THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN

Book I
Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-1954

EDITED BY
Jacques-Alain Miller

TRANSLATED WITH NOTES BY
John Forrester

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THE SEMINAR OF

JACQUES LACAN

BOOK I

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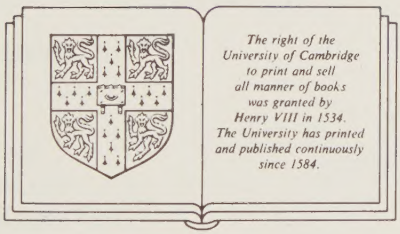
LACAN.



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TRANSLATORS' NOTE

1. What follows is a complete translation of the seminar that Jacques Lacan gave in the course of a year's teaching within the training programme of the Société Française de Psychanalyse. The French text was prepared by Jacques-Alain Miller in consultation with Jacques Lacan, from the transcriptions of the seminar. Certain minor errors in the text have been corrected in the translation, and will be incorporated in later editions of the French text. All notes are supplied by John Forrester (who also compiled the index), in order to clarify questions of translation and supply limited bibliographical information.
2. We have aimed at an exact translation. This involves, however, finding appropriate colloquial English to correspond to a text which is both informal and complex – a rendition of Lacan's spoken French. The translation aims at being both informal and literary, corresponding as faithfully as possible with the original text.
3. As we needed to pay additional attention to the German background of many psychoanalytic concepts, in many passages the requirements of three languages had to be taken into account. There has been considerable debate in French analytic circles about the translation of Freud's works, in large part stimulated by these seminars of Lacan's, which, until the early 1960's, were advertised as 'Commentaries on the texts of Freud'. In recent years the admirable English edition of Freud prepared by James Strachey has also been the subject of discussion and criticism in the English-language world. Anticipating the decision of the next Freud translators, we have made one decision which follows the French translations of Freud at the expense of Strachey's: where '*investir, investi, investissement*' appears in the French text, corresponding to the German '*besetzen, besetzt, Besetzung*', we have translated this by 'invest, invested, investment', instead of 'cathect, cathected, cathexis'. We have also translated '*pulsion*', corresponding to '*Trieb*', by 'drive' and '*instinct*', corresponding to '*Instinkt*', by 'instinct'; this decision is hardly

controversial. Both of these decisions accord with Schneiderman's practice.[1] Other decisions are pointed out in the notes.

4. We have paid considerable attention to the practices of previous translators of Lacan, in particular Anthony Wilden,[2] Alan Sheridan,[3] Stuart Schneiderman and Jacqueline Rose,[4] in the hope that some consistency in the English rendition of Lacan can be achieved. This Seminar, together with Seminar II, which is being published simultaneously, was worked on by both translators so as to produce uniformity in both terminology and style. In attempting to follow our predecessors, we came to the conclusion that it was often more accurate to render one single French term by a variety of English terms. This was made all the more necessary in view of the fact that Lacan's 'technical' vocabulary was, throughout his life, always tentative and decidedly in flux. Nonetheless, the translations of the following terms have, or have acquired, such importance in discussion of Lacan's work that it may be useful to point them out, together with certain differences between our translation and that of other Lacan translators.

FRENCH TERM	PREVIOUS TRANSLATORS	THIS TRANSLATION
parole	Word (Wilden)	speech
signification	signification (Sheridan) meaning (Schneiderman)	signification or significance
sens	sense (Schneiderman) meaning (Sheridan)	meaning
signifier		to mean or to signify
travail		labour or work

5. In the original text, words in a language other than French were printed in italics. We have followed this practice, indicating in notes which words in the original appeared in English. An exception to this rule is made for the terms '*ego*' and '*moi*'. Both these terms are translated in this text by 'ego'; when italicized, it is 'ego' in the French; when it is in roman face, the original word is '*moi*'.

JOHN FORRESTER
SYLVANA TOMASELLI
Cambridge, June 1986

[1] In *Returning to Freud: Clinical Psychoanalysis in the School of Lacan*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980, pp. vii–viii.

[2] Anthony Wilden, trans. and ed., *The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis*, by J. Lacan, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968.

[3] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: a Selection*, London: Tavistock Publications, 1977; Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1977.

[4] Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, eds., *Feminine Sexuality. Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne*, translated by Jacqueline Rose, London: Macmillan, 1982.

ABBREVIATIONS

E Lacan, *Écrits*, Paris: Seuil, 1966. Where there are two numbers, separated by /, the first number refers to the page number in the French edition, the second to the page number in *Écrits; a Selection*, translated by Alan Sheridan, London: Tavistock, 1977.

Sem Lacan, *Le Séminaire*, Paris: Seuil, 1973– (26 volumes).

SE Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (24 volumes), edited by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson, London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1953–74.

GW Freud, *Gesammelte Werke* (18 volumes), London: The Hogarth Press, 1940–68.

Stud Freud, *Studienausgabe* (10 volumes with an unnumbered *Ergänzungsband*, abbreviated as *Erg*), Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1969–75.

Origins Sigmund Freud, *The Origins of Psychoanalysis. Letters to Wilhelm Fliess, Drafts and Notes 1887–1902*, ed. Marie Bonaparte, Anna Freud, Ernst Kris, authorised translation by Eric Mosbacher and James Strachey, introduction by Ernst Kris, London: Imago, 1954.

Robert Paul Robert, *Dictionnaire Alphabétique & Analogique de la Langue Française*, Paris: S.N.L., 1977.

The interventions of participants in the Seminar have on occasion been abbreviated by Jacques-Alain Miller; these omissions are indicated by dotted lines.

OVERTURE TO THE SEMINAR

The master breaks the silence with anything – with a sarcastic remark, with a kick-start.

That is how a buddhist master conducts his search for meaning, according to the technique of *zen*. It behoves the students to find out for themselves the answer to their own questions. The master does not teach *ex cathedra* a ready made science; he supplies an answer when the students are on the verge of finding it.

This kind of teaching is a refusal of any system. It uncovers a thought in motion – nonetheless vulnerable to systematisation, since it necessarily possesses a dogmatic aspect. Freud's thought is the most perennially open to revision. It is a mistake to reduce it to a collection of hackneyed phrases. Each of his ideas possesses a vitality of its own. That is precisely what one calls the dialectic.

Certain of these ideas were, at a given moment, indispensable to Freud, because they supplied an answer to a question that he had formulated previously, in other terms. Hence one only gains a sense of their value by relocating them in their context.

But it is not enough to do some history, the history of thought, and to say that Freud lived in a scientistic century. Rather, with *The Interpretation of Dreams*, something of a different essence, of a concrete psychological density, is reintroduced, namely, meaning.

From the scientistic point of view, Freud appeared at this point to revert to the most archaic thinking – reading something in dreams. He later returns to causal explanations. But when one interprets a dream, one is always up to one's neck in meaning. What is at issue is the subjectivity of the subject, in his desires, in his relation to his environment, to others, to life itself.

Our task, here, is to reintroduce the register of meaning, a register that must itself be reintegrated on its own level.

Brücke, Ludwig, Helmholtz, Du Bois-Reymond had instituted a kind of

pledged faith – everything reduces down to physical forces, those of attraction and repulsion. Once one takes these as premises, there's no reason to go beyond them. If Freud did go beyond them, it is because he also took on others. He dared to attach importance to what was happening to him, to the antinomies of his childhood, to his neurotic problems, to his dreams. That is why Freud is for us all a man beset, like anyone else is, by all the contingencies – death, woman, father.

This represents a return to origins, and barely warrants being called science. What holds good in the art of the expert cook, who knows how to joint a bird, to disjoint it with as little resistance as possible, is also true for psychoanalysis. We know that there is a method of conceptualisation proper to each structure. But since this leads to complications, one prefers to cling to a monistic notion of a deduction of the world. That's how one goes astray.

One has to realise that we do our dissecting with concepts, not with a knife. Concepts have their specific order in reality. They do not emerge out of human experience – if they did, they would be well made. The first appelations arise out of words themselves, they are instruments for delineating things. Hence every science remains in darkness for a long time, entangled in language.

At first there is language, already formed, which we use as we would a very poor instrument. From time to time, reversals occur – from phlogiston to oxygen, for instance. Lavoisier introduces the right concept, oxygen, at the same time as his phlogistic. The root of the difficulty is that you can only introduce symbols, mathematical or otherwise, by using everyday language, since you have, after all, to explain what you are going to do with them. You are then at a certain level of human exchange, the level of healer in this instance. So is Freud, despite his denial. But, as Jones has demonstrated, he imposed upon himself right from the beginning the discipline of not dabbling in the speculation to which his nature inclined him. He submitted himself to the discipline of the facts, of the laboratory. He distanced himself from the wrong language.

Let us now turn to the notion of the subject. When one brings it in, one brings in oneself. The man speaking to you is a man like any other – he makes use of the wrong language. Oneself is then at issue.

Thus, Freud knew, from the beginning, that he would only make progress in the analysis of the neuroses if he analysed himself.

The growing importance attributed today to counter-transference means that it is a recognised fact that in analysis the patient is not alone. There are two of us – and not only two.

Phenomenologically, the analytic situation is a structure, that is to say that it is only through that that certain phenomena are isolable, separable. It is another structure, that of subjectivity, which gives human beings the idea that they are comprehensible to themselves.

Hence being neurotic can help one become a good psychoanalyst, and at the beginning, it helped Freud. Like Monsieur Jordain with his prose,[1] we make sense, nonsense, we misunderstand. But the lines of structure still had to be found there. Jung as well, to his own amazement, rediscovers, in the symbols of dreams and religions, certain archetypes, proper to the human race. This is also a structure – but differing from the analytic structure.

Freud introduced the determinism proper to this structure. Hence the ambiguity that is to be found throughout his corpus. For example, is a dream desire or the recognition of desire? Or, again, the *ego* is on the one hand like an empty egg, differentiated at its surface through contact with the world of perception, but it is also, each time we encounter it, that which says *no* or *me, I*, which says *one*, which speaks about others, which expresses itself in different registers.

We are going to employ the techniques of an art of dialogue. Like the good cook, we have to know what joints, what resistances, we will encounter.

The *super-ego* is a law deprived of meaning, but one which nevertheless only sustains itself by language. If I say *you turn to the right*, it's to allow the other to bring his language into line with mine. I think of what goes through his head when I speak to him. This attempt to find an agreement constitutes the communication specific to language. This *you* is so fundamental that it arises before consciousness. Censorship, for example, which is intentional, nevertheless comes into action before consciousness, functioning with vigilance. *You* is not a signal, but a reference to the other – it is order and love.

In the same way, the ego-ideal is an organism of defence established by the ego in order to extend the subject's satisfaction. But it is also the function that depresses most, in the psychiatric meaning of the term.

The *id* is not reducible to a pure and objective given, to the drives of the subject. An analysis never leads to specifying a given quantity of aggressivity or erotism. The point to which analysis leads, the end point of the dialectic of existential recognition, is – *You are this*. In practice this ideal is never reached.

The ideal of analysis is not complete self mastery, the absence of passion. It is to render the subject capable of sustaining the analytic dialogue, to speak neither too early, nor too late. Such is the aim of a training analysis.

The introduction of an order of determinations into human existence, into the domain of meaning, is what we call reason. Freud's discovery is the rediscovery, on fallow ground, of reason.

18 November 1953

The rest of this session is missing, as are all those sessions from the end of 1953.

[1] '*Il y a plus de quarante ans que je dis de la prose sans que j'en susse rien*' ('I have been speaking prose for more than forty years without knowing it') – Molière, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, M. Jourdain, Act II, Scene IV.

THE MOMENT OF RESISTANCE

I

Introduction to the commentaries on Freud's Papers on Technique

THE SEMINAR
CONFUSION IN ANALYSIS
HISTORY IS NOT THE PAST
THEORIES OF THE *EGO*

I would very much like to start off this new year, for which I offer you my best wishes, by telling you – *The fun is over!*

Last term you had little else to do but listen to me. I declare that this term now starting, I trust, I hope, I venture to hope that I too will hear from you a bit.

It's actually the law, and tradition, of the seminar that those who participate in it bring more to it than a purely personal effort – a contribution through effective communication. This can only come from those involved in the work in the most direct manner, from those for whom these seminars on texts take on their full meaning, from those who are involved in a variety of capacities in our practice. All this does not exclude your obtaining from me answers that I will be in a position to give you.

It would be particularly appreciated if everyone were to give, according to his or her resources, his or her utmost, in contributing to this new phase of the seminar. Your utmost consists in not replying with a long face, saying it just so happens that this week you are particularly heavily burdened, when I call upon one or other of you and consign a specific segment of our common task to him or her.

I am talking here to those who are part of the psychoanalytic group that we represent. I would like you to realise that if it is constituted as such, as an autonomous group, it is for a task that for each of us brings with it nothing less than the future – the meaning of everything which we do and will have to do for the rest of our lives. If you are not coming to put into question everything you do, I don't see why you're here. Why would those who do not sense the meaning of this task remain tied to us, rather than joining up with some sort of bureaucracy or other?

1

These reflections are particularly pertinent, to my way of thinking, just when we are going to tackle what are commonly called Freud's Papers on Technique.

Papers on Technique is a term that a certain tradition has already fixed upon. During Freud's lifetime, a small octavo volume was published with the title *Zur Technik der Psychoanalyse und zur Metapsychologie*, which brought together a certain number of Freud's writings dating from 1904 to 1919, whose title, presentation, contents indicated that they dealt with psychoanalytic method.

The motivation and justification for this format is that there are good grounds for cautioning an inexperienced practitioner who would like to embark upon analysis, so that he might avoid a certain number of confusions regarding the practice of the method, and also regarding its essence.

There are passages in these writings which are extremely important for understanding the progress that the development of practice has seen over these years. What one sees gradually appearing there are notions fundamental to the mode of operation of the analytic therapy, the notion of resistance and the function of transference, the mode of operation and of intervention in the transference, and even, up to a certain point, the essential role of the transference neurosis. There's no need, then, to underline any further the quite special interest this little collection of writings possesses.

To be sure, this way of bringing them together is not entirely satisfactory, and the term Papers on Technique is perhaps not what gives it its unity. They possess no less of a unity for all that. The whole attests to a stage in the development of Freud's thought. We will study it from this perspective.

There is an intermediary step here. It follows on from the initial development of what someone, an analyst who does not always have a way with words, but who on this occasion made a rather fortunate, even beautiful, find, has called Freud's *seminal experience*. It antedates the elaboration of the structural theory.[1]

The beginnings of this intermediary step should be placed between 1904 and 1909.

The article on the psychoanalytic method appeared in 1904;[2] some say that this is where the word psychoanalysis first appears – which isn't true, since Freud had used it well before, but what matters is that it is there used in a formal manner, in the very title of the article. 1909 – the date of the lectures at Clark University, Freud's journey to America, accompanied by his son, Jung.

If we pick up the thread again in the year 1920, we find the theory of the agencies, the structural, or again the metapsychological theory, as Freud called it. That is another theoretical development which he bequeathed to us out of his experience and his discovery.

As you see, the so-called papers on technique are spread between these two advances. It is what gives them their meaning. It is a mistake to think that they

[1] The structural theory is the shorthand term for Freud's theory of the ego, id and super-ego, introduced with *The Ego and the Id* (1923b).

[2] 'Freud's psycho-analytic procedure' (1904a) GW V 3–10; Stud Erg 101–6; SE VII 249–54.

owe their unity to the fact that Freud discusses technique in them.

In a certain sense, Freud never ceased discussing technique. I only have to remind you of the *Studien über Hysterie*, which is nothing other than one long account of the discovery of the analytic technique. That is where we witness it in the making, and that is what makes these studies priceless. If we wanted to give a complete and systematic account of the development of Freud's technique, we would have to start with them. I have not taken up the *Studien über Hysterie* for the simple reason that they are not easily accessible, since not all of you read German, nor even English – to be sure, there are more reasons than just those of expediency leading me to choose instead the Papers on Technique.

The Interpretation of Dreams is itself always, endlessly, about technique. If we put to one side what he wrote on mythological, anthropological and cultural topics, hardly any of Freud's work fails to tell us something about technique. I do not need to emphasise that an article like 'Analysis terminable and interminable', which appeared around 1934, is one of the most important on technique.

I would now like to stress what in my opinion is the best frame of mind in which to conduct our commentary on these papers this term. This is a matter that should be settled today.

2

If we are under the impression that we are here to stand back in admiration of the Freudian texts and marvel at them, we will certainly be well satisfied.

The freshness and vivacity of these papers is not surpassed by any of Freud's other writings. At times his personality is revealed in them in so direct a manner that one cannot fail to remark it. The simplicity and frankness of tone are in and of themselves a kind of education.

More specifically, the ease with which the question of practical rules to be observed is dealt with shows us the extent to which they were, for Freud, an instrument, in the sense that one says one has a hammer firmly in hand. *Firmly held by this hand of mine*, he says in short, *and this is how I am accustomed to holding it. Others may possibly prefer a marginally different instrument, which sits better in their hand.* You will come across passages that will tell you that far more clearly than I do in this metaphorical way.

So the codification of rules of technique is dealt with in these papers with a freedom which in and of itself might well be a sufficient education, and even on a first reading bears fruit and yields its reward. There is nothing more wholesome and liberating. And nothing demonstrates more clearly that the real issue lies elsewhere.

But that's not all. In the manner in which Freud communicates to us what

we could call the paths of the truth of his thought, there is a quite different aspect, to be discovered in those passages which may perhaps appear of secondary importance, but which are nonetheless quite perceptible. It is the long-suffering side of his personality, the feeling he has of the necessity of authority, which in his case is not without a certain fundamental depreciation of what anyone who has something to communicate or teach can expect from those who listen to and follow him. In many a place we come across a measure of profound contempt for the manner in which these things are made use of and understood. As you will see, I even believe that one finds in him a very specific disparagement of the human raw material made available to him by the society in which he lived. Undoubtedly this is what allows us to catch a glimpse of why Freud, in contrast to what happens in his writings, mobilised the full weight of his authority so as to assure, so he believed, the future of analysis. He both excluded all manner of doctrinal dissensions – quite real dissensions – which emerged, and at the same time was quite imperious as to what could be organised around him as the means for the transmission of his teaching.

All this is only a glimpse of what this reading reveals of the historical aspects of Freud's activity and presence. Are we going to restrict ourselves to this level? Certainly not, if only because it would be quite ineffectual, despite the interest, the stimulation, the amusement and relaxation that we might expect from it.

It is always in relation to the question, *what do we do when we do analysis?* that up to now I have offered this commentary of Freud. The scrutiny of these short papers will be undertaken in the same spirit. Hence my starting point is the current state of technique – what is said, written and done concerning analytic technique.

I don't know if most of you – I hope at least some – are fully aware of the following fact. When – I am referring to the present, 1954, this brand new year – we examine now the manner in which the diverse practitioners of analysis think, express, conceive of their technique, we conclude that things have come to such a pass that it would not be an exaggeration to call it the most radical confusion. I can tell you that right now, amongst those who are analysts, and who think – which already limits the field – there isn't perhaps a single one who, deep down, has the same conception as any other of his contemporaries or peers as to what one does, what one aims to do, what one achieves, what is going on in analysis.

It has even got to the point where we could amuse ourselves with the little game of comparing the most extreme conceptions – we would see that they arrive at formulations which are strictly contradictory. Without even seeking out those who cherish paradoxes – anyhow, there aren't that many of them. The question is of such import that the various theoreticians tackle it with no inclination to whimsicality, and humour, in general, is excluded from their laborious pontifications on therapeutic results, their forms, their procedures

and the means by which one obtains them. They content themselves with hanging on to a balustrade, to a guard-rail offered by some corner or another of Freud's theoretical system. This alone gives each of them the guarantee that he is still communicating with those who are his fellow-analysts and colleagues. The Freudian language acts as the go-between by which a channel of communication is kept open between practitioners who hold to manifestly different conceptions of their therapeutic activity, and, what is more, of the general form of this interhuman relation called psychoanalysis.

When I say *interhuman relation*, you can already see that I am describing things the way they are today. Indeed, the elaboration of the notion of the relation between analyst and analysand is the path taken by contemporary analytic doctrines in trying to rediscover a firm basis for the realities of that experience. Certainly it represents the most fertile line of thought traced out since Freud's death. Balint calls it a two-body psychology[3] – a term which, in fact, is not his, but which he borrowed from the late Rickman, one of the rare souls to have had a modicum of theoretical originality in analytic circles since Freud's death.[4] Around this formula one may quite easily align all studies on object-relations, on the importance of counter-transference, and on a certain set of related terms, amongst which fantasy stands in the foreground. The imaginary inter-reaction between analysand and analyst is thus something we shall have to take into consideration.

Does this mean that this is the way to locate our problem precisely? On the one hand, yes. On the other, no.

It is very worthwhile to stimulate research of this character in as much as it highlights the originality of what is at stake when compared to a one-body psychology,[5] the conventional constructive psychology. But is it sufficient to say that we are dealing with a relation between two individuals? It is in this way that we are brought to recognise the impasses into which theories of technique are currently led.

I am not in a position to say more to you about this for the moment – even though, as those who are old hands in this seminar know, you are obviously aware that there is no two-body psychology[5] without the intervention of a third element. If, as we must, we take speech as the central feature of our perspective, then it is within a three- rather than two-term relation that we have to formulate the analytic experience in its totality.

[3] English in the original.

[4] See John Rickman, *Selected Contributions to Psycho-analysis*, compiled by W. C. M. Scott, with an introductory memoir by S. M. Payne, London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1957, in particular 'The factor of number in individual- and group-dynamics' (1950) pp. 165–9; 'Methodology and research in psycho-pathology' (1951), pp. 207–17, esp. pp. 207–10; 'Number and the human sciences' (1951), pp. 218–23. See also Michael Balint, 'On love and hate' (1951) in: *Primary Love and Psycho-analytic Technique*, London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1952, pp. 141–56; see p. 146. Balint's phrase is 'two-person psychology'.

[5] English in the original.

Which doesn't mean to say that we cannot express fragments, pieces and tail-ends of it in other registers. In that way you can grasp the kind of obstacles the theoreticians have come up against. It's really very easy to understand – if the foundation of the inter-analytic relation is truly something that we are obliged to represent as being triadic, there are a number of different ways of choosing two elements from out of this triad. You can put the accent on one or other of the three dyadic relations that are set up within it. As you will see, this furnishes a practical means of classifying a certain number of theoretical elaborations concerning technique that have been proposed.

3

All this may appear to you at the moment to be a little abstract, and I want to do my best to tell you something a bit more concrete, to bring you into this discussion.

I am going to remind you quickly of Freud's seminal experience which I mentioned earlier on, since in fact that is what was partly the object of our lectures of last term, totally centred as they were on the notion that the complete reconstitution of the subject's history is the element that is essential, constitutive and structural for analytic progress.

I believe that I have demonstrated that that is where Freud started from. What is at issue for him is the understanding of an individual case. That is what gives each of the five great case-histories their value. The three that we have already looked at, pondered over and worked on together in previous years show you just that. Freud's progress, the discoveries he made, lies in the way he considers the singularity of a case.

Consider it in its singularity, what does that mean? That means essentially that, for him, the interest, the essence, the basis, the dimension proper to analysis is the reintegration by the subject of his history right up to the furthermost perceptible limits, that is to say into a dimension that goes well beyond the limits of the individual. To lay the foundations, deduce it, demonstrate it employing a thousand subtleties in Freud's texts, is what we have accomplished together over the last few years.

What reveals this dimension is the accent that Freud puts in each case on those points that it is essential to overcome by means of the technique and which are what I will call the bearings [*situations*] of the history. Does this amount to placing the accent on the past, as it may appear at first sight? I showed you that it is not as simple as that. History is not the past. History is the past in so far as it is historicised in the present – historicised in the present because it was lived in the past.

The path of restitution of the subject's history takes the form of a quest for the restitution of the past. We should consider this restitution as the butt to be aimed at by the recourses of technique.

Throughout Freud's works, in which, as I have told you, technical suggestions are to be found at every turn, you will discover that the restitution of the past retained its prominent position in his preoccupations right to the end. That is why the very questions which are opened up by Freud's discovery are raised by this restitution of the past, and they turn out to be none other than the questions which up to now have been avoided, skirted round, in analysis I mean, namely those which bear on the function of time in the realisation of the human subject.

When we return to the origin of the Freudian experience – when I say *origin*, I do not mean historical origin but point-source – one realises that this is what has always kept analysis alive, despite the profoundly different garbs it has been given. Again and again, Freud emphasises the restitution of the past, even when, with the conception of the three agencies – you will see that one can even talk of four – he gives a considerable extension to the structural point of view, favouring thereby a certain orientation which will increasingly focus on the analytic relation in the present, on the here and now of the session, between the four walls of analysis.

To back up what I am telling you, all I need do is cite an article he published in 1934, *Konstruktionen in der Analyse*, in which what is at issue, again and as ever, is the reconstruction of the subject's history.[6] You won't find a more characteristic instance of the persistence of this point of view in all of Freud's work. In this article, it is something like a final insistence on this pivotal theme. We have here something like the distilled essence, the point, the last word on what has been at stake all along, in a work as central as the *Wolfman* – what value does the subject's reconstructed past have?

One could say that Freud touches there – though one senses it in many other places in his corpus – on a notion that was emerging in the course of our discussions last term, and which is roughly the following – the fact that the subject relives, comes to remember, in the intuitive sense of the word, the formative events of his existence, is not in itself so very important. What matters is what he reconstructs of it.

On this point, there are some striking turns of phrase. After all, Freud writes, *Träume*, dreams, *sind auch erinnern*, are also a way of remembering.[7] He even goes so far as to say that screen-memories themselves are, after all, an adequate representative of what is at issue.[8] To be sure, in their manifest form as memories, they certainly are not, but if we work on them sufficiently they render up to us the equivalent of what we are looking for.

Can you see where this is all leading to? It leads, within Freud's own conception, to an idea that what is involved is a reading, a qualified and skilled

[6] 'Constructions in analysis' (1937d) GW XVI 43–56; Stud Erg 395–406; SE XXIII 257–69.

[7] 'From the history of an infantile neurosis' (1918b[1914]) GW XII 80; Stud VIII 169; SE XVII 51.

[8] *Ibid.* SE XVII 50–1.

translation of the cryptogram representing what the subject is conscious of at the moment – what am I going to say now? of himself? no, not only of himself – of himself and of everything else, that is to say of the whole of his system.

As I told you just a moment ago, the restitution of the subject's wholeness appears in the guise of a restoration of the past. But the stress is always placed more on the side of reconstruction than on that of reliving, in the sense we have grown used to calling *affective*. The precise reliving – that the subject remembers something as truly belonging to him, as having truly been lived through, with which he communicates, and which he adopts – we have the most explicit indication in Freud's writings that that is not what is essential. What is essential is reconstruction, the term he employs right up until the end.

There is something truly remarkable here, which would be paradoxical if we gained access to it without having an awareness of the meaning it may take on in the register of speech, which I am trying here to highlight as being necessary to the understanding of our experience. I would say – when all is said and done, it is less a matter of remembering than of rewriting history.

I tell you what there is in Freud. That doesn't imply that he was right; but this thread is continuous, permanently subjacent to his thought's development. He never abandoned something which can only be put in the way I've found of saying it – *rewriting history* – a formula which allows one to put in perspective the various directions that he gives apropos of little details in the narratives within analysis.

4

To the Freudian conception that I am expounding to you, I could counterpose completely different conceptions of the analytic experience.

Certain authors maintain that analysis is a sort of homeopathic discharge by the subject of his fantasised understanding of the world. In their view, this fantasised understanding should, little by little, within the day-to-day experience taking place in the consulting-room, boil down, transform itself, and achieve a new equilibrium within a given relation to the real. What is emphasised here, as you see, in clear contrast to Freud, is the transformation of the fantasised relation in the course of a relation which one calls, without further ado, *real*.

Certainly one can formulate these matters in a more open fashion, sufficiently nuanced to accommodate the plurality of the expression, as has been done by someone to whom I have already referred here, who has written on technique. None of which, in the end, stops it from coming back to that. Some peculiar repercussions thereby result, which we will be in a position to point to when we come to our commentary on the Freudian texts.

How did the practice that Freud initiated get transformed into a manipulation of the analyst analysand relationship in the sense that I have just outlined? That's the fundamental question that we will be encountering in the course of the study we are undertaking.

The ideas that Freud introduced in the period immediately after that of the Papers on Technique, namely those of the three agencies, were greeted, employed, and dealt with in such a way as to result in this transformation. Of the three, the ego took on the greatest importance. Since then all subsequent development of analytic technique has revolved around the conception of the *ego*, and that is where we must locate the source of all the difficulties arising out of the theoretical elaboration on this development in practice.

There is, without doubt, a world of difference between what we actually do in this sort of den where the patient talks to us and where, from time to time, we talk to him – and the theoretical account that we give of it. Even in Freud, where the gap is infinitely more narrow, we have the impression that some distance remains.

I am certainly not the only one to have asked myself the question – what was Freud really doing? Bergler asked this question in plain black and white, and answers that we don't really know much, apart from what Freud himself allowed us to see when he himself set down, also in plain black and white, the fruits of certain of his experiences, namely his five great case-histories. They are the best introduction we have to the manner in which Freud behaved. But it really does seem as if the character of this experience cannot be reproduced in its concrete reality. For one very simple reason, on which I have already insisted – the singularity of the analytic experience, when it comes to Freud.

It really was Freud who opened up this path of experience. This in itself gave him an absolutely unique perspective, as his dialogue with the patient demonstrates. As one can sense all the time, the patient is for him only a sort of prop, or question, or sometimes even a check, along the path that he, Freud, took alone. Hence, the drama, in the true sense of the word, of his quest. The drama which, in each of the cases he gave us, ends in failure.

Throughout his life, Freud followed the paths that he opened up in the course of this experience, attaining in the end something that one could call a promised land. One cannot say, however, that he entered into it. You need only read what can be considered to be his testament, 'Analysis terminable and interminable', in order to see that if there was one thing that he was aware of, it was that he hadn't entered into it, into the promised land. This article isn't recommended reading for all and sundry, for anyone who knows how to read – luckily there are not that many people who do know how to read – it is a difficult one to digest if you happen to be an analyst – if you aren't an analyst, you don't give a toss.

Those who find themselves in a position to follow Freud are confronted with

the question as to how the paths we inherit were adopted, reapprehended, and rethought through. So, we cannot do anything else but gather together what we will contribute to it under the heading of a *critique*, a critique of analytic technique.

Technique is, and can only be, of any value to the extent that we understand wherein lies the fundamental question for the analyst who adopts it. Well then, we should note first of all that we hear the *ego* spoken of as the ally of the analyst, and not only the ally, but the sole source of knowledge. The only thing we know of is the *ego*, that's the way it is usually put. Anna Freud, Fenichel, nearly all those who have written about analysis since 1920, say it over and over again – *We speak only to the ego, we are in communication with the ego alone, everything is channelled via the ego.*

On the other hand, in contrast, every advance made by this ego psychology can be summed up as follows – the ego is structured exactly like a symptom. At the heart of the subject, it is only a privileged symptom, the human symptom *par excellence*, the mental illness of man.

To translate the analytic ego in this quick and shorthand manner is at best to sum up what emerges from a straightforward reading of Anna Freud's book, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*. One cannot avoid being struck by the fact that the ego is constructed and is to be located within the subject as a whole, just as a symptom. Nothing differentiates the one from the other. No objection can be made to this quite dazzling argument. No less dazzling is the fact that things have got so confused that the catalogue of defence mechanisms which make up the ego is as heterogeneous a list as one could conceive of. Anna Freud herself underscores this very clearly – to bring repression closer to notions such as the turning of the drive against its object, or the inversion of its aims, is to put side by side elements which are in no respect homogeneous.

Given the point where we still find ourselves, perhaps we cannot do any better now. But we can still highlight the profound ambiguity of the conception analysts entertain of the *ego* – which is the only thing to which one has access, despite also being only another hindrance, a failure [*acte manqué*], a slip.

At the start of his chapters on analytic interpretation, Fenichel speaks of the *ego* as everyone does, and feels the need to say that it plays the essential role of being a function by which the subject learns the meaning of words. So, from the very start, then, Fenichel is at the heart of the matter. Everything is there. The issue is knowing whether the meaning of the *ego* exceeds the self [*moi*].

If this function is a function of the *ego*, everything that follows in Fenichel's account is incomprehensible, and, besides, he doesn't press the point. I say that it is a slip of the pen, since it isn't pursued, and everything that goes on from there amounts to saying the opposite, and leads him to the conclusion that, in the end, the *id* and the *ego* amount to exactly the same thing, which isn't about to clarify matters. But, I repeat, either the subsequent argument is unthinkable

or it is not true that the *ego* is the function through which the subject learns the meaning of words.

This *ego*, what is it? What is the subject caught up in, which is, beyond the meaning of words, a completely different matter – language, whose role is formative, quite fundamental in his history. With respect to Freud's Papers on Technique we will have to ask ourselves these questions, which will take us a long way – but only on condition that, it is first of all in relation to each of our experiences.

It will also be incumbent upon us, when we try to engage in discussions taking as our starting point the present state of theory and technique, to ask ourselves what was already implicit in what Freud brought us. What, perhaps, already inclined him towards those formulae to which we are now led in our practices? What constraints might there be in the manner in which we are led to look at things? Or, in what sense does something that has happened since amount to being a development, a more rigorous systematisation which corresponds better to reality? This is the register within which our commentary will take on its meaning.

5

I would like to give you a still clearer sense of how I envisage this seminar.

At the end of the last few lectures I delivered to you, you had a taste of a reading of what can be called the psychoanalytic myth. The direction of this reading is not so much that of criticism as of gauging the reality which confronted it, and to which it offers its mythical reply.

Well, the problem is more restricted, but also much more pressing, where technique is concerned.

Indeed, the scrutiny that we will have to engage in of everything pertaining to our technique falls within the purview of our own discipline. If we have to differentiate the actions and the behaviour of the subject from what he says to us about them in the session, I would say that our actual behaviour in the analytic session is just as far from the theoretical account that we give of it.

But this is only a first truth, which only has significance in so far as it may be reversed, and at the same time mean – *just as close*. The fundamental absurdity of interhuman behaviour can only be comprehended in the light of this *system* – as Melanie Klein so happily called it, not knowing, as usual, what she was saying – called the human ego, namely that set of defences, of denials [*négations*], of dams, of inhibitions, of fundamental fantasies which orient and direct the subject. Well then, the theoretical conception we have of our technique, even if it doesn't coincide exactly with what we are doing, doesn't structure any the less, or motivate any the less, the least of our interventions with the said patients.

And that is precisely what is so serious. Because we have effectively allowed ourselves – in the sense, revealed to us by analysis, in which we allow ourselves things, without knowing it – to bring our *ego* into play in the analysis. Since it is argued that one is trying to bring about the patient's readaptation to the real, one really ought to find out if it is the analyst's *ego* which offers the measure of the real.

To be sure, it isn't enough to have a definite conception of the ego for our ego to come into play like a bull in the china shop of our relation to the patient. But a certain way of conceiving of the function of the *ego* in analysis does have some relation to a certain practice of analysis that we might well call inauspicious.

I am only opening up the question. It is our task to resolve it. The totality of each of our world systems – I am referring to the concrete system which doesn't have to be already spelled out for it to be there, which does not pertain to the order of the unconscious, but which acts in the manner in which we express ourselves in daily life, in the smallest spontaneous detail of our discourse – is that something which must in actual fact, yea or nay, be employed in analysis as the yardstick?

I think I have opened up the question sufficiently for you now to see the point of what we can do together.

Mannoni, will you get together with one of your neighbours, Anzieu for instance, to study the notion of resistance in those of Freud's writings available to you under the title *On Psychoanalytic Technique*, published by Presses Universitaires?[9] Don't overlook the concluding lectures of the *Introductory Lectures*. Will two others, Perrier and Granoff for instance, collaborate on the same topic? Then we will see how to proceed. We will let ourselves be guided by experience itself.

13 January 1954

[9] The French book entitled *De la Technique Psychanalytique*, trans. A. Berman, Paris: Presses Universitaires Françaises, 1953 (reprinted as *La Technique Psychanalytique*, Paris: Presses Universitaires Françaises, 1970), comprises the six papers included in the Papers on Technique in SE XII, together with six others: (1904a), (1905a), (1910d), (1910k), (1914a) and (1919a).

II

Preliminary comments on the problem of resistance

ANALYSIS THE FIRST TIME
MATERIALITY OF DISCOURSE
ANALYSIS OF ANALYSIS
FREUD'S MEGALOMANIA?

1

Following O. Mannoni's presentation.

We should offer our heartiest thanks to Mannoni who has given us a most happy prologue to the resumption of the seminar's dialogue. Nonetheless, he has distinctly phenomenological leanings, and I don't think that the solution has quite the form that he leads us to believe – as he himself has sensed. But it is useful to have framed the question as he has, by speaking of an interpersonal mechanism, although the word 'mechanism' can only be an approximation at this juncture.

2

Interruption in the course of D. Anzieu's presentation.

Freud explains, apropos of Lucy R., that he had recourse to pressure of the hands when he could only obtain partial hypnosis. Later on, he says that he stopped worrying about this, and even renounced seeking an answer from the subject to the question, in accordance with the classical method, *are you asleep?*, since he had had the unpleasant experience of receiving the reply, *no, I am not at all asleep* – which put him in a rather embarrassing position.[1] He recounts in a naive and charming manner that he was obliged to tell the subject that he was not talking about quite the same sort of sleep as that to which the other's reply pertained, and that the latter must, nonetheless, have been a little bit asleep. Within the limits of the most perfect ambiguity, he quite clearly states that all this put him in a most embarrassing position, which only came to an end the day he no longer cared one way or the other.

[1] *Studies on Hysteria* (1895d) GW I 165–6; SE II 108–9.

But he retained the pressure of hands, either on the forehead or on either side of the head, and at the same time he asked the patient to concentrate upon the cause of the symptom. That was an intermediary stage between dialogue and hypnosis. The symptoms were dealt with one by one, in themselves, tackled directly like so many formal problems. In Freud's hands, the patient was assured that the memories which were going to come forth were the most relevant ones, that all he had to do was trust in that. And Freud added the detail that it would be at the moment when he removed his hands – mimicking the lifting of the barrier – that the patient would be completely aware, and would only have to take hold of what came into his mind in order to be certain of being on the right track.

It is quite remarkable that this method proved itself perfectly effective, for the cases which Freud tells us of. Indeed, the case of Lucy R., which is so elegant, was entirely solved, with an effortlessness which has all the beauty of works by primitives. You'll find happy chance, a benevolent divine conjunction, in everything new that is discovered. In contrast, with Anna O. we find the hard labour of working-through[2] possessing all the animation and density of the most modern analytic cases, despite the method that was used – the whole series of events, the whole history, is relived and re-worked several times. It required work of extended scope, lasting almost a year. In the case of Lucy R., things happened much more quickly, and with an elegance that turns it into something quite striking. Undoubtedly we aren't truly able to see where the mainsprings lie, on account of its being too compressed, but, even so, it is of enormous use. This woman had what one could call olfactory hallucinations, hysterical symptoms, and their signification was detected, with locations and dates, in an altogether happy manner. On this occasion, Freud reveals all the minutiae of his way of working.

3

Idem.

I have already emphasised the uniquely privileged character of the cases which Freud dealt with, on account of the special character of his technique. What that was, we can only guess at on the basis of a number of rules which he has given us, and which have been faithfully applied. As the best authors, and those who knew Freud, have admitted, one cannot gain a complete conception of the way in which he applied the technique.

I must emphasise the fact that Freud progressed on a course of research which is not characterised by the same style as other scientific research. Its domain is that of the truth of the subject. The quest for truth is not entirely

[2] English in the original.

reducible to the objective, and objectifying, quest of ordinary scientific method. What is at stake is the realisation of the truth of the subject, like a dimension peculiar to it which must be detached in its distinctiveness [*originalité*] in relation to the very notion of reality – I have emphasised this in all of this year's lectures.

Freud was taken up in the quest for a truth which engaged him totally, including there his own self, and hence also his presence with respect to the patient in his function, let us say, of therapist – even though the term is completely inadequate as a description of his attitude. As Freud himself said, this engagement gave an absolutely unique character to his relations with his patients.

To be sure, analysis as a science is always a science of the particular. The coming to fruition of an analysis is always a unique case, even if these unique cases lend themselves all the same to some generality, since there is more than one analyst. But with Freud the analytic experience represents uniqueness carried to its limit, from the fact that he was in the process of building and verifying analysis itself. We cannot obliterate the fact that it was the first time that an analysis was undertaken. Doubtless the method is derived from it, but it is only method for other people. Freud, for his part, did not apply a method. If we overlook the unique and inaugural character of his endeavour, we will be committing a serious error.

Analysis is an experience of the particular. The very first experience of this particular thus takes on an even more peculiar value. If we do not emphasise the difference between this *first time* and everything that has followed since, we, who are interested not so much in this truth as in the construction of the access roads to this truth, will never be able to grasp the meaning of certain sentences, certain texts, which come into view in Freud's oeuvre, and subsequently take on, in other contexts, a completely different meaning, even though one might consider them to be stencilled one on top of the other.

The interest of these commentaries on the Freudian texts allows us to follow out in detail those questions which – as you will see, as you already see today – have a considerable importance. They are numerous and insidious – strictly speaking the sort of questions that each and everyone of us is careful to avoid, relying instead on a jingle, a formula which is schematic, abbreviated and vivid.

4

D. Anzieu cites a passage from the Studies on Hysteria, *(SE II 287–9). Interruption.*

What's striking about the passage that you refer to is that it takes off from the pseudo-anatomical metaphor called to mind whenever Freud talks about

verbal images wandering up and down the nerve fibres. Here, what is stratified around the pathogenic nucleus calls to mind a bundle of papers, a score with several registers. These metaphors overpoweringly tend to suggest the materialisation of speech, not the mythical materialisation of the neurologists, but a concrete materialisation – speech begins to flow in the leaves of a printed manuscript. The metaphor of the blank page, of the palimpsest, is also taken up on another occasion.[3] It has since appeared under the pen of more than one analyst.

Here we come upon the idea of several longitudinal strata, that is to say of several threads of discourse. One may imagine them as rendered material in the text in the form of literally concrete bundles. There is a stream of parallel words, and these broaden out at a certain moment to encompass this famous pathogenic nucleus which itself is also a story, they move away from it in order to include it and join up a little further on.

The phenomenon of resistance is to be located precisely at this point. There are two directions, one longitudinal and one radial. Resistance acts in the radial direction, when one wants to get closer to the threads which lie at the heart of the bundle. It is the result of an attempt to move from the external registers towards the centre. From the repressed nucleus a positive repulsive force is exerted, and when one strives to reach the threads of the discourse which are closest to it, you feel resistance. Freud even goes so far as to write, not in the *Studies*, but in a later text, published under the title *Métapsychologie* that the strength of the resistance is inversely proportional to one's distance from the repressed centre.[4]

I am not sure if this is the exact wording, but it is very striking. It makes manifest the materialisation of resistance acquired in the course of experience, and precisely, as Mannoni put it just now, in the subject's discourse. In order to know where it is happening [*où ça se passe*], what the material, biological foundation is, Freud quite straightforwardly takes the discourse to be a reality in its own right, a reality which is there, a sheaf, a bundle of proofs as one also calls it, a bundle of juxtaposed discourses which overlap, follow on from each other, forming a dimension, a layer, a dossier.

The notion of a material support of speech, singled out as such, was not yet available to Freud. Today, he would have taken the succession of phonemes which make up a part of the subject's discourse as the basis for his metaphor. He would say that one encounters greater and greater resistance the closer the subject comes to a discourse which would be the ultimate one, the right one, but one which he absolutely refuses.

[3] GW II/III 140 n1; Stud II 152 n1; SE IV 135 n2.

[4] 'Repression' (1915d) GW X 251; Stud III 110; SE XIV 149. At the time Lacan spoke, the article was to be found in French in *Métapsychologie*, trans. M. Bonaparte and A. Berman, Paris: Gallinard, 1940, pp. 67–90.

In the attempt at synthesis that you are making, what has not perhaps been highlighted is the question which however is in the foreground, where resistance is concerned – the question concerning the relations of the unconscious and the conscious. Is resistance a phenomenon which occurs only in analysis? Or is it something we can talk about when the subject goes about his business outside of analysis, and even before he enters into it, or after he has left it? Does resistance continue to have a meaning outside of analysis?

There is a discussion of resistance in the analysis of dreams, to which neither of you have referred, and which nevertheless constitutes the implicit hypothesis behind some of the problems both of you have raised, since Freud there asks himself about the inaccessible nature of the unconscious.[5] The ideas of resistance are extremely old. And right from the start, from Freud's initial researches, resistance is linked to the idea of the *ego*. But when one reads some startling sentences in the text of the *Studies*, where it is not just a question of the *ego* as such, but of the *ego* as representing the ideational mass, one realises that the notion of the *ego* already foreshadows for Freud all the problems that it now presents for us. I would almost say that it is a notion with retroactive effect. It even seems, from reading these early pieces in the light of what has developed since around the *ego*, that the most recent formulations mask, rather than reveal.

One cannot but see in this phrase, *the ideational mass*,[6] something very close to a formula that I could have given you, namely that the counter-transference is nothing other than the function of the analyst's *ego*, what I have called the sum total of the analyst's prejudices. Thus, one discovers in the patient a whole organisation of certainties, beliefs, of coordinates, of references, which constitute in the strictest sense what Freud right from the beginning called an ideational system, which we can in an abbreviated manner here call *the system*.

Does resistance stem only from that? When, at the limit of this domain of speech which is exactly the ideational mass of the ego, I portrayed for you the sum of silence after which another speech again makes its appearance, that speech which is to be reconquered in the unconscious since it is that part of the subject separated from his history – is that resistance? Is it, yea or nay, purely and simply the ego's organisation which, in and of itself, constitutes resistance? Is this what makes it difficult to gain access to the contents of the unconscious in the radial dimension – to use Freud's term? That is a very simple question, too simple, insoluble as such.

Fortunately, in the first thirty years of this century, analytic technique made sufficient progress, has been through enough experimental phases to distinguish its own questions. As you see, it boils down to this – which as I told you

[5] See GW II/III 527–30; Stud II 500–3; SE V 522–5.
[6] *Studies* GW I 174; SE II 116.

will be the model of our quest – we must assume that the evolution, the ups and downs of the analytic experience teach us something concerning the very nature of this experience, in so far as it is also a human experience, masked from itself. That is applying to analysis itself the schema that it has taught us. After all, isn't it itself a roundabout way of having access to the unconscious? It also raises to the second degree the problem that is set for us by neurosis. I am only making a claim for this now, you'll see it demonstrated as we examine it.

What do I want? – if not to get out of this genuine impasse, mental and practical, in which analysis has now ended up. You see that I push what I say quite far – it is incumbent on us to submit even analysis to the operational schema that it has taught us and which consists in reading enough in the different phases of its theoretico-technical development to advance further towards the reconquest of the authentic reality of the unconscious by the subject.

This method will require us to go well beyond the simple formal catalogue of procedures or of conceptual categories. Submitting analysis to an examination which is itself analytic is a step which will reveal its fertility in relation to technique, as fertile as it has already revealed itself in relation to Freud's clinical writings.

5

Interventions in the course of the discussion.

Psychoanalytic writings swarm with improprieties of method. These are difficult themes to deal with, to verbalise, without giving the verb a subject, in addition we are always reading that the *ego* emits the signal of anxiety, handles the life instinct, death instinct – one no longer knows where the switch board, the signalman, the pointer is. All of this is quite improper. We are continually finding Maxwell's little demons making an appearance in analytic writing, possessing foresight, intelligence . . . The annoying thing is that analysts do not have a clear idea of the nature of these demons.

We're here to discover what the evocation of the notion of the *ego* means from one end to the other of Freud's work. It's impossible to understand what this notion represents as it began to emerge with the work of the 1920s, with the studies on the psychology of groups and *Das Ich und das Es*, if one starts by drowning everything in a sum total, under the pretext that what is involved is the apprehension of a certain aspect of the psyche. That's not at all what the *ego* is in Freud's work. It has a functional role, linked to technical necessities.

The triumvirate who work in New York, Hartmann, Loewenstein and Kris, in its current attempt to elaborate a psychology of the *ego*, is always asking itself – what was Freud trying to get at in his last theory of the *ego*? Has anyone up to

now really drawn out all the technical implications from it? I am not interpreting, I am only repeating what can be found in Hartmann's two or three most recent articles. In the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* for 1951, you'll find three articles by Loewenstein, Kris and Hartmann on this topic, which are worth reading. It can't be said that they lead to a fully satisfying formulation, but they are looking in that direction, and propose theoretical principles which have very important technical applications, which according to them have not been noticed. It is very interesting to follow the development of this work in a series of articles we have seen appear over several years, especially since the end of the war. I believe that what has happened there is a very significant failure, one which has to be very instructive for us.

In any case, there is a world of difference between the *ego* as discussed in the *Studies*, the ideational mass, container of ideations, and the final theory of the *ego*, such as it had been wrought by Freud himself from 1920 on, which is still a problem for us. Between the two lies the central field we are in the process of studying.

How did this final theory of the *ego* get to see the light of day? It is the apex of Freud's theoretical elaboration, an extremely original and novel theory. Yet, under Hartmann's pen, it seems as if it strove with all its might to merge once again with classical psychology.

Both of these things are true. This theory, Kris writes, brings psychoanalysis within general psychology, and, at the same time, constitutes an unprecedented innovation. A paradox that we will highlight here, whether we carry on with the technical papers up to the holidays, or tackle the same problem in Schreber's writings.

. . . . . .

In Bergman's article, *Germinal Cell*, the germinal cell of analytic observations is taken to be the notion of a rediscovery and restitution of the past. He refers to the *Studien über Hysterie* in order to show how, right up to the end of his work, right up the final expressions of his thought, Freud always kept this notion of the past in the foreground, in a thousand forms, and above all in the form of reconstruction. In this article, the experience of resistance is therefore in no way considered as central.

. . . . . .

M. Hyppolite is alluding to the fact that Freud's anatomical researches can be viewed as successes, and have been recognised as such. In contrast, when he set himself to work at the physiological level, he seems to have shown a certain lack of interest. That is one of the reasons why he didn't recognise the importance of the discovery of cocaine. His physiological research was feeble, because it stuck fast to therapeutics. Freud concerned himself with the use of cocaine as an analgesic, and left to one side its anaesthetic value.

Here we are reminding ourselves of a trait of Freud's personality. Certainly

we can ask ourselves if he was, as Z* was saying, keeping himself for a more glorious destiny. But to go so far as to say that turning towards psychopathology was for him a compensation is, I believe, a bit excessive. If one reads the works published under the title *The Origins of Psycho-analysis* and the rediscovered early manuscript in which the theory of the psychic apparatus figures, one realises that he was following the line of contemporary theoretical elaboration of the mechanistic functioning of the nervous apparatus – besides, everyone recognised it.

One shouldn't really be surprised therefore that electrical metaphors are mixed up in it. But nor should you forget that the electric current was experimented with for the first time in the area of nerve conduction, without anyone knowing what the implications would be.

Z*: *I believe that, from the clinical point of view, the notion of resistance clearly represents an experience that we all encounter at some time or another with almost all the patients in our practices – he is resisting and it makes me furious.*

Sorry? What's that?

Z*: *I mean that extremely unpleasant experience when you say to yourself – he was on the point of discovering, he could have discovered himself, he knows it without knowing that he knows it, all he has to do is take the trouble to look up, and this damn idiot, this cretin, all those aggressive and hostile words that leap to mind, doesn't do it. And the temptation that one feels to push him, to compel him, . . .*

Don't get too excited about it.

M. Hyppolite: *The only thing that allows the analyst to be intelligent, is when this resistance makes the analysand look like an idiot. It promotes heightened self-esteem.*

All the same, the trap of counter-transference, since we have to to call it that, is more insidious than this first plane.

. . . . . .

Z*: *For direct power over human beings, Freud substitutes the indirect and more palatable power that science gives over nature. We see here again the mechanism of intellectualisation, understand nature and by that very fact subdue her to oneself, the classical formula of determinism, which allusively refers back to Freud's authoritarian character, which punctuates the whole of his history, particularly in his relations with heretics as much as with his disciples.*

I ought to say that if I do speak in this manner, I stopped short of making it the key to the Freudian discovery.

Z*: *I don't think I'm making it the key either, but it is an interesting point to highlight. In this resistance, Freud's hypersensitivity to the subject's resistance is not unconnected to his own character.*

What allows you to speak of Freud's hypersensitivity?

Z*: *The fact that he, and not Breuer, nor Charcot, nor anyone else, discovered it. After all, it happened to him, because he felt it more keenly, and he accounted for what he had experienced.*

You believe that the fact of bringing out a function like resistance indicates a specific intolerance in the subject to whatever resists him? Isn't it, on the contrary, knowing how to conquer it, how to go elsewhere and well beyond, which allowed Freud to turn it into one of the mainsprings of the therapy, a factor which one can render objective, nameable and manageable? You think that Freud was more authoritarian than Charcot? – whereas Freud, in so far as he could, renounced suggestion so as to let the subject integrate what the resistances separated him from. In other words, are those who fail to recognise [*méconnaissent*] resistance less authoritarian, or is it the person who recognises it for what it is? I am rather inclined to believe that someone who, in hypnotism, attempts to make an object of the subject, his thing, to make him as supple as a glove so as to give him any form that he chooses, so as to take from him what he wants, is, more so than Freud, driven by a need to dominate and exercise his power. In contrast, Freud seems respectful of what is generally known as the object's resistance.

Z*: *Certainly.*

I believe that one must be extremely careful here. We cannot make use of our technique so importunately. When I talk about analysing Freud's work, it's so as to venture into it with unqualified analytic prudence. One shouldn't make a character trait into a constant of the personality, still less a characteristic of the subject. On this topic, you'll find some very hasty things from Jones's pen, but things which are nonetheless more subtly put than what you have said. To think that Freud's career was a compensation for his desire for power, even for his clearcut megalomania, of which moreover one may find traces in remarks he made, I think that's. . . . Freud's drama, from the moment when he discovers his path, cannot be summarised like that. We have after all learned enough through analysis not to feel ourselves obliged to identify the Freud who dreams of world-domination with the Freud who reveals a new truth. It doesn't seem to me to arise out of the same cupido, if not of the same libido.

M. Hyppolite: *Even so, it seems to me – without accepting in their totality the formulations of Z* and the conclusions he draws from them – that, in Charcot's domination through hypnosis, it was only a matter of domination over someone reduced to an object, of the possession of a being no longer master of himself. Whereas in the Freudian domination, it is the vanquishing of a subject, a being who still has self-awareness. Hence there is a stronger will for domination in the domination of the resistance to be conquered than in the simple and straightforward suppression of this*

resistance – without being able to draw from that the conclusion that Freud wanted to dominate the world.

Is domination really what is at stake in Freud's experience? I always have reservations about lots of things which aren't specified in his way of going about things. His interventionism, in particular, I find surprising, if we compare it to some of the technical principles to which we now grant importance. But you'll find in this interventionism no satisfaction being gained from having won a victory over the patient's consciousness, in contradiction to what Hyppolite says, less, certainly, than in the modern techniques, which put all the emphasis on the resistances. In Freud we find a more nuanced attitude, that's to say, more humane.

He doesn't always define what is now called interpretation of defence, which is not, perhaps, the best way of putting it. But when all is said and done, interpretation of contents has for Freud the role of interpretation of defence.

You're right to allude to this, Z*. That is because that's for you. I will try and show you in what way the danger of a forcing of the subject through the analyst's intervention emerges. It's much more out in the open in so-called modern techniques – as one says in talking about analysis the way one talks about chess – than it ever was in Freud. And I don't believe that the theoretical promulgation of the notion of resistance can be used as a pretext for making this accusation against Freud, an accusation which goes radically against the liberating effect of his work and of his therapeutic activity.

I am not putting your opinions on trial, Z*. For this is well and truly your opinion. Certainly, one should show a spirit of scrutiny, of criticism, with respect to the founding works, but, in this form, it can only serve to increase the mystery, and not at all to throw light on it.

20 and 27 January 1954.

III

Resistance and the defences

MARGARET LITTLE'S TESTIMONY

FROM *EGO* TO *EGO*

REALITY AND FANTASY OF THE TRAUMA

HISTORY, THE LIVED AND THE RELIVED

Let us first congratulate Mannoni and Anzieu on their reports, which have the merit of showing us the controversial aspects of the question we are dealing with. As is appropriate to minds well-educated, but only recently initiated into, if not the application of analysis, at least its practice, there was in their reports something quite sharp, even polemical, which is always of value in revealing the problem's vividness.

A very delicate question has been raised, all the more delicate since, as I pointed out in my interruptions, it is very much a present concern for some of us.

A reproach has implicitly been levelled at Freud, as to his authoritarianism, alleged to be constitutive of his method from the beginning. That is paradoxical. If anything constitutes the originality of the analytic treatment, it is rather to have perceived at the beginning, right from the start, the problematical relation of the subject to himself. The real find, the discovery, in the sense I explained to you at the beginning of this year, is to have conjoined this relation with the meaning of symptoms.

It is the subject's refusal of this meaning that poses a problem for him. This meaning must not be revealed to him, it must be assumed by him. In this respect, psychoanalysis is a technique which respects the person – in the sense in which we understand it today, having realised that it had its price – not only respects it, but cannot function without respecting it. It would thus be paradoxical to place in the foreground the idea that analytical technique has as its aim to break down the subject's resistance. Which isn't to say that the problem doesn't ever arise.

Indeed, aren't we aware these days that an analyst doesn't make a single move in the treatment without teaching his students to be always asking themselves, in relation to the patient, the question – *What defence has he come up with now?*

This isn't really a policeman's approach, in the sense that it involves looking

for something hidden – that term should rather be reserved for the suspect phases of analysis in its archaic periods. Rather, they are always trying to find out what posture the subject could possibly take up, what find he could have made, in order to get himself into a position such that everything we might say to him will be ineffective. It would not be fair to say that they impute bad faith to the subject because *bad faith* is too much tied to implications of the order of knowledge, which are totally foreign to this state of mind. That would be too subtle by half. There is in all this the idea of the subject's fundamental ill will. All these features lead me to think that I am being accurate in calling this style of analysis inquisitorial.

1

Before going into my subject, I will take as an example Margaret Little's article on counter-transference, which appeared in the first number of the *International Journal of Psycho-analysis* for 1951.

This article takes its bearings from a manner of orienting technique which is pushed very far by a certain section of the English school. As you know, it leads to the view that the whole of the analysis must unfold in the *hic et nunc*. Everything is supposed to take place through grappling with the subject's intentions, here and now, in the session. That one catches glimpses of bits and pieces of his past is no doubt conceded, but it is thought that in the end it is in the trial – I was about to say the trial of psychological strength – within the treatment that the entire activity of the analyst is deployed.

And that really is the problem – the activity of the analyst. How does he act? What are the implications of what he does?

For the authors in question, for Margaret Little, nothing else matters but the recognition by the subject, *hic et nunc*, of the intentions of his discourse. And his intentions only ever have value in their implications *hic et nunc*, in the immediate exchange. The subject may well describe himself taking on the grocer or the hairdresser – in fact, he is bawling out the person he's talking to, that is to say the analyst.

There is some truth in that. The slightest experience of conjugal life will tell you that there is always an implicit demand of some sort in the fact that one spouse relates to the other what got his goat during the day, rather than the other way round. But it may also stem from a concern to inform the other of some incident worth knowing about. Both are true. It is a question of knowing on which aspect one should throw some light.

As the following story told by Margaret Little shows, things do sometimes go even further. Certain of its features are a bit confused, but everything points to the fact that it is a training analysis, or in any case, the analysis of someone whose area of interest is very close to psychoanalysis.

The analysand had occasion to make a radio broadcast on a topic that intensely interested the analyst himself – these things happen. It so happened that he gave this broadcast a few days after his mother's death. Now everything points to the fact that the mother in question plays an extremely important role in the patient's fixations. He is certainly very affected by this mourning, but he nonetheless fulfils his obligations in a particularly brilliant manner. The next session, he arrives in a state of stupor close to confusion. Not only is it impossible to get anything out of him, but what he does say is surprising in its lack of coordination. The analyst interprets boldly – *You are in this state because you think I greatly begrudge you your success on the radio the other day, with this topic which, as you know, personally interests me in the highest degree.* There we have it!

The rest of the account shows that it took a year for the subject to recover from this shock-interpretation, which hadn't failed to have some effect, since he had instantly recovered his spirits.

This shows you that the fact that the subject comes out of a confused state of mind following an intervention by the analyst by no means proves that it was effective in the strictly therapeutic, structuring sense of the word, namely that it was, in the analysis, true. On the contrary.

Margaret Little brought the subject back to a sense of the unity of his ego. Suddenly he tears himself out of the confusion in which he found himself, saying to himself – *Here is someone who points out to me that indeed everything is much of a muchness and that life goes on.* And he starts off, gets going again – the effect is instantaneous. It is impossible, in the analytic experience, to consider the subject's change of style as being the proof of the correctness of an interpretation. I consider the proof of the correctness of an interpretation to lie in the confirmatory material the subject supplies. And even that needs to be put more subtly.

After a year, the subject realises that his state of confusion was linked to the backlash of his reactions to mourning, which he had only been able to overcome by inverting them. I refer you at this point to the psychology of mourning, whose depressive side some of you are sufficiently familiar with.

Indeed, a radio-talk is produced in accordance with a very specific modality of speech, since it is addressed to a mass of invisible listeners by an invisible speaker. It may be said that, in the imagination of the speaker, it isn't necessarily addressed to those who listen to it, but equally to everyone, the living and the dead. The subject there enters into a relationship of conflict – he might regret that his mother was not able to be a witness to his triumph, but perhaps, at the same time, in the speech which he gave, to his invisible listeners, there was something that was intended for her.

However that may be, the nature of the subject's attitude is then clearly inverted, pseudo-manic, and its strict relation with the recent loss of his

mother, privileged object of his bonds of love, is quite clearly the source of the critical state in which he had arrived for the next session, after his exploit, after having accomplished, despite the unpropitious circumstances, and in a brilliant fashion, what he had set himself to do. Thus, Margaret Little, who is however far from having a critical attitude with respect to this style of intervention, herself testifies to the fact that an interpretation based on the intentional signification of the discursive act in the immediate present of the session is subject to all the relativities implied by the possible engagement of the analyst's *ego*.

In a word, the important thing is not that the analyst himself was mistaken and there's nothing in the slightest to indicate that the counter-transference is to be blamed for this interpretation, so clearly refuted by the rest of the treatment. Not only can we concede that the subject had been prey to the feelings that the analyst imputed to him, it is even extremely probable. That they led the analyst into giving the interpretation he did, isn't something dangerous in itself. If the only analysing subject, the analyst, had even felt some jealousy, it is up to him to take it into account in an appropriate manner, to be guided by it as by an extra needle on the dial. No one has ever said that the analyst should never have feelings towards his patient. But he must know not only not to give in to them, to keep them in their place, but how to make adequate use of them in his technique.

In this particular instance, it is because the analyst thought he should look first in the *hic et nunc* for the reason for the patient's attitude that he found it in something which, without a shadow of a doubt, really existed in the intersubjective field shared by the two characters. He was well placed to recognise it, because he felt some hostility, or at the very least irritation in connection with the patient's success. What is serious is to have believed himself authorised by a certain technique to make use of it straightaway and in a direct manner.

What do I contrast this to? I will now try and show you.

The analyst here believes himself authorised to offer what I will call an interpretation from *ego* to *ego*, or from equal to equal – allow me the play on words – in other words, an interpretation whose foundation and mechanism cannot in any way be distinguished from that of projection.

When I say projection, I am not saying erroneous projection. Let there be no mistake about what I'm explaining to you. Before I became an analyst, I had – thanks to what little psychological gifts I have – taken a formula as the principle of the little compass with which I appraised some situations. I was quite happy to say to myself – *Feelings are always reciprocated*. It is absolutely true, appearances notwithstanding. As soon as you put two subjects together – I say two, not three – feelings are always reciprocated.

This explains why the analyst was justified in thinking that given that he had

these particular feelings, corresponding feelings could be elicited in the other. The proof of it is in their wholehearted acceptance by the other. All that would be necessary is for the analyst to tell him – *You are hostile, because you think that I am irritated with you* – and the feeling would be elicited. The feeling then was already there, virtually, since all that was required for it to exist was to light the blue touch-paper.

The subject was perfectly justified in accepting Margaret Little's interpretation, for the simple reason that, in a relationship as intimate as that which exists between analysand and analyst, he was sufficiently aware of the analyst's feelings to be induced into something symmetrical.

The question is to know whether this way of understanding the analysis of defences doesn't land us with a technique which almost inevitably generates a specific sort of error, an error which in fact isn't one, something prior to truth and falsity. There are interpretations which are so to the point and so true, so necessarily to the point and true, that one cannot say if they do or do not speak to a truth. Whichever way they will be verified.

It is best to abstain from offering this interpretation of the defence, which I will call from *ego* to *ego*, whatever value it may eventually have. In the interpretation of defences, there should always be at least a third term.

In fact, you need more than that, and I hope to be able to prove it to you. But I am only opening up the problem today.

2

It is late. Which will not allow us to go as far as I would have liked into the problem of the relation between resistance and the defences. Nevertheless I would like to give you some sense of where we're heading.

After having listened to Mannoni's and Anzieu's reports, and after having shown you the risks run by a particular analytic technique, I think it necessary to lay down some guidelines.

It is in *The Interpretation of Dreams* that Freud offered the first definition, in relation to analysis, of the notion of resistance, in Chapter Seven; Section One. There is this decisive sentence – *Was immer die Fortsetzung der Arbeit stört ist ein Widerstand* – which means – *Everything which destroys/suspends/changes the continuation of the work* – symptoms are not at issue here, what is is the analytic work, the cure, the *Behandlung*, as we say when dealing with an object undergoing certain processes – *Everything which destroys the continuation of the work is a resistance.*[1]

This has been unhappily translated into French as – *Tout obstacle à l'interprétation provient de la résistance psychique.*[2] I am pointing this out to you,

[1] SE V 517: 'whatever interrupts the progress of analytic work is a resistance.'

[2] 'Every obstacle to interpretation stems from psychical resistance.'

because it doesn't make life easy for those who can only go by the very congenial translation of the brave M. Meyerson. And the whole of the preceding paragraph is translated in the same vein. This should instil in you a healthy suspicion of a number of translations of Freud. In the German edition a note is added to the sentence quoted, which discusses the following point – if the patient's father dies, is it a resistance? I am not going to tell you what conclusion Freud reaches, but you see that this note shows how broadly the question of resistance is conceived. Well, this note is omitted in the French edition.

Everything which suspends/destroys/interrupts/the continuity – Fortsetzung can even be translated like that – *of the cure is a resistance*. You must start from texts such as these, mull them over a bit, sift them and see where it gets you.

What does all this add up to? What is at issue is the continuation of the treatment, of the work. In order to make it perfectly unambiguous, Freud did not say *Behandlung*, which could mean *the cure*. No, what is at issue is work, *Arbeit*, which can be defined by its form, as the verbal association determined by the rule which he has just mentioned, the fundamental rule of free association. Now, this work, since we are dealing with the analysis of dreams, is quite clearly the revelation of the unconscious.

This will allow us to consider a certain number of problems, in particular the one which Anzieu mentioned just now – this resistance, where does it come from? We've seen that none of the texts in the *Studien über Hysterie* allow one to suppose that, as such, it comes from the ego. Nor does anything in the *Traumdeutung* indicate that it comes from the secondary process – whose introduction is such an important stage in the development of Freud's thought. When we get to the years around 1915 when Freud published *Die Verdrängung*, the first of those studies to appear amongst those which were eventually to be regrouped into the metapsychological writings, resistance is indeed conceived of as something produced on the side of consciousness, but whose identity is essentially determined by its distance, *Entfernung*, from what was originally repressed. The relation then of resistance to the contents of the unconscious itself is in this instance still extremely tangible. It will remain so right up to a period later than that of this article, which belongs to the middle period of Freud's development.

What is it, in the end, which has been primally repressed, from *The Interpretation of Dreams* up to this period which I call intermediary? It is still, as always, the past. A past which must be reinstated, and whose ambiguity we cannot but recall once again, no less than the problems that it raises as to its definition, its nature and its function.

This period is the same as that of the *Wolfman*, in which Freud raises the question, what is a trauma? He realises that trauma is an extremely ambiguous concept, since it would seem that, according to all the clinical evidence, its fantasy-aspect is infinitely more important than its event-aspect. Whence, the

event shifts into the background in the order of subjective references. In contrast, the dating of the trauma remains for him a problem that he sees fit to retain quite, if I may put it this way, pig-headedly, as I reminded those of you who followed my course on the subject of the Wolfman. Who will ever know what he saw? But whether he saw it or not, he can only have seen it on a specific date, he cannot have seen it were it only one year later. I don't think I am being unfaithful to Freud's line of thought – all you need is to know how to read him, it's written down in black and white – by saying that it is only the perspective of history and of recognition that allows a definition of what counts for the subject.

For those of you who aren't familiar with this dialectic which I have already developed at great length, I would like to offer a certain number of basic concepts. One should always work at the level of the alphabet. I am therefore going to take an example which will make you understand clearly the questions raised by recognition, and which will keep you from drowning it in notions as confused as those of memory and recollection. If *Erlebnis*, in German, can still have a meaning, the French notion of a memory that is lived or not lived leads to all sorts of ambiguities. I am going to tell you a little story.

I wake up in the morning with my curtain, like Semiramis, and I open one eye. I don't see this curtain every morning because it's the curtain of my house in the country, where I go only every week or so, and among the lines fomented by the fringe of the curtain I notice, once again – I say once again, I have only ever seen it once like that in the past – the silhouette of a face, all at once, sharp-edged, caricatured and old-fashioned, which for me is vaguely like the face of an eighteenth-century marquis. This is one of those completely stupid fabulations to which the mind lends itself when waking, produced as a result of a gestalt-like crystallisation, as one would say these days, in speaking of the recognition of a figure one has known for a long time.

The same thing could have happened with a spot on the wall. That's why I can say that the curtain hasn't moved an inch since precisely eight days before. A week ago, on waking up, I had seen the same thing. I had, of course, completely forgotten it. But it is because of that that I know that the curtain hasn't moved. It is still there, in exactly the same position.

This is only a fable, because it takes place on the imaginary plane, although it wouldn't be difficult to put the symbolic coordinates in place. The bits of nonsense – the eighteenth-century marquis, etc. – play a very important part in it, because if I didn't have a certain number of fantasies on the subject of what the profile represents, I wouldn't have recognised it in the fringe of my curtain. But let's leave that.

Let us see what this implies on the plane of recognition. The fact that it really was like that eight days previously is linked to the phenomenon of recognition in the present.

This is exactly the expression that Freud uses in the *Studien über Hysterie*. He recounts having undertaken, at this period, several studies on memory, and he relates the memory evoked, the recognition, to the actual and present-day force which lends it, not specifically its weight and its density, but quite simply its possibility.[3]

That is how Freud proceeds. When he doesn't know which way to turn to elicit the reconstruction of the subject, he takes hold of him then and there, with the pressure of the hands on the forehead, and enumerates all the years, all the months, all the weeks, even all the days, naming them one by one – Tuesday the 17th, Wednesday the 18th, etc. He trusts sufficiently in the subject's implicit structuration by what has since been defined as *socialised time*, to think that, when his enumeration reaches the point at which the hand of the clock truly intersects with the critical moment of the subject, the latter will say – *Oh, yes, that's right, I do remember something for that day*. Note that I am not saying that it works. It is Freud who assures us that it did work.

Have you got hold of the implication of what I am saying to you? The subject's centre of gravity is this present synthesis of the past which we call history. And it is in that that we trust when it is a matter of keeping the work going. That is what is presupposed by analysis from its beginnings. Henceforth, there are no grounds on which to prove that it is refuted at its end. In truth, if it isn't like that it is absolutely impossible to see anything novel in analysis.

This is a first phase. Is it enough?

No, of course it isn't enough. The subject's resistance is no doubt in action on this plane, but it manifests itself in an odd manner which deserves to be explored and in strictly specific instances.

There is one case in which Freud knew the whole story – the mother had told him it. So he tells it to the subject, by saying to her – *Here is what happened, this is what was done to you*. On each occasion, the patient, a hysteric, responded with a little hysterical crisis, a replica of the characteristic crisis. She listened and replied, in her own way, which was her symptom. Which raises several small problems, and this one in particular – is it a resistance? It is a question that I open up for today.

I would like to conclude with the following remark. At the end of the *Studien über Hysterie*, Freud defines the pathogenic nucleus as what is being sought, but which repels the discourse – what discourse shuns. Resistance is the inflexion the discourse adopts on approaching the nucleus. From then on, we will only be able to resolve the question of resistance by deepening our understanding of what is the meaning of this discourse. We have already said it, it is a historical discourse.

Don't let's forget what analytic technique is in its beginning – a hypnotic

[3] See (1895d) GW I 169–72; SE II 111–14.

technique. In hypnotism, the subject sustains this historical discourse. He even sustains it in a particularly striking, dramatised manner, which implicates the presence of the listener. Once out of this hypnotised state, the subject remembers nothing of this discourse. Why is this precisely the point of entry into the technique of analysis? Because the reviviscence of the trauma is revealed here, in itself, immediately, if not in a permanent, therapeutic manner. It turns out that a discourse held like that, by someone who can say *me* [*moi*], concerns the subject.

It still is ambiguous to speak of the lived, relived character of the trauma in the second, hysterical state. It is not on account of the discourse having been dramatised and presented in a pathetic manner that the word *relived* does the trick. What does it mean to say that the subject assumes his own lived experience?

You see that I am bringing the question to bear at the point where this relived is at its most ambiguous, namely in the subject's second state. But isn't it exactly the same at every level of analytic experience? At every turn we come upon the question – what is the meaning of this discourse which we force the subject to set up within the parenthesis of the fundamental rule. This rule tells him – *When all is said and done, your discourse has no importance.* As long as he surrenders himself to this exercise, he already only half believes in his discourse, since he knows himself to be in the cross-fire of our interpretation at every moment. So the question then becomes – *What is the subject of the discourse?*

That is where we will start off again next time, and we'll try to discuss the meaning and importance of resistance in relation to these fundamental problems.

27 January 1954

IV

The ego and the other

RESISTANCE AND TRANSFERENCE
THE FEELING OF PRESENCE
VERWERFUNG ≠ *VERDRÄNGUNG*
MEDIATION AND REVELATION
THE INFLECTIONS OF SPEECH

Last time we began to ask ourselves about the nature of resistance.

You did get a sense of the ambiguity, and not only the complexity, in our approach to this phenomenon of resistance. Several of Freud's formulations seem to indicate that resistance stems from what is to be revealed, that is to say from the repressed, from the *verdrängt* or again from the *unterdrückt*.

The early translators rendered *unterdrückt* by *étouffé* [stifled] – that is really feeble. Are *verdrängt* and *unterdrückt* the same thing? We are not going to go into these points of detail. We'll only do that when we have begun to see differences between these phenomena grounded in our experience.

Today I want to lead you, in the Papers on Technique, to one of these points which offers some perspective. Before using the vocabulary, what one has to do is to try to understand, and, to this end, to get oneself into a position in which things fall into place.

At the clinical consultation on Friday, I gave you advance notice of the reading of an important text, and I am going to try to keep to my promise.

Right at the heart of the collection of these so-called technical papers, there is a text which is called 'The dynamics of transference'. Like all the texts in this collection, one cannot say that we have cause to be entirely satisfied with its translation. There are some peculiar inaccuracies, which go right to the limit of impropriety. Some of them are astonishing. They all tend in the same direction, which is to efface the sharp edges of the text. For those who know German, I cannot recommend referring to the original text too much. I warn you of a break in the translation, a full stop inserted in the penultimate line, which separates off a very small sentence which seems to be there for no reason, one knows not why – *For when all is said and done, it is impossible to destroy anyone* in absentia *or* in effigie.[1] In the German text, we find – . . . *because one should recall that no one can be killed* in absentia *or* in effigie. It is linked to the preceding

[1] See GW VIII 374; Stud Erg 167–8; SE XII 108.

phrase. Isolated, the phrase cannot be understood, whereas Freud's text is perfectly articulated.

The passage from this article I mentioned to you I'll now read. You'll find it on page fifty-five of the French translation. It is directly linked with this important passage from the *Studien* that I reminded you of, which deals with the resistance met with by approximation[2] in the *radial direction* as Freud puts it, of the subject's discourse, when it finds itself closer to the deep formation which Freud calls the *pathogenic nucleus*.

Let us look[3] *at a pathogenic complex which is sometimes very obvious and sometimes almost imperceptible* . . . I would rather translate – *either apparent as a symptom, or impossible to apprehend, non-manifest* – because it is a question of the way in which the complex is translated, and it is the translation of the complex that is said to be apparent or imperceptible. It isn't the same thing to say that it, the complex, is. In the French translation there's a displacement which is enough to produce a kind of wavering. I'll continue – . . . *from its manifestation in the conscious right down to its roots in the unconscious, we soon reach a region where the resistance makes itself felt so clearly that the association which then emerges bears its mark* – of this resistance – *and appears to us as a compromise between the requirements of this resistance and that of the work of investigation*. It is not quite *the association which emerges*, it is the *nächste Einfall*, the closest, the next association, but in the end the meaning is retained. *Experience* – here's the important point – *shows that it is at this point that transference emerges. When something from amongst the elements of the complex (in the latter's contents) is suitable for being transferred on to the doctor's person, transference takes place, furnishes the next idea and manifests itself in the form of a resistance, in the cessation of associations for example. Similar experiences teach us that the transference-idea is arrived at in preference to all other possible associations capable of sliding into consciousness, precisely because it satisfies the resistance*. The last part of the sentence is underlined by Freud. *A fact of this sort is replicated on an incalculable number of occasions in the course of a psychoanalysis. Every time that one gets close to a pathogenic complex it is first of all the part of the complex capable of transference that finds itself forced towards consciousness and which the patient persists in defending with the greatest tenacity.*

The elements of this paragraph which should be highlighted are the following. First, *we soon reach a region where the resistance makes itself clearly felt*. This resistance stems from the very process of the discourse, from its approximation,[2] if I may say. Secondly, *experience shows that it is at this point that the transference emerges*. Thirdly, transference is produced *precisely because*

[2] The sense of approximation Lacan is using here is close to that used in mathematics (e.g. Archimedes) – a method that recursively approximates to its desired end, by repeated application of a rule.

[3] In the passage that follows I give a literal translation of the French translation in order to make clear the conceptual points that Lacan draws out of problems of translation. See GW VIII 368; Stud Erg 163; SE XII 103.

it satisfies the resistance. Fourthly, *a fact of this sort is replicated on an incalculable number of occasions in the course of a psychoanalysis.* It really is a question of a palpable phenomenon in the analysis. And that part of the complex which manifested itself in the form of transference finds itself *forced towards consciousness at this particular instant. The patient persists in defending it with the greatest tenacity.*

There's a note added here which throws the phenomenon in question into relief, a phenomenon which is clearly observable, sometimes in an extraordinary purity. This note intersects with a point emerging from another of Freud's texts – *When the patient is silent, there is every chance that this drying up of his discourse is due to some thought relating to the analyst.*[4]

Employing a not uncommon technical maneouvre, but one which nonetheless we have taught our students to curb, to refrain from, this translates itself as a question of the sort – *Doubtless you are having some thought that relates to me?* Sometimes the patient's discourse is crystallised by this inquiry into some remarks concerning the analyst's style or face, or his furniture, or the way in which the analyst welcomed him that day, etc. This manoeuvre does have a rationale. Something like this can be on the patient's mind at the time and in thus focussing his associations, one can extract a whole variety of things from him. But sometimes one comes across an infinitely purer phenomenon.

Just when he seems ready to come out with something more authentic, more to the point than he has ever managed to come up with up to then, the subject, in some cases, breaks off, and utters a statement, which might be the following – *I am aware all of a sudden of the fact of your presence.*

That is something that has happened to me more than once and which analysts can easily testify to. The phenomenon occurs in connection with the concrete manifestation of resistance as it cuts into the very fabric of our experience in relation to transference. If it takes on a selective value, it's because the subject himself then feels something like a sharp bend, a sudden turn which causes him to pass from one slope of the discourse to the other, from one aspect of the function of speech to another.

I wanted to put this sharply focussed phenomenon before you straightaway, since it clarifies my remarks today. It is the point which will allow us to begin raising our questions again.

Before pursuing this line, I want to stay for a moment with Freud's text so as to show you clearly the extent to which what I am talking about is the same thing as what he is talking about. For a moment, you should stand back from the idea that resistance is all of a piece with the notion that the unconscious is, in a given subject, at a given moment, contained and, as one says, repressed. Whatever the extension that we may eventually give to the term resistance in

[4] See GW VIII 367; Stud Erg 161; SE XII 101.

its relation to the totality of the defences, resistance is a phenomenon which Freud localised in the analytic experience.

It is for this reason that the little note appended to the passage that I read to you is important – Freud there spells it out one word at a time.

However, one shouldn't conclude on the pathogenic importance . . . – that's exactly what I am telling you, it is not a question of the conception we construct for ourselves after the event, concerning what motivated, in the deep sense of the term, the stages of the subject's development – *. . . excessively great pathogenic importance of the element chosen with a view to the transference-resistance. If in the course of a battle there is a particularly embittered struggle over the possession of some little church or some individual farm, there is no need to suppose that the church is a national shrine, perhaps, or that the house shelters the army's pay-chest. The value of the object may be a purely tactical one and may perhaps emerge only in this one battle.*

It is within the movement in which the subject acknowledges himself that a phenomenon which is resistance appears. When this resistance becomes too great, the transference emerges.

It's true that the text doesn't say a *transference-phenomenon*. If Freud had wanted to say *a transference-phenomenon appears*, he would have done so. The proof of this distinction's significance is to be found at the end of the article. In the last sentence, the one which starts, *Let us confess that nothing in analysis is more difficult . . .*, the French translation gives *vaincre les résistances* [*conquer the resistances*], whereas the text is *die Bezwingung der Übertragungsphänomene*, that is to say, *the forcing of the transference-phenomena*.[5] I mention this passage to show you that *Übertragungsphänomene* belongs to Freud's vocabulary. Why, however, has it been translated as *resistance*? It isn't a mark of great learning, nor of great understanding.

Freud wrote that it is exactly at that point that something emerges which is not the phenomenon of transference itself, but a phenomenon with an essential relation to it.

As for the rest, what is at issue throughout this article is the dynamics of transference. I am not going to take up in their entirety all the questions it raises, because they touch on the specificity of transference to analysis, on the fact that there the transference isn't like it is everywhere else, but rather *that it there has a quite particular function*. I advise you to read this article. I bring it up here solely as an aid to our study of resistance. Nonetheless, it is, as you'll see, the pivotal point for what's at issue in the dynamics of transference.

What can this teach us about the nature of resistance? It allows us to reply to the question, *who is speaking*? and hence to know what the reconquest, the rediscovery of the unconscious might mean.

[5] GW VIII 374; Stud Erg 167–8; SE XII 108.

We have raised the question as to the meaning of memory [*mémoire*], rememoration, the technique of rememoration, as to the meaning of free association in as much as it allows us to arrive at a formulation of the subject's history. But what does the subject become? In the course of his progress, is it always the same subject at issue?

When confronted by this phenomenon, we get hold of a knot in this progress, a connection, a primary pressure, or rather, strictly speaking, a resistance. At a certain point in this resistance, we see what Freud calls the transference being produced, that is to say in this context the actualisation of the analyst's person. In extracting it from my experience, I told you just now that at the most sensitive and, it seems to me, significant point of the phenomenon, the subject experiences it as an abrupt perception of something which isn't very easy to define – presence.

It isn't a feeling that we have all the time. To be sure, we are influenced by all sorts of presences, and our world only possesses its consistency, its density, its lived stability, because, in some way, we take account of these presences, but we do not realise them as such. You really can sense that it is a feeling which I'd say we are always trying to efface from life. It wouldn't be easy to live if, at every moment, we had the feeling of presence, with all the mystery that that implies. It is a mystery from which we distance ourselves, and to which we are, in a word, inured.

I think that it is something which we cannot dwell on for too long. And we are going to try to find other ways of getting at it, because what Freud teaches us, the trusty analytic method, consists in always rediscovering the same connection, the same relation, the same schema, to be found simultaneously in forms of experience, of behaviour, and for that matter, within the analytic relationship.

Our aim is to establish a perspective, a perception in depth, of several planes. Notions like the id and the ego, which particular techniques have accustomed us to assuming in a wholesale manner, are perhaps not simply a contrasted pair. There we have to set up a stereoscope that is a little more complicated.

For those of you who came to my commentary on the *Wolfman* – already a long time back now, a year and a half ago – I'd like to remind you of certain particularly striking features of this text.

Just as he gets to the question of his patient's castration complex, a question which has an extremely specific function in this subject's structuration, Freud sets out the following problem. As soon as the fear of castration comes up for this subject, symptoms appear, located on a plane we commonly call the anal, since they are intestinal. Now, we interpret all of these symptoms according to the register of the anal conception of sexual intercourse, we regard them as attesting to a certain phase of infantile sexual theory. By what right? Isn't the

subject raised to a level of genital structure from the very fact that castration has come into play? What is Freud's explanation?

Even though the subject, Freud says, has arrived at an initial infantile maturation, or pre-maturation, and even though he was mature enough to secure, at least partially, a more specifically genital structuration of his parent's relationship, he had refused the homosexual position allotted to him in this relation, he didn't realise, make real the Oedipal situation, he refused, rejected – the German word is *verwirft* – everything pertaining to the plane of genital realisation. He turned back to his previous version[6] of this affective relation, he retired into the positions of the anal theory of sexuality.

This is not even a repression, in the sense in which an element which would have been realised on a certain plane is repulsed. Repression, he says on page 111,[7] is something else – *Eine Verdrängung ist etwas anderes als eine Verwerfung*. In the French translation – the work of people whom intimacy with Freud should have rendered a little more enlightened – but doubtless it is not enough to have borne the relic of an eminent person to be authorised to become his guardian – the translation is – *a repression is something other than a judgement which rejects and chooses* [*un refoulement est autre chose qu'un jugement qui rejette et choisit*]. Why translate *Verwerfung* thus? I admit that it's difficult, but the French language . . .

M. Hyppolite: *Rejection* [*rejet*]?

Yes, rejection. Or, on occasion, *refusal* [*refus*].[8] Why suddenly introduce *a judgement* into it, in a place where no trace of *Urteil* is to be found? What's there is *Verwerfung*. Three pages further on, on the eleventh line, after elaborating on the consequences of this structure, Freud concludes by saying – *Kein Urteil über seine* . . .[9] It's the first time that he brings in *Urteil*, to round off the passage. But, here, there isn't any 'no judgement has been brought to bear on the existence of the problem of castration – *Aber es war so*, but it was the same, *als ob sie nicht*, as if it didn't exist.

This important articulation shows us that originally, for repression to be possible, there must be a beyond of repression, something final, already primitively constituted, an initial nucleus of the repressed, which not only is unacknowledged, but which, for not being formulated, is literally *as if it didn't exist* – I'm just following what Freud says. And nevertheless, in a certain sense, it is somewhere, since, as Freud everywhere tells us, it is the centre of attraction, calling up all the subsequent repressions.

I'd say that that is the very essence of the Freudian discovery.

[6] '*vérification*'.

[7] GW XII 111, Stud VIII 194; SE XVII 79–80.

[8] Lacan's translation of *Verwerfung* here, and throughout Seminar I, is *rejet* or *refus*, the verb form being *rejeté*.

[9] GW XII 115; Stud VIII 198; SE XVII 84.

To explain how a repression of this or that sort is produced, of an hysterical or obsessional type, there is actually no need to have recourse to an innate predisposition. Freud on occasion allows it as a broad general framework, but never as a principle. Read *Bemerkungen über Neurosen*, the second article, from 1896, on the neuroses of defence.[10]

The forms that repression takes on are brought on by this initial nucleus, which Freud then attributes to a certain experience, which he calls the original traumatic experience. In what follows we will take up the question of what *trauma* means, a notion which had to be relativised, but do hang on to the idea that the primitive nucleus is to be found at another level from that of the derivatives of repression.[11] It is their foundation and support.

In the structure of what happened to the Wolfman, the *Verwerfung* of the realisation of genital experience is a quite specific moment, which Freud himself distinguishes from all the others. The strange thing is, what is there, excluded from the subject's history, and which he is incapable of saying, had to be forced out by Freud, in order to see the back of it. It's only then that the repeated experience of his infantile dream took on its meaning, and made possible, not the reliving, but the direct reconstruction of the subject's history.

I'll leave the theme of the *Wolfman* hanging for the moment in order to look at things from another angle. Let's take up Chapter Seven of the *Traumdeutung*, devoted to the dream processes, *Traumvorgänge*.

Freud starts by summarising everything which had been brought out by his argument in the course of his book.

The fifth part of the chapter starts off with this splendid sentence – *Elements in this complicated whole which are in fact simultaneous can only be represented successively in my description of them*, – since he is once again going over everything he has explained about the dream – *while, in putting forward each point, I must avoid appearing to anticipate the grounds on which it is based: difficulties such as these it is beyond my strength to master.*[12]

This sentence shows clearly the very difficulties that I am also having here, in ceaselessly taking up that problem which is always to the forefront in our experience, for one must succeed somehow in a variety of ways in recreating it every time from a new perspective. Freud tells us that one must play dumb each time.

The movement of the argument in this chapter brings us face to face with

[10] See '*Weitere Bemerkungen über die Abwehr-Neuropsychosen*' (1896b) GW I 379–403; SE III 162–85.

[11] *Ibid.* SE III 166 n2, 172, 173.

[12] '*Il est bien difficile de rendre par la description d'une succession la simultanéité d'un processus compliqué, et en même temps de paraître aborder chaque nouvel exposé sans idée préconçue.*' – '*Die Gleichzeitigkeit eines so komplizierten Zusammenhangs durch ein Nacheinander in der Beschreibung wiederzugeben und dabei bei jeder Aufstellung voraussetzungslos zu erscheinen will meinen Kräften zu schwer werden.*' – GW II/III 593; Stud II 559. See SE V 588.

something truly very peculiar. Freud lists all the objections one can make as to the validity of the memory of the dream. What is the dream? Is the subject's reconstitution of it accurate? What guarantee do we have that a later verbalisation isn't mixed in with it? Isn't every dream a thing of the moment, to which the subject's speech gives a history? Freud sets aside all these objections, and shows that they are groundless. And he does so by underlining the following, which is quite peculiar, that the more uncertain the text that the subject gives us is, the more it is meaningful. It is in the very doubt that the subject casts on certain bits of the dream that Freud, who listens to it, who expects it, who is there in order to reveal its meaning, clearly recognises what is important. Because the subject doubts, one must be certain.

But as the chapter progresses, the procedure is pared down to a point such that, at the limit, the most significant dream would be the dream that has been completely forgotten, one about which the subject couldn't say anything. That is more or less what Freud writes – *It is often possible by means of analysis to restore all that has been lost by the forgetting of the dream's content; at least, in quite a number of cases one can reconstruct from a single remaining fragment, not, it is true, the dream – which is in any case a matter of no importance – but all the dream-thoughts.*[13] *A single remaining fragment* [*Quelques bribes*] – that's exactly what I've been telling you, there's nothing left of the dream.

What else, besides, interests Freud? Here, we come on *all the dream-thoughts*.

For those who have done psychology, there is nothing more difficult to deal with than the term 'thought'. And as we have done psychology, these thoughts are, for us, as people used to thinking, what we have in our heads all the time.

But we are sufficiently enlightened by the whole of the *Traumdeutung* to realise that these *dream-thoughts* are not perhaps what one thinks they are when one studies the phenomenology of thought, thought without or with images, etc. These aren't what are usually called thoughts, since what is always involved is a desire.

God knows that we have learnt in the course of our research to realise that this desire runs away, appearing and disappearing before our eyes, like the slipper in a game of now you see it, now you don't. In fact, we don't always know if it should be located on the side of the unconscious or on that of the conscious. And whose desire anyway? and above all from what lack?

Freud illustrates what he means with an example, in a little note that he takes from the *Introductory Lectures*.[14]

A woman patient, who is both sceptical about and interested in him, Freud, tells him a fairly long dream, in the course of which, she says, some people told her about his book on *Witz*, and spoke highly of it. All this seems to lead nowhere. Then something else comes up, and the only scrap that remains of the

[13] SE V 517.

[14] Lecture XII; see GW II/III 520–1; Stud II 496; SE V 516–7.

dream is this – *channel*. Perhaps some other book where this word occurs, something in which *channel* is involved . . . she doesn't know, it's quite obscure.

So we are left with *channel*, and we don't know what it relates to, nor from whence it came, nor where it is going. Well, this is what is most interesting, he says, this thing which is only a tiny scrap, surrounded by an aura of uncertainty.

And what does it lead to? The next day, not the very same day, she recounts how she has an idea which relates to *channel*. It is a witticism. On a crossing from Dover to Calais, an Englishman and a Frenchman. In the course of conversation, the Englishman quotes the well-known dictum – *De sublime au ridicule, il n'y a qu'un pas*. And the Frenchman, gallantly, replies – *Oui, le Pas-de-Calais*, which is being particularly gracious to his fellow conversationalist. Now, the *Pas-de-Calais* is the channel of *la Manche*, the English Channel. We thus come upon the channel again, and what else, by the same token? Pay strict attention, because this has the same function as the emerging of presence in the moment of resistance. The sceptical patient had previously deliberated at length on the merits of Freud's theory of jokes. After her discussion, at the moment in which her discourse hesitates and is directionless, exactly the same phenomenon appears – just as Mannoni put it the other day, in what seemed to me a most happy way, because he was speaking as a midwife, *resistance makes itself felt in the guise of transference*.

Du sublime au ridicule, il n'y a qu'un pas – that is the point by which the dream hangs on the listener, because that is meant for Freud.

Thus, *channel*, it wasn't a lot, but after the associations, it's indisputable.

I would like to use some other examples.

God knows that Freud is careful in the grouping of facts, and it is not by chance that things are brought together in specific chapters. For example, phenomena which belong very specifically to the order of language appear in the dream just when it takes a certain direction. The subject quite consciously makes a linguistic mistake. In the dream, the subject knows that it's a linguistic mistake since someone intervenes in it to correct it. At a critical point, then, one finds an adaptation which is carried out poorly, and whose function is split before our eyes. But let's leave this to one side for the moment.

Let us turn our attention once again – I picked it out this morning, a little at random – to that celebrated example which Freud published as early as 1898 in his first chapter of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. Regarding the forgetting of names, Freud makes use of the difficulty he once had, during a discussion with a travelling companion, of bringing to mind the name of the author of the celebrated fresco in the cathedral at Orvieto, a vast composition depicting the phenomena expected at the end of the world and centred around the apparition of the Antichrist. The fresco's author is Signorelli, and Freud doesn't manage to recover the name. Others come to mind – it's that one, no it

isn't – *Botticelli, Boltraffio* . . ., he doesn't manage to recover *Signorelli*.

He gets to it in the end thanks to an analytic technique. For this little phenomenon doesn't come out of nowhere, it's ensconced in the text of a conversation. At the time they are travelling from Ragusa towards the Dalmation interior, and they are roughly at the limit of the Austrian empire, in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This word *Bosnia* gives rise to a certain number of anecdotes, as does *Herzegovina*. Then some remarks follow about a particularly endearing inclination of the Muslim clientele, which is, from a certain point of view, primitive, and which here attests to an extraordinary sense of propriety. When a doctor brings particularly bad news, of an incurable disease – Freud's interlocutor seems in fact to be a doctor practicing in the area – these people allow themselves to give vent to a certain hostility. So they immediately appeal to him, in saying – *Herr, what is there to be said? If he could be saved, I know you would have saved him.*[15] They are confronted with a fact which has to be accepted, whence their measured, courteous, respectful attitude to the doctor, the *Herr*, as he is called in German. All of this provides the background against which the rest of the conversation proceeds, punctuated by the meaningful forgetting which presents Freud with his problem.

Freud indicates that he did indeed take a full part in the conversation, but at a certain point, his attention wandered away – even while he was speaking, he was thinking of something else, to which this medical story was leading him.

On the one hand, he turned over in his mind the value that patients, especially Muslims, attach to everything concerned with the sexual functions. A patient who consulted him about a disturbance of his sexual potency had quite literally said to him – *If one no longer has that, life isn't worth living*. On the other hand, he remembered having learnt, in one of the places he had stayed, of the death of one of his patients, whom he had cared for for a very long time, something one doesn't come to hear of, he said, without a certain shock. He hadn't wanted to express these thoughts about the high evaluation of sexual activities, because he wasn't very sure of his interlocutor. And then, he wasn't happy to let his thoughts dwell on the subject of this patient's death. But in thinking about all this, he had withdrawn his attention from what he was in the middle of saying.

In his text Freud draws up a very pretty little picture – go look at the German edition – on which he writes all the names – *Botticelli, Boltraffio, Herzegovinia, Signorelli* – and at the bottom the repressed thoughts, the sound *Herr* and the question. The result is what is left. The word *Signor* had been called up by the *Herr* of these ever so polite Muslims, *Traffio* had been called up by the fact that that is where he had received the shock of the bad news about his patient. What he was able to rediscover, at the moment when his discourse was searching out

[15] GW IV 7; SE VI 3.

the author of the Fresco at Orvieto, was what was still available, after a certain number of root elements had been recalled by what he calls *the repressed*, that is to say the ideas concerning the sexual stories of the Muslims, and the theme of death.

What does this mean? The repressed wasn't as repressed as all that, although he hadn't spoken to his travelling companion about it, he presents us with it straightaway in his text. But everything happens, in effect, as if these words – one can properly speak of words even if these vocables are parts of words – were those parts of the discourse that Freud truly had to offer to his interlocutor. He didn't say it, even though he had started to. That[16] is what interested him, that is what he was ready to say, and because he didn't say it, what stayed with him, in the rest of his intercourse with this interlocutor, was the debris, the pieces, the scraps of this speech.

Don't you see here to what extent this phenomenon, which takes place at the level of reality, is complementary to what takes place at the level of the dream? What we are witnessing is the emerging of a veridical speech.

God knows that it can reverberate a great deal, this veridical speech. What is at issue? – if not the absolute, namely death, which is present in it, and which Freud tells us that he preferred, and not only on account of his interlocutor, not to confront too closely. God also knows that the problem of death is experienced by the doctor as a problem of mastery. Now, the doctor in question, Freud, like the other, lost – it's always like that that we feel the loss of a patient, above all when we have cared for him for a long time.

So what beheads *Signorelli?* Everything is indeed focussed on the first part of this name, and on its semantic reverberations. It is in as much as speech, that speech which might reveal the deepest secret of Freud's being, isn't spoken, that all Freud can do is hang on to the other with the scraps of this speech. Only debris is left. That is the phenomenon of forgetting, literally made manifest by the degradation of speech in its relation to the other.

Now – this is what I've been wanting to get at with these examples – it is in so far as the confession of being doesn't come to term that speech runs entirely along the slope by which it hooks on to the other.

Hooking on to the other is not alien, if I can put it this way, to the essence of speech. Without doubt, speech is mediation, mediation between subject and other, and it implicates the coming into being of the other in this very mediation. An essential element of the coming into being of the other is the capacity of speech to unite us to him. This is above all what I have taught you up to now, because this is the dimension within which we are always moving.

But there is another side to speech – revelation.

Revelation, and not expression – the unconscious is not expressed, except by

[16] *ça* in the French (play on *ça* = *Es* = *id*).

deformation, *Entstellung*, distortion, transportation. This summer I wrote *The Function and Field of Speech and Language*, intentionally without using the term 'expression', because the whole of Freud's work unfolds in the dimension of revelation, and not of expression. Revelation is the ultimate source of what we are searching for in the analytic experience.

Resistance is produced at the moment when the speech of revelation is not said, when – as Sterba puts it in a most bizarre manner at the end of an atrocious, though entirely honest, article, which focusses the whole of the analytic experience around the dissociation [*dédoublement*] of the *ego*, one half of which must come to our aid against the other – the subject can no longer get himself out of it.[17] He hooks on to the other because what is pressing towards speech cannot attain it. The arrested arrival of speech, in so far as something perhaps renders it fundamentally impossible, that's the pivotal point around which, in analysis, speech entirely seesaws over into its initial aspect and is reduced to its function of relationship to the other. If speech then functions as mediation, it is on account of its revelation not having been accomplished.

The question is always one of knowing at which level hooking on to the other occurs. You have to be made mutton headed by a certain way of theorising, of dogmatising and of regimenting yourself in analytic technique, to be capable of telling us, as someone once did, that one of the preconditions of analytic treatment, is what? – is that the subject has a certain awareness of the other as such. You don't say! But the point is knowing at what level this other is realised, and how, in which function, in which circle of its subjectivity, at what distance, this other is.

In the course of the analytic experience, this distance is continuously changing. How silly can you be to claim that it is a specific stage of the subject!

The same way of thinking leads M. Piaget to talk of the egocentric idea of the infant's world. As if adults had something to teach kids on this subject! And I would really like to know what, in the scales of eternity, has the greater weight when it comes to a better apprehension of the other, that held by M. Piaget, in his professorial position, and at his age, or that of a child! This child, we see that he is prodigiously open to everything concerning the way of the world that the adult brings to him. Doesn't anyone ever reflect on what this prodigious porosity to everything in myth, legend, fairy tales, history, the ease with which he lets himself be invaded by these stories, signifies, as to his sense of the other? Does anyone think that it's compatible with the child playing little games with blocks, thanks to which M. Piaget shows us that he arrives at a Copernican view of the world?

The point is to know how, at a given moment, this quite mysterious feeling of

[17] Richard Sterba *'Das Schicksal des Ichs im therapeutischen Verfahren'*, *International Zeitschrift für Psychoanalysis 20, 1934, 66–73*; 'The fate of the ego in analytic therapy', *International Journal of Psycho-analysis* 15, 1934, 117–26.

presence points to the other. Maybe it is part of what Freud tells us about in 'The dynamics of transference', that is, part of all the preliminary structurations, not only of the love life of the subject, but of his organisation of the world.

If I had to single out the first inflection of speech, the initial moment in which the entire realisation of the truth of the subject is inflected in its trajectory, the initial level on which the captation of the other takes on its function, I would isolate it in a formula given me by someone who is present here and whom I supervise. I was asking him – *Where has he got to, your subject, in relation to you this week?* He then gave me an expression which coincides exactly with what I have tried, in this inflection, to pinpoint – *He called on me to bear witness.* And, indeed, that really is one of the most elevated, although already deflected, functions of speech – the call to bear witness.

A little further and it will be seduction. A little further still, the attempt to inveigle[18] the other into a game in which speech even turns into – as analytic experience has clearly shown us – a more symbolic function, into a deeper instinctive satisfaction. Not to speak of the final stage – the complete disintegration of the speech function in the transference-phenomena, in which the subject, Freud notes, frees himself entirely and does exactly what he pleases.

In the end, doesn't this consideration bring us back to what I started off with in my commentary on the functions of speech? namely, the opposition between empty and full speech, full speech in so far as it realises the truth of the subject, empty speech in relation to what he has to do *hic et nunc* with his analyst, in which the subject loses himself in the machinations of the system of language, in the labyrinth of referential systems made available to him by the state of cultural affairs to which he is a more or less interested party.[19] Between these two extremes, a whole gamut of modes of realisation of speech is deployed.

This perspective brings us exactly to the following consideration – the resistance in question projects its effects on to the system of the ego, in as much as the system of the ego isn't even conceivable without the system, if one can put it this way, of the other. The ego has a reference to the other. The ego is constituted in relation to the other. It is its correlative. The level on which the other is experienced locates exactly the level on which, quite literally, the ego exists for the subject.

For resistance, in fact, is embodied in the system of the ego and the other. It comes into being at this or that moment of the analysis. But it emanates from somewhere else, namely from the subject's impotence to end up in the domain in which his truth is realised. In a way, a way doubtless more or less defined for a given subject by the fixation of his character and his structure, it is always on a specific level, through a specific style of relations with the other, that the act of speech comes to be projected.

[18] '*capter*'. [19] See E 247-65/40-56.

Look at the paradox of the analyst's position from that moment on. It's just at the moment when the speech of the subject is at its fullest that I, the analyst, can intervene. But I would be intervening in what? – in his discourse. Now, the more intimate the discourse is for the subject, the more I focus on this discourse. But the inverse is equally true. The emptier his discourse is, the more I too am led to catch hold of the other, that is to say, led into doing what one does all the time, in this famous analysis of the resistances, led into seeking out the beyond of his discourse – a beyond, you'll be careful to note, which is nowhere, the beyond that the subject has to realise, but which he hasn't, and that's the point, realised, and which is in consequence made up of my own projection, on the level on which the subject is realising it at that moment.

Last time I showed you the dangers of interpretations or of intentional imputations, which, whether verified or not, susceptible or not to verification, are in fact no more verifiable than any other system of projections. And right there you have the difficulty of analysis.

When we say that we engage in the interpretation of resistances, we are confronting this difficulty – how can one operate at a level of the speech relation which has a lower density? How can one operate within this interpsychology, of *ego* and *alter ego*, to which we are reduced by the very degradation of the process of speech? In other words, what are the possible relations between that intervention of speech which is interpretation, and the level of the *ego*, in so far as this level always mutually involves the analysand and the analyst? When the function of speech has become so firmly inclined in the direction of the other that it is no longer even mediation, but only implicit violence, a reduction of the other to a correlative function of the subject's ego, what can we do so as to still legitimately employ speech in the analytic experience?

You get a sense of the oscillating character of the problem. It brings us back to the question – what meaning does this support taken in the other have? Why does the other become less and less truly other to the extent that it takes on more and more exclusively the function of support?

This is the vicious circle which one has to find a way out of in analysis. Aren't we all the more caught up in it the more the history of technique shows that a stronger emphasis has always been placed on the ego-related aspect of resistances? It is the same problem as is expressed again in the following way – why does the subject alienate himself all the more the more he affirms himself as ego?

We thus come back to last session's question – who, then, is it who, beyond the ego, seeks recognition?

3 February 1954

V

Introduction and reply to Jean Hyppolite's presentation of Freud's *Verneinung*

THE LINGUISTIC CRISS-CROSSING
THE PHILOSOPHICAL DISCIPLINES
STRUCTURE OF HALLUCINATION
IN EVERY RELATION TO THE OTHER, NEGATION

Those who were here last time heard an exposition on the central passage in Freud's paper, 'The dynamics of transference'.

The whole of this exposition consisted in showing you that the principal phenomenon of transference starts with what I could call the basis of the movement of resistance. I isolated that moment, which remains masked in analytic theory, in which resistance, in its most essential aspect, is manifested in a see-saw motion of speech towards the presence of the listener, towards the witness who is the analyst. The moment when the subject interrupts himself is usually the most significant moment in his approach towards the truth. At this point we gain a sense of resistance in its pure state, which culminates in the feeling, often tinged with anxiety, of the analyst's presence.

I also taught you that the analyst's questioning when the subject interrupts himself – a questioning which, because it has been pointed out to you by Freud, has become almost automatic for some people – *Aren't you thinking about something that has to do with me, the analyst?* – is only an activism which crystallises the orienting of the discourse towards the analyst. All this crystallisation shows is the following, that the subject's discourse, in so far as it doesn't attain this full speech in which its base in the unconscious should be revealed, is already addressed to the analyst, is so made as to interest him, and is supported by this alienated form of being that one calls the *ego*.

1

The relation of the *ego* to the other, the relation of the subject to this other himself, to this fellow being in relation to whom he is initially formed, is an essential structure of the human constitution.

It is by taking our cue from this imaginary function that we can conceptualise and explain what the *ego* is in analysis. I am not talking about the *ego* in psychology, where it performs a synthetic function, but the *ego* in

analysis, a dynamic function. The *ego* makes itself manifest there as defence, as refusal. Inscribed in it is the entire history of successive oppositions which the subject manifested to the integration of what will subsequently be called within the theory, but only subsequently, his deepest and most misunderstood drives. In other words, in these moments of resistance, so clearly pointed out by Freud, we gain a sense of the means by which the very movement of the analytic experience isolates the fundamental function of the *ego* – misunderstanding [*méconnaissance*].

I showed you the mainspring, the fine point of Freud's investigation, in relation to dream analysis. You there saw, in an almost paradoxical form, the extent to which the Freudian analysis of the dream presupposes a function of speech. This is clinched by the fact that Freud grasps the last trace of a vanishing dream just at the moment when the subject turns completely towards him. It is at the precise moment when the dream is no more than a trace, a fragment of a dream, an isolated vocable, that we rediscover its transferential tip. I have already mentioned this significant, isolated interruption, which may be the turning-point of a phase in the analytic session. The dream is hence modelled on an identical movement.

Similarly, I have shown you the significance of speech that is unspoken because it is refused, because *verworfen*, rejected [*rejetée*] by the subject. I made you realise the specific weight of speech in the forgetting of a word – with an example taken from *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* – and the extent to which there is, in this instance also, a sizeable difference between what the subject's speech should have proferred, and what is left to him with which to address the other. In the present instance, on account of the effect of the word *Herr*, something is lacking in the subject's speech, the vocable *Signorelli*, which he will no longer be able to bring to mind with the interlocutor, with whom the word *Herr* had, in an implicit manner, been called up a moment earlier, with all of its signification. Revealing as this moment is of the fundamental relation between resistance and the dynamic of the analytic experience, it leads us to a question which can be polarised between these two terms – the *ego*, speech.

This is a question which has been so little explored – although it should be the object of the essential investigation for us – that somewhere, under Mr Fenichel's pen, we find, for example, that the subject indisputably gains access to the meaning of words via the *ego*. Does one have to be an analyst to think that such a view is, at the very least, subject to dispute? Even if we admit that the *ego* is indeed what, as they say, controls our motor activities, and as a consequence the issuing of these vocables known as words, can one claim that, in our discourse, right now, the *ego* is the master of everything that these words harbour?

The symbolic system is extraordinarily intricate, marked as it is by this *Verschlungenheit, property of criss-crossing*, which the translation of the papers

on technique has rendered as *complexity*, which is, and how, much too weak. *Verschlungenheit* designates linguistic criss-crossing – every easily isolable linguistic symbol is not only at one with the totality, but is cut across and constituted by a series of overflowings, of oppositional overdeterminations which place it at one and the same time in several registers. This language system, within which our discourse makes its way, isn't it something which goes infinitely beyond every intention that we might put into it, and which, moreover, is only momentary?

It is precisely on these ambiguities, on these riches already involved in the symbolic system as it has been constituted by the tradition in which we as individuals take up our places, far more than we can spell out or learn of it, it is on these functions that the analytic experience plays. At every moment this experience consists in showing the subject that he is saying more than he thinks he is – to take up only this aspect of the question.

We might be led to take up the question from the genetic point of view. But we would then get caught up in an investigation in psychology which would lead us so far away that we can't broach it now. Nevertheless it seems to be indisputable that one cannot make judgements concerning the acquisition as such of language on the basis of the acquisition of the motor mastery revealed by the appearance of the first words. The punching in of words which observers are pleased to record leaves intact the problem of knowing to what extent the words which do indeed emerge in motor representation emerge precisely as a result of an initial appreciation of the totality of the symbolic system as such.

The words that first appear have, as clinical experience shows, an entirely contingent signification. Everyone knows the degree of diversity shown by the first fragments of language as they appear in the child's elocution. And we also know how striking it is to hear the child give expression to adverbs, particles, words, to *perhaps* or *not yet*, before having given expression to a substantive, the minimal naming of an object.

Setting up the problem in this way from the outset seems indispensable to finding a place for any valid observation. If one doesn't manage to grasp clearly the autonomy of the symbolic function in the realising of the human, it is impossible to proceed from the facts without at once committing the crassest of errors in understanding.

Since this isn't a course in general psychology, I will probably not have an opportunity to return to these questions again.

2

Today, I think I will only be able to introduce the problem of the *ego* and of speech, starting, of course, with the way in which it is revealed in our experience.

We can only address this problem in the form which it now has. We cannot pretend that the Freudian theory of the *ego* doesn't exist. Freud opposed the *ego* to the id, and this theory permeates our theoretical and technical conceptions. That's why today I want to draw your attention to a text called *Verneinung*.

Verneinung, as M. Hyppolite pointed out to me just now, is *dénégation* and not *négation*, as it has been translated in French. That is how I myself have always referred to it in my seminars, each time I had occasion to.

The text dates from 1925. It comes after the publication of the articles dealing with the psychology of the ego and its relation to the id. Specifically, it comes after the article *Das Ich und das Es*. In it Freud takes up again this relation, always so alive for him, of the *ego* with the spoken manifestation of the subject in the session.

It seemed to me, for reasons which will become apparent to you, that M. Hyppolite, who by his presence, not to speak of his interventions, does us a great honour in coming here to participate in our work, could make us privy to a critique that is sustained by everything that we know of his previous work.

The problem at issue, as you are going to see, concerns nothing less than the entire theory, if not of knowledge, at least of judgement. That is why I asked him, no doubt a little insistently, to be so good as, not only to stand in for me, but to bring what he alone can bring to a text as rigorous as *Die Verneinung*.

I think that this could present difficulties for any mind not trained in those philosophical disciplines which we could not do without in our present capacity. Our experience is not that of affective smoochy-woochy. We don't have to elicit in the subject the return of more or less evanescent, confused experience, in which would consist all the magic of psychoanalysis. Hence we are plainly doing our duty in listening, when it comes to a text like this, to the expert opinions of someone who is practised in the analysis of language and trained in philosophical disciplines.

This paper shows once more the fundamental value of all of Freud's writings. Every word is worthy of being measured for its precise angle, for its accent, its specific turn, is worthy of being subjected to the most rigorous of logical analyses. It is in that way that it is distinguished from the same terms gathered together more or less hazily by the disciples, for whom the apprehension of the problems was at second-hand, if one may say it, and never in any depth, which resulted in this degradation of analytic theory to which its hesitations so constantly attest.

Before giving the floor to M. Hyppolite, I would like to draw your attention to an intervention that he made in the course of the sort of debate that was instigated by a certain way of putting things concerning Freud and his intentions with respect to the patient. M. Hyppolite had at that time come to Z*'s rescue . . .

M. HYPPOLITE: . . . *for a brief moment.*

. . . yes, for a brief moment of rescue. What was at issue, if you remember, was to find out what was Freud's basic, intentional attitude with respect to the patient, when he claimed to have substituted the analysis of resistances by speech for the subjugation that operates through suggestion or through hypnosis.

I showed myself to be extremely guarded on the question of knowing if there were at this point signs of combativeness in Freud, indeed of domination, vestiges of an ambitious style which we might see betrayed in his youth.

On this point, I think there is a quite decisive text. It is a passage from *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. It is in connection with collective psychology, that is to say, relations to the other, that the ego, in so far as it is an autonomous function, is brought into Freud's work for the first time – a simple point, perhaps, but worth making because it justifies the particular manner in which I myself am introducing it to you. This passage comes from chapter four, entitled 'Suggestion and libido'.

We shall therefore be prepared for the statement that suggestion (or more correctly suggestibility) is actually an irreducible, primitive phenomenon, a fundamental fact in the mental life of man. Such, too, was the opinion of Bernheim, of whose astonishing arts I was a witness in the year 1889. But I can remember even then feeling a muffled hostility to this tyranny of suggestion. When a patient who showed himself unamenable was met with the shout: 'What are you doing? Vous vous contre-suggestionez!' *I said to myself that this was an evident injustice and an act of violence. For the man certainly had a right to counter-suggestions if people were trying to subdue him with suggestions. Later on my resistance took the direction of protesting against the view that suggestion, which explained everything, was itself to be exempt from explanation. Thinking of it, I repeated the old conundrum:*

Christoph trug Christum,
Christus trug die ganze Welt,
Sag' wo hat Christoph
Damals hin den Fuss gestellt?[1]

So – Freud experienced genuine revulsion on contact with the violence that speech can bring with it. This potential tendency of the analysis of resistances which Z* attested to the other day is precisely the misconstrual to be avoided in putting analysis into practice. I think that in this respect this passage has a very great value, and deserves to be cited.

In thanking him once more for the collaboration that he is willing to give us, I will ask M. Hyppolite who, from what I have gathered, was willing to devote a considerable amount of time to this text, to tell us straightforwardly what he makes of it.

[1] (1921c) GW XIII 97; Stud IX 84; SE XVIII 89. 'Christopher bore Christ; Christ bore the whole world; Say where did Christopher then put his foot?'

Jean Hyppolite's contribution to the seminar, 'A spoken commentary on Freud's Verneinung', *will be found in an Appendix.*

3

We cannot thank M. Hyppolite enough for giving us the opportunity, through a movement coextensive with Freud's thought, to encounter straightaway this beyond of positive psychology, which he has so very remarkably located.

In passing, let me point out to you that in insisting in these seminars on the trans-psychological character of the psychoanalytical domain, we are only rediscovering what is quite evident from our practice, and which the very thought of the person who opened its gates to us constantly manifests in the very slightest of his writings.

There is a great deal to be drawn from a careful reflection on this text. The great concision of M. Hyppolite's presentation is perhaps, in a sense, much more didactic than what I myself, in my own way, tell you, with specific intentions in mind. I will get it duplicated for the benefit of those who come here, because it seems to me that one couldn't have a better preface to this differentiation of levels, to this critique of concepts, which I have myself endeavoured to introduce to you, with the aim of avoiding confusions.

M. Hyppolite's elaborations on Freud's text has shown us the difference between the levels of the *Bejahung*, of affirmation, and of negativity in as much as it sets up at a lower level – I use much more clumsy expressions quite on purpose – the constitution of the subject-object relation. That is exactly what this text, so minimal in appearance, introduces us to from the start, and it clearly links up with some of the most recent philosophical thinking.

By the same token, it allows us to criticise the ambiguity that always dogs us concerning the notorious opposition between the intellectual and the affective – as if the affective were a sort of colouration, a kind of ineffable quality which must be sought out in itself, independently of the eviscerated skin which the purely intellectual realisation of a subject's relationship would consist in. This conception, which urges analysis down strange paths, is puerile. The slightest peculiar, even strange, feeling that the subject professes to in the text of the session is taken to be a spectacular success. That is what follows from this fundamental misunderstanding.

The affective is not like a special density which would escape an intellectual accounting. It is not to be found in a mythical beyond of the production of the symbol which would precede the discursive formulation. Only this can allow us from the start, I won't say to locate, but to apprehend what the full realisation of speech consists in.

There is a little time left. I would like just now to try to indicate with some

examples how the question arises. I am going to show it to you from two different angles.

Let us begin by taking a phenomenon whose perspective has been completely transformed by the development of thinking about psychopathology – hallucination.

Up to a certain date, hallucination was considered to be a critical phenomenon around which revolved the question of the discriminating value of consciousness – it couldn't be consciousness which was hallucinated, it had to be something else. In fact, one need only acquaint oneself with the new phenomenology of perception as put forward in M. Merleau-Ponty's book to see that hallucination is on the contrary integrated as being essential to the subject's intentionality.

When it comes to hallucination, one is usually content with a certain number of registers, such as that of the pleasure principle, in order to explain its production. One thus considers it as the initial movement in the order of the subject's satisfaction. We cannot rest content with a theorisation as simple as this.

Recall the example that I mentioned to you last time in the *Wolfman*. The progress of the analysis of the subject in question, the contradictions which are revealed by the traces through which we follow the specification of his position in the human world, point to a *Verwerfung*, a rejection – literally, it has always been for him as if the genital plane did not exist. We have been led to locate this rejection on the level, I would say, of the *non-Bejahung*, because we cannot, in any way, place it on the same level as a negation.

What is striking is what happens next. In the light of the explanations that have been given you today concerning the *Die Verneinung*, it will be much easier to comprehend. In a general way, in fact, the condition such that something exists for a subject is that there be *Bejahung*, this *Bejahung* which isn't a negation of the negation. What happens when this *Bejahung* doesn't happen, in such a way that nothing appears in the symbolic register?

Just let's look at the Wolfman. There was no *Bejahung* for him, no realisation of the genital plane. There is no trace of this plane in the symbolic register. The only trace we have of it is the emergence, not at all in his history, but really in the external world, of a minor hallucination. Castration, which is precisely what didn't exist for him, manifests itself in the form of something he imagines – to have cut his little finger, so deeply that it hangs solely by a little piece of skin. He is then overwhelmed by a feeling of a castastrophe that is so inexpressible that he doesn't even dare to talk of it to the person by his side. What he daren't talk about is this – it is as if this person to whom he immediately refers all of his emotions were annulled. The other no longer exists. There is a sort of immediate external world, of manifestations perceived in what I will call a primitive real, a non-symbolised real, despite the symbolic form, in the usual sense of the term, that this phenomenon takes.

The subject is not at all psychotic. He just has a hallucination. He might be psychotic later on, but he isn't at the moment when he has this absolutely limited, nodal experience, quite foreign to his childhood, completely disintegrated. At this point in his childhood, nothing entitles one to classify him as a schizophrenic, but it really is a psychotic phenomenon we are dealing with.

Hence there is here, at the level of completely primitive experience, at the source-point in which the possibility of the symbol lays the subject open to a certain relation to the world, a correlation, a balancing that I would very much like you to understand – what is not recognised irrupts into consciousness in the form of the seen.

If you go deeply into this particular polarisation, you'll find it much easier to broach the ambiguous phenomenon known as déjà-vu, which lies between these two modes of relation, the recognised and the seen. In the déjà-vu, something in the external world is carried to the limit, and emerges with a special pre-signification. Retrospective illusion relates this perceived thing endowed with an original quality to the domain of the déjà-vu. Freud is talking of nothing other than this when he tells us that any experiencing[2] of the external world implicitly refers to something which has already been perceived in the past. This is true as far as you might want to take it – in a certain way, all varieties of the perceived necessarily include a reference to something previously perceived.

That is why we are here brought back to the level of the imaginary as such, to the level of the model image of the original form. What is at issue is not the recognised as symbolised and verbalised. Rather we rediscover the problems raised by Platonic theory, not of remembering but of reminiscence.

I promised you another example, which I am taking from the advocates of the so-called modern way of analysing. You'll see that these principles were already set out in 1925 in this text of Freud's.

A great deal is made of the fact that at first we analyse the surface, as they say. It would be the crowning glory to make it possible for the subject to progress by escaping this sort of chance represented by the intellectualised sterilisation of contents re-evoked by analysis.

Well, Kris, in one of his articles, gives an account of the case of a subject whom he took into analysis and who, it should be said, had already been analysed once. This subject is seriously hampered in his profession, an intellectual profession which appears to be, in the glimpses one catches of it, not far removed from what might be our preoccupations. This subject experiences all manner of difficulties producing, as they say. Indeed, his life is as it were fettered by the feeling he has of being, let's say for the sake of brevity, a plagiarist. He is continually discussing his ideas with someone who is very close to him, a brilliant scholar,[3] but he always feels tempted to take on the ideas his

[2] '*toute épreuve*'. Cf. *Realitätsprufung, épreuve de la réalité*, reality-testing.

[3] English in the original.

interlocutor provides him with, and that is for him a perpetual impediment to everything that he wants to get out, to publish.

All the same, he manages to get one text into shape. But, one day, he turns up declaring almost triumphantly that the whole of his thesis is already to be found in the library, in a published article. So there he is, this time, a plagiarist despite himself.

What will the alleged interpretation of the surface that Kris offers us actually consist in? Probably in the following – Kris in actual fact gets interested in what happened and what the article contains. Looking into it more closely, he realises that none of the central theses brought forward by the subject are to be found there. Some issues are raised which address the same question, but there is nothing of the new views brought forward by his patient, whose thesis is thus clearly original. This is where you must start from, Kris says, it's what he calls – I don't know why – taking up things on the surface.

Now, Kris says, if the subject is bent on showing him that his entire behaviour is completely shackled, it is because his father never succeeded in producing anything, because he was crushed by a grandfather – in all the senses of the word – who himself had a highly constructive and fertile mind. He needs to find in his father a grandfather, a father who would be grand, who, in contrast, would be capable of doing something, and he satisfies this need by forging himself tutors, always grander than him, upon whom he becomes dependent by means of a plagiarism which he then reproaches himself for, and by means of which he destroys himself. He is thus doing nothing more than satisfying a need, the same need that tormented his childhood and in consequence dominated his history.

There's no question about it, the interpretation is valid. And it is important to see how the subject reacted to it. What does Kris consider as being the confirmation of the significance of what he put forward, which has such tremendous implications?

In what follows we see the whole history of the subject unfolding. We see that the symbolisation, properly speaking penile of this need for the real, creative and powerful, father, took the form of all sorts of games in childhood, fishing games – will the father catch a bigger or a smaller fish? etc. But the immediate reaction of the subject is the following. He remains silent, and at the next session he says – *The other day, on leaving, I went into such and such street* – it takes place in New York, it is the street where there are foreign restaurants where you can eat rather more spicy dishes – *and I sought out a place where I could find the dish I am particularly fond of, fresh brains.*

Here you can see what makes for a response elicited by an accurate interpretation, namely a level of speech which is both paradoxical and full in its meaning.

What makes this an accurate interpretation? Are we dealing with something

which is at the surface? What does that mean? It means nothing, other than that Kris, via a detour that is doubtless diligent, but whose outcome he could easily have predicted, came to realise precisely the following – that the subject, in his manifestation in this special guise of the production of an organised discourse, in which he is always subject to this process which is called negation and in which the integration of his *ego* is accomplished, can only reflect his fundamental relation to his ideal ego in an inverted form.

In other words, the relation to the other, in so far as the primitive desire of the subject strives to manifest itself in it, always contains in itself this fundamental, original element of negation, which here takes the form of inversion.

This, as you see, only opens up new problems for us.

But to continue, it would be useful if one were to fix precisely the difference of level between the symbolic as such, the symbolic possibility, the opening up of man to symbols, and, on the other hand, its crystallisation in organised discourse in so far as it contains, fundamentally, contradiction. I think that M. Hyppolite's commentary has shown you that today in a magisterial fashion. I would like you to keep both the tool and the means to use it to hand, as milestones to which you will always be able to refer yourselves when you come to difficult crossroads in the rest of our discussion. That is why I thank M. Hyppolite for having given us the benefit of his extraordinary expertise.

10 February 1954

VI

Discourse analysis and ego analysis

ANNA FREUD OR MELANIE KLEIN

What I intend to do is to begin to draw you into the area marked out by the remarks I made last time. It is very precisely that area between the formation of the symbol and the discourse of the ego, and we have already been making our way into it from the start of this year. Today, I've entitled the seminar we'll be pursuing together 'Discourse analysis and ego analysis', but I cannot promise to live up to such an ambitious title in a single session. In opposing these terms, I mean them to take the place of the classical opposition between analysis of contents/analysis of resistances.

In the text on the *Verneinung* that he kindly commented on for us, M. Hyppolite brought out the importance of the complex meaning of *Aufhebung*. In German, this term signifies at once to deny, to suppress and also to preserve through suppression, to raise up. We have here an example of a concept which cannot be pondered over too much in order to reflect upon what we do in our dialogue, with the subject, as psychoanalysts have for some time noted.

1

Obviously we are dealing with the ego of the subject, with its limitations, its defences, its character. We have to get it moving. But what function does it have in this operation? The entire psychoanalytic literature is as it were at a loss over its exact definition.

All the recent discussions which take the ego of the analysand to be the ally of the analyst in the Great Analytic Work contain quite obvious contradictions. Indeed, apart from ending up with the notion, not only of the bipolarity or bi-functioning of the ego, but strictly speaking of its splitting,[1] the radical distinction between two egos, it is very difficult to define the ego as an autonomous function, while at the same time continuing to regard it as a master of errors, the seat of illusions, the locus of a passion proper to it, one

[1] English in the original.

which leads essentially to misunderstanding [*méconnaissance*]. In analysis, as moreover in one major philosophical tradition, misunderstanding is precisely its function.

There are paragraphs in Anna Freud's book, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*, where one has the feeling, if you overlook the sometimes disconcertingly reifying character of its language, that she is talking about the ego with the same kind of understanding as we are trying to sustain here. And at the same time one has the feeling that she is talking about *the-little-man-within-the-man*, who has an autonomous life within the subject and who is there to defend it – *Father, look out to the right, Father, look out to the left* – against whatever might assail him from without as from within. If we were to consider her book as the depiction of a moralist, then she incontestably is speaking of the ego as the seat of a certain number of passions, in a style not unworthy of the manner in which La Rochefoucauld points out the unflagging ruses of self-love.

The dynamic function of the ego in the analytic dialogue thus up to now remains fundamentally contradictory for lack of having its place rigorously specified and this fact comes to the surface each time we touch on the principles underlying technique.

I believe that many of you have read this book of Anna Freud's. It is extremely instructive and it is easy to pick out, on account of its being quite rigorous, those points where the weaker elements in its argument appear, still more apparent in the examples she gives.

Look at the passages where she tries to define the function of the ego. In analysis, she says, the ego is only made manifest through its defences, that is to say in so far as it is opposed to the work of analysis. Does that amount to saying that everything which is opposed to the work of analysis is a defence of the ego? Elsewhere she acknowledges that one cannot maintain this and that there are other elements of resistance than the defences of the ego. Isn't that the way I began broaching the problem with you? Many of the problems we've taken up here figure in this book, and one should read it pen in hand, because it has the status of a legacy, faithfully transmitted, of Freud's final detailed construction regarding the ego.

Someone close to us in the *Société*, seized at the 1950 Congress, I know not why, with a lyrical impulse – this dear friend – called Anna Freud *the plumb-line of psychoanalysis*. Well, the plumb-line doesn't make a building. A number of other instruments are needed, a water-level for instance. But in the end the plumb-line isn't that bad – it allows us to gauge the vertical of certain problems.

I am going to ask Mlle Gélinier to give you an account of an article of Melanie Klein's entitled 'The importance of symbol-formation in the development of the ego'. I don't think reading one of Anna Freud's texts dealing with the analysis of children, and especially the ego defences, can be a bad way of introducing it.

Here is a small example she gives us. It concerns one of her patients, who

comes to be analysed on account of a state of acute anxiety which disrupts her life and her studies, all this, to obey her mother.

Her attitude toward me was friendly and frank, but I noticed that in all her communications she carefully avoided making any allusion to her symptom. She never mentioned anxiety attacks which took place between the analytic sessions. If I myself insisted on bringing her symptom into the analysis or gave interpretations of her anxiety which were based on unmistakable indications in her associations, her friendly attitude changed. On every such occasion the result was a volley of contemptuous and mocking remarks. The attempt to find a connection between the patient's attitude and her relation to her mother was completely unsuccessful. Both in consciousness and in the unconscious that relation was entirely different. In these repeated outbursts of contempt and ridicule the analyst found herself at a loss and the patient was, for the time being, inaccessible to further analysis. As the analysis went deeper, however, we found that these affects did not represent a transference reaction in the true sense of the term and were not connected with the analytic situation at all. They indicated the patient's customary attitude toward herself whenever emotions of tenderness, longing, or anxiety were about to emerge in her affective life. The more powerfully the affect forced itself upon her, the more vehemently and scathingly did she ridicule herself. The analyst became the recipient of these defensive reactions only secondarily, because she was encouraging the demands of the patient's anxiety to be worked over in consciousness. The interpretation of the content of the anxiety, even when this could be correctly inferred from other communications, could have no result so long as every approach to the affect only intensified her defensive reaction. It was impossible to make that content conscious until we had brought into consciousness and so rendered inoperative the patient's method of defending herself against her affects by contemptuous disparagement – a process which had become automatic in every department of her life. Historically this mode of defence by means of ridicule and scorn was explained by her identification of herself with her dead father, who used to try to train the little girl in self-control by making mocking remarks when she gave way to some emotional outburst. The method had become stereotyped through her memory of her father, whom she had loved dearly. The technique necessary in order to understand this case was to begin with the analysis of the patient's defence against her affects and to go on to the elucidation of her resistance in the transference. Then, and then only, was it possible to proceed to the analysis of her anxiety itself and of its antecedents.[2]

What is at stake in what is here presented as the necessity for analysing the ego defence? Nothing other than the correlate of an error. Indeed, Anna Freud immediately approached the material from the perspective of the dual relation between the patient and herself. She took the patient's defence to be what was its manifestation, namely an aggressive act toward her, Anna Freud. It is on the plane of her own ego, Anna Freud's, it is within the framework of the dual

[2] Anna Freud (1936) pp. 36–7.

relation with her, Anna Freud, that she perceived the manifestations of the ego defence. At the same time she wanted to see in it a manifestation of transference, according to the formula which makes of the transference the reproduction of a situation. Although it is often given, to the point where it is taken to be classical, this formula is incomplete, since it doesn't specify how the situation is structured. What I am now saying to you is related to what I pointed out in my lecture at the Collège Philosophique.

Anna Freud started by interpreting the analytic relation in accordance with the prototype of the dual relation, which is the relation of the subject to her mother. She immediately found herself in a position which not only marked time but was also perfectly sterile. What does she call *having analysed the defence against the affects*? Following this text, there seems no other alternative than her very own understanding. This path would not take her very far. She should have distinguished between the dual interpretation, in which the analyst enters into an ego to ego rivalry with the analysand, and the interpretation which moves forward in the direction of the symbolic structuration of the subject, which is to be located beyond the present structure of his ego.

Through this we come back to the question of knowing what *Bejahung*, what assumption by the ego, what *yes* is at issue in the progress of analysis. What *Bejahung* should be elicited, so as to constitute the unveiling essential to the progress of an analysis?

In a passage to be found in the *Outline of Psycho-analysis*, page 40 in the French edition,[3] but which is not outside of our purview since it is headed 'The technique of psycho-analysis', Freud tells us that it is the ratification of a pact that determines the point of entry into the analytic situation. *The sick ego promises us the most complete candour – promises, that is, to put at our disposal all the material which its self-perception yields it; we assure the patient of the strictest discretion and place at his service our experience in interpreting material that has been influenced by the unconscious. Our knowledge is to make up for his ignorance and to give his ego back its mastery over lost provinces of his mental life. This pact constitutes the analytic situation.*

Well – as my last lecture implied – if it is true that our knowledge comes to the rescue of the ignorance of the analysand, it is no less the case that we are also in ignorance, in as much as we are ignorant of the symbolic constellation dwelling in the subject's unconscious. What is more, this constellation should always be conceived of as structured, in accordance with a complex order.

The word *complex* surfaced in analytic theory through a kind of internal force since, as you know, it wasn't Freud who invented it, but Jung. When we get on the trail of the unconscious, what we encounter are structured, organised, complex situations. Freud gave us the first model of it, its standard, in the Oedipus complex. Those of you who have followed my seminar for some time

[3] (1940a) GW XVII 98; Stud Erg 412; SE XXIII 173.

have had the opportunity to see for themselves to what extent the Oedipus complex poses problems and to what extent it contains ambiguities, thanks to the commentary I made on those cases least subject to reservations on account of their having been so richly sketched in by Freud himself, namely three of the five great psychoanalyses. In short, the entire development of analysis has resulted from showing to advantage, one after another, each of the tensions implied within this triangular system. This fact alone requires us to see in it something quite different from this solid mass summed up in the classic formula – sexual attraction for the mother, rivalry with the father.

You are aware of the profoundly dissymmetrical character, right from the start, of each of the dual relations included within the Oedipal structure. The relation linking the subject to the mother is distinct from that linking him to the father, the narcissistic or imaginary relation to the father is distinct from the symbolic relation, and also from the relation that we really do have to call real – which is residual with respect to the edifice which commands our attention in analysis. All this demonstrates well enough the structure's complexity, and it is by no means inconceivable that another line of research will allow us to develop the Oedipal myth more clearly than has been done up to now.

Despite the wealth of material which has been included within the Oedipal relation, the schema laid down by Freud can hardly be said to have been departed from. This schema should be kept to in its essentials, because it is, and you'll see why, truly fundamental, not only for any understanding of the subject, but also for any symbolic realisation by the subject, of the id, of the unconscious – which is a self [*soi-même*] and not a set of unorganised drives, as a part of Freud's theoretical elaboration might lead one to think when one reads in it that within the psyche only the ego possesses an organisation.

Last time we saw that even the reduction of the negation bearing on what has been denied does not, for all that, render up to us, on behalf of the subject, his *Bejahung*. One should take a close look at the value of the criteria we demand – and on which we are, moreover, in agreement with the subject – in order to recognise a satisfactory *Bejahung*.

What is the source of the evidence? It is the analytic reconstruction that the subject must authenticate. The memory must be re-experienced with the help of empty spaces. And Freud quite rightly reminds us that we can never wholeheartedly trust memory. From then on, what, exactly, are we satisfied with when the subject tells us that things have got to that clicking-point where he has the feeling of truth?

This question brings us to the heart of the problem of the feeling of reality which I touched on the other day with respect to the genesis of the Wolfman's hallucination. I put forward the quasi-algebraic formula, which has the air of being almost too transparent, too concrete – the real, or what is perceived as such, is what resists symbolisation absolutely. In the end, doesn't the feeling of

the real reach its high point in the pressing manifestation of an unreal, hallucinatory reality?

For the Wolfman, the symbolisation of the meaning of the genital plane was *verworfen*. So should we be surprised that a number of interpretations, which are called interpretations of contents, are not symbolised by the subject? They manifest themselves at a stage when they cannot in any way make available to him the revelation of his situation within this forbidden territory that is his unconscious, in so far as they are still located in the plane of negation or in that of the negation of the negation. Something has not yet been got over – which is precisely beyond discourse, and which necessitates a jump in discourse. Repression cannot purely and simply disappear, it can only be gone beyond, in the sense of *Aufhebung*.

What Anna Freud calls the analysis of the defences against affect is only one step in her own understanding and not in that of the subject. Once she realises that she is on the wrong track in believing that the subject's defence is a defence against herself, she can then analyse the resistance of the transference.

Where does this lead her? – to someone who isn't there, to a third party. She sifts out something that must greatly resemble Dora's position. The subject is identified with her father and this identification has structured her ego. This structuration of the ego is here referred to as a defence. It is the most superficial aspect of identification, but one is able, through this short cut, to make connection again with a deeper plane, and to recognise the subject's position in the symbolic order. Nothing other than this is at stake in analysis – recognising what function the subject takes on in the order of the symbolic relations which covers the entire field of human relations, and whose initial cell is the Oedipus complex, where the assumption of sex is decided.

Now I will let Mlle Gélinier speak – she will get you to grasp Melanie Klein's point of view. This point of view is opposed to that of Anna Freud – it is not for nothing that these two ladies confronted each other in Merovingian rivalries, a situation not without parallel.

Anna Freud's point of view is intellectualist, and leads her into putting forward the view that everything in analysis must be conducted from a median, moderate position, which would be that of the ego. For her everything starts with the education or the persuasion of the ego, and everything must come back to that. You are going to see the diametrically opposite starting point of Melanie Klein's approach to a particularly difficult subject, apropos of whom one may ask oneself how Anna Freud would have been able to make use of her categories of the strong ego and the weak ego, which presuppose a position of preliminary re-education. By the same token you will be able to judge which of the two is closer to the axis of the Freudian discovery.

Melanie Klein's article, 'The importance of symbol-formation in the development of the ego', published in 1930, is to be found in The Writings of Melanie Klein, *vol I, pp. 219–32.*

2

She slams the symbolism on him with complete brutality, does Melanie Klein, on little Dick! Straight away she starts off hitting him large-scale interpretations. She hits him a brutal verbalisation of the Oedipal myth, almost as revolting for us as for any reader – *You are the little train, you want to fuck your mother.*

Quite clearly, this way of doing things leads to theoretical discussions – which cannot be dissociated from a case-diagnostic. But it is clear that as a result of this interpretation something happens. Everything is there.

You will have noticed the lack of contact that Dick experiences. That's where the defect of his *ego* is. His *ego* isn't formed. Moreover Melanie Klein differentiates Dick from a neurotic, by his profound indifference, his apathy, his absence. In fact, it is clear that, for him, what isn't symbolised is reality. This young subject is completely in reality, in the pure state, unconstituted. He is entirely in the undifferentiated. Now, what constitutes a human world? – if not the interest brought to bear on objects as distinct entities or as equivalent ones. The human world is an infinite world as far as its objects are concerned. In this respect, Dick lives in a non-human world.

This text is a precious one because it comes from a therapist, a woman of experience. She feels things, she expresses them badly – one cannot blame her for that. The theory of the *ego* is incomplete here perhaps because she hadn't decided to provide one, but what she does show extremely well is the following – if, in the human world, objects become variegated, develop, with the luxuriance that makes for its originality, it is to the extent that they make their appearance within a process of expulsion linked to the instinct of primitive destruction.

What is at issue here is a primitive relation, at the very root, the instinctual root, of being. As these ejections out of the subject's primitive world each take place, a world which is not yet organised into the register of a properly human, communicable reality, so each time a new type of identification arises. That is what is insufferable, and anxiety arises simultaneously.

Anxiety is not a sort of energy that the subject has to apportion out in order to constitute objects, and Melanie Klein's text does not include any turn of phrase which might be read in this way. Anxiety is always defined as appearing suddenly, as arising.[4] To each of the objectal relations there corresponds a mode of identification of which anxiety is the signal. The identifications in

[4] English in the original.

question here precede the ego-identification. But even when this latter will have been achieved, every new re-identification of the subject will cause anxiety to arise - anxiety in the sense of its being a temptation, a giddiness, a loss of the subject as he finds himself at extremely primitive levels. Anxiety is a connotation, a signal, as Freud always very clearly formulated it, a quality, a subjective colouration.

Now this anxiety is exactly what is not generated in the subject in question. Dick cannot even engage in the first sort of identification, which would already be an essay in symbolism. He is, paradoxical as it may seem to say it, eyeball to eyeball with reality, he lives in reality. In Melanie Klein's office, there is neither other nor ego for him, just a reality pure and simple. The space between the two doors is the body of his mother. The trains and all that is doubtless something, but something which is neither nameable nor named.

It is at this point that Melanie Klein, with her animal instinct which has moreover allowed her to bore through a body of knowledge which was up to then impenetrable, dares to speak to him – to speak to a being who nonetheless allows himself to be apprehended as someone who, in the symbolic sense of the term, does not reply. He is there as if she didn't exist, as if she were a piece of furniture. And yet she is speaking to him. She literally gives names to what doubtless does indeed partake in the symbol, since it can be named immediately, but which was, up to that moment, for this subject, just reality pure and simple.

That is what gives signification to the term prematuration which she employs to say that Dick has already in some sense reached the genital stage.

Normally, the subject finds for those objects of his primitive identification a series of imaginary equivalents which diversify his world – he draws up identifications with certain objects, withdraws them, makes them up again with others, etc. Each time anxiety prevents a definitive identification, the fixation of reality. But these comings and goings will give its framework to that infinitely more complex real which is the human real. After this phase, in the course of which fantasies are symbolised, comes the so-called genital phase, in which reality is then fixed.

Now, for Dick, reality is clearly fixed, but that's because he cannot undertake these comings and goings. He is immediately in a reality which knows no development.

It is however not a completely dehumanised reality. It signifies, at its own level. It is already symbolised, since one can give it a meaning. But as it is above all a movement of coming and going, it only amounts to an anticipated, fixed symbolisation, with a single and unique primary identification, with the following names – the *void*, the *dark*. This gap is precisely what is human in the structure peculiar to the subject, and that is what replies within him. He only makes contact with this gap.

In this gap, he can count only a very limited number of objects, which he cannot even name, as you have already astutely noted. Certainly, he already has some sense of vocables, but to these vocables he hasn't given a *Bejahung* – he hasn't assumed them. At the same time, paradoxical as it may appear, a potentiality for empathy can be found in him, which is much greater than normal, because he is perfectly at ease in relation to reality, in a non-anxiogenic fashion. When he sees little pencil shavings on Melanie Klein's blouse, the result of a fragmentation, he says – *Poor Melanie Klein.*

Next time we will take up the problem of the relation between the symbolic and the real from the most difficult angle, at its point of origin. You will see the connection with what we singled out the other day in M. Hyppolite's commentary – the function of destructionism in the constitution of human reality.

17 February 1954

THE TOPIC OF THE IMAGINARY

VII

The topic of the imaginary

MEDITATION ON OPTICS

INTRODUCTION OF THE INVERTED BOUQUET

REALITY: THE ORIGINAL CHAOS

IMAGINARY: BIRTH OF THE EGO

SYMBOLIC: THE POSITIONS OF THE SUBJECT

FUNCTION OF THE MYTH OF OEDIPUS IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

The small talk I will offer you today was announced under the title 'The topic of the imaginary'. Such a subject is quite enough to fill up several years of teaching, but since several questions concerning the place of the imaginary in the symbolic structure crop up while following the thread of our discourse, today's chat may justify its title.

It wasn't without some preconceived plan, the rigour of which will, I hope, become apparent as it is revealed in its entirety, that last time I brought your attention to a case whose particular significance resides in its showing in miniature the reciprocal interplay of those three grand terms we have already had occasion to make much of – the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real.

Without these three systems to guide ourselves by, it would be impossible to understand anything of the Freudian technique and experience. Many difficulties are vindicated and clarified when one brings these distinctions to bear on them. This is indeed the case with the incomprehensions Mlle Gélinier remarked upon the other day when dealing with Melanie Klein's text. What matters, when one tries to elaborate upon some experience, isn't so much what one understands, as what one doesn't understand. The value of Mlle Gélinier's report is precisely to have highlighted what, in this text, cannot be understood.

That is why the method of textual commentary proves itself fruitful. Commenting on a text is like doing an analysis. How many times have I said to those under my supervision, when they say to me – *I had the impression he meant this or that* – that one of the things we must guard most against is to understand too much, to understand more than what is in the discourse of the subject. To interpret and to imagine one understands are not at all the same things. It is precisely the opposite. I would go as far as to say that it is on the basis of a kind of refusal of understanding that we push open the door to analytic understanding.

It isn't enough for it to seem to hang together, a text. Obviously, it hangs together within the framework of pat phrases we've grown used to –

instinctual maturation, primitive aggressive instinct, oral, anal sadism, etc. And yet, in the register that Melanie Klein brings into play, there appear several contrasts, which I am going to return to in detail.

Everything turns on what Mlle Gélinier found to be peculiar, paradoxical, contradictory in the *ego*'s function – if too developed, it stops all development, but in developing, it reopens the door to reality. How is it that the gate to reality is reopened by a development of the *ego*? What is the specific function of the Kleinian interpretation, which appears to have an intrusive character, a superimposing upon the subject? These are the questions that we will have to touch upon again today.

You should have realised by now that, in the case of this young subject, real, imaginary and symbolic are here tangible, are flush with one another. I have taught you to identify the symbolic with language – now, isn't it in so far as, say, Melanie Klein speaks, that something happens? On the other hand, when Melanie Klein tells us that the objects are constituted by the interplay of projections, introjections, expulsions, reintrojections of bad objects, and that the subject, having projected his sadism, sees it coming back from these objects, and, by this very fact, finds himself jammed up by an anxious fear, don't you have the feeling that we are in the domain of the imaginary?

From then on the whole problem is that of the juncture of the symbolic and of the imaginary in the constitution of the real.

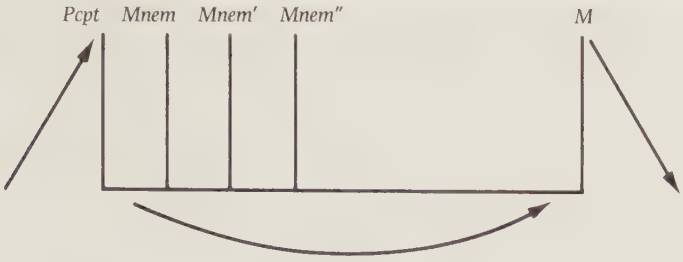
1

To clarify things a little for you, I've concocted a little model for you, a substitute for the mirror-stage.

As I have often underlined, the mirror-stage is not simply a moment in development. It also has an exemplary function, because it reveals some of the subject's relations to his image, in so far as it is the *Urbild* of the ego. Now, this mirror-stage, which no one can deny, has an optical presentation – nor can anyone deny that. Is it a coincidence?

The sciences, and above all those sciences in labour, as ours is, frequently borrow models from other sciences. My dear fellows, you wouldn't believe what you owe to geology. If it weren't for geology, how could one end up thinking that one could move, on the same level, from a recent to a much more ancient layer? It wouldn't be a bad thing, I'll note in passing, if every analyst went out and bought a small book on geology. There was once an analyst geologist, Leuba, who wrote one. I can't recommend you to read it too highly.

Optics could also have its say. At this point I find that I'm not in disagreement with the tradition established by the master – more than one of you must have noticed in the *Traumdeutung*, in the chapter 'The psychology of the dream-process', the famous schema into which Freud inserts the entire proceedings of the unconscious.



Freud's schema[1]

Inside, Freud places the different layers which can be distinguished from the level of perception, namely from the instantaneous impression – *Mnem'*, *Mnem''*, etc, both image and memory. These recorded traces are later repressed into the unconscious. It is a very pretty schema, which we will come back to since it will be useful to us. But I'd like to point out that it is accompanied by a commentary which doesn't appear to have ever attracted anyone's attention, even though it was used again in another form in Freud's quasi last work, the *Outline of Psycho-analysis*.

I will read it to you as it is to be found in the *Traumdeutung*. *What is presented to us in these words is the idea of psychical locality* – what is at issue here is precisely the field of psychical reality, that is to say of everything which takes place between perception and the motor consciousness of the ego. *I shall entirely disregard the fact that the mental apparatus with which we are here concerned is also known to us in the form of an anatomical preparation, and I shall carefully avoid the temptation to determine psychical locality in any anatomical fashion. I shall remain upon psychological ground, and I propose simply to follow the suggestion that we should picture the instrument which carries out our mental functions as resembling a compound microscope or a photographic apparatus, or something of the kind. On that basis, psychical locality will correspond to a point inside the apparatus at which one of the preliminary stages of an image comes into being. In the microscope and telescope, as we know, these occur in part at ideal points, regions in which no tangible component of the apparatus is situated. I see no necessity to apologise for the imperfections of this or of any similar imagery. Analogies of this kind are only intended to assist us in our attempt to make the complications of mental functioning intelligible by dissecting the function and assigning its different constituents to different component parts of the apparatus. So far as I know, the experiment has not hitherto been made of using this method of dissection in order to investigate the way in which the mental instrument is put together, and I can see no harm in it. We are justified, in my view, in giving free rein to our speculations so long as we retain the coolness of our judgement and do not mistake the scaffolding for the building. And*

[1] (1900a) SE V 538.

since at our first approach to something unknown all that we need is the assistance of provisional ideas, I shall give preference in the first instance to hypotheses of the crudest and most concrete description.[2]

I don't have to tell you that, seeing as advice is given so as not to be followed, since then we haven't missed an opportunity of taking the scaffolding for the building. On the other hand, the authorisation which Freud gives us to make use of supplementary relations so as to bring us closer to an unknown fact incited me into myself manifesting a certain lack of deference in constructing a schema.

Something almost infantile will do for us today, an optical apparatus much simpler than a compound microscope – not that it wouldn't be fun to follow up the comparison in question, but that would take us a bit far out of our way.

I cannot urge you too strongly to a meditation on optics. The odd thing is that an entire system of metaphysics has been founded on geometry and mechanics, by looking to them for models of understanding, but up to now it doesn't seem as though optics has been exploited as much as it could have been. Yet it should lend itself to a few dreams, this strange science which sets itself to produce, by means of apparatuses, that peculiar thing called *images*, in contrast to other sciences, which import into nature a cutting up, a dissection, an anatomy.

Don't think that, having said this, I am trying to make you believe that the moon is made of green cheese, or to make you take optical images for those images with which we are concerned. But, all the same, it is not for nothing that they share a name.

Optical images possess a peculiar diversity – some of them are purely subjective, these are the ones we call virtual, whereas others are real, namely in some respects, behave like objects and can be taken for such. More peculiar still – we can make virtual images of those objects which are real images. In such an instance, the object which is the real image quite rightly has the name of virtual object.

There is in truth something which is even more surprising, which is that optics is founded on a mathematical theory without which it is absolutely impossible to structure it. For there to be an optics, for each given point in real space, there must be one point and one corresponding point only in another space, which is the imaginary space. This is the fundamental structural hypothesis. It gives the impression of being overly simple, but without it one cannot write even one equation, nor symbolise anything – optics would be impossible. Even those who are not aware of this couldn't do a thing in optics if it didn't exist.

Here, too, the imaginary space and the real space fuse. Nonetheless they have to be conceived of as different. When it comes to optics, there are many

[2] (1900a) GW II/III 541; Stud II 512; SE V 536.

opportunities for employing certain distinctions which show you the extent to which the symbolic source counts in the emergence of a given phenomenon.

On the other hand, there is in optics a set of phenomena which can be said to be altogether real since we are also guided by experience in this matter, but in which, nonetheless, subjectivity is implicated at every moment. When you see a rainbow, you're seeing something completely subjective. You see it at a certain distance as if stitched on to the landscape. It isn't there. It is a subjective phenomenon. But nonetheless, thanks to a camera, you record it entirely objectively. So, what is it? We no longer have a clear idea, do we, which is the subjective, which is the objective. Or isn't it rather that we have acquired the habit of placing a too hastily drawn distinction between the objective and the subjective in our little thought-tank? Isn't the camera a subjective apparatus, entirely constructed with the help of an *x* and a *y* which take up residence in the domain which the subject inhabits, that is to say that of language?

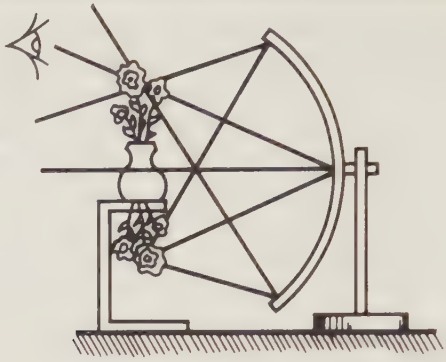
I will leave these questions hanging, to move straight on to a small example that I will try to get into your heads before I put it on the blackboard, because there is nothing more dangerous than things on the blackboard – it's always a bit flat.

It is a classical experiment, which used to be performed in the days when physics was fun, in the days when physics was really physics. Likewise, as for us, we find ourselves at a moment in time when psychoanalysis is really psychoanalysis. The closer we get to psychoanalysis being funny the more it is real psychoanalysis. Later on, it will get run in, it will be done by cutting corners and by pulling tricks. No one will understand any longer what's being done, just as there is no longer any need to understand anything about optics to make a microscope. So let us rejoice, we are still doing psychoanalysis.

Put a vast cauldron in place of me – which perhaps could quite happily stand in for me on some days, as a sound-box – a cauldron as close as possible to being a half-sphere, nicely polished on the inside, in short a spherical mirror. If it is brought forward almost as far as the table, you won't see yourselves inside it – hence, even if I were turned into a cauldron, the mirage effect that occurs from time to time between me and my pupils would not come about here. A spherical mirror produces a real image. To each point of a light ray emanating from any point on an object placed at a certain distance, preferably in the plane of the sphere's centre, there corresponds, in the same plane, through the convergence of the rays reflected on the surface of the sphere, another luminous point – which yields a real image of the object.

I am sorry that I haven't been able to bring the cauldron today, nor the experimental apparatuses. You'll have to represent them to yourselves.

Suppose that this is a box, hollow on this side, and that it's placed on a stand, at the centre of the half-sphere. On the box, you will place a vase, a real one. Beneath it, there is a bouquet of flowers. So, what is happening?



The experiment of the inverted bouquet

The bouquet is reflected in the spherical surface, meeting at the symmetrical point of luminosity. Consequently, a real image is formed. Note that the rays do not quite cross perfectly in my schema, but that is also true in reality, and for all optical instruments – one only ever gets an approximation. Beyond the eye, the rays continue their movement, and diverge once again. But for the eye, they are convergent, and give a real image, since the characteristic of rays which strike the eye in a convergent form is that they give a real image. Convergent in meeting the eye, they diverge in moving away from it. If the rays happen to meet the eye in the opposite sense, then a virtual image is formed. This is what happens when you look at an image in the mirror – you see it where it isn't. Here, on the contrary, you see it where it is – on the one condition that your eye be in the field of the rays which have already crossed each other at the corresponding point.

At that moment, while you do not see the real bouquet, which is hidden, if you are in the right field, you will see a very peculiar imaginary bouquet appear, taking shape exactly in the neck of the vase. Since your eyes have to move linearly in the same plane, you will have an impression of reality, all the while sensing that something is strange, blurred, because the rays don't quite cross over very well. The further away you are, the more parallax comes into play, and the more complete the illusion will be.

This is a fable we will put to a great deal of use. To be sure, this schema has no pretension to touch on anything which has a substantial relation to anything we deal with in analysis, the so-called real or objective relations, or the imaginary relations. But it allows us to illustrate in a particularly simple way what follows on from the strict intrication of the imaginary world and the real world in the psychic economy – now you are going to see how.

2

This little experiment pleased me. It is not me who invented it, it has been around for a long time, known as *the experiment of the inverted bouquet*. As it

stands, in its innocence – these authors didn't make it up for us – it seduces us with its contingent details, the vase and the bouquet.

Indeed, the specific domain of the primitive ego, *Urich* or *Lustich*, is constituted by a splitting, by a differentiation from the external world – what is included inside is differentiated from what is rejected by the processes of exclusion, *Aufstossung*, and of projection. From then on, if there are any notions which are placed at the forefront of every psychoanalytic conception of the primitive stage of the ego's formation, it is clearly those of container and contained. This is how the relation of the vase to the flowers that it contains can serve us as a metaphor, a most precious one at that.

You know that the process of his physiological maturation allows the subject, at a given moment in his history, to integrate effectively his motor functions, and to gain access to a real mastery of his body. Except the subject becomes aware of his body as a totality prior to this particular moment, albeit in a correlative manner. That is what I insist upon in my theory of the mirror-stage – the sight alone of the whole form of the human body gives the subject an imaginary mastery over his body, one which is premature in relation to a real mastery. This formation is separated from the specific process of maturation and is not confused with it. The subject anticipates on the achievement of psychological mastery, and this anticipation will leave its mark on every subsequent exercise of effective motor mastery.

This is the original adventure through which man, for the first time, has the experience of seeing himself, of reflecting on himself and conceiving of himself as other than he is – an essential dimension of the human, which entirely structures his fantasy life.

In the beginning we assume there to be all the ids, objects, instincts, desires, tendencies, etc. That is reality pure and simple then, which is not delimited by anything, which cannot yet be the object of any definition, which is neither good, nor bad, but is all at the same time chaotic and absolute, primal. This is the level Freud is referring to in *Die Verneinung*, when he talks about judgements of existence – either it is, or it is not. And it is here that the image of the body gives the subject the first form which allows him to locate what pertains to the ego and what does not. Well then, let us say that the image of the body, if we locate it in our schema, is like the imaginary vase which contains the bouquet of real flowers. That's how we can portray for ourselves the subject of the time before the birth of the ego, and the appearance of the latter.

I'm schematising, as you're quite well aware, but developing a metaphor, a thinking apparatus, requires that from the start one give a sense of what its use is. You will see that this apparatus here possesses a versatility which allows for all sorts of movement. You can invert the experiment's conditions – the pot could just as well be underneath and the flowers on top. You could make what is real imaginary at your discretion, on condition that you retain the relation of the signs, $+ - +$ or $- + -$.

For there to be an illusion, for there to be a world constituted, in front of the eye looking, in which the imaginary can include the real and, by the same token, fashion it, in which the real also can include and, by the same token, locate the imaginary, one condition must be fulfilled – as I have said, the eye must be in a specific position, it must be inside the cone.

If it is outside this cone, it will no longer see what is imaginary, for the simple reason that nothing from the cone of emission will happen to strike it. It will see things in their real state, entirely naked, that is to say, inside the mechanism, a sad, empty pot, or some lonesome flowers, depending on the case.

You might say – *We aren't an eye, what is this eye which wanders around?*

The box represents your own body, the bouquet, instincts and desires, the objects of desire which rove about. And the cauldron, what's that? That could well be the cortex. Why not? It would be fun – we'll discuss that some other day.

In the middle of this, your eye doesn't rove about, it is fixed there, like a titillating little appendage of the cortex. So, why am I telling you that it roves around and that, according to its position, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't?

The eye is here, as so often, symbolic of the subject.

The whole of science is based on reducing the subject to an eye, and that is why it is projected in front of you, that is to say objectivated – I'll explain that to you another time. In relation to the theory of the instincts, some time back someone proposed a very beautiful construction, the most paradoxical that I have ever heard professed, which entified the instincts. At the end, not a single one was left standing, and it was, just on this account, useful to undertake this demonstration. In order to reduce us for a moment to being only an eye, we had to put ourselves in the shoes of the scientist who can decree that he is just an eye, and can put a notice on the door – *Do not disturb the experimenter.* In life, things are entirely different, because we aren't an eye. So, this eye, what does it mean?

It means that, in the relation of the imaginary and the real, and in the constitution of the world such as results from it, everything depends on the position of the subject. And the position of the subject – you should know, I've been repeating it for long enough – is essentially characterised by its place in the symbolic world, in other words in the world of speech. Whether he has the right to, or is prohibited from, calling himself *Pedro* hangs on this place. Depending on what is the case, he is within the field of the cone or he isn't.

That is what you have to get into your heads, even if it seems a bit much, to understand what follows.

3

We must accept Melanie Klein's text for what it is, namely the write-up of an experiment.

Here's a boy, who, we are told, is about four years old, whose general level of development is between fifteen and eighteen months. That is a question of definition, and you never know what is meant. What is the instrument of measurement? Specification is often omitted. An affective development of fifteen to eighteen months, this notion remains even more fuzzy than the image of a flower in the experiment I just set up for you.

The child possesses a very limited vocabulary, more than just limited in fact, incorrect. He deforms words and uses them inopportunely most of the time, whereas at other times it is clear that he knows their meaning. Melanie Klein insists on the most striking fact – this child has no desire to make himself understood, he doesn't try to communicate, his only activities, more or less playful, are emitting sounds and taking pleasure in meaningless sounds, in noises.

Even so, this child possesses something of language – otherwise Melanie Klein could not make herself understood by him. He has some of the elements of the symbolic apparatus at his disposal. On the other hand, Melanie Klein, from this first, so crucial, contact with the child on, characterises his attitude as one of apathy, indifference. He is nonetheless not lacking in direction. He does not give the impression of being an idiot, far from it. Melanie Klein distinguishes him from all the neurotic children she had previously seen by observing that he gave no sign of anxiety, even in the disguised forms which it assumes in neurotics, either explosion or else withdrawal, stiffness, timidity. It could not escape the notice of this therapist, with all her experience. There he is, this child, as if nothing was going on. He looks at Melanie Klein as he would look at a piece of furniture.

I am underlining these aspects because I want to highlight the uniform character of reality for him. Everything is equally real for him, equally indifferent.

This is where Mlle Gélinier's quandaries begin.

The child's world, Melanie Klein tells us, is manufactured out of a container – this would be the body of the mother – and out of the contents of the body of this mother.[3] In the course of the development of his instinctual relations with this privileged object, the mother, the child is led into instigating a series of relations of imaginary incorporations. He can bite, absorb the body of his mother. The style of this incorporation is one of destruction.

In this maternal body, the child expects to encounter a certain number of objects, themselves possessing a specific unity, though objects which may be dangerous for him are included amongst them. Why dangerous? For exactly the same reason whereby he is dangerous for them. Mirroring them, as one might well say, he clothes them with the same capacities for destruction as

[3] The term Lacan uses is '*contenu*', which covers both the English 'contents' (the term Klein uses, see *op. cit.* p. 232 and particularly p. 221) and 'contained', which is the English term most appropriate for some of the uses to which Lacan is putting the term in this seminar.

those of which he feels himself the bearer. It is in virtue of this that he will come to accentuate their exteriority in relation to the initial limitations of his ego, and reject them like bad, dangerous objects, poo-poo.

Certainly these objects will be externalised, isolated, from this primal universal container, from this primal large whole that is the fantasised image of the mother's body, the entire empire of the primal infantile reality. But they will nevertheless always be endowed with the same maleficent accent which marked his first relations with them. That is why he will reintroject them, and switch his attention to other, less dangerous objects. For example, he will construct what is called the equation *faeces-urine*. Different objects from the external world, more neutralised, will be set up as the equivalents of these first ones, will be linked up with them through the imaginary – I am underlining it – equation. Hence, the symbolic equation that we rediscover between these objects arises from an alternating mechanism of expulsion and introjection, of projection and absorption, that is to say from an imaginary interplay.

It is specifically this interplay that I am trying to symbolise for you in my schema through the imaginary inclusions of real objects, or inversely, through the capturing of imaginary objects within a real enclosure.

In Dick's case, we see clearly that there is the skeleton of imagination, if I may say, of the external world. It is there ready to surface, but only ready to.

Dick plays with the container and the contained. Already, he has quite naturally entified in several objects, the little train for example, a certain number of tendencies, of persons even – himself as little train, in comparison with his father who is the big train. Moreover, the number of objects of significance is, surprisingly, for him very limited, limited to the minimal signs capable of expressing the inside and the outside, the contained and the container. Hence the dark space is straightaway assimilated to the inside of the mother's body, in which he seeks refuge. What doesn't happen is the free play, the conjunction between the different forms, imaginary and real, of objects.

That is why, when he seeks refuge in the empty, dark inside of the maternal body, there are no objects there, to Mlle Gélinier's great surprise. For one simple reason – in his case, the bouquet and the vase cannot both be there at the same time. That is the key.

Mlle Gélinier's astonishment is based on the fact that, for Melanie Klein, everything takes place on a plane of equal reality – of unreal reality,[4] as she puts it, which, in fact, doesn't facilitate our conceiving the dissociation of different sets[5] of primitive objects. Melanie Klein has neither a theory of the imaginary nor a theory of the *ego*. It is up to us to introduce these notions, and to understand that, in so far as one part of reality is imagined, the other is real and inversely, in so far as one part is reality, the other becomes imaginary. One can

[4] English in the original.
[5] English in the original.

see why, in the beginning, the conjunction of different parts, of sets,[6] can never be accomplished.

Here, we are in the mirror relation.

We call this the plane of projection. But can one designate the correlate of projection? One has to find another word than *introjection*. As we use it in analysis, the word 'introjection' is not the opposite of projection. It is almost only ever used, you will notice, when it is a question of symbolic introjection. It is always accompanied by a symbolic denomination. Introjection is always the introjection of the speech of the other, which introduces an entirely different dimension from that of projection. Around this distinction you can discriminate between what is a function of the *ego* and what pertains to the order of the dual relation, and what is a function of the super-ego. It is not for nothing that they are distinguished within analytic theory, nor that it is accepted that the super-ego, the authentic super-ego, is a secondary introjection in relation to the function of the ideal *ego*.

These are asides. I'll return to the case described by Melanie Klein.

The child is there. He has a certain number of significant registers at his disposition. Melanie Klein – we can follow her at this point – underlines the extreme restrictedness of one of them – the imaginary domain. Normally it is through the possibilities of play in the imaginary transposition that the progressive valorisation of objects comes about, on the plane that we commonly designate as affective, through a diversification, a fanning-out of all the imaginary equations which allow the human being to be the only animal to have at his disposition an almost infinite number of objects – objects marked with the value of a *Gestalt* in his *Umwelt*, objects isolated as to their forms. Melanie Klein underlines the poverty of the imaginary world, and, by the same token, the impossibility of this child entering into an effective relation with objects *qua* structures. An important correlation to grasp.

If we now sum up everything that Melanie Klein describes of this child's attitude, the significant point is simply the following – he makes no call.

The call – this is a notion that I ask you to retain. You are going to say to yourselves – *Of course, being Doctor Lacan, he uses this to go on about language again*. But the child already has his own system of language, quite sufficient. The proof is that he plays with it. He even makes use of it to play a game of opposition against the adults' attempts to intrude. For example, he behaves in a way which is said in the text to be negativistic.[6] When his mother suggests a name to him, one he is capable of reproducing in a correct manner, he reproduces it in an unintelligible, deformed manner, which cannot be of any use whatever. Here we rediscover the distinction to be drawn between negativism and negation – as M. Hyppolite reminded us, thus demonstrating

[6] English in the original.

not only his culture, but also that he has seen patients with his own eyes. As to Dick, he uses language in a strictly negativistic manner.

In consequence, in introducing the call, it isn't language that I am covertly slipping in. I will even go further – not only isn't it language, but it isn't a higher level of language. It is in fact beneath language, if we're talking of levels. You have only to observe a pet to see that a being deprived of language is quite capable of making calls on you, calls to draw your attention to something which, in some sense or other, it lacks. To the human call a further, richer development is reserved, because it takes place precisely in a being who has already reached the level of language.

Let us be schematic.

A certain Karl Bühler put forward a theory of language, which is neither unique, nor the most complete, but in it you'll find something of interest – he differentiates three stages in language. Unfortunately he located them in registers which do not make them very comprehensible.

First of all, the level of the statement as such, which is almost a level of the natural datum. I am at the level of the statement when I say the simplest thing to someone, for example an imperative. It is at this level of the statement that everything concerning the nature of the subject must be placed. An officer, a professor, will not give an order in the same language as a worker or foreman. At the level of the statement, from its style to its very intonation, everything we learn bears on the nature of the subject.

In any imperative, there's another plane, that of the call. It is a question of the tone in which the imperative is uttered. The same text can have completely different imports depending on the tone. The simple statement *stop* can have, depending on the circumstances, completely different imports as a call.

The third level is communication properly speaking – what is at issue, and its reference to the totality of the situation.

With Dick we are at the level of the call. The call acquires its weight within the already acquired system of language. Now, what is crucial here is that this child does not voice any call. The system whereby the subject comes to locate himself in language is interrupted, at the level of speech. Language and speech are not the same thing – this child is, up to a certain point, a master of language, but he doesn't speak. There is a subject here who quite literally does not reply.

Speech has not come to him. Language didn't stick to his imaginary system, whose register is extremely limited – valorisation of trains, of door-handles, of the dark. His faculties, not of communication, but of expression, are limited to that. For him, the real and the imaginary are equivalent.

Hence Melanie Klein here has to give up on technique. She has the minimum of material. She doesn't even have games – this child does not play. When he picks up a little train for a while, he doesn't play, he does it in the same way he moves through the air – as if he were an invisible being, or rather as if everything were, in a specific manner, invisible to him.

Melanie Klein here doesn't, as she is vividly aware, offer an interpretation. She starts off, she says, from ideas she already has, which are well known, as to what happens at this stage. I won't beat about the bush, I just tell him – *Dick little train, big train daddy-train.*

Thereupon, the child starts to play with his little train, and he says the word, *station.*[7] Crucial moment, when the sticking of language to the subject's imaginary begins to sketch itself.

Melanie Klein plays this back to him – *The station is mummy. Dick is going into mummy.* From this point on, everything starts firing. She'll only feed him these kinds of lines, and no others. And very quickly the child makes progress. That's a fact.

So what did Melanie Klein actually do? – nothing other than to bring in verbalisation. She symbolised an effective relationship, that of one named being with another. She plastered on the symbolisation of the Oedipal myth, to give it its real name. It's from that point on that, after an initial ceremony, taking refuge in the dark in order to renew contact with the container, something new awakens in the child.

The child verbalises a first call – a spoken call. He asks for his nurse, with whom he came in and who he had allowed to leave as if it were nothing to him. For the first time, he reacts by calling, which is not simply an affective call, mimed by the whole being, but a verbalised call, which from then on includes a reply. This is his first communication in the strict, technical sense of the term.

Things then progress to the point where Melanie Klein brings into play all the other elements of a situation which is from then organised, right up to and including the father himself, who comes to take his own part. Outside of the sessions, Melanie Klein says, the child's relations unfold on the plane of the Oedipus complex. The child symbolises the reality around him starting from this nucleus, this little palpitating cell of symbolism which Melanie Klein gave him.

That is what she later calls – *gaining access to his unconscious.*[8]

What did Melanie Klein ever do, which would reveal the least comprehension of any kind of process, which might, in the subject, amount to his unconscious? She accepts it from the start, out of habit. Do all read the case again and you will see in it the spectacular demonstration of the formula that I am always giving you – *the unconscious is the discourse of the other.*

Here is a case where it is absolutely apparent. There is nothing remotely like an unconscious in the subject. It is Melanie Klein's discourse which brutally grafts the primary symbolisations of the Oedipal situation on to the initial ego-related [*moïque*] inertia of the child. Melanie Klein always does that with her subjects, more or less implicitly, more or less arbitrarily.

In the extreme case, in the case of the subject who hasn't acceded to human

[7] English in the original.

[8] *'avoir ouvert les portes de son inconscient'* – the phrase is taken from Klein's paper (p. 229).

reality, since no call can be heard from him, what are the effects of the symbolisations introduced by the therapist? They specify an initial position from which the subject can introduce an interplay between the imaginary and the real and master his development. He is swallowed up in a series of equivalences, in a system in which objects are substituted one for the other. He runs through an entire sequence of equations which drive him out of the space between the doors where he had gone to seek refuge in the absolute darkness of the total container, to those objects which he substitutes for it – the wash-basin, for example. In this way he unfolds and articulates his entire world. And then, from the wash-basin, he moves on to an electric radiator, on to objects which are more and more complex. He accedes to richer and richer contents [*contenus*], such as to the possibility of defining the contained [*contenu*] and the non-contained [*non-contenu*].

Why speak in this case of the development of the *ego*? That's to confuse, as always, the *ego* and the subject.

Development only takes place in so far as the subject integrates himself into the symbolic system, acts within it, asserts himself in it through the use of genuine speech. It isn't even essential, you should note, that this speech be his own. In the couple that is temporarily constituted in what is, however, its least affectivated form, between the therapist and the subject, genuine speech can be brought forth. To be sure, not any old speech – that's where we perceive the virtue of the symbolic situation of the Oedipus complex.

It really is the key – a very elementary key. I have already pointed out to you that there most probably was a whole bunch of keys. One day perhaps I will give you a lecture on what we gain in this respect from the myths of primitive peoples – I wouldn't say inferior, because they aren't inferior, they know much more than we do. When we study a mythology, for example one that might perhaps appear with respect to a Sudanese population, we discover that for them the Oedipus complex is just a rather thin joke. It is a very tiny detail within an immense myth. The myth allows the cataloguing of a set of relations between subjects of a wealth and complexity besides which the Oedipus complex seems only to be so abridged an edition that in the end it cannot always be used.

But no matter. Us analysts have been satisfied with it up to now. Certainly, one does try to elaborate it a bit, but it is all rather timid. One always feels terribly tangled up because one doesn't distinguish easily between the imaginary, symbolic and real.

Now I want to bring the following to your attention. When Melanie Klein offers him the Oedipal schema, the imaginary relation which the subject lives, though extremely impoverished, is already complex enough for us to say that he has a world of his own. But for us this primitive real is literally ineffable. As long as he doesn't tell us anything about it, we have no means of gaining access

to it, except through symbolic extrapolations which constitute the ambiguity of all systems such as Melanie Klein's – she tells us, for instance, that within the empire of the maternal body, the subject is to be found with all his brothers, not to mention the father's penis, etc. Really?

It doesn't matter, since we can thus grasp in any case how this world is set in motion, how the imaginary and real begin to be structured, how the successive investments develop, investments which delineate the variety of human, that is nameable, objects. All of this process has its point of departure in this initial fresco constituted by a significative speech, formulating a fundamental structure which, in the law of speech, humanises man.

How can I put this in yet another way? Ask yourselves what the call represents in the field of speech. Well, it's the possibility of refusal. I say the *possibility*. The call doesn't imply refusal, it doesn't imply any dichotomy, any bipartition. But you can see for yourselves that it is when the call is made that dependency relations establish themselves in the subject. From then on he will welcome his nurse with open arms, and in deliberately hiding himself behind the door, he will all at once reveal in relation to Melanie Klein the need to have a companion in this cramped corner which he occupied for a while. Dependency will come in its train.

In this observation, then, you see, quite independently, the set of pre-verbal and post-verbal relations at play in the child. And you realise that the external world – what we call the real world, which is only a humanised, symbolised world, the work of transcendence introduced by the symbol into the primitive reality – can only be constituted when a series of encounters have occurred in the right place.

These positions belong to the same order as those which, in my schema, cause a given structuration of the situation to depend upon a given position of the eye. I will make further use of this schema. For today I only wanted to introduce a bouquet, but one can introduce the other.

Starting from Dick's case and by employing the categories of the real, the symbolic and the imaginary, I showed you how it can happen that a subject who has all the elements of language at his disposition, and who has the possibility of making several imaginary moves that allow him to structure his world, might not be in the real. Why isn't he in it? – simply because things didn't happen in a specific order. The figure is in its entirety upset. No way of giving this entirety any development whatsoever.

Are we dealing with the development of the *ego* here? Look at Melanie Klein's text again. She says that the *ego* had developed in too precocious a manner, in such a way that the child has too real a relation to reality, because the imaginary could find no place there – and then, in the second part of her sentence, she says that it is the *ego* which halts development. This simply means that the *ego* cannot be fruitfully employed as an apparatus in the structuring of

this external world. For one simple reason – because of the poor position of the eye, the *ego* quite simply doesn't appear.

Let the vase be virtual. The vase doesn't appear, and the subject remains in a reduced reality, with a similarly reduced imaginary baggage.

The core of this observation, which is what you must understand – the virtue of speech, in so far as the act of speech is a mode of functioning coordinated to a symbolic system that is already established, typical and significant.

It would be worth your while to ponder the questions, to reread the text, also to get the feel of this little schema so that you could see for yourselves what use you could put it to.

What I've given you today is a theoretical discussion in complete contrast with the set of problems raised last time by Mlle Gélinier. The title of the next session, which will take place in two weeks time, will be – *The transference – the different levels on which it should be studied.*

24 February 1954

VIII

The wolf! The wolf!

THE CASE OF ROBERT
THEORY OF THE SUPER-EGO
THE CORE OF SPEECH

In the course of our dialogue, you have been able to get acquainted with the ambition which rules our commentary, namely that of reconsidering the fundamental texts of the analytic experience. The moving spirit of our excavation is the following idea – whatever in an experience is always best seen is at some remove. So it is not surprising that it should be here and now that we are led, in order to understand the analytic experience, to begin again with what is implied by its most immediate given, namely the symbolic function, or what in our vocabulary is exactly the same thing – the function of speech.

We rediscover this, the central domain of analytic experience, signalled throughout Freud's oeuvre, never named, but signalled at every step. I don't think I am pushing it when I say that that is what can be immediately translated, almost algebraically, from any Freudian text. And this translation yields the solution of a number of antinomies which become apparent in Freud with that honesty which ensures that any given one of his texts is never closed, as if the whole of the system were in it.

For the next session, I would very much like someone to undertake to give a commentary on a text which exemplifies what I've just been saying. This text is to be found between 'Remembering, repeating and working-through' and 'Observations on transference-love', which are two of the most important texts in the collection of Papers on Technique. I am referring to 'On narcissism: an introduction'.

It is a text that we cannot but bring into our course, as soon as we have touched on the situation of the analytic dialogue. You will agree with that, if you know the further implications of these terms, *situation* and *dialogue* – dialogue in inverted commas.

We tried to define resistance within its own field. Then, we formulated a definition of transference. Now, you will be well aware of the great distance which separates – resistance, which keeps the subject from this full speech which analysis awaits from him, and which is a function of that anxiogenic

inflection constituted, in its most radical mode, at the level of symbolic exchange, by the transference – from this phenomenon which we handle in a technical manner in analysis and which seems to us to be the driving force,[1] as Freud put it, of the transference, namely love.

In 'Observations on transference-love', Freud did not hesitate to call the transference by the name, *love*. Freud is so little concerned to evade the phenomenon of love, of passionate love, in its most concrete sense, that he goes so far as to say that there is no really essential distinction between transference and what, in everyday life, we call love. The structure of this artificial phenomenon which is transference and that of the spontaneous phenomenon we call love, and more specifically passionate love, are, on the plane of the psychic, equivalent.

On Freud's part, there is no evading this phenomenon, no attempt to dissolve the scabrous into something symbolic, in the sense in which it is usually understood – the illusory, the unreal. Transference – is love.

Our inquiries are now going to centre on transference-love, to wind up our study of the Papers on Technique. This will take us to the heart of that other notion, which I am trying to bring in here, without which, what is more, it is not possible to arrive at a judicious apportioning of what we deal with in our experience – the function of the imaginary.

Don't get the idea that this function of the imaginary is absent from Freud's texts. It is no more so than the symbolic function. Freud quite simply didn't place it in the foreground, and didn't call attention to it everywhere it can be found. When we come to study 'On narcissism', you will see that Freud himself, in order to specify the difference between dementia praecox, schizophrenia, psychosis, on the one hand, and neurosis on the other, comes up with no other definition than the following, which may perhaps seem surprising to some of you. *A patient suffering from hysteria or obsessional neurosis has also, as far as his illness extends, given up his relation to reality. But analysis shows that he has by no means broken off his erotic relations to people and things. He still retains them in phantasy; i.e. he has, on the one hand, substituted for real objects imaginary ones from his memory, or has mixed the latter with the former;* – remember our schema from last time – *and on the other hand, he has renounced the initiation of motor activities for the attainment of his aims in connection with those objects. Only to this condition of the libido may we legitimately apply the term 'introversion' of the libido which is used by Jung indiscriminately. It is otherwise with the paraphrenic. He seems really to have withdrawn his libido from people and things in the external world, without replacing them by others in phantasy.* This simply means that he recreates this imaginative world . . . *When he* does *so replace them, the process seems to be a secondary one and to be part of an attempt at recovery, designed to lead the libido back to objects.*[2]

[1] (1915a) GW X 313; Stud Erg 224; SE XII 165 – *triebende Kräfte.*
[2] (1914c) GW X 139; Stud III 42; SE XIV 74.

Here we come to what is the essential distinction to be drawn between neurosis and psychosis, as to the functioning of the imaginary, a distinction which Schreber's analysis, which, I hope, we will be able to start before the end of the year, will enable us to consider in greater depth.

For today, I will yield the floor to Rosine Lefort, my student, here on my right, who, as I heard yesterday evening, presented her observations on a child, whom she had spoken of with me for a long time, to our sub-group dealing with the psychoanalysis of children. It is one of those serious cases which leave us with a great feeling of unease as to the diagnosis, and in a considerable quandary as to the nosology. But at all events, Rosine Lefort was able to penetrate deeply, as you will be able to see for yourselves.

Just as we started off, two lectures ago, with Melanie Klein's observation, today I yield the floor to Rosine Lefort. She will open up, in so far as time permits, questions to which I will provide answers which may well be included next time in my discussion entitled 'Transference in the imaginary'.

Dear Rosine, tell us about the case of Robert.

1

THE CASE OF ROBERT

MME LEFORT: *Robert was born on 4 March 1948. His past history has been reconstituted with some difficulty, and it is in large part owing to the material brought up in sessions that it has been possible to learn of the traumas he suffered.*

His father is not known. His mother is presently confined as a paranoiac. She kept him with her up to the age of five months, moving from house to house. She neglected his essential needs, to the point of forgetting to feed him. She had to be continually reminded to care for her child: washing, dressing, feeding. We have established that this child was so neglected as to suffer from hunger. He had to be hospitalised at the age of five months in an acute state of hypertrophy and wasting.

Scarcely had he been hospitalised when he suffered a bilateral otitis which necessitated a double mastoidectomy. He was then sent to Paul Parquet,[3] *whose strict prophylactic practice is well known. There, he was isolated, and fed on a drip on account of his anorexia. He came out at nine months, and was returned almost by force to his mother. Nothing is known of the two months he then spent with her. We pick up his scent again after his hospitalisation at eleven months, when he was again in a state of acute wasting. He was definitively and legally abandoned five months later without having seen his mother again.*

From that time up to the age of three years and nine months, this child underwent changes of residence twenty-five times, passing through institutions for children or hospitals, without ever being placed in a foster home, properly speaking. These

[3] Children's hospital in Paris.

hospitalisations were made necessary by childhood illnesses, by an adenoidectomy, by the neurological, ventriculographic, electro-encephalographic examinations he was given – result: normal. Health and medical evaluations were made indicating profound somatic disturbances, and then, the somatic ones having been improved upon, psychological deterioration. The last evaluation, at Denfert, when Robert was three and a half, suggested that he be confined, which could only have been definitive, on account of an unclearly defined para-psychotic state. Gesell's test gave an I.Q. of 43.

So he arrived, at the age of three and a half, at the institution, the unit at the Denfert repository, where I undertook his treatment. At that time, he was in the following condition.

From the point of view of height and weight, he was in very good shape, except for a chronic bilateral otorrhea. From the standpoint of motor activity, he had a swinging gait, extreme lack of coordination in his movements, a constant hyperagitation. From the point of view of language, complete absence of coordinated speech, frequent screams, guttural and discordant laughter. He yelled the only two words he knew – Miss! *and* wolf! *This word,* wolf!, *he repeated throughout the day, so I nicknamed him the* wolf-child, *because that really was the image he had of himself.*

From the point of view of his behaviour, he was hyperactive, continually prey to jerky and disorderly movements, without aim. Unorganised prehensive activity – he would throw his arm out to take hold of an object and if he didn't reach it, he couldn't correct it, and had to start the movement all over again from the beginning. A variety of sleeping problems. With this permanent condition as a background, he experienced convulsive fits of agitation, without any true convulsions, with reddening of the face, piercing howls, during each of the routine moments of his daily life – the pot, and above all the emptying of the pot, undressing, feeding, open doors, which he couldn't stand, likewise darkness, other children's yelling, and as we will see, moving rooms.

Less often, he had crises of a diametrically opposed sort, in which he was completely prostrate, staring aimlessly, like a depressive.

With an adult, he was hyperagitated, undifferentiated, without any true contact. Children he appeared to ignore, but when one of them screamed or cried, he went into a convulsive fit. In these moments of crisis, he became dangerous, he became strong, he throttled other children, and he had to be kept isolated during the night and at meals. At those times he betrayed neither a hint of anxiety, nor any emotion.

We didn't really know what category to put him in. But we tried to treat him nonetheless, though we did ask ourselves if anything would come of it.

I am going to tell you about the first year of treatment, which was then discontinued for a year. There were several phases in the treatment.

During the preliminary phase, he retained his everyday behaviour. Guttural screams. He would arrive in the room running without stopping, howling, jumping in the air and crouching down, putting his head between his hands, opening and closing the

door, switching the light on and off. With objects, he would either take them up or hurl them aside, or pile them on top of me. Very marked prognathism.

The only thing I could extract from these first few sessions was that he did not dare go near the feeding-bottle containing milk, or coming somewhat closer to it would blow on it. I also noted an interest in the wash-basin which, when full of water, seemed to spark off a real panic attack.

At the end of this preliminary phase, after one session, after having piled everything on top of me while in a very agitated state, he bolted and I heard him at the top of the staircase, which he didn't know how to go down by himself, saying in a pathetic voice, in a very low tone, for him unusual, Mummy, *looking into the emptiness.*

This preliminary phase came to an end outside the treatment. One evening, after going to bed, he tried to cut off his penis with a pair of plastic scissors, while standing on his bed in front of the other terrified children.

In the second part of the treatment, he started to reveal what Wolf! *meant to him. He would scream it all the time.*

He started, one day, by trying to strangle a little girl whom I had in treatment. They had to be separated and he was put in another room. He had a violent reaction, and was intensely disturbed. I had to come and bring him back into the room where he normally lived. As soon as he was there, he howled – Wolf!, *and started to throw everything across the room – it was the dining-hall – food and plates. In the days that followed, each time that he passed by the room where he had been put, he howled –* Wolf!

This also clarifies his behaviour towards doors, which he couldn't stand being left open, he spent the time of the session in opening them so as to make me close them again and howling – Wolf!

At this point we should recall his history – the shifting from place to place, the rooms, were for him a destruction, since he had never stopped changing places, nor adults. It had become a real principle of destruction for him, one which had intensely marked the primitive manifestations of his activity of ingestion and excretion. He expressed it mainly in two scenes, one with the feeding-bottle and the other with the pot.

He had at long last taken to the bottle. One day, he went to open the door, and held out the feeding-bottle to an imaginary person – whenever he was alone in a room with an adult, he carried on behaving as if there were other children around him. He held out the bottle. He came back tearing off the teat, he made me put it back on, held the bottle outside again, left the door open, turned his back on me, drank two gulps of milk, and, facing me, tore off the teat, threw back his head, covered himself in milk and spilt the rest over me. And, seized with panic he fled, unconscious and blind. I had to pick him up from the staircase which he'd started to roll down. At that moment I had the impression that he had swallowed the destruction and that the open door and the milk were linked.

The scene with the pot which followed was marked by the same destructive character. At the beginning of the treatment, he felt obliged to do his business in the session, thinking that if he gave me something, he would keep me. He could only do it pressed against me, sitting on the pot, holding my apron in one hand, and the bottle or a pencil in the other. He would eat before, and especially after. Not milk but sweets and cakes.

The emotional intensity betrayed great fear. The most recent of these scenes clarified the relation for him between defecation and destruction through changes.

In the course of this session, he had started to do his business, seated beside me. Then with his pooh beside him, he leafed through the pages of a book, turning the pages. Then he heard a noise from outside. Crazed with fear, he went out, took his pot, and set it down in front of the door of the person who had just gone into the room next door. Then he returned into the room where I was, and flattened himself against the door, howling – Wolf! Wolf!

I had the impression it was a propitiatory rite. He was incapable of giving this pooh to me. To some extent he knew that I didn't exact it from him. He went to put it outside, knowing full well that it would be thrown out, hence destroyed. So I interpreted his rite for him. Straightaway, he went to look for the pot, put it back in the room beside me, hid it with a piece of paper, saying, 'have no more, have no more',[4] *so as not to be obliged to give it.*

Then he started to be aggressive towards me, as if giving him permission to take possession of himself through this pooh which he had at his disposal. I had given him the possibility of being aggressive. Clearly, not being able to own, up until then, he didn't have a sense of aggressivity, but only of auto-destruction, specifically when he attacked the other children.

From that day on, he no longer felt obliged to do his business in the session. He used symbolic substitutes, sand. He was acutely confused as to his own self, the contents of his body, objects, children, and the adults who surrounded him. His state of anxiety, of agitation, became more and more acute. For the rest of the time he was becoming unbearable. I would actually witness truly hectic sessions in which I had considerable difficulty intervening.

That day, after having drunk a little milk, he spilt it on the floor, then threw sand into the wash-basin, filled the feeding-bottle with sand and water, peed in the pot, put sand in it. Then he shovelled up milk mixed with sand and water, added the lot to the pot, and placed the india-rubber baby and the bottle on top of it, and entrusted the whole of it to me.

Then, he went to open the door, and came back with fear written all over his face. He again took up the bottle which was in the pot and broke it, working feverishly on it until he had reduced it to little pieces. He then gathered them all carefully together, and buried them into the sand in the pot. He was in such a state that I had to take him down, feeling that I couldn't do anything for him any more. He brought the pot along.

[4] *'a pu, a pu'.*

A bit of sand fell on the ground, unleashing unbelievable panic in him. He had to gather up every last bit of sand, as if it was a piece of himself, and he howled – Wolf! Wolf!

He couldn't stand being put in the group, he couldn't stand any child coming close to his pot. He had to be put to bed in a state of extreme tension, which, in a spectacular manner, was only relieved by a diarrhetic debacle, which he spread everywhere in his bed and on the walls, with his hands.

The whole of this scene was so pathetic, lived through with such anxiety, that I was very worried, and I started to get a sense of the idea he had of himself.

He gave it greater precision the next day, when I had to frustrate him – he ran to the window, opened it and cried out – Wolf! Wolf!, *and, seeing his own image in the glass, he hit it, crying out* – Wolf! Wolf!

That is the way Robert represented himself, he was the Wolf! *It was his own image that he hit or that he evoked with such intensity. This pot into which he placed what comes into him and what comes out, the pee and the pooh, then a human image, the doll, then the pieces of the bottle, it really was an image of himself, akin to that of the wolf, as the panic generated when a bit of sand fell on the floor testified. In sequence and at the same time, he was all the elements that he put into the pot. He was just the series of objects through which he came into contact with daily life, symbols of the contents of his body. The sand is the symbol of faeces, the water that of urine, the milk that of what enters his body. But the scene with the pot shows that he differentiated very little between these things. For him, all of these contents are united in the same feeling of permanent destruction of his body, which, in opposition to these contents, represents the container, and which he symbolised with the broken bottle, whose pieces were buried under these destructive contents.*

In the following phase, he exorcised the Wolf! *I say exorcise because this child gave me the impression of being possessed. Thanks to my permanent presence, he was able to exorcise, with a little of the milk he had drunk, the scenes from daily life which did him such harm.*

At that point, my interpretations above all tended to differentiate the contents of his body from the affective point of view. The milk is what one receives. Pooh is what one gives, and its value depends on the milk one has received. Pee is aggressive.

Many sessions went on in this way. Just when he was peeing in the pot, he would inform me – Not pooh, it's pee. *He was sorry. I reassured him in telling him that he received too little to be able to give something without destroying him. That reassured him. He could then go and empty the pot in the toilet.*

The emptying of the pot was surrounded with many protective rites. He started by emptying the urine into the sink in the toilet while letting the tap run so as to be able to replace the urine with water. He filled the pot, letting it amply overflow, as if a container only had an existence through its content and also had to overflow so as to contain it in its turn. There we have a syncretistic vision of being in time, as container and contained, exactly like an intra-uterine existence.

Here he rediscovered this confused image that he had of himself. He emptied the pee,

while trying to catch it again, convinced that it was he who was leaving. He howled – Wolf!, *and the pot only had a reality for him when full. My whole concern was to show him the reality of the pot, which was still there after having been emptied of his pee; just as he, Robert, was still there after having peed, and the tap wasn't washed away by the water which ran from it.*

*On account of these interpretations and my continued presence, Robert progressively introduced a delay between emptying and filling, until the day when he was able to return, triumphantly carrying an empty pot in his arms. He had quite clearly acquired the idea of the permanence of his body. His clothes were for him his container, and when he was stripped of them, it was certain death. The business of undressing was for him the occasion for genuine crises, the most recent one having lasted three hours, during which the staff described him as possessed. He howled –*Wolf!, *running from one bedroom to the next, smearing the other children with faeces that he found in the pots. It was only once he was tied up that he calmed down.*

The next day, he came to the session, started to undress in an extreme state of anxiety, and, completely naked, climbed into the bed. It took three sessions before he was able to drink a little milk, completely naked in the bed. He pointed to the window and the door, and hit his image while howling – Wolf!

In parallel, in daily life, undressing was easy, but was followed by a deep depression. He started to sob without reason each evening, seeking comfort from the ward-sister downstairs, going to sleep in her arms.

At the end of this phase, he had exorcised with me the emptying of the pot, as well as the undressing scene, through my continuing presence, which had turned milk into a constructive element. But, driven by the necessity of building up a minimum, he hadn't touched on the past, he only counted on the present of everyday life, as if he were deprived of memory.

In the next phase, it was I who became the Wolf!

He made use of the little bit of construction he had succeeded in accomplishing to project on to me all the badness he had drunk, and, in some way, to rediscover his memory. He was thus progressively able to become aggressive. This was to turn tragic. Driven by the past, he had to be aggressive towards me, and yet, at the same time, in the present I was the one he needed. I had to reassure him by my interpretations, speak to him about the past which was forcing him to be aggressive, and assure him that it wouldn't cause me to disappear, nor shift him from where he was, something he always took as a punishment.

When he had been aggressive towards me, he would try to destroy himself. He would represent himself by the bottle, and would try to break it. I would take it out of his hands, because he wasn't in a fit state to cope with breaking it. He would then take up the thread of the session, and his aggressivity towards me continued.

At that point, he made me play the role of his starving mother. He forced me to sit on a chair on which a mug of milk was sat, so that I would knock it over, thus depriving

him of his good food. Then he started howling – Wolf!, *took the cot and wash-tub and threw them out of the window. He turned against me, and, with great violence made me swallow dirty water while howling –* Wolf! Wolf! *Here this feeding-bottle stood for bad food, and was a throwback to his separation from his mother, who had deprived him of food, and to all the changes which he was made to suffer.*

In parallel, he conferred another aspect of the bad mother on me, the role of the one who leaves. One evening, he saw me leaving the institution. The next day, he reacted, even though he had seen me leave on other occasions without being capable of expressing the emotion that he must have felt. That day, he peed on me whilst in a highly aggressive, and also anxious, state.

This scene was only the prologue to a final scene, which resulted in my being definitively burdened with all the bad things that had happened to him, and in projecting on to me the Wolf!

So, because I used to leave, I was made to swallow the bottle of dirty water and was on the receiving end of the aggressive pee. So I was the Wolf! *Robert separated himself from it during one session, by shutting me in the toilets, then returned to the room where we had the sessions, all alone, climbed into the empty bed, and started to moan. He could not call me, yet I did have to come back, since I was the permanent person. I came back. Robert was stretched out, pathetic, his thumb now within an inch of his mouth. And, for the first time in a session, he held out his arms to me and let himself be consoled.*

From this session on, the institution witnessed a total change in his behaviour. I had the impression that he had exorcised the Wolf!

From this point on, he no longer talked about it, and could move on to the next phase – intra-uterine regression, that is to say the construction of his body, of the body-ego,[5] *which he hadn't been able to do up till then.*

To use the dialectic that he himself had always used, that of the contained-container, Robert was obliged, in order to construct himself, to be my content, but had to make sure of his possession of me, that is to say of his future container.

He started this period by using a bucket full of water, the handle of which was made of rope. He absolutely could not stand this rope being attached to the two ends. It had to hang on one side. I had been struck by the fact that when I had had to tie the rope up again for carrying the bucket, he had experienced pain that seemed almost physical. One day, he put the bucket full of water between his legs, took the rope and brought its end up to his navel. I then had the impression that the bucket was me, and he was attaching himself to me with an umbilical cord. Then, he overturned the contents of the bucket of water, took all his clothes off, and then lay down in the water, in a foetal position, curled up, stretching himself out from time to time, and going so far as opening and closing his mouth on the liquid, just as a foetus drinks the amniotic fluid.

[5] English in the original.

as the most recent American experiments have shown. I had the impression that this was how he was constructing himself.

Exceedingly agitated at the beginning, he became aware of a certain reality of pleasure, and everything came to a climax in two key scenes, enacted in an extraordinarily collected manner, and with an astonishing completeness, given his age and his general condition.

In the first of these scenes, Robert, completely naked and facing me, collected up the water in his cupped hands, raised it to the level of his shoulders and let it run the length of his body. He started afresh like this several times, and then he said to me, softly – Robert, Robert.

This baptism in water – because it was a baptism, given the collected manner in which he accomplished it – was followed by a baptism in milk.

He started by playing in the water with more pleasure than contemplativeness. Then, he took his glass of milk and drank it. Then he put the teat back on and started running the milk from the feeding-bottle the length of his body. As it didn't flow fast enough, he took the teat off, and started afresh, making milk run over his chest, his stomach and along his penis with an intense feeling of pleasure. Then he turned towards me, showed me this penis, taking it in his hand, with an air of complete rapture. Then he drank some milk, thus putting some both inside and outside him, in such a way that the content was both contained and container at once, rediscovering the same scene that he had enacted with the water.

In the subsequent phases, he moved on to the stage of oral construction.

This stage is extremely difficult, very complex. First of all, he was four years old and he was living through the most primitive of the stages. What is more, the other children that I then had in treatment in this institution were girls, which created a problem for him. Finally Robert's patterns[6] *of behaviour had not entirely disappeared and had a tendency to return whenever he encountered frustration.*

After his baptism by water and milk, Robert started to experience the symbiosis which characterises the primitive mother-child relationship. But when the child actually lives through it, there is normally no problem of sexuality, at least in the direction, new-born to the mother. Whereas here, there was one.

Robert had to set up a symbiosis with a feminine mother, which thus presented him with the problem of castration. The problem was to get him to accept food without this entailing his castration.

At first he experienced this symbiosis in a simple form. Seated on my knees, he ate. Then, he took my ring and my watch and put them on, or he took a pencil from my smock and broke it with his teeth. Then I interpreted it for him. This identification with a castrating phallic mother remained from then on within the plane of the past, and was accompanied by a reactional aggressivity whose motivations changed over time. He now only broke the lead of his pencil to punish himself for this aggressivity.

[6] English in the original.

After that, he could drink milk from the bottle, resting in my arms, but it was he who held the bottle. It was only later that he could cope with my holding the bottle, as if the whole of the past forbade him from taking into him, from me, the contents of so essential an object.

His desire for symbiosis was still in conflict with his past. That's why he opted for the expedient of giving himself the bottle. But as he acquired the experience, by means of other foods, such as pap and cakes, that the food he received from me in the course of this symbiosis didn't make him into a girl, he could then accept it from me.

He first tried to differentiate himself from me by sharing with me. He gave me everything to eat, saying, while touching himself – Robert, *then touching me* – Not Robert. *I made great use of this in my interpretations to help him differentiate himself. The situation then ceased being only between him and me, and he brought in the little girls who I had in treatment.*

It was a castration problem, since he knew that a little girl came up for sessions with me before him and after him. So the logic of emotions required that he turn himself into a girl, since it was a girl who broke the symbiosis he needed with me. The situation was one of conflict. He played it out in different ways, peeing seated on the pot, or else doing it standing up, while showing himself to be aggressive.

Robert was now capable of receiving, and capable of giving. He gave me his pooh without fear of being castrated by this gift.

So we had got to a stage in the treatment that can be summarised as follows – the contents of his body are no longer destructive, bad, Robert is capable of expressing his aggressivity in peeing standing up, without the existence and integrity of the container, that is to say his body, being put into question.

The Gesell IQ had changed from 43 to 80, and on the Terman-Merill, he had an IQ of 75. The clinical picture had changed, his motor difficulties had disappeared, as well as the prognathism. With the other children, he had become friendly and often protective of the smaller ones. One could start to integrate him into the group activities. Only his language remained rudimentary, Robert never put together sentences, he only used key words.

Then I left on holiday. I was away for two months.

On my return, he made a scene which showed the coexistence in him both of patterns[7] *from the past and of the present construction.*

While I was away, his behaviour had remained as it had been – what the separation meant to him, his fear of losing me, was expressed in the old way, but in a very rich fashion, on account of what he had since acquired.

When I returned, he emptied out, as if to destroy them, the milk, his pee, his pooh, then took off his smock and threw it in the water. He thus destroyed his old contents and his old container, rediscovered through the trauma of my absence.

The next day, overwhelmed by his psychological reaction, Robert expressed himself

[7] English in the original.

on the somatic plane – profuse diarrhoea, vomiting, fainting. He emptied himself completely of his past image. Only my continuous presence could make the connection with a new image of himself – like a new birth.

At that moment, he acquired a new image of himself. We saw him re-enacting in the session ancient traumas we knew nothing of. Robert drank from the bottle, put the teat in his ear, and then broke the bottle, in a condition of acute violence.

Now, he could do it without the integrity of his own body suffering from it. He separated himself from the symbol of the bottle, and could express himself through the bottle qua *object. This session was so striking – he repeated it twice – that I made inquiries about what happened when he had had the antrotomy at the age of five months. We then learned that in the E.N.T. ward where he had been operated upon, he had not been given an anaesthetic, and that throughout the painful operation a bottle of sweetened water had been kept forced in his mouth.*

This traumatic episode clarified the image that Robert had constructed of a starving, paranoiac, dangerous mother, who certainly attacked him. Then the separation, a bottle held by force, making him swallow his cries. The force-feedings with the tube, twenty-five moves in succession. I had the impression it was Robert's tragedy that all his oral-sadistic fantasies had been realised in the actual events of his life. His fantasies had become reality.

Lately, I have had to confront him with something real. I was away for a year, and I returned eight months pregnant. He saw me pregnant. He started playing with fantasies of the destruction of this child.

I disappeared for the birth. While I was away, my husband took him into treatment, and he acted out the destruction of this child. When I returned, he saw me thin, and childless. So he was convinced that his fantasies had become reality, that he had killed the child, and hence that I was going to kill him.

He has been extremely disturbed in the last fortnight, up until the day when he was able to tell me about it. Then and there, I confronted him with reality. I brought him my daughter, in such a way that he would now be able to make the break. His level of agitation subsided instantly, and the next day, when I had him for a session, he started at last to demonstrate some jealousy. He was becoming attached to something living and not to death.

This child had always remained at the staye in which fantasies are realities. That is what explains why his fantasies of intra-uterine form had been reality in the treatment, so that he could perform an astonishing construction. If he had gone past this stage, I wouldn't have been able to have secured this construction of himself.

As I was saying yesterday, I had the impression that this child had sunk under the real, that at the beginning of the treatment there was no symbolic function in him, still less an imaginary function.

But he did have two words.

2

M. Hyppolite: *I want to ask a question about the word* Wolf! *Where did* Wolf! *come from?*

Mme Lefort: *In children's homes, you often see nurses scaring them with the wolf. In the home where I had him in treatment, one day when the children were impossible to deal with, they were shut in the children's garden, and a nurse went outside to howl like a wolf so as to make them be good.*

M. Hyppolite: *It still has to be explained why fearing the wolf took hold in him, just as with so many other children.*

Mme Lefort: *The wolf was quite clearly the devouring mother, in part.*

M. Hyppolite: *Do you think that the wolf is always the devouring mother?*

Mme Lefort: *In children's stories, the wolf is always about to eat. At the oral-sadistic stage, the child wishes to eat its mother, and thinks that its mother is going to eat it. Its mother becomes the wolf. I think that that is probably its genesis but I'm not sure. In this child's history there are many things of which I am ignorant, which I wasn't able to find out about. When he wanted to be aggressive towards me, he didn't go on all fours, nor did he bark. At the moment he does. Now he knows that he is human, but he needs, from time to time, to identify himself with an animal, just like a child of eighteen months. And when he wants to be aggressive, he gets on all fours, and goes* wouh, wouh, *without the least anxiety. Then he stands up and carries on with the rest of the session. He can still only express his aggressivity at this stage.*

M. Hyppolite: *Yes, it's between* zwingen *and* bezwingen.[8] *There's a world of difference between the word implying constraint, and the one which doesn't. Constraint,* Zwang, *is the wolf who creates anxiety in him, and once the anxiety is overcome,* Bezwingung, *that's when he plays the wolf.*

Mme Lefort: *Yes, I quite agree.*

Naturally the wolf raises all the problems of symbolism: it isn't a function with a limit, since we are forced to search out its origin in a general symbolisation.

Why the wolf? We are not particularly familiar, in this part of the world, with this character. The fact that it is the wolf who is chosen to produce these effects ties us straightaway to a broader function on the mythical, folkloric, religious, primitive plane. The wolf is part of a complete filation, which connects up with secret societies, with everything that implies in the way of initiation, either in the adoption of a totem, or in the identification with a character.

[8] *Zwingen* and *bezwingen* are both often roughly translated as 'to overcome, to vanquish'. *Zwang* is the term most often rendered in English by 'compulsion' (cf. '*Zwangsneurose*', '*Zwangsvorstellung*' – 'obsessional neurosis', 'obsessional idea').

It is difficult to draw these distinctions in relation to such an elementary phenomenon, but I would like to draw your attention to the difference between the super-ego and the ego-ideal, in the determination of repression.

I don't know if you have realised the following – here we have two conceptions which seem to lead in exactly opposite directions, as soon as one brings them into play, in any kind of dialectic, in order to explain the behaviour of a patient. The super-ego is constraining and the ego-ideal exalting.

These are things that one tends to gloss over, because we move from one term to the other as if the two were synonymous. It is a question which is worth pursuing in relation to the transference relationship. When one looks for the basis of therapeutic action, one says that the subject identifies the analyst with his ego-ideal or on the contrary with his super-ego, and, in the same text one substitutes one for the other in accordance with the unfolding of the demonstration, without really explaining what the difference is.

Certainly I will be led to examine the question of the super-ego. I should say from the start that, if we don't limit ourselves to a blind, mythical usage of this term, this key-word, this idol, the super-ego is essentially located within the symbolic plane of speech, in contrast to the ego-ideal.

The super-ego is an imperative. As is indicated by common sense and by the uses to which it is put, it is consonant with the register and the idea of the law, that is to say with the totality of the system of language, in so far it defines the situation of man as such, that is to say in so far as he is not just a biological individual. On the other hand, one should also emphasise, as a counter to this, its senseless, blind character, of pure imperativeness and simple tyranny. What path will allow us to bring these notions into a synthesis?

The super-ego has a relation to the law, and is at the same time a senseless law, going so far as to become a failure to recognise [*méconnaissance*] the law. That is always the way we see the super-ego acting in the neurotic. Isn't it because the morality of the neurotic is a senseless, destructive, purely oppressive, almost always anti-legal morality, that it became necessary to elaborate on the function of the super-ego in analysis?

The super-ego is at one and the same time the law and its destruction. As such, it is speech itself, the commandment of law, in so far as nothing more than its root remains. The law is entirely reduced to something, which cannot even be expressed, like the *You must*, which is speech deprived of all its meaning. It is in this sense that the super-ego ends up by being identified with only what is most devastating, most fascinating, in the primitive experiences of the subject. It ends up being identified with what I call *the ferocious figure*, with the figures which we can link to primitive traumas the child has suffered, whatever these are.

In this very special case, we see, embodied there, this function of language, we touch on it in its most reduced form, reduced down to a word whose

meaning and significance for the child we are not even able to define, but which nonetheless ties him to the community of mankind. As you have quite aptly remarked, this isn't a wolf-child who might have lived in a savage state, but a speaking child, and it is through this *Wolf!* that you had the possibility, right from the beginning, of establishing a dialogue.

What is remarkable in this case is the moment when, after a scene which you described, the use of the word *Wolf!* disappeared. It is around this pivot of language, of the relationship to this word, which for Robert is the summary of a law, that the turning-point from the first to the second phase occurs. There then follows this extraordinary elaboration, brought to a close by this touching self-baptism, when he utters his own Christian name. At that point we come close to the fundamental relation, in its most reduced form, of man to language. It is extraordinarily moving.

What questions do you still want to raise?

MME LEFORT: *What is the diagnosis?*

Well, there are some people who have already taken a stand on this. Lang, I've been told that you had said something on this subject yesterday evening, something which appeared to me to be interesting. I think the diagnosis you made is only analogical. By making a reference to the categories that exist in nosography, you uttered the word. . . .

DR LANG: *Hallucinatory delirium.*[9] *One can always try to look for an analogy between relatively deep disturbances in the behaviour of children and what we are familiar with in adults. And most often we talk about infantile schizophrenia when we don't quite know what is happening. An essential element is lacking here, needed in order to talk of schizophrenia, namely dissociation. There is no dissociation, because there is scarcely any construction. It seemed to me reminiscent of certain forms of organisation of hallucinatory delirium. I had great reservations yesterday evening, because there is a margin between direct observation of the child at this age and what we know from our usual nosography. In this particular case many things would have to be clarified.*

Yes. That is how I understood what you had said when it was passed on to me. A hallucinatory delirium, by which you mean a chronic hallucinatory psychosis, has only one thing in common with what is happening in this subject, and that is this dimension, which Mme Lefort subtly highlighted, which is that this child lives only the real. If the word *hallucination* means something, it is this feeling of reality. In hallucination there is something which the patient truly takes to be real.

[9] The French term is '*délire*', notoriously difficult to translate, since it has a wider range than 'delirium'; it has occupied an important place in French psychiatric terminology for well over a century.

You know how much this remains a problem, even in a hallucinatory psychosis. In an adult chronic hallucinatory psychosis, there is a synthesis of the imaginary and the real, which is the entire problem of psychosis. Here we find a secondary imaginary elaboration which Mme Lefort has highlighted, which is literally non-inexistence in the nascent state.

It's a long time since I have re-examined the case. And yet, the last time we met, I had put before you the grand schema of the vase and the flowers, in which the flowers are imaginary, virtual, illusory, and the vase real, or inversely, because one can set up the apparatus the other way round.

At this juncture, all I can do is point out to you the pertinence of this model, constructed around the relation between the contained-flowers and the container-vase. The container-contained system, which I already placed in the foreground with the significance that I give to the mirror-stage, is here seen being played out to the full, and quite nakedly. We see the child behaving in accordance with the more or less mythical function of the container, and, as Mme Lefort has noted, only being able to endure it being empty at the end. To be capable of enduring its emptiness is, in the end, to identify it as a truly human object, that is to say, an instrument, capable of being detached from its function. And it is essential in so far as in the human world, there is not only utility, but also the tool,[10] that is to say instruments, which exist as things in their own right.

M. Hyppolite: *Universal.*

Dr Lang: *The way in which the wolf changes from being vertical to horizontal is rather delightful. It does seem to me precisely that the wolf of the beginning is lived through.*

It is neither him nor anyone else, at the beginning.

Dr Lang: *It's reality.*

No, I think that it is essentially speech reduced down to its core. It is neither him nor anyone else. He is clearly the *wolf!* in so far as he says this very word. But the *wolf!* is anything in so far as it can be named. Here you see the nodal state of speech. Here the ego is completely chaotic, speech has come to a halt. But, starting with the *wolf!* he will be able to take his place and construct himself.

Dr Bargues: *I noticed the fact that there was a change at a particular moment, when the child played with his excrement. He gave, transformed and took sand and water. I think that it is the imaginary which he started to construct and reveal. He could already take a greater distance from the object, his excrement, and then he distanced himself further and further. I don't think that one can talk of the*

[10] '*l'utile*' and '*l'outil*'.

symbol in the sense in which you understand it. However, yesterday, I had the impression that Mme Lefort talked about them as symbols.

It's a difficult question. It is the one we are addressing here, in as much as it may be the key to what we designate as the ego. What is the ego? These aren't homogeneous agencies. Some are realities, others are images, imaginary functions. The ego itself is one of them.

This is what I would like to turn to before we leave. What musn't be left out is what you described to us in such an absorbing way at the beginning – the motor activity of this child. This child seems to have suffered no lesion of the organic systems. What sort of motor behaviour has he now? How are his grasping gestures?

MME LEFORT: *To be sure, he no longer is as he was at the beginning.*

At the beginning, as you have described him, when he wanted to reach an object, he could only grasp it in one complete gesture. If this gesture failed him, he had to start again from the beginning. So he is in control of visual adaptation, but he suffers from disturbances of his sense of distance. This wild child can always, like a well organised animal, catch what he wishes. But if there is something wrong or lacking in the act, he can only correct it in doing the whole thing over again. Consequently, we can say that there doesn't seem to have been any deficiency or backwardness bearing on the pyramidal system in this child, but we are confronted with signs of failures in the functions of ego-synthesis, in the sense in which we understand the ego in analytic theory.

The lack of attention, the unarticulated agitation that you also observed, at the beginning, must also be linked to failures of the ego's functions. Besides, one should take note that, in certain respects, analytic theory goes so far as to make sleep a function of the ego.

MME LEFORT: *From the memorable day when he locked me up, his motor disturbances diminished, and this child, who neither slept nor dreamt, began to dream in the night, and to call his mother in his dreams.*

That is what I was trying to get at. I am not overlooking the direct relation between the atypicality of his sleep and the anomalous character of his development, whose backwardness is to be placed precisely on the plane of the imaginary, on the plane of the ego in so far as it is an imaginary function. This observation shows us that, from the backwardness of a given point in imaginary development, there ensues disturbances of certain functions which are apparently of a lower level than what we may call the superstructural level.

What gives this case its special interest is the relation between the strictly sensorimotor maturation and the function of imaginary mastery by the subject. That is the question. The point is to know to what extent it is this particular articulation which is involved in schizophrenia.

According to our inclination and the idea each of us has of schizophrenia, of its mechanism and of its fundamental source, we can include or exclude this case from the category of schizophrenic illness.

It is clear that it isn't schizophrenia in the sense of a state, in as much as you have showed us its significance and its movement. But there is here a schizophrenic structure of the relation to the world and an entire set of phenomena that we could, if need be, bring into line with the catatonic set of phenomena. To be sure, strictly speaking there is no symptom of it, so that we can place the case, as Lang did, in any one given category, only in order to give it an approximate location. But some deficiencies, some failures in adaptation to the human, point towards something which later, analogically speaking, would present itself as a schizophrenia.

I think that one can't say any more about it, except that it is what one calls an exemplary case. After all, we have no reason to think that the nosological categories have been there all along, awaiting us from eternity. As Péguy said, the little pegs always fit into the little holes, but there comes a time when the little pegs no longer correspond to the little holes. That it is a question of phenomena of a psychotic nature, more exactly of phenomena which may terminate in psychosis, seems indisputable to me. Which doesn't mean that all psychoses have analogous beginnings.

Leclaire, I'm asking you specifically to work out something for next time from 'On narcissism: an introduction', which is to be found in volume IV of the *Collected Papers*, or in volume X of the complete works. You'll see that what is at issue are the questions raised by the register of the imaginary, which we are in the course of studying here.

10 March 1954

IX

On narcissism

CONCERNING PERFORMATIVES[1]
SEXUALITY AND LIBIDO
FREUD OR JUNG
THE IMAGINARY IN NEUROSIS
THE SYMBOLIC IN PSYCHOSIS

For those who weren't here last time, I am going to appraise the utility as I see it of bringing Freud's article '*Zur Einführung des Narzissmus*' in at this point.

1

How can we take stock of our findings to date? This week, I realised, not without satisfaction, that some of you have started to be seriously concerned about the systematic usage that I recommend to you here, and have done for some time, of the categories of the symbolic and the real. You know that I insist on the notion of the symbolic by telling you that it is always advisable to start with that notion in order to understand what we are doing when we intervene in analysis, and especially when we intervene in a positive fashion, namely through interpretation.

We have been led to emphasise that aspect of resistance which is to be located at the very level of the utterance of speech. Speech can express the being of the subject, but, up to a certain point, it never succeeds in so doing. So we have now reached the point where we ask ourselves the question – in relation to speech how should one locate all these affects, all these imaginary references which are ordinarily invoked when one wants to define the action of the transference in the analytic experience? You have clearly perceived that it is not a matter of course.

Full speech is speech which aims at, which forms, the truth such as it becomes established in the recognition of one person by another. Full speech is speech which performs.[2] One of the subjects finds himself, afterwards, other than he was before. That is why this dimension cannot be evaded in the analytic experience.

[1] '*De ce qui fait acte*' – *faire acte* means 'to act as, to give proof of'. The term 'performative' is taken from J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.

[2] '*qui fait acte*'.

We cannot think of the analytic experience as a game, a lure, an intrigue based on an illusion, a suggestion. Its stake is full speech. Once this point has been made, as you might have already noticed, lots of things sort themselves out and are clarified, but lots of paradoxes and contradictions appear. The value of this conception is precisely to bring out these paradoxes and contradictions, which doesn't make them opacities and obscurities. On the contrary, it is often what appears to be harmonious and comprehensible which harbours some opacity. And inversely it is in the antinomy, in the gap, in the difficulty, that we happen upon opportunities for transparency. This is the point of view on which our method is founded, and so, I hope, is our progress.

The first of the contradictions to appear is the remarkable fact that the analytic method, if it aims at attaining full speech, starts off on a path leading in the diametrically opposed direction, in so far as it instructs the subject to delineate a speech as devoid as possible of any assumption of responsibility and that it even frees him from any expectation of authenticity. It calls on him to say everything that comes into his head. It is through these very means that it facilitates, that is the least one can say, his return on to the path which, in speech, is below the level of recognition and concerns the third party, the object.

Two planes have always been distinguished within which the exchange of human speech is played out – the plane of recognition in so far as speech links the subjects together into this pact which transforms them, and sets them up as human subjects communicating – the plane of the *communiqué*, in which one can distinguish all sorts of levels, the call, discussion, knowledge, information, but which, in the final analysis, involves a tendency to reach an agreement on the object. The term 'agreement' is still there, but here the emphasis is placed on the object considered as external to the action of speech, which speech expresses.

To be sure, the object is not devoid of reference to speech. From the start, it is already partially given in the system of objects, or objective system,[3] in which one should include the accumulated prejudices which make up a cultural community, up to and including the hypotheses, the psychological prejudices even, from the most sophisticated generated by scientific work to the most naive and spontaneous, which most certainly do not fail considerably to influence scientific references, to the point of impregnating them.

So here is the subject invited to abandon himself entirely to this system – it is just as much the scientific knowledge he possesses or what he can imagine on

[3] '*système objectal, ou objectiv*' – '*objectal*' is a word coined within the technical vocabulary of psychoanalysis (Robert gives 1951 as its date of introduction) to describe whatever relates to the objects independent of the subject's ego. '*Objectif*' has a venerable history, in philosophy, linguistics and ordinary usage – it corresponds roughly to 'objective', including therein the often neglected philosophical senses in English (and such uses as in 'the objective of a telescope').

the basis of the facts he possesses as to his condition, his problem, his situation, as the most naive of his prejudices, upon which his illusions are founded, including his neurotic illusions, in so far as what is at stake there is an important part of the constitution of the neurosis.

It would seem – and this is where the problem lies – that this speech act can only progress along the path of intellectual conviction which emerges from educational intervention, that is to say a higher intervention, which comes from the analyst. Analysis progresses through indoctrination.

It is this indoctrination one has in mind when one talks about the first phase of analysis as having been intellectualist. Of course it never existed. Perhaps some intellectualist conceptions of analysis were around then, but that doesn't mean that intellectualist analyses actually took place – the forces authentically at work were there from the beginning. If they hadn't been, analysis would never have had the opportunity to show its mettle, and assert itself as an obvious method of psychotherapeutic intervention.

What is called intellectualism in this context is something completely different from what is connoted were we to speak of something intellectual. The better we analyse the various levels of what is at stake, the better we will be able to distinguish what has to be distinguished and unify what has to be unified, and the more effective our technique will be. That is what we will try to do.

So, there really must be something other than indoctrination to explain the effectiveness of the analyst's interventions. That is what experience has shown to be efficacious in the action of transference.

That's where the opacity begins – what, after all, is transference?

In its essence, the efficacious transference which we're considering is quite simply the speech act. Each time a man speaks to another in an authentic and full manner, there is, in the true sense, transference, symbolic transference – something takes place which changes the nature of the two beings present.

But there what is at issue is a transference other than the one which is initially encountered in analysis not only as a problem, but as an obstacle. Indeed, this function should be located on the imaginary plane. So it is to specify it, that the notions you are familiar with, the repetition of prehistoric situations, unconscious repetition, the putting into effect of a reintegration of history – history in the opposite sense to the one I once put forward, since it is a question of an imaginary reintegration, the past situation only being experienced in the present, without the knowledge of the subject, in so far as its historical dimension is misrecognised [*méconnue*] by him – you'll note that I didn't say *unconscious*. All these ideas have been put forward so as to define what we observe, and their reward is a guaranteed empirical finding. They don't uncover, however, the reason, the function, the signification of what we observe in the real.

To expect an explanation for whatever is observed is, you'll perhaps tell me,

to expect too much, to manifest too great a thirst for theory. Several hard-headed characters would perhaps like to impose a damper on us at this point.

However it seems to me that the analytic tradition doesn't distinguish itself by its lack of ambition in this respect – there must be reasons for that. Besides, whether justified or not, whether carried away or not by Freud's example, few are the psychoanalysts who have not succumbed to the theory of mental evolution. This particular metapsychological business is in truth completely impossible, for reasons which will become apparent later. But one cannot practice psychoanalysis, not even for one second, without thinking in metapsychological terms, just as M. Jourdain[4] was pretty well obliged to speak prose, whether he wanted to or not, as soon as he started speaking. This fact is truly structural to our activity.

Last time I alluded to Freud's article on transference-love. You are well aware of the strict economy of Freud's works, and to what extent it can be said that he never truly addressed himself to a subject which was not urgent, indispensable for him to deal with – in the course of a career which had almost the span of a human life, especially if one thinks at what point in his actual life, his biological life, he began his teaching.

We cannot but see that one of the most important questions in analytic theory is to know what is the connection between the bonds of transference and the characteristics, both positive and negative, of the love relation. Clinical experience vouchsafes it, as does, by the same token, the theoretical history of the discussions arising around what is called the source of therapeutic efficaciousness. In short, this subject has been on the agenda roughly since the 1920s – the Berlin Congress first of all, the Salzburg Congress, the Marienbad Congress. Since that time, the usefulness of the function of transference in the manipulation we undertake of the patient's subjectivity has never stopped being questioned. We have even separated out something which some go so far as to call, not just transference neurosis – a nosological label designating what the subject is affected with – but a secondary neurosis, an artificial neurosis, an actualisation of the neurosis in the transference, a neurosis which knots the imaginary persona of the analyst in its threads.

We know all that. But the question as to what constitutes the mainspring of what takes effect in analysis remains obscure. I am not talking about the courses of action we sometimes undertake, but about the very source of therapeutic efficacity.

The least one can say is that there is an enormous diversity of opinion in the analytic literature on this subject. To go back to the venerable discussions, all you have to do is take a look at the last chapter of Fenichel's little book. I'm not often one to recommend reading Fenichel, but as far as the historical data are

[4] See p. 3 n1 above.

concerned, he is a very instructive witness. You will see the diversity of opinion – Sachs, Rado, Alexander – when the question was broached at the Salzburg Congress.[5] You will also see the said Rado announce in what direction he intends to push the theorisation of the source of analytic efficacity. Strangely enough, having promised to spell out in black and white the solution to these problems, he never did so.

It seems that there's some mysterious resistance at work, acting so as to keep the question in comparative darkness, not only on account of its own obscurity, since little glimmers of light sometimes appear in this or that researcher's work, the more reflective subjects. One really has the feeling that the question is often caught sight of, that someone gets as close as is possible to it, but that it exerts some sort of repulsion which forbids it being rendered into concepts. Perhaps here more than elsewhere, it is possible that the completion of the theory, and even its progress, are experienced as a threat. That isn't to be excluded. It is no doubt the most propitious hypothesis.

The opinions expressed in the course of discussions on the nature of the imaginary link established in the transference bear a very close relation to the notion of the object relation.

This latter idea has now come to the foreground in analytic theoretical work. But you are aware of the extent to which the theory wavers on this issue.

Take for example the fundamental article of James Strachey, which appeared in the *International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, dealing with the source of therapeutic efficacity. It is one of the best argued of texts, whose entire emphasis falls on the super-ego. You can see the difficulties that this conception gets one in, and the number of supplementary hypotheses that the above-mentioned Strachey is required to introduce in order to sustain it. He suggests that the analyst takes on, in relation to the subject, the function of the super-ego. But the theory according to which the analyst is purely and simply the mainstay of the super-ego's function cannot stand up, since this function is precisely one of the most important sources of the neurosis. So the argument is circular. To get out of it, the author finds himself forced to introduce the idea of a parasitical super-ego – a supplementary hypothesis which is completely unjustified, but which the contradictions in his argument necessitate. Besides, he is obliged to go too far. So as to argue for the existence of this parasitical super-ego in analysis, he is obliged to posit that a set of exchanges, of introjections and projections, take place between the analysand subject and the analyst subject, which bring us to the level of the mechanisms by which good and bad objects – introduced by Melanie Klein into the practice of the English school – are constituted. This brings with it the risk of re-creating them *ad nauseam*.

One can locate the question of the relations between the analysand and the

[5] See p. 164 n1 below.

analyst on a completely different plane – on the plane of the ego and the non-ego, that is to say, on the plane of the narcissistic economy of the subject.

Moreover, the question of transference-love has from the start been too closely linked with the analytic study of the notion of love. We are not dealing with love in the guise of Eros – the universal presence of a power binding subjects together, underlying the whole of the reality in which analysis is played out – but of passionate love, as it is concretely lived by the subject, as a sort of psychological catastrophe. It raises the question, as you know, of knowing how this passionate love is, in its very essence, linked to the analytic relation.

Having said something nice about Fenichel's book, let me tell you something nasty about it. It is as delightful as it is striking to note the sort of revolt, of insurrection even, that the extremely pertinent remarks of two authors on the relations between love and transference seem to elicit in Mr Fenichel. They emphasise the narcissistic character of the relationship of imaginary love, and show how and to what extent the loved object is confounded, by means of one whole facet of its qualities, of its attributes, and also of its impact on the psychic economy, with the subject's ego-ideal. One thus sees the general syncretism of Mr Fenichel's thought linked up in a curious fashion with this middle way which is his and which leads him to experience such repugnance, a real phobia when faced with the paradox generated by this imaginary love. Imaginary love in its essence partakes of illusion, and Mr Fenichel experiences a kind of horror in thus seeing the very function of love devalued.

That is precisely what is at issue – what is this love, which enters in as an imaginary mainspring in analysis? Fenichel's horror tells us something about the subjective structure of the character in question.

Well, for us, what we have to locate is the structure which articulates the narcissistic relation, the function of love in its widest sense and the transference in its practical efficacy.

There is more than one way to help you find your sense of direction in the midst of all the ambiguities which, as I think you have become aware, make their appearance again and again at every twist and turn in the analytic literature. I hope to teach you new categories, which introduce essential distinctions. These are not external distinctions, scholastic or ever-expanding ones – juxtaposing this or that field, proliferating bipartitions off to infinity, a mode of procedure which consists in always introducing supplementary hypotheses. No doubt this method is open to those who want it; but for my part I am aiming at progress in understanding.

It is a matter of bringing into focus what is implied by simple ideas, which already exist. There is no point in taking apart indefinitely, as one could – as has been done in a remarkable work on the idea of transference. I am rather inclined to leave intact the empirical totality of the notion of transference, all

the while remarking that it is plurivalent and that it acts in several registers at a time, in the symbolic, the imaginary and the real.

These are not three fields. Even in the animal kingdom, you have been able to see that it is in relation to the same actions, the same behaviour, that we can distinguish precisely the functions of the imaginary, the symbolic and the real, for the simple reason that they do not belong in the same order of relations.

There are a number of ways of introducing these ideas. Mine has its limits, like any dogmatic account. But its usefulness is in being critical, that is to say in arising just where the empirical efforts of researchers meet with a difficulty in handling a pre-existing theory. That is what makes for the value of the path of textual commentary.

2

Doctor Leclaire starts the reading and commentary on the initial pages of 'On narcissism: an introduction'. Interruption.

What Leclaire is saying here is quite right. For Freud there is a relation between a thing *x* which has moved on to the plane of the libido, and the disinvestment of the external world characteristic of the forms of dementia praecox – take this in as extended a sense as you can. Now, to set up the problem in these terms creates great difficulties in analytic theory, as it was constituted at that time.

In order to understand it one must look at the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, where the notion of a primitive auto-erotism comes from.[6] What is this primitive auto-erotism, whose existence Freud postulates? It is a libido which constitutes the objects of interest, and which is allocated, through a sort of evasion, of extension, of pseudopodia. Beginning with this emission by the subject of libidinal investments, its instinctual development unfolds, its world is built up, in accordance with an instinctual structure peculiar to it. This conception does not give rise to any difficulties so long as Freud leaves out of the libido's mechanism everything pertaining to a register other than that of desire as such. The register of desire is, for him, an extension of the concrete manifestations of sexuality, an essential relation maintained by the animal being with the *Umwelt*, its world. So you see that this is a bipolar conception – on one side the libidinal subject, on the other the world.

Now this conception breaks down, as Freud knew very well, if one generalises excessively the notion of libido, because, in so doing, one neutralises it. Isn't it quite clear, moreover, that it adds essentially nothing to an understanding of the facts of neurosis if the libido functions roughly in the same way as M. Janet called the function of the real? On the contrary, the libido takes on its meaning by being distinguished from the real, or realisable, relations,

[6] (1905d) GW V 82–3; Stud V 88–9; SE VII 181–2; *et seq.*

from all the functions which have nothing to do with the function of desire, from everything touching on the relations of the ego and of the external world. It has nothing to do with instinctual registers other than the sexual, with, for example, whatever has to do with the domain of nutrition, of assimilation, of hunger in so far as it is conducive to the preservation of the individual. If the libido is not isolated from the entire range of functions for the preservation of the individual, it loses all meaning.

Now, in schizophrenia, something happens which completely disturbs the relations of the subject to the real, swamping the foundation with form. This fact, all of a sudden, raises the question of knowing whether the libido doesn't go much further than the definition given it by taking the sexual register as its organising, central core. That's the point at which the libido theory begins to create problems.

It creates such problems that it has been effectively put in question. I'll show you that when we analyse Freud's commentary on the text written by Senatspräsident Schreber. It is in the course of this commentary that Freud becomes aware of the difficulties created by the problem of libidinal investment in the psychoses. And he then makes use of notions that are ambiguous enough for Jung to say that he had given up defining the nature of the libido as being uniquely sexual. Jung does take this step decisively, and introduces the notion of introversion, which is for him – that is the criticism which Freud made of him – a notion *ohne Unterscheidung*,[7] lacking in capacity to discriminate. And he ends up with the vague notion of psychic interest, which collapses into one single register what belongs to the order of the preservation of the individual and what belongs to the order of sexual polarisation of the individual in its objects. All that remains is a kind of relation of the subject to himself which Jung says pertains to the libidinal order. What the subject must do is realise himself as an individual in possession of genital functions.

Since then, psychoanalytic theory has been vulnerable to a neutralisation of the libido, which consists, on the one hand, in firmly asserting that the libido is what is involved, and on the other, in saying that it is simply a property of the soul, the creator of its world. Such a conception is extremely difficult to distinguish from analytic theory, in so far as the Freudian idea of a primordial auto-erotism forming the basis upon which objects are progressively constituted is almost equivalent, in terms of its structure, to Jung's theory.

That is why, in his article on narcissism, Freud harks back to the necessity of distinguishing egoistical libido and sexual libido. Now you understand one of the reasons why he wrote this article.

The problem is an extremely knotty one for him to resolve. All the while

[7] (1914c) GW X 139; Stud III 42; SE XIV 74, quoted on p. 90 above, where it is translated as 'indiscriminately'.

maintaining the distinction between the two libidos, throughout the entire article he continually skirts around the notion of their equivalence. How can these terms be clearly distinguished if one maintains the idea that they are equivalent in energetic terms, which is what allows one to say that it is in so far as the libido is disinvested from the object that it returns back on to the *ego?* There's the problem raised. As a result, Freud is led to conceive of narcissism as a secondary process. A unity comparable to the ego does not exist at the beginning, *nicht von Anfang*, is not to be found in the individual from the start, and the *Ich* has to develop, *entwickelt werden*.[8] The auto-erotic instincts, in contrast, are there right from the start.

Those of you who are somewhat familiar with what I am putting before you will see that this idea confirms the usefulness of my conception of the mirror-stage. The *Urbild*, which is a unity comparable to the ego, is constituted at a specific moment in the history of the subject, at which point the ego begins to take on its functions. This means that the human ego is founded on the basis of the imaginary relation. The function of the ego, Freud writes, must have *eine neue psychische Aktion. . . . zu gestalten*.[9] In the development of the psyche, something new appears whose function it is to give form to narcissism. Doesn't that indicate the imaginary origin of the ego's function?

In the next two or three lectures, I will specify what use, simultaneously limited and various, should be made of the mirror-stage. For the first time, I will teach you, in the light of Freud's text, that there are two registers implied in this stage. Finally, if last time I showed you that the imaginary function contains the plurality of experience of the individual, I am going to show you that one cannot limit it to that – because of the need to distinguish the psychoses from the neuroses.

3

What is now important to bear in mind from the article's opening is the difficulty Freud experiences in defending the originality of the psychoanalytic dynamic against the Jungian dissolution of the problem.

According to the Jungian schema, psychic interest comes and goes, goes out, comes back, colours, etc. It drowns the libido in the universal magma which will be the basis of the world's constitution. Here we come upon a very traditional mode of thought clearly distinct from orthodox analytic thought. Psychic interest is here nothing other than an alternating spotlight, which can come and go, be projected, be withdrawn from reality, at the whim of the pulsation of the psyche of the subject. It's a pretty metaphor, but it throws no light on practice, as Freud underlines. It does not allow one to grasp the

[8] GW X 142; Stud III 144; SE XIV 77. [9] *Ibid.*

differences that there might be between a directed, sublimated retreat of interest in the world which the anchorite may achieve, and that of the schizophrenic, whose result is however structurally quite distinct, since the subject discovers that he is completely stuck. No doubt a considerable number of clinical points have been brought out by the Jungian investigation, which intrigues by its quaintness, its style, the parallels it establishes between what some mental or religious ascesis produces and what a schizophrenic produces. That, perhaps, is a way of working which has the advantage of adding some colour and life for the benefit of the researchers, but which quite clearly has illuminated nothing in the way of mechanisms – Freud doesn't miss the opportunity of quite mercilessly underlining that in passing.

What is crucial for Freud is grasping the difference in structure which exists between the withdrawal from reality which we observe in the neuroses and that which we observe in the psychoses. One of the crucial distinctions is established in a surprising manner – surprising at least for those who haven't come to grips with these problems.

In the refusal to recognise [*méconnaissance*], in the refusal, in the barrier opposed to reality by the neurotic, we note a recourse to fancy. Here we have *function*, which in Freud's vocabulary can only refer to the imaginary register. We know the extent to which people and objects in the neurotic's milieu change significance entirely, in relation to a function there is no problem in naming – without going further than ordinary linguistic usage – as imaginary. *Imaginary* here refers – in the first instance, to the subject's relation to its formative identifications, which is the true meaning of the term 'image' in analysis – secondly, to the relation of the subject to the real whose characteristic is that of being illusory, which is the facet of the imaginary most often highlighted.

Now, whether rightly or wrongly, it doesn't matter at this stage, Freud emphasises that nothing comparable is to be found in psychosis. When it comes to the psychotic subject, if he loses the realisation of the real, he doesn't find any imaginary substitute. That is what distinguishes him from the neurotic.

This conception may appear extraordinary at first glance. You are well aware that one has to make some headway in conceptualisation at this point in order to follow Freud's thinking. One of the most widespread of conceptions is that the deluded [*délirant*] subject is dreaming, that he is bang in the middle of the imaginary. So, in Freud's conception, the function of the imaginary cannot be the function of the unreal. Otherwise there'd be no point in his denying the psychotic access to the imaginary. And since in general Freud knows what he is saying, we will have to find a means of filling in what he meant on this topic.

This will lead us into a coherent exposition of the relations between the imaginary and the symbolic, since that is one of the points on which Freud brings this difference of structure to bear with great energy. When the

psychotic reconstructs his world, what is invested to start off with? You will see along what path, for many of you unexpected, this will take us – the answer is words. There, you cannot but recognise the category of the symbolic.

We will push what this critique opens up further. We will see that it may be the case that the specific structure of the psychotic should be located in a symbolic unreal, or in a symbolic unmarked by the unreal. The function of the imaginary is to be located somewhere entirely different.

You're beginning to see, I hope, the difference between Freud's and Jung's appreciation of the place of the psychoses. For Jung, the two domains of the symbolic and the imaginary are there completely confused, whereas one of the preliminary articulations that Freud's article allows us to pinpoint is the clear distinction between the two.

Today is only a curtain-raiser. But when it comes to matters as important as these, you can't raise the curtain too slowly. I have only managed to introduce – as moreover the very title of the article puts it – a limited number of questions, which have never been raised. It will give you the time to turn things over in your minds, and to do a little work from now to the next time.

Next time I would like to see, in commenting on this text, as close a collaboration as possible from our friend Leclaire. I would rather like to see Granoff engage in this work – he seems to have a particular inclination and interest in Freud's article on transference-love – this may well be an opportunity for him to contribute by introducing this article. There's a third article that I would like to entrust to someone for next time. It's a text which comes from the metapsychology of the same period, and which pertains directly to our object – '*Compléments métapsychologiques à la doctrine des rêves*',[10] which is translated into French as '*La théorie des rêves*'. I'll give it to whoever doesn't mind taking it on himself – for example our dear Perrier, for whom this will be the chance to comment on the subject of schizophrenics.

17 March 1954

[10] 'Metapsychological supplement to the theory of dreams' (1917d) GW X 412–26; Stud III 179–91; SE XIV 222–35.

X

The two narcissisms

THE NOTION OF DRIVE

THE IMAGINARY IN ANIMALS AND IN MAN

SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR IS PARTICULARLY PRONE TO THE LURE

THE *URICH*

'On narcissism: an introduction' dates from the beginning of the 1914 war, and it is quite moving to think that it was at that time that Freud was developing such a construction. Everything which we include under the metapsychological rubric emerges between 1914 and 1918, following the publication in 1912 of Jung's work translated into French under the title *Métamorphoses et Symboles de la Libido*.[1]

1

Jung's approach to the mental illnesses had an entirely different perspective from Freud's, since his experience was with the gamut of schizophrenias, whereas Freud's was with the neuroses. His 1912 work puts forward a grandiose unitary conception of psychic energy, fundamentally different in its inspiration, and even in its definition, from the notion developed by Freud under the name of libido.

Nevertheless, the theoretical difference is still recalcitrant enough to state for Freud to be struggling with difficulties which one can sense throughout the article.

The point, for him, is to maintain a clearly demarcated usage – these days we would say *operational* – of the notion of libido, which is essential to sustaining his discovery. On what, in short, is the Freudian discovery based – if not on this fundamental realisation that the symptoms of the neurosis reveal an indirect form of sexual satisfaction. Freud had very concretely demonstrated the sexual function of symptoms with respect to neurotics, by means of a series of equivalents, the last of which is a therapeutic sanction. With this as a foundation, he always maintained that it wasn't a new, totalising conception of

[1] The original work, *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (1911–12) was translated as *The Psychology of the Unconscious* (New York, 1916). The revised, better known version is that to be found in *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol 5, Princeton: Bollingen, 1953–1979, under the title *Symbols of Transformation*.

the world that he was offering, but a well defined theory, based on a clearly, yet entirely new, demarcated field, comprising several human realities, particularly psychopathological ones – subnormal phenomena, that is to say those which normal psychology does not study, dreams, slips, mishaps, which disturb some of the so-called higher functions.

The problem which Freud faced at this point in time was that of the structure of the psychoses. How to map out the structure of the psychoses within the framework of the general theory of the libido?

Jung gives the following solution – the profound transformation of reality apparent in the psychoses is due to a metamorphosis of the libido, analogous to that which Freud had caught a glimpse of with respect to the neuroses. Except that, in the psychotic, Jung says, the libido is introverted into the internal world of the subject – a notion left hanging in the greatest ontological uncertainty. It is on account of this introversion that for him reality fades into a twilight. The mechanism of the psychoses is thus perfectly continuous with that of the neuroses.

Being intent on the working out, starting off from experience, of extremely well defined mechanisms, always concerned with its empirical reference, Freud sees analytic theory transformed by Jung into a vast psychic pantheism, a series of imaginary spheres each enveloping the other, which leads to a general classification of contents, of events, of the *Erlebnis* of the individual's life, and finally to what Jung calls the archetypes. This is not the path down which a clinical, psychiatric working out of the objects of research can be undertaken. And that is why he now attempts to ascertain the relation which the sexual drives are capable of maintaining amongst themselves, those sexual drives to which he had given such prominence owing to their having been hidden and to their having been revealed by his analysis, and the ego drives, which up to that point he had not brought to the fore. Can one say, yes or no, whether the one is the shadow of the other? Is reality constituted by this universal libidinal projection which is at the heart of the Jungian theory? Or is there on the contrary a relation of opposition, a relation of conflict, between the ego drives and the libidinal drives?

With his usual honesty, Freud makes it clear that his determination to maintain this distinction is based on his experience of the neuroses, and, after all, that is only a limited experience. That is why he says no less clearly that one may postulate, at a primitive stage, prior to that which psychoanalytic investigation permits one to penetrate, a condition of narcissism, in which it is impossible to distinguish the two fundamental propensities, the *Sexuallibido* and the *Ichtriebe*.[2] They are inextricably mixed together, *beisammen*,[3] confused, and are not distinguishable - *ununterscheidbar* – by our coarse analysis. Nonetheless he explains why he strives to maintain the distinction.

[2] GW X 142; Stud III 44; SE XIV 76.

[3] '*beisammen*' usually means 'together (in the same place)'.

First of all there is the experience of the neuroses. Next, he says, the fact that the distinction between the ego-drives and the sexual drives lacks clarity at the moment should perhaps be attributed simply to the fact that the drives constitute, for our theory, the final point of reference. The theory of drives is not at the base of the construction, but right up at the top. It is eminently abstract, and Freud later was to call it our mythology. That is why, with the concrete always within his sights, always putting his own speculative projects in their place, he underlines their limited value. He compares the notion of drive to the highest-level notions from physics, matter, force, attraction, which have only been developed in the course of the historical evolution of the science, and whose initial form was uncertain, in truth confused before they were purified and then applied.

We are not following Freud, we are accompanying him. The fact that an idea occurs somewhere in Freud's work doesn't, for all that, guarantee that it is being handled in the spirit of the Freudian researches. As for us, we are trying to conform to the spirit, to the watchword, to the style of this research.

Freud backed up his theory of the libido with what the biology of his time made available to him. The theory of instincts cannot but take into account a fundamental bipartition between the final ends of the preservation of the individual and those of the continuity of the species. What we find in the background is nothing other than Weissmann's theory, of which you must remember something from your time spent in philosophy classes. This theory, which hasn't been definitely proved, posits the existence of an immortal substance made up of sexual cells. These would make up a unique sexual line of descent through continuous reproduction. The germ-plasm would, still according to this theory, be what preserves the existence of the species, and what is perpetuated from one individual to the next. In contrast, the somatic plasm would be like an individual parasite which, from the point of view of the reproduction of the species, would have carried on growing in a lateral fashion, with the sole aim of being the vehicle for the eternal germ-plasm. Freud immediately makes it clear that his own construction does not pretend to be a biological theory. Whatever value he attaches to this reference, on which he decided to rely until further notice and with reservations, he would not hesitate to abandon it, if an examination of the facts within the domain specific to analytic investigation were to render it useless and detrimental.

Similarly there is no reason, he says, to swamp the *Sexualenergie* in the as yet unexplored field of psychic facts. The point is not to seek for the libido a universal kinship with every single psychic manifestation. That would be as if, he says, in a question of inheritance, someone were to invoke, as a proof to the lawyer of his rights, the universal kinship which, according to the monogenetic hypothesis, links all men together.[4]

[4] GW X 144; Stud III 46; SE XIV 79.

I'd like to make a remark here, which may perhaps seem to you to contrast sharply with those we usually make. But you will see that it will help us with our task, which is to clarify Freud's ongoing discussion, whose obscurities and impasses he in no way keeps from us, as you have already seen, if only through our commentary on the first few pages of this article. He doesn't offer a solution, but opens up a series of questions, into which we must try to penetrate.

At the time Freud was writing, there was, as he himself says somewhere, no ready-made,[5] ready-to-wear theory of instincts. Even today, it hasn't been brought to completion, but some progress has been made since the work of Lorenz and Tinbergen – which justifies these perhaps over-speculative remarks that I'm now going to make.

What follows from endorsing the Weissmannian notion of the immortality of the germ-plasm? If the individual which develops is quite distinct from the fundamental living substance which the germ-plasm constitutes, and which does not perish, if the individual is parasitic, what function does it have in the propagation of life? None. From the point of view of the species, individuals are, if one can put it this way, already dead. An individual is worth nothing alongside the immortal substance hidden deep inside it, which is the only thing to be perpetuated and which authentically and substantially represents such life as there is.

Let me clarify this. From the psychological point of view, what exactly is this individual led to propagate, by the infamous sexual instinct? – the immortal substance enclosed in the germ-plasm in the genital organs, represented in vertebrates by spermatozoa and ova. Is that all? – obviously not, since what is propagated is, after all, an individual. Only, it doesn't reproduce as an individual, but as a type. It only manages to reproduce the type already brought into being by the line of its ancestors. In this respect, not only is it mortal, but it is already dead, since properly speaking it has no future. It isn't this or that horse, but the prop, the embodiment of something which is *The* Horse. If the concept of species is valid, if natural history exists, it is because there are not only horses, but also *The* Horse.

This really is where the theory of instincts ends us up. In fact, what serves as support for the sexual instinct on the psychological plane?

What is the basic mainspring determining the setting into motion of the gigantic sexual mechanism? What is its releasing mechanism, as Tinbergen puts it, following Lorenz?[6] It isn't the existence of the sexual partner, the particularity of one individual, but something which has an extremely intimate relation with what I have been calling the type, namely an image.

[5] English in the original.

[6] The French term here translated 'releasing mechanism' is '*déclencheur*', which means 'trigger, starter (as in starter for a car)'. It was thought best to make this term consistent with English language works in ethology, despite the connotations, which Lacan exploits, borrowed from other semantic fields.

In the functioning of pairing mechanisms, ethologists have proved the dominance of the image, which appears in the guise of a transitory phenotype through modification of the external appearance and whose manifestation serves as a signal, of a constructed signal, that is to say a *Gestalt*, which sets the reproductive behaviour in motion. The mechanical throwing into gear of the sexual instinct is thus essentially crystallised in a relation of images, in – I now come to the term you're expecting – an imaginary relation.

This is the framework within which we must articulate the *Libidotriebe* and the *Ichtriebe*.

The libidinal drive is centred on the function of the imaginary.

Try as an idealist and moralising transposition of analytic doctrine might to make us believe, this does not mean that the subject makes his way in the imaginary towards an ideal state of genitality which would be the ultimate sanction and final source for the installation of the real. So we now have to define more precisely the relations of the libido with the imaginary and the real, and to resolve the problem as to the real function that the *ego* has in the psychic economy.

O. MANNONI: *Can I put in a word? For some time I've been perplexed by a problem that seems to me simultaneously to complicate and simplify matters. It is that the investment of objects by the libido is at bottom a realist metaphor since it only invests the image of objects. Whereas the investment of the ego can be an intra-psychic phenomenon, whereby the ontological reality of the ego is invested. If the libido has become object-libido, it can then only invest something symmetrical to the ego's image. Such that we will have two narcissisms, according to whether it is a libido which intra-physically invests the ontological ego, or an object-libido which invests something which may perhaps be the ego-ideal, and is in any case an image of the ego. We would then have a well-founded distinction between primary narcissism and secondary narcissism.*

You do know, don't you, that, step by step, I want to take you somewhere. We are not proceeding entirely aimlessly, although I am open to welcome discoveries that we make along the way. I am happy to see our friend Mannoni taking an elegant jump[7] into the subject – one needs to make one every now and then – but let us first go back to where we left off.

What am I trying to get at? – to get to grips with this fundamental experience made available to us by the contemporary development of the theory of instincts in relation to the cycle of sexual behaviour, which reveals that the subject is there essentially prone to the lure.

For example, the male stickleback has to have beautiful colours on its belly and back, before the copulation dance with the female can get going. But we

[7] English in the original.

can quite easily make a cut-out which, even when poorly put together, will have exactly the same effect on the female, provided that it possesses certain markings – *Merkzeichen*. Sexual behaviour is quite especially prone to the lure. This teaches us something which is important in working out the structure of the perversions and the neuroses.

2

Since we've got to this point, I am going to introduce a complement to the schema that I gave you during that little course on the topic of the imaginary.

I pointed out to you that this model faithfully follows Freud's very wishes. He spelled out in several places, particularly in the *Traumdeutung* and the *Abriss*, that the fundamental psychic agencies should be primarily conceived of as representing what takes place in a camera, namely as images, which are either virtual or real, produced through its functioning. The organic apparatus represents the mechanism of the camera, and what we apprehend are the images. Their functions are not homogeneous, because a real image and a virtual image are not the same thing. The agencies that Freud constructs should not be taken to be substantial, nor epiphenomenal in relation to the modification of the apparatus itself. Hence the agencies should be interpreted by means of an optical schema. A conception that Freud drew attention to on many occasions, but which, in his hands, never materialised.

On the left you see the concave mirror, thanks to which the phenomenon of the inverted bouquet is produced, which I have here transformed since it is more convenient, into that of the inverted vase. The vase is in the box, and the bouquet is on top.

Through the play of reflection of light rays, the vase will be reproduced in the form of a real, and not virtual, image, to which the eye can accommodate. If the eye becomes accommodated to the level of the flowers that we have placed there, it will see the real image of the vase encompassing the bouquet, and will give a style and unity to it – a reflection of the unity of the body.

For the image to have some consistency, it must be a genuine image. What is the definition of an image in optics? – to every point on the object there must correspond a point on the image, and all the rays issuing from a point must intersect again somewhere in a unique point. An optical apparatus is uniquely defined by a univocal or bi-univocal convergence of rays – as one says in axiomatics.

If the concave apparatus is placed here where I am, and the conjurer's little set-up in front of the desk, the image cannot be seen with clarity sufficient to produce an illusion of reality, a real illusion. You have to be positioned at a certain angle. Obviously, depending on the various positions of the eye doing the looking, we might distinguish a given set of circumstances which could

perhaps allow us to understand the different positions of the subject in relation to reality.

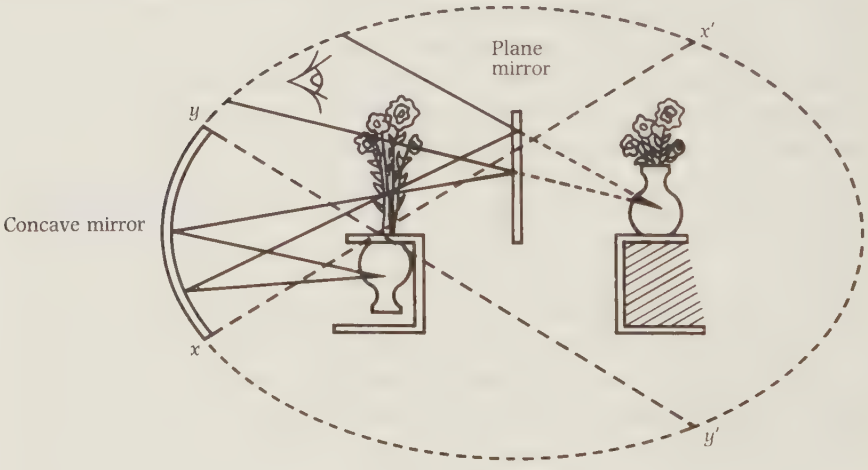
To be sure, a subject is not an eye, I've told you that. But this model can be applied because we are in the imaginary, where the eye has a great importance.

Someone raised the question of the two narcissisms. You are well aware that this is what is at issue - the relation between the constitution of reality and the relation with the form of the body, which Mannoni, more or less felicitously, called *ontological*.

First let us go back to the concave mirror, on to which, as I've pointed out to you, we could probably project all manner of things whose meaning is organic, in particular the cortex. But let's not turn it into a substance too quickly, because the point here isn't, as you will see more clearly from what follows, the pure and simple exposition of the theory of the little-man-inside-the-man. If I wanted to use it to redo the-little-man-inside-the-man, there would be no point in my criticising it all the time. And if I am giving in on that, it's because there is a reason why I'm giving in.

The eye now, this hypothetical eye I've been telling you about, let us put it somewhere between the concave mirror and the object.

For this eye to have precisely the illusion of the inverted vase, that is to say for this eye to see it under optimal conditions, as clearly as if it were at the end of the



Schema with two mirrors

room, one thing only is both necessary and sufficient – that there be a plane mirror in the middle of the room.

To put it another way, if one put a mirror in the middle of the room, while I

turn my back on the concave mirror, I would see the image of the vase as clearly as if I were at the end of the room, even though I wouldn't see it in a direct manner. What am I going to see in the mirror? Firstly, my own face, there where it isn't. Secondly, at a point symmetrical to the point where the real image is, I am going to see this real image appear as a virtual image. Are you with me? It isn't difficult to understand – when you get home, set yourself in front of a mirror, put your hand in front of you . . .

This little schema is only a very simple elaboration of what I've been trying to explain to you for years with the mirror stage.

Just now, Mannoni mentioned the two narcissisms. First of all, there is, in fact, a narcissism connected with the corporeal image. This image is identical for the entirety of the subject's mechanisms and gives his *Umwelt* its form, in as much as he is man and not horse. It makes up the unity of the subject, and we see it projecting itself in a thousand different ways, up to and including what we can call the imaginary source of symbolism, which is what links symbolism to feeling, to the *Selbstgefühl*, which the human being, the *Mensch*, has of his own body.

This initial narcissism is to be found, if you wish, on the level of the real image in my schema, in so far as it makes possible the organisation of the totality of reality into a limited number of preformed frameworks.

To be sure, this way of functioning is completely different in man and in animals, which are adapted to a uniform *Umwelt*. For the animal there is a limited number of pre-established correspondences between its imaginary structure and whatever interests it in its *Umwelt*, namely whatever is important for the perpetuation of individuals, themselves a function of the perpetuation of the type of the species. In man, by contrast, the reflection in the mirror indicates an original noetic possibility, and introduces a second narcissism. Its fundamental pattern[8] is immediately the relation to the other.

For man the other has a captivating value, on account of the anticipation that is represented by the unitary image as it is perceived either in the mirror or in the entire reality of the fellow being.

The other, the alter ego, is more or less confused, according to the stage in life, with the *Ichideal*, this ego-ideal invoked throughout Freud's article. Narcissistic identification – the word identification, without differentiation, is unusable – that of the second narcissism, is identification with the other which, under normal circumstances, enables man to locate precisely his imaginary and libidinal relation to the world in general. That is what enables him to *see* in its place and to structure, as a function of this place and of his world, his being. Mannoni said *ontological* just now, I'm quite happy with that. What I would

[8] English in the original.

precisely say is – his *libidinal being*. The subject sees his being in a reflection in relation to the other, that is to say in relation to the *Ichideal*.

Hence you see that one has to distinguish between the functions of the ego – on the one hand, they play for man, as they do for every other living creature, a fundamental role in the structuration of reality – what is more, in man they have to undergo this fundamental alienation constituted by the reflected image of himself, which is the *Urich*, the original form of the *Ichideal* as well as that of the relation to the other.

Is this sufficiently clear for you? I had already given you an initial element of this schema, I'm giving you another one today – the reflexive relation to the other. Later on you'll see what use it may serve, this schema. You're right in thinking that it is not for the fun of it that I've made up these delightful constructions. It will be extremely useful, since it will allow you to locate almost all the clinical, concrete questions raised by the function of the imaginary, and in particular in relation to those libidinal investments whose meanings one eventually ceases to understand when handling them.

Reply to Doctor Granoff's intervention concerning the application of the optical schema to the theory of the state of being in love.

The exact equivalence of the object and the ego-ideal in the love relation is one of the most fundamental notions in Freud's work, and one comes across it again and again. The loved object, when invested in love, is, through its captative effect on the subject, strictly equivalent to the ego-ideal. It is for this reason that, in suggestion, in hypnosis, we encounter the state of dependency, such an important economic function, in which there is a genuine perversion of reality through the fascination with the loved object and its overestimation. You're acquainted with the psychology of love which Freud so subtly expounded. We are offered such a large, important slice, that, as you see, we have scarcely come to terms with it today. But you'll find all manner of things on the topic of what he calls the choice of the object.

So, you cannot but see the contradiction that exists between this notion of love and certain mythical conceptions of the libidinal ascesis of psychoanalysis. I know not what vague fusion, or communion between genitality and the constitution of the real is recommended to us as the culmination of affective maturation. I am not saying that there isn't something essential to the constitution of reality in all this, but one must understand what. Because, it is either one or the other – either love is what Freud is describing, an imaginary function in its very foundation, or it is the foundation and the base of the world. Just as there are two narcissisms, so there must be two loves, Eros and Agapè.

Reply to Doctor Leclaire's question about the ambiguities concerning the Ichideal *and the* Idealich *in Freud's text.*

We are in a seminar here, we are not professing an ex cathedra teaching. We are trying to find our bearings, and to draw the greatest profit from a text and above all from someone's thinking as it develops.

God knows how others, amongst them the best, Abraham and Ferenczi included, have tried to get the development of the *ego* and its relations to the development of the libido sorted out. This question is the subject of the latest article brought out by the New York school, but for now let's stay with Ferenczi and Abraham.

Freud relied on the article published in 1913 by Ferenczi on the sense of reality. It is very poor. Ferenczi is the one who started to put the famous stages into everyone's heads. Freud refers to it. At that point in time, we are still at the stage of the very first theoretical attempts to articulate the constitution of the real, and the mere fact of receiving a reply was in itself a great help to Freud. Ferenczi brought him something, and he made use of it.

The article in question had a decisive influence. It's like repressed things, which have all the more importance for being unknown. Similarly, when some chap writes something truly stupid, it's not because no one reads it that it doesn't have consequences. Because, without having read it, everyone repeats it. Some inanities circulate like that, playing on a mixing up of planes which people don't watch out for. Hence, the first analytic theory of the constitution of the real is impregnated with ideas in the air at the time, expressed in more or less mythical terms, concerning the stages of the evolution of the human mind. The idea is to be found everywhere, in Jung also, that the human mind has made decisive progress in very recent times, and that before that we were still at a stage of prelogical confusion – as if it weren't clear that there is no structural difference between the thought of Mr Aristotle and that of some of the others. These ideas bring with them their power of confusion and disseminate their poison. You can see it clearly in the embarrassment which Freud himself experiences when he refers to Ferenczi's article.

When one talks of primitives, of so-called primitives, and of mental patients, it works fine. But where the evolutionary point of view finds complications is with children. There, Freud is forced to say that development is far from being that transparent.

Perhaps it would be better, in fact, not to refer here to falsely evolutionary notions. This probably isn't the place for the fertile idea of evolution. It is a question, rather, of elucidating structural mechanisms, which are at work in our analytic experience, which is centred on adults. Retroactively, one may

clarify what happens in children, in a hypothetical and more or less verifiable manner.

In taking up this structural point of view, we are directly following Freud, because that is where he ended up. The final development of his theory distanced itself from analogical evolutionary adventures, embarked on through a superficial use of several shibboleths. Actually, what Freud always insisted upon was exactly the opposite, namely the preservation, at every level, of what may be considered as different stages.

We'll try to go one step further next time. Think of all this as a starter. You will come to see its strict relation with the phenomenon of the imaginary transference.

24 March 1954

XI

Ego-ideal and ideal ego

FREUD LINE BY LINE
THE LURES OF SEXUALITY
THE SYMBOLIC RELATION DEFINES THE POSITION OF
THE SUBJECT IN THE IMAGINARY

Leclaire, who has worked for us on the difficult text, 'On narcissism: an introduction', is going to continue today to share his reflections and questions with us. Take up the second section again and try to quote a lot.

1

DR LECLAIRE: *It's an impossible text to summarise. One would have to quote almost the whole of it. The first part postulates the fundamental distinction in the libido, with those arguments to which you have paid some attention concerning the germ-plasm. In the second part, Freud tells us that it is unquestionably the study of the dementia praecoxes, which he calls the group of paraphrenias, which continues to provide the surest access to a study of the psychology of the ego. But that is not what he will go on to consider. He mentions several other paths which might lead to reflections concerning the psychology of the ego. He starts off with the influence of organic illness on the distribution of libido, which may be considered an excellent introduction to psycho-somatic medicine. He makes a reference to a discussion that he had had with Ferenczi on this subject, and starts with the observation that, in the course of an illness, of a painful episode, the patient withdraws his libidinal investment in to his ego in order to free it once more when he is cured. He concludes that this is a banal consideration, but nevertheless one which merits examination. During the phase in which he withdraws his libidinal investment from objects, the libido and the ego's interest are once again confused, once again share the same destiny, and become impossible to tell apart.*

Do you know Wilhelm Busch? He's a humourist you should drink deep from. There's an unforgettable creation of his called *Balduin Bählamm*, the poet in shackles. His toothache puts a stop to all his idealist and platonising daydreams, as well as to the promptings of love. He forgets the prices on the stock exchange, taxes, the multiplication table, etc. All the habitual forms of being are suddenly

found to be without interest, turned to nothing. And now, in the little hole, lives the molar. The symbolic world of the prices on the stock exchange and the multiplication table is entirely invested in pain.

DR LECLAIRE: *Freud then turns to another point, the state of sleep in which there is a similar narcissistic withdrawal of libidinal investments. He then returns to hypochondria, to its differences and points of similarity with organic illness. He thus arrives at the notion that the difference between the two, which is perhaps of no importance, is the existence of an organic lesion. The study of hypochondria and organic illnesses allows him above all to make it clear that, in the hypochondriac, there are doubtless also organic changes of the order of vaso-motor difficulties, of circulatory difficulties, and he expounds on the similarity between the excitation of any bodily zone and sexual excitation. He introduces the notion of erotogenicity,*[1] *of erogenous zones which can, he says, replace the genitals and behave like them, that is to say, they can be the seat of activity and relaxation. And he tells us that there may be a variation in the libidinal investment of the ego in parallel with each variation of this type in the erotogenicity of an organ. And this raises the psycho-somatic problem again. In any case, following on from the study of erotogenicity, and the possibilities of erotogenization*[2] *of any part of the body, he is led to suppose that hypochondria may be classified with the neuroses which depend on the libido of the ego, whereas the other actual neuroses depend on object-libido. I had the impression that this passage, which, when the second part is considered as a whole, forms a kind of paragraph, is less important than the second paragraph of the second part, in which he defines the two types of object choice.*

Freud's essential point is that it is almost of no importance whether a working over of the libido – you know how difficult it is to translate *Verarbeitung* and *élaboration* isn't quite it[3] – is produced with real objects or with imaginary objects. The distinction only appears later, when the libido becomes oriented towards unreal objects. This leads to a *Stauung*, to a damming of the libido, which brings us to the imaginary character of the *ego*, since it is its libido which is in question.

O. MANNONI: *This German word must mean the construction of a dike. It appears to have a dynamic meaning, and at the same time means a raising of the level, and consequently a greater and greater energy of libido, which is well rendered in English by damming.*[4]

[1] '*érogénéité*'. Freud's term is '*Erogeneität*' (GW X 151; Stud III 51), translated as 'erotogenicity' (SE XIV 84).

[2] A neologism in French (*érogénéisation*). At the corresponding point in his text, Freud uses the same term as in note 1 above, as does SE.

[3] *Verarbeitung* is translated in SE as 'working over' (GW X 152; Stud III 52; SE XIV 86).

[4] English in the original.

Damming up,[4] even. In passing, Freud quotes four verses of Heinrich Heine's from the *Schöpfungslieder*, usually found in collection with the *Lieder*. It is a very strange little group of seven poems, whose irony and humour reveal many things which touch on the psychology of *Bildung*. Freud asks himself the question why does man get out of narcissism. Why is man dissatisfied? At this truly crucial moment in his scientific argument, Freud quotes Heine's verses to us. God is speaking, and says, *Illness is no doubt the final cause of the whole urge to create. By creating, I could recover. By creating, I became healthy.*[5]

DR LECLAIRE: *That is to say that this internal work, in which real objects and imaginary objects are equivalent . . .*

Freud doesn't say that they are equivalent. He says that at the point we have reached in the formation of the external world, it is a matter of indifference whether one considers them as real or imaginary. The difference only makes its appearance later, when the damming up has had its effects.

DR LECLAIRE: *So I come to the second sub-chapter of the second part, in which Freud tells us that another important point in the study of narcissism is to be found in the analysis of the difference in modalities of the love life of man and woman. He thereby comes to the distinction between two types of choice which one may translate by anaclitic and narcissistic, and he studies their genesis. He is led to putting it as follows* – A human being has originally two sexual objects – himself and the women who takes care of him.[6] *We might start from there.*

Himself, that's to say his image. It's absolutely clear.

DR LECLAIRE: *He goes into greater detail prior to the genesis, to the form, even, of this choice. He notes that the initial auto-erotic sexual satisfactions serve a function in the preservation of the self. Then, he notes that the sexual drives are at first employed in the satisfaction of the ego-drives, only becoming autonomous later. Thus the child at first loves the object which satisfies the ego-drives, that is to say the person who takes care of him. Finally, he is led to define the narcissistic type of object choice, clearly seen, above all, he says, in those whose libidinal development has been disturbed.*

That is to say in neurotics.

DR LECLAIRE: *These two basic types correspond - as he had mentioned earlier – to the two basic types, masculine and feminine.*

The two types – narcissistic and *Anlehnung*.

[4] English in the original.

[5] A modification of Strachey's translation (SE XIV 85 n3), following Lacan's more exact and literal French rendering of the German (GW X 151; Stud III 51).

[6] GW X 155; Stud III 55; SE XIV 88.

DR LECLAIRE: Anlehnung *has the meaning of support.*

The notion of *Anlehnung* does have some connection with the notion of dependency developed since. But it is a much larger and richer idea. Freud draws up a list of the different types of fixation in love, which has no reference whatsoever to what one might call a mature relationship – that myth of psychoanalysis. First of all, within the field of fixation in love, there is *Verliebtheit*, the narcissistic type. It is characterised as follows, that one loves – firstly, what one is oneself, that is to say, as Freud specifies in brackets, oneself – secondly, what one was – thirdly, what one would like to be – fourthly, the person who was a part of one's own self. That's the *Narzissmustypus*.

The *Anlehnungstypus* is no less imaginary, since it is also based on a reversal of identification. The subject thus takes his bearings on a primitive situation. One loves the woman who feeds and the man who protects.

DR LECLAIRE: *Here, Freud puts forward a number of considerations which count as indirect proofs for the conception of the primary narcissism of the child, which he locates essentially – strange as it may seem – in the manner in which parents see their child.*

That's the seduction exercised by narcissism. Freud points out what every human being finds fascinating and satisfying in the apprehension of a being whose perceived characteristics are those of this enclosed world, shut in on itself, satisfied, full, which the narcissistic type represents. He compares it to the supreme seduction a beautiful animal exerts.

DR LECLAIRE: *He says* – His Majesty the Baby. *The child is what the parents make of it, in so far as they project the ideal on to it. Freud makes it clear that he will leave to one side the disturbances of the child's primary narcissism, even though that is a subject of great importance, since the question of the castration complex is linked to it. He takes the opportunity to give a more precise sense of where Adler's notion of the masculine protest belongs, by putting it back in its proper place . . .*

. . . which is by no means negligible.

DR LECLAIRE: *. . . yes, it is of great importance, but he links it up with disturbances of the original primary narcissism. We thus come to the following important question – what happens to the ego libido in the normal adult? Are we forced to admit that it is completely subsumed in the object investments? Freud rejects this hypothesis, and reminds us of the existence of repression, which has, in the end, a normalising function.* Repression, *he says, and this is the essential point in the argument,* proceeds from the ego, from its ethical and cultural requirements. The same impressions, experiences, impulses and desires that one man indulges or at least works over consciously will be rejected with the utmost indignation by

another, or even stifled before they enter consciousness.[7] *We have here a difference in behaviour, depending on the individual, depending on the person. Freud attempts to formulate this difference as follows* - We can say that the one man has set up an ideal in himself by which he measures his actual[8] ego, while the other has formed no such ideal. For the ego the formation of an ideal would be the conditioning factor of repression. This ideal is now the target of the self-love which was enjoyed in childhood by the true[9] ego. *And he goes on . . .*

It isn't the true ego, it's the real ego – *das wirkliche Ich.*

DR LECLAIRE: *The text goes on* – Narcissism seems to make its appearance displaced on to this new ideal ego, which finds itself in possession of all the ego's precious perfections, in the same way as the infantile ego was. As always where the libido is concerned, man has here again shown himself incapable of giving up a satisfaction he had once enjoyed. *For the first time Freud uses the term 'ideal ego' in this sentence* - this ideal ego is now the target of the self-love which was enjoyed in childhood by the true[10] ego. *But he then says* – He is not willing to forgo the narcissistic perfection of his childhood and [. . .] he seeks to recover it in the new form of an ego-ideal.[11] *Here we find the two terms 'ideal ego' and 'ego-ideal'.*

Given the rigour of Freud's writing, one of the puzzles of this text, very well brought out by Leclaire, is the coexistence in the same paragraph of the two terms.

DR LECLAIRE: *It is amusing to observe how the word 'form' is substituted for the word 'ego'.*

Exactly. And Freud makes use there of the *Ichideal*, which is precisely symmetrical and opposed to the *Idealich*. It's the sign that Freud is here designating two different functions. What does that mean? We are going to try and clarify it in a moment.

DR LECLAIRE: *What caught my attention is that just when he substitutes the term* ideal ego *for* ego-ideal, *the* ego-ideal *is preceded by* new form.

Of course.

DR LECLAIRE: *The new form of his ego-ideal is what he projects before him as his ideal.*

[7] GW X 160; Stud III 60; SE XIV 93. The first sentence of this passage is a loose paraphrase of the original German: 'Repression, we have said, proceeds from the ego; we might say with greater precision that it proceeds from the self-respect of the ego.'

[8] '*aktuelles*' in German; 'actual' in SE; '*actuel*' in French.

[9] SE gives 'actual'; French has '*véritable*'; as Lacan points out the German is '*wirkliche*'.

[10] '*wirkliche Ich*'. [11] GW X 161; Stud III 61; SE XIV 94.

The next paragraph clears up this difficulty. For once, quite exceptionally in his work, Freud spells out the difference between sublimation and idealisation. Go on.

DR LECLAIRE: *So Freud has postulated the existence of the ideal ego, which he then calls the ego-ideal, or form of the ideal ego. He says, from there, there is only one step to the searching out of the relations of the formation of the ideal to sublimation. Sublimation is a process involving object libido. In contrast, idealisation deals with the object which has been ennobled, elevated, and it does so without any modification in its nature. Idealisation is no less possible in the domain of ego libido than in that of object libido.*

Once again, that amounts to saying that Freud places the two libidos on the same plane.

DR LECLAIRE: *The idealisation of the ego may coexist with a failed sublimation. The formation of the ego-ideal heightens the demands of the ego and encourages repression to the full.*

One is on the plane of the imaginary, and the other is on the plane of the symbolic – since the demand of the *Ichideal* takes up its place within the totality of demands of the law.

DR LECLAIRE: *Hence sublimation opens up the expedient of satisfying this demand without involving repression.*

That is successful sublimation.

DR LECLAIRE: *That's how he rounds off this short paragraph dealing with the relations of the ego-ideal to sublimation.* It would not surprise us, *he goes on to say*, if we were to find a special psychical agency which performs this task of seeing that narcissistic satisfaction from the ego-ideal is ensured and which, with this end in view, constantly watches the actual [*aktuelle*] ego and measures it by that ideal.[12] *This hypothesis of a special psychical agency, which would thus have vigilance and security as its function, will eventually lead us to the super-ego. And Freud supports his argument with an example drawn from the psychoses in which, he says, this agency is clearly visible in delusions of being watched.*[13] *Before he discusses the syndrome of being watched, he makes it clear that, if such an agency exists, we are not in a position to discover it, but can only presuppose*[14] *it as such. To me, it seems singularly important that, in this, his first way of introducing the super-ego, he says that this agency does not exist, that one will not discover it, but can only presuppose it.*

[12] GW X 162; Stud III 62; SE XIV 95.

[13] *Ibid.* '*Beachtungs- oder richtiger Beobachtungswahnes*', rendered by Leclaire as '*syndrome d'influence*', a nosological conception found primarily in French psychiatry following Séglas.

[14] Freud's verb, '*agnoszieren*', is rendered by Strachey as 'recognise'. The French verb Leclaire employs is '*supposer*' (assume, presuppose, suppose). See p. 152 n8 below.

He adds that what we call our conscience fulfils this function, has this characteristic. The recognition of this agency throws light on paranoid symptomatology. A patient of this type complains of being watched, of hearing voices, of having his thoughts known, of being observed. They are right, *Freud says*, this complaint is justified. A power of this kind, watching, discovering and criticising all our intentions, does really exist. Indeed, it exists in every one of us in normal life. *Then we find . . .*

That is not quite the intended meaning. Freud says that, if such an agency exists, it is not possible that it is the sort of thing that we would not yet have discovered. That's because he identifies it with the censorship, as the examples he chooses reveal. He comes upon this agency again in delusions of being watched,[15] in which it becomes confused with the person who commands the subject's actions. He then recognises it in what is defined by Silberer as the functional phenomenon. According to Silberer, the subject's internal perception of his own mental states, of his mental mechanisms in so far as they are functions, just when he is sliding into a dream, plays a formative role. The dream symbolically transposes this perception, in the sense in which *symbolic* simply means imagistic. Here we have a spontaneous form of splitting of the subject. Freud always had an ambiguous attitude towards this conception of Silberer's, saying both that this phenomenon is extremely important, and that it is nonetheless secondary in relation to the manifestation of desire in the dream. Perhaps that is due to the fact, he remarks somewhere,[16] that he himself has a make-up such that this phenomenon does not possess the importance in his own dreams that it may have in other people's. This vigilance of the ego which Freud highlights, ever present in the dream, is the guardian of sleep, placed on the margins, as it were, of the dream's activity, and very often ready to comment on it in its own right. This residual participation of the ego is, like all the agencies which Freud takes account of under the rubric of the censorship, an agency which speaks, that is to say a symbolic agency.

Dr Leclaire: *A sort of synthesis then follows, in which he opens up a discussion of the sense of self,*[17] *in the normal individual and the neurotic. The sense of self has three origins, which are – primary narcissistic satisfaction, the measure of success, that is to say the satisfaction of the desire for omnipotence, and the gratification received from love objects. These are the three roots of the sense of self which Freud seems to retain. It's not necessary, I think, to go into the detail of the discussion here. I would prefer to return to the first of the complementary remarks. What seems to me to be extremely important is this* – The development of the ego consists in an

[15] '*le délire d'influence*'. See p. 134 n13 above.

[16] (1900a) GW II/III 508–9; Stud II 484–5; SE V 504–5.

[17] '*sentiment de soi*'. Freud's term, *Selbstgefühl*, is translated in SE as 'self-regard' (SE XIV 98 *et passim*). The broader term 'sense of self' has been employed, despite its clumsiness, because it reflects French and German more faithfully.

estrangement from primary narcissism and gives rise to a vigorous attempt to recover that state. This departure is brought about by means of the displacement of libido on to an ego-ideal imposed from without, and satisfaction is brought about from fulfilling this ideal.[18] *So the ego experiences a kind of estrangement, passing via a middle term, which is the ideal, and returns later to its primitive position. This movement seems to me to be the very image of development.*

O. MANNONI: *Its structuration.*

Yes, structuration, that's quite right.

DR LECLAIRE: *This displacement of the libido on to an ideal needs to be made more precise because it may be one of two things – either this displacement of the libido is carried out once again on to an image, on to an image of the ego, that is to say on to a form of the ego, which we call an ideal, since it is not similar to the one that is already there, or that was there – or else we will apply the term ego-ideal to something going beyond a form of the ego, to something which is quite properly an ideal, and which comes closer to the idea, to the form.*

Agreed.

DR LECLAIRE: *It's in this sense that we come to perceive, it seems to me, all of the richness of the sentence. But also its degree of ambiguity in as much as, if one talks of structuration, one then takes the ego-ideal to be the form of the ego-ideal. But that isn't made clear in this text.*

M. HYPPOLITE: *Could you read Freud's sentence again?*

DR LECLAIRE: The development of the ego consists in an estrangement from primary narcissism and gives rise to a vigorous attempt to recover that state.

M. HYPPOLITE: *But does one have take that to be the begetting of the ego-ideal?*

DR LECLAIRE: *No. Freud talks about the ego-ideal before. The estrangement is brought about by means of a displacement of the libido on to an ego-ideal imposed from without. And satisfaction is brought about by fulfilling this ideal. Obviously, to the extent that this ideal is fulfilled . . .*

M. HYPPOLITE: *. . . incapable of being fulfilled, because when all is said and done that is the origin of transcendence, destructive and fascinating.*

DR LECLAIRE: *It isn't made explicit, however. The first time that he talks of the ideal ego, it's in order to say that self-love now moves towards this ideal ego.*

O. MANNONI: *In my opinion, one often gets the impression that we are speaking several different languages. I think that one should perhaps distinguish between a*

[18] GW X 168; Stud III 67; SE XIV 100.

development of the person and a structuration of the ego. Something of this sort will allow us to understand one another, because it is truly an ego which structures, but within a being which is developing.

Yes, we are deep in structuration. Precisely at the point where the entire analytic experience unfolds, at the joint of the imaginary and the symbolic. Just now, Leclaire raised the question about the function of the image and the function of what he called the idea. We know very well that the idea never lives all by itself. It lives with all the other ideas, Plato has already taught us that.

In order to bring a little light to bear, let's get the little apparatus going, the one I have been showing you these last few sessions.

2

Let's start with the animal, an animal which is also an ideal, that is to say successful – the unsuccessful one is the animal we managed to capture. This ideal animal gives us a vision of completeness, of fulfilment, because it presupposes the perfect fit, indeed the identity of the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt*. That's what makes this living form seductive, as its appearance harmoniously unfolds.

What does the development of instinctual functioning teach us in this respect? The extraordinary importance of the image. What comes into play in releasing the complementary behaviour of the male and female sticklebacks? *Gestalten*.

Let us simplify matters, and consider this functioning solely at one given moment. The male or female animal subject is captivated, as it were, by a *Gestalt*. The subject literally identifies itself with the releasing stimulus. The male is caught up in the zigzag dance on the basis of the relation that is set up between himself and the image which governs the releasing of the cycle of his sexual behaviour. The female is caught up in the same way in this mutual dance. This is not just the external manifestation of something which always has the aspect of a dance, of two-body gravitation. Up to now that has been one of the most difficult problems for physics to solve, but it comes about quite harmoniously in the natural world in the pairing relation. At that moment, the subject is found to be completely identical to the image which governs the complete releasing of a specific motor behaviour, which itself produces and echoes back to the partner, in a certain style, the command which makes it engage in the other part of the dance.

The natural appearance of this closed world of two gives us the image of the conjunction of the object libido and the narcissistic libido. In effect, each object's attachment to the other is produced by the narcissistic fixation on this image, because it is this image, and it alone, that it was expecting. That explains

why, in the world of living things, only a partner of the same species – we never pay sufficient attention to this – is able to release this special form which we call sexual behaviour. With very few exceptions, which must be placed within the margin of error which natural events display.

Let us say that, in the animal world, the entire cycle of sexual behaviour is dominated by the imaginary. On the other hand, it is in sexual behaviour that we find the greatest possibilities of displacement occurring, even in animals. We already make use of it for experimental purposes when we present the animal with a lure, a false image, a male partner which is only a shadow bearing the dominant characteristics of the said animal. At the time of the manifestations of the phenotype that, in many species, occur at this biological moment which calls for sexual behaviour, the offering of this lure is sufficient to release the sexual behaviour. The possibility of displacement, the illusory, imaginary dimension, is essential to everything pertaining to the order of sexual behaviour.

Is this true for man, yes or no? This image could be it, this *Idealich* we've just been talking about. Why not? Still, it wouldn't occur to us to call this lure the *Idealich*. So where are we going to put it? Here my little apparatus reveals its virtues.

What are its implications? I've already explained to you the physical phenomenon of the real image, which can be produced by the spherical mirror, be seen in its place, be inserted into the world of real objects, be accommodated in it at the same time as real objects, even bringing to these real objects an imaginary disposition, namely by including, excluding, locating and completing them.

This is nothing other than the imaginary phenomenon which I just spelt out in detail for you in the animal. The animal makes a real object coincide with the image within him. And, what is more, as is indicated in Freud's texts, I would add that the coincidence of the image with a real object strengthens it, gives it substance, embodiment. At this moment, behaviour is released, such that the subject will be guided towards its object, with the image as go-between.

Does this happen in man?

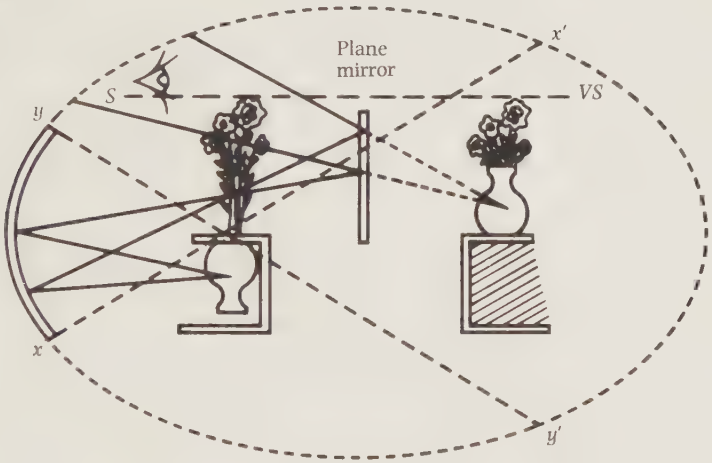
In man, as we know, an eminent disorder characterises the manifestations of the sexual function. Nothing in it adapts. This image, around which we, we psychoanalysts, revolve, presents, whether in the neuroses or in the perversions, a sort of fragmentation, of rupture, of breaking up, of lack of adaptation, of inadequation. Here we come upon a game of hide and seek between the image and its normal object – if indeed we adopt the ideal of a norm at all in the functioning of sexuality. From then on how can we find a way of representing the mechanism whereby this disordered imagination finally succeeds, in spite of everything, in fulfilling its function?

I am trying to use simple terms so as to guide your thinking. We could make

use of more complicated ones. But you see that this really is the question which analysts distractedly ask themselves, as they vigorously – and publicly – scratch their heads.

Take up any article, it doesn't matter which, for example the last one, which I read for your sake, by our dear friend Michael Balint – whose forthcoming visit to our Society I'll announce shortly. He asks the question – what is the end of the treatment? For the last session of our course this term, I would like – perhaps I won't do it, I don't know, it will depend whether I'm feeling inspired – I would like to talk to you about the termination of analysis. It's a jump, but doesn't our scrutiny of the mechanisms of resistance and of the transference allow it?

Well, what is the end of the treatment? Is it analogous to the end of a natural process? Genital love – this Eldorado promised to analysts, which we quite imprudently promise to our patients – is it a natural process? Isn't it, on the contrary, simply a series of cultural approximations which are only capable of being realised in certain cases? Is analysis, its termination, thus dependent on all sorts of contingencies?



Simplified schema of the two mirrors

What is the point? – if not to see what the function of the other, of the human other, is, in the adequation of the imaginary and the real.

Here we'll take up the little schema again. The finishing touch I added to it in our last session constitutes an essential element of what I am trying to demonstrate. The real image can only be seen in a consistent fashion within a limited field of the real space of the apparatus, the field in front of the apparatus, as constituted by the spherical mirror and the inverted bouquet.

We have placed the subject at the edge of the spherical mirror. But we know that the seeing of an image in the plane mirror is strictly equivalent for the

subject to an image of the real object, which would be seen by a spectator beyond this mirror, at the very spot where the subject sees his image. We can therefore replace the subject by a virtual subject, *VS*, placed inside the cone which limits the possibility of the illusion – that's the field *x'y'*. The apparatus that I've invented shows, then, how, in being placed at a point very close to the real image, one is nevertheless capable of seeing it, in a mirror, as a virtual image. That is what happens in man.

What follows from this? A very special symmetry. In fact, the virtual subject, reflection of the mythical eye, that is to say the other which we are, is there where we first saw our *ego* – outside us, in the human form. This form is outside of us, not in so far as it is so constructed as to captate[19] sexual behaviour, but in so far as it is fundamentally linked to the primitive impotence of the human being. The human being only sees his form materialised, whole, the mirage of himself, outside of himself. This notion doesn't figure as yet in the article we are studying, it only emerges later in Freud's work.

What the subject, the one who exists, sees in the mirror is an image, whether sharp or broken up, lacking in consistency, incomplete. This depends on its position in relation to the real image. Too much towards the edge, and you'll see it poorly. Everything depends on the angle of incidence at the mirror. It's only from within the cone that one can have a clear image.

So whether you see the image more or less clearly depends on the inclination of the mirror. As for the virtual spectator, the one who becomes your substitute through the fiction of the mirror in order to see the real image, all that's necessary is for the plane mirror to be inclined in a specific way for him to be in the field in which one sees very poorly. From this fact alone, you will also see the image in the mirror very poorly. Let's say that this represents the uneasy accommodation of the imaginary in man.

Now let us postulate that the inclination of the plane mirror is governed by the voice of the other. This doesn't happen at the level of the mirror-stage, but it happens subsequently through our overall relation with others – the symbolic relation. From that point on, you can grasp the extent to which the regulation of the imaginary depends on something which is located in a transcendent fashion, as M. Hyppolite would put it – the transcendent on this occasion being nothing other than the symbolic connection between human beings.

What is the symbolic connection? Dotting our i's and crossing our t's, it is the fact that socially we define ourselves with the law as go-between. It is through the exchange of symbols that we locate our different selves [*mois*] in relation to one another – you, you are Mannoni, and me Jacques Lacan, and we have a certain symbolic relation, which is complex, according to the different planes on which we are placed, according to whether we're together in the police station, or together in this hall, or together travelling.

[19] See p. 146 n2 below.

In other words, it's the symbolic relation which defines the position of the subject as seeing. It is speech, the symbolic relation, which determines the greater or lesser degree of perfection, of completeness, of approximation, of the imaginary. This representation allows us to draw the distinction between the *Idealich* and the *Ichideal*, between the ideal ego and the ego-ideal. The ego-ideal governs the interplay of relations on which all relations with others depend. And on this relation to others depends the more or less satisfying character of the imaginary structuration.

A schema like this one shows you that the imaginary and the real act on the same level. To understand this, all we have to do is to make another little improvement in the apparatus. Think of the mirror as a pane of glass. You'll see yourself in the glass and you'll see the objects beyond it. That's exactly how it is – it's a coincidence between certain images and the real. What else are we talking about when we refer to an oral, anal, genital reality, that is to say a specific relation between our images and images? This is nothing other than the images of the human body, and the hominisation of the world, its perception in terms of images linked to the structuration of the body. The real objects, which pass via the mirror, and through it, are in the same place as the imaginary object. The essence of the image is to be invested by the libido. What we call libidinal investment is what makes an object become desirable, that is to say how it becomes confused with this more or less structured image which, in diverse ways, we carry with us.

So this schema allows you to represent to yourself the difference which Freud always carefully drew, and which often remains puzzling to readers, between topographical regression and genetic, archaic regression, regression in history as we are also taught to designate it.

Depending on the inclination of the mirror, the image in the spherical mirror is more or less successfully set up at the centre or on the edges. One might even conceive of it being modified. How does the primitive mouth get transformed, in the end, into a phallus? – it would perhaps be easy to knock up a little model of entertaining physics for this problem. This shows you that, in man, no truly effective and complete imaginary regulation can be set up without the intervention of another dimension. Which is what analysis, mythically at least, aims at.

What is my desire? What is my position in the imaginary structuration? This position is only conceivable in so far as one finds a guide beyond the imaginary, on the level of the symbolic plane, of the legal exchange which can only be embodied in the verbal exchange between human beings. This guide governing the subject is the ego-ideal.

This distinction is absolutely essential, and it allows us to make sense of what happens in analysis on the imaginary plane, which we call transference.

To get hold of it – this is the value of Freud's text – one has to understand

what *Verliebtheit* is, what love is. Love is a phenomenon which takes place on the imaginary level, and which provokes a veritable subduction of the symbolic, a sort of annihilation, of perturbation of the function of the ego-ideal. Love reopens the door – as Freud put it, not mincing his words – to perfection.

The *Ichideal*, the ego-ideal, is the other as speaking, the other in so far as he has a symbolic relation to me [*moi*], which, within the terms of our dynamic manipulation, is both similar to and different from the imaginary libido. Symbolic exchange is what links human beings to each other, that is, it is speech, and it makes it possible to identify the subject. That isn't a metaphor – the symbol begets intelligent beings, as Hegel says.

The *Ichideal*, considered as speaking, can come to be placed in the world of objects on the level of the *Idealich*, that is, on the level where this narcissistic captation which Freud talks about over and over again throughout this text can take place. You can rest assured that when this confusion occurs, the apparatus can't be regulated any longer. In other words, when you're in love, you are mad, as ordinary language puts it.

I would like at this point to give an illustration of love at first sight. Remember the first time Werther sees Lotte, as she is cuddling a child. It's an entirely satisfying image for the *Anlehnungstypus* on the anaclitic plane. It is the way the object coincides with Goethe's hero's fundamental image that triggers off[20] his fatal attachment – next time we must clarify why this attachment is fundamentally fatal. That's what love is. It's one's own ego that one loves in love, one's own ego made real on the imaginary level.

People go crazy thinking about this problem – how can a transference be so easily generated in neurotics, when they are so fettered when it comes to love? The production of transference has an absolutely universal character, truly automatic, whereas the demands of love are, on the contrary, as everyone knows, so specific . . . It's not every day that you come upon something which is constructed so as to give you the very image of your desire. How is it, then, that within the analytic relation, the transference, which has the same nature as love – Freud says it in the text which I gave Granoff to go through – arises, one can say *even before* the analysis has started? To be sure, it isn't perhaps quite the same thing before and during analysis.

I see that the clock ticks on, and I don't want to keep you after quarter to two. I will start off with these questions next time – how does the function of transference, triggered off[20] almost automatically in the analysand/analyst relation – before it has even begun, on account of the presence and function of analysis – how does it allow us to bring into play the imaginary function of the *Idealich*?

31 March 1954

[20] '*déclenche*'. See p. 121 n6 above.

XII

Zeitlich-Entwicklungsgeschichte

THE IMAGE OF DEATH
THE SLEEPER'S REAL SELF
THE NAME, THE LAW
FROM THE FUTURE TO THE PAST

It was Alain who pointed out that no one counts the number of columns on his mental image of the Pantheon. To which I would have liked to have answered him – except the architect of the Pantheon. So here we are, ushered through this little gateway, into the relations between the real, the imaginary and the symbolic.

1

M. HYPPOLITE: *Can one ask a question about the structure of the optical image? I want to ask for some material specifications. If I've correctly understood the material structure, there is a spherical mirror, and the real image of the object is inverted in the middle of the mirror. This image would be on a screen. Instead of being formed on a screen, we can look at it with the eye.*

Exactly. Because it's a real image, in as much as the eye accommodates itself within a specific plane, designated by the real object. In the amusing experiment which I drew inspiration from, there was an inverted bouquet which was placed in the neck of a real vase. In so far as the eye accommodates itself to the real image, it sees it. It is clearly delineated in as much as the light rays all converge on the same point in virtual space, that is to say in as much as, for every point on the object, there corresponds a point on the image.

M. HYPPOLITE: *If the eye is placed within the luminous cone, it sees the image. If not, it doesn't see it.*

The experiment proves that, for it to be perceived, the observer must be not very far removed from the axis of the spherical mirror, within a sort of continuation of the outward curvature of this mirror.

M. HYPPOLITE: *In that case, if we introduce a plane mirror, the plane mirror gives a virtual image of the real image we are considering as the object.*

Everything which can be directly seen can also be seen in a mirror. It is exactly the same as if it were seen as making up a set composed of symmetrical parts, one real, the other virtual, corresponding to one another. The virtual part corresponds to the opposed real part, and inversely, in such a manner that the virtual image in the mirror is seen in the same way as the real image would be by an imaginary, virtual observer, who occupies the symmetrical position in the mirror, the real image functioning on this occasion as the object.

M. HYPPOLITE: *I've gone back to construction sets again, just as in the days of exams or prelims.*[1] *But here, there's also an eye which looks in the mirror in order to see the virtual image of the real image.*

As long as I can see the real image, I will see it just as well, placing the mirror at a half-way point, either appearing from where I am, that is at a place which may vary between the real image and spherical mirror, or even behind it. What I'll see appearing in the mirror, if it is appropriately positioned, that is to say if it is perpendicular to the axis of a moment ago, is the self-same real image outlined against the confused background given by the concavity of a spherical mirror in a plane one.

M. HYPPOLITE: *When I look in the mirror, I simultaneously perceive the virtual bouquet of flowers and my virtual eye.*

Yes, as long as my real eye exists, and isn't itself an abstract point. For I've emphasised that we aren't eyes. And, in saying this, I'm beginning to slip into abstraction.

M. HYPPOLITE: *So, I've properly understood the image. There remains the symbolic correspondence.*

That is what I am going to try to explain a bit to you.

M. HYPPOLITE: *What play of correspondences is there between the real object, the flowers, the real image, the virtual image, the real eye and the virtual eye? Let's start with the real object – what do the real flowers represent for you?*

The point of this schema is, of course, that it can be put to a variety of uses. Freud had already constructed something similar, and quite specifically pointed out to us in the *Traumdeutung* and the *Abriss* that the psychic agencies should be conceived of on the basis of imaginary phenomena. In the *Traumdeutung* he made use of the schema of layers, in which perceptions and memories are inscribed, the former forming the conscious, the latter the unconscious, which comes to be projected on to consciousness, eventually closing the stimulus-response circuit, with which one tried to explain the

[1] *'bachot ou du PCB'*, colloquial terms for *'baccalauréat'* (final secondary school examinations) and *'Certificat d'études de physique, chimie et biologie'*, a preliminary medical examination.

organism's circuit at that time. We can see in it something like the superposition of photographic films. But it is quite clear that his schema is imperfect. Because . . .

M. HYPPOLITE: *I've already got the hang of your schema. I am looking for the initial correspondences.*

The original correspondences? To clarify matters, we can give the real image, which has the function of containing and, at the same time, of excluding several real objects, the signification of the limits of the ego. However, if you give such a function to one element of the model, other elements necessarily take on other functions. All that counts here is the way the relations are put to use.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Could one, for example, say that the real object signifies the* Gegenbild, *the sexual replica of the ego? In the animal schema, the male finds the* Gegenbild, *that is to say his complementary counterpart in the structure.*

Since you need a *Gegenbild* . . .

M. HYPPOLITE: *The word is Hegel's.*

The very term *Gegenbild* implies correspondence with an *Innenbild*, which boils down to the correspondence of the *Innenwelt* with the *Umwelt*.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Which prompts me to say that if the real object, the flowers, represents the real object correlative to the perceiving animal subject, then the real image of the flower pot represents the reflected imaginary structure of this real structure.*

You couldn't have put it better. That's exactly what happens when one is dealing with an animal. And that is what happens in my first construction, where there is only the spherical mirror, when the experiment is limited to showing how the real image is mixed in with real things. That, in fact, is one way of representing the *Innenbild* which allows the animal to seek out its specific partner, in the manner in which the key seeks out a keyhole, or the keyhole seeks out the key, directing its libido where it has to be for the propagation of the species. I've pointed out to you that, from this point of view, we can already grasp in an impressionistic way the essentially transitory character of the individual in relation to the type.

M. HYPPOLITE: *The cycle of the species.*

Not only the cycle of the species, but the fact that the individual is so much a captive of the type that, in relation to this type, it is annihilated. It is, as Hegel would say – I don't know if he said it – already dead in relation to the eternal life of the species.

M. HYPPOLITE: *I made Hegel say this sentence, in commenting on your image – that in fact, knowledge, that is to say humanity, is the failure of sexuality.*

That's going a bit too far.

M. HYPPOLITE: *For me what is important is that the real object can be understood as the real counterpart, which pertains to the order of the species, of the real individual. But then a development in the imaginary takes place, which allows this counterpart in the single spherical mirror also to become a real image, an image which fascinates, as such, in the very absence of the real object which is projected into the imaginary, an image which fascinates the individual and captates*[2] *him right up to the plane mirror.*

You know what a delicate matter it is to measure what is and what isn't perceived by an animal, because, for it just as for man, perception seems to extend much further than one is able to bring out in experimental, that is to say artificial behaviour. Sometimes we realise that it is capable of making choices with the help of things the existence of which we did not suspect. Nonetheless, we know that, when it is engaged in a cycle of behaviour of the instinctual type, there takes place in it a thickening, a condensation, a dulling, of its perception of the external world. The animal is then so stuck within a number of imaginary conditions that we can lure it most easily, just when it would be of the greatest use for it not to be fooled. Libidinal fixation on certain terms here appears as a kind of funnel.

That is our starting point. But, if it is necessary to construct an apparatus which is a little more complex and tricky for man, it is because, for him, it doesn't happen like that.

Since you have been kind enough to get me started again today, I don't see why I shouldn't begin by reminding you of the fundamental Hegelian theme – man's desire is the desire of the other.

That is exactly what is made plain in the model by the plane mirror. That is also where we again come upon Jacques Lacan's classical mirror phase, this turning point [*moment de virage*] in development, in which the individual makes a triumphant exercise of his own image in the mirror, of himself. Through certain correlations in his behaviour, we can understand that what occurs here for the first time, is the anticipated seizure of mastery.

Here we are also touching on something else, which I've called the *Urbild*, using *Bild* in a different sense from the way you used it just now – the first model in which man's delay, the unsticking of man in relation to his own libido, is

[2] '*capter*'. The verb 'to captate', obsolete according to the O.E.D., is here revived in a quasi-technical sense Lacan and Hyppolite use it to refer exclusively to the imaginary effects of the image in the other, a relation of seduction and fascination.

noticeable. This gap means that there's a radical difference between the satisfaction of a desire and the pursuit of the fulfilment of desire – desire is essentially a negativity, introduced at a point in time which is not especially primary, but which is crucial, a turning-point [*tournant*]. Desire is first grasped in the other, and in the most confused form. The relativity of human desire in relation to the desire of the other is what we recognise in every reaction of rivalry, of competition, and even in the entire development of civilization, including this sympathetic and fundamental exploitation of man by man whose end is by no means yet in sight, for the reason that it is absolutely structural to, and constitutes, as Hegel acknowledged once and for all, the very structure of the idea of labour. To be sure, it is no longer a question of desire here, but of the total mediation of activity in so far as it is specifically human, in so far as it has taken the path of human desires.

The subject originally locates and recognises desire through the intermediary, not only of his own image, but of the body of his fellow being. It's exactly at that moment that the human being's consciousness, in the form of consciousness of self, distinguishes itself. It is in so far as he recognises his desire in the body of the other that the exchange takes place. It is in so far as his desire has gone over to the other side that he assimilates himself to the body of the other and recognises himself as body.

Nothing allows us to assert that the animal has a consciousness separated from its body as such, that its corporeality is an objectifiable entity for it . . .

M. Hyppolite: *Statutory, in both senses.*

Exactly. Whereas it is certain that, if there is for us a fundamental given even before the register of the unhappy consciousness has emerged at all, it's precisely the distinction between our consciousness and our body. This distinction makes our body into something factitious, from which our consciousness is entirely incapable of detaching itself, but on the basis of which it conceives itself – these are not perhaps the most adequate terms – as distinct.

The distinction between consciousness and body is set up in this abrupt interchange of roles which takes place in the experience of the mirror when the other is involved.

Mannoni yesterday evening remarked that, in interpersonal relations, something factitious is always brought in, namely the projection of others on to ourselves. This is no doubt because we recognise ourselves as body in so far as these others, who are indispensable for the recognition of our desire, also have bodies, or more exactly, in so far as we have one like them.

M. Hyppolite: *What I fail to understand, is not so much the distinction between oneself and the body, as the distinction between two bodies.*

Of course.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Since the self represents itself as the ideal body, and since there is also the body I feel, there are two . . .?*

No, certainly not. That's where the Freudian discovery acquires its full importance – man, in his initial stages, does not from the first in any way accede to a surmounted desire. What he recognises and fixes in this image of the other is a fragmented desire. And the apparent mastery of the mirror image is given to him, at least virtually, as complete. It is an ideal mastery.

M. HYPPOLITE: *That is what I call the ideal body.*

It is the *Idealich*. As for his desire, that, in contrast, is not constituted. What the subject finds in the other is first of all a series of ambivalent planes, of alienations of his desire – of a desire still in pieces. Everything we know about the evolution of instincts yields us its schema, since Freud's libido theory is built upon the preservation, upon the progressive compounding of a number of partial drives, which may or may not succeed in leading to a mature desire.

M. HYPPOLITE: *I think that we are in complete agreement. Yes? But, you were saying no just now. We are in complete agreement. If I say two bodies, that simply means that what I see as being constituted either in the other, or in my own image in the mirror, is what I am not, and in fact is what is beyond me. That is what I call the ideal, statutory body, or statue. As Valéry says in* La Jeune Parque – But my statue quivers at the same time,[3] *that is to say disintegrates. Its disintegration is what I call the other body.*

The body as fragmented desire seeking itself out, and the body as ideal self, are projected on the side of the subject as fragmented body, while it sees the other as perfect body. For the subject, a fragmented body is an image essentially dismemberable from its body.

M. HYPPOLITE: *The two project themselves on to each other in the sense that, all at once, it sees itself as statue and dismembers itself at the same time, projecting the dismembering on to the statue, within a dialectic which cannot be brought to an end. I apologise for repeating what you have said, just to be sure that I've really understood.*

In a moment, if you want, we'll go one step further.

After all, the real is obviously right here, on this side of the mirror. But what is beyond it? First of all, there is, as we have already seen, the primitive imaginary of the specular dialectic with the other.

This fundamental dialectic already introduces the fatal dimension of the death instinct, in two senses. Firstly, the libidinal captation has an irremediably fatal significance for the individual, in so far as it is subjected to the *x* of eternal

[3] '*Mais ma statue en même temps frissonne.*'

life. Secondly – and this is the point emphasised by Freud's thought, but isn't fully made out in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* – the death instinct in man takes on another signification in that his libido is originally constrained to pass through an imaginary stage.

In addition, this image of an image is what disrupts the maturity of the libido in man, disrupts the smooth fitting together of reality and the imaginary which should in principle exist, according to our hypothesis – since, after all, what do we know about it? – in animals. In animals, the securing of the guide-rails is so much more in evidence that it is precisely what has given rise to the great fantasy of *natura mater*, the very idea of nature, in relation to which man portrays his original inadequacy to himself, which he expresses in a thousand different ways. You can spot it, in a perfectly objectifiable manner, in his quite special impotence at the beginning of life. This prematurity of birth hasn't been invented by the psychoanalysts. Histologically, the apparatus which in the organism plays the role of nervous system, still a matter for debate, is not complete at birth. Man's libido attains its finished state before encountering its object. That is how this special fault is introduced, perpetuated in man in the relation to the other who is infinitely more fatal for him than for any other animal. This image of the master, which is what he sees in the form of the specular image, becomes confused in him with the image of death. Man can be in the presence of the absolute master. He is in his presence from the beginning, whether he has been taught this or not, in so far as he is subjected to this image.

M. Hyppolite: *The animal is bound by death when he makes love, but he doesn't know anything about it.*

Whereas man knows it. He knows it and feels it.

M. Hyppolite: *That amounts to saying that he himself takes his own life. Through the other he wants his own death.*

We are all completely agreed that love is a form of suicide.

Dr Lang: *There's one point you have insisted on, and I haven't fully grasped the significance of your insistence. It is the fact that one has to be within a certain field in relation to the apparatus we're studying.*

I see that I haven't shown you enough petticoat, since you've seen the frills but not how they're tied on.

What's at issue here can once again come into play on several planes. We can interpret things at the level of structuration, or of description, or of the management of the cure. It is particularly useful to have a schema such that the apparition of the image at a given moment be dependent upon the activation of a plane of reflection – the subject remaining always in the same place. Only

from a specific virtual point of observation can one see the image with sufficient completeness. You can shift this virtual point around as you wish. Now, when the mirror veers round, what changes?

It will not only be the backdrop, that is, what the subject can see at the back, for example himself – or an echo of himself, as M. Hyppolite has observed. In fact, when you move a plane mirror, there comes a point when a certain number of objects leave the field. Clearly the closest ones are the last to leave, which may already be useful in explaining some of the ways in which the *Idealich* is placed in relation to something else which for the moment I leave in an enigmatic form, and which I have called the observer. Quite obviously it's not just an observer. In the end what is involved is the symbolic relation, namely the point from which one speaks, it is spoken.

But it is not only this which changes. If you put the mirror at an angle, the image itself changes. Without the real image moving, simply because the mirror changes, the image that the subject, placed on the side of the spherical mirror, will see in this mirror, will pass from having the form of a mouth to that of a phallus, or from a more or less complete desire to that type of desire which a moment ago I called fragmented. In other words, this mode of functioning allows us to see what was always Freud's idea, namely the possible correlations between the notion of topographical [*topique*] regression and the regression he called *zeitlich-Entwicklungsgeschichte* – which clearly shows how embarrassed by the temporal relation he himself was. He says *zeitlich*, that's to say *temporal*, then a hyphen, and – *history of development*, whereas you're well aware what an internal contradiction there is between the term *Entwicklung* and the term *Geschichte*.[4] He joins these three terms together, then, sort that one out for yourselves!

But if we didn't have to sort it out, we wouldn't need to be here. And that would be a great pity.

Go on, Perrier, with the 'Metapsychological supplements to the theory of dreams'.

2

DR PERRIER: *Yes, this text . . .*

Did this text seem a bit of a problem to you?

DR PERRIER: *As a matter of fact, yes. I think the best thing to do would without doubt be to make a schema of it. It's an article that Freud opens by telling us that it is instructive to set out a parallel between certain morbid symptoms and the normal*

[4] The passage Lacan is referring to, (1917d) GW X 418; Stud III 184; SE XIV 227, reads 'zeitlichen *oder entwicklungsgeschichtlichen*' ('*zeitlichen*' emphasised in the original).

prototypes which allow us to study them, for example, mourning and melancholia, the dream, sleep and certain narcissistic states.

By the way, he uses the term *Vorbild*, which has much the same meaning as the term *Bildung*, to designate the normal prototype.

Dr Perrier: *Freud comes to the study of the dream with an aim which comes clear at the end of the article, of going more deeply into the study of those phenomena which one comes across in the narcissistic disorders, in schizophrenia for example.*

The normal prefigurations in a morbid disorder, *Normalvorbilder krankhafter Affektionen*.[5]

Dr Perrier: *So, he says that sleep is a state of psychic undressing, which restores the sleeper to a state analogous to the primitive foetal state, and which in the same way brings him to divest himself of an entire part of his psychic organisation, just as one takes off a wig, false teeth, clothes, before going to sleep.*

With regard to this image of the subject's narcissism which he gives us, and which he takes to be the fundamental essence of sleep, it's rather funny to see Freud add the remark, which doesn't quite seem to fit within a straightforwardly physiological perspective, that it is not true for all human beings. Sure, you usually do take off your clothes, but you put on others. Look at the picture that he paints all of a sudden, of taking off one's glasses – some of us are endowed with infirmities which make them necessary – but also one's false teeth, one's false hair. A hideous picture of a disintegrating being. We thus come upon this partially decomposable, collapsible character of the human ego, whose limits are so imprecisely defined. Surely false teeth are not a part of my ego, but to what extent are my real teeth? – if they are so easily replaced. The idea of the ambiguous, uncertain character of the limits of the ego is put to the fore here, in the portico of the introduction to the metapsychological study of the dream. The preparation for sleep reveals its importance.

Dr Perrier: *In the next paragraph, Freud takes up something which appears to be the short cut to everything he is going to study from then on. He recalls that when one studies the psychoses, in every case one finds oneself in the presence of temporal regressions, that is to say of those points in the stages of its own evolution to which every case returns.*[6] *He then says that one comes across similar regressions, one in the evolution of the ego, and the other in the evolution of the libido. The regression of the evolution of the libido in the dream*[7] *which corresponds to all of this will, he says, lead to the re-establishing of primitive narcissism. The regression of the evolution of the*

[5] GW X 412; Stud III 179; SE XIV 222.

[6] See (1900a) GW II/III 554; Stud II 524; SE V 548: 'what is in question [in *zeitliche* regression] is a harking back [*Rückgreifen*] to older psychical structures'.

[7] GW X 412–3; Stud III 179–80; SE XIV 222–3).

ego in the dream will in the same way lead to the hallucinatory satisfaction of desire. This, a priori, *doesn't seem to be particularly clear, at least not to me.*

It might be a bit clearer with our schema.

DR PERRIER: *You can already get an inkling of it, in seeing how Freud starts with temporal regressions, of regressions in the subject's history. Consequently, regression in the evolution of the ego leads to this completely elementary, primordial, unelaborated state, which is the hallucinatory satisfaction of desire. He will, first of all, enjoin us to go over with him once again the study of the dream-processes, and in particular, the study of the narcissism of sleep, in terms of what takes place in it, that is to say the dream. First of all he talks about the dream's egoism, which is a term which shocks a bit when comparing it with narcissism.*

How does he justify the egoism of the dream?

DR PERRIER: *He says that in the dream, the principal protagonist is always the sleeper.*

Who also plays the leading role. Who can tell me exactly what *agnoszieren* means? It's a German term which I haven't been able to find. But its meaning is not in doubt – it's a question of this person who must always be recognised as the person himself, *als die eigener* [*Person*] *zu agnoszieren.*[8] Can someone give me some idea of the use of this word? Freud doesn't use *anerkennen*, which would imply the dimension of recognition in the sense in which we always understand it in our dialectic. The person of the sleeper is to be recognised, at which level, that of our interpretation or that of our mantic? It is not quite the same thing. Between *anerkennen* and *agnoszieren*, there's all the difference between what we understand and what we know, a difference which nonetheless bears the mark of a fundamental ambiguity. See how Freud himself analyses for us the celebrated dream of the botanical monograph in the *Traumdeutung*. The further we get the more we see how inspired these initial approaches towards the meaning of the dream and its scenario actually were.

Mme X, can you give us a hint about this *agnoszieren*?

MME X: *Sometimes Freud uses Viennese words. This word is no longer used in German, but the meaning you have given is correct.*

Indeed, it's interesting, the significance of the Viennese milieu.

In this connection, Freud gives us a very deep sense of his relation with the fraternal character, with this friend-enemy, who he says is a character absolutely fundamental to his existence – there must always be someone

[8] GW X 413; Stud III 180; SE XIV 223. *Agnoszieren* is used in the passage which Lacan and Leclaire commented upon (pp. 134 n14 above) – there, it is rendered into French as '*supposer*' (assume, suppose), the sense that Leclaire highlights, opposing it to 'discover'. Lacan emphasises the fact that it is impossible that we haven't *yet* discovered it. On both occasions, SE translates '*agnoszieren*' as 'recognise'.

masked by this sort of *Gegenbild*. But, at the same time, it is with this character as go-between, embodied by his colleague from the laboratory – I've mentioned this character in earlier seminars, right at the beginning, when we talked a bit about the first stages of Freud's scientific life – it is in relation to and through the intermediary of this colleague, of his acts, of his feelings, that Freud projects, brings to life in this dream what is its latent desire, namely the claims of his own aggression, of his own ambition. Such that this *eigene Person* is entirely ambiguous. It is right at the heart of the dream's consciousness, more exactly at the heart of the mirage of the dream that we have to search, in the person who plays the leading role, for the sleeper's own person. But the point is that, it is not the sleeper, it is the other.

Dr Perrier: *He then asks if narcissism and egoism are not in fact one and the same thing. And he tells us that the word narcissism serves only to underline the libidinal character of egoism. In other words, narcissism may be considered as the libidinal complement of egoism. In a parenthetical clause, he talks about the diagnostic capacity of the dream, by reminding us that one often perceives in dreams, in a way that is completely unapparent in the waking state, organic modifications which allow one to offer a diagnosis of something still unapparent in the waking state. At this point, the problem of hypochondria makes its appearance.*

Here, then, is something a bit crafty, a bit more clever. Think hard about what it means. I talked to you about the exchange that takes place between the subject's image and the image of the other in so far as it is libidinalised, narcissised, in the imaginary situation. By the same token, in the same way as in animals, certain parts of the world are rendered opaque and become fascinating, it too is rendered thus. We have the capacity to *agnoszieren* in the dream the sleeper's own person in a pure state. The power of understanding of the subject is expanded in proportion. On the contrary, in the waking state, at least if he hasn't read the *Traumdeutung*, he won't be able to perceive in its sufficiency those bodily sensations capable of telling him, while he is sleeping, about something internal, something coenaesthetic. It is precisely in so far as the libidinal obscuring in the dream is on the other side of the mirror, that his body is, not felt any the less, but perceived better, understood by the subject.

Do you grasp the mechanism here?

In the waking state, the body of the other is reflected back to the subject, he thus fails to recognise lots of things about himself. That the *ego* is a capacity to fail to recognise [*méconnaissance*] is the very foundation of the technique of analysis.

This goes a very long way. As far as structuration, organisation and by the same token scotomisation – here, I am happy enough to use the term – and all manner of things, which are so many pieces of information which can be passed from ourselves to ourselves – a special game which reflects back to us our corporeality, that corporeality which also has an alien origin. Even as far as

– *They have eyes in order not to see.* You must always take the phrases of the Evangelist literally, if you don't it's obvious you won't understand anything – people think that it is ironic.

Dr Perrier: *The dream is also a projection, an externalisation of an internal process. Freud reminds us that the externalisation of an internal process is a means of defence against waking. In hysterical phobias, there is the same projection, which is itself a means of defence, and which replaces an internal function. Except, he says, why does the intention to sleep find itself thwarted? It can be either through a stimulus coming from outside, or through an excitation coming from within. The case of the internal obstacle is the more interesting, that is the one we are going to study.*

One must go over this passage carefully, because it allows one to introduce a bit of rigour into the usage, in analysis, of the term projection. It is continually employed in the most confused way. In particular, we slide all the time into the classical usage of the term, in speaking of the projection of our feelings on to our fellow beings. That is not quite what is involved when we are obliged, by force of circumstance, that is to say by the law of the system's coherence, to make use of the term in analysis. If we manage to get to the Schreber case and the question of the psychoses next term, we will have to spell out in its fine detail the meaning to be given to projection.

If you followed what I said just now, you must see that what is here called the internal process always comes from the outside. It is first recognised through the intermediary of the outside.

Dr Perrier: *This is a problem that I encountered with Father Beirnaert and Andrée Lehmann, who helped me yesterday evening – the preconscious desire of the dream, what is it?*

What Freud calls the desire of the dream is the unconscious element.

Dr Perrier: *Exactly. Freud says that first the preconscious desire of the dream is formed, in the waking state I presume, which allows the unconscious drive to express itself, thanks to the material, that is to say, in the preconscious residues of the previous day. That's the point at which my perplexing question arose. Having used the term preconscious desire of the dream, Freud says that there was no need of its presence in the waking state, and it may already possess the irrational character peculiar to everything which is unconscious. One translates it in terms of the conscious.*

Which is important.

Dr Perrier: *One must be careful, he says, not to confuse the dream's desire with everything that pertains to the order of the preconscious.*

That's it!

See how one usually understands this after having read it. One says – here's

the manifest and there's the latent. Then one gets caught up in a number of complications. What is manifest is the composition. The work on the dream makes it possible – through a very pretty turnaround of its initial aspect, as memory – for the subject to evoke for you what is manifest. But what makes up the dream is something which we must look for, and which truly belongs to the unconscious. This desire, we find it or we don't find it, but we only ever see it silhouetted at the back. The unconscious desire is like the directing force which has forced all the *Tagesresten*, these vaguely lucid investments, to become organised in a certain way. This composition results in the manifest contents, that is to say in a mirage which in no way corresponds to what we are obliged to reconstruct, which is the unconscious desire.

3

How can we represent this with my little schema? M. Hyppolite, in a timely manner, made me pull out all the stops at the beginning of this session. We won't be able to settle this question today. But we must at least make some headway.

At this point, it is indispensable to bring in what one might call the controls of the apparatus.

So, the subject becomes aware of his desire in the other, through the intermediary of the image of the other which offers him the semblance of his own mastery. Just as we quite frequently reduce the subject to an eye in our scientific reasoning, we could just as well reduce him to an actor momentarily caught up in the anticipated image of himself, quite independently of his development. But there's no escaping the fact that he's a human being, born in a state of impotence, and, very early on, words, language were what he used to call with, and a most miserable call it was, when his food depended on his screams. This primitive mothering has already been related to his states of dependency. But really that is no reason to hide the fact that, no less early, this relation to the other is named, and is so by the subject.

That a name, however confused it may be, designates a specific person, is exactly what makes up the transition to the human state. If one has to define the moment at which man becomes human, we can say that it is the moment when, however little it be, he enters into the symbolic relation.

As I've already emphasised, the symbolic relation is eternal. And not simply because effectively there must always be three people – it is eternal because the symbol introduces a third party, an element of mediation, which brings the two actors into each other's presence, leads them on to another plane, and changes them.

I want to take up this point again, and at length, even if that means breaking off in the middle today.

M. Keller, who is a gestalt philosopher, and who, by virtue of this, believes himself to be very much superior to the mechanicist philosophers, is very ironical about the theme of the stimulus-response. Somewhere he says the following – it really is odd to receive from Mr So-and-so, a publisher in New York, an order for a book, because if we were in the register of stimulus-response, one would believe that I had been stimulated by this order and that my book is the response. Oh, dear me, says Keller, appealing to our so well founded everyday intuitions, things aren't so simple. I am not just satisfied to reply to this request, I also find myself in a state of terrible tension. My equilibrium – a gestalt notion – will only be restored when this tension has taken on the form of a realisation of the text. This call I have received produces a dynamic state of disequilibrium in me. It will only be satisfied when it has been assumed, that is to say, when the circle has been closed, that circle which here and now is anticipated by the very existence of this call for a full response.[9]

This is by no means a sufficient description. Keller assumes that a preformed model of the right response exists in the subject, and introduces an element of the already-there. At the limit, it's having a response to everything through a dormative power. He is satisfied with postulating that the register of relations which generate any action means that the subject hasn't actualised the model which is already entirely inscribed within him. That is only the transcription, at a slightly more developed level, of the mechanistic theory.

No, you must not misconceive [*méconnaître*] the symbolic register here, through which the human being as such is constituted. In fact, from the moment that M. Keller receives the order, has replied *yes*, has signed a contract, M. Keller is not the same M. Keller. There's another Keller, a contracted Keller, and also another publishing house, a publishing house which has one more contract, one more symbol.

I am using this crude, obvious example because it brings us to the heart of the dialectic of labour. Simply as a result of having defined myself in relation to some man as his son, and of my having defined him as my father, something happens which, however intangible it may appear to be, weighs just as heavily as the carnal procreation which unites us. And, practically speaking, within the human order, it weighs even more heavily. Because, even before I am capable of pronouncing the words father and son, and even if he is gaga and can no longer pronounce these words, the entire human system around us already defines us, with all the impending consequences that that brings with it, as father and son.

So, the dialectic of the ego and the other is transcended, is placed on a higher plane, in relation to the other, solely through the function of language, in so far as it is more or less identical, and at all events is fundamentally linked up with

[9] The French word '*réponse*' covers both the English 'response' (as in 'stimulus-response') and the term 'reply' (as in 'reply' to a call from the other).

what we should call the rule, or better still, the law. At each instant of its intervention, this law creates something new. Every situation is transformed by its intervention, whatever it is, except when we talk to no purpose.

But even this, as I've explained elsewhere, has its meaning. This realisation of language, now only serving *as an effaced coin passed from hand to hand in silence* – a phrase I quoted in my Rome report, which comes from Mallarmé – indicates the pure function of language, which is to assure us that we are, and nothing more.[10] That one is capable of speaking to no purpose is just as significant as the fact that, when one speaks, in general it is for a purpose. What is striking is that there are many instances when one speaks although one might just as well remain silent. Ah, but to keep silent just then is precisely what is most cunning.

Here we are, introduced to this elementary level where language immediately adheres to our first experiences. Because it is a vital necessity which makes of man's environment a symbolic one.

In my little model, in order to conceive of the incidence of the symbolic relation, all you have to do is assume that it is the introduction of linguistic relations which produces the swings of the mirror, which will offer the subject, in the other, in the absolute other, the various aspects of his desire. There is a connection between the imaginary dimension and the symbolic system, so long as the history of the subject is inscribed in it – not the *Entwicklung*, the development, but the *Geschichte*, that is, that within which the subject recognises himself, correlatively in the past and in the future.

I know that I am saying these words quickly, but I will go over them again more slowly.

The past and the future correspond precisely to one another. And not any old how – not in the sense that you might believe that analysis indicates, namely from the past to the future. On the contrary, precisely in analysis, because its technique works, it happens in the right order – from the future to the past. You may think that you are engaged in looking for the patient's past in a dustbin, whereas on the contrary, it is as a function of the fact that the patient has a future that you can move in the regressive sense.

I cannot tell you why just now.

All human beings share in the universe of symbols. They are included in it and submit to it, much more than they constitute it. They are much more its supports than its agents. It is as a function of the symbols, of the symbolic constitution of his history, that those variations are produced in which the

[10] Lacan is referring to a phrase of Stéphane Mallarmé's: 'To relate, to teach, even to describe is all right and although perhaps enough for each one to exchange human thought, by taking or putting a coin silently in someone else's hand, the elementary use of talk serves the universal *reportage* of which, with the exception of literature, everything among the different kinds of contemporary partakes.' (Mallarmé, *The Poems*, trans. and introduction by Keith Bosley, Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp. 44–7)

subject is open to taking on the variable, broken, fragmented, sometimes even unconstituted and regressive, images of himself. That is what we see in the normal *Vorbilden* in the subject's everyday life, just as we see it, in a more controlled manner, in analysis.

What are the unconscious and the preconscious in all this?

I can't satisfy you today. But even so you should recognise that the first approximation we can give of it, from today's point of view, is that what is at issue are certain differences or more exactly certain impossibilities linked to the subject's history, in as much as his development is in fact inscribed in it.

We will now reappraise Freud's ambiguous formula, *zeitlich-Entwicklungsgeschichte*. But let's limit ourselves to history, and let's say that it's on account of certain peculiarities in the subject's history that some parts of the real image or some abrupt phases exist. We thus are dealing with a mobile relation.

In the intra-analytic game, certain phases or faces – let us not baulk at plays on words – of the real image can never be given as the virtual image. On the contrary, whatever is accessible through the simple mobility of the mirror in the virtual image, whatever you are able to see of the real image in the virtual image, should be located rather in the preconscious. Whereas the parts of the real image which can never be seen, those places where the apparatus seizes up, where it blocks up – having pushed the metaphor this far, we needn't shy away from pushing further – that is the unconscious.

If you think you have understood, you are bound to be wrong. You will see the difficulties that this notion of the unconscious gives rise to, and my only ambition is to show you them. On the one hand, the unconscious is, as I have just defined it, something negative, something ideally inaccessible. On the other hand, it is something quasi real. Finally, it is something which will be realised in the symbolic, or, more precisely, something which, thanks to the symbolic progress which takes place in analysis, *will have been*. I'll show you, following Freud's texts, that the notion of the unconscious must satisfy these three conditions.

But just now I am going to illustrate the third of them, whose irruption may seem surprising to you.

Don't forget this – Freud initially explains repression as a fixation. But at the moment of the fixation, there is nothing which could be called repression – that of the Wolf-man happens a long time after the fixation. The *Verdrängung* is always a *Nachdrängung*. How then should one explain the return of the repressed? As paradoxical as it may seem, there is only one way to do it – it doesn't come from the past, but from the future.

To give you a fair idea of what the return of the repressed is in a symptom, one must take up the metaphor that I've gleaned from the cyberneticists – this spares me from having to invent it myself, because one shouldn't invent too many things.

Wiener posits two beings each of whose temporal dimension moves in the opposite direction from the other. To be sure, that means nothing, and that is how things which mean nothing all of a sudden signify something, but in a quite different domain. If one of them sends a message to the other, for example a square, the being going in the opposite direction will first of all see the square vanishing, before seeing the square. That is what we see as well. The symptom initially appears to us as a trace, which will only ever be a trace, one which will continue not to be understood until the analysis has got quite a long way, and until we have discovered its meaning. In addition, one can say that, just as the *Verdrängung* is only ever a *Nachdrängung*, what we see in the return of the repressed is the effaced signal of something which only takes on its value in the future, through its symbolic realisation, its integration into the history of the subject. Literally, it will only ever be a thing which, at the given moment of its occurrence, *will have been*.

You'll see it better with the help of my little apparatus. I'm going to let you in on a secret – I add a little bit to it every day. I don't bring it here all finished, like Minerva emerging from the head of a Jupiter which I am not. We'll stay with it right to the day when it begins to seem a bit tiresome to us, then we'll drop it. Until then, it will help us reveal the construction of these three necessary facets of the notion of the unconscious so that we understand it, by eliminating all these contradictions which Perrier is encountering in the text he's presenting.

Let's leave it there for today. I still haven't shown you why the analyst is to be found where the virtual image is. The day you will have understood why the analyst is to be found there, you will have understood almost everything that happens in analysis.

7 April 1954

BEYOND PSYCHOLOGY

XIII

The see-saw of desire

CONFUSION OF TONGUES IN ANALYSIS

BIRTH OF THE *I*

MISRECOGNITION [*MÉCONNAISSANCE*] IS NOT IGNORANCE

THE MYSTIQUE OF INTROJECTION

ON PRIMARY MASOCHISM

We are beginning a third term which, thank God, is going to be short.

I had thought to start on the Schreber case before we went our separate ways this year. I would really have liked that, especially since I am getting the original work of President Schreber translated, for whatever purpose it may serve. It is a book Freud worked on and he advised us to consult it. A recommendation made in vain up to now, since it is impossible to find this work – I know of only two copies in Europe. I managed to get hold of one of them from which I have had two microfilms made up, one for my own use, the other I've given to the library of the Société Française de Psychanalyse.

Reading Schreber is entrancing. In it one finds everything one needs in order to write a complete treatise on paranoia and to supply a rich commentary on the mechanism of the psychoses. M. Hyppolite said that my knowledge started off from paranoiac knowledge – if it started there, I hope that it hasn't stayed there.

There's a gap here. But we are not going to fall into it straightaway, because we might easily remain imprisoned there.

Up to now, we have been making our way through Freud's Papers on Technique. I believe that it is now impossible not to push a bit further the comparison that I have implicitly always been making with present-day analytic technique, with what one can call, in inverted commas, *its most recent advances*. I've been referring implicitly to the teaching that is given you in supervisions, according to which analysis is analysis of resistances, analysis of the systems of the ego's defences. This conception remains poorly centred, and we can only refer to specific, but unsystematised, and sometimes even unformulated teachings.

Despite the paucity, which everyone remarks upon, of analytic literature dealing with technique, a few authors have addressed the topic. When they have not written a book, strictly speaking, they have written articles – some of them, strangely enough, remain working papers, and these are among the

most interesting. There is here, in fact, a considerable corpus to work through. I hope that at this point I'll be able to count on the collaboration of some of you, to whom I'll lend several of these texts.

First of all, there are the three articles of Sachs, Alexander and Rado, taken from the Salzburg symposium.[1] You must know them if you have looked through Fenichel's book.

Then at the Marienbad Congress, you'll find the symposium on the results – as they call them – of analysis. In reality, it's less a question of the result than of the procedure which leads to these results. You can already see there the beginnings, and even the blossoming forth, of what I call the confusion of tongues in analysis, namely the extreme diversity of conceptions, whichever one holds, concerning active methods in the analytic process.

The third stage is what is happening now. There are good grounds for emphasising the recent development of the theory of the ego by the American troika, Hartmann, Loewenstein and Kris. These writings are sometimes quite disconcerting in the way they disengage concepts. They are always referring to the *desexualised* libido – they almost get to the point of saying *delibidinised* – or of deaggressivated aggression. The function of the ego more and more plays there the problematical role it already has in the writings of Freud's third period – which I have left outside our field of investigation, which I've limited to the median period 1910–1920 during which what was to be the final theory of the ego begins, with the notion of narcissism, to be developed. Read the volume which in its French edition is called *Essais de Psychanalyse*, which brings together *Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, and *The Ego and the Id*. We cannot analyse it this year, but it is indispensable for anyone who wants to understand the developments that the authors I have been talking about have brought to the theory of the cure. The theories of treatment which have been brought forward since 1920 have always centred around the final formulations of Freud. With great clumsiness most of the time, which stems from the very great difficulty of understanding what Freud is saying in these truly monumental articles, if one hasn't got to the bottom of the very genesis of the notion of narcissism. That is what I've tried to draw your attention to regarding the analysis of resistances and transference in the Papers on Technique.

1

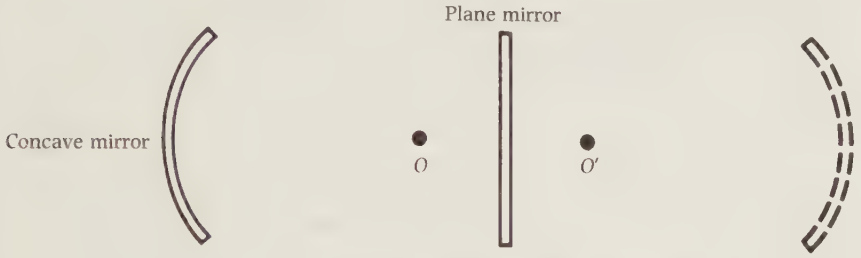
Essentially, mine is a discursive path. Starting from the Freudian texts, I try to put before you here a problematic. But, from time to time, we have to focus on a

[1] The symposium on technique Lacan is referring to took place on 21 April 1924, at the International Congress at Salzburg. See *Int. J. Psa.* 6 1925.

didactic formula and bring into line the diverse formulations of these problems to be found in the history of analysis.

I'm adopting a middle way in placing before you a model, which doesn't pretend to be a system, but only a pictorial reference. That's why I've led you step by step to the optical schema we've started to construct here.

This apparatus is now beginning to become familiar to you. I've showed you how we may imagine that the real image formed thanks to the concave mirror is produced inside the subject, at a point which we call *O*. The subject sees this real image as a virtual image in the plane mirror, at *O'*, in so far as he finds himself placed in the virtual symmetrical position in relation to the plane mirror.



Simplified schema of the two mirrors

Here we have two points *O* and *O'*. Why *O* and *O'*? Because a little girl – a virtual woman, hence a being much more engaged in the real than males – one day came up with this pretty phrase – *Oh, you musn't think my whole life will unfold in O and in O'*.[2] Poor little thing! Your life will unfold in *O* and in *O'*, the same as for everyone else. But still, by this she is telling us what she aspires to. In her honour I will call these points *O* and *O'*.

With that, one can already manage to do something.

You have to start, against all odds, from *O* and from *O'*. You already know that what is at issue relates to the constitution of the *Idealich*, and not the *Ichideal* – in other words, to the fundamentally imaginary, specular origin of the ego. That's what I am trying to make you understand using several texts, the principal one being '*Zur Einführung des Narzissmus*'.

I hope you have grasped the strict relation that exists, in this text, between the formation of the object and that of the ego. It is because they are strictly correlative and because their appearance is truly contemporaneous that the problem of narcissism arises. At this point in Freud's thinking, the libido seems to be subject to a dialectic other than its own – that, I would say, of the object.

Narcissism is not the biological individual's relation to his natural object.

[2] '*Ah! il ne faut pas croire que toute ma vie se passera en O et en O'.*'

which is then made richer and more variously complicated. There is a special narcissistic investment. It is a libidinal investment in something which should be conceived of as different from an image of the *ego*.

I'm putting things very crudely at this stage. I could put them in more sophisticated, philosophical language, but I want to make you see them clearly. What is absolutely certain is that from a certain point on in the development of the Freudian experience, attention becomes centred around the imaginary function of the ego. After Freud, the entire history of psychoanalysis becomes confused with a return to the academic, and not the traditional, conception of the ego as the psychological function of synthesis. Now if the ego has a contribution to make in the psychology of human beings, it can only be conceived of in a trans-psychological plane, or, as Freud says it explicitly – because Freud, despite the difficulties that he had with the conception of the ego, never lost the thread – *metapsychological*.

What does that mean, if not that it is beyond psychology?

2

What is it to say *I*? Is it the same thing as the *ego*, the analytic concept? One must start here.

When you use it, you cannot fail to recognise that the *I* has above all a psychological reference, in the sense in which one starts doing psychology when it is a question of observing what goes on in a human being. How does he learn to say it, this *I*?

I is a verbal term, whose use is learned through a specific reference to the other, which is a spoken reference. The *I* is born through the reference to the *you*. Everyone knows that the psychologists have used this to erect a scaffolding of remarkable things, the relation of reciprocity for example, which is either consolidated or isn't, and which determines I know not what stage in the intimate development of the child. As if one could, just like that, be sure of it, and deduce it from the initial clumsiness of the child in sorting out the personal pronouns. The child repeats the sentence one says to him using *you* instead of inverting it with the *I*. There is a hesitation in the learning of language. We don't have the right to go beyond that. But it is enough to warn us that the *I* is constituted at first in a linguistic experience, in reference to the *you*, and that this takes place within a relation in which the other shows him, what? – orders, desires, which he must recognise, his father's, mother's, educators', or his peers' and mates'.

It is clear that at the beginning, the chances are extremely slight that he will achieve recognition for his own, for his desires, except in the most immediate manner. We don't know anything, at least when we begin, about the precise point of resonance where, in the little subject's way of thinking, the individual is to be found. It is precisely that which makes him so unhappy.

Besides, how would he achieve recognition for his desires? He hasn't got a clue about them.[3] Let's say that we have every reason for believing that he hasn't got a clue about them. That is what our experience of adults shows us, us analysts. The adult, in fact, has to search out his desires. Otherwise he wouldn't need analysis. Which is enough to show us that he is cut off from what's related to his ego, namely from what of himself he is capable of securing recognition for.

I say – *he hasn't got a clue about them*. A vague formula, but analysis teaches us things in stages – which incidentally is the point of following the development of Freud's work. Let us now clarify this formula.

What is ignorance? Certainly it is a dialectical notion, since it is only within the perspective of truth that it is constituted as such. If the subject does not refer himself to the truth, there is no ignorance. If the subject doesn't begin to ask himself the question what is and what is not, there is no reason for there to be a true and a false, nor even, beyond that, reality and appearance.

Careful. We are beginning to get deep into philosophy. Let us say that ignorance is constituted in a polar fashion in relation to the virtual position of a truth to be attained. So it is a state of the subject in so far as he speaks.

In analysis, starting from the point when we implicitly engage the subject in a search for the truth, we are beginning to constitute his ignorance. It is we who create this situation, and hence this ignorance. When we say that the ego hasn't a clue about the subject's desires, it is because the examination of the experience in Freud's work teaches us that. So this particular ignorance is not ignorance pure and simple. It is what is concretely expressed in the process of *Verneinung*, and which, in the subject's static totality, is called misrecognition [*méconnaissance*].

Misrecognition is not ignorance. Misrecognition represents a certain organisation of affirmations and negations, to which the subject is attached. Hence it cannot not be conceived without correlative knowledge. If the subject is capable of misrecognising something, he surely must know what this function has operated upon. There must surely be, behind his misrecognition, a kind of knowledge of what there is to misrecognise.

Take someone who is deluded, who lives in a state of misrecognition of the death of someone close to him. One would be wrong to believe that he confuses him with a living being. He misrecognises, or refuses to recognise, that he is dead. But everything in the way he behaves indicates that he knows that there is something that he doesn't want to recognise.

So what is this misrecognition implied behind the function of the ego, which is essentially that of knowledge? That will be our point of entry into the question of the ego. That is, perhaps, the effective, concrete origin of our experience – we are led into devoting ourselves, in the presence of what is analysable, to an operation employing a mantic, in other words a translation, whose aim is to

[3] *'Il n'en sait rien.'*

loosen up, beyond the subject's language, ambiguous as it is on the plane of knowledge, a truth. To make progress in this register, one must ask oneself what is the knowledge which guides and directs the misrecognition.

In animals, knowledge is a coaptation, an imaginary coaptation. The structuration of the world in the form of the *Umwelt* is accomplished through the projection of a certain number of relations, of *Gestalten*, which organise it, and specify it for each animal.

In fact, the psychologists of animal behaviour, the ethologists, define certain mechanisms of structuration, certain paths of discharge as innate in the animal. Its world is the environment in which it evolves, which weaves and separates out from the indistinctness of reality these paths which are preferred from the outset, to which its behavioural activities are committed.

In man, there is nothing of the kind. The anarchy of his elementary drives is demonstrated by analytic experience. His partial behaviour-patterns, his relation to the object – to the libidinal object – is subject to all sorts of risks. Synthesis miscarries.

So what corresponds in man to this innate knowledge which in the animal is quite simply its guide in life?

Here one should separate out the function which the image of his own body possesses in man – all the while noting that in animals it also assumes enormous importance.

Here I jump on a bit because I presume that we have already gone over these steps together.

You know that the attitude of the infant between six and eighteen months in front of a mirror informs us about the fundamental relation to the image of the human individual. Last year, I was able to show you the infant's jubilation in front of the mirror throughout the whole of this period in a film made by M. Gesell, who, however, had never so much as heard of my mirror stage, and has never asked himself any question of an analytical nature, believe you me. This makes the fact that he has so well isolated the significant moment even more impressive. Certainly, *he* does not himself underline its fundamental feature, which is its exalting character. Because it isn't the appearance of this behaviour at six months which is the most important thing, but rather its dissolution at eighteen months. All of a sudden, the behaviour changes completely, as I showed last year, so as to be nothing more than an appearance, *Erscheinung*, one experience amongst others upon which is exerted the action of control and of instrumental play. All the signs so clearly accentuated in the previous period disappear.

To explain what happens, I will make use of a term which some of your reading must at least have made familiar to you, one of those terms which we use in a confused manner, but which all the same corresponds in us to a mental schema. You know that at the moment of the dissolution of the Oedipus complex, something happens which we call *introjection*.

I beg you not to be hasty in giving this term too definite a meaning. Let us say that it is used when something like a reversal takes place – what was the outside becomes the inside, what was the father becomes the super-ego. Something takes place at the level of this invisible, unthinkable subject, which is never named as such. Is it at the level of the ego, of the id? Somewhere between the two. That's why we call it the super-ego.

So one then embarks on this quasi-mythology for specialists, with which our minds usually busy themselves. After all, these schemata are acceptable, we perpetually inhabit a world whose schemata are acceptable. But if one asked a psychoanalyst – *Do you really believe, then, that the child devours his father, that it gets into his stomach, and that that becomes the super-ego?*

We operate as if all that goes without saying. There are innocuous ways of using the term introjection, which go a long way. Suppose there's an ethnologist who had never heard anyone speak of this godforsaken analysis, and suddenly turns up here to listen to what's going on. He would say – *Very peculiar primitives, these analysands, who bit by bit devour their analysts.*

So look at the treatise of Balthasar Gracián, whom I consider to be a fundamental author – Messrs Nietzsche and La Rochefoucauld are rather insignificant alongside *The Oracle* and *Criticón*. As long as one believes in the communion, there is no reason for not thinking that one eats Christ, and hence his dainty ear-lobe as well. Why not make the communion a communion *à la carte*? Well, that would be fine for those who believe in transubstantiation. But what about the rest of us, the reasonable analysts, the analysts concerned with science? What we discover above Stekel's signature, and that of other authors, is only, when all is said and done, a measured introjection of the analyst and an outside observer could but transpose it on to the mystical plane of communion.

All the same it is a long way from what we really think – in so far as we think. Thank God, we don't, which is our excuse. That is the great mistake that is always made – to imagine that people think what they say.

We do not think, but that is not a reason for not trying to understand why such manifestly senseless words have been uttered.

Let us pick up the thread again. The point at which the mirror stage vanishes is analogous to the moment of see-sawing which occurs at certain points in psychic development. We can observe it in these phenomena of transitivism in which one finds the infant taking as equivalent his own action and that of the other. He says – *François hit me*, whereas it was him who hit François. There's an unstable mirror between the child and his fellow being. How are we to explain these phenomena?

There's a moment when the infant in jubilation assumes a mastery which he has not yet attained, through the mediation of the image of the other. Now, the subject shows himself entirely capable of assuming this mastery within himself. See-saw.

To be sure, he can only do it in a state of empty form. This form, this envelope

of mastery, is something so certain that Freud, who came to it along paths quite different from mine, along the paths of the dynamic of libidinal investment, could find no other way of putting it – read *The Ego and the Id*. When Freud speaks of the *ego*, it is not at all a question of something so incisive, so determining, so imperative, that it gets confused with what in academic psychology are called the *higher agencies*. Freud underlines that it must have an intimate connection with the surface of the body. Not the sensitive, sensory, impressionistic surface, but this surface in so far as it is reflected in a form.[4] There is no form which lacks a surface, a form is defined by the surface – by difference in the identical, that is to say the surface.

The image of the other's form is assumed by the subject. Thanks to this surface, situated within the subject, what is introduced into human psychology is this relation between the outside and the inside whereby the subject knows himself, gets acquainted with himself as body.

Besides, it is the sole truly fundamental difference between human and animal psychology. Man knows himself as body, whereas there is, after all, no reason why he should know himself, since he is inside it. The animal is also inside it, but we have no reason for thinking that he represents it to himself.

It is within the see-saw movement, the movement of exchange with the other, that man becomes aware of himself as body, as the empty form of the body. In the same way, everything which is then within him in a pure state of desire, original desire, unconstituted and confused, which finds expression in the wailing of the child – he will learn to recognise it through its inversion in the other. He will learn, because he has not yet learned, in as much as we have not brought communication into play.

This anteriority is not chronological, but logical, and here we are only performing a deduction. It is no less fundamental for all that, since it allows us to distinguish the planes of the symbolic, of the imaginary and of the real, without which one can only make progress in the analytic experience by using expressions bordering on the mystical.

Before desire learns to recognise itself – let us now say the word – through the symbol, it is seen solely in the other.

At first, before language, desire exists solely in the single plane of the imaginary relation of the specular stage, projected, alienated in the other. The tension it provokes is then deprived of an outcome. That is to say that it has no other outcome – Hegel teaches us this – than the destruction of the other.

The subject's desire can only be confirmed in this relation through a competition, through an absolute rivalry with the other, in view of the object towards which it is directed. And each time we get close, in a given subject, to this primitive alienation, the most radical aggression arises – the desire for the disappearance of the other in so far as he supports the subject's desire.

[4] See (1923b) GW XIII 253; Stud III 294; SE XIX 26.

Here we meet up again with what the simple psychologist can observe in the behaviour of subjects. Saint Augustine, for example, notes, in a phrase I've often repeated, this all-consuming, uncontrollable jealousy which the small child feels for his fellow being, usually when the latter is clinging to his mother's breast, that is to say to the object of desire which is for him essential.

This is a key function. The relation of the subject to his *Urbild*, his *Idealich*, through which he enters into the imaginary function and learns to recognise himself as a form, can always see-saw. Each time the subject apprehends himself as form and as ego, each time that he constitutes himself in his status, in his stature, in his static, his desire is projected outside. From whence arises the impossibility of all human coexistence.

But, thank God, the subject inhabits the world of the symbol, that is to say a world of others who speak. That is why his desire is susceptible to the mediation of recognition. Without which every human function would simply exhaust itself in the unspecified wish for the destruction of the other as such.

Inversely, each time that, in the phenomenon of the other, something appears which once again allows the subject to reproject, to recomplete, to *feed*, as Freud says somewhere, the image of the *Idealich*, each time that the jubilant assumption of the mirror stage is retrieved along similar lines, each time that the subject is captivated by one of his fellow beings, well, then the desire revives in the subject. But it is revived verbally.

In other words, each time that the object identifications of the *Idealich* come about, so this phenomenon of *Verliebtheit* occurs, to which I've drawn your attention from the beginning. The difference between *Verliebtheit* and transference is that *Verliebtheit* does not happen automatically – there have to be certain conditions for it, as determined by the subject's development.

In the article on *The Ego and the Id* – which is read so sloppily, because attention is paid solely to the famous, idiotic schema,[5] with the stages, the little bob, the irrelevancies, the gadget he brings in which he calls the super-ego, what got into him, to come up with that, when he must have had other schemata – Freud writes that the ego is constructed out of its successive identifications with the loved objects which allowed it to acquire its form. The ego is constructed like an onion, one could peel it, and discover the successive identifications which have constituted it.[6] He writes in a similar vein in the articles I mentioned to you just now.

The perpetual reversion of desire to form and of form to desire, in other words of consciousness and body, of desire in so far as it is a part of the loved object, in which the subject literally loses himself, and with which he is identified, is the fundamental mechanism around which everything relating to the *ego* turns.

We really must understand that this game is, in its essence, an all-consuming one, and leads to immediate extermination, as soon as the subject is capable of

[5] *'fameux schéma à la con'*. [6] See (1923b) GW XIII 257; Stud III 297; SE XIX 29.

doing something. And, believe me, he is capable of it very quickly.

The little girl I mentioned earlier, who wasn't particularly awful, found refuge in a country garden, where she became very peaceably absorbed, at an age when she was scarcely walking on her feet, in the application of a good-sized stone to the skull of a little playmate from next door, who was the person around whom she constructed her first identifications. The deed of Cain does not require very great motor sophistication to come to pass in the most spontaneous, I must even say in the most triumphant, of fashions. She had no sense of guilt – *Me break Francis head*. She spoke that with assurance and peace of mind. Nonetheless, I still don't predict a criminal future for her. She simply displayed the most fundamental structure of the human being on the imaginary plane – to destroy the person who is the site of alienation.

What were you trying to say, Granoff?

3

Dr Granoff: *How then should one understand the masochistic outcome of the mirror stage?*

Give me time. That's what I'm here for, to explain it to you. As soon as you start to call it the masochistic outcome, you won't be able to see the wood for the trees.

The masochistic outcome – I never fold when raised, even if it holds up my argument for a bit – we cannot understand it without the dimension of the symbolic. It is located at the juncture between the imaginary and the symbolic. What, in its structurating form, is generally called primary masochism is located at this juncture. That is also where one must locate what is usually called the death instinct, which is constitutive of the fundamental position of the human subject.

Don't forget that, when Freud described primary masochism, he found its most precise embodiment in the play of a child. He was exactly eighteen months old, that child. For the painful tension engendered by the inevitable fact of the presence and absence of the loved object, he substituted, Freud tells us, a game, in which he himself manipulated the absence and presence in themselves and took pleasure in controlling them. He achieved it by means of a little reel at the end of a thread, which he threw away and pulled back.

Since at this point I am not myself engaged in a dialectic, but am trying to respond to Freud, to clarify the basic elements of his thought, I will emphasise what Freud does not underline, but which is implicit in it – as always, his observations enable one to complete the theorisation. This game with the cotton-reel is accompanied by a vocalisation which from the linguist's point of view is characteristic of the very foundation of language [*langage*], and which is

the only way one may grasp the problem of a language [*langue*], namely a simple opposition.

What is important is not that the child said the words *Fort/Da*, which, in his mother tongue, amounts to *far/here* – besides, he pronounced them in an approximate fashion. It is rather that here, right from the beginning, we have a first manifestation of language. In this phonematic opposition, the child transcends, brings on to the symbolic plane, the phenomenon of presence and absence. He renders himself master of the thing, precisely in so far as he destroys it.

Since from time to time we read a bit of Freud's text, for the first time we are going to turn to one of Jacques Lacan's texts. I read it again recently, and I found that it was comprehensible. But it is true that I was in a privileged position.

I wrote[7] – *These are the games of occultation which Freud, in a flash of genius, revealed to us so that we might recognise in them that the moment when desire becomes human is also the moment when the child is born into language. We can now thereby grasp that that subject does not just in this master his privation in assuming it* – that's what Freud says – *but he also raises his desire to a second power. For his action destroys the object that it causes to appear and disappear in the provocation* – in the true sense of the word, through the voice – *in the anticipating provocation of its absence and its presence. It thus renders negative the field of forces of desire, in order to become its own object for itself. And this object, by quickly taking shape in the symbolic couple of the two elementary exclamations, announces in the subject the diachronic integration of the dichotomy of the phonemes* – that simply means that it is the gate of entry into what already exists, the phonemes making up a language – *whose synchronic structure the existing language offers to his assimilation; for that matter he is already engaged in the system of the concrete discourse of his surroundings, in reproducing more or less approximately in his* Fort *and his* Da *the vocables that he has received from these surroundings* – so, it is from outside that he receives it, the *Fort/Da* – *it is in fact already in his solitude that the desire of the little man has become the desire of an other, of an* alter ego, *who dominates him and whose object of desire is henceforth his own affliction.*

Whether the child now turns to an imaginary or a real partner, he will see him obeying equally the negativity of his discourse and his call – because don't forget that, when he says *Fort*, it is because the object is here, and when he says *Da* the object is absent – *and since his call has the effect of making him slip away, he will search in a banishing affirmation* – very early on he will learn the force of refusal – *the provocation of the return which brings his object back to this desire.*

So you see here that – already before the introduction of the no, of the refusal of the other, when the subject learns to constitute what M. Hyppolite showed us

[7] E 318–19/103–4.

the other day – the negativation of the simple call, the appearance of a simple pair of symbols when confronted with the contrasted phenomenon of presence and absence, that is to say the introduction of the symbol, reverses the positions. Absence is evoked in presence, and presence in absence.

This seems foolish, and to go without saying. But you still have to say it and reflect on it. Because it is in so far as the symbol allows this inversion, that is to say cancels the existing thing, that it opens up the world of negativity, which constitutes both the discourse of the human subject and the reality of his world in so far as it is human.

Primal masochism should be located around this initial negativation, around this original murder of the thing.

4

Just a word by way of conclusion.

We haven't got as far as I had hoped. Nonetheless, I have been able to get you to grasp the fact that desire, alienated, is perpetually reintegrated anew, reprojecting the *Idealich* outside. It is in this way that desire is verbalised. Here there is a game of see-saw between two inverted relations. The specular relation of the *ego*, which the subject assumes and realises, and projection, which is always ready to be renewed, in the *Idealich*.

The primary imaginary relation provides the fundamental framework for all possible erotism. It is a condition to which the object of Eros as such must be submitted. The object relation must always submit to the narcissistic framework and be inscribed in it. Certainly it transcends it, but in a manner which it is impossible to realise on the imaginary plane. That is what introduces for the subject the necessity of what I would call love.

A creature needs some reference to the beyond of language, to a pact, to a commitment which constitutes him, strictly speaking, as an other, a reference included in the general or, to be more exact, universal system of interhuman symbols. No love can be functionally realisable in the human community, save by means of a specific pact, which, whatever the form it takes, always tends to become isolated off into a specific function, at one and the same time within language and outside of it. That is what we call the function of the sacred, which is beyond the imaginary relation. We will come back to it.

Perhaps I am going a bit too quickly. Bear this in mind, that desire is only ever reintegrated in a verbal form, through symbolic nomination – that is what Freud called the *verbal nucleus* of the *ego*.

Through that, we come to understand analytic technique. In analysis one lets go of all the moorings of the speaking relationship, one eschews courtesy, respect, and dutifulness towards the other. *Free association*, this term is a very poor one for defining what is involved – we try to cut off the moorings of the

conversation with the other. From then on, the subject finds himself relatively mobile in relation to this universe of language in which we engage him. While he adjusts his desire in the other's presence, this oscillation of the mirror occurs on the imaginary plane, allowing those imaginary and real things, which are not in the habit of co-existing for the subject, to encounter one another in a relative simultaneity, or in specific contrasts.

Here we find an essentially ambiguous relationship. What do we try to show to the subject in analysis? Where do we try to guide him to in authentic speech? All our attempts and instructions have as their aim, at the moment when we free the subject's discourse, to deprive him of every possible genuine function of speech – so through what paradox do we manage to rediscover it? This paradoxical path consists in extracting speech from language. Given this, what will the full significance of the phenomena which take place in the interval be? Such is the horizon of the question which I am trying to spread out in front of you.

Next time I will show you the results of this experiment in unanchored discourse, the oscillation of the mirror which allows the play of the see-saw between *O* and *O'*, at the end of properly conducted analyses. Balint gives us a terrific definition of what we usually obtain *at the end of those rare analyses which may be considered to be terminated* – it is he who puts it like that. Balint is one of the rare souls who know what they are saying, and what he depicts as happening is quite alarming, as you will see. Now, what we're talking about here is a properly conducted analysis . . .

Besides this, there is analysis as it is usually practised, which I have shown you to be improper. *Analysis of resistances* – that is a legitimate rubric, but it isn't a practice, as I will show you, implied by the premises of analysis.

5 May 1954

XIV

The fluctuations of the libido

AGGRESSIVITY ≠ AGGRESSION

THE WORD *ELEPHANT*

THE MOORINGS OF SPEECH

TRANSFERENCE AND SUGGESTION

FREUD AND DORA

Let's go back to where we left off. Can someone start off with a question?

DR PUJOL: *You say* the desire of the other. *Is it the desire which is in the other? Or the desire that I have for the other? For me, they are not the same thing. In what you said last time at the end, it was desire in the other, and which the* ego *can recapture by destroying the other. But at the same time it is a desire which it has for the other.*

1

Isn't it the original, specular foundation of the relation to the other, in so far as it is rooted in the imaginary?

The first alienation of desire is linked to this concrete phenomenon. If play is of value to the child, it is because it constitutes the plane of reflection in which he sees appearing in the other an activity which anticipates his own, in that it is that little bit more perfected, better mastered, than his own, his ideal form. From that point on the first object has value.

The pre-development of the child already shows that the human object differs fundamentally from the object of the animal. The human object is originally mediated through rivalry, through the exacerbation of the relation to the rival, through the relationship of prestige and physical presence. It is already a relation belonging to the order of alienation since it is initially in the rival that the subject grasps himself as ego [*comme moi*]. The original notion of the totality of the body as ineffable, as lived, the initial outburst of appetite and desire comes about in the human subject via the mediation of a form which he at first sees projected, external to himself, and at first, in his own reflection.

Second point. Man knows that he is a body – although he never perceives it in a complete fashion, since he is inside it, but he knows it. This image is the ring, the bottle-neck, through which the confused bundle of desires and needs must pass in order to be him, that is to say in order to accede to his imaginary structure.

The formula *man's desire is the desire of the other* has to be, like all formulae, used in the right context. It is not valid in only one sense. It is valid on the plane on which we started, that of imaginary captation. But, as I said to you at the end of the last session, it doesn't stop there. Were that not the case, as I pointed out in a mythical way, the only inter-human relation that would be possible would be this mutual and radical intolerance of the coexistence of consciousnesses, as Mr Hegel puts it – every *other* remaining essentially what frustrates the human being, not only of his object, but of the very form of his desire.

Here we have a destructive and fatal relation between human beings. Moreover, it is always there, subjacent. Lots of things have been made to fit within the political myth of the 'struggle for life'.[1] If it was Darwin who wrought it, that was because he came of a nation of privateers, for whom racism was the basic industry.

In fact, everything tells against this thesis of the survival of the fittest species. It is a myth which goes against the facts. Everything goes to prove that there are points of invariability and of equilibria proper to each species, and that species live in a sort of coordinated way, even amongst eaters and eaten. It never gets to the point of radical destruction, which would quite simply lead to the annihilation of the eating species, who would no longer have anything to eat. The strict inter-adjustment which exists in the living world is not brought about by the struggle to the death.

We must gain a deeper appreciation of the notion of aggressivity, which we use in such a brutal fashion. People believe that aggressivity is aggression. It has got absolutely nothing to do with it. At the limit, virtually, aggressivity turns into aggression. But aggression has got nothing to do with the vital reality, it is an existential act linked to an imaginary relation. That is a key which enables one to think through a great many problems anew, and not just our own, in an entirely different register.

I asked you to bring up a question. You did well to raise it. Are you satisfied, however? It seems to me that we got further last time.

In the human subject, desire is realised in the other, by the other – *in* the other,[2] as you put it. That is the second moment, the specular moment, the moment when the subject has integrated the form of the ego. But he is only capable of integrating it after a first swing of the see-saw when he has precisely exchanged his ego for this desire which he sees in the other. From then on, the desire of the other, which is man's desire, enters into the mediation of language. It is in the other, by [*par*] the other, that desire is named. It enters into the symbolic relation of *I* and *you*, in a relation of mutual recognition and transcendence, into the order of a law which is already quite ready to encompass the history of each individual.

[1] English in the original. [2] '*chez l'autre*', which could be rendered as 'that the other has'.

I talked about the *Fort* and *Da* with you. It is an example of the way in which the child enters naturally into this game. He starts to play with the object, to be more exact, with the simple fact of its presence and its absence. So it is a transformed object, an object with a symbolic function, a devitalised object, already a sign. When the object is there he chases it away, when it isn't there he calls it. Through these first games, the object passes, as if naturally, on to the plane of language. The symbol comes into being and becomes more important than the object.

I've repeated this time and again. If you can't get it into your heads . . .

For the human being the word or the concept is nothing other than the word in its materiality. It is the thing itself.[3] It is not just a shadow, a breath, a virtual illusion of the thing, it is the thing itself.[3]

Think for a moment in the real. It is owing to the fact that the word *elephant* exists in their language, and hence that the elephant enters into their deliberations, that men have been capable of taking, in relation to elephants, even before touching them, decisions which are more far-reaching for these pachyderms than anything else that has happened to them throughout their history – the crossing of a river or the natural decimation of a forest. With nothing more than the word *elephant* and the way in which men use it, propitious or unpropitious things, auspicious or inauspicious things, in any event catastrophic things have happened to elephants long before anyone raised a bow or a gun to them.

Besides, it is clear, all I need do is talk about it, there is no need for them to be here, for them really to be here, thanks to the word *elephant*, and to be more real than the contingent elephant-individuals.

M. Hyppolite: *That is Hegelian logic.*

Is it liable to attack on that account?

M. Hyppolite: *No, it is not liable to attack. Just now Mannoni said that it was politics.*

O. Mannoni: *That is how human politics comes about. In the broad sense. If men don't act like animals, it is because they exchange their knowledge by means of language. As a consequence, it is politics. The politics of elephants is possible thanks to the word.*

M. Hyppolite: *But not only that. The elephant himself is affected. That's the Hegelian logic.*

All this is pre-political. I simply want to help you be clear about the importance of the name.

[3] *'la chose même'.*

Here we are simply entering on to the plane of the name. There isn't even any syntax yet. But really, it is quite clear that this syntax originates at the same time. The child, as I have already hinted, articulates taxic[4] elements before phonemes. The *if sometimes* appears all by itself on occasion. To be sure, this does not allow us to decide upon a logical anteriority, because we are only dealing with the emergence, properly speaking, of a phenomenon.

Let me sum up. The projection of the image is invariably succeeded by that of desire. Correlatively, there is a reintrojection of the image and a reintrojection of desire. Swing of the see-saw, a play of mirrors.[5] To be sure, this articulation doesn't happen only once. It is repeated. And, in the course of the cycle, the child reintegrates, and reassumes his desires.

I will now place the accent on the manner in which the symbolic plane connects up with the imaginary plane. In fact, as you see, the desires of the child initially pass via the specular other. That is where they are approved or reproved, accepted or refused. And that is how the child serves his apprenticeship in the symbolic order and accedes to its foundation, which is the law.

This also has its experimental sureties. Susan Isaacs mentions in one of her texts – and the Koehler school also highlights it – that very early on, at an *infans* age still, between eight and twelve months, the child simply does not react in the same way to an accidental knock, to a fall, a brutal mechanical act related to a piece of clumsiness, and, on the other hand, to a slap with a punitive intention. In this instance we can distinguish two entirely different reactions of the child, well before the exteriorised appearance of language. That is because the child already has an initial appreciation of the symbolism of language. Of the symbolism of language and of its function as a pact.

Now we are going to try to grasp what the function of speech is in analysis.

2

Speech is the mill-wheel whereby human desire is ceaselessly mediated by re-entering the system of language.

I emphasise the register of the symbolic order because we must never lose sight of it, although it is most frequently forgotten, although we turn away from it in analysis. Because, in the end, what do we usually talk about? What we go on and on about, often in a confused, scarcely articulate fashion, are the subject's imaginary relations to the construction of his ego. We talk all the time about the dangers, the commotions, the crises that the subject undergoes at the level of his ego's construction. That is why I started by explaining the relation *O-O'*, the imaginary relation to the other.

On its first emergence, the genital object is no less premature than everything

[4] '*taxième*' – not to be found in dictionaries, but clearly relating to the 'ordering', the syn*tax*. See p. 54 above. [5] '*Jeu de bascule, jeu en miroir*'.

else that one observes in the development of the child, and it founders. Except that the libido which is related to the genital object is not on the same level as the primitive libido, whose object is the subject's own image. That is a crucial phenomenon.

It is in so far as the child comes into the world in a structurally premature state, from top to bottom and from end to end, that he has a primitive libidinal relation to his image. The libido here at issue is the one whose resonances you know, which belongs to the order of *Liebe*, of love. It is the grand *X* of the entire theory of analysis.

You think it's a bit much to call it the grand *X*? I would have no difficulty showing you the texts, and from the best analysts – because you don't demonstrate something by searching out references in the writings of people who don't know what they are talking about. I will ask someone to read Balint. What is it, this supposedly accomplished genital love? It remains entirely problematical. The question of knowing whether it is a natural process or a cultural achievement has not yet been, so Balint tells us in the text, decided upon by analysts. That is a quite extraordinary ambiguity, which remains at the very heart of everything which is apparently most openly accepted in our circles.

However that may be, if the primitive libido is relative to prematuration, the nature of the second libido is different. It goes beyond, it responds to an initial maturation of desire, if not of organic development. That at least is what we have to assume if the theory is to hold up and if an explanation of our experience is to be given. Here there is a complete change of level in the relation of the human being to the image, to the other. It is the pivotal point of what is called maturation, upon which the entire Oedipal drama turns. It is the instinctual correlative of what, in Oedipus, takes place on the situational plane.

So what happens? In so far as the primitive libido comes to maturity, the relation to the narcissistic image, to use the final edition of the Freudian vocabulary, passes on to the plane of *Verliebtheit*. The captivating narcissistic image, which is alienating on the imaginary plane, finds itself invested with *Verliebtheit*, which phenomenologically speaking pertains to the register of love.

To explain things in this way means that the filling up, even the overflowing, of the primitive gap of the immature subject's libido depends on an internal maturation linked to the organic development of the subject. The pre-genital libido is the sensitive spot, the moment of mirage between Eros and Thanatos, between love and hate. That is the simplest way to render comprehensible the crucial role played by the so-called desexualised libido of the ego in the possibility of reversion, of instantaneous swerving of hate into love, of love into hate. That is the problem whose solution apparently gave Freud the greatest of

difficulties – go and take a look in his work, *The Ego and the Id*.[6] In the text I'm discussing, he even seems to turn it into an objection to the theory which postulates as distinct the death instincts and life instincts. I think, on the contrary, that this fits in perfectly – on condition that we have an adequate theory of the imaginary function of the ego.

If you found this too difficult, I can give you an illustration of it right away.

The aggressive reaction to Oedipal rivalry is related to one of these changes of level. At first, the father constitutes one of the most conspicuous of the imaginary figures of the *Idealich*, and as such is invested with a *Verliebtheit* which is clearly isolated, named and described by Freud. It is in so far as a regression of the libidinal position takes place that the subject reaches the Oedipal phase, between three and five years of age. Then the aggressive feeling of rivalry and hate towards the father makes its appearance. A very slight change of libidinal level in relation to a specific threshold transforms love into hate – moreover, it oscillates for a while.

Now let us take up the thread where I left it last time.

I pointed out to you that the imaginary relation definitively provides the frameworks within which the libido will fluctuate. And I left open the question of the symbolic functions in the cure. What use do we make of language and of speech in the cure? In the analytic relation there are two subjects linked by a pact. This pact is set up on levels which are very diverse, even very confused, at the beginning. It isn't, in essence, any the less a pact. And we do everything, via the preliminary rules, to establish this aspect quite firmly at the beginning.

Within this relation, the initial task is to untie the moorings of speech. In his way of speaking, in his style, in his manner of addressing himself to his allocutor,[7] the subject is freed of the obligation, not only to be polite, to be courteous, but even to be coherent. One lets go of a certain number of the moorings of speech. If we think that there is a direct, permanent link between the way in which a subject expresses himself, achieves recognition, and the genuine, experiential dynamic of his relations of desire, we are forced to see that this alone introduces a certain uncoupling, a floating, a possibility of oscillation in the mirror relation to the other.

That is the why and the wherefore of my model.

For the subject, the uncoupling of his relation to the other causes the image of his ego to fluctuate, to shimmer, to oscillate, renders it complete and incomplete. So that he can recognise all the stages of his desire, all the objects which have given consistency, nourishment and body to this image, he has to perceive it in its completeness, to which he has never had access. Through the

[6] '*Le Moi et le Soi*'.

[7] '*allocutaire*' – according to *Robert*, a recent neologism in lingustics, meaning the person who receives the message of the speaker.

successive identifications and revivals, the subject must constitute the history of his ego.

The floating, spoken relation with the analyst tends to produce, in the self-image, sufficiently repeated and wide-ranging variations, albeit infinitesimal and limited, for the subject to perceive the captating images which lie at the base of the constitution of his ego.

I have talked about small oscillations. I don't need to enlarge on what makes up their smallness right now. Clearly there is some braking, several occasions when things grind to a halt, which technique teaches us to surmount, to fill in, even, sometimes, to reconstruct.

Such a technique produces in the subject an imaginary mirage relation with himself above and beyond anything everyday experience may procure him. It tends to create artificially, as a mirage, the fundamental condition for any *Verliebtheit*.

It is the breaking of the moorings of speech which allows the subject to see, at least as a sequence, the diverse parts of his image, and to procure what we can call a maximal narcissistic projection. In this respect analysis is still rather rudimentary, since at the beginning it consists, we must admit, in letting everything go, to see what will happen. Things could have been, could be handled differently – it is not inconceivable. The fact remains that it can only tend to produce, at best, narcissistic revelation on the imaginary plane. And that is precisely the fundamental condition of *Verliebtheit*.

Being in love, when it happens, happens in an entirely different way. There has to be a surprising coincidence there, because it doesn't happen with just any partner or with just any image. I have already alluded to the maximal conditions for Werther's love at first sight.

In analysis, the point around which the subject's identification at the level of the narcissistic image focuses is what we call the transference. The transference, not in the dialectical sense which I explained to you in the Dora case for example, but the transference such as it is commonly understood as an imaginary phenomenon.

I am going to show you the moot point to which the handling of the imaginary transference leads. It leads to a point where, in terms of technique, there's a parting of the ways.

Balint is one of the most self-aware of analysts. His description of what he does is extremely lucid. At the same time, it offers one of the best examples of the tendency to which the entire technique of analysis has little by little become committed. He simply says in a more coherent and more open manner what in others is entangled in scholasticism where one cannot see the wood for the trees. So, this is exactly what Balint says – the entire development of analysis consists in the tendency of the subject to rediscover what he calls 'primary love'.[8]

[8] English in the original.

The subject feels the need to be the object of love, of care, of affection, of the interest of another object without his having any regard for the needs or even the existence of this object. That is what Balint quite clearly spells out, and I am grateful to him for spelling it out – which doesn't mean that I approve of it.

Locating the entire activity of analysis on such a plane, with no qualification, with no other element, is startling in itself. However this conception is right in the mainstream of that development of analysis which places the accent more and more on relations of dependency, on instinctual satisfactions, even on frustration – which is the same thing.

Given that, how does Balint describe what we observe at the end of analysis, at the end of a completed analysis, one that is truly terminated – by his own admission, that amounts to no more than a quarter. A state of narcissism is induced in the subject, he says quite explicitly, which reaches the point of an unrestrained exaltation of his desires. The subject becomes intoxicated with a quite illusory sensation of absolute mastery over reality, but which he has a need of in the post-termination period. He must free himself of it by progressively putting the nature of things back into place. As for the final session, it never fails to elicit, in both partners, the strongest desire to cry. That is what Balint writes, and this is valuable as extremely precious testimony as to the high point of a whole segment of the analytic movement.

Don't you have the feeling that that is an extremely unsatisfactory game, a Utopian ideal? – which something in us is bound to be disappointed by.

One way of understanding analysis, or to be more precise, of not understanding some of its essential mainsprings, quite certainly must lead to a conception like this one and to results like these.

I will leave this question hanging for the moment. We'll comment on Balint's texts later on.

3

Now I am going to make use of an example which you are already familiar with, since I have gone over it dozens of times – the case of Dora.

What is overlooked in analysis is quite obviously speech as a function of recognition. Speech is that dimension through which the desire of the subject is authentically integrated on to the symbolic plane. It is only once it is formulated, named in the presence of the other, that desire, whatever it is, is recognised in the full sense of the term. It is not a question of the satisfaction of desire, nor of I know not what primary love,[9] but, quite precisely, of the recognition of desire.

Remember what Freud does with Dora. Dora is a hysteric. At that point in time, Freud is not sufficiently aware – he wrote it, re-wrote it, repeated it

[9] English in the original.

everywhere in notes, and even in the text – of what he calls the *homosexual component* – which means nothing, but still, it is a label. It comes down to this – he didn't perceive what Dora's position was, that is to say who Dora's object was. He didn't perceive, in a word, that for her *O'* is occupied by Frau K.

How does Freud conduct his intervention? He tackles Dora on the plane of what he himself calls resistance. What does that mean? I have already explained it to you. It is absolutely obvious that Freud brings into play his *ego*, the conception he himself has of what girls are made for – a girl is made to love boys. If something isn't right, if something torments her, something repressed, in Freud's eyes it can only be this – she loves Herr K. And perhaps, by the same token, she loves Freud a little. Once you look at things this way, it is entirely self-evident.

For reasons which are likewise linked to his erroneous starting point, Freud doesn't even interpret for Dora the signs of her so-called transference to him – which at least spares him from erring here. Quite simply, he talks to her about Herr K. What does that mean? – save that he is speaking to her at the level of the experience of others. It is at this level that the subject has to recognise her desires and get them recognised. And if they are not recognised, they are forbidden as such, and that is indeed where repression begins. So, when Dora is still at the stage at which, if I can put it this way, she has learnt to understand nothing, Freud intervenes at the level of the recognition of desire, at a level which corresponds point by point with the experience of chaotic, even aborted, recognition, which had already made up her life.

Here's Freud, saying to Dora – *You love Herr K.* It so happens, what is more, that he says it clumsily enough for Dora to break off immediately. If he had at that time been initiated into what we call the analysis of resistances, he would have spoon-fed her slowly, he would have started by teaching her which things in her were defences, and, by dint of this, he would in fact have removed an entire set of minor defences. He would thus, strictly speaking, have employed an act of suggestion, that is to say he would have introduced into her *ego* a supplementary element, a supplementary motivation.

Somewhere Freud writes that the transference is just that. And to a certain extent, he is right, it *is* just that. Except you have to know at which level. Because he might have been able to modify Dora's *ego* sufficiently for her to have married Herr K. – a marriage as unhappy as any other marriage.

If, on the contrary, the analysis had been handled properly, what should have happened? What would have happened if, instead of making his speech intervene in *O'*, that is to say putting his own *ego* into play with the aim of remoulding, of modelling that of Dora, Freud had pointed out to her that it was Frau K. whom she loved?

In fact, Freud intervened just when, in the swing of the see-saw, Dora's desire is in *O'*, when she desires Frau K. The whole of Dora's story is to be found in this

oscillation whereby she does not know if she loves only herself, her image as magnified in Frau K., or if she desires Frau K. It is precisely because this oscillation occurs again and again, because there is a perpetual see-sawing, that Dora can't get out of it.

It is when the desire is in *O'* that Freud had to name it, because, at that particular moment, it can be realised. If the intervention is repeated often enough, in a complete enough manner, the *Verliebtheit*, which is misrecognised [*méconnue*], broken, continually refracted, like an image on water which one can never quite keep a hold of, can be realised. At that moment, Dora could have recognised her desire, the object of her love, as being in fact Frau K.

That is an illustration of what I was saying to you just now – if Freud had revealed to Dora that she was in love with Frau K., she would then have actually have been so. Is that the aim of analysis? No, that is only the first stage. And, if you have bungled it, either you wreck the analysis, like Freud did, or you are engaged in something different, an orthopaedics of the *ego*. But you are not doing an analysis.

There is no reason why analysis, conceived of as a process of fleecing, of peeling away the systems of defence, should not work. That is what analysts call *finding an ally in the healthy part of the* ego. In effect they manage to pull over on to their side a half of the subject's *ego*, then a half of a half, etc. And why doesn't it happen like that with the analyst, since that is how the *ego* is constituted in real life? Except, the point is to know whether that is what Freud has taught us.

Freud has shown us that speech must be embodied in the very history of the subject. If the subject has not embodied it, if this speech is muzzled and is to be found latent in the subject's symptoms, do we, or do we not, have to release it, like Sleeping Beauty?

If we don't have to release it, let us then engage in a resistances type of analysis. But that is not what Freud meant when he first started talking about the analysis of resistances. We will see what the legitimate meaning of this expression is.

If Freud had intervened by allowing the subject to name her desire – because he didn't have to name it for her himself – the state of *Verliebtheit* would have been produced in *O'*. But one should not overlook the fact that the subject would have been very well aware that it was Freud who had given her this object of *Verliebtheit*. The process doesn't come to an end there.

Once this see-saw is accomplished, whereby the subject, at the same time as his speech, reintegrates the analyst's speech, recognition of his desire becomes possible for him. This doesn't happen in one go. Because the subject sees this so precious completeness approaching, he forges ahead into the storm-clouds, as towards a mirage. And it is in as much as he makes a fresh conquest of his *Idealich* that Freud can then take his seat at the level of the *Ichideal*.

We will leave it there for today.

The relationship of the analyst and the *Ichideal* raises the question of the super-ego. Besides, you know that *Ichideal* is sometimes taken to be a synonym for the super-ego.

I chose to climb the mountain. I could have taken the slope that leads down and straightaway asked the question – what is the super-ego? Only now are we coming to it. Because the reply seems to be self-evident, but it is not. Up to now, all the analogies which have been proposed for it, the references to the categorical imperative, to the moral conscience, are extremely confused. But let us leave matters there.

The first phase of analysis is accomplished in the passage from O to O′ – from what, in the ego, is unknown to the subject to this image in which he recognises his imaginary investments. Each time, this projected image awakens in the subject the feeling of an exaltation without limit, of a mastery of every outcome, which is already laid down at the beginning of the experience of the mirror. But now, he can name it, because he has since learnt to speak. If he hadn't, he wouldn't be here, in analysis.

That is the first stage. It appears to be strictly analogous to the point where Balint breaks off. What is this narcissism without restraint, this exaltation of desires? – if not the point Dora could have reached. Are we going to leave her there, in this contemplation? At some point in the case-history, we see her lost deep in contemplation of this painting – the image of the Madonna, before which a man and a woman stand in adoration.

How should we conceive of the rest of the process? To take the next step, we will have to get to the bottom of the function of the *Idealich*, whose place you see the analyst occupy for a while, in so far as he intervenes in the right position, at the right time, at the right place.

So the next chapter will bear on the handling of the transference. I am leaving it open.

12 May 1954

XV

The nucleus of repression

NAMING DESIRE
THE *PRÄGUNG* OF THE TRAUMA
THE FORGETTING OF FORGETTING
THE SUBJECT IN SCIENCE
THE SUPER-EGO, A DISCORDANT STATEMENT

To the extent that we are making any progress this year, which is beginning to take on the form of a year as it wanes, I find it satisfying to have received confirmation, through the questions which have been put to me, that some of you are beginning to understand that what I am in the process of teaching you involves the whole of psychoanalysis, involves the very meaning of your action. I am thinking of those of you who have understood that one can only propose a technical rule given the meaning of analysis.

Everything isn't as clear as it could be as yet, in what I am spelling out to you little by little. But have no doubt that nothing less is at stake here than taking a fundamental stand on the nature of psychoanalysis, which will later animate your activity, since it transforms your understanding of the existential position of the analytic experience and its ends.

1

Last time, I tried to give you a picture of that process which we are always bringing, in an enigmatic manner, into analysis, which in English is called working-through. In French, it is translated, not without some difficulty, by *élaboration*, or *travail*. It is this dimension, at first glance mysterious, which requires us to go over our work with our patient hundreds of times,[1] so that some progress, some subjective breakthroughs, come about.

What is embodied in the mill-wheel's turning, as expressed by these two arrows, from O to O′, and from O′ to O, in this game of coming and going, is the shimmering of the before and the beyond of the mirror, which the subject's image goes through. The point is to bring it, in the course of the analysis, to its completion. At the same time, the subject reintegrates his desire. And each time

[1] *'qu'il nous faut avec le patient cent fois sur le métier remettre notre ouvrage'* – a quotation from Boileau, *L'Art Poetique*, Chant I.

the completion of this image is brought a step nearer, the subject sees his desire suddenly emerging within him in the form of a particularly heightened tension. The completion of a single cycle does not bring this movement to a halt. There are as many cycles as it takes for the different phases of imaginary, narcissistic, specular identification – the three adjectives are equivalent when it comes to representing these matters in theory – to give an image in focus.

That does not exhaust the phenomenon, since in any case, nothing can be conceived of without the intervention of this third element, which I introduced last time – the speech of the subject.

That is when desire is sensed by the subject – which cannot happen without the conjunction of speech. And it is a moment of pure anxiety, and nothing but. Desire emerges in a confrontation with the image. Once this image which had been rendered incomplete is completed, once the imaginary facet which was non-integrated, suppressed, repressed, looms up, anxiety then makes its appearance. That is the fertile moment.

Some authors have wanted to specify it. Strachey tried to delimit what he calls the transference-interpretation, more precisely the mutative interpretation. See volume XV of the *International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, for 1934, numbers 2 and 3. In fact, he emphasises that interpretation is only capable of having positive effect at a precise point in time in the analysis. Such moments are not frequent, and cannot be grasped in just an approximate manner. It is neither around, nor roundabout, neither before, nor after, but at the exact moment when what is close to bursting open in the imaginary is then also present in the verbal relation with the analyst, that the interpretation must be given so that its decisive value, its mutative function, can have an effect.

What does that mean? – save that that is the moment when the imaginary and the real of the analytic situation are confused. That is what I am trying to explain to you. The subject's desire is there, in the situation, both present and inexpressible. To name it, so Strachey says, is what the analyst's intervention must confine itself to. It is the only occasion when his word should be added to that which the patient foments in the course of his long monologue, a mill-wheel of speech the movement of whose arrows on the schema would be a good enough justification for the metaphor.

To illustrate it, last time I reminded you of the function of Freud's interpretations in the Dora case, the sense in which they were inadequate and the blockage which resulted from them, the mental wall. That was only a first stage in the Freudian discovery. One must follow it as it moves on. Did some of you come, two years ago, to my commentary on the *Wolfman?* . . . not many. I would like one of them – Father Beirnaert? – to treat himself to another reading of this text of Freud's. You will see how helpful the schema I've given you is.

The Wolfman comes across as having what we would today call a character neurosis, or maybe a narcissistic neurosis. As such, this neurosis offers

considerable resistance to treatment. Freud chose, quite deliberately, to give us an exposition of a part of it. In fact, the infantile neurosis – that is the title of the *Wolfman* in the German edition – was then of great use to him for raising certain theoretical questions concerning the function of trauma.

So we are in 1913, hence in the middle of the years 1910 to 1920, which are the object of our commentary this year.

The *Wolfman* is indispensable for understanding what Freud is working out at that particular point in time, namely the theory of trauma, unsettled then by Jung's persistent comments. There are a great many things in this study, not to be found anywhere else in Freud, certainly not in his purely theoretical writings – here we find essential complements to his theory of repression.

Firstly, I will remind you that repression is, in the Wolfman's case, bound up with a traumatic experience, that of the spectacle of his parents copulating in an *a tergo* position. The patient was never able to evoke, to remember, this scene directly, and it is reconstructed by Freud. The copulatory position could only be restored on the basis of the traumatic consequence it had on the actual behaviour of the subject.

To be sure, we have here patient historical reconstructions, which are remarkably surprising. Freud here proceeds as if with monuments, with archival documents, employing textual criticism and exegesis. If, at a certain point, an element comes to light in complex guise, it is certain that the point at which it appears in a less elaborated form is prior to it. In this way Freud manages to determine the date of the copulation in question. He fixes it unhesitatingly, with an absolute rigour, at a date defined by $n + \frac{1}{2}$ years. Now n cannot be higher than 1, because it could not have happened at two and a half for reasons which must be conceded on account of the consequences for the young subject of this spectacular revelation. It is not impossible that it happened at six months, but Freud sets this date aside because it appeared to him, given his thinking at that time, a trifle violent. I would just like to remark in passing that he does not exclude the possibility of it having occurred at six months. And, in truth neither do I. I must say that I'm rather inclined to think that it's the correct date, rather than at one and a half. I might tell you why later on.

Let us get back to the essentials. The traumatic force of the imaginary break-in produced by this spectacle is under no circumstances to be located immediately after the event. The scene acquires traumatic significance for the subject between the ages of three years three months and four years. We know the exact date because the subject was born on Christmas Day, a coincidence which is, furthermore, decisive for his history. It is in anticipation of the events of Christmas, for him as for all children invariably accompanied by the arrival of presents coming to him from a descending being, that for the first time he has the anxiety-dream, the pivot of this case-history. This anxiety-dream is the first

manifestation of the traumatic significance of what a moment ago I called the imaginary break-in. To borrow a term from the theory of instincts such as it has been developed in recent times, in a manner that is certainly more meticulous than in Freud's day, especially for birds, it is the *Prägung* – this term possesses resonances of *striking*, striking a coin – the *Prägung* of the originating traumatic event.[2]

This *Prägung* – Freud explains in the most clearcut fashion – is at first located in a non-repressed unconscious – we will render this approximate expression more precise later. Let us say that the *Prägung* has not been integrated into the verbalised system of the subject, that it has not even reached verbalisation, and not even, one might say, attained signification. This *Prägung*, strictly limited to the domain of the imaginary, re-emerges in the course of the subject's progress into a symbolic world which is more and more organised. That is what Freud is explaining in telling us the subject's entire history, as it then unfolds out of his statements, between *x* the original moment and the age of four, where he locates the repression.

Repression only occurs to the extent that the events of the early years of the subject are historically sufficiently turbulent. I cannot tell you the whole story - his seduction by his older sister, who is more virile than he is, the object both of rivalry and of identification – his drawing back and his refusal in the face of this seduction, for which, at that early age, he had neither the resources nor the elements – then his attempt to approach and actively seduce the governess,[3] the famous Nania, a seduction that is normatively directed along the line of a primary genital Oedipal development, but whose opening move is warped because of the sister's initial captivating seduction. From the terrain on which he was engaged, the subject is thus forced back towards the sado-masochistic positions, whose register and ensemble of elements Freud supplies us with.

Now I will show you two signposts.

Firstly, all the outcomes, the most favourable outcomes which can be hoped for, stem from the subject's introduction to the symbolic dialectic. Furthermore, the symbolic world will not cease to exert a determining attraction throughout the entire development of this subject since, as you know, later on there will be occasions when the solution found is a happy one, in so far as the elements that are educative in the strict sense of the word enter into his life. The whole of the dialectic of rivalry with the father, which renders him passive, will become, at a given point in time, quite relaxed, through the intervention of prestigious individuals, this or that teacher, or, earlier on, through the introduction of the religious register. What Freud shows us then is the following – it is in as much

[2] Translated in ethological works in English as 'imprinting'. Lorenz and others also employ the term '*Objektbindung*' (translated as 'object-fixation').

[3] '*gouvernante*', usually the term for 'governess'. See (1918b) GW XII 42–5; Stud VIII 139–41; SE XVII 19–21 and GW XII 48; Stud VIII 144; SE XVII 24.

as the subjective drama is integrated into a myth which has an extended, almost universal human value, that the subject brings himself into being.

On the other hand, what happens in this period between three years one month and four years? – save that the subject learns how to integrate the events of his life into a law, into a field of symbolic significations, into a human field which universalises significations. That is why, at least at this point in time, this *infantile neurosis* is exactly the same thing as a psychoanalysis. It plays the same role as a psychoanalysis, namely it accomplishes the reintegration of the past, and it brings into the play of symbols the *Prägung* itself, which here is only attained through an effect that is retroactive, *nachträglich*, as Freud puts it.

To the extent that, in the course of events, it becomes integrated in the form of a symbol, in history, the stamp comes very close to emerging. Then, when it does in fact emerge exactly two and a half years after having entered into the life of the subject – and perhaps, given what I've said, three and a half years later – on the imaginary plane it takes on its status as trauma, as a result of the form of the first symbolic integration, a form that was especially shocking for the subject.

The trauma, in so far as it has a repressing action, intervenes *after the fact* [*après coup*], *nachträglich*. At this specific moment, something of the subject's becomes detached in the very symbolic world that he is engaged in integrating. From then on, it will no longer be something belonging to the subject. The subject will no longer speak it, will no longer integrate it. Nevertheless, it will remain there, somewhere, spoken, if one can put it this way, by something the subject does not control.

In other words, there is no essential difference between this moment in the analysis which I have described to you, and the intermediary moment, between the stamp and the symbolic repression.

There is just one difference, which is that at that particular moment, there is no one there to give him his cue. Repression begins, having constituted its original nucleus. Now there is a central point around which symptoms, successive repressions, and by the same token – since repression and the return of the repressed are the same thing – the return of the repressed will later be organised.

2

Aren't you amazed that the return of the repressed and repression are the same thing?

Dr X: *Oh, nothing amazes me any longer.*

It amazes some people. Though X tells us that, as far as he's concerned, nothing amazes him any more.

O. MANNONI: *That gets rid of the notion one sometimes comes across of successful repression.*

No, it doesn't get rid of it. To show you this, we would have to go into the entire dialectic of forgetting. Every successful symbolic integration involves a sort of normal forgetting. But that would take us a very long way into the Freudian dialectic.

O. MANNONI: *A forgetting without the return of the repressed, then?*

Yes, without the return of the repressed. Integration into history evidently brings with it the forgetting of an entire world of shadows which are not transposed into symbolic existence. And if this symbolic existence is successful and is fully taken on by the subject, it leaves no weight behind it. One would then have to bring in Heideggerian notions. In every entry of being into its habitation in words, there's a margin of forgetting, a λήθη[4] complementary to every ἀλήθεια.[5]

M. HYPPOLITE: *It is the word* successful *in Mannoni's formula that I don't understand.*

It is a therapist's expression. Successful repression is essential.

M. HYPPOLITE: Successful *could mean the most profound forgetting.*

That is what I am talking about.

M. HYPPOLITE: *So this* successful *means, in certain respects, total failure. To arrive at the integration of being, man must forget the essential. This* successful *is a* failure. *Heidegger would not accept the word* successful. *You can only say* successful *from the therapist's point of view.*

It is a therapist's point of view. Nonetheless, the margin of error there is to be found in every realisation of being is always, it seems, reserved by Heidegger to a sort of fundamental λήθη, or shadow of the truth.

M. HYPPOLITE: *The therapist's success – nothing could be worse for Heidegger. It is the forgetting of the forgetting. Heideggerian authenticity consists in not being engulfed by the forgetting of the forgetting.*

Yes, because Heidegger made a sort of philosophical law out of this return to the sources of being.

Let us take up the question again. To what extent can a forgetting of the forgetting be successful? To what extent must every analysis open out on to a resurgence into being? Or on to a certain recoil into being, opted for by the subject with regard to his own destiny? Since I always jump at any opportunity

[4] Forgetting, forgetfulness. [5] Truth.

that comes my way, I am going to forestall somewhat those questions which might be raised. If the subject starts off from point O, the point of confusion and innocence, where is the dialectic of the symbolic reintegration of desire going to lead? Is it enough simply for the subject to name his desires, for him to have permission to name them, for the analysis to be terminated? That is the question that I may perhaps raise at the end of this session. You will also see that I will not leave it there.

At the end, right at the end of analysis, after having gone through a specific number of circuits and brought about the complete integration of his history, will the subject still be at O? or else, a bit further over there, towards A?[6] In other words, will a part of the subject still remain on the level of this sticking-point which we call his *ego*? Does the analysis only deal with what we consider to be a given, namely the subject's *ego*, the internal structure which could be improved by exercise?

That is how someone like Balint and one whole trend of analysis have come to think that, either the *ego* is strong, or else it is weak. And if it is weak, they are obliged, by the internal logic of their position, to think it has to be strengthened. As soon as one holds the *ego* to be the straightforward exercising of self-mastery by the subject, the high point of the hierarchy of the nervous functions, one is completely committed to the task of teaching it to be strong. From whence the notion of education through practice, through learning,[7] even, as a mind as clear-headed as Balint's has written, through performance.

With respect to the strengthening of the *ego* in the course of the analysis, Balint goes so far as to comment on the extent to which the ego is perfectible. Only a few years ago, he says, what was considered in any given exercise or sport to be the world record is now just about good enough to qualify an athlete as average. So the human ego, when it is made to compete with itself, accomplishes more and more extraordinary feats. Considering which, one is led to deduce – we have no proof of it, and for good reasons – that an exercise such as analysis could structure the ego, could introduce into its functions a training which will strengthen it and will render it capable of tolerating a greater amount of excitation.

But what could render analysis – a verbal game – fit for whatever goes on in this type of training?

The fundamental fact which analysis reveals to us and which I am in the process of teaching you, is that the *ego* is an imaginary function. If you blind yourself to this fact, you'll find yourself in step with the line that the whole, or nearly the whole of analysis, has taken.

If the *ego* is an imaginary function, it is not to be confused with the subject.

[6] The diagram in the French edition, reproduced here on p. 139, does not have A: the very similar diagram on E 674 names the plane mirror A. [7] English in the original.

What do we call a subject? Quite precisely, what, in the development of objectivation, is outside of the object.

One might say that the ideal of science is to reduce the object to what can be closed and fastened within a system of interacting forces. In the end, the object is only ever like that for science, and there is only ever one subject – the scientist who considers the whole, and hopes one day to reduce everything to a determinate play of symbols encompassing all the interactions between objects. Except, when it comes to organised beings, the scientist finds himself obliged after all always to imply that action exists. Certainly one can always consider an organised being as an object, but as long as one grants it the status of organism, one retains, if only implicitly, the idea that it is a subject.

During analysis, for example of a piece of instinctual behaviour, one can ignore the subjective position for a while. But this position can under no circumstances be ignored when it comes to the speaking subject. We are necessarily obliged to admit the speaking subject as subject. But why? For one simple reason – because he can lie. That is, he is distinct from what he says.

Well, the dimension of the speaking subject, of the speaking subject *qua* deceiver, is what Freud uncovered for us in the unconscious.

In science, the subject is only sustained, in the end, on the plane of consciousness, since the subject *x* in science is in fact the scientist. It is whoever possesses the system of the science that sustains the dimension of the subject. He is the subject, in so far as he is the reflection, the mirror, the support of the objectal world. In contrast, Freud shows us that in the human subject there is something which speaks, which speaks in the full sense of the word, that is to say something which knowingly lies, and without the contribution of consciousness. That restores – in the obvious, strict, experimental sense of the term – the dimension of the subject.

By the same token, this dimension is no longer confused with the *ego*. The ego is deprived of its absolute position in the subject. The ego acquires the status of a mirage, as the residue, it is only one element in the objectal relations of the subject.

Are you with me?

That is why I took up on the way what Mannoni was putting forward. The question is indeed whether, in analysis, it is solely a matter of enlarging the correlative objectivations of the *ego*, when considered as a centre that is completely given, but which is more or less restricted – that is how Miss Anna Freud puts it. When Freud writes – *Where id was, there ego must be* – must we take it to mean that the task is to enlarge the field of consciousness? Or is it a matter of displacement? *Where id was, there* . . . – don't think that it is there.[8] It

[8] The word '*là*', here translated as 'there', is to be found in the standard French translation of Freud's dictum, '*Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*' – '*Là où le ça était, l'ego doit être.*' See Freud (1933a) SE XXII 80, which gives 'Where id was, there ego shall be.' The 'shall' [*soll*] has been corrected to 'must', but 'there' (which is not to be found in the German) has been retained to correspond to the French '*là*'. See the more extensive discussion in E 128–9, 299–300.

is in a great many places. For example, in my schema, the subject is looking at the mirror game in A. For a moment, let us identify the id with the subject. Are we to understand that there where the id was, in A, the *ego* must be? That the *ego* must move to A and, at the end of the most refined of ideal analyses, no longer be there at all?

That is quite conceivable, since everything pertaining to the *ego* must be realised in what the subject recognises as himself. That, in any case, is the question I am putting to you. I hope that this is sufficient indication of the direction I am taking. I haven't exhausted it.

However that may be, given the point I've reached with my remarks about the *Wolfman*, I think that you see the usefulness of the schema. In conformity with the best analytic traditions, it unifies the original formation of the symptom, the signification of repression itself, with what takes place in the analytic process, considered, at least in its beginnings, as a dialectical process.

With this simple beginning, I will leave it up to Reverend Father Beirnaert to take his time in once again reading the case-history of the *Wolfman*, to give us someday a résumé, indeed to highlight some questions when he has drawn together the elements that I have brought out for you in this text.

3

Since we will leave the subject of the *Wolfman* there, I want to make a little further progress towards understanding what is the therapeutic procedure, the source of therapeutic action, in analysis. What, precisely, does the naming, the recognition of desire signify, at the point where it is arrived at, in O? Does everything have to stop there? Or is it necessary to go a step further?

I am going to try and get you to understand the meaning of this question.

There is an absolutely essential function in the process of the symbolic integration of his history by the subject, a function in relation to which, as everyone has long noticed, the analyst occupies a significant position. This function is called the super-ego. It is impossible to understand anything about it if you don't relate it to its origins. The super-ego at first appeared in the history of Freudian theory in the form of the censorship. I could just as well a moment ago have directly illustrated the remark I made you by saying that, from the beginning, we are placed, with the symptom and just as much with all of the unconscious functions of daily life, in the dimension of speech. The task of censorship is to deceive through lying, and it is not for nothing that Freud chose the term of censorship. Here we are dealing with an agency which splits the subject's symbolic world, cuts it in two, into one accessible part, which is recognised, and one inaccessible, forbidden part. It is this idea that we rediscover, hardly transformed, with almost the same emphasis, in the register of the super-ego.

Straightaway I am going to emphasise what brings the idea of the super-ego,

one of whose facets I am reminding you of, into opposition with the idea we commonly make use of.

In general, the super-ego is always thought of within the register of a tension, and this tension is within a hair of being reduced down to purely instinctual principles, like primary masochism for example. Such a conception is not alien to Freud. Freud goes even further. In the article *Das Ich und das Es*, he maintains that the more the subject suppresses his instincts, that is to say, if you wish, the more moral his conduct is, and the more the super-ego exacerbates its pressure, the more severe, demanding and imperious it becomes.[9] That clinical observation is not universally true. But Freud here lets himself get carried away by his object, which is neurosis. He goes so far as to consider the super-ego to be one of these toxic products which, through their organic activity, would release other toxic substances which, under given conditions, would bring their reproductive cycle to an end. That is pushing things very far. But you will rediscover this idea implicit within a whole conception of the super-ego prevalent in analysis.

As a counter to this conception, the following may be apt. In a general fashion, the unconscious is, in the subject, a schism of the symbolic system, a limitation, an alienation induced by the symbolic system. The super-ego is an analogous schism, which is produced in the symbolic system integrated by the subject. This symbolic world is not limited to the subject, because it is realised in a language which is the common language, the universal symbolic system, in so far as it establishes its empire over a specific community to which the subject belongs. The super-ego is this schism as it occurs for the subject – but not only for him – in his relations with what we will call the law.

I am going to illustrate this with an example, because what you are taught in analysis familiarises you so little with this register, that you are going to think that I am overstepping its limits. Nothing of the kind.

It concerns one of my patients. He had already been in analysis with someone else before coming to me. He had quite peculiar symptoms connected with the use of the hand, an organ of some significance for those entertaining activities on which analysis has shed so much light. An analysis conducted along classical lines did its utmost, without success, to organise, at any cost, his various symptoms around, obviously, infantile masturbation, and the prohibitions and the repressions that it would have brought with it in his environment. These prohibitions did exist, since they still exist. Unfortunately, it explained nothing, nor did it resolve anything.

This subject was – I can't dissimulate this element of his history, although it is always a delicate matter to bring particular cases into teaching – of the Islamic religion. But one of the most striking elements of the story of his subjective

[9] Freud (1923b) GW XIII 284; Stud III 320; SE XIX 54.

development was his estrangement from, his aversion to the Koranic law. Now, this law is something infinitely more complete than we can imagine, in our cultural sphere, defined as it is by *Render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's*. In the Islamic sphere, on the contrary, the law has a totalitarian character which will on no account permit the isolation of the juridical from the religious plane.

So this subject manifested a failure to recognise [*méconnaissance*] the Koranic law. In a subject who belonged, through his ancestry, his functions, his future, to this cultural sphere, this was something which struck me in passing, in line with the idea, which I believe to be sound enough, that one should not fail to recognise the symbolic appertinances of a subject. This put us hot on the trail of what was at issue here.

In fact, the Koranic law decrees the following, with respect to the person who is found guilty of theft – *The hand will be cut off.*

Now, the subject had, in his childhood, been caught up in a whirlwind both private and public, which amounted to the following, that he had heard it said – and it was quite a scene, his father being a civil servant and having lost his position – that his father was a thief and must therefore have his hand cut off.

To be sure, for a long time now the prescription has not been put into effect – no more than that belonging to the laws of Manu,[10] *whosoever has committed incest with his mother must tear off his genitals and, carrying them in his hand, will go towards the West*. But it does not remain any the less inscribed in the symbolic order which founds interhuman relations, and which is called the law.

This proposition was for this subject thus isolated off from the rest of the law in a privileged manner. And it became lodged in his symptoms. All the other symbolic references of my patient, all these primitive arcana around which such a subject finds his most fundamental relations to the universe of the symbol organised, were forfeited on account of the particular emphasis that this prescription had acquired for him. For him it lies at the centre of an entire series of inadmissible, conflictual, symptomatic unconscious expressions, linked to this primal childhood experience.

In the course of analysis, as I have pointed out to you, it is when the traumatic elements – grounded in an image which has never been integrated – draw near that holes, points of fracture appear in the unification, the synthesis, of the subject's history. I have pointed out how it is in starting from these holes that the subject can realign himself within the different symbolic determinations which make him a subject with a history. Well, in the same way, for every human being, everything personal which can happen to him is located in the relation to the law to which he is bound. His history is unified by the law, by his symbolic universe, which is not the same for everyone.

[10] Manu is the first man and giver of laws in Hindu mythology.

Tradition and language diversify the reference to the subject. A discordant statement, unknown in law, a statement pushed into the foreground by a traumatic event, which reduces the law down to a point with an inadmissible, unintegrable character – this blind, repetitive agency is what we usually define in the term super-ego.

I hope that this little case will have been striking enough to give you an idea of a dimension analysts are not often to be found reflecting upon, but which they cannot manage to ignore entirely. Every analyst, in fact, is a witness to the fact that no resolution of an analysis is possible, whatever the diversity, the iridescence of the archaic events that it brings into play, if it does not end by knotting itself around this legal, legalising coordinate, which is called the Oedipus complex.

The Oedipus complex is so essential to the very dimension of the analytic experience that its pre-eminence is revealed right from the start of Freud's work and is sustained right up to its end. That is because the Oedipus complex occupies a privileged position, in the present state of Western civilization.

Just now I alluded to the division into several planes of the register of the law in our cultural sphere. God knows that the multiplicity of planes does not make life very easy for the individual, because conflicts ceaselessly are bringing them into opposition. In as much as the different languages of a civilisation gain in complexity, its tie to the most primitive forms of the law comes down to this essential point – this is Freudian theory at its purest – which is the Oedipus complex. That is what, in the life of the individual, resonates with the register of the law, as one discovers in the neuroses. It is the most uniform point of intersection, the minimum requirement.

That is not to say that it is the only one, nor that it would amount to straying outside of the field of psychoanalysis to refer to the totality of the symbolic world of the subject, which can be extraordinarily complex, even antinomic, and to his own personal position, which is a function of his place in society, of his future, of his projects, in the existential sense of the term, of the education and tradition which is his.

We are in no way relieved of the problems raised by the relations of the subject's desire – which emerges there, at point O – to the totality of the symbolic system in which the subject is called, in the full sense of the term, to take up his place. The fact that the structure of the Oedipus complex is an ubiquitous requirement does not exempt us, for all that, from perceiving that other structures belonging to the same level, to the plane of the law, can, in a given case, play just as decisive a role. That is what we just now encountered in this last clinical case.

Once the number of cycles necessary for the subject's objects to appear have been accomplished, and his imaginary history is completed, once the successive tensed-up, suspended, anxiety-provoking desires of the subject are

named and reintegrated, all is not, for all that, brought to term. What was initially there, in O, then here, in O′, then again in O, has to be referred to the completed system of symbols. The very outcome of the analysis requires it.

Where should this adjournment come to a stop? Do we have to extend analytic intervention to the point of becoming one of those fundamental dialogues on justice and courage, in the great dialectical tradition?

That is a question. It is not easy to answer, because in truth, modern man has become singularly unused to broaching these grand themes. He prefers to resolve things in terms of conduct, of adaptation, of group morale and other twaddle. From whence the gravity of the problem posed by the analyst's education in humanity.

That is where I will leave you today.

19 May 1954

MICHAEL BALINT'S BLIND ALLEYS

XVI

Preliminary interventions on Balint

THEORY OF LOVE
DEFINITION OF CHARACTER
OBJECTIVATION

It's all very fine saying that theory and technique are the same thing. Do let us get something out of it. Let us try and understand each individual's technique, when his theoretical ideas are sufficiently articulated to allow us to make some assumptions about it.

Except, the theoretical ideas pushed to the fore by some minds, even fine minds, are not on that account usable. Those people who work with concepts are not always clearly aware of what they are saying. In contrast, in certain cases, one has a strong feeling that the concepts truly express something of the experience, and that is the case with our friend Michael Balint.

I wanted to seek the support of someone who is, in lots of ways, close, even congenial to us, and who without question has an orientation which converges with some of the demands we are here making explicit as to what the intersubjective relation in analysis must be. At the same time, the way in which he expresses himself gives us the feeling that he has come under the sway of the dominant mode of thought.

In order to render palpable what I will call a certain contemporary deviationism in relation to the fundamental analytic experience which is my constant point of reference, it would be all too easy to pick out crude, even obviously crazy people. It is when they are subtle, and when they attest less to a clearcut aberration than to a specific way of missing the point, that one should take them up.

This is how I wanted to put to the test what has to be the point of any teaching, namely that one follows it. I have entrusted this to Granoff, who, as he has made crystal-clear, is unquestionably to be numbered as one of those most interested in the path along which I am trying to lead you, so that he may communicate to us today what he has been able to gather from his reading of Balint's book, *Primary Love and Psycho-analytic Technique*.

According to what he himself says, Balint started his career around about 1920. This book is a collection of articles written between 1930 and 1950. It is

a very interesting book, extremely pleasurable to read, clear, lucid, often bold, full of humour. It will be in all your interests to get to grips with it – when you have the time, because it is holiday reading, like a prize at the end of term. Treat yourselves to a copy, because our *Société* is not rich enough this year to give you all one.

1

Interventions in the course of Dr Granoff's presentation.

Two modalities of love are being opposed. First of all there is the pregenital mode. An entire article, entitled 'On love and hate', has as its axis the notion that what is involved is a love in which the object possesses absolutely no interests of its own. Absolute unselfishness[1] – the subject does not recognise any of its demands, any of its own needs. Everything which is good for me is right for you – that is the implicit formula which the subject's behaviour expresses. Primary love,[2] the later stage, is always characterised as the rejection of any kind of reality, the refusal to recognise the partner's requirements. That is what contrasts it to genital love.[2] As you'll see, I have massive objections to this conception; my objections will show how it literally dissipates everything which analysis has contributed.

You are entirely right, Granoff, to point out that Balint's conception is centred on a theory of love which is more than just normative, or moralising. Quite rightly, you highlight that it leads to this question – is what we consider to be normal a natural state or is it a cultural end-product, something artificial, indeed something which he calls a happy chance?[3] And, further on, he asks – what should we call health, when analysis is terminated? Is the analytic cure a natural or an artificial process? Are there processes in the mind which, if they are not halted, disturbed, will lead development towards equilibrium? Or, on the contrary, is health a happy chance, an improbable event? About that, Balint remarks, the ambiguity of the analytic chorus is complete. Which may lead one to think that the question has not been put very clearly.

. . . . . .

You are not bringing out clearly enough the Balintian definition of character, which is, however, extremely interesting.

Character controls man's relations to his objects. Character always signifies a more or less extensive limitation of the possibilities of love and of hatred. So character signifies limitation of the capacity for love and enjoyment.[4] The dimension of enjoyment [*joie*], which is extremely extensive, goes well beyond

[1] English in the original. See Alice Balint, 'Love for the mother and mother love', pp. 110–11.
[2] English in the original. [3] English in the original.
[4] Last four words in English in the original.

the category of *jouissance* in a way that one should spell out. Enjoyment [*joie*] implies a subjective plenitude which well deserves being expanded on.[5]

If the article didn't date from 1932, I would say that it is responsible for the promulgation of a certain puritanical moral ideal. In Hungary there are Protestant historical traditions, which have precise historical parallels with the history of Protestantism in England. Hence, we see a peculiar convergence of the thought of this student of Ferenczi's, guided by his master along trails which I am going to make you follow today, with his destiny, which has eventually integrated him so well into the English community.

Character is for him preferable in its strong form, the one which brings with it all its limitations. The weak character[6] is someone who lets himself be overrun. There's no need to add that this results in complete ambiguity between what he calls character analysis, and, something he feels no qualms in venturing out in the same context, logical character. He does not seem to see that these are completely different characters – on the one hand, character is the reaction to the libidinal development of the subject, the web within which this development is caught, and limited, on the other, there are innate elements which, for the characterologists, divide individuals into classes, which are constitutional.

Balint thinks that analytic experience will tell us more about this. I myself have pretty well been brought round to think so too, but on condition that one realises that analysis can profoundly modify character.

. . . . . .

Quite rightly you highlight Balint's remark to the effect that, beginning in 1938–40, an entire vocabulary disappeared from analytical articles, while the orientation which centres psychoanalysis upon object relations was being consolidated. This vocabulary is the one whose connotation, Balint says, is *too libidinal* – the term *sadistic*, for example, disappears.

This confession is very revealing. That really is what's going on, the growing puritanism of the analytic atmosphere.

. . . . . .

Balint fully realises that there must be something that exists between two subjects. Since he is completely lacking in the conceptual apparatus necessary for introducing the intersubjective relation, he is led to speak of a two-body psychology.[7] He thinks that is the way out of one-body psychology.[7] But it is clear that two-body psychology is still a relation of object to object.

Theoretically, this would not be serious, if it did not have technical consequences in the concrete, therapeutic exchange with the subject. The point is that in actual fact it is not a relation of object to object. Balint is, as you put it so well just now, *entangled in a dual relation, and denying it*. We won't be

[5] Lacan here counterposes the notoriously untranslateable *jouissance* (bliss, pleasure, enjoyment, orgasm) and 'joy'. [6] English in the original. [7] English in the original.

able to find a more felicitous formula, and I congratulate you on it, for saying how the explanation of the analytic situation is usually expressed.

To make any advances, all knowledge [*connaissance*] must objectify the parts which are objectifiable. How does an analysis make progress? – if not through the interventions which impel the subject to objectify himself, to take himself as object.

Balint objectifies the subject, but in a different sense. He proposes what I would call a recourse to a call on the real, which is only an effacement, through a failure to recognise, as you put it just now, the symbolic register. In fact, this register disappears completely in the object relation, and by the same token the imaginary register as well. That is why the objects take on an absolute value.

Balint tells us how to act – *create an atmosphere, your own atmosphere, a comfortable atmosphere*. That is all he has to say. It is extremely uncertain, hesitating on the edge of the unsayable, and he then brings in reality, what he calls the event. Clearly, analysis is not set up so that we fall into our patient's arms, and he into ours. The limitation of the analyst's means raises the question as to what plane his action occurs on. Balint is induced to call to attention all the registers of the real.

It is not for nothing that the real is always in the background, and that I never refer to it directly in our commentaries here. It is, quite precisely, and quite properly speaking, excluded. And Balint, no more than anyone else, will not make it come back. But that is the implication of his recourse to the call. A failure of the theory which corresponds to this deviation in technique.

2

It is late now. I don't want to go beyond a quarter to two.

I think we can give Granoff full marks. He has achieved everything I hoped of him, and has given you a full presentation of all the problems raised by this book of Balint's, his one and only book, which is the fruit of his reflections as well as of his professional practice.

Some questions may have emerged from it for you. I will come back to them next time. What I want to highlight now is the article which you didn't talk about, 'Transference of emotions', from 1933. Is it emotions which are transferred? Nobody seems scandalised by a title like that.

It isn't an article specifically addressed to analysts, it is also addressed in part to those who aren't, so that they grasp the phenomenon of tranference which, he says, gives rise to many misconceptions, and of which the scientific world in general had a less adequate conception at that time than of the phenomenon of resistance. He gives several examples. You'll see, it is quite delightful.

I will start off with this hole which Granoff left at the heart of his presentation so as to throw light once again on the rest. Because Balint lacks a correct definition of the symbol, the latter is necessarily everywhere.

In this same article, he tells us that the interpretation of their own experience by analysts is naturally a psychology, or a characterology of the psychoanalyst himself. So it is not me who says it, it is him who makes the remark. The author himself offers us the belief that one should undertake the psychoanalysis of the theoretician analyst so as to locate some of the modern tendencies of theory and of practice.

Till next Wednesday.

26 May 1954

XVII

The object relation and the intersubjective relation

BALINT AND FERENCZI
THE SATISFACTION OF NEED
THE MAP OF TENDERNESS
INTERSUBJECTIVITY IN THE PERVERSIONS
SARTRIAN ANALYSIS

So let us look at this conception which we call Balint's, which is, in fact, linked to a very specific tradition, which may be said to be Hungarian in so far as it has been, quite incidentally, dominated by the personality of Ferenczi. Certainly we will have to broach, in many little anecdotal ways, the relations between Freud and Ferenczi. It is all rather diverting.

Ferenczi was to some extent considered, up to 1930, to be the *enfant terrible* of psychoanalysis. In relation to the analytic group in general, he remained a free-wheeler. His way of raising questions showed no concern for couching itself in a manner which was, at that time, already *orthodox*. Hence, on a number of occasions, he raised questions which can be classified under the rubric *active psychoanalysis* – and, having said this, which seems so crucial, we think we have understood something.

Ferenczi started by asking himself what role, at any given moment of the analysis, the analyst's initiative, in the first instance, and later on, the analyst's being, should play. One has to see under what terms any intervention is made, before qualifying it as active. For example, yesterday evening you heard the question regarding prohibitions raised, apropos of the case which Dr Morgan reported to us. As I reminded you yesterday evening, that is a question which is already sounded out in Freud's Papers on Technique. Freud always took it to be absolutely self-evident that, in certain cases, one must know how to intervene in an active way by imposing prohibitions – *Your analysis cannot continue if you indulge in that activity which, through in some way saturating the situation, sterilises, in the full sense of the term, what might happen in the analysis.*

Starting from where we are, and going back in history from Balint on, we will try to see what the notion of active psychoanalysis means for Ferenczi, who is credited with its introduction.

I'll point out to you in passing that, in the course of his life, Ferenczi changed his position several times. He reconsidered some of his attempts, concluding that experience had shown them to be excessive, almost unfruitful, even injurious.

Balint thus belongs to this Hungarian tradition which blossomed around the questions raised by the relation of the analysand and analyst, conceived of as an interhuman situation involving persons and, as a consequence, implying a certain reciprocity. Today these questions are spoken of in terms of transference and counter-transference.

Around about 1930, the personal influence of Ferenczi came to an end. From then on, it is that of his pupils which makes itself felt.

Balint is to be located in this period extending from 1930 to today, which is marked by the growing influence, within analysis, of the notion of the object relation. I believe that that is the central point in the conception of Balint, of his wife, and of their collaborators who took an interest in animal psychology. That is what comes across in a book which, even though it is only a collection of rather variable, disparate articles, spread over a period of twenty years, is nevertheless characterised by a remarkable unity, which one can extract.

1

I presume that the terrain has been reconnoitred, because Granoff's presentation has enabled you to locate, in their gross outlines, the problems that Balint raises. So let us start off with the object relation. It lies at the heart of all the problems, as you will see.

Let us go straight to the knot. Balint's main focus in the elaboration of the notion of the object relation comes down to this – the object relation is one which conjoins to a need an object which satisfies it.

In his conception, an object is first and foremost an object of satisfaction. This is not about to surprise us, since analytic experience moves within the order of libidinal relations, within the order of desire. Does that mean that defining the object, in human experience, as what saturates a need is a valid point of departure, from which one will be able to develop, to group together and to explain what experience teaches us is encountered in analysis?

For Balint, the fundamental object relation satisfies what one can call the full form, the typical form. It assumes its most characteristic form in what he calls primary love,[1] namely the relations between mother and infant. The key article on this point is 'Mother's love and love for the mother', by Alice Balint. According to the latter, what is specific to the infant's relation to the mother is that the mother as such satisfies all the needs of the infant. This doesn't mean, obviously, that that's how things always turn out. But it is a structural feature of the human infant's situation.

Here the entire animal backdrop is implicit. The little human being, like the little animal for a limited period, is stitched into the maternal companionship which saturates a certain primitive need he has, while he takes his very first

[1] English in the original.

steps in life. But he is much more so than any other, on account of the backwardness of his development. You are aware that one can say that the human being is born with foetalised traits, that is to say deriving from premature birth. Balint scarcely touches on this point, and only in an aside. But he notes it, and he has good reason to.

However that may be, the mother-child relation is so fundamental for him that he goes so far as to say that, if it comes to pass in a happy manner, problems can only arise by accident. This accident may be the rule – that doesn't change anything, it is an accident with respect to the essentials of the relation. If there is satisfaction, which is the desire of this primary relation, this primary love[2] doesn't even have to come to light. Nothing does. So everything pertaining to it which becomes manifest is simply a hitch in the fundamental set-up, the enclosed, two-sided relation.

I cannot linger over this, but I must just say that Alice Balint's paper develops this conception to the point of heroism. Let us follow its reasoning.

For the infant, everything which is good for it, coming from the mother, goes without saying. There is nothing to imply that this partner is autonomous, nothing to imply that it is another subject. The need is imperious. And everything in the object relation tends, all by itself, towards the satisfaction of need. If there thus exists a pre-established harmony, an enclosing of the first object relation of the human being, a tendency towards perfect satisfaction, in all strictness exactly the same has to hold for the other side, for the mother's side. Her love for her offspring has exactly the same characteristic of pre-established harmony on the primitive plane of need. For her as well, the care, the contact, the breast-feeding, everything which links her in an animal fashion to her offspring satisfies a need, complementary to the first one's.

Hence Alice Balint is obliged to prove – and this is the extreme heroism of her demonstration – that maternal need displays exactly the same limits as every vital need, namely that *when one no longer has anything to give, well one takes*. One of the most clinching points she puts forward is that, in any given so-called primitive society – this term is less an allusion to the social or communitarian structure of these societies than it is to the fact that they are much more exposed to terrible crises in the realm of need, whether it is a question of eskimos or tribes wandering in an abject state across the Australian deserts – when there is nothing left to eat, you eat your child. This forms part of the same system, the register of the satisfaction of vital needs, there is no gap between feeding and eating – you are all his and, by the same token, he is all yours. Consequently, when there is no longer any other way of getting by, it is easy enough to gulp him down. Absorption is a part of inter-animal relations, of object relations. In the normal run of events, the infant feeds on his mother, absorbing her to the

[2] English in the original.

extent that he can. The inverse is true. When the mother can no longer do otherwise she tucks into him.

Balint goes to great lengths in supplying extraordinarily suggestive ethnographic detail. I do not know if they are accurate – one should always be wary of reports from afar. Nevertheless, ethnographers recount that, in times of hardship, during the atrocious famines which form a part of the rhythms of isolated populations, which have remained at a very primitive stage, in certain Australian tribes for example, the pregnant women are capable, with that remarkable dexterity which is a characteristic of some primitive behaviour, of inducing abortion so as to feed on the object of the pregnancy, born prematurely in this fashion.

In short, the infant-mother relation is here presented as the starting-point of a complementarity of desire. There is a direct stitching together of desires, which dovetail together, bind together. Any discordances, gaps are only accidental.

This definition, the starting-point and pivot of the Balint conception, is in contradiction with the analytic tradition on one essential point, concerning the development of instincts. In fact, the definition of the infant-mother relation runs counter to the positing of a primitive stage of so-called auto-erotism, which is however vouchsafed, to a great extent, by Freud's texts, although not without considerable qualifications – very important qualifications which always leave matters subject to a certain ambiguity.

In the classical, Viennese conception of libidinal development, there is a stage in which the infantile subject knows only its need, in the sense in which it has no relation with the object which satisfies it. It knows only its sensations, and it reacts on the plane of stimulus-response. It does not have a pre-determined primary relation, only the feeling of its pleasure or its unpleasure. The world is the world of sensations. And these sensations direct, dominate, govern its development. One doesn't have to take account of its relation to an object, since no object yet exists for it.

It is this classic thesis – that Wälder sets out in his article 'Earliest stages', which appeared in the *International Journal* for 1937, page 416 – which made the Viennese circle particularly impermeable to what was beginning to emerge in the English circle. It was highlighting what emerged later on in Kleinian theory, namely the idea of original traumatic elements, linked to the notion of the good and the bad object, to primitive projections and introjections.

What are the consequences of the Balint conception of the object relation? To begin with, let us postulate the following – it is clear that Balint and those who follow him are on the track of a truth. Who can seriously deny, if he has observed a baby of fifteen to twenty days at the breast, that it takes an interest in specific objects? So, the traditional idea that the original vicissitude of the libido is auto-erotism has to be interpreted. It is certain that it has some value, but it is

false if we locate it on the behaviourist plane of the relation of the living organism with its *Umwelt*, since observation shows us that there really is an object relation. Such theoretical developments, which are spliced on to the theory of analysis, figure as a deviation in relation to the fundamental inspiration of the conception of the libido. For the moment, a large section, the largest section, of the analytic movement is pursuing it.

So Balint defines the object relation through the satisfaction of a need to which the object corresponds in a closed, completed fashion, in the form of a primary love, the original model of which is found in the mother-infant relation. I could have introduced you to Balint's thought via another path. But, because it is a coherent body of thought, whichever entrance gains you access to it, you will always find the same blind alleys and the same problems in it. If one starts off with an object relation like this, there is no getting away from it. The libidinal relation, whatever its progressive steps, its stages, its breakings of limits, its phases, its metamorphoses, will always be defined in the same way.

2

Once such a definition of the object has been given, however varied the qualities of desire are in passing from the oral to the anal, and then to the genital, there will just have to be an object to satisfy and saturate it.

So, the genital relation, in its completed aspects, in its fulfilment on the instinctual plane, is theorised in the same manner as the infant-mother relationship. In the achievement of genital satisfaction, the satisfaction of the one, I won't say is concerned for the satisfaction of the other, but is saturated in this satisfaction. And it goes without saying that the other is satisfied in this essential relation. That is the axis of the Balints' conception of genital love.[3] It is the same as that for primary love.[3]

Balint cannot conceive of matters in any other way, once the object is defined as an object of satisfaction. As it is clear that this becomes much more complicated when the adult human subject has actually to put into effect his capacities for genital possession, what he needs here is an extension. But it is never anything more than an extension, that is, one does not understand where the subject's initiative could arise from, his perception of the existence or the *reality*, as one says, of the partner.

What makes genital love[4] different from primary love[4] is acceding to the reality of the other as a subject. The subject takes into account the existence of the other subject as such. He concerns himself, not only with the enjoyment [*jouissance*] of his partner, but with many other requirements which are

[3] English in the original. [4] English in the original.

associated with it. All of this isn't a matter of course. For Balint, this is part of the given. That's the way it is because an adult, well, is far more complicated than a child. Fundamentally, the register of satisfaction is the same. There is a closed satisfaction, for two, in which the ideal is that each finds in the other the object which satisfies his desire.

But these faculties for appreciating the needs and requirements of the other, which are necessary at the genital stage, where are you going to get them from? What can introduce the recognition of others into the closed system of the object relation? Nothing can, and that is what is striking.

Yet they do have to come from somewhere, these elements which he calls tenderness, idealisation, which are these mirages of love with which the genital act is draped – the map of Tenderness.[5] Balint cannot deny this dimension, since clinical work demonstrates it. So, he says – and this is where his theory comes apart, from top to bottom – the origin of all this is pregenital.

That is incredible. It means that he is forced to build on to primary love[6] an original dimension of the genital stage, which brings with it this extremely complex relation to others through which copulation becomes love. Now, up to that point he has devoted himself to defining primary love[6] as an object relation which is closed in on itself, without intersubjectivity. The genital once reached, he wants the stuff on which the intersubjective relation is made to emerge out of this same primary love.[6] That is the contradiction of his doctrine.

Balint thinks of the pregenital as formed in an object relation, let us say an animal one, in which the object is not selfish,[6] is not subject. The term is never used, but the very formulae he does use show clearly what is at issue. In the pregenital, there is no self[7] at all, besides the one which organically exists. The object is there so as to saturate its needs. When we arrive at the level of the genital relation, one cannot escape from such a definition of the object relation, there is no way of making it develop any further, since, change as desire might, the object will still always have to be complementary to it. Yet Balint does find himself obliged to say – without being able to fill in the gap which results from doing so – that intersubjectivity, that is to say the experience of the selfishness of the other, stems from this pregenital stage from which he had previously excluded it. It is true. One can see this perfectly palpable fact revealing itself in the analytic experience. But this contradicts the entire theory of primary love.[6] And it is here, on the very plane of the theoretical statement, that one can see the blind alley one is led into when one takes the object relation to belong to the register of satisfaction.

[5] *'la carte du Tendre'*. A reference to Madeleine de Scudéry's *Clélie* (1654–60) vol. I, in which she recounts a salon conversation in which an allegorical map of the country of the tender sentiments was drawn up.

[6] English in the original.

[7] The term 'self' became accepted into the French language in the mid-twentieth century, first in medicine and then in psychology and psychoanalysis.

DR LANG: *It seems to me that there is another contradiction, which also emerges from the presentation you've given. For in the closed world of primary love,*[8] *need and desire are completely confused. Besides, you yourself have sometimes used the one, sometimes the other term. Perhaps it is in paying attention to this point that we will see where the weakness lies.*

Balint uses the two alternately. The basis of his thought is need,[8] and it is accidentally, in lacking, that need makes itself manifest as wish.[8] And that really is what is at issue – is the human wish[8] simply the lack inflicted on need?[8] Does desire emerge only out of frustration? Analysts have gone a long way down this path, in a manner which is far less coherent than Balint, to the point of making frustration the pivot of analytic theory – the primary frustration, secondary, primitive, complex frustrations, etc. You must extricate yourself from this fascination to fall on your feet again. That is what I am going to try to remind you of now.

3

If analysis has made any positive discovery about libidinal development, it is that the child is a pervert, even a polymorphous pervert.

Before the stage of genital normalisation, first sketched around the Oedipus complex, the child is given over to an entire series of phases connoted by the term component drives. These are its first libidinal relations to the world. On the basis of this sketch, analysis today is engaged in applying the notion of the object relation, which is caught – Lang's idea is extremely fruitful at this point – within that of frustration.

What is this primary perversion? One has to recall that analytic experience started off with a select number of clinical phenomena, amongst which are the perversions. If one introduces the perversions into the pregenital, you must bear in mind what they are when they are seen in a clearcut and delineated fashion.

Is the Balint notion of object relation applicable both in the phenomenology of the perversions, in which the pregenital phase is involved, and in the phenomenology of love?

Quite the opposite! There is not one form of the perverse phenomena whose very structure is not, in every moment of its being lived through, sustained by the intersubjective relation.

Let us leave to one side the voyeuristic and exhibitionistic relations – that's too easy to prove. Let us take as our example the sadistic relation, whether in an imaginary form or in a paradoxical clinical form.

One thing is certain – the sadistic relation can only be sustained in so far as

[8] English in the original.

the other is on the verge of still remaining a subject. If he is no longer anything more than reacting flesh, a kind of mollusc whose edges one titillates and which palpitates, the sadistic relation no longer exists. The sadistic subject will stop there, suddenly encountering a void, a gap, a hollow. The sadistic relation implies, in fact, that the partner's consent has been secured – his freedom, his confession, his humiliation. The proof of this is manifest in the forms which one may call benign. Is it not true that most sadistic manifestations, far from being taken to extremes, remain rather on the threshold of execution – playing the waiting-game, playing on the fear of the other, with pressure, with threat, keeping to the forms, more or less secret, of the participation of the partner.

You know the extent to which by far the largest part of our clinical experience of the perversions is restricted to the plane of an exclusively playful execution. We are not dealing here with subjects prey to a need. In the mirage of play, each identifies himself with the other. Intersubjectivity is the essential dimension.

I cannot refrain at this point from referring to the author who has described this play in the most magisterial manner – I am referring to Jean-Paul Sartre, and the phenomenology of the apprehension of others in the third part of *Being and Nothingness*. It is a work which one can demolish, from a philosophical point of view, can be made to crumple under the weight of numerous criticisms, but which surely, in this description, becomes, if only through its talent and its verve, something which is quite especially convincing.

The author's entire demonstration turns around the fundamental phenomenon which he calls the gaze. The human object is originally distinguished, *ab initio*, in the field of my experience, and cannot be assimilated to any other perceptible object, by virtue of being an object which is looking at me. Sartre makes, on this point, some very subtle distinctions. The gaze in question must on no account be confused with the fact, for example, of seeing his eyes. I can feel myself under the gaze of someone whose eyes I do not even see, not even discern. All that is necessary is for something to signify to me that there may be others there. This window, if it gets a bit dark, and if I have reasons for thinking that there is someone behind it, is straightaway a gaze. From the moment this gaze exists, I am already something other, in that I feel myself becoming an object for the gaze of others. But in this position, which is a reciprocal one, others also know that I am an object who knows himself to be seen.

The entire phenomenology of shame, of modesty, of prestige, of the specific fear engendered by the gaze, is quite admirably described there, and I recommend you to look it up in Sartre's book. It is essential reading for an analyst, above all given the pass that analysis has come to, forgetting intersubjectivity even in the perverse experience, where it is so firmly woven into a register in which you have to recognise the plane of the imaginary

We do indeed observe, in those phenomena which one calls perverted,

nuances which cannot possibly be confused with what I am teaching you to place as the axis of the symbolic relation, that is to say recognition. These forms are extremely ambiguous – it is not for nothing that I mentioned shame. Were we to analyse prestige in a more subtle manner, we would also come upon its derisory forms, upon for example the way it appears in children, for whom it is a form of excitation, etc.

A friend told me an anecdote about this joke[9] that precedes bull fights, in which, in Spain, boobies are obliged to take part. He described an extraordinarily beautiful scene of collective sadism. You'll see how far the ambiguity extends.

So, one of these semi-idiots is made to file past, dressed up in a most beautiful matador costume. He files past into the arena before the little animals who partake in these games. As you know, they are not entirely innocuous. And the crowd is shouting out – *But that one, there, isn't he beautiful!* The character in question, whose semi-idiocy is firmly in the tradition of the grand games of the court of old Spain, gets into a sort of panic and starts to feel incompetent. His comrades say to him – *Go on, you see, everybody wants you.* Everybody joins in the game. The man's panic increases. He baulks, wants to get out of it. He is pushed beyond the barriers, and, finally, the see-saw takes place. All of a sudden, he breaks away from the people pushing him, and, carried away by the crushing insistence of the crowd, he becomes transformed into a sort of comic hero. Caught up in the structure of the situation, he walks up to the beast, taking on all the characteristics of the sacrificial attitude, with this difference, that it does after all remain on the level of a farce. He is immediately flattened to the ground. And he is carted off.

This sensational scene appears to me to illustrate perfectly the ambiguous zone in which intersubjectivity is essential. You could say that the symbolic element – the pressure of the clamour – plays an essential role in it, but it is almost cancelled out because of the mass phenomenon character which it assumes on this occasion. The whole phenomenon is thus reduced to that level of intersubjectivity whose manifestations we connote, provisionally, as perverse.

One can go further. And Sartre does go much further, in giving a structuration to the phenomenology of the love relation which to me appears irrefutable. I cannot go over the whole of it for you, because I would be obliged to go through all the phases of the dialectic of the for-itself and the in-itself. You will have to take the trouble of turning to the book yourselves.

Very astutely, Sartre makes the remark that, in the experience of love, it is not an entirely free commitment which we require from the object by whom we desire to be loved. The initial pact, the *you are my wife* or *you are my husband* to

[9] English in the original.

which I often allude when I talk to you about the symbolic register, contains nothing, in its Corneille-like abstraction, to saturate our basic requirements. The nature of the desire is expressed in a sort of bodily agglutinating of freedom. We want to become for the other an object that has the same limiting value for him as does, in relation to his freedom, his own body. We not only want to become for the other that in which his freedom is alienated – without a shadow of a doubt, freedom has to enter into it, since commitment is an essential element of our requirement to be loved – but it must also be much more than a free commitment. We require that a freedom accept its own renunciation so as to be, from that moment on, limited to everything capricious, imperfect, in truth inferior, the paths along which it is swept by its captation by that object which we ourselves are.

In this way, to become, through our contingence, through our specific existence in its most carnal aspect, in its most limiting aspect for our own selves, for our own freedom, to become the limit to which the other consents, to become the form of abdication of the other's freedom, that is the requirement which phenomenologically locates love in its concrete form – genital love,[10] as our good friend Balint said just now. That is what sets it down in this intermediate, ambiguous zone, between the symbolic and the imaginary.

If love is entirely caught up and glued within this imaginary intersubjectivity, upon which I would like to focus your attention, it requires, in its completed form, participation in the register of the symbolic, the freedom-pact exchange, which is embodied in giving one's word [*parole donneé*]. There, a tiered zone is established in which you will be able to distinguish the planes of identification, as we put it in this so often imprecise language of ours, and a whole range of nuances, an entire fanning out of forms at play between the imaginary and the symbolic.

By the same token, you see that, contrary to Balint's perspective, and much more in conformity with our experience, we must start off with a radical intersubjectivity, with the subject's total acceptance by the other subject. It is by starting with the experience of the adult that we must grapple retrospectively, *nachträglich*, with the supposedly original experiences, in ranging the various degradations in tiers, without ever leaving the domain of intersubjectivity. In so far as we remain within the register of analysis, we will be obliged to admit an original intersubjectivity.

There is no transition possible between the two registers, between that of animal desire, in which the relation is object, and that of the recognition of desire. There has to be intersubjectivity at the beginning, since it is there at the end. And if analytic theory has qualified as polymorphously perverse this or that mode or symptom in the child's behaviour, it is in so far as perversion

[10] English in the original.

implies the dimension of imaginary intersubjectivity. Just now, I tried to get you to grasp it, in this double gaze whereby I see that the other sees me, and that any intervening third party sees me being seen. There is never a simple duplicity of terms. It is not only that I see the other. I see him seeing me, which implicates the third term, namely that he knows that I see him. The circle is closed. There are always three terms in the structure, even if these three terms are not explicitly present.

In adults, we are aware of the palpable richness of perversion. Perversion, in sum, is the privileged exploration of an existential possibility of human nature – its internal tearing apart, its gap, through which the supra-natural world of the symbolic was able to make its entry. But, if the child is a polymorphous pervert, does this mean that one has to project on to him the qualitative value of the perversion as it is experienced in the adult? In the child, are we obliged to search out an intersubjectivity of the same type as that which we see to be constitutive of perversion in the adult?

Well, no. What do the Balints base themselves on when they tell us about this primary love which takes no account of the other's selfishness?[11] On words like those of the child who, loving his mother the best, can say, quite coldly, to her – *When you are dead, Mummy, I'll have your hats.* Or – *When grandad dies*, etc. Words which elicit the adult's adulation of the child, because the latter then appears to be a scarcely conceivable divine being, whose feelings are quite beyond him. When one comes across phenomena as paradoxical as those, when one no longer understands and when one has to resolve the question of the transcendental, one thinks one is confronted either with a god or an animal. We take children far too much for gods to admit it, so we tell ourselves that we take them for animals. And that is what Balint does in thinking that the child does not recognise the other, except in relation to his own need. A complete error.

This simple example of *when you are dead* tells us where the basic intersubjectivity really shows itself in the child – it shows in the fact that he can make use of language.

Granoff was right to say the other day that Balint's work presages the role of what, following Freud, I have emphasised, in the first games of the child, which consists in evoking – I am not saying in calling – presence in absence, and in rejecting the object from presence. But Balint fails to recognise that this is a linguistic phenomenon. He only sees one thing, which is that the child does not take the object into account. Whereas what is important is that this little human being is able to make use of the symbolic function, thanks to which, as I have explained to you, it is possible for the elephants to make their entry here, however strait be the gate.

[11] English in the original.

To start with, intersubjectivity is given in the manipulation of the symbol, and this is the case right from the beginning. Everything begins with the possibility of naming, which is both destructive of the thing and allows the passage of the thing onto the symbolic plane, thanks to which the truly human register comes into its own. It is from that point on that, in a more and more complicated manner, the embodiment of the symbolic within imaginary experience takes place. The symbolic will shape all those inflections which, in the life of the adult, the imaginary commitment, the original captation, can take on.

In neglecting the intersubjective dimension, one slips into the register of that object relation from which there is no means of escape, and which leads us to theoretical no less than to technical blind alleys.

Have I wrapped things up enough this morning to be able to leave you at this point? That doesn't mean that there won't be a sequel.

For the child, to start with there is the symbolic and the real, contrary to what one might think. Everything which we see taking on consistency, becoming enriched and being diversified in the register of the imaginary begins with these two poles. If you think that the child is more a captive of the imaginary than of the rest, you are right in a certain sense. The imaginary is there. But it is completely inaccessible to us. It is only accessible to us when we start from its realisations in the adult.

The past history, the lived history, of the subject, which we try to get at in our practice, is not what the person you heard yesterday evening present to you as the snoozing, the fiddling about of the subject while in analysis. We can only get at it – and that is what we do, whether we know it or not – through the adult's childish language. I will prove it to you next time.

In magisterial fashion, Ferenczi saw the importance of this question – what is it in an analysis which makes the child within the adult participate? There is no doubt about the answer – whatever is verbalised in an irruptive fashion.

2 June 1954

XVIII

The symbolic order

PERVERSE DESIRE

MASTER AND SLAVE

NUMERICAL STRUCTURATION OF THE INTERSUBJECTIVE FIELD

THE HOLOPHRASE

SPEECH IN THE TRANSFERENCE

ANGELUS SILESIUS

Last time I left you on the dyadic relation in primary love. You were able to see that this leads Balint to end up conceptualising the analytic relation itself on this model – what he calls, quite rigorously, the two body psychology.[1] I think you have understood what blind alleys this leads one into, if one takes as a central idea the supposedly harmonious imaginary relation, which saturates natural desire.

I tried to show you this in the phenomenology of the perverse relation. I put the accent on sadism and scopophilia, leaving to one side the homosexual relation, which would require an infinitely more subtle study of imaginary intersubjectivity, of its uncertainty, of its unstable equilibrium, of its critical character. I thus centred the study of the imaginary intersubjective relation around the phenomenon, in the true sense, of the gaze.

The gaze is not located just at the level of the eyes. The eyes may very well not appear, they may be masked. The gaze is not necessarily the face of our fellow being, it could just as easily be the window behind which we assume he is lying in wait for us. It is an *x*, the object when faced with which the subject becomes object.

I gave you an introduction to the experience of sadism, which I took to be elective in revealing this dimension to you. I pointed out that, in the gaze of the being whom I torment, I have to sustain my desire with an act of defiance, a challenge[2] at every instant. If it does not rise above the situation, if it is not glorious, desire sinks into shame. This is equally true of the scopophilic relation. According to Jean-Paul Sartre's analysis, for anyone surprised in the middle of looking, the entire colour of the situation changes, in one swerving moment, and I become a pure thing, a maniac.

[1] English in the original. [2] English in the original.

1

What is perversion? It is not simply an aberration in relation to social criteria, an anomaly contrary to good morals, although this register is not absent, nor is it an atypicality according to natural criteria, namely that it more or less derogates from the reproductive finality of sexual union. It is something else in its very structure.

A certain number of perverse inclinations have not without reason been said to arise out of a desire which dare not speak its name. Perversion in fact is to be placed at the limit of the register of recognition, and that is what fixes it, stigmatises it as such. Structurally, perversion such as I have delineated it for you on the imaginary plane, can only be sustained with a precarious status which, at every moment is contested, from within, for the subject. It is always fragile, at the mercy of an inversion, a subversion, which makes one think of the change of sign which occurs in certain mathematical functions – at the point when one passes from one value of a variable to the value immediately following, the correlative changes from plus to minus infinity.

The fundamental uncertainty of the perverse relation, the fact that it can find no way of becoming grounded in any satisfying action, makes up one aspect of the drama of homosexuality. But it is also this structure which gives perversion its value.

Perversion is an experience which allows one to enter more deeply into what one can call, in the full sense, the human passion, to use the Spinozistic term, that is to say what there is in man which is open to this division from himself which structures the imaginary, namely, between O and O′, the specular relation. It becomes a profound experience, on account of the fact that within this gap of human desire, all manner of nuances are called forth, rising up in tiers from shame to prestige, from buffoonery to heroism, whereby human desire in its entirety is exposed, in the deepest sense of the term, to the desire of the other.

Remember the quite stupendous analysis of homosexuality which unfolds in Proust in the myth of Albertine. It hardly matters that this character is feminine – the structure of the relation is eminently homosexual. The requirement of this style of desire can only be satisfied in an inexhaustible captation of the desire of the other, pursued even in his dreams by the dreams of the subject, implying at each moment a complete abdication of the true desire of the other. An incessant see-saw of the lark-mirror which, at each moment, makes a complete turn on itself – the subject exhausts himself in pursuing the desire of the other, which he will never be able to grasp as his own desire, because his own desire is the desire of the other. It is himself whom he pursues. Therein lies the drama of this jealous passion, which is also a form of the imaginary intersubjective relation.

The intersubjective relation which subtends perverse desire is only sustained by the annihilation either of the desire of the other, or of the desire of the subject. It can only be grasped at the limit, in its inversions, whose meaning is made clear in a flash. This means – do think hard – that in the one as in the other, this relation dissolves the being of the subject. The other subject is reduced to being only the instrument of the first, who thus remains the only subject as such, but the latter is reduced to being only an idol offered to the desire of the other.

Perverse desire finds its support in the ideal of an inanimate object. But it cannot rest content with the realisation of this ideal. As soon as it realises it, at the very moment when it catches up with it, it loses its object. Its satiation is hence by its very structure condemned to be realised prior to the embrace through the extinction of desire or else the disappearance of the object.

I underline *disappearance*, because you find in analyses like this one the secret key to this *aphanisis* which Jones talked of when he tried to grasp, beyond the castration complex, what he touched on in the experience of certain infantile traumas. But here we are getting lost in a kind of mystery, because we do not rediscover the plane of the imaginary in it.

When all is said and done, an entire segment of the analytic experience is nothing other than – the exploration of blind alleys of imaginary experience, of their continuations, which are not innumerable, since they rest on the very structure of the body in so far as as such it defines a concrete topography. In the subject's history, or rather in his development, certain fertile, temporalised moments come to light, in which the different styles of frustration are revealed. These hollows, these cracks, these chasms that come to light in development are what define these fertile moments.

Something always goes limp when people talk to you about frustration. Owing to something like a naturalistic inclination of language, when the observer draws up the natural history of his fellow being, he omits to inform you that the subject *experiences* the frustration. Frustration is not a phenomenon that one can objectivate in the subject in the form of a deviation of the act which unites it to this object. It is not animal aversion. However premature it may be, the subject himself experiences the bad object as a frustration. And, by the same token, the frustration is experienced in the other.

Here we find a reciprocal relation of annihilation, a fatal relation structured by the following two abysses – either desire is extinguished, or the object disappears. That is why, at every turn, I take my bearings from the master-slave dialectic, and I re-explain it.

2

The master-slave relation is a limit-example, because, to be sure, the imaginary register in which it is deployed appears only at the limit of our experience. The

analytic experience is not a total one. It is defined on another plane than that of the imaginary – the symbolic plane.

Hegel gives an account of the interhuman bond. He has to account not only for society, but for history. He cannot neglect any of its aspects. Now, one of these essential aspects, which is neither collaboration between men, nor the pact, nor the bond of love, is struggle and labour. And he focusses on this aspect, in order to structure the fundamental relation within an original myth, on the plane which he himself defines as negative, as marked by negativity.

What differentiates human society from animal society – the term doesn't frighten me – is that the former cannot be grounded upon any objectifiable bond. The intersubjective dimension as such must come into it. The master-slave relation does not therefore involve the domestication of man by man. That cannot be enough. So, what grounds this relation? It is not that the one who declares himself vanquished pleas for mercy, it is rather that the master enters into this struggle for reasons of pure prestige, and has risked his life. This risk establishes his superiority, and it is in the name of that, not of his strength, that he is recognised as master by the slave.

This situation begins with an impasse, because his recognition by the slave is worth nothing to the master, since only a slave has recognised him, that is to say someone that he does not recognise as a man. The initial structure of this Hegelian dialectic seems thus to lead to a dead end. You can see therefore that it is not without its affinities with the impasse of the imaginary situation.

However, this situation does unfold further. Its point of departure, being imaginary, is hence mythical. But its extensions lead us on to the symbolic plane. You know the extensions – that is what makes us speak of the master and the slave. Indeed, beginning with the mythical situation, an action is undertaken, and establishes the relation between pleasure [*jouissance*] and labour. A law is imposed upon the slave, that he should satisfy the desire and the pleasure [*jouissance*] of the other. It is not sufficient for him to plea for mercy, he has to go to work. And when you go to work, there are rules, hours – we enter into the domain of the symbolic.

If you look at it closely, this domain of the symbolic does not have a simple relation of succession to the imaginary domain whose pivot is the fatal intersubjective relation. We do not pass from one to the other in one jump from the anterior to the posterior, once the pact and the symbol are established. In fact, the myth itself can only be conceived of as already bounded by the register of the symbolic, for the reason that I underlined just now – the situation cannot be grounded in goodness knows what biological panic at the approach of death. Death is never experienced as such, is it – it is never real. Man is only ever afraid of an imaginary fear. But that is not all. In the Hegelian myth, death is not even structured like a fear, it is structured like a risk, and, in a word, like a stake. From the beginning, between the master and the slave, there's a rule of the game.

I won't push this today. I am only saying it for those of you who are most open – the intersubjective relation, which unfolds in the imaginary, is at the same time, in so far as it structures a human action, implicitly implicated in a rule of the game.

Let us once again take up, under another aspect, the relation to the gaze.

We are at war. I am moving forward over a plain, and I assume myself to be under a gaze lying in wait for me. If I am assuming that, it is not so much that I am afraid of some sign of my enemy, some attack, because as soon as that happens the situation becomes more relaxed and I know who I am dealing with. What matters the most to me is knowing what the other imagines, what the other detects of these intentions of mine, I who am moving forward, because I must screen my movements from him. It is a matter of ruse.

The dialectic of the gaze is maintained on this plane. What counts is not that the other sees where I am, but that he sees where I am going, that is to say, quite precisely, that he sees where I am not. In every analysis of the intersubjective relation, what is essential is not what is there, what is seen. What structures it is what is not there.

The theory of games, as it is called, is a fundamental method for the study of this relation. Simply because it is a mathematical theory, we are already on the symbolic plane. However simply you define the field of an intersubjectivity, its analysis always requires a certain number of numerical givens, which, as such, are symbolic.

If you read the book of Sartre's I was referring to the other day, you will see that he allows something extremely disturbing to emerge. Having defined the intersubjective relation so clearly, he seems to imply that, if there is a plurality in this world of imaginary inter-relations, this plurality is not enumerable, in so far as each of the subjects is by definition the unique centre of reference. This holds if one remains on the phenomenological plane of the analysis of the in-itself and the for-itself. But its consequence is that Sartre does not perceive that the intersubjective field cannot but open on to a numerical structuration, on to the three, the four, which are our bench-marks in the analytic experience.

Primitive as it is, this symbolism brings us immediately on to the plane of language, in so far as, outside of that, there is no numeration conceivable.

Another small parenthesis. I was reading, not much longer than three days ago, an old book from the beginning of the century, *The History of the New World of America*. The topic was the origin of language, a problem which attracted the attention of quite a number of linguists, even provoking their consternation.

Every discussion of the origin of language is vitiated by an irremediable puerility, even with indisputable cretinism. On every occasion, someone tries to make language emerge out of some or other advance in thought. Quite

evidently, it is a circle. Thought, on this account, would pinpoint the detail in a situation, delimit the particularity, the combinatory element. It would by itself go beyond the stage of the detour, which is the mark of animal intelligence, to accede to that of the symbol. But how, if the symbol, which is the very structure of human thought, is not there in the first place?

To think is to substitute the word *elephant* for elephants, and a ring for the sun. You realise of course that there is an abyss between this thing which is phenomenologically the sun – the centre of which runs through the world of appearances, the unity of light – and a ring. And even if one spans it, what progress is there over animal intelligence? None. Because the sun in so far as it is designated by a ring is valueless. It only has a value in so far as this ring is placed in relation with other formalisations, which constitute with it this symbolic whole within which it has its place, at the centre of the world for example, or at the periphery, it doesn't matter which. The symbol only has value if it is organised in a world of symbols.

Those who speculate about the origin of language, and try to engineer the transitions between an appreciation of the whole situation and symbolic fragmentation have always been struck by what have been called holophrases. In the usages of certain peoples, and you won't need to go far to find common usages, there are phrases, expressions which cannot be broken down, and which have to be related to a situation taken in its entirety – these are holophrases. Here, it is thought, one has got hold of a juncture between the animal, who gets about without structuring situations, and man, who inhabits a symbolic world.

In the work I cited just now, I read that the Fijians, in certain specific situations, use the following phrase, which is not a phrase belonging to their language [*langage*] and cannot be reduced down to anything else – *Ma mi la pa ni pa ta pa*. The phonetisation is not indicated in the text, and I can only say it to you like that.

In what situation is the holophrase in question spoken? Entirely innocently, our ethnographer writes – *State of events of two persons looking at the other hoping that the other will offer to do something which both parties desire but are unwilling to do*.[3]

Here we find defined with an exemplary precision a state of inter-gaze where each expects the other to decide on something which has to be done by the two, which is between the two, but which neither of them wishes to enter into. And, by the same token, you see clearly that the holophrase is not an intermediary step between a primitive assumption of the situation as a whole, which would be the register of animal action, and symbolisation. It is not some vague sort of

[3] English in the original.

original gluing together of the situation into a verbal mode. On the contrary, what is involved is something in which what pertains to the register of the symbolic composition is defined at the limit, at the periphery.

I will leave you the task of bringing me some holophrases taken from our everyday usage. Listen carefully to the conversation of your contemporaries and you will see to what extent it is imbued with them. You will also see that every holophrase is connected with limit situations, in which the subject is suspended in a specular relation to the other.

3

This analysis had as its aim to get you to overturn that psychological perspective in which the intersubjective relation is reduced to an inter-objectal relation, grounded on a natural, complementary satisfaction. We have now got to Balint's article, 'On transference of emotions', whose title gives notice as to what I could call the delirious plane on which it unfolds – in the original, technical sense of the term delirious [*délirant*].

What is at issue is transference. The first paragraph invokes the two fundamental phenomena of analysis – resistance and transference. Resistance is defined, extremely well in fact, relating it to the phenomenon of language – everything which brakes, alters, slows up the blarney, or else completely interrupts it. You cannot go further than that. No conclusion is drawn from this, and we pass on to the phenomenon of transference.

How can an author as subtle as Balint, as refined, as delicate a practitioner, as admirable a writer, I would go so far as to say, undertake a study of some fifteen pages starting off with so psychological a definition of transference? It amounts to saying the following – what must come into it is something which exists inside the patient, so it is quite clearly something or other, feelings, emotions – the word *emotion* gives a better image. The problem is then to show how these emotions are embodied, projected, disciplined, symbolised. Now, the symbols of these supposed emotions evidently have no relation to them. So, he tells us about the national flag, the lion and the unicorn of Britain, the epaulets of officers, and everything else you fancy, about the two houses with their two roses of contrasting colours, judges who wear wigs.

I would be the last person to deny that one is capable of finding something to meditate upon in these examples skimmed from the surface of everyday British life. But, for Balint, it is a pretext for considering the symbol solely from the perspective of displacement. And with good reason – since he takes as the starting-point so-called emotion, a phenomenon of psychological surging forward, which would in this case be the real, the symbol in which it has to find its expression and come into being can only be displaced in relation to it.

There can be no doubt that the symbol has a role to play in every displacement. But the question is rather of knowing whether, as such, it is

defined within the vertical register, by virtue of being displacement. That is the wrong road. Balint's remarks contain nothing erroneous in themselves, it is simply that the path that has been taken cuts across the right one – instead of going in the forwards direction, it goes in the direction in which everything comes to a halt.

Balint then reminds us what a metaphor is – the face of a mountain, the foot of a table, etc. Are we finally going to investigate the nature of language? No. We are told that the mode of operation of the transference is the following – you are angry, so you give the table a punch. As if it was really the table I was punching! There's a fundamental error in this.

Nonetheless, this really is the issue – how does the aim of the act come to be displaced? How does the emotion come to be displaced in its object? The real structure and the symbolic structure enter into an ambiguous relation which is constructed in the vertical direction, each of these two universes corresponding to the other, but for the fact that since the notion of a universe is not to be found here, there is no way of introducing that of correspondence.

According to Balint, transference is transference of emotions. And what is emotion transferred on to? In all of his examples, on to an inanimate object – note in passing that this word, *inanimate*, has already made its appearance just now as the limit of the imaginary dialectical relation. This amuses Balint, this transference on to the inanimate – I am not asking you, he says, what the object makes of all this. To be sure, he adds, if one thinks that the transference is made on to a subject, one ends up with a complication you will never see the end of.

That's right! That really is what happens, and for some time now – there is no way of doing analysis. Such a song and dance is made out of the notion of counter-transference, so much swaggering, boasting, promising the earth – yet somehow or other something gets in the way, it is just that this means that in the end – you will never see the end of it. With a two body psychology,[4] we come upon the famous problem, which is unresolved in physics, of two bodies.

In fact, if you restrict yourselves to the level of two bodies, there is no satisfactory symbolisation available. So is it by taking this path, and by maintaining that the transference is essentially a phenomenon of displacement, that one grasps the nature of transference?

Balint then tells us a pretty story. A gentleman comes to see him. He is on the brink of analysis – we know this situation very well – and he can't decide. He has been to see several analysts, and in the end he came to see Balint. He tells him a long story, very rich, very complicated, with details about his feelings, and his sufferings. And it is at this point that our Balint – whose theoretical positions by the way I am in the process of slandering, and God knows I'm sorry to do it – shows himself to be the wonderful character he is.

Balint does not fall into the counter-transference – that is to say, in plain

[4] English in the original.

language, he is not an idiot – in the coded language we wallow in, we call the fact of hating someone ambivalence, and the fact of being an idiot counter-transference. Balint is not an idiot, he listens to this bloke, as a man who has already heard a great many things, a great many people, a man of experience. And he doesn't understand. That happens. There are stories like that, you don't understand them. When you don't understand a story, don't blame yourself immediately, say to yourself – the fact that I don't understand must mean something. Not only does Balint not understand, but he considers that he has the right not to understand. He says nothing to this bloke, and asks him to come back.

The bloke comes back. He carries on telling his story. And lays it on a bit thick. And Balint still doesn't understand. What the other tells him, are things which are as likely as anything else, the thing is that they just don't fit together. Experiences like that happen, they are clinical experiences to which you must always accord considerable weight, and sometimes they incline us towards the diagnosis of something organic. But that's not what this is about. So, Balint says to his client. *What's strange is that you are telling me lots of really interesting things, but I must confess that I can't make head or tail of your story.* Then the bloke brightens up, with a big smile on his face. *You're the first honest man I have met, because I've told all those things to some of your colleagues, who straightaway saw in them an intimation of an interesting, sophisticated structure. I told you all this as a test, to see if you were like all the others, a charlatan and a liar.*

You must have a sense of the gulf there is between Balint's two registers, when he expounds on the blackboard that it is the emotions of the English citizens which are displaced on to the British lion[5] and the two unicorns, and when he is on the job, talking intelligently about what he is trying out. One may say – *No doubt this bloke is within his rights, but isn't it rather uneconomic*[5]*? Isn't it rather a long detour?* Well, there, you start to go astray. Because the issue is not one of knowing whether it is economic or not. The bloke's way of going about things is nobly sustained, within his register, in so far as at the start of the analytic experience, one encounters the register of mendacious[6] speech.

The instauration of the lie in reality is brought about by speech. And it is precisely because it introduces what isn't, that it can also introduce what is. Before speech, nothing either is or isn't [*rien n'est, ni n'est pas*]. Everything is already there, no doubt, but it is only with speech that there are things which are – which are true or false, that is to say which are – and things which are not. Truth hollows out its way into the real thanks to the dimension of speech. There is neither true nor false prior to speech. Truth is introduced along with it, and so is the lie, and other registers as well. Before we go our various ways today, let us put them in a sort of triangle with three apexes. There, the lie. Here, the

[5] English in the original. [6] '*menteresse*' – an Old French form for 'lying'.

mistake – not error, to which I will come back. And then, what else? – ambiguity, to which, by its very nature, speech is doomed. Because, the very act of speech, which founds the dimension of truth, always remains, by this fact, behind, beyond. Speech is in its essence ambiguous.

Symmetrically, the hole, the gap of being as such is hollowed out in the real. The notion of being, as soon as we try to grasp it, proves itself to be as ungraspable as that of speech. Because being, the very verb itself, only exists in the register of speech. Speech introduces the hollow of being into the texture of the real, the one and the other holding on to and balancing each other, exactly correlative.

Let us move on to another example, which Balint offers us, no less significant than the first one. How can he integrate them into this register of displacement within which he expounded on the transference? That is another story.

This time we have a charming lady patient, who belongs to the type, well illustrated in some English films, who chatter,[7] *talk-talk-talk-talk-to-say-nothing*. That is how the sessions go by. She has already done long stretches of analysis with someone else before coming into the hands of Balint, who understands very clearly – and even the patient confesses to it – that when something is troubling her, she covers it over by saying anything.

Where is the decisive turning-point? One day, after a painful hour of chatter,[7] Balint ends up putting his finger on what it is she didn't want to say. She didn't want to say that she had received a letter of recommendation for a job from a doctor friend of hers, which said that she was a completely trustworthy[7] person. A pivotal moment, from then on she makes an about turn, and will be able to commit herself to the analysis. In fact Balint gets the patient to acknowledge that, right from the start, that was exactly what mattered to her – she must not be considered trustworthy, that is to say someone bound by her word. Because if her word binds her, she will have to get to work, like the slave just now, she will have to enter the world of labour, that is to say of the homogeneous adult relationship, of the symbol, of the law.

It's clear. From the beginning, she understood very well the difference between the way one treats the words of a child and the way one treats the words of an adult. So as not to be committed, located in the world of adults, where one is always more or less reduced to slavery, she chatters away so as to say nothing and fill the sessions with hot air.

We can stop for a moment, and ponder on the fact that the child also has speech. It is not empty. It is as full of meaning as the speech of the adult. It is so full of meaning that adults spend their time marvelling at it – *See how clever he is, the sweet little thing! Did you hear what he said the other day?* In fact, that's the whole point.

[7] English in the original.

Indeed, here we have, just as a moment ago, this element of idolification which comes into the imaginary relation. The wonderful speech of the child may perhaps be transcendental speech, the revelation of heaven, the oracle of the little god, but it is clear that it doesn't commit him to anything.

And we make strenuous efforts, when things aren't going well, to extract some words from him which will tie him down. Lord knows how the adult's dialectic skids! The point is to link the subject to his contradictions, to make him sign what he says, and to pledge his speech in a dialectic.

In the transference situation – it is not me who says this, but Balint, and he is right, though this is something completely different from a displacement – what is at issue is the value of speech, no longer this time in so far as it creates the fundamental ambiguity, but in so far as it is a function of the symbolic, of the pact which links the subjects together in one action. The human action *par excellence* is originally founded on the existence of the world of the symbol, namely on laws and contracts. And it is truly around this register that Balint, when he is working at the level of the concrete, in his capacity as analyst, makes the situation between him and the subject revolve.

From this day on, he can make remarks to her about all manner of things – for example the way she behaves in her various jobs, that is to say, as soon as she begins to be trusted by everyone, she makes sure that some trivial matter gets her the sack. Even the kind of jobs she finds is significant – she is on the telephone, she receives things or she sends [*envoie*] others off to do various things, in short she shunts things around so that she can feel herself outside the situation, and in the end, she always makes sure to get the sack [*renvoyer*].

So this is the plane on which the transference relation comes to be played out – it is played out around the symbolic relation, whether it be a question of its institution, of its extension, or of its maintenance. The transference includes incidents, projections of imaginary articulations, but it is to be located entirely within the symbolic relation. What does that imply?

Speech is not deployed on one plane alone. By definition, speech always has its ambiguous backdrops, which attain the moment of the ineffable, in which it can no longer be spoken, can no longer provide its own foundations as speech. But this beyond is not the one that psychology searches for in the subject, finding it in God knows what mimicry, cramps, agitations, and all the emotional correlates of speech. The so-called psychological beyond is in fact on the other side, it is a be-fore [*en-deça*]. The be-yond involved is to be found in the very dimension of speech.

By *being of the subject*, we do not mean its psychological properties, but what is hollowed out in the experience of speech, which constitutes the analytic situation.

This experience is constituted in analysis by extremely paradoxical rules, since what is involved is a dialogue, but a dialogue which is as much of a

monologue as possible. It unfolds according to a rule of the game, and entirely within the symbolic order. Do you follow? What I wanted to exemplify today is the symbolic register in analysis, in bringing out the contrast that exists between the concrete examples that Balint gives, and his theorisation.

What for him is brought out by these examples is the mainspring of the situation, that is, the use that each of these two people, the bloke and the lady, made of speech. Now, that is an illicit extrapolation. Speech in analysis is not at all the same as that speech, which is both triumphant and innocent, which the child can make use of before he enters into the world of work. To speak in analysis is not equivalent to sustaining on purpose an insignificant discourse in the world of work. It is only by analogy that one can link the two together. Their basis is entirely different.

The analytic situation is not just an ectopia of the infantile situation. It is obviously an atypical situation, and Balint tries to take account of this by seeing it as an attempt at maintaining the register of primary love.[8] That's true, from certain points of view, but not all. In limiting oneself to this point of view, one embarks upon interventions which will lead the subject astray.

The facts prove it. In saying to the lady patient that she was reproducing some situation or other from her childhood, the analyst who preceded Balint didn't succeed in turning the situation around. That only started to happen given the concrete fact that the lady had with her that morning a letter which allowed her to find a position. Without theorising it, without knowing it, Balint intervened there in the symbolic register, put into play by the assured guarantee, by the simple fact of answering for someone. And it was precisely because he was on this plane that he had an effect.

His theory is out of joint, and botched as well. And yet, when one reads his text, one finds, as you have just seen, gloriously enlightening examples. The excellent practitioner Balint cannot, despite his theory, fail to recognise the dimension within which he manoeuvres.

4

Amongst Balint's references, there is one I want to take up here. It is a couplet by someone that he calls one of our colleagues – and why not? – Johannes Scheffler.

Having, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, undertaken very advanced medical studies – that probably had more meaning at that time than in our day – the latter wrote some very striking couplets, under the name of Angelus Silesius. Mystical? That is not quite the right way to describe them. The question of the deity is to be found in them, and of his relations with creativity

[8] English in the original.

which in its essence depends on human speech, and which goes as far as speech, to the point, even, where it ends up falling silent. The rather unorthodox perspective which Angelus Silesius always maintained is, in fact, a puzzle for historians of religious thought.

That he finds a place in Balint's text is certainly not just a matter of chance. The two verses he quotes are very beautiful. Their subject is nothing less than being in so far as it is tied, in the realisation of the subject, to the contingent or the accidental, and for Balint this has resonances with how he conceives the final moment of analysis, namely this state of narcissistic eruption, which I have already talked about in one of our meetings.

This rings a bell for us as well. Except, I don't think of the analytic termination in this manner. Freud's formula – *Where id was, ego must be* – is usually understood in line with crass spatialisation, and the analytic reconquest of the id is in the end reduced to the action of a mirage. The *ego* sees itself in a self which is simply a final alienation of itself, just better finished than all those it has known up to then.

No, it is the act of speech which is constitutive. The progress of an analysis does not consist in the enlarging of the field of the *ego*, it is not the reconquest by the *ego* of its margin of the unknown, rather it is a genuine inversion, a displacement, like a minuet executed by the *ego* and the *id*.

It is time to give you the couplet of Angelus Silesius – the thirtieth from the second book of *The Cherubinic Wanderer*.

Zufall und Wesen
Mensch werde wesentlich: denn wann die Welt vergeht
So fällt der Zufall weg, das Wesen das besteht.

This couplet translates as follows –

Contingence and essence
Man, become essential: for when the world fails at last,
The contingent falls away, but Essence, that stands fast.[9]

That really is what is at issue, at the end of analysis, a twilight, an imaginary decline of the world, and even an experience at the limit of depersonalisation. *That is when the contingent falls away* – the accidental, the trauma, the hitches of history – *And it is being which then comes to be constituted.*

Clearly Angelus wrote this at the time when he was studying medicine. The end of his life was troubled by the dogmatic wars of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, with respect to which he took up an extremely impassioned position. But the books of the *Cherubinic Wanderer* strike a transparent, crystalline note. It is one of the most significant moments in human meditation on being, a moment richer in resonances for me than the

[9] Translation adapted from *Selections from The Cherubinic Wanderer*, translated with an introduction by J. E. C. Flitch, London, 1932, p. 166.

Dark Night of St John of the Cross, which everyone reads and no one understands.

I cannot recommend anyone who is in analysis too highly to go out and acquire the works of Angelus Silesius. They are not that long, and they are translated in French, published by Aubier. You will find in them lots of other things to meditate on, for example the pun on *Wort*, speech, and *Ort*, place, and aphorisms which are spot on concerning temporality. Perhaps I will have an occasion next time to touch on some of these admirable formulae, which are extremely closed and yet open up, and lend themselves to meditation.

9 June 1954

SPEECH IN THE TRANSFERENCE

XIX

The creative function of speech

EVERY SIGNIFICATION REFERS BACK TO ANOTHER SIGNIFICATION
THE COMPANIONS OF ODYSSEUS
TRANSFERENCE AND REALITY
THE CONCEPT IS THE TIME OF THE THING
HIEROGLYPHICS

Our friend Granoff has something to tell us, which seems to fit in with what I discussed last time. I am exceedingly happy when people take such initiatives, as they are completely in conformity with the spirit of dialogue which I desire in what is – let us not forget it – first and foremost a seminar. I do not know what he is going to tell us this morning.

Granoff's presentation concerned two articles from the April 1954 number of the Psycho-analytic Review: *'Emotion, instinct and pain-pleasure', by A. Chapman Isham, and 'A study of the dream in depth, its corollary and consequences' by C. Bennitt.*

1

These two extensive articles, pitched at a high theoretical level, converge with what I am doing here. But each of them draws attention to different points.

The first puts the emphasis on the information of emotion, which is said to be the ultimate reality with which we have to deal, and, strictly speaking, is the object of our experience. This conception answers to the desire to find an object somewhere which is similar, in so far as it is possible, to objects belonging to other registers.

Alexander wrote an important article, which we may perhaps discuss some day, called 'Logic of emotions', which no doubt places him at the heart of analytic theory.

Just as in this recent article of Chapman Isham, the question is how to introduce a dialectic into what we usually consider to be the affective register. Alexander starts with the well known logico-symbolic schema in which Freud deduces the various forms of delusion in accordance with the various ways of denying *I love him – It is not me who loves him – It is not him that I love – I do not love him – He hates me – It is him who loves me* – which accounts for the genesis of

various delusions – the jealous, the impassioned, the persecutive, the erotomaniacal, etc. Hence we grasp the transformations, the very metabolism, which occur in the preconscious order, in a symbolic structuration, at a high level, since it includes very elaborate grammatical variations.

The first article that Granoff commented upon is thus interesting on account of its being at odds with the theoretical current dominant in analysis today. The second seems even more interesting to me, in so far as it seeks the beyond, the reality, the *fact*, as the article puts it, to which signification refers. It is a crucial problem.

So, you will get caught up in paths which are always dead ends, as is clearly seen in view of the impasses in which analytic theory finds itself today, if you fail to take account of the fact that signification only ever refers back to itself, that is to say to another signification.

Each time that we are obliged, in the analysis of language, to look for the signification of a word, the only correct method is to enumerate all of its usages. If you want to know the signification of the word *main* in the French language, you must draw up the catalogue of its usages, and not only when it represents the organ of the hand, but also when it figures in *main d'oeuvre* [manpower], *mainmise* [manumission], *mainmorte* [mortmain], etc. The signification is given by the sum of these usages.

This is what we are concerned with in analysis. We don't have to try very hard to find additional references. What need is there to talk of a reality which would sustain the so-called metaphorical usages? Every kind of usage, in a certain sense, is always metaphorical. Metaphor is not to be distinguished, as Jones thought, at the beginning of his article on 'The theory of symbolism', from the symbol itself and from its usage. Were I to address another being, whether created or not, in calling him *sun of my heart*, it would be an error to believe, as Jones does, that it is a question of a comparison, between what you are in my heart and what the sun is, etc. Comparison is only a secondary development of the original emergence of the metaphorical relation to being, one that is infinitely richer than anything I could now illuminate.

This emergence implies everything which will come to be linked with it in the future, and which I do not believe to have said. Simply from my having formulated this relation, it is me, my being, my avowal, my invocation, which enters into the domain of the symbol. Implied in this formula is the fact that the sun heats me up, the fact that it allows me to live, and also that it is the centre of my gravitation, and for that matter that it gives rise to Valéry's *morne moitié d'ombre*,[1] that it also blinds, lending false clarity and a deceptive glitter to everything. Because, the greatest light is also, is it not, the source of all obscurity. All that is already implied in the symbolic invocation. The

[1] Paul Valéry, '*Le cimitière marin*: '. . . *rendre la lumière/Suppose d'ombre une morne moitié.*'

emergence of the symbol *creates*, literally, a new order of being in the relations between men.

But you'll say, there are, all the same, irreducible expressions. And you will object, furthermore, that we can always reduce the creative utterance of this symbolic call down to the level of fact, and that one could find simpler, more organic, more animal formulae for the metaphor that I gave you as an example. Try it out for yourselves – you will see that you will never leave the world of the symbol behind.

Let us suppose that you have recourse to the organic index, to the *Mets ta main sur mon coeur*,[2] said to Léonor by the infanta at the beginning of *Le Cid*, to express her feelings of love for the young knight. Well, if the organic index is invoked, it is still there at the centre of the confession, like a testimony, a testimony which only gains its edge in so far as – *Je m'en souviens si bien que j'épandrais mon sang Avant que je m'abbaisse à démentir mon rang.*[3] It is, in fact, only in as much as she forbids herself this feeling that she invokes a factual element. The fact of her heart beating only acquires its meaning within the symbolic world traced out in the dialectic of the feeling which is refused, or which is implicitly refused recognition by the person who experiences it.

We have, as you can see, come back to the point our discourse had reached last time.

2

Each time that we find ourselves within the order of speech, everything which founds another reality in reality, at the limit, only acquires its meaning and its edge in relation to this same order. If the emotion can be displaced, inverted, inhibited, if it is engaged in a dialectic, it is due to its being taken up into the symbolic order, in accordance with which the other orders, the imaginary and the real, find their place and their disposition.

Once more, I will try to make you see it. Here is a little fable.

One day, Odysseus's companions – as you know, a thousand misadventures befell them, and I think almost none completed the excursion – were turned, because of their unfortunate tendencies, into swine. The theme of the metamorphosis is well calculated to interest us, since it raises the question of the limit between the human and the animal.

So, they are turned into swine, and the story goes on.

One is still obliged to think they nonetheless retain some links with the human world, since in the middle of the pigsty – but the pigsty is a society – they

[2] Pierre Corneille, *Le Cid*, Act I, Scene 2: 'Put your hand on my heart.'

[3] *Ibid.* 'I remember it so well that I would spill my own blood/Before I would abase myself in denying my rank.'

communicate, through their grunts, their different needs, hunger, thirst, their sensuality, indeed their group feeling. But that is not all.

What can one say about these grunts? Aren't they also messages addressed to the other world? Well, here, at any rate, is what I hear. Odysseus's companions grunt the following – *We miss Odysseus, we miss his being with us, we miss his teaching, what he was for us in life.*

How do we recognise that a grunt which comes to us out of this silky mass filling the enclosed space of the pigsty is speech? Is it because some ambivalent feeling is expressed in it?

On this occasion there really does exist what we call, in the order of emotions and feelings, ambivalence. Because, for his companions, Odysseus is somewhat of a liability as a guide. However, once changed into swine, they no doubt have grounds for missing his presence. From whence the doubt about what they are communicating.

This dimension is not to be overlooked. But is it enough to turn a grunt into speech? No, because the emotional ambivalence of the grunt is a reality, in its essence unconstituted.

The pig's grunt only becomes speech when someone raises the question as to what it is that they want to make you believe. Speech is precisely only speech in as much as someone believes in it.

And what, through grunting, do these companions of Odysseus turned into swine want to have us believe? – that they are still somewhat human. To give expression to their nostalgia for Odysseus is, on this occasion, to lay claim to recognition for themselves, the swine, as being the companions of Odysseus.

It is within this dimension that speech is to be located, before all else. Speech is essentially the means of gaining recognition. It is there before anything lying behind. And, on account of that, it is ambivalent, and absolutely unfathomable. What it says – is it true? Is it not true? It is a mirage. It is this initial mirage which guarantees that you are in the domain of speech.

Without this dimension, a communication is just something which transmits, roughly of the same order as a mechanical movement. A moment ago I alluded to the silky rustling, the rustling communication within the pigsty. That is it – the grunt is entirely analysable in terms of mechanics. But, as soon as it wants to have something believed and demands recognition, speech exists. That is why, in a sense, one can speak of the language of animals. Animals have a language [*langage*] to the degree that there is someone there to understand it.

3

Let us take another example which I will borrow from Nunberg's article, 'Transference and reality', from 1951, which raises the question as to what the transference is. It is the same problem.

It is extremely gratifying to see both how far the author goes and the extent to which he is nonplussed. According to him, everything happens at the level of the imaginary. The foundation of the transference is, he thinks, the projection into reality of something which is not there. The subject requires that his partner be a form, a model, of his father for example.

To start with, he refers to the case of a patient who spent her time vehemently scolding the analyst, bawling him out even, reproaching him for never being good enough, for never making the correct interventions, for making mistakes, for being in bad taste. Is this an instance of transference, Nunberg asks himself?

Interestingly enough, but not without some justification, he replies – no, here it is rather more like an aptitude – readiness[4] – for transference. For the moment, in her recriminations, the subject makes her requirement heard, her primitive requirement for a real person, and what motivates her dissatisfaction is the discordance which the real world manifests in comparison with this prerequisite. That is not the transference, but its condition.

When does transference really start? When the image which the subject requires becomes confused for the subject with the reality in which he is placed. The whole progress of the analysis is to show him the distinction between these two planes, to unstick the imaginary and the real. Classical theory – the subject displays so-called delusive behaviour, which one brings him to see is rather ill adapted to the actual situation.

Except, we spend our time realising that the transference is in no way a delusive phenomenon. You are not analysing the subject if you say to him – *But my dear chap, the feeling you have for me is only transference*. That has never settled anything. Luckily, when the authors are clear-headed in their practice, they give examples which give the lie to their theory and which prove that they have some feeling for the truth. That is true of Nunberg. The example that he gives as being typical of the experience of transference is particularly instructive.

He had a patient who brought him masses of material, and expressed himself with an authenticity, a care for detail, a regard for being complete, with a surrender . . . And yet nothing budged. Nothing budged until Nunberg realised that the analytic situation happened to reproduce, for the patient, a situation from his childhood, in which he indulged in making as complete confessions as possible, based upon the total confidence that he had in his interlocutor, who was none other than his mother, who came every evening to sit at the foot of his bed. The patient, like Scheherezade, took pleasure in giving her an exhaustive account not only of day-to-day events, but also of his acts, of his desires, of his inclinations, of his scruples, of his self-reproaches, never hiding anything. The warm presence of his mother, clad in her night-gown, was for him the source of a continuous pleasure in and of itself, consisting in making out the outline of her breasts and body under her gown. So he conducted his first sexual investigations on his beloved partner.

[4] English in the original.

How do you analyse this? Let us try to be a little bit coherent. What does this mean?

Two very different situations are evoked here – the patient with his mother, the patient with the analyst.

In the first situation, the subject experiences a satisfaction by means of this spoken exchange. We have no difficulty in distinguishing two planes there, the plane of the symbolic relations, which here are quite indubitably subordinated to, subverted by the imaginary relationship. On the other hand, in analysis, the subject gives himself over to complete surrender, and submits with total good will to the rule. Are we forced to conclude from that that he experiences a satisfaction similar to the primary satisfaction? For many, this step is easily taken – *but of course, that's it*, the subject is seeking out a similar satisfaction. With no hesitation there'll be talk of the compulsion to repeat. And everything else you may want to add. The analyst will pride himself on having detected behind this speech goodness knows what feeling or emotion, which would reveal the presence of a psychological beyond constituted past speech.

But wait a moment, let's think about this! To start off with, the analyst's position is exactly the inverse of the mother's position, he is not at the foot of the bed, but behind, and he is a long way from offering, at least in most instances, the charms of the primary object, and a long way from being party to the same concupiscences. In any case, that is not the way you will be able to draw the analogy.

What I'm saying is downright simple-minded. But it is only by making the structure a bit more explicit, and in saying simple things, that we will be able to learn how to spell out in words of one syllable the elements of the situation in which we act.

What has to be understood is the following – why does a complete transformation of the analytic situation ensue as soon as the relation between the situations has been revealed to the subject? Why do the same words then become effective, and constitute genuine development in the subject's existence? Let us think this over a bit.

Speech as such is instituted within the structure of the semantic world which is that of language. Speech never has one single meaning, nor the word one single use. All speech always possesses a beyond, sustains various functions, encompasses several meanings. Behind what a discourse says, there is what it means [*veut dire*], and behind what it means, there is again another intended meaning [*vouloir-dire*], and nothing will ever be exhausted by that – except that it comes down to this, that speech has a creative function, and that it brings into being the very thing, which is none other than the concept.

Remember what Hegel says about the concept – *The concept is the time of the thing*. To be sure, the concept is not the thing as it is, for the simple reason that the concept is always where the thing isn't, it is there so as to replace the

thing, like the elephant that I brought into the room the other day by means of the word *elephant*. If that was so striking for some of you, it was because it was clear that the elephant was really there as soon as we named it. Of the thing, what is it that can be there? Neither its form, nor its reality, since, in the actual state of affairs, all the seats are taken. Hegel puts it with extreme rigour – the concept is what makes the thing be there, while, all the while, it isn't.

This identity in difference, which characterises the relation of the concept to the thing, that is what also makes the thing a thing and the fact[5] symbolised, as we were told just now. We are talking about things, and not about some eternally unidentifiable I know not what.

Heraclitus tells us – if we introduce absolute mobility in the existence of things such that the flow of the world never comes to pass twice by the same situation, it is precisely because identity in difference is already saturated in the thing. It is from this that Hegel deduces that *the concept is the time of the thing.*

At this point we find ourselves at the heart of the problem that Freud sets up when he says that the unconscious is located outside time. It is true, and it isn't. It is located outside time exactly like the concept, because it is in itself time, the pure time of the thing, and as such it can reproduce the thing within a certain modulation, whose material support can be anything. The compulsion to repeat involves nothing but this. This remark will take us a very long way, indeed well into those problems of time which analytic practice generates.

So let us go back to our example – why does the analysis become transformed the moment the transferential situation is analysed through evoking the old situation, when the subject found himself with an entirely different object, one that cannot be assimilated to the present object? Because present speech, like the old speech, is placed within a parenthesis of time, within a form of time, if I can put it that way. The modulation of time being identical, the speech of the analyst happens to have the same value as the old speech.

This value is the value of speech. There is no feeling, no imaginary projection in it, and Nunberg, who goes out of his way to construct one, thus finds himself in a situation from which he cannot extricate himself.

For Loewenstein, there is no projection, but rather displacement. That is a mythology which has all the hallmarks of a labyrinth. You will only escape from it by recognising that the time-element is a dimension constitutive of the order of speech.

If in actual fact the concept is time, we must analyse speech in stages, to seek in it the multiple meanings between the lines. Is there no end to it? No, it is not without end. Except, what is revealed at the end, the last word, the last meaning, is this temporal form which I am telling you about, and which all by

[5] English in the original.

itself is speech. The final meaning of the speech of the subject before the analyst is his existential relation before the object of his desire.

On this occasion this narcissistic mirage does not take on any particular form, it is nothing other than whatever supports the relation of man to the object of his desire, and always leaves him isolated in what we call fore-pleasure. This relation is a specular one, and here it places speech in a kind of suspension in relation to what indeed amounts to a purely imaginary situation.

There is nothing present, nothing emotional, nothing real in this situation. But, once it has been reached, it changes the meaning of speech, it reveals to the subject that his speech is only what I called in my Rome report *empty speech*, and that it is as such that it is lacking in any effect.

None of this is easy. Are you with me? You must understand that the beyond to which we are referred is always another speech, one that is deeper. As to the ineffable limit of speech, it stems from the fact that speech creates the resonance of all these meanings. In the end, we are referred back to the very act of speech as such. It is the value of this act, here and now, which makes this speech empty or full. What is involved in the analysis of transference is knowing at which point in its presence speech is full.

4

If you find this interpretation a trifle speculative, I am now going to give you a reference, since I am here to comment on Freud's texts, and it isn't an inopportune moment for saying that what I am explaining to you is strictly orthodox.

At what point in Freud's work does the word *Übertragung*, transference, appear? It is not in the Papers on Technique, nor in connection with real, or indeed imaginary, or even symbolic, relations, it doesn't matter which, with the subject. It is not apropos of Dora nor of all the miserable things she did to him, since, supposedly, he did not know how to tell her in good time that she was beginning to feel tenderly towards him. It is in the seventh section, 'The psychology of the dream-processes', of the *Traumdeutung*.

That is a book which I will perhaps give you a commentary on someday soon, one whose sole aim is the demonstration, in the function of the dream, of the superposed significations of a material signifier. Freud shows us how speech, that is the transmission of desire, can get itself recognised through anything, provided that this anything be organised in a symbolic system. There we have the source of what was for so long the indecipherable character of the dream. And it is for the same reason that for a long time no one knew how to understand hieroglyphics – they were not set up in their own symbolic system, all anyone could see was a little human silhouette, which might mean *a man*,

but might also represent the sound *man*, and, as such, might be a part of a word by virtue of its being a syllable. The dream is constructed like hieroglyphics. Freud refers, as you know, to the Rosetta Stone.

What does Freud call *Übertragung*? It is, he says, the phenomenon constituted by the fact that it is not possible to give a direct translation, for a given desire repressed by the subject. This desire of the subject is forbidden to his mode of discourse, and cannot get itself recognised. Why? Because amongst the elements of the repression there is something which partakes of the ineffable. There are essential relations which no discourse can express adequately, except in what I called just now the interlineation.

Next time I will tell you about *The Guide of the Perplexed* by Maimonides, which is an esoteric work. You'll see the extent to which he deliberately organises his discourse in such a way that what he wants to say, which is not sayable – it is him who says this – can nonetheless be revealed. He says what cannot or must not be said by means of a certain disorder, certain ruptures, certain intentional discordances. Well, the slips, the holes, the disputes, the repetitions of the subject also express, but here spontaneously, innocently, the manner in which his discourse is organised. And that is what we have to read. We will come back to this, because the texts are worth the trouble of being brought together.

What does Freud say in his initial definition of *Übertragung*? He tells us about the *Tagesreste*, the day-residues, which are, he says, disinvested from the point of view of desire. These are, within the dream, the stray forms which have become, for the subject, of minimal importance – and are emptied of their meaning. So this is a piece of signifying material. The signifying material, be it phonematic, hieroglyphic, etc., is constituted out of forms which have forfeited their own meaning and are taken up again within a new organisation, thanks to which another meaning finds a means of gaining expression. What Freud calls *Übertragung* is exactly that.

The desire which is unconscious, that is to say impossible to express, nonetheless finds a means of expression through the alphabet, the phonematics of day-residues, themselves disinvested of desire. So it is a phenomenon of language as such. That is what Freud calls *Übertragung*, the first time he uses the word.

To be sure, in analysis, in comparison with what happens in dreams, there is this essential supplementary dimension, namely that the other is there. But note also that dreams become more clear, more analysable, as the analysis makes progress. That's because the dream addresses the analyst more and more. The best dreams that Freud puts before us, the richest, the most beautiful, the most complicated are the ones which take place in the course of an analysis, and which tend to address the analyst.

This should in addition clear up for you the true signification of the term acting-out.[6] If, just now, I mentioned the compulsion to repeat, if I mentioned it primarily in relation to language, it is really because every action in the session, acting-out[6] or acting-in,[6] is included in a context of speech. One qualifies as acting-out[6] whatever takes place in the treatment. And not without reason. If so many subjects rush headlong while in analysis into engaging in a host of erotic activities, like getting married for example, it is clearly acting-out.[6] If they act, it is with their analyst in mind.

That is really why one must analyse the acting-out[6] and analyse the transference, that is to say find the meaning of speech in an act. In so far as the point for the subject is to gain recognition, an act is speech.

On this note I will leave you today.

16 June 1954

[6] English in the original.

XX

De locutionis significatione

Following the very interesting contribution our good friend Granoff made, which fitted the shape the previous seminar had taken on like a glove, it was very easy for me to continue with what I was saying, and I was thus led into clarifying something which, up to that point, had been left hanging within the series of questions I raise with you.

This clarification is the following – the function of the transference can only be understood on the symbolic plane. It is around this central point that all the forms in which it becomes apparent to us are organised, and this is true even for the domain of the imaginary.

I couldn't think of a better way to get you to grasp this than to focus on the first definition Freud gave of the transference.

What is fundamentally at issue in transference, is how a discourse that is masked, the discourse of the unconscious, takes a hold of a discourse that is apparent. This discourse takes possession of these emptied-out, available elements, the *Tagesreste*, and of everything else in the preconscious order, which is made available by the smallest investment of this, the subject's fundamental need, which is to gain recognition. It is within this vacuum, within this hollow, with what thus becomes working materials, that the deep, secret discourse gains expression. We see it in the dream, but we also rediscover it in the slip of the tongue and throughout the psychopathology of everyday life.

That is our starting-point for listening to the person who speaks to us. And we only have to refer back to our definition of the discourse of the unconscious, which is that it is the discourse of the other, to understand how it authentically links up again with intersubjectivity in the dialogue, that full realisation of speech.

The fundamental phenomenon revealed by analysis is this relation of one discourse to another, using it as a support. What we discover manifested in it is this fundamental principle of semantics, that every semanteme refers to the whole of the semantic system, to the polyvalence of its usages. Moreover, for

everything which properly speaking pertains to language, in as much as it is human, that is to say utilisable in speech, the symbol is never univocal. Every semanteme always has several meanings.

From whence we come upon that truth, which is so absolutely obvious in our experience, and which linguists are well aware of, that every signification only ever refers back [*renvoyer*] to another signification. So linguists have resigned themselves to this, and it is from within this field that from now on they are developing their science.

One should not believe that this is taking place with no ambiguity, and that, for a Ferdinand de Saussure who saw it clearly, perfectly satisfactory definitions had always been available.

The signifier is the audible matter, which, however, does not mean the sound. Not everything belonging to the order of phonetics is on that account included in linguistics as such. It is the phoneme that is the important element, that is to say one sound as opposed to another sound, within a set of oppositions.

When one talks about the signified, one thinks of the thing, whereas in fact signification is what is involved. Nonetheless, each time we talk, we say the thing, the signifiable, by means of the signified. There is a lure here, because it is quite clear that language is not made to designate things. But this lure is structural to human language and, in a sense, the verification of every truth is founded on it.

During a discussion I recently had with the most eminent person in the field in France, someone who can legitimately be qualified as a linguist, M. Benveniste, it was pointed out to me that one thing has never been made clear. It may surprise you, since you are not linguists.

Let us begin with the notion that the signification of a term must be defined by the totality of its possible usages. This can also be extended to groups of terms, and in truth one can't have a theory of language [*langue*] if one doesn't take the usages of groups into account, that is to say, expressions, and syntactical forms as well. But there is a limit, which is – that the sentence, for its part, does not have a usage. So there are two zones of signification.

This remark is of the greatest importance, because these two zones of signification are perhaps something to which we are referring, since it is a way of defining the difference between speech and language.

This discovery was made recently, by a man as eminent as M. Benveniste. It is unpublished, and he imparted it to me as something he is working on at the moment. It is clearly cut out to give us much food for thought.

In fact, Father Beirnaert thought of telling me – *Wouldn't everything that you have been saying on the subject of signification be illustrated in the* Disputatio de locutionis significatione, *which constitutes the first part of the* De magistro? I replied – *That is a splendid idea, what you have just said.* Even what I taught you last time bore traces of what I remember of this text. One must not overlook the

fact that the words I despatch to you elicit such responses, indeed such commemorations, as Saint Augustine expresses himself, which, in Latin, is the exact equivalent of recollection [*remémoration*].

Father Beirnaert's recollection is just as much to the point as the articles Granoff introduced. And it is quite telling that the linguists, in as much as we are entitled to make up one large family through the ages bearing this name, *linguists*, have taken fifteen centuries to rediscover, like a sun which has risen anew, like a dawn that is breaking, ideas which are already set out in Saint Augustine's text, which is one of the most glorious one could read. And I treated myself to reading it again for this occasion.

Everything I have been telling you about the signifier and the signified is there, expounded with a sensational lucidity, so sensational that I am afraid that the spiritual commentators who have given themselves over to its exegesis have not always perceived all of its subtlety. They think that the profound Doctor of the Church has strayed off his path into rather futile things. These futile things are nothing other than the latest developments in modern thought on language.

1

FATHER BEIRNAERT: *I only had six or seven hours to venture into this text a little, and I can only give you a short introduction.*[1]

How do you translate *De locutionis significatione*?

BEIRNAERT: *On the signification of speech.*

Undeniably. *Locutio* is speech.

BEIRNAERT: Oratio *is discourse.*

We could say – *On the signifying function of speech*, since a bit further on we come upon a text in which *significatio* itself has exactly this sense. Here *speech* is used in the broad sense, it is language [*langage*] at work in elocution, even eloquence. It is neither full nor empty speech, it is speech in its entirety. Full speech, how would you translate that into Latin?

BEIRNAERT: *There is an expression* – sententia plena. *A full statement is one in which there is not only a verb, but also a subject, a noun.*

[1] St Augustine, *De Magistro*, translated as *The Teacher*, in *The Fathers of the Church Vol. 59. Saint Augustine. The Teacher. The Free Choice of the Will. Grace and Free Will*, translated by Robert P. Russell, Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1968, pp. 7–61, from which the passages quoted are taken, with certain modifications to accord English and French versions with the Latin text, to be found in: *Corpus Christianorum XXIX Aurelii Augustini Opera*, Pars II, 2, Turnholti, Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1970, pp. 155–203.

That simply means the complete sentence, that is not speech. There Saint Augustine is trying to prove that all words are nouns. He uses several arguments. He explains that every word in a sentence can be employed as a noun. *If* is a subordinating conjunction. But in the sentence 'I don't like the *if*', the word is used as a noun. Saint Augustine proceeds in as rigorous and analytical a spirit as any modern linguist, and he shows that it is its usage in the sentence which defines what part of speech a word is. Well. Have you thought how to translate full speech into Latin?

BEIRNAERT: *No. Perhaps we will come across it in going over the text. If you will allow me, I am going to supply the context for the dialogue* De Magistro. *It was written by Augustine in 389, some years after his return to Africa. Its title is* On the master, *and it uses two interlocutors – Augustine and his son Adeodatus, who was then sixteen years old. This Adeodatus was very intelligent, so Saint Augustine says, and he assures us that Adeodatus's words were actually spoken by this boy of sixteen, who thus proves himself to be a disputant of the first rank.*

The child of sin.

BEIRNAERT: – *The thematic axis, which determines the direction the entire dialogue takes, is that language transmits the truth from without through words which sound without, but the disciple always sees the truth within.*

Before coming to this conclusion, towards which the discussion is rushing headlong, the dialogue snakes for a long time and proposes a doctrine of language and of speech from which we have much to learn.

There are two large parts – the first is the Disputatio de locutionis significatione, *the discussion of the signification of speech, the second part is entitled* Veritatis magister solus est Christus, *Christ is the sole master of truth.*

The first part is itself divided into two sections. The first is synthetically entitled De signis. *It is poorly translated as* – Of the value of words. *It is really about something quite different, since one cannot identify* signum *and* verbum. *The second section has as its title* Signa ad discendum nihil valent, *signs are of no use in learning. Let us start off with* Of signs.

Augustine asks his son – What do we want to do, when we speak? Reply – We want to teach or learn, in accordance with the position of master or disciple. Saint Augustine is going to try to show that, even when one wants to learn and when one asks questions so as to learn, one is still teaching. Why? Because one teaches the person one addresses what it is one wants to know. Hence, the general definition – So you see, that through language we do nothing other than teach.

Will you allow me to make a remark? You do realise, don't you, the extent to which we are, right from the start, at the heart of what I have been trying to explain to you here. The question is – what is the difference between communication by signals and the exchange of interhuman speech?

Straightaway Augustine makes for the element of intersubjectivity, since he highlights *docere* and *discere*, which are impossible to distinguish. The entire interrogation is essentially an attempt to make the two speeches agree, which implies that from the first there was agreement between languages [*langages*]. No exchange is possible, except by way of the reciprocal identification of two complete universes of language [*langage*]. That is why speech is already, as such, a teaching. It is not a play of signs, it is to be located, not on the level of information, but on that of truth.

BEIRNAERT: *Adeodatus – I do not think that we wish to teach anything when no one is there to learn.*

Each of these replies is worthy of special attention.

BEIRNAERT: *Having emphasised teaching, he goes on to an excellent method of teaching,* per commemoration, *that is to say, through recalling* [ressouvenir]. *So there are two reasons for speaking. We speak either in order to teach, or in order to induce recollection, either in other people, or in ourselves. Following what is the beginning to the dialogue, Augustine raises the question whether speech exists solely in order to teach or to recall. Here, let us not forget the religious atmosphere which informs the dialogue. The interlocutor replies that there is prayer, after all, in which one enters into a dialogue with God. Can we believe that God is taught or reminded of something by us? Our prayer does not require words, Augustine very precisely states, except when others should know that we are praying. When it comes to God, one does not try to remember or to teach the subject with whom one is in dialogue, but rather alert others to the fact that one is praying. Hence, one only expresses oneself in relation to those people who can see us engaged in this dialogue.*

Prayer here touches on the ineffable. It does not belong in the field of speech.

BEIRNAERT: *That said, teaching is accomplished by means of words. Words are signs. At this point we find a considerable discussion on* verbum *and* signum. *To develop his thought, and render explicit the manner in which he conceives of the relation of the sign to the signifiable, Augustine proposes a verse from the Aeneid to his interlocutor.*

He hasn't defined signifiable yet.

BEIRNAERT: *No, not yet – the point is to signify, but what? We don't know as yet. So he takes a verse from the Aeneid – Book II, line 659 –* Si nihil ex tanta superis placet urbe relinqui. If it pleases the gods that nothing remain of so great a city. *And, through an entire maieutic, he will try to discover this* aliquid *which is signified. He starts by asking his interlocutor.*

Aug. – How many words are there in this verse?

Ad. – Eight.

Aug. – So there are eight signs?

Ad. – That is indeed the case.

Aug. – Do you think you understand this verse?

Ad. – I understand it well enough.

Aug. – Tell me now what each word signifies.

Adeodatus is a bit put out by the si. *He has to find an equivalent for it. He doesn't find one.*

Aug. – Whatever is signified by this word, do you know at least where it occurs?

Ad. – It seems to me that si *signifies doubt. Now, where is doubt to be found, if not in the soul?*[2]

It is interesting, because we immediately see that the word refers to something of a spiritual order, to a state of the subject as such.

Are you sure?

BEIRNAERT: *I think so.*

Be that as it may, he is talking there about a localisation.

BEIRNAERT: *Which should not be spatialised. I say* in the soul *in opposition to the material. Then he moves on to the next word. It is* nihil, *that is* nothing. *Adeodatus says – Clearly, this is what does not exist. Saint Augustine makes the objection that what does not exist cannot possibly be something. So the second word is not a sign, because it does not signify something. And it is by mistake that they had agreed that every word is a sign, or that every sign is a sign of something. Adeodatus is perplexed, because if we have nothing to signify, it is madness to speak. So, there must be something to that.*

Aug. – Instead of saying that nihil *signifies something which is nothing, shall we say that this word signifies a certain state in the soul when, failing to perceive a thing the soul nevertheless finds, or thinks it finds, that such a thing does not exist?*

Hence, what is signified here is the state in the soul consequent upon an absence of something which could be there.

The value of this first part lies quite precisely in having shown that it is impossible to deal with language by referring the sign to the thing term by term. It is informative for us, as long as we don't forget that negativity had not been developed in Saint Augustine's time. And you see that, not withstanding, by dint of signs, or of things – we are here to try to find out which it is – he falters on the *nihil* in this beautiful line. It is not an entirely accidental choice. Certainly Freud knew Virgil very well, and this line, which evokes the Troy that has disappeared, has a strange resonance with the fact that, when Freud, in *Civilisation and its Discontents*, wants to define the unconscious, he talks of the

[2] '*âme*' in French; '*in animo*' in Latin; 'mind' in English translation.

monuments of the Rome that had once been. Both instances deal with things that disappear in history, but which, at the same time, still remain present, absent.

BEIRNAERT: *Augustine then moves on to the third term, which is* ex. *Here, his disciple gives him another word to explain what it signifies. It is the word* de, *a term of separation from a thing in which the object is found, from which it is derived. After which Augustine remarks that he has explained words with words – ex by* de, *one very well known word by other very well known ones. Then he urges him to move beyond the plane he presently occupies.*

> *Aug. – I would like you to show me, if you can, those very things of which these words are the signs.*

He uses rampart[3] *as his example.*

> *Aug. – Can you point it out to me in such a way that I will see the very thing whose sign this three-syllable word is. You would be showing it to me without the use of words.*

Then there's an account of gesture language. Augustine asks his disciple if he has paid attention to the deaf, who communicate with each other by gesture. And he shows that, in this language, it is not only visible things which are shown, but also sounds, tastes, etc.

O. MANNONI: *This reminds me of the little game we played at Guitrancourt, on Sunday. And in the theatre, also, actors make themselves understood and put on plays without speech, with dancing.*

Your allusion is, in fact, very instructive. You're referring to a little game in which one of two teams has to get the other to guess, as quickly as possible, a word supplied in secret by the organiser of the game. Exactly what Saint Augustine is reminding us of in this passage becomes clear in this game. Because what is being talked about here is not so much the dialectic of gesture as the dialectic of pointing. That he uses as his example rampart should not surprise us, since he is going to come up more against the rampart of language than against the real rampart. He thus goes on to remark that it is not only things which can be designated, but also qualities. If every pointing is a sign, it is an ambiguous sign. Because if the rampart is pointed out to you, how are you to know that it really is the rampart, and not, for example, its rough quality, or its green, grey, etc? In the same way, in the little game we played the other day, someone having to express *ivy* went and got some ivy. He was told – *You are cheating.* That was wrong. The person brought three ivy leaves. That could designate the colour green, or the Holy Trinity, and lots of other things.

O. MANNONI: *I was going to say something. I want to say the word* chair. *If that very word fails me and I hold up a chair to complete my sentence, it is not really the*

[3] 'paries'.

thing that I am using, but the word. So it is not possible to speak with a thing, one always speaks with words.

Your example illustrates perfectly how interpretation works in analysis – we always interpret the actual reactions of the subject in as much as they are taken up in the discourse, just like your chair which is a word. When Freud interprets movements, gestures, and supposedly, emotions, that is always what is going on.

BEIRNAERT: *Nothing can be shown without a sign. Yet, Adeodatus will try to show that there are things which can be. Augustine asks him the following question.*

> *Aug. – If I ask you: what is walking? and you, in getting up, accomplish this act: won't you be using the thing itself, in order to teach me, rather than words or any other sign?*
>
> *Ad. – That is the case, I must confess, and I am ashamed at not having seen something so obvious.*
>
> *Aug. – If I were to ask you while you are walking: what is walking? How would you teach it to me?*
>
> *Ad. – I would carry out the same action a bit faster so as to draw your attention after you had asked me by something new, all the time doing nothing more than doing what was to be demonstrated.*

But that is hurrying, which is not the same thing as walking. One would be led to think that ambulare *is* festinare. *Just now, with the* nihil, *we touched on negativity, now, with this example, we come to see that a word like* festinare *can be applied to all sorts of other acts. More precisely, we see that in showing any act whatever in its particular temporality, the subject has no reason, if he does not have words at his disposal, to conceptualise the act itself, because he may think that it is only a question of this particular act at this particular point in time. Again, we come upon* time is the concept. *It is only if the time of the act is taken in itself, separated from the specific act, that the act can be conceptualised as such, that is to say, preserved in a name. Moreover, we are now coming to the dialectic of the name.*

So Adeodatus recognises that we cannot point out a thing without a sign when we are performing the act at the time asked. But, if we are questioned about an act that we can perform, but which we are not performing when being asked, this time we are capable of replying with the thing itself, by setting about and performing this act. In consequence we can show without signs, on condition that we are not in the process of performing the action when questioned about it.

Adeodatus makes an exception of one sole action, that of speaking. The other asks me – *What is speaking? Whatever I say to teach him,* the child says, *I will have to speak. With this starting-point, I would pursue my explanation to the point where I had made it clear what he wanted, without wandering off from the thing which he wanted to have shown him, and without looking for signs outside of this thing itself.* In fact, it is the only action which can demonstrate itself, since it is the action

which in its essence is demonstrated by signs. Signification alone is recovered in our call, because signification always refers to signification.

BEIRNAERT: *Augustine now goes back to all the points which have been touched on in order to go into them more deeply. Let us take up the first point, which is that signs are shown by signs.*

Aug. – Are words the only signs?

Ad. – No.

Aug. – So it appears that in speaking, we signify by means of words, either the words themselves, or other signs.

So Augustine then shows that, using speech, one is able to signify and designate signs other than those of speech, for example gestures, letters, etc.

Examples of two signs which are not *verba – gestus* and *littera*. Here, Saint Augustine shows himself to be more sane than our contemporaries, some of whom have come to regard gesture as not pertaining to the symbolic order, but as being located, for instance, at the level of an animal response. The gesture would thus become an objection to our thesis that analysis takes place entirely within speech. *And what about the subject's gestures?* they say. Now, a human gesture does belong with language and not with motor manifestations. That's obvious.

BEIRNAERT: *I will continue reading.*

Aug. – These signs which are words, to which sense do they pertain?

Ad. – To hearing.

Aug. – And gesture.

Ad. – To sight.

Aug. – And when we come upon written words? Are these not words, or do they have to be thought of more accurately as signs of words? So that, the word would be what is uttered as a sound of the voice articulated with a signification, which cannot be perceived by any other sense than that of hearing.

So this written word refers to the word which is addressed to the ear, in such a way that the latter then pertains to the mind. Having said this, Augustine then goes on to pronounce a specific verbum, nomen, *the name.*

Aug. – We do signify something with this verbum nomen, *since we can signify* Romulus, Roma, fluvius, virtus, *innumerable things – it is only an intermediary. But there really is a difference between this name and the object that it signifies. What is this difference?*

Ad. – Names are signs, and objects are not.

So, ever on the horizon, always at the limit, are objects which are not signs. It is at this point that the term significabilia *comes up for the first time. We will call those objects signifiable which are susceptible of designation by a sign without themselves being a sign.*

Now we can go a bit faster. The final questions are all concerned with signs which designate themselves. What is required is deeper understanding of the meaning of the verbal sign, associated with the *nomen* and the *verbum* – we have translated *verbum* by *word* [*mot*], whereas Father Tonnard[4] at one point translates it by *speech* [*parole*].

In this connection, I would like to remark that it is possible that an isolated phoneme in language does not designate anything. One can only find this out through usage and use, that is to say through its integration into the system of signification. *Verbum* is used as such, and the argument whether every word may be considered to be a *nomen* turns on this. The question is raised. Even in languages where the substantival use of the verb is extremely rare, as in French, where in everyday language we do not say *le laisser* [the leaving], *le faire* [the doing], *le se trouver* [the finding itself], the distinction between the noun and the verb is more undecided than you may think. What is Augustine's point in wanting to identify *nomen* and *verbum*? And what value do you give to *nomen* in the language of our seminar?

It is precisely what we here call the symbol. The *nomen* is the totality signifier-signified, especially in as much as it makes for recognition, since the pact and the agreement rest upon it. It is the symbol in the sense of pact. The *nomen* is employed on the plane of recognition. This translation conforms to the linguistic essence of Latin, in which there are a fair number of legal usages for the word *nomen*, which can, for example, be used in the sense of 'credit note'.

Hence we may recall Hugo's play on words – it is not necessary to believe that he was a madman – *nomen, numen*. The word *nomen* has indeed an original form connecting it to *numen*, the sacred. To be sure, the linguistic evolution of the word was snatched up by *nocere*, giving rise to such forms as *agnomen*, which is hard not to think comes from a captation of *nomen* by *cognoscere*. But the legal usages are sufficient to show us that we are not wrong in recognising in it a function of recognition, of pact, of interhuman symbol.

BEIRNAERT: *Indeed, Saint Augustine makes it explicit in the passage in which he talks about expressions like* this is called, this is named. *That is accomplished by referring to the idea of intersubjectivity.*

Somewhere else, he sets out a fantastic etymology of *verbum* and *nomen* – *verbum* is the word in so far as it strikes the ear, which corresponds to our idea of verbal materiality, and *nomen* is the word in so far as something is made known by it. Except, what is not to be found in Saint Augustine – because he hadn't read Hegel – is the distinction between knowledge [*connaissance*], *agnoscere*, and recognition [*reconnaissance*]. The dialectic of recognition is essentially a human one, and since he, Saint Augustine that is, is engaged in a dialectic which is not atheistical . . .

[4] Père François-Joseph Tonnard, translator of *De Magistro*.

BEIRNAERT: *Nonetheless, when he is dealing with whatever* is called, is recalled, and is named, *it is recognition which is involved.*

No doubt, but he does not isolate it, because for him, when all is said and done, there is only one recognition, that of Christ. Nonetheless, it is certain that the theme does at least appear. Even the questions which he resolves in a manner different from our own are at least indicated – that is the way of all coherent language [*langage*].

BEIRNAERT: *That, you know, is what is crucial.*

Go on to the second chapter, the one which bears on what you have called the power of language.

BEIRNAERT: *Its title is* – Whether signs are useless for learning. *This time, the issue no longer is the relation of signs to signs, we come instead to the relation of signs to signifiable things.*

From the sign to teaching.

BEIRNAERT: *That's a poor translation, it is rather more like* to the signifiable.

So that is how you translate *dicendum*. Alright, but Saint Augustine tells us on the other hand that *dicere*, which is the essential meaning of speech, is *docere*.

BEIRNAERT: *I will skip two or three pages. Augustine then states that the sign, once heard, directs one's attention to the thing signified. To which he makes an objection that is interesting from the analytic point of view, because one comes across it from time to time. What would you say, he asks Adeodatus, if an interlocutor, in a sort of game, came to the conclusion that if someone talks about a lion, a lion comes out of the mouth of the person who is talking? Adeodatus replies, it is the sign which comes out of the mouth and not the signification, not the concept, but its vehicle. Now, Saint Augustine wants to lead us to the following point, that, in actual fact, knowledge comes from things. Firstly he asks what one should prefer, the thing signified or the sign. In line with a principle that was almost universal at the time, one must esteem the signified things more than the signs, since the signs are imposed on to the things signified, and whatever is imposed on another thing is less noble than whatever it is imposed on. Unless, Saint Augustine says to Adeodatus, you adjudge it otherwise. The other finds an objection.*

> *Ad.* – *If we say* filth, *this name, in my opinion, is much nobler than the thing signified. Because we like hearing it much better than smelling it.*

This allows him to introduce, between the thing in its materiality and the sign, the knowledge of the thing, namely science. What was the aim, Augustine asks, of those who gave a name to such a shameful and contemptible thing? Their aim was to alert others as to how one should behave towards this thing. One should esteem the knowledge of the thing which the word itself is more highly than the thing.

Aug. – The knowledge of filth, in fact, should be held to be superior to the name itself, which in turn is to be preferred to filth itself. Because there is no other reason to prefer knowledge to the sign, except that the latter exists for the sake of the former, and not the former for the latter.

One speaks so as to know, not the other way round. Another problem – is the knowledge of signs to be preferred to the knowledge of things? Augustine only gives the beginnings of a reply. Finally he winds up the discussion by saying:

Aug. – The knowledge of things takes preference over, not the knowledge of signs, but over the signs themselves.

Then he returns to the problem touched on in the first part.

Aug. – Let us examine a little more closely whether there are things which one can show by themselves, without any sign, like speaking, walking, sitting, and other similar things. Are there things which can be shown without signs?

Ad. – None, with the exception of speaking.

Aug. – Are you that certain of what you are saying?

Ad. – No, not at all.

Augustine uses an example of a thing which doesn't require a sign to show itself, which made me think of the analytic situation.

Aug. – Suppose now that someone unfamiliar with the business of snaring birds, which is done with reeds and birdlime, should encounter a bird-catcher fitted out with all his equipment, though he is not snaring birds but simply going on his way. At the sight of him, he quickens his pace and, as is usually the case, reflects and, in amazement, asks himself the meaning of the man's paraphernalia. Suppose, too, that the bird-catcher, aware that the other's attention is fixed upon him, and eager to show off his prowess, releases the reeds and, with his rod and hawk, snares a little bird which he sees nearby which he comes up to and captures. Would he not, I ask you, teach that spectator of his what he was so eager to know, not by any sign, but by the reality itself?

Ad. – I am afraid we are confronted here with a situation similar to that where I referred to the man who asks what walking is. Neither do I think that everything about bird-catching has been made known even in the present case.

Aug. – It is an easy matter to put your mind at ease. I will make the further qualification, that if the spectator were intelligent enough, he could grasp everything there is to know about the art of bird-catching from what he saw. It is sufficient for our purpose that some *men can be taught* some *things, though not all,*[5] *without the use of signs.*

Ad. – I too could further qualify my remarks by saying that if one is really intelligent, he will learn all about walking as soon as someone indicates it to him, by taking a few steps.

Aug. – You may make that qualification as far as I am concerned. I not only

[5] The phrase 'though not all', corresponds (loosely) to the Latin '*tametsi*'.

have no objection, but am even favourable to it. You see, in fact, that we have both reached the conclusion that some things can be taught without the use of signs, and that we were wrong in thinking a little while ago that nothing at all can be taught without signs. Actually, these examples bring to mind, not one or two, but thousands of things, which are made known by themselves without having to resort to signs. Quite apart from the numerous plays performed in every theatre by actors who play their part by enacting the events themselves.

To which one could reply that, in any case, whatever can be shown without signs is already significant, since the bird-catcher's actions always take on meaning within a universe within which subjects are already located.

2

What Father Beirnaert has said, with such pertinence, has made it superfluous for me to have to remind you that the bird-catcher's art can only exist in a world already structured by language.[6] There is no need to emphasise it.

What is at the heart of things for Saint Augustine is not the restoration of the hegemony of things over signs, but the casting of doubt on the hegemony of signs in the essentially spoken activity of teaching. This is where the break occurs between *signum* and *verbum, nomen*, the instrument of knowing in as much as it is the instrument of speech.

Saint Augustine calls upon the same dimension as we psychologists do. Because psychologists are more spiritual people – in the technical, religious sense of the word – than one might think. They believe, like Saint Augustine, in illumination, in intelligence. That is what they are designating, when they do animal psychology, with the name of instinct, of *Erlebnis* – I say this in passing.

Because Saint Augustine wants to involve us in truth's very own dimension, he abandons the linguist's domain, to take on this lure which I mentioned earlier. As soon as it is established, speech moves in the dimension of truth. Except, speech does not know that it is what makes truth. And Saint Augustine does not know it either, and that is why he tries to meet up with truth as such, through illumination. From whence a total inversion of perspective.

To be sure, he tells us, in the end signs are totally impotent, because we ourselves cannot recognise their value as signs, and we come to know that they are words only when we know what they signify in the language as concretely spoken. From then on, it is easy to make a dialectical about turn, and to say that, in the manipulation of signs which are defined by each other, we never learn anything. Either we already know the truth in question, and it is not, then, the signs which teach it to us, or we do not know it, and we cannot locate the signs which relate to it.

[6] Cf. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, no. 32.

He goes further, and locates admirably well the basis of the dialectic of truth which lies at the heart of the analytic discovery. In the presence of speech which we hear, he says, we find ourselves in extremely paradoxical situations – not knowing if they are true or not, whether or not to stand by their truth, to refute them or accept them, or to put them in doubt. But it is in relation to truth that the signification of everything which is expressed is to be located.

So speech, as much taught as teaching, is located in the register of the mistake, of error, of deception, of the lie. He takes it a long way, since he even places it in the domain of ambiguity, and not only of semantic ambiguity, but of subjective ambiguity. He admits that the very subject who is telling us something very often does not know what he is telling us, and tells us more or less than he means to. He even mentions the slip.

BEIRNAERT: *But he doesn't explicitly say that the slip can mean something.*

He almost does, since he considers it to be significant, but without saying of what. For him it is a slip when the subject signifies something other – *aliud* – than what he means. Another example, a quite striking example of the ambiguity of discourse, the Epicurean. The Epicurean introduces arguments about the function of the truth which he believes to have refuted. But these possess in themselves the virtue of truth in so far as they confirm in the listener a conviction exactly contrary to that which the Epicurean wished to inspire in him. Furthermore, you know the extent to which a masked discourse, a discourse of persecuted speech – as a writer by the name of Leo Strauss calls it – under a politically oppressive regime, for instance, can get things across by pretending to refute arguments which in fact express its true thought.

In short, Saint Augustine orients his entire dialectic around these three poles, error, mistake, ambiguity of speech. Well, it is as a function of this impotence of signs in teaching – simply to take up Father Beirnaert's terms – that next time we will try to get to grips with the founding dialectic of the truth of speech.

In the tripod which I am leaving with you, you will have no difficulty in recognising the three great symptomatic functions that Freud highlighted in his discovery of meaning – *Verneinung, Verdichtung, Verdrängung*. Because what speaks in man goes far beyond speech and penetrates even his dreams, his being and his very organism.

23 June 1954

XXI

Truth emerges from the mistake

FAILED[1] = SUCCESSFUL

SPEECH FROM BEYOND DISCOURSE

THE WORD ESCAPES ME[2]

THE DREAM OF THE BOTANICAL MONOGRAPH

DESIRE

Today, your group, whose fidelity was up to now unfailing, is flagging somewhat. And at the end of the race, it is I who will have had you.

We started with the rules on technique as set out for the first time in Freud's Papers on Technique, formulated as they are both in the most perfect and in the most uncertain fashion. Following a path true to the nature of the subject, we arrived at the central point we have been discussing since the middle of last term – the structure of the transference.

To locate the questions which are tied up with it, one must begin with the central point to which our dialectical investigations have led us, namely that one cannot account for the transference in terms of a dual, imaginary relation, and that the engine of its forward motion is speech.

To bring into play the illusory projection of any one of the subject's fundamental relations with the analytic partner, or again the object relation, the relation between transference and counter-transference, all this, remaining as it does within the limits of a two body psychology,[3] is inadequate. Not only do theoretical arguments show us that, but so in addition does the concrete testimony of authors I have cited. Remember what Balint tells us he notices during what he calls the termination of an analysis – nothing other than a narcissistic relation.

So we have demonstrated the necessity for a third term, which alone allows us to conceptualise the mirror transference, which is speech.

Despite all the effort one can put in to forget speech, or to downgrade it into being just a means, analysis is in itself a technique of speech, and speech is the very milieu in which it moves. It is in relation to the function of speech that the different mainsprings of analysis are to be distinguished from each other, and take on their meaning, their exact position. The whole of the teaching that we will expand upon subsequently will only recast this truth in a thousand different forms.

[1] *'Manqué'*. [2] *'Le mot me manque'*. [3] English in the original.

1

Last time fortified us with the discussion of a fundamental text from Saint Augustine on the signification of speech.

Saint Augustine's system may be said to be dialectical. It doesn't have a place in the system of sciences as it has been constituted, only over the last few centuries. But neither is it a point of view foreign to our own, which is that of linguistics. On the contrary, we have established that, well before linguistics arose within the modern sciences, someone who meditates on the art of speech, that is to say who talks about it, was led to a problem which lies at the present frontier of this science.

This problem is raised by the question of the relation between speech and signification, what relation the sign bears to what it signifies. In fact, in grasping the function of the sign, one is always referred from one sign to another. Why? Because the system of signs, as they are concretely instituted, *hic et nunc*, by itself forms a whole. That means that it institutes an order from which there is no exit. To be sure, there has to be one, otherwise it would be an order without any meaning.

This blind alley reveals itself only if one considers the entire order of signs. But that is how one really must consider them, as a set, because language cannot be conceived of as the result of a series of shoots, of buds, coming out of each thing. The name is not like the little asparagus tip emerging from the thing. One can only think of language as a network, a net over the entirety of things, over the totality of the real. It inscribes on the plane of the real this other plane, which we here call the plane of the symbolic.

Certainly, comparing is not reasoning,[4] and I am only illustrating what I am in the course of explaining to you.

The result of the blind alley indicated in the second part of the Augustinian argument is that the question of the adequation of the sign, I won't any longer say to the thing, but to what it signifies, leaves us confronted with an enigma. This enigma is none other than that of the truth, and that is where the Augustinian apologetic awaits us.

Meaning, either you've got it or you haven't. When you understand what is expressed in the signs of the language, it is always, in the end, on account of light coming to you from outside of the signs – either through an inner truth which allows you to recognise what is borne by signs, or by the presentation of an object which is correlated, in a repeated and insistent manner, with a sign. And here we have the perspective turned upside down. The truth is outside of the signs, elsewhere. This see-saw of the Augustinian dialectic directs us towards the recognition of the authentic *magister*, of the inner master of truth.

[4] '*Comparaison n'est pas raison*' – a French proverb.

We are entitled to pause here for a moment to remark that the very question of the truth is already raised by the dialectical movement itself.

In the same way as, at a certain point in his argument, Saint Augustine forgets that the bird-catcher's technique, this complex technique – a trick, a trap for his object, the bird to be caught – is already structured, instrumentalised by speech – so here, he appears to fail to recognise that the very question of the truth is already included at the heart of his discussion, since it is with speech that he raises the question of speech, and creates the dimension of truth. Every act of speech which is formulated as such brings into the world the novelty of the emergence of meaning. It is not that it is affirmed as truth, but rather that it introduces the dimension of truth into the real.

Saint Augustine argues – speech can be deceiving. Now, the sign, just of itself, can only present and sustain itself in the dimension of the truth. Because, in order to deceive, speech affirms itself as true. That is for the one who listens. For the one who speaks deception itself requires from the beginning the support of the truth that must be dissembled, and, as it unfolds, it presupposes a veritable deepening of the truth to which, if one can put it this way, it replies.

In fact, as the lie is organised, pushes out its tentacles, it requires the correlative control of the truth it encounters at every twist and turn of the way, and which it must avoid. The moralist tradition says it – you must have a good memory when you have lied. You have to know one hell of a lot of things to keep a lie going. There is nothing more difficult than to sustain a lie. Because the lie, in this way, brings about, in its unfolding, the constitution of the truth.

But that is not the real problem. The real problem is that of error, and that is where it has always lain.

It is clear that error is only definable in terms of the truth. But the point is not that there would be no error if there were no truth, as there would be no white if there were no black. There is more to it than that – there is no error which does not present and promulgate itself as truth. In short, error is the habitual incarnation of the truth. And if we wanted to be entirely rigorous, we would say that, as long as the truth isn't entirely revealed, that is to say in all probability until the end of time, its nature will be to propagate itself in the form of error.

You don't have to go much further to see in this a structure constitutive of the revelation of being as such.

On this point, for the moment I wish only to open a small door for you, whose threshold we will someday cross. For today let us keep to the phenomenology of speech.

We have seen that deception, as such, can only be sustained as a function of the truth, and not only of the truth, but of a movement of the truth – that error is the usual manifestation of the truth itself – so that the paths of truth are in essence the paths of error. *So*, you will say to me, *how, from within speech, will error ever be discerned? One needs either the test of experience, the confrontation with*

the object, or the illumination of this inner truth, the aim of the Augustinian dialectic.

This objection is not without some force.

The signifier, which is always material and which in Saint Augustine we have recognised in the *verbum*, and the signified are the very foundation of the structure of language. Taken one by one, they appear to have a strictly arbitrary relation. There is no more reason to call the giraffe *giraffe* and the elephant *elephant* than to call the giraffe *elephant* and the elephant *giraffe*. There is no reason not to say that the giraffe has a trunk and the elephant a very long neck. If it is an error in the system as generally accepted, it is not discernible, as Saint Augustine points out, for as long as the definitions are not laid down. And is there anything more difficult than to lay down good definitions?

Nonetheless, if you continue your discourse on the giraffe with a trunk indefinitely, so that everything you say applies perfectly to the elephant, it will be clear that, under the name of the giraffe, you are talking about the elephant. All you have to do is bring your terms into agreement with the generally accepted ones. That is what Saint Augustine demonstrates with respect to the term *perducam*. That is not what we call error.

Error shows itself to be such whenever, at a given moment, it ends in a contradiction. If I started by saying that roses are plants which generally live under water, and if it seems from what follows that for a whole day I remained in the same place as the roses, since it is also quite clear that I cannot remain for a day under water, a contradiction appears in my discourse, demonstrating my error. In other words, in discourse it is contradiction which sorts truth from error.

From whence the Hegelian conception of absolute knowledge. Absolute knowledge is this moment in which the totality of discourse closes in on itself in a perfect non-contradiction up to and including the fact that it posits, explains and justifies itself. We are some way yet from this ideal!

You know only too well the everlasting disputes there are on every theme and on every subject, with greater or lesser ambiguity depending on the zones of interhuman action, and the manifest discordance between the different symbolic systems which prescribe action, the religious, juridical, scientific, political systems. There is neither superposition, nor conjunction of these references – between them there are gaps, faults, rents. That is why we cannot conceive of human discourse as being unitary. Every emission of speech is always, up to a certain point, under an inner necessity to err. So we are led, it would appear, to a historical Pyrronism which suspends the truth-value of everything which the human voice can emit, suspends it in the expectation of a future totalisation.

Is it unthinkable that it might come about? After all, can't the progress of the system of the physical sciences be conceived of as the progress of a single symbolic system, to which things give sustenance and substance? As this

system is perfected, in any event we see things being disturbed, decomposing, dissolving under its pressure. The symbolic system is not like a piece of clothing which sticks on to things, it is not lacking in its effects on them and on human life. You can call this upheaval what you will – conquest, rape of nature, transformation of nature, hominisation of the planet.

This symbolic system of the sciences tends towards the *well made language*,[5] which one might consider to be its own language, a language deprived of all reference to a voice. That is also where Augustinian dialectic leads us, by depriving us of reference to this domain of the truth within which its own forward movement nevertheless takes place.

And that is where one cannot but be struck by the Freudian discovery.

2

The Freudian discovery, while being empirical, does not on account of that make any less of a striking contribution, so striking in fact that one gets blinded to its existence, to this question, a question which seems, taken literally, to be a *metaphysical* one.

What is peculiar to the field of psychoanalysis is indeed the presupposition that the subject's discourse normally unfolds – this is a genuine bit of Freud – within the order of error, of misrecognition, even of negation – it is not quite a lie, it is somewhere between an error and a lie. These are the truths of crude common sense. But – this is the novelty – during analysis, within this discourse which unfolds in the register of error, something happens whereby the truth irrupts, and it is not contradiction.

Do analysts have to push the subjects on the road of absolute knowledge, to gain an education in every respect, not only in psychology, so as to have them discover the absurdities whose company they habitually keep, but also in the system of the sciences? Certainly not – we are doing it here because we are analysts, but what if we had to do it to patients!

Nor can we engineer their meeting with the real, since we receive them within the confines of four walls. It is not our function to guide them by the hand through life, that is to say into the consequences of their stupidities. In life, you can see truth catch error from behind. In analysis, truth emerges in the most clearcut representative of the mistake – the slip, the action which one, improperly, calls *manquée* [missed, failed, abortive].

Our abortive actions are actions which succeed, those of our words which come to grief are words which own up. These acts, these words reveal a truth from behind. Within what we call free associations, dream images, symptoms, a word bearing the truth is revealed. If Freud's discovery has any meaning, it is that – truth grabs error by the scruff of the neck in the mistake.

[5] *'langue bien faite'.*

Reread the beginning of the chapter on the dream-work – *a dream*, Freud says, is a sentence, *it is a rebus*.[6] Had it not been explicitly formulated by Freud, fifty pages of *The Interpretation of Dreams* would lead us to this equation just as easily.

It would emerge just as well from the formidable discovery of condensation. You would be wrong to think that condensation simply means the term by term correspondence of a symbol with something. On the contrary, in a given dream, the whole of the dream-thoughts, that is to say the whole of those things signified, the meanings of the dream, is taken as a network, and is represented, not at all term by term, but through a set of interlacings. To demonstrate it to you, all I need do is take one of Freud's dreams, and make a drawing on the blackboard. Read the *Traumdeutung*, and you will see that really is how Freud understands it – the totality of meanings is represented by the totality of whatever is signifying. Each signifying element of the dream, each image, includes a reference to a whole set of things to be signified, and inversely, each thing to be signified is represented in several signifiers.

So the Freudian discovery leads us to hear in discourse this speech which reveals itself through, or even in spite of, the subject.

He tells us this speech not only verbally, but through all his other means of expression. Even through his body, the subject emits a speech, which is, as such, speech of truth, a signifying speech which he does not even know he emits. It is because he always says more than he means to, always more than he thinks he says.

Augustine's main objection to the inclusion of the domain of truth within the domain of signs is, he says, that very often subjects say things which go much further than what they think, and that they are even capable of owning the truth while not adhering to it. The Epicurean who maintains that the soul is mortal quotes his opponents' arguments so as to refute them. But those who have their eyes open can see that that is the true speech, and recognise that the soul is immortal.

The subject, via something whose structure and function as speech we have recognised, testifies to a truer meaning than all he expresses by means of his discourse of error. If that is not how our experience is structured, then it has absolutely no meaning.

The speech that the subject emits goes beyond, without his knowing it, his limits as discoursing subject – all the while remaining, to be sure, within his limits as speaking subject. If you abandon this perspective, what immediately appears is an objection which I am surprised not to hear raised more often – *Why doesn't the discourse, which you detect behind the discourse of mistake, fall prey to the same objection as the latter? If it is a discourse like the other, why isn't it, in just the same way, immersed in error?*

[6] (1900a) GW II/III 283–4; Stud II 280–1; SE IV 277–8.

Every Jungian-style conception, every conception which makes of the unconscious, under the name of archetype, the real locus of another discourse, really does fall prey, in a categorical way, to this objection. These archetypes, these reified symbols which reside in a permanent manner in a basement of the human soul, how are they truer than what is allegedly at the surface? Is what is in the cellar always truer than what is in the attic?

What does Freud mean when he states that the unconscious knows neither contradiction nor time? Does he mean that the unconscious is a truly unthinkable reality? Certainly not, because there is no such thing as an unthinkable reality.

Reality is defined by contradiction. Reality is what makes it so that when I am here, you, my dear lady, cannot be in the same place. It is not clear why the unconscious should escape this type of contradiction. What Freud means when he talks about the suspension of the principle of non-contradiction in the unconscious is that the genuine speech that we are supposed to uncover, not through observation, but through interpretation, in the symptom, in the dream, in the slip, in the *Witz*, obeys laws other than those of discourse, which is subject to the condition of having to move within error up to the moment when it encounters contradiction. Authentic speech has other modes, other means, than everyday speech.

That is what we have to explore in a rigorous fashion if we want to make any progress at all in thinking about what we are doing. Of course, we don't *have* to do so. I will even admit that the majority of human beings quite universally excuse themselves from so doing, and accomplish what they have to in a no less satisfactory fashion. I would go even further – one can push discourse, and even dialectic, extremely far, while avoiding thought entirely. Nonetheless, every step forward in the symbolic world capable of constituting a revelation implies, at least for a brief moment, an effort of thought. Now, an analysis is nothing other than an entire series of revelations particular to each subject. So it is probable that his activity requires the analyst to remain on the alert as to the meaning of what he is doing, and that, from time to time, he devote a moment to thought.

So here we are presented with a question – what is the structure of this speech which is beyond discourse?

The Freudian innovation, in comparison with Saint Augustine, is the revelation, within the phenomenon, of these subjective, experienced moments, in which speech which goes beyond the discoursing subject emerges. An innovation that is so striking that it is only with difficulty that we can believe that it was never previously perceived. No doubt it was necessary for the common run of men to be caught up for some time in a rather perturbed, perhaps even refracted, and in some way inhuman, alienating, discourse for this speech to become manifest with such acuteness, such immediacy, such urgency.

Let us not forget that it made its presence felt in that portion of mankind which suffers, and it was quite clearly in the form of a morbid psychology, of a psychopathology, that the Freudian discovery was made.

3

I will leave you to think about these matters, because now I want to stress the following – it is only in the dialectical movement of speech beyond discourse that the terms we use all the time without giving them a moment's thought, as if they were givens, gain their meaning.

Verdichtung proves to be nothing other than the polyvalence of meanings in language, their encroachments, their criss-crossings, through which the world of things is not recovered by the world of symbols, but is taken up once more as follows – a thousand things correspond to each symbol, and each thing to a thousand symbols.

Verneinung is what shows the negative side of this non-superposition, because one really does have to get the objects into the holes, and since the holes don't fit them, it is the objects which thereby suffer.

The third register, that of *Verdrängung*, can also be remarked in the register of discourse. Because, and make a careful note of this, each time that repression takes place – make note of it in practice, it is an indication, go take a look and you will see – repression in the true sense of the word – because repression is not repetition, repression is not negation – there is always interruption of discourse. The subject says that the word escapes him [*le mot lui manque*].

The word escapes me [*Le mot me manque*] – at what point in literature does such an expression come up? It is Saint Amand who uttered if for the first time – not even written, but said like that one day in the street, and it became part of the innovations introduced into the language by the *Précieux*.[7] Somaize mentions it in his *Dictionnaire des Précieuses* amongst a thousand other forms which are now in current usage but which were not any the less witty plays on words, created in *boudoirs* by this pleasant society, devoted as it entirely was to the perfecting of language [*langage*]. As you see, there is a relation between the map of Tenderness [*la carte du Tendre*][8] and psychoanalytic psychology. *Le mot me manque* – you never would have said a thing like that in the sixteenth century.

You know the famous example of a word which Freud could not find – the name of the painter of the frescos at Orvieto, Signorelli. Why couldn't he find this word? – if not because the preceding conversation had not been brought to a conclusion, a conclusion, which would have been *Herr*, the absolute master.

[7] Somaize, *Le Dictionnaire des Précieuses*, nouvelle édition de Ch.-L. Livet, Paris: Jannet. 1856 (orig. published 1661), vol. I, p. 94: 'Je scay bien ce que je veux dire, mais je ne puis m'expliquer comme je voudrois: *Je scay bien ce que je veux dire mais le mot me manque.*'

[8] See p. 213 n5 above.

death. And, after all, there are perhaps internal limits to what can be said, as Mephistopheles, often cited by Freud, says – 'After all, the best of what you know may not be told to boys.'[9] That's repression.

Already, every time the master comes to a halt along the path of his teaching, for reasons pertaining to the nature of his interlocutor, there's repression. And I, who bring you picturesque things, aimed at putting ideas back into place, I am also engaged in repression, but a little less than the usual, for that is of the order of negation.

Take the first dream which Freud discusses in the chapter on condensation, the dream of the botanical monograph, already summarised in the chapter on the material and sources of dreams. It is a wonderful demonstration of everything I am telling you. No doubt, with his own dreams, Freud never gets us to the heart of the matter, but it is not very difficult to guess at it.

So, during the day Freud saw a monograph on the cyclamens, which are his wife's favourite flowers.[10] You get a clear sense that, when he says that many husbands – including him – give their wives flowers less often than they should, he is not unaware what that means. Freud evokes his conversation with Königstein the eye surgeon, who operated on his father anaesthetised with cocaine. Now, you know the famous story about cocaine – Freud never forgave his wife for having made him come to visit her in a hurry, because if he hadn't, he used to say, he would have taken his discovery a lot further, and would have become a famous man. In the associations to the dream, there is also the patient who answers *to the beautiful name Flora*, and Gärtner – which means *gardener* in German – appears at one point with, as if by chance, his wife, whom Freud finds *blühende*, blooming.

Everything is there, implicit. Freud, not having made up his mind to break with his wife, dissembles the fact that he doesn't bring her flowers often enough, also dissembles this complaint, this permanent bitterness of his, at the moment when he is expecting to be elected to an Extraordinary Professorship. Because the struggle he is engaged in to get himself recognised is there, subjacent to what he alludes to from the dialogues with his colleagues, and this is again emphasised by the fact that, in the dream, Prof. Gärtner interrupts him.[11] In the same way one understands why it is these two day-residues, the conversation with the eye-surgeon, and the sight of the monograph, that this dream feeds on. It is because they were the phonematically experienced moments, if I can put it like that, with which the speech which finds expression in the dream is put into motion.

Do you want me to put it in a formula? To put it crudely, it is – *I no longer love my wife*. Or again, what he refers to in connection with his whimsies and his expensive tastes – *I am not recognised by society, and hampered in my ambitions.*

[9] See (1900a) GW II/III 147; Stud II 158; SE IV 142 and 142 n1.
[10] (1900a) GW II/III 288–90; Stud II 285–6; SE IV 282–4.
[11] GW II/III 177; Stud II 185; SE IV 171.

I am thinking of a colleague of ours, who said in a lecture on Freud – *He was a man without ambitions and without needs*. That is blatantly false, all you have to do is read Freud's biography and be aware of the brutality of his responses to those people who came to him with their hearts of gold, the idealists, and questioned him about his own interests in life. Fifteen years after Freud's death, we really should not fall to the level of hagiography. Happily there's something to be found in his work which somewhat bears witness to his personality.

Let us go back to this famous dream. If there's a dream, that means there is repression, doesn't it? So, what was repressed, here? Haven't I put you in a good enough position to recognise in Freud's very own text that a specific desire was suspended during the day, and that one specific word was not said, could not be said, which went right to the heart of the avowal, to the heart of being?

There I'll leave for today the question – in the present state of relations between human beings, can speech spoken outside of the analytic situation ever be full speech? Interruption is the law of conversation. Everyday speech all the time runs up against failure of recognition [*méconnaissance*], which is the source of *Verneinung*.

If you read the *Traumdeutung*, taking what I teach you as your guide, you will see the extent to which the concepts become clearer and what meaning, ambiguous as it sometimes seems, Freud gives to the word *desire*.

He concedes, which might appear to be a surprising negation, that one has to admit to there being two types of dream, dreams of desire, and punishment-dreams. But if you understand what the issue is, you realise that the repressed desire made manifest in the dream is identified with this register to which I am trying to get you to enter – what is waiting to be revealed is being.

It is this perspective which gives the term desire in Freud its full value. It unifies the domain of the dream, it allows one to understand paradoxical dreams, such as the dream of the poet whose youth was so difficult, who dreams the same dream over and over again, in which he is the insignificant assistant to the tailor.[12] This doesn't so much represent a punishment as a revelation of being. It marks one of the crossings of the threshold of the identification of being, the passage of being into a new stage, a new symbolic incarnation of itself. From whence the value of everything which is of the order of accession, of competition, of the examination, of certification – whose value is not that of testing, of a test, but of an investiture.

On the off chance, I drew this little diamond on the blackboard for you, a dihedron with six faces.

[12] (1900a) GW II/III 476–8; Stud II 455–7; SE V 473–6.

Let us make all its faces similar, one set above, the other below a plane. It is not a regular polyhedron, even though all its faces are identical.

Imagine the median plane, where you'll find the triangle which divides this pyramid into two, to represent the surface of the real, the real just as it is. Nothing here can break out of it, all the seats are taken. But, on the other level, everything has changed. Because words, symbols, introduce a hollow, a hole, thanks to which all manner of crossings are possible. Things become interchangeable.

Depending on the way one envisions it, this hole in the real is called being or nothingness. This being and this nothingness are essentially linked to the phenomenon of speech. It is within the dimension of being that the tripartition of the symbolic, the imaginary and the real is to be found, those elementary categories without which we would be incapable of distinguishing anything within our experience.

It is not for nothing, no doubt, that there are three of them. There must be a minimal law in that, which geometry here only embodies, namely that, if, in the plane of the real, you detach a shutter which moves into a third dimension, the minimum number of shutters you need to construct something solid is two.

Such a schema makes you aware of the following – it is only in the dimension of being, and not in that of the real, that the three fundamental passions can be inscribed – at the junction of the symbolic and imaginary, this fault line, if you will, this ridge line called love – at the junction of the imaginary and the real, hate – and, at the junction of the real and the symbolic, ignorance.

We know that the dimension of transference exists from the start, implicitly, well before analysis begins, before this concubinage, which analysis is, triggers it. Now, these two possibilities of love and hate are never present without the third, which is commonly neglected, and which is not included as one of the primary components of transference – ignorance, as a passion. However, the subject who comes into analysis places himself, as such, in the position of someone who is in ignorance. There is no possible way into analysis without this point of reference – one never says it, one never thinks of it, whereas it is fundamental.

As speech moves forward, the upper pyramid is constructed, corresponding to the working over of the *Verdrängung*, the *Verdichtung* and the *Verneinung*. And being is realised.

At the beginning of the analysis, just as at the beginning of every dialectic, this being, if it does exist implicitly, in a virtual fashion, is not realised. For the naive, for someone who has never entered into any dialectic and believes himself simply to be in the real, being has no presence. The speech included in discourse is revealed thanks to the law of association by which it is put in doubt, in brackets, through suspending the law of non-contradiction. This revelation of speech is the realisation of being.

Analysis is not the reconstitution of the narcissistic image to which it has so

often been reduced. If the analysis were only a matter of putting to the test a limited number of minor forms of behaviour, which are more or less well sussed out, more or less cunningly projected, courtesy of the collaboration between the two egos, if we were only concerned with looking out for the emergence of goodness knows what ineffable reality, why should this reality be singled out above all the others? In my schema, the point O moves somewhere to the back and, to the extent that it is symbolised by its speech, is realised in its being.

We will leave it there for today.

Let me immediately urge those of you who have found this discourse interesting, indeed who have been stirred up by it, to ask me questions next time – not too long, since we have only one seminar left – on the basis of which I will try to plan the conclusion, if one may speak of conclusion. This will serve as a knot, with which to broach a new chapter next year.

I am more and more inclined to think that next year I will have to divide this seminar into two if I want, on the one hand, to explain Präsident Schreber and the symbolic world of psychosis to you, and on the other hand to show you, starting off with *Das Ich und das Es*, that ego,[13] super-ego[13] and *Es* are not new names for old psychological entities. I thus hope to make you see that it is in the movement of the dialectic which I have engaged you in this year that the structuration introduced by Freud takes on its true meaning.

30 June 1954

[13] So in the original.

XXII

The concept of analysis

THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE AFFECTIVE
LOVE AND HATE IN THE IMAGINARY AND IN THE SYMBOLIC
IGNORANTIA DOCTA
SYMBOLIC INVESTITURE
DISCOURSE AS LABOUR
THE OBSESSIONAL AND HIS MASTER

Who has any questions?

MME AUBRY: *I understand that at the conjunction of the imaginary and the real one finds hate, on condition that one takes conjunction in the sense of rupture. What I don't understand quite so well is finding love at the conjunction of the symbolic and the imaginary.*

I am delighted by your question. Perhaps it will enable me to lend to our last meeting of the year the familiar atmosphere which I prefer to the magisterial.

1

Leclaire, surely you must also have things to ask. Last time after the session you said to me something remarkably like a question – *I would have really liked you to have talked about transference, even so.*

They are tough, those *even so*'s – I do nothing but talk to them about it and they're still not satisfied. There are profound reasons why the subject of transference always leaves you craving for more. Nonetheless, we are still going to try today to deal with this subject.

If I wanted to represent the three times of the structuration of speech in search of truth on the model of those allegorical paintings which proliferated in the romantic era, like *virtue pursuing crime, aided by remorse*, I would tell you – *Error taking flight in deception and recaptured by mistake*. I hope you can see that that paints a picture of transference for you, such as I try to get you to grasp it in the moments of suspension which the avowal of speech undergoes.

DR LECLAIRE: *Yes.*

What, in short, are you still craving for? Perhaps for the articulation of what I have been telling you with the usual conception of transference?

DR LECLAIRE: *When one looks at what is written on transference, one always gets the impression that the phenomenon of transference falls in the category of manifestations of an affective order, of emotions, in contrast with other manifestations, of an intellectual order, such as procedures aimed at understanding, for instance. Hence one always finds it a bit difficult to give an account of your view of the transference in the current, ordinary terminology. Definitions of transference always say that it is a question of emotion, of feeling, of an affective phenomenon, which is categorically opposed to everything which, in an analysis, can be called intellectual.*

Yes . . . You see, there are two ways of applying a discipline which is structured as a teaching. There's what you hear, and then what you make of it. These two planes do not overlap, but they can be made to join up in a certain number of secondary signs. It is from this angle that I see the fertility of every truly didactic action. It is not so much a question of transmitting concepts to you, as of explaining them to you leaving you the task, and the responsibility, of filling them in. But something else is perhaps even more imperative, which is to point out to you those concepts which should never be made use of.

If there is something of that order in what I teach you here, it is the following – I urge you, each of you, at the heart of your own search for the truth, to renounce quite radically – if only provisionally, to see if one doesn't gain by dispensing with it – the use of an opposition like that of the affective and the intellectual.

That by using it one gets into a series of blind alleys is only too obvious for it not to be tempting to follow this instruction for a while. This opposition is one of those most contrary to analytic experience and most unenlightening when it comes to understanding it.

You ask me to give an account of what I teach, and the objections that this teaching may encounter. I teach you the meaning and the function of the action of speech, in as much as that is the element of interpretation. Speech is the founding medium of the intersubjective relation, and what retroactively modifies the two subjects. It is speech which, literally, creates what installs them in that dimension of being I try to get you to glimpse.

We are not dealing here with an intellectual dimension. If the intellectual is to be located somewhere, it is at the level of the *ego*-phenomena, in the imaginary projection of the pseudo-neutralised *ego* – *pseudo* in the sense of lie – that analysis has exposed as a phenomenon of defence and of resistance.

If you are with me, we will be able to go a long way. The question is not so much one of knowing up to what point one should go, the question is more one of knowing if one will be followed. In fact that is an element which allows one to discriminate what one can call reality.

Over the ages, throughout human history, we witness advances which one would be quite wrong to take to be those of circumvolutions. These are the advances of the symbolic order. Follow the history of a science like mathemat-

ics. For centuries it stagnated on problems which are now transparent to ten-year old children. And yet these were powerful minds which pondered them. We were stuck on the solution to equations of the second degree for ten centuries too many. The Greeks could have solved it, since they found out cleverer things concerning the problems of maxima and minima. Mathematical progress is not progress in the power of thought of the human being. It comes good the day some man thinks of inventing a sign like this, $\sqrt{}$, or like that, $\int$. That's what mathematics is.

The position we are in is different, more difficult. Because we have to deal with an extremely polyvalent symbol. But it is only to the extent that we succeed in formulating the symbols of our action in an adequate manner that we will take a step forward. This step forward, like every step forward, is also a retroactive step. That is why I would say that we are, in a way, in the middle of building up, to the extent that you follow me, a psychoanalysis. Our step forward in psychoanalysis, is at the same time a return to the aspirations of its origin.

So what is at issue? A more authentic understanding of the phenomenon of transference.

DR LECLAIRE: *I hadn't quite finished. I am asking this question because it is always a little bit in the background for us. It is quite clear that the terms affective and intellectual are no longer common currency in the group we make up.*

A good thing too. What can one do with them?

DR LECLAIRE: *But that's the point, that is one thing which has been left hanging a bit since Rome.*

I believe that I didn't make use of them once in that famous Rome Discourse, except to expunge the term *intellectualised.*

DR LECLAIRE: *Exactly, both this silence, and these direct attacks on the term affective did have an effect.*

I believe that is a term which one must completely expunge from our papers.

DR LECLAIRE: *In asking you this question, I wanted to get rid of something which had been left hanging. Last time, in talking about transference, you introduced three fundamental passions, amongst them ignorance. That is what I wanted to come to.*

2

Last time I wanted to introduce something like a third dimension, the space, or rather the volume, of human relations in the symbolic relation. It is entirely deliberately that it was only last time that I spoke of these ridges of passion. As Mme Aubry clearly underlined with her question, these are junction points,

points of rupture, crests which are located between the different domains over which the interhuman relation extends, the real, the symbolic, the imaginary.

Love is distinct from desire, considered as the limit-relation which is established by every organism with the object which satisfies it. Because its aim is not satisfaction, but being. That is why one can only speak of love where the symbolic relation as such exists.

Now learn to distinguish love as an imaginary passion from the active gift which it constitutes on the symbolic plane. Love, the love of the person who desires to be loved, is essentially an attempt to capture the other in oneself, in oneself as object. The first time that I spoke at length about narcissistic love was, if you remember, as the direct continuation of the dialectic of perversion.

The desire to be loved is the desire that the loving object should be taken as such, caught up, enslaved to the absolute particularity of oneself as object. The person who aspires to be loved is not at all satisfied, as is well known, with being loved for his attributes. He demands to be loved as far as the complete subversion of the subject into a particularity can go, and into whatever may be most opaque, most unthinkable in this particularity. One wants to be loved for everything – not only for one's ego, as Descartes says, but for the colour of one's hair, for one's idiosyncracies, for one's weaknesses, for everything.

But inversely, and I would say correlatively, as a result of exactly that, to love is to love a being beyond what he or she appears to be. The active gift of love is directed at the other, not in his specificity, but in his being.

O. MANNONI: *It was Pascal who said that, not Descartes.*

There is a passage in Descartes on the progressive purification of the ego beyond all its specific qualities. But you aren't wrong, in so far as Pascal tries to take us beyond the creature.

O. MANNONI: *He said it explicitly.*

Yes, but it was a gesture of rejection.

Love, now no longer conceived of as a passion but as an active gift, is always directed, beyond imaginary captivation, towards the being of the loved subject, towards his particularity. That is why it can accept to such a great extent his weaknesses and detours, why it can even admit to his errors, but there is a point at which it comes to a halt, a point which is only located in relation to being – when the loved being goes too far in his betrayal of himself and persists in self-deception, love can follow no longer.

I won't fill out the entire course of this phenomenology, which you can ascertain from experience. I will only remark that love, to the extent that it is one of the three lines of division in which the subject is engaged when he realises himself symbolically in speech, homes in on the being of the other. Without speech, in as much as it affirms being, all there is is *Verliebtheit*,

imaginary fascination, but there is no love. There is inflicted love, but not the active gift of love.

Well, with hate, it is the same thing. There is an imaginary dimension of hate, in so far as the destruction of the other is one pole of the very structure of the intersubjective relation. As I've pointed out to you, it is what Hegel recognises as the impasse for the coexistence of two consciousnesses, from whence he deduces his myth of the struggle for pure prestige. Even there, the imaginary dimension is framed by the symbolic relation, and that is why hate is not satisfied with the disappearance of the adversary. If love aspires to the unfolding of the being of the other, hate wishes the opposite, namely its abasement, its deranging, its deviation, its delirium, its detailed denial, its subversion. That is what makes hate a career with no limit, just as love is.

Perhaps it is more difficult to get you to understand that, for reasons which may not be such good reasons for rejoicing as one might think, these days we know less about the feeling of hatred than in times when man was more open to his destiny.

To be sure, we have seen, not very long ago, manifestations which, within this genre, weren't bad at all. Nonetheless, these days subjects do not have to shoulder the burden of the experience of hatred in its most consuming forms. And why? Because our civilisation is itself sufficiently one of hatred. Isn't the path for the race to destruction really rather well marked out for us? Hatred is clothed in our everyday discourse under many guises, it meets with such extraordinarily easy rationalisations. Perhaps it is this state of the diffuse flocculation of hatred which saturates the call for the destruction of being in us. As if the objectivation of the human being in our civilisation corresponded exactly to what, within the structure of the *ego*, is the pole of hatred.

O. MANNONI: *Western moralism.*

Exactly. Hatred here discovers how to feed on everyday objects. You would be wrong to think that as a result it is absent from wars, when, for certain privileged subjects, it is fully realised.

Don't get me wrong. In speaking about love and hate to you, I am showing you the paths for the realisation of being, not the realisation of being, but only its paths.

And yet, if the subject commits himself to searching after truth as such, it is because he places himself in the dimension of ignorance – it doesn't matter whether he knows it or not. That is one of the elements making up what analysts call 'readiness to the transference'.[1] There is a readiness to the transference in the patient solely by virtue of his placing himself in the position of acknowledging himself in speech, and searching out his truth to the end, the

[1] English in the original.

end which is there, in the analyst. The analyst's ignorance is also worthy of consideration.

The analyst must not fail to recognise what I will call the dimension of ignorance's power of accession to being, since he has to reply to the person who, throughout his discourse, questions him in this dimension. He doesn't have to guide the subject to a *Wissen*, to knowledge, but on to the paths by which access to this knowledge is gained. He must engage him in a dialectical operation, not say to him that he is wrong since he necessarily is in error, but show him that he speaks poorly, that is to say that he speaks without knowing, as one who is ignorant, because what counts are the paths of his error.

Psychoanalysis is a dialectic, what Montaigne, in book III, chapter VIII, calls *an art of conversation*.[2] The art of conversation of Socrates in the *Meno* is to teach the slave to give his own speech its true meaning. And it is the same in Hegel. In other words, the position of the analyst must be that of an *ignorantia docta*, which does not mean knowing [*savante*], but formal, and what is capable of being formative for the subject.

Because it is in the air these days, these days of hatred, there is a great temptation to transform the *ignorantia docta* into what I have called, and this is hardly a novelty, an *ignorantia docens*. If the psychoanalyst thinks he knows something, in psychology for example, then that is already the beginning of his loss, for the simple reason that in psychology nobody knows much, except that psychology is itself an error of perspective on the human being.

I will have to use banal examples to make you understand what the realisation of the being of man is, because in spite of yourselves you put it in an erroneous perspective, that of a false knowledge.

All the same you must have realised that, when a man says *I am*, or *I will be*, even *I will have been* or *I want to be*, there is always a jump, a gap. It is just as extravagant, in relation to reality, to say *I am a psychoanalyst* as *I am king*. Both the one and the other are entirely valid affirmations, which nothing, however, in the order of what one might call the measure of capacities justifies. The symbolic legitimations by virtue of which a man takes on what is conferred on him by others entirely escapes the register of entitlements to office.[3]

When a man refuses to be king, it does not have at all the same value as when he accepts. By the very fact of refusing, he is not king. He is a petit bourgeois – take for example the Duke of Windsor. The man who, just on the brink of being invested with the dignity of the crown, says – *I want to live with the woman I love* – simply because of that remains on this side of the domain of being king.

But when the man says – and in saying it, is it, by virtue of a certain system of symbolic relations – says *I am king* – it is not simply accepting an office. From

[2] '*un art de conférer*'.
[3] '*habilitations capacitaires*'.

one minute to the next the meaning of all his psychological attributes changes. His passions, his plans, even his stupidity take on an entirely different meaning. All of these functions become, solely by virtue of the fact of his being the king, royal functions. In the register of royalty, his intelligence becomes something quite different, even his inabilities start to polarise, to structure an entire series of destinies around him, destinies which are found to be profoundly modified for the reason that the royal authority will be exercised in this or that way by the person who has been invested with it.

This happens on a small scale every day – a gentleman who has decidedly mediocre qualities and who presents all sorts of problems in a low-level job, is raised up in to an investiture that is sovereign in some way, however limited the domain may be, and he changes entirely. All you have to do is observe him everyday, the significance of his strengths as well as his weaknesses is transformed, and their relations may well be reversed.

That is also what habilitations, examinations reveal in an unobtrusive, concealed fashion. Why, given the time that has elapsed since we became such clever psychologists, haven't we eliminated the various milestones which formerly had the value of initiations, the degrees, the competitive examinations, etc? If we have truly eliminated this value, why not pare down the investiture to the totalisation of the work acquired, the notes taken down over the year, or even to a set of tests or examinations measuring the abilities of the subjects? Why retain this vague archaic character for these examinations? We protest against these elements of chance and fortune like people throwing themselves against the walls of the prison they themselves have built. The truth is simply that a competitive examination, in as much as it clothes the subject with a qualification which is symbolic, cannot be given an entirely rationalised structure, and cannot just be inserted into the register of the addition of quantity.

So, when we meet this, we think how clever we are and tell ourselves – *But of course, let's write a great psychoanalytic article so as to show the initiatory character of the examination.*

This character is obvious. It is fortunate that we are aware of it. But it is unfortunate that the psychoanalyst doesn't always explain it very well. His is a partial discovery, which he explains in terms of omnipotence of thoughts, of magical thought, whereas it is the dimension of the symbol which is fundamental here.

3

Who has got other questions to raise?

DR BEJARANO: *I have a concrete example in mind. You should try to show us how the different registers are followed out in the case of Dora.*

In the Dora case, one remains somewhat on the threshold of that, but even so I can place it for you a little by giving a final reply to the question of the transference as a whole.

The analytic experience is founded on Freud's first discoveries, on the tripod dream, slip, joke. The symptom is a fourth element, which can serve, not as *verbum*, since it is not constructed out of phonemes, but as *signum*, with the organism as ground – if you can recall the various spheres distinguished in Augustine's text. It is within this experience, and with some delay in the founding of the latter – Freud himself says that he was frightened – that he isolates the phenomenon of the transference. For want of being recognised, the transference operated as an obstacle to the treatment. Once recognised, it becomes the mainstay of the treatment.

But even before he had become aware of the existence of transference, Freud had already designated it. In the *Traumdeutung*, there is, in effect, already a definition of the *Übertragung* as a function of the double level of speech, as I have put it to you. There are parts of the discourse which are disinvested of significations which another signification, the unconscious signification, will take from behind. Freud demonstrates it with respect to the dream, and I have pointed it out to you in some striking slips.

It's a pity I have not talked much about the slip this year. Now, that is a fundamental dimension, since it is the radical facet of the non-meaning which all meaning possesses. There is a point where meaning emerges, and is created. But even at this very point, man is very easily capable of feeling that the meaning is at the same time annihilated, that it is created so as to be annihilated. What's a joke? – if not the calculated irruption of non-sense into a discourse which seems to make sense.

O. MANNONI: *It is the navel of speech.*

Exactly. In the dream, there is an extremely confused navel. Inversely, the navel of the joke is perfectly sharp – the *Witz*. And what expresses its most radical essence is non-sense.

Well, we realise this transference is our mainstay.

I pointed out three senses in which different authors understand it. This tripartition, which is only didactic, should allow you to get your bearings amidst the various present-day analytic tendencies – and that is not very encouraging.

Some want to understand the phenomenon of transference in relation to the real, that is to say in as much as it is a phenomenon taking place in the present. One thinks one is making a real breakthrough when one says that every analysis must bear on the *hic et nunc*. One thinks one has found something quite dazzling in that, one thinks one has taken a bold step forward. On this theme

Ezriel writes some very touching things, breaking down doors which are already open: the transference is there, it is simply a matter of knowing what it is. If we take transference on the plane of the real, that is what it yields – a real which is not real, but illusory. What is real is that the subject is there, telling me about his dealings with his grocer. What is illusory is that in complaining about his grocer, it is me he is bawling out – that is one of Ezriel's examples. So he thereby concludes that one should demonstrate to the subject that there is really no reason for bawling me out because of his grocer.

Thus, starting off from the emotions, from the affective, from abreaction, and from other terms designating a certain number of the partitioned phenomena which indeed come about during analysis, one nonetheless ends up, I'll have you notice, with something essentially intellectual. To proceed along these lines leads in the end to a practice equivalent to the original forms of indoctrination which scandalise us so much in Freud's behaviour with his early cases. One would have to teach the subject how to act in the real, show him that he is behind the times. If that is not education and indoctrination, I wonder what is. In any case it is an entirely superficial way of dealing with the phenomenon.

There is another way of approaching the problem of transference, which is to place it on the level of that imaginary whose importance I do not fail to underline here. The relatively recent development of animal ethology allows us to give it a much clearer structuration than Freud could. But this dimension has certainly been named as such in Freud's text – *imaginare*. How could he have avoided it? You have seen as much this year in 'On narcissism: an introduction', the relation of the living organism to the objects that it desires is linked to the conditions of the *Gestalt* which locate the function of the imaginary as such.

The function of the imaginary is not at all overlooked in analytic theory, but to introduce it only in order to deal with transference is to pull the wool over both eyes, because it is present everywhere, and in particular whenever identification is at issue. Except, one musn't use it without rhyme or reason.

Let us note in this connection that the function of the imaginary is at work in the behaviour of every animal couple.

A dimension of parade appears in every action that is linked up with the moment of pairing of individuals caught up in their cycle of sexual behaviour. In the course of the sexual parade, each of the individuals finds himself captated into a dual situation, in which what is set up, via the go-between of the imaginary relation, is an identification – no doubt only momentarily, on account of its being linked to the instinctual cycle.

Similarly, in the course of the struggle between males, one can see subjects coming to an agreement in an imaginary struggle, in which there is, between the adversaries, a regulation at a distance, transforming the struggle into a

dance. And, at a given moment, as in pairing, roles are chosen, one of them is recognised as dominant, without it coming down, I won't say to blows, but to claws, teeth, or prickly spines. One of the partners takes on a passive attitude and submits to the superiority of the other. He gives way to him, adopts one of the roles, quite clearly as a function of the other, that is to say as a function of what the other has made a claim to on the plane of the *Gestalt*. The adversaries avoid a real struggle which would lead to the destruction of one of them – and transpose the conflict on to the imaginary plane. Each takes his bearings on the other's image, what results is a regulation in which the roles are distributed within the situation as a whole, within the dyadic set-up.

In man, the imaginary is reduced, specialised, centred on the specular image, which creates both impasses and the function of the imaginary relation.

The image of the ego – simply because it is an image, the ego is ideal ego – sums up the entire imaginary relation in man. By being produced at a time when the functions are not yet completed, it has a salutary value, expressed well enough in the jubilatory assumption of the mirror phenomenon, but it does not possess any the less of a connection with the vital prematuration and hence with an original deficit, with a gap to which it remains linked in its structure.

The subject will rediscover over and over again that this image of self is the very framework of his categories, of his apprehension of the world – of the object, and he will achieve this through the intermediary of the other. It is in the other that he will always rediscover his ideal ego, from whence develops the dialectic of his relations to the other.

If the other saturates, fills this image, he becomes the object of a narcissistic investment, that of *Verliebtheit*. Recall Werther meeting Charlotte just when she is holding a child in her arms – that hits the bull's-eye of the narcissistic image of the novel's young hero. If, on the contrary, on the same slope, the other manifests himself as frustrating the subject of his ideal and of his own image, it engenders the maximal destructive tension. A mere nothing turns the imaginary relation to the other either this way or that, giving us the key to the questions which Freud raises apropos of the transformation that takes place, in *Verliebtheit*, between love and hate.

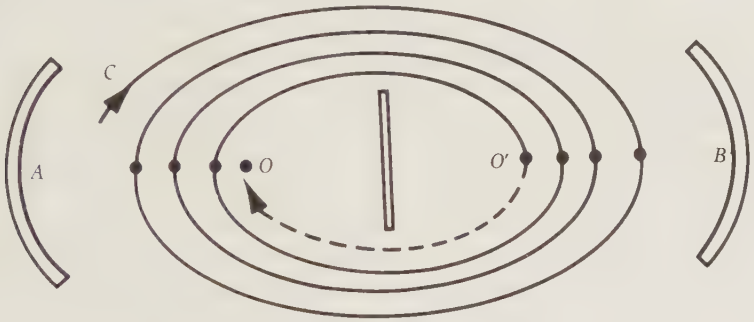
This phenomenon of imaginary investment plays a pivotal role in the transference.

If it is true that the transference is established in and through the dimension of speech, it only brings about the revelation of this imaginary relation at certain crucial points in the spoken encounter with the other, that is to say, in this instance, with the analyst. The discourse, stripped of a certain number of its conventions by the so-called fundamental rule, begins to move, more or less freely, in relation to ordinary discourse, and opens up the subject to this fertile mistake through which genuine speech joins up once again with the discourse

of error. But also, when speech flees from revelation, from fertile error, and develops into deception – an essential dimension, whose existence precisely forbids us from eliminating the subject as such from our experience, and from reducing that experience[4] to objective terms – what is discovered are those points which, in the subject's history, have not been integrated, taken on, but repressed.

In the discourse of analysis, the subject develops what is his truth, his integration, his history. But there are some holes in this history, where what had been *verworfen* or *verdrängt* took place. *Verdrängt* – come for a moment into discourse and was rejected. *Verworfen* – the rejection is primal. For the present I don't want to talk at any further length about this distinction.

The phenomenon of transference encounters the imaginary crystallisation. It revolves around it and it has to join up with it again.



A schema of analysis

At *O*, I place the unconscious notion of the ego of the subject. This unconscious is made up of what the subject essentially fails to recognise in his structuring image, in the image of his ego – namely those captivations by imaginary fixations which were unassimilable to the symbolic development of his history – this means that it was traumatic.

What is involved in analysis? That the subject be able to totalise the various accidents the memory of which is retained in *O*, in a form closed off to him. It only opens up through verbalisation, that is to say through the mediation of the other, that is the analyst. It is through the spoken assumption of his history that the subject becomes committed to the path of bringing into being his truncated imaginary.

This complementation of the imaginary is achieved in the other, in as much as the subject assumes it in his discourse, in so far as he gets the other to hear it.

What is on the side of *O* passes over to the side of *O'*. Everything which is

[4] *'de la réduire'* in the original. I have chosen to make it clear in the translation that *'la'* refers to *'l'expérience'*, and not to *'le sujet'*.

proffered from *A*, from the side of the subject, makes itself heard in *B*, on the side of the analyst.

The analyst hears it, but, in return, so does the subject. The echo of his discourse is symmetrical to the specularity of the image. This revolving dialogue, which I represent on the schema by a spiral, binds *O'* and *O* more tightly. The progress of the subject in his being must finally bring him to *O*, via a series of points spaced between *A* and *O*.

On this line, the subject, settling down to his labour, over and over again,[5] acknowledging his history in the first person, makes progress into the order of fundamental symbolic relations in which he has to find the time, resolving the halts and the inhibitions which make up the super-ego. You need time for that.

If the echos of the discourse come together too quickly from point *O'* – that is to say if the transference gets too intense – a critical phenomenon takes place, evoking resistance, resistance in the most acute form in which it manifests itself – silence. So you see why, don't you, as Freud says, the transference becomes an obstacle when it is excessive.

It must also be said, that, if this moment comes at an opportune time, the silence takes on its full value as silence – it is not simply negative, but has value as a beyond of speech. Certain moments of silence in the transference represent the most vivid apprehension of the presence of the other as such.

One final remark. Where should the subject be placed, in so far as it is to be distinguished from point *O*? It is necessarily somewhere between *A* and *O* – much closer to *O* than any other point – let us say, so as to come back to it, in *C*.

When you will have left me for holidays which I hope will be happy, I beseech you to reread the precious little technical writings of Freud in the light of these reflections. Reread them, and you will see the extent to which they will take on a new and more vital meaning for you. You will realise that the apparent contradictions regarding transference, simultaneously resistance and motor of the analysis, can only be understood within the dialectic of the imaginary and the symbolic.

Analysts whose teaching is by no means lacking in merit have argued that the most up to date technique of analysis, that which has taken to itself the title of the analysis of resistances, consists in isolating off from the ego of the subject – single out,[6] which is Bibring's term[7] – a certain number of patterns[6] which are manifested as defence mechanisms, in relation to the analyst. That is a radical perversion of the notion of defence as introduced by Freud in his early writings, and reintroduced by him at the time of 'Inhibitions, symptoms and anxiety', one of his most difficult articles and one which has lent itself to most misunderstandings.

[5] *'remettant cent fois l'ouvrage sur le métier'* – see p. 187 n1 above.
[6] English in the original. [7] Bergler in the original.

There's an intellectual operation for you. Because it is no longer a question of analysing the symbolic character of the defences, but of lifting them, in so far as they constitute an obstacle to a beyond, a beyond which is nothing more than a beyond – it doesn't matter what one puts into it. Read Fenichel, you will see that everything can be approached from the point of view of defence. Does the subject give himself over to the confession of tendencies whose sexual or aggressive character is completely acknowledged? From the simple fact of his having told you them, one can very easily set oneself looking for something beyond which is much more neutral. If one qualifies everything which is made manifest at the outset as a defence, everything can be legitimately considered as a mask, behind which something else is hidden. This systematic inversion is the butt of Jean Cocteau's famous jest – if you can tell someone that he dreams of an umbrella for sexual reasons, why not tell him when he dreams of an eagle swooping down on him to savage him that it is on account of his having forgotten his umbrella?

In centring analytic intervention on the dissipation of patterns[8] which hide this beyond, the analyst has no other guide than his own conception of the subject's behaviour. He attempts to normalise it – in accordance with a norm that is coherent with his own *ego*. So this will always be a modelling of one *ego* by another *ego*, hence by a superior *ego* – as everyone knows, the analyst's *ego* is not negligible.

Read Nunberg. What is the essential mainspring of the treatment in his eyes? The good will of the subject's *ego*, which must become the ally of the analyst. What does that mean? – except that the subject's new *ego* is the *ego* of the analyst. And Hoffer is there to tell us that the normal end of the treatment is identification with the *ego* of the analyst.

Of this end, which is none other than the spoken assumption of the ego, the reintegration not of the ideal ego, but of the ego-ideal, Balint gives us a very moving description. The subject enters into a semi-maniacal state, a sort of sublime release, a freedom from a narcissistic image through the world – for which one must allow him a bit of time so he can pull himself together and rediscover all by himself the paths of common sense.

This conception is not entirely false, since there really is a temporal factor in an analysis. And, besides, this is what has always been said, in a confused fashion, to be sure. Every analyst can only grasp it in his experience – there is a certain staggering of the time-for-understanding. Those of you who came to my discussions on the *Wolfman* will see in this a reference. But you will rediscover this time-for-understanding in Freud's Papers on Technique in connection with *Durcharbeiten*.

Is that something like borrowing from psychology? Or is it rather, as I said in

[8] English in the original.

what I wrote on empty and full speech, something from the order of discourse, from discourse as labour? Yes, without a shadow of a doubt. The discourse has to be maintained for a long enough time for it to appear as entirely engaged in the construction of the *ego*. From that point on, it may quite suddenly be resolved into the person for whom it was constructed, that is to say the master. By the same token, its own value falls, and now appears just as labour.

Where does this take us? – if not to grant once again that the concept is time. In this sense, one can say that the transference is the very concept of analysis, because it is the time of analysis.

The so-called analysis of resistances is always too much in a hurry to unveil for the subject the patterns[9] of the *ego*, its defences, hideaways, and that is why experience shows us and Freud teaches us in a specific passage in the Papers on Technique – such an analysis won't get the subject to take one more step. Freud says, when this happens, you have to wait.

You have to wait. You have to wait as long as it takes for the subject to realise the dimension at stake on the plane of the symbol, that is to say to disengage from the thing experienced in analysis – from this pursuit, from this brawl, from this tight embrace which the analysis of resistances produces – the appropriate duration of certain repetition-compulsions, which in some way gives them symbolic value.

O. MANNONI: *I think that that is a concrete problem. For example, there are some obsessionals whose lives consist in waiting. They turn their analyses into another waiting. That is exactly what I want to get to grips with – why does this waiting of the analysis reproduce in a certain manner the waiting in life, and change it?*

Exactly, and that is what has been asked of me with respect to the case of Dora. Last year, I developed the dialectic of the *Ratman* around the master-slave relation. What is the obsessional waiting for? The death of the master. What use does this waiting have for him? It is interposed between him and death. When the master is dead, everything will begin. You re-encounter this structure in all its guises.

What is more, he is right, the slave, he is quite right in banking on this waiting. To take up a comment attributed to Tristan Bernard, the day he was arrested to be brought to the Danzig camp -- *Up to now we have been living in anxiety, now we are going to live in hope.*[10]

The master, let us get it straight, has a much more abrupt relation to death. The master in the pure state is in a desperate position in this respect, because he has nothing but his own death to wait for, since he expects nothing from the death of his slave, except a little inconvenience. On the other hand, the slave

[9] English in the original.

[10] Paul Bernard, usually known as Tristan Bernard, (1866–1947), novelist and playwright.

has a great deal to expect from the master's death. Beyond the death of the master, he really will be obliged to confront death, as every fully realised being has to, and to assume, in the Heideggerian sense, his being-for-death. Now precisely, the obsessional does not assume his being-for-death, he has been reprieved, that is what has to be shown him. That is the function of the image of the master as such.

O. MANNONI: . . . *who is the analyst.*

. . . who is embodied in the analyst. It is only after having sketched out several times the imaginary exits from the master's prison, and done this in accordance with certain scansions, in accordance with a certain timing,[11] it is only then that the obsessional can realise the concept of his obsessions, that is to say what they signify.

In each obsessional case, there necessarily is a certain number of temporal scansions, and even numerical signs. I have already touched on that in an article on 'Logical time'.[12] The subject thinking the thought of the other, sees in the other the image and the sketch of his own movements. Now, each time the other is exactly the same as the subject, there is no other master than the absolute master, death. But the slave requires a certain time to see that.

All because, like everyone else, he is much too happy being a slave.

Jacques Lacan has figurines representing elephants handed out.

7 July 1954

[11] English in the original.
[12] E 197–213.

APPENDIX

A spoken commentary on Freud's *Verneinung*, by Jean Hyppolite*

To start off with, I must thank Dr Lacan for his insisting on my giving you a presentation of this article of Freud's, because it gave me the occasion for a night's work; and of bringing you the fruit of this labour.[1] I hope that it will prove worthy in your eyes. Dr Lacan made sure to send me the German text with the French. That was a wise thing to do, because I don't think I would have understood anything in the French text, if I hadn't had the German.[2]

I wasn't familiar with this text. It has an absolutely extraordinary structure,

* [Originally published as 'Commentaire parlée sur la *Verneinung* de Freud', *La Psychanalyse* 1, 1956, 29–40. Reprinted as Appendice I to Lacan's *Écrits*, pp. 879–87, and also in Jean Hyppolite, *Figures de la pensée philosophique. écrits de Jean Hyppolite*. Paris: P.U.F. 1971, vol. I, pp. 385–96. We would like to thank Presses Universitaires de France for permission to translate this text.

It will be clear from what follows that the task of translating this talk is a peculiarly complicated one, since Hyppolite is sometimes commenting on the German text (in French), sometimes commenting on the French translation of the German text, and English readers will wish to rely upon the English translation of SE. On occasion, Hyppolite's rendition of the German text differs considerably from that of SE; notes will indicate this where necessary. The SE translation has been relied upon and often adapted (see p. 292 n10 below for a major inaccuracy in it).

There is an additional complication owing to the lack of fit between key terms in German, French and English. As Strachey notes, the translation of '*Verneinung*' by 'negation' was chosen to distinguish it from 'denial', which had previously been used to translate '*Verleugnung*', but which SE renders with 'disavowal'. (There is also the third term in this series, '*Verwerfung*', translated in SE by 'repudiation'.) While Hyppolite explicitly recognises the value of translating '*Verneinung*' by '*dénégation*', rather than by '*négation*', he does not appear to hold consistently to this practice; hence, where 'negation' appears in the text, it corresponds to '*dénégation*'; where '*negation*' was used in the original, the French word appears in square brackets afterwards.

Having been translated from the Appendix prepared in 1966 for the *Écrits*, this is the one passage in the Seminar with annotations supplied by Lacan and by the editor of *Ecrits*, Jacques-Alain Miller. Notes added for the English edition are to be found in roman square brackets; annotations and additions already present in the body of the French text are to be found in ⟨ ⟩.]

[1] '*Je t'apporte l'enfant d'une nuit d'Idumée.*' (J. L.) ['I bring you the fruit of a night of Idumée' – reference unclear.]

[2] The French translation of Freud's *Verneinung* appeared in volume VII, no. 2 of the official organ of the Société Psychanalytique de Paris, in 1934, under the title *La négation*. The German text first appeared in *Imago* IX, in 1925, and has been reproduced in several collections of Freud's works. It can be found in GW XIV, as the second article, pp. 11–15. [The English translation, entitled 'Negation', is to be found in SE XIX 235–9; the newer German edition is Stud III 373–7.]

and deep down it is extremely enigmatic. Its construction is not at all that of a professor. The text's construction is, I don't want to say dialectical, so as not to abuse the word, but extremely subtle. And it obliged me to give myself over, with both the German text and French text (in which the translation is not very accurate but is, in the end, when compared with others, honest enough) to a genuine interpretation. And this is the interpretation I am going to offer you. I think it is valid, but it is not the only possible one and it is certainly worth talking over.

Freud begins by introducing the title *Die Verneinung*. And I realised, making the same discovery Dr Lacan had already made, that it would be better to translate it by '*la dénégation*'.

In the same way, further on you will find *etwas im Urteil verneinen*, which is not 'the negation of something in the judgement',[3] but a sort of readjudication [*déjugement*].[4] Throughout this text, I think one must distinguish between the negation [*négation*] internal to judgement and the attitude of negation [*négation*]; otherwise it doesn't seem possible to understand it.

The French text doesn't bring out the extremely concrete, almost entertaining style of the examples of negation with which Freud starts off. To start off with, take the following one, which contains a projection whose role you can easily locate given the analyses this seminar has engaged in, in which the patient, let us call him the person being psychoanalysed [*psychanalysé*], says to his analyst: 'Now you'll think I mean to say something insulting, but really I've no such intention.' 'We realise', Freud says, 'that this is a rejection, by projection, of an idea that has just come up.'[5]

'I came to realise that when, in daily life, as frequently happens, we want to say "assuredly I do not want to insult you by saying what I am saying", one should translate this by "I want to insult you." Such an intention is never lacking.'[6]

But this remark leads Freud to a very daring generalisation, through which he will address the problem of negation in so far as it might be the very origin of

[3] [SE: 'to negate something in a judgement']

[4] As is sufficiently indicated by the following sentence, in making the *Verurteilung*, that is the condemnation that it designates as the equivalent (*Ersatz* [SE: substitute]) of repression, whose very *no* must be taken as a hall-mark, into a certificate of origin comparable to the *made in Germany* impressed upon an object. (J. L.) [The phrase 'Made in Germany' appears in English in the original German (and in the French), thus highlighting that the hall-mark of repression is written in a foreign language. There is a historical aspect to this: the requirement that German goods display a hall-mark of origin (written in English) was imposed on the governments of Germany and Austria following the First World War (and hence a few years before Freud was writing): the ruling was intended to facilitate discrimination against German goods by stigmatising them. In fact, it had the opposite effect, since goods bearing the stamp 'Made in Germany' thereupon became sought after.]

[5] [SE XIX 235]

[6] [It is not clear why this passage is in quotation marks, since it is not a quotation from Freud's text.]

intelligence. That is how I understand the paper, in all its philosophical density.

In the same way, he gives an example of someone saying: 'You ask who this person in the dream can be. It's *not* my mother.' In which case, the question is settled, we can be sure that it is indeed her.

He goes on to cite a procedure which is useful to the psychoanalyst but in addition, we would say, to anyone, for clarifying what it is that has been repressed in a given situation. 'What would you consider the most unlikely thing in that situation? What do you think was furthest from your mind at that time?' And the patient, or it might just as easily be anyone you happen to be talking to, at a party or over supper, if he lets himself be caught in your trap and indeed tells you what he considers to be the most unbelievable thing, then that is what one has to believe.

So this is an analysis of concrete goings on, generalised until its basis is encountered in a mode of presenting what one is in the mode of not being it. Because that is exactly how it is constituted: 'I am going to tell you what I am not; pay attention, that is exactly what I am.' That is how Freud engages with the function of negation and, in order to do this, he uses a word which I could not but feel at home with, the word *Aufhebung*, which, as you know, has had a variety of destinies; it is not for me to say it . . .

DR LACAN: But if not you, then who else will it fall to?

M. HYPPOLITE: It is Hegel's dialectical word, which means simultaneously to deny, to suppress and to conserve, and fundamentally to raise up. In reality, it might be the *Aufhebung* of a stone, or equally the stopping of my newspaper subscription. At this point Freud tells us: 'negation is already an *Aufhebung* of the repression, though not, of course, an acceptance of what is repressed.'[7]

This is the start of something truly extraordinary in Freud's analysis, whereby what emerges from these anecdotes, which we might well have taken for nothing more than anecdotes, are implications of prodigious philosophical importance, which I will attempt to summarise in a moment.

Presenting one's being in the mode of not being it, that is truly what is at issue in this *Aufhebung* of the repression, which isn't an acceptance of what is repressed. The person speaking says: 'This is what I am not.' It would no longer be repressed, if repression signified unconsciousness, since it is conscious. But in its essentials, the repression persists,[8] in the form of non-acceptance.

Here Freud is going to lead us through an argument of extreme philosophical subtlety, in which it would be a gross lapse of attention to overlook the remark that Freud makes, simply on account of its everyday use which we never reflect on, that 'in this the intellectual function is separated from the affective process'.

[7] [SE XIX 235–6]

[8] *'bei Fortbestand des Wesentlichen an der Verdrängung'* [GW XIV 12; Stud III 374].

Because, in the manner in which he then goes on to deal with it, there's a truly profound discovery.

Extending my hypothesis, I would say that, in proposing an analysis of the intellectual, he does not show how the intellectual is separated from the affective, but how it, the intellectual, is that sort of suspension of content for which the term, in rather barbaric language, sublimation[9] is not inappropriate. Perhaps what is born here is thought as such; but not before the content has been affected by a negation.

To refer to a philosophical text (which I once again ask you to excuse me for, although Dr Lacan is my surety here with respect to such a necessity), at the end of one of Hegel's chapters, the issue becomes that of substituting genuine negativity for that destructive appetite which takes hold of desire and which is there conceived of in a profoundly mythical rather than psychological manner, substituting, I was saying, for this destructive appetite which takes hold of desire and which is such that in the final outcome of the primordial struggle in which the two combatants confront one another, there would be no one left to remark the victory or the defeat of the one or the other, an ideal negation [*négation*].

The negation which Freud is here talking of clearly shows us, in so far as it is different from the ideal negation [*négation*] in which the intellectual is constituted, the sort of genesis whose vestiges Freud points to, in bringing his text to a conclusion [*moment de conclure*], in the negativism characteristic of certain psychotics.[10] And Freud goes on to give us an account of what differentiates this point from negativity, all the while speaking mythically.

In my view, this is what has to be acknowledged in order to understand what, in this article, is being spoken of, quite properly, under the name of negation, even though it isn't immediately visible. Similarly, one must take cognisance of an asymmetry expressed by two different words in Freud's text – which have been translated by the same word in French – an asymmetry between the emergence of affirmation starting off from the unifying drive [*tendance*] of love, and the genesis, starting off with the destructive drive [*tendance*], of that negation whose true function is that of giving rise to intelligence and the very starting point of thought.

But let us make our way with more care.

We have seen that Freud posits the intellectual as separated from the affective: whatever is yet to be added to this by the desired modification of

[9] We intend some day to establish a strict definition for analysis for this term – something which has not yet been done. (J. L. 1955). A promise since kept (1966).

[10] '*Die allgemeine Verneinungslust, der Negativismus mancher Psychotiker, ist wahrscheinlich als Anzeichen der Triebentmischung durch Abzug der libidinosen Komponenten zu verstehen.*' ['The general pleasure in negation, the negativism of many psychotics, is probably to be understood as a sign of a defusion of drives that has taken place through a withdrawal of the libidinal components.' (GW XIV 15; Stud III 376–7; SE XIX 239 – translation modified: amongst other imprecisions, SE gives 'wish to negate' for '*Verneinungslust*')]

analysis, 'the acceptance of what is repressed', repression is not, for all that, suppressed. Let us try to represent the situation.

First stage: this is what I am not. One concludes from that what I am. Repression still subsists in the guise of negation.

Second stage: the psychoanalyst obliges me to accept intellectually what I just denied; and Freud adds, after a dash and without any further explanation – 'the repressive process itself is not yet removed (*aufgehoben*) by this'.

Which seems very profound to me. If the analysand accepts, he renounces his negation, and yet the repression is still there! I conclude from this that one must do what Freud didn't do: call what happens here by a philosophical term – the negation of the negation. Literally, what appears here is intellectual affirmation, which is only intellectual, in so far as it is negation of the negation. These terms are not to be found in Freud, but I think that all we're doing is taking his thought one step further by formulating it in this way. That is what he really means.

At this point (let us be vigilant over a difficult text!) Freud finds himself in a position where he can show how the intellectual separates itself ⟨in action⟩[11] from the affective, to give a formulation of a sort of genesis of judgement, that is, in short, a genesis of thought.

I apologise to the psychologists here, but I do not much like positive psychology in itself; one might take this genesis for a positive psychology. To me its implications seem more profound in belonging to the order of history and of myth. And I think, given the role that Freud has this primordial affectivity play, in so far as it is the progenitor of intelligence, that it should be understood in the way that Dr Lacan teaches: that is to say that the primal form of relation known psychologically as the affective is itself situated within the distinctive field of the human situation, and that, if it engenders intelligence, it is because it already, from its beginnings, brings with it a fundamental historicity. There is no pure affective on the one hand, entirely engaged in the real, and the pure intellectual on the other, which detaches itself from it in order to grasp it once again. In the genesis described here, I see a sort of grand myth. And behind the appearance of Freud's positivity, there's this grand myth sustaining it.

What does that imply? Behind affirmation,[12] what is there? *Vereinigung*, which is Eros. And what is there behind negation (careful – intellectual negation will be something more)? The emergence of a fundamental asymmetrical symbol. Primordial affirmation is nothing more than affirming; but to deny is more than to wish to destroy.

The process which leads to that point, which has been translated by *rejet* [rejection], without Freud having used the term *Verwerfung*,[13] is still yet more forcefully accented, since he uses *Ausstossung*, which means expulsion.

[11] Words added. These will be indicated from now on by similar brackets.
[12] *Bejahung*. [13] [See p. 43 n8 above.]

Here, then, in some way one finds ⟨the formal couple⟩ of two primary forces: the force of attraction[14] and the force of repulsion, both, it appears, under the domination of the pleasure principle, which in this text cannot but strike one.[15]

So, here judgement has its primary history. And at this point Freud distinguishes two types:

In conformity with what everyone learns concerning the elements of philosophy, there is a judgement of attribution and a judgement of existence. 'The function of judgement . . . affirms or disaffirms the possession by a thing of a particular attribute, and it asserts or disputes that a presentation has an existence in reality.'

And Freud then shows what lies behind the judgement of attribution and behind the judgement of existence. It seems to me that in order to understand this paper, one should consider the negation [*négation*] of the attributive judgement and the negation [*négation*] of the judgement of existence as being on this side of negation [*négation*] when it appears in its symbolic function. At bottom, judgement doesn't yet exist in this moment of emergence, rather there is a primary myth of the outside and the inside, and that is what has to be understood.

You can sense the implication of this myth of the formation of the outside and the inside: that of alienation, which is founded in these two terms. What is translated in their formal opposition becomes, beyond, alienation and hostility between the two.

What makes these four or five pages so dense is that, as you see, they put everything in question, and in them one is led from concrete remarks, seemingly so slight and yet so profound in their generality, to something which sweeps away an entire philosophy, by which we should understand an entire structure of thought.

Behind the judgement of attribution, what is there? There is the 'I should like to take in (to myself) [(*m'*)*approprier*], introject' or the 'I should like to eject.'

In the beginning, Freud seems to be saying, but in the beginning means nothing more than the myth 'once upon a time' . . . Within this history, once upon a time there was an ego (by which we here should understand a subject) for which nothing as yet was alien.

Distinguishing between the alien and itself is an operation, an expelling. Which renders comprehensible a proposition which, having emerged rather abruptly, seems for a moment to be contradictory:

'*Das Schlechte*, what is bad, *das dem Ich Fremde*, what is alien to the ego, *das Außenbefindliche*, what is external, *ist ihm zunächst identisch*, are, to begin with, identical.'

[14] *Einbeziehung*.

[15] The seminar in which J. L. gave a commentary on *Beyond the pleasure principle* took place in 1954–55.

Now, just before, Freud had said that one introjects and one ejects, that therefore there is an operation which is the operation of expulsion ⟨without which⟩ the operation of introjection ⟨would have no meaning⟩. So that is the primordial operation upon which the judgement of attribution is founded.

But what lies at the origin of the judgement of existence is the relation between representation and perception. And here it is very difficult to miss the sense in which Freud deepens this relation. What is important is that, 'in the beginning', it is of no importance to know whether something exists or doesn't exist. The subject reproduces its presentation of things from the primitive perception it had of them. Now, when he says that this exists, the question is ⟨not⟩[16] one of knowing whether this presentation still preserves its state in reality but if it can or cannot be refound. Such is the relation which Freud stresses: he founds [the testing] of the presentation by reality in the possibility of its object being refound once again. This emphasis on the source of repetition shows that Freud is working in a more profound dimension than that of Jung, the latter's dimension being more properly that of memory.[17] At this point one must not lose the thread of his analysis. (But it is so difficult and detailed that I am afraid of losing you.)

What was at issue in the judgement of attribution was expelling or introjecting. In the judgement of existence, it is a question of attributing to the ego, or rather to the subject (it is more comprehensive), a presentation to which its object no longer corresponds, although an object had once corresponded to it, through a retracing of its steps. What is here in question is the genesis 'of the external and of the internal'.

Hence this offers us, Freud tells us, 'an insight into the origin' of judgement, 'from the interplay of the primary drive-impulses'. So here there is a sort of 'continuation, along lines of expediency, of the original process by which the ego took things into itself [*appropriation au moi*][18] or expelled them from itself, according to the pleasure principle.'

'*Die Bejahung*, affirmation, Freud tells us, *als Ersatz der Vereinigung*, in so far as it is simply the equivalent of unification, *gehört dem Eros an*, belongs to Eros': this is what lies at the source of affirmation. For example, in the judgement of attribution, there's the fact of introjecting, of taking into ourselves [*nous approprier*] instead of ejecting outside.

[16] Words added by the editor, in line with Freud's text: '*Der erste und nächste Zweck der Realitätsprüfung ist also nicht, ein dem Vorgestellten entsprechendes Objekt in der realen Wahrnehmung zu finden, sondern es* wiederzufinden, *sich zu überzeugen, daß es noch vorhanden ist.*' [GW XIV 14; Stud III 375] ['The first and immediate aim, therefore, of reality-testing is, not to *find* an object in real perception which corresponds to the one presented, but to *refind* such an object, to convince oneself that it is still there.' (SE XIX 237–8)]

[17] Is the author here referring to Platonic reminiscence? (J. L.)

[18] [The term in the German text at this point is '*Einbeziehung*', earlier rendered as 'attraction', whereas the earlier use of '*approprier*' was a rendering of '*einführen*'; SE renders both '*Einbeziehung*' and '*einführen*' by 'take into'.]

For negation [*négation*], he doesn't employ the word *Ersatz*, but the word *Nachfolge*. But the French translator translates it by the same word as *Ersatz*. The German text gives: affirmation is the *Ersatz* of *Vereinigung*, and negation [*négation*] the *Nachfolge* of expulsion, or more exactly of the instinct of destruction (*Destruktionstrieb*).[19]

As a result this becomes entirely mythical: two instincts which, as it were, are mixed together in this myth which bears the subject: one of unification, the other of destruction. A grand myth, as you see, and one which repeats others. But the little nuance, whereby affirmation in some way only comes to substitute for unification, whereas negation [*négation*] ensues well after expulsion, only this nuance appears to me capable of explaining the sentence which follows, in which it is simply a question of negativism and of the instinct of destruction. In fact this explains how there can be a pleasure in negation, a negativism which results straightforwardly from the suppression[20] of the libidinal components; that is to say what has disappeared in this pleasure in negating (disappeared = repressed) are the libidinal components.

As a consequence, does the instinct of destruction also depend upon ⟨the⟩ pleasure ⟨principle⟩? I think this is very important, crucial for technique.[21]

Except, Freud tells us, 'the performance of the function of judgement is only made possible by *the creation of the symbol of negation*'.[22]

Why doesn't Freud say: the functioning of judgement is rendered possible by affirmation? Because negation [*négation*] has a role to play not as a tendency to destruction, no more than within a form of judgement, but in so far as it is the fundamental attitude of symbolicity rendered explicit.

'The creation of the symbol of negation which has permitted an initial degree of independence in relation to repression and its consequences and, with it, from the compulsion (*Zwang*) of the pleasure principle.'[23]

[19] [For this sentence, SE XIX 239 gives: 'Affirmation – as a substitute for uniting – belongs to Eros; negation – the successor to expulsion – belongs to the instinct of destruction.']

[20] The German *Abzug*: deduction, deducting, withholding, docking, 'what is withheld in the pleasure in negating are the libidinal components'. Its possibility is referred to the *Triebentmischung* which is a sort of return to a pure state, a decanting of drives which is commonly – and mediocrely – translated by: '*désintrication des instincts*' [SE: 'defusion of instincts'].

[21] The admirable way in which M. Hyppolite's presentation at this point presses close to the difficulty appears to me all the more important given that I had not as yet produced the theses that I was to develop in the following year in my commentary on *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, on the death instinct, which is simultaneously both so elusive and so present in this text.

[22] Underlined by Freud. [There is no emphasis of this passage in the German text. Here, the passage is translated directly from the French, since it differs markedly from SE: '*Die Leistung der Urteilsfunktion wird aber erst dadurch ermöglicht, daß die Schöpfung des Verneinungssymbols dem Denken einen ersten Grad von Unabhängigkeit von der Erfolgen der Verdrängung und somit auch vom Zwang des Lustprinzips gestattet hat.*' (GW XIV 15; Stud III 377) 'But the performance of the function of judgement is not made possible until the creation of the symbol of negation has endowed thinking with a first measure of freedom from the consequences of repression and, with it, from the compulsion of the pleasure principle.' (SE XIX 239)]

[23] [See previous note.]

A sentence whose meaning would not have created any problem for me, if I hadn't started off by linking up the tendency to destruction with the pleasure principle.

Because here there is a difficulty. From then on, what does this asymmetry between affirmation and negation [*négation*] signify? It signifies that all of the repressed can once again be taken up and used again in a sort of suspension, and that, in some way, instead of being under the domination of the instincts of attraction and repulsion, a margin of thought can be generated, an appearance of being in the form of non-being, which is generated with negation, that is to say when the symbol of negation [*négation*] is linked up with the concrete attitude of negation.

Because that is how one should understand the text, if one admits its conclusion, which at first seemed so strange to me.

'This view of negation fits in very well with the fact that in analysis we never discover a "no" in the unconscious . . .'

But one certainly finds destruction there. So one must make a clearcut distinction between the instinct of destruction and the form of destruction, otherwise one won't understand what Freud meant. In negation, one should see a concrete attitude at the origin of the explicit symbol of negation [*négation*], which explicit symbol alone makes possible something like the use of the unconscious, all the while maintaining the repression.

Such appears to me to be the meaning of the end of the conclusion cited above: '. . . and that recognition of the unconscious on the part of the ego is expressed in a negative formula'.

That is the summary: in analysis there is no 'no' to be found in the unconscious, but recognition of the unconscious on the part of the ego demonstrates that the ego is always failure to recognise [*méconnaissance*]; even in knowledge [*connaissance*], one always finds, on the part of the ego, in a negative formula, the hall-mark of the possibility of being in possession of the unconscious in refusing it all the while.

'There is no stronger evidence that we have been successful in our effort to uncover the unconscious than when the analysand reacts with the phrase: "I didn't think that", or (even): "I didn't (ever) think of that."'

So, in these four or five pages of Freud's – and I apologise if I myself have demonstrated some difficulty in finding in it what I believe to be its thread – there is, on the one hand, the analysis of that kind of concrete attitude, which emerges simply from observing negation; on the other hand, the possibility of seeing the intellectual dissociate itself 〈in action〉 from the affective; finally, and above all, a genesis of everything which occurs on the level of the primal, and in consequence the origin of judgement and of thought itself (in the form of thought as such, since thought is already there before, in the primal, but it does not figure as thought there) – grasped by means of negation.

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THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN

Book II

The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955

EDITED BY

Jacques-Alain Miller

TRANSLATED BY

Sylvana Tomaselli

WITH NOTES BY

John Forrester

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JACQUES LACAN

BOOK II

By Jacques Lacan

ECRITS: A SELECTION

FEMININE SEXUALITY

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TRANSLATORS' NOTE

1. What follows is a complete translation of the seminar that Jacques Lacan gave in the course of a year's teaching within the training programme of the Société Française de Psychanalyse. The French text was prepared by Jacques-Alain Miller in consultation with Jacques Lacan, from the transcriptions of the seminar. Certain minor errors in the text have been corrected in the translation, and will be incorporated in later editions of the French text. All notes are supplied by John Forrester (who also compiled the index), in order to clarify questions of translation and supply limited bibliographical information.
2. We have aimed at an exact translation. This involves, however, finding appropriate colloquial English to correspond to a text which is both informal and complex – a rendition of Lacan's spoken French. The translation aims at being both informal and literary, corresponding as faithfully as possible with the original text.
3. As we needed to pay additional attention to the German background of many psychoanalytic concepts, in many passages the requirements of three languages had to be taken into account. There has been considerable debate in French analytic circles about the translation of Freud's works, in large part stimulated by these seminars of Lacan's, which, until the early 1960's, were advertised as 'Commentaries on the texts of Freud'. In recent years the admirable English edition of Freud prepared by James Strachey has also been the subject of discussion and criticism in the English-language world. Anticipating the decision of the next Freud translators, we have made one decision which follows the French translations of Freud at the expense of Strachey's: where '*investir, investi, investissement*' appears in the French text, corresponding to the German '*besetzen, besetzt, Besetzung*', we have translated this by 'invest, invested, investment', instead of 'cathect, cathected, cathexis'. We have also translated '*pulsion*', corresponding to '*Trieb*', by 'drive' and '*instinct*', corresponding to '*Instinkt*', by 'instinct'; this decision is hardly

controversial. Both of these decisions accord with Schneiderman's practice.[1] Other decisions are pointed out in the notes.

4. This Seminar, together with Seminar I, which is being published simultaneously, was worked on by both translators so as to produce uniformity in both terminology and style. We have paid considerable attention to the practices of previous translators of Lacan, in particular Anthony Wilden,[2] Alan Sheridan,[3] Stuart Schneiderman and Jacqueline Rose,[4] in the hope that some consistency in the English rendition of Lacan can be achieved. In attempting to follow our predecessors, we came to the conclusion that it was often more accurate to render one single French term by a variety of English terms. This was made all the more necessary in view of the fact that Lacan's 'technical' vocabulary was, throughout his life, always tentative and decidedly in flux. Nonetheless, the translations of the following terms have, or have acquired, such importance in discussion of Lacan's work that it may be useful to point them out, together with certain differences between our translation and that of other Lacan translators.

FRENCH TERM	PREVIOUS TRANSLATORS	THIS TRANSLATION
parole	Word (Wilden)	speech
signification	signification (Sheridan) meaning (Schneiderman)	signification or significance
sens	sense (Schneiderman) meaning (Sheridan)	meaning
signifier		to mean or to signify
travail		labour or work

5. In the original text, words in a language other than French were printed in italics. We have followed this practice, indicating in notes which words in the original appeared in English. An exception to this rule is made for the terms '*ego*' and '*moi*'. Both these terms are translated in this text by 'ego'; when italicized, it is 'ego' in the French; when it is in roman face, the original word is '*moi*'.

JOHN FORRESTER
SYLVANA TOMASELLI
Cambridge, June 1986

[1] In *Returning to Freud: Clinical Psychoanalysis in the School of Lacan*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 1980, pp. vii–viii.

[2] Anthony Wilden, trans. and ed., *The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis*, by J. Lacan, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968.

[3] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: a Selection*, London: Tavistock Publications, 1977; Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1977.

[4] Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, eds., *Feminine Sexuality. Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne*, translated by Jacqueline Rose, London: Macmillan, 1982.

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ABBREVIATIONS

E Lacan, *Écrits*, Paris: Seuil, 1966. Where there are two numbers, separated by /, the first number refers to the page number in the French edition, the second to the page number in *Écrits; a Selection*, translated by Alan Sheridan, London: Tavistock, 1977.

Sem Lacan, *Le Séminaire*, Paris: Seuil, 1973–, (25 volumes).

SE Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (24 volumes), edited by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson, London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1953–74.

GW Freud, *Gesammelte Werke* (18 volumes), London: The Hogarth Press, 1940–68.

Stud Freud, *Studienausgabe* (10 volumes with an unnumbered *Ergänzungsband*, abbreviated as *Erg*), Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1969–75.

Origins Sigmund Freud, *The Origins of Psychoanalysis. Letters to Wilhelm Fliess, Drafts and Notes 1887–1902*, ed. Marie Bonaparte, Anna Freud, Ernst Kris, authorised translation by Eric Mosbacher and James Strachey, introduction by Ernst Kris, London: Imago, 1954.

Robert Paul Robert, *Dictionnaire Alphabétique & Analogique de la Langue Française*, Paris: S.N.L., 1977

The interventions of participants in the Seminar have on occasion been abbreviated by Jacques-Alain Miller; these omissions are indicated by dotted lines.

INTRODUCTION

I

Psychology and metapsychology

TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE
THE DENTIST'S *COGITO*
THE *I* IS NOT THE EGO, THE SUBJECT IS NOT THE INDIVIDUAL
THE CRISIS OF 1920

Hello, dear old friends, so here we are again.

Defining the nature of the ego will take us a long way. Well then, it is from this *long way off* that we will start in order to return back towards the centre – which will bring us back to the *long way*.

Our topic this year is *the Ego in Freud's theory and in the technique of psychoanalysis*. But it isn't only within this theory and this technique that the ego has a meaning, and this is precisely what makes for the complexity of the problem.

The notion of the ego has been developed over the centuries as much by those commonly known as philosophers, with whom we are not afraid to rub shoulders here, as by the communal consciousness. In short, there is a certain pre-analytical notion of the ego – let us agree to call it thus, in order to give ourselves a sense of direction – which exerts an attraction on the radical innovation Freud's theory introduced with respect to this function.

We might well be surprised at such an attraction, indeed even subduction, or subversion, were it not for the fact that the Freudian notion of the ego is so upsetting as to warrant the expression *Copernican revolution*, the meaning of which we apprehended in the course of our meetings last year. These constitute the basis for those we will have this coming year.

The results we arrived at will be almost completely integrated into the new phase in which we now take up Freud's theory again, a theory which remains our guiding thread – do not forget that this is a seminar of texts.

1

The new perspectives opened up by Freud were destined to abolish the preceding ones. And yet, via innumerable detours, something happened to the usage of theoretical terms, and a notion of the ego has re-emerged, which is in no way that which the overall equilibrium of Freud's theory brings with it. On

the contrary, it tends towards the re-absorption, which is moreover openly admitted, of analytic knowledge within general psychology, which in this instance means pre-analytical psychology. And by the same token, for theory and practice are inseparable, the analytic relation, the direction of the practice, have been realigned. This is what the contemporary history of the technique of psychoanalysis shows us.

It remains very enigmatic. This wouldn't trouble us in the least if it were just a conflict between schools, between reactionaries and progressives, Ptolemaics and Copernicans. But it goes much further than that. What is at issue is the establishment of an efficacious, concrete complicity, between analysis, the liberating, demystifying treatment of a human relation, and the fundamental illusion of man's experience, or at least of modern man.

The man of today entertains a certain conception of himself, which lies half-way between naivity and sophistication. The belief he holds that he is constituted in this or that way partakes in a certain current of diffuse, culturally accepted notions. He may think that it is the result of a natural inclination, whereas in fact, in the present state of civilization, it comes to him from all sides. My thesis is that Freud's technique, at its origin, transcends this illusion which, in a quite concrete manner, has taken hold over the subjectivity of individuals. The question therefore is whether psychoanalysis will ever so gently allow itself to abandon what had opened up for a moment, or whether, on the contrary, it will again make manifest its cutting edge in such a way as to give it back its sharpness.

Hence the usefulness of referring to certain works of a certain style.

It makes no sense, to my mind, to cut up our remarks according to the different series in which they occur. Thus, what Alexandre Koyré introduced in his lecture yesterday evening concerning the function of the Platonic dialogue, starting specifically with the *Meno*, can, without any undue contrivance, be inserted into the framework of the teaching being developed here. The function of the Tuesday lectures, rightly called *extra-ordinary*, is indeed to enable each of you to crystallise the questioning left dangling at the outer edges of the domain we are investigating in this seminar.

Yesterday evening, I underlined, in the few comments I made, transforming Meno's equations, what one can call the function of truth in its nascent state. Indeed, the knowledge to which truth comes to be knotted must actually be endowed with its own inertia, which makes it lose something of the virtue which initiated its deposition as such, since it exhibits an obvious propensity to misrecognise its own meaning. Nowhere is this degradation more obvious than in psychoanalysis, and this fact, in and of itself, reveals the truly nodal point which psychoanalysis occupies within the limited advance of human subjectivity.

This singular ambiguity of knowledge and of truth can be seen at the origin – although one never really gets completely to the origin, let us take Plato as the origin, in the sense in which one speaks of the origin of coordinates. Yesterday evening we saw it revealed in the *Meno*, but we could just as easily have used *Protagoras* which wasn't mentioned.

Who is Socrates? He is the one who within human subjectivity inaugurates that style from which the notion of knowledge as tied to certain requirements of coherence has arisen, knowledge which is the prerequisite for any future progress of science as experimental – and we will have to define what the sort of autonomy which science has acquired within the experimental register signifies. Well then, at the very moment when Socrates inaugurates this new being-in-the-world which here I call subjectivity, he realises that science will not be able to transmit the means to achieve the most precious thing, the *arété*, the excellence of the human being. Here already there is a decentring – it is by starting off with this virtue that a domain is opened up to knowledge, but this very virtue, with respect to its transmission, its tradition, its formation, remains outside of the domain. That is something which merits attention, rather than rushing off into believing that in the end everything will sort itself out, that it is only Socrates's irony, that sooner or later science will catch up with this through a retroactive action. Yet, up until now, nothing in the course of history has proved this to us.

What has happened since Socrates? A lot of things, and in particular, the concept of the ego has seen the light of day.

When something comes to light, something which we are forced to consider as new, when another structural order emerges, well then, it creates its own perspective within the past, and we say – *This can never not have been there, this has existed from the beginning.* Besides, isn't that a property which our own experience demonstrates?

Think about the origins of language. We imagine that there must have been a time when people on this earth began to speak. So we admit of an emergence. But from the moment that the specific structure of this emergence is grasped, we find it absolutely impossible to speculate on what preceded it other than by symbols which were always applicable. What appears to be new thus always seems to extend itself indefinitely into perpetuity, prior to itself. We cannot, through thought, abolish a new order. This applies to anything whatsoever, including the origin of the world.

Similarly, we can no longer do our thinking without this register of the ego which we have acquired over the course of history, even when we are concerned with traces of man's speculation about himself at times when this register was not pursued as such.

It seems to us then that Socrates and his interlocutors must have had an implicit notion of this central function, that the ego must have had for them a

function analogous to that which it occupies in our theoretical thinking, but also in the spontaneous apprehension we have of our thoughts, our tendencies, our desires, of what belongs to us and what does not, of what we admit to being expressions of our personality or what we reject as being parasitical on it. It is very difficult for us to imagine that the whole of this psychology isn't eternal.

Is this in fact the case? The question at least deserves to be raised.

To raise it leads us to examine more closely whether there isn't in fact a point when this notion of the ego can be grasped in its nascent state. We don't have to go very far, the evidence is still fresh. It doesn't go back much further than the period, still quite recent, in which so much progress in our lives took place, when we thought it funny to read in the *Protagoras* of someone arriving one morning at Socrates's – *Hallo! Come in, what is it? – Protagoras has arrived.* What amuses us, is that everything happens, just as Plato says it does, as if by chance, in complete darkness. This has never been noticed by anyone, because it can only interest those who, like us, for a mere seventy-five years, if that, are used to switching on the electric light.

Look at the literature. You say that that's the job of those who think, but those who don't think must always have had, more or less spontaneously, some notion of the ego. What makes you so sure? You, in any case, belong with those who think, or at least you are following on after people who have thought about it. So, let's try to open the question, rather than settling it so unthinkingly.

The type of people that we shall define, using a conventional notation, as *dentists* are very confident about the order of the universe because they think that Mr Descartes made manifest the laws and the procedures of limpid reason in the *Discourse on Method.* His *I think, therefore, I am,* so essential to the new subjectivity, is not as simple, however, as it would appear to these dentists, and some even think they detect in it a pure and simple sleight of hand. If it is in fact true that consciousness is transparent to itself, and grasps itself as such, it does seem that the *I* is not on that account transparent to it. It is not given to it as different from an object. The apprehension of an object by consciousness does not by the same token reveal to it its properties. The same is true for the *I.*

If this *I* is in fact presented to us as a kind of immediate given in the act of reflection by which consciousness grasps itself as transparent to itself, for all that, nothing indicates that the whole of this reality – and it is granting quite a bit already to say that we come to a judgement of existence[1] – would be exhausted by this.

The reflections of the philosophers have led us to a more and more purely formal notion of the ego, and, to be truthful, to a critique of this function. The development of thought turned away, at least temporarily, from the notion of

[1] See Freud, 'Negation' (1925h) GW XIV 11–15: Stud III 373–7: SE XIX 235–9.

the ego as a substance, as from a myth to be submitted to rigorous scientific scrutiny. Though embarked – whether or not legitimately is beside the point – on an attempt to consider it as a pure mirage, with Locke, with Kant, and even with the psychophysicists, who had only to follow their lead for different reasons, of course, and with other premises. They cast the greatest suspicion on the function of the ego, in as much as the latter more or less implicitly perpetuates the substantialism implicit in the religious conception of the soul, as a substance which at the very least is endowed with the properties of immortality.

Isn't it striking that, by an extraordinary conjuring trick of history – having abandoned for a moment the subversive element of Freud's contribution, which can be taken as a step forward within a certain tradition of the development of thought – we have returned to a state prior to this philosophical critique, which by any standard is not new?

We have used the term Copernican revolution to describe Freud's discovery. Not that what isn't Copernican is absolutely unambiguous. Men have not always believed that the Earth was a kind of infinite plate. They have also conceived of it as having limits, various shapes, sometimes that of a lady's hat. But nonetheless, they had the idea that there were things below, let us say at the centre, and that the rest of the world was built up on top of it. Well, if we do not know what a contemporary of Socrates might have thought of his ego, even so there must have been something at the centre, and there is no reason to believe Socrates ever doubted that. It was probably not made like the ego, which starts at a later date, which we can locate towards the middle of the sixteenth, beginning of the seventeenth centuries. But it was at the centre, at the base. In relation to this conception, the Freudian discovery has exactly the same implication of decentring as that brought about by the Copernican discovery. It is quite well expressed by Rimbaud's fleeting formula – poets, as is well known, don't know what they're saying, yet they still manage to say things before anyone else – *I is an other*.[2]

2

Don't let this impress you! Don't start spreading it around that *I is an other* – it won't impress anyone, believe me! And what is more, it doesn't mean anything. Because, to begin with, you have to know what an other means. The other – don't use this term as a mouthwash.

One of our colleagues, our ex-colleagues, who used to hobnob a bit with *Les Temps Modernes*, the journal of existentialism, as it's called, told us as if it were news that in order for someone to be analysed he had to be able to conceive of

[2] 'Je est un autre.'

the other as such. A real smart Alec, that one. We should have asked him – What do you mean by *the other?* – his fellow man, his neighbour, his ideal *I*, a washbowl? These are all others.

The unconscious completely eludes that circle of certainties by which man recognises himself as ego. There is something outside this field which has every right to speak as *I*, and which makes this right manifest by coming into the world speaking as an *I*. It is precisely what is most misconstrued by the domain of the ego which, in analysis, comes to be formulated as properly speaking being the *I*.

So this is the register within which what Freud has to teach us about the unconscious can take on its full importance and contours. The fact that he gave voice to this by calling it *the unconscious* leads him to real contradictions *in adjecto*, in speaking of unconscious thoughts – he says it himself, *sit venia verbo*,[3] and he constantly apologises for it. This is all terribly cumbersome, since, from the point of view of communication, at the time he started writing, he was forced to start off from the notion that what belongs to the order of the ego also belongs to that of consciousness. But that's not certain. If he says that, it is because of a specific stage in the development of philosophy which at that time assumed the equation *ego = consciousness*. But the more Freud's work progressed, the less easy he finds it to locate consciousness, and he has to admit that it is in the end unlocalisable. Everything is progressively more organised within a dialectic in which the *I* is distinct from the ego. In the end, Freud gives the game up for lost – there must be, he says, conditions beyond our grasp here. The future will tell us what these are. This year we will try to get a sense of how we can finally locate consciousness within the Freudian functionalisation.

With Freud, a new perspective suddenly appears, revolutionising the study of subjectivity and showing precisely that the subject cannot be confused with the individual. This distinction, which I first showed you on the subjective plane, can also be grasped – and, from the scientific point of view, this may be the most decisive step – on the objective plane.

If we consider from a behaviourist's perspective what is objectively to be found in the human animal, in the individual as an organism, we note a certain number of properties, of movements, manoeuvres and relations. From the organisation of such behaviour we infer the variable extent of the detours of which the individual is capable in order to attain those things which are assumed by definition to be his goals. That is how we get an idea of the nature of his relations with the external world, how one measures the degree of his intelligence, how one in effect fixes the level, the low-water mark, by which to measure the perfection, or *arété*, of his species. Now what Freud's contribution was is the following – the manifestations of the subject in question can in no sense be localised on an axis, on which, the higher they would be, the more they

[3] (1918b) GW XII 116; Stud VIII 198; SE XVII 84.

would consistently be confused with the intelligence, the excellence, the perfection of the individual.

Freud tells us – intelligence has nothing to do with the subject, the subject is not on the same axis, it is ex-centric. The subject as such, functioning as subject, is something other than an organism which adapts itself. It is something else, and for those who are capable of understanding, its entire behaviour speaks of something other than the axis we can grasp when we consider it as a function of an individual, that is to say, with a specific number of interests conceived of in relation to the individual *arété*.

We will confine ourselves to this topological metaphor for the moment – the subject is decentred in relation to the individual. That is what *I is an other* means.

In some ways, it can already be found on the periphery of the fundamental Cartesian intuition. If you take off your dentist's glasses in reading Descartes, you will become aware of certain puzzles he shows us, in particular that of a deceiving God. When one employs the notion of the ego, at the same time one cannot avoid the implication that there has been a misdeal somewhere along the line. The deceiving God is, in the end, the reintegration of what was rejected, *ectopia*.

About the same time, one of those frivolous minds who play at salon games – sometimes some very surprising things start there, minor entertainments sometimes do give rise to a new order of phenomena – a very odd fellow, who doesn't really fit our standard conception of the classical type, La Rochefoucauld to give him his name, all of a sudden took it upon himself to inform us of the peculiarity of something we hadn't thought long enough about, and which he calls *self-love*. It is rather surprising that this should have seemed so outrageous, for what in fact was he saying? He was emphasising that even those of our activities which seem to be most disinterested are motivated by the concern for glory – even passionate love or the most virtuous acts, however secret.

What exactly did he mean? Was he saying that we act with a view to our own pleasure? This is a very important question because everything in Freud will turn around it. If that was all that La Rochefoucauld had said, he would have only been repeating what had since time immemorial been taught in the schools – nothing is ever *since time immemorial*, but you can see the point of the *since time immemorial* on this occasion. Since Socrates, pleasure has been the search for one's good. Whatever we may think, we are pursuing our pleasure, seeking our good. The only question is whether a human animal of such a sort, considered behaviourally as we did just now, is intelligent enough to comprehend what is truly its good. If he understands wherein this good resides, he gains the pleasure which always results from it. Mr Bentham pushed this theory to its logical extreme.

But La Rochefoucauld makes us appreciate something else – that by engaging in so-called disinterested actions, we think we free ourselves from

immediate pleasure, and are seeking a higher good, but we are mistaken. That is the novelty. This isn't a general theory claiming that egoism accounts for all human activities. That can already be found in Saint Thomas's physical theory of love – in love the subject is searching for his own good. Saint Thomas, who was only repeating what had been said for centuries, was in fact contradicted by a certain William of Saint-Amour, who observed that love had to be something other than the search for one's own good. In La Rochefoucauld, what is scandalous is not so much that for him self-love is the basis of all human behaviour, but rather that it is deceiving, inauthentic. There is a hedonism specific to the *ego*, and which is precisely what lures us, that is, which at one and the same time frustrates us of our immediate pleasure and of the satisfactions which we can draw from our superiority with respect to this pleasure. Here there's a division of planes, for the first time the introduction of an outline, which starts to open us up, through a certain diplopia, to what will seem like a real division of the plane.

This conception belongs to a tradition parallel to that of the philosophers, the moralist tradition. These are not people who specialise in ethics, but who introduce a so-called perspective of truth into the observation of moral conduct or mores. This tradition leads to Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, which remains entirely within this in some ways negative perspective, according to which human behaviour as such is deluded. It is into this hollow, into this bowl, that the Freudian truth comes to be poured. You are deluded, no doubt, but the truth lies elsewhere. And Freud tells us where it is.

What then erupts, with the crash of thunder, is the sexual instinct, the libido. But what is the sexual instinct? the libido? the primary process? You think you know – me too – but that doesn't mean we should be as certain about it as all that. You should take a closer look, and that is what we will try to do this year.

3

Where have we got to today? To a theoretical cacophony, to a conspicuous revolution in positions. And why? In the first place, because the metapsychological work of Freud after 1920 has been misread, interpreted in a crazy way by the first and second generations following Freud – those inept people.

Why did Freud think it necessary to introduce these new, so-called structural,[4] metapsychological notions, which we call the ego, the super-ego and the id? Because, in the experience of the aftermath of his discovery, a turning-point, a real crisis was reached. In short, this new *I*, with whom one was meant to enter into dialogue, after a while refused to answer.

This crisis is clearly expressed in the testimony of historical witnesses of the

[4] '*topique*'. Usually referred to as 'structural' in English-language writings on Freud.

years between 1910 and 1920. In the course of the first analytical revelation, the subjects recovered more or less miraculously, and this is still apparent when we read Freud's cases with their interpretations which strike like lightning and their endless explanations. Well, it is a fact that it worked less and less well, that it ground to a halt in the course of time.

That is what prompted people to think that there is some reality in what I'm saying, that is, in the existence of subjectivity as such, and its modifications in the course of time, in accordance with a specific causality, a specific dialectic, which moves from subjectivity to subjectivity, and which perhaps escapes any kind of individual conditioning. Within the conventional units which we call subjectivities on account of individual particularities, what is happening? What is closing up? What is resisting?

Precisely in 1920, that is just after the change of direction which I have just mentioned – the crisis of analytic technique – Freud thought it necessary to introduce his new metapsychological notions. And if one reads what Freud wrote from 1920 on attentively, you realise that there is a direct link between this crisis in technique which had to be overcome, and the manufacture of these new notions. But for that you must read his writings – to read them in the right order is better still. The fact that *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* was written before *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, and before *The Ego and the Id*, should raise questions – no one has ever asked them.

What Freud introduced from 1920 on, are additional notions which were at that time necessary to maintain the principle of the decentring of the subject. But far from being understood as it should have been, there was a general rush, exactly like the kids getting out of school – *Ah! Our nice little ego is back again! It all makes sense now! We're now back on the well-beaten paths of general psychology.* How could one fail to come back to it with elation, when this general psychology is not only stuff from school or a mental commodity, but, what is more, is the psychology of everyman? There was satisfaction in being once again able to believe the ego to be central. And we see its latest manifestations in the amusing lucubrations which come to us at the moment from the other side of the pond.

Mr Hartmann, psychoanalysis's cherub, announces the great news to us, so that we can sleep soundly – the existence of the *autonomous ego*. This *ego* which, since the beginning of the Freudian discovery, has always been considered as in conflict, which, even when it was located as a function in relation to reality, never ceased to be thought of as something which, like reality, is conquered in a tragedy, is all of a sudden restored to us as a central given. To what inner necessity does the assertion that somewhere there must be an autonomous[5] *ego* answer?

This conviction extends beyond the individual naivity of the subject who

[5] English in the original.

believes in himself, who believes that he is himself – a common enough madness, which isn't complete madness, because it belongs to the order of beliefs. Obviously, we are all inclined to believe that we are ourselves. But we aren't so sure of it, take a closer look. In many very specific circumstances we doubt it, without for all that undergoing depersonalisation. It isn't therefore simply to this naive belief that they want us to return. It is properly speaking a sociological phenomenon, which concerns analysis as a technique, or if you prefer, as a ceremony, as a priesthood determined within a certain social context.

Why reintroduce the transcendent reality of the autonomous[6] *ego*? Looking at it closely, these autonomous[6] *egos* are more or less equal, according to the individuals. So we are back to an entification according to which not only individuals as such exist, but moreover some exist more than others. That is what contaminates, more or less implicitly, the so-called notions of the strong ego and the weak ego, which are just so many ways of ducking the issues raised as much by the understanding of the neuroses as by the handling of the technique.

We will consider all of this in its own due time and place.

So this year we will pursue the examination and criticism of the notion of the ego in Freud's theory, we will clarify its meaning in relation to Freud's discovery and to the technique of psychoanalysis, all through studying side by side some of its current uses, which are tied to a certain manner of conceiving the relation of one individual to another in analysis.

Freudian metapsychology does not begin in 1920. It is there from the very start – take a look at the collection on the beginnings of Freud's thought, the letters to Fliess, the metapsychological writings of that period – and is taken up again at the end of the *Traumdeutung*. It is sufficiently in evidence between 1910 and 1920 for you to have noticed it last year. In 1920, what may be called the last metapsychological period begins. For this period *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is the primary text, the pivotal work. It is the most difficult. We won't resolve all of its puzzles right away. But that's how it happened – Freud first produced that, before elaborating his structural model [*topique*]. And if you put off dealing with it in order for you to get, or think you have got, to the bottom of the works of the following period, all you do is make the grossest of errors. That is how most analysts give up the challenge when it comes to the death instinct.

I would like some good soul, for instance Lefèbvre-Pontalis, to give an initial reading of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

17 November 1954

[6] English in the original.

II

Knowledge, truth, opinion

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND ITS CONCEPTS

A TRUTH WHICH CANNOT BE GRASPED BY BOUNDED KNOWLEDGE

FORM AND SYMBOL

PERICLES, PSYCHOANALYST

THE YEAR'S PROGRAMME

Last time I gave a brief introduction to the problem into which I am expecting us to make some headway this year, that is, the ego in Freudian theory.

This notion cannot be identified with the ego of traditional classical theory, although it extends the latter – but given what it adds to it, within the Freudian perspective the ego takes on an entirely different functional value.

I gave you a sense that it is only rather recently that the ego has been theorised. Not only did the ego not mean in Socrates's time what it means today – open the books, you will see that the word is altogether absent – but actually – used here in the full sense of the word – the ego didn't have the same function.

A change in perspective has since upset the traditional notion of what could be the good, of, say, the individual, the subject, the soul, or of whatever else you want. The unitary notion of the good, as this perfection or *aretê*, which polarises and directs the fulfilment of the individual, was from a certain point on stamped with a hint of inauthenticity. I pointed out to you the real significance in this respect of La Rochefoucauld's thought. Open this small collection of maxims about nothing very much. Now, there's a peculiar society game, which affords us a kind of pulsation, or more exactly an instantaneous grasp of consciousness. It is a moment of reflection which has a truly active value, and is an ambiguous eye-opener – is it a concrete mirage of the relation of man with himself, or a simple coming to consciousness, the realisation, of something which had not been seen up until then?

The impact of psychoanalysis on this issue is that of a Copernican revolution. Every relation of man with himself changes perspective with the Freudian discovery, and this is what is involved in practice, such as we pursue it every day.

This is why, last Sunday, you heard me reject in the most categorical fashion the attempt at refusion of psychoanalysis with general psychology. The idea of a unilinear, pre-established individual development, made up of stages each

appearing in their turn, according to a determined typicity,[1] is purely and simply the giving up, the conjuring away, the camouflage, the negation, properly speaking, even the repression of the essential contribution of analysis.

We have heard this bid for syncretism from the mouth of the only advocate of this tendency who knows how to deliver a coherent discourse. You could see what this coherent discourse led him to uphold – *Analytical concepts have no value whatever, they don't correspond to reality.* But this reality, how are we to grasp it, if we don't designate it by means of our vocabulary? And if, in continuing to do so, we believe that this vocabulary is only a signal of things which would be beyond, that it is reducible to little labels, designations floating in the unnamed of everyday analytic experience? If that were the case, it would simply mean that another has to be invented, that is, practice something other than psychoanalysis. If psychoanalysis isn't the concepts through which it is formulated and transmitted, it isn't psychoanalysis, it is something else, but if that's the case, then that should be made clear from the start.

However – and therein lies the sleight of hand – these same concepts continue to be used, of course, otherwise the experience would completely disintegrate – and I don't mean that this doesn't happen, in actual fact, to some people who let themselves go to the point of reducing psychoanalysis to general psychology. But psychoanalytical concepts quite simply do exist, and it is because of them that psychoanalysis endures. The others use them, they cannot but make use of them, but in a way which is neither integrated, nor articulated, nor capable of making itself understood, nor of being transmitted, nor even of being defended. And that's why as soon as they enter into dialogue with others as happened last Sunday, that is, with psychiatrists, they slip their vocabulary back into their pockets, saying that that isn't what's so important in the analytical experience but rather what is is the interchange of forces, that is, what you can't poke your nose into.

The character of Meno did not afford a pointless preamble to our cycle of work this year. Its value is exemplary – at least for those who are here and try to understand. For them, there will be no share in the confusion which, from what I've been told, reigns in some minds, in accordance with which Meno would be the analysand, the unhappy analysand whom we ridiculed the other evening. No, Meno isn't the analysand, he's the analyst – the bulk of analysts.

I wouldn't want to leave hanging whatever may have been left unfinished in our meeting with Alexandre Koyré. I know it was our first meeting, and that it is always hard to knit something into a dialogue. It really is an art, a maieutics. Some of those who might have had something to contribute to it weren't able to do so, except off-stage. We can't pretend to exhaust the question of the Platonic dialogue in one evening. The important thing is that it is still with us, alive and open.

[1] *Typicité.*

Nevertheless, it would be unfortunate if what Octave Mannoni said to me after the lecture weren't put into circulation within our community. Does he still remember what occurred to him after my own intervention on the function of *orthè doxa*? For there is, in truth, a puzzle in this *orthè doxa*.

1

O. MANNONI: *What struck me about the drift of M. Koyré's lecture is firstly an almost spontaneous tendency to assimilate directly the Platonic dialogue and the Socratic maieutics to analysis. I would like to challenge this all too easy assimilation by drawing attention to the fact that for Plato, there is a forgotten truth, and maieutics consists in bringing it to light, in such a way that the dialogue is a mixture of truth and error, and dialectic a kind of sieve for truth. In analysis, it isn't the same kind of truth, it is a historical truth, whereas the first kind appears, from one point of view, as a truth of natural science. It is rather surprising that the unconscious is sometimes called the forgotten language, as Eric Fromm does, and at other times the basic language, as Senatspräsident Schreber does, that is to say, sometimes wisdom and sometimes madness. So that what comes back to light in the analytical maieutics is the truth in error and the error in truth. That is completely different from what happens in a Platonic perspective. I also think that M. Koyré pulls* orthè doxa *onto the side of what primitives call the customs which people live by. Consequently, it can in fact happen that someone – Meno, and especially Anytos – who is attached to customs which people live by feels himself threatened in the face of epistemological investigation. It may be that here there is a conflict which reappears in analysis, when someone who is confident, who trusts in what he is doing, worries about what might happen if one put him on the spot.*

It is true that there has been, and not only on the part of M. Koyré, a somewhat abusive inclination to compare the handling of the dialogue with Meno to the analytic experience.

Now, as far as truth is concerned, do take note what the aim of the *Meno* is. The *Meno* shows how one gets truth from the mouth of the slave, that is to say, from anyone, and that any and everybody is in possession of the eternal forms. If present experience presupposes reminiscence, and if reminiscence is what ensues from the experience of previous lives, then it must be the case that these experiences have also been had with the help of a reminiscence. There's no reason why this recurrence should come to an end, which shows us that it is indeed a matter of a relation to the eternal forms. It is their awakening in the subject which explains the passage from ignorance to knowledge. In other words, one can't know anything, if only because one already knows it. But this isn't, properly speaking, the aim of the *Meno*.

The aim and paradox of the *Meno* is to show us that the *epistêmê*, knowledge bounded by a formal coherence, does not cover the whole of the field of human

experience, and in particular there is no *epistêmê* of what brings about perfection, the *arété* of this experience.

I should say now that we will have to ask ourselves what these relations are in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.*

What is highlighted in this dialogue, is not simply that Meno doesn't know what he is saying, it is rather that he doesn't know what he is saying regarding virtue. Why? – because he was a bad pupil of the Sophists – he doesn't understand what the Sophists have to teach him, which isn't a doctrine which explains everything, but the use of discourse, which is really quite different. You can see how bad a pupil he is when he says – *If Gorgias were here, he would explain all this to us. You would be knocked over by what Gorgias said.* The system is always in the other.

What Socrates highlights is precisely the following, that there is no *epistêmê* of virtue, and more precisely of what is the essential virtue – for us no less than for the Ancients – political virtue, by which citizens are bound into one body. Excellent, pre-eminent, practitioners, who are not demagogues, Themistocles, Pericles, act at that highest level of action, political government, by reason of an orthodoxy, which isn't defined for us in any other way than the following, that there is here a truth which cannot be grasped by a bounded knowledge.

Orthèdoxa has been translated as a *true opinion*, and this is indeed the meaning.

If the constitution of an *epistêmê*, within the vast uproar, the hubbub, the confusion, of sophistry, is Socrates's role, it remains to be understood what he expects from it. Because Socrates doesn't believe that it is everything.

There would still be a lot to say about Socrates's points of reference. Socrates always includes a reference to techniques in his dialectics, not that he makes techniques the models for everything, because he knows very well that there are differences between those of the pilot, the shipbuilder, the physician, and the higher technique of those who govern the state. And in the *Meno*, he shows us again exactly where the breach is.

M. HYPPOLITE: *You're somewhat avoiding Mannoni's question.*

I'm not avoiding it. I have been skirting around it for a long time. But do you agree with what I've been saying?

M. HYPPOLITE: *I'm waiting for what's to come, in order to decide. I think Mannoni just now made clear the fundamental difference between the Platonic dialogue and that of analysis.*

I take that for granted, and it is completely irrelevant.

M. HYPPOLITE: *I think one can avoid the radical aspect of this difference. And I was wondering if that was what you were trying to get at. I was waiting for what comes next.*

You'll see.

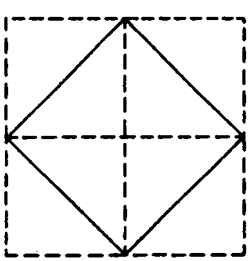
It isn't easy to wrap things up. That's because our *epistêmê* has made so much progress that it is evidently constituted completely differently from Socrates's. Nevertheless, it would be wrong not to realise that, even based on the model of experimental science, the modern *epistêmê*, as in Socrates's time, consists essentially in a certain coherence of discourse. It is simply a matter of knowing what this coherence means, what kind of bond it involves. It is to this word 'relation' that we will address a great many of the questions which we will be raising here starting off with what I will try to teach you about the ego.

I'll make another comment, before I lay my cards on the table. In wanting to give Meno an example of the way in which the discourse of science is constituted, in showing him that he doesn't need to know that much, that there is no need to believe that he'll find it in the discourse of the Sophists, Socrates says: *Take this human life, this one here, the slave, and you will see that he knows everything. All that is needed is to awaken it.* Now read again with some care the manner in which he makes the slave discover the truth in question, that is – how to double the surface of the square, after having realised that a certain number of surface units corresponds to one of its sides, units which are proportional to this side.

Well, the slave may be in possession of all the sciences in the book, as accumulated in his previous life, it won't change the fact that he will start by making a mistake. He goes astray by quite properly employing what we use as a starting-point in the standard intelligence test – he employs the relation of equivalence $A/B = C/D$, the means intelligence most consistently employs. This procedure leads him mathematically to the erroneous belief that in doubling the side one will double the surface.

With the figure drawn in the sand Socrates shows him that this could not be the case.

The slave sees clearly that the surface constructed by doubling the side of 2 is twice what one wanted to obtain – 16 instead of 8. But it doesn't help him in resolving the problem, and it is Socrates who shows him that by removing the four corners of the large square, one reduces it by exactly half, that is by 8, and that in this way the inside square is 8, and constitutes the required solution.



Don't you see there is a fault-line between the intuitive element and the symbolic element? One reaches the solution using our idea of numbers, that 8 is half of 16. What one obtains isn't 8 square-units. At the centre we have 4 surface units, and one irrational element, $\sqrt{2}$, which isn't given by intuition. Here, then, there is a shift from the plane of the intuitive bond to a plane of symbolic bond.

This demonstration, which is an example of the shift from the imaginary to the symbolic, is quite evidently accomplished by the master. It is Socrates who effects the realisation that 8 is half of 16. The slave, with all his reminiscence and his intelligent intuition, sees the right form, so to speak, from the moment it is pointed out to him. But here we put our finger on the cleavage between the imaginary, or intuitive, plane – where reminiscence does indeed operate, that is to say the type, the eternal form, what can also be called *a priori* intuitions – and the symbolic function which isn't at all homogeneous with it, and whose introduction into reality constitutes a forcing.

I will ask M. Riguet, who is a mathematician, if I am saying things which seem to him to be controversial?

M. RIGUET: *I agree.*

I do feel better for having a mathematician agree with me.

You see then that the function here shown to be generic to the bonds which Socrates incorporates into the *epistêmê*, fundamentally brings into question the value of the symbolic invention, the emergence of speech. There is a moment in the history of geometry when $\sqrt{2}$ appears. Up until then, they just hovered close to it. Retrospectively, one can say that the Egyptian and Indian geometers caught a glimpse of it, that they found a way of dealing with it. Similarly, Socrates, who right there on the sand, pulls a neat trick, and finds an equivalent for it. But the autonomy of $\sqrt{2}$ is not at all brought out in the dialogue. When it appears, it generates a great many things, a complete mathematical transformation, in which the slave no longer has any role to play.

M. HYPPOLITE: *You argue then that in Plato any invention once made turns out to generate its own past, turns out to be an eternal discovery. Actually, we are perverted by Christianity, which makes us locate a given eternal truth as antecedent. Whereas Platonism, following to a great extent the movement which we might call historicity, shows us that the invention of the symbol, once invented, turns out to be an external past. The notion of eternal truth has perhaps not the meaning that the Middle Ages gave it, and upon which Mannoni's interpretation is clearly based. That is why I am saying that there could exist a paradoxical bond between the Platonic dialogue and analysis, and that that was what you were looking for in the relation between symbolism and truth.*

That's still not quite right. I in fact believe that there are two sorts of relations to time. From the moment that a part of the symbolic world comes into

existence it does indeed create its own past. But not in the same way as the form at the intuitive level. It is precisely in the confusion of the two planes that the error lies, the error of believing that what science constitutes by the intervention of the symbolic function has always been there, that it is given.

This error exists in all knowledge, in as much as it is only a crystallisation of the symbolic activity, and once constituted, it forgets it. In all knowledge once constituted there is a dimension of error, which is the forgetting of the creative function of truth in its nascent form. That it is forgotten in the experimental domain is just about understandable, since it is bound up with purely operant[2] activities – operational[2] as we say, I don't quite know why, when the word 'operant' says it just as well. But we analysts, we can't forget it, we who work in the dimension of this truth in its nascent state.

What we discover in analysis pertains to the level of *orthè doxa*. Everything which takes effect in the field of analytic action precedes the constitution of knowledge, which doesn't change the fact that in operating in this field we have constituted a knowledge, and one which has even proved itself to be exceptionally efficacious, as is quite natural, since any science arises from a use of language which precedes its own constitution, and that it is through this use of language that the analytic action develops.

This is also why the more we know, the greater the risks. All you are taught in a more or less pre-digested form in the so-called institutes of psychoanalysis – sadistic, anal stages etc. – all this is of course very useful, especially for people who aren't analysts. It would be stupid for a psychoanalyst systematically to neglect them, but he must be aware of the fact that that isn't the dimension in which he operates. He must fashion himself, come to be at ease in a domain other than the one where what in his experience is slowly constituted out of knowledge is deposited, laid down.

O. MANNONI: *I entirely agree.*

Except I think I am explaining to you what you put to us earlier as being an enigma. You said that on both sides there was truth and falsehood, falsehood and truth. They had, for you, a strictly symmetrical and inverse distribution.

O. MANNONI: *I didn't put it forward as an enigma. What seemed enigmatic to me is that the opinion of the general public is all too eager to tag psychoanalysis on to Platonism.*

There are two sorts of public, the one here, which at least has a chance of finding out what's what, and the other, which drops in from all kinds of places, to sniff out a little of what's happening, which thinks this is funny, a subject for passing comments on, for dinner-table conversation, and which understandably gets a bit lost. If they want to find out which way is up, all they need to do is

[2] The French terms are *'opérantes'* and *'opérationnelles'*.

to be a bit more assiduous. We can't discourage curiosity enough – these aren't lectures for the fashion-conscious. If they come in order to believe that we are going to turn psychoanalysis into the extension of the Platonic dialogue, they are wrong. They should get better informed.

Founding speech, which envelops the subject, is everything that has constituted him, his parents, his neighbours, the whole structure of the community, and not only constituted him as symbol, but constituted him in his being. The laws of nomenclature are what determine – at least up to a point – and channel the alliances from within which human beings copulate with one another and end up by creating, not only other symbols, but also real beings, who, coming into the world, right away have that little tag which is their name, the essential symbol for what will be their lot. Thus the *orthè doxa* which Socrates leaves behind him, but in which he feels completely enveloped – since after all that's also where he starts out from, since he is in the process of constituting this *orthè doxa* which he leaves behind – we ourselves place it, once again, at the centre. That's what analysis is.

In the end, for Socrates, though not necessarily for Plato, if Themistocles and Pericles were great men, it was because they were good psychoanalysts.

In their own register, they discovered what true opinion means. They are at the heart of this historical reality in which a dialogue is taken up, when no truth of any kind can be located in it in the form of a generalisable knowledge which is always true. To give the reply that one has to in response to an event in so far as it is significant, in so far as it is a function of a symbolic exchange between human beings – it could be the order given to the fleet to leave Piraeus – is to give the right interpretation. And to give the right interpretation at the right moment, that's to be a good analyst.

I don't mean to say that the statesman is a psychoanalyst. It is precisely Plato who, with the *Statesman*, begins to construct a science of politics, and God knows where it has led us since. But for Socrates, the good statesman is a psychoanalyst. That's my reply to Mannoni.

O. MANNONI: *I don't quite agree. There is another side of the alternative which seems to me to be more Socratic. Pericles and Themistocles were good statesmen for another reason, they had* orthè doxa, *they were what today we call gentlemen.*[3] *They were so well integrated into their social milieu, they had so few problems, so little need of science, that it is almost the reverse.*

That is what I'm in the middle of telling you, my dear fellow. It wasn't because they were born psychoanalysts, without having been psychoanalysed, that they weren't good psychoanalysts.

It is obvious that at that time, it was only the masters who made history, and

[3] English in the original.

that the slave who Socrates wanted to put through his paces has nothing to say. It will still take him some time to be Spartacus. For the moment he is nothing. It is precisely because only gentlemen[4] have something to say in this story that they find the right words. And even a chap like Socrates will be turned out[4] because he stepped a little too far out of line from the society of gentlemen.[4] By dint of *epistêmê*, he misses out on *orthè doxa*, and they will make him pay dearly for it, in a stupid way. But it is also that, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty has remarked, Socrates did show some good will – he might well have almost had them on. Maybe he wasn't altogether there at the time? He probably had his own reasons for staging another kind of demonstration. After all, it wasn't that ineffective. It did have a symbolic meaning.

2

There is a bit of time left. Have you anything to tell us today, Pontalis?

I think it is always best to begin to tackle questions at their most difficult point – then, you only have to work your way down. That's why I wanted us to begin with *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Of course, I didn't want Pontalis to be burdened with the task of giving us straight off an exhaustive analysis, because we will only understand this text after having been through everything Freud says concerning the ego, from one end to the other of his work.

I want to remind you that this year you must all read the following texts from cover to cover and with the greatest care.

Firstly, *Aus den Anfängen der Psychoanalyse*, which includes the letters to Fliess and the *Entwurf*, which is a preliminary, already self-contained, psychological theory. The great discovery of the period after the war was that of these youthful papers of Freud's. Read this *Project* for a so-called psychological theory, which is already a metapsychology with a theory of the *ego*. You'll also find it in English under the title *The Origins of Psycho-analysis*.

Secondly, the *Traumdeutung*, especially the chapter entitled 'The psychology of the dream-processes'. In the German edition or failing that in the English one.

Thirdly, the texts concerning what is considered to be Freud's second metapsychology, grouped together in the French translation under the title of *Essais de Psychanalyse*. It contains *Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* and the *The Ego and the Id*, which are the three articles fundamental to the comprehension of the ego.

Fourthly, there are other things you can read, such as the articles 'Neurosis and psychosis', 'The loss of reality in neurosis and psychosis', 'Analysis terminable and interminable'.

Fifthly, you must be acquainted with Freud's last work, this incomplete essay

[4] English in the original.

called in German *Abriss der Psychoanalyse*, which provides some signposts as to the way in which Freud superimposed on the first topographical account he had given of the psyche – unconscious, preconscious, conscious – the new topography of the ego, the super-ego and the id. It is only in the *Abriss* that you will find any hints on this point.

With the above, which ranges from Freud's first to his last work, you have the element in which we will try to conduct the analysis of Freudian theory.

O. MANNONI: – *May I draw our attention to the last article in the* Collected Papers, *'Splitting of the ego'?*[5]

That is precisely where all the confusions began.

Pontalis, you have ten minutes to tell us the questions which the initial reading of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* has inspired in you.

M. LEFÈBVRE-PONTALIS: *I will briefly remind you what the title means. You will recall that* Beyond the Pleasure Principle *is an essay in which Freud discovers that the pre-eminence which he had first accorded to the pleasure principle, tied to the principle of constancy, according to which the organism must be able to reduce tension to a constant level, he discovered then that this principle is not exclusive, contrary to what he had first asserted. It is as if he were somehow pushed by a certain number of facts to go beyond what he had first asserted. But he is in some difficulty in this text which I didn't know until now.*

First of all there are the dreams of those with traumatic neuroses, that is, the strange fact that in the traumatic neuroses there always is a rerun of the dream of the traumatic situation. So that the idea of the dream as a hallucinatory fulfilment of desire collapses.

Next, the games endlessly repeated by children. There's the famous example of the eighteen-month-old child left by his mother, and who each time throws an object away and retrieves it again – a process of continual disappearance, and reappearance. The child tries to take on an active role in this situation.

Most important is what happens in the transference situation, when the analysand dreams the same dreams over and over again, always the same ones. And in a general way, he is led to repeat instead of simply remembering. It is as if resistance didn't only arise, as Freud first believed, solely from the repressed, but uniquely from the ego. And he finds his initial conception of the transference modified. The latter isn't simply defined as the product of a disposition for transference, but as a compulsion to repeat.

In short, these facts lead Freud to objectify, and to move on to assert that there is something other than the pleasure principle, that there is an irresistible tendency[6] *to repeat, which would transcend the pleasure principle and the reality principle, which, although opposed in a way to the pleasure principle, would complete it, at the heart of*

[5] English in the original.

[6] The French term is *'tendance'*; 'compulsion' translates *'compulsion'*.

the principle of constancy. It is as if, alongside the repetition of needs, there was a need for repetition, of which Freud is aware long before he actually introduces it.

At this point it is out of the question to follow Freud in the biological project which he seeks to offer as infrastructure. I would simply like to raise some questions concerning what we have covered up until now.

Something which struck me – since I am meant to play the part of the innocent – is that the tendency to repeat seems defined in a contradictory fashion.

It seems defined by its goal, and its goal, to take the example of the child's game, seems to be to master what threatens a given equilibrium, to assume an active role, to triumph over unresolved conflicts. At this point, the tendency to repeat seems to be the generator of tension, the purveyor[7] of progress, whereas the instinct, in the sense in which Freud uses it, is on the contrary only a principle of stagnation. The key idea is that the tendency to repeat modifies the pre-established harmony between the pleasure principle and the reality principle, that it leads to broader and broader integrations, that it is therefore the purveyor of human progress. The title of the article is then justified. The compulsion to repeat would be beyond the pleasure principle, since it would constitute the condition for a kind of human progress, instead of being, like the pleasure principle, a relation of security.

If we adopt the other point of view, if we cease to define the tendency to repeat by its goal, and define it by its mechanism, it appears as pure automatism, as regression. To illustrate this aspect, Freud uses many examples drawn from biology. The tension aspect is illustrated by the facts of human progress, while the regression aspect is illustrated by the phenomenon of alimentary hygiene.

That is the construction which I thought I discerned between the tendency to repeat, purveyor of progress, and the tendency to repeat, mechanism. One mustn't give up trying to describe this repetition in biological terms, and understand it in purely human terms. Man is led into mastering it by his death, his stagnation, his inertia, which he can always fall back into.

Second question. This inertia could be intimated by the ego, which Freud defines very explicitly as the nucleus of resistances in the transference. It is one step in the evolution of his doctrine – the ego in analysis, that is in a situation which challenges the precarious equilibrium, the constancy, the ego introduces security, stagnation, pleasure. In such a way that the function of the relation of which we spoke a moment ago will not define every subject. The ego, whose main task is to transform everything into secondary energy, into bound energy, won't define every subject, hence the appearance of the tendency to repeat.

The question of the nature of the ego could be bound to the function of narcissism. There again, I have found some contradictions in Freud, who sometimes seems to identify it with the self-preservative instinct, and sometimes speaks of it as a sort of quest for death.

That is more or less what I wanted to say.

[7] *'le facteur'.*

Did it seem to be sufficiently intelligible, in its brevity?

As brief as it may have been, I think that the way in which Pontalis has raised the problem is remarkable, because he really points to the heart of the ambiguities with which we will have to deal, at least in the first stages, in our attempt to understand the Freudian theory of the ego.

You spoke of the pleasure principle as being equivalent to the tendency to adaptation. You do realise that this is precisely what you subsequently put into question. There is a profound difference between the pleasure principle and something else which differentiates itself off from it, like these two English terms which can render the word *'besoin'* – need[8] and drive.[8]

You have put the question aptly by saying that a certain way of talking about it implies the idea of progress. But perhaps you haven't sufficiently insisted on the fact that the notion of the tendency to repeat as drive[8] is very explicitly opposed to the idea that there is anything at all in life which has a tendency towards progress, contrary to the perspective of conventional optimism, of evolutionism, which leaves the problematic of adaptation – and I would even go so far as to say that of reality – completely open.

You were right to underline the difference between the biological register and the human register. But this can only be of interest if one realises that the question of this text emerges from the confusion between these two registers. No other text so profoundly questions the very meaning of life. It leads to a confusion, I would almost say a radical confusion, of the human dialectic with something which is in nature. There is here a term that you did not mention, and which is, however, absolutely essential, that of the *death instinct.*

You very rightly showed that this isn't simply Freudian metaphysics. The question of the ego is entirely implicated here. You have only sketched it out – otherwise you would have accomplished what I am going to help you to do this year.

Next time I will take up the question of the ego and of the pleasure principle, that is to say, I will take up at one and the same time what figures at the end of Pontalis's question and what he encountered at the beginning.

24 November 1954

[8] English in the original.

BEYOND THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE, REPETITION

III

The symbolic universe

DIALOGUES CONCERNING LÉVI-STRAUSS
LIFE AND THE MACHINE
GOD, NATURE AND THE SYMBOL
THE NATURAL IMAGINARY
FREUDIAN DUALISM

Yesterday evening's meeting marked a definite step forward in comparison with the first session, since we maintained the dialogue better and for longer.[1]

I have some evidence as to the comings and goings which this elicits in each person's subjectivity – *Will I make an intervention? – Won't I make an intervention? – I didn't make an intervention* – etc.

Surely you must have realised, if only by the way I conduct them, that these sessions are not analogous to so-called scientific meetings. It is in this sense that I ask you to take careful note of the following, that in these open sessions, you aren't by any means on display, despite the fact that we have outside guests, sympathisers and others. You musn't try to say elegant things, aimed at putting you in the limelight and increasing the esteem in which you are already held. You are here to be receptive to things you haven't as yet seen, and which are in principle unexpected. So, why not make the most of this opportunity by raising questions at the deepest level you can, even if that comes out in a way which is a bit hesitant, vague, even baroque.

In other words, the only criticism I have to make of you, if I may, is that you all want to appear too clever. Everybody knows you are. So why do you want to appear as such? And, in any case, what is so important, either about being or appearing to be so?

That said, those who weren't able to vent their spleen, or the opposite, yesterday, are asked to do so now, since the whole point of those meetings is what comes out of them.

1

Already Anzieu is volunteering. I would be grateful if he says what he has to say.

[1] On 30 November 1954, Claude Lévi-Strauss gave a lecture to the Société Française de Psychanaiyse, entitled 'Kinship versus the family'.

Anzieu's question is not reproduced here.

Durandin seemed to say that the violence of the prohibition of incest was something measurable, being translated into clearcut social acts. That isn't true. In order to discover the Oedipus complex, it was first necessary to examine neurotics, so as then to move to a much wider circle of individuals. That is why I said that the Oedipus complex, with the intensity of fantasy that we have discovered it to possess, the importance and the presence that it has on the imaginary level for the subject we are dealing with, must be conceived of as a recent, terminal and not original, phenomenon, in comparison with what Lévi-Strauss is telling us about.

But how can you attach such importance, my dear Anzieu, to the fact that Lévi-Strauss includes words like *compensation* in his vocabulary, when speaking, for example, of Tibetan or Nepalese tribes in which little girls are killed, which has as its consequence that there are more men than women? The term compensation in this case has only a statistical value, without any relation to the analytic term.

We are obliged to concede to Lévi-Strauss that numerical elements have a role in the constitution of a collectivity. M. de Buffon made some very apt remarks on this subject. What is troublesome is that when it comes to the monkey ladder, as you put your feet on one rung, you forget the steps below – or you let them rot. In consequence one always has only a strictly limited field to which the whole of the conception applies. But it would be wrong not to take in Buffon's extremely apt remarks on the role played by statistical elements in a group, in a society.

There's a lot in these remarks, since they deprive all kinds of pseudo-finalist questions of their relevance. There are questions which one doesn't need to ask oneself, because they are dispelled all by themselves as a consequence of the spatial distribution of numbers. Those sorts of problems still exist, and are studied at those demographical levels to which Lévi-Strauss made a vague reference.

Buffon asked himself why bees make such pretty hexagons.[2] He noticed that no other polyhedron fills a surface in so practical and pretty a manner. It is a kind of pressure on the occupation of space which requires that they be hexagons, and one doesn't have to create sophisticated problems of the type – do bees know geometry?

You can see the meaning which the word compensation might have in that case – if there are less women, there will necessarily be more men.

But your mistake goes even deeper when you speak of finality, when you believe that Lévi-Strauss confers a soul on the society when he speaks of the traffic from one family to another. There would be a lot to say about the usage

[2] Buffon, *Histoire naturelle*, Paris, 1753, IV 99.

even of the term finality, of its relations with causality, and intellectual rigour requires one to accord it some attention, if only to note that finality is always implied, in a variously embryonic form, in every causal notion – except when one expressly opposes causal thought to the finalist conception. For causal thought, finality doesn't exist, but the fact that one must emphasize that is sufficient proof that the notion is difficult to deal with.

What is original in Lévi-Strauss's notion of the elementary structure?

Throughout he emphasizes the fact that nothing is understood about the facts now collected for some considerable time concerning kinship and the family, if one tries to deduce them from any natural or naturalising dynamic. Incest as such doesn't elicit any natural feeling of horror. I don't say that we can base our work on this fact, all I'm saying is that this is what Lévi-Strauss says. There is no biological reason, and in particular no genetic one, to account for exogamy, and he demonstrates that with an extremely precise discussion of the scientific data. In a society – and we can imagine societies other than human societies – the permanent and constant practice of endogamy would not only not have any disadvantages, but would after a certain time have the result of eliminating the alleged hereditary defects. There is no possible means, starting from the natural plane, of deducing the formation of this elementary structure called the preferential order.

And what does he base this on? On the fact that, in the human order, we are dealing with the complete emergence of a new function, encompassing the whole order in its entirety. The symbolic function is not new as a function, it has its beginnings elsewhere than in the human order, but they are only beginnings. The human order is characterised by the fact that the symbolic function intervenes at every moment and at every stage of its existence.

In other words, the whole thing holds together. In order to conceive what happens in the domain proper to the human order, we must start with the idea that this order constitutes a totality. In the symbolic order the totality is called a universe. The symbolic order from the first takes on its universal character.

It isn't constituted bit by bit. As soon as the symbol arrives, there is a universe of symbols. The question one might ask – how many symbols, numerically, does it take to constitute the symbolic universe – remains open. But however small the number of symbols which you might conceive of as constituting the emergence of the symbolic function as such in human life, they imply the totality of everything which is human. Everything is ordered in accordance with the symbols which have emerged, in accordance with the symbols once they have appeared.

Everything which is human has to be ordained within a universe constituted by the symbolic function. It's not for nothing that Lévi-Strauss calls his structures *elementary* – he doesn't say *primitive*. *Elementary* is the opposite of *complex*. And, oddly enough, he hasn't written *The Complex Structures of Kinship*

yet. We are the representers of complex structures, and they are characterised by being much more amorphous.

DR BARGUES: *Lévi-Strauss has spoken of complex structures.*

Of course. He alludes to them, he indicates the points of insertion, but he hasn't discussed them.

In elementary structures, the rules of alliance are part of an extraordinarily rich, luxuriant network of preferences and prohibitions, of indications, of commands, of facilitations, and cover a much larger field than the complex forms. The closer we get, not to the origin, but to the element, the more the structuration, the amplitude, the intricacy of the specifically symbolic structure of nomenclature imposes itself. The nomenclature of kinship and alliance is more comprehensive in the elementary forms than in the so-called complex forms, that is to say those forms elaborated in cultural cycles of far greater extension.

This is one of Lévi-Strauss's fundamental points, one which shows the fertility of his thinking in this book. On this basis, we can formulate the hypothesis that this symbolic order, since it always presents itself as a whole, as forming a universe all by itself – and even constituting the universe as such, as distinct from the world – must also be structured as a whole, that is to say, it forms a dialectic structure which holds together, which is complete.

Some systems of kinship are more viable than others. Some lead to impasses which are properly speaking arithmetical and which presuppose that from time to time crises occur within the society, bringing with them ruptures and new beginnings.

On the basis of these arithmetical studies – understanding arithmetical not only as the manipulation of collections of objects, but also as including the significance of these combinatory operations, which exceeds any sort of given which might be deduced experimentally from the living relation of the subject to the world – Lévi-Strauss demonstrates that there is a correct classification of what the elementary structures of kinship make available to us. This presupposes that the symbolic agencies function in the society from the start, from the moment it takes on a human appearance. But this is nothing more nor less than what is presupposed by the unconscious such as we discover and manipulate it in analysis.

This is exactly where there was some uncertainty yesterday evening in Lévi-Strauss's answer to my question. For, in truth, in a manoeuvre often found in people who produce new ideas, a kind of hesitation to sustain all of their sharp edge, he almost returns back to the psychological level. The question which I put to him in no way implied a collective unconscious, as he called it. What solution could seriously be expected from the word 'collective' in this instance, when the collective and the individual are strictly the same thing? No, it isn't a

matter of positing a communal soul somewhere, in which all these calculations would take place, it isn't a question of any psychological entification, it is a question of the symbolic function. The symbolic function has absolutely nothing to do with a para-animal formation, a totality which would make of the whole of humanity a kind of large animal – for in the end, that's what the collective unconscious is.

If the symbolic function functions, we are inside it. And I would even say – we are so far into it that we can't get out of it. A large part of the problems which confront us when we try to scientificate, that is to say to bring order to a certain number of phenomena, first in line being those of life, in the end it is always the paths of the symbolic function which lead us, much more than any sort of direct apprehension.

Thus, when it comes down to it, we always try to explain the living organism in terms of mechanism. The first question which we analysts must answer, and which can perhaps help us get away from the controversy which exists between vitalism and mechanism, is the following – why are we led to think of life in terms of mechanism? In what way actually are we, as men, parents of the machine?

M. HYPPOLITE: *In so far as we are mathematicians, in so far as we have a passion for mathematics.*

That's right. The philosophical criticisms made of strictly mechanistic research assume the machine to be deprived of freedom. It would be very easy to prove to you that the machine is much freer than the animal. The animal is a jammed machine. It's a machine with certain parameters that are no longer capable of variation. And why? Because the external environment determines the animal, and turns it into a fixed type. It is in as much as, compared to the animal, we are machines, that is to say something decomposed, that we possess greater freedom, in the sense in which freedom means the multiplicity of possible choices. This is a way of looking at it which is never highlighted.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Hasn't the word machine fundamentally and sociologically changed its meaning, from its origins up to cybernetics?*

I agree with you. I am in the process, for the first time, of trying to inculcate in my listeners the idea that the machine is not what a vain people think it is. The meaning of the machine is in the process of complete transformation, for us all, whether or not you have opened a book on cybernetics. You're behind the times, it's always like that.

People in the eighteenth century, the ones who introduced the idea of mechanism – an idea which it is in good taste to pour scorn on today, a notion of small machines quite removed from life, a superseded notion, so you believe – people like La Mettrie, whom I can't encourage you enough to read, those

people who lived that, who wrote *L'Homme-Machine*, you can't imagine the extent to which they were still all caught up in the categories of an earlier age, which truly dominated their thinking. One must read the thirty-five volumes of the *Encyclopédie des Arts et des Techniques* from end to end, which sets the tone for the period, to become aware of the extent to which scholastic notions dominated what they were trying, not without an effort, to introduce. These attempts at reduction based on the machine, at the functionalisation of the phenomena which occur on the human level, were very far ahead of the complications which held good in their mental functioning when they took up any common or garden theme.

Look up the word *amour*, the word *amour-propre* in the *Encyclopédie* – you'll see how far removed their human feelings were from what they were trying to construct in the way of knowledge of man.

It is only much later, in our thinking or that of our fathers, that mechanism took on its full, purified, naked meaning, a meaning exclusive of all other interpretative systems. That is an observation which allows us to grasp what it means to be a precursor. What it isn't, which would be completely impossible, is the anticipation of the categories which emerge later and which haven't yet been created – human beings are always immersed in the same cultural network as their contemporaries, and the ideas they have can only be theirs as well. Being a precursor means seeing what it is one's contemporaries are constituting in the way of ideas, of consciousness, of action, of techniques, of political forms, seeing them as they will be seen a century later. Yes, that can happen.

There is a mutation taking place in the function of the machine, which is leaving all those who are still bent on criticising the old mechanism miles behind. To be a little ahead means realising that this has as its consequences the complete reversal of all the classical objections raised to the use of purely mechanistic categories. I think I'll have the opportunity to demonstrate this to you this year.

2

Has anyone still got a question to ask?

O. MANNONI: *What interested me was the manner in which Lévi-Strauss addressed the problem of nature and culture. He said that for some time now, the opposition between nature and culture has no longer been visible. The work that was being done continued to look for nature somewhere on the side of affectivity, of impulsions, of the natural foundation of being. Now, what brought Lévi-Strauss to set himself the question of nature and culture was that it seemed to him that a certain form of incest, for instance, was both universal and contingent. And this type of*

contradiction brought him to a kind of conventionalism which has baffled a good number of listeners. I made the following observation – it is troubling to find this problem of the contingent and the universal elsewhere than in the institutional world. Right-handedness is a universal form, and yet it is contingent – we could be left-handed. And no one has ever been able to prove that it was social or biological. There is something profoundly obscure for us here, which is of the same kind as that in Lévi-Strauss. To go further, and show that the obscurity is really very serious, one can note that in molluscs of the helical variety, which are clearly not institutional, there is also a universal coiling round which is contingent, since they could be coiled the other way, and some individuals in fact are coiled the other way. It seems therefore that the question raised by Lévi-Strauss is much larger than the classical opposition of the natural and the institutional. It isn't surprising, therefore, if he also tries to feel which is his natural and which his institutional side, as every one did yesterday. That seems extremely important to me – we are confronted by something which dissolves both the old idea of nature and that of the institution.

M. HYPPOLITE: *That would be a universal contingency.*

O. MANNONI: *I don't know.*

I think you are bringing in things which perhaps were not implied by the notion of contingency that Lévi-Strauss invoked. I think that for him contingency was opposed to the idea of the necessary – in fact, he said as much. The question he posed, which we might well in the end think naive, concerns the distinction between the universal and the necessary. Which also ends up raising the question of what we could call the necessity of mathematics. It is quite clear that it warrants a special definition, and that is why I talked just now about the universe. With respect to the introduction of the symbolic system, I think that the answer to the question raised by Lévi-Strauss yesterday, is that the Oedipus complex is both universal and contingent, because it is uniquely and purely symbolic.

M. HYPPOLITE: *I don't think so.*

The contingency now suggested by Mannoni belongs to a completely different order. The value of the distinction between nature and culture which Lévi-Strauss introduces in his *Elementary Structures of Kinship* is that it allows us to distinguish the universal from the generic. There's absolutely no need for the symbolic universal to be spread over the entire surface of the world for it to be universal. Besides, as far as I know, there's nothing which entails the world unity of human beings. There's nothing which is concretely realised as universal. And yet, as soon as any symbolic system is formed, straightaway it is, *de jure*, a universal as such. The fact that men have, with some exceptions, two arms, two legs and a pair of eyes – which in any case they have in common with

animals – the fact that they are, as someone once put it, featherless bipeds, plucked chickens, all of that is generic, categorically not universal.[3] You bring in your helix coiled one way or the other. The question you are asking pertains to the natural type.

O. MANNONI: *That is what I am putting into question. Up until now, men have opposed to nature a pseudo-nature, the human institutions – one encounters the family in the same way one encounters the oak or the birch. And then they decided that these pseudo-natures were a result of human liberty or of the contingent choices of man. And in consequence they were led to attach the greatest importance to a new category, culture, opposed to nature. Studying these questions, Lévi-Strauss ends up no longer knowing which is nature, which is culture, precisely because one encounters problems of choosing, not only in the universe of nomenclatures, but in the universe of forms. From the symbolism of the nomenclature to the symbolism of the whole form, nature speaks. It speaks by coiling to the right or to the left, by being right- or left-handed. It is her own way of making contingent choices such as families or arabesques. At this point, it is true, I find myself at a watershed and I no longer know which way to go. I wanted to share my difficulty. I don't have a solution, just a difficulty.*

M. HYPPOLITE: *It seems to me that earlier on you quite rightly opposed the universal to the generic, by saying that universality was tied to symbolism itself, to the modality of the symbolic universe created by man. But then it is a pure form. Your term* universality *at bottom means that a human universe necessarily affects the form of universality, it attracts a totality which is universalised.*

That is the function of the symbol.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Does that answer the question? It only shows us the formal character which a human universe acquires.*

There are two senses of the word *formal.* When one speaks of mathematical formalisation, we are dealing with a set of conventions from which you can generate a whole series of consequences, of theorems which follow on from one another, and establish certain structural relations, a law, in the strict sense of law, within a set. In the gestaltist sense of the word, in contrast, form, the *good form*,[4] is a totality, but it is actualised and isolated.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Is this second sense yours, or the first?*

Unquestionably the first.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Nonetheless, you did speak of totality, so this symbolic universe is purely conventional. It affects the form in that sense in which one speaks of universal*

[3] See Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* II 5, 92a 1–5.

[4] The corresponding German term within Gestalt psychology is usually rendered into English as 'good shape'. Occasionally in this Seminar, this is the translation given, but more often *'la bonne forme'* is translated as 'good form'.

form, without, for all that, it being generic or even general. I wonder if you aren't giving a formal solution to the problem raised by Mannoni.

Mannoni's question has two sides.

First there is the problem he raises, which is stated in the form *signatura rerum* – do things themselves possess, naturally, a specifically asymmetrical character? There is something real, a given. This given is structured in a specific manner. In particular natural asymmetries exist. Within the present line of development of our understanding, are we going to get to the bottom of their mysterious meaning? One whole human tradition, known as the philosophy of nature, busied itself with this kind of reading. We know what that yields. It never gets very far. It leads to completely ineffable things, which moreover soon peter out – except if one wants to carry on regardless, ending up with what is commonly called a delirium. This is certainly not the case with Mannoni, whose mind is too sharp, too dialectical, not to raise such a question save in the form of a problem.

The second thing is knowing if this wasn't the point Lévi-Strauss was getting at when he told us yesterday evening that, after all, he found himself, at the edge of nature, prey to vertigo, asking himself whether the roots of the symbolic tree weren't to be rediscovered in her. Private conversations I've had with Lévi-Strauss allow me to enlighten you on this point.

Lévi-Strauss is in the midst of backtracking as regards the very sharp bipartition which he makes between nature and symbol, whose creative value he nonetheless well appreciates, because it is a method which allows him to distinguish between registers, and by the same token between orders of facts. He wavers, for a reason which may seem surprising to you, but which he has made quite explicit – he is afraid that the autonomy of the symbolic register will give rise to a masked transcendentalism once again, for which, as regards his affinities, his personal sensibility, he feels only fear and aversion. In other words, he is afraid that after we have shown God out of one door, we will bring him back in by the other. He doesn't want the symbol, even in the extraordinarily purified form in which he offers us it, to be only a re-apparition, under a mask, of God.

That is what lies at the base of the wavering which he showed signs of when he put into question the methodical separation of the symbolic from the natural plane.

M. HYPPOLITE: *It isn't any the less true that to call on the symbolic universe does not even resolve the question of the choices man has made.*

Certainly not.

M. HYPPOLITE: *There is no doubt that what we used to call* institutions, *implying a certain number of contingent choices, enter into the symbolic universe. But, having said this, it doesn't give us the explanation for these choices.*

It isn't a question of explanation.

M. HYPPOLITE: *But we are nonetheless confronted with a problem.*

It is precisely the problem of origins.

M. HYPPOLITE: *I don't deny that the mark of a systematic universality has been imprinted by the symbolic relation. But this guise itself requires explanation and leads us to the problem which Mannoni raised. I would like to address a criticism to you. How does the use of the word symbolic help us? What does it give us? That's the question. I don't doubt that it is useful. In what way does it contribute? And what does it contribute?*

I use it to give an account of the analytic experience. You were able to see that last year, when I showed you that it is impossible to bring the diverse aspects of the transference together correctly, if one doesn't start with a definition of speech, of the creative function, of full speech. In the analytic experience, we encounter it under different aspects – psychological, personal, interpersonal – it occurs in an imperfect, refracted, diversified way. Without a radical stand on the function of speech, transference is purely and simply inconceivable. Inconceivable in the true sense of the word – there is no concept of transference, nothing but a multiplicity of facts tied together by a vague and inconsistent bond.

3

Next time I will introduce the question of the ego in the following form: *Relations between the function of the ego and the pleasure principle.*

I think I can show that in order to gain an idea of the function which Freud designates by the word 'ego', as indeed to read the whole of the Freudian metapsychology, it is necessary to use this distinction of planes and relations expressed in the terms, the symbolic, the imaginary and the real.

What's the point? The point is to retain the meaning of a particularly pure symbolic experience, that of analysis. I will give you an example of it, by giving you a foretaste of what I will tell you regarding the ego.

In its most essential aspect, the ego is an imaginary function. That is a discovery yielded by experience, and not a category which I might almost qualify as *a priori*, like that of the symbolic. On account of this point, I would almost say on account of this point alone, we find in human experience a door opened out on to an element of typicality. Of course, to us this element appears on the surface of nature, but in a form which is always misleading. That is what I wanted to insist on when I spoke of the failure of the various philosophies of nature. It is also very misleading with respect to the imaginary function of the ego. But this is a deception to which we are committed up to the hilt. In as much

as we are the ego, not only do we experience it, but it is just as much a guide to our experience as the different registers that have been called guides in life, that is, sensations.

The fundamental, central structure of our experience really belongs to the imaginary order. And we can even grasp the extent to which this function is already different in man from what it is in nature as a whole.

We rediscover the imaginary function in nature in a thousand different forms – all the Gestaltist captations linked up to the parade, so essential to sustaining sexual attraction within the species.

Now, in man the function of the ego possesses distinct characteristics. That's the great discovery of analysis – at the level of the generic relation, bound up with the life of the species, man already functions differently. In man, there's already a crack, a profound perturbation of the regulation of life. That's the importance of the notion introduced by Freud of the death instinct. Not that the death instinct is such an enlightening notion in itself. What has to be comprehended is that he was forced to introduce it so as to remind us of a salient fact of his experience, just when it was beginning to get lost.

As I observed a little while ago, when an apperception of the structure is ahead of its time, there is always a moment of weakness when one is inclined to abandon it.

That is what happened in the circle around Freud when the meaning of the discovery of the unconscious was pushed into the background. They reverted to a confused, unitary, naturalistic conception of man, of the ego, and by the same token of the instincts. It was precisely in order to regain the sense of his experience that Freud wrote *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. I will show you what necessity led him to write those last paragraphs, of whose fate at the hands of the majority of the analytic community you are well aware. It is said they are incomprehensible. And even when one does show willingness to follow Freud, mouthing *the death instinct*, one doesn't understand it any more than the Dominicans, so prettily riddled by Pascal in *Les Provinciales*, had a clue about sufficient grace. I ask all of you to read this extraordinary text of Freud's, unbelievably ambiguous, almost confused, to read it several times, otherwise you won't understand the literal critique I am going to make of it.

The final paragraphs have quite literally remained a closed book, refusing to speak. As yet they have never been elucidated. They can only be understood if one understands what Freud's experience amounted to. He wanted to save some kind of dualism at all costs, just when this dualism was crumbling in his hands, and when the ego, the libido, etc., all of that was tending to produce a kind of vast whole, returning us to a philosophy of nature.

This dualism is none other than what I am getting at when I emphasize the autonomy of the symbolic. Freud never formulated that. To get you to

understand it, a critique and exegesis of his text will be necessary. I can't now take for granted precisely what has to be proven this year. But I believe that I can show you that the category of symbolic action is well-founded.

M. HYPPOLITE: *I wasn't denying that. The symbolic function is for you, if I understand it correctly, a transcendental function, in the sense that, quite simultaneously, we can neither remain in it, nor can we get out of it. What purpose does it serve? We cannot do without it, and yet we cannot inhabit it either.*

Of course. It is presence in absence and absence in presence.

M. HYPPOLITE: *I wanted to understand what there was to be understood.*

If you want to stick by what you are giving me now, on the phenomenological plane, I have no objection. Only I believe it is insufficient.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Doubtless. I believe so too.*

And, to be candid, being purely phenomenological doesn't get us very far.

M. HYPPOLITE: *I agree.*

That can only obscure the path we have to follow, by setting in advance the tone which it will retain from then on. Does the use I make of the symbolic register just lead one into locating your transcendence somewhere, a transcendence which, after all, surely must exist? Is that what it is about? I don't think so. The allusions I have made to a completely different use of the notion of machine might well indicate that.

M. HYPPOLITE: *My questions were only questions. I was asking you what enabled you to avoid answering Mannoni's question by saying that there was nothing to reply to, or at least that one would get side-tracked in answering it.*

I said that I don't think that that is the meaning one has in mind in saying that Claude Lévi-Strauss is going back to nature.

M. HYPPOLITE: . . . *refuses to go back to her.*

I also said that we have, of course, to take the formal side of nature into account, in the sense in which I qualified it as possessing pseudo-significant symmetry, because that is what man embraces in order to produce his fundamental symbols. The important thing is what gives the forms of nature symbolic value and function, what makes them function in relation to one another. It is man who introduces the notion of asymmetry. Asymmetry in nature is neither symmetrical, nor asymmetrical – it is what it is.

Next time I wanted to tell you about the following – *the Ego as function and as symbol.* That is where the ambiguity is played out. The ego, the imaginary function, intervenes in psychic life only as symbol. One makes use of the ego in

the same way as the Bororo does the parrot. The Bororo says *I am a parrot*, we say *I am me* [*moi*]. None of that has the slightest importance. The important thing is the function it has.

O. MANNONI: *After Lévi-Strauss one has the impression that we can no longer use the notions of culture and nature. He destroys them. The same is true for the ideal of adaptation we talk about all the time. Being adapted simply means being alive.*

There's something to that. It pertains to the same order as what I was implying just now by saying that at a given point in time Freud wanted to defend some sort of dualism at all costs. As a result of the rapid evolution of the theory and technique of analysis, Freud found himself faced with a drop in tension analogous to that which you discern in the mind of Lévi-Strauss. But, in his case, it may not be his last word.

1 December 1954

IV

A materialist definition of the phenomenon of consciousness

EXPERIENCE AND DESTINY

'THE CORE OF OUR BEING'

THE EGO IS AN OBJECT

FASCINATION, RIVALRY, RECOGNITION

Indem er alles schaft, was schaftet der Höchste? – Sich.
Was schaft er aber vor er alles schaftet? – Mich.

We are going to encounter this distich of Daniel von Chepko's again later on, if I manage to take you where I want to today.

The laws governing this kind of teaching in themselves contain a reflection of its meaning. Here I do not pretend to anything more than to get you to read Freud's works. I do not pretend to replace that, if you won't commit yourselves to it. You must realise that the form which I try to give here to the Freudian teaching will only take on its meaning and its full importance for you if you refer to the texts, so as to bring the insights I give you to bear on the difficulties you'll find in them.

Indeed, these texts are sometimes difficult, borrowing from a problematic weave of questions which manifests itself in contradictions. These contradictions are organised contradictions, but for all that they remain contradictions, and not just antinomies. Sometimes Freud, by following his own path, ends up with positions which seem contradictory even to him, and he reconsiders some of them – which, for all that, doesn't mean that he didn't think them justified at the time. In short, this movement of Freud's thought, which never reached journey's end, which was never cast into a definitive, dogmatic form, is what you must learn to comprehend for yourselves. It is to ease this comprehension that I try here to impart to you what I have myself gained from my reading of Freud's works, informed by an experience which, at least in principle, was directed in accordance with them. I say *at least in principle*, since here I continually put into question whether that thought has always been clearly understood, or even rigorously kept to in the development of analytic technique.

I am teaching you that Freud discovered in man the substance and the axis of a subjectivity surpassing the individual organisation considered as the sum of individual experiences, and even considered as the line of individual development. I am giving you a possible definition of subjectivity, by formulating it as an organised system of symbols, aiming to cover the whole of

an experience, to animate it, to give it its meaning. And what are we trying to realise here, if not a subjectivity? The directions indicated, the doors opened for you here into our experience and our practice are intended to inspire you to extend them into concrete action.

1

In this teaching, as in an analysis, we have to deal with resistances.

The resistances always have their seat in the ego, so analysis teaches us. What corresponds to the ego, is what I sometimes call the sum of the prejudices which any knowledge comprises and which each of us has as individual baggage. It is something which includes what we know or think we know – for knowing is always in some way believing one knows.

On account of that fact, when you are shown a new perspective, in a manner which is decentred in relation to your experience, there's always a shift, whereby you try to recover your balance, the habitual centre of your point of view – a sign of what I am explaining to you, which is called resistance. What you should do, on the contrary, is open your minds to the notions being generated by another domain of experience, and turn it to your own profit.

Let us take an example. Claude Lévi-Strauss the other day opened up for us a perspective which implies the radical relativisation of familial reality, which should provide us with the occasion for revising what can for us be too fascinating, too absorbing, the reality which we have to deal with everyday. So, how did one of our longstanding companions choose to express himself on the subject? After all, he said, rather than worry ourselves about the conventionalism of the familial system, let us remind ourselves that in the family, there are not just the parents, there are also children. From the point of view of the child, the reality of the family is restored. What we analysts have to deal with, is the relation of the child to the parents. That is what stops us from getting lost in this extremely disorienting relativism.

To restore the family in this manner to the concrete reality of the child's experience certainly has far-reaching implications: locating the centre of the analytic experience in the fact that each individual is a child. But this intervention itself testified to this intellectual tendency to centre our analytic experience on individual, psychological experience.

What one shouldn't do, and I will illustrate this using what we encountered, no later than on the morrow, in the so-called supervision group.

A subject did in fact dream of a child, of a babe in arms in its primitive state of impotence, lying on its back, like a little up-turned turtle, flapping its four limbs about. He dreamt of this child, an isolated image. Straight off, for specific reasons, I felt obliged to say to the person who was reporting this dream to me – *This child is the subject, there is no doubt about it.*

Another dream was brought to me, confirming this imagery as representing

the subject. The dreamer himself is swimming in a sea which has very special characteristics – let us say, going straight to the associations, the imaginary and verbal context, that it is so constituted as to be at the same time the analyst's couch, the cushions in the analyst's car and, of course, the mother. On this sea are written numbers which clearly refer to the birth date and the age of the subject.

What is the backdrop to this dream? The subject is extremely preoccupied with a child who is about to be born, for whom he feels responsible, and for whom he fantasises, it seems, an imaginary paternity. This crucial situation appears in such an ambiguous way that it cannot but occur to one to think that the subject must have deep motives for fantasising this, for reality does not cast light on the matter. In fact, in a kind of sub-delirious anxiety regarding his responsibilities as the progenitor, the subject reproduces a question which is essential to him, that is – is he himself a legitimate child, yes or no?

It is only because, to some degree or other, the analyst has already put to him – *This story is really about you* – that the subject comes up with this dream. And what underlies the dream is – *Aren't I, after all, your child, you the analyst?*

You can see that what this throws into relief isn't, as is usually believed, the concrete, affective dependency of the child in relation to supposedly more or less parental adults. If the subject asks himself the question what kind of child he is, it isn't in terms of being more or less dependent, but as having been recognised or not, having or not having the right to bear his name as the child of so-and-so. It is in as much as the relations in which he is caught up are themselves brought to the level of symbolism, that the subject questions himself about himself. For him, when it occurs it is as a problem of the second degree, on the plane of the symbolic assumption of his destiny, in the register of his auto-biography.

I wouldn't say that, in the analytic dialogue, everything always takes place at this level, but what you must get straight is that this is the essentially analytic level. A great many children fantasise about having another family, about being the children of people other than those who take care of them. I would say that it is a typical, normal phase in the development of the child, bringing all kinds of offspring into the world, and which cannot be neglected even outside the analytic experience.

So then – and this is what I've been leading up to – what is the analysis of resistances?

It doesn't mean, as one tends, if not to formulate it – and it is formulated, I could give you lots of examples – then at least to practice it, it doesn't mean intervening with the subject so that he becomes aware of the manner in which his attachments, his prejudices, the equilibrium of his ego, prevent him from seeing. It doesn't mean persuading him, which leads pretty quickly to suggestion. It doesn't mean reinforcing, as they say, the ego of the subject, or to make an ally of its healthy part. It doesn't mean convincing. What it means is, at every instant of the analytic relation, knowing at what level the answer

should be pitched. Sometimes this answer may have to be pitched at the level of the ego. But that has nothing to do with the case I'm considering. The subject's question in no way refers to what might ensue from weaning, abandonment, vital lack of love or affection, or whatever, it concerns his history in as much as he fails to recognise [*méconnaît*] it, and that is what his entire behaviour really does express in spite of himself, in so far as he tries obscurely to recognise it. His life is oriented according to a problematic which isn't that of his actual experience, but that of his destiny, namely – what does his history signify?

Speech is mother to the misrecognised [*méconnue*] part of the subject, and that is the level peculiar to the analytic symptom – a level decentred in relation to individual experience, since it is that of the historical text which integrates it. From then on, what is certain is that the symptom will only give in to an intervention interceding at this decentred level. What will fail is any intervention inspired by a prefabricated reconstruction, one forged out of our notion of the normal development of the individual, and aiming at his normalisation – here is what he was lacking, here is what he must learn to submit to by way of frustration, for instance. What is at issue is knowing if the symptom is resolved in one register or in the other, there is no middle way.

The matter is nevertheless problematic in as much as the inter-ego dialogue cannot but include some reverberations, perhaps, why not – psychotherapeutic ones. Some kind of psychotherapy has always been practised, although no one knew quite what it was, and it has always involved the function of speech. What is at issue is determining whether, in analysis, this function of speech exerts its impact by substituting the authority of the analyst for the ego of the subject, or whether it is subjective. The order created by Freud demonstrates that the axial reality of the subject isn't in his ego. Intervening by substituting oneself for the ego of the subject, which is what is always done in one way of practising the analysis of resistances, is suggestion, not analysis.

The symptom, whatever it may be, isn't properly resolved when the analysis is practised without putting at the top of the agenda the question of ascertaining where the action of the analyst must be directed to, what point on the subject, if I can put it like that, he must aim at.

I'm going step by step. In the course of recent months, years even, I think I have sufficiently emphasized that the unconscious is the unknown subject of the ego, that it is misrecognised [*méconnu*] by the ego, which is *der Kern unseres Wesens*, Freud writes in the chapter of the *Traumdeutung* on the dream-processes, with which I have asked you to get acquainted – when Freud discusses the primary process, he means something having an ontological meaning, which he calls *the core of our being*.[1]

[1] (1900a) GW II/III 609; Stud II 572–3; SE V 603. The German word *Kern* is translated into English either as 'nucleus' (for instance, in the final chapter of Freud's *Studies on Hysteria*, in the phrase 'pathogenic nucleus', translated into French as '*noyau pathogène*', and rendered in Sem I as 'pathogenic nucleus') or, as in this passage, by 'core'. Occasionally 'kernel' may be found.

The core of our being does not coincide with the ego. That is the point of the analytic experience, and it is around this that our experience is organised, and around this that these strata of knowledge which are now being taught have been deposited. But do you think that we should be content with that, and say – the *I* of the unconscious subject is not *me* [*moi*]? That is not good enough, because nothing, for those of you who think spontaneously, if one can say that, implies the inverse. And normally you start thinking that this *I* is the real ego. You think that the ego is nothing but an incomplete, erroneous form of this *I*. In this way, you have accomplished the decentring essential to the Freudian discovery, but you have immediately reduced it. An experiment well known to oculists demonstrates the same diplopia. Put two images very close to one another, so that they are almost overlapping – thanks to a certain cross-eyedness, sometimes they make up a *single one, if they are brought close enough together*. Similarly, you force the ego back into this *I* discovered by Freud – you restore the unity.

That is what happened in analysis the day when realising that – for a reason which will have to be elucidated in retrospect – the first fruitfulness of the analytic discovery was being exhausted in the practice, people reverted to what is referred to as the analysis of the ego, claiming to find in it the exact inverse of what has to be demonstrated to the subject. Because one had already reached the level of the puzzle, of demonstration. People thought that by analysing the ego, one would find the reverse-side of whatever it was that had to be made comprehensible. In that way a reduction of the kind I just mentioned was effected – two different images into a single one.

There's no doubt that the real *I* is not the ego. But that isn't enough, for one can always fall into thinking that the ego is only a mistake of the *I*, a partial point of view, the mere becoming aware of which would be sufficient to broaden the perspective, sufficient for the reality which has to be reached in the analytic experience to reveal itself. What's important is the inverse, which must always be borne in mind – the ego isn't the *I*, isn't a mistake, in the sense in which classical doctrine makes of it a partial truth. It is something else – a particular object within the experience of the subject. Literally, the ego is an object – an object which fills a certain function which we here call the imaginary function.

This thesis is absolutely essential to technique. I defy you not to extract this conception from the reading of the post-1920 metapsychological texts. Freud's research on the second topography was undertaken in order to put back in its place an ego which had begun to slide back to its old position. Whereas, through an effort at mental accommodation, one was falling back into the essential element of the classical illusion – I do not say error, it is quite strictly an illusion. Everything Freud wrote aimed at reestablishing the exact perspective of the excentricity of the subject in relation to the ego.

I claim that this is the essential, and that everything must be organised in relation to it. Why? I will show you my cards starting with the a, b, c, even starting at the level of what is called, or what one falsely takes to be, the evidence.

2

Your evidence, the evidence of the psychological experience which is your own, is determined by a confusion of the concepts of which you know nothing. We live amongst concepts far more than we think. Its mode of reflection is essential to the manner in which the being of a certain cultural era gains a sense of itself, and by the same token conceives itself.

However, the elevated, highly elaborated character of the phenomenon of consciousness is conceded as a postulate by us all, each and everyone of us, in this year of 1954, and I am certain that there isn't a single one of us who isn't in the end convinced that, however partial the apprehension of consciousness, hence of the ego, may be, even so that is where our existence is given. We think that the unity of the ego is, if not explored, then at least apprehended in this fact of consciousness.

On the contrary, what the analytic experience highlights and what Freud doesn't know what to do with, like a fish with a fig, are the illusions of consciousness.

In his *Project* of 1895, Freud does not manage, even though it is easy, to locate precisely the phenomenon of consciousness in his already elaborated schema of the psychic apparatus. Much later, in the metapsychology, when he tries to explain the different pathological forms – dream, delirium, mental confusion, hallucinations – through investments of systems, he repeatedly finds himself confronted with a paradox when it is a matter of making the system of consciousness function, and he tells himself that it must have some special laws. The system of consciousness does not enter into his theory. Freud's psycho-physical conception of the investments of the intra-organic systems is extremely ingenious at explaining what takes place in the individual. However hypothetical it may be, what we have since acquired in the way of experience concerning the diffusion and distribution of nervous input rather goes to show the validity of Freud's biological construction. But for consciousness it doesn't work.

You are going to tell me – it proves that Freud was confused. We will consider the issue from another angle.

What gives consciousness its seemingly primordial character? The philosopher does indeed seem to start with an indisputable given when he takes as his starting point the transparency of consciousness to itself. If there is consciousness of something it cannot be, we are told, that this consciousness does not

itself grasp itself as such. Nothing can be experienced without the subject being able to be aware of himself within this experience in a kind of immediate reflection.

On this topic, doubtless, philosophers have taken a few steps forward since Descartes's decisive step. The question has been raised, and remains open, of knowing whether the *I* is immediately grasped in the field of consciousness. But one could already say of Descartes that he had differentiated the thetic consciousness from the non-thetic consciousness.

I won't go any deeper into the metaphysical investigation of the problem of consciousness. I am going to propose to you, not a working hypothesis – I claim that it isn't a hypothesis – but a way of being rid of it, of cutting the Gordian knot. For there are problems which one must resign oneself to abandon without having resolved.

Once again, we're dealing with a mirror.

What is the image in the mirror? The rays which return on to the mirror make us locate in an imaginary space the object which moreover is somewhere in reality. The real object isn't the object that you see in the mirror. So here there's a phenomenon of consciousness as such. That at any rate is what I would like you to accept, so that I can tell you a little apologue to aid your reflection.

Suppose all men to have disappeared from the world. I say *men* on account of the high value which you attribute to consciousness. That is already enough to raise the question – *What is left in the mirror?* But let us take it to the point of supposing that all living beings have disappeared. There are only waterfalls and springs left – lightning and thunder too. The image in the mirror, the image in the lake – do they still exist?

It is quite obvious that they still exist. For one very simple reason – at the high point of civilization we have attained, which far surpasses our illusions about consciousness, we have manufactured instruments which, without in any way being audacious, we can imagine to be sufficiently complicated to develop films themselves, put them away into little boxes, and store them in the fridge. Despite all living beings having disappeared, the camera can nonetheless record the image of the mountain in the lake, or that of the Café de Flore crumbling away in total solitude.[2]

Doubtless philosophers will have all kinds of cunning objections to make to me. But nevertheless I ask you to continue to listen to my apologue.

At this point the men return. It is an arbitrary act of Malebranche's God – since it is he who sustains us in every moment of our existence, there is no reason why he couldn't have obliterated us and a few centuries later put us back into circulation.

[2] The Café de Flore, on the Boulevard St Germain in Paris, was a favourite haunt of writers, artists and intellectuals, and later on of the existentialists, from the Second Empire on.

Perhaps men would have to learn everything anew, and especially how to read an image. It doesn't matter. What is certain is that – as soon as they saw on the film the image of the mountain, they would also see its reflection in the lake. They would also see the movements which took place on the mountain, and those of the image. We can take things further. If the machine were more complicated, a photo-electric cell focused on the image in the lake could cause an explosion – it is always necessary, for something to seem efficacious, for an explosion to take place somewhere – and another machine could record the echo or collect the energy of this explosion.

So then! this is what I want you to consider as being essentially a phenomenon of consciousness, which won't have been perceived by any ego, which won't have been reflected upon in any ego-like experience – any kind of ego and of consciousness of ego being absent at the time.

You'll tell me – *Just a minute though! The ego is somewhere, it's in the camera.* No, there's not a shadow of ego in the camera. But, on the other hand, I am quite happy to admit that there is an *I* in it – not in the camera – up to something in it.

I am explaining to you that it is in as much as he is committed to a play of symbols, to a symbolic world, that man is a decentred subject. Well, it is with this same play, this same world, that the machine is built. The most complicated machines are made only with words.

Speech is first and foremost that object of exchange whereby we are recognised, and because you have said the password, we don't break each other's necks, etc. That is how the circulation of speech begins, and it swells to the point of constituting the world of the symbol which makes algebraic calculations possible. The machine is the structure detached from the activity of the subject. The symbolic world is the world of the machine.

Then we have the question as to what, in this world, constitutes the being of the subject.

Some people get very worried when they see me referring to God. However it is a God we conceive of *ex machina*, unless we extract *machina ex Deo*.

The machine makes for the continuity, thanks to which the men who were absent for a while will have the recording of what, in the interim, took place in the way of phenomena of consciousness properly speaking. And there, I can speak of *phenomena of consciousness* without reifying any kind of cosmic soul, nor any presence in nature. For at the point we have got to, maybe because we are sufficiently committed to the manufacture of the machine, we've gone beyond confusing symbolic intersubjectivity with cosmic intersubjectivity. At least, I hope so.

I've not knocked this apologue together in order to develop a hypothesis, but as an act of salubrity. Just to start raising the question as to what the ego is requires one to detach oneself from what we might call the religious conception

of consciousness. Implicitly, modern man thinks that everything which has happened in the universe since its origin came about so as to converge on this thing which thinks, creation of life, unique, precious being, pinnacle of creation, which is himself, with this privileged vantage-point called consciousness.

This perspective leads to an anthropomorphism which is so deluded that one has to start by shedding the scales from one's eyes, so as to realise what kind of illusion one has fallen prey to. This is a newcomer for humanity, this idiocy of scientistic atheism. Since within science one denies anything that could be considered as a recourse to the supreme Being, one ends up with vertigo, taking refuge elsewhere – to end up doing the very same thing, prostrating oneself. Here, there is nothing left to understand, everything is explained – consciousness has to appear, the world, history converge on this marvel, contemporary man, you and me, us men in the street.

The purely sentimental, in truth incoherent atheism of scientistic thought is pushed on the rebound into making consciousness the high-point of all phenomena. It strives as much as it can – just as one turns too absolute a king into a constitutional one – to make it clear that this consciousness is the masterpiece of masterpieces, the explanation for everything, perfection. But these epiphenomena are useless. When one deals with phenomena, one always acts as if one didn't take them into account.

This very precaution of not taking them into account underlines the fact that if you don't destroy its importance, you will become a cretin – you won't be able to think of anything else. I won't go on about the contradictory and hazardous varieties of aversions, of prejudices, of so-called inclinations for introducing forces, or vitalist entities, as they are called etc. But when one speaks in embryology of the formative force taking effect in the embryo, right away one assumes that since there is an organising centre there can be only one consciousness. Consciousness, eyes, ears – so then there is a little demon inside the embryo. So one no longer tries to organise what is apparent in the phenomenon, since one thinks that everything which is superior implies consciousness. However we do know that consciousness is linked to something entirely contingent, just as contingent as the surface of a lake in an uninhabited world – the existence of our eyes or of our ears.

To be sure, there is something unthinkable about this, an impasse in which all kinds of things come together, which seem to be organised in a contradictory manner in the mind. Common sense has reacted against them with a number of taboos. These are premises. Behaviourism says – *As for us, we're going to observe total behaviour, we're not going to pay any attention to consciousness.* But we know full well that this putting of consciousness into brackets wasn't that fruitful.

Consciousness isn't the monster one makes it out to be. Excluding it, chaining it up, doesn't bring any real benefits. Moreover, it has been said for some time now that behaviourism, under the alias of molar-behaviourism, has

reintroduced it on the sly. Following Freud, they have learned to make use of the notion of the field. Without that, the little progress behaviourism has been able to make hinges around the fact that it was agreed to observe a series of phenomena at their own particular level – at the level, for instance, of behaviour taken as a whole, considered in an object constituted as such – without worrying too much what their elementary instruments, inferior or superior, were. It isn't any the less the case that in the very notion of behaviour there is a certain castration of human reality. Not because it doesn't take into account the notion of consciousness, which, in fact, is of absolutely no use to anyone, neither to those who use it, nor to those who don't – but because it eliminates the intersubjective relation, which is the foundation not only of behaviour, but of actions and of passions. That has nothing to do with consciousness.

I hope you'll consider – for a certain time, during this introduction – consciousness to occur each time – and it occurs in the most unexpected and disparate places – there's a surface such that it can produce what is called *an image*. That is a materialist definition.

An image – that means the effects of energy starting from a given point of the real – think of them as being like light, since that is what most clearly evokes an image in our mind – are reflected at some point on a surface, come to strike the corresponding same point in space. The surface of a lake might just as well be replaced by the *area striata* of the occipital lobe, for the *area striata* with its fibrillary layers is exactly like a mirror. In the same way as you don't need the entire surface of a mirror – if that actually means anything – for you to be aware of the content of a field or a room, in the same way as you obtain the same result by using a tiny little bit, so any small portion of the *area striata* can be put to the same use, and behaves like a mirror. All sorts of things in the world behave like mirrors. All that's needed is that the conditions be such that to one point of a reality there should correspond an effect at another point, that a bi-univocal correspondence occurs between two points in real space.

I say in real space – I'm going too fast. There are two cases – either the effects occur in real space, or else they occur in imaginary space. Earlier on I showed what happens in a point in imaginary space, in order to unsettle your habitual conceptions. In this way you can realise that everything which is imaginary, everything which is properly speaking illusory, isn't for all that subjective.

There are illusions that are perfectly objective, objectifiable, and it isn't necessary to make the whole of our distinguished company disappear for you to understand that.

3

What about the ego, in this perspective? The ego really is an object. The ego, which you allegedly perceive within the field of clear consciousness as being the

unity of the latter, is precisely what the immediacy of sensation is in tension with. This unity isn't at all homogenous with what happens at the surface of the field, which is neutral. Consciousness as a physical phenomenon is precisely what engenders this tension.

The entire dialectic which I have given you as an example under the name of the *mirror stage* is based on the relation between, on the one hand, a certain level of tendencies which are experienced – let us say, for the moment, at a certain point in life – as disconnected, discordant, in pieces – and there's always something of that that remains – and on the other hand, a unity with which it is merged and paired. It is in this unity that the subject for the first time knows himself as a unity, but as an alienated, virtual unity. It does not partake in the characteristics of inertia of the phenomenon of consciousness under its primitive form, on the contrary, it has a vital, or anti-vital, relation with the subject.

It seems that this experience is a privileged one for man. Perhaps there is, after all, something of the kind in other animal species. That isn't a crucial issue for us. Let us not feign any hypotheses. This dialectic is found in experience at every level of structuration of the human ego, and that is enough for us.

So that you gain a firm grasp on this dialectic, I would like to give you a representation of it in an image whose outline you have not yet had time to wear down, since I haven't given you it yet, that of the blind man and the paralytic.[3]

Subjectivity on the level of the ego is comparable to this couple, which was introduced by the imagery of the fifteenth century – no doubt not without reason – in a particularly emphatic manner. The subjective half of the pre-mirror experience is the paralytic, who cannot move about by himself except in an uncoordinated and clumsy way. What masters him is the image of the ego, which is blind, and which carries him. Contrary to all appearances, and this is where the entire problem of the dialectic lies, it isn't, as Plato thinks, the master who rides the horse, that is, the slave, it's the other way round. And the paralytic, whose perspective this is, can only identify with his unity in a fascinated fashion, in the fundamental immobility whereby he finishes up corresponding to the gaze he is under, the blind gaze.

There's another image, that of the snake and the bird, fascinated by the gaze. Fascination is absolutely essential to the phenomenon of the constitution of the ego. The uncoordinated, incoherent diversity of the primitive fragmentation gains its unity in so far as it is fascinated. Reflection is also fascination, jamming. I will show you this function of fascination, of terror even, under Freud's pen, precisely in discussing the constitution of the ego.

A third image. If machines could embody what's at stake in this dialectic, I would offer you the following model.

[3] See Freud (1905c) GW VI 34; Stud IV 36; SE VIII 34.

Take one of these small turtles or foxes, which we have known how to make for some time, and which are the playthings of the scientists of our time – automata have always played a very great role, and they are playing a revived role in our time – one of those small machines which we now know, thanks to all kinds of intermediary organs, how to furnish with homeostasis and something like desires. Let us suppose that this machine is constituted in such a way that it is incomplete, and will jam, will only be definitively structured as a mechanism once it perceives – by whatever means, a photo-electric cell, for instance, with relays – another machine identical to itself, with the sole difference being that it would have already perfected its unity through what we may call a prior experience – a machine can have experience. The movement of each machine is thus conditioned by the perception of a certain stage attained by another. That is what corresponds to the element of fascination.

You see, by the same token, how a circle can be set up. As long as the unity of the first machine hangs on that of the other, as long as the other gives it the model and even the form of its unity, whatever it is that the first is oriented towards will always depend on what the other is oriented towards.

What will result from this is nothing less than the situation of impasse which is that of the constitution of the human object. The latter, in fact, hangs entirely on this dialectic of jealousy-sympathy, expressed precisely in traditional psychology by the incompatibility of consciousnesses. This doesn't mean that one consciousness cannot conceive another, but that an ego which hangs completely on the unity of another ego is strictly incompatible with it on the plane of desire. An apprehended, desired object, it's either he or I who will get it, it has to be one or the other. And when the other gets it it's because it belongs to me.

This rivalry, which is constitutive of knowledge in the pure state, is obviously a virtual stage. There is no such thing as knowledge in the pure state, for the strict community of ego and other in desiring the object initiates something completely different, namely recognition.

Recognition obviously presupposes a third thing. For the first machine which is jammed on the image of the second to be able to come to an agreement, for them not to be forced to destroy themselves on account of the convergence of their desire – which in fact is the same desire, since at this level they are one and the same being – it would be necessary for the little machine to *inform* the other, to say to it – *I desire that.* That's impossible. Admitting that there is an *I* would immediately turn it into *you desire that.* I desire that means – *You, the other, who is my unity, you desire that.*

It may be thought that here we have rediscovered that essential form of the human message whereby one receives one's own message from the other in an inverted form. Don't believe that for one moment. What I am telling you now is purely mythical. The first machine has no means of saying anything

whatsoever, for it is prior to unity, it is immediate desire, it has no speech, it is no one. It is no more anyone than the reflection of the mountain in the lake is. The paralytic is aphonic, he has nothing to say. For something to become established, it would require the presence of a third, placed inside the machine, the first one, for instance, pronouncing an *I*. But this is quite unthinkable at this level of experience.

However, this third party is what we find in the unconscious. But that's it, it is in the unconscious – there where it must be located for the ballet of all the little machines to get going, namely above them, in this elsewhere in which, as Claude Lévi-Strauss told us the other day, the system of exchanges is to be found, the elementary structures. It is necessary for the symbolic system to intervene in the system conditioned by the image of the ego so that an exchange can take place, something which isn't knowledge [*connaissance*], but recognition [*reconnaissance*].

That shows you that the ego can in no way be anything other than an imaginary function, even if at a certain level it determines the structuration of the subject. It is as ambiguous as the object itself, of which it is in some way, not only a stage, but the identical correlate.

The subject sets itself up as operating, as human, as *I*, from the moment the symbolic system appears. And this moment cannot be deduced from any model of the order of individual structuration. To put it another way, for the human subject to appear, it would be necessary for the machine, in the information it gives, to take account of itself, as one unity amongst others. That is precisely the one thing it cannot do. To be capable of taking itself into account, it would have to be something more than the machine it in fact is, because one can do anything, except get a machine to include itself as an element in a calculation.

Next time, I will talk about things from a less arid angle. The ego isn't just a function. From the moment when the symbolic system is instituted, it can itself be used as a symbol, and that is what we are considering.

As we want the ego to be the subject, as we unify it as function and as symbol, today we have had to busy ourselves divesting it of its fascinating symbolic status, which makes us believe in it. Next time we will restore this status to it, and we will see the strict relevance all this has for our practice.

8 December 1954

V

Homeostasis and insistence

IDOLATRY

SELF-COUNTING OF THE SUBJECT

HETEROTOPIA OF CONSCIOUSNESS

THE ANALYSIS OF THE EGO ISN'T THE ANALYSIS OF THE UNCONSCIOUS INSIDE OUT

If I wanted to find an image for whatever it is we are investigating here, I would begin by rejoicing in the fact that given the accessibility of Freud's work I do not find myself forced, save by some unexpected intervention of the deity, to go and seek them on some Sinai, in other words to leave you by yourselves too soon. In actual fact, what we always see being reproduced in the most tightly argued parts of Freud's text is something which, while it isn't quite the adoration of the Golden Calf, is still an idolatry. What I am trying to do here is tear you away from it once and for all. I hope that I will do enough so that one day your tendency to use highly imagistic formulations will disappear.

In his presentation yesterday evening, our dear Leclaire did not quite prostrate himself before the calf, but there was a bit of that in it. You all felt it, the tenor of some of his terms of reference is of that order. The need to give an image certainly has its merits in scientific presentation no less than in other domains – but maybe not as much as one thinks. And nowhere does it offer more traps than in the domain we find ourselves in, which is that of subjectivity. When one speaks of subjectivity, the problem is not to turn the subject into an entity.

I think that, with the aim of making his constructions hold up – and it is indeed this aim which accounts for the fact that he presented his model to us as a pyramid, firmly seated on its bottom, and not on its tip – Leclaire made the subject into some sort of idol. There was no other way he could do it than represent it for us.

This remark comes up at the right moment in the course of our demonstration here, which is centred on the question – *What is the subject?* – raised both by a naive understanding and by the scientific, or philosophical, formulation of the subject.

Let us take up the discussion at the point where I left you last time, that is at the moment when the subject grasps his unity.

1

The body in pieces finds its unity in the image of the other, which is its own anticipated image – a dual situation in which a polar, but non-symmetical relation, is sketched out. This asymmetry already tells us that the theory of the ego in psychoanalysis has nothing in common with the learned conception of the ego, which on the contrary partakes of a kind of naive understanding which I told you was peculiar to the historically datable psychology of modern man.

I brought you up short at the moment when I was showing you that this subject, really, is no one.

The subject is no one. It is decomposed, in pieces. And it is jammed, sucked in by the image, the deceiving and realised image, of the other, or equally by its own specular image. That is where it finds its unity. Laying hold of a reference taken from the most modern of these mechanistic problems, which have such importance in the development of science and of thought, I'll show you this stage of development of the subject by using a model whose utility is that it doesn't in any way idolise the subject.

At the point where I left you, the subject was nowhere. We had our two little mechanical tortoises, one of which was stuck on the image of the other. We were in effect supposing that, through a regulative part of its mechanism – the photoelectric cell, for instance, but let's leave that, I'm not here to tell you about cybernetics, even an imaginary variety – the first machine was dependent on the image of the second, hanging on its unitary functioning, and consequently captivated by its procedures. Hence a circle, which can be vast, but whose essential set-up is given by this imaginary dual relation.

I showed you the consequences of this circle regarding desire. Let us be clear – what could the desire of a machine be, except to restock on energy sources? A machine can scarcely do anything other than feed itself, and that is indeed what Grey Walter's courageous little animals do. Machines which reproduce themselves have yet to be built, and have yet even to be conceived of – the schema of their symbolic has not even been established. The sole object of desire which we can presume of a machine is therefore its source of nourishment. Well then, if each machine is intent on the point to which the other is going, somewhere there will necessarily be a collision.

That is where we had got to.

Now let us suppose our machines to have some sound recording equipment, and let us suppose that a loud voice – we can easily imagine that someone supervises their operation, the legislator – intervenes so as to regulate the ballet which up until now was only a round which might lead to a disastrous end. What's being introduced is a symbolic regulation, of which the unconscious mathematical subjacency of the exchanges of the elementary structures gives

us the schema. The comparison ends there, for we aren't going to make an entity of the legislator – that would be yet another idol.

DR LECLAIRE: *I'm sorry, but I'd like to reply. If I have a tendency to idolise the subject, it's because I think it necessary – you can't do otherwise.*

Well, then, you are a little idolator. I come down from Sinai and break the Tables of the Law.

DR LECLAIRE: *Let me finish. I have the impression that in refusing this deliberate entification, the subject, we have a tendency, and* you *have a tendency, to carry this idolisation over to another point. At that moment, it won't be the subject, it will be the other, the image, the mirror.*

I realise this. You aren't the only one. You and your transcendental preoccupations lead you to a specifically substantialist idea of the unconscious. Others have an idealist conception, in the sense of critical idealism, but they also think that I reintroduce what I am chasing away. There is more than one person here whose formation is in, let us say, traditional philosophy, and for whom consciousness's awareness of itself is one of the pillars of his conception of the world. That is doubtless something which shouldn't be treated lightly, and last time I did warn you that I was taking the step of cutting the Gordian knot, by deliberately being partial and radically neglecting one entire point of view. Someone here, whose identity I have no need to disclose, said to me after my last lecture – *This consciousness, it seems to me that after having badly maltreated it you bring it back in with this voice which reintroduces order, and which regulates the ballet of the machines.*

Our deduction of the subject however demands that we locate this voice somewhere in the interhuman game. To say that it is the legislator's voice would doubtless be an idolification, albeit of a high, though characterised, order. Isn't it rather the voice *Which knows itself when it resounds/No longer to be no one's voice/But that of the waves and the woods?*[1]

It's language Valéry is speaking of here. And shouldn't we perhaps in the end recognise it, this voice, as *the voice of no one.*

That is why I undertook to tell you last time that we are led to require that it be the machine which speaks commandingly. And, moving on a bit faster, as happens sometimes at the end of a discourse when I am forced both to tie it up and initiate its resumption, I said the following – suppose that the machine could take itself into account [*se compter elle-même*]. In fact, for the mathematical combinations which control object exchange to function, in the

[1] Paul Valéry, 'La Pythie' in *Oeuvres I*, Paris: Gallimard, Pléiade, 1957, p. 136: 'Qui se connaît quand elle sonne/N'être plus la voix de personne/Tant que des ondes et des bois.'

sense in which I defined them earlier, it is necessary that in the combinatory each of the machines be able to count itself.

What do I mean by that?

2

When does the individual in his subjective function take himself into account – if not in the unconscious? One of the most obvious phenomena discovered by the Freudian experience is exactly that.

Think of that very strange game Freud mentions at the end of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, which consists in inviting the subject to say numbers at random.[2] The associations which then come to him bring to light significations which reverberate so neatly with his remembrance, his destiny, that, from the point of view of probabilities, what he chose goes well beyond anything we might expect from pure chance.

If philosophers warn me against the materialisation of the phenomenon of consciousness, which would make us lose a precious handhold when it comes to grasping the radical originality of the subject – this is in a world structured *à la* Kant, even *à la* Hegel, for Hegel did not abandon the central function of consciousness, although he does allow us to free ourselves from it – for my part, I would warn philosophers against an illusion which has some affinity with what is highlighted by this extraordinarily significant, amusing, period-piece of a test, called the Binet and Simon.

The plan is to detect the mental age of a subject – a mental age which in fact isn't that changeable – by putting absurd sentences to him, amongst which there's this one – *I have three brothers, Paul, Ernest and me.* There certainly is an illusion of this order in believing that the fact that the subject takes himself into account is an operation of consciousness, an operation attached to an intuition of a consciousness transparent to itself. Besides, the model of it is not unequivocal, and not all philosophers have described it in the same way.

I don't presume to criticise the way in which Descartes does it, because the dialectic is there governed by an aim, the demonstration of the existence of God, in such a way that in the end, it is in arbitrarily isolating the cogito that one gives it a fundamental existential value. However, it wouldn't be difficult to show that, from the existentialist point of view, the grasp of consciousness by itself, at the limit, loses its moorings in any kind of existential apprehension of the ego. The ego only figures in it as a particular experience, tied to objectifiable conditions, within the limits of the inspection that is believed simply enough to be this reflection of consciousness on itself. And the phenomenon of consciousness has no privileged character in such an apprehension.

[2] GW IV 268–72; SE VI 240–3

The issue is how to free our notion of consciousness of any mortgage as regards the subject's apprehension of itself. It is a phenomenon which is, I wouldn't say contingent in relation to our deduction of the subject, but heterotopic, and that is why I gave myself and you the pleasure of showing you a model of it in the physical world itself. Invariably you'll see consciousness appear with very great irregularity in subjective phenomena. In the reversal of perspective which analysis imposes, its presence always appears tied to conditions which are more physical, material, than psychic.

Thus, doesn't the register of consciousness enter into the phenomenon of the dream? A dream is conscious. This imaginary iridescence, these moving images, this is something which belongs entirely to the same order as that illusory aspect of the image on which we insist in relation to the formation of the ego. The dream is very much akin to reading in the mirror, a most ancient means of divination, which can also be used in the technique of hypnosis. In becoming fascinated by a mirror, and preferably by a mirror as it has always been since the beginning of humanity until a relatively recent period, more obscure than clear, mirror of burnished metal, the subject may succeed in revealing to himself many of the elements of his imaginary fixations. Well then, where does that leave consciousness? In what direction to look for it, to locate it? In more than one passage in his work, Freud puts the problem in terms of psychic tension, and attempts to find out by what mechanisms the system of consciousness is invested or disinvested. His speculation – see the *Project* and the *Metapsychology*[3] – leads him to consider that there is a discursive necessity for holding the system of consciousness to be excluded from the dynamic of the systems of the psyche. The problem remains unresolved for him, and he leaves to the future the task of giving to this matter a clarity which eludes him. He evidently ends up in an impasse.

So we are thus confronted with the necessity of a third pole, which is exactly what our friend Leclaire was trying to argue yesterday evening with his triangular schema.

We do indeed need a triangle. But there are a thousand ways of acting on a triangle. It isn't necessarily a solid figure resting on an intuition. It is just as much a system of relations. In mathematics, we only really begin to deal with the triangle, for instance, once none of its sides is privileged.

So here we are, in search of the subject in so far as it takes itself into account. The question is to know where it is. That it is in the unconscious, at least so far as we analysts are concerned, is the point which I believe I've led you to and which I am now reaching myself.

[3] *Métapsychologie* is the French title of a collection of articles which includes Freud (1912g) and the papers published in SE XIV under the title *Metapsychology*; it does not include *The Ego and the Id*, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, etc.

M. LEFÈBVRE-PONTALIS: *Just a word, since I think I recognise myself as the anonymous interlocutor who drew your attention to the fact that you were only conjuring consciousness away at the beginning to find it again all the more at the end. I never said that the* cogito *was an untouchable truth, and that one could define the subject by this experience of complete transparency of self to itself. I never said that consciousness entirely exhausted subjectivity, which would in any event be rather difficult given phenomenology and psychoanalysis, but simply that the* cogito *represented a sort of model of subjectivity, that is to say rendered quite apparent the idea that there must be somebody for whom the word* like *has a meaning. And that, you appeared to omit. For when you went into your apologue about the disappearance of men, you forgot one thing, which is that men had to return in order to grasp the relation between the reflection and the thing reflected. Otherwise, if one considers the object in itself and the film recorded by the camera, it is nothing other than an object. It isn't a witness, it's nothing. Similarly, in the example you proposed of so-called random numbers, for the subject to realise that these numbers which he said at random are really not as random as all that, requires that there be a phenomenon, which we can call whatever you like, but which seems to me in fact to be this consciousness. It isn't just the reflection of what the other said to him. I really can't see why it is so important to demolish consciousness if it is to bring it back in at the end.*

It's not the demolition of consciousness that's important – we aren't here to produce great crashings of glass. What's important is the extreme difficulty the analytic experience has in giving the system of consciousness a formulation within the order which Freud calls the energetic reference, to locate it in the interplay of different psychic systems.

The central object of our study this year is the ego. This ego is to be stripped of the privilege which it receives from a certain kind of evidence, concerning which I try to underline for you in a thousand different ways that it is only a historical contingency. The place which it has taken up in philosophical deduction is one of the clearest manifestations of that. The notion of the ego today draws its self-evidential character from a certain prestige given to consciousness in so far as it is a unique, individual, irreducible experience. The intuition of the ego retains, in so far as it is centred on the experience of consciousness, a captivating character, which one must rid oneself of in order to accede to our conception of the subject. I try to lead you away from its attraction with the aim of allowing you to grasp at last where, according to Freud, the reality of the subject is. In the unconscious, excluded from the system of the ego, the subject speaks.

3

The question is – is there an equivalence to be found between these two systems, the system of the ego – about which Freud at one point went so far as to

say that it was the only organised thing in the psyche – and the system of the unconscious? Is there opposition like that of a yes and a no, of a reversal, of a pure and simple negation? Doubtless the ego makes a great many things known to us by means of the *Verneinung*. Why, while we are at it, couldn't we simply go on to read the unconscious by changing the sign of everything that is said? We haven't got to that point yet, but something analogous has been done.

Freud's introduction of his new topography has been understood as a return to the good old ego – texts by some of the best analysts attest to that, including Anna Freud's *Defence Mechanisms*, written ten years later. There was a true liberation, an explosion of joy – *Ah, it's back, we can busy ourselves with it again, not only do we have the right to, but it is recommended.* That is how Miss Freud expresses herself in the *Defence Mechanisms*. It must be said that being concerned with something other than the ego was felt by analysts, so strange an experience was it to them, like a defence against being concerned with the ego.

Obviously Freud always talked about the ego. And this function always greatly interested him, as external to the subject. In the analysis of resistances do we have the equivalent of what we call the analysis of material? Is working on the procedures of the ego, or exploring the unconscious, of the same order? Are the two systems complementary? Are they the same with a change of sign, just about? Are the unconscious and what thwarts its revelation, are they like the inside out and the right side up? If that is the case, then it is legitimate to speak, as one analyst, Sandor Rado, has dared to, of unconscious egology.

I am alluding to his very pretty article, in the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, Volume VIII, which places the rid principle[4] in the foreground, as the essential king-pin of this egology. This is a principle new to analytic theory, and you will rediscover it again under a thousand different guises, because this is in reality the one which at present directs the activity of most analysts. *To rid*[4] means *to free oneself of something, to rid of,*[4] *to avoid.* This new principle is meant to govern every manifestation of the subject, from top to bottom. It presides over the most elementary processes of stimulus-response – the frog gets rid of a little bit of acid which you've put on its leg by means of a reflex, the spinal character of which can easily be shown by cutting off its noddle – as it does over the reactions of the ego. It goes without saying that references to consciousness are completely abandoned, and it is only for heuristic purposes that I have proceeded as I have. That is an extremist position, particularly useful because it makes explicit in a coherent manner ideas which are usually hidden. Now, if Freud does have something to say when he introduces his new topography, it is precisely the opposite. The point for him is to remind us of the fact that not only is there an absolute dissymmetry between the subject of the unconscious and the organisation of the ego, but also a radical difference.

[4] English in the original.

Please read Freud. You are going to have three weeks. And while worshipping the Golden Calf, keep a small book of the law in your hand, read *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* with the introduction I am giving you as a small key. You'll see that either it makes not the least bit of sense or it has exactly the sense I say it has.

From when we started up to the present, Freud says, we took as a principle that the psychic apparatus, in so far as it is organised, is to be placed between the pleasure principle and the reality principle. Freud, of course, in his thinking isn't inclined to idolification. It never occurred to him that there wasn't a pleasure principle in the reality principle. For if you follow reality, it is only because the reality principle is a delayed-action pleasure principle. Conversely, if the pleasure principle exists, it is in conformity to some reality – this reality is psychic reality.

If the psyche has any meaning, if there is a reality which is called psychic reality, or, in other words, if living beings exist, it is in so far as there is an internal organisation which up to a certain point tends to oppose the free and unlimited passage of forces and discharges of energy, such as we may assume to exist, in a purely theoretical way, intercrossing in the inanimate reality. There is a closed precinct, within which a certain equilibrium is maintained, through the action of a mechanism which we now call homeostasis, which absorbs, moderates the irruption of quantities of energy coming from the external world.

Let us call this regulation the *restitutive function of the psychic organisation.* At a very elementary level, the frog's leg gives us an idea of it. Not only is there discharge, but withdrawal – which testifies to the still very primitive functioning of a principle of restitution, of equilibration of the machine.

Freud doesn't have the term homeostasis. he uses that of inertia, and that is an echo of Fechnerism. Do you know that there are two sides to Fechner? On one side, he is the psycho-physicist, asserting that only the principles of physics can allow one to symbolise psychic processes. But there is another side of Fechner, which few people know, which is quite unique. He goes a long way down the path of universal subjectivisation, and would no doubt have given a realist reading of my little apologue the other day, which was very far from being my intention. I wasn't telling you that the reflection of the mountain in the lake was a dream of the cosmos, but you would be able to find that in Fechner.

Discharge and return to the position of equilibrium – this law of regulation is valid for both systems, says Freud. But by the same token he is led to ask himself – what is the relation between these two systems? Is it simply that what is pleasure in the one is unpleasure in the other, and vice versa? If the two systems were the inverse of one another, one should be able to arrive at a general law of equilibrium, and on that account, there would be an analysis of the ego which would be the analysis of the unconscious inside out. That, put in a theoretical way, is the problem I put to you earlier.

This is where Freud realises that something doesn't satisfy the pleasure principle. He realises that what comes out of one of the systems – that of the unconscious – has a very particular insistence – that is the word I wanted to bring in. I say *insistence* because it expresses rather well, in a familiar way, the meaning of what has been translated into French as *automatisme de répétition*, *Wiederholungszwang* [compulsion to repeat]. The word *automatisme* has resonances for us of the complete ascendancy of neurology. That isn't how it should be understood. What it is is a compulsion to repeat [*compulsion à la répétition*], and that is why I think I am making it concrete by introducing the notion of insistence.

This system has something disturbing about it. It is dissymmetrical. It doesn't quite fit. Something in it eludes the system of equations and the evidence borrowed from the forms of thought of the register of energetics as they were introduced in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Yesterday evening, Professor Lagache brought out for you, a bit quickly, Condillac's statue. I cannot recommend the rereading of the *Traité des Sensations* too highly. Firstly, because it is an absolutely delightful read, with an inimitable period style. In it, you will see that my primitive state of a subject to be found everywhere, and which in some sense is the visual image, has some sort of ancestry. In Condillac, the scent of the rose seems a very solid starting-point, out of which the entire psychic edifice has to be drawn, without any apparent difficulty, like a rabbit from a hat.

The jumps in his reasoning give us cause for consternation, but that wasn't the case for his contemporaries – Condillac wasn't deluded. Why, it must be asked, doesn't he give an explicit formulation to the pleasure principle? Because, as M. de la Palice would reply,[5] he didn't have a formula for it, because he came before the steam engine. The era of the steam engine, its industrial exploitation, and administrative projects and balance-sheets, were needed, for us to ask the question – what does a machine yield?

For Condillac, as for others, more comes out than was put in. They were metaphysicians. Whatever one makes of it – my usual discourse isn't generally coloured by a progressivist tendency – one must admit that new things do emerge in the symbolic order. At some point it was realised that to draw the rabbit out of the hat you always have to have put it in beforehand. That is the principle of energetics, and that is why energetics is also a metaphysics.

It is the principle of homeostasis which obliges Freud to inscribe all his deductions in terms of investment, charge, discharge, energy relations between different systems. However, he realises that something doesn't work in all this. That's what *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is about, no more no less.

At first, he picks up on a very local point, the well-known phenomenon of the

[5] M. de la Palice is the purveyor of truisms.

repetition of dreams in cases of traumatic neuroses, which contravene the rule of the pleasure principle, in as much as for dreams it is embodied in the principle of the imaginary fulfilment of desire. Freud asks himself – *Why on earth is there an exception in this particular case?* But one sole exception can't put into question something as fundamental as the pleasure principle, which is the principle of regulation which enables one to inscribe the concrete functioning of man considered as a machine in a coherent system of symbolic formulations. This principle isn't deduced from his theory, it forms the basis of his thought in as much as in his time one thought in that particular register. So if you read this text, you will see that among the different exceptions he mentions, none seems to him quite sufficient to put the principle into question. But the exceptions, taken as a whole, seem to him to converge.

You were telling me earlier on that I would end up by getting ship-wrecked on a reef, and that somewhere we'll meet up with this subject, in the form of an idol. Are we playing hunt-the-slipper here? Anyway, that is what Freud is playing. For the very phenomenon on which analysis is based is the following – aiming at remembering, and whether we encounter it or not, we come upon the reproduction, in the guise of the transference, of something which manifestly belongs to the other system.

DR LECLAIRE: *I would like to answer all at once, because I feel somewhat got at. I think that you are reproaching me a great deal for having pulled the rabbit out of the hat in which I had placed it. But really, I'm not so sure that it was me who put it there. I did pull it out, true, but it wasn't me who put it in. That is the first thing I had to say to you, but that's not all. The second is this. Regarding the subject of the unconscious, you have accused me of idolification; however, I said that I was representing it, even though to be rigorous, it, like Jehovah, should be neither represented, nor named. Nonetheless, I did represent it, knowing what I was doing. I have the feeling you carry this idolification over from one side to the other.*

Dear Leclaire, it seems to me that many people here may not have felt that you were put on the line to the extent you feel you were. Of course, I acknowledge and indeed admire the fact that you did things as you say you did, knowing what you were doing. What you did last night was very much under control, you knew perfectly well what you were doing, you didn't do it innocently. That is greatly to your credit. Having said that, we are going to see whether what you are suggesting now is true. What you forewarned me would be a reef is more than avoidable – it's already avoided.

DR LECLAIRE: *I simply have the feeling that this phenomenon of avoidance is reproduced every time we speak of the subject. Every time, it is a kind of reaction, when we speak of the subject.*

What do you mean by avoidance?

DR LECLAIRE: *Riddance,*[6] *just that.*

Let us not get side-tracked here please. It isn't the same avoidance.

There is a restitutive function, which is that of the pleasure principle. But there is also a repetitive function. How do they fit together?

The subject may reproduce one experience indefinitely, some characteristics of which are discovered through remembering. Lord knows what difficulty you have in apprehending what satisfaction the subject gains from it. I already explained this to you some years back, in relation to the *Wolfman.* What is this insistence on the part of the subject to reproduce? Reproduce what? Is it in his behaviour? Is it in his fantasies? Is it in his character? Is it even in his ego? All kinds of things, from entirely different registers, can be used as material and as elements in this reproduction.

The reproduction in the transference within analysis is obviously only a particular case of a far more diffuse reproduction, which we take on in what is called character analysis, analysis of the total personality, and other nonsenses.

Freud asks himself what the inexhaustible nature of this reproduction means, from the point of view of the pleasure principle. Does it occur because of something unruly, or does it obey a different, more fundamental principle?

I leave the question open – what is the nature of the principle which governs what is at issue, namely the subject? Is it assimilable, reducible, symbolisable? Is it something? Or can it neither be named, nor grasped, but only structured?

This will be the theme of the lectures for our next term.

15 December 1954

[6] English in the original.

VI

Freud, Hegel and the machine

THE DEATH INSTINCT
FREUD'S RATIONALISM
THE MASTER'S ALIENATION
PSYCHOANALYSIS IS NOT A HUMANISM
FREUD AND ENERGY

You have been spoilt. M. Hyppolite gave you something good yesterday evening. Now the question is to know what you are going to do with it.

Some of you may still have a mnemic trace of what I left you with at the end of our last talk, namely the *Wiederholungszwang* – which we will translate as *compulsion de répétition* [compulsion to repeat] rather than *automatisme de répétition*. This *Zwang* was singled out by Freud right from the start of his writings, the last to be made public, in the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* to which I frequently allude, an analysis and critique of which we must undertake here in the weeks to come.

What Freud then defined as the pleasure principle is a principle of constancy. There is another principle, which our theoretician-analysts are as nonplussed by as a fish by a fig, the Nirvana principle. It is remarkable to see how, in the writings of an author like Hartmann, the three terms – principle of constancy, pleasure principle, Nirvana principle – are totally identified, as if Freud had never shifted out of the one mental category with which he sought to put a construction on the facts, and as if it were always the same thing he was talking about. One wonders why all of a sudden he would have called the Nirvana principle the beyond of the pleasure principle.

At the beginning of *Beyond*, Freud gives us a representation of two systems, and shows us that what is pleasure in the one is translated into pain in the other, and conversely. Now, if there were symmetry, reciprocity, a perfect coupling up of the two systems, if the primary and secondary processes were in fact the converse of one another, they would simply become one, and it would be enough to work on one to work on the other at the same time. In working on the ego and resistance, one would by the same token get at the heart of the problem. Freud wrote *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* precisely to explain that the matter can't be left like that.

Indeed, the manifestation of the primary process at the level of the ego, in the form of a symptom, is translated into unpleasure, suffering, and yet, it always

returns. This fact alone should give us pause for thought. Why does the repressed system manifest itself with such insistence, as I called it last time? If the nervous system is set to reach a position of equilibrium, why doesn't it attain it? These matters, when put like that, are so obvious.

But that's the point, Freud was a man who, once he had seen something – and he knew how to see, and be the first – would not lose sight of the cutting edge. And that is what makes for the prodigious value of his work. Of course, no sooner had he made a discovery than it would immediately be set upon by the work of gnawing away which always takes place around any kind of speculative novelty, and tends to make everything fit back into the routine. Just look at the first great original notion he contributed at the purely theoretical level, the libido, and the mark, the irreducible character he gives it by saying – *libido is sexual*. These days, in order to make ourselves understood, we would have to say that what Freud put forward is that the essential motor of human progress, the motor of the pathetic, of the conflictual, of the fruitful, of the creative in human life, is lust. And already, after only ten years, there was Jung ready to explain that libido is psychic interest. No, libido is sexual libido. When I speak of the libido, I am speaking of the sexual libido.

What everyone acknowledges as the turning-point in the technique of analysis, centring on resistance, was well-founded and proved its fertility, but it lent itself to a theoretical confusion – by working on the ego, it was thought that one was working on one of the two halves of the apparatus. At this point in time, Freud chose to remind us that the unconscious as such cannot be reached and makes itself known in a fashion which is paradoxical, painful, and cannot be reduced to the pleasure principle. He thus brings back into the foreground the essence of his discovery, which one tends to forget.

Have you read *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*? If one of you is willing to tell us what he read in that text, I will hand over to him.

1

O. MANNONI: *I would very much like to ask for clarification on a point which troubles me a little. It seems, when reading Freud, that he maintains there are two aspects of the compulsion to repeat. In the one, it is a matter of renewing an attempt that has failed so as to make it succeed – this takes the form of protection against danger, against trauma. In the other, it seems that one reverts to a more comfortable position, because one has failed to attain the position which, from an evolutionary perspective, is posterior. I can't see how these two positions are finally made to agree, or at least I've missed the agreement, and I'm troubled by this difficulty.*

There is, as Lefèbvre-Pontalis observed, an ambiguity in the use of the word *Wiederholungszwang*. There are two registers intermingling, interweaving, a

restitutive tendency and a repetitive tendency, and between the two, I wouldn't want to say that Freud's thought vacillates, because there is no less vacillating thought than his, but one does have the feeling that his research retraces its steps. It is as if each time he goes too far in one direction, he stops to say – isn't this simply the restitutive tendency? But at each turn he remarks that that isn't enough, and that, after the restitutive tendency has manifested itself, something is left over which at the level of individual psychology appears to be gratuitous, paradoxical, enigmatic and is genuinely repetitive.

In effect, according to the hypothesis of the pleasure principle, the entire system should always return to its starting-point, should always act in a homeostatic way, as we say these days. How is it that there is something which, from whatever end we approach it, does not fit into the movement, into the framework of the pleasure principle? Each time, Freud tries to make the phenomena he's observed fit inside this framework, and experience again and again requires him to relinquish it. It is the most paradoxical facts which are the most instructive. And in the end, it is the solid fact of reproduction in the transference which forces on him the decision to admit the compulsion to repeat as such.

O. MANNONI: *My question was aimed at clarifying the point – did the compulsion to repeat in the second sense oblige him to reshape the initial conception, or are they superimposed as distinct? I haven't quite made out if that made him return to the idea that there was a pure and simple restitution, or whether, on the contrary, he added to the pure and simple restitution, a compulsion now . . .*

That is precisely why he was led straight to the function of the death instinct. There, he tips over the limit of the blueprint.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Why does he call it* death instinct? *One gets the impression of something terribly enigmatic, one gets the impression that he cites heterogeneous phenomena which, quite simply, do not fit into the framework of the blueprint. What relation is there between the word* death instinct *and the phenomena beyond the pleasure principle? Why call it* death instinct? *This all of a sudden opens up perspectives some of which seem quite strange, such as the return to matter.*

O. MANNONI: *He would have been better off calling it* anti-instinct.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Once he calls it* death-instinct, *that leads him all of a sudden to discover other phenomena, to open up perspectives which had not been implied by what pushed him into baptising it* death-instinct.

That's right.

M. HYPPOLITE: *It is an extraordinary enigma, the return to matter, and a bit vague in my opinion. One has the impression that one is in the presence of a series of enigmas,*

and the very name he gives them, death instinct, *is itself a leap in relation to the phenomena accounted for, an enormous leap.*

M. BEJARANO: *I have the same difficulty in understanding that leap. He seems to be saying that the life-preserving instincts lead to death, he says in effect that death is sought out by the preservative instincts. This seems to me to be as specious as saying, by transposition, that fire, that is to say heat, is cold. I can't understand why he calls that* death instinct.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Isn't it a somewhat woolly philosophy? He ends up by saying that the libido leads to the formation of groups which are more and more bound to one another, and organic, whereas the death instinct leads to a return to the elements.*

That doesn't give one the feeling of being vague. One gets the impression, reading the text, that Freud is following what I call his little hunch.[1] There's something at work in him. And at the end, he himself admits the extremely speculative nature of the whole of his argumentation, or more precisely of his circular interrogation. He constantly returns to his starting points, and completes another circle, and again rediscovers the passage, and finally ends up making a leap, and having made the leap, admits that there is something there which does indeed move completely off the edges of the blueprint, and can in no way be grounded solely in a reference to experience. He asserts finally that if this articulation has seemed to him to be worth communicating, it is because he was of necessity brought down the path of this problematic.

M. HYPPOLITE: *One gets the impression that, according to him, the two instincts, of life and of death, are but one in the unconscious, but what is worrisome is when the components are separated. There is something very beautiful, very striking, mixed up, in all this, just like a child who kisses you by scratching you – in fact he says it explicitly. It is true, there is in what we call human love a share of aggressivity, without which there would only be impotence, but which can go so far as killing the partner, and a share of libido, which would end in actual impotence if there weren't a share of aggressivity. If they work together, it makes for human love. But when they come apart, when one of the components functions alone, then the death instinct appears.*

That is at the level of what we might call the immediate, to be found in the psychological experience of the individual, we might say, taking it a long way, so as to give an image to our thinking, at the level of the puppet. But Freud is interested in knowing what pulls the strings on the puppet. That is what he is talking about when he talks of death instinct or life instinct.

Which brings me back to the question which I thought I had to ask you following yesterday evening's discussion – *is psychoanalysis a humanism?* It's

[1] *'sa petite idée'.*

the same question as when I ask whether the autonomous[2] *ego* is in the spirit of the Freudian discovery. The question of knowing what is man's portion of autonomy is age-old and everyone's concern. What does Freud contribute to the topic? Is it a revolution or no? And by the same token there arises the third question I raised yesterday evening – what is there that's new, if we place them on the same register, in moving from Hegel to Freud?

M. HYPPOLITE: *A lot is.*

I certainly won't give you an exhaustive reply today, because we have some ground to cover, perhaps a long way to go. To start with I will simply try in my own way to locate the meaning of what just a moment ago I called Freud's little, or big, hunch, when there he is vacillating, wheeling around the function of the death instinct.

It is very surprising that laboratory scientists should still entertain this mirage, that it is the individual, the human subject – and why him amongst all the others? – who is truly autonomous, and that, somewhere in him, be it in the pineal gland or elsewhere, there's a signalman, the little man within a man, who makes the apparatus tick. That is exactly what the whole of analytic thought, with few exceptions, has returned to, for the moment.

People tell us about the autonomous *ego*, about the sane part of the ego, about the ego which must be strengthened, about the ego which isn't sufficiently strong to support us in doing an analysis, about the ego which should be the ally of the analyst, the ally of the analyst's ego, etc. You see these two *egos*, arm in arm, the analyst's ego and that of the subject, in fact subordinated to the other in this so-called alliance. Nothing in experience gives us the faintest hint of it, since precisely the contrary takes place – it is at the level of the ego that all the resistances occur. One really does wonder where they could start if not from this ego.

I don't have the time today to extract a few texts from my papers, but I will some day, and then I will cite recently published paragraphs, in which the idea is complacently set down, set down with the satisfaction of well-earned repose, that it is very simple, as simple as saying 'hallo', that there are some good things in this decent little subject, that there is a conflict-free sphere in which the libido is neutralised, delibidinised, in which aggressivity itself is deaggressivised. It's like Archimedes – you give him his little point outside of the world, and he can move it. But this little point outside the world doesn't exist.

One must have a clear sense of the scope of the question. Its scope is as broad as this – is psychoanalysis a humanism? – which puts into question one of the fundamental premises of classical thought, from a certain period in Greek history on. We are told that man is the measure of all things. But where is his own measure? Is it to be found in himself?

[2] English in the original.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Don't you think – this is almost an answer to your question, which I was led to reflect upon for some of the night, but which does chime in with what you are saying – that in Freud there is a deep conflict between a rationalist – by rationalist I mean someone who thinks that it is possible to render humanity rational, and this happens by way of the ego – and an entirely different man, absolutely detached from the curing of men, eager for a knowledge of an entirely different depth, who at every moment is opposed to this rationalist? In* The Future of an Illusion *Freud wonders what will happen when all illusions are gone. And there the ego, the reinforced ego, the human, acting, ego intervenes. One sees humanity freed. But in Freud there is a more profound aspect. Isn't the discovery of the death instinct tied to that deeper aspect which the rationalist does not express? There are two men in Freud. From time to time, I see the rationalist, and that is the humanist side – we will rid ourselves of all illusions, what will be left? Then there is the pure speculator, who is revealed on the side of the death instinct.*

That is the adventure of Freud as creator. I don't at all think that, for him, there was a conflict there. One could maintain this if he had embodied the rationalist aspiration in a dream of rationalisation. However, as far as he was able to go, in *The Future of an Illusion* for instance, or in *Civilisation and its Discontents*, his dialogue with Einsteinian utopism, that of Einstein when he leaves his mathematical genius behind to find himself in the midst of platitudes . . .

M. HYPPOLITE: *Freud's materialism has a certain grandeur.*

Platitudes also have their grandeur. I don't think that was Freud's level.

M. HYPPOLITE: *That is why I like him, because that wasn't his level. His is something far more enigmatic.*

In *Civilisation and its Discontents*, he knows how to see where it resists. No matter how far one extends, I won't say rationalism, but rationalisation, it will necessarily blow up somewhere.

M. HYPPOLITE: *That is what is most profound in Freud. But there's also the rationalist in him.*

His thought deserves to be qualified, at the highest level, and in the firmest manner, as rationalist, in the full sense of the word, and from one end to the other. This text, so difficult to penetrate, around which we have been turning, makes present the most lively, the most pressing demands of a reason which never abdicates, which does not say – *Here begins the opaque and the ineffable.* He enters, and even at the risk of appearing lost in obscurity, he continues with reason. I don't believe there is any abdication on his part, nor any final prostration, nor that he ever renounces working with reason, nor that he retires to the mountains, thinking that everything is just fine as it is.

M. HYPPOLITE: *To be sure, he goes right up to the light, even if this light, the most complete, must be antithetical. By* rationalism, *I didn't mean to say that he was engaging in a new religion. On the contrary, the* Ausführung *is a religion against religion.*

Its antithesis – let us call it that – is precisely the death instinct. It is a decisive step in the grasp of reality, a reality which surpasses by far what we designate as such in the reality principle. The death instinct isn't an admission of impotence, it isn't a coming to a halt before an irreducible, an ineffable last thing, it is a concept. We will now try our best to take some steps in its direction.

2

I will begin, since this where we've got to, with what you suggested yesterday evening about *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. The way you see it, it is clear that it concerns the progress of knowledge. *Bewusstsein* in Hegel is far closer to knowledge than to consciousness. However, if yesterday's assembly hadn't been so well-behaved, one of the questions which I would have asked would have been – what is the function of non-knowledge in Hegel? You should give us a second talk about that next term. Freud wrote a number of articles on the subject of knowing what one should really expect from the reconquest of this psychological Zuider Zee which is the unconscious.[3] When we will have drained the polders of the id, what will it bring in the way of human returns? Well, this perspective didn't seem particularly exalting. It seemed to him that one risked bursting some dikes. All that is in Freud, and I only mention it to show that we are still continuing the commentary on Freud's thought. Within the Hegelian perspective, what is the realisation, the end of history? I think that, to put it succinctly, the entire forward march of the phenomenology of spirit is all of you – that's what you are here for. That's what what you are doing means, even when you don't think about it. Always the puppet strings. Will M. Hyppolite give me his approval if I say that the whole of the forward march of this phenomenology of spirit is an ever more elaborated mastery?

M. HYPPOLITE: *That depends on what you are going to put under* mastery.

Quite. I am going to try to illustrate it, without rounding off the corners. I don't mean to ease my term in, but on the contrary to show in which way it can cut.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Don't take me as your adversary. I'm not Hegelian. I'm probably against. Don't take me as representing Hegel.*

That is going to simplify matters greatly for us. I'm only asking you, because

[3] A reference to the last two sentences of Lecture XXXI of the *New Introductory Lectures*, GW XV 86; Stud I 516; SE XXII 80.

you are still more of a Hegel specialist than I, to tell me whether I'm not going too far, that is to say whether major texts might contradict me.

As I have often pointed out, I don't much like hearing that we have *gone beyond* Hegel, the way one hears we have *gone beyond* Descartes. We go beyond everything and always end up in the same place. Hence, an ever more elaborate mastery. Let us illustrate it.

The end of history, that's absolute knowledge. You can't get out of that – if consciousness is knowledge, written as such in Hegel.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Yes, but Hegel can be interpreted. One can ask whether there is a moment, in the wake of experience, which appears as absolute knowledge or whether absolute knowledge is in the whole presentation of experience? That is to say – are we always and at every moment in absolute knowledge? Is there, in the* Phenomenology, *a series of stages which are prior to absolute knowledge, then a final stage which Napoleon, anyone, etc., reaches, and which one would call absolute knowledge? Hegel says so somewhat, but he can be understood in an entirely different fashion. Heidegger's interpretation, for instance, is tendentious, but fortunately it is tenable. That is why one doesn't go beyond Hegel. It may be highly likely that absolute knowledge be, so to speak, immanent at every state of the* Phenomenology. *Only consciousness misses it. Consciousness makes of this truth which absolute knowledge would be another natural phenomenon, which is not absolute knowledge. Absolute knowledge therefore would never be a moment in history, and it would always be. Absolute knowledge would be experience as such, and not a moment in experience. Consciousness being in the field, doesn't see the field. Seeing the field, that's it, absolute knowledge.*

Still, in Hegel this absolute knowledge is embodied in a discourse.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Certainly.*

I think that according to Hegel, everything is always there, all of history is always actually present, vertically so. Otherwise, it would be a childish tale. And the thing with absolute knowledge, which indeed is here, ever since the first Neanderthal idiots, is that discourse closes in on itself, whether or not it is in complete disagreement with itself, whether or not everything which can be expressed in the discourse is coherent and justified.

That is where I am stopping you. We are going step by step, but it is better to go slowly in order to go assuredly. This will bring us to what we are looking for – to the meaning, to the originality of what Freud contributes in relation to Hegel.

Within the Hegelian perspective, completed discourse – doubtless, from the moment discourse has reached its completion, there won't be any further need to speak, that is what we call the post-revolutionary stages, let's leave that to one side – completed discourse, the embodiment of absolute knowledge, is the instrument of power, the sceptre and the property of those who know. Nothing

implies that everyone partakes in it. When the scientists I mentioned yesterday evening – this is more than a myth, it is the very meaning of the forward march of the symbol – succeed in bringing human discourse to a close, they are in possession of it, and those who don't have it have nothing left but to turn to jazz, to dance, to entertain themselves, the good fellows, the nice guys, the libidinal types. That is what I call elaborated mastery.

Within absolute knowledge, there remains one last division, one last separation, ontological if I may say, within man. If Hegel has gone beyond a certain religious individualism which grounds the existence of the individual in his unique tête-à-tête with God, it is by showing that the reality, so to speak, of each human being is in the being of the other. In the end, there is a reciprocal alienation, as you so well explained it yesterday evening, and, I want to insist on this, it is irreducible, with no way out. What could be more stupid than the primitive master? A real master. We have as a matter of fact all lived long enough to realise what actually happens when the aspiration to mastery gets a hold on men! We saw it during the war, the political error of those whose ideology it was to believe themselves the masters, to believe that all it takes is to stretch out the hand to take. The Germans advance towards Toulon to catch the fleet there – a true story of masters. The mastery is entirely on the slave's side, because he elaborates his mastery against the master. Now, this reciprocal alienation, it must last until the end. Think how little effect the elaborated discourse will have on those who are busy with jazz at the corner *café*. And how much the masters will be aching to go and join them. While conversely the others will consider themselves wretches, nobodies, and will think – *how happy the master is in enjoying being master?* – whereas, of course, he will be completely frustrated. That is where, I think, in the last instance, Hegel leads us to.

Hegel is at the limit of anthropology. Freud got out of it. His discovery is that man isn't entirely in man. Freud isn't a humanist. I will try and explain to you why.

3

Let us turn to basics. Freud was a physician, but he was born about a century later than Hegel, and a lot of things happened in the meantime, which were not lacking in consequences for the meaning which might be given to the word 'physician'. Freud wasn't a physician as Aesculapius, Hippocrates or Saint Luke were. He was a physician in the way we all more or less are. In short, he was a physician who no longer is one, as we ourselves are of a type of physician which no longer partakes in the tradition of what the physician has always been for man.

It is very odd to say, there's a truly strange incoherence in saying – man *has* a body. For us it makes sense, it is even probable that it has always made sense,

but it makes more sense for us than for anybody else, since, with Hegel and without knowing it, in so far as everybody is Hegelian without knowing it, we have pushed to an extreme degree the identification of man with his knowledge, which is an accumulated knowledge. It is very strange to be localised in a body, and this strangeness can't be minimised, despite the fact that a great deal of time is spent puffing ourselves up and boasting about having reinvented human unity, which that idiot Descartes had cut in two. It is completely useless to make great declarations about returning to the unity of the human being, to the soul as the body's form, with large dosages of Thomism and Aristotelianism. The division is here to stay. And that is why physicians of our day and age aren't the physicians of other times, except those who spend their time convinced that there are temperaments, constitutions, and other things of that sort. The physician has with respect to the body the attitude of the man who dismantles a machine. All statements of principles notwithstanding, this attitude is a radical one. That's the point where Freud started, and that was his ideal – to do pathological anatomy, anatomical physiology, to discover what this little complicated apparatus embodied there in the nervous system is for.

This perspective, which splits the unity of the living, certainly does have something of a disturbing, scandalous aspect, and one entire line of thought tries to counter it – I'm thinking of gestaltism and other well intentioned theoretical elaborations, which hope to return to the benevolence of nature and to a pre-established harmony. Of course, nothing proves that the body is a machine, and in fact there's every chance that it isn't. But that isn't the problem. The important thing is that this is the way in which one has tackled the question. I named him just now, the *one* in question, it's Descartes. He wasn't the only one, for it took quite a bit for him to begin to think of the body as a machine. What in particular it took was for there to be one which not only worked by itself, but which could embody in a quite striking way something essentially human.

Admittedly, while this was taking place, nobody actually realised it. But now we have a tiny bit of hindsight. The phenomenon occurs sometime before Hegel. Hegel, who only played a small part in all this, is perhaps the last representative of a certain classical anthropology, but in the end, he is almost, with respect to Descartes, a bit behind.

The machine I'm talking about is the clock. It is rare in our day and age for a man to be sufficiently wonderstruck by a clock. Louis Aragon talks about this in *Le Paysan de Paris* in words which only a poet could find to salute the miraculous character of a thing, this thing, which, he says, pursues a human hypothesis, whether man be there or not.

So there were clocks. They weren't very miraculous yet, since it was a long time after the *Discourse on Method* before there was a real one, a good one, with a

pendulum, Huygens's clock – I have already referred to it in one of my texts. There were already some worked by weights, which, year in year out, nonetheless embodied the measure of time. It was obviously necessary for us to cover a certain distance in history before we realised to what extent it is essential to our *being-there*, as they say, to know the time. A lot can be said about this time not being the real one, it still passes there, in the clock, all alone like an adult.

I can't recommend too strongly to you the reading of a book by Descartes called *Of Man*. You will be able to get hold of this *Man* on the cheap, it isn't one of the most sought-after-works, it will cost you less than the *Discourse on Method*, dear to the dentists. Flip through it, and confirm that what Descartes is looking for in man is the clock.

This machine isn't what a vain people think it is. It isn't purely and simply the opposite of the living, the simulacrum of the living. That it was constructed so as to embody something which is called time and is the mystery of mysteries, should put us on the right track. What is in play in the machine? That at the same time someone called Pascal busied himself constructing a machine, still very modest, making additions, shows us that the machine is tied to radically human functions. It isn't a simple artifact, as could be said of chairs, tables, and of other more or less symbolic objects, among which we live without realising that they make for our own portrait. Machines are something else. They go much further in the direction of what we are in reality, further even than the people who build them suspect.

Hegel thought himself to be something like the embodiment of the Spirit of his time, and he dreamt that Napoleon was the *Weltseele*, the soul of the world, the other pole, more feminine, more carnal, of power. Well, both of them distinguished themselves by the fact that they completely failed to apprehend [*méconnu*] the importance of this phenomenon which was beginning to come into view in their time – the steam engine. Yet Watt wasn't that long in coming, and there were already things which worked all by themselves, little bombs down the mines.

The machine embodies the most radical symbolic activity of man, and it was necessary so that questions could be raised – you may not notice it in the middle of all this – at the level at which we are raising them.

In Freud something is talked about, which isn't talked about in Hegel, namely energy. That is the major preoccupation, the dominant preoccupation, which from the speculative point of view is more important than this purely homonymic confusion we got caught up in yesterday evening when we were talking of the opposition between consciousness in Hegel's time, and the unconscious in Freud's time – it's like talking about the contradiction between the Parthenon and hydroelectricity, they've got nothing to do with one another. Between Hegel and Freud, there's the advent of the world of the machine.

Energy, I had you observe last time, is a notion which can only emerge once there are machines. Not that energy hasn't always been there. Except that people who had slaves didn't realise that one could establish equations for the price of their food and what they did in their *latifundia*. There are no examples of energy calculations in the use of slaves. There is not the hint of an equation as to their output. Cato never did it. It took machines for us to realise they had to be fed. And more – they had to be looked after. But why? Because they tend to wear out. Slaves do as well, but one doesn't think about it, one thinks that it is natural for them to get old and croak. And later on, it dawned on people, something which was never thought of before, that living things look after themselves all on their own, in other words, they represent homeostats.

From then on, you begin to see the dawn of modern biology, with its characteristic of never calling upon any notion concerning life. Vitalist thought is alien to biology. The founding spirit of modern biology, who died prematurely, and whose statue adorns the old faculty of medicine, Bichat, expressed this in the most succinct manner. He was someone who had somehow maintained a vague belief in God, but who was extremely clear-sighted – he knew that a new period had begun, and that from now on life was going to be defined in relation to death. That converges with what I am trying to explain to you, the decisive character of the reference to the machine so far as the founding of biology is concerned. Biologists think that they devote themselves to the study of life. It's not clear why. Until further notice, their fundamental concepts' point of origin has nothing to do with the phenomenon of life, which in its essence remains completely impenetrable. The phenomenon of life continues to elude us, whatever we do, despite the reiterated reaffirmations that we are getting closer to it. Biological concepts remain completely inadequate to it, which doesn't prevent them from retaining all their value.

Some people were surprised by the approbation which I bestowed yesterday evening on Françoise, when in relation to this third term we are looking for in the inter-human dialectic, she brought in biology. She may not have been thinking about biology exactly as I'm going to describe it to you, but let us say that the truth came out of the mouth of someone who was saying it naively.

We will take biology by antiphrasis. Freudian biology has nothing to do with biology. It is a matter of manipulating symbols with the aim of resolving energy questions, as the homeostatic reference indicates, thus enabling us to characterise as such not only the human being, but the functioning of its major apparatuses. Freud's whole discussion revolves around that question, what, in terms of energy, is the psyche? This is where the originality of what in him is called biological thought resides. He wasn't a biologist, any more than any of us are, but throughout his work he placed the accent on the energy function.

If we know how to reveal the meaning of this energy myth, we see the emergence of what was, from the start and without it being understood,

implicit in the metaphor of the human body as a machine. Here we see the manifestation of a certain beyond of the inter-human reference, which is in all strictness the symbolic beyond. That is what we are going to study, and surely we will then understand this kind of dawn which the Freudian experience is.

Freud started from a conception of the nervous system according to which it always tends to return to a point of equilibrium. That is what he started with, because it was then a necessity in the mind of any physician of that scientific age concerned with the human body.

Anzieu, look at the *Entwurf*, which is what I am talking about, and give us an account of it. On this foundation, Freud tried to build a theory of the functioning of the nervous system, by showing that the brain operates as a buffer-organ between man and reality, as a homeostat organ. And he then comes up against, he stumbles on, the dream. He realises that the brain is a dream machine. And it is in the dream machine that he rediscovers what was there all along and which hadn't been noticed, namely, that it is at the most organic and most simple, most immediate and least manageable level, at the most unconscious level, that sense and speech are revealed and blossom forth in their entirety.

Hence the complete revolution in his thinking, and the move to the *Traumdeutung*. It is said that he abandons a physiologising perspective for a psychologising perspective. That's not the point. He discovers the operation of the symbol as such, the manifestation of the symbol in the dialectical state, in the semantic state, in its displacements, puns, plays on words, jokes working all on their own in the dream machine. And he has to take a line on this discovery, accept it or ignore it, as all the others had to when they were that close to it. It was such a turning-point that he didn't know anything about what was happening to him. It took him another twenty years of a life which was already quite advanced at the time of this discovery, to be able to look back to his premises and to try to recover what it means in terms of energy. That is what required him to produce the new elaboration of the beyond of the pleasure principle and of the death instinct.

In this re-elaboration, one can see the meaning we needed yesterday evening, together with the reference of man to his fellow man, so as to make up that third term where, since Freud, the true axis of the realisation of the human being is to be found. That I cannot name for you as yet, given the point I've got to today.

12 January 1955

VII

The circuit

MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY AND UNDERSTANDING
- CONSERVATION, ENTROPY, INFORMATION
PLEASURE PRINCIPLE AND REALITY PRINCIPLE
GRIBOUILLE'S APPRENTICESHIP
REMINISCENCE AND REPETITION

We are going to reflect on yesterday evening's extraordinary paper.[1] Did you make some sense of it? The discussion was remarkably well focused, and I was very pleased with that. But do you really see the heart of the problem, and the distance which Merleau-Ponty unyieldingly keeps from the analytic experience?

1

There is a term towards which the discussion could have turned if we had had more time, namely Gestaltism. I don't know whether you spotted it in passing, it arose at one point in Merleau-Ponty's talk as what for him is truly the measure, the standard of the encounter with the other and with reality. And, indeed, what lies at bottom of his teaching is understanding. In spite of the distance he tries to keep from what he calls the traditional liberal position, well, as was quite rightly pointed out to him, he isn't that far from it. Because in the end, his only advance is to have realised that some things are difficult to understand, hard to swallow.

It's no accident that he has taken his point of reference from contemporary political experience. You know how greatly concerned he is about this, the breaking off of the dialogue with communism. For him it's a historical crisis spanning human experience. He realises both that we don't understand one another, and he reaffirms that we must understand. As the title of one of his recent articles in a weekly expressed it – *D'abord comprendre les Communistes.*

A very paradoxical title, since he realises precisely that, from his point of view, he can't understand.

It was just the same yesterday evening. It is unfortunate that he didn't

[1] On 18 January 1955, Maurice Merleau-Ponty gave a lecture to the Société Française de Psychanalyse, entitled 'Philosophy and psychoanalysis'.

examine more closely, no doubt because of insufficient familiarity with this area, whether understanding has a place in the field of analysis. In other words, can the field of analysis accede to homogeneity? Can everything in it be understood? That is the question which Jean Hyppolite raised – is Freudianism a humanism, yes or no? Merleau-Ponty's position is essentially a humanist one. And you can see where that leads him.

In effect, he hangs on to the notion of totality, of unitary functioning, he always presupposes a given unity accessible to what in the end will be an instantaneous, theoretical, contemplative apprehension, to which the experience of the *good form*, so very ambiguous in Gestaltism, gives a semblance of support. Not that this notion doesn't correspond to measurable facts, a wealth of experimentation. But the ambiguity lies in a theorisation in which physics becomes confused with phenomenology, in which a drop of water, so long as it takes on a spherical form, is on the same level as this something which requires that we always tend to perceive the approximate form we see as circular.

That is a correlation which to be sure makes for a striking image, but it elides the essential problem. No doubt something tends to produce this good form at the back of the retina, something in the physical world tends to produce certain analogous forms, but putting these two facts together isn't a way of giving an account of experience in all its richness. In any case, if one does so, one can no longer assert, as Merleau-Ponty would like to, the primacy of consciousness. Consciousness, in the end, itself becomes a mechanism. And it plays, without him realising it, the function which I argue here to be the first stage [*temps*] of the dialectic of the ego. Except, for Merleau-Ponty, it's all there, in consciousness. A contemplative consciousness constitutes the world through a series of syntheses, of exchanges, which at every moment place it within a renewed, more enveloping totality, but which always finds its origin in the subject. (*To M. Hyppolite*) Don't you agree?

M. HYPPOLITE: *I'm listening to the movement you're unfolding starting off from the* Gestalt. *In the end, it is a phenomenology of the imaginary, in the sense in which we use this word.*

O. MANNONI: *It can nonetheless go beyond the imaginary level. I see the seed of Gestaltist thinking in Darwin's thinking. When he replaces variation with mutation, he discovers a nature which yields good forms. But the existence of forms which aren't simply mechanical then raises a problem. It seems to me that the* Gestalt *is an attempt to resolve it.*

Of course. What you just said is one more step, which I don't take, because I don't want to go beyond the level Merleau-Ponty keeps to. But in fact, in following him, in taking the word *form* in its fullest possible acceptation, one would be led back to a vitalism, to the mysteries of the creative force.

The idea of living evolution, the notion that nature always produces superior forms, more and more elaborated, more and more integrated, better and better built organisms, the belief that progress of some sort is immanent in the movement of life, all this is alien to him, and he explicitly repudiates it. Since Freud is a subject little inclined to make his decisions from positions of principle, I think that it is his experience of man which guides him. It is a medical experience. It allowed him to locate the register of a certain kind of suffering and illness, of fundamental conflict, in man.

To explain the world with a natural tendency to create superior forms is quite the opposite of the essential conflict such as he sees it played out in the human being. But this conflict goes beyond the human being. It's as if Freud were hurled into *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, which is an incontestably metaphysical category, he steps outside of the limits of the domain of the human in the organic sense of the word. Is it a conception of the world? No, it is a category of thought, to which every experience of the concrete subject cannot but refer itself.

M. HYPPOLITE: *I'm not at all challenging the crisis described by Freud. But he opposes the libido to the death instinct, and he defines it as the tendency of the organism to come together with other organisms, as if that constituted progress, integration. So, independently of this undeniable conflict of which you speak and which doesn't make him an optimist from the human point of view, we nevertheless find in him a conception of the libido, what is more ill defined, which asserts clearly the broader and broader integration of organisms. Freud says it quite succinctly in the text itself.*

I understand that. But note that the tendency to union – Eros tends to unite – is only ever apprehended in its relation to the contrary tendency, which leads to division, to rupture, to a redispersion, most especially of inanimate matter. These two tendencies are strictly inseparable. No notion is less unitary than that. Let us go over it step by step.

2

What impasse had we reached last time? The organism already conceived by Freud as a machine, has a tendency to return to its state of equilibrium – this is what the pleasure principle states. Now, at first sight, this restitutive tendency is not clearly distinguishable, in Freud's text, from the repetitive tendency which he isolates, and which constitutes his original contribution. So we ask ourselves the following question – what distinguishes these two tendencies?

In this text, the middle terms are very strange, because they are part of a circular dialectic. Freud is constantly returning to a notion which always

seems to elude him. It resists, but he doesn't stop, he tries to maintain the originality of the repetitive tendency at all costs. Without the shadow of a doubt, there was something he lacked, of the order of categories or of images, so as to give us a clear sense of it.

From the beginning of Freud's work to the end, the pleasure principle is explained in the following way – when faced with a stimulus encroaching on the living apparatus, the nervous system is as it were the indispensable delegate of the homeostat, of the indispensable regulator, thanks to which the living being survives, and to which corresponds a tendency to lower the excitation to a minimum. *To a minimum*, what does that mean? There is an ambiguity here, which puts analytic authors under some difficulty. Read them, you'll see them slide down the slope which Freud's way of rendering the question dialectical opens to them.

Freud here offered them the opportunity for yet one more misunderstanding, and in chorus they all succumb to it, in their panic.

The minimum tension can mean one of two things, all biologists will agree, according to whether it is a matter of the minimum given a certain definition of the equilibrium of the system, or of the minimum purely and simply, that is to say, with respect to the living being, death.

Indeed one can consider that with death, all tensions are reduced, from the point of view of the living being, to zero. But one can just as well take into consideration the processes of decomposition which follow death. One then ends up defining the aim of the pleasure principle as the concrete dissolution of the corpse. That is something which one cannot but see as excessive.

However, I can cite you several authors for whom reducing the stimuli to the minimum means nothing more nor less than the death of the living being. That is to assume that the problem has been resolved, that is to confuse the pleasure principle with what we think Freud designated under the name of the death instinct. I say *what we think*, because, when Freud speaks of the death instinct, he is, thank God, designating something less absurd, less anti-biological, anti-scientific.

There is something which is distinct from the pleasure principle and which tends to reduce all animate things to the inanimate – that is how Freud puts it. What does he mean by this? What obliges him to think that? Not the death of living beings. It's human experience, human interchanges, intersubjectivity. Something of what he observes in man constrains him to step out of the limits of life.

No doubt there is a principle which brings the libido back to death, but it doesn't bring it back any old how. If it brought it back there by the shortest paths, the problem would be resolved. But it brings it back there only along the paths of life, it so happens.

The principle which brings the living being back to death is situated, is

marked out behind the necessity it experiences to take the roads of life – and it can only take that way. It cannot find death along any old road.

In other words, the machine looks after itself, maps out a certain curve, a certain persistence. And it is along the very path of this subsistence that something else becomes manifest, sustained by this existence it finds there and which shows it its passage.

There is an essential link which must be made right away – when you draw a rabbit out of a hat, it's because you put it there in the first place. Physicists have a name for this formulation, they call it the first law of thermodynamics, the law of the conservation of energy – if there's something at the end, just as much had to be there at the beginning.

The second principle – I'll try to give you a striking image of it – stipulates that the manifestation of this energy has undegraded modes and others which aren't. To put it another way, you can't swim against the current. When you do a job, a part of it is expended, as heat for instance – there's a loss. That's called entropy.

There is no mystery to entropy, it's a symbol, a thing you can write on the blackboard, and you'd be very wrong to think it exists. Entropy is a capital *E*, absolutely indispensable to our thinking. And even if you couldn't care less about this capital *E*, because a man called Karlus Mayer, a doctor in the navy, founded it, it is the principle, actually, of everything – one cannot avoid taking it into account when one runs a factory, atomic or otherwise, or a country. Karlus Mayer started thinking seriously about it while bleeding his patients – sometimes the paths of thought are mysterious, those of the Lord are unfathomable. It is quite striking that having thought this one out, and this is, to be sure, one of thought's great moments, he was extremely enfeebled by it – as if giving birth to capital *E* might have left its mark on the nervous system.

You'd be wrong to think that, when I take up positions which are commonly thought of as anti-organicist, it is because – as someone I like a lot said one day – the nervous system annoys me. I don't take such sentimental reasons as my guide. I think ordinary organicism is a stupidity, but there is another variety which doesn't in any way neglect material phenomena. Which leads me to tell you – in all honesty, if not in complete truth, for truth would require looking for its traces in experience – that I think that, for an unhappy individual to have been charged by I know not what, *the holy language* as Valéry put it, with the task of bringing capital *E* to life, doesn't perhaps come about without cost. Karlus Mayer certainly had two parts to his life, the one before and the one after, when nothing else happened – he had said what he had to say.

Well, this entropy, Freud encounters it, and he already does so by the end of the *Wolfman*. He has a firm sense that it has some kind of relation to his death instinct but without being able, there either, to be quite at ease with it, and throughout this article he pursues his infernal little merry-go-round, like

Diogenes seeking a man with his lantern. He was missing something. It would be too easy if I were to tell you – I will tell you – that all you have to do is add a capital *F* or a capital *I* to the capital *E*. That is certainly not it, because it hasn't thereby been entirely elucidated.

Contemporary thought is in the process of trying to get ahold of this down paths which are often ambiguous, even confusional, and you can't be unaware that you are present at its birth. I would go even further – in so far as you are here, following my seminar, you are in the process of see-sawing into this childbirth. You are entering into that dimension in which thought tries to order itself and find its correct symbol, its capital *F* following on from capital *E*. In the present state of things, it's the quantity of information.

Some aren't taken aback by this. Others seem completely baffled.

The great adventure of the research concerning communication began at some distance, at least ostensibly, from our concerns. Rather let's say, for how are we to know where it all began, that one of its significant moments is to be found in the company of telephone engineers.

The Bell Telephone Company needed to economise, that is to say, to pass the greatest possible number of communications down one single wire. In a country as vast as the United States, it is very important to save on a few wires, and to get the inanities which generally travel by this kind of transmission apparatus to pass down the smallest possible number of wires. That is where the quantification of communication started. So a start was made, as you can see, by dealing with something very far removed from what we here call speech. It had nothing to do with knowing whether what people tell each other makes any sense. Besides, what is said on the telephone, you must know from experience, never does. But one communicates, one recognises the modulation of a human voice, and as a result one has that appearance of understanding which comes with the fact that one recognises words one already knows. It is a matter of knowing what are the most economical conditions which enable one to transmit the words people recognise. No one cares about the meaning. Doesn't this underline rather well the point which I am emphasising, which one always forgets, namely that language, this language which is the instrument of speech, is something material?

In this way it was realised that there was no need for everything that gets inscribed on to the small sheet of an apparatus which has been more or less perfected, and become electronic in the meantime, but which in the end is still a Marey's apparatus,[2] which oscillates and represents the modulation of the voice. To obtain the same result all that is needed is to take a small slice from it, reducing the whole oscillation by a great deal – of the order of 1 to 10. And not

[2] English in the original.

only does one hear, but one recognises the voice of the dearly beloved or of dear Mrs So-and-so, at the other end. The things of the heart, the conviction passed on from one individual to another, comes over in its entirety.

The quantity of information then began to be codified. This doesn't mean that fundamental things happen between human beings. It concerns what goes down the wires, and what can be measured. Except, one then begins to wonder whether it does go, or whether it doesn't, when it deteriorates, when it is no longer communication. This what is called, in psychology, the jam,[2] an American word. It is the first time that confusion as such – this tendency there is in communication to cease being a communication, that is to say, of no longer communicating anything at all – appears as a fundamental concept. That makes for one more symbol.

You must get acquainted with this symbolic system, if you want to gain entrance to entire orders of reality which very much concern us. If you don't know how to manipulate these capital *E*'s and these capital *F*'s correctly, you can't be qualified to speak about inter-human relations. And this is in fact an objection which we could well have made yesterday evening to Merleau-Ponty. At some point in the symbolic system's development, not everyone can speak with everyone else. When we talked of closed subjectivity to him, he said – *If you can't talk with communists, the foundation of language vanishes, for the foundation of language is that it is universal.* Well of course. But one still has to be introduced into the circuit of language, and know what one is talking about when one talks about communication. And you'll see that this is essential in relation to the death instinct, which seems the opposite.

Mathematicians qualified to handle these symbols locate information as that which moves in the opposite direction to entropy. When people had become acquainted with thermodynamics, and asked themselves how their machine was going to pay for itself, they left themselves out. They regarded the machine as the master regards the slave – the machine is there, somewhere else, and it works. They were forgetting only one thing, that it was they who had signed the order form. Now, this fact turns out to have a considerable importance in the domain of energy. Because if information is introduced into the circuit of the degradation of energy, it can perform miracles. If Maxwell's demon can stop the atoms which move too slowly, and keep only those which have a tendency to be a little on the frantic side, he will cause the general level of the energy to rise again, and will do, using what would have degraded into heat, work equivalent to that which was lost.

This seems far removed from our subject. You will see how we will meet up with it again. Let us start again with our pleasure principle, and let's plunge back into the ambiguities.

3

At the level of the nervous system, when there are stimuli, everything works, everything comes into action, the efferents, the afferents, so that the living being returns to a state of repose. That's the pleasure principle, according to Freud.

On the intuitive level, there is, isn't there, some discordance between the pleasure principle defined thus, and what pleasure evokes in the way of raciness. Every man runs after his lady, that's what it looked like until now. In Lucretius, it was clear, and rather fun. And from time to time, analysts, despairing after all at having to use categories which seem to them so contrary to the feeling, remind us that there is indeed a pleasure in activity, a taste for stimulation. One seeks out entertainment, and one is taken in by the game. And, after all, wasn't it Freud who introduced the function of the libido into human behaviour? This libido, isn't it something rather libidinous? People seek their pleasure. So, why is this expressed theoretically by a principle which states the following – what is sought is, in the end, the cessation of pleasure. But you can see that the direction the theory takes at this point goes exactly in the opposite direction to that of subjective intuition – in the pleasure principle, pleasure, by definition, is bent on its end. The pleasure principle – the principle of pleasure – is that pleasure should cease.[3]

Within this perspective, what becomes of the reality principle?

The reality principle is usually introduced with the simple remark that too much pleasure-seeking ends in all kinds of accidents – you get your fingers burnt, you get the clap, you get your face smashed in. That is how we have the genesis of what is called human learning described to us. And then we are told that the pleasure principle is opposed to the reality principle. In our perspective, that obviously acquires another meaning. The reality principle consists in making the game last, that is to say, in ensuring that pleasure is renewed, so that the fight doesn't end for lack of combatants. The reality principle consists in husbanding our pleasures, these pleasures whose aim is precisely to end in cessation.

Don't get the idea that analysts are satisfied with this way of looking at the pleasure principle, which is nonetheless absolutely essential, from one end to the other, to the theory – if you don't think of the pleasure principle in this register, it is useless to introduce you to Freud.

The notion that there is a kind of pleasure proper to activity, pleasure in play, for instance, cripples the very categories of our thinking. What need would we then have of our technique? It would simply be a matter of teaching people

[3] *'le principe de plaisir'* is equally accurately translated by 'the pleasure principle' and by 'the principle of pleasure'.

gymnastics, music or anything else you want. Pedagogical procedures belong to a completely alien register to that of analytic experience. I'm not saying that they are without value, or that they might not be made to play an essential role in the Republic – we need only refer to Plato.

One may want to fit man in to a harmonious, natural mode of functioning, one may want to get him to connect the stages of his development, allow him the free blossoming of what in his organism, reaches, in its own time, maturity, and to give to each of these stages its time for play, then its time for adaptation, time for stabilisation, until the new living feature makes its appearance. An entire anthropology can be ordered around this. But is that the anthropology that justifies psychoanalyses, that is to say, sticking them on a couch so that they can tell us a lot of bloody nonsense? What's the relation between that and gymnastics, music? Would Plato have understood what psychoanalysis was about? No, he wouldn't have understood it, despite appearances, because at this point there's an abyss, a fault, and this is what we are in the process of looking for, with *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

I'm not saying that analysands are incapable of learning. You can teach people to play the piano – though it has to exist – and you notice, for instance, that having learned to play the piano with large keys, they can play on a piano with small keys, on a harpsichord, etc. But this is only a matter of determinate segments of human behaviour, and not, as in analysis, of man's destiny, his conduct when the piano lesson has ended and he goes and visits his girlfriend. Then what he learns is more or less the same as Gribouille.

You know the story of Gribouille. He goes to a funeral, and says – *Many happy returns!* He gets himself in a mess, gets his hair pulled, goes back home – *Come now, you don't say 'Many happy returns' at a funeral, you say – May God rest his soul!* He goes back out, comes upon a wedding – *May God rest his soul!* And he still gets into trouble.

Well that is what learning is, so analysis shows us, and that is what we come upon in the first analytic discoveries – trauma, fixation, reproduction, transference. What in the analytic experience is called the intrusion of the past into the present pertains to this order. It is always the learning of someone who will do better next time. And when I say that he will do better next time, that means that he'll have to do something completely different next time.

When we are told, employing the notion metaphorically, that analysis is an apprenticeship[4] in freedom, you must admit that it has an odd ring to it. All the same, at our point in history, as Merleau-Ponty was saying yesterday, one should be on one's guard.

What does analysis uncover – if it isn't the fundamental, radical discordance

[4] *'apprentissage'* – translated as 'learning' up to this point; 'learning theory' (in psychology) is translated into French as *'théorie d'apprentissage'*.

of forms of conduct essential to man in relation to everything which he experiences? The dimension discovered by analysis is the opposite of anything which progresses through adaptation, through approximation, through being perfected. It is something which proceeds by leaps, in jumps. It is always the strictly inadequate application of certain complete symbolic relations, and that implies several tonalities, immixtions, for instance of the imaginary in the symbolic, or inversely.

There is a radical difference between any investigation of human beings, even in the laboratory, and what happens in animals. On the animal side, one shifts within a fundamental ambiguity between instinct and learning, as soon as one tries, as is done now, to keep rather close to the facts. In animals, the so-called preformations of the instinct don't in any way exclude learning. In addition, one constantly finds in them possibilities for learning within the instinctual frameworks. What is more, one discovers that the actualisations of instinct would not occur without a call from the environment, as they say, which stimulates and provokes the crystallisation of forms, of behaviour and modes of conduct.

There is a convergence, a crystallisation, here which gives us the feeling, however sceptical we may be, of a pre-established harmony, subject to be sure to all kinds of difficulties cropping up. The notion of learning is in some way incapable of being differentiated from the maturation of instinct. It is in this domain that Gestalt categories naturally arise as indicators. An animal recognises its brother, its fellow being, its sexual partner. It finds its place in paradise, its environment, it also moulds it, it impresses itself on it. The stickleback makes a certain number of small holes, for no apparent reason, but one can tell that it is its leap which marks, its leap of which its entire body is the bearer. The animal fits into its environment. There's adaptation, and it's an adaptation which, quite precisely, has its end, its term, its limit. In this way, animal learning displays the characteristics of an organised and finite mode of becoming perfect. How different it is from what the same research – so one thinks – reveals about learning in man! These researches clearly show the function of the desire to return to it, the privilege of tasks which haven't been completed. Mrs Zeigarnik is invoked without knowing quite what she said, for saying that a task will be memorised all the better for having failed under determinate conditions. Don't you see that all of that goes totally against animal psychology, and even totally against the account we might give of memory as being the stacking up of engrams, of impressions, in which the individual being is formed? In man, it is the wrong form which prevails. In so far as a task is not completed the subject returns to it. The more abject the failure, the better the subject remembers it.

In all this, we are not considering things at the level of the being and of destiny – the thing was measured within the limitations of a laboratory. But it is not enough to measure, one must also try to understand.

I am perfectly well aware that the mind is always abundant in modes of understanding. I often say that to people I supervise – be very careful not to understand the patient, there is no surer way of getting lost. The patient says something which one can make neither head nor tail of, and, in repeating it to me – *Well, I understand him*, I'm told, *to mean this*. That is, in the name of intelligence, what should stop us in our tracks, what isn't comprehensible, is simply dodged.

The Zeigarnik effect, the abject failure, or the task left incomplete, everyone understands that. We all remember Mozart – he gulped down the cup of chocolate, and he came back to strike the last chord. But one fails to understand that it isn't an explanation. Or if it is one, that means we aren't animals. We aren't musicians the way my little dog is, going all dreamy when I put on certain records. A musician is always the musician of his own music. And except for people who write their own music, that is, who keep their distance from this music, there aren't many people who come back to strike their last chord.

I would like to get you to understand at what level the need for repetition is situated. And once again, we will find our reference some way away.

4

Kierkegaard, who was, as you know, a humorist, discussed the difference between the pagan world and the world of grace, which Christianity introduces. Something of the ability to recognise his natural object, so apparent in animals, is present in man. There is being captured by form, being seized by play, being gripped by the mirage of life. That is what a theoretical, or theorial, or contemplative, or Platonic thought refers itself to, and it isn't an accident that Plato places reminiscence at the centre of his entire theory of knowledge. The natural object, the harmonic correspondent of the living being, is recognisable because its outline has already been sketched. And for it to have been sketched, it must already have been within the object which is going to join itself to it. That is the relation of the dyad. Plato's entire theory of knowledge – Jean Hyppolite won't contradict me – is dyadic.

But for certain specific reasons, a change occurred. Sin is from then on present as the third term, and it is no longer by following the path of reminiscence, but rather in following that of repetition, that man finds his way. That is precisely what puts Kierkegaard on the track of our Freudian intuitions, in a small book called *Repetition*. I recommend reading it to those who are already somewhat ahead. Those who don't have much time should at least read the first part.

Kierkegaard wants to avoid precisely those problems which stem from his accession to a new order, and he encounters the dam of his own reminiscences, of who he thinks he is and of what he knows he will never be able to become. He

then tries the experiment of repetition. He returns to Berlin where, during his previous stay he had experienced infinite pleasure, and he retraces his own steps. You will see what happens to him, seeking his well-being in the shadow of his pleasure. The experiment fails totally. But as a result of that, he puts us on the track of our problem, namely, how and why everything which pertains to an advance essential to the human being must take the path of a tenacious repetition.

I'm getting close to the model which I want to leave with you today, so you can see the meaning of man's need for repetition. It's all to do with the intrusion of the symbolic register. Only, I'll illustrate it for you.

Models are very important. Not that they mean anything – they mean nothing. But that's the way we are – that's our animal weakness – we need images. And, sometimes, for lack of images, some symbols don't see the light of day. In general, it is rather the symbolic deficiency which is worrisome. The image comes to us from an essentially symbolic creation, that is to say from a machine, that most modern of machines, far more dangerous for man than the atom bomb, the adding machine.

You've been told, you've understood, and you don't believe it – the adding machine has a memory. You quite like saying it, but you don't believe it. Do get it right! The sort of memory it has is destined to put all the images of memory which up to now we had given ourselves into question. The best thing we've found for giving an image of the phenomenon of memory is the Babylonian wax seal, a thing with a few little reliefs and some lines which you roll out on to a wax plaque, what we call an engram. The seal is also a machine, only no one notices that.

For machines to remember every question, questions which have already been put to them, which is sometimes necessary, something a bit more cunning was discovered – the machine's first experience circulates inside it in the form of a message.

Suppose that I send a telegram from here to Le Mans, with the request that Le Mans send it back to Tours, from there to Sens, from there to Fontainebleau, and from there to Paris, and so on indefinitely. What's needed is that when I reach the tail of my message, the head should not yet have arrived back. The message must have time to turn around. It turns quickly, it doesn't stop turning, it turns around in circles.

It's funny, this thing turning back on itself. It's called feedback,[5] and its related to the homeostat. You know that that is how the admission of steam into a steam-engine is controlled. If it heats up too quickly, a governor registers it, two things are forced apart by the centrifugal force, and the admission of steam is regulated. We have oscillation about a point of equilibrium.

[5] English in the original.

Here, it's more complicated. We call that a message. It's very ambiguous. What is a message inside a machine? Something which proceeds by opening and not opening, the way an electronic lamp does, by yes or no. It's something articulated, of the same order as the fundamental oppositions of the symbolic register. At any given moment, this something which turns has to, or doesn't, come back into play. It is always ready to give a reply, and be completed by this selfsame act of replying, that is to say by ceasing to function as an isolated and closed circuit, by entering into the general run of things. Now this comes very close to what we can conceive of as *Zwang*, the compulsion to repeat.

As soon as we have this little model, we realise that in the very anatomy of the cerebral apparatus there are things which return back on themselves. Thanks to Riguet, on whose recommendation I read the work of an English neurologist, I became very interested in a certain octopus. It seems that its nervous system is sufficiently simple to have an isolated nerve which governs what is called the jet, or the propulsion of liquid, thanks to which the octopus has this delightful way of moving. You can also think of its memory apparatus being pretty much reduced to this message circulating between Paris and Paris, on tiny points of the nervous system.

Think back on what we said in preceding years about those striking coincidences Freud noted in the sphere of what he calls telepathy. Very important things, in the way of transference, occur in parallel in two patients, whether one is in analysis and the other just on its fringes, or whether both are in analysis. At that time, I showed you how it is through being links, supports, rings in the same circle of discourse, agents integrated in the same circle of discourse, that the subjects simultaneously experience such and such a symptomatic act, or discover such and such a memory.

At the point we have reached, I propose, looking ahead, that you conceive of the need for repetition, such as it concretely manifests itself in the subject, in analysis for instance, as the form of behaviour staged in the past and reproduced in the present in a way which doesn't conform much with vital adaptation.

Here we rediscover what I've already pointed out to you, namely that the unconscious is the discourse of the other. This discourse of the other is not the discourse of the abstract other, of the other in the dyad, of my correspondent, nor even of my slave, it is the discourse of the circuit in which I am integrated. I am one of its links. It is the discourse of my father for instance, in so far as my father made mistakes which I am absolutely condemned to reproduce – that's what we call the *super-ego*. I am condemned to reproduce them because I am obliged to pick up again the discourse he bequeathed to me, not simply because I am his son, but because one can't stop the chain of discourse, and it is precisely my duty to transmit it in its aberrant form to someone else. I have to put to someone else the problem of a situation of life or death in which the chances are

that it is just as likely that he will falter, in such a way that this discourse produces a small circuit in which an entire family, an entire coterie, an entire camp, an entire nation or half of the world will be caught. The circular form of a speech which is just at the limit between sense and non-sense, which is problematic.

That's what the need for repetition is, as we see it emerge beyond the pleasure principle. It vacillates beyond all the biological mechanisms of equilibration, of harmonisation and of agreement. It is only introduced by the register of language, by the function of the symbol, by the problematic of the question within the human order.

How does Freud project that in the most literal manner on to a level which ostensibly belongs to the order of biology? We will have to come back to that the next few times. Life is only caught up in the symbolic piece-meal, decomposed. The human being himself is in part outside life, he partakes of the death instinct. Only from there can he engage in the register of life.

19 January 1955

THE FREUDIAN SCHEMATA OF THE PSYCHIC APPARATUS

VIII

Introduction to the *Entwurf*

ON THE LEVEL OF PSYCHOSOMATIC REACTIONS
THE REAL IS WITHOUT FISSURE
THE REDISCOVERY OF THE OBJECT

In a quite precise manner, Professor Lagache was looking for an empiricism yesterday evening, in a way which cannot fail to make one suspicious.[1] For no empiricism is possible without an advanced conceptualisation, as Freud's work clearly shows. One can only make headway in the empirical domain to the extent that the conceptualisation be taken up again at every moment and enriched. Look up the article 'Instincts and their vicissitudes'.[2]

We have often heard it maintained that sciences should be built up on clear and sharply defined basic concepts. In actual fact no science, not even the most exact, begins with such definitions. The true beginning of scientific activity consists rather in describing phenomena and then in proceeding to group, classify and correlate them. Even at the stage of description it is not possible to avoid applying certain abstract ideas to the material in hand, ideas derived from somewhere or other but certainly not from the new observations alone. Such ideas – which will later become the basic concepts of the science – are still more indispensable as the material is further worked over. They must at first necessarily possess some degree of indefiniteness; there can be no question of any clear delimitation of their content. So long as they remain in this condition, we come to an understanding about their meaning by making repeated references to the material of observation from which they appear to have been derived, but upon which, in fact, they have been imposed. Thus, strictly speaking, they are in the nature of conventions – although everything depends on their not being arbitrarily chosen but determined by their having significant relations to the empirical material, relations that we seem to sense before we can clearly recognise and demonstrate them. It is only after more thorough investigation of the field of observation that we are able to formulate its basic scientific concepts with increased precision, and progressively so to modify them that they become serviceable and consistent over a wide area.

They say Freud isn't a philosopher. I don't mind, but I don't know of any text

[1] On 25 January 1955, François Perrier led a discussion at the Société Française de Psychanalyse under the title 'Psychoanalysis and psycho-somatic medicine'.
[2] GW X 210; Stud III 81; SE XIV 117.

concerning the working up of scientific theory which is philosophically more profound.

Then, indeed, the time may have come to confine them in definitions. The advance of knowledge, however, does not tolerate any rigidity even in definitions. Physics furnishes an excellent illustration of the way . . .

This was written in 1915.

O. MANNONI: *After Galileo, though.*

But before Einstein. So, a continual reworking of concepts, which can shatter what we call rational frameworks.

. . . in which even 'basic concepts' that have been established in the form of definitions are constantly being altered in their content.

A conventional basic concept of this kind, which at the moment is still somewhat obscure but which is indispensable to us in psychology, is that of an 'instinct', in other words: drive. Let us try to give a content to it by approaching it from different angles.

Note that '*l'instinct*' is here the invention of Mme Anne Berman.[3] Freud's text is only concerned with '*pulsion*'.[4]

1

I don't think it was such a mistake on Perrier's part yesterday evening to have emphasized, at the end of his talk, psychosomatic problems and object relations.

The object relation has become an empty catch phrase, allowing one to avoid lots of problems. But, given the point we have reached in our discussions of the various registers in which the relations of the subject are established, the object, in the sense we can give it, is something else. For there to be an object relation, there must already be a narcissistic relation of the ego to the other. Moreover, that is the primary condition for any objectification of the external world – of naive, spontaneous objectification no less than that of scientific objectification.

Perrier wanted to distinguish between organic functions in which there's a representation of the relational element and others, which he contrasted to the first as the inside to the outside, thinking in this way to join up again with a theme constantly in the forefront in the Freudian theory of the psychic economy. I think that that intuition is a good one, but he didn't know how to express it in an adequate manner. The distinction at stake in the psychosomatic reactions of organs is one of a completely different level.

The issue is knowing which organs come into play in the narcissistic

[3] The French translator of many of Freud's works.

[4] 'Drives and their destinies' would be a more accurate translation of the paper's title. The English terms corresponding to the debate between '*instinct*' and '*pulsion*' are 'instinct' and 'drive'. See Editor's Note in the Introduction, SE XIV 111–12, and SE I xiv–xvi.

imaginary relation to the other whereby the ego is formed, *bildet*. The imaginary structuration of the ego forms around the specular image of the body itself, of the image of the other. Now, the relation of looking and being looked at does indeed involve an organ, the eye, to give it its name. Some very surprising things can happen here. How are we to approach them, when all aspects of psychosomatics are plunged in the greatest confusion?

(*Dr Perrier arrives.*)

My dear Perrier, I was in the middle of saying that you lacked a basic distinction, which would probably have shielded your account from some of Valabrega's criticisms.

You were looking for a distinction which takes account of the organs involved in the true psychosomatic process, as you tried to define it. I would like to point out in connection with that, that this process is very far from including everything you told us – if one puts an epileptic in a more settled environment, he sometimes does have fewer fits, but that has nothing to do with psychosomatics. You talked about relational organs, which have a relation to the external world. With respect to the others, you thought they were closer to the immense reserve of excitations of which Freud gives us a picture when he talks about internal instincts. Well, I don't think that's a good distinction.

What's important is that certain organs are caught up in the narcissistic relation, in so far as it structures both the relation of the ego to the other and the constitution of the world of objects. Behind narcissism, you've got auto-erotism, that is, a mass invested with libido inside the organism, whose internal relations, I would say, are as much beyond our ken as entropy is.

In passing, I should like to draw your attention to the fact that in the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, the passage on libido is added later, sometime around 1920 if I remember right.[5] To think that the theory of the libido was developed at the same time as that of the instinctual phases is an illusion, a result of the fact that the *Three Essays* was revised several times. Freud fully developed his theory of the libido, the one which occupies the median part of his work, only after having introduced the function of narcissism – I did enough last year to show you that – and only after having realised that the latter was directly involved in the libidinal economy.

I'm coming back to my comparison with entropy so that you appreciate all its import. Among the energy equivalences we can apprehend with respect to a living organism, we can only really know about metabolism, that is, the balance sheet – what goes in and what comes out. There are quantities of energy

[5] (1905d) GW V 118–19; Stud V 121–2; SE VII 217–19; see note 1 on SE VII 217, and the Editorial Introduction, SE VII 126.

the organism assimilates, by various means, and there's what, taking everything into account – muscular expenditure, effort, dejections – comes out of the mechanism. To be sure, the laws of thermodynamics are respected – there is degradation of energy. But about everything which happens inside, we know absolutely nothing. For one simple reason – we have no means whatever of measuring the interaction of neighbouring parts, in the way we can in the physical world, the specificity of an organism lying in that everything which happens in one of its points has repercussions in all the others.

The libidinal economy is something which isn't equivalent, but is analogous.

The properly intra-organic investments, which in analysis we call auto-erotic, certainly play a very important role in psychosomatic phenomena. The *eroticisation* of this or that organ is the metaphor which comes up most often, through our sense of what order of phenomena is at stake in psychosomatic phenomena. And your distinction between psychosomatic neurosis and the psychosomatic phenomenon is precisely marked by this line of separation constituted by narcissism.

Obviously in the neuroses one always comes across defence mechanisms. One musn't talk about it in a loose way, as if these were homogeneous with the defence mechanisms, with the reactions one speaks of within a certain economic conception of the illness. Those implicated here, which are enumerated by Anna Freud as originally constituting the defences of the ego, are always tied to the narcissistic relation in so far as it is strictly structured on the relation to the other, the possible identification with the other, the strict reciprocity between the ego and the other. Indeed, in any narcissistic relation, the ego is the other, and the other is me [*moi*].

The neurosis is always given its framework by the narcissistic structure. But, as such, it is beyond, on another level.

This other level isn't the level of the object relation, as you claimed, or as Pasche says, with a very unfortunate lapse in conceptual rigour – I say it all the more readily given that he is someone who, at one time, showed greater promise. If psychosomatic reactions as such suggest something, it is that they are outside the register of neurotic constructs. It isn't an object relation. It's a relation to something which always lies on the edge of our conceptual elaborations, which we are always thinking about, which we sometimes speak of, and which, strictly speaking, we can't grasp, and which is nonetheless there, don't forget it – I talk about the symbolic, about the imaginary, but there is also the real. Psychosomatic relations are at the level of the real.

DR PERRIER: *That is precisely what I tried to say.*

But you didn't say it. You cited Pasche on the object relation. If you put things at that level, you get yourself lost in the relations to the primal, maternal object,

you end up with a kind of clinical pat.[6] Nothing comes out of it. In contrast, reference to the term 'real' can on this occasion make its fruitfulness felt.

DR PERRIER: *After citing Pasche, I believe I insisted on the fact that the psychosomatic patient had a direct relation to the real, the world, and not to the object, and that the therapeutic relation he established with a physician, however undifferentiated it was, reintroduced the register of narcissism to him. And it is to the extent that this buffer enabled him to come back to a more human dimension that he was cured of his psychosomatic cycle.*

I'm not saying that what you said was silly. What I'm saying is that, from the point of view of terminological rigour, you wouldn't have been vulnerable to Valabrega's criticisms if you had introduced the term 'real', rather than that of 'object'.

M. VALABREGA: *The reference to narcissism is essential. Narcissism does however lead to an object relation, with the body itself.*

That's all I'm saying.

I spoke earlier on of voyeurism-exhibitionism, and of a drive whose source lies in an organ, the eye. But its object isn't the eye. Similarly, what pertains to the register of sado-masochism also has its origin in an organic set-up, the musculature, but everything points to the fact that its object, although not unrelated to this muscular structure, is something other. In contrast, when it is a matter of those investments we call auto-erotic, we can't distinguish the source from the object. We know nothing about it, but it seems that what we can conceive of is an investment in the organ itself.

You see the difference. You also see the extent to which auto-erotism remains mysterious, almost impenetrable. This doesn't mean that we won't make some progress later on. If Perrier doesn't mind, after the effort he made, not slipping immediately into the reaction of sleepiness and repose, which is what the pleasure principle naturally longs for, but sustaining that effort, and preparing for us next time this little chapter entitled 'Instincts and their vicissitudes'.

Remember this, regarding externality and internality – this distinction makes no sense at all at the level of the real. The real is without fissure. What I teach you about Freud's convergence with what we may call philosophy of science is that we have no means of apprehending this real – on any level and not only on that of knowledge – except via the go-between of the symbolic.

The real is absolutely without fissure. Let us not conceal the flaw in theories initially so appealing, even fruitful, as that of von Frisch. Reciprocal holism, taking an *Umwelt* to correspond to an *Innenwelt* is a *petitio principii* right at the

[6] English in the original.

outset of biological investigation. It may be of interest as a hypothesis, but nothing obliges us to think such a thing. The notion of reflected relations of the living being with its environment, the hypothesis of a pre-established harmony, even if we give it the broadest sense, is a premise whose validity nothing goes to demonstrate. If other modes of research, such as atomism, associationism, etc., against which we can raise all kinds of criticisms, are more fruitful, it is because they move away from this hypothesis, because without knowing it they place symbolism in the foreground. They project it into the real, they imagine that it is the elements of the real which are of relevance. But it is simply symbolism which they bring into operation inside the real, not by virtue of projection, nor as a framework of thought, but by virtue of being an instrument of investigation. The real is without fissure. And in that hypothetical state of auto-enclosure which is presupposed by Freudian theory to be that of the subject right at the start, what could it possibly mean to say that the subject is everything?

M. VALABREGA: *The problem doesn't arise apropos of the real, but apropos of the distinction between apparatuses with relations to the real and the non-relational ones.*

The distinction is drawn between what is included in the narcissistic relation and what isn't. It is at the seam where the imaginary joins the real that the differentiation takes place.

2

Last time I wanted to give you an initial insight into the meaning of the question – what happens beyond the pleasure principle? My great friend Jean Hyppolite, who isn't here today because he is in Germany, told me he had read *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* again. I think he is at least as busy as most of you. So, it's time to think of reading. In a fortnight we will talk about it again text in hand.

Last time I told you that symbolism is essential to all the most basic manifestations of the analytic domain, namely to repetition, and that we must think of it as tied to a circular process of the exchange of speech. There is a symbolic circuit external to the subject, tied to a certain group of supports, of human agents, in which the subject, the small circle which is called his destiny, is indeterminately included.

I make an image, I incurve my thought, you do realise that that's not quite how understanding comes about.

A certain exchange of relations, both external and internal, takes place which has to be represented as a speech that is recited. With a recording machine, one could isolate it, preserve it. For the most part, it escapes the subject, who doesn't possess the recording machines in question, and continues, comes back, always ready to re-enter the dance of the inner speech.

Naturally, the subject can spend his entire life without making out what it's about. It is after all what most commonly happens. Analysis is made for him to make out, for him to understand in what circle of speech he is caught, and by the same token into what other circle he must enter.

Now we are going to retrace our steps and talk about the *Entwurf*.

It is a manuscript which Freud didn't publish, and which was discovered. It dates from September 1895, so from before *The Interpretation of Dreams*, from the period during which Freud was engaged in, not his self-analysis, but simply his analysis, that is to say when he was on his road of discovery. It tells us how Freud conceived of the psychic apparatus. This text is vital to the history of Freud's thought and, in the light of the punctuation which we will give it, it reveals the signification of what was to follow, of the theory of the *Traumdeutung*. It tells us how Freud was forced to rework his original conceptions. You will see the dream machine join up with this machine whose sketch I gave you earlier on apropos of the discourse of the other, and many others.

Today Anzieu will give us an analysis of what should be brought out in this text.

Interventions in the course of Anzieu's presentation.

In 1895, the theory of the neuron hadn't got anywhere. Freud's ideas on the synapse are entirely original. He plumps for the synapse as such, that is to say for rupture in continuity from one nerve cell to the next.

. . . . . .

What we are given as being the vitalist system, the reflex arc, according to the simplest schema of stimulus-response, seems to obey solely the law of discharge. There is a pure and simple general inertia. The circuit is drawn shut by the shortest path. To this, Freud tags on a buffer-system, a system inside the system, from which the ego system originates. The reality principle is here introduced in reference to the ψ system, turned towards the inside. Later on, the terms will criss-cross.

. . . . . .

The ω system is already a prefiguration of the id system. Explain what makes its invention necessary. For, when all is said and done, until then, everything worked very well. Not the least bit of consciousness. But it must nonetheless be brought back in, and Freud does so in the paradoxical form of a system which has quite exceptional laws. The period has to pass through it with the minimum expenditure of energy, with almost no expenditure of energy – he can't say none at all.

Here for the first time we find ourselves faced with this difficulty, which reoccurs at every turn throughout Freud's work –one doesn't know what to do

with the system of consciousness. Very special laws must be attributed to it, and it has to be placed outside of the laws of energy equivalence which govern the movements of quantity. Why can't he dispense with bringing it in altogether? What is he going to do with it? What function does it have?

. . . . . .

Apropos of states of desire, what Freud puts into play is the correspondence between the object which appears and the structures already constituted in the ego. He stresses the following – either what appears is what is expected and that isn't in the least interesting – or it doesn't work out well and that's very interesting, for any kind of construction of the object world is always an attempt to rediscover the object, *Wiederzufinden*.[7] Freud distinguishes two completely different structurations of human experience – one which, along with Kierkegaard, I called *ancient*, based on reminiscence, presupposing agreement, harmony between man and the world of his objects, which means that he recognises them, because in some way, he has always known them – and, on the contrary, the conquest, the structuration of the world through the effort of labour, along the path of repetition. To the extent that what appears to him corresponds only partially with what has already gained him satisfaction, the subject engages in a quest, and repeats his quest indefinitely until he rediscovers this object.

The object is encountered and is structured along the path of a repetition – to find the object again, to repeat the object. Except, it never is the same object which the subject encounters. In other words, he never ceases generating substitutive objects.

Within this theory, which seems to hold up, we find then the first hint, at a materialist level, of the process of the function of repetition as structuring the world of objects.

This is the sketch of this fruitful something which is going to be the foundation of the psychology of conflict, and which makes a bridge between libidinal experience as such and the world of human knowledge, which is characterised by the fact that, for the most part, it escapes from the field of the forces of desire. The human world isn't at all structurable as an *Umwelt*, fitting inside an *Innenwelt* of needs, it isn't enclosed, but rather open to a crowd of extraordinarily varied neutral objects, of objects which no longer even have anything to do with objects, in their radical function as symbols.

. . . . . .

The ego experiences reality not only in so far as it lives it, but in so far as it neutralises it as much as possible. And this takes place to the extent that the system of derivation comes into play. You didn't put enough stress on the fact that Freud locates the process of derivation in the branching of neurons, thus

[7] See SE I 329 and GW II/III 572; Stud II 540; SE V 566.

accounting for the fact that the scattered and individuated influx of energy doesn't pass through. And it is to the extent that it doesn't pass through that a comparison becomes possible with the information which the system gives us in terms of periodicity, namely on account of the energy reduced, not perhaps in its potential, but in its intensity.

. . . . . .

In this initial sketch of the ego, there is a first hint of what will be revealed to be like the structural condition of the construction of the object world in man – the rediscovery of the object. But the reference to the other, which is also essential to the structuration of the object, is completely missing. In other words, as in Condillac's statue, the objectivated organisation of the world seems to be a matter of course. And the discovery of narcissism for us takes on all of its significance for not having at all been perceived by Freud at this earlier point in time.

Following the path of eighteenth-century philosophers, and like every one else at the time, Freud reconstructs everything, memory, judgement, etc., starting off from sensation, and only stopping for one moment in the quest for the object in itself. But he finds himself returning to the primary process in so far as it concerns sleep and dreams. And this is how even this mechanical reconstruction of reality still leads to the dream.

Let us stop there for today. Does Valabrega want to assume responsibility for establishing the link with the completed theory of the primary and secondary processes in the *Traumdeutung*?

26 January 1955

IX

Play of writings

MADNESS IS NOT DREAMING
FOUR SCHEMATA
OPPOSITION AND MEDIATION
THE PRIMARY PROCESS
THE ENTIFICATION OF PERCEPTION-CONSCIOUSNESS

Yesterday evening, after Lang's talk,[1] Lefèbvre-Pontalis made the following comment to you all, that we should control ourselves about the mirror stage.

His remark has my assent, in that its use should not be abused. The mirror stage isn't a magic word. It's already a bit dated. Since I put it out in 1936, it's about twenty years old. It's beginning to be in need of a bit of renovation – which isn't always for the best, for in order to make progress, one should know how to go back over things. It isn't so much repeating it that is a bore, as not using it properly. And in this respect, Lang gets full marks.

1

(*M. Lefèbvre-Pontalis arrives.*)

Ah, here comes the rebel! I assure you that there is something it's possible you, Lefèbvre-Pontalis, have not the faintest idea about, which is the extent to which the diagnosis of psychosis in a child is debated and debatable. In a way, one never knows if it is a good thing to use the same word for psychoses in children and in adults. For decades, everyone refused to believe that there could be genuine psychoses in children – one sought to link the phenomena to various organic conditions. Psychosis isn't structured at all in the same way in the child and in the adult. If we legitimately speak of psychosis in children, it is because, as analysts, we can advance a step further than the others in our conception of psychosis.

As we don't yet have a doctrine on this subject, not even in our group, Lang was in a difficult position.

The greatest confusion still reigns when it comes to adult psychosis, *a fortiori* concerning child psychosis. But if Lang's work seemed to me entirely

[1] On 1 February 1955, Dr J. L. Lang led a discussion at the Société Française de Psychanalyse under the title 'A psychoanalytic approach to psychosis in the child'.

appropriate, it is because he tried to do something which is indispensable when it is a matter of analytic understanding, and especially when one goes up to the limits, namely – stepping back.

There are two dangers in anything related to the understanding of our clinical domain.

The first is not to be sufficiently curious. Children are taught that curiosity is a terrible fault, and on the whole, it's true, we aren't curious, and it isn't easy to generate this feeling in an automatic way.

The second is to understand. We always understand too much, especially in analysis. Most of the time, we're fooling ourselves. One thinks one can do a good therapeutic analysis if one is gifted, intuitive, when one has made contact, if one puts to work the genius which each person deploys in an interpersonal relation. And from the moment one doesn't demand extreme conceptual rigour of oneself, one always finds some way to understand. But one is left without a compass, you know neither where you started, nor where you are trying to get to.

Can the contrast with the psychosis of children enlighten us as to what we should think about adult psychosis? That is what Lang tried to do, and he did it very well. With great tact he pointed out the incoherences, divergences and gaps in the systems of Melanie Klein and of Anna Freud, to the benefit, in the end, of Melanie Klein, because the system of Anna Freud is, from the analytical point of view, in an impasse.

I really liked what he said about regression. He pointed out that it was a symbol, and not a mechanism which will occur in reality. You know that I don't like to resort to the term of magical thought at every turn, but this is indeed something which resembles a magician's thought. Do we ever see any adult actually regress, return to the state of a small child, start wailing? Regression doesn't exist. As Lang remarks, it is a symptom which must be interpreted as such. There is regression on the plane of signification and not on the plane of reality. In the child, it is sufficiently well borne out by the simple observation that he hasn't much room to regress in.

I reread a note in *The Interpretation of Dreams* about the processes and mechanisms of the psychology of the dream, in which Freud cites Jackson – *Find out all about dreams and you will have found out all about insanity.*[2]

Well, that's just not true. It's got nothing to do with it. Get that clear in your heads. They indubitably work with the same elements, the same symbols, and one can find analogies between them. But that isn't our way of looking at things. It all hangs on this – why isn't a dream madness? Or inversely, what needs to be defined in madness is how it is that its determining mechanism has got nothing to do with what happens every night in dreams.

[2] (1900a) GW II/III 575; Stud II 542; SE V 569 n2.

You mustn't think that this should all be credited to Freud. The French edition is incomplete, and doesn't mention that it is a kind of good mark given to Ernest Jones, who had thought it worthwhile to make this link, which he no doubt thought appropriate for linking analysis up with what was already well thought of in England. Let us render up to Jones that which is Jones's, and to Freud that which is Freud's. And don't let go of the idea that the problem of the dream leaves all the economic problems of psychosis completely unresolved.

I can't tell you more about that today. This is a foretaste of things to come. We may be able to start thinking about psychosis already this year. In any case, we will have to devote ourselves to it next year.

2

Let us return to Freud's text.

I asked Valabrega to continue the commentary, but I will immediately draw you a schema on the blackboard, to which you will be able to refer so as to grasp the trend of what is being explored here. In fact, I will draw four schemata, of comparable structure, whose differences illustrate the progress of Freud's development.

The first refers to what is sketched out in his first general psychology, which wasn't published, and constituted a reference for himself, full of fruitful insights. The second brings it up to *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the theory of the psychic apparatus having the explanation of the dream for its object. Take good note of the fact that – after he had supplied all the elements for the interpretation of dreams, he still had to give an account of the dream as psychical function. The third refers to the level of the much later theory of the libido. It isn't at all coeval with the *Three Essays*, but rather correlative with the advent of the function of narcissism. Finally, the fourth schema – *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

Although they refer to entirely different functions, these schemata are somewhat similar in form. In fact, they are always schemata of the analytic field. At the beginning, Freud calls that *psychic apparatus*, but you will see the advances he makes, the advances in his conception with respect to what we can call the human being.

That is what it is about. Behind your exigencies at the theoretical level, behind, for instance, Lefèbvre-Pontalis's call yesterday evening, there's the idea that you are confronted with something individual, if not unique, that everything is there, concentrated in the form of what is in front of you, that that is the unity of the object in psychoanalysis, if not in psychology, whose limits and laws are thought to be knowable.

All of you believe yourselves still to be within the domain of psychology, and that the psyche is a kind of double, a kind of property, of this something you see.

It is very odd that you don't grasp the fact that all scientific progress consists

in making the object as such fade away. In physics, for instance, the further you advance, the less you grasp the object. What pertains to the order of perception interests physicists only at the level of exchanges of energy, atoms, molecules, which only produce the perceptible appearance in a contingent and transitory way.

This isn't to say that for us the human being fades away.[3]

You must know, being philosophers, that being and the object aren't at all the same thing. From the scientific point of view, we cannot grasp being, of course, since it doesn't belong to the scientific order. But even so, psychoanalysis is an experience which delineates, if one can say it, its vanishing point. It stresses that man isn't an object, but a being in the process of becoming, something metaphysical. Is that our object, our scientific object? Certainly not, but neither is our object the individual who apparently embodies this being.

In every dream, Freud says, there's an absolutely incomprehensible point, belonging to the domain of the unknown – he calls this the navel of the dream.[4] Such things aren't emphasised in his text because people probably think it's poetry. It isn't. It means that there is a point which cannot be grasped in the phenomenon, the point where the relation of the subject to the symbolic surfaces. What I call being is that last word, which is certainly not accessible to us in our scientific position, but whose direction is indicated to us in the phenomena of our experience.

What matters to us is knowing where we have to locate ourselves in our relation to what we call our partner. Now, if there is anything that is obvious, it is that there are two different dimensions in this unique phenomenon of the inter-human relation, although they never cease getting caught up with one another – one is that of the imaginary, the other is that of the symbolic. In some way, they criss-cross, and we must always know what function we have, in what dimension we are located, in relation to the subject, in a way which produces either an opposition, or a mediation. To think that these two dimensions are in fact one, because they are mixed up together in the phenomenon, is simply wrong. You end up with a kind of magical communication, a universal analogy, which is what many people base the theorisation of their experience on. In the concrete and the particular, it can often be very rewarding, but can in no way be developed, and is liable to every error in technique.

All this is very abbreviated, but it will both be made precise and illustrated by the fourth schema, which corresponds to the last stage in Freud's thought, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.*

[3] The verb here. '*s'évanouir*', also means 'to faint'. Cf. Lacan's later usage of 'fading' (English in the original) apropos of the movement of the subject. e.g. E 835.

[4] See (1900a) GW II/III 115 n2; Stud I1 130 n2; SE IV 111 n1.

3

Interventions in the course of M. Valabrega's presentation.

What is Freud calling the system ϕ? He starts from the schema of the reflex-arc in its simplest version, which offered such hope of grasping the relations of the living being with its environment. This schema displays the essential property of the system of relations of a living being – it receives something, an excitation, and it responds with something.

Don't forget that the notion of response always implies that we are dealing with an adapted being. This reflex-arc schema came out of the first experiments on frogs, for instance, at the time when electricity, which, as you will see, will teach us so many things as a model, was starting to make its appearance in the world. The frog is electrically stimulated, or else a drop of acid is placed on its leg. It scratches this leg with the other – that's what one calls the response. There isn't just the afferent-efferent pair. One must also assume that the response has a purpose, which is to say that the living being is an adapted being.

All this is taken on by Freud when he begins his construction. And already he seems to include in it the notion of equilibrium, in other words a principle of inertia. But that isn't at all legitimate. The stimulus that Valabrega calls somewhat prematurely information, is nothing more than an *in-put*,[5] a *put-inside*. This is a pre-scientific way of approaching the problem, it dates from before the introduction of the notion of energy, and even from well before Condillac's statue. There is no consideration of energy in this basic schema. It is only when Freud takes into account that what happens in the ϕ system must have an affect on the ψ system, that the notion of a quota of energy comes up. And it is only then that he specifies that the ψ system has to deal with internal promptings, that is to say needs.

What are needs? They are things which are closely linked to the organism, and which are clearly distinguishable from desire. Yesterday evening, Lang was deploring the fact that desire is always confused with need, and, indeed, it isn't at all the same thing. Need[5] expresses how this system, which is a special system within the organism, connects up with the general homeostasis of the organism. Here therefore the notion of energy constancy necessarily comes up, already emerging at this point in Freud's work, in transversal fashion. Freud considers that there is an energy equivalence between ψ, which experiences something from within the organism, and ϕ which produces something related to its needs. That becomes completely mysterious – we are absolutely ignorant as to what it might mean, to say that there's an equivalence of energy between the internal pressure, tied to the equilibrium of the organism, and what results

[5] English in the original.

from it. So what use does it serve? It's an x, which, after having been used as a starting point, is totally abandoned.

Freud can't be satisfied with the in-put,[6] with what is brought in from the external world, and he has to improvise. So he introduces a supplementary apparatus, ω. We said it already last time, all this is a play of writing.

The task is to build everything up from notions of energy, that is to say, from the idea that in order to pull a rabbit out of a hat, one must first put it in it. For something to come out, something must go in. Everything will be constructed on this basis. Most probably it involves the system of perception. Let us not be premature and call it consciousness. In what follows, Freud confounds it with the system of consciousness, but he has to introduce the latter as a supplementary hypothesis. Why? Because he needs not only stimuli from the external world, but the external world itself. He needs an internal apparatus which reflects not only the stimuli of the external world, but also, in a manner of speaking, its structure.

Freud isn't a Gestaltist – one cannot give him credit for everything – but he does sense the theoretical demands which gave rise to the Gestaltist construction. Indeed, so that a living being doesn't perish every time it turns round, it must possess some adequate reflection of the external world. This tells you that this schema is in fact based on what will later be isolated in the term 'homeostasis'. We find this here already in the notion of an equilibrium which has to be conserved and of a buffer-zone, which maintains the excitations at the same level, which therefore serves as much for not recording as for recording badly. It records, but in a filtered fashion. The notion of homeostasis is therefore already there, implying something which is called an energy both at the entry and the exit.

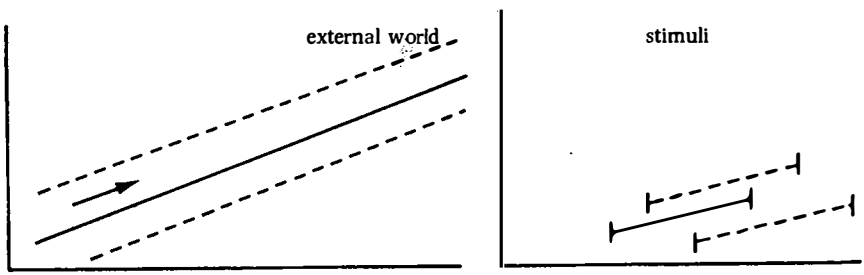
Except, this schema proves to be inadequate. If the nervous system in fact operates a filtering, it is an organised, progressive filtering, which brings with it facilitations.[7] However, nothing here entitles one to think that the facilitations will ever have a functional utility. The sum total of all these facilitations, the events, the incidents which have occurred in the development of the individual, constitutes a model which provides the measure of the real. Is that the imaginary? The imaginary must indeed be here. But as such it includes an intervention from the *Gestalten* predisposing the living subject to a certain relation with a typical form which specifically corresponds to it, it presupposes a biological coupling of the individual with an image of its own species, with the images of what is biologically useful for it in a determinate environment. Of this, there is no trace here. There is only a zone of experience and a zone of facilitation.

[6] English in the original.

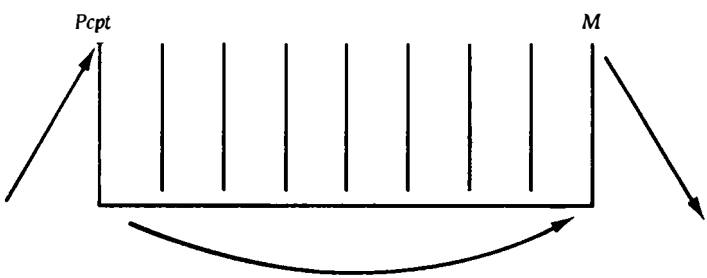
[7] Freud's term is '*Bahnung*', translated in SE (and here) as 'facilitation', and in the French edition as '*frayage*'.

In short, memory is here conceived of as a succession of engrams, as the sum of a series of facilitations, and this conception proves to be completely inadequate if we don't introduce the notion of image into it. If one assumes that a series of facilitations, a succession of experiences, brings into existence an image in a psychic apparatus conceived of as a simple sensitive sheet, it goes without saying that as soon as the same series is reactivated by a new excitation, pressure, a need, the same image is reproduced. In other words, all stimuli tend to produce hallucinations. The principle of operation of the ϕ apparatus is hallucination. That is what *primary process* means.

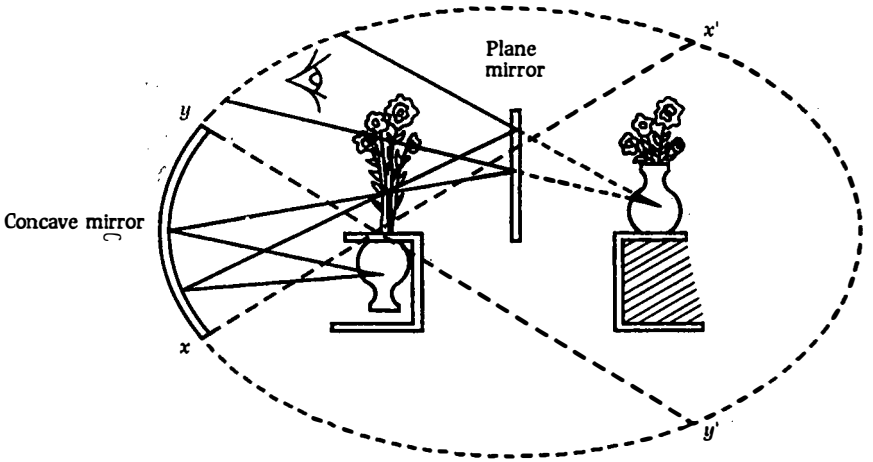
From then on the problem is that of the relation of hallucination to reality. Freud is led to reinstate the consciousness system and its paradoxical autonomy, from the point of view of energy. If the sequence of experiences has hallucinatory effects, there must be a correcting apparatus, a test of reality. This test of reality presupposes a comparison between the hallucination and something which is given in experience and preserved in the memory of the psychic apparatus. From then on, the price for having wanted to eliminate completely the consciousness system is that Freud is forced to reinstate it with an added autonomy.



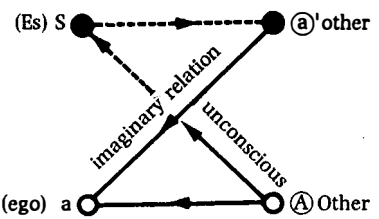
First schema of the psychic apparatus in the *Entwurf*



The psychic apparatus in the *Traumdeutung*



Optical schema for the theory of narcissism



The imaginary function of the ego and the discourse of the unconscious

I'm not saying that this is illegitimate. But you can see where it leads. What detours will he have to take in order to conceive of this reference comparison between what is given in experience in the system ψ, the buffer-system, the homeostasis system, which moderates the promptings, and the registration of these promptings? To what supplementary hypothesis is he brought? In effect the supplementary hypotheses provide the measure of the difficulties he faces.

They can be grouped under the two headings which Valabrega distinguished – inhibitions and information.

. . . . . .

The system ω is made up of differentiated organs which do not register the massive energies coming from the external world. One can imagine energies so massive – changes in temperature, considerable pressures – that they put into question the continued existence of the living organism. If it is no longer capable of buffering, there isn't much else for it to do but take flight. But that is

absolutely irrelevant to what is interesting. What concerns us here are the relations of the psyche with the subtle determinations of the external world. Take solar energy – the specialised apparatus retains only a part of the phenomenon. It selects a certain frequency, gets in tune, not really with the energy as such – what would we be like as transformers, photoelectric cells? – but with the period. When an eye receives light, it retains far less energy than a green leaf, which does all sorts of things with this same light. Freud is therefore led to identify quality as pertaining to the specialised apparatus, implying the almost complete erasure of any energy contribution.

You do perceive that the notion of an exclusively perceptive discharge corresponds, in this apparatus, to a simple need for symmetry. He really is obliged to concede a certain constancy of energy as well, and that what is let in must turn up again somewhere.

But the emphasis is placed on the fact that between excitation and discharge, there is the minimum displacement of energy. Why? Because this system must be as independent as possible of displacements of energy. He is obliged to detach, to distinguish from the energy, pure quality, that is, the external world seen as a simple reflection.

For there to be a comparison, a common scale, between the inside, where the image depends only on memory, where it is hallucinatory by nature, and the outside, the ego, doubly emphasising the regulatory function of this buffer, must allow the maximum inhibition of the passage of energy through this system. What enters as a prompting, already considerably filtered, must be filtered again, so it can be compared with the specific images which arise in consequence of need. What has to be ascertained is the level of the pressure of the need, whether it will impose itself in the face of all counter-evidence, or whether the quantity of displaced energy can be sufficiently buffered, sifted, by the ego for it to realise that the image isn't actually real.

In other words, thinking within the tradition that starts with the reflex and little by little succeeds in deducing the entire gamut – perception, memory, thought, ideas – Freud is led to construct a consciousness-perception which is turned into an entity within a system. Which is not completely absurd. This differentiated system does exist, we do have some notion of it, we can even locate it more or less. It demarcates two zones in the psychic apparatus – a zone of imagination, of memory, or better still of memorial hallucination, in relation to a perceptual system which is specialised as such. Here consciousness is a reflection of reality.

M. VALABREGA: *Yes, but that comes to light only much later. Freud still doesn't as yet have a clear idea of the notion of the psychic apparatus which he will set up later with the perception-consciousness system. Here, there are only the elements.*

The elements, that's ω.

M. VALABREGA: *They aren't conceived of as being what he will later call the psychic apparatuses.*

On the contrary I think that the apparatuses as such are already present here. Why would he call them ψ, ϕ, ω if he didn't distinguish them as being apparatuses?

M. VALABREGA: *In what follows, he distinguishes two basic elements in the ψ system itself, and that is what yields the psychic apparatus.*

But what I want to show you next time is precisely that the term psychic apparatus is totally inadequate to cover what is in the *Traumdeutung*, where the temporal dimension begins to emerge.

. . . . . .

M. VALABREGA: *When it comes to the* ego *and the indications of reality, there are three distinctions to be made. Firstly, if the ego is in a state of desire*[8] *at the time when the indication of reality appears, a discharge of energy through the specific action takes place. This first case simply corresponds to the satisfaction of the desire. Secondly, an increase in unpleasure coincides with the indication of reality. The system ψ reacts by initiating defence through a lateral investment.*

That means that the quantity of energy passing through several neuronic filters arrives with a smaller level of intensity at the synapses – that's the electrical schema. If you pass a current down three or four wires instead of one, each of these wires will require less resistance, in proportion to the number of wires. Finally, thirdly, if neither one nor other of these two cases occurs the investment can augment without hindrance, in accordance with the dominant tendency.

4

Judgement, thought, etc., are inhibited discharges of energy. Freud was to continue to employ this construct, when he later said that thought is an act carried out with a minimum level of investment. It is in a way a simulated act. That it is a reflection of the world must be conceded, in as much as experience obliges us to posit a neutral perception – I say *neutral* from the point of view of investments, that is to say, a perception with minimal investments.

If animal psychology has made any progress, it is in so far as it has emphasised lines of force in the world, in the *Umwelt* of the animal, lines of forces, configurations which are for it preformed points of appeal corresponding to its needs, that is to say to what is also called its *Innenwelt*, the structure linked with the preservation of its form.

[8] Here, as elsewhere, Freud's '*Wunsch*' is rendered in French by '*désir*', which has here been translated by 'desire'. The corresponding passages in the *Project* are thus those dealing with 'wishful states' (see SE I 319ff).

In fact, it isn't enough to speak of the homeostasis of energy. The needs of a crab aren't those of a rabbit, and the one isn't interested in the same things as the other.

But explore just the field of perception of a rabbit, a crab, or a bird. Offer a rat or a chicken something it finds eminently desirable, food, the object which satisfies one of its needs, and systematically place this object in correlation with a form or a colour. It's amazing, the number of things which a chicken, even a crab, is capable of perceiving, whether it be through senses analogous to ours – sight, hearing – or through apparatuses which have every indication of being sensory apparatuses without our being able to give them an anthropomorphic analogue – in the case of grasshoppers, for instance. In any case, you will see that the sensory field which is at the disposition of a given animal is extremely extended in comparison with what acts so as electively to structure its *Umwelt*. In other words, there isn't just a simple coaptation of the *Innenwelt* to the *Umwelt*, a preformed structuration of the external world as a function of needs. Each animal has a zone of consciousness – we say *consciousness* in as much as a reception of the external world inside the sensory system occurs – much larger in scope than anything we could structure in the way of preformed responses to its pivotal needs.

In a certain sense, this corresponds closely with the schema's generalised sensitive layer. Man has in fact much more information about reality than he could acquire through the simple pulsation of his experience. But he lacks what I call the preformed paths. Man starts with nothing at all. He has to learn that wood burns and that you musn't throw yourself into the void.

It isn't true that he must learn all of that. But what does he know at birth? It's ambiguous. It is likely that he learns it, but by paths other than those of the animal. He already has a certain detector, a certain knowledge – in Claudel's sense, *co-naissance*[9] of reality, which is none other than these *Gestalten*, the preformed images. It is not only a necessity for Freudian theory to admit it, but something which animal psychology requires – either there is a neutral recording apparatus, which constitutes a reflection of the world, which we call, with Freud, conscious, or there isn't.

Except, in man, it becomes visible with the particular configuration we call consciousness, in as much as the imaginary function of the ego comes into play. Man gets to see this reflection from the point of view of the other. He is an other for himself. This is what gives you the illusion that consciousness is transparent to itself. We aren't present, in the reflection; to see the reflection, we are in the consciousness of the other.

As you can see, the rational schema of the psychic apparatus proposed by Freud isn't elaborated, and this is what makes for the thanklessness of our

[9] Literally 'co-birth', a pun on '*connaissance*' ('knowledge').

discourse today. It is the first occasion on which Freud spreads his wings. Everything is simultaneously crude, ambiguous, and, in certain respects, superfluous, and yet, nonetheless, it was to be fruitful.

The notion of equivalence, for instance, is here a bastard notion. Needs exist, Freud says, and these needs push the human being into reactions aimed at satisfying them. Now, this notion, far from being vitalist, far from being forcibly introduced into the pseudo-mechanistic schema, is in reality an energetic notion. The quantity of neuronal energy is there from the start. The conjunction of this conception with the experience of the dream will produce a striking transformation in the schema, as you will see.

All this probably seems sterile and archaic to you. But what's important for us is to grasp what in this schema opens on to the future, and forces Freud's conception to develop. It is not at all, as Kris would like to have us believe, that Freud moved from a mechanistic to a psychological conception, a crass opposition which doesn't mean anything. He never did abandon his schema. He elaborated it in his theory of the dream, without marking, nor even perceiving, the differences, and he thus took the decisive step which introduces us into the psychoanalytic domain proper. There is no such thing as Freud's conversion to organo-psychological thought. It is always the same thought unfolding. One might say that his metaphysics never changes, but that he completes his schema, by introducing something entirely different into it, namely the notion of information.

Learn how to let your thoughts dwell on these thankless moments, and don't forget that these are the first moments of a creative thought, whose development carries us far beyond.

2 February 1955

X

From the *Entwurf* to the *Traumdeutung*

ENTROPY TAKEN LITERALLY
THE PARADOXES OF OMEGA
EVERYTHING IS ALWAYS THERE
DREAM AND SYMPTOM
THE CONVERSATION WITH FLIESS

It is a fundamental law of all healthy criticism that it applies to a work the very principles which it itself employs in its own construction. Try, for instance, understanding Spinoza according to the principles which he sets up for himself as being the most valuable for the conduct of thought, for the reform of the understanding.

Another example – Maimonides, also someone who gives us certain keys to the world. Within his work, there are explicit warnings as to the manner in which one should conduct one's research. Applying them to the work of Maimonides himself enables us to understand what he meant.

So it is a law with a quite general application which leads us to give a reading of Freud which tries to apply to the work itself the rules of comprehension and understanding which it formulates.

1

Three seminars ago, I began to initiate you into the comprehension, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, of this *x* which is called either *automatisme de répétition*, or *Nirvana principle*, or *death instinct*, depending on the case. You have already heard me invoke the notion of entropy. It isn't arbitrary. Freud himself indicates that what he is talking about must be something of the sort. It isn't a question here of taking Freud literally. However, many an analyst, indeed some of the best ones, notably Bernfeld, have failed to forgo the pleasure of making themselves ridiculous in this way.

Bernfeld is an analyst of repute, who knew how to discover one of Freud's childhood memories, behind the veil of anonymity with which the latter had cloaked it when he wrote it up as a *screen memory*. Freud had presented it in a camouflaged manner by attributing it to a patient, but the text itself, not biographical detective work, but the very structure of the text, enabled Bernfeld to show that it couldn't be a real dialogue with a real patient, that it had to be a

transposition, and that the example had to have been taken from Freud's life, which he demonstrates by comparing it to two or three dreams from *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Those of you who heard my commentary on the *Ratman* know the passage.

Bernfeld, therefore, some ten years after the publication of the major text which we are in the middle of commenting upon, gave, with Feitelberg, in the *International Journal of Psycho-analysis* for 1931, an account of I know not what, for which no language has a name, which is a piece of research. The title of it is – *The Principle of Entropy and the Death Instinct*. They tried to study the paradoxical pulsation of entropy within a living organism, to be more exact, in man's nervous system, by comparing the brain and the rectal temperature. In this way they thought to acquire evidence of paradoxical variations, that is to say, variations not conforming to the principle of entropy as it functions in physics for an inanimate system.

It is very odd to read it, if only because it indicates the aberrations which taking a theoretical metaphor literally can lead to.

In fact for Freud it is a matter of understanding human behaviour. To this end, he wonders whether there might not be room for employing a category analogous to those used in physics. So he introduces the dimension of entropy in so far as it is found in the analytic situation, this novel form of communication. One must keep a hold on all of these dimensions, in order to understand Freud's proposals, which concern not only the living organism as objectifiable at the psychic level, but the signification of its behaviour, precisely in so far as it comes into play in this particular relation, the analytic relation, which can only be understood as a communication. That is the framework which gives the comparison between the death instinct and entropy its meaning. To take this analogy literally, to translate it into the precise terms used in physics, is a misinterpretation as absurd as the work of Borel's monkey typists. Only too often will we have to decry in analysts the work of monkey typists.

Throughout these four stages of Freud's thought that I've mentioned – indicated by the unpublished manuscript whose commentary we are now bringing to completion, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the constitution of the theory of narcissism, and finally *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* – the difficulties and the impasses are reproduced each time in a modified form. We are going to follow out this kind of negative dialectic, which implies the persistence of the same antinomies under transformed guises, so that we bring out the autonomy, the true order, of what it is Freud is tackling, which he endeavours to formalise.

You cannot but know, after a year and a half of seminar here, that this order is the symbolic order, with structures proper to it, with its own dynamism, with the mode specific to the manner in which it intervenes so as to impose its

coherence, its economy, which is autonomous to the human being and his experience. It is through that that I indicate to you the originality of the Freudian discovery. Let us say by way of illustration for those who don't understand anything, that the symbolic order is what is most elevated in man and what isn't in man, but elsewhere. To the extent that he makes progress in his synthesis, Freud is always forced to reinstate, to restitute this external, excentric, point. We are now going to try to rediscover the stages of this progress in the text.

2

The other day I described to you the ψ system, as crudely representing the reflex-arc, based on the notion of quantity and of discharge, with a minimum of content. Freud, trained in neurological, anatomo-physiological and clinical disciplines, is not satisfied with the model on offer from positivist physiology at the time, namely, a reflex architecture – higher reflexes, reflexes of reflexes, etc., up to the reflex of unity located at the level of the higher functions. And one would still have had to add to it something which our friend Leclaire would, on one of his good days, call the subject. I hope that one day he will get rid of that as well, for the subject must never be represented anywhere.

Freud has to produce something different. What he produces isn't an architecture, but a buffer.

Freud is here already ahead of neuron theory, he anticipates Foster and Sherrington by two years. The genius in him emerges here, right down to the smallest detail, apropos of some of the properties of conduction – he guessed more or less what we know today. Of course, there have been experimental advances, which have confirmed the functioning of the synapses as contact barriers, and that is the way in which he already puts it. The important point is that in the process leading to the act of discharge, he interposes a buffer-system, an equilibrating system, a system which filters, damps down the system ψ. Moreover, to what does he compare it? In this schema, you can see within a spinal arc, something which looks like a ball – it's a ganglion. Well, in his view, psyche is a ganglion, the brain is a differentiated ganglion, of the sympathetic kind, like the chain of nerves in insects.

My dialogue with Valabrega last time was a little wayward – he said some things which weren't wrong about the system ω. Freud can't get by without the intervention of this system of consciousness as a reference to this reality out of which, try as one might, one will never manage to pull a rabbit without having put it there in the first place. With Freud at least, no one tries to make you believe that piling up enough things is sufficient to make what's on top that much more beautiful than it was when it was at the bottom.

Freud's experience forces him to remodel the structure of the human subject

by decentring it in relation to the ego, and by shifting consciousness to a no doubt essential, but problematic, position. I would say that the elusive, irreducible nature of consciousness with respect to the functioning of living things is something which, in Freud's work, is as important to grasp as what he tells us about the unconscious.

The difficulties which this system of consciousness raises reappear at each level of Freud's theorising. Freud doesn't succeed in finding a coherent model of it, and this isn't due to the existence of the unconscious. While he can give a coherent, balanced account of the majority of the other parts of the psychic apparatus, when it's a question of consciousness, he always encounters mutually contradictory conditions.

I'll give you an example. In one of his papers, called 'A metapsychological supplement to the theory of dreams',[1] published in French in the collection *Métapsychologie*, he explains almost everything which happens in dementia praecox, in paranoia, in dreams, in terms of investments and disinvestments – notions whose importance in his theory we will have to ascertain. We are led to believe that a theoretical construction can always be made to work, made to hang together somehow. Not so. The apparatus of consciousness has quite special properties, and the very coherence of his system, the necessity of his deduction, brings Freud up short. We fail to understand how, he says, this apparatus, in contrast to the others, can function even when it is not invested. When it comes to the conscious system, the paradoxes gather.

Why this failure? It isn't because Freud doesn't know how to go about it – he had all the time in the world. If he didn't succeed, there must be a reason.

Here, for the first time, we see the appearance of the paradox of the system of consciousness – it both has to be there, and not be there. If it is included in the energy system as constituted at the ψ level, it won't be any more than a part of it, and won't be able to play its role as reference to reality. Still, some energy has to go through it. But it can't be directly linked to the external world's massive input, as is presumed in the first, so-called discharge, system, that is, of elementary stimulus-response reflex. On the contrary, it must be completely separated off from it, and it must receive only slight investments of energy, which allow it to come into operation, such that the movement always goes from ϕ to ψ and it is only from ψ that ω receives minimal energy, thanks to which it is capable of beginning to vibrate.

On the other hand, beginning with what happens in ω, the system ψ needs information, as Valabrega said the other day, which I found somewhat hasty, but not false in itself. It can only find this information at the level of the discharge of the perceptual system.

The reality test thus takes place in the psyche. Take the example of a properly

[1] (1917d) GW X 377–91; Stud X 241-53; SE XIV 321–33.

perceptual motor discharge. Movements in the eye occur as a result of the visual accommodation, of fixation on the object. In comparison with the hallucination of desire, in the process of being formed in the psyche, that is what theoretically should force the issue – Should I believe my eyes? Is this really what I'm looking at? Now, the motor discharge, the properly motoric aspect of the operation of the organs of perception, is precisely that part which is totally unconscious. We are conscious of seeing, and nothing seems to us more homologous to the transparency of consciousness than the fact that we see what we see – seeing imposes its own transparency on itself. But on the other hand, we are not in the least bit aware, except in a very marginal, limitrophe, way, of what we are doing, efficaciously, actively, in a motoric sense, in this synchronisation, in the palpation at a distance which the eyes undertake when they try to see.

So a series of paradoxes begin to be sketched out in relation to the system ω. I wanted to emphasise it because it hints at something which we will find over and over again at every level.

Next, there's the model you'll find in chapter VII of the *Traumdeutung*, 'The dream process'.[2]

Here, there's a support. Here, something will form a ladder between the perceptual system and the motor system. Here, we find the various layers which constitute the level of the unconscious. Then, there's the preconscious, consciousness, whose paradoxical repositioning you can already see – here it is now, on both sides.

The first model tried to give a true representation of an apparatus, which one then tried to get working. It was an apparatus which was somewhere, with organs of perception, cortex and sub-cortex, functioning like a kind of autonomous ganglion, regulating the pulsation between the drives [*pulsions*] internal to the organism, and the manifestations of research outside. It was a question of the instinctual [*instinctuelle*] economy of the living being in quest of what it needs.

Now it is no longer an apparatus. The schema refers to something far more immaterial. Freud underlines this fact – the things he will talk about must not be given spatial location. In the text, he tells us that there is something it must be like. Remember what I told you last year during the lectures on transference, about the optical images which are nowhere. They are seen at a given place when one is somewhere else to see them. That's what this is about.

Freud's schema has changed meaning. He puts the temporal dimension as such on the blackboard – that too is emphasised in the text. This schema, whose general arrangement you can see remains the same, proves then that Freud is already introducing new dimensions into his categories, and in particular a certain logical dimension.

[2] 'Psychology of the dream-processes' in the English translation: '*Zur Psychologie der Traumvorgänge*' in the German text.

Even though that could have been embodied in a mechanical model, we have moved on from a mechanical to a logical model.

Before turning to the third model, I would like to remind you that I promised you I'd say something about cybernetics. Why are we so astonished by these machines? It may have something to do with the difficulties Freud encountered. Because cybernetics also stems from a reaction of astonishment at rediscovering that this human language works almost by itself, seemingly to outwit us.

One thinks everything is resolved by saying that it's the little chap who put it there. Which is what we're reminded of by Lévi-Strauss, who is always so wise when faced with new things, and always seems bent on turning them back into old things. I usually like what M. Ruyer writes, but not his book on cybernetics.

Language is certainly there, completely vibrant, in these machines. And it's no small thing that we recognise it by a little song that gives us the greatest pleasure, as I am going to tell you. I discovered it the other day at the Société de Philosophie.

Mme Favez-Boutonier had just given a very good paper on psychoanalysis. She had said things she hoped would be understood by the philosophical audience present there. To be sure, she was too modest in her claims, yet, nonetheless it was way over the top of what a lot of people had managed to understand up until then. Thereupon, M. Minkowski got up, and said what I've heard him say for the last thirty years, regardless of the nature of the talk on psychoanalysis he has to comment on. Between what Mme Favez-Boutonier had just contributed and what he heard thirty years ago on the same topic, from the mouth of Dalbiez, there was a world of difference. And yet, he said exactly the same thing. I don't want to take issue with him personally – that is what usually happens in a scientific society. Why has the paradoxical expression *thinking-machine* been created? I who say that men think only very rarely, I'm not going to speak of thinking machines – but all the same, what happens in a thinking machine is on average on an infinitely higher level than what happens in a scientific society. If you give a thinking machine different elements, it, at least, answers something different.

From the point of view of language, these little machines purr something new for us, perhaps an echo, an approximation let us say. One can't resolve the issue simply by saying that it is the builder who put it there. The language came from outside, that's understood, but it isn't enough to say that it's the little chap who put it there. If anyone has something to say on the matter, it's the psychoanalyst, who is constantly reminded that the matter isn't closed by believing that the little genius of a chap did it all.

The big question for the human sciences now is – what is language? One wonders – where does it come from? What happened during the geological epochs? how did they begin to wail? did they begin by making noises while making love, as some would have it? – whereas it is above all a matter of

knowing how it actually works now. Everything is always there. Our relation to language must be grasped at what is, for us, the most concrete, everyday, level, that of our analytic experience.

That is what's important in the schema which gives complexity to the system by introducing into it the imaginary as such. We rediscover the little optical schema I showed you last year in the third stage, in the theory of narcissism. It places the perception-consciousness system where it belongs, namely at the heart of the reception of the ego in the other, for all imaginary references of the human being are centred on the image of the fellow being.

Finally, the last schema will enable us to interpret *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and to understand to what necessity this work answers. Freud wrote it at the time when analytic technique was taking a turn, at a time when one might have thought that resistance and unconscious signification corresponded to one another as right side out to inside out, such that what works according to the pleasure principle in the so-called primary system appears as reality in the other, and vice versa. That is quite straightforwardly the classical study of the ego, a little enriched by the notion that a lot of things can be comprehended in its syntheses. Freud maintains that this isn't it, that not all of the system of significations is to be found in the little chap, that his structure isn't a synthesis of these significations, rather the contrary.

I am giving you this last model so as to put you on the track of what it is Freud wants to contribute with *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. I'll take something which has to do with our modern machines' modes of transmission, an electronic tube. Anyone who's played around with a radio is acquainted with a triode valve – when the cathode heats up, the little electrons bombard the anode. If there is something in the way, the electric current does or doesn't pass, depending on whether it is positive or negative. One can modulate the passage of the current at will, or more simply make it an all or nothing system.

Well, that's what resistance, the imaginary function of the ego, as such, is – it is up to it whether the passage or non-passage of whatever there is to transmit as such in the action of analysis occurs. To start with, this schema shows that, if there were no interposition, no resistance from the ego, no frictional effect, no lighting up, no heating effect – call it what you will – the effects of communication at the level of the unconscious would not be noticeable. But above all it shows that there is not the slightest sense of the relation of the ego to the discourse of the unconscious – this concrete discourse in which the ego bathes and plays its function of obstacle, of interposition, of filter – being one of negative to positive. The unconscious has its own dynamic, its own flow, its own paths. It can be explored according to its own rhythm, its own modulation, its own message, quite independently of whatever interrupts it. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud wanted to situate this imaginary function of the ego.

Today I've only given a general outline of the line of development we will

have to pursue in detail. I'll now ask Valabrega to broach the second of these four stages.

3

M. Valabrega gives an account of the principal characteristics of dreams.

M. VALABREGA: *Freud also tells us that the vivacity of the hallucination, its intensity, is proportional to the quantity of investment of the idea in question. It is quantity which conditions the hallucination. It is the opposite of perception. In perception, which comes from the system* ϕ*, attention makes the perception more or less distinct.*

It comes from the system ω.

M. VALABREGA: *No, from the system* ϕ.

A distinction has to be made. The quantitative contributions of the external world come from the system ϕ. The balance of the text shows that everything which is perception, and not excitation, occurs as such in the system ω.

M. VALABREGA: *But it comes from* ϕ.

Because it comes from the external world. It only comes from ϕ by way of ω.

M. VALABREGA: *Sure. In any case, it's only a parenthesis.*

. . . . . .

In 1897, Freud still hasn't got very far with his own analysis. For Anzieu's benefit, I've made a note of some remarks on the limitations of self-analysis. Letter 75 – *I can only analyse myself with the help of knowledge obtained objectively (as a stranger). Genuine self-analysis is impossible; otherwise there would be no illness. Since I still find puzzles in my patients, they are bound to hold me up in my self-analysis as well.*[3] That is how he defines the limits of his own analysis – he can only understand what he has come across in his cases. At the very time when he is with great brilliance discovering a new path – and it is exceptionally precise testimony, given its early date – he himself points out that his self-analysis isn't an intuitive process, a divinatory mapping out within his own self, that it has nothing to do with introspection.

M. ANZIEU: *Before he had the Irma dream, Freud knew that dreams had a meaning. And it was because his patients had brought him dreams whose meaning lay in their being the fulfilment of desire that he wanted to apply it to himself. That's what his criterion of verification is.*

Exactly.

[3] *Anf.* 249; SE I 271 (translation modified to accord the German, French and English texts).

M. VALABREGA: *It isn't the meaning of the dream which is at issue, but the theory of the identity of the dream and the neurotic symptom.*

In the *Traumdeutung* Freud insists on the family resemblance between the dream and the neurotic symptom, but also on the difference between them. The dream process is exemplary as regards understanding the neurotic symptom, but he argues that there is an absolutely fundamental economic difference between the symptom and the dream. All they have in common is a grammar. That's a metaphor, don't take it literally. They are as different as an epic poem is from a work on thermodynamics. The dream makes it possible to grasp the symbolic function at play, and it is, on that account, capital for understanding the symptom. But a symptom is always part of the overall economic state of the subject, whereas the dream is a state localised in time, under extremely specific conditions. The dream is only a part of the activity of the subject, while the symptom is spread out over several domains. The processes are more analogous than identical.

. . . . . .

M. Valabrega gives an account of the analysis of the dream of Irma's injection.

At this time Freud's conversation with Fliess is the speech which polarises, organises his entire existence. This guiding thread runs throughout his entire existence as the fundamental conversation. When all is said and done, Freud's self-analysis takes place within this dialogue. That is what makes Freud Freud, and it is why we still talk about it today. Everything else, the scientific discourse, the everyday discourse, the trimethylamine formula, the things we know, the things we don't know, all that farrago is at the level of the ego. It can just as easily constitute an obstacle as signal the passage of what is in the process of being constituted, that is, this vast discourse addressed to Fliess which the entirety of Freud's work will then become.

Freud's conversation with Fliess, the fundamental speech, which is at this time unconscious, is the essential dynamic element. Why is it unconscious at this time? Because it infinitely surpasses what both of them, as individuals, can at this time consciously apprehend of it. After all, they are just a couple of pipsqueak scientists like any others, exchanging rather weird ideas.

The discovery of the unconscious, such as it appears at the moment of its historical emergence, with its own dimension, is that the full significance of meaning far surpasses the signs manipulated by the individual. Man is always cultivating a great many more signs than he thinks. That's what the Freudian discovery is about – a new attitude to man. That's what man after Freud is.

9 February 1955

XI

Censorship is not resistance

THE MESSAGE AS AN INSISTENCE OF AN INTERRUPTED DISCOURSE
THE KING OF ENGLAND IS A FOOL
FREUD AND FECHNER

The Interpretation of Dreams does not offer just the theory of dreams. Freud's second working up of the schema of the psychic apparatus is also to be found in it. With the first, he concluded his neurological work. The second corresponds to his advance into the specific field of the neuroses, into what will become the domain peculiar to analysis.

So it is concerned with the dream, but also, in the background, the neurotic symptom, whose structuration proves to be the same – it puts into play the structure of language in general, more precisely the relation of man to language. My commentary will show you this, thereby bringing you testimony as to the fact that the terms used by us here to understand Freud's work anew are included in it.

We want to apply to the development of Freud's thought the same mode of interpretation as Freud employs with respect to what happens in the psychic organ. Something moves, shifts, in relation to these ϕ, ψ, ω systems whose characteristics and also impasses, so well perceived by Freud, Valabrega and I have underlined. I urge you to reread the Irma dream. Already last year, I made you read it and explained to you certain of its stages, to illustrate the transference. Read it again in connection with what we are in the process of doing, namely trying to understand what the compulsion to repeat [*automatisme de répétition*] means, trying to give a meaning to this expression, and to this end, trying to grasp to what duplicity of relations between the symbolic and the imaginary we are led.

The schema from last time, that of the triode valve, already puts Irma's dream in a different light for you. In his manuscript, Freud reduces its themes to four elements, two conscious, two unconscious. We have already pointed out how these two unconscious elements should be understood – one is the revelation of the creative speech of the dialogue with Fliess, the other is the transversal element, illuminated by the passage of this current. What is on display in an almost unconscious way in the dream, is the question of Freud's

relations with a series of feminine sexual images, which are all caught up with some element of tension in his marital relations. What is even more striking is the essentially narcissistic character of all these feminine images. These are fascinating images and all of them have a certain narcissistic relation to Freud. Irma's pain, when the physician percusses her, is in the shoulder, and Freud mentions that he suffers from rheumatism in the shoulder.

All this is always said in a way which amazes us, and which enables us to see beyond what Freud himself was capable of grasping at the time. The point is that Freud is an exceptional, absolutely brilliant observer. In what he has given us, we always have more of what we call, for the sake of rapidity, *material*, to orientate us, than what he himself had conceptualised of it, which makes him an exceptional case in the history of scientific literature.

1

M. Valabrega starts the commentary on 'The psychology of the dream processes', chapter VII of The Interpretation of Dreams.

There are two small sentences which, from the point of view we're following out here, deserve to be noted. Just when Freud once again puts into question all the constructions built up in the preceding chapters, in relation to the dream-work, which constitutes the bulk of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, he all of a sudden says that all objections can be answered apropos of dreams, including that the dream may perhaps be only the dream of a dream.[1]

In short, we have treated as Holy Writ what previous writers have regarded as an arbitrary improvisation, hurriedly patched together in the embarrassment of the moment.[2]

Let us look at this metaphor in passing, because in Freud metaphors are precious - he indeed treated the dream as Holy Writ. Holy Writ is interpreted according to very special laws, and everyone knows that sometimes these interpretations surprise. A great importance must also be accorded to the word *text*.[3] We are here getting much closer to what Valabrega is trying to show us – just when he starts talking about the dream process, Freud comes to the question of forgetting.

Well, the distortion, even the forgetting, of the text of the dream is of such minor importance, Freud tells us, that were there to remain only one element, an element one had doubts about, a tiny tit-bit, the shadow of a shadow, we could continue to accord it a meaning. It's a message.

Its distortion is not due to chance, it isn't linked to a kind of deadening, of

[1] See GW II/III 516–18; Stud II 491–3; SE V 512–14.
[2] GW II/III 518; Stud II 492–3; SE V 514.
[3] The German phrase rendered as 'Holy Writ' is '*einen heiligen Text*', '*un texte sacré*' in French.

erasure, of a drowning of the message in background noise. The message isn't forgotten any old how. Let us restore to the famous censorship we all too often forget, all of its freshness, all of its novelty – censorship is intentional.

What's distinctive about Freud's argument is that it shifts the burden of proof – *In the elements which you raise against me as objections, the forgetting and distortion of dreams, I still see a meaning, and even an additional meaning. When the phenomenon of forgetting comes into play, it becomes all the more interesting to me. I find that to be a part of the message as well. I add these negative phenomena to the reading of the meaning, I also recognise them as having the function of a message.* It isn't just that Freud discovered this dimension, but he even, by taking sides, isolates it, so that that is all he wants to know about.

It is said of him that he only discusses wishful dreams [*rêves de désir*], and yet there are also anxiety-dreams, self-punishment dreams. One of the phases of his answer is to say that, to be sure, anxiety-dreams exist, but what produced that anxiety is nothing other than what would provoke anxiety in waking life. Not everything in dreams interests him, only the semantic element, the transmission of a meaning, an articulated word [*parole*], what he calls the dream-thoughts, *Gedanken*.

What interests Freud, and it is nowhere more in evidence than in the first part of this seventh chapter, is the message as such, and one can go further and say – it is the message as interrupted, but insistent, discourse. Here is something which keeps us in touch with the problem we've got on the table at the moment – what is the beyond of the pleasure principle? What is the compulsion to repeat [*automatisme de répétition*]?

In this text, the word *Gedanken* cannot take a psychological interpretation. Freud repeats it in three or four different passages, let us not imagine that all of our explanations are already well known in the domain of the psyche, they are phenomena of a completely different order from that of the psychological.

Here is an example which is that much more meaningful for being so extreme, that of the lady who is left with only one word from her dream – *channel*. Freud demonstrates to us using this instance what he means by the interpretation of dreams.

What can the memory [*mémoire*] of something so erased be, a memory of a memory? And, more generally, when we remember a dream, do we really remember something which we could speak of as if it were a thought, since we don't know, after all, whether it isn't the very quintessence of the illusion of memory? That doesn't bother Freud, that doesn't matter to him, what he is concerned with isn't of the order of psychological phenomena. Do we remember a dream in the same way as an event which took place and which is locatable somewhere? It is literally insoluble. Philosophers have always been concerned with this – why isn't the experience one has in sleep just as important, as authentic, as that of the previous day? If he dreams every night

that he is a butterfly, is it legitimate to say that he dreams he's a butterfly? But Freud doesn't care.

This psychological realism, this quest for an essential subjectivity doesn't detain him. For him, the important thing is not that one dreams one is a butterfly, but what the dream means, what it means to someone. Who is that someone? That is the important question.

He has already had a conversation with this lady, and the dream is simply its continuation. She apparently accepts many of Freud's propositions, but her associations reveal what she wants to tell him in the dream. Push, push, lady. She finally comes out with a short, funny anti-English story. *From the sublime to the ridiculous, there is only one step – Yes, the Pas-de-Calais.* This is what she means *– All your stories are sublime, but ever so slightly ridiculous, so that it doesn't take much to end up laughing.*[4]

It's not for us to say whether that's legitimate or not, we are commenting on Freud, trying to grasp what the unconscious function of the dream is. One of the dimensions of the dream's wish is to pass a certain word. Making that clear is always enough for Freud to ratify the fact that his theory has been confirmed. He doesn't have to go back to childhood memories, nor to think of regression. What, for Freud, necessitates the theory of regression? That is what the next step will show us. What we may conclude for the moment, is that Freud is only satisfied, is only sure of his way, he only claims to have shown what he set out to, when he can show us that the dream's pre-eminent wish is to pass a message.

M. VALABREGA: *In consequence, the forgetting of the dream is the obstacle.*

It isn't the obstacle, it's part of the text. Doubt, for instance, in his way of looking at it, is almost an *emphasis*[5] – there is no equivalent word in French, one would have to say *soulignage.*[6] Doubt as a psychological phenomenon doesn't interest him, and with respect to dreams, is it even a psychological phenomenon?

The phenomenon of doubt must be interpreted, Freud says, as a part of the message. If the subject doubts, tell yourself it is to do with resistance, but let us not talk about resistance for the moment. Doubt is part of the message. When the subject tells you he had doubts, you must take that to indicate he is drawing your attention to the fact that it is a particularly significant dream-element. Doubt has a privileged connotation in this famous bit of Holy Writ. Alright?

2

M. VALABREGA: *Yes, . . . Nonetheless, Freud emphasises the word resistance when he says – Any obstacle to interpretation stems from psychic resistance,* Widerstand.

[4] GW II/III 522 n1; Stud II 496 n1; SE V 517 n2.
[5] English in the original. [6] 'underlining'.

Not quite. Did you read the short note as well?[7] If the father of the patient dies in the course of the analysis, he says, we are not about to claim that he made him die just to interrupt his analysis, that's a resistance. We classify everything which stands in the way of interpretation as a resistance – it is a matter of definition. We are going to interpret that as well according to whether that facilitates or not the progress of the interpretative task, that is the passage of the message. You must admit that this generalisation of the theme of resistance allows one to think that he doesn't include it in a psychological process. Resistance only acquires value in relation to work. It isn't at all considered from the point of view of the subject's psychic properties.

Resistance does exist, of course. We know of the existence of imaginary or psychological frictions, which constitute obstacles to what Freud calls the flow of unconscious thoughts. The short note is consistent with what I am telling you, that resistance is not thought of as being internal to the subject, on a psychological level, but uniquely in relation to the work of interpretation.

M. VALABREGA: Widerstand is *also censorship.*

No, that's the point, it isn't censorship.

M. VALABREGA: *But it is, monsieur.*

No, it isn't censorship. Censorship isn't located on the same level as resistance. It is part of the interrupted character of the discourse.

I feel that this is an important disagreement, that there is some sort of lack of understanding on your part, and that I'll have to give you some kind of illustration.

In the strict sense, the subject's resistance is linked to the ego's register, it is an effect of the ego. In this chapter, it is an x designating everything, whether psychological or not, whether coming from reality or by accident, which halts analytic work. Censorship has nothing to do with resistance, neither in the first sense, nor – though nonetheless a great deal more – in the second.

This brings with it the question of what we call the super-ego. I'm telling you about the interrupted discourse. Well, one of the most striking forms of interrupted discourse is the law in so far as it is not understood. By definition, no one is taken to be ignorant of the law, but it is never understood, for no one can grasp it in its entirety. The primitive who is caught up in the laws of kinship, of alliance, of the exchange of women, never has, even if he is very learned, a complete vision of what it is in this totality of the law that has a hold over him. Censorship is always related to whatever, in discourse, is linked to the law in so far as it is not understood.

This may seem a bit far fetched to you, but I will try to illustrate it.

There is a small pornographic work, written by someone with an eminent

[7] GW II/III 516 n1; Stud II 495 n1; SE V 517 n1; note added 1925.

literary name, currently a member of the Académie Goncourt, Raymond Queneau. In this book, one of the most delightful one could hope to read, a young typist, who gets caught up in the Irish revolution and some very scabrous misadventures, makes, while locked inside the toilets, a discovery in every respect like that of the father Karamazov.

As you know, his son Ivan leads the latter into those audacious avenues taken by the thought of the cultivated man, and in particular, he says, *if God doesn't exist . . . – If God doesn't exist,* the father says, *then everything is permitted.* Quite evidently, a naive notion, for we analysts know full well that if God doesn't exist, then nothing at all is permitted any longer. Neurotics prove that to us every day.

The typist, locked in the toilets, makes what is a still more impressive discovery for someone who's a subject of His Majesty. Something happens to disturb the maintenance of order in Dublin, which leads her into doubt, a doubt which leads to the following formulation – *If the King of England is an idiot, then everything is permitted.* And from then on her entire adventure – she is aided by the course of events – goes to show how she no longer denies herself anything. The title of the book has to be – *One is always too good to women.*

Indeed, for the subjects of His Britannic Majesty – that's the hypothesis, don't get the idea that I'm slandering our English allies – it is very important that one shouldn't say that the King of England is an idiot. This can be expressed, for instance, in the following law – any man who says that the King of England is an idiot will have his head cut off.[8] Listen carefully. What will follow from that?

This may seem funny to you, but I want it to seem tragic. And I want to show you that any similar law, any primordial law, which includes the specification of the death penalty as such, by the same token includes, through its partial character, the fundamental possibility of being not understood. Man is always in the position of never completely understanding the law, because no man can master the law of discourse in its entirety.

If it is forbidden to say that the King of England is an idiot, under pain of having one's head cut off, one will not say it, and in consequence of this sole fact, one will be led into not saying a great many other things – that is to say, everything which reveals the glaring reality that the King of England is an idiot.

Everything goes to show that the King of England is an idiot. We have had some examples. And one King of England who wasn't an idiot was immediately called upon to abdicate. He differed from the others in that he kept falling off his horse and aspiring to marry the woman he loved – this obviously indicated he wasn't an idiot, and he was immediately asked to take his intimate affairs elsewhere. What does that mean? Is it sufficient not to be an idiot to find one's salvation? That is a mistake – that isn't enough either. I'm not trying to say that

[8] See Freud (1909d) GW VII 403; Stud VII 53; SE X 179.

the King was right to agree to abdicate because he wasn't an idiot. But this is an aside.

It follows then that everything in the discourse which is of a piece with this reality, that the King of England is an idiot, is put in suspense. The subject is caught up in the necessity of having to eliminate, to extract from the discourse everything pertaining to what the law forbids one to say. Now, this interdiction as such is not at all understood. At the level of reality, no one can understand why one would have one's head cut off for saying this truth, no one grasps where the very fact of the interdiction is located. From then on, one can no longer suppose that someone who says what musn't be said and has the idea that everything is permitted will be able purely and simply to annul the law as such.

I hope I'm giving you a feeling of this final, unexplained, inexplicable mainspring upon which the existence of the law hangs. The tough thing we encounter in the analytic experience is that there is one, there is a law. And that indeed is what can never be completely brought to completion in the discourse of the law – it is this final term which explains that there is one.

What happens according to this hypothesis? The subject of the King of England has many reasons for wanting to express things which have a most direct relation with the fact that the King of England is an idiot. Let us say that it passes into his dreams. What does this subject dream of? – it has to do with something difficult to express, not only because the King of England is an idiot, but with everything connected to it, with everything which makes it such that he cannot be anything but an idiot, with the entire structure of the regime, and beyond, with the universal connivance in the idiocy of the Kingdom of England. Well then, the subject dreams that he has his head cut off.

No need to ask yourself questions about I-know-not-what primary masochism, about self-punishment, about the desire for chastisement. On this occasion, the fact that he has his head cut off means that the King of England is an idiot. That is censorship. It is the law in so far as it is not understood.

At the level of the dream, it is only a little child's problem – why does one dream that one has one's head cut off? Why does that tickle you so? But ponder the fact that not one of the subjects in this kingdom where idiocy reigns has a very solid head on his shoulders. That is expressed by a symptom.

What I'm telling you has the appearance of being a small apologia, but I knew a subject whose writer's cramp was tied, as his analysis revealed, to the fact that in the Islamic law, within which he had been raised, a thief has his hand cut off. He never could stomach that. Why? Because his father had been accused of being a thief. He spent his childhood in a kind of deep suspension in relation to Koranic law. The whole of his relation with his original milieu, everything solid, the judiciary, order, the basic coordinates of the world were barred, because there was one thing he refused to understand – why someone

who was a thief should have his hand cut off. Furthermore, for this reason, and precisely because he didn't understand it, it was he who had his hand cut off.

That is censorship in so far as there can never be any relation with the law in its entirety, since the law is never completely made one's own.

Censorship and super-ego are to be located in the same register as that of the law. It is the concrete discourse, not only in so far as it dominates man and makes all kinds of fulgurations appear, it doesn't matter what, everything which happens, everything which constitutes discourse, but in so far as it gives man his own world, which we, more or less accurately, call cultural. It is in this dimension that censorship is located, and you can see in what way it differs from resistance. Censorship is neither on the level of the subject, nor on that of the individual, but on the level of discourse, in so far as, as such, it constitutes, all by itself, a full universe, and at the same time there is something irreducibly discordant about it, in every one of its parts. It takes very little, very little at all, being locked up in the toilets, or having a father falsely accused of Lord knows what crime, for the law all of a sudden to appear to you in a lacerating form. That is what censorship is, and Freud never confuses *Widerstand* with censorship.

M. VALABREGA: *At the end of the paragraph, he establishes that the forgetting of the dream is intentional. That is where I find the psychoanalytic theory of forgetting. Freud replaces the explanation of the formation of the dream by the discharge of tension, as he still employed it in the text of the* Project, *by the idea that sleep slackens censorship, and that it moreover permits one to skirt around resistance. There still may be a confusion between the two concepts, but . . .*

But here, that's true, because he's introducing the psychology of sleep. Up until then, Freud never concerned himself with sleep, but here he is obliged to point out its original contribution. There is an essential relation between the ego and sleep. In sleep, the ego doesn't have the same attitude as in the waking state. Once the theory of the libido has been developed, Freud will then assume that there is a withdrawal of libido and its involution once again into the ego. It is in as much as its resistances can be skirted around, traversed or filtered – I am talking about the resistance of the ego, of the resistance tied to the ego, which is only a small part of the resistance – that the conditions in which the phenomenon which we assume to be permanent occurs, namely the continuation of the discourse, are found to be modified. What do these two chapters mean – if it isn't that the discourse of the dream coheres with the discourse of the previous day? Freud always refers the one to the other – what does the subject say in his dream, given what he said the previous day? The entire dialectic of this chapter rests on this relation. All the relations, all the differences, all the processes not seen up until then, ignored, which make the proper object of the *Traumdeutung*, are established at this level.

M. VALABREGA: *In consequence, he ties resistance and disguise together in a dynamic way. He writes, for instance, that under the pressure of the censorship – he also uses the expression* the resistance of the censorship.[9]

Which proves that they aren't the same thing. Otherwise he wouldn't have to say resistance of censorship. The censorship is on the same level as the transference. There is a resistance of censorship, just as there is a resistance of transference. Here it's a matter of censorship and transference in so far as they oppose the work of analysis. When two words are equivalent, like the word *colour* and the word *colour*, you don't say a *colour of colour*.

3

Interventions in the course of M. Valabrega's exposition.

Freud had a real grasp of the notion advanced by Fechner in his psychophysics. Fechner's psychophysics doesn't at all stem from the elementary psychologising dimension where his vulgarisation is to be found. The rigour of his position leads him to suppose that, since there is a parallelism between consciousness and the quantifiable domain in physics, at least virtually, in the abstract, the possibility of there being phenomena of consciousness must be extended way beyond animate beings. Which goes to show that ideas, even when they are first introduced as valid hypotheses, take their authors away, much further away from the run of the mill. If Freud refers to it, it isn't simply as a nice phrase, a happy analogy. Freud never does things like that. Freud isn't Jung. He doesn't spend his time finding all the echoes. When Freud puts something in his text, it is always extremely important. And when he mentions to Fliess, in a letter, what a revelation it had been for him when he read the passage in which Fechner says that one can only conceive of dreams as being located in another psychic locality, one must give this note its full weight.

This is precisely what I am telling you – the psychic locality in question is not psychic, it is quite simply the symbolic dimension, which is of another order – in Angelus Silesius there's a play on the words *Ort* and *Wort*, we will come back to it. To say that the dream is placed in another psychic locality is to say that it isn't simply circumscribed as the parenthesis of sleep. It is placed and defines itself in another locality, governed by different local laws, the place of the symbolic exchange, which is not to be confused, although it is embodied in it, with the spatio-temporal dimension in which we can locate all human behaviour. The structural laws of the dream, like those of language, are to be found elsewhere, in another locality, whether we call it psychic or not.

[9] GW II/III 535; Stud II 507; SE V 530.

M. VALABREGA: *Let us move on to the schema on pages 537–8, whose essential characteristic is that its directionality is like that of a reflex apparatus. Freud explains that this directionality stems from the requirement that one explain psychic processes on the model of reflex processes.*

Wait a moment. As you are reminding us, Freud justifies the introduction of this directionality by retroactively clinging on to his reflex apparatus. After all, he says, it is a property of the reflex apparatus that things only go in one direction. But what is remarkable, is that he emphasises this fact only at this one moment. Up until then, he was concerned, when dealing with these three apparatuses, ϕ, ψ, ω, with equilibrium phenomena, which had to be considered as reversible – equilibrium, one always comes back to it, going either forwards or backwards. Now, all of a sudden – you have to know how to spot the passage – Freud introduces the notion that things happen in a determinate and irreversible succession. The word *irreversible* isn't there, but it is sufficiently hinted at for my taste and I hope also for yours, by the expression *zeitlichen Folge*,[10] temporal sequence, and *Richtung*. That's not all. At the very moment when he introduces temporal succession, he finds himself, for reasons of internal conceptual consistency, having to tell us about the exact opposite, namely, that paradoxical thing which will be called regression, and which will have such a dominant influence on the development of psychoanalytic thought.

In passing I'll note that this was the issue in yesterday evening's discussion of Schweich's lecture – for those of us who are going into fields that are still little understood, like that of psychosis, how should we understand the notion of regression? What meaning are we to give to the fact that a subject has regressed to the oral stage?

Freud gets involved in a series of antinomies, of which the following one isn't the least significant – the more the desire is linked to its biological root, to biological force, the more it has a tendency to manifest itself in a hallucinatory guise. You must admit that that is a paradox. We find, for instance, further on in the text, this formulation, that dreams reveal to us a kind of primitive state of humanity.[11] That means that primitive man, in so far as his means of subsistence were less than ours, would have been sustained by dreaming. We have had, besides, to swallow a great many other things about primitives – we were told that their thought was prelogical. These things mustn't be taken on trust.

In short, the explanation of dreams by regression leads Freud into fundamental contradictions at all levels, and for every form he gives this regression, he encounters an objection. He has to find some kind of primitive perceptual plan, so he talks of a topographical regression, from whence the

[10] GW II/III 542: Stud II 513: SE V 537–8. [11] GW II/III 554: Stud II 524: SE V 548.

allegedly hallucinatory form which desire assumes under certain conditions. But the neuronal circuit can only go in one direction, the propagation of nervous excitation is never reversed. So topographical regression raises many a problem. Temporal and formal regression produce equally severe antinomies.

This reading shows us the direction in which Freud's thought had later on to develop. The theory of the ego, for instance, articulated in 1915 on the basis of narcissistic libido, resolves the problems raised in this schema by the various forms of regression.

This will be the subject of our next seminar, in two weeks. You see the restricted conditions under which we can legitimately employ the terms resistance, censorship and regression.

16 February 1955

XII

The difficulties of regression

WHO IS THE SUBJECT?
PARADOXES OF THE FREUDIAN SCHEMATA
PERCEPTION AND HALLUCINATION
FUNCTION OF THE *EGO*

Today we are going to pick up the thread of our commentary on the seventh part of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, with the aim of integrating it within the general line we are pursuing – understanding what the progress of Freud's thought means, given due respect for what can be called the primary foundations of the human being such as he discovers himself in the analytic relation, and this in order to explicate the final stage of Freud's thought, which finds expression in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

Last time we got to the first paragraph in 'The psychology of the dream-processes', which concerns the forgetting of dreams. That led me, following a difference of opinion which made itself manifest apropos of a certain correction I made to Valabrega's remarks, to construct a little apologue which gave precision to the difference that exists between censorship and resistance, censorship and the resistance of censorship. The resistance is everything which is opposed, in a general sense, to the work of analysis. Censorship is a special qualification of this resistance.

What's important for us is to know where the subject of the analytic relation is to be found. One must be on one's guard against the naive attitude – *the subject, why, that's him of course* – as if the patient were something univocal, as if the analyst himself amounted to nothing other than a given sum of individual characteristics. Who is the subject? That is the question we are dealing with here in all its aspects, in the antinomies which it reveals. We pursue it to all the points at which it is reflected, refracted, signalled. This is how we hope to give a feeling for the point of its precise location, which cannot be tackled head on, since to tackle it is to tackle the very roots of language.

1

In this perspective, look at one of these things one doesn't usually stop at, a little note included in the masonry of the Freudian edifice.

A second factor – that of knowing why the preconscious has rejected and stifled the wish [*désir*] which belongs to the unconscious – *which is much more important and far-reaching, but which is equally overlooked by laymen is the following. No doubt a wish-fulfilment must bring pleasure; but the question then arises 'For whom?'* You see that this question, *for whom?* is not just ours. It isn't my student Leclaire who invented it – *For the person who has the wish, of course. But, as we know, a dreamer's relation to his wishes is a quite peculiar one. He repudiates them and censors them – he has no liking for them, in short. So that their fulfilment will give him no pleasure, but just the opposite; and experience shows that this opposite appears in the form of anxiety, a fact which has still to be explained. Thus a dreamer in his relation to his dream-wishes can only be compared to an amalgamation of two separate people who are linked by some important common element.*[1]

Now here's a small text I propose to you as liminal to your reflection, for it expresses clearly the idea of a decentring of the subject. It is a propadeutic formulation, not a solution. It would be turning the problem into a thing to say there's another personality. Moreover, we didn't have to wait for Freud to tell us that – a gentleman named Janet, a worker not without merit even though eclipsed by the Freudian discovery, had thought that he had in fact observed that in certain cases a phenomenon of double identity came about in the subject, and he stopped there, because he was a psychologist. For him it was a psychological curiosity, an observational fact – which comes down to the same thing – *historiolae*, Spinoza used to say, little stories.

Freud, for his part, doesn't set things out in the form of a little story, he raises the essential aspect of the problem – what is the meaning? When he says *thoughts*, that is what he is specifying, and nothing else.

We must be precise – what is the meaning of the behaviour of our neighbour, when we are placed with him in this very special relation inaugurated by Freud in his approach to neuroses? Must we look for the answer in some exceptional, abnormal, pathological features of the other's behaviour? That isn't what Freud does. He seeks the answer by asking the question just where the subject himself can ask it of himself – he analyses his own dreams. And it is precisely because he talks about himself, that he makes it apparent that someone other than himself talks in his dreams. That is really what he imparts to us in this note. Someone else it would seem, a second character has a relation with the being of the subject. That's the question raised in Freud's work, from its beginning to its end.

Think of the little *Project*, from the time of his beginnings. We saw that, at each moment, while keeping to an atomistic language, Freud deviates from it, because he raises the problem of the relations of the subject and the object, and

[1] GW II/III 586 n1; Stud II 552 n1; SE V 580 n1; the translation is adapted slightly from SE.

he does so in remarkably original terms. Wherein lies the originality of this sketch of the human psychic apparatus? In that it is in fact about the subject.

What distinguishes Freud here from all the authors who have written on the same subject, and even from the great Fechner to whom he constantly refers, is the idea that the object of the human quest is never an object of rediscovery in the sense of reminiscence. The subject doesn't rediscover the preformed tracks of his natural relation to the external world. The human object always constitutes itself through the intermediary of a first loss. Nothing fruitful takes place in man save through the intermediary of a loss of an object.

I think that this feature, which we have noted in passing, didn't escape you, but you may have thought it was only a point of detail – the subject has to reconstitute the object, he tries to find its totality again starting from I know not what unity lost at the origin. This theoretical symbolic construction – which, to the extent that they are applicable to clinical experience, the initial discoveries concerning the nervous system suggest to Freud – already makes it possible to foresee what must, after all, be called the metaphysical import of his work. This is what proves that we are indeed on the right lines, in continually asking afresh Freud's question – what is the subject?

What the subject does makes sense, his behaviour speaks just as his symptoms do, just as all the marginal functions of his psychic activity do. The psychology of the period, as you know, holds the terms consciousness and psyche to be equivalent, and Freud shows at every turn that this is precisely what creates the problem. That is what is made present in this small sketch of the psychic apparatus, which we have more or less finished with. One musn't confuse, he says, just when he is undertaking the psychological discussion of the dream-processes, the primary process and the unconscious. In the primary process, all kinds of things appear in consciousness. What one wants to know is why it is these which do so. Of course, we are conscious of the idea, the dream-thought, since we would otherwise know nothing about it. Through an exigency of the theory, a certain quantity of interest must have been turned towards what is unconscious. And yet, what motivates and determines this quantity, is in an elsewhere of which we aren't conscious. We have to reconstruct that object as well.

This is what we have already seen made apparent apropos of the dream of Irma's injection, and apropos of the initial small schema Freud gives of it in the *Entwurf*. He shows us that, when one studies the structure and the determination of associations, what appears in the dream as most heavily charged, in terms of quantity, is the point towards which the most things to be signified converge. What results is the point of convergence of maximum psychic interest. But that doesn't cast any light on the motives themselves.

What appears in Irma's dream is doubly determined – there is, on the one hand, the speech of the dialogue being conducted with Fliess, and on the other,

the sexual foundation. The sexual foundation *is* double. He is interested in this speech, since it is the notion that it exists which thus comes to determine the dream – it *is* the dream of someone who *is* trying to find out what dreams are. But also, Freud finds himself in a complex relation not only with his patient, but with the entire, mutually contrasting, feminine series, which *is* sketched out behind her. What there is in the unconscious can only be reconstructed, that *is* the meaning to which Freud *is* leading us. It *is* what we are going to tackle today, with the second part of chapter VII on regression.

The coalescing of at least two series of motivations *is* necessary to the production of any symptomatic form. One is sexual, the other is, according to the name we give it here, symbolic – it *is* the factor of speech, as it *is* assumed by the subject. But the same question is raised again – by whom? by which subject?

2

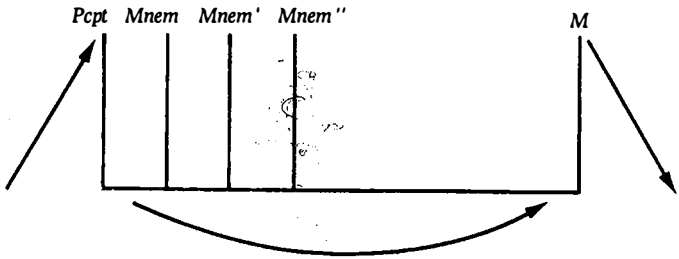
M. VALABREGA: *Freud introduces his conception of the psychic apparatus for the first time in relation to the study of regression. So we will have to return to* The Interpretation of Dreams *to find the first explanation of regression, which will later take on a considerable importance in the theory. Freud begins by summarising the three most important features which the analysis of dreams has furnished him with. Firstly, dreams put thought in the present tense through the fulfilment of a wish* [désir]. *It is an actualisation, and desire, or the thought of the desire, is most often objectified, enacted, lived. Secondly, a feature almost independent of the preceding one and no less important, the transformation of the dream-thoughts into visual images and into discourse* – Bilder und in Rede.[2]

Rede means discourse. The unconscious is the discourse of the other, I didn't make it up. *Bilder* means imaginary.

M. VALABREGA: *A third notion, due to Fechner, the psychic locality of the dream being different from the locality of the representation of waking life. There follows the construction of the psychic apparatus. This apparatus is constituted of various systems, which one doesn't have to, Freud tells us, give a spatial order, but rather an order of temporal succession. As a consequence, one mustn't believe in the spatiality of the schema. It is a temporal topography. This is the first schema of the apparatus. It possesses a direction – the psychical process always goes from the perceptual extremity,* Pcpt., *to* M., *the motor. Immediately after, there's a first differentiation. The perceptual excitations received by the subject must leave a trace there, a memory. Now, the* Pcpt. *system, perception, has no memory whatsoever. One must therefore distinguish between a* Mnem'. *system and the* Pcpt. *system. When there have been simultaneous perceptions, there will be a simultaneous connection of the traces –*

[2] GW II/III 539; Stud II 511; SE V 534.

that's the phenomenon of association. But there exist other connections than the associative one. So it therefore becomes necessary to allow for several Mnem. *systems* – Mnem, Mnem', Mnem'', *etc. It would be pointless. Freud says, to try to determine the number, or even to wish to do so. Consider the following diagram:*[3]



The text is really rather pithy – *The first of these* Mnem. *systems will naturally contain the record of association in respect to* simultaneity in time; *while the same perceptual material will be arranged in the later systems in respect to other kinds of coincidence, so that one of these later systems, for instance, will record relations of similarity, and so on with the others.*[4] We enter here into the dialectic of the same and the other, of the one and the many. You can put the whole of Parmenides into this. And Freud adds – *It would of course be a waste of time to try to put the psychical significance of a system of this kind into words.* Freud realises the foolishness of any attempt at trying to recreate all the categories of language by schematising the various ways in which the elements of reality, atomistically conceived, are organised. The spatial schema of the conceptual connections would only be the doublet of the exigencies of the play of thought, in the most general sense. One can see that Freud is giving up, and that his schema is no longer of any use, except for showing us that where there is a language relation, there has to be the substrate of a determinate neuronal apparatus. Freud realises that it is enough to point out the necessity for there being a series of systems, without wanting to specify each of them in turn. The ease with which he abandons this task, to which more naive people are known to devote themselves, is in itself an education.

Let us take the following sentence – *Its character would lie in the intimate details of its relations to the different elements of the raw material of memory, that is – if we may hint at a theory of a more radical kind – in the degrees of conductive resistance which it offered to the passage of excitation from those elements.*[5] *'Dégradations de la résistance'* isn't an accurate translation. Here, something pulls us up short. At

[3] GW II/III 543; Stud II 515; SE V 538.
[4] GW II/III 544; Stud II 515; SE V 539.
[5] GW II/III 544; Stud II 515–6; SE V 539; *'dégradations de la résistance'* corresponds to *'Abstufungen des Leitungswiderstandes'*, translated in SE by 'the degrees of conductive resistance'.

this level, what does the notion of resistance signify? Where can it be located in this schema?

M. VALABREGA: *As one can see from the passage that M. Lacan just commented on, this is a critique of associationism. For Freud, association is one connection amongst others, and that is why there are several systems.*

That's right. If one must assume all these levels, it's because he shifts implicitly from associationism to what is irreducible to it, the category of resemblance being the first dialectical category.

M. VALABREGA: *The memories* Mnem., Mnem.', *etc., are by their nature unconscious. They can become unconscious. But one must still take note that they have no sensible quality comparable to perceptions. They remain distinct from them. Until now, we haven't taken into account, in the schema, the dream and its psychology. The formation of the dream can only be explained by two basic agencies* [instances][6] *– the criticising agency and the criticised agency. The criticising agency forbids access to consciousness, and as a result of this fact finds itself in the closest relation with this consciousness. It is in placing these two agencies, criticising and criticised, in his schema, that Freud arrives at the next schema. The preconscious should be considered as the last of the systems, being located at the motor end. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that one would understand the diagram better if, instead of making it in the form of a parallelepiped, one made it circular, so as to be able to join* M. *to* Pcpt., *preconscious phenomena becoming conscious.*

Here you are emphasising the problem which, I think, for a long time any reader of good faith has asked himself. Freud recognises here that the system perception-consciousness, *Wahrnehmung-Bewusstsein*, which we find again in the final topography, and at certain points in Freud's account, as the nucleus of the ego, supposes a unity. I say it in passing, we won't be satisfied with this commonly accepted final resting-point of Freud's thought.

Valabrega's remark is worthwhile on its own terms, independently of the attempt at a solution which he proposes. Freud presents something as having a topographical unity which is split at both ends. Let's leave the question open for the moment. To explain just the functioning of his schema, Freud reminds us that the disturbing process, which passes from the unconscious to the preconscious, should normally end up at consciousness – even the denomination of these systems implies this orientation towards consciousness. What is in the unconscious is separated from the conscious, but can pass into it via the preliminary stage of the preconscious. Now the necessity of his schema obliges

[6] 'Agency' is the English translation of *Instanz* (see SE V 537 n1); '*instance*' is the French translation. The German and French terms have legal connotations, although the French sense of a 'court' is relatively recent. In *Robert*, '*instance*' is given a separate meaning corresponding to that introduced by Freud in 1923, in *The Ego and the Id*.

Freud to locate this system of consciousness just before the possibility of the act, before the motor outlet, hence in *M*. But all the premises which determined the fabrication of his neurological schema obliged him to admit that perception takes place well before any kind of unconscious, at the level of contact with the external world, with the *Umwelt*, that is to say at the other end of the schema. Hence, the way in which the diagram is constructed has the singular consequence of representing as disassociated, at the two terminal points of the directed circulation of psychic movement, two sides of one and the same function, namely perception and consciousness. This difficulty can in no way be attributed to some sort of illusion stemming from spatialisation, it is internal to the very construction of the schema.

The perceptual system is a kind of sensitive layer, sensitive in the sense of photo-sensitive. In another text,[7] Freud describes a well-known little apparatus, a slate board with special properties of adhesivity upon which a transparent paper rests. The pencil is a simple point which, each time it traces signs on the transparent paper, causes a momentary and local adherence of the paper to the slate underneath. Consequently, the tracing appears on the surface, dark on clear or clear on dark, and remains inscribed there as long as you don't detach the sheet from what lies underneath, which triggers the disappearance of the tracing, the paper returning to a virgin state each time the sticky sheet is raised. Freud requires his first perceptual layer to be something of this kind. One must assume that the perceptual neurone, being sensitive matter, is always capable of intercepting a perception. But here, while the surface becomes virgin, some trace of what was perceived at a given moment always remains on the slate.

Such is the logical schema, and there's nothing to tell us it isn't based on the actual functioning of the psychic apparatus, which makes it necessary that the perceptual system be given at the start.

We thus end up with this peculiar local dissociation of perception and memory. From the point of view of the nervous apparatus, one must distinguish between the level of mnemic accumulation and the level of perceptual acquisition, which is perfectly correct, from the point of view of the imagining of a machine. But we then find ourselves faced with this second difficulty to which Valabrega and I are drawing your attention.

Everything in experience indicates that the system of consciousness must be located at the most extreme opposite point from this succession of layers we have to allow in order to conceive of the effective functioning of the psychic apparatus. Yet again, we suspect that there's something here which doesn't quite work, that there's the same difficulty which, in the first diagram,

[7] 'A note upon the "Mystic Writing-Pad"' (1925a) GW XIV 3–8; Stud III 365–9; SE XIX 227–32.

expressed itself as follows, that the system ϕ, the complement to the stimulus-response circuit, and the system ψ were on two different planes. As for the system ω, functioning according to other energy principles, it represented the perceptual system and ensured that something could come into consciousness. In this way the subject received information concerning quality, which could not be provided by the system ψ, the regulator of investments within the nervous apparatus. So the first schema gave us a representation of perception and consciousness at only one extremity of the apparatus, united together, just as they are in experience. The second schema compounds the difficulties of the first by dissociating the location of the perceptual system and that of the system of consciousness.

M. VALABREGA: – *One ought to be able to establish some sort of connection, I don't know how.*

You offered one solution.

M. VALABREGA: *No, it isn't a solution. In a very brief note in which he assimilates* Pcpt. *and* Cs., *Freud talks about the linear succession of the schema.*[8] *If he had wanted to construct a circular schema, he would have done so. One has to wait for another topography to see the matter clearly. But let's abandon this problem in order to get on to the unconscious, the system located more to the back, which cannot accede to consciousness except by passing through the preconscious. Consciousness is a system which succeeds the preconscious. Here again we come upon this paradox, that the system of consciousness is open both on the side of perception, through which the excitation arrives, and to the motor end, whose most adjacent system is the preconscious. In the case of dreams, the internal excitation tends to pass via the intermediary station of the preconscious in order to become conscious, but it cannot, because the censorship forbids it this path during the previous day. How are we to explain the hallucination, the hallucinatory dream? According to Freud, the only way to get out of this is to admit that the excitation, instead of being transmitted as normal, towards the motor end, follows a retrograde path. That's regression.*

I can see that for today, the attention you're willing to give to quite straightforward things is somewhat wavering. We are confronted by this singular contradiction – I don't know if it should be called dialectical – that the less you understand the better you listen. For I often say very difficult things to you, and I see you hanging on every word, and I learn later that some of you didn't understand. On the other hand, when you're told things that are very simple, that are almost too well known, you are less attentive. I say that in passing – like any concrete observation it has its merits. I deliver it up to your reflection.

[8] GW II/III 546 n1; Stud II 517 n1; SE V 541 n1; this note was added in 1919.

3

So I'll have to go back over things.

When the notion of regression first comes up, it is strictly tied to a particularity of the schema, the paradox of which I showed you just now.

If we could succeed in fomenting a more coherent schema than the one we're now looking at, in which the perception-consciousness system would not be in this paradoxical position in relation to the apparatus and its one-way functioning, there'd be no need for the notion of regression. It is solely because his schema is made that way that, in order to explain the hallucinatory quality of the dream-experience, Freud has to admit not so much a regression as a regredient direction of the circulation of quantity, expressed by the process of excitation-discharge. This direction is called *regredient* in contrast with the progredient direction of the normal, waking, functioning of the psychic apparatus.

We might well suspect that all this is precarious, since it depends upon the construction of a schema which already in itself appears as paradoxical. Mark this in passing, perhaps it will permit you to shed some light on the manner in which the term regression is employed later on, not without its revealing ambiguities.

It first appears as topographical regression – in some cases, what happens in the nervous apparatus has to move in the opposite direction, that is to say not towards discharge, but towards the mobilisation of the system of memories which constitutes the unconscious system. What has to be explained are aspects of the dream – which, moreover, can only be called sensorial metaphorically speaking – its figuration, especially visual, its hallucinatory character.

So the initial introduction of the term regression in the Freudian system is essentially tied to one of the most inexplicable peculiarities of his first schema. We will see if we can't explain things better, in such a way as to make the notion of regression unnecessary at this level.

M. HYPPOLITE: *Can't one put forward the hypothesis that the idea of regression is for Freud primary in relation to the schema? That he has regression at the back of his mind?*

The point of our way of proceeding is that it reminds us that the schema we are now studying has a continuity with another one – also constructed on the basis of Freud's specific experience, that of the neuroses, which from the start animated his theoretical endeavour – in which there is no trace of the notion of regression. There, no need for regression to explain the dream, its hallucinatory character, desire sustains it.

The schema of the *Traumdeutung* only has this shape because that of the

Entwurf had the one I've drawn several times on the board. And it is to the extent that the schema has this shape that Freud talks of a retreat on the topographical level, of swimming up against the nervous current.

There are things which work in the regredient sense in relation to the schema. To account for it, given the way in which his diagram is put together, Freud is forced to enter into supplementary constructions. He had, for instance, to concede that what takes place in dreams is a suspension of the progredient flow, because if the progredient current always passed through at the same speed, the reverse movement could not come about. The notion of regression gives rise to enough difficulties for one to see that Freud is only forced to admit it because he has to explain how things can occur which, in relation to the schema, effectively move in the regredient direction.

His starting point is not at all that of regression. He is obliged to introduce it because he conceives the function of perception in the psychic economy as something primary, not composite, but elementary. For him, the organism is essentially impressionable, the impression is elementary, and it is by virtue of that that it comes into play in what takes place at the level of symptoms.

That is where the whole problem lies – can what happens at the level of the phenomena of consciousness be in any way purely and simply assimilated to the elementary phenomena of perception? What may be said in Freud's favour, is that at this naive level – let us not forget that this was constructed fifty years ago – he doesn't evade the difficulty of the existence as such of consciousness.

Freud's constructions have lost a great deal of their interest for us with the passage of time, that is to say with the diffusion of behaviourist thinking. I want to draw your attention in passing to the fact that, by comparison with Freud's attempt, behaviourist thought is a pure and simple sleight of hand. Of course, the behaviourists say, consciousness raises some problems. Let us resolve the question by describing phenomena without ever taking into account its actual existence. Where it is obviously effective, it is only a stage, let us not mention it. Freud, for his part, doesn't dream of eliminating the difficulty there is in getting consciousness included as a special agency in the entire process and, in the end, he succeeds in dealing with it without turning it into a thing.[9]

Let us return to Freud's first schema. He starts with a nervous system made up of interconnecting neurones, of a ψ apparatus which is, in the central nervous system, the totality of the association-fibres. How is the circulation which represents the sum of its experiences initiated? How is the passage across the synaptic barrier accomplished? How does the facilitation change? Freud is thus only interested in the neuronal quantity circulating in the fibres. The facilitation depends on the energy level of the system. There is a homeostatic

[9] Lacan employs the neologisms '*entifier*', '*chosifier*'; although we have not chosen to do so in this passage, we have sometimes employed the neologism 'entification' for these words.

regulation, with variations which depend on the fact that several thresholds, several homeostatic rules, are possible, depending on whether the system is in the waking state, sleeping state, etc. Well then, what happens in this system? What happens is what Freud calls *hallucination.*

The nervous system receives excitations, which come to it from the organism, from the pressure of needs. Certain experiences then occur. As the ordinary notion of learning [*apprentissage*] would have it, the first experiences determine the others. Each time that the same impulse [*pulsion*] reoccurs, the circuits associated with the first experiences, which have been recorded, are aroused. The internal signals, the neurons, which were excited on the first occasion of the organism's activity under the pressure of need, are excited again. In this strictly hallucinatory conception of the putting into play of needs, from which emerges the idea of the primary process, it is normal for the psychic organism, given that it had been in some way satisfied in the original confused experiences linked to its original need, to hallucinate its second satisfaction.

This implies, it should be noted, an identification between the psychical phenomena which occurs in a neuron, and its epiphenomenal verso, that is, what the subject perceives. It pertains to the order of psychophysical parallelism. One must call a spade a spade. If Freud calls that *hallucination,* it is because he places authentic perception elsewhere. This hallucination is simply, according to the then ruling definition in science, a false perception, just as one could, at the same epoch, define perception as a true hallucination.

The return of a need leads to the hallucination of its satisfaction, the entire construction of the first schema rests on that. Except, how is it that the living organism nonetheless succeeds in not falling into terrible traps, biologically speaking? We must necessarily suppose a mechanism of regulation, of adaptation to the real, which enables the organism to refer the hallucination, which spontaneously follows from the primary functioning of the system ψ, to what is happening at the level of the perceptual apparatus. Something must therefore be constituted in the course of the experiences, something which diminishes the quantitative investment to the level of sensitivity of the incidence of need. This something, Freud locates it in the ψ apparatus, and calls it an *ego.*

How is the regulation achieved? Freud explains it by the process of derivation. What is quantitative is always susceptible to being diffused. At first there is a traced path, the path opened up, facilitated, by the original experience, which corresponds to a given neuronal quantity. The *ego* intervenes to make this quantity pass along several paths at once, rather than one. As a result, the level of what has passed along the path of facilitation will be sufficiently lowered to be successfully compared on examination with what is happening in parallel at the perceptual level.

You can see the hypotheses all this presupposes – so many are needed, and a great many of them are not susceptible of confirmation. That is the somewhat

disappointing feature of these constructions. But we are not here to judge of their merit in and of themselves – they acquire value from the developments to which they led Freud.

Within this schema, the *ego* is the regulatory apparatus for all the comparative testings of the hallucinations of the system ψ with what is taken to be adapted to reality at the level of the system ω. It reduces the level of excitation of neurons which have already been facilitated to an extremely low energy level, so that the distinctions can be drawn via the system ω, where the charges are very weak. I should draw your attention to the fact that the *ego* doesn't belong at the level of the perceptual apparatus. It is in the system ψ itself, it is at the heart of the psychic apparatus. The primary and secondary processes occur in the same place. In fact, the *ego* and the ψ apparatus are the same thing – the *ego* is the *nucleus*,[10] that is how Freud expresses it, the kernel of this apparatus.

That is what goes against the hypothesis you proposed just now. The bipartition of the system of the *ego* into perception and consciousness, located so paradoxically in his schema in the *Traumdeutung*, isn't imposed on Freud by a preformed conception – it was more straightforward in the first schema. And why does it appear necessary for it to be the way it is in the second schema? Because the second schema doesn't at all cover the same ground as the first. It is a temporal schema, which tries to represent the order in which things take place. And it is remarkable that Freud encounters this difficulty just when he introduces the temporal dimension.

I leave this question open. Do bring what you have to say to a conclusion, Valabrega.

M. VALABREGA: *Regression remains for Freud an inexplicable phenomenon from the topographical point of view. That is what we might conclude with.*

If you wish. Had we only done this today, had we only shown you that Freud, in his text, remains just as much in difficulties with regression as a fish with a fig, we would still not have wasted our time. There wasn't the least need to introduce it in order to explain the fundamentally hallucinatory character of the primary process, since he had already distinguished the primary and secondary processes in the first schema. He introduces regression from the moment when he emphasises the temporal factors. As a result, he is also forced to admit it into the topographical, that is to say spatial plane, where its appearance is none too steady. It remains paradoxical, and to a certain extent antinomic and inexplicable. That is what had to be emphasised here.

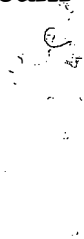
We will see next how the notion of regression must be handled when Freud uses it in the genetic register in relation to the development of the organism.

2 March 1955

[10] English in the original. See p. 43n1 above.

XIII

The dream of Irma's injection



So we are still pondering the meaning of the diverse conceptions of the psychic apparatus which Freud entertained. He pursued this task throughout the entire course of his work – for him it corresponded to a demand for internal coherence. He was the first and for a long time the only one to try to find his way in all this, and he pursued his effort throughout the modifications, of theory and of technique, suggested by those who followed him, that is, the analytic community.

It is a fact that the difficult question of regression, with which we were confronted last time, was first engendered by the very requirements of the model. One has to read the letters to Fliess in order to know how difficult the begetting of this work was. And for him arriving at rigorous schemata was a requirement which touched him to the heart. Now, to produce a hypothesis about quantity has reverberations for the notion of quality. And I don't think that the two of them are perfectly compatible. Freud preferred one to the other on account of certain conveniences when it came to formulation, but the difficulties of the second schema are due to the relative simplications of the first, that is, this disassociation between perception and consciousness which obliges him to introduce the hypothesis of a regression in order to account for the figurative, that is imaginary, character of what takes place in the dream.

Obviously, if he already could have used the term imaginary, then it would have removed a large number of the contradictions. But this figurative character is here conceived of as part of the perceptive and the visual is taken by Freud to be equivalent to the perceptual. It is clear that the schema, as constructed in the *Traumdeutung*, necessarily leads to proposing, right at the topographical level, a hypothesis like the following – because the state of dreaming doesn't allow processes to result as normal in motor discharge, there's a backward flow of the process of intentional influx, and its imagistic character makes its appearance. Things can go the other way round – that's what the term regression means, at the point we've got to.

This here is the first formulation with any solidity of this notion which will, in what follows, be accepted, in a similar fashion, on the formal level no less than on the genetic one. The idea of the regression of the individual to the initial stages of his development dominates, as you know, much of our conceptions of the neuroses as well as those of treatment. The entering into play of this notion, which now seems so familiar, is however not a matter of course, as you have realised.

In order to make it easier for you to shift from this schema of the psychic apparatus to that implied by the later development of Freud's thought, namely the one centring on the theory of narcissism, I am going to propose to you a little test.

1

The initial dream, the dream of dreams, the inaugurally deciphered dream, is for Freud that of Irma's injection. He gives it as exhaustive an analysis as possible, returning to it very often in the *Traumdeutung* itself, each time he needs a fulcrum, and in particular, at length, when he introduces the notion of condensation.

Well, we are going to take another look at this dream, from our present point of view. We will be within our rights, on condition of our not wanting to make Freud, who is still at the first stage of this thinking, say what is in the last stage, on condition of our not attempting to make these stages agree with one another, according to our own whim.

Under Hartmann's pen you come upon the rather candid admission that, after all, Freud's conceptions aren't quite in agreement amongst themselves, and that they need to be synchronised. The effects of this sychronisation of Freud's thought are precisely what makes the return to the text necessary. In truth, to me it has the tiresome echo of bringing him into line. Not for us the synchronisation of the various stages of Freud's thought, nor even getting them to agree. It is a matter of seeing to what unique and constant difficulty the development of this thought – made of the contradictions of its various stages – responded. Through the succession of antinomies that this thought always presents us with, within each of these stages, and between them, it is a matter of confronting what is properly the object of our experience.

Amongst those people whose function it is to teach analysis and to train analysts, I'm not the only one to have had the idea of taking up the dream of Irma's injection again. That is especially the case with a man called Erikson, who describes himself as an advocate of the culturalist school – for the good it will do him! This so-called culturalism consists in emphasising in analysis those things which, in each case, depend on the cultural context in which the subject is immersed. This aspect has certainly not been ignored up until now – I am not

aware of Freud, nor those who might specifically qualify themselves as Freudians, ever neglecting it. The question is to know whether this element should be given pre-eminent importance in the constitution of the subject. Let us leave to one side for a moment the theoretical discussion which this may raise, and let us see what it leads to.

Apropos of the dream of Irma's injection, it leads to some remarks which I will try to point out to you, as I will have to encounter them in the re-analysis which I will try to conduct today. You will be surprised to see that this culturalism converges quite singularly with a psychologism which consists in understanding the entire analytic text as a function of the various stages in the development of the *ego*. You see that it isn't simply the desire to chaff his synchronisation which led me to mention Hartmann.

The attempt is made, then, to locate the dream of Irma's injection as a stage in the development of Freud's *ego*, an *ego* which has a right to a certain respect, for it is that of a great creator, at a highpoint of his creative capacity. In truth, one cannot say it is a false ideal. Of course there must be a psychology of the creator. But is it the lesson we have to draw from the Freudian experience, and more especially, if we examine it under the microscope, is it the lesson we must draw from what takes place in the dream of Irma's injection?

If this point of view is true, we will have to abandon the notion I tell you to be the essence of the Freudian discovery, the decentring of the subject in relation to the *ego*, and to return to the notion that everything centres on the standard development of the *ego*. That is an alternative without mediation –if that is true, everything I say is false.

Except, if what I say is false, it becomes extremely difficult to read the slightest of Freud's texts and understand anything in it. We shall put it to the test with the dream of Irma's injection.

Why does Freud give such importance to this dream? At first glance, this may be surprising. What, in fact, does Freud extract from the analysis of this dream? This truth, which he posits as primary, that the dream is always the fulfilment of a desire, of a wish [*souhait*].

I will read you the contents of the dream, hoping that this will be enough to bring to mind the analysis which follows it.

A large hall – many guests, whom we receive. – Among them Irma, whom I immediately take aside, as if to answer her letter, and to reproach her that she doesn't accept the 'solution' yet. I say to her: 'If you still have pains, it is really only your fault.' – She answers: 'If you knew what pains I have now in my throat, stomach and abdomen, it's tightening me up.' – I am startled and look at her. She looks pallid and puffy; I think, after all I am overlooking something organic. I take her to the window and look into her throat. With that she shows some resistance, like women who wear a denture. I think to myself, she doesn't need to do that. – Her mouth then opens properly, and I find on the right a large white spot, and elsewhere I see some remarkable

curled structures which evidently are patterned on the nasal turbinal bones, extensive white-grey scabs. – I quickly call Dr M., who repeats and confirms the examination . . . Dr M. looks entirely different from usual; he is very pallid, limps, is beardless on the chin . . . My friend Otto now also stands next to her, and my friend Leopold percusses her over the bodice and says: 'She has a dullness below on the left,' points also to an infiltrated portion of the skin on the left shoulder (which I, in spite of the dress, just as he, feel) . . . M. says: 'Without a doubt, it's an infection, but it doesn't matter; dysentery will follow and the poison will be eliminated . . .' We also directly know where the infection comes from. Recently my friend Otto, when she was not feeling well, gave her an injection of a preparation of propyl, propylene . . . proprionic acid . . . trimethylamine (whose formula I see in heavy type before me) . . . one doesn't give such injections so lightly . . . Probably, too, the syringe wasn't clean.[1]

2

Irma is a patient friend of Freud's family. So, with respect to her, he is thus in that delicate situation, always to be avoided, in which the analyst is attending on someone in the circle of his acquaintances. We are much more aware than Freud was, at this pre-historic stage of analysis, of the difficulties, in such a case, of a counter-transference.

That is indeed what happens. Freud has great difficulties with Irma. As he points it out to us in the associations to the dream, he still thinks, at this point in time, that, once the unconscious meaning of the fundamental conflict of the neurosis has been discovered, one only has to put it to the subject, who either accepts or doesn't accept it. If he doesn't accept it, it's his fault, he is a nasty, naughty boy, a bad patient. If he's good, he accepts, and everything is fine and dandy. I'm not pushing anything – there are good and bad patients.

Freud recounts this idea to us with a humour bordering on the rather improvised irony I am indulging in on this subject. He says that he can thank heaven that this was his conception at that time, for it allowed him to make a living.

So, he is in a lot of trouble with Irma, who has certainly improved, but retains certain symptoms, in particular a tendency to vomit. He has just interrupted the treatment, and his friend Otto is bringing him news of his former patient.

In the past, I've underlined that Otto is someone very close to Freud. But he isn't an intimate friend, in the sense of being privy to the ideas of someone who is already a master. He is a good chap, Otto, he does a bit of looking after the

[1] The translation given here follows that of Patrick J. Mahony, 'Towards a formalist approach to dreams', *Int. J. Psa.* 4. 1977, 83–98. Mahony points out that the translation of dreams in SE renders them into the imperfect tense, whereas Freud's text gives them in the present; see GW II/III 112; Stud II 127; SE IV 107. Moreover, Freud makes theoretical remarks concerning the significance of the fact that the tense of all dreams is the present – GW II/III 539–40; Stud II 544–5; SE V 534–5.

entire family, when there are colds about, when things aren't going too well, and his role in the household is that of the friendly, benevolent bachelor, the bringer of gifts. This elicits a certain amused irony in Freud.

The Otto in question, for whom he has genuine, though measured, respect, brings him news of the said Irma, and tells him that, in short, she's alright, but not as well as all that. His tone makes Freud think that dear friend Otto somewhat disapproves of him, or more exactly that the latter must have had a share in his circle's gloating, even in the opposition he faced in relation to this cure imprudently undertaken on terrain where he is not as much the master of the manoeuvres as he would like.

Indeed, Freud has the feeling that he has in fact put the right solution to Irma – *Lösung*. This word has the same ambiguity in German as in French – that is as much the solution that one injects as the solution of a conflict. With that, the dream of Irma's injection is already acquiring its symbolic meaning.

At the start, Freud is pretty displeased with his friend. That is because he is even more displeased with himself. He gets to the point of doubting the validity of the solution he's proposed, perhaps even the very principle of his treatment of neuroses.

In this year 1895, he is still at the experimental stage in which he makes his major discoveries, amongst which the analysis of this dream will always seem to him so important that in 1900, in a letter to Fliess, just after the publication of the book in which he relates it, he will entertain himself – though his ways of having fun are never quite inconsequential – by imagining that one day perhaps there will be inscribed, on the threshold of the house in the country at Bellevue where this dream took place – *In this house on July 24th, 1895, the secret of dreams was revealed to Dr Sigmund Freud.*[2]

So, as well as being displeased, Freud at this time is full of confidence. Note it is before the crisis of 1897, a trace of which we find in the letter to Fliess, when he was to think for a moment that the entire trauma theory based on seduction, which was central to the genesis of his conception, had to be rejected, and the whole of his edifice was crumbling away. In 1895 he is in a creative period, as susceptible to certainty as to doubt – which is a feature of the entire development of the discovery.

The disapproval he senses in Otto's voice is the little shock which sets his dream into motion.

Let me point out that as early as 1882, Freud had remarked, in a letter to his fiancée, that it wasn't so much the major preoccupations of the day which made an appearance in dreams, as themes which had been embarked upon and were then interrupted – as when you're cut off.[3] The cutting off of speech struck Freud very early on, and we come upon it again and again in his

[2] Letter dated 12 June 1900, *Origins*, p. 322. [3] Letter dated 30 June 1882.

analyses in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. I have already discussed with you the forgetting of the name of the painter of the Orvieto fresco. What was at issue then was also something which hadn't completely come out during the day.

That, however, is far from being the case here. Freud started work in the evening after dinner, and had written an entire résumé of the Irma case, as a way of putting things straight, and of justifying, if needs be, the general conduct of the treatment.

Then comes the night. With this dream.

I'll go straight to the conclusion. Freud considers it a great success being able to explain this dream in all its detail, by the desire to be relieved of his responsibility for the failure of Irma's treatment. He does so in the dream – as the artisan of the dream – in so many ways that, as he remarks with his customary humour, it bears a great resemblance to the story of the person who, upon being reproached with returning a kettle with a hole in it, answers firstly, that he returned it intact and that secondly, the kettle already had a hole in it when he borrowed it and that thirdly, he hadn't borrowed it. Each of these explanations on its own would be perfectly valid, but taken together can in no way satisfy us.

That's how this dream is conceived, Freud tells us. And, of course, we find there the thread of everything which appears in the dream. But the question in my view is rather more like this – how is it that Freud, who later on will develop the function of unconscious desire, is here content, for the first step in his demonstration, to present a dream which is entirely explained by the satisfaction of a desire which one cannot but call preconscious, and even entirely conscious? Didn't Freud spend the previous evening trying to put down in black and white a justification as much of what works as what doesn't?

To establish this formula, that in every case the dream is the satisfaction of a desire, Freud doesn't seem, on first impression, to have required anything more than the most general notion of desire, nor to have been much preoccupied with knowing what this desire is, nor from whence it comes – from the unconscious or the preconscious.

Freud then raises the question in the note which I read out to you last time – what is it, this unconscious desire? What is it, this thing which is pushed away and horrifies the subject? What does it mean to speak of an unconscious desire? For whom does this desire exist?

This is the level where we'll find clarification of the immense satisfaction which the solution Freud gives of the dream brings him. To gain for ourselves a full sense of the fact that this dream plays a decisive role in Freud's account, we must take into account the importance which Freud grants it, all the more significant for seeming paradoxical to us. At first sight, one might say that the decisive step hasn't been taken, since in the end it is only a preconscious desire

which emerges. But if he maintains that this dream is the dream of dreams, the initial, typical dream, it is because he has the feeling of having taken it, this step, and the account which follows shows only too well that he has indeed taken it. If he has the feeling that he has taken it, it's because he has.

I am not redoing the analysis of Freud's dream after Freud himself. That would be absurd. Just as it is out of the question to analyse dead authors, so it is out of the question to analyse his own dream better than Freud. Freud has his reasons for breaking off the associations. He tells us – *At this point, I can't tell you any more than this, I don't want to tell stories of bed and chamber pot* – or else – *Here I no longer feel inclined to continue to associate.* It is not a matter of carrying out an exegesis where Freud interrupts himself but for us to take the whole of the dream and its interpretation. That's where we are in a different position from that of Freud.

There are two operations – having the dream, and interpreting it. Interpreting is an operation in which we intervene. But don't forget that in the majority of cases, we also intervene in the first. In an analysis, we intervene not only in that we interpret the dream of the subject – if indeed we do interpret it – but, on account of our already being, as analyst, in the life of the subject, we are already in his dream.

Remember, in this society's inaugural lecture, what I talked to you about apropos of the symbolic, the imaginary and the real. I was using these categories in the form of small and capital letters.

iS – imagining the symbol, putting the symbolic discourse into a figurative form, namely the dream.
sI – symbolising the image, making a dream-interpretation.

Except, for that there has to be a reversion, the symbol has to be symbolised. In between, there's room for understanding what happens in this double transformation. That is what we are going to try to do – take this dream and the interpretation which Freud gives of it as a whole, and see what it signifies in the symbolic and the imaginary order.

We are lucky that this famous dream, which, as will be only too obvious to you, we'll be treating with the greatest respect, isn't, because it is a dream, in time. It is very easy to observe, and it constitutes precisely the originality of dreams – the dream is not in time.

There is something absolutely striking – none of the authors in question draws attention to this fact, in its purity. Erikson comes close to it, but unfortunately, his culturalism isn't a very useful tool for him. This culturalism obliges him to raise the so-called problem of the study of the manifest content of the dream. The dream's manifest content, he tells us, deserves to be placed once again the foreground. On this point, there follows a very confused discussion, based on this opposition between the superficial and the profound, which I beg

you to rid yourselves of. As Gide says in *The Counterfeiters*, there is nothing more profound than the superficial, because there isn't anything profound. But that's besides the point.

You must start from the text, start by treating it, as Freud does and as he recommends, as Holy Writ. The author, the scribe, is only a pen-pusher, and he comes second. The commentaries on the Scriptures were irremediably lost the day when people wanted to get at the psychology of Jeremiah, of Isaiah, of even Jesus Christ. Similarly, when it comes to our patients, please give more attention to the text than to the psychology of the author – the entire orientation of my teaching is that.

Take this text. M. Erikson attaches great importance to the fact that at the beginning, Freud says – *we are receiving*. Thus, he would seem to have a dual personality – he entertains with his wife. It is a small, awaited, birthday party, at which Irma, the friend of the family, is expected. I'm quite happy, in fact, that the *we are receiving* introduces Freud in his identity as head of the family, but that doesn't seem to me to imply a very great duplicity in social function, because *Frau Doktor* makes no appearance at all, not for one minute.

As soon as Freud enters into dialogue, the visual field shrinks. He takes Irma aside and starts reproaching her, inveighing against her – *It is really all your fault, if you would listen to me it would get better*. Inversely, Irma tells him – *You don't know how much it hurts here and here, and there, in the throat, belly, stomach.* And then she says that it *zusammenschnüren*, that it chokes her.[4] This *zusammenschnüren* seems vividly expressive to me.

MME X: *In the old days, three or four people were needed to pull on the laces of a corset to tighten it.*

Freud is then quite impressed, and begins to show disquiet. He draws her towards the window and makes her open her mouth.

So all this takes place against a background of discussion and of resistance – resistance not only to what Freud suggests, but also to the examination.

In fact the resistance we have here is the feminine type of resistance. Authors skate over this by talking about so-called Victorian feminine psychology. Because it is well known that women no longer resist us – it doesn't excite us any more, women who resist, and when you come upon feminine resistance, these poor Victorian women are always there to take all the blame. It's quite funny. A consequence of the culturalism which here doesn't succeed in opening Erikson's eyes.

Nonetheless, Freud's associations revolve around this resistance. They emphasise the fact that Irma is far from being the only one implicated although only she appears in the dream. Amongst the people who are *etwas Sträuben*,

[4] SE gives 'chokes'; Mahony gives 'tightening up'; the French term is '*étouffe*'.

there are two in particular who, despite being symmetrical, are nonetheless somewhat problematic – Freud's own wife, who we know from other sources is pregnant at the time, and another woman patient.

We know the immense importance of the role which his wife played in Freud's life. He had not only a familial attachment to her, but also a conjugal, highly idealised one. It does seem, nonetheless, given certain nuances, that on certain levels, she brought him a certain disappointment. As for the patient, she is so to speak the ideal patient, because she isn't Freud's patient, she is quite pretty, and certainly cleverer than Irma, whose capacity for understanding tends to be denigrated. She also has the added attraction of not asking for Freud's help, which allows him to hope that she might one day ask him for it. But to tell the truth he doesn't entertain high hopes of it. In short, the thematic register in which woman appears here and within which the relation to Irma is located extends from the purest professional interest to all the forms of imaginary mirage.

In the dream itself, Freud shows himself as he is, and his *ego* is completely at home on the level of his vigilant *ego*. As psychotherapist, he openly discusses Irma's symptoms, which no doubt are a little, but only slightly, modified compared with what they are in reality. Irma herself is hardly distorted. What she has to show, she would show just the same if one were to look at it closely in the waking state. If Freud analysed his behaviour, his responses, his emotions, his transference at every moment in the dialogue with Irma, he would see just as easily that behind Irma is his wife, her intimate friend, and just as easily the seductive young woman who is just a few steps away and who would make a far better patient than Irma.

This is at the first level, where the dialogue remains subjected to the conditions of the real relation, in so far as it is itself totally stuck within the imaginary conditions which limit it, and which for the moment present Freud with difficulties.

That goes very far. Having got the patient to open her mouth – that is precisely what's at stake in reality, that she doesn't open her mouth – what he sees in there, these turbinate bones covered with a whitish membrane, is a horrendous sight. This mouth has all the equivalences in terms of significations, all the condensations you want. Everything blends in and becomes associated in this image, from the mouth to the female sexual organ, by way of the nose – just before or just after this, Freud has his turbinate bones operated on, by Fliess or by someone else. There's a horrendous discovery here, that of the flesh one never sees, the foundation of things, the other side of the head, of the face, the secretory glands *par excellence*, the flesh from which everything exudes, at the very heart of the mystery, the flesh in as much as it is suffering, is formless, in as much as its form in itself is something which provokes anxiety. Spectre of anxiety, identification of anxiety, the final

revelation of *you are this – You are this, which is so far from you, this which is the ultimate formlessness.* Freud comes upon a revelation of the type, *Mene, Tekel, Peres* at the height of his need to see, to know, which was until then expressed in the dialogue of the *ego* with the object.

Here, Erikson makes an observation which, I must admit, is excellent – normally a dream which leads to that should cause one to awaken. Why doesn't Freud wake up? Because he's a tough customer.

I've got nothing against that – he is a tough customer. So, Erikson adds, as his *ego* is disagreeably stuck in front of this spectacle, this *ego* regresses – the rest of the account is there to tell us that. Erikson then sets up an entire theory of the different stages of the *ego*, with which I will acquaint you. These psychological diversions are certainly extremely instructive, but to me they seem in truth to go against the very spirit of Freudian theory. For, in the end, if the *ego* is this succession of émergences, of shapes, if this double face of good and evil, of realisations and of modes of derealisations constitute its type, one fails to see what can be made of the fact Freud states in a thousand, two thousand different places in his writings, namely that the ego is the sum of the identifications of the subject, with all that that implies as to its radical contingency. If you allow me to give an image of it, the ego is like the superimposition of various coats borrowed from what I would call the bric-à-brac of its props department.

Can you really, you analysts, in all honesty, bring me testimonies of these splendid typical developments of the *ego* of subjects? These are tall stories. We are told how this great tree, man, has such a sumptuous development, how throughout his existence he overcomes successive trials, thanks to which he achieves a miraculous equilibrium. A human life is something entirely different! I have already written that in the past, in my lecture on psychogenesis.

3

Is it really a question of the regression of the *ego* at the moment when Freud avoids waking up? What we see is that, from this point on, it's no longer a question of Freud. He calls professor M. to his aid because he can't make head or tail of it. This won't get him a better one, a better head or tail.[5]

Doctor M., the circle's dominant figure, as he calls him – I haven't identified who it is – is an entirely respectable character in the everyday life of practice. He has certainly never done Freud a great deal of harm, but he doesn't always agree with him, and Freud isn't the sort of man to accept that easily.

There's also Otto and his chum Leopold, who goes one better than his chum Otto. This gives him considerable merit in Freud's eyes, and he compares the

[5] The untranslatable pun in French is between *'perdre son latin'* ('no longer understand anything') and *'en donner un meilleur, de latin'* (roughly, 'be given a better one, of Latin').

two of them to Inspector Bräsig and his friend Karl. Inspector Bräsig is a sly one, but he's always wrong, because he fails to take a close look at things. His chum Karl, always at his side, notices them, and all the inspector has to do is follow him.

With this trio of clowns, we see a rambling dialogue built up around little Irma, closer in fact to a game of interrupted conversations, and even to the well-known dialogue of the deaf.

All this is extremely rich and I am just summarising. Then the associations which show us the real meaning of the dream appear. Freud realises that he ends up entirely without blame, according to the logic of the kettle with a hole in it. The three of them are so ridiculous that anyone would seem like a god besides such absurd automata. All these characters are significant, in that each of them is the site of an identification whereby the *ego* is formed.

Dr M. corresponds to a function which was of capital importance to Freud, that of his half-brother, Philippe, who, as I've told you in another context, was the essential character for the understanding of Freud's Oedipus complex. If Freud's induction into the Oedipus complex was decisive for the history of humanity, it is obviously because he had a father who already had two sons from a first marriage, Emmanuel and Philippe, of similar age, with about three years difference, but who were already old enough for each of them to have been the father of the little Freud, Sigmund, who was born to a mother exactly the same age as this Emmanuel. This Emmanuel was for Freud the object of horror *par excellence.* It was even believed that all the horrors were concentrated on him – erroneously, for Philippe had his share in them. It was him who shopped Freud's dear old nanny, who has been accorded a disproportionate importance, by culturalists wanting to annex Freud to Catholicism with her as intermediary.

It nonetheless remains the case that the members of the intermediate generation played a considerable role. It is a superior form allowing the concentration of aggressive attacks against the father without touching the symbolic father too much, who, as for him, is to be found in a heaven which, without being that of sainthood, is nonetheless extremely important for all that. The symbolic father remains intact thanks to this division of functions.

Dr M. represents the ideal character constituted by the paternal pseudo-image, the imaginary father. Otto corresponds to the character who played a perennial role in Freud's life, the intimate, close friend who is both friend and enemy, who from one hour to the next changes from being a friend to being an enemy. And Leopold plays the role of the character who is always useful to counter the character of the friend-enemy, of the beloved enemy.

Here, then, is an entirely different triad from the preceding one, but which is just as much in the dream. Freud's interpretation allows us to understand its meaning. But what is its role in the dream? It plays with speech, with decisive and adjudicating speech, with the law, with what torments Freud under the

form – *Am I right or wrong? Where is the truth? What is the outcome of the problem? Where am I placed?*

The first time around, accompanying Irma's *ego* we've found three feminine characters. Freud remarks that there is such a profusion of intercalations at this point that in the end things are knotted together and one ends up confronted with some unknown mystery.

When we analyse this text, we must take into account the text in its entirety, including the notes. This is when Freud indicates that point in the associations where the dream is connected up to the unknown, which he calls its navel.

We've arrived at whatever it is that lies behind the mystic trio. I say *mystic* because we now know its meaning. The three women, the three sisters, the three caskets, Freud has since shown us its meaning. The last term is death, as simple as that.[6]

That in fact is what it is all about. We can even see it coming to the surface in the middle of the hubbub of speech in the second part. The story of the diptheric membrane is directly tied to the threat, of real significance, to the life of one of Freud's daughters two years previously. Freud had taken it to be a punishment for a therapeutic blunder he'd committed when he'd given one of his patients an excessive dose of a drug, sulphonal, unaware that its habitual usage might have harmful side-effects. He thought he was thereby paying the price for his professional mistake.

In the second part, the three characters together play a ridiculous game of passing the buck with regard to these fundamental questions for Freud – *What is the meaning of the neurosis? What is the meaning of the cure? How well-founded is my therapy for neurosis?* And behind all this, there is the Freud who dreams whilst being a Freud who seeks the key to the dream. That is why the key to the dream is the same thing as the key to neurosis and the key to the cure.

Just as there's a highpoint in the first stage, when the apocalyptic revelation of what was there takes place, so there's also a peak in the second part. At first, directly [*immédiatement*], *unmittelbar*, just as in a delirious conviction when all of a sudden you know that it is him who's got something against you, they know that Otto's the culprit. He'd given an injection. The search is on – . . . *propyl . . . propylene . . .* With this is associated the very funny story of the pineapple juice[7] which Otto had given the family the day before. When opened, it smelt of cheap spirits. It was suggested – *Let's give it to the servants.* But Freud, *more humane,*[8] so he says, gently remarks: – *No, it might poison them as well.*[9]

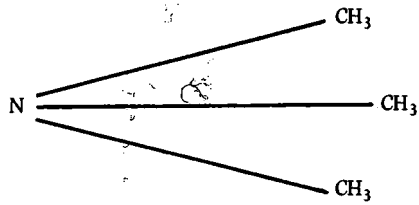
[6] Freud, 'The Theme of the Three Caskets' (1913f) GW X 24–37: Stud X 183–93; SE XII 291–301.

[7] '*Likör*' in German text; '*jus*' in French text.

[8] '*menschenfreudlichen*' in German; translated in SE as 'philanthropic'.

[9] A compromise between Lacan's French rendition ('*Mais non, eux aussi, ça pourrait leur faire du mal.*') and the German ('*sie sollen sich auch nicht vergiften.*'), well caught, in idiomatic English, in SE: 'there was no need for *them* to be poisoned either.' – SE IV 116.

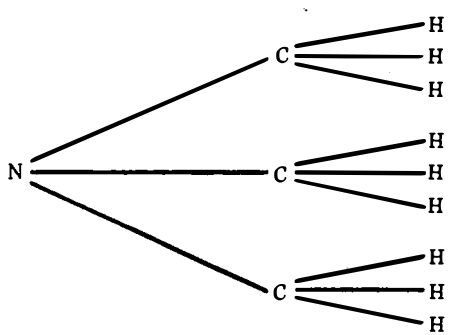
What emerges, printed in heavy type, beyond the hubbub of speech, like the *Mene, Tekel, Upharsin* of the Bible, is the formula for trimethylamine. I will write this formula out for you.



This explains everything, *trimethylamine*. The dream does not only owe its meaning to Freud's research on the meaning of dreams. If he can continue to ask himself the question, it is because he asks himself if all this communicates with Fliess, in whose elucubrations trimethylamine plays a role in connection with the decomposition products of sexual substances. Indeed – I've made inquiries – trimethylamine is a decomposition product of sperm, and it gives it its ammoniacal smell when it's left to decompose in the air. The dream, which culminated a first time, when the *ego* was there, with the horrific image I mentioned, culminates a second time at the end with a formula, with its *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin* aspect, on the wall, beyond what we cannot but identify as speech, universal rumour.

Like my oracle, the formula gives no reply whatsoever to anything. But the very manner in which it is spelt out, its enigmatic, hermetic nature, is in fact the answer to the question of the meaning of the dream. One can model it closely on the Islamic formula – *There is no other God but God*. There is no other word, no other solution to your problem, than the word.

We can rely on the structure of this word, which here makes its appearance in an eminently symbolic form, since it is given in sacred signs.



These threes which we keep encountering, again and again, that's where, in the dream, the unconscious is – what is outside all of the subjects. The structure of the dream shows us clearly enough that the unconscious is not the *ego* of the dreamer, that it isn't Freud in the guise of Freud pursuing his conversation with Irma. It is a Freud who has come through this moment of great anxiety when his ego was identified with the whole in its most unconstituted form. Quite literally, he escaped, he called upon, as he himself wrote, the congress of all those who know. He fainted, was reabsorbed, was abolished behind them. And finally another voice is heard. One can play around with the alpha and omega of the thing. But even if we had N instead of AZ it would be the same nonsense – we could give the name *Nemo* to this subject outside the subject who designates the whole structure of the dream.[10]

So this dream teaches us the following – what is at stake in the function of the dream is beyond the *ego*, what in the subject is of the subject and not of the subject, that is the unconscious.

What does it matter to us at this point if Otto gave an injection with a dirty syringe? You can have a lot of fun with this syringe with all its everyday usages, which in German have all sorts of resonances which in French are given by the verb *gicler* [to spirt]. We are sufficiently familiar, on account of all kinds of small clues, with the importance of urethral erotism in Freud's life. One day when I am in a good mood, I'll show you that, until he was quite old, there was something in Freud in this area which clearly echoes the memory of his urinating in his parents' bedroom – to which Erikson attaches such importance. He tells us that there must have been a small chamber pot and that he can't have peed on the floor. Freud doesn't specify if he did it in the maternal chamber pot or on the carpet or the floorboards. But that is of secondary importance.

The important thing, and this dream shows us it, is that analytic symptoms are produced in the flow of a word which tries to get through. It always encounters the double resistance of what we will call just for today, because it is late, the *ego* of the subject and its image. So long as these two interpositions offer a sufficient resistance, they clarify each other, if I may put it like that, within this flow, they are phosphorescent, they flash.

That's what happens in the first phases of the dream, throughout which Freud is on the plane of resistance, playing with his patient. At a certain point in time, because it must have gone pretty far, it stops. He isn't completely wrong, Erikson, it really is because Freud was prey to such a passion for knowing that he carries on regardless.

What gives this dream its veritable unconscious value, whatever its

[10] The last two sentences rely on the symbol for nitrogen in French chemical nomenclature being 'AZ' from '*azote*' (from the Greek, '*a-*', 'without' and '*zôê*', 'life'); hence the reference to alpha and omega. '*Nemo*' is Greek for 'no one'.

primordial and infantile echoes, is the quest for the word, the direct confrontation with the secret reality of the dream, the quest for signification as such. In the midst of all his colleagues, of this consensus of the republic of those who know – for if no one is right, every one is right, a law which is simultaneously paradoxical and reassuring – in the midst of this chaos, in this original moment when his doctrine is born into the world, the meaning of the dream is revealed to Freud – that there is no other word of the dream than the very nature of the symbolic.

The nature of the symbolic, I myself also want to introduce you into it by telling you, to serve you as a marker – symbols only ever have the value of symbols.

A traversal is accomplished. After the first part, the most loaded, imaginary part, something comes into the dream at the end which we could call *the crowd*. But it is a structured crowd, like the Freudian crowd. That is why I would prefer to introduce another term, which I will leave to your reflection with all the double meanings it contains – the inmixing [*immixtion*] of subjects.

The subject enters and mixes in with things – that may be the first meaning. The other one is this – an unconscious phenomenon which takes place on the symbolic level, as such decentred in relation to the *ego*, always takes place between two subjects. As soon as true speech emerges, mediating, it turns them into two very different subjects from what they were prior to speech. This means that they only start being constituted as subjects of speech once speech exists, and there is no before.

9 March 1955

XIV

The dream of Irma's injection (conclusion)

THE IMAGINARY, THE REAL AND THE SYMBOLIC

What did you get out of M. Griaule's lecture yesterday evening?[1] In what way does it relate to our customary objects? Who has had time to distil its moral? What are your impressions?

Marcel Griaule made a rapid allusion to the Islamisation of an important segment of the populations of the Sudan, to the fact that the latter continue to function with a symbolic register while belonging to a style of religious credo clearly dissonant with this system. Their demand on this level is manifested in a very precise manner, for instance when they ask to be taught Arabic, because Arabic is the language of the Koran. That's a tradition which goes a long way back, is very much alive, and appears to have all manner of means for keeping itself afloat. Unfortunately, he left us hanging in mid-air.

You mustn't get the impression that Sudanese civilisation doesn't deserve its name. We have sufficient evidence of its creations and of its metaphysics to put into question the single scale by which we think we can gauge the quality of civilisations.

Who has read Lévi-Strauss's most recent article? That is what he is alluding to – certain errors in our ways of looking at things stem from the fact that we use a single scale to gauge the quality, the exceptional character, of a civilisation. The conditions in which these people live may at first sight seem rather harsh, rather precarious from the point of view of comfort and of civilisation, but they seem nonetheless to receive very powerful support in the symbolic function, isolated as such.

It has taken a long time for us to be capable of entering into communication with them. There's an analogy here with our position *vis-à-vis* the subject.

[1] Marcel Griaule (1898–1956), ethnologist of Central African societies; author of *Les Masques des Dogons*, Paris, 1938. On 15 March 1955 he gave a lecture to the Société Française de Psychanalyse entitled 'Symbolisation of the world and the conditions for communication in the Sudanese'.

2

Let us come back to the dream of Irma's injection.

I would like to know whether what I told you was clearly understood. What was I trying to say? Who wants to speak?

Well, I think I highlighted the dramatic character of Freud's discovery of the meaning of dreams between 1895 and 1900, that is during the years when he is assembling his *Traumdeutung*. When I speak of the dramatic character, I would like, in support, to show you a passage from a letter to Fliess which follows the famous letter 137 in which, half-jokingly, half-seriously, but really terribly seriously, he suggests that this dream will be commemorated by a plaque – *In this house on July 24th, 1895, the Secret of Dreams was revealed to Dr Sigmund Freud.*

In letter 138, one reads – *The big problems are still unsettled. It is an intellectual hell, layer upon layer of it, with everything fitfully gleaming and pulsating; and the outline of Lucifer-Amor coming into sight at the darkest centre.*[2] It is an image of waves, of oscillations, as if the entire world were animated by a disquieting imaginary pulsation, and at the same time an image of fire, in which appears the silhouette of Lucifer, who seems to embody the anxiety-ridden dimension of Freud's experience. That is how he lived his forties, at the decisive moment when the discovery of the function of the unconscious was made.

The experience of the fundamental discovery was, for Freud, living through the putting into question of the very foundations of the world. We don't need any further indications concerning his self-analysis, in as much as he alludes to it rather than reveals anything about it in the letters to Fliess. He lives in an atmosphere of anxiety with the feeling that he's making a dangerous discovery.

The very meaning of the dream of Irma's injection is related to the depth of this experience. This dream is part of it, it is one of its stages. The dream Freud had is, as a dream, integrated in the progress of his discovery. That is how it acquires its double meaning. At the second level, this dream is not only an object which Freud deciphers, it is Freud's speech. That is what gives it its exemplary value – otherwise, it might perhaps be less demonstrative than other dreams. The value Freud accords it, as the dream whose deciphering was inaugural, would remain quite enigmatic if we didn't know how to read how it was that it specifically answered the question which confronted him, which, in short, went far beyond what Freud himself is at this point in time capable of analysing for us in what he writes.

What he weighs up, the balance-sheet he draws up of the significance of the dream, is far surpassed by the *de facto* historical value he grants it by placing it in this position in his *Traumdeutung*. That is essential to the understanding of this dream. And that is what enables us – I wanted your reply to bring

[2] Freud, *Origins*, p. 323.

confirmation of this, and I don't know how to interpret your silence – to give a convincing enough demonstration, I think, for me not to have to return to it again.

I will, nonetheless, return to it, but at another level.

I want to emphasise, in fact, how I didn't just limit myself to considering the dream itself in going over the interpretation Freud gives of it, but how I considered the whole constituted by the dream and his interpretation and how I did this by taking into account the specific function of the dream's interpretation in Freud's dialogue with us.

That is the essential point – we cannot separate off from the interpretation the fact that Freud makes of this dream our first step towards the key to the dream. It is us Freud is addressing when making this interpretation.

Careful examination of this dream can throw light on the very thorny question of regression, which is what we had got to in the penultimate seminar.

We are using it in a more and more routine manner, while not being oblivious to the fact that we are superimposing extremely different functions at every turn. Not everything, in regression, necessarily belongs to the same register, as this original chapter already indicates in relation to the topographical distinction, which is certainly sustained by temporal regression and formal regressions. On the level of topographical regression, the hallucinatory nature of the dream led Freud, in accordance with his schema, to articulate it with a regredient process, to the extent that it would bring back certain psychic requirements to their most primitive mode of expression, which would be situated at the level of perception. The dream's mode of expression would thus find itself subjected in part to the requirements of passing via figurative elements which would come closer and closer to the level of perception. But should a process which usually passes along the progredient line lead to these mnemic limitations, which are those of images? These images are further and further away from the qualitative level on which perception occurs, more and more denuded, they take on a more and more associative character, they belong more and more in the symbolic knot of resemblance, of identity and of difference, so beyond what properly speaking belongs to the associationist level.

Does our analysis of what is strictly figurative in the dream of Irma impose such an interpretation on us? Do we have to consider that what happens at the associative levels *Mnem.*, *Mnem.'*, *Mnem.''*, etc... brings us back more closely to the primitive point of entry of perception? Is this something which obliges us to adopt this schema, with all that that entails – as Valabrega pointed out – in the way of paradox? When we speak of unconscious processes coming into consciousness, we are indeed obliged to place consciousness at the exit, whereas perception, with which it is in fact closely bound up, is to be found at the entrance.

The phenomenology of the dream of Irma's injection led us to distinguish

two parts. The first leads to the apparition of the terrifying anxiety-provoking image, to this real Medusa's head, to the revelation of this something which properly speaking is unnameable, the back of this throat, the complex, unlocatable form, which also makes it into the primitive object *par excellence*, the abyss of the feminine organ from which all life emerges, this gulf of the mouth, in which everything is swallowed up, and no less the image of death in which everything comes to its end, since in relation to the illness of his daughter, which could have been fatal, there's the death of the patient whom he had lost at a time adjacent to that of the illness of his daughter, which he considered to be some mysterious sort of divine retribution for his professional negligence – *this Mathilde for that Mathilde*, he writes. Hence there's an anxiety-provoking apparition of an image which summarises what we can call the revelation of that which is least penetrable in the real, of the real lacking any possible mediation, of the ultimate real, of the essential object which isn't an object any longer, but this something faced with which all words cease and all categories fail, the object of anxiety *par excellence*.

In the first phase, then, we see Freud in his chase after Irma, reproaching her for not understanding what he wants to get her to understand. He was carrying on his relationships in exactly the same style as he did in real life, in the style of the passionate quest, too passionate we would say, and it is indeed one of the meanings of the dream to say that formally, since at the end that is what it comes down to – the syringe was dirty, the passion of the analyst, the ambition to succeed, were here too pressing, the counter-transference was itself the obstacle.

When the dream reaches its first peak, what happens? Can we speak of a process of regression in order to explain the fundamental destructuration which then occurs in the experience of the dreamer? The relations of the subject change completely. He becomes something totally different, there's no Freud any longer, there is no longer anyone who can say *I*. This is the moment I've called the entry of the fool, since that is more or less the role played by the subjects on whom Freud calls. It's in the text – *appelliere*.[3] The Latin root of the word indicates the juridical meaning it has on this occasion – Freud appeals to the consensus of his fellow-beings, of his equals, of his colleagues, of his superiors. A decisive point.

So can we here speak, without further ado, of regression, even of the regression of the *ego*? It is in any event a very different notion from that of instinctual regression. The notion of the regression of the *ego* was introduced by Freud in the lectures grouped together under the title *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*.[4] It raises the question as to whether we can introduce without

[3] The phrase in the original is '*ich appelliere von ihm weg an einen anderen, Besserwissenden*' – GW II/III 124; Stud II 138; SE IV 119.

[4] Known in French as *Introduction à la Psychanalyse*, the title Lacan quotes.

any further ado the notion of typical stages of the *ego*, with a development, phases, a normative progress.

The question will not be resolved today, but you are familiar with a work which should be considered as essential to this subject, that of Anna Freud on *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*. It has to be recognised that, in the present state of affairs, we can in no way introduce the notion of a typical, stylised development of the ego. This would require a defence mechanism whose very nature would indicate to us whether a symptom is attached to it, at what stage it figures in the psychic development of an ego. Regarding this, there is nothing which can be tabulated – as has been done, and perhaps overdone, for the development of instinctual relations. We are quite incapable, at this moment, of putting the different defence mechanisms which Anna Freud enumerates for us into a genetic schema with any resemblance, however slight, to that which can be drawn up for the development of instinctual relations.

This is what many authors try to provide. Erikson doesn't fail to do so. And yet, do we have to have recourse to that in order to understand this turning point in the dream, the shift from one phase to another? We're not dealing with an antecedent state of the ego, but, literally, with a spectral decompositon of the function of the ego. We can see the series of egos appear. Because the ego is made up of the series of identifications which represented an essential landmark for the subject, at each historical moment in his life, in a manner dependent on circumstances – you will find that in *Das Ich und das Es*, which follows *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, the pivotal point we are in the process of rejoining after having taken this grand detour via the early stages of Freud's thinking.

This spectral decomposition is evidently an imaginary decomposition. It is on this that I would now like to focus your attention.

2

Following the *Traumdeutung*, Freud's thought reaches that stage which, correlatively with the *Papers on Technique* which we studied last year, is marked by the development of the theory of narcissism in the article *Zur Einführung des Narzissmus*, which we haven't been able to avoid referring to.

If Freud's theory, in which narcissism structures all of man's relations with the external world, has a meaning, if we have to draw its logical consequences, it does so in a manner which clearly is in harmony with everything which the so-called *Gestaltist* line of enquiry has given us in the course of the last few years concerning the development of the apprehension of the world by the living organism.

The structuring of the animal world is dominated by a certain number of fundamental images which give this world its lines of *force majeure*. It all

happens so differently in man's world, whose structuration is seemingly highly neutralised, exceptionally loose in relation to his needs. Well then, the Freudian notion of narcissism gives us a category which enables us to understand to what extent there is nonetheless a relation between the structuration of the animal world and that of the human world.

What did I try to get across with the mirror stage? That whatever in man is loosened up, fragmented, anarchic, establishes its relation to his perceptions on a plane with a completely original tension. The image of his body is the principle of every unity he perceives in objects. Now, he only perceives the unity of this specific image from the outside, and in an anticipated manner. Because of this double relation which he has with himself, all the objects of his world are always structured around the wandering shadow of his own ego. They will all have a fundamentally anthropomorphic character, even egomorphic we could say. Man's ideal unity, which is never attained as such and escapes him at every moment, is evoked at every moment in this perception. The object is never for him definitively the final object, except in exceptional experiences. But it thus appears in the guise of an object from which man is irremediably separated, and which shows him the very figure of his dehiscence within the world – object which by essence destroys him, anxiety, which he cannot recapture, in which he will never truly be able to find reconciliation, his adhesion to the world, his perfect complementarity on the level of desire. It is in the nature of desire to be radically torn. The very image of man brings in here a mediation which is always imaginary, always problematic, and which is therefore never completely fulfilled. It is maintained by a succession of momentary experiences, and this experience either alienates man from himself, or else ends in a destruction, a negation of the object.

If the object perceived from without has its own identity, the latter places the man who sees it in a state of tension, because he perceives himself as desire, and as unsatisfied desire. Inversely, when he grasps his unity, on the contrary it is the world which for him becomes decomposed, loses its meaning, and takes on an alienated and discordant aspect. It is this imaginary oscillation which gives to all human perception the dramatic subjacency experienced by a subject, in so far as his interest is truly aroused.

So we do not have to look to regression for the reason why it is imaginary apparitions [*surgissements*] which are characteristic of the dream. To the extent that a dream may get to the point of entering the order of anxiety, and that a drawing nigh of the ultimate real is experienced, we find ourselves present at this imaginary decomposition which is only the revelation of the normal component parts of perception. For perception is a total relation to a given picture, in which man always recognises himself somewhere, and sometimes even sees himself in several places. If the picture of the relation to the world is not made unreal by the subject, it is because it contains elements representing

the diversified images of his ego, and these are so many points of anchorage, of stabilisation, of inertia. That is exactly how I teach you to interpret dreams in supervisions – the main thing is to recognise where the ego of the subject is.

That's what we find already in the *Traumdeutung*, where Freud recognises on so many occasions that it is he, Freud, who is represented by this or that person. For instance, when he analyses the dream of the castle, of the Spanish-American war, in the chapter which we have begun to study, Freud says – *I'm not in the dream where one might think. The character who just died, this commandant who is with me, it is he who is I.*[5] At the moment when something of the real, something at its most unfathomable, is attained, the second part of the dream of Irma's injection highlights these fundamental components of the perceptual world constituting the narcissistic relation. The object is always more or less structured as the image of the body of the subject. The reflection of the subject, its mirror image, is always found somewhere in every perceptual picture, and that is what gives it a quality, a special inertia. This image is masked, sometimes even entirely so. But in the dream, because of an alleviation of the imaginary relations, it is easily revealed at every moment, all the more so to the extent that the point of anxiety where the subject encounters the experience of his being torn apart, of his isolation in relation to the world has been attained. There is something originally, inaugurally, profoundly wounded in the human relation to the world.

That is what comes out of the theory of narcissism Freud gave us, in so far as this framework introduces an indefinable, a *no exit*, marking all relations, and especially the libidinal relations of the subject. *Verliebtheit* is fundamentally narcissistic. On the libidinal level, the object is only ever apprehended through the grid of the narcissistic relation.

That happens when we see the subject substituted for by the polycephalic subject – this crowd I was speaking about last time, a crowd in the Freudian sense, the one discussed in *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse*, made up of the imaginary plurality of the subject, of the fanning out, the blossoming of the different identifications of the *ego*. At first this seems to us like an abolition, a destruction of the subject as such. The subject transformed into this polycephalic image seems to be somewhat acephalic. If there is an image which could represent for us the Freudian notion of the unconscious, it is indeed that of the acephalic subject, of a subject who no longer has an *ego*, who doesn't belong to the *ego*. And yet he is the subject who speaks, for that's who gives all the characters in the dream their nonsensical lines – which precisely derive their meaning from their nonsensical character.

In fact, just when the discourse of the multiple *ego* makes itself heard in a

[5] GW II/III 466–70; Stud II 447–50; SE V 463–7. It is referred to again in chapter VII. GW II/III 553; Stud II 523; SE V 547, but the passage Lacan is paraphrasing is on p. 467/448/464.

great cacophony, the objection which interests Freud is his own guilt, on this occasion towards Irma. The object is destroyed, if I can put it like this, and his guilt, which is what is in question, is destroyed with it. As in the story of the kettle with a hole in it, there is no crime here, since *firstly*, the victim was – which the dream says in a thousand different ways – already dead, that is to say was already ill with an organic ailment which is precisely what Freud could not cure, *secondly*, the murderer, Freud, was innocent of any intention to harm, and *thirdly*, the crime in question was curative, for the illness, which was dysentery – there is a play on words between dysentery and diphtheria – is precisely what will relieve the patient – all the pain, the bad moods, will leave with it.

In Freud's associations, this chimes in with a ludicrous incident he'd heard of in the days preceding his dream. A doctor, with a cutting and oracular tongue, at the same time profoundly absent-minded – doctors have throughout history retained this air of being characters in a comedy when they carry out their function of consultant – a doctor gives his opinion on a case in which it has been pointed out to him that the subject has albumen in his urine. To which he retorts – *No matter, the albumen will be eliminated.*

That, in fact, is what the dream leads up to. The coming into operation of the symbolic function in its most radical, absolute, usage ends up abolishing the action of the individual so completely that by the same token it eliminates his tragic relation to the world. The paradoxical and absurd equivalent of *Everything real is rational.*

The strictly philosophical contemplation of the world can indeed place us in a sort of ataraxia in which any individual is justified by the motives which make him act, and which are conceived as totally determining him. Any action, being the cunning of reason, is equally valid. The extreme use of the radically symbolic character of all truth thus makes it lose the sharp edge of its relation to the truth. At the heart of the flow of events, of the functioning of reason, the subject from the first move finds himself to be no more than a pawn, forced inside this system, and excluded from any truly dramatic, and consequently tragic, participation in the realisation of truth.

This is something extreme, which takes place at the outer edge of the dream. Freud recognises the secret animation of this dream in this procedure dedicated to excusing, the aim pursued by what he calls the structuring desire. This leads us to address the question as to the joint between the imaginary and the symbolic.

3

I have already allowed you to perceive the mediating function of the symbolic when, in trying to find a mechanistic representation of the interhuman

relation, I drew upon the most recent experiments in cybernetics. I supposed that a certain number of these artificial subjects were captivated by the image of their fellow-being. So that this system doesn't amount to being a more and more paralysing, vast concentric hallucination, so that it works, the intervention of a regulatory third party was necessary, which would put this distance, the distance of a certain prescribed order, between them.

Well, approaching from a different angle, we come upon the same thing again – every imaginary relation comes about via a kind of *you or me* between the subject and the object. That is to say – *If it's you, I'm not. If it's me, it's you who isn't.* That's where the symbolic element comes into play. On the imaginary level, the objects only ever appear to man within relations which fade. He recognises his unity in them, but uniquely from without. And in as much he recognises his unity in an object, he feels himself to be in disarray in relation to the latter.

This disarray, this fragmentedness, this fundamental discordance, this essential lack of adaptation, this anarchy, which opens up every possibility of displacement, that is of error, is characteristic of the instinctual life of man – the very experience of analysis shows us that. What is more, if the object is only ever graspable as a mirage, the mirage of a unity which can never be grasped again on the imaginary level, every object relation can only be infected with a fundamental uncertainty by it. That is in fact what so many different experiences show one, and calling them psychopathological conveys nothing since they lie on a continuum with many experiences which themselves are regarded as normal.

That is where the symbolic relation comes in. The power of naming objects structures the perception itself. The *percipi* of man can only be sustained within a zone of nomination. It is through nomination that man makes objects subsist with a certain consistence. If objects had only a narcissistic relationship with the subject, they would only ever be perceived in an momentary fashion. The word, the word which names, is the identical. The word doesn't answer to the spatial distinctiveness of the object, which is always ready to be dissolved in an identification with the subject, but to its temporal dimension. The object, at one instant constituted as a semblance[6] of the human subject, a double of himself, nonetheless has a certain permanence of appearance over time, which however does not endure indefinitely, since all objects are perishable. This appearance which lasts a certain length of time is strictly only recognisable through the intermediary of the name. The name is the time of the object. Naming constitutes a pact, by which two subjects simultaneously come to an agreement to recognise the same object. If the human subject didn't name – as Genesis says it was done in earthly Paradise – the major species first, if the

[6] *'un semblant'.*

subjects do not come to an agreement over this recognition, no world, not even a perception, could be sustained for more than one instant. That is the joint, the emergence of the dimension of the symbolic in relation to the imaginary.

In the dream of Irma's injection, it is just when the world of the dreamer is plunged into the greatest imaginary chaos that discourse enters into play, discourse as such, independently of its meaning, since it is a senseless discourse. It then seems that the subject decomposes and disappears. In this dream there's the recognition of the fundamentally acephalic character of the subject, beyond a given point. This point is designated by the N of the trimethylamine formula. That's where the *I* of the subject is at that moment. And my suggestion to you that you see in that the dream's last word wasn't said without humour, nor without hesitation, since that is almost a *Witz*. Just when the hydra has lost its heads, a voice which is nothing more than *the voice of no one* causes the trimethylamine formula to emerge, as the last word on the matter, the word for everything. And this word means nothing except that it is a word.

That has almost a delirious air about it, and in fact it is. Let's say that it would be if all by himself the subject, Freud all by himself, analysing his dream, tried to find in it, proceeding as an occultist might, the secret designation of the point where as a matter of fact the solution to the mystery of the subject and the world lies. But he isn't all by himself. Once he communicates the secret of this Luciferian mystery to us, Freud is not confronted with this dream by himself. Just as the dream is addressed to the analyst in an analysis, Freud in his dream is already addressing himself to us.

He is already dreaming for the community of psychologists, of anthropologists. When he interprets this dream, it is us that he is addressing. And that is why seeing the word in the absurd final word of the dream isn't to reduce it to a delirium, since Freud, by means of this dream, makes himself heard by us, and effectively puts us on the road towards his object, which is the understanding of the dream. It isn't just for himself that he finds the *Nemo* or the alpha and omega of the acephalic subject, which represents his unconscious. On the contrary, by means of this dream it's him who speaks, and who realises that he is telling us – without having wanted to, without having recognised it at first, and only recognising it in his analysis of the dream, that is to say while speaking to us – something which is both him and no longer him – *I am he who wants to be forgiven for having dared to begin to cure these patients, who until now no one wanted to understand and whose cure was forbidden. I am he who wants not to be guilty of it, for to transgress any limit imposed up to now on human activity is always to be guilty. I want to not be (born) that.* [Je veux n'être pas cela.] *Instead of me, there are all the others. Here I am only the representative of this vast, vague movement, the quest for truth, in which I efface myself. I am no longer anything. My ambition was greater than I. No doubt the syringe was dirty. And precisely to the extent that I desired it too much, that I partook in this action, that I wanted to be, myself, the creator, I am not*

the creator. The creator is someone greater than I. It is my unconscious, it is this voice which speaks in me, beyond me.[7]

That is the meaning of this dream.

This analysis will now enable us to go further and understand how we should conceive of the death instinct, the death instinct's relation to the symbol, to this speech which is in the subject without being the speech of the subject. A question which we will keep in mind for the time it will take for it to gain weight in our minds, and for us to make the attempt when our turn comes to give a schematisation of the function of the death instinct. We are beginning to see why it is necessary that beyond the pleasure principle, which Freud introduces as being what governs the measure of the ego and installs consciousness in its relation with a world in which it finds itself, that beyond, exists the death instinct. Beyond the homeostases of the ego, there exists a dimension, another current, another necessity, whose plane must be differentiated. This compulsion to return to something which has been excluded by the subject, or which never entered into it, the *Verdrängt*, the repressed, we cannot bring it back within the pleasure principle. If the ego as such rediscovers and recognises itself, it is because there is a beyond to the *ego*, an unconscious, a subject which speaks, unknown to the subject. We must therefore posit another principle.

Why did Freud call it the death instinct?

That's what we will try to get hold of in the encounters to come.

16 March 1955

[7] This passage contains many uses of *je* (I) and *moi* (me) which have great resonances in connection with Lacan's discussion of the subject, the *I* and the ego (*moi*). Not all of these are capable of being transmitted in translation.

BEYOND THE IMAGINARY, THE SYMBOLIC, OR FROM THE LITTLE TO THE BIG OTHER

XV

Odd or even? Beyond intersubjectivity

AN ULTIMATE *QUOD*
THE MACHINE WHICH PLAYS
MEMORY AND REMINISCENCE
INTRODUCTION TO THE PURLOINED LETTER

I am sorry that our good friend Riguet isn't here today, for we are going to touch on questions on which he could perhaps have cast some light. We are going to brush up on the data of what in a confused fashion is called cybernetics, which is nonetheless something which concerns us in the highest degree in this little matter we've been pursuing for the last two seminars, *what is the subject?*, in so far as it is, technically speaking, in the Freudian sense of the word, the unconscious subject, and by way of that, essentially the subject who speaks.

Now, it seems more and more clear to us that this subject who speaks is beyond the *ego.*

1

Let us begin again at the acme of the specimen dream of Irma's injection. In so far as it continues the quest of the previous day, the dream's quest leads to the gap, to this open mouth at the back of which Freud sees this terrifying, composite image which we compared to the revelation of the Medusa's head.

This dream is not unique in this respect. Those who participated in my seminars the year before they were held here may recall the singular character of the Wolfman's dream, of which it could be said that it has, over the whole of the analysis of this case, a function analogous to the acme which we discern in the dream of Irma's injection. In fact, it enters into account after a long period of analysis, the very intellectualised – a term which isn't in the text but which corresponds well to what Freud means – character of which Freud himself notes, as a kind of analytical game, which nonetheless constitutes an authentic quest on the part of the subject, but for a very long time remains at the surface, as if inoperative. It is a stagnant analysis which promises to be interminable, when at last the dream appears, reactivated by a specific occasion in the life of

the subject, and its great importance deriving from having been repeated many times over, from a given epoch in childhood on.

What is this dream? It is the apparition, through a suddenly opened window, of the sight of a large tree, on whose branches wolves are perched. In the dream and in the drawing which the subject has bequeathed to us, which Freud reproduced, they are sufficiently enigmatic for us legitimately to wonder if they are really wolves, for they have distinctive fox tails, which we have formerly paused over to discuss. As you know, this dream turns out to be extremely rich, and the associations it triggers will lead Freud and his subject to nothing less than to the discovery, purely posited, reconstructed, of the primal scene.

The primal scene is reconstructed from the cross-checking which takes place in the course of analysis, it isn't relived. Nothing emerges in the memory of the subject – we will have to ask ourselves about this term memory – which might lead to talking about the resurrection of the scene, but everything forces one to the conviction that it did indeed happen in this way. So in this respect there's a far more significant gap between this scene and what the subject sees in the dream than the normal distance between the latent content and the manifest content of a dream. And yet, in both cases, we have a fascinating vision, which for a time suspends the subject in a state of captivation in which he loses himself. To Freud, the vision of the dream seems like the reversal of the fascination of the gaze. It is in the gaze of these wolves, so anxiety-provoking in the account of it given by the dreamer, that Freud sees the equivalent of the fascinated gaze of the infant confronted with the scene which profoundly marked him in the imaginary and redirected his entire instinctual life. We find there something like a unique and decisive revelation of the subject, in which an indefinite something that is unsayable is concentrated, in which the subject is lost for a moment, blown up. As in the dream of Irma's injection, the subject decomposes, fades away, dissociates into its various egos. Similarly, after the dream of the Wolfman, we witness the real start of the analysis, which makes possible the dissociation inside the subject of a personality which is so singularly composite that it makes for the originality of the style of the case. As you know, the problems left outstanding by this analysis were to be so serious that in the aftermath it could degenerate into psychosis. As I pointed out to you, one can ask whether the latter wasn't linked to the manoeuvrings of the analysis.

In the two dreams in question, we find ourselves confronted by a sort of ultimate experience, confronted by the apprehension of an ultimate real. What is most anxiety-provoking in Freud's life, his relations with women, his relations with death, are telescoped in the central vision of his dream and could certainly be extracted from it by an associative analysis. Enigmatic image apropos of which Freud evokes the navel of the dream, this abyssal relation to that which is most unknown, which is the hallmark of an exceptional,

privileged experience, in which the real is apprehended beyond all mediation, be it imaginary or symbolic. In short, one could say that such privileged experiences, and especially it would seem in a dream, are characterised by the relation which is established with an absolute other, I mean an other beyond all intersubjectivity.

This beyond of the intersubjective relation is attained most especially on the imaginary level. What's at issue is an essential alien [*dissemblable*], who is neither the supplement, nor the complement of the fellow being [*semblable*], who is the very image of dislocation, of the essential tearing apart of the subject. The subject passes beyond this glass in which he always sees, entangled, his own image. All interposition between the subject and the world ceases. One gets the feeling that a passage into a kind of a-logic occurs, and that's where the problem in fact begins, for we see that we are not in it. And yet the *logos* doesn't forego all its rights here, since that's where the essential meaning of the dream, its liberating meaning, begins, since that's where Freud found an escape from his latent guilt. In the same way, the subject will find the key to his problems beyond the terrifying experience of the Wolfman's dream.

It's also the question we encountered in the little scientific meeting yesterday evening – to what extent does the symbolic relation, the relation of language, retain its value beyond the subject, in as much as it may be characterised as centred in an *ego* – by an *ego*, for an *alter-ego*?

Human knowledge, and by the same token the sphere of relations of consciousness, consists in a certain relation to this structure that we call the *ego*, around which the imaginary relation is centred. The latter has taught us that the *ego* is never just the subject, that it is essentially a relation to the other, that it finds its point of departure and its fulcrum in the other. All the objects are considered from the standpoint of the *ego*.

But all the objects are in fact desired from the standpoint of a primitively discordant subject, a subject fundamentally fragmented by this *ego*. The subject cannot desire without itself dissolving, and without seeing, because of this very fact, the object escaping it, in a series of infinite displacements – I am here alluding to what I call, in a short-hand way, the fundamental disorder of the instinctual life of man. And the tension between the subject – which cannot desire without being fundamentally separated from the object – and the *ego*, where the gaze towards the object starts, is the starting point for the dialectic of consciousness.

I have tried to fashion before you the myth of a consciousness without *ego*, which could be defined as the reflection of the mountain in a lake. The *ego* appears, for its part, in the world of objects, as an object, though a privileged one to be sure. Consciousness in man is by essence a polar tension between an *ego* alienated from the subject and a perception which fundamentally escapes it, a pure *percipi*. The subject would be strictly identical to this perception if there

weren't this *ego* which, if one may put it like this, makes it emerge from out of its very perception in a relationship of tension. Under certain conditions, this imaginary relation itself reaches its own limit, and the *ego* fades away, dissipates, becomes disorganised, dissolves. The subject is precipitated into a confrontation with something which under no circumstances can be confused with the everyday experience of perception, something which we could call an *id*, and which we will simply call, so as not to lead to confusion, a *quod*, a *what-is-it?* The question we're going to raise today concerns this confrontation of the subject beyond the *ego* with the *quod* which seeks to come into being in analysis.

Can an interrogation be sustained concerning this ultimate *quod*, which is the experience of the unconscious subject as such, concerning which we no longer know who or what it is? The evolution of analysis itself in this respect puts us in a peculiarly strange position, in so far as it takes as an irreducible given these tendencies of the subject which on the other hand it shows us to be permeable, traversed and structured like signifiers, playing, beyond the real, in the register of meaning, playing on the equivalence of the signified and the signifier in its most material aspect, plays on words, puns, witticisms – which in the end leads to the abolition of the human sciences, in that the last word of the witticism demonstrates the supreme mastery of the subject in relation to the signified itself, since it puts it to all kinds of use, since it plays with it essentially in order to annihilate it.

I'd now like to draw your attention to an exemplary experience, which will constitute a first step for us towards the elucidation of what a *quis* we are ignorant of ponders, in this beyond of the imaginary relation in which the other is absent and in which all intersubjectivity apparently dissolves.

2

You know that a great fuss is made of adding machines in cybernetics. They have even been called thinking machines, in so far as some of them certainly are capable of solving logical problems, conceived, it is true, in a quite artificial manner, so as to confuse the mind for a moment, in such a way that we don't do as well at them as they do.

Today we won't go into these arcana. You can bring a horse to water, but you can't make him drink, and so as not to instill too great an aversion in you to this exercise, I am going to try to lead you into this domain in a more entertaining manner. We have never despised the entertainments of physics and mathematical recreations – you can get a lot out of it.

Amongst these adding or thinking machines there are others which have been dreamt up, which have endearing peculiarities – these are machines which play, inscribed within the functioning and, quite singularly, within the limit of a certain strategy.

Just this fact, that a machine can have a strategy, already leads us to the heart of the problem. For in the end, what is a strategy? How can a machine partake in it? Today I will try to bring home to you the elementary truths which are swept away by that.

A machine has been constructed, so I hear, which plays the game of even and odd. I won't vouch for this, as I haven't seen it, but I can promise you that before the end of these seminars I will – our good friend Riguet told me that he would confront me with it. One must have experience of these things, one can't talk about a machine without having had a shot at it, seen what it can do, made some discoveries, even some sentimental ones. The real eye-opener is that the machine I'm talking about ends up winning. You know the game, you must still have some memories of school. You put two or three marbles in your hand, and you put out your closed fist to the opponent, saying – *Odd or even?* I have, two marbles say, and if he says *odd*, he must hand one over to me. And so on.

Let us try to consider for a moment what it means for a machine to play the game of even and odd. We couldn't work it all out by ourselves, because it would look a bit heavy-handed in the circumstances. A short text comes to our aid, from Edgar Poe, which the cyberneticists, I noticed, make something of. This text is in *The Purloined Letter*, an absolutely sensational short story, which could even be considered as essential for a psychoanalyst.

The characters concerned to recover the purloined letter, which I will tell you more about later, are two policemen. One is the prefect of police, that is to say, in accordance with literary conventions, an idiot. The other is a nobody, an amateur policeman with dazzling intelligence, called Dupin, who foreshadows Sherlock Holmes and those other heroes of the novels you devour in your free time. The latter comes out with the following –

I knew one about eight years of age, whose success at guessing in the game of 'even and odd' attracted universal admiration. This game is simple, and is played with marbles. One player holds in his hand a number of these toys, and demands of another whether that number is even or odd. If the guess is right, the guesser wins one; if wrong, he loses one. The boy to whom I allude won all the marbles of the school. Of course he had some principle of guessing; and this lay in mere observation and admeasurement of the astuteness of his opponents. For example, an arrant simpleton is his opponent, and, holding up his closed hand, asks, "Are they even or odd?" Our schoolboy replies, "Odd," and loses; but upon the second trial he wins, for he then says to himself, "The simpleton had them even upon the first trial, and his amount of cunning is just sufficient to make him have them odd upon the second; I will therefore guess odd;" – he guesses odd, and wins. Now, with a simpleton a degree above the first, he would have reasoned thus: "This fellow finds that in the first instance I guessed odd, and, in the second, he will propose to himself upon the first impulse, a simple variation from even to odd, as did the first simpleton; but then a second thought will suggest that this is too simple a variation, and finally he will decide upon putting it even as before. I

will therefore guess even;" – he guesses even, and wins. Now this mode of reasoning in the schoolboy, whom his fellows termed "lucky," – what, in its last analysis, is it?'

'It is merely,' I said, 'an identification of the reasoner's intellect with that of his opponent.'

'It is,' said Dupin; 'and, upon inquiring of the boy by what means he effected the thorough *identification in which his success consisted, I received answer as follows: "When I wish to find out how wise, or how stupid, or how good, or how wicked is any one, or what are his thoughts at the moment, I fashion the expression of my face, as accurately as possible, in accordance with the expression of his, and then wait to see what thoughts or sentiments arise in my mind or heart, as if to match or correspond with the expression." This response of the schoolboy lies at the bottom of all the spurious profundity which has been attributed to Rochefoucault, to La Bougive, to Machiavelli, and to Campanella.'*

'And the identification,' I said, 'of the reasoner's intellect with that of his opponent, depends, if I understand you aright, upon the accuracy with which the opponent's intellect is admeasured.'

We are here faced with reasoning which raises a certain number of problems.

At first glance, it is a matter of simple psychological penetration, a kind of egomiming. The subject adopts a mirror position, enabling him to guess the behaviour of his adversary. Nonetheless, even this method already presupposes the dimension of intersubjectivity, in that the subject has to know that he is faced with another subject, in principle homogeneous with him. The variations to which he may be subject have far less importance than the possible scansions of the position of the other. There is no other ground for psychological reasoning.

What are these scansions? There is a first period [*temps*] in which I suppose the other subject to be in exactly the same position as me, thinking what I am thinking at the very moment I am thinking it. Let us suppose that it seems to me, for my part, that it would be more natural for the other to change theme, for him to switch from even to odd, for instance. In the first period [*temps*], I believe that this is what he will do. The important thing is that there may be a second period [*temps*], in which a less partial subjectivity is manifested. The subject is in fact capable of making himself other, and to end up thinking that the other, being himself an other, thinks like him, and that he has to place himself in the position of a third party, to get out of being this other who is his pure reflection. As third party, I realise that if that other doesn't play the game, he fools his opponent. And from then on I'm ahead of him, by opting for the position opposite to the one which seemed to me, in the first period [*temps*], to be the most natural.

But after this second period [*temps*], you can suppose a third, which makes it extremely difficult to pursue the same analogical reasoning. After all, someone of superior intelligence can in fact understand that the trick is, notwithstanding

the fact that one seems to be very intelligent, to play like an idiot, that is to return to the first formula. What does that mean? This – if the game of even and odd is played on the level of the dual relation, of the equivalence of one and the other, of the *alter ego* and the *ego*, you will very quickly realise that you haven't reached any kind of second order, since as soon as you think of the third, an oscillation returns you to the first. This doesn't preclude something in the technique of the game from partaking as a matter of fact in the mythical identification with the opponent. But that's a fundamental bifurcation.

It may be that something like a divination, which, however, is problematic, is put into effect, a divination by the subject who has a certain sympathetic rapport with the opponent. It's not out of the question that there may have been such a young child who won more frequently than his turn should allow – which is the only definition one can give in this instance of the word *win*. But the heart of the matter lies in a completely different register from that of imaginary intersubjectivity.

That the subject should think the other to be similar [*semblable*] to himself, and that he reasons as he thinks the other must reason – in the first period [*temps*] like this, in the second period like that – is a fundamental point of departure failing which nothing can be thought, yet is nonetheless totally inadequate in helping us penetrate in any degree to where the key to success might be found. I don't consider the interpsychological experience to be excluded in this case, but it insinuates itself within the fragile framework of the imaginary relation to the other, and it hangs on that very uncertainty. Within this framework, the experience is one which fades away. It cannot be made logical. Take another look at the dialectic of the game of black and white discs placed on the backs of the three characters who have to work out what their own sign is on the basis of what they see on the two others. You will be in a position to discover something of the same order.

We will take the other path, the one which can be made logical, the one which can be upheld in discourse. Obviously it imposes itself as soon as your partner is the machine.

It is clear that you don't have to ask yourself whether the machine is stupid or intelligent, whether it will play in accordance with its first or its second go. Inversely, the machine has no means of placing itself in a reflexive position in relation to its human partner.

What is it to play with a machine? The physiognomy of the machine, however prepossessing it may be, can be of no help whatsoever in this instance. No means of getting out of it by way of identification. One is thus from the start forced to take the path of language [*langage*], of the possible combinatory of the machine. One knows one can expect from the machine a series of relations, operating with an excessive rapidity thanks to those amazing relays, the electronic phases, and, according to the latest news, these transistors the

papers can't stop talking about, with a commercial aim in mind no doubt, but one which doesn't put in question the quality of these objects.

But before we ask ourselves what the machine is going to do, let us ask ourselves what it means to win and lose at the game of even and odd.

On the basis of one single go, it has no meaning whatsoever. Whether your answer coincides with what's in your partner's hand is no more surprising than the converse. For one go, it makes no sense, except purely conventionally, to win or to lose. *Odd, even*, it has no importance whatsoever. Do remember that the best translation of the odd number is the number two, which rejoices in being odd, and with reason, for if it didn't have a reason for rejoicing in being odd, it wouldn't be even either. So, all you have to do is invert this game into the game *who loses wins* [*qui perd gagne*], for it to be quite evident that these things are equivalent.

What is more surprising is losing or winning twice in a row. For if on one go you have a 50% chance each way, you have only a 25% chance of repeating it the second time.

\+ +
− −
\+ −
− +

And on the third go, there is only a 12.5% chance of continuing to win or lose.

Moreover, this is purely theoretical, for from then on, I'd like you to see that we are no longer at all in the domain of the real, but in that of the symbolic signification which we've defined by these *plus-minuses* and these *minus-pluses*. From the point of view of the real, on each occasion there are as many chances of winning as of losing. The very notion of probability and chance presupposes the introduction of a symbol into the real. It's a symbol you're addressing, and your chances bear only on the symbol. In the real, at each go, you have as many chances of winning or of losing as on the preceding go. There is no reason why, by a pure fluke, you might not win ten times in a row. This only begins to have meaning when you write a sign, and as long as you're not there to write it, there is nothing that can be called a win. The pact of the game is essential to the reality of the experience sought after.

Now let us see what is going to happen with the machine.

What's interesting is that you end up going through the same motions as you would with a partner. By pushing a button, you ask it a question about a *quod* which you have there in your hand, and all this is about knowing what it is. That already tells you that this *quod* may perhaps not be reality but a symbol. You are asking the machine a question about a symbol, a machine whose structure must in fact bear some family resemblance to the symbolic order, and that is precisely why it is a machine for playing, a strategic machine. But let us not go into details.

The machine is constructed in such a way that it gives a response. You had *plus* in your hand. It gives the answer *minus*. It lost. The fact that it lost consists solely in the dissimilarity [*dissemblance*] of *plus* and *minus*.

You are obliged to inform the machine that it has lost by inscribing a *minus*. I really don't know whether that is how the machine works, but it's all the same to me – there's no other way it can work, and if it does work some other way, it is equivalent to that.

How on earth can this machine, which in principle should beat me, be put together? Will it play at random? That makes no sense at all. It may well be that for its first three answers it always says the same thing, but that isn't the point. It is in the succession of its answers that we find the beginnings of the phenomenon.

Let us suppose that at the start the machine is really stupid – it really doesn't matter in the least whether it is stupid or intelligent, since being stupid is the height of intelligence. Let us say that, to begin with, it always answers the same thing. It so happens that I, who am intelligent, say *plus*. As it still answers me *minus*, it puts me on the right track. I say to myself – the machine must be a bit slow – I could just as well tell myself the contrary – and in actual fact let us suppose that it loses again.

This is where the fact that we have had several gos must necessarily come into the construction of my machine. Here another section of the machine starts coming into play, recording the fact that it has lost three times – I'm not sure of that, but I can assume it. Besides, as I am very intelligent, but nonetheless not as intelligent as all that, I can suppose that the machine quite stupidly changes and that it's me that is a bit slow on this occasion. This time the machine wins.

1 + −
2 + −
3 + −
4 + +

Having lost three gos, the machine, then, begins to react. What am I to do? I say to myself – perhaps it will persevere, so I'll change my tune. Let us assume that I win.

5 − +

I'm not forced to reason like this, but I want to show you its limits. I can tell myself that, now that it has won, the machine will wait until after the third go to change. So I think that it will play *plus* one more time and I play *minus*. But suppose that the second section comes into play when there has been *minus* three times. So now my machine plays *minus*, and wins yet again.

6 − −

I want to draw your attention to the fact that the machine has won twice using rather similar means. This isn't to show you that this is the way in which the machine will win. But depending on the complexity of the elaborated

mechanism, and the successive sections which can furnish a certain amount of information as to the *pluses* or *minuses*, transformations, which in their turn may be coordinated amongst themselves, will end up yielding a temporal modulation analogous to what takes place in the confrontation of two players. All one needs to posit is a machine complex enough to have a sufficient number of superimposed sections bringing together a large enough count of previous goes – instead of grouping three of them, it could group eight or ten – and its range will be beyond my understanding. Nevertheless it cannot go beyond its reproduction on paper, that is to say I myself can also examine it, on condition that I go over the entire combinatory myself before I risk my hand at it. So there I am entering into some sort of rivalry with it.

I want to draw your attention to the fact that, under these conditions, there's no reason why the machine should win rather than me, except for my exhaustion. To reconstruct the number of sections in this machine, the sets sampled by it at every moment whereby it determines its play, I would be faced with problems of such mathematical complexity that I would have to have recourse to – note the irony – an adding machine.

But then, I'm not playing at even and odd, I am playing at predicting the play of the machine. Now, I will start playing, to find out what will happen.

One could suppose the machine to be capable of drawing up a psychological profile of its adversary. But earlier on I drew your attention to the fact that the latter only functions within the framework of intersubjectivity. The whole question is summed up as the problem of knowing whether the other is cunning enough to know that, I too, am an other for him, if he is capable of going beyond this second period [*temps*]. If I suppose him to be identical to myself, by the same token I suppose him capable of thinking with respect to me what I am in the process of thinking concerning him, and to think that I am going to think that he will do the opposite of what he thinks I am in the process of thinking. A simple oscillation which always comes back. From this fact alone, everything pertaining to the order of the psychological profile is completely eliminated.

What happens if, on the other hand, I play at random? You know the chapter in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* which deals with the production of a random number.[1] That's an experiment which certainly does escape the well known metaphor of the rabbit which one is always advised to remember was previously put in the hat. Freud – with the assistance of his subject, but it is clearly because the subject is speaking to Freud that it works – Freud is the first to notice that a number drawn from the hat will quickly bring out things which will lead the subject to that moment when he slept with his little sister, even to the year he failed his baccalaureat because that morning he had masturbated. If we acknowledge such experiences, we will be obliged to postulate that chance

[1] (1901b) Chapter XII, GW IV 270ff; SE VI 242ff.

doesn't exist. While the subject doesn't think about it, the symbols continue to mount one another, to copulate, to proliferate, to fertilise each other, to jump on each other, to tear each other apart. And when you take one out, you can project on to it the speech of this unconscious subject we've been talking about.

In other words, even if the word of my life had to be sought in something as long as an entire recital of the *Aeneid*, it isn't unthinkable that a machine would in time succeed in reconstituting it. Now, any machine can be reduced to a series of relays which are simply *pluses* and *minuses*. Everything, in the symbolic order, can be represented with the aid of such a series.

One mustn't confuse the *history*, in which the unconscious subject inscribes himself, with his *memory* – a word I wouldn't be the first one to tell you is used in a confusing way. On the contrary, at the point we have reached, it is important to draw a very sharp distinction between memory and *remembering* [*remémoration*], which pertains to the order of history.

Memory has been spoken of as a means of characterising the living organism as such. One then says that a living substance, following a given experience, undergoes a transformation such that it will no longer react to the same experience in the same way as before. This is all rather ambiguous – to react differently, what does that mean? within what limits? No longer reacting at all, isn't that an effect of memory? Is the experience of death, definitively recorded, a memory? In any case, there is no reason to identify this memory, a definable property of living substance, with remembering, the grouping and the succession of symbolically defined events, the pure symbol engendering in its turn a succession.

What goes on in the machine at this level, to confine ourselves just to that, is analogous to the remembering we deal with in analysis. Indeed, memory is here the result of integrations. The first section added on to the basic memory is made up of a section which groups results by threes. This result, memorised, is available to be brought in at any moment. But the next moment, it may well no longer be at all the same. It is possible that it has changed content, changed sign, changed structure. If an error occurs in the course of the experience, what happens? It's not what happens afterwards which is modified, but everything which went before. We have a retroactive effect – *nachträglich*, as Freud calls it – specific to the structure of symbolic memory, in other words to the function of remembering.

I think that this little apologue, with its problematic character, has introduced you to the following, that for there to be a subject who asks a question, all that is needed is a *quod* upon which the interrogation bears. Do we even have to concern ourselves with what this subject is and with respect to which other it is to be located? That is totally useless. The most important thing is the symbolic *quod*. For the subject it is like an image in the mirror, but of a different order – it isn't for nothing that Odysseus pierces the eye of the Cyclop.

In so far as he speaks, the subject can perfectly well find his answer, his return, his secret, his mystery, in the constructed symbol which modern machines represent for us, namely something far more acephalic still than what we encountered in the dream of Irma's injection.

It raises the question of the relation of signification to the living man.

3

Earlier on we referred to *The Purloined Letter*. Everything in this tale revolves around the problems of signification, of meaning, of received opinion, and precisely because received opinion is held in common, the truth is at stake in it.

You know the theme of the story. The prefect of police is charged with the recovery of a letter which was stolen by someone of considerable distinction, who is perfectly amoral. The character in question lifted this letter from the table in the Queen's boudoir. The letter came from another person of distinction whose relations with her she had reason to hide. She doesn't succeed in hiding the letter as quickly as she wanted to but the gesture she makes is enough for the libertine minister, culprit and hero, to see the importance of the piece of paper. She acts as if nothing had happened, and places the letter in plain view. As for the King, who is also there, by definition he is destined not to notice anything, on condition that one doesn't attract his attention. This is what allows the minister, with a manoeuvre consisting in producing a vaguely analogous letter, which he places on the table, to get his hands on it under the nose and in full view – and that's the snag[2] – of those present, this letter which will for him be a source of considerable power over the royal persons, without anyone being able to say anything about it. The Queen realises full well what is happening, but she is bound by the exact conditions of the three-sided game.

The point is to find the letter. All kinds of speculations, including an echo regarding the game of even and odd, lead one to understand that the play of intersubjectivity is so essential that all that's needed is for someone to have the technique, the knowledge and the rigour, for someone to be fascinated by the real, as very intelligent people are, which makes them strict imbeciles. The house of the minister is searched inch by inch, numbering each cubic foot. Everything is looked at through the microscope, long needles passed through cushions, all the scientific methods are employed. And the letter isn't found. However, the letter has to be in the house, for the minister must have constant access to it so as to be able to shove it under the King's nose. He doesn't carry it on himself, since they had him pickpocketed.

The play here is on the very seductive idea that the more the policemen act

[2] *'puisque la barbe est là'* – an untranslatable pun on the preceding phrase which also employs the word *'barbe'* (*'s'emparer au nez et à la barbe'*).

like policemen the less they'll find. It will never occur to them that the letter is right under their noses, hung on a ribbon above the fireplace. The thief was content just to give it a wellworn look, to camouflage it by turning it inside out and putting another seal on it. The extremely sly character, who has his reasons for bearing a grudge against the minister, doesn't pass up the opportunity of taking the letter and substituting another for it, which will be the downfall of his enemy.

But that isn't the point. What is it that makes this rather improbable tale so convincing? After all, it is surprising that the police didn't find the letter in the course of their ransack. To explain that, Poe places intersubjectivity in the forefront – the clever guy goes to the limit of what is unthinkable for the other, and as such will escape. But if you read the tale for its fundamental value, you will realise that there's another key, which makes the whole thing hang together, and which brings with it conviction, whereas, if presented somewhat differently, the story wouldn't interest us for one moment.

It seems to me, that you analysts, you should recognise this key immediately – it is simply the identity of the symbolic formula of the situation, in the two principal steps in its development. The Queen thought the letter was safe because there it was, bang in front of everybody. And the minister also leaves it out in the open, thinking that therefore it can't be taken. It isn't because he is a strategician, but because he is a poet, that he wins, until the intervention of the super-poet, Dupin.

Nothing in the way of intersubjectivity is decisive here, because once the measures of the real are made tight, once a perimeter, a volume, is defined once and for all, there is nothing to lead one to suspect that when all is said and done even a letter might escape. If nonetheless the fact that they can't find it is convincing, it is because the domain of significations continues to exist, even in the mind of people assumed to be as stupid as policemen. If the police do not find it, it isn't only because it is in too accessible a place, but as a consequence of this signification, namely that a letter of great value, upon which the might of the State now bears, with the rewards which may accrue in such a case, has to be hidden with exceeding care. Quite naturally, the slave assumes that the master is a master, and that when he has something precious within his reach, he grabs it. In the same way, one thinks that when one has reached a certain point of comprehension in psychoanalysis, one can grab it and say – *Here it is, we've got it.* On the contrary, signification as such is never where one thinks it must be.

The merit of the apologue is of this order. It is on the basis of the analysis of the symbolic value of the different moments in the drama that its coherence, and even its psychological motivation, can be discovered.

It isn't a game for the subtlest, it isn't a psychological game, it is a dialectical game.

23 March 1955

COMPLEMENT

The next session: THE SEMINAR PLAYS

Today, the holidays are getting nearer, it's a lovely day, so let's do something short and sweet.

Last time we discussed dual intersubjectivity and its mirages. It isn't all mirage, but if we look at our neighbour and think that he's thinking what we're thinking, it's a gross error. That has to be our starting point.

I've shown you the limits of what can be founded on the basis of this dual intersubjectivity, by turning to this famous game of even and odd which, so as not to invent it, I took from Poe – and there is no reason for not thinking that he inherited it from the mouth of the child who used to win at this game.

Playing isn't that difficult. The most natural movement is simply to change from even to odd. The intelligent guy will do the opposite. But on the third occasion [*temps*], the most intelligent course is to act like an idiot, or the alleged idiot. That is to say, everything loses its signification. I have thus shown you that in order to play this game in a reasonable fashion, you must try to undo any grip your adversary may have.

The next step – and this is the Freudian hypothesis – consists in positing that there is nothing random in whatever we undertake with the intention of doing so at random.

I have drawn up on the board what nowadays passes for a machine. When a subject comes up with something at random, it will isolate the formula by which this comes about, a formula which can always be isolated, and in some way it reflects the compulsion to repeat, in as much as it is beyond the pleasure principle, beyond relations, rational motivations, beyond feelings, beyond anything to which we can accede. In the beginnings of psychoanalysis, this beyond is the unconscious, in so far as we cannot reach it, it's the transference in so far as that is really what modulates feelings of love and of hatred, which aren't the transference – the transference is what makes it possible for us to interpret this language composed out of everything the subject can present us with, a language which, outside of psychoanalysis is, in principle, incomplete and misunderstood. That is what the beyond of the pleasure principle is. It is the beyond of signification. The two are indistinguishable.

O. MANNONI: *Your attempt at eliminating intersubjectivity nonetheless seems to me to leave it untouched.*

I will have you notice that I do not eliminate it. I take a case in which it may be subtracted. Of course, it can't be eliminated.

O. MANNONI: *Perhaps it isn't subtracted, because in the law of repetition which we obey without knowing it, two things must be considered. One is that it may not be*

detectable in the thing that's repeated. One could make an indefinite arithmetical study of the numbers and not find the law of repetition, if, for example, we take the rhythms into account. If we repeat words, it may be because a certain number rhyme with the unconscious thought. At that moment, no mathematician could find the reason behind the succession of numbers – that will lie outside the domain of the machine.

I like what you're saying.

O. MANNONI: *And on the other hand, if the law is discovered, by this very fact, an equality is produced in the following manner – by one of the players discovering it, while the other doesn't. For a law that's discovered is no longer a law.*

But of course, my dear friend, the last time, to simplify, I made the subject play with a machine.

O. MANNONI: *That introduces the struggle between the two subjects.*

But of course. But let us begin with the element. The simple possibility of making the subject play with a machine is already sufficiently instructive. That isn't to say that the machine can find the reason for my visions. I said that my personal formula might be as long as a recital of the *Aeneid*, but there's nothing to say that such a recital would give us all the significations. If we are already to find rhymes, we could be certain that we're in the presence of *symbolic efficacity*. I employ this term of Claude Lévi-Strauss's[1] here in relation to a machine. Are we to believe that symbolic efficacity is due to man? Our entire discourse here puts it into question. This question would in any case only be decided one way or another if we had an idea of how language is born – something which we must renounce any knowledge of for a long time.

In the face of this symbolic efficacity, what we need to do today is to highlight a certain symbolic *inertia*, characteristic of the subject, of the unconscious subject.

To this end I am going to propose to you that we play the game of even and odd in an ordered fashion, and we are going to record the results. I'll work them up during the holidays, and we will see whether we can draw any conclusions from them.

That will depend on the following – is there a difference between a list of deliberately selected numbers and a sequence of numbers chosen at random? It is up to the mathematician, to M. Riguet who's present here, to explain to us what a sequence of numbers chosen at random is. You can't imagine how difficult it is. It has taken generations of mathematicians parrying right and left, to succeed truly in saying what numbers chosen at random are.

Riguet, you will be the note-taker in this first game. David, you are going to play even and odd with Mannoni.

[1] See C. Lévi-Strauss, 'Symbolic efficacity' in *Structural Anthropology* (1958), trans. C. Jacobson and B. Grundfest Schoepf, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968.

O. MANNONI: *I, for one, cheat at this particular game.*

I couldn't care less.

(*Play between M. David and M. Mannoni.*)

O. MANNONI: *It's very simple, every time I said it at random, I won. When I no longer had a rule, I often lost. The rule varied. At one point, I took the order from verses of Mallarmé, then a telephone number, a car registration number, then what's written on the blackboard, using vowels and consonants.*

How many goes did you have with the first rule?

O. MANNONI: *That is when I really won.*

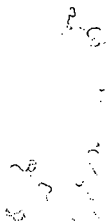
That was only to keep your interest up. Now we want to have something from each of you, something written in whatever style you like – you can do it as fast as you can, and I think that the faster it is, the better it will be – while thinking that you are playing even and odd with the machine. But I ask you not to go about it the way Mannoni did. Do it at random. Show us your symbolic inertia.

(*The participants play, and hand their sheets in to J. Lacan.*)

30 March 1955

XVI

The Purloined Letter



The captivating paper you heard yesterday presented you with what we would call the play of the image and the symbol.[1] That not everything in this relation can be expressed in genetic terms is in fact what emerges from Mme Dolto's work, and that is precisely why she is *at one* with our teaching.

There are thousands of ways of becoming interested as therapists in the aetiology of schizophrenia. To be sure, there is doubtless a medical dimension here, that of diagnosis, of prognosis, but by adapting her vantage point, she throws vivid and profound light on the characteristic phenomenon of this stage of individual development, and no praise is too high for the genius and honesty of her experience. We can't make our categories work everywhere, but nonetheless they enable us to operate a wholesale reshaping of nosography, such as Perrier has started on.

O. MANNONI: *What bothers me is that you assimilate drawing, the graphic, to the imaginary. Now, it seems to me that a drawing is already an obscure elaboration of the imaginary.*

I talked about the imaginary, I didn't say that it *was* a drawing, which is already a symbol.

O. MANNONI: *But not quite, which is what intrigues me.*

Of course, it will intrigue you so long as we haven't taken a drawing as the object, nor begun to raise the question as to what it is together. But it isn't our object this year.

My comments last time were aimed at giving you a clear sense of the relation of the subject to the symbolic function. We will take further steps in that direction today.

[1] On 26 April 1955, Françoise Dolto gave a paper to a Scientific Session of the Société Française de Psychanalyse, entitled 'A clinical case of the recovery of language'.

1

The symbol's emergence into the real begins with a wager. The very notion of cause, when viewed as being capable of bringing with it a mediation between the chain of symbols and the real, is established on the basis of an original wager – will it be this or not? It's not for nothing that the notion of probability takes up a place at the very heart of the development of the physical sciences, as the most recent discussions in epistemology show us; nor is it for nothing that probability theory is reviving a set of problems which, throughout the history of thought, for centuries, have alternately been highlighted and occulted.

The wager lies at the heart of any radical question bearing on symbolic thought. Everything comes back to *to be or not to be*,[2] to the choice between what will or won't come out, to the primordial couple of *plus* or *minus*. But presence as absence connotes possible absence or presence. As soon as the subject himself comes to be, he owes it to a certain non-being on which he raises his being. And if he isn't, if he isn't something, he obviously bears witness to some kind of absence, but he will always remain purveyor of this absence, I mean that he will bear the burden of its proof for lack of being capable of proving the presence.

That's what's important about this chain of *pluses* and *minuses*, aligned here on a bit of paper, drawn from diverse experimental set-ups. The examination of the results we've gathered has concrete value, in showing certain deviations in the curve of gains and losses.

As we saw last time, playing amounts to pursuing in a subject an alleged regularity which escapes observation, but which must be translated into the results by something of a deviation in the probability curve. That is in fact what the facts tend to show, indicating that just by the simple fact of dialogue, even the most blind, no pure game of chance exists, instead there is already the articulation of one word with another. This word is included in the fact that even when the subject plays by himself, his play only has any meaning if he says in advance what he thinks will come out. You can play heads or tails by yourself. But from the point of view of speech, you aren't playing by yourself – there is already the articulation of three signs, comprising a win or a loss, and this articulation prefigures the very meaning of the result. In other words, if there is no question, there is no game, if there is no structure there is no question. The question is constituted, organised, by the structure.

By itself, the play of the symbol represents and organises, independently of the peculiarities of its human support, this something which is called a subject. The human subject doesn't foment this game, he takes his place in it, and plays the role of the little *pluses* and *minuses* in it. He is himself an element in this chain

[2] English in the original.

which, as soon as it is unwound, organises itself in accordance with laws. Hence the subject is always on several levels, caught up in crisscrossing networks.

Anything from the real can always come out. But once the symbolic chain is constituted, as soon as you introduce a certain significant unity, in the form of unities of succession, what comes out can no longer be just anything.

Let us agree to group the *pluses* and the *minuses* which may come up into threes, and to call the sequences 1, 2, or 3, according to which type they belong.

(1)	(2)	(3)
+ + +	+ + −	+ − +
− − −	− − +	− + −
	− + +	
	+ − −	

This transformation alone gives rise to extremely precise laws. The 1s, the 2s, and the 3s cannot succeed each other in just any order. A 1 will never be able to follow a 3, a 1 will never come after any odd-numbered sequence of 2s. But after an even number of 2s, a 1 is possible. An indefinite number of 2s is always possible between a 1 and a 3.

Starting with this, you can constitute other significant unities, representing the intervals between two of these groups.

Passing from 1 to 2 → β
Passing from 2 to 2 → γ
Passing from 1 to 1, Passing from 1 to 3 → α

Shift back from 2 to 1, Shift back from 2 to 3 → δ

You can verify that after the repetition of a great number of αs, if there'd been a β before, only a δ could follow. So this is a primitive symbolic organisation which already enables one to go beyond the metaphors I used the other day in speaking of memory internal to the symbol. In some way, the series of αs remembers that it cannot express anything but a δ, if a β, however far away it might have been, occurred before the series of αs.

You see the possibilities of demonstration and theorematisation which can be derived from the simple use of these symbolic series. From the start, and independently of any attachment to some supposedly causal bond, the symbol already plays, and produces by itself, its necessities, its structures, its organisations. That is indeed what occurs in our discipline, in so far as it consists in getting to the bottom of the significance of the symbolic order for the world of the human subject.

Within this perspective, what is immediately clear is what I have called the inmixing of subjects. I will illustrate it for you, since chance has offered it to us, with the story of *The Purloined Letter*, from which we took the example of the game of even and odd.

2

This example is introduced by the spokesman of the tale's meaning, and it is supposed to give an elementary image of the intersubjective relation, founded upon the following – as a function of the other's supposed capacities for trickery, for dissimulation, for strategy, capacities to be found in a dual reflective relation, the subject assumes the thought of this other. This depends upon the idea that there is a way of distinguishing the understanding of the idiot from that of the intelligent man.

I have stressed how fragile this point of view is, even how completely alien it is to what is at issue, for the simple reason that the intelligent thing to do, in this case, is to play the idiot. However, Poe is a prodigiously alert man, and all you have to do is read the whole of the text to see the extent to which the symbolic structure of the story far surpasses the scope of this reasoning, so attractive for a moment, but excessively weak, and whose sole function here is as a booby trap.

I would like those who have read *The Purloined Letter* since I mentioned it to raise their hands – not even half the room!

Even so, I think you know that it's a story about a letter stolen in sensational and exemplary circumstances, which is narrated by a hapless prefect of police, who plays the role, classic in this kind of mythology, of someone who has to find what is being sought after, but who cannot but end up losing the thread. In short, this prefect asks a certain Dupin to get him out of this tangle. Dupin, for his part, represents the character, more mythical still, who understands everything. But the story goes well beyond the register of comedy tied to the fundamental images which make up the genre of police detection.

The august figure whose outline is to be discerned in the background of the story seems to be none other than a royal personage. The scene is set in France, under the restored monarchy. So the authority is certainly not invested with the sacred aspect which can keep at a distance the hands of the bold as they make an attempt on it.

A minister, himself a man of high rank, of great social facility, who is in the confidence of the royal couple, since he is to be found discussing affairs of State in the private quarters of the King and the Queen, notices the discomforture of the latter, who is trying to dissimulate from her august partner the presence on the table of nothing less than a letter, whose superscription and meaning the minister immediately remarks. A secret correspondence is at stake. If the letter is there, thrown indifferently on the table, it is precisely so that the King won't

notice it. The Queen is banking on his inattention, maybe even his blindness.

The minister, for his part, keeping his eyes skinned, realises what is going on, and plays a little game, which consists in first diverting the company, then in taking from his pocket a letter which happens to be on him, and which vaguely resembles the object – from now on we can call it the object of litigation. After having waved it around, he casually places it on the table next to the first letter. Then, profiting from the inattention of the main character, all he has to do is gently take the letter, and put it in his pocket without the Queen, who hasn't missed a single detail of this entire scene, being able to do anything but resign herself to watching the disappearance under her very eyes of this compromising document.

I'll skip the rest. At all costs, the Queen wants to recover this instrument of pressure, if not of blackmail. She calls in the police. The police, whose destiny it is to find nothing, find nothing. And it is Dupin who solves the problem, and discovers the letter, in the minister's apartment, in the most obvious place, within reach, scarcely disguised at all. To be sure, it would seem that it shouldn't have escaped the notice of the police, since it was included within the orbit of their microscopic examination.

In order to lay his hands on it, Dupin gets someone to fire a shot outside. While the minister goes to the window to see what is happening, Dupin goes to the letter, and quickly substitutes another for it, containing the following verses:

. . . un dessein si funeste,
S'il n'est digne d'Atrée, est digne de Thyeste.[3]

These lines are taken from Crébillon the elder's *Atrée et Thyeste*, and have a far greater significance than just being an excuse for our re-reading the whole of this rather curious tragedy.

This episode is quite odd, if one includes in it the note of cruelty with which the character who seems the most detached, impartial, the Dupin of the tale, rubs his hands and gloats over the thought of the drama which he is bound to have triggered. At this point, it isn't only Dupin speaking, but the storyteller, the mirage of the author. We will see what this mirage signifies.

The drama will come to a climax as follows – the minister, when challenged to show his strength, because from then on he'll be resisted, one day will pull out the letter. *Show me* – he'll be told – *Here it is* – he will answer. And he'll be covered in ridicule, if not caught up in tragedy.

So that is how the tale unfolds.

There are two great scenes – not in the sense in which we say primal scene – the scene of the letter purloined and the scene of the letter recovered, and then some accessory scenes. The scene in which the letter is recovered is duplicated,

[3] '. . . so infamous a scheme/ If not worthy of Atreus, is worthy of Thyestes'. – Act V, Scene V.

since, having discovered where it is, Dupin doesn't take it straightaway – he has to set the trap, prepare his little cabal, and also the substitute-letter. There is also the imaginary scene at the end, in which we see the enigmatic character of the story meeting his end, this ambitious character, so singularly etched out, of whom one wonders what his ambition actually is. Is he simply a gambler? He gambles with a challenge, his aim – and that is what would make him an ambitious man – seems to be to show how far he can go. Where he goes is of no importance to him. The aim of his ambition is dissipated by the essential fact of its exercise.

Who are the characters? We could count them on our fingers. There are the real characters – the King, the Queen, the minister, Dupin, the prefect of police and the *agent provocateur* who shoots in the street. There are also those who do not appear on stage and make back-stage noises. These are the *dramatis personae*, in general one has a list of them at the beginning of a play.

Isn't there another way of doing it?

The characters in question can be defined differently. They can be defined beginning with the subject, more precisely beginning with the relation determined by the aspiration of the real subject through the necessity of the symbolic linking process.

Let us begin with the first scene. There are four characters – the King, the Queen, the minister, and the fourth, who is it?

M. GUÉNINCHAULT: *The letter.*

Yes, of course, the letter and not the person who sends it. Although his name is given towards the end of the novel, he has only a fictional importance, whereas the letter is indeed a character. It is so much a character that we are completely entitled to identify it with the key-schema we came upon, at the end of the dream of Irma's injection, in the formula for trimethylamine.

The letter is here synonymous with the original, radical, subject. What we find here is the symbol being displaced in its pure state, which one cannot come into contact with without being immediately caught in its play. Thus, the tale of *The Purloined Letter* signifies that there's nothing in destiny, or causality, which can be defined as a function of existence. One can say that, when the characters get a hold of this letter, something gets a hold of them and carries them along and this something clearly has dominion over their individual idiosyncracies. Whoever they might be, at this stage of the symbolic transformation of the letter, they will be defined solely by their position in relation to this radical subject, by their position in one of the CH_3s. This position isn't fixed. In so far as they have entered into the necessity, into the movement peculiar to the letter, they each become, in the course of successive scenes, functionally different in relation to the essential reality which it constitutes. In other words, to take this story up again in its exemplary form, for each of them

the letter is his unconscious. It is his unconscious with all of its consequences, that is to say that at each point in the symbolic circuit, each of them becomes someone else.

That is what I am going to try to show you.

3

Every human drama, every theatrical drama in particular, is founded on the existence of established bonds, ties, pacts. Human beings already have commitments which tie them together, commitments which have determined their places, names, their essences. Then along comes another discourse, other commitments, other speech. It is quite certain that there'll be some places where they'll have to come to blows. All treaties aren't signed simultaneously. Some are contradictory. If you go to war, it is so as to know which treaty will be binding. Thank God, there are many occasions on which one doesn't go to war, and treaties continue to hold good, the slipper continues to circulate amongst people, in several directions all at once, and sometimes the object of a game of hunt-the-slipper encounters that of another game of hunt-the-slipper. Subdivision, reconversion, substitution take place. Whoever is engaged in playing hunt-the-slipper in one circle has to hide the fact that he is also playing in another.

It's not for nothing that we see royalty appearing here. They become symbolic of the fundamental character of the commitment entered into in the beginning. Respect for the pact which unites a man and a woman has a value essential to the whole of society, and this value has always been embodied to the greatest extent in the persons of the royal couple, who are playing. This couple is the symbol of the major pact, which reconciles the male element and the female element, and it traditionally plays a mediating role between everything we don't know, the cosmos, and the social order. Quite rightly, there's nothing more scandalous and reprehensible than something which threatens it.

To be sure, in the present state of interhuman relations, tradition has been pushed into the background, or at least it is veiled. You remember the saying of King Farouk, according to which there are now only five kings left in the world, the four kings in a deck of cards and the King of England.

What, after all, is a letter? How can a letter be purloined [*volée*]?[4] To whom does it belong? To whoever sent it or to whoever it is addressed? If you say that it belongs to whoever sent it, what makes a letter a gift? Why does one send a letter? And if you think that it belongs to the recipient, how is it that, under

[4] In what follows, there is an extended pun on the two meanings of *voler* – to fly, and to steal, to purloin. Cf. 'to lift'.

certain circumstances, you return your letters to the person who, for a period in your life, bombarded you with them?

When one considers one of those proverbs attributed to the wisdom of nations – the wisdom of which is thus denominated by antiphrase – one is sure to light upon a stupidity. *Verba volant, scripta manent.* Has it occurred to you that a letter is precisely speech which flies [*vole*]? If a stolen [*volée*] letter is possible, it is because a letter is a fly-sheet [*feuille volante*]. It is *scripta* which *volant*, whereas speech, alas, remains. It remains even when no one remembers it any more. Just as, after five hundred thousand signs in the series of *pluses* and *minuses*, the appearance of α, β, γ, δ will still be determined by the same laws.

Speech remains.[5] You can't help the play of symbols, and that is why you must be very careful what you say. But the letter, for its part, that goes away. It wanders all by itself. I have often insisted, so that M. Guiraud might understand, that there could be two kilos of language on the table. There is no need for there to be that much – a very small sheet of vellum is just as much a language [*langage*] being here. It is here, and it exists only as language, it is the fly-sheet. But it is also something else, which has a particular function, absolutely incapable of being assimilated to any other human object.

So the characters play their parts. There is a character who trembles, the Queen. Her function consists in not trembling beyond a certain limit. Were she to tremble just a touch more, if the reflection of the lake which she represents – because she is the only one who is truly fully aware of the scene – were further troubled, she would no longer be the Queen, she would be completely ridiculous, and we wouldn't be able to bear Dupin's final cruelty. But she stays mum. There's a character who doesn't see anything, the King. There is the minister. There is the letter.

This letter, this speech addressed to the Queen by someone, the duc de S., to whom is it truly addressed? As soon as it is speech, it may have several functions. It has the function of a certain pact, of a certain trust. It doesn't matter whether it is about the duke's love or about a plot against the security of the State, or even about a banality. There it is, disguised in a kind of presence-absence. There it is, but it isn't there, it only has its own value in relation to everything it threatens, to everything it violates, to everything it flouts, to everything it places in danger or in suspense.

This letter, which doesn't have the same meaning everywhere, is a truth which is not to be divulged. As soon as it gets into the pocket of the minister, it is no longer what it was before, whatever it was that it had been. It is no longer a love letter, a letter of trust, the announcement of an event, it is evidence, on this occasion a court exhibit. If we imagine that this poor King, seized by some great enthusiasm which would make of him a king of greater grace, one of those

[5] It should be borne in mind that Lacan is referring to specific occasions of speaking, as well as to the function of speech in general, which the translation of both '*les paroles*' and '*une parole*' by 'speech' might lead one to overlook.

kings who isn't easy-going, who isn't capable of letting something go past, and is capable of sending his worthy spouse in front of the judges, as was seen at certain moments in English history – it's always England – we realise that the identity of the recipient of a letter is as problematic as the question of knowing to whom it belongs. In any case, from the moment it falls into the hands of the minister, it has in itself become something else.

The minister then does something very peculiar. You'll say that it is in the nature of things. But why should we, us analysts, be satisfied with the crude appearances of motivations?

I wanted to take a letter of the period out of my pocket to show you how they were folded, and naturally I've forgotten it at home. At that time, letters were very pretty. They were folded more or less like this – and one put a seal or a sealing wafer on it.

The minister wants the letter to go unnoticed, by means of his cunning trick, so he folds it the other way, and crumples it. By refolding it, it is quite possible to make a small surface, blank and flat, appear, on which one can place another superscription and another seal, black instead of red. In place of the slanted writing of the noble lord, there's the feminine writing which addresses the letter to the minister himself. And it is in this guise that the letter lies in the card-rack where the lynx eye of Dupin will not miss it, because he has, as have we, meditated on what a letter is.

This transformation is not sufficiently well explained, for us analysts, by the fact that the minister wants it not to be recognised. He didn't transform it in any old way. This letter, whose nature we do not know, he has in some way addressed it to himself with its new and false appearance, it is even specified by whom – by a woman of his own standing, who has a diminutive feminine hand – and he has it sent to him with his own seal.

Now this is a curious relation to oneself. The letter undergoes a sudden feminisation, and at the same time it enters into a narcissistic relation – since it is now addressed in this sophisticated feminine hand, and bears his own seal. It's a sort of love-letter he's sent himself. This is very obscure, indefinable, I don't want to force anything, and in truth if I mention this transformation, it is because it is correlative of something else far more important, concerning the subjective behaviour of the minister himself.

Let us pause over this drama, let us see what knits it together.

What makes the fact that the letter is in the possession of the minister so painful that everything stems from the Queen's absolutely imperative need to recover it?

As the narrator, who is also a witness, one of the intelligent interlocutors, observes, this affair gains its significance solely if the Queen knows that the document is in the hands of the minister. She knows, while the King knows nothing.

Let us suppose that the minister then behaves with intolerable cheek. He

knows he is powerful, he behaves as such. And the Queen – we are obliged to think that she has a voice in these affairs – intervenes on his behalf. The desires one attributes to the powerful minister are satisfied, so and so is nominated to such and such a position, he acquires some specified person as a colleague, he is permitted to form majorities in the monarchical Parliament, which is quite clearly all too constitutional. But there's nothing to indicate that the minister has ever said anything, ever asked anything of the Queen. On the contrary, he has the letter and he remains silent.

He remains silent, while he is the holder of a letter which threatens the foundation of the pact. He holds the threat of a profound, unrecognised, repressed disorder, and he remains silent. His attitude might be one which we would qualify as being highly moral. He might have made representations to the Queen. He would then, of course, be hypocritical, but he could pose as the defender of the honour of his master, as the vigilant guardian of order. And perhaps the intrigue established with the duc de S. is dangerous to the policies which he takes to be the good ones. But he does nothing of the sort.

He is presented to us as an essentially romantic character, and he is somewhat reminiscent of M. de Chateaubriand, whom we would not recall as being a very noble character, had he not been Christian. Indeed, if we read the true meaning of his *Mémoires*, doesn't he declare himself tied to the monarchy by his solemn pledge, only to tell us, in the most clearcut fashion, that, having said that, he thinks they are filth? In such a way that he can seem to cut the figure of this *monstrum horrendum* we are told about in order to justify Dupin's final outburst. As the reading of Chateaubriand demonstrates, there is a way of defending principles which turns out to be the best way of destroying them.

Why are we told that the minister is such a monster, a man devoid of principles? When you look more closely, it means that he gives no sense of something of the order of compensation or of some sort of sanction to what he has in his power. He makes nothing of the knowledge he has as to the truth about the pact. He doesn't reproach the Queen, he doesn't urge her to return to the order of things, by placing himself in the position of a confessor or director of conscience, no more than he will say tit for tat to her. He suspends the power conferred on him by the letter in indeterminacy, he gives it no symbolic meaning, all he plays on is the fact that this mirage, this reciprocal fascination is established between himself and the Queen, which is what I told you about earlier on, in speaking of the narcissistic relation. The dual relation between master and slave, founded in the last resort on the indeterminate threat of death, but on this occasion on the fears of the Queen.

These fears of the Queen, if you look at them closely, are quite out of proportion. For, as is noted in the tale, this letter may well be a terrible weapon, but all that is needed for it to be destroyed is for it to be put to use. It is a double-edged sword. We don't know what would ensue from the disclosure of the letter

to the retributive justice, not only of a King, but of an entire council, of the entire organisation involved in such a scandal.

In the end, the intolerable nature of the pressure constituted by the letter is due to the fact that the minister has the same attitude as the Queen in relation to the letter – he doesn't speak of it. And he doesn't speak of it because he can no more speak of it than she can. And simply from the fact that he cannot speak of it, he finds himself in the course of the second scene in the same position as the Queen, and he won't be able to do anything other than let himself be dispossessed of it. This is not due to the ingenuity of Dupin, but to the structure of things.

The purloined letter has become a hidden letter. Why don't the policemen find it? They don't find it because they do not know what a letter is. They don't know that because they are the police. Every legitimate power always rests, as does any kind of power, on the symbol. And the police, like all powers, also rest on the symbol. In troubled times, as you have found out, you would let yourselves be arrested like sheep if some guy had said *Police* to you and shown you a card, otherwise you would have started beating him up as soon as he laid a hand on you. Except there's a small difference between the police and power, namely that the police have been persuaded that their efficacity rests on force – not so as to put trust in them, but on the contrary to curb their functions. And thanks to the fact that the police think that they are able to exercise their functions through force, they are as powerless as one could wish.

When one teaches them something different, as has been done for some time in some parts of the world, we know what it leads to. One obtains universal adherence to what we will simply call doctrine. One can put anyone in more or less any position in relation to the system of symbols, and one thus extracts all the confessions in the world, you can make anyone endorse any element of the symbolic chain, at the whim of the symbol's naked power when a certain personal meditation is missing.

Believing in force, and by the same token in the real, the police search for the letter. As they say – *We looked everywhere.* And they didn't find, because what was at stake was a letter and a letter is precisely nowhere.

That isn't a witticism. Think about it – why don't they find it? It is there. They have seen it. What did they see? A letter. They may even have opened it. But they didn't recognise it. Why? They had a description of it – *It has a red seal and a certain address.* Now, it has another seal and it doesn't have that address. You will tell me – *What about the text?* Well, that's it, they weren't given the text. For, one or the other must be true, either the text has some importance or it doesn't. If it has some importance, and even if no one besides the King could understand it, there is nonetheless some point in not yelling it from the roof tops.

You do see, then, that only in the dimension of truth can something be

hidden. In the real, the very idea of a hidden place is insane – however deep into the bowels of the earth someone may go bearing something, it isn't hidden there, since if he went there, so can you. Only what belongs to the order of truth can be hidden. It is truth which is hidden, not the letter. For the policemen, the truth doesn't matter, for them there is only reality, and that is why they do not find anything.

In contrast, besides his remarks about the game of even and odd, Dupin makes linguistic, mathematical, religious observations, he constantly speculates about the symbol, even going so far as to speak of the non-sense of mathematics – for which I apologise to the mathematicians present here. Why don't you try, he says, to say one day to a mathematician that $x^2 + px$ maybe isn't exactly equal to q – and he'll immediately flatten you. But that's not true, since I often share my suspicions on this subject with Riguet, and nothing like that ever happened to me. On the contrary, our friend encourages me to pursue these speculations. In the end, it is because Dupin has thought a little about the symbol and about truth that he will see what there is to be seen.

In the scene which is described to us, Dupin finds himself treated to an odd display. The minister reveals a splendid indolence – which doesn't fool the astute man, who knows that beneath it there's an extreme vigilance, the terrible daring of the romantic character capable of anything, for whom the term *sang-froid* seems to have been invented, take a look at Stendhal. So there he is, lounging, bored, dreaming – *In a decadent epoch nothing is sufficient to occupy the mind of a great thinker. What is to be done when everything is going to the dogs?* That's the theme. While this is going on, Dupin, with green glasses on, looks everywhere and tries to make us believe that it is his genius which enables him to see the letter. But that's not true.

In the same way as the Queen had in fact indicated the letter to the minister, so it is the minister who surrenders his secret to Dupin. Isn't there some echo between the letter with a feminine superscription and this languishing Paris? Dupin literally reads what has become of the letter in the enervated attitude of this character of whom nobody knows what he wants, besides pushing as far as possible the gratuitous exercise of his activity as gambler. He defies the world just as he defied the royal couple with the abduction of the letter. What does this mean? – save that in order to be in the same position vis-à-vis the letter as the Queen was, in an essentially feminine position, the minister falls prey to the same trick as she did.

You will tell me that there aren't three characters plus the letter, as before. The letter is indeed there, there are two characters, but where is the King? Well, it is obviously the police. If the minister feels so at ease, that's because the police forms part of his security, as the King formed part of the Queen's security. An ambiguous protection – it is the protection which he owes

her in the sense in which a husband owes aid and protection to his wife, it is also the protection which she owes to his blindness. But all it took was a little, a small change of equilibrium, for the letter to be lifted through the chink. And that's what happens to the minister.

It is a mistake on his part to think that, since the police who've been searching his town-house for months haven't found it, he has no cause for worry. This doesn't prove anything, no more than the presence of the King incapable of seeing the letter was an efficacious protection for the Queen. What's his mistake? It is having forgotten that if the police haven't found the letter, it isn't that the letter can't be found, but rather that the police were looking for something else. The ostrich feels secure because its head is buried in the sand – he's the perfected ostrich, who would think itself safe because another ostrich [*autre autruche*] – *other-ich* [*autrui-che*] – has its head buried in the sand.[6] And it leaves its behind to be plucked by a third, who takes possession of its feathers and makes a panache of them.

The minister is in what had been the Queen's position, the police are in that of the King, of this degenerate King who believes only in the real, and who sees nothing. The step-wise displacement of the characters is perfect. And simply because he interposed himself in the rest of the discourse, and came into possession of this little nothing of a letter, sufficient to wreak havoc, this most cunning of foxes, this most ambitious of climbers, this intriguer's intriguer, this dilettante's dilettante, doesn't see that his secret will be pinched from under his nose.

It doesn't take much, just something sufficiently reminiscent of the police, to draw his attention away. In fact, if the incident in the street attracts his attention, it is because he knows himself to be under surveillance from the police – *How come something is going on in front of my house when there are three cops standing at each corner?* Not only has he become feminised through his possession of the letter, but the letter, whose relation to the unconscious I have told you of, even makes him forget the essential. You know the story of the man found on a desert island where he's sought refuge so as to forget–*To forget what? –I've forgotten.* Well then, he has also forgotten that, just the fact of being under surveillance from the police doesn't at all mean that nobody will be able to get the better of you.

The next step is rather odd. How does Dupin behave? Not that there is a long interval between the prefect of police's two visits. As soon as he has the letter, Dupin doesn't breathe a word of it to anyone either. In short, having this letter – this really is the signification of the wandering truth – shuts your trap. And indeed to whom would he have been able to talk about it? He must have been quite encumbered by it.

[6] The puns here are on '*autre*' (other) and '*autruche*' (ostrich) and '*autrui*' (others).

Thank God the prefect of police always returns to the scene of the crime, so the prefect comes round and asks him some questions. The other tells him some absolutely priceless story about free consultations. Someone is trying to sponge information about a prescription from an English doctor – *What would you have directed him to take? – Why, take advice.* That's how Dupin tells the prefect of police that a fee wouldn't be that unwelcome. The good man immediately pays up, and the other says to him – *It's in the drawer there.*

Does this mean that this Dupin, who up until then was an admirable, almost excessively lucid character, has all of a sudden become a small time wheeler and dealer? I don't hesitate to see in this action the re-purchasing of what one could call the bad *mana* attached to the letter. And indeed, from the moment he receives his fee, he has pulled out of the game. It isn't only because he has handed the letter over to another, but because his motives are clear to everyone – he got his money, it's no longer of any concern to him. The sacred value of remuneration of the fee kind is clearly indicated by the context of the medical story.

I don't mean to insist on it, but you might gently point out to me that we, who spend our time being the bearers of all the purloined letters of the patient, also get paid somewhat dearly. Think about this with some care – were we not to be paid, we would get involved in the drama of Atreus and Thyestes, the drama in which all the subjects who come to confide their truth in us are involved. They tell us their damned [*sacré*] stories, and because of that we are not at all within the domain of the sacred and of sacrifice. Everyone knows that money doesn't just buy things, but that the prices which, in our culture, are calculated at rock-bottom, have the function of neutralising something infinitely more dangerous than paying in money, namely owing somebody something.

That is what it is all about. Anyone who has this letter enters into the zone of shadow caused by the fact that it is addressed to whom? if not to whom it may concern – the King. And it will reach him in the end, but not quite the way Dupin tells it in his little imaginary story, in which the minister, following some snub from the Queen, is stupid enough to let the story out. It really does reach the King, a King who still doesn't know anything. But the character of the King has changed in the meanwhile. Having shifted one notch along, and become the Queen, it is now the minister who is the King. In the third stage, he has taken the place of the King, and he has the letter.

It is obviously no longer the letter which passed from Dupin to the prefect of police – and from there into the dark cabinet, for you can't tell us that the odyssey of the letter has come to an end – it is a new form of the letter, which Dupin gave him, far more the instrument of fate than Poe leads us to understand, a provocative form which endows the short story with its cutting and cruel edge, ripe for consumption by *midinettes*. When the minister opens the paper, it is these lines which will forcibly strike him.

. . . un dessein si funeste,
S'il n'est digne d'Atrée, est digne de Thyeste.

And, in this way, if he ever has to open this letter, he would be obliged to submit to the consequences of his own actions, like Thyestes to eat his own children. And that, after all, is what we have to deal with every day, each time the line of symbols reaches its terminal point – these are our actions come to search us out. All of a sudden we find ourselves having to pay in full. It is a matter, as they say, of *accounting* for your crimes – which moreover means, that if you know how to account for them, you won't be punished. If he really is mad enough to get out the letter, and especially not to check a bit in advance that it is indeed this letter which is there, all the minister will be capable of doing is to follow the order of the day which I ironically threw out in Zurich, in answer to Leclaire – *Eat your Dasein*! That is Thyestes's dish *par excellence*.

The minister would really have had to push the paradox of the gambler to its limit of madness for him to take out the letter. He really would have to be a man without any principles whatsoever, without even this, the last principle, the one which for the most part remains to us, which is simply the shadow of stupidity. If he falls prey to passion, he will find the Queen generous, worthy of respect and love – it's completely ridiculous, but it will save him. If he falls prey to pure and simple hatred, he will try to strike his blow in an efficient manner. It is really only if his *Dasein* has become completely detached from any inscription in any kind of order, including that of intimacy, that of his desk, his table, it is really only if that is the case that he will have to drink the bitter cup to the dregs.

We could write all of this with small *alphas, betas, gammas*. Everything which could serve to define the characters as real – qualities, temperament, heredity, nobility – has nothing to do with the story. At every moment each of them, even their sexual attitude, is defined by the fact that a letter always reaches its destination.

27 April 1955

XVII

Some questions for the teacher

THE COMMON DISCOURSE
THE FULFILMENT OF DESIRE[1]
THE DESIRE TO SLEEP
THE WORD AND THE GUTS
THE QUESTION OF REALISM

Today, we are coming close to the top of this sometimes overly steep hill we have been climbing this year. We are approaching a summit. But there's nothing to tell us that we'll have a truly panoramic view from the top over what we've covered.

As I told you last time, I am going to try to knit together the function of speech with that of death – I wouldn't say of death as such, because that doesn't mean anything, but of death in so far as that is what life resists.

The beyond of the pleasure principle is expressed in the word *Wiederholungszwang*. This is incorrectly translated in French by *automatisme de répétition* and I think I am giving you a better rendition with the notion of *insistence* [*insistance*], repetitive insistence, significant insistence. This function is at the very root of language in so far as a world is a universe subjected to language.

Well then, what is the relation of this function to the notion upon which Freud was led to meditate, also insistently, namely the function of death? For there is a conjunction in the human world between the speech which dominates the destiny of man and death whose position in Freud's thought we are at a loss to locate – does it belong on the level of the real, of the imaginary, or of the symbolic?

But before we tie these two terms together in such a way as to make you once again grasp, and I hope even more firmly, the significance of the Freudian discovery and that of our experience in so far as it enables us to assist the subject in the revelation of himself to himself, I will pause for a moment.

I've had a thought which, however severe it may be, has nothing disillusioned about it. It occurred to me that teaching is something rather problematic, and that from the moment one is led to fill the position which I

[1] *'La réalisation de désir'*. This phrase is often taken by Lacan to be the best translation of Freud's *'Wunscherfüllung'*, translated in SE as 'wish-fulfilment'. At other times, *'réalisation'* has been translated as 'realisation'; it should also be borne in mind that puns on *'réalité'* and *'réel'* are to be found in this connection in this chapter; they will be pointed out as needs be.

occupy behind this little table, there are no examples which reveal one to be inadequate, at least as far as appearances go. In other words, as a rather fine American poet so well observed, you never see a professor be wanting through ignorance. One always knows enough to occupy the minutes while one holds forth in the position of he who knows. You never see anyone dumb-struck, once he's taken up the position of being he who teaches.

This leads me to think that the only genuine teaching is one which succeeds in awakening an insistence in those who are listening, this desire to know which can only emerge when they themselves have taken the measure of ignorance as such – in so far as it is, as such, fruitful – and no less so on the part of the one who teaches.

So before delivering those few words which will appear to be conclusive to those who insist on the formal externals of things, but which for the others will be one more opening – I would like each and every one of you to ask me a question which would be defined as follows, that it be mine.

In other words, let everyone tell me, in his own way, what he thinks I'm trying to get at. Let him tell me, given everything I've said this year, how the question that I have raised, in my own way, has been filled out or closed for him, or has already reached its term, or how he is already resisting it.

This is only a target, and each of you can take up whatever distance you want from this ideal point. It seems to me entirely natural that it be the point of convergence for the questions which come to mind, but nothing obliges you to take that as your aim. Any question you may have to ask me, however seemingly incomplete, parochial, even ill-defined, must nonetheless have some relation to this target.

Moreover, if you think there's something we've been evading, you can use this occasion to say so. This will be yet another way of bringing to mind the continuity as it may have appeared to you along the path on which I've taken you up to now.

I would like you to do it now. That's how it is – I won't allow the seminar hour to be spent any other way than in this very experiment.

We shall proceed by calling for volunteers. This test is truly the least I can ask of you – to speak in front of the others. If, as analysts, you aren't capable of doing that, what can you do?

Those who feel ready to express something they already have on their minds or on the tip of their tongues, do say it right away. This will give the others time to recover.

1

MLLE RAMNOUX: *After having read Freud's chapter, I managed to get some idea for myself of a defence-function which would have to be located at the surface and not in*

the depths, and which would be operative on two fronts, simultaneously against traumas which come from without, and against impulses which come from within. After your lectures, I can no longer think of it like that. And I ask myself which is the better definition. I think that amounts to saying that it is about a fragment of a common discourse. Is that it? Another question. I had also managed to understand why Freud called the source of repetitive symptoms a death instinct. I managed to understand it because this repetition manifests a kind of inertia, and inertia is a return to an inorganic state, hence to the remotest past. I thus understood why Freud could assimilate that to the death instinct. But, after having thought about your last lecture, I realised that these compulsions stem from a kind of indefinite, multiform desire, without any object, a desire for nothing. I understand it very well, but now I no longer understand death.

It is undoubtedly the case that everything I teach you is intended to put into question the situation of the ego within the topography as it is usually conceived. To install the ego at the centre of the perspective, as is done in the present approach in analysis, is only one of those reversals to which any questioning of the position of man is exposed. Every time there's been a revision of the discourse on man, we have difficulty imagining what happened, because the gist of each of these revisions is always deadened, attenuated, with time, in such a way that today, as always, the word humanism is a bag in which the corpses of these successive disclosures of a revolutionary point of view on man very slowly rot, piled one on top of the other. That is what is now in the process of happening in psychoanalysis.

This reminds me of something I read in the newspaper this morning about one of these displays with which we are now periodically confronted, each time the question of responsibility is raised, on the subject of a crime somewhat lacking in motivation. One witnesses the panicky fear of the psychiatrist, his frantic appeal, his terrified clutching in the face of the thought that, by not underlining the responsibility of the person in question, he himself may once again open up the door on to a general massacre. The former has evidently done something one's not used to seeing, although each moment affords the possibility of it – quite simply by smashing up and repeatedly stabbing, by the side of the road, the person to whom one is tied by the tenderest of bonds. The psychiatrist is all of a sudden confronted with this opening up, this gap, and he is called upon to take sides. This time, something has happened, in the way improbable things do happen, revealing the possibility that it was the luck of the draw. The psychiatrist, who here would have explained to people how saying that the guy is clearly responsible isn't enough to decide the issue, cops out. Then we are treated to a surprising discourse in which the subject makes a wry face as he utters his speech, saying both that the alleged criminal

manifests every possible disturbance of affectivity, lacking contact, he's abominable, but that what he did nonetheless, of course, comes under the common discourse, and that he must suffer the penalty of the law.

We witness something similar in psychoanalysis. The return to the ego as the centre and common measure is not in any way implied by Freud's discourse. Quite the opposite in fact – the further his discourse advances, the further we follow him in the third stage of his work, the more the ego is shown as a mirage, a sum of identifications. Of course the ego is to be found at the rather impoverished point of synthesis to which the subject is reduced when he presents himself, but he is also something else, he also finds himself somewhere else, he comes from somewhere else, precisely from the point beyond the pleasure principle at which we can ask – what is it that is caught in this symbolic web, in this fundamental phrase which insists beyond anything we can catch of the motivation of the subject?

Evidently there is discourse, and, as you put it, common discourse. When I talked about *The Purloined Letter*, I told you, in a way which might have been enigmatic, that this letter, for a time, and within the limits of the short scene, of the *Schauplatz* as Freud puts it, of the Punch and Judy show Poe puts on for us, was the unconscious of the different subjects who succeed each other as its possessors. The letter itself, this phrase written on a piece of paper, in so far as it wanders about, is the unconscious. It is perfectly obvious, once you've seen my demonstration of the successive colourings these subjects acquire as the reflection of the letter shifts across their faces and their social standing.

Perhaps this does not satisfy you. But don't forget that Oedipus's unconscious is in fact that fundamental discourse which accounts for the fact that Oedipus's history has for a long time, forever, been written, accounts for the fact that we know it, and for the fact that Oedipus is totally ignorant of it, despite his having been its plaything from the start. This goes back a long way – remember how the oracle frightens his parents, how he is abandoned, rejected. Everything happens as a function of the oracle and owing to the fact that he really is someone other than what he thinks his history makes him – he is the son of Jocasta and Laius, and he starts life unaware of that. The entire pulsating drama of his destiny depends, from one end to the other, from beginning to end, on this veiling of the discourse, which is the reality of which he is ignorant.

When we come to talk of death again, I will perhaps try and explain to you the end of Oedipus's tragedy, as the great dramatists have portrayed it. You should read *Oedipus at Colonus* for the next seminar. There you'll discover that the final word of the relation of man to this discourse of which he is ignorant, is death. Indeed one must attain poetical expression in order to discover how intense can become the identification between this veiled preterite and death as such, in its most horrible guise. An unveiling which doesn't include a moment

beyond and extinguishes all speech. If the tragedy *Oedipus Rex* is an exemplary work, analysts should also be acquainted with this beyond of the drama realised in the tragedy of *Oedipus at Colonus*.

How should one locate the ego in relation to common discourse and to the beyond of the pleasure principle? That is the question which your point opens up, and I find it very suggestive. In the end, there exists a kind of mirror relation between the subject-individual and the decentred subject, the subject beyond the subject, the subject of the unconscious.

The ego is itself one of the significant elements of ordinary discourse, which is the discourse of the unconscious. As such, and in so far as it is image, it is caught in the chain of symbols. It is an element indispensable to the insertion of the symbolic reality into the reality of the subject, it is tied to the primitive gap of the subject. On account of that, in its original sense, within the psychological life of the human subject it is what appears as closest to, as most intimate with, as on the closest of terms with death.

The relation of the ego to death is an extremely close one, for the ego is a point of intersection between the common discourse, in which the subject finds himself caught, alienated, and his psychological reality.

In man, the imaginary relation has deviated, in so far as that is where the gap is produced whereby death makes itself felt. The world of the symbol, the very foundation of which is the phenomenon of repetitive insistence, is alienating for the subject, or more exactly it causes the subject to always realise himself elsewhere, and causes his truth to be always in some part veiled from him. The ego lies at the intersection of the one and the other.

In the fundamental symbolism we find an inflection towards the imagistic [*imagé*], towards something which resembles the world or nature, giving the impression that here we have something of the archetypal. By the way, there's no need to say *arche*, it is simply *typical*. But it is more than certain that it has nothing to do with this substantialised thing which Jungian theory offers us under the name of archetype. These archetypes themselves are always symbolised, caught in what you called the common discourse, a fragment of this discourse. I agree – it is a very beautiful definition, and it's a term which I will use, because it is very closely tied to the definition of the ego.

As to your second question, I think last time I got you to realise the difference between insistence and inertia.

To what does resistance correspond in analytic treatment? To something inert. As such, one of its properties is that it doesn't possess in itself any kind of resistance. In the sense of *Widerstand*, an obstacle, an obstacle to an effort, there's no point looking for resistance anywhere else than within ourselves. Whosoever applies force provokes resistance. On the level of inertia, you'll never ever find resistance. Everything connected with transference belongs in a

dimension pertaining to an entirely different register – it belongs to the order of an insistence.

You have also very clearly understood what I wanted to say last time when I invoked desire, desire as revealed by Freud, on the level of the unconscious, as desire for nothing.

Yesterday evening you heard a critique of the illusion, which isn't rare in Freud's readers, that one always finds the same signified, and a signified of rather limited significance, as if the dream's desire designated by Freud in the *Traumdeutung* could in the end be summed up in the form of a list, and a rather short one at that, of drives.

Nothing of the sort is true. I ask you to read the *Traumdeutung* once and for all and in one go so as to be convinced of the contrary. Although Freud there goes over the thousand empirical forms which this desire can acquire, there isn't a single analysis which ends up with the formulation of a desire. Desire is, in the end, never unveiled there. Everything happens on the steps, in the stages, on the different rungs of the revelation of this desire. Freud also somewhere pokes fun at the illusion of those who, having read his *Traumdeutung*, end up thinking that the reality of the dream is the sequence of the dream's latent thoughts. Freud himself says that if that were all it was, this reality would be of no interest. It is the stages of the dream-work which are interesting, for that is where we find revealed what we are looking for in the interpretation of the dream, this *x*, which in the end is desire for nothing. I defy you to bring me a single passage from the *Traumdeutung* which concludes – this is what the subject desires.

Objection – *What about children's dreams?* That is the only point of misunderstanding in the *Traumdeutung*. I will come back to it, and show you that this point of confusion stems from Freud's inclination, which is the shakiest aspect of his work, to have repeated recourse to a genetic view of things. The objection can be refuted. Fundamentally, when Freud speaks of desire as the mainspring of symbolic formations, from the dream to the joke via all the facts taken from the psychopathology of everyday life, he is always concerned with this moment when what comes into existence via the symbol isn't yet, and hence can in no way be named.

In other words, behind what is named, there is the unnameable. It is in fact because it is unnameable, with all the resonances you can give to this name, that it is akin to the quintessential unnameable, that is to say to death.

Read the *Traumdeutung* again, you'll see it at every step. Everything revealed as nameable is always on the level of the dream-work. This work is a symbolisation, with all its laws, which are those of signification. That was what I was talking about yesterday evening when I mentioned the switch-word, polyvalence, condensation, and all the terms which Freud uses. Its order is always that of overdetermination, or again that of significant

motivation. From the moment when desire has already come into this, when it is caught from end to end in the dialectic of alienation and no longer has any other means of expression than through the desire for recognition and the recognition of desire, how can what hadn't yet been be met again?

Why should it be death? That's what I'll leave as the limit of your question, which proves that you understood what I said.

2

M. VALABREGA: *Apropos of what you've just said regarding the dream. Both things are nonetheless true. I think you are right in one way to stress the dream-work.*

Freud does explicitly say that this is the only thing of importance in dreams.

M. VALABREGA: *But even so it isn't the only one, since he also says that the desire is fulfilled in the dream. I think you are right in stressing the work, because it is in the work that one finds the signification of the dream. If that weren't the case, there would be keys to dreams, an idea which Freud has done enough to refute. Nevertheless, the fulfilment of desire mustn't be overlooked. One can find an example of it not only in the dreams of children, but in hallucinatory dreams.*

That is the same question. Do you think you can stick by that?

M. VALABREGA: *No, of course not, when dreams become hallucination, one can't stop there – it is the whole of the work one is led to reconsider, and one has to talk as you do. But one also has to take into consideration the desire to sleep, for which there is a renewed interest today. It is both one of the initial and one of the final motives for the dream. Freud never speaks of secondary work, the only work there is is in the dream in the present, the narrated dream. And then, to terminate, there is the desire to sleep, which is one of the final meanings of the dream. Consequently, the fulfilment of desire at one end, and desire to sleep at the other. I think that more modern interpretations, which are only alluded to in the* Traumdeutung, *or in other later texts, the interpretation of the desire to sleep as narcissistic desire, clearly tend in this direction. There are two realities in the dream, the fulfilment of desire, which you seem to do away with a little, and the work of signifying.*

You speak of fulfilment of the desire to sleep. To start with I'll go back over the first of these terms.

What can the expression *fulfilment of desire* mean? It seems that you grasped the fact that the fulfilment [*réalisation*] includes reality [*réalité*], and consequently here it could only be a question of metaphorical fulfilment. As in any hallucinatory satisfaction, we can here only locate the function of desire in a very problematic form. What is desire, as soon as it is the source of hallucination, of illusion, hence of a satisfaction which is the opposite of a

satisfaction? If we give the term desire a functional definition, if for us it is the tension put into play by the cycle of behavioural fulfilment, whatever that may be, if we include it within a biological cycle, the desire achieves real satisfaction. If it achieves hallucinatory satisfaction, then there is another register here. Desire is satisfied in another fashion than in an effective satisfaction. It is the source, the fundamental means of introduction of a fantasy as such. Here there's another order, which doesn't achieve any objectivity, but which by itself defines the questions raised by the register of the imaginary.

M. VALABREGA: *That is why Freud makes use of the concept of distortion,*[2] *that is why, immediately after the first proposition,* the dream is the fulfilment of a wish [désir], *he uses the concept of desire as a distorted fulfilment. That doesn't make it any the less a real* [réelle] *fulfilment* [réalisation], *but fulfilled in a distorted form.*

The word distortion is only a metaphor, which leaves open the question of knowing what is satisfied in a symbolic satisfaction. There are indeed desires which will never find any other satisfaction than that of being acknowledged, that is to say avowed. In birds who end up giving up their positions alongside their mates following maneouvres with an adversary, one can all of a sudden see arise a meticulous grooming of feathers, which is an ectopia of sexual display. In this case, one would speak of throwing another circuit into gear, which might lead to a cycle of resolutions yielding the image of a substitutive satisfaction. Is symbolic satisfaction of the same order? That's the big question. The notion of distortion in no way aids us to grasp it.

As for the other term you brought up just now, the desire to sleep, of course that is extremely important. Freud gave it a special place in connection with secondary revision, in the final chapter of the section on the dream-work, which concerns the intervention in the dream of the *ego* as such.

I think that here there are still two things which one must know how to distinguish. There is the need to maintain sleep for a certain period of time, a need which is supposed to be subjacent to the duration of sleep, directed towards and against all the external or internal stimuli which might disturb it. Does this need appear in the ego? Does it partake of the vigilance the latter exercises with the aim of protecting the state of sleep? That is in fact one of the points in the dream where the ego makes its presence felt, but is far from being the only one. If you remember the chapter you're referring to, that is where the notion of unconscious fantasy appears for the first time in Freud's thought. Everything pertaining to the register of the ego as a vigilant agency occurs on the level of secondary revision, but Freud cannot separate it from the fantasising function in which this ego is integrated.

Here we find a whole series, set out with great nuance, of gaugings of the

[2] *'déguisement'* 'disguise', corresponding here to *'Entstellung'*.

relations so as to distinguish fantasy, dream and day-dreaming, and, in conformity with a kind of mirror relation, at a certain point, there's an exchange of roles. Day-dreaming such as it occurs on the level of the ego is the illusory imaginary satisfaction of desire, it has a very localised function, as Mlle Ramnoux said earlier on, on the surface. What is the relation between this day-dreaming of the ego and another sort, located elsewhere, in tension? This is the first time in Freud's work that the notion of unconscious fantasy appears. This is to show you the complexity of the desire to preserve sleep.

It may be at this level that the game of hide and seek of the ego is most obvious, and finding out where it is presents us with a great number of difficulties. In the end, it is solely at the level of the ego that we come upon the function of day-dreaming in the structuration of dreams. And in addition it is solely when we start with the ego that we extrapolate into thinking that somewhere day-dreaming without ego exists, that unconscious fantasies exist. Paradoxically, the notion of unconscious fantasy, of the activity of fantasy, is supported only by taking a detour via the ego.

3

MME C. AUDRY: *My question is very similar to that of Clémence Ramnoux, because it also concerns the ego. If the ego is ever a fragment of the common discourse, it is so in analysis. Prior to analysis, it is only a pure, imaginary mirage. From then on, analysis amounts to being a demystification of what was previously imaginary. So we get to the following point – once demystification has been accomplished, we find ourselves in the presence of death. All that is left is to wait and contemplate death. My question may seem overly positivistic or utilitarian but that's how it is.*

Why not? In *Oedipus at Colonus*, Oedipus says the following: *Am I made man in the hour when I cease to be?* That is the end of Oedipus's psychoanalysis – the psychoanalysis of Oedipus is only completed at Colonus, when he tears his face apart. That is the essential moment, which gives his story its meaning, and, from the point of view of Oedipus, it is acting-out,[3] and he says as much – *Still, I was angry.*

MME C. AUDRY: *Is it between the* I cease to be [Je ne suis rien] *and death that whatever is capable of being a substitute for humanism must pass?*

Precisely. This 'something different', over many cultures, which renders this word, *humanism*, so difficult to handle.

[3] English in the original.

4

M. DURANDIN: *I would like to ask a question, but it isn't very legitimate for me to do so, since I haven't attended your seminars on a regular basis.*

Well, I am going to ask you for some explanations of your *deverbalisation* of yesterday evening.

M. DURANDIN: *There is nothing very difficult in my account of deverbalisation. It has a place, in part, in the immediate givens of consciousness. Language is not only an expression of something which one already knows, it's a mode of communication. It is the instrument in accordance with which the thought of the child is formed. Given the fact that the child lives in society, his carving up of the world is achieved through the intermediary of language, hence verbal realism. One thinks that whenever there's a thing, there must be a word, and if there's no word, there's no thing, and one doesn't take the trouble to look.*

Why don't you fill in what you have just said? Yesterday evening you mentioned the following type of question – *did I give that out of generosity or cowardice?*

M. DURANDIN: *My patient often puts such questions to me. It isn't possible for me to reply, for the two things he hesitates between are shallow things, which do not correspond to reality. He needs to label whatever he thinks and feels, and, even if it were less shallow, this need to place things and to label them is nonetheless something fixed, half dead. In most cases, these are ready-made thoughts. And to the extent that one obliges a subject to make contact, that one answers him evasively, encouraging him to continue . . .*

You think it's enough to take away his off-the-peg clothes for him to get a made-to-measure suit?

M. DURANDIN: *It isn't enough. But he must be encouraged to see himself naked, to have some self-awareness. That doesn't alter the importance of the speech which comes afterwards. The expression 'deverbalisation' perhaps wasn't a happy one. What seemed important to me was that language is the mould in which our thought, our concepts, our use of the world is formed.*

What you say seems to presuppose that there are two kinds of thought, the one you call *ready made* and one that wouldn't be. And that the essence of thoughts which aren't ready made is that they are not just thoughts, but deverbalised thoughts. You have taken a conspicuous example from our experience, those questions which the subject asks himself within the register of the psychology of La Rochefoucauld – when I do good, am I doing it for my own glory or for that of a beyond?

M. DURANDIN: *That is indeed the register.*

But why do you think that that is something we should connect with shallow or empty speech? Don't you think that the question remains a perfectly authentic one? You are positioning yourself where La Rochefoucauld placed himself in his register, and it's not for nothing that the ego became such an important issue at that time. Whatever you do, in whatever form you choose to manipulate thought, that is to say, with all due respect, always in a spoken form, the question will retain all of its force. For, in so far as the subject places himself in the register of the ego, everything is indeed dominated by the narcissistic relation. Isn't that what we mean when we say for instance that there is an ineliminable narcissistic dimension in all forms of giving? Do you think that the subject will finally find his way by abandoning the question? How?

M. DURANDIN: *By reformulating it, and by becoming aware of it.*

But how? What have you got in mind as to the manner in which he can reformulate the question?

M. DURANDIN: *If he poses the question in terms of generosity or cowardice, it is probably because he takes the concept seriously, as if they were things.*

He may take them seriously without taking them to be things.

M. DURANDIN: *It isn't very easy.*

What you're saying is true. There is a tendency towards thingification.

M. DURANDIN: *So an exercise in language may be an exercise in the reformulation of thought. Starting with what? Starting with the experience of the fact that one then falls upon things which are a bit mysterious and ineffable. In the end that's reality. One becomes aware of reality by carving it up, by articulating it. But all the same it is something before being named.*

It is unnameable.

M. DURANDIN: *What happens in one's guts is unnameable, but it ends up being named.*

But everything you feel, even in your guts, as you quite rightly say, gives rise to vago-sympathetic reactions only as a function of the chain of questions that you will have introduced. That is what makes you a man. All the peculiarities, the idiosyncrasies, even the rhythm of your vago-sympathetic reactions depends on the way in which questions are introduced in your historicised-historicising story, as soon as you know how to speak. It goes well beyond a strict training.

To evoke a theme often found in Freud, it is as a function of the significant character taken on by the first time you went in your pants, that you will do so

again, at an age it's no longer meant to happen. This letting go was interpreted as a sign, that you lost face or that it was tied to an erotic emotion – take another look at the *Wolfman*. It has acquired value in the phrase, an historic value, a value as symbol, that it may or may not continue to possess. But in every case it is the value that your gut reaction acquired the first time that will be the starting point for the differentiation which will occur on the level of your guts and your digestive tract, and that the chain of causes and effects will evermore be different. If psychoanalysis doesn't teach us that, it doesn't teach us a thing.

In the end, the thought covered by the term deverbalisation is the following – the subject's every word only raises false problems. Can we even imagine this idea giving us the solution to what is to be found in the question the subject asks himself? On the contrary, isn't the point to make him understand the extent to which this dialectic of self-love, in this case, has been a part of his discourse up till then? That he is asking his question in an authentic fashion, in so far as his ego plays this role in his relations with other human beings, and it does so because of his history, which must be restored to him in its entirety?

From the position of the obsessional, for instance, everything of the order of the gift is caught in this narcissistic network from which it cannot escape. Doesn't one have to exhaust the dialectic of narcissism right to the very end for him to find the way out? Does one have to force him to beat a retreat in such a way that he never ever articulates another word, or on the contrary should the discourse be pushed to its end in such a way as to take over the whole story? The obsessional's basic story is that he is entirely alienated in a master whose death he awaits, without knowing that he is already dead, in such a way that he can't make a move. Isn't it by making him realise who he is truly the prisoner and slave of, of the dead master, that you can hope for the solution? It isn't by forcing him to abandon his discourse, but by inciting him to follow it through to the terminal stage of its dialectical rigour, that you will be able to get him to understand how he is always frustrated of everything in advance. The more he grants himself things, the more he grants them to the other, to this dead man, and he finds himself eternally deprived of any kind of enjoyment [*jouissance*] in the thing. If he doesn't understand this step, there is no way that you'll ever get yourself out of it.

You tell him that it's a neat cut-out. Then what? Do you think that in itself this philosophy has any cathartic value? Certainly not. Whatever your disdain for the question, you can't help seeing it being perpetually reproduced. There is no reason why the subject should end up without an ego, except in an extreme case such as that of Oedipus at the end of his life.

No one has ever studied the last moments of an obsessional. It would be worthwhile. Maybe at that moment there's a revelation. If you want to procure a somewhat more precocious revelation you certainly won't do so by abandoning speech.

5

M. LEFÈBVRE-PONTALIS: *I sense a certain unease. A lot is said here about the symbolic and the imaginary, but not much is said about the real. And the questions just asked show that we've somewhat lost the real. What Colette Audry said was striking – it was lucky that Oedipus didn't know too soon what he knew only at the end, for he still had to fill out his life. It's all very well seeing how many things which one first took to belong to the real are part of a network, a system with several points of entry, in which* I *has a place. Where is reality located, if not in the movement between all these dimensions? In other words, the recognition of desire must somehow pass through a certain number of mediations, of avatars, of imaginary formations, of states of being ignorant or of misunderstanding of a symbolic order. Finally, is that what you would call reality?*

Without a doubt. That is what everybody calls reality.

M. LEFÈBVRE-PONTALIS: *Still, in reality there's something, which isn't like a thing, but like a category, like a norm, something more than there is in other orders. Reality isn't the totality of the symbol.*

I am going to ask you a question. Are you aware how rare it is for love to come to grief on the real qualities or faults of the loved one?

M. LEFÈBVRE-PONTALIS: *I'm not sure I can answer no. I'm not sure whether that might not be a retrospective illusion.*

I said it was rare. And in fact, when it comes down to it, they appear to be much more like pretexts. One wants to believe that this reality has been touched on.

M. LEFÈBVRE-PONTALIS: *But that has very great consequences. It amounts to saying that there is no true conception, that one only ever moves from one corrective to the next, from one mirage to the next.*

In fact I do believe that to be the case in the register of intersubjectivity within which our entire experience is to be located. Do we ever reach as simple a real as those limitations of individual capacities which the various psychologies aim to attain?

It isn't in fact that easy to attain, for the domain of the measurable finds its bearings only with great difficulty when it comes to individual qualities, as soon as one locates them at a high enough level, as soon as one tries to discover a certain number of invariable factors – what we call constitutions, temperaments, whereby one tries to qualify individual differences as such. In spite of it all, I wouldn't say that spontaneous psychology is stricken with a basic impotence, since everyone, in so far as he is psychologically astute, gives marks to his contemporaries, and experience shows that he is quite capable of

doing so. One does in fact get somewhere by asking a group of people about a given individual, and in asking each of them to give him a mark for this or that quality of his or this or that alleged defect of his.

I am therefore not trying to render the approach to the real through intersubjectivity fundamentally null and void. But in the end, the human drama as such is located outside the domain of such appraisals. Each person's drama, what each of us has to deal with, which produces certain effects, sometimes pathological, sometimes simply alienating, is of an entirely different order from these appraisals of the real, though they have their utility.

So I don't question the existence of the real. There are all kinds of real limitations. It is undoubtedly true that I can't lift this table with one hand, there are all kinds of things that can be measured.

M. LEFÈBVRE-PONTALIS: *You only see the real under its aspect of adversity, as what resists, what is troublesome.*

It doesn't trouble me that I can't lift this table, it forces me to take a detour, that's obvious, but it doesn't trouble me to take a detour – I don't think that that is the meaning of what I teach you when I distinguish the symbolic, the imaginary and the real.

The essential part of human experience, that which is properly speaking the experience of the subject, that which causes the subject to exist, is to be located on the level of the emergence of the symbolic. To use a word which has resonances in the development of scientific thought, Baconian resonances, tables of presence, it never occurs to one that these assume the emergence of an entirely different dimension from that of the real. What you connote as presence is placed at the root of its possible inexistence. I am presenting the idea I'm putting forward here in a perceivable form, since I'm replying to someone who's putting the question of realism to me, someone who is a long way from being an idealist. There is no question of saying that the real didn't exist beforehand. But nothing that is effective in the domain of the subject emerges out of it. In so far as the subject exists, in so far as he sustains his existence, in so far as he raises the question of his existence, this subject with whom you are in dialogue in analysis and whom you cure through the art of speech, his essential reality consists in the junction of reality and the appearance of tables of presence. That doesn't mean that it's him who creates them all. What I'm going blue in the face telling you is precisely that they are already made. The game is already played, the die already cast. It is already cast, with the following proviso, that we can pick it up again, and throw it anew. The game has been going on a long time. Everything I'm showing you is already part of a story concerning which one can pronounce every possible and imaginable oracle. That is why the Augurs can't look each other in the face without laughing. It isn't because they tell each other – *You're having them on.* If Tiresias encounters

another Tiresias, he laughs. But in fact he can't encounter another, because he is blind, and not without reason. Don't you feel there's something derisory and funny about the fact that the die has already been cast?

M. LEFÈBVRE-PONTALIS: *That doesn't answer my question.*

We are reconsidering it. But what is striking is the extent to which a vacillation – quite apparent, because on the contrary it allows things to conserve a remarkable stability, somewhere other than where you are accustomed to find it – a certain vacillation in the usual relations of the symbol and the real can throw you into considerable disarray. To be quite candid, if I had to sum you up – I'm not talking about you personally, but about people of your generation – I'd say what strikes me is the number of things they believe in.

I have found a very odd ordinance from 1277 for you to use. In those days of faith and darkness, they were forced to curb those who, on the forms at school, in the Sorbonne and elsewhere, openly blasphemed the name of Jesus or Mary during mass. That's not done any more – it would not occur to you to blaspheme against Jesus and Mary. But I've known highly surrealist people who would rather be hung than publish a poem blaspheming the Virgin, because they thought that, after all, something just might happen to them.

The most severe punishments were decreed for those who played dice at the altar during the Holy Sacrament. Such things seem to me to indicate the existence of a working dimension which is singularly lacking in our time.

It is not for nothing that I am telling you about dice and making you play the game of even and odd. Without the shadow of a doubt, there's something rather scandalous about playing a game of dice on the altar, and all the more so during the Holy Sacrament. But I think that the fact that it is possible should restore to you the sense of a capacity which has been far more obliterated than one thinks in the circles we frequent. It is simply what is called the possibility of criticism.

11 May 1955

XVIII

Desire, life and death

THE LIBIDO
DESIRE, SEXUAL DESIRE, INSTINCT
RESISTANCE OF THE ANALYST
THE BEYOND OF OEDIPUS
LIFE DREAMS ONLY OF DYING

Today we are going to make some headway with the question of the relations between the Freudian notion of the death instinct and what I have called significant insistence.

The questions you asked me last time don't seem to me to have been misguided – they all bore on very sensitive issues. The remainder of our path will take us to some answers to a number of them, and I will try not to forget to point that out to you as we go along.

We have reached a radical crossroads in the Freudian position. At this point, one can almost say anything. But this anything isn't just anything, in the sense that whatever one may say, it will always be rigorous to those who know how to listen.

Indeed the point we're getting to is none other than desire and whatever can be said about it on the basis of our experience – an anthropology? a cosmology? There's no word for it.

Even though this is the central point Freud is asking us to understand in the phenomenon of mental illness, it is something which in itself is so subversive that all one cares about is to distance oneself from it.

1

In order to talk about desire, one notion in particular came to the fore, the libido. Is what this notion implies adequate to the level on which your action takes place, namely that of speech?

Libido allows one to speak of desire in terms which involve a relative objectification. It is, if you wish, a unit of quantitative measurement. A quantity which you don't know how to measure, whose nature you don't know, but which you always assume to be there. This quantitative notion allows you to unify the variation in qualitative effects, and gives some coherence to the manner in which they succeed one another.

Let us be clear as to what is meant by *qualitative effects*. There are states, changes of state. To explain the order in which they occur and their transformations, you more or less implicitly have recourse to the notion of a threshold, and by the same token to that of a level and of invariability. You assume an undifferentiated quantitative unit susceptible of entering into relations of equivalence. If it can't be discharged, can't expand as normal, can't spread out, overflows occur from which other states ensue. Hence one would talk of transformations, regressions, fixations, sublimations of the libido, a single term which is conceived of quantitatively.

The notion of libido emerged only gradually out of the Freudian experience, and it didn't have this extended use at the beginning. But as soon as it makes its appearance, that is in the *Three Essays*, it already has the function of unifying the different structures of the phases of sexuality. Do note that, although this work dates from 1905, the part which concerns the libido dates from 1915, that is to say the period, more or less, when the theory of phases was becoming extremely complicated, with the introduction of narcissistic investments.

So the notion of libido is a form of unification for the domain of psychoanalytical effects. I would now like to draw your attention to the fact that its use falls within the traditional scope of any and every theory, tending to end up with a world, the *terminus ad quem* of classical physics, or a unitary domain, the ideal of Einsteinian physics. We aren't in a position to align our poor little domain with the universal domain of physics, but the libido partakes of the same ideal.

It's not for nothing that this unitary domain is called *theoretical* – it is the ideal and unique subject of a *theoria*, an intuition, indeed contemplation, the exhaustive knowledge of which we assume would allow us to give an account of its entire past no less than its entire future. It is clear that none of this affords any place to what would be the realisation of anything new, a *Wirken*, an action, properly speaking.

Nothing could be further removed from the Freudian experience.

The Freudian experience starts from an exactly contrary notion of the theoretical perspective. It starts by postulating a world of desire. It postulates it prior to any kind of experience, prior to any considerations concerning the world of appearances and the world of essences. Desire is instituted within the Freudian world in which our experience unfolds, it constitutes it, and at no point in time, not even in the most insignificant of our manoeuvres in this experience of ours, can it be erased.

The Freudian world isn't a world of things, it isn't a world of being, it is a world of desire as such.

This famous object relation, which we are gargling with these days, has a tendency to be employed as a model, a pattern[1] of the adaptation of the subject

[1] English in the original.

to its normal objects. However, this term, in so far as it can be of use in the experience of analysis, can only acquire a meaning from ideas concerning the evolution of the libido, the pregenital stage, the genital stage. Can one say that the structure, the maturity, the fully-fledged realisation of the object depends on the libido? At the genital stage, the libido is thought to bring a new object, another structuration, another sort of existence for the object into the world, bringing its fullness, its maturity to completion. And this has nothing to do with traditional aspects of the theory of man's relations to the world – the opposition of being to appearance.

Within the classical, theoretical perspective, between subject and object there is coaptation, *co-naissance*[2] – a play on words retaining all its force, for the theory of knowledge lies at the heart of any discussion of the relation of man to the world. The subject has to place himself in adequation with the thing, in a relation of being to being – the relation of a subjective being, but one that is truly real, of a being aware of being, to a being one knows to be.

The domain of the Freudian experience is established within a very different register of relations. Desire is a relation of being to lack. This lack is the lack of being properly speaking. It isn't the lack of this or that, but lack of being whereby the being exists.

This lack is beyond anything which can represent it. It is only ever represented as a reflection on a veil. The libido, but now no longer as used theoretically as a quantitative quantity, is the name of what animates the deep-seated conflict at the heart of human action.

We necessarily believe that, at the centre, things are really there, solid, established, waiting to be recognised, and that the conflict is marginal. But what does the Freudian experience teach us? If not that what happens in the domain of so-called consciousness, that is on the level of the recognition of objects, is equally misleading in relation to what the being is looking for? In so far as the libido creates the different stages of the object, the objects are never *it*[3] – except from the moment when that would be *entirely it*, thanks to a genital maturation of the libido, the experience of which in analysis retains a character which is, there is no denying it, ineffable, since as soon as one wants to spell it out, one ends up in all sorts of contradictions, including the impasse of narcissism.

Desire, a function central to all human experience, is the desire for nothing nameable. And at the same time this desire lies at the origin of every variety of animation. If being were only what it is, there wouldn't even be room to talk about it. Being comes into existence as an exact function of this lack. Being attains a sense of self in relation to being as a function of this lack, in the

[2] The pun is on *connaissance* (knowledge, acquaintance) and *co-naissance* (a neologism of *co-* (with) and *naissance* (birth).

[3] *ça* – the standard French translation of *das Es* (the id).

experience of desire. In the pursuit of this beyond, which is nothing, it harks back to the feeling of a being with self-consciousness, which is nothing but its own reflection in the world of things. For it is the companion of beings there before it, who do not in fact know themselves.

The self-conscious being, transparent to itself, which classical theory places at the centre of human experience, appears, from this perspective, as a manner of locating, in the world of objects, this being of desire who cannot perceive itself as such, except in its lack. In this lack of being, it perceived that it is lacking being, and that the being is there, in all the things which do not know themselves to be. And it imagines itself, for its part, as one more object, for it sees no other difference. It says – *I'm the one who knows that I am.* Unfortunately, if it does perhaps know that it is, it knows nothing at all about what it is. That is what is lacking in every being.

In short, there is a confusion between the capacity to erect a fundamental distress whereby being arises as presence from a background of absence, and what we commonly call the capacity for consciousness, for becoming aware, which is only a neutral and abstract, and even abstracted, form of the totality of the possible mirages.

Relations between human beings are really established before one gets to the domain of consciousness. It is desire which achieves the primitive structuration of the human world, desire as unconscious. In this respect, we must appraise Freud's advance.

Copernican revolution, when it comes down to it, is, as you can see, a crass metaphor. It goes without saying that Copernicus produced a revolution, but in the world of determined and determinable things. Freud's advance constitutes, I would say, a revolution in an opposite direction, because before Copernicus, the world owed its structure precisely to the fact that so much of man was already in it. And to tell the truth, we've never really decanted it completely, although we've done enough.

Freud's advance isn't to be explained by the basic and precarious experience of the fact of having to care for someone, it really is the correlate of a revolution carried through over the entire domain constituted by man's thinking concerning himself and his experience; over the entire domain of philosophy – since after all we must give it its name.

This revolution brings man back into the world as creator. But the latter risks being entirely dispossessed of his creation by the simple trick, always put on one side in classical theory, which consists in saying – *God is no deceiver.*

That is so essential that, when it came to it, Einstein got stuck at the same point as Descartes. The Lord, he used to say, is certainly a crafty fellow, but he isn't dishonest. It was essential to his organisation of the world that God not be a deceiver. But this, precisely, is what we don't know.

The decisive element of the Freudian experience could be summed up as

follows – don't forget that consciousness isn't universal. Modern experience awoke from a long fascination with the property of consciousness, and considers man's experience within its own structure, which is the structure of desire. That is the only starting-point for explaining the fact that there are men. Not men as a herd, but men who speak, with this speech through which something is introduced into the world which weighs as heavily as the whole of the real.

There is a fundamental ambiguity in the use we make of the word 'desire'. Sometimes we objectify it – and we have to do so, if only to talk about it. On the contrary, sometimes we locate it as the primitive term in relation to any objectification.

In fact, sexual desire in our experience has nothing objectified about it. It is neither an abstraction, nor a purified x, as the notion of force in physics has become. Doubtless we make use of it, and it's very handy, for describing a certain biological cycle, or more precisely a certain number of cycles which are more or less tied up with biological systems. But what we have to deal with is a subject which is here, who truly is desiring, and the desire in question is prior to any kind of conceptualisation – every conceptualisation stems from it. The proof that analysis does indeed lead to our approaching things this way is that the largest part of what the subject takes to be a certainty after due reflection is for us only the superficial, rationalised, subsequently justified ordering of what his desire foments, which gives his world and his action its essential curvature.

If we were to operate in the world of science, if it were sufficient to change the objective conditions in order to obtain different effects, if sexual desire followed objectified cycles, we would end up abandoning analysis. How could sexual desire thus defined be influenced by the experience of speech – except by adopting magical thinking?

It isn't Freud who discovered that the libido is the determining factor in human behaviour. Aristotle was already offering a theory of hysteria based on the fact that the uterus is a small animal which lives inside the woman's body, and which moved about bloody violently when it wasn't given something to tuck into. Obviously he used this example because he didn't want to take a far more obvious one, the male sexual organ, for which you don't need any sort of theoretician to remind you of its surgings.

Except Aristotle never thought matters would be helped by having conversations with the little animal inside the woman's belly. In other words, to speak like a chansonnier who, in his obscenity, was infected from time to time with a kind of sacred fury [*fureur*] verging on prophecy[4] – *ça ne mange pas de pain, ça ne parle pas non plus, et puis ça n'entend rien* [it doesn't take up space, nor does it talk, neither does it hear]. It is not open to reason. If the experience of

[4] An implicit reference to the French idiomatic phrase, '*chanson qui fait fureur*' (a song which is all the rage).

speech has an effect under these circumstances, it is because we are somewhere other than Aristotle.

Of course, the desire we deal with in analysis isn't totally unrelated to this desire.

Given the level at which desire is to be found in the Freudian experience, why are we nonetheless called upon to embody it in this desire?

2

You tell me, my dear Valabrega, that there's a kind of satisfaction of desire in dreams. I assume that you are thinking of children's dreams, as indeed about every kind of hallucinatory satisfaction of desire.

But what does Freud tell us? It is true, in the child there's no distortion of desire, during the day he wants cherries and he dreams of cherries. Except, Freud nonetheless emphasises that, even at this infantile stage, the desire of the dream as of the symptom is a sexual desire. He is adamant about that.

Look at the *Wolfman*. With Jung, the libido gets drowned in the concerns of the soul, the great dreamer, the centre of the world, the ethereal embodiment of the subject. Freud is categorically opposed to that, and moreover at an extremely delicate moment in time, when he is tempted to give in to Jungian reductionism, since at that point he realises that the perspective of the past of the subject may well only be fantasy. The door is open to pass from the notion of desire which is directed towards, which is captivated by, mirages, to the notion of the universal mirage. It isn't the same thing.

The full signification of the fact that Freud retains the term 'sexual desire' every time desire is at issue can be seen in those cases when something else clearly seems to be involved, the hallucination of needs for instance. It all seems entirely natural – why wouldn't needs be hallucinated? It's so much easier to believe on account of there being a kind of mirage at the second level, called mirage of the mirage. Since we experience the mirage, its presence is entirely natural. But once you start thinking, you ought to be astonished by the existence of mirages, and not only by what they show us.

We never stop long enough to consider the hallucination of the child's dream or the dream of the starving. We don't notice one fine detail, which is that when the child wanted cherries during the day, she doesn't dream only of cherries. To cite the young Anna Freud, since the dream is hers, with her baby talk in which certain consonants are missing, she also dreams of custard, of cake, just as the person starving to death doesn't dream of the hunk of bread and glass of water which would sate him, rather he dreams of Pantagruelian meals.

O. MANNONI: *The dream about the cherries and the one about the cake aren't the same.*[5]

[5] See GW II/III 135; Stud II 148; SE IV 130.

The desire at issue, even the one that is said to be distorted, is already beyond the coaptation of need. Even the simplest of desires is very problematic.

O. MANNONI: *The desire isn't the same, since she recounts her dream.*

I'm very much aware that you have an admirable understanding of what I'm saying. Of course, that's what it's really about, but that isn't clear to everyone, and I'm trying to bring the evidence to bear just where it can reach the greatest number of people. Let me stick to the level I'm working on.

In the end, at this existential level, we can only talk about the libido satisfactorily in a mythical way – it is the *genitrix, hominum divumque voluptas.*[6] That is what Freud is getting at. In former days what returns here used to be expressed in terms of the gods, and one must proceed with care before turning it into an algebraic sign. They're extremely useful, algebraic signs, but on condition that you restore their dimensions to them. That is what I am trying to do when I talk to you about machines.

When does Freud tell us about a beyond of the pleasure principle? Just when the analysts have taken the path Freud taught them, and think they know. Freud tells them that desire is sexual desire, and they believe it. That is precisely where they err – for they don't understand what that means.

Why for most of the time is desire something other than what it appears to be? Why is that what Freud calls sexual desire? The reason for it remains concealed, just as concealed as the beyond which the one who experiences the sexual desire looks for behind an experience subjected to all the lures in nature as a whole.

If there's something which shows, not only in ordinary experience, but in experiments, the efficacity of the lure in animal behaviour, that something is sexual experience. There's nothing easier than fooling an animal about the qualities which turn an object, of whatever appearance, into the thing towards which he'll advance as if towards his partner. The captivating *Gestalten*, the innate releasing mechanisms are inscribed in the register of parade and pairing.

When Freud maintains that sexual desire is the heart of human desire, all those who follow him believe it, believe it so strongly that they manage to persuade themselves that it is all very simple, and that all that's left to do is to turn it into a science, the science of sexual desire, a constant force. All it takes is to remove the obstacles, and it will work all by itself. All it takes is to tell the patient – you don't realise it, but the object is here. That is at first sight what an interpretation seems to be like.

Except it doesn't work. This is when – and this is the turning-point – it is said that the subject resists. Why do we say that? Because Freud also said it. But we haven't understood what *resisting* means any more than we have understood *sexual desire*. We think that we should press on. And that is when the analyst

[6] Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, line 1 – 'progenitor, object of ecstasy of men and gods'.

himself succumbs to the lure. I showed you what the insistence on the side of the suffering patient means. Well then, the analyst places himself at the same level, he insists in his own way, an obviously far more stupid way, since it is conscious.

In the perspective which I'm opening up for you, it's you who provoke resistance. In the sense in which you understand resistance, that is a resistance which resists, it only resists because that's where you're pushing. There is no resistance on the part of the subject. What's at stake is delivering the insistence that is to be found in the symptom. What Freud himself calls *inertia* in this context isn't a resistance – like any kind of inertia, it is a kind of ideal point. It's you who presuppose it, in order to understand what's happening. You aren't wrong so long as you don't forget that it is your hypothesis. It simply means that there's a process, and that in order to understand it you imagine a zero point. Resistance only starts once you try to make the subject move on from this point.

In other words, resistance is the present state of an interpretation of the subject. It is the manner in which, at the same time, the subject interprets the point he's got to. This resistance is an abstract ideal point. It is you who call it resistance. It simply means that he cannot move any faster, and you have no say in the matter. The subject is where he is at. The question is one of knowing whether or not he is making progress. It is clear that he has no inclination whatsoever to move on, but however little he speaks, however little value what he says might have, what he says is his interpretation of the moment, and the rest of what he says is the totality of his successive interpretations. Properly speaking, resistance is an abstraction which you locate inside so as to find your way around. You introduce the idea of a deadlock, which you call resistance, and of a force, which makes it move on. Up to that point, that is entirely correct. But if you invariably then resort to the idea that resistance is to be *liquidated*, as is written all over the place, you are ending up with pure, unqualified absurdity. Having created an abstraction, you say – *we have to make this abstraction disappear, there mustn't be any inertia.*

There is only one resistance, the resistance of the analyst. The analyst resists when he doesn't understand what he is dealing with. He doesn't understand what he is dealing with when he thinks that interpreting is showing the subject that what he desires is this particular sexual object. He's mistaken. What he here takes to be objective is just a pure and simple abstraction. He's the one who's in a state of inertia and of resistance.

In contrast, what's important is to teach the subject to name, to articulate, to bring this desire into existence, this desire which, quite literally, is on this side of existence, which is why it insists. If desire doesn't dare to speak its name, it's because the subject hasn't yet caused this name to come forth.

That the subject should come to recognise and to name his desire, that is the

efficacious action of analysis. But it isn't a question of recognising something which would be entirely given, ready to be coapted. In naming it, the subject creates, brings forth, a new presence in the world. He introduces presence as such, and by the same token, hollows out absence as such. It is only at this level that one can conceive of the action of interpretation.

Since we're always engaged in a balancing-act between Freud's text and experience, go back to the text, to see how *Beyond* really does locate desire beyond any instinctual cycle definable by its conditions.

3

To fill in what I am in the middle of articulating for you, I told you that we had an example, which I took because I happened to come across it – the example of Oedipus finding his end, the beyond of Oedipus.

The fact that Oedipus is the patronymic hero of the Oedipus complex isn't a coincidence. Another one could have been chosen, since all the heroes of Greek mythology have some sort of connection with this myth, they embody it under different guises, reveal other aspects of it. There was certainly a reason why Freud was guided towards this one.

Throughout his life, Oedipus is always this myth. He is himself nothing other than the passage from myth to existence. Whether he existed or not is of little importance to us, since he exists in each of us, in a palely reflected form, he is ubiquitous, and he exists far more than if he really had existed.

One can say that a thing does or doesn't *really* exist. On the other hand, I was surprised to see, regarding the archetypal cure, one of our colleagues oppose the term *psychic reality* to that of *true reality*. I think that I have put you all in enough of a state of suggestion for this term to seem to you a contradiction *in adjecto*.

Whether a thing *really* exists or not doesn't much matter. It can perfectly easily exist in the full sense of the term, even if it doesn't really exist. By definition, there is something so improbable about all existence that one is in effect perpetually questioning oneself about its reality.

So Oedipus does exist, and he fully realised his destiny. He realised it to that final point which is nothing more than something strictly identical to a striking down, a tearing apart, a laceration of himself – he is no longer, no longer anything, at all. And it is at that moment that he says the phrase I evoked last time – *Am I made man in the hour when I cease to be?*

I've torn this phrase out of its context, and I must put it back there so that you avoid acquiring the illusion that, for instance, the term of man would at this moment have some sort of significance. In all strictness, it has none, precisely in as much as Oedipus achieved the full realisation of the speech of the oracles which already named his destiny even before he was born. Before his birth his

parents were told those things which required that he be hurled towards his destiny, that is that no sooner was he born, he be exposed hung by a foot. It is with this initial act that he begins to realise his destiny. So everything is written from the start, and unfolds right up to its final end, including the fact that Oedipus assumes it through his own action. *I*, he says, *have nothing to do with it. The people of Thebes, in their exaltation, gave me this woman as reward for having delivered them from the Sphinx, and this guy, I didn't know who he was, I beat him up, he was old, I can't help it, I hit him a bit hard, it has to be said I was quite a guy.*

He accepts his destiny at the moment when he mutilates himself, but he had already accepted it at the moment when he accepted the crown. It is when he is king that he draws down all the maledictions on the city, and that there is an order of the gods, a law of retributions and punishments. It is quite natural for everything to come down on Oedipus since he is the central knot of speech. The question is whether he will accept it or not. He thinks that, after all, he is innocent, but he fully accepts it since he tears himself apart. And he asks to be allowed to sit at Colonus, in the sacred precinct of the Eumenides. He thus fulfils the prophecy [*parole*] down to the last detail.

Meanwhile, people in Thebes continue to gossip. The people of Thebes are told – *Just a minute! You pushed it a bit far. It was all very well for Oedipus to mortify himself. Except, you found him disgusting and you drove him away. Now, the future of Thebes hangs precisely on this embodied speech which you couldn't recognise when it was here, with its ensuing tearing, cancelling of man. You exiled him. Thebes beware – if you don't bring him back, if not within the limits of your land, at least nearby, so that he doesn't slip away from you. If the speech which is his destiny begins to wander, it will take with it your destiny as well. Athens will reap the harvest of true existence which he embodies, and she will secure every advantage over you and will have every triumph.*

They run after him. Hearing that he is about to receive some visit, all kinds of ambassadors, wise men, politicians, enthusiasts, his son, Oedipus then says – *Am I made man in the hour when I cease to be?*

That is where beyond the pleasure principle begins. When the oracle's prophecy [*parole*] is entirely fulfilled, when the life of Oedipus has completely passed over into his destiny, what remains of Oedipus? That is what *Oedipus at Colonus* shows us – the essential drama of destiny, the total absence of charity, of fraternity, of anything whatsoever relating to what one calls human feeling.

What does the theme of *Oedipus at Colonus* amount to? The chorus says – *Say what you will, the greatest boon is not to be;/ But, life begun, soonest to end is best,* . . . And Oedipus calls down the most extreme maledictions upon posterity and the city for which he was a burnt offering – read the maledictions addressed to his son, Polynices.

And then, there is the negation of the prophecy [*parole*], which takes place within the precinct, upon whose borders the whole drama takes place, the

precinct in the place where it is forbidden to speak, the central point where silence is obligatory, for there live avenging goddesses, who do not forgive and who catch hold of the human being at every opportunity. You get Oedipus to come out of there each time you want to get a few words from him, for if he says them in that place, something awful will happen.

The sacred always has its *raisons d'être*. Why is there always somewhere where speech peters out? Perhaps so that it subsists in this precinct.

What happens at that moment? The death of Oedipus. It comes about under extremely peculiar circumstances. Someone whose gaze, from afar, has followed the two men as they go towards the centre of the sacred place, turns around, and sees only one of the two men, hiding his face with his arm in an attitude of sacred awe. You have the feeling that it isn't very pretty to look at, a kind of volatilisation of the presence of one who has said his last words. I think that *Oedipus at Colonus* here is alluding to some unknown thing which was revealed in the mysteries, which are here always in the background. But for us, if I wanted to picture it, I would look for it yet again in Edgar Poe.

Edgar Poe always juxtaposed the themes of life and of death, in a way not lacking in significance. As an echo of this liquifaction of Oedipus, I would choose *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*.

It's about an experiment in the sustentation of the subject in speech, by means of what was then called magnetism, a form of theorisation of hypnosis – someone *in articulo mortis* is hypnotised to see what will happen. A man at the end of his life is chosen, he only has some few breaths left, and in every other way he's dying. It's been explained to him that if he wants to become one of humanity's heroes, he has only to signal to the hypnotiser. If this could be set up in the few hours preceding his last breath, one would find out. This is fine poetical imagination, which ranges much further than our timid medical imaginations, although we all try hard along that road.

In fact, the subject passes from life into death, and remains for some months in a state of sufficient aggregation to be still in fair condition – a corpse on a bed, which, from time to time, speaks, saying *I am dead*.

This state of affairs is maintained, with the help of all kinds of tricks and digs in the ribs, until the passes contrary to those that put him to sleep are started in order to wake him up, when several screams from the poor wretch are heard – *For God's sake! – quick! – quick! – put me to sleep – or, quick! – waken me! – quick! –* I SAY TO YOU THAT I AM DEAD!

He's already been saying he's dead for six months, but when he is awakened, M. Valdemar is no more than a disgusting liquefaction, something for which no language has a name, the naked apparition, pure, simple, brutal, of this figure which it is impossible to gaze at face on, which hovers in the background of all the imaginings of human destiny, which is beyond all qualification, and for which the word carrion is completely inadequate, the complete collapse of this

species of swelling that is life – the bubble bursts and dissolves down into inanimate putrid liquid.

That is what happens in the case of Oedipus. As everything right from the start of the tragedy goes to show, Oedipus is nothing more than the scum of the earth, the refuse, the residue, a thing empty of any plausible appearance.

Oedipus at Colonus, whose being lies entirely within the word [*parole*] proferred by his destiny, makes actual the conjunction of death and life. He lives a life which is dead, which is that death which is precisely there under life. That is also where Freud's lengthy text leads us, where he tells us – *Don't believe that life is an exalting goddess who has arisen to culminate in that most beautiful of forms, that there is the slightest power of achievement and progress in life. Life is a blister, a mould, characterised* – as others besides Freud have written – *by nothing beyond its aptitude for death.*

That is what life is – a detour, a dogged detour, in itself transitory and precarious, and deprived of any significance. Why, in that of its manifestations called man, does something happen, which insists throughout this life, which is called a meaning? We call it *human*, but are we so sure? Is this meaning as human as all that? A meaning is an order, that is to say, a sudden emergence. A meaning is an order which suddenly emerges. A life insists on entering into it, but it expresses something which is perhaps completely beyond this life, since when we get to the root of this life, behind the drama of the passage into existence, we find nothing besides life conjoined to death. That is where the Freudian dialectic leads us.

Up to a certain point, Freudian theory may seem to explain everything, including what's related to death, within the framework of a closed libidinal economy, regulated by the pleasure principle and a return to equilibrium, involving specific relations between objects. The merging of the libido with activities which on the surface are at odds with it, aggressivity for instance, is put down to imaginary identification. Instead of beating up the other confronting him, the subject identifies himself, and turns against himself this gentle aggressivity, which is thought of as a libidinal object relation, and is founded upon what are called the instincts of the ego, that is to say the need for order and harmony. After all, one must eat – when the pantry is empty, one tucks into one's fellow being [*semblable*]. The libidinal adventure is here objectified in the order of living things, and one assumes that the behaviour of subjects, their inter-aggressivity, is conditioned and capable of explication by a desire which is fundamentally adequate to its object.

The significance of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is that that isn't enough. Masochism is not inverted sadism, the phenomenon of aggressivity isn't to be explained simply on the level of imaginary identification. What Freud's primary masochism teaches us is that, when life has been dispossessed of its speech, its final word can only be the final malediction expressed at the end of

Oedipus at Colonus. Life doesn't want to be healed. The negative therapeutic reaction is fundamental to it. Anyway, what is healing? The realisation of the subject through a speech which comes from elsewhere, traversing it.

This life we're captive of, this essentially alienated life, ex-sisting, this life in the other, is as such joined to death, it always returns to death, and is only drawn into increasingly large and more roundabout circuits by what Freud calls the elements of the external world.

All that life is concerned with is seeking repose as much as possible while awaiting death. That is what devours the time of the suckling baby at the beginning of its existence, with hourly segments which allow him just to take a peep from time to time. You have to try bloody hard to draw him out of this for him to find the rhythm by which we get attuned to the world. If the nameless desire can appear at the level of the desire to sleep, which you mentioned the other day, Valabrega, that's because it is in an intermediary state – dozing off is the most natural of all vital states. Life is concerned solely with dying – *To die, to sleep, perchance to dream*, as a certain gentleman put it, just when what was at issue was exactly that – to be or not to be.[7]

4

This *to be or not to be*[7] is an entirely verbal story. A very funny comedian tried showing how Shakespeare came upon it, scratching his head – *to be or not . . .*, and he would start again – *to be or not . . . to be.* If that's funny, that's because this moment is when the entire dimension of language comes into focus. The dream and the joke emerge on the same level.

Take this sentence, which is obviously not very funny – *The greatest boon is not to be.*[8] It is quite striking to realise that for the greatest tragedian of Antiquity, this was to be found in a religious ceremony. Can you imagine that being said during mass! The comics took it upon themselves to make us laugh at it. *It would be better not to be born – Unfortunately*, replies the other, *that happens to scarcely one in a hundred thousand.*[9]

Why is this witty?

To begin with, because it plays on words, an indispensable technical element. *It would be better not to be born.* Of course! This means that here there's an unthinkable unity, about which absolutely nothing can be said before it comes into existence, from which time it may indeed insist, but one could imagine it not insisting, so that everything passes into the universal rest and silence of the stars, as Pascal puts it. That is true enough, it may be so at the moment when one says it, *it would be better not to be born.* What is ridiculous is

[7] English in the original.

[8] The French version of the Greek that Lacan uses is, literally translated: 'It would be better not to be born.' Without the reference to birth, the connection with the joke cited by Freud that follows is lost. [9] See (1905c) GW VI 60; Stud IV 57–8; SE VIII 57.

saying it, and entering into the order of the calculus of probabilities. Wit is only wit because it is close enough to our existence to cancel it with laughter. The phenomena of the dream, of the psychopathology of everyday life, of the joke are to be found in this zone.

You must read *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*. Freud's rigour is stupefying, but he doesn't quite give the last word, namely that everything relating to wit takes place on the vacillating level of speech. If it weren't there, nothing would exist.

Take the silliest story, the man in a bakery, who pretends he's got nothing to pay for – he held out his hand and asked for a cake, he gives the cake back and asks for a glass of liqueur, drinks it, he's asked to pay for the glass of liqueur and he replies – *But I gave you the cake in exchange for it. – But you haven't paid for the cake either – But I hadn't eaten it.*[10] There was an exchange. But how did the exchange begin? At some point, something must have entered the circle of exchange. So the exchange must have already been set up. That is to say that when all is said and done, one is always left paying for the small glass of liqueur with a cake one hasn't paid for.

The absolutely sublime marriage-broker stories are also funny for the same reason. *'The one you introduced me to has an unbearable mother.' – 'Listen, you're marrying the daughter, not the mother.' – 'But she isn't exactly pretty, nor a spring chicken.' – 'She'll be all the more faithful for it.' – 'But she hasn't got much money.' – 'You can't expect everything.'*[11] And so on. The conjoiner, the marriage-broker, conjoins on a completely different plane than that of reality, since the plane of an engagement, of love, has nothing to do with reality. By definition, the marriage-broker, paid to deceive, can never fall into crass realities.

Desire always becomes manifest at the joint of speech, where it makes its appearance, its sudden emergence, its surge forwards. Desire emerges just as it becomes embodied in speech, it emerges with symbolism.

To be sure, symbolism links up a certain number of these natural signs, of these loci, which captivate the human being. There is even the beginnings of symbolism in the instinctual capture of one animal by another. But that isn't what constitutes symbolism, it's the symbolising *Merken* which make what doesn't exist exist. You mark the six sides of a die, you roll the die – from this rolling die emerges desire. I am not saying *human* desire, for, after all, the man who plays with the die is captive to the desire thus put into play. He doesn't know the origin of his desire, as it rolls with the symbol written on its six sides.

Why is it only man who plays dice? Why don't the planets speak?

Questions I'll leave open for today.

18 May 1955

[10] (1905c) GW VI 63: Stud IV 59: SE VIII 60.
[11] *Ibid.* GW VI 64: Stud IV 60: SE VIII 61.

XIX

Introduction of the big Other

WHY THE PLANETS DO NOT SPEAK
POST-ANALYTIC PARANOIA
THE Z-SHAPED SCHEMA
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL OF LANGUAGE
IMAGINARY RE-MEMBERING[1] AND SYMBOLIC RECOGNITION
WHY ONE TRAINS ANALYSTS

Last time, I left you with a somewhat strange question, but one which came directly out of what I was saying to you – why don't the planets speak?

1

We aren't at all like planets, that's something we can have a sense of whenever we want, but that doesn't prevent us from forgetting it. We always have a tendency to reason about men as if they were moons, calculating their masses, their gravitation.

That isn't an illusion peculiar to us, us scientists [*savants*] – it is quite especially tempting for politicians.

I am thinking of a work which has been forgotten, though it wasn't that unreadable, because it probably wasn't written by the author who signed it – it had the title *Mein Kampf*. Well, in this work by the said Hitler, which has lost a great deal of its topicality, relations between men are spoken of as being like relations between moons. And there's always the temptation to construct a psychology and a psychoanalysis of moons, whereas all you need do to see the difference is refer directly to experience.

For instance, I am rarely altogether happy. Last time, I wasn't at all happy, no doubt because I tried to fly too high – I wouldn't have engaged in all that flapping of wings if everything had been well prepared. However, several kind people, those who accompany me to the door, told me that everybody was happy. Rather an exaggeration of the position, I imagine. No matter, that's what I was told. Moreover, at the time I wasn't convinced. But why not! So I said to myself – if the others are happy, that's the main thing. That's where I am different from a planet.

[1] *'remembrement'*, which does not have connotations of memory in French, and, in fact, is often translated as 'regrouping'; the passage in the Seminar being referred to discusses the reaggregation of the limbs (cf. 'dismembering').

It isn't simply that I said that to myself, but that it is true – if you're happy, that's the most important thing. I would even say – given that I've been reassured that you were happy, well then, good Lord, I become happy as well. But, even so, with a little margin. Not exactly *happy-happy*. There was a space between the two. During the time it took me to realise that the main thing is that the other be happy, I persisted in my non-happiness.

So when am I really me then? When I'm not happy, or when I'm happy because the others are happy? This relation of the subject's satisfaction with the satisfaction of the other – to be understood, please, in its most radical form – is always at issue where man is concerned.

I would very much appreciate it if the fact that on this occasion I was dealing with my fellow beings doesn't fool you. I used this example, because I had promised myself to use the first example that came up after the question I left you with last time. But I hope that today I will get you to see that it would be wrong of you to think that it's the same other at issue here as that other I sometimes talk about to you, that other which is the ego, or more precisely its image. Here there's a radical difference between my non-satisfaction and the supposed satisfaction of the other. There is no image of identity, of reflexivity, but a relation of fundamental alterity.

We must distinguish two *others*, at least two – an other with a capital *O*, and an other with a small *o*, which is the ego. In the function of speech, we are concerned with the *Other*.

What I am saying is worth demonstrating. As always, I can only do so in terms of our experience. To those who would like to have some practice at some mental juggling which is bound to render their articulations more supple, I can't recommend too highly, for whatever use you may wish to put it, reading *Parmenides*, where the question of the one and the other was addressed in the most vigorous and single-minded way. That is no doubt why it is one of the most misunderstood of all works. When, after all, all it takes are the middling abilities – which should not be belittled – of a solver of crossword puzzles. Don't forget that in one of my written pieces, I formally recommended you to do crossword puzzles. The only thing which is essential is to hold your attention right to the end in developing the nine hypotheses. That's all that matters – paying attention. It is the most difficult thing in the world to get the average reader to do, as a result of the conditions under which the sport of reading is carried out. Those of my students who could devote themselves to a psychoanalytic commentary on the *Parmenides* would be doing something useful, and would allow the community to find its bearings in relation to a good many problems.

Let us come back to our planets. Why don't they speak? Who wants to articulate something?

All the same there are lots of things to say. What is odd is not that you don't

say any of them, but rather that you don't make it apparent that you realise that there's loads to say. If only you would dare to think it. It isn't very important to know what is the clinching reason. But what is certain, is that if one tries to enumerate them – I had no preconceived idea about the way they might be set out when I asked you it – the reasons which come to mind are structured like those we have already encountered on several occasions at play in Freud's work, namely those he comes up with in the dream of Irma's injection apropos of the kettle with a hole in it. The planets don't speak – firstly, because they have nothing to say – secondly, because they don't have the time – thirdly, because they have been silenced.

Each of these three things is true, and might permit us to make important statements with respect to what is called a planet, that is to say what I've taken as my term of reference in showing what we aren't.

I put the question to an eminent philosopher, one of our lecturers this year. He has been much preoccupied with the history of science and has made the most apt comments, the most profound there are, about Newtonianism. You always come away disappointed when you ask people who seem to be specialists, but you are going to see that, in actual fact, I wasn't disappointed. The question didn't seem to him to present any difficulties. He answered – *Because they don't have mouths.*

At first blush, I was a bit disappointed. When one is disappointed, one is always wrong. You should never be disappointed with the answers you receive, because if you are, that's wonderful, it proves that it was a real answer, that is to say exactly what you weren't expecting.

This point has considerable bearing on the question of the other. We have too great a tendency to be hypnotised by the so-called system of moons, and to model our idea of the answer on what we imagine when we talk about stimulus-response. If we receive the answer we were expecting, is it really an answer? That's another problem, and I won't get involved in that little diversion right now.

In the end, the philosopher's answer didn't disappoint me. No one is obliged to enter into the labyrinth of the question along the path mapped out by any one of the three reasons I mentioned, although we will encounter them again, for they are the true ones. One can enter into it just as well with any old answer, and the one I was given is extremely illuminating, on condition that one knows how to hear it. And I was in a very good position to listen to it, since I am a psychiatrist.

I don't have a mouth, we hear this when we're starting our careers, on the first psychiatric wards we, like lost souls, arrive on. At the heart of this miraculous world, we encounter very old ladies, very old spinsters, and the first thing they tell us is – *I don't have a mouth.* They inform us that they don't have a stomach either, and what is more that they will never die. In short, they have a very close

relationship to the lunar world. The only difference is that for these old ladies, victims of the so-called Cotard syndrome, or negation delirium, in the end that's true. What they have identified with is an image where every gap, every aspiration, every emptiness of desire is lacking, namely whatever it is that really constitutes the property of the buccal orifice. To the extent that the being's identification with its pure and simple image takes effect, there isn't any room for change either, that is to say death. That in fact is what their theme is – they are both dead and incapable of dying, immortal – like desire. To the extent that the subject here symbolically identifies himself with the imaginary, he in some way satisfies [*réalise*] desire.

The fact that the stars also happen not to have mouths and to be immortal pertains to another order – one can't say that it is true – it's real. There is no question of the stars having mouths. And, at least for us, the word immortal has over time become purely metaphorical. It is incontestably real that a star doesn't have a mouth, but no one would think of that, in the true sense of the word to think, if there weren't beings endowed with an apparatus for giving utterance to the symbolic, namely men, so as to make one notice it.

Stars are real, integrally real, in principle, there is absolutely nothing about them pertaining to an alterity with respect to themselves, they are purely and simply what they are. The fact that we always find them in the same place is one of the reasons why they don't speak.

You've noticed that from time to time I oscillate between planets and stars. It isn't by accident. For it wasn't the planets which manifested the *always in the same place* first, but the stars. The perfectly regular movement of the sidereal day is clearly what gave men their first opportunity of sensing the stability of the changing world surrounding them, and of starting to found the dialectic of the symbolic and the real, in which the symbolic apparently springs out from the real, which naturally isn't any more well-founded than thinking that the so-called fixed stars really revolve around the Earth. Similarly, one shouldn't think that symbols actually have come from the real. But it is nonetheless striking seeing how captivating these singular forms have been, whose grouping, after all, is not founded on anything. Why did human beings see the Great Bear that way? Why are the Pleiades so obvious? Why is Orion seen this way? I couldn't tell you if I tried. I am not aware that these points of light have even been grouped any differently – I'm asking you. In the dawn of humanity, which, incidentally, we cannot make out very clearly, this fact played quite a role. These signs have been tenaciously preserved to the present day, offering a rather bizarre example of the way in which the symbolic gets hitched up. The famous properties of form do not seem to provide an absolutely convincing explanation of the way in which we have grouped the constellations.

That said, we might have spared ourselves the trouble, since there is no foundation for this apparent stability of the stars we always find in the same place. Clearly we made genuine progress when we realised that there were, on

the other hand, things which really were in the same place, which were first perceived as wandering planets, and when we realised that it wasn't just as a function of our own rotation, but really, that some of the stars which fill the sky move and are always to be found in the same place.

This reality is a first reason why the planets do not speak much. Nevertheless, one would be wrong to suppose that they are as dumb as all that. They are so far removed from that that for a long time they were confused with natural symbols. We made them talk, and it would be wrong not to ask ourselves the question as to how that happened. For a very long time, and until rather recently, they retained a sort of subjective existence. Copernicus, who had nonetheless taken a decisive step in specifying the perfect regularity of the movement of the stars, still thought that an earthly body on the moon would make every effort to return home, that is to say to Earth, and that conversely a lunar body would not rest until it had flown back to its maternal home. That gives you an idea of how long these notions have persisted, and how difficult it is not to make beings out of realities.

At last Newton arrived. That had been in the making for some time – there is no better example than the history of science for showing you the extent to which human discourse is universal. Newton ended up stating the definitive formula which the world had been on the edge of for a century. Newton did definitively succeed in getting them to shut up. The eternal silence of infinite spaces, which petrified Pascal, is taken for granted after Newton – the stars do not speak, planets are dumb, and that's because they are silenced, which is the only real reason, for in the end you never really know what can happen with a reality.

Why don't planets speak? That is a real question. You only know what can happen to a reality once you have definitively reduced it to being inscribed in a language. We only became absolutely certain that the planets do not speak once they'd been shut up, that is to say once Newtonian theory had produced the theory of the unified field, in a form which has since been completed, a form which was already entirely satisfactory to every thinker. The theory of the unified field is summed up in the law of gravitation, which consists essentially in the fact that there's a formula which holds all this together, in an ultra-simple language consisting of three letters.

At the time, thinkers came up with all kinds of objections – this gravitation is unthinkable, we've never seen the like of this action at a distance, across a void, every kind of action is by definition an action of things in contact with one another. If you knew how hard Newtonian motion is to get hold of when examined up close! You would realise that operating with contradictory notions isn't the exclusive privilege of psychoanalysis. Newtonian motion makes use of time, but no one worries about the time of physics, because it doesn't in the slightest touch on realities – it's a question of proper language, and the unified field cannot be considered as anything more than a well-made language, than a syntax.

There's no cause to worry from that quarter – everything which enters into the unified field will never speak again, because these are realities which have been totally reduced to language. Here I think you can clearly see the opposition between speech and language.

Don't get the idea that our posture with respect to all the realities has attained a point of definite reduction, which is nonetheless rather satisfying – if planets and other things of the same order spoke, it would make a funny kind of discussion, and Pascal's fright might well be transformed into terror.

In fact, each time we deal with a residue of action, of truly authentic action, with this something new which emerges from the subject – this doesn't require that the subject be animated – we are confronted by something of which only our unconscious is not afraid. For at the level on which physics is currently moving, it would be wrong to imagine that it's all wrapped up, and that the atom and the electron have been silenced. Not at all. And it is obvious that we aren't here to go along with the musings about freedom to which people are wont to abandon themselves.

That is not at all what is at issue. It is clear that it's in relation to language that something funny happens. That is what Heisenberg's principle comes down to. When one is in a position to determine one of the properties of the system, one cannot formulate the others. When one speaks of the location of electrons, when one tells them to stay put somewhere, to remain always in the same place, one loses all sense of what is commonly called their velocity. Conversely, if one tells them – *well then, alright, you must always move in the same way* – one no longer has any idea where they are. I am not saying that we will always be in this eminently ludicrous position. But until things change, we can say that the elements don't answer where one asks them. More precisely, if one asks them somewhere, it is impossible to grasp them as a whole.

The question of knowing whether they speak isn't settled solely by their not answering. That's unsettling – one day, something may take us unawares. Let us not slide into mysticism – I'm not about to tell you that atoms and electrons speak. But why not? Everything happens *as if*. In any case, the matter would be settled the moment they started to lie to us. If atoms lied to us, tried to outwit us, we would be convinced, and quite rightly. There you've got your finger on the nub of the matter – the others as such, and not only in so far as they reflect our *a priori* categories and the more or less transcendental forms of our intuition.

These are things which we would prefer not to think about – if one day they started to get at us, you'd see where we'd end up. We wouldn't know where we were, quite literally, and that is indeed what Einstein thought all along and he never ceased to marvel at it. He always reminded people that the Almighty is a crafty one, but certainly not dishonest. Moreover, because it is a question here of a non-physical Almighty, that's the only thing which allows one to do science, that is to say, in the end reduce the Almighty to silence.

2

When it comes to this human science *par excellence* called psychoanalysis, is our aim to arrive at a unified field, and to turn men into moons? Do we get them to speak so much only so as to shut them up?

Besides, the most correct interpretation of the end of history invoked by Hegel is that it is the moment when all that men will have left to do is to close it. Is this a return to animal life? Are men who have reached the point of no longer needing language animals? An important question which seems to me to have received no meaningful answer. Whatever the case may be, the question of knowing what is the end of our practice is at the heart of analytic technique. Some disgraceful mistakes have been committed in this respect.

For the first time, I've read a very congenial article on what is called the typical cure. *The necessity of maintaining the ego's capacity for observation intact*, I see this written in bold letters. There's talk of a mirror, the analyst – that's not bad, but the author wants this mirror alive. A live mirror, I wonder what that is. Poor fellow, he talks about a living mirror because he clearly senses that there is something not quite right in this story. What's the essential thing in analysis? Does analysis consist in the imaginary realisation of the subject? The ego gets confused with the subject, and the ego is turned into a reality, something which, as they say, *integrates*, that is, which holds the planet together.

If this planet doesn't speak, it is not only because it is real, but because it doesn't have the time, in the literal sense – it doesn't have this dimension. Why? Because it is round. That's what integration is – whatever a circular form does, it is always equal to itself. What is advanced as being the aim of analysis is to make it well-rounded, this ego, to give it the spherical shape in which it will have definitively integrated all its disjointed fragmentary states, its scattered limbs, its pregenital phases, its partial drives, the pandemonium of its *egos*, countless and broken up as they are. A race to the triumphant *ego* – as many objects as *egos*.

It's not at all the case that everyone means the same thing by the term object relation, but by approaching things by way of the object relation and the partial drives, instead of locating it where it belongs, on the plane of the imaginary, the author I'm talking about, who for a time seemed to have got off to a good start, ends up with nothing less than the following perversion, which consists in locating the entire development of analysis in the imaginary relation of the subject to its most primitive diversity. Thank God, the experiment is never pushed to the limit, one doesn't do what one says one is doing, one stays well this side of one's goals. Thank God, his cures fail, and that is why the subject survives it.

Following the line the author I've just spoken of espoused, one can give an entirely rigorous demonstration of the fact that his way of conceiving of the

cure of obsessional neurosis will have no other result than that of making the subject paranoid. What seems to him the abyss one constantly skirts around in the cure of obsessional neurosis is the appearance of psychosis. In other words, according to the author in question, the obsessional neurotic is in fact a madman.

Let us dot the i's and cross the t's – what is this madman? He's a madman who keeps his distance from his madness, that is to say from the greatest imaginary perturbation there can be. He's a paranoid madman. To say that madness is the greatest imaginary perturbation as such doesn't define every kind of madness – I'm referring to states of delirium and paranoia. According to the author I'm reading, everything the obsessional says has got nothing to do with his experience. It is through verbal conformity, social language, that he maintains his precarious equilibrium – which is nonetheless very stable, for what could be harder than to catch out an obsessional? And if the obsessional does indeed resist and digs his heels in so vigorously, that's because, according to what the author I'm referring to has to say, psychosis, the imaginary disintegration of the ego, is behind all this. Unfortunately for his argument, the author cannot show us an obsessional whom he has truly sent round the bend. There's no possibility of doing that – and there are very good reasons why. But in wanting to guard the subject from his so-called menacing madnesses, he would succeed in ending up not that far from there.

Post-analytical paranoia is a long way from being a mythical problem. You don't have to have pushed the treatment very far for it to give rise to a perfectly consistent paranoia. I've actually seen that on this ward. This is the ward where you can see it most clearly, because there's a tendency to shift them gradually on to open wards, from which they often return, and integrate themselves into a closed ward. It happens. You don't need a very good psychoanalyst to get this to come about, it's sufficient to believe very fervently in psychoanalysis. I have seen paranoias one can call post-analytical, and which can be said to be spontaneous. In an adequate environment, where there's a very strong preoccupation with psychological facts, a subject can succeed, on condition nonetheless of having some inclination for it, in girdling himself with problems which without any doubt are fictive, but to which he gives substance, within a ready-made language – that of psychoanalysis, which everyone talks about. It generally takes a very long time for a chronic delirium to get built up, the subject must put a lot into it – generally, he invests a third of his life in it. I must say that, to some extent, the analytic literature constitutes a ready-made[2] delirium, and it isn't rare to see subjects dressed up in it, ready-to-wear. The style, if I may put it like this, of those silent devotees of the ineffable mystery of the analytic experience, is an attenuated form of it, but its foundation is homogeneous with what for now I am calling paranoia.

[2] English in the original.

3

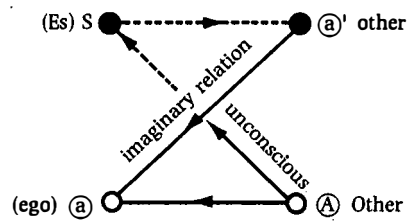
Today I would like to suggest a little schema to you, to illustrate the problems raised by the ego and the other, language and speech.

This schema would not be a schema if it yielded a solution. It isn't even a model. It's just a way of fixing our ideas, called for by an infirmity in our discursive capacity.

Because I think that you are already quite familiar with it, I haven't gone over what distinguishes the imaginary from the symbolic once again.

What do we know about the ego? Is the ego real, is it a moon, or is it an imaginary construction? We start with the idea, with which I've serenaded you for a long time, that there is no way of grasping anything whatsoever of the analytic dialectic if we do not assume that the ego is an imaginary construction. The fact that it is imaginary doesn't take anything away from it, the poor ego – I would even go so far as to say that that's what's good about it. If it weren't imaginary, we wouldn't be men, we would be moons. Which doesn't mean that all it takes to be men is to have this imaginary ego. We could still be that in-between thing called a madman. A madman is precisely someone who adheres to the imaginary, purely and simply.

This is what I'm talking about.



S is the letter *S*, but it's also the subject, the analytic subject, that is to say not the subject in its totality. People spend their time plaguing us about taking it in its totality. Why should it be a whole? We haven't the faintest idea. Have you ever encountered whole beings? Perhaps it's an ideal. *I've* never seen any. *I'm* not whole. Neither are you. If we were whole, we would each be in our corners, whole, we wouldn't be here, together, trying to get ourselves into shape, as they say. It is the subject, not in its totality, but in its opening up. As usual, he doesn't know what he's saying. If he knew what he was saying, he wouldn't be there. He is there, down on the right.

To be sure, that isn't where he sees himself – that is never the case – even at the end of analysis. He sees himself in *a*, and that is why he has an ego. He may believe that this ego is him, everybody is at that stage, and there is no way of getting out of it.

What analysis teaches us, on the other hand, is that the ego is an absolutely fundamental form for the constitution of objects. In particular, it perceives what we call, for structural reasons, its fellow being, in the form of the specular other. This form of the other has a very close relation to the ego, which can be superimposed on it, and we write it as a'.

So there's the plane of the mirror, the symmetrical world of the *egos* and of the homogeneous others. We'll have to distinguish another level, which we call the wall of language.

The imaginary gains its false reality, which nonetheless is a verified reality, starting off from the order defined by the wall of language. The ego such as we understand it, the other, the fellow being, all these imaginary things are objects. To be sure, they aren't homogeneous with moons – and we are liable to forget that all the time. But they are indeed objects, because they are named as such within an organised system, that of the wall of language.

When the subject talks to his fellow beings, he uses ordinary language, which holds the imaginary egos to be things which are not simply *ex-sisting*, but real. Not knowing what there is in the domain in which the concrete dialogue is held, he is dealing with a certain number of characters, a'. a''. In so far as the subject brings them into relation with his own image, those with whom he speaks are also those with whom he identifies.

That said, we, the analysts, must not overlook our basic assumption – we think there are subjects other than us, that authentically intersubjective relations exist. We would have no reason to think that if we didn't have the testimony of the characterising feature of intersubjectivity, that is, that the subject can lie to us. That is the decisive proof. I am not saying that that is the sole foundation of the reality of the other subject, it is its proof. In other words, we in fact address A_1, A_2, those we do not know, true Others, true subjects.

They are on the other side of the wall of language, there where in principle I never reach them. Fundamentally, it is them I'm aiming at every time I utter true speech, but I always attain a', a'', through reflection. I always aim at true subjects, and I have to be content with shadows. The subject is separated from the Others, the true ones, by the wall of language.

If speech is founded in the existence of the Other, the true one, language is so made as to return us to the objectified other, to the other whom we can make what we want of, including thinking that he is an object, that is to say that he doesn't know what he's saying. When we use language, our relation with the other always plays on this ambiguity. In other words, language is as much there to found us in the Other as to drastically prevent us from understanding him. And that is indeed what is at stake in the analytic experience.

The subject doesn't know what he is saying, and for the best of reasons, because he doesn't know what he is. But he sees himself. He sees himself from the other side, in an imperfect manner, as you know, as a consequence of the

fundamentally incomplete nature of the specular *Urbild*, which is not only imaginary, but illusory. The perverted inflection which analytic technique has been acquiring for some time is founded on this fact. Within this perspective, one would like the subject to aggregate all the more or less fragmented, fragmentary pieces of this thing in which he fails to recognise himself [*se méconnaît*]. One wants him in effect to gather everything which he experienced in the pregenital stage, his scattered limbs, his partial drives, the succession of partial objects – think of Carpaccio's *Saint George* skewering the dragon, with small severed heads, arms, and so on, all around. One wants to allow this ego to gather its strength, to realise itself, to integrate itself–the dear little thing. If this end is pursued in a direct fashion, if one focuses on the imaginary and the pregenital, one necessarily ends up in that sort of analysis in which the consummation of partial objects is achieved through the intermediary of the image of the other. Without knowing why, the authors who follow this path all end up with the same conclusion – the ego can only re-encounter and reconstitute itself by way of the fellow being the subject has before him – or behind him, the result is the same.

The subject reconcentrates his own imaginary ego essentially in the form of the analyst's ego. Besides, this ego doesn't remain simply imaginary, for the spoken intervention of the analyst is expressly conceived of as an encounter of ego with ego, as a projection by the analyst of precise objects. In this perspective, the analysis is always represented and planned on the plane of objectivity. What is at issue, as it's written up, is to get the subject to shift from a psychic reality to a true reality, that is to say a moon reconstituted in the imaginary, and very precisely, something also not hidden from us, on the model of the ego of the analyst. This account is sufficiently coherent to realise that it isn't a matter of being indoctrinated, nor of showing what one should be doing in the world. It is clearly on the imaginary level that one is operating. That is why nothing would be more appreciated than locating the ineffable experience beyond what is considered to be the illusion, and not the wall, of language.

Amongst several clinical examples to hand, there's a very pretty vignette, that of the patient terrorised by the thought that the analyst knows what she has in her suitcase. She both knows it and she doesn't. Everything she manages to say is neglected by the analyst from the perspective of this imaginary worry. And all of a sudden, you realise that that is the only thing of importance – she is afraid that the analyst will take away everything she has got in her belly, that is to say the contents of the suitcase, which symbolises her partial object.

The notion of the imaginary assumption of partial objects through the intermediary of the figure of the analyst leads to a kind of *Comulgatorio*, to use the title which Balthasar Gracián gave to a Treatise on the Holy Eucharist, leads to an imaginary consummation of the analyst. A strange communion – at the stall, a head with parsley stuffed up its nose, or again with a well-cut piece in his

pants, and as Apollinaire said in *The Breasts of Tiresias – Eat the feet of your analyst in the same sauce*, that's the fundamental theory of analysis.

Isn't there another conception of analysis, which allows one to conclude that it is something other than the reconstitution of a fundamental imaginary partialisation of the subject?

This partialisation does in fact exist. It is one of the dimensions which enable the analyst to operate through identification, by giving the subject his own ego. I'll spare you the details, but it is certain that the analyst can, by means of a specific interpretation of the resistances, by a specific reduction of the total experience of the analysis to its solely imaginary elements, succeed in projecting on to the patient the different characteristics of his analytical ego – and God knows they can differ, in a way which comes clear at the end of analyses. What Freud taught us is exactly the opposite.

One trains analysts so that there are subjects in whom the ego is absent. That is the ideal of analysis, which, of course, remains virtual. There is never a subject without an ego, a fully realised subject, but that in fact is what one must aim to obtain from the subject in analysis.

The analysis must aim at the passage of true speech, joining the subject to an other subject, on the other side of the wall of language. That is the final relation of the subject to a genuine Other, to the Other who gives the answer one doesn't expect, which defines the terminal point of the analysis.

Throughout the course of the analysis, on the sole condition that the ego of the analyst does agree not to be there, on the sole condition that the analyst is not a living mirror, but an empty mirror, what happens happens between the ego of the subject – it is always the ego of the subject which speaks, ostensibly – and the others. The entire development of the analysis consists in the progressive displacement of this relation, which the subject can grasp at any moment, beyond the wall of language, as being the transference, which is his and in which he doesn't recognise himself. It isn't a matter of reducing this relation, as you'll find it written, but of having the subject assume it where he is. The analysis consists in getting him to become conscious of his relations, not with the ego of the analyst, but with all these Others who are his true interlocutors, whom he hasn't recognised. It is a matter of the subject progressively discovering which Other he is truly addressing, without knowing it, and of him progressively assuming the relations of transference at the place where he is, and where at first he didn't know he was.

There are two meanings to be given to Freud's phrase – *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*. This *Es*, take it as the letter *S*. It is there, it is always there. It is the subject. He knows himself or he doesn't know himself. That isn't even the most important thing – he speaks or he doesn't speak. At the end of the analysis, it is him who must be called on to speak, and to enter into relation with the real Others. Where the *S* was, there the *Ich* should be.

That is where the subject authentically re-integrates his disjointed limbs, and recognises, reaggregates his experience.

In the course of an analysis, something like an object may be formed. But this object, far from being what is at issue, is only a fundamentally alienated form of it. It is the imaginary ego which gives it its centre and its group, and it is clearly identifiable with a form of alienation, akin to paranoia. That the subject ends up believing in the ego is in itself madness. Thank God, analysis very rarely succeeds in that, but we have a thousand proofs that it is being pushed in that direction.

This will be our programme for next year – what does paranoia mean? What does schizophrenia mean? Paranoia, as compared with schizophrenia, always has a relation to the imaginary alienation of the ego.

25 May 1955

XX

Objectified analysis

A CRITIQUE OF FAIRBAIRN
IN ANALYSIS, WHY DOES ONE SPEAK?
THE IMAGINARY ECONOMY AND THE SYMBOLIC REGISTER
THE IRRATIONAL NUMBER

The schema I gave you last time assumes that speech is propagated like light, in a straight line. That shows you the extent to which it is only metaphorical, analogical.

What interferes with the wall of language is the specular relation, whereby what pertains to the ego is always perceived, appropriated, via the intermediary of an other, who for the subject always retains the properties of the *Urbild*, of the fundamental image of the ego. Hence the misapprehensions [*méconnaissances*] thanks to which misunderstandings no less than ordinary communication – which itself rests on the said misunderstandings – become established.

This schema has more than one property, as I have shown you in teaching you how to transform it. I have also pointed out to you that the attitude of the analyst may vary considerably, and bring into the analysis diverse, even opposed, consequences.

We've come up against it, or we've come to the crossroads – in analysis, what takes place, depending on whether one assumes the speech relation to be the matrix or, on the contrary, whether one objectifies the analytic situation? According to the authors, and the practitioners, every objectivation, with varying intensity, turns the analysis into a process of remodelling of the ego, on the model of the ego of the analyst.

This criticism takes on all its significance if one is aware of the fundamentally specular, alienated character of the ego. Every kind of ego rendered present as such renders an imaginary function present, if only the ego of the analyst – an ego is always an ego, however perfected it may be.

Certainly, analysis has taken these paths for a good reason. Freud did in fact reintegrate the ego. But was that in order to recentre analysis on the object and on object relations?

Today the object relation is what is on the agenda. I've told you how central it was to all the ambiguities which now make it so difficult to recapture the meaning of the last segments of Freud's work, and to relocate recent technical

investigations within the framework of the often forgotten meaning of analysis.

What I teach you here are fundamental alphabetical notions, it is a compass-card, a panoramic table, rather than a complete cartography of the present problems of analysis. This assumes that, armed with this panoramic table, you should try to make your own way using the map, and put my teaching to the test with an extensive reading of Freud's work.

One hears so and so saying that the theory I'm proposing to you here doesn't coincide with what can be found in such and such a text of Freud's. I could easily reply that, in all truth, before broaching the text, one has to comprehend the whole. The *ego* appears in several places in Freud's work. Someone who hasn't studied the *ego* in *On Narcissism: an Introduction* cannot follow what Freud says about it in *Das Ich und das Es*, which refers the *ego* to the perceptual-consciousness system.

Even within the topographical argument of *Das Ich und das Es*, you cannot do full justice to a definition like this one, which makes the *ego* equivalent to the system of perception-consciousness, by isolating it. This equation cannot pass for a definition. Isolated, it is simply a convention or a tautology.

If it is just to end up with a schema which can support a thousand interpretations – I am talking about this famous schema of the egg, which has had such a hypnotic effect throughout analysis, in which the *ego* is seen as a kind of lentil, a germinating point, a differentiated part, organised by the mass of the id, whereby the relation is tied to reality – in truth there was no need for the immense detour of Freud's work. Besides, the important thing about this schema is that the *ego*'s organisation is dependent on something completely heterogeneous to it from the point of view of organisation.

The danger with any schema, and especially with any schema which reifies too much, is that the mind immediately falls on it and sees in it only the most summary of images.

1

Last time, I picked a reference from close to home. Today I've picked an Englishman, or rather a Scotsman, with the name of Fairbairn, who tried, not without a certain rigour, to reformulate the whole of analytic theory in terms of object relations. You'll find this reading accessible – his article, 'Endopsychic structure considered in terms of object-relationships', appeared in volume 25 of the *International Journal of Psycho-analysis*.

The aim is to describe endopsychic structure in terms of object relations. There's a greater interest to this than if it were an author's particular theory. You will recognise the familiar traces of the manner in which we relate cases, in which we give an account of the incidences and the forces of psychic reality, with which we summarise the treatment. The schema he elaborates, his

imagery, has some connection with what we cover by the term 'imaginary economy'. You will also see clearly the great risks which analysis runs by sticking to the level of such a conceptualisation.

It would be best to read the whole of the article, to follow its development – each of you do this work on your own. My exposé will give direction to your research, and will, I hope, encourage you to monitor what I am telling you.

Here's the schema which the author arrives at, traced out by the roles in a dream he recounts. Those of you who have just heard a lecture on psychodrama here, which will moreover be revived this evening, will immediately see the family resemblance, which testifies to a degradation of the theory of analysis.[1] One cannot speak about psychodrama without taking sides – this practice has nothing in common with analytic practice.

There are, according to our author, heterogeneities, peculiar asymmetries, in Freudian theory. The whole thing must be renovated, he says. *As far as I'm concerned*, says Fairbairn, *I don't understand any of it* – rather than talking about a libido which we don't know how to handle, and which we end up identifying with the drives, which is indeed a way of objectifying it, why not simply talk of the object? The concept of the libido as energy, with which Freud started, has indeed given rise to all kinds of confusions, since it has been identified with the capacity to love.

According to Freud, Fairbairn says in his language, in his tongue, the libido is pleasure-seeking,[2] it seeks pleasure. But we've changed all that, and we've realised that the libido is object-seeking.[2] Besides, Freud did have some idea of it – the author of these lines, like so many people, hasn't realised that Freud talks of love just when he still thinks what's involved is the criticism of the theory of the libido as – do you see the relation with what I said last time? – something which at least raises the problem of its adaptation to objects. In the end, this notion of object-seeking libido pervades everything which follows.

One of the mainsprings, one of the keys of the doctrine which I expound here, is the distinction between the real, the imaginary and the symbolic. I try to get you used to it, to break you into it. This conception allows you to perceive the secret confusion hidden under this notion of object. This notion of object is in fact sustained by the straightforward confusion of these three terms.

Since objects there are, the objects are there always represented by the way in which the subject brings them – that is what you take literally. And when you grasp them objectively, as one says, that is to say without the knowledge of the subject, you represent them to yourselves as objects homogeneous with those which the subject brings you. Lord knows how you will find your way in the midst of all that.

Fairbairn distinguishes the central *ego* and the libidinal *ego*. The central *ego* is

[1] On 1 June 1955, J. L. Moreno gave a lecture to the Société Française de Psychanalyse entitled 'Psychodrama'. [2] English in the original.

more or less the *ego* as it has always been imagined once the individual organic unity was reified on the psychic level in terms of the idea of its unity, that is to say once the individual's psychic synthesis was taken to be a given tied to the functioning of the apparatuses. Here it is a psychic object, as such closed off from any dialectic, the empirical *ego* of the classical conception, the object of psychology. One part of this central ego emerges in the conscious and the preconscious – see what a meagre functional value the original references to the conscious and the preconscious are henceforth reduced to. And, of course, the other part of this *ego* is unconscious – which no one has ever denied, even in the most outdated psychology.

This unconscious part gives us no access whatsoever to a subjective dimension which might be related to repressed significations. That is the concern of another organised *ego*, the libidinal *ego*, directed towards objects. The latter, in view of the extreme difficulty of its relations to these objects, has undergone a dissociation, a schize, such that its organisation, which is actually that of an *ego*, has been forced back into that of an autonomous function, which from now on no longer fits in with the functioning of the central *ego*.

Here you recognise a conception which easily takes shape in one's mind on first acquaintance with analytic doctrine. It is a vulgarised doctrine. And that is how a number of analysts have now managed to conceive of the process of repression.

But the situation is far from being as simple as that, for the existence of something else has for some time now been discovered in the unconscious, which isn't libidinal, but is aggressivity, which has led to a grand reworking of analytic theory. Freud didn't confuse internal aggressivity with the super-ego. In Fairbairn, we come upon a quite exciting notion, for the author doesn't seem to have found in the English language a term which appeared to him to signify adequately the disruptive, almost demonic, function of the super-ego, so he made one up – the *internal*[3] *saboteur*.

If this saboteur is repressed, it is because at the beginning of the development of the individual two peculiarly inconvenient objects are to be found. These two problematic objects have the bizarre property of having initially been one and the same object. It wouldn't surprise you if I told you that, first and last, we're actually dealing with the mother. Everything leads back to the original frustration or non-frustration.

I'm not distorting anything. I ask each one of you to have a look at this exemplary article, exemplary because it makes quite clear what underlies many moderate, more subtle positions.

The essential structure is the primitive schize between the two faces, good and bad, of the first object, that is to say of the feeding mother. Everything else

[3] English in the original.

will be only elaboration, ambiguity, homonymy. The Oedipus complex is only superimposed on this primitive structuration, by giving it motifs[4] – in the ornamental sense of the word. Later, the father and the mother share out, in a way which may be quite subtle, the fundamental roles which are written into the primitive division of the object, on the one hand exciting,[5] exciting desire, the libido here being confused with the desire objectified in its conditioning – on the other rejecting.[5]

I don't want to take you too far, but it is clear that exciting[5] and rejecting[5] do not belong on the same level. Basically, 'rejecting'[5] implies a subjectification of the object. On the exclusively objective plane, an object is either frustrating or it isn't. Whereas the notion of rejection secretly introduces the intersubjective relation, non-recognition. That gives you an idea of the confusion to which one is forever liable to succumb, even in discussions like this one.

But I'm not here to correct Fairbairn. I am trying to uncover his intentions and the results of his work for you. He reduces repression down to a tendency to repulsion and he distinguishes the libidinal *ego* and the internal[5] saboteur, for the best reasons, which are that the two primitive objects, which in reality make up only one, are difficult to handle.

To be sure, it is a fact that the object is a long way from being univocal, and it elicits from the subject the anguish of rejection as well as the continually renewed libidinal incitation, thanks to which this anguish is reactivated. There's no contesting that internalisation of the bad object occurs. As has been remarked, if it is urgent to internalise something, whatever inconvenience may result from that, it is usually this bad object which is picked on, so as to master it, rather than the good one, which is best left outside, where it can exert its beneficent influence. In the wake of the internalisation of the bad object, a process is set in motion whereby the libidinal *ego*, which is considered too dangerous, reactivating in too acute a fashion the drama which led to the primitive internalisation, will itself be, secondarily, rejected by the central *ego*.

The latter is the object of a double, a supplementary, repulsion, manifested this time in the form of aggression stemming from the agency, itself repressed, of the internal[5] saboteur, in a close relation to the bad primitive objects.

That's the schema we get to, and as you see, it may well remind us of more than one clinically observed phenomenon in the behaviour of neurotic subjects.

This schema is illustrated by a dream. The subject dreams that she is the object of an act of aggression on the part of a character who turns out to be an actress – the function of the actress plays a special part in her story. The rest of the dream permits the specification on the one hand of the relations of the aggressive character with the mother of the subject, and on the other, the splitting [*dédoublement*] of the character attacked in the first part of the dream

[4] '*motifs*' – meaning both 'motifs' and 'motives', which Lacan then distinguishes.
[5] English in the original.

into two characters, respectively male and female, who change in the way moiré effects do, leaving ambiguous the appearance of a given object. Through a kind of pulsation, one sees the attacked character pass from a feminine to a masculine form, in which the author has no difficulty recognising his exciting object[6] well repressed behind the two others, an inert element which thus finds itself at the foundation of the unconscious psyche, and which the subject's associations allow to identify as her husband, with whom she has undoubtedly difficult relations.

What can be deduced from this schema as regards the action of the analyst? The individual lives in a perfectly defined and stable world, with the objects which are destined to be his. It is thus a matter of getting him to rediscover the path to a normal relation with these objects, which are there, awaiting him.

The difficulty stems from the hidden existence of these objects, which from this point on are called internal objects, which hinder and paralyse the subject. At the beginning, their character was coaptating, they had, if one may say so, a fully-fledged reality. If they then acquired this function, it is because of the momentary impotence of the subject, it is because the subject didn't know how to face the primitive encounter with an object which didn't live up to expectations. I'm not forcing anything, that's what the text says.

The mother, we are told, didn't fulfil her maternal function. One assumes, in effect, that, in her natural function, the mother is in no way a rejecting object – in the state of nature the mother can only be good, and it is on account of the specific conditions under which we live that such an accident can happen. The subject separates itself from a part of itself, abandons the coat of Joseph, rather than be subjected to ambivalent excitations. The drama stems from this ambiguity – the object is both good and bad.

This schema is not all faults. In particular one can show that any valid notion of the *ego* must in effect put it into correlation with the objects. But to say that the objects are internalised, there's the sleight of hand. The whole point is to know what an internalised object is. Here we try to solve this question by speaking of the imaginary, with all its implications. In particular, the function which the imaginary plays in the biological order is in fact very far from being identical to that of the real.

In Fairbairn, there is no critique of this order. The object is an object. It is taken as a mass. The position chosen to objectify it, namely the beginning of the subject's life, leads to confusion of the imaginary and the real: thus, the imaginary value of the mother is no less great than the value of her real character. But however dominating these two registers may be, there are no grounds for confusing them, as is done here.

The libidinal *ego* must be integrated, that is to say it must find the objects

[6] Both words in English in the original.

which are destined for it, and which partake of a double nature, real and imaginary. On the one hand, they are imaginary in so far as they are objects of desire – if there is something which analysis has from the beginning brought to the fore, doubtless it is the fecundity of the libido in the creation of objects corresponding to the stages of its development. On the other hand, these objects are real objects – it is taken for granted that we cannot give them to the individual, that isn't within our power. What's at issue is allowing him to make manifest, in relation to the exciting[7] object, that is to say eliciting the imaginary reaction, the libido whose repression constitutes the knot of his neurosis.

If we retain a schema like this one, there is in effect only one course. To know which path the analyst must take, one must know where he is in this schema.

Now, take careful note of the following – when the author deduces from the dream the differentiation of this multiplicity of *egos*, as he puts it, the central[7] *ego* is nowhere to be seen, he assumes it – the whole scene takes place in this *ego*, which observes it. If we now move on from the schema of the individual to that of the analytic situation, there's only one place to locate the analyst – precisely in place of the *ego* who observes. This second interpretation has the advantage of justifying the first. For up until now, in this theory, the *ego*, in so far as it observes, has none of the active characteristics of the *ego*. On the other hand, if there's someone who observes, it is the analyst, and it is his function that he projects into this central[7] *ego*, which he posits in his subject.

The observing analyst is just as much someone who intervenes in the revelation of the function of the repressed object, the correlative of the libidinal *ego*. The subject manifests the images of his desire, and the analyst is there to enable him to rediscover the appropriate images, with which he can harmonise. Now, the difference between psychic reality and true reality being, as we are told, precisely that psychic reality is subjected to that identification consisting in a relation to images, there is no other measure of the normality of the images than that given by the imaginary world of the analyst.

So any theorisation of analysis organised around the object relation amounts in the end to advocating the recomposition of the subject's imaginary world according to the norm of the analyst's ego. The original introjection of the rejecting object[7], which has poisoned the exciting[7] function of the said object, is corrected by the introjection of a correct ego, that of the analyst.

2

Why does one talk in analysis? According to this way of looking at things, it's to keep the audience amused. The analyst has to be on the look out, at the limit of the domain of speech, for what captivates the subject, what stops him, makes

[7] English in the original.

him jib, inhibits him, scares him. He should objectify the subject in order to rectify him on an imaginary plane which can only be that of the dual relation, that is to say the analyst as model, in the absence of any other system of reference.

Freud was never satisfied with such a schema. If he had wanted to conceptualise analysis in such a way, he would have had no need for a *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.*

We don't come upon the imaginary economy at the limit of our experience, it isn't an ineffable experience, it's not a question of looking for a better economy of mirages. The imaginary economy has meaning, we gain some purchase on it, only in so far as it is transcribed into the symbolic order, where a ternary relation is imposed. Although Fairbairn's schema is modelled on the dream which illustrates it, the crucial fact is that this dream is recounted by the subject. And experience tells us that this dream isn't dreamt at any old time, any old way, nor is it addressed to no one. The dream has all the value of a direct declaration of the subject. It is in the very fact that he communicates it to you, that he adjudges himself to have this particular inhibited, difficult, attitude, in some cases, or on the contrary one made easier in others, feminine or masculine, etc., that's where the lever of the analysis is to be found. It is not superfluous that he is capable of saying it in speech. From the start, his experience is organised in the symbolic order. The legal order into which he is inducted almost from the beginning gives signification to these imaginary relations, as a function of what I call the unconscious discourse of the subject. Through all this, the subject is trying to say something, and to do so in a language which is virtually offered in order to become speech, that is to say to be communicated. The spoken clarification is the mainspring of progress. The images will take on their meaning in a wider discourse, in which the entire history of the subject is integrated. The subject is as such historicised from one end to the other. This is where the analysis is played out – on the frontier between the symbolic and the imaginary.

The subject doesn't have a dual relation with an object with which he is confronted, it is in relation to another subject that his relations with this object acquire their meaning, and by the same token their value. Inversely, if he has relations with this object, it is because a subject other than himself has relations with this object, and they can both name it, in an order different from that of the real. As soon as it can be named, its presence can be invoked as an original dimension, distinct from reality. Nomination is invocation of presence, and sustaining of presence in absence.

In short, the schema which places the object relation at the heart of the theorisation of analysis misses the mainspring of the analytic experience, namely that the subject gives an account of himself.

The fact that he gives an account of himself is the dynamic mainspring of the

analysis. The rents that appear, thanks to which you can go beyond what he is recounting to you, are not an a-side in the discourse, they occur in the text of the discourse. It is in so far as something in the discourse appears to be irrational that you can bring in the images with their symbolic value.

This is the first time that I'm granting that there is something irrational. Don't worry, I take this term in its arithmetical sense. There are numbers which are called irrational, and the first one which comes to mind, however unfamilar you may be with this thing, is $\sqrt{2}$, which brings us back to the *Meno*, the archway through which we passed to begin the year.

There is no common measure between the square's diagonal and its side. It took a very long time for us to admit that. However small you make it, you won't find it. That is what we call irrational.

Euclid's geometry is precisely founded on this, that one can employ in an equivalent way the two symbolised realities which have no common measure. And it is precisely because they don't have a common measure that one can employ them in an equivalent way. That is what Socrates does in his dialogue with the slave – *You have a square, you want to make the square twice as big, what do you have to do?*[8] The slave replies that he will make the length twice as long. The point is to get him to understand that if he takes a length twice as long, he will get a square four times the size. And there is no way of making a square twice as big.

But it is neither squares nor diamonds that are being manipulated. Lines are being traced out, that is to say, they are being introduced into reality. That is what Socrates doesn't tell the slave. It is thought that the slave knows everything, all he has to do is recognise it. But on condition that the work's been done for him. The work is in tracing out this line, and in making use of it in a way equivalent to that which is supposed to be given at the start, allegedly real. When it was simply a matter of larger or smaller, of real little squares, whole numbers were introduced. In other words, the images give the appearance of evidence to what is essentially symbolic manipulation. If one finds the solution to the problem, that is to say a square which is twice the size of the first square, it is because one started by destroying the first square as such, by taking a triangle from it, and by reconstituting it with a second square. This assumes a whole field of symbolic assumptions hidden behind the false evidence to which the slave is brought to adhere.

Nothing is less obvious than a space containing in itself its own intuitions. It took a world of surveyors, of practical procedures, preceding the people who discourse so knowledgeably in the agora of Athens, in order that the slave no longer be what he could have been, living on the banks of a great river, in a wild state of nature, in a space of waves and sweeps of sand, on a perpetually

[8] *Meno* 82d.

shifting, pseudopial beach. A very long time spent learning was needed, learning to fold things on to others, to match up outlines, to begin to conceive of a space structured in an homogeneous way in three dimensions. It's you who introduce these three dimensions, you with your symbolic world.

The incommensurability of the irrational number introduces these first imaginary inert structurations, invigorated, reduced to operations like those which we still find turning up in the first books of Euclid. Remember with what care one generates the isosceles triangle, checks that it hasn't moved, superimposes it upon itself. That's the way one starts geometry, and that's the trace of its umbilical cord. In fact, nothing is more essential to the Euclidian construction than the fact that one turns on to itself something which, in the end, is just a trace – not even a trace, nothing at all. And that is why, when one grasps it, one is so scared of making it perform operations in a space which it isn't ready to confront. In truth, that is how one perceives the extent to which it is the symbolic order which introduces the entire reality that is at issue.

In the same way, the images of our subject are buttoned down [*capitonnées*] in the text of his history, they are enmeshed in the symbolic order, in which the human subject is inducted into an event which is just as coalescing as you might imagine the original relation to be, which we are forced to admit as being a kind of residue of the real. As soon as the human being experiences this contrasting rhythm scanned by the first wail and its cessation, something is revealed, something which is operative in the symbolic order.

Anyone who's observed a child has seen that the same blow, the same knock, the same slap, isn't received in the same fashion, depending on whether it is punitive or accidental. The symbolic relation is constituted as early as possible, even prior to the fixation of the self image of the subject, prior to the structuring image of the ego, introducing the dimension of the subject into the world, a dimension capable of creating a reality other than that experienced as brute reality, as the encounter of two masses, the collision of two balls. The imaginary experience is inscribed in the register of the symbolic as early on as you can think it. Everything that happens in the order of the object relation is structured as a function of the particular history of the subject, and that is why analysis, and the transference, are possible.

3

It remains for me to tell you what the function of the ego in analysis correctly centred on the exchange of speech should be. That's what I'll do next time.

If today's session had seemed too arid to you, I will call upon a literary reference, whose connotations are quite striking. The ego is only one object amongst others in the world of objects, in as much as they are symbolised, but on the other hand, it has its own self-evidence, and for the best of reasons. There

is a very close relation between ourselves and what we call our ego. In its insertions in the real, it does not at all appear to us in the guise of an image.

If there is something which gives us a demonstration of the mirage-like quality of the ego, in the most problematic of manners, it must be the reality of the double, and what is more, the possibility of the illusion of the double. In short, the imaginary identity of two real objects puts the function of the ego to the test, and that is what will encourage me to open the next seminar with some literary reflections on the character of Sosie.

The latter didn't come into being at the same time as the legend of Amphitryon, but later. Plautus introduced him as a kind of comic double, the Sosie *par excellence*, of the most magnificent of cuckolds, Amphitryon. This legend was richly embellished in the course of time and the richest version is that of Molière – not the last, though, for there was a German one, in the eighteenth century, of a mystical variety, invoked as a kind of Virgin Mary, and then the marvellous Giraudoux, in which the resonances of pathos go far beyond simple literary virtuosity. Reread all that for next time.

Since today we have studied a small mechanical schema with the happiest of results, it is natural that I should turn to a dramatic model to illustrate the theorisation of analysis in the symbolic register. I will try to show you, in Molière's *Amphitryon*, what I will call, to parody the title of a recent book, the *adventures* – the misadventures even – *of psychoanalysis*.

1 June 1955

XXI

Sosie[1]

THE HUSBAND, THE WIFE AND THE GOD
THE WOMAN, OBJECT OF EXCHANGE
ME, WHO KICKS YOU OUT[2]
THE SPLITTINGS [*DÉDOUBLEMENTS*] OF THE OBSESSIONAL

Who's read *Amphitryon*?

Today we will be concerned with the ego. We are approaching the question of the ego from another angle than the one we adopted last year. Last year, we dealt with it in connection with the phenomenon of transference. This year, we are trying to understand it in relation to the symbolic order.

Man lives in the midst of a world of language, in which that phenomenon called speech occurs. We believe that analysis takes place in this environment. If we don't situate this environment clearly in relation to other environments, which also exist, the real environment, the environment of imaginary mirages, one obliges analysis to deviate either towards interventions bearing on the real – a trap one falls into but rarely – or, on the contrary, by placing in our opinion an unwarranted emphasis on the imaginary. By following this thread of Ariadne we are brought today to Molière's play, *Amphitryon*.

1

I made an allusion to Amphitryon in the presence of our visitor, Moreno, when I said to him that it must surely be the case that our wives cheat on us with God from time to time. It is one of those lapidary formulae which one can use in the course of a joust. It deserves a little closer examination.

Surely you must see that the function of the father is only as crucial as it is within the whole of analytic theory because it is to be found on several levels. We have already been able to see, taking the *Wolfman*, what distinguishes the symbolic father, what I call the *name of the father*, from the imaginary father, the rival of the real father, in so far as he is endowed, poor man, with all sorts of

[1] '*sosie*' has come to be a reasonably common synonym for 'double' in French; Robert gives 1638 as the first occasion of this usage, and notes it became widespread in 1668, the year Molière wrote *Amphitryon*.

[2] '*Moi qui te fous dehors*'.

layers, just like everybody else. Well then, this distinction warrants being taken up on the level of the couple.

In truth, fine minds, solid minds – you meet up with some like that, punctuating history – have already been stirred up by the relations between marriage and love. These things are in general treated in a playful, racy, cynical style. There's a good old French tradition of that, and that may well be the best way of dealing with it, in any case, as far as the practical side of everyday life is concerned. But one of the more serious thinkers can be observed to have one day come upon marriage and love, and not taken them lightly.

I highly recommend you read Proudhon – he had a solid mind, and you rediscover in him the assured emphasis of the Church Fathers. He had thought, at a little distance, about the human condition, and tried to get close to something far more tenacious as well as far more fragile than one thinks, namely fidelity. He arrived at this question – what can be the motive for fidelity, apart from having given one's word? But often one gives one's word lightly. And if it weren't given in such a manner, it is probable that it would be given far more infrequently, which would noticeably hold up the flow of things, good and worthy, in human society.

As we have remarked, that doesn't prevent it from being given and from bearing all its fruits. When it is broken, not only does everyone get upset, and indignant, but it has consequences, whether we like it or not. That is precisely one of the things which we are taught by analysis, and by the exploration of this unconscious in which speech continues to propagate its waves and its destinies. How can one justify this speech, so impudently engaged in, and properly speaking, as no serious mind has ever doubted, untenable?

Let us try to overcome the romantic illusion, that it is perfect love, the ideal value which each of the partners acquires for the other, which upholds human commitment. Proudhon, whose every thought runs counter to romantic illusions, tries, in a style which might at first pass for mystical, to give fidelity its due within marriage. And he finds the solution in something which can only be recognised as a symbolic pact.

Let us look at it from the woman's perspective. The love the wife gives her spouse is not directed at the individual, not even an idealised one – that's the danger of what is called life in common, idealisation isn't tenable – but at a being beyond. The love which constitutes the bond of marriage, the love which properly speaking is sacred, flows from the woman towards what Proudhon calls, *all men*. Similarly, through the woman, it is *all women* which the fidelity of the husband is directed towards.

This may seem paradoxical. But in Proudhon *all*[3] isn't *alle*, it isn't a

[3] In the French. '*tous les*' (all the); in English. 'all the' can be taken as covering all existing particulars, but since Lacan's point is concerned with universals, we have rendered it as 'all'.

quantity, it is a universal function. It is the universal man, the universal woman, the symbol, the embodiment of the partner of the human couple.

So the pact of speech goes far beyond the individual relation and its imaginary vicissitudes – there's no need to look very deep into experience to grasp it. But there is a conflict between this symbolic pact and the imaginary relations which proliferate spontaneously within every libidinal relation, all the more so when what intervenes belongs to the order of *Verliebtheit*. This conflict subtends, one might say, the great majority of the conflicts in that milieu within which the vicissitude of the bourgeois destiny is unravelled, since it occurs within the humanist perspective of the realisation of the ego, and as a consequence within the alienation proper to the ego. All one needs do is observe to see that this conflict exists, but in order to understand the reason for it, one must go further. Our reference-point will be the anthropological data brought forward by Lévi-Strauss.

You know that the *elementary* structures are naturally the most complicated, and that those which are said to be complex, in the milieu we live in, ostensibly appear to be the most simple. We think ourselves to be free in our conjugal choice, *anyone can marry anyone else*, this is a profound illusion, despite it being inscribed in law. In practice, the choice is guided by preferential elements which, although veiled, are nonetheless essential. The interest of so-called elementary structures is to show us the structure of these preferential elements in all their complexities.

Now, Lévi-Strauss shows that, in the structure of the alliance, the woman, who defines the cultural order as against the natural order, is the exchange object, just as speech, which is in effect the original object of exchange, is. Whatever the goods, the qualities and the statuses which are transmitted along the matrilineal line, whatever the authorities with which a so-called matriarchal order is invested, the symbolic order, in its initial operation, is androcentric. That's a fact.

It is a fact which, of course, hasn't failed to receive all manner of correctives in the course of history, but for all that it remains no less fundamental, and in particular allows us to understand the dissymmetrical position of the woman in the bonds of love, and especially in their most pre-eminently socialised form, namely the conjugal bond.

If these things were seen on their level, and with some rigour, many phantoms would be dispelled just like that.

The modern idea of marriage as a pact of mutual consent is certainly a novelty, introduced within the framework of a religion of salvation, which gives pride of place to the individual soul. It covers over and masks the original structure, the primally sacred nature of marriage. This institution exists today in a compacted form, some features of which are so solid and so tenacious that social revolutions are not about to make its pre-eminence and signification

disappear. But at the same time, some features of the institution have, in history, been erased.

In the course of history, there have always been two contracts, of a very different nature, in this order. For the Romans, for instance, the marriage of people who have a name, who really have one, that of the patricians, the nobles – the *ignobiles* are precisely those who don't have a name – had a highly symbolic character, guaranteed it by ceremonies of a special nature – I do not want to enter into an elaborate description of the *confarreatio*. For the plebeians, there was also a kind of marriage, which was based simply on mutual contract, and constituted what Roman society technically called concubinage. Now it is precisely the institution of concubinage which, starting with a certain wavering in society, was generalised, and, in the final period of Roman history, one even sees concubinage established in the higher strata, with the aim of maintaining an independent social status for the partners, and especially for their goods. In other words, it is when the woman begins to emancipate herself, when she has the right to property as such, when she becomes an individual in society, that the significance of marriage begins to be abraded.

At bottom, the woman is introduced into the symbolic pact of marriage as the object of exchange between – I wouldn't say 'men', although it is men who effectively are supports for it – between lineages, fundamentally androcentric lineages. To understand the various elementary structures is to understand how these objects of exchanges, the women, circulate between these lineages. Judging from experience, this can only happen within an androcentric and patriarchal framework, even when the structure is secondarily caught up in matrilineal ancestries.

The fact that the woman is thus bound up in an order of exchange in which she is object is really what accounts for the fundamentally conflictual character, I wouldn't say without remedy, of her position – the symbolic order literally subdues her, transcends her.

The *all men* of Proudhon is here the universal man, who is both the most concrete and the most transcendent man, and that's the impasse into which the woman is pushed by her specific function in the symbolic order. For her, there's something insurmountable, let us say unacceptable, in the fact of being placed in the position of an object in the symbolic order, to which, on the other hand, she is entirely subjected no less than the man. It is indeed because she has a relation of the second degree to this symbolic order that the god is embodied in man or man in the god, except for conflict, and, of course, there is always conflict.

In other words, in the primitive form of marriage, if a woman isn't given, or doesn't give herself, to a god, to something transcendent, the fundamental relation suffers every form of imaginary degradation, and that is what does happen, because we aren't, and haven't been for a long time, cut out to embody

gods. When times were still hard, there was the master. And that was the great period of the women's rights movement – *The woman isn't an object of property – How is it that adultery is punished in so dissymmetric a manner? Are we slaves?*

After some progress, we've reached the stage of the rival, the relation of the imaginary mode. One mustn't think that our society, through the emancipation of the said women is privileged in this respect. The most naked rivalry between men and women is eternal, and its style is laid down in conjugal relations. Only a few German psychoanalysts believe that the sexual struggle is characteristic of our times. When you've read Livy, you'll know the scandal which a very remarkable trial of a case of poisoning caused in Rome, from whence it transpired that in every patrician family it was par for the course for women to poison their husbands, and that they were dropping off like flies. Feminine rebellion didn't start yesterday.

From master to slave and rival, there is only one dialectical step – the relations of the master to the slave are essentially reversible, and the master sees very quickly his dependency in relation to his slave become established. Today we have come up with a new subtlety, thanks to the introduction of psychoanalytic ideas – the husband has become the child, and for some time now women have been taught to treat him well. Along this path, we've come full circle, we are returning to the state of nature. That's the conception some people entertain of the legitimate intervention of psychoanalysis into what is called human relations, and which, disseminated through the mass media, teaches all and sundry how to behave so that there's peace at home – the woman plays the role of the mother, and the man that of the child.

Having said this, the profound meaning of the myth of Amphitryon, which is so polyvalent, so enigmatic that one can give it a thousand interpretations, is the following – for the situation to be tenable, the position must be triangular. For the couple to keep to the human level, there has to be a god there. Love flows towards the universal man, towards the veiled man, for whom every ideal is only an idolatrous substitute, and this is that famous genital love which makes our Sundays and which we affect to scorn.

Reread what Balint says about this – you'll find that when authors are somewhat rigorous and experimental, they reach the conclusion that this famous love is nothing at all. Genital love turns out to be absolutely unassimilable to a unity that is the fruit of an instinctual maturation. In effect, to the extent that this genital love is conceived as dual, in which any notion of the third party, of speech, of god, is absent, it is fashioned in two pieces. Primo, the genital act, which, as everyone knows, doesn't last long – it's nice but it doesn't last – and it doesn't secure anything. Secundo, tenderness, whose origins are found to be pregenital. Such is the conclusion to which the most fairminded come, when they don't get beyond the dual relation to secure the norm of human relations.

I've reminded you of some basic truths. Now we are going to see what turns up in Plautus and Molière.

2

It is a fact that Plautus introduced Sosie – Greek myths aren't ego-based [*moïque*]. But egos exist, and there is one place where the egos quite naturally have their say, in comedy. And it is a comic poet – which isn't to say a funny poet, I think some of you have already thought about this point – who introduces this fundamental novelty, Sosie, from then on inseparable from the myth of Amphitryon.

Sosie is the ego. And the myth shows us how this good little ego of little chaps like you and me behaves in everyday life, what part it plays in the feasts of the gods – a very odd part, since it is always a bit excised from its own pleasure [*jouissance*]. The irresistibly comical side lying at the base of all this has never ceased furbishing the theatre – in the end, it is always a matter of me [*moi*], you and the other.

Well then, how does the ego in question behave? The first time that the ego appears in this drama, he encounters himself at the door, in the guise of what has become Sosie for eternity, the other ego [*l'autre moi*].

I'm going to read the odd bit to you, because you have to have some sense of the sound of it. The first time the ego appears, it encounters me [*moi*]. Who's me? Me, the one who kicks you out. That is what it's about, and that is why the comedy of Amphitryon is so truly exemplary. All you need do is pick at it here and there, study the very style and the language, to realise that those who have introduced this crucial character knew what they were talking about.

In Plautus, where this character comes on stage for the first time, it takes the form of a dialogue in the night, whose gripping and, in a use of the word which should be placed in inverted commas, 'symbolic' nature the text makes you appreciate.

These characters act according to the tradition of asides, so often poorly done when actors play – two characters together on the stage exchange remarks the force of each of which hangs on their being in the nature of an echo or a *quid pro quo*, which amounts to the same thing, which he takes from the remarks the other is independently making. The aside is essential to classical comedy. It is at its very best there.

I couldn't help noticing it, at the Chinese theatre the other day, where it is the gesture which is at its very best. These people speak Chinese and you are no less gripped by everything they show you. For more than a quarter of an hour – it seems like hours – two characters move about the same stage, really giving the impression that they are in two different spaces. With an acrobatic agility, they literally pass through one another. These beings reach one another at every

moment through a gesture which could not miss the adversary and nonetheless does pass by him, because he is already elsewhere. This truly sensational demonstration suggests to one the *miraginary* character of space, but no less leads one to the following characteristic of the symbolic level, that no meeting is ever a shock.

Something of the kind does indeed happen in the play, and especially the first time Sosie comes on the classical stage.

Sosie arrives and meets Sosie.

– *Who goes there?*

– *Me.*

– *Me, who?*

– *Me. Courage, Sosie,* he tells himself, for the former, of course, is the real one, he isn't at ease.

– *What is your fate, tell me?*

– *To be man and speak.* Here is someone who hasn't been coming to the seminars, but bears their trade-mark.

– *Are you master or servant?*

– *Depending how I feel.* This is straight out of Plautus, and it is a very pretty definition of the ego. The fundamental position of the ego confronted with its image is indeed this immediate reversibility of the position of master and servant.

– *Where are you going?*

– *Where I intend to go . . .*

And it goes on –

– *Oh, I do not care for this.*

– *That's music to my ears,* says the imbecile, who naturally expects to receive a thrashing and is already acting smart.

In passing, I can point out to you that this text confirms what I told you about the term *fides*, that it is the equivalent of the phrase *to give one's word.* Mercury promises not to jump on him, and Sosie tells him – *Tuae fide credo, I take your word.*[4] You will also find in the Latin text the *ignobilis* of earlier on, the man without a name.

Let us study the characters in the play, in accordance with a tradition associated with the practice we are criticising, as being just so many embodiments of internal characters.

In Molière's play, Sosie is totally in the foreground, I would even say that he is the only one who matters, he's the one who opens the scene, immediately after Mercury's dialogue paving the way for Jupiter's night. He comes on, good little Sosie, with the victory of his master. He puts down the lantern, and says – *That's Alcmena* and he begins to tell her about Amphitryon's prowess. He is a man who

[4] The French is: '*je crois en ta parole.*'

imagines that the object of her desire, the peace of her pleasure [*jouissance*], hangs on his merits. This is the man of the super-ego, who is always wanting to elevate himself to the dignity of the ideals of the father, of the master, and who imagines that that is how he will attain the object of his desire.

But Sosie will never succeed in getting himself heard by Alcmena, because the ego's fate, by its very nature, is to always find its reflection confronting it, which dispossess it of all it wishes to attain. This sort of shadow, which is simultaneously rival, master, sometime slave, keeps it at a distance from what is fundamentally at stake, namely the recognition of desire.

On this point, the Latin text has some striking formulae, in the course of this priceless dialogue in which Mercury, by using force, obliges Sosie to abandon his identity, to renounce his own name. And just as Galileo says – *And yet, the earth does move*, Sosie always comes back to it – *Yet, I am Sosie*, and he has this wonderful line – *By Pollux*, tu me alienabis numquam, *you will never make me other*, quin noster siem, *than am ours*. The Latin text indicates perfectly the alienation of the ego and the support it finds in the *we*, in its belonging to the order in which its master is a great general.

Enter Amphitryon, the real master, Sosie's guarantor, who will put things in order. What is remarkable is precisely that Amphitryon will also be had just as much, duped just as much, as Sosie himself. He doesn't understand a thing Sosie is telling him, that is, that he has met another me [*moi*].

– *What patience I must resort to!*
But tell me, did you enter the house?
– *Enter, yes. But in what way?* [. . .]
– *So how?*
– *With a stick*
Which my back still feels the terrible pain of.
. . .
– *Who?*
– *Me.*
– *You, fighting yourself* [*Toi, te battre?*]
– *Yes, me; not the me here,*
But the me from the house, who swipes like four men.
. . . *I've seen evidence of it,*
And this devil of a me thrashed me good and proper.
. . .
– *Me, I tell you.*
– *Who me?*
– *This me who rained blows on me.*

And then Amphitryon rains blows on poor Sosie. In other words, he analyses his negative transference for him. He teaches him what an ego must be. He must reintegrate into his ego his ego-properties.

Racy and indescribable scenes. I could give many more quotations, which always show the same contradiction in the subject between the symbolic and the real plane. Sosie effectively starts doubting whether he is himself because Mercury told him something very special – what he was doing when no one could see him. Sosie, astonished at what Mercury tells him about his own behaviour, begins to give in a little.

– *And me I am beginning to doubt in earnest . . .*

It is just as remarkable in the Latin text.

– *Now I recognise my own image, which I have often seen in the mirror*, in speculum.

And he enumerates the symbolic historical qualities of his identity, as in Molière. But the contradiction which is also on the imaginary level splits asunder – *equidem certo idem sum qui semper fui, Nonetheless I am the same man as has always been.* And then, an appeal to the imaginary elements of intimacy with the gods. After all, I have already seen this house, it is clearly the same – recourse to the intuitive certitude, which however is susceptible to being out of kilter. The *déjà-vu*, the *déjà-reconnu*, the *déjà-éprouvé*, often enter into conflict with the certainties which emanate from recollection and history. Some see the phenomena of depersonalisation as being the premonitory signs of disintegration, when it is by no means necessary to possess a predisposition to psychosis to have experienced a thousand times over similar kinds of feelings, whose mainspring is to be found in the relation of the symbolic to the imaginary.

Just when Sosie accepts his confusion, his dispossession, Amphitryon gives him some supportive psychotherapy. Don't let's say that Amphitryon is in the position of the psychoanalyst. Let's be content with saying that he can be symbolic of it, in so far as in relation to his object – in so far as the object of his love, his far off princess, is psychoanalysis – the psychoanalyst occupies, to put it politely, the exiled position which is that of Amphitryon at his own door. But the victim of this spiritual cuckoldry is the patient.

3

Every Tom, Dick and Harry – and Lord knows that I've had enough testimony – thinks he has reached the uttermost depths of the analytic experience by having had some fantasies of *Verliebtheit*, of infatuation, about the person who opens the door at his analyst's – it isn't that rare to hear such testimony, although here I'm alluding to very specific cases. In his encounter with this alleged analytic experience, the subject will be fundamentally dispossessed, will be had.

In everyday chat, in the world of language as it's taken for granted, in the world of the commonly accepted misunderstanding, the subject doesn't know what he is saying – at every moment, the sheer fact that we speak shows that

we don't know that. The very foundation of analysis clearly lies in our telling a thousand times more than it would take to get our heads chopped off. We don't know what we are saying, but we do address it to someone – someone who is miraginary and endowed with an ego. Because speech is propagated in a straight line, as I said last time, we have the illusion that this speech comes from the location we give to our own ego, rightly separated off, in the schema which I left on the drawing-board last time, from all the other egos.

As Giraudoux's Jupiter points out when he tries to find out from Mercury what men are – *Man is the character who is always asking if he exists*, and he's quite right, and there's only one thing wrong, which is his answering yes. In relation to all the others, the privilege his ego has is that it's the only one which he can be sure exists when he questions himself – and Lord knows he does question himself. Essentially, there he is, all alone. And it is because speech is received from this ego that the subject enters into the sweet illusion that this ego is in a unique position.

If the analyst thinks that he has to answer from there, *a'*, he ratifies the function of the ego, which is precisely what dispossesses the subject of himself. He says to him – *Go back into your ego* – or rather – *Stuff everything back into it, everything you let escape from it. Those guts, those limbs of yours you were taking stock of when faced with the other Sosie, reintegrate them now, eat them. Reconstitute yourself in the fullness of these drives you fail to recognise.*

But that's not the point. The point is for the subject to get to know what he's saying, get to know who's speaking from there, *S*, and to this end, to become aware of the essentially imaginary character of what is said in that place when the absolute transcendent Other is invoked, this Other to be found in language each time speech endeavours to be uttered.

Let us take the concrete example of the obsessional. The fatal influence of the ego is brought to a maximum in him. There is no danger of madness, no unleashing of the symbol behind the obsession, as some theoreticians tell us. The obsessional subject isn't the same as the schizoid subject who, in some way, speaks directly at the level of his drives. It is the ego in so far as it bears within itself its dispossession, it is imaginary death. If the obsessional mortifies himself, it is because more than any other neurotic, he binds himself to his ego, which bears within itself dispossession and imaginary death.

But why? It's obvious – the obsessional is always an other. Whatever he tells you, whatever feelings he brings to you, it is always those of someone other than himself. This objectification of himself isn't due to an inclination or to a gift for introspection. It is to the extent that he evades his own desire that all desire to which, were it only ostensibly, he commits himself, will be represented by him as the desire of this other self that is his ego.

And it isn't chiming in with this to plan to reinforce his ego? to allow it its various drives, its orality, its anality, its later oral stage, and its primary anal

stage? to teach him to recognise what he wants, which we know from the start, the destruction of the other? And how could this not be the destruction of the other, since it is the destruction of himself which is the issue, which is exactly the same thing?

Before enabling him to recognise the fundamental aggressivity which he disperses and refracts into the world, which structures all his object relations, he must be made to understand what the function of this fatal relation he maintains with himself is, which makes it such that as soon as a feeling is his he starts annulling it. If an obsessional tells you that he doesn't care for something or someone, you can take it that it touches him to the quick. When he expresses great indifference, that is when his interest is caught at its maximum.

To act in such a way that the obsessional recognises himself in the decomposed image of himself which he presents to us in the more or less explicit, degraded, loose form of his aggressive drives, is no doubt essential, but the key to the cure isn't to be found in this dual relation with himself. The interpretation of his fatal relation to himself only carries weight if you get him to understand the function.

He isn't dead to himself, nor in actual fact [*réellement*]. For whom is he dead? For the person who is his master. And in relation to what? In relation to the object of his pleasure [*jouissance*]. He effaces his pleasure so as not to arouse the anger of his master. But, on the other hand, if he is dead, or if he presents himself as such, he is no longer here, it's someone other than himself who has a master and, inversely, he himself has another master. It follows that he is always somewhere else. In so far as he desires, he splits himself [*se dédouble*] indefinitely into a series of characters, which the Fairbairns turn into an enrapturing discovery. Within the psychology of the subject, there are, Fairbairn notes, many more than just the three characters Freud talks of, the *id*, *super-ego* and *ego*, you'll always stumble on at least two others. But you can still find others, as in a silvered mirror – if you look carefully, there isn't just one image, but a second one, which splits, and if the silver is thick enough, there are ten, twenty, an infinity. Similarly, to the extent that the subject annuls himself, mortifies himself when confronted with his master, he is still an other, since he is always there, an other with another master and another slave, etc. The object of his desire equally suffers an automatic split [*dédoublement*], as I showed in my commentary on the *Ratman*, as well as on the basis of my detailed account of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. What the obsessional hangs on to is always other, for if he truly recognised it, he would be cured.

Analysis doesn't progress, as we are assured, through a kind of auto-observation by the subject, founded on the famous splitting[5] of the *ego* which would thus be essential to the analytic situation. The observation is an

[5] English in the original.

observation of observation, and so on, which simply perpetuates the fundamentally ambiguous relation of the ego. Analysis progresses through the speech of the subject in so far as it passes beyond the dual relation, and thus no longer encounters anything except the absolute Other, whom the subject doesn't know how to recognise. He has to reintegrate this speech progressively in him, that is to say to finally speak to the absolute Other from there where he is, from there where his ego must come to be, by reintegrating the paranoid composition of his drives of which it isn't sufficient to say that he doesn't recognise himself in them – essentially, as an ego, he fails to recognise [*méconnaît*] them.

In other words, what Sosie has to learn isn't that he has never encountered his double [*sosie*] – it is unqualifiedly true that he did encounter him. What he has to learn is that he is Amphitryon, the gentleman full of glory who understands nothing about nothing, not a thing about what one desires, who thinks that it is enough to be a victorious general to make love to one's wife. This fundamentally alienated gentleman, who never does encounter the object of his desires, has yet to realise why he cleaves fundamentally to this ego, and how this ego is his fundamental alienation. He has yet to become aware of this profound twinship, which is also one of the essential viewpoints of *Amphitryon*, and on two levels – that of these doubles who mirror one another, and that of the gods. From a double love, Alcmena engenders a double fruit. Alcmena is far more prominent in Plautus – with time we have acquired a degree of modesty which prevents us from going very deeply into things.

By means of this dramatic, if not psychodramatic, demonstration, which is what the myth of Amphitryon amounts to for us, at least, I wanted to give you a sense today of the extent to which the vital problems which we address ourselves to are inscribed within the register of a traditional way of thinking. But that doesn't prevent me from advising you to look for the evidence of the psychologistic illusion I denounce in the very writings of the authors who sustain it. You'll find a very pretty example of it in this Fairbairn I mentioned to you the other day.

4

It's not an obsessional case, but rather a woman who has a real genital abnormality – she has a very tiny vagina, which has been left untouched, she is a virgin, and there is no uterus corresponding to this very tiny vagina. That is more or less certain, although, on account of a singular timidity, the matter has never been made absolutely clear. At least when it comes to the secondary sexual characteristics, the abnormality is striking, according to certain specialists, who have gone so far as to say that it is an instance of pseudo-hermaphroditism, and that in reality she was a man. Such is the subject which our Fairbairn takes into analysis.

The kind of grand scale with which the whole of the case's unfolding is discussed is really worth noticing. Without batting an eyelid, he tells us that this subject, a personality of evident quality, has learnt that something wasn't going quite right, that her situation is very peculiar in relation to the reality of the sexes. She has learnt that all the more so on account of there being six or seven girls in the family in the same position. So, one knows what's what, one knows that on this point the women are put together somewhat oddly. She tells herself that it's unique, and she is pleased about it – *This way*, she tells herself, *I'll miss out on a lot of worries.* And she duly becomes a teacher.

Then, slowly, she becomes aware that, far from being discharged of nature's burdens owing to the fact that all her pleasure [*jouissance*] comes from a purely spiritual act, funny things happen – nothing is ever right, things never go well enough. She is horribly tyrannised by her scruples. And when she gets rather run down in the middle of the second term, she has a bout of depression.

The analyst plans, above all else, to reintegrate her drives for her, that is to say to get her to become aware of her phallic complex – what do you know, it's true. It is discovered that there is a relation between the fact that she affects[6] certain men, that the proximity of certain men has an effect on her, and the bouts of depression. From that, the analyst deduces that she would like to hurt them, and for months he gets her to reintegrate this aggressive drive. Throughout the whole of this period, he tells himself – *Good gracious me, she does learn all this amazingly well!* What he is waiting for is for her to come up with what he calls feelings of guilt. And eventually, he is successful.

What is really most remarkable is that he gives an account of the progress of the analysis on the day that he makes the following observation – she has finally got to her feeling of guilt, that is to say now it's all very simple, she can no longer get close to a man without this triggering bouts of guilt which, this time, have substance.

In other words, in conformity with the schema we looked at the other day, the analyst gave her – firstly, an ego, he apprised her as to what she really wanted, namely to cut men down to size – secondly, he has given her a super-ego, namely that all of this is really very naughty, and that what is more it is absolutely forbidden to get close to these men. That is what the author calls the paranoid stage of the analysis. I'm quite prepared to believe it – he is very good at teaching her where these drives are, and now she sees them all over the place.

Is this really the right tack? Is what these bouts of depression are concerned with to be located in this dual relation, with all that that involves on the schema of regression?

And yet the author has the thing within his grasp. The depressive qualities of

[6] English in the original.

the images of men are linked to the fact that men, that's her. It is her own image in so far as it has been taken away from her, and it has this decomposing action on her, disconcerting in the original sense of the word. When she comes close to these men, it is her own image, her narcissistic image, her ego, she comes close to. That is the basis of the depressive position. And the situation would certainly be more difficult for her than for anyone else, since she is very specifically in an ambiguous position, one which has its place in teratology. But any kind of narcissistic identification is as such ambiguous.

There is no better illustration of the function of *Penisneid* – it is in so far as she identifies with the imaginary man that the penis takes on a symbolic value, and that there's a problem. It would be entirely incorrect, the author tells us, to think that *Penisneid* is entirely natural in women. Who told him it was natural? Of course it's symbolic. It is in so far as the woman is in a symbolic order with an androcentric perspective that the penis takes on this value. Besides, it isn't the penis, but the phallus, that is to say something whose symbolic usage is possible because it can be seen, because it is erected. There can be no possible symbolic use for what is not seen, for what is hidden.

For this woman, the function of *Penisneid* is fully operative, since she doesn't know who she is, whether she is man or woman, and she is totally absorbed by the question of her symbolic signification. And this real anomaly is doubled up by something else which perhaps has some relation to this teratological apparition, namely that in her family the masculine side is effaced. It is her mother's father who plays the role of the more elevated character, and it is in relation to him that the triangle is established in a typical way, and the question raised as to her phallicisation or not.

All this is completely passed over in the theory and in the conduct of the treatment, in the name of the following, that what is at issue is to get the subject to recognise her drives, and in particular, because in truth those are the only ones one comes across, those drives known in our elegant language as *pregenital*. This solid investigation of the pregenital leads to a phase which the therapist comes to call paranoid. We shouldn't be surprised by that. Taking the imaginary for the real is what characterises paranoia, and by failing to recognise [*méconnaître*] the imaginary register, we bring the subject to recognise his partial drives in the real.

Here, the subject's relations with men, up to then narcissistic and which were already not that simple, become inter-aggressive, which complicates them no end. Taking the path of guilt which it was extraordinarily difficult to instigate, does not bode well for the supplementary detours which will be necessary so that the subject may return to a more pacific course.

You don't have to look very far to find the practical sanction for a theoretical error. In this respect, this an exemplary illustration. One of the secret mainsprings for the failure of the treatments of obsessionals is the idea that

there's a latent psychosis behind the obsessional neurosis. It isn't surprising that one then ends up with latent disassociations, and that one substitutes periodic depressions, even a psychic hypochondriacal inclination, for the obsessional neurosis.

Perhaps that is not the best one can do.

However panoramic our comments may be, you must be aware that they have the most precise repercussions, not only for the understanding of cases, but for technique.

8 June 1955

FINALE

XXII

Where is speech? Where is language?

THE APOLOGUE OF THE MARTIAN
THE APOLOGUE OF THE THREE PRISONERS

The lecture announced for next Wednesday at 10.30 won't be followed by a seminar. We will have a final session the following week, in case the paper raises questions you would like to hear me discuss. The lecture I just mentioned will in fact be given before a larger audience, and I shan't be able to express myself then in the terms in which I express myself here, which takes for granted acquaintance with our earlier work.

Today, I would like us to talk a bit, so that I get some sense of where you have got to. I would like, as we have already done once before, the greatest possible number of you to raise the questions that in your opinion remain open. I have the impression they're not in short supply, since we try to open up questions here, rather than close them again. So then, what question has been opened up for you by this year's seminar?

MLLE X: *I'm not sure of the way in which you locate the symbolic and the imaginary.*

What sense do you have of it, after having heard some of the seminar?

MLLE X: *I think that the imaginary has more to do with the subject, with his way of receiving, whereas the symbolic order is more impersonal.*

Yes, that's true and it isn't.

1

It's my turn to ask you a question. At the point we have reached, what economic function do I give to language and speech in the schema? What relation do they have? What difference? It is a very simple question, but it still deserves an answer.

DR GRANOFF: *Language would be the frieze of the imaginary, and speech, full speech, the symbolic landmark, would be the small island starting from which any message can be reconstructed or rather deciphered.*

O. MANNONI: *I'd say for brevity's sake, that language is geometrical, speech is perspective, and the point of perspective is always an other. Language is a reality, it is geometrical, that is to say that it isn't put into perspective, and belongs to no one, whereas speech is a perspective in this geometry, whose centre of perspective, the vanishing point, is always an ego. Within language, there is no ego.*

Are you sure of that?

O. MANNONI: *Language is a universe. Speech is a cut through this universe, which is exactly tied to the position of the speaking subject. Language may have a meaning, but only speech has a signification. One understands the meaning of Latin, but Latin isn't speech* [une parole].

When one understands Latin, one understands the manner in which the various lexicological and grammatical elements are organised, the manner in which the significations refer to each other, the employment of usages. And why do you say that the system of egos doesn't exist in that? On the contrary, they are entirely comprehended within it.

O. MANNONI: *I'm thinking of quite an old joke about the baccalauréat, in which a false candidate is taken for a candidate. The examiner shows him an exam paper* – But you wrote this. It's called *Letter to Seneca. And the guy says* – But, sir, am I the kind of guy to write to Seneca? *He looks at things in the perspective of speech. At the limit he could translate the version, but he says* – It isn't me, it isn't my speech. *Obviously, it is a farcical situation. But it seems to me to have this meaning. If I read a letter not knowing who sent it, nor to whom, I can understand it, I am in the world of language.*

When someone shows you a letter to Seneca, it is obviously you who wrote it. The example you've suggested has the very opposite meaning to what you are claiming. If we immediately take up our place in the game of the diverse intersubjectivities, that's because we are in our place anywhere. The world of language is possible in so far as we have our place in it anywhere.

O. MANNONI: *When there's speech* [une parole].

Precisely, that's the whole question, is that sufficient to yield speech? The foundation of the analytic experience is that not every manner of introducing oneself into language is equally efficacious, isn't equally this body of being, this *corpse of being,*[1] which makes the existence of psychoanalysis possible, which makes it such that not every random bit of language has the same value for the subject.

DR GRANOFF: *Language is from no one to no one, and speech from someone to someone else. Because speech is constitutive and language is constituted.*

[1] Phrase in English in the original.

DR PERRIER: *In the present state of things, what matters is to introduce the economic problem of language into speech. And to that end I suggest the following – I'm not sure if I'm right – that there would no longer be an economic problem to the extent that the signifying situation of the subject were clearly formulated in all its dimensions, and in particular in its triangular dimensions, with the aid of speech. If language becomes full speech, three-dimensional, the economic factor will no longer be at issue on the level of the quantities channelled into an analysis, quantities of* affects *or instincts, and will simply become the substratum again, the engine of whatever is brought completely naturally into the situation, to the extent that one has become aware of it in all its dimensions.*

I note a word which you used in several ways – *dimension.*

DR LECLAIRE: *The answer which occurs to me is the following. It is a formula – language has the function of communication, even of transmission, and speech, for its part, has a function of foundation, even of revelation.*

M. ARENSBURG: *So it would be via the intermediary of speech that language could acquire its economic role. Is that what you mean?*

DR PERRIER: *No, I'm talking about the reinsertion of the economy into the symbolic order, via the intermediary of speech.*

The key word in cybernetics is *message.* That's what language is made for, but it isn't a code, it is essentially ambiguous, semantemes are always polysemantemes, signifers always have several, sometimes extremely disjointed, significations. The sentence, though, has one unique meaning, what I mean is that it can't be lexicalised – one makes dictionaries of words, of word usages or locutions, but one doesn't make a dictionary of sentences. Hence, some of the ambiguities tied to the semantic element are reabsorbed in the context, through usage and the utterance of the sentence. The theory of communication, in as much as it tries to formalise this theme and to isolate out units, refers rather to codes, which in principle avoid the ambiguities – it isn't possible to confuse one sign from the code with another, except in error. We thus find ourselves confronted with language, confronted with a primary category whose function in relation to the message is not a simple one. Now, this introduction still leaves opaque the question of the message. In your opinion, just like that, spontaneously, what's a message?

M. MARCHANT: *The transmission of information.*

What is information?

M. MARCHANT: *Any kind of indication.*

MME AUDRY: *It's something sent by someone addressed to some else.*

M. MARCHANT: *That's a communication and not a message.*

MME AUDRY: *I think that's the essence of a message, a transmitted announcement.*

M. MARCHANT: *Message and communication are not the same things.*

MME AUDRY: *In its standard meaning, a message is something transmitted to someone, to let him know of something.*

M. MARCHANT: *The message is unidirectional. Communication isn't unidirectional, there's coming and going.*

MME AUDRY: *I said that the message is from someone to someone else.*

M. MARCHANT: *The message is sent from someone to someone else. Communication is what occurs once the message is exchanged.*

DR GRANOFF: *The message is a programme one puts into a universal machine, and after a while it retrieves whatever it can from it.*

What he is saying isn't bad.

M. LEFORT: *It is the enlarging of the symbolic world.*

M. MARCHANT: *No, it is the shrinking of the symbolic world. With language as backdrop, speech will choose.*

Mme Colette Audry introduces the necessity of subjects with respect to the message.

MME AUDRY: *A message isn't just direct. It may be carried by a messenger who has got nothing to do with it. The messenger may not know what the message contains.*

M. MARCHANT: *It may also be transmitted from machine to machine.*

MME AUDRY: *But in every case there is a point of departure and a point of arrival.*

Sometimes, the messenger is confused with the message. If he has something written on his scalp, he can't read it, even in the mirror, to get at the message he has to be shaved. In this case, is that the image of the message in itself? Is a messenger who has a message written under his hair himself a message?

M. MARCHANT: *I would say yes.*

MME AUDRY: *It's obviously a message.*

O. MANNONI: *There is no need for it to be received.*

M. MARCHANT: *In general, messages are sent and received. But between the two, that's a message.*

MME AUDRY: *A bottle in the sea is a message. It is addressed, it doesn't have to arrive, but it is addressed.*

M. MARCHANT: *It is a signification in motion.*

It isn't a signification, but a sign in motion. Now we still have to find out what a sign is.

M. MARCHANT: *It is something one exchanges.*

DR LECLAIRE: *The message is objective speech.*

Certainly not!

2

I will give you an apologue so as to try and put some landmarks in place.

The man known as Wells is commonly thought to have had a somewhat primitive mind. In actual fact, he was quite ingenious, he knew very well what he was doing, what he was refusing and what he was choosing, within the system of thought and behaviour.

I can't recall very clearly in which one of his works he imagines two or three scientists having reached Mars. There, they come upon beings who have modes of communication all their own, and they are very surprised to understand the messages modulated to them. They are amazed, and then, they discuss it together. One says – *He told me that he was doing some research on electronic physics.* The other says – *Yes, he told me that he was working on what constitutes the essence of solid bodies.* And the third one says – *He told me that he was working on metre in poetry and the function of rhyme.*

That is what happens every time we engage in private or public discourse. Does this short story illustrate language or speech?

MME AUDRY: *Both.*

DR GRANOFF: *To my knowledge, there aren't a large number of universal machines. Suppose you run a programme through one. You have to take into account not only the machine, but also the operators. You run a programme, it's a message. On output, one says* – the machine is on the blink, *or else* – it isn't on the blink. *In the sense that from the moment when the machine restores a communication, from the moment when someone can receive it – and it can't be received if the operator hasn't understood it – if he finds it well-formed, if he understands it, if he accepts it as valid, if he considers the machine to have been functioning properly, the message has become a communication.*

M. MARCHANT: *But in that case, all three have understood, but differently.*

O. MANNONI: *Not differently. If a mathematician writes out equations on a blackboard, one person might say it's magnetism, and another something else. These equations are true for both of them.*

That's completely off.

M. RIGUET: *I think that it's language, quite simply.*

DR LECLAIRE: *I have the feeling that the discussion has taken a specific turn as a result of our discussion of cybernetics.*

It is an opportunity to gauge a bit where you've got to.

DR LECLAIRE: *If, within this perspective, we are, relatively speaking, capable of locating language, I think it far harder, for us, at least for the time being, to locate speech. Now, earlier on, when I was talking of speech, I was talking about it in a specific sense – when I talk of speech, I always mean speech. I would like you to tell us a bit about the pole of speech, so that we can at least gauge the level of the discussion.*

M. MARCHANT: *In any case can we separate speech from language when they become manifest?*

What do you make of all this, Father Beirnaert?

FATHER BEIRNAERT: *Like Riguet I also thought it was language, so I haven't understood a thing.*

M. RIGUET: *We have each understood it in our own way.*

MME AUDRY: *It is even more complicated than that. One would first have to see what the Martian wanted to say.*

We will never know what the Martian wanted to say. If we put ourselves on the side on which the emission of words remains vague, it can't be said that speech and language are confounded with one another.

M. MARCHANT: *So, you make language disappear, and then you catch us out on it.*

I admit that this apologue deserves some clarification. There is a substitute for language in this apologue, which is the possibility of the three individuals comprehending. The speech they receive operates on this language. The problem is that there is no code.

What this apologue means is this – it is in a world of language that each man has to recognise a calling, a vocation, which happens to be revealed to him. Someone spoke just now of revelation and foundation, and that is indeed what it is about. We are faced with a world of language, which every now and then, gives us the impression that there is something essentially neutralising, uncertain about it. There isn't one philosopher who hasn't insisted, and rightly so, on the fact that the very possibility of error is tied to the existence of language. Each subject doesn't simply have to take cognisance of the world, as if it all happened on the level of noetics, he has to find his way about in it. If

psychoanalysis means anything, it is that he is already engaged in something which has a relation with language without being identical to it, and that he has to find his way about in it – the universal discourse.

The concrete, universal discourse, which has been unfolding since the beginning of time, is what has truly been said or rather really been said – to fix our ideas, we can get to that point. The subject locates himself as such in relation to that, he is inscribed in it, that is how he is already determined, by a determination belonging to a totally different register from that of the determinations of the real, of the material metabolisms which caused him to come forth into this semblance of existence which is life. His function, in so far as he continues this discourse, is to rediscover his place in it, not simply as orator, but, here and now, as entirely determined by it.

I have often underlined that already before his birth, the subject is already located not only as sender, but as an atom of concrete discourse. He is in the chorus line of this discourse, he himself is, if you prefer, a message. A message has been written on his head, and he is entirely located in the succession of messages. Each of his choices is a speech.

I appealed to Father Beirnaert for help, because of the *in principio erat verbum*. One day you said that *fides* was in your opinion the best translation for speech. It is odd that the religious translation doesn't say *in principio erat fides. Verbum*, that's language, and even the word. In the Greek text, *logos* is also language, and not speech. After that, God made use of speech – *Let there be light*, he said.

Let's try to get a little closer to the manner in which man comes into [*s'intéresse*], in the sense of *inter-esse*, speech. We certainly feel the necessity of distinguishing between a message, in the sense of sign, a wandering sign, and the manner in which man gets in on it. If he is himself integrated into the universal discourse, it isn't after all in the same way as the messages which wander the world in bottles or on scalps. From the point of view of Sirius, maybe they are the same, but for us that's not possible. In any case, what concerns us is to know the difference.

M. RIGUET: *May I put two or three things on the blackboard? I would simply like to try in a few minutes to explain first, what mathematicians understand by language.*

Consider the set of all the words which can be formed by using these letters – ab, ac, ca, ad, *and* abdd, bb, *etc. I place the letters one after another in any kind of order, repetitions being permitted. I can form all these words indefinitely. Amongst these words, take a sub-set WF – well-formed*[2] *– words formed with the help of these symbols. And a mathematical theory consists in the data of a certain sub-set, these are called axioms, and a set of rules of deduction, which will for instance be of a syntactic kind. If, inside one word, I find the symbol* ab, *I will have for instance the option of replacing it by* p. *Thus, starting off with the word,* abcd, *I will be able to form the word*

[2] English in the original.

pcd. *These are theorems, that is, the set of all the words which I can form on the basis of the axioms with the aid of the productions of syntax. This, WF, is called a language.*

The choice of symbols, a, b, c, d, *is of course arbitrary. I could have chosen others,* u, v, x, y, *and thus have generated a theory isomorphic with the first. In actual fact, for mathematicians, the notion of language is pretty nearly defined by an isomorphism. What's more – it is pretty nearly defined by a coding, for if one considers the set of symbols constituted by 0 and 1, I can let* a = 00, b = 01, c = 10, d = 11, *and translate all the syntactic products and the axioms as functions of the symbols 0 and 1. But I will have to be careful when I want to retrieve the old theory by decoding the new one, for if I code a certain word* 00010111001, *the decoding will sometimes yield an ambiguity. If* e = 000, *I won't know if this word begins with* a *or with* e, *etc.*

It seems to me that your definition of symbols is not the same as this. For you, symbols are tied to another language. You have a kind of basic language of communication, a kind of universal language, and the symbols you speak of are always coded in function of this basic language.

What strikes me in what you have just said, if I've properly understood it – I think I've understood it – is this – when one illustrates the phenomenon of language with something as formally purified as mathematical symbols – and that is one of the reasons for putting cybernetics on the agenda – when one gives a mathematical notation of the *verbum*, one demonstrates in the simplest possible way that language exists completely independently of us. Numbers have properties which are absolute. They are, whether we're here or not. 1729 will always be the sum of two cubes, the smallest number which is the sum of two different pairs of cubes.

All this can circulate in all manner of ways in the universal machine, which is more universal than anything you could imagine. One can imagine an indefinite number of levels, where all this turns around and circulates. The world of signs functions, and it has no signification whatsoever.

What gives it its signification is the moment when we stop the machine. These are the temporal breaks which we make in it. If they are faulty, we will see ambiguities emerge, which are sometimes difficult to resolve, but which one will always end up giving a signification to.

M. RIGUET: *I don't think so, for these cuts may be made by another machine, and there's nothing to say that a man will be able to decipher what will come out of this new machine.*

That is perfectly true. Nonetheless, it is the temporal element, the intervention of a scansion permitting the insertion of something which can take on meaning for a subject.

M. RIGUET: *Yes, but it seems to me that in addition there's this universe of symbols, belonging to mankind in common.*

What we have just said is that it doesn't in any way belong specifically to it.

M. RIGUET: *Precisely, machines don't have a common universe of symbols.*

That's very delicate, because we build these machines. In fact, that doesn't matter. It is enough to note that by means of your 0 and your 1, that is, the connotation of presence-absence, we are capable of representing everything which presents itself, everything which has been brought about by a determinate historical process, everything which has been developed in mathematics. We are in perfect agreement. All the properties of numbers are there, in these numbers written with binary numbers. Of course, that isn't how one discovers them. It took the invention of symbols, for instance, which made us take a giant step forward the day it was simply inscribed on a bit of paper. We were left for centuries with our mouths open when faced with equations of the second degree without being able to get it out, and it is through writing it down that an advance was made.

We thus find ourselves confronted with the problematic situation, that there is in fact a reality of signs within which there exists a world of truth entirely deprived of subjectivity, and that, on the other hand, there has been a historical development of subjectivity manifestly directed towards the rediscovery of truth, which lies in the order of symbols.

Who doesn't understand a word of this?

M. MARCHANT: *I don't agree. You defined language, and I think that it is the best definition, as a world of signs to which we are strangers.*

This language here.

M. MARCHANT: *I think that it is true of language in general.*

Not so. For language is completely burdened with our history, it is as contingent as this sign, and what is more it is ambiguous.

M. MARCHANT: *I think the notion of error cannot be applied to language when it is conceived like that.*

There is no error in the world of zeros.

M. MARCHANT: *But in the world of language, it doesn't mean anything any longer. There are true and false things. You speak of research we are engaged in. At this moment, error and truth are determined. But the world of mathematical symbols is already a bit peculiar, as language.*

In the system of language as it exists, I can manage to spot the error as such. If I tell you *elephants live in water*, I can, through a series of syllogisms, refute this error.

M. MARCHANT: *It is already a sentence, a message, a communication which may be false. If one defines every language as a world of signs which exists independently of us, the notion of error cannot be located at this level, but at a higher level, where messages become manifest. Communication and speech are not on the same level. I place language on a lower level, on the basis of which communication, messages and speech become manifest. In my opinion, language must be restricted to a level almost of undifferentiation. If one starts wanting to decipher the meaning of a language, it no longer applies. One can only decipher the meaning of speech. It may have several, and that in fact is its role.*

This is what I am aiming at. I'm showing you that the question of meaning comes with speech.

M. MARCHANT: *Of course, but not with language. Language enables a meaning to be established and for speech to become manifest.*

Two things should be borne in mind. Language as embodied historically, which is that of our community, French, for instance, and then, there is this language here. The important thing is for us to realise that there is something which we can attain in its purity, where laws already have a palpable existence, laws which are completely undeciphered until we intervene to give them some meaning. And what meaning?

M. MARCHANT: *Oh, no! Absolutely no way!*

The meaning of something that engages us completely. It is the way in which we introduce ourselves into the temporal succession. What's involved is knowing what time is involved.

MISS X: *I think some of Piaget's ideas may be relevant here. He defines the essential feature of formal thought in terms of possibility rather than in terms of the real. But within the notion of possibilities themselves, he makes a distinction between what he calls the possible structure, which corresponds to the objective structures of thought, and what he calls materially possible, that is, which must receive a function from the consciousness of the subject.*

But there's absolutely no need for thinking here, the circulation of binary signs in a machine enables us, if we give it the right programme, to discover a previously unpublished prime number. The prime number circulating in the machine has got nothing to do with thought.

MISS X: *Piaget isn't talking about thought, but about the objective structure which finds the solution to the problem, the structure of the machine in the organism, that is to say, in the case of the human being, the structure of the brain.*

These problems aren't on the same level as what concerns us here.

MISS X: *One could say that speech is intercalated as the element of revelation between universal discourse and language.*

M. LEFÈBVRE-PONTALIS: *I'm not sure whether I am following this clearly. I have the impression that we are making a very radical break between* language *and* speech, *which doesn't mean a lot to me, for in the end, if there were no speech, there would be no language. In the apologue we heard earlier on, it seemed to me that language was ambiguous by definition, and that one cannot say that it is a universe of signs which assumes a relatively completed closed cycle, to which one would turn in order to draw out this or that signification. In the face of such an ambiguity, the person who receives the speech reveals his preferences.*

As soon as language exists – and the question is precisely to know what minimum number of signs is needed to make a language – there is a concrete universe. All the significations must find a place in it. There is no instance of a language in which entire zones are untranslatable. Everything which we know as signification is always embodied in a system which is [a] universe of language. As soon as language exists, it is [a] universe.

M. LEFÈBVRE-PONTALIS: *But one can invert this conclusion without twisting it and say that the most impoverished language allows everything to be communicated. But that doesn't mean to say that all the significations are already set down in a language.*

That is why I distinguished language and significations. Language is [a] system of signs, and, as such, [a] complete system. With that, one can do anything.

M. LEFÈBVRE-PONTALIS: *On condition that there be speaking subjects.*

Of course. The question is to know what the function of the speaking subject is in all this.

3

I am going to turn to another apologue, perhaps clearer than that of Wells, because it was designed especially with the aim of distinguishing the imaginary from the symbolic. It's mine.

Three prisoners are put to a test. One of them is to be freed, but as all three are equally deserving, it is not clear which one should benefit from this unique act of mercy. They are told – *Here are three white discs and two black ones. Each of you will have one of these discs attached to his back, and you are going to have to work out for yourself so as to be able to tell us which one you have been stuck with. Obviously there is no mirror, and it isn't in your interest to communicate, since all it needs is for one of you to have revealed to another what he has got on his back for him to gain by it.*

So each of them has a disc on his back. All any one of them sees is the way the two others are connoted by these discs.

They are each given a white disc. How is each subject going to reason?

This story enables one to demonstrate the storeys, the dimensions, as Perrier was saying earlier on, of time. There are three temporal dimensions, which deserve to be pointed out, for they have never really been distinguished. It isn't inconceivable that all three of them realise very quickly that they each have white discs on. But if one wants to set it into discourse, it will necessarily be in the following way. There is a fundamental given of the order of 0 and of the small 1s – if one of them were to see two black discs on the backs of the others, there would not be the least bit of doubt, since there are only two blacks, and he could get moving. That is a given of eternal logic, and the grasping of it is perfectly instantaneous – it is just a matter of seeing. But the thing is, each of them doesn't see two black discs and for a good reason, namely that there is no black disc at all. Each of them sees only two white discs.

Nonetheless, the thing one doesn't see plays a decisive role in the speculation whereby the characters can take the step towards the door.

Seeing two white discs, each subject has to say to himself that one of the two others must see either two white discs or else one white and one black one. What's really involved is each of the subject's thinking what the other two must think, and in a completely reciprocal manner. Obviously, for each of the subjects, one thing is certain, which is that the other two each see the same thing, that is a white plus his own colour, the subject's own, which he doesn't know.

So the subject says to himself, that if he himself is black, each of the two others will see a white and a black, and can say to himself – *If I am black, the white one would have already made for the door, and since he isn't moving, it's because I am myself white as well, and I'll go.*

Now, as our third subject sees neither of the others leave, he concludes from that that he is white, and makes for the door. That is how, on the basis of the immobility of the others, he himself grasps the fact that he is in a strictly equivalent position to the others, that is to say that he is white. Then it is only in a third moment [*temps*], in relation to a speculation on the reciprocity of the subjects, that he can come to feel that he is in the same position as the two others.

Nonetheless, do note that, as soon as he has reached this understanding, he must rush to the door. Indeed, once he has arrived at this understanding, he must realise that each of the others was able to reach the same result. So, if he gives them a headstart, no matter how small, he will fall back into his uncertainty of the moment [*temps*] before. That he isn't mistaken hangs on his very haste.

He has to say to himself – *If I don't hurry to arrive at this conclusion, I*

automatically give in, not only to ambiguity, but to error, given my premises. If I let them get ahead of me, it will be proof that I am black.

It is a sophism, as you are well aware, and the argument comes back again to the third moment [*temps*]. Everything hangs on something ungraspable. The subject holds in his hands the very articulation by which the truth he sifts out is inseparable from the very action which attests to it. If this action is delayed by one instant, by the same token he knows that he will be thrown into error.

Are you with me?

M. MARCHANT: *No one can move, or else all three of them.*

M. LAPLANCHE: *He may end in failure.*

We are now concerned with the subject in so far as he discourses about what he is doing. What he does is one thing, the way he discourses about it is another. If he discourses about it, he says – *If the act, whose necessity I have just discovered, is undertaken by the others before me, according to the very logic of my reasoning they are whites and I am black.*

M. MARCHANT: *But in the example, there is no before, that's the point.*

M. LAPLANCHE: *They leave because I am white, and . . .*

From the moment he lets the others get ahead of him, he has no way of getting himself out of it. He can reason in either of two ways, and he has no means of choosing between them. He is confronted with two terms, each having the properties of subjects, thinking like him. And for himself, the truth, from the point he has reached in his deduction, hangs on the haste with which he takes a step towards the door, after which he will have to explain why he thought as he did. The acceleration, the precipitation in the act, reveals itself in this instance to be coherent with the manifestation of the truth.

M. MARCHANT: *I don't agree because you are introducing the notions of being late and of hurrying.*

Precisely in order to show their logical value.

M. MARCHANT: *But these two notions can only be established in relation to something else. Now, here, there is no relation possible. That is why the three subjects cannot move. There is no relation, because each of the three reasons along the same lines, and awaits something . . .*

Suppose all three make a go of it.

M. MARCHANT: *Then all three get their heads chopped off.*

What will happen before they even get to the door?

M. MARCHANT: *That's not possible, they are all waiting.*

But the act of each depends on something not-happening, and not on something happening. And because each of the others doesn't make it happen, each of them can make it happen. So they will normally reach the same conclusion if they have the same time for understanding, a real element which lies at the heart of all psychological testing. We assume it to be equal.

M. MARCHANT: *But then one can't get oneself out of this. If one wants to resolve the problem, one has to say that the times for understanding aren't the same.*

But the problem is only interesting if you assume the times for understanding to be equal. If the times for understanding are unequal, not only is it an uninteresting problem, but you will see how complicated it gets.

M. MARCHANT: *Either they are not equally intelligent, or else they cannot move.*

M. LAPLANCHE: *If A doesn't see B leave, he will be deeply puzzled, but that isn't an error.*

It is an error, from the moment he reaches the truth.

M. MARCHANT: *He can't reach it.*

But if you assume the time for understanding to be fixed?

M. MARCHANT: *The same for all?*

Yes. At the end of this time for understanding, each of them will be convinced that he is white. All three will leave together, and in principle they will explain why they are white. If you want to reintroduce a point of infinitesimal hesitation, in which each would say to himself *but aren't the others leaving precisely because they have just realised that I am black*, what will happen? A halt. But you musn't think the situation after the halt will be the same. When they start off, some progress will have been made. I'll skip over the details of the analysis – and leave it to you, you'll see how it is structured – but note that they might stop a second, but not a third time. In other words, in two scansions everything will have been said.

So, where is speech here? Where is language?

We have the language in the initial givens – there are two blacks, etc. These are essential givens of language, and they are entirely outside of reality. Speech is introduced from the moment when the subject acts in such a way as to assert, very simply – *I am white*. Of course, he doesn't assert it in a manner which is, as one says, logically grounded. But the step he takes is nonetheless valid if he has proceeded in the way I've just described to you – *If I don't say right away, as soon as I've understood it, that I'm white, I will never be able to affirm it validly again.*

I am not giving you this as a model of logical reasoning, but as a sophism,

designed to draw out the distinction between language applied to the imaginary – for the two other subjects are perfectly imaginary for the third, he imagines them, they are quite simply the reciprocal structure as such – and the symbolic moment of language, that is to say the moment of the affirmation. Here, you see, there's something which isn't completely identifiable with the temporal break you were talking about earlier on.

M. RIGUET: *I agree entirely.*

That is where the power revealed by the originality of the machines we have at our disposal falls short. There is a third dimension of time which they undeniably are not party to, which I'm trying to get you to picture via this element which is neither belatedness, nor being in advance, but haste, the relation to time peculiar to the human being, this relation to the chariot of time, which is there, close on our heels. That is where speech is to be found, and where language, which has all the time in the world, is not. That is why, furthermore, one gets nowhere with language.

DR LECLAIRE: *There is something which troubles me in all this. Earlier on you translated* in the beginning was language, *and that is the first time I've heard that. What are you referring to? Is this your translation?*

In principio erat verbum, that is undeniably language, it isn't speech.

DR LECLAIRE: *So there is no beginning.*

I didn't write the Gospel according to St John.

DR LECLAIRE: *That's the first time I've ever seen this. One always writes* speech, *or* the word [verbe], *and never* language.

I have already written the distich up twice on the blackboard and nobody has asked me for the explanation.

> *Indem er alles schaft, was schaftet der Höchste? – Sich.*
> *Was schaft er aber vor er alles schaftet? – Mich.*

What was the Almighty doing when he made the creation? – *Sich*, himself. And what was he before he made anything at all? *Mich*, myself. It is obviously a risky affirmation.

DR LECLAIRE: *I don't understand why you translate* in the beginning, *and not* before the beginning.

I'm not at all engaged in telling you that St John wrote things correctly. I am saying that, in St John, there's *in principio erat verbum*, in Latin. Now, as you saw when we translated the *De significatione*, *verbum* means word, the signifier, and not speech.

MISS X: Verbum *is the translation for the Hebrew word* dabar *which does mean* speech, *and not* language.

We will have to take another look at this bit of Hebrew. As long as the faculty of sciences hasn't been landed with a chair of theology, this will never get sorted out, neither for theology, nor for the sciences. But the question isn't at this point to know whether we should put the word or speech in the beginning. In the perspective we have taken on today and which I just illustrated by Daniel von Chepko's distich; there's a mirage whereby language, namely all your little 0s and 1s, is there from all eternity, independently of us. You may well ask me – *Where?* I would be really hard pressed finding an answer. But what is certain, as Mannoni was saying earlier on, is that within a certain perspective, we can only see them as being there since the beginning of time.

This is one of the ways in which Platonic and Freudian theory differ from one another. Plato's theory is a theory of reminiscence. Everything we understand, everything we recognise, must always have been there. And why? On occasion I've shown you how this theory is coherent with the fundamental myth of the dyad – Plato cannot conceive of the embodiment of ideas in any other way than in a series of endless reflections. Everything which happens and which is recognised is in the image of the idea. The image existing in itself is in its turn only an image of an idea existing in itself, is only an image in relation to another image. There is only reminiscence and, as we discussed at length yesterday evening, the vagina dentata will be only one image amongst others.[3]

But when we talk of the symbolic order, there are absolute beginnings, there is creation. That is why the *in principio erat verbum* is ambiguous. It's not for nothing that in Greek, it was called *logos*. At the beginning one may see it just as well in the perspective of this indefinite homogeneity which we rediscover every time in the domain of the imaginary.

All I need do is think about myself [*moi*] – I am eternal. From the moment I think about myself [*moi*], no destruction of me [*moi*] is possible. But when I say *I*, not only is destruction possible, but at every instant there is creation. Naturally, it isn't absolute, but for us, if a future is possible, it is because there is this possibility of creation. And if this future isn't, likewise, purely imaginary, it is because our *I* is carried forward by the entire discourse which came before. If Caesar, at the moment of crossing the Rubicon, isn't engaged in a ridiculous act, it is because he has behind him Caesar's entire past – adultery, the Mediterranean policy, the campaigns against Pompey – it is because of that that he can do something which has strictly symbolic value – for the Rubicon is no wider to cross than what's between my legs. This symbolic act unleashed a

[3] On 14 June 1955, Dr Robert Gessain gave a paper entitled '*"Vagina dentata" et images fantasmatiques associées*' ('"Vagina dentata" and associated fantasied images') to the Société Française de Psychanalyse. See *La Psychanalyse* 2, 1956, 316–18 for a resumé of this paper.

series of symbolic consequences. That is what accounts for the fact that there is a primacy of the future of the creation in the symbolic register, in so far as it is assumed by man.

Everything is a function of a past within which we must recognise the succession of prior creations. And even if we do not recognise it there, this past is there forever in the little 0s and the little 1s.

I wasn't trying to tell you that I believed that language was in the beginning – I know nothing of origins. But apropos of this ambiguous term, I wanted to question what for a while you were all agreed on, that the little 0s and the little 1s define a world with irrefutable laws, namely that the numbers are prime from the beginning.

Let us stop there; it is a bit rough-going today.

15 June 1955

XXIII

Psychoanalysis and cybernetics, or on the nature of language

LECTURE[1]

Professor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In what I am going to say, I would like to single out from amongst you those who come regularly to hear me on Wednesdays, in order to associate them in the gratitude we feel for the person I named first, Jean Delay, who agreed to inaugurate this series of lectures, and who is honouring us by his presence at this session.

On a personal note, I would like to thank him for having given a home to the seminar which I have been running here for the last two years, giving us a roof which adds renown to this teaching through all the memories accumulated under it, and allowing it to share in the resonances of his own speech.

Today I would like to talk about psychoanalysis and cybernetics. As it involves bringing together psychoanalysis and the various human sciences, it seemed to me to be a subject worthy of attention.

[1] This was the last in a series of special lectures organised under the auspices of the Société Française de Psychanalyse, under the patronage of the Clinique de la Faculté de Medecine, around the theme 'Psychoanalysis and the human sciences'. Although some of these lectures have already been referred to, when Lacan or others made allusions to them in the course of the seminar, we thought it convenient to list the entire series, which ran parallel to the work of the seminar throughout the year.

10 November 1954 Jean Delay, *Neurosis and Creation*
16 November 1954 Alexandre Koyré, *Problems of the Platonic dialogue*
30 November 1954 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Kinship versus the family*
4 January 1955 Jean Hyppolite, *Psychoanalysis and phenomenology*
18 January 1955 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Philosophy and psychoanalysis*
8 February 1955 Étienne De Greeff, *Homicide symbolism in Maeterlinck*
15 March 1955 Marcel Griaule, *Symbolisation of the world and the conditions of communication in the Sudanese*
19 April 1955 Medard Boss (Zurich), *Psychoanalysis and analysis of the Dasein*
10 May 1955 Émile Benveniste, *Psychoanalysis and linguistics*
24 May 1955 Daniel Lagache, *Psychoanalysis and psychology*
22 June 1955 Jacques Lacan, *Psychoanalysis and cybernetics, or on the nature of language*

I'll tell you right away, I won't be talking about those varieties of cybernetics which are more or less fashionable, nor will I be talking about the big or the little machines. I won't be calling them by their names, I won't be telling you about the wonders they accomplish. In what way could all that be of interest to us?

But nevertheless there is something that can, it seems to me, be got from these two roughly contemporaneous techniques, these two orders of thought and of science, psychoanalysis and cybernetics. Don't expect anything claiming to be exhaustive. Our concern will be to find an axis by means of which some light will be shed on a part of the signification of the one and of the other. This axis is none other than language. And I'm going to give you a quick glimpse of some aspects of the nature of language.

The question we will start off with came up in our seminar when, through a series of associations, we reached a point where we were asking ourselves what it would mean to play a game of chance with a machine.

The game of chance was the game of even and odd, and it may seem surprising that this is of interest in a seminar which deals with psychoanalysis. On occasion we have also talked about Newton. I don't think that these things come up by chance – if I may say so. It is precisely because we talk about the game of even and odd and also of Newton in this seminar that the technique of psychoanalysis has a chance of not falling into disrepair, not to say disrepute.

Well, in the course of this game of even and odd, we wanted to remind ourselves, us analysts, that nothing happens by chance, and also that something might come out of it which might pertain to chance at its purest.

The result was amazing. In this audience of analysts, we encountered genuine indignation at the thought that, as someone told me, I wanted to eliminate chance. In fact, the person who told me this was someone with staunch determinist convictions. And that is what was really frightening. This person was right – there is a close relation between the existence of chance and the basis of determinism.

Let us think about chance for a bit. What do we mean when we say that something happens *by chance*? We may mean one of two things, which may be very different – either that there is no intention, or that there is a law.

Now, the very idea of determinism is that law is without intention. That is indeed why the determinist theory always seeks to find out how something which is constituted in the real, and which functions according to a law, is engendered, starting off with something that is originally undifferentiated – chance as the absence of intention. To be sure, nothing happens without a cause, determinism tells us, but it is a cause without an intention.

This exemplary experiment might have suggested to my interlocutor – Lord knows how easily the mind slips about when it comes to such matters – that I was about to introduce determinism back into the game of heads or tails, with

which he was, more or less intuitively, identifying the game of even and odd. If even the game of heads or tails is determined, what will happen next? A genuine determinism will no longer be possible.

This question opens up that of discovering the nature of that determinism which we analysts take to be at the very root of our technique. We try to get the subject to make available to us, without any intention, *his thoughts*, as we say, his comments, his discourse, in other words that he should intentionally get as close as possible to chance. What is the determinism here sought after in an intention of chance? It is on this point that cybernetics can throw some light for us.

Cybernetics is a domain with very indeterminate frontiers. Finding its unity obliges us to cast our gaze over a variety of spheres of rationalisation, from politics, via the theory of games, to theories of communication, even to certain definitions of the notion of information.

Cybernetics, we are told, was born very straightforwardly from the work of engineers concerned with the economics of information passing through conductors, concerned with the way in which one can reduce down to its essential elements the mode in which a message is transmitted. In this guise, it would be about ten years old. It was given its name by Norbert Wiener, one of the most eminent of engineers. I think that that limits its importance, and we should cast further afield to find its birth.

To understand what cybernetics is about, one must look for its origin in the theme, so crucial for us, of the signification of chance. The past of cybernetics consists in nothing more than the rationalised formation of what we will call, to contrast them to the exact sciences, the conjectural sciences.

Conjectural sciences, this, I think, is the real name which should from now on be given to a specific group of sciences which are normally designated by the term human sciences. Not that I think that this is an improper term to use, since, in truth, human action is involved in any conjuncture. But I think it is too vague, too bound up with all kinds of confused echoes from pseudo-initiatory sciences which can only lower its tension and level. We can only gain by rendering our definition of the sciences of conjecture more rigorous and more specific.

If this is how we locate cybernetics, we will easily find it ancestors, Condorcet for instance, with his theory of votes and coalitions, of *parties*, as he says, and further back again Pascal, who would be its father, and its true point of origin.

I am going to start with the fundamental notions of the other sphere of sciences, the exact sciences, whose coming to fruition, in its modern form, doesn't go back very much further than that of the conjectural sciences. The former have in some way occulted, eclipsed, the latter, but they are inseparable from one another.

2

How are we to define the exact sciences? Should we say that, unlike the conjectural sciences, they are concerned with the real? But what is the real?

I don't think that in this respect the opinion of men has ever varied very much, contrary to what a psychologising genealogy of human thought would have us believe, according to which in early times man lived in dreams, and which claims that children are habitually hallucinated by their desires. A strange conception, so contrary to observation that it can only be described as a myth – a myth whose origin one should inquire into.

The meaning which man has always given to the real is the following – it is something one always finds in the same place, whether or not one has been there. This real may have moved, but if it has moved, one looks for it elsewhere, one looks for why it has been disturbed, one also tells oneself that sometimes it moves under its own steam. But it is always well and truly in its place, whether or not we are there. And our own displacements have, in principle, with certain exceptions, no efficacious influence on this change of place.

To be sure, the exact sciences are very closely tied to this function of the real. Does that mean that, prior to their development, this function was lacking in man, that he was persuaded by this alleged omnipotence of thought which is identified with the so-called archaic stage of animism? It isn't at all the case that man formerly lived at the heart of an anthropomorphic world from which he expected human responses. I think that this conception is totally puerile, and the notion of the infancy of humanity corresponds to nothing historical. Prior to the exact sciences, man thought, as we do, that the real is what keeps turning up where one expected it. At the same time of night one will always find one particular star on a particular meridian, it will turn up again there, it is indeed always there, it is always the same. It's not for nothing that I take the celestial landmark before the terrestrial, for in fact the map of the sky was drawn up before the map of the globe.

Man thought that there were places which endured, but he also thought that his action was concerned with the preservation of this order. For a long time man had the idea that his rites, his ceremonies – the emperor opening the furrow of spring, the dances of spring, guaranteeing the fertility of nature – his ordered and significant actions – action in the real sense, that of speech – were indispensable to sustaining things in their place. He didn't think that the real would vanish if he didn't participate in this ordered manner, but he thought that the real would be disturbed. He did not pretend to lay down the law, he pretended to be indispensable to the permanence of the law. An important definition, for in truth it entirely safeguards the rigour of the existence of the real.

The limit was crossed when man realised that his rites, his dances and his invocations didn't really have anything to do with the order of things. Was he right or wrong? We haven't the faintest idea. But what is certain is that we no longer have the old conviction. From that point on, the perspective of the exact sciences was born.

From the moment man thinks that the great clock of nature turns all by itself, and continues to mark the hour even when he isn't there, the order of science is born. The order of science hangs on the following, that in officiating over nature, man has become its officious servant. He will not rule over it, except by obeying it. And like the slave, he tries to make the master dependent on him by serving him well.

He knows that nature could be on time for the rendezvous he might give it. But what is this exactitude? It is precisely the encounter of two times [*temps*] in nature.

There is a very great clock, which is none other than the solar system, a natural clock which had to be deciphered, and there's no doubt that this was one of the most decisive steps in the constitution of exact science. But man must also have his clock, his watch. Who is on time [*exact*]?[2] Is it nature? Is it man?

It isn't clear that nature makes every rendezvous. Of course, one can define what is natural as what shows up on time for the rendezvous. When M. de Voltaire said of Buffon's natural history that it wasn't as natural as all that, he was trying to say something of this sort. This is a question of definition – *My loved one always makes the rendezvous, because when she doesn't come, I no longer call her my loved one.* Is it man who is on time? What is the source of being on time [*exactitude*], if not precisely in the synchronisation of watches?

Do note that the watch, the reliable watch, has only existed since Huyghens succeeded in making the first perfectly isochronic clock, in 1659, thus inaugurating the *universe of precision* – to use Alexandre Koyré's expression – without which no truly exact science would be possible. In what does being on time [*exactitude*] reside? It consists in something which we cause to fall in this clock, in this watch, namely a factor borrowed from natural time – the *g* factor. You know that, it's the acceleration caused by gravity, in sum, then, a space time relation. It developed out of a certain *thought experiment*, to use Galileo's term, which is a hypothesis embodied in an instrument. And if the instrument is constructed to confirm the hypothesis, there is no need whatever to do the experiment which confirms it, since the very fact that it works confirms the hypothesis.

But one still has to calibrate this instrument with a unit of time. And a unit of time is always borrowed from, it always refers to, the real, that is, to the fact that

[2] There are a series of puns in this passage and those that follow between 'being on time' (*exact*) and 'the exact sciences'.

it always turns up again in the same place. The unit of time is our sidereal day. If you ask a physicist – for instance let us take M. Borel – he will maintain that, if an imperceptible but not, in the long run, unappreciable slowing down of the rotation of the earth occurred, given that this rotation governs our sidereal day, we would be absolutely incapable, under the present circumstances, of finding evidence of it, given that we regulate our time as a function of this sidereal day, which we cannot control.

I say this to give you a sense of the fact that if one measures space with something solid, one measures time with time – which isn't the same thing.

There's nothing surprising, under these conditions, if a certain part of our exact science comes to be summed up in a very small number of symbols. That is where our requirement that everything be expressed in terms of matter and motion comes from, I mean in terms of matter and time, since, in so far as motion is something in the real, we have in fact succeeded in eliminating it, in reducing it.

The little symbolic game in which Newton's system and that of Einstein is summed up has in the end very little to do with the real. The science which reduces the real to several little letters, to a little bundle of formulae, will probably seem, with the hindsight of later epochs, like an amazing epic, and will also dwindle down, like an epic, to a rather short circuit.

Having considered the foundation of the exactitude of the exact sciences, namely the instrument, we might well go on to ask something else, namely – what are these places? In other words, let us concern ourselves with these places as empty.

It is in fact because this question was raised, contemporaneously with the birth of the exact sciences, that this calculus, which has been ill rather than well understood, began to emerge – the probability calculus, which appears in a truly scientific form for the first time in 1654, with Pascal's treatise on the arithmetic triangle, and emerging in the form of a calculation, not of randomness, but of chances, of the encounter in itself.

What Pascal develops with the arithmetic triangle, the first machine, has a claim on the attention of the scientific world, in that it enables one to determine immediately what a gambler has a right to expect at any given moment when the succession of turns which make up a game is interrupted. A succession of turns is the simplest form one can give to the idea of the encounter. As long as one hasn't come to the end of the sequence of turns fixed by convention, something can be evaluated, that is, the possibilities of the encounter as such. What's at issue is the place, and what does or doesn't come to fill it, something then which is strictly equivalent to its own inexistence. The science of what is found at the same place is substituted for by the science of the combination of places as such. It arises in an ordered register which assuredly assumes the notion of the turn, that is, the notion of scansion.

Everything which up until then had been the science of numbers becomes a combinatory science. The more or less confused, accidental traversal of the world of symbols is organised around the correlation of absence and presence. And the search for the laws of presence and absence will tend towards the establishing of the binary order which leads to what we call cybernetics.

And in keeping on this frontier the originality of what appears in our world in the form of cybernetics, I am tying it to man's waiting. If the science of the combinations of the scanned encounter has come to the attention of man, it is because it deeply concerns him. And it is not for nothing that it comes out of games of chance. And it is not for nothing that game theory is concerned with all the functions of our economic life, the theory of coalitions, of monopolies, the theory of war. Yes, war itself, considered in its aspect as game, detached from anything which might be real. It is not for nothing that the same word designates such diverse fields as well as the game of chance. Now, in the first games I mentioned, what is involved is a relation of intersubjective coordination. Does man make a call on something, does he look for something in the game of chance – and also in the calculation he consecrates to it – whose semantic homophony shows that it must have some relation with intersubjectivity, even though in the game of chance it seems to have been eliminated? Here we come very close to the central question with which I began, namely – what is the chance of the unconscious, which in some way lies behind man?

In the game of chance no doubt he will test his luck [*chance*], but also he is going to read his destiny in it. He has the idea that something is revealed there, which belongs to him, and, I would say, all the more so given that there is no one confronting him.

I've told you how the entire movement of the theory converges on a binary symbol, on the fact that anything can be written in terms of 0 and 1. What else is needed before what we call cybernetics can appear in the world?

It has to function in the real, independently of any subjectivity. This science of empty places, of encounters in and of themselves has to be combined, has to be totalised and has to start functioning all by itself.

What is required for that? To support this, something must be taken from the real. From the beginning, man has tried to join the real in the play of symbols. He has written things on the wall, he has even imagined that things like *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*, get written all by themselves on walls, he has placed figures at the spot where, at each hour of the day, the shadow of the sun comes to rest. But in the end, the symbols always stayed where they were intended to be placed. Stuck in this real, one might think that they were just its landmark.

What's new is having permitted them to fly with their own wings. And this has come about thanks to a simple, commonplace apparatus, which anyone can use, an apparatus where all you need do is turn the handle – a door.

3

Please give this a thought – a door isn't entirely real. To take it for such would result in strange misunderstandings. If you observe a door, and you deduce from that that it produces draughts, you'd take it under your arm to the desert to cool you down.

I have spent a considerable amount of time looking in all the dictionaries for the meaning of a door. There are two pages in Littré on the door – ranging from door as opening to door as more or less hinged means of closure, from the Sublime Porte to the door with which one makes a mask on the nose – *if you come back, I'll mask your face with it*, as Regnard writes.[3] After this, without further comment, Littré writes that a door must either be open or shut. That didn't entirely satisfy me, despite its literary echoes, because I am naturally suspicious when it comes to the wisdom of nations – there are a lot of things written into it, but in a form which is a little confusional, and that is indeed why psychoanalysis exists. A door must, it is true, be either open or shut. But they aren't equivalent.

Language can help us here. A door, my God, opens on to fields, but we don't say that it closes on to the sheepfold, nor on to the paddock. I'm aware that here I am confusing *porta* and *fores*, which is the door of the paddock, but one more confusion won't make much difference at this point, so we'll pursue our meditation on the door.

One might think, because I've spoken of the field and the sheepfold, that what is at issue is the inside and the outside. I think this would be a serious mistake – we live in a sufficiently grand age to imagine a great wall which would go exactly round the earth, and if you knock a door through it, which is the inside, which is the outside?

You don't think a door is any the more generous for being open. We say that a window gives on to open country. It is rather bizarre that, when we say that a door gives on to somewhere, it is generally a door which is for the most part closed and sometimes even blocked up . . .

One takes to the door sometimes, and it is always a pretty decisive act. And more often than not, a door is denied you.

There may be two people watching either side of a door, but try to imagine that happening with a window. You can break down a door – even when it is open. Naturally, as Alphonse Allais used to say, that is dumb and cruel. On the contrary, going in by the window is always viewed as a free and easy act, and always intentional, whereas one often goes through a door without noticing it. Thus, to a first approximation, the door doesn't have the same instrumental function as the window.

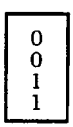
[3] *'Si vous revenez, je vous en fais un masque sur le nez.'*

In its nature, the door belongs to the symbolic order, and it opens up either on to the real, or the imaginary, we don't know quite which, but it is either one or the other. There is an asymmetry between the opening and the closing – if the opening of the door controls access, when closed, it closes the circuit. The door is a real symbol, the symbol *par excellence*, that symbol in which man's passing, through the cross it sketches, intersecting access and closure, can always be recognised.

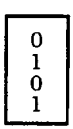
Once it has become possible to fold the two characteristics together, to construct an enclosure, that is to say a circuit, so that something passes when it is closed, and doesn't when it is open, that is when the science of the conjuncture passes into the realm of realisation of cybernetics. If there are machines which calculate all by themselves, add, do sums, do all the marvellous things which man had until then thought to be peculiar to his thinking, it is because the fairy electricity, as we say, enables us to establish circuits, circuits which open and close, which interrupt themselves or restore themselves, as a function of the existence of cybernetised doors.

Note that what's important about this is the relation as such, of access and closure. Once the door is open, it closes. When it is closed, it opens. A door isn't either open or shut, it must be either open and then shut, and then opened and then shut. Thanks to the electrical circuit, and to the induction circuit connected on to it, that is to say what is called feedback,[4] it's sufficient for the door to close for it to be returned by an electro-magnet to an open state and that is its closure again, and its opening again. In this way what is called an oscillation is produced. This oscillation is the scansion. And the scansion is the basis upon which one can inscribe indefinitely the ordered action through employing a series of montages which will be nothing more than child's play.

Here are four cases for a door – in the first two, a closed door, in the others, an open door.



For another door, we can have alternatively an open or a closed door.



[4] English in the original.

As the fancy might take you, you now decide, for instance, that a third door will be open or closed under certain circumstances, depending on the position of the two preceding doors.

0	0	:	0
0	1	:	1
1	0	:	1
1	1	:	1

– Formula 1 –

For the third door to be open, all that's needed is that at least one of the preceding ones be open.

There are other formulae. You can decide that the two doors have to be open for the third one to be open.

0	0	:	0
0	1	:	0
1	0	:	0
1	1	:	1

– Formula 2 –

The third formula has considerable interest:

0	0	:	0
0	1	:	1
1	0	:	1
1	1	:	0

– Formula 3 –

Here, you decide that the third door will only be open when only one of the two doors is.

What does all this amount to? Anything one wishes. Formula 1 can be called, from a logical perspective, reunion or conjunction. Formula 2 also has a logical reading and since its law merges with that of arithmetic multiplication, it is sometimes called logical multiplication. Finally, formula 3 is addition modulus 2. When you add 1 and 1, in a world of binary notation, you get 0 and you carry 1.

Once we have the possibility of embodying this 0, this 1, the notation of presence and absence, in the real, embodying it in a rhythm, a fundamental

scansion, something moves into the real, and we are left asking ourselves – perhaps not for very long, but after all some substantial minds are doing so – whether we have a machine that thinks.

We are very well aware that this machine doesn't think. We made the machine, and it thinks what it has been told to think. But if the machine doesn't think, it is obvious that we don't think either when we are performing an operation. We follow the very same procedures as the machine.

The important thing here is to realise that the chain of possible combinations of the encounter can be studied as such, as an order which subsists in its rigour, independently of all subjectivity.

Through cybernetics, the symbol is embodied in an apparatus – with which it is not to be confused, the apparatus being just its support. And it is embodied in it in a literally trans-subjective way.

I've had to proceed by paths which may seem to you to have been long-winded. But you have to have them in your minds in order to understand the true meaning of the contribution of cybernetics, and in particular the notion of the message.

4

In cybernetics, the notion of the message has nothing in common with what we usually call a message, which always has a meaning. The cybernetic message is a sequence of signs. And a sequence of signs always comes down to a series of 0s and 1s. That is indeed why what is called the unit of information, that is to say what the efficacity of any kind of sign is measured against, always refers back to a primary unit called the keyboard, which is nothing other than the alternative, quite simply.

Within this system of symbols, the message is caught in a banal network, that of the combination of the encounter on the basis of a unified scansion, that is to say of a 1 which is the scansion itself.

On the other hand, the notion of information is as simple to grasp as one of these little tables I've been drawing for you.

0	0	:	0
0	1	:	0
1	0	:	0
1	1	:	1

Let us start with this table, which should read as follows – I must have two positive plays to win. This means that at the beginning, I have an expectation of 1/4. Suppose that I have already had one go. If it was negative, I haven't got

another chance. If it was positive, I have one chance in two, 1/2. This means that a differentiation of level has come about with respect to my chances, in the form of an increase.

The phenomena of energy and of nature always tend in the direction of an equalisation of levels of difference. In the order of the message and of the calculation of chances, to the extent that the information increases, the difference in levels becomes more differentiated. I am not saying it always increases, for you may find cases in which it doesn't, but it doesn't necessarily diminish, and always tends towards differentiation.

Everything we call language can be organised around this basic element. In order for language to come into being, insignificant little things such as spelling and syntax have to be introduced. But all that is a given from the start, because these tables constitute a syntax, and that is indeed why one can get machines to undertake logical operations.

In other words, within this perspective, syntax exists before semantics. Cybernetics is a science of syntax, and it is in a good position to help us perceive that the exact sciences do nothing other than tie the real to a syntax.

So what is semantics, that is to say concrete languages, those we deal with, with their ambiguities, their emotional content, their human meaning? Are we going to say that semantics is peopled, furnished with the desire of men?

What is certain is that it is us who introduce meaning. In any case it is certain for a great number of things. But can we say that everything circulating in the machine has no meaning whatsoever? Certainly not in all the senses of the word *meaning*, because, for the message to be a message, not only must there be a sequence of signs, but there has to be a sequence of directed signs. For it to function in accordance with a syntax, the machine must run in a certain direction. And when I say *machine*, you can sense that it isn't simply a little box – when I am writing on paper, when I go through the transformations of the little 1s and 0s, that also is always a directed activity.

It is therefore not entirely rigorous to say that it is human desire which, all by itself, introduces meaning into this primitive language. The proof of that is that nothing unexpected comes out of the machine. That is to say, not so much what interests us, but what we predicted. It stops just where we have determined that it would stop, and that's where a certain result can be read.

The foundation of the system is already in play. How could it be established if it didn't rest on the notion of chance, that is to say on a certain pure anticipation, which already has a meaning?

So this is the symbol in its most purified form. The latter can already by itself yield more than mistakes in syntax. Mistakes in syntax engender only errors, they are only accidents. But mistakes in programming engender falsehood. Already, at this level, the true and the false are at stake. What does that signify for us analysts? What are we faced with when the human subject addresses himself to us?

His discourse is an impure discourse. *Impure* – is it so just because of mistakes in syntax? No, of course not. The whole of psychoanalysis is quite rightly founded on the fact that getting something meaningful out of human discourse isn't a matter of logic. We look behind this discourse, which has its own meaning, for its meaning, in another meaning, and precisely in the symbolic function which is manifested through it. And also there now emerges another meaning of the world *symbol*.

At this point we come upon a precious fact revealed to us by cybernetics – there is something in the symbolic function of human discourse that cannot be eliminated, and that is the role played in it by the imaginary.

The first symbols, natural symbols, stem from a certain number of prevailing images – the image of the human body, the image of a certain number of obvious objects like the sun, the moon, and some others. And that is what gives human language its weight, its resources, and its emotional vibration. Is this imaginary homogeneous with the symbolic? No. And it would be a perversion of the meaning of psychoanalysis to reduce it to an emphasis on these imaginary themes, to the coaptation of the subject by an elective, privileged, prevailing object, which gives the modulus of what is called, in what has now become a fashionable term, the object relation.

The one thing which cybernetics clearly highlights is the radical difference between the symbolic and the imaginary orders. A cybernetician recently admitted to me the extreme difficulty one has, whatever is said about it, in translating cybernetically the functions of *Gestalt*, that is the coaptation of good forms. And what is good form in living nature is bad form in the symbolic.

As has often be said, man invented the wheel. The wheel isn't to be found in nature, but it is a good form, that of the circle. On the other hand, in nature you won't find a wheel which describes the trace of one of its points on each of its circuits. There is no cycloid in the imaginary. The cycloid is a discovery in the symbolic. And whereas the latter can easily be produced by a cybernetic machine, one encounters unprecedented difficulties, except in the most artificial manner, in getting one circle to correspond to another by means of a dialogue between two machines.

That is what highlights the essential distinction between the two planes – that of the imaginary and that of the symbolic.

There is an inertia in the imaginary which we find making itself felt in the discourse of the subject, sowing discord in the discourse, making it such that I do not realise that when I mean someone well, I mean him ill, that when I love him, it is myself that I love, or when I think I love myself, it is precisely at this moment that I love an other. It is precisely the exercise of the dialectic of analysis which should dissipate this imaginary confusion, and restitute to the discourse its meaning as discourse.

The issue is to know whether the symbolic exists as such, or whether the

symbolic is simply the fantasy of the second degree of the imaginary coaptations. This is where there is a choice between two orientations of analysis.

Given that, through the vicissitudes of history, all meanings have for a long time been accumulating as semantic ballast, is it a matter of following the subject in the direction which he has given, in the here and now, to his discourse, in that he knows that he is engaged in psychoanalysis, and that psychoanalysis has formulated certain norms? Is it a matter of encouraging him to be a good person, to become someone of substance who has attained instinctual maturity, leaving behind the stages in which the image of this or that orifice dominates? Is it a matter, in analysis, of a coaptation of these fundamental images, of a rectification, of a normalisation in terms of the imaginary, or of a liberation of meaning in the discourse, in this continuation of the universal discourse in which the subject is engaged? That is where the schools diverge.

Freud had this sense of meaning in the highest degree, which accounts for the fact that so many of his works, *The Three Caskets* for instance, read as if they were written by a divine, as if they were guided by a meaning belonging to the order of poetical inspiration. What's at issue is knowing whether or not, yes or no, analysis will continue in the Freudian direction, searching not for the ineffable, but for meaning.

What is the meaning of meaning? Meaning is the fact that the human being isn't master of this primordial, primitive language. He has been thrown into it, committed, caught up in its gears.

We don't know the origin. We are told, for instance, that the cardinal numbers appeared in languages before the ordinal numbers. That hadn't been expected. One might have thought that man comes upon number by way of the ordinal, through dancing, through civil and religious procession, the order of precedence, the organisation of the city, which is nothing more than order and hierarchy. And yet the cardinal number came first, the linguists tell me.

We must marvel at the paradox. Here man isn't master in his own house. There is something into which he integrates himself, which through its combinations already governs. The passage of man from the order of nature to the order of culture follows the same mathematical combinations which will be used to classify and explain. Claude Lévi-Strauss calls them the elementary structures of kinship. And yet primitive men are not supposed to have been Pascals. Man is engaged with all his being in the procession of numbers, in a primitive symbolism which is distinct from imaginary representations. It is in the middle of that that something of man has to gain recognition. But what has to be recognised, Freud teaches us, is not expressed, but repressed.

With a machine, whatever doesn't come on time simply falls by the wayside and makes no claims on anything. This is not true for man, the scansion is alive,

and whatever doesn't come on time remains in suspense. That is what is involved in repression.

No doubt something which isn't expressed doesn't exist. But the repressed is always there, insisting, and demanding to be. The fundamental relation of man to this symbolic order is very precisely what founds the symbolic order itself – the relation of non-being to being.

What insists on being satisfied can only be satisfied in recognition. The end of the symbolic process is that non-being come to be, because it has spoken.

22 June 1955

XXIV

A, m, a, S

VERBUM AND *DABAR*
THE MACHINE AND INTUITION
SCHEMA OF THE CURE
THE LIBIDINAL AND THE SYMBOLIC

In the course of our penultimate meeting, the question I put to you had mixed responses, and that session has had a variety of impacts on the minds of those who participated in it. For me it was a way of tuning my instrument for what I had to tell you in my paper on psychoanalysis and cybernetics. I hope you also found it useful.

1

Although I didn't pause to consider it at the time, because the way things were going, it would have given you even more of a feeling of aberration, I did take in your remark about Hebrew. So, what were you trying to tell me, when you said to me that the *verbum* of the first verse of St John was the Hebrew *dabar*? What grounds do you have for that?

It isn't a trap. I thought about it again, an hour ago, and I am no better up on this than you are, almost certainly less so.

M. X: *Well, first of all, I would say that there is an* a priori *fact which leads us to think that.*

If it really is certain that St John wrote in Greek, that doesn't necessarily entail that he thought in Greek, and that his *logos* was the Babylonian *logos* for instance. You say he was thinking of the Hebrew *dabar*. Can you tell me why? Because it isn't the only way to render what *dabar* means in Hebrew.

M. X: *To give a summary of the question, I would say that one doesn't find one truly Platonic concept in St John. It is a fact, and I could prove it to you. What is interesting, is that in general* logos . . .

Who is saying anything about Platonic concepts? I paused over this *verbum* so as to bring it closer on this occasion to the Latin use, which is sufficiently signposted by the use Saint Augustine makes of it in *De Significatione*, which we

discussed last year. You should have a clearer sense of all its implications after my last lecture. I put it to you that the *verbum* was perhaps prior to any speech, and even to the *fiat* of Genesis, as a kind of prior axiomatic. And at that point you objected that it is the Hebrew *dabar*.

M. X: *Because you said* – in the beginning was language. *Upon which Leclaire said* – not language, but speech. *And I agreed.*

There are two questions. First, why does *dabar* underlie the *logos* of St John? And then, does *dabar* mean speech rather than anything else? Deal with these two questions. So, why *dabar*?

M. X: *For two reasons. The first is that it is quite clearly an implicit reference to the beginning of Genesis.*

At the beginning of Genesis, we find, verse 3 – *fiat lux*, precisely *va'omer*. It isn't at all *dabar, va'omer*. In fact it is exactly the opposite.

M. X: *No! it isn't exactly the opposite!*

Tell me why.

M. X: *There is a Rabbinical tradition which has nominalised this third verse of Genesis, into something like a mediating entity between the Creator and the creation, and this would be speech, as there is wisdom. But what is certain is that the entire Biblical tradition contains no concept of* ratio, *of* logos *in the Greek sense. That is what Bultmann has shown through very deep analysis. The concept of the universe doesn't exist in the Biblical tradition. It is completely lacking in the concept of a fixed, determinate law whereby everything is linked together, which is what the Greek concept of* logos *means, the rationality of the world, the world considered as a whole in which everything happens in a linked, logical manner. The Hebrews always talk of a totality of things, or the sky and the earth and all that. But they do not think in static, essentialist concepts.*

Having heard my lecture, do you think that, when I speak of a radical symbolic order, I have in mind this game of places, this initial conjecture, this original conjectural game, prior to the advent of determinism, prior to any rationalised notion of the universe? If I may put it this way, that's the rational prior to its conjunction with the real. Do you think that is what I have in mind? Is it the four causalities, the principle of sufficient reason, the whole caboodle?

M. X: *But if you say* in the beginning was language, *it is like a retrospective projection of present-day rationality.*

It is not for me to say it. I'm not saying it, St John is.

M. X: *No, he doesn't say that.*

Come on, Father Beirnaert, because we are in the middle of trying to demonstrate the philological expertise of X. That the Semites never had the notion of a universe as closed as the 0, whose system Aristotle gives us, is one thing.

M. X: *It is essentially in motion and without rational law. What happens in nature is the resonances of God's speech. It is a universe which isn't determined, isn't rational, historical if you want, where everything happens through personal initiatives.*

Yes, but that doesn't mean that it isn't rational, since it is speech which modulates it.

M. X: *I would say – not essentialist.*

And you, Father Beirnaert?

FATHER BEIRNAERT: *I've been through the Holy Scriptures, like everyone else.*

Do you know what a certain Burnett did?

M. X: *Yes.*

He studied the first verse of St John with great care. I wasn't able to find his text since you raised this objection, but I can more or less remember the conclusion. He says that behind the *logos* of St John, what is assumed is the Aramaic *memmra.*

M. X: *That is the same thing as* dabar *in Hebrew. It is* dabar *which has been rendered substantial, rabbinical, as I told you.*

That's not the point.

M. X: *That is to say that several things have led to this first verse. You have the tradition of Genesis, then the current of Rabbinical thought.*

In any case, *memmra* is far closer to *va'omer* from the first verse of Genesis, it is the first root. I looked up *dabar* an hour ago in the *Genesius.* It is an embodied imperative, of the style, *duxit, locutus est,* and even includes the translation of *insidiatus est,* to engage, to seduce. Its precise implication is everything which is warped, vitiated, corrupted, in connection with speech, when it descends to the archi-temporal. In any case, *dabar* is always whatever is alluring, deceiving, speech at its most self-invalidating in relation to *ammara.*

M. X: *No, not always. For instance, thunder is the speech of God, and not in the self-invalidating sense. What you're talking of is a secondary meaning, but it isn't the primary meaning.*

But it shows the point to which the movement of derivation of the meaning tends.

M. X: *It can derive, obviously it can derive.*

It is clearly attested.

M. X: *Of course, but that doesn't prove anything.*

But in any case it shows that nothing allows us to identify this *dabar* with the albeit problematic usage, let us say, since one does get quite attached to it, of *logos* in the Greek text of St John.

M. X: *In any case, one thing is certain, the Platonic sense of* logos *must be excluded, for it is totally absent everywhere else.*

But that isn't what I had in mind.

M. X: *In any case it must not be translated by language.*

As far as the *logos* in question is concerned, one mustn't neglect the inflection that the Latin *verbum* yields. We can turn it into something completely different from the reason for things, namely this play of absence and presence which already provides the frame for *fiat*. For, in the end, *fiat* is made on a backdrop of the un-made which is prior to it.[1] In other words, I think that it isn't inconceivable that even the *fiat*, the most primary of creative speeches, is secondary.

M. X: *Yes. But I would say that one is there placed at the beginning of the temporal historic order, and one doesn't go beyond, as you are insinuating.*

Saying, when it's a matter of speech, *in principle, in principio*, has a mirage aspect to it.

M. X: *I'm not sure I follow you now.*

Once things are structured in a certain imaginary intuition, they seem to have been there from the beginning, but that is a mirage, of course. Your objection is to say that there is a retro-action of this constituted world, in a model or archetype which would constitute it. But it isn't necessarily the archetype. I absolutely exclude from what I am teaching you the retro-action in an archetype which would amount to a condensation. It's not the Platonic *logos*, the eternal forms.

M. X: *For my part, I've always understood* language *in contrast to* speech, *like this condensation, this essence of all that there is.*

I was trying to get you to understand another meaning of the word *language*.

M. X: *Ah!*

[1] In French, *'fait'* and *'non-fait'*.

What's at issue is a succession of absences and presences, or rather of presence on a background of absence, of absence constituted by the fact that a presence can exist. There is no absence in the real. There is only absence if you suggest that there may be a presence there when there isn't one. In the *in principio*, I am proposing to locate the word in so far as it creates the opposition, the contrast. It is the original contradiction of 0 and 1.

M. X: *Then, in what way is it opposed to speech?*

It gives it its radical condition.

M. X: *Yes, but to my way of thinking, you can designate this condition as satisfactorily by* speech *as by* language, *because it is so far beyond this opposition.*

That is true. But that's what I want to point out to you. It is this kind of master word, if I may call it so, which is at issue, and not the register of *dabar*, which is in some sense the legalist orientation.

M. X: *Oh!*

You can check *Genesius* again when you get home.

M. X: *But I have studied all these texts. There is a long article by Guideau which collects all the possible texts together, and he doesn't take it in this direction. I find him more sophisticated than* Genesius, *which points in the direction of what you are saying* – insidious.

The fact that *dabar* can include *insidiatus est* shows the extent to which it can be inflected.

M. X: *It may inflect, yes, the way* speech *can become* chatter.

FATHER BEIRNAERT: *It is the same with the word* parole *in French* – Il parle [*he talks*], *that is,* he does nothing.

That's not quite right, because *dabar* doesn't include the sense of emptiness.

M. X: *There's a text, Isaiah, fifty-five – God's speech comes down to earth, and returns as if fertilised. It is creative speech, not insidious speech, and it corresponds to the Aramaic* memmra, *in part rendered a little substantial, it is speech imbued with life.*

You think that is the meaning of the Aramaic *memmra*? You think that this speech makes any compromise with life? Here we're on the level of the death instinct.

M. X: *That comes from the tendency to try to understand what is there as an intermediary between the person who is speaking and what he produces. It must have a certain consistency, and that is the beginning, if you like, of a speculative tendency in Hebraic thought.*

What, *dabar*?

M. X: Memmra.

You think so?

M. X: *Yes, that's the Rabbinical tradition.*

FATHER BEIRNAERT: *When does* memmra *appear?*

M. X: *It must date from the third century.*

In the article by Burnett that I mentioned, he shows, by all kinds of cross-checkings, that St John thought in Aramaic.

M. X and FATHER BEIRNAERT: *That is certain.*

What you call the Rabbinical tradition is its gnostic inflection.

M. X: *Yes, it obviously allows gnostic thought to gain a hold, but it isn't gnostic in itself. It is essentially legalist thought, seeking to codify everything.*

You don't think *dabar* is closer to that?

M. X: *No,* memmra.

2

I am not engaging you in an *ex cathedra* teaching. I don't think it would befit our object, language and speech, for me to bring something apodictic for you here, something you would just have to record and put in your pocket. Of course, as things go on, there is more and more language in our pockets, and it even overflows into our brains, which doesn't make that much difference there – you can always put your handkerchief over it.

If there is a true speech behind this discourse, it is yours, my listeners, as much, if not more, than mine.

Last time I asked you to put questions to me. And as they proved to be a bit lightweight, I suggested a theme to you – what do you make of what I am trying to get at vis-à-vis language and speech? On this topic, some valuable objections were in fact formulated and the fact that they were halted in the course of explication, and that they even sometimes generated a certain confusion, wasn't in the least discouraging. It simply means that analysis is in progress.

As the lecture I gave might seem to be the dialectical culmination of everything which has been triggered by this year's work, I ask you again today, if you have any questions to put to me. Today I ask you once again to risk yourselves in the unknown, in this zone of ignorance, which we must never forget in the analytic experience, for it is the position we automatically adopt.

Some say that, as far as analytic theory is concerned, it is I who build, who

put my construction to you, and you, you go off with it. I don't want any of that. Vis-à-vis this archetypal, Platonic order, about which you know I have such reservations, vis-à-vis this original speech which is there to give us the emergence of the symbolic, we are in the position of having to *conceive*, in the full sense of the word.

We do not think for one moment that everything has already been written. As M. Lefèbvre-Pontalis pointed out the other day, there wouldn't be anything at all if a speaking subject didn't exist. And that is why, for something new to come into existence, ignorance must exist. That is the position we are in, and that is why we must conceive, in the full sense. When we know something, we are already not conceiving anything any longer.

Who will take the floor? M. Marchant, who looks as if the spirit has descended upon him?

M. MARCHANT: *The spirit which has descended on me at this moment would rather make me protest. What is the point of our asking questions?*

There may have been some turn in my discourse, in my last lecture, which may have seemed too abrupt, too elusive, abridged, forgotten for you, and which stops you seeing the connection.

M. MARCHANT: *I'm pitching my question at a far higher level, if I may say so. We have been listening here, for a number of months, to a seminar from which we have each drawn what we could. If we ask questions, we'll always have a tendency to bring all this down to things on a more solid level, if one may say so, with all the ill effects that implies.*

We do these things to end up with practice, and don't forget that the latter is entirely conceptualised.

M. VALABREGA: *I have a question about your paper. You spoke of triangularity, which may or may not be recognised by the cybernetic machine. Does this notion then belong to the imaginary or to the symbolic order? Since you spoke of ignorance just now, I though of Nicholas da Cusa, who, throughout the whole of the first part of the* De Docta Ignorantia *engages in a formal analysis of the notion of triangularity, and ties it, it seems to me, to the symbol.*

You are alluding to what I said about the special difficulties one encounters in formalising, in the symbolic sense of the word, certain *Gestalten*. And I didn't take the triangle as my example, but the circle, and that's not the same thing.

M. VALABREGA: *In what I said, I alluded to the fact that the cybernetic machine may or may not recognise a form, depending on its position in space. I then got confused, and so did others – we no longer knew whether, for you, the circularity or triangularity pertains to the symbolic or the imaginary order in these experiments.*

Everything intuitive is far closer to the imaginary than to the symbolic. It is very much a present-day concern of mathematical thought to eliminate the intuitive elements as thoroughly as possible. The intuitive element is considered to be an impurity in the development of the mathematical symbolic. This isn't to say, however, that mathematicians consider the issue settled. Some think intuition cannot be eliminated. Nevertheless, there remains the aspiration to reduce everything to an axiomatic.

When it comes to the machine, I think that it cannot, of course, settle the question. But note what happens each time we try to put the machine in a position to recognise good form, despite all the aberrations of perspective. *Gestalt* theory says that, for us, it is the simplest thing to recognise good form in intuition, in the imagination. With the machine, we never produce an effect founded on a simplicity of the same order – it is always through the most complex, the most artificial compositions, by a point-by-point sweeping of space, a scanning,[2] and by means of formulae which are in consequence very complicated, that one recomposes what one could call the sensitivity of the machine to a particular form. In other words, good forms do not constitute the simplest formulae for the machine. Which is already a sufficient indication in experience of the opposition between the imaginary and the symbolic.

M. VALABREGA: *I didn't make myself clear. The debate you're referring to, concerning the origins of mathematics, between intuitionists and non-intuitionists, is certainly very interesting, but it is an old one, and it is besides the point when it comes to the question I'm raising, which has to do with the idea and not the perception of a triangle or a circle. It is the pointedness that there is in the very notion of triangularity, for instance, which I am getting at.*

We could take another look at the text you mentioned. I read a part of it again this year on the subject of maxima and minima, but I'm no longer very clear how Nicholas da Cusa tackles the question of the triangle. I think that for him the triangle is far more the ternary than the triangle.

M. VALABREGA: *I am not specifically referring to him. It seems to me that the notion of triangularity, whatever the intuitionist or non-intuitionist positions of mathematicians, cannot be other than symbolic.*

Without a doubt.

M. VALABREGA: *Well then, the cybernetic machine should recognise this triangularity, which it doesn't. That is why you, it seems, were inclined to say that triangularity in fact belonged to the imaginary order.*

[2] English in the original.

Absolutely not.

One must give a far more problematic sense to the fact that the machine recognises. This triangularity you're talking about is in some way the very structure of the machine. It is the basis on which the machine comes into being as such. If we have 0 and 1, something comes after. It is on the basis of a succession that the independence of 0 and 1 can be established, the symbolic generation of the connotations of presence-absence. I showed you that the logical product, logical addition, always requires three columns. In one such margin, 0 and 1 will make 1, and in another, 0 and 1 will make 0. In other words, the ternarity is essential to the structure of the machine. And, of course, I prefer ternarity to triangularity, which lends itself to an image.

M. VALABREGA: *I wasn't talking about ternarity, but about triangularity. I was talking about the triangle itself, about the notion of the triangularity of the triangle, and not of ternarity.*

You mean the triangle as form?

M. VALABREGA: *If this notion belongs, as I think it does, to the symbolic order, it is inexplicable why one can't build a cybernetic machine which recognises the form of the triangle.*

Quite specifically in so far as it belongs to the order of the imaginary.

M. VALABREGA: *So it doesn't belong to the symbolic order.*

It is the function 3 which is really minimal in the machine.

M. RIGUET: *Yes. One could generalise the question somewhat, asking whether the machine can recognise a certain ternary relation in another machine? The answer is yes. Whether it recognises the triangle in all cases is, in my view, perhaps not an impossible question, although it is far from being resolved. But, within the order of forms, the triangle is highly symbolised – there are no triangles in nature.*

M. VALABREGA: *If the problem were insoluble, one would have to suppose that the notion of triangularity at issue didn't belong to the symbolic order, but also to the imaginary order.*

Yes.

M. VALABREGA: *If only concrete elaborated concepts exist, there is a contradiction with research in axiomatics. In axiomatics, it seems that one eliminates – at least in large part, a residue is all that is left, and some people have said that there is nothing left over – the concrete concepts of intuition. That's a question.*

You mean that there is as wide a margin as one wants. The problem remains open.

M. VALABREGA: *Yes, in the sense that you yourself said that the triangle doesn't exist in nature. So then, what is this intuition? It isn't a concrete concept, an elaboration on the basis of existing forms. It is a notion, it is symbolic.*

M. RIGUET: *In recent researches in axiomatics, a triangle is something symbolic, for a triangle is a certain relation.*

Yes. One can reduce the triangle to a certain relation.

M. RIGUET: *A notion of the incidence between points and straight lines.*

As a consequence, the machine must be able to recognise it in the end?

M. RIGUET: *Yes. But one must define very precisely the universe of all the forms which we can consider. And you ask the machine to recognise a well determined form from amongst these.*

It is on the basis of an already effected symbolic reduction of forms, in fact of the work already performed by the machine, that one asks the real, concrete machine to operate.

M. MARCHANT: *That's a matter of description.*

No, I don't think so.

M. RIGUET: *It is a description of the relation which you impose on this incidental relation, requiring it to have a certain number of properties, without, however, enumerating them. It is a non-enumerative description, because you don't draw up a list of all the straight lines, of all the points you are considering, but a list of all the points, lines, etc. in nature. That is where the imaginary comes in.*

M. MARCHANT: *Where do you place this concept, in what domain?*

M. RIGUET: *It isn't very useful, if you don't situate yourself within the framework of a deterministic axiomatic. I've talked of the incidence of the straight line, but there are other ways of axiomatising elementary geometry.*

O. MANNONI: *One can in fact constitute the triangle schematically, even without knowing that we are talking about a triangle. How are we to be sure that the triangle we are drawing is a triangle? That is a problem concerning the relation of the symbolic to the imaginary, and it's very obscure.*

Yes. Taken in the opposite sense, if I may say so.

O. MANNONI: *Yes, the other way around.*

M. RIGUET: *When you recognise a triangle drawn on a sheet of paper, you accumulate a certain number of properties which have their correlate in the axiomatic model which you are considering.*

O. MANNONI: *So, you speak two languages which translate.*

Absolutely.

O. MANNONI: *So the imaginary is already language, already symbolic.*

The language embodied in a human language is made up of, and there's no doubt about this, choice images which all have a specific relation with the living existence of the human being, with quite a narrow sector of its biological reality, with the image of the fellow being. This imaginary experience furnishes ballast for every concrete language, and by the same token for every verbal exchange, with this something which makes it a human language – in the most down to earth and most ordinary sense of the word human, in the English sense of 'human'.[3]

It is precisely through that that it may be an obstacle to the progress of the realisation of the subject in the symbolic order, whose pure function manifests itself in a thousand ways in human life, a function connotable in terms of presence and absence, of being and non-being.

And that is indeed why we are always faced with some sort of resistance opposing the restitution of the integral text of the symbolic exchange. We are embodied beings, and we always think by means of some imaginary go-between, which halts, stops, clouds up the symbolic mediation. The latter is perpetually ground up, interrupted.

O. MANNONI: *What bothers me is the feeling I have that this imaginary lining doesn't just grind up, but is the indispensable nourishment of the symbolic language, and that language, if completely deprived of this nourishment, becomes the machine, that is to say something which is no longer human.*

Don't be soft. Don't go and say that the machine is really rather nasty and that it clutters up our lives. That is not what is at stake. The machine is simply the succession of little 0s and 1s, so that the question as to whether it is human or not is obviously entirely settled – it isn't. Except, there's also the question of knowing whether the human, in the sense in which you understand it, is as human as all that.

O. MANNONI: *That is a very serious question.*

All the same, the notion of humanism, which I won't give you a seminar on, seems to me to be for us sufficiently weighed down by history so as to be capable of being considered as a particular position realised within a very much localised field which we imprudently continue to call humanity. And we shouldn't be surprised by the fact that the symbolic order is absolutely

[3] English in the original.

irreducible to what is commonly called human experience. You tell me that there would be nothing if it weren't embodied in this imagination. We don't doubt it for a minute, but are all the roots there? Nothing entitles us to say so. Not only hasn't the empirical deduction of whole numbers been accomplished, but it even seems to have been proved that it can't be.

3

I will try to relate all these considerations to the little summarising schema I've already introduced you to.

At the beginning of the third chapter of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud explains the stages of the process of analysis. An illuminating text, a copy of which you should all have in your pockets, so that you can refer to it at any moment.

First, he says, we took as our goal the resolution of the symptom by giving it its signification. Some insights were gained and even some effects were produced by using this procedure.

FATHER BEIRNAERT: *Why?*

What I am teaching you only tries to express the conditions thanks to which what Freud says is possible. Why? you ask. Because the symptom is in itself, through and through, signification, that is to say, truth, truth taking shape. It is to be distinguished from the natural index in that it is already structured in terms of signified and signifier, with all that that entails, namely the play of signifiers. Even within the concrete given of the symptom, there is already a precipitation into signifying material. The symptom is the inverse side of a discourse.

FATHER BEIRNAERT: *But how is immediate communication to the patient efficacious?*

The communication of the signification to the patient cures to the extent that it produces *Überzeugung*, that is to say, conviction. The subject integrates the explication which you give him into the set of significations he has already admitted, and that may have an effect, in a punctual way, in wild analysis. But it is far from being generally the case.

That is why we move on to the second stage, in which the necessity of integration in the imaginary is recognised. What must emerge is not simply understanding of the signification, but reminiscence properly speaking, that is the passage into the imaginary. The patient has to reintegrate the sequence of significations which had not been recognised [*méconnaître*] into this imaginary continuum which we call the ego, to recognise it as being his, to integrate it into his biography. At the moment, I am following the beginning of the third chapter of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

Third stage – one realises that that isn't enough, namely that there is an inertia peculiar to what is already structured within the imaginary.

The main emphasis, during the course of these efforts, the text goes on, *falls on the resistances of the patient. Now the art is to discover in the quickest possible manner these resistances, to show them to the patient, and to move him, push him through human influence, to bring him to give up these resistances. Even via this path, it is not always entirely possible to achieve the coming to consciousness, the becoming conscious of the unconscious. All this remembering is not, perhaps, strictly the essential thing, if one doesn't at the same time obtain* Überzeugung, *conviction.*[4]

You have to read the text as I do, in German, for the French text – as a result of the art of the translator – has something greyish, pasty about it, which conceals the violence of the picture Freud is sketching.

Freud insists on the following, that after the reduction of the resistances, there is a residue which may be what is essential. Here he introduces the notion of repetition, *Wiederholung*. It consists essentially in the following, he says, that on the side of what is repressed, on the unconscious side of things, there is no resistance, there is only a tendency to repeat.

In this same text, Freud underlines the originality of his new topography. The simple qualitative connotation unconscious/conscious isn't the essential thing here. The line of cleavage doesn't pass between the unconscious and the conscious, but between, on the one hand, something which is repressed and tends simply to repeat itself, that is to say speech which insists, this unconscious modulation of which I talk, and on the other hand, something which is an obstacle to it, and which is organised in another manner, namely the ego. If you read this text in the light of the notions which I believe I have inured you to, you will see that the ego is strictly located there as belonging to the order of the imaginary. And Freud stresses that all resistance as such comes from this order.

Before I leave you, and since one must punctuate, put in a final full stop, to serve you as an orientation table, I will turn once again to the four poles which I have more than once written on the board.

I begin with *A*, which is the radical Other, that of the eighth or ninth hypothesis of Parmenides, which is equally the real pole of the subjective relation and is what Freud ties the relation to the death instinct to.

Then, here you have *m*, the ego, and *a*, the other which isn't an other at all, since it is essentially coupled with the ego, in a relation which is always reflexive, interchangeable – the *ego* is always an *alter-ego*.

Here you have *S*, which is simultaneously the subject, the symbol, and also the *Es*. The symbolic realisation of the subject, which is always a symbolic creation, is the relation between *A* and *S*. It is subjacent, unconscious, essential to every subjective situation.

This schematisation doesn't start off with an isolated and absolute subject.

[4] See GW XIII 16; Stud III 228; SE XVIII 18.

Everything is tied to the symbolic order, since there are men in the world and they speak. And what is transmitted and tends to get constituted is an immense message into which the entire real is little by little retransplanted, recreated, remade. The symbolisation of the real tends to be equivalent to the universe, and the subjects are only relays, supports in it. What we get up to in all this is to make a break on the level of one of these couplings.

You won't understand anything unless you start with this, which the whole of Freud's work teaches us and reminds us of. Take the schema of the psychic apparatus, which appears in one of the little manuscripts Freud used to send Fliess, and also at the end of *The Interpretation of Dreams*. One might think that he was simply trying to formalise using what could be called the scientistic symbolic – nothing could be further off the mark. The critical point in what Freud is doing, the idea which can be found nowhere else, is what he insists on principally in Chapter VII – there really is an opposition between conscious and unconscious functions. This starting point – justified or not, it doesn't matter, we are engaged in commenting on Freud – seems essential to him in order to explain what actually happens with the subjects with whom he is dealing, in order to understand the domains of psychic life. What happens on the level of pure consciousness, on the level of the cortex in which this reflection of the world which is where consciousness is located, is as such immediately erased, leaving no traces. The traces take place elsewhere.

This has been the starting-point for many absurdities, fed by this term 'depth' which Freud could have avoided, and which has been so abused. That means that in the end, the living organism can only receive, record, what it is constructed to receive – more precisely, that its functions are far more constructed in order *not* to receive than to receive. It doesn't see, it doesn't hear, what isn't useful to its biological subsistence. Except, the human being goes beyond the real which is biologically natural to it. And that is where the problem begins.

All animal machines are strictly riveted to the conditions of the external environment. If they vary, it is, we are told, to the extent that this external environment varies. Of course, the essence of most animal species is not to want to know anything about what bothers them – they'd rather peg out. That is in fact why they do peg out, and why we are strong. Freud's inspiration isn't mystical. He doesn't think that there is a morphogenic power as such in life. For the animal, the type, the form are linked to a choice in the external environment, as inside and outside. Why is it otherwise for the human being?

There are enough really rather tiresome laboratory experiments, which show that if one holds an octopus, or any other animal, with sufficient doggedness in front of a triangle, they will recognise it in the end, that is to say generalise it. M. Valabrega's question should be answered on the level of the general. But what is new in man is that something is already sufficently open,

imperceptibly shifted within the imaginary coaptation, for the symbolic use of the image to be inserted into it.

One has to assume a certain biological gap in him, which I try to define when I talk to you about the mirror stage. The total captation of desire, of attention, already assumes the lack. The lack is already there when I speak of the desire of the human subject in relation to his image, of this extremely general imaginary relation which we call narcissism.

Living animal subjects are sensitive to the image of their own kind. This is an absolutely essential point, thanks to which the whole of living creation isn't an immense orgy. But the human being has a special relation with his own image – a relation of gap, of alienating tension. That is where the possibility of the order of presence and absence, that is of the symbolic order, comes in. The tension between the symbolic and the real is subjacent here. It is substantial, if you are willing enough to give the term substance its purely etymological meaning. It's an *upokeimenon.*

For all existing human subjects, the relation between *A* and *S* will always pass via the intermediary of these imaginary substrates, the ego and the other, which constitute the imaginary foundation of the object – *A,m,a,S.*

Let us try to light up the magic lantern a little. We are going to take on a mechanical outlook, which is the enemy of man, by imagining there to be a triode lamp at the point of intersection of the symbolic direction and the passage through the imaginary. Let us suppose that a current passes down the circuit. If there is a vacuum, a bombarding of electrons takes place between the cathode and the anode, thanks to which the current passes. Besides the anode and the cathode, there is a third ode, a transverse one. You can make the current pass through it by making it positive, in such a way that the electrons are led towards the anode, or else by making it negative, cutting the process short – what emanates from the negative is repelled by the negative you've interposed.

It is simply a new version of the story of the door which I spoke of the other day, on account of the non-homogeneous character of the audience. Let us say that it is a door in a door, a door to the power of two, a door within the door. The imaginary is thus in a position to interrupt, to grind up, to scan what passes on the level of the circuit.

Note that what happens between *A* and *S* in itself has a conflictual character. At best, the circuit contradicts itself, cuts itself off, grinds itself up. I say *at best,* for the universal discourse is symbolic, it comes from a long way back, we didn't invent it. We didn't invent non-being, we fell into this little corner of non-being. And as far as the transmission of the imaginary is concerned, we've had our fill of it, what with all the fornications of our parents, grandparents, and the other scandalous stories which give psychoanalysis its piquancy.

From then on, the necessities of language and those of interhuman communication are easy to understand. You know those messages that the

subject sends out in a form which structures them, grammaticalises them, as coming from the other, in an inverted form. When a subject says to another *you are my master* or *you are my wife*, it means precisely the opposite. It passes via *A* and via *m*, and then gets to the subject, who it all of a sudden enthrones in the perilous and problematic position of spouse or disciple. That's how fundamental speech is expressed.

Well then, what is the symptom, or to put it another way, the neurosis, about? You may have noted that in the circuit, the ego is really separated from the subject by the little *a*, that is to say by the other. And yet, there is a bond. I am me, and so are you, you. Between the two, there is this structuring given, namely that the subjects are embodied. In effect, what happens at the level of the symbol happens in all living beings. What is present in *S* passes via the corporeal support of the subject in order to be realised, via a biological reality which establishes a division between the imaginary function of the living organism, of which the ego is one of the structured forms – we don't really have any cause for complaint – and the symbolic function which it is capable of filling and which gives it a preeminent position vis-à-vis the real.

To say that there is a neurosis, to say that there is a repressed, which never goes anywhere without a return ticket, is to say that something of the discourse going from *A* to *S* passes and yet at the same time doesn't pass.

What merits the name resistance is the fact that the ego isn't identical to the subject, and it is in the nature of the ego to integrate itself into the imaginary circuit which determines the interruptions of the fundamental discourse. It is this resistance that Freud emphasises when he says that every resistance stems from the organisation of the ego. For it is in so far as it is imaginary, and not simply in so far as it is carnal existence, that the ego is, in analysis, the mainspring of the interruptions of this discourse, which simply asks to be put into action, into speech, or into *Wiederholen* – it amounts to the same thing.

When I tell you that the only real resistance in analysis is the resistance of the analyst, that means that an analysis is conceivable only to the extent that the *a* is effaced. A certain subjective purification must be accomplished in analysis – otherwise, what is the point of all these ceremonials which we subject ourselves to? – in such a way that one can throughout the analytic experience, confuse the pole *a* with the pole *A*.

The analyst partakes of the radical nature of the Other, in so far as he is what is most inaccessible. From then on, and beginning at this point in time, what leaves the imaginary of the ego of the subject is in accordance not with this other to which he is accustomed, and who is just his partner, the person who is made so as to enter into his game, but precisely with this radical Other which is hidden from him. What is called transference happens very precisely between *A* and *m*, in so far as *a*, represented by the analyst, is lacking.

What is involved, as Freud says in an admirable way in this text, is an

Überlegenheit – which on this occasion is translated by *supériorité*,[5] but I suspect there is a play on words here, as what follows indicates – thanks to which the reality which appears in the analytic situation is recognised *immer*, always, *als Spiegelung* – an astonishing term – *as the mirage* of a certain forgotten past.[6] The term *Spiegel*, mirror, is there. From the moment the resistance of the imaginary function of the ego no longer exists, the *A* and the *m* can in some way come to an accord, communicate enough so that a certain isochronism is established between them, a certain simultaneous positivation, in relation to our triode lamp. The fundamental speech which goes from *A* to *S* here encounters a harmonic vibration, something which, far from interfering, allows its passage. One can even give this triode lamp its real role, which is often that of an amplifier, and say that the fundamental discourse – up until then censored – to use the best term – becomes clearer.

This progress is achieved by the effect of transference, which happens somewhere other than the repetitive tendency. What insists, what simply demands to pass through, takes place between *A* and *S*. Whereas transference takes place between *m* and *a*. And it is to the extent that the *m* learns little by little, if one may put it this way, to come to agree with the fundamental discourse, that it can be treated in the same way as the *A* is treated, that is little by little linked to the *S*.

This doesn't mean that an allegedly autonomous ego finds support in the ego of the analyst, as Loewenstein writes in a text I won't read you today, but which I meticulously selected, becoming a stronger and stronger ego. On the contrary, it means that the ego becomes what it wasn't, that it gets to the point where the subject is.

Don't, however, get the idea that the ego volatilises after an analysis – be it didactic or therapeutic, one doesn't go to heaven, disembodied and pure symbol.

All analytic experience is an experience of signification. One of the great objections which is made to us is the following – what catastrophe will come about if one reveals to the subject his reality, his *je-ne-sais-quoi*-drive, his homosexual life? Lord knows how much the moralists have to tell us under this heading. And yet it is nonetheless an unfounded and empty objection. Even admitting that one reveals to the subject some tendency which might well have been kept at bay by him forever, through I don't know what effort, what is at stake in analysis is not our revealing his reality to the subject. A certain conception of the analysis of resistances is to be traced, in fact, within this register. But the authentic experience of analysis is absolutely opposed to it – through the analysis the subject discovers his truth, that is to say the

[5] 'aloofness' in SE.

[6] GW XIII 17; Stud III 229; SE XVIII 19.

signification taken on in his particular destiny by those givens which are peculiar to him and which one can call his lot.

Human beings are born with all kinds of extremely heterogeneous dispositions. But whatever the fundamental lot is, the biological lot, what analysis reveals to the subject is its signification. This signification is a function of a certain speech, which is and which isn't the speech of the subject – this speech, he already receives it ready-made, he is its point of passage. I don't know if that is the original master word of the Book of Judgement in the Rabbinical tradition. We aren't searching that far off, we have more limited problems, but ones in which the terms of vocation and of calling have their full value.

If this speech received by the subject didn't exist, this speech which bears on the symbolic level, there would be no conflict with the imaginary, and each of us would purely and simply follow his inclination. Experience shows us that nothing of the sort happens. Freud never renounced an essential dualism as constitutive of the subject. This means nothing other than these intersections, I would like to pursue them.

The ego is inscribed in the imaginary. Everything pertaining to the ego is inscribed in imaginary tensions, like all the other libidinal tensions. Libido and the ego are on the same side. Narcissism is libidinal. The ego isn't a superior power, nor a pure spirit, nor an autonomous agency, nor a conflict-free sphere – as some dare to write – in which we could find some support. What kind of story is this? Do we have to exact from subjects their higher tendencies towards truth? What is this transcendent tendency towards sublimation? Freud repudiates it in the most formal way in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. He cannot find the slightest tendency towards progress in any of the concrete and historical manifestations of human functions, and this really has a value for the person who invented our method. All forms of life are as surprising, as miraculous, there is no tendency towards superior forms.

This is the point where we open out into the symbolic order, which isn't the libidinal order in which the ego is inscribed, along with all the drives. It tends beyond the pleasure principle, beyond the limits of life, and that is why Freud identifies it with the death instinct. Reread the text, and you'll see whether it seems to you worthy of being endorsed. The symbolic order is rejected by the libidinal order, which includes the whole of the domain of the imaginary, including the structure of the ego. And the death instinct is only the mask of the symbolic order, in so far – this is what Freud writes – as it is dumb, that is to say in so far as it hasn't been realised. As long as the symbolic recognition hasn't been instituted, by definition, the symbolic order is dumb.

The symbolic order is simultaneously non-being and insisting to be, that is what Freud has in mind when he talks about the death instinct as being what is most fundamental – a symbolic order in travail, in the process of coming, insisting on being realised.

29 June 1955

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THE PSYCHOSES 1955–1956

THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN

Book III

Edited by

Jacques-Alain Miller

Translated with Notes by

Russell Grigg

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JACQUES LACAN

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BOOK III

The Psychoses 1955–1956

TRANSLATED WITH NOTES BY

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

This is a translation of the seminar that Lacan delivered to the Société Française de Psychanalyse over the course of the academic year 1955–56. The original French text is the third in a series of Lacan's seminars, beginning in 1953, that is being edited by Jacques-Alain Miller.

I have been mindful of James Strachey's translations of Freud in the *Standard Edition*. On the whole it has been possible to avoid major divergences from Strachey, the two exceptions being to render *"investissement"* as "investment" rather than "cathexis" and *"pulsion"* as "drive" rather than "instinct." In this I follow the practice adopted by the translators of Seminars I and II and by Stuart Schneiderman in *Returning to Freud: Clinical Psychoanalysis in the School of Lacan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).

The translation of this seminar is faced with one further complication arising from the fact that it deals extensively with Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*. Schreber's terms have often been rendered differently in the English translation of the *Memoirs*, in the *Standard Edition* version of Freud's case history, and in Lacan's article, "The question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis," in *Ecrits: A Selection*. This has, on a very small number of occasions, required some explanation, which will be found in the footnotes.

I should add that I have diverged in two major ways from the translations of Seminars I and II.

First, the terms *"signification"* and *"sens,"* which appear in Seminars I and II as "signification" and "meaning" respectively, have been translated as "meaning" and "sense." I am following the practice of Stuart Schneiderman here, for essentially the same reason he gives: there seems little reason to resort to the archaism of the English "signification" when there are two common English terms that will do adequate service.

Secondly, the term *"méconnaissance"* is rendered as "misrecognition," instead of "failure to recognize" or "misunderstanding." The latter term has to be

reserved for *"malentendu,"* while there are contexts in which the first does not capture the appropriate meaning.

I have followed Seminars I and II in indicating the distinction, a significant one in the original, between *"moi"* and *"ego"* by putting "ego" in roman when *"moi"* appears in the original and in italics when *"ego"* has been used.

Finally, the numbers in the margin of this translation refer to the pagination of the French edition published by *Editions du Seuil* in 1981. It is hoped that this practice will assist those who, while needing to refer to the English edition, are in a position to consult the original.

I wish to thank Jacques-Alain Miller for the assistance and advice he gave me while I was preparing this translation. I am also grateful to the editor at W. W. Norton, Susan Barrows Munro, for her encouragement and patience in helping me to bring this long and sometimes difficult translation to publication.

Many very helpful comments were made by Kerry Murphy and Rosemary Sorensen, who both generously read an entire draft of the manuscript. I owe them gratitude for invaluable suggestions on ways to improve the style of the translation. Dominique Hecq, with her sensitivity to the idiom of both languages, gave me sound advice on a number of difficult points.

Finally, I would like to record my thanks to Deakin University for its support while I was engaged on this work.

Russell Grigg
Geelong, Australia
June 1992

ABBREVIATIONS

Mem	D. P. Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness,* translated and edited with introduction, notes, and discussion by Ida MacAlpine & Richard Hunter, with a new introduction by Samuel M. Weber, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988. Originally published as *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken,* Leipzig: Oswald Mutze, 1903. Page numbers refer to the pagination of the original German edition, noted in the margin of the English translation.
SE	Sigmund Freud, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (24 volumes), translated and edited by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson, London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis; New York: Norton, 1953–74.
GW	Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke* (18 volumes), Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag.
Sem	Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan,* Books I and II, New York: Norton, 1988.
E	Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits,* Paris: Seuil, 1966. Where there are two numbers, separated by a slash, /, the first number refers to the page number in the French edition, the second to the page number in *Ecrits: A Selection,* translated by Alan Sheridan, New York: Norton, 1977.

INTRODUCTION TO THE QUESTION OF THE PSYCHOSES

I

11

Introduction to the question of the psychoses

SCHIZOPHRENIA AND PARANOIA

M. DE CLÉRAMBAULT

THE MIRAGES OF UNDERSTANDING

FROM *VERNEINING* TO *VERWERFUNG*

PSYCHOSIS AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

This year the question of the psychoses begins.

I say the *question* because one can't speak straightaway of their *treatment,* as was announced in the initial notice, and still less of the treatment of psychosis *in Freud,* for he never spoke of it, except by allusion.

We shall start with Freud's theory and assess what it contributes to the issue, but we shall not fail to introduce the notions we have developed over the past years, nor to deal with all the problems that the psychoses raise for us *today.* Clinical and nosographic problems first. I've been thinking that all the benefit analysis might produce with respect to them hasn't yet been fully extracted. Problems of treatment, too, which our work for this year ought to lead into – this is our aim.

Thus it's not by chance that I initially gave what we shall finish with as our title. Let us say it was a lapsus, a significant lapsus.

1

I would like to stress one primary, self-evident truth – the least noticed as is always the case.

In what has been done, is done, and is now in the course of being done concerning treatment of the psychoses the schizophrenias are much more 12
readily explored than the paranoias, a much more lively interest is taken in them, and greater results are expected from this. Why then does paranoia, on the contrary, have a rather privileged position for Freudian doctrine – that of a knot, but also of a resistant nucleus?

It might take us a long time to answer that question, but it will remain just below the surface of our approach.

Of course, Freud wasn't unaware of schizophrenia. The movement involving this concept's development was contemporary with him. But while he recognized, admired, and even encouraged the work of the Zurich school and

put analytic theory into relation with what was being constructed around Bleuler, he kept his distance nevertheless. He was initially and essentially interested in paranoia. And, to give you straightaway a reference point that you can return to, I remind you that at the end of the observation on the Schreber case, which is his major text concerning the psychoses, Freud traces out a watershed, as it were, between paranoia on the one hand and on the other everything he would like, he says, to be called paraphrenia, which exactly covers the field of the schizophrenias.[1] This is a necessary reference point for the intelligibility of everything we shall subsequently have to say – for Freud the field of the psychoses divides in two.

What does the term *psychosis* cover in the field of psychiatry? Psychosis is not dementia. The psychoses, if you like – there is no reason to deny oneself the luxury of this word – correspond to what has always been called and legitimately continues to be called *madness*. This is the domain Freud divides in two. He did not go in for much more nosology than this on the subject of psychosis, but on this point he is quite clear, and given the status of its author we cannot neglect this distinction.

In this respect, as sometimes happens, Freud is not absolutely in step with his time. Is he way behind it? Is he way ahead of it? There lies the ambiguity. At first sight he is way behind it.

I can't recount to you here the history of paranoia since it made its first appearance with a psychiatrist disciple of Kant at the beginning of the nineteenth century,[2] but let me tell you that at its maximum extension in German psychiatry it covered almost all forms of madness – seventy percent of the ill in asylums bore the label of paranoia. Everything we call psychosis or madness was paranoia.

In France the word *paranoia*, at the time it was introduced into nosology – this was very late, a matter of some fifty years – was identified with some-
13 thing fundamentally different. A paranoiac – at least until the thesis of a certain Jacques Lacan attempted to stir up people's minds,[3] which was limited to a small circle, to the small circle that matters, which means that nobody talks of paranoiacs as they used to before – a paranoiac was a nasty person, an intolerant one, a bad-humored type, proud, mistrustful, irritable, and who overestimated himself. This feature formed the foundation of paranoia – when the paranoiac was far too paranoid, he would end up deluding. It was less a question of a conception than of a clinical picture, moreover a very fine one.

[1] "Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)," SE 12:75–76.

[2] R. A. Vogel is generally credited with having introduced the term into modern usage in 1764.

[3] Jacques Lacan, *De la psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports avec la personnalité*.

This is roughly where things stood in France, without my distorting anything, after the publication of M. Génil-Perrin's work on the paranoid constitution, which had spread the characterological notion of anomaly of the personality, essentially made up of what one may well describe – the book's style bears the mark of this inspiration – as the perverse structure of character.[4] Like all perverts, it sometimes happens that the paranoiac goes beyond the limits and falls into that frightful madness, the unbounded exaggeration of his unfortunate character.

That outlook can be described as psychological, psychologizing, or even as psychogenetic. All the formal references to an organic base, to temperament for example, don't change a thing – it's really a psychological genesis. Something is defined and assessed at a certain level, and its development follows uninterrupted with an autonomous coherence that is self-sufficient in its own field. This is why, in a word, it's a question of psychology, despite the author's own explicit rejection of this point of view.

In my thesis I tried to promote another view. I was certainly still a young psychiatrist then, and I had been introduced to psychiatry largely through the works, the direct teaching, and, I would even be so bold as to say, the intimacy of someone who played a very important role in French psychiatry of that period, M. de Clérambault, whose personality, action, and influence I call to mind in this introductory discussion.[5]

For those among you who have only an approximate knowledge of his work – and there must be some – M. de Clérambault is supposed to have been the fierce defender of an extreme organicist conception. That was certainly the explicit design of his theoretical statements. However, I do not believe they give a correct perspective – either on the influence of his personality and teaching or on the true range of his discoveries. 14

His work has, independently of its theoretical aims, a concrete clinical value – there are a considerable number of clinical syndromes that Clérambault located in a completely original manner and that have since then been

[4] See Georges Génil-Perrin, *Les Paranoïaques,* specially pt. 2, "La constitution paranoïaque."

[5] Gaëten Gatian de Clérambault (1872–1934), Psychiatrist-in-charge at the Special Infirmary for the Insane of the Paris Prefecture of Police from 1920 to 1934, sought to describe the psychoses on the basis of a common element, the *syndrome of mental automatism,* on the grounds that delusion underlies all the different forms in which psychosis appears. He claimed that the disturbances from which delusions stem, which he called *elementary phenomena,* are of purely organic origin; not being part of the subject's own thought processes, they impose themselves upon the subject's mind from without. These phenomena include thought-echoes, verbal enunciations of actions, and various forms of hallucination. See de Clérambault, "Psychoses à base d'automatisme."

In 1966 Lacan, describing de Clérambault as his "only master in psychiatry," observed that "his mechanistic ideology . . . seems to me, in its grasp of the subjective text, to be closer to what can be constructed as a structural analysis than does any other clinical effort in French psychiatry." "De nos antécédents," E, 65.

integrated into the heritage of psychiatric experience. He made precious, original contributions which have never been taken up since. I have in mind his studies on psychosis caused by toxic substances. In a word, in the realm of the psychoses Clérambault remains absolutely indispensable.

The notion of mental automatism is apparently brought into focus in Clérambault's work and teaching by his concern to demonstrate the fundamentally *anideational* [*anidéique*], as he put it, character of the phenomena that manifest themselves in the development of psychosis. What this means is *that which doesn't correspond to a train of thought,* but unfortunately this doesn't make much more sense than the master's discourse does. This reference point is supposedly located, then, in terms of being understandable. The initial reference to understanding serves to decide exactly what it is that introduces a breach and appears as unintelligible.

Here we have an assumption that it would be an exaggeration to describe as naive, since surely none is more commonly held – and still, I fear, by you, or at least many among you. The major progress in psychiatry since the introduction of this movement of investigation called psychoanalysis has consisted, or so it's believed, in restoring meaning to the chain of phenomena. This is not false in itself. But what is false is to imagine that the sense in question is what we understand. What we are supposed to have learned once again, as is thought everywhere in medical quarters, the expression of psychiatrists' *sensus commune,* is to understand patients. This is a pure mirage.

The notion of understanding has a very clear meaning. It's a source that, under the name of *relation of understanding,* Jaspers has made the pivot of all so-called general psychopathology.[6] It consists in thinking that some things are self-evident, that, for example, when someone is sad it's because he doesn't have what his heart desires. Nothing could be more false—there are people who have all their heart desires and are still sad. Sadness is a passion of quite another color.

I would like to insist on this. When you give a child a smack, well! it's understandable that he cries – without anybody's reflecting that it's not at all obligatory that he should cry. I remember a small boy who whenever he got a smack used to ask – *Was that a pat or a slap?* If he was told it was a slap he cried, that belonged to the conventions, to the rules of the moment, and if it was a pat he was delighted. But this isn't the end of the matter. When one gets a smack there are many other ways of responding than by crying. One can return it in kind, or else turn the other cheek, or one can also say – *Hit me, but listen!* A great variety of possibilities offer themselves, which are

[6] See Karl Jaspers, "Meaningful Connections," *"Verständliche Zusammenhänge,"* chap. 5 of his *General Psychopathology.*

neglected in the notion of relation of understanding as it's spelled out by M. Jaspers.

Before next time you can refer to his chapter entitled "Meaningful Connections." Its inconsistencies soon appear – this is the value of a sustained discourse.

Understanding is evoked only as an ideal relation. As soon as one tries to get close to it, it becomes, properly speaking, ungraspable. The examples that Jaspers takes as the most apparent – his reference points, with which he very quickly and inevitably confuses the notion itself – are ideal references. But what is striking is that in his own text he cannot, despite all the art he puts into sustaining this mirage, avoid giving precisely the examples that have always been refuted by the facts. For example, since suicide demonstrates a tendency towards decline, towards death, it seems that each and every one of us could say – but only if one sets out to get us to say it – that it more readily takes place at the decline of nature, that is during autumn. Yet it has been known for a long time that many more people commit suicide in spring. That is neither more nor less understandable. Surprise at there being more suicides in spring than autumn can only be based on this inconsistent mirage called the relation of understanding – as if there were anything that could ever be grasped in this order!

One is led to think then that psychogenesis is to be identified with the reintroduction of this celebrated relation into a relationship with the object of psychiatry. This is in fact very difficult to conceive, because it's literally inconceivable but, like all things that are not well grasped, or captured in a real concept, it remains a latent assumption, one that has been latent throughout all the changes in the complexion of psychiatry over the last thirty years. Well, if that is what psychogenesis is, I say – because I think that most of you are by now capable of grasping it, after two years of teaching on the symbolic, the imaginary and the real, and I also say it for those who aren't yet up to it – that the great secret of psychoanalysis is that there is no psychogenesis. If that is what psychogenesis is, there is precisely nothing that could be further from psychoanalysis in its whole development, its entire 16
inspiration and its mainspring, in everything it has contributed, everything it has been able to confirm for us in anything we have established.

Another way of expressing things, one that goes much further, is to say that the psychological is, if we try to grasp it as firmly as possible, the ethological, that is, the whole of the biological individual's behavior in relation to his natural environment. There you have a legitimate definition of psychology. There you have an order of real relations, an objectifiable thing, a field with quite adequately defined boundaries. But to constitute an object of science, one must go a little bit further. It has to be said of human psychology what Voltaire used to say about natural history, which was that it's not as

natural as all that and that, frankly, nothing could be more anti-natural.[7] Everything that in human behavior belongs to the psychological order is subject to such profound anomalies and constantly presents such obvious paradoxes that the problem arises of knowing what needs to be introduced in order for a cat to find its kittens.

If one forgets the landscape, the essential mainspring, of psychoanalysis, one comes back – which is naturally the constant, daily-observed tendency of psychoanalysts – to all sorts of myths formed ages ago. How long ago remains to be defined, but they date more or less from the end of the eighteenth century. The myth of unity of the personality, the myth of synthesis, of superior and inferior functions, confusion about automatism, all these types of organization of the objective field constantly reveal cracks, tears and rents, negation of the facts, and misrecognition of the most immediate experience.

Make no mistake, though. I'm not going to fall into the myth of immediate experience that forms the basis of what people call existential psychology or even existential psychoanalysis. Immediate experience is no better placed to arrest or captivate us than in any other science. In no way is it the measure of the development that we must ultimately reach. Freud's teaching, which in this respect is in total agreement with what takes place in the rest of the scientific domain – however differently we have to conceive it from our own myth – brings resources into play that are beyond immediate experience and cannot be grasped in any tangible fashion. In psychoanalysis, as in physics, it's not the property of color as sensed and differentiated by direct experience that holds our attention. It's something which is behind this, and which conditions it.

17 Freudian experience is in no way preconceptual. It's not a pure experience, but one that is well and truly structured by something artificial, the analytic relation, as it's constituted by what the subject recounts to the doctor and by what the doctor does with it. It's by setting out from this initial mode of operation that everything gets worked out.

Throughout this reminder you must have already recognized the three orders that I'm forever harping on as so necessary to understanding anything at all about analytic experience – that is, the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real.

You saw the symbolic appear just now when I alluded, and from two different directions, to what is beyond all understanding, which all understanding is inserted into, and which exercises such an obviously disruptive influence over human and interhuman relationships.

You have also seen the imaginary indicated in the reference I made to

[7] On hearing someone praise Buffon's monumental work, *L'histoire naturelle*, Voltaire is said to have exclaimed, "Not so natural as all that!"

animal ethology, that is to the captivating or ensnaring forms that constitute the rails upon which animal behavior is conducted towards it natural aims. M. Piéron, who for us doesn't have an odor of sanctity, called one of his books *Sensation, the Guide to Life*.[8] It's a very pretty title, but I don't know that he applies himself to sensation as much as he says, and the book's contents certainly don't confirm this. What is correct in his approach is that the imaginary is surely the guide to life for the whole animal domain. While the image equally plays a capital role in our own domain, this role is completely taken up and caught up within, remolded and reanimated by, the symbolic order. The image is always more or less integrated into this order, which, I remind you, is defined in man by its property of organized structure.

What difference is there between what belongs to the imaginary or real orders and what belongs to the symbolic order? In the imaginary or real orders we always have more and less, a threshold, a margin, continuity. In the symbolic order every element has value through being opposed to another.

Take an example from the domain that we are beginning to explore.

One of our psychotics tells us how foreign the world is which he entered some time ago. Everything has become a sign for him. Not only is he spied upon, observed, watched over, not only do people speak to, point, look, and wink at him, but all this – you will see the ambiguity straightaway – invades the field of real, inanimate, nonhuman objects. Let us look at this a bit more closely. If he encounters a red car in the street – a car is not a natural object – it's not for nothing, he will say, that it went past at that very moment.

Let us inquire into this delusional intuition. The car has a meaning, but 18
the subject is very often incapable of saying what it is. Is it favorable? Is it threatening? Surely there is some reason for the car's being there. Of this, the most undifferentiated phenomenon there is, we can form three completely different conceptions.

We can consider the thing from the angle of an aberration of perception. Don't think we are currently so far removed from this. Not so long ago this was the level at which the question was raised concerning what a madman's rudimentary experience was. He might just be color blind and see red as green and *vice versa*. Perhaps he can't distinguish colors.

Again, we can consider the encounter with the red car along the lines of what happens when the robin redbreast, encountering its mate, displays the breast that gives it its name. It has been demonstrated that its dress corresponds to the guarding of the limit of its territory and that the encounter alone occasions a certain form of behavior towards its adversary. Here the red has an imaginary function which, precisely in the order of relations of understanding, can be translated into the fact that for the subject this red

[8] Henri Piéron, *The Sensations: Their Functions, Processes and Mechanisms.*

will have made him see red and seemed to him to bear within it the expressive and immediate character of hostility or anger.

Finally, we can understand the red car within the symbolic order, namely in the way one understands the color red in a game of cards, that is, as opposed to black, as being a part of an already organized language.

There you have the three registers distinguished from one another, and also distinguished from one another are the three planes on which our so-called understanding of the elementary phenomenon can be undertaken.

2

The novelty of what Freud introduced in investigating paranoia is even more dazzling than it is anywhere else – perhaps because it's more localized and breaks more with contemporary discoveries on psychosis. Here we see Freud proceed from the very first with an audacity that has the character of an absolute beginning.

To be sure, the *Traumdeutung* [*The Interpretation of Dreams*] is a creation, also. Despite its being said that interest had already been taken in the meaning of dreams, this had absolutely nothing to do with the pioneering work
19 that is performed before our eyes. This doesn't finish just with the formula that the dream tells you something, for the only thing that interests Freud is the elaboration through which the dream says this something – it says it in the same way as one speaks. No one had ever seen that before. People had been able to notice that dreams have a meaning, that something could be read in them, but not that dreams talk.

But let's allow that Freud's approach to the dream may have been prepared for by the artless practices that preceded his own attempt. By contrast there has never been anything comparable to the manner in which he proceeds with Schreber. What does he do? He takes the book of a paranoiac which, at the time he is writing his own work, he blithely recommends that one read – *do not fail to read him before reading me* – and gives it a Champollion-like decipherment. He deciphers it in the way hieroglyphics are deciphered.

Of all the literary productions of the type that plead a cause, of all the communications of those who, having gone beyond the limits, have spoken of the psychotic's alien experience, Schreber's work is certainly one of the most remarkable. Here we have an exceptional encounter between the genius of Freud and a unique book.

I said *genius*. Yes, there is a true stroke of genius on Freud's part that owes nothing to any intuitive insight – it's the genius of the linguist who sees the same sign appear several times in a text, begins from the idea that this must mean something, and manages to stand all the signs of this language right side up again. The prodigious identification that Freud makes between the

birds of the sky and maidens is a part of this phenomenon – it's a remarkable hypothesis, which enables the entire chain of the text to be reconstituted, the famous *fundamental language* that Schreber talks about. More clearly than anywhere else, analytic interpretation is here demonstrated to be symbolic, in the structured sense of the term.

This translation is remarkable indeed. But, be careful, it leaves the fields of the psychoses and the neuroses both on the same level. If the application of the analytic method yielded no more than a symbolic-order reading, it would show itself incapable of explaining the distinction between the two fields. It's therefore outside this dimension that the problems forming the object of our research this year arise.

Since discourse, the lunatic's printed discourse, is at issue, it's therefore manifest that we are in the symbolic order. Now, what is the actual material of this discourse? At what level does the sense translated by Freud unfold? From what are the naming elements of this discourse borrowed? Generally 20
speaking the raw material is his own body.

In man the relation to one's own body characterizes, in the final analysis, the restricted, but really irreducible, field of the imaginary. If there is anything in man that corresponds to the imaginary function as it operates in animals, it's everything that, in a fundamental manner but one that is always barely graspable, relates him to the general form of his body at a point called an erogenous zone. Only analytic experience has been able to seize this relationship, always at the limit of the symbolic, at its mainspring.

This is what the symbolic analysis of the Schreber case demonstrates for us. It's only by entering through the symbolic that we can successfully make any inroads into the case.

3

The questions that arise touch upon exactly all the categories effective in our field of operation.

It's classically said that in psychosis the unconscious is at the surface, conscious. This is even why articulating it doesn't seem to have much effect. Within this perspective, quite instructive in itself, we can observe first of all that it's not purely and simply, as Freud always emphasized, from the negative trait of being an *Unbewusst*, a nonconscious, that the unconscious derives its efficacity. Translating Freud, we say – the unconscious is a language. Its being articulated doesn't imply its recognition, though. The proof of this is that everything proceeds as if Freud were translating a foreign language, even carving it up and reassembling it. The subject is, with respect to his own language, quite simply in the same position as Freud. If it's ever possible for

someone to speak in a language that he is totally ignorant of, we can say that the psychotic subject is ignorant of the language he speaks.

Is this a satisfactory metaphor? Certainly not. The question is not so much why this unconscious, which is articulated at ground level, remains excluded for the subject, not adopted by him – but why it appears in the real.

I hope that there are enough of you who remember the commentary that M. Jean Hyppolite made for us here on *Die Verneinung*,[9] and I regret his absence this morning, which prevents me from being certain I'm not distorting the terms he uncovered in it.

21 What emerged clearly from his analysis of this striking text is that in what is unconscious not only is everything repressed, that is, misrecognized by the subject after having been verbalized, but that behind the process of verbalization there must be admitted a primordial *Bejahung*, an admission in the sense of the symbolic, which can itself be wanting. This point is borne out by other texts, and especially by a passage that is as explicit as can be where Freud admits a phenomenon of exclusion for which the term *Verwerfung* appears valid and from which *Verneinung*, produced at a much later stage, is distinguished. It can happen that a subject refuses access to his symbolic world to something that he has nevertheless experienced, which in this case is nothing other than the threat of castration. The subject's entire subsequent development shows that he wants to know nothing about it, Freud literally says, *in the sense of the repressed*.[10]

What comes under the effect of repression returns, for repression and the return of the repressed are just the two sides of the same coin. The repressed is always there, expressed in a perfectly articulate manner in symptoms and a host of other phenomena. By contrast, what falls under the effect of *Verwerfung* has a completely different destiny.

It's not pointless in this respect for me to remind you of the comparison I made last year between certain symbolic order phenomena and what happens in those machines, in the modern sense of the word, that do not quite talk yet but any day now will. One feeds figures into them and waits for them to give what would perhaps take us 100,000 years to calculate. But we can only introduce things into the circuit if we respect the machine's own rhythm –

[9] See "Introduction and Reply to Jean Hyppolite's Presentation of Freud's *Verneinung*," Sem I:52–66; and "A Spoken Commentary on Freud's *Verneinung* by Jean Hyppolite," app. to Sem I:289–97.

[10] "When I speak of his having rejected it, the first meaning of the phrase is that he would have nothing to do with it, in the sense of having repressed it. This really involved no judgement upon the question of its existence, but it was the same as if it did not exist." "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," SE 17:84. The German text reads, "Wenn ich gesagt habe, dass er von ihr nichts wissen wollte im Sinne der Verdrängung. Damit war eigentlich kein Urteil über ihre Existenz gefällt, aber es war so gut, als ob sie nicht existierte." GW 12:117.

otherwise they won't go in and can't enter the circuit. We can re-use the same image. Only it also happens that whatever is refused in the symbolic order, in the sense of *Verwerfung*, reappears in the real.

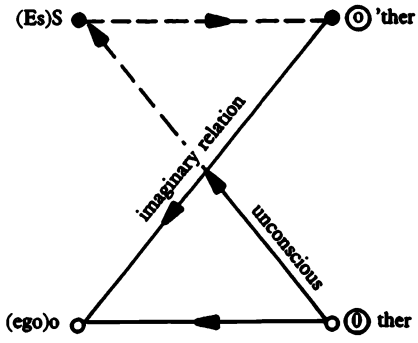
Freud's text is free of ambiguity on this point. It concerns the Wolf Man, as you know, who gives evidence of psychotic tendencies and qualities, as is demonstrated by the brief paranoia he enters between the end of Freud's treatment and when he is taken under observation again. Well, the fact that he has rejected all means of access to castration, which is nevertheless apparent in his conduct, all access to the register of the symbolic function, the fact that any assumption of castration by an *I* has become impossible for him, has the closest of links with his having had a brief hallucination in childhood, of which he recounts extremely precise details.

The scene is as follows. While playing with his knife he cut his finger, 22
which was left hanging on by only a small piece of skin. The subject recounted this episode in a style traced from lived experience. All temporal reference points seem to have disappeared. Then he sat on a bench, beside his nurse, who was precisely the confidant of his early experiences, and he didn't dare mention it to her. How significant is that suspension of all possible speech! – and precisely with the person he used to recount everything to, and especially things of that order! There is an abyss here, a temporal submersion, a rupture in experience, following which it turns out that he has nothing at all wrong with him, it's all over, let's drop the subject. The relation that Freud establishes between this phenomenon and this very special *knowing nothing of the thing, even in the sense of the repressed* expressed in this text translates as this – what is refused in the symbolic order re-emerges in the real.

There is a close relation between, on the one hand, negation and the reappearance in the purely intellectual order of what has not been integrated by the subject and, on the other, *Verwerfung* and hallucination, that is, the reappearance in the real of what the subject has refused. Here we have a range, a series, of relations.

What is involved in a hallucinatory phenomenon? This phenomenon has its own source in what we shall provisionally call the subject's history in the symbolic. I don't know whether I shall retain this combination of terms, because all history is by definition symbolic, but let's keep to this formula for the moment. The essential distinction is this – the origin of the neurotic repressed is not situated at the same level of history in the symbolic as that of the repressed involved in psychosis, even if there exists the closest of relations between their contents. This distinction alone provides a key that allows the problem to be raised in a much simpler fashion than up till now.

The same thing goes for the diagram from last year concerning verbal hallucination:



23 Our schema, I remind you, represents the interruption of full speech between the subject and the Other and its detour through the two egos, *o* and *o'*, and their imaginary relations. Here it indicates triplicity in the subject, which overlaps the fact that it's the subject's ego that normally speaks to another, and of the subject, the subject S in the third person. Aristotle pointed out that one must not say that man thinks, but that he thinks with his soul. Similarly, I say that the subject speaks *to himself with* his ego.

However, in the normal subject, speaking to oneself with one's ego can never be made fully explicit. One's relationship to the ego is fundamentally ambiguous, one's assumption of the ego always revocable. In the psychotic subject on the other hand certain elementary phenomena, and in particular hallucinations, which are their most characteristic form, show us the subject completely identified either with his ego, with which he speaks, or with the ego assumed entirely along instrumental lines. It's he who speaks of him, the subject, the S, in the two equivocal senses of the term, the initial S and the German *Es*.[11] This is what presents itself in the phenomenon of verbal hallucination. The moment the hallucination appears in the real, that is, accompanied by the sense of reality, which is the elementary phenomenon's basic feature, the subject literally speaks with his ego, and it's as if a third party, his lining, were speaking and commenting on his activity.

This is where our attempt to situate the diverse forms of psychosis in relation to the three registers of the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real will lead this year. It will enable us to get to the ultimate source of the function to give to the ego in the cure. The question of the object relation lies on the horizon.

The current handling of the object relation in the context of an analytic relation conceived as dual is founded on a misrecognition of the autonomy of

[11] *"Das Es"* is Freud's term for the id.

the symbolic order. This automatically introduces a confusion between the imaginary and real levels. But it doesn't eliminate the symbolic relation however, since we continue talking and, indeed, do nothing else. But it results from this misrecognition that what in the subject calls for recognition on the appropriate level of authentic symbolic exchange – which is not so easy to attain since it's always interfered with – is replaced by a recognition of the imaginary, of fantasy. Thus to authenticate everything of the order of the imaginary in the subject is properly speaking to make analysis the anteroom of madness, and we can only admire the fact that this doesn't lead to a deeper alienation – no doubt this indicates sufficiently that to be mad some predisposition, if not some precondition, is necessary.

In Vienna a charming young man to whom I was trying to explain a few 24
minor details asked me whether or not I believed that the psychoses were organic, so I said to him that the question was totally out of date, that for a very long time I had been making no distinction between psychology and physiology, and that, surely, *nobody goes mad through wanting to,* as I had stuck up on the wall of my medical quarters in those former, slightly archaic times.[12] It remains true though that we must attribute the well-known cases of fairly rapid onset of more or less persistent and sometimes lasting delusion to a certain way of handling the analytic relation, which consists in authenticating the imaginary, in substituting recognition on the imaginary level for recognition on the symbolic level.

The fact that an analysis can, right from its first stages, trigger a psychosis is well known, but no one has ever explained why. It's obviously a function of the subject's disposition, but also of an imprudent handling of the object relation.

I believe that today I have done nothing but put before you the interest there is in what we are going to study.

We shall find it useful to investigate paranoia. However thankless and arid this may be for us, it involves purifying, elaborating, and applying Freudian notions, and therefore also involves our training in analysis. I hope I have made you feel how it is that this conceptual elaboration can have the most direct effect on the ways we shall think, or be careful not to think, what our daily experience is and must be.

16 November 1955

[12] Lacan had recently been to Vienna, where, on 7 November 1955, he gave a lecture to the Neuro-Psychiatric Clinic of Vienna. This lecture later appeared in expanded form as "The Freudian Thing, or the Meaning of the Return to Freud in Psychoanalysis" in E, 401–36/114–45. See below, app. to chap. 5, 71.

25

II

The meaning of delusion

CRITIQUE OF KRAEPELIN

DIALECTICAL INERTIA

SÉGLAS AND PSYCHOMOTOR HALLUCINATION

PRESIDENT SCHREBER

The more one studies the history of the notion of paranoia, the more significant it seems and the more one appreciates the lesson that can be drawn from the progress, or lack of progress – whichever you like – that characterizes the psychiatric movement.

1

No notion is in the end more paradoxical. If I took care last time to put madness in the foreground, it was because it's quite possible to say that with the word *paranoia* authors have displayed all the ambiguity present in the use of the old term *madness*, which is the fundamental, common term.

The term doesn't date from yesterday, nor even from the birth of psychiatry. Without giving way to a facile deployment of erudition, I shall simply remind you that reference to madness has always been part of the so-called language of conventional wisdom. In this respect, the celebrated *Praise of Folly*[1] retains all its value for having identified it with normal human behavior – although this latter expression was not in use at that time. What was then said in the language of philosophers, between philosophers, eventually ended up being taken seriously and literally – a turning point that took place with Pascal, who formulated, with grave and meditative emphasis, that there is undoubtedly a necessary madness, that it would be another form of madness not to be mad with the madness of everybody.[2]

26 These reminders aren't useless, when you look at the paradoxes implicit in the premises of the theorists. It might be said that until Freud madness had been reduced to a number of modes of behavior, of patterns,[3] while others

[1] Desiderius Erasmus, *Praise of Folly and Other Writings*.

[2] "Les hommes sont si nécessairement fous que ce serait être fou par un autre tour de folie de n'être pas fou." "Men are so necessarily mad that not to be mad would be another form of madness." *Pensées*, section 6, no. 414.

[3] In English in the original.

thought of judging everybody's behavior in this way. In the end the difference, pattern for pattern, isn't obvious. The emphasis has never been fully placed where it would enable an image to be formed of what normal, or even understandable, conduct is and how properly paranoid conduct may be distinguished from it.

Let us remain at the level of definitions. The dissection of paranoia was incontestably much more extensive during the whole nineteenth century than it has been since the end of the last century, that is around 1899, at the time of the fourth or fifth edition of *Kraepelin*.[4] For a very long time Kraepelin remained attached to the vague notion that on the whole the man of experience knows, by a sort of sense, how to recognize natural signs. The true medical gift is to be able to perceive the signs that correctly dissect reality. It was only in 1899 that he introduced a finer subdivision. He brings the old paranoias back within the framework of *dementia praecox* by creating the paranoid sector and he puts forward quite an interesting definition of paranoia, distinguishing it from other modes of paranoid delusions with which it had until then been confused.

Paranoia is distinguished from the others because it is characterized by the gradual development of internal causes and according to a progressive evolution of a stable delusional system that is impossible to disturb and establishes itself with total preservation of clarity and order in thought, will, and action.[5]

This definition, coming as it does from the hand of an eminent clinician, is remarkable in that point by point it contradicts all clinical material. There isn't a word of truth in it.

Its development isn't gradual, there are always surges and phases. It seems to me, but I'm not absolutely sure of this, that it was I who introduced the notion of fertile moment. This fertile moment is always visible at the beginning of a paranoia. There is always a break in what Kraepelin goes on to call the progressive evolution of a delusion dependent on internal causes. It's obvious that the evolution of a paranoia can't be limited to internal causes. To be convinced of this one only has to go to the chapter "Aetiology" of his textbook and also read the contemporary authors, Sérieux and Capgras, whose work dates from five years later.[6] When one looks for the triggering causes of a paranoia, one always observes, with the required question mark, an emotional element in the subject's life, a life crisis that in fact does involve his

[4] The fifth edition of Emil Kraepelin's textbook, *Psychiatrie: Ein Lehrbuch für Studirende und Aerzte* appeared in 1896 and the sixth in 1899. A translation of the seventh (1903–04) edition, *Clinical Psychiatry*, was published in 1907.

[5] "Paranoia is a chronic progressive psychosis occurring mostly in early adult life, characterized by the gradual development of a stable progressive system of delusions, without marked mental deterioration, clouding of consciousness, or disorder of thought, will, or conduct." *Clinical Psychiatry*, 423.

[6] *Clinical Psychiatry*, 423–24; Paul Sérieux and J. Capgras, *Les folies raisonnantes: le délire d'interprétation.*

27 external relationships, and it would be astonishing were one not led to do this with respect to a delusion that is essentially characterized as a delusion of reference [*délire de relation*] – the term isn't Kretschmer's but Wernicke's.[7]

I read – . . . *progressive evolution of a stable delusional system that is impossible to disturb* . . . Nothing could be more false – the delusional system varies, whether it has been disturbed or not. As a matter of fact this question seems secondary to me. The variation comes from interpsychology, from external interventions, from the preservation or disruption of a certain orderliness in the world around the patient. He is very far indeed from not taking this into account and seeks, over the course of his delusion's evolution, to incorporate these elements into the composition of his delusion.

. . . *which establishes itself with total preservation of clarity and order in thought, will, and action.* Sure. But it's a question of knowing what clarity and order are. While something meriting these names can be discovered in the account the subject gives of his delusion, it still needs to be stated what this means, and this will by its very nature call into question the notions concerned. As for thought, will, and action, we are here to attempt to define them in terms of a number of specific forms of behavior, one of which is madness, rather than treat them as acquired notions at the outset. To us it seems that academic psychology has to be recast before it's capable of yielding concepts rigorous enough to be exchanged, at least at the level of our experience.

What is the ambiguity that surrounds the notion of paranoia due to? To many things, and perhaps to an inadequate clinical subdivision. I think that the psychiatrists among you have enough knowledge of the different clinical types to know for example that an interpretation delusion [*délire d'interprétation*] isn't at all the same thing as a litigious delusion [*délire de revendication*]. Equally there is every reason to distinguish between paranoid psychoses and passional psychoses, a difference that has been admirably emphasized by the work of my master, de Clérambault, whose function, role, personality, and doctrine I began pointing out to you last time.[8] It's precisely at the level of psychological distinctions that his work is the most significant. Does this mean that the clinical types have to be distributed more widely, that we have in some way to break them up? I do not believe so. The problem that arises for us bears on the framework of paranoia as a whole.

A century of clinical work has always just drifted around the problem. Every time psychiatry has made a bit of progress, advanced slightly, it has

[7] Ernst Kretschmer (1888–1964), professor of psychiatry at the University of Marburg. Carl Wernicke (1848–1905), psychiatrist and neurologist, noted for his work on aphasia.

[8] See de Clérambault, "Les délires passionnels; érotomanie, revendication, jalousie," where the author distinguishes between interpretation delusions, which are based on the paranoid character, and passional delusions, which comprise delusions of demands, delusions of jealousy, and erotomaniacal delusions.

also lost the ground it has won through its very manner of conceptualizing what is immediately accessible to observation. Nowhere is the contradiction between observation and theorization more apparent. It can almost be said that there is no more apparent and visible discourse of madness than the psychiatrist's – and precisely on the subject of paranoia. 28

There is something here that, it seems to me, goes straight to the heart of the problem. If you read for example the work I wrote on paranoid psychosis, you will see that I emphasize what I call, borrowing the term from my master de Clérambault, the elementary phenomena and that I try to show how radically different these phenomena are in relation to what can be drawn from what he calls ideational deduction, that is, from what is understandable by everybody.[9]

Ever since that period I have strongly emphasized that the elementary phenomena are no more elementary than what underlies the entire construction of a delusion. They are as elementary as a leaf is in relation to the plant, in which a certain detail can be seen of the way in which the veins overlap and insert into one another – there is something common to the whole plant that is reproduced in certain of the forms that make it up. Similarly, analogous structures can be found at the level of the composition, motivation, and thematization of a delusion and at the level of the elementary phenomenon. In other words, it's always the same structuring force, as it were, at work in a delusion, whether it's the whole or one of its parts that is under consideration.

What is important isn't that the elementary phenomenon should be an initial nucleus, a parasitic point as de Clérambault used to say, inside the personality, around which the subject supposedly constructs something, a fibrous reaction destined to envelop and enclose it in a cyst, and at the same time to integrate it, that is to explain it, as is often said. A delusion isn't deduced. It reproduces its same constitutive force. It, too, is an elementary phenomenon. This means that here the notion of element is to be taken in no other way than as structure, differentiated structure, irreducible to anything other than itself.

The source of this structure has been so profoundly misrecognized that the whole discourse on paranoia I was talking about before bears the mark of that misrecognition. You can test this while reading Freud, or almost any author – you will find pages, sometimes entire chapters, on paranoia. Take them out of their context, read them out loud, and you will see the most wonderful descriptions of the behavior of everyone. It was touch and go whether what I read out loud before from Kraepelin's definition of paranoia defined normal behavior. You will find this paradox time and again, and even among analyst 29

[9] See *Psychose paranoïaque*, 207–17.

authors, precisely when they put themselves on the level of what a while ago I called the pattern – a term whose domination of analytic theory is recent, but which has nonetheless been there potentially for a very long time.

To prepare for today's meeting I was re-reading an already old article, from 1908, in which Abraham describes the behavior of a case of dementia praecox and his so-called lack of affectivity, starting with his relationship to objects.[10] There he was for months on end, heaping up, stone by stone, the crude rocks that for him were affected with the greatest good. Now, because he has stacked them up on a plank, the plank breaks, there's a great din in the room, everything is swept out, and the character who seemed to attach such importance to these rocks doesn't pay the slightest bit of attention to what is going on, doesn't raise the slightest protest before the general evacuation of the objects of his desires. He simply starts again, accumulating others. And that is dementia praecox.

It is tempting to make a fable of this little apologue, one that would show that this is what we all do all the time. I should go even further – to accumulate a stack of things without value, to have to consider them lost at a moment's notice and start again is a good sign. Indeed, if the subject were to remain attached to what he loses, not being able to bear being deprived of it, it could be said that here you have a case of the overvaluation of objects.

These supposedly conclusive cases are so completely ambiguous that one wonders how it's possible to maintain the illusion for one second, unless through a sort of eclipse of the critical sense that seems to seize all readers as soon as they open a technical work, specially where our experience and profession are concerned.

It's surprising that the remark I made last time, that the understandable is an ever-fleeting and elusive term, is never assessed as being a lesson of prime importance, as an obligatory formulation at the threshold of the clinical. Begin by thinking you don't understand. Start from the idea of a fundamental misunderstanding. This is an initial attitude, failing which there is really no reason why you should not understand anything and everything. One author presents certain behavior as indicating a lack of affectivity in a certain context; for another it will be the contrary. Starting one's work again after having acknowledged its loss may be understood in completely opposite senses. Appeal is constantly made to notions that are thought to be commonly accepted, while they are not commonly accepted at all.

This is the point I wanted to get to – the difficulty of addressing the prob-
30 lem of paranoia arises precisely because it's situated on the plane of understanding.

[10] Karl Abraham, "The Psycho-Sexual Differences between Hysteria and Dementia Praecox."

The irreducible elementary phenomenon here is at the level of interpretation.

2

Let's return to the example we took last time.

We have, then, a subject for whom the world has begun to take on a meaning. What does this mean? For some time he has been prey to strange phenomena that consist in his noticing things going on in the street. But what things? If you question him you will see that some points remain mysterious to him while he will express himself about others. In other words, he symbolizes what is happening in terms of meaning. Very often he doesn't know, if you look closely, whether things are favorable or unfavorable towards him, but he looks for what is revealed by the way his counterparts act, or by some observed feature in the world, in this world which is never purely and simply inhuman since it's man-made. In discussing the red car I was attempting, with respect to this, to show you the different import the color red can have, according as its perceptive, imaginary, or symbolic value is considered. In normal behavior, too, features that have until then been neutral can take on value.

What is the subject ultimately saying, specially at a certain period of his delusion? That there is meaning. What meaning he doesn't know, but it comes to the foreground, it asserts itself, and for him it's perfectly understandable. And it's precisely because it's situated at the level of understanding as an incomprehensible phenomenon, as it were, that paranoia is so difficult for us to grasp and, also, of such great interest.

What has made it possible here to speak of reasonable madness, of the preservation of clarity, order, and will, is the feeling that, however far into the phenomenon we go, we remain in the realm of the understandable. Even when what one understands can't even be articulated, named, or inserted by the subject into a context that makes it clear, it's already situated at the level of understanding. It's a question of things that in themselves already make themselves understood. And by virtue of this fact we ourselves feel that we are within reach of understanding. This is where the illusion starts to emerge 31
– since it's a question of understanding, we understand. Well, no, precisely not.

Someone once pointed this out, but he didn't go beyond this basic remark. It was Charles Blondel, who in his book on the troubled conscience observed that psychopathologies characteristically deceive the understanding.[11] It's a valuable work, even though Blondel has obstinately refused to understand

[11] Charles Blondel, *The Troubled Conscience and the Insane Mind.*

anything of the subsequent development of ideas. This is nevertheless an appropriate point at which to take the problem up again – it's always understandable.

You will observe in the training we give to our students that this is always a good place to stop them. It's always at the point where they have understood, where they have rushed in to fill the case in with understanding, that they have missed the interpretation that it's appropriate to make or not to make. This is generally naively expressed in the expression – *This is what the subject meant.* How do you know? What is certain is that he didn't say it. And in most cases, on hearing what he did say, it appears that at the very least a question mark could have been raised which alone would have been sufficient for the valid interpretation, or at least for the beginnings of it.

Let me now give you an idea of the point on which this discourse is converging. Whether some moment in the subject's perception, in his delusional deduction, in his explanation of himself, or in his dialogue with you is more or less understandable isn't what is important. At some of these places something may occur that appears to be characterized by the fact that there is indeed a completely understandable kernel, if you really want to hold to this. Whether there is or not, is of absolutely no interest at all. What, on the contrary, is altogether striking is that it's inaccessible, inert, and stagnant with respect to any dialectic.

Take elementary interpretation. To be sure, this comprises an element of meaning, but it's a repetitive one, it proceeds by reiteration. Sometimes the subject does elaborate on this element, but what is certain is that it will remain, at least for a while, being constantly repeated with the one interrogative sign that is always involved, without any answer, any attempt to integrate it into a dialogue, ever being made. The phenomenon is closed to all dialectical composition.

Take what is known as passional psychosis, which seems so much closer to what is called normal. If in this case the prevalence of litigiousness is stressed, it's because the subject can't come to terms with a certain loss or injury and because his entire life appears to be centred around compensation for the injury suffered and the claim it entails. Litigation moves into the
32 foreground so much that sometimes it seems completely to dominate his interest in what is at stake. Here also the dialectic comes to a halt, centered of course in a totally different way from the preceding case.

I pointed out to you last time what the phenomenon of interpretation hinges on – it's linked to the relation between the ego and the other, inasmuch as analytic theory defines the ego as always being relative. In passional psychosis what is known as the understandable kernel, which is in fact a kernel of dialectical inertia, is situated obviously much closer to the I, the subject. In short, it's precisely because there has always been a radical misrecognition of

the dialectical dimension in the phenomenology of pathological experience that the clinical has gone astray. This misrecognition, it may be said, characterizes a class of mind. It seems that from the entry into the field of human clinical observation a century and a half ago when, with the beginnings of psychiatry, this field as such was formed, from the moment we became concerned with man, we have radically misrecognized that dimension which everywhere else nevertheless seems to be alive, accepted, handled with ease in the sense of the human sciences, namely, that of the autonomy as such of the dialectical dimension.

Authors point to the integrity of the paranoid subject's faculties. Will and action, as Mr. Kraepelin was saying just before, seem to us to be homogeneous in him with what we expect from normal beings. There is no deficiency anywhere, no fault; there are no functional disorders. One forgets that the dialectical changeability of actions, desires, and values is characteristic of human behavior and that it makes them liable to change not only from one moment to the next but constantly and even that it makes them pass over to strictly opposite values as a function of a change of direction in the dialogue. This absolutely fundamental truth is present in the most popular of fables that show what was loss and disadvantage at one instant becoming happiness bestowed by the gods a moment later. The ever-present possibility of bringing desire, attachment, or even the most enduring meaning of human activity back into question, the constant possibility of a sign's being reversed as a function of the dialectical totality of the individual's position, is such a common experience that it's stupefying to see this dimension forgotten as soon as one's fellow whom one wants to objectify is concerned.

It's never completely forgotten, though. We find a trace of it whenever the observer allows himself to be guided by his feeling for what is going on. The term *interpretation* lends itself to all sorts of ambiguities in the context of this reasonable madness into which it's inserted. Authors speak of combinatory 33
paranoia – how fertile this term could have been had they been aware of what they were saying, that the secret effectively resides in the way the phenomena are combined.

The question that has been advocated frequently enough here to be of full value, that of *Who speaks?*, must dominate the whole subject of paranoia.

I already pointed this out to you last time when I reminded you that verbal hallucination plays a central role in paranoia. You know how long it took to perceive what is nevertheless sometimes quite visible, which is that the subject himself utters what he says he hears – it took M. Séglas and his book *Leçons cliniques*.[12] By a sort of brilliant stroke at the beginning of his career

[12] Jules Séglas, *Leçons cliniques sur les maladies mentales et nerveuses (Salpétrière, 1887–1894)*.

he pointed out that there were people having verbal hallucinations who could be observed, by quite obvious signs in some cases and by looking slightly more closely in others, to be uttering the words they accused their voices of having spoken to them, whether or not they were aware of it, or did not want to know. It constituted a small revolution to observe that the source of auditory hallucination was not external.

This is because, or so it was thought, the source is internal, and what is more tempting than to think that this corresponds to the tingling of a zone itself called sensory? It remains to be known whether this can be applied to the domain of language. Are there verbal psychical hallucinations properly so-called? Are they not always more or less psychomotor hallucinations? Can the phenomenon of speech, in both its pathological forms and its normal form, be dissociated from the fact, which is nonetheless perceptible, that when the subject speaks he hears himself? One of the essential dimensions of the phenomenon of speech is that the other isn't the only person who hears you. The phenomenon of speech can't be schematized by the image that serves a number of what are called communication theories – sender, receiver, and something that takes place in between. It seems to have been forgotten that among many other things in human speech the sender is always a receiver at the same time, that one hears the sound of one's own words. It's possible not to pay attention to it, but it's certain that one hears it.

Such a simple remark dominates the entire question of what is known as verbal psychomotor hallucination, and it's perhaps because it's too self-evident that in the analysis of these phenomena it has moved into the background. Of course the little Séglasian revolution is far from having brought
34 us a solution to the enigma. Séglas remained with the phenomenal exploration of hallucination, and he had to retract what was too absolute in his initial theory. He restored their place to certain hallucinations that are untheorizable in this register, and he threw some new clinical light and contributed a subtlety of description, neither of which can be ignored – I advise you to have a look at him.

If many of these episodes in the history of psychiatry are instructive, it's perhaps more by virtue of the errors they bring into focus than by the positive contributions that supposedly result from them. But it's not possible simply to devote oneself to negative experiences of the field concerned and construct solely on the basis of errors. Errors are in any case so abundant as to be almost inexhaustible. We shall just have to take a few shortcuts to try to get to the heart of the matter.

We shall do this by following Freud's advice and, with him, enter into the analysis of the Schreber case.

3

After a short illness between 1884 and 1885, a mental illness consisting of a hypochondriacal delusion, Schreber, who then occupied quite an important place in the German judiciary, left Professor Flechsig's Psychiatric Clinic completely cured, it would seem, with no apparent aftereffects.

For the next eight years or so he led an apparently normal life and he himself points out that the only shadow over his domestic happiness was the regret at not having had children. At the end of these eight years he was named Presiding Judge to the Court of Appeal in the city of Leipzig. Having received the announcement of this extremely important promotion before the vacation period, he took up office in October. He was, it seems, as so often happens in many mental crises, a bit overwhelmed by his functions. At fifty-one he was young to be presiding over a court of appeal of this importance and the promotion unhinged him slightly. He found himself among men far more experienced, more accustomed to dealing with such difficult matters, and for a month he overworked, as he himself says, and began to become disturbed again – insomnia, flight of ideas, the appearance of more and more disturbing themes in his thoughts, which led him to further consultations.

And once again he was confined. First in the same Psychiatric Clinic, Professor Flechsig's, then, after a short stay in the mental home of Dr. Pierson in Dresden, in the Sonnenstein Asylum, where he was to remain until 1901. 35
It was there that his delusion went through an entire series of phases of which he gives us an account that is, it seems, extremely trustworthy and extraordinarily composed, written during the last months of his confinement. The book was to be published immediately upon his release. Therefore, at the time he claimed the right to leave he hid from no one that he would make his experience known to all humanity, with the view of informing everybody of the most important revelations for them that his experience contained.

This book, published in 1903, is the one Freud picked up in 1909. He spoke of it on his holidays with Ferenczi and it was in December 1910 that he wrote his "Psycho-Analytic Notes upon an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia."[13]

We shall quite simply open Schreber's book, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*. The letter preceding the body of the work, which is addressed to *Professor Flechsig, private consultant,* clearly shows the medium by which a delusional's critique of the terms he holds to most can be established. This, at least for those of you who have no experience of these cases, is of a value

[13] James Strachey, who says the book seems to have attracted Freud's attention in 1910, suggests it was September of the same year, while on vacation with Ferenczi, that Freud discussed the whole question of paranoia; see SE 12:3.

that deserves to be highlighted. You will observe that Dr. Flechsig occupies a central place in the construction of the delusion.

Lacan reads the letter, pp. vii–xii.

You will appreciate the courteous tone, the clarity and order. The first chapter is taken up with a whole theory concerning, at least in appearance, God and immortality. The terms at the centre of Schreber's delusion consist in an admission of the prime function of nerves.

Lacan reads the first paragraph, pp. 6–7.

Everything is there. These rays, which exceed the bounds of recognized human individuality, which are unlimited, form the explanatory network, but which he also experiences, on which our patient spins his entire delusion like a web.

The essential point stems from the relation between the nerves, principally between the subject's nerves and the divine nerves, which comprises an entire series of vicissitudes, among which there is the *Nervenanhang*, or nerve-contact, a form of attraction apt to put the subject in a state of dependence upon several characters, on whose intentions he decides in different ways over the course of his delusion. Initially these intentions are far from benevolent, if
36 only because of their catastrophic effects upon him, but are found over the course of the delusion to be transformed, integrated, into a real progressiveness, like the one you see dominating the personality of Dr. Flechsig at the beginning of the delusion and, at the end, the structure of God. There is examination and even progress characteristic of the divine rays, which are the foundation of souls. This is not to be confused with the identity of the said souls – Schreber strongly emphasizes that the immortality of these souls must not be reduced to the level of the person. The preservation of the ego's identity doesn't seem to him to require justification. All this is said with an air of likelihood that doesn't render the theory unacceptable.

On the other hand, an entire metabolic imagery is developed with extreme precision regarding the nerves, according to which the impressions registered by the nerves subsequently become the primary material which, reincorporated into the rays, nourishes divine action and may well be taken up again, reworked, and utilized in later creations.

The details of these functions matter enormously and we shall come back to them. But already it appears to be characteristic of these rays that they talk – they are obliged to, they have to speak. The nerves' soul intermingles

with a certain *fundamental language* defined by the subject – I shall show you with what subtlety when I read out the appropriate passages. It's akin to a highly vigorous German, with an extremely developed use of euphemism, that includes using the ambivalent power of words – next time I shall give you a condensed reading to greater effect.

It's quite exciting to recognize a striking likeness here to Freud's famous article on the double meaning of primitive words.[14] You recall that Freud thought he had found an analogy between the language of the unconscious, which admits no contradiction, and primitive words that are characterized by their ability to designate the two poles of a property or quality, good and bad, young and old, long and short, etc. A lecture by M. Benveniste last year presented you with a convincing critique of that from the point of view of linguistics,[15] but it remains no less true that Freud's remark carries weight in our experience with neurotics, and if there were anything that guarantees its value it would be the emphasis that in passing Schreber confers on it.

This delusion, whose richness you will see, presents surprising analogies – not only through its content, the image's symbolism, but also through its construction, its very structure – with certain schemas that we can ourselves be called upon to draw out of our own experience. You may, in this theory of divine nerves that talk and may be integrated by the subject while remaining radically separate from him, vaguely see something that isn't totally different from what I teach about the way one has to describe the functioning 37
of the unconscious. The Schreber case objectifies certain structures supposed correct in theory – with the possibility of overturning that stems from this, which is in any case a question that arises concerning all species of emotional construction in these sensitive domains that we are habitually exploring. This remark was made by Freud himself, who in some ways authenticates the homogeneity I'm claiming. At the end of his analysis of the Schreber case he notes that he has never yet seen anything that so much resembles his own libido theory, with its disinvestments,[16] separation reactions, influence at a distance, as Schreber's theory of divine rays, which doesn't bother him, since the drift of his whole exposition is to reveal a surprising approximation between Schreber's delusion and structures of both interindividual exchange and intrapsychical economy.[17]

So, as you see, we are dealing with an advanced case of madness. His delusional introduction gives you an idea of the polished nature of Schreber's lucubrations. And yet, owing to this exemplary case and to the intervention

[14] "The Antithetical Meaning of Primary Words," SE 11:155–61.

[15] See Emile Benveniste, "Remarks on the Function of Language in Freudian Theory."

[16] *"Désinvestissements,"* "withdrawal of cathexes" in SE.

[17] SE 12:78–79.

of such a penetrating mind as Freud's, we find ourselves for the first time in a position to grasp structural notions which it's possible to extrapolate to all cases – this vivid and at the same time illuminating novelty allows a classification of paranoia to be recast on completely new foundations. We also find in the very text of the delusion a truth that isn't hidden, as it is in the neuroses, but made well and truly explicit and virtually theorized. The delusion presents it – one can't even say from the moment one has the key to it, but as soon as one takes it for what it is, a double, perfectly legible, of what is explored by theoretical investigation.

This is where the exemplary character of the field of the psychoses, for which I have recommended that you reserve the greatest extension and the greatest suppleness, is located, and this is what justifies our giving special attention to it this year.

23 November 1955

III

The Other and psychosis

HOMOSEXUALITY AND PARANOIA
THE WORD AND THE REFRAIN
AUTOMATISM AND ENDOSCOPY
PARANOID KNOWLEDGE
GRAMMAR OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

The life of a psychoanalyst – as I was reminded by my analysands [*analysés*] several times on the one day – isn't rosy.

The comparison that can be made between the analyst and a rubbish dump is justified. All day long in fact he has to endure utterances that, surely, are of doubtful value to himself and even more so to the subject who communicates them to him. This is a feeling that the psychoanalyst, if he is a real one, has not only been accustomed to overcoming for a long time, but, to be honest, it's one that he purely and simply abolishes within himself in the exercise of his practice.

I must on the other hand say that this feeling comes alive again with all its force when one is led to go over the sum total of works that make up what is called the analytic literature. There is no more disconcerting an exercise for scientific attention than to be made aware over a short space of time of the points of view that authors have elaborated on the same subjects. And nobody seems to perceive the flagrant and permanent contradictions that are brought into play whenever basic concepts arise.

1

You know that psychoanalysis explains the case of President Schreber, and paranoia in general, by portraying the subject's unconscious drive as nothing other than a homosexual tendency.[1] Drawing attention to all the facts grouped around such a notion was surely fundamentally new, and it profoundly changed our outlook on the pathogenesis of paranoia. But as for knowing what this homosexuality is, at which point of subjective economy it acts, how it occa-

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[1] *"Tendance"* has a meaning in both psychology and psychoanalysis. In psychoanalysis it has been used for *"Trieb,"* drive, though in more narrowly psychoanalytic contexts Lacan uses the term *"pulsion."*

sions the psychosis – I believe I can testify that, in this sense, all the outlines we have contain the most imprecise, even the most contradictory approaches.

People speak of defense against the supposed irruption – and why this irruption at this point? – of the homosexual tendency. But this is far from having been proved, if one is to give a meaning that is in any way precise to the term *defense* – which one is very careful not to do, so as to be able to continue cogitating in the dark. It's nevertheless clear that there is a constitutive ambiguity here and that the defense maintains a far from univocal relation with the cause that provokes it. It's thought either that the defense helps maintain a certain equilibrium or else that it provokes the illness.

We are also assured that the initial determinants of Schreber's psychosis are to be sought in the moment of onset of the different phases of his illness. You know that around 1886 he had his first crisis, whose co-ordinates people try to show us by means of his *Memoirs* – at that time he had nominated for the Reichstag, we are told.[2] Between this crisis and the second, which covers a period of eight years, Magistrate Schreber was normal, with the exception that his hope of paternity was unfulfilled. At the end of this period he happened to accede, in a way that up to a point was premature and certainly at an age at which it could not have been foreseen, to a very high function, that of Presiding Judge of the Leipzig Court of Appeal. This function, which was in the nature of an eminent distinction, conferred authority on him, so it's said, that elevated him to responsibility that, though not quite total, was at least greater and heavier than any he could have hoped for, which gives the impression that there was a relation between his promotion and the onset of the crisis.

In other words, in the former case one appeals to the fact that Schreber was unable to satisfy his ambition, and in the other that it was fulfilled from the outside, in a manner that is virtually consecrated as being undeserved. These two events are given the same value as trigger. It's carefully noted that the President had no children, so as to assign a prime role to the notion of paternity. But at the same time it's claimed that because he finally accedes to the position of father, the fear of castration thus comes to life in him again, with a corresponding homosexual craving. This is what is supposed to be
41 directly at issue in the onset of the crisis and to entail all the distortions, pathological deformations, and mirages that progressively evolve into a delusion.

Surely the fact that the masculine characters in the medical entourage are present from the outset, that they are named one after the other and successively come to the centre of President Schreber's extreme paranoid persecu-

[2] The onset of this first crisis occurred in October 1884, that of the second in November 1893.

tion, is enough to show their importance. This is, in a word, a transference – which is undoubtedly not to be taken in quite the sense that we usually mean, but it's something of that order, bound up in a special way with those in whose care he had been. Undoubtedly this is an adequate explanation of the choice of characters, but before we become too satisfied with this overall arrangement it needs to be observed that, in providing its motivation, the proof by the contrary is neglected. People fail to realize that both fear of the struggle and premature success are given the value of a sign with the same positive sense in each case. If by chance President Schreber had, between his two crises, become a father, this would be emphasized and much would be made of the fact that this paternal function would have been unbearable for him. In short, the notion of conflict is always played upon in an ambiguous manner – the source of conflict and, what is much less easy to see, the absence of conflict are placed on the same level. The conflict leaves an empty place, one might say, and it's in the empty place of the conflict that a reaction, a construction, a bringing into play of subjectivity, appears.

This suggestion is only designed to show you that the same ambiguity as the one our last lesson was about is at work, the ambiguity of the very meaning of a delusion, and which here is concerned with what is normally called the content and which I would prefer to call the psychotic statement [*dire*].

You think you are dealing with someone who is communicating with you because he speaks the same language as you. And then, what he is saying is so understandable that you get the feeling, particularly if you are a psychoanalyst, that here is someone who has penetrated, in a more profound way than is given to the common lot of mortals, into the very mechanism of the system of the unconscious. Somewhere in the second chapter Schreber expresses it in passing – *Enlightenment rarely given to mortals has been given to me.*[3]

My discourse today is about this ambiguity whereby the very system of the delusional is supposed to provide us with the elements of its own understanding.

2

42

Those of you who attend my case presentations are aware that last time I presented quite a clear case of psychosis and will recall the amount of time I put into drawing from her the sign, the stigma, that proved we were indeed dealing with a delusional and not simply with a person of difficult character who quarrels with those around her.

The examination went well beyond the hour that it usually takes for it to appear clearly that, at the limits of this language that there was no way of making her go beyond, there was another one. This is the language, which

[3] See Mem, 167.

has a particular and often extraordinary savor, of the delusional. It's a language in which certain words take on a special emphasis, a density that sometimes manifests itself in the very form of the signifier, giving it this frankly neologistic character that is so striking in the creations of paranoia. From out of the mouth of our patient of the other day there finally emerged the word *galopiner,*[4] which gave us the signature to everything that had been said up to that point.

This was something quite different from the frustration of her dignity, of her independence, of her daily affairs, of which the patient was the victim. This term *frustration* has belonged to the vocabulary of decent people for some time now – who doesn't go on all day long about the frustrations they have experienced or will experience or that others about them experience? She was obviously in another world, in a world in which this term *galopiner,* and doubtless many others that she hid from us, constitute essential reference points.

Let me pause here for a moment so you can appreciate how necessary are the categories of the linguistic theory that last year I was trying to make you feel comfortable with. You recall that in linguistics there is the signifier and the signified and that the signifier is to be taken in the sense of the material of language. The trap, the hole one must not fall into, is the belief that signifieds are objects, things. The signified is something quite different – it's the meaning, and I explained to you by means of Saint Augustine, who is as much of a linguist as Monsieur Benveniste, that it always refers to meaning, that is, to another meaning. The system of language, at whatever point you take hold of it, never results in an index finger directly indicating a point of reality; it's the whole of reality that is covered by the entire network of lan-
43 guage. You can never say that this is what is being designated, for even were you to succeed you would never know what I am designating in this table – for example, the color, the thickness, the table as object, or whatever else it might be.[5]

Let us pause at this quite simple little phenomenon of *galopiner* that came from the mouth of the patient the other day. Schreber himself constantly underlines the oddness of certain terms in his discourse. When he speaks to us for example of the *Nervenanhang,* nerve contact, he makes it quite clear that this word was spoken to him by the tested souls or the divine rays. These are key words, and he himself notes that he would never have found the formula for them, for the original words, the full words, which are very dif-

[4] As it happens, *"galopiner"* is not a neologism. Zola, e.g., employs the word, which derives from *"galopin,"* street-urchin; see *Trésor de la langue française,* s.v. *"galopiner."*

[5] See the discussion in chaps. 20 and 21, Sem I:247–72.

ferent from the words he uses to communicate his experience. He himself makes no mistake about this, there are different levels here.[6]

At the level of the signifier, in its material aspect, the delusion is characterized precisely by that special form of discordance with common language known as a neologism. At the level of meaning, it's characterized by the following, which will appear to you only if you set out with the idea that a meaning always refers to another meaning, that is, precisely, that the meaning of these words can't be exhausted by reference to another meaning.

This can be seen in Schreber's text as well as in the presence of a patient. The meaning of these words that pull you up has the property of referring essentially to meaning *as such*. It's a meaning that essentially refers to nothing but itself, that remains irreducible. The patient himself emphasizes that the word carries weight within itself. Before being reducible to another meaning it signifies within itself something ineffable, it's a meaning that refers above all to meaning as such.

We can see this at the two poles of all the concrete manifestations of which these patients are the centre. However far the endophasia that covers the entire phenomena to which they are subject is taken, there are two poles where this characteristic is taken to its highest point, as Schreber's text stresses, two types of phenomena where the neologism is displayed – the intuition and the formula.

The delusional intuition is a full phenomenon that has an overflowing, inundating character for the subject. It reveals a new perspective to him, one whose stamp of originality, whose characteristic savor, he emphasizes, as Schreber does in speaking of the fundamental language to which his experience introduced him. There, the word – with its full emphasis, as when one says *the word for, the solution to, an enigma* – is the soul of the situation.

At the opposite pole there is the form that meaning takes when it no longer refers to anything at all. This is the formula that is repeated, reiterated, drummed in with a stereotyped insistence. It's what we might call, in contrast to the word, the refrain. 44

These two forms, the fullest and the emptiest, bring the meaning to a halt, it's like lead in the net [*plomb dans le filet*], in the network, of the subject's discourse – a structural characteristic in which, once we approach it clinically, we recognize the mark of delusion.

This is how this language we can let ourselves be taken in by in our first initial contact with the subject, sometimes even the most delusional subject, brings us to the point of going beyond his conception and positing the term *discourse*. For, to be sure, these patients speak to us in the same language as

[6] See, e.g., 30 n. 19.

ourselves. Without this component, we would be in total ignorance. It's therefore the economy of discourse, the relationship between meaning and meaning, the relationship between their discourse and the common organization of discourse, that allows us to ascertain that delusion is involved.

I once tried to outline an analysis of psychotic discourse in an article published in the *Annales médico-psychologiques* in the thirties.[7] It concerned a case of schizophasia where effectively one can, at every level of discourse, semanteme as well as taxeme, pick out the structure of what is, perhaps not without reason, but no doubt without full awareness of the term's significance, known as schizophrenic disintegration.

I've been talking about language. You must in this respect touch upon the inadequacy, the undesirable tendency that is betrayed in the expression – *One has to speak the patient's language*. No doubt those who say such things must be forgiven, like all those who don't know what they are saying. Evoking so summarily what is at issue is the sign of hasty thoughts, of repentance. One absolves oneself, pays one's debts – except that one only displays condescension and reveals at what distance one maintains the object in question, namely the patient. Since he, too, is present, well then, let's speak his language, the language of simpletons and idiots. To mark this distance, to make language a pure and simple instrument, a way of making oneself understood by those who understand nothing, is completely to elude what is at issue – the reality of speech.

Let's leave analysts to one side for the moment. On whom is the psychiatric discussion of delusion, whether it seeks to be phenomenological, psychogenetic, or organogenetic, centered? What do the extraordinarily penetrating analyses of a de Clérambault signify, for instance? Some people think that it is a matter of discovering whether or not delusion is an organic phenomenon. This, it seems, is supposed to be discernible in its very phenomenology. This is all very well, but let's look at the thing a bit more closely.

45 Does the patient speak? If we did not distinguish language and speech, it's true, he speaks, but he speaks like those sophisticated dolls that open and close their eyes, drink liquid, etc. When a de Clérambault analyzes the elementary phenomena, he looks for their signature in their mechanical, serpiginous structure, and God only knows what neologisms. But even on that analysis personality is never defined but is always assumed, since everything rests on the ideogenic character of a primary comprehensibility, on the link between affections and their linguistic expression. This is supposed to be self-evident, this is where the demonstration starts from. We are told this – the automatic character of what takes place is demonstrable phenomenologically,

[7] See Jacques Lacan, J. Lévy-Valensi, and Pierre Migault, "Ecrits 'inspirés': Schizographie."

and this proves that the disorder isn't psychogenetic. But it's in relation to a psychogenetic reference itself that the phenomenon is defined as automatic. It's assumed that there is a subject who understands by himself and who observes himself. Otherwise, how would the other phenomena be grasped as foreign?

Notice that this isn't the classical problem that has brought all philosophy since Leibniz to a standstill, that is, at least since consciousness has been emphasized as the foundation of certainty – must a thought, to be a thought, necessarily think of itself thinking? Must all thought necessarily perceive that it's thinking of what it is thinking? This is so far from being straightforward that it immediately leads into an endless play of mirrors – if it's the nature of thought to think of itself thinking, there will be a third thought that will think of itself thinking thought, and so on. This small problem, which has never been resolved, suffices on its own to demonstrate the insufficiency of the subject's foundation in the phenomenon of thought as transparent to itself. But this isn't at all what is at issue here.

Once we allow that the subject has knowledge as such of the parasitic phenomenon as such, that is, as subjectively unmotivated, as written into the structure of the mechanism, into the disturbance of the supposed neurological pathways, we cannot avoid the idea that the subject has an endoscopy of what is actually going on within his own mechanisms. This is a necessity imposed on any theory that makes intraorganic phenomena the center of what happens in the subject. Freud attacks this problem more subtly than other authors, but he is equally obliged to admit that the subject is somewhere, at a privileged point where he is able to have an endoscopy of what is going on inside himself.

This idea doesn't surprise anybody when it's a question of more or less delusional endoscopies that the subject has of what is happening inside his stomach or his lungs, but it's a more difficult matter when intracerebral phenomena are concerned. The authors are forced to admit, though usually without being aware of it, that the subject has some endoscopy of what goes on inside the system of nerve fibers.

Take a subject who is the object of a thought-echo. Let's agree with Clérambault that this is the effect of a delay produced by a chronaxic deterioration – one of the two intracerebral messages, one of the two telegrams, as it were, is impeded and arrives after the other, thus as its echo. For this delay to be registered, there must be some privileged reference point at which this can occur, from which the subject notes a possible discordance between one system and another. However the organogenetic or automatizing theory is constructed, there is no escaping the consequence that some such privileged point exists. In a word, one is more of a psychogeneticist than ever.

What is this privileged point if it's not the soul? – except that one is even

more idolatry than those who confer the crudest reality on the soul by locating it in a fiber or a system, in what President Schreber designates as the unique fiber attached to the personality. It's what is habitually called the function of synthesis, the nature of a synthesis being to have its point of convergence somewhere – even if ideal, this point exists.

So whether we are organogeneticists or psychogeneticists, we shall always be forced to assume the existence of a unifying entity somewhere. Does that entity suffice to explain the level of psychotic phenomena? The sterility of these sorts of hypotheses is astounding. If psychoanalysis has revealed anything significant, clarifying, illuminating, fruitful, rich, dynamic, it's through disturbing the minuscule psychiatric constructions pursued over the decades with the help of purely functional notions of which the ego, which camouflaged them, necessarily formed the essential hub.

But as for what psychoanalysis has contributed that is new, how do we approach it without again falling into the same rut from a different direction, through multiplying egos, themselves variously camouflaged? The only approach consistent with the Freudian discovery is to raise the issue within the same register in which the phenomenon appears to us, that is, in the register of speech. It's the register of speech that creates all the richness of the phenomenology of psychosis, it's here that we see all its aspects, decompositions, refractions. Verbal hallucination, which is fundamental to it, is precisely one of speech's most problematic phenomena.

47 Is there no way of dwelling on the phenomenon of speech as such? Simply by taking it into consideration, don't we see a primary structure emerge, an essential and obvious structure that enables us to make distinctions that are not mythical, that is, that do not assume that the subject is somewhere?

3

What is speech? Does the subject speak or does he not? *Speech* – let's dwell on this fact for a moment.

What distinguishes speech [*une parole*] from a registering of language? To speak is first of all to speak to others. I have on many occasions brought to the foreground of my teaching this characteristic which at first sight appears simple – speaking to others.

The notion of what a message is has, for some time, been in the foreground of the preoccupations of science. For us, the structure of speech, as I have said to you whenever we have had to use this term in its strict sense here, is that the subject receives his message from the other in an inverted form. Full speech, essential, committed speech, is based on this structure. We have two exemplary forms of this.

The first is *fides*, speech that gives itself, the *You are my woman* or the *You*

are my master, which means – *You are what is still within my speech, and this I can only affirm by speaking in your place. This comes from you to find the certainty of what I pledge.*[8] *This speech is speech that commits you.* The unity of speech insofar as it founds the position of the two subjects is made apparent here.

If this doesn't seem obvious to you, confirmation by its contrary is, as usual, so much more obvious.

The sign by which the subject-to-subject relation is recognized, and which distinguishes it from the subject-to-object relationship, is the feint, the reverse of *fides*. You are in the presence of a subject insofar as what he says and does – they're the same thing – can be supposed to have been said and done to deceive you, with all the dialectic that that comprises, up to and including that he should tell the truth so that you believe the contrary. You know the Jewish joke, recounted by Freud, about the character who says – *I am going to Cracow.* And the other replies – *Why are you telling me you are going to Cracow? You are telling me that to make me believe that you are going somewhere else.*[9] What the subject tells me is always fundamentally related to a possible feint, in which he sends me, and I receive, the message in an inverted form.

There you have both sides of the structure, foundational speech and lying 48
speech which is deceptive as such.

We have generalized the notion of communication. In the present state of affairs, it's touch and go whether the entire theory of what goes on in living beings will be revised as a function of communication. Read anything by Mr. Norbert Wiener; its implications are huge. Among his many paradoxes he presents this strange myth of transmitting a man by telegraph from Paris to New York by sending exhaustive information on everything that constitutes his individuality. Since there is no limit to the transmission of information, the point-by-point resynthesis, the automatic recreation of his entire true identity at a distant place, is conceivable. Such things are curiously deceptive, and everyone wonders at them. They are a subjective mirage which collapses as soon as one points out that it would be no greater a miracle to telegraph over two centimeters. And we do nothing less when we move ourselves through the same distance. This extraordinary confusion is sufficient indication that the notion of communication has to be treated cautiously.

For my part, within the generalized notion of communication, I state what speech as speaking to the other is. It's making the other speak as such.

We shall, if you like, write that other with a big O.

And why with a big O? No doubt for a delusional reason, as is the case whenever one is obliged to provide signs that are supplementary to what language offers. That delusional reason is the following. *You are my woman*

[8] *"Cela vient de toi pour y trouver la certitude de ce que j'engage."*
[9] *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, SE 8:115.

– after all, what do you know about it? *You are my master* – in point of fact, are you so sure? Precisely what constitutes the foundational value of this speech is that what is aimed at in the message, as well as what is apparent in the feint, is that the other is there as absolute Other. Absolute, that is to say that he is recognized but that he isn't known. Similarly, what constitutes the feint is that ultimately you do not know whether it's a feint or not. It's essentially this unknown in the otherness of the Other that characterizes the speech relation at the level at which speech is spoken to the other.

I am going to keep you at the level of structural description for a while, because it's only here that the problems can be raised. Is this all that distinguishes speech? Perhaps, but surely it has other characteristics – it doesn't speak only *to* the other, it speaks *of* the other as an object. And this is what is involved when a subject speaks to you of himself.

49 Take the paranoiac of the other day, the one who used the term *galopiner*. While she talks to you, you know that she is a subject by virtue of the fact that she tries to take you in. This is what you are expressing in saying that you are simply dealing with what you clinically call a partial delusion. It's precisely to the extent that it took me an hour and a half the other day to make her produce her *galopiner*, to the extent that during all that time she held me at bay and showed herself to be of sane mind, that she maintains herself at the limit of what can be clinically perceived as a delusion. What you call, in your jargon, the sane part of the personality derives from the fact that she speaks of the other, is capable of making fun of him. It's by virtue of this that she exists as a subject.

Now, there is another level. She is talking about herself, and she happens to say a little bit more than she would have liked to. This is where we perceive that she is deluding. Here she is talking about what is our common object – the other, with a small *o*. It is indeed still she who is talking, but there is another structure here, which moreover doesn't reveal itself entirely. It's not quite as if she were talking to me about nothing in particular, she is talking to me about something which to her is very interesting, vital, she is talking about something to which she nevertheless continues to be committed – in short, she bears witness.

Let us try to probe a bit the notion of bearing witness. Is bearing witness purely and simply communication, too? Surely not. It's clear however that everything we attach value to as communication is of the order of bearing witness.

Disinterested communication is ultimately only failed testimony, that is, something upon which everybody is agreed. Everyone knows that this is the ideal of the transmission of knowledge. The entire system of thought of the scientific community is based on the possibility of a communication that con-

cludes with an experiment that everybody can agree on. The very institution of the experiment is a function of testimony.

Here we are dealing with another sort of otherness. I can't repeat all I once said about what I have called paranoid knowledge, since I shall also have to take it up again constantly over this year's discourse, but I am going to give you some idea of it.

What I designated thus in my first communication to the group Evolution psychiatrique, which at the time was quite remarkably original, was aimed at the paranoid affinities between all knowledge of objects as such. All human knowledge stems from the dialectic of jealousy, which is a primordial manifestation of communication. It's a matter of an observable generic notion, behavioristically observable. What takes place between two young children 50
involves this fundamental transitivism expressed by the fact that one child who has beaten another can say – *The other beat me.* It's not that he is lying – he *is* the other, literally.

This is the basis of the distinction between the human world and the animal world. Human objects are characterized by their neutrality and indefinite proliferation. They are not dependent on the preparation of any instinctual coaptation of the subject, in the way that there is coaptation, housing, of one chemical valency by another. What makes the human world a world covered with objects derives from the fact that the object of human interest is the object of the other's desire.

How is this possible? It's possible because the human ego is the other and because in the beginning the subject is closer to the form of the other than to the emergence of his own tendency. He is originally an inchoate collection of desires – there you have the true sense of the expression *fragmented body* – and the initial synthesis of the *ego* is essentially an *alter ego,* it is alienated. The desiring human subject is constructed around a center which is the other insofar as he gives the subject his unity, and the first encounter with the object is with the object as object of the other's desire.

This defines, within the speech relationship, something that originates somewhere else – this is exactly the distinction between the imaginary and the real. A primitive otherness is included in the object, insofar as primitively it's the object of rivalry and competition. It's of interest only as the object of the other's desire.

The said paranoid knowledge is knowledge founded on the rivalry of jealousy, over the course of the primary identification I have tried to define by means of the mirror stage. This rivalrous and competitive ground for the foundation of the object is precisely what is overcome in speech insofar as this involves a third party. Speech is always a pact, an agreement, people get on with one another, they agree – this is yours, this is mine, this is this, that

is that. But the aggressive character of primitive competition leaves its mark on every type of discourse about the small other, about the Other as third party, about the object. It's not for nothing that in Latin testimony is called *testis* and that one testifies on one's balls. In everything of the order of testimony there is always some commitment by the subject, and a virtual struggle in which the organism is always latent.

This dialectic always carries the possibility that I may be called upon to annul the other, for one simple reason. The beginning of this dialectic being my alienation in the other, there is a moment at which I can be put into the position of being annulled myself because the other doesn't agree. The dialec-
51 tic of the unconscious always implies struggle, the impossibility of coexistence with the other, as one of its possibilities.

The master-slave dialectic reappears here. The *Phenomenology of Mind* probably doesn't exhaust the whole question, but surely its psychological and psychogenetic value can't be misrecognized. It's in a fundamental rivalry, in a primary and essential struggle to the death, that the constitution of the human world as such takes place. Except that at the end one is present when the stakes reappear.

The master has taken the slave's enjoyment from him, he has stolen the object of desire as object of the slave's desire, but at the same time he has lost his own humanity. It was in no way the object of enjoyment that was at issue, but rivalry as such. To whom does he owe his humanity? Solely to the slave's recognition. However, since he doesn't recognize the slave, that recognition literally has no value. As is habitual in the concrete development of things, the one who has triumphed and conquered the enjoyment becomes a complete idiot, incapable of doing anything other than enjoying, while he who has been deprived of it keeps his humanity intact. The slave recognizes the master, and thus he has the possibility of being recognized by him. Over the centuries he will engage in the struggle to be effectively recognized.

This distinction between the Other with a big O, that is, the Other in so far as it's not known, and the other with a small *o*, that is, the other who is me, the source of all knowledge, is fundamental. It's in this gap, it's in the angle opened up between these two relations, that the entire dialectic of delusion has to be situated. The question is this – firstly, is the subject talking to you? – secondly, what is he talking about?

4

I am not going to answer the first question. Is it true speech? – at the outset we can't know. On the other hand, what does he talk to you about? About himself no doubt, but first about one object that isn't like any of the others,

about an object that is situated in the prolongation of the dual dialectic – he speaks to you about something that has spoken to him.

The very basis of the paranoid structure is the fact that the subject has understood something that he formulates, that something has taken the form of speech and speaks to him. No one, of course, is in any doubt that this is a 52
fantasized being, not even he, for he is always in a position to admit the totally ambiguous character of the source of the utterances that have been addressed to him. The paranoiac bears witness to you concerning the structure of this being that speaks to the subject.

You must already be able to tell the difference in level between alienation as the general form of the imaginary and alienation in psychosis. It's not simply a matter of identification, and of scenery swinging over onto the side of the little other. From the moment the subject speaks, the Other, with a big O, is there. Without this there would be no problem of psychosis. Psychotics would be speaking machines.

It's precisely insofar as he speaks to you that you take his testimony into account. The question is this. What is the structure of this being that speaks to him, and that everybody agrees is fantasmatic? It's precisely the S in the sense in which the analyst understands it, but an S with a question mark. What part in the subject talks? Analysis says it's the unconscious. Naturally, for this question to make sense you have to have already admitted that the unconscious is something that speaks within the subject, beyond the subject, and even when the subject doesn't know it, and that says more about him than he believes. Analysis says that in the psychoses this is what speaks. Is this enough? Absolutely not, for the whole question is how it [*ça*] speaks and what the structure of paranoid discourse is. Freud gave us an altogether gripping dialectic on this point.

It's based on the utterance [*énoncé*] of a fundamental tendency that might eventually be recognized in a neurosis, namely – *I love him* and *You love me.* There are three ways of negating this, says Freud.[10] He doesn't beat about the bush, he doesn't tell us why the unconscious of psychotics is such a good grammarian and such a bad philologist – from the philologist's viewpoint all this is in fact extremely suspect. Don't think that this works like a high-school grammar book – there are, depending on the language, many ways of saying *I love him.* Freud doesn't stop there, he says there are three ways, and three types of delusion, and it works.

The first way to negate it is to say – *It's not I who love him, it's she,* my conjoint, my double. The second is to say – *It's not him that I love, it's her.* At this level the defense isn't adequate for the paranoid subject, the disguise

[10] "Case of Paranoia," SE 12:63–65. Freud in fact mentions four kinds of contradiction. The fourth is: "I do not love him at all – I do not love anyone."

is inadequate, he isn't safe, projection has to enter into play. The third possibility – *I do not love him, I hate him.* Here inversion is also inadequate, this at least is what Freud tells us, and the mechanism of projection must also intervene, namely – *He hates me.* And there we have the delusion of persecution.

53 The high degree of synthesis that this construction contributes is illuminating for us, but you see the questions that remain open. Projection has to intervene as a supplementary mechanism whenever there is no effacement of the *I*. This isn't totally unacceptable, though we would like more information about it. Furthermore, it's clear that the *not,* the negation taken in its most categorical form, definitely doesn't have, when applied to these different terms, the same value. But on the whole this construction comes close to something, it works, and it situates things at their true level by tackling them from this angle of, I would say, principal logomachy.

Perhaps what I have said to you this morning will give you some indication that we can rephrase the question differently. *I love him* – is this a message, an utterance, a testimony, the brute recognition of a fact in its neutralized state?

Take things in terms of a message. In the first case, *It's she that loves him,* the subject gets another to carry his message. This alienation surely places us on the level of the little other – the *ego* speaks through the intermediary of the *alter ego,* which has meanwhile changed sex. We shall restrict ourselves to observing the inverted alienation. In delusions of jealousy, this identification with the other with a reversal of the sign of sexualization is in the foreground.

On the other hand, by analyzing the structure this way, you see that it isn't, in any case, a question of projection in the sense in which it can be integrated into a mechanism of neurosis. This projection consists in effect of imputing one's own infidelities to the other – when one is jealous of one's wife, it's because one has a few little peccadilloes of one's own to reproach oneself with. The same mechanism can't be invoked in the delusion of jealousy, probably psychotic, such as it's presented either in Freud's case or in the register into which I myself have just tried to insert it, where it's the person you are identified with through an inverted alienation, namely your own wife, that you make the messenger of your feelings concerning, not even another man, but, as the clinic shows, a more or less indefinite number of men. The properly paranoid delusion of jealousy is repeatable indefinitely, it re-emerges at every turning point of experience and may implicate fairly well any subject who appears on the horizon, and even ones that don't.

Now, *It's not him that I love, it's her.* This is another type of alienation, no longer inverted, but diverted. The other addressed in erotomania is very special, since the subject doesn't have any concrete relations with him, so much

so that it has been possible to speak in terms of a mystical bond or platonic love. He is very often a distant object with whom the subject is happy to 54
communicate in writing, without even knowing whether what's written will get to its destination. The least that can be said is that there is diverted alienation of the message. The accompanying depersonalization of the other is apparent in that heroic perseverance through every trial, as the erotomaniacs will themselves say. The erotomaniacal delusion is addressed to such a neutralized other that he is inflated to the very dimensions of the world, since the universal interest attached to the adventure, as de Clérambault used to say, is an essential part of it.

In the third case we are dealing with something much closer to negation. It's a converted alienation, in that love has become hatred. The profound deterioration of the entire system of the other, its reduction ratio, the extensive nature of interpretations about the world, shows you here the properly imaginary disturbance at its maximum extension.

The relations with the Other in delusions now call for investigation. Our terms will help us to reply all the better, through making us distinguish between the subject, he who talks, and the other with whom he is caught in the imaginary relation, the center of gravity of his individual ego, and in which there is no speech. These terms will enable us to characterize psychosis and neurosis in a new way.

30 November 1955

55

IV

"I've just been to the butcher's"

WHAT RETURNS IN THE REAL
PUPPETS OF DELUSION
R. S. I. IN LANGUAGE
THE EROTIZATION OF THE SIGNIFIER

In two articles respectively entitled "The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis" and "Neurosis and Psychosis"[1] Freud provides us with interesting information on the question of what distinguishes neurosis from psychosis. I shall try to emphasize what distinguishes them from one another with respect to the disturbances they create in the subject's relations with reality.

It is also an opportunity to recall, in a precise and structured way, what is meant by repression in neurosis.

1

Freud stresses the extent to which the subject's relations with reality are not the same in neurosis and psychosis. In particular, the clinical characteristic of the psychotic is distinguished by this profoundly perverted relation to reality known as a delusion. For this great difference in organization, or disorganization, there must be, Freud tells us, a deep-seated structural reason. How are we to spell out this difference?

When we speak of neurosis, we ascribe a certain role to flight, to avoidance, in which conflict with reality plays a part. Attempts have been made to designate the function of reality in the onset of neurosis by the notion of traumatism, which is an etiological notion. This is one thing, but another is the moment in a neurosis when a certain rupture with reality occurs in the
56 subject. What is the reality involved? Freud stresses from the outset that the reality sacrificed in neurosis is a part of *psychical* reality.

We are already entering here upon a very important distinction – reality is not synonymous with external reality. When he triggers his neurosis the subject elides, scotomizes as it has since been said, a part of his psychical reality,

[1] SE 19:183–87 and 149–53.

or, in another language, a part of his *id*.[2] This part is forgotten but continues to make itself heard. How? In a manner that all my teaching emphasizes – in a symbolic manner.

In the first article I mentioned Freud evokes a storehouse that the subject sets aside in reality and in which he preserves resources to be used in constructing the external world – this is where psychosis will borrow its material from. Neurosis, Freud says, is something quite different, for the subject attempts to make the reality that he at one time elided re-emerge by lending it a particular meaning, a secret meaning, which we call symbolic.[3] But Freud does not emphasize this properly. Overall the impressionistic manner in which the term *symbolic* is used has until now never been made precise in a way that is really consistent with what is at stake.

I point out, in passing, that I don't always have the opportunity to provide the textual references that a number of you would like, because they mustn't interrupt my discourse. Nevertheless I do give you, it seems to me, quotations where necessary.

Many passages in Freud's work show that he felt the need for a complete articulation of the symbolic order, for this is what was at stake for him in neurosis, to which he opposes psychosis, where at some time there has been a hole, a rupture, a rent, a gap, with respect to external reality. In neurosis, inasmuch as reality is not fully rearticulated symbolically into the external world, it is in a second phase that a partial flight from reality, an incapacity to confront this secretly preserved part of reality, occurs in the subject. In psychosis, on the contrary, reality itself initially contains a hole that the world of fantasy will subsequently fill.

Can we be satisfied with so simple a definition, so summary an opposition between neurosis and psychosis? Surely not, and Freud himself indicates, subsequent to his reading of Schreber's text, that it's not enough just to see how symptoms are made. It is also necessary to discover the mechanism of their formation. Let's start with the idea that a hole, a fault, a point of rupture, in the structure of the external world finds itself patched over by psychotic fantasy. How is this to be explained? We have at our disposal the 57
mechanism of projection.

I shall start with that today, insisting upon it in particular because a number of you working on the Freudian texts I've already commented on have said that, in returning to a passage whose importance I've pointed out, you are still hesitant over the meaning to give to a fragment, even though it's very clear, concerning the episodic hallucination in which the paranoid potential-

[2] The concept of scotomization was introduced in France by Edouard Pichon and systematically elaborated by René Laforgue. See René Laforgue, "Verdrängung und Skotomisation," and *Relativité de la réalité*.

[3] See SE 19:187.

ities of the Wolf Man appear. While what I was stressing when I said that *what has been rejected from the symbolic reappears in the real* was grasped very well, a discussion arose over the way I translate *the patient does not want to know anything about it in the sense of repression.*[4] However, to act on the repressed through the mechanism of repression is to know something about it, for repression and the return of the repressed are one and the same thing, expressed elsewhere than in the subject's conscious language. The difficulty for some was their failure to grasp that what is involved is of the order of knowledge [*un savoir*].

I shall quote you another passage, taken from the Schreber case. While Freud is explaining to us the mechanism of projection as such, which is supposed to explain the reappearance of fantasy in reality, he pauses to observe that we cannot speak here purely and simply of projection. This is all too self-evident if one thinks of the way this mechanism functions, for example, in the delusion of so-called projective jealousy, which consists in imputing to one's spouse infidelities of which one imaginatively feels guilty oneself. The delusion of persecution is quite different and manifests itself through interpretive intuitions in the real. Here are the terms in which Freud expresses himself – *It is incorrect to say that the internally suppressed sensation – Verdrängung* is a symbolization, and *Unterdrückung* simply indicates that something has fallen underneath – *is once again projected outwards* – this is the repressed and the return of the repressed – *But instead we must say that what is rejected* – you perhaps recall the note of insistence that usage has given this word – *returns from without.*[5]

There you have a text to add to the ones that I've already quoted in the same vein, and which are pivotal. To be precise, the text *Die Verneinung* that M. Hyppolite gave us a commentary on has enabled us to articulate with precision that there is a moment that is, one might say, the point of origin of symbolization. Let it be clearly understood that this point of origin is not a point in development but answers to the requirement that symbolization has to have a beginning. Now, at any point in development something may occur
58 that is the contrary of *Bejahung* – a *Verneinung* that is in some way primitive, to which *Verneinung* in its clinical consequences is a sequel. The distinction between the two mechanisms, *Verneinung* and *Bejahung*, is absolutely essential.

We should be better off to abandon this term *projection*. What we are concerned with here has nothing to do with the psychological projection that makes us – when for example it concerns those about whom we have nothing

[4] See above, p. 12, n.10.

[5] "It was incorrect to say that the perception which was suppressed internally is projected outwards; the truth is rather, as we now see, that what was abolished internally returns from without." SE 12:71.

but extremely mixed feelings – always greet everything they do with at least a certain amount of confusion as to their intentions. Projection in psychosis is not that at all; it's the mechanism that makes what has got caught up in the *Verwerfung* – that is, what has been placed outside the general symbolization structuring the subject – return from without.

What is this three-card trick we are all prey to, this strange juggler's game between the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real? Since we don't know the juggler we can ask the question. I am putting it on this year's agenda. It will enable us to define what is called the relation to reality and at the same time to articulate what the goal of analysis is, without falling into the constant confusions made in analytic theory on this subject. What are we talking about when we talk about adaptation to reality? Nobody knows what reality is, until it has been defined, which is not altogether simple.

To introduce the problem I shall begin from a thoroughly up-to-the-minute element. No one can say that this seminar is merely a commentary of texts, in the sense in which it would involve a pure and simple exegesis – these things are alive for us in our daily practice, in our supervisions, in the way we conduct our interpretation, in the way we deal with resistances.

So I shall borrow an example from my case presentation of last Friday.

2

Those of you who attend my presentations will recall that I was dealing with two people and one single delusion, what is known as a *délire à deux*.

It wasn't very easy for me to draw out either daughter or mother. I've reason to think that the daughter had been examined and presented before I became involved with her and that she had seen the role that patients play in a teaching ward a good dozen times. It does not matter whether or not one is delusional, one gets fed up fairly quickly with these sorts of exercises, and 59
she wasn't particularly well disposed.

It was nevertheless possible to bring out certain things, and in particular the following. Paranoid delusion, since she is paranoid, is far from presupposing a character base of pride, mistrust, irritability, psychological rigidity, as people say. At least, alongside the chain of interpretations, difficult to grasp, of which she felt she was the victim, this young girl had, on the contrary, the feeling that a person as good and kind as herself who, into the bargain, was surrounded by the many trials she had undergone, could only benefit from benevolence, from a general sympathy – and indeed the head of her ward, in making his report on her, spoke of her only as a charming woman loved by all.

In a word, after having had all the difficulty in the world tackling the subject, I approached the center of what was manifestly present there. Of

course, her basic concern was to prove to me that no element was subject to reticence, while at the same time not allowing the doctor any room for the wrong interpretation, of which she was certain in advance. All the same she confided to me that one day, as she was leaving her home, she had a run-in in the hallway with an ill-mannered sort of chap, which came as no surprise to her, since this shameful married man was the steady lover of one of her neighbors, someone of loose morals.

On passing her – she could not hide this from me, it still weighed upon her chest – he had said a dirty word to her, a dirty word that she was disinclined to repeat to me because, as she put it, it devalued her. Nevertheless, a certain gentleness that I had put into approaching her meant that after five minutes of chat we were on good terms with one another, and on that subject she confessed to me with a conceding laugh that she was not completely innocent in this matter for she herself had said something in passing. This something, which she confessed to me more easily than what she had heard, was this – *I've just been to the butcher's.*

Naturally, I'm like everybody else, I make the same mistakes as you, I do everything I tell you that you mustn't do. I'm no less in the wrong – even when it works. A true opinion remains no less an opinion from the point of view of science, as Spinoza shows. If you understand, so much the better, keep it to yourself. The important thing is not to understand, but to attain the true. But if you attain it by chance, even if you understand, you don't understand. Naturally, I understand – which proves that we all have a little
60 something in common with delusionals. I have within myself, as you have within yourselves, what there is that is delusional in the normal man.

I've just been to the butcher's – if I am told that there is something there to understand I may well declare that there is a reference to pig. I didn't say *Pig,* I said *Pork.*[6]

She agreed entirely. That was what she wanted me to understand. It was perhaps also what she wanted the other to understand. Except that this is precisely what one must not do. What one has to be interested in is the point of knowing why she wanted the other to understand this, precisely, and why she didn't say it to him clearly, but by allusion. If I understand I continue, I don't dwell on it, since I've already understood. This brings out what it is to enter into the patient's game – it is to collaborate in his resistance. The patient's resistance is always your own, and when a resistance succeeds it is because you are in it up to your neck, because you understand. You understand, you are wrong. What it is, precisely, that has to be understood is why there is

[6] That is, in the interview with the woman, he said *Pork* and not *Pig.* The *charcutier,* here translated as butcher, specializes in pork products.

something there given to be understood. Why did she say, *I've just been to the butcher's* and not *Pig?*

I limited my commentary, because of insufficient time, to pointing out to you that it contained a gem, and showed you the similarity with the discovery that consisted in observing one day that certain patients who complain of auditory hallucinations were manifestly making movements of the throat, of the lips; in other words, they were articulating them themselves. Here, it's not the same, it's similar, and it's even more interesting because it's not the same.

I said – *I've just been to the butcher's,* and then she blurts it out to us, what did *he* say? He said – *Sow!* This is the final word – *thread, needle, my soul, my life,* things happen thus in our existence.

Let's pause here a moment. *There he is, all pleased with himself,* you are saying to yourselves. *This is what he teaches us – in speech the subject receives his message in an inverted form.* Disabuse yourselves, this isn't true. The message in question is not identical with speech, far from it, at least not in the sense in which I describe it to you as the form of mediation where the subject receives his message from the other in an inverted form.

First, who is this character? We have already said he is a married man, the lover of a girl who is herself the friend of our patient and heavily implicated in the desire of which our patient is the victim – she is not its center but, I would say, its main character. Our subject's relations with this couple are ambiguous. They are no doubt persecutory and hostile characters, but they 61
are not grasped in such a terribly litigious style, which surprised those present at the interview. What characterizes this subject's relations with the outside is rather her perplexity – how was it possible, through malicious gossip, no doubt through taking legal action, to get them into hospital? The universal interest bestowed on them has a tendency to be repeated. From this there arise these beginnings of erotomaniacal elements that we observed in the presentation. They aren't properly speaking erotomaniacs, but they're inhabited by the feeling that one is interested in them.

Sow, what is that? It is effectively her message, but is it not rather her message to herself?

At the beginning of everything that was said, there was the intrusion of the said neighbor into the relationship of these isolated women, who had remained closely bound to one another in their existence, who were unable to separate when the younger married, who suddenly fled the dramatic situation that seems to have been created in the marital relations of the latter by the threats of her husband who, according to the medical certificates, wanted nothing less than to slice her up. We get the feeling here that the insult in question – the term *insult* is quite essential here and has always been stressed in the

clinical phenomenology of paranoia – agrees with the process of defense, the pathway of expulsion, to which the two patients felt compelled to proceed in relation to the neighbor who was considered primordially invading. She would always come and knock at their door while they were at their toilet or just as they were dining or reading. Above all, it was a matter of distancing this person who was essentially taken to be intrusive. Things only started to become problematic when this expulsion, this refusal, this rejection, took full effect, I mean when they actually threw her out.

Is this to be located at the level of projection, as a defense mechanism? The entire intimate life of these patients has unfolded outside the masculine element, they have always made the latter into an outsider with whom they have never been in harmony, for them the world is essentially feminine. Is the relation they maintain with persons of their own sex of the projection type, in their supposed necessity to remain themselves, closed in on themselves, as a couple? Is it connected with that homosexual fixation, in the widest sense of the term, that is at the base, as Freud says, of social relations? This would explain how in the isolation of this feminine world in which these two women live they find themselves in a position, not to receive their message from the
62 other, but to speak it to the other. Is insult the mode of defense that is in some way reflected back into their relationship – a relationship which, it's understandable how, was extended to all others as such, whoever they may be, from the moment it was established? This is conceivable and already suggests that it's a matter of the subject's own message, and not of the message received in inverted form.

Should we stop there? Certainly not. This analysis may enable us to understand how the patient feels surrounded by feelings of hostility. But that is not the point. The important thing is that *Sow!* has been heard really, in the real.

Who is speaking? Since there is a hallucination it's reality that is speaking. This follows from our premises if we accept that reality is made up of sensations and perceptions. There is no ambiguity over this; she didn't say *I had the feeling that he answered me – "Sow!"* She said – *I said, "I've just been to the butcher's," and he said "Sow!" to me.*

Either we are satisfied with saying to ourselves – *There you are, she's hallucinating,* or we try – this may seem to be a senseless enterprise but hasn't the role of psychoanalysts so far been to give themselves over to meaningless enterprises? – to go a little bit further.

And first of all, is it the reality of objects that is at issue? Who normally speaks in reality, for us? Is it reality, exactly, when someone speaks to us? The point of the remarks I made to you last time on the other and the Other, the other with a small o and the Other with a big O, was to get you to notice that when the Other with a big O speaks it is not purely and simply the reality

in front of you, namely the individual who is holding forth. The Other is beyond that reality.

In true speech the Other is that before which you make yourself recognized. But you can make yourself recognized by it only because it is recognized first. It has to be recognized for you to be able to make yourself recognized. This supplementary dimension – the reciprocity – is necessary for there to be any value in this speech of which I've given you some typical examples – *You are my master* or *You are my woman,* or, equally, mendacious speech which, although the contrary, equally presupposes recognition by an absolute Other, aimed at beyond all you can know, for whom recognition is to be valued only because it is beyond the known. It is through recognizing it that you institute it, and not as a pure and simple element of reality, a pawn, a puppet, but as an irreducible absolute, on whose existence as subject the very value of the speech in which you get yourself recognized depends. 63
Something gets born there.

In saying to someone, *You are my woman,* you are implicitly saying to her, *I am your man,* but you are saying to her first, *You are my woman,* that is, you are establishing her in the position of being recognized by you, by means of which she will be able to recognize you. This speech is therefore always beyond language. And such a commitment, like any other utterance, even a lie, conditions all the discourse that follows, and here, what I understand by *discourse* includes acts, steps, the contortions of puppets, yourselves included, caught up in the game. Beginning with an utterance a game is instituted, entirely comparable to what happens in *Alice in Wonderland* when the servants and other characters of the Queen's court start playing cards by dressing themselves up in the cards and themselves becoming the King of Hearts, the Queen of Spades, and the Jack of Diamonds. An utterance commits you to maintaining it through your discourse, or to repudiating it, or to objecting to it, or to conforming to it, to refuting it, but, even more, to complying with many things that are within the rules of the game. And even should the Queen change the rules from one moment to the next, this changes nothing essential – once you have entered the play of symbols, you are always forced to act according to a rule.

In other words, whenever a puppet talks it's not the puppet that talks, but it's someone behind it. The question is what is the function of the character one encounters on this occasion. What we can say is that for the subject it's clearly something real that is speaking. Our patient is not saying that there is someone else behind him who is speaking. She receives her own speech from him, but not inverted, her own speech is in the other who is herself, the little other, her reflection in the mirror, her counterpart. *Sow!* gives tit for tat, and one no longer knows whether the tit or the tat comes first.

That the utterance is expressed in the real means that it is expressed in the

puppet. The Other at issue in this situation is not beyond the partner, it is beyond the subject herself – this is the structure of the allusion, it indicates itself in a beyond of what it says.

Let us try to orientate ourselves by means of this game of four implied by what I said last time.[7]

The small *o* is the gentleman she encounters in the corridor and there is no big O. It's small *o'* who says, *I've just been to the butcher's.* And who is *I've just been to the butcher's* said of? Of S. Small *o* said *Sow!* to her. The person who is speaking to us, and who spoke *qua* delusional, *o'*, undoubtedly receives
64 somewhere her own message in an inverted form from the small other, and what she says affects the beyond which she herself is as subject and which, by definition, simply because she is a human subject, she can only speak of by allusion.

There are only two ways one can talk about this S, about this subject that we radically are. These are – either truly to address oneself to the Other, the big Other, and to receive from it the message that concerns you in an inverted form – or to indicate its direction, its existence, in the form of an allusion. The reason that the woman is strictly a paranoiac is that for her the cycle contains an exclusion of the big Other. The circuit closes on the two small others who are the puppet opposite her, which speaks, and in which her own message resonates, and herself who, as an ego, is always an other and speaks by allusion.

This is the important thing. She speaks by allusion so well that she doesn't know what she is saying. What does she say? She says – *I've just been to the butcher's.* Now, who has just been to the butcher's? A quartered pig. She does not know that she is saying this, but she says it nevertheless. That other to whom she is speaking, she says to him about herself – *I, the sow, have just been to the butcher's, I am already disjointed, a fragmented body,* membra disjecta, *delusional, and my world is fragmenting, like me.* That's what she's saying. That way of expressing it, however understandable it might appear to us, is nevertheless, to put it mildly, a tiny bit amusing.

There is another thing which concerns temporality. It is clear from the patient's words that we do not know who spoke first. To all appearances it was not our patient, or at least it was not necessarily her. We will never know since we are not going to time dereal [*déréel*] utterances, but if what I've just sketched out is correct, if the response is the allocution – that is, what the patient actually said – then the *I've just been to the butcher's* presupposes the response, *Sow!*

In true speech, on the contrary, the allocution is the response. What responds to speech is in effect the consecration of the Other as *my woman* or as *my*

[7] See above, p. 14.

master, and so here it's the response that presupposes the allocution. In delusional speech the Other is truly excluded, there is no truth behind, there is so little truth that the subject places none there himself, and in the face of this phenomenon, this ultimately raw phenomenon, his attitude is one of perplexity. It will be a long time before he attempts to restore an order, which we shall call a delusional order, around this. He does not restore it, as is thought, through deduction and construction, but in a way that we shall later see is not unrelated to the primitive phenomenon itself.

The Other being truly excluded, what concerns the subject is actually said 65
by the little other, by shadows of others, or, as Schreber will express himself to designate all human beings he encounters, by *fabricated*, or *improvised* men. The small other effectively presents an unreal character, tending towards the unreal.

The translation that I've just given you is not entirely correct, there are resonances in German that I've tried to render with the word *foutu*, fabricated.[8]

3

After having looked at speech, we shall now take a quick look at language, to which the triple division of the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real appropriately applies.

Certainly, the care Saussure took to eliminate considerations of motor articulation from his analysis of language clearly shows that he discerns its autonomy.[9] Concrete discourse is real language, and language speaks [*le langage, ça parle*]. The registers of the symbolic and the imaginary recur in the two other terms in which he expresses the structure of language, namely, the signified and the signifier.

The signifying material, such as I am always telling you it is, for example on this table, in these books, is the symbolic. If artificial languages are stupid it is because they are constructed on the basis of meaning. Someone recently reminded me of the forms of deduction that rule over Esperanto and which are such that once one knows *ox* one can deduce *cow, heifer, vealer*, and whatever else one wants to. And I asked him how one says, *Death to the bastards!*[10] – this must be deducible from *Long live the king!* This alone suffices to refute the existence of artificial languages, which attempt to model themselves on meaning, this as a rule being the reason why they are unused.

And then there is meaning, which always refers to meaning. Of course, the

[8] Mem, 4 n.1. The German word is *"hingemachte."*

[9] See "The Object of Linguistics," Introduction, chap. 3, *Course in General Linguistics*, 7–17.

[10] *"Mort aux vaches!"*, literally, "Death to the cows!"

signifier may be caught up therein as soon as you give it a meaning, as soon as you create another signifier as signifier, something in this function of meaning. This is why it's possible to speak of language. But the signifier-signified division will always reproduce itself. There's no doubt that meaning is by nature imaginary. Meaning is, like the imaginary, always in the end evanescent, for it is tightly bound to what interests you, that is, to that in which you are ensnared. You would know that hunger and love are the same
66 thing, you would be like any animal, truly motivated. But owing to the existence of the signifier your personal little meaning – which is also absolutely heart-breakingly generic, human all too human – leads you much further. Since there is this damned system of the signifier, such that you have not yet been able to understand either how it came to be there, how it came to exist, what purpose it serves, or where it is leading you, it is what leads you away.

When he speaks, the subject has the entire material of language at his disposal, and this is where concrete discourse begins to be formed. Firstly, there is a synchronic whole, which is language as a simultaneous system of structured groups of opposition, then there is what occurs diachronically, over time, and which is discourse. One cannot but give discourse a certain direction in time, a direction that is defined in a linear manner, M. de Saussure tells us.[11]

I leave the responsibility for that statement with him. Not that I believe it to be false – it is basically true that there is no discourse without a certain temporal order, and consequently without a certain concrete succession, even if it is a virtual one. If I read this page starting from the bottom reading up, backwards, the effect won't be the same as if I read it in the right direction, and in certain cases this may give rise to an extremely serious confusion. But it is not quite exact to say that it is a simple line, it is more probably a set of several lines, a stave. It is in this diachronism that discourse is set up.

The signifier as existing synchronically is sufficiently characterized in delusional talk by a modification I've already pointed out here, namely that certain elements become isolated, laden, take on a value, a particular force of inertia, become charged with meaning, with a meaning and nothing more. Schreber's book is overflowing with them.

Take a word such as *Nervenanhang,* for example, nerve-contact, a word of the fundamental language. Schreber discerns perfectly well which words have come to him through inspiration, precisely by way of the *Nervenanhang,* which have been repeated to him in their elective meaning which he does not always understand terribly well. *Seelenmord, soul murder,* for example, is another of these words, which is problematic for him, but which he knows has a particular sense. Nevertheless, he talks about all this in a discourse that is indeed our own, and his book, it must be said, is remarkably written, clear, and

[11] See "The Linear Nature of the Signifier," *Course,* 70.

natural. Moreover, he is as coherent as are many philosophical systems of our time, where we constantly see somebody suddenly get stung, at a detour on the path, by a tarantula that makes him regard Bovaryism and duration as 67
the key to the world and reconstruct the entire world around this notion, without one's knowing why it is this one that he has gone and picked out. I do not see how Schreber's system is of any less value than those of philosophers whose general theme I've just profiled. And what Freud remarks at the end of his study is that this character has written some amazing things that resemble what I, Freud, have described.

This book, then, written in ordinary discourse, signals the words that for the subject have taken on such a particular weight. Let's call this erotization, and let's avoid explanations that are too simple. When the signifier finds itself charged thus, the subject is perfectly well aware of it. The moment Schreber employs the term *instance* to define the various forces articulated in the world he is implicated in – he also has his little instances – he says, *Instance, that is mine. The others didn't say it to me, it is my normal discourse.*[12]

What happens at the level of meaning? The insult is always a rupture in the system of language, just as words of love are. Whether or not *Sow!* is charged with obscure meaning, and probably it is, we already have here an indication of this dissociation. This meaning, like all meaning worthy of the name, refers to another meaning. It is indeed what here characterizes the allusion. In saying, *I've just been to the butcher's,* the patient points out to us that it refers to another meaning. Naturally, it is a bit oblique, she would prefer it was I who understand.

Beware those who say to you – *You understand.* It is always so as to send you somewhere else than where it is a question of going. That's what she's doing. *You understand perfectly well,* this means that she herself isn't very sure of the meaning, and that the latter refers not so much to a system of continuous and reconcilable meaning as to meaning as ineffable, to the meaning of her own reality, to her own personal fragmentation.

And then there is the real, the well and truly real articulation, the other's sleight of hand. Real speech, I mean speech that is expressed, appears at another point of the field, not just at any point, but at that of the other, the puppet, as an element of the external world.

The big S whose medium is speech, analysis warns us, is not what a vain people thinks it is.[13] There is the real person who is before you and who takes up space – there is this in the presence of human beings, they take up space, at a pinch you can get ten of you into your office, but not a hundred and fifty

[12] Mem, 29 n.19. *"Instance"* is the French translation of Freud's *"Instanz,"* which SE translates as agency.

[13] *Ce n'est pas ce qu'un vain peuple pense,* an allusion to Voltaire, *Nos prêtres ne sont point ce qu'un vain peuple pense; Notre crédulité fait toute leur science.* Voltaire, *Oedipe* 4, 1.

– there is he whom you see, who manifestly captivates you and is capable of
68 making you jump up and hug him – an ill-considered act of the imaginary order. And then there is the Other whom we were talking about, who is the subject also, but not the reflection of what you see in front of you, and not simply what takes place insofar as you see yourself seeing yourself.

If what I am saying is not true, then Freud said nothing true, for this is what the unconscious means.

There are several possible othernesses, and we shall see how they manifest themselves in a complete delusion like Schreber's. First there are day and night, the sun and the moon, those things that always return to the same place, which Schreber calls the natural world order.[14] There is the otherness of the Other that corresponds to the S, that is, the big Other, the subject who is unknown to us, the Other who is symbolic by nature, the Other one addresses oneself to beyond what one sees. In between there are objects. And then, at the level of the S, there is something that is of the dimension of the imaginary, the ego and the body, whether fragmented or not, but more fragmented than not.

I shall leave you there for today. This analysis of structure begins what I shall speak to you about next time.

We shall try to understand, on the basis of this little picture, what is happening to Schreber, the delusional who has arrived at complete fulfillment and, ultimately, at a perfectly adapted delusion. What is characteristic of Schreber in fact is that he never stopped raving at full bore, but had adapted himself so well that the director of the psychiatric hospital said of him – *He is such a nice man.*

We are fortunate in having in him a man who communicates his entire delusional system to us, and at a time when it is full-blown. Before we start wondering how he entered psychosis and giving the history of the prepsychotic phase,[15] before we take things up in the sense of their genesis, as everyone always does, which is the source of inexplicable confusions, we shall convey them such as they are given to us in Freud's observation, who only ever had this book, who never saw the patient.

You will see how the different elements of a system are modified when constructed as a function of the coordinates of language. This approach is certainly legitimate, concerning as it does a case that is only given to us through a book, and it is what will enable us to reconstitute its dynamics in an effective way. But we shall start with its dialectics.

7 December 1955

[14] *"Weltordnung,"* translated as Order of the World in Mem.
[15] In English in the original.

THEMATICS AND STRUCTURE OF THE PSYCHOTIC PHENOMENON

V

On a god who does not deceive and one who does

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PSYCHOSIS IS NOT A SIMPLE FACT OF LANGUAGE

THE DIALECT OF SYMPTOMS

IT REALLY MUST BE RATHER PLEASANT TO BE A WOMAN . . .

GOD AND SCIENCE

SCHREBER'S GOD

The other day at my case presentation we saw a serious case.

It was a clinical case that I had certainly not chosen myself, but it was one that in a way brought the unconscious out into the open, in the difficulty it had in passing into the analytic discourse. It brought it out into the open because, owing to the exceptional circumstances, everything that in another subject would have passed into repression was found in him to be supported by another language, this language of quite limited scope known as a dialect.

As it happens, the Corsican dialect had functioned for this subject in conditions that accentuated even further the function of particularization belonging to all dialects. He had in fact lived in Paris from childhood, an only child of parents extremely closed in upon their own laws, speaking exclusively the Corsican dialect. The perpetual quarreling of these two parental characters, an ambivalent manifestation of their extreme attachment to one another and of the fear of seeing a woman, a foreign object, appear, was carried out quite openly, plunging him directly into their conjugal intimacy. All this in the Corsican dialect. Nothing of what went on in the house was conceived in anything but the Corsican dialect. There were two worlds, that of the elite, of the Corsican dialect, and then that which went on outside. This separation was still present in the subject's life and he recounted to us the difference in his relations with the world between when he was with his mother and when he was out in the street.

What did this result in? This is a most conclusive case. It resulted in two things. The first, apparent when he was questioned, is the difficulty he had in calling to mind anything at all from this former register, that is, in expressing himself in his childhood dialect, the only one he ever spoke with his mother. When I asked him to say something in this dialect, to repeat to me words he might have exchanged with his father, for example – *I can't get it out,* he replied. Moreover, one could see a neurosis in him, the traces of behavior that enabled us to divine a mechanism that one may call – this is a

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term I always use cautiously – regressive. In particular, his unusual way of exercising his genitality tended to get confused on the imaginary level with the regressive activity of his excremental functions. But everything that was of the order of what is usually repressed, all the contents that are commonly expressed through the intermediary of neurotic symptoms, was perfectly limpid here, and I had no trouble in getting him to express it in words. Since it was borne by the language of the others, he expressed it in words all that much more easily.

I used the comparison of the censorship of a newspaper that not only has an extremely small circulation but is published in a dialect that is only understood by a minimum number of people. The establishment of a common discourse, of a public discourse I would almost say, is an important factor in the specific functioning of the mechanism of repression. In itself repression stems from the impossibility of granting discourse to a certain past of the subject's speech which is linked, as Freud stressed, to the specific world of his infantile relations. It's precisely this past of speech that continues to function in the primitive language. Now, for this subject, this language is his Corsican dialect in which he was capable of saying the most extraordinary things, of flinging at his father for example – *If you don't go away, I shall punch you in the hurt.* These things, which could have just as easily been said by a neurotic, having had to construct his neurosis in a different manner, were out in the open here in the register of the other language which was not only dialectal but intrafamilial.

What is repression for a neurotic? It's a language, another language that he manufactures with his symptoms, that is, if he is a hysteric or an obsessional, with the imaginary dialectic of himself and the other. The neurotic symptom acts as a language that enables repression to be expressed. This is precisely what enables us to grasp the fact that repression and the return of the repressed are one and the same thing, the front and back of a single process.

These remarks are not irrelevant to our problem.

73

1

What is our method concerning President Schreber?

It's undeniable that he expressed himself in common discourse to explain to us what had happened and was continuing to happen to him at the time he wrote his work. This testimony bears witness to structural transformations that are undoubtedly to be regarded as real, but here the verbal dominates since it's through the intermediary of the subject's written testimony that we have proof of this.

Let's proceed methodically. By setting out from our knowledge of the

importance of speech in the structuring of psychoneurotic symptoms we shall make progress in the analysis of this territory, psychosis. We are not saying that psychosis has the same etiology as neurosis. We are not even saying that it is, like neurosis, a pure and simple fact of language – far from it. We are simply remarking that psychosis is very rich with respect to what it can express in discourse. We have proof of this in the work that President Schreber bequeathed us and which Freud's almost fascinated attention has recommended to our attention. On the basis of this testimony, by means of an internal analysis, Freud has shown us how this world was structured. We shall proceed in the same way, setting out from the subject's discourse, which will enable us to approach the constituent mechanisms of psychosis.

Let it be clearly understood that we shall have to proceed methodically, step by step, not leaving out any detail on the pretext that a superficial analogy with a mechanism of neurosis is apparent. In short, we shall do nothing of what is so often done in the literature.

A certain Katan, for example, who has taken a special interest in the Schreber case, takes it for granted that the origin of his psychosis is to be located in his struggle against threatening masturbation provoked by his homosexual erotic investments upon the character who formed the prototype and at the same time the nucleus of his persecutory system, namely, Professor Flechsig.[1] This is supposed to have driven President Schreber so far as to undermine reality, that is to say, to reconstruct, after a short period of *twilight of the world*,[2] a new, unreal world, in which he didn't have to give in to this masturbation that was thought to be so threatening. Don't we all feel that a mechanism of this kind, while it's true that it enters into play in the neuroses at a certain point of their articulation, would here be having altogether dis- 74
proportionate results?

President Schreber gives a very clear account of the first phases of his psychosis. And when he testifies that between the first psychotic attack, a phase called, not without foundation, prepsychotic, and the progressive establishment of the psychotic phase, at the height of the stabilization of which he wrote his work, he had a fantasy which was expressed in these words, *that it really must be rather pleasant to be a woman succumbing to intercourse*.[3]

He emphasizes that this thought, which takes him by surprise, has the character of having been imagined, while adding that he greeted it with indig-

[1] See Maurits Katan, "Schreber's Delusion of the End of the World," "Schreber's Hallucinations about the 'Little Men,' " "Further Remarks about Schreber's Hallucinations," and "Schreber's Prepsychotic Phase."

[2] *"le crépuscule du monde," "Weltuntergang,"* translated as the end of the world in Mem.

[3] Mem, 36.

nation. There is a sort of moral conflict here. We find ourselves in the presence of a phenomenon whose name nobody ever uses anymore, so that nobody knows how to classify things anymore – it's a preconscious phenomenon. This is the preconscious order at which Freud intervenes in the dynamics of the dream, and to which he attaches so much importance in the *Traumdeutung*.

One gets the strong impression that this is coming from the ego. The emphasis placed by this *It really must be rather pleasant* . . . has the character of a seductive thought, which the ego is far from misrecognizing.

In a passage in the *Traumdeutung* dedicated to dreams of punishment Freud admits that at the same level at which unconscious desires intervene in a dream another mechanism than the one that relies on the conscious-unconscious opposition may be present – *The mechanism of dream formation,* says Freud, *would in general be greatly clarified if instead of the opposition between conscious and unconscious we were to speak of that between the ego and the repressed.*[4]

This was written at a time when the notion of the ego was not yet part of Freudian theory, but you still see nevertheless that it was already present in his thought. *I will only add that punishment-dreams are not in general subject to the condition that the day's residue shall be of a distressing kind. On the contrary, they occur most easily where the opposite is the case – where the day's residues are thoughts of a satisfying nature but the satisfaction which they express is a forbidden one. The only trace of these thoughts that appears in the manifest dream is their diametric opposite. . . . The essential characteristic of punishment-dreams would thus be that in their case the dream-constructing wish is not an unconscious wish derived from the repressed (from the system* Ucs.), *but a punitive one reacting against it and belonging to the ego, though at the same time an unconscious (that is to say, preconscious) one.*[5]

Anyone who is following the path I am gradually leading you down, by drawing your attention to a mechanism that is distinct from *Verneinung* and that can be constantly seen emerging in Freud's discourse, will find here, once again, the need to distinguish between something that has been symbolized and something that hasn't.

75 What relation is there between the emergence in the ego – and, let me emphasize, free from conflict – of the thought that *it must be rather pleasant to be a woman succumbing to intercourse,* and the conception which the delusion, achieving a degree of completion, will blossom into, namely that the man must be the permanent woman of God? There is reason, undoubtedly, to compare the two terms – the initial appearance of this thought that crossed Schreber's mind, who was apparently sane at the time, and the delusion's

[4] SE 6:558.
[5] SE 6:558. The passage was added to *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1919.

final state which, before an all-powerful personality with whom he has permanent erotic relations, situates him as a completely feminized being, a woman – this is what he says. The initial thought legitimately appears to us to give a glimpse of the final theme. Nevertheless, we must not neglect the stages, the crises, that have made him pass from such a fleeting thought to such firmly delusional conduct and discourse.

We should not assume that the mechanisms in question are homogeneous with the mechanisms we are usually dealing with in the neuroses, and especially not with that of repression. Of course, to appreciate this one has to begin by understanding what repression means, that is, that it's structured like a linguistic phenomenon.

The question arises whether we have before us a properly psychotic mechanism, one that would be imaginary and that would extend from the first hint of identification with and capture by the feminine image, to the blossoming of a world system in which the subject is completely absorbed in his imagination by a feminine identification.

What I am saying, which is almost too artificial, clearly indicates to you in what direction we have to seek a resolution of our question. We shall lack the means to do it unless we can uncover its traces in the one element we do possess, namely the document itself, the subject's discourse. This is why I introduced you last time to what will orient our investigation, namely the structure of this discourse itself.

2

I began by distinguishing the three spheres of speech as such. You may recall that within the phenomenon of speech we can integrate the three planes of the symbolic, represented by the signifier, the imaginary, represented by meaning, and the real, which is discourse that has actually taken place in a 76
diachronic dimension.

The subject has at his disposal a whole lot of signifying material which is his language, whether maternal or not, and he uses it to circulate meanings in the real. To be more or less captivated, captured, by a meaning is not the same thing as to express that meaning in a discourse designed to communicate it and reconcile it with other variously received meanings. In this term *received* lies the driving force of what makes discourse a common discourse, a commonly admitted discourse.

The notion of discourse is fundamental. Even for what we call objectivity, the world objectified by science, discourse is essential, for the world of science – one always loses sight of this – is above all communicable, it's embodied in scientific reports. Even if you were to succeed in carrying out the most amazing experiments, if no one is able to repeat them on the basis of the

report you give of them, they will have been to no avail. This is the criterion by which one ascertains that something has not been scientifically received.

When I drew up this triple-entry chart for you, I located the different relations in which we can analyze a delusional's discourse. This diagram is not the diagram of the world. It's the basic condition of any relationship. Vertically, there is the register of the subject, speech, and the order of otherness as such, the Other. The hub of the function of speech is the subjectivity of the Other, that is to say, the fact that the Other is essentially he who is capable, like the subject, of convincing and lying. When I told you that in the Other there must be a sector of entirely real objects, it was understood that this introduction of reality is always a function of speech. For it to be possible to relate anything at all in relation to the subject and the Other to a foundation in the real, somewhere there must be something nondeceptive. The dialectical correlate of the basic structure which makes of the speech of subject to subject speech that may deceive is that there is also something that does not deceive.

This function, you will notice, is fulfilled in various ways according to the cultural region in which the constant function of speech comes to function. You would be wrong to think that the same elements, qualified in the same way, have always fulfilled that function.

Take Aristotle. Everything he says is perfectly communicable, and never-
77 theless the position of the nondeceptive element is essentially different for him and for us. Where is this element for us?

Well, whatever minds satisfied with appearances – which is often the case with free-thinkers, and even the most positivist among you, indeed the most liberated from any religious idea – might think, the simple fact that you live at this precise moment in the evolution of human thought does not exonerate you from what was openly and rigorously formulated in Descartes's meditation about God as incapable of deceiving us.[6]

This is so true that so lucid a personality as Einstein, when it was a matter of handling that symbolic order that was his, recalled it – *God,* he said, *is clever, but he is honest.*[7] The notion that the real, as difficult as it may be to penetrate, is unable to play tricks on us and will not take us in on purpose, is, though no one really dwells on this, essential to the constitution of the world of science.

Having said this, I admit that the reference to a nondeceiving god, the one accepted principle, is based on results obtained by science. We have in fact never observed anything that would show us a deceiving demon at the heart

[6] See Descartes's Fourth Meditation,"Truth and Falsity," in *Meditations on First Philosophy.*

[7] This is perhaps an allusion to Einstein's remark, *"Raffiniert ist der Herrgott aber boshaft ist er nicht,"* "The good Lord may be tricky but he isn't mean."

of nature. But that does not prevent its being a necessary article of faith for the first steps of science and the constitution of experimental science. It need hardly be said that matter does not cheat, that it has no intention of crushing our experiments or blowing up our machines. This sometimes happens, but only when we have made a mistake. It's out of the question that it, matter, should deceive us. This step is not at all obvious. Nothing less than the Judaeo-Christian tradition was required for it to be taken with such assurance.

The reason that the emergence of science, as we have constituted it with the tenacity, obstinacy, and daring characteristic of its development, took place within this tradition is that it proposed a unique principle at the foundation, not only of the universe, but of the law. It's not simply the universe that was created *ex nihilo,* but also the law – this is where the entire debate between a certain rationalism and a certain voluntarism is played out, one that bothered and still bothers the theologians. Does the criterion of good and evil depend on what could be called God's whim?

It's the radicality of Judaeo-Christian thought on this point that made possible this decisive step, for which the expression *act of faith* is not out of place, which consists in supposing that there is something absolutely nondeceptive. That this step should be reduced to this act is an essential point. Just think what would happen, at the current pace of things, if we were to perceive that there is not only a proton, a meson, etc., but also an element we had not reckoned with, one member too many in atomic mechanics, a character who 78
lies. We wouldn't be laughing then.

For Aristotle, things are completely different. What assured him, in nature, of the truthfulness of the Other as real were those things that always return to the same place, namely the celestial spheres. The notion of celestial spheres as what is incorruptible in the world, as being of another, divine, essence, for a long time inhabited Christian thought itself, the medieval Christian tradition, which inherited classical thought. It's not just a question of a Scholastic heritage, for the notion is, it might be said, natural to man, and it's we who are in an unusual position in no longer being preoccupied with what goes on in the celestial sphere. Until a quite recent period what occurred in the heavens was mentally present as an essential reference in every culture, including those whose astronomy indicates the advanced state of their observations and reflections. Our culture is an exception, since it consented, very recently, to follow the Judaeo-Christian position strictly. Until then it had been impossible to pry the thought of the philosophers, like that of the theologians and therefore that of the physicists, away from the idea of the superior essence of the celestial spheres. Measurement is the materialized proof of this – but it's we who say this – in itself, measurement is the proof of what does not deceive.

Our culture is really the only one that has this characteristic – common to

us all here, I think, with the exception of some who may have some curiosity for astronomy – this characteristic trait that we never think of the regular return of the stars, or of the planets, or of eclipses, either. For us, this has no importance, we know that these things take place all by themselves. There is a world of difference between what is called, to use a word I don't like, the *mentality* of people like us – for whom the guarantee of everything that occurs in nature is one simple principle, namely, that nature is incapable of deceiving us, that somewhere there is something that guarantees the truth of reality, which Descartes affirms in the form of his own nondeceptive god – and on the other hand the normal, natural position, the more common position, that which appears in the minds of the very great majority of cultures, which consists in locating the guarantee of reality in the heavens, however one represents them to oneself.

The account I have just sketched out is not unrelated to our subject, for here we are, all of a sudden, in the thick of the first chapter of President Schreber's *Memoirs,* which treats the system of the stars as the essential, rather unexpected, item in his struggle against masturbation.

79

3

What follows is interspersed with readings from Memoirs of My Nervous Illness, *chap. 1, pp. 6–12.*

According to this theory, each nerve of intellect represents the total mental individuality of a human being and has, as it were, the sum total of memories inscribed upon it. We have here a highly elaborate theory whose position it would not be difficult to encounter, even if it were only as a stage of the discussion, in standard scientific works. Through an unexceptional mechanism of the imagination, we touch on the connection between the notion of souls and that of the permanence of impressions. The basis for the concept of the soul in the demand for the preservation of imaginary impressions is quite apparent here. I would almost say that we have here the basis, I'm not saying the proof, of the belief in the immortality of souls. There is something irrepressible when the subject considers himself – he is incapable of not conceiving not only that he exists but, moreover, that there is an impression that conveys its eternity. Up to this point our delusional is no more deluded than an extremely large sector of humanity, without our saying that he is co-extensive with it.

The reading continues.

We are not far from the Spinozian universe, insofar as it is founded on the co-existence of the attribute of thought and the attribute of extension. A very

interesting dimension for situating the imaginary quality of certain stages of philosophical thought.

The reading continues.

We shall see later why Schreber took the notion of God as his starting point. This point is certainly connected with his final discourse, the one in which he systematizes his delusion in order to communicate it to us. You already see him in the grips of this dilemma – who is going to draw more rays to himself, him or this God with whom he maintains his perpetual erotic relationship? Will Schreber win the love of God and thereby place his existence in danger, or will God possess Schreber and then leave him in the lurch? I am describing the problem for you in a humorous manner, but there 80
is nothing funny about it since it's the delusional text of a sick man.

There is a divergence in his experience between God who is for him the lining [*l'envers*] of the world – and if this one isn't quite the one I was talking about just before, who was linked to a certain conception of an equivalence between God and extension, he is nevertheless all the same the guarantee that extension is not an illusion – and on the other hand this God with whom, in the crudest of experiences, he has relations as if with a living organism, this living God, as he puts it.

While the contradiction between these two terms does become apparent to him, you can well imagine that it does not happen at the level of formal logic. Our patient hasn't got to this stage yet – any more than the rest of us have, moreover. The famous contradictions of formal logic have no more reason to be operant in him than in us, who make the most heterogeneous, or even the most discordant, systems exist simultaneously in our minds, in a simultaneity in which that logic seems completely forgotten, apart from those moments when we are provoked into discussion about, and then become very sensitive to, formal logic – just refer to your own personal experience. There is no logical contradiction, there is a lived, living contradiction, seriously considered and vividly experienced by the subject, between the almost Spinozian God whose shadow, whose imaginary outline, he supports and the God with whom he has this erotic relationship about which he is constantly testifying to him.

The by no means metaphysical question arises of what is really going on in the lived experience of the psychotic. We are not yet in a position to give an answer and perhaps at no time will the question ever have any meaning for us. Our job is to situate structurally the discourse that testifies to the subject's erotic relations with the living God who, through these divine rays and through an entire procession of forms and emanations, also speaks to him, expressing himself in that language, destructured from the point of view of common

language, but also restructured on more fundamental relations, which he calls the *fundamental language*.

The reading continues.

Here we come across the emergence, which is striking in relation to the rest of the discourse, of the most ancient of beliefs – God is the master of the sun and the rain.

81 *The reading continues.*

We can't fail to note the link between the imaginary relation and the divine rays. And I'm under the impression that there is a literary reference in Freud when, on the subject of repression, he insists upon the fact that there is a double polarity – something is undoubtedly suppressed, repelled, but it's also attracted by what has previously been repressed.[8] In passing, we can't fail to recognize the striking similarity between these dynamics and the sentiment Schreber expressed in stating his experience.

A while ago I pointed out to you how divergent he feels the two demands by the divine presence to be, one that justifies his maintaining the scenery of the external world around himself – you will see how well founded that expression is – and one made by God whom he experiences as the partner of this oscillation of the living force that will become the dimension in which he suffers and palpitates. This gap is resolved for him in these terms– *Perhaps the full truth lies (by way of a fourth dimension) in the form of a humanly inconceivable diagonal between these two lines of thought.*[9]

He gets himself out of trouble, as is normal in the language of that form of communication too unequal to its object which is known as metaphysics when one has absolutely no idea how to reconcile two terms, freedom and transcendent necessity, for instance. One makes do with saying that somewhere there is a fourth dimension and a diagonal, or one pulls both ends of the chain at once. That dialectic, perfectly obvious in all use of discourse, can't escape you.

[8] See "Case of Paranoia," SE 12:67 and "Repression," SE 14:148. The reference is perhaps to Goethe's poem, "The Fisherman," "Partly she dragged him down, partly he sank." The passage is quoted by Schreber; see Mem, 11 n.5.

[9] Mem, 8.

The reading continues.

Ultimately God only has a complete, authentic relationship with corpses. God doesn't understand anything of living beings, his omnipresence grasps things only from the outside, never from the inside. Here we have propositions that don't appear to be self-evident or demanded by the coherence of the system, such as we ourselves might conceive it in advance.

I shall come back to this point next time, with greater emphasis. But you can already see that the psychotic relation, at its highest degree of development, entails the introduction of the fundamental dialectic of deception into a dimension that is, as it were, transversal in comparison with that of an authentic relationship. The subject can speak to the Other insofar as with 82
him it's a question of faith or feint, but here this permanent exercise of deception, which tends to subvert any order whatever, whether mythical or not, in thought itself, unfolds as a passive phenomenon, as an experience lived through by the subject, in an imaginary dimension that is suffered, which is a fundamental characteristic of the imaginary. This means that the world – as you will see emerge in the subject's discourse – is transformed into what we call a fantasmagoria, but which for him has the utmost certainty in his lived experience. This is the game of deception that he maintains, not with another like himself, but with this primary being, the very guarantor of the real.

Schreber himself remarks perfectly well that his prior categories had far from prepared him for this vivid experience of an infinite God – previously these questions had had no kind of existence for him and, even better than being an atheist, he had been indifferent.

One can say that in this delusion God is essentially the opposite term in relation to the subject's megalomania, but God as he is caught at his own game. Schreber's delusion will in fact reveal that God, through having wanted to harness his forces and turn him into detritus, excrement, carrion, the object of all the exercises of destruction that he has allowed his intermediary mode to bring about, has been caught at his own game. Ultimately God's greatest danger is to love Schreber, that transversally transversed zone, too much.

We shall have to structure the relationship between what guarantees the real in the other, that is, the presence and existence of the stable world of God, and Schreber the subject qua organic reality and fragmented body. We shall see, provided we borrow a number of references from analytic literature, that a major part of his fantasies, of his hallucinations, of his miraculous or marvelous construction, consists of elements in which all sorts of bodily equivalents are clearly recognizable. We shall see, for example, what the hallucination of the little men represents organically. But the pivot of these phe-

nomena is the law, which here lies entirely within the imaginary dimension. I say it's transversal because it's diagonally opposed to the relation of subject to subject, the axis of effective speech.

We shall continue this analysis, which has only just begun, next time.

14 December 1955

Appendix

The following session: The discourse of the desk

I realized that last time you had a bit of difficulty, owing to the difference in potential between my discourse and the reading of President Schreber's nevertheless absorbing writings. This technical difficulty has made me think of relying less on a running commentary on the text in future. I had thought that we could read it from beginning to end and on the way pick out those elements of structure, of organization, where I would like you to make progress. The experience has shown that I shall have to organize things differently. First of all I shall make a choice.

This question of method, combined with the fact that I had not fully decided to give today's seminar, and the fact that only my great affection for you leads me to do so, added to which is the tradition that on the eve of vacations in establishments of secondary education, which is about your level, one gives a small reading, has led me to decide to read you something recent and unpublished, by me, and which is in line with our subject.

This is a paper I gave, or am supposed to have given, at Dr. Hoff's Psychiatric Clinic in Vienna on the theme, *The meaning of a return to Freud in psychoanalysis*, for them to learn about the Parisian movement and the style, if not the general orientation, of our teaching.

I gave this paper under conditions of improvisation that were the same as here, or even rather more so. The discourse I give here I prepare. There, the subject appeared sufficiently general for me to rely on my ability to adapt to the audience, in such a way that I am going to deliver a written reconstitution, as faithful as possible to the spirit of improvisation and the modulations of this discourse. I was led to elaborate certain passages a little and to add certain considerations that I went on to make in a smaller session that took place afterwards, where I found myself with a second, smaller circle of the analyst technicians who had attended the first lecture. I addressed them on a

technical question, that of the meaning of interpretation in general. This was nonetheless a subject of some astonishment on their part, at least at first sight, which proves that there is always room for trying to establish a dialogue.

84 I am going to try, as far as possible, to read this in the spoken tone my text endeavors to reproduce, and which, I hope, will hold your attention better than the reading did last time.

Let me tell you, even if it's only so as to provoke your curiosity, that I had quite a curious adventure in the middle of this discourse – which, since the material is lacking, we won't be able to reproduce here, except in the somewhat simulated fashion in which it is inscribed in the text.

Over there I had a sort of desk in front of me, of better quality than this one, and it was probably at a moment when at least my interest, if not the audience's, was flagging a bit, for the contact is not always as good as I feel it is here with you, the said desk came to my aid, and in a fairly extraordinary way if we compare it with the words we heard recently from one of my old friends at the Sorbonne, who recounted some astonishing things to us last Saturday, namely the metamorphosis of the lacemaker into rhinoceros horns and finally into cauliflowers. Well! this desk began to speak. And I had all the trouble in the world getting the floor back from it.

This element will perhaps introduce a slight imbalance into the composition of my discourse.

Lacan reads the article, published in E, 401-36/114-45 as "The Freudian Thing, Or the Meaning of the Return to Freud in Psychoanalysis."

21 December 1955

VI

85

The psychotic phenomenon and its mechanism

CERTAINTY AND REALITY
SCHREBER IS NO POET
THE NOTION OF DEFENSE
VERDICHTUNG, VERDRÄNGUNG,
VERNEINUNG, AND *VERWERFUNG*

It is always a good thing not to let one's horizons close in. This is why today I should like to remind you not only of my general design regarding the Schreber case, but also of the basic purpose of these seminars. Whenever one pursues a certain course step by step for a while, one always ends up with a wall in front of one's nose. But still, if I lead you off into difficult places, perhaps we are a bit more demanding than others. I also think I need to remind you how this course is mapped out.

The plan of this seminar would need to be expressed in various ways that all confirm one another and that all come down to the same thing. First I should tell you that I am here to remind you that our experience should be taken seriously and that being a psychoanalyst does not exempt you from being intelligent and sensitive. The fact that you have been given a number of keys is no excuse for you to use them not to think anymore and to endeavor, as is the general inclination of human beings, to leave everything as it is. There are certain ways of using categories such as the unconscious, the drive, the pre-oedipal relation, and defense that consist in drawing none of the authentic consequences that they imply and considering that this is an affair that concerns others but does not go to the heart of your own relations with the world. It has to be said that though you may be psychoanalysts, this in no way obliges you, unless you give yourselves a bit of a shake, to bear in mind that the world is not quite like everyone imagines it to be, but is caught up in mechanisms you are supposed to be familiar with.

Now, there is no question, either – make no mistake – of my doing the 86
metaphysics of the Freudian discovery and drawing out its consequences for what may be called being, in the widest sense of the term. This is not my intention. This would not be useless, but I think that it can be left to others and that what we are doing here will indicate how it might be approached. Don't get the idea that you are forbidden to stretch your wings a bit in this direction – you will lose nothing in inquiring into the metaphysics of the

human condition as it is revealed to us by the Freudian discovery. But still, this is not the main point, for you receive this metaphysics on your head. One can have confidence in things as they are already structured – they are there and you are implicated in them.

It's not for nothing that the Freudian discovery was made in our time, and it's not for nothing that, through a series of extremely muddled accidents, you personally find yourselves its depositaries. The metaphysics in question can be inscribed entirely within man's relation to the symbolic. You are immersed in it to a degree that extends far beyond your experience as technicians and, as I sometimes point out to you, we find traces of it and its presence in all sorts of disciplines and inquiries bordering on psychoanalysis.

You are technicians, but technicians of things that exist within this discovery. Since this technique develops through speech, the world that in your experience you have to move about in is incurved in this perspective. Let us try at least to structure it correctly.

This is the requirement that my little square meets,[1] which goes from the subject to the other and, in a way, here, from the symbolic towards the real, subject, ego, body, and in the contrary sense towards the big Other of intersubjectivity, the Other that you do not apprehend as long as it is a subject, that is, as long as it can lie, the Other that on the contrary one always finds in its place, the Other of the heavenly bodies, or, if you will, the stable system of the world, of the object, and, between the two, speech, with its three stages of the signifier, meaning, and discourse.

This is not a world system, but a system of reference for our own experience – this is how it is structured, and we can situate within it the various phenomenal manifestations with which we have to deal. We shall not understand a thing unless we take this structure seriously.

Of course, this business of taking things seriously itself goes to the heart of the matter. What characterizes a normal subject is precisely that he never
87 takes seriously certain realities that he recognizes exist. You are surrounded by all sorts of realities about which you are in no doubt, some of which are particularly threatening, but you don't take them fully seriously, for you think, along with Paul Claudel's subtitle, that *the worst is not always certain,*[2] and maintain yourselves in an average, basic – in the sense of relating to the base – state of blissful uncertainty, which makes possible for you a sufficiently relaxed existence. Surely, certainty is the rarest of things for the normal subject. If he questions himself about this matter, he will be aware that certainty emerges in strict correlation to an action he undertakes.

I shall not pursue this any further, as we are not here to give the psychol-

[1] See above, chap. 1, p. 14.
[2] Paul Claudel, *Le soulier de satin, ou, le pire n'est pas toujours sûr.*

ogy and phenomenology of those closest to us. We have to attain it, as usual, by means of a detour, via those furthest from us. Today this is Schreber the madman.

1

If we keep our distance, we shall see that Schreber, in common with other madmen, possesses a feature that you will also find in the most readily observable data – this is why I do case presentations for you. Psychologists, because they don't really keep company with the insane, raise the false problem of why they think their hallucinations are real. Since it is readily seen that nevertheless this doesn't hang together, one therefore exhausts oneself in deliberating on how the belief came about. One should first specify what the belief is, since in point of fact the madman doesn't believe in the reality of his hallucinations.

There are thousands of examples of this, but I shall not go into them today because I want to stay with the text of Schreber the madman. But still, it is within the reach even of people who are not psychiatrists. Chance recently brought me to open Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* at page 334 on the theme of the thing and the natural world. I refer you to it. You will find some excellent remarks on this subject – for example, that nothing is easier to obtain from the subject than the admission that what he can hear nobody else has heard. He says – *Yes, all right, so I was the only one who heard it, then.*

Reality is not the issue. The subject admits, by means of all the verbally expressed explanatory detours at his disposal, that these phenomena are of another order than the real. He is well aware that their reality is uncertain. 88
He even admits their unreality up to a certain point. But, contrary to the normal subject for whom reality is always in the right place, he is certain of something, which is that what is at issue – ranging from hallucination to interpretation – regards him.

Reality isn't at issue for him, certainty is. Even when he expresses himself along the lines of saying that what he experiences is not of the order of reality, this does not affect his certainty that it concerns him. The certainty is radical. The very nature of what he is certain of can quite easily remain completely ambiguous, covering the entire range from malevolence to benevolence. But it means something unshakable for him.

This constitutes what is called, whether rightly or wrongly, the elementary phenomenon or, as a more developed phenomenon, delusional belief.

You can obtain an example of this by leafing through the admirable summary Freud gave of Schreber's book when he analyzed it. Through Freud you can make contact with it and see its importance.

A central phenomenon in Schreber's delusion, we may even say an initial phenomenon in the conception he formed of the transformation of the world that constitutes his delusion, is what he calls *Seelenmord,* soul murder. Now, he himself presents this as being totally enigmatic.

To be sure, chapter 3 of the *Memoirs,* in which he gave reasons for his neuropathy and developed the notion of soul murder, was censored. Still, we know that it contained remarks concerning his family, which would probably have thrown light both on his initial delusion in relation to his father and brother, or to someone else close to him, and on what are commonly called the significant transferential elements. But that censorship is not as regrettable as all that, ultimately. Sometimes too many details prevent the basic formal features from being seen. What is essential is not that, because of the censorship, we should have lost the occasion to understand such and such an affective experience concerning those close to him, but that he, the subject, failed to understand it and yet was able to formulate it.

He characterizes it as a decisive moment in this new dimension that he has attained and described for us in his account of the various relational modes, the prospect of which has gradually unfolded for him. He is certain that soul murder is at the root of something, but it retains the character of an enigma, nevertheless. What on earth could it be to murder a soul? Moreover, it's not as if each and every one of us knows how to differentiate the soul from every-
89 thing that is connected to it, but this delusional does, with a degree of certainty that is an essential feature of his testimony.

We must pause at these things and not overlook their distinctive character if we want to understand what is really going on and not simply, with the aid of certain key words or of this opposition between reality and certainty, rid ourselves of the phenomenon of madness.

I must accustom you to finding this delusional certainty wherever it exists. You will then notice for example the extent to which the phenomenon of jealousy is different according to whether it presents itself in a normal or in a delusional subject. There is no need to recall at length what is humorous or even comical in the normal form of jealousy, which, one could say, spontaneously rejects certainty, whatever the reality is. There is the famous story of the jealous husband who pursues his wife to the door of the very bedroom in which she has locked herself with someone else. This contrasts sufficiently with the fact that the delusional exempts himself from any real references. This ought to make you mistrustful of using normal mechanisms such as projection to explain the genesis of a delusional jealousy. Yet it is common to see this extrapolation made. It is enough to read Freud's text on President Schreber to perceive that, though he does not have the time to explore the whole breadth of the question, he shows all the dangers there are in independently bringing projection, the relation between ego and ego, that is, between

ego and other, to bear where paranoia is concerned. Despite this warning's being written black on white, the term *projection* is used without rhyme or reason to explain delusions and their genesis.

I would go even further – the delusional, as he climbs the scale of delusions, becomes increasingly sure of things that he regards as more and more unreal. This is what distinguishes paranoia from dementia praecox. The delusional articulates them with an abundance, a richness, that is precisely one of the most essential clinical features which, while one of the most massive, must nevertheless not be neglected. Moreover, the discursive products characteristic of the register of paranoia usually blossom into literary productions, in the sense in which *literary* simply means sheets of paper covered with writing. Notice that this fact militates in favor of maintaining a certain unity between those delusions that have been perhaps prematurely isolated as paranoid and the formations known as paraphrenic in classical nosology.

It is, however, important to notice what the madman – including our President Schreber who gives us such a gripping work in its completed, enclosed, 90
full, and finished form – lacks at this point, however much of a writer he might be.

The world he describes for us matches the conception to which he has raised himself after the period of the unexplained symptom of the profound, cruel, and painful disturbance of his existence. According to this conception which, moreover, gives him a certain mastery over his psychosis, he is the female correspondent of God. Henceforth, everything becomes understandable, everything works out, and I would even go so far as to say everything works out for everybody since he plays the role of intermediary between a humanity threatened to the very depths of its existence and this divine power with whom he has such special ties. Everything works out in the *Versöhnung*, the reconciliation, that positions him as the woman of God. His relationship with God, as he conveys it to us, is rich and complex, and yet we cannot fail to be struck by the fact that the text includes no indication of the slightest presence, the slightest fervor, the slightest real communication, that would give us the idea that there really is a relationship here between two beings.

Without resorting to a comparison with a great mystic, which would be out of place in relation to a text like this, open nevertheless St. John of the Cross at any page you like, if this test appeals to you. He, too, in the experience of the ascent of the soul, presents himself in an attitude of receiving and offering and even speaks of the soul's nuptials with the divine presence. Yet the tone of the two approaches has absolutely nothing in common. I would say that even in the briefest testimony of an authentic religious experience you can see a world of difference. Let us say that the lengthy discourse in which Schreber testifies to what he has finally resolved to acknowledge as the solution of his problem nowhere gives us the feeling of an original experience

in which the subject is himself included – his testimony can be said to be truly objectified.

What are these testimonies of delusionals about? Don't say that the madman is someone who does without the other's recognition. Clearly, Schreber wrote this enormous work so that nobody would be unaware of what he experienced and, even, so that when the opportunity arose learned scientists would verify the presence in his body of the feminine nerves that had gradually penetrated him, in order to objectify his own unique relationship with the divine reality. This certainly looks like an effort to be recognized. Since it concerns a published discourse, this raises a question mark as to what the need for recognition might possibly mean to this character of the madman,
91 so isolated by his experience. At first sight what seems distinctive about a madman is the fact that he has no need for recognition. But his self-sufficiency in his own world, the auto-comprehensibility that seems characteristic of it, is not devoid of contradiction.

We could summarize the position we are in with respect to his discourse on first encountering it by saying that while he may be a writer, he is no poet. Schreber doesn't introduce us to a new dimension of experience. There is poetry whenever writing introduces us to a world other than our own and also makes it become our own, making present a being, a certain fundamental relationship. The poetry makes us unable to doubt the authenticity of St. John of the Cross's experience, or Proust's, or Gérard de Nerval's. Poetry is the creation of a subject adopting a new order of symbolic relations to the world. There is nothing like any of this in Schreber's *Memoirs*.

So what, in the final analysis, are we going to say about the delusional? Is he on his own? This isn't the feeling we get, either, since he is inhabited by all sorts of existences, improbable ones, certainly, but whose meaningful character is in no doubt. This is an initial datum, whose articulation becomes more and more elaborate as his delusion advances. He is raped, manipulated, transformed, spoken in every possible way, and, I should say, chattered. You can read in detail what he says about what he calls the birds of the sky and their chirping. This is clearly what is at issue – he is the seat of an entire aviary of phenomena – and this is the fact that inspired this enormous communication of his, this book of some five hundred pages, which is the result of a lengthy activity of construction that for him was the solution to his internal adventure.

In the beginning, and at a later moment as well, there is doubt over what the meaning refers to, but there is never any doubt for him that it does refer to something. With a subject like Schreber, things go so far that the whole world ends up caught up in this delusion of meaning, in such a way that it can be said that, far from his being alone, there is almost nothing in his surroundings that in some sense isn't him.

On the other hand, everything he brings into being in these meanings is in a certain sense void of him. He phrases it in a thousand different ways, and especially for example when he remarks that God, his imaginary interlocutor, understands nothing about what goes on within, nothing at all about living beings, and that he never has anything to do with anything but shadows or cadavers. Moreover, his whole world has been transformed into a fantasmagoria of shadows of *fleeting-improvised-men*.

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To understand how such a process of construction might occur in a subject, we have, in the light of analytic perspectives, several avenues open to us.

The simplest are the ones we are already familiar with. A category in the foreground today is that of defense, which was introduced into analysis very early on. Delusion is regarded as one of the subject's defenses. Neuroses are explained in the same manner, moreover.

You know how much I insist upon the incomplete and perilous character of this reference, which lends itself to all sorts of hasty and harmful interventions. You also know how difficult it is to rid oneself of it. This concept is so insistent, so tempting, precisely because it touches something objectifiable. The subject defends, well then! we will help him to understand that he does nothing but defend, we will show him what he is defending against. As soon as you enter into that approach you find yourself confronted by numerous dangers – in the first instance, the danger of missing the level at which your intervention must be brought to bear. In point of fact, you must always rigorously differentiate the order within which the defense appears.

Suppose that this defense was obviously within the symbolic order and that you could elucidate it along the lines of an utterance in the complete sense, that is, one that in the subject involves both signifier and signified. If the subject presents you with both the signifier and the signified, then you may intervene by showing him the union of this signifier and this signified. But only if both are present in his discourse. If you do not have them both, if you have the feeling that the subject is defending against something that you yourself see and that he doesn't, if, that is, you clearly see that the subject is aberrant with respect to reality, then the notion of defense is insufficient to enable you to place the subject before reality.

You may recall what I once said about Kris's nice paper on the character haunted by the idea that he was a plagiarist and the accrued guilt.[3] It was in

[3] Ernst Kris, "Ego Psychology and Interpretation in Psychoanalytic Therapy." Lacan elaborated on these remarks about Kris's case in "Réponse au commentaire de Jean Hyppolite sur la *Verneinung* de Freud," E, 393-99. The case is discussed again in "The Direction of the Treatment and the Principle of its Power," E, 598-602 / 238-40. Finally, the same article was mentioned in "The Function and Field of Speech

the name of defense that Kris considered his intervention to be a stroke of genius. For some time now we have been getting nothing but this notion of defense and, as the ego has to struggle on three fronts, that is, against the *id*, the superego, and the external world, one believes one is authorized to inter-
93 vene on any one of these levels. When the subject alludes to the work of one of his colleagues whom he claims he has plagiarized yet again, one takes the liberty of reading the work and, observing that there is nothing there that merits being considered an original idea for the subject to plagiarize, makes this known to him. One considers such an intervention to be part of the analysis. We are fortunately both honest and blind enough to give as proof that our interpretation is well-founded the fact that the subject brings this nice little story along to the next session – on leaving the session he had gone into a restaurant and treated himself to his favorite dish, fresh brains.

One is delighted; there is a response. But what does it mean? It means that the subject has himself understood absolutely nothing of the matter, that he understands nothing of what he brings us, either, so that one fails to see very well where the progress that has been brought about is situated. Kris has pressed the right button. It is not enough to press the right button. The subject quite simply acts out.

I treat acting out as equivalent to a hallucinatory phenomenon of the delusional type that occurs when you symbolize prematurely, when you address something in the order of reality and not within the symbolic register. For an analyst, addressing the question of plagiarism in the symbolic register must first be centered on the idea that plagiarism doesn't exist. There is no symbolic property. This is precisely the question – if the symbolic belongs to everybody, why have things in the symbolic order taken on this emphasis, this weight, for the subject?

This is where the analyst has to wait for the subject to provide him with something before bringing his interpretation to bear. As we are dealing with a grand neurotic who has resisted a certainly non-negligible analytic effort – before going to Kris he had already had an analysis – the likelihood is that the plagiarism is fantasmatic. On the other hand, if you bring the intervention to bear at the level of reality, that is, if you return to the most elementary psychotherapy, what does the subject do? He responds in the clearest of manners at a deeper level of reality. He testifies that something emerges from reality that is obstinate, something that imposes itself upon him, and that nothing one says will in any way change the core of the problem. You show him that he isn't a plagiarist anymore. He shows you what is at stake by making you eat fresh brains. He renews his symptom, and at a point that has

and Language in Psychoanalysis" in relation to the difference between "need for love" and "demand for love," E, 296 / 83.

no more foundation or existence than the one at which he showed it at the outset. Is there something that he shows? I would go further—I would say that there is nothing at all that he shows, but that something shows itself.

Here we are at the heart of what I shall be trying to demonstrate on the 94
subject of President Schreber this year.

3

President Schreber reveals to observation certain microscopic things in a dilated form. This is going to enable me to clarify for you what Freud clearly formulated on psychosis, without taking it too far, because in his day the problem had not attained the degree of acuteness or urgency for analytic practice that it has in ours. He says – a crucial sentence that I have already quoted many times – something that has been rejected from within reappears without. I shall come back to this.

I propose putting the problem in the following terms. Prior to all symbolization – this priority is not temporal but logical – there is, as the psychoses demonstrate, a stage at which it is possible for a portion of symbolization not to take place. This initial stage precedes the entire neurotic dialectic, which is due to the fact that neurosis is articulated speech, insofar as the repressed and the return of the repressed are one and the same thing. It can thus happen that something primordial regarding the subject's being does not enter into symbolization and is not repressed, but rejected.

This hasn't been demonstrated. Nor is it a hypothesis. It is a way of phrasing the problem. This first stage doesn't have to be situated anywhere genetically. I am not denying of course that what happens at the level of the first symbolic articulations, the essential appearance of the subject, raises questions for us, but do not allow yourselves to be fascinated by this genetic moment. The young child whom you see playing at making an object disappear and reappear, who is thereby working at apprehending the symbol, will, if you let yourselves be fascinated by him, mask the fact that the symbol is already there, that it is enormous and englobes him from all sides – that language exists, fills libraries to the point of overflowing, and surrounds, guides, and rouses all your actions – the fact that you are engaged, that it can require you to move at any moment and take you somewhere – all this you forget before the child being introduced into the symbolic dimension. So let us place ourselves at the level of the existence of the symbol as such, insofar as we are immersed in it.

In the subject's relationship to the symbol there is the possibility of a prim- 95
itive *Verwerfung*, that is, that something is not symbolized and is going to appear in the real.

It is essential to introduce the category of the real, it is impossible to neglect

it in Freud's texts. I give it this name so as to define a field different from the symbolic. From there alone is it possible to throw light on the psychotic phenomenon and its evolution.

At the level of this pure, primitive *Bejahung,* which may or may not take place, an initial dichotomy is established – what has been subject to *Bejahung,* to primitive symbolization, will have various destinies. What has come under the influence of the primitive *Verwerfung* will have another.

Today I am going to forge ahead and I will light my lamp so that you can see where I am headed. Do not take what I am expounding for you as an arbitrary construction, nor simply as the fruit of adherence to Freud's text, even if it is exactly what we read in this extraordinary text, *Die Verneinung,* that M. Hyppolite was kind enough two years ago to discuss for us.[4] If I say what I am saying now it is because it is the only way to introduce rigor, coherence, and rationality into what happens in psychosis, and namely in the psychosis in question here, President Schreber's. I shall subsequently show you the difficulties our entire understanding of the case raises and the need for this initial formulation.

In the beginning, then, there is either *Bejahung,* which is the affirmation of what is, or *Verwerfung.*

Obviously, it is not enough for the subject to have only selected a part of the text of what there is to say, while thrusting the rest aside, in the hope that at least with the part things will hang together. There are always things that don't hang together. This is an obvious fact, if we do not begin with the idea that inspires all classical, academic psychology, which is that human beings are, as they say, adapted beings, because they are living, and therefore it must all hang together. You are not a psychoanalyst if you accept this. To be a psychoanalyst is simply to open your eyes to the evident fact that nothing malfunctions more than human reality. If you believe that you have a well-adapted, reasonable ego, which knows its way around, how to recognize what is to be done and not to be done, and how to take reality into account, then there is nothing left to do but send you packing. Psychoanalysis, and this it shares with common experience, shows you that nothing is more stupid than human destiny, that is, that one is always being fooled. Even when one does do something successfully, it is precisely not what one wanted to do. There is nothing more disappointed than a gentleman who is supposed to have attained the pinnacle of his wishes. One only need speak with him for three minutes, frankly, as perhaps only the artifice of the psychoanalytic couch permits, to
96 know that in the end all that stuff is just the sort of thing he could not care less about and, furthermore, that he is particularly troubled by all sorts of things. Analysis is about becoming aware of this and taking it into account.

[4] See above, chap. 1, p. 12 n.9.

It is not by accident, because it couldn't be otherwise, that by a bizarre stroke of luck we go through life without meeting anyone but the unhappy. One says to oneself that there must be happy people somewhere. Well then! unless you get that out of your head, you have understood nothing about psychoanalysis. That is what I call taking things seriously. When I told you things had to be taken seriously, it was so that you would take precisely this point seriously, that you never take anything seriously.

So, within *Bejahung* all sorts of accidents occur. There is no indication that the primitive retrenchment has been done cleanly. Besides, there is a strong chance that in the long term we will know nothing about the motives for it, precisely because it is situated beyond all mechanisms of symbolization. And if someone does know something about this one day, then there is little chance that he will be an analyst. In any case, it is with what remains that the subject constructs himself a world and, above all, that he situates himself within it, that is, that he manages to be more or less what he has admitted that he was—a man when he finds himself to be of masculine sex, or, conversely, a woman.

If I put this in the foreground, it is because analysis strongly emphasizes that this is one of the essential problems. Never forget that nothing touching on the behavior of the human being as subject, or on anything in which he realizes himself, in which he quite simply is, can escape being bound by the laws of speech.

The Freudian discovery teaches us that all natural harmony in man is profoundly disconcerted. It is not just that bisexuality plays an essential role. This bisexuality is not surprising from the biological point of view, given that the means of access to regularization and normalization in man are more complex than and different from what we observe in mammals and in vertebrates in general. Symbolization, in other words the Law, plays an essential role here.

If Freud insisted on the Oedipus complex to the extent of constructing a sociology of totems and taboos, it is obviously because for him the Law is there *ab origine*. It is therefore out of the question to ask oneself the question of origins—the Law is there precisely from the beginning, it has always been there, and human sexuality must realize itself through it and by means of it. This fundamental law is simply a law of symbolization. This is what the Oedipus complex means.

So, within this, everything imaginable will occur under the three registers 97
of *Verdichtung*, *Verdrängung*, and *Verneinung*.

Verdichtung is simply the law of misunderstanding [*malentendu*], owing to which we survive or, even, owing to which we can, if we are a man, for example, completely satisfy our opposite tendencies by occupying a feminine position in a symbolic relation, while perfectly well remaining a man equipped with one's virility on both the imaginary and the real planes. This function

which, with greater or lesser intensity, is a role of femininity, may thus find the means to satisfy itself in this essential receptivity that is one of the fundamental existing roles. This is not metaphorical – we do indeed receive something in receiving speech. Participating in speech relations may have several senses at once, and one of the meanings involved might be just that of obtaining satisfaction in the feminine position, as such essential to our being.

Verdrängung, repression, is not the law of misunderstanding, it is what happens when things don't hang together at the level of a symbolic chain. Each symbolic chain we are linked to comprises an internal coherence, which means that we can be forced at any given moment to render what we have received to someone else. Now, it sometimes happens that we are unable to do this on all levels at once – in other words, we find the law intolerable. Not that it is intolerable in itself, but the position we are in comprises a sacrifice that proves to be impossible at the level of meaning. So we repress some of our own acts, discourse, or behavior. But the chain nevertheless continues to run on beneath the surface, express its demands, and assert its claims – and this it does through the intermediary of the neurotic symptom. This is where repression is at the base of neurosis.

As for *Verneinung*, this belongs to the order of discourse and concerns what we are capable of bringing to the light of day in an articulated form. The so-called reality principle intervenes strictly at this level. We have gone over at different moments of our commentary the three or four places in his work where Freud expresses this most clearly. It concerns the attribution, not of the value of symbols, *Bejahung*, but of the value of existence. Freud gives, with a profundity a thousand times in advance of what was being said in his day, the following characteristic feature of this level, which he situates in his vocabulary as that of the judgment of existence – it always concerns the refinding of an object.

All human apprehension of reality is subject to this primordial condition –
98 the subject seeks the object of his desire, but nothing leads him to it. Reality, inasmuch as it is supported by desire, is initially hallucinated. The Freudian theory of the birth of the world of objects, of reality as it is expressed, for example, at the end of *Die Traumdeutung* and restated whenever essentially it is in question, implies that the subject remains suspended at the point of what makes his fundamental object the object of his essential satisfaction.[5]

This is the part of Freud's work, of Freudian thought, that is often returned to in all the developments that are currently taking place on pre-oedipal relations, which ultimately consist in saying that the subject always seeks to sat-

[5] See the last section of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, "The Unconscious and Consciousness—Reality," SE 7:610.

isfy the primitive maternal relation. In other words, whereas Freud introduced the dialectic of two inseparable principles that cannot be thought one without the other, the pleasure principle and the reality principle, one of them, the pleasure principle, is selected and emphasized through the claim that it dominates and englobes the reality principle.

But this reality principle is basically misrecognized. It expresses precisely this – the subject does not have to *find* the object of his desire, he is not led, channeled there, by the natural rails of a more or less pre-established instinctual and, moreover, more or less stumbling, adaptation, such as we see in the animal kingdom. He must on the contrary *refind* the object, whose emergence is fundamentally hallucinated. Of course, he never does refind it, and this is precisely what the reality principle consists in. The subject never refinds, Freud writes, anything but another object that answers more or less satisfactorily to the needs in question. He never finds anything but a distinct object since he must by definition refind something that he has on loan. This is the essential point that the introduction of the reality principle into the Freudian dialectic hinges on.

What has to be understood, because this is given in clinical experience, is that something else appears in the real than what the subject experiences and seeks, something other than what the subject is led towards by that apparatus of reflection, mastery, and research that is his ego, with all its fundamental alienations, something else that can appear either in the sporadic form of that hallucination that is emphasized in the case of the Wolf Man, or, in a much more extensive fashion, as what takes place in the case of President Schreber.

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What is the psychotic phenomenon? It is the emergence in reality of an enormous meaning that has the appearance of being nothing at all—in so far as it cannot be tied to anything, since it has never entered into the system of symbolization—but under certain conditions it can threaten the entire edifice.

In the case of President Schreber there is obviously a meaning that concerns the subject, but it is rejected and merely sketches itself most indistinctly on his horizon and in his ethics, while its re-emergence occasions the psychotic invasion. You will see the extent to which what determines it is different from what determines the neurotic invasion – these are strictly opposite conditions. In President Schreber's case this rejected meaning is closely related to the primitive bisexuality I was speaking about just before. In no way has President Schreber ever integrated any type of feminine form – we shall try to see this in the text.

It is difficult to see how it could be purely and simply the suppression of a

given tendency, the rejection or repression of some more or less transferential drive he would have felt toward Dr. Flechsig, that led President Schreber to construct his enormous delusion. There really must be something more proportionate to the result involved.

I point out to you in advance that this involves the feminine function in its essential symbolic meaning and that we can refind it only at the level of procreation. You will see why. We are not saying *emasculation* or *feminization* or *fantasy of pregnancy,* for this extends to procreation. Here we have what appears to him at a high point in his existence, and not at all at a moment of deficit, in the form of an irruption in the real of something that he has never known, a sudden emergence of a total strangeness that will progressively bring on a radical submersion of all his categories to the point of forcing him into a veritable reshaping of his world.

May we speak of a process of compensation, or even of cure, as some people would not hesitate to do, on the pretext that when his delusion stabilizes the subject presents a calmer state than at its appearance? Is he cured or
100 not? It is a question worth raising, but I think it can only be wrong to speak of a cure here.

What happens, then, when what is not symbolized reappears in the real? It wouldn't be useless here to bring forward the term *defense.* Clearly, what appears does so in the register of meaning, in the register of a meaning that comes from nowhere, and which refers to nothing, but is an essential meaning, one that concerns the subject. What intervenes whenever there is a conflict of orders, namely repression, is set in motion at this point. But why doesn't repression work here, that is, why isn't what happens when a neurosis is involved the end result?

Before we can know why, we must study the how. I shall focus on what creates the structural difference between neurosis and psychosis.

When a drive, let's say a feminine or pacifying one, appears in a subject for whom the drive has already been brought into play at different points of his previous symbolization, in his infantile neurosis for example, it manages to express itself in a certain number of symptoms. Thus what is repressed nevertheless expresses itself, repression and the return of the repressed being one and the same thing. The subject has the possibility, within repression, of getting by when something new happens. Compromises are made. This is what characterizes neurosis; it is both the most obvious thing in the world and the thing one doesn't want to see.

Verwerfung is not at the same level as *Verneinung.* When, at the beginning of a psychosis, the nonsymbolized reappears in the real, there are responses made from the side of the mechanism of *Verneinung,* but they prove inadequate.

What is the beginning of a psychosis? Does a psychosis, like a neurosis,

have a prehistory? Is there, or is there not, an infantile psychosis? I am not saying that we shall answer this question, but at least we shall raise it.

It looks very much as if psychosis has no prehistory. However, it so happens that when, in exceptional circumstances that will have to be spelled out, something that has not been primitively symbolized appears in the external world the subject finds himself absolutely unequipped, incapable of making *Verneinung* succeed in respect of the event. What then occurs has the characteristic of being totally excluded from the symbolizing compromise of neurosis and, through a veritable chain reaction at the level of the imaginary, is translated into another register, that is, into the opposite diagonal of our little magic square.

For want of being able in any way to re-establish his pact with the other, for want of being able to make any symbolic mediation whatsoever between 101
what is new and himself, the subject moves into another mode of mediation, completely different from the former, and substitutes for symbolic mediation a profusion, an imaginary proliferation, into which the central signal of a possible mediation is introduced in a deformed and profoundly asymbolic fashion.

The signifier itself undergoes profound modifications that will give this particular quality to those intuitions that are most significant for the subject. President Schreber's fundamental language in fact indicates that the signifier is still required within this imaginary world.

The subject's relationship to the world is a mirror relation. The subject's world will essentially consist of the relationship with that being who is the other for him, namely God himself. Something of man's relation to woman is allegedly realized here. But on the contrary you will see, when we come to study this delusion in detail, that these two characters, that is, God, with all that he implies, the universe, the celestial sphere, and on the other hand Schreber himself, literally decomposed into a multitude of imaginary beings with their toing-and-froing and their various transfixions, are two strictly alternating structures. They develop in a way that is very interesting for us and that is permanently elided, veiled, domesticated in the life of a normal man—namely, the dialectic of the fragmented body in relation to the imaginary universe, which is subjacent to a normal structure.

The outstanding interest in studying Schreber's delusion is that it enables us to improve our grasp of the imaginary dialectic. If it is manifestly distinct from everything we can assume about an instinctual, natural relation, it is because of a generic structure we originally described, which is the mirror stage. This structure makes man's imaginary world something decomposed in advance. Here we find it in its advanced state, and that is a part of our interest in the analysis of delusions as such. As analysts have always emphasized, delusions show us the play of fantasies in a highly advanced state of

duality. The two characters that the world is reduced to for President Schreber are constructed in relation to one another; they offer one another their inverted image.

The important thing is to see in what way this answers to the indirectly formulated demand to integrate what has emerged in the real, which for the subject represents something of himself that he has never symbolized. A requirement of the symbolic order, through being unable to be integrated into what has already been put into play in the dialectical movement on which
102 the subject has lived, brings about a serial disintegration, a removal of the woof from the tapestry, which is known as a delusion. A delusion is not necessarily unrelated to normal discourse and the subject is well able to convey it to us, to his own satisfaction, within a world in which communication is not entirely broken off.

Next time we shall continue our examination at the point where *Verwerfung* and *Verdrängung* intersect with *Verneinung*.

11 January 1956

VII

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The imaginary dissolution

DORA AND HER QUADRILATERAL
EROS AND AGGRESSION IN THE MALE STICKLEBACK
WHAT IS CALLED THE FATHER
THE FRAGMENTATION OF IDENTITY

My intention was to penetrate today into the essence of madness, and I thought that was mad. I was reassured by the thought that what we are undertaking is not so isolated and hazardous.

The work isn't easy, however. Why not? Because by a singular piece of fate all human undertakings, particularly the difficult ones, always tend, by virtue of this mysterious thing called laziness, to lose ground. To assess this one only has to reread Freud's text on President Schreber without prejudice and with an eye and an understanding cleansed of all the noise that we hear around analytic concepts.

It is an absolutely extraordinary text, but it only puts us on the path to the enigma. The entire explanation he gives of the delusion links up with the notion of narcissism, which is certainly not elucidated for Freud, at least not at the time he writes on Schreber.

People today act as if narcissism were something that was self-explanatory – before extending to external objects, there is a stage at which the subject takes his own body as object. The term *narcissism* does, it is true, have a meaning in this dimension. Does this mean, though, that the term *narcissism* is used only in this sense? President Schreber's autobiography, in the way Freud used it to support this notion, shows us, however, that what was repugnant to the said President's narcissism was the adoption of a feminine position towards his father, which involved castration. Here is someone who is supposed to be better off obtaining satisfaction in a relation founded on a delusion of grandeur, since castration can no longer affect him once his partner has become God. 104

In short, Freud's schema could be summed up thus, in line with the formulas for paranoia he gives in this same text – *I do not love him, I love God,* and reciprocally – *God loves me.*

I pointed out to you last time that this is perhaps not totally satisfactory, any more than Freud's formulas themselves are, as illuminating as they may

be. The double reversal, *I do not love him, I hate him, he hates me,* undoubtedly gives us a clue to the mechanism of persecution. The problem is entirely one of this *he*. In effect, this *he* is multiplied, neutralized, emptied, or so it seems, of subjectivity. The persecutory phenomenon takes on the character of indefinitely repeated signs, and the persecutor, to the extent that he is its support, is no longer anything more than the shadow of the persecutory object.

This is no less true of the god in question in the blossoming of President Schreber's delusion. I pointed out to you in passing how far removed – it's so obvious that it's almost too silly to mention – Schreber's relationship with God *is* from anything that occurs in mystical experience. As detailed as it is, the description of this unique partner called God nevertheless leaves us perplexed as to his nature.

What Freud said to us about the withdrawal of libidinal interest from the external object goes right to the heart of the matter. But we still need to spell out what this might mean. At what level does this withdrawal occur? We very much get the impression that something has profoundly modified the object, but is it enough to attribute this to one of these displacements of libido that we see as central to the mechanisms of the neuroses? What are the levels, the registers, by which we can define these modifications to the character of the other that are always, we very much get the impression, central to the alienation of madness?

1

Here I shall take the liberty of going back a bit to try to get you to view in a new light certain aspects of phenomena with which you are already familiar. Take a case who is not psychotic, the almost inaugural case for the properly psychoanalytic experience developed by Freud, that of Dora.[1]

105 Dora is a hysteric, and as such she has unusual object relationships. You know the difficulty that the ambiguity surrounding the issue of who her love object really is contributes both to his observations and to the pursuit of the cure. Freud eventually realized his mistake and said that it was undoubtedly as a consequence of having misrecognized Dora's true love object that he caused the whole matter to fail and that the cure was prematurely broken off without allowing a sufficient resolution of what was at issue. You know that Freud was of the opinion that he had detected a relationship of conflict in her due to her finding it impossible to detach herself from her first love object, her father, and move towards a more normal object, namely, another man. Now, the object for Dora was none other than the woman known in this case as Frau K., who was precisely her father's mistress.

[1] "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria."

Let us start with the case. I shall comment on it afterwards. The history, as you know, is that of a minuet for four characters, Dora, her father, Herr K. and Frau K. Dora in fact uses Herr K. as her ego, in that it is by means of him that she is effectively able to support her relationship with Frau K. I ask you to accept this point and trust me, since I have written enough on this case in an intervention concerning the transference for you to refer to it easily.[2]

It's only Herr K.'s mediation that enables Dora to sustain a bearable relationship. While this mediating fourth person is essential for maintaining the situation, this is not because the object of her affection is of the same sex as herself, but because she has the most profoundly motivated relations of identification and rivalry with her father, further accentuated by the fact that the mother is a person completely obliterated in the parental couple. It is because the triangular relationship is supposed to have been particularly unbearable for her that the situation not only lasted but was effectively supported within the fourfold-group composition.

This is proved by what took place the day Herr K. pronounced that fateful sentence – *My wife is nothing to me.*[3] Everything then happened as if she had answered him – *So, what can you be to me, then?* She slapped his face there and then, whereas up until that moment she had maintained with him the ambiguous relationship necessary to preserve the four-person group. This disturbed the equilibrium of the situation.

Dora is only a little hysteric; she doesn't have many symptoms. You recall, I trust, my emphasizing this famous aphonia which occurred only at her moments of *tête à tête* with, of being confronted with, her love object, and which was definitely linked to a very special erotization of the oral function, 106
withdrawn from its usual employment as soon as Dora got too close to the object of her desire. This is no big deal, and this wouldn't have brought her to see Freud, or made those around her force her to see him. On the contrary, from the moment the fourth character withdrew and broke up the situation, a little syndrome of persecution, quite simply, appeared in Dora with respect to her father.

Until then the situation had been a bit improper, but without going beyond what we might call a Viennese operetta. As all the subsequent observations make clear, Dora behaved admirably in order to avoid any scenes and to ensure that her father had normal relations with the woman – in point of fact, the nature of these relations remains pretty much in the dark. Dora covered up the entire situation and she was on the whole reasonably comfortable with it. But when the situation broke up, she began making demands,

[2] "Intervention on the Transference."
[3] "You know I get nothing out of my wife." SE 7:98.

she declared that her father wanted to prostitute her and surrender her to Herr K. in exchange for maintaining his ambiguous relations with the latter's wife.

Am I about to say that Dora is a paranoiac? I have never said this, and I am fairly scrupulous when it comes to diagnosis in psychosis.

I made an effort here last Friday to see a female patient who obviously had behavioral problems, problems of conflict, with other people. I was brought in, in short, to declare that she was psychotic and not, as had at first appeared, an obsessional neurotic. I refused to diagnose her as psychotic for one decisive reason, which was that there were none of those disturbances that are our object of study this year, which are disorders at the level of language. We must insist upon the presence of these disorders before making a diagnosis of psychosis.

A claim against people who are supposedly acting against you is not enough for us to have a psychosis. It may well be an unjustified claim, contributing to a delusion of presumption, this doesn't make it a psychosis. This isn't unrelated to psychosis – there is a small delusion, one could describe it that way. That these phenomena are continuous is common knowledge – people have always known how to define the paranoiac as a touchy, intolerant, and distrustful gentleman, who is in a state of verbalized conflict with his surroundings. But for us to have a psychosis, there must be disturbances of language – this at least is the rule of thumb I suggest you adopt provisionally.

With respect to her father Dora experiences a significant, interpretative, or even hallucinatory phenomenon, but it does not add up to a delusion. This is nevertheless a phenomenon that is on the ineffable, intuitive road towards
107 imputing hostility and bad intentions to others – and concerning a situation the subject has, in a profoundly elective way, actually participated in.

What does this mean? This character's level of otherness becomes modified, and the situation deteriorates owing to the absence of one of the components of the quadrilateral that enabled it to be sustained. Here we can make use of the notion of distantiation, provided we know how to handle it prudently. People use it indiscriminately, but this is no reason to refuse to use it ourselves, provided we give it an application that is in better agreement with the facts.

This takes us to the heart of the problem of narcissism.

2

What notion of narcissism can we form on the basis of our work? We regard narcissism as the central imaginary relation of interhuman relationships. What crystallized analytic experience around this notion? Above all, its ambiguity. It is in fact an erotic relationship – all erotic identification, all seizing of the

other in an image in a relationship of erotic captivation, occurs by way of the narcissistic relation – and it is also the basis of aggressive tension.

Ever since the notion of narcissism entered psychoanalytic theory, the aggressive component has been placed increasingly at the centre of technical preoccupations. But their elucidation has been rudimentary. We have to go further.

This is precisely where the mirror stage is useful. It brings to light the nature of this aggressive relation and what it signifies. If the aggressive relation enters into this formation called the ego, it's because it is constitutive of it, because the ego is already by itself an other, and because it sets itself up in a duality internal to the subject. The ego is this master the subject finds in an other, whose function of mastery he establishes in his own heart. In every relationship with the other, even an erotic one, there is some echo of this relation of exclusion, *it's either him or me,* because, on the imaginary plane, the human subject is so constituted that the other is always on the point of re-adopting the place of mastery in relation to him, because there is an ego in him that is always in part foreign to him, a master implanted in him over and above his set of tendencies, conduct, instincts, and drives. All I am doing here is putting into words, with a bit more rigor to bring out the paradox, the fact that the drives and the ego are in conflict and that there is a choice 108
that has to be made. It adopts some, it doesn't adopt others, this is what is called the ego's function of synthesis – nobody knows why, given that on the contrary this synthesis never takes place and that one would do better to call it a function of mastery. And where is this master? Inside? Outside? He is always both inside and outside, which is why any purely imaginary equilibrium with the other always bears the mark of a fundamental instability.

Let me make a brief comparison with animal psychology.

We know that animals have a much less complicated life than ours. At least this is what we believe on the basis of what we see and there is enough evidence of this for man to have always used animals as a point of reference. Animals have relations with the other whenever they want to. For them there are two ways of wanting to – first, by eating it, second, by fucking it. This takes place according to what is called a natural rhythm which forms a cycle of instinctual behavior.

Now, it has been possible to bring out the importance of the fundamental role, in the triggering of these cycles, that images play in the relationship animals have with their counterparts. On seeing the silhouette of a predator to which they may be more or less sensitive, chickens and other poultry go berserk. The silhouette provokes reactions of flight, chirping, and cheeping. A slightly different silhouette will produce no reaction. The same goes for the triggering of sexual behavior. It's very easy to deceive both the male and the female stickleback. The dorsal aspect of the stickleback assumes a certain

color in one of the partners at the time of parade, which triggers in the other the cycle of behavior finally culminating in their mating.

There is no reason for this borderline I was speaking about between eros and the aggressive relation in man not to exist in animals, and it is brought out clearly, and it is quite possible to make it manifest, even to externalize it, in the stickleback.

The stickleback is in fact territorial. This is particularly important when it comes to the period of parade, which requires a certain amount of space on the more or less grassy river-beds. An actual dance takes place, a sort of nuptial flight, in which the female is initially charmed, then gently induced to surrender herself and set up house in a sort of small tunnel that has been previously built for her. But there is something else again that is not all that well understood, which is that once all this has been accomplished, the male will still find time to dig a lot of little holes about the place.

109 I do not know if you recall the phenomenology of the hole in *Being and Nothingness*, but you know the importance that Sartre ascribes to it in the psychology of the human being, the bourgeois particularly, amusing himself at the sea-side. Sartre has observed here an essential phenomenon that is close to bordering on one of these artificial manifestations of negativity. Well then, I believe that the male stickleback is no slouch in this matter. He too digs his little holes and impregnates his surroundings with his very own negativity. With these holes one really gets the impression that he is appropriating a certain field within his surroundings and, in effect, there is no question of any other male entering the area thus marked without triggering fight reflexes.

Now, experimenters, full of curiosity, have tried to discover the extension of the said fight reaction, first by varying the distance of the rival's approach, then by replacing this character with a decoy. In both cases they observed that in fact the sinking of these holes, dug during the parade, or even beforehand, is an act essentially tied to the erotic behavior. Should the invader come closer than a certain distance from the area defined as territory, this produces the reaction of attack in the male. If the invader is a bit further off, it is not produced. There is thus a point, a borderline defined by a certain distance, at which the stickleback subject finds itself caught between attacking and not attacking. And what happens then? – this erotic manifestation of negativity, this activity of sexual behavior that consists in digging holes.

In other words, when the male stickleback does not know what to do at the level of his relation with his counterpart of the same sex, when he does not know whether or not to attack, he takes to doing something that he does when he's making love.[4] This displacement, which has not failed to strike ethologists, is in no way peculiar to the stickleback. It is a common occur-

[4] See Konrad Lorenz, *King Solomon's Ring*, 26–29.

rence for birds suddenly to cease fighting and for one bird to start madly glossing its wings, just as it would normally do when it is trying to please a female.

It is curious that although he has not participated in my seminars Konrad Lorenz thought it necessary to place a very pretty and enigmatic picture of a male stickleback before a mirror at the front of his book. What is it doing? It is lowering its nose, it's adopting an oblique stance, tail in the air, nose down, a position it only ever adopts when it's going to stick its nose in the sand to dig holes. In other words, it's not indifferent to its own image in the mirror, even if this image does not introduce the whole cycle of erotic behaviour the effect of which would be to produce in the stickleback that borderline reaction between eros and aggressiveness that is indicated by digging holes.

Animals are equally accessible to the enigma of a decoy. The decoy places 110
them in a clearly artificial and ambiguous situation which already contains a derangement and a displacement of behavior. We should not be astonished at this once we have grasped the importance for man of his own specular image.

This image is functionally essential for man, in that it provides him with the orthopedic complement of that native insufficiency, constitutive confusion or disharmony, that is linked to his prematurity at birth. He will never be completely unified precisely because this is brought about in an alienating way, in the form of a foreign image which institutes an original psychical function. The aggressive tension of this *either me or the other* is entirely integrated into every kind of imaginary functioning in man.

Let us try to picture what consequences follow from the imaginary character of human behavior. This question is itself imaginary, mythical, for the reason that human behavior is never purely and simply reduced to the imaginary relation. Let us imagine for a moment a human being, in a sort of Eden in reverse, entirely reduced to this capture that is both assimilating and dissimulating in his relations with his counterparts. What happens as a result?

By way of illustration, I have already had occasion to refer to the domain of these little animal-like machines that for some time we have been having fun creating. There's of course no resemblance at all, but they contain mechanisms which have been set up for the study of a number of types of behavior which are said to be comparable to types of animal behavior. This is true in one sense, and a part of this behaviour may be studied as something unpredictable, which is interesting because it coincides with conceptions we are able to form of a self-feeding mechanism.

Imagine a machine that has no mechanism for overall self-regulation, so that the organ designed to make the right leg walk was unable to coordinate with the one that makes the left leg walk unless a photo-electric receiver transmits the image of another machine functioning in a coordinated way.

Think of these little automobiles that you see at fairs going round at full tilt out in an open space, where the principal amusement is to bump into the others. If these dodg'em cars give so much pleasure, it is because bumping into one another must be something fundamental in the human being. What would happen if a certain number of little machines like those I describe were
111 put onto the track? Each one being unified and regulated by the sight of another, it is not mathematically impossible to imagine that we would end up with all the little machines accumulated in the center of the track, blocked in a conglomeration the size of which would only be limited by the external resistance of the panelwork. A collision, everything smashed to a pulp.

This is only a fable designed to show you that the ambiguity and the gap in the imaginary relation require something that maintains a relation, a function, and a distance. This is the very meaning of the Oedipus complex.

The Oedipus complex means that the imaginary, in itself an incestuous and conflictual relation, is doomed to conflict and ruin. In order for the human being to be able to establish the most natural of relations, that between male and female, a third party has to intervene, one that is the image of something successful, the model of some harmony. This does not go far enough – there has to be a law, a chain, a symbolic order, the intervention of the order of speech, that is, of the father. Not the natural father, but what is called the father. The order that prevents the collision and explosion of the situation as a whole is founded on the existence of this name of the father.

I emphasize this. The symbolic order has to be conceived as something superimposed, without which no animal life would be possible for this misshapen subject that man is. This, in any case, is how things are given to us today, and everything tends to suggest that it has always been like this. Indeed, whenever we find a skeleton we call it human if it has been placed in a grave. What reason can there be for placing this debris within a stone enclosure? For this to be possible a whole symbolic order must have already been instituted, which entails that the fact that a gentleman has been Mr. So-and-so in the social order requires that this be indicated on his headstone. The fact that he was called Mr. So-and-so extends beyond his living existence. This doesn't presuppose belief in the immortality of the soul, but simply that his name has nothing to do with his living existence, that it extends and perpetuates itself beyond it.

If you do not see that Freud's originality is to have brought this into relief, one wonders what you are doing in analysis. It is only after it has been clearly indicated that this is where the essential source is that a text like the one we are reading can become interesting.

To take what President Schreber presents in its structural phenomenology, you must first off have this schema in your head, which entails that the symbolic order subsists as such outside the subject, as distinct from, determin-

ing, his existence. Things bring one to a halt only when one considers them as possible. Otherwise one is happy to say, *This is how things are,* and one 112
does not even try to see that this is how things are.

3

The long and remarkable observation that makes up Schreber's *Memoirs* is no doubt exceptional, but it is certainly not unique. It is probably unique only because President Schreber was in a position to have his book published, although censored, and also because Freud became interested in it.

Now that you have got the function of symbolic articulation into your heads you will be more sensitive to this truly imaginary invasion of subjectivity that Schreber has us observe. There is an altogether striking predominance of the mirror relationship, a notable dissolution of the other qua identity. All the protagonists he talks about – when he does do this, for there is a long period during which he is unable to speak, and we shall return to the meaning of this period – divide into two categories which despite everything are on the same side of a certain border. There are those who are apparently alive and who are free to move about, his guards and his nurses, and who are the *fleeting-improvised-men – les ombres d'hommes bâclés à la six-quatre-deux,* as Pichon has put it, who is responsible for this translation – and then there are the more important protagonists, who invade Schreber's body, who are the souls, the majority of souls, and the longer this goes on, the more they are ultimately corpses.

The subject himself is only a second copy of his own identity. At a particular moment he has the revelation that the previous year his own death had occurred and that it was announced in the newspapers. Schreber remembers this former colleague as someone more gifted than he. He is an other. But he is nevertheless the same, who remembers the other. This fragmentation of identity brands all Schreber's relations with his counterparts on the imaginary level.[5] At other times he speaks of Flechsig, who is also dead and who has therefore ascended to where only souls exist, insofar as they are human, in a beyond where they are assimilated bit by bit into the grand divine unity, not without having gradually lost their individual characters. Before achieving this they still have to undergo a trial to free them from the impurity of their passions, from what is properly called their desire. There is literally a fragmentation of their identity, and the subject is undoubtedly shocked by this attack upon their personal identity, but this is how it is, *I can only bear witness,* he says, *to things that have been revealed to me.* And so we see, throughout 113
this entire history, a fragmented Flechsig, a superior Flechsig, the luminous

[5] See Mem, 73.

Flechsig, and an inferior part that ends up fragmented into between forty and sixty little souls.[6]

I shall pass over many things full of details that I would love you to take enough interest in for us to be able to follow them closely. Concerning his style, and its great strength of affirmation, typical of delusional discourse, we cannot but be struck by its convergence with the notion that the imaginary identity of the other has a profound relation to the possibility of fragmentation and segmentation. That the other is structurally multipliable and divisible is clearly manifested here in this delusion.

There is also the telescoping of these images inside one another. On the one hand one finds multiple identities of the one same character, on the other there are these little enigmatic identities, variously piercing and harmful inside him, that, for example, he calls little men. This fantasmatic has often struck the imagination of psychoanalysts, who have sought to discover whether they are children, or spermatozoa, or something else. Why couldn't they just be little men?

These identities, which in relation to his own identity have the value of an instance,[7] penetrate, inhabit, and divide Schreber himself. The notion he has of these images suggests to him that they are getting thinner and thinner, becoming reabsorbed in some way by Schreber's own resistance. They maintain themselves in their autonomy, which moreover means that they can continue to harm him, only through realizing the operation that he calls the tying-to-celestial-bodies,[8] a notion he would not have without the fundamental language.

This is not just the soil, these bodies are also the planetary bodies, the astral bodies. You can see this register which, in my little magic square of the other day, I was calling that of the heavenly bodies. I didn't invent it for the occasion; I have been speaking for a long time of the function of heavenly bodies in human reality. It is clearly not for nothing that always, and in all cultures, the names given to the constellations play an essential role in establishing a certain number of fundamental symbolic relationships, which become increasingly evident as we find ourselves in the presence of a more primitive culture, as we say.

A soul fragment thus ties itself on somewhere. Cassiopeia, *the brothers of Cassiopeia,* play a major role here.[9] In no way is this an idea pulled out of the air – it is the name of a student confederation from the time of Schreber's
114 studies. An attachment to such a fraternity, whose narcissistic, even homo-

[6] Mem, 111.

[7] Or agency, *"instance."*

[8] *"attachement aux terres," "Anbinden an Erden,"* Mem, 125. As the following paragraph makes clear, *"terre"* and *"Erde"* also have the meaning of soil or earth.

[9] Mem, 58.

sexual, character is brought out in the analysis, is moreover a characteristic mark of Schreber's imaginary antecedents.

It is suggestive to see how this network, which is symbolic by nature and maintains the image in a degree of stability in interhuman relationships, is necessary so that everything doesn't suddenly reduce to nothing, so that the entire veil of the imaginary relation does not suddenly draw back and disappear in the yawning blackness that Schreber was not so very far away from at the outset.

Psychoanalysts have caviled, employing all sorts of details, over what meaning, from the point of view of the subject's libidinal investments, the fact might have that at one stage it's Flechsig who dominates, at another it's a divine image, which is variously located in the realms of God, since God has his realms too – there is an anterior and a posterior realm. You can imagine how analysts have fiddled around with that. Of course, these phenomena are not incapable of being given a number of interpretations. But there is a register that outweighs them all, and that doesn't seem to have caught anyone's attention – as rich and amusing as this fantasmagoria is, as supple, also, in that we have located in it the various objects of the little analytic game, there are extremely nuanced auditory phenomena all throughout Schreber's delusion.

These range from low whispers to the voice of waters[10] when at night he encounters Ahriman. He subsequently corrects himself by the way – Ahriman wasn't the only one present, Ormuzd must have been there also, since the gods of good and evil are inseparable.[11] Thus he has a momentary encounter with Ahriman when he sees him with his mind's eye and not, as with some of his other visions, with a photographic clarity. He comes face to face with this God, who says the significant word to him, the one that puts all things in their place, the divine message *par excellence*. He says to Schreber, the only man remaining after the twilight of the world – *Wretch*.[12]

This translation is perhaps not exactly equivalent to the German word *Luder*. *Charogne* is the word the French translation uses, but the word is more informal in German than it is in French. In French it is rare to call your friends *charogne, carrion,* except at particularly exuberant moments. The German word does not just convey this element of annihilation, there are undercurrents that make it more akin to a word that would be more in the style of the feminization of the person, more frequently encountered in conversations between friends, that of being rotten, sweet rottenness [*douce pourriture*]. The

[10] *"la voix des eaux."* It's not clear what this means. Schreber speaks of a voice that "resounded in a mighty bass as if directly in front of my bedroom window." Mem, 136.

[11] Mem, 139 n.66.

[12] Mem, 136.

important thing is that this word which dominates his unique face-to-face
115 encounter with God is not at all isolated. Insults are very frequent in the divine partner's relations with Schreber, as in an erotic relationship that one initially refuses to take part in and resists. This is the other face, the counterpart, of the imaginary world. The annihilating insult is a culminating point, it is one of the peaks of the speech act.

Around this peak all the mountain chains of the verbal field are laid out for you in a masterly perspective by Schreber. Everything that a linguist could imagine as decompositions of the function of language is encountered in what Schreber experiences, which he differentiates with a lightness of touch, in nuances that leave nothing to be desired as to their information.

When he speaks to us about things that belong to the fundamental language and bring order to the relationships he has with the one and only being that henceforth exists for him, he divides them into two categories. There is on the one hand what is *echt*, an almost untranslatable word, which means authentic, true, and which is always given to him in verbal forms worthy of our attention – there are several species of these, and they are very suggestive. There is on the other hand what is learned by rote, inculcated into a number of the peripheral, even fallen, elements of the divine power, and repeated with a total absence of sense, uniquely as a refrain. Added to this there is an extraordinary variety of modes of oratory flux which enable us to see in isolation the various dimensions in which the phenomenon of the sentence – I am not saying the phenomenon of meaning – unfolds.

Here we go to the heart of the function of the sentence in itself, insofar as it does not necessarily carry its meaning with it. I am thinking of this phenomenon of sentences that emerge in his asubjectivity as interrupted, leaving the sense in suspense. A sentence interrupted in the middle is auditivated.[13] The rest is implied meaning. The interruption evokes a fall which, while it may be indeterminate over a wide range, cannot be just any old one. Here the symbolic chain is emphasized in its dimension of continuity.

Here, both in the subject's relation to language and in the imaginary world, there is a danger, which he is constantly aware of, that all this fantasmagoria might be reduced to a unity which doesn't annihilate his existence, but God's, which is essentially language. Schreber states this explicitly – the rays must speak.[14] It is at all times necessary to produce diversionary phenomena so that God is not absorbed back into the central existence of the subject. This isn't self-evident but well illustrates the creator's relationship to what he cre-

[13] *"auditiver":* The meaning is unclear, but the context would suggest it means "to make audible."

[14] Mem, 130.

ates. The withdrawal of his function and his essence effectively allows the corresponding nothing that is his lining to appear.

Either speech is produced or it isn't. If it is, it is to a certain extent pro- 116
duced at the discretion of the subject. Hence the subject is here the creator, but he is also attached to the other, not as object, image, or shadow of an object, but to the other in his essential dimension which is always more or less passed over by us, to this other who is irreducible to anything other than the notion of another subject, that is, to the other qua *he*. What characterizes Schreber's world is that this *he* is lost, and only the *you* remains.

The notion of subject is correlative to the existence of someone of whom I think – *It's he who did that!* Not him, whom I see here, who of course has such an air of innocence, but him, the one who isn't here. This *he* is the guarantor of my being, without this *he* my being could not even be an *I*. The drama of the relationship with the *he* underlies the entire dissolution of Schreber's world, where we see the *he* reduced to a single partner, this God who is asexual and polysexual at one and the same time, englobing all that still exists in the world Schreber is confronted with.

To be sure, owing to this God there subsists someone able to speak true speech, but this speech has the property of always being enigmatic. This is characteristic of all speech in the fundamental language.

Moreover, this God also appears to be Schreber's shadow. He is tainted by an imaginary degradation of otherness, and as a result he is, like Schreber, stricken with a sort of feminization.

In any case, since we don't know Schreber the subject, we have to study him via the phenomenology of his language. It is therefore around the phenomenon of language, around the more or less hallucinated, parasitic, foreign, intuitive, and persecutory phenomena of language at issue in the case of Schreber, that we are going to shed light on a new dimension in the phenomenology of the psychoses.

18 January 1956

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VIII

The symbolic sentence

THE NOTION OF DEFENSE
THE PATIENT'S TESTIMONY
THE SENSE OF REALITY
VERBAL PHENOMENA

We could, all the same, end up making a start on Schreber's text together, because the Schreber case for us is also Schreber's text.

This year I'm trying to gain a better conception of the economy of the case. You must have some sense of the shift that is slowly taking place in psychoanalytic conceptions. The other day I reminded you that Freud's explanation, briefly put, is that the patient enters an essentially narcissistic economy. This is a very rich idea, all the consequences of which should be drawn out, except nobody ever does, and one forgets what narcissism is at the point in his work Freud has got to when he writes the Schreber case. Consequently, nobody has a clear idea, either, how novel this explanation is, that is, of what other explanation it is to be situated in relation to.

I shall return to one of the authors who have spoken in the greatest detail about the question of the psychoses, namely, Katan. He emphasizes the notion of defense. But I don't want to proceed by means of commentaries on commentaries. We have to start with the book, as Freud recommends.

Since we are psychiatrists, or at least people who are in various ways familiar with psychiatry, it's quite natural that to get an idea of what is taking place in this case we should also read with the eyes of psychiatrists.

1

We must not forget the stages in the introduction of the notion of narcissism
118 in Freud's thought. The word *defense* is used today to refer to anything and everything, in the belief that one is repeating something with a long history in Freud's work. It's quite true that the notion of defense plays a role very early on and that from 1894–95 onwards Freud proposes the expression *neuropsychoses of defense*. But he uses this term in a quite specific sense.

When he speaks of *Abwehrhysterie,* he distinguishes it from two other types of hysteria, and this is the first attempt to carry out a properly psychoanalytic

nosography. Look at the article I'm alluding to.[1] According to Breuer hysterias have to be thought of as a secondary production of hypnoid states, dependent on a certain fertile moment which corresponds to a disturbance of consciousness in the hypnoid state. Freud doesn't deny that there are hypnoid states, he simply says – *We are not interested in this, we don't take this to be a differential feature in our nosology.*[2]

One has to understand what one is doing when one classifies. You begin by counting the number of what appear to be the colored organs of a flower, which are called petals. It's always the same, a flower presents a certain number of units that can be counted – this is a very rudimentary botany. Later, you sometimes notice that the uninformed person's petals are not petals at all, but sepals, which don't have the same function. Likewise, in what concerns us, various registers – anatomical, genetic, embryological, physiological, functional – may enter into consideration and intersect with one another. For the classification to be significant it has to be a natural one. How are we to look for what is natural?

Thus Freud didn't reject hypnoid states, he said he would not take them into account because when he was initially working things out what was important to him in the register of analytic experience was something else, namely the memory of trauma. This is what the notion of *Abwehrhysterie* consists in.

The first time the notion of defense appears we are in the register of memory and its disturbances. The important thing is what may be called the patient's little story. Is he able to articulate it verbally or not? Anna O. – whose portrait on a postage stamp someone brought along for me, for she was the Queen of social workers – called this the *talking cure*.[3]

Die Abwehrhysterie is hysteria in which things are expressed in symptoms and the discourse has to be freed. There is therefore no trace of regression, or of the theory of instincts, and yet all of psychoanalysis is already present.

Freud distinguishes yet a third species of hysteria, characteristic of which 119
is that there is also something to recount, but which is recounted nowhere. Of course, at this stage of his theorizing, it would be astonishing indeed should he tell us where this might be, but it's already sketched out perfectly well.

Freud's work is full of these prefigurations [*pierres d'attente*], and it delights me. Whenever one takes up an article of Freud's, not only is it never what one expects, but it's never anything other than very simple and admirably clear. And yet, there is not one of them that is not nourished by these enig-

[1] "The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence"; see also "Further Remarks on the Neuro-Psychoses of Defence."

[2] See "Neuro-Psychoses of Defence," SE 3:46–47.

[3] In English in the original.

matic prefigurations. It can be said that he alone, in his own lifetime, brought out the original concepts necessary for attacking and organizing the new field he was discovering. He gives us each of these concepts accompanied by a world of questions. What's so good in Freud is that he doesn't hide these questions from us. Each of these texts is a problematic text, such that to read Freud is to open these questions up again.

We always have to come back to disturbances of memory to know what the point of departure for psychoanalysis was. Even if we assume that we have gone beyond this, we have to assess the road travelled, and it would be quite astonishing indeed should we be able to allow ourselves to misrecognize history. I don't have to follow in detail the road covered between this stage and that at which Freud introduced the regression of instincts. I have done enough in previous years for me now to say simply that it's through exploring disturbances of memory, through wanting to repair the void presented by the subject's history, and through tracking down what the events of his life have become, that we have ascertained that they will lodge themselves where one does not expect them to.

I spoke last time about displacements of behavior – one realizes that it can't simply be a matter of rediscovering the mnemic, chronological localization of events, of restoring a piece of lost time, but that things also take place on the topographical level. The distinction in regression between entirely different registers is implicit here. In other words, what is constantly being forgotten is that it's not the case that if one thing comes to the fore another loses its price, its value, within topographical regression. It's here that events acquire their fundamental behavioral meaning.

And this is when narcissism was discovered. Freud realized that there are modifications to the imaginary structure of the world and that they interfere with modifications to the symbolic structure – this is really how it has to be described, since remembering necessarily takes place within the symbolic order.

120 When Freud explains delusion by a narcissistic regression of libido, with this withdrawal from objects ending in a disobjectualization, this means, at the point he has attained, that the desire that is to be recognized in delusion is situated on a completely different level from the desire that has to make itself recognized in neurosis.

If one doesn't understand this, one will completely fail to see what differentiates psychosis from neurosis. Why should it be so difficult in psychosis to restore the subject's relation to reality, when the delusion is in principle entirely legible? This, at least, is what can be read in some passages in Freud, which you have to know how to emphasize in a less summary way than is usual. Delusions are indeed legible, but they are also transcribed into another register. In neurosis, one always remains inside the symbolic order, with this

duality of signifier and signified that Freud translates as the neurotic compromise. Delusions occur in a completely different register. They are legible, but there is no way out. How does this come about? This is the economic problem that remains open at the time Freud completes the Schreber case.

I'm making some large claims. In the case of the neuroses the repressed reappears *in loco* where it was repressed, that is, in the very midst of symbols, insofar as man as agent and actor integrates himself into them and participates in them. The repressed reappears *in loco* beneath a mask. The repressed in psychosis, if we know how to read Freud, reappears in another place, *in altero,* in the imaginary, without a mask. This is quite clear, it's neither new nor heterodox, it just has to be appreciated that this is the main point. This is far from being a settled issue at the time Freud puts the last full stop to his Schreber study. On the contrary, this is where the difficulties begin to appear.

Others have tried to pick up where Freud left off. Read Katan for example, who tries to give us an analytic theory of schizophrenia in volume five of the collection, *Psychoanalysis of the Child.*[4] Read it and you will see very clearly the path that analytic theory has taken.

In Freud the question of the subject's center always remains open. In the analysis of paranoia, for example, he proceeds step by step to show the evolution of an essentially libidinal disturbance, a complex play of an aggregate of transferable, transmutable desires, which may regress, and the center of this entire dialectic is still problematic for us. Now, the turn that took place in analysis at around the time of Freud's death led to the rediscovery of this good old ever-lasting center, the ego at the controls, guiding defense. Psychosis is no longer interpreted on the basis of the complex economy of the dynamics of the drives, but on the basis of procedures used by the ego to escape from various requirements, to defend itself against the drives. The 121
ego again becomes not only the center but the cause of the disorder.

Henceforth the term *defense* makes no more sense than does talk of defending oneself against temptation, and the entire dynamics of the Schreber case are explained to us on the basis of the ego's efforts to escape from a so-called homosexual drive threatening its completeness. Castration no longer has any other symbolic meaning than that of a loss of physical integrity. We are solemnly told that the ego, which is not yet strong enough to establish points of attachment in the external milieu in order to exercise its defense against the drives in the id, finds another resource, that is, it foments this neo-production we call a hallucination, which is another way of acting and transforming its dual instincts – sublimation, in its own way, but with serious drawbacks.

The narrowing of perspective, the clinical inadequacies of this construction, are self-evident. That there exists an imaginary way of satisfying the

[4] "Structural Aspects of a Case of Schizophrenia."

thrust[5] of need is an explicit notion in Freudian theory, but it's only ever taken as one of the elements that occasion the phenomena. Freud never defined hallucinatory psychosis on the simple model of fantasy, like hunger which can be satisfied by a dream of satisfaction of hunger. A delusion in no way serves such an end. It is always pleasing to rediscover what one has previously pictured to oneself, and Freud even teaches us that this is the path that the creation of the world of human objects takes. We, too, always experience great satisfaction in rediscovering certain neurotic symbolic themes in psychosis. There is nothing illegitimate in this, but one really must recognize that it only covers a tiny bit of the picture.

For Schreber, as for homosexuals, it's possible to summarize the imaginary transformation of the homosexual thrust into a delusion that makes the subject the wife of God, the repository of good will and divine good manners. This summary is fairly convincing, and all sorts of refined modulations can be found to justify it in the text itself. Similarly, the distinction I drew last time between the realization of repressed desire on the symbolic level in neurosis and on the imaginary level in psychosis is already fairly satisfactory, but it doesn't satisfy us. Why not? Because this isn't all there is to psychosis, which isn't the development of an imaginary, fantasmatic relationship with the external world.

Today I would simply like to get you to see how massive the phenomenon is.

Does the entire delusion consist of the dialogue of this unique Schreber, who, with his enigmatic partner, the Schreberian God, is the starting point
122 for the regeneration of humanity through the birth of a new Schreberian generation? No, it doesn't. Not only is this not the whole delusion, but it's quite impossible to understand it entirely at this level. It's rather curious that in only retaining what is clear in the imaginary events, people happily accept such a partial explanation of a massive phenomenon like psychosis. If we wish to make any progress in understanding psychosis, we must develop a theory that justifies the bulk of these phenomena, several samples of which I shall give you this morning.

2

We shall begin at the end and attempt to understand by working backwards. If I adopt this course, it's not simply contrived for the presentation but also suits the matter at hand.

Here you have a subject who was ill from 1883 to 1884, who then had eight

[5] *"Poussée"* translates Freud's *"Drang,"* pressure, one of the four elements of the drive.

years respite and, at the end of the ninth year after the start of the first crisis, in October 1893, things in his pathology began again. He entered the same clinic directed by Dr. Flechsig in which he had been treated on the first occasion, and he remained there till mid June 1894.[6] His state was complex. The clinical aspect of it may be characterized as a hallucinatory confusion or even a hallucinatory stupor. Later on he was to give a no doubt distorted report of all that he had lived through. We speak of *confusion* to characterize his hazy recollection of certain episodes, but other elements, and specially his delusional relations with various people about him, remained sufficiently intact for him to be able to give valuable testimony about them. This is nevertheless the most obscure period of the psychosis. Take note that it's only via his delusion that we know anything about it, since we weren't there either and the medical certificates on this first period are not rich. Schreber certainly recalled it well enough at the time he started to give testimony to be able to draw distinctions here, and in particular to be able to pick out a displacement of the center of interest onto his personal relations with what he calls souls.

Souls aren't human beings, nor are they these shadows he has dealings with. They are dead human beings with whom he has special relations, connected with all sorts of feelings of bodily transformation, of being enclosed, 123
of intrusion, and of exchanges of bodies. This is a delusion in which an element of pain plays a very important role. I'm not speaking of hypochondria, which is in any case too vague a term in our vocabulary, I'm sketching the outline.

From the phenomenological point of view, and remaining cautious, we can admit that there is a state here that can be described as the twilight of the world. He is no longer amongst real beings – this *being no longer amongst* is typical, for he is amongst other much more burdensome elements. Suffering is the dominant strain in his relations with them, which involve the loss of his autonomy. This profound, intolerable disturbance of his existence motivates in him all sorts of behaviour of which he can only give us a hazy indication, but of which we get an indication by the way he is treated – he is placed under surveillance, at night he is placed in a cell, and he is deprived of all implements. At this moment he appears to be a patient in a very seriously acute state.

There is a moment of transformation, he tells us, around February–March 1894.[7] The so-called posterior realms of God take the place of the souls with which he has had dealings of the order of intrusions or somatic fragmentations. There is a metaphorical intuition here of what lies behind appearances.

[6] See the chronology of events, which differs slightly from this, in SE 12:6–7.
[7] Mem, 44 & chap. 7, 81ff.

These realms appear in two forms, Ormuzd and Ahriman. The pure rays also appear, behaving quite differently from the so-called tested souls, which are impure rays. Schreber refers to the profound perplexity he is left in by the effects of this apparent purity, which can only be attributed to a divine intention. They are constantly disturbed by elements arising from the tested souls, which play all sorts of tricks on the pure rays and place themselves between Schreber and their beneficial action. The tactics of the majority of these souls, motivated by very evil intentions indeed, are very precisely described – and notably those of the ringleader, Flechsig, who fragments his soul in order to redistribute the pieces in the hyperspace located between Schreber and the distant God in question.[8] *I am he who is distant,* we find this formula which has a Biblical echo in a footnote in which Schreber tells us what God has confided in him. God for Schreber isn't he who is, but he who is . . . a long way away.[9]

The pure rays speak, they are essentially speaking rays. There is an equivalence between the speaking rays, the nerves of God, plus all the particular forms they are capable of adopting, including their variously miracled forms, such as the scissors. This corresponds to a period during which what Schre-
124 ber calls the *Grundsprache* dominates, a sort of extremely vigorous High German with a tendency to express itself in euphemisms and antiphrases – a punishment for example is called a reward, and in fact punishment is a reward in its own way.[10] We shall have to return to the style of this fundamental language, so as to address again the problem of the opposite meaning of primitive words.

On this subject there remains a gross misunderstanding over what was said by Freud, who simply made the mistake of taking as his reference a linguist who was regarded as a bit advanced, but had put his finger on something correct, namely Abel. Last year M. Benveniste gave us a very valuable contribution on this, namely that it is out of the question that in a signifying system any word should designate two contradictory things at the same time. Words are made precisely for distinguishing between things. Where words exist, they are necessarily made from pairs of contraries, they are unable in themselves to join two extremes together. When we move on to meaning, it's a different matter. There is nothing astonishing in calling a deep well *altus* because, he says, from the mental starting point of Latin this starts from the bottom of the well. We only have to reflect that in German the Last Judgment is called *das Jüngste Gericht,* that is, *the youngest judgment,* which is not the image employed in France. And yet we do say, *votre petit dernier,* your little

[8] Mem, 111.
[9] Mem, 252 & n.101.
[10] Mem, 12–13.

last one, to refer to the youngest. But the Last Judgment rather suggests old age for us.

In 1894 Schreber was transported to Dr. Pierson's mental home in Coswig, where he stayed for a fortnight. This was a private mental home, and the description he gives of it shows it to be, if I may say, extremely amusing. You will recognize, from the patient's point of view, features that will not fail to delight those who have retained something of their sense of humor. It's not that it's bad, it's agreeable enough and has that aspect of the good public face of the private mental home with its character of profound neglect, about which we are spared nothing. Schreber didn't stay there long, and he was sent to the asylum in Pirna, the oldest, in the venerable sense of the word, in Germany.

Before his first illness he had been at Chemnitz, he was appointed to Leipzig, then in Dresden he was appointed President of the Court of Appeal just before his relapse. From Dresden he went to Leipzig for treatment. Coswig is located somewhere on the other side of the Elbe from Leipzig, but the place in which he spent ten years of his life is upstream on the Elbe.

When he was admitted at Pirna he was still very ill, and he only began writing his *Memoirs* in 1897–98. Given that he was in a public asylum, and that it's not unknown for decisions to be a bit slow there, from 1896 to 1898 125
he was still being placed at night in a so-called cell for dements, taking with him a pencil and some pieces of paper in a little tin-plate container, and he started to write down a few notes which he called his little studies.[11] There are in fact, over and above the work he has left us, fifty-odd small studies he refers to from time to time, which are notes he took at the time and used as his material. It's obvious that this text, which was not started before 1898 and not completed before 1903, when Schreber was released, since it includes his court case, bears witness in a more certain, more assured, manner to the terminal state of his illness. As for the rest, we don't even know when Schreber died, but only that he had a relapse in 1907 and that he was again admitted to a mental home – which is very important.[12]

We shall start at the date at which he wrote his *Memoirs*. What he is able to give evidence of at that date is already quite problematic enough to be of interest to us. Even if we don't resolve the problem of the economic function of what I called just now the phenomena of verbal alienation – let's provisionally call them verbal hallucinations – we are interested in what is distinctive about the analytic viewpoint in the analysis of a psychosis.

[11] Mem, 195–96.

[12] Schreber died April 14, 1911. See SE 12:6–7 and Franz Baumeyer, "The Schreber Case."

3

We are all disillusioned with the prevailing psychiatric point of view.

As far as a real understanding of the economy of the psychoses is concerned, we can now read a report on catatonia written around 1903 – carry out this experiment yourselves, naturally take a good study – not one step forward in the analysis of the phenomena has been made. If there is something that is distinctive about the analyst's point of view, is it to wonder, on the subject of a verbal hallucination, whether the subject hears a little bit, or a great deal, or whether it's very loud, or whether it explodes, or whether he really does hear it with his ear, or whether it comes from within, from the heart, or from the stomach?

These extremely interesting questions arise from the fact, fairly infantile in the final analysis, that we are flabbergasted that a subject should hear things that we don't. As if we don't, all of us, all of the time, have visions, as if we are never in the grip of phrases that just pop into our heads, sometimes
126 brilliant, illuminating phrases that orientate us. Obviously, we don't put them to the same use as the psychotic does.

These things take place in the verbal order, and the subject experiences them as being received by him. If, as we were taught to be at school, we are interested above all else in the question of whether it's a sensation, a perception, an apperception, or an interpretation, if in short we cleave to the elementary relation to reality in the scholarly academic register, by putting our faith in a clearly incomplete theory of knowledge, we shall lose all its value. Besides, contrary to a theory that moves from the level of sensation through that of perception to that of causation and the organization of the real, philosophy has for some time now, at least since Kant, been attempting in no uncertain terms to bring to our attention that there are different fields of reality and that the problems are expressed, organized, and raised in registers that are equally different. Consequently, the most interesting question perhaps isn't whether the speech is heard or not.

This still leaves us up in the air. What do our subjects give us three-quarters of the time? Nothing other than what we are getting them to do in suggesting to them that they reply to us. We introduce distinctions and categories which interest us, not them, into what they experience. The imposed, external character of the verbal hallucination needs to be taken into consideration on the basis of the way the patient reacts. It's not what he hears the best – as one says, in the sense in which one thinks that hearing is hearing with one's ears – that strikes him the most. Extremely vivid hallucinations remain hallucinations, recognized as such, while others that are on the contrary no less vivid endophasically are of the most decisive character for the subject and give him certainty.

The distinction I introduced at the beginning of our course between certainty and reality is what counts. It introduces us to differences which, to our mind, as analysts, are not superstructural but structural. It's a fact that this can be the case for us alone, because contrary to all other clinicians we know that speech is always there, whether articulated or not, present in an articulated state, already historicized, already caught in the network of symbolic couples and oppositions.

Some imagine that we have to totally restore the undifferentiated lived experience of the subject, the succession of images projected onto the screen of his lived experience, in order to grasp it *qua* duration, *à la* Bergson. What we apprehend clinically is never like this. The continuity in everything a subject has lived through since birth tends never to emerge and doesn't interest us in the slightest. What interests us are the decisive moments of symbolic 127
articulation, of history, but in the sense in which we say the History of France.

One day Mlle de Montpensier was at the barricades. She was there perhaps by chance, and perhaps this was of no importance from a certain point of view, but what is certain is that this is all that remains in History. She was there, and a meaning, whether true or not, has been given to her presence there.[13] Besides, the meaning is always a bit more true at the time, but it's what has become true in history that counts and operates. Either this comes about through a later reworking, or else it has already begun to be articulated at the time itself.

Well then, what we call the sense of reality [*le sentiment de réalité*] where the restoration of memories is concerned is something ambiguous, which consists essentially in the fact that a recollection – that is, a resurgence of an impression – is organized in historical continuity. Neither provides the mark of reality, both of them are required, a certain way of combining the two registers. I shall go even further – it's equally a certain mode of combining these two registers that gives the sense of unreality. Within this field whatever is a sense of reality is a sense of unreality. The sense of unreality is present only as a signal that being in reality is at issue and that one is a hair's breadth from some little thing that is still lacking. We could describe the sense of *déjà vu*, which has been such a problem for psychologists, as a homonym – it's always a symbolic key that half-opens the mainspring. *Déjà vu* occurs when a situation is lived through with a full symbolic meaning which reproduces a homologous symbolic situation that has been previously lived

[13] During the third war of the Fronde, on February 2, 1652, Mlle de Montpensier is reputed to have saved Condé's army from destruction by ordering the cannon of the Bastille to be fired against the royal troops. The importance of the Fronde in French history is to have shown the inability of the nobility and the Parlement to form a legitimate alternative to the king; it was the last serious threat to the monarchy till the Revolution of 1789.

through but forgotten, and which is lived through again without the subject's understanding it in all its detail. This is what gives the subject the impression that he has already seen the context, the scene, of the present moment. *Déjà vu* is a phenomenon extremely close to what analytic experience offers to us as the *déjà raconté*, the already recounted – except that it is its inverse. This is not situated in the order of the already recounted, but in that of the never recounted. But it's the same register.

If we admit the existence of the unconscious as Freud elaborates it, we have to suppose that this sentence, this symbolic construction, covers all human lived experience like a web, that it's always there, more or less latent, and that it's one of the necessary elements of human adaptation. The fact that this may happen without one's knowledge might have been described as outlandish for a long time, but for us this isn't so – the very idea of an unconscious thought, this great practical paradox that Freud gave, means nothing
128 else. When Freud formulated the term *unconscious thought*, adding *sit venia verbo* in his *Traumdeutung*, he was saying nothing other than that *thought* means the thing articulated in language.[14] At the level of the *Traumdeutung* there is no other interpretation of the term than this.

We could call this language internal, but this adjective already falsifies everything. This so-called internal monologue is entirely continuous with the external dialogue, and indeed this is why we can say that the unconscious is also the discourse of the Other. While there is indeed something of the order of continuity, it's not present at every instant. Here, too, one must begin to say what one means, move in the direction in which one is moving, and at the same time know how to correct it. There are properly symbolic laws of intervals, of suspension, and of resolution, there are suspensions and scansions that mark the structure of every calculation, the effect of which is that it's precisely not in a continuous manner that this internal sentence, let's say, gets registered. This structure, which is already attached to ordinary possibilities, is the very structure, or inertia, of language.

For man it is precisely a question of knowing how to get by in the face of this continuous modulation without becoming too preoccupied by it. This is why things work out in such a way that his consciousness shies away from it. However, to admit the existence of the unconscious is to say that even if consciousness shies away from it, the modulation I'm talking about, the sentence in all its complexity, continues regardless. There is no other sense than this to give to the Freudian unconscious. If this is not what it is, then it's a

[14] The expression does not appear in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, but in "Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses," SE 3:274, and in the Wolf Man case, "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," SE 14:84.

six-legged, absolutely incomprehensible monster – incomprehensible in any case from the perspective of analysis.

Since we are looking for the functions of the ego as such, let me say that one of its tasks is precisely not to become poisoned by this sentence that always continues circulating and seeks only to re-emerge in a thousand more or less camouflaged and disturbing forms. In other words, the sentence of the Gospels, *They have ears so as not to hear,* is to be taken literally. It's a function of the ego that we do not have to perpetually listen to this articulation that organizes our actions like spoken actions. This isn't drawn from the analysis of psychosis, it's only making evident, once again, the postulates of the Freudian notion of the unconscious.

In these phenomena – let's provisionally call them teratological – of the psychoses, this is out in the open. I'm not making this the essential characteristic, any more than a while ago I was making the imaginary element the essential characteristic, but it's too often ignored that in cases of psychosis we see this sentence, this monologue, this internal discourse I was speaking to you about, reveal itself in the most highly articulated manner. We are the first to be able to grasp this because, to a certain extent, we are already prepared to hear it.

Henceforth, we have no reason to refuse to recognize his voices when the 129
subject testifies that they are something that forms a part of the very text of his lived experience.

4

Reading of the Memoirs, *pp. 308–12.*

This is what the subject tells us in a retrospective addition to his *Memoirs.* He metaphorically refers the slowing down of sentences over the years to the vast distance to which the rays of God have withdrawn. Not only is there a slowing down but also a delay, a suspension, an adjournment. It's highly significant for us that the very phenomenology under which the seamless web of the accompanying discourse presents itself changes and evolves over the years, and that the very full sense at the beginning subsequently empties itself of its sense. Moreover, the voices also make extremely curious commentaries, like this for instance – *All nonsense cancels itself out.*[15]

The structure of what happens is worth noting. Let me give you an example. He hears – *Lacking now is . . .* and then the sentence is interrupted, he hears nothing more. We only have his word for it, but for him this sentence has

[15] Mem, 312.

the implicit meaning of – *Lacking now is the leading thought.*[16] In an interrupted sentence, as such always subtly articulated grammatically, meaning is present in two ways – as anticipated on the one hand, since it's a question of its suspension, and as repeated on the other, since he invariably refers it to an impression of having already heard it.

When one enters into the analysis of language, it's important also to take some interest in the history of language. Language isn't as natural a thing as all that, and the expressions that appear to us to be self-evident can be ranked according to whether they are more or less grounded.

The voices that preoccupy Schreber with their continuous discourse are psychologists. A major part of what they recount concerns the *conception of souls,* the psychology of the human being. They contribute catalogues of registers of thought, the thoughts of all thoughts, of assertion, of reflection, of fear, they point them out, articulate them as such, and say which are regular. They also have their conception of *patterns,*[17] they are at the forefront of behaviorism. Just as on the other side of the Atlantic people are attempting
130 to explain the normal way to offer a bunch of flowers to a young girl, so too they have precise ideas on the manner in which man and woman should make advances to one another and, even, go to bed together. Schreber is nonplussed by it – *This is how it is,* he says, *though I have never seen it myself.* The text itself is reduced to rote learning or refrains that sometimes strike us as just a little embarrassing.

Concerning the interrupted sentence, *Lacking now is . . .*, I remember something that had struck me when I was reading M. Somaize, who around 1660–1670 wrote a *Dictionnaire des précieuses.*[18] To be sure, the *Précieuses* are ridiculous, but the so-called movement of the *Précieuses* is an element at least as important for the history of the language, of thought, of mores, as our dear surrealism which, as we know, doesn't amount to nothing – surely if a movement of people who handled symbols and signs in a strange way around 1920 had not occurred, we would not have the same style of poster. The movement of the *Précieuses* is much more important than one thinks from the point of view of language. Obviously, there is everything that this genius of a character called Molière recounted, but on this subject he has probably been made to say a bit more than he wanted to.[19] You have no idea how many locutions that seem perfectly natural to us today date from then. Somaize notes for example that it's the poet Saint-Amant who was the first to say *Le*

[16] Mem, 218.
[17] In English in the original.
[18] The two principal works of Baudeau de Somaize are his *Dictionnaire des précieuses* and *Grand dictionnaire historique des précieuses.*
[19] See *Les précieuses ridicules.*

mot me manque.[20] If today no one calls an armchair *les commodités de la conversation,* it's by pure chance – there are things that succeed and others that don't. These expressions that have passed into the language thus have originated in a form of conversation in salons where people were trying to introduce a more refined language.

The state of a language can be characterized as much by what is absent as by what is present. In the dialogue with the famous miracled birds you find funny things like this – they are told something like *breathlessness* and they hear *twilight.*[21] It's all pretty interesting – who among you has not heard *amnesty* and *armistice* commonly confused in language that is not especially uneducated? If I asked each of you in turn what you understand by *superstition,* for example, I'm sure that we would get a fair idea of the confusion that is possible in your minds on the subject of a word in current usage – after a while *superstructure* would end up appearing. Similarly, *epiphenomena* has a quite special meaning in medicine – Laënnec calls *epiphenomena* phenomena such as fever that are common to all illnesses.

The origin of the word *superstition* is given by Cicero in his *De natura deo-* 131
rum, which you would do well to read.[22] You can for example judge how far we are from, and also how close we are to, the problems that the classical authors raised about the nature of the gods. The *superstitiosi* were people who would pray and make sacrifices all day long so that their descendants would survive them. Superstition was the monopolizing of devotion by people in the pursuit of a goal that they regarded as essential. This tells us a great deal about the conception these people had of the notion, so important in all primitive cultures, of the continuity of one's line of descent. This reference could, perhaps, also give us the best hold on the true definition to give of *superstition,* which consists in extracting one part of the text of conduct at the expense of others. This tells us how it's related to everything that is compartmentalized, methodically displaced, in the mechanism of neurosis.

What is important is to understand what one is saying. And in order to understand what one is saying it's important to see its lining, its other side, its resonances, its significant superimpositions. Whatever they may be – and we can include every misconstrual – there is no element of chance. Whoever reflects upon the organism of language must know as much as possible and construct as complete a catalogue as possible, not only concerning a word but also a turn of phrase or a locution. Language entirely operates within ambiguity, and most of the time you know absolutely nothing about what you are

[20] "The word escapes me," literally "I am missing the word."
[21] *"Atemnot"* and *"Abendrot,"* Mem, 210.
[22] Cicero, *The Nature of the Gods,* 152–53.

saying. In your most ordinary conversations language has a purely fictional character, you give the other the feeling that you are always there, that is to say, that you are capable of producing the expected response, which bears no relation to anything whatsoever that is susceptible to being pursued any further. Nine-tenths of discourses that have effectively taken place are completely fictional in this respect.

This primordial fact is necessary to whoever wants to penetrate the economy of President Schreber and understand what this nonsense means that he himself locates within his relations with his imaginary interlocutors. This is why I invite you to make a closer examination of the evolution of the verbal phenomena in President Schreber's history, so as to be able later to link them to the libidinal displacements.

25 January 1956

IX

On nonsense and the structure of God

PRINCIPLES OF THE ANALYSIS OF DELUSION
DELUSIONAL INTERLOCUTION
BEING FORSAKEN
DIALOGUE AND VOLUPTUOUSNESS
GOD'S POLITICS

Regarding an expression Schreber uses, namely that voices tell him that they lack something, I remarked that such expressions don't appear out of the blue,[1] that they are born over the course of a language's history, and at a level of creation sufficiently elevated for this to have taken place within a circle interested in questions of language. These expressions appear to flow quite naturally from the given arrangement of signifiers, but their appearance at a given moment is historically verifiable.

I was saying, then, that *le mot me manque, the word escapes me,* an expression that seems so natural to us, is recorded in Somaize as having issued from the coteries of the *précieuses*. It was considered so remarkable at the time that he recorded its appearance, attributing it to Saint-Amant. I've collected nearly a hundred of these expressions – *C'est la plus naturelle des femmes,* She's the most natural of women; *Il est brouillé avec Untel,* He's fallen out with So-and-so; *Il a le sens droit,* He is a good judge; *Tour de visage,* The outline of the face; *Tour d'esprit,* Turn of mind, personal style; *Je me connais un peu en gens,* I'm quite a good judge of people; *Jouer à coup sûr,* To play with no chance of losing; *Il agit sans façons,* He acts without ceremony or in an offhand way; *Il m'a fait mille amitiés,* He was effusively friendly; *Cela est assez de mon goût,* That is quite to my taste; *Il n'entre dans aucun détail,* He doesn't go into details; *Il s'est embarqué en une mauvaise affaire,* He has embarked upon a bit of bad business; *Il pousse les gens à bout,* He drives people mad; *Sacrifier ses amis,* To sacrifice one's friends; *Cela est fort,* That is a bit much; *Faire des avances,* To make approaches or advances to someone; *Faire figure dans le monde,* To cut a figure in the world. These expressions, which seem quite natural to us and have become standard, are recorded in Somaize and also in Berry's rhetoric of 1663 as having been created in the circle of the *Précieuses*. This tells you to what extent one must avoid the illusion that language is

[1] See above, chap. 8, pp. 114–115.

modeled on a simple and direct apprehension of the real. They all presuppose a lengthy elaboration, the implications, the reductions, of the real, what we
134 might call metaphysical progress. That people act in a certain way with certain signifiers involves all sorts of presuppositions. *Le mot me manque,* for example, presupposes first of all that the word exists.

1

Today we shall take up our subject again according to the methodic principles we have laid down. To press on a little bit further into President Schreber's delusion we shall proceed by taking up his document again. Besides, we haven't got anything else.

I pointed out that the document was composed by Schreber at a period sufficiently late in his psychosis for him to be able to put his delusion into words. In this respect I have some reservations, legitimate ones, since something that we may suppose is more primitive, prior, originary, escapes us – the lived experience, the famous ineffable and incommunicable lived experience of psychosis in its primary or fertile period.

We are at liberty to be fascinated by this and to think that we have lost the best part. To deplore the fact that one has lost the best part is in general a way of neglecting what one has at hand, which is perhaps worth taking into consideration.

Why should a terminal state be any less instructive than an initial state? It's not certain that this terminal state represents a drop in value if we accept the principle that in unconscious matters the relation of the subject to the symbolic is fundamental.

This principle requires that we abandon the idea, implicit in many systems, that what the subject puts into words is an improper and always distorted enunciation of a lived experience that would be some irreducible reality. This is the hypothesis at the bottom of Blondel's *La Conscience morbide,* a good reference point I occasionally use with you. There is, according to Blondel, something so original and irreducible in the lived experience of the delusional subject that when he expresses himself he gives us something that can only be misleading. All we can do is renounce any idea of ever penetrating this impenetrable lived experience. The same psychological presupposition, implicit in what might be called the thought of our times, is indicated in the customary, and incorrect, use of the word *intellectualization.* There is, for an entire species of modern intellectual, something irreducible that intelligence is by definition bound to miss. Bergson did much to establish this dangerous prejudice.

135 One of two things has to be true. Either a delusion is in no way part of our own personal domain as analysts and has nothing to do with the unconscious,

or it's dependent upon the unconscious such as we – we've been through this together – have thought we could elaborate it over recent years.

The unconscious is fundamentally structured, woven, chained, meshed, by language. And not only does the signifier play as big a role there as the signified does, but it plays the fundamental role. In fact, what characterizes language is the system of signifiers as such. The complex play between signifier and signified raises questions that we are skirting since we aren't doing a course in linguistics here, but you have a good enough idea of it now to know that the relationship between signifier and signified is far from being, as they say in set theory, one-to-one.

The signified is not the things in their raw state, already there, given in an order open to meaning. Meaning is human discourse insofar as it always refers to another meaning. M. Saussure in his famous courses on linguistics produces a diagram with one flux that is the meaning and another that is the discourse, what we hear. This diagram illustrates that the cutting up of a sentence into its different elements already involves a certain degree of arbitrariness. These units called words undoubtedly exist, but when one looks at them closely they are not so unitary. This is of no concern here. Well then, M. de Saussure thinks that what enables the signifier to be cut up is a certain correlation between the signifier and the signified. Obviously, for it to be possible to cut the two of them up together there must be a pause.

This diagram is questionable. It's in fact clear that in the diachronic sense, across time, shifts occurs, and that at any given moment the evolving system of human meanings is being displaced and modifies the content of the signifiers, which adopt different usages. I hope I have made you feel this with the examples I gave you before. Underneath the same signifiers there have been over the course of time these shifts which prove that no one-to-one correspondence between the two systems can be established.

A system of signifiers, a language, has certain characteristics that specify the syllables, the usage of words, the locutions into which they are grouped, and this conditions what happens in the unconscious, down to its most original fabric. If the unconscious is as Freud depicts it, a pun can in itself be the linchpin that supports a symptom, a pun that doesn't exist in a related language. This is not to say that symptoms are always based on puns, but that they are always based on the existence of signifiers as such, on a complex 136
relationship of totality to totality, or more exactly of entire system to entire system, of universe of signifiers to universe of signifiers.

This is so clearly Freud's doctrine that there is no other meaning to give to his term *overdetermination*, or to his necessary requirement that for a symptom to occur there must be at least a duality, at least two conflicts at work, one current and one old. Without this fundamental duality of signifier and signified no psychoanalytic determinism is conceivable. The material linked

to the old conflict is preserved in the unconscious as a potential signifier, as a virtual signifier, and then captured in the signified of the current conflict and used by it as language, that is, as a symptom.

Henceforth, when we explore delusions with the idea that they can be understood in the register of psychoanalysis, in the order of the Freudian discovery, according to the mode of thought that regarding symptoms it makes possible, you readily see that there is no reason to reject the explanation Schreber gives of his world system as being the effect of a purely verbal compromise, as a secondary elaboration of the terminal state, even if the testimony he provides is, undoubtedly, not always beyond criticism.

We are well aware that as he progresses the paranoiac retroactively rethinks his past and discovers, even in his very early years, the origin of the persecutions of which he has been the object. He can have the greatest difficulty in situating an event, and one clearly senses his tendency through a play of mirrors to project it into a past that itself becomes rather indeterminate – a past of eternal recurrence, as Schreber writes. But this isn't what is essential. A document as extensive as President Schreber's retains all its value provided we suppose a continuous and profound solidarity between the signifying elements from the beginning to the end of the delusion. In short, the final organization of the delusion enables us to grasp the primary elements that were at work – in any case it is legitimate to look for them.

It's in this respect that analysis of the delusion provides us with the subject's fundamental relationship to the register in which all the manifestations of the unconscious are organized and unfold. Perhaps it will even explain to us, if not the ultimate mechanism of psychosis, at least the subjective relationship to the symbolic order it contains. Perhaps we shall be able to understand how over the course of the evolution of the psychosis, from the time of its origin to its final stage, assuming that there is a final stage in psychosis, the subject is situated in relation to the whole symbolic, original order – an environment distinct from the real environment and from the imaginary
137 dimension, with which man is always involved, and which is constitutive of human reality.

We must not, under the pretext that the subject is deluded, proceed from the idea that his system is in conflict. There is no doubt that it is without application, that's one of the distinctive signs of delusion. In what is communicated within society it's absurd, as they say, and even extremely disturbing. A psychiatrist's first reaction to a subject who starts raving at him is to find it unpleasant. He's disturbed at hearing a gentleman make statements that are both peremptory and contrary to what one is accustomed to regarding as the normal order of causality, and his first concern in the interview is to get the little pegs back into the little holes, as Péguy would say in his late works when speaking of the experience he had taken upon himself, about

these people who, when the great catastrophe declares itself, want to retain the same relationship with things as beforehand. *Proceed in an orderly manner, Sir!* they say to the patient, and the chapters are already done.

Like all discourse a delusion is to be judged first of all as a field of meaning that has organized a certain signifier, so that the first rules of a good interview, and of a good investigation of the psychoses, might be to let him speak for as long as possible. One forms an opinion afterwards. I'm not suggesting that in an observation it should always be like this, and clinicians have on the whole approached things fairly well. But the notion of an elementary phenomenon, the distinctions between hallucinations, between disorders of attention, perception, and the various levels within the order of faculties, have certainly contributed to obscuring our relationship to the delusional.

As for Schreber, he was free to speak for the good reason that no one ever said anything to him, and he had all the time in the world to write his big book for us.

2

We saw last time that Schreber introduces distinctions into his concert of voices in that they are the work of these various entities he calls the realms of God.

This plurality of agents of discourse alone raises a serious problem, since the subject nevertheless doesn't think of it as being autonomous. There are some quite beautiful bits in this text that describe these voices and give us a sense of their relationship with the divine essence. We shouldn't allow ourselves to slide from there into saying that they emanate from it, because then we would be making the construction. We must follow the subject's own language, and he doesn't mention emanation. 138

In the copy I had in my possession there were traces in the margin of annotations by a person who must have considered himself very erudite, because he had written down a number of explanations opposite Schreber's term *emanation*. This person had no doubt heard of Plotinus, but this is one of those cases of hasty understanding one has to guard against. I don't think anything like a Plotinian emanation is involved here.[2]

In the passage I read out,[3] the noise the discourse makes – the subject insists upon this – is spoken so softly that he calls it whispering. But this discourse is always present, uninterrupted. The subject can, as he says, drown it out with his actions and his own words, but it's always ready to recommence at the same noise level.

[2] In Plotinus's theory as expounded in *The Enneads* Intelligence "emanates" from the One, and Soul "emanates" from Intelligence.

[3] Mem, 308–12.

As a working hypothesis, as they say these days, we can accept that it's not impossible that this discourse is verbalized by the subject. This is accepting a lot, perhaps too much, but let's leave that to one side for the moment. In any case, this discourse is related to what we suppose is the continuous discourse which memorizes each subject's conduct for him at every moment and is a sort of understudy to his life. Not only are we obliged to accept this hypothesis because of what we have just been taking to be the structure and fabric of the unconscious, but it's what immediate experience allows us to grasp.

Someone recounted to me, not very long ago, that they had had the following experience. The threat of being about to be run over by a car had suddenly surprised this person who, as everything indicates, possessed the necessary movements for getting out of the way. The phrase *brain damage* leapt into his head, uttered mentally, as it were. No one can say that this verbalization is an operation that forms part of the chain of reflexes for avoiding a shock that might lead to the said brain damage. On the contrary it's slightly removed from the situation, quite apart from the fact that it presupposes all sorts of determinants in the subject that make brain damage something particularly significant for him. Here you can see this latent discourse appear which is always ready to emerge and which intervenes at a level of its own, to a different score from the music of the subject's total conduct.

This discourse which is presented to the subject Schreber at the period of the illness he's describing has a dominant characteristic of *Unsinn*. But this *Unsinn* is not entirely simple. The subject who is writing and confiding in us
139 depicts himself as undergoing this discourse, but the subject who speaks – and the two are not unrelated, otherwise we wouldn't be characterizing him as mad – says some things very clearly, such as what I've already quoted to you, *Aller Unsinn hebt sich auf! All nonsense is annulled, rises, is transposed!*[4] This is what President Schreber tells us he has heard in the register of the allocution made to him by his permanent interlocutor.

This *Aufheben* is a very rich word indeed. It's the sign of implication, of a search, of a recourse proper to this *Unsinn*, which is far from being, as Kant says in his analysis of negative magnitudes,[5] a pure and simple absence, a privation of sense. This *Unsinn* is very positive and organized, it consists of interlocking contradictions, and, of course, the entire sense of our subject's delusion is located here, which makes his novel so enthralling. This *Unsinn* is what is an obstacle, is composite, continues, and is articulated in the delu-

[4] "All nonsense cancels itself out." Mem, 182–83 & 312.

[5] Immanuel Kant, *"Versuch, den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen."*

sion. Negation here is not a privation, and we shall see what it has value in relation to.

What is the connection in this discourse between the subject who speaks in these voices and the subject who reports these things to us as meaningful? This is extremely complex.

I began this demonstration last time by insisting on the significant nature of the suspension of sense produced by the fact that the voices never complete their sentences.

There is here a specific procedure by which meaning is evoked, which undoubtedly reserves for us the possibility of conceiving this meaning as a structure, the one I stressed with respect to that patient who, when she heard someone say, *Sow!* to her, whispered between her teeth, *I've just been to the butcher's* – namely the allusive voice, the subject's indirect aim. We have already managed to get a bit of an idea here of a structure that is very close to the schema we give for the relationships between the subject who speaks concretely, who sustains the discourse, and the unconscious subject who is literally present, in this hallucinatory discourse. He's present, alluded to – one can't say in a beyond, since the Other is lacking in delusion – but on this side, in a sort of internal beyond.

It would not be impossible to pursue this demonstration further. But this would be to introduce schemas too quickly, perhaps, which, if we want to proceed rigorously, might appear preconceived in relation to the data. In the content of a delusion there are sufficient data that are of easier access so that we can proceed differently and take our time.

As a matter of fact, taking one's time is a part of that attitude of good faith which I maintain is necessary if we are to make any progress on the structure of delusion. Bracketing it at the outset as psychiatric is the source of the state 140
of incomprehension in which people have always remained until now. It's assumed at the outset to be an abnormal phenomenon that is involved and, as such, one is condemned not to understand it. One defends oneself against it, one defends oneself thus against its seduction, so tangible in President Schreber, who naively asks the psychiatrist, *Aren't you sometimes afraid of going mad?* But the fact is that this is absolutely true. One of the better masters I have known had a good sense of where listening to these characters who rave on at you all day with such odd things might lead him.

Don't we analysts know that the normal subject is essentially someone who is placed in the position of not taking the greater part of his internal discourse seriously? Observe the number of things in normal subjects, including yourselves, that it's truly your fundamental occupation not to take seriously. The principal difference between you and the insane is perhaps nothing other than this. And this is why for many, even without their acknowledging it,

the insane embody what we would be led to if we began to take things seriously.

So let us, without too great a fear, take our subject seriously, our President Schreber, and since we are unable at the outset to penetrate into either the aim, articulations, or ends of this singular *Unsinn*, let's try to use certain questions to explore as much of it as we can, where we aren't rudderless.

3

First, is there an interlocutor?

Yes, there is, and he's fundamentally unique. This *Einheit* [oneness] is very amusing when you think about, if we think of this text on "Logos" by Heidegger I have translated, which is going to be published in the first issue of our new journal, *La Psychanalyse*, and which identifies the logos with Heraclitus's *En* [One].[6] And in fact we shall see that Schreber's delusion is in its own way a mode of relationship between the subject and language as a whole.

What Schreber expresses shows us both the unity he feels there is in him who maintains this continuous discourse before which he feels himself to be alienated, and a plurality in the modes and in the secondary agents that he attributes to the various parts. But the unity is very fundamental, dominating, and he calls it God. We are at home here. If he says it's God, the man has his reasons. Why deny him the use of a term whose universal importance
141 we are aware of? For some this has even been one of the proofs of his existence. We well know how difficult it is to grasp what the precise content of this is for the majority of our contemporaries, so why should we more especially withhold belief from a delusional when he speaks of God?

What's striking is that Schreber is a disciple of the *Aufklärung*, he's even one of its last representatives, he spent his childhood in a family where religion was not an issue. He lists his reading – all this is valid proof for him of the seriousness of what he experiences.[7] After all, he doesn't enter into a discussion of whether he has made a mistake or not. He says, *This is how it is. It's a fact of which I have the most direct proofs, this can only be God, if the word is to have any meaning. I had never taken this word seriously before, and at the moment at which I experienced these things, I experienced God. The experience is not the guarantee of God, it's God who is the guarantee of my experience. I am speaking to you of God. I must have got it from somewhere, and as I didn't get if from the baggage of my childhood prejudices, my experience is true.*[8] He's very

[6] "Logos (Heraclitus Fragment B 50)."
[7] Mem, 63–64 & n.36.
[8] See Mem, 78–80.

clever here. Not only is he on the whole a good witness, but he commits no theological mistakes. Moreover, he's well informed, I would even say he's a good classical psychiatrist.

In his text one finds a quotation from the sixth edition of Kraepelin that he has plucked out by his own devices, which causes him to laugh at what Kraepelin marks as being a strange thing, that the delusional's experience carries a great capacity to convince.

Beware, says Schreber, *this isn't right at all. Here it's obvious that I am not the delusional the doctors say I am, because I am quite capable of reducing things not only to what people say, but even to common sense. Thus I happen to hear the noise of a train or chain-steamer, which makes a great deal of noise, and the things I think register themselves in the regular intervals between these monotonous noises, just as one modulates the thoughts that churn over inside one's head upon these noises that we are familiar with from being in a railway carriage. But I can discriminate things very well, and the voices I hear are something different again – you fail to give sufficient weight and meaning to this.*[9]

This Schreberian analysis provides us with an opportunity to criticize from within certain genetic theories about interpretation or hallucination. And there are many other examples in the text.

What is this God, then, who has revealed himself to him? First, he is presence. And his mode of presence is the speaking mode.

First, a remark. I don't need to go very far to find testimony that will show 142
the importance of the providential function for the idea subjects have of the Divinity. I'm not saying that this is the best way of approaching the thing from the theological point of view, but nevertheless, opening half by chance a book that attempts to speak of the gods of Epicurus, I read these very nicely written lines – *Ever since people have believed in gods, they have been convinced that they control human affairs, that these two aspects of faith are connected. Faith . . . is born of the many-times repeated observation that the majority of our actions do not achieve their aim, there necessarily remains a margin between our best conceived plans and their accomplishment, and thus we remain in uncertainty, the mother of hope and fear.*[10]

The text is by Father Festugière, a very fine author and extremely knowledgeable about Ancient Greece. Doubtless the slightly apologetic style of this introduction dedicated to the persistence of belief in gods is a bit distorted by its subject matter, that is, by the fact that Epicurianism was constructed around the issue of the presence of the gods in human affairs, since one can't but be astonished by the partiality of reducing the divine hypothesis to a

[9] See Mem, 309 & n.113; cf. Mem, 236–37.
[10] André Festugière, *Epicurus and his Gods,* 51.

providential function, that is, to the requirement that we be recompensed for our good intentions – when they're nice good things happen to them. But anyway, it's significant.

All the more so because there is no trace of it in Schreber, whose delusion is in large part theological and whose partner is divine. To be sure, noting an absence is less decisive than noting a presence, and the fact that something isn't there is always, in the analysis of phenomena, subject to caution. If we had more details on President Schreber's delusion, perhaps this would be contradicted. On the other hand, taking note of an absence is extraordinarily important for localizing a structure. I therefore point out to you that, whether theologically valid or not, the notion of providence, of an agency that rewards, so essential to the functioning of the unconscious, and which protrudes into consciousness, leaves no trace in Schreber. And consequently, let's say, to be brief, that it isn't certain that this divine erotomania is to be immediately inscribed in the register of the superego.

So, here is this God, then. We already know it's he who is always talking, who is forever talking without saying anything. This is so much so that Schreber dedicates many pages to considering what it might mean, that there is this God who talks without saying anything and who nevertheless never stops talking.

143 This troublesome function can't for one second be separated from the mode of presence that is God's. But Schreber's relationships with him are far from being limited to this, and I would now like to emphasize the fundamental and ambiguous relation Schreber has with his God, and which is situated in the same dimension as the one in which he is there, chattering away incessantly.

In a way, this relation is present from the beginning, even before God has unveiled himself, at a time when the delusion is borne by characters like Flechsig, and initially by Flechsig himself, his first therapist. The German expression that, following Freud, I shall emphasize expresses for the subject his essential mode of relationship with his fundamental interlocutor. It establishes a continuity between the initial and the final interlocutors of the delusion, in which we can recognize that there is something in common between Flechsig, the tested souls, the realms of God with their various meanings, posterior and anterior, upper and lower, and, finally, the ultimate god to whom everything appears to be reduced at the end, when Schreber has placed himself in a position of megalomania. Whether it be at the beginning of the delusion, when, as Freud emphasizes, his imminent rape, a threat to his virility, is at issue, or whether it be at the end, when an effusion of voluptuousness is established in which God is supposed to find even greater satisfaction than our subject, it's a matter of this, the greatest of atrocities, that he's going *to be forsaken*.

The translation of this *liegen lassen, laisser en plan,* is not too bad, because it has connotations of feminine sentiments. In German it's much less emphatic and it's also much broader, it's *to let lie.* Throughout the entire Schreberian delusion the threat of this *being forsaken* returns like a musical theme, like the unbroken thread one finds running through a literary or historical theme.

Right at the outset this forms part of the sinister intentions of the persecuting violators and has to be avoided at all cost. One cannot escape the impression that the subject's global relationship with the whole of the phenomena to which he is prey consists in this essentially ambivalent relation – whatever the painful, weighty, troublesome, unbearable, character of these phenomena, maintaining his relationship with them constitutes a necessity the rupture of which would have been absolutely intolerable to him. When this rupture is realized, that is, whenever he loses contact with God – whom he has relations with on two levels, an auditory one and another, more mysterious one, that of his presence, which is linked to what he calls the blessedness of the partners, and his partner's blessedness even more than his own – whenever the relationship is interrupted, whenever the withdrawal of the divine presence occurs, all sorts of variously intolerable internal phenomena 144
of tearing apart, of pain, break out.

This character with whom Schreber is involved in a twofold relation, a dialogue and an erotic relationship which are distinct and yet never disjoined, is also characterized by the fact that he has absolutely no understanding of anything that is specifically human. This feature is often quite touching in Schreber's hands. Of the questions that God asks him so as to incite him to give the response implied by the questioning itself, which Schreber never allows himself to give, he says – *These really are stupid traps that I am offered.* Schreber even elaborates all sorts of quite agreeably rationalized remarks about the dimensions of certainty, and offers an explanation. How can one successfully conceive of a God such that he understands absolutely nothing about human needs? How can one be so stupid as to believe, for example, that if I cease for an instant to think of anything, I will have become a complete idiot, have even fallen into nothingness? Yet this is what God does, taking advantage of this to withdraw. Whenever this occurs, I apply myself to some intelligent occupation and manifest my presence. For God, despite his thousand-fold experiences, to be capable of believing this, he really must be ineducable.

Schreber elaborates on this point in ways that are far from being stupid. He hypothesizes and argues in ways that wouldn't be out of place in a properly theological discussion. God being perfect and imperfectible, the very notion of progress through acquired experience is altogether unthinkable. Schreber does find this argument a bit sophistical nevertheless, since this irreducible perfection is completely cut off from things human. Contrary to

the god who probes loins and hearts, Schreber's god knows things only on their surface, he sees only what he sees.[11] As to what is inside he doesn't understand a thing, but since everything is written down somewhere, on little cards, by what is called the writing-down system, he will ultimately, at the end of this totalization, nevertheless be totally informed.

Moreover, Schreber explains very well how it stands to reason that God cannot have access to things as contingent and childish as the existence of steam engines and locomotives. But all this having been recorded in the form of discourse by the souls ascending towards blessedness, God collects it together and thereby still has some idea of what happens on Earth in terms of minor inventions, from the game of diabolo to the atomic bomb. This is a very nice system, and one gets the impression that it was discovered through an extraordinarily innocent development, through the working out of significant consequences, in a harmonious and continuous unfolding through its various
145 phases, whose motor is the subject's disturbed relationship to something that affects the total functioning of language, the symbolic order, and discourse.

I can't discuss all the richness there is here. There is for example a discussion, which is extraordinarily brilliant, of God's relationship to games of chance.[12] Can God foresee what number will get drawn in a lottery? It's not a silly question, and it would be good if the people here who have a strong belief in God asked themselves the same question. The order of omniscience that is presupposed by being able to guess which little piece of paper gets drawn from a huge ball presents considerable difficulties. From the point of view of the real, the only difference between the pieces of paper in this balanced mass is a symbolic difference. It therefore has to be supposed that God enters the discourse. It's an extension of the theory of the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real.

There is one thing that this implies, which is that God's intentions are unclear. There is nothing more fascinating than to see how the delusional voice that has emerged from an indisputably original experience involves in this subject a sort of burning of language that manifests itself in the respect with which he upholds omniscience and good intentions as being essential to the Divinity. But he can't fail to see, particularly at the beginning of his delusion when these painful phenomena come at him from all sorts of harmful characters, that God has despite everything allowed it all to happen. This God practices the absolutely inadmissible politics of half-measures, of half-tormenting, in respect of which Schreber lets slip the word *perfidie*.[13] In the end one has to suppose that there is a fundamental disturbance in the univer-

[11] See Mem, 20.
[12] Mem, 258.
[13] Mem, 226.

sal order. As the voices say – *Remember that all that is worldizing implies a self contradiction.*[14] There is beauty here that I don't need to highlight for you.

We shall stop for today on this analysis of the structure of the divine person.

The next move will consist in analyzing the relation between the entire fantasmagoria and the real itself. With the symbolic register, the imaginary register, and the real register, we shall break new ground which will enable us to uncover, I hope, the nature of what is at issue in the delusional interlocution.

1 February 1956.

[14] "Don't forget that the end of the world is a contradiction in itself." Mem, 183.

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X

On the signifier in the real and the bellowing-miracle

PSYCHIATRY'S MAIN FACT
THE DISCOURSE OF FREEDOM
THE PEACE OF THE EVENING
SUBJECTIVE TOPOLOGY

Some thought I went a bit swiftly last time in mentioning President Schreber's reflections on divine omnipotence and omniscience and appearing to endorse their appropriateness.

I was simply observing that this man, for whom the entire experience of God is discourse, was wondering about what there is to be found at the junction of the symbol and the real, that is, about what introduces the symbolic opposition into the real. Perhaps I ought to have gone on to add how remarkable it is that this was precisely what caught the patient's attention – that within the register of his experience it seemed to him difficult to see how God could foresee what numbers would be drawn in a lottery.

This remark doesn't of course exclude the criticisms that such an objection might lead to for anyone who should find himself inclined to respond. Someone pointed out to me for example that numbers are distinguishable by their spatial coordinates and that, when the problem of the principle of individuation is raised, distinguishing between individuals is based on nothing different.

As far as I was concerned, I took notice of the subject's sensitivity, in his reasoning part, to the difference there is between language as symbolic and his own permanent internal dialogue – or more exactly this oscillation in which a discourse that the subject experiences as foreign and as revealing a presence to him itself asks the questions and itself gives the answers.

It was a belief in God for which he was totally unprepared that engendered in him the experience he conveys. It was for him a question of discerning
148 what order of reality could account for this presence extending over a part of the universe – not all of it, since the divine power has no knowledge of man. Nothing of his interior, of his feeling for life, of his life itself, is comprehensible to God, who only gathers it up once everything has been transformed into infinite note-taking.[1]

[1] I.e., the *writing-down-system*.

Now, a deeply reasoning character like Schreber, confronted by an experience which for him has all the characteristics of a reality and in which he can discern the full weight of the undeniable presence of a god of language, pauses, to evoke the limits of his power, before an example that concerns a human, artificial handling of language. It concerns a future contingent, in relation to which there is a real issue of human freedom and, by the same token, of what God can't foresee.

What is of interest to us is that Schreber distinguishes between two spheres of language use, which are extremely different for him. This distinction can only have value for us within the perspective that admits the radically primary nature of the symbolic opposition between plus and minus, insofar as these are distinguished by nothing other than their opposition, though they must have material support. They nevertheless evade all real coordinates apart from the law of their equiprobability.

As soon as we introduce a game of symbolic alternation, we must effectively assume that nothing differentiates the real efficiency of one element from that of another. It isn't the result of a law of experience but of an a priori law that we have to have equal chances of selecting a plus or a minus. The game will not be considered correct unless it meets the criterion that the likelihood of outcomes be equal. In this sphere we can say that, at least at the nosological level of apprehending the term, here the symbolic yields an a priori law and introduces a type of operation that lies outside anything we could arrive at by inference from facts in the real.

1

We must constantly ask ourselves why we're so attached to the question of delusion.

To understand why, one need only recall the formula that is sometimes used, carelessly, regarding the way analysis works, namely that our leverage point is the healthy part of the ego. Is there no clearer example of the contrast in existence between a healthy part and an insane part of the ego than the delusions classically referred to as partial? Is there no more striking example 149
of this than the work of this President Schreber who offers us such a sensitive, engaging, tolerant exposition of his conception of the world and experiences, and who doesn't exhibit any less assertively the inadmissible mode of his hallucinatory experiences? Now, who is not aware – this is I would say psychiatry's main fact – that no amount of leverage on the healthy part of the ego would enable us to gain an inch of ground over the manifestly insane part?

Psychiatry's main fact, by means of which the beginner is initiated into the very existence of madness as such, leads to the abandonment of all hope of a cure by such an approach. Moreover, this is how things had always been

before the arrival of psychoanalysis, whatever more or less mysterious force had been appealed to – affectivity, imagination, coenaesthesia – to explain this resistance to reducing through reason a delusion that nevertheless presents itself as fully articulated and in appearance accessible to the laws of coherent discourse. Psychoanalysis, on the other hand, gives a curious endorsement to the psychotic's delusion because it legitimates it in the same sphere as the one in which analytic experience normally operates and because it rediscovers in his discourse what it usually discovers as the discourse of the unconscious. But it still doesn't contribute any success to the experience. This discourse, which has emerged in the ego, shows itself – as articulated as it may be, and it could even be said to be in large part inverted, bracketed by *Verneinung* – to be irreducible, unmanageable, incurable.

In short, it could be said that the psychotic is a martyr of the unconscious, giving this term *martyr* its meaning, which is to be a witness. It's an open testimony. The neurotic is also a witness to the existence of the unconscious, he gives a closed testimony that has to be deciphered. The psychotic, in the sense in which he is in a first approximation an open witness, seems arrested, immobilized, in a position that leaves him incapable of authentically restoring the sense of what he witnesses and sharing it in the discourse of others.

I shall try to get you to sense the difference there is between open and closed discourse on the basis of a homology, and you will see that in the normal world of discourse there is a certain dissymmetry that already adumbrates the dissymmetry at issue in the opposition between neurosis and psychosis.

We live in a society in which slavery isn't recognized. It's nevertheless clear to any sociologist or philosopher that it has in no way been abolished. This
150 has even become the object of some fairly well-known claims. It's also clear that while bondage hasn't been abolished, one might say it has been generalized. The relationship of those known as the exploiters, in relation to the economy as a whole, is no less a relationship of bondage than that of the average man. Thus the master-slave duality is generalized within each participant in our society.

The deep-seated bondage of consciousness in this unhappy state of affairs is to be attributed to the discourse that provoked this profound social transformation. We can call this discourse the message of brotherhood. It concerns something new which didn't just appear in the world with Christianity, since Stoicism, for instance, had already laid the ground for it. In short, behind this generalized bondage there is a secret discourse, a message of liberation, which in a way subsists in a state of repression.

Does the same thing hold for what we can call the patent discourse of freedom? No, it doesn't. Some time ago an imbalance was observed between the pure and simple fact of revolt and the capacity of social action to transform. I would even say that the entire modern revolution was founded on

this distinction and on the notion that the discourse of freedom was, by definition, not only ineffectual but also profoundly alienated from its aim and object, that everything probative that is linked to it is properly speaking the enemy of all progress towards freedom, to the extent that freedom can have a tendency to animate any continual movement in society. Nonetheless, this discourse of freedom is articulated deep within us all as representing a certain right of the individual to autonomy.

A certain mental breathing space seems indispensable to modern man, one in which his independence not only of any master but also of any god is affirmed, a space for his irreducible autonomy as individual, as individual existence. Here there is indeed something that merits a point-by-point comparison with a delusional discourse. It's one itself. It plays a part in the modern individual's presence in the world and in his relations with his counterparts. Surely, if I asked you to put this autonomy into words, to calculate the exact share of indefeasible freedom in the current state of affairs, and even should you answer, *the rights of man,* or *the right to happiness,* or a thousand other things, we wouldn't get very far before realizing that for each of us this is an intimate, personal discourse which is a long way from coinciding with the discourse of one's neighbor on any point whatsoever. In a word, the existence of a permanent discourse of freedom in the modern individual seems to me indisputable.

Now, how can this discourse be matched up not only with the other's 151
discourse but with his conduct as well, assuming that he tends to base it on this discourse at all? There is a truly discouraging problem here. And the facts show that there is invariably not just a coming to terms with what everyone effectively contributes, but actually resigned abandonment to reality. In the same way, our delusional Schreber, after having believed himself the sole survivor of the twilight of the world, resigns himself to acknowledging the permanent existence of external reality. He can barely explain why this reality is there, but he has to recognize that the real is indeed still there, that nothing has perceptibly altered. This for him is the strangest thing of all, since there is here an order of certainty inferior to what his delusional experience gives him, but he resigns himself to it.

To be sure, we ourselves place much less confidence in the discourse of freedom, but as soon as it's a matter of acting, in the name of freedom in particular, our attitude towards what in reality we have to endure, or towards the impossibility of our acting together to further this freedom, has entirely the character of resigned abandonment, of a renunciation of what is nevertheless an essential part of our internal discourse, namely that we have not only certain indefeasible rights but that these rights are founded on certain primary freedoms, which can be demanded for any human being in our culture.

There is something ridiculous in the effort of psychologists to reduce thought

to an incipient action, or to an elided or represented action, and to seek its origins in what would put man permanently at the level of the experience of an elementary real, of a real of objects that would be his own. It's far too obvious that for each of us thought is a thing of little value which we could call vain mental rumination – but why belittle it?

We are constantly raising problems closely related to these notions of internal freedom and of the manifestation of something enclosed within oneself. This point of view comes to a dead end very quickly, given that every type of living reality immersed in the spirit of the modern world's cultural arena is essentially going round in circles. This is why one always comes back to the restricted, hesitant character of one's personal actions, and one only begins to think the problem is confused when one actually takes things in hand *qua* thinker, which is not everyone's fate. We all remain at the level of an insoluble contradiction between a discourse that is at a certain level always necessary and a reality to which, both in principle and in a way proved by experience, we fail to adjust.

152 Moreover, don't we see that analytic experience is deeply bound up with this discursive double of the subject, his discordant and ridiculous ego? The ego of every modern man?

Isn't it clear that analytic experience began with the fact that ultimately nobody feels at ease in the current state of interhuman relations in our culture? Nobody who has had to face even the smallest request for advice, however elementary, that encroaches on principles feels he is being honest. It's not simply because we are too ignorant of the subjects' lives that we are unable to tell them whether they would do better to marry or not in such and such circumstances and will, if we're honest, tend to be reticent – it's because the very meaning of marriage is for each of us a question that remains open, and open in such a way that, as to its application in a particular case, we don't feel ourselves to be in a position to give the answer when called upon to become directors of conscience. This attitude, the pertinence of which can be experienced by anyone who doesn't abandon himself for the sake of becoming a somebody and who doesn't set himself up as a moralist or as omniscient, is also the first condition to be demanded of what can be called a psychotherapist – psychotherapeutics will have taught him the risks of taking such perilous initiatives.

Analysis began precisely by refusing to take sides within the sphere of common discourse, with its profound rifts as to the essence of mores and the status of the individual in our society, precisely by avoiding this sphere. It limits itself to a different discourse, one that is inscribed in the very suffering of the being we have before us and is already articulated in something – his symptoms and his structure – that escapes him, in so far as obsessional neurosis, for instance, doesn't simply consist of symptoms but is also a structure.

Psychoanalysis never places itself at the level of the discourse of freedom, even though this discourse may always be present, constant within each of us, with our contradictions and dissonances, this discourse that is personal and yet common, and always, whether imperceptibly or not, delusional. Psychoanalysis is otherwise directed at the effect of discourse within the subject.

Henceforth, isn't the experience of a case like Schreber – or of any other patient who could give us as extensive an account of discursive structure – of such a nature as to enable us to get a bit closer to the problem of what the ego really signifies? The ego isn't reducible to a function of synthesis. It's indissolubly linked to this sort of mortmain, of a necessary and unbearable enigmatic element, that is partially constituted by the discourse of the real man we are dealing with in our experience, this foreign discourse within 153
everyone's heart in so far as one thinks of oneself as an autonomous individual.

2

Schreber's discourse has a different structure, to be sure. Schreber notes at the beginning of one of his chapters, very amusingly – *They say I'm paranoid.* As it happens, people at that time were still sufficiently bound to Kraepelin's first classification to describe him as paranoid, whereas his symptoms went much further than this. But in calling him paraphrenic Freud went further still, since paraphrenia was the name he suggested for *dementia praecox*, Bleuler's schizophrenia.[2]

Coming back to Schreber, *They say I'm paranoid, and they say that paranoiacs are people who refer everything to themselves. In this case they're mistaken, it's not I who refer everything to myself, it's he who refers everything to me, it's this God who speaks non-stop inside me, through his various agents and extensions. It's he who has the unfortunate habit, whatever I experience, of immediately pointing out to me that something is meant for me, or even that something comes from me. I can't play an aria from* The Magic Flute – Schreber is a musician – *without having him who speaks immediately attribute the corresponding feelings to me, but I don't have them myself.*[3] You can also see President Schreber become highly indignant at the fact that the voice should intervene to tell him that what he is in the process of saying concerns him. Of course, we are in a play of mirages, but this is no ordinary mirage, this Other considered as radically foreign, as errant, who intervenes so as to cause a convergence to the second degree upon the subject, an intentionalization of the external world, which the subject himself, insofar as he asserts himself as *I*, vigorously repels.

[2] Freud mentions Schreber's *paraphrenic traits*, but retains the diagnosis of paranoia. See SE 12:78.

[3] See Mem, 262–63.

We talk about hallucinations. Do we absolutely have the right to do so? They are not presented to us as such when we hear them recounted. According to the commonly received notion, which treats them as a false perception, we're dealing with something that emerges in the external world and forces itself on one as a perception, a disorder, a rupture in the text of the real. In other words, the hallucination is located in the real. The prior question is whether a verbal hallucination doesn't require a certain preliminary analysis that questions the very legitimacy of this definition.

Here I have to take the same path I've already somewhat bored you with,
154 by reminding you of the very foundations of the order of discourse and by rejecting its status as superstructure, its relationship of pure and simple reference to reality, its having the character of signs, and the equivalence that is supposed to exist between naming and the world of objects. Let's try to re-examine the question from an angle that is a bit closer to experience.

Nothing is as ambiguous as verbal hallucination. The classical analyses already give us some indication, at least for a portion of the cases, of the subject's role in their creation. This is what has been called the psychomotor verbal hallucination, and the observed adumbrations of utterances have been gleefully recorded because they offer the hope of a satisfactory rational explanation of the phenomenon of hallucination. If this problem warrants investigation, the starting point is the relationship between the mouth and the ear. This doesn't only exist between subjects, but also exists for each subject himself, who when he speaks hears himself. Having got this far, one thinks that one has already taken a step forward and gained insight into a whole lot of things. In fact, though, the remarkable sterility of the analysis of the problem of verbal hallucination is due to the inadequacy of this observation. That the subject hears what he says is precisely the point at which it's appropriate not to stop but to return to the experience of what is going on when he hears someone else.

What happens if you pay attention solely to the saying of what you hear, to the accent, or even to the regional expressions, to whatever is literal, in registering your interlocutor's discourse? You have to bring a little imagination to this, since it can perhaps never be carried out entirely, but it's very clear when a foreign language is involved – what you understand in a discourse is different from what is registered acoustically. It's even simpler if we think of deaf-mutes, who are able to receive a discourse through visual signs given by means of the fingers, according to the deaf-mute alphabet. If a deaf-mute is fascinated by the pretty hands of his interlocutor, he will fail to register the discourse the hands convey. I would add this – can it be said that properly speaking he sees what he registers, namely the sequence of signs, their opposition without which there is no sequence?

Even so, we can't stop there. As it happens, a deaf-mute, even as he reg-

isters the sequence put to him, may well understand nothing if addressed in a language he doesn't know. Like someone who hears a discourse in a foreign language, he will have seen the said sentence perfectly well, but it will be a dead sentence. The sentence becomes alive only when it conveys a meaning.

What does this mean? Even if we are quite convinced that the meaning 155
always relates to something, that it has value only to the extent that it refers to another meaning, it's clear that the life of a sentence is very deeply bound up with the fact that the subject is listening in, that he intends this meaning for himself. What makes the sentence as understood different from the sentence as not understood, which doesn't prevent it from being heard, is precisely what the phenomenology of delusion highlights so well, namely the anticipation of meaning.

It's of the nature of meaning, insofar as it takes shape, continually to tend to close itself off for the listener. In other words the contribution of the listener of the discourse to the listener who is uttering it is constant and there is a link between listening and speaking which isn't external, in the sense in which one hears oneself speak, but which is located at the level of the language phenomenon itself. It's at the level at which the signifier conveys meaning, and not at the sensory level of the phenomenon, that listening and speaking are like front and back. To listen to words, to give them one's hearing, is already more or less to obey them. To obey is nothing else, it's to be on the look-out, in listening.

Let me sum this up. The sense is always moving towards something, towards another meaning, towards the closure of meaning. It always refers to something that is out ahead or that turns back upon itself, but there is a direction. Does this mean that we have no endpoint? I'm sure that this point still remains uncertain in your mind given the insistence with which I state that meaning always refers to meaning. You are wondering whether the aim of discourse, which is not simply to cover over or even conceal the world of things, but to find a foothold there from time to time, would not in the end be an irremediable failure.

Now, in no way can we consider that the fundamental endpoint is to point to a thing. There is an absolute non-equivalence between discourse and pointing. Whatever you take the ultimate element of discourse to be reduced to, you will never be able to replace it with your index finger – recall the quite correct remark by Saint Augustine. If I designate something by pointing to it, no one will ever know whether my finger is designating the object's color or its matter, or whether it's designating a stain or a crack, etc. You need words, discourse, to discern this. Discourse has an original property in comparison with pointing. But that's not where we shall find the fundamental reference of discourse. Are we looking for where it stops? Well then, it's always at the level of this problematical term called being.

156 I don't want to give an overly philosophical discourse here but want to show you for example what I mean when I tell you that discourse is essentially directed at something for which we have no other term than *being*.

I ask you, then, to think about this for a moment. You are at the close of a stormy and tiring day, you regard the darkness that is beginning to fall upon your surroundings, and something comes to mind, embodied in the expression, *the peace of the evening*.

I don't think anybody who has a normal affective life is unaware that this is something that exists and has a completely different value from the phenomenal apprehension of the close of the clamor of the day, of an attenuation of contours and passions. There is in *the peace of the evening* both a presence and a choice from everything that surrounds you.

What link is there between the expression *the peace of the evening* and what you experience? It's not absurd to ask oneself whether beings who didn't give this peace of the evening a distinct existence, who didn't formulate it verbally, could distinguish it from any of the other registers under which temporal reality may be apprehended. This might be a panic feeling, for example, over the presence of the world, an agitation that you observe at that moment in the behavior of your cat which appears to be searching left and right for the presence of a ghost, or this anxiety which, although unknown to us, we attribute to primitive peoples over the setting of the sun, when we think they are perhaps afraid that the sun will not return – which, moreover, isn't unthinkable. In short, a feeling of disquiet, of a quest. There's something here – isn't there? – that leaves intact the question of what the relationship is between this order of being, which has its existence equivalent to all sorts of other existences in our lived experience, and which is called *the peace of the evening*, and its verbal expression.

We can now observe that something quite different happens according to whether we, who have called up this peace of the evening ourselves, have formulated this expression before uttering it, or whether it takes us by surprise or interrupts us, calming the movement of agitation that dwelled within us. It's precisely when we are not listening for it, when it's outside our field and suddenly hits us from behind, that it assumes its full value, surprised as we are by this more or less endophasic, more or less inspired, expression that comes to us like a murmur from without, a manifestation of discourse insofar as it barely belongs to us, which comes as an echo of what it is that is all of a sudden significant for us in this presence, an utterance such that we don't know whether it comes from without or from within – *the peace of the evening*.

Without going to the heart of the issue of the relationship between the
157 signifier, *qua* signifier of language, and something that without it would never be named, it's noticeable that the less we express it, the less we speak, the more it speaks to us. The more foreign we are to what is at issue in this being,

the more it has a tendency to present itself to us, accompanied by this pacifying expression that presents itself as indeterminate, lying on the border between the field of our motor autonomy and this something that is said to us from outside, this something through which the world borders on speaking to us.

What does this being, or not, of language, this *the peace of the evening*, mean? To the extent that we're not expecting it, or wishing for it, or haven't even thought about it for a long time, it's essentially as a signifier that it presents itself to us. No experimentalist construction can justify its existence, there is a datum here, a certain way to take this time of the evening as a signifier, and we can be open to it or closed to it. And it's precisely insofar as we have been closed to it that we receive it through this peculiar echo phenomenon, or at least the start of it, which consists in the appearance, at the limit of the phenomenon's grip on us of what will most commonly be expressed for us by these words, *the peace of the evening*. We have now come to the limit at which discourse, if it opens onto anything beyond meaning, opens onto the signifier in the real. We shall never know, in the perfect ambiguity in which it dwells, what it owes to this marriage with discourse.

You can see how the more this signifier takes us by surprise, that is, in principle escapes us, the more it's already presented to us with a more or less appropriate fringe of discourse phenomena. Well then, the issue for us – this is the working hypothesis I propose – is to look for what there is at the center of President Schreber's experience, what he senses without knowing it at the edge of the field of his experience, at the fringe, carried away as he is in the froth created by this signifier he fails to perceive as one but which, at its limit, organizes all these phenomena.

3

I said last time that the continuity of this perpetual discourse is not only felt by the subject as a test of his capacities for discourse, but also as a challenge and a requirement in the absence of which he suddenly feels he is at the mercy of a rupture with the sole presence in the world that still exists at the time of his delusion, that of this absolute Other, this interlocutor who has 158
emptied the universe of any authentic presence. Where does the ineffable voluptuousness – a fundamental feature of the subject's life – which is attached to this discourse, stem from?

In this particularly true-to-life observation, and with an infrangible attachment to the truth, Schreber notes what happens when this discourse upon which he is painfully dependent ceases. Different phenomena from those of the continuous internal discourse arise – things slow down, there are interruptions, discontinuities, which the subject is forced to complement.

The withdrawal of the ambiguous and double god in question, who habitually presents himself in his so-called lower form, is accompanied by sensations that are very painful for the subject, but above all by four connotations of a linguistic order.[4]

In the first place, there is what he calls the bellowing-miracle. He is unable to contain a prolonged shout, which grips him so brutally that, as he himself notes, if at that instant he had had anything in his mouth it would have forced him to spit it out. He has to restrain himself if this is not to occur in public, and he is a long way from always being able to do so – quite a striking phenomenon if we see in this shouting the mouth's motor participation in speech reduced to its most extreme aspect. If there is anything by means of which speech comes to be combined with an absolutely a-signifying vocal function, and which nevertheless contains all possible signifiers, it must surely be what it is that makes us shiver in a dog's baying at the moon.

Secondly, there is the call for help, supposedly heard coming from the divine nerves that have become separated from God but that trail a sort of comet's tail behind them. In the first period, at the time of the tying-to-celestial-bodies, Schreber could not enter into effusive communion with the divine rays without having one or more tested souls leap into his mouth. But following a certain stabilization of his imaginary world, this no longer occurred. In contrast, anxiety-making phenomena recur when some of these animated entities that he is living in the midst of are, on God's withdrawal, left trailing and call out for help.

This phenomenon of the call for help is different from the bellowing. The bellowing is a pure signifier only, whereas the call for aid has a meaning, however elementary.

This isn't all. Thirdly, there are all sorts of noises from without, whatever they might be – something that happens in the corridor of the mental home, or a noise outside, a bark or a neigh which, he says, has been miracled, done expressly for him. It's always something that has a human meaning.

159 Between the vanishing meaning of the bellowing and the emission obtained from the call for help – which is not even his according to him, since it surprises him from without – we can observe a whole range of phenomena that are characterized by the outbreak of meaning. Schreber is well aware that these are real noises that he is accustomed to hearing in his surroundings, nevertheless he is convinced that they do not occur by chance just at that moment, but for his sake, on their return to abandonment in the external world, and in a way that corresponds to the intermediate periods of absorption in the delusional world.

[4] See Mem, 205–6. The fourth phenomenon, not discussed here by Lacan, consists of blasts of wind that coincide with pauses in Schreber's thinking.

The other miracles, for which he constructs an entire theory of divine creation, consist in the call of a number of living beings which in general are singing birds – as distinct from the speaking birds that form part of the divine entourage – that he sees in the garden. There are also known species of insects – the subject had an entomologist great grandfather – created quite intentionally for him by the omnipotence of divine speech. Thus between these two poles, the bellowing-miracle and the call for help, a transition occurs in which can be seen traces of the passage of the subject absorbed in an undeniably erotized link. The connotations are there – this is a male-female relationship.

The fundamental phenomenon of Schreber's delusion stabilized into an *Unsinnig*, nonsensical, field of erotized meanings. With time the subject managed to neutralize to its utmost the task he set himself, which consisted in completing the interrupted sentences. Any other way of responding, by questioning them or by insulting them, would not have been playing the game. It is necessary, he says, for me to be linked to the activity of God himself who speaks to me in his fundamental language, however absurd or humiliating the character of his questioning. Well then, whenever the subject leaves this enigmatic field, whenever a state occurs whose arrival one would think he must be wishing for as a respite, an illumination occurs on the fringe of the external world and goes through him with all the component elements of language in a dissociated form. On the one hand there is vocal activity in its most elementary form, even accompanied by a sort of feeling of disarray linked in the subject to a certain sense of shame. On the other hand there is a meaning that has the connotation of being a call for help, correlated at that moment with his abandonment and, subsequently, with this something which on our analysis ultimately appears much more hallucinatory than these language phenomena that on the whole remain entirely mysterious. Furthermore, he never calls them anything but internal speech.

Schreber describes the peculiar trajectory of the rays that precede the 160
induction of the divine words – transformed into threads of which he has a certain visual, or at least spatial, apprehension, they come towards him from the horizon, spin around inside his head, and finally stab into him from behind. All this leads us to think that this phenomenon, which is a prelude to the coming into play of the divine discourse as such, unfolds in what could be called a trans-space linked to the structure of the signifier and of meaning, a spatialization prior to any possible dualization of the phenomenon of language.

What happens when this phenomenon ceases is different. Reality becomes the support of other phenomena, those that are classically reduced to belief. If the term *hallucination* must be attributed to a transformation of reality, this is the only level at which we have the right to maintain it, if we are to preserve

any coherence for our language. What indicates a hallucination is this unusual sense the subject has at the border between the sense of reality and the sense of unreality, a sense of proximate birth, of novelty – and not just of any novelty but of novelty over its use breaking through into the external world. This is not of the same order as what appears with respect to meaning or meaningfulness. It is a created reality, one that manifests itself well and truly within reality as something new. Hallucination, as the invention of reality, here constitutes the support for what the subject is experiencing.

I think today I've got you to grasp the schema I have tried to present, with all the problems it comprises.

We are inquiring into the sense to give the term *hallucination*. In order to be able to classify hallucinations in the appropriate way, it's best to observe them in the reciprocal contrasts, the complementary oppositions, that the subject himself points out. As a matter of fact, these oppositions form part of the one same subjective organization and, having been given by the subject, they have greater value than if they were provided by the observer. Moreover, one has to follow their progress over time.

I have tried to give you an idea of how in Schreber there is something that is always liable to surprise him, that never unveils itself, but is located in the order of his relations with language, of these language phenomena that the subject remains attached to by a very special compulsion and that constitute the center in which the resolution of his delusion finally results.

There is a subjective topology here based entirely upon the fact, given to us by analysis, that there may be an unconscious signifier. We need to know
161 how this unconscious signifier is situated in psychosis. It appears to be external to the subject, but it's another exteriority than the one that is evoked when hallucination and delusion are presented to us as a disturbance of reality, since the subject remains attached to it through an erotic fixation. Here we have to conceive of space speaking as such, so that the subject can't do without it without a dramatic transition in which hallucinatory phenomena appear, that is, in which reality itself is presented as affected and also as signifying.

This topographical notion tends in the same direction as the question already raised about the difference between *Verwerfung* and *Verdrängung* as to their subjective localization. What I've tried to get you to understand today constitutes a first approach to this opposition.

8 February 1956

XI

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On the rejection of a primordial signifier

A TWIN THAT IS BIG WITH DELUSION
DAY AND NIGHT
VERWERFUNG
LETTER 52

We've been approaching the problem of the psychoses via the question of Freudian structures. This approach is a modest one, and it isn't actually going in the direction in which our investigations are pointing, namely that of the economy of the psychoses, which we are investigating through an analysis of the structure.

The structure appears in what can be called the phenomenon, in the strict sense of the term. It would be surprising if nothing of the structure were to appear in the way that, for example, the delusion presented itself. But our confidence in the analysis of the phenomenon is quite distinct from that of the phenomenological point of view, which strives to discover what it contains of reality in itself. From the point of view that guides us we don't have this a priori confidence in the phenomenon, for the simple reason that our way of proceeding is scientific and that it's the starting point of modern science not to trust the phenomena and to look for something more subsistent behind them that explains them.

One must not retreat from this word. If some time ago psychiatry took a backward step that consisted in distrusting explanation so as to extol understanding, it was because the explanatory path had led to dead ends. But we ourselves have evidence of the explanatory efficacity of analytic investigation, and it's on the assumption that here, too, an appropriate analysis of the phenomenon will lead us to the structure and the economy that we shall make advances in the domain of the psychoses.

It is not for the simple pleasures of the nosographer that we're grappling with the distinction between the neuroses and the psychoses. This distinction is only too evident. It's by comparing the two that relationships, symmetries, 164
and contrasts will appear that will enable us to erect an admissible structure for psychosis.

Our starting point is this – the unconscious is present but not functioning. Contrary to what has been thought, the fact that it's present doesn't imply a

solution but, on the contrary, a very special inertia. Furthermore, psychoanalysis doesn't consist in making thought conscious or in making the ego's defenses less paradoxical, so as to obtain what is rashly called its strengthening. This rejection of the two paths psychoanalysis took, first at its emergence and then in its present, deviated state, is almost self-evident when one explores the psychoses.

In the forthcoming journal of our Society, in its first number on language and speech, you will find this statement in the foreword – *If psychoanalysis inhabits language, in its discourse it cannot misrecognize it with impunity.* This is the whole sense of what I have been teaching you for a number of years, and this is where we are with respect to the psychoses. The emphasis on, the importance given to, language phenomena in psychosis is for us the most fruitful lesson of all.

1

The question of the *ego* is obviously primordial in the psychoses since the *ego* in its function of relating to the external world is what breaks down. It's therefore not free of paradox to want to give it the power to handle the relationship with reality and transform it for the aims of what is defined as defense.

Defense, in the cursory form in which it's currently understood, is said to be at the origin of paranoia. The *ego,* which is gaining in strength in the modern conception of analysis, in effect having the power to bring the external world into play in various ways, is in the case of psychosis said to cause a signal, intended as a warning, to appear in the external world in the form of a hallucination. Here we rediscover this archaic idea that a pressure [*poussée*] emerges which is perceived by the *ego* as dangerous.

165 I should like to remind you here of the sense of what I say regarding the *ego* and to phrase it in another way.

Whatever the appropriate role to attribute to it in psychical economy is, the ego is never alone. It always implies a strange twin, the ideal ego, which I spoke of in my seminar two years ago.[1] The most apparent phenomenology of psychosis tells us that this ideal ego speaks. It's a fantasm [*fantaisie*], but unlike the fantasm, or fantasy [*fantasme*], that we highlight in the phenomena of neurosis it's a fantasm that speaks, or more exactly, it's a spoken fantasm. This is where this character who echoes the subject's thoughts, who intervenes, spies upon him, names his actions in the sequence in which they occur, and commands them is not adequately explained by the theory of the imaginary and the specular ego.

I tried last time to show you that the ego, whatever we make of its function,

[1] See, e.g., "Ego-Ideal and Ideal Ego," chap. 11, Sem I:129–42.

and I shall go no further than to give it the function of a discourse of reality, always implies as a correlate a discourse that has nothing to do with reality. With the impertinence that, as everyone knows, is characteristic of me I designated this the discourse of freedom, essential to modern man insofar as he is structured by a certain conception of his own autonomy. I pointed out its fundamentally biased and incomplete [*partiel et partial*], inexpressible, fragmentary, differentiated, and profoundly delusional nature. I set out from this general parallel to point out to you what, in relation to the ego, is apt, in the subject fallen prey to psychosis, to proliferate into a delusion. I'm not saying it's the same thing. I'm saying it's in the same place.

There is, then, no *ego* without this twin that is, let's say, big with delusion. Our patient, who provides us with valuable images from time to time, says at one stage that he is *a leprous corpse leading another leprous corpse along behind him.*[2] A nice image indeed of the ego, since there is in the ego something that is fundamentally dead and always lined with this twin discourse. The question we are asking ourselves is this – how does it happen that this double, which only ever makes the ego half of the subject, becomes a speaking double? Who is speaking?

Is it the other whose function of reflection in the dialectic of narcissism I have expounded, the other of the imaginary part of the master-slave dialectic which we have sought in the transitivism of children, in the games of prestige in which the integration of the *socius* is put into effect, the other whom the captivating action of the total image in the counterpart encapsulates so well? Is it really this reflected other, this imaginary other, this other that for us is every counterpart in so far as he gives us our own image, captivates us by an 166
appearance, and provides the projection of our totality – is it he who is speaking?

The question is worth raising. One implicitly resolves it each time one mentions the mechanism of projection.

Projection doesn't always have the same sense, but for our part we restrict it to this imaginary transitivism by means of which when a child hits his counterpart he can say without lying – *He hit me*, because for him it's exactly the same thing. This defines an imaginary order of relations that is constantly found in all sorts of mechanisms. In this sense there is a type of jealousy by projection, one that projects onto the other the subject's unfaithful tendencies, or the accusations of unfaithfulness that he himself has to bear.

It's a rudimentary observation that delusional projection has nothing in common with this. One may well say that it, too, is a mechanism of projection in the sense that something whose source is within the subject appears without, but it's certainly not the same as the one I have just presented to

[2] Mem, 92.

you as the transitivism of evil intentions, which is much closer to so-called common or normal jealousy. One need only examine the phenomena to see this, and the distinction is fully drawn in Freud's own writings on jealousy. The mechanisms at work in psychosis are not limited to the imaginary register.

Where shall we look for them, given that they escape libidinal investment? Is it sufficient to appeal to libidinal reinvestment of the body? This mechanism, commonly held to be that of narcissism, is explicitly invoked by Freud himself to explain the phenomenon of psychosis. Briefly put, in order to mobilize the delusional relationship, it's supposed to be a matter of nothing other than enabling him, as one so quickly says, to become an object again.

From one angle this coincides with a number of the phenomena involved, but it doesn't exhaust the problem. Each and every one of us knows, provided he's a psychiatrist, that in a fully developed paranoiac there is no question of mobilizing this investment, while in schizophrenics the properly psychotic disturbance is as a rule much more extensive than in the paranoiac.

Wouldn't this be because in the imaginary order there is no way of giving a precise meaning to the term *narcissism?* Alienation is constitutive of the imaginary order. Alienation is the imaginary as such. Nothing is to be expected from the way psychosis is explored at the level of the imaginary, since the
167 imaginary mechanism is what gives psychotic alienation its form but not its dynamics.

This is the point we always get to together, and if we don't get there unarmed, if we don't give in, it's precisely because in our exploration of analytic technique, and then of beyond the pleasure principle with the structural definition of the *ego* that it implies, we have the idea that beyond the little other of the imaginary we have to admit the existence of another Other.

It's not only because we give it a capital letter that we are satisfied with it, but because we locate it as the necessary correlate of speech.

2

These premises alone cast doubt on a theory of analytic treatment that with ever-increasing insistence is reduced to a relation of two. It's henceforth captivated in the relationship between the subject's ego and the ideal ego, between the ego and the other, an other whose qualities may no doubt vary, but who will always be – experience proves it – the one unique other of the imaginary relation.

As for the supposed object relation that is to be rehabilitated, the subject is reduced to a curious experience that could be called the Kleinian substructure of the imaginary, namely, the oral complex. Of course, in a subject who

isn't inclined towards alienation of his own accord this can only persist on the basis of a misunderstanding constituted by a sort of imaginary incorporation or devouring which, given that the analytic relation is a relation of speech, can only be an incorporation of the analyst's discourse. On this deviant conception analysis can't be anything other than the incorporation of the suggested, even supposed, discourse of the analyst – that is, the exact contrary of analysis.

I'm lighting my lantern and I shall therefore tell you my thesis. I'm going to tell it to you the wrong way round – that is, by situating it on this genetic level that seems to be so necessary for you to feel at ease. I shall tell you afterwards that this isn't it, but still, let's begin by saying that if this were it then it would be as I'm about to say it is.

It's a question of a thesis involving the entire psychical economy, which is important for an understanding of the confused debates still going on over the Kleinian fantasmatic, for the refutation of certain objections made against 168
it, and also for better situating what it can truly or fruitfully contribute to an understanding of the precocity of the repressions it implies. As a matter of fact, contrary to what Freud says, that there is no repression properly so-called before the decline of the Oedipus complex, the Kleinian theory on the other hand entails the claim that repression exists right from the earliest pre-oedipal stages.

My thesis may equally throw light on a contradiction concerning autoerotism that appears insoluble in Freud himself. On the one hand he talks about the primitive object of the first mother-child relation. On the other he formulates the notion of primordial autoerotism, that is to say, of a stage, however short we suppose it to be, in which there is no external world for the child.[3]

The question is that of the human being's primordial access to his reality insofar as we assume that there is a reality correlative to him – an assumption always implied at the outset of this theme, but which we also know that we shall have in part to abandon, because there would be no question about this reality were it itself not constantly being called into question. Is there anything in man that has this both enveloping and coapted character which causes us to invent the notion of *Umwelt* for animals?

I point out to you in passing that we make use of this hypothesis concerning animals to the extent that an animal is for us an object and that there are conditions that are in fact strictly indispensable to its existence. We're happy to investigate how an animal functions so as always to be in harmony with these primordial conditions, and this is what we call an instinct, an instinc-

[3] See *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, SE 7:181–84 & 222.

tual cycle or instinctual behavior – if there are things that aren't in there, one has to assume that we can't see them, and since we can't see them we're happy, and in fact why shouldn't we be?

It's very clear that this is inadequate where man is concerned. The open and proliferating nature of his world prevents us from making it into his biological correlate. This is where I try, because it seems coherent and useful for me to do so, to differentiate for you between the three orders of the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real. It's abundantly clear that everything that our analytic experience shows us can be satisfactorily classified into these three orders of relationships, the question being at what moment each of these relationships is established.

My thesis, and perhaps it will give the answer to the enigma that for some of you my purple passage of last time on the peace of the evening seems to have consisted in, is as follows – reality is *at the outset* marked by symbolic nihilation [*néantisation*].

169 Although all of last year's work prepared us for it, I'm nevertheless going to illustrate it once again, even if only so as to come back to this peace of the evening that got such a mixed reception.

This is not a detour that, as Plato says, is discordant or lacking in analytic tone. I don't think I'm being at all innovative. If you read Freud's text on President Schreber you will see that, as a clinical argument for understanding the said President, he explores the function that Nietzsche's saga in his *Zarathustra,* called *Before the dawn,* played for another patient of his.[4] If you refer to this moment – it was precisely so as not to read it out to you that I indulged in this invocation of the peace of the evening – you will see the same thing represented I wanted to bring to your attention a week ago, which I'm going to put to you again now in speaking to you about daytime.

The day is a being distinct from all the objects it contains and manifests, it's probably even more weighty and more present than any of them, and it's impossible to think of it, even in the most primitive human experience, as the simple return of an experience.

It suffices to mention the prevalence of a rhythm of sleep in the first few months of human life for us to have all sorts of reasons to believe that it isn't due to any empirical apprehension that at a given moment – this is how I illustrate the initial symbolic nihilations – the human being detaches itself from the day. The human being is not, as everything leads us to think is the case for the animal, simply immersed in a phenomenon such as that of the alternation of day and night. The human being poses the day as such, and the day thereby becomes presence of the day – against a background that is not a background of concrete nighttime, but of possible absence of daytime,

[4] SE 12:54–55.

where the night dwells, and *vice versa* moreover. Very early on, day and night are signifying codes, not experiences. They are connotations, and the empirical and concrete day only comes forth as an imaginary correlative, originally, very early on.

That's my supposition, and seeing that I speak from the genetic point of view, I don't otherwise have to justify it in experience. It's structurally necessary to admit a primitive stage in which the world of signifiers as such appears.

Since this level leaves you somewhat confused, I will put things to you dogmatically, which I detest doing – you know my style is dialectical.

Before a child can learn to articulate language, we have to assume that signifiers, which are already of the symbolic order, have appeared. When I speak of a primitive appearance of the signifier, this is something that already 170
implies language. All this does is link up with the emergence of this being that is nowhere, the day. The day *qua* day is not a phenomenon, the day *qua* day implies symbolic connotation, the fundamental alternation of the vocal connoting presence and absence, on which Freud hinges his whole notion of beyond the pleasure principle.

It's exactly this field of symbolic articulation that I'm currently aiming at in my discourse, and it's here that *Verwerfung* occurs.

I'm delighted by the fact that some of you are bothered by this subject of *Verwerfung*. After all, Freud doesn't mention it very often, and I have gone and dug it out of the two or three crannies where the tip of an ear is showing, and even sometimes those where nothing at all is showing, but where the comprehension of the text demands that one assume it is there.

On the subject of *Verwerfung*, Freud says that *the subject did not want to know anything about castration, even in the sense of repression*.[5] As a matter of fact, in the sense of repression one still knows something about the very thing one doesn't want, in some sense, to know anything about, and the whole of analysis consists in showing us that one knows it very well indeed. If there are things the patient wants to know nothing about, even in the sense of repression, another mechanism is implied. And as the word *Verwerfung* appears in direct connection with this sentence as well as several pages before, I grab it. I set no great store by the term, I set store by what it means, and this is what I believe Freud meant.

It has been objected to me, most pertinently I must say, that the closer one gets to the text the less one manages to understand it. This is indeed why a text has to be brought to life by what follows and by what precedes. It's always by means of what follows that a text has to be understood.

Those who make the most objections to me suggest, incidentally, that I

[5] See above, chap. 1, 12 & n.10.

look in some of Freud's other texts at something that might not be *Verwerfung* but, for instance, *Verleugnung* – it's strange to see the proliferation of this *Ver* in Freud. I have never given you any purely semantic lesson on Freud's vocabulary, but I assure you that I could serve up a good dozen of them straightaway. I would begin by talking about the banking connotations of all these terms, *conversion, displacement,*[6] etc., and this would take us a long way, right into the major implications of this direct approach Freud had to the phenomena of neurosis. But we can't spend forever on these different approaches. Trust me a bit concerning this work on the sense. I have chosen *Verwerfung* to make myself understood because it's the fruit of long reflection, my work leads me to it. At least for a while, take my honey such as I offer it to you and try to put it to some use.

171 This *Verwerfung* is implicated in the text *Die Verneinung,* which M. Jean Hyppolite presented here two years ago, and this is why I have chosen to publish his presentation in the first number of the review *La Psychanalyse.*[7] There you will be able to see, with text in hand, whether or not we were right, Hyppolite and I, to set off down the path of *Verneinung.*

Freud's text, undeniably brilliant, is far from being satisfactory. It mixes everything up. This has nothing to do with a *Verdrängung.*

What is at issue when I speak of *Verwerfung?* At issue is the rejection of a primordial signifier into the outer shadows, a signifier that will henceforth be missing at this level. Here you have the fundamental mechanism that I posit as being at the basis of paranoia. It's a matter of a primordial process of exclusion of an original within, which is not a bodily within but that of an initial body of signifiers.

It's inside this primordial body that Freud posits the constitution of a world of reality, which is already punctuated, already structured, in terms of signifiers. Freud then describes the entire operation by which representation and these already constituted objects are brought together. The subject's initial apprehension of reality is the judgment of existence, which consists in saying – *This is not my dream or my hallucination or my representation but an object.*

It's a matter of testing the external by the internal – it's Freud saying this, not me–, a matter of the constitution of the subject's reality in a refinding of the object. The object is refound in a quest, and moreover the object one refinds is never the same. This constitution of reality, essential to the explanation of all mechanisms of repetition is registered on the basis of an initial bipartition, one that curiously coincides with certain primitive myths that evoke something primordially crippled that has been introduced into the sub-

[6] I. e., *"Konversion"* and *"Verschiebung."*
[7] See above, chap. 1, p. 12 n.9.

ject's access to human reality. Here you have what is presupposed by this unusual priority that in *Die Verneinung* Freud attributes to what he explains analogically as a judgment of attribution, as distinct from a judgment of existence. There is in Freud's dialectic an initial division into the good and the bad that can only be understood if we interpret it as the rejection of a primordial signifier.

What does *primordial signifier* mean? It's clear that it quite precisely means nothing.

What I'm explaining to you here has all the characteristics of the myth that I was tempted to mention on that occasion and that M. Marcel Griaule recounted to you last year – namely, the division into four of the primeval placenta. The first was the fox who, tearing out his portion of the placenta, introduced an imbalance from which there stemmed the cycle that would involve the division of the fields, the bonds of kinship, etc.[8] What I'm 172
recounting to you is also a myth, for I in no way believe that there is anywhere at all a moment, a stage, at which the subject first acquires the primitive signifier, that subsequently the play of meanings is introduced, and that after that, signifier and signified having linked arms, we then enter the domain of discourse.

All the same, there is a representation here that is so indispensable that I feel comfortable about giving it to you, so as to satisfy your demands, but also because Freud himself tends in this direction – we shall have to wait and see how.

3

In his Letter 52 to Fliess, Freud returns to the circuit of the psychical apparatus.[9]

You are, I hope, familiar with the Fliess correspondence, which has been delivered to us by certain testamentary or testimonial hands with a series of cuts and expurgations that, whatever their justification, the reader cannot fail to feel is scandalous. Nothing can justify the cutting of a text at the point at which the remainder, even if it were regarded as outdated and weaker, might enlighten us on Freud's thought.

The psychical apparatus that preoccupies Freud isn't the psychical apparatus as conceived by a professor behind a table and in front of a blackboard, who modestly gives you a model which, all things considered, looks like it

[8] This is no doubt the lecture Griaule gave on 15 March 1955 to the Société Française de Psychanalyse entitled "Symbolization of the World and the Conditions of Communication in the Sudanese." See Sem II:161.

[9] Letter of 6 December 1896, Freud-Fliess, 207–15; Letter 52, Origins, 173–81.

might work – whether it works well or poorly, it doesn't much matter, what is important is to have said something that seems in some simple way to resemble what is known as reality. For Freud, it's a matter of the psychical apparatus of his patients, not of the ideal individual, and it's this that introduces him to this really astounding productiveness that we see here, even more than anywhere else, in this famous Letter 52. What he is seeking to explain is not just any old psychical state, but that from which he set out, because it alone is accessible and proves to be fruitful in the experience of the treatment – the phenomena of memory. The schema of the psychical apparatus in Freud is invented to explain phenomena of memory, that is, what isn't going well.

You must not think that the general theories of memory that have been proposed are particularly satisfactory. Because you're psychoanalysts you're not excused from reading the works of psychologists, some have done some
173 sensible things, have discovered some remarkable discrepancies in valuable experiments – you will see their difficulty, the twists and turns they perform, in trying to explain the phenomenon of reminiscence.[10] However, Freudian experience shows that the memory which interests psychoanalysis is quite distinct from what psychologists speak of when they display its mechanism to us in an animate being in an experiment.

I shall illustrate what I mean.

The octopus. It's the most beautiful animal there is. It has played a fundamental role in Mediterranean civilizations. Nowadays it's very easy to catch. You put it into a little jar, insert electrodes, and watch. The octopus extends its limbs and, suddenly, it retracts them. And one observes that it's very soon wary of our electrodes. So we dissect it and we discover, in what serves as its head, a large nerve, large not only in size but also in the diameter of the neurons, visible under the microscope. This is what serves as its memory, that is, if you sever it in the live octopus, the apprehension of experience works much less well, a deterioration is produced in the registrations of memory, which is why it's thought this is the seat of its memory. And nowadays people tell themselves that perhaps the octopus's memory functions like a little machine, in that it's something that goes round in circles.

I'm not in the process here of distinguishing man from the animal, since what I teach you is that in man, too, memory is something that goes round in circles. However, it's made up of messages, it's a succession of little signs of plus or minus, which file in one after the other and go round and round like the little electric lights on the Place de l'Opéra that go on and off.

This is what human memory is. However, the primary process, the plea-

[10] In psychology *"réminiscence"* has the meaning of an image that comes to mind without being recognized as a memory.

sure principle, means that the psychoanalytic memory Freud talks about is, contrary to that of the octopus, something completely inaccessible to experience. What else would it mean to say that desires in the unconscious are never extinguished, because those that do become extinguished are by definition never spoken of again? There are some that are never extinguished and continue to circulate in memory. In the name of the pleasure principle, they cause the human being to recommence the same painful experiences, in cases in which things are connected to one another in memory in such a way as to persist in the unconscious. What I'm saying here is only the simple expression of what you already know in principle, but which of course is what you know as if you didn't know it. I'm not only trying to make you know it, but 174
also to get you to recognize that you know it.

Freudian memory is not located along a sort of continuum from reaction to reality considered as a source of excitation. It's striking that we have to go to all this trouble whereas this is all Freud ever speaks of – disorder, restriction, registration – this is not only the vocabulary of this letter, this is the very thing at issue. *What is essentially new in my theory,* says Freud, *is the claim that memory is not simple, it's registered in various ways.*[11]

So what are these different registers? It's here above all that this letter brings grist to my mill, which I regret, because you're going to jump on it and you're going to say to yourselves – *Yes, it's like this in this letter, but in the next one it's not like this.* It's in all the letters. It's the very soul of the development of Freud's thought. Otherwise a mass of things would be inexplicable. He would have become Jungian, for example.

So what are these registers? You're going to see something appear that you've never seen before, because until now there have been for you the unconscious, the preconscious, and the conscious. It's been known for a long time that the phenomenon of consciousness and the phenomenon of memory exclude one another. Freud stated it not only in this letter, but also in the system of the psychical apparatus he gives at the end of *The Interpretation of Dreams.*[12] It's for him a truth that absolutely cannot be called experimental, it's a necessity that imposes itself on him from the point of view of handling the system as a whole, and at the same time one feels that there is here an initial signifying a priori in his thought.

At the beginning of the circuit of psychical apprehension there is perception. This perception implies consciousness. This must be something like what he shows us in his famous metaphor of the magic writing pad.[13]

The magic writing pad is made of a sort of bluish-grey substance on which

[11] Freud-Fliess, 207; Origins, 173.
[12] See SE 5:536ff.
[13] See "A Note upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad.' "

there sits a strip of transparent paper. You write on the strip of paper and when you lift it up there is nothing there anymore, it remains blank. On the other hand, everything you have written down reappears on the surface of the slightly adhesive substance, which enables what you write to be recorded by virtue of the fact that the tip of your pencil makes the paper adhere to this surface which, becoming darkened slightly, becomes momentarily visible. There you have, as you know, the basic metaphor by which Freud explains what he understands by the workings of perception in connection with memory.

What memory? The memory he is interested in. There are two zones in
175 this memory, that of the unconscious and that of the preconscious, and after the preconscious one sees a complete consciousness emerge which cannot but be articulated.

The requirements of his own conception of things are manifest in the fact that between the essentially ephemeral *Wahrnehmungen* [perceptions], which disappear as soon as they appear, and the constitution of the system of consciousness and, even at this stage, of the *ego* – he calls it the *official ego*, and *official* in German means the same as *officiel* in French, in the dictionary it's not even translated – there are the *Niederschriften* [registrations], of which there are three. Here we witness Freud's development of an initial apprehension of what memory might be in its analytic functioning.

Freud gives a number of chronological divisions – that there are systems formed for example between birth and one and a half, then between one and a half and four years of age, then between four and eight, etc. But despite his saying this, we aren't required to believe, any more than we did before, that these registers are constituted successively.

Why distinguish them from one another and how do they become apparent? They become apparent in the defense system, which consists in the fact that things that don't give us pleasure don't reappear in any of the registers. Thus here we are in the official economy, and this is where we don't recall what doesn't give us pleasure. This is absolutely normal. Call it defense, but it isn't pathological for all that. It's even what one has to do – if we forget things that are disagreeable to us we can only come out ahead. A notion of defense that doesn't start from this falsifies the entire question. What gives defense its pathological character is the fact that, around the famous affective regression, topographical regression takes place. A pathological defense, when produced in an uncontrolled fashion, provokes unjustifiable reverberations, because what goes for one system doesn't go for another. The disturbance stems from this confusion between mechanisms, and it's from this point on that we speak of a system of pathological defense.

To understand it properly we shall begin with the best known phenome-

non, from which Freud always started, the one that explains the existence of the system *Unbewusstsein*.

The mechanism of topographical regression here is perfectly clear at the level of finished discourse, which is that of the official *ego*. Here one finds agreements and coherences between discourse, signifier, and signified superimposed upon one another, forming the intentions, the plaints, the obscurity, the confusion, in which we live and due to which, whenever we spell something out, we always have this feeling of discordance, of never being completely up to what we want to say. This is the reality of discourse. We are nevertheless well aware that the signified is sufficiently captured by our discourse for everyday purposes. It's when we want to do a bit better, to get to the truth, that we are in total disarray, and rightly so. It is, moreover, why most of the time we give up the game. 176

There is indeed a relationship between meaning and the signifier, it is what the structure of discourse supplies. Discourse, which is what you hear when you listen to me, and it does exist – the proof is that sometimes you don't understand it –, is a signifying temporal chain. But at the level of neurosis, which brought about the discovery of the realm of the Freudian unconscious *qua* register of memory, our good fellow, instead of using words, uses everything at his disposal – he empties his pockets, he turns his trousers inside out, he puts his functions, his inhibitions inside, he gets completely inside himself, with the signifier, it's he who becomes the signifier. His real, or his imaginary, enters into the discourse.

If this isn't what a neurosis is, if this isn't what Freud taught, then I give up.

In the problematic field of the phenomena of *Verneinung*, phenomena occur that must originate in a fall in level, in the passage from one register to another, and that curiously manifest themselves with the characteristic of the negated and the disavowed – it's as if they are not existent. This is a very early property of language, since the symbol is as such the connotation of presence and absence.

This doesn't exhaust the question of the function of negation within language. There is an illusion of privation that stems from the ordinary usage of *negation*. Moreover, all languages possess a whole range of negations, each worthy of separate study – negation in French, negation in Chinese, etc.

What's important is this. What appears to be a simplification in discourse harbors dynamics which escape us, are secret. There is an illusion in thinking that a *Verneinung* is observable simply in the fact that apropos of a dream the subject stresses, *It's not my father*. Everyone's familiar with this, the subject is noticeably affected by the interpretation and ends up saying that it's his father, and as we're happy with this, we don't go any further. The subject

says to you – *I don't want to tell you something that is unpleasant.* Here it's quite different. He says it nicely, but through dynamics whose immediacy is perceptible, he is in effect engaged in saying something unpleasant. It's because
177 we experience this that we are alert to the mystery that this illusion of privation can represent. Think of what Kant calls a negative value in its function, not only of privation, but of subtraction, in its true positivity.

The question of *Verneinung* remains entirely unresolved. What's important is to notice that Freud was only able to understand it by relating it to something more primitive. He expressly acknowledges in his Letter 52 that the primordial *Verneinung* comprises an initial putting into signs, *Wahrnehmungszeichen.* He admits the existence of this field I am calling that of the primordial signifier. Everything he subsequently says in this letter about the dynamics of the three great neuropsychoses that he applies himself to – hysteria, obsessional neurosis, paranoia – presupposes the existence of this primordial stage, which is the chosen locus of what for you I am calling *Verwerfung.*

In order to understand this, consider something that Freud is constantly pointing out, namely that one has to assume a prior, and at least partial, organization of language in order for memory and historicization to work. The memory phenomena that Freud is interested in are always language phenomena. In other words, one already has to have the signifying material to make anything signify at all. In *The Wolf Man* the primitive impression of the famous primordial scene has remained over the years, serving no purpose, though already signifying, before having its word to say in the subject's history. The signifier is thus primitively given, but it remains nothing as long as the subject doesn't cause it to enter into his history, which becomes important between the ages of one and a half and four and a half. Sexual desire is effectively what man uses to historicize himself, insofar as it's at this level that the law is introduced for the first time.

You now see the general economy of what Freud gives us with his simple schema in this little letter. This is confirmed by a hundred other texts. One of you, whom I have praised for having contradicted what is being developed here, pointed out to me that the end of the text on "Fetishism" refers quite directly to what I'm now explaining to you. There Freud makes an essential revision to the distinction he had drawn between neurosis and psychosis, saying that in the psychoses reality is reworked, that a part of reality is suppressed, and that reality is never truly scotomized.[14] Ultimately, and you will see this from the context, it's to a deficiency, to a hole in the symbolic, that he is referring, even if in the German text it's the term *reality* that is used.

178 Haven't you seen what the primordial phenomenon is when I present concrete cases to you of people who have recently plunged into psychosis? I

[14] SE 21:155–56.

showed you a person who thought he had been receiving advances from a character who had become his friend and the essential point of attachment in his existence. This character withdrew, and then there he was in a state of perplexity linked to a correlate of certainty, which is how the approach to the prohibited field announces itself, access to which on its own constitutes the onset of psychosis.

How does one enter psychosis? How is the subject led, not into alienating himself in the little other, but into becoming this something which, from within the field in which nothing can be said, appeals to all the rest, to the field of everything that can be said? Isn't this something that evokes what you see displayed in the case of President Schreber – namely, these fringe phenomena at the level of reality which have become significant for the subject?

Psychotics love their delusion like they love themselves.[15] Having said this, Freud, who hadn't yet written his article on narcissism, added that the entire mystery lies here. This is true. What is the relationship between the subject and the signifier that is distinctive of the very phenomena of psychosis? How come the subject falls entirely into this problematic?

These are the issues that we are raising this year and I hope we are able to make some headway with them before the long vacation.

15 February 1956

[15] "Thus they love *their delusion as they love themselves*. That is the secret." "Draft H," Freud-Fliess, 111; Origins, 113.

ON THE SIGNIFIER AND THE SIGNIFIED

XII

The hysteric's question

ON THE PREVERBAL WORLD
PRECONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS
SIGN, TRACE, SIGNIFIER
A TRAUMATIC HYSTERIA

We've got to the point where the analysis of Schreber's text has led us to emphasize the importance of language phenomena in the economy of psychosis. It is in this sense that one may speak of Freudian structures of the psychoses.

1

What function do these language phenomena have in the psychoses?

It would be surprising if psychoanalysis didn't offer us a new way of treating the economy of language in the psychoses, a way that differs through and through from the traditional approach, which refers to classical psychological theories. Our own point of reference is different – it is our schema of analytic communication.

Between S and O, the fundamental speech that analysis must uncover, we have the interference of the imaginary circuit, which resists its passage. The imaginary poles of the subject, *o* and *o'*, coincide with the said specular relation, that of the mirror stage. The subject, in the corporeity and multiplicity of his organism, in his natural fragmentation, which is in *o'*, refers to this imaginary unity that is the ego, *o*, where he knows himself and misrecognizes himself [*se connaît et se méconnaît*], and which is what he speaks about – he doesn't know to whom, since he doesn't know who speaks in him either.

I used to say schematically, in the archaic period of these seminars, that the subject begins by talking about himself, he doesn't talk to you – then, he 182
talks to you but he doesn't talk about himself – when he talks about himself, who will have noticeably changed in the interval, to you, we will have got to the end of the analysis.

If one wants to position the analyst within this schema of the subject's speech, one can say that he is somewhere in O. At least he should be. If he enters into the coupling of the resistance, which is just what he is taught not

to do, then he speaks from *o'* and he will see himself in the subject. This occurs in the most natural of ways if he has not been analyzed – which does happen occasionally, and I'd even say that in a certain way the analyst is never fully an analyst, for the simple reason that he is a man, and that he, too, partakes of the imaginary mechanisms that are obstacles to the passage of speech. He must not identify with the subject, he must be dead enough not to be caught up in the imaginary relation, within which he is always solicited to intervene, and allow the progressive migration of the subject's image towards the S, the thing to be revealed, the thing that has no name, that can only find its name to the extent that the circuit from S to O has been completed directly. What the subject has to say through his false discourse will find a passage all the more easily when the economy of the imaginary relation has been progressively pared down.

I'm moving quickly, since I'm not here today to go over the whole theory of analytic dialogue for you. I simply want to indicate to you that the *word* – to be understood with the emphasis that this comprises, the solution to an enigma, a problematic function – is located in the Other, through the intermediary of which all full speech is realized, this *you are* in which the subject locates himself and recognizes himself.

Well then, through analyzing the structure of Schreber's delusion at the time it became stabilized into a system that links the subject's ego to this imaginary other, this strange god who understands nothing, who doesn't reply, who deceives the subject, we have been able to recognize that in psychosis the Other, where being is realized through the avowal of speech, is excluded.

The phenomena in question in verbal hallucination exhibit in their very structure the subject's relationship of internal echo to his own discourse. They ultimately become increasingly meaningless, as Schreber puts it, emptied of sense, purely verbal, learned by rote, pointless refrains. What, then, is this special relationship to speech? What does the subject lack for him to be able to get to the point where it is necessary for him to construct this entire imaginary world, for him to undergo within himself this automatism of the function of discourse? Not only does discourse invade him, not only is it a parasite in him, but he is dependent on its presence.

183 I've shown you *in vivo* in a case presentation that the subject is only able in psychosis to reconstitute himself in what I've called the imaginary allusion. This is precisely the point we have come to. The subject's constitution in imaginary allusion is the problem on which we need to make progress.

Until now people have been satisfied with this. The imaginary allusion has seemed to be very significant. People have rediscovered all the material, all the elements, of the unconscious in it. They seem never to have wondered what was significant from the economic point of view about the fact that by itself this allusion has no power to resolve anything. They were aware of this

nevertheless, but as a mystery, and over time they strove to efface the radical differences between this structure and the structure of the neuroses.

I was asked the same questions in Strasbourg as in Vienna. People who seemed fairly open to certain views I was putting forward ended up saying to me – *How do you work with psychotics?* – as if stressing the ABC of technique wasn't enough, with an audience as unprepared as that one was. I replied – *The question is still somewhat in progress. We have to try to locate some reference points before we can discuss technique, let alone any psychotherapeutic recipes.* They persisted – *Nevertheless, one can't just do nothing for them.* – *No, certainly not. Before we discuss this, let's wait until certain things have been made clear.*

To take a further step forward here, we must, as is often the case, take a step back and return to the fascinating character offered by language phenomena in psychosis – as it happens, this is liable to reinforce what just now I called a misunderstanding.

I hear it said that I hold that everything the subject communicates he expresses in words and thus that I deny the existence, to which people are much attached, of the preverbal.

This extreme position doesn't fail to produce, in those who dwell on this, fairly lively recantations, which manifest themselves in two attitudes – *the hand on the heart,* related to what we shall call the authentic attestation through a displacement upwards, and *the bowing of the head,* supposed to be weighed in the balance, which I reputedly unload too much at the wishes of my interpellator.

2

People sometimes also say to me – *Fortunately you're not alone in the Société de psychanalyse. There's also a woman of genius, Françoise Dolto, who shows us* 184
the essential function of the image of the body and throws light on the way the subject leans on it in his relations with the world. We are delighted to rediscover a substantial relation here, which the language relation is undoubtedly tacked onto, but it is infinitely more concrete.

I'm not at all criticizing what Françoise Dolto teaches. She makes excellent use of her technique and her extraordinary apprehension of the subject's imaginary sensibility. She speaks of all this and she also teaches those who listen to her to speak of it. But making this remark doesn't resolve the question.

I'm not surprised that something of a misunderstanding remains to be dispelled, even in people who think they're following me. Don't think I'm expressing any disappointment here. That would be to be in disagreement with myself, since I teach you that misunderstanding is the very basis of interhuman discourse.

But that is not the only reason that I'm not surprised that my discourse may have created a certain margin of misunderstanding. This is because in addition, if one is to be consistent in practice with one's own ideas, if all valid discourse has to be judged precisely according to its own principles, I would say that it is with a deliberate, if not entirely deliberated, intention that I pursue this discourse in such a way as to offer you the opportunity to not quite understand. This margin enables you yourselves to say that you think you follow me, that is, that you remain in a problematic position, which always leaves the door open to a progressive rectification.

In other words, if I were to try to make myself very easily understood, so that you were completely certain that you followed, then according to my premises concerning interhuman discourse the misunderstanding would be irremediable. On the contrary, given the way I think that I have to approach problems, you always have the possibility of what is said being open to revision, in a way that is made all the easier by the fact that it will fall back upon me entirely if you haven't been following sooner – you can hold me responsible.

It is on this basis that today I shall take the liberty of going back over an essential point.

I'm not saying that what is communicated in the analytic relation passes through the subject's discourse. I am therefore absolutely not required to distinguish, in the very phenomenon of analytic communication, between the domains of verbal and preverbal communication. That this pre- or even
185 extraverbal communication is always present in analysis is not in doubt, but it is a question of seeing what it is that constitutes the properly analytic field.

What constitutes the analytic field is identical with what constitutes the analytic phenomenon, namely the symptom – and also a very large number of other phenomena that are called normal or subnormal, the sense of which wasn't elucidated before analysis, and that extend well beyond discourse and speech, since they involve things that happen to the subject in his daily life, like slips, memory disturbances, dreams, and the phenomenon of jokes, whose value to the Freudian discovery is essential because it enables the perfect coherence in Freud's work between the analytic phenomenon and language to be isolated.

Let's start by saying what the analytic phenomenon is not.

Analysis has thrown an immense amount of light on the preverbal. In analytic doctrine this is linked essentially to the preconscious. It is the sum of internal and external impressions, of information the subject receives from the world he lives in, of the natural relations he has with it – assuming that there are any relations in man that are entirely natural – some are, however perverted they may be. Everything of the order of this preverbal thus partakes of what we can call an intraworldly *Gestalt*, within which the subject is

the infantile doll that he once was, he is an excremental object, a sewer, a leech. Analysis has called upon us to explore this imaginary world, which partakes of a sort of barbaric poetry – though it is in no way the first to make it felt, certain poetic works have been.

Here we're in the innumerable shimmering of the great affective meaning. The words to express it come to the subject in great abundance, they are at his disposal, as accessible and as inexhaustible in their combinations as the nature to which they are a response. This is the world of the child, in which you feel at ease, all the more because you are familiar with his fantasies – high is equivalent to low, the back is equivalent to the front, etc. Universal equivalence is the law of this world, and it is even this that leaves us sufficiently uncertain whether any structure in it can be pinned down.

This discourse of affective meaning attains the sources of confabulation straight away. On the other hand the discourse of passional demands, for instance, is poor by comparison and is already drivel. This is because of the impact of reason. The preverbal support of the imaginary relation therefore quite naturally expresses itself in discourse here. We find ourselves here in a familiar domain, one that has always been explored by empirical deduction as much as by a priori categorial deduction. The source and storehouse of this preconscious of what we call imaginary is not unfamiliar, it has already 186
been successfully explored in the philosophical tradition, and it may be said that Kant's schema-ideas are situated on the border of this domain – this at least is where they might find their most brilliant credentials.

The classical theory of the image and the imagination is obviously surprisingly inadequate. This is ultimately an unfathomable domain. While we've made remarkable progress into its phenomenology, we are a long way from having mastered it. While analysis has enabled the issue of the image's formative value – which tends to be confused with the problem of the origins or even of the essence of life – to be brought to light, it's unquestionably from biologists and ethologists that we must expect any progress. While the analytic inventory enables certain essential characteristics of the economy of the imaginary function to be displayed, the question is not thereby exhausted.

Therefore, I have never said of this preconscious world, which is always ready to emerge into the daylight of consciousness, and which is at the subject's disposal unless there are orders to the contrary, that in itself it has the structure of language. I'm saying, because it is obvious, that it is recorded there and that it is recast there. But it retains its own pathways, its characteristic ways of communication. And this is not the level at which analysis has made its essential discovery.

It is highly surprising to observe that an exclusive preponderance of the world of imaginary relations is responsible for the emphasis in analysis on the object relation, which has elided what is properly speaking the field of ana-

lytic discoveries. One can follow the increasing predominance of this perspective by reading what the analyst Kris has been producing in recent times. With respect to the economy of progress in an analysis, he emphasizes what he calls – since he has read Freud – the preconscious mental processes and the fruitful nature of ego regression, which amounts to placing the means of access to the unconscious entirely on the level of the imaginary. If we follow Freud it is on the contrary clear that no exploration of the preconscious, however profound or exhaustive it is, will ever lead to an unconscious phenomenon as such. The excessive prevalence of ego psychology in the new American school introduces an illusion similar to that of the mathematician – we can assume he is ideal – who having got a vague idea of the existence of negative magnitudes sets about indefinitely dividing a positive number by two in the hope of finally crossing over the zero line and entering the dreamt-of domain.

The error is all the more gross because there is nothing Freud places greater insistence upon than the radical difference between the unconscious and the preconscious. But one imagines that however much of a barrier there is, it's
187 like putting up a partition in a grain store – the rats get through in the end. The fundamental image that currently seems to regulate analytic practice is that there must be something connecting neurosis and psychosis, the preconscious and the unconscious. It is a matter of pushing, of nibbling away, and one will succeed in perforating the partition wall.

This idea leads authors who are even a little bit coherent to make altogether surprising theoretical additions, like the notion of a sphere that is, as they say, conflict-free – an extraordinary notion – that is not regressive but transgressive. The likes of this had never been heard before, even in the most neo-spiritualist psychology of faculties of the soul. No one had ever thought of making the will an agency located in a conflict-free empire. It's clear what leads them to it. For them the ego is the prevailing framework of phenomena, everything goes through the ego, ego regression is the sole means of access to the unconscious. Where, therefore, are we to locate the mediating element that is indispensable for understanding the action of analytic treatment, if it is not located in this type of ego that is really ideal, in the worst sense of the word, which is the conflict-free sphere, which thus becomes the mythical locus of the most incredible reaction entifications?

In comparison with the preconscious we have just been describing, what is the unconscious?

If I say that everything that belongs to analytic communication has the structure of language, this precisely does not mean that the unconscious is expressed in discourse. The *Traumdeutung*, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, and *Jokes* make this transparent – nothing in Freud's detours is explicable unless it is because the analytic phenomenon as such, whatever it may

be, isn't a language in the sense in which this would mean that it's a discourse – I've never said it was a discourse – but is structured like a language. This is the sense in which it may be called a phenomenal variety, and the most revealing one, of man's relations to the domain of language. Every analytic phenomenon, every phenomenon that comes from the analytic field, from the analytic discovery, from what we are dealing with in symptoms and neurosis, is structured like a language.

This means it's a phenomenon that always presents the essential duality of signifier and signified. This means that here the signifier has its own coherence and nature which distinguish it from every other species of sign. We are going to follow its trail in the imaginary preconscious domain.

Let's begin with the biological sign. In the very structure, in the morphology, of animals there is something that has this captivating value due to which its receiver, who sees the red of the robin redbreast for instance, and who is 188
made for receiving it, undertakes a series of actions or henceforth unitary behavior that links the bearer of this sign to its perceiver. Here you have what gives us a precise idea of what may be called natural meaning. Without otherwise seeking how this might take place in man, it is clear that by means of a series of transitions we can manage to purify, neutralize, the natural sign.

Then there is the trace, the footprint in the sand, the sign about which Robinson Crusoe makes no mistake. Here sign and object separate. The trace, in its negative aspect, draws the natural sign to a limit at which it becomes evanescent. The distinction between sign and object is quite clear here, since the trace is precisely what the object leaves behind once it has gone off somewhere else. Objectively there is no need for any subject to recognize a sign for it to be there – a trace exists even if there is nobody to look at it.

When have we passed over into the order of the signifier? The signifier may extend over many of the elements within the domain of the sign. But the signifier is a sign that doesn't refer to any object, not even to one in the form of a trace, even though the trace nevertheless heralds the signifier's essential feature. It, too, is the sign of an absence. But insofar as it forms part of language, the signifier is a sign which refers to another sign, which is as such structured to signify the absence of another sign, in other words, to be opposed to it in a couple.

I spoke about day and night. Day and night are in no way something that can be defined by experience. All experience is able to indicate is a series of modulations and transformations, even a pulsation, an alternation, of light and dark, with all its transitions. Language begins at the opposition – day and night. And once the day is there as a signifier, it lends itself to all the vicissitudes of an arrangement whereby it will come to signify things of great diversity.

This characteristic of the signifier essentially marks everything of the order

of the unconscious. Freud's opus, with its huge philological framework at work deep in the heart of the phenomena, is absolutely unthinkable unless we place the signifier's dominance in analytic phenomena at centre stage.

This reminder should take us a step further.

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3

I spoke to you of the Other of speech as being where the subject recognizes himself and gets himself recognized. This, and not the disturbance of some oral, anal or even genital relation, is the determining factor in a neurosis. We are only too well aware how much trouble the handling of the homosexual relation gives us, since we bring out its permanence in subjects who are diverse at the level of instinctual relations. The issue here is a question that arises for the subject at the level of the signifier, of the *to be or not to be,*[1] at the level of his being.

I want to illustrate this for you with an example, an old observation of traumatic hysteria—no trace of hallucinatory elements.

The reason I have chosen this one is that it brings into play, in the foreground, this fantasy of pregnancy and procreation which dominates the history of President Schreber, since this is where his delusion ends up, that a new humanity, Schreberian in spirit, has to be re-engendered by him.

It concerns an observation we owe to Joseph Eisler, a psychologist of the Budapest School, made at the end of the First World War, which recounts the story of a chap who was a tram conductor during the Hungarian revolution.[2]

He is thirty-three years of age, a Hungarian protestant – austerity, stability, peasant tradition. He left his family to move to the city at the end of his adolescence. His working life was marked by changes that were not without meaning – he started out as a baker, then he worked in a chemical laboratory, and finally he became a tram conductor. He used to ring the bell and punch the tickets, but he had also been a driver.

One day, alighting from his tram, he stumbled, fell, and was dragged a short distance. He had some swelling and his left side hurt. He was taken to hospital where they found that there was nothing wrong with him. He was given a few stitches in the scalp to close the wound. Everything was fine. He left after a thorough examination. They took a lot of x-rays, and they were quite certain that there was nothing wrong with him. He had been putting on a bit of a show.

And then, gradually, he fell victim to crises characterized by an increase

[1] In English in the original.
[2] Michael Josef Eisler, *"Analyse eines Zwangssymptoms."*

in pain in his lower rib, a pain that spread out from this point and drove the subject into a state of increasing discomfort. He would stretch out, lie down on his left side, use a pillow to block it. And things stayed that way, getting worse as time went on. The crises would last several days, returning at reg- 190
ular intervals. They kept getting worse, reaching the point of actually causing the subject to lose consciousness.

Once again he was given a thorough examination. They found absolutely nothing. They suspected a traumatic hysteria and sent him to our author, who analyzes him.

This man belongs to the first generation of analysts, he sees the phenomena with a lot of freshness, investigates them from beginning to end. Nevertheless, this observation dates from 1921 and already belongs to this type of systematization that began to affect – correlatively, it would seem – observation and practice and that would produce this turning point from which the reversal that stressed the analysis of resistance emerged. Eisler is already extremely impressed by the new *ego* psychology. On the other hand, he knows the early things very well, Freud's early analyses of the anal character, he recalls the idea that the economic elements of the libido can play a decisive role in the formation of the ego. And one feels that he is deeply interested in his subject's ego, in his style of conduct, in the things that indicate regressive elements in him, insofar as they are inscribed not only in the symptoms but also in the structure..

His record of the subject's curious behavior is very pertinent. At the end of the first session the subject abruptly sits down on the couch and starts looking at him with eyes like lottery balls, mouth agape, as if he has discovered an unexpected and enigmatic monster. On other occasions the subject gives some fairly surprising expressions to the transference. On one occasion in particular he stands up abruptly and falls down again the other way round, but with his nose against the couch, offering his dangling legs to the analyst in a manner whose general meaning does not escape him.

This subject is adapted well enough. His relations with his friends are those of a militant unionist, he is something of a leader, and he is very interested in what binds him to them socially. He enjoys undeniable prestige there. Our author also particularly notes the way in which his being self-taught functions, his papers are all in order. You can see that Eisler is trying to find the features of an anal character, and not without some success. But the interpretation he finally gives the subject of his homosexualizing tendencies doesn't affect him either way – nothing changes. There is the same dead end that Freud encountered with the Wolf Man some years before, not all of the clues to which are given in this case study, because at the time the object of his research was something else.

Let's take a closer look at this study. The onset of the neurosis in its symp- 191

tomatic aspect, which made the analyst's intervention necessary, undoubtedly presupposes a trauma which must have aroused something. In the subject's childhood we find traumas by the bucketful. When he was very small, starting to crawl about the place, his mother had stood on his thumb. Eisler doesn't fail to point out that at this moment something decisive must have occurred, since according to the family tradition he is supposed to have started to suck his thumb after this incident. You see? – castration – regression. One can find others. However, there is one small difficulty, which is that it is noticed when the material is being produced that what was decisive in the decompensation of the neurosis wasn't the accident but the radiographic examinations.

The analyst doesn't see all the implications of what he gives us, and whatever preconceived idea he has tends in the opposite direction. It is at the time of the examinations which subject him to mysterious instruments that the subject's crises are triggered. And these crises, their sense, their regularity, their style, very obviously appear linked to a fantasy of pregnancy.

The manifestation of the subject's symptoms is dominated by those relational elements that in an imaginary way colour his relations with objects. One can recognize in them an anal relation, or a homosexual relation, or this or that, but these very elements are caught up in the question that arises – *Am I or am I not someone capable of procreating?* This question is obviously located at the level of the Other, insofar as integration into sexuality is tied to symbolic recognition.

If the recognition of the subject's sexual position is not tied to the symbolic apparatus, then nothing remains for analysis, Freudianism, but to disappear – it means absolutely nothing. The subject finds his place in a preformed symbolic apparatus that institutes the law in sexuality. And this law no longer allows the subject to realize his sexuality except on the symbolic plane. This is what the Oedipus complex means, and if analysis didn't know this, it would have discovered absolutely nothing.

What is at issue for our subject is the question – *What am I?*, or *Am I?*, a relation of being, a fundamental signifier. It is to the extent that this question was aroused as symbolic, and not reactivated as imaginary, that the decompensation of his neurosis was triggered and his symptoms became organized. Whatever their qualities, their nature, the material from which they are borrowed, his symptoms have the value of being a formulation, a reformulation, or even an insistence, of this question.

This key is not sufficient on its own. It is confirmed by elements of his past life which retain all their significance for the subject. One day he managed,
192 while hiding, to observe a woman from the neighborhood of his parents who was uttering these endless groans. He came upon her writhing about, her legs in the air. He knew what was going on, especially as she was unable to

give birth and the doctor had to intervene and carry the infant off in a bag, in pieces, which was all that could be removed.

Moreover, the feminized character of the subject's discourse is so immediately noticeable that when our analyst acquaints the subject with its major elements, he obtains from him this remark which the doctor who examined him had made to his wife – *I fail to see what's wrong with him. It seems that if he were a woman I should understand him much better.* He perceived the significant aspect, but he didn't perceive – for the simple reason that he didn't have the analytic apparatus, which is only conceivable in the register of the structurations of language – that all this is only material, favorable material admittedly, that the subject uses for expressing his question. Any other could have been used just as easily, in order to express what is beyond any relation, current or not current, a *Who am I? a man or a woman?* and *Am I capable of procreating?*

Once one holds this clue, the subject's entire life is reorganized from its point of view. One mentions his anal preoccupations, for example. But what does the interest he brings to his excrement revolve around? Around the question of whether in his excrement there may be fruit seeds still capable of growing if they're buried in the ground.

The subject has one great ambition, which is to be involved in raising chickens and, more particularly, in the marketing of eggs. He is interested in all sorts of botanical questions, all centered on germination. One may even say that a whole series of accidents that happened to him during his job as tram conductor is tied to the dismembering of the child he witnessed. This is not the ultimate origin of the subject's question, but it is a particularly expressive one.

Let's finish where we began, with the last accident. He fell from the tram which for him had become a significant machine, he fell down, he delivered himself. The sole theme of a pregnancy fantasy dominates, but in what way? As a signifier – the context makes this clear – of the question of his integration into the virile function, into the function of the father. It may be noted that he contrived to marry a woman who already had a child and with whom he could only ever have inadequate relations.

The problematic nature of his symbolic identification underlies any possible understanding of the observation. Everything that's said, expressed, gestured, manifested, assumes its sense only as a function of a response that 193
has to be formulated concerning this fundamentally symbolic relation – *Am I a man or am I a woman?*

When I set things out for you like this, you can't fail to compare it with what I emphasized in the case of Dora. Where does she end up in fact, if not confronted by a fundamental question on the subject of her sex? Not on what sex she is, but *What is it to be a woman?* Dora's two dreams are absolutely

transparent in this respect – one speaks of nothing else, *What is it to be a woman?* and specifically, *What is a feminine organ?* Notice that here we find ourselves before something odd – the woman wonders about what it is to be a woman, just as the male subject wonders about what it is to be a woman.

We shall take things up from there next time. We shall highlight the dissymmetries that Freud always stressed in the Oedipus complex, which confirm the distinction between the symbolic and the imaginary that I have taken up today.

For the woman, the realization of her sex is not accomplished in the Oedipus complex in a way symmetrical to that of the man's, not by identification with the mother, but on the contrary by identification with the paternal object, which assigns her an extra detour. Freud always stuck by this conception, whatever people, women particularly, have since tried to do to re-establish the symmetry. But the disadvantage the woman finds herself in with respect to access to her own sexual identity, with respect to her sexualization as a woman, is turned to her advantage in hysteria owing to her imaginary identification with the father, who is perfectly accessible to her, particularly by virtue of his position in the composition of the Oedipus complex.

For the man, on the other hand, the path is more complex.

14 March 1956

XIII

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The hysteric's question (II): *What is a woman?*

DORA AND THE FEMININE ORGAN
THE SIGNIFYING DISYMMETRY
THE SYMBOLIC AND PROCREATION
FREUD AND THE SIGNIFIER

What was the meaning of my lecture last night on the training of analysts? It was that it is essential to carefully distinguish between symbolism properly so-called, that is, symbolism as structured in language, that in which we understand one another here, and natural symbolism. I have summed this up in the expression, *To read coffee grounds is not to read hieroglyphics.*

For the audience that it was, it was necessary to bring the difference between signifier and signified to life a bit. I gave examples, some of them humorous, I gave the schema, and I went on to some applications. I reminded them that analysts' practice makes them fascinated by highly seductive imaginary forms, by the imaginary meaning of the subjective world, whereas what one needs to know – this is what interested Freud – is what organizes this world and enables it to be displaced. I pointed out that the dynamics of phenomena in the analytic field are linked to the duality that results from the distinction between the signifier and the signified.

It's no accident that it was a Jungian who brought in the term *symbol.* At the heart of the Jungian myth the symbol is effectively thought of as a flower that rises up from the depths, a blossoming of what lies in the depths of man *qua* typical. The question is whether this is what a symbol is, or whether on the contrary it's something that envelops and forms what my interlocutor nicely called creation.

The second part of my lecture concerned the consequences in analysis of forgetting the signifier-signified structuration. And there I was only able to give an indication of the way in which the theory of the ego currently being promoted in New York circles completely changes the perspective from which 196
the analytic phenomena have to be approached, and that it is party to the same effacement. This effectively ends up placing the ego-to-ego relation in the foreground. And a simple inspection of Freud's articles between 1922 and 1924 shows that the ego is nothing like what it's currently made out to be in analytic usage.

1

If what is called strengthening the ego exists, it can only be the accentuation of the fantasy relation that is always correlative of the ego, especially in the case of the neurotic with a typical structure. As far as the latter is concerned, the strengthening of the ego moves in exactly the opposite direction from that of the dissolution, not only of symptoms, which are strictly speaking within their own meaningfulness but may when the occasion arises be mobilized, but also of the structure itself.

What is the sense of what Freud contributed with his new topography when he stressed the imaginary nature of the ego's function? It's precisely the structure of neurosis.

Freud relates the ego to the object's fantasmatic character. When he writes that the ego has the privilege of reality using, of reality testing, that it's the ego that indicates reality for the subject, the context leaves no doubt – the ego is here as an illusion, what Freud called the ego ideal. Its function, which is not that of objectivity but that of illusion, is fundamentally narcissistic, and it's on the basis of this function that the subject gives something its connotation of reality.

From this topography there arises what in typical neuroses is the place of the ego. The ego in its imaginary structuration is for the subject like one of its elements. In the same way that Aristotle declared that one must not say, *Man thinks,* nor, *The soul thinks,* but, *Man thinks with his soul,* we shall say that the neurotic asks his neurotic question, his secret and muzzled question, with his ego.

The Freudian topography of the ego shows us how a hysteric, or an obsessional, uses his or her ego in order to raise the question, that is, precisely in order not to raise it. The structure of a neurosis is essentially a question, and indeed this is why for a long time it was for us purely and simply a question. The neurotic is in a position of symmetry, he is the question that we ask ourselves, and it's indeed because it affects us just as much as him that we have the greatest repugnance to formulating it more precisely.

This is illustrated by the way in which I have always spoken to you about
197 hysteria, to which Freud has given illumination of the highest kind in the case of Dora.

Who is Dora? She is someone who is trapped in a very clear symptomatic state, with the qualification that Freud, by his own admission, makes a mistake over the object of Dora's desire in that he himself is too centered on the question of the object, that is, in that he doesn't bring out the fundamental subjective duality implicated in it. He asks himself what Dora desires, before asking himself who desires in Dora. And in the end Freud realizes that in this quartet – Dora, her father, Herr and Frau K. – Frau K. is the object

that really interests Dora, in so far as she is identified with Herr K. The question of where Dora's ego is located is thus resolved – Herr K. is Dora's ego. The function filled by the specular image in the schema of the mirror stage, where the subject situates his sense so as to recognize himself, where for the first time he situates his ego, this external point of imaginary identification, is, for Dora, placed in Herr K. It is insofar as she is Herr K. that all her symptoms adopt their definitive sense.

Dora's aphonia occurs during Herr K.'s absences, which Freud explains quite nicely – she no longer needs to talk since he is no longer present, only writing remains. This leaves us a bit perplexed, nevertheless. If she has dried up, it's in fact because the mode of objectification hasn't been raised anywhere else. The aphonia arises because Dora is left directly in the presence of Frau K. Everything she has heard about Frau K.'s relations with her father revolves around fellatio, and here there is something infinitely more significant for understanding the appearance of the oral symptoms.

Dora's identification with Herr K. is what holds this situation together up until the neurotic decompensation. While she may complain about the situation, this is still part of the situation, for it is insofar as she is identified with Herr K. that she complains.

What is Dora saying through her neurosis? What is the woman-hysteric saying? Her question is this – *What is it to be a woman?*

This leads us further into the dialectic of the imaginary and the symbolic in the Oedipus complex.

What in fact characterizes the Freudian understanding of the phenomena is that it always shows the structural planes of the symptom, despite the outburst of enthusiasm by psychoanalysts for the imaginary phenomena stirred up in analytic experience.

Concerning the Oedipus complex there has been no shortage of well-meaning people to stress the analogies and symmetries along the paths that the boy and girl have to follow – and Freud himself pointed out many common features. However, he never stopped insisting on the essential dissymmetry of Oedipus in the two sexes. 198

What is this dissymmetry due to? To the primary love relation with the mother, you will say, but Freud was a long way away from this point at the time he was beginning to put order into the facts that he was observing in experience. He mentions, among other things, the anatomical component, which means that for the woman the two sexes are identical. But is this the reason for the dissymmetry?

The detailed studies that Freud did on this subject are closely argued. I shall name some of them – "Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes," "Female Sexuality," "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex." What do they bring out, if it isn't that the reason for the

dissymmetry is located essentially at the symbolic level, that it's due to the signifier?

I should say that strictly speaking there is no symbolization of woman's sex[1] as such. In any case, the symbolization isn't the same, it doesn't have the same source or the same mode of access as the symbolization of man's sex.[1] And this is because the imaginary only furnishes an absence where elsewhere there is a highly prevalent symbol.

It's the prevalence of the phallic *Gestalt* that in bringing about the oedipal complex forces the woman to take a detour via identification with the father and therefore for a while to follow the same paths as the boy. The woman's access to the oedipal complex, her imaginary identification, is accomplished via the father, exactly as in the boy's case, by virtue of the prevalence of the imaginary form of the phallus, but insofar as this form is itself taken as the symbolic element central to the Oedipus complex.

If for the girl as much as for the boy the castration complex assumes a pivotal value in bringing about the Oedipus complex, it does so precisely as a function of the father, because the phallus is a symbol to which there is no correspondent, no equivalent. It's a matter of a dissymmetry in the signifier. This signifying dissymmetry determines the paths down which the Oedipus complex will pass. The two paths make them both pass down the same trail – the trail of castration.

The experience of the Oedipus complex is evidence of the predominance of the signifier in the ways open to subjective realization, since the girl's assumption of her own situation is in no way unthinkable on the imaginary plane. All the ingredients are there for the girl to have direct experience of the feminine position, symmetrical to the realization of the masculine position. There would be no obstacle if this realization were to be brought about
199 in the order of lived experience, of *ego* sympathy, of sensations. And yet, experience shows a striking difference – one of the sexes is required to take the image of the other sex as the basis of its identification. That things are so can't be considered a pure quirk of nature. This fact can only be interpreted from the perspective in which it's the symbolic organization that regulates everything.

Where there is no symbolic material, there is an obstacle, a defect, in the way of bringing about the identification that is essential for the subject's sexuality to be realized. This defect comes from the fact that on one point the symbolic lacks the material – for it does require material. The female sex is characterized by an absence, a void, a hole, which means that it happens to be less desirable than is the male sex for what he has that is provocative, and that an essential dissymmetry appears. If all this could be grasped within the

[1] *"le sexe,"* which may also mean the genitals.

order of a dialectic of drives, we would not see why such a detour, such an anomaly, would be necessary.

This remark is nowhere near adequate for us concerning the matter at hand, namely the function of the ego in male and female hysterics. The question isn't simply linked to the material, to the trappings of the signifier, but to the subject's relationship with the signifier as a whole, with what the signifier is capable of answering to.

When I spoke about beings of language last night it was intended to have an impact upon my audience. Beings of language aren't organized beings, but there is no doubt that they are beings, that they stamp their form upon man. The comparison I made with fossils was therefore quite appropriate up to a point. It nevertheless remains true that they don't have any substantial existence in themselves.

2

Consider the paradox that results from certain functional interweavings between the two planes of the symbolic and the imaginary.

On the one hand, it seems that the symbolic is what yields us the entire world system. It's because man has words that he has knowledge of things. And the number of things he has knowledge of corresponds to the number of things he is able to name. This is not in doubt. On the other hand, there is no doubt either that the imaginary relation is linked to ethology, to animal psychology. The sexual relation implies capture by the other's image. In other words, one of these domains appears to be open to the neutrality of the order of human knowledge, the other seems to be the very domain of the erotization of the object. This is what initially manifests itself to us. 200

Now, the bringing about of the sexual position in the human being is linked, Freud tells us – and experience tells us – to the trial of traversing a fundamentally symbolized relationship, that of the Oedipus complex, which includes a position that alienates the subject, that makes him desire an other's object and possess it through the proxy of an other. We therefore find ourselves here in a position structured within the very duality of the signifier and the signified. It is insofar as the function of man and woman is symbolized, it is insofar as it's literally uprooted from the domain of the imaginary and situated in the domain of the symbolic, that any normal, completed sexual position is realized. Genital realization is submitted to symbolization as an essential requirement – that the man be virilized, that the woman truly accept her feminine function.

Conversely, no less paradoxically, it's in the order of the imaginary that we find the relation of identification on the basis of which the object is realized as an object of competition. The domain of knowledge is fundamentally inserted

into the primitive paranoid dialectic of identification with the counterpart. The initial opening of identification with the other, that is, with an object, starts from here. An object is isolated, neutralized, and as such particularly erotized. This is what makes an infinitely greater number of objects enter the field of human desire than enter animal experience.

In this interweaving of the imaginary and the symbolic lies the source of the essential function that the ego plays in the structuring of neurosis.

When Dora finds herself wondering, *What is a woman?*, she is attempting to symbolize the female organ as such. Her identification with the man, bearer of the penis, is for her on this occasion a means of approaching this definition that escapes her. She literally uses the penis as an imaginary instrument for apprehending what she hasn't succeeded in symbolizing.

There are many more women hysterics than men hysterics – this is a fact of clinical experience – because the path to the woman's symbolic realization is more complicated. Becoming a woman and wondering what a woman is are two essentially different things. I would go even further – it's because one doesn't become one that one wonders and, up to a point, to wonder is the contrary of becoming one. The metaphysics of the woman's position is the detour imposed on her subjective realization. Her position is essentially
201 problematic, and up to a certain point it's unassimilable. But once the woman is locked into hysteria it must also be said that her position presents an unusual stability by virtue of its structural simplicity – the simpler a structure is, the fewer the points of rupture it displays. When her question takes shape in the form of hysteria it's very easy for the woman to raise it by taking the shortest path, namely identification with the father.

In masculine hysteria the situation is certainly much more complex. To the extent that in man the oedipal realization is better structured, the hysteric's question has less chance of arising. But if it's raised, what is it? Here there is the same dissymmetry as in the Oedipus complex – hysterics, whether men or women, ask themselves the same question. The question of the male hysteric also concerns the feminine position.

The question of the subject whom I mentioned last time revolved around a fantasy of pregnancy. Is this sufficient to exhaust the question? It has long been known that fantasmatic anatomical fragmentation is a hysterical phenomenon. This fantasmatic anatomy has a structural character – neither paralysis nor anesthesia occurs according to the pathways and topography of the nerve branches. Nothing in neural anatomy corresponds to anything whatsoever that occurs in hysterical symptoms. It's always a question of an imaginary anatomy.

Can we now spell out the factor common to the feminine position and the masculine question in hysteria – a factor that is no doubt situated at the symbolic level, but perhaps isn't entirely reducible to it? It concerns a ques-

tion of procreation. Paternity, like maternity, has a problematic essence – these are terms that are not situated purely and simply at the level of experience.

Recently I was discussing problems, raised long ago, about the *couvade* with one of my students and he reminded me of the light ethnographers have recently managed to throw on this problem. Facts of experience obtained from an investigation carried out on some Central American tribe, because this is where it appears clearly, effectively enable the resolution of certain questions that have arisen over the meaning of this phenomenon. It is now possible to see here that the function of the father and of what he contributes to the creation of the new individual is called into question. The *couvade* is located at the level of a question concerning masculine procreation.

In this vein perhaps it won't strike you as artificial if I elaborate in the following way.

The symbolic provides a form into which the subject is inserted at the level 202
of his being. It's on the basis of the signifier that the subject recognizes himself as being this or that. The chain of signifiers has a fundamental explanatory value, and the very notion of causality is nothing else.

There is nevertheless one thing that evades the symbolic tapestry, it's procreation in its essential root – that one being is born from another. In the symbolic order procreation is covered by the order instituted by this succession between beings. But nothing in the symbolic explains the fact of their individuation, the fact that beings come from beings. The entire symbolism declares that creatures don't engender creatures, that a creature is unthinkable without a fundamental creation. In the symbolic nothing explains creation.

Nor does anything explain why some beings must die for others to be born. There is an essential relationship between sexual reproduction and the appearance of death, the biologists say, and if this is true then it shows that they, too, mull over the same question. The question of what links two beings in the appearance of life only arises for a subject when he or she is in the symbolic, realized as a man or as a woman, but so long as an accident has prevented him or her from acceding to it. This may just as easily occur to anyone by virtue of his or her biographical accidents.

Freud raises these same issues in the background of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Just as life reproduces itself, so it's forced to repeat the same cycle, rejoining the common aim of death. For Freud this reflects his experience. Each neurosis reproduces a particular cycle in the order of the signifier on the basis of the question that man's relationship to the signifier as such raises.

There is, in effect, something radically unassimilable to the signifier. It's quite simply the subject's singular existence. Why is he here? Where has he come from? What is he doing here? Why is he going to disappear? The sig-

nifier is incapable of providing him with the answer, for the good reason that it places him beyond death. The signifier already considers him dead, by nature it immortalizes him.

As such, the question of death is another mode of the neurotic creation of the question – its obsessional mode. I indicated this last night, and I'll leave it to one side today because we are dealing with the psychoses this year and not with the obsessional neuroses. The considerations about structure I'm proposing to you here are still a prelude to the problem raised by the psychotic. If I'm particularly interested in the question raised in hysteria, it's because at issue is the way in which it's distinct from the mechanism of psy-
203 chosis, especially that of President Schreber, where the question of procreation, of feminine procreation in particular, is also sketched out.

3

I would like to finish by pointing out to you those texts by Freud that justify what I said to you last night.

My own work is to understand what Freud did. Consequently, to interpret even what is implicit in Freud is legitimate in my eyes. I say this to tell you that I'm not backing away from my responsibilities in asking you to refer to what certain texts have powerfully expressed.

Refer to those years, around 1896, when as Freud himself tells us he was assembling his doctrine – he took a long time to state what he had to say. He stresses the time of latency, which always lasted three to four years, between the composition of his major works and their publication. The *Traumdeutung* was written three or four years prior to its publication. The same goes for *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* and the Dora case.

One can observe that the twofold structuring of the signifier and signified doesn't appear after the event. As early as Letter 46, for example, Freud states that he is beginning to see the stages of the subject's development appear in his experience, how to construct them, and also to show its relationship to the existence of the unconscious and its mechanisms. One is struck by seeing him employ the term *Übersetzung* to designate a given stage of the subject's experiences, according as it's translated or not. *Translated* – what does that mean? It's a question of what happens at levels defined by the subject's age – from one to four years of age, then from four to eight years of age, then the prepubertal period, and finally the period of maturity.[2]

It's interesting to note the stress Freud places on the signifier. *Bedeutung*

[2] See letter of 30 May 1896, Freud-Fliess, 187–90; Letter 46, Origins, 163–67.

can't be translated as specifying the signifier in relation to the signified. Likewise, in Letter 52, I've already pointed out that he says this – *I am working on the assumption that our psychic mechanism has come into being by a process of stratification: the material present in the form of memory traces being subjected from time to time to a* rearrangement *in accordance with fresh circumstances – to a* retranscription. *Thus what is essentially new about my theory is the thesis that memory is present not once but several times over, that it is laid down in various kinds of indications.*[3]

I'm pointing out to you the kinship between what is said here and the 204
schema I gave a commentary on for you the other day. Freud emphasizes that these different stages are characterized by the plurality of mnemic inscriptions.

There is *Wahrnehmung,* perception, first of all. This is a primordial, primary position which remains hypothetical since in a way none of it comes to light in the subject. Then there is *Bewusstsein,* consciousness.

Consciousness and memory as such are mutually exclusive. This is a point on which Freud never varied. It always seemed to him that pure memory, *qua* inscription and acquisition by the subject of a new means of reacting, should remain completely immanent to the mechanism and bring no apprehension of the subject by himself into play.

The *Wahrnehmung* stage is there to show that something simple must be presupposed at the origin of memory, conceived as consisting of a plurality of registers. The first registration of perceptions, which is also inaccessible to consciousness, is arranged according to associations by simultaneity. Here we have the original requirement of a primitive installation of simultaneity.

This is what I showed you last year in our probative exercises concerning symbols.[4] Things became interesting, you'll remember, when we established the structure of groups of three. Putting these groups of three together effectively establishes a relationship of simultaneity between them. Simultaneity is the birth of the signifier and, equally, its existence is a synchronic coexistence. Saussure emphasizes this point.

Unbewusstsein is of the order of conceptual memories. The notion of causal relation as such appears here for the first time. This is the moment at which the signifier, once constituted, is secondarily arranged according to something else, which is the appearance of the signified.

It's only subsequently that the *Vorbewusstsein,* the third mode of rearrangement, comes into play. It's from this preconscious that investments will become conscious, according to certain precise rules. This second thought conscious-

[3] Letter of 6 December 1896, Freud-Fliess, 207; Letter 52, Origins, 173.
[4] See Sem II:191–94.

ness is in all likelihood linked to the hallucinatory experience of word representations,[5] the emission of words. The most radical example of this is verbal hallucination, connected with the paranoid mechanism by which we auditivate word representations. The appearance of consciousness which is linked to this would otherwise always be without any link to memory.

In everything that follows, Freud shows that the phenomenon of *Verdrängung* consists in the loss of something of the order of a signifying expression
205 at the moment of passage from one stage of development to another. The signifier recorded at one of these stages doesn't cross over into the next, with the mode of retroactive regrouping required by any new phase of signifier-meaning organization that the subject enters.

This is where any explanation of the existence of repression has to begin. The notion of inscription in a signifier that dominates the registration is essential to the theory of memory insofar as it's at the basis of Freud's first investigation of the phenomenon of the unconscious.

21 March 1956

[5] I. e., "word presentations" in SE.

XIV

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The signifier, as such, signifies nothing

THE NOTION OF STRUCTURE
SUBJECTIVITY IN THE REAL
HOW TO LOCATE THE BEGINNING OF A DELUSION
THE BETWEEN-I'S

Ad usum autem orationis, incredibile est, nisi diligenter attenderis, quanta opera machinata natura sit.

How many marvels there are concealed by the function of language, if you want to pay diligent attention to it! You know that this is what we are striving towards here. You won't be astonished, therefore, that I should offer you this sentence from Cicero as an epigraph, since it is on this theme that this term we are going to return to the study of the Freudian structures of the psychoses.

Effectively, it's a question of what Freud left behind concerning the structures of the psychoses, this being why we call them Freudian.

1

The notion of structure by itself deserves our attention. Given the manner in which we efficaciously apply it in analysis, it implies a number of coordinates, and the very notion of coordinate is part of it. A structure is in the first place a group of elements forming a covariant set.

I said a *set*, I didn't say a *totality*. As a matter of fact, the notion of structure is analytic. A structure is always established by referring something coherent to something else, which is complementary to it. But the notion of totality only comes into it if we are dealing with a closed relation with a correspondent, where the structures are interdependent. On the other hand it is possible to have an open relation, which we shall call a relation of supplementarity. 208
For those who have gone in for structural analyses the ideal has always appeared to be to find what links the two, the closed and the open, to discover circularity on the side of the open.

I think that you're well enough oriented to understand that the notion of structure is by itself already a manifestation of the signifier. The little I've just indicated about its dynamics, about what it implies, points you towards

the notion of signifier. To be interested in structure is to be unable to neglect the signifier. In structural analysis, as in the analysis of the relationship between signifier and signified, we discover relations between groups founded on sets that, whether open or closed, essentially comprise reciprocal references. In the analysis of the relationship between signifier and signified we have learned to stress synchrony and diachrony, and this reappears in a structural analysis. In the end, if we observe them closely, the notion of structure and that of signifier appear inseparable. In fact, when we analyze a structure it's always at least ideally a question of the signifier. What satisfies us the most in a structural analysis is an uncovering, that is as radical as possible, of the signifier.

We situate ourselves in a field that is distinct from the field of the natural sciences and that, as you know, it isn't enough to call the field of the human sciences. Where are we to draw the dividing line? How closely do we have to approximate to the ideals of the sciences of nature such as they have developed for us – for instance, physics as we know it? To what extent are we unable to avoid differentiating ourselves from them? Well then, it's in relation to these definitions of the signifier and of structure that the appropriate boundary can be drawn.

In physics we have adopted the law that we proceed from the idea that in nature nobody uses the signifier to signify. This is what distinguishes our physics from mystical physics and even from the physics of antiquity, which had nothing mystical about it, but which didn't adopt this strict requirement. It has become a fundamental law for us, one required of every utterance within the order of the natural sciences, that there is nobody who uses the signifier.

The signifier is nevertheless there in nature, and if we weren't looking for the signifier, we shouldn't find anything there at all. To extract a natural law is to extract a meaningless formula. The less it signifies anything, the happier we are. This is why we're perfectly happy with the achievements of Einstei-
209 nian physics. You would be wrong to think that those little equations of Einstein's that express the relationship of inertial mass to a constant plus some exponents have the slightest meaning. They are pure signifiers. And this is why thanks to him we hold the world in the palm of our hand.

The idea that the signifier signifies something, that there is someone who uses this signifier to signify something, is called the *Signatura rerum*. This is the title of a work by Jakob Boehme.[1] It means that God is present in natural phenomena and speaks to us in his language.

You must nevertheless not think that our physics implies the elimination of all meaning. There is a meaning at the limit, but there is nobody to signify

[1] Jakob Boehme, *Signature of All Things*.

it. In physics the mere existence of a signifying system implies, at the very least, the meaning that there is an *Umwelt*. Physics implies the minimal conjunction of the two signifiers, *one* and *all* – that all things are one or that the one is all things.

You would be wrong to think that these signifiers belonging to science, however simple they are, are given or that any form of empiricism would enable one to abstract them. No empirical theory is able to account for the existence of even the first whole numbers. Despite Mr. Jung's best efforts to convince us of the contrary, history, observation, and ethnography show us that at a certain level of the signifier in a given culture, community, or tribe of people, it's an accomplishment to get access to the number five, for instance. One can clearly distinguish on the banks of the Orinoco between a tribe that has learned to signify the number four and not beyond, and one for which the number five opens up surprising possibilities, consistent moreover with the entire signifying system into which the tribe is inserted.

This isn't a joke. It's to be taken literally. The extraordinary effect the number three had when it arrived in a certain Amazon tribe has been recorded by people who knew what they were talking about. Uttering a series of whole numbers isn't self evident. It's altogether conceivable, and experience shows that this is so, that beyond a certain limit in this series things get mixed up and one no longer sees anything but a confused multitude. Experience also shows that since the number one necessarily implies its maximum effect, it's not the number one whose origin we are able, in acquiring the signifier, to understand clearly.

These considerations appear to contradict my remarks to you about the fact that any system of language includes, or covers, the totality of possible meanings. This isn't so, for that didn't mean that every system of language exhausts the possibilities of the signifier, which is quite different. The proof 210
of this is the fact that, for example, the language of an Australian tribe may express a given number by a crescent moon.

These remarks may appear to you to be way off the mark. It's essential however to take them up again at the beginning of our topic for this year. Our starting point, the point we keep coming back to, since we shall always be at the starting point, is that every real signifier is, as such, a signifier that signifies nothing.

2

Experience proves it – the more the signifier signifies nothing, the more indestructible it is.

They go off in a foolish direction, those who make fun of what one may call the power of words, by demonstrating, which is always easy, the contra-

dictions into which one falls with the play of a given concept, those who mock nominalism, as it's called, in a given philosophy.

It's of course easy to criticize what may be arbitrary or fleeting in the use of a notion like that of society, for instance. It's not so very long ago that this word was invented, and it's amusing to see what dead ends result in the real from the notion that the society is responsible for what happens to the individual – a notion the requirement for which was ultimately expressed in socialist constructions. There is in effect something radically arbitrary in the emergence of the notion of society – I'm not saying of the city. Recall that for our friend Cicero in the above work the nation is, as it were, only the goddess of the population – it presides over births. As a matter of fact the modern idea of the nation is not even on the horizon of classical thought, and it is not merely the fortunes of a word that demonstrate this to us.

None of these things is self-evident. One is free to conclude from this that doubt can be cast on the notion of society. But it's precisely insofar as we are able to cast doubt upon it that it's a signifier. It's also for this reason that it has entered our social reality like the prow of a ship, like a ploughshare.

When one speaks of the subjective, and even when here we call it into question, the illusion always remains in our minds that the subjective is the opposite of the objective, that it's on the side of the speaker, and finds itself, by virtue of this very fact, on the side of illusions – it either distorts or restricts the objective. The dimension elided until now in the understanding
211 of Freudianism is that the subjective isn't on the side of the speaker. It's something we encounter in the real.

The real in question is no doubt not to be taken in the sense in which we normally understand it, which implies objectivity, a confusion constantly being made in analytic writings. The subjective appears in the real insofar as it implies that we have opposite us a subject capable of using the signifier, the play of signifiers. And capable of using it like us – not to signify something but precisely to deceive us over what there is to signify. This is to use the fact that the signifier is something other than meaning in order to present a deceptive signifier. This is so essential that it is strictly speaking the first step of modern physics. The Cartesian discussion of the deceptive god is a step that is impossible to avoid for any foundation of physics in the sense in which we understand the term.

The subjective is for us that which distinguishes the field of science in which psychoanalysis is grounded from the entire field of physics. It's the instance of subjectivity as present in the real that is the essential source of the fact that we are saying something new when we single out, for example, these series of apparently natural phenomena that we call neuroses or psychoses.

Do the psychoses form a series of natural phenomena? Do they fall within

a field of natural explanation? What I'm calling *natural* is the field of science in which there is no one who uses the signifier to signify.

Please remember these definitions, because I'm only giving them to you after having carefully decanted them.

I think they are suited, in particular, to contributing the greatest clarity on the subject of final causes. The idea of final cause is repugnant to science in its present form, but science constantly makes use of it in a camouflaged way, in the notion of a return to a state of equilibrium, for instance. If by *final cause* one simply understands a cause that acts in advance, which tends towards something out ahead, it's absolutely ineliminable from scientific thought, and there is just as much final cause in Einstein's equations as in Aristotle. The difference is precisely this – there is no one who uses this signifier to signify anything – unless it's this, which is that there is a universe.

I was reading in Mr. [. . .] how amazed he was at the existence of the element water – how well this shows the care that the Creator has taken with order and with our pleasure, for if water were not this element that is so wonderfully fluid, heavy, and solid, we wouldn't see little boats sailing so 212
beautifully on the sea. This is written and it would be a mistake to think that the author is an idiot. It's just that he was still a captive of the atmosphere of a time when nature was made for speaking. We overlook this because of a kind of purification that has taken place in our causal requirements. But this alleged naivety was natural for people for whom everything that presents itself with a signifying nature is made for signifying something.

People are currently engaging in a very curious operation, which consists in overcoming certain difficulties presented by certain frontier domains into which the question of the use of the signifier as such has to be introduced, precisely by means of the notion of communication which we've discussed on occasion. And the reason I've placed the article by Tomkins in this issue of the journal you've all become somewhat familiar with is to give you an example of the naive way the notion of communication can be used.[2] You will see that this can be taken a very long way, which people haven't failed to do.

There are people who will claim that the various orders of internal secretion inside an organism send one another messages in the form, for instance, of hormones that notify the ovaries that everything's going well, or on the contrary that there's a bit of a problem somewhere. Is this a legitimate use of the notions of communication and message? Why not, if a message is simply of the order of what takes place when we project a light beam, whether invis-

[2] Silvan S. Tomkins, "Consciousness and the Unconscious in a Model of the Human Being." Published as *"La conscience et l'inconscient représentés dans un modèle de l'être humain"* in *La Psychanalyse* no. 1 (1956), 275–86.

ible or not, onto a photoelectric cell? This can be taken a very long way. If, on sweeping the sky with the beam of a spotlight, we see something appear in the middle, it may be taken as the sky's response. This produces its own criticism. But this is still to take things too lightly.

When may one really speak of communication? You are going to tell me that it's obvious – there has to be a response. This is defensible, it's a question of definition. Shall we say that there is communication whenever a response is registered? But what's a response? There's only one way defining it, which is to say that it's when something returns to the starting point. This is the schema for feedback. Every return of something that, having been registered somewhere, thereby triggers an operation of regulation, constitutes a response. And this is where communication begins, with self-regulation.

But notwithstanding this, are we now at the level of the function of the signifier? I don't think so. In a thermoelectric machine supported by feedback the signifier is not employed. Why not? Isolating the signifier as such
213 requires something else which, like any dialectical distinction in the first instance presents itself in a paradoxical manner. There is appropriate use of the signifier whenever, at the level of the receiver, what is important is not the effect of the content of the message, nor the triggering in the organ of a given reaction due to the appearance of a hormone, but this – that at the message's point of arrival one makes a note of it.

Does this imply a subjectivity? Look at it very closely. It's not certain that it does. What is distinctive about the existence of the signifier as such, the signifier which I have just been trying one more time to give a precise formulation to, insofar as it's a correlated system of elements that derive their place synchronically and diachronically in relation to one another?

I'm at sea, the captain of a small ship. I see things moving about in the night, in a way that gives me cause to think that there may be a sign there. How shall I react? If I'm not yet a human being, I shall react with all sorts of displays, as they say – modeled, motor, and emotional. I satisfy the descriptions of psychologists, I understand something, in fact I do everything I'm telling you that you must know how not to do. If on the other hand I am a human being, I write in my log book – *At such and such a time, at such and such a degree of latitude and longitude, we noticed this and that.*

This is what is fundamental. I shelter my responsibility. What distinguishes the signifier is here. I make a note of the sign as such. It's the acknowledgment of receipt [*l'accusé de réception*] that is essential to communication insofar as it is not significant, but signifying. If you don't articulate this distinction clearly, you will keep falling back upon meanings that can only mask from you the original mainspring of the signifier insofar as it carries out its true function.

Let's keep the following in mind. Even when inside an organism, whether

living or not, things are transmitted that are founded upon the effectiveness of all or nothing, even when, by virtue of the fact that, for example, a threshold exists, there is something which doesn't exist below a certain level and then all of a sudden has a certain effect – keep the example of the hormones in mind –, we still can't speak of communication if by communication we imply the originality of the order of the signifier. Indeed, it isn't as all or nothing that something is a signifier, it's to the extent that something constituting a whole, the sign, exists and signifies precisely nothing. This is where the order of the signifier, insofar as it differs from the order of meaning, begins.

If psychoanalysis teaches us anything, if psychoanalysis constitutes a novelty, it's precisely that the human being's development is in no way directly deducible from the construction of, from the interferences between, from the 214
composition of, meanings, that is, instincts. The human world, the world that we know and live in, in the midst of which we orientate ourselves, and without which we are absolutely unable to orientate ourselves, doesn't only imply the existence of meanings, but the order of the signifier as well.

If the Oedipus complex isn't the introduction of the signifier then I ask to be shown any conception of it whatever. The level of its elaboration is so essential to sexual normalization uniquely because it introduces the functioning of the signifier as such into the conquest of the said man or woman. It's not because the Oedipus complex is contemporary with the genital dimension or tendency that it's possible to imagine even for a single instant that it's essential to an actual human world, to a world that has its structure of human reality.

Think about it for a second – if there is something that is clearly unsuited to introducing articulation and differentiation into the world, it's the genital function. That which in its strict essence tends towards the most mysterious of effusions is that which is the most paradoxical in relation to any real structuring of the world. It's not the instinctual dimension that is operative in the stage to be passed through in the Oedipus complex. In this respect, it's on the contrary the so highly diverse material we are shown by the pregenital stages that enables us to imagine easily how, by analogy with meaning, the mode of matter, to call it by its name, is linked up to what man has in his immediate field. The bodily, excremental, pregenital, exchanges are quite adequate for structuring a world of objects, a world of complete human reality, that is, one in which there are subjectivities.

There's no other scientific definition of subjectivity than one that proceeds from the possibility of handling the signifier for purely signifying, not significant ends, that is, expressing no direct relation of the order of appetite.

Things are simple. But the subject still has to acquire, conquer, the order of the signifier, be given his place in a relationship of implication that attains

his being, which results in the formation of what in our language we call the superego. One doesn't have to go very deeply into analytic literature to see that the use made of this concept is congenial to the definition of the signifier, which is that it signifies nothing and is therefore always capable of yielding various meanings. For us the superego raises the question of what is the order of entrance, of introduction, of present instance, of the signifier, which is indispensable to the functioning of a human organism that has to come to terms not only with a natural environment but with a signifying universe.

215 Here we return to the crossroads at which I left you last time on the subject of the neuroses. What do symptoms result from, if it's not from the human organism's being implicated in something that is structured like a language, whereby such and such an element of its functioning will come into play as a signifier? I went further on this topic last time, taking the example of hysteria. Hysteria is a question centered on a signifier that remains enigmatic as to its meaning. The question of death and the question of birth are as it happens the two ultimate questions that have precisely no solution in the signifier. This is what gives neurotics their existential value.

Now for the psychoses. What do they mean? What is the function of the subject's relationships to the signifier in the psychoses? We have already tried to spell this out on a number of occasions. The reason that we are always thus forced to investigate things in a roundabout way must lie in the question itself. We're obliged to acknowledge this for the moment. There is an obstacle here, a resistance, which will yield its meaning only to the extent that we have gone into things deeply enough to explain why things are like this.

3

Let's explore the problem again with the aim of taking a further step forward, as we've done on each occasion.

You remember the schema we arrived at. I pointed out to you that there must have been something there that had not materialized, at a certain moment, in the field of the signifier, that had been *verworfen*, thereby making the object of a *Verwerfung* reappear in the real. This mechanism is distinct from everything that in other ways we know from our experience, concerning the relationships between the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real.

Freud gave powerful expression, in the text on Schreber we're working on among others, to the radical distinction between passional conviction and delusional conviction. The former depends upon the projection of intentions. It is, for example, jealousy where I'm jealous of my own feelings in the other, where it's my own drives to be unfaithful that I impute to the other. As to the second, Freud formulates it thus, that what has been rejected from within

216 reappears without, or again, as one tries to say in an expanded form, that

what has been suppressed in the idea reappears in the real. But what does this mean, exactly?

In neurosis, too, we see this action of the drive and its consequences. Doesn't this formulation leave something to be desired, something confused, defective, even absurd? Every author confines himself to this formulation, and in putting it to you in this form I wasn't wanting to contribute anything original. I think I can find someone among you to help me look more closely at the works in which Katan has tried to grasp the mechanism of psychotic neoformation. You will observe what an extraordinary dead-end he arrives at, from which he escapes only at the price of contradictory formulations. This testifies to the conceptual difficulties one is committed to if one confuses, however slightly, the notion of reality with that of objectivity, or even with that of meaning, if one moves away from a reality distinct from the test of the real, from a reality in the sentiment of the real.

An entire phenomenological supposition, which extends well beyond the field of psychoanalysis and holds sway there only insofar as it equally holds sway elsewhere, is based on confusing the realm of meaningfulness with the realm of meaning. Proceeding from works that are extremely rigorous elaborations upon the function of the signifier, supposedly psychological phenomenology slides into the realm of meaning. This is its basic point of confusion. It's led towards it like a dog on a scent, and, like the dog, this will never lead it to any kind of scientific result.

You know the would-be opposition between *Erklären* and *Verstehen*. Here we must maintain that the only scientific structure is where there is *Erklären*. *Verstehen* opens onto all kinds of confusion. *Erklären* doesn't at all imply mechanical meaning or anything else of that order. The nature of *Erklären* lies in the recourse to the signifier as the sole foundation of all conceivable scientific structuration.

At the beginning of the Schreber case we find a period of disorder, of fertile moment. It presents a whole set of symptoms which, because it has generally been hidden away or, more exactly, because it has slipped through our fingers, has been unable to be elucidated analytically and is most of the time only reconstructed. Now, in reconstructing it we can discover, with very few exceptions, what appear to be the meanings and mechanisms we see at work in neurosis. There is nothing that more closely resembles a neurotic symptomatology than a prepsychotic symptomatology. Once the diagnosis has been made, we are told that one finds that the unconscious is displayed on the outside, that everything belonging to the *id* has passed into the external world, 217
and that the meanings in play are so clear that we are precisely unable to intervene analytically.

This is the classical position, and it still has some value. The paradox it contains has escaped nobody, but all the reasons that have been advanced to

explain it are of a tautological or contradictory character. They are superstructurations of totally absurd hypotheses. It suffices to take an interest in analytic literature as a symptom to realize this.

Where does it spring from? From the fact that the world of objects is in some way affected, captured, induced, by a meaning in relation with drives characteristic of the psychoses? Is the construction of an external world distinctive of the psychoses? However, if there is any way of equally defining neurosis, this is it. When do we decide that the subject has crossed over the limits, that he is delusional?

Take the prepsychotic period. Our President Schreber is living out something in the nature of perplexity. He gives us in living form this question that I was saying lies at the bottom of every form of neurosis. He is prey to strange forebodings – he indicates this to us after the event. He is abruptly invaded by this image which would seem to be the least likely to enter the mind of a man of his kind and his style, that it really must be rather pleasant to be a woman succumbing to intercourse. This is a period of confusion and panic. How are we to locate the border between this moment of confusion and the point at which his delusion ended with the construction that he was in actual fact a woman, and not just any woman, but the divine woman, or more exactly God's fiancée? Is there anything here that is sufficient for locating the onset of psychosis? Certainly not. Katan reports a case that he saw declare itself at a much earlier period than Schreber's, and about which he was able to form a direct idea, having come onto the scene at the turning point of the case.[3] It was the case of a youth at the age of puberty, whose whole prepsychotic period the author analyses very well, while conveying the idea that there was nothing in this subject of the order of accession to anything that would realize in him the virile type. Everything failed. And while he did try to conquer the typically virile attitude, it was by means of imitation, of a latching on, following the example of one of his friends. Like him and following him, he engaged in the first sexual maneuvers of puberty, namely masturbation, which he subsequently renounced under the injunction of the said friend, and he began to identify with him for a whole series of exercises that were called exercises of self-conquest. He behaved as if he were at the mercy of a severe father, which was the case with his friend. Like him, he became interested in a girl
218 who, as if by chance, was the same one his friend was interested in. And once this identification with his friend has gone quite a way, the young girl will readily fall into his arms.

Here we obviously find the *as if* mechanism that Mrs. Helene Deutsch has stressed as being a significant dimension in the symptomatology of the schi-

[3] See "Structural Aspects of a Case of Schizophrenia."

zophrenias.[4] It's a mechanism of imaginary compensation – you can verify the usefulness of the distinction between the three registers – for the absent Oedipus complex, which would have given him virility in the form, not of the paternal image, but of the signifier, *the name of the father*.

Once the psychosis has broken out, the subject will conduct himself in the same way as before, as an unconscious homosexual. No meaning emerges that is fundamentally different from the prepsychotic period. All his conduct in relation to the friend, who was the pivotal element in his attempt at structuration at the time of puberty, can be rediscovered in his delusion. When did he start to delude? When he said that his father was pursuing him to kill him, to rob him, to castrate him. All the contents implied in neurotic meanings are there. But the essential point, which isn't highlighted, is that the delusion began the moment the initiative came from the Other, with a capital O, when the initiative was founded on a subjective activity. *The Other wants* this, and above all he wants this to be known, he wants to signify it.

As soon as there is a delusion, we enter at full tilt upon the domain of intersubjectivity, where the whole problem is to know why it's fantasized. But in the name of fantasy, omnipresent in neurosis, attached as we are to its meaning, we forget its structure, namely that it's a question of signifiers, of signifiers as such, handled by a subject for signifying aims, signifying so purely that the meaning very often remains problematic. What we have encountered in this symptomatology always implies what I indicated to you last year in relation to the dream of Irma's injection – the inmixing[5] of subjects.

It's characteristic of the intersubjective dimension that you have a subject in the real capable of using the signifier as such, that is, to speak, not so as to inform you, but precisely so as to lure you. This possibility is what is distinctive about the existence of the signifier. But this isn't all. As soon as there is a subject and use of the signifier, use of the between-I [*l'entre-je*] is possible, that is to say, of the interposed subject. This inmixing of subjects is one of the most obvious elements in the dream of Irma's injection. Recall the three practitioners called in one by one by Freud, who wants to know what it is that's in Irma's throat. And these three farcical characters operate, 219
defend theses, talk only nonsense. They are the between-I's, who play an essential role here.

They are marginal to Freud's inquiry, whose major preoccupation at this

[4] See "Some Forms of Emotional Disturbance and their Relationship to Schizophrenia."

[5] *"immixtion;"* term used by Damourette and Pichon for the semantically different ways the subject's participation in an event or action can be described by a verb alone or by one of the verbs *"faire," "voir,"* or *"laisser"* plus an infinitive: e.g., *"opérer," "faire opérer," "voir opérer,"* and *"laisser opérer."* See *Essai de grammaire de la langue française* 5:791–817.

time is defense. In a letter to Fliess he says this – *I am right in the middle of what is outside nature.*[6] This is what defense is, in effect, insofar as it has an essential relationship to the signifier, not to the prevalence of meaning, but to idolatry of the signifier as such. This is merely a pointer.

Isn't it precisely the inmixing of subjects that appears in delusion? This is a characteristic that is so essential to any intersubjective relation that, it may be said, there is no language that doesn't include quite special grammatical expressions to indicate it.

I'll give you an example. It's all the difference there is between *The head of department who had this patient operated on by his resident* and *The head of department who was to operate on this patient had him operated on by his resident.*[7] You must be able to see that, although they lead to the same action, they mean two completely different things. It's this that is constantly involved in delusion. One *makes them do* this. This is where the problem lies, we are a long way from being able just simply to say that the *id* is quite abruptly present and reappears in the real.

At the heart of the psychoses there is a dead end, perplexity concerning the signifier. Everything takes place as if the subject were reacting to this by an attempt at restitution, at compensation. Fundamentally the crisis is undoubtedly unleashed by some question or other. Which is . . . ? I've got no idea. I suppose that the subject reacts to the signifier's absence by all the more emphatically affirming another one that as such is essentially enigmatic. I told you that the Other with a big O, qua bearer of the signifier, is excluded. The Other is thereby all the more powerfully affirmed between it and the subject, at the level of the little other, of the imaginary. This is where all the between-I phenomena that make up what is apparent in the symptomatology of psychosis take place – at the level of the other subject, of the one who holds the initiative in the delusion – in the case of Schreber, Professor Flechsig or God who is potentially so seductive that he places the world order in danger by virtue of the attraction.

It's at the level of the between-I, that is, of the little other, of the subject's double, who is both his ego and not his ego, that words appear that are a kind of running commentary on existence. We observe this phenomenon in mental automatism, but it's much more accentuated here, as there is a sort of teasing use of the signifier in the sentences that are begun then interrupted.
220 That level of the signifier which is that of the sentence comprises a middle, a beginning, and an end, and thus requires a conclusion. This is what enables

[6] This may be a reference to the remark, "All I was trying to do was to explain defense, but just try to explain something from the very core of nature!" Letter of August 16, 1895, Freud-Fliess, 136; Letter 27, Origins, 123.

[7] The two sentences are *Le médecin-chef qui a fait opérer ce malade par son interne* and *Le médecin-chef qui devait opérer ce malade, il l'a fait opérer par son interne.*

the play upon expectation, a slowing down that occurs at the imaginary level of the signifier, as if the solution to the enigma, for want of being able to be formulated in any really open manner other than through the primordial assertion of the other's initiative, is given by showing that it's a question of the signifier.

Just as the formula in bold letters that appears at the conclusion to the dream of Irma's injection shows the solution to what is at the end of Freud's desire – nothing more important in effect than a formula of organic chemistry – so we find, in the phenomenon of delusion, in the commentaries and in the buzzing of discourse in its pure form, the indication that it's a question of the signifier.

11 April 1956

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XV

On primordial signifiers and the lack of one

A CROSSROADS
BASIC SIGNIFIERS
A NEW SIGNIFIER IN THE REAL
APPROACHES TO THE HOLE
IDENTIFICATORY COMPENSATION

The distinction I have been insisting upon this year between the signifier and the signified turns out to be particularly justified by examination of the psychoses. Today I would like to make you feel this.

1

What are we looking for, we analysts, when we investigate a mental disturbance, whether it's confirmed in a patent manner or is latent, whether it masks itself or reveals itself in symptoms or conduct? We are always looking for meaning. This is what makes us different. The psychoanalyst is credited with not letting himself be deceived over the true meaning. When he uncovers the significance that an object has acquired for the subject, the register of meaning is always involved, that of a meaning which he regards as concerning the subject in some way. This is where I want you to pause, for there is a crossroads here.

The interest, the desire, the craving, which captures the subject in a meaning leads to a search for its type, mold, preformation, in the register of instinctual relations in which this subject appears correlated to an object – hence the construction of the theory of instincts, the foundations on which the analytic discovery rests. Here we have a relational world or, I should almost say, maze which comprises so many bifurcations, communications,
222 turnings back, as to leave us satisfied – that is to say, ultimately, that we lose ourselves in them. This is a tangible fact in our daily handling of these meanings.

Take homosexual attachment as an example, which is an essential component of the Oedipal drama. We say that the meaning of the homosexual relation tends to emerge in the inverted Oedipus complex. In the case of neurosis we say most of the time that the subject defends against this attachment that is more or less latent in his conduct, but still tends to appear. We speak of

defense – it has several modes. We look for its cause, which we define as the fear of castration. We are never short of an explanation, moreover – if this one won't do, we shall find another one.

But whether it be this one here or another one, isn't it apparent, as the slightest familiarity with analytic literature will show, that the question of the order of coherence at work is never raised?

Why should we allow that the homosexual orientation of libidinal investment involves causal coherence for the subject from the outset? In what way does being captured by the homosexual imago entail for the subject that he lose his penis? What is the order of causality that implies what is known as the primary process? Up to what point is a causal relation to be admitted here? What are the modes of causality that the subject fears in imaginary capture? Is it sufficient that we observe this imaginary relation – with all its implications, which are themselves constructed since it's a question of the imaginary – for it to be given in the subject, whereas we see it from the outside? I'm not saying that we are wrong to think that the fear of castration, with all its consequences, enters into play automatically in a male subject caught in the pacifying capture of the homosexual relation. I'm saying that we never question it. And there would no doubt be different answers according to different cases. The causal coherence here is constructed, through an unwarranted extrapolation from things of the imaginary onto the real. When it is the pleasure principle, resolution and return to an equilibrium, a requirement of desire, that is at issue, we quite naturally slide into bringing the reality principle – or something else – into play.

This enables us to return to our crossroads. Desire is at first sight understood as an essentially imaginary relation. Setting out from here, we set about cataloguing instincts, their equivalences and interconnections. Let's instead stop and ask ourselves whether these are merely biological laws that render a number of meanings instinctually interesting for the human subject. What part does that which depends on the signifier play in all this?

In fact, the signifier, with its own action and insistence, intervenes in all 223
of the human being's interests – however profound, primitive, elementary we suppose them to be.

I have spent days and lessons trying by all available means to give you a glimpse of what we might provisionally call the autonomy of the signifier, that is, the fact that it has its own laws. Undoubtedly, they are extremely difficult to isolate, since we always set the signifier to work among meanings.

This is to state the interest of linguistic considerations on the problem. It's impossible to study how this phenomenon called language, which is the most fundamental of interhuman relations, functions unless one draws this distinction between the signifier and the signified from the outset. And the step I ask you to take in this seminar is to follow me when I say to you that the

sense of the analytic discovery isn't simply to have found meanings but to have gone much further than anyone has ever gone in reading them, namely right to the signifier. That this fact is neglected explains the dead ends, the confusions, the circles and tautologies, that analytic research encounters.

2

The mainspring of the analytic discovery isn't to be found in the so-called libidinal or instinctual meanings relative to a whole range of behavior. These exist, it's true. But in the human being those meanings that are the closest to need, meanings that are relative to the most purely biological insertion into a nutritive and captivating environment, primordial meanings, are, in their sequence and in their very foundation, subject to laws that are the laws of the signifier.

If I spoke to you about day and night, it was to make you feel that the day, the very notion of the day, the word *day*, the notion of the coming of the day, is something that is properly speaking ungraspable in any reality. The opposition between day and night is a signifying opposition, which goes infinitely beyond all the meanings it may ultimately cover, indeed beyond every kind of meaning. If I took day and night as examples, it's of course because our subject is man and woman. The signifier *man* and the signifier *woman* are something other than a passive attitude and an active attitude, an aggressive attitude and a yielding attitude, something other than forms of behavior. There is undoubtedly a hidden signifier here which, of course, can nowhere
224 be incarnated absolutely, but which is nevertheless the closest to being incarnated in the existence of the word *man* and the word *woman*.

If these registers of being are anywhere, in the final analysis it's in words. It isn't obligatory that they be verbalized words. It may be a sign on a wall, it may be, for the so-called primitive, a painting or a stone, but it's elsewhere than in types of conduct or patterns.[1]

This is not new. When we say that the Oedipus complex is essential for the human being to be able to accede to a humanized structure of the real, it can't mean anything else.

Everything that abounds in our literature, the fundamental principles on which we agree, imply it – in order for there to be reality, adequate access to reality, in order for the sense of reality to be a reliable guide, in order for reality not to be what it is in psychosis, the Oedipus complex has to have been lived through. Now, we are only able to express this complex, its triangular crystallization, its various modalities and consequences, its terminal

[1] In English in the original.

crisis, called a decline,[2] which is ratified by the subject's entry into a new dimension, insofar as the subject is at once himself and the other two partners. This is what is meant by the term *identification* that you are always using. Thus here we have intersubjectivity and dialectical organization. This would be unthinkable if the field we have localized under the name of the Oedipus complex didn't have a symbolic structure.

I don't believe that this analysis can be questioned. The fact that it isn't generally accepted alters nothing. It's enough that certain people take it to be certain for it to be raised, by this very fact alone, as an issue. Equilibrium, the right situation for the human subject in reality, depends, at one of its levels at the very least, on a purely symbolic experience, on an experience that implies the conquest of the symbolic relation as such.

On reflection, do we need psychoanalysis to tell us this? Aren't we astounded that philosophers didn't emphasize ages ago that human reality is irreducibly structured as signifying?

Day and night, man and woman, peace and war – I could enumerate more oppositions that don't emerge out of the real world but give it its framework, its axes, its structure, that organize it, that bring it about that there is in effect a reality for man, and that he can find his bearings therein. The notion of reality that we bring to bear in analysis presupposes this web, this mesh of signifiers. This isn't new. It's constantly being implied in analytic discourse, but is never isolated as such. This isn't necessarily a drawback, but it is one 225
in, for example, what has been written on the psychoses.

Concerning the psychoses, the same mechanisms of attraction, repulsion, conflict, and defense as in the neuroses have been invoked, whereas the results are phenomenologically and psychopathologically distinct from, if not opposed to, one another. One is content with the same effects of meaning. This is where the mistake is. Thus the need to pause over the existence of the structure of the signifier as such – in a word, such as it exists in psychosis.

I'll pick things up again from the beginning and I'll keep myself to the bare minimum – since we have distinguished between the signifier and the signified, we must allow for the possibility that psychosis not only depends on what appears at the level of meanings, of their proliferation, of their labyrinth, in which the subject is supposedly lost or, even, arrested at a fixation, but also that essentially it stems from something that is situated at the level of the subject's relations with the signifier.

The signifier is to be thought of initially as distinct from meaning. It's characterized by not in itself possessing a literal meaning [*signification propre*]. Try to imagine, then, what the appearance of a pure signifier might be like.

[2] The French translation of "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex" is *"Le déclin du complexe d'Oedipe."*

Of course, we can't imagine this, by definition. And yet, since we ask ourselves questions about origins, we must try to get closer to what this might represent.

Our experience makes us constantly feel that these basic signifiers without which the order of human meanings would be unable to establish itself exist. Isn't this what all mythologies explain to us, also? *Magical thought* is how modern scientific drivel puts this whenever it is confronted with something that goes beyond the little shrunken brains of those to whom it seems that the necessary condition for penetrating the cultural domain is that nothing should capture them in any desire that might humanize them. *Magical thought* – does this term strike you as sufficient for explaining why people who, in every likelihood, have had the same relationships to birth as we have should have interpreted day, night, earth, and sky as entities that combine and copulate in a family studded with murders, with incest, with extraordinary eclipses, with disappearances, metamorphoses, mutilations, with one or other of the terms? Do you believe that these people really take these things literally? This really is putting them at the mental level of the evolutionist of our day, who thinks he has explained it all.

I think that as far as the inadequacy of thought is concerned, we've got no reason to be envious of the ancients.

226 Isn't it on the contrary clear that these mythologies are aimed at installing man, at placing him upright, in the world – and that they tell him what the primordial signifiers are, how to conceive their relationships and their genealogy? There is no need here to inquire into Greek or Egyptian mythology, since M. Griaule came and explained African mythology to you.[3] This was about a placenta that had been cut into four, and one of the pieces, ripped out before the others, introduced into the four primitive elements the initial dissymmetry and the dialectic by which are explained not only the division of the fields but also the manner in which clothing is worn, what it is that clothing, weaving, such and such an art, etc., signify. This is the genealogy of signifiers insofar as it's essential if a human being is to find his bearings in them. They aren't just signposts, or external, stereotyped moulds, layered over forms of behavior, nor are they just *patterns*.[4] It makes possible for him free circulation in a world that henceforth has order in it. Modern man is perhaps less well off.

It's through these myths that the primitive finds his bearings in the order of meaningfulnesses. He possesses keys for all sorts of extraordinary situations. Should he be in breach of everything, signifiers still support him, which for example will tell him exactly the form of punishment entailed by the

[3] See above, chap. 11, p. 151 & n.8.
[4] In English in the original.

outburst that produced the disturbances. The rule imposes its fundamental rhythm upon him. As for us, we're reduced to very fearfully remaining conformist, we are afraid that we'll go a little bit mad as soon as we don't say exactly the same thing as everybody else. This is the situation of modern man.

Let's flesh out the signifier's presence in the real, insofar as this is possible. The emergence of a new signifier, with all the consequences, down to one's most personal conduct and thoughts, that this may entail, the appearance of a register such as that of a new religion, for example, isn't something that is easily manipulated – experience proves it. Meanings shift, common sentiments and socially conditioned relations change, but there are also all sorts of so-called revelatory phenomena that can appear in a sufficiently disturbing mode for the terms we use in the psychoses not to be entirely inappropriate for them. The appearance of a new structure in the relations between basic signifiers and the creation of a new term in the order of the signifier are devastating in character.

This is no concern of ours. We don't need to take any interest in the appearance of a signifier, since it's a phenomenon that we never encounter professionally. On the other hand, we do deal with subjects in whom we 227
apparently bring to light something, an irreducible kernel, that occurs at the level of the Oedipal relation. The further question I invite you to ask yourselves is this – can't one conceive of considering the consequences of the essential lack of a signifier in these immediately accessible subjects called psychotics?

Here again, I'm saying nothing new. I'm simply clearly articulating what is implied in our discourse when we speak of the Oedipus complex. A neurosis without Oedipus doesn't exist. This question has been raised, but there's no truth in it.[5] We readily acknowledge that in psychosis something hasn't functioned, is essentially incomplete, in the Oedipus complex. A certain analyst has had a paranoid-like case to study *in vivo,* homologous in certain respects to the case of President Schreber. He says a number of things that in the end come very close to what I've been telling you, except that obviously he gets confused because he's unable to formulate things as I'm suggesting they should be in saying that psychosis consists of a hole, a lack, at the level of the signifier.

This may strike you as vague, but it's adequate, even if we can't say straightaway what this signifier is. We shall nevertheless figure it out by approximation, beginning from the meanings connoted as we approach it. May one speak of approaching a hole? Why not? There is nothing more dangerous than approaching a void.

[5] See Charles Odier, *"Une névrose sans complexe d'Oedipe."*

3

There is another form of defense that a forbidden tendency or meaning will provoke. It's the defense that consists in not approaching the place where there is no answer to the question.

One is more at ease this way and, after all, this is the characteristic of normal people. *Don't ask us questions,* we've been taught, and this is why we're here. But as psychoanalysts it's nevertheless our business to try to enlighten these poor unfortunates who have asked themselves questions. We're certain that neurotics have asked themselves a question. Psychotics, it's not so sure. The answer has perhaps come to them before the question – this is a hypothesis. Or else, the question has asked itself of its own accord – this isn't inconceivable.

There is no question for a subject without another to whom he has addressed it. Someone was saying to me recently, in analysis – *In the final analysis, I have got nothing to ask of anyone.* It was a sad avowal. I pointed out to him
228 that if in any case he had anything to ask he would necessarily have to ask it of someone. This is the other side of the same question. If we implant this relation firmly in our heads, it won't appear extravagant if I say that it's also possible that the question asks itself first, that it's not the subject who has asked it. As I've shown you in my case presentations, what happens at the beginning of a psychosis is of this order.

Recall this little subject who, to us, appeared evidently very lucid. Given the way he had grown up and prospered in existence, in the midst of the anarchy, which was merely a bit more patent than in other cases, of his family situation, he had attached himself to a friend who had become his point of implantation in existence, and all of a sudden something happened, he wasn't able to explain what. It became very clear to us that this was bound up with the appearance of his partner's daughter, and we can add that he experienced this fact as incestuous, hence defense.

We haven't been very stringent about the rigor of our remarks ever since we learned from Freud that the principle of contradiction doesn't work in the unconscious – a suggestive and interesting formulation but, if one doesn't go any further than this, a bit brief – when something fails to work in one sense it's explained by its contrary. And this is why analysis explains things so admirably. This simple little chap had understood a lot less than we had. He was knocking against something, and he didn't have any keys, he spent three months in bed in order to find his bearings again. He was in a state of perplexity.

A minimum of the sensitivity that our trade gives us clearly demonstrates something that can always be seen in what is known as prepsychosis, namely the feeling that the subject has come to the edge of a hole. This is to be taken

literally. It's not a matter of understanding what is going on when we aren't present. It isn't a matter of phenomenology. It's a matter of understanding, not imagining, what happens for a subject when the question comes to him from where there is no signifier, when it's a hole, a lack, that makes itself felt as such.

I repeat, it's not a matter of phenomenology. It's not a matter of playing the madman – one does this enough ordinarily, in one's internal dialogue. It's a matter of determining what the consequences are of a situation that is determined thus.

Not every stool has four legs. There are some that stand upright on three. Here, though, there is no question of their lacking any, otherwise things go very badly indeed. Well then, let me tell you that the significant points of purchase that uphold the little world of the solitary little men in the modern 229
crowd are very few in number. It's possible that at the outset the stool doesn't have enough legs, but that up to a certain point it will nevertheless stand up, when the subject, at a certain crossroads of his biographical history, is confronted by this lack that has always existed. To designate it we've made do until now with the term *Verwerfung*.

This may lead to more than one conflict, but it isn't essentially a matter of conflicting constellations which in neurosis are explained by a significant decompensation. In psychosis it's the signifier that is in question, and as the signifier is never solitary, as it invariably forms something coherent – this is the very meaningfulness of the signifier – the lack of one signifier necessarily brings the subject to the point of calling the set of signifiers into question.

Here you have the fundamental key to the problems of the beginning of psychosis, the sequence of its stages, and its meaning.

In fact, the terms in which these questions are usually framed imply what I'm telling you. A Katan, for example, states that hallucination is a mode of defense like any other.[6] He's aware, however, that there are phenomena here which though very closely related are different – the certainty of meaning without content, which may simply be called interpretation, is, effectively, different from hallucination properly so-called. He explains the two by mechanisms designed to protect the subject according to another mode than the one in operation in the neuroses. In the neuroses it's meaning that temporarily disappears, is eclipsed, and goes and lodges itself somewhere else, whereas reality itself remains. Such defenses are inadequate in the case of psychosis, where what is to protect the subject appears in reality. The subject places outside what may stir up inside him the instinctual drive that he has to confront.

It's obvious that the term *reality* as it's used here is totally inadequate. Why

[6] See "Schreber's Hallucinations about the 'Little Men.' "

not have the courage to say that the mechanism being appealed to is the *id* – since it's considered to have the power to modify and disturb what one may call the truth of the thing?

According to this explanation it's a matter of the subject's protecting himself against homosexual temptations. Nobody has ever gone on to say – Schreber less so than anyone else – that all of a sudden he could no longer see people, that the very face of his male counterparts was, by the hand of eternal God, covered with a cloak. He could always see them perfectly well. One simply believes that he couldn't see them for what they really were for him, namely attractive love objects. At issue is, therefore, not what one vaguely calls reality, as if this were the same thing as the reality of a wall we might bump into, but a meaningful reality, which doesn't present us simply with footholds and obstacles, but a truth that verifies itself and installs itself by itself as orienting this world and introducing beings, to call them by their name, into it.

Why not admit, then, that the *id* is capable of conjuring away the truth of the thing?

But we can also raise the question from the opposite direction, namely, *What happens when the truth of the thing is lacking, when there is nothing left to represent it in its truth, when for example the register of the father defaults?*

The father is not simply the generator. He's also the one who has rightful possession of the mother – and in peace, in principle. His function is central to the realization of the Oedipus complex and conditions the son's accession – which is also a function, correlative to the first – to the model of virility. What happens if a certain lack occurs in the formative function of the father?

The father may well have had a certain mode of relation such that the son does indeed adopt a feminine position, but it's not through fear of castration. We are all familiar with cases of these delinquent or psychotic sons who proliferate in the shadow of a paternal personality of exceptional character, one of these social monsters referred to as venerable. They are often characters strongly marked by a style of radiance and success, but in a unilateral manner, in the register of unbridled ambition or authoritarianism, sometimes of talent, of genius. They don't necessarily have to be a genius, have merit, or be mediocre or nasty, it's sufficient that this be unilateral and monstrous. It's certainly not by chance that a psychopathic personality subversion, in particular, is produced in such a situation.

Let's suppose that this situation entails for the subject the impossibility of assuming the realization of the signifier *father* at the symbolic level. What's he left with? He's left with the image the paternal function is reduced to. It's an image which isn't inscribed in any triangular dialectic, but whose function as model, as specular alienation, nevertheless gives the subject a fastening point and enables him to apprehend himself on the imaginary plane.

If the captivating image is without limits, if the character in question manifests himself simply in the order of strength and not in that of the pact, then a relation of rivalry, aggressiveness, fear, etc. appear. Insofar as the relationship remains on the imaginary, dual, and unlimited plane, it doesn't possess the meaning of reciprocal exclusion that is included in specular confrontation, but possesses instead the other function, that of imaginary capture. The image, on its own, initially adopts the sexualized function, without any need of an intermediary, an identification with the mother, or with anything else. The subject then adopts this intimidated position that we can observe in the fish or lizard. The imaginary relation alone is installed on a plane that has nothing typical about it and is dehumanizing because it doesn't leave any place for the relation of reciprocal exclusion that enables the ego's image to be founded on the orbit given by the model of the more complete other.

The alienation here is radical, it isn't bound to a nihilating signified, as in a certain type of rivalrous relation with the father, but to a nihilation of the signifier. The subject will have to bear the weight of this real, primitive dispossession of the signifier and adopt compensation for it, at length, over the course of his life, through a series of purely conformist identifications with characters who will give him the feeling for what one has to do to be a man.

The situation may be sustained for a long time this way, psychotics can live compensated lives with apparently ordinary behavior considered to be normally virile, and then all of a sudden, mysteriously, God only knows why, become decompensated. What is it that suddenly renders insufficient the imaginary crutches which have enabled the subject to compensate for the absence of the signifier? How does the signifier as such again lay down its requirements? How does what is missing intervene and question?

Before trying to resolve these problems, I would like you to notice how the appearance of the question raised by a lack of a signifier manifests itself. It manifests itself through fringe phenomena in which the set of signifiers is brought into play. A great disturbance of the internal discourse, in the phenomenological sense of the term, comes about and the masked Other that is always in us appears lit up all of a sudden, revealing itself in its own function, for this function is the only one that henceforth maintains the subject at the level of discourse which threatens to fail him entirely and disappear. Such is the sense of the twilight of reality that characterizes the beginning of psychoses.

We shall try to advance a bit further next time.

18 April 1956.

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XVI

Secretaries to the insane

A READING
SOUL MURDER
THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SIGNIFIER
THE LITTLE MEN
THE THREE FUNCTIONS OF THE FATHER

That Schreber was *exceptionally gifted,* as he himself puts it, at observing phenomena of which he is the center and at searching for their truth, makes his testimony incomparably valuable.

Reading from the Memoirs

1

Let's pause for a moment. I began with this reading in order to give you an indication of what I intend doing today, namely, take you through a number of passages that I have chosen as the best I could from the four or five hundred-odd pages of Schreber's book.

We are apparently willingly going to become secretaries to the insane. This expression is generally used to reproach alienists for their impotence. Well then, not only shall we be his secretaries, but we shall take what he recounts literally – which till now has always been considered as the thing to avoid doing.

Wasn't it because they didn't go far enough in listening to the insane that the great observers who drew up the first classifications impoverished the material they were given – to such an extent that it appeared problematic and fragmentary to them?

234 On Friday I presented a case of chronic hallucinatory psychosis. Weren't you struck, those of you who were there, by how much more alive what one obtains is if, instead of trying at all cost to establish whether the hallucination is verbal or sensory or nonsensory, one simply listens to the subject? That patient the other day brought forth, invented, as though by a sort of imaginative reproduction, questions that one really felt had been previously implied by her own situation, without having been, strictly speaking, formulated by her. Of course, one can't stop there if one wants to understand it entirely,

for one has to know why things happen this way. But one has to begin by looking at things in a balanced way, and this is located at the level of the signifier-signified phenomenon.

This dimension is far from having been exhausted by psychology, or metapsychology, or traditional classical parapsychology, which make use of academic categories – hallucination, interpretation, sensation, perception. One does indeed feel that the problem doesn't arise at this level and that this is even a very bad beginning, one that leaves no hope of ever correctly raising the question of what delusion is, or of the level at which the displacement of the subject in relation to the sense phenomena occurs.

It can't be too often suggested to psychologists and doctors that they make use of what is nevertheless accessible to the experience of the common man. I propose an exercise for you. Reflect a bit on what reading is.

What is it that you call reading? What is the optimum moment for reading? When are you quite certain that you are reading? You will tell me that there is no room for doubt, and that one has a feeling of reading. There are many things that count against this. In dreams, for example, we are quite capable of having the feeling of reading something, whereas, obviously, we can't claim that there is any correspondence with a signifier. Consuming certain toxic substances may lead us to the same feeling. Doesn't this suggest the idea that we can't trust the apprehension of the thing by our feelings, and that the objectivity of the relation between the signifier and the signified has to be introduced? This is where the problem and its complications really begin.

There is for example the case of someone pretending to read. Long ago, when I was traveling in countries that had just gained their independence, I saw a gentleman, the attendant to a lord of the Atlas,[1] take a small document that was intended for him, and I noticed immediately that he didn't understand one word of it, for he was holding it upside down. But, with great seriousness, he uttered something – a story about not losing face before the 235
respectful circle. Was he reading or wasn't he? Undeniably he was reading the essential part, namely, that my credentials were sound.

The other extreme is when you already know what is in the text by heart. This happens more often than one thinks. Those texts of Freud's that are in common use in your psychological and medical training you can be said to know by heart already. You only read what you already know by heart. This is what makes it possible for what forms the basis of so-called scientific literature to be singularly relativized, at least in our domain. One often gets the impression that what orientates, fundamentally, the point of a discourse is perhaps nothing other than to stay exactly within the limits of what has already been said. It seems that the ultimate point of the discourse is to give a sign

[1] A mountain chain situated in northern Africa.

to its readers and to prove that the signatory is, if I can put it like this, a nonnobody, that he is capable of writing what everybody else writes.

Here one observes a flagrant lack of correspondence between the intellectual capacities of authors, which clearly range over very great limits indeed, and the remarkable uniformity of what they contribute to the discourse. The most ordinary scientific life presents us with this patent lack of correspondence. Why, then, stigmatize in advance, as null and void, what issues from a subject who is presumed to be in the order of the meaningless, but whose testimony is more unusual or, even, entirely original? However disturbed his relations with the external world may be, perhaps his testimony still remains valuable.

As a matter of fact, we notice, and not simply concerning a case as remarkable as President Schreber but concerning any one of these subjects, that if we know how to listen the delusion of the chronic hallucinatory psychoses reveals that the subject has a very specific relationship with respect to the entire system of language in its various orders. Only the patient is able to bear witness to this, and he bears witness most energetically.

We have no reason not to take down word for word what he says, under the pretext of something or other that is supposed to be ineffable, incommunicable, affective – you know, everything that is constructed around supposedly primitive phenomena. The subject effectively bears witness to a certain turning [*virage*] in the relationship to language, which may be called erotization or pacification. His way of falling under the phenomenon of discourse as a whole undoubtedly reveals to us, as soon as we give up looking for the lowest common denominator in mental life, a dimension that is constitutive of this phenomenon. This dimension is the distance between psychical lived experience and the half-external situation in which, in relation to all language
236 phenomena, not only the insane but all human subjects find themselves.

Methodologically we are therefore correct in accepting the testimony of the insane about their position with respect to language, and we should take it into account in the overall analysis of the subject's relationships to language. This is the major and enduring interest of the legacy that Schreber has left us in his *Memoirs*, an effectively memorable thing and one worthy of our meditation.

2

Schreber himself points out that something in him was at a certain moment profoundly disturbed. A fissure appeared in the order of his relations with the other, which he mysteriously calls *soul murder*.

This remains obscure, but our experience of analytic categories enables us to find our bearings here. It's a matter of something essentially related to the

origins of the ego, to what for the subject is the ellipsis of his being, to this image in which he is reflected under the name of ego.

This problematic is inserted between the image of the ego and the image that is raised, elevated, in relation to the first, that of the big Other, the paternal imago, insofar as it founds the double perspective within the subject of the ego and the ego ideal – leaving the superego to one side on this occasion. We get the impression that it's insofar as he hasn't acquired or has lost this Other that he encounters the purely imaginary other, the fallen and meager other with whom he is not able to have any relations except relations of frustration – this other negates him, literally kills him. This other is that which is most radical in imaginary alienation.

Now, this capture by the double is correlative of the appearance of what can be called the permanent discourse that underlies the inscription of what takes place over the course of the subject's history and doubles all his acts. It isn't impossible, moreover, to see this discourse emerge in a normal subject.

I'll give you an example that almost lends itself to an extrapolation from lived experience, that of the solitary character on a desert island. Robinson Crusoe is effectively one of the themes of modern thought, appearing for the first time, to my knowledge, in Baltasar Gracián.[2] This is a psychological problem which is accessible, if not to the imagination, at least to experience – what happens when the human subject lives all alone? What becomes of 237
the latent discourse? At the end of two or three years of solitude what becomes of the order of vocalization, *I'm going to sell some wood?*

You may also wonder what becomes of vocalization for a person who gets lost in the mountains – and it's undoubtedly not without reason that the phenomenon is clearer in the mountains, since these places are perhaps less humanized. That which takes place, namely the perceptible mobilization of the external world concerning a meaning liable to emerge from any quarter, may give us an idea of this aspect, constantly liable to crop up, of a half-insane discourse. The continuous existence of this discourse may be considered analogous to what is going on in the insane – the verbalization phenomena in Schreber only accentuate it, on the whole. The question now is this – why does the phenomenon appear in the delusional subject? in the margin of what does it appear? in order to signify what? what is it mobilized by?

I shall take another passage, equally chosen at random, because all this is so insistent in Schreber that confirmation of the phenomena I'm indicating can be found everywhere.

[2] See *El Criticón.*

Reading from the Memoirs, *308–10*

Following this you'll find some thoughts on the slowing down of the tempo. This is where we have to push our analysis further.

It's essential to the phenomena of meaning that the signifier be indivisible. One can't section a piece of signifier like one can section the tape of a tape-recorder. If you cut the tape of a tape-recorder the sentence breaks off, but the effect of the sentence doesn't come to a halt at the same point. The signifier contains all kinds of implications, and it's not because you are listeners or decipherers by profession that in certain cases you are able to complete the sentence. The unit of meaning is constantly showing the signifier functioning according to certain laws. The fact that within a delusion voices play upon this property can't be taken to be a matter of indifference, and we can't exclude the hypothesis that it is fundamentally motivated by a precisely more radical, more global, relationship to the phenomenon of the signifier.

On this basis we shall ask ourselves why it's effectively in the relationship to the signifier that the subject invests all his capacities for interest. To explore the problem at this level is not at all to alter the function of energetics. It is in no way to reject the notion of libido. It's only to ask what, in psychosis, the elective interest in the relationship to the signifier means.

238 Here is a brief note concerning the relationship between divine intelligence and human intelligence.

Reading from the Memoirs, *300–01*

However much it appears to have been worked over, the equivalence between nerves and presenced remarks is founded on the subject's primitive experience. The nerves are this verbiage and these refrains, this verbalized insistence that has become his universe. At the same time, on the other hand, the incidental presences in his surroundings are afflicted with unreality and become *fleeting-improvised-men*. The presences that count have become essentially verbal, and the sum of these verbal presences is for him identical with the divine presence, this sole and unique presence that is his correlative and his guarantor.

The notion that the divine intelligence is the sum of human intelligences is stated in formulas that are sufficiently rigorous and elegant for us to gain the impression that we have before us a small fragment of a philosophical system. If I had asked you who this was by, perhaps you may not have been far short of replying – *Spinoza*.

The question is what this testimony by the subject is worth. Well then, he is giving us his experience, which imposes itself as the very structure of reality for him.

The fifth chapter particularly concerns the so-called fundamental language which, as I've already taught you, is, on the subject's own testimony, made up of a species of particularly vigorous High German, crammed with archaic expressions drawn from the underlying etymologies of this language.

Reading of the Memoirs, *46–47*

We are getting closer. One gets the sense that the subject has certainly meditated longer on the nature of the emergence of speech than perhaps we ourselves have done so far. He is well aware that speech is located at another level than that at which the organs capable of materializing it are put into use. You will notice that he introduces the dream as something that belongs essentially to the world of language. It isn't beside the point to observe the surprising illogicality that this represents on the part of an insane person who isn't supposed to be aware of the highly significant character that since Freud we give to dreams. It's certain that Schreber had no inkling of this.

3

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The note on pages 49–50 is phenomenologically very rich concerning the ambient meanings in the context of a German bourgeoisie of quite a lengthy tradition, for we can map out the history of the Schrebers as far back as the eighteenth century.[3] They have been part of the intellectual life of their country in a fairly brilliant way – I shall return to the personality of Schreber's father later. The themes that emerge in a second early stage of his delusion are obviously tied to this complex of cultural encirclement which sadly blossomed into the renowned party that was to throw all Europe into war. The encirclement by the Slavs, by the Jews, all this is already there in this worthy fellow who doesn't at all seem to have participated in any passionate political tendency, except, at the time of his studies, in these student societies he speaks of.

We shall come back to the existence of the souls who are the support of the sentences that constantly include the subject in their turmoil. They waste away with time, down to these famous *little men* that have greatly attracted the attention of analysts. Katan, in particular, devotes an article to these little men who have been the occasion for all sorts of more or less ingenious interpretations, such as assimilating them to spermatozoa that the subject, having rejected masturbation at a certain point, refuses to lose.[4] There is no need to reject such an interpretation but, even if we allow it, it doesn't exhaust the problem.

[3] This appears to refer to the body of the text rather than to the footnote.
[4] See Katan, "Schreber's Hallucinations about the 'Little Men.' "

The important thing is that it involves regressive characters who have returned to their original procreative cell. Katan seems to have forgotten some very early works by Silberer, who was the first to speak of dreams in which there occur certain images of spermatozoa or of the primitive female cell of the ovum.[5] At that time, which may be regarded as archaic, Silberer had nevertheless observed perfectly well that it is above all a question of grasping what the function played by these images was, whether they were fantasized or oneiric. It's moreover curious to see someone, in 1908, take into consideration the notion of what these images signify. According to him, their appearance has a meaning of mortality. It's a question of a return to origins. It's equivalent to a manifestation of the death instinct. We can see this clearly in the present case since the little men occur in the context of the twilight of the world, a properly constitutive phase of the delusion's development.

240 Be that as it may, on this occasion we're unable to avoid wondering whether a certain incompleteness in the realization of the paternal function isn't involved in Schreber's case. Every author has in fact attempted to explain the onset of Schreber's delusion with reference to the father. Not that Schreber was in conflict with his father at the time – he had disappeared a long time previously. Not that he was at a time of setback in acceding to paternal functions, since on the contrary he was entering a brilliant stage of his career and had been placed in a position of authority that seems to have solicited him to truly adopt a paternal position, to have offered him a support for idealizing and referring himself to this position. President Schreber's delusion would therefore depend more on the giddiness of success than on a sense of failure. This is what the understanding generated by authors of the mechanism determining the psychosis revolves around, at least on the psychical level.

For my part, I would make three responses on the subject of the function of the father.

Normally, the conquest of the Oedipal realization, the integration and introjection of the Oedipal image, is carried out – Freud says this unambiguously – by way of an aggressive relationship. In other words, it's by way of an imaginary conflict that symbolic integration takes place.

There is another way, different in nature. Ethnological experience shows us the importance, however residual it may be, of the phenomenon of *couvade* – imaginary realization here takes place by the symbolic putting into play of conduct. Isn't it something of this order that we have been able to locate in neurosis? The hysterical pregnancy that Eisler describes, which occurred fol-

[5] See Herbert Silberer, "Zur Frage der Spermatozoenträume," "Spermatozoenträume," and "Zum Thema: Spermatozoenträume."

lowing a traumatic breakdown of his equilibrium, isn't imaginary but symbolic.[6]

Isn't there a third way, which is in some sense embodied in delusions? These little men are forms of reabsorption, but they're also the representation of what will take place in the future. The world will be repeopled by Schreber men, men of a Schreberian spirit, small, fantasmatic beings – procreation after the deluge. Such is the prospect.

In sum, in the normal form the emphasis is placed upon the symbolic realization of the father by way of imaginary conflict – in the neurotic or paraneurotic form, upon the imaginary realization of the father by way of a symbolic exercise of conduct. And here, what do we see if not the real function of generation?

There's something here that nobody's interested in, neither neurotics nor primitives. I'm not saying that the latter don't know the real function played by the father in generation, simply that they're not interested in it. What they're interested in is the begetting of the soul, the begetting of the mind by 241
the father, the father as either symbolic or imaginary. But, curiously, in delusion it's in fact the father's real function in generation that we see emerge in an imaginary form, at least if we accept the identification analysts make between the little men and spermatozoa. There's a movement of retreat here between the three functions that define the problematic of the paternal function.

We are now engaged in reading this text and in the task of actualizing it to the utmost in the dialectical register of signifier and signified.

To each and everyone of you here I shall say this – if you investigate, as is certainly legitimate, the question of being, don't be too arrogant about it. In the articulated phenomenal dialectic I've put to you, speech is indeed the central reference point.

25 April 1956

[6] See above, chap. 12, p. 168, n. 2.

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XVII

Metaphor and metonymy (I): "His sheaf was neither miserly nor spiteful"[1]

THE TRUTH OF THE FATHER
THE INVASION BY THE SIGNIFIER
SYNTAX AND METAPHOR
WERNICKE'S APHASIA

Sie leben also den Wahn wie sich selbst. Das ist das Geheimnis. This sentence is taken from the correspondence with Fliess,[2] where the beginnings of the themes that will appear successively in Freud's work can be found with singular prominence.

Would we have Freud's style if we didn't have these letters? Yes, we still would, but they teach us that this style, which is nothing other than the expression of what orientates and animates his research, never deviated. Even in 1939, when he wrote *Moses and Monotheism*, one feels that his passionate questioning hasn't waned and that it's still with the same almost desperate tenacity that he strives to explain how it is that man, in the very position of his being, should be so dependent upon these things for which he is obviously not cut out. This is said and named – it's a question of the truth.

I reread *Moses and Monotheism* with the intention of preparing for the paper I have been asked to give in two weeks time on the person of Freud.[3] It seems to me that in this work we find confirmation yet again of what I'm here trying to make you feel, namely that analysis is absolutely inseparable from a fundamental question about the way truth enters into the life of man. The dimension of truth is mysterious, inexplicable, nothing decisively enables the necessity of it to be grasped, since man accommodates himself to non-truth perfectly well. I shall try to show you that this is indeed the question that is troubling Freud to the end in *Moses and Monotheism*.

In this little book one senses a gesture of renunciation and a hidden face.
244 Having accepted death, he continues. The renewed questioning over the person of Moses, over his hypothetical fear, has no other motive than to answer this question – by what path does the dimension of truth enter in a living

[1] *"Sa gerbe n'était point avare, ni haineuse,"* Victor Hugo, *Booz endormi*.
[2] "Thus they love *their delusion as they love themselves*. That is the secret." "Draft H," Freud-Fliess, 111; Origins, 113. See above, chap. 11, p. 157.
[3] See below, chap. 19.

way into life, into the economy of man? Freud's answer is that it's mediated by the ultimate meaning of the idea of the father.

The father belongs to a reality that is sacred in itself, more spiritual than any other, since ultimately nothing in lived reality strictly speaking points to his function, his presence, his dominance. How does the truth of the father, how does this truth that Freud himself calls spiritual,[4] come to be placed in the foreground? The thing is thinkable only by means of this ahistorical drama, inscribed in the very flesh of men at the origin of all history – the death, the murder of the father. A myth, obviously, a very mysterious myth, one impossible to avoid in the coherence of Freud's thought. There is something veiled here.

All the work we did last year meets at this point – one can't deny the inevitability of Freud's intuition. Ethnographic criticisms are beside the point. It's a question of an essential dramatization through which an internal movement going beyond the human being enters into life – the symbol of the father.

The nature of the symbol remains to be clarified. We have come close to its essence by locating its genesis at the same point as that of the death instinct. We are expressing one and the same thing. We are moving towards a point of convergence – what does the signifier essentially signify in its signifying role? What is the original and initiatory function, in human life, of the existence of the symbol qua pure signifier?

This question takes us back to our study of the psychoses.

1

The sentence I have written on the blackboard is typical of Freud's style and I give it to you so that we may continue to hear its resonances.

In this letter Freud speaks of the different types of defence. The word has been so overused in our usage that we cannot help but wonder – who is defending himself? What is being defended? What is one defending oneself against? In psychoanalysis defence is directed against a mirage, a nothingness, a void, and not against anything that exists and carries weight in life. This latter enigma is veiled by the phenomenon itself even as we apprehend it. This letter shows us for the first time, in an especially clear way, the 245
various mechanisms of the neuroses and the psychoses.

Nevertheless, when he comes to psychosis it's as if Freud has been struck by a more profound enigma. He says – *As for those suffering from paranoia, delusions, psychosis, they love their delusion as they love themselves.*

[4] See "The Advance in Intellectuality," section C, pt. 2, essay 3, *Moses and Monotheism*, SE 23:111–15. Freud's *"geistigkeit,"* "intellectuality" in SE, is translated by Lacan as *"spiritualité."*

There is an echo here, which should be given full weight, of what is said in the commandment, *Love thy neighbor as thyself.*

A sense of mystery is never absent from Freud's thought. It's its beginning, middle, and end. I believe that if we allow it to vanish, we lose what's essential to the very procedure upon which every analysis has to be founded. If we lose the mystery for one single moment we get lost in a new type of mirage.

Freud had the profound impression that something in the psychotic's relationship to his delusion goes beyond the workings of the signified and meanings, the workings of what we would later call *id* drives. There is an affection here, an attachment, an essential bringing to presence, the mystery of which remains almost total for us, which is that the delusional, the psychotic, clings to his delusion as to something which is himself.

With this resonance in our ears we shall once again raise the question raised last time concerning the economic function that the relationship to language assumes in the form and development of psychosis.

Let us start by taking as our data the sentences that Schreber tells us he hears coming from those intermediate beings, diverse in their nature – the forecourts of Heaven, the deceased souls or the blessed souls, these shadows, these ambiguous forms of beings dispossessed of existence and carriers of voices.

The full part of the sentence, which contains the kernel-words, as the linguists say, which give the sentence its sense, is not experienced as hallucinatory. On the contrary, the voice stops, forcing the subject to utter the meaning in question in the sentence.

Now it's time . . . that he was subdued![5] Here it's the implied expression that carries the significant weight. Our subject signifies to us that he is not hallucinating. He is placed in the overhang [*porte à faux*], in what remains empty after the grammatical or syntactic part of the sentence, consisting of auxiliaries, connectives, conjunctions, or adverbs, which is suddenly verbalized, as coming from without, as a sentence by the other. It's a sentence by this subject, who is both empty and full, whom I have named the inter-I of delusion.

246 *Now that is going too far according to the conception of the souls.* The entire function of this conception of the souls resides in what, according to Schreber, is put into words by somewhat higher agencies than the subjects that convey the refrains, learned by rote, made up of words he considers empty. It alludes to functional notions that decompose his various thoughts. A psychology does indeed have a place within his delusion, a dogmatic psychology

[5] I.e., "He must be done now." Mem, 311 n.114; see also Mem, 217–18.

that is expounded to him by the voices that interpellate him, by explaining to him how his thoughts are formed.

In particular, that which is implied has assumed a hallucinatory form and is not expressed out loud in the hallucination. This is the *principal thought*. The subject's delusional lived experience presents its own essence in the phenomenon. It indicates that the hallucinatory phenomenon lived through, whether elementary or not, lacks the principal thought. *We rays lack thought*, that is, that which signifies something.

With respect to what we might call the chain of the delusion, the subject seems to be both agent and patient. He undergoes rather than organizes the delusion. To be sure, as a finished product this delusion can up to a point be described as reasoning madness, in the sense that in certain respects its articulation is logical, though from a secondary point of view. That madness should achieve a synthesis of this nature is no less a problem than its very existence. It takes place over the course of a genesis that starts from elements perhaps immanent to [*gros de*] this construction, but which in their original form present themselves as closed or even enigmatic.

First there were several months of prepsychotic incubation in which the subject was in a state of profound confusion. This is the period in which the phenomena of the twilight of the world occur, which are characteristic of the beginning of a delusional period. Towards the middle of March 1894 he was admitted to Flechsig's clinic. In mid-November '93 the hallucinatory phenomena began, the spoken communications which he attributes to different grades in this fantasmatic world, consisting of two levels of divine reality, the anterior and posterior realms of God, and of all sorts of entities that are in a more or less advanced stage of reabsorption into this divine reality.

These entities, the souls, move in an opposite direction to what he calls the *world order*, a fundamental notion in the structuring of his delusion. Instead of moving towards the reintegration of the absolute Other, they move on the contrary in the direction of attaching themselves onto him, Schreber, in forms that vary over the delusion's course of development. At the outset we see the phenomenon of introjection expressed openly, in his lived experience, when he says that Flechsig's soul enters him here and that it resembles the threads of a spider's web, that it's big enough to be unassimilable by him, and that it 247
comes out again through his mouth.[6] Here we have a sort of lived schema of introjection, which will become attenuated later on, be polished into a much more spiritualized form.

In fact Schreber will become increasingly integrated into this ambiguous speech with which he becomes as one, and to which, with all his being, he

[6] Mem, 82–83.

gives a response. He literally loves it like himself. This phenomenon can hardly be described as an internal dialogue since it's precisely around the existence of the other that the meaning of the preeminence of the signifying game revolves, increasingly emptied of meaning.

What is the meaning of this invasion by the signifier that tends to drain itself of signified as it occupies more and more place in the libidinal relation and invests all the moments, all the desires, of the subject?

I paused at a series of those repetitive texts, which it would be tedious to unfold for you here. Something struck me – even when the sentences may have a meaning, one never encounters anything that resembles a metaphor.

But what is a metaphor?

2

I am introducing you here to an order of inquiry never pointed out.

Metaphor is not the easiest thing in the world to speak about. Bossuet says it's an abridged simile [*comparaison*]. Everyone is aware that this is not entirely satisfactory, and I believe that in fact no poet would accept it. I say *no poet* because a definition of poetical style could be to say that it begins with metaphor, and that where metaphor ceases poetry ceases also.

His sheaf was neither miserly nor spiteful – Victor Hugo. That's a metaphor. It's certainly not a latent simile, it's not – *just as* the sheaf was willingly dispersed among the needy, *so* our character was neither miserly nor spiteful. There's not a comparison but an identification. The dimension of metaphor must be less difficult for us to enter than for anyone else, provided that we recognize that what we usually call it is identification. But that's not all – our
248 use of the term *symbolic* in fact leads us to restrict its sense, to designate only the metaphorical dimension of the symbol.

Metaphor presupposes that a meaning is the dominant datum and that it deflects, commands, the use of the signifier to such an extent that the entire species of preestablished, I should say lexical, connections comes undone. Nothing in any dictionary usage can suggest for one instant that a sheaf is capable of being miserly, and even less of being spiteful. And yet it's clear that the use of a language is only susceptible to meaning once it's possible to say, *His sheaf was neither miserly nor spiteful,* that is to say, once the meaning has ripped the signifier from its lexical connections.

Here we have the ambiguity of the signifier and the signified. Without the signifying structure, that is, without predicative articulation, without the distance maintained between the subject and its attributes, the sheaf cannot be qualified as miserly or spiteful. It's because there is a syntax, a primordial order of the signifier, that the subject is maintained as separate, as different from its qualities. It's completely out of the question that an animal could

create a metaphor, even though we have no reason to think that it doesn't also have an intuition of what is generous and what can easily and abundantly grant it what it desires. But insofar as it doesn't possess the articulation, the discursive – which is not just meaning, with all that this entails about attraction and repulsion, but an alignment of signifiers – metaphor is unthinkable within the animal psychology of attraction, appetite, and desire.

This phase of symbolism that is expressed in metaphor presupposes similarity, which is exhibited uniquely by position. It's by virtue of being the subject of *miserly* and *spiteful* that the sheaf can be identified with Booz in his lack of avarice and in his generosity. It's by virtue of the similarity of position that the sheaf is literally identical to the subject Booz. This dimension of similarity is, surely, the most striking thing about the significant use of language, which so dominates the apprehension of the workings of symbolism as to mask from us the existence of the other dimension, the syntactic. However, this sentence would lose all sense if we disturbed the word order.

This is what gets neglected when symbolism is discussed – the dimension linked to the signifier's existence, its organization.

3

What, on this basis, cannot fail to occur to one, and which occurred to a linguist friend of mine, Roman Jakobson, is that the distribution of certain 249
disorders known as aphasias can be reconsidered in the light of the opposition between on the one hand the relations of similarity, or substitution, or choice, and also of selection or concurrence, in short, all that is of the order of synonymy, and on the other hand the relations of contiguity, alignment, signifying articulation, syntactic coordination.[7] From this perspective the classical opposition between sensory and motor aphasia, which has been criticized for a long time, becomes strikingly coordinated.

You are all familiar with Wernicke's aphasia. The aphasic links together a sequence of sentences of an extraordinarily developed grammatical nature. He will say – *Yes, I understand. Yesterday, when I was up there, already he said, and I wanted, I said to him, that's not it, the date, not exactly, not that one . . .*

The subject thereby demonstrates complete mastery of everything articulated, organized, subordinated, and structured in the sentence, but what he says is always wide of what he wants to say. Not for an instant can you be in any doubt that what he wants to say is present, but he never manages to give verbal incarnation to what he is aiming at in the sentence. He constructs

[7] See Roman Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances."

around it an entire fringe of syntactic verbalization, the complexity and level of organization of which are far from indicating a loss of attention to language. But if you ask him for a definition, an equivalent term, even without wanting to go so far as a metaphor, if you confront him with the use of language that logic calls metalanguage, or language about language, he can't follow you.

There's no question of making the slightest comparison between a disorder of this type and what happens to our psychotics. But when Schreber hears *Factum est,* which then stops, a phenomenon certainly manifests itself here at the level of the relations of contiguity. The relations of contiguity dominate, following the absence or failure of the function of meaningful equivalence by means of similarity.

We, too, have to take account of this striking analogy by introducing an opposition under the two rubrics of similarity and contiguity into what happens in hallucinatory delusional subjects. One could not make the dominance of contiguity in hallucinatory phenomena more evident than by pointing out the effect of interrupted speech – and of interrupted speech precisely as it's given, that is, as invested and, let's say, libidinized. What imposes itself on the subject is the grammatical part of the sentence, the one that exists only by virtue of its signifying character and by being articulated. This is what becomes a phenomenon imposed within the external world.

The aphasic I was speaking of is incapable of coming to the point. Hence
250 an apparently empty discourse, which, curiously, even in the most experienced subjects, in neurologists, always sets off nervous laughter. Here you have this character who employs enormous, extraordinarily articulate bla-bla-bla, but who can never get to the heart of what he has to communicate. The imbalance in the phenomenon of contiguity that comes to the fore in the hallucinatory phenomenon, and around which the whole delusion is organized, is not unlike this.

Typically, it's always the signified that we draw attention to in our analyses, because it's undoubtedly what is the most seductive, and it's what at first sight appears to be the true dimension of symbolic investigation by psychoanalysis. But in misrecognizing the primordial mediating role of the signifier, in misrecognizing that it's the signifier that in reality is the guiding thread, not only do we throw the original understanding of neurotic phenomena, the interpretation of dreams itself, out of balance, but we make ourselves absolutely incapable of understanding what is happening in the psychoses.

While a later part of analytic investigation, one concerning identification and symbolism, is on the side of metaphor, let's not neglect the other side, that of articulation and contiguity, with what is here sketched out that is initial and structuring in the notion of causality. The rhetorical form that is the opposite of metaphor has a name – it's called metonymy. It involves

substitution for something that has to be named – we are in fact at the level of the name. One thing is named by another that is its container, or its part, or that is connected to it.

If, using the technique of verbal association as it's practiced at the level of the laboratory, you give a subject a word like *hut,* he has more than one way to respond. Certain responses will be in the register of contiguity. *Hut – Burn it.* Also, the subject may say *hovel* or *cabin* to you – there we already have the synonymous equivalent, a little bit further on we move into metaphor, in saying – *burrow,* for example. But there is also another register. If for example the subject says *thatch,* no longer is it quite the same thing. It's a part of the hut that enables it to be designated as a whole – it's possible at a pinch to talk of a village composed of three thatches, to mean three little houses. Here it's a question of evoking. The subject may also say *dirtiness* or *poverty.* We no longer have metaphor, we have metonymy.

The opposition between metaphor and metonymy is fundamental, since what Freud originally drew attention to in the mechanisms of neurosis, as 251
well as in the mechanisms of the marginal phenomena of normal life or of dreams, is neither the metaphorical dimension nor identification. It's the contrary. In general what Freud calls condensation is what in rhetoric one calls metaphor, what he calls displacement is metonymy. The structuration, the lexical existence of the entire signifying apparatus, is determinant for the phenomena present in neurosis, since the signifier is the instrument by which the missing signified expresses itself. It's for this reason that in focusing attention back onto the signifier we are doing nothing other than returning to the starting point of the Freudian discovery.

Next week we shall return to this question by studying why in psychosis these workings of the signifier end up totally preoccupying the subject. The issue in this case is not the mechanism of aphasia — it's a certain relationship to the other as lacking, deficient. It's by proceeding from the subject's relation to the signifier and to the other, with the different levels of otherness, imaginary other and symbolic Other, that we can articulate this psychical intrusion, this invasion by the signifier, called psychosis.

2 May 1956

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XVIII

Metaphor and metonymy (II): Signifying articulation and transference of the signified

SENSORY APHASIA AND MOTOR APHASIA

THE POSITIONAL LINK

ALL LANGUAGE IS METALANGUAGE

DETAIL AND DESIRE

In introducing the opposition between similarity and contiguity here, I'm not saying that I consider that psychosis is in any way comparable to aphasia.

I would say more than this. What I retain from the two levels of disorder that have been distinguished in aphasia is that there is the same opposition between them as the one that appears, no longer in a negative but in a positive way, in metaphor and metonymy.

I was told that this opposition had thrown some of you into great perplexity, and that you have been telling yourselves – *Metaphor has indeed shown us the importance of opposition, disagreement, and confusion.*

The opposition between signifier and signified isn't a simple substitute for the famous and no less inextricable opposition between idea, or thought, and word. Someone, an outstanding grammarian, has written a remarkable work in which there is only one fault, its unfortunate subtitle, *Words for thought.*[1] This way of putting it is, I hope, no longer sustainable for any of you.

1

We clearly show the constant life of metaphor in these transferences of signified, an example of which I gave you last time with *His sheaf was neither miserly nor spiteful.*

Here you have an example of metaphor. One may say, in a sense, that meaning dominates everything, that it's all of a sudden the meaning that imprints on the subject, *his sheaf,* this value that shows it generously dispers-
254 ing itself, as if of its own accord. However, the signifier and the signified are always in a relationship that may be described as dialectical.

This isn't a rehash of the relation upon which the notion of expression

[1] *"Des mots à la pensée":* the subtitle of Damourette and Pichon, *Essai de grammaire.*

rests, where the thing, that which one refers to, is expressed by a word regarded as a label. My discourse is intended precisely to destroy this idea.

You must have heard aphasics spoken about, and you are aware of their extraordinarily lively and rapid, apparently fluid speech, at least up to a point. They express themselves admirably on a theme without being able to utter the word, while using an entire, extremely subtle syntactic articulation to get at something whose name or precise indicator they have on the tip of their tongue, but they are only capable of going round it in circles.

What is enthralling here is the persistence of the subject's intentionality despite this localized verbal impotence.

People have claimed to have brought out a kind of intellectual deficit of a predemential order as its correlative. This is a step forward which nuances the initial massive notion according to which it's a question of an incapacity to passively grasp verbal images, a step that indicates that the disorder is much more complex than appears at first sight. But whatever deficits the subject may display if we set him a specific task, according to the modes that characterize the position of the tests, nothing will be solved as long as we are ignorant of their mechanism and their origin.

One can see the subject protest against a reading of an observation that conveys a given precise historical detail, concerning a date, an hour, a form of behavior. This is when the subject trots out his discourse, however disturbed and jargonaphasic its character. Should he make a mistake, it's still in relation to a definite historical detail he possessed just five minutes earlier that he begins to enter the dialogue. Here one can grasp the presence and intensity of the intentionality at the heart of the deployment of discourse, which never manages to catch up with it again.

From the phenomenological viewpoint the sensory aphasic's language is a language of paraphrases. His jargonaphasia – the word is a bit too strong – is characterized by an abundance and ease of articulation and expression of sentences, however segmented they may ultimately become.

Paraphrase is the direct opposite of metaphrase, if by this is meant everything of the order of literal translation. This means that if you ask him to translate, to give a synonym, to repeat the same sentence, the same one he has just uttered, he can't do it. He is able to hook onto your discourse or 255
onto his own, but he has the greatest difficulty in commenting on a discourse. You will get from him replies that are so lively, so pathetic in his desire to make himself heard, as to border on the comical. You have to be interested in the phenomenon itself if you are not to laugh.

Therefore, there is a similarity disorder here, which is that the subject is incapable of metaphrase, and what he has to say lies entirely within the domain of paraphrase.

Alongside sensory aphasia there is what is broadly called motor aphasia. It

ranges from disorders of agrammatism, well-known by now, to an extreme reduction of his stock of words – its immortal image is the famous *pencil* that he is unable to get out. This other dimension of aphasic deficit can be very well ranged within the order of contiguity disorders.

Here it's essentially the articulation, the syntax of language, which, progressively along the scale of cases and in the evolution of certain subjects, deteriorates to the point of making them incapable of articulating in a compound sentence what they are nevertheless able to name correctly. They retain the nominative capacity, but lose the propositional capacity. They are unable to construct propositions.

Owing to the properties of the signifier and the signified, the constant temptation to which linguists themselves, and *a fortiori* those who aren't linguists, succumb is to consider that it's what is the most obvious in the phenomenon that says it all.

Up to a point linguists have fallen victim to this illusion. The emphasis they place, for example, on metaphor, which has always been studied much more than metonymy, is proof of this. In full and living language it's what is the most gripping, but also the most problematical – how does it happen that language is at its most effective when it manages to say something by saying something else? It's enthralling indeed, and it's even thought that this is the way to the crux of the phenomenon of language, in opposition to a naive notion.

The naive notion has it that there is a superimposition, like a tracing, of the order of things onto the order of words. It's thought that a great step forward has been made by saying that the signified only ever reaches its goal via another signified, through referring to another meaning. This is only the first step, and one fails to see that a second is needed. It has to be realized that without structuring by the signifier no transference of sense would be possible.

A number of you rightly saw last time that this is what I meant in emphasizing the role of the signifier in metaphor.

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2

The deficit, if we approach things from this angle, has two sides.

The first is the dissolution of the link between intentional meaning and the apparatus of signifiers. The latter is on the whole retained by the subject, who nevertheless fails to master it in relation to his intention. The second is the dissolution of the link internal to the signifier. Here the fact is emphasized that there is a sort of regressive decomposition, which is sufficiently well explained by the Jacksonian theory according to which functions decompose in the inverse order of their acquisition, not in development – language

isn't reducible to the ideally primary language of the infant – but through a veritable *turning*.[2]

For my part, is that what I wanted to emphasize?

I say – *No, it's not.* According to a type of general law of illusion concerning what goes on in language, it isn't what appears in the foreground that is important. What's important is the opposition between two sorts of links that are themselves internal to the signifier.

First, the positional link, which is the foundation of the link that I earlier called propositional. This is what in a given language sets up that essential dimension which is the order of words. To understand this it suffices to recall that in French *Pierre bat Paul* isn't equivalent to *Paul bat Pierre.*

Concerning the second form of aphasic disorders, notice the strict coherence there is between maintaining the positional function of language and maintaining an adequate stock of terms. This is an absolutely incontestable clinical phenomenon and shows us the fundamental binding of the signifier.

What appears at the grammatical level as characteristic of the positional link reappears at all levels and sets up the synchronic coexistence of terms.

The verbal locution is its highest form. At a lower level there is the word, which has the air of a stability that, as you know, has been rightly challenged. While the independence of the word manifests itself from certain angles, it can't be regarded as radical. The word can in no way be regarded as a unit of language, even though it constitutes a privileged elementary form. At an even lower level you find the phonematic oppositions or couplings which characterize the ultimate radical element that distinguishes one language from another.

In French for example *boue* and *pou* are opposed to one another, whatever your accent. Even if, because you live near a border, you tend to pronounce 257
boue like *pou*, you will pronounce the other *pou* differently, because French is a language in which this opposition is valid. In other languages there are oppositions totally unknown in French. This binding of opposites is essential to the functioning of language. It must be distinguished from the link of similarity, implicated in the functioning of language, which is tied to the indefinite possibility of the function of substitution, which is conceivable only on the basis of the positional relation.

The mainspring of the metaphor isn't the meaning, which is supposed to be transposed from Booz onto the sheaf. I readily admit that someone might object to me that Booz's sheaf is metonymic, not metaphorical, and that underlying this magnificent poetry, and never named directly, there is Booz's royal penis. But that isn't what gives this sheaf its metaphorical quality, it's that the metaphor is placed in the position of subject, in Booz's place. It's a phenomenon of signifiers that is involved.

[2] In English in the original.

Let's move to the limit of poetic metaphor, which you wouldn't hesitate to describe as surrealist, even though we didn't have to wait for the surrealists to make metaphors. You are unable to say whether it makes sense or not. I won't say that this is the best way of putting things, but, in any case, it's near enough.

Take an expression that we can agree is indeed a metaphor. You will see whether it's the sense that sustains it.

Love is a pebble laughing in the sun .

What does this mean? It's indisputably a metaphor. It's likely enough that if it was born, it's because it contains a sense. As for finding one . . . I could do a whole seminar on it. This seems to me to be an indisputable definition of love, and I shall say that it's the last I paused at, because to me it appears indispensable if one wants to avoid falling endlessly into irremediable confusions.

In short, a metaphor is above all sustained by a positional articulation. This can be demonstrated even in its most paradoxical forms.

None of you has, I believe, failed to hear of the exercise that a poet of our day has carried out under the rubric of *Un mot pour un autre* [one word for another]. It's a little comedy in one act by Jean Tardieu. It concerns a dialogue between two women. One is announced, the other goes up to her and says:

My dear, my dearest, how many pebbles is it since I have had the apprentice to sugar you?

258 *Alas, my dear,* answers the other, *I myself have been extremely unvitreous, my three littlest oil-cakes,* etc.

This is confirmation that, even if it's in a paradoxical form, not only is the sense maintained, but that it tends to manifest itself in a particularly fortunate and metaphorical manner. It may be said that the sense is in some way renewed. Whatever effort the poet may have made to push it in the direction of a demonstration, one is at every instant a hair's breadth from a poetic metaphor. It belongs to a register that is no different from what arises as natural poetry as soon as a powerful meaning is involved.

The important thing isn't that the similarity should be sustained by the signified – we make this mistake all the time – it's that the transference of the signified is possible only by virtue of the structure of language. All language implies a metalanguage, it's already a metalanguage of its own register. It's because potentially all language is to be translated that it implies metaphrase and metalanguage, language speaking of language. The transference of the signified, so essential to human life, is possible only by virtue of the structure of the signifier.

Do get it into your heads that language is a system of positional coherence,

and secondly that this system reproduces itself within itself with an extraordinary, and frightful, fecundity.

It's not for nothing that the word *prolixity* is the same word as *proliferation*. *Prolixity* is the frightening word. All use of language incurs fright, which stops people and finds expression in the fear of intellectuality. *He intellectualizes too much,* people say. This serves as an alibi for the fear of language. In fact, you can observe that there is verbalism wherever one makes the error of granting too much weight to the signified, whereas it's by heading further in the direction of the independence of the signifier and the signified that all operations of logical construction adopt their full effect.

At least for the phenomena that interest us, one always falls into verbalism by further adhering to what I call the mythology of significance [*mythologie significative*]. Mathematics on the other hand uses a language of pure signifier, a metalanguage *par excellence*. It reduces language to its systematic function upon which another system is built, grasping the former in its articulation. The efficacity of this way of doing things isn't in doubt in its own register.

3

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When one reads the rhetoricians, one realizes that they never get to an entirely satisfactory definition of metaphor, or of metonymy.

This results in, for example, the formula that metonymy is an impoverished metaphor. One might say that the thing is to be taken in exactly the opposite sense – metonymy exists from the beginning and makes metaphor possible. But metaphor belongs to a different level than metonymy.

Let's study the most primitive phenomena, and let's take an example that for us analysts is particularly alive. What is more primitive as the direct expression of a meaning – that is of a desire – than what Freud relates about his youngest little daughter, the one who has since occupied such an interesting place in analysis, Anna?

Anna Freud asleep – things are, you see, in their pure state – she talks in her sleep – *Big strawberries, raspberries, cakes, porridge.*[3]

There's something here that looks like the signified in its pure state. And it's the most schematic, the most fundamental form of metonymy. There's no doubt that she desires these strawberries, these raspberries. But it isn't self-evident that these objects should all be there together. The fact that they are there, juxtaposed, coordinated in this articulated naming is due to the positional function that places them in a situation of equivalence. This is the essential phenomenon.

[3] *Interpretation of Dreams,* SE 4:130.

If there is anything that shows indisputably that it's not purely and simply a question here of a phenomenon of expression that a psychology, say Jungian, could get us to see as an imaginary substitute for the object appealed to, it's precisely the fact that the sentence begins with what? With the name of the person, *Anna Freud*. She's an infant of nineteen months, and we are at the level of naming, of equivalence, of nominal coordination, of signifying articulation as such. It's only within this framework that the transference of meaning is possible.

This is the heart of Freud's thought. His work begins with the dream, its mechanisms of condensation and displacement, of figuration – these are all of the order of metonymic articulation, and it's on this foundation that metaphor is able to intervene.

It's even more apparent at the level of the erotization of language. If there is an order of acquisition, it's certainly not what makes it possible to say that
260 children begin with such and such an element of the verbal stock rather than by some other. There is the greatest diversity. One doesn't take hold of language by one end, like certain painters who start their paintings at the left-hand corner. For language to be born, it must always already be grasped as a whole. On the other hand, for it to be able to be grasped as a whole, it has to be grasped at the outset by means of the signifier.

People speak of the concrete nature of language in children. This is something that, contrary to appearances, refers to contiguity. Someone recently confided to me what had been said by his child, a boy, who at the age of two and a half had grabbed his mother as she was leaning over him to say goodnight and said to her – *My big girl full of bottom and muscles.*

This language is obviously not the same as that of *His sheaf was neither miserly nor spiteful.* The child doesn't do that yet. Nor does he say that *love is a pebble laughing in the sun.* We are told that children understand surrealist and abstract poetry, which would be a return to childhood. This is stupid – children detest surrealist poetry and find repugnant certain stages of Picasso's painting. Why? Because they're not yet up to metaphor, but only metonymy. And when they do appreciate certain things in Picasso's paintings it's because metonymy is involved.

We can also see metonymy in certain passages in Tolstoy, where whenever a woman approaches you see the shadow of a fly, a spot on the upper lip, etc., emerge in place of her – the metonymic process of a great stylist. In general metonymy animates this style of creation called the realist style, as opposed to the symbolic style and to poetic language. The promotion of detail that characterizes it is no more realist than anything else. Only quite specific paths can make a detail the guide of the desiring function – not just any detail can be promoted as equivalent to the whole.

The proof of this is the trouble we go to to emphasize certain of these

details, through a series of significant transferences, in our experiments with mazes designed to bring out what we call the intelligence of animals. Call it intelligence if you wish – it's merely a question of definition. It's a matter of the extension of the field of the real in which we can include the animal with its current capacities of discrimination, provided that it's instinctually, libidinally, interested.

The supposed realism of describing the real by details is only conceivable in the register of an organized signifier, due to which, by virtue of the fact that the mother is *my big girl full of bottom and muscles,* the child will evolve 261
in a certain way. It's clearly as a function of his early metonymic abilities that at a certain moment the bottom can become an equivalent of the mother for him. Whatever the sense by which we can conceive the sensitization on the vital level, it alters absolutely nothing in the problem.

It's on the basis of the metonymic articulation that this phenomenon is able to take place. The coordination of signifiers has to be possible before transferences of the signified are able to take place. The formal articulation of the signifier predominates with respect to transference of the signified.

How do we now raise the question of the repercussions on the function of language of disturbances in the relationship to the other? Just as metaphor and metonymy are opposed to one another, so the fundamental functions of speech are opposed to one another – foundational speech and passwords.

Why are they both fundamentally necessary? What distinguishes them? This is something that arises in relation to a third term. If it's necessary for man to use speech to make discoveries or to get his bearings, it's as a function of his natural propensity to decompose in the presence of the other.

In what way does he compose and recompose himself? We shall come back to this on another occasion, but in the phenomena that Schreber presents you can already grasp the use we can make of these categories.

I spoke to you last time of the interrupted sentences, but there is also question and reply. This has to be understood as having the value of being opposed to the dimension of foundational speech, where one doesn't ask the other for his opinion. The function of question and reply, insofar as it is given value through initiation into language and is its complement and its root, lays bare the signifying foundation of foundational speech in relation to what is profoundly significant in such speech. The delusional phenomenon lays bare, at all levels moreover, the signifying function as such.

I shall give you another example. You know these famous equivalences that the delusional Schreber gives as having been formulated by the birds from the sky parading in the twilight. One finds assonances here – *Santiago or Carthago, Chinesenthum or Jesum-Christum.*[4] Is the absurdity of this all that

[4] Mem, 210.

is to be retained? What strikes Schreber is the fact that the birds from the sky are brainless. On this Freud is in no doubt – they are young girls.[5]

But what's important isn't the assonance, it's the term-by-term correspondence between closely neighboring elements of discrimination, which only
262 have importance for a polyglot like Schreber within the linguistic system of German.

Schreber, with all his perspicacity, once again shows that what is being sought is of the order of the signifier, that is, of phonematic coordination. The Latin word *Jesum-Christum* here is, as we know, an equivalent of *Chinesenthum* only insofar as in German the ending *tum* has a particular sound quality.

Promoting the signifier as such, the emergence of this always hidden substructure that is metonymy, is the condition of any possible investigation of the functional disorders of language in neurosis and psychosis.

9 May 1956

[5] "Case of Paranoia," SE 12:36.

XIX

An address: Freud in the century

The session is opened by Professor Jean Delay.

For the centenary of Freud's birth, who was born May 16, 1856, commemorative occasions have been organized in Paris.

It's appropriate to recall that it was in Paris, while following Charcot's teaching at la Salpêtrière when he was only twenty-nine years old, that Freud found his calling. And in the article in the edition of his complete works he himself stressed all he owed to the teaching at la Salpêtrière.

This filiation in no way detracts from his obvious, brilliant originality, since it's really to him that we owe the method and doctrine of psychoanalysis. One can, indeed one must, have reservations about certain theoretical and practical aspects of psychoanalysis. But it remains no less true that in highlighting the role of affective conflicts and instinctual disorders in the neuroses he has made a very important contribution to psychiatry. Moreover, by highlighting the role of the unconscious in all manifestations of mental life it can be said that his contribution goes beyond the framework of medical science and is applicable to all human sciences.

This is why I thought it necessary on the occasion of this centenary to ask Jacques Lacan, who is the director here, with Daniel Lagache and Mme Favez-Boutonier, of the Société française de psychanalyse, to address us on Freud and his influence in the century. I believe he is particularly well qualified for this since he has an admirable knowledge of the life and work of Freud.

Here I am, then, today entrusted by Professor Jean Delay with a commis- 264
sion that, through being different from the teaching that under his patronage takes place here on this same day each week, greatly honors me – namely, to speak about Freud to an audience, new to the subject, of students in their

psychiatry course, with the intention of commemorating the centenary of his birth.

I have a twofold aim here, which will perhaps give my talk some sort of double vision, that of instructing through honoring, of honoring through instructing – and I should have to apologize for it were I not hoping to adapt the aim of this talk to making the man's arrival in the world coincide with his arrival at the supreme sense of his work.

This is why my title, *Freud in the century*, is intended to suggest more than a chronological reference.

1

I wish to begin by saying what, while appearing under Freud's name, extends beyond the time of his appearance and conceals its truth even in its very unveiling – that Freud's name signifies *joy*.

Freud himself was conscious of this, as is demonstrated by a good number of things – an analysis of a dream that I could adduce, dominated by a sum of composite words, more especially by a word of ambiguous resonance, both English and German at the same time, and in which he enumerates the charming little spots in the environs of Vienna.[1]

If I pause at this name, it's not that my procedure is panegyrical. I'm anticipating what I shall articulate in my discourse by recalling that his family, like all the families of Moravia, of Galicia, of the outlying provinces of Hungary, owing to an edict of 1785 by Joseph II, had to choose this name from a list of first names – it's a feminine first name, in fairly frequent use at the time. But this name is a much older Jewish name which throughout history one already finds translated differently.

This is well suited to remind us that this recurrence of a purely literal tradition persists through the cultural assimilation of hidden signifiers and takes us very close to the heart of the structure with which Freud answered his questions. To be sure, to grasp this properly we would immediately need to evoke the extent to which he acknowledged belonging to the Jewish tradition and its literal structure which, he says, goes so far as to imprint itself
265 upon the structure of language. Freud could make the striking observation in a message addressed to a confessional community on the occasion of his seventieth birthday that he acknowledges that this was where his most intimate identity lay.[2]

There is, to be sure, a contrast between this acknowledgment and his early rejection – offensive, almost insulting, for those close to him whom he had

[1] SE 4:298.

[2] "Address to the Society of B'nai B'rith" was read on Freud's behalf at a meeting of the Society on May 6, 1926 in honor of his seventieth birthday; see SE 20:271–4.

the most reason to spare – of the religious faith of his fathers. Perhaps this is the angle from which we might be best introduced to what would help us understand how questions were raised for Freud.

However, this isn't how I shall be going about it. For, in point of fact, it's not always the simplest approaches that seem the clearest. In a word, they aren't the ones we are the best prepared for. And it's certainly not for nothing that we often have to take a more complex route to make truths heard.

Nor is it in Freud's biography that we shall find the source of the subversion brought about by his discovery.

It does not seem that a touch of neurosis, which can certainly help us understand Freud, has ever guided anyone before him down the same path. Nothing is less perverse, it seems to me, than the life of Freud. If this were where one had to seek the price of his daring, neither his poverty as a student nor his years of struggle as the father of a large family seems sufficient to me to explain something that I would call an abnegation of love relations, which one really has to point out when it concerns the person who renewed the theory of Eros.

Recent revelations, the letters to his fiancée, the great attraction of a recent biography,[3] seem to me to be complemented by a certain something which I shall call a touching egocentrism that consisted of demanding from the other an unreserved compliance with the ideals of his beautiful soul and of being torn apart at the thought of the favors shown to another the unforgettable evening that he rēceived from her the first token of her love. All this comes down to what I should call the rawness of a virgin, which we may excuse him for, on discovering its equally indiscreet equal in the same published letters to a fiancée of our own Hugo.

This disclosure, quite opportune in the final analysis, prevents me from dwelling on the dignity of a union where what Freud himself confides indicates mutual respect and attention to parental tasks – in short, the high tradition of Jewish family values. For what one cannot fail to detect in his early letters is some kind of reduction to the smallest common denominator of a petit-bourgeois convention of a love the sentimental extravagance of which doesn't exclude reserve or Freud's long-held rancor towards his fiancée for 266
having caused him, through an ill-timed journey, to miss the glory of having been the inventor of the surgical use of cocaine. This is indication enough of a relationship of psychical forces for which the term of ambivalence, employed without rhyme or reason, would be entirely inappropriate.

In point of fact, we shall not follow the geography of these ravages over time.

One day I heard Freud spoken of in these terms – *without ambition and*

[3] Ernest Jones's biography, *Sigmund Freud: Life and Work* was partially completed at the time Lacan is speaking.

without needs. The thing is comical if one thinks of the number of times throughout his work that Freud confessed his ambition which, while undoubtedly quickened by all sorts of obstacles, is much more extensive in his unconscious, as he was able to show. To make you appreciate this, must I depict for you – as Jung, speaking to me personally, did one day – the scene of Freud's reception at the University he placed on the world's stage? I mean, depict the stream, whose symbolic meaning he was the first to have shown, blossoming out into a growing stain on his pale trousers?

Shall I say it? This isn't the point from which I would like to throw light upon the figure of Freud, for really it seems that nothing can go beyond what he disclosed in his long autobiography that his first works constitute – *Die Traumdeutung, The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* and *Der Witz*.[4] Nobody, in a sense, has ever taken the confession so far, at least within the limits that a man's concern for his authority imposes on him. And this isn't to diminish its importance, far from it. The sigh at which these confidences stop perhaps gives us the feeling of a barrier, but nothing ever since has enabled us to cross it – even the most indiscreet hypothesis makers have never managed to add anything to what he himself disclosed to us.

There is something here worth dwelling on, which is well suited to make us feel the value of a critical method I shall surprise you with by saying that someone's work is to be judged by the standard of its own criteria.

If the discovery of psychoanalysis really is to have reintegrated into science an entire objectifiable field of man and to have shown its supremacy, and if this field is the field of sense, why seek the genesis of this discovery outside the meanings that its inventor encountered within himself along the path leading him to it? Why look elsewhere than in the register to which this discovery must, if one is to be rigorous, be limited? If we must have recourse to some other source foreign to the field discovered by our author, and by nobody else, to explain what it is, the prevalence of this field becomes null and void, through having been made subordinate.

To suppose the supremacy, and not the subordination, of sense as efficient
267 cause is apparently to repudiate the principles of modern science. In fact, for the positive science to which Freud's masters, this Pleiad that Jones quite rightly mentions at the beginning of his study, belonged, the entire dynamics of sense can, question-beggingly, be neglected — it is all fundamentally superstructure.[5] It's therefore a revolution in science that Freud introduces, if this science has the value he claims for it.

Does it have this value? Does it have this meaning?

[4] I.e., *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*.
[5] Jones, *Sigmund Freud* 1:45.

2

I want to pause here to try to restore the point of view, currently effaced, from which Freud's work can be viewed in its proper light.

I shall ask you straightaway to be prepared for a contrast between what Freud's work authentically signifies and what is currently being offered as the sense of psychoanalysis. For many of you, the students, as you draw nearer to things in the mental sphere, psychoanalysis is, it's said, first of all a means to a better understanding of the mentally ill.

I can't recommend too highly that those of you who have the opportunity to become acquainted with the analytic literature – and God knows how enormous, almost diffuse, it has become – combine this reading with an at least equivalent measure of Freud himself. The difference will leap out at you.

The term *frustration,* for example, has become the *leitmotiv* of the prolific mothers of analytic literature in English, with the abandonism and relationship of dependence it comprises. Now, this term is quite simply absent from Freud's work. The simplistic use of notions taken out of context, like that of reality testing, or of bastardized notions like that of the object relation, the recourse to the ineffability of affective contact and of lived experience – all of this is strictly foreign to the inspiration behind Freud's work.

This style has for some time tended to descend to the level of a foolish optimism which stems from an equivocal moralism and is founded on an equally crude schematism, which really is the most superficial image ever given to man to apply to his own development – the famous sequence of so-called pregenital phases of the libido. The reaction has not failed to make itself felt, so much so that we have now got to the pure and simple restoration of an orthopedics of the ego, which only a hundred years ago everyone would have laughed at as being the most simplistic question begging.

This rather improbable slide is due, I believe, to the fact that there is a 268
profound misrecognition in thinking that analysis is meant to be used as a bridge for gaining access to a sort of intuitive penetration and easy communication with the patient. If analysis had only been an improvement in the doctor-patient relation, we would literally have no need of it.

Just recently, reading an old text by Aristotle, the *Nicomachean Ethics,* with the intention of rediscovering the origin of Freudian themes on pleasure in it – it makes salubrious reading – I came across a curious term that means something like *fearful.* And this explained many things to me, in particular why it's sometimes the best minds among young psychiatrists that rush headlong down this mistaken path by which they seem to be captivated. I think as a matter of fact that paradoxically they are the best, dreadfully intelligent young men. They're afraid to be so, they frighten themselves – *Where would we be if we gave way to our fine intelligence?* And so they enter analysis where

they're taught that their intellectualization is a form of resistance. Once they have finished they're delighted, they've encountered at first hand this famous intellectualization, which for so long had been an obstacle for them. At this stage my discourse can no longer address them.

By contrast, what is at issue in Freud's work? What stands out in it? What, in a word, is its style? Freud's own style would alone suffice to characterize its significance. To see this, I ask you to refer to another form of resistance, which hasn't been much better appreciated than the one I alluded to just before.

For a long time it was thought that the main resistance encountered by Freud's work was due to the fact that he was touching on sexual matters. Good God, why would sexual matters have been any less welcome at that time than in our own, where they appear to be the delight of everyone?

Besides, we have had to wait until our own day for some well intentioned scholar to point out the kinship between Freud's work and the *Naturphilosophie* that prevailed in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This time was far from having been as fleeting and contingent as Jones represents it to us from an Anglo-Saxon perspective, nor were we in France, above all at the time Freud began to become known here, lacking certain irrationalist or intuitionist tendencies that were advocating recourse to an affective, or sentimental, effusion to understand man or, even, natural phenomena – I don't need to mention the name of Bergson. Why did honest and
269 cultivated people suddenly see in Freud's work some kind of excessive scientism? Why didn't the scholars themselves, who seemed repelled by the results and the originality of the method whose status they didn't immediately identify, ever think of referring Freud to the vitalist or irrationalist philosophy that was much more alive then?

As a matter of fact, nobody was taken in by it. Psychoanalysis does in fact manifest something of the positive spirit of science *qua* explanatory. Psychoanalysis is as far removed as is possible from any form of intuitionism. It has nothing to do with this hasty, short-circuited understanding that so simplifies and limits its significance. To put it back into its proper perspective, one only has to open Freud's work and see the place that a particular dimension, which has never been really emphasized, has there. The value of this for opposing the current evolution of analysis can now be recognized, named, and orientated towards a real reform of analytic studies.

I shall light my lantern and I'll tell you what this is in a way that attempts to be both rapid and striking.

Open *The Interpretation of Dreams*. You will find nothing there resembling this graphology of children's drawings that has ended up becoming the paradigm of analytic interpretation, none of these ascending and descending manifestations of the waking dream. If there is anything this resembles, it's

deciphering. And the dimension in question is that of the signifier. Take any of Freud's dreams and you will see that a word, such as *Autodidasker*, predominates.[6] This is a neologism. From here we get *Lasker*, plus a number of other memories. The very form of the word is absolutely essential where interpretation is concerned. An initial interpretation, an orientation or a dichotomy, will direct us towards *Lassalle*. Here one discovers Alex, Freud's brother, through the intermediary of another, purely phonetic and verbal transformation. Freud finds in his recollection a novel by Zola in which a character by the name of *Sandoz* appears. In the way Freud reconstructs it, Zola constructed *Sandoz* out of *Aloz*, the ananym of his name, by replacing *Al*, the beginning of *Alexander*, by the third syllable *sand*. Thus, just as it was possible to make *Sandoz* from *Zola*, so *Alex* is included in the *Lasker* that Freud dreamed as the last part of the word *Autodidasker*.

I'm telling you what Freud did. I'm telling you how his method proceeds. And, as a matter of fact, one only has to open any page of the book, *Die Traumdeutung*, to find an equivalent. I could have taken any other dream, the one for example where he speaks of jokes that have been made on his name, or the one that features a swimming bladder.[7] You will always find a sequence of homonyms or metonyms, of onomastic constructions that are absolutely 270
essential to an understanding of the dream and without which it dissipates, vanishes.

M. Emil Ludwig wrote a book against Freud, almost defamatory in its unfairness, in which he evokes the impression of delusional alienation that one is supposed to get from reading him.[8] I should almost say that I prefer such a testimony to the wearing down of the angles, to the softening, reductive smoothing out being brought about by analytic literature claiming to follow Freud. The incomprehension, the refusal, the shock displayed by Emil Ludwig – whether he's being honest or acting in bad faith doesn't matter to us much – is greater testimony than the disintegration of Freud's work that is being achieved in the decadence analysis is sliding into.

How has it been possible to omit the fundamental role of the structure of the signifier? Of course, we understand why. What is expressed within the apparatus and the play of signifiers is something that comes from the bowels of the subject, which can be called his desire. As soon as this desire is caught up in the signifier it's a signified desire. And thus we are all fascinated by the meaning of this desire. And we forget, despite Freud's reminders, the apparatus of the signifier.

Freud emphasizes, however, that the elaboration of the dream is what makes

[6] *The Interpretation of Dreams*, SE 4:298–302.
[7] SE 4:298 & 206.
[8] *Doctor Freud, an Analysis and a Warning*.

the dream the leading model of symptom formation. Now, this elaboration bears a strong resemblance to a logical and grammatical analysis, just slightly more erudite than what we did at school. This register is the normal level of Freudian work. It's the very register that makes linguistics the most advanced of the human sciences, provided one is simply prepared to acknowledge that what is distinctive about positive science, modern science, isn't quantification but mathematization and specifically combinatory, that is to say linguistic, mathematization which includes series and iteration.

This is what stands out in Freud's work. Without it nothing of what he subsequently develops is so much as thinkable.

I'm not alone in saying this. We have recently published the first volume of the journal in which we inaugurate our attempt to renew the Freudian inspiration, and you can read there that at the bottom of the Freudian mechanisms one rediscovers these old figures of rhetoric which over time have come to lose their sense for us but which for centuries elicited a prodigious degree of interest. Rhetoric, or the art of oration, was a science and not just an art. We now wonder, as if at an enigma, why these exercises could have captivated whole groups of men for such a long time. If this is an anomaly
271 it's analogous to the existence of psychoanalysts, and it's perhaps the same anomaly that's involved in man's relationships to language, returning over the course of history, recurrently, with different ramifications and now presenting itself to us from a scientific angle in Freud's discovery. Freud encountered it in his medical practice when he came upon this field in which the mechanisms of language can be seen to dominate and organize the construction of certain so-called neurotic disorders, unbeknown to the subject, outside his conscious ego.

Here's another example Freud gives at the beginning of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life,* and which I've given a commentary on in my seminar.[9] Freud can't recall the name *Signorelli* and a series of other names present themselves to him, *Boticelli, Boltraffio, Trafoi.* How does Freud construct his theory of this memory lapse? During a journey in *Bosnia-Herzegovina* he is talking to someone when he has this kind of name loss. There's also the beginning of a sentence uttered by a peasant – *Herr, what is there left to say now?* It's about the death of a patient, in the face of which a doctor can do nothing. So here we have *Herr,* and death, which is hidden, since Freud, any more than the rest of us, doesn't have any particular reason to linger over the thought of it. What is the other place where Freud has already had occasion to reject the idea of death? It's a place that isn't far from Bosnia, where he received very bad news about one of his patients.

That's the mechanism. Its schema, analogous to that of a symptom, suf-

[9] SE 6:1–7.

fices to demonstrate the essential importance of the signifier. It's insofar as *Signorelli* and the series of names are equivalent words, translations of one another, metaphrases if you like, that the word is linked to repressed death, refused by Freud. He bars them all, even those within the word *Signorelli*, which has only the most distant of links with it – *Signor, Herr*.

What takes its place in response? The other does, he who both is Freud and isn't Freud, the other who is on the same side as the memory lapse, the other from whom Freud's ego has withdrawn and who answers in its place. He doesn't give the reply, since he is forbidden to speak, but he gives the beginning of the telegram, he answers, *Trafoi* and *Boltraffio*, which he makes the intermediary of the metonymy, the intermediary of the slide between *Herzegovina* and *Bosnia*. Freud has exactly the same conception of this mechanism as the one I'm expounding here. Verify it.

Similarly, everything lucid, unique that Freud has contributed on the subject of *Witz* is conceivable only on the basis of the signifying material involved.

That is what, beyond all the determinisms and all the formations, beyond all the presentiments, Freud encountered after turning forty. Of course, he had a father and a mother like everyone else. His father died and everyone knows that that never passes unnoticed, but all the same these facts must not cause us to underestimate the importance of the discovery of the positive order of the signifier for which something in him had undoubtedly prepared him, the long literary, literalist, tradition from which he came.

The discovery he made in dealing with dreams is to be radically distinguished from any intuitive interpretation of dreams, such as it had been possible to practice before him. Moreover, he had a heightened awareness of how crucial to his thought this adventure that *Die Traumdeutung* was, and in writing to Fliess he mentions it with a kind of fervor, he calls it something like *my garden plant*, by which he meant a new species that had emerged from his stomach.

3

Freud's originality, which disconcerts our sentiment but alone enables the effect of his work to be understood, is his recourse to the letter. This is the spice in Freud's discovery and in analytic practice. If some of this hadn't fundamentally remained, there would have been nothing left of psychoanalysis a long time ago. Everything stems from here. Who is this other who speaks in the subject, of whom the subject is neither the master nor the counterpart, who is the other who speaks in him? Everything is here.

It's not enough to say that it's his desire, for his desire is libido, which, let's not forget, above all means whim [*lubie*], unbounded desire, due to the fact that he speaks. If there were no signifiers to support this rupture, these

fragmentations, displacements, transmutations, perversions, this insulation of human desire, the latter would have none of these characteristics that make up the substance of the signifying material provided by analysis.

Nor is it enough to say that this other is in some way our counterpart, on the pretext that he speaks the same language as what we may call common discourse, which is thought to be rational and which, as it happens, sometimes is. For in this discourse of the other what I take to be me is no longer a subject but an object. It's a function of mirage, in which the subject refinds himself only as misrecognition and negation.

It's on this basis that the theory of the ego is best understood.

Freud produced it in a number of stages, and one would be wrong to think that it must date from *Das Es*.[10] Perhaps you've already heard mention of the
273 famous Freudian topography. I fear that you've heard only too much mention of it, since the way it's interpreted goes in a sense contrary to Freud's reason for introducing it. It was in 1914, with his major article "On Narcissism," which is prior to this topography that has now come to the foreground, that Freud constructed a theory of the ego.

The main, unique reference of contemporary analytic theory and practice, namely the famous so-called pregenital stages of the libido which are thought to date from the beginning of Freud's work, date from 1915. "On Narcissism" dates from 1914.

There can be no mistaking Freud's intentions in emphasizing the theory of the ego. It was a question of avoiding two traps. The first is dualism. There is a kind of mania in some analysts which consists in turning the unconscious into another ego, a bad ego, a double, a symmetrical counterpart to the ego – whereas the theory of the ego in Freud is on the contrary designed to show that what we call our ego is a certain image we have of ourselves, which gives us a mirage, of totality no doubt. These leading mirages don't at all orientate the subject in the direction of so-called profound – an adjective I personally don't care for – self-knowledge. The ego's function is explicitly designated in Freud as analogous in every way to what in the theory of writing is called a determinative.

Not all forms of writing are alphabetic. Some are ideophonetic and contain determinatives. In Chinese a thing like this means *something more or less just*, but if you add this, which is a determinative, it becomes *to govern*. And if instead of putting in this determinative you put in a different one it means *illness*. The determinative emphasizes in a particular way, inserts into a class of meanings, something that already has its phonetic individuality as a signifier. Well then, for Freud the ego is precisely a sort of determinative whereby certain of the subject's elements are associated with a special function that

[10] I.e., *The Ego and the Id*.

appears on the horizon of his theory at that moment, namely aggressiveness, considered as characteristic of the imaginary relationship with the other in which the ego constitutes itself through successive and superimposed identifications. Its variable value, its value as a sign, essentially distinguishes it from the entity of the organism as a whole. And, indeed, this is the other trap that Freud was avoiding.

As a matter of fact, even as Freud rallies the personality that speaks in the unconscious around a center, he wanted to avoid the mirage of the famous *total personality* that hasn't failed to regain the upper hand throughout the entire American school which continues to relish the term, promoting the restoration of the primacy of the ego. This is a complete misrecognition of 274
Freud's teaching. The total personality is precisely what Freud intends to characterize as fundamentally foreign to the function of the ego as it has been regarded by psychologists until now.

There is a twofold alienation in the movement of Freudian theory.

There is the other as imaginary. It's here in the imaginary relation with the other that traditional *Selbst-Bewusstsein* or self-consciousness is instituted. There is no way that the unity of the subject can be brought about in this direction. The ego isn't even the place, the indication, the rallying point, the organizing center of the subject. It's profoundly dissymmetrical to it. Although it is in this sense that he is going to begin by getting one to understand the Freudian dialectic – I can in no way expect to attain my accomplishment and my unity from the recognition of an other who is caught up with me in a relation of mirage.

There is also the other who speaks from my place, apparently, this other who is within me. This is an other of a totally different nature from the other, my counterpart.

That's what Freud contributes.

If this still required confirmation, we would only have to observe the way in which the technique of the transference is prepared. Everything is designed to avoid the relation of ego to ego, the imaginary relation that could be established with the analyst. The subject isn't face to face with the analyst. Everything is designed to efface the entire dual, counterpart-to-counterpart relation.

On the other hand, analytic technique derives from the necessity for an ear, an other, a listener. The analysis of a subject can only be brought about with an analyst. This is a reminder to us that the unconscious is essentially speech, speech of the other, and can only be recognized when the other sends it back to you.

Before I finish I would still like to speak about what Freud added towards the end of his life, when he had already left his troop of followers behind him a long time before. I'm unable to doubt for one instant, merely from the evidence of the style and tone of Freud's dialogue with all around him, that

he had a profound notion of their radical inadequacy, of their total incomprehension. There is a period in Freud's work, between 1920 and 1924, when he quite simply broke off. He knew that he didn't have very long to live – he died at 83 years of age, in 1939 – and he went straight to the heart of the problem, namely the compulsion to repeat [*automatisme de répétition*].

This notion of repetition is so perplexing for us that one tries to reduce it
275 to a repetition of needs. If on the contrary we read Freud we see that the compulsion to repeat was based, as it always had been from the beginning of his entire theory of memory, on the question raised for him by the insistence of speech which returns in the subject until it has said its final word, speech that must return, despite the resistance of the ego which is a defense, that is, the adherence to the imaginary misconstrual of identification with the other. Repetition is fundamentally the insistence of speech.

As a matter of fact, the final word of Freudian anthropology concerns what possesses man and makes him, not the support of the irrational – Freudism isn't a form of irrationalism, on the contrary – but the support of a form of reason of which he is more victim than master and by which he is condemned in advance.

This is the final word, the red thread that passes through all of Freud's work. From beginning to end, from the discovery of the Oedipus complex to *Moses and Monotheism*, via the extraordinary paradox from the scientific point of view of *Totem and Taboo*, Freud only ever asked himself, personally, one question – how can this system of signifiers without which no incarnation of either truth or justice is possible, how can this literal logos take hold of an animal who doesn't need it and doesn't care about it – since it doesn't at all concern his needs? This is nevertheless the very thing that causes neurotic suffering.

Man is in fact possessed by the discourse of the law and he punishes himself[11] with it in the name of this symbolic debt which in his neurosis he keeps paying for more and more.

How can this have taken hold, how does man enter into this law which is foreign to him and which as an animal he has nothing to do with? It was to explain this that Freud constructed the myth of the murder of the father. I'm not claiming that this is an explanation, but I'm showing you why Freud fomented this myth. Man must become involved in it as guilty. This remains in Freud's work to the end and confirms what I'm presenting to you here and teach elsewhere.

Henceforth, what is the Freudian discovery's center of gravity. What is its philosophy? Not that Freud was doing philosophy. He always repudiated the claim that he was a philosopher. But to ask oneself a question is already to

[11] *"il se châtie"*: alternatively, he mortifies himself.

be a philosopher, even if one is unaware that this is what one is doing. What, then, does Freud the philosopher teach? To keep the positive truths that Freud has contributed in proportion, to leave them in their place, let's not forget that his inspiration is fundamentally pessimistic. He denies any tendency towards progress. He is fundamentally anti-humanist to the extent that there is in humanism this romanticism which would like to make the mind the flower of life. Freud is to be situated in a realist and tragic tradition, 276
which explains why it is that it's in the light of Freud that we are today able to understand and read Greek tragedy.

But for us, workers, scholars, doctors, technicians, what direction does this return to the truth of Freud indicate?

It is the direction of a positive study whose methods and forms are given to us in this sphere of the so-called human sciences, which concerns the order of language, linguistics. Psychoanalysis should be the science of language inhabited by the subject. From the Freudian point of view man is the subject captured and tortured by language.

Psychoanalysis introduces us to a psychology, to be sure, but which one? Psychology properly so-called is effectively a science of perfectly well-defined objects. But, undoubtedly, by virtue of the significant resonances of the word, we slide into confusing it with something that refers to the soul. One thinks that everyone has *his own* psychology. One would be better off, in this second usage, to give it the name it could be given. Let's make no mistake – psychoanalysis isn't an egology. From the Freudian perspective of man's relationship to language, this *ego* isn't at all unitary, synthetic. It's decomposed, rendered complex in various agencies – the ego, the superego, the id. It would certainly be inappropriate to make each of these terms a little subject in its own right, which is a crude myth that makes no advance, illuminates nothing.

Freud could not have been in any doubt about the dangers confronting his work. When, in 1938, he took up his pen for his final preface to *Moses and Monotheism* he added a very curious note – *I do not share,* he says, *the opinion of my contemporary Bernard Shaw, who claims that man would be capable of achieving something only if he could live to be three hundred years old. I do not believe this prolongation of life would have any advantages unless,* as the translation goes, *the conditions of the future were totally transformed.* There you have the sad nature of these translations. In German, this has quite a different sense – *many other things would have to be profoundly altered, at the base, at the root, in the determinations of life.*[12]

This note by Freud written when he was old, continuing to pursue his meditation before leaving his message to decompose, to me appears to echo

[12] SE 23:54 n.2. This is the first of two prefatory notes Freud added in 1938.

the terms in which the chorus accompanies the final steps of Oedipus towards the little wood of Colonus. Accompanied by the wisdom of the people, he meditates upon the desires that bring man to pursue shadows, he indicates that it's his having strayed that makes him unable even to know where the
277 woods are. I'm astonished that nobody – except for someone who rendered this into Latin reasonably well – has ever managed to translate properly the *mé phunaï* that the chorus then utters.[13] It's reduced to the value of a verse that says it's better *not to have been born*, whereas the sense is absolutely clear – the only way to overcome all this business of logos, the only way to be rid of it all, would be *not to have been born like this*. This is the very sense accompanying the gesture of the old Freud, when he rejected with his hand any wish that his life be prolonged.

It's true that somewhere in his work on the *Witz*, in other words on the quip, he indicates a reply – *Much better not to have been born – unfortunately, this happens barely once in two hundred thousand.*[14]

I give you this reply.

16 May 1956.

[13] *Oedipus at Colonus*, 1388.
[14] SE 8:57.

THE ENVIRONS OF THE HOLE

XX

The appeal, the allusion

THE ONSET OF PSYCHOSIS

SPEAKING OUT

THE MADNESS OF LOVE

THE EVOLUTION OF DELUSION

If we reflect that the means of representation in dreams are principally visual images and not words, we shall see that it is even more appropriate to compare dreams with a system of writing than with a language. In fact the interpretation of dreams is completely analogous to the decipherment of an ancient pictographic script such as Egyptian hieroglyphs. In both cases there are certain elements which are not intended to be interpreted (or read, as the case may be) but are only designed to serve as "determinatives," that is to establish the meaning of some other element. The ambiguity of various elements of dreams finds a parallel in these ancient systems of writing; and so too does the omission of various relations which have in both cases to be supplied from the context. If this conception of the method of representation in dreams has not yet been followed up, this, as will be readily understood, must be ascribed to the fact that psychoanalysts are entirely ignorant of the attitude and knowledge with which a philologist would approach such a problem as that presented by dreams.[1]

This passage is clear enough. The apparent flagrant contradiction that you can draw from it on the basis of Freud's remark that dreams are expressed in images rather than otherwise is restored and resituated as soon as he shows the sort of images in question – namely, images that occur in writing, that is not even for their literal sense since there is a number of them that will not be there to be read, but simply to contribute an exponent without which this would remain enigmatic.

The other day I wrote some Chinese characters on the board. I could just as easily have written some ancient hieroglyphs – the first person pronoun, for example, which is drawn as two little signs that have a phonetic value and may be accompanied by a more or less fleshed-out image which is there to

[1] Sigmund Freud, "The Claims of Psycho-Analysis to Scientific Interest," SE 13:177.

give the other signs their sense. But the other signs are no less autographic than the little fellow[2] and have to be read in a phonetic register.

The comparison with hieroglyphs is rendered all the more valid and certain by the fact that it's dispersed throughout *Die Traumdeutung* and that Freud returns to it constantly.

282 Freud wasn't unaware of what hieroglyphic writing really is. He was in love with everything touching on the culture of ancient Egypt. Very often he would make reference to the style, to the signifying structure, of hieroglyphs and to the sometimes contradictory, superimposed, way of thinking of the beliefs of the ancient Egyptians. And he readily refers to this to give, for example, an image expressive of a certain way in which contradictory concepts coexist in neurotics.

At the end of this passage he evokes the language of symptoms and speaks of the specificity of the signifying structuration in the different forms of neuroses and psychoses. Then suddenly, in a striking summary, he compares the three great neuropsychoses. *For instance,* he says, *what a hysteric expresses by vomiting an obsessional will express by painstaking protective measures against infection, while a paraphrenic will be led to complaints or suspicions that he is being poisoned. These are all of them different representations of the patient's wish to become pregnant which have been repressed into the unconscious, or of his defensive reaction against that wish.*[3]

That was to set us going.

1

Let's return to our subject.

We're not far away from it with the theme of procreation, which lies at the heart of the symptomatology in the Schreber case. But even today we shall not get there immediately.

I would like, from yet another angle, and concerning what you heard on Monday evening from our friend Serge Leclaire, to raise once again the issue of what I call the ultimate signifier in neurosis.

Even though it's essentially a signifier, it of course isn't a signifier without meaning. I stress this fact that it doesn't depend on meaning but is the source of meaning.

The two sides, male and female, of sexuality are not given data, are nothing that could be deduced from experience. How could the individual situate himself within sexuality if he didn't already possess the system of signifiers, insofar as it institutes the space that enables him to see, at a distance, as an

[2] Presumably a reference to one of the characters drawn.
[3] "Claims of Psycho-Analysis to Scientific Interest," SE 13:178.

enigmatic object, the thing that is the most difficult of access, namely his own death? This is no more difficult of access, if you think about it, if you think precisely of the long dialectical process necessary for an individual to accomplish it and of the extent to which our experience consists of too much and too little in one's access to the male and female poles – a reality that may 283
make us wonder whether it's so much as graspable outside the signifiers that isolate it.

The notion we have of reality as that around which the setbacks and obstacles of neurosis revolve must not deflect us from remarking that the reality with which we are concerned is upheld, woven through, constituted, by a tress of signifiers. We have to bring out the point of view, the plane, the particular dimension, of the human being's relationship to the signifier if we are to know even what we are saying when for example we say that in psychosis something becomes lacking in the subject's relation to reality. As a matter of fact it's a question of a reality structured by the presence of a particular signifier that is inherited, traditional, transmitted – but how? Of course, by virtue of the fact that all around the subject people speak.

If we now admit as a fact of common experience that not to have undergone the trial of Oedipus, not to have seen its conflicts and its dead ends open before one, and not to have resolved it, leaves the subject with a certain defect, in a certain state of inability to bring about the correct distance that is called human reality, this is because we hold that reality implies the subject's integration into a particular play of signifiers. Here I'm only formulating what everyone admits, in a kind of implicit way, in analytic experience.

We have indicated in passing that what characterizes the hysterical position is a question that refers precisely to the two signifying poles of male and female. The hysteric addresses it with all his being – how can one be either male or female? – which implies that the hysteric nevertheless has reference to it. The question is this – what is it that the entire structure of the hysteric, with his fundamental identification with the individual of the sex opposite to his own by which his own sex is questioned, is introduced into, suspended from, and preserved in? The hysterical manner of questioning, *either . . . or . . .*, contrasts with the obsessional's response, negation, *neither . . . nor . . .*, neither male nor female. This negation comes about against a background of mortal experience and of hiding his being from the question, which is a way of remaining suspended from it. The obsessional is precisely neither one nor the other – one may also say that he is both at once.

I shall move on, since that was only intended to situate what happens in the psychotic, who contrasts with the position of each of the subjects of the two great neuroses.

In my talk on Freud a fortnight ago I spoke of language insofar as it's inhabited by the subject who to a greater or lesser extent speaks out in lan- 284

guage with all his being, that is, in part unknowingly. How can one fail to see in the phenomenology of psychosis that everything from beginning to end stems from a particular relationship between the subject and this language that has suddenly been thrust into the foreground, that speaks all by itself, out loud, in its noise and furor, as well as in its neutrality? If the neurotic inhabits language, the psychotic is inhabited, possessed, by language.

What comes to the foreground reveals that the subject is subjected to a trial, to the problem of some fault concerning the permanent discourse that supports the everyday, the miscellany, of human experience. Something detaches itself from the permanent monologue and appears as some kind of music for several voices. It's worthwhile dwelling on its structure so as to ask ourselves why it's made in this way.

This is, at the level of the phenomena, something that immediately gives us the impression of being structured. Don't forget that the very notion of structure is borrowed from language. To misrecognize this, to reduce it to a mechanism, is as conclusive as it is ironic. What is it that Clérambault has isolated under the name of the elementary phenomena of psychosis – the repeated, contradicted, commanded thoughts – if it's not this discourse that is augmented, recapitulated in antitheses? But on the pretext that there is an entirely formal structuration here – and Clérambault is absolutely right to insist upon this – the conclusion he draws is that we are dealing with simple mechanical phenomena. This is totally inadequate. It's much more promising to think of it in terms of the internal structure of language.

The merit of Clérambault is to have shown its *ideationally neutral* nature, which in his language means that it's in total discord with the subject's mental state, that no mechanism of the affects adequately explains it, and which in ours means that it's structural. The weakness of the etiological or pathogenic deduction is of little concern to us in comparison with what he stresses, namely that the nucleus of psychosis has to be linked to a relationship between the subject and the signifier in its most formal dimension, in its dimension as a pure signifier, and that everything constructed around this consists only of affective reactions to the primary phenomenon, the relationship to the signifier.

The subject's relation of exteriority to the signifier is so striking that all clinicians have emphasized it in one way or another. The syndrome of influence still leaves some things vague, but the syndrome of action from without, as naive as it appears, does underline the essential dimension of the phenomenon, the psychotic's exteriority in relation to the entire apparatus of language. Hence the question arises whether the psychotic has really entered language.

285 Many clinicians have shown an interest in the psychotic's prior history.

Helene Deutsch has emphasized a certain *as if* that appears to mark the first stages of development in those who at some moment sink into psychosis. They never enter the game of signifiers, except through a kind of external imitation.[4] The non-integration of the subject into the register of the signifier indicates the direction from which the question of the preconditions of psychosis arises – which is undoubtedly soluble only through analytic investigation.

It sometimes happens that we take prepsychotics into analysis, and we know what that produces – it produces psychotics. The question of the contraindications of analysis would not arise if we didn't all recall some particular case in our practice, or in the practice of our colleagues, where a full-blown psychosis – a hallucinatory psychosis, I'm not speaking of a precipitated schizophrenia – is triggered during the first analytic sessions in which things heat up a bit, at which point the poor analyst rapidly becomes the transmitter who makes known to the analysand [*analysé*] what he must do and must not do.

Aren't we here touching on what in our very own experience, without our having to look any further, lies at the heart of the reasons for the onset of psychosis? It's one of the most difficult things that can be proposed to a man, with which his being in the world doesn't confront him all that often – it's what is called speaking out [*prendre la parole*], I mean speaking out one's own speech, which is quite the opposite of saying *yes, yes* to the speech of one's neighbor. This isn't necessarily put into words. The clinic shows that, provided one knows how to discern it at very different levels, it is at precisely this moment that psychosis breaks out.

It's sometimes a question of a tiny spot of speaking out, whereas previously the subject had been living in his cocoon like a moth-worm. This is the form that Clérambault characterized very well under the name of the mental automatism of old maids. I'm thinking of the marvelous richness characteristic of his style – how could Clérambault have failed to dwell on the facts? There was really no reason to pick out these unfortunate beings, forgotten by everybody, whose existence he describes so well and in whom, at the slightest provocation, mental automatism emerges from this discourse that had always remained latent and unexpressed in them.

If we allow that the failing [*défaillance*] of the subject on encountering real speech locates his entry, his sliding, into the critical phenomenon, the inaugural phase, of psychosis, then we can begin to see how this comes to link up with what we have already expounded.

[4] See "Some Forms of Emotional Disturbance and their Relationship to Schizophrenia."

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2

The notion of *Verwerfung* indicates that there must already have been something in the relation to the signifier previously lacking here in the initial introduction to fundamental signifiers.

This is, quite clearly, an absence undiscoverable by experimental research. There is no way of grasping something that lacks at the time it lacks. In the case of President Schreber this would have been the absence of the primordial male signifier to which for years he was able to appear to be equal – he looked as if he, like everyone else, were upholding his role as a man and of being somebody. Virility does signify something for him, since it's equally the object of his very lively protestations at the time the delusion erupts, which initially presents itself in the form of a question over his sex, an interpellation [*appel*] that comes to him from outside, as in the fantasy – *how nice it would be to be a woman undergoing intercourse*. The delusion's development expresses the fact that for him there is no other way of realizing himself, of affirming himself as sexual, than through admitting he is a woman, transformed into a woman. This is the axis of the delusion. For there are two planes to distinguish.

On the one hand, the course of the delusion reveals the need to reconstruct the cosmos, the world's entire organization, around the fact that there is a man who can only be the wife of a universal god. On the other hand, let's not forget that in his common discourse up to the critical period of his existence this man appeared to know just like everyone else that he was a man, and what he somewhere calls his manly honor cries out aloud when he happens suddenly to be aroused a bit too strongly by the enigma of the absolute Other entering into play, which emerges with the first signs of the delusion.

In short, we are led here to the distinction that is the thread running through everything we have until now deduced from the very structuration of the analytic situation – namely, what I have called the little other and the absolute Other.

The former, the other with a small o, is the imaginary other, the otherness in a mirror image, which makes us dependent upon the form of our counterpart. The latter, the absolute Other, is the one we address ourselves to beyond this counterpart, the one we are forced to admit beyond the relation of mirage, the one who accepts or is refused opposite us,[5] the one who will on occasion deceive us, the one of whom we will never know whether he is deceiving us,
287 the one to whom we always address ourselves. His existence is such that the fact of addressing ourselves to him, of sharing something like language with

[5] . . . *celui qui accepte ou qui se refuse en face de nous* . . .

him, is more important than anything that may be placed at stake between him and us.

Misrecognizing the distinction between these two others in analysis, where it's present throughout, lies at the origin of all the false problems, and in particular of the one that appears now that the primacy of the object relation is being emphasized.

Indeed, there is an obvious discrepancy between the Freudian position according to which the newborn, on entering the world, is in a so-called autoerotic relation, that is, a relation in which the object doesn't exist, and the clinical observation that from the beginning of life we undoubtedly have every indication that all sorts of objects exist for the newborn. The solution to this difficulty can only be found by distinguishing between the imaginary other insofar as he is structurally the originary form of the field in which a multiplicity of objects is structured for the human newborn, and the absolute Other, the Other with a big O, which is surely what Freud was driving at – and which analysts have subsequently neglected – when speaking of the non-existence, originally, of any Other.

There is a good reason for this, which is that this Other lies entirely within itself, Freud says, but at the same time entirely outside itself.

The ecstatic relation to the Other is an issue that didn't arise yesterday, but because it has been left in the background for several centuries it's worth our while, for we analysts who are constantly dealing with it, to reexamine it.

In the Middle Ages a distinction was drawn between what was called the physical theory and the ecstatic theory of love. This is the way the question of the subject's relation to the absolute Other was raised. Let's say that in order to understand the psychoses we have to make the love relation with the Other qua radically Other, and the mirror situation, everything of the order of the imaginary, *animus* and *anima*, which is located according to the sexes at one or other of the places, overlap in our little schema.

Where does the difference between someone who is psychotic and someone who isn't come from? It comes from the fact that for the psychotic a love relation that abolishes him as subject is possible insofar as it allows a radical heterogeneity of the Other. But this love is also a dead love.

It may seem to you that it's a curious and unusual detour to resort to a medieval theory of love in order to introduce the question of psychosis. It is, however, impossible to conceive the nature of madness otherwise.

Think about, sociologically, the forms of enamoration, of falling in love, 288
attested in culture.

Psychologists only ever put the question of *patterns* on the agenda. In certain cultures things have become so worn out that it's extremely awkward to

know how to give form to love – the crisis begins the moment one takes the classic orchid, worn as a corsage, to the first rendezvous. Let's take as a reference point the technique, for it was a technique, or the art, of love – say, the practices of the love relation that prevailed for a time down in our Provence or in our Languedoc. There is an entire tradition there that was followed by the Arcadian novel along the lines of *L'Astrée*,[6] as well as by romantic love, in which one can observe a degradation in love patterns, which became increasingly uncertain.

Undoubtedly, over the course of this historical evolution passionate love becomes, to the extent that it's practiced in the style called platonic or passionate idealism, an increasingly ridiculous thing, or what is commonly called, quite rightly, a form of madness. The tone has been lowered, the thing has fallen into derision. We undoubtedly play upon this alienated and alienating process, but in an increasingly external manner upheld by an increasingly diffuse mirage. The thing, if it no longer takes place with a beautiful woman or with a lady, is accomplished in a darkened cinema with an image on the screen.

It's something of this order that I want to bring into prominence. This dimension tends in the direction of the madness of pure mirage insofar as the original style of the love relation has been lost. It strikes us as comical, this total sacrifice of one being for another, systematically pursued by people who had the time to do nothing but this. It was a spiritual technique that had its own modes and registers that we can barely grasp, given the distance that separates us from these things. We analysts would find plenty to interest us in this mixture of sensuality and chastity that was technically sustained, so it would appear, over the course of a singular concubinage with no physical relationship, or at the very least with deferred relations.

The characteristic of alienating degradation, of madness, that connotes the remnants of this practice which have been lost at the sociological plane provides us with an analogy with what takes place in the psychotic and gives meaning to the sentence from Freud I quoted to you the other day, namely that the psychotic loves his delusion like himself.[7]

The psychotic can only apprehend the Other in the relation with the sig-
289 nifier, he lingers over a mere shell, an envelope, a shadow, the form of speech. The psychotic's Eros is located where speech is absent. It is there that he finds his supreme love.

Many things become clear if we take them in this register – for example, the curious onset of Schreber's psychosis with the curious expression *soul murder* he employs, a most unusual echo, you'll agree, of the language of love

[6] Seventeenth-century novel by Honoré d'Urfé.
[7] See above, chap. 17, p. 214.

in the technical sense I have just been highlighting for you, love at the time of the *Carte de Tendre*.[8] This sacrificial and mysterious symbolic soul murder is formed at the onset of psychosis according to the precious language.

What can we discern concerning the onset of psychosis – at the least, that an imaginary abundance of modes of beings that are as many relations to the little other, an abundance supported by a certain mode of language and speech, is produced proportionate to a certain interpellation to which the subject is unable to respond?

3

From the outset I've emphasized the intrusion of what Schreber calls the fundamental language, which is affirmed as a sort of particularly full signifier.

This ancient German, he says, is full of resonances by virtue of its nobility and simplicity. There are passages where things go much further than this – Schreber attributes the misunderstanding with God to the fact that the latter does not know how to draw the distinction between what expresses the real feelings of the little souls, and thus of the subject, and the discourse in which he commonly expresses himself over the course of his relations with others. A distinction is thus literally traced out between the unconscious discourse that the subject expresses with all his being and common discourse.

Freud says it somewhere – there is more psychological truth in Schreber's delusion than in the psychologists.[9] This is Freud's wager. Schreber is more true than anything psychologists may say about him, he knows a lot more about human mechanisms and feelings than psychologists do. If God doesn't stop at man's daily needs, if he understands nothing of man, it's because he understands him only too well. The proof of this is that he also introduces into the fundamental language what happens while man sleeps, that is, his dreams. Schreber emphasizes this as if he had read Freud.

Opposed to this from the outset is a side of the signifier that is given to us for its qualities, its particular density – not for its meaning, but for its meaningfulness. The signified is empty, the signifier is retained for its purely formal properties, which are used for example to form series. This is the language of the birds from the sky, the discourse of the young girls, which Schreber grants the privilege of being without meaning. 290

The register in which the onset of psychosis is played out is located between these two poles – the word of revelation, which opens up a new dimension and gives a feeling of ineffable understanding, which corresponds to nothing previously experienced, and on the other hand the refrain, the same old song.

[8] Best known part of Madeleine de Scudéry's novel *Clélie*.
[9] See Freud's remarks at the end of the Schreber case, SE 12:78–79.

Beginning with what I call the first sign of the onset of psychosis, the world sinks into confusion, and we can follow, step by step, how Schreber reconstructs it in an attitude of gradual, ambiguous, reticent, *reluctant* as they say in English, consent. He admits bit by bit that the only means of escape, of preserving a certain stability in his relations with the invasive, desiring entities that for him are the supports of the unleashed language of his internal uproar, is to accept his transformation into a woman. Isn't it better, after all, to be a spirited woman than a cretinous man?[10] His body is thus progressively invaded by images of feminine identification to which he opens the door; he lets them take over, he has himself possessed, remodeled, by them. In a note somewhere there is the notion of his permitting images to enter himself.[11] And it's at this point that he recognizes that the world doesn't appear to have changed all that much since the beginning of his crisis – the return of a certain, no doubt problematic, sense of reality.

Concerning the delusion's evolution, it's worth observing that initially full manifestations of speech are produced and that they are satisfactory to him. But while his world is being reconstructed on the imaginary plane, there is a proportionate withdrawal of sense to other places. Speech is initially produced in what he calls *the anterior, prior realms of God.* Then God withdraws to a distance, remoteness, and that which corresponds to the first great signifying intuitions slips further and further away. At the same time as he reconstructs his world, that which is close to him and which he deals with, the speech of this anterior god with whom he has this unusual relation, which is an image of copulation, as is shown by the first dream of psychotic invasion, this god enters the universe of the learning by rote, of the refrain, of empty sense, and of objectification. In the vibrant space of his introspection what he calls *writing-down* henceforth permanently connotes, records, and ratifies his thoughts. There is a displacement here in the subject's relation to speech.

291 The spoken hallucinatory phenomena that for the subject have a sense in the register of interpellation, irony, defiance, allusion, always allude to the Other with a big O, as if it were a term that is invariably present but never seen and never named except indirectly. These considerations will lead us to some linguistic remarks relating to a fact that is within your reach but which you never grasp. I have in mind the two distinct types of usage of personal pronouns.

There are personal pronouns that decline, *je* [I], *me* [me], *tu* [you], *te* [you], *il* [he], *le* [him or it], *etc.* In the register *me* [me], *te* [you], *le* [him or it], the

[10] Mem, 178.
[11] Mem, 231–37.

personal pronoun is liable to be elided. In the other me, *moi* [me], *toi* [you], *lui* [him], it isn't elided.

Do you see the difference? *Je le veux* [*I want it* or *I want him*] and *Je veux lui* or *elle* [*I want him* or *her*] aren't the same thing.

We'll stop there for today.

30 May 1956

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XXI

The quilting point

SENSE AND SCANSION

THE FULL CIRCLE AND SEGMENTATION

"*YES*, I COME INTO HIS TEMPLE . . ."

THE FEAR OF GOD

THE FATHER, A QUILTING POINT

Does the subject hear with his ears something that exists or something that doesn't exist? It's quite obvious that it doesn't exist and that consequently it's of the order of a hallucination, that is, of a false perception. Is this adequate for us?

This massive conception of reality leads to the quite mysterious explanation, advanced by analysts, according to which a so-called refusal to perceive produces a hole and there then appears in reality a drive that has been rejected by the subject. But why should something as complex and architectured as speech appear in this hole? This is what we are not told.

To be sure, such an explanation already constitutes progress over the classical conception, but we can go further. In short, we can expect that the phenomenon of psychosis will enable us to restore the proper relationship, increasingly misunderstood in analytic work, between the signifier and the signified.

1

I remind you that at the end of the period during which the external world disintegrated for Schreber, with its roots in that period, there appeared in him a structuration of the relations between the signifier and the signified that is presented thus – there are always two planes.

They are without doubt indefinitely subdivided within themselves. But
294 Schreber's efforts always to locate an anterior plane and a plane beyond is obviously imposed on him by his experience, and this guides us towards something that is really deep-seated in psychotic structure. I have sometimes got you to feel this in an immediate way in my presentations.

On one of these planes phenomena are produced that are above all ones the subject regards as neutralized, as signifying less and less a true other – phrases, he says, learned by rote, drummed into the birds from the sky who

repeat them to him, who don't know what they are saying. This term *birds* leads to the parrot – it's a question of the transmission of something empty that wearies and exhausts the subject. At their first appearance these phenomena are situated at the limit of meaning, but they soon turn into quite the contrary – residue, refuse, empty bodies.

I have already mentioned these interrupted sentences that suggest a continuation. They teach us a great deal about the unity that prevails at the level of the signifier – in particular, that the latter isn't isolatable.

These unfinished sentences are in general interrupted at the point at which the full word that would give them their meaning is still lacking but is implied. I've already picked out more than one example of this. For instance, the subject hears – *Do you still speak . . .* , and the sentence stops. This means – *Do you still speak . . . foreign languages?*[1]

The said *conception of souls* is this dialogue, which is much fuller than the drummed-in words the souls exchange with him, in teaching him an entire psychology of thoughts, on the subject of himself. What first of all manifested itself at the beginning of the delusion, like an ineffable and vigorous form of expression, withdraws to a distance, becomes enigmatic, passes into the *posterior realms of God,* at the level of which the intrusive and absurd voices multiply. Even further beyond these voices there are other voices which express themselves in striking formulas.

I remind you of one that is not the least striking of them – *Lacking now is . . . the leading thought.*[2] They also speak to him of *Gesinnung,* which can mean either conviction or faith. *Gesinnung,* they explain, is something we owe any good man, even the blackest of sinners, subject to the demands of purification inherent in the order of the universe, something we owe him in exchange [*dans l'échange*], in the name of that which must regulate our relations with human beings. It is indeed faith that is in question, that minimum of good faith implied by recognition of the other.

A certain period of his hallucinations goes much further still. We have the most unusual expression [. . .]. It's a rare word, extremely difficult to translate. After consulting with people who know about these things, I had arrived at the idea that it was a question of nothing other than what I call the base word, the key, the ultimate linchpin, rather than the solution. It has a tech- 295
nical connotation, in fact, in the art of hunting – it would be what hunters call the *fumées,* that is, the traces of big game.

The essential aspect seems to me to be the withdrawal or migration of sense, its flight onto a plane that the subject is led to situate as the background. Two styles, two levels, are opposed to one another. On the one hand

[1] Mem, 311 n.114.
[2] Mem, 218.

scansion, which plays on the properties of the signifier, with the implicit questioning that scansion contains and which extends to coercion. On the other hand sense, the nature of which is to take flight, to define itself as something that flees, but which at the same time presents itself as an extremely full sense, the fleeing of which draws the subject in towards what would be the core of the delusional phenomenon, its navel. You know that Freud uses this term *navel* to designate the point at which the sense of a dream appears to culminate in a hole, a knot, beyond which it is to the core of being that the dream appears to be attached.[3]

This description is no more than phenomenological. Try to get as much out of it as possible for what is at issue here, which is to find an explanation, a mechanism. We devote ourselves to the work of scientifically analyzing phenomena whose ways of manifesting themselves are familiar to us doctors, practitioners – the condition of familiarity is essential if we are not to lose the sense of analytic experience. The phenomenal relationship I am speaking of remains entirely within the distinction I've stressed a hundred times between the signifier and the signified.

You must undoubtedly end up saying to yourselves – *In the end, don't we know that within the meanings that orient analytic experience this signifier is given by one's own body? And, conversely, that when he speaks of this signifier a given element of which happens to be missing, doesn't he, by means of one of these sleight-of-hand tricks that he holds the secret to, place meaning at the summit of the signifier? There is always a three-card trick from one register to another, according to the needs of the demonstration.*

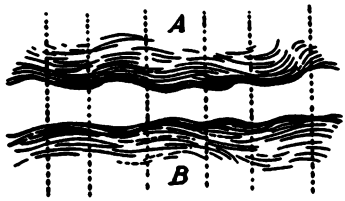
Well then, I shall happily grant you that there is in fact something of this sort, and this is just what I would like to explain to you today.

The problem is to give you a vivid sense of what you should have a general intuition of anyway, and which last year I showed you concerning a given neurotic phenomenon, by means of a game of letters that some of you recall, and this year concerning psychosis – the elementary meanings we call desire, or feeling, or affectivity, these fluctuations, these shadows, these resonances even, have certain dynamics that can be explained only at the level of the signifier insofar as it is structuring.[4]

296 The signifier doesn't just provide an envelope, a receptacle for meaning. It polarizes it, structures it, and brings it into existence. Without an exact knowledge of the order proper to the signifier and its properties, it's impossible to understand anything whatsoever, I don't mean about psychology – it

[3] Freud refers to the dream's navel at SE 5:525 and also at 4:111 n.1. The expression "core of our being," "*Kern unseres Wesens,*" occurs at SE 5:603.

[4] Cf. chaps. 15 – 16, Sem 2:175–205.



Saussure's schema

suffices that one restrict it in a certain way – but certainly about psychoanalytic experience.

This is what I would like to show you today.

The opposition between the signifier and the signified lies, as you know, at the basis of Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theory. It has been expressed in the famous schema of the two curves.[5]

At the upper level Saussure locates the series of what he calls thoughts – without the slightest conviction, since his theory consists precisely in reducing this term to that of the signified insofar as it is distinct from both the signifier and the thing – and he insists above all upon the aspect of amorphous mass. It's what, for our part, we shall provisionally call the sentimental mass of the current of discourse, a confused mass in which appear units, islands, an image, an object, a feeling, a cry, an appeal. It's a continuum, whereas underneath is the signifier as a pure chain of discourse, a succession of words, in which nothing is isolable.

How can I show you this through an experience?

I have to tell you that I spent a week looking for something in the area of the personal pronoun that would give you an image in French of the difference between *je*, *I*, and *moi*, *me*, in order to explain to you how the subject can lose mastery of them, if not contact with them, in psychosis. But concerning the person of the subject and the way it functions, it isn't possible to stop at this pronominal embodiment – it's the structure of the term as such that is involved, at least for our languages. I'm only saying this to secure the steps that I want to get you to follow today.

Come last night, then, I had a mountain of documents. But the ways linguists go about things are so diverse, so contradictory, and would require so many different levels to show you what is meant, that I once again found myself reproducing this double flow of discourse on a piece of paper.

This is indeed the impression we get. The relationship between the signified and the signifier always appears fluid, always ready to come undone. Analysts know better than anyone what is ungraspable in this dimension and 297

[5] *Course*, 112.

how much they themselves may hesitate before taking the plunge. A step forward has to be taken in order to give what is involved here a sense that is really usable in our experience.

Saussure tries to define a correspondence between these two flows that would segment them. But the sole fact that his solution is inconclusive, since it leaves the locution and the whole sentence problematic, clearly shows both the sense and limitations of his method.

Well then, I think to myself – *What does one start with?* And I go about looking for a sentence, a bit like this pseudo-Shakespeare stuck for inspiration, who paces up and down, repeating – *To be or not . . to be or not . . . ,* stuck until he discovers that he can continue by starting at the beginning again – *To be or not . . . to be.* I start with a *Yes.* And, since French, not English, is my language, what comes to me next is – *Yes, I come into his temple to worship the Eternal Lord.*[6]

This means that no signifier is isolable.

It's very easy to see it immediately. Stop at *Yes, I* – why not? If your ear really was like a machine, at each instant the unfolding of the sentence would be followed by a sense. *Yes, I* does have a sense, which probably even constitutes the significance of the text.

Everyone wonders why the curtain rises on this *Yes, I come . . . ,* and they say – *There is a conversation going on.* It's initially because this makes sense. The initial *yes* does indeed have a sense, linked to a species of ambiguity that remains in the word *yes, oui,* in French. It's not necessary to be involved with a woman of the world to be aware that *Yes* sometimes means no and that *No* sometimes means perhaps. The *oui* appeared late in French, it appeared after the *si,* after the *da,* which we agreeably rediscover in our time in the *dac.*[7] Because it comes from something that means, *How good that is,* the *oui* is in general a confirmation and at the very least a concession. Most often a *Oui, mais, Yes, but,* is just the type of thing.

Yes, I come into his temple. . . . Don't forget who this character is who is introducing himself here, being a little bit forward. It's the said Abner. He is an officer of the Queen, the said Athaliah, who gives the story its title and who sufficiently dominates everything that takes place as to be its main character. When one of the soldiers begins by saying, *Yes, I come into his temple . . . ,* we have no idea where it might be taking us. It could well end up anywhere. *I come into his temple . . . to arrest the High Priest,* for example. It does have to be completed for one to know what is going on. The sentence

[6] *"Oui, je viens dans son temple adorer l'Eternel,"* the opening line of Racine's *Athaliah.*

[7] *Dac* is a familiar abbreviation of *d'accord, okay.* In contemporary French *si* is an affirmative response to a negative question.

only exists as completed and its sense comes to it retroactively. We need to have got right to the end, that is to say, to this famous *Eternal Lord.* 298

We are, here, in the order of signifiers, and I hope I have made you feel what the continuity of the signifier is. A signifying unit presupposes the completion of a certain circle that situates its different elements.

3

That is where I had paused momentarily. But this modest beginning has a much greater interest. It made me appreciate that the entire scene gives a very nice opportunity to get you to sense what brings psychologists to a standstill, because their function is to understand something of which they understand nothing, and what linguists don't extend to, despite the marvelous method they have in their hands. As for us, we shall go a bit further.

If we return to the scene, who is there listening to the said Abner? Jehoiada is, the High Priest who is engaged in cooking up the little conspiracy that will end with the accession to the throne of his son whom he rescued from massacre at the age of two and a half months and raised in a distant refuge. You can imagine the sentiment in which he listens to this declaration by the officer – *Yes, I come into his temple to worship the Eternal Lord.* The old man may well say to himself, in response – *What is he doing here, then?* The theme continues –

> *Yes, I come into his temple to worship the Eternal Lord,*
> *I come, according to ancient and hallowed custom,*
> *To celebrate with you the glorious day*
> *When on Mount Sinai we received the law.*

In short, they have a chat. And once the Eternal Lord has been left there in the lurch, he won't be spoken of again until right at the end of the play. They start reminiscing. Those were the good old days, *masses of holy people streamed in through the gates,* but now, how things have changed, *scarcely a handful of zealous worshippers.*

Here we start to understand what this is all about. *Scarcely a handful of zealous worshippers* – here's a character who thinks that this is the moment to join the Resistance. Here we are at the level of meaning – while the signifier goes on its merry way, *zealous worshippers* indicates what's at issue, and the ear of the High Priest does not, we can well imagine, fail to pick up this *zeal* in passing. *Zeal* comes from the Greek and means something like emulation, 299
rivalry, mimicry, because in this game one only wins by doing what suits, by looking like the others.

The climax appears at the end of the first discourse, namely that

I tremble with fear, to hide nothing from you, that Athaliah
Should have you ripped from the altar
And wreak upon you her dreadful revenge,
Shedding the remnants of a forced respect.

Here we see a word emerge that has a great deal of importance – *tremble*. It's etymologically the same word as *craindre, fear,* and *fear* is going to appear. There is something here that reveals the significant climax of the discourse, that gives an indication that has two senses. Here we are placed at the level of the upper register, that is, of what Saussure calls the amorphous mass of thoughts – it may be inherently amorphous, but it isn't merely that, because the other has to guess it.

Abner is there in effect, undoubtedly zealous, but when later the high priest virtually grabs him by the throat and says to him – *Stop the chatter. What's this all about? How does one recognize those who are anything other than zealots?,* one is going to realize how hard times are. It's a long time since God has given anything much in the way of proof of his power, whereas the power of Athaliah and her followers has up till now always proved to be triumphant. Consequently, when he mentions this new threat we don't see what he is driving at very well. It's double-edged. It's equally a warning, a piece of good advice, a counsel of prudence, or even of what's called discretion.

The other's responses are much briefer. He has many reasons for this, and principally that he is the more powerful, he holds the trump card, as it were – *Where,* he simply replies, *does this dark foreboding come from today?* And the signifier sticks perfectly to the signified. But you can see that he gives absolutely nothing away, all he does is make a retort, send back to the subject a question about the sense of what he has to say.

Thereupon, Abner elaborates further and begins to penetrate a bit further into the significant game. It's a mixture of flattery – *Do you believe you can be holy and just with impunity?* and informing, which consists of recounting that there is a certain Mattan who is, in any case, indomitable. He doesn't pursue very far his denunciation of the proud Athaliah, who is after all still his Queen. There happens to be a scapegoat, which is extremely convenient for continuing to lay the bait.

It's still not clear what the point of all this is, unless it's this –

Do believe me, the more I think about it, the less I am able to doubt
That upon you her wrath is about to break.

This displays the moving nature of the characters well. The less he is able to doubt . . . this doubt doesn't make such a disagreeable pillow, but it's no longer quite the moment to relax.

. *Yesterday I observed her . . .*

Here we are at the level of the intelligence officer.

. . . and I saw her eyes
At the holy place throw furious glances.

I would like you to observe that after all the courtesy that Abner has pledged over the course of the exchange, nothing will have happened by the end if we remain at the level of meaning. At this level everything can be summed up in a few words. They both know a bit more than they are prepared to say. Jehoiada is the one who knows the most, but in order to go out and meet what the other claims to know, he makes only one allusion to the fact that there is something in the wind, in other words an Elician in the sanctuary.

But you have the striking evidence of the speed with which the said Abner jumps on this – *She made a mistake,* he says later, that is to say –*Did she botch part of the massacre? What if there remains someone from this famous family of David?* This contribution shows well enough that the reason Abner has gone into the temple is that he is attracted by the smell of fresh blood. But in the final analysis he knows neither more nor less at the end of the dialogue than at the beginning, and this first scene in its meaningful fullness could be summed up in these words –

– I have come to the Festival of the Lord.
– Very well, says the other. *Take part in the procession and no talking in the ranks.*

It's not this at all, on the one condition that you are aware of the role of the signifier. If you are, you will see that there are a number of key words underlying the discourse of the two characters and that they partly coincide. There 301
is the word *tremble,* the word *fear,* the word *extermination. Tremble* and *fear* are used by Abner first, who takes us to the point I have just indicated, that is, to the point at which Jehoiada truly starts to speak out.

He who can still the raging seas
can also thwart the wicked in their plots.
In respectful submission to His holy will,
I fear God, dear Abner, and have no other fear.

I fear God, you say . . . , he replies, whereas Abner had never said this,

. . . his truth touches me.
Here is how the Lord answers you out of my mouth.

And we see the word I pointed out to you at the beginning, *zeal,* appear here –

By zeal for my law,
By sterile vows do you think to honor me?

What is the fruit for me of all your sacrifices?
The blood of your Kings cries out, and is not heard.
Break off all your pacts with impiety.
From the midst of my people extinguish the crimes
And then you will immolate your victims in my name.

You mustn't think that these are innocent victims in more or less fixed form in appropriate locations. When Abner observes that *the Holy Ark is mute and gives no more oracles,* he gets this lively response –

Ungrateful race. What? Will the greatest marvels
strike your ears but never move your heart?
Must I, Abner, must I recall the series
Of wondrous prodigies accomplished in our time?
Of Israel's tyrants the celebrated disgrace,
And God found faithful in all his threats;
The impious Ahab destroyed, and drenched with his blood
The field that by murder he had usurped;
302 *Near this fatal field Jezebel immolated,*
Under the horses' hooves this Queen was crushed,
In her inhuman blood the dogs slaked their thirst,
And her hideous body dismembered;
. . .

So we know what sort of victim will be involved.

In short, what is the role of the signifier here? Fear is something that is particularly ambivalent. We others, we analysts, aren't unaware of this – it's as much something that drives you on as something that holds you back, it's something that makes you a double being and that, when you express it before a character with whom you want to play at being afraid together, will always place you in the position of a reflection. But there is something else, which looks homonymous – *the fear of God.*

This isn't the same thing at all. It's the signifier, itself rather rigid, that Jehoiada trots out precisely at the moment he is alerted to the danger.

The fear of God is an essential expression in a certain line of religious thought which you would be wrong to think of as simply the general line. The fear of *the gods,* from whom Lucretius wants to free his little friends, is something altogether different, a multiform, confused feeling, one of panic. The fear of *God,* on the other hand, on which a tradition that goes back to Solomon is based, is the principle of wisdom and the foundation of the love of God. Moreover, this tradition is precisely our own.

The fear of God isn't a signifier that is found everywhere. Someone had to invent it and propose to men, as the remedy for a world made up of manifold terrors, that they fear a being who is, after all, only able to exercise his cruelty

through the evils that are there, multifariously present in human life. To have replaced these innumerable fears by the fear of a unique being who has no other means of manifesting his power than through what is feared behind these innumerable fears, is quite an accomplishment.

You will say to me – *That really is a curate's idea!* Well, you're wrong. The curates have invented absolutely nothing in this genre. To invent a thing like this you have to be a poet or a prophet, and it's precisely insofar as this Jehoiada is one to some extent, at least by the grace of Racine, that he can use as he does this major and primordial signifier.

I have only been able to briefly mention the cultural history of this signifier, but I have sufficiently indicated to you that it's inseparable from a particular structuration. It's the signifier that dominates the thing, since as far as the meanings are concerned they have completely changed.

This famous fear of God completes the sleight of hand that transforms, 303
from one minute to the next, all fears into perfect courage. All fears – *I have no other fear* – are exchanged for what is called the fear of God, which, however constraining it may be, is the opposite of a fear.

What has happened by the end of the scene is precisely this – the said Jehoiada has handed the fear of God onto the other, and in the proper way, the right way round, painlessly. And straightaway Abner departs completely trustworthy, with this word that echoes *God found faithful in all his threats.* It's no longer a question of zeal, he will join the faithful troops. In short, he himself has become the support of the bait that will hook the Queen. The play is already played out, it's over. It's insofar as Abner doesn't say a word to her about the real risks she is running that the Queen will take the bait he henceforth represents.

The power of the signifier, the effectiveness of this word *fear,* has been to transform the *zeal* at the beginning, with everything that is ambiguous, doubtful, always liable to be reversed, that this word conveys, into the *faithfulness* of the end. This transmutation is of the order of the signifier as such. No accumulation, no superimposition, no summation of meanings, is sufficient to justify it. The entire progress of this scene, which would otherwise be worthy of the *Deuxième Bureau,*[8] resides in the transmutation of the situation through the intervention of the signifier.

Whether it be a sacred text, a novel, a play, a monologue, or any conversation whatsoever, allow me to represent the function of the signifier by a spatializing device, which we have no reason to deprive ourselves of. This point around which all concrete analysis of discourse must operate I shall call a quilting point.

[8] The French Secret Service.

When the upholsterer's needle, which has entered at the moment of *God found faithful in all his threats,* reappears, it's all over, the chap says, *I'm going to join the faithful troops.*

Were we to analyze this scene as a musical score, we should see that this is the point at which the signified and the signifier are knotted together, between the still floating mass of meanings that are actually circulating between these two characters and the text. It's due to this admirable text, and not to the meaning, that *Athaliah* is not a piece of boulevard theatre.

The quilting point is the word *fear,* with all these trans-significant connotations. Everything radiates out from and is organized around this signifier, similar to these little lines of force that an upholstery button forms on the
304 surface of material. It's the point of convergence that enables everything that happens in this discourse to be situated retroactively and prospectively.

4

The schema of the quilting point is essential in human experience.

Why does this minimal schema of human experience which Freud gave us in the Oedipus complex retain its irreducible and yet enigmatic value for us? And why privilege the Oedipus complex? Why does Freud always want to find it everywhere, with such insistence? Why do we have here a knot that seems so essential to him that he is unable to abandon it in the slightest particular observation – unless it's because the notion of father, closely related to that of the fear of God, gives him the most palpable element in experience of what I've called the quilting point between the signifier and the signified?

Perhaps I've spent a long time explaining this to you, but I nevertheless believe that this creates an image and enables you to grasp how it can happen, in psychotic experience, that the signifier and the signified present themselves in a completely divided form.

One can think that in a psychosis everything is there in the signifier. It looks as if everything is there. President Schreber seems to understand perfectly well what it is to be screwed by Professor Flechsig and by a number of others who become his substitutes. What is vexatious is precisely that he should say so, and in the clearest possible way – why, henceforth, should this provoke, as people explain to us, such profound disorders in his libidinal economy?

No, it's in another register that what happens in psychosis has to be explored. I don't know how many there are, but it isn't impossible that one should manage to determine the minimal number of fundamental points of insertion between the signifier and the signified necessary for a human being to be

called normal, and which, when they are not established, or when they give way, make a psychotic.

What I'm proposing is still altogether crude, but it's the point from which we can begin next time to examine the role of the *personization* of the subject, namely the manner in which in French *je* and *moi* are differentiated.[9]

Of course, no particular language has any privilege in the order of signifiers, the resources of each are extremely different and always limited. But equally, any one of them covers the entire field of meanings. 305

Where in the signifier is the person? How does a discourse hang together? Up to what point can a discourse that seems personal bear, on the level of the signifier alone, a sufficient number of traces of impersonalization for the subject not to recognize it as his own?

I'm not saying that this is the source of the mechanism of psychosis, I'm saying that the mechanism of psychosis manifests itself here. Before outlining this mechanism we must make an effort to recognize at the different stages of the phenomenon the points at which the quilting is omitted. A complete catalogue of these points would enable us to discover some surprising correlations and appreciate that it isn't just in any old way that the subject depersonalizes his discourse.

In this respect there is an experience within hand's reach. Clérambault recognized it. He alludes somewhere to what happens when all of a sudden we are gripped by an event from our past that we find difficult to tolerate being affectively evoked. When it's not a question of commemoration but of the resurgence of affect, when, recollecting being angry, we are very close to being angry, when, recollecting a humiliation, we relive the humiliation, when, remembering the destruction of an illusion, we feel the need to reorganize our equilibrium and our meaningful field, in the sense in which one speaks of social field – well then, this is the most favorable moment, Clérambault notes, for the emergence, which he himself calls purely automatic, of scraps of sentences sometimes taken from one's most recent experience, and which have no kind of meaningful relationship with the matter at hand.

These phenomena of automatism are in fact admirably observed – but there are many others – and having the adequate schema is sufficient for one to situate oneself in the phenomenon in a way that is no longer purely descriptive but properly explanatory. There you have the order of things that an observation such as that of President Schreber, which is no doubt unique in the annals of psychopathology, must convey to us.

[9] Damourette and Pichon define "personization" as the distribution of verbs on the "delocutory" plane (i.e., in the indicative, subjunctive, and conditional moods) and on the "locutory" plane (i.e., in the imperative mood).

Next time I shall pick things up at the *je* and the *tu*.

There is no need for these to be expressed in a sentence for them to be there. *Come on!* is a sentence and implies an *I* and a *you*.

306 In the schema I have given you, where are the *I* and the *you?* You imagine perhaps that the *you* is here, at the level of the big Other, do you? No, not at all. This is where we shall begin – the *you* in its verbalized form does not at all coincide with this pole that we have been calling big O.

6 June 1956

XXII

"Thou art the one who wilt follow me"

THE OTHER IS A LOCUS
THE *YOU* OF THE SUPEREGO
DEVOLUTION AND OBSERVATION
THE VOICE
INTERPELLATION OF THE SIGNIFIER

I'm much more myself. Before, I was a para-me who thought of myself as the true one, and who was absolutely false.

In any càse, I want to point out that there is a lot of us, those who gave our support to the Popular Front.[1]

These sentences, which are attested, I have selected from Damourette and Pichon's *Grammaire,* a substantial and highly instructive work, even if only because of the enormous quantity of very intelligently classified documents, whatever errors it contains as a whole and in its details.

These two sentences, one spoken and one written, show us that what I am going to get you to think about today is not a forged artifact, a misplaced literary subtlety.

The first sentence obviously comes from a patient in analysis. Pichon indicates this by her initials, Mme X, such and such a date. *I'm much more myself,* she says, no doubt very satisfied with progress accomplished in her treatment, *Before, I was a para-me who thought of myself as. . . .* Thank God that the French language, which is often ambiguous when spoken, here, owing to the encounter between a silent consonant and an initial vowel, enables what is in question to be clearly discerned.[2] The verb is in the first person singular, it's I *who thought of myself as. . . .* Through the relative pronoun, the first person has been transmitted to the relative clause.

You'll tell me – *This is obvious!* That was the response of a charming woman

[1] *"Je suis beaucoup plus moi. Avant, j'étais un paramoi qui croyais être le vrai, et qui était absolument faux.*

"En tout cas, je veux préciser que nous sommes nombreux ceux qui avons soutenu le Front populaire."

[2] With most verbs the difference between the first and third person singular would not normally be heard in French, but when, as here, the following word begins with a vowel, the final consonant of the verb may be pronounced. The first and third persons can then be differentiated in spoken language.

308 whom I tried recently to interest in these issues by propounding to her the problem of the difference between *I am the woman who will not abandon you* and *I am the woman who shall not abandon you.*[3] I have to say that I was unsuccessful. She refused to show any interest in this nuance whose importance you have nevertheless already felt.

Usage makes this sufficiently clear, since in the same sentence Mme X continues – *I am much more myself. Before, I was a para-me who thought of myself as the true one, and who was absolutely false.*

I think that no sentence is more appropriately expressed. It *was absolutely false,* this para-me. An *I* in the first part of the sentence, it has become an *it* in the second.

There are a few of them like that in Pichon, equally quite pertinent and still of interest – *In any case, I want to point out that there is a lot of us, those who gave our support to the Popular Front, voted for its candidates, and who thought of themselves as having a totally different ideal to follow, a totally different action, and a totally different reality,* etc.[4]

If you pay attention you can collect these examples by the bucketful. The issue is whether or not the personization that is in the principal clause crosses the screen, the lens, at the entrance to the relative clause. The screen is obviously neutral, it won't vary. It is therefore a question of knowing what the penetrative power, as it were, of the antecedent personization consists in.

We shall see that this minor linguistic point can also be found in other languages in a manner that is very much alive. But obviously one would have to look in other syntactic forms. We shall come back to this later on.

1

Last time I left you at the point of examining what new light the advances we have made concerning the function of the signifier can contribute to the burning question, which has been made topical in a confused way by the function of the object relation and made present as much by the structure as by the phenomenology of psychosis, of the other.

Until now I have been showing you the duality of this other, between the imaginary other and the Other with a big O, this Other that I discussed in the small piece I read out to you in the last session of last year, and which

[3] *"Je suis la femme qui ne vous abandonnerai pas"* and *"Je suis la femme qui ne vous abandonnera pas."* The relative verb is in the second person in the first example and in the third person in the second example. The old or regional distinction in English usage between *shall* and *will* seems to capture much of the sense of the distinction that Lacan draws.

[4] *"En tout cas je veux préciser que nous sommes nombreux ceux qui avons soutenu le Front populaire, voté pour ses candidats, et qui croyaient à un tout autre idéal poursuivi, à une tout autre action et à une tout autre réalité."*

has just been published in *Evolution psychiatrique* under the title of *La Chose freudienne*.[5]

I apologize for quoting myself, but what's the use of polishing up one's propositions if one is not to use them? I say – *the Other is, therefore, the locus* 309
in which is constituted the I who is speaking with him who hears.[6] I say this following some remarks on the fact that there is always an Other beyond all concrete dialogue, all interpsychological play. This proposition that I quote has to be taken as a starting point, the issue is to find out where it leads to.

I would like you to be aware of how much difference there is between such a perspective and the one that is confusedly accepted today. Saying that the Other is the locus in which is constituted he who is speaking with him who hears is something quite different from setting out from the idea that the other is a being.

We have been intoxicated for some time in analysis by themes that have indisputably come from so-called existentialist discourse, where the other is the *thou*, the one who can respond, but in a symmetrical mode, one of complete correspondence, the alter ego, the brother. One forms a fundamentally reciprocal idea of intersubjectivity. Add to this the sentimental confusions that come under the rubric of personalism, plus Martin Buber's book on the I and the thou,[7] and the confusion will be definitive and irremediable unless one returns to experience.

Far from having made any contribution whatsoever that would throw light on the foundation of the existence of the other, all the existentialist experience has done is to suspend it, in an increasingly radical way, from the hypothesis of projection – upon which you of course all live – according to which the other is barely more than a certain human semblance, animated by an *I* that is the reflection of my own.

Animism and anthropomorphism are there, always liable to emerge and in fact impossible to refute, as are the summary references to the experience of language at the time of one's first babbling. It's brought to our attention that the child doesn't immediately acquire mastery of *you* and *I*, but the acquisition is ultimately summed up in the child's being able to say *I* when you have said *you* to him, in his understanding that when he is told *you're going to do this* he has to say in his register *I'm going to do this*.

In analysts this symmetrical conception culminates in a number of first truths, in extraordinary statements such as the following, which I heard from the mouth of someone who belongs to what one calls the other group – *One can't analyze someone for whom the other doesn't exist*.

[5] See "The Freudian Thing," E, 401-36 / 114-45.
[6] E, 431 / 141.
[7] Martin Buber, *I and Thou*.

I wonder what it means to say that *the other doesn't exist*. I wonder whether this expression has any value whatsoever, even as an approximation. What is at issue? A lived experience? An irreducible feeling? Take the case of Schre-
310 ber, for whom all humanity was at one time in the state of fleeting-improvised-men – well then, there is indeed an other for him, a singularly accentuated other, an absolute Other, an entirely radical Other, an Other who is neither a place nor a schema, an Other who he says is a living being in his own way, and who he stresses is capable, when threatened, of egoism like other living beings. God, finding himself in a position in which his independence is threatened by this disorder for which he is primarily responsible, manifests spasmodic defense relations. He nevertheless retains an otherness such that he is a stranger to living things and, more particularly, is deprived of all understanding with respect to the vital needs of our Schreber.

That there is for Schreber an other who is worthy of the name is adequately indicated by the singularly pointed, witty beginning of one of the chapters of his *Memoirs*, where he says he is in no way a paranoiac. A paranoiac is someone who relates everything to himself, he's someone whose egocentrism is invasive – he's read Kraepelin – but *as for me*, he says, *it's quite different, it's the Other who relates everything to me*.[8] There is an Other, and this is decisive, structuring.

Thus, before speaking of the other as something that is either placed or not placed at a certain distance, which we are either capable or incapable of embracing, of clasping, or even of consuming in more or less rapid quantities, one would have to know whether the very phenomenology of things as they present themselves in our experience doesn't necessitate a different approach – precisely the one I adopt in saying, before seeing how it will be more or less brought about – that the Other must first of all be considered a locus, the locus in which speech is constituted.

Persons – since this is what we are interested in today – must come from somewhere. They come first in a signifying, by which I mean formal, manner. Speech is constituted for us by an *I* and a *you*. These are two counterparts. Speech transforms them, by giving them a certain appropriate relationship, but – and this is what I want to insist upon – a distance that's not symmetrical, a relationship that isn't reciprocal. In fact, the *I* is never there where it appears in the form of a particular signifier. The *I* is always there in the name of a presence that supports the discourse as a whole, whether in direct or indirect speech. The *I* is the *I* of him who is pronouncing the discourse. Underneath everything that is said there is an *I* who pronounces it. It's within this enunciation that the *you* appears.

These are first truths, so much so that you are liable to look further than

[8] Mem, 262.

the end of your nose. There is nothing more to understand than what I have just observed. That the *you* is already within discourse is obvious. There has never been a *you* anywhere else than where one says *you*. Let's start from there. 311

As for the *I*, is it, too, a coin, a fiduciary element circulating in discourse? I hope to answer this a little later, but I raise the question now so that you won't lose sight of it and so that you will know what I'm getting at.

2

The *you* is far from being addressed to an ineffable person, to that species of beyond whose leading accent the sentimentalist tendency in the manner of existentialism would like to show us. It's something quite different in its usage.

The *you* isn't always the full *you*, of which so much is made and which, as you know, I myself occasionally evoke in some leading examples. *You are my master, you are my woman* – I make a great deal of such expressions for getting the function of speech understood.

It is a question today of recentering the significance attached to this *you*, which is far from always having this full employment.

I return to some linguistic observations.

The second person is far from always being employed with this emphasis. When it is said in quite ordinary usage – *One can't go for a walk in that place without someone's accosting you*,[9] it isn't about any *you* in reality. The *you* is almost the reflexive of the *one*, it is its correspondent.

Something even more significant – *When you have attained this degree of wisdom, all that remains is to die*.[10] Here again, what *you* is involved? I am certainly not addressing myself to no one in particular in this utterance. I ask you to take the sentence as a whole because there is no sentence that can be detached from the fullness of its meaning. What *you* is alluding to is so far from being an other that I should say it is alluding to those left behind who would persist in living after this discourse – if wisdom says that there is no end to anything other than death, then all that remains is to die. This shows you well enough that the function of the second person on this occasion is precisely to allude to what is nobody, to what is depersonalized.

In fact, this *you* that one kills here is the one that is perfectly familiar to us from the phenomenology of psychosis, as well as from common experience.[11] It's the *you* that says *you* in us, this *you* that always makes itself more or less 312

[9] *"On ne peut pas se promener dans cet endroit sans qu'on vous aborde."*
[10] *"Quand on en vient à ce degré de sagesse, il ne vous reste plus qu'à mourir."*
[11] *"Tu,"* "you," and *"tue,"* "kill," are homophonic.

discreetly heard, this *you* that speaks alone, and says *You see!* to us, or, *You're always the same.* As in Schreber's experience, this *you* doesn't need to say *you* in order to be the *you* that speaks to us. A tiny bit of disintegration suffices – Schreber had more than his fair share – for things like, *Don't surrender to the first inducement* to emerge.[12]

This is an allusion to something that isn't named and that we reconstruct as being Schreber's homosexual tendency, but it is possibly something different, since invitations, injunctions, are not rare but constant. This sentence is in fact the rule of conduct for many people – *Don't surrender to your initial reaction, it might be the right one,* as they say.[13] And what are you taught, if it isn't precisely never to surrender to the first inducement? Here we recognize our good old friend the superego, who suddenly appears before us in his phenomenal form, rather than in amiable genetic hypotheses. This superego is indeed something like the law, but it's a law without dialectic, and it's not for nothing that it is recognizable, more or less correctly, in the categorical imperative, with what I would call its maleficent neutrality – one author calls it the internal saboteur.

We would be wrong if we misunderstood that this *you* is also present as an observer – it sees everything, hears everything, notes everything. This is indeed what takes place in Schreber, and it's his mode of relation to it that is expressed in him by this remorseless, incessant *you,* which provokes him into responses devoid of any kind of sense.

I am tempted to quote the old expression, *Nobody suspects a thing,*[14] that used to be displayed in the pages of the telephone directory concerning a private detective agency. One senses to what extent an ideal is involved here. How happy everybody would be if in fact nobody did suspect a thing! But hide as one may behind a curtain, there is always a big pair of shoes that stick out. It's the same for the superego. But it doesn't suspect anything. Nothing is less doubtful than whatever appears to us through the intermediary of this *you.*

It is incredible that we should be liable to forget this major obstacle, which our analytic experience makes manifest – that the *you* is present as a foreign body. An analyst, Mr. Isakower, went so far as to compare it with what takes place in a little crustacean of the prawn genus that has the unusual property of having, at the beginning of its existence, its vestibular chamber, the organ that governs balance, open to the marine environment.[15] The vestibular chamber subsequently closes and includes a number of small particles prev-

[12] "Not at the first demand," Mem, 164.

[13] *"Ne cédez pas à votre premier mouvement, ce pourrait être le bon."* Talleyrand is reputed to have said, *"Méfiez-vous des premiers mouvements, parce qu'ils sont les bons."* Mistrust your initial reactions because they are the right ones.

[14] *"Nul ne s'en doute."*

[15] Otto Isakower, "On the Exceptional Position of the Auditory Sphere."

alent in the environment that will make it easier for it to adopt a vertical or horizontal position. At the beginning of their existence these little animals 313
themselves gently introduce small grains of sand into their shell, then, by a physiological process, the chamber closes up. If you substitute small particles of iron filings for these grains of sand you can lead these charming little things to the end of the earth with an electromagnet or make them swim upside down.

This is the function of the *you* in man according to Mr. Isakower, and I would be happy to make an apologue of this in order to get the experience of the *you* understood, but at its lowest level. One totally misrecognizes its function if one neglects that it leads to the *you* as signifier.

Analysts – the path I'm following here isn't a solitary one – have emphasized yet another point. I can't dwell upon the relation that exists between the superego, which is nothing other than the function of the *you,* and the sentiment of reality. I don't need to insist on this for the simple reason that it's stressed on every page of President Schreber's observation. If the subject doesn't doubt the reality of what he hears, it's because of this characteristic of foreign body that the intimation of the delusional *you* presents. Need I invoke the philosophy of Kant, who recognizes a fixed reality only in the starry skies above our heads and the voice of conscience within?[16] This foreignness, like the character Tartuffe, is the true possessor of the house who readily says to the ego – *You will have to leave.* When the feeling of foreignness, strangeness, strikes somewhere, it's never on the side of the superego – it's always the ego that loses its bearings, it's the ego that enters the state of *you,* it's the ego that thinks it is in the state of the double, that is, expelled from the house, while the *you* remains the possessor of things.

That's our experience. We don't have to stop there all the same. But ultimately we have to be reminded of these truths if we are to understand where the structural problem lies.

It may seem strange to you that I mechanize things in this way, and perhaps you will imagine that I'm working with an elementary notion of the discourse I teach, that everything is contained within the relation between the *I* and the *you,* between the ego and the other.

This is what linguists – not to mention psychoanalysts – start mumbling about whenever they investigate the question of discourse. One may even regret seeing that Pichon, in the quite remarkable work I have mentioned, finds it necessary to remind us that for the basis of his definition of verbal distributories[17] – as he puts it – one has to set out from the idea that discourse is always addressed to an other, to the allocutor.[18] And so he begins

[16] Conclusion, *Critique of Practical Reason,* 258.

[17] *"répartitoire."* Damourette and Pichon define a "distributory" as a system of grammatical classification involving number, voice, person, etc.

[18] Damourette and Pichon define the "allocutor" as the second person singular.

314 with the simple locutory plane[19] found in the imperative, *Come here!* There's no need to say much about this – *Come here!* presupposes an *I*, it presupposes a *you*. There is moreover a narrative plane that is delocutory,[20] on which there's always I and you, but on which one is alluding to something else.

We can only think that one is not fully satisfied with such a distribution, since a new problem arises concerning the interrogative, which we shall introduce with a dissymmetry that forms a symmetry provided we regard the number three as the best.

If the narrative is *He's coming*, the interrogative is *Vient-il?*, *Is he coming?* But it's not so simple in this function. The proof is that one says *Le roi vient-il?*, *Is the King coming?*, which clearly shows that *t-il* is not quite the same subject in the interrogative as in the narrative. This may mean *there is a King, let the King come*, or *if the King comes*. The question becomes much more complex as soon as one approaches the concrete usage of language. The imperative *Viens!*, *Come here!*, creates the illusion of a symmetrical, bipolar presence of an *I* or a *you*. But are the *I* or the *you* also present when reference is made to this third object called a third person?

The said third person doesn't exist. I tell you this in passing so as to begin to unsettle some principles that are, certainly, very tenacious in your minds, owing to the elementary teaching of grammar. There is no third person, M. Benveniste has demonstrated this conclusively.[21]

Let's pause for a moment in order to place the question that the subject asks himself, or more exactly the question that *I* ask myself about what *I* am or may hope to be.

In our experience we only ever find it expressed by the subject outside himself and without his knowledge. It's a fundamental question, however, since it lies at the foundation of neurosis, which is where we have grabbed it by the ears.

We can see that this question, when it crops up, decomposes remarkably. It crops up in forms that have nothing interrogative about them, like *Puissé-je y arriver!*, *Would that I succeed!*, but which are in between an exclamation, a wish, an expression of doubt. If we want to give this a little bit more consistency, to express it in the delocutory and narrative register, in the indicative, notice how we quite naturally say – *Penses-tu réussir?*, *Do you really think you'll succeed?*

In short, I would like to convey to you a distribution of the functions of language other than by rambling on about the locution, the delocution, and

[19] The "locutory plane" is defined as "the state of language when the attention is focused on the state of mind of the person speaking." Glossary, *Essai de grammaire* 7:10.

[20] The "delocutory plane" is the state of language when the expression is focused on the thing being spoken of.

[21] See Emile Benveniste, "The Nature of Pronouns" and "Relationships of Person in the Verb."

the allocution – and to do it as a function of the question that is always latent, never raised.

If it is brought to light, if it emerges, it's always in connection with a mode of appearance of speech that we may in various ways call a mission, a mandate, a delegation, or a devolution, in reference to Heidegger. It's the foundation or foundational speech – *You are this, my woman, my master,* a thousand other things. This *You are this,* when I receive it, makes me in speech other than I am. 315

Who utters it? Is this *you* the same as the *you* swimming at large in the examples I have given you? Is this mission phenomenally primary or secondary in relation to the question?

The question tends to emerge when we have to answer to a mission. The third party at issue here – I point this out to you in passing – is nothing resembling an object. It's always the discourse itself to which the subject is referring. To the *you are my master* a certain *what am I?* responds – *What am I if that's what I am, if indeed I am it at all?* This *it* isn't the master taken as an object, it is the entire enunciation of the sentence that says *I am your master,* as if *your master* had a sense solely through the homage I receive from it. *What am I, if I'm what you've just been saying I am?*

There is a very nice prayer in Christian practice called the *Ave Maria.* Moreover, nobody suspects that this begins with the three letters that buddhist monks murmur all day long, AUM, there must be something radical in the order of the signifier here – but it's not important. *I salute you, Mary* and – according to another popular saying – *You will have a son without a husband,* as the song goes.[22] Moreover, this is not at all unrelated to the subject of President Schreber. The response is not at all, *I am what?,* but, *I am the maid-servant of the Lord, that it be done unto me according to your word. I am the maid-servant* simply means, *I abolish myself. What am I if I am she who you say I am? But that it be done unto me according to your word.*

Such is the order of response at issue in speech at its clearest. When the devolution presents itself in a sufficiently advanced manner, we can study the reciprocal relationships between the *you,* a foreign body, and the signifier that pins down, quilts, the subject.

I ask you to consider with me today some examples whose linguistic significance is completely tangible to us French.

3

What is the difference between *Thou art the one who wilt follow me everywhere* and *Thou art the one who will follow me everywhere?*[23]

[22] *"Je vous salue Marie / Vous aurez un fils sans mari."*

[23] *"Tu es celui qui me suivras partout"* and *"Tu es celui qui me suivra partout."* In

316 We have a principal clause in the second person, *Thou art the one. Who* is the screen. Will it or will it not let the *thou* pass into the relative? You see immediately that it is absolutely impossible to separate the *thou* from the sense of the signifier that follows. The permeability of the screen doesn't depend on the *thou,* but on the sense of *to follow* and on the sense that I place upon it, I who am speaking – this I who is speaking isn't necessarily me, it is perhaps whoever hears that with the echo that lies underneath the whole sentence – on the sense placed on this sentence.

Thou art the one who wilt follow me everywhere is at the very least an election, perhaps unique, a mandate, a devolution, a delegation, an investment. *Thou art the one who will follow me everywhere* is an observation, which we are inclined to feel as being on the side of a sorrowful observation. Of this *thou* who *will follow me everywhere* we shall rapidly have had a stomach full if this really is determinative in character. If in one case this tends towards the sacrament, in the other it would move fairly quickly over to the side of the persecution included in the very term *to follow.*

You will tell me yet again that the signifier in question is precisely a meaning. My retort is that the meaning of *secution* that is in question when I say *thou art the one who will follow me everywhere* to the one whom I recognize as my companion, and which may be the response to *you are my master* that we are always going on about, implies the existence of a certain mode of signifier. I shall materialize this for you immediately.

Suivre, to follow, may be ambiguous in French. It may not carry quickly enough in itself the mark of the signifying originality of the dimension of the true *suivre.* Follow what? This is what remains open. And this is precisely what I want you to observe – that it remains open. Follow your being, your message, your word, your group, what I represent? What is it? It's a knot, a point of contraction in a bundle of meanings, whether acquired by the subject or not. If the subject hasn't acquired it, he will hear *Tu es celui qui me suivra partout, Thou art the one who will follow me everywhere,* what the other has said to him *suivras, wilt follow,* that is, in quite a different sense, which changes even the significance of the *thou.*

The presence of the *thou,* in the *wilt follow,* affects the personization of the subject to whom one is addressing oneself. When I say, in a tangible example, *Thou art the woman who will not abandon me,* I display a much greater certainty concerning the conduct of my partner than when I say *Thou art the woman who wilt not abandon me.* To make you feel the difference which [in French] isn't heard, in the first case I exhibit a much greater certainty and in

the first of these two sentences the subordinate verb is in the second person singular, in the second it is in the third person singular. For what follows it is important to bear in mind that the two French sentences sound the same.

the second a much greater trust. This trust presupposes precisely a looser link between the person who appears in the *thou* of the first part of the sentence and the one who appears in the relative. It's precisely because this link 317
is loose that it appears in a special form of originality with respect to the signifier and because it presupposes that the person knows what sort of signifier is at issue in this *to follow,* that she assumes it. This also means that she may not follow.

I am going to select a reference that touches on the most radical characteristic of the relations between the *I* and the signifier. In the old Indo-European languages, and in certain remnants in living languages, there is what is called the middle voice. The middle voice is distinguished from the active and the passive in that, this is an approximation one learns at school, the subject performs the action in question for himself. There are for example two different forms for saying *I sacrifice,* according as one performs the sacrifice or offers the sacrifice.

Let's not enter into the nuances of the middle voice concerning verbs that have the three voices, because, not using it ourselves, our feel for it will always be poor. What is instructive is the verbs that have only a middle voice. Selecting them from an article by M. Benveniste on this subject in the *Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique* of January–March 1950, dedicated entirely to language, the following are middle verbs – to be born, to die, to follow or embrace a movement, to be master, to be lying down, to return to a familiar state, to enjoy or benefit, to suffer, to be patient, to be mentally agitated, to take measures – which is the *medeor* that is invested in you as doctors – to speak.[24] In short, this is the entire register at work precisely in analytic experience.

These verbs exist only in the middle voice in a number of languages. What do they have in common? It emerges on investigation that what they have in common is that the subject is constituted as such in the process or the state expressed by the verb.

Don't attach any importance to the terms *process* or *state* – the verbal function isn't easily apprehended in a category. The verb is a function in the sentence, nothing else. There is no difference between the name and the verb other than their function within the sentence. Substantives are able to express a process or state also. The implication of the subject is absolutely unchanged by the fact that the process or state concerned is expressed in verbal form. If it's expressed in verbal form, this is because it is the support of a number of signifying accents that place the sentence as a whole in a temporal mode.

The existence of distinct forms for the verbs in which the subject is constituted as such, as *I,* like the Latin *sequor* which, by virtue of the full sense of

[24] See "Active and Middle Voice in the Verb," 148.

318 the verb *to follow*, implies the presence of the *I* in the *secution*, gives us a clue to what is involved in the fact that in French the verb in the relative clause agrees or doesn't agree with the *thou* of the main clause. It will agree or not agree with the *thou*, depending on the way in which the *I* in question is involved, captivated, pinned down, caught up in the quilting I spoke of the other day, depending on the way in which, in the subject's total relationship to the discourse, the signifier latches on.

The entire context of *Thou art the one who wilt follow me* changes according to the accent placed on the signifier, according to the implications of the *wilt follow*, according to the mode of being that lies behind this *wilt follow*, according to the meanings the subject has coupled to a certain signifying register, according to the baggage with which the subject departs into the indetermination of the *what am I?* – and it matters little whether this baggage is primordial, acquired, secondary, defensive, fundamental, its origin matters little. We live with a number of responses, in general highly suspect, to *what am I?* If *I am a father* has a sense, it's a problematic sense. If it is common usage to tell oneself, *I am a professor*, this leaves completely open the question *professor of what?* If one tells oneself, among a thousand other identifications, *I am a Frenchman*, this presupposes the bracketing of everything the notion of belonging to France may represent. If you say *I am a Cartesian*, in most cases you haven't got a clue about what M. Descartes said because you have probably never opened him. When you say *I am the one who has clear ideas*, one has to ascertain why. When you say *I am the one who has character*, the whole world may rightly ask *which one?* And when you say *I always tell the truth*, well then, you're not afraid.

It's this relation to the signifier that determines the accent that the first part of the sentence, *Thou art the one who . . .*, will have for the subject according as the signifying part has been conquered and assumed or on the contrary *verworfen*, rejected by him.

I still want to give you some more examples before I leave you.

If I say to someone *tu es celui qui dois venir, thou art the one who must come*, the background of signifiers that this presupposes is no longer there if I say *Tu es celui qui doit arriver, Thou art the one who must arrive*, since this is simply to say that *you will arrive*, and this leaves it to be supposed – *Yes, but in what state!*[25]

Tu es celui qui veux ce qu'il veut, Thou art the one who wantst what he wants, means *You are an obstinate little person. Tu es celui qui veut ce qu'il veut, Thou art the one who wants what he wants*, means *You are the one who knows how to*

[25] The subordinate clauses in the two examples are in the second and third person respectively.

want. It is not necessarily a question of being the one who wilt follow me or not follow me, thou art the one who will follow his path to the end.

Tu es celui qui sais ce qu'il dit, Thou art the one who knowst what he is saying, isn't *the one who will follow his path to the end.*

The importance of these distinctions is to show that the change of emphasis, the fullness that *thou* confers on the other, which is also what he gets back, is essentially linked to the signifier. 319

4

What happens when the signifier in question, the organizing center, the point of significant convergence that it constitutes, is evoked but fails to appear [*fait défaut*]?

We can both deduce this from this approach and see it confirmed in our experience.

It's enough to situate our formula on the schema I have given you as being that of speech.[26] *Thou art the one who wilt follow me everywhere.* Naturally, the S and the O are always reciprocal, and insofar as the message we receive is that of the other that founds us, the O is at the level of the *thou,* the little *o'* at the level of *who . . . me,* and the S at the level of *wilt follow.*

What happens if the signifier which gives the sentence its weight and the *thou* its emphasis is lacking? if this signifier is heard, but nothing in the subject is able to respond to it? The function of the sentence is then reduced solely to the significance of the *thou,* a free signifier that is nowhere pinned down. There is no elective *thou.* The *thou* is precisely he to whom I address myself, nothing else. If I say *Thou art,* the *thou* is the one who dies.[27] This is exactly what one observes in Schreber's interrupted sentences, which stop precisely at the moment at which a signifier that remains problematic is on the point of emerging, charged with a definite meaning, but one doesn't know which – a paltry, derisory meaning, which indicates the gap, the hole, where nothing meaningful is able to respond in the subject.

It is precisely insofar as this signifier is interpellated, evoked, involved, that there emerges around it the pure and simple apparatus of the relation to the other, the empty muttering – *Thou art the one who. . . .* This is the very model of the interrupted sentence of President Schreber who, of course, produces the other's presence, made all the more radical, all the more radically other, by the fact that there is nothing that places him at a level of the signifier with which the subject would in any way be in harmony. Schreber states

[26] See above, chap. 1, p. 14.
[27] "*Tu es,*" "you are," and "*tuez,*" "kill," are homophonic.

it – if the Other abandons him for one instant, drops him, a veritable decomposition occurs. This decomposition of the signifier occurs around a point of interpellation constituted by the lack, the disappearance, the absence of a certain signifier to the extent that at a given moment it is interpellated as such.

320 Let's suppose that it's a question of *wilt follow me*. All meanings nearby will be evoked, there will be *I shall be ready, I shall be obedient, I shall be dominated, I shall be frustrated, I shall be whisked away, I shall be alienated, I shall be influenced*. But the *wilt follow* in the full sense won't be there.

Which meaning is it that, in the case of President Schreber, has been drawn near to like this? Which signifier has thus been interpellated, the lack of which has produced such an upheaval in a man who till then had come to terms with the apparatus of language perfectly well, insofar as he establishes a normal relation with his fellows? Which is the signifier whose absence can explain how this constant repetition of speech becomes for him the elective mode of relating to another, how otherness is reduced to the unique register of absolute otherness, breaking, dissipating the otherness of all the other beings in his surroundings?

This is the question we shall stop at today.

I point out to you here and now, so as not to leave you completely up in the air, the direction in which we shall be looking. The key words, the signifying words of Schreber's delusion, *soul murder, nerve-contact, voluptuousness, blessedness,* and a thousand other terms, revolve around a fundamental signifier, which is never mentioned and whose presence is in command, is determinant. He says it himself. I shall give you an indication and, to reassure you by showing you that we are in our own domain, I shall tell you that in Schreber's entire work his father is cited only once.

This is on the subject of his most well-known, if not his most important, work, which is called *Manual of Bedroom Gymnastics*.[28] It's a book that I did everything to obtain, full of little diagrams. The only time Schreber mentions his father by name is when he goes and looks in this book to see whether what the voices tell him about the typical position of men and women when they make love really is true. You will admit that it is an amusing idea to go in search of this in a *Manual of Bedroom Gymnastics*. Everyone knows that love is an ideal sport, but all the same.

However amusing this way of approaching it may be, this must nevertheless put you on the track of what, after having approached, from the direction of the coherence of the sentence, the problem of what results from a certain lack at the level of the signifier, I shall bring along for you next time.

13 June 1956

[28] I.e., *Medical Indoor Gymnastics*. See Mem, 166.

XXIII

321

The highway and the signifier "being a father"

Thou art the one who followst me the best.
Thou art the one who follows me like a little dog.
Thou art the one who did follow me that day.
Thou art the one who didst follow me through trials.
Thou art the one who followst the law . . . the text.
Thou art the one who follows the mob.
Thou art the one who didst follow me.
Thou art the one who did follow me.
Thou art the one who art.
Thou art the one who is.[1]

1

Your trade of psychoanalyst is well worth your pausing for a moment at what speaking means.[2] Though it's of a slightly different nature, this is an exercise that borders on mathematical games, which are never given enough attention, for they have always been used for training the mind.

Here, this goes beyond a bit of entertainment. This isn't something that can be totally objectified, formalized. This is at the level of what conceals itself, it's here that you pause the least willingly, and yet it's here that is found the essential in what happens when you are in a relationship with the discourse of another.

Let's pick up from where we had got to last time, with the future tense of the verb *to follow – Thou art the one who wilt follow me, Thou art the one who will follow me.*

We began to punctuate the genuine double senses that arise according as 322
one passes through the screen of *the one who* or not. The demonstrative is nothing other than the famous third person. In all languages this person is made out of demonstratives, and this is the reason it's not a person of the verb. There remain the two other persons, the *thou* to whom I address myself and in the background the presence of an ego more or less presenced – I would even say invoked, provided we give this term its full sense.

[1] *"Tu es celui qui me suis le mieux," "Tu es celui qui me suit comme un petit chien," "Tu es celui qui me suivait ce jour-là," "Tu es celui qui me suivais à travers les épreuves," "Tu es celui qui suis la loi . . . le texte," "Tu es celui qui suit la foule," "Tu es celui qui m'as suivi," "Tu es celui qui m'a suivi," "Tu es celui qui es," "Tu es celui qui est."*

[2] *"ce que parler veut dire"*; this also means the exact value of what is said.

I emphasized the opposition that exists between the character of inevitability, the simple observation, of *Thou art the one who will follow me* in the third person, and the mandate, the delegation, the interpellation, that can be heard in *Thou art the one who wilt follow me*. I could equally have contrasted prediction and foresight, a difference that is perceptible only in a sentence embodying the message. If we abstractify, prediction becomes something different.

Thou art the one who didst follow me and *Thou art the one who did follow me* offer an analogous divergence. The tense of the verb isn't solely reducible to the consideration of past, present, and future, it's involved in quite a different way when the second person is there. I should say that in the former case, where the *didst follow me* is in the second person, an action in time is involved, a temporalized action, considered in the act of being accomplished. In the other, *Thou art the one who did follow me,* it's a perfect tense, a completed thing, so much so that one may even say that it borders on a definition – *Of the others, thou art the one who did follow me.*

There is without any doubt a rule here, but one needs to give numerous examples of it if one is to succeed in grasping it. The difference between *Thou art the one who followst me the best* and *Thou art the one who follows me like a little dog* is there to enable you to have a go at the exercises that follow, what it is appropriate to put in the spaces.

Thou art the one who did follow me that day. Thou art the one who, at one time, didst follow me through trials. Between these two expressions there is all the difference that there is between constancy and faithfulness. Let's even say, if the word *constancy* is perhaps ambiguous, all the difference between permanence and faithfulness.

The *me* doesn't need to be there. *Thou art the one who followst the law, Thou art the one who followst the text* seem to me to be inscribed differently from *Thou art the one who follows the mob,* while being perfectly valid sentences from the point of view of the signifier, that is, as organic groups whose significant value is organized from the beginning to the conclusion.

MR. PUJOL – *They're not identified phonetically, but only orthographically.*

323 These grouped examples don't seem to me to be too contrived to be valid. These differences don't exist without a reason.

M. PUJOL – *In* Tu es celui qui m'as suivi, Thou art the one who didst follow me, *it's the other who inserts the* s, *it's not the speaker.*

Here you've come to the heart of the matter, in taking up what I've just indicated – that this *thou* to whom I address myself from the place I myself am in as Other with a big O is in no way my pure and simple correlate. These examples demonstrate that there is something else beyond the *thou,* which is the *ego* that sustains the discourse of the one who follows me when he follows my speech, for example. It's precisely the greater or lesser intensity, the greater

or lesser presence of this *ego*, that decides between the two forms. Of course, it's he who sanctions, and it's because the sanctioning depends on him that we're applying ourselves to these examples. This *ego* is beyond this *thou art the one*, which is the mode in which he is called to orientate himself. In one case it's *he* who is going to follow, and in effect the words *the one* becomes null and void – he will follow, *he* will follow, it's *he* who will follow. In the other, it's not *he* who is in question, it's *I*.

In a word, it's a matter of showing you that the support of this *you*, whatever form it takes in my experience, is an *ego*, the ego expressing it, but that the *ego* can never be taken to sustain it completely. Whenever I make an appeal to the other via this message, this delegation, whenever I explicitly designate him as the one who must act, the one who is to act, but even more, as the one to whom I announce what he is going to be, no doubt I sustain him but there remains something completely uncertain and problematic in this fundamental communication, which is the announcement, not to say the annunciation.

The *I* is essentially fleeting in nature and never entirely sustains the *thou*.

2

Indeed it's one of the most profound characteristics of the mental foundation of the Judaeo-Christian tradition that against it speech clearly profiles the being of the *I* as its ultimate ground. On all the essential questions the subject always finds himself in a position, summoned, to justify himself as *I*. The *I* who says, *I am the one who am*, this *I*, absolutely alone, is the one who radically sustains the *thou* in his interpellation. That's all the difference there is between the god of the tradition we come from and the god of the Greek tradition. I wondered whether the Greek god is capable of proffering himself 324
in the mode of any *I*. Would he say, *I am the one who is?* This is out of the question, however. The super-attenuated form of the Greek god isn't something that there is any reason to laugh at, or to believe that it's situated on the path to the atheistic disappearance of God. It's rather the god Voltaire was interested in to the point of regarding Diderot as a cretin, the god of deism, who is of the half-flesh, half-fish order of the *I am the one who is*.

Your minds won't readily dwell on the god of Aristotle, because this has become unthinkable for us. But still, try to get yourselves to meditate – a mode of this *medeor* I was speaking to you about last time, and which is the original verb of your medical function – for a second on what the relationship to the world might have been for a disciple of Aristotle's for whom God was the most immutable sphere in the sky. He isn't a god who announces himself through the word, like the one we were evoking a second ago. He is that part of the starry sphere that includes the fixed stars, he is that sphere in the world

that doesn't move. This obviously involves a relationship to the other that to us is foreign and unthinkable and much more distant than the one put into play, for example, in the punitive fantasm [*la fantaisie punitive*].

Nobody dwells on this – it's because at the heart of the religious thought that has formed us there is the idea of making us live in fear and trembling, that the coloration of guilt is so fundamental in our psychological experience of the neuroses, without its being possible for all that to prejudge what they are in another cultural sphere. This coloration is even so fundamental that it was by its means that we explored the neuroses and noticed that they were structured in a subjective and intersubjective mode. This is why there is every reason to wonder whether the tradition that announces itself in the expression which is, we're told, flanked by a little tree on fire – *I am the one who am*, doesn't fundamentally bear upon our relationship to the other. We're not so far from our subject matter. It's a question of this in President Schreber – of a mode of constructing the Other-God.

The word *atheism* has quite a different sense for us from that which it could have had in a reference to the Aristotelian divinity, for example, where it's a question of a relationship to a superior entity [*étant*], to the supreme entity. Our own atheism is located in another perspective – it's linked to this always elusive aspect of the *I* of the other.

An other who announces himself as *I am the one who am* is by virtue of this sole fact a god beyond, a hidden god, and a god who under no circumstances unveils his face. Precisely from the Aristotelian perspective it could be said
325 that our own point of departure is already atheistic. This is an error, but from that perspective it's strictly true, and in our experience it's no less so. Whatever announces itself as *I am the one who am* is totally problematic, not sustained, and almost unsustainable, or only sustainable by an idiot.

Think about the *I am* of *I am the one who am*. This is what makes for the problematic nature of the relation to the other in our own tradition. It's also what in its own right characterizes our relationship to entities, to objects, and our own science – much more profoundly than its so-called experimental nature. The ancients didn't experiment any less than we do, they experimented on what interested them. This isn't the issue. It's in the way in which we place others, little others, in the light of the ultimate, absolute Other that we are distinctive in the way we fragment the world, break it down into pieces. The ancients on the other hand approached it as something that was graded on a scale of consistency of entities. Our position radically calls into question the very being of what announces itself as *being*, and not as an *entity*.[3]

We are no longer in a position to reply to him who says, *I am the one who*

[3] *"être"* and *"étants,"* the standard translations of Heidegger's *"Sein"* and *"Seiendes,"* which were translated in *Being and Time* as *being* and *entities*.

am. What are we to be able to reply to *the one who am?* We know only too well. A birdbrain – in fact we get lots of flights of these birdbrains coming in from the other side of the Atlantic – whom I met recently remarked to me – *But still, all the same, I am me!* To him that seemed to be the ultimate certainty. I assure you that I didn't instigate this, and that I wasn't there to make anti-psychological propaganda.

As a matter of fact, if there is one minimal thing that is obvious in experience – I won't say analytic experience, but simply in anyone's internal experience – it's that we are certainly even less the ones who are,[4] for being well aware what a racket, what frightful chaos permeated by various objurgations, we experience within ourselves at every turn, at every instant.

I've guided you by the hand long enough for you to perceive that speech, and especially this essential form of speech in which we announce ourselves as a *thou,* is a complex mode that is far from reducible to the intuition of two centers exchanging signals. As the relation of subject to subject is structured in a complex mode by the properties of language, the specific role the signifier plays in it has to be located therein.

I would like to return to some simple properties of the said signifier. The radicalism I showed you on the subject of the relation of subject to subject extends to an investigation proceeding in the direction of the Other as such, which shows that strictly speaking it cannot be grasped – it doesn't sustain, it can never totally sustain, the wager that we offer it. Inversely, the point of 326
view I am trying to maintain before you involves a certain materialism of the elements in question, in the sense that the signifiers are well and truly embodied, materialized, they are words that wander about and as such they play their role of fastening together.

To give you a rest, I shall now offer an analogy. An analogy is not an argument,[5] but the examples I have used have been of a rigorous quality, like this first scene of *Athaliah,* where I showed you that the development consisted in substituting for the interlocutor, Abner, *the fear of God,* which has no more of a relationship to the fears and the voice of Abner than has the *didst follow me.*

An aside. I recently happened to read an article in English on Racine which defines the originality of his tragedy by the claim that he had the art, the skill, to introduce into this setting, almost without his public's knowledge, characters of high whoredom.[6] You see the distance between Anglo-Saxon

[4] *"sommes,"* first-person plural.

[5] *"Comparison n'est pas raison,"* a French proverb.

[6] See "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason Since Freud," E, 503 n.1 / 176 n.17. The reference is to a book review by Geoffrey Brereton, "Keeping up with Racine," *New Statesman and Nation,* Saturday May 19, 1956, p. 575. Brereton's term is "extreme bitchery."

culture and our own. The fundamental mark of *Andromaque, Iphigénie,* etc. is whoredom. It is pointed out in passing that Freudians have made an extraordinary discovery in Racine's tragedies. I haven't yet noticed this, I'm sorry to say. It's true that in the wake of Freud one has sought exemplification of a certain number of analytic relations in the plays of Shakespeare, and not without some self-satisfaction. But as for our own cultural references, they have been slow to appear. It may be time to start, one might perhaps find something to illustrate, as I did last time, the problems that have arisen over the use of the signifier.

Let's turn to an example I want to give you to get you to understand the gravity, the inertia specific to the signifier in the field of relations with the Other.

3

The road, now there's a signifier worth taking as such – the road, the highway you travel down in your various means of locomotion, the road that goes from Mantes to Rouen, for example. I won't say *Paris,* which is a special case.

The existence of a highway between Mantes and Rouen is a fact that all on its own presents itself to the researcher's meditation.

Suppose that – as happens in the south of England, where you have these
327 highways only in an exceedingly parsimonious way – to get from Mantes to Rouen you have to go via a series of minor roads, such as the one that goes from Mantes to Vernon, then from Vernon to wherever. Having had this experience is enough to make one aware that a succession of minor roads and a highway are not at all the same thing. Not only does it slow you down in practice, but it completely changes the meaning of your behavior concerning what happens between the point of departure and the point of arrival – *a fortiori,* if you imagine an entire region covered by a network of minor roads without a highway anywhere.

The highway is something that exists in itself and is immediately recognizable. When you emerge from a path, a thicket, a shoulder, or a minor local road, you know immediately that you have come to a highway. The highway isn't something that extends from one point to another, it's a dimension spread out in space, the presencing of an original reality.

If I take the highway as an example, it's because, as Monsieur de la Palice would say, it's a path of communication.[7]

[7] *Une vérité de Monsieur de la Palice* is a purely formal truth which is amusing because self-evident.

You may get the impression that there is a banal metaphor here, that the highway is only a means of going from one point to another. Mistake.

A highway is not at all the same as the track made by the movement of elephants through an equatorial forest. As important, so it seems, as these tracks are, they are nothing other than the passage of elephants. Undoubtedly this isn't nothing, since it's supported by the physical reality of elephantine migrations. Moreover, this passage has a direction. I don't know whether these pathways lead, as is sometimes claimed, to cemeteries, which appear to be quite mythical – it seems that they're rather bone depots – but the elephants certainly don't languish about their roads. The difference between the highway and the elephant track is that we stop along ours – and the Parisian experience comes to the foreground – we stop along the way to the point of forming agglomerations and rendering these places of passage so viscous as to be virtually impassable.

A great many other things occur on highways.

It sometimes happens that we take a trip down the highway intentionally and on purpose so as then to turn around and come back again. This movement of departure and return is also quite essential, and it puts us on the track of the evident fact that the highway is a site around which not only all sorts of dwellings, of places of abode, agglomerate but which also, qua signifier, polarizes meanings.

Houses are built alongside the highway, and they rise up and spread out 328
with no other function than to be looking out at the highway. It's precisely because the highway is an undeniable signifier in human experience that it marks a stage in history.

The Roman road, the road taken and named as such, has in human experience quite a different consistency from those paths, those trails, even the ones with staging posts, of rapid communication, that in the East succeeded for a time in holding empires together. Everything touched by the Roman road adopted a style that goes much further than what is immediately accessible as an effect of the highway. Wherever it went, it left traces that are practically irremovable. Roman imprints, with everything that developed around them, are essential – as are, moreover, interhuman relationships of law, the mode of transmitting the written thing, as well as the mode of promoting the human appearance, statues. M. Malraux may rightly say that there is nothing to retain in Roman sculpture from the point of view of the eternal art museum, it remains no less true that the very notion of a human being is linked to the vast diffusion of statues in Roman sites.

The highway is thus a particularly tangible example of what I'm saying when I speak of the function of the signifier insofar as it polarizes meanings, hooks onto them, groups them in bundles. There is a real antinomy between the function of the signifier and the induction it exerts on the grouping of

meanings. The signifier polarizes. It's the signifier that creates the field of meanings.

Compare three maps in a large atlas.

On a map of the physical world you will see things inscribed in nature, ready to play a role, certainly, but still in their natural state. Compare a political map – there you will find, in the form of traces, of alluvion, of sediments, the entire history of human meanings maintaining themselves in a kind of equilibrium and tracing out these enigmatic lines that are the political boundaries of lands. Take a map of the major paths of communication and see how a road that runs through countries linking one river basin to another, one plain to another, crossing a mountain chain, crossing bridges, organizing itself, has been traced out from South to North. You will notice that it's this map that best expresses the role of the signifier in man's relationship to the land.

Don't act like the person who marvelled at the fact that water courses pass precisely through towns. It would be proof of analogous foolishness not to see that towns have formed, crystallized, been established at road junctions.
329 It's where they cross, with a bit of fluctuation moreover, that what becomes a center of meanings, a human agglomeration, a town, comes about historically, with all that is imposed upon it by this dominance of the signifier.

What happens when we don't have a highway and we are forced to combine minor paths, more or less separate modes of grouping meaning, with one another when we go from one point to another? To go from this point to that point we shall have a choice between different components of the network, we can take this route, or that route, for various reasons – for the sake of convenience, in order to roam, or simply because of a mistake at a crossroads.

Several things can be deduced from this, which explain Schreber's delusion to us.

Which signifier is it that is in abeyance in his inaugural crisis? It's the signifier *procreation* in its most problematic form, the one that Freud himself evokes in relation to obsessionals, which isn't the form *being a mother* but the form *being a father*.

This is an appropriate place to pause for a moment to think about the fact that the function of *being a father* is absolutely unthinkable in human experience without the category of the signifier.

What can it mean *to be a father?* You are familiar with the learned discussions, ethnological or other, one immediately enters into to establish whether primitives who say that women conceive when they're placed in such and such a spot possess the scientific notion that women become fertilized once they have duly copulated. These inquiries have nevertheless seemed to some to be perfectly foolish, since it's difficult to conceive of human animals stupid

enough to fail to notice that when one wants to have kids one has to copulate. This is not the point. The point is that the sum of these facts – of copulating with a woman, that she then carries something within her womb for a certain period, that this product is finally expelled – will never lead one to constitute the notion of what it is *to be a father*. I'm not even speaking about the entire cultural cluster implied in the term *being a father*, I'm simply speaking of what it is *to be a father* in the sense of procreation.

A rebound effect is necessary for the fact that man copulates to receive the sense it really has, but to which no imaginary access is possible, that the child is as much his as the mother's. And for this effect of action in return to occur, the elaboration of the notion of *being a father* must have been raised by work that has taken place through an entire cluster of cultural exchanges to the state of major signifier, and this signifier must have its own consistency and status. The subject may well know that copulating is *really* at the origin of procreation, but the function of procreation as a signifier is something else.

I grant you that I haven't yet completely lifted the veil – I'll leave that for 330
next time. In order for procreation to have its full sense there must also be, in both sexes, an apprehension, a relation with the experience of death, which gives the term *to procreate* its full sense. Moreover, paternity and death are two signifiers that Freud links in relation to obsessionals.

The signifier *being a father* is what creates the highway in sexual relations with a woman. If the highway doesn't exist, one finds oneself faced with a number of elementary minor paths, copulation and then the woman's pregnancy.

To all appearances President Schreber lacks this fundamental signifier called *being a father*. This is why he had to make a mistake, become confused, to the point of thinking of acting like a woman. He had to imagine himself a woman and bring about in pregnancy the second part of the path that, when the two were added together, was necessary for the function of *being a father* to be realized.

The experience of the couvade, as problematic as it seems to us, may be located as an uncertain, incomplete assimilation of the function of *being a father*. It does effectively answer to a need imaginarily – or ritually or otherwise – to realize the second part of the path.

To take my metaphor a little bit further I shall say to you – what do those who are called road-users do when there is no highway and it's a question of taking minor roads to go from one point to another? They follow the signs erected by the side of the road. That is, where the signifier isn't functioning, it starts speaking on its own, at the edge of the highway. Where there is no road, written words appear on signs. This, perhaps, is the verbal function of auditory verbal hallucinations – they are the signs along their little path.

If we suppose that the signifier continues on its way alone whether we pay

attention to it or not, we must admit that within us, more or less eluded by the maintenance of the meanings that interest us, there is a kind of buzzing, a veritable pandemonium, which we have been bewildered by ever since childhood. Why not imagine that, at the precise moment at which the link between what Saussure calls the *amorphous mass* of the signifier and the amorphous mass of meanings and interests comes apart and is revealed to be deficient, the continuous current of the signifier once again assumes its independence? And then, in this buzzing that people who are hallucinating so often depict to you on this occasion, in this continuous murmur of these
331 sentences, of these commentaries, which are nothing but the infinity of these minor paths, the signifiers begin to talk, to sing on their own. The continuous murmur of these sentences, of these commentaries, is nothing other than the infinity of these minor paths.

There's still a chance that they will vaguely indicate the right direction.

Next time I shall try to show how everything that in delusion is orchestrated and organized according to different spoken registers reveals, in its layering and in its texture, the fundamental polarization of the suddenly encountered, suddenly observed, lack of a signifier.

20 June 1956

XXIV

"Thou art"

FORMS OF GAPS
THE VERB *TO BE*
FROM THE *THOU* TO THE OTHER
THE TORTOISE AND THE TWO DUCKS
THE ONSET OF PSYCHOSIS

I shall begin my little weekly discourse by telling you off – but when all is said and done, when I see you there, all so kindly lined up so late in the year, it's rather this verse that comes to mind – *It's you who are the faithful ones. . . .*

I shall nevertheless resume my plan again, which is related to the last meeting of the Société [française de psychanalyse].

It's clear that while the paths I take you down lead somewhere, they're not so well beaten that you have no difficulty in showing that you recognize the place where someone is moving along. Nevertheless this is no reason to keep quiet – even if it were only to show that you have some idea of the question. By speaking you might display some confusion, but you gain nothing from remaining silent. You will tell me that what you gain from it is that it's as a group that you act like duffers and that when all is said and done it's much more bearable in this form.

On this subject one can't but be struck by what certain philosophers, who are precisely those of the moment and to whom from time to time I discreetly refer, have formulated – that man, of all entities, is an open entity. The openness of being fascinates anyone who begins to think. This kind of panic statement that defines our time cannot fail to appear at certain moments as a balance to and a compensation for what the colloquial term *bouché, duffer,* expresses, namely, as is sententiously observed, a divorce between the prejudices of science where man is concerned and the experience of man in what is supposed to be his authenticity. These people strive to rediscover that 334
surely what is at the bottom of thought isn't the privilege of thinkers, but that in the slightest act of his existence the human being, however much he may err as to his own existence, nevertheless remains, precisely when he wishes to articulate something, an open being.

This is the level at which those who really think, who say it, are said to maintain themselves. Rest assured in any case that I'm not at this level, even though certain people try to circulate the contrary idea. At the very least, this

isn't the level at which the reality in question is situated and conceptualized when we are exploring analytic matters.

No doubt it's impossible to say anything sensible about this, unless one resituates it in what we shall call the gaps of being. But these gaps have assumed certain forms, and this is where there is something valuable in analytic experience – it's surely in no way closed to the radically questioning and questionable side of the human position, but it contributes some determinants. Of course, to take these determinants as determined is to propel psychoanalysis down the path of the prejudices of science, which lets the entire essence of human reality escape. But by simply maintaining things at this level, and not placing them too high, either, it is possible to give our experience the right tone of what I call mediocre reason.

Next year – François Perrier's lecture propelled me into this, as I wasn't sure what I would do – I shall take as the theme of the seminar the object relation or purported relation. Perhaps I shall introduce this by a comparison between the objects of phobia and fetishes, two series of objects. You can already see straight off how different they are in their catalogue.

For today we shall pick things up again where we left them last time.

1

Regarding the way I have introduced these lessons on the signifier someone said to me – *You start from a long way off, no doubt, it's tiring, one doesn't properly see what it is that you're driving at, but still, retrospectively, one can see that there was some relationship between what you started with and where you ended up*. This way of putting things proves that nothing is lost in going back over the same ground one more time.

The question is restricted. I'm not claiming to be covering the entire subject of a thing as enormous as the case of President Schreber, or, *a fortiori*,
335 the field of paranoia in its entirety. I claim to be throwing light on only a small field. I'm applying myself to certain phenomena without reducing them to a mechanism foreign to them, without forcing them into the categories currently in use, into the *Psychology* chapter of the philosophy program. I'm trying to refer them to slightly more elaborate notions concerning the reality of language. I claim that this effort is of a kind to allow the question of origins, in the precise sense of the determinism of or of the occasion for the onset of psychosis, to be raised otherwise, which will ultimately include entirely etiological determinations.

I ask the question – what is required in order that it speak [*ça parle*]?

This is in effect one of the most essential phenomena of psychosis. Expressing it thus is already of a kind to remove some false problems, namely those that are raised when one says that in psychosis the id [*le ça*] is conscious. We

increasingly dispense with this reference, about which Freud always said that, literally, no one knew where to place it. From the economic point of view nothing is more uncertain than its effect – it's entirely contingent. We are therefore placing ourselves squarely in the Freudian tradition in saying that after all the only thing that we have to think through is that it [*ça*] speaks.

It speaks. But why does it speak? Why is it that, for the subject himself, it speaks? Why is it that it presents itself as speech, and that it, not he, is this speech? We've already raised this question at the level of the *thou,* of the distant *thou* as someone pointed out to me, which I was getting at in trying to symbolize the signifier through the example of the highway. We shall return to this *thou* point once again, since it was also upon this that the progress we made last time, as well as certain of the objections that were made to me, were centered.

Let's pause at this *thou,* if there is any truth whatsoever in my claim that the originary apprehension of what I am leading you towards and asking you to give some reflection to must be located around a thorough study of its function.

Last time someone made the grammatical objection to me that there was something arbitrary in bringing together *Thou art the one who wilt follow me* and *Thou art the one who will follow me,* the elements not being homologous. It's not the same *the one* in question in the two cases, since the former could also be elided, leaving *Thou wilt follow me.*

One may make the initial observation that *Thou wilt follow me* is a commandment. *Thou art the one who wilt follow me,* if we understand it in its full sense, isn't a commandment but a mandate. It implies, in the presence of the other, something expanded that presumes presence. An entire universe instituted by discourse is presumed here, within which *thou art the one who wilt follow me.* 336

Let's begin by pausing first at this *thou,* making the remark, which looks self-evident but is rather rare, that the said *thou* has no literal meaning.

This isn't merely because I address it indifferently to everyone – as a matter of fact I address it to myself as well as to you, and virtually to all kinds of things, I may thou something that is as foreign as is possible to me, I can say thou to an animal, I can say thou to an inanimate object – this isn't the point. Look closely at the formal, grammatical aspect of the thing. This is, moreover, what every kind of usage of the signifier comes down to for you. You will place meanings there despite yourselves. One may say that you believe in grammar! Your entire schooling amounts, as intellectual gain, to your having been made to believe in grammar. To be sure, you weren't told as much, since the aim would not have been achieved.

Let's therefore pause at some sentences like the following – *If you poke your nose outside you'll get shot down.* Or again – *When you see the bridge you*

turn right.[1] Here the *you* doesn't have the subjective value of any reality of the other whatsoever, it's entirely equivalent to a site or a point – it introduces a condition or temporality, it has the value of a conjunction.

This may seem rash to you, but I assure you that if you spoke a bit of Chinese you would be convinced of it. One can have a lot of fun with Chinese characters, with this one for example, which is the sign for a woman and the sign for a mouth. The *you* is someone one addresses oneself to in giving him an order, that is, as befits speaking to women. One may say a thousand other things, so let's not delay, and let's stay with the *you*. The *you* may be used in this form to formulate the expression *as if*, and in another form it's used unambiguously to formulate a *when* or an *if*, introducing a conditional.

If this thing is less apparent in our languages, and if we have some resistance to understanding it and to acknowledging it in the examples I've just given, this is solely a function of the prejudices of grammar, which prevent you from hearing. The artifices of etymological and grammatical analysis force you to insert the second person singular into this *you*. Of course, it is the second person singular, but it's a matter of knowing what it's used for. In other words, our *you* is related to elements existing in languages that are
337 described as having no inflection and that for us have the advantage of serving to open up our minds a bit. They do in fact have particles at their disposal, which are the curious signifiers whose usage, like that of our *you*, is singularly multiple and sometimes so broad as to create a degree of confusion in our descriptive grammars. Moreover, one would only need to write the least bit phonetically to observe that differences in tonality or accent of the signifier *you* have effects that go entirely beyond the identification of the person and are completely different from this from the point of view of meaning.

Attributing autonomy to the *you* as signified isn't without its difficulties. Let's say that in general it has the value of an introduction, of a protasis as we say, that which is placed before. This is the most general way of designating what precedes the statement [*énoncé*] of what it is that gives the sentence its importance.

There would be many other things to say about this if we went into the details. Much use would have to be made of expressions like this *you've only got to . . .* which we use to get rid of our interlocutor. It's something that has so little to do with *only* that the lapsus quite spontaneously slides into *to do this*. It's turned into something that declines, that is inflected – the *you've only got to . . .* does not have the value of reducing this something that allowed some very enlightening semantic remarks.

What's important is that you grasp that the *you* is a long way from having

[1] *"Si tu risques un oeil au-dehors, on va te descendre"* and *"Tu vois le pont, alors tu tournes à droite."*

a univocal value and is therefore a long way from permitting us to hypostatize the other. The *you* is in the signifier what I call a way of hooking the other, of hooking him in discourse, of fastening meaning to him. It should in no way be confused with the allocutor, that is, he to whom one is speaking. This is obvious, as it's very often absent. In imperatives, where the allocutor is implied in the most manifest of ways, and around which a certain register of language known as the *simple locutory* has been defined, the *you* doesn't appear. There is a sort of limit that begins at the signal – I mean the articulated signal. *Fire!* is undeniably a sentence, and one only has to utter it to appreciate that this is something that provokes a reaction. Then there is the imperative *Come here!* which necessitates nothing. One stage further on and the *you* is implicated, for example, in that order in the future tense I was speaking about before, this *you* which is a hooking-up [*accrochage*] in discourse, a way of situating it in the curve of meaning that Saussure represents for us, parallel to this curve of the signifier.[2] The *you* is the hooking of the other in the waters of meaning.

In the final analysis, if we pursue our apprehension, or our metaphor, to its radical end, this term that is used to identify the other at a point in these waters is a form of punctuation.

Reflect on this fact, which is made particularly evident in unsectioned lan- 338
guages, that punctuation is what plays the most decisive role of hooking up, so much so that a classical text may vary in its entirety according as you place it at one point or another. I would even say that this variability is used to increase the richness of interpretation, the variety in the sense of a text. All those interventions known as commentaries in relation to traditional texts play precisely upon the way punctuation is apprehended or fixed in any given case.

The question is this – if the *you* is a signifier, a punctuation by which the other is secured at a point of meaning, what is required to elevate it to subjectivity? This *you*, unsecured in the substratum of discourse, in its pure carriage – this *you*, which by itself isn't so much what designates the other as what enables us to act upon him, but which also is always present in us in a state of suspension, comparable in every way to these otoliths I spoke about the other day, which enable us, with a bit of guile, to conduct little crustaceans about at will with an electromagnet[3] – this *you* which for us, insofar as we leave it free and in suspension within our own discourse, is always liable to exercise this conduction about which we can do nothing but oppose it and respond to it – what is required to elevate this *you* to subjectivity so that, in its form as signifier, present in discourse, it becomes the supposed support

[2] See above, chap. 21, p. 261.
[3] See above, chap. 22, p. 276.

of something that is comparable to our *ego* and yet isn't our *ego*, that is to say, the myth of an other?

This is the question that interests us, since it isn't so astonishing to hear people speaking their internal discourse out loud in the manner of psychotics, a little bit more than we do ourselves. The phenomena of flight of ideas were observed long ago. They're comparable to the testimony we gather from a psychotic in every way, except that the subject doesn't believe himself to be under the influence of a scrambling device.

We shall simply say that this *you* presupposes an other who, in short, is beyond him. How does this come about? Our next step should be situated around an analysis of the verb *to be*.[4]

2

We can't exhaust everything proposed to us concerning the analysis of this
339 verb *to be* by the philosophers who have centered their meditation on the question of *Dasein*, and especially Mr. Heidegger, who has begun to consider it from the grammatical and etymological angle in texts that are quite faithfully expounded in several articles that Monsieur Jean Wahl has recently devoted to them.

Mr. Heidegger attaches a great deal of importance to the signifier at the level of the analysis of the word and of conjugation, as it's usually called – let us more accurately say declension. In German as in French this famous verb *to be* is far from being a simple verb and even from being one single verb. It's evident that the form *suis, am,* doesn't come from the same root as *es, art, est, is, êtes,* [*you*] *are,* and as *fut,* [*it*] was, nor is there any strict equivalence to the form *été, been.* Whereas *fut* has an equivalent in Latin, as does *suis* and the series of *est, été* comes from another source, from *stare.* The distribution is equally different in German where *sind,* [*they*] *are,* is grouped with *bist, art,* whereas in French the second person is grouped with the third. Three roots have been more or less uncovered for all the European languages, those that correspond to *sommes,* [*we*] *are, est* and *fut,* which has been compared with the root *phusis* in Greek, which is related to the idea of life and growth. As to the others, Mr. Heidegger insists upon the two aspects, *Sten* which would be closer to *stare,* to stand alone, and *Verbahen,* to last, to endure, this sense being nevertheless attached to the source *phusis.* According to Mr. Heidegger, the idea of standing erect, the idea of life and the idea of lasting, enduring, is therefore what an etymological analysis combined with a gram-

[4] *"être"* is both a substantive and an infinitive. The substantive is translated into English as *being,* the infinitive as *to be*

matical analysis yields, and it's out of a kind of reduction or of indetermination cast over these senses as a whole that the notion of being emerges.

I summarize, so as to give you some idea of the thing. I must say that an analysis of this order is rather inclined to elide, to mask, what Mr. Heidegger is trying to initiate us into, namely that which is absolutely irreducible in the function of the verb *to be,* the copulatory function pure and simple. One would be mistaken to think that this function is disclosed through a gradual shift in direction of these various terms.

We raise this question – at what moment and by what mechanism does the *you,* such as we have defined it as a form of punctuation, as an indeterminate signifying mode of hooking on, achieve subjectivity? Well then, I believe that it's essentially when it's taken in the copulatory function in pure form and in the ostensive function. And it's for this reason that I chose the exemplary sentences that we started with – *thou art the one who. . . .*

Which element is it that, elevating the *you,* makes it go beyond its indeterminate function of boredom and begins to turn it, if not into subjectivity, then at least into something that constitutes a first step towards the *Thou art the one who wilt follow me?* It is the *It is thou who will follow me.* This is ostension, which in fact implies the presence of the assembly of all those who, whether or not united into a community, are supposed to form its body, to 340
be the support of the discourse in which ostension is inscribed. This *it is thou* corresponds to the second formula, namely, *thou art the one who will follow me.*

Thou art the one who will follow me presupposes, I am saying, the imaginary assembly of those who are the supports of the discourse, the presence of witnesses, indeed, of the tribunal before which the subject receives the warning or the opinion that he is called upon to reply to. As a matter of fact, unless he replies *I follow you,* that is, unless he complies, there is at this level no other response open to the subject than to maintain the message in the very state in which it was sent to him, at the very most modifying the person, than to inscribe it as an element of his internal discourse, which whether he likes it or not is what he has to reply to in order not to follow it. It would strictly speaking be necessary that he precisely not follow this indication at all onto the terrain where it calls on him to reply, that is, that he refuse to hear. He is taken there as soon as he hears. The refusal to hear is a force that no subject, without special gymnastic training, is really capable of. It's in this register that the particular force of discourse becomes apparent.

In other words, at the level we have come to the *you* is the other such as I cause him to be seen [*le fais voir*] by means of my discourse, such as I designate him or denounce him, he is the other insofar as he is captured in ostension in relation to this *everybody* that the universe of discourse presupposes. But by the same token I bring the other out of this universe, I objectify him

within it, I may even designate his object relations for him, should he so much as ask me to, as is characteristic of the neurotic. That may go quite a long way.

Notice that it's not entirely useless to give people what they ask for. It's just a question of whether it's beneficial. In fact, if this has any incidental effect, it's insofar as it helps him to complete his vocabulary. Those who operate with object relations believe they are actually designating them, and consequently it's only rarely, and then by pure chance, that any beneficial effect is produced. Completing his vocabulary may enable the subject to extract himself from the signifying entanglement that constitutes the symptomatology of his neurosis. This is why things worked better whenever this addition to the vocabulary, this *Nervenanhang,* to use the vocabulary of our delusional, had still retained some of its freshness. Since then, what we have at our disposal in our little exercise books as *Nervenanhang* has greatly fallen in value and doesn't quite fill the function that one might hope for concerning the resubjectification of the subject, by which I designate the operation of extracting oneself from this signifying entanglement in which we have out-
341 lined the essence and very forms of the neurotic phenomenon. To handle this object relation correctly, one would need to understand that in this relation it's the neurotic who is ultimately the object. It's even for this reason that he got lost as subject and seeks himself as an object.

We have come to the point at which there is no common measure between ourselves and this *you* such as we have brought it out. There is ostension necessarily followed by reabsorption, injunction followed by disjunction. In order to have an authentic relationship with the other at this level and on this plane, he must answer, *Thou art the one whom I follow.* Here we are on his wavelength, and it's he who guides our desire.

Tu es celui que je suis lends itself to a play on words.[5] It's the relationship of identification with the other that is involved, but if we in fact guide one another in our reciprocal identification towards our desire, we shall necessarily encounter one another there, and we shall encounter one another in an incomparable way, since it's insofar as I am you that I am – here the ambiguity is complete. *Je suis* isn't only to follow, it's also *Je suis, et toi, tu es, I am and thou art,* and also, *toi, celui qui, thou, the one who,* to the point of encountering, *me tueras, wilt kill me.* When the other is captured as an object in the relation of ostension, we can only encounter this relation as a subjectivity equivalent to our own on the imaginary plane, the plane of the *moi ou toi, I or thou,* one or the other, all confusion is possible concerning the object

[5] "Thou art the one whom I follow," "Thou art the one who I am," "Kill the one whom I follow," and "Kill the one who I am."

relation. The object of our love is only ourselves, it's the *tu es celui qui me tues, thou art the one who kilst me.*

Observe the fortunate opportunity that the signifier offers us in French, with the different ways of understanding *tu es.*[6] One can make use of it indefinitely. If I were to say to you that we do this all day long – instead of saying, *To be or not . . . to be or. . . ,*[7] one may say, *Tu es celui qui me . . . tu es. . . , Thou art the one who . . . me . . . thou art. . . ,* etc. This is the foundation of the relationship with the other. In all imaginary identification, the *tu es, thou art,* ends in the destruction of the other, and vice versa, because this destruction is simply there in the form of transference and hides itself in what we shall call *thouness.*

In this respect I could have brought you a particularly disheartening and stupid analysis of the type to be found in the famous *Meaning of Meaning,* which elevates this kind of drivel to giddy heights.[8] Similarly for this famous passage in which it's a matter of urging people who have the beginnings of virtue to have at least the consistency to finish the job. One of them says something like this – *Toi qui ne peux supporter le tu, tue-moi, Thou who canst not bear the thou, kilst me.* This is a reasonable idea – if you can't bear the truth of the *thou,* you can always be designated for what you are, namely a scoundrel. If you want your neighbors' respect, raise yourself to the notion of normal distances, that is, to a general notion of the other, the order of the world, and the law. This *thou* seems to have disconcerted commentators, and as a matter of fact I think that today's *thouness* will familiarize you with the 342
register in question.

Let's take the next step. It concerns the other's being recognized as an other. What, then, is required for the other to be recognized as an other? What is this other? He is the other insofar as he figures in a sentence of mandate. We have to pause at this for a moment.

Recognition of the other doesn't constitute an unattainable limit, since we have also seen that the disappearing otherness of the ego's imaginary identification only encounters the you at an extreme point at which neither is able to subsist together with the other. The Other, with a big O, has to be recognized beyond this relationship, even reciprocal relationship, of exclusion. It has to be recognized in this disappearing relation as being just as elusive as I. In other words, it must be invoked as what it is unaware of about itself. This is indeed the sense of *Thou art the one who wilt follow me.*

If you examine this closely, if *Thou art the one who wilt follow me* is a

[6] "Thou art" and "Kill."
[7] In English in the original.
[8] C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning.*

delegation, indeed a consecration, then it's insofar as the response isn't a play on words but an *I follow you, I am,*[9] *I am what thou hast just said.* There is a usage of the third person that is absolutely essential to discourse in that it designates what its very subject matter is, that is, what has been said. *Je le suis, ce que tu viens de dire, I am it, what thou hast just said,* which as it happens means exactly – *I am very precisely what I am ignorant of, since what thou hast just said is absolutely indeterminate, I don't know where thou wilt lead me.* The full response to the *Thou art the one who wilt follow me* is *I am it.*

You know the fable of the tortoise and the two ducks.[10] The tortoise turns up at the crucial moment when the ducks have offered to take him with them to America, and everybody is waiting to see this little tortoise stuck onto the traveler's staff – *The Queen?* says the tortoise, *Oui, vraiment, je la suis, Yes, really, I am she.* Pichon asks himself huge questions to discover whether it's a question of a queen in the abstract or a concrete queen and speculates, in a disconcerting way for someone who had a bit of finesse in grammatical and linguistic matters, on the question of whether she ought not to have said, *Je suis elle.* Had the tortoise been speaking of an existing queen, she could have said any number of things, for example, *Je suis la reine, I am the Queen,* but since she says *Je la suis,* in referring to what you have just spoken of, there is no distinction to be made, it suffices to know that this *la, her,* concerns what is implied in the discourse.

What is implied in the discourse is indeed what is at issue. We must pause for a moment at this inaugural speech of the dialogue and take stock of the enormity of the *Thou art the one who wilt follow me.* It's to the *thou* itself, as the unknown, that we address ourselves. This is what gives it its naturalness,
343 and its force as well, and also what makes it pass from *thou art* into the *wilt follow* of the second part, where it persists. It persists there precisely because in the meantime it may decline there. In this formula it's therefore not an I, insofar as I cause it to be seen, that I address myself to, but all the signifiers that make up the subject opposite me. I say *all* the signifiers he possesses, his symptoms included. We address ourselves both to his gods and to his demons, and for this reason this way of stating the sentence I have until now been calling the mandate I shall now call the invocation, with this term's religious connotations.

An invocation isn't an inert formula. It's that by which I get that faith which is mine to pass into the other. In good authors, perhaps in Cicero, an invocation in its original religious form is a verbal formula by means of which, before combat, one tries to make favorable to oneself what I was just calling the gods and demons, the enemy's gods, the signifiers. It's to them that the

[9] *"Je te suis, je suis."*
[10] La Fontaine, "The Turtle and the Two Ducks," 97.

invocation is addressed, and this is why I think that the term *invocation* is suited to designate the most elevated form of the sentence, where all the words I pronounce are true words, evocative voices to which each of these sentences must reply, the insignia of the veritable other.

You have just seen how it is that the *you* depends upon the signifier as such. It's on the level of the vociferated signifier that depend the quality and the nature of the *thou* that is interpellated to respond. Henceforth, when the latter lacks the signifier that carries the sentence, the *I am the one* that replies to you can only play the part of an eternal interrogation. *Thou art the one who . . .* what? The limiting case is the reduction to the preceding signifier – *Thou art the one who. . . , thou art the one who. . . ,* etc., *Thou art the one who . . . kilst me.*[11] The *thou* reappears indefinitely. This is how it is whenever, in the appeal proffered to the other, the signifier falls into the field which for the other is excluded, *verworfen,* unattainable. The signifier at this point produces a reduction, but an intensified one, to the pure imaginary relation.

3

This is precisely the point at which this so singular phenomenon is located that has had all the commentators on President Schreber scratching their heads – the puzzling *soul murder,* as he calls it.

This phenomenon, which for him is the signal of the onset of psychosis, may for the rest of us, the commentator-analysts, adopt all sorts of meanings, but it cannot be placed anywhere else than in the imaginary field. It relates 344
to the short-circuiting of the affective relation, which makes the other a being of pure desire who henceforth can only be, in the register of the human imaginary, a being of pure interdestruction. There is a purely dual relation here, which is the most radical source of the very register of aggressiveness. Freud didn't miss this, moreover, but he discussed it in the homosexual register. This text offers us a thousand proofs of what I am putting forward, and this is perfectly coherent with our definition of the source of aggressiveness and its emergence when the triangular, oedipal relation finds itself to be short-circuited, when reduced to its dual simplification.

Undoubtedly we lack the elements in the text that would enable us to get a better grasp of Schreber's relations with his father, with a certain presumed brother, whom Freud also makes a great deal of. But we don't need anything more to understand that it's necessarily via the purely imaginary relation that the register of the *you* must pass at the moment at which it's evoked, invoked, interpellated from the Other, from the field of the Other, by the emergence of a signifier that is primordial but excluded for the subject. I named this

[11] *"Tu es celui qui me tues."*

signifier last time – *Thou art the one who is,* or who will be, *a father.* As a signifier it can in no way be received, insofar as the signifier represents an indeterminate support around which there is grouped and condensed a number, not even of meanings, but of series of meanings, which come and converge by means of and starting from the existence of this signifier.

Before the Name-of-the-Father there was no father, there were all sorts of other things. If Freud wrote *Totem and Taboo,* it was because he thought he could glimpse what there was, but before the term *father* was instituted in a certain register historically there was certainly no father. I am only giving you this perspective as a pure concession, for it interests me in no manner or degree. I'm not interested in prehistory, except to indicate that it's fairly likely that Neanderthal man lacked a certain number of essential signifiers. There's no point in searching so far back, for we can observe this lack in subjects within our reach.

Observe this crucial moment carefully and you will be able to pick out this passage in the onset of every psychosis – it's the moment at which from the Other as such, from the field of the Other, there comes the interpellation of an essential signifier that is unable to be received.

In one of my case presentations I happened to show a West Indian whose family history brought out the problematics of the original ancestor. This was a Frenchman who had gone and introduced himself over there, a sort of pioneer, who had led an extraordinarily heroic life, involving all sorts of high-
345 points and lowpoints in his fortunes, and who had become an ideal for the entire family. Our West Indian, extremely deracinated from the region of Detroit where he had been leading quite a comfortable life as a craftsman, found himself one day in possession of a woman who announced to him that she was going to have a baby. It wasn't known whether it was his or not, but nevertheless within several days his first hallucinations declared themselves.

Barely had it been announced to him, *You are going to be a father* when a character appeared to him telling him, *You are Saint Thomas.* It must have been, I think, Saint Thomas the Doubter and not Saint Thomas Aquinas. The annunciations that followed leave no room for doubt – they came from Elizabeth, the one to whom it was announced very late in life that she was going to bear a child.

In short, this case demonstrates very well the connection between the register of paternity and the blossoming of revelations, of annunciations regarding generation, namely, precisely what the subject is literally unable to conceive – and it's not by chance that I use this word. The question of generation, a term of alchemical speculation, is always there ready to emerge as a response by detour, as an attempt to reconstitute what isn't receivable for the psychotic subject, for the *ego* whose power is invoked without his being strictly speaking capable of a response.

Henceforth, beyond every signifier able to be significant for the subject, the only response can be the permanent and, I would say, constantly sensitized employment of the signifier as a whole. We can in fact observe that the memorizing commentary accompanying all human acts immediately finds itself revived, spoken out loud in the emptiest and the most neutral of forms, and becomes the ordinary mode of relation of an *ego* unable to find its respondent in the signifier at the level from which it's interpellated.

Precisely because he is interpellated on terrain where he is unable to respond, the only way to react that can reattach him to the humanization he is tending to lose is to make himself permanently present in this slender commentary on the stream of life that constitutes the text of mental automatism. The subject who has crossed this limit no longer has the customary significant security, except through the accompaniment of a constant commentary on his gestures and acts.

These phenomena present an exceedingly rich character in the case of President Schreber, but they are not specific to him since they enter into the very definition of mental automatism. This justifies the use of the word *automatism*, of which so much use has been made in mental pathology without one's really knowing what one was saying. The term has a fairly precise sense in neurology where it characterizes certain phenomena of liberation, but its employment by analogy in psychiatry remains problematic at the very least. It's nevertheless the most appropriate word in de Clérambault's theory if you 346
think of the distinction, completely forgotten today, that Aristotle makes between *automaton* and fortune.[12] If we go straight to the signifier, that is to say on this occasion with all the reservations that such a reference comprises, straight to etymology, we see that *automaton* is what really thinks by itself without any link to that beyond, the *ego*, which gives thought its subject. If language speaks all alone, the occasion to use the term *automatism* is now or never, and this is what gives the term de Clérambault used its resonance of authenticity, its satisfying side for us.

What we have just been emphasizing will enable us next time to see what is lacking in each of the two points of view developed by Freud and Mrs. Ida Macalpine.

Freud posits a latent homosexuality that is supposed to imply a feminine position – this is where the leap is. He speaks of a fantasy of fertilizing impregnation, as if the thing were self-evident, as if every acceptance of the feminine position implied in addition this register that is so developed in Schreber's delusion and that ends up making him into the wife of God. Freud's theory is that the only way for Schreber to avoid what results from the fear of castration is *Entmannung*, unmanning, or simply emasculation, transfor-

[12] Aristotle, *Physics*.

mation into a woman – but after all, as Schreber himself observes somewhere, isn't it better to be a spirited woman than a poor unfortunate man, oppressed, or even castrated?[13] In short, the solution to the conflict introduced by latent homosexuality is found in an enlargement to the size of the universe.

On the whole, Freud's theory is the one that best respects the balance of the psychosis's progress. It's nevertheless certain that Mrs. Macalpine's objections are a worthy reply to Freud, even a worthy complement to a part of his theory.[14] She emphasizes, as being determinant in the process of psychosis, a fantasy of pregnancy, thus evoking a rigorous symmetry between the two great lacks that can manifest themselves as neuroticizing in each sex. She goes a long way in this direction and says some very amusing things to which the text lends support, including in the background the evocation of a heliolithic civilization where the sun, regarded as feminine and incarnated in stones, is said to be the fundamental symbol matching the promotion of the phallus in classical theory. There is a correspondence in the very name of the town in which Schreber is hospitalized, Sonnenstein.[15]

In the concrete analyses of the least neurotic of people we are constantly
347 encountering this mischievous mockery by the signifier, where unusual homonyms from all the corners of the horizon strangely intersect and appear to give a unity, sometimes ungraspable by any other means, both to the entire destiny of a subject and to his symptoms. It's surely less appropriate here than elsewhere to retreat from this investigation where the moment of onset of psychosis is concerned.

Before I finish I would like to draw your attention to the significant, indeed unfortunate, words that Flechsig said to Schreber on the occasion of his relapse when the latter arrived for his consultation in an extremely disturbed state. Flechsig had already been elevated for him to the value of an eminent paternal character. The function of paternity had previously already been put on alert or in suspension. We know from his testimony that he had hoped to become a father, that over the period of eight years separating the first from the second crisis his wife had had several spontaneous abortions. Now, Flechsig said to him that since the previous occasion enormous progress has been made in psychiatry and that they are going to give him one of those short sleeps that will be very fertile.[16]

[13] See above, chap. 20, p. 256.

[14] Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter, "Translators' Analysis of the Case."

[15] "Translators" Analysis of the Case," 379. Both *Heliolithic* and *Sonnenstein* literally mean sun-stone.

[16] "He . . . gave me hope of delivering me of the whole illness through one prolific sleep." Mem, 39. The verb, lacking in the original, has been supplied by the translators. See Lacan's comment in "Preliminary Question," E, 545 n.1 / 222 n.10.

Perhaps this was just the thing not to say. From this moment our Schreber no longer slept and that night he tried to hang himself.

The relation of procreation is in fact implicated in the subject's relationship to death.

I shall keep this for next time.

27 June 1956

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XXV

The phallus and the meteor

PREVALENCE OF CASTRATION

IDA MACALPINE

NATURAL SYMBOLIZATION AND SUBLIMATION

THE RAINBOW

INSERTED IN THE FATHER

I'm not sure what to begin with to end this course. On the off chance, I've put two small schemas on the board for you.

The first is an old one. It's a sort of grid which I used at the start of this year to try to show you how the problem of delusion is raised if we want to structure it insofar as it appears to be a relation in some way linked to speech. The second of these schemas is entirely new and I will have occasion to refer to it shortly.

1

What I have put forward this year has been centrally concerned with placing the emphasis back upon the structure of delusion. Delusion may be regarded as a disturbance of the object relation and is therefore linked to a transference mechanism. But I wanted to show you that all its phenomena, and I even think I can say its dynamics, would be clarified in reference to the functions and structure of speech. This will also free this transference mechanism from all kinds of confused and diffuse object relations.

By hypothesis, whenever one deals with a disturbance regarded overall as immature, one refers to a linear developmental series derived from the immaturity of the object relation. Now, experience shows that this unilinearity leads to impasses, to inadequate, unmotivated explanations that superimpose themselves on one another in a way that does not enable cases to be differ-
350 entiated and, first and foremost, obliterates the difference between neurosis and psychosis. The mere experience of partial delusion mitigates against speaking of immaturity, or even of regression or simple modification of the object relation.

The same thing goes if one refers to the neuroses alone. Next year we shall see that the notion of object relation isn't univocal, when I begin by contrast-

ing the object of phobias with the object of perversions. This will be to take up again, at the level of the category of *object,* the problem of the relations between the subject and the other, two terms which, regarding the psychoses, are opposed.

I left you last time with two opposed descriptions, Freud's and that of a psychoanalyst who is far from being without merit and, while representing the most modern tendencies, has at least the advantage of doing so very intelligently.

Let's briefly summarize Freud's position on the subject of Schreber's delusion and the objections brought against him, and let's see if anything like a better solution has even begun to be outlined.

For Freud, we're told, Schreber's delusion is linked to the irruption of a homosexual tendency. The subject negates it, defends himself against it. In his case, which isn't the case of a neurotic, this negation ends in what we might call divine erotomania.

You know how Freud divides up the various denials [*dénégations*] of the homosexual tendency. He starts from a sentence that symbolizes the situation – *I love him, a man.*[1] There is more than one way of introducing denial into this sentence. One may say for example, *It's not I who love him* or, *It's not him I love* or again, *For me there's no question of love, I hate him.* Moreover, he tells us, the situation is never simple and isn't limited to a simple symbolic reversal. For reasons that he takes to be implied sufficiently, but upon which as a matter of fact he doesn't insist, an imaginary reversal of the situation occurs in only a part of the three terms, namely *I hate him* is for example transformed through projection into *He hates me.* In our case, *It's not him I love, it's someone else,* a big He, God himself, is inverted into *He loves me,* as in all erotomania. It is clear that Freud is indicating that the final result of defense against the homosexual tendency can't be understood in the absence of a very advanced reversal of the symbolic apparatus.

Everything may therefore appear to revolve around defence. It must undoubtedly be very intense indeed to propel the subject into trials that extend to nothing less than the derealization, not only of the external world in general, but of the very people around him, even those he is closest to, including the other as such. This necessitates an entire delusional reconstruction, fol- 351
lowing which the subject gradually resituates, though in a profoundly disturbed way, a world in which he is able to recognize himself, in an equally disturbed way, as destined – at a time projected into the uncertainty of the future, at a date that is indeterminate but that certainly cannot be delayed – to become the subject par excellence of a divine miracle, that is, to be the

[1] SE 12:63–65.

support and feminine receptacle of the recreation of all humanity. Schreber's delusion in its final state presents with all the megalomaniacal characteristics of delusions of redemption in their most highly developed form.

How do we account for the intensity of the defense? Freud's explanation looks like it is contained entirely within the reference to narcissism. The defence against the homosexual tendency begins with a narcissism under threat. The megalomania represents that by which the narcissistic fear expresses itself. The ego's enlargement to the dimensions of the world is a fact of libidinal economy which is apparently located entirely on the imaginary level. Making himself the supreme being's love object, the subject can henceforth abandon that which, of all that he was going to save, initially seemed most precious to him – namely the mark of his virility.

But ultimately, and I stress this, the pivot, the point of convergence of the libidinal dialectic that the mechanism and development of neurosis refer to in Freud, is the theme of castration. It's castration that conditions the narcissistic fear. To accept castration the subject must pay as elevated a price as this reworking of the whole of reality.

Freud stuck by this prevalence. In the material, explanatory order of Freudian theory, from beginning to end, this is an invariable, a prevalent invariable. He never subordinated or even relativized its place in the theoretical conditioning of the subjective interplay in which the history of any psychoanalytic phenomenon whatsoever is inscribed. It was around Freud, within the analytic community, that one wanted to give it symmetrical or equivalent things. But in his work the phallic object occupies the central place in libidinal economy, in both man and woman.

This is an altogether essential fact, characteristic of all the theorizing given and maintained by Freud – whatever reworking he brought to his theorizing, throughout all the phases of the schematization he was able to give of psychic life, the prevalence of the phallic center was never modified.

If there is some truth in Mrs. Macalpine's remarks – and this is however
352 the only thing that she doesn't really make evident – it's that, effectively, in Schreber castration is never an issue. The Latin term that is used in German, *eviratio – Entmannung,* means in the text *transformation,* with all that this word conveys of transition, *into a woman* – it's not castration at all.[2] This doesn't matter, Freud's analysis makes the entire dynamics of the subject Schreber revolve around the theme of castration, of the loss of the phallic object.

We must remark that despite certain weaknesses in his argument, which are due to the use of terms that only have their place in the imaginary dialectic of narcissism, the virile object is the essential element at play in the con-

[2] "unmanning" in Mem.

flict. It alone enables us to make sense of and to understand the different stages of the delusion's evolution, its phases, and its final construction. Furthermore, we may note in passing all sorts of subtleties that have not been developed or completely explored. Freud shows us for example that projection alone cannot explain delusion, that it is not a matter of a mirror image of the subject's feeling, but that it is indispensable to determine stages in it and, at a certain moment as it were, a loss of the tendency, which ages. Over the course of the year I have greatly insisted upon the fact that what has been repressed within reappears without, re-emerges in the background – and not in a simple structure but in a position that is, as it were, internal, which makes the subject himself, who in the present case happens to be the agent of persecution, ambiguous, problematic. He is initially only the representative of another subject who not only permits but undoubtedly acts, in the final analysis. In short, the otherness of the other is spread out. It's one of the problems to which as a matter of fact Freud does lead us, but he stops there.

Ida Macalpine, after others, but in a much more coherent way than others, objects that nothing permits us to think that this delusion presupposes the genital maturity, if I may call it that, that would explain the fear of castration. The homosexual tendency is far from manifesting itself as primary. What we see from the start are symptoms, initially hypochondriacal, which are psychotic symptoms.

At the outset one finds this particular something which is at the heart of the psychotic relation, such as the psychosomatic phenomena that this clinician has especially worked on, and which certainly for her are the means of access to the phenomenology of this case. It is here that she might have directly apprehended phenomena that are structured quite differently from what takes place in the neuroses, namely, where there is some sort of direct imprint or inscription of a characteristic and even, in certain cases, of a conflict upon what may be called the material picture that the subject presents as a corporeal being. A symptom such as a facial eruption, which can be variously characterized dermatologically, will be mobilized in response to a given anniversary for example, directly, without any intermediary, without any dialectic, without any interpretation's being able to indicate any correspondence with anything from the subject's past. 353

This is no doubt what drove Ida Macalpine to raise the most unusual problem of direct correspondences between the symbol and the symptom. The apparatus of the symbol is so absent from the mental categories of the contemporary psychoanalyst that the sole way such relations can be conceived is through the intermediary of a fantasy. Furthermore, her entire argument consists in relating the development of the delusion to a fantasmatic theme, to an originary – original [*originelle*] according to the usual word today – pre-

oedipal fixation, emphasizing that what sustains desire is essentially a theme of procreation, but one that is pursued for its own sake, is asexual in form, and only induces conditions of devirilization, of feminization, as a sort of *a posteriori* consequence of the requirement in question. The subject is conceived as born into the sole child-mother relation, prior to any constitution of a triangular situation. This is when he would have seen a fantasy of desire born within himself, a desire to equal the mother in her ability to create a child.

This is Mrs. Macalpine's entire argument, which I have no reason to pursue here in all the richness of its detail, since it is within your reach in the substantial preface and postface to the English edition of Schreber's text she has done. It is important to see that this construction is connected with a certain reorientation of the entire analytic dialectic which tends to make the imaginary economy of fantasy, the various fantasmatic reorganizations, disorganizations, restructurations, and destructurations, the hub of all comprehensive progress as well as of all therapeutic progress. The schema that is currently so widely accepted, frustration-aggressiveness-regression, is at the base of everything in this delusion that Mrs. Macalpine thinks she can explain.

She goes a long way in this direction. There is, she says, a decline, a twilight of the world, and at one point a quasi-confusional disorder of the apprehensions of reality, only because the world has to be recreated.[3] She thus introduces, at the most profound stage of the mental confusion, a sort of teleology. The entire myth was only constructed because it is the only way for the subject Schreber to satisfy himself in his imaginary requirement of childbirth.

354 Ida Macalpine's point of view can no doubt enable us to understand the putting into play, the imaginary impregnation, of the subject to be reborn – I'm copying here one of Schreber's themes which is, as you know, the *picturing*.[4]

But from such a point of view, in which only imaginary fantasies are involved, what enables us to understand the prevalence that Freud gives to the function of the father?

Whatever certain of the weaknesses in Freud's argument concerning psychosis may be, it is undeniable that the function of the father is so exalted in Schreber that nothing less than God the father – in a subject for whom up to this point this has had no sense – is necessary for the delusion to attain its culminating point, its point of equilibrium. The prevalence, in the entire evolution of Schreber's psychosis, of paternal characters who replace one another, grow larger and larger and envelop one another to the point of

[3] Mem, 387–88.
[4] In English in the original. Mem, 231–37.

becoming identified with the divine Father himself, a divinity marked by the properly paternal accent, is undeniable, unshakable, and destined to make us raise the question once again – how come something that confirms that Freud is so right is only investigated by him in certain modes that leave a lot to be desired?

In reality, everything in him is balanced, and everything remains inadequate in Mrs. Macalpine's rectification. It's not only the vastness of the fantasmatic character of the father that prevents us from being in any way satisfied with a dynamics founded on the irruption of a pre-oedipal fantasy. There are many more things, including what in both cases remains enigmatic. Freud, much more than Mrs. Macalpine, comes close to the preponderant, crushing, proliferating aspect of the phenomena of verbal auditivation, the formidable captivation of the subject in the world of speech, which is not only copresent with his existence, which constitutes not only what last time I called a spoken accompaniment of acts, but also a perpetual intimation, solicitation, summation even, to manifest itself on this plane. Not for one instant must the subject cease testifying, at the constant inducement of the speech that accompanies him, that he is there present, capable of responding – or of not responding, because perhaps, he says, one wants to compel him to say something silly. By his response, as by his nonresponse, he has to testify that he is always awake to this internal dialogue. Not to be so any longer would be the signal of what he calls a *Verwesung*, that is, as it has been correctly translated, a decomposition.

This is what we have drawn attention to this year and what we have insisted upon, in order to say that it's what gives the pure Freudian position its value. Despite the paradox presented by certain manifestations of psychosis if one 355
refers them to the dynamics that Freud recognized in neurosis, psychosis nevertheless happens to be explored in a more satisfactory manner from his point of view.

His point of view. Freud never completely elucidated it, but it's what makes his position tenable in relation to this kind of leveling-off, as it were, of instinctual signs that psychoanalytic dynamics have tended to be reduced to since Freud. I am speaking of the terms that he never abandoned, that he requires for any possible analytic understanding, even where it hangs together only approximately, for it hangs together all the better in this way – namely, the function of the father and the castration complex.

It can't be a question purely and simply of imaginary elements. What one finds in the imaginary in the form of the phallic mother isn't homogeneous, as you are all aware, with the castration complex, insofar as the latter is integrated into the triangular situation of the Oedipus complex. This situation is not completely elucidated by Freud, but by virtue of the sole fact that it is always maintained it is there ready to lend itself to elucidation, which is only

possible if we recognize that the third element, central for Freud, which is the father, has a signifying element that is irreducible to any type of imaginary conditioning.

2

I'm not saying that the Name of the Father is the only one of which we can say this.

We can uncover this element whenever we apprehend something that is of the symbolic order properly so-called. On this subject I reread, once again, Ernest Jones's article on symbolism.[5] I shall take up one of the most notorious examples in which this master's brat tries to grasp the phenomenon of the symbol. It concerns the ring.

A ring, he tells us, doesn't enter into play as an analytic symbol insofar as it represents marriage, with all that is cultural and developed, even sublimated – since this is how he expresses himself – that this conveys.[6] The ring as a symbol of marriage is to be sought somewhere in sublimation – we couldn't care less about all that, it drives us up the wall, we're not people to speak to about analogies. If a ring signifies something it's because it is a symbol of the female sexual organ.

356 Doesn't this kind of declaration give you cause to wonder, when we know that the putting into play of the signifier in the symptom has no link with anything of the order of a tendency? You would really have to have the oddest idea of natural symbolization to believe that a ring is the natural symbolization of the female sexual organ.

You are all familiar with the theme of the *Ring of Hans Carvel*, a fine story from the Middle Ages of which La Fontaine made a tale and which Balzac used again in his *Contes drolatiques*. This fellow, who is colorfully depicted and is sometimes said to be a priest, dreams that he has a ring on his finger and on waking finds that he has his finger inside the vagina of his companion. To put this in a way that dots the *i*s and crosses the *t*s – how could the experience of penetrating this orifice, since it is an orifice that is in question, resemble in any way at all that of putting on a ring, if one didn't already know in advance what a ring is?

A ring isn't an object one encounters in nature. If there is anything in the order of penetration that resembles the more or less tight-fitting penetration of a finger inside a ring, it is certainly not – I appeal, as Marie-Antoinette used to say, not to all mothers, but to all those who have ever put their finger

[5] Ernest Jones, "The Theory of Symbolism." Lacan examined this paper in *"A la mémoire d'Ernest Jones: sur sa théorie du symbolisme,"* E, 697–717.

[6] "Theory of Symbolism," 128–29.

in a certain place – it's certainly not penetrating this place which is, my God, more like a mollusk than anything else. If something in nature is designed to suggest certain of the properties of a ring [*anneau*] to us, it is restricted to what language has dedicated the term *anus* to, which in Latin is spelt with one *n*, and which in their modesty ancient dictionaries designated as the ring that can be found behind.

But to confuse one with the other on the basis of the fact that it may be a question of natural symbolization, one must really have had in the order of these cogitative perceptions. . . . Freud himself must have really despaired of you not to have taught you the difference between the two, and regarded you as irredeemable little idiots.

Mr. Jones's lucubration is designed to show us that a ring is introduced into a dream, indeed a dream that culminates in a sexual action, only because we thereby signify something primitive. Cultural connotations frighten him and this is where he is mistaken. He doesn't imagine that the ring already exists as a signifier, independently of its connotations, that it's already one of the essential signifiers by which man in his presence in the world is capable of crystallizing many things other than marriage. A ring isn't a hole with something around it, as Mr. Jones seems to think, in the manner of these people who think that to make macaroni one takes a hole and surrounds it 357
with flour. A ring above all has a signifying value.

How else can we explain that a man is able to understand something, what is called understanding, of the simplest formulation to be inscribed in language, the most elementary utterance – *That's it* [*c'est cela*]*?* For a man, this expression nevertheless has an explanatory sense. He has seen something, anything, which is there, and *that's it.* Whatever the thing is he is in the presence of, whether it be a question of the most unusual, the most bizarre, or even the most ambiguous, *that's it.* It is now located somewhere other than where it was beforehand, which was nowhere, now it's – *that's it.*

I would for a moment like deliberately to take a phenomenon that is exemplary because it's the most inconsistent of that which can present itself to man – the meteor.[7]

By definition the meteor is *that* [*cela*], it's real and at the same time it's illusory. It would be quite wrong to say that it's imaginary. The rainbow, *that's it.* You say that the rainbow is *that,* and then you search. People racked their brains for some time until M. Descartes came along and completely reduced the whole affair. There is a region that becomes iridized in little drops of water in suspension, etc. Fine. And so what? There is the ray on

[7] Besides the current meaning of *mass from space made luminous by the earth's atmosphere,* "meteor" has the older, generic meaning of any atmospheric phenomenon. This earlier meaning is clearly intended in the current context.

one side and the condensed drops on the other. *That's it.* It was only an appearance – *that's it.*

Notice that the question is not at all settled. A ray of light is, as you know, a wave or a corpuscle and a little drop of water is a curious thing, since ultimately it's not really in gaseous form, it's condensation which is falling in a liquid state, but in a suspended fall, between the two, in the state of an expansive pool, as water.

When we say, then, *That's it,* we imply that that's all it is, or that that's not what it is, namely, the appearance that we had stopped at. But this proves to us that everything that has subsequently emerged, the *that's all it is* as well as the *that's not what it is,* was already implied in the *that's it* at the beginning.

A rainbow is a phenomenon that has no kind of imaginary interest, you will have never seen an animal pay one any attention, and as a matter of fact man pays no attention to an incredible number of related manifestations. Various iridizations are exceedingly widespread in nature and, gifts of observation or some special research aside, nobody pauses at them. If on the contrary rainbows exist, it's precisely in relation to the *that's it.* That's why we have named them rainbows and why when one speaks of them to someone
358 who hasn't yet seen one there is a point at which one says to him – *That's what a rainbow is.* And this *that's what it is* presupposes the implication that we are going to carry on until we have run out of breath, to discover what lies hidden behind it, what its cause is, to which we shall be able to reduce it. Notice that what has characterized the rainbow and the meteor from the beginning – and everybody knows this since this is why it's called a meteor – is precisely that nothing is hidden behind it. It exists entirely in this appearance. What makes it nevertheless subsist for us, to the point where we do not stop asking ourselves questions about it, stems uniquely from the original *that's it,* that is, the naming as such of the rainbow. There is nothing besides this name.

In other words, to pursue this further, this rainbow doesn't speak, but one could speak in its place. Nobody ever speaks to it, this is quite striking. The aurora is interpellated, and so are all sorts of other things. The rainbow retains the privilege, along with a number of other manifestations of the same kind, that nobody speaks to it. No doubt there are reasons for this, namely that it is quite particularly insubstantial. But let's say that one speaks to it. If one speaks to it, one can make it speak. One can make it speak to whomever one wants. This could be to the lake. If the rainbow has no name, or if it doesn't want to hear anything of its name, if it doesn't know that it's called the rainbow, the only resource this lake has is to show it the thousand little mirages of the sunshine upon its waves and the rising vapor. It may well attempt to join up with the rainbow, but it will never join up with it, for the simple reason that the little fragments of sun that dance on the surface of the lake,

like the vapor that wafts away, have nothing to do with producing the rainbow which begins at a certain angle of inclination of the sun and at a certain density of the droplets in question. There is no reason to search for either the inclination of the sun or for any of the indices that determine the phenomenon of the rainbow, so long as it is not named as such.

If I've just carried out this lengthy study concerning something that has the characteristic of a spherical belt, able to be unfolded and refolded, it's because the imaginary dialectic in psychoanalysis is of exactly the same kind. Why are the mother-child relationships, to which there is a tendency to limit it more and more, inadequate? There is really no reason.

We're told that a mother's requirement is to equip herself with an imaginary phallus, and it's very clearly explained to us how she uses her child as a quite adequate real support for this imaginary prolongation. As to the child, there's not a shadow of doubt – whether male or female, it locates the phallus very early on and, we're told, generously grants it to the mother, whether or 359
not in a mirror image, or in a double mirror image. The couple should harmonize symmetrically very well around this common illusion of reciprocal phallicization. Everything should take place at the level of a mediating function of the phallus. Now, the couple finds itself on the contrary in a situation of conflict, even of respective internal alienation. Why? Because the phallus is, as it were, a wanderer. It is elsewhere. Everyone knows where analytic theory places it – it's the father who is supposed to be its vehicle. It's around him that in the child the fear of the loss of the phallus and, in the mother, the claim for, the privation of, or the worry over, the nostalgia for, the phallus is established.

Now, if affective, imaginary exchanges between mother and child are established around the imaginary lack of the phallus, then that which makes it the essential element of intersubjective coaptation in the Freudian dialectic, the father, has his own and that's that, he neither exchanges it nor gives it. There is no circulation. The father has no function in the trio, except to represent the vehicle, the holder, of the phallus. The father, as father, has the phallus – full stop.

In other words, he is that which in the imaginary dialectic must exist in order for the phallus to be something other than a meteor.

3

So fundamental is this that if we try to situate on a schema what it is that makes the Freudian conception of the Oedipus complex cohere, it is not a question of a father-mother-child triangle, but of a triangle (father)-phallus-mother-child. Where is the father in this? He is in the ring that holds all this together.

The notion of father can only be supposed as provided with an entire series of signifying connotations which give it existence and consistency and which are a very long way indeed from merging with those of the genital, from which it is semantically different across all the linguistic traditions.

I shan't start quoting Homer and Saint Paul to tell you that invoking the father, whether it be Zeus or someone else, is entirely different from purely and simply referring to the generative function. An indefinite number of beings can issue from a woman. They could all be women —moreover, we shall soon reach this point, since every day the newspapers tell us that parthenogenesis is on the way and that soon women will beget daughters without anyone's assistance. Well then, notice that if any masculine elements intervene here,
360 they will play a role of fecundation without being anything other than an indispensable lateral circuit, as in animals. There will be the begetting of women by women, with the aid of lateral abortees that can be used to set the process off again but will not structure it. It's only when we seek to inscribe descendence as a function of males that any innovation in the structure intervenes. It's only when we speak of descendence from male to male that a cut intervenes, which is the difference between generations. The introduction of the signifier of the father introduces henceforth an ordering in the descendants, the series of generations.

We're not here to develop all the facets of this function of the father, but I am pointing out one of the most striking of them, which is the introduction of an order, of a mathematical order, whose structure is different from the natural order.

We've been trained in analysis through the experience of the neuroses. The imaginary dialectic may suffice if, within the framework of this dialectic that we have sketched out, there already exists this implied signifying relation for the practical use one wants to put it to. In two or three generations no doubt no one will understand it at all anymore, a cat won't be able to find its kittens, but for the moment, on the whole, the continued presence of the theme of the Oedipus complex preserves the notion of signifying structure, which is so essential for finding one's way about the neuroses.

But where the psychoses are concerned, things are different. It's not a question of the subject's relation to a link signified within existing signifying structures, but of his encounter under elective conditions with the signifier as such, which marks the onset of psychosis.

Look at the point in his life at which President Schreber's psychosis declares itself. On more than one occasion he was in the situation of expecting to become a father. Here he is, all of a sudden, invested with a socially eminent function, one that has great value for him – he becomes President of the Court of Appeal. I should say that within the administrative structure in

question it is something like the Conseil d'Etat.[8] Here he is admitted to the top of the legislative hierarchy, among men who make laws and are all twenty years older than he is – a disturbance in the order of generations. Following what? Following an explicit call from the ministers. This promotion of his nominal existence solicits a renewing integration from him. Ultimately the question is whether or not the subject will become a father. The question of the father centers all Freud's research, all the points of view he has introduced into subjective experience.

This is entirely forgotten, I'm well aware. Recent analytic technique is 361
clouded by the object relation. The supreme experience that is described, this famous distance taken in the object relation, ultimately consists in fantasizing the sexual organ of the analyst and imaginarily absorbing it. Make filiation the equivalent of fellatio? Indeed there is an etymological relationship between these two terms, but this isn't a sufficient reason for deciding that analytic experience is a sort of obscene chain that consists in the imaginary absorption of an object that has finally been extracted from fantasies.

In any case, it is impossible in the phenomenology of psychosis to misunderstand the originality of the signifier as such. What is perceptible in the phenomenon of everything that takes place in psychosis is that it is a question of the subject's access to a signifier as such and of the impossibility of that access. I shan't go back over the notion of *Verwerfung* I began with, and for which, having thought it through, I propose to you definitively to adopt this translation which I believe is the best – *foreclosure*.

There follows a process whose first stage we have called an imaginary cataclysm, namely that no longer can anything in the mortal relation, which is in itself the relation with the imaginary other, be held on lease. Then there is the separate deployment and bringing into play of the entire signifying apparatus – dissociation, fragmentation, mobilization of the signifier as speech, ejaculatory speech that is insignificant or too significant, laden with nonmeaningfulness, the decomposition of internal discourse, which marks the entire structure of psychosis. After the encounter, the collision, with the inassimilable signifier, it has to be reconstituted, since this father cannot be simply a father, a rounded-out father, the ring of just before, the father who is the father for everybody. And President Schreber does in fact reconstitute him.

Nobody is aware of being inserted into the father. Nevertheless, I would like to point out to you before leaving you this year that to be doctors you may be innocent, but that to be psychoanalysts you should nevertheless meditate from time to time on a theme such as this, even though neither the sun

[8] The supreme juridical body of the French State.

nor death can look itself in the face. I shan't say that the slightest little gesture to arouse an evil creates possibilities for a greater evil, it *always* entails a greater evil. This is something that a psychoanalyst should become accustomed to, because I believe that he is absolutely incapable in all conscience of conducting his professional life without it. Having said this, it won't take you very far. The newspapers are always saying that God only knows whether the progress of science is dangerous, etc., but for us this is neither here nor
362 there. Why not? Because you are all, myself included, inserted into this major signifier called Father Christmas. With Father Christmas things always work out and, I would add, they work out well.

What is at issue in the psychotic? Suppose someone unthinkable for us, one of these gentlemen who, we are told – if indeed any have ever existed, don't believe I attribute any importance to such hearsay – was capable of such self-discipline that he no longer believed in Father Christmas and was able to convince himself that everything good that one does entails an equivalent evil and that consequently one mustn't do it. Admitting this, even for an instant, is sufficient for you to understand that all sorts of things which are fundamental at the level of the signifier may depend on it.

Well then, compared to you the psychotic has this disadvantage, but also this privilege, of finding himself a little bit at odds with, askew in relation to, the signifier. Once he is summoned to harmonize with these signifiers, he has to make a considerable effort of retrospection, which culminates in these extraordinarily bizarre things that constitute what is called the development of a psychosis. This development is quite particularly rich and exemplary in the case of President Schreber, but I have shown you in my case presentations that things become a bit clearer once one possesses this point of view, even in the most common illnesses. The most recent case I have shown you was of someone who was very, very strange, on the verge of mental automatism, though not quite there. For him everyone was suspended in an artificial state whose coordinates he defined well. He had observed that the signifier dominates the existence of beings, and his own existence appeared to him to be much less certain than anything that presented itself with a certain signifying structure. He stated it quite crudely. You noticed that I put this question to him – *When did all this begin? During your wife's pregnancy?* He was a bit astonished for a moment, then answered me – *Yes, that's true* – adding that it had never occurred to him.

–From the imaginary point of view, what we say in passing, in analysis, has strictly no importance, since it's solely a question of frustration or of no frustration. One frustrates him, he is aggressive, he regresses, and we continue like that until the most primordial fantasies emerge. Unfortunately, this isn't the correct theory. One has to know what one's saying. It isn't sufficient to bring signifiers into play in this way – *I tap you on the shoulder . . . You're*

really a nice person . . . You had a bad daddy . . . Things will work out. One has to use them in full knowledge, make them resonate otherwise, and at least know how not to employ certain of them. The negative indications con- 363
cerning certain contents of interpretation are highlighted by such a point of view.

I leave these questions open. The year ends in dialect, why should it end in any other way?

In conclusion I would like to move to a different genre of style from my own. Several weeks back I promised myself to end on a very pretty page by an admirable poet called Guillaume Apollinaire. It comes from the *Enchanteur pourrissant.*

At the end of one of the chapters there is the enchanter who is rotting away in his tomb, and who, like any good cadaver, I won't say speaks drivel, as Barrès would say, but enchants and speaks very well. There is also the Lady of the Lake seated on her tomb – it was she who had got him to enter the tomb by telling him that he could get out again easily, but she, too, had her tricks, and the enchanter is there, rotting away, and from time to time speaks. This is where we are when a number of madmen appear in the middle of various funeral processions, along with a monster whom I hope you are going to recognize. This monster is the one who found the analytic key, the active force of men, and especially in the relation of the father-child to the mother.

> *I mewed, I mewed, said the monster, I encountered only owls who assured me that he was dead. I shall never be prolific. However, those who are have qualities. I confess that I do not recognize any in me. I am alone. I am hungry, I am hungry. Here I discover a quality of my own; I am famished. Let's look for something to eat. He who eats is no longer alone.*[9]

4 July 1956

[9] *L'Enchanteur pourrissant,* 49.

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The Object Relation

Jacques Lacan

The Object Relation

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan
Book IV

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller

Translated by A. R. Price

polity

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Book IV

The Object Relation

1956–1957

THEORISING THE LACK OF OBJECT

I

INTRODUCTION

The Z-shaped diagram
The object, lost and re-found
Gems
The object, anxiety and the hole
Fetishes and phobic objects

This year we shall be speaking on a topic to which the historical evolution of psychoanalysis, or what is so termed, could offer a central place in both theory and practice, whether in a way that hangs together or otherwise.

This topic is *The Object Relation.*

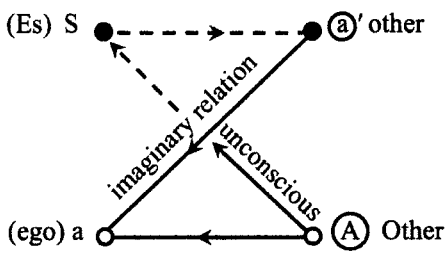
Why did I not choose this topic before, back when we began these seminars, given that it was already a crucial, prominent and contemporary topic? Well, precisely for the reason behind the second part of my title – . . . *and The Freudian Structures.*

Indeed, this topic could be treated only after a certain step back had been taken in relation to this question. We first had to examine what constitutes those structures in which, according to what Freud has shown us, analysis moves and operates, and most especially the complex structure of the relation between the two subjects present in analysis, namely the subject being analysed and the analyst. This is what our past three years of commentary and critical reading of Freud's texts have been devoted to, which I shall rapidly recall for you now.

The first year dealt with the main technical features in the steering of the treatment, that is, with the notions of transference and resistance. The second year bore on the grounding of the Freudian discovery and experience, namely the notion of the unconscious. I think I showed well enough how this notion is what necessitated Freud's introduction, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, of principles that are utterly paradoxical on the purely dialectical plane. Lastly,

over the third year, I gave you a patent example of the absolute necessity of isolating the essential articulation of symbolism that is known as the *signifier*, so as to understand, analytically speaking, something of that field of psychoses that is strictly limited to paranoia.

After these years of critical reading we are now armed with a number of terms that have culminated in certain schemas. On no account is the spatiality of these schemas to be taken in the intuitive sense of the term *schema*, but rather in another sense that is altogether legitimate, the topological sense. It's not a matter of localisations, but rather of relationships between loci, interposition, for example, or succession, sequence. What we developed culminated in the following diagram –



This diagram lays out, first and foremost, the subject's relation to the Other. In the way that it is naturally constituted at the start of analysis, this relation is one of virtual speech wherein the subject receives, from the Other, his own message in the form of unconscious speech. This message, which for him is interdicted, is profoundly misrecognised. It is mangled, stayed and intercepted by the interposition of the imaginary relationship between *a* and *a'*, between the ego and the other, which is the ego's *type*-object. The imaginary relationship, which is an essentially alienated relation, barges in, hampers, and more often than not reverses and profoundly misrecognises the relationship of speech between the subject and the Other. This happens insomuch as the big Other is another subject and insomuch as he is capable, par excellence, of deceiving.

There was a point to introducing this schematisation in analytic experience, given how nowadays this experience is being reformulated by an ever larger number of analysts who give priority in analytic theory to the object relation as something primary, without for all that offering any further commentary. They have been realigning the entire dialectic of the pleasure principle and reality principle on the object relation, and basing all analytic furtherance around what might be called a rectifying of the subject's

relation to the object, regarded as a dual relationship, as a relationship that would be – so we are told when they speak about the analytic situation – exceedingly straightforward.[1] Well, this relationship between subject and object that is increasingly tending to occupy the centre stage of analytic theory is the very thing that we are going to put to the test.

Given that the object relation, insomuch as it is dual, corresponds to the line *a–a'* in our diagram, can we on this basis construct in a satisfactory way the entirety of phenomena open to our observation in our analytic experience? Can this implement possibly answer for the facts all by itself? Can the more complex diagram that we have set in opposition to this be disregarded, indeed must it be cast aside?

I shall give you some sustained evidence of how the object relation has become, at least apparently, the foremost theoretical feature in the explication of analysis. Not that I can recommend that you delve into what can be called a sort of collective work that has just come out, and to which the term *collective* is particularly well suited. You will see that from beginning to end this object relation is foregrounded in a way that is not always particularly satisfactory, in the sense of hanging together, but the monotony of which, the uniformity, is quite striking. You will see this object relation being expressly promoted in one of the articles, entitled *Évolution de la psychanalyse*, and, as the final stage of this evolution, you will see in the article *La clinique psychanalytique* a way of presenting clinical practice itself that is fully aligned with it. Perhaps I will give you some idea of what a presentation such as this can lead to.

The collection as a whole is certainly quite striking. In it, you can see practitioners of analysis trying to put their minds in order. The understanding they manage to have of their own experience does not seem to give them full and complete satisfaction. On the other hand, however, this only orients or penetrates their practice with any depth when they conceive of how their own experience in this realm is not something that would truly have consequences for the actual patterns of their intervention, for the direction they give to analysis, nor, by the same token, for its outcomes. In merely reading them, one can misrecognise this, even though it has always been said that analytic theory and practice cannot be separated, dissociated, one from the other. Once people start conceiving of analysis in a certain direction it is inevitable that it will also be led in a certain direction, if the theoretical direction and the practical outcomes can likewise be but glimpsed.

To introduce the question of the object relation, and precisely the question of its legitimacy, or of the groundlessness of its being placed at the centre of analytic theory, I shall have to recall for

you at least briefly what this notion owes, or doesn't owe, to Freud himself. I shall do so first of all because this is indeed a sort of guide rope for us, and almost a technical delimitation that we have imposed on ourselves, based on this Freudian commentary.

Likewise, this last year I have sensed some questioning arising from you, worries even, as to whether I would be taking Freud's texts as my point of departure. When it comes to the object relation, it is undoubtedly very hard to begin with Freud's texts themselves, because it's not to be found in them. I'm speaking, of course, about something that is hereby categorically asserted to be a deviation from analytic theory. So, I'm going to have to begin with recent texts and with a criticism of their positions. However, that we shall ultimately have to refer to Freud's positions is not in doubt, and by the same stroke we cannot avoid bringing up, even very rapidly, what revolves around the very notion of object in those fundamental themes that are strictly Freudian.

We cannot do so, here at the point of departure, in a developed way. It is precisely at the end that we will be joining up with this, when we will have to spell it out.

So, I simply want to provide a brief reminder, which wouldn't even be conceivable were it not for the three years of collaboration we have under our belt, and had you not already met this theme of the object in various different guises here with me.

1

Freud does, of course, speak about the object. The final section of the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* is called *Die Objektfindung*, *The Finding of an Object*. The object is being implicitly spoken of whenever the notion of reality comes into play. It is spoken of in yet a third way whenever the ambivalence of certain fundamental relationships is implied, namely the fact that the subject turns himself into an object for the other party, the fact that there is a specific type of relationship in which an object's reciprocity with a subject is a plain and even constituting factor.

I would like to accentuate more firmly the three ways in which notions relating to the object become apparent to us. This is why I'm alluding to one of the points in Freud's writings to which we can refer in order to demonstrate, to articulate, the notion of object. If you go to this chapter in the *Three Essays* you will see something that was already there at the time he was drafting the *Entwurf*, a text that I remind you has only been published by a sort of historical accident, for not only was Freud not minded to publish it but,

furthermore, it was published against his will. None the less, we find the same wording in connection with the object back in this first projection of his psychology. Freud insists that any way by which man may find the object is only ever subsequent to a drive tendency[2] in which what is at issue is a lost object, an object that would have to be found again.

Here, the object is not regarded in the same terms as in the new-fangled theory, where it is said to be a fully satisfying object, a *type*-object, the object par excellence, a harmonious object, the object that grounds man in a corresponding reality[3], in the reality that is proof of maturity – the infamous genital object. It is quite striking to see how, when he is laying out the theory of instinctual development, such as it can be isolated in the first analytic experiences, Freud indicates that it is grasped along the path of a search for the lost object. This object that corresponds to an advanced stage in the maturation of instincts is the object of the first weaning, found again. It is the object that was initially the point of attachment to the infant's earliest satisfactions. It is a *re-found* object.

It is quite clear that discordance is established by the bare fact of repetition. Nostalgia binds the subject to the lost object, through which every searching effort is exerted. It brands this re-finding with the stamp of a repetition that is impossible, precisely because it is not the same object and never can be. The primacy of this dialectic places a fundamental tension at the heart of the subject–object relationship, which ensures that what is sought out is never sought out in the same way as what will be found. It is through a search for a satisfaction that is both *passée* and *dépassée*, past and outgrown, that the new object is sought out and found, and seized elsewhere than the very spot at which it is being sought out. A fundamental distance is introduced by the essential conflictive element that any search for the object entails. This is the first form in which this notion of the object relation appears in Freud's work.

It is here that we ought to resolve to lay the stress squarely on what I've been underscoring. I would say that to articulate this in terms that would be philosophically developed would be at cross-purposes. I'm not doing this, and intentionally so, because I'm setting it aside for our return to this theme. For some of you these terms already carry a meaning by way of certain items familiar to you from philosophy. I'm underscoring the distance that lies between, on the one hand, the subject's relationship to the object in Freud's work and, on the other, what preceded it in a certain conception of the object as a corresponding object, the object expected in advance, coapted to the subject's maturation. This full distance is already implicit in what contrasts a Platonic perspective – the perspective that grounds

each apprehending, each recognition, upon the reminiscence of a *type* that is in some sort preformed – with a profoundly different notion. It is the same distance that lies between modern experience and experience in Antiquity, and it is set out by Kierkegaard in the register of repetition, the repetition that is forever sought out but essentially never satisfied insomuch that, of its very nature, it is not reminiscence by any stretch of the imagination. It is always repetition as such, and thus impossible to assuage. It is in this register that Freud's notion of *re-finding the lost object* is located.

We shall take this textual reference on board. It is crucial that it should have survived in Freud's first report on the notion of the object. It is essentially with a notion of the subject's profoundly conflictive relation with his world that things are set out and clarified. How could it be otherwise since, already at that time, it was essentially a matter of the opposition between the reality principle and the pleasure principle?

If pleasure principle and reality principle were not extricable, one from the another – I would further say, each implying the other and each including the other in a dialectical relation, as Freud consistently established – then the reality principle would be constituted only by what is imposed, for its satisfaction, on the pleasure principle. It would merely be its extension.

Correlatively, while the reality principle does imply, in its dynamic and in its fundamental search, the fundamental tension of the pleasure principle, it is no less the case that between the two – and this is the essential factor in what Freudian theory brings us – there is a wide gap that there would be no cause to single out were the one merely the continuation of the other. Indeed, the pleasure principle tends to become a reality in profoundly unrealistic formations, while the reality principle implies the existence of an organisation, a structuration, that is different and autonomous, and which entails that what it grasps may well be something fundamentally different from what is desired. In itself this relation introduces another term into the very dialectic of subject and object, a term that is here posited as irreducible.

Just as the subject we saw earlier was something that was founded in its primordial requirements as something that is fated forever to make a return, and even an impossible return, so too in the opposition between reality principle and pleasure principle do we have the notion of a fundamental opposition between reality and what is sought by the drive tendency. In other words, the notion of the satisfaction of the pleasure principle, insomuch as it is always latent, subjacent to any world-building exercise, is something that always tends to become more or less of a reality in a loosely hallucinatory

form. The fundamental possibility of this organisation that is subjacent to the ego, that of the subject's drive tendency as such, is to be satisfied in an unreal realisation, in an hallucinatory realisation. Here, with *hallucinatory*, we have the other term on which Freud squarely lays the accent in the *Traumdeutung*, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, where there is the first full and articulated formulation of the opposition between reality principle and pleasure principle.

These two positions are not, as such, articulated one to the other. The fact that Freud presents them as distinct marks out well enough how the development is not centred around the relationship between subject and object. Each of these two terms finds its place at a different point in the Freudian dialectic, for the simple reason that in no case whatsoever is the subject–object relationship central.

This relationship becomes apparent only in a way that may seem to be sustained directly, without any gap. It is within this ambivalent relationship, or in a kind of relationship that has since been labelled *pregenital* – referring to relations of seeing/being seen, attacking/being attacked, passive/active – that the subject experiences these relationships that always imply, in a way that is more or less manifest, his identification with the partner of this relationship. That is to say, these relations are lived through in a *reciprocity* – the term is acceptable in this instance – of ambivalence between the subject's position and the partner's position.

Indeed, at this level a relationship is introduced between subject and object that is not only direct and seamless but which literally equates them. It was this relationship that provided the pretext for the foregrounding of the object as such. This relationship of reciprocity between subject and object, which warrants being termed a mirror-relation, already in and of itself raises so many questions that, in an attempt to resolve them, I introduced the notion of the mirror stage into analytic theory.[4]

What is the mirror stage? It is the moment at which the infant recognises his own image, but it is far from being purely and simply the connoting of this one phenomenon in child development. It encompasses everything that the child learns from being captivated by his own image, and precisely everything of the distance that lies between his inner tensions and those that are brought out in this relation to his identification with the image. This is still something that has served as a theme, as a central point, in the foregrounding of this subject–object relation as, so to speak, the phenomenal scale to which may be referred, in a valid and satisfactory manner, what had hitherto been presented in terms that were not only pluralist but strictly speaking conflictive.

It introduces an essentially dialectical relation between the

different terms, except that some thought – and one of the first to accentuate this, though not as early on as might be believed, was Karl Abraham – that they ought to be trying to refocus everything that had thus far been introduced concerning the subject's development.

Until then, the subject's development had always been introduced in a way that was seen retroactively, as a reconstruction, based on a central experience, that of the conflictive tension between conscious and unconscious. This conflictive tension is created by the fundamental fact that what is sought by the drive tendency is obscure, that what is consciously acknowledged therein is first and foremost a misrecognition, and that it is not along the path of consciousness that the subject recognises himself. There is something else, and there is a beyond-zone. By the same stroke, this beyond-zone thereby poses the question of its structure, its origin and its meaning, in being fundamentally misrecognised by the subject, beyond the reach of his cognisance.

This is the perspective that was abandoned on the initiative of a number of figureheads, and then in trends of significance within analysis. They refocused everything in accordance with an object the terminal point of which is not the same as our point of departure. Our point of departure leads backwards in time, so as to understand how this terminal point is arrived at. Moreover, this terminal point can never be observed. This ideal object is literally unthinkable. They, on the contrary, conceived of it as a sort of focal point, a culminating point, onto which a whole series of experiences, elements and partial notions of the object would converge. This conception became prevalent from a particular time onwards, and especially from the moment that Abraham formulated it, in 1924, in his theory of libidinal development. For many, this theory grounds the very law of analysis and everything that occurs within it. It grounds the system of coordinates within which they situate the entire analytic experience, along with the experience of this infamous corresponding object that is ideal, terminal and perfect. They propose this object in analysis as the one that in and of itself marks out the achieved goal, namely the normalisation of the subject.

In itself alone, the term *normalisation* ushers in a slew of categories that are utterly foreign to the point of departure of analysis.

2

By the admission of those who have gone down this path – I think I can offer no better illustration of what is at issue than what they

have certainly worded in very precise terms – what they regard to be furtherance in analytic experience is the fact of having pushed to the fore the subject's relations with his surroundings.

The accentuation they give to the surroundings amounts to a reduction of everything that analytic experience yields. There is a kind of reverting to the altogether objectifying position that posits, at the forefront, the existence of a particular individual and a relation that more or less corresponds, that is more or less adapted, to his surroundings. This is something that is spelt out in the collective work we were speaking about, on pages 761 to 773 [of the original French edition], in the following terms.

After having underscored that what is at issue in the furtherance of analysis is the accentuation of the subject's relations with his surroundings, we read in passing that this is especially relevant in the little Hans case study. We are told that Hans's parents seem to be *lacking a personality of their own.* Nothing compels us to subscribe to this opinion. The important matter is what follows. *It was before the outbreak of the 1914 war, at a time when Western society was more self-assured and didn't think to second-guess its longevity; since 1926, the emphasis has been, on the contrary, on anxiety and the organism's interaction with its surroundings; so it was that society's foundations were shaken, the anxiety of a changing world was lived through on a daily basis, and individuals saw themselves differently. This was also the time when physics was trying to find itself, with relativism, uncertainty, and probability seeming to undermine the self-confidence of objective thought.*

It seems to me that this reference to modern physics as the foundation of a new rationalism speaks for itself. What is important is that it is being oddly confessed, in a roundabout way, that psychoanalysis is envisaged as a kind of social remedy. This is what is pushed to the fore as the driving feature behind its furtherance. It is of no matter whether this is well founded or otherwise, because these are items that don't appear to us to carry much weight. What is instructive is the great casualness of the context in which these items are accepted.

This example does not stand alone, because what is specific to this collective work is how it communicates internally in a way that seems to be much rather composed of a kind of odd homogenisation than any articulation in the strict sense.

The first article to which I alluded earlier also marks out in a deliberate way the fully formulated notion that, all things considered, what will afford us *the general conception of a scheme that enables us to understand, here and now, the structure of a personality* is the *point of view* that we are told is *the most practical* and *the most*

prosaic, that of *the patient's social relationships.* This last expression is emphasised by the author.

I shan't linger over other terms, which are confessional in nature – *there arises a painful impression of something in motion, ungraspable, even artificial, but doesn't this depend on the very object of this discipline, which is an activity of which the variations over time no one dreams of contesting?* Indeed, this is one explanation for the somewhat cloudy character of the different approaches that this point of view offers, but it's perhaps not an explanation that ought to be entirely satisfactory for us. I fail to see which objects of any discipline are not equally subject to variations over time.

Concerning *the relationship between the subject and his world,* it is asserted that there is a *parallelism between the more or less advanced state in the maturation of instinctual life and the structure of the ego in a given subject at a given moment.* To spell it right out, from a certain point on, this structure of the ego is considered to be the inner lining and, ultimately, the representative of the *state of the maturation of instinctual activities.* There is no more difference, whether on the dynamic plane or the genetic plane, between the different stages of the ego's progress and the different stages of instinctual progression.

For some of you, these are terms that you might not find particularly questionable in and of themselves. No matter. This is not the issue. We will be seeing to what extent we may or may not take them on board. But their consequence is that setting this up at the heart of analysis presents as a typology in which there are those who are pregenital and those who are genital.

This is written – *Pregenitals are people with egos that are [. . .] weak.* For them, the ego's coherence depends strictly *upon the stability of object relationships with a significant object.* This is where we can start to ask questions. Later, in passing, we might see where this unexplained notion of a *significant object* leads in the other texts, namely the absolute lack of differentiation and discernment about what is *significant.* The technical notion that this implies is the bringing into play, and by the same stroke the emphasising, within the analytic relationship, of pregenital relations, those that typify this pregenital individual's relation with his world. We are told – *The loss of these relationships, or of their object (which amounts to the same thing since the object exists only by virtue of its relationship to the subject), may bring about functional disturbances of the ego, such as depersonalisation or psychotic disorders.* Here we uncover the spot where a test is being sought that would vouch for this deep fragility in the ego's relationships with its object. *The subject makes every effort to maintain at all costs his object relationships, making all sorts of adjustments to this end, changing the object by using displacement*

or symbolism in such a way that the choice of a symbol, quite arbitrarily charged with the same affective values as the original object, makes it possible for him not to be deprived of an object relationship. For this object, onto which the affective value of the original object is displaced, the term *auxiliary ego* is fully justified.

This explains the following – *The genital type, on the other hand, possesses an ego whose strength and healthy functioning do not depend upon the possession of a significant object. While, for the first group, the loss of a person of great subjective importance – to take the most straightforward example – may endanger the whole personality, for the second group, however painful the loss may be, it does not constitute a threat to the solidity of their personality. The latter individuals are not dependent upon an object relationship. This is not to say that they can easily do without all object relationships – which, after all, is unrealisable in practice, so many and so varied are such relationships – but simply that the integrity of their being is not at the mercy of the loss of one significant object. This is where, from the standpoint of the connection between the ego and its object relationships, we find the difference between this and the former types of personality.*

Much further on, we read – *It may well be that, as in all neuroses, normal development seems to be halted by the subject's finding it impossible to achieve a resolution of the last structural conflict of the infantile phase. Such a resolution normally results in that happy adaptation to the world which we call the genital object relationship and which gives the observer the impression of a harmonious personality and, in analysis, what seems a sort of crystalline clarity of mind that is more an ideal than a reality. But this difficulty in resolving the oedipal conflict is very often the result not only of the problems involved in that conflict [. . .].*

Crystalline clarity. We can see where this author is able to lead us with the perfection of the objectal relation.

Whereas the drives in their pregenital form present *a need for a possession that cannot be controlled or limited by conditions and has in it a destructive element*, in their genital form they are *really tender and loving*, and while such subjects may *not show themselves to be oblative, that is, disinterested*, and *the object selected may be fundamentally just as narcissistic a choice as in the earlier cases; nevertheless, they are capable of understanding and adapting themselves to the object situation. Moreover, the inner structure of their object relationships shows that the happiness of the object is essential to the happiness of the subject. The convenience, the desires, and the needs of the object are taken into consideration to the highest degree.*

This is enough to open up a very serious problem. Is it important to draw distinctions within maturation, which is neither a path, nor

a perspective, nor a plane? Indeed, we cannot help but ask what is meant by a *normal* end to childhood, to adolescence and to maturity.

However, an essential distinction does need to be drawn between the establishing of a reality – with all the problems it poses in terms of adapting to something that resists, to something that refuses, to something that is complex, to something that in any case implies the notion of *objectivity*, as the most elementary experience shows us – and what is being aimed at in these same texts as a notion that is loosely implicit, and which is opened up by the contrasting term *objectality*, the plenitude of the object. Besides, this confusion is spelt out because the term *objectivity* can be found in the text as what typifies this form of achieved relation. There is certainly a distance between, on the one hand, what is implied by a certain construction of the world regarded as more or less satisfying at such-and-such an era that is effectively determined outside of any historical relativity, and, on the other, this relationship with the other party in its affective register, indeed its sentimental register, including the fact of taking his needs, happiness and pleasure into consideration. This certainly carries us much further, because what is at issue is the constitution of the other as such, insomuch as he speaks, insomuch as he is a subject.

We shall have to come back to these texts, whose authors plop out one gem after another. It's something that requires more than just quoting, even when coming out with the comic remarks that they themselves suggest quite readily enough, without, for all that, making the necessary progress.

3

This extraordinarily simplistic conception of the notion of instinctual development in analysis is far from universally accepted.

Texts like those by Glover, for instance, will refer you to a very different notion of the exploration of object relations, and which are even named and carefully defined as such. When you read Glover's texts, you will see that what essentially characterises the stages of the object throughout the different phases of individual development is an object that is conceived of as having an utterly different function.

Analysis insists on introducing a functional notion of the object that is quite different from that of something that simply corresponds, that simply coapts the object to a particular demand from the subject. The object has an altogether different role here. It is, as it were, placed against a backdrop of anxiety, insomuch as the object is an instrument for masking off, for fending off, the funda-

mental backdrop of anxiety that characterises the different stages in the development of the subject's relation to the world. This is how the subject needs to be characterised at each stage.

As we near the end of today's talk, I should cast some light on what I am asserting by means of an illustrative example. It will be enough to punctuate Freud's classic and fundamental conception of phobia.

Freud, and all those who studied phobia both with him and after him, could not fail to note that there is no direct relation between the object and the purported fear that tinges this object with its crucial mark, constituting it as such as a primal object. On the contrary, considerable distance lies between the fear at issue – and which may be a primal fear in some cases but not so in others – and the object that is constituted in relation to this fear in order to keep fear at a distance. This object encloses the subject in a circle, a bulwark wherein he shields himself from these fears. The object is essentially linked to the sounding of an alarm signal. It is an outpost against an established fear. This fear furnishes the object with its role, its function, at a point that is determined by a certain crisis of the subject, but which, for all that, is neither a typical crisis nor a developmental crisis.

This modern notion, as it were, of phobia is something that is more or less legitimately asserted – though we shall also have to criticise it – at the origin of the notion of object such as it is promoted in Glover's papers and in the way of conducting analysis that is characteristic of his thought and technique.

We are told that the anxiety at issue is castration anxiety, and until recently this has seldom been contested. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that things have got to the point that the desire for reconstruction, in the genetic sense, has gone so far as to try to make us deduce the very construction of the paternal object from something that would be seen as its sequence and culmination, namely the burgeoning of primal constructions that are phobic and objectal. There is a report by Mallet on phobia that goes in precisely this direction, curiously reversing the trail that effectively allowed us to trace back from the phobia to the notion of a protective function which the phobic object holds in relation to anxiety.

In another register, it is no less remarkable to see what has become of notions of the fetish and fetishism. I'm introducing this today to show you that, if we take them from the object-relations perspective, fetishes are seen to fulfil a function that in analytic theory is also articulated as a protection against anxiety and, oddly enough, against the same anxiety, that is to say, castration anxiety. This doesn't seem to be the same angle from which fetishes are purported

to be more particularly bound to castration anxiety in so far as it is linked to the perception of the absence of a phallic organ in the female subject, and to the negation of this absence. What matter. You cannot fail to see, here too, that the object has a certain function of complementation in relation to something that presents as a hole, even an abyss, in reality.

The question is whether there is a relation between the two, whether there is something in common between these fetishes and phobic objects.

However, in posing such questions in such terms, perhaps, without declining to broach these problems on the basis of the object relation, we ought to find in the phenomena themselves the opportunity and the starting point for a critique that – even if we submit to the interrogation that is pressed on us regarding the *type*-object, the ideal object, the functional object, indeed all these forms of the object that you may presume in mankind – does effectively lead us to tackle the question in this light. But then, let's not content ourselves with uniform explanations for a variety of phenomena. Let's focus our opening question upon what constitutes the essential functional difference between a phobia and a fetish, in so far as both are centred on the same backdrop of fundamental anxiety, where both one and the other are called upon by the subject as a protective measure, as a security measure.

It is precisely this that I have resolved to take as my point of departure to show you where we start from in our experience in order to reach these same problems. Indeed, this needs to be posed, not in a mythical fashion, nor in an abstract fashion, but in a direct fashion, in the way the objects are presented to us.

It is insufficient to speak about the object in general, or about an object that, by goodness knows what property of magical communication, would have the function of regularising relationships with every other object, as though the fact of having come to be a genital individual would be enough to resolve each and every question. For example, one such question is what one particular object might be for a genital individual, an object that doesn't strike me as having to be any the less enigmatic from the essentially biological viewpoint that is foregrounded there, an object of everyday human experience, namely a coin.

This object does not pose in and of itself the question of its object value. Doesn't the fact that, in a certain register, we might lose the coin as a means of exchange – or any other kind of regard for the exchange of any item whatsoever of human life transposed into its commodity value – introduce in umpteen different ways the question of what has effectively been resolved in Marxist theory by an

altogether coterminous, though not synonymous, term, namely the fetish? In short, there is the notion of the fetish object and, if you like, the screen object. Likewise, we can only wonder why its rightful value is still not being accorded to the function of the constitution of an altogether singular reality on which, right at the start, Freud shed a truly piercing light, namely the notion of *screen memories* as what are especially constitutive of the past of each and every subject as such. All these questions deserve to be taken in themselves and on their own terms.

They should also be analysed in their mutual relations, because it is from these relations that the necessary distinctions between different planes can emerge, which will enable us to define, in a way that hangs together, why a phobia and a fetish are two different things.

What relation is there between the widespread use of the word *fetish* and the precise employment of the term to designate a sexual perversion? We are hereby introducing the subject of our next talk, which will be on phobias and fetishes.

It is along this path back to the experience that we will be able to establish anew the term *object relations* and restore its true value.

21 November 1956

II

THE THREE FORMS OF THE LACK OF OBJECT

What is an obsessional?
The imaginary triad
Phallicism and the imaginary
Reality and *Wirklichkeit*
Mr Winnicott's transitional object

This week, with you in mind, I did some reading. I've been reading what psychoanalysts have written on what is going to be our subject this year, namely the object, and more specifically the genital object.

The genital object is, to call it by its name, woman. So, why not call it by its name?

I rewarded myself, therefore, by reading a number of texts on female sexuality. It would be more important for you to do this reading than for me. It would make you more at ease when it comes to understanding what I've been led to tell you on this subject. And then, what I have read is very instructive from yet further points of view, principally from the following. *Human stupidity gives an idea of the infinite*, said Renan. Well, I have to say that, had he lived in our times, he would surely have added – *as do the theoretical ramblings of psychoanalysts.*

Don't believe that I'm equating them with stupidity. I'm not. Rather, they belong to the realm of what may afford an idea of the infinite. Indeed, it is exceedingly striking to see what extraordinary difficulties the minds of different analysts have had to cope with in the wake of Freud's altogether sharp and astonishing statements.

What did Freud, ever on his own, contribute on this subject? What I shall tell you today will probably not go beyond this. Freud's contribution here is that the idea of a harmonious object that of its very nature would bring about the subject–object relationship is at absolute variance with experience. I won't even say analytic experience, but the common experience of relations between man and woman.

If harmony in this realm were not a problematic thing, there would be no analysis at all. Nothing is more precise than Freud's formulations on this matter. In this realm there is a wide gap, something that doesn't work out, though this doesn't mean that it suffices to define it. Freud positively affirms that things don't work out. You will find this affirmation in *Civilization and Its Discontents* and in one of the *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis.*

This leads us back, then, to asking ourselves about the object.

1

I remind you that what is commonly forgotten in regard to the notion of the object is nowhere more greatly accentuated than in the contours through which the experience and the expounding of Freudian doctrine locate and define this object.

The object first presents in a quest for the lost object. The object is always a *re-found* object, the object caught up itself in a quest. This stands in categorical opposition to the notion of an autonomous subject, which is what the idea of an object that would bring about a subject–object duality leads to.

Likewise, I underscored last time the notion of an object that is *hallucinated* against a backdrop of anguishing reality. This is a notion of the object such as it arises in the exercise of what Freud calls the primary system of pleasure. In complete contrast to this, in analytic practice there is the notion of the object that ultimately boils down to the real. It's a matter of re-finding the real. This object stands out, not against a backdrop of anxiety this time, but against a backdrop of common reality, as it were. The terminal point of the analytic search is to realise that there is no reason to hold this in fear. *Fear* is a term to be distinguished from the term *anxiety.*

Lastly, the third term under which the object becomes apparent when we trace it in Freud is that of *imaginary reciprocity*, namely, in any relationship with the object, the place of the term that is in the relation is simultaneously occupied by the subject. Identification with the object thus lies at the root of any relationship with the object.

In truth, this last point has not been forgotten, but it's clearly the point to which object-relations practice in the new-fangled analytic technique is most attached, resulting in what I shall call an imperialism of identification. *Since you can identify with me, and since I can identify with you, out of the two of us the ego that best adapts to reality is surely the better model.* Ultimately, the furtherance of the analysis would be dragged, in a pure stripping back, towards an

identification with the analyst's ego. To show the extreme deviation that such partiality in the steering of the object relation can condition, I would like to illustrate this by recalling how practice with obsessional neurosis has been particularly exemplary in this regard.

As most of you here accept, obsessional neurosis is a structuring notion that can be expressed more or less as follows. What is an obsessional? All in all, he is an actor playing his part, carrying out a certain number of acts as though he were dead. It's a way of shielding himself from death. The game he plays is in some sense a lively game that consists in showing that he is invulnerable. To this end, he practises a sort of subduing that conditions his every approach to others. This can be seen in a sort of exhibiting of how far he can go in this practice that has every aspect of a game, including its illusory aspects. He exhibits how far this little other, which is his alter ego, his own double, can go, and does so before an Other who witnesses the spectacle in which he himself is a spectator. Therein lies the very possibility of the game and all the pleasure he takes in it. However, he doesn't know what place he occupies, and this is what is unconscious as far as the obsessional is concerned. He does what he does to distractive ends. He is able to glimpse this, and is well aware that the game is not being played where he is, which is why almost nothing of what occurs has genuine importance for him. But that he should know where he beholds all of this from is another matter.

Who, ultimately, calls the shots? We know that he does, but we will make countless mistakes if we don't know from where these shots are called. Hence the notion of the object, and of one significant object for this subject.

It would be quite wrong to believe that this object can be designated in any of the terms of a dual relationship. You are going to see now where this leads with the notion of the object relation that is developed by the author in question. It's quite clear that in this very complex situation, the notion of object is not given immediately because it takes part in an illusory game, a game of aggressive retaliation, a cheating game, which consists in steering as close as possible to death while keeping out of range of every blow, because the subject has in some sense killed his desire in advance, mortifying it, so to speak.

The notion of object is infinitely complex here, and deserves to be accentuated from one instant to the next so that at least we may know which object we are talking about. We shall try to furnish this notion of the object with a uniformity, which will allow us to find our way in our vocabulary.

This is a notion that, I won't say steals away, but rather presents itself as something difficult to circumscribe. To bolster our

comparison, let's say that it's a matter of demonstrating something that the subject has articulated for the other spectator that he is, unknowingly, and at the site where he positions us as the transference advances.

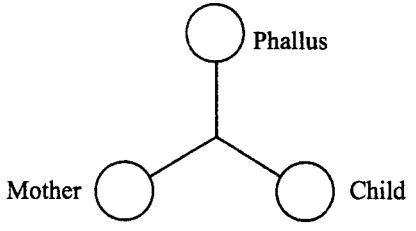
I urge you to take up the case of the obsessive reported by the author I've been speaking about in order to see what to his mind constitutes the furtherance of the analysis. You will see that the way of handling the object relation in this case consists in doing something analogous to what would happen if you were to witness a circus routine where Auguste and Chocolat administer each other a series of simultaneous, alternating slaps.[1] It would consist in stepping down into the arena and forcing oneself to brave the fear of being smacked. In actual fact, it is the obsessional subject's aggressiveness that leads him to land each slap and makes the relation with him in the consultations an aggressive one. Whereupon the Ringmaster rolls up and says – *Look. This is all quite unreasonable. Pack it in. Swallow your cane, each of you. That way you'll have it in the right place. You'll have interiorised it.* Indeed, this is one way of resolving the situation and securing an outcome.

You can sing a little tune to this, the enduring song by N*, who was something of a genius. Those of you who never saw him when he was performing in one of the Parisian cabaret clubs cannot possibly form an idea of what he was capable, simply clowning around with a hat.[2] However, one will never understand a single thing, either about what here I am calling the somewhat sacred character of what we would be witnessing on such occasions, or about the forced exhibiting, however dark it may appear, but nor perhaps will one understand what the object relation means, strictly speaking, until, between the lines, there appears the profoundly oral character and backdrop of the imaginary object relation. This also enables us to see what can be narrowly and rigorously imaginary in a practice that is unable to escape from the laws of the imaginary, from this dual relationship that it takes as real, because in the end the culminating point of this object relation is the fantasy of phallic incorporation.

Why phallic? Not only does experience not follow the ideal notion that we may have of its accomplishment, but furthermore this notion only highlights its paradoxes all the more, to the extent that the full accomplishment of the dual relationship as such brings to the fore, the closer one gets to it, the imaginary object known as the phallus, as a privileged object. This is what I'm introducing today in the step I'm trying to get to you take.

The notion of object relations cannot be dealt with, cannot be understood, cannot even be put into practice, if one doesn't include the phallus as a third-party element. I won't call it a mediating

element, because that would involve taking a step that we haven't yet taken together. I'm calling this to mind today, writ large in the following diagram which I gave you at the end of the last academic year as both a conclusion to the analysis of the signifier with which we carried out our exploration of psychosis, and as an introduction to what I'm putting forward this year concerning the object relation.[3]



The imaginary relationship, whichever it may be, is moulded on a certain relation that is effectively fundamental – the mother–child relation, with everything that is problematic therein. This relation certainly gives us the idea that a real relationship is at issue, and indeed this is the point to which all analysis of the analytic situation is currently heading. They have been trying ultimately to reduce it to something that can be conceived of as the development of mother–child relationships, and what thereafter in the early stages bears the traces and the reflections of this initial position.

It is impossible, however, even for those authors who have turned this into the base of the whole analytic genesis in the strict sense, to bring in this imaginary feature without what we may term the *phallicism* of the analytic experience revealing itself as a key point at the heart of the notion of the object relation. This is demonstrated by experience, and by the evolution of analytic theory. In particular, I will be trying to show you in the course of this lecture the impasses that result from every attempt to reduce this imaginary phallicism to anything whatsoever that is given in the real. Indeed, when one seeks the origin of the entire analytic dialectic in the absence of the trinity of terms – symbolic, imaginary, and real – ultimately one can refer only to the real.

To offer you a final remark, to put the final touch to my description of how the dual relationship is being conducted in a certain orientation and theorisation of the analytic experience, I shall again make reference to the leader article in the collective work I spoke to you about.

When the analyst, entering the obsessional's imaginary game, is insistent in making him acknowledge his aggressiveness, that is to say, in making him situate the analyst in the imaginary relation-

ship, the same that earlier I described as that of reciprocations, we find in this text something that is offered as testimony of the subject's refusal, his misrecognition of the situation. This is the fact that he never wants to express his aggressiveness and only does so by way of *a slight irritation provoked by the analyst's technical rigidity*. The author confesses that he insists on perpetually bringing the subject back to the theme of aggressiveness, as though it were the central significant theme. He adds, tellingly, that in the end everybody knows that *irritation and irony are aggressive by nature*. Is it really so obvious that irritation is characteristic of aggressive relationships? We do know, however, that aggression can be provoked by any other feeling, and that for example it is not ruled out that a feeling of love may be the basis of a reaction of aggression. As for saying that a reaction like that of irony is *aggressive by nature*, this doesn't seem to me to be compatible with what everybody knows, namely that far from being an aggressive reaction, irony is above all a way of questioning. It's a mode of question. If there is an aggressive element, it is secondary to the structure of the element of questioning that there is in irony.

This shows you the kind of reductive perspective that such a conception of the object relation culminates in. Anyway, with this, I resolve not to speak to you any further on this matter.

On the other hand, we have now been led to the fundamental question as to relations between anyone and anything. We have to begin with this question because we are going to have to return to it. It will be our end point. The whole ambiguity of the question that arises around the object can be summarised as – is the object real or not?

2

We arrive at this question both along the path of the expanded vocabulary that we are using here – symbolic, imaginary, and real – and through the most immediate intuition.

When they speak to you about the object relation purely and simply along the lines of a point of access to the real, an access that the terminal point of analysis should constitute, what does this represent for you, as a spontaneous intuition? Is the object the real, or not? Is the object what is found in the real?

It's worth taking the trouble to ask oneself this, even without going into the problematic of phallicism that I'm introducing today, that is, without taking into account a truly prominent point in

analytic experience, a major object around which the entire dialectic of individual development revolves, along with the entire dialectic of an analysis. We shall be seeing in greater detail that phallus and penis are not to be conflated. When in the 1920s and 1930s the notion of phallicism and of the phallic period fell into place around a great ruckus that occupied the whole of the analytic community, what was at stake was to draw a distinction between the penis as a real organ, with functions that can be defined by certain real coordinates, and the phallus in its imaginary function. Even if there were no more than that, still it is worth taking the trouble to ask ourselves what the notion of the object means.

It cannot be said that this object is not a supervalent object in the analytic dialectic, an object that the individual has an idea of as such. While it has never been formulated that the singling out of this object is, strictly speaking, conceivable solely on the plane of the imaginary, this represents no less how the notion of phallicism entails the extrication of this category of the imaginary. It will leap out at you from every line of what Freud contributed at a particular date, and from the responses of Helene Deutsch, Melanie Klein and Ernest Jones in particular.[4]

Before we move into this, however, let's ask ourselves what is meant by the relationship, the reciprocal position, of the object and the real. There is more than one way to broach this question because as soon as we do broach it we realise that the real carries more than one meaning. Some of you, I think, will let out an immediate sigh of relief – *At last he's going to speak to us about the notorious real that so far has stayed in the shadows.* Indeed, it should come as no surprise to us that the real is something that lies on the fringes of our experience.

This position in relation to the real is quite amply explained by the screen of our experience, the conditions of which are so artificial, contrary to what we are told when it is presented as being such a straightforward situation. None the less, we cannot do otherwise than to refer to the real when we theorise. What do we mean when we invoke the real? It is highly unlikely that each of us has the same notion of it at the outset, but it is also plausible that each of us is able to reach certain essential distinctions and dissociations to be applied to the handling of the term *real*, or *reality*, if we look closely at how it is used.

When one speaks about the real, one may be driving at several things. What is at issue first of all is the whole of what effectively occurs. This is the notion of reality that is implied in the German term *Wirklichkeit*, which advantageously discerns a function in reality that French can isolate but poorly. It is what implies in

itself any possibility of effect, of *Wirkung*. It's the mechanism as a whole.

I shall just share a few reflections here in passing, to show the extent to which psychoanalysts have remained captive to categories that are utterly foreign to everything that their practice ought, in all appearance, to have introduced them to – with ease, I daresay – with respect to this very notion of reality. While it is conceivable, for a mind steeped in the tradition of mechanodynamics that reaches back to the eighteenth-century attempt to devise *Man a Machine*, with La Mettrie, that everything that happens at the level of mental life should require that we relate it to something that is posited as matter, how could this possess the slightest interest for an analyst? In what way could this possess the slightest interest when the very principle through which the analyst's technique and function is practised plays out through a succession of effects that are hypothetically accepted, if analyst he is, as having their own specific order? If he follows Freud, if he conceives of what directs the sense of the system as a whole, the perspective thereof that he must adopt is one of energetics.

Matter, this primitive *Stoff*, is so intriguing for the medical mind that people think they are actually saying something when they mindlessly assert that we, like all other doctors, posit an organic reality as the basis of everything that is brought to bear in analysis. Freud put is as simply as this. One just has to refer to where he said it and see the function it has. But in the end this remains a kind of need for reassurance. You can see analysts repeating it endlessly in their texts, like touching wood – *In the end, it's quite clear that these are merely superficial mechanisms, and everything must ultimately be referred to things that perhaps we shall know one day, namely the basic matter of what lies at the origin of everything that happens.* There is a kind of absurdity in this for an analyst, if indeed he accepts the realm of effectiveness he moves about in.

Allow me to draw a simple comparison to illustrate this. It's a little as though someone in charge of a hydroelectric power station on a wide river, the Rhine for instance, in an attempt to get you to understand what goes on in the machine, were to start going on about the time when the landscape was still untouched, when the Rhine flowed freely, and so on. However, it is the machine that is the source of the accumulation of energy, in this case electrical energy, which can thereafter be distributed and made available to consumers. What is accumulated bears the strictest relation to the machine, above all else. Saying that the energy was already there in a virtual state in the flow of the river doesn't get us anywhere. Strictly speaking, it means nothing, because energy only starts to concern

us in this instance from the moment it begins to accumulate, and it only accumulates from the moment the machines are set running in a certain way. Yes, they are kept going by a sort of permanent propulsion that comes from the river's flow, but referring to this flow as though it were the primal organisation of this energy is an idea that can only occur to someone who is utterly foolish. It amounts to conflating this energy with a notion that strictly speaking belongs to the realm of *Mana*. The realm of energy, even force, is quite different. Well, the same foolishness is to be met in anyone who, by any means possible, seeks out the permanence of what is ultimately accumulated as the element of *Wirkung*, of a possible *Wirklichkeit*, in something that has been there in some kind for all eternity.

In other words, this kind of urge that we have to conflate the *Stoff*, or primal matter, or forward thrust, or flow, or tendency, with what is really at stake in the exercise of analytic reality represents nothing less than a misrecognition of symbolic *Wirklichkeit*. The conflict, the dialectic, the organisation and the structure of the elements that are assembled and composed, lend what is at issue an altogether different energetic scope. Keeping up this urge to speak of this ultimate reality as though it existed elsewhere than in this exercise itself amounts to misrecognising the specific reality that we move about in. I may verily qualify this reference as a superstitious one. It's a sort of legacy of the organicist postulate, which in the analytic perspective can hold absolutely no meaning whatsoever. I'm going to show you that it carries no more meaning in the realm where Freud appears to be touching upon it.

A different use of the notion of reality is made in analysis, which is far more important and has nothing to do with the previous one. This other question of reality is the one that is brought into play in the twofold principle of the pleasure principle and the reality principle. Here, something utterly distinct is at issue, because it's quite clear that the pleasure principle is not something that is carried through in a way that is any less real than the reality principle. I even think that analysis is designed to demonstrate the contrary. Its use of the term *reality* is quite different.

There is a rather striking contrast here. While this use initially proved to be exceedingly fruitful, with the furtherance of analysis the terms of this *primary system* and *secondary system* in the realm of the psyche turned out to be more problematic, but in a way that was tremendously elusive. To perceive the distance that has been covered between the first use of the opposition of these two principles and the point we have now reached, through a certain sliding, we almost need to refer – and we do once in a while – to the

child who says that the emperor is wearing no clothes. Is this child a simpleton? Is he a genius? Is he a cheerful soul? Is he a brute? No one will ever know. He is surely a fairly liberating fellow.

Well, this happens once in a while. We see analysts coming back to a kind of primitive intuition, realising that everything people have been saying explains nothing. This is what occurred to Mr Winnicott in a short article he wrote to speak about what he calls *Transitional Objects* – we should think of these as objects in transition – *and Transitional Phenomena.*

Mr Winnicott simply notes that as we start becoming more interested in the mother's function and start deeming her to be absolutely primordial and decisive in the infant's apprehension of reality, that is, as we start replacing the impersonal and dialectical opposition between the reality principle and the pleasure principle with something to which we have given actors, subjects – they undoubtedly are exceedingly model subjects, who look far more like bit parts or imaginary puppets, but this is what we've come to – the pleasure principle starts to be identified with a particular relation to an object, namely the maternal breast. The reality principle, meanwhile, starts to be identified with the fact that the child has to learn to go without the breast.

Mr Winnicott has noted quite rightly that *if all goes well* – because it is important that all should go well – we are to make all that goes badly divert into a primordial anomaly, into *frustration*, this term which is becoming the key term in our dialectic. Winnicott notes that for things to turn out well, namely for the infant not to be traumatised, everything should happen as though the mother operates by always being there at just the right moment, that is, precisely by coming to lay out in just the right place, at the moment of the infant's delusional hallucination, the real object that fulfils him. Thus, to start with, there isn't any kind of distinction in the ideal mother–child relationship between the hallucination of the maternal breast, which arises in principle from the notion that we have of the primary system, and the encounter with the real object at issue.

Therefore, if all goes well, the infant has no means of distinguishing between what belongs to the realm of the satisfaction that in principle is rooted in hallucination – which is bound to the exercise and functioning of the primary system – and the apprehension of the real that effectively fulfils and satisfies him. What is at issue, then, is for the mother gradually to teach the child to tolerate these frustrations, and by the same stroke to perceive, in the form of a certain inaugural tension, the difference that lies between reality and illusion. This difference can be brought to bear only along the

path of disillusionment, when every now and then reality does not coincide with the hallucination that has arisen from desire.

Winnicott simply notes, first of all, that in this dialectic it is inconceivable that anything whatsoever could be elaborated that would go further than the notion of an object that strictly corresponds to primary desire. The wide variation of objects, as much fantasmatic as instrumental, which crop up during the development of the field of human desire, is strictly unthinkable in this dialectic once you start embodying them in two real actors, namely the mother and the child. Second, it is a fact of experience that, even in the youngest infants, we see these objects appearing which Winnicott calls *transitional*, because we cannot say on which side they lie in this reduced and embodied dialectic between hallucination and real object.

All objects in the infant's play are transitional objects. The infant doesn't need to be given toys in the strict sense, because he turns anything that falls in his hands into a transitional object. *And we do not challenge the infant in regard to subjectivity or objectivity just here where there is the transitional object.* It is of a different nature, the limit of which Winnicott does not cross by naming it thus. We shall simply call these objects *imaginary*.

In articles that are certainly very tentative, full of digressions and confusion, we can see all the same that their authors are invariably led back to these objects when they seek to explain the origin of a fact like the existence of sexual fetishes. They are led to see, as far as they can, what the common points are between the infant's object and the fetish, which comes to the forefront of objectal requirements on account of the great satisfaction that there can be for a subject, namely sexual satisfaction. They are always on the look out for any somewhat preferential handling on the part of the infant of some trifling object – a handkerchief pilfered from his mother, a corner of a blanket, some incidental piece of reality left within reach of his clasp – and which appears during this period that, despite here being called *transitional*, does not constitute an intermediate period but a permanent period in the child's development. They are thereby led almost to conflate these two kinds of object, without asking any questions about the distance that can lie between the eroticisation of the fetish object and the first appearance of the object as an imaginary object.

What is forgotten in this dialectic – a forgetting that of course calls upon these forms of supplementation that I'm accentuating in connection with Winnicott's article – is one of the most essential mainsprings of the entire analytic experience, and has been so since the very beginning, namely the notion of the lack of object.

3

We can never do without a notion of the lack of object as a central matter in our concrete practice of analytic theory. The missing object is not a negative, but the very mainspring of the subject's relationship with the world.

From the start, analysis, the analysis of neurosis, has begun with the altogether paradoxical notion of *castration*, which we may say has still not been fully developed.

We believe we are still speaking about it in the same way it was spoken of in Freud's time. This is utterly mistaken. We speak about it less and less, and in this we are wrong. What we have been speaking about much more is the notion of *frustration*. There is yet a third term, which is starting to be spoken of. More precisely, we are going to see how this notion has necessarily been introduced, by what path and by what requirements. This is the notion of *privation*.

On no account are these three things equivalent. To distinguish between them I would like to make a few remarks simply to try to help you first to understand what this is.

We should begin with the one that is most familiar to us by use, namely the notion of frustration.

What difference is there between a frustration and a privation? Let's take this as our point of departure, because Jones has gone so far as to introduce the notion of privation and to say that these two notions are experienced in the same way in the psyche. This is something that is tremendously brazen. It's quite clear, however, that we shall have to refer to privation to the extent that while phallicism, the requirement of the phallus, is, as Freud says it is, the major point of the entire playing out of the imaginary in the conflictive progress that the analysis of the subject describes, when it comes to a very different thing from the imaginary, namely the real, we can speak only of privation. This is not where the phallic requirement is brought to bear, because one of the things that appears most problematic is how a being presented as a totality can feel deprived of something that by definition this being does not have. We shall say, therefore, that privation is essentially something that of its nature as a lack is a real lack. It's a hole.

The notion that we have of frustration, simply by referring to the use that is effectively made of these notions when we speak about them, is the notion of detriment. It is an injury, a harm done, and from the way we are used to allowing it to play out in our dialectic we can see that it is only ever an imaginary detriment. Frustration is, in essence, the domain of *revendication*. It concerns something

that is desired and is not held to, but rather which is desired without reference to any possibility of satisfaction or acquisition. Frustration is, in and of itself, the domain of unbridled demands, of lawless demands. The crux of the notion of frustration, insomuch as it is one of the categories of lack, is an imaginary detriment. It is to be located on the imaginary plane.

On the basis of these two remarks it is perhaps easier for us to see that the essential nature of castration, its *Wesen*, has been neglected and abandoned far more than it has been dealt with in depth.

Freud introduced castration in a way that coordinated it fully with the notion of primordial Law, of the fundamental Law that there is in the incest prohibition and in the structure of the Oedipus complex. If we think from where we are now about the meaning of what Freud first stated, it was by taking a kind of mortal leap into experience that he placed so paradoxical a notion as castration at the heart of the major, decisive and shaping crisis of the Oedipus complex. We can only remark on this after the event, because it certainly is remarkable that we think only of not speaking about it. Castration can only be classified in the category of symbolic indebtedness.

With symbolic indebtedness, imaginary detriment, and real absence – the hole – we have what allows us to locate these three elements that we shall call the three terms of reference for the lack of the object.

For some, this will undoubtedly seem to be something that cannot be taken on board unreservedly. They would be right in that, in reality, for it to be valid we are going to have to cling firmly to the central notion of this having to do with categories of the lack of object. I'm saying *lack of object* and not *object* because if we position ourselves at the level of the object we shall be able to ask ourselves what the object is that lacks in each of the three cases.

This is most immediately apparent at the level of castration. What lacks at the level of castration – in so far as it is constituted by symbolic indebtedness, something that is recognised by law and which lends it both its support and its inverse, namely punishment – is quite clearly not, in our analytic experience, a real object. Only in the *Manusmṛti* is it said that he who has slept with his mother must cut off his own testicles and, cupping them in his hand, walk in a westerly direction until he drops down dead.[5] Until further notice, we have observed such things only in exceedingly rare cases that have nothing to do with our experience and which appear to us to require explanations that still belong to a very different realm from that of the structuring and normalising mechanisms put at stake in our experience.

Here, the object is imaginary. The castration at issue is always the

castrating of an imaginary object. It was this commonality, between the imaginary character of the object of castration and the fact that frustration is an imaginary lack of the object, that made it easier for us to believe that frustration was something that could allow us to proceed more easily to the heart of these problems. Yet it is by no means sure that *lack*, *object*, and even a third term that we shall call *agent*, stand on the same level within these categories. In fact, the object of castration is an imaginary object, and this is what ought to make us ask what is meant by this phallus that it took so long to identify as such.

The object of frustration, on the other hand, is well and truly real, even though frustration itself is wholly imaginary. The infant, the choice subject of our dialectic of frustration, is always missing a real object. This will help us to perceive something that is obvious – and which requires a slightly more metaphysical handling of the terms than people usually have when referring to precisely those criteria of reality we were speaking about earlier – namely, the object of privation is never anything but a symbolic object.

This is absolutely clear. How could something not be in its place, not be in a place where, precisely, it is not? From the point of view of the real this means absolutely nothing. Everything that is real is always and necessarily in its place, even when it is being interfered with. The property of the real is first and foremost that of carrying its place around with it on the soles of its shoes. You can disrupt the real as much as you like, it remains the case that, after our bodies have been blown apart, they will still be in their place, their place of fragments. The absence of something in the real is purely symbolic. An object is missing from its place to the extent that we would have defined it by law as having to be there. There is no finer reference for this than the following. Think of what happens when you ask for a book in a library and you're told that it's missing from its place. It might be just alongside, but it is no less the case that it's missing from its place. It is, in principle, invisible. This means that the librarian lives entirely in a symbolic world. When we speak of privation, a symbolic object is at issue, and nothing else.

This might appear somewhat abstract, but you will see how useful this will be to us hereafter when it comes to detecting those sleights of hand whereby mock solutions are given to false problems, in other words, those sleights of hand whereby, in the ensuing part of the dialectic that is debated in an effort to break away from what appears to be intolerable, namely the utterly different development in men and in women of what is called sexuality, in analytic terms, desperate bids are made to bring these two terms back to a single principle. Yet perhaps from the very first there was something

that permits of explaining and appreciating in a very clear and straightforward fashion why their respective development will be so different.

I simply want to add something that is also going to have a certain scope, and this is the notion of an agent. Here I'm making a leap that would mean having to come back to the imaginary triad of mother, child and phallus, but I don't have time for that. I simply want to complete the picture. The agent will also play a part in the lack of object.

Regarding frustration, we have the paramount notion that the mother plays this part. But is the agent of frustration symbolic, imaginary or real? And what is the agent of castration? Is it symbolic, imaginary or real? What is the agent of privation? Is it ultimately something that has no real existence whatsoever, as I said earlier? These are questions that at the very least warrant the posing.

Nearing the end of this session, I am going to leave these questions open. While the answer could perhaps be gone into here, even deduced, in an altogether formal manner, either way it would be unsatisfactory at the point we've reached because the notion of agent is something that lies completely outside the framework of what we have confined ourselves to today. Today we have dealt with a first question concerning the relations between the object and the real. We have stayed within the categories of the imaginary and the real, whereas the agent plainly belongs to another realm.

You can see nevertheless that the question of qualifying the agent at each of these three tiers is a question that is plainly connoted by this initial construction of the phallus.

28 November 1956

III

THE SIGNIFIER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

The body image and its signifier
The power station of the *Id*
Signifier, signified and death
The signifying transmission of the object
Its imaginary discordance

Yesterday evening you heard an exposé by Madame Dolto on the body image. Circumstances were such that I was unable to go beyond a general statement of how well I thought of it. Had it fallen to me to speak about it, it would have been to say where it stands in relation to what we are doing here, that is, all in all, teaching. This is something I am loath to do in a context of scientific work that really is of a very different kind, and I'm not upset at not having had to speak about it.

If we take as our point of departure this body image in the way it was presented to us yesterday evening, I think that, to situate it in relation to what we are doing in this seminar, you are all quite well enough aware of something that is obvious above all else, namely that this image is not an object.

When an object was spoken of yesterday, it was in an attempt to define stages of development, and the notion of object is indeed important in this regard. It is still no less the case, however, not only that the image of the body is not an object, but also that it cannot even become an object. This simple remark, which no one stated except indirectly, will better allow you to situate the body image in contrast to other imaginary formations.

In the analytic experience we do indeed deal with objects that can lead us to pose the question as to their imaginary nature. I'm not saying that these objects are imaginary, but rather that this is the question we are asking here. It is the central point at which we position ourselves in order to introduce at the clinical level what is

of interest to us in the notion of the object. This doesn't mean that we subscribe to the hypothesis of the imaginary object, nor does it mean that it is our point of departure. Actually, it is so scarcely our point of departure that this is precisely what we are questioning.

You are already familiar with this possibly imaginary object in the way it is evinced in the analytic experience. To anchor your ideas about it, I have taken two examples which I said I would be focusing on – the phobia and the fetish.

You would be wrong to believe that these objects have already yielded their secrets. Far from it. Irrespective of the exercise, the acrobatics, the contortions, the fantasmatic genesis, which people have given themselves over to, it still remains rather mysterious that during certain periods of children's lives, whether they are male or female, they feel they have to be afraid of lions, despite the lion not being an object they commonly meet in their experience. It is difficult to conjure up its form, or any kind of primitive feature that would, for example, be inscribed in the image of the body. One may try to, one may do all one can, but even so a residue remains. The residues in scientific explanations are invariably what are most fruitful for our consideration. In any case, we certainly won't make any progress by skirting round them.

Similarly, you have been able to note how, across the board, the number of sexual fetishes remains fairly limited. Why so? Apart from shoes, which play such a stunning role that one may wonder why more attention is not paid to this, we find scarcely more than garters, stockings, brassieres and the like, all of which cling to the skin. Chief among them, however, is the shoe, and there too there is a residue. How could one be a fetishist in the time of Catullus?[1]

We shall ask ourselves whether these objects are imaginary. How might we conceive of their kinetic value in the economy of libido? Can we do so only on the basis of indicating what might emerge from a point of origin? Ultimately this always has to do with the notion of an ectopia with respect to a certain typical relation. Do these objects arise from a typical relation of so-called stages that follow on one from the next?

Whichever the case may be, if these are the objects you were hearing about yesterday evening, then it's clear that they represent something that puts us in quite a bind. You have only to consider the interest generated in the audience, and the extent of the discussion, to appreciate how enthralling this is. On first approach, we could say that these objects are constructions that order, organise and articulate a certain lived experience. What is altogether striking however is the use that is made of this – and one doesn't doubt for a second its effectiveness – by the operator, Mme Dolto on this

occasion. This is quite certainly something that can be situated at the outset, and in a fully comprehensible way, only on the basis of the notions of signifier and signified. Mme Dolto uses this object, or what is supposed to be such, this image, as a signifier. It is as a signifier that the image comes into play in her dialogue. It is as a signifier that it represents something. This is particularly apparent in the fact that not one of them is supported on its own. It is always in relation to another of them that each one assumes its crystallising value that orients and penetrates the subject at stake, namely the infant.

So, here we are, brought back once again to the notion of the signifier.

1

Since here it's a matter of teaching, and since there is nothing more important than misunderstandings, I would like to begin by saying that I have observed, both directly and indirectly, that a few things I said last time when I was speaking about reality were not understood.

I said that psychoanalysts have such a mythical notion of reality that it overlaps the notion that for decades has been hindering any progress in psychiatry. This is precisely the hindrance that one might have thought psychoanalysis would deliver them from, namely that of seeking out reality in something whose character would be more material. To make myself understood, I gave the example of the hydroelectric power station, and I said that it was as though someone who is involved in whatever changes the station might undergo, its up-scaling or downscaling, its shutdowns and repairs, always thought they could reason in a valid way about what is to be done with it by referring to the prime matter that comes into play to set it running, namely the downward flow of water.

Whereupon someone came up to me to say – *what are you going to get out of that? You can well imagine that for the engineer this run of water counts for everything. You speak of energy accumulated in the power station, but this energy is no less than the transformation of the potential energy that is given in advance at the site where the power station is to be located. When the engineer has measured the height of the water upstream in relation to the outflow point, he can make his calculation. Everything is already given at the level of the potential energy. The power of the hydroelectric plant is already determined by prior conditions.*

This objection calls for a number of remarks. The first is that having to speak to you about reality, I started by defining it as

Wirklichkeit, as the efficacy of the system as a whole, in this instance the psychical system. I then wanted to specify for you the mythical character of a certain way of conceiving of this reality, which I laid out for you by means of the example of the power station. I didn't manage to get to the third point, which is a yet further perspective from which the theme of the real can present, namely the real that is there before we are constantly reckoning with it.

Of course, this is precisely yet another way of considering reality. Considering what is there prior to when a certain symbolic functioning is brought to bear is what is most substantial in the mirage harboured in the objection that was levelled at me. In truth, on no account am I denying that there is something that was there before. For instance, before the advent of the *I*, there was something else. The *Id* was there. It's simply a matter of finding out what this *Id* is.

So, in the case of the power station, I'm being told that what was there before is, effectively, energy. I never said any different. But energy and natural reality are worlds apart, because energy only begins to be taken into account once you start measuring it. And you only dream of measuring it once these power stations are up and running. Thenceforth, you have to make numerous calculations, one of which is indeed the energy that you will have at your disposal. This notion of energy is effectively constructed upon the necessity imposed by a civilisation of production that seeks to balance the books when it comes to the labour necessary to obtain from it this available remuneration of efficacy.

For instance, you always measure this energy between two reference points. There is no absolute energy of the natural reservoir. There is an energy of the reservoir in relation to the lower elevation to which the flowing liquid will travel when you have added a spillway to this reservoir. But the spillway all by itself will not allow for any calculation of energy. The energy will be calculable in relation to the lower elevation.

However, the question does not lie here. The question is that certain natural conditions have to be realised in order for it to be even faintly worthwhile calculating the energy. Any difference in elevation in running water, even if these are mere brooks or even driblets, will always potentially hold a certain value of energy in reserve, but this is of strictly no interest to anyone. To spell it right out, there has to be something in nature that presents the different materials that will come into play in the running of the machine, which are in a certain fashion privileged and, quite frankly, signifying. There have to be, in nature, certain privileged things that present themselves as useable, signifying and measurable, to enable the plant to be installed. On the path of a system that is taken to be

signifying, this is obviously something that on no account is to be contested.

What is important is the comparison I'm making with the psychical system. Let's see now how it takes shape.

Freud was led by the notion of energetics to designate a notion that we have to use in analysis in a way that would be comparable with the notion of energy. This is a notion that, just like energy, is entirely abstract and consists solely in the fact that it can posit, in analysis, yet in a virtual way, a simple bid for a principle designed to allow a certain leeway in thinking. This is strictly the energy that was introduced by the notion of equivalence, that is, the notion of a common measure between manifestations that present as being qualitatively very different. This notion of energy is precisely the notion of libido.

Nothing is less anchored in a material underpinning than the notion of libido in analysis. It is marvelled at, in the *Three Essays on Sexuality, how small a modification was made necessary in Freud's hypothesis* – the first time, in 1905, speaking about the biological underpinning of libido – *by the discovery of the sex hormones.* There is no marvel here. It means that, in either case, when it comes to libido, Freud *attaches no importance* to this reference to a chemical factor, strictly speaking. Freud spells this out. Whether there is one libidinal substance or several – one *whose presence produces a male sexual excitation and another substance which produces a female one* – he says that for us *it is a matter of indifference whether there is a single sexually exciting substance in the body or two or countless numbers of them.* Whichever is the case, analytic experience makes it necessary for us to think *with a single libido.* In this way, he locates libido on a plane that is, if I may say so, *neutralised,* as paradoxical as the term may seem.

Libido is this something that will link the behaviour of two beings, for example in a way that will ascribe to them the active position or the passive position. However, Freud tells us that in every case, even in the passive position, we take this libido as having active effects. Indeed, to adopt a passive position, a certain activeness is required. Thus, Freud comes to indicate that, ipso facto, libido takes on an aspect that presents only in this effective and active form, and is thus invariably rather akin to the masculine position. He goes so far as to say that only the masculine form of libido is within our reach.

How paradoxical all this would be, were it not merely a notion that is there simply to allow us to embody and to support the particular type of liaison that occurs on what is strictly speaking the level of the imaginary. It is what binds the behaviour of each living being in the presence of another living being by what are called

bonds of desire, that is, all the yearning that is one of the essential mainsprings of Freudian thought when it comes to organising what is at issue in any line of behaviour in sexuality.

We tend to regard the *Es* as an agency that bears the strongest relation to the drive tendencies, the instincts and libido. But what is the *Es*? And to what does the comparison with the power station allow us to compare it? Well, precisely to the power station as seen by someone who has absolutely no idea how it works. The uninstructed person who sees it might indeed think that it is the genie in the current who has started playing around inside, transforming water into light or force.

The *Es* is what, through the intermediary of the Other's message, is liable to become *I*.[2] This is the best definition there can be of the *Es*.

If analysis has brought us something, it is the following. The *Es* is not a physical reality, nor is it merely what was there before. The *Es* is organised and articulated as the signifier is organised and articulated.

This is also true for what the machine produces. All the force that is already there can be transformed, with the slight difference, nevertheless, that it is not only transformed but accumulated as well. This is even what is essentially interesting in the fact that the plant is a hydroelectric power station and not simply a hydraulic pumping station, for example. Of course, there is all this energy, but nevertheless no one can challenge the fact that when the plant has been constructed there is a palpable difference, not only in the landscape, but in the real.

The plant was not constructed through the intervention of the Holy Spirit. More precisely, it *was* constructed through the intervention of the Holy Spirit, and if you have any doubt about this, you're wrong.

I'm producing this theory of the signifier and the signified precisely to remind you of the presence of the Holy Spirit, which is absolutely essential for the furthering of our understanding of analysis.

2

Let's take this up at a different level, at the level of the reality principle and the pleasure principle.

In what respect is there an opposition between the two systems, primary and secondary? If you stick to what defines them when they are looked at from the outside, you can say the following. What occurs at the level of the primary system is governed by the pleas-

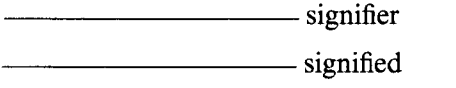
ure principle, that is, by the tendency to return to rest, while what occurs at the level of the reality system is defined purely and simply by that which forces the subject into what is called exterior reality, conducting him to make a detour. Yet nothing in these definitions gives us a sense of what in practice will emerge from the conflictive and dialectical character of the use of these two terms, simply in the concrete use that you make of them on a day-to-day basis. You never fail to make use of them in this fashion, with each of the two systems, endowed as they are with a particular indication that is in some way its own specific paradox. This paradox is often eluded, but is never left out in practice.

The paradox of the pleasure principle is that what presents at this level is linked, as indeed is pointed out to you, to the law of a return to the state of rest, to the tendency towards rest. Nevertheless, what is striking, and this is why Freud put it in a categorical way in his text, is that he introduced the notion of libido because pleasure, in its concrete sense, is linked not only to rest but to yearning, to the elevation of a desire. The word in German is *Lust*, with the ambiguous meaning that Freud underscores, both pleasure and yearning,[3] which are indeed two things that can appear contradictory but which are no less efficaciously linked in experience.

A no lesser paradox is found at the level of reality. Just as at the level of the pleasure principle there is, on one side, the return to rest, but on the other, yearning, so too at the level of reality is there not only the reality that one bumps into, but also the principle of edging, of taking a detour through reality.

This appears more clearly if, correlatively to the existence of these two principles, we bring in the two terms that bind them together in a way that allows for their dialectical functioning, namely the two tiers of speech such as they are expressed in the notions of signifier and signified.

I have already placed the course of the signifier, or of concrete discourse, for example, in a kind of parallel superposition over the course of the signified, in which and as which the continuity of lived experience presents itself, the flow of tendencies within a subject and between subjects.



This presentation[4] is all the more valid given that nothing may be conceived of, not only in speech or in language but in the very functioning of everything that presents as a phenomenon in analysis, unless we accept the essential possibility of a perpetual sliding of

the signified under the signifier, and of the signifier over the signified. Nothing in the analytic experience can be explained except in reference to this fundamental schema.

This schema entails that what is the signifier of one thing may at any moment become the signifier of something else, and that what presents in the subject's yearnings, tendencies and libido, is always branded with the mark of a signifier. In so far as it concerns us, there is nothing else. There might be something else in the drive and in yearning that is not branded in any way by the signifier, but we have no access to it. Nothing is accessible to us unless it is branded by this mark of the signifier, which is introduced into natural movement, into desire, or into the particularly expressive term *demand* to which the English language has recourse as a primal expression of appetite, of exigency, even though it is not marked by laws that are specific to the signifier. Thus, yearning becomes what is signified.

The intervention of the signifier poses a problem that earlier led me to remind you about the Holy Spirit. The year before last, we saw what this means for us and what it means in Freud's thought and teaching. This Holy Spirit is, on the whole, the coming into existence of the signifier.

This is undoubtedly what Freud brings us under the term *death instinct*. What is at stake is the limit of what can be signified, which can never be reached by any living being, save in exceptional cases because we meet it only in the last-gasp writings of a certain philosophical experience. This is all the same something to be found virtually at the limit of man's reflection on his life as what allows him to glimpse death as the absolute and unsurpassable condition of his existence, as Heidegger puts it. Man's existence in the world, at any rate his potential relations with the signifier as a whole, is bound very precisely to this possibility of the suppression, the bracketing off, of everything that is lived.

What lies at the bottom of the existence of the signifier, of its presence in the world, is something that we will put there, and which is this efficient surface of the signifier as something where it reflects in some way what may be called the last word of the signified, that is, of life, of lived experience, of the flux of emotions and libido. It is death, insomuch as this is the support, the base, the intervention of the Holy Spirit through which the signifier exists.

Is this signifier, which has its own laws that may or may not be recognised in any given phenomenon, what is designated here in the *Es*? We ask this question, and we answer it. To understand anything of what we do in analysis, we have to answer in the affirmative.

The *Es* that is at issue in analysis is the signifier that is already

there in the real, the uncomprehended signifier. It's already there, but it's a signifier, and not some confused and primitive property of goodness knows what pre-set harmony, this being loosely the hypothesis that is always hauled out by those I would unhesitatingly describe as feeble-minded.

Foremost among these is a certain Dr Ernest Jones. I'll be telling you presently how he tackles the issue, for example, of the early development of women and their infamous castration complex, which has posed an unsolvable problem to all analysts whenever it rears its head.

The error is to start off from the idea that because there are, as one says, needle and thread, so there are also girl and boy, and so there can be the same pre-set harmony between them, such that should some difficulty arise, it can only be due to some secondary disorder, some defence process, or some purely accidental and contingent occurrence. When one imagines that the unconscious means that whatever lies in one subject is designed to perceive what must respond to it in another, one is simply presupposing the notion of a primitive harmony.

This notion can be contrasted with Freud's altogether straightforward remark in his *Three Essays on Sexuality* concerning what is such an important theme in child development in respect of these sexual impressions, namely that it's a great pity that things are not laid out in such a way that guiderails leading to man's open access to woman[5] would be installed and signposted in advance. On no account is this an encounter in which the only obstacles are those that may crop up along the way. On the contrary, Freud asserts that the subject's infantile sexual theories, those that will leave their mark on the entire development and history of the relation between the sexes, are linked to the first maturity of the genital stage that occurs before the full development of the Oedipus complex, namely the so-called *phallic phase*.

This phase is called *phallic* not in the name of a joining of some sort of fundamental equality at the level of energetics, which is there solely for the convenience of thought. It's not on account of there being only one libido. Rather, it is because this time, on the imaginary plane, there is a single primary representative of the genital state and stage, and this is the phallus as such.

The phallus is neither wholly nor merely the full male genital apparatus. The phallus is excepted, says Freud, from *the other part of the male genitals*, the testes, say. The erect image of the phallus is what is crucial here. There is only one. There is no other choice but a virile image or castration.

I'm not enshrining Freud's term. I'm telling you that this is the

starting point that Freud offers us when he performs this reconstruction. In relation to everything that came before, the *Three Essays* did indeed set off in search of natural references for the idea which had been uncovered in analysis, but what analysis underscores is precisely that there are a whole host of accidental occurrences that are far from being as natural as all that.

Furthermore, we posit what I'm laying out here as the principle behind the analytic experience, namely that it begins with the notion that there is something of the signifier already installed and already structured. A power station is already up and running. You are not the one who has made this power station. It is language, which has been functioning here for as long as you can remember. Literally, you cannot remember further back. I'm speaking about the history of the whole of humanity. For as long as there have been functioning signifiers, subjects have been organised in their psychical systems by the specific play of the signifier. This is precisely what means that the *Es* of what is already given, which is something you will seek out in the depths, is not as natural as all that, and even less so than images. Indeed, the existence in nature of the hydroelectric power station, constructed through the intervention of the Holy Spirit, stands in stark contrast to the notion of nature.

The analytic position inheres in this scandal. When we approach a subject, we know that already in nature there is something that is his *Es* and which, ipso facto, is structured in accordance with a signifying articulation that leaves its mark – its imprints, its contradictions, its profound difference from natural coaptations – on everything that is brought to bear on this subject.

I thought I ought to remind you of these positions, which strike me as fundamental. I note that I placed the signifier behind this ultimate reality, which is completely veiled with respect to what is signified. Moreover, the use of the signifier also entails the possibility that nothing of what is signified exists. This is none other than the death instinct, the awareness that life is completely obsolete and improbable. Here we have a whole host of notions that have nothing to do with any kind of living exercise, because any living exercise consists precisely of making one's own little way in existence by falling exactly in line with all those who have come before us.

The existence of the signifier is bound to nothing other than the fact – for it is a fact – that discourse exists and is introduced into the world against a backdrop that is more or less familiar or misconstrued. Yet it is curious all the same that Freud was led by the analytic experience not to be able to do otherwise than to spell this

out by saying that if the signifier functions, then it is against the backdrop of a particular experience of death.

This experience has nothing to do with any kind of lived experience. If our commentary on *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* two years ago was able to show something, then it was that what is there at issue is a reconstruction, which is prompted by the fact of certain paradoxes that in experience are inexplicable, that is to say, by the fact that the subject is led to behave in an essentially signifying fashion, repeating indefinitely something that for him is, strictly speaking, deathly.

Conversely, just as this death is reflected here at the bottom of the signified, so there is a whole series of things in the signified, things that are there but which have been imprinted by the signifier. These are precisely the things that are at issue, namely certain elements that are linked to something that is just as profoundly engaged in the signified, and this is the body. There are a number of elements, of accidental occurrences of the body, that amount to experiential givens. Just as in nature certain natural reservoirs are already there, so too in the signifier there are certain elements that are taken up in the signifier in order to furnish it with, as it were, its first weapons. These elements are things that are ungraspable in the extreme, and yet they are irreducible. Among them is the phallic term, the pure and simple erection. The upright stone is one such example. The notion of the erect human body is another. Thus, a number of elements are each linked more or less to bodily stature, and not merely to the lived experience of the body. They constitute the first elements, and are effectively borrowed from experience, but completely transformed by the fact that they are symbolised. *Symbolised* means that they are introduced into what characterises the bond of the signifier as such, the signifier being something that is articulated in keeping with its own logical laws.

I led you back to the first of these logical laws in connection with the death instinct, at the very least getting you to play the game of odds-and-evens, in order to remind you that what these laws finally boil down to – that is, the pluses and minuses and their groupings in twos and threes within a temporal sequence – is that there are ultimate laws that are the laws of the signifier. These laws are of course implicit, wherever you start off from, but it is impossible not to encounter them.

Let's come back now to where we left things last time, namely at the level of the analytic experience.

3

The central object relation, the one that is dynamically creative, is that of lack. At the level of the analytic experience, every *Findung* of the object is, Freud tells us, a *Wiederfindung*.

One oughtn't to read the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* as though it were a book written in one go. Admittedly, not a single one of Freud's major works went unrevised – they all include added notes – but there are very few textual modifications. The *Traumdeutung*, for instance, was expanded without anything of its original balance being altered. However, the first thing you have to bear in mind should you read the first edition of the *Three Essays* is that you won't get over it, so to speak, because you won't recognise any of what you think of as the familiar themes of the *Three Essays* from your usual reading of the book, that is to say, with the additions that were made many years later, chiefly in 1915. Everything that has to do with the pregenital development of libido could be conceived of only after the appearance of the theory of narcissism. At any rate, it was never included in the *Three Essays* before the modification of everything that comprised the sexual theory of childhood, with its major misunderstandings that consist, in particular, in Freud's telling us that the child has no notion of coition or of begetting. This is their essential failing. That this should have also been repeated after 1915 is due largely to the fact of a notion that only saw light of day after the final edition of the *Three Essays* in 1920, in the 1923 article on *Die infantile Genitalorganisation*.[6] This crucial element of *genitality* in development remains beyond the confines of the *Three Essays*, which don't quite come to this. Their progress, in this research on the pregenital relation as such, can only be explained by the importance of sexual theories and the libido theory itself.

The chapter entitled *The Libido Theory* concerns the narcissistic notion, along with the discovery and origin, and even the very idea, of the theory of libido. Freud tells us that we can account for all this when we possess the notion of an *Ich-libido* as a reservoir of libido that constitutes objects. He adds that we can do no more than peep at this reservoir over its walls. In sum, it is in the notion of narcissistic tension as such, that is to say, in a relation between man and image, that we may form the idea of a common measure. At the same time, we have an idea of the central reserve from which any objectal relation is established insomuch as it will be fundamentally imaginary. In other words, one of these essential articulations is the subject's fascination with the image. All things considered, this is an image that is only ever an image that he bears within himself. This is the last word on the theory of narcissism as such.

So, everything that thereafter took its bearing from this, heading in the direction of acknowledging an organising value in fantasies, is something that is backed up, not at all by the idea of a pre-set harmony, of a natural inclination between object and subject, but on the contrary by something that first and foremost presupposes an experience, laid out for us in the *Three Essays* in their original version, that revolves entirely around a diphasic development. This two-stage temporal development of child sexuality hinges on the fact that the re-finding of the object will always be marked by the fact of the latency period, of the latent memory that persists throughout this period. Freud spells this out. The result is that the first object, the mother, is remembered in a way that has not been able to change. It is, as he puts it, *unverwendbar*, unutilisable. The object, which will only ever be a re-found object, *wiedergefunden*, will bear the mark of the initial style of this object. This will introduce an essential and fundamentally conflictive division into this re-found object and into the very fact of its re-finding. Thus, Freud's first dialectic in the theory of sexuality is introduced around an initial notion of the discordance between the re-found object and the object that is sought.

This fundamental experience supposes that throughout the latency period the object is preserved in the subject's memory, but unbeknown to him. That is to say, during the latency period, there is a signifying transmission of an object that thereafter divides, becomes discordant, and plays the role of a disturbing force in all the subject's subsequent object relations. It is within this frame that, at certain moments, in certain choice articulations, during certain phases of this evolution, the strictly imaginary functions are uncovered. Everything that falls within the remit of pregenital relations is taken up within this parenthesis. This notion of an imaginary layer is introduced into a dialectic that is first and foremost, in our vocabulary, essentially a dialectic of the symbolic and the real.

This introduction of the imaginary, which has since become such a prevalent notion, only comes about, first, with the article on narcissism, which is not articulated into the theory of sexuality until 1915, and then, second, with its formulation in connection with the phallic phase, which doesn't happen until 1920. However, at the time this was formulated in a categorical way, it seemed disturbing and threw the entire analytic audience into a state of bewilderment. Things are such that the dialectic that at the time was termed *pregenital* – and not, I note, *preoedipal* – is situated in relation to the Oedipus complex.

The term *preoedipal* was introduced in connection with female sexuality, ten years later. In 1920, however, what is at issue is the

pregenital relation, which is situated in the emergence of experiences that are preparatory to the Oedipal experience but which only come to be linked up in this latter experience. It is on the basis of the signifying articulation of the Oedipus complex that we are able to behold the signifying material of these images, these fantasies, which do indeed arise from a certain experience of contact between signifier and signified. In such experience, the signifier has drawn its material from somewhere in the signified, from a certain number of living and lived relations. This past is grasped retroactively, enabling us to structure this imaginary organisation that we meet first and foremost as having a paradoxical character. It is paradoxical in that it opposes, far more than it accords with, any idea of a regular harmonious development. On the contrary, it is a critical development, in which from the very first the objects, as they are called, of the different oral and anal phases, are already taken to be something other than what they are. They are objects that have already been worked over. Yet people have been working with these objects in such a way that it is impossible to extract their signifying structure.

This is what people have been referring to with all these notions of *incorporation*, notions that organise them, dominate them, and enable them to be linked up.

How ought this experience to be arranged? As I told you last time, we should be arranging the entirety of the experience around the notion of the lack of object.

I showed you the three different tiers of this lack, which for us are essential when it comes to understanding all that occurs whenever there is a crisis, an encounter, or an efficient action in the search for the object, which in and of itself is essentially a critical notion of search. These tiers are *castration*, *frustration* and *privation*. Their central structure, what they amount to as lack, is essentially three distinct things.

In the coming lessons we are going to position ourselves at the precise point where the new-fangled theory and current practice are entrenched. The analysts of today have been reorganising the analytic experience upon the tier of frustration, while neglecting the notion of castration, which, along with the Oedipus complex, was Freud's original discovery. Next time I shall take as my point of departure an example that I chose at random in volumes III and IV of *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, published in 1949. It's a presentation by Mrs Anneliese Schnurmann, one of Anna Freud's pupils.

Mrs Schnurmann was able to observe the fairly sudden emergence of a phobia in one of the young boarders at Anna Freud's Hampstead Nursery. We are going to read this observation, which is one among

umpteen others, and we shall see what we can understand in it. We shall also see what has been understood by she who reports the observation with what seems to be exemplary fidelity. That is to say, it does not exclude a certain number of pre-established categories. However, what has been gathered together is ample for us to have a notion of temporal succession. We shall see how, through a number of points of reference, the phobia will appear and then disappear. We are going to see a privileged imaginary creation in this subject, which prevails for a certain while, and which has a whole series of effects on the subject's behaviour. We shall have to see whether it really is possible for the author to spell out what is essential in this observation when she takes as her sole point of departure the notion of frustration, in the way it is currently conceived, that is, as related to the privation of a privileged object that is the object of the stage to which the subject has arrived when the privation appears. This is a loosely regressive effect, which can even be progressive in some cases – and why not? But can a phenomenon like phobia be understood by merely appearing, by merely being located, in a particular chronological order? Don't things become clearer when we refer to the three terms I have set out? This is what we are going to see.

I shall now simply underscore what these three terms mean. In castration, there is a fundamental lack that is located, as indebtedness, in the symbolic chain. In frustration, lack can only be understood on the imaginary plane, as an imaginary detriment. In privation, lack is purely and simply in the real, as a real gap or limit.

When I say that in privation the lack is in the real, certainly this only holds interest when we see that on no account does this mean that it is something that is in the subject. For the subject to reach privation, he already has to symbolise the real, to conceive of the real as being something other than what it is. The reference to privation, as it is set out here, consists in positing – before we can say something sensible – that all of this does not come to pass as it does in the idealist dream where we can see the subject in some sense obligated in the genesis of the psychical system as it is laid out for us.

In the current analytic conception of psychogenesis, the subject is like a spider who has to spin the entire web herself. There, each subject has to envelop himself in the silk of his cocoon. He has to make his entire conception of the world emerge from himself and his images. In this psychogenesis, the subject secretes from himself his successive relations, in the name of goodness-knows-what pre-set maturation with the objects that will somehow manage to be the objects of this human world of ours. So it is, in defiance of how often analysis makes it apparent that giving oneself over to such an exercise is impossible, because the partisans of this conception

only latch on to those aspects that support it. Moreover, each time they get in a muddle, it seems to them that it is merely a difficulty of language. In fact, this is simply a manifestation of the error they are in. Somatognosis, the image of the body as a signifier, shows this well enough.[7]

The problem of object relations can be posed in the right way only by positing a framework that must be regarded as fundamental to the comprehension of this object relation. The framework, or the first of these frameworks, is that in the human world the structure, the point of departure for objectal organisation, is the lack of the object. We have to conceive of this lack of object across its different stages in the subject, not merely at the level of the symbolic chain, the beginning and end of which are beyond his grasp, nor merely at the level of frustration, though he is indeed poised at this level, where his lived experience is thinkable for him. We also have to consider this lack in the real, because when we speak of privation here, it's not about feeling deprived.

Privation as a feeling of being deprived of a central reference that we need, to such an extent that everyone makes use of this, is simply the trick of making privation equivalent to frustration, which is what Dr Ernest Jones does. Privation is not the equivalent of frustration. Privation is in the real, and quite outside of the subject. For the subject to apprehend privation, he must first symbolise this real. How is the subject led to symbolise it? How does frustration introduce the symbolic order? This is the question we shall be asking, and it will allow us to see that the subject is neither isolated nor independent. The subject is not the one who introduces the symbolic order.

It is quite striking that yesterday evening no one spoke about a major passage in what Mme Dolto offered us, namely that according to her the only children who become phobic are those, of either sex, whose mother happens to have endured a disturbance in the objectal relation with her own parent of the opposite sex. Here we are introduced to a notion that certainly brings in something very different from the relationships between mother and child, and indeed this is why I have set out for you the trio of mother, child and phallus.

For the mother, there is nearly always this requirement of the phallus on the side of the child. The child symbolises, sometimes more, sometimes less, the phallus. As for the child, who has his own relationship with his mother, he knows nothing about it, because if there is one thing that surely must also have been apparent to you yesterday evening when the body image was being spoken of in relation to this child, it's that, if this image is even accessible to him, is

this how the mother sees her child? This is a question that was never raised.

Similarly, at what moment is the child in a position to realise that what his mother desires in him, saturates and satisfies in him, is her phallic image? What possibility is open to the child of having access to this relational element? Is this something that belongs to a kind of direct effusion, or even a projection? Doesn't this amount to supposing that any relationship between subjects is of the same kind as the relationship between Mme Dolto and her child? I'm stunned that no one asked her, she who sees all these body images, whether there is anyone else, apart from analysts – of her school, at that – who happen to see in the child such elements and such images. Yet this is the important point.

How are we to conceive of the way in which the child, male or female, is induced or introduced to this imaginary discordance that means that, for the mother, the child is far from being just the child? The child is also the phallus. This is something that falls within the scope of experience, because certain elements can be extracted from experience which show us, for instance, that there needs already to be a period of symbolisation in order for the child to have access to this, or even that in certain cases the child has broached the imaginary detriment in a way that is in some sense direct – not *his* detriment, but the mother's detriment with respect to this privation of the phallus. This really is essential in development. Is an imaginary here being reflected in the symbolic? Or, on the contrary, is a symbolic element appearing in the imaginary? These are the crucial points in relation to which we ask ourselves the question of phobia.

So as not to fall short of your expectations, and in order to shed some further light, I will tell you what is in question in the threefold scheme of mother, child and phallus. It's a different question from the question of phobia, and it will certainly take us a long way.

Why in fetishism does the child come more or less to occupy the position of the mother in relation to the phallus? Or why, on the contrary, in certain highly particular forms of dependency in which anomalies can present with every appearance of normality, does the child also come to occupy the position of the phallus in relation to the mother? What leads him to this? It does indeed seem that this mother–phallus relation is not afforded to the child in a spontaneous and direct fashion. Does everything happen simply because he watches his mother and notices that what she desires is a phallus? Apparently not. We shall be coming back to this.

A phobia, when it develops, is not at all of the same kind. It has nothing to do with this liaison that the infant establishes between the phallus and the mother by putting something of his own into it,

and rather a great deal. A phobia is something else. It's another type of solution to the difficult problem introduced by the relationships between child and mother. I showed you this last year. For there to be the three terms of the trio – it was in a closed forum – there has to be an organisation of the symbolic world, and this is called the father. The phobia belongs rather to this realm. It has to do with this circumscribing bond. At a particularly critical moment, when no path of any other nature is open for solving the problem, the phobia constitutes a call for rescue. It's an appeal to a singular symbolic element.

In what way is it singular? Let's say that it appears always to be exceedingly symbolic, that is, exceedingly far from any imaginary apprehension. When it is called to the rescue of a solidarity that it is essential to maintain in the gap introduced by the appearance of the phallus in the orientation between mother and child, the element that intervenes in the phobia has a truly mythical character.

5 December 1956

IV

THE DIALECTIC OF FRUSTRATION

Frustration placed at the centre of the mother–child relation
Revisiting the *Fort–Da* game
The mother, from symbolic to real
The infant and the phallic image
The young English girl's phobia

agent	lack of object	object
	castration *symbolic indebtedness*	imaginary
	frustration *imaginary detriment*	real
	privation *real hole*	symbolic

This is the chart at which we have arrived, and which allows the issue of the object such as it arises in analysis to be spelt out with precision.

The lack of rigour in this matter, the confusion that analysts have shown, has resulted in a curious slippage.

Analysis partakes of a sort of scandalous notion of man's affective relations. I think I have already underscored on several occasions what at the start gave rise to so much outrage in analysis. It was not so much that it highlighted the role of sexuality, and that it played

its part in the fact that this has become commonplace – in any case, these days no one dreams of taking offence at it – rather, it was precisely that at the same time as introducing this notion, and far in excess of this, it introduced the notion of a paradox, of an essential difficulty, that is inherent, so to speak, in the approach to the sexual object.

It is peculiar indeed that since then we have slid from this to a harmonic notion of the object.

To take measure of the distance that lies between this notion and what Freud spelt out with the greatest rigour, I chose a sentence from the *Three Essays on Sexuality*. Even those who are the least informed with respect to object relations have remarked that it may quite readily be seen that in Freud's writings there are many things pertaining to the object – object-choice, for example – but that the notion of object relations on its own is neither highlighted nor cultivated, nor brought to the fore of the question. Here is Freud's sentence that can be found in the article *Drives and Their Fates* – *The object of the drive is that [. . .] through which the drive is able to achieve its aim. It is the most variable aspect of a drive, not originally connected with it, but merely appropriated by it on grounds of suitability to provide satisfaction.* One might also say that it's about the possibility of satisfying the drive. It's a matter of satisfaction insomuch as the position that the pleasure principle takes as the goal of the drive tendency is that of arriving at its own satisfaction.

So, the notion that there is no pre-set harmony between object and drive tendency is spelt out. The object is literally bound to the drive tendency only by conditions that are its own. In short, one gets by as best one can. This is not a doctrine. It's a quotation. But it's one quotation among others that motion in the same direction, and it's one of the most significant. What is this conception of the object that is at issue here? Along what winding paths does it lead us before we manage to conceive of its effective impact?

We have already managed, thanks to a number of points that have also been spelt out by Freud, to give some depth to the notion that the object is only ever a re-found object, based on a primary *Findung*. This means that the *Wiederfindung*, the re-finding, is never satisfactory. What is more, drawing on further characteristics, we saw on the one hand that this object is inadequate, and on the other that it steals away, partially, from any conceptual grasp. This is now leading us to take a firmer grip on the fundamental notions, and in particular to revise the one that has been placed at the centre of latter-day analytic theory, that of frustration.

To what extent has it been turned into something necessary? To what extent, too, ought it to be revised? It's up to us to critique it so

as to make it both usable and, to spell this right out, coherent with what constitutes the grounding of analytic doctrine, which is still fundamentally Freud's thought and teaching. I have underscored for you many times now that the notion of frustration is quite marginal in Freud's thinking.

1

I reminded you of what presents at the outset in what is given – *castration*, *frustration* and *privation*. Marking out the differences between these three terms is going to be productive.

What is involved in castration?

Castration is essentially linked to a symbolic order qua already established, which as such comprises a long coherence in which the subject can on no account be an isolated given. The liaison between castration and the symbolic order is evinced as much in each of our earlier reflections as in the straightforward remark that, from the very first, Freud yoked castration to the central position he gave to the Oedipus complex as the essential articulation of any development in sexuality. The Oedipus complex already bears within it, and fundamentally so, the notion of Law that is absolutely ineradicable. I think that the fact that castration stands at the level of symbolic indebtedness will appear amply confirmed and even amply demonstrated by this remark, which has been weighed up and supported through each of our earlier reflections.

What is the object that is at issue, or that is brought into play, in the symbolic indebtedness established by castration? As I indicated last time, it is an imaginary object, the phallus as such. At least this is what Freud asserts, and this will be my point of departure today in order to push the dialectic of frustration a little further.

Frustration holds the central position on this chart. In itself, this does not harbour anything that should throw us out of kilter or off track. By laying the emphasis on the notion of frustration we do not stray very far from the notion that Freud placed at the heart of analytic conflictedness, this being the notion of desire. What is important here is to grasp what is meant by frustration, how it was introduced, and what it refers to.

Clearly, insomuch as it is placed to the fore in analytic theory, the notion of frustration has been linked to the earliest age of life. It has been linked to research into traumas, fixations and experiential impressions that in themselves are preoedipal. This does not imply that they lie outside the scope of the Oedipus complex but rather that in some sense they provide its preparatory ground,

its base and foundation. They model it in such a way that certain inflexions are prepared within it, and they will furnish those aspects through which the Oedipal conflict will be led to reorient, in a more or less pronounced way, in a direction that is loosely atypical or heterotypic.

What, then, is the pattern of relationship with the object that is in play in frustration? Clearly it introduces the question of the real. Indeed, along with the notion of frustration we can see a whole host of other notions being placed to the fore in the subject's conditioning and development. These notions have been conveyed in a language of loose quantitative metaphor. People speak about satisfactions, gratifications, and a certain number of well-adapted benefits that correspond to steps in the young subject's development. Furthermore, when it more or less reaches saturation point, or on the contrary when it comes up short, this is considered to be an essential feature.

I think that just making this remark is enough to open our eyes to the evidence, when we consult the texts, and to see what step has been taken in this research, guided by an analysis of this fact of a basic shift of interest within the analytic literature. This can already be seen fairly easily, at least for those who are sufficiently familiar with these three notions to be able to recognise them with ease. You will see in one article from the analytic literature, in which you can recognise this element of the conceptual articulation of the matter quite straightforwardly, that the thrust of it bears on certain real conditions that we are supposed to be able to ascertain in a subject's history through the analytic experience. In the first analytic observations, it is on the whole apparent that any such foregrounding of this element of interest is absent, in the sense that it is articulated differently.

So, here we are led back to the level of frustration regarded as a sort of feature of a real impression, experienced by the subject during a period when his relationship with this real object, whatever it might be, is habitually focused on the so-called primordial image of the maternal breast. It is essentially in relation to this primordial object that what just now I called its first aspects and first fixations will take shape in the subject. Faced with these aspects and fixations, descriptions have been made of the various typical instinctual stages, which are characterised by the imaginary anatomy of the subject's development that they offer us. This is where the relationships of the oral stage and the anal stage have been articulated, with their various subdivisions – phallic, sadistic, and so on. Each of these bear the mark of the element of ambivalence whereby the subject's position partakes of the other's position, where the subject

is twain, where he participates always in a dual situation without which any comprehensive assumption of his position is not possible.

By simply limiting ourselves to this, let's see where it takes us. We are, therefore, in the presence of a subject that is in this position, which is a position of desire. Let's take it in the form it is given to us, as the breast qua real object. Here we are led to the heart of the question of what this relationship is, this most primitive of relationships, between the subject and the real object.

You know the extent to which the theoretician-analysts have found themselves in a sort of discussion that is teeming with all manner of misunderstanding. After Freud spoke of a lived stage of autoeroticism, some preserved this autoeroticism as the primal relationship between the infant and the primordial maternal object, while others objected that it was difficult to refer to a notion that seems to be founded on the fact that the subject that it implies is acquainted only with himself, given how a good many features from direct observation seem to run athwart the idea that in this instance there are no effective relations with an object. We conceive of these features as necessary when it comes to explaining the development of relations between child and mother. Furthermore, what could be more overtly exterior to the subject than this something for which he feels the most pressing need, and which is the first nourishment par excellence?

In truth, it seems that there is a misunderstanding here, begotten essentially by a kind of confusion, whereby the discussion comes to a standstill, culminating in formulations that are so diverse that simply to list them would take up considerable time. This is why I can't do so straightaway, because we need to make some headway in the conceptualisation of what is at issue here. I shall simply remind you of the theory we have already spoken about, Alice Balint's theory.

This theory seeks to reconcile the notion of autoeroticism, such as it is set out by Freud, with what seems to impose on the reality of the object that confronts the infant during an altogether primary stage of his development. This culminates in the strikingly articulated conception that Mr and Mrs Balint call *Primary Love*. According to them, this is the only form of love in which egoism and altruism are perfectly reconcilable, allowing of a perfect and fundamental reciprocity between what the infant requires of the mother and what the mother requires of the infant, a perfect complementarity between the two poles of need.

This conception runs quite contrary to all clinical experience, in that we are constantly dealing with the evocation, within the subject, of the mark of each truly fundamental discord that may have arisen.

The theory of this so-called primary love, which would be perfect and complementary, contains in its very wording the hallmark of this discord. Alice Balint tells us, in *Love for the Mother and Mother Love*, that where relations are natural, that is, in the wild, the child is always carefully maintained in contact with its mother.[1] In other words, this always happens elsewhere, in dreamland, in the Garden of the Hesperides, there where, as everyone knows, the mother always carries the child on her back. Such a strict complementary notion of love, destined in and of itself to find its reciprocity, constitutes an evasion that is so scarcely compatible with an accurate theorisation that ultimately it has to be admitted that this is, therefore, an utterly ideal stance, if not an idealist one.

Actually, I have taken this example only because it serves as an introduction to what is going to be the driving element in our critique of the notion of frustration. It's clear that this is not quite the image of fundamental representation that is given to us in a theory like, say, Mrs Melanie Klein's. Here, too, it's amusing to see from what angle the theoretical reconstruction that she proposes comes under attack, especially given that object relations are at issue.

It so happened that a Bulletin fell into my hands reporting on the activities of the Belgian Psychoanalytic Association. On its contents page are the same authors who are to be found in the collection I dealt with in my first lecture, and which I said is oriented around a shamelessly optimistic and contestable view of the object relation, this being the main thrust of the two volumes. In this Bulletin for a slightly more restricted audience, things are broached with greater nuance, as though it were the lack of assurance that was giving rise to a mild shame on their part, and they were allowing it to show through in places where certainly it becomes apparent, when one becomes aware of it, that this is of greater merit.

So, we find in this Bulletin an article by Messrs Pasche and Renard that reproduces the same critique of the Kleinian positions that they delivered at the Geneva congress. It is quite striking to read them reproaching Melanie Klein for a developmental theory that, according to these authors and their criticisms, would place everything within the subject in a preformed fashion. The whole Oedipus complex, its whole possible development, would already be included in what is given instinctually, and the different elements, which would already be potentially articulated, would just have to sprout from it. In the way the authors frame the comparison, which is how it is for some in the biological theory of development, the full-grown oak would already be wholly present in the acorn. Nothing would come to such a subject from the outside. From the outset, he possesses his primitive aggressive drives – the prevalence

of aggressiveness is indeed manifest when comprehended within Melanie Klein's perspective – and then, through the intermediary of shocks that he feels from the outside, from the maternal field, in return for these aggressive drives, there is a progressive construction of something that we are told can only be received as a sort of full-grown oak, namely the notion of the totality of the mother. On this basis, the so-called *depressive position* is established, which can arise in any experience.

Without taking each of these criticisms into account one after the next, as would be necessary to appreciate their rightful worth, I would simply like to underscore what they paradoxically culminate in as a whole, which constitutes the crux and the core of this article.

The authors seem to be fascinated by the question of what, in development, is brought in from the outside. What they think they can read in Melanie Klein's work is that this is already given at the start in an internal constellation, such that it would come as no surprise that the notion of an internal object should thereafter be foregrounded so prevalently. The authors come to the conclusion that they think can be drawn from the Kleinian contribution, namely the notion of a full-grown oak that follows hereditary patterns, which they say is very difficult to represent in one's mind. So, they say – *The child is born with certain inherited instinctual drives into a world which he does not yet perceive but which he recalls, and which later he will not have to create simply from within himself and from nothing else but a series of chance discoveries, but a world he will come to recognise.*

I think that for most of you the Platonic character of the wording will not escape your notice. This world that one has only to recall, and which will be established in accordance with a certain imaginary preparation, to which the subject already corresponds, is something that surely represents a critique of the position. However, we are going to have to test out not simply whether this critique goes against everything that Freud wrote, but whether we cannot already glimpse how the authors themselves stand far closer to the position for which they reproach Melanie Klein. For they are the ones who indicate, in the subject, in the state of the full-grown oak, ready to appear on cue, all the elements that will enable the subject to be counted throughout a series of stages that can be called *ideal* only to the extent that they are precisely the subject's memories, very precisely his phylogenetic memories, and which furnish them with their norm and type.

Is this what Mrs Melanie Klein intended? It is strictly unthinkable to maintain as much. If there is indeed one thing that Mrs Melanie Klein gives us an idea of – and, moreover, this is the thrust of the

authors' critique – it is surely that the first situation is far more chaotic. At the start, it is truly anarchic. What characterises the origin is the noise and fury of the drives. The question, therefore, is much rather how something like an order can be established on this basis.

That there is something mythical in the Kleinian conception is absolutely beyond doubt. It's quite certain that the contradiction that is introduced by a myth that the authors do not locate very well, though it does resemble the Kleinian *phantasy*, is wholly on the beam. Of course, these *phantasies* only have a retroactive character. During the construction of the subject we see them being projected back onto the past from points that can themselves be very early. But how is it that these points can be so early? How is it that Mrs Melanie Klein can take a toddler of fairly advanced age, of two-and-a-half, and like the Pythia reading in a mantic mirror, a divinatory mirror, is able to read retroactively in his past nothing less than the Oedipal structure? There is some reason behind this.

Doubtless there is some manner of mirage here, and of course she is not to be followed when she tells us that the Oedipus complex was already there in the very forms, fragmented as they are, of the penis roaming around amid the brothers and sisters on the inside of the entire field that is defined as the interior of the mother's body. But that this articulation should be detectable in a certain relation with the child, and that it should be articulable very early on, is something that certainly poses us a fruitful question.

That this theoretical articulation, which is in some sense a purely hypothetical articulation, should allow us to provide at the outset something that might better satisfy our idea of natural harmonies, nevertheless does not conform to what experience shows us.

I think that this is starting to indicate for you the angle from which we can introduce something new in the confusion that remains at the level of the primordial mother–child relation.

2

I believe that this confusion is due to not having taken a central notion, the true centre, as the point of departure. Frustration is not the starting point. It's a matter of finding out how the child's primary relationships are situated. A great deal can be clarified if we approach things in the following way, which is that in this frustration there are from the very start two facets that will bracket it to the very end.

On one side, there is the real object. And as we are told, *the object*

can affect the subject before he has formed the least idea of it. This object is real, and the subject is affected in his direct relations. It is only as a function of this periodicity, in which holes and deficiencies can appear, that a certain pattern of relation will be established that on no account necessitates admitting that for the subject there would be a distinction between *me* and *not-me*. This is so, for instance, in the autoerotic position, in Freud's understanding of it, namely that strictly speaking there is no constitution of the other, nor initially of any fully conceivable relationship.

On the other side, there is the agent. Indeed, the object is instantiated only in relation to lack. In this fundamental relation that is a relation of lack, the notion of agent is something that should enable us to introduce a formulation that from the very first is utterly crucial when it comes to the way in which the overall position is situated. In this instance, the agent is the mother.

To show you this I just have to remind you of what we have been studying these last few years, namely what Freud spelt out concerning the altogether principial position of the infant with regard to repetitive play, and especially the game that Freud seized upon so swiftly in the child's behaviour.

The mother is something other than this primal object. She does not appear as such at the start but, rather, as Freud underscores, on the basis of this first play, that of clutching an object that in itself is perfectly insignificant, which has no biological value whatsoever. On that occasion it was a spool, but it could equally be anything else that a six-month-old child could send over the edge of his cot in order then to retrieve it anew. This presence–absence pairing, which is articulated by the child at a very early age, connotes the first constitution of the agent of frustration that lies at the origin of the mother. We can write the symbol of frustration S(M).[2]

The mother is spoken of as introducing a new element of totality that ushers in a stage of development known as the depressive position, which is characterised less by its opposition to the sort of chaos of fragmented objects that typifies the previous stage than by the connotation of presence–absence.

This presence–absence is not only set out as such objectively, it is articulated as such by the subject. As we have already spelt out in our studies from last year, this presence–absence is articulated by the subject in the register of appeal. The maternal object is called upon when it is absent, and rejected when it is present, all within the same register of appeal, by modulating his voice.

Of course, this essential scansion of the appeal is far from being something that gives us the entire symbolic order from the start, but it does show us how it is first broached. It allows us to discern

something else, an element that is distinct from the real object relation and which will thereafter afford the subject the possibility of establishing a relation to a real object, with its scansion, its marks, and the traces that remain of it. This is what affords the possibility of a link between this real relationship and a symbolic relationship as such.

Before I show you this in a more manifest fashion, I simply want to highlight what is entailed by the mere fact that in the child's relations the presence–absence opposition is introduced into this relationship with the constituting person. What is introduced here in the child's experience is that he tends, quite naturally, to drop off to sleep at the moment of frustration. So, the child is situated between the notion of an agent, which already participates in the order of symbolicity, and the contrasting couple of presence–absence, the plus–minus connotation, which gives us the first element of a symbolic order. This element is not sufficient to constitute a symbolic order by itself alone because a sequence is required thereafter. This is a sequence that will be grouped as such, but already in the opposition between plus and minus, between presence and absence, there is the virtual origin, the virtual begetting, the possibility, the fundamental condition, of a symbolic order.

The question now is how we are to conceive of the moment when this primordial relationship with the real object can change tack and open up to a more complex relationship. What, in truth, is the turning point at which the mother–child relation opens up to further elements that will introduce what we have called a *dialectic*? I believe that we can formulate this in schematic fashion by asking the following question – what happens if the symbolic agent, the mother as such, who is so essential to the child's relationship with the real object, no longer responds? What happens if she no longer answers the child's call?

Let's provide the reply ourselves. Whereas the symbolic structuration makes her the present–absent object in keeping with the child's appeal, from the moment she is in decline she becomes real.

Why so? Until then she existed within this structuration as an agent, distinct from the real object that is the infant's object of satisfaction. However, outside of this structuration, she becomes real. In a sense, she now replies merely as she pleases. She becomes something that also ushers in the start of the structuration of reality as a whole, and thereafter she becomes a power.

Correlatively, the object positions switch around. So long as a real relationship is at issue, the breast – let's take this as an example – can be made to be as enticing we may wish. Yet as soon as the mother becomes a power and, as such, real, the child will depend on her in

the most manifest way for access to those objects that hitherto were purely and simply objects of satisfaction, but which now become objects that are gifted by this power. And so, in the same way, though no more than has thus far been the case for the mother, these objects are liable to enter a presence–absence connotation, but in dependence on this real object, this power that the maternal power is. In short, they are objects in the sense we intend here, not metaphorically, but objects that can be clasped and possessed. As for the notion of *not me*, of non-ego, it's a matter of observing whether it enters first via the image of the other or via what can be possessed. What the child wants to keep beside him are objects that from this moment forth no longer really need to be objects of satisfaction so much as objects that are the mark of the value of this power, this power that may not respond and which is the power of the mother.

In other words, the positions have switched. The mother has become real and the object has become symbolic. The object now stands above all as a token of the gift from the maternal power. Thenceforth, the object possesses its satisfying property in two different realms. It is doubly a possible object of satisfaction. It satisfies a need, as surely it did before, but it also symbolises an auspicious power.

This is exceedingly important because one of the most cumbrous notions in all analytic theory, now that it has become, as one slogan has it, *genetic psychoanalysis*, is the notion of the omnipotence of thought, of all-powerfulness. This has been imputed to everything that is most foreign to us. Is it conceivable that the child should have some notion of all-powerfulness? He does perhaps possess the essential part of it, but this doesn't mean that the all-powerfulness at issue is his own. That would be absurd. Entertaining as much leads into dead-ends. The all-powerfulness at issue is the mother's.

At the moment I'm describing for you, that of the mother becoming real, it is she who is all-powerful and not the child. It's a decisive moment, when the mother passes into reality from an utterly archaic symbolisation. At that moment, the mother can give anything at all, but that the child should possess a notion of his all-powerfulness is quite erroneous and utterly unthinkable. Not only does nothing in his development indicate that he should possess such a thing, but indeed practically everything that interests us in this development and in the mishaps that crop up along the way serve to show us that this notion of his all-powerfulness and the failures it might meet do not amount to anything in the question. What counts, as you will see, are the shortcomings and the disappointments that affect maternal all-powerfulness.

This investigation might strike you as somewhat theoretical, but at the very least it has the advantage of introducing essential

distinctions and of making openings that are not those that are commonly put to use. You are going to see now what this leads us to and what we can already indicate therein.

Here, then, is the child in the presence of something that he has made a reality as a power. What hitherto stood on the plane of the first presence–absence connotation all of a sudden passes over to something that can refuse, yet which harbours everything the subject may need. And even if he has no need of it, it becomes symbolic from the moment it depends on this power.

3

Let's pose the question now from a quite different point of departure.

Freud tells us that in the world of objects there is one that has an utterly and paradoxically decisive function, namely the phallus. This object is defined as imaginary. In no case whatsoever is it possible to conflate it with the penis in its reality. Strictly speaking, it is its form, its image, in erection. This phallus has such a decisive role that both its presence and the yearning to which it gives rise, its instantiation in the imaginary, turn out to be more important – so it seems – for those members of humanity who lack one, namely women, than for those who can be sure that they possess the reality thereof, namely men, and whose entire sexual life is nevertheless subordinated to the fact that imaginarily they well and truly assume the use of it, and do so as licit, as permitted.

This is a given. Let's consider now our mother and child, who for Michael and Alice Balint form but a single totality of needs, just like Jean Cocteau's Mortimer couple who have but one heart between them. Nevertheless, here on the blackboard I'm keeping them apart in two circles that do not intersect.

Freud tells us that among a woman's essential missing objects is the phallus, and that this bears the closest relation to her relationship with her child. This is for the simple reason that if woman finds satisfaction in her child, it's precisely insomuch as she finds in him something, the penis, that more or less succeeds in calming her need for the phallus, that saturates this need.[3] Should we fail to take this into account we misconstrue not only Freud's teaching but also something that is manifest in experience from one instant to the next.

So, here we have mother and child in a certain dialectical relation. The child expects something from his mother and he also receives something from her. In this dialectic, we cannot avoid introducing the following. Let's say, roughly speaking, in the way the Balints word it, that the child wants to be loved for what he is.

The question is this. What happens, to the extent that, for the mother, the image of the phallus is not fully reducible to the image of the child? What happens in this double vision, this division of the so-called primordial desired object? Far from being harmonic, the mother's relation to the child is doubled, on the one hand by the need for a certain imaginary saturation and, on the other, by what is effectively there in terms of real, effective relations with the child at a primordial, instinctive level, which ultimately remain mythical. For the mother, there is always something that remains irreducible in what is at stake. Ultimately, if we follow Freud, the child, as real, symbolises the image. More precisely, the three terms are here in the fact that the child, as real, should take on for her the symbolic function of her imaginary need.

All sorts of variations can emerge here. All sorts of situations that have already been structured exist between child and mother. Once the mother has been introduced into the real in the state of a power, the possibility opens up for the child of an intermediary object as such, as a gift-object. The question is, at what point, how, and by what mode of access, can the child be introduced directly to the symbolic–imaginary–real structure in the way that it has been produced for the mother? In other words, at what point can the child enter – and assume in a way that is, as we shall see, loosely symbolised – the imaginary situation, which is also real on account of what the phallus is for the mother? At what point can the child to a certain extent feel himself dispossessed of something that he demands from the mother in noticing that it is not he who is loved but something else, a particular image?

There is something that goes further here. The child makes this phallic image a reality upon his own self, and this is where the narcissistic relation strictly speaking intervenes. When the child grasps sexual difference, for example, to what extent will this experience come to be articulated with what is offered him in the presence of the mother and her actions when this third imaginary term is recognised, which for the mother is the phallus? Furthermore, the notion that the mother lacks this phallus, that she herself is desiring not only of something other than him but desiring *tout court*, that is, afflicted in her power, will be more decisive for the subject than anything else.

Last time I told you about the *Observation of a Phobia*, the phobia of a young girl. I'm going to tell you right away what interest this holds.

Given that it was wartime, and that the author is a pupil of Anna Freud, conditions were such that the child could be observed from beginning to end, and by a fine observer. She's a fine observer

because she understands nothing. And she understands nothing because Anna Freud's theory is wrong. Consequently, this brings her face-to-face with the facts in a state of astonishment that constitutes the fruitfulness of the observation.

So, everything is noted down from one day to the next. The young girl – at the age of two years, five months – having noticed that boys have a *widdler*, as it is put in the observation on little Hans, sets to conducting herself throughout a whole period from a position of rivalry. She does all she can to be able to do the same as the little boys do. The child had been separated from her mother, not just because of the Blitz but because her mother had lost her husband at the start of the war. Her mother would come to see her, since contact is not excluded, and the presence–absence was regular. When she came, the games she played with her child were games of teasing approach. She would sidle up to her *slowly and hesitatingly*. You can see her function as symbolic mother. Everything was going very well. The child had the real objects she wanted when her mother was not there, and when the mother was there she played her role of symbolic mother. So, the young girl discovers that boys have a *widdler*. Sure enough, something happens. She wants to imitate them and to be given a boy's *bicki* to urinate with. A fuss ensues, but which is entirely without consequence.

Now, the observation is presented as an *Observation of a Phobia*, and indeed one night the child was to wake up seized with terror at the presence of *a dog in her bed* that wanted to bite her. She asks to change beds, saying she should be put in another one. This observation of the phobia carries on for a while.

Does the phobia follow the discovery of the absence of the penis? Why are we asking this? We ask this question because the dog is clearly a dog that bites the genitals. We know this insomuch as we are going to analyse the child, that is, insomuch as we are going to follow and comprehend what she tells us. Her first sentence of any length and articulation – this is a child with a slight retardation – is to say, *Doggie bite naughty boy leg*, and this was at the height of the phobia.

You can see the relationship between the symbolisation and the object of the phobia. Why is it a dog? We shall speak about this presently, but what I want to note right away is that the dog is there as an agent that takes away what initially was more or less accepted as absent.

Are we going to cut corners and say that what is at issue in the phobia is merely a passage to the level of Law? That is to say, is this merely the intervention of an element that, as I was saying earlier, is endowed with power so as to account for what is absent, and absent on account of having been bitten off?

The schema that I'm trying to set out for you today motions in this direction and allows us to get over the hurdle by taking a look at this item that seems exceedingly cursory. Dr Ernest Jones tells us very succinctly that, after all, for the child the superego is perhaps merely an *indirect vent*, while the anxieties are primordial, primitive and imaginary, and in some sense he there reverts to a sort of artifice. It's the return for a moral contravention. In other words, it's culture as a whole with all its prohibitions. It's something fallen by the wayside that serves only to shield what is most fundamental, namely the anxieties in their uncontained state which in some sense find some relief there. There is something accurate in this, namely the mechanism of phobia. But the mechanism of phobia is the mechanism of phobia, and to extend it, as does Monsieur Pasche at the end of the article I was telling you about, to the point of saying that the mechanism of phobia is something that ultimately explains the death instinct, for example, or even that dream images are in a certain respect the subject clothing his anxieties and, as it were, personalising them, amounts always to reverting to the same idea, a misrecognition of the symbolic order in the notion that it is merely a kind of clothing, a kind of praetexta over something more fundamental. Is this what I want to tell you by drafting in this *Observation of a Phobia*? No, it is not.

What is interesting in the observation is that it indicates with precision the mother's absence one month prior to the outbreak of the phobia. Certainly, the time it took for the phobia to burst forth was much longer. Four months pass by following her discovery of her aphallicism, but something else had to happen in this interval. First, *her mother had to go to the hospital for an operation.* The mother is no longer the symbolic mother. She has bowed out. She comes back, and she plays again with her child, and as yet nothing occurs. Then she comes back *in very poor health . . . leaning on a stick.* She no longer has the same presence, and is not her cheerful self. Nor can there be any resumption of the relations of approach and withdrawal that were a sufficient ground for the whole attachment with the child, and which used to be played out on a weekly basis. And so it was at that moment, in a third period, much later in time, that the phobia was to break out.

So, thanks to the observers, we find out that the Oedipus complex comes not from the aphallicism, from the second break in the alternating of the mother's coming-and-coming-back as such, but that it also required that the mother should appear as someone who could lack. Her lack was inscribed in the child's reaction and behaviour, that is, she was very sad and had to be reassured, but there was no phobia. It was when she saw her mother again, weak and leaning

on a stick, weary and unwell, that the very next day the dream of the dog erupted and the phobia set in. Nothing in the observation is more significant and more paradoxical than this, except for one point that I shall tell you about now.

We are going to speak again about the way the therapists tackled the phobia, given what they thought they had understood. I simply want to point out the question that arises when considering the antecedents to the phobia. From what moment is the phobia necessary, and why is it sufficient? It is when the mother lacks the phallus that something is determined that is balanced out in the phobia. This is another question that we shall look at next time.

There is another point that is no less striking. Later, after the phobia, the Blitz comes to an end and the mother takes back her child and remarries. The young girl finds herself with a new father and a new brother, her stepfather's son.[4] The brother she has suddenly acquired is older than her, by about five years, and he gives himself over to all kinds of games, both adoratory and violent, including the request that they expose themselves to each other naked. He does something to her that is clearly linked to his interest in the young girl insomuch as she is a-penian. Whereupon the psychotherapist shows some astonishment – why, this might have been a fine occasion for a relapse of the phobia!

Indeed, the environmental theory on which Anna Freud's therapeutics is founded has it that discord sets in to the extent that the ego is more or less informed of reality. Would the presence of the man-brother, a character who is not only phallic but also penis-bearing, be an occasion for a relapse? Far from it. There is not a trace of mental disturbance and she has never been in finer shape.

Moreover, we are told exactly why this is. It's that she is clearly favoured by her mother over the boy. Nevertheless, the father is someone who is sufficiently present to introduce a new element, which we haven't yet spoken about, but which is essentially linked to the function of the phobia, namely a symbolic element beyond the relations of the mother's power or powerlessness. This is the father properly speaking, himself bringing out from his relations with the mother the notion of power. In short, he is substituted for what seems to have been saturated by the phobia, namely what is feared in the castrating animal as such that has proven in all its necessity to have been the essential element of articulation that enabled the child to come through the deep crisis she had entered when faced with maternal powerlessness. The child then finds her need saturated by the maternal presence and, what is more, by something else.

Does the therapist manage to see this something else with any clarity? This relationship in which she is already the brother's girl

brings with it all sorts of pathological possibilities. We can glimpse here, in a different aspect, that she has wholly become something that is worth more than the brother. She is to become the *girl-phallus* which is spoken about so often. It will be a matter of finding out to what extent thereafter she might not be implicated in this imaginary function. But for the time being no essential need is to be filled by the articulation of the phallic fantasy, because the father is there and he suffices for this. He suffices to maintain enough distance between the three terms of the mother–child–phallus relationship for the subject not to have to give of her own self. She doesn't have to put anything of her own into it to maintain this distance.

How is this distance maintained? Along what path? Through what identification and by what artifice? This is what we shall start to tackle next time by looking again at this observation, which will enable us to move into what is most characteristic of preoedipal object relations, namely the birth of the object as a fetish.

12 December 1956

V

ON ANALYSIS AS BUNDLING AND THE CONSEQUENCES THEREOF

A presupposition about the drive
The essence of the anaclitic relationship
The fetishist solution
Fever pitches of perversion
A phobic subject's transitory perversion

The analytic conception of object relations has already become something of an historical reality. What I've been trying to show you takes this up in a sense that is in part different and in part the same, but the mere fact that here it is being inserted into a different whole lends it a different signification.

At the point we've reached it is only right to punctuate with some emphasis how the object relation has been placed at the centre of a conception of analysis held by a group who have been pushing this increasingly to the fore. On recently rereading some of their articles I saw that this formulation, which over the years has been gathering pace and assurance, has now culminated in something that is being very assertively voiced.

It so happens that in a few articles I expressed the ironic wish that someone might truly set out the notion of the object relation in the way it is being reckoned in a certain orientation. This wish has since been amply fulfilled by more than one person, and while a formulation has been given by Bouvet, who introduced it in connection with obsessional neurosis in a way that rather softens it down, others too have made an effort at precision.

1

The article by Messrs Pierre Marty and Michel Fain on the *Importance du rôle de la motricité dans la relation d'objet*, which was

published in the January–June 1955 issue of the *Revue française de psychanalyse*, offers us a vivid example of the dominant conception. I'm going to summarise this work for you, with the forewarning that when you read the article things will certainly strike you as going much further than in the few words I can utter here.

The relationship between the one analysing and the one being analysed is conceived of at the start as a relationship that is established between a subject, the patient, and an *external object*, the analyst. To put it in our vocabulary, the analyst is here conceived of as real. The whole tension of the analytic situation is conceived of on the basis of this couple being, in itself alone, a driving element of the analytic development. Between a subject, whether or not he is on the couch, and the external object that is the analyst, there can in principle be established and manifested only what is called the primitive drive relationship, the relationship that is normally manifested – this is the presupposition of the development of the analytic relationship – through motor activity.

It is on the side of faint traces that are carefully observed during each stage of the subject's motor reaction that, in this article, we find the last word of what happens at the level of the drive, which is in some sense to be localised and vividly felt by the analyst. Insomuch as the subject is forced to contain his movements through the relationship that is established by the analytic convention, it is at this level that what is manifested, namely the drive in the course of its emergence, is localised in the analyst's mind.

The situation is at bottom conceived of as something that can be exteriorised only in an erotic aggression. This doesn't become manifest, because it has been agreed that it will not become manifest, but it is desirable that its *reception* should spring up, so to speak, from one moment to the next. It is precisely to the extent that, within the analytic convention, due to the fact of the fundamental rule, the motor manifestation of the drive cannot occur, that we shall be allowed to perceive what interferes in this situation, a situation that is considered to be a constituting one. It is very precisely formulated for us that a relationship with an *internal object* is superposed onto the relationship with the external object. This is how it is expressed in the article I've just cited. The subject has a certain relationship with an internal object, which is invariably considered to be the person who is present but captured somehow in the subject's pre-established imaginary mechanisms, thus becoming the object of a fantasmatic relationship. It is insomuch as discordance is introduced, between this imaginary object and the real object, that the analyst will be weighed up and gauged from one instant to the next, and that he in turn will model his interventions. Since according to

this conception no one else comes into play in the analytic situation besides those who are there, one of the two authors – who in this respect is followed by all the rest in the ensuing discussion – is led to highlight the notion of neurotic *distance* that the subject imposes on the object. The fantasmatic internal object, at least in the suspended position it holds in the way it is experienced by the subject, will be reduced to the real distance that is the distance between subject and analyst. It is to this extent that the subject will make his analyst a reality as a real presence.

The authors stretch this quite far. I've already alluded several times to the fact that one of these authors, admittedly during an aspirant phase of his career, had spoken of the crucial turning point in one analysis as the moment when the person he was analysing had been able to smell him. This was no metaphor. It wasn't about sensing him psychologically. It was the moment when the patient smelled his odour. I must say that the wafting in of this relationship of subodoration is one of the mathematical consequences of such a conception of the analytic relationship.[1] In this *restrained* position, within which a distance – here conceived of as active and present in relation to the analyst – has gradually to become real, it is quite certain that one of the most direct modes of relation is most surely this remote apprehending that is yielded by subodorating.

I am not merely taking up a single example here. This has been repeated many times. It seems that within this group they are tending more and more to give pivotal importance to modes of apprehending such as these.

Here, then, is how the analytic position is being regarded in this situation, which is the situation of a real relation between two protagonists in a closed space, where they are separated by a kind of conventional barrier and where something has to be made real. I'm talking about the theoretical formulation of things. We shall see afterwards what practical consequences this has.

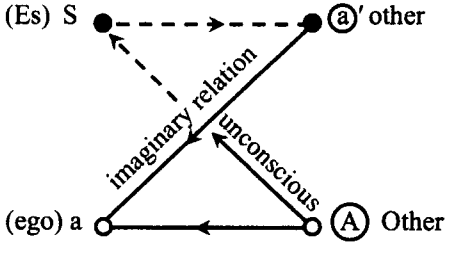
First, it is quite clear that such an exorbitant conception cannot be pushed to its ultimate consequences. On the other hand, if what I've been teaching you is true, then even when the practitioner shares this conception, the situation in which he operates cannot for all that really become what this conception stipulates. It is not enough, of course, just to conceive of it as such for it to be so. It will be pulled out of shape due to how it has been conceived of, but what it really is nevertheless remains what I've been trying to express for you by means of my diagram, which makes the symbolic relationship and the imaginary relationship intervene and crisscross, one serving in some sense as a filter to the other. The situation is not annulled, however much it is misconstrued, and this shows quite clearly the

insufficiency of their conception. But conversely, the insufficiency of this conception can have consequences on the way that the whole situation is seen through to a successful end.

This is a special example, which I'm going to highlight for you today, to show what this can effectively lead to, but here already we have a situation that is conceived of as a real situation, in which there is an operation of reducing the imaginary to the real. A certain number of phenomena occur through this operation, which allow for a situating of the different stages at which the subject has remained more or less stuck, or fixated, on this imaginary relationship. In this way the various positions are exhausted, which are essentially imaginary positions, foremost among them being the pregenital relation which becomes increasingly essential to what is explored in the analysis.

There is just one thing that receives no elucidation whatsoever in this conception of the analytic situation, and this is no small matter because everything lies therein. This thing can be expressed as follows. It is not known why, in this situation, nothing is said of the fact of the function, strictly speaking, of language and of speech in this position. On no account does this mean that it can be bypassed. Furthermore, what we shall also see coming to light is the special value that is given to the simple impulsive verbalisation, to these sorts of plea to the analyst along the lines of – *Why won't you answer me?* You will see this being punctuated most precisely in what the authors say and in the bits of text they quote. A verbalisation only holds any importance for them in so far as it is impulsive, that is, in so far as it is a motor manifestation.

In what will this operation culminate, this operation of setting the distance with regard to the internal object, and with which technique is expected to comply? Our diagram enables us to form a conception of this.



The line *a–a'* concerns the imaginary relationship, which refers the subject – who is more or less discordant, decomposed, and exposed to fragmentation – to the unifying image of the little other,

a narcissistic image. On the line S–A, the subject's relationship with the Other is produced, though this is not yet a solid line because it needs to be established. This Other is not merely the other party who is there, but is literally the locus of speech. This is so inasmuch as, already, structured in the speaking relationship, this big Other stands beyond the other that you apprehend imaginarily. This supposed Other is the subject as such, the subject in which your speech is constituted because it is able not only to greet it and to perceive it, but to respond to it. It is on this line that everything belonging to the transferential realm is established, with the imaginary playing its role as a filter, and even as an obstacle. Of course, in every neurosis, the subject already has, as it were, his own set functioning. His set functioning in relation to the image serves him when it comes both to hearing and to not hearing what is there to be heard in the locus of speech.

Let's say no more than the following. What happens if all our effort and interest is focused solely on the imaginary relation that lies here in this transversal position in relation to the advent of speech? What happens if everything is misrecognised when it comes to the relationship between the imaginary tension and what has to be made a reality, what has to be brought to light, with respect to the unconscious symbolic relation – because here lies precisely the whole analytic doctrine in a potential state, and because there is something here that must allow this symbolic relation to be realised as history as much as an avowal? What happens if we abandon the notion of the imaginary relationship functioning in relation to this impossibility of symbolic advent that constitutes neurosis, and if we fail to take them into account constantly in their mutual functioning? Well, what one can in principle expect to hear is what the authors who hold this conception speak of in terms of *distance* with respect to this object, which is precisely set to one certain end. Should we turn our interest to this distance only in order to abolish it, were such a thing possible, we would come to a certain result that indeed has already been borne out by subjects who have come into our hands after having passed through this style of apprehension and test. One thing is absolutely certain, which is that in at least a certain number of cases, these being precisely cases of obsessional neurosis, this way of situating the development of the analytic situation entirely within a pursuit of the reduction of this notorious distance – a distance they consider to be typical of the object relation in obsessional neurosis – leads to what may be called paradoxical perverse reactions.

We are now seeing phenomena that are quite out of the ordinary, which scarcely existed in the analytic literature before this technical mode was brought to the fore. I'm thinking for example of the

precipitated outbreak of a homosexual attachment to an object, one that is in some sense quite paradoxical in the subject's relationship, which even lingers there in the manner of a kind of artefact, a thing that has crystallised around objects that are lying around within his reach. This can display for some time a somewhat durable persistence.

None of this is astonishing if we refer to the imaginary triad.

2

At the point to which matters were brought last time, you were able to see a line of research being sketched out concerning the imaginary triad of mother–child–phallus. This was for us to stay at the level of a prelude to the bringing into play of the symbolic relationship that will be wrought only with the fourth function, that of the father, which is introduced through the dimension of the Oedipus complex.

The triangle is itself preoedipal. I stress that this is only being isolated here in an abstract way. It is of interest to us in its development only to the extent that it is subsequently taken up in the quartet that is constituted by the paternal function entering the fray, on the basis of what we may call the child's fundamental disappointment. This happens when he recognises – we have left open the question of how – not only that he is not his mother's sole object, but also that his mother's point of interest is the phallus, in a way that has greater or lesser accentuation depending on the case. On the basis of this recognition, he is to realise in a second moment precisely that she is deprived of this object, that she lacks it. This is the point we reached last time.

I showed you this with reference to the case of a transitory phobia in a very young girl, which is highly favourable to the study of phobia because it stands on the frontier of the Oedipal relationship. We were able to see this frontier in the wake of a double disappointment. First, there is an imaginary disappointment, which is the child's ascertaining the phallus that she lacks. Next, in a second moment, comes the perception that her mother, who is on the frontier between the symbolic and the real, also lacks the phallus. Then comes the child's appeal for this unsustainable relationship to be sustained. The phobia breaks out with the intervention of the fantasmatic creature, the dog, which steps in as the one that is responsible for the whole situation, strictly speaking. It bites. It castrates. It is owing to the dog that the whole situation is thinkable and symbolically liveable, at least for a provisional period.

What position is possible when, on this occasion, the yoking of

the three imaginary objects is broken? There is more than one possible solution, and a solution is always called upon, whether the situation is normal or abnormal.

What happens in the normal Oedipal situation? It is through the intermediary of a certain rivalry, punctuated in the subject's relations with the father, that something will be established that will mean that the subject will find him- or herself being conferred this phallic might, in various ways depending on the subject's position as a boy or as a girl. For the boy, this is altogether clear. The conferring of this phallic might happens within certain limits, which are precisely those that introduced the subject to the symbolic relationship.

I told you the other day that, for the mother, the child as a real being is captured as a symbol of her lack of object, of her imaginary wish for the phallus. The normal outcome of this situation is that the child receives, symbolically, the phallus he is in need of. But for him to be in need of it, it was necessary for him first to be threatened by the castrating agency, which is originatively and essentially the paternal agency. It is within a constitution on the symbolic plane, on the plane of a sort of pact of entitlement to the phallus, that this virile identification is established, which lies at the base of a normative Oedipal relationship.

I will slip in a side-remark here concerning the originative formulations that come from Freud's pen when introducing the distinction between the anaclitic relationship and the narcissistic relationship. They are somewhat peculiar, and even paradoxical.

In the libidinal relationship in adolescents, Freud tells us that there are two types of love. There is anaclitic love, which bears the stamp of a primal dependence on the mother, and the narcissistic love object, which is modelled on the image that is the subject's own self-image, the narcissistic image. It is this image that we have been striving to develop here by showing its root in the specular relation to the other party.

The word *anaclitic*, even though we owe it to Freud, is ill wrought, for in Greek it really doesn't have the meaning that Freud gives it, this being indicated by the German word *Anlehnung*. It's a relationship of *propping against*. Furthermore, this gives rise to all sorts of misunderstanding, some having pushed this *propping against* so far as to turn it into something that is ultimately a kind of defensive reaction. But let's leave this aside. In fact, when one reads Freud, one can see that this is well and truly about the need for a prop and for something that indeed asks only to open out on the side of a relationship of dependence.

If we press further, we shall see that there are peculiar contra-

dictions in the two contrasting formulations that Freud provides for these two modes of relationship, the anaclitic and the narcissistic. Rather curiously, with regard to the anaclitic relationship he is led to speak of a need to be loved much more than a need to love. Conversely, and altogether paradoxically, the narcissist all of a sudden appears in a light that surprises us. Indeed, Freud is drawn to an element of activity that is inherent to the highly particular behaviour of the narcissist. He appears to be active insomuch as he always misrecognises the other party to a certain degree. Freud adorns him, in contradistinction to the anaclitic type, with the need to love, and gives him its attribute, which suddenly and paradoxically turns this into a sort of natural site for what in another vocabulary we would call the *oblative*, which cannot help but disconcert.

I think we will have to come back to this, but once again, it is in the misrecognition of the position of intersubjective elements that these paradoxical perspectives find their origin and, by the same stroke, their justification.

What is called the anaclitic relationship – there where it is of interest, that is, in its persistence in the adult – is always conceived of as a sort of pure and simple survival, or prolongation, of what is called an infantile position. In his article on *Libidinal Types*, Freud refers to this position as neither more nor less than an erotic position, which shows very well that this is the most open position. Its essence will be misconstrued if one fails to notice the following. It is precisely in so far as, in the symbolic relationship, the male subject acquires, is invested with, the phallus as such, as belonging to him and as being legitimately wielded by him, that he becomes the bearer of the object of desire for the object that succeeds the maternal object. This object that succeeds the maternal object is the re-found object, marked by the relationship with the primal mother, which in the normal position of the Oedipus complex – this is how it is, in principle, from the first in what Freud expounded – will invariably be the object of the male subject, namely woman. The position becomes anaclitic in so far as it is upon him, upon the phallus of which he is now the master, the representative, the custodian, that woman depends.

The relationship of dependence is established in so far as, identifying with the other party, with the objectal partner, the subject knows that he is indispensable for this partner. He knows that he is the one who has satisfied her, and he alone, because in principle he is the sole custodian of this object that is the mother's object of desire. It is commensurate with an achievement of the Oedipal position that the subject finds himself in the stance that, from a certain standpoint, may be qualified as optimal with respect to the re-found object, the successor to the primal maternal object, and in relation to whom he

will become the indispensable object, knowing himself to be indispensable. One portion of the erotic life of subjects who partake of this libidinal aspect is wholly conditioned by the need, once it has been experienced and assumed, of the Other, of the maternal woman, in so far she needs to find the object in him, this object being the phallic object. This is what forms the essence of the anaclitic relationship in contradistinction to the narcissistic relationship.

This is a mere parenthesis designed to show how useful it is always to bring into play the dialectic of the relationship between these first three objects and the fourth term that encompasses them and binds them into the symbolic relationship, namely the father. This term introduces the symbolic relationship and, with it, the possibility of transcending the relationship of frustration or lack of object, thereby shifting up into the relationship of castration which is something altogether different. That is to say, it introduces this lack of object into a dialectic, into something that gives and takes, that instates, invests and confers the dimension of a pact, of an interdiction, of a law, and in particular the incest prohibition.

Let's come back to our topic. What happens when, in the absence of the symbolic relationship, the imaginary relationship becomes the rule and the measure of the entire anaclitic relationship? Well, exactly the following. When discord, when non-binding or the destruction of bonds, come about for whatever reason in the progressive development of historical incidents in the child's relationship with the mother in respect of the third-party object – the phallic object that is both what woman lacks and what the child has uncovered as lacking for the mother – there are other modes by which this coherence can be re-established. There are imaginary modes, which are atypical.

For example, there is the child's identification with the mother. On the basis of an imaginary displacement in relation to the maternal partner, the child will make the phallic choice in her place, will assume for her the clinamen towards the phallic object as such.

The scheme that I'm giving you here is none other than the scheme for fetishist perversion. This is one example of a solution, if you like, but there is a more direct path. In other words, further solutions exist to access this lack of object. Already, on the imaginary plane, this lack of object constitutes the human path to a realisation that cedes man to his existence, that is, to something that can be called into question. This is already something different from the animal realm and from all possible animal relationships on the imaginary plane. This imaginary access to the lack of object is achieved under certain conditions that will in some sense be punctuated, and which are extra-historical, which is how the fever pitch of perversion always presents.

Perversion has the property of bringing about a certain mode of access to what lies beyond the image of the other that typifies the human dimension, but it does so only in such moments as are always produced by the fever pitches of perversion, moments that are syncopated within the subject's history. There is a kind of convergence or build-up towards such moments, each of which can be significantly qualified as a *passage à l'acte*. During this *passage à l'acte*, something is brought about that is both a fusion and a point of access to what lies beyond, which is strictly speaking the trans-individual dimension that Freud's anaclitic theory formulated as such. Freud's theory teaches us to call by the name *Eros* the union of two individuals, each of whom is torn away from himself and, for an instant that is more or less fragile and transitory, even virtual, finds himself a constituent of this unit. A unity such as this is brought about at certain moments in perversion, but what is specific to perversion is precisely that it can only ever be brought about in these moments that are not ordained symbolically.

In fetishism, the subject finds his object at last, his exclusive object, and says as much himself. It is all the more exclusive and perfectly satisfying in that it is inanimate. This way, at least, he will be calm in the knowledge that it will not disappoint him. To love a slipper is really to have the object of one's desires in easy reach. An object that is itself bereft of any subjective, intersubjective, or even trans-subjective property is more reliable. When it comes to bringing about the condition of lack as such, the fetishist solution is incontestably one of the most conceivable conditions within this perspective, and it is indeed transformed into a reality.

We also know – because what is specific to imaginary relationships is that they are always perfectly reciprocal, since this is a mirror relation – that in the fetishist we must expect to see arising from time to time the position, not of identification with the mother, but of identification with the object. This is effectively what we shall see being produced in the course of an analysis of a fetishist, for this position is as such what is invariably non-satisfying in the utmost. That for a short while the mesmerising illumination of the object that the maternal object was should be something that satisfies the subject is not enough for an entire erotic equilibrium to be established around it. Moreover, if he identifies with the object for this brief moment, he will effectively lose his primal object, namely the mother, and will reckon himself to be a destructive object for her. This perpetual game, this profound double vision, marks each and every apprehending of the fetishist manifestation.

This is so visible that someone like Phyllis Greenacre, who has sought seriously to look into the foundation of the fetishist

relationship, tells us that it seems as though we are in the presence of a subject who is showing us with excessive speed his own image in two opposite mirrors. She comes out with it like that, without her really knowing why. It comes out of the blue, but right away she has the sense that this is how it is. The fetishist is never where he is, for the good reason that he has left his place. He has gone over to a specular relationship between the mother and the phallus, where he is both one and the other in alternation. This is a position that does not manage to stabilise unless there is some grasp of this unique symbol that is privileged yet at the same time impermanent, this being the precise object of the fetishism, that is to say, this something that symbolises the phallus.

It is therefore on the plane of relationships that, while they are not identical, are at the very least analogous, and which we can conceive of as being essentially perverse in nature, that the results will surely emerge, at least the transitory results, in the context of a certain way of handling the analytic relationship. This is what happens when this relationship is focused entirely on the object relation in so far as only the imaginary and the real are allowed to intervene, and when the whole focus of the imaginary relationship is set upon what is claimed to be real about the presence of the analyst.

This is what we are going to see now.

3

In my Rome report, I alluded to how this mode of the object relation is being used in analysis. I compared it to what I called *a sort of bundling taken to the extreme as a psychological test.*

This short passage perhaps went unnoticed, but I enlighten the reader in a footnote that specifies that bundling is a very precise practice, which still exists in these sorts of cultural islet where old customs have weathered well. Stendhal speaks of it as a kind of particularity of Swiss fantasists, also to be found in southern Germany, places that are not unimportant from the geographical point of view.[2]

This bundling is a conception of love relations. It is a technique, a pattern of relations between male and female that consists of the following. Under certain conditions, for instance when an associate comes into the group in a privileged way, it is allowed, as a show of hospitality, that someone of the household, generally the daughter, may extend to him the offer of sharing her bed, on the condition that there should be no contact between them. The word *bundling* comes from the fact that more often than not the daughter is wrapped in a

bed sheet, such that all conditions of approach are possible save the final one. What could pass for a mere blithe and fanciful tradition that perhaps we might regret that we are not participating in – it could be amusing – warrants our attention because ultimately there is nothing artificial in saying that now, seventeen or eighteen years after Freud's death, the analytic situation has come paradoxically to be conceived of and formalised in this manner.

Fain and Marty's article reports on one session, noting down all the patient's movements insomuch as they manifest something of an oriented impulse that is more or less held back, at greater or lesser distance, from the analyst who is there, behind her back. There is something rather striking here. Their text came out after I wrote my report, which proves I forced nothing in saying that it is to this end, and to these psychological consequences, that the practice of analysis was being reduced within one particular conception.

We find these paradoxes in the habits and customs of certain cultural islets, for example there is a protestant sect of Dutch origin that someone has studied in depth, which has maintained very precisely the local customs linked to one religious unit, the Amish sect. Without doubt all of this emerges today in remnants that are not understood, but we can find their fully coordinated, deliberated and organised symbolic formulation across a whole tradition that may be termed religious and even symbolic. Everything we know about the practice of courtly love and the whole sphere in which it was localised in the Middle Ages implies a very rigorous technical elaboration of the approach to love that entailed a long practice of restraint in the presence of the loved object, aiming to make a reality of what lies beyond, which is what is sought in love and is specifically erotic. Once one has uncovered the key to all these techniques and traditions, one finds their points of emergence thoroughly formulated in other cultural spheres, because this is a realm of search in the realisation of love that has been set out with great deliberation on many occasions in the history of humanity.

We do not need to pose the question here of what is ordained and effectively reached. Nor is there any doubt that the fact that this aims at something that tries to go beyond physiological corner-cutting, if it may be expressed in this way, should hold a certain interest. This is not something that is being introduced without a reference that allows us to locate with precision both this metaphor and, at the same time, the possibility of integrating across various levels, that is to say, in a loosely conscious fashion, what they make of this use of the imaginary relationship as such. This relationship is perhaps itself employed deliberately. It is a use, as it were, of practices that may

seem perverse to unworldly eyes, but which in reality are no more so than any other regulating of the approach to love in a defined sphere of customs and *patterns*, as they say. This is something that deserves to be indicated as a reference point, so that we may know where to situate ourselves.

Let's turn now to a case that is set out in the small Bulletin I mentioned last time, which reports questions posed in all sincerity, by the members of a particular group, with respect to the object relation. We have here from the pen of someone who has assumed a certain rank in the analytic community, Mme Ruth Lebovici, the observation of what she quite rightly calls a phobic subject.

This phobic subject, whose activity was already fairly restricted, has come to a state of almost complete inactivity. His most manifest symptom is the fear of being too tall, and he presents always with an extremely bent-over posture. Nearly everything has become impossible for him in his professional context. He lives housebound, but nevertheless has a mistress, fifteen years his senior and who was purveyed to him by his mother. It is within this constellation that the analyst takes him on and starts to broach the question with him.

The diagnosis of the subject is made with finesse. This diagnosis of phobia brooks no difficulty, despite the paradoxical fact that the phobogenic object in its foremost aspect does not seem to lie on the outside. Nevertheless, it does lie on the outside inasmuch as at one point we can see a recurring dream appear which is the model for an exteriorised anxiousness. In this particular case, the object is discovered only on a second approach. It is a phobic object that is perfectly recognisable in that it is marvellously illustrated by the substitute for the paternal image that utterly falls short in this case. Indeed, after a while, an image is obtained of a man in armour, who is equipped with a particularly aggressive instrument that is none other than a Fly-Tox pump sprayer for wiping out phobic objects – insects. The subject reveals that he harbours a fear of being pursued and strangled in the dark by this man in armour, and this fear is no small matter in the overall balance of this phobic structure.

The analyst who has this subject in her charge has published the observation under the title *Perversion sexuelle transitoire au cours d'un traitement psychanalytique*. Therefore, there is no forcing on my part when I introduce the question of the perverse reaction, since the author herself accentuates this as the focus of interest in the observation.

The author is ill at ease, to say the least. Not only is she ill at ease, but she has seen very clearly that the reaction she calls perverse – this is a label, of course – arose in precise circumstances in which she plays a part. The fact that she poses the question in relation to

this moment proves she is aware that this is where the question lies. What happened? Having finally seen the phobogenic object come to light – the man in armour – she interprets it as being the phallic mother. Why the phallic mother when this is absolutely the man in armour with all his heraldic aspects? Throughout the entire observation, the questions that the author asks herself are set out with a fidelity that I believe to be beyond doubt, and in any case they are carefully underscored. In particular, the author asks herself whether perhaps one interpretation that she made was not the right one.

Indeed, soon after this interpretation, a perverse reaction becomes apparent and we are then engaged in nothing less than a three-year period throughout which the subject developed, stage by stage, a perverse fantasy. This consisted first in imagining himself being seen urinating by a woman who, greatly aroused, would then solicit him for sexual relations. Next, there was a reversal of this position, with the subject watching – sometimes while he would masturbate, sometimes not – a woman urinating.[3] Lastly, at a third stage, this position was effectively made a reality when the subject found in a cinema a small box room providentially equipped with a hole through which he could effectively watch the women in the toilets on the other side of the partition.

The author herself wonders whether her way of interpreting might have had a determining value in precipitating what at first assumes the appearance of a fantasmatic crystallisation of something that clearly forms part of the subject's composite elements, this being not the phallic mother but rather the mother in her relation with the phallus. But the key to this idea that a phallic mother is involved is given to us by the author when she wonders about the overall handling of the treatment, and observes that she was far *more prohibitive* than his mother had ever been. Everything shows that the entity of the phallic mother has been produced here by what the author herself refers to as her own countertransferential positions. If one follows the analysis closely, there can be absolutely no doubt about this. Concomitant with the development of this imaginary relationship, which of course developed from this analytic *faux pas*, let's see what is involved on the analyst's side.

First, the subject reports a dream in which, finding himself in the presence of a woman from his past for whom he claims to have had amorous inclinations, he finds himself impeded by the presence of another female subject who also played a role in his personal history in that he had once seen her urinate in front of him.[4] This happened late in his childhood, that is, in his teenage years. The analyst intervenes by saying – *No doubt you prefer to turn your attentions to a woman by watching her urinate rather than make the effort of going*

after another woman who might be to your liking but who happens to be married. By means of this intervention the analyst thinks she is reintroducing the truth, but in a somewhat strained manner because the male character is only indicated in the dream through associations. That is to say, the supposed husband of the mother, the husband who would reintroduce the Oedipus complex, intervenes in a way that has every character of provocation, especially when we know that it was the analyst's husband who referred the subject to her. It is at this precise moment that a change of tack occurs, with the progressive turnaround of the watching fantasy which shifts from the sense of *being watched* to that of *watching himself.*

Second, as though that were not enough, in response to the subject's request to space out the frequency of the sessions, the analyst says – *Now you're showing your passive positions, because you know full well that, whatever happens, you won't get that.* From this point on, the fantasy crystallises completely, which proves that there is something more. The subject, who understands a great deal about his relations of impossibility when it comes to attaining the female object, ends up developing his fantasies within the treatment itself. He speaks of his fear of urinating on the couch, and so on. He starts to have these reactions that show a certain closing of the distance to the real object, such as peeping at the analyst's legs – which, moreover, she notes with a certain satisfaction. Indeed, there is something that lies on the edge of the real situation, as though we were witnessing the constitution of the mother who is, not phallic, but aphallic. If there is one thing that lies at the root of the fetishist position then it is very precisely that the subject comes to a standstill at a certain level in his investigation and observation of woman, inasmuch as she has or has not the organ that is called into question.

This position gradually leads the subject to say, *My goodness, there's no solution but to sleep with my analyst.* He tells her so. Realising that this is starting to get somewhat on her nerves, the analyst remarks, *You're amusing yourself by taking fright at something you know full well will never happen.* Then, she wonders anxiously, *Was I right to say that?*

Anyone can wonder as to what degree of mastery such an intervention might entail. This somewhat blunt reminder of the conventions of the analytic situation is utterly in accord with the notion that can be entertained of the analytic position as a real position. So, things are here brought to a head. It is immediately after this intervention that the subject makes a definitive *passage à l'acte* and finds the perfect location, the choice site in the real, namely the specific arrangement of a loo in a cinema on the Champs-Elysées. This time he really will find himself at the right real distance from the object

of his observation, separated by a wall. This time he can observe the object not as a phallic mother, but well and truly as aphallic. Here he suspends for a certain while all his erotic activity, having found there such satisfaction that he declares that until the time of this discovery he had lived *as an automaton*, but that now everything has changed.

This is what things have come to. In summarising this observation I wanted simply to allow you to put a finger on how the notion of distance from the analyst-object as a real object, and the notion of so-called reference, can be something that is not without effect, and how, all things considered, these are perhaps not the most desirable effects.

I won't tell you how the treatment ends. It would have to be examined meticulously, so richly instructive is its every detail. The final session is eluded, the subject undergoing surgery on varicose veins. Everything is laid out here. The timid attempt to access castration and a certain liberty that can arise from it is even indicated. It is deemed that, after this, they've gone far enough. The subject goes back to his mistress, the same he had at the outset, fifteen years his senior, and since he no longer speaks about his tallness, the phobia is thought to have been cured. Unfortunately, now he thinks only of one matter – his shoe size. Sometimes his shoes are too big and he loses balance in them, sometimes they are too small and they pinch his feet. Thus, the change of tack, the transformation of the phobia, is complete. After all, why not regard this as the end of the analytic work? Either way, from the experimental standpoint there is something that is surely not without interest.

The summit of access to the supposedly correct distance from the real object is provided – seemingly with a sign of recognition among initiates – when the subject has a perception, in the presence of his analyst, of the odour of urine. This is deemed to be the moment at which the distance from the real object – throughout the observation we are told that this is the point at which any neurotic relationship fails – is finally accommodated within its exact scope. Of course, this coincides with the moment when the perversion reaches its height.

This is not strictly speaking a perversion – and the author is not unwilling to face up to this – but much rather an artefact. Such things, though they can be permanent or long-lasting, are nevertheless artefacts that are liable to be broken off or dissolved, and sometimes fairly abruptly. Thus, in this case, after a while the subject is *caught by surprise by an usherette*. This simple fact of being surprised by the usherette is enough to make him drop, there and then, his visits to the especially propitious site that the real had offered him at just the right moment.

Indeed, the real is always timely in offering everything one needs when finally one has been set, along the proper paths, at the proper distance.

19 December 1956

THE PERVERSE WAYS OF DESIRE

VI

THE PRIMACY OF THE PHALLUS AND THE YOUNG HOMOSEXUAL WOMAN

Freud, the girl, and the phallus
The signifier *Niederkommt*
The lies of the unconscious
Serving the lady
Beyond the object

Today we are going to launch ourselves into a problem that, were we moving forward step by step, we ought normally to be meeting much further on in our disquisition. This problem is that of perversion, in inverted commas, the most problematic perversion there is from the perspective of analysis, namely female homosexuality.

Why am I proceeding in this way? Contingency is playing a part in this. But it is quite certain that we cannot examine the object relation this year without meeting the female object.

You know that the problem is not so much one of how we meet the female object in analysis. Analysis provides us with plenty for our edification when the subject of this encounter is not natural. I showed you this quite adequately in the first lessons from last term, reminding you that the female subject is always hailed, when encountered by a man, to a sort of re-finding that positions her from the first in this ambiguity between natural relations and symbolic relations. I've been trying to show you how the entire analytic dimension inheres in this ambiguity.

The problem now is to find out what the female object thinks about this, because what the female object thinks about it is even less natural than the way in which the male subject approaches her. What path does she take, from her earliest approaches to the natural and primordial object of desire that is the mother's breast? How does the female object enter this dialectic?

I am not calling the woman *object* today just for the sake of it. It's quite clear that this object must at some point start functioning, yet

it assumes this position of object that is so scarcely natural because it's a position at one remove, which there is no interest in qualifying as such except in that it's a position that is taken by a subject.

1

Female homosexuality has been ascribed a particularly exemplary value in analysis as a whole for what it has revealed in terms of the stages and the stopping-points that can mark out woman's destiny on the path she wends.

What is natural or biological at the start is constant in carrying over to the symbolic plane, where it is a matter of its being taken on board by the subject who is herself caught in the symbolic chain. It is precisely here that woman is at issue, to the very extent that she is to make a choice that, whichever side it may come from, must, as the analytic experience teaches us, be a compromise between what is to be attained and what it has not been possible to attain. The fact that female homosexuality is met whenever the discussion bears upon the subject of stages, which the woman has to complete in her symbolic becoming, ought to lead us during this period to read a certain number of texts exhaustively, in particular those that come in succession from Freud's hand from 1923 onwards, the date of his article on *The Infantile Genital Organisation.*

In this text Freud posits as a principle the *Primat des Phallus*, the primacy of the assumption of the phallus. The phallic phase is the final stage in the childhood phase of sexuality and is typical for both boys and girls. The genital organisation is reached by them both, but in accordance with a type that makes the possession or the non-possession of the phallus the primordial differential element. At this level, the genital organisation is contrasted in either sex. Freud tells us that at this moment there is no realisation of male and female, but rather of what is endowed with the phallic attribute and what is not, the latter being deemed equivalent to having been castrated.

I will add, to spell out his thought clearly, that this organisation is the formula from an essential stage that brings to an end the first phase of childhood sexuality, which comes to a close with the entry into the latency period. I will further specify that this is founded, for one sex as much as for the other, upon a miscarriage, a *Mißlingen.*[1] This miscarriage is in turn founded upon an unawareness – not misrecognition, but unawareness – of the fertilising role of male semen and, on the other side, of the existence as such of the female organ.

These are very considerable assertions that require some exegesis

if they are to be understood, for here we cannot be in the presence of something that may be taken at the level of real experience.

Indeed, an objection was raised, and in the deepest confusion, by authors who went into action in the wake of this assertion from Freud. A very great number of facts lead to the admission that in a certain number of experiences there is a revelation of the presence, perhaps not of the real role of the male in the procreative act, but certainly of the female organ, at least for girls. It can hardly be contested that in the early experience of young girls there is something that corresponds to vaginal localisation, with sensations and even precocious vaginal masturbation. This is the reality in at least a certain number of cases. On this basis, people set to wondering whether the predominance of the phallic phase ought to be attributed to the existence of the clitoris. They wondered whether this is due to the fact that libido, as they say – making this term the synonym of all erogenous experience – is initially focused exclusively on the clitoris or whether this might come about only after a displacement that must be both long and painful, necessitating a lengthy detour.

Freud's assertion can certainly not be understood in such terms. When it is couched in these terms, too many confused facts enable all sorts of objections to be levelled at it. I will allude to one such objection issued by Karen Horney, which is dictated by realist premises deeming that every misrecognition presupposes in the unconscious a certain acquaintance with the coaptation of the two sexes. This leads her to say that, in girls, the supervalence of the organ that as such does not belong to them in their own right can come about only against the backdrop of a certain denial of the existence of the vagina, which has to be accounted for. Based on these hypotheses, accepted as *a priori*, she ventures to trace back to a genesis of this phallic term in the girl. When we go into the details, we will see a kind of necessity that is borrowed from a certain number of theoretical premises, expressed in part by the author herself. She shows this very clearly through the very uncertainty of the ultimate fact to which this necessity is referred, for the facts upon which this primordial experience of the vaginal organ are based are exceedingly discreet and even reticent. What is at issue here is a sort of reconstruction that is required by theoretical premises that stem from having taken a wrong path in the understanding of Freud's assertion.

Freud's assertion is grounded in his experience. While it is advanced with care, even with a share of incertitude that is so characteristic of his presentation of this discovery, it is asserted none the less as primordial. It's a fixed point. The paradoxical assertion of

phallicism is the very pivot around which the theoretical interpretation must be developed. This is what we are going to try to do.

Eight years later, in 1931, he writes something yet more considerable on *Female Sexuality*, which further extends his assertion of 1923. During the interval, an exceedingly lively discussion has taken place among his pupils which, such as it is reported by Karen Horney and by Jones, contains a crop of speculations. Thus, there is a veritable tangle of approximations here, which I've had to wade through over the holiday break. I must say that it has struck me as especially hard to give an account of this discussion without falsifying it, because what characterises it is assuredly how ill-mastered are the categories that are brought into play.

To give some account of this, and to get something of it across, there is no other means of proceeding but to master it, and to master it is already to alter its axis and nature completely. So, to a certain extent, this will not offer an accurate perspective of what is at issue, for this ill-mastered character is truly essential to the whole problem. It is truly correlative to the second goal of our theoretical examination this year, which is to show, in parallel with our exploration of the object relation, how analytic practice has been committing inflexibly to a deviation that cannot be mastered.

To come back to the precise incidence that concerns us today, it occurred to me this morning that one exemplary image could be isolated from this heap of doings, plucked from one of these articles.

All of the authors accept that in the young girl's detour in her development, when she enters the Oedipus complex she starts to desire a child from the father as a substitute for the missing phallus. The disappointment of not receiving a child from the father will play an essential role in making the young girl retreat from the identification with the father that she established on entering the Oedipus complex. All the authors accept in principle that this will lead her to take up once more the feminine position, along the path of the privation of the child that she desires from the father. So, one of these authors cites the example of an analysis of a child in order to show the degree to which this disappointment can come into play and impact upon the present, precipitating the motion of the Oedipus complex. This motion is exemplified as being essentially unconscious, so, in the course of the young girl's analysis, she was enabled to bring this image to light of day. Finding herself thereby greater enlightened as to what was going on in her unconscious, thereafter *every morning she woke up to ask in a fury – Hasn't the child come yet?*

This instance strikes me as exemplary of what is at issue in this deviation from analytic practice, which will be attendant through-

out this year's theoretical exploration of the object relation. Here, we put a finger on how a certain pattern of understanding and tackling frustrations is in reality something that leads the analyst to a manner of intervention the effects of which not only appear doubtful, but positively opposed to what plays out through the process of analytic interpretation. It is plain to see that the notion we may form of *a child from the father* appearing at some point in the development as an imaginary object, as a substitute for this missing phallus, which plays an essential role in the young girl's development, cannot be brought into play at just any moment and in any old way. It can only be brought into play later, or else at a contemporary stage on the condition that *the child*, to the extent that the subject does have dealings with this child, has entered the interplay of a series of symbolic resonances that will concern what the subject has experienced in the past, at the phallic stage, namely everything that might be bound for this subject to possessive or destructive reactions at the moment of the phallic crisis, with all that this entails that is so problematic in the stage of childhood to which it corresponds. In short, everything that refers to the supervalence or the predominance of the phallus at one stage of the child's development only finds its point of impact retroactively.

The phallus can be brought into play only in so far as it becomes necessary at one moment or another to symbolise some event that may occur, whether this is the late arrival of a child for someone who is in an immediate relation with the child, or else the subject's question as to the possession of the child, which is to pose the question of the subject's own motherhood. But to bring in, at a different moment, something that does not intervene in the subject's symbolic structuration but rather bears a certain relation of imaginary substitution, precipitated then and there by speech on the symbolic plane, and which will be experienced by the child in an utterly different way, is tantamount to acknowledging it as having already been organised. It is tantamount to introducing it into some sort of legitimacy that literally acknowledges frustration as such at the heart of the experience, when in fact this is not how it is legitimately introduced.

Frustration cannot be legitimately introduced as such in interpretation unless it has effectively passed through at the level of the unconscious, as the correct theory tells us. This frustration is but an evanescent moment, which holds importance and a function only for we analysts, on a purely theoretical plane as an articulation of what has occurred. That it should become a reality for the subject is excluded by definition, because it is exceedingly unstable. Frustration only has any importance and interest in so far as it leads

on to something else, to one or other of the two planes that I distinguished for you as *castration* and *privation*. The plane of castration is nothing less than what establishes, in its true order, the necessity of this frustration. It transcends it and instates it in a law that lends it a different value. Furthermore, this is what sanctions the existence of privation, because the idea of privation is inconceivable on the plane of the real. The idea of privation is effectively conceivable only for a being who is articulating something on the symbolic plane.

We can grasp this in those interventions that are in some way interventions of support, of psychotherapy, like, say, the intervention I mentioned briefly concerning the young girl who was in the hands of one of Anna Freud's pupils.

You will recall that this young girl presented the beginnings of a phobia that arose in connection with her experience of effectively being deprived of something. This privation occurred under conditions that were different from those within which the child found herself confined. Indeed, I showed you that the mainspring of the necessary displacement of the phobia on no account lay in this experience. This mainspring lies not in the fact that she doesn't have the phallus, but in the fact that her mother couldn't give it to her. Further still, the mother couldn't give it to her because she didn't have it herself.

The psychotherapist's intervention consists in telling her – and she is quite right – that all girls are like that. This might sound like a reduction to the real, but it is not. The child knows full well that she doesn't have the phallus. The psychotherapist lets her know that this is the rule, thereby making it pass over to the symbolic plane of Law. This way of intervening does indeed remain debatable from the standpoint of efficacy, because in truth the psychotherapist can only wonder whether it might have been effective or not in a certain reduction of the phobia. At that point it is clear that it was effective only in an extremely fleeting way. The phobia resumes with greater intensity, and will only subside once the child has been integrated into a complete family.

Why so? In principle, the child's frustration should seem to her even greater than before, for now she is confronted with a stepfather, that is to say, a male who enters the family dynamic, her mother having until then been a widow. And there is now an elder brother too. But in fact the phobia really does subside, because it literally no longer needs to make up for this absence of any specifically phallophore element in the symbolic circuit, that is to say, the absence of males.

These critical remarks bear above all on use of the term *frustration*. This use is in a certain sense legitimised by the fact that what is

essential in this dialectic is much rather the lack of object than the object itself. Frustration corresponds very well, in appearance, to a conceptual notion. But what is at stake concerns the instability of the very dialectic of frustration.

Frustration is not privation. Why not? Frustration concerns something you are deprived of by someone else, from whom you might precisely have hoped to get what you were asking for. Thus, what is at stake in frustration is something that is less the object than the love of the one who can bestow this gift upon you, if and when it is given to you. The object of frustration is less the object than the gift.

Here we find ourselves at the origin of a dialectic that stands at one remove from the symbolic, and which itself fades away from one instant to the next because this gift is a gift that is still bestowed only as though it were free of charge. It comes from the other. What lies behind this other, namely the full chain in virtue of which the gift comes to you, is yet un-glimpsed. It is only afterwards that the subject will perceive this and notice that the gift is far more complete than at first appeared, in that it entails the entire human chain in the symbolic. But at the start of the dialectic of frustration there is merely the confrontation with the other and the gift that surfaces.

If this gift is bestowed as a gift, it will make the object itself vanish as an object. In other words, if the request is granted, the object will pass into the background. If, however, the request is not granted, the object will, in this case too, vanish and change signification.

What justifies using the word *frustration*? There is frustration only when the subject shifts into *revendication*, into the laying claim that this term implies, bringing in the object as though it were something that may be demanded by right. At such a moment, the object enters what may be called the narcissistic zone of the subject's appurtenances.

In either case, whichever should occur, the moment of frustration is an evanescent moment. It leads on to something that projects us onto a plane that is different from that of pure and simple desire. The request does indeed have something about it with which human experience is very familiar, which is that in itself it can never be truly granted as such. Whether it is granted or not, it will be annihilated, it will be wiped out, at the next stage, whereupon it projects onto something else – either onto the articulation of the symbolic chain of gifts, or onto this closed and absolutely inextinguishable register that is called narcissism, in virtue of which the object is for the subject both *what is him* and *what is not him*, with which he can never be satisfied, precisely in this sense that *it is him* and *is not him* at the same time. It is solely insomuch as frustration enters a dialectic,

which by legalising it also situates it by lending it this dimension of something free of charge, that the symbolised order of the real can be established whereby the subject is able to instate certain permanent privations, for example, as existent and accepted.

In misconstruing this condition, these various authors usher in all sorts of ways of reconstructing what is given to us in the experience as an effect linked to the fundamental lack of object. A whole series of impasses are thereby introduced, which are always linked to the idea of wanting to deduce the entire chain of experience on the basis of desire regarded as a pure element of the individual, with all that this desire brings with it in terms of repercussions both in his satisfaction and in his disappointment. Now, this entire chain of experience can literally be conceived of and elaborated only if we first posit the principle that nothing is articulated, that nothing can be layered up in experience, so long as we have not posited beforehand the fact that nothing can be established and constituted as a properly analysable conflict until the subject has entered the realm of the symbol, the legal realm of the symbolic order, the symbolic chain, which is the order of symbolic indebtedness. It is solely on the basis of the subject's entry into an order that pre-exists everything that happens to him, every kind of happening or disappointment, that everything through which he broaches this – that is to say, what is called his lived experience, this confused thing that is there beforehand – takes on an order, an articulation, and assumes its meaning. And only as such can it be analysed.

Nowhere else can I better enable you to appreciate how well-founded is this reminder – which ought to be no more than a reminder – than in a few texts by Freud himself, and by going through them with fresh eyes.

2

Yesterday evening some people spoke of an uncertain aspect, sometimes a paradoxically wild aspect, to some of Freud's texts, even speaking in terms of chanciness. Yet others spoke in terms of diplomacy – though I can't see why. This has led me to choose one of his most brilliant texts, and I would almost say one of the most disturbing, but it is conceivable that it might appear to you to be archaic and even outmoded. I'm referring to *The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman.*

I will remind you of its essential points of articulation.

It concerns a young woman from a Viennese family of good standing. For such a family in the Vienna of 1920 to send someone

to Freud amounted to taking a fairly large step. To resolve to do so, something exceedingly peculiar had to have occurred. The daughter of the household – *a beautiful and clever girl of eighteen*, from a very high social class – has become a cause of concern for her parents because she has been running around after a woman ten years her senior, *a certain society lady*. It is specified through all sorts of details provided by the family that this *dame du monde* is perhaps from a world that could be qualified as a *demi-monde* – going by how such things were predominantly classified in the Vienna of the time[2] – and not altogether respectable.

The young woman's attachment to this lady, which as events unfold is revealed to be truly passionate, puts her in a rather vexed relationship with her family. We then learn that this vexed relationship was not unrelated to what brought about the situation in the first place. To spell it right out, this concerns the fact that it throws her father into a rage, which certainly seems to be a motivating factor, not for the continuation of the passion itself, but for going about it in the way she does. I'm referring to the calm defiance with which she pursues her attentions towards the lady in question, waiting for her in the street and making in part a show of her affair. Without her flaunting it publicly, all of this is enough for her parents, and especially her father, not to be in the dark about it. We are also told that the mother is someone who is not exactly easy-going, having been neurotic. She doesn't take the situation quite so badly, or at least not so seriously.

They come to Freud to ask him to sort this out. He lays out altogether pertinently the difficulties of putting in place a treatment when one has to meet the family's stipulations, and notes quite rightly that one cannot do analysis on demand. In truth, this leads onto something yet more extraordinary, which motions in a direction that will make apparent Freud's considerations on the analysis itself and which to some will seem altogether out-of-date.

Freud specifies that the analysis was not taken to its end, but that it did allow him to see a very long way, which is why he is sharing it with us. He reveals that the analysis certainly did not enable him to change much in this young woman's destiny, and to explain this he introduces an idea that is not unfounded, though it may seem old-fashioned, a schematic idea that ought rather to incite us to return to certain fundamental givens instead of finding more manageable ones. This idea is that there are two phases to an analysis, the first being the procuring of everything there is to know, the second the bringing down of resistances that still hold strong even though the subject does by now know a great deal.

The comparison he then introduces is not one of the least

astounding. He compares the first stage to preparing one's luggage before a journey, *today so complicated and hard to effect*, and the second to setting off and making the journey. Coming from a man who has a phobia of railways and travel, this reference is all the same rather spicy.

A yet more considerable matter is that throughout this time he has the sense that, effectively, nothing is working. He does, however, see very clearly what has been happening, and throws light on a certain number of stages.

In the subject's childhood there was something that seems not to have passed off without a hitch, when she beheld in the elder of her two brothers the difference that would make of her someone who does not possess the essentially desirable object, the phallic object. Nevertheless, Freud says that *the girl had never been neurotic, and came to the analysis without even one hysterical symptom.* Nothing in the childhood history is noteworthy from the standpoint of pathological consequences. This is precisely why it is remarkable, clinically speaking, to see emerging so belatedly the flaring of an attitude that strikes everyone as being downright abnormal, that is to say, the peculiar position that she occupies with respect to the faintly denigrated lady.

The passionate attachment that she shows towards her culminates in the outburst that leads her to Freud's consulting room. For things to have reached such a point that Freud would be involved, something peculiar had surely occurred.

In her mild flirting with danger, the girl would go strolling with the lady practically beneath the windows of her own home and, one day, her father comes out and sees them. Since there are other people around, he *casts a furious look* at them, and goes on his way. The lady asks the girl who it was, and she replies that it was her father. *He doesn't look happy.* The lady *becomes incensed at this.* It is noted that hitherto she had always shown a very reserved, even cold, attitude to the girl. On no account had she encouraged the girl's attentions, and she was not especially keen on being embroiled in any complications. So she tells her that, under these conditions – *the affair must now come to an end.* In Vienna there are these little cuttings for the suburban belt of the railway, and just nearby was one of those small footbridges that crosses over. From there, the girl falls, *niederkommt.* She fractures a couple of bones, but pulls through.

So, Freud tells us that up until the moment when the attachment appeared, not only had the girl's development been normal, but indeed everything suggested that she had been evolving very well. After all, hadn't she shown at the age of thirteen or fourteen a

deportment that presaged the most congenial bearing in the feminine vocation, that of maternity? She used to dote on a small boy, even befriending his parents. And yet, all of a sudden, this sort of motherly love, which seemed to make of her a model mother in advance, was to come to an abrupt halt, and it was then that she started to associate with women – for the affair in question is not the first – whom Freud qualifies as *mature*, that is to say, who seem to be substitute mothers.

Nevertheless, this pattern is not really valid for the last in the line, for she truly incarnated the dramatic affair around which the engaging of the analysis was to revolve, along with the problematic of a declared homosexuality. Indeed, the subject declares to Freud that she is prepared to give up neither anything of her ambitions nor her object-choice. She will do all it takes to deceive her family, and she continues to safeguard her bonds with the person for whom she is far from having lost the taste, the lady having been sufficiently touched by this extraordinary mark of devotion to have become far more amenable since then.

Freud makes three very striking sets of remarks with respect to this declared and maintained relationship, and gives them the value of a sanction that is explicative either with regard to what occurred before the treatment, for example the suicide attempt, or with regard to his own failure. The first set seems very pertinent. The second too, though perhaps not altogether as he intends. One of the distinguishing features of Freud's observations is that they always leave us a great deal of extraordinary clarity, even on items that have in some sense eluded him. I'm alluding to the Dora observation, which Freud came to see clearly at a later stage. He intervened in the Dora case when he was still misconstruing the bearing of her question towards her own sex, that is to say, her homosexuality. Here we can observe an analogous misconstruing, but one that is far more instructive because it runs much deeper.

Then there are other things that he tells us without taking full advantage of them and which are certainly not the least interesting, about what is at issue in the suicide attempt that crowns the crisis with an act of significance. It certainly cannot be said that the subject is not tightly bound to the tension that mounts until the bursting of the conflict and the catastrophic occurrence.

How does Freud explain this? He says that it is within the register of a normal orientation of the subject towards the desire to have *her father's child* that the originative crisis has to be understood, the same that led to her committing herself to something that goes right in the opposite direction. Indeed, we are told that there is a *great reverse* of position, and Freud attempts to spell this out. This is one

of those cases where being let down by the object of desire gives rise to a complete swing-over. The subject identifies with this object and, as Freud lays out with precision in a footnote, this is *equivalent to a kind of regression to narcissism.* When I make the dialectic of narcissism essentially this relationship between ego and little other, I'm doing absolutely no more than highlighting what is implicit in each of Freud's ways of expressing himself.

What, then, is this disappointment that brings about the reversal? When in her fifteenth year the subject was committed to the path of taking possession of the imaginary object, of the imaginary child – and she was sufficiently occupied with this child for it to leave its mark on the patient's history – it so happened that her mother really did bear a child from the father. In other words, the patient acquires a third brother. Here, then, is the key point.

This also makes for the apparently exceptional character of this observation. It is rather unusual that the late arrival of a little brother should have resulted in such a profound reversal of a subject's sexual orientation. It is at this moment that the girl changes position, and so now we shall see how this is best to be interpreted.

Freud tells us that this has to be regarded as a reactional phenomenon. The term is not in his text, but it is implied because he supposes that her resentment towards her father is still being played out. This linchpin in the situation explains her entire manner of handling the affair. The girl is distinctly aggressive towards her father, while the suicide attempt, which follows her being opposed by the counterpart object of her attachment, is simply the counter-aggressiveness from the father. Her aggression against the father swings round onto her own self, combined with something that symbolically satisfies what is at issue, namely a sort of collapse of the entire situation onto its primal givens through a precipitation, a reduction, to the level of the objects that are truly at stake. In short, when the girl falls from the little bridge she performs a symbolic act, which is none other than the *Niederkommen* of a child during childbirth. This is the term used in German for dropping or whelping.

Thus we are brought back to the ultimate and originary meaning of the structure of the situation.

3

In the second set of remarks that Freud makes, he explains how the situation lay in a cul-de-sac in the treatment.

He tells us that to the extent that the resistance had not been conquered, everything that was said to the patient was received

with great interest, but without her giving up her latest position. Nowadays we would say that she held all this on the plane of an intellectual interest. He employs a metaphor, comparing her reactions to those of a *grande dame* being shown museum pieces, peering through her lorgnette and saying, *How nice!*

Nevertheless, he notes that it cannot be said that there was an absence of any transference. He indicates with great perspicacity the presence of the transference in the patient's dreams. Parallel to her unambiguous declarations of her determination not to change anything in her deportment towards the lady, her dreams herald a remarkable re-flowering of this most congenial bearing, the arrival of some handsome and satisfying husband and the expectant advent of an object, the fruit of this love. In short, the idyllic and almost forced character of this spouse announced by the dream appeared in such conformity with the efforts undertaken together that anyone else but Freud would have pinned great hopes upon it.

Freud makes no mistake. He spies a transference here. It is the doubling of the kind of counter-ploy that she was carrying on in response to the disappointment with the father. Indeed, she had not been solely aggressive and provocative with him. She also made him concessions. It was just a matter of showing the father that she was deceiving him. Freud recognises that something analogous is going on in these dreams of hers, and that this is their transferential signification. She is reproducing with him the fundamental stance of the cruel game she has been carrying on with her father.

We must not fail here to come back to this kind of founding relativity, which is essential to what is involved in symbolic formation to the extent that there lies the fundamental line of what for us constitutes the field of the unconscious. This is what Freud expresses with great accuracy – its only wrong is to be a little over accentuated – when he tells us, *beside the intention to mislead me, the dreams partly expressed the wish to win my favour; they were also an attempt to gain my interest and my good opinion – perhaps in order to disappoint me all the more thoroughly later on.*

Here appears the leading edge of the intention that is imputed to the subject, of presently occupying this stance of captivating him so as then to make him tumble from on high, to make him fall from an even greater height on account of having been drawn yet further into the situation. There can be no doubting, when one hears the accentuation of this sentence, that it harbours what we call a counter-transferential action. It is correct that the dream is deceptive, but Freud does not retain just this. Immediately after, he enters into a discussion that is quite gripping to find in his writing, on how the typical manifestation of the unconscious can be deceptive. It is

certainly true that he understands in advance the objections that will be levelled at him. *If the unconscious too can lie, then what are we to trust?* his disciples will ask. He offers them a lengthy explanation of how this can come about and how in the end it contradicts nothing in the theory.

This explanation is a little tendentious, but it still remains that what Freud foregrounds here in 1920 is exactly what is essential in the unconscious, namely the subject's relation to the Other as such. This relation implies as its basis the possibility of being brought about at this level of the lie. We are in the realm of lies and truth.

Freud spots this very well. What seems to escape his notice, however, is that this is a true transference. It is in the interpretation of the desire to deceive that the path is opened, instead of taking this as something that – let's put it somewhat crudely – is directed against him.

It was enough for him to come out with one sentence more, *it's also an attempt to string me along, to captivate me, to get me to think her so pretty* – and the young woman must be ravishing – for him not to be completely free in this business, just as with Dora. What he wants to avoid is precisely to have to affirm that what he has coming to him is the worst, that is to say, something in which he is the one who will be disillusioned. In other words, he is quite prepared to form his own illusions. In putting himself on guard against these illusions, he has already entered the game. He is making the imaginary game a reality. He turns it into something real because he is right in it.

Moreover, this doesn't miss the target because his way of interpreting the thing is to say to the young woman that her intention is precisely to deceive him just as she habitually deceives her father. This amounts immediately to cutting off short the imaginary relation that he has made a reality. In a certain respect, his countertransference could have served him well here, so long as it is *not* a countertransference, that is, so long as he doesn't believe in it, so long as he doesn't fall into it. To the extent that he has fallen into it and interprets too early, he brings the girl's desire into the real, when in fact it was no more than a desire, and not an intention, to deceive him. He fleshes out this desire. He operates with her just as the therapist intervened with the little girl, giving the thing a symbolic status. Here we have what lies at the heart of this slide into the imaginary that becomes much more than a trap. It becomes a calamity once it has been established doctrinally.

Here we are seeing a borderline example that is transparent. We cannot fail to recognise it because it's in the text. With his interpretation, he makes the conflict break out. He fleshes it out, when

in fact what was at issue, as he himself senses, is to point out this mendacious discourse that is there in the unconscious. He tells her that all this is being done against him, and in effect the treatment doesn't go much further. He breaks it off. In wanting to unite, he has sundered.

But something far more interesting is accentuated by Freud, without him interpreting it, something of considerable scope, namely the nature of the young woman's passion for the person in question.

Indeed, it did not escape his notice that this is not a homosexual relationship like others, although in truth homosexual relationships display all the variety of heterosexual relationships, and perhaps even a few extra variations. Freud underscores quite admirably that this object-choice corresponds to a type that is specifically *männliche*, and explains what he means by this. He spells out in remarkable depth how this is platonic love in its most exalted aspect.

It's a love that asks for no other satisfaction but to serve the lady. It's truly a sacred love, so to speak, or courtly love in its most devotional form. He adds a few extra words like *Schwärmerei*, which has a very particular meaning in Germany's cultural history.[3] It is this exaltation that lies at the base of the relationship. In short, he pitches this love relation at the highest degree of symbolised love relationship, posited as a service, as an institution, as a reference. It is not merely something that is submitted to, like an attraction or a need. It's a love that, in itself, doesn't simply make do without satisfaction, but aims very precisely for this non-satisfaction. It instates lack in the relationship with the object as the very realm in which an ideal love can blossom.

Can you not see that there is something here that joins in a kind of nexus the three tiers of what I've been trying to give you a sense of in this entire process that goes from frustration to symptom? Take, if you will, the word *symptom* as equivalent to enigma, since this is what we have been examining. This is how the problem of this exceptional situation will come to be articulated. However, it is of interest only when taken in a register that is its own, which is to say that it is exceptional because it is particular.

At first we have the reference, which has been lived through, though in an innocent fashion, to the imaginary object, the child. Interpretation enables us to conceive of it as a child received from the father. As we have already been told, contrary to what one might believe, female homosexuals are subjects who have formed a staunch paternal fixation.

Why does a real crisis ensue? It is because the real object arises at this moment. It is indeed a child given by the father, but precisely to someone else, and to the person who is closest to her.

It is then that a great reversal is produced. Its mechanism is explained to us. I believe that it is of the utmost importance to perceive that in this case what was at stake had already been established on the symbolic plane. It was on the symbolic plane that the subject was satisfied by this child as a child that was given to her by her father, so that the presence of this real object would lead her back for a moment to the plane of frustration. It no longer has to do with something that satisfied her in the imaginary, something that already sustained her in the relation among women, with the full institution of the paternal presence as such, the father par excellence, the fundamental father, the father who will always be, for her, any man whomsoever who will give her a child. The presence of the real child, the fact that the object really is right there, materialised for a moment by the fact that her mother is the one who has the child, right beside her, leads her back to the plane of frustration.

What is most important in what happens next? Is it the swing-over which brings her to identify with the father? It is understood that this played its part. Is it that she herself becomes this sort of latent child that will effectively *niederkommen* when the crisis comes to a head? Perhaps we might find out how many months it took for this to happen, if we had the dates as we do for Dora. But this is not the most important matter. What is most important is that what is desired is something that lies beyond the beloved woman.

The young woman's love for the lady aims at something else besides her. This love that lives purely and simply in the realm of devotion, and which raises the attachment to its supreme degree, the subject's annihilation in the relationship, is something that Freud seems to restrict, and not without reason, to the register of male experience. Indeed, these things can be observed in a sort of institutionalised thriving that is sustained in a highly elaborated cultural relation. When the fundamental disappointment passes reflexively onto this level, and the subject finds there her way-out, it raises the question of what, in this register of love, is loved in the lady beyond herself, and calls into question all that is truly fundamental in everything that refers back to the attainment of love.

What is desired, strictly speaking, in the beloved woman is precisely what she lacks. And what she lacks in this instance is the primordial object, the equivalent of which the subject would find in the child, the imaginary substitute.

At this extreme, in the most idealised love, what is sought in the woman is what she lacks. And what is sought beyond her is the object that is central to the entire libidinal economy – the phallus.

9 January 1957

VII

A CHILD IS BEING BEATEN AND THE YOUNG HOMOSEXUAL WOMAN

Intersubjectivity and desubjectivation
The image as the cast of perversion
The symbolic aspect of the gift
Frustration, love and jouissance
Permutational schema of the case

We ended our talk last time by trying to summarise the case of female homosexuality presented by Freud. At the same time as sketching out its twists and turns, I adumbrated what might be called its *structure*. Indeed, this case would not hold a great deal more importance than being merely colourful were we not working through it on the basis of a structural analysis.

We need to look again at this structural analysis. It is solely on the condition of pushing such analysis further, and as far as possible, that it is worthwhile committing oneself to this path in psychoanalysis.

That the psychoanalytic theory is wanting is something that, so it seems to me, is there constantly to be seen. Moreover, there is no harm in reminding you that we are pursuing our effort here in order to respond to this want.

This want is palpable across the board. I recently beheld it coming alive in my mind on reading Miss Anna Freud's remarks pitted against those of Mrs Melanie Klein.

Doubtless Miss Anna Freud has backed down a bit since then, but she grounded the principles of her child analysis on remarks such as the following – the child forms no transference, or at least, *forms no transference-neurosis*, because children are still within the situation that creates the neurotic tension. There could be no transference, in the strict sense, for something that was in the course of being played out.

Then, in another remark, of the same nature but different, she

says that the fact that children are still relating with their original objects of attachment calls for a change in position from the analyst, *who enters the situation as a new person*, on the current plane. This is purported to modify the analyst's technique profoundly.

In this respect, Miss Anna Freud pays homage to something of an inkling of the importance of the essential function of speech in the analytic relation. She says that the child will assuredly be in a different relation from that of the adult to speech, and so should be approached with the aid of play, which provides the means for the technique of child analysis. The child is in a position that does not allow the analyst to offer himself from the position of neutrality or receptivity, which strives above all to gather speech, to allow it to thrive, and, when the occasion presents, to echo it. I would say, therefore, that while it is not developed in this text, nor even conceived of, the analyst's engagement on a path that is different from the speech relation is nevertheless indicated there.

Mrs Melanie Klein argues, on the contrary, that nothing could be more congruent with adult analysis than child analysis, and that already, even at a very early age, what is at issue in the child's unconscious has nothing to do with the actual parents, unlike what Miss Anna Freud says. Between the ages of two-and-a-half and three, the situation has already modified to such an extent compared with what can be observed in the real relation, that what is at stake is a whole dramatisation that is profoundly alien to the actual situation of the child's familial relationship. This modification is illustrated by the example of a child who, being raised as an only child by an elderly aunt who lived far from his parents, leaving him in an altogether isolated and dual relation with this one person, none the less reconstituted a whole family drama with a father, mother, and even rival brothers and sisters. I'm quoting. It really is, therefore, a matter of revealing in analysis something that ultimately does not lie purely and simply in an immediate relation with the real, but rather is already inscribed in a symbolisation.

Are we to accept what Mrs Melanie Klein asserts? These assertions are based on her experience, and this experience is communicated to us in observations that sometimes push things into the realm of strangeness. One cannot fail to be struck by this kind of witch's cauldron, or soothsayer's crucible, at the bottom of which a whole wide imaginary world is bubbling away, the idea of the mother's body as a container, all the primordial fantasies present from the very first, in their tendency to become structured into a drama that seems to come preformed, this entire machine requiring the constant surfacing of the most aggressive primordial instincts if it is to keep turning. We cannot fail to be struck by how she vouches for a corre-

spondence between this entire phantasmagoria and the clinical data that she handles here, and at the same time wonder just what we have before us. What can this dramatic symbolisation mean, which is found to be increasingly more complete the further back we go? It is as though the closer we get to the point of origin, the more the Oedipus complex is complete, articulated and ready to spring into action. This warrants at least the posing of a question.

This question looms up at every turn along the precise path I've been trying to lead you along, that of perversion.

1

What is perversion? Within a single psychoanalytic group we have been hearing the most discordant voices raised on this issue.

Some, thinking they are following Freud, say that we simply have to come back to the notion of the persistence of a fixation that bears on a partial drive. This fixation is purported to traverse unscathed the entire progress through the dialectic that tends to be established by the Oedipus complex. It is further purported that it does not undergo the transformations that tend to reduce the other partial drives into a movement that unifies them, ultimately culminating in the genital drive, which is the ideal unifying drive. What is at issue then in perversion is a sort of accident in the development of the drives. Translating in a classical way Freud's notion that perversion is the negative of neurosis, these analysts seek to turn perversion into something where the drive has not been elaborated.

Others, however, who moreover are not for all that the most discerning or the best, but who have been informed by experience and by something that truly does impress itself upon analytic practice, would try to show that, far from being this pure element that persists, perversion forms part of something that comes about via all the dramatic crises, fusions and de-fusions of a neurosis, presenting the same dimensional richness as a neurosis, along with the same abundance, the same rhythms and stages. They would then try to explain how perversion is the negative of neurosis by pushing forward formulas like the following – perversion is *the eroticisation of defences*, just like all these games through which analysis is pursued as a reduction of defences.

Fine by me. This offers an image. But, in fact, why is it that this can be eroticised? This is the whole question. Where does this eroticisation come from? Where does the invisible power lie that would project this colouration that here seems to come as something extraneous, a change in quality brought upon the defence, which strictly

speaking should be regarded as a libidinal satisfaction? In truth, this thing is not unthinkable, but the least that can be said is that it has not been thought through.

It mustn't be believed that Freud never dared to give us a notion to be elaborated. I would further say that we have among Freud's writings an example that proves that his formula that perversion is the negative of neurosis is certainly not to be taken to mean what it has long been taken to mean, namely that what is hidden in the unconscious when we are faced with a case of neurosis is, in perversion, out in the open and, as it were, in a state of freedom. Freud is proposing something quite different in this formula. Perhaps, after all, it has to be taken in the same way as what is given to us in all these compressed formulas to which our analysis has to restore their true meaning. It is by trying first of all to follow him and to see, for example, how he conceives of the mechanism of a phenomenon that may be qualified as perverse, or even a categorical perversion, that we shall finally be able to perceive what he means when he asserts that perversion is the negative of neurosis.

Let's look at things a little more closely by taking up the study that was to gain a certain fame, *Ein Kind wird geschlagen*, subtitled, *A Contribution to the Study of the Origin of Sexual Perversions*.

It is characteristic of Freud that his attention should here be focused on a single sentence – which he turns into the title of his text – that is not a mere label but instead a phrase extracted directly from what patients declare when they broach the theme of their fantasies. These fantasies may roughly be called sadomasochistic, irrespective of the role and function they hold in any particular case.

Freud tells us that he is focusing his study on six cases, which are more or less obsessional neuroses, four women and two men. Behind this lies his experience of all the cases of which he does not have such a great understanding himself. So it seems that this is a sort of summary, an attempt to organise a considerable mass of experience.

When the subject declares to be bringing into the arena of the treatment something that is his fantasy, he expresses it in a form that is remarkable for its imprecision, for the questions that it leaves hanging and to which he replies only with great difficulty. In truth, at the start the subject is unable to give a satisfactory answer, for he can scarcely say a word more about the characteristics of this fantasy. Furthermore, he only does so with a sort of aversion, even abashment or shame.

There is something quite remarkable here, which is that whereas the masturbatory practices that are associated to a greater or lesser degree with these fantasies do not entail any sense of guilt, when

it comes to wording these fantasies, not only does the subject very often show great difficulty, but furthermore it provokes in him a fairly considerable abhorrence, repugnance and culpability. The discrepancy between the fantasmatic or imaginary use of these fantasies and their spoken articulation is something that ought to make us prick up our ears. The subject's deportment here is already a signal that marks out a limit – it is not the same register mentally to play with the fantasy or to speak about it.

What does the fantasy *A child is being beaten* signify in these subjects? Freud is going to tell us what his experience has shown him. We won't get to the end of the article today. I simply want to throw some light on certain elements that directly concern the path to which I committed us last week when tackling the problem via *The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman.*

According to Freud, the progress of analysis shows that what is at issue in this fantasy is something that has been substituted through a series of transformations brought to bear on other fantasies, which themselves had a fully comprehensible role at precise moments in the subject's development. It is the structure of these states that I would like to set out for you, so as to enable you to recognise in them something that seems to be altogether evident, so long as we keep our eyes open, at least with regard to the dimension into which we are trying to advance and which is summed up under the heading *subjective structure.* In other words, in order to restore its true position to what often presents in our theory as an ambiguity, even as an impasse and an antinomy, we shall be seeking each time to locate on which level of subjective structure a given phenomenon occurs.

Freud tells us that the subject's history – to the extent that it opens up under analytic pressure and allows the origin of these fantasies to be found again – is punctuated in three stages.

In the first part of his exposé, which we shall not be bringing to the fore right now, he informs us that he will be confining himself to the women, for reasons that he makes clear afterwards but which we shall leave aside for today.

The form taken by the first fantasy, which he tells us can be found when the facts are analysed, is the following – *My father is beating the child whom I hate.*

This fantasy is loosely tied to the appearance of a brother or a sister in the subject's history, a rival who happens to frustrate the child – through his presence and the care that is lavished on him – of her parents' affection. Here it is especially the father who is at issue. Without insisting on this point, we should not omit the fact that this concerns a young girl who is caught at a moment when the Oedipus complex has already been constituted and when the relationship

with the father has been instated. The pre-eminence of the father's person in this altogether primal fantasy cannot be unrelated to the fact that this concerns a girl. But let's leave the explanation of this issue for a later date.

What is important is that here at the outset we are touching on an historical perspective that is retroactive. It is from a current point in the analysis that the subject formulates and organises a primal dramatic situation, and she does so in a way that is nevertheless inscribed in her current speech and her power of symbolisation at the present time. Thus, we find again, through the progress of the analysis, what presents as the primal thing, the deepest primordial organisation.

This entails the evident complexity of accommodating three characters – there is the agent of the punishment, there is the one who undergoes it, and there is the subject. The one who is undergoing the punishment is someone other than the subject, namely a child whom the subject hates and whom she thereby sees being stripped of the parental preference at stake. She thus feels privileged by the fact that the other is being stripped of this preference.

A tripartite dimension and tension is here implied. There is the subject's relation to the two others, whose interrelations are themselves dictated by an element that is focused by the subject. To accentuate things in one direction, it could be said that *My father is beating my brother or my sister for fear I might not believe that I am the favoured one.* A causality, or a tension, a reference to the subject who is captured as a third party in whose favour all of this is being produced, is something that animates and dictates the action directed onto the ancillary personage, the one who is undergoing the beating. The third party, who is the subject, is presentified in the situation as an onlooker under whose eye this must come to pass with the intention of making it known to her that something is being given to her, namely the privilege of preference, of precedence.

So, there is a notion of fear, that is to say, a sort of anticipation, a temporal dimension, a pre-tension that is introduced into the heart of this tripartite situation as its motor. And then there is the reference to the third party *qua* subject, insomuch as the subject is to believe or infer something from a certain deportment that is brought to bear on the ancillary object. In this instance, this object is taken as the instrument of the communication between the two subjects, which is ultimately a communicating of love, because what is declared for the central subject, this something that she receives, comes at the expense of the ancillary object. This something is the expression of her wish, or her desire, to be favoured and to be loved. Of course, the formation has itself been dramatised. It is already

reactional in so far as it is the product of a complex situation, but the situation presupposes the tripartite intersubjective reference with all that it necessitates and introduces as a temporal punctuation. It presupposes the introduction of the ancillary subject, who is necessary.

Why so? This ancillary subject is the instrument, the mainspring, the medium, the means, by which the crossover from one subject to the other is made. All things considered we find ourselves before a full intersubjective structure in the sense that it is established in the culminated crossing-over of speech. The point is not that something should have been spoken, but rather that the intersubjective structure itself, in this ternary situation which is established in the primal fantasy, should carry the mark of the very same intersubjective structure that constitutes any culminated speech.

Let's shift now to the second stage.

In relation to the first, this second represents a scaled-down situation. Freud tells us that here is to be found, in a very particular way, a situation reduced to two characters. I'm following Freud's text, explaining it as best it can be. He describes this situation, without weighing it up, as a necessary and reconstructed step that is indispensable when it comes to understanding the full motivation behind what is produced in the subject's history. The second stage produces the fantasy – *I am being beaten by my father.*

This situation, scaled-down to two, excludes any other dimension but that of the relation to the agent who is doing the beating. There is something here that can give rise to all sorts of interpretations, but such interpretations will themselves remain marked with the greatest ambiguity. While the first fantasy harbours an organisation and a structure that sets out a direction that could be indicated by a series of arrows, in the second the situation is so ambiguous that for a brief moment one may wonder as to how far the subject might be participating with the one who is assaulting her and striking her. This is the classic sado-masochistic ambiguity.[1] To resolve it, one will conclude with Freud that this is linked to something that is *the essence of masochism*, but that in this instance the ego is firmly accentuated in the situation.

The subject finds herself in a reciprocal position, but which is also exclusive. It's either him or her who is being beaten. And here, it's her. The fact that it is her indicates something, without resolving it. In the very act of being beaten, one can see – and the ensuing part of Freud's discussion shows this – a transposition or a displacement of an element that perhaps is already marked by eroticism.

The very fact that one can speak on this occasion of *the essence of masochism* is altogether indicative. At the previous stage we were

in a situation that, as exceedingly structured as it was, was in some sense laden with virtuality. As Freud says, it is *Not clearly sexual, not in itself sadistic, but yet the stuff from which both will later come.* The precipitation in one direction or in the other is marked out at the second stage, though it will remain ambiguous.

The second stage is a dual one, with the whole problematic that it raises on the libidinal plane. The subject finds herself included in a dual relation which is thus ambiguous. We meet the *either . . . or . . .* that is fundamental in this dual relationship. Freud tells us that we are almost always forced to reconstruct it, so fleeting is its existence. This fleetingness is such an essential characteristic that very quickly the situation is precipitated into the third stage.

In the third stage, the subject is reduced to her most extreme point. Here the subject is apparently to be found again in a third-party position in the shape of a pure and simple onlooker, as at the first stage. After the scaling-down of the first intersubjective situation, with its temporal tension, and the passage to the second situation, which was dual and reciprocal, we come to the desubjectivised situation which is that of the final fantasy, namely – *A child is being beaten.*

Of course, behind this passive voice one can vaguely make out the paternal function, but generally speaking the father is not recognisable. It's a mere substitute. On the other hand, Freud did want to respect the subject's wording but often it's not a matter of just one child but of several. The fantasmatic production causes it to burst apart, multiplying into umpteen specimens, and this shows very well the character of essential desubjectivation that is produced in the primordial relationship.

Indeed, there remains an objectivation, in any case a desubjectivation, that is radical and that affects the entire structure at this level where the subject is no longer there except as reduced to the state of an onlooker, or merely an eye, that is to say, the very thing that always characterises any kind of object at the limit, at the point of final reduction. To behold it, there has to be at least, not always a subject, but an eye, a screen upon which the subject is established.

How can we translate this into our language, at the precise point we've reached in our process? In referring to our diagram, the imaginary relationship, which is more or less fantasised, is inscribed between the two vertices *a–a'* in a relation that is marked to a greater or lesser degree by specularity and reciprocity between the ego and the other party. But here we find ourselves in the presence of something that takes place on the line S–A, namely unconscious speech, which had to be uncovered again through the artifices of the analysis of the transference. This unconscious speech runs as follows – *My*

father, in beating the child whom I hate, is showing me he loves me. Or – *My father is beating a child for fear I might believe I'm not the favourite.* Or some quite different wording that in whichever way highlights one of the accents of this dramatic relationship. What is excluded, what is not present in the neurosis, yet which will undergo different developments that will become manifest elsewhere, in all the constitutive symptoms of the neurosis, is uncovered in this element of the clinical picture that is the fantasy.

How does this fantasy present? It bears within it, in a still highly visible manner, the testimony of the signifier-elements of speech that is articulated at the level of this *trans-object*, so to speak, which is the big Other. The big Other is the locus at which unconscious speech is articulated, the *Es* insomuch as it is speech, history, memory and articulated structure.

Perversion, or rather, to limit ourselves here, the perverse fantasy, possesses a property that we can now bring out.[2]

What is this kind of residue, this symbolic reduction that has progressively eliminated the entire subjective structure from the situation, to allow to emerge from it nothing more than something that is entirely de-subjectivised? Ultimately it is enigmatic because it conserves the full charge – but this is a charge that is neither revealed, nor constituted, nor taken on board by the subject – of what, at the level of the Other, is the articulated structure in which the subject is engaged. At the level of the perverse fantasy, all the elements are there, but everything to do with signification has been lost, namely the intersubjective relationship. These are what we might call signifiers in their pure state, without the intersubjective relationship, signifiers shorn of their subject. We have here a sort of objectivation of the signifiers of the situation as such. What is indicated here in the sense of a fundamental structuring relationship in the subject's history at the level of perversion is both preserved and contained, but in the form of a pure sign.

Is this different from everything that we meet at the level of perversion? Picture for a moment what you know about the fetish, for instance. You are told that it is explicable by what lies beyond but which is never seen, and for good reason, namely the penis of the phallic mother. More often than not, after a short effort of analysis, this proves to be linked by the subject, at the very least in those memories that are still accessible to him, to a precise situation when he came to a standstill in his observation – this at least is his memory of it – at the hem of his mother's dress. Here we find ourselves before a remarkable convergence with the structure that can be called the *screen-memory*, that is to say, the moment at which the chain of memory is arrested. Indeed, it is arrested at the hem of the dress, no

higher than the ankle, and this is why the shoe is met here. This is also why the shoe can, at least in certain particular but exemplary cases, assume its function as a substitute for what has not been seen but which is articulated and formulated as being, here for this subject, what the mother possesses, namely the phallus. Doubtless it is an imaginary phallus, but it is essential to her symbolic foundation as a phallic mother.

Here in the beating fantasy we also find ourselves faced with something that belongs to the same realm, something that freezes the flow of memory, that reduces it to the instantaneous, by arresting it at this point that is called a screen-memory. Think of how cinematographic motion can be speeding along altogether rapidly and then all of a sudden stop at some point, capturing the characters in a freeze-frame. This freeze-frame is characteristic of the reduction of the full signifying scene, articulated from subject to subject, to something that is immobilised in this fantasy, which remains charged with all the erotic values that are included in what it has expressed, and of which it is the testimony and the support, the last support that remains.

Here we can put a finger on how there comes to be moulded what might be called the cast of perversion, namely the valorisation of the image. The image is at stake here to the extent that it remains the privileged witness of something that, in the unconscious, must be articulated and brought back into play in the dialectic of the transference, that is, in this something that must assume its full dimensions once more within the analytic dialogue.

The value of an imaginary dimension appears, therefore, to be supervalent whenever a perversion is at issue. This imaginary relationship stands on the path of what occurs between subject and Other, or more accurately, of what of the subject remains located in the Other, precisely insomuch as it is repressed. This is speech that is indeed the subject's own but, since by its very nature as speech it is a message that the subject must receive from the Other in an inverted form, it can equally remain in the Other and there constitute the repressed and the unconscious, establishing a relationship that is possible but which does not become a reality.

Possible does not say it all. There has to be some impossibility in this, without which it would not be repressed. It is precisely because this impossibility is present in ordinary situations that it requires all the artifices of the transference to make that which has to be communicated from the big Other to the subject both newly passable and formulable, in so far as the subject's *I* comes into being.

Freud's analysis affords us this indication in the sharpest fashion, and everything is spelt out at far greater length than what I've been

saying here. He marks out how we must tackle the problem of the constitution of any perversion through the transformations of the Oedipus complex, through its advance and its revolution.

It is astounding that people should have dreamed of maintaining the indication that perversion is the negative of neurosis simply by translating it, as is commonly being done, to mean that perversion is a drive that has not been elaborated by the Oedipal and neurotic mechanism. It is purported to be a pure and simple relic, the persistence of an irreducible partial drive. On the contrary, in this vital article, and in many further points, Freud indicates well enough that perverse structuration, however primal we might suppose it to be – in any case, among those that come to our knowledge as analysts – can be articulated only as a means, a linchpin, an element of something that ultimately can be conceived of, can be understood, and can be articulated solely in, by and through the process, the organisation and the articulation of the Oedipus complex.

2

Let's try now to inscribe the case from the other day, the case of the young homosexual woman, onto our diagram of the subject's criss-cross relationship with the Other.

On the axis that runs S–A, insomuch as it is here that symbolic signification must come about and be established, lies the entire genesis of the subject in the present. On the other hand, the imaginary interposition *a–a'* is where the subject finds her status, her object structure, which she recognises as such, installed in a certain liaison in relation to these objects, which for her are immediately attractive and correspond to her desire, in so far as she commits to imaginary guiderails that form what are called libidinal fixations.

While we cannot push this exercise to its end today, we can try to sum things up. What can we see? Five temporal phases can be laid out to describe the major phenomena through which this perversion is instated. Whether we regard this perversion as fundamental or acquired matters little. In this instance, we know when it was first indicated, when it was established, when it was precipitated, we have its motives and we have its point of departure. It is a perversion that was constituted belatedly, which doesn't mean that it did not have its premises in quite primordial phenomena. But let's try to understand what we can see on the level at which Freud himself cleared the avenues.

There is a state that is essential, when the young woman has reached puberty, around her thirteenth or fourteenth year. She

treasures an object, a child whom she looks after and to whom she is bound by ties of affection. She shows herself in everyone's eyes to be steering particularly well in this direction, precisely on the kinds of paths that anyone might hope for, as the vocation typical to woman, that of maternity.

On this basis, something occurs that will produce in her a kind of reversal that sets in when she starts to take an interest in love objects who will be marked first of all with the sign of femininity. These are women who are in a more or less motherly, neo-maternalising, circumstance.

She will ultimately be led to the passion, which is literally qualified as a *consuming passion*, for the person who in the text is called *the lady*, and there is a good reason for this. The young woman treats this lady in a highly elaborate style of relation that is chivalrous and specifically masculine. Her passion for the lady is served, in a sense, without any requirement, without desire, without even hope of return, with this character of a gift, the lover projecting even beyond any kind of show from the beloved. In short, we find here one of the most highly cultivated forms of love relation.

How are we to conceive of this transformation? I've given you its first temporal phase and its result. Between the two, something occurred. Freud tells us what. We are now going to implicate this transformation in the same terms that served to analyse the position.

Let's begin with the phallic phase of the genital organisation. What is the meaning of what Freud tells us in this regard? Just before the latency period, the infantile subject, male or female, reaches the phallic phase, which indicates the point of realisation of the genital type. Everything is there, up to and including object-choice. However, there is one thing that is not there, namely a full realisation of the genital function insomuch as it would be structured and organised as a reality. Indeed, there remains this essentially imaginary and fantasmatic element which is the supervalence of the phallus, in view of which there are for the subject two types of being in the world – those who *have* the phallus and those who *have not*, that is to say, who have been castrated.

This is how Freud formulates it and it's quite clear that there is something here that truly suggests a problematic from which, in truth, the various authors do not manage to extricate themselves when they seek to justify it in any way by motives that are determined for the subject in the real. I've already told you that I would bracket off the extraordinary modes of explanation that this forces upon these authors. Their general pattern of explanation amounts pretty much to the following – *as everyone knows, since everything is already figured out and inscribed in the unconscious drive tendencies,*

the subject must already possess, by his very nature, the preformation that makes one sex correspond to the other in cooperation. So, this can only be a kind of formation in which the subject already finds some advantage, and there must already be a process of defence here. Actually, this is not inconceivable from one perspective, but it simply pushes the problem further back. This in turn commits the authors to a series of constructions that merely place the entire symbolic dialectic back at the origin, and which become increasingly unthinkable as one shifts further back towards it.

It is easier for us than for these authors to accept that in this instance the phallus happens to be the imaginary element – this is a fact, which has to be taken as a fact – whereby the subject at the genital level is introduced into the symbolic aspect of the gift.

The symbolic aspect of the gift and genital maturation, which are two different things, are nevertheless linked by a factor that is included in the real human situation, namely the rules that are established by law in the exercise of genital functions, to the extent that they effectively come into play in inter-human exchange. It is because things happen on this level that the bond is so tight between the symbolic aspect of the gift and genital maturation. But this is something that has no internal, biological or individual coherence for the subject. On the other hand it emerges that the fantasy of the phallus, within this symbolic aspect of the gift at the genital level, does assume its value, and Freud insists on this. The phallus does not have the same value for he who really possesses it, that is, the male child, as for the child who does not possess it, that is, the female child.

For the female child, she will be introduced to the symbolic aspect of the gift precisely in so far as she does not possess the phallus. It is in so far as she phallicises the situation – that is to say, in so far as it's a matter of either *having* or *not having* the phallus – that she enters the Oedipus complex.[3] Meanwhile, what Freud underscores is that this is not how the boy enters the Oedipus complex. Instead, this is his way out. At the end of the Oedipus complex he will have to make the symbolic aspect of the gift a reality on a certain plane. He will effectively have to make a gift of *what he has*, whereas the girl has entered the Oedipus complex in so far as she is to find, in the complex, *what she does not have.*

What is meant by *what she does not have*? Here, we are already on the plane where an imaginary element enters a symbolic dialectic. In a symbolic dialectic, what one does not have is merely something that is just as inexistent as the rest, but it bears the mark of the minus sign. So, she enters with this minus. To enter here with a minus or with a plus does not change the fact that what is in play here is the

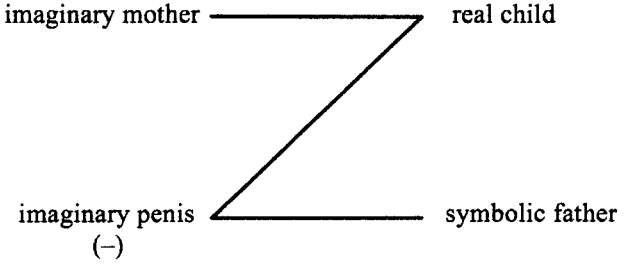
phallus. There has to be something so that one can assign oneself with a plus or a minus, a presence or an absence. Freud tells us that this is the mainspring of the girl's entry into the Oedipus complex.

Within this symbolic aspect of the gift, all sorts of things can be given in exchange. Indeed, it is because so many things can be given in exchange that ultimately we find so many equivalents of the phallus in what effectively occurs in symptoms.

Freud goes still further, and you can find it worded in a rough-and-ready fashion in *A Child is Being Beaten*. Why do so many elements from pregenital relations come into play in the Oedipal dialectic? Why do frustrations from the anal level or the oral level tend to arise, and to bring about the frustrations, accidents and dramatic elements of the Oedipal relation, when going by the premises this should only come about in the genital elaboration? Freud's reply is that this is related to something obscure that occurs at the level of the ego – because of course the child has no experience of this – in that the objects that form part of the pregenital relations *can be more easily apprehended in verbal representations*, in *Wortvorstellungen*.

Freud goes so far as to say that pregenital objects are brought into play in the Oedipal dialectic to the extent that they lend themselves more readily to verbal representations. The child can tell himself more easily that what the father gives to the mother on occasion is his urine, because urine is something that the child is very acquainted with in use, in its function and existence as an object. It is easier to symbolise an object – that is, to endow it with a plus sign or a minus sign – that has taken on a certain reality in the child's imagination, than this something that in spite of everything remains exceedingly hard to grasp, and which for the girl is difficult to access.

Freud tells us that the girl's first introduction into the dialectic of the Oedipus complex hinges on the fact that the penis she desires will be received from the father in the form of a substitute, namely a child. But in the example we are looking at, that of the young homosexual woman, a real child is involved. She has been doting over a real flesh-and-blood child who is part of the interplay.



On the other hand, what does this child whom she dotes over satisfy in her? Well, the child is the imaginary phallic substitution through which, as a subject, she constitutes herself, without knowing it, as an imaginary mother. She derives satisfaction from looking after this child because it amounts to an acquisition of the imaginary penis, which was the object of the fundamental frustration that resulted from her having placed this imaginary penis at the level of the minus. I'm doing no more than highlighting what is characteristic of originary frustration, namely that any object that is introduced by a frustration that has become a reality can only be an object that the subject takes up in this ambiguous position of the body's appurtenances.

I'm underscoring this for you because when people speak about primordial relationships between mother and child, they put all the emphasis on the notion of frustration taken passively. We are told that the child makes the first test of the relation between the pleasure principle and the reality principle in the frustrations he feels from his mother, and after that you can see the terms *frustration of the object* or *loss of the love object* being used indiscriminately. Now, if there is one thing on which I insisted in the previous lessons then it's precisely the bipolarity or the highly marked opposition that there is between the real object, in so far as the child can be deprived of it, namely the mother's breast, and the mother, in so far as she is in a position to grant or not to grant this real object.

This distinction between the breast and the mother as a *complete object* is made by Mrs Melanie Klein. She distinguishes between, on the one hand, the partial objects, and on the other, the mother who is established as a whole object. This is the mother that can create the famous *depressive position* in the child. Indeed, this is one way of seeing things. But what is passed over in the stance Klein takes is that these objects are not of the same nature, because irrespective of whether they are set apart or not, it is still the case that the mother is established as an agent by the function of the appeal. It is still the case that already, in her most rudimentary form, she is taken as an object that is marked and connoted by a possibility of plus or minus, as presence or absence. It is also the case that the frustration brought about by anything that refers to the mother as such is a frustration of love, and that everything that comes from the mother by way of response to this appeal is a gift, that is to say, something other than the object. In other words, there is a radical difference between, on the one hand, the gift as a sign of love, which aims radically at something else that lies beyond, namely the mother's love, and on the other hand, whichever object that might arise for the satisfaction of the child's needs.

The frustration of love and the frustration of jouissance are two distinct things. The frustration of love is pervaded by all the intersubjective relationships that can be constituted thereafter. Meanwhile, the frustration of jouissance is on no account pervaded by just anything, contrary to what people say.

As Mr Winnicott has understood very sharply, through the usual confusion to be read in the analytic literature, it is not the frustration of jouissance that generates reality. We cannot ground the faintest genesis of reality on the fact of whether the child has or doesn't have the breast. If he doesn't have the breast, he is hungry and he carries on crying. In other words, what is it that is produced by the frustration of jouissance? It produces at the very most the rekindling of desire, but it produces no kind of object constitution whatsoever. This is ultimately what leads Mr Winnicott to remark on what is truly there for the grasping in the child's behaviour, and which allows us to shed light on how there is indeed a progression that calls for an original explication.

It's not simply because the child is deprived of his mother's breast that he conjures up his fundamental image of it, nor is it just any kind of image. It is necessary that the image should in itself be taken as an original dimension. It's not the breast but the tip of the breast, the nipple, that is absolutely essential. It is this nipple that will be replaced by the phallus, which will be superposed onto it. When this happens, the nipple and the phallus show that what they have in common is this character of bringing us to a standstill, in so far as they are constituted as images.

What follows on from the child's frustration of jouissance is an original dimension that persists in the subject in the state of an imaginary relationship. This is not simply something that polarises the kindling of desire in the way that, in animals, there is always a certain lure that orients. The animal's behaviour always carries something of significance, in the feathers or in the fins of its adversary, which turns it into an adversary. One can always ascertain whatever it is that individualises the image in the biological realm. This is certainly present in mankind, but it is accentuated, and in such fashion as to be observable in children's behaviour where these images are referenced to the fundamental image that gives the subject his comprehensive status. We find this complete shape, this form of the other party as such, which he clings to and which means that he too has this image, around which subjects may band together or disband, as appurtenances or non-appurtenances.

All in all, the problem does not concern the more or less large degree to which narcissism is elaborated – a narcissism which to

begin with is conceived of as a kind of imagined and ideal auto-eroticism. On the contrary, it's a matter of finding out what the function of original narcissism is in the constitution of an objectal world as such. This is why Winnicott pauses over these objects that he calls *transitional objects.*

Without them, we would have no account of the way in which the child is able at the start to constitute a world from his frustrations, because of course he does constitute a world, but don't go telling us that this has to do with the object of his desires that is the cause of his frustration at the beginning. He constitutes a world to the extent that in heading towards something that he desires, he will come up against something that he bumps into, or which burns him. This is not an object that is generated in any way whatsoever by the object of desire. It's not something that can be modelled by the stages of the development of desire as would be established and organised in child development. It's something else. In so far as it is generated by frustration itself, the object leads us to admit the autonomy of this imaginary figment in its relationship with the body image. This is an ambiguous object, which lies betwixt and between. One can speak neither of reality nor of unreality in its regard. This is how Mr Winnicott puts it, with great pertinence. Instead of presenting this with all the problems that it raises with respect to the introduction of this object into the symbolic order, he comes to it despite himself, because one is obliged to go there once one has committed oneself to this path.

These half-real, half-unreal objects – the transitional objects that he designates – are objects to which the child clasps, like the corner of his blanket or a piece of his bib. This cannot be observed in all children but is there in most of them. Mr Winnicott spots very clearly the relationship these objects must have at their terminal point with the fetish. He is wrong to call them primal fetishes but they are indeed its point of origin.

He pauses and tells himself that, after all, this object that is neither real nor unreal is something to which we grant neither a full reality nor a fully illusory character. The same goes for your philosophical ideas and your religious system, in the midst of which a good English citizen lives and knows in advance how he ought to behave. No one dreams of telling you that you believe in thus-and-such a religious or philosophical doctrine, nor does anyone dream of trying to pull you out of it. This is the realm of betwixt and between. Indeed, Mr Winnicott is not wrong. Life is situated in the midst of all this. How could the rest be organised were it not for this?

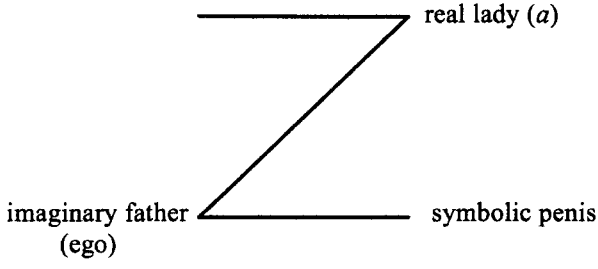
Mr Winnicott also remarks that one ought not to be too exacting. The *intermediate state* in which these things are established

is firmly marked by the one thing that no one dreams of – unless one is forced to impose it on others as an object to which they must adhere, the authenticity or the unwavering reality of what you promote as a religious idea or a philosophical illusion – in short, the well instituted world indicates that everyone has the right to be mad on the condition that one remain mad separately. Madness begins when one imposes one's private madness on the entirety of subjects who are each constituted in a sort of nomadism of the transitional object.

3

To end, let's come back to the case of the young woman in love, who has her transitional object, this imaginary penis, due to the fact of having her child. This is no different from what we are told when it is asserted that, all in all, she has her imaginary penis from the moment she starts doting on the child. What does it take for her to pass to the third phase, that is, the second stage of the five situations that we shan't manage to see today?

She is homosexual, and Freud tells us that she loves as does a man, *männlichen Typus*, even though the [French] translator has rendered this as *féminin*. She is in a virile position. This can be translated onto our diagram. The father, who at the previous stage was at the level of the big Other, has now passed to the level of the ego, to the extent that the girl has taken the male position. At *a'*, there is the lady, the love-object who has replaced the child. Then, at the level of the Other there is the symbolic penis, that is to say, what stands at its most elaborated point in this love, which stands beyond the beloved subject. What is loved in love is what lies beyond the subject. It is literally what the beloved subject does not have. The lady is loved precisely in so far as she does not have the symbolic penis, though she has all it takes to get it because she is the chosen object of the subject's every adoration.



So, a permutation has been produced whereby the symbolic father has passed over into the imaginary through the subject's identification with the function of the father. By the same stroke, the lady has now appeared up here, on the right, as the love object, precisely by harbouring what lies beyond, the symbolic penis that at the outset was on the imaginary level.

What has happened between these two phases?

The distinguishing feature of the observation, which appears in the second phase and which can be found again in the fourth, is that at the level of the imaginary relationship the real action of the father has been introduced, this symbolic father who was previously down here in the unconscious.

The child that the father will give the girl as a substitute for the desire for a penis is a child that is either imaginary or real. In the present case, it's rather troubling that the child is real, but so it was. The father nevertheless remains unconscious as a progenitor, and all the more so given that the child is real. Yet here we have the father really giving a child not to the daughter but to the mother. So, the real child unconsciously desired by the daughter, and which she gave to herself in the substitute from which she derived her satisfaction, already shows without a shadow of doubt an accentuation of need, which lends the situation its dramatic aspect. The subject has been frustrated in a very particular way by the fact that the real child from the father qua symbolic father has been given to her own mother.

This is what amounts to the distinguishing feature of the observation. When people say that in a case such as this, things have taken the turn of a perversion, owing surely to some accentuation of the instincts or the drive tendencies, or of some primal drive, are they managing to sift out these three elements, which are absolutely essential so long as one distinguishes between them – the imaginary, the symbolic and the real?

You can see that the situation has revealed itself to be a relationship of jealousy, for eminently structural reasons, and that the imaginary satisfaction to which the girl entrusted herself has assumed an untenable character because the real has been introduced, a real that has responded to the unconscious situation on the level of the imaginary plane. Through a sort of interposition, the father has now become a reality on the plane of the imaginary relationship. He has effectively come into play as an imaginary father, and no longer as a symbolic father. Another imaginary relationship has now been established, which the girl will fill out as best she can.

This relationship is marked, however, by the fact that what was articulated in a latent fashion at the level of the big Other is starting

to link up in an imaginary fashion, in the fashion of a perversion and, moreover, it is for this reason, and no other, that this will culminate in a perversion. The girl identifies with her father. She takes on his role and herself becomes the imaginary father. She also keeps his penis, and attaches herself to an object to whom necessarily she must give this something that the object doesn't have.

This necessity of centring her love not on the object but on what the object doesn't have, brings us to the heart of the love relationship as such and to the heart of the gift. And it is this something that the object doesn't have that makes the tripartite constellation of the subject's history a necessity.

This is where we shall pick things up next time. It will allow us to delve deeper into the dialectic of the gift as it is beheld and experienced altogether primordially by the subject, and also to see its other face, the one that earlier we left to one side. I accentuated the paradoxes of frustration on the side of the object, but I didn't say what is produced, and what is signified as such, by the frustration of love.

16 January 1957

VIII

DORA AND THE YOUNG HOMOSEXUAL WOMAN

The symbolic insistence of transference
Potent father, impotent father
Love, lack and gift
Dora between question and identification
Perverse metonymy, neurotic metaphor

This latest instalment, the second issue of the journal *La Psychanalyse*, contains some texts that will allow you to see a new foray into logic, to see it right where it is, in a particularly vivid fashion, that is to say, in our practice. I'm alluding to our much-touted game of odds-and-evens, and I'm referring you to the Introduction I have given to my lesson on *The Purloined Letter*.

You can very easily find there the three temporal phases of subjectivity, in so far as subjectivity bears a relation to frustration, and on the condition that frustration is taken in the sense of a lack of object. You can find them easily if you reflect on what the baseline of the problem is, namely the opposition brought about by the institution of the pure symbol – plus or minus, presence or absence – in which there is nothing less than a sort of objectifiable positioning of what is given in the game.

You will easily see there the second temporal moment in the fact that the declaration you make in saying *odd* or *even* is a sort of bid whereby you put yourself in the position of being gratified or not by the response from the other party. However, since he already has the cubes in his hands, he is quite incapable of doing so. Whether or not what he has in hands corresponds to your bid is no longer something that depends on him. So, here you have the second stage in the dual relation in so far as it sets out this appeal and its response, upon which the level of frustration is established. At the same time you will see its utterly evanescent character, which is literally impossible to accommodate.

If the game possesses something that is of interest to you then clearly it's because you introduce the third dimension, which gives it its meaning, the dimension of law, in a form that is always latent in the playing of the game. From the standpoint of the bidder, what is at stake? From one moment to the next, the other party is clearly supposed to be hinting at some regularity, in other words a law, which at the same time he endeavours to shield from him. This dimension of a law, of a regularity that is being established, is conceived of as something possible yet is being shielded from the bidder by the one who is hinting at it in the hidden part of the game, even as he hints fleetingly at its emergence. It is at this moment that what is fundamental to the game is established, thereby lending it its intersubjective sense, locating it in a dimension that is no longer dual but ternary, and essentially so.

The value of my introductory text hinges on this, namely on the fact that for there to be the beginning of an articulation of something that resembles a law, it is necessary to introduce three terms. We are going to try to see how the object is introduced into these three intersubjective phases. By the mere fact that it falls within our scope, our purview in analytic practice, this object is an object that has to enter the symbolic chain.

This is the point we reached last time in the unfolding of our case of female homosexuality.

1

We reached what I called the third phase, which I am going to summarise for you by starting from the first situation that we are taking arbitrarily as the point of departure.

Note that this chronological ordering of terms is already a concession to the progressive point of view, which runs from the past to the future. We are doing this to facilitate matters by shifting closer to what is usually done in the dialectic of frustration, while not forgetting that in conceiving of it in a perfunctory fashion, that is to say, without distinguishing between the planes of the real, the imaginary and the symbolic, one ends up in impasses. The further we go, the more I hope to give you a sense of these impasses.

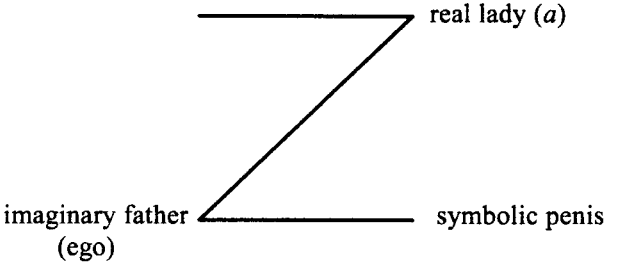
For the time being, however, we shall try to set out the principles behind these relationships between the object and the constitution of the symbolic chain.

First we have the young woman's position when she is still in her pubescent phase. The initial symbolic and imaginary structuration of her position happens in the typical way, as is ordained by the

theory. The equation between imaginary penis and child sets the subject up as an imaginary mother in relation to what lies beyond, namely her own father who steps in at this moment as a symbolic function, that is, as the one who can give the phallus. The potency of the father is at this moment unconscious. This is after the dissolution of the Oedipus complex, and so the father qua *he who can give the child* is unconscious.

It is at this stage that occurs what might be called the fatal moment, when the father intervenes in the real, giving a child to her mother, that is to say, turning the child that was formerly in an imaginary relationship with the subject into a real child. Something becomes a reality, and as a result she can no longer sustain it in the imaginary position where she had set it up. We now find ourselves in the second phase, where the intervention of the real father at the level of the child, which is now the object of her frustration, produces the transformation of the whole equation.

Henceforth, this will be posited with the following terms – the imaginary father, the lady, and the symbolic penis. Through a sort of inversion, the subject's relationship with her father, which was previously in the symbolic realm, veers in the direction of the imaginary relationship. Or, if you prefer, there is a projection of the unconscious formula, that of her first equilibrium, into a perverse relationship, an imaginary relationship, which is her relation to the lady. This is the third phase.



So, after a first application of our formulae we can briefly pause over this positioning of the terms in play, which is undoubtedly enigmatic. None the less, it does need to be stressed that these terms, whichever they may be, impose a structure. That is to say, were we to change the position of any one of them, we would have to place each of the others elsewhere, and not just anywhere. Let's try now to see what this means. The signification is yielded by the analysis.

What does Freud tell us at the crucial moment of the observation? Due to a certain conception he has formed of the position at issue,

and due also to an intervention he makes on this basis, he crystallises the position between himself and the patient in a way that is unsatisfactory, since he avouches that this was the moment at which the analytic relationship was broken off. Either way, whatever Freud thought about it, he is a long way from laying the full burden of this on an impasse in the patient's position. His intervention, his conception, his prejudices about her position, must count for something in the fact that the situation is broken off.

Let's remind ourselves what this position is and how Freud formulates it for us. He tells us that the patient's resistances were insurmountable. How does he substantiate these resistances? What examples does he provide and what meaning does he give them? He reads these resistances being expressed in particular in a series of dreams that might paradoxically have given rise to hopes that the situation was normalising. These are effectively dreams where what is at issue is nothing else but union, *conjugo*, and a fruitful marriage. In these dreams she is submissive to an ideal husband and bears his children. In short, this series of dreams indicates a desire that is steering in the direction of what is most wished for – if not by Freud then by society as here represented by her family – as the best outcome for the treatment.

Armed with everything the patient has told him about her position and her intentions, far from taking the dream-text at face value, Freud sees in it no more than what he calls the patient's ruse, expressly designed to disappoint him, or more precisely to deceive him and disillusion him at the same time, in the same manner as the intersubjective guessing-game I mentioned just a moment ago. It is remarkable that this presupposes, as Freud says it does, that one may object – *What! The unconscious too can lie!* Freud dwells at length on this point. He discusses it and makes sure to reply in a carefully worded manner.

He takes up a passage from *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which he had also revisited in another observation, the Dora case study, which we shall be coming to presently. At a congress five years ago, after Lagache's report on transference I gave a short paper summarising the positions in which I think the Dora case ought to be appreciated.

Regarding the relations between unconscious desire and preconscious desire, the *Traumdeutung* makes an analogy between the capitalist and the entrepreneur. Preconscious desire is the entrepreneur of the dream, but the dream would have no sufficient outlay to set itself up as the representative of this something that is called the unconscious were it not for another desire that provides the funds for the dream, and this is unconscious desire. Freud distinguishes

very sharply between the two, though he doesn't go quite so far as to tease out their most far-reaching consequences. Ultimately there is a distinction between what the subject brings along in his dream, which is at the level of the unconscious, and the factor of dual relations, which hinge on his addressing someone when he recounts the dream in analysis. It is in this sense that I tell you that a dream that arises in the course of an analysis always bears a certain steering towards the analyst, and this steering is not always necessarily the unconscious steering.

The whole question is as to whether or not the stress should be laid on intention. In the case of the young homosexual woman, Freud tells us that this intention remains the patient's avowed intention to play the game of deception with her father. She manages to formulate this game that consists in feigning to undergo treatment while maintaining her positions and her fidelity to the lady. But should this something that is being expressed in the dreams be conceived of purely and simply from the perspective of deception, that is to say, in its preconscious intentionalisation?

I don't think so, because when we look closely, what can we see being formulated? This is undoubtedly a dialectic of deception, but when brought back to the signifier, what is being formulated is precisely what was deflected at the outset, in the first position, and which at that stage was in the unconscious just as it is in the unconscious now at the third stage. What is being formulated comes from the father. In the way that the subject receives his own message in an inverted form, in the form of *You are my wife* or *You are my master*, here the message is *You will bear my child.* Upon entering the Oedipus complex, or so long as the Oedipus complex has not been resolved, this is the promise on which the girl's entry into the Oedipus complex is grounded. This is the point of departure for her position, and if indeed we find in this series of dreams something that is articulated as a situation that fulfils this promise, then it's because it is always the same unconscious content that is borne out.

Freud hesitates when faced with this precisely because he hasn't yet managed to provide a fully pared down formulation of what transference is. In transference, there is an imaginary element and a symbolic element, and consequently there is a choice to be made. If there is a meaning to transference and to what Freud later contributed with the notion of *Wiederholungszwang* – on which I made sure to spend a year, so that you could see what was meant by it – then it's that there is an insistence that is inherent to the symbolic chain as such.

By definition, this insistence inherent to the symbolic chain is not taken on by the subject. None the less, the mere fact that here

it reproduces and survives into the third stage, to be formulated in a dream – even though this does appear to be a misleading dream on the imaginary level of the direct relationship with the therapist – makes it strictly speaking, by itself alone, the representative of the transference in the proper sense. This is where Freud could have soundly and boldly placed his confidence, grounded on a less wavering positioning of his notion of transference. He would have been able to intervene if only he had perceived that transference happens essentially on the level of symbolic articulation.

When we speak of transference, when something takes on meaning from the fact that the analyst becomes the locus of the transference, this is very precisely in so far as symbolic articulation as such is at issue. Of course, this is before the subject has taken it on board, as we can see here in this transference dream. Freud notes how there and then something occurred that belonged to the realm of transference, yet he draws from it neither the strict consequence nor the correct method of intervention.

I'm pointing this out because in truth this is not valid for this particular case alone. We also have another case in which the problem arises on the same level and in like fashion, except that Freud makes the exact opposite mistake. This is the Dora case.

These two cases balance each other out admirably. They criss-cross, the one with the other, and strictly so, not only because the conflating of the symbolic position and the imaginary position occurs in either case in an opposite direction, but still more because in their overall constellation they are in strict correspondence, with the sole proviso that they are correlated as positive to negative. I might say that there is no finer illustration of Freud's formula that perversion is the negative of neurosis.

This still has to be developed.

2

Let's quickly review the terms of the Dora case, through their commonality with the terms of the constellation that is present in the case of the young homosexual woman.

In the Dora case we find exactly the same protagonists on centre stage – the father, a daughter, and also a lady, Frau K. This is all the more striking in that the whole problem revolves around the lady, though this is hidden from Freud in the girl's presentation.

Dora is a case of *petite hystérie* and she has been brought to see Freud because of certain symptoms she has. These symptoms are undoubtedly mild, but striking all the same. Above all, the situation

has become intolerable following some sort of token of suicidal intention that ultimately caused her family some alarm. When she is taken to Freud, the father presents her as ill, and without a shadow of a doubt this move to consult is an element that in itself denotes a crisis in the social circle, in which previously the situation had been maintained with a certain equilibrium. Nevertheless, this peculiar equilibrium had already been upset two years hence, an equilibrium constituted by a positioning that was initially concealed from Freud, namely that Dora's father had taken Frau K. as his mistress. This woman was married to a gentleman named Herr K., and they lived in a sort of foursome relation encompassing the couple formed by father and daughter. Dora's mother is absent from the situation.

We can already see, as we keep pressing forward, the contrast with the previous situation. In the case of the young homosexual woman, the mother is present because she is the one who takes the father's attention away from the daughter, thereby introducing the real element of frustration that will be decisive in shaping the perverse constellation. Furthermore, in the Dora case the father is the one who brings the lady into the picture and seems to be keeping her there, while in the other case the daughter is the one who brings her in.

What is striking in this positioning is that Dora straightaway emphasises to Freud her exceedingly sharp reproach concerning the affection from her father, which she says has been stolen from her by the affair. She shows right away that she has always been privy to the existence of the affair, to its permanence and its regularity, and that she has reached a point where she can stand it no longer. Her entire deportment is indicative of her reproach in this regard.

With a step that is most decisive, possessing as it does the dialectical quality, strictly speaking, of the Freudian experience, Freud brings Dora to the question – *Is it not the case that what you are rebelling against, as though it were something out of line, is the very thing that you yourself participated in?* And, indeed, he promptly offers evidence of how, up until a critical moment, this position had been supported most efficaciously by Dora herself. She had shown herself to be far more than accepting of this singular situation. She was truly its kingpin, protecting the private moments of the couple formed by her father and the lady, even on occasion taking over the lady's duties, such as looking after her children. On the other hand, as one moves further into the structure of the case, she is even to be seen staking out an altogether special bond with the lady, whose confidante she is. Indeed, it seems that the confidences they exchanged went very far indeed.

The case bears such wealth of detail that there are still discoveries

to be made in it, and so this quick reminder can on no account replace an attentive reading. Among other items, let me point out the lapse of nine months between the scene by the lake and the hysterical symptom of her dragging her leg, which Freud believes he has uncovered because the patient yields it to him in a symbolic fashion, but if one looks more closely one will notice that in reality it was a lapse of fifteen months. These fifteen months carry meaning because *fifteen* crops up throughout the observation, and this element is useful for our understanding in that it is grounded on number and on a purely symbolic value.

Today I can do no more than remind you of the terms in which the whole problem is set out, from beginning to end of the observation. It's not merely that Freud realises, after the event, that he has failed, due to the patient's resistance to admitting the love relation that binds her to Herr K., as Freud suggested to her with all the weight of his insistence and authority. It's not merely the footnote added, with hindsight, in which he points out that doubtless there was an error, namely that he should have understood that the homosexual attachment to Frau K. was the true signification of both the establishing of her initial position and her crisis. What is important is not merely that Freud acknowledges this after the event, but rather that throughout the observation you can read that Freud remains in the greatest ambiguity concerning the real object of Dora's desire.

In what terms is the problem to be articulated? Yet again, it's a matter of how this ambiguity might possibly be formulated, an ambiguity that is in some sense unresolved. It's quite clear that Herr K., in his person, is of overarching importance for Dora and that something along the lines of a libidinal bond has been established with him. It is also clear that something that belongs to another realm, yet which also carries considerable weight, is playing a constant role in Dora's libidinal bond with Frau K. How are they each to be appreciated in a way that would account both for the furtherance of the affair and for the moment at which it stops, its crisis point when the equilibrium is upset?

When I made my first inroad into the observation five years ago, I pointed out that, in conformity with the hysteric structure, the hysteric is someone who loves vicariously. You will find this in a whole host of observations. The hysteric is someone whose object is homosexual and who approaches this homosexual object by identifying with someone of the opposite sex. This was a first clinical approach, as it were, to the patient Dora.

I went further still. Taking as my point of departure the notion of the narcissistic relationship insomuch as it founds the ego, insomuch as it is the matrix, the *Urbild*, of the constitution of this imaginary

function known as the ego, I showed how this affords trace elements for the observation. The full *quadrille* can be understood only to the extent that Dora's ego – and the ego alone – has identified with a virile protagonist, who is Herr K., and that for her the men are so many possible crystallisations of her own ego. In other words, it is through the intermediary of Herr K., it is in so far as she *is* Herr K., at the imaginary point constituted by the personality of Herr K., that she is attached to the personage of Frau K.

I went a little further still. I said that Frau K. is someone of importance. Why so? She is not important merely because she has been chosen among other objects. She is not merely someone of whom we might say that she is vested by the narcissistic function that lies at the bottom of any enamoration, any *Verliebtheit*. No. As the dreams show – since the essential point of the observation hinges on the dreams – Frau K. is Dora's question.

Let's try now to transcribe this onto our present formulation, and to pinpoint what in this foursome comes to be arranged on our fundamental schematic.

Dora is a hysteric, that is to say, someone who reached the level of the Oedipal crisis and who was both able and unable to pass through it. There is a reason for this, which is that her father, unlike the father of the young homosexual woman, is impotent. The whole observation leans on this central notion of the father's impotence. Here, then, is an opportunity to highlight in a particularly exemplary fashion what the function of the father might be in relation to the lack of object that led the girl into the Oedipus complex. What might the function of the father be qua giver?

This situation hinges on the distinction I made regarding primary frustration, the frustration that can set in between child and mother. There is the object of the child's frustration, but after this frustrating the child's desire persists. Frustration means something only to the extent that the object is the subject's appurtenance and persists as such after the frustrating. What is distinct in the mother's intervening belongs to another register, in that she gives, or doesn't give, and in that this gift is a sign of love.

Now comes the father, who is cut out to be the one who gives, symbolically, this missing object. Here in the Dora case he doesn't give it because he hasn't got it. Her father's phallic shortcoming resounds throughout the entire observation like the root of a chord, constitutive of the positioning. But yet again, do we find ourselves on just the one plane? Will the whole crisis be established solely in relation to this lack? Let's consider what is at stake. What does it mean to give? Isn't there another dimension that is introduced into the object relation on the level where it is raised to the symbolic

degree by the fact that the object may or may not be given? In other words, is it ever the object that is given? This is the question, and in the Dora observation we can see one of its outcomes, which is utterly exemplary.

Dora remains very attached to this father from whom she does not receive, symbolically, the virile gift. She is so attached to him that her story begins exactly at the age of the dissolution of the Oedipus complex, with a whole series of hysterical mishaps that are very clearly linked to shows of love for the father, who at that time appears more than ever, and decisively so, to be a wounded and sick father, stricken in his very vital forces. The love she has for this father is at that time strictly correlative and coextensive with his diminution.

So, we have a very clear-cut distinction here. What intervenes in the love relationship, what is asked for as a sign of love, is only ever something that carries worth merely as a sign. Or, to go yet further, there is no greater possible gift, no greater sign of love, than the gift of what one hasn't got. Let's take note, however, that the dimension of the gift comes into existence only with the introduction of the Law. As is posited and asserted in sociological thought as a whole, a gift is something that circulates. The gift you give is always the gift you have received. But when the giving occurs between two subjects, the cycle of gifts comes from yet elsewhere, because what establishes a love relationship is that the gift is given, so to speak, for nothing.

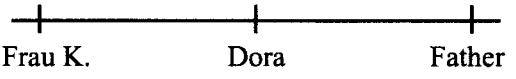
Rien pour rien is the principle of exchange. You get nothing for nothing. This formula, like any formula in which the ambiguous *rien* occurs, seems to be the very formula for *interest*, but it is also the formula for what is wholly free of charge. Indeed, in the gift of love there is merely something that is given for nothing, and which can only be nothing. In other words, a subject gives something for free in so far as behind what he gives there is everything he lacks. What constitutes the gift is that the subject sacrifices beyond what he has. Moreover, this holds true for the primitive gift such as it effectively used to be practised at the origin of human exchanges in the form of the potlatch.

Imagine if you will a subject in possession of all the riches possible, the maximum possible amount of what may be possessed. Well, a gift from such a subject would literally have no value as a sign of love. Believers imagine that they love God because He is deemed to possess within Him this total plenitude and fullness, but it's quite certain that if this recognition is so much as thinkable, for anything whatsoever, when it comes to someone who might have gauged that at the root of any belief there is this Being who is supposed to be thought of as a Whole, even so, without any doubt He lacks the

foremost thing in Being, that is to say, existence. At the root of any belief in God as perfectly and totally munificent, there is this *je ne sais quoi* that He forever lacks and which means that, all the same, it is always supposable that He doesn't exist. There is no reason to love God save that perhaps He doesn't exist.

What is certain is that this is where Dora is when she loves her father. She loves him precisely for what he doesn't give her. The whole situation is unthinkable outside of this initial position, which is maintained through to the end. It still needs to be seen how this situation could be tolerated and put up with once the father got involved in something else, right before Dora's very eyes, and which she even seems to have induced.

The observation hinges on the following. We have the father, Dora, and Frau K.



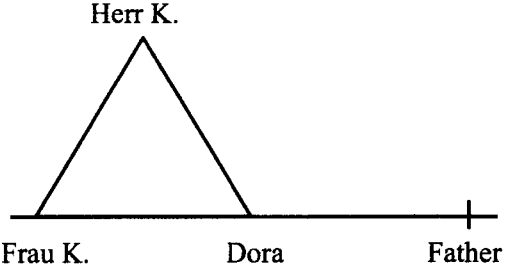
The whole situation is established as though Dora had to ask herself the question, *What is it that my father loves in Frau K.?* Frau K. is presented as something that her father can love beyond herself. What Dora latches on to is this something that is loved by her father in another, in so far as she doesn't know what it is.

This is in full conformity with what is supposed by the whole theory of the phallic object, namely that the female subject can enter the dialectic of the symbolic order only through the gift of the phallus. There is no other way. This supposes that *real need*, which is not denied by Freud and which belongs to the female organ as such, to woman's physiology, is something that never enters automatically into the establishing of the position of desire. Desire targets the phallus to the extent that it must be received as a gift. To this end, the phallus has to be raised to the level of the gift, which moreover may be absent or present. It is in so far as it is raised to the dignity of the gift-object that it leads the subject to enter the dialectic of exchange, which will normalise each of the subject's positions, up to and including the essential prohibitions that ground the overall movement of exchange. It is from within this that *real need*, the existence of which Freud never dreamed of denying, and which is linked to the female organ as such, will fall into its place and be satisfied, as it were, laterally. But it is never marked out symbolically as something that carries meaning. It is always essentially problematic unto itself, positioned shy of a certain symbolic crossing-point.

Indeed, this is precisely what is at stake throughout the unfurling of these symptoms and the unfurling of the observation. Dora asks herself, *What is a woman?* And it's in so far as Frau K. embodies this feminine function as such that for Dora she is the representation of the very thing into which Dora projects herself, as the question of femininity. It is to the extent that Dora herself is on the path of the dual relation with Frau K., or rather that Frau K. is what is loved beyond Dora, that Dora feels herself to be concerned in this position. Frau K. is the living incarnation of what Dora can neither know nor cognise in this situation, where she finds nowhere to accommodate herself. When it comes to love, someone is loved over and above what that someone is. Ultimately it's something this someone is lacking, whoever they are.

Dora places herself somewhere between her father and Frau K. Insomuch as her father loves Frau K., Dora feels satisfied, but on the condition, of course, that this positioning should be maintained. Moreover, this positioning is symbolised in umpteen different ways. The impotent father compensates by every kind of symbolic gift, including material gifts, for what he does not embody as a virile presence. And, in passing, he effectively makes Dora benefit from this through all sorts of generosity that are shared out equally to the mistress and to the daughter, thereby having her partake of this symbolic position.

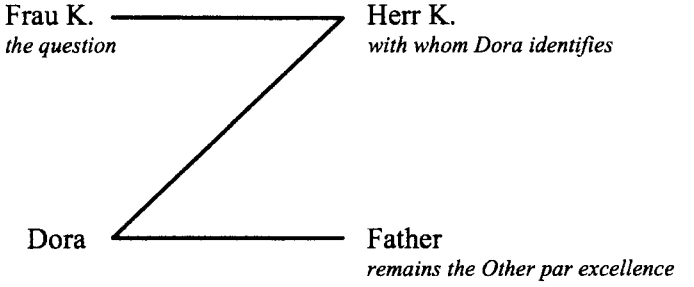
Yet this is still not enough, and Dora tries to restore access to a manifest position oriented in the opposite direction. I mean that it's no longer vis-à-vis the father but vis-à-vis the woman she has in front of her, Frau K., that she tries to re-establish a triangular situation. This is where Herr K. comes in, through whom the triangle can effectively be closed, but in an inverted position.



Owing to her interest in the question, Dora will regard Herr K. as someone who participates in what symbolises the question aspect of Frau K.'s presence, namely the adoration that is further expressed by a very patent symbolic association that is given in the observa-

tion, the Sistine Madonna. Frau K. is an object of adoration to everyone around her, and Dora ultimately positions herself in relation to her as a participant in this adoration. Herr K. is the means whereby she makes this position normative by trying to reintegrate the male element into the circuit.

When does she slap him? Not when he is courting her or making declarations of love, nor even when he approaches her in a way that is intolerable for a hysteric. Rather, it's at the moment he tells her, *Ich habe nichts an meiner Frau.* The German wording is particularly telling. It has a particularly vivid sense, if we allow the term *nothing* to have its full scope. What he says in essence removes him from the circuit that had been thereby constituted, and which in its ordering is set out as follows –



Dora can readily accept that her father loves in her and through her what lies beyond, Frau K. But for Herr K. to be tolerable in this positioning he has to occupy the exact opposite function, which balances it out, namely, Dora herself has to be loved by him beyond his wife, but in so far as his wife means something to him. This something is the same as the *nothing* that must lie beyond, that is to say, in this instance, Dora. He doesn't say that his wife means nothing to him. He says that on the side of his wife, there is nothing. This *an* can be found in countless locutions in German, for example in the expression *Es fehlt ihm an Geld.* The particular wording here in German shows that this *an* is an additional link into the beyond of what lacks. This is precisely what we meet here. He means that there is nothing beyond his wife – *My wife is not included in the circuit.*

What is the upshot of this? Dora cannot tolerate that he should be interested in her, Dora, only in so far as he is interested in her alone. By the same stroke, the whole situation is broken off. If Herr K. is only interested in her, then her father is only interested in Frau K., and at that point she can no longer tolerate it. Why not?

In Freud's eyes, this nevertheless falls within a typical kind of

situation. As Claude Lévi-Strauss explains in *Elementary Structures of Kinship*, the exchange of ties of alliance consists in the following – *I have received a wife and I owe a daughter*. Yet while this is the very principle behind the institution of exchange and of Law, it turns woman purely and simply into an object of exchange. She is not integrated into this by anything. In other words, if she has not renounced something, namely the paternal phallus conceived of as a gift-object, she can conceive of nothing, subjectively speaking, that she might receive from others, that is to say, from another man. To the very extent that she is excluded from this first institution of the gift and of the Law in the direct relation of the gift of love, she cannot experience this situation otherwise than by feeling reduced to the state of a mere object.[1]

This is indeed what happens at that very moment. Dora rebels absolutely and starts to say, *My father is selling me to someone else.* In effect, this is a clear and excellent assessment of the situation, to the extent that it has been kept in this half-darkness. As a matter of fact, from the father's standpoint, allowing Frau K.'s husband to carry on his courting of Dora over these long years in a sort of veiled tolerance has been a way of repaying his indulgence.

So, Herr K. has admitted that he has no part in a circuit where Dora could either identify him with herself or think that she is Herr K.'s object beyond the woman, through whom she is attached to him. There is a breaking of these bonds, which are undoubtedly subtle and ambiguous but which in each case carry a meaning and are perfectly oriented. She can no longer find her place in the circuit except in an extremely unstable fashion, but she does find it in some way, and in a way that is constant. When the bonds break, the situation loses its balance and Dora finds herself having slid into the role of a mere object. She then sets about staking a claim to the very thing she was inclined to consider she had been receiving up to the present time, though it was through the intermediary of another, namely her father's love. From this moment forth, she demands it exclusively, because it has been refused her totally.

3

So, what difference becomes apparent between these two registers and these two situations in which Dora and the homosexual woman are respectively implicated?

To go quickly, so as to end on something that will give you a clear picture, I will tell you the following, which we shall confirm later.

If it is true that what is maintained in the unconscious of the young

homosexual woman is the father's promise, *You will bear my child*, and if what she shows in her exalted love for the lady is, as Freud says it is, the very model of absolutely selfless love, of love given for nothing in return, can't you see that it's as though the young woman wanted to show her father what true love is, this love that her father has refused her? Undoubtedly the father was implicated in the subject's unconscious, and no doubt this was because he was finding further favour from the mother. Indeed, this relationship is fundamental whenever a child enters the Oedipus complex, namely the crushing superiority of the adult rival. What she demonstrates to him is how one can love someone not only for what that person has, but literally for what the person doesn't have, for the symbolic penis she knows she will not find in the lady. For she knows full well where the symbolic penis is to be found. It is with her father who, for his part, is not impotent.

In other words, what is called *perversion* is expressed in this case between the lines, through contrasts and allusions. It's a way of speaking about something altogether different, but which necessarily implies, through a rigorous sequence of terms that are in play, its return as what is meant to be heard. You will find here what I once called, in the widest sense, *metonymy*, which consists in getting something across by speaking about something utterly different. If you cannot appreciate this fundamental notion of metonymy in its most comprehensive form, it is quite inconceivable that you should manage to form any notion whatsoever of what perversion in the imaginary can mean.

This metonymy is the principle behind everything that may be called *realism* in the realm of art and invention. Realism literally carries no sort of meaning whatsoever. A novel, which is made up of a heap of tiny lineaments that mean nothing, has no value if it doesn't make something pulsate harmonically, something that carries a meaning beyond. Thus, near the beginning of *War and Peace*, the theme that emanates from the women's bare shoulders stands for something else.[2] If the great novelists are tolerable, it's in so far as everything they endeavour to show us finds its meaning not at all symbolically, nor allegorically, but rather through what they allow to reverberate at a distance. The same goes for cinema. When a film is good, it's because of the metonymic function. And so too, the subject's function of perversion is a metonymic function.

Is it the same for Dora, who is a neurotic? It's actually quite different. When we look at the diagram, we notice that in perversion we are dealing with a signifying line of conduct that points to a signifier that lies further along in the signifying chain, to the extent that it is

linked to it by a necessary signifier. In the Dora case, however, taken as a subject, Dora places herself at each step of the way beneath a certain number of signifiers in the chain. She finds in the situation a sort of perpetual metaphor.

Literally, Frau K. is her metaphor, because Dora can say nothing of what she is. Dora knows neither where to locate herself, nor where she is, nor what she is meant for, nor what love is meant for. She knows simply that love exists, and she finds an historicisation of this, wherein she finds her place in the form of a question. This question is focused by the content and the articulation of each of her dreams – the jewellery box, then *Bahnhof*, *Friedhof*, *Vorhof* – which signify nothing more than this question. In short, it is in so far as Dora questions herself about what it means to be a woman that she expresses herself as she does, through her symptoms. These symptoms are signifier-elements, but to the extent that beneath them runs a perpetually shifting signified, this being the way in which Dora implicates herself in this and concerns herself with it.

Dora's neurosis takes on its meaning to the extent that it is metaphorical, and to the extent that it can be unravelled. And it was precisely in so far as Freud forced the real element into this metaphor, the real element that tends to be reinserted in any metaphor, by telling her *This is who you love*, that something did, of course, tend towards a normalisation in the situation when Herr K. entered the game, but this something remained in a metaphorical state.

Proof of this is the sort of pregnancy that befalls Dora after the crisis when she breaks off from Herr K., and which Freud perceives with his prodigious intuitive feeling for signification. It is indeed an odd sort of signifying still-birth that occurs at term, after nine months. Freud says *nine months* because Dora herself tells him so. She thereby confesses to a sort of pregnancy, but it actually happens after that, after what for Dora would be a normal term pregnancy. It is of significance that Dora sees in this the final reverberation of what still binds her to Herr K. We find here, in a certain form, some equation with a kind of copulation that translates into the realm of the symbolic in a purely metaphorical fashion. Yet again, the symptom is but a metaphor here, an attempt to join the Law of symbolic exchanges to the man with whom one unites or disunites.

In contrast to this, the childbirth that is also to be found at the end of the observation on the homosexual woman, before she comes to see Freud, manifests in the following way – she abruptly throws herself from a little railway bridge when, once again, the real father steps in, evincing his irritation and wrath, which is in turn acknowledged by the lady who is beside her. The lady tells her that she no longer wishes to see her, and the young woman then finds herself

stripped utterly of her last resources. Up until that moment, she was frustrated, since she was without the paternal phallus that was supposed to be given to her, but she had found the means to maintain desire along the path of the imaginary relationship with the lady. Now that the lady has rejected her, however, she can no longer sustain anything. The object is lost once and for all, and this *nothing* in which she had set herself up, in order to demonstrate to her father how to love, has no more reason to be. At that moment, she makes her suicide attempt.

As Freud underlines for us, this also carries another meaning, that of a definitive loss of the object. The phallus that has been firmly refused her has fallen, *niederkommen*. This falling away has the value of a definitive privation, and also mimes a sort of symbolic childbirth. The metonymic aspect I was telling you about is to be found here. If Freud can interpret the act of jumping off the railway bridge at the critical and terminal moment of her relationship with the lady and the father as a demonstrative way of herself becoming this child that she has not had, and at the same time of destroying herself in a final act that signifies the object, this is grounded solely on the existence of the word *niederkommen*.

This word indicates, metonymically, the final term, the term of suicide, in which is expressed what is at stake in the young homosexual woman, this being the sole mainspring of her entire perversion, in keeping with what Freud asserted time and again concerning the pathogenesis of a certain type of female homosexuality, namely a steady and particularly reinforced love for the father.

23 January 1957

THE FETISH OBJECT

IX

THE FUNCTION OF THE VEIL

The symbolic phallus
How lack is actualised
The screen-memory: coming to a halt on the image
Alternation between perverse identifications
The structure of reactional exhibitionism

Pursuing our reflections on the object, today I'm going to be putting forward what can be gathered from them in connection with a problem that actualises the question of the object in an especially keen fashion, namely fetishes and fetishism.

You are going to see from this how the fundamental schema with which I've been trying to furnish you these last weeks certainly finds special expression in the following paradoxical assertions – that *what is loved in the object is what the object lacks* and that *one gives only what one hasn't got.*

The fundamental schema that in any symbolic exchange, irrespective of how it may function, implies the permanence of the constituent character of what lies beyond the object allows us to see in a new light the perversion that has taken on the role of exemplum in analytic theory and to establish what I might call its *fundamental equations* in a different way.

So, this is about fetishism.

1

Freud makes an inroad into the question of fetishism in two fundamental texts, one from 1905 and the other from 1927. While further texts take up the question later, these two – the paragraph on fetishism in the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* and the article entitled *Fetishism* – are the most precious.

In his article, Freud tells us at the outset that the fetish is the symbol of something, but adds that in saying this he *shall certainly create disappointment*. A great deal has been said about the fetish for as long as people have been speaking about analysis, and also since Freud first spoke about it. The something in question is, once again, the penis.

Yet immediately after this comment, he stresses that this is *not any chance penis*. The detail seems scarcely to have been exploited in its structural grounding, in the fundamental suppositions that it implies on reading it naively for the first time. To spell it right out, the penis at stake is not the real penis. It's the penis in so far as the woman has it, that it to say, in so far as she does not have it.

I'm underscoring this point of oscillation, on which we ought briefly to pause, so as to see what is ordinarily passed over, and which we must not pass over. For someone who does not make use of the keys we possess, all this is merely a matter of misrecognising the real – it's about the phallus that the woman *doesn't have*, and which she *must have* for reasons relating to the child's doubtful relation to reality. This is the common path, which usually supports all manner of speculation on the future, the development and the crisis-points of fetishism, and, as I have been able to confirm through an extensive reading of all that has been written on fetishism, it leads to all sorts of impasse.

Here, as always, I have ventured not to expand too far into this forest of analytic literature. In truth, this is something that, to be treated effectively, would require not just hours but a more controlled study, for there is nothing more delicate and more fastidious than to locate the precise point at which some matter shrinks away, at which the author avoids the crucial point in a discrimination. So, I will be showing you here, in one part of what I'm about to expatiate, the more or less settled result of my readings, and I will be asking you to follow me.

To avoid the aimless wandering into which the authors have gradually been led over the years whenever they avoid this point, and to restore the proper position to what is at issue, the differential sinew by which to broach this is that on no account is this a real phallus, a phallus which, as real, would exist or not exist. It's a symbolic phallus, in so far as it's in its very nature to present in exchange as an absence, as an absence that functions as such.

Indeed, everything that can be tralatitious in symbolic exchange is always something that is as much absence as presence. It is made in such a way that it has a sort of fundamental alternation, which means that, having appeared at one point, it disappears then to reappear at another. In other words, it circulates, leaving behind

it the sign of its absence at the point from which it came. In yet other words, we can immediately recognise that the phallus that is involved here is a symbolic object.

On the one hand, by means of this object a structural cycle of imaginary threats is established, which limits the use and wielding of the real phallus. This is the meaning of the castration complex, in that this is how the man is caught in it. But there is another use, which is hidden, so to speak, by the more or less fearsome fantasies in the man's relation to these prohibitions bearing on the use of the phallus, and this is the symbolic function of the phallus. I mean that the fact of whether it is there or not there, and solely in so far as it is there or not there, is what sets up the symbolic differentiation between the sexes.

Symbolically, woman does not have the phallus. But not to have the phallus symbolically is to partake of it in the capacity of absence, and so to have it in some way. The phallus always lies beyond any relationship between man and woman. It can on occasion form the object of a woman's imaginary yearning to the extent that she has only a very small phallus, yet this phallus that she might feel to be insufficient is not the only one that functions for her because, in so far as she is caught in the intersubjective relationship, there lies, beyond her, for the man, the phallus that she doesn't have, that is to say, the symbolic phallus that exists qua absence. This is completely independent of the inferiority she might feel on the imaginary plane, for as much as she has a real partaking of the phallus.

This symbolic penis, which the other day I positioned in the diagram for the young homosexual woman, plays an essential role and function in the girl's entry into symbolic exchange. It is in so far as she does not have this phallus, that is to say, in so far as, also, she does have it on the symbolic plane, it is in so far as she enters the symbolic dialectic of having or not having the phallus, that she thereby enters the ordered, symbolised relationship of differentiation between the sexes, where the inter-human relationship is taken on board as something disciplined, typified, ordered, struck with prohibitions and marked by the fundamental structure of the incest law. This is what Freud means when he tells us that it is through the intermediary of what he calls the *idea* of castration in woman – and which is precisely that she does not have it symbolically, and so therefore she may have it – that she enters the Oedipus complex, whereas this is the boy's way out if it.

In this we can see how, structurally speaking, the androcentrism that marks the elementary structures of kinship in Lévi-Strauss's schematisation is in a certain way justified. The women are exchanged between lineages founded on the male line, the one that is chosen

precisely because it is symbolic and improbable. It is a fact that the women are exchanged as an object between male lineages. They enter here through an exchange, that of the phallus they receive symbolically and in exchange for which they give the child that for them takes on the function of an ersatz, a substitute, an equivalent for the phallus, and whereby they introduce natural fecundity into this patricentric symbolic genealogy which in itself is sterile. Yet it is in so far as they latch onto this sole and central object that is distinguished by the fact that *it is precisely not an object*, but an object that has undergone symbolic valorisation in the most radical way, it is by the intermediary of their relation to this phallus, that they enter the chain of symbolic exchange, that they set themselves up within it and assume their place and value.

Once you have noticed this you can see it finding expression in umpteen different ways. When we look closely, what is ultimately expressed in this fundamental theme of the woman giving of herself, if not precisely the need to affirm the gift? Here we can see the concrete psychological experience such as it is given to us, and which is so paradoxical in this instance because it's quite clear that in the act of love, the woman receives, for real. She receives far more than she gives. Everything indicates, and the analytic experience has accentuated this, that no position is a more capturing one, indeed a more consuming one, on the imaginary plane, than hers. If this gets turned around into the contrary assertion, namely that the woman gives herself, it is to the very extent that symbolically it must be so. She must give something in exchange for what she receives, that is, the symbolic phallus.

So – Freud tells us – here we have the fetish, representing the phallus qua absent, the symbolic phallus. How can we not see here, right away, that this sort of initial turnaround is indispensable if we are to understand items that are otherwise utterly paradoxical? For example, it is invariably boys who are fetishists, and never girls. If everything lay on the plane of imaginary deficiency, or even of imaginary inferiority, it might seem on first approach that of the two sexes fetishism would break out most overtly in the one that is deprived of the phallus for real. Yet this is hardly the case. Fetishism is exceedingly rare in women, in the proper and individualised sense that it is incarnated in an object that we can regard as itself corresponding in a symbolic way to the phallus qua absent.

Let's try to see first of all how this singular relation to an object that is not one can be generated.

2

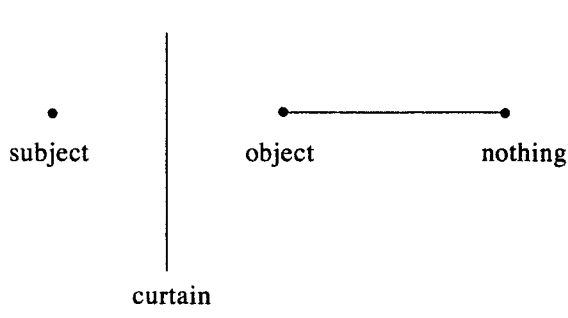
Analysis tells us that the fetish is a symbol. In this respect, it is placed at the outset almost on the same footing as any other neurotic symbol.

When it is not a neurosis that is at issue but rather a perversion, this is not so palpable. This is how things are classified nosographically for reasons of clinical resemblance that indubitably harbour a certain value, but one has to look fairly closely to confirm this in the structure from the standpoint of analysis. In truth, a good many authors show hesitation here and go so far as to place fetishism on the borderline between the perversions and the neuroses, precisely due to the especially symbolic character of the crucial fantasy.

Having started with the full weight of structure, let's pause for a moment on this position of interposition, which means that what is loved in the love-object is something that lies beyond it. This something is undoubtedly nothing, but it possesses the property of being there symbolically. Since it is a symbol, not only *can* it be this nothing, but also it *must* be. What can materialise for us, as it were, in the sharpest way this relationship of interposition, which means that what is aimed at lies beyond what presents itself? Well, something that is truly one of the most fundamental images of the human relationship with the world, namely the veil, the curtain.

The veil or curtain that hangs in front of something is still what best affords an image of this fundamental situation of love. One can even say that with the presence of the curtain, what lies beyond as a lack tends to be actualised as an image. The absence is painted onto the veil. This is nothing less than a curtain's function per se, whichever it may be. The curtain assumes its value, its being and its consistence from being precisely that onto which absence is projected and imagined. The curtain is, so to speak, the idol of absence. If the veil of Māyā is the most commonly used metaphor to express man's relation to all that captivates him, this is surely due to his sense of a certain fundamental illusion in all his relations of desire. It is precisely here that man embodies and idolifies his sense of this nothing that lies beyond the love-object.

You should hold this fundamental schema in your minds if you want to locate in the right way the elements that come into play in the setting up of the fetishistic relationship, at whichever moment we might consider it.



Here, then, is the subject, and the object, and what lies beyond is the nothing, or else the symbol, or else the phallus insomuch as woman lacks it. But once the curtain is in place, something can be painted onto it that indicates that the object lies beyond. The object can then take the place of lack, and also, as such, be the support of love, but in so far as it is precisely not the point to which desire is tethered. Desire appears in some way as a metaphor for love, but what tethers it, namely the object, appears as something illusory and as something that is valorised as illusory.

The notorious splitting of the ego when the fetish is involved is explained to us by saying that here woman's castration is at once affirmed yet denied. Since the fetish is there, she has not lost the phallus, but by the same stroke she can be made to lose it, that is, she can be castrated. The ambiguity of this relationship to the fetish is constant and is relentlessly manifested from one moment to the next in symptoms. This ambiguity, which is borne out in lived experience, an illusion both sustained and cherished as such, is at the same time experienced in a fragile balance where at any moment the curtain could be raised or come tumbling down. This is the relation that is at issue in the fetishist's relationship with his object.

When we follow Freud's article further, he speaks of *Verleugnung* with regard to the fundamental stance of disavowing in the relationship to the fetish. But he also says that it's about making the complex relationship hold up, *aufrechtzuhalten*, as though he were speaking about a stage set. Freud's language, which is so full of imagery, while being so very precise, employs terms that here assume their value. He says that *the horror of castration has set up a memorial to itself in the creation of this substitute*. The fetish is a *Denkmal*. The word *trophy* doesn't feature, but in truth it is there, doubling up as the *token of triumph*, *das Zeichen des Triumphes*. Authors who approach the typical phenomenon of the fetish will speak over and again of the way in which the subject heraldises his relation to sex,[1] but Freud is making us take a step further here.

Why does this come about? Why is it necessary? We will be

coming back to this afterwards. As always, people press ahead too quickly. If one goes straight to the whys and wherefores, one slides immediately into a kind of pandemonium where all sorts of leanings come crowding in to explain why the subject can be more or less remote from the object and feel himself to be arrested, threatened and in conflict.[2] Let's stay for the time being at the level of structure.

The structure is here in this relation between the veil and what lies beyond it. An image can be formed on the veil, that is to say, it can be established as an imaginary capture and as the place of desire. This relationship with a beyond-zone is fundamental whenever a symbolic relationship is being set up. It's a matter of descending onto the imaginary plane of the ternary order of *subject / object / beyond-zone* that is fundamental to the symbolic relationship. In other words, it's about projecting the intermediary position of the object into the function of the veil.

Before going any further and examining the subject's requirement of this veil, we are going to look at another angle from which a symbolic relation is established in the imaginary.

When last time I was speaking about the perverse structure as such, I spoke about metonymy, or allusion, or a relation that lies between the lines, these being the elevated forms of metonymy. Here Freud puts it in the clearest possible way, though he does not use the word *metonymy*. What constitutes the fetish, the symbolic element that fixes down the fetish and projects it onto the veil, is taken from the historical dimension. It's the moment when the image comes to a standstill.

I recall previously making a comparison with a film that all of a sudden freezes, just before the moment when what is being sought in the mother, that is, the phallus that she has and which she does not have, has to be seen qua *presence–absence*, qua *absence–presence*. The historical reminiscence is halted and suspended at the moment just before.

I'm saying *historical reminiscence* because there is no other meaning to be given to the term *screen-memory*, which is so fundamental in Freud's conceptualisation and phenomenology. The screen-memory, the *Deckerinnerung*, is not merely a snapshot. It's an interruption in the subject's history, a moment at which it becomes halted and frozen, and so by the same token a moment when it indicates the pursuance of its movement beyond the veil. The screen-memory is linked to the subject's history by a whole chain. It is a stopping point in this chain, and it's in this respect that it is metonymical, because history, by its very nature, goes on. In coming to a halt there, the chain indicates its ensuing sequence,

which is thenceforth veiled. It indicates its absent sequence, namely the repression at stake, as Freud says very clearly.

We speak of repression solely in so far as there is a symbolic chain. If a phenomenon that may pass for an imaginary phenomenon can be designated as the point of a repression – because the fetish is in a certain sense an image, and a projected image – it's precisely in so far as this image is merely the limit point between history insomuch as it goes on and the moment at which it is interrupted. It is the sign, the marker, of the point of repression.

If you read Freud's text carefully you will see that this way of spelling things out is the clearest way of giving his expressions their full weight.

Once again we can see the distinction between the relationship with the love object and the relationship of object frustration. These are two different relationships. On the one hand, love transfers via metaphor to desire, which latches onto the object as something illusory, while on the other hand the constitution of the object is not metaphoric but metonymic. The latter is a point in the chain of history at which history has come to a halt. It's the sign that this is where the beyond-zone that the subject has constituted begins. Why so? Why does the subject have to constitute this zone that lies beyond? Why is the veil more precious to man than reality? Why does the order of this illusory relationship become an essential constituent that is necessary for his relation to the object? This is the question posed by fetishism.

Before going further, from what I've just said you can see all sorts of things becoming clearer, including for instance the fact that as the first example of an analysis of a fetishist Freud gives us the wonderful story of a play on words, concerning a gentleman who had been brought up in England and later became a fetishist in Germany, and who was forever seeking out a little shine on the nose. Moreover, he would actually see this shine, this *Glanz auf der Nase*. It meant nothing other than a *glance at the nose*, the nose itself being, of course, a symbol. The German expression simply transposed the English expression of his early years. You can see here the historical chain coming into play and projecting onto a point on the veil insomuch as it can even encompass an entire sentence, and indeed a sentence from a forgotten tongue.

3

What are the causes behind the setting-up of the fetishistic structure? The Kleinians won't ascertain anything for you in this matter.

In any case, the various authors have been in a bind for some time now.

On the one hand, we cannot lose sight of the notion of the essential articulation that is the relation between the genesis of fetishism and the castration complex. On the other, it is apparently most certain in preoedipal relationships, and not elsewhere, that the phallic mother is the central element and the decisive mainspring. How are the two to be joined together?

These authors are more or less happy to do so. Just look how confortable the members of the English school are – fair to middling, actually – thanks to Mrs Melanie Klein's system. It structures the first stages of the oral drive tendencies, and particularly their most aggressive moment, by introducing the presence of the paternal penis into the very heart of this moment by means of retroactive projection, that is to say, by retroactivating the Oedipus complex in the earliest relationships with objects that are introjectable. Clearly, in this way they have easier access to the material that will allow for an interpretation of what is at issue. Since I have not yet embarked on an exhaustive critique of what Melanie Klein's system means, we shall leave aside for the time being what one or another author might be able to contribute on this score. To stick to what we have brought to light here, let's start with the fundamental relationship between the real child, the symbolic mother and her phallus, which for her is imaginary.

So, this is a scheme to be handled with caution inasmuch as it is focused on a single plane, despite corresponding to various planes and coming to function at successive stages of the story. Indeed, for a long while the child is not in a position to appropriate for himself the relationship of imaginary appurtenance that produces the mother's profound division on her side. We are going to try this year to elucidate this question. We are on the path of seeing how and at what moment this is taken on board by the child, and how this comes into play when the child himself enters this relationship with the symbolic object in so far as the phallus is its main currency. This poses questions of chronology, temporality, order and succession, which are questions that we try to broach quite naturally – as is indicated by the history of psychoanalysis – from the angle of pathology.

What do the observations show us here? When we scrutinise them carefully they show that it is very exactly around and correlative to this singular symptom, which places the subject in an elective relationship with a fetish – the mesmerising object inscribed upon the veil – that his erotic life gravitates. I'm saying *gravitates* because although it is a mesmerising object, it is understood that the subject maintains a certain freedom of movement, which can be perceived

when one analyses and doesn't merely make a clinical description. When we take an observation we can see those elements that I have been spelling out today, and which Binet himself had already seen, for instance this gripping point of the screen-memory and the stand-still at the hem of the mother's dress, even her girdle. We can see the essentially ambiguous relation of illusion with this fetish being lived through as such and, moreover, being preferred. We can see the particularly satisfying function of an object that in itself is inert and entirely at the mercy of the subject for the handling of his erotic relationships. All of this can be seen, but it takes analysis to see what is at stake a little more closely, namely what happens whenever, for whatever reason, the recourse to the fetish founders, becomes exhausted and worn out, and simply gives way.

What we can see in the subject's deportment in his love life, and more simply in his erotic relationship, boils down to a defence. You can inspect this by reading observations in the *International Journal*, by Mrs Sylvia Payne in the second issue of volume 20, by Mr W. H. Gillespie in volume 21, and by Mr Dugmore Hunter in the third issue of volume 35, or those by Mrs Greenacre and others in the *Psycho-Analytic Study of the Child.* This was also glimpsed by Freud, and is spelt out in our diagram. Freud tells us that fetishism is a defence against homosexuality and Mr Gillespie too notes *how narrow may be the margin* between fetishism and homosexuality. In short, what we find in the relationships with the love object that organise this cycle for the fetishist is an alternation of identifications. There is an identification with the woman confronted with the destructive penis, the imaginary phallus of the primordial experiences from the oral–anal period focused on the aggressiveness of the sadistic theory of coitus, and indeed a good many experiences that are brought to light by analysis include some observation of the primal scene perceived as cruel, aggressive, violent and even deadly. And, conversely, there is the subject's identification with the imaginary phallus, which for the woman makes it a pure object which she can devour and, at the furthest limit, destroy.

The child is faced with this oscillation between the two poles of the imaginary relationship in what might be called a brutal fashion, not yet established in its Oedipal lawfulness by the introduction of the father as a subject, as a central point of order and legitimate ownership. The child is offered up to this bipolar oscillation of the relationship between two irreconcilable objects which either way culminate in a destructive and even deadly outcome. This is what is to be found at the base of love relations whenever they arise in the subject's life as they assume order and shape. Along a certain path of understanding analysis, which is precisely the new-fangled path

and which in this respect has forged its own path, the analyst will intervene to make the subject perceive the alternation between these positions at the same time as their signification. It might be said that in a certain way the analyst intervenes to open the symbolic distance that is necessary for the subject to perceive meaning.

The observations are exceedingly rich and profitable here, when they show us for example the umpteen forms that the actuality of the subject's early life can take, the fundamental dis-completion that means that he is offered up as such to the imaginary relationship, either along the path of identification with the woman or along the path of taking the place of the imaginary phallus. That is to say, either way there is an insufficient symbolisation of the ternary relationship. For example, the authors say that very often they note the absence of the father, sometimes repeatedly in the subject's history, his shortcoming as a presence – he goes on a trip, off to war, and so forth.

Furthermore, they note a certain type of subjective position that is sometimes peculiarly reproduced in the fantasies, that of a forced immobilisation. It is sometimes manifested by the fact of the subject having actually been tied down. There is a very fine example in the observation by Sylvia Payne. Following some excessive medical advice, a child was prevented from walking up until the age of two. He had to be tied down in his bed, and this was not without consequence, including the fact that he lived in this way closely monitored in his parents' bedroom. This put him in the exemplary position of being entirely given over to a purely visual relationship, without any first signs of muscular activity emerging from their source. His relationship with his parents was thus lived through in the style of rage and anger that you can imagine. While such exemplary cases are rare, some authors have insisted on the fact that certain phobic mothers who keep their child at a distance from their contact, a little as though such contact were a source of infection, are certainly not without consequence on the supervalence accorded the visual relationship in the constitution of the primal relationship with the maternal object.

Be that as it may, far more instructive than any such example of a vitiation of the primary relationship is, as it were, what appears as a pathological relationship, which presents as the flipside or the complement to the libidinal adherence to the fetish. Fetishism is a classification that, nosologically speaking, encompasses all sorts of things for which our intuition merely gives us an indication of their affinity or kinship with fetishism.

That a subject like the one Mrs Payne tells us about should be attached to a mackintosh seems to be of the same nature as being

attached to a shoe. We make no mistake in thinking so. Structurally speaking, however, this mackintosh contains relations on its own account and indicates a position that is somewhat different from that of the shoe or the girdle in so far as strictly speaking they are themselves directly in the position of the veil between subject and object. Yet it is quite certain that this mackintosh, like any other kind of clothing fetish that is more or less enveloping, aside from the special quality that the rubber entails, possesses a feature that is very often met and which cannot fail to harbour some final mystery that would doubtless be clarified psychologically by the sensoriality of the special contact with the rubber itself. Perhaps it does harbour something that might, more easily than anything else, be the outer lining of skin, or else perhaps harbour special insulating capacities, but whatever the case may be concerning the structure itself of the relations such as they are delivered up in some centres where the observation is made analytically, we can see that the mackintosh plays a role here that is no longer exactly that of the veil. It is much rather the role of something behind which the subject aligns himself, not as though he were in front of the veil but as though he were behind it, that is, in the mother's place, and, more specifically, adhering to the position of identification with the mother in which she needs to be protected, right here, by this envelopment.

This is what affords the transition between cases of fetishism and those of transvestism. The envelopment is not a veil but a protection. It's an aegis in which the subject identified with the female personage envelops himself.

Another typical relationship that can be particularly exemplary is evidenced in outbreaks of an exhibitionism that in some cases is truly reactional, even sometimes in alternation with fetishism. It always occurs in connection with some effort the subject makes to leave his labyrinth, and when the real comes into play in some way, putting the subject in these positions of unstable equilibrium that give rise to this type of crystallisation or swing-around of his position. This is very plainly illustrated by the outline of Freud's case of female homosexuality, to the extent that we can see that the introduction of the real element in the shape of the father leads to an interchange of the terms such that what was located in the beyond-zone, the symbolic father, takes up a place in the imaginary relationship in the form of the exemplary homosexual position that she assumes, and which is demonstrative in relation to the father.

Similarly, among the observations we have a very fine case in which we can see a subject who, having attempted in certain conditions to gain access to a full relationship by artificially forcing the

real, expresses what was symbolically latent in the situation by means of his acting-out, that is to say, on the imaginary plane. Here is the example. The subject is about to attempt actual intercourse with a woman for the first time, but he positions himself in the experience as venturing into it in order to show, as it were, what he is capable of doing. He manages more or less successfully thanks to the help of the woman but, within the hour, even though there was nothing to suggest any possibility of his developing such symptoms, he gives himself over to a most peculiar and very highly calculated exhibitionism that consists in exposing his organ just as an international train is passing by. In this way, he could not be caught red-handed. He was compelled, therefore, to follow-up on something that was implicit in his position. His exhibitionism was merely the expression or the projection on the imaginary plane of something of which he had not understood the symbolic reverberations, namely the act he had just engaged in, which ultimately was but the act of trying to show, and merely to show, that he was capable of having normal intercourse just like anyone else.

We find this sort of reactional exhibitionism time and again in those observations that are proximate to fetishism, or which are even quite indisputably fetishism. One has a very clear sense of what is at stake in *Delinquent Acts as Perversions and Fetishes* by Melitta Schmideberg, though at the same time it is very curious to see how far she manages to avoid the main and essential aspect of the thing. She depicts a man who married a woman *nearly a head taller than he and of about one and a half times his weight*. He was truly victimised by his wife, becoming her awful punch-bag. One fine day this young man, who had been doing his best to face up to the situation, is informed that he is going to be a father. He rushes off to a public park and starts showing his organ to a group of young women.

Mrs Schmideberg, who certainly sounds a bit too Anna-Freudian in this, finds all sorts of analogies with the fact that the lad's father was already something of a victim for his wife, but had one day managed to get out of the situation by being caught with the maid. The intermediary of the jealous protest had brought his wife somewhat to heel. This explains nothing. It seems to Mrs Schmideberg that she has managed to make a *short analysis* of a perversion. But there is no cause for wonder, because it wasn't perversion at all, and nor has she managed to analyse it in the slightest. She leaves out of account the fact that, even so, it was through an act of exposing himself that the subject on this occasion manifested himself. There is no other way to explain this act of exposing himself than to refer to the mechanism of triggering whereby what arises in the real as a surplus that cannot be symbolically assimilated tends to precipitate

what lies at the bottom of the symbolic relationship, namely the equivalence between phallus and child.

Unable to assume this paternity in any way whatsoever, or even to believe in it, the intrepid fellow went off to show the equivalent of the child in the right place, namely the use of his phallus that still remained to him.

30 January 1957

X

IDENTIFICATION WITH THE PHALLUS

Transvestism and garment use
Showing oneself ≠ offering oneself to view
Girl = phallus
The object and the ideal in Freud
Frustration of love and satisfaction of need

Last time, I took a step forward in the elucidation of fetishism as an especially fundamental example of the dynamics of desire.

Desire is of the utmost interest to us for a reason that is twofold. On the one hand, we deal with this desire in our practice. It's not a constructed desire but a desire with all its paradoxes, just as we deal with an object with all its paradoxes. On the other hand, it's quite clear that Freud's thought took these paradoxes as its starting point. In particular, as far as desire is concerned, the starting point was perverse desire. It would be a great shame to lose sight of this in our attempt at unification or reduction in the face of the most naively intuitive theories on which psychoanalysis today has been drawing.

Every now and then I get some feedback on how you have received each fresh little finding that I bring you from one time to the next. At least this is what I hope for. Now, the little step I took came as a surprise to some people, who already found the theory of love quite satisfactory enough in the way I present it to you, in being grounded on the fact that the subject addresses the lack that is in the object. This had already given a number of them the opportunity to reflect in a way that seemed sufficiently enlightened, though they did have some trouble realising that there is a beyond-zone and a lack in this subject–object relation. Last time, I brought in an extra complication with a term that is situated in front of the object, namely the veil or curtain, the site of the imaginary projection where something appears that becomes the figuration of this lack and which as such can be the support offered to something that finds its name there

– desire, but desire qua perverse. It is upon this veil that the fetish comes as a figuration of precisely what lacks beyond the object.

This schematisation is designed to set up the successive planes that should allow you in certain cases to find your bearings more easily in this sort of perpetual ambivalence and confusion, where yes is equal to no, where steering in one direction is equal to steering in exactly the opposite direction, along with everything that analysts unfortunately make use of to get out of the bind under the name *ambivalence*.

1

Right at the end of what I told you last time regarding fetishism, I pointed out how a position becomes apparent that is in some sense complementary. This position is also apparent across the different phases of the fetishist structure, even in the attempts that the fetishist makes to join up with the object from which he has been separated by something that has a mechanism and function which he does not, of course, understand. This position, which might be called symmetrical – the corresponding pole that lies opposite fetishism – is the function of transvestism.

In transvestism the subject identifies with what lies behind the veil, with the object that lacks something. The authors have spotted this very well in their analyses and have expressed it in their language, saying that the transvestite identifies with the phallic mother insomuch as, further to this, she veils over the lack of phallus.

This transvestism takes us a long way into the question, because we didn't have to wait for Freud to tackle the psychology of garments. In any use of the garment there is something that partakes of the function of transvestism. While the immediate commonplace view of the function of the garment is that it conceals the pudendum, the question has to be slightly more complicated than this in the eyes of an analyst. All it would take would be for one of these authors who go on about the phallic mother just to notice the meaning of what he is saying. Garments are not made solely to conceal what one has, in the sense of *having it or not*, but also precisely on account of *not having*. Both functions are essential. It is not always and essentially a matter of hiding the object but also of hiding the lack of object. This is a straightforward application in this case of the imaginary dialectic of what is too often overlooked, namely the function and presence of the lack of object.

Conversely, in the sweeping use they make of the scoptophilic relationship,[1] they always imply, as though it went without saying,

that the fact of showing oneself is quite straightforward, that it is the correlative of the activity of viewing in voyeurism. Yet again, one dimension is being wilfully overlooked.

It is not true that always and in every instance the subject simply puts himself on view, as though this were the correlative and corresponding relation to the activity of viewing. It is not about the subject's involvement in a couple of visual capture. In scoptophilia there is also the supplementary dimension of involvement that is expressed in language by the presence of the reflexive form, a verbal form that in other languages exists in the middle voice. It is *to offer oneself to view*. If you combine these two dimensions, what the subject offers to view across a whole range of activities that get mixed up under the heading of voyeurism/exhibitionism is something other than what he shows. This gets drowned out in what is sweepingly called *the scoptophilic relationship*.

Authors like Fenichel – who are very poor theoreticians under their apparent clarity but who, even so, are not lacking in analytic experience – saw this very well. While the effort at theorisation comes to a head in hopeless failure, which is the case in a number of Fenichel's articles, you can occasionally light upon some very fine clinical gems in them, and even his good feeling for a whole range of facts that, through a kind of flair that the analyst has fortunately drawn from his experience, are grouped together around a theme or a branch chosen from the analytic articulation of the fundamental imaginary relationships. Around scoptophilia and around transvestism, various factual stems are grouped together which are utterly distinct from one another but which the author feels more or less obscurely to share some kinship or commonality.

In particular, while taking in this expansive and bland literature – a necessary undertaking if one is to give an account of just how far analysts have penetrated into an actual articulation of these facts – I recently turned my attention to an article by Fenichel that was published in 1949, in the third instalment of the eighteenth volume of the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*. It concerns what he calls *The Symbolic Equation: Girl = Phallus*. This is not unrelated to the well-known series of equations *faeces = child = penis* that Freud himself authorised. Even though we can see a blatant lack of orientation being demonstrated here by Fenichel, which constantly leaves us wishing for a logic that would be otherwise, a series of facts can be ascertained which are grouped around these analytic encounters. From these it can be seen that, in the subject's unconscious, and especially the unconscious of the female subject, the child may be held to be equivalent to the phallus. All in all, here lies the phylum of everything that attaches to the fact that the child is given to the

mother as a sort of substitute for, or even an equivalent to, the phallus.

However, alongside this there are many further facts, and that they should be bracketed together with this one is rather surprising. When I spoke about the child, it was not especially the female child, but this article sets its sights very specifically on the girl. Certainly the article has to start with a number of well-known features of fetishistic or quasi-fetishistic specificity, with certain perversions that are interpreted as the equivalent of the subject's phallus. It is part and parcel of analytic data that the girl herself – and even the child in a more general way – can conceive of herself as being posited as equivalent to the phallus and can demonstrate this in her deportment. That it is to say, a woman can experience the sexual relationship as being what leads her to bring the male partner his phallus. This is sometimes noticeable even in the details of her preferred position in love-making, as something that comes to append to the partner, that nestles into a certain locality of her partner's body. This is yet another kind of fact that cannot fail to be quite striking and to catch our attention. Then, in some cases, the male subject can likewise give himself to the woman as the thing she lacks, and bring her the phallus in the capacity of what she lacks, imaginarily speaking.

The full range of facts that are highlighted here might seem to point in one direction, but it can also be seen that in this way of comparing them and bringing them all into a single equation, the facts that are being gathered together are actually extremely different. In each of the four different orders of relationship that I have just sketched out, the subject is absolutely not in the same relation with the object. Either the subject brings it, or else gives it, or else desires it, or else replaces it. Once our attention has been drawn to these registers, we cannot fail to see that the author's grouping together of these facts into the equivalence that he thereby sets up goes far beyond a straightforward theoretical requirement.

We also read that the young girl can, for one type of subject, be the object of a supervalent attachment, and that a mythical function can emerge both from these perverse mirages and from a whole series of literary constructions which, depending on their author, we can place in more or less illustrious groupings. Some have spoken quite readily of a Mignon type. You are all familiar with Goethe's creation of Mignon the bohemian, whose bisexual position is very firmly underscored by the author himself. She lives with a sort of enormous and brutal protector, who clearly is highly paternal, known as the Harper. All told, he serves as her high servitor, but at the same time she is of great necessity to him. Goethe says somewhere, *the Harper*

whom she needed, and Mignon whom he could not do without.[2] We find here a sort of couple with, on the one hand, what could be called *might* in its solid and brutal embodied state, and, on the other, something without which this might would be stripped of its efficacy, something that it is missing and which is ultimately the secret of its true might. This something is nothing less than a lack.

This is the final site where the infamous magic comes to be located, which is always so confusedly attributed in analytic theory to the idea of almightiness. As I have told you, the structure of almightiness, contrary to what people believe, lies not in the subject but in the mother, that is, in the primal Other. The Other is the one who is almighty. However, behind this almightiness there is indeed an ultimate lack on which the might of the Other hinges. I mean that as soon as the subject perceives, in the object whose almightiness he expects, this lack that renders powerless, the final resource of almightiness is deferred yet further beyond, to the very site where something does not exist, and to the utmost degree. It is that which, in the object, is nothing but the symbolism of lack, nothing but fragility and smallness. This is where the subject has accentuated the true and secret mainspring of almightiness, and it's what constitutes the considerable interest of what today I'm calling the Mignon type, which in literature has been reproduced in a great many examples.

Three years ago, I nearly announced a lecture on Jacques Cazotte's *Le Diable amoureux*. There are few testimonies that are so exemplary when it comes to a profound divination of the imaginary dynamic I've been trying to develop for you, and today especially. My recollection of it is as a major illustration that accentuates and imparts the meaning of this magical being that lies beyond the object, to which a whole series of idealising fantasies can become attached.

The tale begins in Naples, in a cave to which the first-person narrator has taken himself at the beckoning of the devil. In accordance with certain formalities, the devil appears in the guise of a formidable camel's head with disproportionately large ears. The camel's head says to him, in the most hollow voice – *Che vuoi? What wouldst thou?*

I believe that this fundamental questioning is indeed what provides us in the most gripping way with the function of the superego. But the interest does not lie in the fact that the image of the superego has found a gripping illustration, but rather in the creature who is supposed to transform, no sooner has the pact been concluded, into a little dog who, through a transition that surprises no one, becomes a charming young man and, then, a charming young woman. Furthermore, until the end they intermingle with total ambiguity. This beloved protagonist, who goes by the significant

name of Biondetta, becomes for a while the stunning source of the narrator's every happiness, the fulfilment of his every desire, the properly magical satisfaction of everything he might wish for. Yet all this is steeped in an atmosphere of fantasy, of dangerous unreality, of abiding menace that doesn't fail to taint the surroundings. The situation is resolved at the end by the sudden collapse of this accelerating and crazy race, and by a catastrophic dissipation of the mirage, when the subject returns, as is only proper, to his mother's castle.

Another novel, Henri de Latouche's *Fragoletta*, presents a curious character who is clearly a transvestite because until the end, and without anything being brought to light unless by the reader, it has to do with a girl who is a boy and who plays a role that is functionally analogous to the one I've just described as the Mignon type. After a number of details and refinements, the novel culminates in a duel in which the protagonist kills Fragoletta. Fragoletta had presented herself to him as a boy and he had failed to recognise her. This shows very well the equivalence between a certain female object of *Verliebtheit* and the other party as a rival, the same other that is at issue when Hamlet kills the character of Ophelia's brother.

Here we are in the presence of a character that is fetishised or made fay, these being fundamentally the same word since they both connect via the Portuguese *feitiço* to the Latin *factitius*. Historically speaking, the word *fetish* derives from this and is none other than the *factitious*. The ambiguous feminine creature represents the subject himself, embodying in some way, beyond the mother, the phallus that she lacks, and doing so all the better in that he doesn't possess it himself. Instead, he is fully engaged in its representation, its *Vorstellung*. We are in the presence of a yet further function of the love relation on the perverse paths of desire, paths which can be exemplary for us in clarifying the positions that have to be singled out when we analyse this desire.

So, we have been led finally to ask the question of what is subjacent and constantly put into question by this very critique, namely the notion of identification.

2

The notion of identification is present from the first in Freud's writing in a latent fashion, emerging from one moment to the next only to disappear again. Implications of identification are already there in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. It was to reach its major point of explication when he wrote *Mass Psychology and the*

Analysis of the Ego, which includes a chapter expressly devoted to identification.

One feature of this chapter is to show us – as very often this is so, and the value of Freud's writing is to show us this – the author's very great perplexity. This is an article where Freud admits that he is in a bind, and even that he is quite powerless to get out of the dilemma posed by the constant ambiguity that presents between the two terms he specifies, namely *identification* and *object-choice*. These two terms appear in a great many cases, one being substituted for the other with such a disconcerting power of metamorphosis that the transition itself is not grasped. Nevertheless, it is clearly necessary to maintain the distinction between the two because, as Freud says, standing on the side of the object is not the same thing as standing on the side of the subject. It's quite clear that, should an object become the object of choice, it is not the same as becoming the support for the subject's identification.

In itself this is wonderfully instructive. It is no less instructive to behold the disconcerting ease with which each author seems to accommodate himself to this and uses one and the other in a way that is strictly equivalent, whether in his observation or his theorisation, without asking for more. When one does ask for more, this produces an article like the one by Gustav Hans Graber, in the 1937 edition of *Imago*, on two types of mechanism in identification, *Die zweierlei Mechanismen der Identifizierung*, which really is the most staggering thing you can imagine because everything seems to be resolved for him by the distinction between active identification and passive identification. When one looks more closely it is impossible not to see, and indeed Graber himself notices this, that the two poles of active and passive are present in any kind of identification, and so we really have to come back to Freud and take up his articulation of the question point by point.

Chapter VIII of *Mass Psychology and Analysis of the Ego*, which follows the chapter on identification, opens with a sentence that shifts right away into the atmosphere of something that in its purity is quite different from what we usually read – *Even in its caprices the usage of language remains true to some* Wirklichkeit, *to some effective reality*.

As a side note, I would like to point out that Freud had made a first inroad into identification in the previous chapter by speaking about identification with the father as the example through which we enter most naturally into this phenomenon. We come to the second paragraph, and in the German text we read – *At the same time as this identification with his father, possibly even earlier, the boy has begun to undertake a true object-charging of his mother*. As

an example of the poor translation of Freud's texts in French, *even earlier* is translated as *un peu plus tard, a little later*, leaving the reader to wonder whether the identification with the father might not come first.[3]

We find another example in the passage I want to come to this morning, and which I have chosen for you because it is the most condensed and the most apt to show you Freud's perplexities. It concerns the state of love in its relations with identification. Following Freud's text, we read that identification is the more primal and fundamental function in that it entails an object-choice, but one that still has to be articulated in a way that is itself highly problematic, because Freud's entire analysis ties it profoundly to narcissism. To go as far as we can in the direction that Freud spells out perfectly, we see that this object is a sort of other ego within the subject – *The difference between identification and the condition of being in love,* Verliebtheit, *in its highest forms, called fascination or amorous dependence,* Hörigkeit, *is now easy to describe. In the former case the ego has enriched itself with the qualities of the object. To use Ferenczi's expression, it has 'introjected' the object into itself. In the latter case the ego has become poorer, it has abandoned itself to the object, setting the object in place of its most important constituent.*

In the French translation we read that the ego *s'assimile* the object, but all one has to do is read what Ferenczi wrote to see that it's not about assimilation but introjection. It's a matter of introjection in its relations with identification. Then, the French translator gives *s'étant effacé devant lui* for *dasselbe an die Stelle seines wichtigsten Bestandteils gesetzt*. The German has been completely lost in the French sentence, which on no account translates what is so fully articulated in Freud's text.

Freud is pausing here on the contrast between, on the one hand, what the subject introjects and is enriched by, and on the other, what takes something from him and impoverishes him. Indeed, Freud had previously dwelt at some length on what occurs in the state of love, where the subject becomes increasingly dispossessed, to the benefit of the loved object, of everything that is himself. The subject is humbled and falls into complete subjection in relation to the object he has invested in. Freud is spelling out how this object, for whose benefit the subject has become impoverished, is the very same that he sets in place of his *most important constituent*, his *wichtigsten Bestandteils*.

This is Freud's approach to the problem. He tackles it by tracing backwards. He doesn't spare us the moves he makes. He moves forward and sees that it's incomplete, so he retraces his steps and says – *Closer examination shows that this account erects sham opposites*

that do not in fact exist. We are not talking about impoverishment or enrichment in economic terms; the condition of being deeply in love can also be described as the ego having introjected the object into itself. It may be that another distinction comes closer to the essence here. In the case of identification, the object had become lost or been given up.

The French translation, however, tells us that the object *se volatilise et disparaît*. We are better off consulting the German text, because this is a reference to the fundamental notion that can be found consistently in Freud's notion of the formation of the object from the very start. He says that *das Objekt verloren gegangen oder aufgegeben worden*. It is not, therefore, about evaporating or vanishing, because the object does not vanish. On the contrary, the object is *reinstated in the ego, with the ego undergoing a partial change, modelling itself on the lost object*, or, in the case of *Verliebtheit*, *the object is preserved and is as such 'over-charged' by and at the expense of the ego.*

Freud continues – *But in this respect too there is some doubt. If it is established that identification presupposes the relinquishment of object-charging, can there be no identification where the object is preserved? And before we allow ourselves to become involved in debating this delicate question, it may already have dawned on us that another question captures the essence of this situation, namely whether the object is set in the place of the* Ich *or of the* Ichideal.

So, in going about things in this way the text leaves us in quite a pickle. It seems that nothing of any great sharpness emerges from these movements to-and-fro. The very place that is to be given to the object in these different back-and-forth movements, in which it is constituted either as an object of identification or as an object of loving capture, remains almost entirely in the state of a question. At least the question is being posed, and this is simply what I wanted to highlight. It can't be said that this is one of those texts that would be testamentary, but it's one of those in which Freud reached the summit of his theoretical elaboration.

Let's try, therefore, to take up the problem on the basis of the reference points that we have been afforded in the elaboration we have been trying to undertake here concerning the relations between frustration and the constitution of the object.

3

First of all, it's a matter of conceiving of the bond that we commonly establish, both in our practice and in our parlance, between identification and introjection. You have seen how this is quite apparent

right from the start of the passage from Freud that I've just read out to you.

I propose the following – *the metaphor that underlies introjection is an oral metaphor*. People speak indiscriminately about introjection and incorporation, allowing themselves to slide in the most common way into all the articulations that were produced in the Kleinian era. They would evoke, for instance, the infamous constitution of primordial objects that divide in just the right way into good and bad objects that are alternately introjected. These objects are held to be something that is simply given in this infamous primitive world that knows no bounds, where the subject would form a whole from his being subsumed into the maternal body. From this standpoint, introjection is held to be a function that is strictly equivalent to and symmetrical with the function of projection. Furthermore, the object is constantly in a kind of movement, passing from without to within only to be pushed back out from the inside when it has become too much to bear. This leaves introjection and projection in a perfect symmetry.

What I am about to try to articulate for you now takes a stand against this excess, which is certainly not a Freudian excess.

I believe that it is strictly impossible to conceive of phenomena such as manifest oral impulses – and I'm not talking simply in terms of conceptualisation or something that is shaped in thoughts, but in terms of clinical practice – of such evocations of the oral drive, correlative with turning points in the symbolic reduction of the object that we endeavour to bring about from time to time, with more or less success, if we stick with this vague notion of regression that is always put at our disposal in such cases. In cases of young children where this leads to the appearance of bulimic impulses, or at some such turning point in the treatment of a fetishist, we are told that the subject is regressing because, of course, that's what he's there for. Why? Because at the very moment he is progressing in his analysis, that is to say, trying to take in a full perspective of his fetish, he regresses. You can always say this and no one will contradict you.

I say, on the contrary, that each time the drive appears in the analysis, or elsewhere, it should be conceived of in relation to its economic function, in relation to the unfolding of a particular defined symbolic relationship. Isn't there something that allows us to shed light on this in the rough outline I gave you for the dialectical structure of the gift?

On one side, the child is faced with the mother as the support of the first love relation, in so far as love is something that is symbolically structured, in so far as she is the object of an appeal, an object which therefore is as much absent as present. This is the mother

whose gifts are signs of love, and which as such are just that. Ipso facto, these gifts are cancelled out whenever they are anything else but signs of love. On the other side, there are the objects of need that she presents to the child in the form of her breast. Can't you see that between the two it's a matter of equipoise and compensation? Whenever there is a frustration of love, this is compensated by the satisfaction of need. It is in so far as the mother is missing for the child who calls out to her, that he clings to her breast and turns it into something more significant than anything else. So long as he has it in his mouth and derives satisfaction from it, he cannot be separated from this thing that leaves him nourished, relaxed and satisfied. Here, the satisfaction of need is both a compensation for the frustration of love and, I would almost say, the beginning of the distraction from it.

The supervalence that the object assumes – the breast in this instance, or the nipple – is grounded precisely on the fact that a real object assumes its function as a part of the love object. It takes on its signification qua symbolic and, as a real object, becomes part of the symbolic object. The drive aims at the real object as a part of the symbolic object. It is on this basis that any understanding of oral absorption, of the mechanism of so-called regressive oral absorption that can intervene in any love relation, becomes possible. Once a real object that satisfies a real need has become an element of the symbolic object, any other object that can satisfy a real need can come in its stead, and first in line is the one that is already symbolised but which is also perfectly materialised, namely speech.

To the extent that oral regression to the primal object of devoration comes to compensate for the frustration of love, this reaction of incorporation imparts its model, its cast, its *Vorbild*, to the kind of incorporation that is the incorporation of certain words among others, which lies at the origin of the early shaping of what is known as the superego. What the subject incorporates under the name of the superego is something analogous to the object of need, not in the sense that it would itself be the gift but in that it is the substitute for the failing of the gift, which is really not the same thing.

It is on this basis, too, that the fact of possessing or not possessing a penis can take on a double meaning and enter the subject's imaginary economy by two paths that are initially very different. First, the penis can, at a given moment, locate its object somewhere in the lineage and the stead of the object that is the breast or the nipple. It is thus an oral form of the incorporation of the penis that plays its role in determining certain symptoms and functions. But there is another way in which the penis enters the imaginary economy. It can enter not as an object that compensates for the frustration

of love, but as what lies beyond the love object and which the love object lacks.

Let's call the first one the *penis*. With all it entails, even so, it is an imaginary function in that it is incorporated imaginarily. The other one is the *phallus* inasmuch as the mother lacks it and it lies beyond her and her power of love.

It is with respect to this missing phallus that I've been posing you the question, since the start of this year's seminar – *at what moment does the subject discover this lack?* When and how does he make this discovery in such a way that he can find himself committed to substituting himself for it, that is to say, to choosing a different path in the re-finding of the love-object that slips away, by himself bringing in his own lack?

This distinction is crucial, and it will enable us today to set down a first sketch of what is more or less requisite for this temporal phase to come about.

We have symbolic structuration and possible introjection, which as such is the most characteristic form of primal identification that Freud posited. It is in a second temporal phase that *Verliebtheit* occurs. This *Verliebtheit* is absolutely inconceivable, it cannot be articulated anywhere, except in the register of the narcissistic relationship, in other words in the specular relationship, such as I have defined and articulated it.

I remind you that this occurs at a date that can be isolated. Of necessity, it cannot be before the sixth month. Sometime thereafter, this relationship with the image of the other comes about, insomuch as this image affords the subject the matrix around which can be organised what I called his *incomplétude vécue*, his lived experience of incompleteness, of the fact that he is wanting. He realises that he is lacking something in relation to the image that presents itself as total, not only as fulfilling, but also as a source of jubilation for him. It is in so far as there is a specific relationship between man and his image, in so far as the imaginary comes into play, that upon the foundation of these first two symbolic relationships between the object and the mother it will become apparent that both he and his mother lack something imaginarily. It is in the specular relationship that the subject has had the experience and the apprehension of a possible lack, the apprehension that something that lies beyond can exist and that this is a lack.

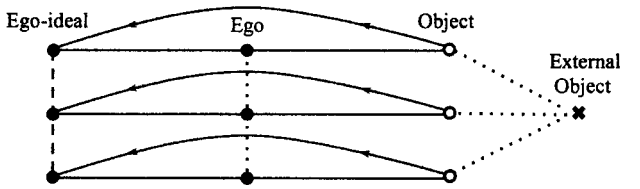
Therefore, it is only beyond the narcissistic realisation, and to the extent that these tense and deeply aggressive comings and goings start to be organised, around which the successive layers of what will constitute the ego will crystallise and form a kernel, that there can be an introduction of what leads to the appearance, for the

subject, beyond what he constitutes for the mother as an object, of the impression that either way the object of love is itself caught, captured, withheld in something that he, as an object, does not manage to reach, namely a yearning that bears on the mother's own lack.

In fact, at the point we've reached, all of this hinges on the effect of transmission whereby we suppose – because experience forces this upon us and because Freud adhered to this completely, right through to the last of his formulations – that no satisfaction by any real object whatsoever that comes to replace it will ever manage to fill this lack in the mother. Alongside the relationship with the child, the lack of the phallus remains as a point of attachment of her insertion in the imaginary. It is only after the second phase of imaginary specular identification with the body image as such, which lies at the origin of the ego and which provides its matrix, that the child, the subject, can gain access to what the mother lacks. But the precondition for this is the specular experience of the other as forming a totality in relation to which he is the one who can lack something, because the subject broaches, beyond the object of love, the lack for which he can be led to substitute himself. He can propose himself as the object that will fill this lack.

I have led you today as far as the presentation of a form that you must simply hold in your minds so that we can pick up from the same spot next time. To what does this form correspond? What you can see drawn up here is a new dimension, a new property, of what is given in the actual state of the subject once he has completed this process and the functions of superego, Ego-ideal and ego have been differentiated. It's a matter of knowing, as Freud puts it very well at the end of his article, what is meant by this object coming to position itself either in the place of the ego or in the place of the Ego-ideal.

In what I have thus far explained about narcissism I have had to stress the shaping of the Ego-ideal – I mean, the shaping of the ego insomuch as it is an ideal shaping and insomuch as it is from the Ego-ideal that the ego is detached. I have not sufficiently articulated the difference between them. However, if you simply look into Freud, with his fruitful obscurities and his diagrams that pass from hand to hand without anyone deigning for an instant to reproduce them, what do you find in the one that he offers us at the end of this chapter?



Freud's *Graphische Darstellung*

Here [on the central vertical axis] is where he places the egos of the different subjects. It's a matter of knowing why different subjects are in communion with the same ideal. He explains that there is an identification between the Ego-ideal and all these objects that are supposed to be the same. Yet when we look at the diagram we notice that he has taken care to link these three objects, which may be supposed to be the same, to an external object that lies behind them. Can you not see that this bears a glaring resemblance to what I've been trying to explain to you? Regarding the *Ichideal*, it's not merely a matter of an object but indeed of something that lies beyond the object and which comes to be reflected, as Freud says, not purely and simply in the ego – which doubtless feels something of this and can be impoverished by it – but rather in something that lies in the ego's very footings, in its first requirements and, to spell it right out, upon the first veil that is projected in the form of the Ego-ideal.

Next time I will be picking up from where I've left off today, with the relation between the Ego-ideal, the fetish, and the object qua missing object, that is to say, the phallus.

6 February 1957

XI

THE PHALLUS AND THE UNFULFILLED MOTHER

The gift manifests itself on appeal
Substitution of satisfactions
The eroticisation of need
The mirror, from jubilation to depression
The signifying role of the imaginary phallus

I intend today to take up the terms with which I've been trying to formulate the necessary revision of the notion of frustration. Indeed, without this revision it is quite possible that the gap will continue to grow between the dominant theories in psychoanalysis today – what are called the current proclivities of psychoanalysis – and Freudian doctrine. As you know, in my view Freud's doctrine constitutes nothing less than the only accurate conceptual formulation of the practice that this very same doctrine founded.

What I am going to try to spell out today might be a little more algebraic than usual, but everything we have done so far has paved the way for it.

Before we set off again, let's punctuate what has been brought out by certain terms that we have been led to voice here.

1

I have tried to locate frustration for you on the three-tier chart between *castration*, which Freud's doctrine took as its point of departure, and *privation*, to which certain authors refer it. Let's say that they have referred privation to castration in various ways.

Psychoanalysis today has been putting frustration right at the heart of all these failings that are purportedly marked out in their analysable consequences, in the symptoms properly speaking that fall in our remit. We need to understand frustration so that we can

turn it to valid use, because, to be sure, if the problem of analytic experience has brought it to the forefront of the terms in use, this cannot be entirely without reason. While its prevalence does not substantially modify the economy of our thought as a whole in the presence of neurotic phenomena, it does nevertheless lead it in some respects into dead-ends. This is indeed what I've been endeavouring to demonstrate, I hope with success, using a number of examples. The further you venture into the analytic literature with an open eye, the more you will see these dead-ends being demonstrated.

Let's posit here at the outset that frustration is not the refusing of an object of satisfaction in the pure and simple sense. Satisfaction means the satisfying of a need. I don't have to insist on this point.

On the whole, when one speaks in terms of frustration, one is using the word without reading more into it. We have frustrating experiences and we think they leave traces. We simply forget that for things to be so simple an explanation would have to be found for how the desire that would supposedly have been frustrated might correspond to the distinctive property that Freud accentuates so firmly from the time of his very first writings, namely that desire in the repressed unconscious is indestructible. I've been indicating to you how the entire development of his life's work is undertaken to examine this riddle.

This property is strictly inexplicable within the perspective of need alone. Any experience we might have of what goes on in an animal economy shows us this. The frustration of a need must entail various modifications that are bearable for the organism to a greater or lesser extent, but certainly if there is one thing that experience confirms, it's that frustration cannot give rise to the maintaining of desire as such. Either the individual succumbs or the desire alters or wanes. Either way, no coherence whatsoever is imposed between frustration and the permanence of desire, even its insistence, to employ the term I was led to foreground when we were speaking about *Wiederholungszwang*, the automatism of repetition.

Furthermore, Freud never speaks of frustration. He speaks of *Versagung*, which falls more adequately in line with the notion of reneging, in the sense that one says *to renege a treaty*, to withdraw from an engagement.[1] This is so true that one can even on occasion place *Versagung* on the opposite side, because the word can mean both *pledge* and *the breaking of a pledge*. Very often this is so with these words that carry the prefix *Ver-*, which is so essential in German and which has held an eminent place in word-choice in analytic theory.

Let's come straight out with it. The triad *frustration / aggression / regression*, when it is given like this, is far from having the more or

less seductive character of immediately comprehensible signification that is often read into it. One has only to consider it for a moment to notice that in itself it is not comprehensible, and that it raises the question of how comprehensive it is. There is no reason not to offer some other sequence of terms instead. Quite randomly, I could tell you – *frustration / depression / contrition.* I could invent others. For us, it's a matter of posing the question of the relations between frustration and regression, and this has never been done in a satisfactory way. I wouldn't say that what has been done is false. Rather, I'm saying that it's not satisfactory because the notion of regression is never developed in these efforts.

So, frustration is not the refusing of an object of satisfaction. It hinges on something else. I'm going to content myself with lining up a series of formulas that have already been worked through here, and so I am relatively unburdened from having to prove their worth, save through veiled references. I want to work through a chain in such a way that you will be able to retain its chief points of articulation, so that you can make use of it and see whether these articulations are helpful to you.

Let's move on to the path that consists in taking things up at the start. I'm not saying that this is the start of development, because it doesn't have the character of a development, but rather at the level of the child's primal relation with his mother. Let's say that, originatively, frustration – not just any frustration but a frustration that can be utilised in our dialectic – is thinkable only as the refusing of a gift, in so far as the gift is itself the symbol of something that is called love.

In saying this I'm saying nothing that isn't spelt out in black and white by Freud himself. The fundamental character of the love relation, with all that it entails in and of itself, elaborated not at one remove but twice removed, does not imply merely that one is faced with an object but that one is faced with a being. This is set out by Freud in a number of different passages as the relation that lies at the beginning. What does it mean? It doesn't mean that the child has practised the philosophy of love, that he has made the distinction between love and desire. It means that he is already steeped in the implied existence of the symbolic order. We find evidence of this in his behaviour. Certain things come to pass that are only conceivable if this order is already present.

Here we are faced with an ambiguity that arises from the fact that we have a science that is a science of the subject and not a science of the individual. Yet we succumb to the need to place the subject at the point of departure, forgetting that the subject qua subject cannot be identified with the individual. Even if the subject is detached, as

an individual, from the order that concerns him as a subject, this order exists none the less. In other words, the law of intersubjective relationships, given how it profoundly governs the very thing upon which the individual depends, implicates him, whether he is conscious of this or not, as an individual in this order.

Trying to make the image of the father emerge from the child's anxieties in the dark is a desperate attempt that can only be undertaken by pulling strings so conspicuous they fool no one. I'm alluding to Mallet's articles on phobia. I can qualify their outlook as desperate because the order of paternity exists as such. Whether or not the child has experienced such childhood dread, it only takes on its articulated meaning in the intersubjective father/child relationship, which is deeply organised symbolically and forms the subjective context in which the child will have to develop his experience. This experience is taken up from one moment to the next, and retroactively reshaped, by the intersubjective relation in which he engages himself incrementally, taking the bait piece by piece.

I spoke about the gift. In itself the gift implies the full cycle of exchange, and the subject enters this as early as you can imagine. There is a gift only because there is an immense circulation of gifts that covers the entire intersubjective whole. The gift arises from a zone that lies beyond the object relation, precisely because it presupposes behind it the full order of exchange that the child has entered, and it can arise from this beyond-zone only with the character that constitutes it as specifically symbolic. Nothing is a gift unless it has been constituted by the act that cancelled it out or dismissed it beforehand. The gift emerges against a backdrop of revocation, and it is against this backdrop, and as a sign of love that is first annulled so as then to reappear as a pure presence, that the gift is given or not on appeal.

I shall say more here. I've said that the appeal lies on the foremost plane, but recall if you will what I told you when we were dealing with psychosis. I said that the appeal was essential to speech. I would be wrong to stick at this level, because the structure of speech implies in the Other that the subject receives his own message in an inverted form. Here, we are not yet at this level because what is at issue is the appeal. However, already, the appeal cannot be sustained in isolation. Freud's image of the infant with his *Fort/Da* shows this very well. Already, at the level of the appeal, it has to have its contrary diametrically opposed. Let's call it a marker. It is to the extent that the very thing that is called out for can be rejected that the appeal is already fundamental and foundational in the symbolic order. Either way, the appeal is already a fully engaged introduction into the symbolic order.

When it is not there, the gift manifests itself following the appeal for *what is*, and when it is there, it manifests itself essentially as the mere sign of the gift, that is to say, as nothing, as no object of satisfaction. It is there precisely to be pushed away in so far as it is this nothing. This symbolic interplay therefore has a fundamentally disappointing character. This is the essential articulation on the basis of which satisfaction itself is situated and takes on its meaning.

I don't mean that the child does not on such occasions obtain the satisfaction that is granted to a pure vital rhythm. I'm saying that any satisfaction that is in question in frustration arises there against the backdrop of the fundamentally disappointing character of the symbolic order. Here, satisfaction is a mere substitute, a compensation. The child quashes, as it were, the disappointing aspect of this symbolic interplay by orally seizing the object of satisfaction, the breast in this instance. What sends him to sleep in this satisfaction is precisely his disappointment, his frustration, the refusal that he has experienced.

The painful dialectic of the object that is both there and never there, in which the subject becomes practised, is symbolised for us in the exercise that is brilliantly seized upon by Freud as the pared-down interplay of what constitutes the backdrop to the subject's relationship with the presence–absence couple. Of course, Freud seizes upon it in its pure state, in its detached form, but he recognises this interplay insomuch as it is absence that constitutes presence. So, in his satisfaction, the child quashes the fundamental unfulfilment of this relationship. He stifles the interplay by grasping the oral object. He quashes what arises from this fundamentally symbolic relationship.

From this point forth, there is nothing astonishing for us in the fact that it is in sleep that the persistence of his desire on the symbolic plane should manifest itself. I will add here how even the child's desire in the dream is never tied to a pure and simple natural satisfaction. You can see this in the dream of the young Anna Freud, which is claimed to be exceedingly straightforward. She says – *stwawbewwies, pudden,* etc. These objects are all transcendental objects. They have already entered the symbolic order to such an extent that they are all forbidden objects. Nothing obliges us to think that the young Anna was unfulfilled that evening, quite the contrary. What is maintained in the dream as a desire – certainly one that is expressed undisguisedly, but with the full transposition of the symbolic order – is desire of the impossible.

And if you might still be in doubt as to whether speech plays an essential role here, I will point out to you that had the young Anna

Freud not voiced this in words, we would never have known a thing about it.

2

Let's pursue now the dialectic of frustration and ask what happens when the satisfaction of need comes into play and replaces symbolic satisfaction.

Due to the very fact that it is substituted for symbolic satisfaction, this satisfaction of need itself undergoes a transformation. When the real object itself becomes a sign in the demand for love, that is to say, in the symbolic plea, it brings about an immediate transformation. What is this transformation? Given that I've been telling you that the real object here takes on the value of a symbol, I could tell you that it has thereby become a symbol, or almost become one, but to do so would be a sheer sleight of hand. What takes on a symbolic accent and value is the activity, the mode of apprehension, that puts the child in possession of the object.

This is how orality becomes what it is. Being an instinctual mode of hunger, it is the vehicle of a libido that maintains one's body, but that's not all it is. Freud wonders about this libido, asking whether it is the libido of vital preservation or sexual libido. Of course, in itself it is the former, and this is even what implicates *destrudo*, but it is precisely because it has entered this dialectic of substituting satisfaction for the demand for love that it is indeed an eroticised activity. It is libido in the strict sense, and it is sexual libido.

All this is not merely some nugatory rhetorical articulation, because it responds to certain objections – and in a different way, in a way that does not evade them – voiced by people who are certainly not especially astute, regarding certain analytic remarks on the eroticisation of the breast. One such objector is Charles Blondel. In the most recent issue of *Les Études philosophiques*, dedicated to the centenary of Freud's birth, Mme Favez-Boutonier quotes Blondel from one of his articles where he says that he's quite prepared to entertain all of this, but still wonders what analysts make of those cases where the child is not suckled at his mother's breast but is instead bottle-fed. What I've just structured for you provides a reply precisely to this. Once it has entered the dialectic of frustration, the real object is not in itself irrelevant, but it has no need to be specific. Even if it is not the mother's breast, it will lose nothing of the value of its place in the sexual dialectic, from which emanates the eroticisation of the oral zone. The object is not what plays the essential role here, but rather the fact that the activity has taken on

this eroticised function on the plane of desire, and which becomes organised in the symbolic order.

I shall also point out to you in passing that this reaches so far that it is quite possible for the same role to be played when there is no real object whatsoever, because what is at issue here is to give rise to a substitutive satisfaction for symbolic saturation. This and this alone can explain the true function of symptoms like those of anorexia nervosa. I've already[2] told you that anorexia is not a matter of *not eating anything*, but of *eating nothing*. I insist – it means *to eat nothing*. *Nothing* is precisely something that exists on the symbolic plane. It's not a *nicht essen*, but a *nichts essen*. This point is indispensable if one is to understand the phenomenology of anorexia. What is at issue in the detail is that the child eats *nothing*, which is something other than a negation of activity. From this savoured absence as such, he makes use of what he has in front of him, namely the mother on whom he depends. In virtue of this *nothing*, he makes her dependent on him. If you do not grasp this, you cannot understand anything, not only about anorexia but about other symptoms besides, and you will make the gravest errors.

So, I have located for you the moment of reversal that brings us into the symbolic dialectic of oral activity. Other types of activity are then seized upon in like fashion in the libidinal dialectic. But this is not all that happens. Conversely, and consequently, at the same time as the symbolic reversal of the substitutive activity is introduced into the real, the mother – who hitherto was the subject of the symbolic demand, the simple locus where presence or absence could manifest itself, which raises the question of the unreality of the primary relationship with the mother – becomes a real being. Since she can endlessly decline, she can literally do anything. As I said, it is at this level – and not at the level of goodness knows what hypothesis of some kind of megalomania, which merely projects onto the child what is in the mind of the analyst – that there appears for the first time the dimension of almightiness, *Wirklichkeit*, which in German means what is really and effectively so. The essential effectiveness initially presents as the almightiness of the real being upon whom the gift or the non-gift depend, absolutely and with no recourse.

I'm telling you that the mother is primordially all-powerful, and that this cannot be eliminated from this dialectic if we are to understand anything worthwhile. It's one of its essential conditions. I'm not telling you, as does Mrs Melanie Klein, that the mother contains everything. That is another matter, to which I'm alluding only in passing. I will note, however, that we are now afforded a glimpse of how all the primitive phantasmatic objects can be found gathered

together in the immense container of the maternal body. Mrs Klein has always shown us quite wonderfully that this is possible, but she has always been in a great bind when it comes to explaining *how* it is possible, and her opponents have not held back from arguing as much in order to say that she is surely daydreaming. For sure, she has been daydreaming, and she has been quite right to, because the fact is possible only through a retroactive projection of the whole gamut of imaginary objects into the heart of the maternal body. But these objects really are there, because the mother constitutes a virtual field of symbolic annihilation, from which each of the objects to come will in turn draw their symbolic value. If we simply take the subject at a slightly more advanced level, for example a child at around two years of age, it is not surprising in the least that Mrs Klein should find here objects that are re-projected retroactively. And one can say in a certain sense that, just like all the others, since they were ready to appear there one day, they were indeed already there.

So, we find ourselves before a point at which the child is faced with the presence of maternal almightiness. Since we are on Mrs Melanie Klein's level, you will note that if I have just alluded briefly to what can be called the paranoid position, which is what she herself terms it, we are already at the level of maternal almightiness in what is suggested to us as constitutive of the depressive position, because, faced with this almightiness, we may suspect that there is something that cannot be unrelated to the relationship to almightiness, this kind of annihilation, this kind of micromania, which, contrary to megalomania, takes shape, according to what she tells us, at this stage. Clearly we should not go too quickly, because this is not given in itself by the mere fact that the mother who emerges as almighty is real. For the real almightiness to generate a depressive effect in the subject he still has to be able to reflect upon himself and upon the contrast with his own powerlessness. Clinical experience allows us to locate the thereabouts of this point at around the sixth month, the same that Freud picked out, and when the phenomenon of the mirror stage is already being produced.

You will object that I taught that when the subject is able to grasp his own body in its totality, in its specular reflection, this total other in which he completes himself and presents himself to himself, it is rather a sense of triumph that he feels. Indeed, this is something that we reconstructed, and not without experiential confirmation. The jubilatory character of this encounter was not in doubt. But there are two things here that we must not conflate.

On the one hand there is the experience of mastery, which will impart to the child's relation with his own ego an utterly essential

element of splitting, of being distinct from himself, and which will last until the end. On the other hand there is the encounter with the reality of the master. Insomuch as the form of mastery is given to him in the shape of a totality that is alienated from his own self, though closely bound to him and dependent upon him, there is jubilation, but it's a different matter once this form has been given and he encounters the reality of the master. This is when the moment of his triumph bespeaks also his defeat. When he finds himself in the presence of this totality in the shape of the mother's body, he is forced to observe that it doesn't obey him. Therefore, it is in so far as the reflected specular structure of the mirror stage comes into play that we can conceive of maternal almightiness as being reflected upon solely from a distinctly depressive position, namely the child's sense of powerlessness.

It is here that we can insert what I was alluding to earlier in anorexia. We could go a little quickly and say that the only power the subject wields against almightiness is to say *no* at the level of action and to bring in the dimension of negativism, which of course is not unrelated to the moment I'm driving at. Nevertheless, I will note that experience shows us, and surely not without reason, that resistance to almightiness in the relationship of dependence does not develop at the level of action or in the form of negativism, but rather at the level of the object insomuch as it has appeared to us under the sign of the nothing. It is at the level of the annulled object qua symbolic object that the child holds his dependence in check, and precisely by feeding on *nothing*. It is here that he turns his relation of dependence around, making himself by this means the master of the almightiness that is so eager to keep him alive, he who is initially the dependent one. From this point forward, the almightiness becomes answerable to his desire. It is blown wide open by a show of his capriciousness and is henceforth at the mercy of his own almightiness.

So, we do indeed need to be clear in our minds about how the symbolic order is, as it were, the necessary breeding ground on which the first imaginary relationship can come into play, on which the projection of a contrary can be played out in full.

To illustrate this now in psychological terms – but which amount to no more than a downgrading alongside the exposé I've just given – the intentionality of love constitutes very early on, prior to any beyond-zone with respect to the object, a fundamental symbolic structuration that it is impossible to conceive of if we do not posit the symbolic order itself as already established and present. Experience shows us this. Quite early on Mrs Susan Isaacs noted that from a very tender age a child can distinguish between a scolding and an

accidental knock. Even before a word is uttered, the child does not react to an inadvertent bump in the same way as to a slap.

I'll leave you to reflect on what this implies. You will tell me that, curiously enough, it's the same with animals, at least with pets. You would be raising an objection that I believe can easily be overturned, but which perhaps could be used as a counterargument. Indeed, this proves that the animal is able to accede to this sort of sketching out of a beyond-zone that brings him into highly particular relations with his master. Yet it is precisely because, unlike mankind, the animal is not inserted in an order of language with his whole being that this yields nothing further in the animal. The animal does, however, manage something as developed as telling the difference between some unintended whack on the back and being beaten.

Since for the time being it's a matter of sharpening the contours, you might have seen the journal that came out in December 1956 as the fourth number of volume 37 of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. It looks as though they told themselves that, after all, there is something to this thing called language, and it looks like a few people were solicited to respond to the call. I'm basing myself on the article by Mr Loewenstein, which betrays a certain cautious distance, not without competence, that consists in calling to mind how Ferdinand de Saussure taught that there is a signifier and signified. In short, Loewenstein shows that he's a little abreast of what's going on, but this is absolutely devoid of any links with our experience here, save for underscoring that one ought to think about what one says. So, remaining at this level of development, I can forgive him for not citing my teaching, because we've gone a great deal further.

There is also in the same issue an article by Mr Charles Rycroft, who on behalf of the Londoners tries to put a bit more into it, that is, to tell us what we're doing, the analytic theory of the intra-psychical agencies and their articulations one with the other. Perhaps we ought not to forget, says the author, that communication theory exists. We are reminded that when a child cries out, this can be regarded as a total situation that encompasses the mother, the cry, and the child. Consequently, we find ourselves fully in communication theory – the child cries out and the mother receives his cry as a *sign-stimulus* of need. If we could only take this as our point of departure, says the author, perhaps we might manage to reorganise our experience.

This is absolutely not how things are in what I have been teaching you. The cry that is at stake is a cry that already, as is shown by what Freud highlights in the child's manifestation, is not taken as a signal. It is already a call inasmuch as it calls for a reply. It calls out,

if I may say so, against the backdrop of a response. The cry is produced in a state of affairs where not only is language set in place for the child, but indeed he is steeped in a language-environment and is capable of seizing upon and voicing his first scraps of language as an alternating pair.

The *Fort/Da* is utterly essential. It's a cry, but the cry that is at issue here, the one that we take into account in frustration, is inserted into a synchronic world of cries that are organised in a symbolic system. The cries are already virtually organised in a symbolic system. The human subject is not merely conversant with the cry as something that on each occasion signals an object. Indeed it is perverted, deceptive, and wrong to pose the question in terms of a sign when the symbolic system is at issue, because from the very first the child issues his cry for someone to take it into account, and even for someone to have to account for it to someone else. You need only observe the interest that the child takes in receiving these moulded and voiced cries that we call language, and the interest he takes in the system of language for its own sake. The model gift is precisely the gift of speech, because here the gift is indeed equal in its principle. From the very first, the child feeds on words as much as on bread. As the Gospel says, *Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.*

You have noticed the following – or more precisely, you didn't notice it but I insist on underscoring it for you so as to bring this to a close – the term *regression* can have a repercussion here that is different from how it usually appears. The term *regression* is applicable to what happens when the real object, and by the same stroke the activity that is exerted to secure it, comes to be substituted for the symbolic demand. When I said that the child quashes his disappointment in his saturation and his unfulfilment by the contact with the breast, or with whichever other object, what is strictly speaking at stake is what will enable him to enter the necessity of the mechanism. This means that a symbolic frustration can always be followed by, can always open the door to, regression.

3

We need to make a jump now.

It would be quite artificial if we were to make do with the remark that, based on this opening that has been made for the signifier by the entry of the imaginary, everything else from here on in is plain sailing. Indeed, with all the relationships that will now be

established with the subject's own body, through the intermediary of the specular relationship, you can see very well how the advent of the signifier can come into play for each of the body's appurtenances. That excrement should become the choice object for the gift during a certain period should certainly come as no surprise to us because it's quite obvious that the child can on occasion find the real in a ready state to feed the symbolic in the material that is available to him in relation to his body. That retention can occasionally become refusal should not surprise us either. Whatever richness and refinement the analytic experience has uncovered in the phenomena of anal symbolism, this doesn't lead us to dwell on it at any length.

If I spoke of making a jump, it's because it's now a matter of seeing how the phallus is brought into the dialectic of frustration.

Once again, please abstain from pointless demands bearing on natural genesis. If you want to deduce the fact that the phallus plays an absolutely supervalent role across the entire genital aspect of the symbolic from something in the makeup of the genital organs, you will simply never manage. You will merely surrender to the very contortions that I hope to be able to show you in detail, those of Dr Ernest Jones when he tries to offer a satisfactory commentary on the phallic phase, which Freud had asserted in a rough-and-ready way, and tries to show us how it is that the phallus that woman doesn't have can assume such importance for her. It's really very strange to behold.

In truth, the question absolutely does not lie here. The question is first and foremost a question of fact. It's a fact. Had we not uncovered, in the phenomena, this supervalence and pre-eminence of the phallus across the entire imaginary dialectic that governs the misadventures, the mishaps, and also the failures and breakdowns of genital development, there wouldn't be any problem.

There can be no doubting that it's quite needless to tire oneself out, as many have, observing that the female child must surely have little sensations in her tummy too, and an experience that is surely distinct from the boy's. As Freud notes, this is not the question. Moreover, this is utterly self-evident because if woman, by her own admission, finds it much harder than the boy to bring the reality of what happens on the side of the uterus or the vagina into a dialectic of desire that would satisfy her, it's because she has to pass through something to which she has a completely different relation from that of the man, namely the thing she lacks, the phallus. But the reason why things are like this is certainly not to be gathered, in any case whatsoever, from anything that originates in any physiological leaning of either of the two sexes. One has to start with the existence of an imaginary phallus.

The imaginary phallus is the pivotal point in a whole series of facts that require it as a postulate. One has to study this labyrinth in which the subject generally loses his way, and in which he can even wind up being devoured. The thread that leads out of it is provided by the fact that what is to be discovered is that the mother lacks the phallus, that it is because she lacks it that she desires it, and that it is only insomuch as something gives it to her that she can be satisfied.

This might appear, quite literally, stupefying. Well, we have to start with this stupefaction. The first virtue of cognisance is to be capable of confronting what is not self-evident. All the same, we have perhaps been somewhat prepared to accept that lack is the main desire here if we accept that this is also the distinguishing feature of the symbolic order. In other words, it is in so far as the imaginary phallus plays a major signifying role that the situation presents in this way. It's not that each subject invents the signifier in accordance with his or her sex and his or her leanings or frolickings at birth. The signifier exists. That the phallus as signifier plays a subjacent role cannot be doubted. It took analysis to discover it, but it's absolutely essential.

Let's leave for a moment the terrain of analysis to take up a question I put to Monsieur Lévi-Strauss, the author of *Elementary Structures of Kinship*. He sets out the dialectic of the exchange of women down through the lineages. By means of a sort of postulate and choice, he sets out how women are exchanged between generations. *I have taken a woman from one line, I owe another woman to a following generation or to another line.* And so there is a moment when this must come to a close. If this is done through the law of exchange and preferential marriages between cross cousins, things will circulate with great regularity in a circle that will have no reason to close or break, but if this is done with what are known as parallel cousins this can give rise to things that are rather awkward because after a while the exchange starts to converge and to produce cracks and fragments in the lineages. So, I asked Lévi-Strauss, what if you were to describe this circle of exchange by turning it around, to say that the female lineages produce men and exchange them between one another? For, in the end, we are already aware that the lack that we have been speaking about in women is not a real lack. Everyone knows that they can have phalli, and what is more they produce them. They beget boys, phallophores. As a consequence, one may describe the exchange down through the generations in a more straightforward way, in the opposite order. One can imagine a matriarchy whose law would be – *I've given a son, I shall now receive a man.*[3]

Lévi-Strauss's reply is the following. From the standpoint of

formalisation one could doubtless describe things in exactly the same way, symmetrically, by taking a reference axis, a system of coordinates founded on women or founded on men, but then a heap of items would remain inexplicable and in particular the following. In every case where the political power is androcentric, even in matriarchal societies, it is represented by men and by male lineages. Very peculiar anomalies in these exchanges – a modification, an exception, or a paradox that might appear in the laws of exchange at the level of the elementary structures of kinship – can be explained only in relation and reference to something that lies outside the interplay of kinship, and this is the political context, that is to say, the order of power, and very precisely the order of the signifier, the order in which sceptre and phallus merge into one.

It is for reasons that are inscribed into the symbolic order, which transcends individual development, that the fact of having or not having the imaginary and symbolised phallus takes on the economic importance that it holds at the level of the Oedipus complex. This is what explains both the importance of the castration complex and the primacy of the infamous fantasies of the phallic mother, which has been creating the problem you know about for as long as it has been on the analytic horizon.

Before leading you into how the dialectic of the phallus is articulated, completed and resolved at the level of the Oedipus complex, I want to show you that I too can remain for a while in the preoedipal stages, on the sole condition of being led by the guiding thread of the fundamental role of the symbolic relationship.

What role does the phallus play at the level of its imaginary function, at the level of the claimed requirement of a phallic mother? I want to show you once again how absolutely essential this notion of the lack of object is, just by reading the decent analyst-authors, among whom I include Karl Abraham.

In an admirable article from 1920 on *Manifestations of the Female Castration Complex*, Abraham gives us the example, on page 341, of a little girl of two.[4] After coffee-time, she goes to her father's cigar box, takes a first cigar and gives it to her father, takes a second and gives it to her mother, who doesn't smoke, then takes a third and places it between her legs. *Her mother put the three cigars back in the box.* It is not by chance that the girl *waited a little while and then played the same game over again.* This comes to just the right place. I regret that the commentary is not spelt out further, because if we accept that the third move indicates that the young girl lacks this symbolic object, which is what Abraham implicitly admits, she thereby manifests this lack and it is no doubt in this capacity that she first gave it to he who does not lack, thereby showing she who does

lack, namely her mother, what to do with it. The girl marks out very well how she can desire it, as experience proves, in order to satisfy the one who lacks it. If you read Freud's article on *Female Sexuality*, you learn that for the young girl it's not simply a matter of lacking the phallus, but of giving it or its equivalent to her mother, *just as the boy wants to.*

I'm recalling this vignette simply by way of an introduction to what you need to represent in your own minds, which is the fact that nothing is conceivable in the phenomenology of the perversions – I mean in a direct way – if you don't start with the idea that what is involved is the phallus. This is a far simpler idea than what is usually given to you in that kind of obscurity of identifications, re-entifications, and projections all enmeshed into a labyrinth where you lose your way. It's a matter of the phallus and of seeing how the child realises, more or less consciously, that his all-powerful mother is fundamentally in want of something. The question is always to see by what path he will give her this object that she is in want of, and which he himself is forever in want of.

Indeed, let's not forget that the young boy's phallus is not a great deal more robust than the young girl's. Naturally the finer authors spotted this, and Dr Jones realised all the same that Mrs Karen Horney was rather favourable to the one with whom he was in conflict, in this instance Freud. The fundamentally deficient character of the little boy's phallus, even the shame that he can feel about it, his keen sense of insufficiency, is something that she was able to stress very firmly, not as a way of trying to bridge the gulf of difference that lies between the young boy and the young girl, but as a way of clarifying one through the other. In this light, in order to understand the exact value of the little boy's attempts at seducing his mother, let's not forget the importance of what he discovers on his own person. These attempts at seduction, which people are still speaking about, are deeply marked by narcissistic conflict. This is always the occasion of the first narcissistic wounds, which are merely preludes here, and even presuppositions, with regard to the later effects of castration. They still need to be looked at, though. Rather than mere sexual drive or aggression, what is ultimately at issue is the fact that the boy wants to make-believe that he is a male or a bearer of the phallus, when he is only half way to being one.

In other words, what is involved throughout the whole preoedipal period in which the perversions find their point of origin is a game that is kept up, a game of hunt-the-ring or find-the-Lady, or even our game of odds-and-evens, where the phallus is fundamental as a signifier in this imaginary of the mother that it's a question of joining, because the child's ego is reliant on the mother's

almightiness. It's a matter of seeing where it is and where it is not. It is never truly there where it is, and it is never altogether absent where it is not. The classification of the perversions as a whole must encompass this. Irrespective of the worth of some contributions on identification with the mother and identification with the object, and so on, what is essential is the relation to the phallus.

Take for example transvestism. In transvestism the subject calls the phallus into question. People forget that transvestism is not merely a matter of homosexuality more or less transposed, nor is it a matter of fetishism particularised, a fetish that is worn by the subject. As Fenichel shows very well in his article *The Psychology of Transvestism*, which came out in 1930 in the eleventh issue of *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, the woman with whom the transvestist identifies himself is conceived of by him as phallic. However, she has a phallus in so far as it is hidden, and here we can see that the phallus must always partake of something that veils it. The essential importance of what I called the veil, the existence of garments, lies in the fact that it is through them that the object is materialised. Even when the real object is there, one has to be able to think that it may not be there. And it always has to be possible that it is thought to be precisely where it is not.

Likewise, in male homosexuality – to confine ourselves to this for today – what is at stake for the subject is still his phallus but, curiously, it is in so far as he will seek out his own phallus in another party.

To spell it right out, all the perversions can be placed within this measure, where they always play from some angle with the significant object insomuch as it is, in itself and by its very nature, a true signifier, that is to say, something that in no case whatsoever can be taken at face value. And when one does get one's hand on it, when one finds it and attaches oneself to it definitively, as is the case in the perversion of all perversions known as fetishism – for this is the one that shows not only where it truly lies, but also what it is – the object is tantamount to exactly nothing. It's just a worn-out garment, a cast-off rag. A part of this fetishism can be seen in transvestism, where at the end of the day it's just a tatty old shoe.

When it does appear, when it is unveiled for real, it is the fetish. What does this mean? It's that the crucial stage stands just before the Oedipus complex. It stands between the first relationship that was my point of departure today and which I have grounded for you, namely the primary relationship of frustration, and the Oedipus complex. It's the stage at which the child engages in the dialectic of the lure. To satisfy what cannot be satisfied, namely the mother's desire, which in its very fundament is unfulfillable, the child

commits, by whichever path, to the route of making himself a deceptive object. I mean that it's a matter of tricking this desire that cannot be fulfilled. It is very precisely to the extent that he shows his mother that *he is not*, that the whole movement from which the ego derives its stability is constructed.

The most characteristic stages have now been marked by the fundamental ambiguity between subject and object, as Freud showed in his final article, on splitting. It is to the extent that the child turns himself into an object meant to trick, that he finds himself committed to a position vis-à-vis the other where the intersubjective relationship has been fully constituted. This is not merely a sort of immediate lure, as can be produced in the animal kingdom where the one that is decked out in all the colours of display has to establish the whole situation by parading around. On the contrary, the subject supposes desire in the other. What has to be satisfied is a desire at one remove, and since it's a desire that cannot be satisfied, one can only trick it.

It is always overlooked how human exhibitionism is not an exhibitionism like others, like that of the robin redbreast, for instance. It involves opening one's trouser fly then closing it again. If there are no trousers then a dimension of exhibitionism is missing.

We also meet the possibility of regression. The unfulfilled and unsatisfied mother around whom the child ascends the upward slope of his narcissism is someone real. She is right there, and like all other unfulfilled creatures, she is in search of what she can devour, *quaerens quem devoret*. What the child once found as a means of quashing the symbolic unfulfilment is what he may possibly find across from him again as a wide-open maw. We also find this projected image of the oral situation at the level of imaginary sexual satisfaction. The gaping hole of the Medusa's head is a devouring figure that the child encounters as a possible outcome of his search to satisfy his mother.

To be devoured is a grave danger that our fantasies reveal to us. We find it at the origin, and we find it again at this turn in the path where it yields us the essential form in which phobia presents.

We find it again when we look at the fears of little Hans. The case now presents with somewhat greater clarification with respect to one of its conditions. With the support of what I have shown you today, you will better see the relationships between phobia and perversion. Furthermore, you will better see what I indicated last time, namely the function of the Ego-ideal that takes shape against this backdrop. I shall go so far as to say that you will interpret the case better than did Freud himself, because there is a wavering in the observation over how what the child calls *the big giraffe* and *the little giraffe* ought to be identified.

As Monsieur Prévert has put it,

Les grandes girafes sont muettes
Les petites girafes sont rares.

While this is very poorly interpreted in the observation, there is nevertheless an inroad to what is at stake. Isn't it clear enough from the simple fact that little Hans crumples the little giraffe and sits on top of it, in spite of the cries of the big giraffe who is incontestably the mother?

27 February 1957

MYTHICAL STRUCTURE IN THE OBSERVATION ON LITTLE HANS'S PHOBIA

XII

ON THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX

The equation Penis = Child
The ideal of woman's monogamy
The Other, between mother and phallus
The symbolic father is unthinkable
Male bigamy

agent	lack	object
	castration S	i
symbolic mother	frustration I	r
	privation R	s

Last time, we tried to spell out afresh the notion of castration, or at the very least how this concept is used in our practice.[1]

In the second part of the lesson I pinpointed the locus at which the imaginary comes to interfere in the relationship of frustration that unites the child to his mother, this relationship being vastly more complex than the use that has on the whole been made of it. I told you that it was only in an apparent way, and in keeping with the requirements of its expounding, that we found ourselves thereby moving backwards, depicting a sort of succession of stages that would follow on in a line of development, because, quite to

the contrary, it's always a matter of grasping what at each stage intervenes from the outside, retroactively to reorganise what had been initiated at the previous stage. This is for the simple reason that the child is not alone. The fact that he is not alone is due not only to his biological surroundings but also to surroundings that are of far greater import, namely the lawful environment, the symbolic order. As I underscored last time, the particularities of the symbolic order are what impart accentuation and supervalence to the element of the imaginary known as the phallus.

So, this is the point we reached, and to open the third part of my exposé I set you on the trail of little Hans's anxiety, since from the first we have been singling out two exemplary objects, the fetish object and the real object.

It is at the level of little Hans that we are going to try to articulate today's remarks.

This will not be an attempt to rearticulate the notion of castration, because goodness knows it was powerfully and insistently articulated by Freud, but simply to speak about it once more because for as long as people have avoided speaking about it, the use and reference that can be drawn from it have become increasingly rare in the observations.

To tackle this notion of castration today, we need only follow the same line as our disquisition last time.

1

What is at issue at the end of the preoedipal phase, on the cusp of the Oedipus complex?

The child has to take the phallus on board as a signifier, and in a way that turns it into the instrument of the symbolic order of exchange that presides over the constitution of lineages. All told, he has to be confronted with the order that, in the Oedipus complex, will make the function of the father the pivotal point of the drama.

This is not so straightforward. At the very least, I have thus far told you enough about it for it to strike a chord with you when I tell you that it's not so straightforward. The function of existence on the symbolic plane in the signifier *Father*, with everything that this term entails that is so deeply problematic, raises the question of the way in which it has come to the centre of the symbolic organisation.

This gives us to think that we shall have a few questions to ask ourselves regarding the three aspects of the paternal function.

During the first year of our seminars, when the second semester was dedicated to the study of the Wolf Man, we learnt to single out the paternal repercussions in the conflict under the threefold heading of the *symbolic father*, the *imaginary father* and the *real father*. We saw that it was impossible to orient oneself in the Wolf-Man case if one doesn't draw this essential distinction.

Let's try to tackle the point we reached, namely the introduction into the Oedipus complex that arises for the child, in chronological order.

All in all, we saw the child in the luring position that he takes up vis-à-vis his mother. I told you that this is not a lure in which he would be fully implicated. It's not the simple lure of the game of sexual parade, in the ethological sense, where we on the outside can perceive the imaginary elements that captivate one of the partners in virtue of the appearances of the other. In this case, we don't know to what extent the subjects themselves act as a lure, though we do know that we can do so on occasion, presenting a mere coat-of-arms to the desire of the adversary. Here, the lure that is at issue is very sharply delineated in the very actions and activities that we can observe in the young boy. For example, in his seducing of his mother, when he exhibits himself, this is no mere showing. It is the showing *of* himself *by* himself to the mother that exists as a third party. And behind the mother looms something that is tantamount to good faith, in which she can be caught, so to speak. This is already an entire intersubjective trinity, even a quaternary, that is taking shape.

What ultimately is at stake in this entry into the Oedipus complex? Well, it's about the subject himself having to be caught in this lure in such a way that he finds himself committed to an existent order, an order that is different from the psychological lure through which he came into it. This is where we left him last time.

While analytic theory ascribes a normalising function to the Oedipus complex, we should recall that our experience teaches us that this normalising function is not enough to culminate in the fact of the subject making an object-choice. Just as we know that for there to be heterosexual object-choice it is not enough to play by the rules of being heterosexual, so do we know that there are all shapes and sizes of apparent heterosexuality. Sometimes the candidly heterosexual relationship can harbour an atypical positioning that will come to light through analytic investigation as being derived from a clearly homosexualised position, for instance. So, after the Oedipus complex, the subject, boy or girl, must not only arrive at heterosexuality but also reach it in such a way as to situate him- or herself in the proper manner in relation to the function of the Father. This lies at the heart of the whole Oedipal problematic.

We indicated on our inroad into object relations, and Freud spells it out expressly in his 1931 article on *Female Sexuality*, that taken from this angle, and from the preoedipal angle, the woman's problematic *is much simpler*.[2] While it can appear far more complicated in Freud's writings, this is consistent with the order of discovery. He discovered the Oedipus complex before he uncovered what is preoedipal, and indeed how could he have done otherwise? If there is something that is preoedipal, it's because first of all the Oedipus complex has been posited. We can speak of this greater simplicity of the female position on the developmental level that we qualify as preoedipal only because we first know that we are going to arrive at the complex structure of the Oedipus complex.

That said, we are also able to say that, for the woman, the phallus that she has more or less situated and approached in the imaginary – which is where it is to be found, beyond the mother, in the progressive uncovering of the fundamental dissatisfaction that the mother feels in the mother/child relationship – slides into the real. There is a sliding of the phallus from the imaginary to the real. This is what Freud explains when he tells us that in the yearning for the originary phallus, at the imaginary level where it starts to emerge for the young girl in the specular reference to her semblable – another little girl or a little boy – the child will be the substitute for the phallus.

This is actually a somewhat summary way of grasping what occurs in the phenomenon under observation. If you look at the position such as I have drawn it out – here is the imaginary, that is, the mother's desire for the phallus, and here the child, our centre, who has to discover this beyond-zone, this lack in the maternal object – in one of the possible outcomes, from the moment the child becomes the pivotal point of the situation and finds himself saturating it, he gets out of it by conceiving of the possibility of this way out.

What effectively do we find in the young girl's fantasy, and also in the young boy's?

To the extent that the situation pivots around the child, the young girl then finds the real penis right where it is, beyond the child herself, with the one who can give her the child, says Freud, with the father. It is precisely in so far as she does not have it as an appurtenance, and even in so far as she sharply renounces it on this plane, that she will be able to have it as a gift from the father. This is why it is through the relation to the phallus that, as Freud tells us, the young girl enters the Oedipus complex in a straightforward way, as you can see. Thereafter, the phallus will just have to slide from the imaginary to the real by means of a sort of equation. *Gleichung* is

the term that Freud uses in his 1925 article on *Some Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes*. He writes, *Nun aber gleitet die Libido des Mädchens – man kann nur sagen: längs der vorgezeichneten symbolischen Gleichung Penis = Kind – in eine neue Position*. The young girl will have been sufficiently introduced into the Oedipus complex to make this a reality.

I'm not saying that there is not to be a great deal more, including thereafter all the anomalies in the development of female sexuality, but here there is already the fixation upon the father as the bearer of the real penis, as he who can give the child for real. For her this is already of sufficient consistence for it to be said that ultimately the Oedipus complex, as the pathway to integration into the typical heterosexual position, is far more straightforward for the woman, even though it does usher in all sorts of complications and impasses in the development of female sexuality.

Obviously this should not astonish us, insomuch as the Oedipus complex is essentially androcentric or patricentric. This asymmetry calls upon all kinds of particular quasi-historical considerations to make us perceive the supervalence on the sociological and ethnographic plane of the individual experience that Freud's discovery allows us to analyse. Conversely, since I spoke of an ordering, of a symbolic order or a subordinated ordination, it's quite clear that the object of woman's love is the object of the sentiment that is addressed, strictly speaking, to the element of lack in the object. In so far as she has been led to this object, the father, along the path of lack, he becomes the one who gives the object of satisfaction, the object of the natural relationship of childbirth. From this point forward, all it takes is a little patience for the father to be replaced by he who will play exactly the same role, the father's role.

This brings with it a feature that we will be coming back to, and which lends its particular style to the development of the female superego. There is a kind of balance between the renunciation of the phallus and what has quite rightly been called the supervalence of the narcissistic relationship in women's development. Hanns Sachs saw the importance of this very clearly.[3] Indeed, once this renunciation has been made, the phallus is given up as an appurtenance and becomes the appurtenance of the one to whom she now attaches her love, the father from whom she effectively awaits a child. This expectation of what henceforth is for her no less than her due places her in a very peculiar dependence that paradoxically gives rise at one point to specifically narcissistic fixations, as the various authors have noted. Indeed she is the being who is most intolerant of a particular frustration.

We might come back to this later, when we speak about the ideal of monogamy in women.

Furthermore, it is with this simple reduction of the situation, which identifies the object of love with the object that gives satisfaction, that the especially fixed aspect of women's development, and even its precociously arrested aspect, is located in a development that may be qualified as normal. At certain junctures in his writings Freud assumes a peculiarly misogynistic tone, complaining bitterly of how very difficult it is, at least with some female subjects, to get them to shift away from *the logic of soup, with dumplings for arguments*, from something so imperiously requisite in the satisfaction that they must derive, for example, from their analysis.

I'm doing no more than indicating a certain number of beginnings. We will have to come back to the development that Freud contributed on female sexuality. Today we are going to focus on the boy.

In the case of the boy, the Oedipus complex appears to be far more clearly destined to allow him to identify with his own sex. All in all, it arises in the ideal relationship, in the imaginary relationship with the father. Conversely, the true aim of the Oedipus complex, which is to situate the subject in the right way in relation to the function of the father, that is to say, for him one day to gain access to the altogether paradoxical and problematic position of being a father, presents a mountain of difficulties.

People have not been taking less and less interest in the Oedipus complex because they've failed to see this mountain. It's precisely because they have seen it, and they prefer to turn their backs on it.

Let's not forget that Freud's questioning as a whole, not only in the doctrine but in his very experience, which we find traced out for us in the confidences he shares – his dreams, the progress of his thought, everything that we now know of his life, his habits and even his attitudes at home with his family, which Dr Jones has reported in a way that is fairly thoroughgoing, but of which we may be sure – boils down to the question of what it means to be a father.

This was the central problem for Freud, the productive point from which all his research took its true orientation.

Observe too that while this is a problem for every neurotic, it's also a problem for every non-neurotic in the course of his childhood experience. What is a father? This question is one way of tackling the problem of the signifier of the father, but let's not overlook the fact that in the end they do become fathers. To pose the question *What is a father?* is something different from being a father oneself, from acceding to the paternal position. Let's look at this more closely.

Even if acceding to this position is an article of faith, a quest, it's not unthinkable to say that, in the end, no one has ever truly been a father through and through.

In this dialectic, we suppose – and this supposition has to be the starting point – that somewhere there is someone who can fully take on the position of the father, someone who can respond, *I am the father*. This is a supposition that is essential to the whole furtherance of the Oedipal dialectic, but in no way does this settle the question of the particular intersubjective position of the one that fulfils this role for the others, and especially for the child.

So, let's start again with little Hans.

2

The observation on little Hans is a whole world unto itself. Among the collection of five of Freud's case studies,[4] this is the one I have left until last in the labour of commentary I have been pursuing, and with good reason.

Last time, I left you with the material from the first few pages of the text, and Freud is well justified in presenting things in this order. The question is that of the *Wiwimacher*, which has been translated [into English] as *widdler*. When we follow Freud to the letter, the questions that little Hans poses concern not only his widdler but also the widdlers of all living creatures, and especially of those that are bigger than himself.

You have seen the pertinent remarks concerning the sequence in which the child poses his questions. In sequence, he first asks his mother, *Have you got a widdler too?* We will speak later about what his mother replies, and whereupon Hans utters, *I was only just thinking*. That is to say, he has been mulling over a good many things. Next he puts the question to his father. Then he delights in seeing the lion's widdler, which is not altogether by chance. And back at this time, that is, prior to the appearance of the phobia, he clearly indicates that if his mother has a widdler, as she asserts to him that she has – not, in my opinion, without impudence – then it ought to be visible. One evening, not long after this questioning, he watches her undressing and remarks *I thought you were so big you'd have a widdler like a horse.*

The word *Vergleichung* has been translated [into English] as *comparison*. We could almost say that the word *equalisation* would be better in this instance, at the very least in economic terms if not by strict tradition. From the imaginary phallicist perspective, in which we left the subject last time, there is an effort of equalisation

between a sort of absolute object, the phallus, and the fact of putting it to the test of the real. It's not a matter of all or nothing, as it was in the game of find-the-Lady or in the game of hide-and-seek where it is never where one is looking and never where it was found. It's a matter now of finding out where it truly is.

Up to this point the child was the one who was affecting a semblance, or who was playing at affecting a semblance. It's not for nothing that, a little further on in the observation, little Hans has a dream – *his first account of a dream*, we are told by Freud and his parents – in which an element of distortion, a displacement, arises, precisely through the intermediary of a game of forfeits. Moreover, when you follow the whole imaginary dialectic – if you remember how I approached it in the previous lessons – you will be struck by how it is being played out here on the surface at this pre-phobic stage in Hans's development. It's all there, up to and including the fantasmatic children. All of a sudden, after the birth of his little sister, he adopts a bevy of imaginary little girls to whom he does everything that can be done to children. The imaginary game is out in force, almost without intention. It's a matter of bridging the full distance that lies between the one who affects a semblance and the one who knows that he has the power.

What affords us a first approach to the Oedipal relationship? When we look at what is being played out on the plane of this act of comparing, we could conceive of it as the continuation of the game on the plane of the lure, on the imaginary plane, with the child merely subjoining the maternal model to his own dimensions. The image is larger, but essentially homogenous. Yet it still remains that if this is how the dialectic of the Oedipus complex gets under way, then ultimately he will only ever be dealing with a double of himself, an enlarged double. In this introduction, which is perfectly conceivable, of the maternal image in the form of the Ego-ideal, we remain in the imaginary dialectic, in the specular dialectic of the subject's relation to the little other. The inevitable consequence of this does not allow us to get out of the *either/or*, of the *either him or me*, that remains bound to the first symbolic dialectic, that of presence or absence. We do not get out of the game of odds-and-evens. We do not leave behind the plane of the lure. What results from this?

We know the answer from the side that is as much theoretical as it is exemplary. The only thing we see coming out of this is the symptom, the manifestation of anxiety. So Freud tells us.

Freud underscores near the start of the observation that, when it comes to anxiety and phobia, *there is good reason for keeping the two separate*. They are two things that come in succession. One

comes to the aid of the other. The phobic object fulfils a function against the backdrop of anxiety. On the imaginary plane, however, nothing enables us to envisage the jump that makes the child shift away from the luring game with his mother. As someone who is all or nothing, the one who suffices or the one who does not suffice, she surely remains on the plane of fundamental insufficiency in virtue of the sole fact that the question has been posed.

This is the first outline of the notion of the entry into the Oedipus complex – the almost fraternal rivalry with the father. We are being led to nuance this far more than in how it is commonly put together. Indeed, the aggressiveness at issue there is an aggressiveness of the type that comes into play in the specular relationship, in the *it's either him or me* that is always being defined as the fundamental mainspring. On the other hand, the fixation remains wholly attached to she who, after the first frustrations, has become the real object, that is to say, the mother. It is due to this stage, or more precisely to this essential and central Oedipal experience on the imaginary plane, that the Oedipus complex reaches out with all its neurosis-inducing consequences, which can be found in countless aspects of analytic reality.

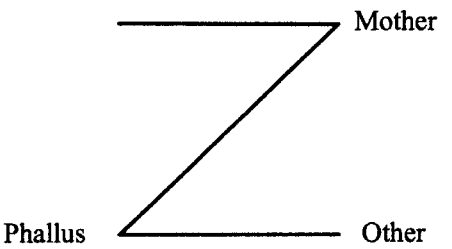
In particular, it is here that we can see one of the first terms of the Freudian experience making its entry, the debasement in the sphere of love to which Freud devoted a special study. In virtue of the subject's permanent attachment to this real primal object that is the mother qua frustrating mother, any female object will thereafter be no more for him than a depreciated object, a substitute, a broken, refracted and forever partial mode in comparison with the first maternal object. We will be seeing shortly what we ought to think of this.

However, don't forget that while the Oedipus complex can have perdurable consequences with respect to the imaginary mainspring that it causes to intervene, this is not the whole story. As a rule, and from the very first in Freud's doctrine, it is in the nature of the Oedipus complex to resolve itself. When Freud speaks about it, he tells us that surely what we can appreciate concerning the pushing into the background of the hostility against the father is something that we can legitimately link to a repression. But in the same breath, he makes sure to underscore that this is one more opportunity to note that repression is applied always to a particular articulation of the subject's history, and not to a permanent relationship. He says, *I see no reason for denying the name of a 'repression'*, but at this age, between five and five-and-a-half years when the dissolution of the Oedipus complex occurs, it is as a rule equivalent *to a destruction and an abolition of the complex*. Thus, there is something more

in relation to what we have thus far described, and which would in some way be the effacement, the imaginary attenuation, of a relationship that in itself is fundamentally perdurable. There is a veritable crisis, a revolution. There truly is something that leaves a result, this being the shaping of the superego, which is both highly particular and precisely datable in the unconscious.

It is here that we come face-to-face with the necessity of bringing out something new and original, and which has its specific solution in the Oedipal relationship. To see this, we need only turn to our usual scheme.

At the point we reached last time, the child was offering the mother the imaginary object of the phallus in order to give her complete satisfaction, and was doing so in the form of a lure, that is to say, by bringing in the Other that is in some way the witness, the one who can behold the situation as a whole. The young boy's exhibitionism to his mother is meaningless without this term. It is implicated by the mere fact that what we describe in the presentation, even in the offering, that the little boy makes to his mother, plainly arises at the level of this Other. This term must be produced at this level for the Oedipus complex to exist. It requires the presence of a term that hitherto was not in the game, the presence of someone who always and in any circumstance is poised to play and to win.



The scheme of the forfeits game is there to show us this, among countless other hints that are there to be read in the observations and which one can see being played out in the child's very activity at this stage. We meet it in umpteen different forms in the case of little Hans, for example in his way of suddenly taking himself off to the wood-cupboard and standing in the darkness. It is *his W.C.*, where previously he was using the family W.C. There is a moment when everything oscillates around this game-playing, with the notion of something that adds the dimension that was to be expected on the plane of the symbolic relationship. What previously, in the broaching of the symbolic relationship, was no more than the calling and the calling back that I spoke about last time, and which characterises

the symbolic mother, now becomes the notion that at the level of the big Other there is someone who can respond come what may, and who in every case answers that he is the one who's got the true phallus, the real penis. He is the one who holds the trump card, and who knows it. The introduction of this real element in the symbolic order is the inverse of the first position of the mother that is symbolised in the real by her presence and her absence.

Until then, the object both was and wasn't there. It was with this point that the subject began in relation to any object, namely that an object is both present and absent, and that one can always play with the presence or the absence of an object. After the turning point, however, the object is no longer the imaginary object that he can use in his luring but an object the power of which is always in the hands of an Other, who can show that the subject does not have it or that he has it insufficiently. Castration plays its absolutely essential role throughout his ensuing development solely on the basis of the fact that, in having to take on board the maternal phallus as an essentially symbolic object, in the essential Oedipal experience the child can conceive that this same symbolic object will be given to him one day by the one who has it, who knows that he has it in every instance.

In other words, taking on board the very sign of the virile position, of male heterosexuality, implies castration at its point of departure. This is what Freud's Oedipal notion teaches us. Precisely because the male, contrary to the female position, is already in perfect possession of a natural appendage, he has to have this appurtenance from someone else, in this relationship to something that is real in the symbolic – the one who truly is the father. And in the end no one can say what it means to be the father for real, except that it's something that is already to be found in the game. It's in relation to this game played with the father, this game of loser wins, as it were, that the child can win the faith that leaves him with this first inscription of Law.

3

What becomes of the subject in this drama?

As it is described for us in the Freudian dialectic, he is a little criminal. It is by the path of the imaginary crime that he enters the realm of Law. But he can enter this realm of Law only if he has had, at least for an instant, a real partner across from him, someone who has effectively brought to this level something that is not merely calling and calling back, that is not merely a pairing of presence and

absence, the fundamentally annihilating element of the symbolic, but rather someone who responds to him.

Now, while things may be expressed in this way on the plane of the imaginary drama, it is on the level of the imaginary game that this must be experienced. It is not without reason that no particular dialogue is generated by this requirement of a dimension of absolute alterity, by the one who simply possesses the power and who answers for it. This dimension is incarnated by real protagonists, but they themselves are always dependent upon something that ultimately presents as an eternal alibi. The only one who might respond absolutely from this position of the father qua symbolic father is the one who could say, like the monotheistic God, *I AM THAT I AM.* But this is a thing that, aside from the sacred text in which we find it, can literally be uttered by no one.

You will tell me then, *You have taught us that the message we receive is our own in an inverted form, and so everything will be resolved by – THOU ART THAT THOU ART.* Don't believe it, because *who am I to say that to anyone else?* In other words, what I want to indicate here is that the symbolic father is strictly speaking unthinkable.

The symbolic father is nowhere. He intervenes nowhere.

The proof of this is laid out in Freud's work. It took a mind as bound to the requirements of positivist and scientific thought as was the mind of Freud to produce the construction that Jones reveals he esteemed above all the rest of his life's work. He didn't put it in the front line, because his major work, and the only one – as he affirmed in writing and never went back on – was *The Interpretation of Dreams*, but the one he held most dear, as an achievement that in his eyes was a feat, is *Totem and Taboo. Totem and Taboo* is no less than a modern myth, a myth constructed to explain what remained as a gaping hole in his doctrine, namely, *Where is the father?*

You need only read *Totem and Taboo* with an open eye to realise that if it is not what I say it is – a myth – then it's quite absurd. However, if *Totem and Taboo* is designed to tell us that there are such things as fathers who linger on, then the true father, the only father, the one and only father from before the dawn of history, has to be the dead father. Further still, this father has to have been killed. And truly, how could this even be thinkable beyond its strictly mythical value, because as far as I know, the father at issue is not conceived of by Freud, nor by anyone, as an immortal being? Why is it that the sons should have in some way hastened him to an untimely end? Why go to such lengths when ultimately they forbade themselves what it was a matter of stealing from him? That is to say, they killed him only to show that he cannot be killed.

The essence of what Freud introduces in relation to a major drama hinges on a notion that is strictly mythical in so far as it is the very categorisation of a form of the impossible, even of the unthinkable, namely the eternalisation of a one and only Father at the origin, whose characteristics amount to his having been killed. And why so, if not to maintain him? I point out to you incidentally that in French, and a few other tongues, in German in particular, *tuer* comes from the Latin *tūtāre*, which means *to guard.*

This mythical father who shows us what kinds of difficulties Freud was facing also shows us on what he was well and truly setting his sights in the notion of the father. It has to do with something that does not intervene at any moment of the dialectic unless through the intervention of the real father who at any given moment comes to fulfil the role and function thereof, and who allows the imaginary relationship to be invigorated and afforded a new dimension. The real father does not bring in the pure specular interplay of *either me or the other*, but rather affords an embodiment to the unutterable sentence, *THOU ART THAT THOU ART*, which just now we said cannot be uttered by someone who is not so himself. If you will allow me to play on the words and the ambiguity that I made use of when we were studying the paranoiac structure of Präsident Schreber, it's not *tu es celui que tu es*, but rather *tu es celui qui tuais, thou art the one that hath killed.*

The end of the Oedipus complex is correlative with the establishing of the Law as repressed, but permanent, in the unconscious. It is to this extent that there is something that responds in the symbolic. The Law is not simply this thing about which we ask ourselves why the whole community of man has been introduced into it and is implicated in it, but also something that has passed into the real in the form of the kernel left by the Oedipus complex, in the form of something that analysis has shown, once and for all, to be the real form that is the superego. This is the form that the philosophers had latched on to, to show us with greater or lesser ambiguity the density, the permanent kernel, of moral conscience. We know that in each individual this is very precisely incarnated in a superego that can take multiple forms, that comes in every shape and size, the most twisted and the most contorted.

It takes this form because its introduction at the level of the *Es*, as an element that is homogenous with the other libidinal elements, always partakes of some accident. One does not necessarily know at what point in the imaginary game the passage has been made, nor who was there momentarily to respond.

This tyrannical superego, in itself fundamentally paradoxical and contingent, represents in itself alone, even in non-neurotics, the

signifier that leaves its mark and its imprint on man, that seals his relationship with the signifier. There is in man a signifier that marks his relationship with the signifier, and this is called the superego. There are even many more than one, and they are called symptoms.

It is with this key, and with this key alone, that you may understand what is at issue when little Hans is fomenting his phobia. What is distinctive, and I think I can demonstrate this for you in this observation, is precisely how in spite of all the father's love, all his kindness, all his intelligence, in virtue of which we have this observation, there is no real father.

The ensuing part of the game is played out in the luring in the relationship between little Hans and his mother, which in the end is unbearable, anguishing and intolerable, in that it is *either him or her*. It is one or the other, without ever knowing which, he the phallophore or she the phallophore, the little giraffe or the big giraffe. Despite the ambiguities in the ways the various authors have appraised the observation, it's quite clear that the little giraffe is precisely this maternal appurtenance around which the matter of knowing who has it and who will have it plays out. Hans is in a kind of waking dream, which for a moment makes him – to a chorus of cries from his mother, and in spite of this calling out – the possessor of the main stake. Indeed, it is there to underscore for us this very mechanism in the most vivid fashion.

To this I would like to add a few considerations that will allow you to familiarise yourselves with the strict handling of the category of castration that I have been trying to spell out for you.

The perspective that I've laid out for you allows both the imaginary game of the Ego-ideal and the sanctioning intervention of castration – in virtue of which these imaginary elements take on stability and a fixed constellation in the symbolic – to be located in their reciprocal relationships, each on their own plane. Let's try to see whether it really is necessary, from this perspective and with this distinction in mind, to deign to articulate something that would stem directly from the notion of an object relation conceived of in advance as harmonious and uniform, as though by some happy convergence of Nature and Law each Jack should come to find his Jill, ideally and constantly, to the couple's greatest satisfaction, without so much as a moment's pause to find out what the community as a whole happens to think about this.

If, on the contrary, we know how to distinguish the order of Law from imaginary harmonies, indeed from the very position of the love relationship, and if it is true that castration is the essential crisis in which each and every subject becomes authorised, as it were, to be rightfully Oedipalised, we shall gather from this that it is quite

natural – even at the level of complex structures, indeed structures that are altogether free of kinship, like those we live with at our level, and not only in elementary structures – to posit, at least at a push, the formula that *any woman who is not permitted is forbidden by Law*. This formula allows us to appreciate the very sharp echo of castration that all marriage bears within it, and not simply for neurotics. While the particular civilisation we are living in, which has produced marriage symbolically as the fruit of mutual consent, will explain to you that the ideal conflation of love and *conjugo* has been able to flourish as an ideal, it is nevertheless quite clear that this is so to the extent that it has thrust the fact of mutual consent to the fore, that is to say, it has pushed the freedom to unite as far as it possibly can, so far indeed that it is always verging on incest.

Besides, you need only dwell a little on the very function of the primitive laws of alliance and kinship to realise that any conjoining whatsoever, even an instantaneous conjoining, arising from individual choice within the bounds of the law, any conjoining of love and law, even when it is desirable, even when it is a kind of necessary crossing point of union between beings, is something that partakes of incest. It ultimately follows from this that, if Freudian doctrine ascribes the failures and indeed the debasements in the sphere of love to the lasting fixation to the mother as a permanent constancy of goodness knows what that strikes the ideal of monogamous union with an originary flaw, it should not be believed that there might be something else here. It should not be believed that there is a new form of *either/or* that would show us how, if incest does not arise where we wish it to, in actuality or in perfect marriages, as they say, this is precisely because it arose elsewhere. Rather, incest is very much at issue in both cases. In other words, there is something here that bears its limit within it, that entails a fundamental duplicity, an ambiguity that is always ready to rise again.

This is what allows us to affirm, in keeping with experience but with the sole advantage of coming as no surprise, that while the ideal of conjugal conjunction is monogamous in women, for the reasons we stated at the outset, there is no cause for astonishment when we realise that what always tends to be reproduced on the man's side is the split that makes him fundamentally bigamous. One has only to refer to the initial scheme of the child's relation to his mother. To the extent that the typical, normative and lawful union is always marked by castration, this division tends to be reproduced in men. I'm not saying that it makes him polygamous, contrary to what people think, though of course once the twain has been introduced there is no longer any reason to stem the play in this mirror palace. Fundamentally, however, while the real father authorises the one

who has entered the Oedipal dialectic to fix down his choice, what is always targeted in love lies beyond this choice, and it is neither the lawful object nor the object of satisfaction, but Being, that is to say, the object that is grasped in precisely what is wanting.

It is for this, that whether in an institutionalised or anarchic fashion, we can see how love and consecrated union are never conflated. I repeat – either this is produced in an institutionalised fashion, as numerous evolved civilisations have had no hesitation in asserting in doctrine and in putting into practice, or, when one is in a civilisation like ours, where no one knows how to make anything hang together, everything happens almost by accident. It happens because one is more or less an ego that is more or less weak, more or less strong, and because one is more or less tied to some such archaic or even ancestral fixation.

It is in the primary imaginary relationship, the one in which the child has already been introduced to what lies beyond the mother, that, through his mother, he can already behold, touch upon and experience how the human being is a deprived being and an abandoned being. The very structure that imposes the distinction between this imaginary experience and the symbolic experience that normalises it – though solely through the intervention and the intermediary of Law – implies that many things are maintained that on no account allow us to speak of the sphere of love as though it were merely an object relation, even the most ideal one, one that is motivated by choice and by the deepest affinities. This structure leaves entirely open a problematic that is inherent to the love life of each and every subject.

Freud's experience, and our day-to-day experience, are there to bring us up against this and by the same stroke to confirm it.

6 March 1957

XIII

ON THE CASTRATION COMPLEX

Critique of aphanisis
The imaginary father and the real father
Being loved
Anxiety, from the lure to the stirring penis
The animals in phobias

agent	lack	object
real father	symbolic castration	imaginary phallus
symbolic mother	imaginary frustration	real breast
imaginary father	real privation	symbolic phallus

Today we are going to try to speak about castration.

Castration runs throughout Freud's writings, as does the Oedipus complex, yet they are treated differently.

It was only late in the day, in a 1931 article dedicated to something entirely new, that Freud tried to spell out in full the formula of the Oedipus complex, despite its having been present in his thinking from the first. Indeed, it may be reckoned that here lies the chief personal issue that was his point of departure – *What is a father?* There can be no doubt about this because we know from his biography – and the letters to Fliess are confirmatory – that he was preoccupied by the presence of the Oedipus complex from the outset. It was only much later that he explained himself on this matter.

As for castration, nowhere is there anything of the sort. Not once did Freud spell out in full the precise meaning, the precise psychical

impact, of this fear, or this threat, or this instance, or this dramatic moment. Each of these words may equally be posited, with a question mark, in regard to castration.

When I started to tackle the issue last time through the emergence of castration at a lower level than frustration and the imaginary phallic game with the mother, many of you, even when you had grasped the role I was ascribing to the father's intervention – his symbolic personage being purely the symbolic personage of dreams – were still wondering what this castration is. What does it mean that, for the subject to come to genital maturity, he has to have been castrated?

We are going to see how to respond to this.

1

If you take things at the simple level of reading, it may be said that *castration is the sign of the Oedipal drama, just as it is its implicit fulcrum.*

Even though it is not spelt out like this anywhere, it is literally implied throughout Freud's writings.

People may seek to sidestep this, and it can be taken as a sort of make-believe, which is what keeps cropping up when you listen to current-day analytic discourse. However, once you allow the text to bring you to dwell on this, as I am doing right now, so that the abruptness of this assertion can become apparent as something problematic, which indeed it is, you can take this formula as the point of departure, however paradoxical it may be.

What, then, is meant by this formulation? What does it presuppose? Moreover, this is precisely what the authors have latched on to because, even so, there are some who have not failed to pause over the singularity of such a consequence. Foremost among them is Ernest Jones.

You will notice this if you read his collected papers. He never managed to overcome the difficulty of how to handle the castration complex as such. He tried to formulate a term which is peculiar to him, though of course like everything that has been introduced into the analytic community it has wended its way and borne echo, having been cited chiefly among the British authors. The term is *aphanisis*. The Greek term ἀφάνισις means *disappearance*.

The solution that Jones tried to offer to the pattern of insistence behind the psychical drama of castration in the subject's history runs as follows. First, the dread of castration cannot, at least from his perspective, be made to hang on the accidental occurrence, on

the contingency, of threats, which nevertheless are always so singularly reproduced in subjects' histories, expressed in the well-known parental threat of *We shall send for someone to cut it off*. The paradoxically motivated aspect of the threat, which is un-rooted, in a sort of necessary constant of the inter-individual relationship, is not the only aspect that has given the authors pause for thought. So, the question and difficulty concerns how castration is to be handled when it comes to integrating such a singular thing in its positive form, which Freud nevertheless spells out clearly as something that threatens the penis, the phallus. This is what pushed Jones, when he was starting to broach the problem of establishing the mechanism of development around which the superego must be constituted, to foreground the notion of aphanisis. I think I need only spell it out for you myself for you to see to what extent it cannot help but present great difficulty.

Aphanisis is indeed disappearance, but the disappearance of what? For Jones, it is the disappearance of desire. The castration complex qua aphanisis, substituted for castration, is the subject's fear of seeing his desire extinguished.

I think you cannot fail to see how such a notion in itself amounts to a relationship that has been highly subjectified. It may indeed be conceivable that this is the source of some primordial anxiety, but this is certainly an anxiety that has been reflected on in a very peculiar manner. One really has to make a leap of understanding that leaves an immense gulf gaping wide, all the while assuming it to have been bridged, if one is to suppose, on the basis of data derived from a subject's very first relational movements with respect to his objects, that he is already in a position to take a step back in such a way as not only to experience an articulated frustration as such, but also to hang upon it the apprehension of a drying-up of desire.

It was actually around the notion of privation, as what purportedly gives rise to the fear of aphanisis, that Jones tried to articulate his entire genesis of the superego as the formation in which the Oedipus complex naturally culminates. Of course, he promptly found himself faced with the distinctions to which I believe we are succeeding in giving a slightly more manageable form. When Jones uses the term *privation*, he doesn't manage for an instant to distinguish between *sheer privation*, which means that the subject is not satisfied in any given need he might have, and the privation that he calls *deliberate deprivation*, which presupposes, across from the subject, another subject who refuses him the satisfaction he is seeking. Furthermore, since it is not easy, based on such indistinct data, to unite the passage from one to the other, especially when they are being kept in the state of synonyms, he quite naturally

comes to suggest that, more often than not, privation is taken as frustration. He suggests that, for the subject, *privation is equivalent to frustration.* Of course, on this basis a good many things are facilitated in the articulation of a process, but while they are facilitated for the speaker, this does not mean that the same holds true for a moderately exacting listener.

In point of fact, on my chart I don't give the term *privation* anything like the meaning that Jones gives it. The privation that is involved on the chart, where it features as one of the terms, is the very thing in relation to which the notion of castration has to be located. I have tried to restore to the term *frustration* its complexity as a veritable relation. As you were able to see in the session just before the February break, I did so in a highly articulated way, and you ought to be able to retain enough from this to see that I do not employ the term in the summary form in which it is usually employed.

In my schematic, privation and castration feature as distinct simply because it's not possible to articulate the impact of castration onto something else without isolating the notion of privation as what I have called a *real hole.* Rather than throwing out a red herring, let's try on the contrary to isolate the herring. Privation is the privation of the herring.[1] It is, in particular, the fact that woman does not have a penis. I mean that this fact has a constant impact in the evolution of practically all the cases that Freud lays out for us. Taking on board the fact that woman is deprived of a penis affords the boy the most salient example, which we can meet at every turn in the Freudian case histories, of how castration, if indeed it is this that we are seeking out, takes as its base the apprehension of woman's absence of penis in the real. This is the crucial point in the majority of the cases. In the male subject's experience, this is the fundament upon which the notion of privation sits in a way that is especially efficacious and anguishing. There is a share of beings in humanity who are, as it is put in the texts, *castrated.* This term is, of course, utterly ambiguous. They are castrated in the subjectivity of the subject. In reality, when it comes to what they are in the real, and which is invoked as a real experience, they are *deprived.*

I am alluding to the reference to the real around which the experience of castration turns in the teaching to be derived from Freud's texts. I mentioned to you in this connection that to spell out the thinking correctly we must correlate to this privation in the real the fact that it necessarily concerns our own way of apprehending what is at issue. This is due to the simple fact that we are setting things out in reference, not to the patient's experience, but to the experiences of our own thinking.

The very notion of privation is exposed in this kind of experience – which entails the symbolisation of the object in the real – as something markedly tangible and visible. In the real, nothing is deprived of anything. Everything that is real is sufficient unto itself. By definition, the real is full. If we introduced the notion of privation into the real, this is because we already symbolise it quite enough, and even altogether fully, to indicate that if something is not there it's because we suppose its presence to be a possibility. That is to say, we introduce into the real, in order to cover it over and to hollow it out in some way, the elementary order of the symbolic.

This is why I say that, at the level of this progression, the object at issue in this instance is the penis. It's an object that is given to us in a symbolic state on the tier at which we have been speaking about privation. I'm reminding you of the necessity of the chart. It's quite clear that castration, insomuch as it is effective and felt in lived experience, and present in the genesis of a neurosis, is the castration of an imaginary object. In its impact in a neurosis, no castration is ever a real castration. Castration enters the game to the extent that it is played out in the subject in the form of an action that bears on an imaginary object.

The issue for us is precisely to conceive of why and through what necessity this castration is introduced into a development that is the subject's typical development. It's a matter of the subject joining this complex order that constitutes the relationship between man and woman and which means that genital realisation is submitted to a number of conditions in humankind.

So, our starting point will be, as it was last time, the subject in his originative relation with the mother at the stage that is being qualified as preoedipal. We have seen that there is much to say about this stage, and we hope to have spelt it out better than is usually done, with greater differentiation. Even when these authors do demonstrate what is at issue, we believe that they do not handle it so well and fail to reason it out. We are going to start again from this point so as to try to seize at its moment of emergence the necessity of the phenomenon of castration as something that symbolises a symbolic indebtedness, a symbolic castigation inscribed into the symbolic chain, and as something that snatches hold of this imaginary object as its instrument.

To serve us as a guide, and so that we may refer to terms that I laid out previously, I ask you to accept for the time being the hypothesis, the supposition, that our articulation will lean on and which we saw last time, namely that behind the symbolic mother stands the symbolic father.

The symbolic father is in some sense a necessity of symbolic

construction, but one that we can locate only in a beyond-zone, I would almost say in a transcendence, in any case in something that, as I indicated in passing, can only be joined through a mythical construction. I have often insisted on the fact that ultimately this symbolic father is not represented anywhere, and the next part of our disquisition will confirm for you whether this is valid, whether it is effectively useful in allowing us to find this element of the drama of castration in complex reality.

We now have on our chart the real father and the imaginary father. While the symbolic father is the signifier about which one can never speak without encountering both its necessity and its character – which we have to accept as a kind of irreducible given from the world of the signifier – the imaginary father and the real father are two terms that present far less difficulty for us.

We are constantly dealing with the imaginary father. The imaginary father is the commonest point of reference for the whole dialectic of aggressiveness, the whole dialectic of identification, and the whole dialectic of idealisation whereby the subject gains access to what is called identification with the father. All of this occurs on the level of the imaginary father. We also say that this father is imaginary because he is integrated into the imaginary relationship that forms the psychological support for dealings with the semblable, these being strictly speaking relationships of kind, the same that lie at the root of any libidinal captivation or any aggressive stand-off. The imaginary father also participates, ipso facto, with typical characteristics. This imaginary father is the terrifying father with whom we are acquainted, who is behind so many neurotic experiences and who bears no mandatory relation to the child's real father. We frequently see cropping up in the child's fantasies a figure of the father – and also of the mother – who twists into a grimace and who is very far removed from the real father who was present for the child at the time. He is linked solely to this period, and to the function that this imaginary father will hold at this stage of development.

The real father is an altogether different matter. The child has only ever had a very difficult apprehension of this real father, due to the interposition of fantasies and the necessity of the symbolic relationship. Indeed, this is how it is for any human being. If there is one thing that lies at the base and the foundation of all analytic experience, then it's that we find it so very hard to apprehend what is most real around us, that is to say, human beings such as they are. The whole difficulty of psychical development and everyday life alike is that of knowing with whom we are really dealing. This is no less the case for the person of the father, who under ordinary condi-

tions may rightly be regarded as a constant element in what these days is called the child's *entourage*. I ask you therefore to take on board what might strike you as paradoxical in the first approach to the stationed character of the chart, namely that, contrary to a sort of normative or typical notion that people seek to pin on the insistence of the castration complex in the Oedipal drama, it is effectively to the real father that the prominent function of what occurs with respect to the castration complex is deferred.

So, you can see from the way I'm formulating it what can already appear as a contingency, as something scarcely explicable. Why is this castration here? Why is there this strange form of intervention in the subject's economy that is called castration? In itself it has something shocking about it.

I will double this contingency by telling you that it is no accident, it is no strangeness ascribable to the first approach to this topic, that physicians were the first to dwell on these things that were recognised as being more fantasmatic than people believed, namely the scenes of primary seduction. You know that this is a stage in Freud's thought, even before he had analysed this topic and produced the doctrine on it. When it comes to castration, however, it's not a matter of fantasmatising the whole affair, as was done with the scenes of primary seduction. While castration does effectively warrant being isolated by naming it in the subject's history, this is always linked to the impact, to the intervention, of the real father. Or, if you prefer, it may equally be marked, and profoundly so, by the absence of the real father, which throws it deeply off balance, and this necessity, which introduces something of a profound atypia, then calls for the substitution of the real father by something else, which is deeply neuroticising.

We will take as our point of departure the supposition of the fundamental character of the link between the real father and castration, so as to try to find our bearings in these complex dramas that Freud elaborates for us. Very often we have the sense that he is allowing himself to be led in advance by a sort of guiding thread that occasionally is so assured – as in the case of little Hans – that we too have the impression of being guided, from one instant to the next, yet without grasping anything and without the motives that lead us to make a choice at each fork in the path.

I ask you, therefore, tentatively to accept this position, on a provisional basis, as the position around which we shall try to understand this necessity behind the signification of the castration complex, by now taking up the case of little Hans.

2

From the age of four-and-a-half, little Hans develops what is called a phobia, that is to say, a neurosis.

This phobia was taken in charge by Hans's father, who as it happened was one of Freud's acolytes. He was a good honest fellow, which is the best thing for a real father to be. We are also told that little Hans had every positive feeling for him, *whom he had always loved*, and that he is far from fearing such abusive treatment as castration from the father.

On the other hand, it cannot be said that little Hans has been frustrated of something for real. In the way we see it at the beginning of the observation, little Hans, still an only child, is as happy as can be. He is the object of an attentiveness that his father certainly didn't wait until the appearance of the phobia to lavish. He is also the object of the most tender care from his mother, so tender, in fact, that everything is handed over to him. In truth, it takes Freud's sublime serenity to approve her actions, when nowadays all manner of anathema would be pronounced upon her, she who every morning allows little Hans into the conjugal bed as a third party, against the express reservations voiced by the husband and father. Not only does the latter show himself on this occasion to be very peculiarly tolerant, but also we may deem him not to be in on what's going on, because regardless of what he says, things carry on no less in the most determined fashion. Not for a second do we see the mother in question taking even slightly into account the observation that has been respectfully suggested to her by the person of the father.

Little Hans is in no way frustrated. He is not deprived of anything for real. Nevertheless, at the start of the observation, his mother does go so far as to forbid his masturbation. Not only is this no small matter in itself, she even goes so far as to utter the fatal words, *If you do that, I shall send for Dr A. to cut off your widdler*. This is reported at the start of the observation, but we don't have the impression that it is decisive. The child continues of course. This is not an element that is assessed, but certainly her intervention needs to be taken note of given the qualm with which the observation is picked up on, and due to the fact that the parents are sufficiently well informed, which moreover doesn't stop them from behaving exactly as though they knew nothing. Nevertheless, Freud doesn't entertain, even for a second, bringing in at that moment anything whatsoever that would be decisive with respect to the appearance of the phobia. The child harkens to this threat, I would say almost as is fitting. You will see that after the event there even emerges the impli-

cation that one could say nothing more to a child, that it's precisely what will serve him as the material from which to construct what he needs, that is, the castration complex. However, the question of why he needs this is precisely another question. This is where we are, and we are far from being able to give an immediate reply.

For the time being, it's not about castration. It's about phobia and the fact that on no account can we tie it in a direct and straightforward way to the forbidding of masturbation. As Freud puts it very well, the child's masturbation *does not by any means explain his anxiety*. The child will continue to masturbate. Of course, in what ensues he will integrate it into the conflict that will become manifest at the time of his phobia, but this is certainly not anything apparent. What occurs at this moment is not some traumatising impact that would allow us to understand the outbreak of the phobia. The conditions that surround the child are optimal, and the issue of the scope of the phobia remains an issue that one has to know how to introduce with its truly dignified character, though it is a questionable one on occasion. It is on this basis that we shall be able to uncover the cross-references that will enlighten and indeed enhance our attempt at theorisation.

I want to give due consideration – and this will be a reminder – to what we can call the fundamental situation with regard to the child's phallus in relation to the mother.

What do we have in the child's relation to the mother, which we spoke about in the preoedipal relationship? There the mother is an object of love, an object desired for its presence, an object that presupposes a relationship that is as simple as you may imagine, but very early on in the child's experience, in his deportment, his sensibility and his reaction, this relationship is very soon made manifest in its articulation in a presence–absence pair. As you know, this is our point of departure. Some difficulty has arisen regarding what might be called *the child's first objectal world* due to insufficient distinction of the term *object*. That there should be a primordial object that we can on no account constitute ideally, that is, in our ideation – the child's world as a bare state of hanging on to the undetermined limits of the organ that satisfies him, the nourishing organ – is something that I am not the first to contradict. The entire life's work of Alice Balint, to take one example among others, is there to articulate what I am telling you in a different way, one that I believe to be less sustainable, namely that the mother exists but that this does not presuppose that there is already such a thing as *me* and *not-me*.

The mother exists as a symbolic object and as a love object. This will be confirmed both by experience and by what I'm formulating

for you in the position I've given to the mother on the chart. The mother is first of all, so we are told, a symbolic mother, and it is only in the crisis of frustration that she starts to become a reality through a certain number of confrontations and peculiarities that arise in the relationships between mother and child. The mother qua love-object can at any moment become the real mother in so far as she frustrates this love.

The child's relationship with the mother, which is a relationship of love, has something about it that can open the door to what is usually called, for want of knowing how to articulate it, *the first undifferentiated relationship*. But, in fact, what is it that occurs fundamentally in the first concrete stage in this relationship of love as such, this something that constitutes the ground on which the child's satisfaction may or may not be produced, along with the signification that it carries? It's that the child includes himself in this relationship as the object of the mother's love. It's that the child learns that he brings his mother pleasure. This is one of the child's fundamental experiences. He comes to know that if his presence commands, however little, the presence of the one who is necessary to him, it's because he himself introduces something into the experience, namely the radiance that means that this presence is there and that it surrounds him as something to which he brings a satisfaction of love. The fact of *being loved, geliebt werden*, is fundamental. It is the ground upon which everything that will develop between mother and child is played out.

As I have indicated to you, the question that is brought to the fore by the facts themselves is that of how the child apprehends what he is for the mother. Our starting hypothesis, as you know, is that he is not alone. Little by little, something is articulated in the child's experience which indicates to him that, in the mother's presence beside him, he is not alone. The whole dialectic furtherance of the mother's relationship with the child will be articulated around this.

One of the most commonplace experiences is that first of all he is not alone because there are other children, but our starting hypothesis is that there is another term at stake, which is constant, radical, and independent of the contingencies and peculiarities of his history and the presence or not of another child. This hypothesis is that the mother maintains, at varying degrees depending on the subject, her *Penisneid*. Her child may fulfil her or not, but the question is posed. The two discoveries, of the phallic mother for the child and of *Penisneid* for the mother, are strictly coexistent with the problem that we are now trying to broach.

They do not lie on the same level. I have chosen to start from one particular point in order to get to another, and it's on this level

that we must take *Penisneid* as one of the fundamental givens of the analytic experience, as a constant term of reference in the mother's relationship with the child. Experience proves that there is no means of articulating the perversions in any other way, insomuch as, contrary to what is said, they are not fully explicable by the preoedipal stage, though they do indeed necessitate the preoedipal experience. We can see that it is in the relationship with the mother that the child experiences the phallus as the central focus of the mother's desire. And he places himself there in different positions, through which he is led to maintain, but more exactly to lure, the mother's desire.

The articulation from the lesson I was alluding to earlier bears on this. Either way, the child presents himself to the mother as being the very thing that offers her, in himself, the phallus. This happens to varying degrees and from different positions. He may identify with the mother, he may identify with the phallus, he may identify with the mother as bearer of the phallus, or present himself as the bearer of the phallus. Here, there is a high degree, not of abstraction, but of the generalisation of this level of imaginary relationship, of the relationship that I've been calling a luring relationship, wherein the child attests to his mother that he can fulfil her, not only as a child, but also with respect to her desire and, to spell it right out, with respect to what she lacks. The situation is certainly a fundamental and structuring one, because it's around this, and only around this, that the fetishist's relationship with his object can be articulated. Take for example the whole intermediary scale that links him to such a complex and elaborate relationship as transvestism, and to which analysis alone has been able to furnish its accentuation and its terminal point. Homosexuality is here set apart for what is at issue in homosexuality, that is to say, a need of the object, of the real penis, in the other party.

At what point will we see that something brings an end to the relationship that is sustained in this way? What, for example, brings this to an end in the case of little Hans?

3

At the start of the observation, through a kind of lucky encounter, through the illumination of a miraculous stroke of fortune, which is what has happened whenever we make a discovery, we see the child fully committed to a relationship in which the phallus plays a most evident role.

The father's notes on what he picked out from the child's development, up until the hour of reckoning when the phobia began, tell us that little Hans was constantly fantasising the phallus, questioning

his mother about the presence of her phallus, then about his father's phallus, and then about the phallus of animals. He speaks about nothing but the phallus. Going by the comments that are reported to us, the phallus is truly the pivotal object, the central object in the organisation of his world. We have Freud's text before us, and we are trying to make sense of it.

What was it, then, that changed, since nothing of especial importance, nothing critical, occurred in the life of little Hans? What changed was that his penis started to become something altogether real. It began to stir, and the child started to masturbate. The important element is not so much that his mother intervened at that moment, but rather that his penis became real. This is the solid fact in the observation. From that point forth, it's quite clear that we need to ask ourselves whether there might not be a relationship between this fact and what appears at that time, that is to say, anxiety.

I have yet to tackle the problem of anxiety here in this Seminar, because things need to be taken in sequence. As you know, the question of how anxiety is to be conceived of is one of the abiding questions that runs throughout Freud's work. I'm not about to give you a single-sentence synopsis of the path Freud took, but I will note that, as a mechanism, anxiety is constantly present at each stage of his observation. The doctrine comes afterwards.

How are we to conceive of the anxiety that is at issue in this instance, while staying as close as possible to the phenomenon? I ask you to try out for a moment the fashion that consists in showing a little imagination and to notice that anxiety appears in this extraordinarily evanescent relationship when the subject peels away from his existence, however imperceptible this may be, and when he realises, though scarcely so, that he is on the verge of being drawn back into something that you may label as you wish depending on the occasion – *image of the other*, *temptation*, and so on – in short, the instant when the subject is suspended between a moment at which he no longer knows where he is, and a shift towards a moment when he will become something in which he will never be able to find himself again. That's what anxiety is.

Can't you see that right when there appears in the child, in the form of a drive in the most elementary sense of the term, this thing that stirs – the real penis – what formerly had long been the very paradise of happiness starts to feel like a snare? This snare is what formerly was the game of being what one is not, of being for the mother everything that she wants.

I can't speak about everything at once, so I shall make do with saying that all of this depends after all on the fact of what the child is

really for the mother. Presently we shall be trying to introduce some difference into this, and to get much closer to what Hans was for his mother, but for the time being we shall stick with this crucial point that yields us the general scheme of things.

Until this point, the child is in the paradise of the lure. It may be satisfying or not, but either way there is no reason for us not to see that he can keep up this game for a very long while in a satisfying way. The child tries to slip into, to integrate himself into what he is for the mother's love, and, with a bit of good fortune, and even very little, he manages, because that's all it takes to authorise this relationship that is so very delicate. But as soon as his drive, his real penis, starts to interfere, the unsticking that I have just mentioned becomes apparent. He is caught in his own snare, the dupe of his own game, and falls prey to every discordance now that he is confronted with the particularly immense gap that lies between satisfying an image and having something to present – to present, so to speak, in full. What invariably happens is not merely that the child simply fails in his attempts at seduction, for one reason or another, or that he is rejected by the mother. The decisive factor is that what he ultimately has to present is something that seems to him to be something quite meagre. There are countless such experiences in analytic experience. The child comes face-to-face with the opening where he is the captive, the victim, the pacified element in a game in which he now becomes prey to the significations of the Other. There is a dilemma here.

As I indicated last year, it is very precisely at this point that the origin of paranoia branches off. Once the game starts to become serious, while still being a mere game of luring, the child is entirely left hanging on what the partner indicates to him. The partner's every expression becomes for him the verdict on his sufficiency or his insufficiency. This is what happens to the extent that the situation evolves, that is to say, when the term of the symbolic father does not intervene, having been left on the outside due to *Verwerfung*. We are going to see, concretely, just how necessary this term of the symbolic father is. But when the situation evolves without this term, it turns into the highly peculiar situation of being thenceforth delivered up entirely to the eye and the gaze of the Other. Let's leave to one side, however, this future paranoiac. On the other branch, in and of itself there is literally no way out of the situation. Of course, there is a way out, because I'm here to show you how the castration complex is the way out.

The castration complex takes up, on the purely imaginary plane, everything that is at stake in the phallus. This is precisely why it is most fitting that the real penis should in some sense be placed out of

range. The Father introduces an order that intervenes with its prohibitions, with the fact that he introduces the reign of Law here, which means that the affair is taken out of the child's hands but is settled elsewhere. The Father is the one with whom there is no more chance of winning but to accept the distribution of stakes as they stand. The symbolic order intervenes precisely on the imaginary plane. It is not for nothing that castration bears on the imaginary phallus, but in some sense outside of the real couple. Order is thus re-established, within which the child will be able to wait out events as they evolve.

This might strike you as straightforward for the time being as a solution to the problem. It's an indication. It's not a solution. It's a bridge that's been quickly flung across the divide. Were it really so easy, were there just one bridge to be made, there would be no reason to do any bridging. What is of interest is the point we've reached, namely the point that little Hans had reached precisely when nothing of the sort had been laid out for him.

What is little Hans faced with? He is poised at the meeting point between the real drive and the game of the imaginary phallic lure, and this is in relation to his mother. What happens at that moment, because there is a neurosis? It will come as no surprise to you when I tell you that a regression occurs.

I would nevertheless prefer you to be surprised by this because I'm giving the term *regression* neither more nor less than the strict scope I gave it in the last session before the break, when we spoke about frustration. I told you back then that in the presence of the mother's failing, the child brings about a quashing in the satisfaction of being fed. Here too, where the child stands at the centre, regression occurs when it's no longer enough to give what is there for the giving, and he finds himself in the disarray of no longer sufficing. There is a feigning of the same shortcut by which primary frustration is satisfied, where the child snatches hold of the breast in order to fence off all his problems. The only thing that opens up before him as a yawning gap is exactly what is now happening elsewhere – *to be devoured by the mother.*

This is the first coat that the phobia dons, and this is exactly what appears in the case of our young fellow. Whichever horse becomes the object of his phobia, it is always a horse that bites. The theme of devouring is always to be found, in one aspect or another, in the structure of the phobia.

Is this the whole of it? Of course it is not. It's not just anything that bites or that devours. We find ourselves confronted with the problem of phobia whenever a certain number of fundamental relationships come about, some of which have to be left to one side in order to be able to articulate something cogent. What is certain is that the

objects of phobias, which are animals in particular, are marked out from the first, even to the eye of the most casual observer, by something that turns them by their very essence into objects of the symbolic order. Whether the object of the phobia is a lion, a wolf, or even a giraffe, and above all when the child doesn't live in parts where this animal presents the faintest sign, not of danger, but simply of actual presence, they are foreign objects – among which we can see on this occasion that the horse presents as an extremely precise limit – which show very well to what extent they are objects that have been lifted, as it were, from a sort of list or category of signifiers that share the same nature, consistent with what can be found on coats-of-arms. These objects are the same that led Freud, when putting together *Totem and Taboo*, to the analogy, which even became a necessity, between the father and the totem. They have a very special function, which is to stand in for the signifier of the symbolic father.

We cannot see what the final term of this signifier is. One can wonder why it takes one form or another. There must be something in what we encounter that belongs to the realm of fact or experience, both of the positive and the irreducible kind. This is not a deduction but an apparatus necessitated by the support of what we find in experience. Besides, we are not here to sort out why the phobia takes the form of such and such an animal. This is not the question.

4

I ask you to take up, between now and next time, the text of the observation on little Hans. You will see that it's a phobia without a shadow of a doubt, but it's a phobia that is, so to speak, in motion. His parents seized the thread the moment it first appeared, and his father doesn't let go until it's over.

I should like you to read this text. You will have all the flitting impressions that one can have from it. You will even on several occasions have a sense of being utterly lost. Nevertheless, I would like those of you who will have been willing to put yourselves through the test to tell me next time whether you have been struck by a contrast in the text.

At the first stage, we see little Hans in full flow developing all sorts of extraordinarily fictionalised imaginings concerning his relations with all the children whom he adopts as his own. This is a theme of the imaginary in which he shows himself to be very much at ease, as though in this state he were extending in some way the luring game with his mother. He feels himself quite at ease in a position

that combines an identification with the mother. At the same time, adopting the children entails a series of loving relationships of every stripe, going from the little girl whom he woos and courts at close quarters – the daughter of the landlord of their holiday lodgings – to the girl who inspires his *long-range love*. This locates him as already inscribed in all the forms of loving relationship, which he can pursue with great ease on the plane of fiction.

All of this contrasts with what will come to pass when, after the father's interventions under the pressure of a more or less directed analytic questioning, he gives himself over to a sort of fantasy novelising in which he constructs the presence of his little sister, years before her actual birth, *in a box*, *in a carriage*, and *on a horse*. In short, the coherence of this draws a firm line in the analysis of little Hans between what I would call the imaginary orgy and the intervention of the real father.

In other words, while the child reaches a most satisfactory cure – and we will be seeing what *satisfactory cure* means with respect to his phobia – this is quite clearly to the extent that the real father has intervened, a real father who hitherto had intervened so very little. Moreover, he was able to intervene because he had the symbolic father, Freud, behind him. However, commensurate with this intervention, everything that was tending to crystallise on the plane of a sort of premature real sets off again in a radical imaginary, so radical indeed that one no longer knows very well where one is. One keeps wondering whether Hans might not be making fun of everything, or producing a refined brand of humour, which moreover is incontestably the case because what we have here is an imaginary that is being played out to reorganise a symbolic world.

One thing is certain, however, which is that his recovery comes about when he expresses castration in the clearest way in the form of an articulated story, namely the plumber who comes and unscrews his widdler and gives him another one. It is right there that the observation stops. We can gather from this that the solution of the phobia is linked to the constellation of this triadic intervention of the real father.

We will be coming back to this next time. Supported and assisted as he is by the symbolic father, the real father enters here as a schmuck. Freud is constantly forced to say that it's better than nothing, that the child had to be allowed to speak. Above all, says Freud at the bottom of one page, *It is not in the least our business to 'understand' a case at once*. With all the questions that the father obviously presses on his son, he goes barking up the wrong tree. No matter. The result is punctuated by these two points – Hans's imaginary orgy, and the advent, as it were, of fully articulated castration.

This castration is spelt out as follows – *what is real will be replaced by something more impressive, something bigger*. The bringing to light of castration is both what puts an end to the phobia and what shows, I would say, not its finality, but what it stands in for.

You must have a fair sense of how this is but an intermediary stage in my disquisition. I simply wanted to give you enough to see where his repertoire of questions opens up. Next time we will take up this dialectic of child and mother, and we shall set about isolating the value, the true signification, of the castration complex.

13 March 1957

XIV

THE SIGNIFIER IN THE REAL

The network of *The Purloined Letter*
Quite alone with Mariedl
A metonymic child
The black on the mouth
A world structured phobically

I should like to begin by setting things straight regarding the article published in the second issue of *La Psychanalyse* under the title *Séminaire sur 'La Lettre volée'*, and especially its Introduction.

A number of you have had time to read it and to go into it more deeply. I am grateful for the attention of those who have devoted themselves to this inspection. It is to be believed, however, that the memory of the context in which what is there laid out in the Introduction was first delivered is not so easy for everyone to get back in touch with, because some have fallen back into a sort of *real-ising* error of another kind, which is what a few people allowed themselves to be overtaken by when I was first setting out these terms. For example, they imagined that I was denying that there is such a thing as chance. I allude to this in my text and I won't be coming back to this point.

I'm now going to clarify what is at issue.

1

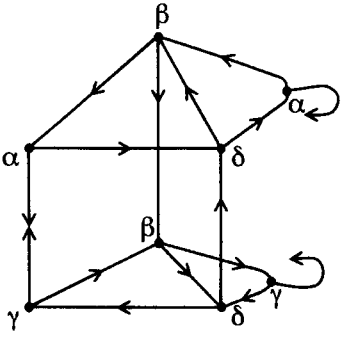
It will be useful for me to remind you of the basic data.

We take the signs + and – , randomly ordered in a temporal succession, in groupings of three. We order these groupings as 1, 2 or 3, depending on whether they represent a succession of identical signs + + +, – – –, or an alternating succession + – +, – + –, or on the contrary a succession that is distinct from the others in that it has no

symmetry, such as + + –, but also – – +. I call this last grouping *odd*, using an English term that cannot be translated into French. It's the one that is asymmetrical, and which stands out as being uneven and lopsided. It's a simple question of definition. It's enough to set it out like this for it to be established as a convention, as the existence of a symbol. While this was laid out unambiguously in my text, though perhaps in a way that was dense enough for some to have found it difficult, the context prevents one from taking it even so long as a second for anything but this definition, this convention that is the point of departure.

Next, it's a matter of using the letters α, β, γ and δ, to label a third series of symbols that is built from the second series. This is founded on the remark that when one knows the beginning and end term in the second series, the middle term is univocal. So, in order to define the terms α, β, γ and δ, we take into account only the two extremes of the series. In a case like this one here, γ, you can see that it goes from odd to odd. Therefore, the convention has been established whereby a sign is set down that captures within its range the five previous symbols from the first line. This will give the sign α when going from same to same, that is, from symmetrical to symmetrical, whether it's a matter of going from 1 to 1, from 1 to 3, or from 3 to 1.[1] Going from odd to odd gives γ. Starting from the same to arrive at odd will give β. Coming back to the same from odd will give δ. These are the conventions.

On this basis, if we want to define all the possibilities by means of a network, we can construct it as a parallelepiped formed of vectors. This has been found by one of the people who has best understood and best examined this thing, in the most precise way and even, I would almost say, in the most competent way.



The network has to be oriented, which is exactly how it is here. The α can reproduce indefinitely, which is not the case for the other

points unless it is expressly indicated by the loop defined thus. So, this network provides an exhaustive summary of all the possible sequences. These are the only ones. A series that cannot be set into this network is an impossible series.

Why didn't I put this in my text? First of all, because I hadn't represented it for you here. It's a simple device for checking the calculations, which allows for the definitive envelopment and locking-down of the problem in such fashion as to ensure that none of the possibilities has been pretermitted. What is convenient about it is that you can always refer to it as something trustworthy. It will indicate when you might perhaps in a certain case have overlooked a possible solution, whichever the problem may be that you are posing with respect to the series, or even when you have gone completely wrong.

This brings me to a point of contention, which you can see in the network. The network shows you that there are in some sense two kinds of γ, two kinds of δ, and so on. If you look at any of the vertices, which have been labelled with these letters, you can see that a dichotomous division is always posited when starting from any one of them. Take for example γ. After γ there can be a β, and there can also after γ be an α, because this vector here has the privilege of running in both directions. Likewise, down here you can see a δ, and there are two possible outcomes – it can go to this δ up here, or to γ. So, there is another δ up here – which is not the same as the δ down here – after which there can be a β or an α.

The objection that some people have levelled at this way of laying out the evidence for functional diversity is that, according to them, one could for example label the vertices with eight different letters instead of four, or else put a lower-case *a* or a subscript 2. It was put to me that there was no clear and distinct definition of the symbol here, and that consequently everything I was representing and spelling out in my text was merely a sort of opacifying of the mechanism for how the symbols play out. It would be a sort of creation that would make some kind of internal law emerge from within. This is where a disquiet began to arise in some people's minds regarding one implication of something that is introduced by the creation of the symbol and which goes beyond the pure randomness that is given at the outset. I think I have to explain myself on this matter.

It's exactly that. And in one sense it can indeed be said that in the choosing of the symbols there is a certain ambiguity that is given at the outset, from the moment you set down the symbols, with the simple indication of oddity, that is to say, asymmetry, when in fact, given that we've spoken of a temporal succession, these items are oriented. Obviously 2 followed by 1 is not the same thing as 1 fol-

lowed by 2. To confound them would be to introduce an ambiguity into the symbol itself when this can be expressed more clearly in the reference that has been set out.

However, what is at issue here is to find out what is meant by the clarity in question. There is something that you may call ambiguity, but be sure to tell yourself that this is precisely what one has to get a sense of. At every level, the symbol that is a + presupposes the – , and the symbol that is a – presupposes the +. The ambiguity is still there as we move further into the construction. By grouping them in threes, I took the smallest step one can take. I didn't demonstrate this in the article because my sole aim was to remind you of the context in which the purloined letter was introduced. Please accept for the moment that this is the smallest possible step, because it is precisely to the extent that the symbol harbours this ambiguity that what I have called *law* becomes apparent.

In other words, were you to assume that you could replace four of the vertices by ε, ζ, η, and θ, you would effectively obtain possible sequences that would be different and which would be extremely complicated because you would be dealing with eight terms, each of which would pair up with two others in keeping with an order that would be far from immediately obvious. Yet this is precisely the convenience of choosing these ambiguous symbols that pair up, because they do indeed pair up with something, this vertex α with another vertex that we have also labelled α, and which do indeed have different functions. It is in this respect that it's convenient to group them in this way, and from which, as you can see, there arises the exceedingly straightforward law that I expressed for you in one of the schematics in the text.

$$\underset{\text{Phase 1}}{\frac{\alpha, \delta}{\gamma, \beta}} \longrightarrow \underset{\text{Phase 2}}{\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta} \longrightarrow \underset{\text{Phase 3}}{\frac{\alpha, \beta}{\gamma, \delta}}$$

This schematic allows you to say that, while in the first or second phase you can have any one of the symbols, the third phase is subject to a dichotomy that rules out any possibility of obtaining γ or δ in the third phase if you began with α or δ in the first. Likewise, there is no possibility of obtaining an α or a β in the third if you began with a γ or a β in the first.

In my text I indicated some of the sequential effects this entails, certain properties that are interesting in that they always bring out other phrases of the same form, laws of syntax that can be deduced from this exceedingly straightforward formula. I tried to put them

together in such a way that they would be metaphorical, that is to say, so that they would enable you to glimpse how the signifier truly is the organiser of something that is inherent in human memory. This is so to the extent that, by always implicating elements of the signifier in its weft, human memory turns out to be structured in a fundamentally different way from any possible conception of vital memory, of the persistence or the effacement of an impression. Why so? Because it's important to see that as soon as we introduce the signifier into the real – and it is introduced into the real simply from the moment we start speaking, less still from the moment when simply we count – everything that is apprehended in the realm of memory is taken up in something that essentially structures it in a way that is fundamentally different from anything that can be conceived of in a theory that is founded on the theme of vital property, pure and simple.

This is what I try to illustrate, clearly in a metaphorical way, when I speak to you about the future perfect, and when I bring in a fourth phase after the third. If one takes the fourth phase as a point of arrival, any one of the four symbols can feature there because the fourth phase has the same function as the second phase. If you set down an α, β, γ, or δ in this fourth phase, certain eliminations will result from it at the second and third phases. This can serve as an image of what comes into focus in an immediate future once it has become – in relation to a goal, a determined project – the future perfect. That certain signifier-elements should be rendered impossible by this simple fact is something that I will illustrate metaphorically as the function that we can give to what on this occasion I shall call the impossible signifier, the *caput mortuum* of the signifier.

What I want to stress today is that this is, of course, where I broke off my development. However, as people might quibble in the name of some kind of false evidence that might arise from the fact that not every facet of mystery vanishes away, because laws can be extracted from it – laws that are just as straightforward – upon consideration, in a differentiated fashion, of the terms at the different vertices in the parallelepipedic construction I have given you, this is not the question. What I would like you to hold in your minds for a moment is simply that this means that as soon as there is *graphia*, there is *orthographia*.

I'm going to illustrate this for you right away in a different manner, which might have a more conclusive value in your eyes, even though I didn't just concoct all this as some kind of mathematical excursion, with the incompetence that characterises me as much as everyone else. You would be wrong to think that. First, these are not items

that I merely tarried with overnight. Second, I got a mathematician to check it. Please don't think, just because I've added this further precision, that the slightest element of incertitude or fragility might have crept into it.

So, as soon as there is *graphia*, there is *orthographia*. I begin with this simple hypothesis, but not in the sense that the word hypothesis is usually understood, rather in the sense of a definition of the action or the exceedingly straightforward premises that result therefrom. I begin with the *odd*, and do not do what I could equally have done at the start, which would be to distinguish, as I was told, between the *odd* with two light feet at the beginning and the *odd* with two light feet at the end, the anapaest and the dactyl. I didn't do that, and the interest of the question lies precisely here. I'm using certain definitions, which perhaps indeed are quite rudimentary, and from which certain intuitive elements have been purged, and especially this particularly gripping intuitive element that is grounded on scansion, which already entails a whole bodily engagement. This is where poetry begins. But we are not even moving into the realm of poetry. We are bringing in solely the notion of symmetry or asymmetry. I'm going to tell you why it seems to me to be of interest to curb the creation of the first signifier to this strict element.

Here I'm reproducing my table, with the second indeterminate phase, here – α, β, γ, δ. Now we come to the fifth phase. If we note down what is possible after an α, then what is possible after a β, and what is possible after each of the symbols, we can see that here [in the fourth phase] there can be α, β, γ or δ. You can see the excess of possibilities that we have. We have all the possible symbols, and we have them at two levels. Yet the most cursory examination of the situation shows you that if you choose this fifth phase as the point of arrival, and if you choose here for example the letter β – it could be any letter – and if you take as the point of departure another letter, for example the letter α, you will realise right away that in no case whatsoever can you have a letter from this line here [below the bar in the third phase – γ, δ]. By virtue of starting with α, you can have at the third phase only what features here above the line of dichotomy, that is to say α or β. However, what [exactly] is required in the third phase for you to have β in the fifth phase? It has to be an α, because β can only have α as its provenance.

The result of this is that when your design is to form a series in which two letters are determined at either end of a spacing of five moves, the middle letter, the one that stands at the third phase, is determined in an absolutely univocal way.

I could show you other properties that are just as striking but I'm confining myself to this one in the hope that this will succeed

in bringing into your minds the dimension that has to be evoked. Indeed, what results from this property is that if you take any term in a sequence, by considering the term that lies two moves before and the term that lies two moves after, you can always check, and in a straightforward way that can be reckoned by eye without difficulty – this is a check that a typographer can perform – whether there is a fault at any point in the chain. It is enough to refer to the term that stands two moves before and the term that stands two moves after to see that in this case there can only be one possible letter here in the middle. In other words, as soon as there is the faintest emergence of a *graphia*, an *orthographia* emerges at the same time, that is to say, a means of checking for a possible fault.

This example has been put together for this purpose. It shows you how, from the most elementary emergence of the signifier, law emerges quite independently of any real element. On no account does this mean that chance is being steered. It means that law emerges with the signifier, in a way that is internally independent of any experience. This is what this speculation on the alphas, betas, gammas and deltas is intended to demonstrate.

It seems that for some minds these items entail very considerable resistance. This path nevertheless struck me as being a more straightforward one, to give a sense of a certain dimension, than recommending for example that you undertake a reading of Frege, or offering a commentary on his work. Frege was a mathematician of this century who dedicated himself to a science that at first blush looks to be as simple as can be, that of arithmetic. He thought it necessary to take wide detours – because the closer a thing is to simplicity, the harder it is to grasp – but detours that were surely altogether convincing when it came to demonstrating that there is no possible means of deducing the number 3 on the basis of experience alone. Of course, this leads us into a series of philosophical or mathematical speculations, and I didn't think it necessary to put you to this test.

Yet this is no less important because while, contrary to what Jung believed, no deduction from experience can make us accede to the number 3, it's quite certain that the symbolic order, as distinct from the real, enters the real like a ploughshare and introduces an originary dimension. In so far as we operate on this register of speech, we analysts have to take into account the originariness of this dimension. This is what is at stake in this instance.

I'm afraid I might wear you out, and I'll tell you something else. I'm going to share with you a more intuitive idea that occurred to me, one that is less certain in its affirmation.

This remark popped into my head one day when I was in a

wonderful zoo, some thirty-odd miles north of London, where apparently the animals enjoy the greatest freedom since the bars are sunk into the ground at the bottom of concealed ditches. I was contemplating a lion surrounded by three magnificent lionesses that bore an altogether peaceful look of good temper and concordance. I asked myself why there was such good concordance among these animals, when as a rule, given what we know, I should have been seeing unmistakeable eruptions of rivalry and conflict. It seems to me that I didn't make such a big leap in my mind when I gathered that it's simply because lions don't know how to count up to 3.

You understand that it's because lions don't know how to count up to 3 that the lionesses do not feel the faintest sense of jealousy for one another, at least apparently. I offer this to your meditation. In other words, we ought never to neglect the introduction of the signifier when it comes to comprehending the emergence at issue whenever we find ourselves across from the appearance of the reality that is our principal object in analysis, the reality of inter-human conflict.

One could even go further and say that ultimately conflict exists because men don't know how to count any better than lions do, namely because this number 3 is never fully integrated. It is merely articulated. Of course, the dual relationship, which is fundamentally animal, maintains no less its supervalence across a certain zone, precisely that of the imaginary, and to the very extent that man does, even so, know how to count, in the final analysis something that we call *conflict* occurs. Were it not so difficult to manage to articulate the number 3, then this gap between the preoedipal and the Oedipal wouldn't be there. This is the same gap that of late we have been trying to cross as best we can, with the aid of little rope ladders and other contraptions. What I simply want to make you realise is that once one has started to try to cross it, one is always falling back on such contraptions. There is no veritable experiential crossing of the gap between 2 and 3.

This is exactly the point we have reached with little Hans.

2

We left little Hans at the moment when he is about to tackle the passage we defined, and which is called the castration complex.

We can clearly see that at the start he has not yet come to it, because he is playing with the *Wiwimacher* which is there and is not there. It's the *Wiwimacher* of his mother, or of the big horse, or the

little horse, or his father's, and which is also his own, but ultimately it does not seem to amount to much more for him than a very fine object in a game of hide-and-seek, from which he is even capable of deriving the greatest pleasure.

I think that a certain number of you have consulted the text. This is the starting point, and it's the only thing at issue. At the start the child presents, without doubt to the attention of his parents, a sort of problematic of the imaginary phallus, which is everywhere and nowhere. It is presented as the essential element in his relation to what at that time is for him what Freud called the *other person*, in the most clear-cut fashion, namely the mother.

This is the point Hans has reached, and everything looks to be moving along perfectly well, as Freud underscores, thanks to a kind of liberalism, or even an educative laxity that was fairly typical of the pedagogy that, so it seems, emerged from these early days of psychoanalysis. We can see the child developing in the strongest, clearest, and happiest way. Now, it is after these fine antecedents that, to everyone's surprise, he comes to what we can call, without being too dramatic, a small hitch, the phobia. That is to say, from a certain point forth, the child took great fright at one privileged object, which happens to be the horse whose presence was already heralded in the text, metaphorically, when the child said to his mother, *I thought you were so big you'd have a widdler like a horse.* It's clear that if we can see the image of the horse appearing on the horizon, it's from this moment forth that the child enters the phobia.

In order to pursue this trajectory metaphorically through the observation on little Hans, it has to be understood how the child will pass from such a simple relationship, which ultimately is altogether blithe and clearly articulated, to the phobia.

Where then is the unconscious? Where is the repression? There doesn't seem to be any. It is with the greatest liberty that he questions his father and his mother about the presence or absence of the widdler, and tells them that he went to the zoo and saw an animal, a lion as it happens, endowed with a large widdler. The widdler plays a role that tends to become presentified for all sorts of reasons, which are not quite spelt out at the start of the observation, but which we can see appearing in hindsight. The fact that the child takes great pleasure in exhibiting himself, and some of his games too, show very well the essentially symbolic character of the widdler at the time. He will exhibit it in the dark. He will show it at the same time as a hidden object. He will also make use of it as an intermediate element for his relationships with the objects that catch his interest, that is, the young girls whom he asks to assist him and allows to watch him. The fact that his mother or his father assist him, which

is also underscored, plays a major role in establishing his organs as an element of consideration from which he doubtless derives further pleasure by catching attention, interest, and even caresses from a certain number of people around him.

This is the point we've reached when this thing is about to arise. To get some idea of the prevailing harmony prior to the phobia, note how Hans is showing on the imaginary plane the most formally typical attitudes one may expect from what in our harsh language we call *virile aggression*. With the little girls he is performing a courtship that is present to a greater or lesser extent, and which is differentiated into two patterns – there are the young girls whom he hustles, clasps and molests, and there are others whom he treats in the manner of *Liebe per Distanz*. These two patterns of relationship are highly differentiated, and are already very subtle, I would almost say very civilised, very ordered and very cultivated. The term *kultivierte* is used by Freud to designate the differentiation that Hans makes between his objects. He doesn't conduct himself in the same way with little girls whom he considers to be refined ladies, ladies of his world, as he does with the landlord's young daughters. So, this has every appearance of opening out onto the favourable prospect of what one might call the transference towards other female objects, the reinvestment of his sentiments with respect to the female object in the guise of the mother. We can conceive of there being something that was produced which contributed to this development that was facilitated, so we are told, by the particularly open relationship of dialogue, which didn't forbid the child any mode of expression in the slightest.

What happens? How might we try to broach this problem, because now it's a matter of pursuing step by step a critical reading of the observation and not merely offering a conspectus, which is what I've done so far?

I don't think I'm forcing the text when I tell you already what the sign of the underlying structuration is. This is the same structuration as the one I pointed out to you, of the child's relationship with the mother, on the basis of which the onset of the crisis can be conceived of in the form of the entrance, the bringing into play, of the real penis. There is something in the text that has never been commented on. The child dreams he is with little Mariedl, one of his playmates from the summer resort in the Austrian lakes. He gives his account of being with the young girl, and then, when his father is retelling the dream to the mother in his presence and saying how amusing it is that he should have dreamt about being with her, Hans makes a very nice rectification, *Not with Mariedl,* but *ganz allein mit der Mariedl, quite alone with Mariedl.* Like many other

elements that abound in the observations, people cast this aside as mere childish talk, but this retort has all its importance. Freud puts it very well, *everything carries a signification.* Hans's retort is conceivable only within the imaginary dialectic which I laid out for you as the initial plane of the child's relations with his mother. Indeed, this scene occurs when he is three and three-quarters, his little sister having been born just three months before. So, not only *with*, but *quite alone with*, that is to say, one can be *quite alone with her*, and not have this intruder there, as is the case with the mother. There is no doubt about it, Hans takes six months to get used to the presence of his little sister.

I think that on the plane of such typical and classical remarks, this can only strike you as evident and satisfactory. Nevertheless, you know very well that this is not the plane on which I shall be staying. While the real intrusion of the other child in the relationship between the child and his mother certainly has all it takes to bring about some such critical moment or some such decisive anxiety, it still remains that I have no hesitation in accentuating this *quite alone with* because, whatever the position may be, a child is never alone with his mother. The full progression of a child's apparently dual relationship with his mother is marked by one absolutely essential element, which is that the child comes in – as the experience of the analysis of female sexuality assures us, this being the referential axis that has to be staunchly maintained given what Freud upheld to the very end concerning female sexuality – only as a substitute, as a compensation, in short as a reference to what the mother essentially lacks. This is what means that the child is never left quite alone, *ganz allein*, with the mother. Little by little the child learns that the mother situates herself as being marked by this fundamental lack, which she strives to fill, and in relation to which the child only ever brings her a satisfaction that we could provisionally call *substitutive.*

It is essentially on this basis that we are to conceive of any kind of fresh opening of the gap, any kind of reopening of the question, and especially the question that arises with real genital maturity, that is, in the boy, with the introduction of masturbation, this real jouissance with his own real penis. Nothing can be understood unless within this initial constellation, through which the crucial elements can be introduced that open onto the various outlets that constitute either an Oedipus complex with a normal outcome or an Oedipus complex that is broached more or less in a way that is negativised to a greater or lesser extent, and which is not at all a neurosis, as you are usually taught.

So, let's pick up from the point we've reached and make a brief remark.

The child has to uncover this dimension wherein the mother desires something beyond him, that is, beyond the object of pleasure that at first he feels himself to be for her and which he aspires to be. This situation can be conceived of, like any analytic situation, as I have taught you, only within the essentially intersubjective reference that always includes, simultaneously and correlatively, the originary dimension of each subject, yet also the reality of this intersubjective perspective such as it anchored in each subject. In other words, I am making the passing remark that something is veiled at the start and we will only come to unveil it at the end.

Yet you already know the observation well enough at least to be able to ask yourselves the question, and to refer to terms that I have used in the past, whether wisely or unwisely, namely the two essential terms of an altogether major division in the signifying approach to any reality whatsoever in a subject, *metaphor* and *metonymy*. This is very much a case where this distinction is to be applied, at least giving vent to so many question marks.

In any intersubjective situation such as it becomes established between child and mother, we will have, as it were, a preliminary question to ask ourselves. It will be preliminary, and probably it will be settled only at the end. In this function of substitution, what ultimately forms an image, as a way of expressing it, doesn't mean a thing. It's easy to say *substitution*. But try substituting a pebble for a hunk of bread when you put it in an elephant's trunk. He won't take it with quite the uniform tone you might suppose. It's not about substitution. It's about what this signifying substitution signifies. To spell it right out, it's a matter of finding out, in relation to the phallus that is the mother's object of desire, what the function of the child is for her. It's clear that if the child is the metaphor of her love for the father, this is not quite the same thing as being the metonymy of her desire for the phallus, which she does not have and never will have.

Which is it in this case? Everything in the mother's conduct with little Hans, whom she literally drags around with her everywhere, from the WC to her bed, clearly indicates that the child is an absolutely indispensable appendage for her. Hans's mother, of whom Freud is very fond, to whom Freud had previously been *of assistance*, this *excellent and devoted mother*, *sehr besorgte*, and pretty to boot, still finds the wherewithal to take off her knickers in front of her child. This is a very peculiar dimension. If there is one thing that illustrates very well what I just said about the essential dimension that lies behind the veil, then the observation on little Hans is it. Though there are many others too. Can't you see that in this case the child is the metonymy of the phallus for the mother?

This doesn't mean that she has greater consideration for the child's phallus. In truth, she shows very well – this person who is so liberal in matters of childrearing and what may be spoken of – when it comes to deeds and to laying a finger on the little thingummy that the child whips out for her, she is seized by a sudden dread – *Das eine Schweinerei ist*. After all, this is how it is in this kind of live dynamic. We need to try to give another lick of polish to this observation on little Hans to restore its shine.

So, you see, saying that the child is taken as a metonymy of the mother's desire for the phallus does not mean that he is taken up in the metonymy as a phallophore, but on the contrary that he is metonymic as a totality. This is where the drama takes shape. Everything would be all well and good for him were it a matter of his *Wiwimacher*, but it's not. It's him as a whole that's in question, and this is why the difference starts to become very seriously apparent when the real *Wiwimacher* comes into play. This real *Wiwimacher* becomes an object of satisfaction for Hans, and this is when what is called *anxiety* starts to be created. What is called *anxiety* hinges on the fact that he is able to gauge the full difference that lies between what he is loved for and what he is able to give.

Given the child's originary position in relation to the mother, what can he do? He is there to be an object of pleasure. Therefore, he is in a relationship that is fundamentally an imagined one. The best thing that can happen to him is to come out of this purely passive state. This primordial passivation is what is essential, and if we fail to see that this is where it is inserted, we understand nothing of the Wolf Man case study. Beyond this imaginary capture in which he has become ensnared on account of being his mother's object, and in which he gradually becomes aware of what he truly is, the best thing he can do is to imagine himself such as he is imagined, to pass over, so to speak, to the middle road. Once he starts also to exist as real, he doesn't have a great deal of choice. He can quite certainly imagine himself to be fundamentally other and rejected, something other than what is desired and as such outside the imaginary field where hitherto his mother could derive satisfaction from the place he occupied.

Freud underscores this. What is at issue is something that supervenes. An anxiety. But anxiety over what? We have traces of it. There is a dream from which he wakes up in tears because his mother was going to leave. On another occasion he says to his father *Suppose you were to go away*. It's about separation. We can complement these terms with numerous further details. His anxieties arise when he is separated from his mother and when he is with someone else. What is quite certain is that the anxieties are the first to appear,

and Freud underscores how the sense of anxiety is distinct from phobia. But what is a phobia? It's not so easy to grasp.

We are going to try now to ascertain what it is.

3

One can, of course, blithely skip forwards and say that the phobia is the representative element in this. Fine, but where does it get you? Why is it such a singular representation? What role does it play?

Another trap consists in telling oneself that there is a finality and that the phobia must serve some purpose. Why, then, would it serve a purpose? Might there not also be things that serve no purpose? Why take it as settled in advance that the phobia serves a purpose? Maybe it serves precisely no purpose and everything would have come equally to pass had it not been there. Why have preconceived ideas about finality in this instance?

We are going to try to find out what the function of the phobia is. What is the phobia in this instance? In other words, what is the particular structure of little Hans's phobia? This will perhaps lead us to form some notions about what the general structure of a phobia is.

Either way, at this stage I would like to point out how the difference between anxiety and phobia is altogether tangible here.

I don't know whether the phobia is as representative as all that, because as we are going to see, it's rather hard to figure out what Hans is afraid of. He voices it in umpteen different ways, but an altogether singular residue remains. If you've read the observation, then you know that this horse, which is white, brown, black . . . – and these colours are not devoid of a certain interest – poses a riddle that through to the end of the observation is never solved. It has to do with goodness knows what black stain that it has around its muzzle, lower than the bridge of the nose, which turns it into a prehistoric animal. His father asks him, *What do you mean? The piece of iron they have in their mouths?* Hans replies *No*. It doesn't seem to be the harness either. And then when later Hans says it looks like a muzzle, *for the last three days not a single horse has passed on which he could point out this 'muzzle'*. Then finally, worn out, Hans says, *Here comes a horse with something black on its mouth*, and wants no more to do with it. What is most certain is that we never know what this black on the horse's mouth is.

A phobia is not, therefore, such a straightforward matter because it even includes these quasi-irreducible elements and so can scarcely be a representative. If there is one thing that gives a good sense of the negative hallucinatory element on which someone has recently

expressed himself in one of those theoretical forays that periodically sprouts up in analysis, it's this kind of blurriness, because ultimately this is what appears to be the clearest thing about this horse's head. It is somewhat reminiscent of the horse's head above Venus and Vulcan in Titian's painting.[2]

One thing, however, is quite certain, and this is the radical difference between the two feelings, the sense of fear and the sense of anxiety that is created when all of a sudden the child feels himself to be something that in one fell swoop can be completely side-lined. Of course, the little sister prepares the question to the highest degree. The crisis opens against a backdrop that reaches much deeper, when the ground falls away from under his feet upon his realisation that he can no longer fulfil his erstwhile function in any way whatsoever. He can no longer be anything. Quite simply, he is nothing more than something that looks like it is something, but at the same time is nothing, and which is called a *metonymy*.

I'm using a term which we have already seen. Metonymy is the procedure of realist novels. If a realist novel can hold our interest it's not because of all the minor realistic glimmer that is put before us, because ultimately such a novel only ever amounts to a piling up of snapshots. If these snapshots hold our interest it's precisely because, behind it, they always aim at something else. They take aim exactly at what looks to be most contrary, that is to say, everything that is missing. This means that, far beyond these many details, beyond the entirety of scintillating pebbles laid out for us, there is something that tethers us. The more metonymic the novel is, the more it aims at this beyond-zone.

So, our dear little Hans suddenly finds himself precipitated, or at the very least precipitable, through his metonymic function. To say this word in a way that is more vivid than theoretical, he imagines himself as a nothingness.

What happens once the phobia has entered the fray of his existence? One thing in any case is certain – faced with the anxiety-horses, the *Angstpferde*, it's not anxiety that he feels, it's fear. He is afraid that something real will happen. He tells us that there are two things that make him afraid – that the horses might bite, and that they might fall. The difference between anxiety and phobia is quite literally that anxiety is *without object*. Here, I'm merely repeating what Freud said, because he spelt it out perfectly. What is at stake in the phobia is not at all anxiety, in spite of the tonality that Hans here lends to the horses. The horses arise from anxiety, but what they bring is fear. In a certain sense, fear always bears on something real that can be voiced and named. These horses can bite, and they can fall.

They have a good many further properties that can harbour within them the trace of the anxiety that is at issue, and perhaps indeed there is some relation between them. We will be taking a look at the relations between this blurriness, this kind of black stain, and something that appears beneath, which shines through from behind the blackness that starts to blur, but in the lived experience of anxiety. Little Hans is afraid, but afraid of what? It's not a fear of one horse, but of horses, such that from this moment forth the world seems to be punctuated by a whole series of points of danger, points of alarm, which in a certain sense restructure it.

In keeping with the indication from Freud, who on one page poses himself questions about the function of phobia and advises us to refer to other cases to settle these questions, let's not forget that one of the most widespread and typical forms of phobia is agoraphobia. Afterwards we will be seeing what constitutes a phobia, whether is it a morbid entity or a syndrome, but agoraphobia is surely something that in itself brings its own value. Here we have the world punctuated by alarm signals which sketch out a field, a domain or an area. If we have to try absolutely to indicate in which direction takes shape not the function, because we mustn't rush here, but rather the sense, of the phobia, it's that it introduces a structure into the child's world. In a certain sense it brings to the fore the function of an interior and an exterior. Until then the child was, all in all, in his mother's interior. He has now been rejected from it, or has imagined himself to be rejected from it, into anxiety. And so here he is, trying, with the aid of the phobia, to establish a new order of interior and exterior. A series of thresholds starts to bring structure to the world.

It's not so easy. I'm sure there would be a great deal to learn here from a study of certain elements that have been furnished by ethnography, from the way spaces are constructed in a village. In primitive civilisations, villages are not built just any old how. There are fields that have been cleared and others that have been left untouched, and in the midst of all this there are further limits that signify things that are truly fundamental with respect to the bearings at the disposal of these people who stand in greater or lesser proximity to their extrication from Nature. There would be much to learn from this and perhaps in time I shall say a word or two about it.

Either way, there is a threshold, and there is also something that presents as an image of what protects the threshold, the *Schutzbau* or the *Vorbau*, the defensive outpost or the barrier, these being the terms with which Freud expressly articulates phobia. It's something that is erected further out towards the point of anxiety.

Already, something is becoming apparent to us here. It is starting to hold together and to show us its function. I simply want to avoid

going too quickly, and I ask you not to stick at this level. One generally contents oneself with little. And after all, to have transformed anxiety into fear is a nice idea. Fear is apparently more reassuring than anxiety. But nor is this certain.

Today I simply want to punctuate how we absolutely cannot mark out fear as a primary element, a primordial element, in the construction of the ego, contrary to what has been voiced in the most categorical manner, as the base of his entire doctrine, by someone whom I'm not about to name and who occupies a leadership position in a certain school that is more or less rightfully termed *Parisian*. On no account can fear be regarded as a primitive element, as a final element, in the structure of neurosis. We can see that fear intervenes in neurotic conflict as an element that defends, from a point that is posted further out, against something that is utterly other and which of its very nature is without object, namely anxiety. Phobia is precisely what allows us to articulate this.

I shall stop for today on this *Vorbau* of my disquisition, having led you to the precise point at which the question of phobia is posed, in relation to what it is led to respond to. I ask you to take the word *respond* in the most profound sense of the term. We shall try next time to see where the ensuing sequence of items can lead us.

20 March 1957

XV

WHAT MYTH IS FOR

Functions and structure of myth
Orgasm and the *Krawall*
The fantasy of the two giraffes
Fixing in | Boring a hole | Screwing and unscrewing
Symbolic transposition of the imaginary

Let's resume our walk through the observation on little Hans.

Walking is not a bad way of recognising that one is within a considered space. For me, however, it's a matter of teaching you to imagine the topography of a field without falling back onto the routes that have already criss-crossed it. It's a matter of perceiving when, for example, you might have come back to your starting point without realising, or else to reflect, when you are in a place as perfectly independent and familiar to you as your bathroom, that were you to drill through the wall you would be on the first floor of the neighbouring bookshop. This is not something that will often pop into your minds. I would even say that it's a matter of perceiving, when you take your bath each day, that work is going on in the bookshop next door and that this is an arm's length away. And then they say, *He's one hell of a metaphysician, this Lacan fellow!*

Yet this is more or less what it's about. It's about enabling you to spot certain connections and, by the same stroke, making you perceive the elements of the overall plan such that you will not be reduced to what I would call, quite intentionally, the *cérémonial*, the protocol, of charted itineraries.

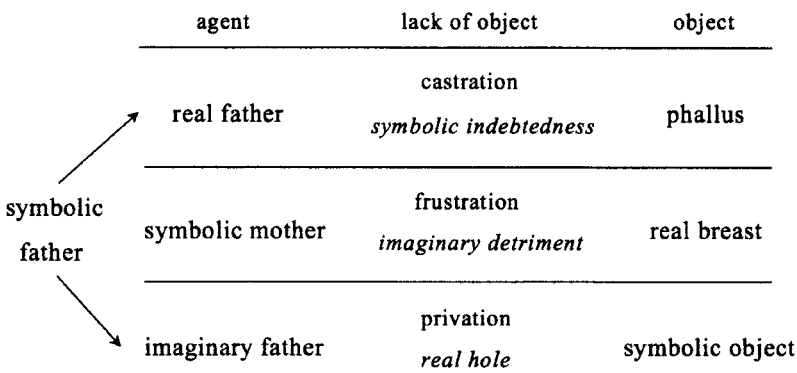
1

So, here we are with little Hans, having reached the point at which, in a situation where everything had been moving along fairly well,

anxiety and phobia arise. I remind you that I distinguished one from the other and in this respect I was in strict conformity with what you can find in Freud's text.

It's about topography, and not some random walk, though indeed it's by taking you on an unusual walk that I hope to represent this topography for you. Unusual as it is, this walk has already been paced out. It was paced out in the observation on little Hans.

I simply want to show you the kinds of things that the first imbecile who comes along could find here – except a psychoanalyst, because an analyst is not the first imbecile who comes along.



The symbolic mother becomes real precisely in so far as she manifests herself in her refusing of love. The object of satisfaction itself, the breast, becomes symbolic of frustration, the refusing of the love object.

The real hole of privation is this thing that does not exist. The real being full by its very nature, one has to introduce a symbolic object into it in order to make a real hole.

What's at stake? We have arrived at a point in the so-called preoedipal process that can be defined as follows. To turn himself into an object of love for this mother, who for him is the most important thing there is and who is even what essentially carries import, the child is progressively led to realise that he must shift into a third-party position. He must slide in, squeeze himself in, somewhere between his mother's desire, which he learns to experience, and the imaginary object that is the phallus.

We have to posit this because it's the most straightforward representation that allows us to synthesise a whole series of accidental happenings that are inconceivable unless they are taken as the product of this structure of the imaginary and symbolic relationship during the preoedipal period. As I told you, this is strictly spelt out in the chapter from the *Three Essays on Sexuality* entitled *Die infantile*

Sexualforschung, that is to say, *The Sexual Researches of Childhood* or *Infantile Theories on Sexuality*. There you will find it formulated that what are broadly called perversions are to be conceived of and explained in relation to the childhood theory of the phallic mother and the necessity of passing through the castration complex.

One can still hear people maintaining that perversion is something fundamentally instinctual, an underlying trend,[1] something like a direct cutting of corners in the direction of the satisfaction that constitutes its true density and balance. They think that in this way they are interpreting Freud's notion that perversion is neurosis in negative, as though perversion were in itself the satisfaction that is repressed in neurosis, as though the latter were the same thing in positive. It's actually the exact opposite, because the negative of a negation is on no account necessarily its positive, as is demonstrated by the fact that Freud roundly affirms that perversion is structured in relation to everything that takes on an order around the absence and presence of the phallus. Perversion always bears some relation, even if only on the horizon, to the castration complex in its own right. In consequence it stands – as it were from the genetic point of view – on the same level as neurosis. It is structured in such a way as to be its negative or, more exactly perhaps, its inverse, but it is just as structured as neurosis. It is structured by the same dialectic, to employ a vocabulary that is closer to the one I use here.

The importance that Freud ascribed at a very early date to the notion of childhood sexual theories and their role in the child's developing economy means that it is incontestably worthwhile us tarrying with this, though its full opening-up, in the form of the chapter I just mentioned, was only added to the *Three Essays* long after its first edition, in 1915 I believe. One shortcoming of the German edition is that it doesn't include any mention of the date on which each chapter was integrated into the book's composition.

The importance of childhood theories of sexuality in libidinal development ought in itself to instruct a psychoanalyst to maintain some sense of proportion when it comes to the sweeping notion of intellectualisation which has been wielded here, there and everywhere with its somewhat pejorative tone. I mean that it ought to teach us to realise that something which on first blush might present as being situated in the intellectual domain clearly holds an importance that the simple and sweeping opposition between the intellectual and the affective could never account for. What are called *childhood theories*, or the child's activity of *research* concerning sexual reality, correspond to a necessity that is quite different from what we label – unduly, but it has to be recognised as a kind of diffuse notion – as the superstructural character of intellectual activity which is more

or less implicitly admitted in what might be termed *the font of belief with which common consciousness aligns*.

Something quite different is at issue in this activity. It concerns something that lies, if this term may also be employed, in the body as a whole, where its common sense runs much deeper. It lies much deeper because it envelops all of the subject's activity and motivates what might equally be called *the affective themes*, which means that it steers the subject's affects or affections along the lines of key images. All in all, it is correlative to a whole series of things carried out in the widest sense, things which become manifest in actions that are fully reducible to utilitarian ends. Let's classify this full set of actions or activities under a term that is perhaps not the best, nor the most encompassing, but which I select for its expressive value when I qualify such activities as *cérémoniales* [in the sense of *protocolic*], and not only as *cérémonielles*.

I'm referring to the entirety of everything that can be included within this register in both individual and collective life, and you know that there is not a single example of a human activity that supresses them. Even civilisations with a firm utilitarian and functional bent peculiarly see these ceremonial activities being reproduced in the most unexpected corners. There has to be some reason behind this. To spell it right out, what we must refer to in order to bring into focus the exact value of what are called *childhood theories of sexuality*, and indeed the full order of the child's activities which are structured around them, is the notion of myth.

There's no need to be a mental giant, I mean, to have gone into this notion of myth in detail, though this nevertheless is my intention here. I'm going to try to do so carefully, stage by stage, because it also strikes me as necessary to accentuate further the continuity between our field and the referential elements to which I believe they need to be linked. Not that I claim on any account, as I once was told, to be offering you a general metaphysics, nor to be covering the whole field of reality, but simply to be speaking to you about our reality and the realities that border on it, those that are most immediately connected to it. This is precisely so as not to fall into an unwarranted world-system, into a projection that is quite insufficient and impoverished yet very often performed when our domain is projected into a whole series of realms and layered fields of reality on the pretext that they might have something to do with what we do, since the *macro* can always be found in the *micro*. No such projection could ever exhaust reality, or even the sum of human problems. On the other hand it would be wrong to isolate our field completely and to refuse to see what within it is, not analogous to, but directly in connection with, I mean directly geared into, a

reality that is accessible to us through other disciplines and other human sciences. This has to be done if we are properly to situate our domain and even, simply, to find our bearings within it.

This is how we are now coming quite naturally to the notion of childhood theories, because for as long as I've been speaking to you about Hans you've been able to note that this observation is a labyrinth and even, on first approach, a muddle, precisely due to the place held by a whole series of Hans's flights of fancy. Some of these flights of fancy are very rich and give the impression of a proliferation, a wealth, which cannot fail to strike you as falling within this class of theoretical elaborations that plays such a major role.

We are going to approach myth simply as though it were a primary fact.

What is called myth, whether it's religious or folkloric, at whichever stage of its passing down it might be taken, is something that presents as a sort of narrative. Many different things may be said about this narrative and various structural aspects may be taken up. For example, it may be said to be atemporal. One might also try to define its structure with respect to the sites it defines. One can take it in its literary form, which quite strikingly shares some kinship with poetic creation while at the same time being very distinct from it, in the sense that myth is linked to certain constants that are absolutely not submitted to subjective invention. It is also something that would allow us at least to indicate the problems it poses.

I think that on the whole we can say that myth has a fictive character but that in itself this fiction harbours a stability which means that it is scarcely malleable to any modification that might be brought to it. Or, more specifically, it entails that any modification implies, ipso facto, another modification, and this invariably suggests the notion of a structure. On the other hand, this fiction is but a singular relation to something that is always implied behind it, and which even carries within it its formally indicated message, to wit, a singular relation to truth. This is also something that cannot be detached from myth.

Somewhere in the *Séminaire sur 'La lettre volée'*, I wrote, in connection with the fact that I was analysing a work of fiction, that at least in a certain sense this operation was quite legitimate because in any correctly structured fiction one can lay one's finger on the structure that in truth itself may be designated as the same as that of fiction. The structural necessity brought forth by any expression of truth is precisely a structure that is the same as that of fiction. Truth has a structure, so to speak, of fiction.

These truths, or this truth, this aim of myth, presents with a character that is still utterly striking, a character that presents first

and foremost as inexhaustible. I mean that it partakes of what may be called – to employ, briefly, an old term – the character of a *schema*, in the Kantian sense. It's much closer to structure than to any content, and can be found again, re-applied, in the most material sense of the word, across all sorts of data, with the kind of ambiguous efficacy that typifies all myth. That which is structured, that which is most adequate to this kind of cast furnished by the category of myth, is a certain type of truth, and, to restrict ourselves to our field and our experience, we cannot fail to see that what is at issue here is a relationship of man – but with what?

We are not about to give an immediate reply to this *with what?*, and when we do, it will be neither randomly nor lightly. Were we to reply *with Nature*, this would, I think, quickly leave us dissatisfied, in view of the remarks I've made on the fact that Nature, such as it presents to man, such as it coapts to him, is always deeply denatured. Were we to reply *with Being*, we would certainly not be inexact, but perhaps we would be going a little too far and ending up in philosophy, indeed the most recent philosophy of our friend Heidegger, as pertinent as this reference is. We surely have references closer at hand and terms that have been more fully articulated, which we can immediately broach in our experience.

We need only perceive that this has to do with themes of life and death, of existence and non-existence, and especially of birth, that is, the appearance of what does not yet exist. On the one hand, this is linked in particular to the existence of the subject himself and to the horizons that his experience brings him. On the other, this is linked to the fact that he is the subject of a sex, and most especially his own, his natural sex. Our experience shows us that the mythical activity is limited to these themes, and it is deployed in the child. Therefore, we can see here, and with ease, that in its content and its aim, this mythical activity is at once in agreement yet not completely in coincidence with what we find under the specific term of *myth* in ethnographic exploration.

In their presentation as fiction, myths always aim to a greater or lesser extent not at man's individual origin but at his origin as a species – the creation of man, the genesis of his fundamental nurturing relationships, the invention of the so-called major human resources such as fire, agriculture, animal domestication, and so on. This is also the fiction that explains how man came to be in relation with something that is constantly brought into question in myths, namely a secret force which may be maleficent or beneficent but which is essentially typified by its sacred character.

This sacred might is variously designated in the mythical narratives, but it certainly allows us to situate it in a manifest identity with

man's relationship to the power of signification and most especially to its power as a signifying instrument. This power is what means that man introduces into Nature something that, on account of distancing him, brings him closer to the universe. It makes him capable of introducing into the natural realm not only his own needs and factors of transformation submitted to these needs, but something that certainly goes beyond this, the notion of a profound identity, which is never completely grasped nor even grasped in anything but a roundabout way, between the power that he possesses, to wield or to be wielded on account of being included in a signifier, and the power that he possesses to incarnate the agency of this signifier in a series of interventions that, at the start, are not posited as gratuitous activities, as the pure and simple introduction of the signifying instrument into the chain of natural things.

These myths, whose relation of contiguity with the mythical creation of childhood is indicated well enough by the comparisons I have just set out, pose us the problem of something that has already been going on for some time now, namely the investigation of myths or, if you prefer, scientific or comparative mythology. This has steadily developed into a method of formalisation which is already indicating that a certain step forward has been taken. The fruitful character of this formalisation further indicates that this is the direction that ought to be pursued, rather than turning to the method of analogies and the various culturalist or naturalist references that have thus far been employed in the analysis of myths.

This formalisation extracts from myths what might be called elements or units which at their own level possess the character of a structural functioning that is comparable, without for all that being identical, to the one that in the study of linguistics extracts elaborations of various modern taxemic elements. It has been possible to build and to put into effective practice an isolation of elements that we may define as the units of mythical construction, which have been labelled *mythemes*.[2]

By pursuing the experiment through a series of myths that have been put to this test of decomposition so as to see how their recomposition functions, a surprising unity has been noted between myths that in appearance stand very far apart, on the condition that analogies between the face-value of the different myths are set aside. For example, saying that an act of incest and a murder are two equivalent things is not something that would come to mind on first approach, but the comparison of two myths, or two stages of a single myth, can bring such a thing to light. Consider for instance what happens to a myth across two different generations. By positing a constellation that looks altogether comparable to the little

cube I drew on the blackboard last week, and by arranging at the different vertices of this construction the terms *father* and *mother*, a mother who is unknown to the father–subject, you will also find, in this first generation, *incest*. When you move on to the following generation, you will find point by point, and in keeping with laws of which the sole interest is that they can offer a strict and unambiguous formalisation, the overlapping notion of *twin brothers*, which is in some sense the predicted transformation of the father–mother couple from the first generation. Thus you can see the murder of Polynices taking up its place, through this operation of transformation, in the stead of the incest. This operation is already regulated by a certain number of structural hypotheses about how myth ought to be treated.

So, this gives us an idea of the weight, the presence, and the instance of the signifier as such, its specific impact. What is isolated here is always in some sense what is most hidden, because it has to do with something that in itself signifies nothing but which assuredly bears the full order of significations. If something of this nature exists, nowhere is this more tangible than in myth.

This necessary preamble indicates the angle from which I think we should approach, in order to put them to this test, the abundance of themes that we meet in the observation on little Hans and which on first blush look, quite frankly, as though they have been made up.

2

How genuine are Hans's imaginative themes? Freud himself mentions the possibility that they might have been suggested to him by comments that could be supposed of an interlocutor.

But is the term *suggestion* to be taken in its simplest sense? Is it to be taken as something that is voiced by one subject then to pass into another subject in the state of an admissible truth, at the very least in a form that is accepted with a certain character of belief, like a garment that clothes the reality that is being received? The very term *suggestion* implies some doubt as to how genuine the construction in question is. It's a construction that is received by the subject, and of course there is no notion that can more easily be seen – why not? – as a legitimate critical element. And who more than us could imagine that there is something here that warrants fuller consideration still? We maintain that the cultural elements of the symbolic organisation of the world are elements that, by their very nature, belong to no one and so have to be received and learnt. Isn't this something that furnishes the incontestable fundament to this notion of suggestion?

What is equally striking is that not only does this suggestion exist in the case of little Hans, but we are able to see it unfolding, out in the open. The father's way of questioning Hans is tantamount to a continual and sometimes insistent inquisition, even bearing the signature of a steering of the child's responses. As Freud underscores several times, the father certainly intervenes in a way that is rough, coarse and even downright heavy-handed. Furthermore, he shows all kinds of misunderstanding in his reception of his son's responses, which he scrambles to understand, but all too hastily. This is also underscored by Freud. What is likewise utterly explicit when reading the observation is that something occurs that is far from independent of this paternal interference, with all its defaults which are pointed out and designated by Freud. One can see Hans's deportment, and his constructions too, responding in the most palpable manner to one or another of his father's interventions. One can even see this taking on its own momentum from a certain point forth, and the phobia assumes a character of acceleration and hyper-productivity that is quite tangible.

Of course, it is of the utmost interest to see what these different moments of Hans's mythical production correspond to. There is something else that is quite manifest, which is the fact that this production, while having a character that is implicitly made-up, in the sense of gratuitously invented, is playful. After a recent patient presentation that I conducted, someone pointed out the imaginative character of some of the patient's constructions, which seemed to him to indicate an hysterical note of suggestion, of suggested effect in what the patient produced, when in fact it was easy to see that it was not that at all. Even though it was provoked or stimulated by a question, the patient's pre-delusional productivity manifested itself with its own stamp and force of proliferation, in strict accordance with its own structures.

This is not at all the same impression one has with Hans. At no point whatsoever does one have the impression of a delusional production. I would further say that one has the distinct impression of a playful production. It's not only about play, yet it's quite clear that everything is so playful that even Hans himself is in something of a pickle when it comes to bringing the whole thing to a close and sustaining a single path to which he can commit, after having come out with goodness knows what magnificent tall story verging on farce, for example the story of the stork's intervention in the birth of his little sister Hanna. He is quite capable of stating, *I say, what I'm telling you isn't a bit true.* Nevertheless, it still remains that what is apparent in this very game is not so much constant terms but rather a certain configuration. And while this configuration is

sometimes fugitive, at other moments it can be grasped in a striking fashion.

This is what I wanted to introduce, this sort of structural necessity that presides over not only the construction of each of what may be called, with caution, Hans's little myths, but also their furtherance and transformation. I would especially like to draw your attention to the fact that what is important is not always necessarily their content. By *content* I mean the revival, which is arranged to a greater or lesser extent, of previous states of the soul, the anal complex for example.

The anal complex will be exhausted in everything that Hans allows himself to demarcate with respect to the *lumf*. Its appearance was perfectly unexpected for the father, and Freud tells us that he *entirely concealed from Hans's father my expectation that there would turn out to be some such connection.* Freud names the two themes that arise in the course of Hans's probing by his father – the anal complex[3] and, no more no less, the castration complex.

Let's not forget that in the analytic theory of the time, around 1906–1908, the castration complex was already a kind of crucial key for Freud but had not yet been brought into the full light of day that would reveal it as the central key. Far from it. It was one small key, lying around among others, that almost seemed to be nothing at all. What Freud ultimately means here is that the father was in no respect aware of something that is related to the essential relation that makes the castration complex the major peg through which passes both the establishment and the resolution of the constellation, the ascendant and descendent phases of the Oedipus complex.

So, we can see little Hans reacting. He reacts all along to the interference of the real father, to being put in the hothouse under the crossfire of the father's interrogation to which he is exposed for a certain while, and which, when the observation is taken as a whole, proves to have been favourable to a veritable development in little Hans, even to a veritable culture. This is something that, given its richness, allows us to think that the phobia would not have borne such extensions and echoes without the paternal intervention, nor would it have borne in its centre this development and this richness, nor even perhaps a certain insistence that at one stage is so prevalent. This is admitted by Freud, and I would even say that he takes it on board when he admits that there might have been a momentary flaring-up, a precipitation, an intensification of the phobia under the father's action.

These are just some basic truths, but they still needed to be said. Let's pick things up from the point we've come to. So as not to leave you completely at a loss before this wealth of elements, I'm going to indicate the general scheme of what we will be trying to understand

in the phenomenon of the analysis of Hans, its point of departure and its results. I think that with this scheme these elements will fall into order for us in a satisfactory way.

So, Hans is in a certain relation with his mother, into which is mixed his direct need for his mother's love and something that we have called the game of the intersubjective lure. It is enough to read the beginning of the observation to see that this luring game is manifest in the clearest fashion in the child's remarks, and this indicates that for him his mother must have a phallus. This doesn't mean, however, that this phallus is something real for him. On the contrary, in his remarks there is a constant eruption of the ambiguity that is made apparent by this relation within a playful perspective. In the end the child is fully aware of something, and at the very least indicates as much when he says, *I was only just thinking* . . ., and then breaks off. What he was thinking was, *Does she have it or not?* And he asks her, and he gets her to say – and who knows whether or to what extent the reply was satisfactory – that she has a *Wiwimacher*. This is the word in the observation. The French rendering, *fait-pipi*, does not fully translate this *macher*. It's a maker of wee, with the suggestion of a worker, an agent, as in *Uhrmacher*. A masculine gender is implied here, which can be found in other words that carry the prefix *Wiwi*.[4]

The child is in this intimacy, this connivance of the imaginary game with his mother, when suddenly he finds himself in a situation where, from one angle or another, a decompensation arises, because something happens that manifests itself through an anxiety that touches precisely on these relations with his mother.

Last time, we tried to see what this anxiety was responding to. We said that it was linked to various real elements that complicate the situation in some way. These real elements are not univocal. Among the mother's objects there are real elements that are new, for instance the birth of the little sister with all the reactions that this leads to in Hans, but these reactions do not come about immediately. It's only after fifteen months that the phobia breaks out. There is also the interference of the real penis, but this had also been there for a while before the complications arose. At least a year had gone by following the masturbation to which the child confessed thanks to the good relations that exist on the plane of speech between him and his parents.

We also noted, last time, whence these elements of decompensation can come into play.

From one angle, Hans is excluded. He falls out of the situation. He is ejected by the little sister. From another angle, something else is at stake. This is the interference of the phallus in a different

form. I'm speaking about the masturbation. It's the same object, but it presents in an altogether different form. Let's say it right out. It has to do with the integration of sensations linked at the very least to turgescence and very possibly to something that we can go so far as to qualify as orgasm. Of course, it's not a matter of ejaculation. There is a question and a problem in this regard, which Freud doesn't resolve. At this stage he hasn't amassed enough observations to broach this difficult problem of orgasm in childhood masturbation. I'm simply pointing out to you that this lies on the horizon of our questioning.

It's peculiar that Freud doesn't ask himself the question of whether the row, the racket, the *Krawall*, which is one of the dreads that the child feels when faced with the horse, might not bear some relation with orgasm, and even an orgasm that would not be the child's own. It might be related to some scene he perceived between the parents, for example. Freud readily accepts his parents' assertion that the child could not have glimpsed anything of the sort. This is a small riddle, and we shall have the absolutely certain solution to it.

All of our experience indicates to us that in children's pasts, in their lived experience and their development, there is something that is very hard to integrate yet which is clearly manifested. I've been insisting for a long time now – I believe it's in my medical thesis or an almost coeval text – on the ravaging character, most especially for paranoiacs, of the first climactic, orgasmic sensation. Why for paranoiacs? We shall try to answer this en route, but we assuredly find in a very constant way such testimony of a character of harrowing invasion, of destabilising upsurge, that this experience presents for certain subjects. This is enough to indicate for us, here at this turn in the path, that the fact that the real penis is something new must play a role as an element that is integrated with difficulty.

None the less, given that this had already been going on for some time, it's not what presents at the forefront with respect to the outbreak of anxiety. What is it, in the end, that causes anxiety to arise at this moment, and only at this moment? The question plainly remains.

3

Here then is our little Hans, who has now arrived at the moment of the apparition of the phobia.

It wasn't Freud, but rather and without doubt – as the ensuing part of the text of the observation shows – the father who is corresponding with Freud who promptly forms the notion that there is

something going on here that is linked to a tension with the mother. As to what triggers the phobia in particular, he states in the very first lines of his letter to Freud, with clarity that lends its full bearing to this first communication in the case history proper, that he is *not able to specify the actual exciting cause*. Whereupon he begins his description of the phobia.

What is it? Let's leave to one side the appearance of the phobia, and reflect.

We have attributed all this importance to the mother and to the child's imaginary symbolic relation with her. We have been saying that for the child the mother presents with the requirement of what she lacks, of this phallus that she doesn't have. We have said that this phallus is imaginary. For whom is it imaginary? It is imaginary for the child. Why have we been speaking about it like this? Well, because Freud told us that this always plays a role for mothers. Why so? Well, you will tell me, it's because he discovered this. But let's not forget that if he discovered it, it's because it's true. So, if it's true, why is it true?

It's a matter of finding out in what sense it is true, because analysts, and especially analysts of the feminine sex, regularly raise the objection that it's not so clear why women should be given over more than the rest to desiring precisely what they don't have, or to believing themselves endowed with it. Well, it's precisely for reasons that belong – let's limit ourselves to this – to the order of the existence of the signifier and its specific insistence. It's because the phallus has a symbolic value in the signifying system and is thereby retransmitted through each and every text of inter-human discourse in such a way that it imposes itself among other images, and in a supervalent way, on woman's desire.

Isn't the problem, precisely at this turn in the path, at this moment of decompensation, that the child should be taking this step that is literally an insuperable hurdle for him on his own? What is this step? Hitherto, he was playing with the phallus desired by his mother, with the phallus that for him became an element of his mother's desire, and so this was something he had to pass through in order to captivate his mother. This phallus was an imaginary element. What is at stake now is for him to manage to do something that in itself is insurmountable, namely to realise that this imaginary element has a symbolic value.

In other words, the system of the signifier, or the system of language, to define it synchronically, or the system of discourse, to define it diachronically, is something that the child enters at the outset, but without entering the full breadth, the full scope, of the system, because he enters on an occasional basis in connection with

his relations with his mother, who is there or who is not there. However, this first symbolic experience is something that is utterly insufficient. The full system of relations with the signifier cannot be constructed around the fact that something that one loves is there or is not there. We cannot content ourselves with just two terms. There have to be others.

A minimum of terms is necessary for the symbolic to function. It's a matter of knowing whether it's three of them, whether it's four of them – it's certainly not three, because the Oedipus complex gives us three terms, yet certainly implies a fourth when it tells us that the child has to come through the complex. This means that there has to be someone who intervenes in this business, and this is the father.

We've been told how the father intervenes. We've been told the whole little story about rivalry with the father and inhibited desire for the mother, but at the level we've reached, moving forward step-by-step, when we found ourselves in one particular situation we said that the father has a very curious presence. We shall see whether it's simply this role of presence, in other words this degree of paternal shortcoming, that plays its role in the affair. Are we to fall back on these so-called real and concrete characteristics to which it is hard to bring a final word? For what does it mean that the real father falls more or less short in this instance?

On this point, each commentator contents himself with an approximation. In the end, we are told, and we are not supposed to linger over it, in the name of goodness knows what logic that is purported to be our own, that things are even more than contradictory. Well, we are going to see that, on the contrary, all of this falls into order in accordance with the fact that certain images have a symbolic functioning for the child.

What does this mean? It means that those images which thus far reality has afforded Hans may well be abundant, present and profuse, but they lie in a state of manifest incoordination. For Hans, it's a matter of aligning the world of the maternal relationship – which, up to now had been functioning harmoniously for him – with this element of imaginary opening, or lack, which made him so amusing and even so exciting for his mother. At one point we are told that his mother becomes somewhat fretful when the father tells her to send the child out of the bed, and she protests, she plays around and starts to flirt. What has been translated as *rather irritated* is *wohl gereizt*, which here means to be *all worked up*. There's a reason for Hans's being there of course. We will learn why he is there in his mother's bed. It's one of the main axial lines of the observation.

I'm going to illustrate what I've just said about these images which

are first and foremost those that arise from the relationship with the mother, but which are also other images, new images, which the child confronts rather well. Since his little sister has been around, and since things have simply no longer been holding together in the world with his mother, two notions have arisen, which he knows how to face up to very well on the plane of reality – the notion of big and small, and the notion of what is there and what is not there, but which appears. So, there is a notion of growth and emergence, a notion of proportion and size. These are different phases in which big and small find themselves confronted with different antinomies, depending on the pairings. We can see him handling all this exceedingly well. When he speaks about his little sister, he says, *She's not got any teeth yet*, which implies that he has a very accurate notion of this emergence.

Freud ironises on the side, because he has no need to think that the child is a metaphysician. What the child says is quite sane and normal. He very rapidly faces up to notions which are by no means self-evident. First, there is emergence, the appearance of something new. Second, the growth of the other – she will grow, or what she doesn't have will grow. There's no reason to be ironic about this. And then there is a third term, which seems to be the simplest but which is not given immediately – that of proportion or size.

They will speak to the child about all this, and it seems that it's still too soon for him to accept the explanations they will give him. The father will tell him that there are some who are without, that the feminine sex has no phallus. But this child – who is quite capable of handling these notions in a cogent manner because previously he handled them both deftly and pertinently – far from being content with these explanations, takes detours that on first approach look astounding, frightening, morbid, and which look to be part of the phobia. Where does this lead him? Well, to something that we shall see at the end, to the solution that he finds to the problem. But what is quite plain to see is that there are paths to this solution, paths that he must follow, and which, while they amount to this apprehension of forms that might be satisfactory for objectifying the real, nevertheless take a frightfully wide berth in relation to it. From one instant to the next we will meet this passing over, this raising up, from the imaginary to the symbolic, and you will see of course that this cannot be produced without something that is invariably a structuration in circles that are at least ternary. Next time I shall be showing you some consequences of this.

For now, however, I'm going to choose an example for you.

On Freud's instruction – and you will be seeing next time what these instructions of Freud's mean – the father hammers it home to

Hans that women do not possess a phallus and so his searching for one is futile. That it should have been Freud who told the father to step in in this way is an enormity unto itself, but let's leave that to one side.

What happens after this intervention by the father? Hans reacts with the giraffe fantasy.

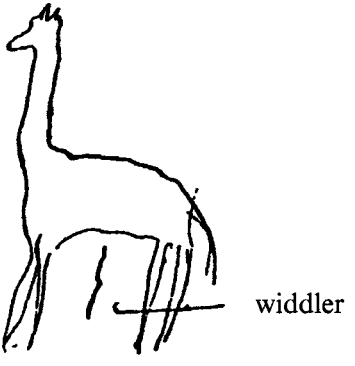
In the middle of the night the child comes into his parents' bedroom to take refuge. They ask him whether perhaps he is afraid, but it's not clear whether he's afraid or not. Either way, he falls back to sleep in his parents' bed and they carry him into his room. The next morning they ask him what it was all about. It's a fantasy. There are two giraffes.[5] A big giraffe, and a little giraffe that is *zerwutzelte*, which is translated as *crumpled* but really means *rolled into a ball*. They ask him what he means and he shows them by taking a piece of paper and scrunching it up into a ball.

How is this interpreted? Right away, the father has no doubt that of the two giraffes, the big one is the symbol of the father. The little one, which the child grabs and sits on top of while the big one cries out, is a reaction to the maternal phallus. The longing for the mother and her lack are named, perceived, acknowledged and pinpointed by the father, straightaway, as the signification of the little giraffe. Moreover, this doesn't stop him, in a way that doesn't strike him as contradictory, from reading the couple of the big and small giraffe as the father–mother couple. Naturally, all of this poses the most interesting problems. One can endlessly debate whether the big giraffe is the father, whether the little giraffe is the mother. Indeed, for the child it's a matter of regaining possession of the mother, to the father's greatest irritation and even anger. Yet this anger is never a real anger. The father never allows himself to slip into anger, and little Hans puts his finger on this – *You ought to be cross, you should be jealous*. Unfortunately, the father is never there to embody the god of Thunder.

Let's pause for a while on what is quite obvious and visible. A large giraffe and a small giraffe are of the same stuff. One is the double of the other. There is the aspect of big and small, but there is also the aspect of always being a giraffe. In other words, here we find something that is altogether analogous to what I was telling you last time when I said that the child was caught in the mother's phallic desire as a metonymy. The child is the phallus in his totality. So, when it's a matter of restoring to the mother her phallus, the child phallicises the mother as a whole entity in the form of a double. He produces a metonymy of the mother, which hitherto was merely the enigmatic phallus that is at once desired, credited and not credited, submerged in ambiguity, in belief, and in the term of reference, namely the luring

game with the mother. All of this turns into something that starts to hang together as a metonymy. And as though it weren't enough simply to show us the creation of the image and its introduction into a properly symbolic game, in order to explain to us that we've passed from the image to the symbol – this little giraffe about which no one in the observation comprehends anything, even though it's so visible – Hans tells us that the little giraffe is so very much a symbol that it can be crumpled like a little giraffe on a sheet of paper. We have come to the point that the little giraffe is no more than a drawing.

The passage from the imaginary to the symbolic can be no better translated than in these things that in appearance are absolutely contradictory and unthinkable, because you always turn what children say into something that from either side partakes of the domain of three dimensions when actually there is also something in the play of symbols that is in two dimensions. I pointed out to you in *The Purloined Letter* the moment when there remains nothing more of the letter than something that the queen holds in her hands, when there is nothing more to be done but to scrunch it up into a ball. This is the same gesture by which Hans strives to make his parents understand what is at issue in the little giraffe. At that moment, the little crumpled up giraffe signifies something that belongs utterly to the same realm as the drawing of the giraffe that had been made once before.



The drawing of the giraffe

Here it is, with its widdler, which was already on the path to the symbol. Whereas the drawing of the giraffe is freely sketched and each of the members is in its right place, the widdler that has been added to it is something that is truly graphic. It's a linear stroke, and, to boot, so that we are fully aware of this, it is separate from the giraffe's body.

We are now entering the major play of the signifier, the game on which I gave a seminar, on *The Purloined Letter*. The little giraffe is a double of the mother, reduced to the support that is always necessary as a vehicle for the signifier as such. It is something that can be held, crumpled and sat on. It's such a loving testimony that, even so, it has something of a draft or a jotting about it.

Observe if you will that this is not the only point at which we can grasp the passage from the imaginary to the symbolic. There are all kinds of other points. We can see a parallel gradually settling in between the Wolf Man case study and the observation on little Hans, which allows us to compare these paths along which the phobic image is approached. We have yet to determine the signification of this phobic image, but in order to determine it we need to turn to how it is approached in the child's experience. In the case of the Wolf Man, it is plainly an image, but an image that is in a picture-book, and the child's phobia is the wolf from the book. In the case of Hans, this is not absent either. The image comes from a page of his picture-book, the same page that shows the stork bringing children to a chimney top, which Hans reads as a *red box*. As chance would have it, on this same page there is a picture of a horse being shod.

Now, what are we going to find? Since we are looking for structures, what we are going to find throughout this observation are logical instruments being played out in a kind of turning game where each complements the other, forming a kind of circle through which little Hans seeks a solution, but a solution to what? In this series of elements or instruments that are called *mother*, *child* and *phallus*, the phallus is the new element that is no longer merely something that is played with, because it has become unruly. It has, if it may be expressed like this, its whims and fancies. It has its needs, its demands, and it wreaks havoc everywhere. It's a matter of finding out how this is going to be settled, that is to say, how, at least within this original trio, things are going to be fixed down.

We are going to see a triad emerging.

First, *my penis is angewachsen, fixed in*. Here we have a form of guarantee. Unfortunately, no sooner had he been led to profess that his penis is *fixed in* than the phobia promptly flared up. It has to be believed, therefore, that there is also some danger to its being fixed in.

Then we see another term appearing, the *boring of a hole*. We can see it appearing in umpteen different forms when we know how to hunt it out in a way that conforms to the mythical analysis of themes. First of all, in a dream, Hans himself has a hole bored in him.[6] Then he cuts a hole in a rubber doll. There are things that are

bored with a hole from the inside out, and others from the outside in.

Next, Hans comes across a third term, one which is particularly expressive because it cannot be deduced from natural forms. He introduces it as a logical instrument in his mythical passage, and it truly constitutes the third term at the apex of the triangle formed together with the fixing-in and with the gaping hole that leaves an open void. If the penis is not fixed in, then there is no longer anything. So, there is a mediation. It can be put there and put back, removed, and put back again. In short, it is detachable. What does the child use for this? He introduces the screw thread. The plumber or the fitter come by and do their unscrewing. Then the plumber comes by and unscrews his penis so that another, bigger one can be screwed in.

The introduction of this logical instrument, of this theme borrowed from his limited childhood experience, of this mythical element, will lead to a veritable resolution of the problem, which is that ultimately, through the notion that the phallus too is something that is taken up in the symbolic play, this phallus can be combined. It is fixed in when it has been put in, but it can be mobilised, it can circulate, and it is an element of mediation. It is from this moment forth that we find ourselves on the slope upon which the child will find his first respite in this frantic search for conciliatory myths that are never satisfactory, and which will lead us right to the final term of the solution that he will find, the approximate solution of the Oedipus complex.

This is to indicate for you the direction in which we need to analyse the terms and the child's use of the terms. Another problem, a no lesser one, is taking shape, which is the problem of the signifier-elements that he brings in by borrowing them from symbolised elements. The horse being shod is just one of the solutions, buried in the observation, to the problem of fixing-in the missing element and which as such can be represented by anything at all. Indeed, it is most readily represented by any object that in itself possesses sufficient hardness. We will see that ultimately the object that symbolises the phallus in the simplest way in the mythical construction is the stone. We find it everywhere in the major scene from the true resolutive dialogue with his father. The role of the stone can also be found in the horseshoe that is hammered into the horse's hoof. It also plays its role in the child's auditory panic, in his fright when the horse is pawing with its hoof, to which something is attached that surely is not properly attached, for which the child will at last find the solution of the screw thread.

In short, this progress from the imaginary to the symbolic

constitutes an organising of the imaginary into myth, or at the very least into something that is on the way to a true mythical construction, that is to say, a collective mythical construction. This is why it reminds us in every respect of myth, to the point that in some cases it reminds us of the systems of kinship. Strictly speaking, it never reaches these kinship systems because it's an individual construction, but it's along this path that something has to be accomplished, that a certain minimum number of detours have to be taken in full, so that the efficacy of the relation between terms can be found. A model for this is presented in the skeleton or, if you prefer, in the metonymy, of my stories of α, β, γ, δ. Up to a certain point, the child needs to have roamed something of this order, to have crossed this difficult passage that becomes a reality in a certain gap or shortcoming, in order to find his rest and his harmony. Perhaps not every Oedipus complex needs to pass in this way through such mythical construction, but it's absolutely certain that each Oedipus complex needs to make a reality of this same plenitude in symbolic transposition. It might take another shape that is more efficient, because it is in action, because the presence of the father would have symbolised the situation by his Being or by his non-Being.

The crossing of something of this order is implicated in everything we find in the analysis of little Hans, and I hope to show you this in greater detail next time.

27 March 1957

XVI

HOW MYTH IS ANALYSED

Offering to view and *being surprised*
The Professor's divine position
Lévi-Strauss's method
Naked in her chemise
Capture in the permutative mechanism

agent	lack	object
real father	symbolic castration	imaginary phallus
symbolic mother	imaginary frustration	real breast
imaginary father	real privation	symbolic phallus

What have we been trying to do this year?

It's been a matter of preserving the depth and the Freudian articulation of what is infamously claimed to be an object relation, which on examination, as they say, proves not only to be not so straightforward, but never to have been as straightforward as all that. Otherwise one wouldn't really see why Freud's oeuvre in its entirety gives such a prominent place to two dimensions in particular – which are perhaps still enigmatic, and now even more so – known as the castration complex and the phallic mother. This has led us over the course of our research to focus our examination on the case of little Hans, in which we are now trying to broach the application of our analysis to the disentangling of the subject's fundamental relationships, to what in one analytic persuasion of relational types is called his *environment*.

Yesterday evening we were able to see how this instrument leaves a lot to be desired. When we try to approach the relationship between child and mother as a fundamental reference and we tell ourselves that by sticking to the general terms of the dual relationship as fixed upon the phallic mother – as enveloped by the mother or not enveloped by the mother – we find ourselves faced with characteristics that are perhaps like those we were told about yesterday at our Society's meeting, characteristics that are excessively general when it comes to allowing us to circumscribe the points of impact – I mean, the *efficient* points of impact – that stand to be pointed out. Indeed, it is quite peculiar that categories as flexible as those that Freud introduced cannot, in this current use, be corroborated in a way that would be fairly commonplace and would enable us to differentiate, at any given moment, within a single family of relationships, between a character trait and a symptom, for example. It's not enough to establish an analogy between them. Since they occupy different functions, there must be a different structural relation.

This is precisely what we have been trying to put a finger on in these eminent examples that are Freud's case studies. As you know, over the years we have been giving a direction to the experience, a direction that we have been striving to make more specific, because there is no better way of defining a concept than to put it to use. We claim that without the distinction introduced by the three relations that are called *symbolic*, *imaginary* and *real*, these three essential and profoundly distinct modes of our experience, it is utterly impossible to orient oneself in the most everyday experience.

1

Last time, we arrived at the notion that little Hans, whom we are taking at a particular biographic moment, is marked by a certain type of relationship with his mother, the fundamental terms of which are defined by the manifest presence of the phallic object between him and his mother.

This should come as no surprise to us after our previous analyses because we have already seen, through other case studies and then since the start of this academic year, the extent to which the term of the phallus as an imaginary object of the mother's desire constitutes an absolutely crucial point in the mother–child relationship. We saw the extent to which, during a first stage, the child's accession to his proper situation in the presence of his mother could be defined as the necessity of his recognising, and indeed his taking on board, the essential role of this imaginary object, the phallic object, which

enters as an altogether primary compositional element in the primordial structuration of the mother–child relationship.

No other observation can serve us better in this regard than the observation on little Hans. Indeed, everything begins with the game between Hans and his mother – seeing, not seeing, being on the lookout for where this phallus is. Let's underscore how at this point we remain in total ambiguity regarding what might be called Hans's belief. When the observation begins, we have a firm impression that for some time, from the real standpoint, he has formed, as people say, his own little idea. *Ich hab' gedacht*, he says, *I've already been thinking about all this*, which comes in response to the glib replies designed to cloud the issue, these being the kind of replies that his parents feel obliged to make whenever he poses a somewhat abrupt question.

While the imaginary relationship might be taken for the reaction of *seeing* and *being seen* par excellence, I want to punctuate how it is important to uphold, already at this level, an intersubjective articulation that is far from being a dual one, as you are about to see. If the relationship that is called *scoptophilic*, with its two opposing terms of *showing* and *showing oneself*, deserves to hold our attention for a moment, it's because it is already distinct from the primordial imaginary relation, which is this kind of mode of capture in the field that we may call a reciprocal visual confrontation.

I insisted on this at length, back when I was referring to the animal kingdom and these peculiar visual duels between pairs of animals in which one can see the animal, be it a lizard or a fish, caught in certain typical reactions which [in French] are called *parades*. Between the two adversaries or partners, everything is set up through an array of adnexa and signals, through apparatuses of visual capture that are present in each of the two, and then, solely on the plane of this visual confrontation, something in one of them gives way. The animal yields. One might say that the animal effaces itself, to use a term that conjoins in some way the motor withdrawal and the paling of colour. One animal turns away from the vision of another that has taken the dominant position. Experiments have shown that it's not always a matter of something that occurs strictly to the benefit of the male against the female, because sometimes a manifestation of this type arises between two males. What occurs on this plane of visual communication prepares, and extends directly into, the act of seizure, indeed the act of oppression, of ascendency, which bends one of the subjects to the other, whereby the latter gains the upper hand.

While certainly we have here the point of biological or ethological reference that allows us to provide the right accentuation to the

imaginary relationship in its articulation with the whole process, not of *parade*, but of *pariade*, of courtship displays, I don't want there to be any doubt about how one can see from the outset that everything that is being referred to this domain, which I have called the child's divining of the mother's imaginary world, is actually quite different from it. We can see that what is at issue here is not so much to see and to submit to being seized by what has been seen, but rather to seek to behold, to be on the lookout for, what is both there and not there. What is aimed at in this relationship is something that is there in so far as it remains veiled. In other words, what is at issue in this fundamental relationship is to sustain the lure so that something can be maintained that is literally there and not there. This culminates in the fundamental situation the crucial character of which we cannot fail to recognise in the imaginary drama such as it tends to be inserted into something else, which will give it a yet more elaborate meaning – the fact of *surprise*.

Don't overlook the ambiguous character of the French term *surprise*, in the sense that it refers to the act of surprising, as in, *I glimpsed him by surprise*. There is the surprising of an enemy force, or else the surprising of Diana, which is indeed the surprise that culminates in the mythology that I'm not mentioning again just for the sake of it because the whole Acteonesque dimension that I allude to at the end of my text *La Chose freudienne* is grounded on this essential moment. Yet there is another facet to this word. If there is a surprise, it's not the astonishment that is felt. On the contrary, being surprised is something that happens through an unexpected discovery. Those of you who have been attending my patient presentations might have noticed in one of our transsexual patients the truly harrowing character that he depicted for us of the painful surprise he felt the day he saw his sister naked for the first time.

So, at a higher degree than mere *seeing* and *being seen*, the imaginary dialectic culminates in *offering to view* and *being surprised* by an unveiling. This dialectic is the only one that enables us to comprehend the fundamental sense of the act of seeing. We have seen how essential it is in the very genesis of everything that amounts to perversion, for example. Or, conversely, how it is only too clear in the technique of the exhibitionist act that the subject shows what he's got precisely insomuch as the other party hasn't got it. The exhibitionist strives, as he himself asserts to us in his declarations, to capture the other party, by means of this unveiling, in something that is far from merely holding her in a visual enthrallment, but which literally gives him the pleasure of revealing to the other party what she is supposed not to have, in order to plunge her at the same time into the shame of what she lacks.

It is on this ground that each of Hans's relationships with his mother is played out. We can also see that his mother fully participates in this and, with great indulgence, allows the child to partake of everything to do with her bodily functioning. However, when little Hans solicits her exhibitionist participation, she loses her mastery and issues rebuffs, severity, and even condemnations. It is on this basis that we see the imaginary object, which is already caught in this dialectic of veiling and unveiling, playing its fundamental role.

This is the turn in the path at which we shall now take up little Hans. We shall ask ourselves why he produces his phobia after an interval of a whole year subsequent to the major occurrences that arose in his life, notably the birth of his little sister and his discovery that she too is an essential term in his relationship with his mother.

We have already indicated that this phobia needs to be mapped into a process that cannot be conceived of unless we see that what is at stake for the child is profoundly to change his entire pattern of relationships with the world and to accept – which will ultimately be accepted at the end – what subjects sometimes require a whole lifetime to take on board, namely that in this privileged field of the world which is that of their fellow semblables, there are effectively subjects who are deprived, for real, of this infamous imaginary phallus.

You would be wrong to think that it's enough to have a scientific notion or even an articulable notion of this for it to be accepted among the subject's beliefs as a whole. The deep complexity of men's relationships with women emanates precisely from what we could call in our coarse language the resistance of male subjects effectively to admitting that female subjects are truly not endowed with something, and all the more so given that they are endowed with something else.

This is what needs to be firmly articulated on the basis of facts and support from our analytic experience. It is literally on this level that a misrecognition takes root which is often maintained with a tenacity that influences the subject's entire world-conception and especially his conception of social relationships. It is maintained beyond any limit in subjects who would never fail to deem themselves, and with a smile, to have roundly accepted reality as it is. The effacing of this fact from our experience shows the extent to which we have been incapable of benefiting from the most elementary terms of Freud's teaching. Why this is so hard to accept surely needs to be accounted for, and this is perhaps what we shall manage to do by the end of this year's path.

For the time being, our point of departure is the observation on little Hans, so let's articulate how the problem of a similar

recognition is posed for him. Why does an acknowledgement such as this suddenly become necessary when hitherto what had been most important was precisely to play at this not being so? It is retroactively that we shall clarify why it was so important to play at this not being so.

Let's also look at how it is that, for this real privation to be somehow taken on board, it cannot not be operative, if it is to produce results that are subjectively liveable for the subject, by which I mean that they enable him to integrate into the sexual dialectic in such a way that it allows the human subject to live it and not merely to endure it. This necessitates the integration of a fact that is already given, the fact that the mother is already an adult and that she is taken up in the system of symbolic relationships in which inter-human sexual relationships have to be situated. The child himself has to take this path. He has to experience the Oedipal crisis and its essential moment of castration. This is what the example of little Hans illustrates, but perhaps neither completely nor perfectly. It is perhaps indeed in this incompleteness that we can find the hardest evidence of what I have indicated as the essential movement of the observation.

This is a privileged case of analysis in that the transition from the imaginary dialectic can be seen being produced out in the open. We can see the child passing from this intersubjective game with the mother around the phallus to the game of castration in the relationship with the father. This passage occurs through a series of transitions that are precisely what I have called the *myths* that little Hans creates.

Why are we seeing this in such a pure way? I started to spell this out, and now I shall pick up from the point we were at last time.

2

I left you, last time, on the riveting phenomenon of Hans relating the fantasy of the two giraffes, in which we can truly behold, like an illustration given in a seminar, the passage from the image to the symbol.

Quite literally, little Hans is showing us, like a conjurer, the duplicated image of the mother, what I called the *metonymy of the mother*, to become a piece of paper, to become a crumpled giraffe that the child sits on.

There is something like a sketching out of the overall scheme here, which is the sign that we are on the right path. Had I wanted to invent something by means of a metaphor that would spell out

the passage from the imaginary to the symbolic, I could never have invented the tale of the two giraffes in the way that little Hans dreamed it up and articulated it with these elements. He shows that it's a matter of transforming an image into a ball of paper, into something that is wholly a symbol and, as such, an element that can be mobilised. He sits on his mother, reduced at last to a symbol, to this scrap of paper, which they snatch hold of and exclaim, *Ah! Le bon billet qu'a le petit Hans!*[1] Of course, this is not enough. Otherwise he would have been cured. But through this act he shows what he has been ruminating, because the spontaneous acts of a child are far more direct and lively than the mental conceptions of an adult, after the long years of deepening cretinisation that make up the common run of what is called *upbringing*.

Let's see what happens when we turn to our chart, as though it had already been proved correct. What does it mean that it should be an imaginary father who definitively sets the order of the world, namely that not everyone has a phallus? It's easy to recognise that the imaginary father is the all-powerful father. This is the grounding of the world in the commonplace conception of God, the guarantee of universal order. All things real and physical, the Lord God made them all.

When I tell you this, I'm not merely forging my table. You have only to turn now to the observation on little Hans. When he speaks about God, which he does on two occasions, he speaks very nicely of him. His father has started to clarify certain matters for him, and there is an improvement, though it is fleeting. Then, on 15 March, when he goes outside and notices that there are fewer horses and carriages than usual, he says, *How sensible! God's done away with horses now.*

What does this mean? We don't know. Does it mean that on this day there is less need of horses? It could mean that, but the word *gescheit* doesn't mean *kind*, but rather *indisputably clever*. People tend to believe that the good Lord has spared him some difficulty, but if one deems that the horse is not merely a difficulty for Hans but an essential element, then it could indeed mean that there is less need of horses. Whichever is the case, it tells you that God is there as an essential point of reference.

It's utterly striking to see that after the meeting with Freud – on 30 March, just after he had turned mother into a ball of paper, which is not entirely satisfactory for Hans but had set him on the right path – the child alludes to God once again. Hans supposes that the Professor must talk to the good Lord, to be able to say everything he has just said. Freud himself doesn't fail to be tickled by this, though scruples to note that he had provoked it himself, because out

of his own vainglory he had peculiarly taken the high and mighty position of bragging to the child, *Long before you were in the world, I had known that a little Hans would come who would be so fond of his mother that he would be bound to feel afraid of his father because of it.*

It is certainly quite striking to see Freud taking this position. On no account have we dreamt of reproaching him for this. A long while ago I noted the original and exceptional dimension that Freud would open in each of his analyses precisely by uttering such interpretative words to the subject. It's not something that he is transmitting. It's truly something that he has found himself, that comes in some way directly from the lips of Freud. I've given you a reference that seems to me to be altogether essential regarding the authenticity of speech, namely that it has to be seen how different is an interpretation by Freud from all the rest that we might give in his wake. As we have very often seen, Freud doesn't impose any kind of rule on himself here. He truly takes what I could call *the divine position*. He speaks to young Hans from Mount Sinai, and Hans doesn't fail to feel the force of this.

Mark well that on this occasion the position taken by the symbolic articulation – the symbolic father also remains veiled to Hans – is that of Freud's poising himself as the absolute master, as something that is not the symbolic father but the imaginary father. This is important because we are about to see that this is how Freud tackles the situation.

It is very important to appreciate the particularities of Hans's relationship with his analyst. I mean that if we want to comprehend this observation we should note that it has something about it that is absolutely exceptional compared with all other child analyses. The situation is developed in such a way that the element of the symbolic father is rather distinct both from the real father and, as you can see, from the imaginary father. It is doubtless to this – which we will be able to confirm later – that we owe the absence of phenomena that could be qualified as transferential, for example. Likewise there are no phenomena of repetition, and this is why we have pointed out the pure state of the functioning of the fantasies.

A further interest of this observation is to show us that the *Durcharbeitung* is not, contrary to what is commonly accepted, animated merely by some endless iteration at the end of which what had not been intellectually assimilated will at last work its way under the subject's skin, like gnawing on a bit or slowly permeating. *Durcharbeitung* is doubtless a necessary thing because a number of circuits need to be travelled in several different directions so that the function of symbolising the imaginary can be efficiently completed. This is why we can see little Hans roaming along a whole labyrin-

thine path, to the extent that we can indeed reconstitute this path because of course it is broken off from one moment to the next, chopped up by the father's interventions which, as Freud underlines for us, are certainly neither the best oriented nor the most respectful. Nevertheless, we can see a series of constructions being produced and reproduced, in which it's a matter of discerning what the veritable component-elements are. Rather than constantly contenting ourselves with covering each fact with a catch-all term of such-and-such a complex – anal relation or mother attachment – we would be better off trying to see what functions, what representative and figurative elements, are brought before us in the tight articulations of ancient myths.

We have got used to matching sweeping equivalents to these terms and functions – saying that this represents the father, or that represents the mother, or something else represents the penis – but were we to try to perceive these elements, this effort would show us that each of them, the horse for example, is conceivable only in its relationship with a certain number of other elements that are equally significant. It is impossible to make such an element correspond to a univocal signification. I've taken the example of the horse, but this is so for all the other elements of these Freudian myths. At the start the horse is the mother. At the end, it's the father. Between the two, it might have been little Hans himself, who plays horsey once in a while, or even the penis, which is manifestly represented by the horse at several points in the case history.

This is true in the most evident way for the horse but is no less so for any other signifier that you might care to pluck from the different modes of mythical creation in which little Hans indulges and which, as you know, are exceedingly profuse. For example, at one point the bathtub is clearly the mother, but at the end it is Hans's behind. This is understood in the observation as much by Freud, by the father and by little Hans himself. You can equally perform the same operation for each of the elements that is involved, the biting or even the nakedness for instance.

In any case, in order to perceive these things it is absolutely necessary to force yourselves, at each point of the observation, not to understand straightaway. This is a point of method. You must strive, as Freud expressly recommends twice in the observation, not to understand immediately. The best way of not understanding on this occasion is to jot down some brief notes, to record day-by-day on a piece of paper the elements that Hans broaches and which have to be taken as such, as signifiers. I insisted for example on *Quite alone with Mariedl.* While you understand nothing about it, you retain this signifier-element and, as the intelligence will come to you

when you sit down to eat, you will see that this overlaps strictly with something else that you can write down on the same page. What is supposed in the fact of being, not alone with someone, but *quite alone with* someone? It supposes that there could be someone else.

This method for analysing myths is the very same that Monsieur Claude Lévi-Strauss has set out for us in an article in the October–December 1955 issue of *The Journal of American Folklore* under the title *The Structural Study of Myth.* By proceeding in the way he describes, you will see that each of the elements of the observation on Hans can be ordered in such a way that, when read in a certain direction, it forms the sequence of these myths. After a while, however, one is compelled by the element of recurrence alone, which is not a straightforward recurrence but a transformed recurrence of the same elements, to put them in order not merely on a single line but by making bundles of lines that take on an order as though they were an orchestra score, and then you can see a series of successions being established which can be read both horizontally and vertically. The myth is told in one direction, while its meaning or its understanding are referred to the bundles of analogous elements that recur in various forms. At each point these elements are transformed, doubtless in order to complete a certain path that goes very precisely from the point of departure – to state the obvious – to the point of arrival, and which means that by the end something has been integrated that at the start was inadmissible and irreducible.

So, in the little Hans case history, the point of departure is the eruption of the real penis in the play between mother and child, and the end point is when this real penis comes to be accommodated in a way that is sufficient for life to go on without anxiety. I said *sufficient*. I didn't say *necessary*. This *sufficient* means that it could be even fuller, and this is indeed what we shall see. In the end, little Hans's Oedipus complex perhaps doesn't lead to a solution that would be completely satisfactory. It suffices simply to free him from the interference of the phobic element. It renders unnecessary the conjunction between the imaginary and anxiety that is known as phobia. In other words, it culminates in the reduction of the phobia.

Indeed, let's not forget something that can be gleaned from the 1922 postscript. When Freud meets Hans again at the age of nineteen, the youth had just read the full case history for the first time, but *the whole of it came to him as something unknown.* Freud draws a very neat comparison – *Any one who is familiar with psychoanalysis may occasionally experience something similar in sleep. He will be woken up by a dream, and will decide to analyse it then and there; he will then go to sleep again feeling quite satisfied with the result of his efforts; and next morning dream and analysis will alike be forgotten.*

This is indeed something we are familiar with, and Freud's comparison is highly appealing. It allows us to think, as does Freud himself, that what is at stake in the observation on little Hans, as we ourselves can grasp, is in no way comparable to the subject's integration or reintegration of his history as a lifting of amnesia that allows for the elements that have been won back to be preserved. On the contrary, what is at issue here is a very special activity that stands on the borderline between the imaginary and the symbolic, and which does indeed belong to the same realm as dreams. This dream realm is equally the realm of the mythification that is involved throughout the observation on Hans, which plays an economic role that is comparable in every respect to that of Hans's fantasies and even his mere games and inventions.

However, let's not overlook what Freud tells us in passing. He says that, even so, as Hans was reading his case history, *there dawned on him a kind of glimmering recollection that it might have been he himself that it happened to.* It has to do with all the fantasmatisations in the case concerning the younger sister. Hans's parents are now divorced, as might have been anticipated from reading through to the end of the observation, and Hans is no less spirited as a result. There is just one thing that he still harbours as a wound, and this is the fact that he lives apart from his sister. This little sister has come to represent for him, over the course of his life, the term that has been distanced beyond what is accessible to love. She is the idealised love-object, the girl-phallus that we took as a point of departure in our analysis and which will remain – there is no cause for doubt here, even though this is just a supposition, an extrapolation – the mark that will lend its style and its type to Hans's love life in its entirety thereafter.

So, in spite of the masterful analysis of which Hans was the object, not everything was fully brought to a close, nor did it culminate in an object relation that would in itself be fully satisfactory.

3

Let's come back to the starting point, to Freud, to the child's father who is Freud's acolyte, and to the instructions that Freud gives him, because we have now seen how Freud assumes his role here. How will he tell the one who is his agent to conduct himself? He gives two recommendations.

The first recommendation has two aspects. After being informed of little Hans's demeanour and the painful and anguishing phenomena of which he is the object, Freud tells the father to explain to the

child that the phobia is *a piece of nonsense, eine Dummheit*, and that the nonsense in question is linked to his desire to get close to his mother. Furthermore, since Hans has for some time been greatly preoccupied with *Wiwimachers*, he needs to be told that this is *not right, unrecht*, and that this is why the horse is so bad and wants to bite him.

This goes a long way. We have here a sort of direct and immediate manoeuvre bearing on guilt, which on the one hand consists in easing the guilt by saying that such things are quite natural and straightforward but simply need to be put in order and dominated a little. On the other hand, however, Freud doesn't hesitate to accentuate the element of prohibition, at least relative prohibition, of the masturbatory satisfactions. We shall see what the result of this is for the child.

The second recommendation that Freud gives is even more characteristic of the language he uses. Since Hans's satisfaction is clearly derived from hunting out – this was why earlier I took up the dialectic of discovery and surprise – the hidden object that is the penis or the phallus of the mother, this desire is to be taken away from him by taking away the object of his satisfaction. *You are to tell him that this desired phallus does not exist.* This is voiced by Freud at the start of the observation, on pp. 263–4 of volume VII of the *Gesammelte Werke*. It has to be said that as an intervention from the imaginary father, it would be hard to do any better. He who puts the world in order is saying that there is nought to be found.

One can also see the extent to which the real father is incapable of taking on such a function. In truth, when he tries to do so, Hans reacts by taking a completely different path from the one that has been suggested to him, just as previously he had reacted by producing the story of the two giraffes. Right after the absence of the phallus has been asserted to him, he fantasises a very nice story – *I saw Mummy quite naked in her chemise, and she let me see her widdler. I showed Grete, my Grete, what Mummy was doing, and showed her my widdler.*

This is a superb response, and utterly in line with what I was trying to spell out for you earlier. What is at stake is very precisely to see what is veiled insomuch as it is veiled. The mother is both naked and in her chemise, just like Alphonse Allais's tale *L'engraisseur*, about a friend of his who was wont to exclaim with a flamboyant gesture, *You see that woman over there, she is naked under her clothes!* It's quite possible that you have never gauged the impact and scope of this remark in the metaphysical underpinnings of your social deportment, but it is fundamental to interhuman relationships as such.

With that, Hans's father, who doesn't distinguish himself by any especially shrewd perception in these matters, tells him that she can only be one or the other. *He could only mean 'in her chemise'* or *'quite naked'*. Yet this is the whole issue. For Hans, she is at once naked *and* in her chemise, just like all of you here. Hence the impossibility of taking on board the order of the world simply through an authoritarian intervention that stipulates *there is nought*. Clearly the imaginary father has existed for a long time, for all time. The imaginary father is also a certain form of God. But this is not what will resolve our difficulties in a way that is any the less permanent and experiential.

Before this attempt, Hans's father had made a first approach, under Freud's instruction, to easing the child's guilt. He made a first clarification concerning the relationship between the horse and the forbidden act of putting his hand on his penis. Analysts of our generation, after some twenty or thirty years of experience, now know that such an intervention aiming to alleviate guilt-ridden anxiety is always doomed to fail. Guilt should never be confronted head on, lest it should be transformed into the various metabolic forms that will never fail to arise. So, once the child has been told that the horse is merely a more or less frightful substitute for something that he ought not to be making such a fuss about, we see him here in the observation, in the most articulate fashion, starting to feel compelled to look at the horses. He says, *I have to look at horses.*

Let's pause for a moment on this mechanism, which is altogether noteworthy. What does everything that he has just been told mean? In the end, it amounts to saying that looking at the horses is permitted. Just like in totalitarian systems, which are defined by the fact that everything that is permitted is compulsory, he now feels himself compelled. Little Hans has been told that he is allowed to go towards the horses because the problem lies elsewhere. The result of this is that he feels ordered, forced, to look at the horses.

What can this mechanism mean, which I have summarised as the *permitted* becoming the *compulsory*? We have first a transition, that is, the elimination of what was previously forbidden. Doubtless this transformation – because it does indeed amount to a transformation – must be caused by the fact that what is permitted is clad at the same time with the term of obligation. This must be something like a mechanism that preserves the right to what was forbidden, yet in a different form. In other words, what now has to be looked at is precisely what previously was not supposed to be looked at.

As we have already seen, something was forbidden by means of the horse. We know that the phobia is an outpost, a protection against anxiety. The horse marks out a threshold, and we know that

at this level this is what it does above all else. But now there is also what has just been said to the subject, and so the horse also bears a relation to what is at stake in the new element that has sown disorder across the subject's play as a whole, namely the real penis. Even so, does this mean that the horse is the real penis? It most certainly does not. As umpteen examples hereafter will show you, the horse is a long way from being the real penis because, over the course of the transformations of Hans's myth, the horse is also the mother, at the end the father, and also on occasion little Hans himself. Let's bring in here an essential symbolising notion, the same that I developed for you during the Seminar of the year before last concerning the play on words that Angelus Silesius makes on *Ort/Wort*.[2] We shall say that, on this occasion, this is the place where the real penis must be accommodated, and not without giving rise to fear and anguish.

With this first contribution from the father, which is still hardly reassuring, we can nevertheless see the child reacting and committing to the structure that is strictly speaking the signifier-structure, the structure that resists against imperative interference, the structure that will nevertheless react to the father's addled and clumsy interventions, and which will produce the series of mythical creations that, through a series of transformations, will gradually integrate the new element of the real penis into Hans's system. This new element necessitates no longer merely the intersubjectivity of the lure – which even so is fundamental and allows Hans to play at surprising, at being caught by surprise, and at presenting himself as absent – but at the same time, through this play which is still ongoing, a third-party object, which is the first element in his relation with his mother and which ultimately must itself be integrated into it. This new and inconvenient element – which actually turned up a while ago – the real penis, Hans's own penis, with its own reactions that run the risk of throwing the whole thing up in the air, as they say, is clearly for him, as you will see in the series of imaginary creations, the element of perturbation and disturbance.

Since today is the 3rd of April, let's go straight to what happens on the 3rd of April 1908, when father and child are at their apartment window speculating as to what is going on in the courtyard across the street. The elements that will become the first props to Hans's problem are already to be found in this yard. With these he will produce his first mythical construction under the sign, as Freud tells us, of means of transport.

All this is going on constantly under his nose – the horses and carts that shift around, that load and unload, that bring boxes onto which the street-boys climb. What will Hans make of it all? Do you think that there was some kind of preadaptation, planned for all eternity

by the eternal imaginary father, between these means of conveyance in use during the imperial reign of Franz Joseph in pre-war Vienna, and each drive and natural tendency that surges up hereabouts in accordance with a solid order of instinctual development in a child like little Hans? It's exactly the opposite. These elements also have their order of reality, but the child will make use of them as elements that are necessary to his game of permutation.

Let me say it again. The use of the signifier is conceivable and comprehensible only when you take as your starting point the fact that the elementary and fundamental playing-out of the signifier is permutative. However civilised and learnèd you might be, as you go about your everyday life you couldn't be clumsier when it comes to exhausting all the possible permutations. I'm going to prove this for you with the example of myself. I have a necktie that is lighter on one side and darker on the other, and for the lighter side to be underneath and the darker side showing on the front, I have to make a mental permutation. I get it wrong every time.

The permutative order is what is being played out in everything that little Hans will construct. Before you try to understand anything about what the horse means, about what the cart means, about little Hans getting onto it, or the unloading of the cart, you have to retain the fact that there is a cart, a horse, and little Hans who wishes to get onto it and who is afraid. But afraid of what? Well, that the cart might set off without him before he gets up onto the loading dock. There's no need to rush and to start saying that we are familiar with this, that he must be afraid of being separated from his mother, because little Hans reassures you straightaway, *I can always come back to Mummy, in the cart or in a cab*. Little Hans stands quite firm in reality. Something else is thus at stake. What counts is the fact of being on a cart looking onto something that can separate from the cart, that can displace.

Once you have isolated the element in relation to which the cart can displace, you will find it in countless features in the observation on little Hans, for example in connection with one of the fantasies that crops up later, that of travelling in the train to Gmunden, when they don't have time to put on their clothes before getting off and the train carries them on. There are many others. For instance, one of his last fantasies, on 22 April – *A street-boy was riding on a truck, and the guard came and undressed the boy quite naked and made him stand there till next morning, and in the morning the boy gave the guard 50,000 florins so that he could go on riding on the truck*. You cannot fail to see the patent kinship between these different stages and moments in Hans's fantasmatisation.

You will also see all the fantasmatisation around the splendid and

intrepid little Hanna. At one point she is with little Hans in another carriage that greatly resembles the previous ones, because it has the same anxiety-horses. Hanna will go and ride on one of the horses, in this first myth that we may call *the carriage myth.*

You will try to see how these different signifiers constitute the *hitching*, because this really is what is at issue. Everyone goes on all the time about the horse, but it can be hitched or unhitched to a carriage. You will see how these different elements that compose the hitching, both the coachmen and the referring of the carriage to a fixed map, turn out to have different significations as the case history progresses. You will try to see what is most important in all this. Is it the role of the signifier, as I explained for you in my *Séminaire sur 'La Lettre volée'*, or more precisely the displacement of the signifier-element onto the different personages who each find themselves caught in some way under its shadow and inscribed in its possession? Does the vital part of Hans's progress consist in the movement of the signifier as it turns around the different personages in whom the subject shows greater or lesser interest, and who may be caught, captivated, or captured in the permutative mechanism? Or, on the contrary, does it lie in something else? On this occasion, we can't really see what kind of progress this would be if it's not a progress through the order of the signifier.

One can say that at no point do any of the elements of reality that surround little Hans really lie beyond his means. There is no trace in this observation of what might be called *regression.* If you think that there is regression at one point because little Hans produces all that immense anal phantasmagoria around the *lumf*, you are sorely mistaken. It's a fantastic mythic play, which at no point entails any kind of regression. From beginning to end of the observation, little Hans holds onto his right, so to speak, to masturbation, without allowing himself to be ruffled. If there is one thing that distinguishes the overall style of Hans's progress, it's precisely its irreducible aspect. As Freud underlines in his discussion, it is precisely because the genital element is utterly solid, present, resistant, and firmly installed in a subject such as this, that he doesn't come out with a hysteria but a phobia. This is very sharply articulated in the observation.

This is what we will be trying to see next time. We are going to see that little Hans doesn't employ just one myth, just one alphabetic element, to resolve his issue, the issue of passing from a phallic apprehension of the relationship with his mother to a castrated apprehension of relations with the parental couple as a whole. There is also the infamous story of the bathtub and the borer, to which last time I referred with the element of the screw thread. It's something that revolves entirely around what I would call the logical function

of manufactured instruments. One cannot help but be quite struck by the way in which this child takes elements that are grouped around highly developed patterns of coaptation in human adaptation and turns them into logical instruments. They enable him to create an opposition between that which is enrooted, or even simply that which is naturally fixed in, and that which has a hole bored through it. The latter is the point of *apprehension*, in the sense of *fear*. It is the formidable polarity before which the child effectively comes to a standstill. The introduction of the element of the unscrewing, or else the pincering – I mean, that which is gripped in the pair of pincers[3] – plays an absolutely essential role in what I shall call the other myth, the myth of the bathtub and the tap.

All the progress that Hans brings about over the course of the observation hinges on the detail of this mythical structuration, that is, on the use of imaginary elements in order to exhaust a certain exercise of symbolic exchange. This is what will allow the threshold element to fall into disuse, the element that was the first symbolic structuration of his reality, which is exactly what his phobia was.

3 April 1957

XVII

THE SIGNIFIER AND *DER WITZ*

A golden rule
The combinatory value of the signifier
Hans through the looking-glass
Raillery and naivety
What passes out through the hole

Our progress through the observation on little Hans has led us to highlight the function of myth in the psychological crisis that the child is going through, a crisis that is inseparable from the paternal intervention being guided by Freud's counsel.

This all-pervasive notion of the function of what is called *myth* – not metaphorically but at the very least technically – is something that we suppose may be appreciated in its rightful scope to the extent that Hans's imaginative creation always follows on from his father's interventions, which can be adroit, not so adroit, or maladroit, but which are certainly sufficiently well oriented not to stem this series of productions but ultimately to stimulate it. This series presents to us as something that it would be hard to separate from his symptom, his phobia, and indeed it can be put into order in relation to this symptom.

1

Last time, we arrived at the anniversary day of 3 April, when Hans's remarks on the content of his phobia are aired.

The father says, all in all, that while that same afternoon his son became more courageous in his conduct under the effect of the most recent occurrences, and notably the effect of Freud's unmediated intervention to Hans on 30 March, the phobia too had *plucked up courage*. Indeed, in this ambiguity which clearly was indiscernible,

the phobia seemed to be just as much enriching itself from details of finer scope and incidence, of higher complication, now that Hans knew better how to make such confidences about the way in which the phobia was pressuring and oppressing him.

I'm venturing to overturn in your minds, or more exactly to re-establish in your minds, the true function both of the symptom and of its variously qualified productions which have been rounded up under the name *transitory symptoms of analysis*. To summarise for you the scope of what is meant by our approach, I shall try to set out a certain number of terms, definitions and, while I'm at it, rules.

I told you last time that if we want to work in a way that is truly analytic, that is truly Freudian, and which is in true conformity with the major examples that Freud developed for us, then we ought to become aware of something that can be understood and confirmed only on the basis of the distinction between signified and signifier. As I told you, not one of the signifier-elements of the phobia carries a univocal meaning or is equivalent to a single signified.

There are many such signifiers that we could tarry with. The first of them is, of course, the horse. It is impossible to regard the horse in any way whatsoever as something that could be the pure and simple equivalent of the function of the father, for example. One can take this easy route and hastily declare that, like in the classic formula from *Totem and Taboo*, the horse is responding to some shortcoming of the father, as a sort of neo-production or equivalent that somehow represents him or incarnates him, thereby playing a role determined by what does indeed seem to be the difficulty at that time, namely the passage from the preoedipal state to the Oedipal moment. The word *moment* is here intended in the sense it carries in physics, and this passage is in effect what I have been teaching, but of course such a declaration about the horse would be utterly incomplete and insufficient. The horse is not merely the horse that perhaps at the end it may indeed become, when Hans sees a *proud* horse trotting past in the street and associates it with something equivalent to the virile pride of the father.

At one moment near the end of the treatment, Hans has the much-vaunted conversation with his father when he tells him something along the lines of, *You ought to be cross with me, you must hold it against me that I'm in this place, that I monopolise mother's attention and take your place in her bed.* And this comes in spite of the father's denegations, telling Hans that he has never scolded him. *Das muß wahr sein*, Hans says again. *It must be true.* Thus, for a brief instant, doubtless having been duly indoctrinated some time hence, the child makes the Oedipal myth loom up with an altogether special imperiousness. Moreover, this has not failed to strike a few authors,

notably Robert Fliess, who wrote an article on this in the January–February 1956 issue of the *IJP* devoted to Freud's centenary.

Before it came to fulfil this metaphorical function in a terminal fashion, so to speak, the horse played a good many other roles. On 3 April, Hans gives all the possible explanations on this matter. Is the horse to be hitched, or not? Is it hitched to a cart with just one horse, or two horses? In each case there is a different signification. What becomes apparent to us is that at this time the horse is symbolic of something. As the next part of the observation will show in a more developed way, on one side the horse is symbolic of the mother. It is also symbolic of the penis. At any rate, it is irreducibly linked to the cart, which is itself a loaded dray, as Hans insists all along the session of 3 April when he is explaining his interest and the brand of satisfaction he derives from all the traffic that passes in front of their apartment, these drays that drive into the yard and drive back out again, and which, while they are there, are unloaded and reloaded. Gradually the equivalence becomes apparent between the function of the dray, together with the horse, and something that obviously belongs to a very different realm, suggestive of what refers essentially to the mother's pregnancy. As we are told in the observation, by Freud and by the father, it refers essentially to the problem of the situation of children in their mother's belly and how they come out. So, at this moment, the horse has a very different scope and a very different function.

Similarly, another element becomes a subject of lengthy examination both for the father and for Freud, namely the notorious *Krawall*, the idea of noise, of a row, of a disorderly racket, with some Austrian overtones whereby it seems that the word can further be used to designate a fracas or a rumpus. In each case, there appears the troubling and especially anguishing character of this *Krawall*, which is apprehended by little Hans when it arises with the bus-horse that fell down, *umfallen*. In Hans's own words, this was one of the events that precipitated the phobic value of the horse. This fall, which occurred but once, will thereafter be found as the constant backdrop to the fear. He fears that this may happen to certain horses, especially big horses hitched up to large, heavily laden vans. The fall and the attendant noise of the horse's pawing, the *Krawall*, keep cropping up, from more than one angle, during the questioning of little Hans, yet not once in the observation will anything be yielded that would amount to an overt interpretation of the *Krawall*.

Furthermore, it should be noted that for the full run of the case history of little Hans, Freud and the father alike are led to remain in doubt, to float, and even to abstain, when it comes to the interpretation of a certain number of elements. It turns out that, try as

they might to press the child to come out with it, try as they might to suggest every possible equivalent and solution, they obtain from him no more than evasions, allusions and side-stepping. Sometimes one even has the impression that the child is to some extent making fun.

Actually, this is not to be doubted. The parodic character of some of the child's figments and confabulations is patent in the observation. I'm thinking above all of what happens in relation to what could be called *the stork myth*, which in Hans's rendition is so rich and lush, teeming so with humorous elements – *The stork came up the stairs . . . and he had the right key . . . and then he took his hat and went away again*, and so on and so forth. This parodic and caricatured aspect of the child's figments has just what it takes to have struck the various commentators.

In the end this brings us to the heart of something that is re-established not from a perspective that deems the observation to be incomplete, but on the contrary from a perspective that appreciates its distinctive demonstrative phase. This is not an insufficiency. On the contrary, it is along this path that it must show us the way to a mode of comprehending what is involved both in the symptomatic formation – the phobia, which is already so simple and yet already so rich – and in the working-through itself. This aspect is expressed, and it finds its place. There is no better illustration of this observation, to the extent that it's a Freudian observation, that is, an intelligent observation.

What we can see essentially is the signifier as such in its distinction from the signified. The symptomatic signifier is constituted in such a way that by its very nature, all along its development and evolution, it covers signifieds that are the most multiform and the most varied. Not only is it in its nature to be able to do this, it is its function to do so.

The full set of signifier-elements that are put before us in the course of this portion of the observation, its kit of signifiers, is assembled in such a way that if we want the observation to be something more than a mere riddle, a confused and failed observation, then we need to impose upon ourselves a certain number of rules about how we tackle it. Why should this case be singled out as a failed one, and not any other case to which we customarily refer? Even so, we cannot help but be struck by the arbitrary, solicited and systematic character of the interpretations made in the case history in particular, yet also of the analytic interpretations vis-à-vis the child. Precisely inasmuch as this observation is so remarkably rich and complex, we have here a testimony given in a register that is exceedingly rare on account of its abundance. If there is one

impression that one receives upon moving into it, it's the sense of constantly getting lost in it.

The rules that I would like to propose in this regard are as follows.

Be it the analysis of a child or of an adult, no element that we may regard as a signifier – in the sense that we have been promoting here, that is to say, whether the signifier is an object, a relationship or a symptomatic act, and however primal or vague it may be – fails to appear as bearing already the firm and singular stamp of something that is dialectical.

Such vagueness is characteristic of the first emergence of the horse, when it appears after a certain interval during which the child's anxiety manifests itself. The horse will hold a function that needs to be defined, but this dialectical stamp is already apparent. This is precisely what we are going to try to grasp, and it is already quite palpable enough in the fact that the anxiety emerges exactly when it's a matter of Hans's mother leaving. He is afraid that the horse will come into the bedroom. But what comes into the room? It is he, little Hans. In every aspect of this we can see a highly ambiguous double relationship that is linked on the one hand to the function of the mother by way of a sentimental tonality of anxiety, but on the other hand to little Hans through his movement and his act. From its very first appearance, the horse is already loaded with profound ambiguity. It is already an all-purpose sign, just like any typical signifier. We take just three strides forward into the observation on little Hans and we can see this come pouring in from every side.

So, we posit the following rule. No signifier-element, thus defined as an object, a relationship or a symptomatic act, in neurosis for example, can be regarded as having a univocal scope. In no way is it equivalent to any one of these objects, relationships, or even these imaginary actions in our register upon which the currently used notion of the object relation was founded. In our time, object relations, with everything that is normative and progressive about them in the subject's life, with how they are genetically defined as mental development, belong to the register of the imaginary. This register is not, of course, without value, but when one tries to articulate it, it presents all the characteristics of untenable contradiction that I told you about when I was sharply caricaturing the texts that had been published at the start of the academic year in a two-volume collection. We had before our eyes the flagrant contradictions in how this notion of the object relation plays out when it starts to be expressed in terms of a pregenital relation that is becoming genital, with the idea of progress that this entails. These contradictions are upon us immediately, and so the task ahead is to arrange the terms in the most basic fashion.

If we follow what for us is a golden rule, and which draws on our notion of the structure of symbolic activity, the signifier-elements must first be defined by their articulation with the other signifier-elements. This is what justifies our *rapprochement* with the recent theory of myth.

This theory has imposed itself in a way that is peculiarly analogous to the way in which the simple apprehension of the facts compels us to articulate things. What guides Monsieur Lévi-Strauss in his article in the *Journal of American Folklore*? What does he use to introduce the notion of *The Structural Study of Myth*? He quotes a remark from one of his colleagues, A. M. Hocart, who says that if there is one thing that we need to overturn at the outset, then this is the stance that down through the ages has been taken in the name of goodness knows what deep-seated anti-intellectualist bias, which consists in withdrawing psychological interpretations from what is presumed to be an intellectual field only to introduce them again in a field that is qualified as one of *affectivity*. As the author categorically concludes, this thereby adds, to *the inherent defects of the psychological school . . . the mistake of deriving clear-cut ideas . . . from vague notions.*

What is here called *the psychological school* is the school that seeks to find the source of myths in a so-called constant of human philosophy that is somehow generic. We are constantly dealing with such *clear-cut ideas*, as much in myth as in symptomatic productions. We ascribe to some vague drive something that presents in the patient in a way that is very broadly articulated, which is even what makes for the paradox of how it appears to our eyes as a parasite. It is enough simply to avoid conflating what amounts to a mental play, goodness knows what superfluity of intellectual deduction – which can only be qualified as such from a perspective of the rationalisation of delusion, for example, or of the symptom, but which is an utterly outmoded perspective – with our perspective, from which, on the contrary, the play of the signifier snatches hold of the subject and takes him far beyond all that he can intellectualise therein, but which amounts no less to the play of the signifier with its own specific laws.

I would like to presentify this for you with an image. What is it that becomes palpable for us when little Hans starts coming out with his fantasies one-by-one, and also, from a certain perspective, when we have our eyes peeled for it, in the development of a neurosis when we start to perceive its history and development in a subject, the way in which he has been taken up by it and seized by it? I would say that it's something that he doesn't enter face on. He backs into it somehow. It seems that little Hans, from the moment the shadow of

the horse is looming over him, gradually enters a stage-set that takes on an order and organisation, that is erected around him, but which captures him much more than being developed by him. What we see is the articulated aspect by which this delusion develops.

I've just said *delusion*. It slipped out almost as a parapraxis because what is going on here has nothing to do with a psychosis, yet the term is not inappropriate. On no account can we content ourselves with deducing anything from *vague emotions*, as Hocart puts it, cited by Lévi-Strauss. On the contrary, we have the impression that the ideational edification – if we can use this expression in the case of little Hans – has its own motivation, its own specific plane and occurrence. It might correspond to some need or other, to some function or other, but surely not to anything that might at any moment be justified by a drive, by an impulse, by a particular emotional movement that would be transposed here to find plain expression. A very different mechanism is at issue, and it necessitates what has been termed *the structural study of myth*, the first step of which is never to consider any of the signifier-elements independently of the others that arise, and then to reveal this. When I say *to reveal* it, I mean *to develop* it on this same plane of a series of oppositions that belong first and foremost to the realm of combinatorics.

What we can see looming up in the course of the development of what is happening for little Hans is not a certain number of themes that would have more or less some affective or psychological equivalent, but rather a certain number of grouped signifier-elements that progressively transpose from one system into another. An example will illustrate this for you.

After the father's first attempts at enlightenment, under Freud's guidance, an especially penile element is isolated in the horse, which will lead Hans to react to this piece of enlightenment by the compulsion to look at the horse. Next, we find that the child is relieved at certain moments by the prohibitive aid that the father brings him concerning his masturbation. We are edging closer to a first attempt at analysing Hans's concern over what has to do with his urinary organ, the *Wiwimacher*, as he calls it. Hans certainly absorbs the full force of the *Aufklärung*, the real enlightenment, this being the strong intervention that the father makes so as to connect more directly with what he reckons to be the only real support of the child's anxiety, and which amounts to saying, as Freud incites him to say, that little girls don't have one, while he does have one. And, in a way that does not escape Freud's notice, Hans underscores that his widdler is *angewachsen*. It is *fixed in* or *enrooted*. It is something that will grow and get bigger with him.

Isn't this already a first adumbration of something that appears

to lead in the direction of somehow allowing the phobia to fall into disuse, if indeed it is purely and simply the equivalent of the anxiety that is bound to the apprehension of a real that hitherto had not been fully realised by the child? It is then that we see the fantasy of the big giraffe and the little giraffe appear.

I showed you that this fantasy casts us into the field of a creation characterised by a style and a symbolic exigency that are utterly riveting. I'm repeating this for those of you who weren't here. I restored its full scope – and this can only be done from our perspective – to the fact that for Hans there is neither contradiction nor even ambiguity in the fact that one of the giraffes, the little one, is a crumpled giraffe, just as one can crumple up a sheet of paper. He shows this for us. We have an object that until then had its imaginary function and which is now passing over to a sort of radical intervention of symbolisation. This is formulated as such by the subject himself and is underlined by the gesture that he then makes of taking possession of this symbolic position, of occupying it, by sitting on top of the crumpled giraffe, in spite of how the big giraffe calls out and protests. There is something especially satisfying about this for little Hans. It's not a dream. It's a fantasy that he has come up with himself. He goes into his parents' bedroom to speak about it, and he develops it.

The bafflement they evince yet again as to what this is about is firmly underscored. You will have noted the wavering in the observation itself. According to the father, the big giraffe and the small giraffe are initially the father and the mother. Yet right after he says categorically that the big giraffe is the mother and the little one is her genital organ, *ihr Glied*, and so this is another form of the relational value of these two signifiers. But will this suffice us? Surely not, because the father makes a fresh intervention, telling the mother, *Good-bye, big giraffe!* Having so far accepted a different interpretative register, the child doesn't reply *Oh yes!* – which is what the French [and the English] translation has, and which fails to get across the point and the scope of his interjection – but rather *Nicht wahr, that can't be true!* And he adds, *and Hanna's the crumpled giraffe, isn't she?*

What are we touching on here? What is this other mode of interpretation doing here? Does this really have to do with Hanna and her *Krawall*, in the sense that further on in the observation we shall see little Hanna appearing to be quite bothersome on account of her crying? We cannot fail – so long as we keep our ears open to the signifier-element – to identify this crying with the mother crying out in the fantasy.

What ultimately, and what alone, is meant by this ambiguity?

Hans's moment of cheerfulness, which even carries a touch of raillery, is something that all by itself designates for us the false path his father is taking in his attempts to make pairs of correspondences between the two terms of the symbolic relationship and some imaginary or real element that they would be there to represent. Hans is right beside the father from one moment to the next to demonstrate that this is not the right path and never will be.

Why will this never be the right path? What Hans is dealing with when the phobia emerges – this being the moment in the observation that we are talking about – is an apprehension of particular symbolic relations that so far have not been constituted for him and which have their own value as a symbolic relationship.

Man, because he is man, is poised in the presence of problems that are problems of the signifier as such. The signifier is introduced into the real by its very existence as a signifier, because, for example, words are being spoken, or because sentences are being articulated and linked up, bound together by some medium, a copula, such as *wherefore* or *because*. The existence of the signifier introduces into the world of man something that I expressed near the end of the little Introduction I made in the first issue of *La Psychanalyse*, to the effect that it is in crossing the flow of things diametrically that the symbol is tethered, in order to lend it another meaning. These are problems to do with the creation of meaning, with everything that this entails in terms of freedom and ambiguity, and everything that might possibly be reduced at any moment to nothingness by the utterly arbitrary nature of a sudden spirited remark.

Just like Humpty-Dumpty in *Alice through the Looking-Glass*, little Hans is quite capable of saying that this is how things are because this is *just what I choose*, because he is *master*. This doesn't stop him from being completely subordinate to the solution of the problem, which arises from his having to adjust the way he had hitherto been relating to the maternal world, the world that was already being organised by the dialectic of the luring between him and his mother, the importance of which I have already underscored for you. Who out of the two of them has the phallus and who doesn't? *What does mother desire when she desires something other than me, the child?* This was where the child was, but he can stay there no longer.

The function of myth takes hold at this juncture. Once we are on the path to the right way of analysing myth – that of structural analysis – we can see that a myth is always an attempt to articulate a solution to a problem. It's a matter of passing from a certain mode of explication, let's say, bearing on the subject's relationship with the world, or on a society's relationship with the world, to a trans-

formation that is necessitated by the fact that different elements have come to stand in contradiction to the first formulation. These new elements require a shift that as such is impossible, an impasse, and this is what affords the myth its structure.

The same goes for Hans, who at this moment is faced with something that necessitates the adjustment of the first adumbration of the symbolic system that was structuring the relationship with the mother. This is what is at issue in the appearance of the phobia and, far more than this, in the development of everything that the phobia brings with it in terms of signifier-elements. Hans is faced with this, and, by like token, it is what makes his father's every foray into a piecemeal reading appear derisory to the child.

2

Regarding the style of Hans's responses, I simply must urge you to refer to the absolutely admirable passages that constitute Freud's immense work – which has still scarcely been exploited for our experience – called *Der Witz*.

This book perhaps has no equivalent in what might be called *psychological philosophy*. I know of no other that has yielded anything so fresh and trenchant as this work. All the other books on laughter, be it Bergson's or any of the rest, will always be of lamentable poverty alongside this one.

What is the crucial thing that is put before us in Freud's book *Der Witz*? It targets directly the essential nature of the phenomenon, without dipping off and without falling wide in its considerations. Just as in the very first section of the chapter on *The Dream-Work* in the *Traumdeutung* he foregrounds the notion that the dream is a rebus, and no one takes heed – the sentence has gone completely unnoticed – so it doesn't seem to have been realised that section A, the analytic part of *Der Witz*, opens with the famous layout of his analysis of the phenomenon of condensation as grounded in the signifier. In the example of *famillionär*, there is a superposition of *familiär* and *Millionär*, and everything Freud will develop from it consists in showing us that it is on the level of the suppressed case that the truly destructive term is located, the term that disrupts the play of the signifier as such in relation to what could be called the existence of the real. By playing with the signifier, man calls his world into question, right down to the root. The value of the spirited quip, which distinguishes it from the comical, is its possibility of playing on the nonsense that is fundamental to any use of sense. It is possible, at any moment, to call any element of meaning into question

insomuch as it is grounded on a use of the signifier. That is to say, it is grounded on something that in itself is profoundly paradoxical in relation to any possible signification because, in establishing this use, the use itself is what creates what it is designed to sustain.

The distinction between the domain of wit and the domain of the comic is one of the clearest there is. When Freud does touch on the comic in this book, he broaches it only as an ancillary by which to clarify wit by means of a contrast. First of all, he will come upon intermediate notions, highlighting for us the dimension of the naive, which is so ambiguous, and which is my reason for making this excursus.

While on the one hand this dimension of the naive does indeed need to be defined – because it exists – in order to see what manifestations of the naive can arise from the comic, we can clearly see on the other hand the extent to which this naivety is intersubjective. We are the ones who impute naivety to the child, and in a way that some doubt always lingers over it. Why so?

Once again, let's take an example. Freud begins his illustration of the naive with the story of the children who gather an audience of adults for their little drama piece. The show begins. The young actors tell the tale of a poor fisherman and his wife who have fallen on hard times. In an attempt to change their fortune, the husband decides to set off for faraway lands. He comes back after his many exploits, laden with riches, which he shows to his wife. She listens to him, then opens the door of their hut saying, *Look, I too have not been idle.* A dozen large dolls lie sleeping in a row.

This is the example that Freud gives to illustrate naivety. It is one of the forms in which, were the definition of the comic to be implicated here, the discharge would arise from an economic gain brought about spontaneously by someone who is less naive, and in this different realm would entail a share of tension that even generates a certain degree of embarrassment. The fact that the child goes straight to this enormous gaffe without incurring the least trouble triggers something that transforms into laughter. That is to say, it becomes very droll, with all the overtones of the strange that this word can entail.

But what is at issue here? While on this occasion we are in a zone that borders on the comic, the economy at stake is very precisely the gain that is made from bypassing what such a construction would have undergone if the same things were to be evoked from the lips of an adult. The child somehow makes a reality, directly, of something that takes us to the height of the absurd. He produces what is called *naive wit.* It's a funny story that triggers laughter because it has come from the mouth of a child, leaving all the room for the adults

to rejoice, *These kids are priceless!* They are assumed to have found, in all innocence and in one shot, what an author would necessarily have taken a great more trouble to find, or what he would have had to enrich with some further subtlety, so that it might pass for something droll, properly speaking.

However, this allows us also to see that it is not altogether certain that the ignorance that has been given free run to hit the bulls-eye is really so complete. To spell it right out, when children's stories possess this disconcerting character of triggering our laughter, we include them in the perspective of the naive, but we know that this naivety is not always to be taken at face value. There is *being naive* and there is *feigning naivety*. If we attribute a feigned naivety to the children's drama play, we restore to it its full character of *Witz* in its most *tendentious* form, as Freud puts it. It takes very little, indeed it takes no more than for it to be assumed that this naivety is not so very complete, for the children to gain the upper hand and effectively become the masters of the game.

In other words, what is called for is something that Freud highlights, and which I ask you to look up in the text, namely the *third person* who is always implied in the spirited remark. The first person makes a remark about a second to a third. Whether or not there really are three people standing there, there is always this ternarity which is essential for the remark to trigger laughter. The comic, meanwhile, can be triggered simply between two people, like Freud's example of seeing someone slip and fall down, or when you see someone making a meal out of some task which for us is one of the most straightforward there is. This on its own suffices to trigger the comic relationship. However, in the naive, we can see essentially that the perspective of the third person, even if it remains virtual, is always implicit to some degree. Beyond the child whom we take to be naive, there is but another, who is precisely the one whom we suppose to be there for it to make us laugh so much. After all, it could be that he is feigning to feign, that his *being naive* is affected.

This dimension of the symbolic is exactly what is there to be felt in the kind of hide-and-seek game, the perpetual mockery, that sets the tone of Hans's every reply to his father.

We see this kind of phenomenon being produced when, at another moment, the father asks Hans, *What did you think when the horse fell down?* This has to do with the fall from which Hans says he *got the nonsense*. His father blurts out the question, *Was the horse dead when it fell down?* As he notes just afterwards, Hans's expression was quite serious when he first replied, *Yes!* But then the child has a sudden change of mind, and lets out a laugh – this too is noted – saying, *No, it wasn't a bit dead. I only said it in jest,* im Spaß.

What can this mean? The observation is punctuated by all these little remarks. After Freud allows himself to take in for a moment the tragic resonance of the horse's fall – though is it really certain that this tragic resonance is present on any occasion in the psychology of little Hans? – he becomes mindful of the other, this moustachioed father, the bespectacled one whom he depicts for us, whom he had seen during the consultation sitting beside little Hans. Beside *the funny little fellow . . . with all his self-assurance*, this other is there, heavy set, eyeglasses full of reflections, trying his hardest with the best will in the world. Freud wavers for a brief moment. The matter at hand is the notorious black on the horse's mouth, which they are now wondering about, peering into it with a lantern, and Freud tells himself, *Why, here he is, the long-headed one, it's this ass right here!* And when I say *this ass . . .*

Even so, get it into your heads that this kind of floating blackness around the horse's mouth, which is never elucidated, is nevertheless the real gap that is always concealed behind the veil and the mirror, and which always stands out against the background like a stain. Ultimately, there is a sort of short-circuit from a divine character of professorial superiority, which Freud accentuates with some humour, and the appraisal – which the experience and confidences of his contemporaries show us was always on the ready to come flying out of his mouth – which in French starts with the third letter of the alphabet followed by an ellipsis.[1] *What a great . . . president . . . this is*, thinks Freud, telling himself that he has right there in front of him the figure that cuts across and joins up with the intuition of the fundamentally abysmal character of what stands out from the background.

So, in these conditions, no doubt little Hans is leading the game rather well from one turn to the next when he corrects himself, when he laughs, and when in one fell swoop he cancels out a long series of what he has just been developing in front of his father. We have the impression that he is telling him, *I saw you coming*. On first approach, he accepts the word *dead* as an equivalent to *fallen*, but in a second moment he tells himself, *You're repeating the Professor's lesson to me*, that is, precisely what the Professor has just insinuated, namely that Hans is against his father to the point of wishing him dead.

This is something that comes to contribute, therefore, to these rules of ours. As I said, first of all one maps out the signifiers in accordance with their essentially combinatorial value. The full set of signifiers that is brought into play is there to restructure the real by introducing this newly combined relationship. To take up again the reference to the first issue of *La Psychanalyse*, it is not merely

for the sake of it that what you can see on the cover is the symbol of the signifier-function as such.[2] The signifier is a bridge in a domain of significations. The consequence of this is that the signifier doesn't reproduce significations. It transforms and recreates them.

This is what is at stake, and this is why we always need to focus the lens of our question on the signifier.

3

We need to be attentive to the twist in the signifier that little Hans brings about. What is its point of departure and what is its point of arrival?

So it is that in each of the stages that he travels through over the first five months of 1908, we can see him turning his interest successively to what is loaded and unloaded, or to what heaves into motion with more or less of a jolt, and which also might tear prematurely away from its landing dock. Among all these linkages of variously fantasmatic signifier-elements revolving around the theme of movement, or more exactly, if you will allow this, within the theme of movement, the term of modification, acceleration, there is specifically the word *Bewegung*, *motion*. This element is absolutely essential in the structuration of the first fantasies and gradually brings out other elements, among which are the mother's drawers, a pair of yellow ones and a pair of black ones. We must pay particular attention to what happens in relation to this element of the drawers.

Without the perspectives that I have been trying to introduce for you, this passage is utterly incomprehensible. The father gets his knickers in a twist, if you will forgive the pun. As for Freud himself, he says simply that the father led the analysis to become *obscure and uncertain*, but nevertheless in a side note at the end of the exchange he indicates a certain number of perspectives, and in particular that doubtless the father had failed to recognise a fundamental distinction linked to *the difference between the sounds made by a man micturating and a woman*.

Little Hans says things that are quite incomprehensible. Surely he wants to tell us that the longer a pair of drawers is worn, the blacker they become. This follows a number of developments in which one can see that when the drawers are yellow they have such-and-such a value, and when they are black they don't. When he sees the yellow drawers separate from his mother, it makes him want to spit. When his mother is wearing them, it doesn't make him want to spit. In short, Freud insists and says in a footnote that without doubt what little Hans wants to indicate here is that the drawers have a different

function for him depending on whether his mother has them on or he sees them on their own account.

We have, therefore, enough signposts to see that Freud himself is heading towards an adumbration of the total dialectical relativisation of this pairing of the yellow drawers and the black drawers. In the course of the long and complicated conversation in which little Hans and his father try to unravel the question together, it transpires that this pairing only takes on a value when it manifests a series of oppositions, which have to be sought out in remarks that at first go quite unnoticed. At any rate, they go drastically unnoticed when one tries sweepingly to identify the yellow drawers with something like urination, for instance, and the black drawers with something that in Hans's language is called *lumf*.

Furthermore, it is quite wrong to identify this *lumf* with defecation, thereby overlooking what is essential to Hans about this element. We have his father's own testimony that Hans's word *Lumpf* is a transformation of the word *Strumpf*, a stocking, and in another part of the observation little Hans associates it with a black blouse. It partakes of the crucial function of clothing as a concealing function. It is also the screen onto which is projected the major object of his preoedipal questioning, namely the missing phallus. The fact that excrement as such should be designated by a term allied to this symbolisation also shows us clearly enough that the instinctual relationship, the anality concerned in the mechanism of defecation, is a trifling matter alongside the symbolic function. Here, once again, this is the dominant register.

For little Hans, the symbolic register is linked to a questioning that is vital for him – *What can be lost? What can pass out through the hole?* These are the first elements of what might be called a *symbolic instrumentation* which thereafter little Hans will examine while developing his mythical construction that includes, in the first dream, the bath that the fitter comes to unscrew, or later, in the second dream, his behind, which will also be unscrewed, along with his penis as well. All of this gives rise to the greatest delight in Freud and the father alike, it has to be said.

They are in such a rush to impose their signification on little Hans that they don't even wait for him to finish his remarks on the unscrewing of his little widdler before they tell him that the only possible explanation is that, quite naturally, this was so that he could be given a bigger one. Little Hans doesn't say that at all, and on no account do we know whether he would have said it had he been allowed to speak to the end. Nothing indicates that he would have said it. Little Hans speaks only of replacement. This is an instance where we can touch on the countertransference. The

father is the one who comes out with the idea that if Hans's widdler and behind are being changed, it's so that he can be given bigger ones. This is an example of the kinds of wrongs that are done all the time. After Freud, people have not held back from perpetuating this tradition, following a mode of interpretation that goes hunting out in goodness knows what affective proclivity whatever might prompt and justify what actually possesses its own laws, its own structure, its own gravitational pull, and which ought to be studied as such.

We are going to draw to a close by saying that, in the mythical development of a symptomatic signifying system, one should always take into consideration its systematic coherence, at each step of the way, along with the kind of development that is specific to it in the diachrony of time. The development of any mythical system in a neurotic – I once called it *the neurotic's individual myth* – presents as the issuing, the progressive dislocation, of a series of mediations that are resolved by a chaining-up of signifiers which always bears a circular character. This may be more or less apparent but is none the less fundamental in that the point of arrival bears a deep relation to the point of departure, without being exactly the same. I mean that the impasse that is always there at the start is to be found again at the point of arrival, where it can be regarded as a solution in an inverted form, just with a change of sign. But the impasse from which one began is always found in some fashion at the end of the operative displacement of the signifying system.

I will be illustrating this for you in the next part, along the winding paths that we shall take after the holiday break, by taking up the hand that Hans was dealt.

At the start, little Hans was faced with something that until then had been the game of the phallus, which was already a sort of luring relationship that was sufficient to maintain a progressive movement between him and his mother, and which offered him the meaningful prospect and goal of perfect identification with the object of maternal love. But then a new element came on the scene.

On this score, I concur with the authors, with the father and with Freud. A problem arises, the importance of which in the child's development cannot be overestimated. It is grounded on the fact that nothing in the subject himself has been pre-established or arranged in advance which might allow him to take on board the prospect that sharply confronts him at two or three moments during his childhood development, namely the prospect of growth. Given the fact that nothing is pre-established or predetermined on the imaginary plane, what brings in an essential element of perturbation is very precisely a phenomenon that is quite distinct, but which for the child comes to be annexed imaginarily at the time of his first

confrontation with the prospect of growth, namely the phenomenon of turgescence.

That the penis should go from being smaller to larger during the first childhood masturbations or erections is no different from one of the most fundamental themes in the imaginary fantasia of *Alice in Wonderland*, and which lends this work its absolutely choice value in the matter of childhood imagination. Hans is confronted with a problem of this sort, that of integrating something that is linked to the existence of the real penis, the distinct existence of a penis that can itself become bigger or smaller, but which is also the penis that belongs to the small one or to the big one.

To spell it right out, the problem of Hans's development at this moment is linked to the absence of the penis of the big one, that is to say, of the father. And the phobia is produced in so far as Hans must face up to his Oedipus complex in a situation that necessitates a particularly difficult symbolisation.

However, the fact that the phobia develops as it does, and that the analysis produces this abundance of mythical proliferation, indicates to us, in the same way that the pathological reveals the normal, the complexity of the phenomenon at stake when it comes to the child integrating the real of his genitality, along with the deeply and fundamentally symbolic character of this moment of passage.

10 April 1957

XVIII

CIRCUITS

Wherefore the horse?
From horse to railway
Hans's back and forth
Wegen and *Wägen*

If you needed reminding of the constitutive character of the impact of the symbolic in human desire, it seems to me that, for want of any accurate focus upon the most common and everyday experience, a quite riveting example may be found in the following formula, the immediacy and omnipresence of which should be lost on no one. What is at issue here is a formulation of the desire that is perhaps the keenest of all human desires, the most constant at any rate, which at certain turning points in the lives of each and every one of us we cannot fail to recognise, not to mention in the lives of those to whom we grant the closest attention, those who are tormented by some subjective unease. This desire, to name it at last, is called *the desire for some other thing*.

What is meant, in terms of instinctual coaptation, by this desire for some other thing? What can it mean in the register of the object relation, which is conceived of as a sort of developmental evolution that is immanent to itself, arising by way of successive thrusts that it would be a mere matter of fostering? If the object relation is referred to a *type* object that is somehow preformed, where can this desire for some other thing come from?

This preliminary remark is intended to put you, as Freud expresses it somewhere in his letters in connection with Egyptian realms, in [. . .].[1]

What I have just said is not unrelated to my subject, namely little Hans.

1

What have we been trying to detect in the mythical fomentation that is the essential characteristic of the observation on little Hans?

What I'm calling *mythical fomentation* refers to each of the different elements, the ambiguity of which I have pointed out to you, along with how they are essentially designed to cover just about any signified, but not all the signifieds at the same time. When one of the signifiers covers one such element of the signified, the other signifier-elements that are in play cover other signifieds. In other words, the signifying constellation operates by means of something that we may call a *system of transformation*, that is, a turning motion which, when looked at more closely, covers the signified, from one moment to the next, in a different way, and by the same movement seems to exercise upon it an action that profoundly reshapes it.

Why is this so? How are we to conceive of the dynamic function of this kind of sorcery, the instrument of which is the signifier and the goal of which, or the result of which, must be a reorientation of the signified, its repolarisation and reconstitution after a crisis?

We are posing the question from this angle because we believe that it has to be posed in this way, for the simple reason that if we are turning our interest to the child's mythical fomentation, or, to call it by a name that is more common, which says exactly the same thing yet in a form that is not so well adapted, *childhood theories of sexuality*, it's not because they are merely a kind of superfluity, an insubstantial dream, but rather because in themselves they harbour a dynamic element. This is what is at issue in the observation on little Hans, without which it wouldn't make any sense whatsoever.

We ought to tackle this function of the signifier without any preconceived idea about the observation, because this observation is more exemplary than any other. It was seized in the miracle of origins where, if I may say so, the mind of the inventor and of those who followed him had not yet had time to become weighed down with all sorts of taboo elements, with the reference to a real that is founded on prejudices that somehow find goodness knows what support in earlier references, which are precisely those that are called into question, shaken up and discredited by the field that had just been discovered. In its freshness, the observation on Hans still maintains its revelatory power. I would almost say *its explosive power*.

Over the course of this complex evolution, the dialogue with the father that Hans is caught up in plays a role that is inseparable from the furtherance of the said mythical fomentation. It may even be said that with each new intervention from the father, this mythi-

cal fomentation that is in some sense prompted, bounces back and starts afresh, before falling back into a state of vegetation. However, as Freud expressly remarks at one turn, it has its own laws and its own particular necessities. What Hans gives us is not always what is expected of him, far from it. He comes out with things that surprise, which the father in any case was not expecting. While Freud indicates that he had forewarned the father of them, Hans comes out with things that go beyond what Freud himself could foresee, because Freud doesn't hide the fact that many elements remain unexplained and, on occasion, uninterpreted.

But do we need all of them to be interpreted? We can sometimes press a little further the interpretation made by the two collaborators, Hans's father and Freud, but what we are trying to do here is to reconstitute the specific laws of gravitation behind the coherence of the signifier which appears to accrue around the horse.

Freud tells us quite purposefully that we might be tempted to qualify the phobia by its object, the horse in this instance, so long as we perceive that the horse extends far beyond what appears as something of a supervalent figure, a heraldic figure, which focuses the entire field and is laden with all sorts of implications, and above all signifying implications.

So, a certain number of reference points are necessary in order to mark out where our path is now to lead.

We are not broaching anything new, because Freud himself articulates this in the most deliberate fashion. This passage is to be found after Hans's first dialogue with his father in which the child starts to draw out of the phobia what I am calling its *signifying implications*. What Hans is able to construct around this is rich in mythical or even in novelistic aspect. It is rich in a fantasmatisation that bears not only on the past but also on what he would like to do with the horse, or in relation to the horse. There is no doubt that it accompanies and modulates his anxiety, but it also carries its own constructive force. After the dialogue that we are coming to now, between Hans and his father, Freud indicates that the phobia has *plucked up courage*, that it is developing, that it is *venturing to show itself* in its various phases. He writes the following – *in this we get to see how diffuse it really is. It extends on to horses and on to carts, on to the fact that horses fall down and that they bite, on to horses of a particular character, on to carts that are heavily loaded. I will reveal at once that all these characteristics were derived from the circumstance that the anxiety originally had no reference at all to horses but was transposed on to them secondarily and had now become fixed upon those elements of the horse complex which showed themselves well adapted for certain transferences.*

So, Freud formulates this in the most deliberate fashion. We have two poles. The first pole is that of the signifier, and this signifier will serve to support the full series of transferences, that is to say, the reshaping of the signified across all the possible permutations of the signifier. We may suppose as a working hypothesis, to the extent that it conforms to everything that our experience requires, that in principle the signified will be different from what it was at the start. Something has happened on the side of the signified. By means of the signifier, the field of the signified will be either reorganised or extended in some way.

So, wherefore the horse? Things can be spun out in this regard. The horse is a theme that is rather rich in mythology, in legends and fairy tales, and in what is most constant yet opaque in the oniric thematic, namely the nightmare, the *mare* of the night. Dr Jones dedicated a whole book to this to show us that it is no accident that the mare of the night is not simply the anguishing apparition of the night-fiend, but that the mare is a substitute for the fiend. Of course, in keeping with the good old custom, Dr Jones goes searching in his analysis on the side of the signified, which brings him to the finding that everything is in everything. He shows us that there is no god in antique mythology, or even in modern mythology, who eludes this fact of having been a horse in some respect or other. And so Hippios, Mars, Odin, Hermes and Zeus are all horses. It's a matter of finding out why. They *are* horses. And they *have* horses. Everything is a horse in this book. Clearly it's not hard to show on this basis that the root *MR*, which is at once *mare* and the Gaelic *mara*, and also *mer* in French, is a root that in itself comprises a signification that is that much easier to find in that it covers pretty much everything.

Obviously this is not the path along which we are to proceed. We are not about to imagine that all the explanations stand on the side of the horse. There is certainly on the side of the horse something that entails all sorts of analogous inclinations that turn it into something that, as an image, can be a favourable receptacle for all sorts of symbolisations of natural elements that come to the fore in childhood preoccupations, which indeed is the turn in the path at which we find little Hans. The accentuation that I'm trying to give here, which has always been neglected in every quarter, is that this is not what is essential. The essential point is that a certain signifier is brought in at a critical moment in Hans's evolution, and this signifier plays a polarising and re-crystallising role. Doubtless this looks to us like something pathological, but it is assuredly a constitutive factor. From this moment forth, the horse starts to punctuate the outside world with what Freud will much later qualify – looking back on Hans's phobia in *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* – as a

signal function. These signals effectively restructure the world for Hans, a world that thereafter is profoundly marked by all sorts of limits, the property and function of which we must now try to grasp.

What can it mean that, these limits having been constituted, there is by the same stroke a constitution of the possibility, through the fantasy or through desire, of a transgression of the limit at the same time as a constitution of an obstacle, an inhibition, that checks the subject within this limit? All of this is done with an element that is a signifier, the horse.

To understand the function of the horse, the path to be taken is not that of trying to find what the equivalent of the horse is, whether it's little Hans himself, or Hans's mother, or Hans's father, because it's all of these and many other things besides. It can be anything and everything in all this, in that little Hans makes successive attempts to apply to his world, in order to structure it, the signifying system that is coherent with the horse. Throughout these attempts, the horse manages to cover one or another of the major composite elements in the world of little Hans, notably his father, his mother, himself, his little sister Hanna, his little playmates, the fantasmatic girls, and many more. So, what is at stake, what we need to consider, is that the horse, when it is introduced as the central point of the phobia, introduces a new term that has precisely the property of being an obscure signifier. There is a wordplay here, in that I would almost say that *un signifiant* can be taken as a complete whole, as *insignifiant*. In some respect, it is insignificant. This is where it has its most profound function. It plays the role of a ploughshare that will furrow the real in a new way.

We can conceive of how necessary this is.

2

Up to that point, everything had been all well and good for little Hans.

The appearance of the horse is secondary. Freud firmly underscores how it is shortly after the appearance of the diffuse signal of anxiety that the horse will start to function. It is by following the development of this function step-by-step, right through to the end, that we can manage to comprehend what has happened.

So, little Hans suddenly finds himself in a situation that has assuredly decompensated. Why did this come about? Up to a certain date, 5 or 6 February 1908, that is to say, a couple of months before his fifth birthday, he seemed to be bearing everything rather well. Something happens, and let's take it as directly as possible in the

terms of reference that are set out in the observation. The game was being pursued with the mother on the basis of the lure of seduction that thus far had been fully sufficient. The love relation with the mother introduced the child to the imaginary dynamic into which he would gradually be initiated. I would almost say, to introduce the relation to the bosom, in the sense of *lap*, from a new angle, that he insinuated himself into it. We have seen how at the start of the observation this was spreading out constantly as the game with the hidden object that Hans played in a sort of perpetual veiling and unveiling. Now, into these relationships with his mother, which were being pursued on a playful basis, certain real elements are introduced. The rules of the game, which revolved around dialogue on symbolic presence and absence, are suddenly violated for Hans.

Two things appear. The first arises when Hans is no longer in a position to respond in full. I mean when he is no longer able to show, actually and in in its most glorious state, his little penis. Right there and then, he is rebuffed. His mother tells him word for word not only that it's forbidden but that it's *eine Schweinerei*. It's piggish. It's something repugnant. We assuredly cannot fail to see an element that is utterly essential here. Moreover, Freud underscores that the effects of the depreciative intervention did not arise straightaway but in the manner of aftershocks. He underscores the term that I've been repeating and pushing to the fore of analytic reflection, namely *après coup*, *retroaction*. He says *nachträgliche Gehorsam*, which means *deferred obedience*. *Gehör* is hearing, an attentive audience. *Gehorsam* is submission, docility. Such threats and rebuffs are not brought to bear immediately, but after a lapse of time.

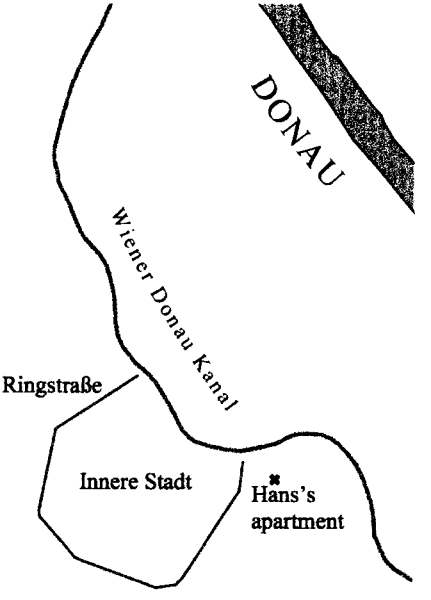
And so my position would be far from a partial one. Freud also underscores, and not merely between the lines, a real element of comparison, of *Vergleichung*. In making comparisons between big and small, Hans has accurately assessed the reduced, minuscule and ridiculously insufficient character of the organ in question. It is this real element that comes to be added to the rebuff, lending it a weight that shakes the edifice of the relationships with his mother right down to its foundations.

To this we may add a second element, the presence of little Hanna. At first this presence is taken from multiple angles of highly diverse patterns of assimilation. Further to this, however, it comes increasingly to vouch for another element of the game that is very present here, and which also calls into question the whole edifice, all the principles and all the bases of the game, perhaps even to the point of rendering it superfluous in this instance. Those who have experience with children know that these are facts of common experience that the analysis of the child puts constantly before us.

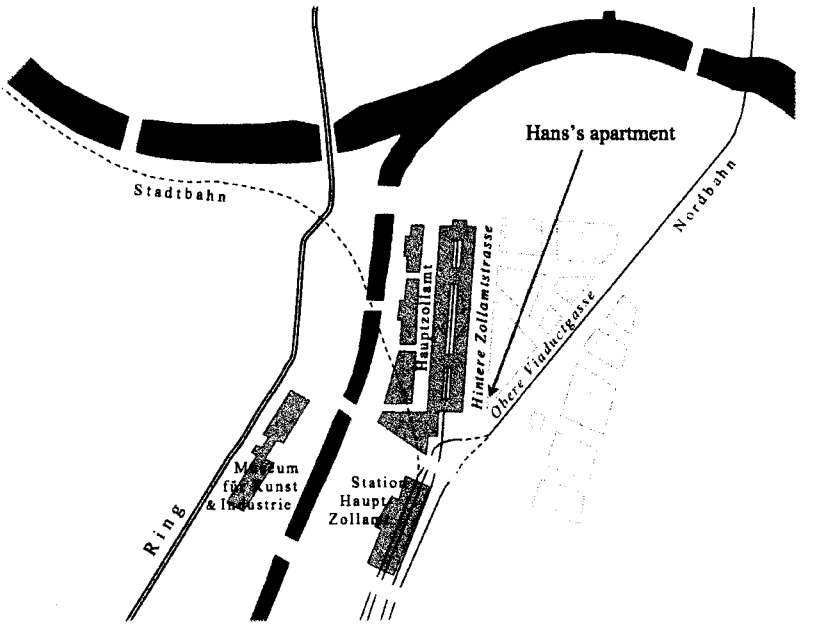
For the time being, what is occupying us is the way in which the signifier will operate in the midst of all this. What is to be done? One has to go to the text and make the construction. One has to know how to read. When we see things recurring in a certain way, with the same elements but recomposed in a different fashion, one has to know how to register them as such, without hunting out remote analogous references, without alluding to earlier events that we might extrapolate or assume in the subject. It is not, as we say in everyday language, the symbol of something that he is cogitating. It's something else entirely. It's a matter of laws that manifest this structuration, which is not real but symbolic. These laws will start to play out amongst themselves, to operate, as it were, by themselves in an autonomous fashion. At least they need to be regarded as such for a while, so that we can perceive whether this operation of reshaping, of reconstruction, is in itself something that is operative in this instance.

I'm going to illustrate this for you.

On 22 March, the father takes little Hans to see his grandmother in Lainz, as he does every Sunday. This is a crucial point. Let's sketch out a map.



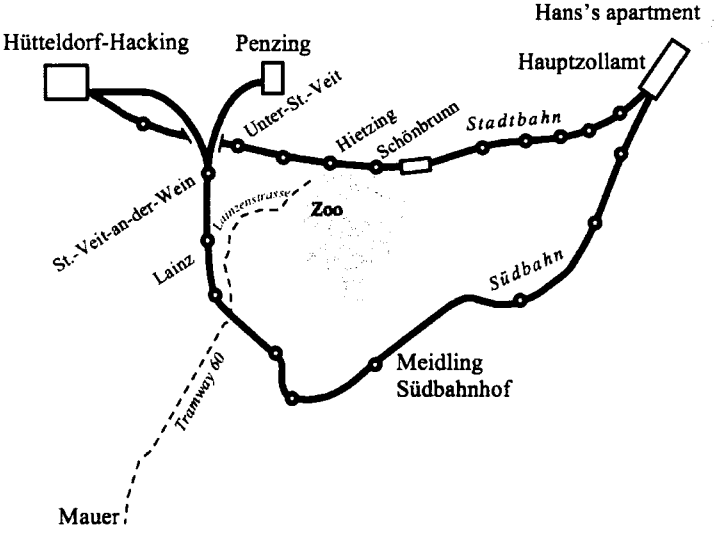
Vienna's Innere Stadt is located on a bank of the Donaukanal, a former arm of the Danube. The home of Hans's parents is in this part of the old town, delimited by the Ringstraße.



Across from their apartment stands the Hauptzollamt, the Head Customs House, and a little further off stands the Hauptzollamt station that is frequently mentioned in the observation. Facing the Customs House [on the other side of the Wien river], you have a square where now stands the Kriegsministerium and a very nice museum, the Museum für Kunst und Industrie. The Hauptzollamt is where Hans thinks of going once he has made some progress and is able to get beyond a stretch of space that lies in front of their apartment. I am inclined to think that their apartment is right at one end of the block, on the road behind the Customs House, because there is an allusion to the fact that *the Nordbahn runs past opposite our house*. Now, the Nordbahnhof is on the other bank of the Danube Canal. There are quite a few of these light railway networks in Vienna, feeding in from east and west and from north and south. But there are also a number of local lines, in particular a circle line that is sunk into a cutting. It's probably the same one that the young homosexual woman, whom I spoke about at the start of the year, threw herself into. There are two lines that are of interest to us as far as little Hans's adventures are concerned. There is a link-line, the *Verbindungsbahn*, connecting the Nordbahnhof to the Meidling Südbahnhof, which runs nearby the apartment block in which Hans's apartment is located, and it is on this line that Hans can see the truck, what Freud calls *eine Draisine*, on which he

would like so much to ride. Before then, he had also been to another station, to take a train that for some stretches runs underground, and this is the line that goes to Lainz.

On Sunday 22 March, Hans's father proposes that they take a route that is slightly more complicated than their usual one.



They will take the Stadtbahn and stop at Schönbrunn palace, which is like a Viennese Versailles. This is where the zoological garden is that little Hans visits with his father and which plays such an important role in the observation. It's far less grandiose than Versailles. The House of Hapsburg was probably much closer to the people than was the House of Bourbon, because you can see how even at a time when the city didn't spread out quite so far, its profile was visible on the horizon. After the visit to Schönbrunn park, they will take the steam tramway, which at the time was line 60, and this will bring them to Lainz. To give you an idea of scale, Lainz is about the same distance from Vienna as Vaucresson is from Paris.[2] The tramway carries on beyond Lainz to Mauer and Mödling. Usually, when they just go to the grandmother's house, they take a south-bound tramway that goes straight to Lainz. A further tramway line links this direct line and the Stadtbahn. The connection is made at the station Unter-St-Veit.

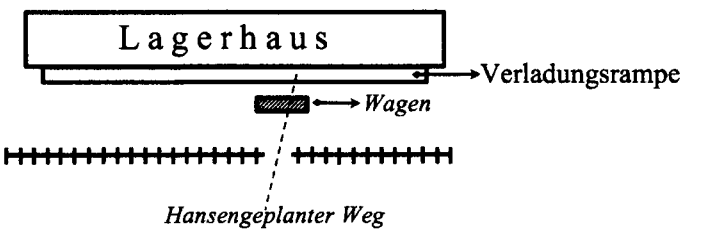
This will allow you to understand what little Hans will say on the day that he has the fantasy of coming back home from Lainz, when he says that the train left with him and his grandmother on it while his father

missed it, and that he can see the second train coming from Unter-St-Veit. The network forms a loop, a virtual loop because the two lines don't connect. They simply allow each of them to get to Lainz.

A few days later, in conversation with his father, little Hans will come out with something that is classified among the many things that he shows us he has been pondering. Even when everyone wants to make him say that he has been dreaming, he underlines very firmly that these are things he has thought – *Nein, nicht geträumt; ich hab' mir's gedacht.*

The essential point to keep in mind is that this is where the *Verkehrskomplex* makes its entrance. Freud himself indicates that it is quite natural, given how matters stand, that what refers to the horse and everything that the horse will do, the *Pferdekomplex*, extends much further into the transport system. In other words, on the horizon of the circuits traced by the horse there are the circuits of the railway.

This is so evidently true that the first explanation Hans gives his father on how he experiences his phobia concerns the fact that there is a large yard and a wide lane in front of their apartment. It's easy to understand why it's such a big deal for little Hans to cross over them. Across from the house, these horses-and-carts come to load and unload, and they line up along the length of the loading dock.



The tangency, as it were, between the circuit system of the horse and the circuit system of the railway is indicated in the clearest fashion the very first time that little Hans starts to explain himself a little on the horse phobia.

3

What does little Hans say on 5 April? He says that he *should so much like* to climb onto the cart where he has seen the boys playing on the boxes. *If the cart stands still, then I can get on to the cart quick,*

geschwind, *and get on to the board.* By *board* he means the loading deck. What is he afraid of? He fears that the horses will set off and prevent him from making this swift movement, and then he will have to get straight back off again.

There must be some meaning to this. To comprehend this meaning, and to comprehend anything in the functioning of the signifying system, one should not start with the question of what the board might be doing here, or what the cart might be doing here, or even what the horse is doing here. The horse certainly is something, and at the end we will be able to say what its purpose is, when we find this out from its functioning. But as yet we can't know anything.

We need to pause on this horse. His father pauses here. Everybody pauses here, except the analysts who pore endlessly over the observation on little Hans, trying to read something into it. The father takes an interest in this and asks him why he is afraid. *Perhaps you're afraid you won't come home any more if you drive away in the cart?* he says. *Oh no!* replies little Hans, *I can always come back to Mummy, in the cart or in a cab. I can tell him the number of the house too.* There's no difficulty.

No one seems to have paused on this, yet it's striking that while Hans is afraid of something, this something is absolutely not what it would suit us so well for it to be. This could even lead in the direction of the comprehension of things that I've been trying to mobilise for you, namely the theme of being dragged along by the situation. That would be a nice metaphor. But this is not at all the case. He knows very well that he will always come back to his point of departure. If we have just a little *comprenoire*,[3] we could tell ourselves that perhaps after all this is what is at stake, namely that, whatever is done, there's no getting out of it. This is a simple indication that I'm making in passing, but to stick with this might well be overly subtle and insufficiently rigorous.

We ought rather to perceive that there are situations in the observation that we are compelled to fetch alongside this one. We have to pause over this because this is the very phenomenology of the phobia. Here we can behold the total ambiguity of what is desired and what is feared. In the end, we might believe that it's the fact of being dragged away, of leaving, that anguishes little Hans. But by his own testimony, this fact of leaving falls quite short because he knows full well that one always comes back. What, then, is meant by his wanting in some sense to go beyond?

Surely this formula – *that he wants to go beyond* – is something that we can provisionally maintain in a sort of minimal construction. If his whole system is in disarray due to the fact that the rules of the game are no longer being respected, he can feel himself to

be caught, purely and simply, in an untenable situation, the most untenable element in the situation being that of no longer knowing where to locate himself.

I am now going to bring in other elements that in a certain way reproduce what is indicated in the fantasy of the phobic dread.

In the first fantasy, Hans will drive off with the horses, carrying him further away from the loading dock. And he will come back to re-converge with Mummy, which maybe he desired too much, or feared too much, who knows?

When we have read and reread the observation, we should remember at least two further stories.

There is another fantasy, which doesn't crop up at just any moment, and which is supposed to have happened. He imagined the rest with his father. The date is 11 April. *We were travelling in the train to Gmunden.* Gmunden is where they spend their holidays. *In the station we put on our clothes; but we couldn't get it done in time, and the train carried us on.* It seems that at that time, gathering together one's luggage and getting it on board was more of a worry than it is for us these days. Freud himself hints at this in the case of the young homosexual woman when he makes his analogy with the two stages of a journey. The first entails *all the necessary preparations, today so complicated and hard to effect*, the second involves getting the luggage and oneself aboard. So, Hans and his father don't have time to put on their clothes before the train starts off again.

There is then a third fantasy, which Hans tells his father on 21 April and which we shall call *the platform scene.* These are just conventional labels to help us find our bearings later on. It occurs just before the major dialogue with his father to which we have been referring. Hans tells his father, *There was a train at Lainz and I travelled with my Lainz Grandmummy to the Hauptzollamt station.* This grandmother is the woman they visit every Sunday, about whom we are told absolutely nothing in the observation, and I must say that this is rather suggestive of a fearsome character, because at that time it was much easier for contemporaries to situate the whole family than it is for me today. So, *die Lainzerin*, as Hans later calls her, is supposed to be on board the train with him. His father, meanwhile, *hadn't got down from the bridge yet*, and they have left without him. Given that the trains pass frequently, and one can see down the line as far as Unter-St-Veit, Hans says that he arrives at the platform in time to catch the second train with his father.

If little Hans had already left, how did he come back? This is precisely the impasse. In truth, it's an impasse that no one has managed to elucidate, but the father does ask himself these questions. In the

observation, a dozen lines are devoted to what might have occurred in Hans's mind. As for us, let's content ourselves with our schemas.

In the first schema, the two of them leave, Hans and his grandmother. The second, mysteriously, is the path of the impossible, of non-solution. In the third, they end up leaving as two, Hans and his father. In other words, there is something that cannot fail to strike us if we are already roughly acquainted with the two poles of the observation on little Hans, namely, at the start, the whole maternal drama that is constantly underlined, and, at the end, *I am now with father.* One cannot overlook how there must be a certain relation between this implacable back and forth to his mother and the fact that one fine day he dreams of marching off with his father. This is a simple indication, but it's clear. Only, it's quite impossible. That is to say, one really can't see how little Hans, having set off with his grandmother, can now set off again with his father. This is possible only in the imaginary.

What we can see appearing here between the lines is the fundamental schema that I told you was the schema for mythical furtherance on the whole – one starts from a point of impossibility, or an impasse, to arrive at another impasse and another point of impossibility. In the first case, it is impossible to leave the mother behind, one always comes back to her. *Don't tell me that this is why I'm anxious.* In the second case, one may indeed think that all that has to be done is to permute and to leave with the father, as Hans himself thought, to the point of writing as much to the Professor, which is the best use one can make of one's thoughts. Only, what also appears in the text of the myth is that this is impossible, that there is always something left half-open somewhere.

If we start with this schema, we will see that matters are not limited to these elements alone, in that they offer us quite easily, all by themselves, the opportunity of placing them alongside the schema of the hitching.

What is hitched to what? This is surely one of the absolutely primary elements behind the appearance of the choice of the horse signifier, or the use of the horse. It is quite useless to discern in which direction the coupling is made, because the sense in which Hans operates is dictated just as much by the favourable occasions provided by the horse function. We can even say that this is what guided his choice of the horse. In any case, he is careful to show the origin of this when he tells us about the moment he *got the nonsense.* He tells us this on 9 April, in dialogue with his father, at a moment that is no less noteworthy than any of the other moments, and we shall see what this comes on the heels of.

Hans tells us that he was playing horsey, when something happened that will be of great importance in that it will furnish the

first model of the fantasy of injury that will manifest later on with respect to his father. First of all, however, it was extracted from the real, precisely from one of these horsey games, when his friend Fritzl sustains an injury to his foot.

In response to his father's query, Hans says that they played at horses *ohne Wagen*, without carts, and in this case, *the cart can stay at home*. However, the horse can also be hitched to a cart. Hans himself articulates how first and foremost the horse is an element designed to be hitched. It is detachable and attachable. This *amboceptor* characteristic, which we meet constantly in the functioning of the horse, is yielded in the very first experience from which Hans extracts it. Before being a horse, the horse is something that links, that coordinates, and, as you will see, it is precisely in this mediating function that we will find it throughout the development of the myth. If a basis needed to be established for what will be confirmed in every corner of what I am going to develop for you next in the function of the horse signifier, here we have immediately, from the mouth of Hans himself, that it is in the direction of the grammatical coordination of the signifier that we must head.

Indeed, it is at that very moment, when he is articulating this in connection with the horse, that Hans himself says, *I think that was how I got the nonsense, Mir scheint, da hab' ich die Dummheit gekriegt*. The verb *kriegen* is used each time in connection with the nonsense. It means *to get* or *to catch*. It is also used in the colloquial expression *ein Kind kriegen*, to denote a woman falling pregnant, like in French when we say *une femme attrape un enfant*. Once again, this was not lost on the authors, on the father and on Freud. Freud provides a long footnote on it, which everybody has leapt on, to the point that the phrasing has posed something of a difficulty for the translators, who for once have resolved it elegantly. Hans keeps saying, *wegen dem Pferd*. He comes out with this refrain, that he got the nonsense *'cos of the horse*. Freud makes no mistake in identifying this with an association between the word *wegen*, *because of*, and the word *Wagen*, which means *carriage*, *coach*, *cart*, *vehicle*, and so on, and which Hans would have heard pronounced *Wägen*. This is how the unconscious works.

In other words, the horse pulls the cart just as something pulls behind it the word *wegen*. So, there is nothing excessive in saying that it's precisely at this moment, when Hans is prey to something that is not even a *wherefore* – because beyond the point where the rules of the game are respected there is nothing else but trouble, a lack of being and a lack of any *wherefore* – that he gives rise to the dragging along of his *'cos of*, which doesn't correspond to anything, by something that is the pure and simple *x* of the horse.

In yet other words, at the begetting of the phobia, at its very point of emergence, we find ourselves faced with the typical process of metonymy, that is to say, the passage from the weight of meaning, or more exactly from the questioning that the comment brings with it, the passage from one point of the textual line, to the point that follows. This is the very definition of metonymy in its structure. It's because the weight of the *wegen* is entirely veiled, and because it has been transferred to what comes just afterwards, *dem Pferd*, that the term assumes its articulatory value and accrues to it every hope of a solution. The balance of Hans's situation hangs on this transfer of grammatical weight.

In the end, we are simply meeting again the concrete associations – and not associations imagined in goodness knows what psychological hyperspace – that fall into two kinds. On the one hand there is metaphorical association, where one word corresponds to another for which it can be substituted. On the other hand there is metonymic association, where one word yields the following word that can come next in a sentence. These are the two kinds of response in psychological experience, and you call them *associations* because you want absolutely for this to occur somewhere in cerebral neurones. I don't know anything about that. At any rate, as an analyst I don't want to know anything about it. I come across these two types of association, called metaphor and metonymy, where they stand, in the text of this pool of language in which Hans is immersed.

It was here that he lighted upon the originative metonymy that brought with it the horse, the first term around which his whole system would be reconstituted.

8 May 1957

XIX

PERMUTATIONS

Don't race off from me!
The whole house decamping
Be a true father
Pincers

So, we've arrived at what is being played out between 5 and 6 April. This spatial-temporal *moment* is not necessarily to be conflated with chronological distance.

We have followed the explanation that little Hans gave his father, on 5 April, of the fantasies he came out with, in which he expresses how he would like to climb up on to the cart that usually unloads in front of their building.

I remind you that we insisted on the ambiguity of the anxiety to which Hans gives shape and form in the fantasy. It might seem that this anxiety arises from the simple perspective of a fear of separation, but we pointed out how what is dreaded here is not necessarily separation from his mother, because when his father asks him about this he specifies that he is quite sure, and almost over sure, of being able to return.

It is on the afternoon of 9 April that the *wegen dem Pferd* arises, in the course of Hans's revelation of a moment that seems to him to be significant with respect to how he *got the nonsense*. You know that it's not for nothing that, in the retrospections of memory, the moment when Hans gets his nonsense is far from univocal. He says each time, with equal conviction, *I got the nonsense*. Everything is grounded upon this, because what is at issue here is nothing other than a symbolic retrospection linked to the signification that is presentified at each moment of the signifying plurivalence of the horse.

There are at least two moments, which we are already familiar with, when Hans says, *I got the nonsense*.

There is the moment when this *wegen dem Pferd* arises, which

provided me with the peroration to my last lesson, but at the cost of a jump that didn't leave me time to indicate the context in which this manifest metonymy appears. It is in correlation with the story of Fritzl's fall when they are playing horsey in Gmunden.

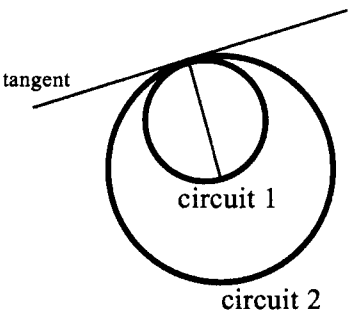
On another occasion he told us that he got the nonsense when he was out with his mother, and the same text notes the paradox of this explication, because if he didn't peel away from his mother once throughout the whole day, it was because she already had his intense anxiety on her hands. So, the anxiety had already begun, and I would further say that the horse phobia had already been declared in the context of this outing in her company.

This is the point we've reached, in Freud's text on the one hand and in our initial decipherment on the other. Last time, I laid this out for you at the level of something that is taking shape, and I indicated its graphical aspect across its three forms.

It concerns things that Hans has thought and concocted. They are never dreams. He always tells his father that he has thought, *gedacht*, these things. We can recognise here the very material with which we are usually working when we work with children, imaginary material that is always so richly resonant, but what I'm trying to show you is that all these imaginary resonances that can be sounded out here are no match for the succession of structures, the series of which I'm going to try to complete for you today.

These structures are each marked by the same exemplary feature. The fantasy of 5 April, which is complemented by the father's questioning, traces out the idea of Hans's return to his mother.

In the fantasy of 21 April there is another important moment of evolution when Hans imagines, not without reason, that he will set off with his grandmother and then, on the other side of a gap, that his father will join him again in a move that may equally be inscribed into this cycle, with the proviso that we have an enigmatic impossibility here when it comes to the two protagonists joining again after having been separated just an instant before.



Before moving further into a confirmative exploration of this exhaustion of the possibilities of the signifier, which here is the object at the originary level that I'm putting before you, I shall mention again the tangency I indicated. There is the enigmatic circuit of the horse, which is clearly anguishing in the first example and which manifests as impossible in the other, and then its tangency with the larger circuit constituted by the wider system of traffic. Freud himself notes that Hans's imagination *was advancing systematically from horses, which draw vehicles, to railways.*

Everything takes place between two longings – two *nostalgies* in the sense of *νόστος*, a *return home* – to come and to come back. Freud asserts that the function of return is fundamental to the object, insisting that it ought to have been engendered in the form of something that is re-found, but that, through the subject's development, a necessity is constituted which is strictly correlative to the distance taken from the object. This necessity is correlative to the symbolic dimension, which distances the object, yet so that the subject may re-find it.

This is the truth that is half-eluded, even lost, in the insistence of psychoanalysis today on accentuating the term *frustration* without understanding that frustration is only ever the first stage of the return to the object which, in order to be reconstituted, must be re-found.

1

Let's remind ourselves what is at issue in the case history of little Hans.

For Freud, what is at issue is none other than the Oedipus complex, the drama of which brings of its own account a new dimension that is necessary to the constitution of a replete human world and to the constitution of the object. This object is not merely the correlate of what is claimed to be instinctual genital maturation, but rather the fact of having acquired a certain symbolic dimension.

What is this symbolic dimension? To aim directly at what is at stake, given my disquisition thus far with which I am assuming you are already familiar, we can say that it consists in what is involved each time that we are dealing with the appearance of a phobia. Here in the case of little Hans it is manifest. It has to do with what comes to be revealed to the child, from any angle, concerning the fundamental privation by which the image of the mother is marked. It concerns the moment of this intolerable privation, because ultimately the fact that the child himself appears to be threatened by

this supreme privation, that of not being able to fulfil her in any way whatsoever, hangs on this moment. Moreover, it is to this privation that the father must bring something. It's as easy as pie – copulation. He gives her what she doesn't have. *Good Lord, won't he just give her one!*[1] This is precisely what is at stake in little Hans's drama, and we can see it gradually being revealed as the dialogue wears on.

People tell us that the *environmental image*, as they put it these days, of Hans's family circle has not been traced out sufficiently. What more do they want? It's enough to read the case – and not even between the lines – to see the father's constant and diligent presence spreading out, while the mother is mentioned only to the extent that the father asks her whether what she has just said is accurate. Ultimately, the mother is never with little Hans in the observation. Meanwhile, this very sensible, very kind and very Viennese father is right there, sparing no effort in mollycoddling his little Hans and toiling away. And then, every Sunday, he goes to see his mum, with little Hans of course. One cannot help but be struck by the ease with which Freud – knowing as we do what his main ideas were at the time – accepts that little Hans, who slept in his parents' room until he was four years old, could certainly never have beheld any scene that might have unsettled him regarding the fundamental nature of coitus. The father asserts this in what he writes to Freud, and Freud doesn't challenge the affirmation. He probably had his own idea about it, since Hans's mother was Freud's patient.

At one point in the major scene of the dialogue with his father, Hans says *du tust eifern*. The phrase is almost untranslatable in French, as has been noted by Fliess's son who has focused his attention on this scene. While Fliess's handling is not fully to his credit, his remarks are quite right on this score. He highlights how the expression is almost untranslatable and invokes the resonance of the jealous God in Luther's *Ich Dein Gott bin ein eifriger Gott*, a God that is identical to the figure of the father in Freudian doctrine. *You ought to be a father, you ought to be cross with me, it must be true.* By the time Hans manages to say this, much water has flowed under the bridge. He takes a while to reach this moment.

Let's also ask without further ado whether little Hans is in any way gratified in this regard during the course of the crisis. Why would he be gratified, if his father is in this critical position, the apparition of which in the background needs to be conceived of as a fundamental element of the opening from which the phobic fantasy has surged up? It is certainly unthinkable that this very dialogue should have, as it were, psychoanalysed, not little Hans, but his father, making him more virile at the end of the story – which is rather happily settled in four months – than he was at the start. In other words, if it is to the

real father that little Hans addresses so urgently his appeal, there is no reason that this should make him rise up in reality.

If, therefore, little Hans reaches a happy solution to the crisis he has entered, it is surely worthwhile asking ourselves whether at the end of this crisis we may deem this to be a completely normal dissolution of the Oedipus complex. Is the genital position, in inverted commas, at which little Hans arrives, something that in and of itself suffices to assure you that his future relation with a woman will be all that one might imagine desirable for it to be?

The question is an open one. And not only is it open but a number of remarks can be made in this regard. If little Hans is destined for heterosexuality, this guarantee might not be enough to make us believe that this heterosexuality would be sufficient in and of itself to ensure a full consistence, so to speak, to the female object.

You see that we are compelled to move forward by a concentric nudge. We have to stretch the canvas, and the picture upon it, over the different poles at which it is attached if we are to be sure of its normal tethering, if we are to be sure that this is the screen upon which we are to pursue this particular phenomenon, namely the development of the phobia, which is correlative with the development of the treatment itself.

A simple example of this kind of panting aspect of Hans's father comes to mind, to get our investigation moving again. After Hans's long explanation of his love for his father – they have spent the morning on this – they have breakfast together and, when the father gets up from the table, Hans tells him, *Vatti, renn mir nicht davon!*

The [French] translation bears the overwhelming stamp of goodness knows what that the translator has cooked up, but all the same her rendition is not wrong here – *Papa reste! Ne t'en va pas au galop!* [*Stay Daddy! Don't go off at a gallop!*] The father notes that he was struck by his saying *renn*. It's rather, *Don't race off like that!* One might even add, because in German this is allowed, *Don't race off from me like that!* We are bringing the question of the analysis of the signifier to the level of the hieroglyphic decipherment of the mythological function, but this doesn't mean that paying attention to the signifier isn't first and foremost a matter of knowing how to read. Obviously this is the precondition for being able to translate correctly. This [French] translation is regrettable given the sound resonance that Freud's oeuvre ought to have for French readers.

So, here we are with the father. Already, we have practically inscribed onto our chart the place that he must occupy. It is through him, through the identification with him, that little Hans ought to be able to find the normal path to the larger circuit onto which it is now time for him to pass. There is so much truth in this that it is

confirmed by what is in some sense a doubling of the consultation of 30 March.

The consultation of 30 March is the one to which Hans is brought by his father. In my opinion this is an illustration of the doubling, or indeed the tripling, of the paternal function on which I have been insisting as crucial to any comprehension of the Oedipus complex and of analytic treatment itself, to the extent that the Name-of-the-Father must come into play. Hans's father brings the child before Freud, which allows for a representation of the supra-father, the symbolic father. I must say that when Freud simply prophesises the Oedipal schema, not without a touch of humour which he points out himself, broaching it at the outset, little Hans's harkens to this with a sort of amused interest, with an overtone of *How can he know all this? The Professor is surely not God's confidant!* The humoristic relation, properly speaking, that sustains little Hans's relation with the remote father that Freud represents is exemplary and marks out also the necessity of this transcendent dimension. Moreover, how wrong one would be to seek always to embody it in the style of terror and respect. It is no less fruitful in this other register where its presence allows little Hans to unfold his problem.

However, as I said, many other things come to pass in parallel with this, which have a great deal more weight for little Hans's progress. Read the observation and you will see that on this day of Monday 30 March, when he is taken to see Freud, the father's account points out two things. The exact function of these two moments is slightly obfuscated due to the fact that he reports them in the preamble, even though the second was a remark that Hans made following the consultation, but he certainly doesn't minimise their importance.

So, the first item. I remind you that it's a Monday, just after the Sunday when they took a slightly more complicated route to the grandmother's house, first going for a stroll in Schönbrunn.[2] Hans recounts to his father a fantasy of a transgression. You can't call it anything else because it's the very image of a transgression. There can be no finer than this utterly unmitigated transgression designated by a rope under which the two of them crawl together. The father explains that this is the rope they had seen in the Schönbrunn gardens, preventing them from crossing a stretch of lawn to see the sheep. Hans had observed that it would be quite easy to slip under the rope, to which his father had replied that respectable people don't crawl under ropes. So, Hans's doesn't fail to respond to this, later, with the fantasy in which they perform the transgression together, *zusammen*. The fact of doing it together is the important

element. *And then we told the policeman at the end of the garden, and he grabbed hold of us*, uns zusammengepackt.

The importance of this fantasy seems to be amply graspable from its context. Surely what is at stake is to pass over to the register of the father and for them to do something together that will get them taken off, *zusammengepackt*. This allows for a clarification of the missed embarkation. Of course, the schema has to be taken in reverse to be understood. It is in the very nature of the signifier to present things in a strictly operational fashion. The whole question revolves around embarkation – it's a matter of knowing whether he will set off with his father. Now, setting off with his father is out of the question, precisely because the father cannot make use of this function, at least not the embarkation that is made a reality in their being carted off together. We are going to see what use each of little Hans's successive elaborations have when it comes to getting closer to this goal that is both desired and impossible, but what is already initiated in this first fantasy, just before the consultation with Freud, is already amply indicative.

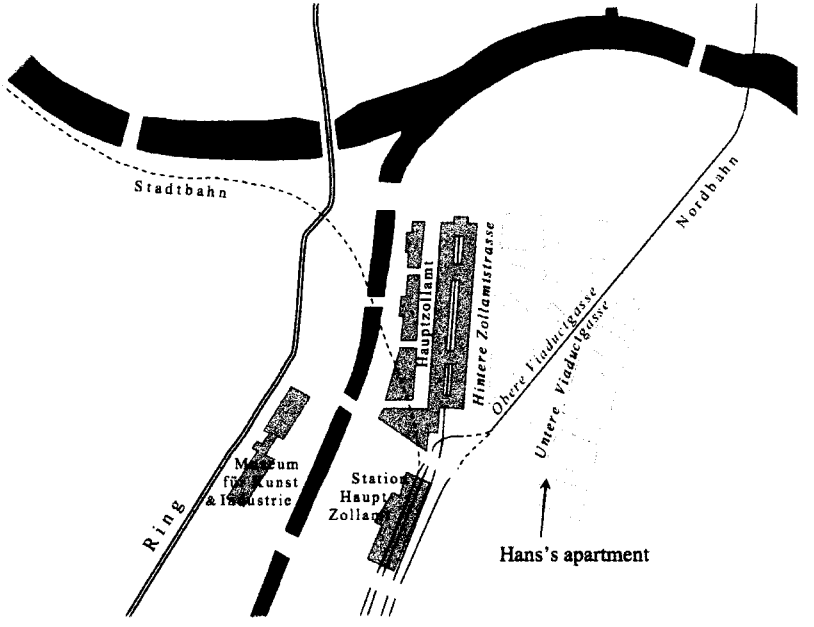
Here, now, is the second fantasy, which comes as though we simply must make sure we don't overlook the reciprocal function of the two circuits – the small maternal circuit and the large paternal circuit. This fantasy gets even closer to the goal. Returning from Freud's office in the evening, little Hans will give himself over to another transgressive fantasy. He says to his father, *I went with you in the train, and we smashed a window*. You can't do much better than that when it comes to the signifier of a breakout. Yet again, they are *mitgenommen*, taken off, by a policeman. And once more this is the full stop, the terminus, of the fantasy.

On 2 April, that is, three days after the consultation, there is the *first improvement*, which moreover we may suspect to have been overstated because no sooner was Hans seemingly in remission than the father was revising his judgement, writing to Freud that the improvement perhaps *was not so complete as I may have represented it*. Even so, the lifting spirits that little Hans is starting to show manifest themselves in his being able to stay a little longer in front of the *Haustore*, the street-door. Let's not forget that in the context of the time, the street-door has the function of representing the family's propriety and decorum. When circumstances force the Gide family to seek a new home, moving a few floors up is of little consequence, but the *porte-cochère* is another thing altogether. Gide's aunt instructs his recently widowed mother that leaving the building is out of the question – *Tu te le dois; tu le dois à ton fils*.[3] So, the street-door is no small matter in the topology of what relates to little Hans.

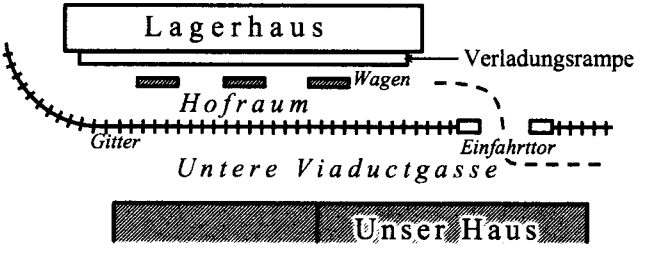
As I told you last time, this street-door and the borderline that

it marks is something that is duplicated point-by-point by what stands a little farther off, perhaps not as close by as I said it was last time, but still within view of the main façade of the station on the local Vienna line, the one that regularly takes them to the grandmother's.

Indeed, trusting in information I had gathered with some care, last week I drew up a schematic map on which the parents' apartment lay behind the Customs House, on Hintere Zollamtstrasse. That was not quite right. I realised this thanks to something that reveals yet again how blind we are to what is right under our noses, and which is called the signifier, the letter.



In the very diagram that we have in the observation that Freud has given us, the name of the street is there, Untere Viaductgasse.



There is a hidden street, which allows us to suppose that on one side of the byway there is a building, which indeed is indicated on the maps of Vienna, that corresponds to what Freud calls a Lagerhaus. It's a special depot for the Office for the Taxation of Food-Stuffs. This accounts for all the different connections that converge here – on one hand the Nordbahn with the little truck that will play a role in Hans's fantasy, and then on the other the possibility of having right opposite their apartment the depot that Freud speaks about, while still keeping the station entrance in full view of their street-door.

So, the stage-set is in place in which the drama is to unfold. Hans's poetic spirit and, if you will, his tragic spirit, will allow us to follow its construction.

2

How are we to manage to conceive of the fact that the passage to a wider circle was a necessity for little Hans?

I have already said often enough that everything hinges on the stranglehold, the deadlock, that has arisen in Hans's relationship with his mother. We find constant indications of this. The grounding of the child's crisis, insomuch as his mother is the one who until then had ensured the propping up of his insertion into the world, is something that we can grasp at face value in the anxiety that prevents him from roaming beyond a particular radius that corresponds to the sight of his home.

Obsessed as we have been with a certain number of supervalent significations, it so happens that we have often overlooked what has been set out in the clearest way in the text, articulated through a symptom as close to the level of the signifier as the phobia is. His father writes of Hans's *venturing outside the house but not going away from it . . . , turning round at the first attack of anxiety*. He is turning round to look at their house. Why not try to understand that we merely have to translate this in the same way that Hans presents it to us? What he is afraid of is not simply that one person or another might no longer be at home when he comes back, especially given that his father – and it seems that the mother also has a hand in this – is not always in the circuit. What is in question at the point Hans has reached is, as is expressed in the cart fantasy, that the whole house might just decamp. What is essentially at stake is the house. The house has been the main issue since he first understood that this mother can be missing and at the same time is completely united with him. What he fears is not to be separated from her but

to be led goodness knows where with her. We scent this element coming to the surface in the observation from one moment to the next. To the extent that he is joined to his mother, he no longer knows here he is.

I shall simply cite one episode here. It's the occasion I highlighted earlier, on 5 April, when little Hans mentions the outbreak of his nonsense. In a somewhat arbitrary fashion, he says that it arose when he was out with his mother, just after they bought the waistcoat. They saw a bus-horse fall down. These bus-horses are the large horses that used to pull the omnibuses. When the horse falls, Hans thinks, *Now it'll always be like this. All horses in buses'll fall down.*

To allow the Japanese flower to come back to life in the water of the observation, let's ask ourselves, by simply following the father's line of curiosity, what significance this moment during the day spent with his mother might have. His father asks him, *Where did you go with Mummy that day?*, and Hans lists the day's programme. They went to the skating rink, then to the Kaffeehaus, then to buy the waistcoat, and from there they went directly to the Zuckerbäcker, the confectioner's shop. Hans says, *dann beim Zuckerbäcker mit der Mammi, then to the confectioner's shop with Mummy.* This contrasts sharply with what came before. Given the fact that he had been with his mother the whole day, this seems to indicate, not a hole or a censure on the child's part, but certainly that something had happened at that point for him to underscore in this way that he had indeed been *with Mummy.* He underscores that he had been with his mother, and not with someone else who might have been around. This *mit der Mammi* carries altogether the same value of accentuation in his discourse as what he said at the start, *Nicht mit der Mariedl, ganz allein mit der Mariedl.* It surely plays the same role.

The overtone of the father pressing his questioning rather far and then abandoning it fairly suddenly allows us to perceive a trait that is confirmed no less by an earlier occurrence when, talking with little Hans who had just come into his bed, the child said, *When you're away, I'm afraid you're not coming home.* His father replies, *And have I ever threatened you that I shan't come home? Not you,* says Hans, *but Mummy. Mummy's told me she won't come back.* Whereupon, to caulk the gap, his father says, *She said that because you were naughty.*

Indeed, you can see very well what is going on. Without pushing the character of a police investigation any further, it is right here that we have something that for little Hans calls into question the solidity of his parents' marriage, which in the catamnesis of the observation we learn has come completely undone. It is around this point that revolves the anxiety of being carried off with the maternal love, which has shown its presence since the very first fantasy.

While the horse is there with its property of representing the fall that threatens little Hans, on the other hand there is the danger expressed by the horse's biting.

To the extent that the deepening crisis is commensurate with Hans no longer being able to satisfy his mother, oughtn't we to be struck by the fact that this biting is the retaliation for the fall? One might see some implication here of what is brought into use in a confused way in the idea of a return of a sadistic impulsion – an idea that, as you know, is so important in Kleinian themes – but this isn't really what I have been indicating for you. I said that it was a matter of the child quashing his disappointment in love. Conversely, if he in turn is disappointing, how could he fail to see that he is equally within reach of being consumed? This has become all the more of a threat in view of the privation, and all the more ungraspable because he cannot bite back. The horse is what represents both falling and biting. These are its two properties. I am pointing this out to the extent that, in the first circuit, we can see the element of biting only in an elusive way.

Anyway, let's move on and punctuate now what ensues from a certain moment forth. We will have to pick out how this thing arose, even if it means going back over the sequence of little Hans's fantasies one by one. This sequence includes a number of further fantasies that punctuate in some way what I have called the sequence of mythical permutations.

Here at the individual level the myth certainly cannot, due to all sorts of characteristics, be fully restored to a kind of identity with the developed mythology that lies at the base of any social seat, anywhere in the world, wherever myths are functionally present. And don't imagine that even where they appear to be absent, in our scientific civilisation, they are not there somewhere. Nevertheless, even if this identity cannot be restored, there is one characteristic of mythical development that is maintained at the individual level and this is its function as a solution to a situation that is in deadlock, in impasse. This is little Hans's situation between his father and mother. The individual myth reproduces on a small scale the fundamental character of mythical development such as it presents wherever we can get a sufficient purchase on it. All in all, it's a matter of how to face up to an impossible situation through the successive articulation of all the different forms of the impossibility of a solution.

It is in this respect that mythical creation responds to a question. It roams, as it were, around the full circle of what presents both as a possible opening and an opening that it is impossible to take. Once the circuit has been run through, something has become a

reality, signifying that the subject has placed himself at the level of the question. It is in this respect that Hans is a neurotic and not a pervert.

There is nothing artificial about distinguishing in this way the direction of Hans's evolution from another possible direction. This direction is indicated in the observation itself, as I am going to show you next time, but I can already point out that all these goings-on in relation to the mother's drawers indicate in negative the path Hans could have taken on the side of what culminates in fetishism.

The little pair of drawers is there for no other reason than to present to us the resolution that Hans could have taken, of becoming attached to these drawers behind which there is nothing, but upon which he might have depicted what he would have wished. It is precisely because little Hans is not a mere nature lover, but a metaphysician, that he conveys the question to its proper place, that is to say, right where there is something that lacks, and where he asks what the reason is – in the mathematical sense of *raison*, the common difference – behind this wanting being. And he will conduct himself, just like the collective mind of a primitive tribe, with the rigour we have come to expect of him, doing the rounds of the possible solutions and making certain choices so as to constitute a battery of signifiers. Never forget that the signifier is not there to represent signification. It is there much rather to stand in for the gaps in a signification that signifies nothing. It is because the signification is literally lost, because the trail is lost as in the fairy tale of Hop-o'-My-Thumb, that the white stones of the signifier surge up to fill this hole and this void.

Today I shall content myself with zooming in on the ensuing sequence of fantasies that follow on from the three examples I gave you last time – the fantasy of the cart by the loading dock, the fantasy of the missed stop at Gmunden, and the fantasy of setting off with the Lainz grandmother and returning with the father, in spite of its evident impossibility.

We are now going to see another series of fantasies that, when we know how to read them, cover in a certain sense, and modify, the permutation of elements.

3

The first fantasy in the series will show you straightaway where the point of passage is to be found. It lies at a moment that is somewhat further on in the progressing dialogue between little Hans and his father, on 11 April. It is the fantasy of the bathtub, which everyone

pores over with a kind of addle-brained tenderness, as though some familiar face were to be found here, while they are still utterly incapable of saying which.

The bathtub fantasy runs as follows. Hans is in the bath, and I've told you enough for you to have a sense of how this *in the bath* is something that lies as close as can be to the *in the cart* that is at issue here, in other words the fundamental *in the house*. It has to do with a connection, a link, with this thing that is already poised to slip away, namely the plateau of maternal support. And so, here we have someone different making his entrance, a certain form of the eagerly awaited third party, the *Schlosser*, the fitter who unscrews the bathtub. Nothing more is said about him. He unscrews the bath, and then, with his *Bohrer*, his gimlet, he bores a hole in Hans's belly. In a footnote Freud introduces the possibility of an equivoque with *geboren*, *born*, without resolving it.

With the usual methods of interpretation that we make use of, people have raced headlong into a forcing of matters, and Lord knows all that is to be found in this fantasy. Hans's father, at any rate, can't help but relate it to the scene that is regularly played out in the mother's bed, when little Hans chases his father away and supersedes him in some way, so that here in the fantasy Hans is the object of his father's aggression. All of this is not necessarily tainted with error, but to stay strictly at the level of the elements themselves, we shall say that if the bathtub corresponds to something that has to be overcome, namely this unison between little Hans and his mother, it is quite certain that the fact that it is unbolted is surely something to be noted.

More to the point, the fact that in his fantasy little Hans is the one who has a hole in his belly is something that we should also take note of as corresponding to what we may conceive of within the system of a permutation in which ultimately he is the one who takes on board, in his person, the mother's hole. This hole is precisely the gulf that is the crucial and ultimate point in question, the thing that cannot be looked at, the thing that floats in the shape of the blackness that is forever ungraspable around the horse's head, and precisely around where the horse can bite. Somewhere in this vicinity is this thing into which he was not to look. When I say that he was not to look there, you will see when you refer to the episode of the mother's drawers that little Hans says as much himself.

Questioned by his father, who flies in the face of good sense, little Hans brings in two elements, and two alone, to counter the father's suggestions. I will tell you about the second element next time, when we shall be coming back to the analysis of this moment, but the first is as follows. Hans dictates that his father should write to the

Professor to say that, *When I saw the yellow drawers I said 'Ugh! That makes me spit!' and threw myself down and shut my eyes and didn't look.* In the bathtub fantasy, little Hans doesn't look either, but he takes on board the hole, the maternal position. Here we are precisely at the level of the inverted Oedipus complex, and from a certain perspective, that of the signifier, we can see just how far it is necessary, how it is literally a phase of the positive Oedipus complex.

What happens next? In one of the following fantasies, on 22 April, we come back to another position, that of the so-called *Wagerl*, the little truck. Little Hans, who is perfectly recognisable in the guise of the young street-boy who has climbed onto the truck, spends the whole night there *ganz nackt, quite naked.* This is something altogether ambiguous, both a desire and a dread. It is tightly bound to what immediately precedes it, when Hans says to his father, in the dialogue that I have pointed out as a crucial one, *du sollst als Nackter, you've got to be naked.*

In the article I mentioned, Robert Fliess underscores how the texture of the child's idiom acquires *a cross-threading that is almost biblical* in its force, and indeed this does disconcert everyone to the point that they rush to plug up the hole by inserting a parenthesis *– er meint: barfüßig, he means 'barefoot'*. Fliess argues quite rightly that the style of the term *als Nackter* is noteworthy, falling strictly in line with Hans's invocation *du tust eifern.* He's asking his father to do his job, to do this thing that ultimately cannot be seen, namely how the mother is satisfied. *So long as she is, and you're the one who must do it. It must be done.* In other words, *be a true father.*

It is just after he has come out with this formula, thereby showing what is being appealed to in reality, that little Hans foments his fantasy of spending the whole night on the truck, on the wider plane and circuit of the railway. He spends a whole night there, when thus far the relationships with his mother have essentially been sustained *geschwind, at great speed.* Up to that point, this was what he had wished for. He explains to his father, still in the same dialogue of 21 April, *You've got to knock your foot up against a stone and bleed, and then I'll be able to be alone with Mummy for a little bit at all events. When you come up into our flat I'll be able to run away quick so that you don't see.* We find here again the rhythm of what we might call *the primal game of transgression with the mother*, which is only sustained clandestinely.

In the fantasy of 22 April, little Hans spends the whole night on the little truck, and the next morning, 50,000 Gulden – which at the time of the observation was a tidy sum – are given to the guard so that the boy can go on riding on it.

Another fantasy, on 2 May, seems to be the last in the line, its

summit and terminus. Little Hans ends by saying that this time, not merely the plumber but *der Installateur*, the fitter, which accentuates the aspect of unscrewing, comes with a pair of pincers. It is quite wrong to translate *Zange* as *Schraubenzieher* on the grounds that it is a pointed instrument. A *Zange* is a pair of pincers, not a screwdriver. What is unscrewed is Hans's behind, so that another can be fitted.

So, here we have another step being taken. The superposition of this fantasy onto the previous one of the bathtub is highlighted well enough by the fact that the relations of size between the behind and the bathtub are articulated in the most precise and complete way by little Hans himself. It so happens that in the small bath that they used to have at home, his little behind filled it. *I sat in that one. I couldn't lie down in it, it was too small.* In the small bath, he is hefty. This is the whole question – is he or isn't he hefty enough? He fills the little bath, and even has to sit in it, but wherever there are baths that do not offer such guarantees, the fantasies of being engulfed resume. These anxieties mean that whenever he had to have a bath elsewhere, like in Gmunden, he would *protest with passionate tears.*

Without there being any equivalence of signification, there is a superposition of the schema of the unscrewed behind onto the bathtub that was previously unscrewed. This is also something that we can place at the level of an opening, where what is at issue is a correspondence – and at the same time something that has changed – with the fact that the cart drives off or doesn't drive off, at higher or lower speed, from the dock to which it is momentarily hitched.

To conclude the last fantasy, it is said that the fitter tells little Hans to turn around, and instructs him, *Let me see your widdler.* This widdler is the insufficient reality that has not succeeded in seducing the mother. With that, everyone completes the interpretation by saying that the fitter unscrews the widdler so that Hans can be given a better one. Only, this is not in the text. Nothing indicates that little Hans has run through the castration complex to the end and in a significant way.

If the castration complex is anything it's that, while somewhere there is no penis, the father is capable of furnishing another one. We shall further say that, insomuch as the passage to the symbolic order is necessary, the penis always needs to have been removed to a certain extent, then to be given back. Naturally, it can never be given back, because all that is symbolic is by definition quite unable to be given back. The drama of the castration complex revolves around the fact that it is only symbolically that the penis is removed and given back.

However, in a case like this one, we can see that it is symbolically

removed but is not given back. Therefore, it's a matter of knowing to what extent the fact of having completed this round might suffice for little Hans.

One can say that it's equivalent to the exam perspective, that Hans has done an extra circuit, and the mere fact that this is a cycle and a circuit suffices to turn it into something that ensures the rite of passage, lending it a value that is equal to what it would be if it had been fully completed. At any rate, the question has been posed.

It still remains that we cannot move forward in our comprehension of symptomatic formations if we stray outside of this strictly bounded terrain of the enumeration of the signifier. Before I take leave of you, and because I always try to end with a remark that will amuse you, I want to show you this by pointing something out to you.

What are these pincers? Where do they come from? In the end, they are never referred to anywhere else in the case history. The father has never said, *It will be screwed back in for you.* Yet again, by staying at the level of the signifier there can be no doubt that what the fitter uses to unscrew the behind is a pair of pincers, or long-nosed pliers.

It so happens that long ago I happened to learn that these large teeth with which a horse could bite the finger of the likes of little Hans used to be called, in nearly every language, *pincers*. Not only are teeth called *pincers*, but the front of the hoof with which the horse makes his little *Krawall* is also called a *Zange* in German. This word carries the same two meanings as the word *pince* in French.

I shall also tell you that in Greek, *χηλή* has exactly the same meaning. I didn't come across that by flipping through the Greek smithery handbook, which doesn't exist. I chanced upon it in the prologue to Euripides' *Φοίνισσαι*.

Jocasta, before telling the story of Antigone, offers a very curious detail concerning what occurred at the time of the death of King Laius. With as much care as I have devoted to the construction of these little Viennese avenues and rail networks, she explains how the routes of Laius and Oedipus led them to the same spot. They were each making their way to Delphi when the quarrel broke out over who had right of way, the one on the great chariot or the other on foot. There is a to-do, but then Oedipus, being the stronger, walks on in front. It is then that Jocasta takes care to note – and this is a detail that I have found in no other version – that the quarrel revives because *πῶλοι δέ νιν χηλαῖς τένοντας ἐξεφοίνισσον ποδῶν*, one of the horses' hooves bloodies the tendons of his feet, the ankles of Oedipus.

So, for Oedipus to meet his fate, it was not enough that his feet

should be swollen from the iron pins that had been driven through his ankles, it also required this injury to his foot, just like the father of little Hans, made precisely by a horse's hoof, which in Greek, as in German, and as in French, is called *pincer*, because χηλή designates pincers or tongs.

This remark is intended to show that there is nothing exaggerated in my telling you that in the sequence of little Hans's fantasmatic constructions it is always the same material that is in service and turning around.

15 May 1957

XX

TRANSFORMATIONS

Phallus dentatus
Unloading the signifier
Anxiety of movement
Biting then falling
The penknife in the doll

Of Children bound in Bundles

O cities of the Sea! In you I see your citizens – both females and males – tightly bound, arms and legs, with strong withes by folks who will not understand your language. And you will only be able to assuage your sorrows and lost liberty by means of tearful complaints and sighing and lamentation among yourselves; for those who will bind you will not understand you, nor will you understand them.[1]

This short passage, which I extracted a few months ago from the *Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* and then completely forgot, strikes me as apt to introduce our lesson today.

This rather magnificent passage is to be heard allusively, of course.

1

Today we are going to resume our reading of the observation on little Hans by trying to hear the idiom in which he expresses himself.

Last week, I pointed out for you a certain number of stages in the development of the signifier. Its enigmatic centre is the signifier of the horse that is included in the phobia, and the function of this signifier is that of a crystal in a supersaturated solvent. The

mythical development that is the constituent factor in the case history of little Hans branches out in a sort of immense arborescence around the signifier of the horse. It is now a matter of immersing, so to speak, this tree-like network in the pool of what little Hans has experienced, and to see what the role of this arboreal development has been. I'm going to indicate right away what the report on little Hans's progress that we are going to establish will tend towards.

Since what is at stake here are object relations considered in terms of a progression, I will say that throughout the period when little Hans lives out his Oedipus complex there is nothing in the observation to suggest that the results should be deemed fully satisfying.

If there is one thing that is accentuated by the observation at the start, then it's something or other that could be termed *the precocious maturity* of little Hans. It cannot be said that at that moment he is ahead of his Oedipus complex, but surely he is at its point of dissolution. In other words, the way in which little Hans experiences his relation with the young girls already possesses, as is underscored for us in the observation, all the characteristics of an advanced relationship. We won't call it *adult*, but it has something about it that allows Freud himself to recognise him in a luminous analogy that presents little Hans as a kind of blithe seducer, even a tyrannical Don Juan. This complex term, which I came out with here a couple of months ago, to the outrage of some, is characterised through and through by little Hans's precocious stance, indicative of his entry into a sort of happy adaptation to a real context.

However, what do we see, on the contrary, at the end of the observation? It has to be said that at the end we meet again the same little girls inhabiting little Hans's inner world, but if you read the observation you cannot help but be struck by how they are not only more imaginary, but radically imaginary. They are now fantasies, to whom little Hans talks. Moreover, his relation to these girls is palpably different, because they are much rather his children. I would even say that if this is where we are to ascertain the matrix, left by the resolution of the crisis, of Hans's future relations with women, then we can further say that while from the surface viewpoint the result of heterosexuality has been amply acquired by little Hans, these girls will still bear the stigmata that marked the way they entered his libidinal structure. We will even get to see him treating in detail how the girls came into it.

The narcissistic style of their position in relation to little Hans is irrefutable, and we shall be seeing in greater detail what determines and locates this. Certainly, little Hans will be a lover of women, but

they will remain fundamentally bound to a sort of testing out of his power. This is also why everything indicates that he will always dread them. They will be, so to speak, his mistresses. They will be and will remain the girls of his mind. Not only that, but as you will see, they have been robbed from the mother.

These remarks are intended to show you, or at least to suggest, the interest of research such as this. Naturally, in order to be confirmed, it will require that we resume our trail. Since we have taken the phases of the signifying structure of little Hans's myth as our point of reference, we need to chart the different stages of his progress in relation to these phases. Furthermore, since we have been speaking about object relations, we will ask what the objects are that come to the fore in succession and hold little Hans's interest across these different phases in the shaping of the signifying myth. All in all, what progress arises correlatively in the signified over the course of this particularly active and fruitful period when little Hans's relationship with his world is undergoing a sort of renewal or revolution? In parallel to this, are we going to be able to grasp what these successive crystallisations punctuate in the form of fantasies?

These are, without any doubt, the successive crystallisations of a signifying configuration. Last week, I showed you its cluster of figures. At the very least, I allowed you to perceive how the same elements permute with the others in these successive figures so as to refresh each time the signifying configuration while still leaving it fundamentally the same.

On 5 April, we have the theme that I called *the theme of return*. Of course, this label doesn't explain the essence of the fantasy, but it does denote what it possesses as a base. It's the theme of what we could call a departure, or more exactly an anguishing solidarity, with the cart, with the *Wagen* that stands at the edge of the loading dock. The fantasy develops this solidarity, because it doesn't present in this form at the outset. It requires the questioning from Hans's father to facilitate the avowal of these fantasies and at the same time to talk them through and to organise them, in order to reveal them to himself just as we are allowed to perceive them.

On 11 April, we see the fantasy of the unscrewed bathtub appear, with little Hans inside it bearing the large hole in his belly, onto which we have been focusing an approximate profile. What has happened between 5 April and 11 April?

On 21 April, we find the fantasy that we may call *leaving anew with the father*. It's a fantasy that is manifestly represented as fantasmatic and impossible. Hans sets off with his grandmother before his father arrives. When the father joins him, we don't know by

what miracle little Hans is there. This is the order in which these things present.

On 22 April, it's the little truck in which Hans goes off by himself. And then, something else will probably mark out the limit of what we can come to today.

What is at issue before 5 April? Between 1 March and 5 April, what was at stake was essentially and solely the phallus. It was in connection with the phallus that his father had suggested the motive behind his phobia, telling little Hans that the phobia arises to the extent that he touches himself, to the extent that he masturbates. The father goes even further, suggesting an equivalence between what little Hans fears and the phallus, to the point that he draws out of him the retort that a phallus – or rather a *Wiwimacher*, which is the exact term by which the phallus is inscribed into Hans's vocabulary – *doesn't bite*. This was back on 1 March, at the start of the series of misunderstandings that govern the dialogue between little Hans and his father.

A phallus is very much what is at issue in what bites and injures. This is so true that someone to whom I gave this observation to read, someone who is not a psychoanalyst but a mythologist, and who has penetrated quite far into the topic of myths, told me how it is quite striking to see that what underpins the whole development of the observation is the function, not of the *vagina dentata*, but of the *phallus dentatus*. Except that, of course, the observation develops wholly in the register of misunderstanding. I would add that this is quite ordinarily the case in any kind of generative interpretation between two subjects. Indeed, this is how one should expect it to develop. It's scarcely anomalous. And it's precisely in the gulf of this misunderstanding that something else will develop that will have its own fruitfulness.

So it is that, when his father is speaking to Hans about the phallus, he is speaking to him about his real penis, the one that Hans has been touching. He is certainly not wrong, because when the possibility of erection arises for this young subject, along with everything that it brings with it in terms of unfamiliar emotions, the deep balance of all his relationships with what until then had constituted the stable point, the fixed point, the almighty point of his world, namely his mother, is incontestably altered.

On the other hand, what is it that plays the supervalent role in the fact that all of a sudden this fundamental anxiety arises which makes everything waver, to the point that anything is preferable to this, even the forging of an anguishing image that in itself is completely uncommunicative, like that of the horse, and which at the very least traces out a limit, a reference point, within this anxiety? What is it in

this image that opens the door to the attack, to the biting? Well, it's another phallus, the imaginary phallus of the mother.

It is by way of the mother's imaginary phallus that the intolerable phobia opens up. What had hitherto been a game of showing or not showing the phallus consisted in playing with a phallus that Hans had long known to be perfectly inexistent, yet which for him was the main stake in his relation with his mother. This was the plane on which the game of seduction was established, not only with his mother but with all the young girls as well. He also knows full well that they don't have any phallus either, but he keeps up the game of their having one. Up to that point, the whole fundamental relationship, not simply of the lure in the most immediate sense, but his *playing at this luring*, hinged precisely on this.

The introductory part of the observation, prior to the declaration of the phobia, ends with a fantasy. Moreover, this is a fantasy on the limits of what a fantasy is, because it's a dream. It is modelled on a game of forfeits. One person hides the forfeit in his hand, and the one who declares that it is his is condemned to do something. In Hans's version, he has the right *to get one of the girls to widdle*. It is underlined in the observation that the dream has *no visual content whatsoever*. It is of *the purely auditory type*, even though it concerns a game of showing or seeing, and is the grounding of the first scoptophilic relationship with the young girls. Isn't the spoken element, the game that has passed over into the symbol, into speech, already supervalent here?

Throughout this first period, the father's every attempt to introduce something that concerns the reality of the penis, along with an indication as to what should or shouldn't be done with it, namely not to touch it, is met with the themes of the game being pushed back to the fore by little Hans with automatic rigour. For example, when he suddenly comes out with the fantasy that he *saw Mummy quite naked in her chemise*, and his father asks him whether he means *in her chemise* or *quite naked*, little Hans is not in the least ruffled. *She was in her chemise, but the chemise was so short that I saw her widdler*. That is to say, one could just about see, and also not see. You can recognise here the structure of the rim or the fringe that typifies fetishistic apprehension. It's a matter of being at the point where one could just about see what is to appear, yet one does not see it. What is thereby educed as something hidden in the relationship with the mother is the inexistent phallus, and he is playing at its being there. So, Hans somehow accentuates the character of what is at stake here, namely a defence against the destabilising element that the father contributes in his insistence on speaking about the phallus in real terms.

Little Hans calls upon a witness in this fantasy, a little girl called Grete. She is a loan-element from his surroundings, from the holiday home and the little girls with whom he pursues his imaginary relationships, but at this point they are perfectly real personages. There is a point to this underlining of the fact that she is called Grete and that she steps into this fantasy, because we will meet her again later. In this fantasy, she is called upon as a witness to what he and his mother are doing, because he introduces the fact that he touches himself very quickly, almost stealing a touch.

For Hans there is a necessity of bringing back onto the ground of the phallic relationship with his mother everything that is intervening anew, not only due to the fact of the real existence of his penis but also due to the fact that this is where his father is trying to drag him. The resulting compromise-formation is something that structures the whole of this earlier period, prior to 5 April, such as we can read it in the observation.

Of course, this doesn't mean that there isn't anything else. Indeed, a second such element will appear on 30 March, the date of the consultation with Freud. What appears on this date is not entirely artificial because, as I told you, it is heralded by what is implicit in the father's collaboration in little Hans's fantasies, in which Hans calls on his aid.

So, between 1 March and 15 March, which is when the fantasy of Grete and his mother arises, it's above all a matter of the real penis and the imaginary penis. Between 15 March and the consultation with Freud, the father is trying to make the phallus pass over entirely to the side of reality, telling little Hans that big animals have big widdlers and little animals have little widdlers, which is surely what leads little Hans to say that his widdler is *fixed in*, and it will get *bigger and bigger*. The same schema that I showed you earlier is being reproduced here. Faced with the father's attempt to make the phallus a reality, little Hans's reaction is not to approve what he is nevertheless gaining access to, but yet again to forge a fantasy.

This time, on 27 March, it's the fantasy of the two giraffes, in which what is essential becomes manifest, namely a symbolisation of the maternal phallus, which is sharply represented in the little giraffe. While little Hans is caught between his imaginary attachment and the insistence of the real through the intermediary of his father's words, the path he will now take will provide a punctuation, and even a schematisation, of everything that will go on to be developed in the myth of the phobia. That is to say, the imaginary term will become for him the symbolic element.

In other words, far from our being able to ascertain in the object relation a path that would somehow lead directly to the passage to

the signification of a new real, to an acquisition of a handling of the real by means of a symbolic instrument, pure and simple, what we see is, on the contrary – at least during the critical phase at issue here, which analytic theory pinpoints as the Oedipus complex – that the real cannot be reorganised into the new symbolic configuration unless one pays the price of a reactivation of all the most imaginary elements. A veritable imaginary regression is produced in relation to the first inroad that the subject makes.

Here, in these first steps of little Hans's neurosis – his childhood neurosis, I mean – we have both its model and its schema. To the father who is the spokesperson for reality and the new order of adaptation to the real, little Hans responds with a sort of imaginary profusion that becomes reinforced in a way that is all the more typical in that it is sustained by a pattern of profound disbelief. Moreover, you will see little Hans pursuing the full sequence of this, which will lead you in turn to perceive how it is laid out at the start of the observation in a way that is almost materialised. This is precisely what makes for the exceptional character, the heaven-sent quality, of the observation. It shows us how little Hans himself realises how this can be taken, namely how not only can one play with this crumpled thing, but one can transform it into balls of paper. This first image of the little giraffe is already the beginning of the solution, the synthesis, of what little Hans is learning to do. He is learning how images can be played with.

He doesn't know what this thing is. He has simply been introduced to it by the fact that he already knows how to speak, by the fact that he is a little man, by the fact that he is in a pool of language. He is very much aware of the precious value that the fact of being able to speak affords him. Indeed, this is what he is constantly underscoring on his own account. Whenever he says this or that, and he is told that it's good or bad, he says, *No matter, it's always good because it can be sent to the Professor.*

There is more than one remark of this kind, where little Hans shows his sense of the specific fecundity that has been opened up to him by the fact that, all in all, he has found someone to speak to. It would be quite astonishing were we to fail to perceive on this occasion how this, right here, is all that is precious and efficacious about analysis.

Such was *this first analysis of a child.*

2

The way that Freud brings in his Oedipus myth during the consultation of 30 March, in all its bluntness, fully constructed, without the faintest attempt to adapt it into something that might present as immediate or precise for the child, may be deemed to be one of the most striking points of the observation. Freud deliberately tells him that he is going to recount a big story that he has invented – *Long before you were in the world, I knew that a little Hans would come who would be so fond of his mother that he would be bound to feel afraid of his father because of it.*

The Oedipus complex is implied here by its author in an operation that lays bare the fundamentally mythical character, the character of an originary myth, that it carries in Freud's doctrine. He makes use of it in the same way that people have always taught children that God created heaven and earth and all kinds of other things, depending on the cultural context in which one happens to be. It is a myth of origins that comes ready made, and because one puts faith in what it determines as an orientation, as a structure, as an avenue for speech in the subject who is its depository, what is at stake here is quite literally its function as a creation of truth. This is exactly how Freud brings it to little Hans, and what we see is little Hans responding with the same ambiguity with which he will assent to everything that will ensue – *It's very interesting*, he seems to say, *it's very exciting. How fine it is. He really must have gone off to speak to the good Lord to find something of that calibre.*

What is the result of this? Freud articulates it very clearly for us in his own way – *It was not to be expected that he should be freed from his anxiety at a single blow by the information I gave him.* At this moment in the observation, articulating it as we have been articulating it here, Freud says that *a possibility had now been offered him of bringing forward his unconscious productions*, unbewußten Produktionen vorzubringen, *and of unfolding his phobia*, und seine Phobie abzuwickeln. In short, it's an incitement. It's a matter of implanting another crystal, as it were, in the incomplete signification that little Hans is at this point representing to himself, I mean in his whole Being. On the one hand there is what has been produced all by itself, the phobia, and on the other there is Freud bringing in, all of a piece, what this is fated to culminate in. Of course, Freud doesn't imagine for one second that the religious myth of the Oedipus complex that he is broaching at this moment will bear fruit immediately. He expects just one thing, and he says what this is. It's that it will assist, on

the other side, the unfolding of the phobia. This clears the way to what earlier I called the development of the signifier-crystal. You can't put it any more clearly than does Freud in these two sentences from 30 March.

All that one can say about the immediate effect of the consultation with Freud is that, even so, there is a mild reaction on the side of the father. It won't last long. I mean that we don't really find the father in the object relations until the end. As I said earlier, we are seeking today to grasp the object relations across the different stages of the signifying formation. It should come as no surprise that we see the father coming to the fore in these object relations only right at the end of the crisis. As I mentioned the other day, this arises just before the fantasy of the little truck, at the time of Hans's confrontation with his father in the Oedipal dialogue. *Why are you so jealous?* asks Hans, or more exactly, he uses the term *cross*, *eifern*. The father protests, *But that's not true*, and Hans insists, *You must be*. This is the moment of encounter with the father which here represents the shortcoming of the paternal position. What we find here, therefore, is just a first apparition, a small confrontation, that is yielded by the fact that, as we can see quite clearly, he is there in a way that is altogether conspicuous, in the way that it is commonly said, *he was conspicuous by his absence*.

So it is that, the very next day [following the consultation with Freud], little Hans reacts. He comes to see his father and tells him he is frightened. Or more precisely, when his father asks why he has come, he answers, *When I'm not frightened I shan't come any more*. Hans says, *When you're away, I'm afraid you're not coming home*. This will go a long way, because his father promptly asks, *And have I ever threatened you that I shan't come home?* Let's pause here. Faced with this fear of the father's absence, let's find out how to punctuate what is truly involved in this fear.

All in all, it's a small crystallisation of the anxiety. Anxiety is not the fear of an object. Anxiety is the subject's confrontation with the absence of an object, where he is drawn in and where he loses himself. Anything is preferable to this, up to and including the forging of an object that is the strangest and least objectal of all objects, the phobia. The unreal character of the fear that is at issue here is manifested precisely by its shape and form, if we know how to see it. It's the fear of an absence. I mean the absence of the object that has just been designated for him. Little Hans comes to his father to tell him that he is afraid of its absence. You should hear this in the same way that I have told you that in anorexia nervosa, what needs to be heard is not that the child doesn't eat, but that the child eats *nothing*. Here, little Hans is afraid of the

absence of the object that is the father, and which here he is starting to symbolise.

Hans's father, on his side, is racking his brain to work out what about-turn or backlash might have led the child to manifest a fear that would merely be the nether side of desire. This is not entirely wrong, but in a way it grabs the phenomenon only by its edges. In fact, this is the beginning of the subject's realisation that the father is precisely not what he was told he would be in the myth. He says as much to his father, *Why did you tell me I'm fond of Mummy . . . when I'm fond of you?* What Hans has just said here does not match the myth. *If I'm supposed to hate you, that's not right.*

What is implicit here, beyond little Hans and what he is caught up in, is that while it's altogether regrettable that things should be like this, even so, it's no small matter to have been put on the path that is really at issue and to be able to spot where there is an absence in relation to this myth. This is something that is registered immediately, something that the observation takes note of, and in which, if you will, we need to hear a symbolisation. If we label the signifier around which the phobia organises its function *capital I*, let's say that something at this moment is *symbolised* by what we can label with a lower-case *sigma*, and which is the *absence of the father*, p^0. Thus –

$$I\ (\sigma\ p^0)$$

This is not to say that this is the whole of what is contained in the horse signifier. Far from it. As we shall see, the horse will not suddenly vanish just because Hans has been told that he should be afraid of his father. However, the horse signifier is certainly unloaded of something, and the observation records this – *Nicht alle weißen Pferde beißen, Not all white horses bite.* Little Hans is no longer afraid of all white horses. There are some that no longer frighten him. Whereupon his father, despite the fact that he isn't travelling along the path of our theorisation, understands that there are some that are *Vatti*, *Daddy*, and when little Hans has a sense that there are some who are *Vatti*, he is no longer afraid of them.

Why is he no longer afraid of them? Well, because *Vatti* is kind through and through. This is also what the father understands without quite fully understanding, without even mildly understanding, through to the end. It's that the drama lies in the fact that *Vatti* is kind through and through. If there had been a *Vatti* to be truly afraid of, everything would have followed the rules of the game, so to speak. That is to say, a veritable Oedipus complex could have taken form, the kind of Oedipus complex that helps you to untie

from your mother's apron strings. However, since there is no *Vatti* to be afraid of, since *Vatti* is too kind, this explains how evoking the *Vatti*'s potential aggressiveness in the myth leads the phobic signifier of the ἵππος to be unloaded to such an extent. This is logged that same afternoon.

I'm forcing nothing in what I'm telling you here, because it's in the text, provided one shifts imperceptibly the point of perspective so that the observation ceases to be a labyrinth in which one gets lost and so that, on the contrary, its every detail can take on a meaning. While it might look like I'm going fairly slowly here, and that I keep going back to the start, I have to allow you to grasp how not a single detail of the observation eludes this bringing into perspective. As soon as you can see how the relation to the signifier is articulated – which is reported in its raw state by Freud, along with the signified ready to emerge – we can see it reverberating mathematically in the functions of the signifier that is educed in a natural and spontaneous state in little Hans's situation. In this same moment we can see these effects of subtraction, of unloading, being immediately recorded to the extent that the Father has simply been ushered in. This simple fact has to be inscribed in a way that is almost mathematical, like on a balance sheet.

So, there is a share of white horses that do not make little Hans afraid, and Freud himself spells out how the anxiety is *double-edged*, which further bolsters what I have just said. Freud distinguishes between anxiety *of* the father, *vor dem Vater*, and anxiety *for* or *around* the father, *um den Vater*. We need only take into account the way that Freud presents this to find the exact two elements that I have just described. The anxiety *around* this empty place, this hollow that the father represents in little Hans's configuration, seeks out its support in the phobia. To the precise extent that an anxiety *of* the father has been educed, even if only in the state of a requirement for something to be postulated, the anxiety *around* the father's function is unloaded. The subject can at last have an anxiety *of* something.

Unfortunately, this cannot go very far, because Hans's father, even though he is there, is on no account capable of sustaining the now established function that corresponds to the necessities of a correct and limpid mythical formation with the full universal scope that the Oedipus myth possesses. This is precisely what forces our little Hans to fall back into his difficulty. As Freud had predicted, after this his difficulty would start to unfold, to be embodied and precipitated in productions that would develop out of his phobia.

We immediately start to see more clearly in this direction when the first fantasy of 5 April appears. I began with this fantasy as

though it were a first term, the transformations of which we meet many times over right through to the end. With everything that surrounds it and everything that heralds it, this fantasy highlights the weight of a question that little Hans had started to articulate very well the previous afternoon, regarding what makes him afraid.

We start to see the four modalities in which the horse frightens him. His father bucks up a bit and really performs an analysis here in that, when from time to time he doesn't know where to turn, this still allows him to find things. He lays them out, *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*. They are elements that bring a term into play that has a special value for man, that is to say, for an animal who is fated to know himself to exist, unlike the rest of the animals. This term shows its most perturbing impact here when it is developed and articulated by little Hans in the neo-productions of the phobia. This term is *movement*.

Please understand that it's not a matter of uniform motion, which is a movement that we have always known, or at least for a good while. It's a movement in which one loses one's sense of oneself, from which one tries to escape. It's already there in Aristotle, in the discrimination between linear motion and circular motion. In more modern language, one would say that there is acceleration. This is what little Hans is telling us when he says that the horse that is pulling something behind it makes him afraid when it starts moving, and more so when it drives past quickly than when it trots up slowly. The anxiety arises wherever the one who is not involved in this movement, who has a minimum of detachment from life, can sense the dead weight rocking into motion. It consists in what I have just called *knowing oneself to exist*, in being a creature who is conscious of oneself, and who is caught in this movement that presents this sort of inert force.

This is where the anxiety is to be analysed. It is as much the anxiety of being dragged into motion as its inverse, namely the fantasy of being left behind, of being left in the lurch. This introduction of something that all of a sudden carries him along in a movement represents for little Hans a hard fall. Profoundly modifying his relationships with the stability of the mother, it brings him into her presence as something that by the same token truly overhauls the very bases of this stability. Hans tells us this in the form of what he says at this stage regarding the horse. It can *umfallen und beißen wird*, fall down and bite.

We know what the biting is linked to. It is linked to the surging up of what is produced each time the mother's love happens to be missing. When the mother effectively falls away, she is at the same

time this thing that has no other outcome than what for little Hans himself becomes the anxiety reaction by necessity, what is known as the *catastrophic reaction*.[2] The first stage is the biting, the second stage is the falling down and rolling around on the ground.

Now it'll always be like this, little Hans tells us when he is trying to recreate, in a way that is completely fantasmatic, the moment when he *got the nonsense*. He continues, and his wording bears a structure that we must keep in mind, *All horses in buses'll fall down*.

This is the formula in which is embodied what is at stake for little Hans, namely the calling into question of the very foundations of everything that thus far constituted the seat of his world.

3

This brings us to 9 April. It's an elaboration around the theme of the anxiety of movement. What can possibly temper this anxiety?

The father is utterly without effect, because nothing indeed can resolve for a creature like man, whose world is structured in the symbolic, this sense of becoming carried away, this thing that will drag him along in a movement.

This is why, in his signifying structuration, little Hans has to make the conversion that consists in changing the schema of movement into the schema of substitution, stage by stage.

First of all there will be the introduction of the theme of the detachable element. Next, with this, substitution will be produced. These are the two schematic stages that are expressed in the bathtub fantasy-formation.

In the first stage, the bathtub is unscrewed. As I said, its unscrewing comes at a cost, because little Hans has to undergo something from which we know one never gets off scot-free, whenever this passage is performed. This is something that is not gone into sufficiently in the observation, namely that not only does he undergo castration, but it is formally symbolised by the borer, by this large gimlet that makes a hole in his belly.

Then comes the second stage when Hans has something unscrewed. In its place, something else can be screwed in. Through its signifying form, what is at issue in the subject's operation of transformation from movement into substitution, from continuity in the real into discontinuity in the symbolic, is what is demonstrated throughout the whole observation as the very coursing without which its stages and progress are incomprehensible.

What happens in the signified, in the confusion and pathos that little Hans finds himself in? What is there between 5 April, when

there appears the schema of the fantasy of the cart that sets off, with everything around the phobia that is attached to it, and the fantasmatic unbolting of the bathtub on 11 April, when this symbolisation of a possible substitution starts to be initiated? Between the two there is a whole surrounding theme, the material of which I am forced to put in a ready state. This is the lengthy passage that will last almost as long as the time it takes for there to be produced for little Hans the only element from the previous situation that could possibly introduce the detachable feature, this element that is fundamental to his restructuring of his world. What is this element?

It is very precisely the element that I told you we must introduce into the dialectic of showing and not seeing, of the educing of *what is not*, yet which is hidden, that is to say, the veil itself.

There ensue two days of anxious questioning from Hans's father, who understands literally nothing and gives himself over to a heavy-handed groping around, which as Freud underlines had the consequence that the analysis *began to be obscure and uncertain.* No matter, there remains enough for us to see not only what constitutes the essential point but also what Freud himself takes care to underscore as essential, namely all that happens around the veil, that is to say, the little pair of drawers.

These little drawers are there in all their carefully polished detail, the little yellow drawers and the little black drawers. We are told that the black drawers are *Reformhosen*, a novel garment for use by women when out cycling. As we know very well, Hans's mother likes to keep up with the cutting edge of progress. I think that a few judicious extracts from the splendid comedies of Apollinaire, in particular *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, should help us to paint a closer portrait of her. As it is put in this admirable play –

Elles sont tout ce que nous sommes
Et cependant ne sont pas hommes.[3]

The whole drama lies here. This is what everything has emanated from, right from the first. It's not simply because little Hans's mother is more or less a feminist, but because all in all what is at stake for little Hans is the fundamental truth inscribed into the lines of verse I have just quoted. Freud himself did not dissimulate for one second the essential and decisive value of this truth when he made his variation of Napoleon's saying, *Anatomy is destiny*. This is precisely what it at issue, but what do we see when little Hans articulates what he has to say?

The father's vehement questions constantly interrupt little Hans,

rendering the parsing of his responses a little difficult, but Freud manages to sift out what is essential. What we see more clearly from Freud's note is that there are two stages in which little Hans recognises and differentiates the pairs of drawers, which project over their duality confusedly, as though each could hold more than one of the functions of the other. But what is essential is that the drawers in themselves are linked for Hans to a reaction of disgust. Much more than this, little Hans has dictated what should be written to Freud – *When I saw the yellow drawers I said 'Ugh! That makes me spit!' and threw myself down and shut my eyes and didn't look.* This reaction shows us that his choice has been made. Hans will never be a fetishist.

If, on the contrary, he had recognised these drawers as his object, namely as the mysterious phallus that no one could ever see, he would have been satisfied and would have become a fetishist. But fate has something else in store for little Hans. He is disgusted by the drawers.

He does specify, however, that when his mother is wearing them, it's another matter. In this instance, they are not at all repugnant. This makes all the difference. When they are on offer as an object, that is, *on their own account*, he is turned off. They conserve their virtue, so to speak, only when they are functional, when they continue to sustain the lure of the phallus. This is the nerve that enables us to apprehend the experience.

The reality of things has been highlighted by the long questioning in relation to which little Hans tries to explain himself. If he does this poorly, it's to the extent that he is being pressed in divergent and confused directions, but what is crucial is the introduction, through the intermediary of this privileged object, of the detachable element that we are going to meet in the next part, and which thenceforth leads onto the plane of instrumentalisation. We are going to see a formidable material array of instruments that will become dominant from this point forth in the evolution of the signifying myth.

I have mentioned some of these instruments, and have even shown you just how far such singular things already find themselves inscribed into the ambiguities of the signifier, for example the extraordinary homonymy between *Zange* as a horse's tooth and *Zange* as a horse's hoof. I could develop this much further still, by telling you that the middle of the hoof is called the *pince*, and the two sides are called *mamelles*.

When I spoke to you last week about the *Schraubenzieher*, which means screwdriver, I told you that this is precisely not what features in the fantasy of the fitter, namely that it's rather a pair of pincers, or

pliers, and that Freud pulls out his *Schraubenzieher* without having noticed very well the value that this instrumentation was offering him. Don't assume that this is a unique case. In the objects that will progressively make themselves felt from here on in, you will see not only the mother–child relations becoming apparent, but also this fundamental detachability that is expressed for man in the question of life and death. You are going to see these being introduced now, and behind them the enigmatic, uncanny and burlesque character of the stork.

Don't forget that the stork has a wholly different style. You are going to see this Mr Stork – *der Storch* – arriving with his flamboyant profile, his little hat and latch-key, not in his pocket because he doesn't have one, but in his beak, which he also uses as a pair of forceps, not to mention for ringing bells and picking locks.

By this point we are submerged with material, and indeed this is what will characterise the rest of the observation as a whole. However, to avoid leaving you with something imprecise, I shall tell you what the axial moment is, what the turning point is, in what will come to pass in relation to mother and child.

Next time we will be taking this up step by step and we will be seeing precisely which signifying forms stand as intermediaries that transform this mother and child, while leaving them the same – the cart becomes a bathtub, and then a box, and so on and so forth, each nestling into the others.

However, at one point, which clearly was very fine indeed, when sufficient progress had been made with the mother – and you will be seeing what this entails – on 22 April, a very nice fantasy arises. Little Hans takes a little rubber doll called, as though this were quite random, Grete. His father asks him, *What were you playing at with your doll?* And Hans answers, *I said Grete to her. Why?* asks his father. *Because I said Grete to her*, replies Hans. If one has read the observation carefully, one notices what seems to have rather escaped the father's notice, namely that this is the same Grete who was the witness in his game with his mother.

But by this point substantial progress has been made, since the mastery of the mother has already been carried quite far. This term *mastery* needs to be employed in its most technical sense, and you will see by whose intermediary he has learned to lead her by the rein, and even to give a few whacks.

Little Hans pushes a small penknife through the doll, then manipulates it to make the knife drop out. He is remaking his own hole, but this time with a small penknife, which seems to have been pushed in through the hole where the doll lets out its squeaking voice.

Little Hans has definitively found the last word, bringing down the final curtain on the farce. The mother had kept in reserve, in her head, a little knife with which to cut it off him. And he has hacked the route by which to make it drop out.

22 May 1957

XXI

THE MOTHER'S DRAWERS AND THE FATHER'S SHORTCOMING

Lumf and the garment
Unscrewing the bathtub
Fuck her a bit more
A suppletion for the father
Unproductive maternal castration
The *Idea* of Hanna

9 April	the two pairs of drawers
11 April	the bath and the borer
13 April	Hanna's fall
14 April	the big box . . .
15 April	. . . and the stork
16 April	the whipped horse
21 April	the imaginary embarkation with the father
"	the major dialogue
22 April	the initiation rite on the little truck
"	the penknife in the doll
24 April	the lamb
26 April	Lodi
30 April	*bin ich der Vatti*
2 May	the fitter

Let's resume today a few of our remarks on little Hans, who for a while now has been the object of our attention.

I remind you of the spirit in which this commentary is being pursued. What, essentially, is this little Hans? It is the prattling of a five-year-old child from 1 January until 2 May 1908. This, for the first-time reader, is what presents as little Hans. If the reader is more prepared, and it's not hard to be so, he will know that this prattling is of interest.

Why is this of interest? It's of interest because it has been posited, at least in principle, that there is a certain relation between this prattling and something that is utterly substantial, namely a phobia, with all the inconveniences that it brings to the life of this young subject, all the worry that it causes those around him, and all the interest that it arouses in Professor Freud.

I consider the elucidation of this relation between his prattling and the phobia to be of the utmost importance, and there is no reason to go hunting this relation out beyond the prattling, because no such beyond-zone is presented to us in the observation. Any such zone only presents itself to our minds after the event, with the fully imperious character of prejudice. By way of example, take the point I left you with last time, the story of the doll through which little Hans cuts a hole with a penknife.

Today I have drawn up a chronology. I think that you have now had time to read and reread the observation on little Hans, and that these indications should be vivid enough on their own.

1

Last week I concluded with little Hans's reactions to his mother's drawers, with everything that is problematic about the exchanges and questioning between the father and the child, and about the sort of deep misunderstanding in which the dialogue unfolds.

I accentuated, as does Freud, what struck him as the most essential residue of this dialogue on the mother's drawers, namely Hans's assertion, which was neither suggested nor induced by his father's questioning, that the two pairs of drawers carry an absolutely different sense depending on whether they are being worn by his mother or are there on their own account. In this latter case, little Hans spits and rolls around on the floor, remonstrates, and makes a show of disgust, the key to which he doesn't yield, but which he desires should be conveyed to the Professor in writing. When the drawers are on his mother, he says that they have an altogether different sense for him.

Having accentuated this, I have since heard some people expressing some mild astonishment at my having eluded the connection between the said *Hosen*, the mother's drawers, and the *lumf*.

In little Hans's vocabulary, *Lumpf* is excrement. It goes by this atypical name, just as it is exceedingly frequent in children that a fortuitous name, if not a random one, should be ascribed to this function on the basis of a first denomination linked to a certain connection with the exercise of this function. We are going to see what this is in the case of this *lumf*.

So, it has been imputed to me that, due to goodness knows what systems-inclined mindset, I have elided the anal stage that looms up in our minds right on cue, just like when the button is pressed to provoke some such conditioned reflex in Pavlov's dog. No sooner have you heard mention of excrement than you're barking out – *Anal stage! Anal stage! Anal stage!* Well, let's speak about the anal stage, because it's only right that things should pass out normally!

I would like you to stand back a little from the observation, and to see how either way there is one thing that is never really indicated throughout the process of this cure. Indeed, is there a cure? I certainly didn't say so. I said it was something that has a fundamental function in our experience of analysis, as do each of Freud's major case studies. To put it rapidly, the one thing that is never indicated is any rhythm, or any mechanism, that could be inscribed into the register of frustration.

Throughout the whole period of the cure, not only does little Hans not undergo any frustration, but he is fully sated. Is there regression or aggression? Without doubt there is aggression, but it's certainly linked neither to any frustration nor to any moment of regression. If there is regression, it's not in the instinctual sense, in the sense of a resurgence of something from before.

If there is indeed one phenomenon of regression, it's in a register that belongs to the realm of what I have indicated for you many times as possible. It is effectively what occurs when, through the necessity of the subject's elucidation of his problem, he requires, he pursues, the reduction of such and such an element of his being-in-the-world, of his relationships, from, for example, the symbolic to the imaginary, and even sometimes, as is manifest in this observation, from the real to the imaginary. In other words, there is a change of approach to the signifiers of one of the terms that is present. This is exactly what you are going to see occurring over the course of the observation when little Hans is pursuing his development. Goodness knows how rigorous and even urgent this is. Indeed, this is what characterises the signifying process of the unconscious, insomuch as Freud defined it as unconscious, that is to say, as something that occurs without the subject being able to account for it in any way whatsoever, literally without his knowing what is he is doing. It's enough for him simply to be aided, incited, in this development of the signifying incidence that he himself has introduced as necessary to his psychological sustenance. In managing to develop it, he draws from it a certain solution that moreover is not necessarily a normative solution, nor the best solution, but certainly a solution that, in the case of little Hans, has the most evident effect of resolving the symptom.

Let's come back to the *lumf*.

Freud refers the signs of disgust that are shown when little Hans sees his mother's drawers to the *Lumpf Zusammenhang*, the *context of the lumf*. His father has just posed a few questions that lead in this direction, Hans having surely evinced how the question of excrement was neither insignificant nor uninteresting for him. But of course this *lumf context* turns around. We can conversely say that the *lumf* appears to have been brought in with regard to the drawers.

What is meant by this? It's not simply the fact that little Hans is led to speak about these functions of excrement in relation to the reaction of disgust that he shows when he sees his mother's drawers. In what way do excrement and everything to do with anality enter the fray of the observation? We are immediately told that this is not unrelated to the background, that it is not unconnected with his own excremental function *which had once afforded him a great deal of pleasure*. However, what is surely at stake here is *the desire for seeing his mother do lumf*, to the extent that he tags on right behind her whenever she is putting on or taking off her drawers.

Little Hans badgers his mother, and she excuses herself to his father – who has resumed his little inquiry and who overlooks very little of what is going on – by saying, *he goes on pestering me till I let him in*. So, there is this game between little Hans and his mother, of seeing and not seeing, and not only that, but also of seeing what cannot be seen, because it doesn't exist, and little Hans knows this full well. To see what cannot be seen it has to be seen behind a veil, that is, a veil that has been held in front of the inexistence of what is to be seen. It is precisely behind the theme of the veil, of the pair of drawers, of this garment, that the essential fantasy of the relationships between mother and child lies hidden. This is the fantasy of the phallic mother. It is in relation to this theme that the *lumf* is introduced.

Consequently, if I have been leaving this *lumf* on its own plane, that is, on a secondary plane, it's not because of some systematic mindset, it's because in the observation it is only brought before us in this connection. In other words, it's not sufficient in an analysis simply to be breathing an unfamiliar air to find oneself by the same stroke delighted at being back on familiar ground, to content oneself with telling us that here we can get back in touch with the same old tune, of the anal complex in this instance. Rather, it's a matter of finding out at such a moment in the analysis what the precise function of this theme is. If this theme is always important for us, it's not merely because of this purely implicit signification, which in itself is vague and linked to geneticist ideas that can constantly be called into question in this particular case, at any moment of the

observation, but because of its connection with the complete system of the signifier in so far as it is evolving, as much in the symptom over the course of the illness as in the process of cure.

The *lumf* carries an extra meaning within this system on account of its strict homology with the function of the drawers, that is to say, the function of the veil. Both the *lumf* and the drawers are a thing that can fall. The veil falls, and it's precisely in so far as the veil has fallen that there is a problem for little Hans.

He lifts, if I may say so, the flap of this veil, because it is in consequence of the experience of 9 April, of the long explanation about the drawers, that we next see the bathtub fantasy appearing, that is to say, something that bears the closest relation to the fall. The combination of this dropping with the other term that is present, and with which he is confronted in the phobia, namely the biting, yields the theme of detachability, of unscrewing, which will be pursued as an essential element in reducing the situation across the succession of fantasies.

We need therefore to take a close look at this succession of little Hans's fantasies and to conceive of them as a myth in development, as a discourse. Furthermore, nothing else is involved in the observation but a series of reinventions of this myth with the aid of imaginary elements. It's a matter of comprehending the function behind this turning progress, these successive transformations of the myth which, at a deep level, represent the solution to the problem for Hans, the problem of his own position in existence to the extent that it has to be situated in relation to a certain truth, in relation to a certain number of truthful reference points, where he can find his own place.

Were some further proof required of what I'm telling you – and I'm insisting a little given the objection that has been levelled at me and, since I've come up against it, I want to see it through to the end – I would bid you refer to the text to see what this *lumf* ultimately turns out to be. When little Hans is coming back from his grandmother's on the Sunday evening, on 12 April, Hans shows his disgust at the black upholstery of the seats in the carriage, because they are *lumf*. In the explanation that follows, what is it that comes to be compared with the black, with the *lumf*? Well, a black blouse and black stockings. The close relationship between the theme of the *lumf* and the mother's garments, that is, the veil, is registered in the observation by little Hans himself.

For that matter, what is this *lumf*? Where does it come from? Why does little Hans call excrement *lumf*? We are also told in the observation that *Lumpf* comes by association with stocking, *Strumpf*, and its dark colour.

Throughout the segment of the observation that we are pursuing in an examination afforded by Freud's analysis, it is quite clear that the *lumf*, the excrement, enters the fray here as a particular function of the far more crucial signifying articulation – which in truth is the only important thing for us to see – that is its relationship with the theme of the garment, the theme of the veil, behind which is hidden the denied absence of the mother's penis. This is the essential signification.

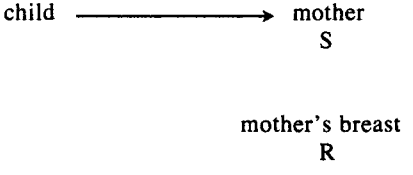
We alter nothing in the direction of the observation itself, and not by any biased mindset, when we take this axis to understand the progress of these mythical transformations through which the reduction of the phobia is brought about in the analysis.

2

We came as far as 11 April and the bathtub fantasy.

I told you that the bathtub represented something that starts to bring about the mobilisation of the situation, that is, the situation of the stifling reality of the mother, the sole reality to which Hans feels bound, for some unspecified reason, and which produces a maximum level of anxiety. From the time that he feels that he is being delivered up to her, threatened by her and annulled by her, this reality of the mother represents a danger situation. Moreover, this is a danger that in itself is absolutely unnameable, strictly speaking. It's a matter of seeing how the child will manage to get out of this situation.

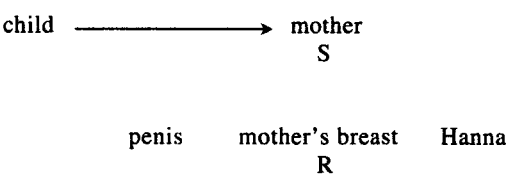
I remind you of the fundamental schema for the child's situation vis-à-vis the mother, when he is at a moment of losing the mother's love.



This mother is the symbolic mother, the first element of reality that is symbolised by the child in that she can essentially be absent or present. When there is a refusing of love on her part, the compensation for this refusal is found in the quashing brought about by a real satisfaction, derived from the real breast. This doesn't mean that an inversion is produced. Indeed, to the extent that the breast becomes a compensation, it becomes the symbolic gift. The mother, meanwhile, becomes a real element, that is to say, an all-powerful element that refuses love.

The progress in the situation with the mother lies in how the child has to discover, beyond the mother, what the mother loves. It is not the child himself, but the *i*, the imaginary element, that is to say, the mother's desire for the phallus. Ultimately, what the child has to do at this level – which is not to say that he does do it – is to manage to formulate i S (*i*). This is what we are shown in the playful alternation in the deportment of the child who is still a toddler, which accompanies his playful occultation of the symbolic part.

For little Hans, this schema has been complicated by the introduction of two elements that are real.



On the one hand there is Hanna, a real child who comes to complicate the situation of the relations beyond the mother, and then on the other hand there is something that belongs to him but which he literally doesn't know what to do with, a real penis that is starting to stir and which has received an unfavourable greeting from the person on whom it functions. Little Hans comes to ask his mother what she thinks of his widdler, an aunt having said a little while back, *he has got a dear little thingummy*. His mother, however, does not extend such a warm welcome, and the question then becomes very complicated.

To fathom this complication, you need only take the two poles of the phobia, the two elements for which the horse is dreaded. As I explained, *the horse bites* and *the horse falls*.

The horse bites, that is to say – *Since I can no longer satisfy mother at all, she will take satisfaction, just as I did when she did not satisfy me at all, biting me as I bit her, for this is my last line of recourse when I cannot be sure of her love.*

The horse falls, that is to say – *It falls just as I do, little Hans, at the instant when I am left in the lurch, when there is no more but for Hanna.*

However, it is quite clear on the other hand that, in a certain way, needs must that little Hans be eaten and bitten. Needs must, because ultimately this is what corresponds to a revalorisation of the penis that has been taken for nothing at all, that has been rejected by his mother to the full extent that it has to become something, and this is what little Hans aspires to. His being bitten, his being seized by the mother, is something that is as much desired as feared.

The same goes for what is involved in the falling. The horse's fall is also something that can be desired by little Hans. There is more than one element of the situation that little Hans desires to see fall, and the first of these, once we have introduced the category of the dropping into the observation, will present in the form of little Hanna. Hans says, *I thought to myself Hanna was on the balcony and fell down off it.* The father adds that the railing of the balcony *was designed in the most unpractical way, by a metal-worker of the Secessionist movement* – we are in the home of folk who stand at the vanguard of progress – *and had big gaps in it which I had to have filled with wire netting*, hideous as this must have been, so as to avoid little Hans pushing young Hanna a little too vigorously through one of the gaps.

So, the function of the biting, like the function of the falling, are given in the most apparent structures of the phobia. They are its essential elements. As you can tell, these are double-edged signifier-elements. Such is the true meaning of the term *ambivalence*. The fall, like the bite, is not merely feared by little Hans. They are elements that can also enter the fray in an opposite sense. From one side, the biting is desired, because it will play a crucial role in the solution of the situation, just as the fall is equally a desired element. While the girl herself must not fall, one thing is certain and this is that the mother will trace a falling curve, for the full run of the observation, starting from the moment conditioned by the curious appearance of the instrumental function of the unscrewing. This function appears for the first time, enigmatically, in the bathtub fantasy.

As I said last week, what is in question here is an anxiety that concerns not only the mother in reality, but the whole surrounding, the whole milieu, everything that thus far had constituted little Hans's reality, the fixed bearings of his reality, what last time I called *la baraque*, the whole shack. With the first fantasy of the plumber coming along to unscrew the bath, this whole shack begins to be dismantled in detail.

These connections are not in the least abstract connections. They are wholly contained within the experience. Don't forget that the observation discloses how baths had already been unscrewed in front of little Hans, because when they went on holiday to Gmunden, *a small bath had been packed in a box*. On the other hand, we have some notion of an earlier house move, though we can only regret that the observation does not offer a precise date for this. It must lie in the space of time covered by the anamnesis of the observation, namely the two years, prior to the illness, on which we have a number of notes from the parents.

Moving house, like the transporting of the bath to Gmunden,

has already afforded little Hans the signifying material for what it means to dismantle the whole shack. He already knows that this can happen, and this was without any doubt an experience that had already been integrated to a greater or lesser extent into his specific handling of the signifier. The fantasy of the unscrewed bathtub is tantamount to a first step into the perception of what presents first of all with a character that is opaque, that is purely a signal of an inhibition, an arrest, a frontier, a limit beyond which one cannot pass, namely the phobia. This can only be mobilised in the phobia itself, where there are elements that can be differently combined.

In other words, along with the horse's bite – which brings to the fore these teeth, this *pince*, the plural signification of which I explained for you last time and which in French as in German and in many other tongues, notably in Greek, is both what the horse bites with and something that means *pincers* or *pliers* – there appears for the first time the character who, with his pincers and pliers, starts to come into play and to introduce an element of evolution. This evolution is, I repeat, a purely signifying evolution. You're not going to tell me how there are already instinctual traces in the child that explain how his behind is unscrewed, how it's both the same thing and in other respects something different. In other words, it is nowhere else but in the signifier itself, in the human world of the symbol, which also embraces the tool and the instrument, that the development will unfold of the mythical evolution in which little Hans is engaged through the obscure and fumbling collaboration between him and the two protagonists who have been looking into his case in order to psychoanalyse it.

I will pause for a moment on the fact that there are not only the bathtub and the unscrewing in the fantasy, there is also at that moment the borer, the gimlet. Here, as always, there is a very keen perception, linked to the freshness of the discovery, which means that the onlookers who are at the explorative forefront of the analysis are in no doubt as to what this borer is. They say that it's the paternal penis. Here again there is something vague about the text. Is the target of this penis little Hans or his mother? I would say that this ambiguity is quite valuable, and all the more so because we shall better understand what is at issue.

Once more, you can see the proof of what I'm telling you, namely that it's not sufficient to have in your minds the more or less complete list of classic situations in analysis, including the inverted Oedipus complex where, perceiving the parents' coitus, the child can identify with the feminine role. That we find little Hans identifying here with his mother, well, it's true, why not? But on one condition, which is that we would not understand *why* it is true, because when one says

this and nothing more, not only does it not hold any interest, but it doesn't match, to any degree, anything that represents the ins and outs that come together in the apparition of the fantasy, where the child imagines, and himself articulates, that something has come along to make a big hole in his belly. This can take on meaning only in the context, in the signifying evolution, of what is at issue.

Let's say that at this point little Hans is explaining to his father – *Just bloody give her it for once, right where it belongs*. This is indeed all that is in question in little Hans's relation with his father. All along, we have a notion of this shortcoming and the effort that little Hans is making to restore, I wouldn't say a normal situation – no such thing has been in question since the father started playing the role that he has been playing with Hans, namely that of begging him please to believe that Daddy is not unkind – but a structured situation. And in this structured situation, there are firm reasons for little Hans, at the same time as tackling the ousting of the mother, correlatively to provoke, and imperiously so, the father's functioning in relation to the mother.

I repeat that there are a thousand ways, a thousand angles, from which such fantasies of passivity can intervene over the course of the analysis of a young boy, sweeping him up in a fantasmatic relation with the father in which he identifies with the mother.

To go no further than my own analytic experience, not so long ago I saw a man who was no more homosexual than little Hans could in my opinion have become, but who, even so, at one point in his analysis voiced how, without any doubt, in his childhood he had fantasised being in the maternal position, precisely so as to offer himself, if I may say so, as a victim in his mother's place. His whole childhood situation was lived in the shadow of a sort of importunity of the father's sexual insistence, the latter being highly rambunctious and, indeed, demanding in his needs upon the subject's mother, who deflected him with all the force she could muster. The child perceived, rightly or wrongly, that she lived through the situation as a victim.

This had been integrated into the development of the subject's symptomatology, yet the subject was a neurotic. On no account can we come to a standstill merely at the feminised position, or even the homosexual position, represented functionally at a given moment of the analysis by the outcome of this fantasy, because its context lends it an utterly different sense. It even lies in opposition to what occurs in the observation on little Hans.

Little Hans is saying to his father, *fuck her a bit more*, while the other subject, my patient, is telling his, *fuck her a bit less*. Clearly it's not the same, even though they each have to make use of the term, *fuck her*, and even, *fuck me instead of her if need be*. It is, therefore,

the signifying connection of the term that enables us to appreciate what is at stake.

In the way I have presented it, the situation that is thereby created apparently has no way out, because the father doesn't step up. You will tell me that the father nevertheless exists, that he is there. What is the function of the father in the Oedipus complex? It's quite clear that at some point, and regardless of the form in which the deadlock of the child's situation with the mother might present, another element has to be introduced.

These things need to be repeated. If we don't repeat them, we lose track of them. This is why we are going once again to spell out the Oedipus complex.

3

Of course, this won't be a re-articulation of the Oedipus complex because by definition, if the Oedipus complex is fundamental, it must be explained in a thousand different ways. Nevertheless, there are structural elements that we find every time and which are the same, at least with respect to their arrangement and with respect to their number.

On one plane, the father comes in as a third party in the situation between the child and his mother. If we take it on another plane, he comes in as a fourth element, because there are already three elements due to the inexistent phallus. This is the *en-soi*, the *in-itself* of the situation, if you will excuse this expression of which I'm not especially fond but which I'm compelled to use in order to go quickly.[1] I mean that, for the time being, I'm considering the father insomuch as he must be in the situation together with the others, independently of what will come to pass for the *pour-soi* of the subject, his *for-himself*. Nor am I especially fond of this expression because you can take this *pour-soi* as something that is given in the subject's consciousness, when in fact it lies for the greater part in the subject's unconscious, to the extent that this has to do with the effects of the Oedipus complex. I'm using the term, however, to mark out the distinction that I am noting in the fact that the father must be here *en-soi*. What should his role be?

I cannot rehearse the whole theory of the Oedipus complex. Nevertheless, we can say that the father is the one who possesses the mother, who possesses her as a father, with his true penis which is an ample penis, in contradistinction to the child who is in the grip of the problem of his instrument being both poorly assimilated and insufficient, not to say spurned and disdained.

What does the analytic theory of the Oedipus complex teach us? What is it that makes the Oedipus complex necessary in some way? I'm not speaking about biological necessity, nor internal necessity, but a necessity that is at any rate empirical because it was discovered in the experience. If the existence of the Oedipus complex means anything, then it's that the natural increase of the young boy's sexual potency does not happen by itself, nor in one go, nor even in two goes. If we take it purely and simply on the physiological plane, it could effectively be seen to happen in two phases, but taking it solely at the level of this natural increase does not suffice to any degree when it comes to accounting for what is actually going on.

The fact is that for the situation to develop in normal conditions, I mean in conditions that allow the human subject sufficiently to maintain his presence not only in the real world but in the symbolic world, that is to say, for him to tolerate himself in the real world such as it is organised with its symbolic weft, he needs to have not only this sort of perception of what last time I called *movement*, with its acceleration that carries the subject along and transports him, but also a point of arrest, a fixing down of two terms. The true penis, the *real penis*, the valid penis, the father's penis, has to be functioning on the one hand, while on the other the child's penis has to be situated in a *Vergleichung* with the father's penis, in a comparison with the father's penis that will somehow meet up with its function, its reality, its dignity and its integration as a penis, to the extent that there will be a passage through the cancelling out that is known as the castration complex.

In other words, it's to the extent that his own penis is momentarily annulled, in a dialectical moment, that the child is destined to accede to a full paternal function later on, that is to say, to be someone who feels himself to be in legitimate possession of his virility. And it appears that this *legitimate* is essential to the felicitous functioning of the sexual function in the human subject. Without this register, everything that we have to say about the determinism of premature ejaculation and the various disturbances of sexual function has no meaning.

This has merely been an overall situating of the problem of the Oedipus complex. It is important to bear in mind that the experience has dictated this. Moreover, it was not to be predicted. Already, in what I have just set out, the schema of the situation was not necessarily predictable in itself. The proof of this is that the analytic experience, which uncovered the Oedipus complex as an integration into the virile function, allows us to push things further and to say that the symbolic father, the Name-of-the-Father, is essential to the structuration of the symbolic world.

The symbolic father is pivotal in this sort of severance that is more essential than primordial weaning, and through which the child exits the pure and simple coupling with maternal almightiness. If the symbolic father is the mediating element that is essential to the symbolic world, if the Name-of-the-Father is so essential to any articulation of human language, then this is strictly speaking the reason behind Ecclesiastes telling us that, *The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.*[2] It is strictly speaking foolish to say in one's heart that there is no God, quite simply because it is foolish to utter a thing that is in contradiction with the very voicing of language. You know very well that I'm not professing any deism here. There is the symbolic father.

The experience teaches us that when it comes to the specific incidence of the father's entrance in the assumption of the virile sexual function, the real father is one that plays a role of essential presence. To the extent that the real father is truly playing the game of his function as a castrating father, his *father function* in a form that is concrete, empirical and, I was almost going to say, to a certain degree degenerate – the personage of the primordial father in his tyrannical and more or less horrifying form such as he is presented to us in the Freudian myth – to the extent, in other words, that the father, such as he exists, fulfils his imaginary function in what is empirically intolerable about it, which even leads to revolt when he makes his impact felt as a castrator, the castration complex can be lived through, and solely from this angle.

What we have here is marvellously illustrated in the case of little Hans. There is a symbolic father, and little Hans, who is no fool, believes right away in this symbolic father. Freud is the good Lord. You can well imagine that this is one of the most crucial elements for balance to be established for little Hans. Naturally, he believes in God right away, and he believes in him like we all believe in God, namely, without believing in Him. He believes in Him because this reference to a sort of supreme witness is an element that is essential to any kind of articulation of truth. There is someone who knows everything, and he's found him. It's Professor Freud. What luck! The good Lord is here on earth. Not all of us are so lucky.

In any case, this will be of service to him, but on no account will it make up for the shortcoming of the imaginary father, of the castrating father. The whole problem lies here. Little Hans has to find a suppletion for this father who persists in not wanting to castrate him.[3] This is the key to the observation.

It's a matter of seeing how little Hans will be able to bear his real penis, precisely in so far as it is not under threat. This is the fundament of the anxiety. What is intolerable in his situation is

the shortcoming on the side of the castrator. In fact, throughout the whole observation, you will never see anything appearing that could represent the structuration, the real-isation, even the fantasmatic experience, of something that could be called a castration.

Yet some kind of injury is imperiously called upon by little Hans, and anything can be turned to this purpose. Contrary to what Freud says here, there is nothing in the experience of Fritzl hurting his foot on a stone that is called of its own accord to make the connection [with the horse falling down]. The wish that the father should be exposed to this same injury, this kind of mythical circumcision, will appear thereafter in the long dialogue of 21 April, when he will say to his father, *you've got to be naked, du sollst als Nackter*. Everyone is so stupefied by this that they wonder what the child might mean. They tell themselves that the child is starting to speak biblically. Even in the observation, there is a parenthesis to say that he surely means *barefoot*. Yet little Hans is the one who is truthful here. It's a matter of knowing whether the father will indeed prove himself, that is to say, will confront the fearsome mother like a man, and whether he, the father, has been through, or not, the essential trial by injury, knocking up against the stone. This tells you just how far this theme, in its most fundamental and mythical form, is something to which little Hans aspires with his whole Being.

Unfortunately, nothing of the sort occurs. It's not enough for little Hans to have uttered what he uttered in the dialogue with his father. He has only shown that he was burning with an imperious desire for the wrath of a jealous God – *eifern* is the German term used in the *Bibel* – namely a father who is against him, who wants to castrate him. But he doesn't encounter this, and so the situation takes a very different turn. I shall be telling you presently how we can conceive of this.

Note that while there is no castrator, because we are on the side of the father, we do have on the other hand a number of characters who have come in the stead of the castrator. We have the plumber who began by unscrewing the bath, then to bore a hole in him. Then in a short while we shall see someone else, the coachman, who is not strictly speaking implicated in the desired function of the father. In any case, there is what little Hans himself calls the *Schlosser*, the fitter, in the last fantasy, on 2 May, which brings the situation to a close. God does not carry out all of His functions very well, and so in comes the *deus ex machina*, the fitter, to whom little Hans assigns a share of the functions that he is there to fulfil.

Note how everything boils down to the following. One just has to know how to read the text to see that it could not be more striking than how it is in the final fantasy, which literally closes both the cure

and the observation, namely that what the fitter comes to change is little Hans's behind, his rear. They started to dismantle the whole shack, but it wasn't enough. Something had to be changed in little Hans. Without any doubt, this is where we find the fundamental schema of the symbolisation of the castration complex.

Yet it can be seen in the observation just how far even Freud allows himself to be carried along by the schema. There is no trace in little Hans's fantasy of a replacement for what he has on the front side. The father is the one who says, *he gave you a bigger widdler*, and Freud falls into step with this fantasising. Unfortunately, there is nothing of the sort in little Hans's fantasy. His behind is unscrewed and he is given another. Then he is told to turn around, and that's where it ends. The text has to be taken as it is. The specificity of the observation on little Hans lies in this, along with the very thing that ought to enable us to understand the full whole.

If, indeed, after coming so close, things didn't go any further, it's because things couldn't go any further, because if things had been able to go further, there wouldn't have been a phobia but a normal castration complex and Oedipus complex instead, and there would have been no need for all this complication. It would have taken neither the phobia, nor the symptom, nor the analysis, to arrive at this point, which is not necessarily the stipulated point, the typical point.

All of this is intended by and large to locate the function of the father in this instance, or more precisely to locate how he is both incontestably there, active and helpful in the analysis, but at the same time, due to the fact that he is there in the analysis – and this is predetermined by the situation as a whole – his functions are clearly incompatible with playing the role of the castrating father effectively.

You will observe that, all in all, while there is castration to the extent that the Oedipus complex is castration, it's no accident that what has been perceived but dimly, yet perceived nevertheless, is that castration bears just as much relation to the mother as to the father. We can see in the description of the primordial situation how maternal castration implies for the child the possibility of devoration and biting. In relation to this anteriority of maternal castration, paternal castration is a substitute that is perhaps no less terrible, but which is certainly more favourable.

It is more favourable because it is open to development, whereas in the case of maternal castration, with its engulfment and devoration by the mother, it does not lead on to any development. With the term of the father, there is the possibility of dialectical development, namely a rivalry with the father, a possible murder of the father,

and a possible eviration of the father. On the side of the father, the castration complex is productive in the Oedipus complex, whereas it is not so on the side of the mother for the simple reason that it is quite impossible to perform this eviration on the mother, because she has nothing that could undergo such eviration.

Let's take things up at the point where we left our little Hans, who is now standing at this crossroads.

We can already see an adumbration of the mode of suppletion by which the primordial situation will be left behind, dominated as it was by the pure threat of total devoration by the mother. Something of this is already sketched out in what I'm calling *the bath and borer fantasy*. Like each of little Hans's fantasies, it's the beginning of an articulation of the situation. There is, as it were, a return to sender, that is to say, a returning of the threat to the mother. The mother is the one who is ousted, and the father is the one who is called upon to play his role of borer.

Once again, I note that I'm doing no more than taking literally what Freud brings us. He is so riveted by the role of the borer that he makes a remark without resolving it himself. He doesn't resolve it for a good reason, which is that it has to be considered in the light of philology, ethnography, myths, and so on. The remark bears on the relation there might be between *Bohrer* and *geboren*, being born. In fact, there is no etymological link between their respective roots. This is the whole distance that lies between the Latin *feriō*, to smite, and *fero*, to bear. They don't share the same root, and when one traces the derivations across the different tongues they remain absolutely distinct. Then there is *forāre*, to bore, which clearly is not the same thing as *fero*. It is again to the term of bearing that *geboren* is traced. The essential distinction between the two roots can be found as far back as it has been possible to trace, but what is important here is that Freud comes to a halt on this. He comes to a halt on something that is literally an encounter of the signifier with the purely signifying problematic that it posits, because ultimately *Bohrer* evokes Prometheus – *Pramantha*, etymologically *the borer*.[4] Meanwhile, *geboren* is *to bear*, that is to say, the fundamental bearing of child, bringing him forth into the world. And so there are two distinct and even opposite elements. This is a parenthetical remark to show you the importance that Freud himself attaches to the signifying term.

Along what line will the ensuing part of the solution, of the suppletion, brought about by little Hans develop? The solution is mere suppletion in that he is somehow powerless to bring about a maturing – allow me if you will to use this expression, though it's not about instinctual maturation – that would press the dialectic development

of the situation in a direction that would not be a dead-end. It has to be reckoned that he arrives at something, because there is a development. At the very least, it's a matter of comprehending it, and of comprehending it in its entirety. Today I can do no more than indicate this.

By what means does the whole development unfold, starting from the point we've reached, around mid-April? Hanna is introduced as an element whose fall is possible and desired. The same goes for the maternal bite, which is taken on as an instrumental element, as a substitute for the castrating intervention. Moreover, it is diverted in its direction, because it doesn't bear on the penis but on something else, something that in the final fantasy culminates in a change. It has to be believed that this change already has a certain degree of sufficiency in itself, or at any rate a degree of sufficiency when it comes to reducing the phobia. At the end, Hans has changed. This is what is obtained. Next time, we will be seeing all the consequences of this, which are absolutely crucial for Hans's development, and quite intriguing to boot.

So, Hanna comes into play. She is the other inassimilable term in the situation. The whole process of Hans's fantasies consists in restoring this intolerable element of the real to the imaginary register where it can be reintegrated, through stages that we are venturing to describe one at a time.

Read, or reread, the observation with this key in hand. See how Hanna is reintroduced in a completely fantasmatic form, as when little Hans tells us that Hanna had already gone with them to Gmunden two years ago, when in fact at that time she was still in her mother's belly. Yet little Hans tells us that they had taken her in a little box on the back of the coach, where she had a jolly time, and even that they had taken her all the previous years as well, because little Hanna has always been there. What is intolerable in the situation is that little Hans cannot envisage that there should not be a Hanna during the holidays in Gmunden, and he makes up for this in his reminiscing.

I'm employing this term very precisely, with its Platonic accent, in opposition to the function of repetition and of the re-found object. Hans turns the Hanna-object into an object that has always been there. Just as Plato needed something to explain how we gain access to the higher world, since we could purportedly enter it even though we're not part of it, so too does little Hans reduce Hanna to something that is remembered as a permanent fixture. This reminiscence is the first stage in the imaginification of this real, and it carries a very different meaning from all those stories of instinctual regression.

After this, there is a second stage, when she becomes an Idea,

again in the Platonic sense of the term, even an Ideal. What does little Hans have her do at this stage? This is also in his fantasy – he has her ride on the horse. It's humorous and brilliant, mythical and epic, all at once. At the same time, it displays all the characteristics of those epic texts for which we've been going to great lengths to describe the two states of condensation, the two states of the epic poem, and to suppose all sorts of pundits, hecklers and charlatans who will expound on what, in epic and myth alike, has to be explained as hinging at once on what happens in the imaginary world and on what happens in the real world.

Little Hans cannot exclude the coachman here, while on the other hand little Hanna has to be on the horse, and also holding the reins. So, in the same sentence, he says, *The coachman had the reins – Hanna had the reins too.* There you have the vivid state of this kind of internal contradiction which so often in myths leads us to suppose that two registers are blending confusedly, that there is an incoherent overlap of two stories, when in reality it's because the author, whether he is Homer or little Hans, is in the grip of a contradiction between two registers that themselves are essentially different.

You can see this coming alive here in the case of little Hans through the intermediary of the sister, who becomes his superior ego once she has become an image. With this key you can read the signification of each of his appraisals which from a certain point forth are voiced on the subject of little Hanna, including the admiring appraisals. They are not merely ironic. They are essential to the little other who is there across from him. He has her perform what will enable him to start to dominate the situation. Once little Hanna has been astride the fearsome horse long enough, little Hans will be able to start to fantasise that he too is taming the horse. It is right after this that there is the whipped horse. Little Hans is starting to experience the truth of the forewarning issued by Nietzsche – *Du gehst zu Frauen? Vergiß die Peitsche nicht!*

We are coming to a stop, but please don't read it as the essential part of the lesson that I wanted to bring you today. It's merely a cut-off point that was necessitated by the late hour to which this disquisition has led us.

5 June 1957

XXII

AN ESSAY IN RUBBER-SHEET LOGIC

Father in the Frigidaire
Sheaf and sickle
The paternal metaphor
The duplicated mother
An imaginary paternity

The academic year is wearing on, and we may hope that little Hans is nearing his end.

I should remind you here at the outset that this year we have set ourselves the goal of revising the notion of the object relation. I think it will not be misplaced briefly to take a step back so as to show you, not the ground that has been covered – one always covers some – but rather, I trust, a certain effect of demystification to which you know I am greatly attached in matters of analysis.

It seems to me that a minimum requirement in analytic formation is to realise that while man has to deal with his instincts – instincts that I credit, whatever some might say, including the death instinct – what analysis has brought us is, even so, the awareness that not everything can be summed up and encapsulated in a formula as simplistic and sanctimonious as the one to which we can commonly see psychoanalysts rallying, namely that, on the whole, everything is resolved when the subject's relations with his fellow man are, as they say, person-to-person relations and not relations with an object.

It is certainly not because I have been trying to show you here the real complexity of object relations that I would be led to loathe the expression *object relations*. Why shouldn't our fellow man be quite validly an object? I would even say, *thank heavens that he is an object*, because, in truth, in what analysis shows us, at the start he is commonly even less than an object. He is this thing that comes to fill the place of the signifier in our questioning, if indeed neurosis is what I've been saying and repeating that it is, namely a question.

An object is not such a straightforward matter. It's something that is assuredly to be conquered, and indeed, as Freud reminds us, it can never be conquered without first being lost. An object is always a re-conquest. Only by taking up once more a place that he initially dis-inhabits can man arrive at something that is improperly called his *wholeness*.

As far as the *person* is concerned, you surely realise that it is desirable that something should be established between our self and some subjects who do indeed represent the plenitude of the *person*. Yet this is precisely the terrain upon which it is hardest to advance. It is also the terrain upon which every kind of sideslip and confusion sets in. People commonly imagine that a *person* is something for which we recognise the right to say *I*, as we do for ourselves. However, we are clearly very much in a bind whenever it's a matter of saying *I* in the full sense, as has been powerfully highlighted by the analytic experience which has just what it takes to show us what we slide into whenever it's a matter of thinking about the other party as someone who says *I*. At such moments, we make him utter our own *I*, that is to say, we induce him into our own mirages.

In short, as I underscored for you last year at the end of my seminar on the psychoses, the hardest issue to come to grips with when it's a matter of encountering the *person* is not the *I*, but the *thou*. Everything indicates that this *thou* is the limit-signifier. It's the very thing in relation to which, when we're halfway to it, ultimately we always have to halt. Nevertheless, it is from this *thou* that we receive each investiture. It was not without reason that I brought last year's seminar to a close on *Thou art the one who wilt follow me . . . or who wilt not follow me . . . or who wilt do this . . . or not do this.*

If analysis is an experience that has shown us one thing, it's precisely that all inter-human relations are founded on this investiture that comes in effect from the Other. This Other is already within us in the form of the unconscious, but nothing can be accomplished in our development if not through this constellation that implies the absolute Other as the seat of speech. If the Oedipus complex has a meaning then it's precisely that it yields, as the fundament of our installation between the real and the symbolic, and of our progress, the existence of He who possesses the Word, of He who can speak, of the Father. To spell it right out, the Father concretises the Oedipus complex in a function that, I repeat, is itself essentially problematic. The question *What is the Father?* is ultimately a question that is posed at the heart of our analytic experience as an eternally unresolved questioning, at least for us analysts.

This is the point from which I should like today to take up Little Hans's problematic in order to show you where and in what way he

places himself in relation to what the Father is and is not. The question needs to taken up, however, from further back in the case history.

1

I shall start over by noting that the only locus from which a response may be uttered in a full and valid way to the question of the Father is the locus of a certain tradition. It's not the next *room* along, as I often say about the phenomenologies, but rather the next *door* along.

If the Father is to find somewhere its synthesis, its full meaning, then it's in a tradition that is known as a religious tradition. It's not without reason that over the course of history we have seen the Judeo-Christian tradition taking shape as the sole attempt to establish accord between the sexes upon the principle of an opposition between potentiality and actuality, which finds its mediation in a form of love. Outside of this tradition – let's put this carefully – any relationship with the object implies the third-party dimension that we can see articulated in Aristotle. It's a dimension that was thereafter eliminated by what I might call the apocryphal Aristotle, the Aristotle of a theology[1] that was attributed to him much later. Everyone knows that the *Theologia Aristotelis* exists and that it is apocryphal. The crucial Aristotelian term with respect to the whole constitution of the object, which stands in opposition to it, is the third term of privation, *στέρησις*.

The whole object relation such as it has been established in the analytic literature and in Freudian doctrine revolves around the notion of privation. Indeed, you have seen this because it was my point of departure at the start of the year. The notion of privation is absolutely central to this doctrine, and when we leave it out of account we cannot understand how the progressive integration into one's sex, as much for man as for woman, requires that one acknowledge something that essentially amounts to a privation that is to be taken on board for the one sex as for the other. This privation is to be taken on board equally in order fully to assume one's sex. In short, *Penisneid* on one side, the castration complex on the other.

Naturally, all of this joins up with the most immediate experience. It is fairly peculiar to see people taking up in a more or less camouflaged form, and which to a certain degree may be qualified as dishonest, the idea that all genital maturation entails an oblativity, a full recognition of the other party, by means of which the supposedly pre-set harmony between man and woman should be

established. Yet we can see very well that the day-to-day experience of this is its constant failure.

Go and tell a wife of this day and age that she is potentiality – as is said by the unknown theologian who went under the fictitious name of Aristotle throughout the whole medieval and scholastic tradition – and that you, the man, are actuality, you will receive a swift response. *Not on your life!* she will tell you, *do you take me for a pushover?* And this is surely quite clear. Woman has fallen into the midst of the same problems as us. There's no need to tackle the feminist or social aspect of the question. It's enough to cite the fine quatrain that Apollinaire fashioned for the profession of faith that comes out of the mouth of Theresa-Tiresias, or more precisely her husband, who says furtively to the policeman –

Je suis une honnête femme–monsieur
Ma femme est un homme–madame
Elle a emporté le piano le violon l'assiette au beurre
Elle est soldat ministre merdecin[2]

Certainly we need to be standing on our own two feet on the ground of our experience and to perceive that if analytic experience has made some headway into the problem that is most fully presentified by our whole experience of the development of life, even of neurosis, then it's precisely to the extent that it has been able to locate the relations between the sexes on their different echelons of object relation. But what does this mean? It means, as has been noted – and after all, not to see this amounts truly to nothing more than drawing over it a sort of veil of the lowest form of modesty, a false modesty – that if analysis has led to progress in one thing, then it's very precisely on the plane of what needs to be called by its name, *eroticism.*

It is on this plane that the relations between the sexes do indeed come effectively to be elucidated, in so far as they are to be found on the path of something that is a fusion, a realisation, a response to the question posed by the subject regarding his sex, and in so far as he is both something that has entered the world and that, as for the rest, he is never satisfied by it, namely the infamous and perfect oblativity in which the ideal harmony between man and woman is purported ultimately to be found. We only ever find this on a distant horizon that doesn't even allow us to name it as one of the goals to be accomplished in analysis.

To afford a wholesome prospect on what is involved in the progress of our investigation we need to see that in the relation between man and woman, once it has been established, a gap still lies wide open. Something of this must ultimately remain admissible in the

eyes of the philosopher, that is to say, the one who always plays his cards right. It's that, after all, woman, namely the *wife*, essentially holds the function that she held for Socrates, to wit – the test of his forbearance, his forbearance of the real.

To enter more vividly into what is set further to punctuate what I'm asserting, and which will bring us back to little Hans, I'm going to share with you a titbit that one of my most excellent friends spotted and brought to my attention. It's a small news item that reached us a fortnight ago from the depths of America concerning a woman bound to her husband by a pact of eternal love, and you're about to see how.

Since her husband's death, this woman has borne, every ten months, one of his children. This may strike you as rather surprising, but it's no parthenogenetic phenomenon. On the contrary, it's a matter of artificial insemination. Vowed as she was to eternal fidelity, by the time a fatal illness had led her husband to his last breath, she had accumulated a sufficient stock of seminal fluid to allow her to perpetuate the race of the deceased at her own discretion, and, as you can see, in the shortest possible timeframe, at regularly repeated intervals.

We were made to wait for this little piece of news, which doesn't sound like such a big deal, though we might have anticipated it. In truth, it's the most riveting illustration we could possibly find of what I've been calling the *x* of paternity, because I think that you are quite able to form a grasp of the problems that such a possibility introduces. Here you have an illustration of what I've been saying when I've been telling you that the symbolic father is the dead father. However, the novelty that is here introduced, and which has just what it takes to highlight the importance of my remark, is that in this case the real father is the dead father as well.

From this moment forth, it really would be very interesting to ask oneself what becomes of the Oedipus complex in such a case. On the plane that lies closest to our experience it would be easy to come out with a few quips on what lies behind the term *frigid woman*. As the latter-day saying goes, *femme froide, mari refroidi. Frigid wife, husband on ice*. I might also mention in this connection a slogan one of my friends came up with for a TV advertisement. It's true that he had considerable difficulty getting the slogan accepted by British minds, but this is precisely where its worth lies. Picture a coolly attractive housewife, and then the voiceover, *Tracey has a frigid air*, before the shot cuts to her Frigidaire. This is very much how matters stand in the previous case.

The question that is wonderfully illustrated here is that the real notion of the father is not to be confounded in any case with the

notion of his fecundity. We can clearly see here that the issue lies elsewhere, and surely we cannot help but see it when we ask ourselves the question of what becomes of the notion of the Oedipus complex. I will leave it to you to extrapolate. Once one has committed to this path, in a hundred years' time we will be making women the mothers of children who are the direct sons of the men of genius alive today, who will have been carefully preserved in little jars. The question arises, therefore, if something of the father has been cut out in this instance, and in the most radical way, by cutting out his speech, then how and by what path, in what fashion, will the speech of the ancestor be inscribed into the child's psyche? Ultimately, the mother will be the sole representative and conveyer of this speech, so how will she give voice to the bottled ancestor?

As you can see, this is not science fiction. It simply has the advantage of laying bare for us one of the dimensions of the problem. This is being said as a parenthesis, because just now I was speaking on the theme of an ideal solution to the problem of marriage, at the next door along. It would be interesting to see how, now that this problem of posthumous insemination by a consecrated husband has been made present, the Church will find a means of taking a position on this. In truth, were the Church to refer to what it pushes to the fore in similar cases, namely the fundamental character of natural practices, it could be remarked that such a practice has been made possible precisely to the extent that we have managed to set Nature apart from all that is not Nature. From this point forth, perhaps the term *natural* ought to be given greater precision, and of course one would then come round to accentuating the great artifice of what thus far has been known as Nature. In a word, we might not be unhelpful at this moment as a term of reference. By the same token, perhaps our good friend Françoise Dolto, or one of her students, will even become a Church Father.

The distinction between the imaginary, the symbolic and the real might not suffice to posit the terms of this problem, which, now that it has been engaged in reality, doesn't appear to me to be all that close to resolution. However, this story will make it easier for us to formulate – which is what I desire to do today – the term under which may be inscribed, not in itself, but for the subject, the sanctioning of the function of the father.

2

Once we have let in this gust of air that strips the décor from the columns, it becomes apparent to us that any kind of introduction

to the paternal function belongs to the realm of metaphorical experience. I am going to illustrate this for you, not by overburdening you with new items, but by recalling for you the heading under which last year I introduced what here I've been calling *metaphor*.

Metaphor is the function, the use of the signifying chain, which unfolds not in its *connective* dimension – in which any metonymic usage of the signifying chain is installed – but in its dimension of *substitution*. I didn't go any further when hunting out my example than something that is within everyone's reach, the Quillet dictionary, from which I took the first example listed, namely the line of verse by Hugo, *Sa gerbe n'était point avare ni haineuse*.[3]

You will tell me that fortune is favouring me, after what has come our way in my demonstration, like a ring slipped onto a finger. I would reply that any metaphor could serve as an analogous demonstration, but I'm going to repeat this one because it's specifically what leads us back to our subject of phobia.

What is meant by metaphor?

It is not, as the Surrealists say, the passing of the poetic spark between two terms that are as imaginarily remote as can be. Admittedly, this definition sounds right, because it's quite clear that it's not a question of this poor sheaf being *avare* or *haineuse*. Indeed, it's about the very human strangeness of explaining oneself in this way, by relating subject to attribute though the intermediary of a negation, a negation that stands, of course, against the backdrop of a possible affirmation. To spell it right out, it's not a question of the sheaf being neither *avare* nor *haineuse*, because *meanness* and *hatefulness* are attributes that belong to Boaz no less than to the sheaf. Boaz turns one and the other to use, suitably employing these properties as he does his merits, without asking their opinion or their feelings.

The two things between which metaphorical creation is produced are what is being explained under the term *sa gerbe* and the term for which *sa gerbe* is substituted, namely the gentleman who has been spoken of just a moment before in balanced terms, and whose name is Boaz. The *gerbe*, the sheaf, has taken his place, a somewhat cumulative place where he is already endued with these qualities of being neither *avare* nor *haineux*, having cleared out a certain number of negative virtues. This is where the sheaf comes in his stead and literally cancels him out for a moment. Here we meet again the schema of the symbol *qua* death of the thing. It's even better here, because the name of the protagonist is abolished and his sheaf comes as a substitute for him.

If there is metaphor here, if this has a meaning, if this is a phase

of pastoral poetry, then it's very precisely because his sheaf, that is to say, something that is essentially natural, can be substituted for him. And then Boaz reappears, after having been eclipsed, occulted, abolished, by the fecund splendour of the sheaf. Indeed, it knows neither meanness nor hatefulness, and is purely and simply a natural fecundity.

This bears its meaning in the following part of the poem. What is at issue is to herald and to announce to Boaz, in the ensuing dream, how despite his advanced age – as he says himself, he is over eighty years old – he is soon to be a father. He dreams that he

vit un chêne
Qui, sorti de son ventre, allait jusqu'au ciel bleu ;
Une race y montait comme une longue chaine ;
Un roi chantait en bas, en haut mourait un dieu.[4]

Any creation of a new meaning in human culture is essentially metaphoric. It's a matter of a substitution which at the same time maintains what it is substituting. In the tension between what is abolished or suppressed and what is substituted for it, this novel thing comes about that introduces so visibly what is being developed by the poetic improvisation. The new dimension that in this instance is manifestly incarnated by this Boazian myth is the function of paternity.

Admittedly, the aging Hugo is, as usual, far from walking always the meticulous path. He dodders somewhat left, right and centre, but what is quite clear is that

Pendant qu'il sommeillait, Ruth, une moabite,
S'était couchée aux pieds de Booz, le sein nu,
Espérant on ne sait quel rayon inconnu,
Quand viendrait du réveil la lumière subite.[5]

The style of this extract lies in an ambiguous zone where the realism blends with some sort of gleam that is a little too intense, even turbid, redolent of the chiaroscuro in Caravaggio's paintings which, with all their popular starkness, are perhaps still in our times what can afford us most frankly a sense of the sacred dimension.

So, a little further on, the same thing is still at stake –

Immobile, ouvrant l'œil à moitié sous ses voiles,
Quel dieu, quel moissonneur de l'éternel été
Avait, en s'en allant, négligemment jeté
Cette faucille d'or dans le champ des étoiles.[6]

Neither in my teaching of last year, nor in what I have recently written on the sheaf in the poem about Boaz and Ruth, did I push the investigation up to the final point to which the poet develops the metaphor. I left the sickle out of account because, outside of the context of what we are doing here, readers might have found it a little forced. I think, however, that you cannot fail to be struck by how the whole poem points towards one image, the intuitive and comparative character of which has been a cause of wonder for nigh on a century.

It has to do with the first waxing crescent of the moon, but you cannot help but notice that if this thing carries weight, if it is something more than a lovely stroke of paint, a touch of golden yellow on the deep blue sky, then it's very precisely in so far as this sky-bound sickle is the eternal sickle of maternity, the one that has already played its role between Cronus and Uranus, between Zeus and Cronus. It's the potentiality I was speaking about earlier, which is fully represented in woman's mystical expectancy.

With the sickle that is lying around in her arm's reach, this gleaner will effectively cut the sheaf in question, the one from which the lineage of the Messiah will spring forth.

Our little Hans, in the creation, development and resolution of his phobia, can inscribe himself properly into the equation only on the basis of these terms.

Note if you will that here in the Oedipus complex we have something in the place of *x*, where the child stands, with all his problems in relation to the mother, M. In so far as something will be produced that is set to constitute the paternal metaphor, this signifier-element can be placed which is so essential in all individual development and which is called *the castration complex*. As I have said, this holds as much for woman as for man.

Therefore, we have to posit the following equation –

$$\left(\frac{\mathrm{P}}{x}\right) \mathrm{M} \sim \mathfrak{Z} + s$$

P is the paternal metaphor.

The *x* is more or less elided, depending on the case, that is, depending on the moment of development and the problems to which the preoedipal period has led the child in relation to the mother, M.

It is in the link of the Oedipal metaphor that, with the phase that is crucial to any concept of the object, we can thus inscribe a crescent C or a sickle – its constitutive castration complex – plus something that is precisely the signification, *s*, that is to say, that in which Being finds itself again, and where *x* finds its solution.

The formula situates the essential moment of the crossing of the Oedipus complex. This is exactly what we are dealing with in the case

of little Hans. As I explained, having reached a particular degree of development, there arises the insoluble problem constituted by the fact that the mother is something as complex as the following formula, with all the complications it brings with it –

$$(M + \varphi + \alpha)$$

This, which is to be read *Mother plus phallus plus a for Hanna*, designates the impasse that Hans has reached. He cannot get out of it because there is no Father. There is nothing to metaphorise his relations with his mother. To spell it right out, there is no way out on the side of the sickle, on the side of the capital C of the castration complex. There is no possibility of a mediation, that is to say, of losing his penis then to find it again.

On the other side of the equation, he finds only the possible biting of his mother, which is the same mordaciousness with which he rushes up to her voraciously whenever he misses her. There is no other real relationship with the mother besides the one that is being highlighted by the whole of the contemporary theory of analysis, namely the relationship of devoration. In so far as he has arrived at this deadlock, he knows no other relationship with the real besides the one that is called, rightly or wrongly, oral-sadistic. This is what I am writing with a lower-case m. Indeed, it is m plus everything that is real for him at this moment, in particular the real that comes to light and which cannot help but complicate the situation, namely Π, his own penis. This is set out in the following formula –

$$(M + \varphi + \alpha)\, M \sim m + \Pi$$

Once the problem is presenting itself to him in this way, it is necessary for this element of metaphorical mediation to be introduced – for there is no other – in the form of the horse, noted Ί [for *Ἵππος*] with its *spiritus asper*. The inauguration of the phobia is thus inscribed into the same formula I have just laid out –

$$\left(\frac{\text{Ί}}{M + \varphi + \alpha}\right) M \sim m + \Pi$$

This will be the equivalent of something that will not for all that be any the more resolved, namely the mordaciousness insomuch as for little Hans it is the chief danger in his whole reality, and most especially the reality that has just come to the surface, namely his genital reality.

This might seem superficial to you. Don't believe it. Start by making

use of these formulae and you will see afterwards whether they can indeed be helpful. I can show you umpteen facets across which they are immediately applicable, and in particular the following.

The horse is said to be at once what bites, what threatens the penis, and also what falls. According to what little Hans himself tells us, this is why the horse has been brought into play. It was brought in first of all as the horse that, standing in front of the cart that was to take Lizzi's luggage to the station, turns its head and is capable of biting. It was then, on 1 March, that Hans told us he *got the nonsense*. At another point, on 5 April, Hans also tells us that he got the nonsense when, out with his mother, he saw a bus-horse fall down. More exactly, that which is *hitched* already has a signification for Hans, yet has also been retained by him as something that goes far beyond any signification, as something that he sanctions through a kind of aphorism or definitional assertion, *Now it'll always be like this. All horses in buses'll fall down.*

The function of the fall is precisely the term that is common to everything that is at issue in the lower portion of the equation. We have underscored the element of the mother's fall, the mother's phallus, φ, which is what is no longer tenable. It's no longer in play, and yet Hans does all he can to keep up the existence of this game. In the end, little Hanna is very essentially the thing whose fall is most wished for, even if it means giving her a little push.

So, the horse fulfils in an efficient way, as an image that is somehow active, each of these functions of the fall united in one. It is in this respect that it starts to be introduced as an essential term, as the term of the phobia in which we can see an asserting and a positing of what truly are objects for the human psyche.

They may indeed warrant the name *object*, but one cannot overemphasise the special character of this qualification as an object which it is necessary to introduce once the objects we are dealing with are phobias or fetishes. We do know how far they exist as objects, because they will constitute veritable milestones in the subject's psyche. They are milestones of desire in the case of the fetish, milestones of the subject's displacements in the case of phobia. The object is therefore very much in the real and at the same time manifestly distinct from it. On the other hand, it is in no way accessible to conceptualisation unless through the intermediary of this signifying formalisation.

Let's state it clearly. Thus far, no more satisfactory conceptualisation has been given. While I might seem to be presenting the formula for the object in a slightly more complicated shape than has ever been done before, I point out to you that Freud speaks of it no differently at the end of his life's work. Looking afresh at phobia in *Hemmung,*

Symptom und Angst, he plainly states that the horse – because he takes little Hans again as an example – is an object that has been substituted for all the images and all the addled significations that have been rather poorly isolated and into which the subject doesn't manage to decant his anxiety. Freud makes it an almost arbitrary object, and this is why he calls it a *signal*. Thanks to this, in this field of confusions, limits will be defined that, however arbitrary they may be, introduce no less the element of delimitation that will ensure, at least potentially, the beginning of an order, the first crystal of an organised crystallisation between the symbolic and the real.

This is in effect what will be produced over the course of Hans's progressing analysis, if indeed we can call what occurs in Hans's case an *analysis* in the full sense of the term. The psychoanalysts don't yet seem to have understood – at least not when you read Dr Jones – that Freud had a few reservations about the case, saying that it was quite exceptional in that the child's father was the one who brought it about and saw it through, although steered by Freud. As a consequence, Freud was to ground very little on the possible extension of this method. The analysts seem to be surprised by Freud's diffidence here. They would do better to take a closer look and ask themselves whether, given the fact that the analysis was conducted by the father, it might not present specific features that exclude, at least partially, the specifically transferential dimension. In other words, isn't the usual yarn proffered by Miss Anna Freud, to the effect that no transference is possible in child analyses, applicable precisely in this case, because the father is involved?

It is only too evident that in any child analysis practised by an analyst there is well and truly a transference just as there is in adults, and perhaps a better one than elsewhere. Something rather particular is at issue here, the consequences of which we shall be led to show in the next part.

Be that as it may, the formula allows us to scan in the most rigorous way the full progress of the father's intervention.

I think I will be able to show you next time how this formula really allows us to grasp why some of the father's interventions do not bear fruit while, on the contrary, others rock the mythical transformation into motion.

3

Across its development, the case of little Hans displays the transformations of this equation, while its possibilities of progress and its implicit metaphorical richness are made manifest right away. For

today, I shall content myself with indicating its furthest and final extent, such as it is written into the same formalisation. I've already told you enough for you to be able to conceive of its scope.

What we see at the end is certainly a solution that establishes little Hans in a register of object relations that is liveable. Is it fully successful from the standpoint of Oedipal integration? Before coming back to this more closely next time, we can already see in what way it is and in what way it isn't.

If we read the text where little Hans formulates his position at the end, he tells us, *now I'm the Daddy, jetzt bin ich der Vatti.* We don't need to ask ourselves how it can be that he should have had this idea, given the father whom he is forced to stimulate throughout the observation, begging him to do his job as a father. The final and very fine fantasy that is produced with the father shows him somehow catching up with Hans on the train platform when in reality Hans had raced on ahead some time hence, having set off with whom? As if by chance, it was the grandmother.

The first thing that his father asks him is, *What would you like to do if you were Daddy?* The reply comes straight out, *I'd like to take you to Lainz every Sunday*, to see the Lainz grandmother. Nothing has changed in the relationship between father and son. We may presume, therefore, that this is not an altogether typical realisation of the Oedipus complex.

Indeed, if we know how to read the text we can see this very quickly. All the bonds with the father are a long way from being broken. They are even being strongly tied through all of this analytic experience. However, as little Hans puts it very well, his father is now to be the grandfather. He says this, but when does he say it? Read the text carefully. He said it when he had begun by saying that he, Hans, was the father.

The term *grandfather* stands utterly apart here. First the mother is mentioned, and we are going to see what sort of mother she will be. Then another woman is mentioned – the grandmother. But there is no link whatsoever between this grandfather and this grandmother from little Hans's perspective in itself.

Freud is surely not wrong to underscore, with a satisfaction that is far from offering us full relief, that the question of the Oedipus complex has been resolved by the little chap, now making himself the mother's husband and sending his father back to the grandmother. It's an elegant and even humorous way of sidestepping the question, but thus far nothing in all that Freud has written indicates that this solution, however cogent it might appear, could be regarded as a typical solution to the Oedipus complex.

What we can see is that little Hans maintains a certain continuity

in the order of lineages. Had this point at least not been reached, little Hans would have resolved nothing at all and the function of the phobia would have been null. In so far as he conceives of himself as the father, little Hans is a function of something that is inscribed approximately as follows –

$$p\,(M)\,(M')$$

It's the mother and the grandmother. At the end of the process, the mother is duplicated. This is a very important point. Little Hans has recognised something that allows him to find a three-legged equipoise, which is the minimum upon which the relation with the object can be established. The thirdness that he has not found in his father is now found in the grandmother, whose absolutely decisive and indeed overwhelming value in the object relations he has spotted only too well.

It's precisely insomuch as, behind the mother, a second is added, that little Hans establishes himself in a paternity. What sort of paternity? Well, an imaginary paternity.

What does Hans tell us next? Who will have children? Well, he will. He says it very clearly. But when his father, putting his foot in it, asks him, *Will you have children with Mummy?* Hans replies, *Not at all. What's this all about? You told me that the father cannot have children on his own, and now you want me to have some.*

There is a moment of wavering in the dialogue between the child and his father, which is quite striking and which shows the repressed aspect, for little Hans, of everything that belongs to the realm of paternal creation as such, when what he voices on the contrary from this moment forth is precisely that he will have children, but imaginary children.

He says in the most precise and articulate manner that he wishes to have children, but on another side he doesn't want his mother to have any. Hence the assurances he wants to secure for the future. For the mother not to have any more children, anything is thinkable, up to and including the bribing – despite everything we are in the presence of a sprog of capitalists – of the great genitor par excellence, the stork, who cuts such a strange figure. Next time we shall be seeing what place and what function ought to be ascribed to the stork and what his true face is. Hans would go so far as to bribe the stork so that there would be no more real children.

The paternal function that the child takes on board is an imaginary one. The mother has been replaced and he will have children as she does. He will look after his imaginary children in the way that he

has managed completely to resolve the notion of the child, including the notion of young Hanna.

In what does all of his fantasy consist, with the box, the stork, and little Hanna who already existed long before her birth? It's a matter of imaginarising his sister, of fantasmatising her. So, he will have fantasmatic children. He will become a character who is essentially a poet, a creator in the imaginary order.

He will give the last of his imaginary creations the name *Lodi*. The father takes great interest in this. *How did you hit upon the name Lodi?* he asks. *Perhaps you mean a Schokolodi? No*, replies Hans, *a Saffalodi*. Indeed, *Saffalodi* relates back to *Saffaladi*, a kind of saveloy sausage. The phalloform character of the image indicates very well the imaginary transmutation that has been brought about by the phallus that is both unreturned and eternally imagined by the mother. We see it reproduced at the end in the shape of little Lodi.

For Hans, woman will never be anything other than the fantasy of these little sister-girls around whom his entire childhood crisis is set to revolve. This is not altogether a fetish, because equally this will be the true fetish, if I may say so. He won't stop at what is inscribed on the veil. Rather, he will find again the typical heterosexual form of his object, but this will not prevent his relationship with women being thenceforth and doubtless forever marked by the narcissistic genesis in the course of which he has found a way to place himself in an orthoposition in relation to the female partner. To say it all, the female partner will not have been generated on the basis of the mother, but on the basis of the imaginary children that he can make with the mother and who themselves are heirs to the phallus around which revolved the whole primordial game of the love relation, of the captivation of love in the mother's regard.

So, in reference to our equation, we ultimately have on the one hand the assertion of Hans's relationship as a new father, as the *Vatti*, with a maternal lineage, and on the other hand little Hanna riding the horse and taking a dominant position in relation to the whole convoy, in relation to the whole train, to everything that the mother trails behind her.

Indeed, it is through the intermediary of little Hanna that little Hans has come to do what we said he was doing last time, that is to say, to dominate the mother, not simply to whip her, but, as the next part of the case history shows us, to see what she has in her belly. Once the little castrating penknife has been extracted, she is far more innocuous.

$$p\,(M)\,(M') \sim \left(\frac{\alpha}{\varphi}\right) \Pi$$

This is the formula that, in contrast to the previous one, marks the point of arrival of little Hans's transformation.

He will surely have every appearance of a normal heterosexual. Nevertheless, the path he will have taken through the Oedipus complex in order to arrive at this is an atypical path, linked to the father's shortcoming. You might be stunned at how great this shortcoming is, but the main thrust of the observation constantly shows us the father's faults and flaws which are underscored from one moment to the next by the appeals of little Hans himself. So, there is certainly no need to be stunned at how this shortcoming leaves the mark of a terminal atypia on the progress and resolution of the phobia.

I ask you simply to keep these two furthermost terms in mind, so as to see that it is possible and conceivable to try to articulate the transformation of one into the other through a series of stages.

Doubtless we ought not to be overly systematic here. This brand of logic is a new one. If it is to be pursued, perhaps it should merely be to introduce a certain number of questions regarding its formalism. Does it share the same laws with what has already been formalised in other domains of logic?

Freud, in the *Traumdeutung*, had already initiated something that tells us about the logic of the unconscious, in other words signifiers in the unconscious. This is certainly not the same as the logic that we are accustomed to handling. A generous quarter of the *Traumdeutung* is devoted essentially to showing a number of crucial logical articulations. *Either/or*, contradiction and causality, can be transported into the order of the unconscious. This logic may be distinct from our usual logic. Since topology is a rubber-sheet geometry, here it's a matter of rubber-sheet logic.

Rubber-sheet does not mean that everything is possible therein. Until further notice, nothing allows us to unlink two interconnected rings, even rubber ones. This remark is intended to show you that rubber-sheet logic is not doomed to complete and utter freedom. It requires us to define a certain number of terms and these definitions will have to be provided.

In short, what we can see appearing at the end of the resolution of little Hans's phobia is a particular configuration that is organised as follows. Despite the presence and even the insistence of the paternal action, little Hans inscribes himself into a matriarchal lineage of sorts, or to be more straightforward, and stricter too, a maternal duplication, as though it were necessary that there should be a third person, and that for want of it being the father, it should be the notorious grandmother.

On the other hand, what is it that brings him into relation with

the object that henceforth will be the object of his desires? I have already underlined how we have testimony in the anamnesis of something that attaches him essentially to Gmunden, to his little sister, to the little girls, that is to say, to children insomuch as they are his mother's daughters, but also his own imaginary daughters. The originally narcissistic structure of his relationships with woman is indicated on the way out, with the opening out onto the solution of his phobia. What trace will remain of the passage through the phobia? Well, something very curious – the role of the little lamb, with which at the end he engages in some rather peculiar games, for example being butted by the animal.

This is the little lamb onto which one day someone tried to put his sister. That is to say, she was in the same position as the horseback position that she holds in the fantasy of the *big box*, the last stage before the resolution of the phobia. The sister had to dominate it first, so that he, little Hans, might then treat the horse as it warrants being treated, that is, by whacking it. At this point, the equivalence between the horse and the mother is secured – to beat the horse is also to beat his mother. The little sister sitting astride the little lamb is a configuration that will remain through to the end.

I cannot forego the pleasure, nor decline you the enigma, of showing you the work around which our master Freud made his analysis of Leonardo da Vinci revolve, namely, not the *Virgin of the Rocks*, but *The Virgin and Child with St Anne* that is in the Louvre and which was preceded by a cartoon that is in Burlington House, this one here.

Freud's whole analysis of Leonardo da Vinci turns around this Saint Anne, who has such a strangely androgynous figure – moreover, she looks like Leonardo's *St John the Baptist* – around the Virgin, and around the Christ child. Furthermore, as is stressed in the study, unlike the London Cartoon, His cousin, namely John the Baptist, is precisely a little lamb.

This highly singular configuration did not fail to attract Freud's attention and it is truly the core of his demonstration in the very peculiar study *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood*. I do hope that you will take the trouble to read it before the end of the year, because I might manage to bring my seminar to a close with this.

You cannot help but notice the incredibly enigmatic character of the whole situation in which the term *narcissism* is introduced for the first time and the almost insensate audacity of writing such a thing at the time it was written. Since then we have managed to scotomise, to misrecognise, the existence of such things in Freud's oeuvre.

Read it, and you will realise just how difficult it is to work out what ultimately it is he wants to manage to say. But also read it to see the extent to which it holds water, in spite of all its errors – because errors there are, but that's of no moment.

We will have to come back to this singular configuration, which is there to present us with a *humanissima Trinità*, a very human trinity that is almost too human, in contrast to the *divinissima* that it substitutes.

What I wanted to present to you as a toothing stone is the peculiar necessity of a fourth term, which here we meet as a residue in the shape of the lamb, this animal term in which we meet again the very term of the phobia.

19 June 1957

XXIII

'ME DONNERA SANS FEMME UNE PROGÉNITURE'

From intersubjectivity to discourse
The object as a function of the signifier
Phobic metaphor
From biting to unscrewing
Hanna, mistress of the horse

Freud tells us that the truth about Hans was not fully obtained. What is to be done now is to formalise the observation slightly differently, the sole interest of which lies in how it allows for a more rigorous clasping and enveloping of what is going on.

There are, of course, all these French windows in the observation, and since it also has to do with a horse phobia one could for example babble on endlessly about the horse, because it's a highly singular animal, the same that crops up regularly in all mythology and which can be validly compared with little Hans's horse.

Robert Fliess, the son of Freud's correspondent who occupies an honourable place in psychoanalysis, has produced in the jubilee issue of the *IJP* commemorating the centenary of Freud's birth a worthy study under the title *Phylogenetic Vs. Ontogenetic Experience*. Certainly, it is inordinately striking on account of its character of manifest incompatibility. Since there are unresolved riddles in the Hans case, he ventures to resolve them by contributing to the file a vast extrapolation, the only completely unjustified drawback of which is that it assumes something to have been resolved that precisely has not been resolved.

One of the most riveting things is to see how he focuses everything, quite validly, on the infamous dialogue between little Hans and his father, the one that I have called the *major dialogue* and which culminates on 21 April. It's the one during which little Hans appeals to his father to play his role as a father by saying, *You must be jealous*. One cannot help but think that his father has played a

role in the emergence of this sentence, which you can sense brewing up in everything that precedes it. Whatever happens, and whatever unnerved negations his father may utter, *das muß wahr sein, it must be true.*

These are the words that bring a dialogue to a close in which little Hans develops the fantasy of his father who, before arriving in the mother's bedroom, hurts his foot on a stone as did previously little Fritzl. The father has to *knock up against a stone and bleed.* Our author, Fliess, insists with great finesse on the use of words that lend what little Hans is saying a *style soutenu* – in French in the text – more *soutenu* here than anywhere else. In this regard he brings out clearly the inadequacies of the English translation. These remarks, which surely have their value, show the sensitivity that people from the first analytic generation have shown to the properly verbal texture, to the accentuation of certain signifiers and their crucial role, but the most interesting thing in his text is its rather astute speculation on the father's role on this occasion.

Indeed, the father is the one who introduces for the first time the word *Schimpfen*, which has been translated [into English] as *scold. Weshalb schimpf ich denn eigentlich?* is rendered as *What do I really scold you for?* Fliess rightly notes that this *is injected into the conversation precipitately and from nowhere*, and speculates on what participation might be occurring on the part of the father in what at that moment is assumed to be a *constituent part* of Hans's ego. All of this does not add up to an overly brazen extrapolation, conveying instead the need that the author feels to tell us that Hans's superego is being constituted at that moment. Indeed, it must be like this because it is already implied in a sort of preformed register that has to be applied to the case. Either way, there is something here that allows us to grasp, there and then, his hesitations in his way of expressing himself. Fliess speaks of *a superego in statu nascendi.* Certainly Hans's superego has not yet been formed.

The forming of the superego is something strange indeed. The author refers to the work of Mr Isakower, who insisted a great deal on the predominance of the auditory sphere in the formation of the superego and who foresaw the whole problem that we have been posing and constantly posing again with respect to the function of speech in the genesis of a certain normative crisis that we call the Oedipus complex. He made equally interesting and pertinent remarks about how we can grasp the mounting of this kind of apparatus, this network of forms that constitutes the superego, perceiving it in elements in which the subject hears purely syntactic modulations, in words that are strictly speaking empty because their movement alone is at issue. He tells us that in these movements of

some intensity we can grasp, there and then, something that must refer back to an altogether archaic element. The child integrates the adult's speech, but will perceive only its structure and not yet its meaning. All in all, it's a matter of interiorisation. This is purported to be the first form of what will allow us to envisage what the superego is, properly speaking.

It's another interesting remark and in a seminar context it could be grouped together with the dialogue between Hans and his father, but not in order to find therein something that would match up neatly. On the one hand it's a matter of the integration of speech in its overall movement, in its fundamental structure as the grounding of an internal agency of the superego. On the other, there is the precise moment of the dialogue with his father, which is wholly externalised. The former can certainly not be matched fully to the latter, even though one might believe that its paradoxes would thereby be sealed over.

While we should always be seeking comprehensive references for what we are describing, I will stress now the necessity of doing something that brings out a point of progression in the handling of concepts of the analytic experience, and of doing so by grasping as closely as possible the movement of the observation on little Hans.

1

Everything that we have done thus far hinges on a number of postulates from our earlier commentaries, which are not *absolutely* postulates. These included a great deal of work of commentary and reflection on what the analytic experience puts before us. One of the postulates is that neurosis is a question posed by the subject at the level of his very existence. *What does it mean to be of the sex that I am?* Or *What does it mean to be of one sex? What does it mean that I can even ask myself this question?* Indeed, the introduction of the symbolic dimension means that man is not simply male or female but that he has to situate himself in relation to something symbolised that is called *male* or *female.*

While neurosis refers back to this, it does so in a way that is more woeful still in obsessional neurosis where it is not only a matter of the subject's relation to his sex but also of his relation to the very fact of existing. *What does it mean to exist? How can I relate to the one that I am without being him, since I can somehow do without him?*

While neurosis is thus a sort of closed question for the subject himself, even though it is one that is organised and structured as a question, it is quite certain that we can also form a finer understand-

ing of how symptoms are the living elements of this question that is articulated without the subject knowing what he articulates. The question is a living one, so to speak, and the subject doesn't know that he is in the question. He is often an element of the question, and can be situated at various levels – at an altogether elementary and almost alphabetic level, but also at a higher syntactical level. It is within this register that we may speak of the *hypnopompic* and *hypnagogic* function.[1] On this basis, starting from the idea that the linguists have given us – at least certain among them – we can discern the two major aspects of the articulation of language. What makes it hard for us to be wholly in keeping with the linguists in our commentary on the observation is that we always have to refrain from pitching in a way that is overly absolute for one or the other of the two sides of what is put before us.

For there to be an observation we have to begin by analysing. Since what is specific to the neurotic's question is that it is totally closed, there is no reason for it to offer up anything more to he who would merely make a sort of rubbing of this hieroglyphic text that will remain undecipherable and enigmatic. This is why, before Freud came along, observations of neuroses had been made for decades without people even suspecting the existence of this language. For neurosis is a language.

Therefore, it is always in so far as something intervenes that is the beginning of a decipherment that we manage precisely to grasp its transformations and to see the manipulations that would be necessary when it comes to confirming that what is really involved is a text, but a text in which we find ourselves by means of a certain number of structures that become apparent only insomuch as we grapple with it.

We can do this at the simple level of decoupage, as is done for riddles. In some respects, this is how we proceed in particularly impenetrable and enigmatic cases, not altogether unlike what we find set out in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, which reminds us of common practices for deciphering telegrams, even when they have been sent in a style that is coded or scrambled. One can even tally the signs that recur with the greatest frequency, which allows us to make interesting suppositions, namely that such and such a sign corresponds to such and such a letter in whichever tongue is supposed as the object language.

With the neuroses we are fortunately involved in operations of a higher order, where we meet certain syntactical groupings with which we are familiar. Yet the danger is always that one could go wrong by entifying these syntactical groupings, pressing them too heavily towards what might be called *properties of the soul*, even

pushing them a little too far in the direction of a sort of natural instinctualisation. This would be to fail to perceive that what suddenly comes to dominate is the organising nexus that lends some of these groupings the value of a unit of signification, which is commonly called a *word*. It was in this sense that I recently alluded to the infamous identification of the boy with his mother, and I tell you now that the general fact of an identification such as this can only ever be made in relation to the overall movement of analytic progress. As Freud points out emphatically in the observation on little Hans – it's on page 319 of the German text – *kann der Weg der Analyse niemals den Entwicklungsgang der Neurose wiederholen, the course of the analysis can never follow that of the development of the neurosis.*

Now we have arrived at the heart of the matter. In our effort of decipherment we must follow what has effectively been woven into the text, and this text is itself subject to the use of an element from the subject's past in a current situation, as a signifier-element for example. Here we have one of the clearest forms of the *x* of a condensation. It is quite certain that when we broach the signifier-element we cannot at that moment cut ourselves off from the fact that it breaks down into two terms, two points that lie very far apart in the subject's history, yet we have to resolve these things in the mode of organisation in which they currently stand. This is what allows us and indeed compels us to seek out laws that are specific to the solution of each of these organised discourses, in keeping with whichever pattern by which the neuroses might present themselves to us.

However, while there is organised discourse there is also something else that comes to complicate matters and this is the way in which a dialogue gets under way so as to offer a solution to the discourse. This cannot be done without us offering the place we hold as the locus in which a share of the terms of this discourse must be realised. In principle, simply by virtue of being a discourse, it entails somewhere, initially in a virtual form, the Other that is in sum the place, the witness, the guarantor and the ideal locus of its good faith.

It is precisely here that we place ourselves and it is on this basis that we will see these elements of the subject's unconscious coming to light, that is to say, terms that will take up the place we hold. This is how we will be called into the revelatory dialogue. The meaning of the discourse will be formulated through a dialogue that progressively decrypts it by showing us what function is held by the personage whose place we occupy. This is what is called *transference*.

The said personage cannot help but change over the course of the analysis, and this is how we try to uncover the meaning of the dis-

course. So, indeed, we are the ones, inasmuch as we are integrated as a *person*, as a signifier-element, who are positioned, and lastingly so, in such a way as to resolve the meaning of the discourse of neurosis.

It is crucial always to keep these two planes of intersubjectivity in sight as the fundamental structure through which the history of the decrypting will develop. This must always be situated at its proper place in an observation.

In the case of little Hans, we had to highlight the complexity of the relationship with his father. Let's not forget that his father was the one who carried out the analysis. Therefore, this is the real, actual father dialoguing with his child. So, this is already a father who possesses speech, but beyond him there is the father to whom this speech is revealed as witness to its truth. This superior father is the almighty father who is represented by Freud, and this is something that cannot help but lend the observation an altogether essential characteristic that bears note. The structure involved here is to be mapped out in any kind of relationship between the one being analysed and the analyst. Likewise, this sort of higher agency is so inherent to the paternal personage or the paternal function that it tends always to be reproduced in one way or another.

This is precisely what makes for the specificity of the time when the patient was dealing with father Freud himself. On that occasion, the duplication didn't exist because the higher authority didn't exist behind him, and the patient had a strong sense that across from him was someone who had made a new universe of signification loom up. This new relationship between man and his own meaning and condition is precisely what he was faced with. And it was there to be used by him. This explains what appears paradoxical to us in the sometimes very stunning results that Freud obtained, and also in the very stunning patterns of intervention he employed in his technique.

This report enables us better to situate the direction in which our focus is shifting. Over the previous years you have seen me developing the fundamental subjective schema of the symbolic relation between the subject and this Other that is the unconscious personage who steers him and guides him, while the imaginary other, the little other, plays an intermediary role, that of a screen. Our focus has changed, little by little, and we have been led to reflect on the very structure of the discourse in question, which presents problems that are no less original and which are distinct from the previous ones.

Over the course of this year we have gradually shifted focus. There are, of course, laws of intersubjectivity, which are laws that govern the subject's relation to the little other and to the big Other,

but this is not the be-all and end-all of what we are dealing with. The original function of discourse, where essentially it is language that is at issue, warrants broaching step by step. Discourse too has laws, and the relation between signifier and signified is something else, something distinct from intersubjectivity, even though it can overlap, as do the relations of the imaginary and the symbolic.

This is how in our movement this year with regard to object relations we have seen coming into the open the originary place of elements that are truly and verily objects, which lie at a stage that is altogether originative and foundational and which even founds objects, but these objects are nevertheless utterly different from objects in the complete sense. At any rate, they are quite different from real objects because it's a matter of using objects that, while they may have been extracted from a subjective discontent, are made to function as signifiers.

2

The first object that I isolated in its function as a signifier was the fetish, and I won't be going any further from now until the end of the year than a consideration of phobia.

Even so, if you have properly understood what we have been trying to bring into play each time that we have spoken of little Hans's phobia then this will have afforded you a mental model on the basis of which any further progress can be conceived of as a deepening or an extension into other neuroses, most notably hysteria and obsessional neurosis.

This is particularly straightforward and exemplary in phobia. Whenever you are dealing with a phobia in a young subject you will notice that what is at stake is always a signifier that is relatively straightforward in appearance. Of course, it won't be straightforward to handle once you've entered his game, but elementarily speaking, it's a signifier.

This was the meaning of the formula I set out for you –

$$\left(\frac{I}{M + \varphi + \alpha}\right) M$$

The terms under the bar represent what has progressively complicated the elementary relationship with the mother, which was our point of departure when I spoke to you about the symbol of frustration, S(M), in so far as the mother is an alternating presence and absence. The child's relationships with his mother become

established here over the course of development from one age to the next.

The case of little Hans led us first to this extremely taxing stage when the mother is complicated on account of all sorts of additional elements. First there is the phallus, φ. I told you that this was certainly the critical gap-element in any relation between the two, a relation which in contemporary analytic dialectics is being represented as something exceedingly closed. We need on the contrary to see the extent to which the child is himself in a relationship with an imaginary function on the mother's side. Then, there is the other child, α, who momentarily expels the subject, driving him away from his mother's affection.

Here we have a critical moment that is typical for any kind of subject that our discourse supposes. It is always in this way that you will see a phobia appearing in a child. Something lacks, which at a certain point comes to play the fundamental role in the way out of the crisis in the child–mother relationship, which appears to have no way out. There's no need to make hypotheses. The whole analytic construction is built on the consistency of the Oedipus complex, which can be schematised as follows –

$$(P)\ M \sim$$

If the Oedipus complex means something, then it's that from a certain point on, the mother is regarded and experienced as functioning through the Father. Father warrants a capital P here, because we suppose that this is Paternity in the absolute sense of the term. It's the Father at the level of the symbolic father. It's the Name-of-the-Father, which establishes the existence of the Father in the complexity in which he presents to us. Each experience of psychopathology breaks this complexity down for us as the Oedipus complex. In the end, it is none other than this, and the introduction of this symbolic element brings with it a new dimension that is completely radical with respect to the child's relationship with his mother.

To fill out the second part of the equation we need to start from the empirical data. These indicate the existence of something that, in a nutshell and perhaps subject to commentary, can roughly be established thus –

$$(P)\ M \sim (-p)\left(\frac{x}{\Pi}\right)$$

What I'm notating as Π under x would be the real penis. The (−p) is what stands in opposition to the child as a sort of imaginary

antagonism. This is the imaginary function of the father insomuch as he plays the aggressive and suppressive role that is entailed by the castration complex.

If we are to formalise the Freudian experience then we need to take it literally and to accept it, at least provisionally, in that it asserts the constancy of the castration complex. Regardless of the discussions to which it might have thereafter given rise, we still maintain it as a reference.

On the one hand, something happens in the relationships with the mother that introduces the father as a symbolic factor. He is the one who possesses the mother and who enjoys her legitimately. This is a function that is both fundamental and problematic, and which occasionally can crumble or weaken.

On the other hand, something holds the function of bringing an essential articulation into the subject's instinctual play and into his assumption of his functions. This essential articulation is a signification that is truly specific to the human genus insomuch as it develops with the supplementary dimension of the symbolic order. The sexual functions are struck by something that is well and truly something of the signifier, something almost instrumental, which the human subject has to take into account by bringing it into play so that it will be present and experienced, and which is called *castration.*

Analysis represents castration in the most instrumental way, as a pair of scissors, or a sickle, or a hatchet, or a cutter. It's something that participates, as it were, in the instinctual furnishing of the sexual relation in humankind. Clearly we could then try to single out some such furnishing in one or another of the animal species. It is probable that the robin's coloured gorget could be regarded as a signal-element both for mating dances and for intersexual clashes. Either way, it's quite clear that an equivalent can be found in animals for the constant character of this paradoxical element that in man is bound to a signifier that is called the castration complex.

Here, then, is how we can write the formula of the Oedipus complex with its correlative, the castration complex. The Oedipus complex is itself something that is organised on the symbolic plane, something that presupposes for the subject the existence of the symbolic order behind it, as constitutive. However, there is something else that we are going to see in the observation on little Hans.

At a certain point in the dialogue with his father, when the latter is trying to nudge Hans towards a consideration of all sorts of physiological explanation – though, timid as this father is, never pushing things right through to the end – it becomes apparent that poor little Hans doesn't have a good understanding of the function of the female organ. And this swings around. When Hans comes out with

this, his father ends up giving him the explanation in desperation, when in fact the fantasies that had already been developed with respect to the neurosis show quite clearly that the child knows full well that everything gestates in the mother's belly, regardless of whether she is symbolised or not by a horse or a coach. But what the father doesn't see is that Hans comes to this conclusion after a long talk in which he was interested only in a kind of genealogical construction. That is what interests Hans the most.

This kind of interest is a normal moment in a subject's progress, though it may be reinforced, as here, by the specific difficulties of the neurosis. It's plain to see that this is normal and that little Hans has only produced this long discussion, which arises when we are a long way in to the observation, in order to construct the genealogical possibilities that exist, that is to say, the different ways in which a child can be related to a father and to a mother, and what this signifies.

He goes so far as to construct one of the most original sexual theories, as Freud underscores because he has not come across many of the like. Indeed, as in any observation, there are peculiar features. At one point the child constructs a theory of reproduction, saying *boys have girls and girls have boys.* Don't imagine that this is a theory that it would be impossible to find in the structure, in the genealogical organisation. It's something that is consistent with the elementary structures of kinship and so there is ultimately some truth in this. It's because women make men that men then return – in the symbolic order – this essential service of allowing them to continue their function of procreation, provided of course that we do consider it in the symbolic order, that is to say, in a certain order that ascribes a regular succession of generations to all of this. As I have set out for you on several occasions, in the natural order there is no obstacle to all of this turning exclusively around the female line, without any discrimination in what can come as a product, without any discrimination or any impossibility of it being, in a nutshell, the mother, commensurate with the possible duration of her fertility, who produces the succeeding generations. Now, what interests little Hans is the symbolic order, this being the gravitational centre of his whole construction which is so extraordinarily lush and fantastical.

In other words, the questioning of the symbolic order emerges in the child in connection with the capital P of Paternity – *What is a father?* The Father is indeed the pivot, the fictive and concrete hub that maintains the genealogical order, which allows the child to energise the world in a satisfying way. However this world is to be judged – culturally, naturally or supernaturally – this is the world into which he is born. He makes his appearance in a human world

organised by this symbolic order, and this is what he has to face up to.

The discovery of analysis is not, of course, to show us what the minimum necessary requirement is from the real father for him to give the child a sense of this notion of his place in the symbolic order by communicating and transmitting it to him. It is likewise taken as read that everything that occurs in the neuroses is designed in one respect or another precisely to make up for a difficulty, even an inadequacy, in how the child deals with this essential problem of the Oedipus complex.

Something else comes to complicate the elements that are being produced with further elements that are called *regressions*. These intermediate elements stem from the primordial relationship with the mother and already include a certain double-edged symbolism. Between this primordial stage and the moment when the Oedipus complex properly speaking is constituted, all sorts of accidents can arise that hinge on nothing but the fact that the child's other elements of exchange come to play their role in this relationship, in the construction and comprehension of the symbolic order. To spell it right out, all that is pregenital can be integrated at the Oedipal level and can come to complicate the question of the neurosis.

In the case of phobia, we have something straightforward. No one challenges that in the case of phobia the child has reached, at least momentarily, what is called the genital stage, when the subject's problems of integrating his or her sex are posed in their fullness. It is at this level, therefore, that we have to entertain the function of the phobic element.

This was plainly spelt out by Freud, who included the phobic element as something homogenous with the so-called *primitive* function of the totem that had been isolated by the ethnography of his time. This is something that probably is no longer tenable in light of the current progress, in which structural anthropology is playing a prevalent and axial role.[2] Others will replace these things, but for we analysts in our practical experience – and to the extent that ultimately it was hardly on the plane of phobia alone that Freud demonstrated how the totem took on its signification in the analytic experience – we nevertheless have to transpose it into a formalisation that would be less subject to caution than the totemic relationship is. This formalisation is what last time I called the *metaphorical* function of the phobic object.

The phobic object comes to play the role that on account of some shortcoming – on account of a real shortcoming in the case of little Hans – has not been played. So, we can see the object of the phobia appearing, which plays the same metaphorical role that last time

I tried to illustrate for you with the image – *Sa gerbe n'était point avare ni haineuse.*

I showed you how the poet used the metaphor to make the paternal dimension appear in its original dimension in connection with this old man in his decline, in order to reinvigorate the old man with all the natural spurt of the sheaf.

The horse has no other function but this in the living poetry that the phobia is. The horse introduces something around which revolve significations of various stripes which ultimately yield an element that makes up for what was missing in the subject's development, that is, in developments with which he has been furnished by the dialectic of the entourage in which he is immersed. However, this element is there only in a possible way, in some sense imaginarily.

What is at stake here is a signifier that is bare yet which carries some tendency that has already been conveyed by the whole convoy of culture that the subject drags behind him. In the end, the subject didn't have to go any further than right where any kind of heraldry can be found, in a picture book. This means that they are not mere images but images drawn by the hand of man, entailing a whole history that is taken as given, in the sense that history is an *historiole*[3] of myths and fragments of folklore. It was in his book, right alongside the picture of the *red box* which is the red chimney on which the stork is perched, that Hans came across the picture of a horse being shod. Here we can put our finger on what is involved. It's a horse represented.

Certainly, it is no wonder that such typical forms should always appear in certain contexts, in certain connections and in certain associations, which can elude those who are their vehicles, yet which the subject chooses in order to carry out a function. This function is the momentary allowing of certain states, and in the present case, the state of anxiety. It has to transform this anxiety into a localised fear, into something that presents a point of arrest, a terminal point, or else a pivot, a stilt in the shallows that fastens what is bobbing around and which runs the risk of being swept off by the whole inner current of the crisis in the maternal relationship. It is at this point that the horse plays a role in the case of little Hans.

The horse does admittedly seem to hamper the child's development a great deal, and for those around him it is a parasitic and pathological element. Yet it is also clear that once the analytic process is in place we are shown that, further to this, the horse holds a fastening role as a major point of arrest for the subject. It is a point around which he can make something revolve that otherwise would settle into an anxiety that would be impossible to bear.

In this case the whole progress of the analysis consists in extracting,

in bringing to light, the potentialities that are offered by the child's way of using this signifier that is so vital in compensating for his crisis. It's a matter of allowing the signifier to play the role that has been set aside for it by the child's fundamental relationship with the symbolic in the construction of his neurosis. He has taken it as an aid, as an absolutely crucial point of reference in the symbolic order.

This is what the phobia develops. It will allow the child to handle the signifier in a particular way by drawing out possibilities of development that are richer than those it contains as a signifier. In itself, the signifier does not contain in advance all the significations that we will make it voice. It contains them rather through the place that it holds. To the extent that this is the place where the symbolic father ought to be, and to the extent that the signifier is there as something that corresponds metaphorically to the father, it allows all the necessary transfers to occur on the level of everything that is complicated and problematic on the lower line, namely the mother, M, her phallic function, φ, and the other child, α. This is a relationship that on each occasion necessitates a distinct triangle in relation to the real mother. For this, a term is required that cannot be mastered by the child, that makes him fearful, and which is even mordacious.

This is why on the other line we have written the other term, m.

$$\frac{\text{I}}{(\text{M} + \varphi + \alpha)\ \text{M} \sim \text{m} + \Pi}$$

This term, Π, is what is most under threat, namely the child's penis.

3

What does the observation on little Hans show us? It shows precisely that, in a like structure, it is futile to tackle its plausibility or implausibility.

It's not by saying to the child that this is a nonsense, *Dummheit*, nor by making very pertinent remarks to him about the link that surely exists between his touching his widdler and his deeper fears over his nonsense, that one will seriously get things in motion. Quite the contrary.

If you read the observation in light of the schema I have just set out for you, you will see that these types of intervention, which do have a certain effect, never have the direct suasive reach of the primordial experience. This initial experience has the efficacy one

might wish for, and the whole interest of the observation is that it allows us to see how on such occasions the child reacts by reinforcing the essential elements of his own symbolic formulation of the problem. He persists in replaying the drama of the phallic hide-and-seek with his mother – *Does she have it? Doesn't she have it?* – clearly showing that what is at issue here is a symbol, which he clings to as such and which should not be thrown into disorder for him. Hence the crucial importance of a schema such as the one we have set out here.

What has to be done for the child is perhaps indeed to let this schema evolve, allowing him to develop the significations that pervade the system and which should enable him in turn not to stick merely with the provisional solution of being a little phobic child afraid of horses. Yet this equation can be resolved only in accordance with its own laws, which are the laws of a determined discourse, of one precise dialectic and not another. One won't get anywhere if one doesn't take into account what this equation is designed to support as a symbolic order.

This is how we are now going to be able to set out the comprehensive schema for the progress that is involved here.

It was surely not fruitless for the father, the great symbolic Father who is Freud, to have intervened, along with the little father, the beloved father. The latter does only one wrong here, though it is a sizeable one, that of not truly fulfilling his function as a father, not even, at least for a while, his function of a father who is jealous, the *eifern* of young Hans's invective, as in the wrath of a jealous God.

While his father speaks to him with great affection and devotion, he is unable to be more than he has been up to the present because he is not a father who is fulfilling his function in the real, leaving the child literally to follow his own whims with his mother. This doesn't mean that the child doesn't love his father, but rather that his father isn't holding for him the function that would allow for a direct and straightforward way out of the situation, far from it. We find ourselves faced with a complication of the situation. The father starts by intervening directly on the term Π, in keeping with Freud's instructions, which proves that Freud hasn't yet got things straight in this regard.

At this juncture, we may delve in detail into the sorts of articulation that would allow us to formulate this in a completely rigorous way, through a series of algebraic formulations, transforming one into the next. I am somewhat reluctant to do so, for fear that your minds might not yet be quite used to this, not yet disposed to something that I believe, even so, to belong to the future in the realm of the clinical and therapeutic analysis of the evolution of cases. I mean

that in any case, at least in its crucial stages, it ought to allow of being encapsulated in a series of transformations.

Last week I gave you an example of this, first writing up the initial formula –

$$(M + \varphi + \alpha)\, M \sim m + \Pi$$

then the terminal formulation –

$$\left(\frac{I}{M + \varphi + \alpha}\right) M \sim m + \Pi$$

and lastly –

$$p\,(M)\,(M') \sim \left(\frac{\alpha}{\varphi}\right) \Pi$$

All of this is taken up in a logicification, Λ.

$$\Lambda \, {}^{P}_{p} \left(\frac{I}{M + \varphi + \alpha}\right) M \sim m + \Pi$$

Once it starts to be spoken of, once this Λ is caught between the capital P and the lower-case p, we can provide a certain development. We can ask ourselves on what occasion, at what major moment, we might regard the transformation to have occurred. That is to say, when does p step in here, in M ~ (m) Π, and when does P step in at the level of I? I have not as yet gone into its successive transformations, but even so, if we follow what happens in the observation and how things evolve, we see that soon after the day of Freud's intervention, there appears, on 5 April, a fantasy that plays a major role and which thereafter will give rise to everything that is placed under the sign of *Verkehr*, that is, *transport*, with all the ambiguity that this word carries.[4] Something arises which allows us to say that in a certain way the first term in our equation is being incarnated here.

Indeed, the fantasy that Hans develops is that of seeing the cart onto which he wanted to climb suddenly driving off with the horse. The fantasy vouches for a transformation of his fears and constitutes a first attempt at dialecticising the phobia. One cannot help but be struck by the extent to which all it would take is to be subject to something like this for what is written out here to become apparent.

I mean that the horse is clearly a dragging element, while little Hans comes to place himself upon the same cart onto which sacks

have been loaded, which as the next part of the observation shows represent all the possible and virtual children the mother can have. He holds nothing in greater fear than to see his mother *loaded up* once again, *beladen*, that is to say, big with child, carrying along, carting around, the children in her belly like all these loaded carts that give rise to so much fear in him. The rest of the observation will show that the cart, and on occasion the bath, hold the function of representing the mother. Therefore, the fantasy signifies – *A heap of little children will be loaded on, I'll pile them on myself, and they will be driven off.*

We can say that what is at issue here is a first exercise pictured in an image that is truly as remote as can be from any kind of natural assent in psychological reality, while being exceedingly expressive from the standpoint of the structure of the signifying organisation. We can see little Hans reaping a first benefit from the dialecticising of the function of the horse which is the essential element of his phobia.

We have already seen little Hans holding firmly to maintaining the symbolic function, for example in one of his fantasies, the giraffe fantasy. In everything that follows Freud's intervention we can see little Hans testing out this grouping in every possible way. First he is on the cart, among all the heteroclite elements which he fears so strongly will be dragged off goodness knows where by a mother who henceforth is nothing more for him than an uncontrollable power that cannot be predicted. With this mother, there is no more playing, or, to use a very expressive argotic term, *y'a plus d'amour*, that is to say, love is no more, the name of the game has changed, because others are entering the fray, and because little Hans is starting to complicate the game by bringing in, not the symbolic phallus with which he plays hide-and-seek with his mother and the little girls, but a real little penis, which earns him a rap on the knuckles.

This complicates the task and shows us that while the child didn't believe a word of what he was told by a certain gentleman who spoke like the good Lord, he did find that the gentleman spoke well, and the upshot of this was that little Hans started to speak, that is, he started to tell stories.

The first thing he will do is to maintain a distinction between the path of the real and the path of the symbolic. He will say to his father, *Why did you tell me I'm fond of Mummy . . . when I'm fond of you?* He has taken things into full consideration, and after this he will render unto the horse all its potentialities, all its possibilities.

The horse is something which can bite and which can fall. We shall see what this is able to yield. This is where little Hans gets the whole movement of his phobia under way. He starts to render

unto the horse everything he can, and this is why we have all these paradoxes.

At the same time as the horse is the signifier that is teeming with all the dangers that it is supposed to cover, this is the same signifier with which little Hans, between 3 and 10 March, allowed himself to play horsey, with great carefreeness, in the company of a new nursemaid, which then provided the opportunity for him to give himself over, with great unseemliness and impertinence, to threats that he would undress her and so on. All of this is part and parcel of the role of maids for Freud. You can see that at this point, Hans was not in the least bit daunted by the horse.

Hans is so undaunted by the horse that he can take its place. We find him at once faced with maintaining the function of the horse and, as it were, making use of every available opportunity to elucidate and apprehend the problem, playing with the signifiers that have been grouped in this way, but on the condition that the movement be maintained, because otherwise none of this would make any sense and there would be no reason for us to spend more time scrutinising what the child is going on about. As I said, the absolutely radical transformation is the one in which the child uncovers one of the most essential properties of a situation such as this, once the set has been logified, once it has been played out sufficiently, once he has given himself over to a certain number of exchanges and permutations.

The initial transformation, which will prove decisive, is no less than the transformation of the biting into the unscrewing of the bathtub, which is something utterly different, in particular for the relationship between the protagonists. Voraciously to bite the mother, as an act or an apprehension of her altogether natural signification, indeed to dread in return the notorious biting that is incarnated by the horse, is something quite different from unscrewing, from ousting, the mother, and mobilising her in this business, bringing her into the system as a whole, for this first time as a mobile element[5] and, by like token, an element that is equivalent to all the rest. The whole system then presents as a large set of bowls from which the child will try to reconstitute a tenable situation. Indeed, he will even introduce new elements that will enable him to recrystallise the situation.

This is precisely what happens at the moment of the bathtub fantasy, which may for example be written out roughly as follows, with a permutation that will give –

$$\left(\frac{I}{M + \varphi + \alpha}\right) \Pi \sim M\,(-m)$$

The symbol Π represents the sexual function and the lower-case m represents the way of bringing the mother herself into the dialectic of the detachable elements, which will turn her, if I can put it like this, into an object like any other, and which will thereby allow him to handle her. It may be said therefore that all of this progress, which is what the analysis of the phobia amounts to, represents in some way the mother's waning in relation to the child and his gradual mastery of her.

The following stage – which I shall have to conclude next time – is focused entirely on something that will happen on the imaginary plane, in relation to what thus far has been in a certain sense regressive, but in a different way.

We will see little Hans bringing in his sister, this element that is so hard to handle in the real, deploying in her regard this sort of magnificent fantasia where she features in a stunning construction that consists first and foremost in supposing that she has always been there, in the *big box*, almost since the beginning of time, we might say.

You are going to see how this is possible and how it already supposes an exceedingly advanced signifying organisation. Before his sister came into the world, he reckons that she was already there, but in what capacity? It is only too evident that this is an imaginary capacity. We have Freud's own explanation, which is that something presents in an imaginary form that is repeated indefinitely, that is constant and permanent, in the form of an utterly essential reminiscence. Little Hanna has always been there, and he underscores that she is all the more there in that in reality he knows full well that she wasn't. He insists that she was there in the world precisely in the first year when she was not yet in the world, and that she indulged in everything that he had indulged in himself, logically and dialectically, in his discourse and in his games, over the course of the first part of the treatment.

Imaginarily in his fantasy, not only does he articulate that his sister has been there forever in the big box that travels either on the coach or separately, depending on the circumstances, he also tells us at another moment that she sits beside the coachman – *The coachman had the reins, Hanna had the reins too.* There is some kind of difficulty here when it comes to distinguishing reality from imagination, an ambiguity that Freud notes between *Wirklichkeit* and *Phantasie*, but little Hans continues his fantasy through the intermediary of this imaginary child who has always been there, and who moreover will always be there. He also indicates that through the intermediary of this imaginary child a certain relation will take shape that is equally imaginary, in which, as I underscored for you,

little Hans's relationship with the maternal object will stabilise, that is to say, with the object of eternal recurrence with respect to the woman to which this little man must accede.

In this imaginary game where he makes use of his little sister literally as a sort of Ego Ideal, she becomes the mistress of the signifier, the mistress of the horse, which she dominates. And it is through her intermediary that little Hans himself can come to whip the horse, to beat it and dominate it, to become its master. So it is that henceforth he will find himself in a relationship of mastery in relation to what thereafter will be inscribed in the register of creations of his mind, which will be developed in the ensuing part. The mastery of this other will henceforth be for him any kind of fantasy of the feminine, namely what I might call the girls of his dream, the daughters of his mind. This is what he will always be dealing with from this point forward as a sort of narcissistic fantasy in which the dominating image is incarnated. While it does resolve the question of the possession of the phallus, this image leaves the fundamental relation in an essentially narcissistic relation, in an essentially imaginary relation. To spell it right out, this relation is his domination of the critical situation.

This is what will leave its mark of deep ambiguity on everything that will ensue as an outcome or as a normalisation of the situation. These stages are pointed out well enough in the observation. It is after the playful development of his fantasies, after the reduction of elements to the imaginary following their fixing down as signifiers, that the fundamental relationship will be constituted that will allow him to assume his sex. He will assume it in a way that, however normal it may remain, can still be reckoned to bear the mark of a deficiency.

I will only be able to show you all the traces of this next time, but already I can say something that will give a good indication of where the fault lies that the child has reached in order somehow to fill or hold its place.

I think that nothing is more telling in this regard than what is expressed in the final fantasy, the fantasy of the unscrewing, in which the child's rear is changed and he is given a bigger one. Why? Ultimately it is to fill this place which he has made far more manageable, far more mobilisable, namely the bath, on the basis of which the dialectic of the falling can come into play and, eventually, be evacuated. This evacuation is only possible once the bath has been unscrewed. I would say that here too the atypical, anomalous and almost inverted character of the situation can be seen.

In a normal formula, to speak only of boys, the child possesses his penis only to the extent that he finds it again as something that

is given back to him, after losing it, after passing through the castration complex. In the case of little Hans, the castration complex is called upon constantly by the child, and indeed he himself suggests its formula. He clings onto its images. When he practically commands his father to make him undergo this test, he foments and organises the same test in a reflected way on the image of his father, wounding him, wishing this injury to be inflicted. Isn't it striking to see that after all these futile efforts for the subject's fundamental metamorphosis to be achieved and overcome, what finally comes to pass does not concern his sexual organ but his rear?

Ultimately it is his relation with his mother that allows him to occupy this place, but at the cost of something that doesn't become apparent to us from this perspective. What is actually involved here is the dialectic of the subject's relation to his own organ. For want of the organ itself being changed, at the end of the observation the subject assumes unto himself a sort of mythical father, such as he has managed to conceive of him. Goodness knows that this father is a father like no other, because this is a father who in Hans's fantasies is capable of engendering. As the husband says to the policeman in *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* –

Revenez dès ce soir voir comment la nature
Me donnera sans femme une progéniture.[6]

It is in this respect that it cannot be said that everything has been taken on board with regard to the relative position of the sexes, of the gap that remains from the integration of these relations.

I want to insist on this. It's precisely in the paradoxical inversion of certain terms, expressed through a notation with a plus or a minus, that we can truly judge the result of a certain furtherance. If therefore in the present case little Hans has not passed through the castration complex, then he has passed though something that had the capacity to transform him into another little Hans, as is indicated by the myth of the fitter who changes his behind.

When Freud meets Hans again in his young adulthood, he sees someone who tells him that he *remembers nothing* of all this. Here we have the sign and the token of a kind of moment of essential alienation.

You know the story that is told of a subject who went off to an island to forget something. Some people find him, go up to him and ask him what it was he wanted to forget, and he is unable to reply. As the end of the story has it – he has forgotten.

In the case of little Hans, I would say that there is something that allows us to shift the emphasis, and almost the formula, of this

story. If to a certain degree Hans may indeed bear one of the scars of the incompleteness of his analysis, and of the Oedipal solution that was predicated by his phobia, it's for the following reason. After all of these salutary turns, which from a certain point forth rendered his recourse to the horse signifier needless and expendable, if the phobia was made gradually to disappear, then it was on the basis of something that allows us to say, not that Hans forgot, but that Hans has forgotten himself.

26 June 1957

FAREWELL

XXIV

FROM HANS-THE-FETISH TO LEONARDO-IN-THE-MIRROR

A way out via the maternal ideal
Little Hans, descendant of two mothers
The vulture was a kite
The Other become little other
Leonardo's imaginary inversion

Today is our last session of the year. I didn't care to sum up by repeating myself, which, regardless of the effects it may have, is not a poor method.

There are a number of things that I didn't get round to last week, which meant that I was unable to push my analysis through to the end.

I have produced a formalisation with some letters and have tried to indicate the direction in which an effort can be made so as to accustom oneself to writing out relations in such a way as to yield fixed reference points – reference points that there is no need to go back on in discussion. Once they have been set down they cannot be passed over by taking advantage of everything that usually is a little too flexible in the interplay between the imaginary and the symbolic, but which is so important for our comprehension of the experience.

What I have initiated for you, then, is a beginning to this formalisation. I'm well aware that I haven't explained every last term. A certain indeterminacy might therefore seem to have persisted in how these terms link up with one another. You can't explain everything in one go. In the article that is set to appear in the third issue of the journal *La Psychanalyse* under the title *L'instance de la lettre*, you will see what is perhaps a tighter justification for the ordering of some of these formulae, notably those for metaphor and metonymy.

At the point we've reached, I believe that what is important is to have suggested to you the possibility of using formulae of this order so as to situate the relations between the subject and the different

modes of the other, which, in sum, cannot be articulated otherwise, given how language in the usual sense does not furnish us with the necessary fundaments with which to do this.

So, I left some things trailing behind. And, after all, why shouldn't I? Why, even in what is specific to the case of little Hans, would I want to provide an absolutely complete formula for what little Hans poses as a question?

You know that I mean to pursue my commentary within the register of questions posed by Freud. Yet this doesn't imply that I should want to turn each of his works, nor even his work as a whole, into a closed system. What is important is for you to have picked up sufficiently, and better so each day, on how Freud shifts the very bases of psychological account by introducing a dimension that is foreign to it. The foreignness of this dimension in relation to any psychological fixing down of the object constitutes the originality of our science and the basic principle on the basis of which we must therein assess our progress.

Either way, to seal up once again Freud's examination, to reduce it to the field of psychology, leads to what I shall call, with no further formality, a delusional psychogenesis, the same psychogenesis that you can see being developed from day to day, implicitly, in how psychoanalysts have been contemplating the facts and the objects they deal with. This psychogenesis is so paradoxical, so foreign to all the neighbouring conceptualisations, so shocking, yet at the same time so well tolerated, that the mere fact that it is surviving needs to be added to the main thrust of the problem, and ought to be resolved at the same time in the solution that we will bring to the problem of the Freudian dimension, that is to say, of the unconscious.

1

So, I left to one side everything that you are now about to follow.

You know the elements well enough to perceive on rereading the text the whole mythical game that plays out in what I shall call *the reduction to the imaginary of the sequence of maternal desire*. I wrote this sequence out in the formula M.φ.α, which is the notation for the mother's relationship with this imaginary other that is her own phallus, then everything that may arise in terms of new elements, that is to say, other children. In this instance it is Hans's little sister, Hanna.

The child's mythification in this imaginary game as triggered by the, let's say, psychotherapeutic intervention, is something that in itself makes manifest a phenomenon the originality of which ought

to be seized upon as a vital element of the *Verarbeitung* of the whole analytic progression. It's a dynamic and crystallising element in the symbolic progress that constitutes the analytic cure as such.

While indeed I didn't push this any further, I should like, even so, to reveal the elements that I didn't touch upon. Actually, I did signpost them in passing, but without explaining the exact function they hold in relation to these mythical doings in which the child indulges under the prompting of the analytic intervention.

There is one element that is correlative with the major mythical invention relating to birth, especially the birth of young Hanna and her constant presence for all eternity, so nicely fomented by Hans in his mythifying speculation. This element is the mysterious personage of the stork, who is truly worthy of the finest tradition of black humour. The hatted stork comes when everyone is asleep, knocks on the door and unlocks it with his key. He presents with all these exceedingly quirky aspects. We need to know how to hear what little Hans says. *He puts Hanna in your bed*, he tells his father. In other words, the stork has come in his father's place. Then, Hans corrects himself, *No, the stork put her in* her *bed.* Next, the stork goes away again leaving no one any the wiser, until he comes back and makes a bit of a din, just to wake up the household. In short, this character who comes and goes, who is seemingly so imperturbable, even uncanny, is surely one of the most enigmatic of little Hans's creations. It would be worthwhile dwelling at greater length on this, and indeed his place needs to be indicated in the overall economy of the case at this point in little Hans's progress.

Little Hans cannot manage, under the suggestion of his psychotherapist father, himself groomed by Freud, to foment his imaginary manipulation of the different terms that are present unless by isolating something that is well and truly heralded just before the major mythical creation – Hanna's birth and, at the same time, the stork – when we meet the theme of death, voiced by Hans and reported word for word by his father. *Once he knocked on the pavement with his stick* – we don't know why he has one, since this cane has never been mentioned before – *and said: 'I say, is there a man underneath? Someone buried?'*

The presence of the theme of death is strictly correlative with the theme of birth. It is crucial to pick out this dimension for the comprehension and furtherance of the case, but, in truth, this theme, this potential of generation raised to its ultimate degree of mystery, between life and death, between existence and nothingness, is something that poses particular problems that are distinct from that of the introduction of the horse signifier. It is not its counterpart. It is something else, which perhaps we shall look at next year. I'm

leaving it in reserve. The heading that I will most likely choose for what I shall develop next year is *Les formations de l'inconscient.*

I will also underscore once again that it is significant that little Hans, at the end of the crisis that resolves and dissolves the phobia, moves into something so imperative as the refusal of any further births. A kind of treaty will be established with the stork and with his mother. You will see the meaning of the passage that has to do with his mother's relations with God with respect to the possible arrival of more children, so elegantly transformed in the observation by Freud's little footnote – *Ce que femme veut, Dieu le veut.* Indeed, this is just what Hans's mother had said when she declared that *if she didn't want it, God didn't want it either.*

On the other hand, little Hans says that he wishes to have children, in this same move whereby he doesn't want there to be any more. His desire is to have imaginary children, insomuch as the whole situation has been resolved for him by an identification with maternal desire. There will be his dream children, the children of his mind. To spell it right out, he will have children structured on the model of the maternal phallus, which ultimately he will turn into the object of his own desire.

Yet it is fully understood, of course, that there will be none, and this identification with the mother's desire as an imaginary desire only constitutes in appearance a return to the little Hans that he once was, the little Hans who played the primordial game of hide-and-seek with the little girls, the object of which was his sexual organ. On no account does Hans still think of playing hide-and-seek, or more exactly, he no longer thinks of showing them anything but, as it were, his fine stature as little Hans, that is to say, a personage who in some respect has become – and this is what I'm driving at – something like a fetish object.

Little Hans places himself in a certain pacified position, and regardless of the heterosexual lawfulness of his object, we cannot regard this as exhausting the legitimacy of his position. In this respect, he blends in with a type that will strike you as no stranger to our era, that of the generation of a certain late nineteen-forties style that we are familiar with, these lovely fellows who wait for the initiative to come from the other side. To say it right out, they wait for their trousers to be pulled down. This is how I see the future of the charming little Hans, as fully heterosexual as he seems to be.

Hear me well. Nothing in the observation allows us at any moment to think that it is resolved otherwise than through this domination of the maternal phallus, in so far as Hans takes its place, identifies with it, and certainly masters it. Everything that might correspond to the phase of castration, or to the castration complex, is no more

than what we can see taking shape in the observation in the form of the stone on which one can injure oneself. The image of this that comes to the surface, so to speak, is much less that of a *vagina dentata* than that of a *phallus dentatus*. This kind of frozen object is an imaginary object that makes a victim of any male assault by causing injury.

It is in this sense that we can also say that little Hans's Oedipal crisis does not culminate strictly speaking in the shaping of a typical superego, I mean a superego such as it is produced in keeping with the mechanism that is already indicated in what we have taught here at the level of *Verwerfung*, namely *what has been rejected from the symbolic and reappears in the real*. This formula is the true key, at a much closer level, to what happens after a *Verwerfung* of the Oedipus complex.

Indeed, it is in so far as the castration complex has been come through, but without it being able to be fully taken on board by a subject, that he produces an identification with a sort of image of the father in the raw, an image that carries reflections of his real particularities in what is heavy and even overwhelming about them. Here we can see once again a fresh instance of the mechanism of *reappearance in the real*, but this time it's a real on the borderline of the psyche, within the bounds of the ego. However, this is a real that forces itself upon a subject in an almost hallucinatory way, to the extent that at a certain point the subject has peeled off from the symbolic integration of the process of castration.

Nothing of the like is manifested in the present case. Little Hans is surely not to lose his penis because at no moment does he acquire it. While little Hans has identified with the maternal phallus, this does not mean that he can thereby retrieve his own penis and take on board its function. There is no phase of penis symbolisation. The penis somehow remains on the margins, disengaged, as something that has only ever been reviled and reproved by his mother. Yet this thing that is produced allows him to integrate his masculinity. This occurs through no other mechanism but that of the shaping of an identification with the maternal phallus, which also belongs to a very different realm from that of the superego with its disturbing yet also balancing function. Rather, it's a function that belongs to the order of the Ego Ideal.

It is in so far as little Hans has a certain idea of his ideal, insomuch as he is his mother's ideal, namely a substitute for the phallus, that he takes his place in existence. Let's say that if, instead of having a Jewish mother in the progressive movement, she'd been a devout Catholic, you can see by what mechanism little Hans might have been gently nudged towards the priesthood, and even towards sainthood.

In a case like this, where the subject has been introduced into an atypical Oedipal relationship, the maternal ideal is very precisely what offers a certain type of way out and positioning in the relation between the sexes. The outcome is produced through identification with the maternal ideal.

This gives us a rough sketch of the terms in which I'm locating what the case of little Hans opens onto. We have confirmative hints of this throughout the observation, and those towards the end are sometimes very moving.

When little Hans has become downright disheartened by the paternal shortcoming – since he wanted his father to step forward – he will somehow perform, himself, fantasmatically, his own initiation ceremony by placing himself *quite naked* on the little truck where he is due to keep watch all night, like a young knight, after which, thanks to a few coins given to the guard – the same money that will serve to abate the terrific potency of the *Storch* – little Hans will be riding on the larger circuit. The matter has been settled. Little Hans might not be anything other than a knight, a knight who is more or less covered by social security, but a knight all the same. And he will have no father. Moreover, I don't believe that anything new in the experience of existence will ever afford him one.

Right after this, there is a somewhat belated intervention from his father. The opening of the father's *comprenoire* as the observation wears on is not an uninteresting item in itself. After playing with an open hand, firmly persuaded of all the truths he has learned from his good mentor Freud, the further he advances in the wielding of this truth the more he comes to realise that it is far more relative than he was given to believe. When little Hans starts to produce his big mythical delusion, he comes out with a sentence that is barely noted in the text but which carries all its importance.

It has to do with the time when little Hans is playing up, contradicting himself from one instant to the next, saying, *It's true – It's not a bit true – It's just for fun – But it's actually quite serious.* His father, who is no fool and who learns from this experience, tells him, *Everything one says is a bit true.* In spite of everything, this father who has not succeeded in holding his position – he is the one who ought to have been put through analysis – tries one more time, even though it's too late. He says to little Hans, *Perhaps you're not fond of Daddy.*

This delayed intervention leads little Hans to the very nice gesture that is given a special highlight in the observation. Just as the father says this to him, Hans knocks over his little horse. The conversation is out of date. The dialogue has expired. Little Hans has settled in to his new position in the world.

Little Hans is now a little man with the power to have children, capable in his imagination of engendering indefinitely and of deriving full satisfaction from his creations. This is how the mother lives on in his imagination.

As I told you, to be little Hans is not to be the descendant of one mother, but the descendant of two mothers.[1] This is a remarkable and enigmatic point, on which last week I paused the observation. Certainly, the other mother is the one whose potency he has had ample occasion and reason to encounter – his father's mother. None the less, that the subject should take on board the conditions of the final equilibrium in this duplication or doubling of the maternal figure still remains one of the structural problems posed by the observation.

It was on this point that I concluded the lesson before last, drawing a comparison with the painting by Leonardo da Vinci and by the same stroke with the case of Leonardo. It is no accident that Freud devoted such attention to it.

We will be dedicating the time that remains to this text. We cannot claim to exhaust *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood* in just a single lesson. This will be a short lesson for the end of term, as is my wont in my teaching as a way of winding down, for a crowd as attentive as you are, and I thank you for being so.

Let's leave little Hans to his fate. But before taking leave of him, I will yet point out to you that when I alluded in his regard to something deeply contemporary in a certain evolution in relations between the sexes, to the 1945 generation, this was surely not to slip inordinately into current affairs. I leave it to others to depict and define what the current generation might be, to lend them a direct and symbolic expression. There is Françoise Sagan for one, whom I'm not name-dropping here for the sake of it, nor for the mere pleasure of being topical, but rather as an opportunity to advise you to read over the holiday period an article on two books from this best-selling author, *Bonjour tristesse* and *Un certain sourire*. The article is by Alexandre Kojève in the August/September 1956 issue of *Critique* under the title *Le dernier monde nouveau*. You will be able to see what a serious philosopher who is used to operating exclusively at the level of Hegel and the highest political issues can draw from works that at first blush seem so frivolous.

It will certainly enlighten you and, as they say, it won't do you any harm. There's no risk involved. Psychoanalysts are not recruited from the ranks of those who devote themselves wholeheartedly to the world's fluctuations in psychosexual matters. You are, if I may say so, too well oriented for that, even a trifle swotty in such matters. Indeed, this is to lead you to a kind of immersion into current

affairs, activating this perspective when it comes to what you do and what you should be ready to hear sometimes from your patients themselves. This will also show you something that we must take into account, namely the deep changes in relations between men and women that have come about during such a brief length of time as the one that stands between us and Freud's era, when, as they say, everything that was to become our history was in the process of fomentation.

All of this is intended to tell you also that the last word on *don-juanisme*, on Don-Juan-esque womanising, might not have been spoken, whatever the analysts might have to say about it. While they have made interesting contributions on this score, and while something correct has been glimpsed in the notion of Don Juan's homosexuality, this is certainly not to be taken in the way it is usually taken.

I firmly believe that Don Juan is a character too far removed from us in the cultural realm for analysts to have been able to perceive him accurately. Mozart's Don Juan, if we take him as the apogee of the character and as something that effectively signifies the culminating point of a question, properly speaking, in the sense I intend here, is surely quite distinct from the character that Rank sought to construct for us as a reflection. It is certainly not from the angle of the double alone that he should be understood. I think that, again to adopt a counter-stance, Don Juan does not blend seamlessly – indeed far from it – into the seducer who's got little tricks that work every time. I believe that Don Juan loves women. I would even say that he loves them enough to know on occasion not to tell them so, and he loves them enough so that when he does tell them, they believe it.

This is no small matter, and it reveals many things. It shows that there is never any way out of the situation for him. I think that it's in the direction of the notion of the phallic woman that we need to look.

In Don Juan's relations with his object, there is of course something related to a problem of bisexuality, but it lies precisely in the direction of this thing that Don Juan seeks out in woman, and this is the phallic woman. Since he truly seeks her out and goes after her, and is never content with attaining her or contemplating her, he doesn't find her, or ends up finding her only in the form of the ominous guest who does indeed lie beyond woman, whom he doesn't expect, and who is, not without reason, the Father. Let's not forget, however, that when he does rear his head, what is yet more curious is that it's in the form of a guest made of stone. To spell it right out, this is stone in its aspect of being absolutely dead and

closed off, beyond all the life of Nature. This, in sum, is where Don Juan comes to a standstill and seals his fate.

The problem that Leonardo da Vinci will pose us is quite different.

2

That Freud should have turned his interest to Leonardo da Vinci is not something that we need to question. In general, why one thing came to pass instead of not coming to pass should be the least of our worries. Freud is Freud precisely because he took an interest in Leonardo.

What is to be done now is to find out how he became interested in him and what Leonardo might have been for him. To find an answer, there is no better than to read the *Kindheitserinnerung*. I gave sufficient forewarning for some of you to have done so, and to have noticed how deeply enigmatic this book is.

In 1910, Freud had arrived at what we might call the height of fortune in existence. This at least is how things look from the outside and, actually, he says as much himself. He had gained international renown, and had not yet been through the sadness and drama of the separations from his most highly esteemed pupils. This was just before the major crisis points, but at this point he was able to tell himself that he had made up for the setbacks of the previous ten years of his life.

So, here is Freud taking Leonardo da Vinci as his subject. Of course, Freud's background, his culture, his love of Italy and the Renaissance, give us to understand that he must have been intrigued by the character. What does he tell us in this regard? In what he writes he evinces a considerable appreciation of Leonardo's profundity, which he handles with great sensitivity.

It may be said that on the whole Freud's text on Leonardo is an interesting read and is read with even greater interest with the passing of time. By this I mean that, even though it is one of Freud's most criticised works – and it's paradoxical to see that it's also one of those of which he was most proud – the people who are always most reticent in such cases, and goodness knows they might well be, I mean the specialists in painting and art history, with the passing of time, and even as the major faults in the text came to light, ultimately came to realise how important it is. By and large, Freud's text came to be almost universally rejected, scorned and even disdained by art historians, and yet, in spite of all the lasting reservations that have become only more intense with the appearance of new documents proving that Freud had made mistakes, no less a figure than

Kenneth Clark, former director of the National Gallery, in a book that is not all that old, acknowledges the great interest of Freud's analysis of the painting that I showed you the other day, the *St Anne* in the Louvre, paired with the famous Cartoon in London. These are the two works on which Freud based the in-depth study he made, or believed he made, of the case of Leonardo da Vinci.

Well, I suppose I don't need to summarise for you the fate of this little book.

First there is a brief presentation of the case of Leonardo, of his *strange side*. This strange side, which we will be coming back to with our own means, is doubtless accurately perceived, and everything that Freud says most certainly finds a sure axis in the enigma of the character. He then examines the painter's singular constitution, even predisposition, along with his paradoxical activity. I'm calling him a painter, though he was so much else besides. Let's say for the time being a *great painter*. Anyway, Freud turns to the fragment that he pushes very much to the fore across all his developments, the only childhood memory that we have from Leonardo, and which has been translated as follows – *It seems that I was always destined to be so deeply concerned with vultures; for while I was in my cradle a vulture came down to me, and opened my mouth with its tail, and struck me many times with its tail against my lips.*

Freud tells us that this memory is of *the strangest sort*, then segues into something that will take us where he wants to lead us. We follow him because we are used to this kind of sleight of hand that consists in superposing in dialectics and reasoning what is very often conflated in experience and in clinical practice, when in fact these are very different registers. I'm not saying that Freud handles them improperly. On the contrary, I believe that he handles them brilliantly, that is to say, that he goes to the heart of the phenomenon. Yet we would be wrong to follow him with an idle mind, accepting in advance everything he tells us, namely that this is a sort of superposition, or superimposition, between the relation to the maternal breast and fellatio, at least an imaginary act of fellatio. This is what he posits at the outset and which is purported also to carry the signification of a veritable sexual intrusion.

Freud lays this out at the start, and it's upon this base that he will tease out an articulation of his construction, gradually leading us to what is deeply enigmatic in the relation to the mother in the case of Leonardo. Onto this he builds all the particularities of this strange personage, namely his probable inversion first of all, then his altogether unique and peculiar relation to his oeuvre, wrought by a kind of activity that always lies on the limits between the realisable and the impossible, as he himself writes in one instance – repeatedly

breaking off the different ventures in his life – this singularity that sets him apart from his contemporaries and makes him a legendary figure in his own lifetime, thought to possess every quality and ability, a universal genius. From all this that surrounds Leonardo da Vinci, Freud will deduce for us his relation with his mother.

As I mentioned, Freud takes as his point of departure the childhood memory. The vulture with the quivering tail that comes to strike the child is, we are told, constructed as the screen-memory of something that is the reflection of a fantasy of fellatio. Freud doesn't hesitate for one second to set it out in just this way, yet all the same it has to be acknowledged that for an unprimed mind this is something that raises a problem. The whole interest of Freud's investigation is to reveal that, until an age that may be tied down to his third or fourth year, Leonardo very probably had no other presence around him but that of his mother, and doubtless no other elements of sexual seduction but what Freud calls *innumerable passionate kisses* pressed onto the child's mouth by his mother, nor any other object to represent the object of his desire besides the maternal breast. Ultimately it is on the plane of fantasy that the revelation is posed by Freud himself, in so far as it can have this informative role.

All of this hinges on one point, which is none other than the identification of the vulture with the mother herself, in so far as she would be the figure at the source of the imaginary intrusion.

Now, let's say it straightaway. It so happened that there was what may be called a mishap or an error in this affair – but it's a fortunate error. Freud only read this childhood memory in the version that features in Herzfeld's translation, from which he lifts the passage. That is to say, he read it in German, and what she translated as *Geier*, a vulture, was not a vulture at all. The fact has been pointed out by several scholars, most recently by Professor Meyer Schapiro in an article published last year in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 17, No. 2.[2]

Besides, Freud could have suspected as much because, as usual, he carried out his work with the utmost care and the reference from the manuscript folio from which the translation was made is given in a footnote. As it happens, it comes from the *Codex Atlanticus*, which is a bound folder of Leonardo's drawings and writings housed in Milan. It's been translated into practically every language. In French there is a complete though inadequate translation under the title *Carnets de Léonard de Vinci*. You can read what Leonardo left by way of manuscript notes, often in the margins of his drawings. Freud could have taken a look at where this reference is to be found in Leonardo's notes, notes which in general are five, six or seven lines long, a half page at most, scattered amongst the

sketches. This fragment is on a folio, just alongside a study of birds in flight. Such studies crop up in different places in Leonardo's oeuvre. Leonardo says, *It seems that I was always destined to be so deeply concerned with* . . . not *vultures*, but precisely what he has drawn alongside, *kites*.

That the kite should be particularly interesting for the study of bird flight is something that had already been remarked upon by Pliny the Elder. According to him, the kite's tail is of especial interest to maritime pilots because its movement is particularly exemplary for the steering of the rudder. Leonardo deals with the same thing. It's very nice to follow the fortune of this kite's tail down through the ages. The fundamental character of its tail has been known since Pliny in Antiquity and has been taken up by several authors, some of whom I shall be mentioning in passing in a short while. I've been told that, in our own time, Mr Anton Fokker has studied first-hand the movement of the kite's tail. Between the wars he concocted some lovely little preparations for the handling of planes in nosedive, a truly distasteful parody – I hope you share my opinion on this – of natural flight. But then, we couldn't expect any better from human perversity.

So, this is the kite, which, moreover, has just what it takes to provoke such perversity. It's an animal that has nothing especially attractive about it. Pierre Belon, who put together a very fine book on birds, and who had been to Egypt and various other parts of the world on behalf of King Henri II, saw some in Egypt and described the bird as *sordide & non gentil*, both vile and unpleasant.

I must say that for a minute I hoped that everything might fall into place and that Freud's vulture, even if it was really a kite, might actually turn out after all to have something to do with Egypt, and that in the end it might be an Egyptian vulture. You can see how I always desire to sort things out. Unfortunately this is not the case.

In fact, the situation is complicated. There are kites in Egypt and I can even tell you that one day when I was having breakfast in Luxor, I had the surprise of catching in my peripheral vision something that was flouncing around and which then darted sideways, making off with an orange from my table. For a second I thought it was a falcon, but then I quickly realised it wasn't. It flew up to perch on the corner of a roof and set down the orange, to show that it was just teasing. You could see it was a reddish creature of a peculiar style. Soon enough, I could be sure that it was a kite. So, you can see what a familiar and readily observable creature it is.

But there is something else. There is an Egyptian vulture that looks very much like it, and this is what might have made things fall into place. This is the one that Belon speaks about, which he calls the

Sacre Egyptien and which since Herodotus has been known under the name of the *Ἱέραξ*. There are many in Egypt and, naturally, it is sacred. Herodotus informs us that in Ancient Egypt it could not be killed without getting its slayer into great trouble. It is of interest here because it looks somewhat like a kite and somewhat like a falcon. This is the one that in the Egyptian ideograms corresponds roughly to the letter *alef* which I speak about in my disquisitions on hieroglyphics and their exemplary function for us. Here is the vulture, that is to say, more or less the Egyptian saker falcon.

Egyptian vulture hieroglyph

Everything would be just fine if it were this one that was used for the Goddess Mut, whom you know Freud speaks about in relation to the vulture, but that won't work. Freud really did get it wrong, because despite all this effort towards a solution, the vulture that was used for the Goddess Mut is this one.

Griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) hieroglyph

Unlike the other one, this one doesn't have a phonetic value. It serves as a determinative element, in the sense that it is added on. Either it designates on its own the goddess Mut, and in this case a little flail is added, or it is integrated into a whole sign that will write Mut plus the little determinative, or else one is content to make it equal to *M*, yet adding a little *t* to phoneticise the term. It can be found in more than one association, where it always has to do with the mother goddess.[3]

This very different vulture, a true *Gyps*, which doesn't resemble in the slightest the previous one, the one that lies on the boundary between kites and falcons and other related animals, is the one to which refers everything that Freud reports of this tradition of the bestiary type, for example what was recorded by Horapollo at the

time of the Egyptian decline. Horapollo's writings, which moreover are fragmentary and have come down to us through umpteen transpositions, transcriptions and distortions, formed the basis for a few Renaissance collections, to which the engravers of the time added little emblems that were supposed to provide us with the signifying value of a number of major Egyptian hieroglyphs.

This edition here dates from 1519, and so was brought out, by Aldus Manutius, in Leonardo's lifetime. It ought to be familiar to you all because it's the one from which I took the drawing that graces the cover of the journal *La Psychanalyse*. Horapollo gives the description that I can see written here – *The image of an ear signifies work to come.*

We will not, however, allow ourselves to fall into the bad habits of an era from which not everything is to be imitated.

It was from Horapollo that Freud took the reference stating that the vulture carried the signification of *mother*, but he also found a far more interesting entry which leads him to take a step forward in the dialectic, namely that this is an animal that exists only in the female sex. This is an old zoological yarn which, like so many others, goes way back. It is attested in Antiquity, though not in the finer authors, but was no less widely accepted in medieval culture. One would be quite wrong to believe it, and all it takes is to open up one of Leonardo's notebooks, which are there to prove it, that his mind brought about a revolution within a certain perspective, and did not partake of these medieval fables. Freud accepts that, because Leonardo was widely read, he must know this story. This is likely and has nothing extraordinary about it, because it's very widespread, but it hasn't been proved. And it has all the less interest in being proved in that a vulture is not what is at issue.

I'm passing over the fact that Saint Ambrose took the story of the female vulture as Nature deliberately affording us an example to foster the entry into our *comprenoire* of the virgin birth of Jesus. Freud seems to accept uncritically that *almost all* the Fathers of the Church told this story. I have to tell you that I haven't been able to check because I only found out this morning that it's in Saint Ambrose. Actually, I knew it already, because a certain Pierio Valeriano, who in 1556 brought out a collection of these captioned images of the time, seemed to me to be a particularly important source to consult in order to see what the kite might have been at that time, along with a certain number of other symbolic elements. He points out that Saint Ambrose mentions it, and singles out Saint Basil the Great as well, but there is no mention of *all the Fathers of the Church*, as the author to whom Freud refers seems to suggest.

Vultures were only female just as snails were only male. It was a tradition, and it's interesting to compare one with the other given that the snail is a creature that slithers over land while the vulture is impregnated in the sky, offering her tail to the wind, as we can see in one very fine image.

Where does all this lead us? It shows that the vulture story surely does have a certain interest, like many others of this nature. In truth, Leonardo's writings are teeming with such stories. He showed a lively interest in different sorts of fables constructed upon such stories. Many other things could be drawn from the kite. One could for example note that it's an animal strongly given to envy, and which mistreats its offspring. Imagine what the result would have been if Freud had chanced upon that, and the different interpretation that we could give of the relation with the mother.

Am I to show you that nothing holds water in all of this, that there is nothing worth keeping in this part of Freud's elaboration? Well, no. That's not why I'm telling you this. I won't give myself the easy advantage of criticising a great invention long after the event. It often happens that, with all sorts of defects, the eye of the genius has been guided by many other things besides these little investigations, and has gone far beyond the supports that some happenstance has afforded.

The question is what it means and what all this allows us to see.

3

Six years after the *Three Essays on Sexuality* and ten or twelve after the first perceptions that Freud formed of bisexuality – in what he had thus far extracted from the function of the castration complex on the one hand, and of the importance of the phallus and the imaginary phallus on the other, in so far as the latter is the object of woman's *Penisneid* – what is there that is new in Freud's essay on Leonardo da Vinci?

He introduces very precisely, in May 1910, the importance of the function of the phallic mother, the phallic woman. She is phallic not for the subject herself, but for the child who is dependent upon this subject. Here we have the point of arrest, the original element in what Freud is bringing us here.

That the child is bound to a mother who in turn is bound on the imaginary plane to the phallus qua lack is the relation that Freud is introducing as crucial and which is utterly distinct from everything he had said before then regarding woman's relation to the phallus. This original structure is the one around which this year I have been

making the fundamental criticism of the object relation revolve, in as much as the object relation is designed to instate a certain stable relationship between the sexes that would ostensibly be grounded in accordance with a certain symbolic relation. I believe I have made this abundantly clear – at the very least I think you have taken it as such – in the analysis of little Hans. Here, we find testimony in Freud's thought of this being something that in itself alone enables us to gain access to the mystery of Leonardo's position.

In other words, the fact that the child, isolated through the dual encounter with woman, finds himself by the same token confronted with the problem of the phallus qua lack for his female partner, that is, in this instance, for the maternal partner, is the element around which everything that Freud constructs with regard to Leonardo turns. This is what makes for the depth and the originality of this observation, which moreover is Freud's first work, and not by chance, in which the term *narcissism* is mentioned. So, this is the start of the structuring as such of the register of the imaginary in Freud's oeuvre.

We need to pause now for a moment on what I shall call the contrast, the paradox, of the personage of Leonardo and pose the question of the other term, which is not new but which appears here with a particular insistence, that of *sublimation.*

Every now and then Freud refers to a certain number of what could be called Leonardo's *neurotic traits.* I mean that from one point to the next Freud is seeking out traces of a critical point of passage, of a relation preserved in some kind of repetition of terms, in sorts of obsessional lapses. Freud will also turn whatever this paradoxical aspect is in Leonardo's thirst for knowledge, in his *cupido sciendi* – this being the traditional designation for the curiosity that animated him – into an obsessional trait, because he calls it a *Grübelzwang*, a *compulsive brooding.* It cannot be denied that there is a certain such indication here. Nevertheless, Leonardo's personality cannot be explained in its totality by neurosis. And, as one of the crucial outlets of what remains of the exhilarated and indeed fixed infantile tendency at issue in the case of Leonardo, Freud brings in the notion of sublimation that he had already introduced in the *Three Essays.*

As you know, further to sublimation being a tendency that bears upon objects that are not primordial objects but the most elevated objects of what is offered to human and interhuman consideration, it was only later on that Freud was to add a few complements showing the role sublimation might play in establishing the interests of the ego.

Since then, the term *sublimation* has been taken up by a number of

authors from the psychoanalytic community who link it to a notion of the neutralisation and dis-instinctualisation of instinct. I must say that this is something that it is very hard to credit. A de-libidinalisation of libido. A dis-aggressivation of aggressiveness. These are the loveliest terms that we can most commonly find flowering up from the pen of Hartmann or Loewenstein. They hardly clarify anything when it comes to the mechanism of sublimation.

The interest of a study like Freud's *Kindheitserinnerung* is that we can take a few ideas from it and at the very least initiate something that will allow us to posit the term *sublimation* in such a way as to secure a more structured basis than the notion of an instinct that dis-instinctualises, indeed of an object that, as they say, becomes more sublime. For it would seem that, going by these ego psychologists, this is what the *Saft* of sublimation ought to be.

Leonardo da Vinci was himself the object of an idealisation, if not a sublimation, which began in his own lifetime and which tends to turn him into a kind of universal genius and, equally, a stunning precursor to modern thought. This is what is maintained by some, including highly erudite scholars, who have started to get down to the crux of the problem, as indeed did Freud. Others have done the same on other planes besides that of art. Pierre Duhem, for example, says that Leonardo glimpsed the Law of Falling Bodies and even the Principle of Inertia. A slightly more rigorous and methodical examination from the standpoint of the History of Science shows that this is hardly the case. Nevertheless, it is clear that Leonardo made stunning discoveries and that the drawings he left us in the realms of the kinematic, the dynamic, the mechanical and the ballistic, often evince an extraordinarily keen perception far in advance of what was being done in his time. On no account does this allow us to believe that there were not on each of these planes works that were highly advanced in mathematisation, and especially those in kinematics, for example.

Yet a remainder of Aristotelian tradition, that is to say, a tradition founded on a certain evidential experience, meant that the fairly advanced mathematical formalisation that had been made in abstract kinematics had not yet been fully conjoined with the experiential domain, the domain of real and existing bodies that seem to be subject to the Law of Gravity, which so occupied the human mind with its experiential prominence that they spent all the time of which you are aware on striving to produce a correct formulation for it. Think on the fact that we also find in Leonardo's drawings and their attendant commentaries interpolations such as, *a body falls more quickly the heavier it is*. We find this explicitly and more often still implicitly. I think that you have retained enough of your

secondary education to know that this theorem is deeply wrong, even though experience, as they say – experience at the broad level of common experience – does seem to impose it.

Nevertheless, what is it that constitutes the originality of these drawings? I'm alluding to just one portion of what he left us, as the work of an engineer, properly speaking, which so astonished, interested and even fascinated both his contemporaries and later generations. These are things that are often extraordinarily advanced for their time but which cannot get beyond certain bounds that had not yet been crossed in terms of the use, the vivid entry, as it were, of mathematics in the realm of the analysis of phenomena of the real.

In other words, what Leonardo brings us is often absolutely admirable in inventiveness, construction and creativity, and it is already quite enough to see for example the elegance with which he determines the theorems that can serve as the basis for evaluating the gradual change in the intensity of a force attached to a *circumvolubile* body, this being the term he uses for a body mobile about an axis. This force is linked to a *spiritual arm*, and the arm turns. What will the variation in the efficacy of this force be as the lever arm turns? These are problems that Leonardo will excel in translating by what I shall call a kind of overview of the field of force, determined not so much by his calculating as by his drawing. In short, the intuitive factor, the factor of creative imagination, is tied in Leonardo to a certain predominance accorded to the principle of experience, which is the source of all sorts of dazzling and original intuitions but which, despite everything, are partial at the level of the working drawing of an engineer.

This is no small matter. As a scholar of the History of Sciences, Alexandre Koyré, tells us, here you have all the distance that lies between a drawing and an engineer's blueprint. While a blueprint can display on its own account all sorts of intuitive elements in the relationship between certain quantities or values that are somehow materialised in an image simply through the layout of whichever apparatus, it is not capable of resolving certain higher-level primary-symbolic problems. Ultimately, we will see in Leonardo an inadequate and even false theory of the inclined plane, which will only be resolved with Galileo. With this *revolution* – to use another of Koyré's terms – the mathematisation of the real gets under way when from a certain point forward it was resolved radically to purge the method, that is to say, to put experience to the test of terms, to the test of positionings of the problem, that roundly take the impossible as the point of departure.

Understand that only when one has set apart the formulation of

those formulae that are to be submitted to hypothesis from any kind of claimed intuiting of the real can one renounce something that seems to be self-evident, like heavier bodies falling faster. Only then can one start to elaborate on the basis of another starting point, like the correct one of gravity, that is to say, a formula that in some sense cannot be actualised anywhere because one will always be in a condition that has too many impurities to make it a reality.

It is because one is starting with a pure symbolic formalisation that the experiment can be realised in a correct fashion and a mathematical physics can start to be established. It may be said that after whole centuries of trying, they never managed to do so until they resolved to make this separation between the symbolic and the real at the point of departure. This was something that had never been allowed in the string of experiments and fumblings that researchers had been making from one generation to the next, and which moreover are fascinating to read about. This is the interest of a History of Science. Until then, they remained in a betwixt and between, in something incomplete, partial and imaginative, something fulgurous that led Leonardo da Vinci himself – and this is what I'm coming to – to formulate that his position was essentially one of a relation of obedience to Nature.

The term *Nature* plays an utterly important, utterly essential, role in Leonardo's oeuvre. Nature is for him a presence that must be constantly turned to account. Nature is the absolutely primary element. Nature is an other against whom he pits himself, and whose signs have to be deciphered as lines of verse. He makes himself Nature's double and, as it were, co-creator. All these terms are in Leonardo's notes.

This is the perspective from which he examines Nature in order to arrive at a sort of fusing of the imaginary with an other that is not the radical Other, that is not the one we deal with and which I have taught you to situate as the place, the locus, of the unconscious. What, then, is this other?

It's very important to see in this respect how insistent Leonardo is in saying that there is no voice in Nature, and he gives such curious and amusing demonstrations that it would be worthwhile taking the trouble to see to what extent it might have become an obsessional preoccupation for him, strictly speaking, to demonstrate that there cannot be anyone who could respond to him, and who would be what everyone then believed in, a spirit who speaks from somewhere up in the air. He insists on this. He often comes back to it. And indeed, there were people for whom to proclaim such a thing was an almost scandalous truth.

Nevertheless, Leonardo examines Nature as an other who is not

a subject but whose causes there is at the same time every reason to read. I'm saying this because it's in Leonardo – *Nature is full of infinite causes that have never occurred in experience.*[4]

The paradox of this formula, if we take Leonardo, as is often done, as a sort of precursor of modern experimentalism, is there to show the distance that lies between him and us, and the difficulty that lies in grasping only after the event, once a certain evolution in thought has been achieved, what the thought of the one who is being labelled a *precursor* was actually engaged with.

Leonardo's position with respect to Nature is one of a relation to an other who is not a subject, yet whose history, sign, articulation and speech are nevertheless to be detected. It's a matter of grasping the creative power of this other. In short, this other transforms the radicalness of the alterity of the absolute Other into something that is accessible through a certain imaginary identification.

It is this other that I would like to see you taking into consideration in the Cartoon to which Freud refers, remarking on the fusing of bodies that makes it hard to tell that of St Anne apart from that of the Virgin, as though this were a riddle.

This is so true that if you reverse the drawing and you compare it with the painting in the Louvre, you will notice that the legs of St Anne are on the side where initially the legs of the Virgin were, in the most natural pose and in almost the same position, while the Virgin's legs are now where St Anne's legs were.

That this is a kind of twofold being, with the aspects of the one peeling away behind the other, is not in doubt. That the Infant in the London Cartoon extends His mother's arm, not altogether unlike a glove puppet, is something that is no less striking. Aside from this, however, note that the other woman, without our really knowing which is which, raises alongside the Infant the pointing finger that we find throughout Leonardo's oeuvre, and which is one of its enigmas. It's in the *St John the Baptist*, in the *Bacchus*, and in the *Virgin of the Rocks*. This is also something that offers a very fine image of the ambiguity between the real mother and the imaginary mother, between the real child and the hidden phallus. I'm not reading the finger as the symbol of the hidden phallus because it roughly reproduces its outline, but because this finger, which is to be found right across Leonardo's output, is the index to want-of-being, the term of which is also inscribed everywhere in Leonardo's oeuvre.

What is involved here is a position that the subject takes in relation to the problematic of the Other, which is either this absolute Other, the closed unconscious, this impenetrable woman, or else, behind her, the figure of death which is the ultimate absolute Other. The way in which a certain experience composes with this ultimate

term of the human relationship, the way in which it reintroduces all the life of imaginary exchanges into this relationship, the way in which it displaces the radical relation to a certain essential alterity so as to cause it to be inhabited by a relationship of mirage – this is what is known as *sublimation* and this is what is exemplified constantly by Leonardo's oeuvre on the plane of genius and creation.

It is also, I believe, what is expressed in the Cartoon in a sort of singular cryptogram. This drawing is not unique, but merely the double of another drawing for a painting he never made, for the chapel in the Servite Monastery. Reproduced there is the theme of St Anne, the Virgin, the Infant and the fourth term we spoke about, namely St John, who elsewhere is the lamb.

In the fourth term of this fourfold composition we ought clearly to find – as on each occasion I have spoken to you about this, whenever the fourfold relation is incarnated – the theme of death. Where is it? Naturally it is everywhere. It passes from one to the other.

Death is also what will leave Leonardo's sexuality in a dead state, because this is his essential problem, around which Freud predicated his examination. Nowhere in Leonardo's life do we find any attestation of something that would represent a true bond, a true captivation that would be more than ambiguous and transient.

But ultimately this is not the impression that his story has left. Rather, it is that of a dreamlike paternity. He was patron and protector to some young fellows whom he took in for their refined background painting, a number of whom passed through his life, yet without any major attachment really leaving its mark on his lifestyle. If there had to be one who ought to be classified as homosexual, it would rather be Michelangelo.

Is death there in this sort of double, the one who is there across from the Infant and who is so readily replaced by the lamb?

On 3 April 1501, Pietro da Novellara wrote to Isabella d'Este[5] that over two days all Florence had flocked to see the preparatory cartoon for the high altar in the Santissima Annunziata, a work which Leonardo was never to paint. Everyone lingered over the meaning of this fourfold scene in which the Infant is *almost jumping out of his mother's arms to seize hold of a lamb.* They all understand the sign of the drama. *It looks as though St Anne, rising slightly from her seat, wants to restrain her daughter from parting the child and the little lamb; perhaps she symbolises the Church, not wishing to prevent the Passion of Christ.* It is here, in this aspect of His destiny and His sacrifice, that the term of Leonardo's relation to his mother can be situated, though it is his separation from her that Freud takes as the point of departure for the whole dramatisation that followed in Leonardo's life.

The last character, the most enigmatic of all, is the St Anne, restored and established in this purely female, purely maternal relation. This Other, with a capital letter, is necessary to lend balance to the scene.

Of course, contrary to what Mr Ernst Kris tells us, this is far from being *almost the first* such setting of these characters. Even Freud didn't believe for a second that the theme of Anne, the Virgin, the Infant and the fourth character that is introduced here, was an invention exclusive to Leonardo.

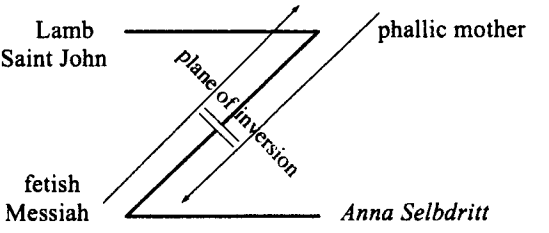
The fourth character does indubitably pose a problem in the history of religious motifs that is rather specific to Leonardo, but when it comes to the representation of the set of St Anne, the Virgin and the Infant, it is enough to have garnered the faintest historical notion of what was going on at the time, by reading any one of the historical accounts, to know that it was precisely in those years, between 1485 and 1510, that the cult of St Anne was being elevated in Christianity, in connection with the dogmatic criticism of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. It was the outgrowth of a spiritual theme, but of many other things besides spirituality, because this was the time of the issuing of plenary indulgences, when across Germany there was a wave of these little tickets with woodcuts of Anne and the Virgin and Infant, the purchase of which could buy you ten or twenty thousand years of indulgence in the afterlife. So, this is a theme that was not invented by Leonardo, nor is it true that Freud imputed the invention to Leonardo. There is only Mr Kris to tell us that Leonardo was alone in representing a trio of the like, when in fact you have just to open Freud's study to see the painting's theme represented with the title *Anna Selbdritt*, that is to say, the Trinitarian Anne. It's the same in Italian – *Anna Metterza.*

This function of the trinity of Anne lies in the fact that at what was doubtless a critical moment, which we needn't revisit since we can't allow ourselves to be swept too far into this historical scholarship on Christian devotion, we meet again the constancy of a supra-Trinity, so to speak, that assumes its full worth when it finds its psychological incarnation in Leonardo da Vinci.

I mean that while Leonardo was surely a man positioned in a profoundly atypical stance with respect to his sexual maturation, and this dissymmetry was tantamount to an encounter with a sublimation that reached exceptional degrees of activity and realisation, nothing in the elaboration of his work – which he was constantly starting over in a truly obsessional way – could be structured without there being something to reproduce this relation between the ego and the other.

This is inscribed, along with the necessity of the big Other, here

on the diagram to which I have been urging you to refer as a means of charting these problems.



Leonardo's inversion

But what are we to make of the atypia brought about through the especially dramatic engagement of this being along the pathways of the imaginary? That he can draw on the prowess of his essential creations only within this trinitarian scene – the same that we met at the end of the observation on little Hans – is one thing. But quite another thing is how this enlightens us on the matter of a perturbation correlative with his own subjective position.

Leonardo's inversion, if indeed we can speak in terms of inversion, is far from reducible to a paradox or an anomaly in his affective relationships. At any rate, this is a register that apparently bears the mark of a peculiar inhibition in this man endowed with every gift.

Besides, the case that there are no erotic themes in Leonardo has perhaps been overstated. It might be going a bit too far, because what is true is that in Freud's time they hadn't yet uncovered the theme of Leda, that is, a very beautiful woman and a swan that all but conjoins with her in an undulating movement no less delicate than her forms. It is rather striking that once again it is a bird that represents the male theme, and certainly an imaginary fantasy. But let's press on because there's something else I must tell you.

If we stay at the level of the experience that we are able to have of Leonardo, there is one element that we cannot eliminate, and this is his manuscripts.

I don't know if you have ever had occasion to leaf through one of the reproductions, but all the same it produces a certain effect when you see all these handwritten notes in mirror writing. Then, when you read them, you can see him constantly speaking to himself, calling himself *thou*. For example, *Sell what you cannot take with you. Get from Jean de Paris the method of painting in tempera.* Or, *You will go and get two sprigs of lavender or rosemary from the corner shop*. They are things of this order, where everything is mixed in together. It ends up becoming quite overawing and gripping.

To spell it right out, the relationship of identification between the ego and the other, the establishment of which appears to be crucial for an understanding of how identifications are constituted, and on the basis of which the subject's ego can move forward, the idea seems to arise that, correlative to each sublimation, that is to say, to the process of the de-subjectification or the naturalisation of the Other which would constitute the essential phenomenon of the sublimation to the very extent of its greater or lesser totality or perfection, something always occurs on the level of the imaginary in a form that is accentuated to a greater or lesser extent, namely an inversion of the relations between ego and other.

Here, in the case of Leonardo da Vinci, we truly have someone who addresses himself and who makes comments to himself from his own imaginary other. We have to take his mirror writing as the bare fact of his proper position with respect to himself. Here we have the same radical alienation that I posed as a question at the end of the last session regarding the amnesia of Hans as a youth.

I shall pose the same question today, as to whether the process that we shall call sublimation, or psychologisation, or alienation, or egoisation, might not entail in its very steering a correlative dimension whereby a being forgets himself as an imaginary object of the other.

Indeed, in the imaginary ego, there is a fundamental possibility of forgetting.

3 July 1957

Note

The collective work cited in the opening chapter bears the title *La Psychanalyse d'aujourd'hui* [a selection of the articles appeared in 'American Adaptation' in the single volume *Psychoanalysis of Today*, New York: Grune & Stratton, 1959]; further commentary on the same is given in 'La direction de la cure et les principes de son pouvoir', *Écrits*, pp. 585–645, *passim*.

The bulletin referenced in chapters IV and V is the *Bulletin d'activités de l'Association des psychanalystes de Belgique*, no. 25, 118 rue Froissart, Brussels (cf. *Écrits*, pp. 609–12).

It has not been possible to identify the painting alluded to on page 328. It may be that the painting is not by Titian, but Veronese: the *Venus and Mars United by Love* in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Nor has it been possible to identify the letter by Freud mentioned on page 295.

A number of annotations in Lacan's own hand feature in the typescript that was given to me. Thereafter, I was able to consult notes taken down directly by Paul Lemoine; I thank my dear friend Gennie Lemoine for allowing me to draw on these notes for the *établissement* of the present Book, as for the Books of the Seminar in their entirety.

I would also like to thank: Claude Cherki, who now manages Éditions du Seuil after Paul Flamand and Michel Chodkiewicz; Evelyne Cazade-Havas, who has taken over from François Wahl as copy-editor; she was the first reader of the [French] manuscript and kindly accepted my request to check the charts of Vienna, which Paul Lemoine had jotted down; and Jean-Claude Baillieul, who went through the [French] text at the various stages of putting this book together.

Lastly, I would like to give a word of thanks for the warm welcome I received from the Library of the École de la Cause Freudienne, 1 rue Huysmans, in the sixth arrondissement of Paris.

Since the *établissement* of the Seminar of Jacques Lacan is a work-in-progress, I would be grateful for any possible corrections and additions, which may be addressed c/o the editor.

J. A. M.

*

The sketches on pages 257 ('Giraffe with Widdler'), 304 ('The Loading Dock') and 317 ('Untere Viaductgasse') are taken from *Analyse der Phobie eines 5-Jährigen Knaben* in the seventh volume of the *Gesammelte Werke* of Sigmund Freud, published by S. Fischer Verlag (©1941, Imago Publishing Co., London).

The map of Vienna (pp. 430–1) is taken from the 1905 edition of the Baedeker handbook to Austria-Hungary; the title page is reproduced on page 429.

J. A. M.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

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Translator's Notes

I Introduction

1 Concerning *situation analytique*, cf. B. Fink's endnote (192, ¶3) on page 412 of his translation of *Book VIII* of the Seminar (Cambridge: Polity, 2015).

2 Note that in the late 1950s, Lacan uses *tendance*, on and off, to translate Freud's *Trieb* and *Regung*. Cf. 'La direction de la cure et les principes de son pouvoir', in *Écrits* (Paris: Seuil), p. 597: 'Quand il dénonce une tendance, ce qu'il [Freud] appelle *Trieb*, [. . .].' In most instances, the present translation renders *tendance* with the paraphrase 'drive tendency'.

3 Lacan's regular use of the adjective *adéquat* to qualify the object of cognisance is in reference to the doctrine of *Veritas est adæquatio rei et intellectus*, ascribed by Thomas Aquinas to Isaac Israeli ben Solomon (Cf. 'La Chose freudienne', in *Écrits*, op. cit., pp. 420, 434). Here and throughout, the present translation opts for 'corresponding'.

4 It may be noted that at the time of the present Seminar, the only authoritative indication in English of the title of Lacan's paper was the indexical reference: 'The Looking-Glass Phase' in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 1937, 18(1): 78.

II The Three Forms of the Lack of Object

1 Chocolat was the clown persona of the performer Rafael, of Afro-Cuban descent. Between 1895 and 1910 he performed in a duo with the clown Foottit, and their skits often featured 'comedic slaps'. The expression 'être chocolat' has passed into colloquial use in French, meaning 'to be taken for a ride' or 'to miss out'. The mention of Chocolat and Auguste is unattested in the authorially annotated typescript (cf. Jacques-Alain Miller's Note, page 427) and so, as with the many subsequent editorial interpolations (signalled below), may derive from the Lemoine notebooks.

2 Perhaps an allusion to Dranem and his hat, which he named 'Poupoute'. Dranem also popularised the song 'Nous nous plûmes' (lyrics by Georges Sibre), which Lacan works into 'Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage', *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 276.

3 The diagram reproduced at 000002.09 of the stenographer's typescript is unattested elsewhere in the seminar typescripts. The variations on the diagram, constituting the figures on pages 57, 85 and 202 of the Seuil edition, are editorial. Of further note are Lacan's two thumbnail sketches flanking the diagram in the authorially annotated typescript: on the left, a schematic version of the 'R schema' (developed in January 1958 and featuring in its fully expanded form in *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 553; on the right, the upper and diagonal vectors of the 'L schema' (as corresponding to the imaginary triangle φIM in the R schema).
4 Mention of Helene Deutsch and Melanie Klein is unattested at 000002.14 of the stenographer's typescript.
5 Lacan seems to be confusing punishment for incest with the penance for 'sex with an elder's wife' listed as one of the 'Penances for Grievous Sins Causing Loss of Caste' in the *Manusmṛti*. Among the various alternative penances is that the penitent should 'cut off his penis and testicles by himself, hold them in his cupped hands, and walk straight towards the south-west until he falls down dead' (*Manu's Code of Law; A Critical Edition and Translation of the Mānava-Dharmaśāstra*, translated by P. Olivelle, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 220).

III The Signifier and the Holy Spirit

1 This interrogative quip is unattested in the stenographer's typescript (cf. 000003.3).
2 The clause . . . , *par l'intermédiaire du message de l'Autre*, . . . is editorial (p. 46 of the Seuil edition, unattested at 000003.11).
3 Freud writes 'die Empfindung des Bedürfnisses als die der Befriedigung', which James Strachey translates as 'the experience both of a need and of a gratification' (*Penguin Freud Library* 7, p. 45n).
4 A thumbnail sketch in Lacan's hand just below this figure (square-bracketed at the foot of 000003.14) links the two levels of signifier and signified to the two levels of the graph to be developed throughout the following year's seminar, where a retroactive vector rises, loops back, and falls, thus to cross each horizontal line twice.
5 Lacan is overlooking the 1924 edition in the fifth volume of the *Gesammelte Schriften*, which included further additions, in particular the note added to the subsection on 'Ambivalence' (in the second *Essay*) incorporating the findings of 'Die infantile Genitalorganisation'.
6 Cf. Freud's remark: 'Unfortunately we can describe this state of things only as it affects the male child' (*PFL* 7, pp. 308–9)
7 This entire sentence has been interpolated editorially (p. 55 in the Seuil edition, unattested at 000003.32 in the typescript). Cf. *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 155. B. Fink translates *somatognosie* as 'agnosia of somatic functions'.

IV The Dialectic of Frustration

1 The bibliographic reference to Alice Balint's 1939 article 'Love for the Mother and Mother Love' is supplied in deference to Lacan's

manuscript annotation (p. 63 of the Seuil edition gives the misreference *Mother's Love and Love of the Mother*), though his spoken remark might equally encompass her 1937 paper, 'Handhabung der Übertragung auf Grund der Ferenczischen Versuche' (in *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, 22: 47–58), mentioned by Michael Balint in 'Early Developmental States of the Ego. Primary Object-Love' with respect to Imre Hermann's notion of 'clinging', there viewed from the perspective of the mother. The interjection in the ensuing sentence . . . *au Jardin des Hespérides* . . . is unattested at 000004.10–11.

2 This notation is editorially supplied, in anticipation of the authorial occurrence of the same in lesson XXIII (p. 386 below).

3 Cf. Freud's introductory lecture on 'Femininity': 'Her happiness is great if later on this wish for a baby finds fulfilment in reality, and quite especially so if the baby is a little boy who brings the longed-for penis with him' (*PFL* 2, p. 163).

4 In the 'Observation of a Phobia', Anneliese Schnurmann notes that the brother is Sandy's elder sibling 'Barrie', who, like Sandy, is a child of the first couple formed by Mrs H. and her now deceased husband. Barrie had been evacuated to live with his aunt where he stayed until the end of the war. It is specified that the boy is just two years older than the subject, not five years, though there is mention of an eleven-year-old stepsister in the new household. Cf. (1949) 'Observation of a Phobia', in *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 4: 253–70.

V On Analysis as Bundling and the Consequences Thereof

1 The noun *subodoration* is far less common than the already antiquated French verb *subodorer*. Rarer still is its English cognate, with Charles Talbut Onions citing just two attested uses of 'subodorate', both from the nineteenth century, with the signification 'to smell or scent out' (*A New English Dictionary of Historical Principles, Vol. IX, Part II, Su-Th* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919), p. 38). Though Onions posits a Latin derivation from *subodōrāt*, the verbal stem *subodorari* appears to be a mid-sixteenth-century concoction by Denis Lambin (cf. Tournoy, G. and Tunberg, T. O., 'On the Margins of Latinity? Neo-Latin and the Vernacular Languages' in *Humanistica Lovaniensia: Journal of Neo-Latin Studies*, Vol. XLV, 1996: 147) which, indeed, may derive from the French, given an earlier attested use in Guillaume Briçonnet's 1522 correspondence with Marguerite D'Angoulême: 'seullement savourer, subodorer et gouster nostre naissance celeste' (Martineau-Genieys, C., Veissière, M. and Heller, H. (eds) *Correspondance (1521–1524): Tome I, Années 1521–1522* (Geneva: Droz, 1975), p. 172. Lacan made previous reference to the same report (remaining discreet as to whether it was delivered by Fain or Marty) in 'Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage en psychanalyse' (*Écrits*, p. 267) under the bivocal formula 'une telle subodoration de son sujet', which echoes the reflexivity of 'se flairer réciproquement' from the preceding sentence. A. Sheridan renders the formula with the equally bivocal 'such a sniffing of his subject' (*Écrits, A Selection* (London: Tavistock, 1977), p. 43), while B. Fink prefers the

univocal 'being smelled by his subject' (*Écrits in English* (New York: Norton, 2006), p. 221). Note also a similar reciprocity implied in the later reference to the occurrence as an *intersubodoration* (*Écrits*, p. 337) and its description as a technical device (*Écrits*, p. 482, n.1: 'technique de subodoration'). For further allusions to the report, see *Écrits*, pp. 267, 464–6.

2 Lacan may be confusing Stendhal's *De l'amour* with Reinhold Günther's *Kulturgeschichte der Liebe. Ein Versuch*, Berlin: Duncker, 1900, which on pages 366–7 mentions the German and Swiss practices of *Fensterin* and *z' Chilt gehen*. The same observation had previously featured on page 191 of his *Weib und sittlichkeit; studien und darlegungen*, Berlin: Duncker, 1898.

3 Ruth Lebovici reports these two stages slightly differently (cf. *Bulletin d'activités de l'Association des psychanalystes de Belgique*, 25 (1956): 5). In the first stage, 'il dessine des femmes accroupies en train d'uriner ou bien il imagine qu'une femme le voit se masturber dans un urinoir, qu'elle est très excitée et qu'elle se donne à lui' ['he makes drawings of women urinating in a squatting position, or imagines to himself that a woman can see him masturbating into a urinal, that she becomes very aroused and offers herself to him.']. In the second stage, 'il se trouve dans un w.c. dont la cloison intermédiaire avec un autre est percée d'un trou ; il exhibe son sexe ; regarde uriner la femme qui se trouve à côté ; et souhaite embrasser ses organes génitaux' ['he finds himself in a toilet cubicle that is divided from another by a partition wall with a hole in it; he exposes his penis; watches the woman on the other side urinating; and wishes he could kiss her on the genitals'].

4 Lacan here inverts the attributes of the two women as reported in the case history (ibid.). The first, a fishmonger and a friend of his parents, is the woman the subject had seen urinating when he was a child and who features in the dream as the one with whom he wants to have sexual relations. The second, the fishmonger's maid, is the woman he had loved as a child, and the sight of whom in the dream stops him in his tracks. The subject adds that as a child he had been afraid of the maid's husband.

VI The Primacy of the Phallus and the Young Homosexual Woman

1 J. Strachey translates 'Das typische Mißlingen der kindlichen Sexualforschung' as 'Typical Failure of Infantile Sexual Researches' (*PFL* 7, p. 115).

2 Freud uses the French term *demi-mondaine* to describe the woman's love object.

3 J. Strachey chooses not to 'stereotype' *Schwärmerei*, instead rendering variously as 'devoted admiration', 'infatuation' and 'adoration'.

VII *A Child is Being Beaten* and the Young Homosexual Woman

1 A marginal note in the authorially annotated typescript here reads: 'Là non plus, L. ne voit pas le problème' (000007.14), and then a further note

just below, indexed to 'un rapport duel, et donc ambigu', reads: 'L. ici n'a pas encore vu le problème, qu'il vera dans V' (000007.15). Referring to himself in the third person, these two notes anticipate Lacan's revised reading of the second stage of the beating fantasy in the lesson of 12 February 1958.

2 Another note in the authorially annotated typescript here reads: 'distinction qui n'est pas encore bien acquise. Sera dans [V]' (000007.18).

3 A further authorial apostil here reads: 'Ce n'est pas ainsi que F[reud]. nous présente la chose' (000007.27).

VIII Dora and the Young Homosexual Woman

1 A marginal note in the authorially annotated typescript here reads: 'C'est ici que surgit pour la 1ère fois le thème de la Verwerfung de la femme. Cf. V' (000008.27), this being an anticipation of the lesson of 23 April 1958.

2 This sentence is editorial, seemingly prompted by Lacan's manuscript note: 'ici, Jakobson' (000008.30). The example is borrowed from the fifth section of Roman Jakobson's 1956 essay, 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances': '[. . .] in *War and Peace* the synecdoches "hair on the upper lip" or "bare shoulders" are used [. . .] to stand for the female characters to whom these features belong' (in *Fundamentals of Language*, The Hague: Mouton, 1956, p. 78).

IX The Function of the Veil

1 Here, *le sexe* could also be understood as 'the sexual organ'.

2 Alternatively, *toutes les tendances* may be intended in the sense of 'all the drive tendencies'. Cf. endnote 2 to Chapter I, above.

X Identification with the Phallus

1 Here and throughout, the terms 'scoptophilia' and 'scoptophilic' have been retained over 'scopophilia' and 'scopophilic'. Though the former had even at the time been singled out as mistranslations of Freud's *Schaulust* (cf. Ernest Jones's 1936 'Review of the *Dictionary of Psychology*', in *IJP* 17: 247), such were the terms then being used by the authors Lacan is here critiquing and he respects their choice of vocabulary. See also J. Strachey's later remark in his 1963 'Obituary of Joan Riviere', *IJP* 44: 229.

2 Assuming the stenographer's typescript to be an accurate transcription, Lacan here misremembers the line from *Wilhelm Meisters theatralische Sendung* reproduced in Fenichel's article: 'Die beiden waren bei ihm geblieben, der Harfner, den er brauchte, und Mignon, den er nicht entbehren konnte' (Book 6, Chapter 5). Goethe is describing how both Mignon and the Harper have become indispensible for Wilhelm.

3 The 1921 edition of *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse* has 'oder etwas später', and the 1925 edition has 'vielleicht sogar vorher'. Curiously,

the wording in Samuel Jankélévitch's 1921 translation 'Psychologie collective et analyse du moi' (the erroneous 'ou un peu plus tard') finds a correlative formation in J. Strachey's 1922 translation 'Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego' (which gives, 'or a little later'), perhaps indicating that both translations were made from a same or similar fair copy that differed from the corrected proof used for the first print. The later translation by J. A. Underwood under the title 'Mass Psychology and Analysis of the "I"' is more dependable here (in *Mass Psychology and Other Writings*, Penguin, 2004).

4 A marginal note in the authorially annotated typescript here reads: 'non ! erreur lieé à la confusion I/II ? La I est orale – II est anale (Safouan)' (000010.20).

XI The Phallus and the Unfulfilled Mother

1 Reading *renonciation* and *renoncer à* for *dénonciation* and *dénoncer* (recorded at 000011.4). Cf. 'Situation de la psychanalyse et formation du psychanalyste en 1956', *Écrits*, pp. 460–1: 'Or on cherchait vainement dans toute l'œuvre de Freud, de ce terme [de frustration] la moindre trace : car on y trouvait seulement occasion à le rectifier par celui de *Versagung*, lequel implique renonciation [. . .].'

2 In the stenographer's paginated typescript, *Je vous ai* falls at the end of page 13, and page 14 begins *relation primitive de la mère*, &c. The discussion on *anorexie mentale* in the Seuil edition is thus an interpolation based apparently on the conjecture that this lacuna must correspond to an entire missing page. The interpolated material features in the present translation as the text leading up to '. . . primary relation with the mother . . .' in the following paragraph.

3 This sentence is unattested in the typescript. It may further be noted that Lacan's question to Lévi-Strauss bears on the latent structure of the communities, not on their manifest structure as patriarchies or matriarchies (cf. the comment on androcentric political power in matriarchal societies in the following paragraph). Compare also Lévi-Strauss's comment on adopting the 'opposite convention' and his allusion to 'a few societies of a highly developed matrilineal type' at the close of his 1956 article 'The Family' (originally written in English in H. L. Shapiro (ed.) *Man, Culture, and Society*, Oxford University Press; later revised in *The View From Afar*, Basic Books, 1985). Of further interest is the manuscript apostil at 000011.26: [Cf. Creswell], almost certainly a reference to Robert Cresswell's research on endogamy and kinship published in English and French in the 1970s.

4 Lacan's textual source is the *Selected Papers of Karl Abraham* published in English translation by Douglas Bryan and Alix Strachey in 1927 (Hogarth Press).

XII On the Oedipus Complex

1 This mention of a preceding lesson dedicated to the theme of castration invites the inference of an error in the manuscript dates appended to the stenographer's typescript, having led in turn to an inversion of the scripts for sessions 12 and 13. This inference is supported tentatively by the ensuing reminders of having dealt just previously with the retroactive constitution of stages and the introduction of the Oedipus complex (which seem to correspond to the discussion of regression and the preoedipal stage on pages 215–20), and more persuasively by the reminder of having in the previous lesson examined little Hans's anxiety and having dealt with 'material from the first few pages of the text' (the latter surely corresponding to the commentary on pages 214–15, then 217–20).

2 Freud's comment that 'the girl's Oedipus complex is much simpler than that of the small bearer of the penis' was in fact from the 1924 article 'The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex', and was not repeated thereafter.

3 This allusion to Sachs's 1927 paper, delivered at the Innsbruck congress and published in 1929 as 'One of the Motive Factors in the Formation of the Super-Ego in Women', is unattested in the typescript.

4 In 1935 a first edition of Freud's case studies was published in French translation under the title *Cinq psychanalyses*. Alongside the case reports on Dora, the Rat Man and the Wolf Man, it includes the notes on Schreber and the observation on little Hans, but not the case of the Young Homosexual Woman. The collection has regularly been reprinted and re-edited, such that its title has become a major reference in French psychoanalysis. In his Seminar, Lacan mentions the book by name, which in the present translation is rendered by a paraphrase. Furthermore, in the authorially annotated typescript, 000012.13 is headed by the manuscript note: 'Imp[ortant] de souligner qu'ici, L. tient encore les Sém. –1 et –2 pour partie de son enseignement.' The seminar held in Lacan's rooms in 1951–1952 bore on the cases of Dora and the Rat Man; the seminar of 1952–1953 bore, as Lacan mentions above, in part on the Wolf Man case. These two seminars are not included in the canonical *Books* of the Seminar, which begin with the 1953–1954 Seminar at Sainte-Anne.

XIII On the Castration Complex

1 This is a far from satisfactory attempt to render: *Au lieu de noyer le poisson, essayons au contraire de bien l'isoler. La privation, c'est la privation du poisson.* The French idiom *noyer le poisson*, literally 'to drown the fish', means 'to muddy the waters' or 'to cloud the issue'.

XIV The Signifier in the Real

1 There is an omission here of the further possibility of '3 to 3', which in the Introduction to 'Le séminaire sur "La Lettre volée"' is also listed under α (*La Psychanalyse* 2:5; compare also page 48 of the revised article in the 1966 *Écrits*, where the Introduction is moved to the end of the text).

2 This reference to a painting by Titian is uncharacteristically vague and is unattested in the stenographer's typescript, thus doubtless deriving from the Lemoine notebooks. In the 'Note' on p. 427, Veronese's *Venus and Mars United by Love* is mooted as an alternative. Given that the horse on this canvas, standing behind the couple, not looming above, bears neither on its mouth nor elsewhere the blackness in question, Veronese's *Venus and Mars with Cupid and a Horse* in the Turin Sabauda is perhaps a more likely referent.

XV What Myth is For

1 In this context, *tendanciel* very probably carries the sense of 'drive tendency'. See again endnote 2 to Chapter 1, above.
2 The term 'mytheme' has here been inserted in deference to Lacan's retrospective manuscript note (at 000015.14). The original English-language version of Lévi-Strauss's 1955 article referenced in the following lesson, 'The Structural Study of Myth' (*The Journal of American Folklore*, 68(270): 428–44), did not carry the term. The first attested use of *mythème* is in the French edition of the text, which was not published until January 1958 (chapter 9 of *L'anthropologie structurale*, Paris: Plon). The second English-language version, in the 1963 *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, pp. 206–31), accordingly carries the term. The mention of Polynices in the following paragraph is also an editorial interpolation, explicitly matching Lacan's development here to its source in the same article.
3 On this occasion Freud uses the term *Exkretionskomplex*, 'excretory complex'.
4 It is not clear what Lacan has in mind here. *Wiwimacher* belongs to Hans's idiolect, and while the child does sometimes use *Wiwi* in isolation to denote 'wee', not once does he incorporate it into other linguistic constructions. The more commonly heard infantile term in German is *Pipi machen*. Furthermore, the example of *Uhrmacher* ('watchmaker') is editorially interpolated.
5 In a parenthesis here in the stenographer's typescript (000015.32), there is a recurrence of the lines from Prévert's *L'opéra des girafes* previously quoted at the close of the eleventh lesson: *Les grandes girafes sont muettes / Les petites girafes sont rares.*
6 Hans qualifies the fantasy of the plumber sticking a borer into his stomach as something he imagined or recalled ('ich hab mir was gedacht'), not as a dream.

XVI How Myth is Analysed

1 This phrase alludes to a proverbial locution, 'Ah! Le bon billet qu'a La Châtre!' denoting an oath or pledge on which no reliance can be placed. According to the (almost certainly fictitious) account penned under the pseudonym 'Monsieur B*' (identified variously as Antoine Bret, Louis Damours and Claude-Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon), when the Marquis

of La Châtre was ordered to return to his regiment, he made his lover, Ninon de Lenclos, sign a 'bond of constancy' pledging her fidelity to him. Two days later, she took another lover and, remembering the note in the throes of her seduction, uttered the now infamous line (*Mémoires sur la vie de Mademoiselle de Lenclos, par Mr. B*****, Corrected Edition, Part I, Amsterdam: François Joly, 1758, pp. 67–9). Voltaire, a former acquaintance of Ninon, gives a shorter account in his remarks on the *Souvenirs de Madame de Caylus* ('Le beau billet qu'a La Châtre!') and reworked the phrase into his 1739 comedy *La Prude*: 'Le bon Billet qu'a là l'ami Blanford!' (Act I, Scene 3). Lacan will use the phrase again the following year in *Les Formations de l'inconscient*.

2 The reference to Angelus Silesius in the Seuil edition supplies an ellipsis in the stenographer's typescript (at 000016.29). While there is indeed in the transcript of the 16 February 1955 a comment on the wordplay in the *Cherubinischer Wandersmann* on *Ort and Wort*, it is a little too brief to warrant being qualified as a 'development'. The couplet in question bears the title 'Der Ort ist das Wort' (22.205):

> Der Ort und's Wort ist Eins, und wäre nicht der Ort
> (Bei ew'ger Ewigkeit!) es wäre nicht das Wort.

3 While Hans is clearly referring to a plumber's 'grips' or 'wrench', Lacan's more expansive discussion on the signification and etymology of the French *pince* and the German *Zange* in lesson XIX have led to 'pincers' being favoured for the present translation, as used previously by J. Strachey in his translation of the case.

XVII The Signifier and *Der Witz*

1 The barely disguised French word is *con*.

2 The maiden issue of *La Psychanalyse*, of which Lacan himself was editor-in-chief, bore on its cover a figure from a French translation of Horapollo's *Hieroglyphica* illustrating the (doubtfully sourced) lemma to be mentioned in the final lesson (p. 416): 'The image of an ear signifies work to come' (II, 23).

XVIII Circuits

1 The Seuil edition reproduces the hiatus in the stenographer's typescript (000018.02). Perhaps the missing content is something along the lines of 'in a good mood', as may be tentatively reconstructed on the basis of Freud's letter of 6 August 1899 to Wilhelm Fliess: 'on the next rainy day I shall tramp on foot to my beloved Salzberg, where I actually unearthed a few Egyptian antiquities last time. These things put me in a good mood and speak of distant times and countries' (*The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess 1887–1904*, translated by J. M. Masson, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 366).
2 Lainz is a little under seven miles from Wien Mitte (formerly the Hauptzollamt station), while Vaucresson is some ten miles from central Paris.
3 Initially used in dialects in Western France before becoming more widespread in the early twentieth century, the informal term *comprenoire* and its sister term *comprenette* denote the faculty of understanding or mental grasp.

XIX Permutations

1 The phrase *Bon Dieu, qu'il le lui foute* is unattested in the stenographer's typescript.
2 As Hans's father reports it in the observation, they went directly to the grandmother's house on 29 March. The longer Sunday outing, taking in Schönbrunn on the way to the Lainz, occurred the week before, on Sunday the 22nd.
3 Dorothy Bussy translates this line from *Si le grain ne meurt* . . . as 'You owe it to yourself; you owe it to your son' (*If it Die* . . ., London: Secker & Warburg, 1950, p. 114).

XX Transformations

1 This 'fable' is extracted from the Codex Atlanticus, f. 393^{r-a} (formerly 145^{r-a}). Here on 22 May, and contemporaneously in the text 'L'instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient ou la raison depuis Freud' dated 14–26 May 1957, Lacan reproduces the Louise Servicen translation from *Carnets de Léonard de Vinci*, Tome II, Paris: Gallimard, p. 400. The English-language translation here is by R. C. Bell from *The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci; compiled and edited from the original manuscripts by Jean Paul Richter*, Vol. II, Oxford University Press, enlarged and revised edition, 1939, p. 354. The original folio reads:

> De'fanciulli che stanno legati nelle fascie.
> O città marine, io vedo in uoi i uostri cittadini così femine come maschi strettamente dai forti legami colle braccia e ganbe esser legati da gente che non ītenderanno i uostri līguaggi, e sol ui potrete sfogare li vostri dolori e perduta libertà mediante i lagrimosi piāti

e li sospiri e lamentatione infra uoi medesimi, chè chi vi lega, non v'intenderà, nè voi loro intenderete.

2 Kurt Goldstein coined the term *Katastrophenreaktion* in 1934 in *Der Aufbau des Organismus: Einführung in die Biologie unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Erfahrungen am kranken Menschen*, The Hague: Nijoff, which was translated (anonymously) as 'catastrophic reaction' in *The Organism: A Holistic Approach to Biology Derived from Pathological Data in Man*, New York: American Book Company, 1939. The French translation was published in 1951. Lacan will use the term again in Seminar VII and, more extensively, in Seminar X.

3 From Act 1, Scene 9. Louis Simpson's 1961 translation (*The Breasts of Tiresias* in M. B. Gale and J. F. Deeney (eds), *The Routledge Drama Anthology and Sourcebook: From Modernism to Contemporary Performance* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 214, gives:

> They are just the same as we
> Yet they're not men as you can see

Meanwhile, Maya Slater (*The Mammaries of Tiresias* in *Three Pre-Surrealist Plays* (Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 187) gives:

> Though physically she's just the same
> To call her man's not playing the game

XXI The Mother's Drawers and the Father's Shortcoming

1 The two variants: *en-soi*, that which exists in itself, and *pour-soi*, that which exists for itself, were popularised in Sartre's *L'être et le néant*.

2 The line:

לדוד אמר נבל בלבו אין אלהים

is from Psalms (13:1, and again 52:1) and not the Book of Ecclesiastes. Lemaistre de Sacy's *Bible de Port-Royal*, like the Authorised Version (where these psalms are numbered 14 and 53), translates the present tense אמר as a past tense verb.

3 While the verb form *suppléer* ('to make up for' or 'to stand in for') has already occurred extensively in the present Seminar, this is the first recorded use in Lacan's teaching of the nounal *suppléance*. The present translation follows R. Grigg in using 'suppletion' (*The Seminar Book V, Formations of the Unconscious* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017), pp. 6, 173, and 459, with a word of explanation from Grigg on p. 493).

4 Freud draws on Karl Abraham's 1909 book *Traum und Mythus, Eine Studie zur Völkerpsychologie*, Leipzig: F. Deuticke, which reproduces the hypothesis that *Pramantha* means 'forth-rubber', the bringing forth (*Hervorreibende*) by rubbing (*Reiben*). Abraham is apparently drawing in turn on Adalbert Kuhn's conjecture of an originary signification of 'Fire-driller' (in 'Die Sprachvergleichung und die Urgeschichte der ind-

ogermanischen Völker' in *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung* 4 (1855): 124; and *Die Herabkunft des Feuers und des Göttertranks*, Berlin: Ferd, Dümmler, 1859, pp. 12–18). It was subsequently noted, however, that Kuhn was falsely conflating *manth* ('twirl' or 'drill') and *math* ('seize'), the latter being frequently compounded with *pra* to mean 'forcibly snatch to oneself'. Cf. Johanna Narten, 'Das vedische Verbum *Math*' in *Indo-Iranian Journal* 4(2/3) (1960): 121–35; seconded by Marcello Durante in *Sulla preistoria della tradizione poetica greca. Parte seconda: risultanze della comparazione indoeuropea*, Rome: Dell'Ateneo, 1976, p. 57, and Calvert Watkins in *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics*, Oxford University Press: 1995, p. 256n.

XXII An Essay in Rubber-Sheet Logic

1 The annotated typescript here bears an asterisk linking to an apostil in Lacan's hand: 'l'ouvrage apocryphe Theologia Aristotelis n'est en fait que Proclus (et/ou Plotin ?) si je me souviens bien. Cf. Gilson'. The concluding note is surely a reference to Etienne Gilson's *La philosophie au Moyen Age, Tome I: De Scot Érigène à S. Bonaventure*, Paris: Payot, 1922, p. 98, 'Deux traités essentiellement néoplatoniciens, la *Théologie d'Aristote* et le *Liber de Causis*, passèrent pour des productions authentiques du maître et influencent profondément l'interprétation que l'on donne de sa pensée. Le contenu du premier est emprunté aux Ennéades de Plotin (livres IV-VI), et celui du second à l'*Elementatio theologica* de Proclus.'

2 From Act 1, Scene 7. Simpson (op. cit. p. 213) gives:

> I am a decent woman-mister
> My wife is a man-lady
> She's taken the piano the violin the butter dish
> She's a soldier minister mover of shit

And Slater (op. cit., p. 182) gives:

> I'm a respectable wife-monsieur
> My wife's a man-madame
> She's gone off with the piano the violin the butter-dish
> She's a soldier a minister a phy-shit-ian

3 Anthony Hatley, in his translation 'Booz Sleeping' (in *The Penguin Book of French Verse, With Plain Prose Translation of Each Poem, Vol. 3*, 1957, p. 69), gives, 'His sheaves of corn were not mean or hateful'. E. H. and A. M. Blackmore in their 'Boaz Asleep' in *Selected Poems of Victor Hugo; A Bilingual Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 337, lose the metaphor somewhat by giving, 'He harvested with neither greed nor spite'; so too does Brooks Haxton, in his translation 'Boaz Asleep' (in *The American Scholar* 70(4):66, reprinted in *Victor Hugo; Selected Poems*, Penguin, 2002), giving, 'He bound sheaves without the strain of hate / or envy'. Steven Monte, in his translation

'Boaz Asleep' (*Victor Hugo, Selected Poetry* (Routledge, 2002), p. 219), gives, 'His sheaves were neither miserly nor filled with bitterness'. John Richmond, in his translation 'Boaz Asleep' in *My Proper Life – Poems 1975–2017* (Cottesloe, WA: Chalkface Press, 2017), gives, 'His sheaves contained no hate nor meanness in their yield.'

4 Hatley (ibid., p. 71) gives, 'Booz saw an oak, which, issuing from his stomach, went up to the blue sky; a people ascended it like a long chain; a king was singing at the bottom, a god dying at the top.' The Blackmores (ibid., p. 339) have, 'Boaz saw an oak tree grow / Out of his loins, and reach up to the sky, / Where a long chain of people climbed; below / A king sang, and a god was slain on high.' Haxton (ibid., p. 67) gives, 'he saw a live oak grow out of his belly / far up into the blue; and many people / climbed it in a long chain, while a king sat / singing at the root, and a god died at the crown.' Monte (ibid., p. 221) gives, 'Boaz saw an oak tree grow out of / The middle of his stomach and ascend into the blue. / A nation climbed upward like the links of a chain: / A king sung at the bottom and a God died above.' Richmond (ibid.) gives, 'out of his belly, like a sprouting rod, / An oak tree rose into the sky. A chosen race, / Links in a long chain, scaled its height; down at its base / A king sang; at its top, men put to death their god.'

5 Hatley (ibid., p. 72) gives, 'While he slept, Ruth, a Moabite, had lain down at the feet of Booz, with naked breast, hoping we know not what unknown gleam, when the sudden light of awakening shone.' The Blackmores (ibid., p. 341) give, 'While he was sleeping, Ruth, a Moabite, / Came to his feet and, with her breast bared, lay / Hoping for some unknown uncertain ray / When, suddenly, they would waken into light'. Haxton (ibid. p. 68) has 'Ruth, a Moabite, had come while Boaz slept, / and now lay at his feet, who knows what light / from what door in the heavens finding her breast / naked, tender to its stirring as his dreams.' Monte (ibid., p. 221) gives, 'While he was sleeping there, Ruth, a Moabite, / Lay down with her breasts bared at Boaz's feet, / Hoping for some sort of unfamiliar ray / In which understanding would flare up like a light.' Richmond (ibid.) gives, 'In his oblivion, came Ruth, a Moabite, / And lay down at the old man's feet. Her breasts were bare. / She hoped we know not what chance ray might touch her there / When he should start awake, his eyes renewed with light.'

6 Hatley (ibid., p. 73) gives, 'what God, what harvester of the eternal summer, had negligently thrown down this golden sickle in the field of stars.' Haxton has (ibid. p. 68) 'what god / of the eternal summer passing dropped / his golden scythe there in that field of stars.' The Blackmores (ibid., p. 343) give, 'what stray god, as he cropped / The timeless summer, had so idly dropped / That golden sickle in the starry field.' Monte (ibid., p. 223) gives, 'what reaper of eternity – what kind / Of God – had, leaving us, carelessly tossed behind / This golden sickle in the dark field of the stars.' Richmond (ibid.) gives, 'once eternal summer's crop was mown, / What god, what harvester so carelessly had thrown / His golden sickle on that field of stars, and gone?'

XXIII *'Me donnera sans femme une progéniture'*

1 The Seuil edition modifies the passage in the typescript reading, 'nous nous permettons de parler de la fonction hypnopompique et hypnagogique' (000023.07), to 'nous nous permettons de parler de fonction métaphorique et de fonction métonymique' (p. 392). In a 1911 footnote to the *Traumdeutung*, and in some contributions thereafter, Freud mentions Herbert Silberer's 1909 study devoted in part to hypnagogic phenomena, 'Bericht über eine Methode gewisse symbolische Halluzinations-Erscheinungen hervorzurufen und zu beodachten' in *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen*, 1(2): 513–25 (translated in 1951 as 'Report on a method of eliciting and observing certain symbolic hallucination-phenomena' in Rapaport, D. (ed.) *Organization and Pathology of Thought: Selected Sources*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1951 pp. 195–207). Lacan will cite this reference two years after the present Seminar in 'Sur la théorie du symbolisme d'Ernest Jones', and then in 1966 in 'D'un syllabaire après coup'.

2 An authorial annotation inserts [Lévi-Strauss?] to supply the stenographer's ellipsis (000022.23), footnoted in turn to expand on the uncertainty denoted by the question mark: 'Totémisme d'aujourd'hui, ou Kroeber ? – Je doute'. Lévi-Strauss's book was not published until 1962 (Paris: PUF), and in its Introduction the author claims it was begun just two years previously, thus three years after the present lesson. Alfred L. Kroeber's text, 'Totem and Taboo: An Ethnologic Psychoanalysis' was published in 1920 (in *American Anthropologist* 22(1): 48–55), and its sequel, 'Totem and Taboo in Retrospect', in 1939 (*American Journal of Sociology* 45: 446–51; both were reprinted in his collected papers, *The Nature of Culture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952, pp. 301–5, pp. 306–9). Lacan will mention Kroeber's work in his 'Proposition du 9 octobre 1967 sur le psychanalyste de l'École' and again in Seminars XVI and XVII. The Seuil edition, here respected, circumvents the doubt by interpolating 'l'anthropologie structurale' (p. 399).

3 The nonce word *historiole* is a French calque for the Latin *historiola*, especially as used by Spinoza in his expression 'historiola mentis' in the 10 June 1666 letter to Johannes Bouwmeester (Ep. XXXVII).

4 Further to its primary signification of 'transport' or 'traffic', *Verkehr* can mean 'contact' or 'dealings' and also 'sexual intercourse' or 'coitus'.

5 Lacan's retrospective manuscript apostil at 000023.35, 'La donna è mobile', suggests that *mobile* might also be understood with its Italian overtones of 'fickle' or 'flighty'.

6 Again from Act 1, Scene 9. Simpson (op. cit. p. 214) gives:

> Return this night to see how nature can
> Provide me with progeny without a woman.

And Slater (op. cit., p. 187) gives:

> I will have offspring though I have no wife
> To see how it is done come back to me tonight.

XXIV From Hans-the-Fetish to Leonardo-in-the-Mirror

1 The stenographer's typescript (000024.13) has . . . *comme je vous l'ai dit, non pas fille d'une mère, mais fille de deux mères*, but there is little in the material thus far developed to anticipate such an attribution of daughterly positioning to little Hans, nor is the point here amplified. While the text should most likely read either *fils de deux mères*, or *phi de deux mères*, the phrase is merely bracketed out in the authorially annotated typescript, not emended.

2 J. Strachey's 'editor's note' to Alan Tyson's translation for the *Standard Edition* claims the first scholar to notice the error was Irma A. Richter, in a footnote to her *Selections* from her father's editions of Leonardo's Notebooks (Galaxy, 1952, p. 286). An earlier example however is the 1923 article cited by Schapiro: Eric Maclagen, 'Leonardo in the Consulting Room', *Burlington Magazine*, 42: 54–57; see also the 1948 article by Raymond Stites, 'A Criticism of Freud's Leonardo', *College Art Journal* 7(4):257–67. The text from the Codex Atlanticus f. 186^{v-b} (formerly 66^{v-b}) reads:

> questo scriuersi distintamẽte del nibbio par che sia moi destino, perchè nella prima ricordatione della mia infantia e' mi parea che, essendo lo in culla, che vn nibbio venisse a me e mi aprisse la bocca colla sua coda, e molte volte mi percuotesse co tal coda dentro alle labra.

3 Lacan may be drawing, here and in the following paragraph, on Ludwig Keimer's critical note of 1927 in *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 43(3): 226–31.

4 From the Institut de France Notebook (MS 2180), f. $I.^1 18^{r-a}$: 'La natura è piena d'infinite ragioni che nō furō mai in isperiẽtia'. The present translation again reproduces R. C. Bell's rendering.

5 There is a blending here of Vasari's account (in *Le Vite*) of Leonardo's commission for the Annunziata, with Novellara's account in his letter. For a more involved enquiry, see Virginia Budny's 1983 article, 'The Sequence of Leonardo's Sketches for *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and Saint John the Baptist*', *The Art Bulletin* 65(1): 34–50; though some details have since been challenged by more recent findings (briskly summarised in Chapter 21 of Walter Isaacson's *Leonardo da Vinci*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 2017, pp. 315–24). Lacan is almost certainly reading out the passage from Novellara's letter as reproduced in the Schapiro article (pp. 168–9), which is also the source of the mentions below of both Kris and the indulgences. The letter was first published in A. Luzio, *I precettori di Isabella d'Este: appunti e documenti*, Ancona: Morelli, 1887, p. 32, note 1. Schapiro quotes the John Shapley rendering in the latter's 1925 article, 'A Lost Cartoon for Leonardo's Madonna with St. Anne' *The Art Bulletin*, 7(3): 96–102, where the original is printed in full on p. 98, note 3. For an alternative Englishing, cf. D. S. Chambers, *Patrons and Artists in the Italian Renaissance*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1970, pp. 145–6.

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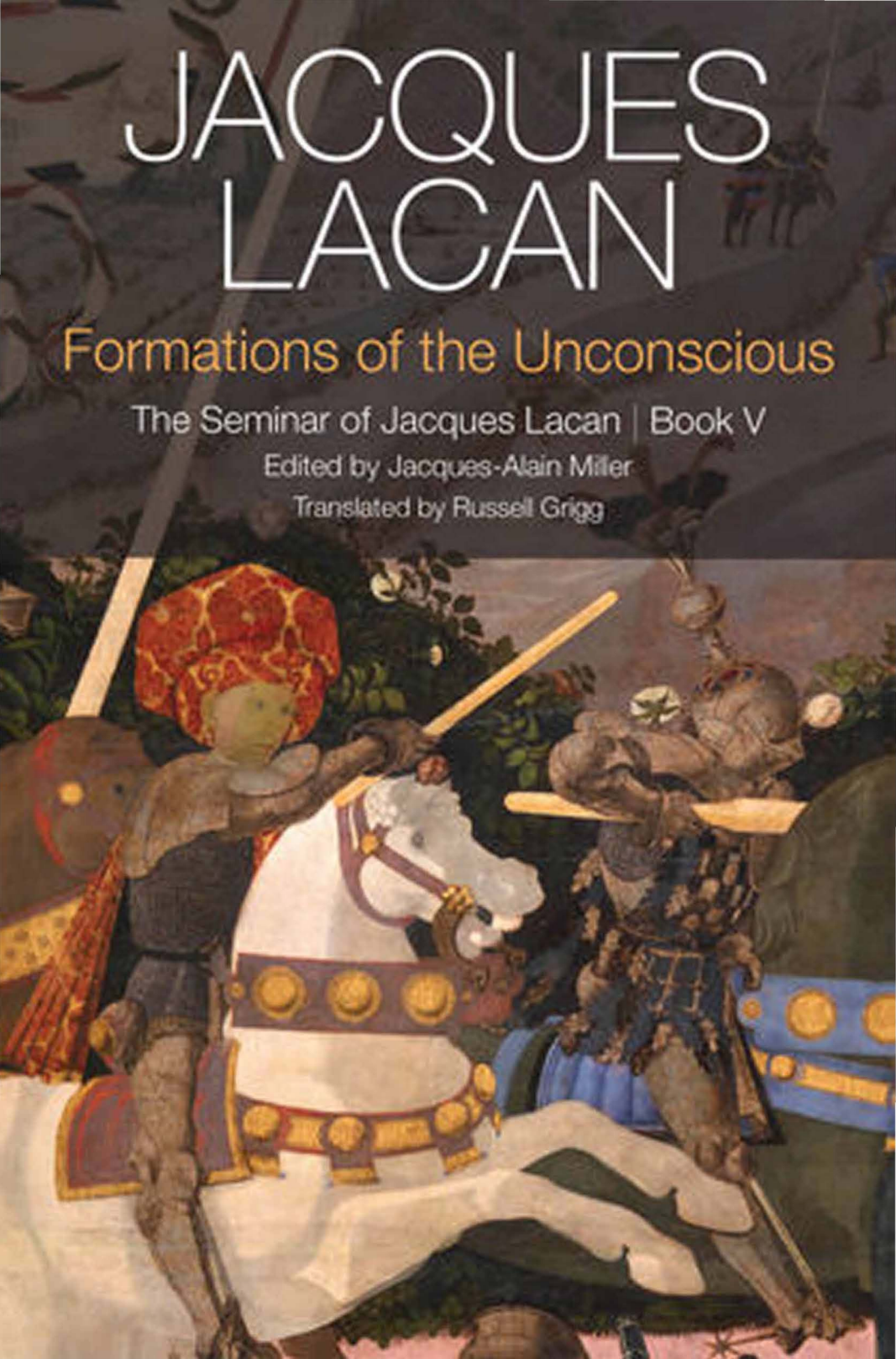
JACQUES LACAN

Formations of the Unconscious

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan | Book V

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller

Translated by Russell Grigg



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Book V

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polity

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Translator's Preface

Throughout this Seminar, the French terms '*trait d'esprit*', its synonym '*mot d'esprit*' and the less common '*esprit*' have most often been translated as witticism, occasionally as wit or joke. As Lacan mentions (p. 13), *trait d'esprit* is his preferred translation for Freud's '*Witz*', though he doesn't follow this practice consistently and often uses the more common expression '*mot d'esprit*', which is how '*Witz*' in Freud's *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten* (*Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*) has been rendered in the two major French translations.

It is true that 'witticism' is not in widespread use in English and carries the connotation of refined and intellectual forms of humour, as James Strachey noted in his preface to *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, published in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*. However, not only is 'joke' closer to the French terms '*blague*' and '*histoire drôle*', but it is also true that, in this Seminar in which Lacan emphasizes connotations of the finesse of language, the choice of the word 'witticism' is not out of place. I have very occasionally translated '*trait d'esprit*' and '*mot d'esprit*' as joke, when it has been clear that a joke is what Lacan has in mind.

Many of the choices I have made for the translation of crucial terms of Lacan's are discussed in the translator's endnotes as they arise.

The numbers in the margins of this translation refer to the pagination of the French edition published by Éditions du Seuil in 1998.

I owe thanks to the following people: Yael Baldwin, for her valuable comments on the entire translation; Bruce Fink, whose thoughts on ways to render Lacan into good English have always been greatly appreciated; Adrian Price, who sent me detailed comments on parts of the translation; and Geoffrey Young, who generously sent me his

own translation of this Seminar when he heard that I was working on the authorized version.

I do not doubt that the translation could still be improved and I invite anyone who has suggestions or corrections to write to me directly or contact me via the publisher.

Abbreviations

Écrits Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, translated by Bruce Fink in collaboration with Héloïse Fink and Russell Grigg (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006).

SE Sigmund Freud, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (24 volumes), translated and edited by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953–74). All quotations of Freud are from this edition.

Words followed by an asterisk (*) are found in English in the original.

Book V

Formations of the Unconscious

1957–1958

THE FREUDIAN STRUCTURES OF WIT

I

THE FAMILLIONAIRE

Points from previous Seminars
Schema of *Witz*
Wit and its national traditions
Confirmation by the Other
What can only be seen by looking away

This year I have taken 'formations of the unconscious' as my topic.

Those of you, and I think this includes most of you, who were at our scientific meeting last night are already up to date and aware that the questions I raise here concern – directly, this time – the function in the unconscious of what in previous years I have been developing as the signifier.

Some of you – I express myself like this because my ambitions are modest – have, I hope, read the article entitled '*L'instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient*' ['The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious'] that I published in the third issue of the journal *La psychanalyse*. Those who had the stamina for it will be well prepared, or better prepared than the others, to follow the discussion. Moreover, my hope, a modest one, or so it seems to me, is that you who make the effort to listen to what I have to say also make the effort to read what I write, since in the end it's for you that I write it. Those of you who have not done so would therefore do well to read it, especially as I will be referring to it constantly. I am obliged to assume you are familiar with what has already been said.

In thinking about those of you who have come unprepared in any of these ways, I am going to tell you what I will limit myself to today and what the object of this introductory lesson to our topic will be.

In the first instance, I will necessarily briefly and allusively, because I cannot go back to square one, recall several major [*ponctuant*] points from previous years that initiated and foreshadowed what I have to tell you about the function of signifiers in the unconscious.

10 Then, as a pause for those whose minds may be left a little out of breath by this brief reminder, I will explain to you what the schema I will be referring to over the course of our theoretical experience this year means.

And then I will finish with an example. It's the first example that Freud employs in his book on witticisms. I am not doing this as an illustration, but because a witticism is always particular – there is no such thing as a witticism in the abstract. I will make a start at showing, in this respect, how witticisms happen to be the best point of entry into our topic, that of formations of the unconscious. This is not only the best point of entry but also the most striking form in which Freud himself indicates the unconscious's relations with signifiers and their techniques.

These, then, are my three parts. You know, then, what to expect from what I am going to explain to you, and this should also spare you some mental effort.

1

The first year of my Seminar, devoted to Freud's writings on technique, essentially consisted in introducing you to the notion of the function of the symbolic as alone capable of explaining what can be called the determination as to meaning insofar as it relates to the fundamental reality of Freudian experience.

Since 'determination as to meaning' is on this occasion nothing but a definition of reason, let me remind you that this reason is to be found at the very origins of the possibility of analysis. It's because something has become tied to something like speech that discourse can untie the knot.

I pointed out to you in this respect the distance separating speech, insofar as it's filled by a subject's being, from the empty discourse that drones away over the actions of humans. These actions are rendered impenetrable by the imagining of motives that are irrational, inasmuch as they are only rationalized from the ego's perspective of misrecognition. As I also taught you in that first year, the ego is itself a function of the symbolic relation and is apt to be affected by it in its density and functions of synthesis – all also made from a mirage, but a captivating mirage. This is only possible because of the gap opened up in human beings by the original, biological pres-
11 ence of death in them, owing to what I have called the prematurity of birth. This is the point where the symbolic intrudes.

That was where we had come to at the juncture of my first and second Seminars.

The second Seminar highlighted the factor of repetitive insistence arising from the unconscious. I identified its consistence with the structure of the signifying chain, and this is what I tried to get you to see by giving you a model of it in the form of the so-called syntax of α, β, γ, δ.

You now have a written exposition of this in my article, 'The Purloined Letter', which gives a brief summary of this syntax. Despite the criticisms it has received, some of which were justified – there are two minor mistakes that should be corrected in a future edition – you should still manage to find it useful for a long while to come. I am even convinced that it will change with age, and that you will find it less difficult to refer to in several months' time, or even by the end of the year. I say this in answer to the laudable efforts that have been made by certain people seeking to limit its significance. It was in any case an opportunity for them to put themselves to the test, and this is precisely all I look for. Whatever dead-end they might have found in it, these gymnastics have nevertheless been useful to them. They will have the opportunity for more gymnastics in what I will have occasion to show them this year.

Of course, as the people who have made this effort stressed to me, even in writing, each of these four terms is marked by a fundamental ambiguity. But that is precisely what makes it a valuable example. With these groupings we have set off down the path of what forms current speculation on groups and sets. These researches are founded on the principle that one starts with complex structures, simple structures merely presenting themselves as special cases. I won't go back over how these little letters are created but it's clear that, following operations by means of which we can define them, we end up with something extremely simple. Each of them is effectively defined on the basis of the relations between two terms in [one of] two pairs of terms, the pair including [configurations] that go from symmetrical to dissymmetrical and from dissymmetrical to symmetrical [see *Écrits*, pp. 47–50], and then the pair that goes from same to different and from different to same. We have here, then, a group of four signifiers [α, β, γ, δ] with the property that each of them can be analysed in terms of its relations with the other three. To confirm this analysis, incidentally, I would add that according to Roman Jakobson, in his own words which I heard from him when I met him recently, four is the minimum number of signifiers necessary for the primary, elementary conditions of linguistic analysis. Now, as you will see, the latter has the closest of relationships to analysis as such. They are indistinguishable, even. If we look closely, they are essentially no different from one another. 12

In the third year of my Seminar, I spoke about psychosis insofar as it's founded on a primordial deficiency of a signifier. I showed what sort of subduction of the real arises when, induced by vital invocation, the real comes to take its place within this deficiency of a signifier, which we were speaking about last night in terms of *Verwerfung* and that, I agree, is not free of difficulties – which is why we will have to return to it this year. I nevertheless believe that the Seminar on psychosis made it possible for you to understand, if not the ultimate mainspring, at least the essential mechanism by which the Other, the big Other, the Other as the seat of speech, is reduced to the imaginary other. It involves the suppletion of the symbolic by the imaginary.

As a consequence, you grasped how it is that we are able to conceptualize the effect of total foreignness of the real produced at moments of rupture in the psychotic's delusional dialogue, which is his sole means of maintaining within himself what I will call a certain kind of intransitivity of the subject. It seems quite natural to us. 'I am thinking, therefore I am', as we say, intransitively. For sure, this is where the difficulty lies for the psychotic, precisely because of the reduction of the duality of the Other with a big O and the other with a little o, the Other as the seat of speech and guarantor of truth, and the dual other, the one whom the subject finds himself faced with as his own image. The disappearance of this double aspect is precisely what makes it so difficult for the psychotic to maintain himself in the human real, that is to say, in the symbolic real.

Over the course of that third year, dealing with the dimension of what I call dialogue, insofar as it makes it possible for a subject to sustain himself, I illustrated it with no more, no less than an example from the first scene of Racine's *Athaliah*. This is a Seminar that I would have quite liked to return to and write up, had I had the time.

Nevertheless, I think that you won't have forgotten the extraordinary first dialogue of the play, where one sees this Abner come forward, prototype of the false friend and double agent, coming to test the water right from the word go. His 'Yes, I come into his temple to adore the Eternal Lord' [Act 1, Scene 1] initially sounds like some sort of attempt at seduction. The way in which we crowned this play has no doubt made us forget all these resonances
13 somewhat, but do admire how extraordinary it is. I stressed how, for his part, the High Priest put in a few essential signifiers – 'And God found faithful in all his threats', or, again, 'Why do you renounce the promises of heaven?' The term 'heaven', and also several other well-chosen words, are nothing but pure signifiers. I stressed their

total emptiness. Jehoiada skewers, as it were, his opponent to the point of henceforth transforming him into this pathetic earthworm who, as I said, re-enters the ranks of the procession and serves as the bait for Athaliah, who ends up falling for this little game.

The signifier's relation to the signified, so palpable in this dramatic dialogue, led me to refer to Ferdinand de Saussure's famous schema in which you see the double parallel flow of signifiers and signifieds, distinct and destined to perpetually slide over one another. It was in reference to this that I fabricated the image, borrowed from the upholsterer's craft, of the quilting point. There does have to be some point, effectively, at which the fabric of one becomes attached to the fabric of the other, so that we know where we stand, at least with respect to the possible limits of the sliding. There are quilting points, then, but they leave some elasticity in the links between the two terms.

We will pick things up from here this year, once I have told you where the dialogue between Jehoiada and Abner, in parallel and symmetrically with this, ends up – namely, with the fact that the only real subject that stands up is the subject who speaks in the name of speech. You won't have forgotten the plane on which Jehoiada speaks – 'Hear how this God replies to you through my mouth.' There is no subject except in reference to this Other. This is symbolic of what exists in all valid speech.

Similarly, in the fourth year of my Seminar, I wanted to show you that the only object is a metonymic object, the object of desire being the object of the Other's desire, and desire always being desire for some Other thing, very precisely for what is lacking, *a*, the primordially lost object, insofar as Freud shows it to us as always having to be refound. Similarly, the only meaning is metaphorical meaning, meaning emerging only from the substitution of one signifier for another in the symbolic chain.

This is connoted in the work I was talking about before, which I invited you to read, 'The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious'. The following symbols are those for metonymy and metaphor, respectively.

$$f(\mathrm{S} \ldots \mathrm{S}')\,\mathrm{S}'' \cong \mathrm{S}\,(-)\,s$$

$$f\left(\frac{\mathrm{S}'}{\mathrm{S}}\right)\mathrm{S}'' \cong \mathrm{S}\,(+)\,s$$

In the first formula, S is linked to S′ in the chain's combination, both of them in relation to S″, the result of which is to put S in a certain metonymic relationship with *s* at the level of signification. 14

Similarly, the substitution of S′ for S in relation to S″ results in the relationship S(+)*s*, which here indicates – this is easier to say than in the case of metonymy – the emergence or creation of meaning.

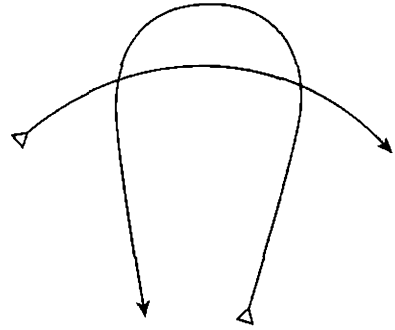
This, then, is where we are. We are now going to start on what will be the object of our research this year.

2

I have constructed a schema for investigating this object and I am now going to tell you what, at least for today, it can be used to connote.

If we have to find a way to examine the signifying chain's relations with the signified chain, it would be by means of the crude image of the quilting point.

For it to be valid, you would still have to ask where the upholsterer is. He is obviously somewhere, but the place where we could put him in the schema would, nevertheless, be far too simplistic.



Since, between the signifying chain and the flow of the signified, there is, as it were, a reciprocal sliding, which is what is essential in their relationship, and since, despite this sliding, there is a liaison or coherence between these two currents, and we have to grasp where it appears, it may occur to us that this sliding, if sliding there be, is necessarily a relative sliding. Displacement in one produces displacement in the other. Thus, it must be through something like the
15 intersecting of the two lines in opposite directions, in a sort of ideal present, that we will find an exemplary schema.

This, then, is what we might focus our speculations on.

All the same, whatever importance this notion of the present must possess for us, a discourse is not a punctiform event, à la Russell, if I can put it like that. A discourse not only has a substance, a texture,

but it takes time, it has a dimension in time, a thickness. We absolutely cannot be satisfied with an instantaneous present, our entire experience runs counter to it, as does everything that we have said. We can present this immediately through the experience of speech. For instance, if I begin a sentence, you will not understand its meaning until I have got to the end. It's completely necessary – this is the definition of a sentence – that I say the final word for you to understand what the first was about. This provides us with the most tangible example of what can be called the *nachträglich* action of a signifier. This is precisely what I am constantly showing you in the text of analytic experience itself, on an infinitely grander scale, when we are dealing with the history of the past.

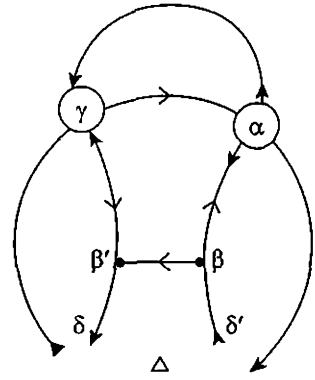
Moreover, one thing is clear – this is one way of putting it – which I stress in a precise manner in 'The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious'. I ask you to refer to it provisionally. I expressed it in the form of a topological metaphor, if I can put it like that. It's impossible to represent the signifier, the signified and the subject on the same plane. This is neither mysterious nor opaque. It's demonstrable in a very simple way in the text with respect to the Cartesian cogito. I will refrain from returning to it now because we will come across it in a different form.

The aim of this reminder is simply to justify the two lines that we are now going to work with.

The little stopper stands for the beginning of the trajectory, and the tip of the arrow is its end. You will recognize my first line here, which the other hooks onto once it has crossed it twice.

Note that you cannot confuse what these two lines previously represented [in Saussure's diagram] – namely the signifier and the signified – with what they represent here, which is slightly different, for now we are going to place ourselves entirely at the level of the signifier. The effects on the signified are elsewhere; they are not directly represented. In this schema, we see the two states or functions that we can apprehend in a sequence of signifiers.

The first line [which goes from left to right] represents the signifying chain insofar as it remains completely permeable to the properly signifying effects of metaphor and metonymy, which 16
implies the possible actualization of signifying effects at all levels, and down to the phonemic level in particular. The phonological element is in effect what puns, word plays and so on are based on. In short, it's the signifying material we analysts constantly have to play with. Apart from those of you who have come here for the first time, you will have some idea of this, and this is why today we will start exploring the subject of the unconscious by way of wit, *Witz*.



The other line [from right to left] is the line of rational discourse, into which a number of reference points or fixed things are already integrated. These things can only be properly grasped in this case at the level of the usage of signifiers, that is, at the level of what concretely, in the use of discourse, constitutes fixed points. As you know, they are a long way from corresponding univocally to a thing. No one single semanteme corresponds to one single thing. Most of the time, a semanteme corresponds to a wide variety of things. We are pausing here at the level of the semanteme, that is, at what is fixed and defined by usage.

This, then, is the line of common, everyday discourse, such as is admitted into the code of the discourse that I will call the discourse of reality we all share. This is also the level at which the fewest meanings are created, since meaning is already there and in some way already given. Most of the time this discourse only consists of a subtle mixture of received ideas. It's precisely at this level that the famous empty discourse is produced, which is what a number of my remarks on the function of speech and the field of language were based on.

As you can plainly see, this line is the individual subject's concrete discourse, the discourse of the person who speaks and makes
17 himself understood. It's discourse that can be recorded on a disk, whereas the former [line] is everything that this includes by way of possibilities of decomposition, reinterpretation, resonance, and metaphorical and metonymic effects. They go in opposite directions, for the simple reason that they slide over one another. But one intersects the other. And they intersect at two perfectly recognizable points.

If we start with discourse, the first point at which it meets the properly signifying chain is what I have just been explaining to you from the point of view of the signifier, namely the bundle of usages. I will call this the code, at a point here marked α.

The code really has to be somewhere here if the discourse is to be capable of being heard. This code is very obviously located in the big Other, that is, in the Other insofar as it's the companion of language. It's absolutely necessary that this big Other exist, and, I beg you to take note of this, there is absolutely no need to call it by the idiotic and delusional name 'collective consciousness'. An Other is an Other. One is enough for a language to be a living language – so much so that this Other is able to constitute the first moment all on its own. The fact that there is one person who remains and is able to speak his own language to himself is enough for there to be he himself plus not only one Other but even two, in any case someone who understands him. One can still make word plays in a language of which one is the sole possessor.

That, then, is the initial encounter, which occurs at the level of what I am calling the code. The second intersection, which closes the circle and constitutes meaning properly so-called, and constitutes it on the basis of the code that it initially encountered, occurs at this endpoint labelled γ. As you can see, two arrows terminate there, and I will dispense with telling you today what the second one is. The result of the conjunction of discourse with the signifier as the medium that creates meaning is the message.

Meaning comes into being in the message. The truth that is there to be announced, if truth there be, is here. Most of the time no truth is announced, for the simple reason that most often discourse absolutely does not go via the signifying chain and is the pure and simple purring of repetition, idle chatter, short-circuiting between β and β′. The discourse says absolutely nothing, apart from indicating to you that I am a speaking animal. This is everyday discourse, words put together for the purpose of saying nothing, owing to which you reassure yourself that you are not simply dealing, opposite you, with what man is in his natural state, namely a ferocious beast.

The two points – the minimum nodal points for the short-circuit of discourse – are easily recognizable. There is, on the one hand, at 18
β′, the object in the sense of the metonymic object I spoke to you about last year. There is, on the other hand, at β, the *I* insofar as it indicates the place in discourse itself of the one who is speaking.

In this schema it's possible to put our finger, in a tangible way, on what binds and what distinguishes statement [*énoncé*] and utterance [*énonciation*]. This is a truth that is perfectly and immediately accessible to linguistic experience, but which in Freudian experience coincides with the distinction that exists, at least in principle, between the *I* that is nothing other than the place of him who is speaking in the discourse chain, which moreover doesn't even need

to be designated by an *I*, and, on the other hand, the message, which, to exist, requires the apparatus of this schema as an absolute minimum. It's totally impossible to bring out a message or a statement of any kind whatsoever, in a radiating and concentric manner, on the basis of any subject, without this entire complexity – and this is for the good reason that speech specifically presupposes the existence of a signifying chain.

Its genesis is far from simple to obtain – we spent a year getting there. It presumes the existence of a network of uses, in other words, of usage for a given language. It presumes as well an entire mechanism that makes it the case that – whatever you say in thinking about it, or in not thinking about it, whatever you formulate – once you have mounted the treadmill of idle chatter, your discourse always says more than what you are saying.

Moreover, solely by virtue of the fact that it's speech, discourse is founded on the existence somewhere of this reference point that is the plane of truth – of truth as distinct from reality, which brings into play the possible emergence of new meanings introduced into the world or reality. These are not meanings that are already there, but meanings that are brought about by speech and that speech literally brings into the world.

Here you have, radiating out from the message on the one hand and from the *I* on the other, these little fins which indicate two divergent directions. From the *I*, one goes towards the metonymic object and the second towards the Other. Symmetrically, following the return path of discourse, the message goes towards the metonymic object and towards the Other. This is all provisional, I ask you to take note, but you will see that these two lines that may look like they are self-evident, the one that goes from the *I* towards the Other, and the one that goes from the *I* towards the metonymic object, will be very useful to us.

You will also see what the other two lines, which are incredibly fascinating, correspond to, those that go from the message towards the code and from the code towards the message. Effectively, the
19 return line exists and, if it did not exist, there would not be the slightest hope of creating meaning, as the schema shows you. The essential dimension that witticisms [*trait d'esprit*] bring us right into is at work specifically in the interplay between message and code, thus also in the return from the code to the message.

We will stay at this point for a number of seminars so that we can see everything that is extraordinarily suggestive and indicative that may occur there.

This will also give us a further opportunity to grasp how the metonymic object, this famous object that we started looking at last

year, this object that is never there, that is always situated elsewhere, that is always something else, is in a relationship of dependence.

Let's now turn to the *Witz*.

3

'*Witz*' has been translated into French as *trait d'esprit*. '*Mot d'esprit*' has also been used. I'll spare you the reasons why I prefer the former translation. But '*Witz*' also means *esprit*. The term is therefore immediately presented to us with an extreme ambiguity.

Traits d'esprit, witticisms, are sometimes an object of disparagement – they are light, not serious, fanciful and capricious. What about *esprit*? Here, on the other hand, one pauses and thinks twice before speaking of it in the same way.

It's fitting that all these ambiguities should be left open to '*esprit*', including even '*esprit*' in the broad sense, as in the *esprit* that obviously serves all too often as an ensign for doubtful merchandise, the *esprit* of spiritualism. But the notion of *esprit* nonetheless has a centre of gravity, which for us resides in *esprit* in the sense in which one speaks of an *homme spirituel*, a witty man, and does so even if he does not have a terribly good reputation. We centre *esprit* on the *trait d'esprit*, that is, on what in it seems the most contingent, the most outdated and the most open to criticism. It's indeed part of the genius of psychoanalysis to do things like that, and this is why we should not be astonished that the one point in Freud's work where he mentions what is elsewhere honoured with a capital letter, namely, *Esprit*, is in his work on *Witz*. There is, nonetheless, a relationship between the two poles of the term, which has always been a source of disagreement.

It would be amusing to evoke the English tradition with you. 'Wit' is even more clearly ambiguous than '*Witz*', and even more than '*esprit*' in French. Discussions have flourished on true, authentic wit – in a word, good wit – and also on bad wit, that is, the wit with which charlatans entertain their audience. How are they to be distinguished? We would have to refer to the difficulties that critics have got themselves into. After the eighteenth century with Addison, Pope, and so on, this discussion continues into the early nineteenth century with the English Romantic school, where the question of wit could not fail to be put on the agenda. Hazlitt's writings are very significant in this regard. It was Coleridge, whom we will have occasion to discuss, who went the furthest in this direction. 20

Equally, I could speak of the German tradition. In particular the promotion of *esprit* to the highest plane of literary Christianity

followed a strictly parallel evolution in Germany. The question of *Witz* is there at the heart of all Romantic speculation, which will hold our interest as much from a historical point of view as from that of the situation of analysis.

What is altogether striking is that there is nothing in France that corresponds to this interest by critics in the question of *Witz* or wit.* The only people who have taken any serious interest in the matter are poets. In the nineteenth century, not only is the question a live one for them, but it's at the heart of the work of Baudelaire and Mallarmé. Elsewhere, it has only ever been present, even in essays, from the standpoint of criticism, I mean from the standpoint of an intellectual formulation of the problem.

I leave to one side the main tradition, the Spanish one, because it's too important for us not to have to return to it frequently later on.

The decisive point is this – whatever you read on the problem of *Witz* or wit,* the fact is that you will always arrive at tangible impasses, which only time prevents me from developing today. I'll come back to this. I will omit this part of my talk, but later I will prove to you what a leap, what a sharp rupture, what a difference in quality and results, characterize Freud's work.

Freud did not carry out the enquiry I have just been alluding to on the European tradition of *Witz*. He tells us what his sources are, and they are clear – there are three very sensible, very readable books by good German professors from minor universities who had the time to reflect peacefully and who wrote these things that were not at all pedantic. They are Kruno Fischer, Theodor Vischer and Theodor Lipps, a Munich professor whose work is the best of
21 the three, and who goes quite far, to the point of lending a hand to Freud's research. Simply put, if Herr Lipps had not been so worried about the respectability of *Witz*, if he hadn't wanted there to be false wit and true wit, he would certainly have gone a lot further. This, on the contrary, was never something that held Freud back. He had already formed the habit of compromising himself, and this is why he was able to see much more clearly. It's also because he saw the structural relations that exist between *Witz* and the unconscious.

On what plane did he see them? Uniquely on a plane that can be called formal. I mean 'formal', not in the sense of pretty forms, curves and everything with which people try to drown you in the blackest obscurantism, but in the sense in which one speaks of form in literary theory, for example. There is effectively yet another tradition that I have not spoken to you about, but this is also because I will have to come back to it often, a recent tradition, which is the Czech tradition. Your ignorance leads you to think that the reference

to formalism has a vague meaning. Not at all. 'Formalism' has an extremely precise meaning – it's a school of literary criticism, which the state apparatus located in the land of the Sputnik has been persecuting for some time now. Be that as it may, Freud places himself at the level of this formalism, that is, of a structural theory of the signifier as such, and the result is not in doubt – it's even thoroughly convincing. This is a key that makes it possible to go much further.

Having asked you to read my articles from time to time, I do not really need to ask you to read Freud's book, *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten*. Since I am talking about *Witz* this year, this seems to me to be the least one can do. You will see that the economy of this book is founded on the fact that Freud starts with the technique of witticisms, and constantly returns to it. What does this mean for him? It's a matter of a 'verbal technique', as they say. I say, more precisely, a 'technique of the signifier'.

Because Freud begins with the technique of the signifier, and because he constantly returns to it, he really does unpack the problem. He brings out distinct levels, and we suddenly see, with the greatest clarity, what you have to know how to distinguish if you are to avoid getting lost in perpetual confusions over the signified, in thoughts that you are unable to extract yourself from. You will see, for example, that there is the problem of witticisms and the problem of the comic, and these are not at all the same thing. Similarly, the problem of the comic and the problem of laughter, even though these sometimes go together, and even though all three get confused, are not at all the same problem.

In short, to clarify the problem of wit, Freud starts with signifying technique, and we too will start from there along with him. 22

What is curious is that this takes place at a level about which absolutely nothing indicates that it's at the level of the unconscious. But, for deep reasons which have to do with the very nature of what is at issue in *Witz*, it's precisely by looking there that we will see most clearly what is not completely there but is off to the side – namely, the unconscious. The unconscious, in fact, is only ever illuminated and only reveals itself when you look away a little. This is something that you will rediscover in *Witz* all the time, for it's in its very nature – you look away and this makes it possible for you to see what is not there.

Let's begin, then, along with Freud, with the keys to the technique of the signifier.

Freud didn't go to too much trouble to look for examples – almost all the ones he gives, and they may strike us as a bit banal and unequal in value, are taken from these three professors, and this is why I spoke of the esteem in which I hold them. But there

is, nevertheless, another author in whom Freud truly is steeped – Heinrich Heine – and it's from this source that he takes his first example.

There is a marvellous quip that comes from the mouth of Hirsch-Hyacinth, a Jew from Hamburg, lottery ticket agent, hard-working and half starved, whom Heine encounters in the baths at Lucca. If you want to undertake a comprehensive reading of Freud's *Witz*, you will need to read *Reisebilder*, *Travel Pictures*. It's astonishing that it's not a classic. In it you will discover, in the part set in Italy, a passage in which this indescribable character features, and whose properties I hope I still have time to say something about today.

In the course of their conversation, Hirsch-Hyacinth declares to Heine that he had the honour of treating the corns of the great Rothschild, Nathan the Wise. While he is trimming his corns, he says to himself that he, Hirsch-Hyacinth, is an important man. He is effectively thinking that during this procedure Nathan the Wise was mulling over the various letters that he would be sending to kings, and that if he, Hirsch-Hyacinth, should trim his corns a little too closely, this would result in an irritation in the upper regions that would in turn cause Nathan to clip the hide of kings a little more.

And thus, one thing leads to another. Hirsch-Hyacinth goes on to talk about another Rothschild that he knew, Salomon Rothschild. One day, when he announces himself as Hirsch-Hyacinth, he receives a reply in nonchalant terms, 'I am a lottery-agent myself,
23 for the Rothschild lottery, I do not want any colleague of mine in the kitchen.' And, Hirsch-Hyacinth exclaims, 'He treated me in quite a famillionaire manner.'

This is where Freud pauses.

What is 'famillionaire'? Is it a neologism, a slip of the tongue, a witticism? It's a witticism, for sure, but the simple fact that I am able to ask these other two questions already introduces us to a fundamental ambiguity concerning signifiers in the unconscious.

What does Freud say? That we can recognize here the mechanism of condensation, that it's materialized in the material of the signifiers and that it involves a sort of stamping together, by means of some machinery or other, of two lines of the signifying chain. Freud completes the witticism with a very nice signifying schema on which '*familiär*' is first entered, then, underneath, '*Millionär*'. Phonetically, '*är*' is on both lines, '*mili*' also; things get condensed and, in the interval between the two, '*familionär*' appears.

famili	är
mili	onär
faMILIon	ÄR

Let's try and see what this produces using the schema on the blackboard. I am obliged to move quickly here, but I have something to point out to you.

Discourse can obviously be schematized by saying that it starts from the *I* and goes to the Other. It's more correct to recognize that, whatever we might think, all discourse starts from the Other, α, that it's reflected by the *I* at β, since the latter must play some part in the matter, that it returns to the Other at a second moment – hence the invoking of the Other, 'I was on completely familiar terms with Salomon Rothschild' – and that it then heads off towards the message, γ.

But don't forget that the reason this schema is interesting is that there are two lines and that things circulate at one and the same time along the line of the signifying chain. Owing to the mysterious property of the phonemes that are in both words, something correlatively stirs within the signifiers – there is an unsettling of the elementary signifying chain as such. Three moments can also be distinguished on the side of the chain.

At the first moment the message takes shape.

At the second moment, the chain is reflected by the metonymic object at β′, 'my millionaire'. In effect, what is involved for Hirsch-Hyacinth is the schematized, metonymic object that belongs to him. He is 'his' millionaire, but at the same time he is not, because the case is, indeed, rather that the millionaire owns him. Result – it doesn't go through and this is precisely why, at the second moment, 24
'millionaire' is reflected back at β′, at the same time as the other term, the 'familiar' manner, arrives at α.

At the third moment, 'millionaire' and 'familiar' meet and come together in the message at γ to form 'famillionaire'.

This schema may strike you as a frivolous one to provide, even though a good one because I am the one who put it together. However, as it falls into place over the course of the year, maybe you will say to yourselves that it has been useful for something. In particular, owing to the topographical requirements it presents us with, it enables us to proceed in a measured way as far as the signifier is concerned. In the way it's constructed, however you run through it, it limits all our steps – I mean that with every step we have to take, the schema requires us to take no more than three elementary ones. This is what the little stoppers at the beginning and the arrowheads are defined for, as are the [directional] fins along the segments, which always have to be in an intermediary, second position. The others either start or end.

Thus, in three moments, the two chains – that of discourse and that of the signifier – have ended up converging on the same point,

which is that of the message. This makes it the case that Herr Hirsch-Hyacinth was treated in a completely 'famillionaire' manner.

This message is completely incongruous, in the sense that it's not received, it's not in the code. That is the crux of the matter. To be sure, the message is in theory designed to be distinct from the code, but here, it's on the actual plane of the signifier that it's manifestly in violation of the code.

The definition of 'witticism' I propose rests, first, on the fact that the message is produced at a particular level of signifying production, that it's differentiated and distinguished from the code, and that it assumes its value as a message by virtue of this distinction and this differentiation. The message lies in its difference from the code.

How is this difference confirmed? This is where the second plane comes in. This difference is confirmed as a witticism by the Other. This is indispensable and it's in Freud.

There are two things in Freud's book on witticisms – the emphasis on the signifying technique, and the explicit reference to the Other as a third party. This reference, which I have been drilling into you for ages, is absolutely spelt out by Freud, especially in the second part of his work, but necessarily from the outset.

For instance, Freud is constantly stressing the difference between witticisms and the comic, which is due to the fact that the comic
25 is dual. The comic is a dual relation, and there has to be a third Other for witticisms to exist. Confirmation by the Other as third party, whether supported or not by an individual person, is essential here. The Other lobs it back, he places the message in the code as a witticism, he says in the code, 'This is a witticism'. If no one does this, there is no witticism. If no one observes it, if 'famillionaire' is a slip, there is no witticism. It's therefore necessary that the Other codify it as a witticism, that it be inscribed in the code through the Other's intervention.

The third element of my definition is that witticisms are related to something that is profoundly located at the level of meaning. I am not saying that this is *a* truth, for the subtle allusions to some kind of psychology of millionaires and parasites – even though they contribute greatly to our pleasure, we will come back to this – do not explain the production of 'famillionaire'. I am saying it's *the* truth.

I put it to you, as of today, that the essence of witticisms – if we wish to seek it, and seek it with Freud, for he will take us as far as is possible in the direction where its crux lies, since it's a question of its crux, and crux there is – resides in their relation to a radical dimension, which essentially depends on truth, namely, what I called in my article 'The Instance of the Letter', the dimension of truth's alibi.

No matter how close we get to the essence of witticisms, which never fail to produce a kind of mental double vision in us, what is always at issue, and which is what witticisms explicitly do, is this – they designate, and always off to the side, what is only ever seen by looking elsewhere.

This is where we will pick things up next time. I am clearly ending with something left up in the air, with an enigma. I think, however, that I have at least set the terms that, as I will show you in what is to come, we must necessarily rally to.

6 November 1957

II

THE *FAT-MILLIONAIRE*

Substitution, condensation and metaphor
'*Atterré*'
From jokes to slips and to the forgetting of names
Ruins and metonymic sparks
The parasite and his master

Let me pick up the discussion from where I left off last time, at the point at which Hirsch-Hyacinth, talking to the author of *Reisebilder*, whom he met at the baths of Lucca, says to him, 'As true as God shall grant me all good things, I was sitting with Salomon Rothschild, and he treated me quite like an equal, he was completely famillionaire.'

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We will begin, then, with the word 'famillionaire', which, all in all, had its moment of fame and fortune. It's known for being Freud's starting point, and I will thereby attempt to show you how he approaches witticisms.

If his analysis is of use to us and if this point is exemplary, it's because it shows us – and, sadly, we need this badly – the indisputable importance of the signifier in what, with Freud, we can call unconscious mechanisms.

It's surprising to see that when they grapple with the delicate subject of aphasia, that is, with speech deficits, neurologists, whose discipline doesn't prepare them for this particularly well, make remarkably steady progress in what might be called their linguistic training. Psychoanalysts, on the other hand, whose entire art and technique rest on the use of speech, have never paid it the least bit of attention, despite the fact that Freud's references to philology

are not simply humanistic references displaying his culture or his reading, but grow organically from his research work.

Since at least the majority of you will have had a look at Freud's work on *Witz* since we last met, you will have seen that his entire argument revolves around the technique of witticisms as a linguistic technique. While the meaning and signification that emerge in witticisms seem to him to deserve to be compared to the unconscious, this is based solely on their function of creating pleasure. I am hammering away at this, since everything that I have to say about witticisms refers to it – the essential element always and uniquely revolves around structural analogies that can only be conceptualized on the linguistic plane, and that appear between the technical or verbal aspect of witticisms and the mechanisms specific to the unconscious which he discovered, giving them such names as 'condensation' and 'displacement' – I will limit myself to those two today. 28

This is where we are. Hirsch-Hyacinth, one of Heinrich Heine's fictional characters, recounts what happened to him. To cleave to the segment that I picked out to begin with, a very clear utterance is produced at the outset, elevating what follows, putting it on display and exalting it. It's an invocation addressed to the universal Witness and to the subject's personal relations with this Witness, that is, with God. 'As true as God shall grant me all good things' – this is both undeniably significant with respect to its meaning and ironic because of what in reality is shown to be lacking. Then what follows – 'I was sitting next to Salomon Rothschild, totally like an equal' – makes the object emerge. This 'totally' [*tout à fait*] contains something that is quite significant. Whenever we invoke a totality, it's because we are not totally certain that it actually obtains. You find this at many levels, I would even say at all [*tous*] levels, in the use of the notion of totality.

Finally, the unexpected phenomenon, the scandal when it comes to enunciation, is produced, namely, this novel message, and we don't yet know what it is, for we can't name it yet – 'in quite a famillionaire manner, quite famillionairely'.

Is this a bungled act or a successful one? A slip or a poetic creation? We don't know. Maybe it's both at once. But it's fitting to think about the formation of the phenomenon strictly on the plane of the signifier. Effectively, as I declared last time, there is a signifying function here that is specific to witticisms, involving a signifier that is not included in the code, that is, not in any of the signifying formations that, in the signifier's signified-creating functions, have accumulated up to that point. Something new appears, which can be conceived of as tied to the very mainspring of what we can call

the progress of, or the changes in, language, but which requires that
29 before we get to it we think about its very formation in order to locate it in relation to the signifier's formative mechanism.

The essential phenomenon is the nodal point [*noeud*] at which 'famillionaire', this new and paradoxical signifier, appears. Freud begins with it and returns to it repeatedly. He asks us to dwell on it and, right till the end of his speculations on witticisms, as you will see, he doesn't fail to reflect on it as an essential phenomenon. It's the technical phenomenon that distinguishes witticisms. That is the central phenomenon. He teaches us about the level that is specifically ours, the level of relations with the unconscious, while simultaneously clarifying from a new perspective what leads him into the tendencies – this is the word used in this work – as well as what is there around it and radiating out from it, the comic, laughter and so on. If we fail to reflect on this, we will be unable to validly articulate the consequences and accompaniments of the phenomenon as well as its sources and reference points.

Let's think, then, about 'famillionaire'. There are several ways of going about it. The aim of my schema is to make it possible for you to do this, but also to allow you to inscribe on it the different planes of elaboration involving the signifier – I have chosen the word 'elaboration' because it's emphasized by Freud. So as not to give you too great a surprise, let's start at the level of meaning.

What happens when 'famillionaire' appears? We initially experience something like an aiming towards meaning, a meaning that is ironic, even satirical. Less apparent, unfolding in the after-effects of the phenomenon, propagating itself in the world in its wake, an object also emerges, one that tends towards the comic, the absurd and nonsense. This is the character of the famillionaire, insofar as it ridicules the millionaire, and begins to take shape as a figure.

It doesn't take much to show you in what direction he begins to be incarnated. Freud himself points out to us in passing that Heinrich Heine, redoubling his witticism, calls the millionaire the *Millionarr*, which in German means something like the scatter-brained millionaire. Along the same line of turning famillionaire into a noun, in French we could say, '*le fat-millionaire*', with a hyphen, the conceited millionaire.

This approach shows you that we are not inhuman. This is a good thing, as long as we do not go too much further in that direction. It's the kind of step that shouldn't be rushed. We mustn't understand too quickly because, by understanding too quickly, we don't understand a thing. Such considerations do not explain the phenomenon, or in what way the latter is connected to the general economy of signifiers.

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On this point, I must insist that you all familiarize yourselves with the examples I gave in 'The Instance of the Letter' of what I call the essential functions of the signifier, insofar as it's by means of them that the ploughshare of the signifier ploughs the signified into the real, literally evoking it, making it emerge, working it and creating it. They concern the functions of metaphor and metonymy.

It seems that for some people it's my style, let's say, that makes it impossible to read the article.

I regret it, but there's nothing I can do about it – my style is what it is. I ask them to make an effort here. I will just add that whatever deficiencies have been introduced by my own personal doing, there is also something – perhaps they are half-aware of this – that corresponds to the very object in question in the difficulties of this style. Since the point in the article is to speak in a valid way about the creative functions that signifiers exercise over signifieds, namely, not simply to speak about speech but to speak wholly in keeping with speech, as it were, so as to evoke its very functions, perhaps there are internal necessities of style that are required – such as conciseness, allusion, and even a few barbs, which are elements needed for entering the field where they dominate not only its avenues but its entire texture. I hope that what I have to say this year will demonstrate this. We shall return to it concerning a certain style that I will not hesitate to call by its name, as ambiguous as it may seem, namely, mannerism. I will try to show you that it not only has a great tradition behind it but that it also serves an irreplaceable function.

That was only a parenthesis to bring us back to my text.

In it, then, you will see that what I call, following Roman Jakobson who invented them, the metaphorical and metonymic functions of language can be very simply expressed in the register of signifiers.

As I have already stated several times over the course of previous years, the characteristics of signifiers are those of the existence of an articulated chain, and, as I add in this article, they tend to form closed groups, that is, groups formed by a series of rings linked together to form chains, which themselves link up like rings with other chains. The general form of my schema also evokes this a little, without presenting it directly. The existence of these chains implies that the connections or links between signifiers involve two 31
dimensions, one that can be called the combination, continuity or concatenation of the chain, and one of substitution, whose possibilities are always implicit in each element of the chain. This second

dimension is left out of the linear definitions that are given of the relationship between signifiers and signifieds.

In other words, in every linguistic act, while the diachronic dimension is essential, synchrony is also implied or evoked by the permanent possibility of substitution inherent in each of the signifying terms.

Last time I wrote two formulas up on the board for you, one that gave a representation of combination and the other an image of the relationship of substitution that is always implicit in every signifying articulation. We need no extraordinary powers of intuition to see that there must be some relationship between the formula for metaphor and what Freud gives us with the schema of the formation of 'famillionaire'.

What might his schema mean? It could mean that something has fallen out in the interval, which has been eluded in the articulation of meaning, at the same time as something has occurred that has compressed or concertinaed 'familiar' and 'millionaire' into one another to produce 'famillionaire', which is what is left. There is, here, a sort of special case of the function of substitution, a special case whose traces remain in some way. Condensation is, if you will, a specific form of what can occur at the level of substitution as a function.

It would be good if you keep in mind, starting now, my lengthy commentary on a metaphor, that of Booz's sheaf, '*Sa gerbe n'était point avare ni haineuse*', 'His sheaf was neither miserly nor hateful', showing how the fact that 'his sheaf' replaces the term 'Booz' forms the metaphor here. Owing to this metaphor, a meaning emerges around the figure of Booz, the meaning of the advent of his paternity, with everything that can radiate and spring from it, by virtue of the fact that he comes to it in an unlikely, belated, unforeseen, providential and divine manner. This metaphor is there in the poem precisely to show the advent of a new meaning around Booz, this character who seemed to have been excluded, foreclosed from it.

It's in the relationship of substitution that metaphor's creative mainspring, creative force or power to engender – that's the word for it! – lies.

Metaphor has a completely general function. I would even say that it's the possibility of substitution that allows the engendering, so to speak, of the world of meaning to be conceived. It's here, and nowhere else, that we must grasp the entire history of language,
32 namely the changes in function owing to which a language is constituted.

If some day we wished to give a model or example of the genesis and appearance of a language in the midst of the unformed reality of

the world as it was before anyone spoke, we would need to assume the existence of an original, irreducible given, which would of course be the smallest possible signifying chain. I won't insist on this 'smallest possible' today, but I have already given you enough indications about this for you to know that it's by way of metaphor, by the play of the substitution of one signifier for another in a given place, that the possibility is created not only of signifying developments but also of the emergence of ever new meanings, always tending towards refining, complicating, deepening and giving its sense of depth to what in the real is nothing but pure opacity.

To illustrate this, I would like to give an example of what might be called the evolution of meaning, where we almost always find the mechanism of substitution. As is my wont, I let chance provide me with examples. And, indeed, one was provided to me by someone close to me who, while working on a translation, had to look up the meaning of the word '*atterré*' in the dictionary, and was surprised to realize that he had never understood the actual meaning of the word until then. In effect, '*atterré*' did not originally, nor in many of its uses, have the meaning of stricken with terror, but that of *mis-à-terre*, knocked to the ground or brought to the ground.

In Bossuet, '*atterrer*' literally means to knock to the ground. In other, slightly later texts we see the weight of '*terreur*', which purists would say contaminates, changes the meaning of the word '*atterré*'. The purists are indisputably wrong about this. There isn't any such contamination. Even if, all of a sudden, following this reminder about the etymological meaning of the word '*atterré*', some of you are under the illusion that '*atterrer*' obviously means nothing other than turn towards the ground, bring to the ground, or place at the level of the ground – in other words, fill with consternation – the fact remains that the word's current usage implies a backdrop of terror.

Take another word that bears a certain relationship to the original meaning of the word '*atterré*'. This is purely conventional, because there is no origin of the word '*atterré*', but let's agree [for the sake of argument] that it's the word '*abattu*', brought down, killed, demoralized or exhausted, insofar as it effectively evokes what the word '*atterré*' might evoke for us in its purportedly pure meaning.

The word '*atterré*' is, then, substituted for the word '*abattu*'. It's a metaphor.

It's a metaphor that doesn't look like one, since we start with the 33
hypothesis that they originally meant the same thing, thrown to the ground or on the ground. This is what I ask you to notice – it's not because the meaning of '*atterré*' changes the meaning of '*abattu*' in any way that the word is fertile, generating new meaning.

However, saying that someone has been *atterré* is not the same thing as saying that someone has been *abattu* and, however much terror is implied, it doesn't mean terrorized either. There is an extra nuance, something new, a new meaning. A new nuance of terror is thereby introduced into the psychological and already metaphorical meaning of the word '*abattu*'.

It's self-evident that, psychologically speaking, no one is '*atterré*', or '*abattu*', in the strict sense. This is something that we cannot say so long as there are no words, and these words are a product of a metaphor – namely, what happens when a tree is felled, *abattu*, or when a wrestler is taken down [*mis à terre*], *atterré*, a second metaphor.

But what is interesting about the thing is seeing that terror, *terreur*, is introduced by earth [*terre*], which is in '*atterré*'. In other words, a metaphor is not an injection of meaning – as if that were possible, as if meanings existed in a reservoir somewhere [just waiting to be injected]. If the word '*atterré*' brings a new meaning with it, it's not insofar as it has a signification, but insofar as it's a signifier. It's because it contains a phoneme that is also found in the word '*terreur*'. It's by way of the signifier, that of equivocation or homonymy – that is, by way of the most meaningless thing there is – that the word comes to create this nuance of meaning, this nuance of terror, which it's going to introduce or inject into the already metaphorical meaning of the word '*abattu*'.

In other words, it's in the relationship of one signifier to another signifier that a certain relationship of *signifier over signified* will be engendered. The distinction between the two is essential.

$$\frac{S}{S'} \rightarrow \frac{S}{s}$$

It's on the basis of the signifier-to-signifier relationship, of the link between this signifier over here and that signifier over there – on the basis of a relationship between signifiers alone, that is, the homonymic relationship, between '*atterré*' and '*terreur*' – that the action of creating signification, namely, the nuancing by 'terror' of what already existed by way of meaning on a metaphorical basis, is going to occur.

This exemplifies for us what happens at the level of metaphor. The metaphorical pathway presides not only over the creation and
34 evolution of a language, but also over the creation and evolution of meaning as such, I mean over meaning insofar as it's not only perceived, but insofar as the subject is included therein, that is, insofar as meaning enriches our lives.

I would again like to point out to you just the beginning of a pathway which connects up with what we see happening in the unconscious.

I have already indicated to you the essential role of the hook, '*terre*', which we must regard purely as a signifier, and the role of the homonymic domain in which metaphors operate, whether we see it or not. But something else is happening as well. I do not know if you will grasp it immediately. You will grasp it better once you have seen it elaborated. This is just the start of an essential pathway.

The nuance of signification that '*atterré*' brings with it, to the full extent that it's constituted and affirmed, implies – notice this – a degree of domination and a certain taming of your terror. Terror is not only named but also attenuated, and indeed it's this that enables you, moreover, to keep the ambiguity of the word '*atterré*' in your mind. You say to yourself that, after all, '*atterré*' does indeed have a relationship with the ground, *la terre*, that the terror in it is not complete, that the *abattement*, felling, in the sense in which it's unambiguous for you, is prevalent, and that terror is just a shade of meaning.

In short, terror remains partly in the shadows on this occasion, it's not observed head on and is grasped by the intermediary aspect of a depression. What has happened is completely forgotten up till the very moment I remind you of it. The model is, as such, not included in the circuit. In other words, insofar as the nuance '*atterré*' has become established in usage, insofar as it has become meaning and usage of meaning, the signifier is, let's use the word, repressed in the strict sense of the term. Once the use of the word '*atterré*' became established in its current nuance, the model was no longer within reach – unless we looked it up in a dictionary or in a scholarly study – but, as '*terre*', or '*terra*', was repressed.

I've got a bit ahead of myself here, because this is a mode of thinking that you are not very accustomed to yet, but I think that this will save us the trouble of coming back to it again. You will see the extent to which this beginning finds confirmation in our analysis of the phenomena.

3

Let's come back to our 'famillionaire' and to the point of metaphorical conjunction or condensation at which we saw it form.

It's useful to begin by separating the thing from its context, namely, from the fact that it's Hirsch-Hyacinth, that is, the mind 35
of Heine, that created it. We will ultimately seek its genesis much

further back in Heinrich Heine's antecedents and relations with the Rothschild family. We would even need to reread the entire history of the Rothschild family to be completely sure not to make any mistakes. But we are not at that point yet, we are at 'famillionaire'.

Let's isolate it for a moment. Let's zoom in for a close-up on this 'famillionaire'. After all, it might have been born elsewhere than in Heinrich Heine's imagination. Perhaps he didn't make it up when he was sitting in front of a blank sheet of paper, pen in hand. Perhaps it was one evening, during one of those strolls around Paris that I will discuss, that it popped into his head. There is even every chance that it was in a state of fatigue or twilight. 'Famillionaire' might also have been a slip; it's quite conceivable.

I have already referred to a slip that I gathered as it rolled off the tongue of one of my patients. I have others, too, but I will come back to this one because one must always return to the same things until they have been exhausted. Then one can move on to other things. This is the patient who, in the course of recounting his history and associations on my couch, mentioned the period in his life when, with his companion whom he ended up marrying through the good offices of the Mayor, he was living merely *maritablement*, maritably.

All of you will have already grasped that this can be inscribed on Freud's schema – on top we write '*maritalement*', which means that one is not married, and underneath we write an adverb in which the situations of married and unmarried people come together perfectly: '*misérablement*', miserably. This gives '*maritablement*'. It's not said, which is much better than being said. You can see here to what extent the message goes beyond, not the messenger – for it's truly the messenger of the gods who is speaking through the mouth of this innocent man – but the medium of speech.

The context, as Freud would say, completely rules out the possibility that my patient was making a joke, and you wouldn't know about it if on this occasion I hadn't been the Other with a big O, that is the listener, and not only the attentive listener, but the listener who hears [*entendant*], in the true sense of the term. The fact remains that, when put in its place, which is precisely in the Other, it's a particularly sensational and brilliant witticism.

Freud gave us countless examples of the close connection between witticisms and slips in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. In certain circumstances a slip can so closely resemble a witticism that
36 Freud himself is obliged to say, and we are obliged to take his word for it, that the context excludes the possibility that the patient in question was trying to make a joke.

Somewhere in the book, Freud gives the example of a woman who, in speaking of the respective situations of men and women,

says, 'For a woman to be of interest to men she has to be pretty' – which is not true of everyone, she implies in her sentence – 'but for a man it suffices that he have his five straight limbs'.

Expressions like this are not always entirely translatable, and I am quite often obliged to completely transpose them, that is, to re-create the slips in French. Here it would almost be necessary to use the expression 'completely stiff'. The word *'droit'*, 'straight', is not in common usage, so much so that it isn't in common usage in German either. Freud has to gloss the four and five members to explain the genesis of the thing. The ever-so-slightly suggestive overtone is undeniable. What Freud shows us, in any case, is that the slip doesn't quite go *straight to the point*, any more in German than in French. Moreover, the context rules out the possibility, according to him, that the woman could have been so crude deliberately. It's quite clearly a slip, but you see how closely it resembles a witticism.

It could therefore be a witticism, it could be a slip, and I would even say that it could even just purely and simply be something stupid, something linguistically naive. After all, for my patient, who was a particularly likeable man, *maritablement* was not even a true slip, since the word was clearly part and parcel of his own personal lexicon – he did not in the slightest think he was saying anything extraordinary. There are people who wander through life like that, who sometimes occupy quite high positions, and who utter words of this kind. A famous film producer used to come out with words like that by the bucketful, it seems, all day long. He used to say, for example, to conclude some of his imperious remarks, 'And then, that's how it is, it's signed with a "No".' It was not a slip; it was the simple result of ignorance and stupidity.

Since we have been speaking about parapraxes, which in all of this is what interests us most, let's take a bit of a look at what is going on at this level. Let's return to the parapraxis that we have gone over several times now in order to emphasize the signifier's essential function, the original parapraxis, so to speak, the one that is at the core of Freudian theory, the one that opens *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* and had been published previously – namely, the forgetting of a proper name, in this instance, 'Signorelli'.

At first sight, a case of forgetting and what I have just been speaking to you about are not the same thing. But if what I am explaining to you carries any weight, if the mechanism or metabolism of the 37
signifier is truly the crux and mainspring of formations of the unconscious, we should be able to find all of them in one of them. What differs outwardly must display its unity inwardly.

In forgetting a name, instead of seeing a word like 'famillionaire' emerge, we have the contrary – something goes missing. What does

the analysis that Freud provides of the forgetting of proper names and foreign names, to boot, show us?

We read *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* as if it were the newspaper, and we know so much about it that we don't think it's worth pausing over. These things were, however, Freud's steps, and each of his steps deserves to be examined. They are the vehicle of his teachings, rich in consequences. Let me point out to you in passing that names – proper names – are situated at the level of the message. We will have to come back to the implications of this later, for I cannot tell you everything at once, unlike 'today's psychoanalysts' who are so knowledgeable that they say everything at once, speaking of the *I* and the ego [*moi*] as if these things had no complexity at all, mixing everything up. I bring you some titbits, to which I will return, and which I will develop further for you later.

The proper name in question is a foreign name, in the sense that its elements are foreign to Freud's own language. '*Signor*' is not a German word, and Freud stresses that this is not unimportant. He doesn't tell us why, but the fact that he singles it out in the initial chapter proves that he thinks it's a particularly striking facet of the reality he is addressing. If Freud states this, it's because this introduces another dimension than that of proper names as such, which is always more or less attached to cabbalistic signs. If a name were absolutely proper and particular, it would have no homeland.

There is another fact that Freud immediately emphasizes just as much, whereas we don't usually dwell on it. What strikes him as remarkable, in effect, in the forgetting of a proper name that he mentions at the beginning of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* is that this forgetting is not an absolute forgetting – a hole or gap – but that other names present themselves in its place. It's here that is located, for him, what is found at the beginning of every science, namely, astonishment. One can only be truly astonished by what one has already begun, however little, to pick up on already, otherwise one doesn't dwell on it at all because one doesn't perceive anything. But Freud, forewarned by his experience with neurotics, perceives that the fact that substitutions occur is worth dwelling on.

38 Now I need to pick up the pace a bit, and spell out for you the entire economy of Freud's analysis of this forgetting of a name, which is a parapraxis, in the sense in which the name has dropped out.

Everything is centred on what we can call a metonymic approximation. Why? Because what re-emerges first are replacement names – 'Botticelli', 'Boltraffio'. There is no doubt but that Freud locates the phenomenon on the metonymic level. We can grasp this in the fact – this is why I am making a detour via the analysis

of a case of forgetting – that the emergence of these names in the place of the forgotten 'Signorelli' is located at the level of a formation involving, not substitution this time, but combination. In the analysis of the case that Freud gives, there is no perceptible relationship between 'Signorelli', 'Boltraffio' and 'Botticelli', except indirect relationships linked solely to phenomena involving signifiers.

I am initially restricting myself to what Freud tells us, which stands out by its rigour. This is one of the clearest demonstrations he ever gives of the mechanisms at work in a phenomenon of formation and deformation linked to the unconscious. It leaves absolutely nothing to be desired with respect to clarity. As for me, I am forced here, for the clarity of my own account, to present this analysis to you indirectly, by saying, 'This is what Freud says.'

He tells us why 'Botticelli' appears. The last half of the name, '-elli', is the remnant of 'Signorelli', rendered incomplete by the fact that the 'Signor' has been forgotten. 'Bo' is the incomplete remnant of 'Bosnia-Herzegovina', 'Herr' having been repressed. It's this same repression that explains that 'Boltraffio' connects the 'Bo' of 'Bosnia-Herzegovina' with 'Trafoi', the name of the locality in which Freud had learned that one of his patients had committed suicide because of sexual impotence.

This latter theme had come up in the course of a conversation Freud had with someone on the train from Ragusa to Herzegovina, which immediately preceded the forgetting of the name. His interlocutor was telling him about the Turks of Bosnia-Herzegovina, these Muslims, ever so endearing, who, when their doctor has been unsuccessful at curing them, tell him, '*Herr*, Sir, we know that you have done everything you could.' The '*Herr*' here has its own weight and significant accent – it's at the limit of the sayable, it's the absolute *Herr*, which is death, this death that, as La Rochefoucauld says, like the sun, one cannot look at directly. And, in effect, Freud is no more able to than anyone else.

Death is here rendered present to Freud twice over. It's rendered present through the incident concerning his function as a doctor. It's also made blatantly present through a specific link, which has quite a personal aspect, between death and sexual potency. It's highly likely that this link, which is undeniable in the text, is not only in 39
the object, that is, not only in what is rendered present to him by his patient's suicide.

What do we have before us? Nothing but a pure and simple combination of signifiers. They are the metonymic ruins of the object in question. The object is behind the various specific elements that are at play there in the immediate past. Who lies behind that? The

absolute *Herr*, death. The word moves on, fades away, withdraws, is repelled, and is, strictly speaking, *unterdrückt*.

There are two words that Freud plays with in an ambiguous manner. The first is '*unterdrückt*', which I have already translated for you as 'fallen into the lower regions' [*tombé dans les dessous*]. The second is '*verdrängt*'.

If we situate this forgetting on our schema, *Herr* has fled the level of the metonymic object, and for a very good reason, which is that it was liable to be a little too present after Freud's conversations on the train. We rediscover, as an *ersatz*, the debris or ruins of this metonymic object, namely, this 'Bo-' that comes along and combines with the other ruins of the name which is repressed at that moment, namely '-elli', which doesn't figure in the other substitute name [Boltraffio].

This is the trace or clue that we have of the metonymic level. It's what makes it possible for us to rediscover the chain of the phenomenon in discourse. It's here that, in analysis, what we call free association is located, insofar as it enables us to track what happens in the unconscious.

Since this object is metonymic, it's already fractured. Everything that occurs in the order of language is always already accomplished. If the metonymic object fractures so readily, it's because, as a metonymic object, it's never anything but a fragment of the reality it represents. That's not all. In effect, '*Signor*' is not to be found amongst the traces, the fragments of the fractured metonymic object. This is what needs to be explained now.

If '*Signor*' cannot be evoked, if this is what makes Freud unable to retrieve the name 'Signorelli', it's because he is implicated in it. He is obviously implicated indirectly by way of '*Herr*'. '*Herr*' has in fact been uttered at a particularly significant moment of the function that it could take on as the absolute *Herr,* the representative of death, which on this occasion is *unterdrück*. *Signor* is implicated only insofar as it's a simple translation of '*Herr*'. This is where we encounter anew the level of substitution.

Substitution is the articulation, the signifying means whereby metaphorical action is instituted. This doesn't mean that substitution is metaphor. If I teach you to proceed down all these pathways
40 in an articulated manner here, it's so that you don't constantly misuse words. To say that a metaphor is produced at the level of substitution means that substitution is one possible way to articulate signifiers, that metaphors exercise their function of creating signifieds in the place where substitution can occur, but they are two different things. Similarly, metonymy and combination are two different things.

I will spell it out for you, as an aside, because such non-distinctions lead to what are called misuses of language. In what is defined in the terms of mathematical logic as a set or a subset when that set has only one member, the set in question must not be confused with this one member. This is a typical example of the misuse of language. This may be useful to those who have criticized my inventions involving α, β, γ and δ.

Coming back to what takes place at the level of '*Signor*' and '*Herr*', the substitutive link in question is a substitution that is called heteronymous. This is what happens in every translation – the translation of one term into a foreign language on the substitutive axis, in the comparison required by the existence of different linguistic systems, is called a heteronymous substitution. You are going to tell me that it isn't a metaphor. I agree, I only need establish one thing, which is that it's a substitution.

Note that I am only following what you are forced to admit in reading the text. In other words, I want to get you to extract from your knowledge the fact that you knew it. Moreover, I am not innovating here – you must accept all of this if you accept Freud's text.

Therefore, if '*Signor*' is implicated or involved, there is indeed something that binds it to what the phenomenon of metonymic decomposition is a sign of, here at the place at which it's produced. '*Signor*' is implicated as a substitute for '*Herr*'.

There is nothing more I need to establish in order to tell you that if '*Herr*' has gone off that way, in the direction of the βs, '*Signor*', as indicated by the direction of the arrows, has gone off in the direction of α – γ. Not only has it gone off in that direction, but we can allow for the moment, till I come back to it, that it rebounds like a ball back and forth between code and message. It goes around in circles in what can be called memory. Remember what I gave you a glimpse of in the past, when I said that we should conceive of the mechanism of forgetting, and, by the same token, of analytic remembering, as like the memory of a machine. What is in the memory of a machine, in effect, goes round in circles until one needs it – it's obliged to go round in circles, for memory cannot be built into a machine in any other way. Curiously enough, we find an application of this in the fact that we can think of '*Signor*' as in constant rotation between code and message, until it's refound. 41

By the same token, you will see there the slight nuance that we can discern between the *unterdrückt*, on the one hand, and the *verdrängt*, on the other. Whereas *unterdrückt* need happen but once and for all, under conditions to which a being, at the level of his mortal condition, cannot descend, something else is going on when '*Signor*' is maintained in the circuit without being able to re-enter

it for a certain period of time. It's necessary for us to admit what Freud admits, namely, the existence of a special force that maintains it there, that is, strictly speaking, a *Verdrängung*.

Now that I have shown you where I wanted to get to regarding this precise point, I will return to the relations between metaphor and substitution. Although, in effect, there is only a substitution between '*Herr*' and '*Signor*', there is also a metaphor. Whenever there is a substitution, there is a metaphorical effect or induction as well.

For someone who is German-speaking, saying '*Signor*' is not quite the same thing as saying '*Herr*'. I would go even further – it's never insignificant when our bilingual patients, or those who simply know another language, having something to say, suddenly change languages. This change of register is always, you can be sure of it, much more convenient for them, and never occurs without a reason. If the patient really is a polyglot, it has a meaning. If he knows the language he is referring to imperfectly, then naturally it has another meaning. If he is bilingual from birth, it has yet another. But in each case, it has one.

I provisionally told you that in substituting '*Signor*' for '*Herr*' there was no metaphor, but simply a heteronymic substitution. I am coming back to this to say that on this occasion, on the contrary, '*Signor*', given the whole context it's attached to, namely, the painter Signorelli, the Orvieto frescoes and the evocation of the last things, represents the most beautiful elaborations there are of this impossible-to-confront reality that is death. It's precisely through recounting a thousand fictions – I am using 'fiction' here in its most veridical sense – on the subject of final things that we metaphorize, or tame, the confrontation with death and bring it into language. It's therefore clear that '*Signor*' here, insofar as it's attached to the context of 'Signorelli', really does represent a metaphor.

42 This is what we have arrived at, and it enables us to reapply, point by point, the phenomenon of *Witz* to the forgetting of a name, since we have found that they share a topography.

'Famillionaire' is a positive production, but the point at which it's produced is the same hole as the one that the phenomenon of a slip displays. I could take another example, and perform the demonstration again. By way of homework, I could give you the task of spelling out the example of Latin verse mentioned by one of Freud's interlocutors – '*Exoriare ex nostris ossibus ultor*' – where the speaker changed the order a bit – the '*ex*' is between '*nostris*' and '*ossibus*' – and also drops the second word, which is indispensable for the scansion, '*aliquis*', which he is unable to articulate. You can only truly understand the phenomenon by referring it to this same grid or framework.

It comprises two levels – the combinatory level, with the special point at which the metonymic object as such is produced, and the substitutive level, with the special point at which the two chains meet, that of discourse and that of the signifying chain in a pure state, where the message is produced. '*Signor*' is repressed, *verdrängt*, in the message-code circuit, whereas '*Herr*' is *unterdrückt* at the level of discourse. Indeed, the preceding discourse captures '*Herr*', and what puts us on the track of the lost signifier are the metonymic ruins of the object.

This is what the analysis of Freud's example of the forgetting of a name yields. Now we can see more clearly what we are able to make of 'famillionaire', this formation that, in itself, has something ambiguous about it.

4

The creation of a witticism, as we have seen, belongs to the same order as the production of a linguistic symptom like the forgetting of a name.

If the two are superimposable and have the same signifying economy, then we should find what, at the level of witticisms, complements – I hinted at something about their double function earlier – their aim with respect to meaning, their disturbing, disruptive neologistic function. What complements it is to be found on the side of what may be called dissolution of the object.

It's no longer a question just of 'he welcomed me like an equal, completely famillionairely', but of the emergence of this fantastical and pathetic character that we can call 'the famillionaire'. He is like one of these creations that a certain fantastic poetry enables us to 43
imagine, halfway between a '*fou-millionaire*', a 'mad-millionaire', and a millipede. This would be a kind of human type whose specimens one could imagine moving, living and growing in the interstices of things, a mycetoma or some analogous parasite. Even without going that far, the word could be assimilated into language in the same way as, for some time now, '*une respectueuse*' has meant a whore.

These sorts of creations have a value of their own, which is that of introducing us to a domain that was previously unexplored. They bring out what we might call a verbal being. But a verbal being is still a being, and it increasingly tends to become embodied. 'Famillionaire' has thus played, it seems to me, many roles, not simply in the imagination of poets, but in history as well.

There are many creations that have come closer to it than

'famillionaire'. Gide makes the entire story of his *Prometheus Misbound* revolve around what is not really a god but a machine, namely the banker Zeus, whom he calls the 'Miglionaire'. Should it be pronounced in French or in Italian? We can't tell, but for my part I think it has to be pronounced in Italian. I will show you the essential function, in Freud, of the *Miglionnaire* in the creation of a witticism.

If we now examine 'famillionaire', we see that the direction I am indicating is not achieved at the level of Heine's text. In no way does the latter give it freedom or independence as a substantive. If I translated it just before as 'completely famillionairely', it was so as to point out to you that Heine remains at the adverbial level. We can make a play on words here and appeal to language – there is a world of difference between the *manner* of being and the direction I was showing you, namely, a manner of *being*. You can see that there is continuity between the two. Heine remains at the level of the *manner* of being when he writes '*ganz famillionär*'.

What does Heine's 'completely famillionairely' bring us? Without us in any way ending up with a being of poetry, it's an extraordinarily rich, swarming and proliferating term, much like what we find at the level of metonymic decomposition.

Heinrich Heine's creation deserves to be put back here in its context, *The Baths of Lucca*, in which we encounter, along with Hirsch-Hyacinth, the Marquis Cristoforo di Gumpelino, a very fashionable man who lavishes all manner of courtesy and attentiveness on beautiful women, to which is added the fabulous familiarity of Hirsch-Hyacinth clinging to his heels.

44 The latter's function as a parasite, valet, manservant or doorman evokes another possible decomposition of the word for us, the '*affamillionaire*', 'famine-llionaire', stressing Gumpelino's hungering for success, the hunger that is no longer the *auri sacra fames*, but that of acceding to the highest spheres, a satisfaction which had previously been denied him. I don't want to allude to something still further in the background – namely, the sad, heartrending function of women in the life of this caricature of a marquis.

We could trace the possible signification of the word in yet another way by decomposing it thus – '*fat-millionaire*', 'conceited millionaire'. The '*fat-millionaire*' is both Hirsch-Hyacinth and Gumpelino. And it's far more than that, because behind them lie Heinrich Heine's singularly *famillionaire* relations, including those he had with the Rothschilds.

You can see, then, the two axes of metaphorical creation in this witticism. There is the axis of meaning, insofar as this word hits home, moves us, is rich in psychological significations and immediately hits

the nail on the head, owing to its improvisation, and captures our attention through a talent that is at the limit of poetic creation. But there is another side, which may not be immediately perceived – by virtue of the combinations that we could extend indefinitely, the word is crawling with all the needs that proliferate around an object.

I alluded to *fames*. There is also '*fama*', namely, the need to shine and be famous that hounds the character of Hirsch-Hyacinth's master. There is also the fundamental 'infamy' of this servile familiarity, which, in the scene at the baths of Lucca, results in the fact that Hirsch-Hyacinth gives his master one of those purges only he knows how to prepare, giving Gumpelino agonizing stomach cramps at the very moment the poor fellow finally receives from his beloved lady the letter that, in other circumstances, would have enabled him to realize his fondest wishes. This hugely farcical scene exposes the underside of this infamous familiarity. It really does give the formation of the witticism its weight, its meaning, its ties, its front and back, its metaphorical aspect and its metonymic aspect. This is, however, not the essence.

We have now seen both sides, the ins and the outs of it. There is, on the one hand, the creation of meaning by 'famillionaire', which also implies a waste product, something that is repressed. It's necessarily something connected to Heinrich Heine, and it will start, just like '*Signor*' did, circulating between code and message. On the other hand, there is the metonymic thing, with all the scraps of meaning, sparks and splatters that are produced around the creation of the word 'famillionaire', and which constitute its influence, its weight, which for us establish its literary value. The fact remains that the only thing that matters, the centre of the phenomenon, is 45
what happens at the level of signifying creation, which makes it a witticism. Everything that happens around it puts us on the scent of its function, but must not be confused with the phenomenon's centre of gravity.

What gives the phenomenon its tone and weight must be sought out in its very centre, sought out, that is, on the one hand at the level of the conjunction of signifiers and, on the other, at the level – as I have already pointed out – of the confirmation that the Other gives this creation. It's the Other who gives the signifying creation its value as a signifier in its own right, its value as a signifier in relation to the phenomenon of signifying creation. It's the Other's confirmation that distinguishes a witticism from the pure and simple phenomenon of a symptom, for example. A witticism resides in the shift to this second function.

But if it weren't for everything that I have just told you today, that is, if it weren't for what occurs at the level of signifying

conjunction, which is the essential phenomenon, and at the level of what this conjunction develops insofar as it shares in the fundamental dimensions of the signifier, namely, metaphor and metonymy, then no confirmation of a witticism would be possible. There would be no means of distinguishing it from the comic, from a joke, or from a crude explosion of laughter.

In order to understand what is at issue in witticisms as signifying phenomena, we need to have identified all their facets, particularities, ties, and ins and outs at the level of the signifier. Witticisms are located at such an elevated level of signifying elaboration that Freud paused there to perceive a specific example of formations of the unconscious. This, too, is what holds our interest.

You must be beginning to glimpse their importance, since you have been able to observe that they make it possible for us to enter further, and in a rigorous manner, into the analysis of a properly psychopathological phenomenon, namely, parapraxes.

13 November 1957

III

THE *MIGLIONAIRE*

From Kant to Jakobson
The repressed in witticisms
The forgetting of a name, a failed metaphor
The appeal to a signifier
The young woman and the count

So, we have now started on this year's topic, having begun with witticisms.

Last time, we started analysing the first example Freud brought up, which was in the form of this word 'famillionaire' attributed by Heinrich Heine to the character of Hirsch-Hyacinth. It is a poetic creation full of meaning, and it is no accident that Freud found himself in the position of choosing this example from the context of poetic creation. As usually happens, moreover, I have found this example to be particularly apt for demonstrating what I wish to demonstrate here.

The analysis of the psychological phenomenon involved in witticisms leads us, as you will have no doubt seen, to the level of a signifying articulation which, as interesting as it is to so many of you – at least I hope it is – may nevertheless appear to be quite puzzling, as you can easily imagine. What is surprising and baffling here is also the central thread running through this return to analytic experience which I want to undertake with you and which concerns the place and, up to a point, the existence of the subject.

1

Someone who was clearly far from being uninformed, neither uninformed about this question nor uninformed about what I am

trying to contribute to it, asked me, 'But then, what becomes of the subject? Where is he?'

The response was easy. Since it was a philosopher who asked this
48 question at the French Society of Philosophy, where I was speaking, I was tempted to reply, 'I'll refer the question back to you, I leave it to the philosophers to respond on this point. There's no question of my doing all the work myself.'

To be sure, the notion of the subject needs to be revised on the basis of Freudian experience. There's no surprise there. On the other hand, given the essential contribution Freud made, would we have ever expected to see minds, and especially the minds of psychoanalysts, even more strongly attached to a notion of the subject that is embodied in some particular way of conceptualizing the ego, no less? This is just returning to what we might call grammatical confusion over the issue of the subject.

Of course, nothing in our experience authorizes us to maintain that the ego should be identified with a power of synthesis. Is there even any need to resort to Freudian experience to see this? A simple and sincere inspection of the life of each and every one of us makes it possible to glimpse the fact that this so-called power of synthesis is less than ineffective. As a matter of fact, fiction aside, there is really no more common experience than that not only are our reasons for doing things incoherent, but we don't know what those reasons are and are fundamentally alienated from them. Freud brings us the notion of a subject that operates beyond this. He shows us the mainsprings and the action of this subject within us that is so difficult to grasp. Something there that should have caught people's attention is that this subject – which introduces a hidden, secret unity into what, at the level of the most common experience, appears to be profoundly divided, profoundly bewitched and profoundly alienated in relation to our very motives – is other.

Is this other subject merely some kind of double or, as has been said, a bad ego insofar as it effectively hides lots of surprising tendencies? Or is it another ego or, as you might take me to be saying, a true ego? Is that what it is about? Is it simply a double? Another ego, purely and simply, one that we can think of as structured like the experiential ego? That is the question, and that too is why we are going to explore it this year at the level of and under the title of 'formations of the unconscious'.

To be sure, the question answers itself – the subject isn't structured in the same way as the ego of experience. What is present in the subject has its own laws. Its formations have not only a specific style but also a specific structure. Freud investigates this structure and reveals it at the level of neuroses, symptoms, dreams, bungled

actions and witticisms, and he detects that there is just the one, homogeneous structure. This is his fundamental argument for treating witticisms as a manifestation of the unconscious. It is the crux of what he lays out for us on the topic of witticisms, and this is why I have chosen them as our way in. 49

Witticisms are structured and organized according to the same laws as those we found in dreams. Freud detects these laws in the structure of witticisms, enumerates them and spells them out. They are the laws of condensation, *Verdichtung*, displacement, *Verschiebung*, and a third element that belongs to this list, and which at the end of my article I call '*égard aux nécessités de la mise en scène*', 'considerations of representability', to translate '*Rücksicht auf Darstellung*'. But naming them isn't the point. The key to his analysis is the recognition of common structural laws. This is how we can tell that a process, as he expresses it, has been drawn into the unconscious – it is structured according to laws of this kind. This is what is involved where the unconscious is concerned.

Now, there is something that happens at the level of what I teach you. It is that now – that is, after Freud – we are in a position to grasp that this unconscious structure, by which a phenomenon is recognized as belonging to the unconscious, completely coincides with everything that through linguistic analysis we can identify as the essential ways that meaning, insofar as it is created by combining signifiers, is formed. This outcome is all the more convincing for having come as a complete surprise.

The notion of signifying elements acquired its full meaning, in the concrete evolution of linguistics, when the notion of the phoneme was isolated. It means that we can take language at the level of a doubly defined elementary register – as a diachronic chain and, within this chain, as the permanent possibility of substitution in the synchronic sense. It also means that we can detect, at the level of the functions of signifiers, an original power as the location for a certain creation of what is called meaning. Without any need for us to labour away any further at this conception, which in itself is very rich in its psychological implications, it is complemented by what Freud already prepared for us at the point where the field of linguistics meets the field specific to analysis, insofar as the psychological effects by which meaning is created are, as he showed us, nothing but formations of the unconscious.

We can grasp and situate here a fact about the place of man that had been overlooked till then. It is obvious that for man there is a heterogeneity, a diversity and a variability of objects that is truly surprising in comparison with biological objects. Every living organism's existence is correlated with a singular set of objects in the world 50

of a particular style. But where man is concerned, this set has a superabundant and luxuriant variety. Furthermore, human objects, the world of human objects, cannot be grasped as biological objects. Now, it turns out that in this context this fact has to be placed in a close, even indissoluble, relationship with the human being's submission to or subduction by the phenomenon of language.

To be sure, this did in fact emerge, but only up to a point and, in a way, it remained masked. Effectively, what can be grasped at the level of concrete discourse in relation to creating meaning is always in an ambiguous position, given that language is turned towards objects that already bear within themselves something of the creation they have received from language itself. This became the object of an entire tradition, even an entire philosophical rhetoric – that of critique in the broadest sense of the term – which poses the question, 'What is the value of language?' What do these connections represent in relation to the connections that they appear to lead to, even put in place for reflecting, and which are the connections with the real?

This is effectively the question raised by a philosophical tradition whose highest point can be defined as Kant's critical philosophy, which can be interpreted as the most profound questioning of every form of the real, insofar as it is subject to the a priori categories not only of the aesthetic but also of the logic. This was a pivotal moment, one at which human meditation made a new start and rediscovered what was not at all perceived in that way of raising the question at the level of logical discourse and enquiring into the correspondence between the real and a certain syntax of the circle of intention, insofar as it is completed in every sentence. We must take this up again, underneath and across this critique, on the basis of the action of speech in this creative chain where it is always liable to engender new meaning – by way of metaphor, in the most obvious manner, or by way of metonymy, in a manner that has stayed profoundly masked till quite recently. I will explain why when the time comes.

This introduction has already been difficult enough and so I will go back to my 'famillionaire' example and try to finish analysing it.

51

2

We got as far as the idea that in the course of an intentional discourse in which the subject presents himself as wanting to say something, something happens that goes beyond his will and that looks like an accident, a paradox, or even a scandal.

This neo-formation, a witticism, appears with features that are not at all negative, whereas they could be considered a sort of stumbling or bungled action – I have shown you things that oddly resemble this at the level of a pure and simple slip of the tongue. On the contrary, under the conditions in which this accident occurs it gets registered and valued as a signifying phenomenon that creates a meaning.

A signifying neo-formation presents a sort of collapse of signifiers, which, as Freud says, get compressed and concertinaed into one another. The result is the creation of signification, whose nuances and enigma I have shown you, between an evocation of a properly metaphorical *manner* of being – 'He treated me quite famillionairely' – and an evocation of a manner of *being*, of verbal being, that almost comes to life in the odd form the phantom of which I tried to raise for you with the character of the 'famillionaire'.

The word 'famillionaire' makes its entry into the world as the representative of a being that for us is highly likely to adopt a reality and a weight that, for us, are infinitely more substantial than those of the millionaire, which are more indistinct. I have shown you how much force it retains, lively enough to really represent a character typical of a specific historical period. I pointed out to you, finally, that it wasn't only Heine who had invented it, and I spoke to you about Gide's *Prometheus Misbound* and his 'Miglionaire'.

It would be extremely interesting to dwell for a moment on this creation of Gide's. His 'Miglionaire' is Zeus the banker. Nothing is more surprising than the creation of this character. The memory this work of Gide's leaves us with is perhaps eclipsed by the extraordinary brilliance of *Paludes*, of which it is nevertheless a sort of double. We have the same character in both cases. They have many overlapping characteristics. In any case, this Miglionaire turns out to engage in some odd conduct with his semblables, since it is there that we see the idea of the gratuitous act emerge.

Effectively, Zeus the banker is unable to have a real and authentic exchange with anyone at all, insofar as he is identified here with 52
absolute power, with money as a 'pure signifier' that calls into question the existence of any possibly meaningful exchange. The only way he has of escaping from his solitude is by doing the following. He goes out into the street with an envelope containing a five-hundred franc note, which was worth something back then, in one hand and in the other a slap in the face, as it were. He drops the envelope and a passer-by obligingly picks it up for him. He asks the latter to write a name and an address on the envelope, in return for which he gives him a slap in the face – and since he isn't Zeus for nothing, it is a tremendous slap, one that leaves the subject dizzy

and wounded. He then slips away and sends the contents of the envelope to the person whose name was written down by the person he has just roughed up.

Thus, he finds himself in the position of having made no choice himself, and of having offset a gratuitous evil spell by bestowing a gift that he plays no part in. Through his actions he is trying to restore the circuit of exchange that it was not possible to introduce just any old how or from just any angle. Zeus tries to become a part of it by making some kind of forced entry, by incurring a sort of debt in which he plays no part. The rest of the novel shows how the two characters never end up putting together what they owe one another. As a result, one ends up almost blind in one eye and the other dies.

That is the whole storyline of the novel, which is profoundly instructive, moral and useful for what I am trying to show here.

Our Heinrich Heine has, then, managed to create a character out of which, with the signifier 'famillionaire', he generates two dimensions – one of metaphorical creation, plus a sort of new metonymic object, the famillionaire – whose place we can locate on our schema. As I showed you last time, even though our attention isn't drawn to this aspect of the thing, we can find in it all the debris or scraps typical of reflecting on an object used in any metaphorical creation. This is the underside of the signifiers, all those signifying fragments into which the term 'famillionaire' shatters – '*fames*', '*fama*', '*famulus*', 'infamy' and, ultimately, whatever you want, whatever Hirsch-Hyacinth actually is for this caricature of a master, Cristoforo di Gumpelino. Whenever we are dealing with a formation of the unconscious, we have to systematically search for what I call the debris of the metonymic object.

For reasons that are very clear in analytic experience, this debris proves to be particularly important when the metaphorical creation has not been successful – I mean when nothing comes of it, as in the case I presented to you of the forgetting of a name. When the name 'Signorelli' is forgotten and leaves a hollow or makes a hole at the level of metaphor, the metonymic debris becomes all-important for refinding its traces. When the term '*Herr*' disappears, the metonymic context in which it has been isolated, namely the context 'Bosnia-Herzegovina', makes it possible to restore it.

53

Let's return to our 'famillionaire', a neo-formation produced at the level of the message. I pointed out to you that, when it comes to witticisms, we should find metonymic correspondences to these paradoxical formations no less than those corresponding to the conjuring-away or disappearance of '*Signor*' when it comes to the forgetting of a name. That is where we ended. How are we to

conceptualize what happens at the level of 'famillionaire' insofar as the metaphor, which is a witty one here, works? There must be something that in some way marks the residue or scraps of the metaphorical creation.

A child could tell you straightaway. If we stop being fascinated by the 'thingification' aspect that always makes us treat the phenomenon of language as if an object were involved, we will learn to say simple and obvious things in the same way mathematicians do when they work with their little symbols, x and y, a and b, without thinking of anything, without thinking of what they signify. What is rejected? What marks the remainder and residue of metaphorical creation at the level of metaphor? It is clear that it is the word 'familiar'.

Since the word 'familiar' didn't come and 'famillionaire' came in its place, we have to conclude that the word 'familiar' has gone somewhere and has met with the same fate as that reserved for the 'Signor' of 'Signorelli', which, as I explained to you last time, went off and followed its own little circular circuit somewhere in unconscious memory.

We won't be at all astonished to learn that this is how it is. The word 'familiar' undergoes a fate that corresponds closely to the mechanism of repression in the usual sense – I mean in the sense in which we experience it, and which corresponds to a prior, let's say personal, historical experience, one that goes back a long way. Of course, it is no longer the being of Hirsch-Hyacinth that is then involved, but that of his creator, Heinrich Heine.

If in Heinrich Heine's poetical creation the word 'famillionaire' unfolded in such a felicitous manner, it doesn't really matter what the circumstances in which he discovered it were. Perhaps it didn't come to him while he was at his desk but was invented during one of 54
those solitary walks in night-time Paris he would have taken, after the meetings he had in the 1830s with Baron James de Rothschild, who treated him like an equal and in a manner that was 'completely famillionaire'. It doesn't make any difference, it works well, it's good.

Don't imagine that I am going any further than Freud did. At around a third of the way into the book you will see that he comes back to the example of 'famillionaire' at the level of what he calls the tendencies of the mind and identifies the sources of the formation of this ingeniously invented witticism. He informs us that this creation of Heine's corresponds to something in his past and in his personal family relations. Behind Salomon de Rothschild, whom he calls into question in his fiction, there is effectively another 'famillionaire' who is from his own family this time, Salomon Heine, his uncle. The

latter played the most oppressive of roles in his life over the entire course of his existence. Not only did he treat him extremely poorly, not giving him the concrete assistance he could have expected from him, but he stood in the way of the realization of his great love, the love he had for his cousin – he was unable to marry her for the essentially 'famillionaire' reason that his uncle was a millionaire while he wasn't. Heine always considered as a betrayal what was merely the consequence of a family impasse profoundly marked by 'millionarity'.

The word 'familiar', which happens to have the major signifying function here in the repression that matches the witty creation by Heine, an artist of language, shows us, in an obvious way, an underlying personal signifier. What makes it underlying is tied to the word, not to anything that the standing signification may have confusedly accumulated over the poet's life with respect to dissatisfaction and to a singularly difficult position in relation to women in general. If this is a factor here, it enters by way of the signifier 'familiar' as such. In this example, there is no other way of grasping the action or impact of the unconscious than by showing that the signification is closely tied to the presence of the signifying term 'familiar'.

Remarks such as these are designed to show you that the path we are taking, that of linking the entire economy of what is registered in the unconscious to combinations of signifiers, takes us far, launching us into a regression that doesn't go on ad infinitum, but leads us all the way back to the origins of language. Effectively, we have to consider all human significations as having been created metaphorically at one time or another through the conjunction of signifiers.

55 Considerations such as these are certainly not devoid of interest – we always have a lot to learn from the history of signifiers. Identifying the term *'famille'* [family], as what is repressed at the level of the metaphor's formation is well suited to serve, in passing, as an illustration of this.

Effectively, unless you have read Freud, or have simply maintained some homogeneity between the way you think while you are in analysis and the way you read a text, you don't think of *'famille'* in the term *'famillionaire'*, any more than you think of *'terre'* [ground], in the term *'atterré'* [dismayed or distressed]. The more real you make the term *'atterré'*, the more you will drift into the sense of terror and the more *'terre'* will be avoided, whereas it is the active element in the signifying use of the term *'atterré'* as a metaphor. It's the same here. The further you go in the direction of *'famillionaire'*, the more you think about *'famillionaire'*, that is, about the millionaire having become transcendent, as it were – having become something that exists in being and no longer just as

a sign, pure and simple – the more '*famille*' tends to elude you as the active term in the creation of the word '*famillionaire*'. Take an interest, then, in this term '*famille*', just as I have, at the level of the signifier and its history, by opening the Littré dictionary.

The Littré, as Charles Chassé tells us, is where Mallarmé got all his ideas from. The funny thing is that he is right. He is right in the particular context he, no less than his interlocutors, is caught up in, and this gives him the feeling that he is breaking down doors. Of course, he is breaking this door down because it isn't open. If everyone thought about what poetry is, there would be nothing surprising in the realization that Mallarmé took a keen interest in signifiers. But no one has ever broached the question of what poetry really is. People oscillate between some vague and obscure theory of similes and reference to musical terms of one kind or another, by means of which one seeks to explain Mallarmé's so-called lack of meaning. In short, one is completely unaware that there must be a way to define poetry as a function of its relationship to signifiers. As soon as one formulates poetry in a slightly more rigorous way, as Mallarmé did, it is much less surprising that it should be called into question in his more obscure sonnets.

That said, I doubt that anyone will ever make the discovery that I too got my ideas from the Littré dictionary on the grounds that I open it.

I open it, then, and I can inform you of this, which I suppose a number of you know already, but which is of interest all the same – in French, the term '*familial*' was a neologism in 1881. Close consultation of some good authors who have addressed the issue 56
has made it possible for me to date this word's appearance at 1865. We didn't have this adjective before that date. Why not?

According to Littré's definition, '*familial*' is used to refer to the family at the level, he says, of political science. The word '*familial*' is thus tied to the context in which one says, for example, '*allocations familiales*' [family welfare benefits]. The adjective came into being, then, when it was possible to treat the family as an object at the level of an interesting political reality, that is, insofar as the family no longer had the same structuring function for the subject it had had up till then, as an integral part of the very bases of one's discourse, without it even occurring to one to isolate it. It was insofar as it was drawn from this level and became subject to a particular technical use that something as simple as its adjectival correlate could appear. This is perhaps not unrelated, as you won't have failed to notice, to the very usage of the signifier '*famille*'.

Be that as it may, it seems that the value of this term which, as I have just been saying, was introduced into the circuit of the

repressed was absolutely not the same in Heinrich Heine's day as in ours. In effect, the sole fact that the term '*familial*' not only wasn't in use in the same context but didn't even exist at this period is enough to change the axis of the signifying function linked to the term '*famille*'. This nuance should not be neglected in this case.

It's because we neglect things of this kind that we are capable of imagining that we understand ancient texts as their contemporaries understood them. It is, however, quite likely that a naive reading of Homer will not correspond to its true meaning in any way. It is certainly not for nothing that people dedicate themselves to an exhaustive study of Homer's vocabulary in the hope of approximately situating the dimension of meaning at work in his poems in its proper place. But the fact is that the latter retain their meaning even though a good part of what is improperly called the mental world – which is the world of meanings – of Homeric heroes in all probability escapes us completely and most probably must escape us more or less definitively. The distance between the signifier and the signified makes it possible for us to understand that plausible meanings can always be attributed to a well-formed concatenation, which is precisely what characterizes poetry, probably down to the end of time.

I think I have covered just about everything that can be said about the phenomenon of the creation of witticisms in its own register. Perhaps this will mean we can more precisely formulate what is involved in the forgetting of a name, which I spoke about last week.

57

3

What is the forgetting of a name? In this case, there is the fact that the subject poses the question to the Other, and to the Other itself qua Other – 'Who painted the Orvieto frescoes?' And nothing comes to him.

I would like you to notice in this case the amount of care I am taking to give an accurate formulation. On the grounds that analysis reveals that the reason the subject doesn't come up with the name of the painter of the Orvieto frescoes is that '*Signor*' is missing, you may think that it is '*Signor*' that has been forgotten. This isn't true. It isn't '*Signor*' he is looking for, but 'Signorelli', and it is 'Signorelli' that has been forgotten. '*Signor*' is the repressed signifying scrap of something that occurs in the place in which 'Signorelli' isn't found.

Do understand the rigorous character of what I am telling you. Recalling 'Signorelli' and recalling '*Signor*' are not the same thing. Once 'Signorelli' has become the name of a painter, one no longer

thinks about '*Signor*'. '*Signor*' is detached here from 'Signorelli' by the action of decomposition characteristic of metaphor, and insofar as the name is caught up in the play of metaphor that resulted in its being forgotten.

Our analysis enables us to reconstruct the connection of '*Signor*' with '*Herr*' in a metaphorical creation that targets the meaning lying beyond '*Herr*', which it assumed in the course of Freud's conversation with the person who was accompanying him on his little journey to the Bay of Kotor. '*Herr*' became the symbol of the place at which his mastery as a physician fails, that of the absolute master, that is to say, of an ailment that he cannot cure – the patient committed suicide despite his efforts – and, in short, of the death and impotence that threaten him, Freud, personally. It was in the metaphorical creation that the shattering of 'Signorelli' occurred, and this made it possible for the '*Signor*' element to go elsewhere. One should therefore not say that it was '*Signor*' that was forgotten, when it was 'Signorelli'. '*Signor*' is what we find at the level of the metaphorical waste product, qua repressed. '*Signor*' was repressed, but it was not forgotten. It doesn't have to be forgotten, since it did not exist beforehand.

If 'Signorelli' was so susceptible to fragmentation and '*Signor*' to becoming detached, it was because for Freud 'Signorelli' was a word in a foreign language. It is striking – you will easily observe this even if you have only the slightest experience with foreign languages – that you much more easily discern the component parts of signifiers in another language than your own. When you start to learn a language you become aware of the rules for the composition of words – which you overlook in your own language. In your own language, you do not think of words by breaking them down into root and suffix, whereas you do it quite spontaneously when you learn a foreign language. It is for this reason that a foreign word is more easily fragmented and usable in its component signifiers than any given word of your own language. This merely helps the process along. It can occur with the words of your own language, but the reason Freud started with the forgetting of a foreign name is that the example was readily available and conclusive.

What, then, is there in the place of the name 'Signorelli' that you do not find? An attempt at metaphorical creation was made in that place. What appears here as the forgetting of a name is what is appreciated in the place of '*famillionaire*'. There would have been nothing there at all if Heinrich Heine had said, 'He received me as a complete equal, completely, . . . um . . . um.' This is precisely what happens at the level at which Freud is searching for the name 'Signorelli'. There is something that doesn't emerge, that isn't created. He is looking

for 'Signorelli' and he looks for it unduly. Why? Because at the level at which he is looking for 'Signorelli', which he expects to be in that place because of the earlier conversation, what is called to that place is a metaphor that would mediate between the topic of the conversation as it is unfolding and what he rejects, namely death.

This is precisely what is involved when he turns his thoughts towards the frescoes at Orvieto, namely, what he himself calls the last things. What is called for is an eschatological elaboration, if one may use this term. This would be the only way in which he could broach this abhorrent and, as it were, unthinkable term in his thinking, which he has to dwell on because death exists and limits his being as a man as well as his action as a doctor and forms an absolutely irrefutable limit to all his thoughts. Now, no metaphor occurs to him on his way to expounding on these last things. Freud rejects all eschatology, except when it takes the form of his admiration for the painted frescoes at Orvieto. And nothing comes.

In the place where he looks for the painter – ultimately, it's about the painter, about naming the painter – nothing is produced, no metaphor succeeds and no equivalent to 'Signorelli' can be found. 'Signorelli' was called for at that moment in quite a different signifying form from that of a simple name. It was invited to enter
59 into play in the manner in which, in '*atterré*', the root '*terre*' fulfils its function – that is to say, it shatters and is elided. The existence somewhere of the term '*Signor*' is the consequence of the unsuccessful metaphor that Freud appeals to for help at that moment and whose effects must be indicated on the schema at the level of the metonymic object.

Freud had no trouble retrieving from memory the object in question, the object that was represented or painted in the last things. 'Not only could I not find the name "Signorelli", but I have never visualized the Orvieto frescoes so clearly, and I am not particularly imaginative' [*SE* 3: 290–1]. We know that this is true from all sorts of other characteristics, from the form of his dreams for instance. And if Freud succeeded in making all these discoveries, it is most likely because he was much more open and permeable to symbolic play than to imaginary play. He himself notes the intensification of the image at the level of memory, the more intense recalling of the object in question, namely the painting, including the very image of Signorelli himself, who is there adopting the pose in which, in paintings of that period, the donors and sometimes the painter appear. Signorelli is in the painting, and Freud visualizes him.

There is, then, no forgetting pure and simple, no global forgetting of the object. There is, on the contrary, a relationship between the intense revivification of a number of its imaginary components and

the loss of certain other components, which are signifying components at the symbolic level. We find here a sign of what is happening at the level of the metonymic object.

We can, then, formulate more or less as follows what happens when a name is forgotten:

$$\frac{X}{Signor} \cdot \frac{Signor}{Herr}$$

We rediscover here the formula for metaphor insofar as it operates by means of a mechanism of substituting one signifier S for another signifier S′. What is the consequence of this substitution? A change in meaning is produced at the level of S′ – the meaning of S′, say *s′*, becomes the new meaning, which we shall call *s*, insofar as it corresponds to big S. So as not to leave you in any doubt, for you might think that in this topology small *s* is the meaning of big S, I would add that the S has to have come into a relation with S′ in order for the little *s* to be able to produce, as such, what I will call *s″*. It is the creation of this meaning that is the aim of the functioning of a metaphor. A metaphor is always successful when, once it has been made, the terms are simplified and cancel one another out, just as when you multiply fractions. The meaning is produced at this moment, having entered into operation in the subject.

It is inasmuch as '*atterré*' comes to signify what it signifies for us in practice, namely, more or less touched by terror, that '*terre*' – which, on the one hand, serves as an intermediary between '*atterré*' and '*abattu*', and this is the most absolute distinction, for there is no reason for '*atterré*' to replace '*abattu*', and, on the other, contributes '*terreur*' as a homonym – can be simplified on both sides. This phenomenon is similar to what occurs at the level of the forgetting of a name.

This isn't about the loss of the name 'Signorelli'. It's about the loss of an X that I am introducing here because we are going to learn how to recognize it and make use of it. This X marks the appeal to signifying creation. We will come across its place in the economy of other unconscious formations. To tell you what it is straightaway, it is what happens at the level of what we call desire in a dream. We see it here, in a straightforward manner, in the place where Freud should have found 'Signorelli'.

Freud finds nothing there, not just because 'Signorelli' has disappeared, but because at this level he would have had to create something that corresponded to what for him is in question, namely, the last things. Insofar as this X is present, a metaphorical formation tends to be produced, and we see this in the fact that the term

'*Signor*' appears at the level of two opposed signifying terms. The value S′ is there twice, and it is as such that it undergoes repression. Nothing is produced at the level of the X, which is why Freud doesn't find the name, and why '*Herr*' plays the role and occupies the place of the metonymic object, the object that cannot be named and that is only named through its connections. Death is the absolute *Herr*. But when one speaks of *Herr*, one isn't speaking about death, because one cannot speak of death and because death is very precisely both the limit of all speech and probably also the place in which it originates.

There you have what it leads to, then, when you relate the formation of witticisms point by point to this unconscious formation whose form you can now see better. It looks negative. In fact, it isn't negative. The forgetting of a name isn't simply a negation, it is a lack, but – we always tend to go too fast – the lack of a name. It isn't because the name isn't grasped that there is a lack. No, the lack is the lack of this name.

Searching for the name, we encounter a lack in the place where it should be serving its function and can no longer serve it, for a new
61 meaning is required, one that demands a new metaphorical creation. This is why 'Signorelli' was not recovered, but, on the contrary, one encounters fragments there where they have to be recovered in the analysis, where they play the function of the second term in the metaphor, namely the term that is elided in metaphor.

This might sound like gobbledygook, but it doesn't matter so long as you simply let yourselves be carried along by what appears. It may sound like gobbledygook to you, but it is rich in consequences. If you remember it when you need to remember it, you will be able to shed light on what occurs in the analysis of this or that unconscious formation and explain it in a satisfactory manner. On the other hand, by eliding it and not taking it into account, you are led to entifications that are summary and crude and, if not constantly producing mistakes, at least to sustaining mistakes in word identification that play such an important role in the construction of a certain psychology, a feeble one at that.

4

Let's return to our witticism and to what we should make of it. To conclude, I want to introduce a distinction that returns to where I started, namely, the question of the subject.

Thought is always led back to making the subject the person who is designated as such in discourse. I would observe that there is

another term opposed to this one. It is the opposition between what I will call the speaking present [*le dire du présent*] and the present speaking [*le présent du dire*].

This looks like a play on words. It's nothing of the sort.

'The speaking present' refers to what says 'I' in discourse. Along with a series of other particles – 'here', 'now' and other taboo words in our psychoanalytic vocabulary – it serves to locate the presence of the speaker in discourse, to situate him in his actuality as speaker at the level of the message.

You need only the slightest experience of language to see that the present speaking – namely, what is there, now, in discourse – is a completely different thing. The present speaking can be read in all sorts of modes and registers and has no in-principle relationship with the present insofar as it is designated in the discourse as the present of the person who is enunciating the discourse, who is variable, and where the words for it have only the value of a particle. 'I' has no more value than 'here' or 'now'. The proof of this is that when you, my interlocutor, speak to me of 'here' or 'now', you are 62
not speaking of the same 'here' or 'now' as I am. In any case, your *I* is clearly not the same as mine.

I am going to give you an illustration of the present speaking straightaway by means of the shortest witticism I know, which introduces us to another dimension than the metaphorical dimension.

The latter dimension corresponds to condensation. I spoke to you a little while ago about displacement, which is what the metonymic dimension corresponds to. The reason I haven't explored it yet is that it is much more difficult to grasp, but this witticism is particularly well suited to give you a sense of it.

The metonymic dimension, insofar as it makes a contribution to witticisms, plays upon contexts and usage. It operates by associating elements already preserved in the treasure trove of metonymies. A word may be linked in different ways in different contexts, and this will give it two completely different meanings. By using it in a certain context with the meaning it has in another, we are in the metonymic dimension.

I will give you a prime example in the form of a witticism that I will let you think about before I discuss it.

Heinrich Heine is with the poet Frédéric Soulié at a salon, and the latter says to him, talking about a person who was rolling in money, a character who occupied an important position at the time, as you can see, and who was very popular, 'You see, my friend, the cult of the Golden Calf isn't yet over.' 'Oh!' Heinrich Heine replies after looking the person over, 'For a calf he strikes me as being a bit past it.'

That's an example of a metonymic witticism. I will dissect it next time, but already you can see that it is a witticism insofar as the word 'calf' is being used, and uniquely being used, in two different metonymic contexts. It adds nothing to the signification of the witticism to say what it means, namely that the person is a cow. It's amusing to say this, but it is a witticism only insofar as, from one reply to the next, 'calf' is used in two different contexts.

It can be demonstrated ultra-quickly that witticisms operate at the level of the play of signifiers.

A young woman in the making, in whom we can recognize all the qualities of a true education – one that consists in her not using but knowing vulgar language – is invited to her first surprise party
63 by a ladies' man, who, after a moment of bored silence, says to her during a dance that has, moreover, not yet ended, '*Vous avez vu, mademoiselle, que je suis comte.*' 'You have noticed, Mademoiselle, that I am a count.' '*Ahhht!*' she simply replies [thereby highlighting that a '*comte*' without a 't' is a '*con*', an idiot].

You won't have read this story in any of the small, specialist collections. Perhaps you will have heard it directly from the mouth of the young woman herself, who was quite pleased with herself, I have to say. But the nature of the story is exemplary nonetheless, for it is the incarnation par excellence of what I have been calling the speaking present. There is no 'I', the *I* isn't named. Nothing exemplifies the speaking present, as opposed to the present speaking, more than a pure and simple exclamation. Exclamations are paradigmatic of the presence of discourse insofar as the person whose discourse it is completely effaces his own present. His present is, if I may say so, retained entirely in the present of discourse.

However, at the level of creation, this subject displays great presence of mind, since something like that isn't premeditated, it just pops out like that, and that's how you recognize that someone is witty. She makes a simple modification to the code which consists in adding a small 't' to it, which draws its value from the context, if I can put it like that – namely, that the count doesn't make her content, apart from the fact that the count, if he is, as I say, so little pleasing, may notice nothing. This trait is therefore completely gratuitous, but nonetheless you see the elementary mechanism of wit here, namely that this slight transgression of the code is, all by itself, taken as a new value enabling the required meaning to be created instantaneously.

What is this meaning? It may seem to you that it is not in doubt, but, after all, this well-bred young woman doesn't tell her count that he was what he was minus a 't'. She tells him nothing of the kind. The meaning to be created remains suspended somewhere between

the ego and the Other. This is an indication that something remains to be desired, at least for the moment. Moreover, the text isn't at all transposable – if the text had said that he was a Marquis, this creation would not have been possible. According to the good old formula that apparently gave our fathers such pleasure last century, you would ask, 'How are you?', and you would give the [meaningless] reply, '*Et toile à matelas!*' It was best not to reply, '*Et toile à édredon!*' You'll tell me they were days of simple pleasures.

'Ahhht!' – there you have wit in its shortest, undeniably phonematic form. This is the shortest composition that you can give a phoneme. Two distinctive traits are required, the shortest formula of a phoneme being this – either a consonant following a vowel or a vowel following a consonant. A consonant following a vowel is the classic formula, and that is what we find here. This is enough to 64
construct an utterance having the value of a message, insofar as it makes a paradoxical reference to actual word usage, and provided that it directs the Other's thoughts to an instantaneous grasp of the meaning.

That's what we call being witty. It is also what primes the properly combinatory element on which all metaphors rely. If I have spoken extensively about metaphor today, again it is by mapping out the mechanism of substitution. The mechanism has the four terms I gave you in 'The Instance of the Letter'. It is uniquely, at least in its form, the essential operation of intelligence, which consists in formulating the correlate of a proportion established with an X.

An intelligence test is perhaps nothing but that. It's just that it isn't enough just to say that man differs from animals by his intelligence. Perhaps man does differ from animals by his intelligence, but perhaps in this fact the introduction of signifying formulations was primordial.

To put in its proper place the question of men's supposed intelligence as the source of their reality plus X, you would have to start by asking yourself this – intelligence with respect to what? What is there to understand? Where the real is concerned, is it so much a question of understanding? If it is purely and simply about a relationship to reality, surely our discourse must come to the point of re-establishing it in its existence as reality, that is, it must, strictly speaking, culminate in nothing. Moreover, this is what discourse does in general. If we arrive at something else, if one can even speak about a story culminating in knowledge of some kind, it is inasmuch as discourse has brought about an essential transformation.

That is what it's about, and perhaps it's quite simply about these four small terms linked together in a particular way, by what are called 'relations of proportion'. Once again we have a tendency to

entify these relations. We believe that we find them in objects. But where in objects are these relations of proportion, if we haven't introduced them with the help of our little signifiers?

It remains the case that the very possibility of metaphorical play is founded on the existence of having something to substitute. The basis for this is the signifying chain as the principle of combination and locus of metonymy.

This is what I will attempt to elaborate next time.

20 November 1957

IV

THE GOLDEN CALF

Need and refusal
Formalizing metonymy
No metaphor without metonymy
Maupassant's double vision
Fénéon's decentring

We left things last time at the point where I showed you the mainspring of one form of witticism, in what I call the metaphorical function, and was about to take up a second aspect in the register of the metonymic function.

You might be surprised at this way of going about it, consisting as it does in starting off with an example and then gradually developing functional relations which as a result do not seem to possess any general relationship to the matter at hand. It stems from a necessity inherent in our subject, whose palpable element I will have an opportunity to show you. Let's say that everything that is at the level of the unconscious insofar as it is structured by language confronts us with the following phenomenon – it is neither the genre nor the class but only specific examples that enable us to grasp the most significant properties.

This is an inversion of our usual analytic perspective – analytic in the sense of the analysis of mental functions. It could be called a failure of the concept, in the abstract sense of the term. More precisely, we need to find another way of grasping it than grasping it conceptually. This is what I was alluding to when I mentioned Mannerism one day, and this feature is entirely appropriate in our field. Given the terrain over which we roam, we're obliged to proceed by *misusing concepts rather than using them* – and this is due to the domain in which the structurations in question move.

Since the term 'prelogical' is liable to create confusion, I recommend you cross it off your list of categories in advance, given what

it's been turned into – namely, a psychological property. We're dealing here with structural properties of language, which are prior
66 to any question that we can put to language about the legitimacy of any aim that it, language, suggests to us. As you know, this is just what philosophers have made the object of anxious enquiry, owing to which we have come to a sort of compromise that goes more or less as follows – if language shows that we can hardly say anything about anything unless it's a being of language, it is with the aim of bringing about a 'for-us' that can be called 'objectivity'. This is undoubtedly a bit too swift as a way of summarizing the entire enterprise that goes from formal logic to transcendental logic, but it is just intended to tell you at the outset that we place ourselves in a different field.

When Freud speaks about the unconscious, he doesn't say that it is structured in a certain way, but he says it nevertheless, inasmuch as the laws that he proposes, the compositional laws of the unconscious, exactly match some of the most fundamental laws of the composition of discourse. Also, all sorts of elements involved in ordinary discourse are missing from the way in which the unconscious is articulated – the link of causality, he tells us, concerning dreams, or negation, and then he returns to it immediately afterwards and shows us that it finds expression in the dream in some other way. This is the field that is already circled, defined, circumscribed, explored and even ploughed by Freud. This is what we are returning to in trying to formulate – let's go even further – in trying to formalize what a moment ago I called the primordial structuring laws of language.

If there's anything that the Freudian experience tells us, it is that we are determined by laws in the very depths of ourselves, as we rightly or wrongly say, adopting an image – let's simply say, at the level of what lies within us beyond our conceptual grasp of ourselves, beyond the idea that we have of ourselves and draw upon, that we hold onto more or less well, and that we sometimes hasten a little too prematurely to make our fate by speaking of synthesis and total personality. And let's not forget that these are all terms that are precisely subject to challenge by the Freudian experience.

Indeed, Freud teaches us – and I will have to make this a signed frontispiece – about the distance, the gap even, that exists between the structuring of desire and the structuring of needs. And while Freudian experience has come to the point of referring to a metapsychology of needs, this certainly has nothing self-evident about it, and one might even describe it as unexpected in relation to what
67 is most obvious, for the entire experience instituted and defined by Freud shows, at every turn, to what extent the structure of desires is determined by something other than needs. Needs only come to us refracted, broken and fragmented, and they are structured precisely

by all these mechanisms like condensation, displacement and so on, according to the manifestations of psychical life in which they are reflected – mechanisms which presuppose still other intermediaries and mechanisms in which we recognize a number of the laws that we will come to before the end of the Seminar this year, and which I call laws of the signifier.

These laws prevail here, and in witticisms we learn about a certain way of using them, in a kind of mental game, with the question mark that introducing the term *'esprit'* calls for. What is *'esprit'*? What is *'ingenius'* in Latin? What is *'ingenio'* in Spanish, since I referred to the concept? What is this thing that intervenes here and is different from the function of judgement? We can only work out its place once we have spelled out and clarified the method. What is this method? What is its basic aim?

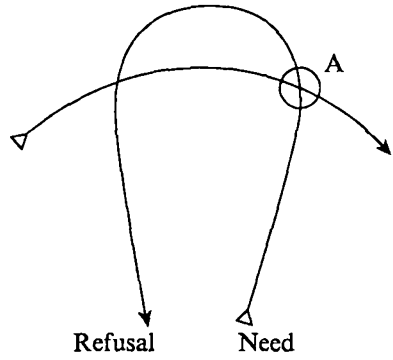
We have already emphasized the ambiguity of witticisms and slips, a basic and in some way constitutive ambiguity. Depending on the circumstances, what is produced may tend towards the sort of psychological accident that slips are, by which we would remain perplexed without Freud's analysis, or rather, on the contrary, it may be taken up and ratified as having been heard by the Other at the level of a specific signifying value – such as the one that has been acquired by the neologistic, paradoxical and scandalous term, 'famillionaire'. The specific signifying function of this word is to designate not only this or that but also some sort of beyond. What is fundamental in what is signified here isn't linked solely to the impasse in the subject's relations with his millionaire protector. We're faced with a certain relationship that fails, with what introduces, into ongoing human relationships, a type of essential impasse that resides in the fact that no desire can ever be received or admitted by the Other save through all sorts of interventions that refract it and turn it into something other than what it is, an object of exchange, and, frankly, right from the outset, submit the process of making a demand to the necessity of refusal.

I will take the liberty of introducing the actual level at which this question arises of translating a demand into an utterance which has an effect by recounting an amusing if not witty story whose register extends well beyond a small, momentary laugh. It's the story that you are all no doubt familiar with about the masochist and the sadist – 'Hurt me!' says the former to the latter, who replies, 'No!'

I see it doesn't make you laugh. No matter. Some people laugh, 68
though. In any case, the story isn't meant to make you laugh. I simply ask you to notice that something unfolds at a level that has nothing witty about it. Effectively, who are better made for one another than the masochist and the sadist? Sure – but, as you can

see from this little story, they get along as long as they don't speak to one another.

It isn't out of spite that the sadist answers, 'No'. His response is a feature of his sadistic character. And as soon as one has spoken he is obliged to reply at the level of speech. Therefore, inasmuch as we have moved onto the level of speech, what should result in the most profound understanding leads to what a moment ago I called the dialectic of refusal that is necessary for sustaining what, in its essence as demand, manifests itself through speech.



In other words, as you can observe in this schema, there is a symmetry between the two elements of the circuit – a closed loop, which is the circle of discourse, and an open loop. Something is uttered by the subject and, coming to the point at which there is a bifurcation at A, it loops back upon itself as an articulated sentence, a ring of discourse [see graph, p. 10]. On the other hand, if what is presented as a demand doesn't respect the essential symmetry I was talking about and describes a circuit that goes directly from his need to the object of his desire, then the sentence ends on a 'No'. Let's say that need, if we locate it at the point delta prime, necessarily encounters the Other's response, which for the moment we'll call a 'refusal'.

What is presented here merely as a paradox, which only our schema makes it possible to locate, no doubt deserves to be gone into in more detail. Let's now return to the chain of our propositions about the different phases of a witticism.

69

1

Today, then, I'll introduce the metonymic phase.

To give you an immediate idea of it, I gave you an example in the form of a story where you can see everything that differentiates

it from 'famillionaire'. There is, then, a dialogue between Heinrich Heine and the poet Frédéric Soulié, almost his contemporary, which is recounted in Kuno Fischer's book, which was, I believe, reasonably well known at the time. A group gathers in a salon around an elderly gentleman basking in the reflected aura of his financial power. 'Look!' says Frédéric Soulié to someone who was barely his senior, and whom he admired, 'Look how the nineteenth century worships the Golden Calf!' To which Heinrich Heine replies, looking with a disdainful eye at the object drawn to his attention, 'Yes, but this one strikes me as a bit old for that' [*SE* 8: 47–8].

What does this witticism signify? What gives it its bite? What is its mainspring?

On the topic of witticisms, Freud, as you know, places us on this level from the outset – witticisms are to be sought where they are, namely, in their text. Nothing is more striking – this man who has been attributed with being a genius at probing what lies beyond, as it were, psychological hypotheses, always sets out on the contrary from the opposite point, namely the materiality of signifiers, treating them as a given, existing in and for themselves. We have a clear example in his analysis of witticisms. Not only does he consistently begin with a technique, but he has confidence that the elements of his technique will uncover the mainspring.

What is the first thing he does? He proceeds to carry out what he calls an attempt at reduction. If we translate the wit of 'famillionaire' into its expanded sense, decompose what it involves and then read the elements – that is, if we say, 'as familiar as one can be with a millionaire' – everything belonging to the witticism vanishes or disappears. This shows clearly that what is at issue lies in the relationship between the fundamental ambiguity specific to metaphor and the function that a signifier acquires when it is substituted for another signifier, one that is latent in the chain through positional similarity or simultaneity.

Having started by examining witticisms at the metaphorical level, Freud finds himself faced with a new variety with the story of the Golden Calf, where one can sense a difference and, as he isn't one to spare us the detours of his approach to the phenomena, he tells us to think about describing it as a 'conceptual joke' as opposed to a 'verbal joke'. But he soon realizes that this distinction is totally inadequate, and that, here, what one should rely on is what is called 70
the form, namely the combining of signifiers. He therefore undertakes anew to submit the example in question to the technique of reduction, making it accountable for what is subjacent to this debatable form, namely subjective agreement that it is a witticism. He

encounters something here that doesn't yield to analysis in the same way 'famillionaire' does.

Sharing each of his approaches in his thinking with us, he pauses for a moment – following Kuno Fischer who remained at this level – at the protasis, that is, at the contribution by Heine's interlocutor, Frédéric Soulié. He detects something metaphorical in the Golden Calf and, to be sure, the expression does have a double value – on the one hand, as a symbol of intrigue and, on the other, as a symbol of the power of money. Does this mean that this gentleman receives all these tributes because he is rich? Wouldn't this obscure the mainspring of what this is about? Freud quickly becomes aware of what is fallacious in such an approach. The richness of this example deserves close scrutiny.

It is certain that in what we are initially given to set the scene for this Golden Calf the notion of the matter is implicated. Without going into how all the verbal uses of this undeniably metaphorical term came to be established, suffice it to say that, while the Golden Calf has the closest of relations with the relationship between signifiers and images that forms the aspect under which idolatry effectively comes to be established, ultimately it is only located within a perspective where being recognized by the god who announces himself as 'I am that I am' – namely, the god of the Jews – demands that one renounce not only idolatry pure and simple, that is, the worship of statues, but also, subsequently, the naming, par excellence, of every imaged hypostasis – that is, the renunciation of what presents itself as the very origin of signifiers, and this in order to seek their essential beyond the refusal of which is precisely what gives the Golden Calf its value.

Thus, it is only through what is already a shift that the Golden Calf comes to acquire a metaphorical use. The topical regression that from a religious perspective is involved in substituting the imaginary for the symbolic, which underpins the idolatry, secondarily acquires the metaphorical value of expressing what people other than I have called the fetishistic value of gold, which I do not mention without reason here, since precisely this fetishistic function – we will have to come back to this – is itself only conceivable in the signifying dimension of metonymy.

Here, then, we have the Golden Calf laden with all the intrications
71 and entanglements of the symbolic function with the imaginary. Is this where the *Witz* resides? No. This isn't at all the place where it is located. The witticism, as Freud is aware, is in Heinrich Heine's riposte, and the latter at least consists precisely in subverting, if not annulling, all the references that underpin the metaphor of the Golden Calf, designating him as someone who is suddenly reduced

to the quality of being no more than a vealer worth [*un veau qui vaut*] so much the pound. Suddenly, this calf is taken for what it is, a living being that the market, itself effectively instituted through the reign of gold, reduces to being only sold as stock, a head of cattle, whereby it is possible to emphasize that he is clearly no longer under the age limit for a vealer – which, according to the definition that Littré gives, is a calf in its first year, and which a butchery purist would define as a calf that has not stopped suckling its mother, 'a calf under its mother'. I allowed myself to say that only in France is this purism respected.

There is no way of reducing the fact that this calf isn't a calf, or that this calf is a bit old to be a calf. With or without the Golden Calf in the background, it's still a witticism. Freud thus grasps a difference between the story about the *famillionaire* and this one – the first is analysable, the second is unanalysable. And yet they're both witticisms. What does this mean if not that these are undoubtedly two separate dimensions of the experience of witticisms? What is present here, as Freud himself tells us, looks like sleight of hand, a trick or faulty reasoning. Yet it's a trait common to an entire category of witticisms distinct from the category in which *famillionaire* is inscribed and in which one takes, as one might crudely put it, a word in a different sense from the sense in which it was intended.

Another story belonging to the same category as the Golden Calf refers to the confiscation by Napoleon III of all the property of the house of Orléans when he ascended to the throne. 'It's the first flight [*vol*] of the Eagle,' someone said, and everyone was delighted with its ambiguity; there was no need to spell it out. Here, there's no question of speaking of a witticism of thought, since it is a witticism of words based on the ambiguity that enables us to take a word in a different sense.

It is, moreover, potentially amusing to probe into what underlies such words and, because this word is recorded in French, Freud takes care to specify the double meaning of '*vol*' as action, as the means of locomotion of birds, and as the removal, abduction or theft of property. It's good to bear in mind what Freud elides here – I am not saying he was unaware of it – which is that one of the meanings was historically borrowed from the other and that towards the thirteenth or fourteenth century the term '*volerie*' [hunting with birds] had passed from the usage whereby a falcon or a quail flies [*vole*], to 72
the usage that designates this violation of one of the essential laws of property, known as theft [*vol*].

This was no accident. I'm not saying it occurs in every language, but it had already occurred in Latin, where '*volare*' took on the same meaning from the same origin. I take this opportunity to

stress something which isn't unrelated to what we are familiar with, namely what I will call the euphemistic modes of expressing what, in speech, represents the 'violation' [*viol*] of one's word or a contract. It's not for nothing that the word '*viol*' is borrowed from the register of an abduction [*rapt*] which has nothing to do with what we properly and juridically call theft [*vol*].

Let's leave it there and return to why I introduce the term 'metonymy' here.

2

Beyond these elusive ambiguities of meaning, I think we effectively need to search for another reference if we are to define this second register of witticisms, unify its mechanism with the first kind and locate their common mainspring. Freud shows us the way without quite finding the formula for it.

What point would there be in talking about Freud if we didn't try to derive the maximum benefit from what he contributed? It's up to us to move it along a little further by giving it this formalization, and our experience will tell us whether it is right and whether this is the right direction for organizing the phenomena.

It's a question that is rich with consequences, not only for everything concerning our therapeutics but also for our conception of modes of the unconscious. It is absolutely decisive whether there is a particular structure, whether this structure is the structure of signifiers and whether the latter imposes its grid on everything that has to do with human needs.

I have already presented metonymy on several occasions, most notably in the article called 'The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious' [*Écrits*, 412–41]. There I deliberately gave an example drawn from our common experience of grammar that draws on your memories of your secondary-school studies. No one could say that you were exactly filled to the brim with the study of the figures of rhetoric – in actual fact, no great fuss has been made of them till now. Metonymy was at the time relegated to the end, under the auspices of a much-underrated Quintilian. Nonetheless, given the point
73 we're at with respect to our conception of forms of discourse, I took 'thirty sails', spoken in the place of 'thirty ships'. There's a literary background to this choice, since, as you are aware, these thirty sails can be found in a certain monologue in *Le Cid*, a reference we'll perhaps do something with later.

In 'thirty sails' it's not simply a matter of taking the part for the whole, as you've been told with reference to the real, for it is rarely

the case that ships have only one sail. We don't know what to do with these thirty sails – either there are thirty of them and there aren't thirty ships, or there are thirty ships and there are more than thirty sails. That is why I say one has to refer to the word-for-word [*mot-à-mot*] correspondence. That said, I am only presenting you with the problematic aspect of the thing, to be sure, and we need to go deeper into the nature of how it differs from metaphor – for you could say to me that it really is a metaphor. Why isn't it one? Indeed, that is the question.

For a while now I have been hearing from time to time that some of you, in the course of your everyday life, are suddenly struck by encountering something you no longer know whether to classify as metaphor or as metonymy. This is sometimes followed by some excessive disturbance in your organism, a sharp rolling from the port of metaphor to the starboard of metonymy, causing some of you to feel a bit seasick. I've also been told, in connection with Booz, that 'His sheaf was neither miserly nor hateful', which I presented to you as a metaphor, could actually be a metonymy. Still, I think that in my article I clearly showed what this sheaf is, and how much it is something other than part of his property. Insofar as it is precisely a substitute for the father, it brings out the entire dimension of biological fecundity that underlies the spirit of the poem, and it's no accident that on the horizon and further out, in the firmament, the sharp cutting edge of the celestial sickle emerges, evoking castration in the background.

Let's return to our thirty sails and try to pinpoint, once and for all, what it is that I'm calling the metonymic function.

Concerning metaphor, I think I've sufficiently stressed, though not without leaving a number of puzzles, that substitution is its structural source. Metaphor is the result of the function that is brought to a signifier S insofar as this signifier is substituted for another in a signifying chain.

As for metonymy, it is the result of the function that a signifier S adopts when it relates to another signifier along the length of the sig- 74
nifying chain. The function that a sail has in relation to a ship exists along the signifying chain and not in reference to the real – along the length of the chain and not in a substitution. It's thus a question, in the clearest way, of the transfer of signification along the chain.

This is why formal representations or formulas are always liable to place extra demands on you. Someone recently reminded me that at one time I said I was seeking to devise a rubber logic for you to use. It's actually something like that that is involved here. This topographical structuring invariably leaves gaps because it's made up of these ambiguities. Let me say in passing that this is unavoidable.

Then again, if we do manage to develop this topographical structuring well enough, we won't be able to avoid a remainder of extra requirements, no matter how much a univocal formalization is an ideal for you – if indeed a univocal formalization is an ideal for you at all – for some ambiguities are irreducible to the level of the structure of language that we're trying to define.

Let me also say in passing that the notion of metalanguage is very often employed in the most inadequate of fashions, insofar as people misrecognize the following – either a metalanguage has formal requirements that displace the total structuring phenomenon in which it has to be situated, or the metalanguage itself conserves the ambiguities of language. In other words, there is no such thing as a metalanguage, there are formalizations – either at the level of logic, or at the level of this signifying structure whose autonomous level I've been trying to uncover for you. There is no such thing as a metalanguage in the sense in which it would mean, for example, a complete mathematization of the phenomenon of language, and this is so precisely because there's no way of formalizing any further than what's given as the primitive structure of language. Still, not only can this formalization be demanded, it is necessary.

It's necessary here, for instance. In effect, the notion of the substitution of one signifier for another requires that its place already be defined. This is a positional substitution, and position requires a signifying chain, that is, a combinatory succession. I'm not saying it requires every one of its features. I'm saying that this combinatory succession is characterized by elements I will call, for instance, intransitivity, alternation and repetition.

If we go into the constitution of a signifying chain at this original, minimal level, we'll end up a long way off today's topic. There
75 are minimal requirements. I'm not saying I claim to have completely got to them all yet, although I have already given you enough for me to suggest some formulas as a basis for some reflection drawn on particular examples – which, in this domain and no doubt for essential reasons, we must draw upon for all our teachings.

We will proceed in this way once again, observing, even if this sounds like a play on words, that these sails [*voiles*] veil [*voilent*] our view, every bit as much as they designate that they don't enter with their full rights as sails, at full sail, into the use we are putting them to. These are sails that rarely slacken. What is reduced in their scope and in their sign can be rediscovered if one evokes 'a village of thirty souls', where the souls are placed there for the shadows of what they represent, lighter than a term suggesting an excessive presence of inhabitants. As in the title of a famous novel, rather than being beings who are not there, these souls may be dead souls. Similarly,

'thirty fires' [for thirty households] also represents a certain degradation or minimization of meaning, for these fires are as much extinguished fires as they are fires about which we say there is no smoke without fire – and it's not for nothing that these fires reappear in a usage that says metonymically what it is that they stand in for.

You will tell me no doubt that I am relying on a reference to meaning to show the difference. I don't believe so, and I'd point out to you that what I started from is the following – metonymy is the fundamental structure within which something new and creative, which is metaphor, can be produced. Even if something of metonymic origin is placed in the position of substitution, as in the case of 'thirty sails', it's different from a metaphor. In short, there would be no metaphor if there were no metonymy.

The chain in which the position at which the metaphorical phenomenon occurs is defined is in a sort of shifting or equivocation where metonymy is concerned. 'There would be no metaphor if there were no metonymy' comes back to me as an echo, and not by chance by any means, of the comic invocation Jarry puts into the mouth of Father Ubu, 'Long live Poland, for without Poland there'd be no Poles!' This is the very essence of our subject. It's a witticism and – this is what's funny – it refers precisely to the metonymic function. You'd be on the wrong track if you thought that what's funny here relates to, for instance, the role the Poles have played in the misfortunes of Poland, which are only too well known. It's just as funny if I say, 'Long live France, Monsieur, for without France there would be no French!' Similarly, if I say, 'Long live Christianity, because without Christianity there'd be no Christians!' 76
And even, 'Long live Christ!', and so on.

One cannot fail to recognize the metonymic dimension in these examples. Every relationship of derivation and every use of a suffix or an ending in inflected languages uses the contiguity of the chain for signifying purposes. The aphasic's experience is indicative here, for instance. There are precisely two types of aphasia, and when we're at the level of disturbances of contiguity – that is, of the metonymic function – the subject has the greatest difficulty with the relation between words and adjectives, between 'benefit' or 'beneficence' and 'beneficent' and also 'benefaction'. It's here in the metonymic Other that this lightning flash occurs, casting a light that's not only comical but also rather farcical.

It's important to try to grasp the signifying chain's properties, and I've tried to find some terms of reference that make it possible to grasp what I would like to describe as the effect of the signifying chain, an effect inherent in its nature as signifying chain, and which one may call its meaning.

3

Last year, it was by means of an analogical reference – it might have seemed metaphorical to you, but I stressed that it wasn't and that it was intended to be taken to the letter of the metonymic chain – that I situated the essence of all fetishistic displacements of desire, its fixation, in other words, before, after or alongside, or at any rate on the threshold of, its natural object. This was about establishing the fundamental phenomenon that we can call the radical perversion of human desires.

I would now like to indicate another dimension of the metonymic chain, which I will call the sliding of meaning. I've already pointed out how it is related to the literary procedure typically referred to by the term 'realism'.

There is no reason why one cannot have all sorts of experiences in this domain, and I subjected myself to the experience of taking a novel from the realist period and rereading it to see what features might help you grasp the original something that the metonymic use of the signifying chain introduces into the dimension of meaning. Thus, I turned, at random, to a novel by Maupassant, *Bel-Ami*.

It makes for pleasant reading. Try it some time. Having made
77 a start, I was quite surprised to find in it what I'm attempting to designate here when I talk about sliding. We see our hero, Georges Duroy, setting out from the top of the rue Notre-Dame-de-Lorette.

> When the woman behind the till had given him the change for his five-franc piece, Georges Duroy left the restaurant. A good-looking man, with the poise of an ex-cavalry N.C.O., he drew himself up, twirled his moustache with a familiar military gesture, and quickly glanced around at the remaining diners with one of those looks of a handsome young man on the lookout for prey. [p.105]

That is how the novel begins. It doesn't seem like much, but it goes on from one moment to the next, from one encounter to another, and you witness, in the clearest of ways, a sort of shift. This shift carries off a fairly basic being, I would say, if we think of him at the point to which he has been reduced at the beginning of the novel, because this five-franc piece is all he has left. It gradually leads this being, then, who has been reduced to the most direct of needs, to an immediate preoccupation with love and hunger, into a series of good and bad incidents, but generally good, for he's not only a handsome fellow, but a lucky one. It places him in a circle, a system of displays of exchange, in which the metonymic subversion of

primitive elements is accomplished, and which, as soon as they're satisfied, are alienated in a series of situations in which he is never able to get his bearings or find any repose. And it conveys him from success to success and to an almost total alienation from what is his own person.

The storyline of the novel, in an overview like this, doesn't actually amount to much because everything is in the detail, I mean in the way in which the novelist never goes beyond what's happening in the sequence of events and records them in the most concrete terms possible, just as he constantly places not only the hero but everything around him in a position that is invariably double so that at every moment one has double vision with respect to the object, no matter how proximate it is.

I will take as an example the meal at the restaurant, which is one of the first moments in the rise in this character's fortunes.

> Succulent Ostend oysters were brought in, looking like dainty little ears enclosed in shells and melting between the tongue and the palate like salty titbits.
>
> After the soup came a trout as pink-fleshed as a young girl; tongues began to wag. [. . .]
>
> They had reached the stage of witty suggestiveness, of words, 78
> veiled yet revealing, that are like a hand lifting up a skirt, the stage of clever allusions, skilfully hidden impropriety, shamelessly brazen hypocrisy, cryptic words that cover naked images and which fill the eye and the mind with a sudden vision of what dares not be said openly and enables smart society to enjoy a subtle, mysterious sort of lovemaking, a sort of marriage of impure minds, by simultaneously conjuring up, with words as sensual and disturbing as a sexual embrace, the secret, shameful desire for body to clasp body. The roast had now appeared, partridges . . . [pp. 105–8]

Note that they ate this roast, the partridges, the poultry terrine and all the rest 'without tasting it properly, without realizing what they were eating, entirely absorbed in what they were saying, immersed in thoughts of love' [pp. 108–9].

This constant diversion which means you don't know whether it's the flesh of a young girl or a trout that's on the table makes it possible for the so-called realist description to dispense with any unfathomable reference to any meaning or trans-meaning whatsoever, poetic or moral or other. This throws enough light, or so it seems to me, on what I'm pointing to when I say that any discourse aiming at grasping reality is obliged to view things from the perspective of the

perpetual sliding of meaning. This is what gives it its value and also what makes it the case that literary realism doesn't exist. In an effort to get a tighter grip on reality by articulating it in discourse, all one ever manages to do is show what is disorganizing and even perverse in what the introduction of discourse adds to this reality.

If that seems a bit impressionistic, I'd like to try out something else with you. Since we're trying to remain, not at the level at which discourse corresponds to the real, but at which it simply claims to connote it, follow it or be its annalist – with two *n*s – let's see what this produces. I've taken the series *Novels in Three Lines*, which Félix Fénéon, a no doubt worthy author whom I don't have time to introduce, used to write for the newspaper *Le Matin*. There's no doubt that they were not collected haphazardly, since a special talent is apparent there. Let's try to find out what it is, taking them at random.

For having thrown a few stones at the police, three pious ladies of Hérissart have been fined by the magistrates in Doullens.

As Mr Poulbot, a primary school teacher in Île-Saint-Denis,
79 rang the bell for the return to class, the bell fell, almost scalping him.

In Clichy, an elegant young man threw himself under a hansom cab with rubber tyres and then, unhurt, under a truck, which crushed him to pieces.

A young woman was seated on the ground in Choisy-le-Roi. The only identifying word her amnesia enabled her to say was: 'Model.'

The corpse of the sexagenarian Dorlay was swinging from a tree in Arcueil with the sign, 'Too old to work'.

In relation to the mystery of Luzarches, the examining magistrate Dupuy deposed the suspect Averlant; but she was mad.

Mangin, from Verdun, was trudging along behind the coffin. He didn't make it to the cemetery that day. Death overtook him on the way.

The valet Silot, from Neuilly, settled an entertaining woman into his absent master's house then disappeared, taking everything but her.

While pretending to search through her savings for rare coins, two swindlers took 1,800 francs of the ordinary kind from a woman in Malakoff.

> At the beach at Saint-Anne [Finistère], two bathers were drowning. A bather jumped in. And Mr Étienne then had three people to save.

What makes them funny? Here we have facts, described with an impersonal rigour and the fewest words possible. I would say the entire art consists simply in this extreme reduction. What is comical, when we read 'Mangin, from Verdun, was trudging along behind a coffin. He didn't make it to the cemetery that day. Death took him by surprise on the way', absolutely fails to touch our own journey towards the cemetery, however diverse the methods employed to make the journey. The effect wouldn't appear if these things were said in a more lengthy fashion, I mean if it was all drowned in a flood of words.

It's because of what I've been calling the 'sliding of meaning' that we literally don't know where to stop, at what point, in these sentences which we encounter in their rigour, in order to locate their centre of gravity or point of equilibrium. This is just what I would call their decentring. There is no morality here. Anything that could be in any way exemplary is carefully effaced. This is the whole art of composition in these *Novels in Three Lines* – their style's art of detachment. Nevertheless, what's recounted is still a sequence of events, one whose coordinates are given to us in a completely rigorous manner. This is another quality of the style.

That is what I was getting at in trying to show you that along the 80
horizontal dimension of the chain, discourse is really a skating rink, just as useful to study as the figures of skating, and along which meaning slides. It is a light, infinite band no doubt, which perhaps, because it is so reduced, appears to be nothing at all, but which is manifest in the order of witticisms in their ridiculous, degrading and disorganizing dimension.

It is along this dimension that the type of witticism like the 'flight of the eagle' is located, that is, where discourse meets the signifying chain. This is also the case with 'famillionaire', except that the latter is inscribed at the meeting point at gamma, whereas the other one simply takes place a bit further on.

Frédéric Soulié contributes something that obviously goes in the direction of locating it over on the side of the *I*, while he appeals to Heinrich Heine to be his witness as the Other. At the beginning of any witticism there's always an appeal to the Other as the locus of verification. 'As true', Hirsch-Hyacinth begins, 'as God shall grant me all good things.' The reference to God may well be ironic, but it is fundamental. Here Soulié invokes a Heinrich Heine who, I will tell you, is much more prestigious than he is himself – without

giving you the history of Frédéric Soulié, though the article devoted to him in *Larousse* is a nice one. Soulié says to him, 'Don't you see, my dear master?' and so on. Here, the appeal, the invocation, tends to fall on the side of Heinrich Heine's *I*, which is the pivotal point of the matter.

We have, then, passed through the *I* and returned with 'Golden Calf' at A, the locus of usage and metonymy, for, while the Golden Calf is a metaphor it is a dead one, it has passed into language – and earlier, incidentally, we displayed its sources, origins and mode of production. It is ultimately a commonplace that Soulié sends to the locus of the message via the classic alpha–gamma pathway. We have two characters here, but you know that there might just as easily have been only one, since the Other, merely because the dimension of speech exists, exists in each of us. Moreover, when Soulié describes the financier as a Golden Calf, it's because he's conscious of a usage that to us seems no longer accepted, but I found it in *Littré* – a gentleman may be called a Golden Calf [*Veau d'or*] if he is filthy rich [*cousu d'or*] and, for that reason, the object of universal admiration. There's no ambiguity [in French], and none in the German either.

At this moment – that is, here, between gamma and alpha – there is a referral from the message back to the code, that is, along the line of the signifying chain and, in a way metonymically, the term is picked up again on a plane which is no longer the one along which it had been sent, and this makes it possible to see the collapse, reduction or devaluation of meaning brought about in metonymy quite clearly.

81 This leads me, at the end of today's lesson, to introduce the following, which may perhaps seem paradoxical – that metonymy is, strictly speaking, the locus where we must situate the dimension that is primordial in and essential to human language and that lies at the opposite end of the dimension of meaning – namely, the dimension of value.

The value dimension becomes apparent, in contrast with the meaning dimension. It is another aspect, another register. It refers to the diversity of objects already constituted by language, into which the magnetic field of each person's needs, with their contradictions, is introduced.

Some of you are, I believe, fairly familiar with *Das Kapital*. I am not talking about the entire text – who's read *Capital*! – but with the first book, which almost everyone has read. A prodigious first book, superabundant, revealing someone – and this is rare – who sustains an articulated philosophical discourse. I urge you to go to the page where, at the level of the formulation of the so-called 'theory of the

particular form of the value of merchandise', Marx shows himself, in a note, to be a precursor of the mirror stage.

On this page Marx formulates the following proposition – no quantitative relations of value can be established without the prior establishment of a general equivalence. It's not simply a question of equating so many yards of cloth, it's the equivalence between cloth and clothes which has to be structured, that is, that clothes can come to represent the value of cloth. It's thus not a matter of the clothes that can be worn but of the fact that clothes can come to be the signifier of the value of cloth. In other words, the equivalence necessary from the start of the analysis, and on which what is called value is based, presupposes, on the part of both terms in play, abandoning a very important part of their meaning.

The meaning effect of the metonymic line is located along this dimension.

We shall subsequently see what the use of bringing this meaning effect into play in the two registers of metaphor and metonymy is. Together they refer to an essential dimension that enables us to refind the plane of the unconscious – the dimension of the Other, to which we necessarily appeal, insofar as the Other is the locus, receiver and pivotal point of witticisms.

That's what we'll do next time.

27 November 1957

V

A BIT-OF-SENSE AND THE STEP-OF-SENSE

Knots of signification and pleasure
Need, demand, desire
Benefits of ingratitude
Misunderstanding and misrecognition
Subjectivity

When Freud comes to the second, synthetic part of his work on witticisms, he enquires into the source of the pleasure they produce.

It's becoming more and more essential that you read this text at least once. I stress this for anyone who might think he is excused from doing so. It's the only way you can become familiar with this work, short of me reading it to you myself, which, I imagine, wouldn't be to your liking. Although this will decidedly lower your attention level, I will read out some extracts, since this is the only way you will realize how closely and how frequently the formulas I bring you – or am trying to – follow the questions Freud raises.

Nevertheless, do be aware that Freud's approach is often circuitous. While he refers to standard themes under various psychological or other headings, the manner in which he exploits them introduces an implicit theme that is just as important as, and even more important than, the themes that serve as his explicit references and which he and his readers have in common. The way he makes use of them, in fact, and you'd really have to have never opened the text not to be aware of this, brings out a dimension that no one had ever suggested before him. This dimension is precisely that of the signifier. I am going to show its role.

1

I'll go straight to the issue that we will occupy ourselves with today – what, Freud asks, is a witticism's source of pleasure?

In language that is too widespread in our day and that certain people would employ, one could say that the source of pleasure in a 84
witticism is to be found in its formal aspect. Fortunately, these are not the terms Freud uses. On the contrary, he goes so far as to say, with much more precision, that the true source of pleasure yielded by a witticism is that it's funny.

It nevertheless remains the case that the pleasure we get from hearing a witticism is centred elsewhere. Are we not aware of the direction in which Freud is looking for this source throughout his analysis? The ambiguity inherent in the act of making a joke prevents us from recognizing where the pleasure comes from, and it takes all the effort of his analysis to show us.

It's quite essential here to follow the way he proceeds. In a manner consistent with a system of explicit references that becomes increasingly apparent as the work progresses, the primitive source of pleasure is referred to a playful period of infantile activity, to the early playing with words that refers us directly to the acquisition of language as pure signifiers, to verbal play and to the practice that we might almost describe as the pure utterance of word forms. Is it a pure and simple question of a return to playing with signifiers as such at a period before they are mastered, whereas reason will gradually oblige the subject, through education and what is learned from reality, to bring mastery and criticism to the use of signifiers? Does the principal source of the pleasure in witticisms lie, then, in this difference? If that were how Freud's contribution could be summed up, the whole thing would appear pretty simple, but this is far from being the case.

While Freud tells us that this is the source of the pleasure, he also shows us the paths down which this pleasure passes – they're former paths, ones that are still there, existing potentially, virtually, and still sustaining something. They are what is liberated by the operation of witticisms, as is their privilege by comparison with the paths that the subject's progress towards the adult state has brought to the forefront of the regulation of thought. Going down these paths immediately takes witticisms – and this is where all of Freud's earlier analysis [in Part A] of their mainspring and mechanisms comes in – down these structuring paths that are the very paths of the unconscious.

In other words, and Freud himself expresses it this way, a witticism has two sides.

On the one hand, there are signifiers in action, with this freedom that maximizes their possibilities of fundamental ambiguity. In a word, here we find the original feature of signifiers in relation to
85 meaning, the essential polyvalence and creative function that they have in relation to meaning, and the touch of the arbitrary that they bring to it.

The other aspect is that of the unconscious. That signifiers in action evoke, all by themselves, the entire order of the unconscious is well enough indicated, as Freud sees it, by the fact that the structures revealed in witticisms – their constitution, crystallization and functioning – are none other than the very ones he discovered in his initial apprehension of the unconscious at the level of dreams, bungled actions – or successful actions, however you want to take it – and at the level of symptoms, even, and which we've tried to formulate more precisely by using the terms 'metaphor' and 'metonymy'. These forms are the same for all language use and also for the structuring by language we encounter in the unconscious. They are the most general forms, of which condensation, displacement and the other mechanisms Freud emphasizes in the structures of the unconscious are in a way merely applications. It may not be in our mental habits to confer the structure of speech on the unconscious in this way, but it corresponds to what's effectively dynamic in the relation of the unconscious to desire.

This commonality between the unconscious and the structure of speech, insofar as it's regulated by the laws of the signifier, is precisely what we're trying to get a better understanding of and illustrate by means of our recourse to Freud's text on witticisms. This is what we're going to attempt to examine in more detail today.

Stressing what might be called the autonomy of the laws of the signifier, and saying that they're primary in relation to the mechanism for the creation of meaning, does not, of course, exempt us from asking how to conceptualize not only the appearance of meaning but also, to parody a rather awkwardly produced formula from the school of logical positivism, the 'meaning of meaning' – not that this latter expression makes any sense. What do we mean when we talk of meaning?

Moreover, in the chapter on the mechanism of pleasure, doesn't Freud repeatedly refer to this formula, so widespread in connection with witticisms, of 'sense in nonsense'? This formula, which had been put forward by many authors in the past, records the two visible sides of pleasure – a witticism immediately strikes one as nonsense, it grabs you and then compensates you with the emergence, inside this very nonsense, of some secret meaning or other that is, moreover, always so difficult to characterize.

From another perspective, it has been said that the way has been paved for meaning's emergence by the nonsense that in the moment 86
confuses and confounds us. This is perhaps closer to the way it works, and Freud is doubtless inclined to concede that there is more to it. That is to say that the role of nonsense is to trick us for a moment, long enough for a previously unnoticed meaning to hit us as we get the joke. This meaning also fades very quickly. It's fleeting, a flash of meaning, similar in nature to the moment of confusion when we were struck by the nonsense.

Effectively, if you take a closer look, you'll notice that Freud goes so far as to reject the term 'nonsense'. This is what I'd like us to think about today, since it's quite characteristic of these approximations to avoid precisely the final term, the ultimate mainspring of the mechanism at work. Formulas like this no doubt have a seductive psychological appeal to them, but they are not strictly speaking correct.

I'm going to propose that we not take the reference to children as our point of departure. We know that children can take pleasure in these verbal games, that one can therefore refer to something of this order, give sense and weight to the psychogenesis of the mechanism of wit and bestow charm on this primitive and distant ludic activity – and rest content with that. But, if we think about this in some other way than by going along with established routine, it's perhaps not a reference that we should be all that happy with, since it's also uncertain whether the pleasure of wit, in which children only remotely take part, can be completely explained by appealing to fantasy [*fantaisie*].

In order to make the link between the use of signifiers and what we might call satisfaction or pleasure, I'm going to return to a reference that may seem elementary. Even if we do refer to children, it must nevertheless not be forgotten that in the beginning signifiers have a purpose – they are made for expressing a demand. Okay, so let's stop for a moment at the mainspring of demand.

2

What is demand? Demand is what in need gets conveyed by means of signifiers addressed to the Other. I pointed out to you last time that this reference merits an effort on our part to explore the different moments in it.

These moments are so underexplored that a distinguished representative of the psychoanalytic hierarchy devoted an entire article of a dozen or so pages – I have alluded to it somewhere in one of

87 my own articles – to marvelling at the virtues of what he calls 'the wording', an English word corresponding to what in French we more awkwardly call '*le passage au verbal*' or '*la verbalisation*'. It's obviously more elegant in English. A patient of his had been particularly irritated by an intervention he had made. He had uttered something to the effect that she had unusual or even strong 'demands', which has an even more insistent emphasis in English than in French. She had been literally bowled over, as if by an accusation or a denunciation. But when he repeated the same interpretation a few moments later using the word 'needs', '*besoins*', he found someone who quite docilely accepted his interpretation. And the author is amazed by it.

The mountain the author in question makes out of this discovery clearly shows us how primitive the state of this art of wording still is inside analysis, or at least inside certain analytic circles. For, in actual fact, there you have it all – demand is in itself so relative to the Other that the Other is immediately in the position of accusing and rejecting the subject, whereas by invoking need he authenticates, assumes and ratifies it, he assumes it and is already beginning to recognize it, which in itself is an essential form of satisfaction. The mechanism of demand brings the Other to oppose it by nature – you could even say that, by its very nature, demand requires opposition for it to be sustained as demand. The introduction of language into communication is being constantly illustrated by the way in which the Other agrees to a demand.

Let's think about this. The system of needs enters the dimension of language where it's remodelled, but it's also permanently pouring into the signifying complex, which is why demand is essentially something that by its very nature presents itself as capable of being excessive. It's not for nothing that children ask for the moon. They ask for the moon because it's in the nature of a need expressed via a signifying system to ask for the moon. And incidentally, don't ever hesitate to promise it to them. And incidentally, we ourselves are very close to having it. But at the end of the day we haven't got it yet.

The most important thing to emphasize is the following – what happens with a demand for a need to be satisfied? We respond to the demand, we give our neighbour what he demands, but what mouse hole does it have to pass through? What reduction in his aspirations must he lower himself to in order for his demand to be approved?

88 The phenomenon of need highlights this quite well when it appears in a naked form. I would even say that to have access to need qua need, we have to refer, beyond the subject, to some kind of Other called Christ who identifies with the poor. This is true of those who practise Christian charity, but also of the rest as well. The man of desire, Molière's Don Juan, of course gives the beggar what he asks

him for, and it's not for nothing that he adds, 'for the love of humanity'. The response to a demand, granting a demand, is ultimately referred to an Other beyond the person there in front of you. One of the stories Freud treats as pivotal in his analysis of witticisms, the one about salmon mayonnaise, gives the best illustration of this.

It's about a character who, having given a beggar the money he needs in order to repay some debt or other, make some payment, is outraged when he sees him putting the object of his generosity to another use. It's a very funny story. Some time after the good deed, he comes across him in a restaurant where he is helping himself to salmon mayonnaise – something regarded as a sign of extravagant expenditure. You need to give it a bit of a Viennese accent, which the story calls for. He says, 'What? Is this what I gave you money for? To buy yourself salmon mayonnaise?' The other then makes a joke of it by responding, 'But I don't understand. When I don't have any money, I can't have salmon mayonnaise, and when I do have some money, I can't have any either! So when am I supposed to eat salmon mayonnaise?' [*SE* 8: 49–50]

Every example of a witticism is made even more significant by its particularity, by what is special in the story and unable to be generalized. It's by way of this particularity that we come to the very mainspring of the domain we're examining.

This story is no less relevant than any other, for they all place us at the very heart of the problem, namely, the relationship between signifiers and desire. Desire is profoundly changed in its emphasis, subverted and rendered ambiguous by its passage through the pathways of the signifier. Let's take a close look at what this means. Satisfaction is always granted in the name of a certain register that brings the Other into play beyond the person making the demand, and it's precisely this that profoundly perverts the system of demand and response to demand.

Clothe the naked, feed the hungry, visit the sick – I don't need to remind you of the seven, eight or nine works of mercy. The terms themselves are striking enough. Clothe the naked – if a demand was 89
something that was to be maintained at its most direct point, why not dress the naked men or women in Christian Dior? This happens from time to time, but usually it's because one has undressed them in the first place. Similarly, feed the hungry – why not get them drunk? This isn't done, it would harm them, they are used to being sober and you mustn't disturb them. As for visiting the sick, there's Sacha Guitry's quip, 'Paying a visit always pleases, if not when you arrive, then at least when you leave.'

The topic of demand is thus at the heart of my remarks today. Let's try, then, to schematize what happens during this pause,

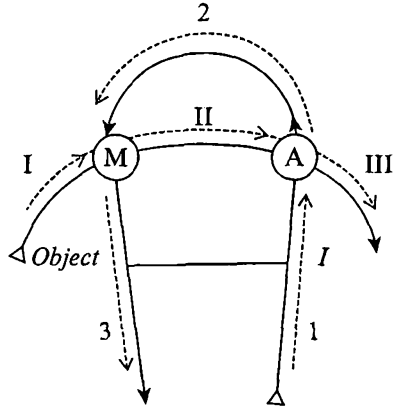
which, in some way, through a singular, zigzag pathway, as it were, renders the communication of a demand out of phase with respect to gaining access to satisfaction.

So that we can put this little schema to use, I'll ask you to refer to something which, while it's only mythical, is nonetheless profoundly true.

Let's assume what must exist somewhere, all the same, even if only on our schema – namely, a demand that is met. That's what matters, ultimately – if Freud introduced a new dimension into our considerations on man, I wouldn't say that it's that something succeeds regardless, but that something meant to succeed gets through. The desire that should go through, leaves, somewhere, not only traces but also a circuit that insists.

Let's start, then, with something that supposedly represents a demand that gets through. Since childhood really does exist, we may think of it as a refuge for this demand that goes through. The child articulates something that for him is still only an uncertain articulation, but he takes pleasure in it – this is what Freud refers to, moreover. The young subject directs his demand somewhere. Where does it come from when it has not yet entered into play? Let's say that something starts to take shape at this point we'll call delta or capital D, for 'Demand'.

What does this describe for us? It describes the function of need. Something gets expressed, coming from the subject, and I'll make it the line of his need. It ends here, in A, where it also crosses the curved line of what we've identified as discourse, consisting of the mobilization of previously existing material. I didn't invent the line of discourse where the stock of signifiers, very limited at this moment, comes into play inasmuch as the subject correlatively articulates something.



Look at these things. They unfold on two planes – that of the young subject's intention, however confused you might suppose it 90
to be, insofar as he makes an appeal, and that of signifiers, however disorganized you might suppose their use to be, inasmuch as they are mobilized by his efforts and his appeal. The line of signifiers advances apace with the intention, until both reach the intersections A and M, whose usefulness for understanding the retroactive effect of a sentence as it comes to a close I've already pointed out to you.

Note that these two lines don't cross before the end of the second moment. In other words, whoever's saying something says both more and less than what he has to say. The reference to the tentative character of a child's first use of language comes into its own here.

There is simultaneous progression along both lines and a twofold completion at the end of the second moment. What began as need will be called demand, while the signifiers will come to a close on what, in as approximate a manner as you like, completes the demand's meaning, which constitutes the message that the Other evokes – let's say the mother, granting the existence of good mothers from time to time. Instituting the Other thus coexists with the completion of the message. They are determined at one and the same time, one as message and the other as Other.

At the third moment, we see the two curved lines extend beyond both A and M. I will indicate, at least hypothetically, the names we can give these endpoints and indicate where we can locate them on the structuring of demand that I'm trying to situate as the foundation of the initial use of signifiers for expressing desire.

As the most useful reference point for what we will try to develop 91
later, I would ask you to consider, at least provisionally, the ideal case where demand encounters what extends it at this third moment, namely, the Other who takes it up at the level of its message.

Now, what we have to consider here with respect to demand cannot exactly be confused with the satisfaction of a need, for using signifiers transforms the way this need manifests itself. With the addition of signifiers, it undergoes a minimal transformation – a minimal metaphor, in a word – and this makes it the case that what is signified is something beyond raw need and is remodelled through the use of signifiers. Henceforth, from this beginning, what enters into the creation of the signified isn't purely and simply the translation of need, but the recapture, reassumption and remodelling of need, the creation of a desire other than a need. It's a need with signifiers. Just as socialism – as Lenin used to say – is probably something quite nice, but the perfect society has electricity as well, so, here, in the expression of need, there are signifiers as well.

On the other hand, with respect to signifiers, at the third moment there's certainly something that corresponds to the miraculous appearance – we have effectively made the assumption that it's miraculous, fully satisfying – of the satisfaction in the Other of the new message that has been created. This normally results in what Freud presents to us as the pleasure we get in the deployment of signifiers. In this ideal case of success, the Other enters into prolonging the deployment of signifiers. What prolongs the effect of signifiers is when they are resolved into their own authentic pleasure, the pleasure we get from using signifiers. You can inscribe this at the end of the [horizontal] line.

I ask you to grant as a hypothesis for a moment that the ordinary usage of 'demand' as such is underpinned by an original reference to what we may call the complete success, the initial success, the mythical success, or the primordial and archaic form of the deployment of signifiers. This hypothesis will underlie everything we are going to try to conceptualize concerning what happens in actual cases in which signifiers come into play.

Inasmuch as the fully successful passage of demand into the real creates both the message and the Other at one and the same time, it results, on the one hand, in a remodelling of the signifieds, something introduced by the use of signifiers as such, and, on the other, it directly prolongs the authentic pleasure in the deployment of signi-
92 fiers. The two alternate. On the one hand, there is the deployment of signifiers that we effectively find, with Freud, at the origin of verbal play and that constitutes an original pleasure that is always ready to surface. On the other, there is what happens in opposition to this. Let's see what is involved.

The originality of this is well masked and appears not merely in the response to demand but in the verbal demand itself. This original something that transforms need renders it more complex and places it on the plane of what, starting now, I will call desire.

What is desire? Desire is characterized by an essential shift in relation to everything that is purely and simply of the order of the imaginary direction of need – need that demand introduces into another order, the symbolic order, with all the disruptions that this is liable to bring about.

The reason I ask you to refer to this initial myth is that we will have to build on it for what is to come, otherwise everything Freud formulates concerning the specific mechanism of the pleasure of witticisms will be rendered incomprehensible. The novelty that appears as an essential dimension in the signified through the introduction of signifiers is found everywhere. Freud emphasizes it at every turn in manifestations of the unconscious.

Freud occasionally tells us that something called surprise appears at the level of formations of the unconscious. We shouldn't take this as an accident of this discovery but rather as a fundamental aspect of its essence. The phenomenon of surprise has something originary about it – whether it's produced in a formation of the unconscious, insofar as it shocks the subject by its surprising character, but, equally, where you provoke this sentiment of surprise in the subject when you unveil it to him. Freud makes this point on all sorts of occasions, whether it's in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, or, at every moment, in the text of *Jokes and their Relationship to the Unconscious*. The dimension of surprise is consubstantial with what desire is essentially, once it has passed to the level of the unconscious.

This dimension is a dimension that desire carries with it as a specific condition of the emergence of desire as desire. It's the very dimension by which desire is able to enter the unconscious. Not every desire is effectively capable of entering the unconscious. The only desires that enter the unconscious are those that, having been symbolized, can, on entering the unconscious, be preserved in their symbolic form – that is, in the form of this indestructible trace, 93
examples of which Freud turns to again in *Witz*. They are desires that never fade, that don't possess the character of impermanence characteristic of all forms of dissatisfaction, but, on the contrary, are supported by the symbolic structure, which maintains them at a certain level of circulation of signifiers, which I have designated as having to be situated on this schema in the circuit between the message and the Other, where it occupies a function that varies according to the effects it has where it emerges. We must use these same pathways to conceptualize the rotating circuit of the unconscious insofar as it's there and always ready to reappear.

New meaning emerges through the action of a metaphor when, taking original circuits, it enters the everyday, banal and accepted circuit of metonymy. In a witticism, it's there for all to see that the ball flies back and forth between the message and the Other, and that this produces the effect of originality that is one of the latter's characteristic features.

Let's now go into greater detail so we can try to grasp and understand this.

3

What happens once we leave the primordial, mythic level of the initial establishment of demand in its characteristic form?

Let's consider an absolutely fundamental theme that runs through stories involving jokes. All you ever see are beggars whom one grants things to. Either they are granted what they haven't asked for, or having been given what they asked for they put it to a different use, or they behave with a special kind of insolence towards the person who has given it to them, reproducing in the relationship between requester and solicited the blessed dimension of ingratitude, in the absence of which granting any request would be truly unbearable. Note, as our friend Mannoni has very pertinently pointed out in an excellent work, how the normal mechanism of granting a request provokes new demands again and again.

What is this demand, ultimately, inasmuch as it reaches the listener, whose ear it was intended for? Let's do a bit of etymology. Although the essential dimension that we must refer to does not lie in the usage of signifiers, a bit of etymology is, however, apt
94 to enlighten us here. '*Demande*', which is so marked by themes of insistence in the concrete use of the term, even more so in English than in other languages, but also in other languages, is originally '*demandare*', to confide in.

Demand is thus placed on the level of a shared register and language and succeeds in handing all of one's self and all one's needs over to an Other from whom the signifying material for every demand is itself borrowed, and it thereby assumes a different tone. This displacement is especially imposed on demand in particular because of how it effectively functions. This is where we find the origin of the materials that have been employed metaphorically, as you can see in the progress of a language.

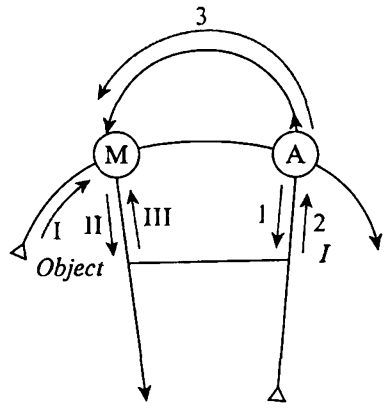
For us, this is quite an instructive fact regarding what is involved in the famous complex of dependence I mentioned earlier. Effectively, in Mannoni's terms, when the person making the demand is able to think that the Other has truly granted one of his demands, there is effectively no longer any limit – it becomes normal to entrust all one's needs to him. Hence the benefits of ingratitude, as I just mentioned, which puts an end to what otherwise can't be stopped.

But, equally, the experienced beggar isn't in the habit of presenting his demand so nakedly. A demand has nothing confiding about it. The subject knows only too well what he is dealing with in the other's mind, and this is why he disguises his demand. He demands something that he needs in the name of something else that he sometimes also needs, but which will be more easily admitted as a pretext for the demand. If he needs to, if he doesn't have this other thing, he will just simply invent it and he will above all take into account what the Other's system is in formulating his demand. He will address himself to a charity worker in one way, to a banker in

another, in another to a marriage broker, and in yet another way to any of these characters who are so amusingly portrayed in this book on *Witz*. That is, his desire will be taken up and remodelled not just in the system of signifiers, but in the system of signifiers such as it is installed or instituted in the Other.

The formulation of his demand thus begins in the Other. It's initially deflected [1] onto this, namely the *I*, which has already been in an active state in his discourse for a long time. The *I* proffers the demand, deflecting it back [2] to the Other, and it will travel via the circuit A–M and arrive [3] at the message. This is the appeal, the intention and the secondary circuit of need. It isn't necessary to emphasize its rationality too much, apart from emphasizing its control by the system of the Other. Of course, the latter already implies all sorts of factors that, purely for the case at hand, we are warranted in describing as rational. Let's say that even if it is rational to take them into account, there is nevertheless no implication that they actually are rational in structure. 95

What happens along the chain of signifiers, according to the three moments we see described here? Something remobilizes the entire apparatus and the entire material, and initially arrives [I] here, at M. Then, it doesn't head towards the Other [A] straightaway, but is deflected [II] towards something which, at the second moment, corresponded to the appeal to the Other – namely, the object. This is an object that is admissible to the Other, the object of what the Other is willing to desire, in short, the metonymic object. Once it's deflected towards this object, it converges, at the third moment [III], on the message.



Here we don't find ourselves, then, in the happy state of satisfaction we had reached at the end of the three moments of the initial mythical representation of demand and its success which, with

its surprising novelty and pleasure, is satisfying in itself. On the contrary, we find ourselves coming to a stop at a message that in itself possesses a character of ambiguity. This message is a formulation which is alienated from the very beginning insofar at it sets out from the Other, and which terminates on this side at what is, in some way, the Other's desire. The message is the meeting point of the two. On the one hand, the appeal has been evoked from the Other itself. On the other, all sorts of conventional elements are introduced into its very signifying apparatus, elements which form what I will call the communal or displacement nature of objects, insofar as the latter are profoundly reworked by the Other's world. And it's striking to see that at the third moment, as we have seen, discourse circulates between the tip and the tail of the arrow. This can culminate in what we call a lapsus, a slip of the tongue.

96 It's doubtful that meaning formed in this way is univocal. It's so doubtful that misunderstandings and misrecognitions are a fundamental feature of language, forming one of its essential elements. Witticisms exploit the ambiguity of this formation of messages. They are formed, in various ways, on the basis of this point.

I won't sketch out again, today, the variety of forms in which messages that are constituted in an essentially ambiguous form structurally are capable of being taken up and treated in a way that, as Freud tells us, ultimately aims at restoring the ideal pathway ending in the surprise of something novel, on the one hand, and in the pleasure of the play of signifiers, on the other. This is the point of a witticism. The point of a witticism is in effect to re-evoke for us the dimension by which desire, if it does not recapture, at least indicates everything that has been lost along the way, namely, on the one hand, what scraps it has left behind at the level of the metonymic chain and, on the other, what it has not fully actualized at the level of metaphor.

While we call 'natural metaphor' what took place earlier in the ideal transition by which desire reaches the Other, where desire is formed in the subject and is directed to the Other which takes it up, here we find ourselves at a more evolved level. Effectively, these two things known as the *I*, on the one hand, and the profoundly transformed, metonymic object, on the other, have already intervened in the subject's psychology. From that point on, we are no longer dealing with a natural metaphor, but with the ordinary use of one, whether it succeeds or fails in the ambiguity of the message, which now is to be highlighted under the conditions that remain in the natural state.

An entire aspect of desire continues to circulate in the form of scraps of signifiers in the unconscious. In the case of a joke, through

a sort of forcing, a happy shadow or reflection of former satisfaction is conveyed. An astonishing success, one purely achieved by signifiers. Let's say that something happens the effect of which is, very precisely, to reproduce the initial pleasure of the satisfied demand even as it accedes to an original novelty. That is what a joke, essentially, accomplishes. How does it manage it?

This schema may help us appreciate that the completion of the initial curve of the signifying chain also extends what in intentional need passes into discourse. How so? Via a joke. But how is a joke going to come to light? Here again we find the dimensions of sense and nonsense – but we should examine them more closely.

If the indications regarding the metonymic function I gave 97
last time were directed at anything, it was at what equalization, levelling out and equivalences are produced simply by the unfolding of the signifying chain. There is an effacement or reduction of meaning, but this isn't to say that it's nonsense. I borrowed a Marxist reference in this connection – bringing two objects of need into operation in such a way that one becomes the measure of the value of the other, effaces what is specifically related to need from the object and thereby introduces it into the order of value. From the point of view of sense, this might be called, using a neologism that is also ambiguous, the de-sense [*dé-sens*]. Today, let's simply call it 'the bit-of-sense' [*'le peu-de-sens'*]. Once you have this key in hand, the meaning of the metonymic chain will not fail to appear for you.

The 'bit-of-sense' is exactly what the majority of witticisms play on. We are not dealing with nonsense, for in a witticism we aren't one of those noble souls who, immediately following the great desert by which they are inhabited, reveal to us the great mysteries of general absurdity. If the discourse of the beautiful soul hasn't succeeded in ennobling our feelings, it has recently nobelled a writer. His address on nonsense remains the shallowest [*vain*] I've ever heard. It's absolutely not the case that there is a play on nonsense every time equivocation is introduced. If you recall the story of the calf – this calf I was having fun with last time almost to the point of giving Heinrich Heine's response for him – let's say that this 'veal's value' was almost nothing at the time it was talked about. Moreover, everything you can find in plays on words, and very specifically those called conceptual plays on words, consists in playing upon how bad words are at maintaining a full sense. It's this 'bit-of-sense', as such, that is taken up, and it's here that something occurs that reduces the message to its scope, insofar as the message is both a success and a failure, but always a form necessary for any formulation of a demand. The message questions the

Other over this bit-of-sense. The dimension of the Other is essential here.

Freud dwells on the fact, as if it were something completely primordial that pertains to the very nature of jokes, that no joke exists in isolation. Even if we have forged it or invented it ourselves, even if the joke is our own invention and it's not that the joke invented us, we feel the need to put it to the Other. A joke is indissociable from the Other, who is charged with authenticating it.

What is this Other? Why this Other? What is this need for the Other? I don't know whether we will have enough time today to
98 define it and establish its structure and limits, but, at the point we have come to, I would simply say this. What in a joke is communicated to the Other essentially plays out, in a manner that is particularly cunning, along the dimension of this bit-of-sense. We need to keep in full view here the nature of what is at issue. A *Witz* is never about provoking the pathetic invocation of some fundamental absurdity like the one I was alluding to before when I referred to the work of one of the Great Woolly Thinkers of our time. It's always a matter of suggesting the dimension of the bit-of-sense by questioning value as such and by summoning it, as it were, to realize its value dimension, reveal itself as true value. Note that this is a ruse of language, for the more value reveals itself as true value, the more it will reveal itself to be supported by what I am calling the bit-of-sense. It can only respond in the sense of the bit-of-sense, and this is where the nature of the message specific to a joke lies, that is, that by which here at the level of the message I resume, with the Other, the interrupted path of metonymy, and ask it this question – 'What does that all mean?'

A joke is only complete once it gets beyond this point – that is, only after the Other has taken the joke on board, responded to it and authenticated it as a joke. A joke requires that the Other has perceived what is there as a demand for sense – that is, as an evocation of a sense that lies beyond – in this vehicle for this question about the bit-of-sense. In all of that, something marked by the sign of the Other has effectively remained. This sign marks every formulation of desire with its profound ambiguity, above all linking desire, as such, to the necessities and ambiguities of a signifier, to homonymy – that is, to homophony. The Other replies to this on the upper circuit, which goes from A to the message, by authenticating . . . but what?

Shall we say that it authenticates whatever nonsense it contains? Here too I'm going to insist. I don't think it's necessary to maintain this term 'nonsense', which only makes sense from the perspective of reason or critique, that is, of precisely what is avoided in this circuit.

I propose the formula 'step-of-sense', '*pas-de-sens*' – just as one says '*pas de vis*', screw thread, '*pas de quatre*', four step, '*Pas-de-Suse*', the Pass of Susa, or the '*Pas de Calais*', the Strait of Dover.

This step-of-sense is, strictly speaking, what is actualized in metaphor. It's the subject's intention, his need, which introduces the 'step-of-sense' into metaphors beyond metonymic use and beyond anything commensurable, beyond any received values to be satisfied. Removing one element from its place and substituting another – I would almost say any other – for it, introduces this 'beyond need' in relation to every formulated desire, which is always at the origin of metaphor.

What do witticisms have to do with this? They indicate nothing more than the very dimension of the 'step' as such, strictly speaking. This is the form of the 'step', as it were. It's the 'step' voided of every kind of need. It's where what, in a witticism, can nevertheless manifest what is latent in my desire in me, and it's something that may resonate in the Other, though not necessarily. What's important in witticisms is that the dimension of the 'step-of-sense' be picked up and authenticated.

This is what displacement corresponds to. Novelty only emerges beyond the object at the same time as the step-of-sense does, and at the same time for both subjects. There's a subject and there's the Other. It's the subject who addresses the Other, who communicates the novelty to him as a joke. He travels along the segment of the metonymic dimension, he then gets the bit-of-sense received as such, the Other authenticates the step-of-sense within it, and pleasure is released for the subject.

The subject reaps pleasure inasmuch as he has succeeded in surprising the Other with his joke – and, indeed, this is the same original pleasure that the infantile, mythical, archaic, primordial subject I mentioned before obtains from his first use of signifiers.

I'll stop at this point. I hope it doesn't seem too artificial or too pedantic to you. My apologies to anyone who gets a headache from these sorts of little exercises on the high wire, not that I believe you incapable of grasping these things mentally. I don't think that what Kant calls your *Mutterwitz*, your good sense, is so degraded by the medical, psychological, analytic and whatever other studies you've pursued that you are incapable of following me down these paths with some simple allusions. Nevertheless, the laws of my teaching don't render the dismantling, one way or another, of these stages or essential moments in the progress of subjectivity in jokes off limits.

'Subjectivity' – that's the word I come to now, because up till the present day, and even still today, while working through the signifiers' pathways with you, something has been missing in the midst of

it all – and not without reason, as you will see. It's not for nothing that in the midst of it all, today, we only ever find quasi-absent subjects, various kinds of support for using signifiers to put the ball back in the other's court. And yet, what is more essential to the dimension of jokes than subjectivity?

100 When I say 'subjectivity', I am saying that nowhere can the purpose of a joke be grasped. Even what a joke designates beyond what it expresses, even the feature of essential, internal allusion is an allusion to nothing other than the necessary requirement of the step-of-sense. And yet, in this total absence of a purpose, something ultimately underpins the joke, which is the liveliest of the lively, the most embraced of the embraced, and which makes it such a subjective thing. As Freud says somewhere, there is an essential subjective conditionality here, and the word 'sovereign' is here, emerging between the lines. 'The only joke', he says, in one of these formulas whose acerbic character can be found in almost no other literary author – I've never seen this comment made by anyone else – 'The only joke is one that I myself recognize as a joke.'

And yet I need the other. The entire chapter following the one on 'The Mechanism of Pleasure', which I have been speaking about today, namely, 'The Motives of Jokes – Jokes as a Social Process' – it has been translated into French as '*mobiles*', I have never understood why – has this other as an essential reference. There is no pleasure in a joke without this other, who is there also as a subject. Everything comes back to the relations between two subjects, the one Freud calls the first person of a joke, the one who makes it, and the one to whom, he says, it's absolutely essential that it be communicated [*SE* 8: 100].

What sort of other does this suggest? To say it here and now, at this level the other, with its characteristic features that are ungraspable anywhere else with such clarity, is strictly speaking what I am calling the Other with a capital O.

I hope to show you this next time.

4 December 1957

VI

WHOAH, NEDDY!

Exorcizing the topic of thought
Queneau tells a joke
The joke machine
The Other between the real and the symbolic
Being of like mind

I have some very important things to tell you today.

I ended last time on the subject's role in jokes, giving full weight to the word 'subject'. I am hoping that, on the grounds that we use it here, it has not become something that you wipe your feet on. When one uses the word 'subject', it generally carries lively, very personal and sometimes emotional reactions from those who cleave above all to objectivity.

Also, we had come to this sort of point of intersection located here at what I call A – that is, the Other. As the locus of the code, it is the locus that a message in the form of a joke reaches by following the path on our schema that goes from the message to the Other where the simple succession of signifiers in a chain, as the foundation of what is produced at the level of discourse, gets registered. At this level the essential something I have been calling 'the bit-of-sense' issues from the text of the sentence.

Last time I mentioned, without dwelling on it, the Other's confirmation of the bit-of-sense in a sentence, which is always more or less apparent in a joke. I limited myself to saying that what is transmitted from the Other, here [at A], in the circle that comes back to the level of the message, confirms the message and constitutes the joke, inasmuch as the Other, having received what is presented as a bit-of-sense, transforms it into what I have called, in an equivocal and ambiguous manner, the 'step-of-sense'.

What I stressed thereby is neither the absence of sense nor nonsense, but exactly the step that corresponds to a glimpse into what

102 sense reveals about its own procedure and what is always metaphorical and allusive in it. Thus it is that, once need has been through the dialectic of demand introduced by the existence of signifiers, it is never encountered again. Everything that is language proceeds via a series of steps like those of Achilles who never catches up to the tortoise – it aims at re-creating a full sense which, however, it never achieves, which is always somewhere else.

This is the schema I came to in the final quarter of an hour of our last session. It seems my discourse flagged a little. From what some people told me, I wasn't finishing sentences. And yet, when I read my text, I didn't find they lacked a tail. Because I am trying to project myself into something difficult to communicate step by step, there will necessarily be some stumbling. My apologies if it happens again today.

1

We have come to the point where we need to enquire into the Other's function and, in a word, essence, at this intersection that I have designated quite well by calling it the 'step-of-sense'.

This step-of-sense is in some ways a partial retrieval of the ideal plenitude, purely and simply realized, of demand, which is where we started from as the point of departure of our dialectic. By what transmutation, transubstantiation or subtle operation of communion, as it were, can this step-of-sense be embraced by the Other? What is this Other?

Our enquiry bears upon this junction that is indicated well enough by Freud's problematic when he speaks about jokes with that capacity he has to leave the question in suspense, and which means that, undeniably, of all the varied attempts carried out over the course of ages to get a good grip on the mystery-question of jokes – however many of these attempts I read, and I haven't held back, and whichever author I turn to, even going back to the fertile Romantic period – I truly see no one who has brought together even the most basic, material elements of the question.

Consider this, for instance, which Freud thinks about. On the one hand, he says, with that sovereign tone of his that cuts through the ordinary, blushing timidity of scientific discourse, 'The only joke
103 is one that I recognize is a joke.' It's what he calls the irreducible 'subjective conditionality' of jokes. Indeed, it is the subject who is speaking there, Freud says. On the other hand, he highlights the fact that as soon as I am in possession of something that qualifies as a joke, I am all in a hurry to try it out on the Other – and, what's

more, to provide him with the context. This is even a condition for me to be able to enjoy its pleasure to the full. And it would not be difficult for me to reveal the play of mirrors in the background whereby, when I tell a joke – if I really am seeking the culmination, repose and acceptance of my pleasure in the Other's consent – the possibility remains on the horizon that this Other will recount the joke in turn, transmit it to others and so on and so on.

Let's grab the dilemma by the horns. On the one hand, the only joke is one that I myself experience as one. But, on the other, nothing in my acceptance of it is in any way sufficient in this respect – the pleasure in a joke is only complete in the Other and through the Other. Let's say – on condition that we pay careful attention to what we say and don't imply any simplification by this term – that a joke has to be communicated. This assumes that at the end of the communication we leave an *opening without knowing what may come and fill it.*

Freud's observation, then, confronts us with an essential question, which we have come across before. What is this Other which, in some way, is the subject's correlate? We find affirmation of this correlation here in what is a real need inscribed in the phenomenon. But we are already familiar with the form of this relation between subject and Other, and have been ever since we insisted, here, on the necessary form in which our reflection proposes the term 'subjectivity' to us.

I have alluded to the sort of objection that might occur to minds trained in a certain discipline, and which, on the grounds that psychoanalysis presents itself as a science, would introduce the requirement that we only ever speak of things that are objectifiable, namely, things on which experience can agree. Simply by virtue of speaking about the subject, analytic experience supposedly becomes something subjective and non-scientific. Implied in the term 'subject' is the notion, which at a certain level is a good one, that what is there underneath the object – which makes it possible to give the object support and which, also, lies beyond the object as well as behind it – presents us with a sort of unknowable substance, something resistant to objectification, which your education and psychological training has given you the arms to fight against. This naturally leads to other forms of objection that are even more crude.
I want to mention the identification of the term 'subjective' with the 104
distorting effects of feelings about the experience of another person, and also introduce, moreover, some kind of mirage of transparency that founds the subject on the immanence of consciousness itself which people rely on a little too quickly to sum up the theme of the Cartesian cogito. In short, a series of entanglements. They are only there to get between us and what we are describing when we bring the subjectivity in our experience into play.

Subjectivity cannot be eliminated from our experience as analysts. The concept is confirmed in a way that completely bypasses the ways in which one could object to it. As an analyst, just as for anyone who goes down the path of a certain dialogue, one has to take subjectivity into consideration in one's calculations when dealing with the other who is capable of introducing errors of his own into his own calculations, and not try to provoke them, as such. I give you this formula, and it clearly expresses something tangible that even a passing reference to chess, or even to the game of odds and evens, suffices to confirm.

When we express it in these terms, subjectivity seems to appear in two ways – there is no point in going back over all this here, I have already emphasized it elsewhere. It certainly seems to me that subjectivity can be seen reflected in what is produced whenever there is confrontation or camouflage in either fight or display. I illustrated this in its day with some ethological examples that I don't think I need return to. Fighting between animals, even display between the sexes, present us with phenomena of reciprocal approaching and fascinating erection in which a sort of natural coaptation is apparent. One thus observes forms of conduct that are reciprocal in nature and that tend towards an embrace – therefore, at the motor level called behaviourist. The spectacle of an animal that appears to be performing a dance is very striking.

This is also what, in this case, leaves something ambiguous in the notion of intersubjectivity, which, having briefly emerged from the opposition between two subjects, as it were, is liable to disappear again in an attempt at objectification. The reciprocal fascination can very easily be thought of merely as subject to a cyclical regulation isolatable in the instinctual process, which, following an appetitive stage, enables consummation to be achieved and the sought-for end to be reached. We can reduce everything here to an innate mechanism of relays, to the point where it fades into the general obscurity of the teleology of living things.

This is all completely different once we introduce any resistances whatsoever, in the form of a signifying chain, into the problem.
105 The signifying chain as such introduces an essential heterogeneity here. Hear 'heterogeneity' with the emphasis on 'heteros', which signifies 'inspired' in Greek, and whose true acceptation in Latin is remainder, residue. Once we bring signifiers into play, as soon as two subjects address one another and relate to one another through the intermediary of a signifying chain, there is a remainder, and the kind of subjectivity that is established is of another order, inasmuch as it refers to the locus of truth as such.

Consequently, my behaviour is no longer deceptive but pro-

vocative. The A is included in it, and this means that even a lie has to appeal to truth and that the truth itself may seem not to be in the register of truth. Recall this example, 'Why do you tell me you are going to Cracow when you really are going to Cracow?' This can mean that truth has need of lies. Later, when I lay my cards on the table, my good faith makes me reliant on the Other's evaluation insofar as he may be planning to take my strategy by surprise even as I am in the process of showing it to him. The detection of bluffing and deception is also at the mercy of the Other's bad faith.

These essential dimensions are apparent in simple experiences of everyday life. However, even though they are woven into our daily life, we will be no less inclined to avoid them as long as analytic experience and Freud's position have not shown us this hetero-dimension of signifiers at play on their own, autonomously. As long as we have not felt this and become aware of it, we will not fail to think that signifiers are there to serve the outpourings of consciousness.

Freud's entire thought is rife with the heterogeneity of the ways signifiers function – namely, with the radical character of the speaking subject's relation to the Other. Now, prior to Freud, this relation was hidden by the fact that we took for granted that the subject speaks, as it were, according to his good or bad consciousness, that he never speaks without intending a meaning, and that his intention lies behind his lying – or his sincerity, it makes no difference. Now, this intention is equally ridiculous whether the subject thinks he is lying or telling the truth, for he is deluding himself no less in his efforts to confess than in his efforts to deceive.

Until now intention has been confused with the dimension of consciousness, because it seemed that consciousness was inherent in what the subject has to say in terms of signification.

The least one could take for granted till now was that a subject always had a meaning to state, and that as a consequence consciousness was inherent in it. Objections to the idea of the Freudian 106
unconscious have always found their last resort here. How could the existence of *Traumgedanken* [dream-thoughts] have been foreseen before Freud, dream-thoughts such as he presents to us, thoughts that our usual intuitions understand as thoughts that are not thoughts? This is why we now need to carry out a veritable exorcism of the topic of thought.

If the topic of the Cartesian cogito clearly is still so powerful, its harmfulness, as it were, derives from the fact that it is always inflected. This 'I am thinking, therefore I am' is difficult to grasp at the height of its mainspring – and anyway perhaps it is only a joke.

But let's leave that alone, for we are not at the point of displaying the relations philosophy has with jokes. The Cartesian cogito is not effectively experienced in each of us as an 'I am thinking, therefore I am', but as an 'I am as I think', which naturally assumes, behind it, an 'I think as I breathe'.

One only need, on this matter, engage in the slightest of reflective experiences on what supports the mental activity of those around us. Since we are scientists, let me speak of those who are dedicated to doing major scientific work. We can very readily form the impression that there are, on average, probably not all that many more thoughts in action in this cogitating body overall than there are in that of any hardworking cleaning lady beset by the most immediate necessities for her subsistence. In itself thought has absolutely nothing to do with the significance of the discourse conveyed. Moreover, the more consistent and coherent the discourse is, the more it appears to lend itself to all sorts of gaps with respect to what can be reasonably defined as a question posed by the subject to his existence as a subject.

At the end of the day, we are confronted with the following, which is that a subject thinks in us, and thinks according to laws that turn out to be the same as those that organize the signifying chain. This signifier-in-action in us is called the unconscious. It was named as such by Freud. And it is so original, so separate from anything at work in our tendencies that Freud repeats to us in a thousand different ways that it involves *another psychical scene*. This term is repeated at every turn in the *Traumdeutung*.

Freud actually borrowed this term from Fechner, and I have already had occasion to emphasize the uniqueness of the Fechnerian context, which is far from being reducible to the observation of psychophysical parallelism, or even to the strange extrapolations he went in for regarding the existence, which he affirms, of the domain of consciousness. The term 'other psychical scene' that Freud borrows from his thorough reading of Fechner is always cor-
107 related by him with the strict heterogeneity of the laws concerning the unconscious in comparison with everything that can be referred to in the domain of the preconscious, that is, in the domain of the comprehensible, of meaning.

The Other that's at issue, which Freud also calls 'reference of the psychical scene' concerning jokes, is the one that today we have to question. It is the one that Freud constantly brings us back to concerning the pathways and the very process of jokes.

There is no possibility, for us, he notes, of a joke emerging without an element of surprise. It is even more striking in German – '*Seine volle Wirkung auf den Hörer nur zu äussern, wenn er ihm neu*

ist, ihm als Überraschung ehtgegentritt.' This can be translated as: 'They only produce their full effect on the hearer if they are new to him, if they come as a surprise to him' [*SE* 8: 154].

There is something that must render the subject foreign to the immediate content of the sentence, and that is sometimes presented by means of what looks like nonsense. This is the nonsense in relation to signification which makes you say momentarily, 'I don't understand, I am confused, this sentence has no real content', marking a break in the subject's assent in relation to what he accepts. That's the first stage, Freud tells us, in the natural preparation for a joke, which will subsequently constitute a sort of pleasure-generator, a 'pleasurogenic'.

What is going on at this level? What is the order of the Other that is invoked in the subject? Since there is, also, something immediate in the subject that one does by means of a joke, the technique of this movement must tell us something about what mode of the Other has to be struck here in the subject.

This is what we are going to think about today.

2

I have only referred to jokes related by Freud himself till now, or almost only. I am now going to introduce a joke that has a different provenance. It hasn't been specially chosen, either. When I decided to explore the question of *Witz* or wit* with you this year, I carried out a small investigation. It will come as no surprise at all that I began by questioning a poet. It was a poet who introduces the dimension of an especially playful wit that runs through his work, as much through his prose as through more poetic forms, and it's a wit that he brings even when he happens to be talking about mathematics, for he is also a mathematician. I am referring to Raymond Queneau. 108

When we were having our first exchange of remarks on the matter he told me a joke. It's not only in analytic experience itself that things that fit like a glove come one's way. Having spent an entire year talking to you about the signifying function of horses, here, once again, we have a horse making its way into our field of attention in quite a curious way.

The joke that Queneau told me is not one that you will know. He took it as an example of what we might call long jokes as opposed to short jokes. This is, to be sure, very much an initial classification. 'Brevity', Jean-Paul Richter, quoted by Freud, says somewhere, 'is the body and soul of wit', to which we can add the sentence in

Hamlet where it is said that if brevity is 'the soul of wit', 'tediousness' is no less 'its limbs and outward flourishes' [*SE* 8: 13]. Both things are true; both authors knew what they were talking about. You'll see whether the term 'long joke' is appropriate here, for there is a witticism in there somewhere.

Here, then, is the joke. It's a joke about exams, about university entrance exams, if you will. We have a candidate and we have an examiner.

'Tell me', says the examiner, 'about the battle of Marengo.'

The candidate pauses for a moment, with a dreamy air. 'The battle of Marengo . . . ? Bodies everywhere! It's terrible . . . Wounded everywhere! It's horrible . . . '

'But', says the examiner, 'can't you tell me anything more precise about this battle?'

The candidate thinks for a moment, then replies, 'A horse rears and whinnies.'

The examiner, surprised, seeks to test him a little further and says, 'In that case, can you tell me about the battle of Fontenoy?'

'The battle of Fontenoy? . . . Dead soldiers, wounded soldiers! Everywhere! All of that, and more.'

The examiner, interested, says, 'But, young man, could you give me some more precise details about this battle of Fontenoy?'

'Oh!' says the candidate. 'A horse rears and whinnies.'

The examiner, strategically, asks the candidate to talk about the battle of Trafalgar. The candidate replies, 'Dead everywhere! A bloodbath . . . Wounded everywhere! Hundreds of them . . . '

'But, my good man, can't you tell me anything more precise about this battle?'

109 'A horse –'

'Excuse me, I would have you note that the battle of Trafalgar was a naval battle.'

'Whoah! Whoah!' says the candidate. 'Back up, Neddy!'

To my mind, the value of this joke is that it enables us to dismantle, I believe, what is going on in a joke.

I think that the entirety of the joke's wittiness lies in its punchline. There would be no reason for the tale itself to come to an end, were it to consist solely of this kind of playing or sparring in which two interlocutors are opposed – and, moreover, no matter how far you extend it, the effect is produced immediately.

Prior to the punchline, this is a joke that makes us laugh because it is comical. I don't want to go any deeper into the question of the comic, because so many enormous and particularly obscure things have been proffered on this matter, ever since Mr Bergson wrote a book on laughter about which the only thing that can be said is that it is readable.

What does the comic consist in? For the moment let's just limit ourselves to the observation that it is bound up with a dual situation. It is because the candidate is there with the examiner that this joust unfolds in which their arms are obviously so radically different and also that this something liable to produce in us what we call 'lively amusement' is created. Is it the subject's lack of knowledge that makes us laugh? I am not convinced. Obviously, the fact that he produces these first truths about what can be called a battle, which no one ever mentions, at least not when taking a history exam, ought to give us pause for a moment's thought. But we can't go into that, for it would take us into questions concerning the nature of the comic, and I do not know whether we will have the opportunity to go there, unless it is to complete our examination of Freud's book.

This book effectively ends with a chapter on the comic in which it is striking to see Freud suddenly miles below his usual perspicacity, so much so that the question is rather why he says nothing more than the worst of authors focused on the most elementary notion of the comic and why in some ways he refused to do more. This will no doubt make us more indulgent towards our psychoanalytic colleagues who also lack a sense of the comic, to the point where it seems to be ruled out for anyone exercising the profession.

Insofar as we experience a lively comical effect with this joke, the comic concerns the preliminary part about the battles. It's against 110
this background that the punchline comes, which makes the joke witty in the strict sense of the term.

Please note the following. Even if some of you are not particularly receptive to what makes this joke witty, there is wit there nevertheless. It is lurking there at one point, namely the point at which it suddenly breaks free from the constraints of the format and the candidate does something that is almost unbelievable if we were to put ourselves momentarily in a position where we situated this joke in a real-life context. The subject all of a sudden seems to be leaning back and pulling on the reins. It's an image that in a flash takes on an almost phobic value. The moment is in any case of a kind, or so it seems, with what can be drawn from various childhood experiences beginning with phobias and extending to all sorts of excesses of imaginary life that we have such difficulty fathoming. It is not so rare to see reports, in recollections from a subject's life, of attraction to a

big horse, or an image of this same horse descending from tapestries, or this horse entering a dormitory where the subject is there with fifty friends. The punchline therefore turns us into observers of the sudden emergence in this joke of the signifying fantasy of the horse.

Call this joke what you will, comical or poetic, but it surely deserves to be called witty, if, as Freud says, you are the final arbiter. Consequently, we may call it a funny story. It is, nevertheless, true that we are no longer surprised by the fact that its content coincides with an image borrowed from an observed and recognized form at the level of unconscious phenomena.

Moreover, the fact that this aspect of it is so clear is what gives the story its value. Am I saying that this is sufficient to make it a joke?

Here, then, are these two moments, broken down into what I will call its preparation and its punchline. Are we going to leave it there? We could leave it there at the level of what can be called the Freudian analysis of *Witz*. We would have no more difficulty, I think, highlighting these two moments or aspects of the phenomenon in another joke, but here they are especially distinct.

What makes the thing not simply poetical or funny but truly witty in character follows the retrograde or retroactive path of what in our schema I call the 'step-of-sense'. However elusive or ungraspable the punchline of this joke is, it is nevertheless heading towards something. It's perhaps forcing things a little bit, no doubt, to spell it out, but so as to indicate this direction, I am going to have to do
111 it nevertheless – the specific feature to which the subject returns with the sort of insistence that in another context would no longer be wit but humour, namely this horse rearing and whinnying, but that may be what we truly relish in the joke.

Of all the history that we have integrated into our experience, formation and culture, let's say that this image here is the most essential of all. We cannot take more than three steps in a museum and look at the paintings of battles without seeing this horse up on its hind legs, whinnying. The horse entered the history of war with a certain splendour. The moment at which men sat astride this animal was a milestone. At the time, with the Achaeans' arrival on horseback, this brought real and enormous progress. These men suddenly had an extraordinary tactical superiority in comparison with horses harnessed to chariots – right up to the First World War when the horse disappeared, when it was rendered practically obsolete by other weapons. Thus, from the Achaean period to the First World War, the horse was effectively something absolutely essential to this interhuman commerce known as war.

The fact that it has consequently been the central image of certain conceptions of history that we can bring together under the rubric

of battle history is a phenomenon whose significant character we are inclined to have a liking for, to the extent that this age has passed and has been progressively purified as the discipline of history has advanced. Ultimately, an entire history is summed up in that image, which strikes us as futile in the light of this funny story. The indication of meaning that it harbours implies that in the end there is no real need to worry oneself over a battle, neither Marengo, nor Fontenoy, perhaps with a little more justification concerning Trafalgar.

Of course, none of this is there in the story. There is no question of extracting any wise lessons concerning the teaching of history. It doesn't teach but shows that the step-of-sense tends in the direction of a reduction in the value, an exorcism, of this fascinating element.

In what sense does this story act? And in what sense does it satisfy us, in what sense does it give us pleasure?

Introducing signifiers into our significations leaves a margin that makes us remain in bondage to them. Something escapes us beyond the bonds that the chain of signifiers maintains for us. The simple fact that this refrain that is repeated from the start of the joke – namely, 'The dead! The wounded!' – makes us laugh is indication enough of the extent to which we are refused access to reality as soon as we penetrate it by means of signifiers.

This joke will simply serve as a point of reference here. Freud 112
stresses that whenever it is a matter of the transmission of a joke and the satisfaction it is capable of bringing, there are always three people involved. The comic can make do with a play between two. In the case of a joke there are three. The Other, who is the second, is located in different places. He is sometimes the second person in the story, without our knowing, and without our even needing to know, whether it is the schoolboy or the examiner. He is also you, when I am recounting it to you.

Effectively, during the first part it is necessary for you to allow yourself to be taken for a bit of a ride. At first the joke elicits your various sympathies, either for the candidate or for the examiner, and it fascinates you or it makes you hostile – although really what is drawn upon in this joke is not so much our hostility as a certain captivation by the game the candidate is engaged in with the examiner, where the latter has a surprise in store for him. The same game is also sketched out in other kinds of tendentious jokes of a smutty or sexual kind. In fact, it's not so much a matter of getting around whatever resistance and repugnance lies within you as it is, on the contrary, of starting to activate it. Far from extinguishing something in you that you might object to, if a good joke is going to be smutty, there is already something at the start that will indicate to you that we are entering this domain. And so you prepare yourself

either to consent or resist, but there is certainly something in you that emerges at the dual level. This is how, here, you let yourself get caught up in the prestige and display aspect foreshadowed by the register and the order of the joke.

Of course, what arrives unexpectedly at the end is invariably located on the plane of language. The playful side of words is developed much further here and is even so dismantled that we see, on the one hand, a pure signifier, the horse as it happens, and, on the other, the playful element in signifiers which presents itself in the form of a cliché that is much more difficult to locate, but where it is nevertheless obvious that that is all the joke contains. What surprises you is the fundamental equivocation, the passage from one meaning to another through the intermediary of the support of signifiers, as the examples I have previously given indicate. There's a hole here that makes you wait for the stage at which it hits you that what is being communicated is a joke.

As a general rule, it always hits you at a different spot from the place your attention – or agreement or opposition – has initially been attracted to and lured by, and this occurs whatever effects are at play, such as nonsense effects, comical effects or effects of smutty participation in a sexually exciting narration. Let's say that
113 this dual game is only ever a preparation, one that enables both what is always imaginary, reflexive and collusive in the communication, and the bringing into play of a certain tendency in which the subject is the second person to be separated into two opposing poles. This is no more than the joke's support. Similarly, everything that attracts the subject's attention and everything that is alert at the level of consciousness is only the base whose role is to enable the move onto another plane, which is always present as more or less enigmatic. This is where the surprise occurs, and it's here, then, that we find ourselves at the level of the unconscious.

Given that the issue is always bound up with the mechanism of language on a plane on which the Other seeks and is sought, on which the Other is joined, on which the Other is the aim and on which the Other is reached by means of a joke – given this, how should we define this Other?

3

Let's pause for a moment at our schema and say some very simple things, some first truths.

You can use this schema as a grid or framework for locating the signifying elements as such. When we take the various modes or

forms that establish the basis for our classifications of jokes, we find ourselves led to enumerate something like the following – word plays, puns in the strict sense, word plays via transposition or displacement of meaning and jokes via transposition or displacement of meaning, jokes via a small modification to a word that is sufficient to throw light on something and bring out an unexpected dimension. Whatever classificatory elements we choose, we tend, along with Freud, to reduce them to terms that are recorded in the register of signifiers. Imagine, then, a machine.

This machine is located somewhere at A or M. It receives data from both sides. It has the capability to dismantle the means of access by which both the construction of the term 'famillionaire' and the passage from the Golden Calf to the butcher's veal are achieved. Let's suppose that it is sufficiently complex for an exhaustive analysis of the signifiers' components. Will it be up to the task of authenticating a joke, as such? Of calculating and replying, 'This is a joke'? That is, of ratifying a message in relation to the code correctly, so that we remain within the limits, at least the possible limits, of what we call a joke?

I am producing this imaginary machine for purely humorous reasons, and it goes without saying that there's no question of 114
making one. But what does that mean? Is it enough to say that we have to be in the presence of a person? That may be self-evident, and we're quite happy with that. Saying so corresponds to experience more or less, overall. But given that the unconscious exists for us, with its enigma, 'a person' is a response that needs to be broken down.

We can start by saying that we have to be in the presence of a real subject. It's effectively in meaning, in a direction for meaning, that jokes play their part. Now, as we have already indicated, this meaning is only conceivable in relation to the interaction between a signifier and a need. Therefore, the absence of the dimension of need in a machine is an objection and an obstacle to its ratifying a joke in any way at all.

Is it possible for us to say, though, that this real subject has to have needs that are homogeneous with our own? It is not necessarily assumed that we must impose this requirement from the outset of our exercise. Effectively, the need is nowhere designated in jokes. On the contrary, jokes point to the distance that exists between a need and whatever is put into play in a discourse. Whatever is articulated in a discourse takes us, by virtue of this very fact, to a series of reactions that is an infinity away from what a need is, strictly speaking.

Here, then, is an initial definition – the subject must be a real subject. God, animal or man? We have no idea!

What I am saying is so true that stories about the supernatural, which do not exist for no reason in human folklore, in no way exclude the possibility of making a joke with fairies or devils, namely with a subject said to have quite different relations, in its own reality, from those defined by human needs. You will tell me no doubt that these verbal beings, beings of thought, are nevertheless fabricated out of human images. I don't disagree, and indeed that's the issue. Effectively, we find ourselves between the following two elements. First, having dealings with a real subject, namely a living subject. Second, a living subject that understands language and, moreover, that possesses a stock of what is verbally exchanged – usages, uses, locutions, terms – without which there would be no question of entering into communication with him via language.

What do jokes suggest to us and in some way put us in touch with?

Bear in mind that these images are present in the human economy in a disconnected way, with an apparent freedom between them which makes possible all kinds of coalescences, exchanges, condensations and displacements, the juggling that we see at the origin of so many manifestations that make for the richness and heterogeneity of the human world in relation to biological reality. From an analytic perspective, we very often inscribe this freedom in a system of reference that leads us to consider it as being conditioned by an initial lesion concerning the interrelationship between man and his entourage, which I have attempted to designate by the prematurity of birth, and which means that it is via the image of the other that man finds unification of his movements, even the most elementary of them. Whether this starts here or somewhere else, what is certain is that these images, in their characteristic state of anarchy in the human order, in the human species, are activated, caught up in and used through the operation of signifiers. This is the way in which they enter into what's involved in a joke.

115

It is these images, which have become more or less everyday signifying elements, more or less ratified in what I have called the metonymic treasure trove, that are at play in jokes. It's the Other that possesses this treasure trove. It is assumed that the Other knows the multiplicity of signifying combinations, moreover completely abridged, elided and, let's say, even purified with respect to their signification. All metaphorical implications are already piled up and compressed in language. It's a matter of everything that language bears within itself, which manifests itself at moments of significant creation and is already there, latent, in a non-active state. That's what I am invoking in a joke, that's what I am seeking to awaken in the Other and in some way I am relying on the Other to support

it. In a word, I only ever address the Other by assuming that what I bring into play in my joke is already contained in it.

Take one of Freud's examples. It's a quip by a witty man, famous in Viennese society, about a bad writer who floods the newspapers with his idle and interminable output on Napoleon and his descendants. As this writer has the particular physical characteristic of being a redhead, our wit skewers him with the words '*rote Fadian*', which signifies that he's redheaded and that he speaks drivel, '*rouquin filandreux*', as it has been translated into French [*SE* 8: 22ff].

What makes the joke a joke is the reference to the red thread, '*roter Faden*', a metaphor which is itself poetical and which, as you know, Goethe borrowed from a practice of the British Navy. The red thread effectively makes it possible to recognize the smallest piece of rope, even and above all stolen rope, stolen from vessels of His British Majesty at a time when sailing ships used rope a lot. This red thread definitively authenticated ownership of the material. The metaphor is certainly more famous for German-speaking subjects 116
than it may be for us, but I suppose that quite a number of you are familiar, at least via this quotation, and perhaps even without being aware that you are, with this passage from *Elective Affinities*. This retort, very much in the style of the time, which was found very funny at a particular moment and in a particular context referred to as cultural, whether rightly or wrongly, lodges itself in the play between the red thread and the ropey character who utters banalities. This is what makes something work as a successful wisecrack or joke. That's where I'm going with this.

Freud says somewhere that something that finds satisfaction under the cover of wit is the subject's aggressive tendency – otherwise it would never show itself. One would not allow oneself to be so rude about a literary colleague. It is only possible under the cover of wit. That's just one aspect of the question, but it is obvious that there is a very great difference between purely and simply proffering an insult and expressing oneself in this register, for in expressing oneself in this register one is appealing to all sorts of things in the Other that are supposedly part of its usage, of its most everyday code.

I chose this example to give you a perspective taken from a specific moment in the history of Viennese society. In this context, reference to Goethe's red thread is immediately accessible to everybody, and up to a point it flatters the desire for recognition in all of us by offering us a shared symbol we are all familiar with.

There's also something else indicated in the tendency of this joke that calls into question not only the person ridiculed but also a very particular value in the social order. As Freud emphasizes, the essayist who approaches history from the perspective of anecdotes has a

habit of including basic ideas in which the author's own insufficiencies, the poverty of his categories and even the laziness of his writing are only too apparent. In short, it's a confused style at the borders of history that he is taking aim at here, one whose writings clutter the newspapers of the day. Undoubtedly, this tendency, quite well characterized in this joke, is not over, is not finished, but still it is what gives this joke its value and its impact.

We are, then, in a position to say that far from its being the case that the subject here with us has to be a real living creature, this Other is essentially a symbolic locus.

The Other is the locus of the treasure trove of, let's say, the sen-
117 tences or even the received ideas without which jokes cannot have value or impact. But at the same time let's observe that no particular signification is emphasized therein. On the contrary, this common treasure trove of categories presents a characteristic that we can describe as abstract. I am alluding here very precisely to this element of transmission which makes it the case that there is something there that, in a way, is supra-individual, and that is tied by an absolutely undeniable community to everything that has been in preparation ever since the origins of culture. What one is addressing when one attacks a subject at the level of the equivocations of signifiers has, as it were, a singularly immortal characteristic. This is really the other term of the question.

The question of knowing who the Other is arises between two poles. For us this Other has to be a real, living being, one made of flesh, even though it is not his flesh that I'm arousing. But, on the other hand, there is also something quasi anonymous, which is present in what I refer to as I reach out to him and arouse his pleasure at the same time as my own.

What is the mainspring that lies there between the two poles of the real and the symbolic? It's the function of the Other. It's this function that is, strictly speaking, brought into play. I have of course said enough about it to be able to say that this Other is the Other as the locus of signifiers, but I have only extracted a direction for meaning from this locus of signifiers, only a step-of-sense, which is where, in the final analysis, the active mainspring lies.

We may say that a joke appears like a Spanish inn here. Or, more exactly, it's the contrary of one, for in a Spanish inn you have to bring your own food and they bring you wine, whereas here I have to bring the wine of speech, since I won't find it here, even if – an image that is more or less comical and ridiculous – I were to consume my adversary.

The wine of speech is always present in everything I say. A joke is usually present, ambient in everything I recount as soon as I

speak, for I necessarily speak in the double register of metonymy and metaphor. The bit-of-sense and the step-of-sense are always in the process of crossing over one another, just as a thousand shuttles cross back and forth, as Freud mentions in the *Traumdeutung*. But also, this wine of speech usually seeps into the sand. What is produced between the Other and me in a joke is, as it were, a very special communion between the bit-of-sense and the step-of-sense. This communion is no doubt more specifically humanizing than any other, but it is humanizing precisely because we begin at a level which, on both sides, is very inhuman.

If I invite the Other to this communion, it is because I have even 118
greater need of his assistance because he is the vase or Grail. This Grail is empty. I mean that I address nothing in the Other that is specified, nothing that unites us in any kind of communion that might lead to any kind of agreement in desire or judgement. It is solely a form.

By what is this form constituted? It is constituted by what is always at issue in jokes, what in Freud are called inhibitions. It is not for nothing that when I prepare a joke I evoke something in the Other that tends to set him in a certain direction. This is still nothing more than a shell in comparison with something more profoundly linked to the stock of metonyms without which, in this order, I am absolutely unable to communicate anything to the Other.

In other words, in order for a joke to make the Other laugh, as Bergson says somewhere, and it's the only good thing that there is in *Laughter*, you have to have a lot in common, you have to belong to the same church.

What does that mean? The very term '*paroisse*', parish, is of no small help to our making progress in understanding the question. I do not know if you know what the origin of the word '*paroisse*' is. It's quite unusual, but ever since etymologists turned their attention to the matter, they have been unable to learn by what miracle a thing that at the outset was '*parodia*' – namely, people who are not from our house, I mean our house here on earth, who are from another world and who have their roots in another world, namely Christians, for the term appeared with Christianity – was, as it were, metaphorized by another term which recorded its signifying element in 'khi', which reappears in the Italian '*parrocchia*'. This other term is the Greek 'πάροχος', which means the purveyor, the intendant to whom the functionaries of the Empire knew that they had to address themselves so as to procure from him pretty well everything that a functionary of the Empire might desire, and in the blessed days of the Pax Romana that could go a very long way indeed.

We are here, then, at the level designated by the ambiguous term '*paroisse*', which clearly shows the limits of the field in which a joke will work. You can see that jokes don't have the same effect always and everywhere, since the one about the red thread has only a feeble effect upon you in comparison with the earlier joke about the candidate at an exam. Given that you are the public that you are, it was quite natural that something as much from our shared background as the baccalaureate or any other exam should be the kind of thing to serve as the container for what was being conveyed, namely a direction for meaning. Undoubtedly, inasmuch as this direction
119 doesn't result in any meaning, it is only the distance that always remains there between every actual meaning and what I could call an ideal of full-sense.

I would add one more play on words. The manner in which this Other is constituted at the level of a joke is something that we are familiar with from Freud's use – he calls it 'the censor' – which bears upon 'sense' or meaning. The Other is constituted as a filter that puts order into, and places an obstacle before, what can be accepted or simply even heard. There are things that cannot be heard, or which habitually are never heard any more, and which a joke strives to make heard somewhere, as an echo. To get them to be echoed back, it uses precisely the thing that forms an obstacle to it, like some sort of reflecting concavity. I had already come to this metaphor earlier, and something inside it was resisting, something that is comprised entirely of a series of imaginary crystallizations in the subject.

We are not surprised to see things occur at this level. The little other, to call him by his name, contributes to the possibility of a joke, but it's within the subject's resistance – which for once, and this is highly instructive for us, I am rather seeking to provoke – that something that makes itself heard will resonate much further, and this means that the joke will resonate directly in the unconscious.

11 December 1957

VII

UNE FEMME DE NON-RECEVOIR, OR: A FLAT REFUSAL

Duplicating the graph
Laughter, an imaginary phenomenon
An Other of one's own
The return to jouissance in Aristophanes
Comic love

Last time I spoke to you about the Grail. You are the Grail, which I'm solidifying by placing your contradictions on alert in all sorts of ways, with the aim of getting you to authenticate 'in spirit', so to speak, the fact that I am conveying this message to you. The essence of this Grail consists in its very defects.

Since it's always a good idea to go back over even the best understood of things, I am going to attempt to materialize on the blackboard what I was saying to you last time.

1

What I was saying to you last time was about the Other, this damned Other, who, when one communicates a *Witz*, completes and, in a way, fulfils the gap formed by the insolubility of desire. It can be said that a *Witz* restores an essentially unsatisfied demand its jouissance, under the double and moreover identical aspects of surprise and pleasure – the pleasure of surprise and the surprise in pleasure.

Last time I stressed the process of immobilizing the Other and forming what I called 'the empty Grail'. This is represented in Freud by what he calls the joke's 'façade' [*SE* 8: 55]. It diverts the Other's attention away from the path down which the joke is heading, it attaches the inhibition somewhere in order to leave another path open somewhere else for the witty words to take.

This, then, is more or less how the thing might be schematized. The path goes from speech, here condensed into a message, to the
122 Other to whom it is addressed. An obstacle, a gap or a flaw in the message is authenticated by the Other as a witticism, but it is thereby restored to the subject himself, and forms the indispensable complement to the desire specific to witticisms.

This, then, is the schema we have been using. The Other, the message, the I and the metonymic object are here [see the graphs on pages 10 and 80]. We have already covered these points, which I assume you know. The Other is indispensable for closing the loop that is discourse insofar as it arrives at the message in a position to satisfy, at least symbolically, the fundamentally insoluble character of demand as such. This circuit is the authentication by the Other of what is, in short, an allusion to the fact that once man enters the symbolic world no demand can be attained except through an infinite succession of steps-of-sense. By virtue of the fact that his desire is caught up in the mechanism of language, man, a new Achilles in search of another tortoise, is destined to this never-to-be-satisfied, infinite approach linked to the very mechanism of desire, which we shall simply call discursiveness.

While the Other is essential to the final, symbolically satisfying step, the instantaneous moment of a joke – when it comes off – it is nevertheless worth remembering that the Other also exists. He exists in the same way that what we call the subject exists, circulating somewhere as in the game of pass the parcel. Don't imagine that there is a subject at the start of need – need is not yet a subject. Where is he, then? Perhaps I can say more about this today.

The subject is the entire system and, perhaps, something in the system. The Other is the same, he is constructed in the same way, and this is why he is able to relay my discourse.

I am going to encounter certain specific conditions that will have to be representable on my schema if it is going to be of any use. These conditions are the ones we spoke about last time. Take note of the directions on the segments. Here there are vectors that go from the *I* towards the object and towards the Other [$\beta \rightarrow \beta'$, $\beta \rightarrow \alpha$], and vectors that go from the message towards the Other and towards the object [$\gamma \rightarrow \alpha$, $\gamma \rightarrow \beta'$], for there is a strong relationship of symmetry between the message and the *I*, just as there is clockwise [$\alpha \rightarrow \beta \rightarrow \beta'$], and again counter-clockwise [$\alpha \rightarrow \gamma \rightarrow \beta'$] between the Other as such, as locus of the treasure trove of metonymies, and the metonymic object itself, insofar as it is constituted in the system of metonymies.

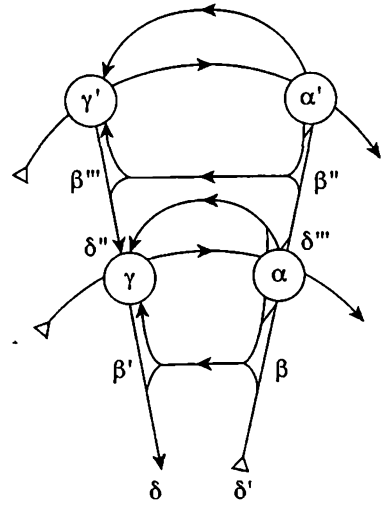
What was it I explained to you last time concerning what I called the preparation for a joke? The best thing is sometimes not to

prepare it – but it is clear that it is not a bad thing to do so. We only have to recall what happened when I didn't – you were left high and 123
dry. Something as simple as the '-t' that I related to you one day seems to have left some of you stumped. If I had prepared you on the reciprocal attitudes of the little count and the well-bred young lady, perhaps you might have been sufficiently tantalized and the 'Ahhht' might have more easily overcome something. Because some of you were paying close attention, you took the time to understand. By contrast, last time you laughed much more easily at the joke about the horse because it included a lengthy preparation, and while you were having a good time with the candidate's remarks that struck you as marked by the powerful insolence that lingers at the bottom of ignorance, you were then quite well disposed to see this flying horse come in at the end of the joke and really give it its punchline.

What I produce with this preparation is the Other. This, of course, is what in Freud is called '*Hemmung*', inhibition. This is merely the opposition that is the fundamental basis of the dual relation, and which, here, is comprised of all the objections you could make against what I was presenting as the object. That is quite natural, you were preparing yourself to be shocked by it, its approach and its pressure. What is organized in this way is what we habitually refer to as 'defence', which is the most elementary of forces. It is very much what is involved in these preludes that can be performed in a thousand ways. Non-sense sometimes plays the role of a prelude in the form of an inducement that draws the mental gaze in a certain direction. It is a lure in this sort of bullfight. Sometimes it's comical, sometimes obscene.

In effect, this is all about focusing the Other on an object. Let's say that, in the opposite sense to the metonymy of my discourse, it's a matter of bringing about a kind of fixation of the Other as discoursing on a particular metonymic object. In a way, this could be any object. It is not at all necessary that it have the slightest connection with my own inhibitions. It makes no difference, it will work with anything provided that the Other is occupied with some object at that particular moment. That is what I was explaining to you last time when I spoke about the imaginary solidification of the Other, which is the first position in making a witticism possible. 124

We must, then, find a place in our schema for the homologue of the object relation at the level of the Other, whom we are taking here as a subject, and this is why I am giving you another system, which I have drawn [see dotted lines]. I am plotting the homologue of the line that I call β - β', which is the *I*'s relationship with the metonymic object for the first subject. I am thereby indicating the superimposition of the system of the Other subject onto the system of the first.



For the baton to be passed from the Other towards the message that authenticates a joke as a joke, it has to be bound up in its own system of signifiers, that is, as it were, the problem is referred back to him [the Other] in such a way that he himself, in his own system, authenticates the message as a joke.

In other words, my γ - α presupposes the inscription of a parallel γ' - α', which is just what is recorded on this schema. A requirement inherent in jokes gives them a theoretical perspective of reproduction ad infinitum, given that a good joke is made for being recounted and is not complete until it has been recounted and others have laughed at it. The very pleasure of recounting it includes the fact that others can, in turn, try it out on others.

While there is no necessary relationship between what metonymic captivation I must produce in the Other to leave the way open for the witty words, there is, on the other hand, necessarily a relationship between the systems of the two subjects. This is made sufficiently clear on the schema by the relationship between the signifying chain, as organized in the Other, which goes from δ''' to δ'' here, and the
125 one that goes from δ' to δ. There has to be a relationship, and this is what I was expressing last time when I said that the Other has to be from the same church, of like mind. It is not enough that he more or less understands French, even though this is the first way to be of like mind. If I make a joke in French, for it to work and succeed there are many other things assumed known and that the Other must share.

Here, then, represented on the schema, are two conditions that we could write as follows. The β'' – β''' designates an inhibition

produced in the Other. Here I am using a sign with two small arrowheads going in opposite directions, and which is equal to, and goes in the opposite direction to, my metonymy, that is, opposite to $\gamma - \alpha$. By contrast, there is a sort of parallel between $\gamma - \alpha$ and $\gamma' - \alpha'$, which can be expressed by saying that $\gamma - \alpha$ can find its certification, which I have indicated by putting a rough breathing incidentally, on α' and γ'. The Other certifies it as a message and authenticates it as a witticism.

This has at least the advantage of clarifying these ideas by visualizing them, since that is one of the mental organs most familiar to the intellect. It visualizes for you what I meant when I was talking last time about the subjective conditions for the success of a witticism, namely, what is demanded of the imaginary other so that, within the goblet that this imaginary other proffers, the symbolic Other understands it.

I leave to ingenious minds the task of aligning this with what, curiously, I previously managed to say in a metaphor, when I was above all interested in imaginary images and in the conditions of the appearance of imaginary unity in a particular organic reflection. I must have had a reason to employ almost the same formal schema when I used the image of a concave mirror in relation to narcissism. But let's not engage in a parallel that would only be forced, as suggestive as it might be.

I am now going to put this schema to one little supplementary use, since, whatever interest there may be in thus reminding you of the meaning of what I said last time, it would be fairly limited if it did not take us any further.

The initial schema that we have been using since the start of the year has been transformed, then, by the modifications I have been making to the formula of the Other as a subject. We have $\gamma - \alpha$, here, for the subject, and $\beta - \beta'$ for the relation to the metonymic object. Beyond this, at the next level up, this same arrangement is reproduced and this means that the Other also has a relation to the metonymic object, $\beta'' - \beta'''$, whereas here the $\gamma - \alpha$ becomes $\gamma' - \alpha'$, and so on indefinitely. The final loop, the one through which need, 126
on its return, passes on the way to indefinitely deferred satisfaction, has to run across the entire circuit of Others, before returning here to its endpoint in the subject.

2

We will use this schema again shortly. For the moment, let's pause at a special case that Freud considers immediately following his

analysis of the mechanisms of jokes, on which this is nothing but a commentary. He speaks about what he calls the social motives of jokes, and from there he goes on to the problem of the comic.

That's what we're going to try to explore today, without exhausting it. Freud explicitly says that he is only exploring it from the perspective of jokes, for there is a field here that is much too vast for him even to think about taking it on, at least on the basis of his experience. To introduce his analysis of the comic, Freud foregrounds what, in the comic, is closest to jokes. It is striking that with the sureness of orientation and touch that is his, what he presents us as being the closest to jokes is very precisely what at first sight might seem to be the furthest from jokes, namely the naive [*SE* 8: 182].

Naivety, he says, is based on ignorance, and quite naturally he gives examples of it taken from children. I've already mentioned the scene where children enact an entire and very pretty little story for the benefit of the adults. A couple separate, the husband goes off to seek his fortune. He returns several years later, having become rich, and on his return the woman greets him with these words, 'You see, I have behaved wonderfully, I haven't wasted my time either while you were away.' And she draws the curtain on a line of ten dolls. It's like a little scene of marionettes. The children are astonished, perhaps simply surprised – they perhaps know more than one thinks – by the outburst of laughter from the adults in the audience.

This is the type of naive joke Freud presents. He also gives it to us in a form that is technically much closer to the processes of language in the story about the little girl who offers a '*Bubizin*' to her brother who has a bit of a tummy ache. Having heard mention of a '*Medizin*' for her, since '*Mädi*' designates little girls and '*Bubi*' little boys, she thinks that if there is a '*Medizin*' for little girls, there must
127 also be a '*Bubizin*' for little boys. It's still a story that, provided one has the key to it, which is that one understands German, can easily be presented as a joke.

Although the reference to children is not unfashionable, what is essential is not there but in a feature that we won't say is one of ignorance but which Freud defines very specifically and whose easily substitutive character in the mechanism of jokes he emphasizes. What pleases us in jokes, says Freud, and this plays precisely the same role as what earlier I called fascination or metonymic captivation, is that we sense a lack of inhibition in the speaker. It's the lack of inhibition that makes it possible for us to convey what is essential in a joke – namely, the beyond that it evokes – to the Other we are telling it to and who is himself already fascinated by this absence of inhibition. Here, in the case of the child, in the cases that I have just referred to, what is essential does not consist in the humour, but in

evoking the time in childhood when there is such a close relationship to language that it thereby directly evokes for us the relationship of language to the desire that constitutes the specific satisfaction of a joke.

I will take another example, one from an adult, which I think I already quoted at one time. One of my patients, who was not normally known for making very elaborate circumlocutions, was telling me one of those stories that are just a little sad, as he would do fairly regularly. He had made a date with a young woman he had met on his peregrinations and, as would often happen to him, the aforementioned stood him up. He concluded his story, 'I understood, once again, that it was a case of a knockback [*femme de non-recevoir*].'

He wasn't being witty; he thought that the expression was in use and that he was saying something completely innocent, which, however, has a highly amusing quality and satisfies something in us that goes well beyond the comical perception of this character in his disappointment.

If this story evokes a feeling of superiority in us, which is entirely doubtful, it is surely much inferior in this respect. I am alluding here to one of the mechanisms that have often been unduly elevated to the origin of comical phenomena, namely, the feeling of superiority over others. This is entirely questionable. Although it was a very great mind who attempted to sketch out the mechanism of the comic in this sense, namely Lipps, it's entirely refutable that this is where the essential pleasure of the comic lies. If there is anyone who happens to retain his superiority intact, it is our character, who possibly finds on this occasion a reason for his disappointment that is far from wounding his unshakeable confidence in himself. If any feeling of superiority takes shape in relation to this story, it 128
acts more like a lure. Everything momentarily engages you in the mirage created by the way you situate the person who is recounting the story, or situate yourself, but what is going on here goes well beyond this.

Effectively, what is looming behind the term '*femme de non-recevoir*' is the fundamental disappointment, in itself, whenever one approaches desire, well beyond the satisfaction of this or that specific approach. What amuses us here is the satisfaction that the subject who has let drop this innocent phrase derives from his very disappointment. He finds that his disappointment is sufficiently explained by a locution that he thinks is an accepted locution, a ready-made metonymy for such occasions. In other words, he rediscovers his disappointment in a top hat in the guise of a baby's stuffed bunny that he thinks is the living rabbit of the valid explanation, and which is actually imaginary. Always expecting the rabbit

that constitutes his very disappointment to turn up yet again, he will remain unshaken and constant, without otherwise being affected by it, when he nears the object of his illusion.

You see, therefore, that a joke by an ignorant or naive person, by the person from whom I've borrowed this phrase and made it into a joke, is complete on this occasion, as it were, at the level of the Other. No longer do I need to bring about anything in the Other that constitutes this solid cup. It has already been given to me in its entirety by the one from whom I gather the precious words which when communicated will form the basis of the joke, and which my story thus raises to the dignity of a master word. In short, the entire dialectic of a naive joke is located in the upper part of my schema. What has to be brought about in the Other in the imaginary order so that a joke in its standard form is admitted and received is formed here by its naivety, ignorance and self-satisfaction. And to elevate this blunder to the level of a joke, I simply have to present it and have it ratified by a third party, the big Other, to whom I communicate it.

Promoting the imaginary other in this analysis of metonymies and in the pure and simple satisfaction he finds in language – and uses to avoid appreciating the extent to which his desire is leading him on – introduces us, and this is why Freud places it at the intersection of witticisms and the comic, to the domain of the comic.

We haven't come to the end of our pains, for, in fact, on the subject of the comic there has been no shortage of more or less unsatisfactory theories advanced – and it's certainly not an idle
129 question to ask why this is so and also why they have been propounded. They have been presented in all sorts of forms that we don't need to spell out here, but their summation, succession and past history, as we say, do not lead us to anything fundamental. Let's leave all that behind and say that, in any case, the question of the comic is evaded when one undertakes to examine it, and I'm not saying resolve it, solely at the psychological level.

At the psychological level, both wit and the comic can obviously be easily combined under the category of what provokes laughter. Now you cannot fail but be struck by the fact that even though I have stressed that a witticism has been more or less well received and registered by the fact that you sanction it with a discreet laugh, or at the very least with a smile, till now I have not examined the question of laughter.

The question of laughter is far from having been resolved. Everyone agrees on making laughter an essential characteristic of what occurs in the witty and the comic, but as to linking it to its expressive character or even simply describing which emotion this

phenomenon might correspond to – where it is possible to say, although this is not absolutely certain, that it is unique to man – one generally enters into matters that are extremely difficult. From some, one gets the impression that in trying to examine the relationship between laughter and phenomena that are thought to correspond to it in an analogical way, they are skirting around the issue. But even those who have said the most defensible or prudent things about the phenomenon of laughter hardly do more than note that it can leave 'oscillatory traces'. For Kant, it is a spasmodic movement with a particular mental oscillation, which passes from tension that is being reduced to nothing, an oscillation between an active tension and its sudden collapse in the face of the absence of anything that, supposedly, might resist it once the tension is activated. Similarly, the sudden passage from a concept to its contradiction emerges with a psychologist from the last century, Léon Dumont, whom Dumas refers to in his article on the psychology of laughter – a very Dumasian article, very fine and subtle, which this fortunate man didn't go to much effort over, but which is well worth reading, for even without making an effort he contributes some very nice elements.

In short, the question of laughter goes a lot further than that of wit or the comic.

It is not rare to see the different varieties of the phenomenon discussed. There is the mere communication of laughter, the laughing at laughter, there is the laughter that is linked to the fact that one must not laugh. The mad laughter of children under certain conditions also deserves to attract our attention. There is also the laughter 130
of anxiety, and even the laughter of an imminent threat, the nervous laughter of the victim who suddenly finds himself threatened by something that goes well beyond the limits of his expectation, the laughter of despair. There is even the laughter over a bereavement that one has just learned about. I leave it there, for I do not intend to treat all these forms of laughter, nor is it my aim to give you a theory of laughter.

I would simply stress, in passing, that nothing is further from what we should be satisfied with than Bergson's theory about the mechanical appearing in the midst of life. His work on laughter reapplies in a condensed and schematic way the myth of vital harmony, of *élan vital*, characterized by its supposedly endless novelty and permanent creation. You cannot fail to appreciate how outrageous this is when you read that one of the characteristics of the mechanical as opposed to the vital is said to be its repetitive character – as if we don't piss in the same way every day, or go to sleep in the same way every day, or as if one is reinventing love

whenever one has a fuck. There is something truly incredible there. This explanation by means of the mechanical appears throughout the book like a mechanical explanation. What I mean is that it lapses into a lamentable stereotype that entirely leaves out what is essential in the phenomenon.

If the mechanical really were at the origin of laughter, where would we go? What would we do with Kleist's subtle remarks about marionettes, which run completely contrary to the supposedly amusing and inferior character of the mechanical? Very subtly, he stresses the fact that a true ideal of grace is achieved by these little objects which, controlled by nothing more than pieces of string, create movements whose elegant paths are linked to the stability of the centre of gravity of their curves, provided they are properly made – that is, according to the precise features of articulations in humans. No dancer, he says, can rival the grace of a skilfully operated marionette.

Having simply remarked how much Bergson's theory neglects even the most elementary understanding of the mechanism of laughter, let's leave it aside even before we involve it in anything as elaborate as the witty or the comic. Laughter effectively touches everything that is an imitation, a doubling, a *Doppelgänger* or a mask, and if we look at it more closely it's not just a matter of masks, but of unmasking – and unmasking at moments that are worth thinking about. You go up to a child with your face covered
131 by a mask, he laughs in a nervous or embarrassed way. You move a bit closer, a manifestation of anxiety starts to appear. You take off the mask, the child laughs. But if you are wearing another mask beneath this mask, he won't laugh one bit.

All I want to indicate here is that a study is called for, one that can only be experimental – but can only be experimental if we begin to have some idea of the direction in which it is pursued. In any case, this phenomenon, like others that I could bring in in support of my affirmation if I intended to highlight it, shows us that there is a very intense, very close relationship between the phenomena of laughter and the function of the imaginary in man.

Images as such have a captivating character beyond their corresponding instinctual mechanisms, as is shown in both sexual and combative animal display. There's an extra touch to it in man due to the fact that in him the other's image is very closely linked to the tension I mentioned earlier, which is always elicited by the object at which the tension is directed, leading it to be placed at a certain distance with a connotation of desire or hostility. I am referring to the ambiguity that is at the very foundation of the ego's formation and this means that for the ego its unity lies outside itself, that it is

in relation to its semblable that it is established and that it finds this unity of defence which is the unity of its being as a narcissistic being.

The phenomenon of laughter is located in this field. And it is here that the collapse of tension, to which authors attribute the instantaneous triggering of laughter, is produced. If someone makes us laugh simply by falling over, it is as a result of his more or less pompous image that we hadn't paid all that much attention to before. The phenomena of stature and status are so rife in our lived experience that we do not even notice them. We burst out laughing when in our imagination the imaginary character goes on in his affected way, whereas what he is supported by in the real is lying spreadeagled on the ground. This is about the liberation of or from the image. Take this in the two senses [in French] of this ambiguous expression – on the one hand, something is freed from the constraints of the image while, on the other, the image is also free to wander off on its own. This is why there is always something comical about the duck with its head cut off taking a few more steps around the farmyard.

This is why, somewhere, the comic connects with what makes one laugh. I locate it at the level of the direction I → object, $\beta \rightarrow \beta'$ or $\beta'' \rightarrow \beta'''$. Certainly, inasmuch as the imaginary is somehow 132
implicated in the relationship to the symbolic, laughter, insofar as it connotes and accompanies the comic, reappears at a higher level, which interests us infinitely more than the totality of the phenomena of pleasure.

Let's move on to the comic.

3

To introduce the notion of the comic today I'll go back to the joke about the Golden Calf.

Soulié's quip in talking about the Golden Calf in relation to the banker – it's almost a witticism already, it's at least a metaphor – meets with this response, then, from Heinrich Heine. 'For a calf, he seems a bit past it to me.' Observe that if Heinrich Heine had said that quite literally, it would be because he hadn't understood, and he would be like my ignoramus from before who said, '*la femme de non-recevoir*'. In this case, his retort would have been comical.

It's this that constitutes the underside of this witticism. Heine's retort is in effect something of a flat rejection [*fin de non-recevoir*], he puts Soulié in his place, makes him feel uncomfortable, as it were. After all, Soulié didn't say anything particularly funny, and Heine checkmates him by showing that it can be dealt with differently.

He erects a metonymic object different from the first calf. In this respect, he is playing at the level of comic opposition.

One cannot avoid noticing one essential difference at the outset. On the occasion of a *Witz*, the comic is grasped in a fleeting state, in a trait, a word, in the repartee – but, really, the comic goes much further. A witticism doesn't need to be massaged at length for it to work, whereas for the comic a simple, brief encounter is not enough. Here I am, then, addressing all of you, whatever your current position, without knowing where you're from, nor even who you are – well, in order for there to be comical relations between us, there has to be a relationship that involves us with one another much more personally. That's what you can already see taking shape in the relationship between Soulié and Heine, and it concerns a mechanism of seduction, because, all the same, Heinrich Heine's response does rebut something on Soulié's side just a little.

To put it briefly, for the comic to be possible it is necessary that the relationship between demand and satisfaction be inscribed, not
133 in an instantaneous moment, but in a dimension that gives it stability and constancy and its own pathway in relation to a determinate other. Now, if, in what underpins witticisms, we have located one of the essential structures of demand according to which, insofar as it is taken up by the Other, it has to be essentially unsatisfied, there is nevertheless a solution, the fundamental solution, the one that all human beings seek from the start of their lives to the end of their existence. Since everything depends on the Other, the solution is to have an Other of one's own. This is what we call love. In the dialectic of desire it's about having an Other of one's own.

The field of full speech, as I've said to you in the past, is defined in this schema by the very conditions under which, as we have just seen, something equivalent to the satisfaction of desire can and must be realized. We have an indication that it can only be satisfied in something beyond speech. The link uniting the Other, the *I*, the metonymic object and the message defines the zone in which full speech has to reside [see graphs pp. 85 and 112]. As an image of the message it is typically constituted by, I have given you 'You are my master' and 'You are my woman'. 'You, the other, are my woman.' I would therefore say to you that this is the form in which a man gives an example of the full speech in which he commits himself as subject, founds himself as the man of the woman to whom he is speaking and declares it to her in an inverted form. I also showed you its strangely paradoxical character, which is that everything rests on what must close the circuit. The metonymy that it contains, the passage from the Other to this unique object that is constituted by the statement, nevertheless requires that the metonymy be received, that something

subsequently pass from γ to α, namely that the 'you' in question does not simply reply, 'Ah, no! No way!'

Even if he does not answer like that, something else happens much more often. It's that, by virtue of the very fact that no preparation as clever as a witticism comes along so that the line β″ - β‴ merges with the line parallel to it at the lower level, the two lines remain completely independent of one another – so much so that the subject in question well and truly retains his own system of metonymic objects. We will thus see produced the contradiction that is established in the circle of the four βs – namely, that since everyone has, as they say, his own little idea, this foundational speech comes up against what I will call, since we are in the presence of a square, the problem not of squaring the circle, but of 'circling' the metonymies, which remain quite distinct, even with the most ideal partner. 'There are good marriages, but no delightful ones,' said La Rochefoucauld.

Now, the problem of love and the Other is at the centre of the 134
comic. To see this, it is a good idea first to remember that, if one wants to inform oneself about the comic, it would not perhaps be such a bad thing to read comedies.

Comedy has a history, comedy even has an origin – something that many people have studied. The origin of comedy is narrowly bound up with the id's relationship to language.

What is this id that we occasionally talk about? It is not purely and simply some original radical need, one that is at the root of the individualization of an organism. The id can only be grasped beyond the elaboration of desire in the network of language, only actualized at its limit. Here, human desire is not initially caught in the system of language that defers it indefinitely and leaves no place for the id to be constituted and named. However, beyond all of this elaboration of language, it is what represents the realization of the first need which, at least in man, has no chance of ever being known. We don't know what the id of an animal is, and there is very little chance that we ever will, but what we do know is that the id of man is entirely caught up in the dialectic of language and that it conveys and preserves the first existence of tendencies.

Where does comedy originate? We're told that it comes from the banquet at which, in a word, men say 'Yes' in a kind of orgy – leave this word in all its vagueness. The meal is constituted by offerings to the gods, that is, to the Immortals of language. Ultimately, the entire process of the elaboration of desire in language comes back to and comes together in consumption at a banquet. The whole detour is only taken so as to come back to jouissance, and the most elementary at that. That is how comedy makes its entrance into what, with Hegel, we can regard as the aesthetic face of religion.

What does Classical comedy show us? It would be a good thing for you to poke your nose into Aristophanes from time to time. This is always where the id gets the upper hand, pulls on the boots of language for its own use of the most elementary kind. It is well known that in *The Clouds* Aristophanes makes fun of Euripides and Socrates, particularly Socrates, but how does he portray this to us? He shows us an old man making use of all his beautiful dialectics to satisfy his cravings by all sorts of tricks – escaping his creditors, getting money from people – or a young man using them to escape his commitments, fail in all his duties, rail against his ancestors and so on. This is the return of need in its most elementary form. What enters at the start in the dialectic of language – namely, sexual needs most especially, all hidden needs in general – is what you see produced right before your eyes on Aristophanes' stage. It's powerful stuff.

I particularly commend to your attention the plays involving women. In the return to the elementary needs that underlie the entire process, a special role devolves upon women, insofar as it's by their intermediary that Aristophanes invites us, at the moment of imaginary communion that comedy represents, to appreciate what can only be appreciated retroactively, which is that if the State – and the City – exist, it's for one's benefit, so that the table of plenty, which, moreover, nobody believes in, is established on the Agora. After good sense has been thwarted by the perverse evolution of a city subject to all the indecision of a dialectical process, one emerges from it through the intermediary of women, who are the only ones who really know what men need, and one returns to this good sense, which naturally assumes the most excessive forms.

This is of interest to us only because of what it shows us about the violence of certain images. It also makes us imagine a world in which women were not quite what we are made to imagine they were by authors who depict a civilized Antiquity to us. In Antiquity, or so it seems to me, the women – I'm talking about real women, not the Venus de Milo – would have had lots of hair and not smelt good, if we are to believe the insistence that is placed on the role of the razor and on certain perfumes.

Be that as it may, in this Aristophanesque twilight, especially the one that concerns the vast insurrection of women, there are some quite beautiful images that one cannot but be struck by. There's one image that is suddenly expressed in the words of one of a group of women who are in the process of not just dressing up as men but also sporting beards to suggest omnipotence – it is simply a matter of knowing which beard it is. She starts laughing and says to them, 'How funny! We look like a school of grilled cuttlefish with beards!'

This vision from the shadows seems like it could suggest an entire foundation of relations in Classical society.

What did this comedy evolve into? Into the New Comedy which began with Menander and has continued right up to our day. What is the New Comedy? It shows us people engaged in the most fascinated and obstinate of manners, in general, with some metonymic 136
object. We encounter every human type there. They are the same characters as the ones you find in Italian comedy. They are defined by having a certain relationship to an object. Something has taken the place of the irruption of sex, and it's love – love that is named as such, the love that we would call naive love, ingenuous love, the love that unites two young and, in general, fairly bland people. This is what forms the pivot of the intrigue. Love plays the role of being the axis around which the entire comedy of the situation revolves, and it will remain so until the appearance of Romanticism, which we will leave to one side for today.

Love is a comedic sentiment. The high point of comedy is readily locatable. The highpoint of comedy in the strict sense, in the sense in which I am presenting it to you here, is found in a unique masterpiece.

The latter is situated in history at the pivotal moment at which the presentation of relations between the id and language, in the form of a taking possession of language by the id, is about to give way to the introduction of the dialectic of man's relations with language in a blind, closed form, which is achieved in Romanticism. It is very important in the sense that without knowing it Romanticism turns out to be a confused introduction to the dialectic of signifiers as such, of which psychoanalysis is, in short, the articulated form. But in the, let's say, Classical line of comedy, the high point is reached when the comedy of which I'm speaking, which is by Molière and is called *The School for Wives*, raises the problem in an absolutely schematic way because it is indeed a question of love, but love as a tool of satisfaction.

Molière presents the problem to us in a manner that gives it a matrix. It possesses a clarity that is absolutely comparable to one of Euclid's theorems.

The play is about a person named Arnolphe. As a matter of fact, the rigour of the thing would not even have required that he be a person with just one idea. It just so happens that it works better that way, but in the same way in which a witticism uses metonymy to fascinate us. We see him enter right at the start with an obsession about not being cuckolded. That is his principal passion. It's a passion just like any other. All passions are equivalent, all are equally metonymic. It's the principle of comedy to present them as such, that

is, to focus the attention on an id that believes entirely in its metonymic object. It believes in it, which doesn't mean that it is tied to it, for it is also one of the characteristics of comedy that the id of the comedic subject, whatever it may be, always remains intact at the end. Whatever happens during the comedy is like water off a duck's
137 back. *The School for Wives* ends with a 'Phew!' from Arnolphe, and yet God only knows what extremes he has been through.

I will try briefly to recount what it's about. Arnolphe is, then, taken with a young girl who, with her 'sweet and poised appearance', 'inspired me with love for her at the age of four'. He has, then, chosen his little woman, he has already instituted the 'You are my woman'. It's even for this reason that he gets so upset when he sees that this dear angel is about to be taken from him. The fact is that, at the point he has come to, he says, she is already his wife, he has already established her socially as such, and he has found an elegant solution to the matter.

'He is an enlightened man,' says his friend, who is called Chrysalde, and enlightened he is indeed. He has no need to be the monogamous person that we were talking about at the start – behind this monogamy he is an educator. Old men have always been preoccupied with the education of girls and have even proposed principles for it. Here, he's found a very happy principle, one that consists in keeping her in a state of being a complete idiot. He himself sets the programme of care supposedly contributing to this end. 'And you won't believe', he says to his friend, 'how far this can go. Just the other day didn't she ask me if children were made through the ears?' This was something that really should have made him prick up these very same ears, for if the girl had had a healthier physiological understanding of things, she might have been less dangerous.

'You are my woman' is full speech whose metonymy is the duly explained duties of marriage that have to be read out to little Agnès. 'She is a complete idiot,' he says, and he thinks, like all educators, that his scheme is thereby guaranteed.

What do the story's developments tell us? It could be called 'How girls grow wise'. The originality of the character of Agnès seems to have created a real enigma for psychologists and critics – is she a woman, a nymphomaniac, a flirt, is she this or is she that? Absolutely not. She's a being who has been taught to speak, and she does so.

She is captivated by the words of a character, a complete dimwit of a young man, moreover. This Horace comes into the picture on this question, when, in the important scene in which Arnolphe tells her he would tear half his hair out, she calmly replies, 'Horace could do more than you with two words.' She thus perfectly punctuates what is present throughout the play, namely that what has come to her in

her encounter with the character in question is precisely that he says things that are amusing and sweet to the ear, that delight her. She is quite incapable of telling us, and of telling herself, what he says, but it comes through speech – that is, through what ruptures the system 138
of learned and educational speech. This is how she gets captivated.

The sort of ignorance that is one of the dimensions of her being is simply connected with the fact that for her there is nothing but speech. When Arnolphe explains to her that the other held her hands, her arms, she asks, 'What else is there?' She is very interested. She is a goddess of reason, this Agnès. Moreover, the word 'reasoner' comes back to choke Arnolphe when he reproaches her for her ingratitude, her lack of sense of duty, her betrayal, and she answers him with admirable pertinence, 'But what do I owe you? If it is only for having made me stupid, your expenses will be reimbursed.'

At the beginning we thus find ourselves with the reasoner alongside the ingenuous, and what constitutes the comical mainspring is that as soon as the girl starts becoming clever we see the emergence of a reasoner alongside a character who, for his part, becomes the ingenuous one – for in words that leave no ambiguity he then tells her that he loves her, and he tells her in every possible way, telling her to the point where his declaration culminates in telling her more or less the following, 'You will do exactly everything you want to, you can also have Horace if it so happens that you want him.' Ultimately, the character overturns even the very principle of his system. He even prefers to be cuckolded, which was his principal starting point in the matter, rather than lose the object of his love.

Love – I am saying that this is the point at which the highpoint of Classical comedy is located. Love is here. It is curious to see to what extent we no longer perceive love except through all kinds of partitions, romantic partitions, that stifle it, whereas the mainspring of love is essentially comical. It is precisely in this respect that Arnolphe is truly in love, much more authentically in love than the said Horace, who is always vacillating. The romantic change in perspective that took place around the term of love means that we can no longer grasp it so easily. It's a fact – the more the play is performed, the more Arnolphe is played as Arnolphe, the more people lean over and say to one another, 'This Molière is so noble and profound, you laugh when you should be crying.' People almost never find the comic compatible with the authentic and overwhelming expression of love as such. However, love is comical when the love that declares itself and shows itself is love that is love at its most authentic.

That, then, is the outline of the story. Still, I must also tell you how it ends.

139 The story is brought to an end by the stupidity of the third person, namely Horace, who happens to conduct himself like a little baby, going so far as to hand back the very person he has just taken out of the hands of her legitimate possessor, without even having been able to identify him as the jealous party whose tyranny Agnès was suffering from, and who, moreover, is her chosen confidant. This doesn't matter. He is a secondary character. Why is he there? So that the problem is posed in these terms – namely, that Arnolphe is kept informed at every instant, hour by hour, minute by minute, about what is happening in reality, by the very person who is his rival and, also, in a manner that is just as entirely authentic, by his pupil herself, the said Agnès who hides nothing from him.

Indeed, she is a complete idiot, as was his wish, uniquely in the sense that she has absolutely nothing to hide, says everything and says it simply, in the most pertinent manner. But from the moment she is in the world of speech, whatever the power of her educational formation, her desire lies beyond. Her desire is not simply on the side of Horace whom – here we are in no doubt – she will in the future subject to the very same fate so feared by Arnolphe. It's just that, by virtue of the fact that she is in the domain of speech, her desire lies beyond, she is charmed by words, she is charmed by wit and – insofar as something lies beyond this metonymic actuality that Arnolphe is attempting to impose on her – she slips away. Even as she always says the truth to Arnolphe, she is still deceiving him, because everything that she does is tantamount to deceiving him.

Horace is aware of this himself when he recounts how she threw his little stone out of the window, telling him, 'Off you go, I do not want to hear any more of your words, and that is my response', which sounded like it meant, 'Here is the stone that I am throwing to you', but the stone was also the vehicle for a little letter. Horace emphasizes it very well – for a girl that Arnolphe wanted to keep in extreme ignorance, there is an ambiguity here that is not at all badly done, and that is the start of these double meanings and an entire game that augurs well for the future.

That is the point at which I wanted to leave you today. By its very nature, the id lies beyond desire's capture in language. The relationship to the Other is essential inasmuch as the path of desire necessarily passes through it, but not insofar as the Other is the unique object, but rather insofar as the Other is the correspondent of language and subjects it to its entire dialectic.

18 December 1957

THE LOGIC OF CASTRATION

VIII

FORECLOSURE OF THE NAME-OF-THE-FATHER

Mrs Pankow expounds the double bind*
Typography of the unconscious
The Other in the Other
Psychosis between code and message
Symbolic triangle and imaginary triangle

I get the impression that I pushed you a bit too hard last trimester – I got some feedback about it. I hadn't noticed, otherwise I wouldn't have done it. I was under the impression that I was repeating myself and getting nowhere. This still didn't prevent me from perhaps leaving behind some of the things I wanted to get you to understand, and it's worth retracing our steps a little and, let's say, looking back over how I have been approaching things this year.

1

What I am trying to show you concerning jokes, for which I have extracted a schema whose usefulness may not be immediately clear to you, is how things fit together and how they mesh with the earlier schema. Ultimately, you have to be aware of something constant in what I teach you – although, certainly, you shouldn't just view this constant as a little flag on the horizon by which you can get your bearings, but you should understand where it is taking you and where the detours are. What is constant is my belief that fundamental to understanding what is in Freud is that one recognize the importance of language and speech. I was the first to say this, but the closer we get to our object, the more aware we become of the importance of signifiers in the economy of desire – let's say, in the formation and information of signifieds.

You could appreciate this when listening to the interesting things Mrs Pankow was saying at our scientific meeting last night. It so
144 happens that in America people are concerned with the same thing as I am explaining to you here. They are trying to introduce the fact of communication and what they call the message into the economic determination of psychical disturbances. You were able to hear Mrs Pankow talking about someone who certainly wasn't born yesterday, namely Mr Bateson, anthropologist and ethnographer, who has contributed something that makes us think a little bit beyond the end of our noses concerning therapeutic action.

Bateson tries to locate and formulate the basis of the genesis of psychotic disturbances in something that is established at the level of the mother–child relationship and is not simply an elementary effect of frustration, tension, retention, relaxation and satisfaction, as if interhuman relationships take place at the ends of a piece of elastic. He introduces the notion of communication from the outset, insofar as it is not merely centred on contact, a relationship or an entourage, but on a meaning. He places it at the beginning of what was originally conflicting and harmful in the child's relationship to its mother. What he designates as being the essentially conflicting element in this relationship is the fact that communication is presented in the form of a double bind.

As Mrs Pankow put it so well last night, in the message in which the child has deciphered the behaviour of its mother there are two elements. They are not defined in relation to one another, in the sense in which one would be presented as the subject's defence in relation to what the other means, which is the common notion that you have of a defence mechanism when you analyse. You consider that the intention behind what the subject says is to misrecognize some signification somewhere there inside him, and that what he says to himself – and says to you – is something else [*la couleur à côté*]. That is not what it is about. It's about something that concerns the Other, which the subject receives in such a way that, if he answers one way, he knows, by virtue of this alone, that he's going to find himself cornered with respect to the other. The example that Mrs Pankow gives is this – if I respond to my mother's declaration of love, I provoke her withdrawal, and if I don't listen, that is to say, if I don't respond to her, I lose her.

We are thereby introduced to a true dialectic of double meaning, where the latter already involves a third party. There are not two meanings one behind the other, with a second meaning, located beyond the first and the more authentic of the two. There are two simultaneous messages in the one single meaningful utterance, as it were, which creates a position in the subject whereby he finds

himself at an impasse. This proves that even in America they are making huge progress. 145

Am I saying this is adequate? Mrs Pankow nicely highlighted what is there at the ground level or, one might say, at the empirical level, in this attempt – though it's not a matter of empiricism, of course. If there were not very important work on game theory in America alongside this, Mr Bateson would not have dreamed of introducing into the analysis what is, after all, a reconstruction of what is thought to have occurred early on, or of determining a subject position that is deeply rent or falsified with respect to what in the message is constitutive for him. I say 'constitutive for him' because if his conception did not imply that the message is constitutive for the subject, it is difficult to see how one could attribute such major effects to the original double bind.*

The question that arises concerning the psychoses is what the nature of this process of communication is, precisely, when it fails to be constitutive for the subject. We have to look for another point of reference. Up to this point, when you read Mr Bateson, you see that while everything is, to put it simply, centred on the double message, it is centred on the double message as double meaning. This is precisely where the system fails, and it fails precisely because this conception neglects the signifier's constitutive role in meaning.

Last night I jotted something down in passing – it has now gone missing – where I recorded a remark by Mrs Pankow about psychosis, which amounted more or less to this. There is no speech, she said, that grounds the act of speech. In speech itself, there has to be speech that grounds speech as an act in the subject. This is in line with what I am coming to now.

By stressing the fact that somewhere in speech there has to be something that grounds speech as true, Mrs Pankow was exhibiting a demand for the stabilization of the entire system. To this end, she had recourse to the perspective of 'personality', which at the very least has the merit of demonstrating her sense of the inadequacy of a system that leaves us in a state of uncertainty and fails to deliver an adequate deduction or construction.

I absolutely do not think that it can be formulated this way. I believe that this personalist reference is only psychologically grounded in the sense that we cannot fail to feel and sense that meanings create the impasse that supposedly triggers this profound disturbance in the schizophrenic subject. But, also, we cannot fail to feel and sense that something must be the cause of this deficit, and that this something is not simply the registration of the experience of impasses in meaning, but rather the lack of something that founds meaning itself, and that what is lacking is a signifier – and something 146

more, which is precisely what I am going to explore today. It is not something that presents itself simply as the personality, as what grounds speech as an act, as Mrs Pankow was saying last night, but something that presents itself as giving the law its authority.

By 'law', here, I mean that which is properly articulated at the level of the signifier, namely the text of the law.

Saying that there has to be a person there in order to sustain the authenticity of speech is not the same as saying that there is something that authorizes the text of the law. Effectively, it is sufficient that what authorizes the text of the law is at the level of signifiers. This is what I call the Name-of-the-Father, namely the symbolic father. It's a term that subsists at the level of signifiers and that, in the Other as the seat of the law, represents the Other. This is the signifier that gives the law its support, that promulgates the law. It is the Other in the Other.

This is just what the myth of the Oedipus complex, necessary for Freud's thought, expresses. Look at it closely. If he is obliged to procure the origin of the law in this mythical form, if there is anything that makes it the case that the law is founded on the father, it is necessary for the father to be murdered. The two things are closely linked – the father, insofar as he promulgates the law, is the dead father, which is to say the symbol of the father. The dead father is the Name-of-the-Father, who is there, constructed over the content.

This is quite essential. I will remind you why.

What has been the nub of everything that I have taught you about psychosis these last two years? It's what I have called *Verwerfung*. I have tried to make you sense that it is different from *Verdrängung*, that is, different from the fact that the signifying chain continues to unfold and continues to be organized in the Other, whether you know it or not. This is essentially Freud's discovery.

Verwerfung, as I have said, is not simply what is inaccessible to you, that is, what exists in the Other as repressed and as signifiers. That is *Verdrängung*, and it is the signifying chain. The proof of this is that it continues to act, even though you do not attach even the slightest signification to it yourself, and determines even the slightest signification without your knowing it to be the signifying chain.

I have also told you that there are other things which, on occasion, are *verworfen*. There may be a missing signifier or a missing
147 letter in the chain of signifiers, one that is always missing in the typography. The space of the signifier, the space of the unconscious, is effectively a typographical space, which we must try to define as being constituted along lines and little squares, and as corresponding to topological laws. There may be something lacking in a chain of signifiers. You have to understand the importance of the lack

of the particular signifier I have just mentioned, the Name-of-the-Father, that grounds, as such, the fact that the law exists, that is, its articulation in a certain order of signifiers – the Oedipus complex, the Oedipal law or the law of prohibition of the mother. It is the signifier that signifies that, within these signifiers, the signifier exists.

That is the Name-of-the-Father and, as you see, it is an essential signifier in the Other, and on which I have tried to centre what takes place in psychosis – namely, that the subject must compensate for the lack of the signifier, the Name-of-the-Father. Everything that I have called the chain reaction or disarray produced in psychosis is organized around that point.

2

What should I do now? Should I immediately go back over what I have said concerning President Schreber? Or should I first show you, more precisely, in detail, how to formulate what I have just been showing you at the level of this year's schema?

To my great surprise, not everybody finds this schema interesting – though some do. It has been constructed, don't forget, so as to represent what occurs at a level that deserves to be called a technique, which is the technique of witticisms. This is something quite unusual, since a *Witz* can obviously be constructed by a subject in the most unintentional way in the world. As I have shown you, a witticism is sometimes only the converse of a slip, and experience shows that many witticisms are born in this way – one realizes after the fact that one has been witty, but it happened all by itself. In some cases, this could be taken for exactly the contrary, a sign of naivety, and last time I alluded to naive witticisms.

It was around witticisms, with the satisfaction that results from them and is particular to them, that I tried to organize this schema for you last trimester. I was trying to work out how to think about the source of the special satisfaction they give. This brings us back 148
to nothing less than the dialectic of demand on the basis of the ego.*

Recall the schema for what I managed to refer to as the primordial ideal symbolic moment, one that is completely non-existent.

The moment at which a demand is satisfied is represented by the simultaneous arrival at the Other of the intention, as it appears in the message, and the message as such. The signifiers – this is what is at stake, since this chain is a chain of signifiers – arrive at the Other. The perfect identity, simultaneity, or exact superimposition between the manifestation of the intention, insofar as it is the ego's* intention, and the fact that the signifiers are ratified, as such, in the Other

is at the heart of the very possibility of the satisfaction of speech. If this moment, which I am calling the ideal primordial moment, exists, it must be constituted by the simultaneity, the precise coextensivity, of desire, insofar as it manifests itself, and the signifiers, insofar as they carry and convey it. If this moment exists, then, what follows, that is, what succeeds the message in its passage into the Other, is thus realized both in the Other and in the subject and corresponds to what is necessary for there to be satisfaction. This is, very precisely, the required starting point for understanding that this never happens.

That is, the nature and the effect of signifiers are such that what happens here at M [see graph, p. 85] appears as the signified, that is, as something that is the result of the transformation or refraction of desire when it passes through signifiers. This is why these two lines cross over one another – so as to get you to sense the fact that desire is expressed through, and passes through, signifiers.

Desire crosses the signifying line, and what does it encounter at the level at which it crosses the signifier line? It encounters the Other. We shall see shortly, since we will have to come back to it, what the Other is on the schema. I am not saying it encounters the Other as a person. It encounters it as the treasure trove of signifiers, as the locus of the code. This is where the refraction of desire by the signifier occurs. Desire, then, as the signified, is different when it arrives from what it was at the start, and there you have – I won't say why the moon is not made of blue cheese – but why your desire is always cuckolded. Or, rather, it's you who are cuckolded. You yourself are betrayed in that your desire has slept with signifiers. I do not know how I could articulate these things better to get you to understand them. The entire meaning of the schema is to get you to visualize the idea that the mere passage of desire – as the expression, the high point of the radical ego* – through the chain of signifiers introduces an essential change in the dialectic of desire.

149 It is quite clear that, concerning the satisfaction of desire, everything depends on what passes through point A, originally defined as the locus of the code, which, in itself, *ab origine*, merely by virtue of its signifier structure, introduces an essential modification to a desire at the level at which it passes through signifiers. Here, everything else is implied, since not only is the code here, there is more besides. I locate myself here at the most radical level – but, of course, there is the law, there are prohibitions, there is the superego and so on. But in order to understand how these various levels are constructed, we have to understand that, even at the most radical level, as soon as you speak to someone, there is an Other, another Other in him, as subject of the code, and that we already find ourselves subject to

the dialectic of the cuckoldification of desire. Therefore, everything depends, as it turns out, on what happens at this point of crossover, A, at this level of crossing.

The possibility of satisfying any human desire happens to depend on how it fits into the signifying system, insofar as it is formulated in the subject's speech, and, as M. de la Palice would have said, on the system of signifiers insofar as it resides in the code – that is, at the level of the Other as locus and seat of the code. A child would be convinced on hearing this, and I am not claiming that what I have just explained to you moves us forward one little bit. But it still needs to be spelt out.

This is where we are going to explore the connection I want to make between this schema and what I was telling you before about the essentials of the question of the Name-of-the-Father. You'll see it being prepared and sketched out, not being engendered, and above all not engendering itself, for it involves making a leap to get there. Not everything happens in continuity, it being a characteristic of signifiers to be discontinuous.

What does the technique of jokes bring to our experience? This is what I have been trying to get you to appreciate. While a joke gives no particular immediate satisfaction, it consists in the fact that something happens in the Other that symbolizes what could be called the necessary condition of all satisfaction – namely, that you are understood beyond what you say. In no case, effectively, can what you say really make you understood.

Witticisms unfold in the dimension of metaphor, that is, beyond signifiers, insofar as when you try to signify something with a signifier, you will always signify something else, whatever you do. It is a signifier that gives the appearance of stumbling that satisfies you, simply by virtue of the fact that, by this sign, the Other is acknowledging this dimension of the beyond where what is at issue has to be signified and which you cannot signify as such. This is the dimension 150
that witticisms reveal to us.

This schema is thus grounded in our experience. I realized I had to construct it to explain what goes on in witticisms. What, in witticisms, replaces the failure of desire to be communicated via signifiers, to the point of giving us a kind of happiness, comes about in this way – the Other confirms that a message has stumbled or failed and, in this very stumbling, recognizes the dimension that lies beyond and where true desire is located, that is, what, because of signifiers, never gets to be signified.

You see that the dimension of the Other is a little bit more extensive here. Effectively, here it is not just the seat of the code any more. It intervenes as a subject, ratifies a message in the code and renders it

more complicated. That is, it is already at the level of who it is that constitutes the law as such, since he is capable of adding this trait or message to it as supplementary – that is, as itself designating something beyond the message.

This is why, when the theme came to be formations of the unconscious, I began the year by speaking about witticisms. Let's now try to look at this Other a little more closely – and in a less unusual situation than that of witticisms – insofar as in this dimension we are seeking to discover the necessity for the signifier that founds signifiers, the signifier that institutes the legitimacy of the code or the law. Let's return, then, to our dialectic of desire.

When we address the other, we don't always express ourselves by means of witticisms. We'd be all the happier if we could in a way. This is what I try to do in the brief time I have for the discourse I address to you. I'm not always successful. Whether it is your fault or mine is completely indiscernible from this point of view. But, in the end, at the banal level of what happens when I address the other, there is a word that makes it possible for us to found him in the most elementary way, and which is absolutely marvellous in French if one thinks about all the ambiguities and puns it lends itself to – which I would be embarrassed to make use of here except in the most discreet way possible. As soon as I say this word, what I am evoking will immediately come back to you. It is the word 'you' ['*tu*'].

This 'you' is quite essential to what on several occasions I have called full speech, speech as foundational in the subject's history, the 'you' of 'you are my master' or 'you are my woman'. This 'you'
151 is the signifier of the appeal to the Other, and I remind those of you who were so kind as to follow my entire chain of Seminars on psychosis about the use I put it to, the demonstration that I tried to bring alive for you around the distance between '*Tu es celui qui me suivras*', 'You are the one who shall follow me' and '*Tu est celui qui me suivra*', 'You are the one who will follow me'. What I was already exploring for you at that time and was trying to engage you in is precisely what I am going to allude to now, which I have already given a name to.

In these two sentences, with their differences, there is an appeal. It is more present in one than in the other, and even completely present in one and not at all in the other. In the 'You are the one who shall follow me', there is something that is not in the 'You are the one who will follow me', and it is what is called invocation. If I say, 'You are the one who shall follow me', I invoke you, I pick you out as being the one who will follow me, I solicit in you the 'Yes' that says, 'I am yours, I devote myself to you, I am the one who will follow you.' But if I say, 'You are the one who will follow me', I do nothing

of the kind, I announce, I state, I objectify, and even, on occasion, I reject. It can mean, 'You are the one who will always follow me, and I'm sick of it.' In the most ordinary and most consequential way that this sentence is pronounced, it is a refusal. Of course, the invocation requires quite another dimension, namely that I make my desire depend upon your being, in the sense that I call upon you to follow the pathway of this desire, whatever it happens to be, unconditionally.

This is the process of invocation. The word means I make an appeal to the voice – that is, to what supports speech. Not to speech, but to the subject insofar as he carries it, and that is why I am there at the level that earlier I called the personalist level. Indeed, this is why the personalists pile it on with their 'thou', 'thou, 'thou', 'thou', all day long, with their 'thou' and their 'thine'. Mr Martin Buber, for example, whose name Mrs Pankow mentioned in passing, is an eminent name in this register.

There is, of course, an essential phenomenological level there, and we cannot do without it. Nor must we give in to its mirage and prostrate ourselves. The personalist attitude – this is the danger that we encounter at this level – lends itself fairly freely to mystical prostration. And why not? We don't refuse any attitude to anyone, we simply request the right to understand these attitudes, and this moreover is not forbidden from the personalist side, though it is forbidden from the scientistic side – if you begin to attach authenticity to the mystical position, you yourself are thought to be succumbing to some ridiculous indulgence.

Every subjective structure, of whatever kind, to the extent that we can follow what it articulates, is strictly speaking equivalent to every 152
other from the point of view of subjective analysis. Only stupid idiots like Mr Blondel, the psychiatrist, can object, in the name of some supposedly ineffable morbid consciousness of the lived experience of another, to what seems ineffable but is articulated. This should be rejected out of hand, because there is a confusion here arising from the fact that one thinks that what is not articulated lies in the beyond, whereas it is nothing of the sort – that which lies beyond can be articulated. In other words, we don't need to speak of the ineffable concerning the subject, whether delusional or mystical. At the level of subjective structure, we are in the presence of something that cannot be presented in any other way than the way it is presented, and which, as such, as a consequence, is presented with full value at its own level of credibility.

If there is something ineffable, whether in the delusional or mystical order, by definition he doesn't say it, because it's ineffable. So we are not to judge what he articulates, namely his speech, on the basis

of what he cannot say. If it can be supposed that the ineffable exists, and we are very happy to suppose that it does, we never turn away from grasping whatever is demonstrated as structure in speech, of whatever kind, under the pretext that the ineffable exists. It is possible we will get lost in it, and then we abandon it. But if we don't get lost in it, the order that this speech demonstrates and unveils is to be taken for what it is. In general, we notice that it is infinitely richer to take it as it is and try to articulate the order that it establishes, provided we have the right reference points – and that is what we are trying to do here. If we were to set out with the idea that speech was essentially made for representing the signified, we would go under immediately, because this would be to fall back upon previous oppositions, namely that we have no knowledge of the signified.

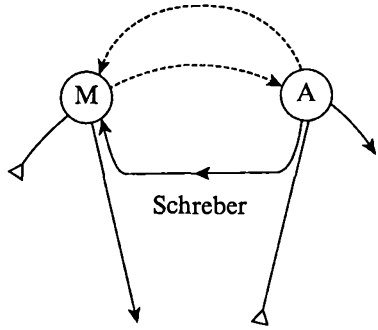
The 'you' in question is the 'you' we invoke. For sure, when we invoke it, this subjective personal impenetrability is involved, but this is not the level at which we are trying to reach it. What is involved in an invocation? The word 'invocation' has a historical usage. It's what was performed in a particular ceremony that the ancients, who had more wisdom than us on certain points, carried out before combat. This ceremony consisted of doing what was necessary – they probably knew what this was – to get the gods of the others on their side. This is exactly what the word 'invocation' means, and it's where the essential relationship that I am now leading you to resides – at this second stage, that of the appeal, the necessary appeal for desire and demand to be satisfied.

153 It is not enough just to say to the Other, 'you', 'you', 'you', and obtain his assistance in a heartbeat. One needs to give him the very voice we want him to have and evoke this voice, which is present in witticisms as their true dimension. A witticism is a provocation, one that does not achieve any great feat, one that does not achieve any great miracle of invocation. An invocation is located at the level of speech insofar as it is articulated vocally in conformity with one's desire.

At this level we find the fact that all satisfaction of demand, to the extent that it depends on the Other, will hinge on what happens here, in this to-and-fro between message and code, code and message, which enables the Other to authenticate my message in the code. We come back to the earlier point – that is, to what constitutes the essence of our interest that together we are bringing to witticisms this year.

I would simply have you remark, in passing, that if you had had this schema, that is to say, that if I had been able, not to give it to you, but to forge it for you at the time of my Seminar on the psychoses, if together we had come to the same witticisms at the same time,

I would have been able to use this to picture what is essentially happening in President Schreber, insofar as he fell prey to, and became a subject absolutely dependent upon, his voices.



Pay close attention to this schema behind me and simply suppose that everything in the Other that might correspond, in whatever way possible, to the level that I am calling the Name-of-the-Father, which incarnates, specifies and particularizes what I have just been explaining to you – that is to say, which represents the Other as what gives the law in the Other its significance – were *verworfen*. Well then, if you imagine the *Verwerfung* of the Name-of-the-Father, that is, that the signifier is absent, you will see that the two links in dotted 154
lines here – namely the to-and-fro between message and code and code and message – are thereby destroyed and rendered impossible. This makes it possible to enter on this schema the two fundamental types of voice phenomena experienced by President Schreber as a substitute for this defect or lack. Let me add that when this hollow or void appears, it's because the Name-of-the-Father has been evoked at least once – because what has been appealed to at the level of the 'you' at a given moment is precisely the Name-of-the-Father, insofar as it is capable of endorsing the message and insofar as, by virtue of this fact, it is the guarantor of the fact that the law as such presents itself as autonomous. That's where the tipping point is, the turning point that tips the subject into psychosis – and I am leaving to one side for the moment in what way, at what moment, and why.

That year I began my discussion of psychosis with a sentence I had extracted from one of my patient interviews. People grasped very well the moment at which the sentence muttered by the patient, 'I have just come from the butcher's', tipped over onto the other side. It was when the word 'sow' appeared in apposition. No longer able to be assumed or integrated by the subject, it tipped over, through its own movement, through its own inertia as a signifier,

from being one of her lines in her own script, into the Other. This was elementary phenomenology, pure and simple. In Schreber what was the result of the exclusion of the links between the message and the Other? The result presented itself in the form of the two broad categories of the voice and hallucinations.

First, there are the utterances at the level of the Other, involving the signifiers of what is presented as the *Grundsprache*, the fundamental language. They are the original elements of the code articulable in relation to one another, for this fundamental language is so well organized that it literally covers the world with its network of signifiers. Nothing else in it is sure or certain, except that total, essential signification is involved. Each of these words has its own weight, emphasis and mass as a signifier. The subject articulates them to one another. Whenever they are isolated, the properly enigmatic dimension of signification, insofar as the latter is infinitely less apparent than the certitude it conveys, is altogether striking. In other words, here the Other only transmits beyond the code, as it were, without there being any possibility of integrating into it what might come from the place in which the subject articulates his message.

From another perspective, if you put the little arrows back in here, messages come. They are not in any way authenticated by the Other's return, as the support of the code, back to the message, nor
155 are they integrated into the code with any intention of any kind. They come from the Other, as does every message, since there is nowhere for a message to come from except from the Other, given that it is made from a language that is the language of the Other – even when it comes from one of us as a reflection of the other. These messages, then, issue from the Other, they leave this reference point behind and become articulated in this sort of proposal, 'And now I want to give you . . .', 'Specifically I want this for myself . . .', 'And now, that must however . . .'.

What's missing? The principal thought, the one expressed at the level of the fundamental language. The voices themselves, which know the entire theory, also say, 'Reflection is missing'. This means, in effect, that messages of the other category of messages come from the Other. They are a type of message that cannot be ratified as such. The message appears here, in that pure and broken dimension of signifiers, as something whose signification is only contained beyond oneself, as something that, by virtue of not being able to contribute to authentification by the 'you', appears as having no other aim than to present as lacking the position of the 'you', where signification is authenticated. Of course, the subject is driven to complete the signification himself, and therefore gives the sentence its complements. 'I do not now wish', say the voices, but elsewhere

he says to himself that he, Schreber, 'cannot acknowledge that he is a . . .'. The message remains broken in that it is unable to go via the path of the 'you' and can only arrive at point gamma as an interrupted message.

I think I have indicated well enough that in order for the dimension of the Other to be fully able to exercise its function as Other, as the locus of the depot or treasure trove of signifiers, it must include the following, which is that it also contain the signifier of the Other as Other. The Other also has, beyond itself, this Other capable of giving the law its foundation. This is a dimension which, of course, is also of the order of signifiers, and is embodied in people who underpin this authority. The fact that on occasion these people are absent, that for example the father is deficient in the sense that he is too stupid, is not what's essential. What is essential is that, in one way or another, the subject has acquired the dimension of the Name-of-the-Father.

Of course what actually happens, and you can glean this from biographies, is that the father is often there in the kitchen doing the dishes and wearing his wife's apron. This is not at all sufficient to make a schizophrenic.

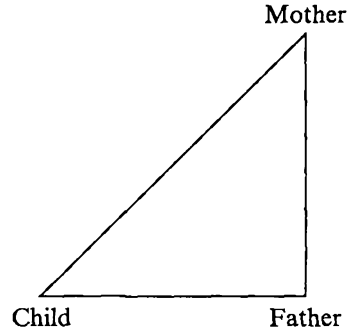
3 156

I am now going to write up on the blackboard the little schema with which I will introduce what I will talk about next time and which will make it possible for us to find a way to draw the distinction, which might seem a bit scholastic to you, between the Name-of-the-Father and the real father – the Name-of-the-Father insofar as it may possibly be missing and the father who doesn't seem to need to be there for him not to be lacking. I will therefore introduce what will be the theme of my Seminar next time, namely what, as of today, I will call the paternal metaphor.

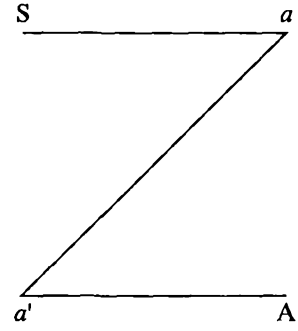
A name is never a signifier just like any other. To be sure, it is important to have one, but that does not mean for all that that one has access to it, any more than one has access to the satisfaction I was talking to you about earlier – the satisfaction of desire, cuckolded in principle. This is why, in the famous speech act Mrs Pankow was talking about yesterday, the invocation I was talking about earlier is going to be actualized concretely, psychologically in a dimension that we call metaphorical.

In other words, you have to have the Name-of-the-Father – but you also have to know how to use it. It's on this that the destiny and outcome of the entire affair may largely depend.

There are the real words that flow around the subject, notably in his childhood, but the essence of the paternal metaphor, which I announce to you today and which we will talk about at greater length next time, consists of the following triangle:



157 And we also have this schema:



Schema *L*

Everything that happens at S, the subject, depends on what signifiers are placed at A. If A truly is the locus of signifiers, it must itself carry some reflection of the essential signifier that I represent here by this zigzag, and which elsewhere, in my article,'The Purloined Letter', I called schema L.

Three of these four cardinal points are given by the three subject terms of the Oedipus complex as signifiers, which we encounter at each of the vertices of the triangle. I will return to this next time, but I ask you for the moment to grant me what I am telling you – a story to whet your appetite.

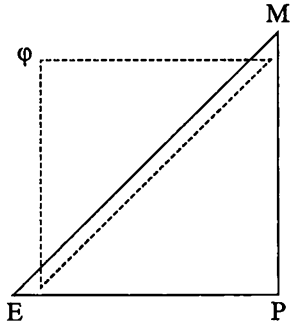
The fourth term is the S. He – not only do I grant you this but this is where one starts – is in effect ineffably stupid, for he does not have

his own signifier. He lies outside the three vertices of the Oedipal triangle, and he is dependent on what takes place in this game. He is the dummy in the game. It's even because the game is structured in this way – I mean that it is conducted not only as a particular game, but as a game that is correctly instituted – that the subject will find himself dependent upon the three poles called ego-ideal, superego and reality.

But to understand the transformation of the first triad into the second, you have to see that, dummy that he is, the subject – and there is a subject – gets little reward for his efforts in this game. From the unconstituted point where he is, it will be necessary for him to contribute to it – if not with his dollars, which perhaps he doesn't have as yet, then at least with his hide, that is to say with his images, his imaginary structure and all that follows. This is how the fourth term, the S, is going to be represented in something imaginary that is opposed to the signifier of the Oedipus complex and which, if it is to work, has to be ternary.

Of course, there is an entire stock, the entire baggage of images. 158
To see this, open the books by Mr Jung and his school, and you'll see that there is no end to such images – they sprout and they vegetate everywhere. There is the serpent, the dragon, tongues, the flaming eye, the green plant, the pot of flowers, the concierge. They are all fundamental images, incontestably stuffed with signification. It is just that we can do strictly nothing with them, and if you move about at this level, you will only succeed in losing yourself, along with your little lamp, in the vegetating forest of primitive archetypes.

As to what interests us, namely the intersubjective dialectic, there are three images selected – I am articulating my thought a little too strongly here – to take on the role of guides. This is not difficult to understand, since something is in some way already ready, not only for being the homologue of the base of the triangle mother–father–child, but for merging with it – it is the relationship between



the body, fragmented and by the same token enveloped by a good number of these images we have been talking about, and the unifying function of the total image of the body. In other words, the ego's relationship with the specular image already gives us the base of the imaginary triangle, here indicated by the dotted line.

The other point [φ] is where we will see the effect of the paternal metaphor.

I gave you this other point in my Seminar last year on the object relation, but now you will see what place it has in formations of the unconscious. I think that you will have recognized this point just in the fact of seeing it here in the third position with the mother and the child. We see it here in another relation, which I did not at all hide from you last year, since we ended on the relation between the Name-of-the-Father and what caused the fantasy of the little horse to emerge in our little Hans. This third point – I will name it, finally,
159 I think you already have it on the tip of your tongue – is nothing other than the phallus. And this is why the phallus occupies such a central place as an object in the Freudian economy.

This alone is enough to show us where *La psychanalyse d'aujourd'hui* is in error, which is moving further and further away from it. It eludes the fundamental function of the phallus, with which the subject imaginarily identifies himself, reducing it to the notion of part object. This brings us back to comedy.

I will leave you there for today, having shown you the ways in which the complex discourse, in which I am trying to bring together everything I have been presenting to you, comes together and holds together.

8 January 1958

IX

THE PATERNAL METAPHOR

Superego, reality, ego-ideal
Ways the father can fail
The delicate question of the inverted Oedipus complex
The phallus as a signified
The dimensions of something Other

I made an exception and announced the title of what I am going to talk about today, namely the paternal metaphor.

Not long ago, someone, slightly worried, I imagine, about the direction in which I was taking things, asked me, 'What do you intend to speak about for the rest of the year?' And I replied, 'I intend to address questions of structure.' That way, I didn't compromise myself. Nevertheless, I actually do intend to talk to you about questions of structure this year concerning formations of the unconscious. To put it simply, it's a matter of putting in place things that you talk about every day and by which you get confused every day in a way that in the end you don't even worry about any more.

The paternal metaphor, then, is about the father's function, as one might say in terms of interhuman relations. You encounter complications every day in the way in which you might have to make use of it as a concept that has taken on a certain familiar appearance since you started talking about it. What you need to know is precisely whether you are talking about it in the form of a coherent discourse.

The father's function has a place, a fairly large place, in the history of analysis. It lies at the heart of the question of the Oedipus complex. And that's where you see it presented. Freud introduced it right at the start, as the Oedipus complex appears as early as *The Interpretation of Dreams*. What the unconscious reveals in the beginning is first and foremost the Oedipus complex. The importance of the revelation of the unconscious is what infantile amnesia relates

to. What it relates to is the existence of the child's desires for the mother and the fact that these desires are repressed. And not only are they suppressed, but it has been forgotten that these desires are
162 primordial. And not only are they primordial, but they are always there. That is where analysis started, and that is the basis on which a number of clinical questions arise.

I have tried to organize the questions that have been raised in the history of analysis in relation to the Oedipus complex in a number of directions.

1

I distinguish three historical poles, which I will briefly situate for you.

In the first, I will inscribe a question of historical importance. It's the question whether the Oedipus complex, initially promoted as fundamental in neurosis but which Freud's work turns into something universal, was to be encountered not only in neurotics but also in the normal person. And the question arose for a good reason, since the Oedipus complex has an essentially normalizing function. On the one hand, then, one could consider that it's an accident of the Oedipus complex that produces neurosis, but also raise the question whether there exist neuroses without an Oedipus complex.

A number of observations seem to indicate, effectively, that the Oedipal drama doesn't always play the essential role but, for instance, that the child's exclusive relationship to its mother does. Experience thus obliged us to admit that there could be subjects presenting with a neurosis in which one did not at all find an Oedipus complex. I remind you that 'Névrose sans complexe d'Oedipe?' ['Neurosis without Oedipus Complex?'] is precisely the title of an article by Charles Odier.

The notion of a neurosis without an Oedipus complex correlates with the totality of questions raised about what has been called the maternal superego. At the time at which the question of neurosis without an Oedipus complex was raised, Freud had already formulated that the superego was of paternal origin. And so the question arose – is the superego really uniquely of paternal origin? Is there not, in neurosis, behind the paternal superego, a much more demanding, more oppressive, more devastating and more insistent maternal superego?

I do not want to go on at length, for we have a long road to travel. That, then, is the first reference point, where the exceptional cases and the relationship between the paternal superego and the maternal superego are grouped together.

Now for the second pole.

Independently of whether the Oedipus complex is present or lacking for a subject, the question has been raised whether an entire field of pathology that falls under our jurisdiction and presents itself to our jurisdiction should not be referred to what we can call the pre-Oedipal field.

There is the Oedipus complex. This Oedipus complex is thought 163
of as representing a phase, and while maturity is present at a certain moment in the subject's evolution, the Oedipus complex is always there. But what Freud had himself put forward in the early stages of his work, five years after *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, was likely to make it understood that what happens prior to the Oedipus complex also has its importance.

This assumes importance in Freud, to be sure, but via the Oedipus complex. It's just that at no point at that time was the notion of retroaction highlighted, the *Nachträglichkeit* of the Oedipus complex, to which as you know I am always insistently drawing your attention. This notion seemed to have escaped thought. People have only thought about the demands of the temporal past.

Certain parts of our field of experience refer especially to this field of pre-Oedipal stages in the subject's development – namely, perversion on the one hand, and psychosis on the other.

For some people, perversion was the primary, untouched state. We are no longer at that point, thank goodness. While in the early days this was a legitimate conception, at least in the name of an approximation to the question, it's certainly less so in our day. Perversion was essentially thought to be a pathology whose aetiology supposedly referred specifically to the pre-Oedipal field, a pathology conditioned by an abnormal fixation. It is, moreover, for this reason that perversion was only ever thought to be an inverted neurosis or, more precisely, a neurosis that hadn't been inverted, with the neurosis remaining patent. What in neurosis had been inverted was openly apparent in perversion. Because perversion had not been repressed, since it had not passed through the Oedipus complex, the unconscious was there, out in the open. It's a conception that nobody entertains any longer, which, however, doesn't mean that we have advanced any further.

I make the point, then, that questions of perversion and psychosis are grouped around the question of the pre-Oedipal field.

Everything that is involved here can now be clarified for us in a number of ways. Whether we are dealing with perversion or psychosis, it's always a matter of the imaginary function. Even without being particularly familiar with the use we make of the image here,

each and every one of you is able to appreciate the special importance it has in these two registers – from quite different angles, of course. An endophasic invasion comprised of words heard doesn't have the troublesome, parasitic character of an image in a perversion, but, in both cases, it's a matter of pathological manifestations
164 in which the field of reality is profoundly disturbed by images.

The history of psychoanalysis shows us that our experience, the concern for coherence and the manner in which theory is constructed and makes sense have led to some occasionally profound disturbances to the field of reality by the invasion of the imaginary being attributed to the pre-Oedipal field. Moreover, the term 'imaginary' seems to render better service than the term 'fantasy', which would be unsuitable for talking about the psychoses and the perversions. An entire direction in analysis committed itself to the exploration of the pre-Oedipal field, even to the point that one could say that this is the direction in which all essential progress since Freud has been made.

In this respect I emphasize the paradox, essential to today's theme, of the testimony that Mrs Melanie Klein's work constitutes.

In any work, as with anything that is put into words, there are two levels. On the one hand, there is what she says, what she formulates in a discourse and what she wants to say, insofar as, if we separate the wanting and the saying, her intention is there in the meaning. And then, we would not be analysts in the sense in which I am trying to get you to hear things here, if we did not know that she sometimes says a little bit more beyond that. This is even habitually what our approach consists in – grasp what one is saying beyond what one means to say. Mrs Melanie Klein's work says things that are full of importance, but sometimes through nothing other than the internal contradictions of her texts, which may be subject to certain criticisms – which have been made. Then, there is also what she says without meaning to say it, and one of the most striking things in this respect is the following.

This woman has contributed views that are so profound and enlightening, not only about pre-Oedipal times, but about the children that she examines and analyses at a stage that, in a first approximation of the theory, is presumed to be pre-Oedipal. This analyst, who forcibly explores, in children, in terms it seems that are sometimes preverbal, almost at the emergence of speech – well then, the further back she goes into the supposedly pre-Oedipal time of history, the more she sees there, the more she always, all the time, permanently, sees the Oedipal question there.

Read her article on the Oedipus complex, specifically. She describes an extremely precocious stage of development, the

so-called stage of the formation of bad objects, which is prior to the so-called paranoid-depressive phase and is bound up with the appearance of the mother's body in its totality. Listening to her, the predominant role in the evolution of the child's initial object relations is played by the insides of the mother's body as the centre 165
of the child's entire attention. Now, you will be surprised to observe that, basing herself on drawings, words and an entire reconstruction of the psychology of children at this stage, Mrs Melanie Klein testifies to us that amongst the bad objects present in the mother's body – including all the rivals, the bodies of brothers and sisters, past, present and future – there is, quite precisely, the father represented in the form of his penis.

This is indeed a discovery that merits our attention, since it's situated at the initial stages of imaginary relationships, to which the properly schizophrenic functions, and psychotic functions in general, can be attached. This contradiction is a highly valuable one, when Mrs Melanie Klein's intention was to go off and explore pre-Oedipal states. The further back she goes on the imaginary plane, the further back she discovers – very difficult to explain if we cling to a purely historical notion of the Oedipus complex – the appearance of the paternal third term, and this is so from the child's earliest imaginary phases. This is why I say that her work says more than she means to say.

Here, then, we have already defined two poles in the evolution of interest around the Oedipus complex – first, questions of the superego and neuroses without the Oedipus complex and, second, questions concerning disturbances that are produced in the field of reality.

The third pole, equally deserving of comment – the Oedipus complex's relationship with genitalization, as one says. This is not the same thing.

On the one hand – a point that so many explorations and discussions in history have moved into the background, but which always remains implicit in everything clinical – the Oedipus complex has a normative function, not simply in the subject's moral structure, nor in his relations with reality, but concerning the assumption of his sex, which, as you know, still retains a certain ambiguity in analysis. Moreover, the properly genital function is the object of a maturation that follows an initial sexual spurt in the order of the organic, for which an anatomical support has been sought in the double growth of the testicles and the creation of spermatozoa. The relationship between this organic growth and the existence of the Oedipus complex in the human species has remained a phylogenetic question over which a lot of obscurity hovers, to the point where nobody takes

the risk of writing articles on the subject any more. But, actually, this question has been no less present in the history of analysis.

The question of genitalization is therefore twofold. There is, on
166 the one hand, growth which carries an evolution or a maturation. There is, on the other hand, in the Oedipus complex, the subject's assumption of his own sex – that is, to call things by their name, what makes it the case that a man assumes the virile type and that a woman assumes a certain feminine type, recognizes herself as a woman and identifies with her functions as a woman. Virility and feminization are the two terms that translate what is essentially the function of the Oedipus complex. Here we find ourselves at the level at which the Oedipus complex is directly tied to the function of the ego-ideal – it has no other meaning.

Here, then, are the three chapters into which you can classify every discussion that has been produced around the Oedipus complex and, consequently, around the function of the father – for they are one and the same thing. There is no question of the Oedipus complex if there is no father, and, inversely, to speak about the Oedipus complex is to introduce the function of the father as essential.

I will repeat for those who take notes. On the historical subject of the Oedipus complex, everything revolves around three poles – the Oedipus complex in relation to the superego, in relation to reality and in relation to the ego-ideal. The ego-ideal, to the extent that genitalization – insofar as it has been assumed – becomes an element in the ego-ideal. Reality, insofar as it concerns relations between the Oedipus complex and the afflictions that involve a disruption of the relationship to reality – perversion and psychosis.

I will summarize this on the blackboard, with an addition whose signification you will see later.

Superego	R.i
Reality	$S \leftarrow S'.r$
Ego-ideal	I.s

Now let's try and go a bit further.

2

Now that you have these broad, global groupings, underlined by history, amply present to assist you, we are going to move forward into the third chapter – the function of the Oedipus complex insofar

as it directly affects the assumption of one's sex – and what has been so little clarified with respect to the castration complex.

We are happy enough to take things from the clinical angle and naively ask, concerning cases, 'And what about the father? What was he doing during that time? What was his involvement in the 167
situation?'

The question of the father's absence or presence, of his beneficial or harmful nature is clearly not hidden. We have even seen the term 'paternal deficiency' appear recently, which was not a minor topic to take on – knowing what people have said on the matter, and whether it holds up, is another question. But in the end, this paternal deficiency, whether known by this name or not, is a topic on today's agenda in the evolution of analysis that is becoming increasingly environmentalist, as it's elegantly expressed.

Not every analyst falls into this trap, thank goodness. A lot of analysts, if you bring them biographical information as interesting as, 'But the parents didn't get on, there was marital conflict and that explains everything', will answer, even those with whom we are not in agreement, 'So what? This proves absolutely nothing. We would expect no particular kind of effect', and they would be right.

That said, when one is seeking this paternal deficiency, what is one interested in concerning the father? Questions in the biographical register come flooding in. Was the father there or not? Did he travel? Was he away? Did he return often? And also – can an Oedipus complex be constituted in a normal manner when there is no father? These are questions that are very interesting in themselves, and I would say even more. It was from this angle that the first paradoxes were introduced, those that led to raising the questions that followed. It was then noticed that an Oedipus complex could be very well formed even when the father was not there.

At the very beginning, it was always thought that it was some excess in the father's presence, or excess in the father, that created all the dramas. This was the time when the image of the terrifying father was considered a damaging element. In neurosis, it was very soon observed that it was even more serious when he was too nice. We were slow to learn these lessons, and now we are at the other extreme, wondering about paternal deficiencies. There are weak fathers, submissive fathers, subjugated fathers, fathers castrated by their wife, and, finally, ill fathers, blind fathers, bankrupt fathers and whatever you want. We should nevertheless try to detect what can be extracted from such a situation and find the minimum of formulas that will enable us to move forward.

First of all, the question of his concrete presence or concrete absence, as someone in the surroundings. If we place ourselves at

168 the level at which these researches take place, that is to say at the level of reality, one can say that it's completely possible, conceivable, actualized and palpable in our experience that the father is there even when he isn't there, which should already encourage us to adopt a certain level of prudence in the use of the environmentalist point of view concerning the father's function. Even in cases in which the father isn't there, or the child has been left alone with its mother, completely normal Oedipus complexes – normal in both senses, normal as normalizing on the one hand, and also normal insofar as they denormalize, I mean by their neuroticizing effect, for example – are established in a manner that is exactly homogeneous with other cases. First point that should grab our attention.

Concerning the deficiency of the father, I would simply point out to you that one never knows in what respect the father is deficient. In certain cases, we're told he's too nice, which would seem to mean that he should be nasty. On the other hand, the fact that, manifestly, he can be too nasty, implies that it would perhaps be better if from time to time he were nice. In the end, we went around this little merry-go-round a long time ago. We discerned that the problem of the father's deficiency did not directly concern the child in question, but, as was obvious from the outset, that one could begin to say things that were a little more effective concerning this deficiency by taking it in the context of the place he has to occupy as a member of the fundamental trio of the family. But one did not, for all that, manage to formulate what was at stake any better.

I do not want to dwell on this at length, but last year we spoke about it with respect to little Hans. We saw the difficulties that we had in pinpointing where the deficiency of the paternal character lay, taken solely from the environmentalist point of view, whereas he was far from being deficient in his family – he was there, close to his wife, he fulfilled his role, he talked about things and she would tell him where to shove it a bit too often, but in the end he was very involved with his child, he was not absent, and so little absent that he even had his child analysed, which is the best outlook that one could expect from a father, at least in this sense.

It's worth coming back to the question of the father's deficiency, but one enters here into a world that is so much in movement that we should try to draw a distinction that makes it possible to see in what way the research falls down. It falls down, not because of what it finds, but because of what it seeks. I believe that the fault in the orientation is that one is confusing two things that have a relation-
169 ship but are not to be confused – the father as normative and the father as normal. Of course, the father can be very denormativizing insofar as he himself isn't normal, but that is to reject the question at

the level of structure – neurotic, psychotic – of the father. Therefore, the father's normality is one question, that of his normal position in the family is another.

The third point I put forward – his position in the family isn't to be confused with an exact definition of his normativizing role. Speaking of his deficiency in the family isn't the same as speaking of his deficiency in the complex. Effectively, to speak about his deficiency in the complex, we have to introduce another dimension than the realist dimension defined by his characterological, biographical or other mode of presence in the family.

It's in that direction that I am going to take my next step.

3

Now that you can see the current state of the question, more or less, I am going to attempt to introduce a little bit of order and get a broader view of these paradoxes. Let's now introduce the father's role more accurately. Since it's his place in the complex that can give an indication of the direction in which to move forward and establish a correct formulation, let's now investigate the complex and go back to the ABC of it.

At the outset, the terrifying father. Still, this image summarizes something much more complex, as the name indicates. The father intervenes at several levels. First, he prohibits the mother. That is the function and origin of the Oedipus complex. It's where the father connects to the primordial law of the prohibition of incest. It's this father, we are told, who is charged with representing this prohibition. Sometimes he has to directly, as when the child is too effusive, demonstrative or indulges in its inclinations, but he plays his role well beyond this. It's through his entire presence, through his effects in the unconscious, that he succeeds in prohibiting the mother. You are waiting for me to say, 'under the threat of castration'. It's true, it has to be said, but it's not so simple. It's understood that castration has a manifest role here, one that is increasingly confirmed. The link between castration and the law is essential, but let's see how this presents itself to us clinically. I feel obliged to remind you of this because my remarks produce all sorts of textual echoes in you.

Let's start with the boy. The relationship between the boy and his father is regulated – this is taken for granted – by the fear of 170
castration. What is this fear of castration? How are we to take it? We encounter it in the initial experience of the Oedipus complex, but in what form? We encounter it as a form of retaliation within

an aggressive relationship. The aggression arises in the boy insofar as his privileged object, the mother, has been prohibited him and is directed towards the father. It returns to him as a function of the dual relationship, insofar as he imaginarily projects intentions onto the father that are equivalent to or reinforced in relation to his own but which find their point of departure in his own aggressive tendencies. In short, the fear experienced towards the father is clearly centrifugal – I mean it has its centre in the subject. This presentation agrees both with experience and with the history of analysis. It's from this angle that, as experience very quickly taught us, the effect of the fear experienced in the Oedipus complex with respect to the father has to be assessed.

Although castration is profoundly bound up with the symbolic articulation of the prohibition of incest, it appears, then, in our entire experience, and particularly with respect to those who are its privileged objects, namely neurotics, on the imaginary level. That is where it starts. It doesn't start with a commandment of the type that the law of Manu formulates – 'Whosoever should sleep with his mother shall cut off his genitals, and holding them in his right hand' – or left, I don't remember which very well – 'will go towards the west until he dies.' That's the law, but this law has not particularly, as such, reached the ears of our neurotics. In general, it's even somewhat left in the shadows. There are, moreover, other ways of dealing with it, but I do not have the time to spend on it today.

And so, the manner in which a neurotic embodies the castrating threat is bound up with imaginary aggression. It's retaliation. Just as Jupiter is quite capable of castrating Chronos, our little Jupiters fear that Chronos will do the job himself first.

Our examination of the Oedipus complex, the way it presents itself in experience, was introduced by Freud and has been articulated in theory, gives us something different again, which is the delicate question of the inverted Oedipus complex. I do not know if it seems self-evident to you, but in reading Freud's article, or any other article by any other author on the subject, whenever the question of the Oedipus complex arises, one is always struck by the extremely shifting, nuanced and disconcerting role that the function of the inverted Oedipus complex plays.

The inverted Oedipus complex is never absent from the func-
171 tion of the Oedipus complex – I mean, the element of love for the father cannot be avoided. It's what brings the Oedipus complex to an end, its dissolution, in a dialectic that remains very ambiguous between love and identification, identification as rooted in love. Identification and love, these are not the same thing – one can identify with someone without loving them, and vice versa – but the two

terms are nevertheless closely tied to and absolutely indissociable from one another.

In Freud's article about the dissolution of the complex, '*Die Untergang des Ödipuskomplexes*' ['The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex'], from 1924, read the explanation he gives of the final identification which is its outcome. It's insofar as the father is loved that the subject identifies with him and discovers the final solution to the Oedipus complex in a composite of amnesic repression and the acquisition within himself of this ideal term, owing to which he becomes the father. I am not saying that he is henceforth and immediately a little male, but he too can become someone, he already has the titles in his pocket, the matter in reserve, and when the time comes, providing things go well and the little piglets don't eat it, at the time of puberty he will have his penis all ready with its certificate – 'Daddy was there to confer it on me at the right moment'.

That's not how it happens if a neurosis declares itself, precisely because something's not in order in the title in question. However, the inverted Oedipus complex isn't so simple either. It's via the same pathway, that of love, that the position of inversion can be produced – namely, in lieu of a beneficial identification, the subject finds himself affected by a nice little passive position at the unconscious level which will reappear in due course, placing him in a kind of angle bisector – *squeeze-panic*. It's a position the subject is caught in, which he has discovered all alone, and it is quite advantageous. It consists in placing oneself in the right place to gain the favours of this redoubtable father who has forbidden so many things but who is otherwise quite nice – that is to say, getting him to love one. But since getting him to love one consists first of all in joining the ranks of women, and since one still retains one's little virile self-love, this position, as Freud explains, carries the danger of castration – hence this form of unconscious homosexuality that places the subject in a conflictual situation with multiple consequences. On the one hand, the constant return of the homosexual position with respect to the father and, on the other, its suspension, that is, its repression, by virtue of the threat of castration that this position entails.

None of this is simple. Well, we are trying to develop something that allows us to conceptualize it in a more rigorous manner and ask better questions in any given case.

So let's summarize. As before, the summary will consist of introducing a number of distinctions that serve as a prelude to realigning the point that isn't working. Already, earlier, we were getting to this – that the question has not been raised with respect to the ego-ideal. Let us also try here to carry out the reduction that we have 172

just started to undertake. I put the following to you – it's not too great a claim to say here and now that, here, the father comes to the position of intruder. And not simply because his sheer volume makes him an encumbrance, but because he prohibits. What does he prohibit, exactly?

Let's press on and draw some distinctions. Do we have to bring the emergence of the genital drive in and say that, in the first instance, he prohibits its real satisfaction? On the one hand, the latter seems to take place earlier. But it's also clear that something revolves around the fact that he prohibits the small child from making use of his penis at the time at which the tendencies of the said penis start to manifest themselves. We will say, therefore, that it's a question of prohibition by the father with respect to the real drive.

But why the father? Experience shows that the mother does too. Recall the observation of little Hans, where it's the mother who says, 'Put it away, you don't do that.' In general, it's most often the mother who says, 'If you keep on doing that, we will call the doctor who will cut it off.' It's therefore correct to point out that the father, as he who prohibits at the level of the real drive, isn't so essential. Let's return, in this connection, to what I contributed last year – as you see, these things always end up being useful – my table with three levels.

real father	castration	imaginary
symbolic mother	frustration	real
imaginary father	privation	symbolic

What is the issue at the level of the threat of castration? The issue is the real intervention of the father concerning an imaginary threat, R.i, since it's a fairly rare occurrence that he gets it cut off in reality. I point out to you that on this table castration is a symbolic act, the agent of which is someone real, the father or the mother who tells him, 'You will have it cut off', and whose object is an imaginary
173 object – if the child feels it has been cut off, it's because he imagines it. I point out to you that this is paradoxical. You could make the following objection – 'This is the actual level of castration, and you are telling me that the father isn't all that useful!' That is indeed what I am saying. Yes, it is.

Also, what does the father prohibit? This is the point we started with – he prohibits the mother. As object, she is his, she isn't the child's. This is the level at which this rivalry with the father, which

engenders aggression quite by itself, is established. The father does indeed frustrate the child of its mother.

Here you have another level, that of frustration. Here, the father intervenes as having rights and not as a real person. Even if he isn't there, even if he calls the mother on the telephone, for example, the result is the same. Here it's the father as symbolic who intervenes and frustrates – an imaginary act concerning an object that is quite real, which is the mother insofar as the child needs her, S′.r.

Then we have the third level, that of privation, which intervenes in the articulation of the Oedipus complex. This level involves the father insofar as he is preferred by the mother, which is a dimension that you are absolutely obliged to bring into the final function, the one that results in the formation of the ego-ideal, $S \leftarrow S'.r$. It's inasmuch as the father becomes, in whatever way, through strength or weakness, an object that the mother prefers that the final identification can be established. The question of the inverted Oedipus complex and its function is established at this level. I would go even further – this is where the question of the difference of the effect of the complex upon the boy and the girl is centred.

Everything proceeds smoothly as far as the girl is concerned, and it's for this reason that the function of the castration complex is said to be asymmetrical for the boy and the girl. It's the entry that she finds difficult, whereas at the end the solution is made easier, since the father, as bearer of the phallus, has no difficulty in getting himself preferred over the mother. For the boy, on the other hand, it's a different matter, and this is where there remains a gap. How does the father get himself preferred over the mother insofar as this is how the exit from the Oedipus complex occurs? We find ourselves faced with the same difficulty we encountered with respect to the establishment of the inverted Oedipus complex. It seems to me as a consequence that, for the boy, the Oedipus complex is always the least normativizing, whereas, really, the implication of what we are told is that it's the most, because virility is assumed via identification with the father.

In the end, the problem is how, in the case of the boy, it comes about that the father's essential function of prohibition doesn't result in what is the very clear conclusion on the third level – 174
namely, the privation that is correlated with identification with the ideal, which tends to be produced for both boy and girl. It's to the extent that the father becomes her ego-ideal that the girl's recognition that she doesn't have the phallus occurs. But this is good for her – whereas for the boy it would be an absolutely disastrous outcome, as it sometimes is. Here, the agent is I, whereas the object is s – I.s.

In other words, at the time of the normativizing outcome of the Oedipus complex, the child recognizes not having – not truly having what he has, in the case of the boy, and what she doesn't have, in the case of the girl.

What happens at the level of identification with the ideal, a level at which the father gets the mother to prefer him, and not at all at the exit from the Oedipus complex, must literally result in privation. For the girl, this result is entirely admissible, and entirely conformizing, even though it's never completely achieved, for there always remains a little aftertaste, which is called *Penisneid*, proof that it doesn't really work rigorously. But in the case where it must work, if we stick to the schema, the boy should always be castrated. There is, therefore, something that doesn't work, that is missing in our explanation.

Let me now attempt to introduce the solution.

What is a father? I am not saying 'in the family', for in the family he is whatever he wants to be – he is a shadow, he is a banker, he is whatever he has to be, he is or he isn't it. This is of overriding importance sometimes, but it may also be of none at all. The question is entirely about what he is in the Oedipus complex.

Well then, there, the father isn't a real object, even if he has to intervene as a real object to embody castration. If he isn't a real object, what is he?

He isn't solely an ideal object either because, on that side of things, it's only accidents that can happen. Well, the Oedipus complex is, nevertheless, not solely a catastrophe since it's the foundation of our relationship to culture, as one says.

And so, naturally, you are going to tell me, 'The father is the symbolic father, you have already said as much.' In effect, I have already said it to you often enough for me not to repeat it to you today. What I am bringing you today is giving precisely a bit more precision to the notion of the symbolic father. It's this – the father is a metaphor.

What is a metaphor? Let's state it straight out and put it up on our table, which will enable us to rectify the difficult consequences
175 of the table. A metaphor, as I have already explained to you, is a signifier that comes to take the place of another signifier. I am saying that this is the father in the Oedipus complex, even if that must be astonishing to the ears of some people.

I am saying exactly this – the father is a signifier substituted for another signifier. That is the mainspring, the essential and unique mainspring, of the father's intervention in the Oedipus complex. And if you don't look for the paternal deficiencies at this level, you won't find them anywhere else.

The father's function in the Oedipus complex is to be a signifier substituted for the first signifier introduced into symbolization, the maternal signifier. According to the formula that, as I once explained to you, was the formula for metaphor, the father comes to the place of the mother, S in the place of S′, S′ being the mother insofar as she is already linked to something that was x, which is the signified in relationship to the mother.

$$\frac{\text{Father}}{\text{Mother}} \cdot \frac{\text{Mother}}{x}$$

The mother comes and goes. It's because I am a small being who is already caught up in the symbolic, because I have learnt to symbolize, that it's possible to say that she comes and goes. In other words, I perceive her or I do not perceive her, the world changes with her arrival, and it may disappear.

The question is – what is the signified? What does she want? I would really like it to be me that she wants, but it's very clear that it's not just me that she wants. There are other things at work in her. What is at work in her is the *x*, the signified. And the signified of the mother's comings and goings is the phallus.

The child, more or less shrewdly, or with more or less luck, may come to discern very early on what the imaginary *x* is and, once he has understood this, may make himself the phallus. But the imaginary way isn't the normal way. Moreover, it's for this reason that it leads to what one calls fixations. And also, this way isn't normal because in the end it's never pure, it's not completely accessible, it always leaves something that is approximate and unfathomable, even something dual, which makes for all the polymorphism of perversion.

What is the symbolic way? It's the metaphorical way. I will give 176
you the schema that will serve as our guide first and explain it to you later, since we have come more or less to the end of today's discussion – it's insofar as the father is substituted for the mother as signifier that the usual outcome of metaphor will be produced, the one that is expressed in the formula on the blackboard.

$$\frac{S}{S'} \cdot \frac{S'}{x} \rightarrow S\left(\frac{1}{s'}\right)$$

The intermediary signifying element falls, and the S enters into possession of the object of the mother's desire by way of the metaphor, which henceforth presents itself in the form of the phallus.

I am not saying that I am giving you the solution in an already transparent form. I am giving it to you in the form of its end result to show you where this is going. We shall see how one gets there and what the point of going there is – that is, everything that this solution resolves.

I leave you with this rough affirmation in your hands – my claim is that the entire question of the impasses of the Oedipus complex can be resolved if we regard the father's intervention as the substitution of one signifier for another signifier.

4

So as to begin to explain the thing to you a little bit, I will introduce a remark which, I hope, will nourish your dreams for the week.

A metaphor is located in the unconscious. Now, if there is one thing that is truly surprising, it's that no one discovered the unconscious earlier, since it has always been there and, moreover, it's still there. The fact of the matter is, no doubt, that one needed to know it on the inside in order to perceive that this place existed.

I would simply like to give you something with which you, who wander about the world as, I hope, so many apostles of my word, could introduce the question of the unconscious to people who have never heard it mentioned. You would say to them, 'How astonishing it is that ever since the world has been the world none of these people who call themselves philosophers has ever dreamt of producing' – at least not in the classical period, these days we
177 have lightened up a bit, but there is still some way to go – 'this essential dimension that I have spoken to you about under the name of "something Other".'

I have already spoken to you about the desire for something Other – not as you feel it at the moment, perhaps, the desire to go out and eat a sausage rather than listen to me, but at any rate, and whatever it's about, the desire for something Other as such.

This dimension isn't present solely in desire. It's present in many other states that are permanent. Wakefulness, for example, what do we call wakefulness? It's not something we think about enough. 'To be awake, so what?' you will tell me. Being awake is what Freud evokes in his study of President Schreber when he speaks to us about 'Before Dawn', a chapter of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*. This is indeed the type of reference that reveals to us the extent to which Freud lived in this something Other. When I spoke to you formerly about the day, the peace of the evening and some other little things like that which more or less reached you, it was centred entirely on

this suggestion. Before sunrise, is it really the sun that is going to appear? It's something Other that is latent, expected at the moment of waking.

And then, claustration. Isn't this an essential dimension? As soon as a man arrives somewhere, in the virgin forest or in the desert, he commences by closing himself in. If needs be, he'll put up two doors, like Cami, to get the air circulating between them. It's a matter of setting oneself up inside, but it's not simply a notion of interior and exterior; it's the notion of the Other, of what the Other is as such, of what is not the place in which one is shut off.

I would go even further – if you were to explore the phenomenology, as some might say, of claustration, you would realize to what extent it's absurd to limit the function of fear to a relationship with a real danger. The close relationship fear has with security should be obvious to you via the phenomenology of phobia. You would know that, for the phobic, his moments of anxiety occur when he observes that he has lost his fear, when you start to alleviate his phobia for him a little bit. It's at that moment that he will tell himself, 'This is not good. I no longer know at what places I have to stop. In losing my fear, I have lost my security.' In short, everything I said to you last year about little Hans.

There is also a dimension that you do not think about enough, I'm convinced of it, because you live in it as if it were the air you breathe – it's called boredom. You have perhaps never thought enough about the extent to which boredom is typically a dimension of this something Other that even manages to be formulated as such in the clearest of manners – you would like something Other. We 178
are happy to eat shit, but not always the same shit. These are types of diversion, formulated diversions, already symbolized, away from the essential relationship with something Other.

You are going to think that, all of a sudden, I am falling into romanticism and melancholy. You can see it – desire, claustration, wakefulness – I was on the point of offering a prayer while I was at it, why not? 'Where is he headed? Where's he going?' No, no.

I would like to end by drawing your attention to the various manifestations of the presence of something Other insofar as they are institutionalized. You can classify the human formations that men institute wherever they go, and everywhere they go, what we call collective institutions, according to the satisfaction they give to the different ways of relating to something Other.

As soon as man arrives somewhere, he builds a prison and a brothel – that is, the places where desire truly is – and he waits for something, a better world, a future world. He is there, he conducts a vigil, he waits for the revolution. But above all, above all, as soon as

he arrives somewhere, it's excessively important that all his occupations ooze boredom. An occupation only begins to become serious when what constitutes it – that is to say, in general, regularity – has become perfectly boring.

Think in particular of everything in your analytic practice that has been very precisely set up to make you bored. Being bored, that's the key. A large part, at least, of what are called the technical rules to be observed by analysts are nothing other than the means for giving this occupation a guarantee of professional standards – but if you look very closely at things, you will see that it's insofar as they approve, sustain and maintain the function of boredom at the heart of practice.

That is a little introduction that doesn't yet introduce you to what I will be talking about next time when I will show you that it's at the level of this Other, as such, that the dialectic of the signifier is located and that it's from there that it's best to explore the function, the impact, the precise pressure and the inductor effect of the Name-of-the-Father, also as such.

15 January 1958

X

THE THREE MOMENTS OF THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX (I)

From the Name-of-the-Father to the phallus
The key to the decline of the Oedipus complex
Being and having
Caprice and the law
The a-subject child

We will continue our examination of what I have been calling the paternal metaphor.

We got to the point where I was claiming that all possibilities of clearly articulating the Oedipus complex and its mainspring – namely, the castration complex – resided in the structure that I have been advocating as that of metaphor.

To those of you who might be astonished that I have come so late to formulating the question that has been so central in the theory and practice of analysis, I would reply that it was impossible to do so without having demonstrated to you, in various theoretical and practical areas, the deficiencies in the formulas that are commonly used in analysis and, above all, without having shown how it's possible to give more adequate formulas, as it were. To begin to formulate the problems, I first need to accustom you, for example, to think in terms of the subject.

What is a subject? Is it something that is purely and simply confused with the individual reality opposite you when you say 'the subject'? Or is it rather that, from the moment you get him to speak, something else is necessarily implied? What I mean is this. Is speech like an emanation floating above him, or does it develop? Does it, yes or no, by itself, impose a structure like the one I have been commenting on at length and familiarizing you with? A structure that says that once there is a speaking subject there is no longer any question of simply reducing the question of the subject's relations, insofar as he speaks, to an other, but that there is always

a third party, the big Other, who is constitutive of the subject's position, insofar as he speaks, which is also to say, insofar as you analyse him.

180 This is not simply a supplementary theoretical requirement. It actually makes things easier when it comes to understanding where the effects you are dealing with are located, namely what happens when you encounter in a subject demands, desires, a fantasy – which is not the same thing – and, also, what, in short, seems to be the most uncertain and difficult to grasp and define of all, a reality.

We will get the chance to see this at the point we have now arrived at in explaining the term 'paternal metaphor'.

1

What is the paternal metaphor? Strictly speaking, in what has been constituted out of a primordial symbolization between child and mother, it's the substitution of the father as a symbol or signifier in the place of the mother. We shall see what the meaning of this 'in the place of the mother' is, which constitutes the turning point or the motor nerve essential to the Oedipus complex's forward movement.

The terms I set out for you last year concerning the child's relations with its mother are summarized in the imaginary triangle that I taught you how to use. Now, introducing the child–father–mother triangle as fundamental is bringing in something that is undoubtedly real, but that already places a symbolic relationship, I mean an established one, in the real. It places it objectively, as it were, insofar as we ourselves are able to make an object of it, are able to look at it.

The initial reality relationship takes shape between the mother and the child, and it's here that the child experiences the first realities of its contact with the living world. In order to describe the situation objectively, we will bring the father into the triangle, whereas for the child he has not yet made his entry.

The father, for us, *is*, he is real. But let's not forget that he is only real for us insofar as the institutions confer upon him, I am not even going to say his role and function as father – it's not a sociological question – but his name as father. That the father is, for example, the real agent of procreation is in no case a truth of experience. It so happens that at a time when analysts still discussed serious matters it was observed that, in some primitive tribe, procreation was attributed to, I don't know, a fountain, a stone or an encounter with a spirit in some far-off place. On this point Mr Jones

181 had made the remark, very relevant moreover, that it was entirely unthinkable that this truth of experience would elude intelligent

beings – and we attribute a minimum of this intelligence to all human beings. It's quite clear that, barring exceptions – but exceptional exceptions – a woman does not give birth unless she has had coitus and, moreover, within a very precise timespan. But in making this particularly pertinent remark, Mr Ernest Jones was quite simply leaving out everything important in the matter.

What is important, in effect, is not that people know perfectly well that a woman can only bear a child if she has had coitus. It's that they acknowledge with a signifier that the one with whom she has had coitus is the father. For otherwise, in the way that the order of symbols is intrinsically constituted, absolutely nothing precludes the 'something' responsible for procreation from continuing to be maintained, in the symbolic system, as identical to whatever you like – that is, a rock, a fountain or an encounter with a spirit in some far-off place.

The father's position as symbolic doesn't depend on people's having more or less recognized the need for a certain sequence of events as different as coitus and giving birth. The Name-of-the-Father's position as such, the attribution of father as procreator, is something that is located at the symbolic level. It can be brought about in various cultural forms, but as such it does not depend on its cultural form. It's a requirement of the signifying chain. Merely by virtue of the fact that you institute a symbolic order, something corresponds to, or does not correspond to, the function defined as the Name-of-the-Father. And within this function you place significations that may be different according to the case, but which in no case depend on any other necessity than the necessity of the father's function, to which the Name-of-the-Father corresponds in the signifying chain.

I believe I have stressed this sufficiently already. Here, then, is what we can call the symbolic triangle, as it is instituted in the real when there is a signifying chain or the articulation of speech.

I'm saying that there is a relationship between this symbolic ternary and what I brought here last year in the form of the imaginary ternary to represent the child's relationship to the mother, insofar as the child finds itself dependent on the mother's desire, on the first symbolization of the mother as such, and nothing else. Through this symbolization, the child detaches its effective dependence on the mother's desire from the pure and simple lived experience of this dependence, and something that is subjectivized at an initial or primitive level is instituted. This subjectification consists simply in posing the mother as this primordial being who may 182
be there or not. In the child's own desire this being is essential. What does the subject desire? It's not simply a matter of appetition for the

mother's care, contact or even her presence, but of appetition for her desire.

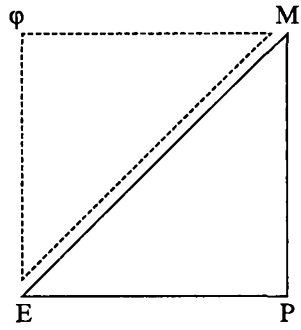
Immediately following this first symbolization in which the child's desire takes shape, all the subsequent complications of symbolization begin. As a result, a dimension opens up by which what the mother – as a being who lives in the world of symbols, a world in which symbols are present, a speaking world – objectively desires is inscribed virtually. Even if she only lives in it partially, or even if she is, as sometimes happens, a being ill-adapted to this world of symbols or who has refused certain elements within it, this primordial symbolization nevertheless opens up, for the child, the dimension of whatever else it is that the mother may desire on the imaginary plane.

This is how the desire for something Other that I spoke about last week makes its entry, in a manner that is still confused and completely virtual – not in the substantial manner that would enable it to be recognized in all its generality, as I did in the last seminar, but in a concrete manner. There is in her the desire for something Other than to satisfy my own desire, which is starting to pulse with life.

Down that path, there is both access and there is no access. In this relationship of illusion by which the first being reads or anticipates the satisfaction of his desires in the hint of a movement in the other, in this dual adaptation of image to image which occurs in all interanimal relations, how are we to conceptualize that what is Other in what the subject desires is able to be read therein as in a mirror, as it's expressed in Scripture?

Surely, it's both difficult to think about and too difficult to bring about, since this is the whole issue around what happens at this primitive level of a switch point for perversions. It's difficult to bring about, in the sense that it's brought about in a faulty way, though it's brought about nevertheless. It's certainly not brought about without the intervention of a little more than the primordial symbolization of this mother who comes and goes, whom one calls when she is not there and whom, when she is there, one pushes away so that one can call her back again. This something extra, which must be there, is precisely the existence behind her of this entire symbolic order on which she depends, and which, since it's always there more or less, permits a degree of access to the object of her desire, which is already such a specialized object and so marked with the necessity the symbolic system institutes that in its prevalence it's absolutely unthinkable in any other way.

183 This object is called the phallus, and it's what I made our entire dialectic of the object relation revolve around last year.



Why? Why would this object be necessary in this place unless it was privileged in the symbolic order? This is the question I want to enter into now in greater detail.

In this drawing there is a relationship of symmetry between 'phallus', which is here, at the vertex of the imaginary ternary, and 'father', at the vertex of the symbolic ternary. As we will see, there is not simply a symmetry here, but rather a connection. How is it that I can already claim that this connection is metaphorical in kind?

Well, this is precisely what takes us to the dialectic of the Oedipus complex. Let's try to articulate what is at issue step by step, as Freud did and as others have done after him.

Not everything is always completely clear therein, nor clearly symbolized. We shall try to go further, and not just for the satisfaction of our intellect. If we articulate step by step the genesis, if I can use this term, that makes the position of the signifier of the father in the symbolic foundational for the position of the phallus on the imaginary plane, if we can manage to clearly distinguish the logical moments, as it were, of the constitution of the phallus on the imaginary plane as a privileged and predominant object, and if, as a result of these distinctions, we are better able to orient ourselves and better able to question the patients we interview, the meaning of our clinical work and the management of the treatment, then we shall regard our efforts as justified. Given the difficulties we encounter in our clinical work, interviews and examinations and in the management of the therapy, these efforts are justified in advance.

Take this desire of the Other, which is the mother's desire, and which contains something beyond. Just reaching this beyond alone requires mediation, and this mediation is given precisely by the 184
father's position in the symbolic order.

Rather than proceeding dogmatically, let's think about the way in which the question arises in concrete terms. We shall see that there are very different states, cases and also stages where the child

identifies with the phallus. That was the point of the course we adopted last year. We showed an exemplary perversion in fetishism, in the sense that the child there has a particular relationship with the object of what lies beyond in the mother's desire, whose predominance and value of excellence, as it were, he has observed and to which he attaches himself to by way of an imaginary identification with the mother. I also pointed out that in other forms of perversion, and notably in transvestism, it's in the contrary position that the child assumes the difficulty of the imaginary relation with the mother. It has been said that he identifies himself with the phallic mother. I think it's more correct to say that he identifies with the phallus as hidden under the mother's clothing.

I am giving you this reminder to show you that the child establishes a relationship to the phallus insofar as it is the object of the mother's desire. Moreover, experience proves to us that this element plays an active and essential role in the child's relations with the parental couple. I recalled this last time at the theoretical level in the commentary on the decline of the Oedipus complex in relation to the so-called inverted Oedipus complex. Freud emphasizes cases where the child identifies with the mother and, having adopted this position that is both significant and promising, fears the consequences – namely, the privation of his virile organ that will result from it for him, if he's a boy.

This is indicative, but it goes much further. Analytic experience proves that the father, as the one who deprives the mother of the object of her desire, namely the phallic object, plays an absolutely essential role in, I won't say the perversions, but in every neurosis and in the entire course, even the easiest and most normal, of the Oedipus complex. In experience, you will always find that the subject has adopted a position of a particular kind, at a moment of his childhood, towards the role the father plays in the fact that the mother does not have a phallus. This moment is never left out.

The reminder I gave last time left the question of the favourable or unfavourable outcome of the Oedipus complex suspended around the three planes of castration, frustration and privation exercised by the father. It's the level of privation that we are concerned with here. At this level, the father deprives someone of what,
185 in the final analysis, he does not have, namely something that only exists insofar as you bring it into existence as a symbol.

It's quite clear that the father does not castrate the mother of something that she does not have. For it to be posited that she does not have it, it has to have already been projected onto the symbolic plane as a symbol. But it's well and truly privation, given that every real privation requires symbolization. It's therefore at the level of

privation of the mother that at a given moment of the evolution of the Oedipus complex the question arises for the subject whether to accept, register, symbolize for himself and render meaningful this privation of which the mother proves to be the object. The child subject either assumes or does not assume this privation, accepts or refuses it. This point is an essential one. You will rediscover it at every crossroads, whenever your experience takes you to a certain point that I am now trying to define as nodal in the Oedipus complex.

Let's call it a nodal point, since this has just occurred to me. I am not essentially committed to it. What I mean by it is that it does not coincide, far from it, with this moment to which we are seeking the key, which is the dissolution of the Oedipus complex, its result and the fruit it bears in the subject – namely, the child's identification with the father. But there is the earlier moment at which the father enters into his function as depriver of the mother – that is, he is profiled behind the mother's relationship to the object of her desire as 'that which castrates', but I am only putting it there in quotes because what is castrated, in the event, is not the subject. It's the mother.

This point is not very new. What is new is to focus on it and for you to turn your gaze towards this point insofar as it makes it possible for us to understand what comes before, about which we already have some enlightenment, and what follows.

Don't be in any doubt about it, and you will be able to verify it and confirm it whenever you have occasion to see it. Experience proves that, insofar as the child does not cross this nodal point, that is to say, does not accept the privation of the phallus carried out on the mother by the father, he maintains, as a rule – it's a correlation grounded in the structure – a certain kind of identification with the mother's object, this object that I present to you from the outset as a rival object, to use the term that comes up here, and this is so whether it's a question of phobia, neurosis or perversion. This is a point of reference – there is perhaps no better word – around which you are able to regroup the elements of the observations by asking yourself this question in each particular case – what is the special configuration of the relationship to the mother, the father and the phallus that makes it the case that the child does not accept that the mother is deprived of the object of her desire by the father? To 186
what extent is it necessary in any given case to emphasize the fact that, in correlation with this relationship, the child maintains its identification with the phallus?

There are degrees, of course, and this relationship is not the same in neurosis, psychosis and perversion. But the configuration is nodal

in every case. At this level, the question that arises is, 'To be or not to be*' the phallus? On the imaginary plane, the question for the subject is one of being or not being the phallus. The phase that is to be passed through places the subject in the position of choosing.

Put this 'choosing' in quotes, moreover, since the subject is as much passive as active there, for the good reason that he is not the one pulling the strings of the symbolic. The sentence started before him, it was started by his parents, and what I am leading you towards is, precisely, the relationship each of these parents has with this sentence that has been started and with the way it's agreed that this sentence is supported by a certain reciprocal position of the parents in relation to this sentence. But let's say, because it's necessary to express oneself, that, in the neuter, there is an alternative between being and not being the phallus.

You get the sense that there is a huge step required to understand the difference between this alternative and the one in question at another moment, and which, all the same, we do have to expect to find, which is that of 'to have or have not' – to draw on another literary reference. In other words, having or not having the penis is not the same thing. Between the two, there is the castration complex, let's not forget. What is at issue in the castration complex is never articulated and is made almost completely mysterious. We know, however, that the following two facts depend on it – that on one side the boy becomes a man, that on the other side the girl becomes a woman. In both cases, the question of having or not having is settled by the intermediary of the castration complex – even for him who in the end has the penis by right, that is, the male. This presupposes that, in order to have it, there must have been a time at which he didn't have it. What is involved would not be called the castration complex if, in some way, it didn't put in the foreground the fact that in order to have it, it first of all has to be the case that one might not have it – so much so that the possibility of being castrated is essential to assuming the fact of having the phallus.

This is a step that has to be taken, and it's one where at some moment the father has to intervene effectively, really and efficaciously.

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2

Till now, as the direction of what I have been saying suggests, I have only been able to speak to you from the point of view of the subject, saying to you, 'He accepts or does not accept, and if he does not accept, that leads him, man or woman, to being the

phallus.' But now, for the following step, it's essential to have the father intervene effectively. I'm not saying that he wasn't already intervening effectively before, but till now I've been able to leave him in the background of what I've been saying and I could even have left him out altogether. And now that it's a question of having it or not having it, we are obliged to bring him into consideration. First of all, I would emphasize that, along with the subject, he needs to be constituted as a symbol. For if he isn't, no one will be able to actually intervene under the sign of this symbol. It's as a real person under the sign of this symbol that he will now effectively intervene at the next stage.

What can we say about this real father as the conveyor of a prohibition? I have already pointed out that, regarding the prohibition of the first appearance of the sexual instinct as it comes to its initial maturity in the subject, when the latter starts to draw attention to his tool, even displays it and offers its good offices to the mother, the father is not necessary. I would go even further – when the subject exhibits himself to his mother and propositions her, which is a moment still very close to that of imaginary identification with the phallus, what occurs unfolds most of the time – as we saw last year with respect to little Hans – on the plane of imaginary deprecation. The mother is quite capable of showing the child to what extent what he offers her is insufficient, and she is also capable of placing a prohibition on the use of his new tool.

However, the father enters into play – this is not in doubt – as the vehicle of the law and prohibitor of the mother as object. This is fundamental, as we know, but it's completely separate from the question that is actually brought into play for the child. We know that the father's function, the Name-of-the-Father, is bound up with the prohibition of incest, but nobody has ever dreamt of placing the fact that the father actually promulgates the law of prohibition of incest in the foreground of the castration complex. It's said sometimes, but it's never articulated by the father qua legislator *ex cathedra*, as it were. He is an obstacle between the child and its mother. He is the vehicle of the law, but *de jure*, whereas *de facto* he intervenes in a different way, and it's also in a different way that his failures to intervene manifest themselves. This is what we are examining close up. In other words, insofar as culturally he is the vehicle 188
of the law, insofar as he is invested with the signifier of the father, the father intervenes in the Oedipus complex in a more concrete, more graduated manner, as it were, and this is what I want to spell out today. This is the most difficult level at which to understand anything, whereas it is, however, the level where, we are told, the key to the Oedipus complex, namely its outcome, is found.

This is where the little schema I was commenting on for you in the first trimester – so massively boring for some of you, it seems – turns out, however, not to have been completely useless.

I remind you what one must always come back to – it's only after having traversed the already constituted order of the symbolic that the subject's intention – by which I mean his desire once it has passed over to the state of a demand – encounters what he addresses himself to, which is his object, his primordial object, namely his mother. Desire is something articulated. The world it enters into and progresses through, this world, this world here below, is not simply an *Umwelt* in the sense that one can find a way to satiate one's needs in it, but a world in which speech reigns, and this submits the desire of each of us to the law of the desire of the Other. The young subject's demand more or less satisfactorily crosses the line of the signifying chain, which is here, latent and already structuring. By this fact alone, the first test that he undergoes in his relationship with the Other, he undergoes with this first Other that is his mother, insofar as he has already symbolized her. It's insofar as he has already symbolized her that he addresses her in a manner that is articulated regardless of how much of a squawk it is, for this first symbolization is linked to the first articulations we have located in the *Fort-Da*. It's therefore insofar as this intention, or this demand, has traversed the signifying chain that it can come to the attention of the maternal object.

Therefore, the child who has made its own mother a subject on the basis of the first symbolization finds itself entirely subject to what we can call, but purely in advance, the law. This is only a metaphor. We have to unpack the metaphor contained in the term, 'the law', if we are to give it its proper place when I use it.

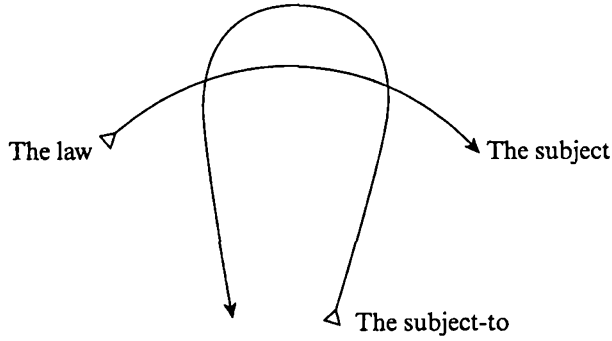
The mother's law is, of course, the fact that the mother is a speaking being, and this suffices to justify saying 'the mother's law'. Nevertheless, this law is, if I may say so, an uncontrolled law. It consists simply in the fact, at least for the subject, that something in his desire is completely dependent upon something else that is doubtless already articulated as such and is of the order of the law, but it is a law that lies entirely within the subject that supports it, namely within the good or bad will of the mother, the good or bad mother.

189 This is why I am about to propose a new term to you which, as you will see, is not as new as all that, since you only need to force it a little and it will join up with something that language has discovered, and not by chance.

Let's begin with the principle I am proposing here, which is that there is no subject unless there are signifiers that found it. It's insofar as primary symbolizations have been formed by the signifying

couple *Fort-Da* that the mother is the first subject. In the light of this principle, what can we say about the child at the start of its life? One wonders whether for the child there is a reality or not, autoerotism or not. You will see things become especially clear as soon as you centre your questions on the child as a subject from whom demand emanates and in whom desire forms – and all analysis is a dialectic of desire.

Well then, I say that the child takes shape as a 'subject-to'. He is a subject-to because he experiences himself and feels himself initially as profoundly subject-to the capriciousness of what he is dependent on, even if this capriciousness is articulated capriciousness.



What I am proposing is a necessity in all our experience, and I will illustrate it by taking the first example that comes to mind. Last year you could see how little Hans found an atypical solution to his Oedipus complex, which is not the outcome that I am about to try to describe, but a suppletion. Effectively, he needs his all-purpose horse as a suppletion for everything that he lacks during this time of transition, which is nothing other than the stage of assuming the symbolic in the form of the Oedipus complex, which is where I am taking you today. His suppletion is, then, this horse which is at one and the same time the father, the phallus, the little sister and whatever else you want, but which essentially corresponds to what I am about to show you now.

Remember how it ends for him, and how this ending is symbol- 190
ized in the final dream. What he summons to the father's place is this imaginary and all-powerful being called a plumber. The plumber is precisely there to desubjectify something, for little Hans's anxiety is essentially, as I told you, the anxiety of subjectification. Literally, at a certain moment, he realizes that in being subjected in this way, there's no knowing where it might lead. You remember the schema of the carts that come and go, and which embody the core of his fear.

It's precisely from this moment on that little Hans establishes in his life a number of centres of fear around which the re-establishment of his sense of security will revolve. Fear, which is something that has its source in the real, is a component of a child's security. He uses his fears to provide a beyond to this anxiety-provoking subjectification that he produces when the lack of this external domain, this other plane, appears. Something to make him afraid has to emerge if he is not to be purely and simply a subject-to.

Here it's appropriate to observe that this Other to whom he addresses himself – specifically, the mother – has a relationship with the father. Everyone realizes that many things depend on her relations with the father, especially when – experience has shown this to be the case – the father fails to play his role, as they say. I don't need to remind you that last week I spoke about all the types of paternal deficit concretely designated in terms of interhuman relations. Our experience effectively requires that this is how it is, but no one fully formulates what is involved. It's not so much a question of the mother's relations with the father, in the vague sense in which there would be a kind of rivalry of prestige between them, one that is supposed to converge upon the subject of the child. Undoubtedly, this schema of a convergence is not false, and that there be two is more than a requirement – without them there could not be this ternary. But this is not sufficient, even if what happens between the two, as everybody admits, is essential.

We come, then, to these bonds of love and respect around which some people make the entire analysis of the case of little Hans revolve, namely – was the mother nice, affectionate enough towards the father, and so on? And we fall back into the rut of environmental sociological analysis. Now, it's not so much a question of the personal relations between the father and the mother, nor whether they are each up to the task or not, as it is of a moment that has to be lived through as such, concerning the relations, not simply of the
191 person of the mother to the person of the father, but of the mother with the father's speech – with the father insofar as what he says is not completely equivalent to nothing.

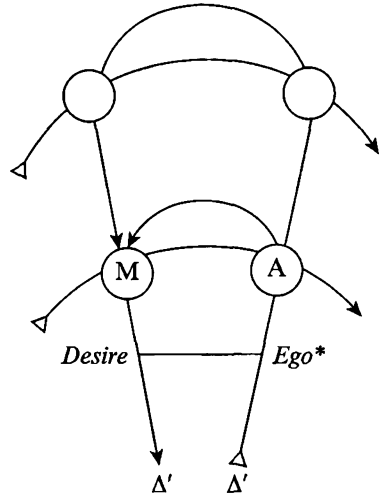
What matters is the function in which three things intervene – first, the Name-of-the-Father, second, the father's spoken words, third, the law insofar as the father has a more or less intimate relationship to it. What is essential is that the mother establish the father as the mediator of what lies beyond her law and her capriciousness – namely, the law as such, purely and simply. It is, therefore, a question of the father qua Name-of-the-Father, closely tied to the declaration of the law, as the entire development of the Freudian doctrine declares and promises. This is the respect in which he is

accepted or not accepted by the child as the one who deprives or does not deprive the mother of the object of her desire.

In other words, in order to understand the Oedipus complex, we must consider three moments that I am going to try to schematize for you with the help of our little diagram from the first trimester.

3

First moment. What the child is seeking, qua desire for desire, is to be able to satisfy the mother's desire, that is to say, 'to be or not to be' the object of the mother's desire. He therefore introduces his demand, here, in Δ.



The fruit or result of this will appear here, in Δ'. Two points 192
are plotted on this path – one that corresponds to the ego* and, opposite, one that here is his other, with which he identifies, this something other that he is going to seek to become, namely the object that satisfies the mother. As soon as something begins to stir at the base of his stomach, he will start to show it to his mother, a matter of finding out 'what I am capable of', with the disappointments that ensue. He will seek it and he will find it, insofar as the mother is questioned by the child's demand. She herself is also pursuing her own desire, and its components are located somewhere thereabouts.

At the first moment and first stage, it is, then, a matter of the following – the child identifies in the mirror with the object of the mother's desire. This is the primitive phallic stage, the one in which

the paternal metaphor per se acts inasmuch as the primacy of the phallus is already instituted in the world by the existence of symbols, discourse and the law. But the child himself is only ever aware of its outcome. In order to please the mother, if you will allow me to go quickly and employ words of imagery, it's necessary and sufficient to be the phallus. At this stage, many things come to a halt and in a certain sense become fixed. Depending on the more or less satisfactory way the message at M is realized, a number of disturbances and perturbations can be established, including the identifications I have been calling perverse.

Second moment. I told you that on the imaginary plane the father definitely intervenes as the depriver of the mother, which means that the demand addressed to the Other, provided it's relayed as it should be, is referred to a higher court, if I may express myself in these terms.

What the subject effectively questions the Other about, provided he traverses it completely, will always encounter in the Other, in some ways, the Other of the Other, that is, its own law. At this level, what occurs is what brings it about that what comes back to the child is purely and simply the law of the father, insofar as the subject imaginarily construes it as depriving the mother. This is the nodal and negative face, as it were, by which what detaches the subject from his identification at the same time reattaches him to the initial appearance of the law in the form of the fact that the mother is dependent upon an object that is no longer simply the object of her desire, but an object that the Other either has or does not have.

The close connection between the mother's deferral to a law that is not hers but an Other's and the fact that the object of her desire is in reality sovereignly possessed by this same Other to whose law
193 she defers provides the key to the Oedipal relation. What gives it its decisive character is to be identified as a relation, not to the father, but to the father's speech.

Recall little Hans from last year. The father is as nice as can be, he is as present as can be, he is as intelligent and as friendly towards little Hans as can be. He does not seem to have been an idiot at all. He took little Hans to Freud, which at the time really was proof of an enlightened mind, and yet he is nevertheless totally inoperative, insofar as what he says is exactly as if he were whistling in the dark – I mean as far as the mother is concerned. This is perfectly clear, whatever the relations were between the two parental characters.

Observe that the mother is in an equivocal position in relation to little Hans. She prohibits, she plays the castrating role that one might see attributed to the father on the real plane and says to him, 'Don't touch it, it's disgusting' – which does not prevent her, on the

practical level, from admitting him into her intimacy, and not only allowing him to retain the function of her imaginary object, but encouraging him to do it. He effectively renders her the greatest of services, he well and truly incarnates her phallus for her, and thus finds himself maintained in the position of 'subject-to'. He is 'subjected to', and that's the whole source of his anxiety and his phobia.

This is a problem to the extent that the father's position is called into question by the fact that his speech does not lay down the law to the mother. But that's not all – it seems that in the case of little Hans what should occur at the third moment fails to. That's why I emphasized last year that the outcome of the Oedipus complex in the case of little Hans was skewed. Although, thanks to his phobia, he came through it, his love life will remain completely marked by this imaginary style the repercussions of which I showed you in the case of Leonardo de Vinci.

The third stage is as important as the second, for the outcome of the Oedipus complex depends on it. The father testified that he was giving the phallus insofar as, and only insofar as, he is the bearer, or the *supporter*, if I may put it like that, of the law. Whether the maternal subject possesses this phallus or not depends on him. Now that the stage of the second moment has been traversed, it's necessary, at the third moment, that the father deliver what he has promised. He can give or he can refuse to give, insofar as he has the phallus, but he must give proof that he has it. It's insofar as he intervenes at the third moment as the one who has, and not who is, the phallus that the shift can occur that restores the instance of the phallus as the mother's desired object and no longer only as an object of which the father can deprive one.

It's the all-powerful father who is the depriver. That's the second 194
moment. It's at this phase that the analyses of the Oedipus complex ceased at the time it was thought that all the ravages of the complex depended upon the father's omnipotence. One was only thinking of this second moment, except that no one emphasized that the castration that is in operation here is the privation of the mother and not the child.

The third moment is this – the father is able to give the mother what she desires and can give it to her because he has it. Here, then, the fact of potency in the genital sense of the word intervenes – let's say that the father is a potent father. By dint of this fact, the mother's relationship to the father moves back onto the real plane.

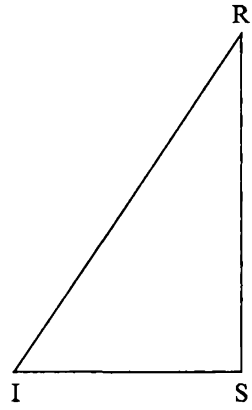
The identification with the paternal instance that may occur has, therefore, been achieved here in these three moments.

First, the paternal instance is introduced in a veiled, or not yet apparent, form. This does not prevent the father from existing in

mundane reality, I mean in the world, by virtue of the fact that the law of the symbol reigns therein. By virtue of this fact, the question of the phallus is already posed somewhere in the mother, which is where the child has to locate it.

Second, the father affirms himself in his privative presence, insofar as he is the one who supports the law, and this no longer happens in a veiled manner but in a manner mediated by the mother, who accords him the place of the one who lays down the law to her.

Third, the father is revealed as having it. This is the exit from the Oedipus complex. The exit is favourable insofar as the identification with the father occurs at this third moment, where he intervenes as the one who has it. This identification is called 'the ego-ideal'. It's inscribed on the symbolic triangle at the pole where the child is located, insofar as it's at the maternal pole that everything that will subsequently become reality starts to form, whereas it's at the level of the father that everything that will subsequently become the superego starts to form.



195 At the third moment, then, the father intervenes as real and potent. This moment succeeds the privation, or castration, that bears upon the mother, the imagined mother, in her own imaginary position of dependency at the level of the subject. It's insofar as the father intervenes as the one who has it that he is internalized in the subject as ego-ideal, and that, henceforth, let's not forget, the Oedipus complex declines.

What does that mean? It doesn't mean that the child is going to enter into possession of all his sexual powers and deploy them, as you well know. On the contrary, he does not deploy them at all, and one could say that he is apparently disappointed by the deployment

of the functions that had begun to awaken. Nevertheless, if what Freud formulated makes any sense, the child has all the titles in his pocket for later use. The paternal metaphor plays a role here, which is precisely the role we would expect from a metaphor – it results in the institution of something which is of the order of signifiers, which is there in reserve and whose signification will develop later. The child has all the entitlements for being a man, and what may be challenged in him later, at the time of puberty, is to be referred to something that has not entirely fulfilled the metaphorical identification with the image of the father, insofar as it has formed across these three moments.

I point out to you that this means that, insofar as he is virile, a man is always more or less his own metaphor. This is even what places this touch of ridicule, which should be mentioned all the same, upon the term 'virility'.

I should also point out that the outcome of the Oedipus complex is, as everyone knows, different for the woman. For her, in effect, this third stage, as Freud emphasizes – read his article on the decline of the Oedipus complex – is much simpler. She does not have to carry out this identification nor retain this title to virility. She knows where it is, and she knows where she has to go to get it. It's on the side of the father and she goes to him as having it.

This is also indicative of the respect in which femininity, true femininity, always has a bit of a dimension of escape. True women always have something a little lost about them.

I only make this suggestion so as to stress the concrete dimension of this development.

Today, this is still only a diagram, as you will be well aware. We will return to each of these three stages, and we will see what we can add to them. I will conclude by justifying my term 'metaphor'.

Note that what is at stake here is, at the most fundamental level, 196
exactly the same thing as the long metaphor common in the field of mania. Effectively, the formula that I have given you of metaphor means nothing but this – that there are two chains, the Ss of the upper level, which are signifiers, while underneath one finds all the wandering signifieds that are circulating because they are always sliding around. The pinning down I have spoken about, the quilting point, is only a mythical affair, for nobody has ever managed to pin a signification to a signifier. On the other hand, what one can do, is pin one signifier to another signifier and see what happens. In this case, something new is always produced, which is sometimes as unexpected as a chemical reaction – namely, a new signification emerges.

The father is the signifier in the Other that represents the existence of the locus of the signifying chain as law. He places himself, if I may say so, above the signifying chain.

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The father is in a metaphorical position inasmuch as, and solely to the extent that, the mother makes him the one who, by his presence, sanctions the existence as such of the locus of the law. Immense latitude is therefore left to the modes and means by which this can be realized, and this is why it is compatible with diverse concrete configurations.

On account of this, the third moment of the Oedipus complex can be gone through, which is the stage of identification at which, for the boy, it's a question of identifying with the father as possessor of the penis and, for the girl, of recognizing the man as the one who possesses it.

We will continue this next time.

22 January 1958

XI

THE THREE MOMENTS OF THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX (II)

Desire for desire
The metonymic phallus
La Châtre's beautiful letter
'Inject' and 'adject'
Male homosexuality in the clinical field

I've been talking about the paternal metaphor. I hope you have noticed that I am talking about the castration complex. It's not because I am talking about the paternal metaphor that I am talking about the Oedipus complex. If my remarks were centred on the Oedipus complex, that would introduce an enormous number of questions, and I can't say everything at once.

The schema I brought you last time brings together what I have tried to get you to understand under the heading of the three moments of the Oedipus complex. What is at stake, I stress this for you at every moment, is a structure that is formed somewhere else than in the subject's own experiences and into which he has to insert himself. Other people may take an interest in this on a number of counts. Let the psychologists who project individual relations in the interhuman, interpsychological or social field into the tensions within groups attempt to inscribe that on this schema, if they can. Likewise, sociologists will have to take into account the structural relations that make up our common measure, for the simple reason that it is the ultimate basis and that the very existence of the Oedipus complex cannot be justified socially – I mean, cannot be founded on any social teleology. As for us, we find ourselves in the position of having to see how a subject is introduced into the relation that is the Oedipus complex.

It wasn't I who discovered that he is not introduced into it without a leading role being played by the male sexual organ. The latter is the centre, the pivot and the object of everything that refers to this

order of events – quite confused and very poorly discerned events, it has to be said – that one calls the castration complex. Everyone continues to refer to it just as much, in terms that, surprisingly, don't produce greater dissatisfaction amongst the public.

198 As for me, in this sort of psychoanalytic diatribe that I am engaged in here, I am trying to give you a letter that will not cloud over. I mean that I am trying to use concepts to differentiate the various levels that are involved in the castration complex.

It has come into play both at the level of a perversion that I would describe as primary, on the imaginary plane, and at that of a perversion that we will perhaps talk a bit more about today, and which is intimately bound up with the end of the Oedipus complex, namely, homosexuality.

To try to show this clearly, I will return, since it's fairly new, to the way I formulated the Oedipus complex for you last time, focusing on the phenomenon linked to the particular function as object that the male sexual organ plays therein. Once I have gone back over this ground and clarified it, I will show you, as I told you, that this throws light on the familiar but poorly situated phenomena of homosexuality.

1

On the schemas I've been giving you, which are extracted from the heart of our experience, I am trying to create a number of moments. They are not necessarily chronological moments, but that doesn't matter, since logical moments also can only unfold in a particular sequence.

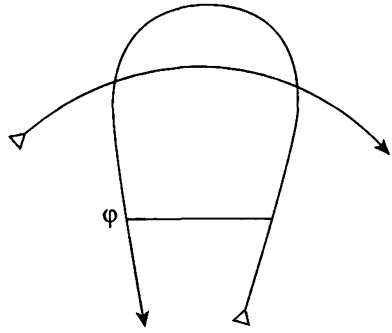
You have therefore, in a first moment, as I have told you, the child's relation, not, as people say, with the mother, but with the mother's desire. It's a desire for a desire. I have become aware that this is not such a common formulation, and that some of you have been having a bit of trouble getting used to the notion that desiring something is different from desiring a subject's desire. What needs to be understood is that this desiring a desire implies that one is dealing with the primordial object, which is the mother, and that she has been constituted in such a way that her desire can be desired by another desire, namely, the child's.

Where do we put the dialectic of this first stage? The child is particularly isolated and bereft of everything but the desire for this Other whom he has already constituted as the Other capable of being present or absent. Let's try to get a good grip on what the child's relation is with what is at issue, namely the object of

the mother's desire. What has to be traversed is this D, namely the mother's desire, the desire that is desired by the child, D (D). The question is knowing how he is going to be able to reach this object when the latter is constituted in an infinitely more elaborate way at 199
the level of the mother who is a bit more advanced in existence than the child.

I have suggested that this object is the phallus as the pivot of the entire subjective dialectic. It is the phallus insofar as it is desired by the mother. From the point of view of structure, there are several different states in the mother's relationship to the phallus. It plays a primordial role in the subjective structuring of the mother and it can be in different states as an object – it is even what makes what comes next so complicated. But for the moment, we will limit ourselves to taking it as it is, because we think we are only able to introduce order and a correct perspective on everything that is an analytic phenomenon by starting out from the structure and circulation of signifiers. If our reference points are always stable and certain, it's because they are structural and because they are linked to the pathways of signifying constructions. This is what we use to guide ourselves, and it's why we don't otherwise have to be particularly worried here about what the phallus is for an actual mother in a specific case. No doubt there are distinctions to be made here. We'll come back to this.

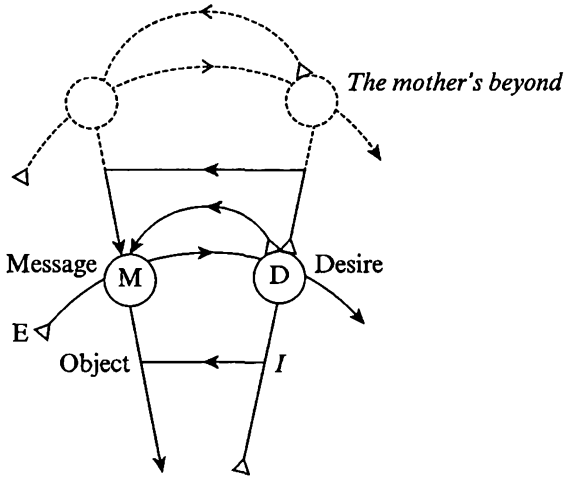
If we simply place our trust in our customary little schema, the phallus is located here, and it is a metonymic object.



We can settle for situating it amongst signifiers here – it is a metonymic object. Because of the existence of the signifying chain, it will in any case circulate, like the ferret, everywhere amongst the signifieds – being, amongst the signifieds, what results from the existence of signifiers. Our experience shows us that this signified plays a major role for the subject – that of universal object.

That's the surprising thing. It's what creates a scandal for those who would like the situation concerning the sexual object to be symmetrical for both sexes. Just as the man has to discover the use of his implement and then adapt to a series of experiences, it should be
200 the same for the woman, namely that the *cunnus* be at the centre of her entire dialectic. This is not at all the case, and it's precisely what analysis has discovered. This is the best ratification of the fact that there is a field that is the field of analysis, which isn't that of a more or less vigorous instinctual development that on the whole is superimposed on anatomy, that is, on the real existence of individuals.

How are we to understand the fact that the child who has the desire to be the object of the mother's desire arrives at satisfaction? He has no other means, of course, than to come to the place of the object of her desire.



What does this mean? Here, the child is at E. We have already had to represent him many times through the relationship between his demand and the existence of articulation of signifiers as such, which is not only in him but also encountered by him.

At the place marked *I*, there is not yet anything, at least not in principle. The subject's constitution as the *I* of discourse is not at all necessarily differentiated yet, even though it is already implied from the first modulation of signifiers. The *I* doesn't need to be designated as such in discourse for it to be its support. In an interjection, in a command, 'Come here!', or in an appeal, 'You!', there is an *I*, but it is latent. We could express this by putting a dotted line between D and *I*. Similarly, the metonymic object, opposite, hasn't yet been constituted for the child.

The expected desire of the mother comes here at D. What results when the child's appeal encounters the mother's existence as Other, 201
namely, a message, is placed opposite. What does it take for the child to successfully become the object of the mother's desire, which we can characterize, already at this level, as what is immediately within its grasp?

Let me begin by drawing what lies beyond the mother as a dotted line – but for a different reason, because this one is completely inaccessible to him.

It is necessary and sufficient that the *I* that is latent in the child's discourse comes to be constituted here, at D, at the level of this Other that is the mother, that the *I* of the mother becomes the child's Other, and that what circulates at the level of the mother at D, insofar as she herself expresses the object of her desire, arrives at M where it fulfils its function as a message for the child – which ultimately implies that the latter momentarily renounces absolutely everything that is his in his own speech. But this isn't difficult for him to do, because at that time his own speech is still being formed. The child therefore receives, at M, the completely raw message about the mother's desire, whereas underneath, at the metonymic level in relation to what the mother says, his identification with her object occurs.

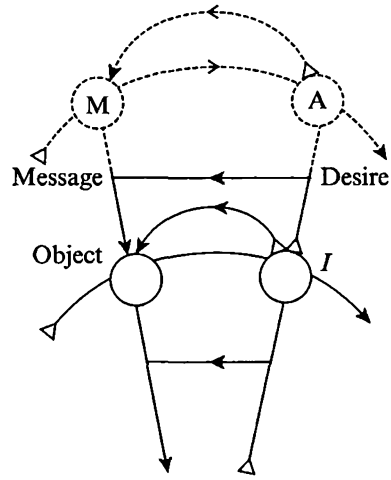
This is highly theoretical, but if you don't grasp it at the outset, it's impossible to conceptualize what has to happen next, which is the entry of the mother's beyond constituted by its relationship to another discourse, that of the father.

Therefore, it is insofar as the child first adopts the mother's desire – and he only adopts it in such a way that the reality of this discourse has something raw about it – that he is open to being in the place of the metonymy of the mother, that is, to becoming what the other day I called her 'subject-to'.

You have seen on what displacement primitive identification, as we will call it in this case, is founded. It consists in an exchange that brings the *I* of the subject to the place of the mother qua Other, except that the *I* of the mother becomes his own Other. That's what is expressed by this new rung on the little ladder of our schema, which has just been introduced at this second moment.

This second moment revolves around the moment when the father makes his presence felt as the prohibitor. He appears as mediated in the mother's discourse. Earlier, at the first stage of the Oedipus complex, the mother's discourse was grasped in its raw state. Saying now that the father's discourse is mediated doesn't mean we are bringing what the mother makes of the father's words back into play, but that the father's words effectively intervene in the mother's discourse. It therefore now appears less veiled than it did at the first 202

stage, but it isn't completely revealed. That is what this use of the term 'mediated' corresponds to on this occasion.



At this stage, the father intervenes by way of a message for the mother. He speaks at M, and what he declares is a prohibition, a 'not', transmitted at the level at which the child receives the expected message from the mother. This 'not' is a message about a message. It's a particular form of a message about a message – which, to my great surprise, linguists do not differentiate as such, and one thereby sees the importance of working with them – namely, the message of prohibition.

This message isn't simply the 'You will not sleep with your mother' already addressed to the child at this period. It is a 'You will not reintegrate your own product' addressed to the mother. Thus, all well-known forms of what is called the maternal instinct encounter an obstacle here. In fact, the primitive form of the maternal instinct, as everyone knows, manifests itself – in certain animals perhaps even more than in humans – by the oral reintegration, as we elegantly say, of what has come out the other end.

This prohibition arrives as such at A, where the father appears as the Other. As a result, the child is profoundly called into question and disturbed in his position as the subject-to – a potentiality or virtuality that is ultimately salutary. In other words, it is insofar as the object of the mother's desire is affected by the paternal prohibition that the circle doesn't completely close up on the child and that he doesn't purely and simply become the object of the mother's
203 desire. The process could have stopped at the first stage, given that the child's relationship to the mother implicitly comprises three

elements, since it isn't her that he desires, but her desire. This is already a symbolic relationship, one that, for the subject, facilitates an initial closure of the desire for a desire and an initial success – the discovery of the object of the mother's desire. Nevertheless, everything is called back into question by the paternal prohibition, which leaves the child at a loss as to locating the desire for the mother's desire.

This second stage is a little less loaded with potentialities than the first. It is palpable or perceptible, but essentially instantaneous, as it were, or at least transitory. It is no less crucial, for it is ultimately this one that is the kernel of what can be called the privative moment of the Oedipus complex. It is insofar as the child is driven out, and for his greatest good, of this ideal position that he and the mother could be happy with, and in which he fulfils the function of being her metonymic object, that the third relation is able to be established, the following stage, which is a fruitful one. Indeed, he becomes something else there, for it includes this identification with the father that I was telling you about last time as well as the virtual title to having what the father has.

If last time I gave a quick outline of the three moments of the Oedipus complex, it was so I wouldn't have to go through it all again today, or, more exactly, it was so as to have time today to go back over it point by point.

2

Let's pause here for a moment to make place for what is almost a parenthesis, important nevertheless, concerning psychosis.

It is extremely important to consider the manner in which the father intervenes at this moment in the dialectic of the Oedipus complex. You will see this more clearly in the article that I have given for the next issue of the review *La Psychanalyse*, which presents an overview of what I said the year in which we spoke about the Freudian structures of psychosis. The level of publication that this represents did not allow me to give the foregoing schema, which would have required far too much explication, but when you've read this article, before too long I hope, you will be able to return in your notes to what I am now going to tell you.

In psychosis, the Name-of-the-Father, the father as symbolic function, the father at the level of what happens here between message and code, and code and message, is *verworfen*. As a result, 204
what I have represented by the dotted lines, namely, that by means of which the father intervenes as law, is not there. There is the raw

intervention of the message 'not' upon the mother's message to the child. This message, insofar as it is completely raw, is also the source of the code that lies beyond the mother. This is perfectly clear on this schema of the conduction of signifiers.

Referring to the case of President Schreber, because he has been called upon, at an essential vital detour, to bring the Name-of-the-Father to respond from its place, which is where it is incapable of responding from because it has never come to that place, he sees this structure appear in its place. This structure is brought about by the massive, real intervention of the father beyond the mother, insofar as she is absolutely not backed up by him as protector of the law. As a result, at the major, fertile point of his psychosis, what does President Schreber hear? Very precisely, two fundamental types of hallucination that are never identified as such in the classic manuals.

To understand something about hallucinations, it is better to read the exceptional work of a psychotic like President Schreber than to read the best psychiatric authors who have explored the problem of hallucination with the famous 'scholar's ladder' they learnt in their philosophy classes at school all ready in their pocket – sensation, perception, perception without an object and other rubbish.

President Schreber himself differentiates two orders of things very well.

First, there are the voices that speak in the fundamental language, a characteristic of which is to teach its code to the subject via this very speech. The messages that he receives in the fundamental language, which are composed of words which, whether neologisms or not, are always neologisms in their own way, consist in teaching the subject what they are in a new code, one that literally repeats a new world to him, a signifying universe. In other words, the first series of hallucinations consists of messages on a neo-code which presents itself as coming from the Other. It is what is the most terrifyingly hallucinatory.

On the other hand, there is another form of message, the interrupted message. You remember these little bits of sentences – 'He must namely . . .', 'Now I want . . .' and so on. They are the beginnings of orders and, in certain cases, even of veritable principles – 'Finish what you have started', and so on. In short, these messages present themselves as pure messages, as orders, or as interrupted orders, as pure forces of induction in the subject, and they are perfectly localizable on the two sides, message and code, insofar as they are dissociated.

205 That's what the intervention of the father's discourse resolves into, when what makes discourse coherent – namely, the self-ratification by which the father, at the completion of his discourse,

goes back over it and ratifies it as law – is abolished from the start and has never been integrated into the life of the subject.

Let's now move on to the following stage of the Oedipus complex, which, under normal conditions, assumes that the father enters into play, as we said last time, insofar as he has it. He intervenes at this level to give what is involved in phallic privation – a central term in the evolution of the Oedipus complex and its three moments. He effectively appears in the act of giving. It is no longer in the comings and goings of the mother that he is present and therefore still half-veiled, but he appears in his own discourse. In some ways, the father's message becomes the mother's message insofar as he now permits and authorizes. My schema from last time means nothing other than this, that the father's message, insofar as it is incarnated as such, is capable of producing this new rung on the schema – so much so that the subject is able to receive from the father's message what he had attempted to receive from the mother's message. Through the intervention of the gift or the permission accorded to the mother, he is finally given permission to have a penis for later. There you have what is effectively brought about by the phase of the decline of the Oedipus complex – he really does have, as I was saying last time, the title in his pocket.

To evoke a historical and amusing citation – a woman whose husband wanted to be sure that she was faithful to him had certified to him in writing that she was faithful to him, following which she went about the world declaring, 'Ah! What a beautiful letter La Châtre has!' Well then, this La Châtre and our little castrated one are of the same order. They both have, at the end of the Oedipus complex, this beautiful letter that is not nothing, since they can rely upon the fact that in the best of cases they can calmly assume that they will have a penis – in other words, that he is someone identical to his father.

But this is a stage in which you can clearly see that the two sides are always liable to switch. There is something abstract and yet dialectical in the relationship between the two moments I have just been speaking about, the one where the father intervenes as prohibiting and depriving, and the one where he intervenes as permissive and gift-giving – gift-giving at the level of the mother. Other things may happen, and to see this, we must now place ourselves at the level of the mother and once again pose the question of the paradox represented by the central character of the phallic object as imaginary.

The mother is a woman who, we suppose, has arrived at the fullness of her capacities of feminine voracity, and the objection that is 206
made to the imaginary function of the phallus is completely valid. If this is what the mother is, then the phallus isn't purely and simply

that, this beautiful imaginary object, for she gobbled that up some time ago. In other words, the phallus at the level of the mother isn't uniquely an imaginary object. It is also perfectly well something that fulfils its function at the instinctual level, as a normal implement of the instinct. It is the 'inject', if I can put it like that – a word which doesn't simply mean that she introduces it into herself, but that one introduces it into her. This 'in' equally signals its instinctual function.

It is because man has to traverse an entire forest of signifiers if he is to reunite with his instinctively valuable and primitive objects that we are dealing with the entire dialectic of the Oedipus complex. This doesn't prevent him from succeeding at it from time to time, nevertheless, thank goodness, otherwise things would have become extinct a long time ago through lack of combatants, given the excessive difficulty of attaining the real object.

That is one of the possibilities on the mother's side. There are others, and we would need to try to find out what her relationship to the phallus means for her, insofar as it is dear to her heart, as it is for every human subject. We can for example differentiate, along with the function of the inject, that of the 'adject'. This term designates the imaginary appurtenance of something which, at the imaginary level, is either given to her or not given to her, which she has permission to desire as such, and which she lacks. The phallus intervenes, then, as lack, as the object of which she has been deprived, like the object of this *Penisneid*, this privation that is always felt and whose incidence we are familiar with in female psychology. But it can also intervene as an object which has been given to her nevertheless, but from where it is it enters into consideration in a very symbolic manner. This is a different function, that of the adject, even though it can be confused with that of the primitive inject.

In short, while she has all the difficulties entailed by the fact of having to introduce herself into the dialectic of symbols if she is to succeed in integrating herself into the human family, a woman also has every kind of access to something primitive and instinctual that puts her in a direct relationship with the object, no longer of her desire, but of her need.

Having clarified this, let's now talk about homosexuals.

207

3

People talk about homosexuals. We treat homosexuals. We don't cure homosexuals. And what is most incredible is that we do not cure them despite the fact that they are absolutely curable.

If there is anything that emerges in the clearest of fashions from

observations, it's that masculine homosexuality – the other one is too, but we are going to limit ourselves today to the male for reasons of clarity – is an inversion concerning the object, which is structured at the level of a full and completed Oedipus complex. More exactly, even as a homosexual realizes this third stage that we have just been talking about, he modifies it appreciably. You will say to me, 'We know this already, they realize the Oedipus complex in an inverted form.' If that is sufficient for you, you can stay with that, I am not forcing you to follow me. But I consider that we have the right to be more demanding than to say, 'Why is the moon made of blue cheese? Well, it's because of an inverted Oedipus complex.'

What we have to seek in the very structure of what is shown by clinical experience regarding homosexuals is whether we are able to understand any better at what precise point the completion of the Oedipus complex is located. One has to consider, in the first instance, his position with all its characteristics and, second, his extreme adherence to the said position. The homosexual, effectively, should you so much as offer him the ways and means, adheres to his homosexual position strongly, and his relationships with feminine objects, far from being abolished, are on the contrary profoundly structured.

I think that only this way of schematizing the problem enables us to point out where the difficulty of shaking his position stems from, and, much more, why once this position has been flushed out, analysis generally fails. This isn't because of any impossibility internal to this position, but is due to the fact that all sorts of conditions are required, and that it is necessary to wend our way through the detours by which his position has become precious and primordial to him.

There are a number of traits that we can note in the homosexual – and, first, a profound and perpetual relationship to the mother. The mother is presented to us, according to the average case, as having a directive and eminent function in the parental couple, and as being more occupied with the child than with the father. It is also said, and this is already another matter, that she has been occupied with the child in a very castrating manner, and that in raising him she has taken great care, been very meticulous and lingered to excess. No one seems to doubt whether all this leads us in the same direction. We have to add some little supplementary links to get to the point of thinking that the effect of such a castrating intervention would have 208
an effect of overvaluation of the object for the child, in the general form in which it presents itself in homosexuals, such that no partner capable of interesting him can be deprived of it.

I don't want to keep you waiting, nor do I want to give the impression of creating new riddles. I believe that the key to the

problem concerning homosexuals is this – if homosexuals, in all their nuances, grant a prevailing value to the blessed object to the point of making it an absolute requirement of the sexual partner, it's insofar as, in one form or another, the mother lays down the law to the father, in the sense in which I have taught you to describe him.

I told you that the father intervenes in the Oedipal dialectic of desire insofar as he lays down the law to the mother. Here, what is at stake, and which can don diverse forms, always comes down to this – it's the mother who turns out to have laid down the law to the father at a decisive moment. This means very precisely that, at the time at which the prohibiting intervention of the father should have introduced the subject to the phase of the dissolution of his relationship to the object of the mother's desire, and cut off at the root all possibility for him to identify himself with the phallus, the subject discovers, on the contrary, in the structure of the mother, the support and the reinforcement which prevents this crisis from taking place. At the ideal moment, at the dialectical time at which the mother should be grasped as deprived of the adject in such a way that the subject is literally at his wit's end over her, he finds therein, on the contrary, his security. That holds up perfectly well by virtue of the fact that he feels it is the mother who holds the key to the situation and that she won't let herself be either deprived or dispossessed of it. In other words, the father can say whatever he wants, they are completely indifferent to it.

This doesn't mean, then, that the father has not come into play. Freud said a long time ago – I ask you to refer to the *Three Essays on Sexuality* – that it isn't rare – and he isn't expressing himself idly, he isn't saying 'it isn't rare' out of vagueness, it's because he has seen it frequently – for an inversion to be determined by the *Wegfall*, the failure, of an excessively prohibitive father. There are two moments in this – namely, prohibition, but also that this prohibition has failed. In other words, in the end it is the mother who lays down the law.

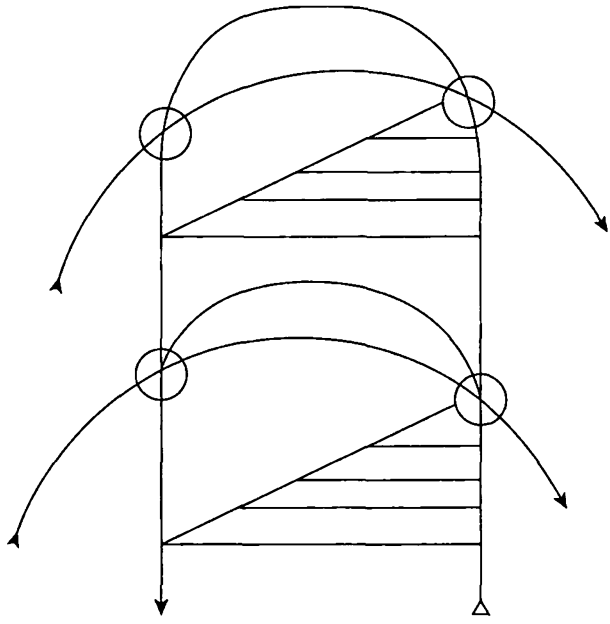
This also explains to you why, in quite different cases, if the mark of the prohibitive father is broken, the result is exactly the same. In particular, in cases in which the father loves the mother too much, where, through his love, he appears too dependent on the mother, the result is exactly the same.

I am not in the process of telling you that the result is always the same, but that it is the same in certain cases. The fact that the father loves the mother too much may have another outcome
209 than homosexuality. I am not at all taking refuge in constitution, I am only pointing out in passing that there are differences to be acknowledged and that it is possible to observe for example an obsessional neurosis type of effect, as we will see on another

occasion. For the moment, I am simply emphasizing that different causes can have a common effect, namely that in cases in which the father is too much in love with the mother, he finds himself in fact in the same position as one to whom the mother lays down the law.

There are still other cases – the interest of this perspective is that it brings together different cases – in which the father, as the subject will testify to you, has always remained a person very much at a distance, his messages only arriving via the intermediary of the mother. But analysis shows that in reality he is far from being absent. In particular, behind the tense relationship with the mother – very often marked by all sorts of accusations, complaints and manifestations of aggressiveness, as they say – which constitutes the text of the analysis of a homosexual, the presence is revealed of the father as a rival, not at all in the sense of the inverted Oedipus complex, but in the sense of the normal Oedipus complex, and revealed in the clearest of fashions. In this case, one makes do with the remark that the aggressiveness against the father has been transferred onto the mother, which isn't very clear but at least it has the advantage of sticking to the facts. What one needs to know is why this is how it is.

This is how it is because the child has found his solution in the critical position in which the father was effectively a threat to him – a solution that consists in the identification represented by the homology of these two triangles.



210 The child has considered that the best way to cope is to identify with the mother, because the mother has not let herself be shaken. It is therefore in the position of the mother, thus defined, that he finds himself.

On the one hand, when he gets involved with a partner who is a substitute for the paternal figure, it is a matter for him, as it frequently appears in the fantasies and dreams of homosexuals, of disarming him, even checkmating him, in a manner that is completely clear in certain cases, and rendering the person who is the substitute for the father incapable of being valued by a woman or women.

On the other hand, the homosexual's requirement of encountering the penile organ in his partner corresponds precisely to this, which is that in the primitive position, the one that the mother who lays down the law to the father occupies, what is called into question – not resolved but called into question – is whether, truly, the father has one or doesn't have one. And this is very exactly what is demanded by the homosexual well before anything else, and in a way that prevails over everything else. Afterwards, we will see what one does with it, but it is a question above all of showing that he has one.

I would go even further, to the point of indicating to you here what the value of the dependence that is represented by the father's excessive love for the mother consists in. You remember, I hope, the formula that I chose for you, namely, that to love is always to give what one doesn't have, and not to give what one has. I shall not come back to the reasons why I gave it to you, but be convinced by it and take it like a key formula, like a little ramp which, with the touch of a hand, will take you to the right floor even if you don't understand anything about it, and it's much better if you don't understand anything about it. To love is to give to someone who has or doesn't have what is in question, but it is certainly to give what one doesn't have. To give, on the other hand, is also to give, but it is to give what one has. There's a world of difference.

In any case, insofar as the father truly shows himself to be in love where the mother is concerned, he is suspected of not having it, and this is the angle from which the mechanism comes into play. I point out to you in this respect that these truths are never completely obscure, nor are they unknown – when they are not articulated, one has an intuition about them at the very least. I don't know if you have observed that this burning issue is never explored by analysts, even though it is at least as interesting to know whether the father loves the mother as it is to know whether the mother loves the father. One always raises the question in that direction – the child had a castrating phallic mother and whatever else you can think of,

she had an authoritarian attitude towards the father, a lack of love, of respect for him, and so on – but it is very curious to see that we never emphasize the father's relationship to the mother. We don't 211
very well know how to think about it, and it doesn't seem to us possible, all things considered, to say anything very normative about it. Thus, we carefully leave this aspect of the problem to one side, at least till today, and I will very probably have to return to this.

Another consequence. There is also something that comes up very frequently, and it is not the least of the paradoxes of the analysis of homosexuals. At first sight, it seems very paradoxical in relation to the demand for a penis in the partner that they are terrified of seeing the organ of a woman, because, or so we are told, that suggests the idea of castration to them. It's perhaps true, but not in the way you think, because what it is about the organ of a woman that stops them is precisely that, in many cases, it is presumed to have ingested the phallus of the father, and that what is dreaded in penetration is precisely an encounter with this phallus.

Dreams – I will quote some for you – well recorded in the literature, and which also occur in my practice, make it apparent in the clearest of manners that what sometimes emerges in a possible encounter with a woman's vagina is a phallus that develops as such and represents something insurmountable, before which not only is the subject brought to a stop but he is invaded by all sorts of fears. This gives a completely different meaning to the danger of the vagina from the one that one thought necessary to put under the heading of *vagina dentata*, which also exists. It is the feared vagina insofar as it contains the hostile phallus, the paternal phallus, the phallus that is both fantasmatic and absorbed by the mother, and whose real power she holds in the feminine organ.

This is an adequate formulation of all the complexity of the homosexual's relationships. It's a stable situation, and not at all a dual one, a fully secure situation, a situation with three legs. It's precisely because it is only ever envisaged from the aspect of a dual relation, and because one never enters into the labyrinth of the homosexual's positions, that, through the fault of the analyst, the situation never comes to be completely clarified.

Even though the situation has the closest of relations with the mother, it only has its importance in relation to the father. What ought to be the message of the law is quite the contrary, and, whether ingested or not, it ends up in the mother's hands. The mother holds the key, but in a manner that is much more complex than the one implied by the global and massive notion that she is the mother equipped with a phallus. If a homosexual turns out to have identified with her, it isn't at all insofar as she has or doesn't have

the adject, purely and simply, but insofar as she holds the key to the
212 particular situation that prevails at the exit of the Oedipus complex, where judgement is passed as to which of the two ultimately holds the power. Not just any power, but very precisely the power of love, and insofar as the complex bonds of the construction of the Oedipus complex, as they have been presented to you here, allow you to understand how the relationship to the power of the law metaphorically reverberates through the relationship to the phallus as fantasmatic object, insofar as it is the object with which the subject must identify at a particular moment.

I will continue next time with a little side commentary on what have been called states of phallic passivity – the term is Löwenstein's – to account for certain disturbances to sexual potency. It fits in here too naturally for me not to do it. Then I will show you how, across the different avatars of this same object, from its origins – namely its function as the mother's imaginary object – through to the moment where it is taken on by the subject, we can outline the general and definitive classification of the different forms in which it intervenes. That's what we will do next week.

The time after that, after which I will leave you for three weeks, we will conclude on the subject's relationship to the phallus in a way that may perhaps interest you less directly, but which I hold to dearly.

Effectively, last trimester I concluded with what I brought for you concerning comedy. When I said that the essence of comedy was when the subject takes the whole dialectical matter in hand and says, 'After all, this entire dramatic affair, tragedy, the conflicts between father and mother – none of that has the same value as love, and now let's amuse ourselves, let's begin the orgy, let's bring all these conflicts to a close, all of that is made for man', it wasn't very well taken. I was quite astonished to have surprised, even scandalized, some people. I am going to let you in on a secret – it's in Hegel.

By contrast, I will bring something new to this topic, something that seems much more demonstrative to me than anything it has ever been possible to formulate on the various phenomena of the mind. The fact is that by taking this path one rediscovers a surprising confirmation of what I am claiming, namely, the crucial character for the subject, and for his development, of imaginary identification with the phallus.

I therefore invite you to come back for the last day of this period so that I can show you the extent to which this applies, the extent to which it is demonstrable and how sensational it is – so as to give a key to, a unique term for, and a univocal explanation of, the function of comedy.

20 January 1958

XII

FROM IMAGE TO SIGNIFIER – IN PLEASURE AND IN REALITY

The connection between the two principles
Winnicott's paradox
Kleinism's dead-ends
From the *Urbild* to the Ideal
The girl who wants to be whipped

The world is preoccupied with symbolization. An article appeared in the *International Journal* in May–June 1956 under the title 'Symbolism and Its Relationship to the Primary and Secondary Processes', in which Mr Charles Rycroft tries to give symbolism a meaning in the current state of analysis. Those of you who read English would do well to familiarize yourselves with this article, where you will see the difficulties that have always been present concerning the meaning to give in analysis, not only to the word 'symbolism', but to the idea one has of the process of symbolization.

Since 1911 when Mr Jones carried out the first important comprehensive study, the question has gone through various phases, and it has encountered, and still encounters, huge difficulties in what currently constitutes the most developed position on this subject, that is, the one arising from the considerations by Mrs Melanie Klein on the role of symbols in the ego's formation.

The matter at hand has the closest of relationships with what I am currently explaining to you, and I would like you to sense how useful the point of view I am trying to communicate to you is for introducing a little bit of clarity into some obscure directions.

I don't know from what angle I am going to approach it today, for I don't have a plan for how I am going to present things to you. Since this is our third-last session, and since I told you that next time the Seminar would be centred on the phallus and comedy, today I would like simply to pause here and show you several directions

214 in which what I have expounded for you regarding the castration complex makes it possible to raise a number of questions.

I will start by taking theses as they come. It's not always possible to impose a strict order on this subject, above all when, as is the case today, we're at a crossroads.

1

You have just seen the terms 'primary' and 'secondary' process in the title of Rycroft's article, which I have never spoken to you about, to the point where some of you were astonished to come across them some time ago in the context of a vocabulary definition.

The opposition between primary process and secondary process dates from the time of the *Traumdeutung*, and, without being completely identical with this, it covers the contrasting notions of pleasure principle and reality principle. I have alluded to these two terms more than once here, and always in order to get you to observe that the use made of them is incomplete unless one considers them in relation to one another and senses their link and their opposition as being constitutive of the position of each.

I will come straight to the heart of the matter.

When one isolates the notion of pleasure principle as the primary process principle, one ends up where Rycroft does – he thinks that he has to define the primary process, set aside all its structural characteristics and place in the background condensation, displacement and so on, everything that Freud began to enquire into when defining the unconscious so that he can characterize it in terms of what the final formulation of Freudian theory in the *Traumdeutung* contributes. Specifically, he turns it into an originary, original mechanism – whether you understand this as a historical stage or as the underlying ground – on the basis of which something else would develop. It would be a kind of base or psychical depth, or, taking it in the logical sense, an obligatory point of departure for reflection. In response to impulses from the drives, there is, supposedly, always a tendency in the human subject – it obviously cannot be anything else, but the point isn't very clearly defined – towards the hallucinatory satisfaction of desire. This would be a virtual possibility – constitutive, as it were – of the subject's position with respect to the world.

I doubt this will come as a surprise to you, for you find that this reference to a primitive experience on the model of the reflex arc is
215 abundantly expressed by all authors. Even before need corresponds to an impulse internal to the subject, triggering the instinctual cycle, the movement, however uncoordinated, of appetite, then the

searching and the locating in reality, it is satisfied via the pathway of the memory traces of what previously satisfied the desire. This, quite simply, is how satisfaction tends to be reproduced on the hallucinatory plane.

Doesn't this notion which has become almost consubstantial with our analytic conceptions, and which we make use of in an almost implicit manner when we speak about the pleasure principle, seem so excessive as to warrant clarification? Because, in the end, if it's in the nature of the cycle of psychical processes to create their own satisfaction, why don't people satisfy themselves?

Of course, it's because a need continues to insist. Fantasmatic satisfaction is unable to fulfil every need – though we are only too well aware that in the sexual order, in every case without any doubt, it's highly likely to confront a need when it's the need of a drive that is at stake. For hunger, it's a different matter. What is appearing on the horizon is that it's ultimately a question of the quite possibly illusory nature of the sexual object.

This conception of the relationship between a need and its satisfaction does exist and it may effectively be sustainable, at least at one level – that of sexual satisfaction. It has so profoundly impregnated the whole of analytic thought that what has come to the foreground are the primitive or primordial gratifications or satisfactions, and frustrations as well, that are produced at the beginning of the subject's life – that is, in the subject's relations with its mother. Psychoanalysis has thus, on the whole, entered more deeply into a dialectic of need and its satisfaction the more it has become interested in the early phases of the subject's development. Down this path, one has come to formulations whose character – no less necessary than significant – I would like to point out to you.

From the Kleinian perspective, which is the one I am referring to at the moment, the subject's entire learning, as it were, about reality is primordially prepared and underpinned by the essentially hallucinatory and fantasmatic constitution of its first objects, which are classified into good and bad objects, insofar as they establish an initial primordial relation which, in the subsequent life of the subject, will give the subject the principal types of the relations he will have with reality. We thus arrive at the notion that the subject's world is made up of a fundamentally unreal relationship that the subject has with objects that are merely the reflection of his fundamental drives.

For example, this world of 'phantasy'*, in the way this concept is used in the Kleinian school, is organized, in a series of projections of the subject's needs, around the subject's fundamental aggressiveness. A series of more or less favourable experiences, and 216

it's desirable that they be favourable, intervenes on the surface of this world. In this way, little by little, the world of experience makes possible a certain rational locating of what in these objects is, as one says, objectively definable as corresponding to a certain reality, where the background of unreality remains absolutely fundamental.

Here, we have what one can truly call a psychotic construction of the subject. From this perspective, a normal subject is, in short, a psychosis that has turned out well, a psychosis in harmony with experience. What I am saying to you isn't a reconstruction. The author I am going to speak about now, Mr Winnicott, expresses it exactly so in a text he wrote on the use of regression in analytic therapy. It absolutely affirms, as such, the fundamental homogeneity of psychosis with a normal relationship to the world.

There are huge problems with this approach, even just in managing to formulate it. As phantasy [*fantaisie*] is only the fabric underlying the world of reality, what can the function of phantasy, when it is recognized as such, be in a subject at an adult and completed state and who has successfully constituted his world? This is also the problem that presents itself to any self-respecting Kleinian – that is, to any self-declared Kleinian – and also, one can currently say, to virtually every analyst, insofar as the register in which he inscribes the subject's relationship to the world becomes more and more exclusively one of a process of learning about the world carried out on the basis of a series of more or less successful experiences of frustration.

I invite you to refer to Mr Winnicott's text, which can be found in volume 26 of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* under the title 'Primitive Emotional Development'. The author makes an effort to explain the emergence of this world of phantasy insofar as it's consciously lived by the subject and stabilizes his reality, as we necessarily observe in the very text of experience. For those interested, I refer them to a remark by the author the need for which one clearly senses, given how it leads to a very curious paradox.

The emergence of the principle of reality – in other words, the recognition of reality – on the basis of the child's primordial relations with the maternal object, the object of its satisfaction and also of its dissatisfaction, doesn't at all show how the world of phantasy in its adult form can emerge from there – unless it's by way of an artifice
217 that Mr Winnicott becomes aware of, and which no doubt makes possible a coherent enough development in the theory, but at the price of a paradox that I want to get you to see.

There is a fundamental discordance between the hallucinatory satisfaction of need and what the mother gives the child. It's within this very discordance that a gap opens up to make it possible for the child to attain its first recognition of the object. This presupposes

that, despite appearances, the object turns out to be disappointing. Now, in order to explain how the thing that sums up everything for modern psychoanalysis concerning the world of fantasy and imagination, namely what in English is called wishful thinking,* can arise, he makes the following observation.

Let's suppose that the maternal object turns up at the appointed hour to fulfil a need. As soon as the child begins to act so as to get the breast, the mother gives it to him. Winnicott quite rightly pauses here and raises the following problem – what enables the child, under these conditions, to distinguish between the hallucinatory satisfac tion of his desire and reality? In other words, with this point of departure we necessarily come to the following equation – in the beginning, it's absolutely impossible to distinguish a hallucination from a fulfilled desire. The paradox of this confusion is unavoidably striking.

From the perspective that rigorously characterizes primary process as naturally having to be satisfied in a hallucinatory manner, we arrive at this, which is that the more satisfying reality is, the less it constitutes a test of reality – omnipotent thought in the child is henceforth originally founded on everything that has succeeded in reality.

This conception may be coherent in some way, but do recognize that in itself it presents a paradoxical aspect. The very need to have to resort to such a paradox to explain a pivotal point in the subject's development gives one pause for thought and even makes one question it.

As paradoxical, and blatantly paradoxical, as this conception already is, it inevitably has several consequences, which I already pointed out to you last year when I alluded to this same article by Mr Winnicott. That is, in the rest of his anthropology, it has no other effect than to lead him to classify almost everything that might be called free speculation as part of the same register as the fantasmatic aspects of thought. He completely assimilates everything of the order of speculation, however highly developed it is, namely everything that can be called a conviction – pretty much whatever it might be – whether political, religious or other, to fantasmatic life. That is a point of view that fits in well with British humour, 218
and with a certain attitude of mutual respect, tolerance and also reserve. There is a series of things that one only ever speaks about in inverted commas, or that one doesn't speak about at all, amongst well-brought up people. They are, however, things that do count just a bit, since they form part of the internal discourse that one is far from being able to reduce to wishful thinking*.

But let's not go into the finer details of the matter. I simply want to show you what, in contrast, a different conception can suggest.

2

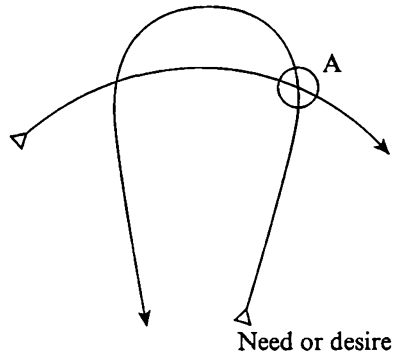
First, is it so clear that one can purely and simply call satisfaction what is produced at the hallucinatory level, and in the different registers in which we can embody the fundamental thesis of the hallucinatory satisfaction of primordial need at the level of the primary process?

I have already introduced the problem several times. We are told, 'Take a look at dreams,' and one always refers to children's dreams. Freud himself shows us the way on this. From the perspective that he was exploring, which was the fundamental nature of desire in dreams, he was effectively led to give us the example of the dream of a child as typical of hallucinatory satisfaction.

From that point on, the door was open. Psychiatrists rushed in – they had for a long time been looking for an idea about their subjects' disturbed relationship to reality in their delusions – by referring them, for example, to structures analogous to those of dreams. The approach I have presented you with here doesn't introduce any essential modifications on this point.

From where we are now, where we can see the difficulties and impasses of a conception in which a purely imaginary relation of the subject to the world is at the origin of the development of his relationship to so-called external reality, it's important to return to the little schema that I never tire of using.

I will return to its simplest form and remind you, even if I should seem to be drumming it in a little, what it's about.



Here one finds something that could be called need, but which I am already calling desire because there is no original or pure state of need. From the outset, need is motivated at the level of desire, that is, at the level of something that is destined in man to have

a particular relationship to signifiers. Here, we have this desiring intention crossing what is laid down for the subject as the signifying 219
chain – either the requirements of the signifying chain have already been imposed on his subjectivity, or, from the start, he only ever encounters it in the following form, which is that it's always and already constituted in the mother and that it imposes its requirements and its barrier on him, in the mother. The subject, as you know, initially encounters the signifying chain in the form of the Other, and it arrives at this barrier in the form of a message – whose projection you can see on this schema.

Where is the pleasure principle located on this schema? One may consider it possible, from some angles, to find a primitive manifestation of it in the form of dreams. Take the most primitive of dreams, the most confused, a dog's dream. You can occasionally see a dog's legs moving when he is asleep. He must be dreaming, therefore, and perhaps his desire, too, has a hallucinatory form of satisfaction. Can we conceptualize this? How do we situate it in humans? Here's what I suggest to you so that it exists at least in terms of a possibility in your minds and so that you are aware that in this case it applies in a more satisfying way.

A hallucinatory response to need isn't the emergence of a fantasmatic reality at the conclusion of a circuit initiated by the insistence of a need. At the conclusion of this insistence that started to awaken in the subject, this movement towards something that, effectively, must begin to take shape for him, what appears does not, of course, bear no relationship to the subject's need, does not bear no relationship to an object, but bears a relationship to the object of such a kind that it deserves to be called a signifier. It's effectively something that has a fundamental relationship to the object's absence and already possesses the characteristics of a discrete element, a sign.

If you consult Letter 52 to Fliess, which I have already cited, you 220
will see that when he sets about articulating the birth of unconscious structures, when he begins to formulate a model of the psychical apparatus that makes it possible to explain the primary process, all Freud can do is grant from the outset that the mnesic inscription that hallucinatorially corresponds to the manifestation of need is nothing but a sign, *Zeichen*.

A sign isn't characterized merely by its relationship to an image in the theory of instincts. It's not the sort of lure that is sufficient to awaken need but not fulfil it. It's located in a particular relationship with other signifiers, with for example the signifier that is its direct opposite and signifies its absence. It has a place in a set of already organized signifiers, already structured in a symbolic relationship,

insofar as it appears at the intersection of a play of presence and absence, of absence and presence – a game that is itself ordinarily linked to a spoken articulation in which discrete elements that are signifiers are already present.

In fact, the experience we have of the simplest of children's dreams isn't one of simple satisfaction, as when it's a matter of the need of hunger. It's already something that presents itself with the character of excess, as exorbitant. What the little Anna Freud dreams of is precisely what the child has been forbidden, 'cherries, strawberries, raspberries, pudding', everything that has already adopted a properly signifying character through being prohibited. She doesn't dream simply of what corresponds to a need, but of what is present in the mode of a feast, going beyond the limits of the natural object that satisfies a need.

This feature is crucial. You will find it at absolutely every level. It's there, at whatever level you consider what appears to be hallucinatory satisfaction.

Conversely, approaching things from the other end, from the angle of delusions, for a while, before Freud, you might be tempted, for want of anything better, to endeavour to make it too correspond to a kind of desire on the part of the subject. You get there via a number of insights, some oblique flashes like this one, where something may effectively seem to represent the satisfaction of desire. But isn't it obvious that the major phenomenon, the most striking, the most massive and the most invasive of all the phenomena of delusions isn't at all the phenomenon that refers to a reverie of satisfaction of desire, but something as frozen as verbal hallucinations?

People have wondered about the level at which this verbal hallucination is produced, whether there is in the subject something like an internal reflection in the form of a psychomotor hallucination which it's extremely important to observe, or whether there is projection, or something else, and so on. But doesn't it seem from the outset that what dominates in the structuration of this hallucination, and which should serve as the first element of classification, is that it has the structure of signifiers? Hallucinations are phenomena structured at the level of signifiers. One cannot, not even for an instant, think about the organization of these hallucinations without seeing that the first thing to be emphasized in the phenomenon is that it's a phenomenon of signifiers.

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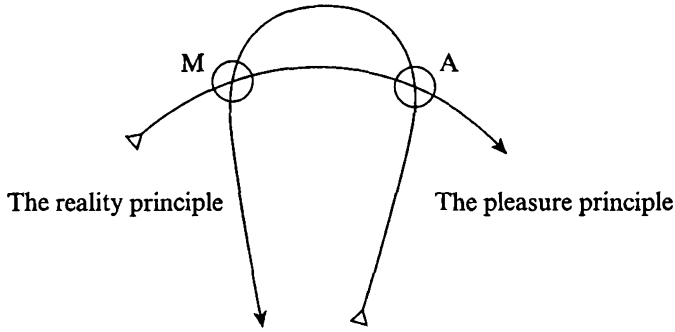
Here, then, is something that must always remind us that, while it's true that one can explore the pleasure principle from the angle of the fundamentally unreal satisfaction of desire, what characterizes the hallucinatory satisfaction of desire is that it's formed in the domain of signifiers and that, as such, it implies a locus of the



Other. This is, moreover, not necessarily an Other. It's a locus of the Other, insofar as it's necessary for the position of the instance of signifiers.

You will notice that on this little schema we see need come into play in that part of the circuit that is external in some way, formed by the part on the [lower] right. Need manifests itself in the form of a sort of tail of the signifying chain, as something that only exists at the limit, and where, however, you will always recognize the feature of pleasure as being attached to it. This is the case every time something reaches this level of the schema.

For a witticism to result in pleasure, it's necessary that what takes place at the level of the Other only comes to an end virtually by tending towards what lies beyond sense, which in itself carries a kind of satisfaction.

If the pleasure principle gets schematized in the external part of the circuit, the reality principle is, likewise, situated in the opposite part. As for the human subject insofar as we have dealings with him 222
in our experience, there is no other possible apprehension or definition of the reality principle, inasmuch as he enters it at the level of the secondary process. How can we neglect, concerning reality, that signifiers effectively enter into play in the human real as an original reality? There is language, it speaks in the world, and by virtue of this fact there is an entire series of things, objects that are signified and that would absolutely not be objects if there were no signifiers in the world.

Introducing the subject into any kind of reality is absolutely unthinkable on the basis of any kind of pure and simple experience, frustration, discordance, shock, burn or whatever else you might think of. There is no bit-by-bit spelling out of an *Umwelt*, explored in an immediate and tentative manner. For animals, instinct comes to the rescue, thank goodness for that. If animals needed to reconstruct the world, life would not be long enough. And so, why wish

that man, who has very poorly adapted instincts, somehow fashion an experience of the world with his own hands? The fact that there are signifiers is absolutely essential to it, and the principal means of expression of his experience of reality – it's almost banal, foolish to say this – is surely the voice. The teaching he receives comes to him essentially from the speech of adults.

But the significant margin that Freud achieves over this element of experience is the following – even before language acquisition is elaborated at the motor level, at the auditory level and at the level at which he understands what one tells him, there is already symbolization – from the outset, from the first relations with the object, from the child's first relationship to the maternal object as the primordial, primitive object on whom its subsistence in the world depends. This object has effectively already been introduced as such into the process of symbolization and it plays the role of introducing the signifier's existence into the world – and at a very early stage.

Take note of this – as soon as the child merely starts to be capable of opposing two phonemes to one another, there are already two vocables. And with two, the one who pronounces them and the one to whom they are addressed, that is the object, his mother, you already have four elements, which is enough to contain potentially, within itself, the entire combinatory from which the organization of signifiers will emerge.

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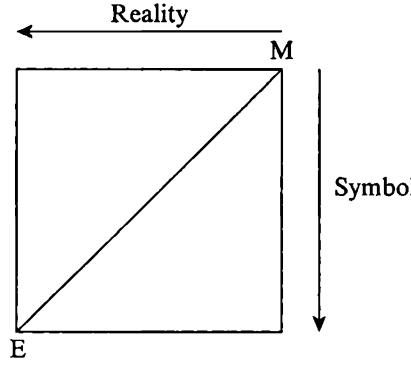
I am now going to move to a new and different little schema – one that, moreover, I have already started here, and which will show you what the consequences are of what I have been telling you as well as recalling for you what I was trying to get you to see at our last session.



I said that, primordially, we have the child's relationship with the mother. If it's along the E–M axis that one wants the initial relationship with reality to be established, and if one makes the constitution of reality depend uniquely on the relationship of the child's desire with the object insofar as it satisfies him or doesn't satisfy him, then this reality cannot be deduced and can only be reconstructed in experience with the aid of continual sleights of hand.

If it's possible, in very extreme cases, to find something that corresponds to this in a number of cases of childhood psychosis, it's always, ultimately, the so-called depressive phase of the child's development that one is referring to whenever one brings this dialectic into play. But insofar as this dialectic comprises an infinitely more complex development, it's in fact a question of something quite different – the child doesn't simply have a relationship with an object that satisfies him or that doesn't satisfy him, but, owing to this minimum thickness of unreality that the initial symbolization gives, there is already a triangular mapping of the child, namely, a relationship, not with what brings satisfaction to his need, but a relationship with the desire of the maternal subject there with him.

If the child does manage to locate his position, it's solely insofar as the dimension of symbols has already been inaugurated. This 224
dimension is represented here as the axis called the axis of ordinates in mathematical analysis. It's what enables us to conceptualize how the child is to locate himself with reference to two poles. It is, moreover, what Mrs Melanie Klein is searching around for without being able to find the formula for it. It's effectively around a double pole of the mother – which she calls the good mother and the bad mother – that the child begins to take up its position. It's not the object that he situates, it's initially himself that he situates. He is then going to situate himself at all sorts of points along this axis, trying to reach the object of the mother's desire, trying to respond to her desire. That is the essential element, and it might take quite some time.

In truth, no species of dialectic is possible if we only consider the child's relationship with the mother – first because it's impossible to deduce anything from this, but also because it's equally impossible, on the basis of experience, to conceive how the child is in this ambiguous world that Kleinian analysts present us with, in which the only reality is that of the mother. According to them, the child's primitive world is both suspended from this object and entirely autoerotic, in that the child is so closely tied to the maternal object that he literally forms a closed circle with her.

In fact, we all know this, and you only have to see a small, living child – he isn't at all autoerotic. He is interested normally, just like

any young animal, and, as he is, when all is said and done, a young animal who is more particularly intelligent than the others, he takes an interest in all sorts of other things there in reality. Obviously, they are not random things. There is one to which we attach a certain importance and which appears at the limit of this reality, on the axis of the abscissa, which here is the axis of reality. This isn't a fantasy, it's a perception.

For Mrs Melanie Klein all is forgiven, for she is a woman of genius, but for her followers, and in particular those trained in matters of psychology, like Susan Isaacs who was a psychologist, it is unforgivable – in the wake of Mrs Melanie Klein, she manages to articulate a theory of perception on which there is no way of distinguishing a perception from an introjection in the analytic sense of the term.

I cannot, in passing, go through all the impasses of the Kleinian system. I am only trying to give you a model that will enable you to articulate what happens more clearly.

What happens at the level of the mirror phase? The mirror phase is a subject's encounter with what is and isn't a reality, strictly
225 speaking, namely a virtual image, which plays a decisive role in a particular crystallization of the subject which I call his *Urbild*. I put it in parallel with the relationship that arises between the child and the mother. This is basically what it's about. The child acquires this point of support for the thing at the limit of reality that appears for him in a perceptual form, but which one can also call an image, in the sense in which an image has the property of being a captivating signal that is singled out in reality and attracts and captures some of the subject's libido, some of its instinct, owing to which a number of reference points, of psychoanalytic points in the world, make it possible for the living being more or less to organize his behaviour.

For the human being, it ultimately seems that this is the sole point that subsists. It plays a role there, as deceptive and illusory. This is where it comes to the aid of an activity which the subject already only engages in insofar as he has to satisfy the Other's desire and, therefore, with the aim of creating an illusion for this desire. That's the whole point of the child's jubilatory activity in front of the mirror. His image of the body is acquired as something that both exists and doesn't exist at the same time, and he positions his own movements as well as the image of those who are there with him in front of the mirror in relation to it. What's special about this experience is that it presents the subject with a reality that is virtual, unrealized, grasped as such, and is to be acquired. Every possible construction of human reality literally passes through here.

For sure, the phallus, as this imaginary object that the child has to identify with in order to satisfy the mother's desire, cannot yet be put in place. But the possibility for this is greatly enriched by the ego's crystallization in this positioning, which opens up all sorts of possibilities for the imaginary.

What are we observing? A double movement. On the one hand, the experience of reality introduces, in the form of the image of the body, an illusory and deceptive element as the essential foundation for mapping the subject in relation to reality. On the other hand, the margin that this experience opens up for the child gives him the possibility of entering into another field and acquiring, in the opposite direction, his first ego identifications.

The field of experience of reality is represented here by the triangle, M-*i*-*m*, which sits on the axis of the previously defined abscissa, whereas the more enigmatic, homologous and inverse triangle, M-*m*-E, creates the subject's field for him, insofar as he has to identify himself, define himself, learn about himself and subjectify himself.

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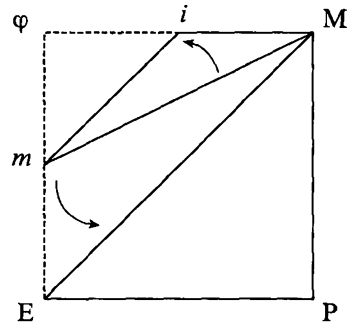

What is this triangle, M-*m*-E? What is this field? And how is this trajectory which starts with the specular *Urbild* of the ego, in *m*, going to enable the child to master himself, to identify himself, to progress? How can we define it? How is it constituted?

Answer. The ego's *Urbild* is this initial self-conquest or self-mastery that the child acquires in his experience once he has split the real pole in relation to which he has to situate himself. This brings him into the trapezium *m*-*i*-M-E, insofar as he identifies multiple elements of signifiers in reality. Through his successive identifications along the segment *m*-E, he himself takes on the role of a series of signifiers, understand by that a series of hieroglyphs, types, forms and presentations that punctuate his reality with a number of reference points, thus making it a reality riddled with signifiers.

What constitutes the limit of the series is this formation in E that we call the ego-ideal. This is what the subject identifies with when he goes in the direction of the symbolic. He sets out from imaginary reference points – which are, in some ways, instinctually preformed in his relationship with his own body – and engages in a series of signifying identifications whose direction is defined as the opposite of the imaginary and which use it as a signifier. The reason the ego-ideal identification occurs at the paternal level is that at this level there is greater detachment in relation to the imaginary relationship than at the level of the relation with the mother.

This little construction of schemas one on top of the other, these little dancers standing on one another, the legs of one on the shoulders of the other – that's what this is about.

The third of these little constructions is the father insofar as he intervenes to prohibit. As a result, he brings the object of the moth-
227 er's desire to the properly symbolic rank, in such a way that it's no longer a purely imaginary object – it's also destroyed, prohibited. It's insofar as the father intervenes as a real person, as *I*, in order to fulfil this function that the *I* will become an eminently signifying element and constitute the nucleus of the final identification, the ultimate outcome of the Oedipus complex. This is why the formation called the ego-ideal relates to the father.

The ego-ideal's oppositions to the object of the mother's desire are expressed on this schema. The subject's virtual and ideal identification with the phallus, insofar as it's the object of the mother's desire, is located at the vertex of the first triangle of the relationship with the mother [φ-M-E]. It's situated there virtually, at one and the same time always possible and always under threat – so much under threat that it will effectively be destroyed by the intervention of the purely symbolic principle represented by the Name-of-the-Father.

The latter is there in the form of a veiled presence. His presence isn't unveiled progressively but by an initially decisive intervention, insofar as he is the prohibiting element.

What does he intervene in? In this kind of groping about on the part of the subject who, without this intervention, would end up in, and in certain cases does end up in, an exclusive relationship with the mother. This exclusive relationship isn't one of pure and simple dependence but manifests itself in all sorts of perversions through a particular essential relationship with the phallus because either the subject assumes it in a number of forms, or turns it into a fetish, or because we are at the level of what can be called the original root of the perverse relationship with the mother.

In general terms, the subject may, at a particular phase, effectively attempt to identify his ego with the phallus. It's inasmuch as he is

transported in the other direction that he constitutes and structures a certain relationship, marked by the endpoints *i*-M which lie along the axis of reality, with the image of his own body, that is, the imaginary pure and simple, namely the mother.

Also, his ego, as a real term, is apt not merely to recognize itself, but, having recognized itself, to become a signifying element and no longer simply an imaginary element in its relationship with the mother. This is how these successive identifications that Freud spells out for us in the strongest of terms, and which form the theme of his theory of the ego, can occur along *m*-E. This theory effectively shows us that the ego is made of a series of identifications with an object that lies beyond the immediate object, the father beyond the mother.

It's essential to retain this schema. It shows you that, in order for it to turn out correctly, completely and in the right direction, there 228
has to be a particular relationship between the subject's direction, his rectitude and his accidents, and the always growing development of the father's presence in the dialectic of the child's relationship with the mother.

This schema comprises a double seesawing movement. On the one hand, reality is mastered by human subjects inasmuch as it reaches one of its limits in the virtual form of the image of the body. Correspondingly, it's insofar as the subject introduces the unreal elements of signifiers into his field of experience that he manages to enlarge the field of this experience to the scale it has for a human subject.

This schema is made for constant use. If you don't refer to it, you will find that you are forever sliding into a series of confusions and literally taking the smoke for the fire – an idealization for an identification, an illusion for an image, all sorts of things that are far from being equivalent and that we shall have to come back to later with reference to this schema.

It's quite clear, for example, that it is easy to show our conception of the phenomenon of delusion through the structure set out on this schema. Delusion is a phenomenon that, surely, deserves to be called regressive, but not because it reproduces an earlier state, which would be completely incorrect. The idea that the child lives in a world of delusion, which seems to be implied by the Kleinian conception, is one of the most difficult things to agree to, for the good reason that while this psychotic phase is required by the premises of the Kleinian articulation, we have no kind of experience of anything at all in the child that represents a transitory psychotic state.

On the other hand, we can very well conceptualize it at the level of a structural, and not a genetic, regression, which the schema makes

possible to illustrate by means of a movement in the direction opposite the one indicated here by the two arrows. The invasion of the world of objects by the image of the body is manifest in delusions of a Schreberian type, whereas, inversely, signifier phenomena are gathered around the ego to the point where the only thing supporting the subject is a continuous thread of verbal hallucinations which constitutes a withdrawal to an initial position of the genesis of his world or of reality.

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Let's see what our aim has been today. Our aim is to definitively locate the meaning of the question we raise concerning the object.

The question of the object is fundamental for us analysts. We experience it constantly, all we ever do is concern ourselves with it. The question is essentially this – what is the source and the genesis of the illusory object? The question is whether we can form an adequate conception of this object as illusory by referring simply to the categories of the imaginary.

My reply to you is, 'No, that's impossible.' The illusory object has been known about for such a long time, for as long as there have been people who think, philosophers who attempt to express what forms part of everyone's experience. The illusory object has been spoken about for ages. It's the veil of Maya. It's well known that sexual need manifestly produces aims that go beyond the subject. We did not have to wait for Freud for that. Mr Schopenhauer, and many others before him, had already seen a ruse of nature in the fact that a subject thinks about kissing such and such a woman, and that he is purely and simply subject to the requirements of the species.

The fundamentally imaginary character of the object, most especially the object of sexual need, was recognized long ago. The fact that the subject is only sensitive to the image of the female of his species, very roughly speaking, has the character of a lure that, supposedly, seems to be realized in nature – but that doesn't help us one little bit in understanding what is nevertheless essential, which is that one small woman's shoe may very precisely be what provokes in a man the emergence of this energy that is said to be intended for the reproduction of the species. The whole problem is there.

It can only be solved on condition that one realizes that the illusory object doesn't fulfil its function in the human subject as an image – however deceptive, however naturally well organized as a

lure you suppose it to be. It fulfils it as a signifying element, taken up into a signifying chain.

We have come to the end of a session today that is perhaps particularly abstract. I apologize, but if we don't set these terms down we will never get to understand what's here and what's there, what I'm saying and what I'm not saying, what I am saying so as to contradict others, and what others say in all innocence, without being 230
aware of their contradictions. We really do have to take this route via the function played by this or that object, fetish or not, and even simply via all the instruments of a perversion.

I really have no idea what one would have had to be thinking about to be satisfied with, for example, terms like 'masochism' or 'sadism', which provide all sorts of admirable considerations on stages and instincts and on the fact that there is some sort of aggressive motor need in order to be able just to accomplish the aim of genital coupling. But, then, why does the fact of being beaten – there are other ways of practising sadism and masochism – very specifically with a switch, or anything else analogous, play an essential role in sadism and masochism? Why does one minimize the importance to human sexuality of this implement commonly known as the whip, in a more or less elided, symbolic or generalized manner? There really is something here that deserves to be taken into consideration.

Mr Aldous Huxley depicts a future world in which everything will be so well organized concerning the reproductive instinct that little foetuses will simply be placed in bottles when those chosen for providing the best embryos have been selected. It all goes very well, and the world becomes particularly satisfactory. Because of his personal preferences, Mr Huxley declares it boring. I'm not taking sides, but what is interesting is that by engaging in these sorts of predictions, to which I personally attach no kind of importance, he remakes the world that he is familiar with, just as we are, through the intermediary of a person who isn't just anybody – a girl who expresses her need to be whipped. There seems to him to be no doubt that there is something here that is closely bound up with the character of humanity in the world.

I am simply pointing this out to you. What is accessible to a novelist, who no doubt has some experience concerning sexual life, should give us analysts pause for thought, all the same.

See the turning point in the history of perversion in analysis. To get away from the idea that perversion was purely and simply the drive coming to the surface – that is to say, the contrary of neurosis – we waited for a sign from the conductor, which came when Freud wrote '*Ein Kind wird geschlagen*' ['A Child is Being Beaten'], a text

that is totally sublime, where everything that has been said about it since is merely small beer. It's through the analysis of this whipping fantasy that Freud really brought perversion into his real analytic dialectic. It doesn't appear as the pure and simple manifestation of
231 a drive, but proves to be attached to a dialectical context that is as subtle, composite, rich in compromise and ambiguous as a neurosis.

Perversion is therefore not to be classified as a category of the instinct or of our tendencies, but is to be articulated precisely in all its detail, in its instruments and, let's say the word, in its signifiers. Whenever you deal with a perversion, moreover, it's a misrecognition not to see to what extent it is fundamentally attached to a scenario that is always liable to be transformed, modified, elaborated and enriched. In certain cases, experience makes it clear that perversion is chemically linked in the closest of ways to the appearance, disappearance and entire compensatory movement of a phobia, which obviously exhibits both a front and a back, but in quite a different sense, in the sense in which two articulated systems are mutually composed, offset one another and alternate with one another. This encourages us to talk about the drive in quite another domain than that of tendencies pure and simple.

I am particularly drawing your attention to the traces of a signifier that the components and the instruments of perversion itself correspond to, since we are interested in the object for the moment.

What does all this mean? We have an object, a primordial object, one that, without any doubt, remains dominant for the rest of the subject's life. We have certain imaginary elements that play a crystallizing role, in particular all the material of the body's parts, its members, the subject's reference to their domination, the image of a whole. But the fact of the matter is that the object is caught in the function of signifiers.

A relationship is formed here between two series – a series of S, S′, S″, which symbolizes the existence of a signifying chain, and a series of significations underneath. While the upper chain moves in one direction, this something that is in the significations moves in the opposite direction. This is a signification that is always sliding, flying and fleeing, which means that ultimately, by virtue of the existence of signifiers, man's basic relationship with all signification is a special type of object. I call this object a metonymic object.

What is the nature of this object insofar as the subject has a relationship with it? The subject imaginarily identifies with it in a totally radical manner, not with this or that of its object functions that supposedly correspond to this or that partial tendency, as they say. Something requires that somewhere at this level there be a pole that represents in the imaginary what is always evasive, what is induced

by a certain tendency of the object to take flight into the imaginary, because of the existence of signifiers. This pole is an object. It's 232
pivotal, central in the entire dialectic of perversions, neuroses and even, purely and simply, in subjective development. It has a name. It's called the phallus.

This is what I will be illustrating for you next time.

5 February 1958

XIII

FANTASY, BEYOND THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE

Reading 'A Child is Being Beaten'
The hieroglyphics of the whip, the law of the rod
The negative therapeutic reaction
The pain of being
So-called feminine masochism

By way of bibliographical information, I draw your attention to the following three articles that I will have occasion to refer to. The first is by Ernest Jones, 'The Phallic Phase', published in the *International Journal*, volume 14, 1933, and reprinted in his collection, *Papers on Psychoanalysis*, where it's the last one. The second is in German. It's by Hanns Sachs, '*Genese der Perversion*' ['The Genesis of Perversion'], and you will find it in the ninth volume of the *Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, 1923. Finally, I give you the English reference for the third, 'Perversion and Neurosis', by Otto Rank, in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* of the same year.

I will add to these Freud's initial article from 1919, '*Ein Kind wird geschlagen*' ['A Child is Being Beaten'], which was the signal he gave of a turnaround or a step forward in his own thought and, thereby, for the entire theoretical development of subsequent analytic thought concerning the neuroses and the perversions.

On close examination, the best formula one can give of what occurred at that moment is a formula that the register I am trying to elaborate here by showing you the essential role of signifiers in the formation of symptoms enables me to give – it's effectively a question, in Freud, of the intervention of the notion of a signifier.

Once Freud had shown this, it became clear that the instinct, the drive, has no right to be promoted as any more naked, as it were, in perversion than in neurosis. Hanns Sachs's entire article on the genesis of perversions is there to demonstrate that there is exactly

the same structure of compromise, evasion, and dialectic of the repressed and return of the repressed as in neurosis. That is the essence of this article that is so remarkable, and he gives absolutely 234
convincing examples for it. There is always something in perversion that the subject does not wish to recognize, with what this *'veut'*, 'wish', conveys in our language – what the subject does not wish to recognize can only be conceived as being articulated therein and, nevertheless, not only misrecognized by him, but also repressed for essential reasons of articulation.

This is the mainspring of the analytic mechanism of repression. If the subject were to recognize the repressed, he would be forced to recognize a series of other things, which are strictly intolerable to him, and this is the source of the repressed. Repression can be conceptualized only insofar as it's linked to an articulated signifying chain. Whenever you have repression in neurosis, it's insofar as the subject does not wish to recognize something that it would be necessary to recognize – and this term 'necessary' always carries an element of signifying articulation that cannot be otherwise conceived than as internal to the coherence of a discourse. Well then, for perversion, it's exactly the same thing. There you have it. In 1923, following Freud's article, Sachs and all psychoanalysts recognized that if you look closely, perversion carries exactly the same mechanisms of elision of the fundamental – that is, Oedipal – terms as we find in the analysis of neuroses.

If there is, all the same, a difference, it deserves to be studied very closely. In no case can one rest content with an opposition as summary as that which consists in saying that in neurosis the drive is avoided, whereas in perversion it declares itself nakedly. The drive does appear here, but it only ever appears here partially. It appears in something which, in comparison with the instinct, is a detached element, strictly speaking a sign and, one can even say, a signifier of the instinct. This is why last time, as I was finishing up, I emphasized the role of instruments that is present in an entire series of so-called perverse fantasies – limiting ourselves to just these for the moment.

Effectively, it's preferable to begin from the concrete and not from some general idea that we might have of what is called the instinctual economy of a tension, aggressive or not, and its reflections, turnings around and refractions. At least, isn't this what will explain the prevalence, insistence and predominance of these elements the nature of which is not only emergent but also isolated in the form that perversions take as a species of fantasy, that is, as that by which they provide imaginary satisfaction?

Why do these elements occupy this special place? The other day I spoke about the shoe and also the whip – we can't link them to a 235

pure and simple biological economy of the instinct. They are instrumental elements isolated in a form that is too obviously symbolic for it to be possible to misunderstand this for a moment, once one has explored the lived reality of perversion. The constancy of such elements across the transformations that the evolution of a subject's perversion is capable of showing over the course of his life – a point on which Sachs also insists – is very likely to emphasize the need to view it, not just as a primordial, ultimate and irreducible element whose place we have to see in a subject's economy, but also as a signifying element of perversion.

Let's turn to Freud's article.

1

Freud starts with a fantasy that he has detected in a group of eight patients, six girls and two boys, presenting fairly nuanced pathological forms, of which quite a large portion are neurotic, but not all are.

This is a systematic and very careful study pursued, step by step, with a scrupulousness that distinguishes the investigations carried out by Freud himself from all others. Beginning with these subjects, as diverse as they are, he sets out to follow the transformations in the economy of the fantasy, 'a child is being beaten', through the stages of the Oedipus complex. He begins to articulate what will subsequently develop in his thought into the period where he investigates perversions, and which will, I insist on this point, show us the importance of the play of signifiers in this economy even more.

I can only point out in passing that one of Freud's last articles, 'Constructions in Analysis' – I don't know if you have noticed this – shows the central importance of the notion of the subject's relationship to signifiers for thinking about the mechanism of remembering in analysis. It's clearly shown in this article that this mechanism, as such, is linked to the signifying chain. Similarly, the last work that Freud wrote for us, the last article by him that we have, from 1938, the one that in the *Collected Papers* was translated with the title 'Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence', which I translate as 'The Division or Splitting of the Ego in the Mechanism of Analytic Symptoms', and whose German title is '*Die Ichspaltung im Abwehrvorgang*', the one that Freud stopped writing – the article is unfinished – closely links the economy of the ego with the dialectics of perverse recognition, as it were, of a particular theme that confronts the subject. An unbreakable knot ties the ego's* function to the imaginary relationship in the subject's relations with reality,

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and it does so insofar as this imaginary relationship is utilized as integrated into the mechanism of signifiers.

Let's now turn to the fantasy, 'a child is being beaten'.

Freud pauses at what is signified by this fantasy, into which at least a significant part, if not all, of the libidinal satisfactions of the subject seem to be absorbed. He insists on the fact that the great majority of cases he has encountered it in are female subjects, less often male subjects. We're not dealing with just any sadistic or perverse fantasy, we're dealing with a fantasy that culminates in and stabilizes into a form the theme of which the subject discloses with great reticence. It seems that a great deal of guilt is bound up with even communicating this theme which, once revealed, cannot be put into any other words than 'a child is being beaten'.

Being beaten. *Ein Kind wird geschlagen.* This means that it isn't the subject who beats, he is there as a spectator. Freud begins by analysing the thing as it occurs in the imagination of female subjects who were the ones who revealed it to him. Taken in its totality, the person who is speaking comes from the line of those who are in authority. It isn't the father, it's on occasion a schoolteacher, an all-powerful man, the King or a tyrant – it's occasionally a very romanticized figure. One recognizes, not the father, but someone who, for us, is equivalent to him. We will have to situate him in the full form of the fantasy, and we shall very clearly see that there is no reason for us to be content with a homology with the father. Far from being assimilated to the father, he should be placed beyond the father, in that category of the Name-of-the-Father that we carefully distinguish from the effects of the real father.

There are several children involved in these fantasies, a kind of group or crowd, and they are always boys. This raises problems, and enough of them for it not to be possible for me to think of covering them all today – I ask you simply to refer to Freud's article. The fact that it's always boys that are beaten, that is, subjects of the opposite sex to that of the subject of the fantasy, is something on which one can speculate indefinitely – try for example relating it initially to themes such as that of the rivalry between the sexes. This is where Freud ends his article, showing the profound incompatibility with the clinical facts of theories such as Adler's and their inability to explain a finding like this one. Freud's argumentation is largely sufficient, and this isn't what creates our essential interest.

What creates our interest is the way Freud goes about examining the problem. He gives us the findings of his analyses. He begins by 237
speaking about what happens in the girl's case, which he does for the requirements of his exposition, so as not to have to be constantly beginning again twice over – this for the girl, that for the boy. Then

he takes what happens in the boy's case, where, moreover, he has less material. In short, what does he tell us? He observes some constants, and he tells us about them. What seems essential to him are the avatars of this fantasy – its transformations, its antecedents, its history and what underlies it – which analytic investigation has given him access to. The fantasy effectively undergoes a number of successive states over the course of which it's possible to observe that something changes and something remains constant. For us it's a matter of learning from the result of this painstaking investigation, which carries the mark that gives almost everything that Freud wrote its originality – precision, insistence, working on the material to the point where the articulations that seem irreducible to him have been properly detached. This is how, in the five major psychoanalyses, and in particular in the admirable 'Wolf Man', we see him constantly returning to rigorously examine the part that we can call the symbolic origin and the part that is the real origin, in the primitive chain of the subject's history. Here, similarly, he discerns three moments.

The first stage, he tells us, that in this instance one always finds in the case of girls is the following. At a certain moment of the analysis, the child who is being beaten, and who discloses his real face, is a sibling, a little brother or a little sister, whom the father is beating. What does this fantasy signify?

We are unable to say whether it's sexual or sadistic, is the surprising affirmation that comes from Freud's pen, supported by a literary reference to the witch's response to Banquo in *Macbeth* – it's made from the stuff from which the two, the sexual and the sadistic, will come. Here we find what Freud will emphasize in an article in 1924, 'The Economic Problem of Masochism', and which is necessitated by *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, namely this first stage at which, we have to think, there is originally, at least in considerable part, *Bindung*, binding or fusion of the libidinal instincts, or life instincts, with the death instincts, whereas the evolution of the instincts comprises a more or less premature defusion, *Entbildung*, of these instincts. Certain types of prevalence or certain arrests in a subject's evolution can be attributed to the premature isolation of the death instinct.

Although this fantasy is primitive, in that one doesn't find any
238 more archaic stage, Freud also emphasizes that its signification is located at the level of the father. The father refuses his love to or withholds his love from the beaten child, the little brother or the little sister. Inasmuch as there is the denunciation of any relationship of love and humiliation, this subject is targeted in his existence as a subject. He is the object of abuse, and this abuse consists in

denying him as subject, reducing his existence as desiring to nothing and reducing him to a state that aims to abolish him as a subject. 'My father does not love him' is the meaning of the primitive fantasy and it's what gives the subject pleasure – the other isn't loved, that is, isn't established in a properly symbolic relationship. This is the perspective from which the father's intervention acquires its primary value for the subject, on which everything that follows depends.

This archaic fantasy is thus initially born into a triangular relationship, one that isn't established between the subject, the mother and the child, but between the subject, the little brother or little sister and the father. We are prior to the Oedipus complex, and yet the father is there.

Whereas this first moment of the fantasy, the most archaic, is recovered by the subject in analysis, the second, on the other hand, never is and has to be reconstructed. This is unbelievable. If I stress the daring of Freud's deduction, it isn't so that we can pause for a moment and ask whether it's legitimate or not. It's so that we do not allow ourselves to be led along blindfolded, it's so that we are aware of what Freud is doing, owing to which his construction can be continued. The analytic material therefore converges on this state of the fantasy which has to be reconstructed since it never appears, according to Freud, in memory.

This second moment is tied to the Oedipus complex as such. It has the meaning of a privileged relationship between the little girl and her father – it's she who is being beaten. Freud thus acknowledges that this reconstructed fantasy may testify to the return of Oedipal desire in the little girl, the desire to be the object of the father's desire, with the guilt that that comprises, requiring that she have herself beaten. Freud speaks in this respect of regression. What should we understand by that? Given that the message in question is repressed and can't be recovered in the subject's memory, a correlated mechanism, which Freud here calls regression, causes the subject to have recourse to the figuration of the previous stage in order to express, in a fantasy that is never brought to light, the frankly libidinal relationship, already structured in the Oedipal mode, that the subject then has with the father.

At a third moment, after emerging from the Oedipus complex, there remains nothing more of the fantasy than a general schema. A new transformation has been introduced, and it's a double one. The figure of the father, now outmoded, is transposed and referred to the general form of an omnipotent and despotic person in a position to beat, whereas the subject himself is presented in the form of these 239
multiple children, not all of whom are even of a determinate sex, but form a kind of neutral series. This final form of the fantasy, in which

something is thus maintained and fixed, one might say memorized, remains invested for the subject with the property of forming the privileged image in which whatever genital satisfaction he will be able to experience will find its support.

This deserves our attention, and it deserves to arouse a reflection using the terms whose primary use I am trying to teach you here.

What might they represent here?

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I return to my imaginary triangle and my symbolic triangle. The first dialectic of the symbolization of the child's relationship with the mother is essentially made for what is signifiable, which is what is of interest to us. There are no doubt other things beyond. There is the object that the mother as bearer of the breast can present, and there are the immediate satisfactions that she can bring to the child, but if that were all there is, there wouldn't be any kind of dialectic, no opening in the edifice. Later, the relationship with the mother does not consist merely of satisfactions and frustrations, it consists in the discovery of what the object of her desire is. The subject, this little child who has to constitute himself in his human adventure and enter the world of the signified, effectively has to make the discovery of what signifies her desire for her. Now, what has always posed a problem in analytic history, for theory as for practice, has been to know why the privileged function of the phallus appears at this point.

When you read Jones's article, 'The Phallic Phase', you will see the unfathomable difficulties that he has with Freud's remark that for the two sexes there is an original stage in their sexual development where the theme of the other as desiring other is linked to the possession of the phallus. This is literally incomprehensible by nearly everybody around Freud, even though they contort themselves in order to get it to fit into their own elaborations, notwithstanding, because the facts impose it on them. What they do not understand is that Freud is positing there a pivot-signifier around which the entire dialectic of what the subject must conquer in himself, in his own being, revolves.

240 For want of understanding that this is a signifier and nothing else, commentators have worn themselves out looking for its equivalent in talking about a defence of the subject in the form of a belief in the phallus. Of course, they gather numerous extremely valuable facts about this, and they discover a thousand traces of it in their various experiences, but these are only ever particular cases or pathways

that still don't explain why it's this privileged element that is taken up as the central, pivotal point of the defence. Jones, in particular, gives belief in the phallus a function in the boy's development which, if you read him, you will notice is taken from the case of a homosexual, which is far from being the general case. Whereas, with the phallus, it's a question of the most general of functions.

Allow me a dense formulation that will strike you as quite bold, but we won't have to come back to it if you will be kind enough to agree to accept it momentarily for its operational use. Just as I have told you that within the signifying system the Name-of-the-Father has the function of signifying the entire system of signifiers, authorizing its existence, making it law, I will tell you that we frequently have to consider that the phallus enters into play in the signifying system when the subject has to symbolize, in contrast with the signifier, the signified as such – I mean signification.

What matters to the subject – what he desires, desire as desired – the subject's desired, when it comes to the neurotic or pervert symbolizing it, is literally carried out, ultimately, with the help of the phallus. The phallus is the signifier of the signified in general.

This is essential. If you start there, you will understand many things. If you do not start there, you will understand far fewer and you will be obliged to take some sizeable detours in order to understand some exceedingly simple things.

The phallus enters into play immediately the subject addresses the mother's desire. This phallus is veiled and will remain veiled to the end of time for one simple reason, which is that it's an ultimate signifier in the signifier's relationship with the signified. There is, effectively, little chance that it ever unveils itself in any other way than in its nature as a signifier, little chance, that is, that it truly reveals what it signifies as a signifier.

Nevertheless, consider what happens – a case that we have not envisaged till now – if in this place something intervenes that is much less easy to articulate or symbolize than anything that is imaginary, namely a real subject. This is just what is in question at this first phase that Freud designates.

The mother's desire here isn't simply the object of an enigmatic search that has to lead the subject, over the course of his development, to trace out this sign, the phallus, therein so that the latter will subsequently enter into the dance of the symbolic, become the exact object of castration and be finally rendered to him in a different form, so that it does and is what it's meant to do and be. It is that and it does do that, but here we are right at the origin, where the subject comes face-to-face with the imaginary place in which the mother's desire is located. And this place is occupied. 241

We can't speak about everything at once, and anyway it was quite fortunate that we didn't immediately think of the role of younger siblings even when we all know that this is of decisive importance in the triggering of neuroses. A minimum of analytic experience is sufficient for one to know how much the appearance of a little brother or little sister acts as a crossroads in the evolution of every neurosis. It's just that if we had thought about this immediately, it would have had exactly the same effect on our thought as we observe it having on the neurotic subject – dwelling on the reality of this relationship makes one miss its function completely. The relation to the little brother or little sister, to any rival, does not acquire its decisive value at the level of reality, but insofar as it's inscribed in a completely different development, the development of symbolization. This complicates it and requires a completely different solution, a fantasmatic solution. What is that? Freud spelt out the nature of this for us – the subject is abolished on the symbolic plane insofar as he is a nonentity who is denied any consideration as a subject. In this particular case, the child discovers the so-called masochistic fantasy of beating that constitutes a successful solution to the problem at this level.

We don't have to limit ourselves to this case, but initially we need to understand what is happening. And what's happening is a symbolic act. Freud stresses it strongly – this child who thinks he is someone in the family, well, a single slap is often enough for him to plummet from the pinnacle of his omnipotence. Well then, we're dealing with a symbolic act, and the very form that comes into play in fantasy – a whip or a switch – carries within itself the character of, has the nature of, some sort of thing which expresses itself on the symbolic plane as an erasure. Before it becomes something else, *Einfühlung*, empathy of some kind, that can be attributed to a physical relationship between the subject and the one who is suffering, what intervenes before anything else is something that strikes out the subject, crosses him out, or abolishes him – this something is the signifier.

This is so true that when later – all of this is in Freud's article, I'm following him line by line – the child effectively encounters the act of beating, namely, when at school he sees a child being beaten before his eyes, he doesn't find it at all amusing, says Freud, trusting
242 to the text of the experience of subjects from whom he has obtained the history of this fantasy. The scene inspires something in the order of an *Ablehnung* – I am correcting the translation – an aversion, a turning away of the head. The subject is obliged to endure it, but he has no involvement and keeps himself at a distance. The subject is by no means taking part in what really takes place when he is

confronted by an actual scene of a thrashing. And also, as Freud precisely indicates, the very pleasure of this fantasy is manifestly tied to its non-serious, inoperative character. The thrashing has no other effect upon the subject's real and physical integrity. It really is its symbolic character that is eroticized as such, and eroticized from the outset.

At the second moment – and this is important for the validation of the schema I introduced you to last time – the fantasy is going to acquire a completely different value and change its meaning. It's here that the whole enigma of the essence of masochism resides.

Where the subject is concerned, there is no way of getting out of this impasse. I am not telling you that this is easy to grasp, explain or unpack. We must first of all hold on to the fact, which is that that is how it is, and, afterwards, we will try to understand how it can be like that.

The radical introduction of signifiers comprises two distinct elements. There is the message and its signification – the subject receives the news that the little rival is a child who is beaten, that is, a nonentity, someone one can sit on. There is also a signifier that has to be picked out as such, namely, what one wields, the instrument.

The fundamental character of the masochistic fantasy as it actually exists in a subject – and not in some kind of model or ideal reconstruction of the evolution of the instincts – is the existence of the whip. It's what, in itself, merits being emphasized by us. We are dealing with a signifier that merits having a special place in the series of our hieroglyphs, and initially for a simple reason, which is that the hieroglyph of the one holding the whip has always designated the director, the governor and the master. We mustn't lose sight of the fact that that exists and that it's what we are dealing with.

The same duality occurs again at the second moment. However, the message in question, 'My father is beating me', doesn't reach the subject – this is how what Freud says is to be understood. The message which had first meant, 'The rival does not exist, he's a nonentity', now means, 'You exist, and you are loved, even.' That is what serves as a message at the second moment, whether it's in a regressive or repressed form doesn't matter. And it's a message that does not arrive.

When Freud addresses the problem of masochism as such, one 243
year later, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and looks for the radical value of this masochism that he encounters in analysis in the form of an opposition or radical enemy, he will be obliged to present it in various terms. Hence the interest we have in thinking about this enigmatic moment of the fantasy, which, he says, is the entire essence of masochism.

3

Let's take it step by step. We have to start off by seeing the paradox, and seeing where it lies.

There is, then, the message, the one that does not arrive at the place of the subject. On the other hand, the one thing that remains is the material of the signifier, this object, the whip, which remains as a sign right to the end, to the point of becoming the pivot and, I would almost say, the model of the relationship to the other's desire.

Effectively, the final fantasy's character of generality, the one that remains, is reasonably well indicated by the indefinite reduction in the number of subjects. This highlights the relationship with the other, the others, the little others, the little *a* as libidinal, and it means that human beings, as such, are all under the stick. To enter into the world of desire is for the human being to undergo, right at the outset, the law imposed by this something that exists beyond – that we were calling it the father is no longer of any importance, it doesn't matter – the law of the rod. This is how, for a determinate subject entering the matter by particular pathways, a certain line of evolution is defined. The function of the final fantasy is to reveal an essential relationship between the subject and the signifier.

Now let's move on a little bit, and remind ourselves what Freud introduces that is new regarding masochism in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. It's essentially this – if we consider a subject's mode of resistance or inertia to a certain normative or normalizing form of treatment intervention, we are led to articulate the pleasure principle as the tendency of life to return to the inanimate. The last resort of libidinal evolution is to return to the stillness of a stone. This is the great scandal that Freud contributes for everyone who till then had made the notion of libido the law of their thought.

If this contribution is paradoxically new, even scandalous when expressed as I just have, it's in other respects merely an extension of the pleasure principle, which Freud characterized as a return to zero tension. There is, in effect, no more radical a return to zero
244 than death. However, at the same time, you can see that we're still obliged, in order to distinguish them, to locate this formulation of the pleasure principle beyond the pleasure principle.

I should say some words here about one of the most unusual problems in the life and person of Freud – his relationship to his wife, to which we will perhaps have occasion to return one day. His existence was very deprived of, or denied itself, women. He is scarcely known to have had any more than two women, his own and this sister-in-law who lived in the couple's shadow. We really have no

trace of anything else that was a properly romantic relationship. On the other hand, he had a fairly deplorable tendency to take suggestions readily from the constellation of women that formed around him, and whose members wished to be the upholders or assistants of his thought. It was thus sufficient for him that a person like Barbara Low should suggest a term to him that was so mediocrely suited, if I may say so, as 'the Nirvana principle' for him to endorse it. The relationship that perhaps exists between Nirvana and the notion of the return of nature to the inanimate is just a little bit approximate – but since Freud was happy with it, let's be happy with it too.

If the Nirvana principle is the rule and the law of the evolution of living things, there must be a trick somewhere so that, at least occasionally, it isn't the decrease in pleasure that gives pleasure but, on the contrary, its increase – except that, as Freud is aware, we are completely incapable of saying why. There must be something in the genre of a temporal rhythm, a concordance of terms, pulsations. He allows that on the horizon there may possibly be recourse to explanations which, were they able to be given, aren't vague, but they remain very much out of reach – they go in the direction of music, of harmony of the spheres.

In any case, as soon as one allows that the principle of pleasure is a return to death, actual pleasure, the pleasure we concretely deal with, requires a different order of explication. We really need some trick of life that makes subjects believe, as it were, that it actually is for their pleasure that they are here. One thus returns to the greatest philosophical banalities, namely that it's the veil of Maya that sustains us in life by deceiving us. Beyond, the possibility of obtaining either pleasure or pleasures by taking all sorts of detours, would [then] be based on the reality principle. This is what would be beyond the pleasure principle.

It takes nothing less than a Freud to justify the existence of what he calls the negative therapeutic reaction. We must pause here for a 245
moment, nevertheless, because, well, this negative therapeutic reaction isn't some kind of stoic reaction by the subject. It manifests itself in all sorts of extraordinarily annoying things as much for him as for us and for his entourage. They are even so troublesome that, all things considered, 'not having been born' can seem like a better fate for everything that has come into being. This remark that Oedipus ends up making, his *μὴ φύναι* (*me phunai*), as the final word that gives the meaning in which the adventure of tragedy culminates, does not abolish the latter, far from it. On the contrary, it eternalizes it, for the simple reason that, if Oedipus was unable to succeed in stating it, he would not be the supreme hero that he is. It's precisely insofar as he does say it – that is, makes himself eternal – that he is this hero.

What Freud discovers for us as beyond the pleasure principle is that there is perhaps, effectively, an ultimate aspiration for rest and eternal death, but, in our experience, and this was the entire meaning of the second year of my Seminar, we encounter the specific character of the negative therapeutic reaction in the form of this irresistible inclination towards suicide that becomes recognizable in the last resistances we encounter in these subjects who are more or less characterized by the fact of having been unwanted children. As what must bring them closer to their history as a subject becomes better articulated, they increasingly refuse to play the game. They literally wish to quit it. They do not accept being what they are. They want nothing of this signifying chain into which their mother has only regretfully admitted them.

What appears to us analysts in these cases is exactly what can be found in others, namely the presence of a desire that is articulated, and articulated not only as a desire for recognition, but as the recognition of a desire. The signifier is the essential dimension here. The more the subject, with the aid of signifiers, asserts himself as wishing to exit the signifying chain, and the more he enters it and integrates himself into it, the more he himself becomes a sign in this chain. Should he do away with himself, he is a sign more than ever. The reason for this is simple – it's precisely when the subject is dead that he becomes an eternal sign for others, and those who have committed suicide even more than others. This is indeed why suicide has a horrific beauty which makes it so terribly condemned by people, and also a contagious beauty which gives rise to these suicide epidemics that are as real as it gets in experience.

Once again, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud stresses the
246 desire for recognition as such, as forming the basis of what constitutes our relation to the subject. And, after all, in what Freud calls beyond the pleasure principle, is there anything else besides the subject's fundamental relation to the signifying chain?

If you think about it, resorting to some supposed inertia in human nature for the model of what life aspires to is an idea that must make us smile slightly, given where we have come to. In fact nothing is less assured than a return to nothing. Moreover, Freud himself – in a tiny parenthesis that I would ask you to go back to in the article 'The Economic Problem of Masochism', where he mentions his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* – points out to us that if the return to inanimate nature is actually conceivable as the return to the lowest level of tension, to the state of rest, nothing assures us that, in reducing to nothing everything that has risen and is life, nothing stirs therein either, as it were, and that, at bottom, there is no pain of being. I am not springing this pain on you, I'm not extrapolating it. As pointed

out by Freud, it's what we have to regard as the final residue of the bond between Thanatos and Eros. No doubt Thanatos comes to be released through the subject's motor aggressiveness in relation to what is in his surroundings, but some part of it remains internal to the subject in the form of this pain of being that, for Freud, seems to be linked to the very existence of living beings. Now, there's no reason to think that this pain stops at living beings – according to everything we now know about a nature that is much more animated, rotting, fermenting, bubbling and even explosive, than we have been able to imagine up till now.

On the other hand, what we do not have to imagine, what is there at the tip of our fingers, is that in his relationship to signifiers a subject may occasionally, insofar as he is asked to constitute himself in signifiers, choose not to do so. He can say, 'No, I will not be an element in the chain.' That really is what lies at the bottom of the matter. But the bottom, the back, is exactly the same thing as the front. What does the subject do, in effect, when he chooses, in some way, not to pay a debt that he has not contracted? He does nothing but perpetuate it. His successive refusals have the effect of making the chain rebound, and he always finds himself tied to this same chain even more. The *Absagüngzwang*, this eternal necessity to repeat the same refusal, is, as Freud shows us, the ultimate mainspring of everything that in the unconscious appears in the form of symptomatic reproduction.

Nothing less than this is necessary in order to understand in what respect signifiers, once they have been introduced, have a fundamentally double value. How does the subject feel affected, as desire, by signifiers, inasmuch as it's he who is abolished, not the other with 247
the imaginary and, of course, signifying whip. As desire, he feels he is running up against what, as such, sanctions and valorizes him even as it profanes him. In masochistic fantasies, there is always a degrading and profanatory aspect, one that indicates both the dimension of recognition and the subject's prohibited mode of relation with the paternal subject. This is what constitutes the depths of the misrecognized part of the fantasy.

The subject's access to the radically double-meaning nature of a signifier is facilitated by something I have not yet brought into play on the schema, so as to spare your tiny minds, because last time there were frightful complications as soon as I introduced the parallel line *i-m* – namely, the relationship between the image of the body and the ego of the subject.

We cannot misrecognize the fact that the rival does not purely and simply intervene in the triangular relation, but that he is already present at the imaginary level as a radical obstacle. This is what

provokes what Saint Augustine describes for us in his *Confessions* – the deathly pallor of the suckling watching its brother at the mother's breast. There is, in effect, something radical there, truly deadly for the subject, which is well expressed in this passage. But the rivalry with the other isn't all, since there is also an identification with the other. In other words, the relationship that binds the subject to every image of the other has a fundamentally ambiguous character, and it gives the subject a completely natural introduction to the back-and-forth which, in fantasy, takes him to his rival's place, where the same message will henceforth reach him with a completely opposite meaning.

We can, then, see this, which makes us better understand what the issue is – it's inasmuch as part of the relation develops a connection with the subject's ego that successive fantasies are organized and structured. It's not for nothing that it's in this dimension between the primitive maternal object and the subject's image – a dimension in which the entire range of the intermediaries where reality is constituted is laid out – that all these others who are the support of the significant object, namely the whip, come to be located. From this moment on, in its signification the fantasy – I mean the fantasy in which the subject appears as the child who is being beaten – becomes the relation with the Other by whom it's a question of being loved, insofar as he himself is not recognized as such. This fantasy is, then, situated somewhere in the symbolic dimension between the father and the mother, between whom, moreover, he effectively oscillates.

248 Today I have taken you down a path that was no less difficult than the one I took you down last time. Let's wait and test its value and its validity, which I will be able to tell you about at a later stage. To terminate on a brief suggestive note, I will make the following remark, which will show you how our terms are applied.

It's commonly said in analysis that a woman's relation to the man comprises a certain masochism on her part. It's one of these errors of perspective to which some kind of sliding of our experience into confusion and into a rut leads us all the time. It's not because masochists display certain signs or fantasies of a typically feminine position in their relations with their partner that, inversely, a woman's relation to the man is a masochistic relation. The idea that, in the relations between a man and a woman, the woman is someone who receives the blows may well be a masculine subject's perspective as someone who is interested in the feminine position. But, in order for a constitutively feminine position to effectively be there, it isn't enough that the masculine subject perceive, from certain perspectives – whether his own or those of his clinical experience – a certain connection between adopting a feminine position and

such-and-such a signifier of the subject's position that is supposed to have more or less of a relationship with masochism.

It's extremely important to make this correction, which I am doing for you in passing, to the term 'feminine masochism' introduced by Freud in his article on the economic problem.

I have had no time at all to start what I was going to tell you about the relations between the phallus and comedy. I regret it, and I'll defer it till next time.

12 February 1958

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PHALLUS

XIV

DESIRE AND JOUISSANCE

The masks of a woman
André Gide's perversion
The Balcony by Jean Genet
Comedy and the phallus

Dear friends, to pick up the thread after a three-week break, I will begin with what we were rightly recalling last night, which was that our discourse has to be a scientific discourse. That said, it seems that the paths to achieving this aim are not so easy as far as our object is concerned.

Last night I simply pointed out the originality of this moment in the examination of the phenomena of man that bringing this privileged element called desire to the foreground, by way of the entire Freudian discipline, constitutes.

I pointed out to you that prior to Freud this element had, in itself, always been reduced and in some respects prematurely elided. It's this that makes it possible to say that until Freud every study of human economy more or less started from a concern with morals, with ethics in the sense in which it's less about studying desire than already reducing it and training it. Now, it's the effects of desire in a very large sense – desire is no side-effect – that we have to deal with in psychoanalysis.

What manifests itself in the phenomenon of human desire is its fundamental subduction, not to say subversion, by signifiers. That is the meaning of everything I am striving here to make you aware of – desire's relationship to signifiers.

I am not going to develop this for you again today, even though we should go back and recommence from there, but I am going to show you what, from the rigorous perspective that maintains the originality of the conditions of man's desire, is signified by a notion that is always more or less implicated in your handling of the

notion of desire, and which deserves to be distinguished from it – I
252 would go further – which can only begin to be articulated once we are sufficiently inculcated with the complex conditions under which this desire is formed. This notion I am speaking about will be the other pole of my discourse today. It's called jouissance.

We will briefly return to what forms, as such, desire's deviation or alienation in signifiers, and we will ask what it means, from this perspective, that the human subject is able to take possession of what in his world are the very conditions imposed upon him as if these conditions were made for him and succeed in satisfying him.

I point out to you that this brings us to a theme – and I hope to get there today – that I announced to you at the start of the year when we were approaching things from the perspective of witticisms, namely the nature of comedy.

1

Remember for a start that desire is established in relation to the signifying chain, that it first poses and proposes itself as a demand in the evolution of the human subject, and that frustration in Freud is *Versagung*, which is refusal or, even more precisely, retraction.

If, along with the Kleinians, we go further back into the origins, which is an exploration that surely constitutes progress for analysis, in the majority of problems in the evolution of the neurotic subject we are led back to so-called oral-sadistic satisfaction. Simply observe that this satisfaction takes place in fantasy, and does so immediately, as retaliation for fantasized satisfaction.

We are told that everything starts with the sometimes aggressive need to bite in the small child, in relation to the mother's body. Don't forget, though, that none of this ever consists of actual biting, that they are fantasies and that this reasoning can only move forward by showing that the fear of being bitten in return is the essential thread in what is being demonstrated.

Moreover, one of you with whom I was chatting last night, and who, after Susan Isaacs, is trying to retrieve some valid definitions of fantasy, was quite correctly telling me about his total confusion as to pursuing any reasoning whatsoever that was founded purely and simply on the imaginary relation between subjects. It's absolutely impossible to distinguish, in any valid way, unconscious fantasies from this formal creation that is the play of imagination,
253 if we do not see that unconscious fantasy is already dominated and structured by the state of the signifiers.

Good and bad primordial objects, and primitive objects on the basis of which all analytic reasoning is carried out, constitute a range of objects in which several series of substitutive terms destined to be equivalent appear. Milk, the breast, subsequently become – what? – sperm – what? – the penis. These objects are already, as it were, 'signifierized'.

What the relation with the most primordial object, the maternal object, initially produces operates on signs, on what we might call, to give an image of what I mean, the currency of the Other's desire. Still, the close study – close so as to see it clearly – we undertook last time of this work that Freud considers decisive –and I stressed to you that it was effectively groundbreaking in the real analytic understanding of the problem of perversion – was intended to get you to see that these signs can be divided in two. Effectively, they are not all reducible to what, as I have already pointed out to you, are property titles, fiduciary values, representative values or money for exchange, as I just said – signs constituted as such. Some of these signs are constitutive – I mean whereby the creation of value is assured, whereby this something real, which is locked into this economy at every moment, is struck by the bullet that turns it into a sign.

We saw one such bullet last time, formed by the sign of the stick, the switch or whatever else is used for hitting. This is an element whereby even a disagreeable effect can create a subjective distinction and can establish the very relation in which demand can be recognized as such. What was initially a means to annul all rivalrous reality with the brother secondarily becomes that by which the subject finds himself differentiated, recognized or picked out as something that can be either recognized or rejected into nothingness. Henceforth, the subject presents himself as a surface on which everything that can be given subsequently can be recorded, or even, as it were, as a blank cheque where all gifts are possible. And since all gifts are possible, the fact is that what can be given or not given is not what's at issue, because what's at issue is a relation of love, which, as I have said, consists in the fact that the subject essentially gives what he doesn't have. Everything possible about the introduction to the order of love presupposes this fundamental sign for the subject, who may be either annulled or recognized as such by it.

I asked you to read a number of things over the break. I hope 254
you have done so and that you occupied yourselves at least a little bit with Mister Jones's phallic phase and the early development of feminine sexuality.

Since I have to move on today, I will punctuate with a completely

local example that I rediscovered when rereading the issue of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* commemorating Jones's fiftieth anniversary, at the time when this phallic phase was in the foreground of the interest of English psychoanalysts. In this issue, volume 10, I reread once again, with great interest, Joan Riviere's article, 'Womanliness as a Masquerade'.

The article is about the analysis of a specific case, and not about the function of femininity in general, which Joan Riviere situates in relation to various branches that offer a number of possible pathways to femininity.

The subject in question presented as endowed with a femininity that was all the more remarkable for apparently being completely embraced, and for the fact that her entire life appeared – in her day much more than in ours – to indicate that she assumed all the masculine functions. In other words, she was someone who had a perfectly independent, developed and free professional life, which, I repeat, stood out much more in those days than in our own, and which nevertheless manifested itself in her correlative assumption to the maximum, to the highest degree, of her role as a woman – both in the public form of her functions as housewife and in her relations with her spouse, everywhere displaying the superiority of qualities which, in our social state just as in all social states, come under what is necessarily the woman's responsibility, and, in another register, quite specially at the sexual level, her relations with her man proved to be entirely satisfying with respect to her jouissance.

Now, beneath the apparently total satisfaction of her feminine position, this analysis highlighted something very hidden and which nonetheless formed its basis. This is without any doubt something that one doesn't find without the instigation of some tiny, infinitely tiny discord appearing on the surface of a state that was in principle completely satisfying.

You are aware of the emphasis our experience can place on *Penisneid*, the claim for a penis, in many developmental disorders of female sexuality. Here, what is hidden is quite the contrary. I cannot repeat the history of this woman, this is not my aim today, but the source of the satisfaction that supports what apparently flourishes in this favourable libido is the hidden sat-
255 isfaction of superiority over the parental characters. This is the term that Mrs Joan Riviere uses, and which she considers to be the very source of the problems in this case – which, as I have said, has a character of freedom and fullness that is not so secure in the evolution of female sexuality for it not to be remarked upon. Detecting this hidden mainspring of her personality produced the

effect, if only a transitory one, of profoundly disturbing what had been presented as a complete, mature and happy relationship to the point of producing for a time the disappearance of a satisfying outcome to the sexual act – which, according to the author, proves her case.

With this woman, we therefore find ourselves in the presence, as Mrs Joan Riviere emphasizes, of the need to avoid reprisals from men motivated by the surreptitious theft that she carries out on the source and very symbol of their power. As the analysis progresses, the meaning of her relations with persons of one or the other sex appears more and more obviously to be given, guided and dominated by her concern to avoid punishment and reprisals from the men whom she has in her sights here.

This very fine scansion, which appears as the analysis progresses, as I say, was, however, already discernible in small, anomalous traits. Whenever she had displayed her phallic power, she would rush into a sequence of steps that were either a seduction or even a sacrificial procedure – 'Do everything for others', thereby in appearance adopting the highest form of feminine devotion, as if she was saying, 'But look, I do not have this phallus, I am a woman and purely a woman.' She would adopt a mask, particularly in her professional activities in relation to men – although she was highly qualified, she would suddenly adopt, with a kind of self-effacement, an excessively modest even anxious attitude to the quality of what she had done, thus in reality playing a game of coquettishness, as Mrs Joan Riviere puts it, which would function not so much to reassure as to deceive those who might take offence at what, in her, was presenting fundamentally as aggression and the need for, and jouissance of, supremacy as such, and which was structured on a history of rivalry, first with the mother and then with the father.

In short, with respect to an example like this, as paradoxical as it may seem, we can clearly see that what is at stake in an analysis and in the understanding of a subjective structure is always something that shows us the subject engaged in the process of recognition as such – but recognition of what? Let's clarify this.

The subject is unconscious of the need for recognition, and indeed this is why it's necessary, completely necessary, for us to locate 256
it in an alterity with qualities that were unknown before Freud. This alterity stems purely and simply from the place of signifiers, whereby being is separated off from its own existence.

The fate of a human subject is essentially tied to his relationship with his sign of being, which is the object of all kinds of passions and presentifies death in the process. In his link to this sign, the subject

is in effect sufficiently detached from himself to be able to have this apparently unique relationship to his own existence in creation – and this constitutes the ultimate form of what, in analysis, we call masochism, namely that by which the subject apprehends the pain of existing.

The subject, qua existence, finds himself constituted as divided from the outset. Why? Because his being has to become represented elsewhere, in signs, and signs themselves are in a third location. This is what structures the subject in this splitting of himself, and without it it's impossible for us, in any valid way, to found what we call the unconscious.

Take the slightest dream and you will see, provided you analyse it correctly and refer to the *Traumdeutung,* that it isn't in the articulated signifiers, even after you have carried out the initial decoding, that the unconscious is embodied. Freud is constantly stressing and returning to this – there are, he says, hypocritical dreams, and they are nonetheless the representation of a desire, even if only the desire to deceive the analyst. Recall what I emphasized in a fully explicit passage from the analysis of the young homosexual woman. The unconscious discourse is not the last word of the unconscious, it's supported by what truly is the ultimate mainspring of the unconscious and which cannot be expressed in any other way than as the subject's desire to be recognized. And this is so, even where it's through a lie already articulated at the level of mechanisms that escape consciousness – a desire for recognition that is here underlying the lie itself, and which from a false perspective may seem like a lie by the unconscious.

This gives you the meaning of and the key to the necessity we find ourselves under to place this schema, around which I am trying to advance the authentic course of the experience of formations of the unconscious, at the foundation of any analysis of the full subjective phenomenon as it's given in analytic experience. This is the one I recommended to you recently in a form that today I can present more simply. Of course, it's always the simplest forms that have to be introduced last.

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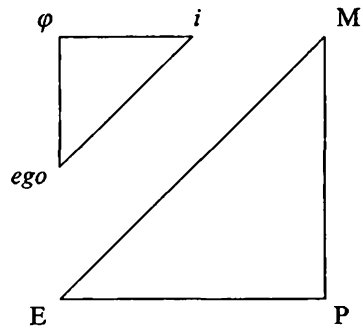
2

What do we have in this triangle with the three poles, E, P and M, which forms the position of the subject?

We see the subject in a relation to a triad of terms that form the signifying foundations of his entire progress. Namely, M, the mother, insofar as she is the first symbolized object and insofar as



Desired child = ego-ideal

her absence or presence will become, for the subject, the sign of the desire onto which his own desire will hook, and which will make him or not make him, not simply a satisfied child or not, but a desired or undesired child.

This is not an arbitrary construction. Be aware that our experience has taught us to discover, step by step, what I am putting in place here. Experience has taught us what the flow-on consequences are, what almost infinite structuration for a subject, before his birth, flows from the fact of having been a child that is not desired. This term is essential. It's more essential than having been, at this or that moment, a more or less satisfied child. The term 'desired child' corresponds to the establishing of the mother as the seat of desire and to the dialectic of the child's relationship with the mother's desire that I have been attempting to demonstrate to you, which is concentrated in the primordial fact of the symbol of the desired child.

Here, P, the term for the father insofar as he is, as a signifier, the signifier through which signifiers are founded as such. It's for this reason that the father is essentially a creator, I would even say an absolute creator, who creates out of nothing. Signifiers effectively have, within themselves, this original dimension of being able to 258
contain the signifier that defines itself as the emergence of signifiers.

In relation to this, something essentially confused, indeterminate, undetached from its existence and yet made for being detached from it – namely, the subject insofar as he must be signified – has to get its bearings.

If identifications are possible, if the subject in his lived experience succeeds in giving this meaning or that meaning to what has been given to him by his particular human physiology, it's always structured in this triadic relationship formed at the level of signifiers.

I don't need to go back over the homology of terms at the level of signifieds, the side where the subject is, in relation to these three symbolic terms. I have partly demonstrated it, and in the end that's all I'm doing here. I ask you to take my word on this, at least till you are better informed, till we get a fuller demonstration.

In the subject's relationship to his own image, he rediscovers the duality of maternal desire in relationship to himself as a desired child, which is only symbolic. He feels it, experiences it in this relationship with this image of himself on which many things can end up being superimposed.

I'm immediately going to give you an example that illustrates this, since I made an allusion last night to the fact that I had been looking quite closely at the history of Gide's childhood, as Jean Delay sets it out for us in a truly exhaustive manner in the pathography that he has given us of this case, under the title *La Jeunesse d'André Gide*.

We know that Gide, this graceless child – as the author says somewhere on seeing a photograph the sight of which made the person tremble – would indulge in the most deformed images in his erotics, his primitive autoerotism, since, as he says, he could achieve an orgasm by identifying with situations of catastrophes. For example, he was able to achieve an orgasm very early on by reading Madame de Ségur, whose books are fundamental with all the ambiguity of primordial sadism, but where this sadism is perhaps not fully developed. Equally, one finds other examples – a child who has been beaten, a servant who drops something with a great 'Crash!', destroying what she was holding in her hands, or again identification with this character of Gribouille in a tale by Hans Christian Anderson, who is carried off by the current and ends up on a far-off bank, transformed into a branch. These are amongst the least humanly constituted forms of the pain of existence.

We can't do anything but grasp something abyssal here that was formed in the subject's first relationship with his mother who, as we
259 know, had both very high and remarkable qualities and something completely elided in her sexuality, in her life as a woman, which, in her presence, clearly left the child in his early years in a completely unsituated position.

The turning point at which the life of the young Gide regains, as it were, meaning and human constitution is to be located in a crucial moment of entification that we are given, as clearly as is possible, in his memory, and which without the slightest doubt marks his entire existence. This is his identification with his young female cousin.

Identification, for sure, but it's not enough to use the term in this vague form. He recounts the precise moment, and nobody pays enough attention to its unusual nature. It's the moment when he

discovers his cousin in tears on the second floor of this house he has rushed to, attracted not so much by her as by her taste for, her love of, the clandestine that festers in that household. It's after he passes the first floor, where his cousin's mother is – his aunt, whom he sees more or less in the arms of a lover – that he encounters his cousin in tears – and then, the height of euphoria, exaltation, love, distress and devotion. From that point on, he dedicates himself to the protection of this child, as he will later tell us. Let's not forget that she was older than he – at the time, Gide was thirteen years old and Madeleine fifteen.

We can absolutely not understand the meaning of what happened at this moment unless we place it in a threefold relation. The young André doesn't find himself only in the presence of his cousin, but also with a woman who is at the height of her passion on the floor below, namely, the said cousin's mother, who, as he presents it to us in *La Porte Étroite*, had previously made an attempt at seducing him.

What happened at that moment? At the time of the seduction, he became the desired child, and, moreover, he fled in horror effectively because nothing had ever contributed the elements of an approach and a mediation that would have made this anything other than a trauma. Still, he had found himself in the position of a desired child for the first time. This new situation, which in some respects was to be his salvation, would nevertheless fixate him on a profoundly divided position, by reason of the atypical, late and – I repeat this – unmediated way this encounter took place.

What did he acquire from this for the constitution of the symbolic term that had been missing till then? He acquired nothing less than the place of the desired child, which he would eventually be able to occupy by the intermediary of his cousin. In that place where there had been a hole, there is now a place, but nothing more, for in that place he denies himself at the same time, insofar as he is unable to occupy it because he is unable to accept the desire of which he is the object. On the other hand, his ego, undeniably, doesn't stop identifying – and forever, and without knowing it – with the subject of the 260
desire upon which he is now dependent. He falls in love forever, for the rest of his existence – this little boy that for an instant had been in the arms of his aunt, this aunt who stroked his neck, his shoulders and his chest. His entire life is there.

We can report the fact, since he admitted as much, that during his honeymoon – everyone is astounded and scandalized by this – and virtually in front of his wife, he would think about the 'excruciating delights', as he expresses it, of being stroked on the arm and shoulder by young boys he had met in the train. This page has become

famous, it's part of literature, one in which Gide displays what, for him, will remain the privileged point of the entire fixation of his desire.

In other words, what has been subtracted at the level of what becomes his ego-ideal, namely the desire of which he is the object and which he is unable to bear, he adopts for himself, he falls in love forever and for all eternity with this same caressed little boy he had no wish to be.

The term 'desired child', this signifier which primordially constitutes the subject in his being, is pivotal here. Something must be created here, and the ego must combine with it in one way or another at this point *x* where he is, which is designated by E. This is where the ego-ideal, which marks the entire psychological development of a subject, is formed.

First, the ego-ideal is marked with the sign of the signifier. Second, the question is – where does it start? It can be formed gradually with the ego as its point of departure, or, alternatively, without the ego being able to do anything but undergo what is produced, unbeknownst to the subject, solely by a succession of accidents subject to the fortunes of the signifier, and which allow him to subsist in the signifying position of a child who is desired to a greater or lesser extent.

The schema thus shows us that it's in the same place – depending on whether it is produced via the conscious pathway or via the unconscious pathway – that what, in one case, we call the ego-ideal and, in the other, perversion is produced.

Andre Gide's perversion doesn't consist so much in the fact that he can only desire little boys, only the [image of] the little boy that he had been, *i*. Andre Gide's perversion consists in the fact that, there, at E, he is able to constitute himself only by perpetually relating himself, only by submitting himself to this correspondence that for him is the heart of his work, only by being the one who makes himself valued in the place occupied by his cousin, the one whose thoughts are all turned towards her, the one who literally gives her, at every moment, everything that he doesn't have, but nothing but that, and who constitutes himself as a personality in her, through her, and in relation to her.

261 This is what places him, in relation to her, in a deadly dependency, which makes him exclaim somewhere, 'You cannot know what the love of a Uranist is. It's something like an embalmed love.'

This entire projection of his own essence into this relationship is the basis of his existence, the heart and root of his existence as a man of letters, as a man totally in signifiers, and totally in what he communicates to this woman. This is how he exists objectively in his

interhuman relations. This woman that he does not desire can effectively be the object of a supreme love for him, and when this object with which he has filled the hole of love without desire disappears, he utters this miserable cry whose similarity to the comical cry par excellence, that of the miser, 'My money box! My precious money box!' I pointed out to you last night.

All passions, insofar as they are the alienation of desire in an object, are on the same footing. Of course the miser's money box makes us laugh more easily – at least, if we have in us a touch of humanity, which is not universally the case – than the disappearance of Gide's correspondence with his wife. Obviously, that was of value to all of us. It doesn't make it any less true that, fundamentally, it's the same thing, and that Gide's cry at the moment his correspondence disappeared is the same cry as that of Harpagon.

What is this comedy I'm referring to?

3

Comedy comes to us in a thousand varied remarks. Comedy is not the comical.

If we want to give a correct theory of comedy, we have to begin with the fact that, at least for a time, comedy was produced for the community, insofar as the latter represents a group of men, that is, insofar as, above itself, it constitutes the existence of a Man as such. Comedy was what it seems to have been at a time when the representation of the relationship between man and woman was the object of a spectacle with a ceremonial value. I am not the first to compare the theatre and Mass, since everybody who has examined the question of theatre has noted that, surely, our day is the only one in which the drama of the Mass represents what the full development of the functions of theatre could represent at a certain moment in history.

At the time of the great period of Greek theatre, tragedy represented man's relationship to speech, insofar as this relationship 262
seizes him in his fatality – a fatality in conflict, insofar as the chain that binds man to the law of signifiers is not the same at the level of the family as at the level of the community. That is the essence of tragedy.

Comedy represents something else, which is not without a link to tragedy, since, as you know, a comedy always completes the tragic trilogy, and we cannot consider it independently. I will show you that we even find both the trace and the shadow of this comedy in the marginal commentary on the Christian drama itself. Of course, this is not to be found in our epoch of constipated

Christianity, where, certainly, no one would dare accompany the ceremonies with these robust farces formed by what used to be called the *risus paschalis*. But let's leave that to one side.

Comedy arises at the point at which the subject and man attempt to adopt a different relationship to speech from that in tragedy. It's no longer a matter of committing to or adopting contrary necessities, nor is it a question of it being only one's own affair. It's a matter of that in which he has to express himself as a person whose destiny it is to absorb the substance and matter of this communion, profit from it, enjoy it and consume it. Comedy, one might say, is something like the representation of the end of the communion meal on the basis of which tragedy has been evoked. It's ultimately man who consumes all his substance and common flesh that has been presented there, and it's a matter of finding out what the outcome is.

To see this, I believe there is no other way than to refer to classical comedy, of which all subsequent comedies are merely a degradation in which the traits of their origin are, however, still recognizable. I refer you to the comedies of Aristophanes, *The Assembly of Women*, *Lysistrata*, *Women at the Thesmophoria*, to see where it leads. I started showing this to you – comedy manifests, by a kind of internal necessity, the subject's relationship to his own signifieds, as the result or fruit of the relationship between signifiers. The signifieds must arrive fully developed on the scene of comedy. Comedy embraces, gathers and takes enjoyment from the relationship with an effect that has a fundamental relation to the signifying order, namely the appearance of this signified called the phallus.

It just so happens that, having given you this term, in the days following the brief sketch I gave of Molière's *The School for Wives* as representing the essential comical relationship, I only had to open this text, which I think I can regard as a very unusual and extraor-
263 dinary resurgence of the master works of comedy, if what I think I read in Aristophanes is right. It's nothing other than Jean Genet's *The Balcony*.

What is *The Balcony*?

You know that there was some fairly lively opposition to its being performed. We shouldn't be astonished by this, in a state of the theatre whose substance and interest can be said to consist primarily in the actors' self-promotion on the stage in various capacities, which delights and titillates those who are there to identify with what we can call by its name – a display. If the theatre is anything else, I certainly believe that this play is well made to get us to appreciate it. It's uncertain whether the public is in a state to view it. It seems to me difficult, though, not to find it dramatically interesting.

Genet speaks of something that means more or less what I am going to try to expound for you. I am not saying that he knows what he is doing. Whether he knows or not is of no kind of importance. Corneille probably didn't know what he was writing as Corneille either, but this didn't prevent him from doing it with great rigour.

Human professions enter the stage of *The Balcony* insofar as they refer to the symbolic: the power that Christ confers on the posterity of Saint Peter and all episcopacies to bind and unbind the order of sin and transgression; the power of the person who condemns and punishes, namely the judge; the power of the person who assumes command in this great phenomenon, war, the power of the warlord, more typically the general. Each of these characters represents functions from which the subject finds himself alienated – they are functions of speech of which he finds himself the support but which go well beyond his singularity.

Now, as it happens these characters are all of a sudden going to be subject to the laws of comedy. That is, we begin to imagine what it is like to enjoy these functions. Disrespectful, no doubt, to pose the question in this way, but the disrespect of comedy is not something one should stop at without trying to discover what it leads to later.

That always starts to emerge in a period of crisis. It's at the highest point in the crisis of Athens – resulting from precisely the aberration of a series of bad choices and a submission to the law of the city that literally seem to lead to its downfall – that Aristophanes attempts this wake-up, which consists in saying that we are ruining ourselves in this war without end and that there is nothing to do but stay at home, keep warm and rediscover one's wife. This is not 264
something that is put forward as a moral, exactly. What is being suggested is that man resume his essential relationship with his state – moreover, without our knowing whether its consequences are all that salubrious.

Thus, we see the bishop, the judge and the general posited there before us on the basis of the question – what is it really like to enjoy the status of a bishop, a judge or a general? This explains the device by which this balcony is nothing other than what is known as a 'house of illusions', a brothel. What happens at the level of different forms of the ego-ideal is not, as is thought, the result of sublimation, in the sense in which this means the progressive neutralization of deeply rooted internal functions. On the contrary, it's a formation that is always more or less accompanied by an eroticization of the symbolic relationship. The person who, in his position and function as bishop, judge or general, enjoys his station can thus be assimilated to this person well known to the keeper of the brothel, such as the little old man who comes for his satisfaction in a strictly

calculated fashion, which momentarily places him in a role – the strangest diversity is encountered at this level – adopted in relation to a partner-accomplice who is always willing to play the role of respondent.

Thus, we see a bank employee come and dress up in the garments of a priest and take confession from a prostitute. The confession is of course nothing but a sham, though it must approximate the truth to some extent. In other words, something in the intention of his accomplice needs to make it possible for him at least to believe that she is taking part in some guilty jouissance. Mounting the grotesque on an even grander scale by having the character in question wear buskins to heighten his caricatured position is not the least original aspect of the art and lyricism with which the poet Jean Genet is well able to mount the dialogue of this grotesque character for us. We thus see this clearly perverse subject basking in the pleasure of seeking his satisfaction in this image, insofar as it's the reflection of a function essentially of signifiers.

In other words, in three long scenes Genet presents us with what, at the level of perversion, gets its name from there, namely what, in explicit language, we can at times of great disorder refer to as the brothel in which we live. Effectively, society cannot be defined in any other way than as a more or less advanced state of degradation of culture. All the confusion that builds up in the relations, however
265 fundamental, of man to speech is there represented in its place. We know what he is getting at.

What is this about? It's about something that for us embodies the subject's relationship to the functions of faith in their diverse and most sacred forms, and presents them to us through a series of degradations. This leap made momentarily – namely that we see the bishop himself, the judge and the general here in the place of 'specialists', as they say in the language of perversion – challenges the subject's relationship to the function of speech.

And so, what happens? This is what happens. This relationship, however degraded, however adulterated it is – and it's a relationship where everyone has failed, in which nobody finds himself – continues nonetheless to be staged there before our eyes, sustains itself and subsists, purely and simply. Despite not being recognized as legitimate, it subsists, at the very least, as something linked to the existence of what one calls order.

Now, what does this order come down to when a society has ended up in the most extreme disorder? It comes down to what we call the police. This last resort, this final right, this final argument of order which is called maintaining order, symbolized by the establishment at the centre of the community of a house of ill repute, of

what was presented originally as the three crossed pikes – this reduction of everything that is of the nature of order to the maintenance of order is embodied by the pivotal character in the drama, namely the Chief of Police.

Genet's hypothesis, and it's truly a very nice one, is that the image of the Chief of Police, the one who essentially knows that maintaining order depends on him and that he is the ultimate foundation and residue of all power, is not elevated to sufficient nobility for any of the little old men who come to the brothel to ask for his ornaments, attributes, role and function. Some know how to play at being a judge and in the presence of some little prostitute who confesses to being a thief, adopt the role themselves to obtain this confession, for 'How could I be a judge if you weren't a thief?' says the judge. I'll pass over what the general says to his mare. On the other hand, nobody asks to be the Chief of Police.

This is pure hypothesis. I do not have enough experience of brothels to know whether the Chief of Police was not elevated long ago to the dignity of characters whose role one might enjoy. But in the play, the Chief of Police, who is the good friend of the manageress of the whole brothel – I am not at all seeking here to do theory, any more than I am saying that it's about concrete things – comes and anxiously asks, 'Has anyone asked to be the Chief of Police?' And it never happens.

Similarly, there is no Chief of Police's uniform. We see a habit 266
displayed, a judge's wig, a general's hat, though without the latter's pants, but no one has ever assumed the role of a Chief of Police in order to make love. That is the nub of the drama.

Now, note that everything that takes place inside the brothel takes place while, outside, there is a revolution raging. Everything that unfolds – and I will pass over the detail, you will gain a lot of pleasure from studying this comedy – everything that unfolds inside – and it's far from being as schematic as I am telling you, there are cries, there are blows, in short they're having a good time – is accompanied, outside, by the rattle of machine guns. The city is in revolt, and all these women are expecting to perish in their beauty, massacred by the dark and virtuous workers who here are supposed to represent the whole man, the real man, the man who is in no doubt that his desire will ultimately prevail and triumph as such in a harmonious manner. Proletarian conscience has always believed that morality will prevail – whether it's right or wrong is irrelevant.

I need to speed up a bit. What is relevant is that Jean Genet takes us to the heart of the adventure in the fact that the Chief of Police is in no doubt, because this is his function, and it's for this reason that the play unfolds as it does, that after the revolution, just as before,

it will still be a brothel. He knows that, in this sense, the revolution is a game.

There is one more very beautiful scene in which the blue-blood diplomat comes and enlightens this amiable group who find themselves in the heart of the brothel about what's happening in the Royal Palace. There, in her state of the most complete legitimacy, the Queen is embroidering and is not embroidering. The Queen is snoring and is not snoring. The Queen is embroidering a little handkerchief. There is a swan in the middle, and one doesn't know yet whether it will be on a sea, on a pond or on a cup of tea. I'll pass over what relates to the ultimate disappearance of this symbol.

The one who makes herself the voice and words of the revolution is one of the prostitutes. She has been abducted by a virtuous plumber, and consequently finds herself fulfilling the role of the woman in the Phrygian bonnet on the barricades, with this extra thing that she is a sort of Joan of Arc. Knowledgeable about the ins and outs of masculine dialectics, because she has been in places where one hears it being developed in all its phases, she knows how to speak to them and how to respond to them. The said Chantal disappears in the blink of an eye – she gets shot – and the power appears immediately incarnated in Irma, the manageress of the brothel. The latter adopts, and with such superiority, the functions of the Queen. Has she not also passed over to the pure state
267 of a symbol, since, as the author expresses it somewhere, with her nothing is real apart from her jewels?

We then come to the regimentation of the perverts we saw displaying themselves during the entire first act, and to their authentic and integral assumption of the reciprocal functions they embodied in their little, diversely amorous frolics.

A fairly forthright political dialogue takes place between them and the character of the Chief of Police, who needs them to represent the powers that will have to take the place of the previously overturned order. They don't do it without reluctance, understanding very well that it's one thing to enjoy where it's warm, in the shelter inside the walls of one of these houses about which one doesn't sufficiently reflect that it's the very place in which order is the most carefully preserved, but another thing to place oneself at the mercy of the elements, even quite simply of responsibilities that these really absurd functions include. Obviously, here, we are openly at the level of farce.

It's the conclusion of this farce in high taste that, in the end, I would like to emphasize.

In the middle of all this dialogue, the Chief of Police is still concerned. 'Has anyone come and asked to be the Chief of Police? Has

there been anyone who has fully recognized his greatness?' Aware that he is looking for satisfaction difficult to obtain, discouraged by having to wait indefinitely for the event that for him would be the endorsement of his accession to the order of respected – because profane – functions, the Chief of Police maintains that he has succeeded in demonstrating that he alone is the order and hub of everything. This means that there is nothing other, in the end, than a firm hand, which doesn't lack meaning, insofar as Freud's discovery of the ego-ideal coincided more or less with the inauguration in Europe of this type of character who offers the political community a unique and easy identification, namely the dictator. The Chief of Police, then, consults the people around him on the subject of the appropriateness of a kind of uniform as well as a symbol that would be the symbol of his function, and does so not without timidity, just in case. In fact, he shocks the ears of his listeners just a little – he suggests a phallus.

Wouldn't the Church take objection? And he leans over to the bishop who, in effect, shakes his mitre for a moment, hesitates, but suggests that in the end, if one were to make it like the dove of the Holy Spirit, it would be more acceptable. Similarly, the general suggests that the said monogram be painted in the national colours. Some other suggestions of this kind tend to indicate that they will arrive fairly quickly at what in such circumstances is called a concordat.

It's at this moment that events take a dramatic turn. One of the 268
girls, whose role in this play truly swarming with significations I have passed over, enters the scene, speechless because of the emotion of what she has just experienced. This is nothing less than the following. The friend, the saviour of the prostitute, who has risen to the state of revolutionary symbol – the character of the plumber, then – who is known in the house, came to see her and asked her for everything he needed in order to look like the person of the Chief of Police.

Total uproar. Tightening of the throat. Our worries are over. Everything was there, including the Chief of Police's toupee. The latter, startled, asks, 'How did you know?' Someone answers him, 'You are the only person who thinks that nobody knows you wear a toupee.' Once the character – who is actually the heroic figure in the drama – has been clothed in all the trappings of the Chief of Police, the prostitute makes the gesture of throwing in his face, after he has cut it off himself, that with which, as she coyly puts it, he will never deflower anybody again. With this, the Chief of Police, who was very close to arriving at the zenith of his satisfaction, nevertheless makes the gesture of checking that he still has his. He still does have

his, effectively, and his passage to the state of being a symbol in the form of the proposed phallic uniform is henceforth useless.

The conclusion is completely clear. This subject, the one who represents the simple desire of man to encounter and embrace his own existence and thought authentically, a value that is not separate from his flesh – this subject who is there, representing man, the one who has fought so that something that until now we have been calling the brothel can rediscover a basis, a norm, a state that can be accepted as fully human – this subject reintegrates himself into it, once he has passed the test, only on condition of being castrated. That is to say, only on condition of bringing it about that the phallus is again promoted to the status of signifier, as this something that can be given or withheld, conferred or not conferred by the one who at this time is confused, in the most explicit manner, with the image of the creator of the signifier, the 'Our Father', the 'Our Father who art in heaven'.

The comedy ends there. Is it blasphemous? Is it comical? We can place the accent wherever we like.

These terms, which I will come back to, will serve as reference points for the essential question of desire and jouissance, a taste of which I wanted to give you today.

5 March 1958

XV

THE GIRL AND THE PHALLUS

The aporias of the Kleinian approach
The phallus, signifier of desire
The theory of the phallic phase
Critique of Ernest Jones
A step forward

The first presupposition of our task is that you appreciate what we are trying to do here. It is, namely, always to bring you to the point where the difficulties, contradictions and impasses that form the fabric of your practice appear to you in their true significance, whereas you avoid them by referring to partial theories and even by dodging the issue and fudging the meaning by the very terms you use, which are also the locus of all one's excuses.

Last time, I spoke about desire and jouissance. I would like to move ahead today by showing you, in the text itself, Freud's contribution to a precise theoretical point by observing the difficulties that he provokes amongst his followers. In his attempt to be more precise about things, starting from certain preconceived requirements, moreover, something emerges that makes the difficulty even greater. As for us, perhaps we can take a third step.

This has to do with the phallic position in women, or, more precisely, with what Freud calls the phallic phase.

1

I remind you what it is that we have been emphasizing and where it is that we have come to. Over the last three or four sessions, I have begun to articulate this desire that, as such, is placed at the heart of analytic mediation. By condensing what I have said, I have formulated it here in a concentrated form as a 'signified demand'.

You have two terms here that work as one. 'I demand, I notify you
270 of my demand', as we say, 'I notify you of an order, I notify you of a judgement.' The demand therefore implies the other, the one of whom the demand is made, but also the one to whom this demand makes sense, an Other who has, amongst other dimensions, the dimension of being the locus in which this signifier acquires its significance. The second term, the term 'signified', in the sense in which 'I signify something to you, I signify my wish to you', is the important point that I particularly had in mind. The term implies the structuring action in the subject of signifiers that have been constituted, in relation to need, in an essential modification due to the entry of desire into demand.

Let me pause for a moment to make a parenthetical remark.

Up till now, for reasons of time and economy, I have left dreams to one side this year even though I have been discussing formations of the unconscious. You know Freud's statement concerning dreams – that a dream expresses a desire. But, in the end, we have not even started to wonder about what this desire in dreams we talk about actually is. There is more than one in a dream. There are the desires of the day which provide it with its occasion and its material, whereas, as everyone knows, what matters is the unconscious desire.

Why, in short, did Freud recognize this unconscious desire in dreams? In the name of what? How is it recognized? Apparently, there is nothing in a dream that corresponds to the way in which a desire is expressed grammatically. There is no text of a dream except for what has to be translated into an underlying articulation, but at the level of this articulation, which is masked and latent, what differentiates, what identifies what dreams articulate? Nothing, apparently.

Notice that ultimately what Freud recognizes as desire in dreams is clearly indicated by what I am telling you, namely, by the modification of need – which is fundamentally masked because it is articulated in a medium that transforms it. That goes through a number of modes and images which are there as signifiers, and this presupposes that an entire structure has come into play.

This structure is undoubtedly the structure of the subject inasmuch as a number of instances have to be brought into operation, but we only recognize it through the fact that whatever enters into a dream is subject to the modes and transformations of signifiers, to the structures of metaphor and metonymy, condensation and displacement. What gives the law for the expression of desire in dreams is, effectively, the law of signifiers. It is through an exegesis of what is articulated in a particular dream that we can discern something, which is what, ultimately? Something that we assume

wants to be recognized, which partakes of a primordial experience, 271
which is inscribed therein, is articulated, and which we always relate to something that originally took place in childhood and has been repressed. This is ultimately what we give primacy of meaning to in what is articulated in dreams.

Something quite crucial with respect to structuring the subject's desire occurs there. Now we can say what it is – it is the primordial experiences that occurred during the desires of childhood, the essential desires, that is the desire for the Other's desire, or the desire to be desired. What has been inscribed in the subject over the course of these events remains there, permanently subjacent. It's what gives the final word on what interests us in a dream. An unconscious desire finds expression through the mask of what fortuitously provides a dream with its material. It is signified through the always specific conditions that the law of the signifier imposes upon desire.

I am trying to teach you to substitute the fundamental notion of the subject's primordial dependence upon the Other's desire for the mechanics or economy of gratifications, needs, fixations and aggressions – which remains more or less confused in the theory because it is always partial. What is structured in the subject always passes through the intermediary of this mechanism, which means that his desire is already shaped by the conditions of demand. That is what is inscribed in his structure, over the subject's history – these are the twists and turns, the avatars, of the constitution of desire, insofar as it is subject to the law of the Other's desire. This is what makes the most profound of the subject's desires the desire that remains suspended in the unconscious, the sum, the entirety I would say, of this capital D, the Other's desire.

Only this can make sense of the developments in analysis that you are familiar with, which have placed so much emphasis on the primordial relationship with the mother that all of the later dialectic, even the Oedipal dialectic, has ultimately eluded it, or seems to have.

This movement both heads in the right direction and formulates it in a way that misses the point. What is important, effectively, is not merely frustration as such, namely, more or less what in the real has been given or not given to the subject. It's in what way the subject has looked for and located this desire of the Other that is the mother's desire. And what matters is to get him to recognize, in relation to this x of desire in the mother, in what way he has been brought to become, or not brought to become, the one who corresponds to it, to become, or not, the desired being.

This is essential. In neglecting it even as she approaches it, in penetrating as deeply as possible into what happens in the child, Melanie Klein discovered many things. But by formulating it simply

272 as the child's encounter with the maternal person, she ends up with a specular, mirroring relation. Consequently, the body – and it is already very striking that the body is in the foreground – the maternal body, becomes the enclosure and habitat for everything in the child's drives that can be located in it through projection, and which themselves are motivated by aggression due to fundamental disappointment. Ultimately, nothing in this dialectic is able to get us out of a mechanism of illusory projection, a construction of the world based on a sort of autogenesis of primordial fantasies. The genesis of the outside as the locus of the bad remains purely artificial and subjects all subsequent access to reality to a pure dialectic of phantasy.

To complement the Kleinian dialectic, it is necessary to introduce this notion that for the subject the outside is already given, not as something that is projected out from the subject's inside, out of his drives, but as the place or the locus in which the Other's desire is located, and where the subject has to go to encounter it.

That is the only way in which we can discover the solution to the aporias engendered by the Kleinian approach, which has shown itself to be so fertile at many points, but ultimately causes the primordial dialectic of desire, as Freud discovered it, to disappear, misses it completely, or reconstructs it in some implicit manner, which she herself does not notice, but in a manner that is illicit because without grounds. This primordial dialectic includes a third relationship, which, beyond the mother, or even through her, brings into play the presence of the character, whether desired or a rival, but invariably a third party, of the father.

This is what justifies the schema I gave you when I told you it is necessary to initially put into place the fundamental symbolic triad, namely the mother, the child and the father.

The mother's absence or presence offers the child – placed here as a symbolic term, this is not the subject – the possibility of being or not being a wanted child and does so merely by virtue of the introduction of the symbolic dimension.

The third term is essential in that he is what permits or prohibits all that. He is placed beyond the mother's absence or presence, as a meaning or signifying presence, which does or doesn't enable him to appear. The subject has to situate himself in relation to this, once the signifying order has come into play.

The subject extends his concrete and real life to him, a life which already consists of desires in the imaginary sense, in the sense of capture, in the sense in which images fascinate him and in the sense in which, in relation to these images, he feels like an ego, a centre, or like a master, or as if dominated.

As you know, the image of oneself, of the body, plays a primordial role in the imaginary relationship in man and comes to dominate everything. The fascination of this image in man is closely bound up with the fact that he is open to this dialectic of signifiers we are talking about. Reducing captivating images to the central image of the image of the body is not unconnected to the fundamental relationship that the subject has with this signifying triad. This relationship to the signifying triad introduces the third term by which the subject, beyond his dual relationship, beyond his relationship of captivation with images, demands, as it were, to be signified. And it is for this reason that there are three poles on the imaginary plane. 273

In the minimal constitution of the symbolic field beyond the ego and its image, by virtue of the fact that I have to enter under the conditions of the signifier, something must mark the fact that my desire has to be signified, insofar as it necessarily passes through a demand that I must signify on the symbolic plane. In other words, a general symbol of this margin that always separates me off from my desire is required, a margin by virtue of which my desire is always marked by the alteration it undergoes through entering into the signifier. There is a general symbol of this margin, this fundamental lack necessary for my desire's admission into the signifier and for making it the desire that I have to deal with in the analytic dialectic. This symbol is what designates the signified insofar as it is always signified, distorted or even signified to the side.

We can observe this in the schema I gave you [see p. 241]. This triangle is in the subject at the level of the imaginary. Here, his image, *i*. Here, the point at which the ego, *m*, is constituted. Here, what I designate for you with the letter φ, namely the phallus.

The constitutive function of the phallus in the dialectic of the subject's introduction to his pure and simple existence and to his sexual position is impossible to deduce if we don't make it the fundamental signifier by which the subject's desire has to be recognized as such, whether in the case of a man or a woman.

The fact is that desire, whatever it may be, has this phallic reference in the subject. It's the subject's desire, of course, but, insofar as the subject himself has received its signification, he must draw his power as a subject from a sign, and he only obtains this sign through mutilating himself and losing something, by which everything comes to have value.

This is not a deduction. It is given in analytic experience. It's the essence of Freud's discovery.

It's what makes it the case that Freud, writing '*Über die weibliche Sexualität*' ['Female Sexuality'] in 1931, lays down an affirmation

274 that, at first sight, is no doubt problematic, insufficient and in need of elaboration, and which provokes responses first from all the women analysts – Helene Deutsch, Karen Horney, Melanie Klein, Josine Müller along with many others – and then, summarizing all of that and expressing it in a manner that is more or less compatible with how Freud puts it, is Ernest Jones's intervention.

This is what we are going to examine today.

2

Let's take up the question at its most paradoxical point.

Initially, the paradox presents itself at the level of a sort of scientific observation. It's as a natural scientist that Freud says to us, 'What my experience shows me is that the phallus is also central for a woman, and not only for a man.'

Consistent with the general formula that I was trying to give you just now, he showed us that the subject cannot be introduced into the dialectic that enables him to take up place and rank in the transmission of human types and enables him to become a father in his turn, without what a moment ago I called this fundamental mutilation owing to which the phallus will become the signifier of power, the sceptre, and also owing to which virility can be assumed. Up to that point, we have understood Freud. But he goes further and shows us how this same phallus appears at the centre of the feminine dialectic. Here, something gaping seems to open up.

Until now, it was in terms of struggle or biological rivalry that, at a pinch, we were able to understand man's accession to the qualities of man via the castration complex. But in the woman's case this affirmation surely presents a paradox, and Freud introduces it initially as a pure and simple fact of observation, one that therefore presents itself – like everything observed – as a part of nature, as natural.

This does indeed seem to be how he effectively introduces things when he tells us – I'll say this as it's written – that the girl, like the boy, initially desires the mother. There is only one way to desire. The girl initially thinks she is equipped with a phallus, just as she also thinks that her mother is equipped with a phallus.

What that means is that the natural evolution of drives brings it about that, from one transfer to another across the instinctual phases, from the form of the breast and on through a number
275 of other forms, one arrives at this phallic fantasy by which it is ultimately in a masculine position that the girl presents herself in relation to the mother. It's consequently necessary that something

more complex for her than for the boy intervenes for her to recognize her feminine position. In Freud's description, not only is there nothing to support recognition of the feminine position, but it is assumed to be lacking from the outset.

It is no minor paradox to make an affirmation that runs so counter to nature, which, on the contrary, might suggest a symmetry in relation to the position of the boy, by distinguishing the vagina, or even, as someone has said, the vaginal mouth, for the girl. We have observations which go, I would say, contrary to the Freudian data. There are primitive lived experiences the primordial trace of which we can find in young subjects, and which show that, contrary to the claims about a primitive misrecognition, something can stir within the subject, at least as a reaction it seems, at the time of the procedure of breastfeeding. The baby girl still at the breast shows some no doubt vague emotion, but it isn't completely unjustified to refer it to a profound bodily emotion, no doubt difficult to localize behind the memories, but which would, in short, make it possible to equate, through a series of transmissions, the mouth during feeding with the vaginal mouth, and moreover, in the developed state of femininity, with the function of an absorbing or even sucking organ.

There is something here that is locatable in experience, and it provides the continuity by which, if it were merely a question of the migration of the erogenous drive, we could see the royal road to the evolution of femininity traced out at the biological level. It's of this that Jones is effectively making himself the advocate and theoretician when he thinks it is impossible, for all sorts of in-principle reasons, to admit that the evolution of sexuality for a woman is destined for this detour and this artificialism.

Jones proffers, then, a theory that, point by point, opposes what Freud describes as a given of observation – the phallic phase of the little girl rests, according to him, on a drive whose natural supports he demonstrates in two elements. The first, accepted, is primordial biological bisexuality. But this is a point, as we must recognize, that is purely theoretical and a long way from what we can access, so we can be very much in agreement with him when he says it. But there is something else – the presence of the beginnings of a phallic organ. Effectively, the clitoral orgasm of her first pleasures linked to masturbation can give rise to the beginnings of the phallic fantasy 276
that plays the decisive role Freud describes. And this is what he emphasizes – the phallic phase is a clitoral phallic phase, the fantasmatic penis is an exaggeration of the small penis effectively present in female anatomy.

Freud sees the source of the little girl's entry into her feminine position in disappointment. The exit from her phallic phase is

engendered by this disappointment, a detour that in his view is, however, founded on a natural mechanism. And it's at this moment, he tells us, that the Oedipus complex plays the normative role it has to play, but in the little girl it plays it inversely to the little boy. The Oedipus complex gives her access to this penis she lacks through perceiving the male's penis, whether she discovers it in a playmate, or places it or, equally, discovers it in the father.

It is through disappointment or disillusionment in relation to this fantasmatic phase of the phallic phase that the little girl is introduced to the Oedipus complex, as was theorized by one of the first analysts to follow Freud in this field, Mrs Lampl-de-Groot. As she quite correctly observed, the little girl enters the Oedipus complex through the inverted phase of the complex. The girl is initially present in the Oedipus complex via her relationship with the mother, and it is the failure of this relationship with the mother which opens up the relationship with the father for her, with what, subsequently, will be found to be normativized by an equivalence between this penis, which she will never possess, and the child that she will effectively be able to have and give in its place.

Note that a number of the reference points I have been teaching you can be found here. *Penisneid* here finds itself to be the essential point of articulation for a woman's entry into the Oedipal dialectic, just as castration finds itself at the heart of the dialectic in a man. No doubt the criticisms I am going to formulate for you, like those that Jones has contributed, will call into question this conception, which, of course, from the outside, when one begins to study analytic theory, looks like an artificial construction.

First, let's pause here for a moment to emphasize the ambiguity with which the term '*Penisneid*' is used at different moments in the girl's Oedipal evolution – as Jones's discussion points out, moreover. *Penisneid* effectively presents itself in three distinct modes, from the entry into to the exit from the Oedipus complex, as Freud describes them concerning the phallic phase.

There is *Penisneid* in the sense of fantasy. It's this wish, this long-maintained wish, sometimes maintained one's whole life – that the
277 clitoris be a penis. Freud insists upon the irreducible character of this fantasy whenever it is kept in the foreground.

There is another meaning, when *Penisneid* intervenes at the moment at which what is desired is the father's penis. This is when the subject attaches herself to the reality of the penis, there where it is, and can see where to go to get it. She is as much deprived of it by Oedipal prohibition as by reason of physiological impossibility.

Finally, in the evolving series, the fantasy of having a child by the father emerges – that is, of having the penis in symbolic form.

Remember what I have taught you to distinguish with respect to the castration complex – castration, frustration and privation – and ask yourselves which of these three forms corresponds to each of these three terms.

Frustration is imaginary, but it bears upon an object that is very real. It's in this respect that the fact that the little girl does not receive the penis from the father is frustration.

Privation is completely real, even though it only bears upon a symbolic object. Effectively, when the little girl doesn't have a child by the father, it has ultimately never been any question of ever having one by him. She is incapable of having his child. The child, moreover, is there only as a symbol, and a symbol precisely of that of which she is really deprived. It is, therefore, in the name of privation that the child's desire for the father intervenes at a certain moment in the evolution.

There remains, then, what corresponds to castration, which symbolically amputates the subject of something imaginary. The fact that in this case this is a fantasy corresponds to it quite closely.

Whatever we make of Freud's conception, he's heading in the right direction when he details the little girl's position in relation to her clitoris – at some time she would have to renounce what she was keeping in store, at least as a hope, namely, that sooner or later it would become something as important as a penis. This is the level at which what corresponds structurally to castration is located, if you remember what I thought necessary to spell out when talking to you about castration at the elective point at which it manifests itself – that is, in the boy.

One can dispute whether everything in the girl effectively revolves around the clitoral drive. One can probe the detours of the Oedipal drama, as happens to have been done. You are now going to see this through Jones's critique. But first we cannot fail to notice the rigour, from the structural perspective, of the point that Freud designates as corresponding to castration. It is at the level of a fantasmatic 278
relation – insofar, of course, as it takes on a signifying value – that the symmetrical point was found.

It is now a matter of understanding how this comes about. It isn't because that point is used that it gives us the key to the matter. It apparently gives it to us in Freud insofar as he gives the impression of showing us here a story about an anomaly of the drive, and it is this that is going to make a number of subjects revolt and rebel, and do so precisely in the name of biological preconceptions. But you will see, in the very formulation of their objections, what they end up saying. They are, by the nature of things, forced to articulate a number of characteristics that will make taking the next step possible.

It is, effectively, a matter of going beyond the theory of natural drives and seeing that the phallus really does intervene in the way that I have been expounding to you in the premises of today's class. This is nothing other than what I have just been outlining in other ways, namely that the phallus intervenes here as a signifier.

But let's now turn to Jones's exposition, which comes in reply.

3

There are three important articles by Jones on the topic. One, written in 1935, is called 'Early Female Sexuality', and it is this one that we shall be talking about today. It was preceded by the article on 'The Phallic Phase', presented at the Congress of Wiesbaden three years earlier in September 1932, and, finally, by 'Early Development of Female Sexuality', communicated to the Innsbruck Congress in September 1927, which Freud alludes to in his 1931 article when, very contemptuously I must say, he refutes the positions taken by Jones in several lines, who replies in 'The Phallic Phase' by spelling out his position against Freud, in sum, even as he attempts to remain as close as possible to the letter of Freud.

The third article, which I will draw on today, is extremely significant for what we want to demonstrate. It is also the most developed point in Jones's position. It is located four years after Freud's article on female sexuality. It was presented at the request of Federn, who at the time was vice president of the Viennese Society. Jones was brought to Vienna in order to put before the Viennese circle what he straightforwardly formulated as being the London point of view, which was, as it turns out, already centred on the Kleinian experience.

279 In true London fashion, Jones draws some sharp distinctions, his intervention thereby gaining greater purity and clarity, and it's a good basis for discussion. It's very interesting to pause over a number of his remarks, referring as much as possible to the text.

Jones first observes that experience shows us how difficult it is, when one studies a child, to grasp the supposedly masculine position of the little girl in relation to her mother at the time of the phallic phase. The further one goes back towards the origin, the more we find ourselves confronted there with something that is critical. I apologize if by following this text we find ourselves looking at positions that are sometimes a little tangential in relation to the line that I am tracing out for you here, but they deserve our attention for what they reveal.

Jones's suppositions – I am going to tell you this straight off – are essentially directed at what he openly states at the end of the article. Is a woman a being who is born a woman, as such? Or is she a being who is made a woman? That is where he locates his question, and it's what makes him rebel against Freud's position. These are the alternatives towards which his thinking is heading. No doubt his work results from a sort of summary of facts arising from concrete experience with children and which enable one either to object or sometimes to confirm, but, in any case, to rectify Freud's conception – but what informs his entire demonstration is the fact that at the end he raises it as a question, 'Yes or no?' In fact, there is no possibility of a choice in his eyes, one of the two responses being absolutely unacceptable – from his perspective, it would not be possible to maintain a position which implies that half of humanity consists of beings that are made* in the defiles of the Oedipus complex.

He doesn't seem to observe in this respect that the Oedipal defile no less makes men, if this is what it's about. Nevertheless, the fact that women enter with luggage that is not their own seems to him to be sufficiently different from the boy for him to object.

In substance, this claim consists in saying this – it's true that in the little girl we observe, at a particular moment in her evolution, the foregrounding of the phallus and a demand, a desire, which manifests itself in the ambiguous form, so problematic for us, of *Penisneid.* But what is this? Everything that he explains to us consists in this – it's a defensive formation, a detour comparable to a phobia, and the exit from the phallic phase has to be thought of as the recovery from a phobia that is, in short, a very widespread phobia, a normal phobia, but of the same order and with the same mechanism as a phobia.

Since, in short, as you can see, I am choosing to jump right into 280
the heart of his demonstration, it does have to be said that there is something there that is, all the same, extraordinarily opportune for our own reflections, inasmuch as you may still remember the way I attempted to spell out the function of phobia for you. If it is indeed the case that the little girl's relation to the phallus has to be conceived as Jones says, then we are undoubtedly getting closer to the conception I am giving you when I say to you that the phallus intervenes in the little girl's Oedipal relations as a privileged signifying element.

Am I saying that we are about to rally to Jones's position here? Certainly not. If you recall the difference I have drawn between a phobia and a fetish, we can say that here the phallus is playing the role of a fetish rather than of a phobic object. We will come back to this later.

Coming back to the beginning of Jones's critical exposition, let's discuss how this phobia is formed. For him, this phobia is a defensive construction against the danger engendered by the child's primitive drives, both the little girl's and the little boy's. But here it is a question of the little girl, and he observes that her original relationship to the mother – this is where I paused just before when I told you that we were going to encounter some highly unusual things – is proof of a primitive feminine position. He says that she is a long way from behaving towards her mother like a man towards a woman. 'Her mother she regards not as a man regards a woman, as a creature whose wishes to receive something it is a pleasure to fulfil' [p. 265]. He would have us believe that a man considers a woman as a creature whose desires to receive something it is a pleasure to accede to, to fulfil.

We have to acknowledge that it is paradoxical at the very least to introduce a position that is as developed as the relationship between a man and a woman into the level we are at. It is quite certain that when Freud speaks of the masculine position of the little girl, in no way does he make mention of this most complete effect of civilization, if indeed it is ever truly attained, where man is there to fulfil all the desires of a woman. But coming from the pen of someone who enters into this domain with such naturalistic ambitions at the outset, we cannot fail to single out this characteristic as evidence, I would say, of one of the difficulties in this field, and which cannot be such a minor one for him to run up against at this point in his demonstration and, moreover, right at the start. At least he does not confuse, but instead contrasts, man's position with respect to the woman and that of the child with respect to the mother.

281 He then brings in, in the wake of Melanie Klein, the mother as milk jug, whom the child considers – I am translating Jones – as 'a person who had been successful in filling herself with just the things the child wants so badly' [p. 265]. This 'successful' carries a lot of weight because it implies, although Jones is not aware of this, that by basing things on the text of what one finds in the child, the maternal subject is indeed a desiring being. The person who has been successful is the mother, since she has been fortunate enough to succeed in filling herself with the things that the child desires so badly, namely with this pleasant material of both a solid and liquid kind.

One only has access to the child's original experience from a distance, but Melanie Klein has come as close to it as one possibly can by analysing three- to four-year-old children, and has given us the discovery of a relationship to the object that is structured in a

form I have characterized as the empire of the maternal body. It's not possible to misrecognize that merely representing that to us is a distinguished contribution.

You will find this in her contributions concerning what she calls the very early Oedipus complex in the child. The latter's drawings show us that the maternal empire carries within it what I have called, with reference to Chinese history, the Warring States. The child is able to draw what she locates as signifiers – brothers, sisters, excrement – inside this field. All of that cohabits in the maternal body, everything is already inside her, since she also identifies what the dialectic of the treatment enables one to describe as the paternal phallus. The latter is supposedly already present as a particularly harmful and rivalrous element in relation to the child's demands concerning possession of the contents of the maternal body.

It is very difficult for us to fail to see that these data call into question and deepen the problematic character of relations that are presented to us as so-called natural, whereas we already see them as structured by what last time I called an entire battery of signifiers articulated in such a way that no natural biological relation could ever account for them.

It is, therefore, already at the level of this primitive experience that the phallus makes its entry onto the stage in the child's dialectic. Although this reference is presented to us by Melanie Klein as deduced from what the child offers, the fact remains no less stupefying. The introduction of the penis as a breast that is more accessible, more convenient and, in some way, more perfect is supposed to be accepted as a fact of experience.

Of course, if this is a given, then it's valid. Nevertheless, it 282
remains the case that it's not self-evident. What can possibly make the penis something more accessible, more convenient and more enjoyable than the primordial breast? It is a question of what this penis signifies and, therefore, of the child's early introduction into a signifying dialectic. Moreover, everything in Jones's demonstration subsequently does nothing but raise this question in an increasingly pressing manner.

As required by his premises, Jones is led to tell us that the phallus can only intervene as the means of and the pretext for a kind of defence. He therefore supposes that at the outset the little girl finds herself interested libidinally in a certain primitive apprehension of her own female organ, and from there he goes on to explain to us why it is necessary that she repress this apprehension of her vagina. The female child's relationship with her own genitals evokes greater anxiety than does the little boy's relationship with his genitals because, as he says, the organ is more internal, more diffuse, more

profoundly specific to her first motions. Hence the role that the clitoris will therefore play.

If Jones does not resile here from relatively naive observations, it is, I am convinced, so as to highlight the necessities that they imply. The subject will use the clitoris, he says, insofar as it is external, to project her anxieties onto it, and it will more easily be a reassuring object on her part, because she will be capable of experiencing, through her own experimentations, even visually at a pinch, the fact that the organ is still there. Later in her evolution it will always be external objects, namely her appearance and her clothing, that a woman will make the focus of what he calls the need for reassurance, which thus enables her to temper anxiety by displacing it onto an object that is not its point of origin. The result of this is that precisely this origin turns out to be particularly misrecognized.

As you can see, here we find once again the implied requirement that the phallus come to the foreground as externalizable and representable, as the limiting term at which anxiety stops. That is Jones's dialectic. Let's see whether it is adequate.

This dialectic leads him to present the phallic phase as a phallic position which enables the child to keep anxiety at a distance by centring it on something accessible, whereas her own oral or sadistic desires directed at the interior of the maternal body immediately evoke the fear of reprisals and appear to her as a danger capable of
283 threatening her inside her own body. That is the genesis that Jones gives to the phallic position as a phobia.

It is certainly as a fantasized, but accessible, exteriorized organ that the phallus comes into play and will subsequently be capable of disappearing from the scene again. The fears linked to hostility will be capable of being dampened by being referred to other objects than the mother. The erogeneity and anxiety linked to the internal organs will be capable of being displaced through the process of a number of masturbatory practices. Ultimately, he says, the relation to the feminine object will become less partial and will be able to be displaced onto other objects, and the original unnameable anxiety, linked to the female organ, which corresponds in the girl-child to the castration anxieties in the boy, can subsequently vary and transform itself into this fear of being abandoned which, in the words of Jones, is characteristic of female psychology.

That, then, is the problem we find ourselves faced with, and you see how Freud intends to resolve it. His position is that of an observer, and therefore his elaboration presents itself as an empirical observation.

The link with the phallic phase is in the nature of a drive. The entry into femininity occurs on the basis of a libido which, by its

nature, is, let's say, active – in order to put things exactly in their place, without following Jones in his critique, which is a bit of a caricature. One arrives at the feminine position to the extent that, through a series of transformations and equivalences, disappointment manages to give birth in the subject to a demand with respect to the paternal figure, that something that will fulfil her desire come to her.

Ultimately, Freud's presupposition, fully spelt out moreover, is that the primordial infantile demand is, as he says, *ziellos*, aimless. What she demands is everything, and it's by virtue of the disappointment of this demand, moreover impossible to satisfy, that little by little the child enters into a more normative position. That is, surely, a formulation which, as problematic as it may be, comprises an opening that will enable us to elaborate the problem with the terms 'desire' and 'demand', which are the ones I have been trying to emphasize.

Jones's response to this is that this is a natural history, a naturalist's observation – which is not as natural as all that – 'and I will make it more natural for you'. He says as much. The history of phallic phobia is only a detour along the path to a primordially determined position. A woman is born, born a woman, in a position that is already that of a mouth, of an absorbent mouth, a sucking mouth. Following the decline of her phobia, which is nothing but a simple detour, she will rediscover her primitive position. What 284
you call phallic drive is only the artificialism of a counter-described phobia provoked in the child by its hostility and aggression towards the mother. It is nothing but a pure detour in an essentially instinctual cycle, and the woman subsequently and rightfully enters her place, which is vaginal.

That, in summary, is Ernest Jones's conception.

4

In reply, what I will try to spell out for you is this.

The phallus is absolutely inconceivable in Kleinian dynamics or mechanics. It is only conceivable if it is already implied that it is the signifier of lack, the signifier of the distance between the subject's demand and his desire. To accede to this desire, something must always be deducted at the necessary entrance into the cycle of signifiers. If the woman has to go via this signifier, however paradoxical that is, it's insofar as it's not a question for her of fulfilling a primitively given female position, but of entering into a defined dialectic of exchange. Whereas the man, the male, is isolated by virtue of

the signifying existence of all the prohibitions that constitute the Oedipal relation, she has to inscribe herself in the cycle of exchanges of alliance and kinship in the name of herself becoming an object of exchange.

What structures the Oedipal relation to begin with is, as every analysis effectively shows us, that the woman must propose or, more exactly, accept being an element in the cycle of exchanges. This fact is huge in itself, and infinitely more important from the natural point of view than all the anomalies in her instinctive evolution that up till now we have been able to observe. We must expect, effectively, that we will find a kind of representative of this at the imaginary level, at the level of desire, in the convoluted ways she has to take to enter it.

The fact that she must – like the man, moreover – inscribe herself in the world of signifiers, is for her punctuated by this desire which, qua signified, will always have to remain at a certain distance from, in the margin of, whatever can be put down to a natural need. Effectively, introduction into this dialectic requires that something in the natural relation has to be amputated, sacrificed – and to what end? Precisely so that it can become the very element that signifies the entry into demand.

285 You will observe a return, which I will not say is surprising, of the necessity – which I have just announced with all the brutality carried by this sociological remark founded on everything we know, most recently articulated by Lévi-Strauss in his *Elementary Structures of Kinship* – the necessity for one half of humanity to become a signifier of exchange, according to various laws, more simply structured in elementary structures, bearing much more sophisticated effects in the complex structures of kinship. What we observe, effectively, in the dialectic of the child's entry into the system of signifiers is in some ways the other side of the woman's passage as signifying object into what we can call the 'social dialectic', in quotation marks, for the entire accent has to be placed here on the dependence of the social with respect to the signifying and combinatory structure. Now, in order for the child to enter into this signifying social dialectic, what do we observe? Very precisely this, that there is no other desire on which it depends more closely and more directly than the woman's desire, and insofar as it is signified precisely by what she lacks, the phallus.

What I have shown you is that everything that we encounter as obstacle or accident in the child's evolution, and this includes the most radical of these obstacles and accidents, is linked to this, that the child doesn't find itself alone with the mother, but that along with the mother there is the signifier of her desire, namely the

phallus. We find ourselves here faced with what will be the theme of my next class.

One of two things is true. Either the child enters into the dialectic, makes itself the object in the current of exchanges and, at a given moment, renounces his father and his mother – that is, the primitive objects of his desire. Or he keeps these objects. That is, he retains something in them that is much more than their value, for their value is precisely what can be exchanged. From the moment he reduces these objects to pure signifiers even as he clings to them as objects of his desire, the Oedipal attachment is invariably preserved – that is to say, the infantile relation with parental objects does not pass. And to the extent that it does not pass, and strictly to that extent, we see appear – let's say, in a very general form – these inversions or perversions of desire which show that within the imaginary relation with Oedipal objects, no normativization is possible.

Why not? Very precisely for this reason, which is that, even in the most primitive relation, that of the child to the mother, the phallus as object of the mother's desire is always there in a third place, and this raises an insurmountable obstacle to the satisfaction of the child's 286
desire, which is to be the exclusive object of the mother's desire. And this is what pushes him to a series of solutions, which will always be to reduce or to identify with this triad. If it is necessary for the mother to be phallic, or for the phallus to be put in the mother's place, then we have fetishism. If it is necessary that he bring about within himself, intimately, the conjunction of the phallus and the mother without which nothing in him can be satisfied, then we have transvestism. In short, it's inasmuch as the child – that is, that being who enters with natural needs into this dialectic – does not renounce his object that his desire does not succeed in being satisfied.

Desire only succeeds in being satisfied on the condition of a partial renunciation – which is essentially what I initially elaborated by saying that it has to become a demand, that is, a desire qua signified, signified through the existence and intervention of signifiers, that is, in part, alienated desire.

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XVI

INSIGNIAS OF THE IDEAL

Karen Horney and Helene Deutsch
Masculinity complex and
homosexuality
The process of secondary identification
Mother and woman
The metaphor of the ego-ideal

I would like to start today by introducing the question of identifications. For those who were not here last time, as well as for those who were, I will recall the gist of what was said.

I attempted to draw attention to the difficulties that the notion of the phallic phase raises. One finds it quite difficult, in effect, to fit what Freud extracted from experience into any biological rationality, whereas things become clear immediately if we assume that the phallus is taken into a certain subjective function where it has to play the role of a signifier.

This phallus-signifier didn't just come out of the blue. At its origin, which is an imaginary origin, it must have had some property for it to fulfil its signifying function. This isn't just any function – it's one more especially adapted than others to hook the human subject into the entire mechanism of signifiers.

In some ways it's a crossroads-signifier. More or less whatever takes place over the course of the human subject's capture in the signifying system converges upon it inasmuch as one's desire has to pass through this system if it's to gain recognition and inasmuch as it's profoundly modified as a consequence. This is a fact of experience – we encounter the phallus at every turn in our experience of the Oedipal drama, at its entry and at its exits.

One may even say, in a certain problematic way, that it extends beyond this Oedipal drama, since, also, one cannot but be struck by the presence of the phallus, and specifically the paternal phallus,

in the primitive Kleinian fantasies. It's precisely this presence that raises for us the question of the register into which these Kleinian fantasies are to be inserted. Should it be the register that Melanie 288
Klein herself proposed in accepting a very early Oedipus complex? Or, on the contrary, should we accept a primitive imaginary functioning classified as pre-Oedipal? The question can be left open for the moment.

To clarify the function of the phallus that is present here in a completely general manner, precisely because it presents itself as a signifier function, we have to see, before we push our formulas to the limit, in what signifying economy the phallus is involved. This means investigating the moment that Freud explored and formulated as the exit from the Oedipus complex, where, following the repression of Oedipal desire, the subject emerges new – and equipped with what? The answer is – with an ego-ideal.

1

In the normal Oedipus complex, the effect of the repression that results from the exit from the Oedipus complex is to constitute an identification in the subject that has an ambivalent relationship with the latter. It's best if we proceed step by step on this. One thing at least emerges unequivocally, I mean in just one way, from what Freud was the first to raise, and no author has neglected to raise it as a minimal formulation – this is an identification distinct from the ego's identification.

Whereas the ego's structure rests on the subject's relationship to the image of the semblable, the ego-ideal's structure raises a problem specific to it. Effectively, the ego-ideal is not put forward – it's almost stating the obvious to say this – as an ideal ego. I have often stressed that the two terms are distinct in Freud, and this is so in the very article, '*Zur Einführung des Narzissmus*' ['On Narcissism'], but you need to look at it with a magnifying glass, for the difference is very difficult to detect in the text, to the point where some people confuse the two. First, this is not accurate, but if it were, by convention we should note that there is no synonymy between what is attributed to the ego-ideal's function in Freud's texts, inspired by clinical experience, and the meaning we may attribute to the ego's image – however much we glorify it by making it an ideal image with which the subject identifies, or a successful model, as it were, of himself, which he confuses himself with and thereby reassures himself of his wholeness.

For example, what is under threat when we make an allusion

to fears of narcissistic attacks on the body, what we are referring
289 to when we speak of the necessity for narcissistic reassurance, can be placed in the register of the ideal ego. As for the ego-ideal, it intervenes in functions that are often depressive, even aggressive, with respect to the subject. Freud brings this into play in diverse forms of depression. At the end of Chapter 7 of *Massenpsychologie* [*Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*], which is called '*Die Identifizierung*' ['Identification'], where for the first time he introduces the notion of the ego-ideal decisively and in an articulated manner, he is inclined to place all forms of depression in the register, not of the ego-ideal, but of some vacillating relationship of conflict between the ego and the ego-ideal.

Let's grant that everything that takes place in the depressive register or, conversely, in that of elation, is to be considered from the angle of open hostility between the two instances, whichever of the instances the declaration of hostilities starts in, whether it be the ego that rebels, or the ego-ideal that becomes too severe, with the consequences and repercussions of the imbalance of this excessive relationship. The fact remains that the ego-ideal presents us with a problem.

We're told that the ego-ideal results from a late identification, that the latter is linked to the three-party relationship in the Oedipus complex, and that desire and rivalry, aggression and hostility mix with one another in a complex manner. Something is being worked out, a conflict, the outcome of which is in the balance. Even if the outcome of the conflict is uncertain, it's nevertheless suggested that it introduces a subjective transformation by virtue of the introduction – introjection, as they say – into a certain structure, which is called the ego-ideal, and which henceforth turns out to be a part of the subject himself – even as it retains, however, a relation to an external object. Both things are there, and we are here touching on the fact that, as analysis teaches us, intrasubjectivity and intersubjectivity cannot be separated. Whatever the modifications that intervene to affect the subject's entourage and milieu, what he acquires as ego-ideal is like the country of an exile which he carries stuck to the soles of his shoes – his ego-ideal does indeed belong to him, it's something acquired. It's not an object, it's something extra in the subject.

We are reminded, with a great deal of insistence, that intrasubjectivity and intersubjectivity must remain connected in the analytic process. In the current use of analysis, people speak of the relations between the ego and the ego-ideal as relations that can be either good or bad, in conflict or harmonious. One brackets, or doesn't succeed in formulating, what has to be formulated and which is

imposed by the minimal requirements of our language, namely, that these relationships are always structured as intersubjective relationships.

The same mode of relations that exist between subjects is reproduced internally to the subject – and, as you well know, it can only be reproduced on the basis of a signifying organization. We are unable to think – even though we say it, and even though it may work when we do say it – that the superego is effectively something severe that spies on the ego and inflicts dreadful misery on it. It is not a person. It functions inside a subject in the way one subject acts towards another subject, and precisely in the sense that a relationship between subjects doesn't necessarily imply the existence of a person – conditions introduced by the existence and functioning of signifiers as such are sufficient for the establishment of intersubjective relationships. 290

It's this intersubjectivity inside the living person that we are dealing with in analysis. It's at the heart of this intersubjectivity that we have to form an idea of what the ego-ideal's function is. You will not find this function in a dictionary, you will not get an unequivocal response, you will only find the greatest confusion. This function is, for sure, not to be confused with that of the superego. They came along together almost, but, for this very reason, they were distinguished from one another. Let's say that they are conflated in part, but that the ego-ideal plays more of a classificatory function in the subject's desire. It does seem to be linked to the adoption of one's sexual type, insofar as the latter is implicated in an entire economy that is at times a social one. It's a matter of masculine and feminine functions, not simply insofar as they result in the act necessary for reproduction, but insofar as they comprise an entire world of relations between men and women.

Of what interest are the findings of analysis on this point? Analysis has made it possible for us to get inside a function that only shows itself at the surface and through its results. It has done this by taking cases where the outcome has been a failure, here following the well-known method, called psychopathological, which consists in breaking a function down and dismantling it by grasping it at the point where it turns out to be imperceptibly displaced or deviant, and where, as a result, what is usually inserted more or less normally into all its surroundings appears with its roots and branches laid bare.

I would like to refer here to our experience of the impact on a certain type of subject of the failure of identification, or that we assume to be partial or provisional failure, with what can be called their regular, satisfying type. We will need to choose a particular

case. Let's therefore take that of those women where we can discern
291 what has been called the 'masculinity complex' that has been linked to the existence of the phallic phase. We can do this because I have already emphasized the problematic aspect of the existence of this phallic phase.

Is there something of the instinctual here? Could a sort of flaw in instinctual development for which the existence of the clitoris would be solely responsible be the cause of what translates at the other extreme into the masculinity complex? We are already ready to recognize that it can't be that simple. When you look at it closely in Freud, it's not that simple – he saw clearly that it isn't purely and simply a matter of a detour in feminine development required by a natural anomaly or the famous bisexuality. Anyway, the debate that followed shows us that it's not so simple, even if the debate itself was poorly conceived, beginning as it did with the question-begging assumption that it couldn't be so.

The issue is definitely more complex. However, we are not immediately able to formulate what this is, but we clearly see that the vicissitudes of what presents itself as the masculinity complex in women already indicate a connection with the phallic element, a game with or a use of this element – and this is worth hanging onto, since, also, the use to which an element can be put is, still, of a kind to clarify for us what this element is, fundamentally.

What are analysts telling us, then, especially women analysts, who have explored this topic?

2

I won't mention everything they tell us today. I will quite especially refer to two of these analysts that are in the background of Jones's discussion of the problem, Helene Deutsch and Karen Horney. Those of you who read English will be able to go to the article by Helene Deutsch that is called 'The Significance of Masochism in the Mental Life of Women', January 1930, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, volume 11, on the one hand, and, on the other, to an article by Karen Horney, January 1924, volume 5, 'On the Genesis of the Castration Complex in Women'.

Whatever one might think of the positions Karen Horney comes to in both theory and technique, she has undeniably been an innovator on the clinical plane from the outset and through to the middle
292 of her career. Her discoveries are still completely valid, however strong or weak are the deductions she might have made from them concerning the anthropological situation of psychoanalysis. What

she emphasizes in her article on the castration complex can be summarized as follows. She observes in women an analogy between everything that, clinically, is organized around the idea of castration, and the claims [*revendications*] subjects make concerning the organ as something they lack. In these claims we find the resonances and clinical traces of castration. Using a series of examples, she shows – you should consult this text – that there is no difference in kind between these cases of phallic demand and certain cases of homosexuality in women, namely those in which the subject, in a certain position with respect to her partner, identifies with the paternal image. There is a seamless continuity between the two. The moments are composed in the same manner. The fantasies, dreams, inhibitions and symptoms are the same. It isn't even possible to say, it seems, that the former constitute an attenuated form of the others, but simply that one has or has not gone beyond a particular threshold, which in itself remains vague.

The point that Karen Horney stresses in this respect is the following. What happens in these cases encourages us to focus our attention on a particular moment in the Oedipus complex that is placed very close to the end of the period, since it presumes that one has arrived at the moment at which not only is the relationship with the father formed, but it's so well formed that it manifests itself in the little girl subject in the form of an explicit desire for the father's penis, which – and for me this is quite correctly emphasized – therefore implies a recognition of the penis, not as fantasmatic, not in general, not in this ambiguous half-light that constantly makes us wonder what the phallus is, but well and truly a recognition of the reality of the penis. We are not at the level of the question, is it or is it not imaginary?

Of course, in its central function, the phallus implies this imaginary existence. At various phases in the development of this relation, the female subject may, in the face of all opposition, maintain that she has it, even as she knows full well that she doesn't have it. She has it simply as an image – she has either had it or has to have it, as is frequently the case. But here, we are told, something else is at stake. It's a question of a penis actualized as real and longed-for as such.

I could not put this forward if I had not already modulated the Oedipus complex in its three moments by pointing out to you that it turns up at each of these three moments in different ways. The father as possessing the real penis intervenes at the third moment. I described it especially for the boy, and here things are perfectly situated for the little girl. 293

What happens, according to what we are told? We are told that,

in the cases in question, what results from the privation of what is longed-for is a phenomenon that was not invented by Karen Horney, and is constantly being implemented in Freud's own text – the shift, the mutation that transforms what had been love into identification.

Effectively, it is insofar as the father disappoints an expectation or a demand, with a particular orientation, by the subject that an identification forms. This assumes that the situation is already at an advanced stage. One could say that the subject has reached the peak of the Oedipal situation, were it not that its function consists in the fact that it has to be gone beyond, since it's by going beyond it that the subject will have to find a satisfactory identification with her own sex.

The identification with the father that occurs here is described as a problem, even a mystery. Freud himself stresses that the transformation of love into identification, the possibility of which is manifest here par excellence, is not self-evident. We accept it at this moment, however, and in the first place because we observe it. The thing is to describe how it works, that is, to give a formula that enables us to conceptualize this identification insofar as it is linked to a moment of privation.

I would like to try to give you several formulas for this, because I consider that they are useful for distinguishing what it is from what it is not. If I am introducing this essential element of an articulation in signifiers, it's not for the pleasure, as it were, or simply out of a taste for finding ourselves back amongst words. It's so that we don't use words and signifiers to commit errors of numbing grossness. Let's not take things that are inadequately articulated for things that are sufficiently enlightening. It's by formulating them properly that we will be able effectively to weigh up what's occurring and distinguish what occurs in one case from what occurs in another.

What happens when a female subject takes up a particular position of identifying with the father?

The situation, if you will, is as follows. There is the father, something has been expected at the level of the child, and the singular, paradoxical result is that, from a certain angle and in a certain way, the child becomes this father. She doesn't really become the father,
294 of course, she becomes the father as ego-ideal. A woman in this case can actually say in the most explicit manner, you just have to listen, 'I cough like my father.' This is indeed an identification. Let's try and follow the economy of the transformation step by step.

Still, this little girl is not transformed into a man. We find signs or stigmata of this identification, they are partly expressed and the

subject can be aware of them and she may pride herself on them up to a point. What are they? There is no doubt that they are signifying elements.

If a woman says, 'I cough like my father,' or 'I stick my stomach, or my body, out like him,' they are signifying elements. More precisely, in order to get at what is in question, I will use a special term for them, because they are not signifiers brought into play in a signifying chain. I'll call them insignias of the father.

The psychological attitude shows this on the surface – to call things by their name, the subject appears behind the mask of the insignias of masculinity and she places them over what, in every subject as such, is partly undifferentiated.

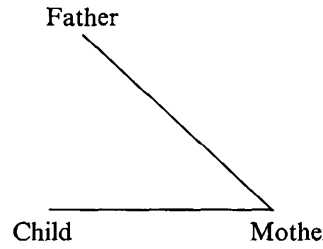
It's perhaps appropriate here, with the slowness that must always keep us from error, to ask ourselves what becomes of desire in this approach. Where does it all begin? The desire, after all, was not a masculine desire. What becomes of it when the subject adopts the insignias of the father? In relation to whom will these insignias be put to use? In relation, experience shows us, to what takes the place that the mother had occupied in the primitive evolution of the Oedipus complex. From the moment the subject adorns herself with the insignias of that with which she has identified, and the desire that comes into play is transformed in the direction of a passage to the state of a signifier, to the state of an insignia, it is then no longer the same.

What desire are we talking about? At the point in the Oedipus complex we have arrived at and seen what was expected from the relationship with the father, we can suppose that it had been a passionate desire, a properly female appeal and extremely close to a passive genital position. It's quite clear that it's no longer the same desire that is there after the transformation.

Let's leave the question of knowing what has happened to this desire for the moment, and let's return to the term 'privation' that I mentioned earlier. One could also talk about frustration. Why privation rather than frustration? I will point out here that this was left up in the air.

Whatever the case may be, the subject who is here [Child] has also been there [Father] insofar as she has an ego-ideal. Something has 295
thus occurred within her, which is structured as in intersubjectivity. This subject will now deploy a particular desire – what is it?

The father's relations with the mother appear on this schema. Now, it's clear that when we analyse a subject like this what we find in her analysis is not the duplication or the reproduction of what takes place between the father and the mother, for all sorts of reasons – if only because the subject has only attained this point



imperfectly. Experience shows, on the contrary, that what comes up is the entire past, the vicissitudes of the extremely complex relations that to this point have modulated the child's relations with its mother from the outset. That is to say the frustrations, the disappointments linked to the mishaps and fits and starts that necessarily exist, with the entire, extraordinarily complicated relationship that the latter entail, and that bring into play, with a very special emphasis, aggressive relations in their most original form, along with relations of rivalry, marked by the impact, for example, of the arrival of elements external to the trio, namely the brothers or sisters who might have come along more or less inconveniently in the subject's evolution and relations with her mother. That all has an impact, and one rediscovers its trace and its reflection tempering or reinforcing what will then appear as a claim upon the insignias of masculinity. That will all be projected into the young subject's relations with her object. These relations will henceforth be determined on the basis of this point of identification in which the subject adopts the insignias of what she has identified with and which, for her, play the role and function of ego-ideal.

Of course, what I am describing for you is a way of imagining the places in question, but this obviously presupposes, if you want to understand it, that one adds to it some sort of coming and going. The subject carries these insignias with her after this to-and-fro movement and finds herself formed in a new way and with a new desire.

296 What does the mechanism of this transformation entail? Three moments are to be distinguished.

First, there is the subject and one other term, one that has a libidinal value for her.

Next, there is a third term with which the subject has a distinct relationship, and this requires that the radically differentiating element – competition – has intervened in past relations with this term.

Finally, an exchange occurs – what was the object of the libidinal relation becomes something else and is transformed into a

signifying function for the subject, and the latter's desire passes over onto another plane, the plane of desire established with the third term. In the process, this other desire comes to be substituted for the initial desire, which is repressed and re-emerges fundamentally transformed.

That is what constitutes the process of identification.

There first has to be a libidinal element that picks out a particular object qua object. This object becomes a signifier in the subject, occupying the place that will henceforth be called the ego-ideal. Desire, on the other hand, undergoes a substitution – another desire takes its place. This other desire doesn't come from nothing, it's not nothing. It existed before – it related to the third term – and it emerges transformed.

That's the schema I ask you to keep in mind, because it's the minimal schema for every process of identification in the true sense of the word, identification at the secondary level, insofar as it grounds the ego-ideal. It never lacks any of these three terms. This to-and-fro is the result of the transformation of an object into a signifier that takes place in the subject and forms the identification that we find at the base of what forms an ego-ideal. This is always accompanied, moreover, by what we can call a transference of desire – another desire comes from somewhere else, from the relationship with a third term that had nothing to do with the first libidinal relation, and this desire is substituted for the first one, but, in and through this substitution, it itself turns out to be transformed. This is absolutely essential. Again, we can explain it differently if we return to our schema in the form in which I am currently presenting it.

In her initial relationship with the primordial object – that's the general formula – the child finds herself adopting a position symmetrical to the father's. She becomes his rival and places herself in opposition to him in relation to the primitive relationship with the object, at a point x, marked with the sign φ. There, she becomes something capable of assuming the insignias of the one whose rival she has become, and it's for this reason that she will subsequently rediscover a place, there where she necessarily is, that is to say at 297
'Child' – opposite this point x where the events occurred – and where she comes to constitute herself in this new form that is called *I*, the ego-ideal, thus retaining something from this passage in the most general form.

No longer is it a matter, here, as you can clearly see, of the father or the mother, it's a matter of relations with the object. The mother is the primitive object, the object par excellence. What the subject retains from the comings-and-goings, which have made her the

rival of a third term in relation to the object, is characterized by what can be called the common factor resulting from the existence of signifiers in the human psyche. Inasmuch as men have dealings with the world of signifiers, it's the signifiers that constitute the defile by which desire has to pass. Consequently, this toing-and-froing always implies the factor common to the impact of signifiers upon desire, common to what signifies it and to what necessarily makes it a signified desire – this common factor is precisely the phallus.

The phallus is always there. It's the lowest common denominator of this common factor. And this is why we always find it there in every case, whether it's a man or a woman. This is why we place the phallus, the small φ, here, at this point *x*.

The phallus is the third party in what is the subject's imaginary relationship with himself, *m* – *i*, always formed in a more-or-less fragile manner. This is the ego's primitive identification, which is always more-or-less ideal, with an always more-or-less disputed image. It has nothing to do with the fundamental relationship the subject maintains with that to which he has addressed his demands, that is, his object.

In these comings-and-goings, the ego-ideal, *I*, is always formed in opposition to the virtual point at which the rivalry, the competition, the contest* with the third term, this 'P' here, occurs and is in opposition to the common metonymic factor, the phallus, which is found everywhere. Of course, what happens at the level of the ego-ideal consists in having this common factor as a minimum. The ideal is composed in a way that prevents it from being seen, or that only lets it be seen as something that is always slipping between your fingers. It still remains there, circulating at the bottom of every kind of acquisition of signifiers.

Note the following – signifiers always eat into the signified. The ego-ideal is formed in the relationship with this third term, which is here, the father, and it always implies the phallus, and does so solely insofar as this phallus is the common, pivotal factor in the instance of the signifier.

298 **3**

Karen Horney has shown us the castration complex's continuity with female homosexuality. What does Helene Deutsch tell us?

She speaks of something else. She, too, tells us that the phallic phase does indeed play the role Freud says it does, except that what matters to her is to follow its subsequent vicissitude, where the girl

adopts the masochistic position that is constitutive, she says, of the female position. Inasmuch as clitoral jouissance happens to be forbidden for the little girl, she will find her satisfaction in a position that will, then, no longer be purely passive, but in a position of jouissance that is assured in this very privation of clitoral jouissance that has been imposed on her.

There's a paradox here. But it's a paradox that Helene Deutsch underpins with observations from experience that go so far as to be guidelines for technique. I am reporting the experiential data of a woman analyst, which, without any doubt, are subject to the choice of material that she makes but are nevertheless worth making the effort to consider.

For Helene Deutsch, the question of feminine satisfaction presents itself in a way that is sufficiently complex for her to consider that a woman, in her nature as a woman, is able to find complete satisfaction – complete enough for nothing to appear that presents itself as neurotic or atypical in her behaviour, in her adaptation to her female functions – without, in any clearly marked way, genital satisfaction fully taking place for her.

I repeat, this is Mrs Deutsch's position. For her, satisfaction in the female position can be totally achieved in the maternal relation, in all the stages of the function of reproduction – namely, in the satisfactions specific to the state of pregnancy, breastfeeding and maintaining the maternal position. The maturation of the satisfaction attached to the genital act, orgasm itself, to call it by its name, is something else – it's linked to the dialectic of phallic privation.

In subjects more or less implicated in the phallic dialectic and presenting a certain degree of masculine identification, Helene Deutsch has thus encountered a personality necessarily in conflict, whose equilibrium is therefore precarious and which has been formed on this basis. Reducing this complex relationship too far, pursuing the analysis too far, would be liable to frustrate such a subject of what jouissance she has more or less managed to achieve on the genital plane up to this point. This type of case goes so far as to comprise, according to her, an indication to leave the subject her penis-identifications, which have been more or less successful but 299
are at least established. To decompose, analyse and reduce these identifications would risk placing the subject in a position of loss in comparison with what the treatment reveals to have been the basis of the jouissance she had established before her analysis. What she would acquire on the plane of genital jouissance would be linked to the subject's past as it relates to her identifications. If, effectively, her jouissance consists in the masochistic frustration that the acquired

position comprises, by the same token it requires that the position from which this frustration is capable of being exercised be maintained. In other words, under certain conditions, reducing the properly masculine identifications has the capacity to threaten what the subject has achieved at the level of jouissance in the very dialectic of these identifications.

That's worth what it's worth. The issue for us here is simply that that has actually been asserted, and by a female analyst who is not at all lacking in experience and reveals herself to be, surely, if only through her reflections, someone who thinks about her trade and the consequences of what she is doing. It's on this basis – and this basis alone – that that deserves to be kept in consideration.

To summarize Mrs Deutsch's position on interhuman relations – I'm not saying that the genital act presents itself in the same way in robin redbreasts or in praying mantises – in the human species, the centre of gravity of the female's position and its element of major satisfaction is said to be located in what lies outside genital relations as such.

Everything that a woman can find in genital relations is said to be linked to a dialectic whose intervention here should be no surprise to us. What does that mean? It means, first, the extreme importance of what is called preliminary pleasure – which is also quite apparent in the man's position regarding the genital act, although it's perhaps simply more accentuated in the woman. These are the libidinal matters that are to be brought into question. But they are effectively only brought into play when they are captured in the subject's history, in a signifying dialectic that implies the intrusion of possible identification with a third object – the father, in the event. Phallic demands, as an identification with the father complicated by the woman's relationship with her object, are thus said to be only the signifying elaboration of this earlier pleasure from which, it turns out, the satisfactions produced in the genital act have been borrowed. As for the orgasm itself insofar as it's to be identified in the moment of the act, it effectively raises a problem in the woman that deserves to be raised, given what we know physiologically about the absence of an organization of nerves directly designed to produce pleasure in the vagina.

300 This leads us to attempt to formulate the relationship between the ego-ideal and a particular vicissitude of desire in the following manner. As much in the case of the boy as in the case of the girl, at a certain moment there is a relationship with a certain object already formed in its reality as an object, and this object becomes the ego-ideal through its insignias. Why has the desire in question in this relationship with the object been called privation in this

case? Because, we are told, it's not typical for it to relate to a real object.

Of course, when the father intervenes in the girl's evolution – this is the first example I gave – it's necessary, effectively, that he be a being real enough in his physiological constitution for the phallus to pass to a stage of evolution that goes beyond the purely imaginary function, which it is capable of retaining for a long time, in *Penisneid*. This is certain, but what constitutes the privation of desire is not that it's directed at something real, but that it's directed at something that can be demanded. A dialectic of privation can only be instituted, properly speaking, with respect to something that the subject is able to symbolize. It's insofar as the father's penis can be symbolized and demanded that what happens at the level of the identification in question today can occur.

This is completely distinct from what intervenes at the level of the prohibition of phallic jouissance. Clitoral jouissance, to call it by its name, can be prohibited at a given moment in its evolution. What is prohibited rejects the subject, throwing her into a situation in which she can no longer find anything suited to signify herself. This is what gives it its painful character, and inasmuch as the ego finds itself in this position of reject on the part of the ego-ideal, for example, a melancholic state sets in. We shall come back to the nature of this rejection, but you can understand already that what I am alluding to here can be brought into relation with this German term that in our vocabulary I have linked to rejection, namely *Verwerfung*. It's inasmuch as, on behalf of the ego-ideal, the subject in her living reality can find herself in a position from which every possible signification is excluded that the depressive state as such sets in.

The process in question in the formation of the ego-ideal is completely the opposite. The object finds itself faced with what I called privation, inasmuch as it's a question of a negative desire, of an object that can be demanded, and insofar as it's on the level of demand that the subject sees his desire refused. The link between desire that is refused and the object is there at the start of the constitution of this object as a particular signifier that occupies a particular place, is substituted for the subject and becomes a metaphor of the subject.

This occurs in the identification with the object of desire in the 301
case where the girl identifies with her father. This father whom she has desired and who has refused the desire of her demand takes its place. The formation of the ego-ideal thus has a metaphorical character and, just as with a metaphor, what results is the modification of a desire that has nothing to do with the desire involved in

constituting the object, a desire that is elsewhere, the one that had bound the little girl to her mother.

Let's call it small *d* in contrast to big D. All the little girl's prior experience with her mother occupies a place here in the question and undergoes the consequences of this metaphor to which desire comes to be bound. Here we rediscover the formula for metaphor that I gave you previously. The result is a change of signification in the relations that have been established to that point in the subject's history.

Since we are still at the first example of the little girl with her father, let's say that it's establishing this new function called the ego-ideal within her that modifies her history and will henceforth mould the subject's relations with her object.

19 March 1958

XVII

THE FORMULAS OF DESIRE

Critique of the early Oedipus complex
Desire and mark
On *Totem and Taboo*
The sign of language
The signifier of the barred Other

$$d \longrightarrow \mathcal{S}(A) \lozenge a \rightleftharpoons i(a) \longleftarrow m$$

$$D \longrightarrow A \lozenge d \rightleftharpoons s(A) \longleftarrow I$$

$$\Delta \longrightarrow \mathcal{S}(A) \lozenge D \rightleftharpoons S(\not{A}) \longleftarrow \Phi$$

I have started by writing these three formulas on the blackboard so as to avoid writing them incorrectly or incompletely when I come to refer to them. I hope to be able to clarify them all before the end of today's discussion.

Picking things up from where I left off last time, I have learned, not without some satisfaction, that some of my propositions managed to provoke some emotion, namely because I seemed to be endorsing the opinions of a certain female psychoanalyst who felt obliged to put forward the view that some analyses of women did not necessarily benefit from being taken right to the end, for the reason that the very progress of the treatment might deprive the said subjects of the point that they had come to in their sexual relations and threaten the level of jouissance they had acquired and achieved. I was subsequently asked whether I endorsed this position and whether analysis should effectively stop at a certain point for reasons external to the laws of its very progress.

My answer to this would be that everything depends on what one considers the aim of analysis to be – not its external aim, but what

it's regulated by, as it were, theoretically. There is, effectively, a perspective according to which the very notion of the development of analysis implies the idea of an adjustment to reality. It takes it as a
304 given that in the condition of man and in the condition of woman, a full explication of this condition must necessarily lead the subject to an adaptation that is in some way preformed and harmonious. It's a hypothesis. In actual fact, there's nothing in experience that would warrant it.

The question of a woman's development and her adaptation to a certain polyvalent register in the human order is clearly a sensitive point in analytic theory. To give you some signposts and to use terms that are the very ones that will return today, in a completely concrete sense this time, doesn't it immediately seem quite certain that it's right, concerning a woman, not to confuse what she desires – I give this term its full meaning – with what she demands? Not to confuse what she demands with what she wants either, in the sense in which one says, 'A woman always gets what she wants'?

These simple reminders, which, if not self-evident, then at least arise from our experience, are intended to show that the question one raises concerning what is to be achieved in analysis is no simple one.

1

What I spoke to you about last week came into the discussion at a tangent. What I wanted to lead you to, and will bring you back to today to create a general formula for it, will function in what follows as a reference point precisely for the critique of normative identifications for men and women.

Last time I gave you an initial glimpse into the identification that produces the ego-ideal, insofar as the latter is the exit point, pivotal point and endpoint of the crisis of the Oedipus complex which analytic experience began with and has not stopped revolving around since, even though it's adopting increasingly centrifugal positions. I insisted on the fact that every identification of the ego-ideal type stemmed from the fact that the subject is placed in a relationship with signifiers in the Other that I called insignias, and on the fact that this relationship grafts itself onto another desire than the desire that had brought the two terms together, the subject and the Other as bearer of these insignias.

That about summarizes it. Of course, it didn't satisfy everybody, even though, speaking to this or that person, that was the only

reference I gave. For example, can't you see that it's insofar as a woman identifies with her father that she makes all the accusations against her husband that she had made against her mother? This is pointed out as a prominent feature by Freud, as it is by every 305
author.

There's no question of being fascinated by this example, for we can find the same formula in different forms, but it is a good illustration of what I have just been telling you – the fact that identification occurs when a subject assumes signifiers characteristic of his relations with another includes and implies that the relations of desire between this subject and a third party will rise to the fore. You will discover the subject S, the big A and the little *a*. Where is the big A, where is the little *a*? It doesn't matter – what's important is that there be the two of them.

Let's go back to a remark that pertains to the maxim of La Rochefoucauld's concerning the things that cannot be gazed at steadily, the sun and death. There are things in analysis like that. It's quite curious that it's precisely the central point in analysis that one looks at obliquely and, increasingly, from a distance. The castration complex is one of those things.

Notice what's happening and has been happening ever since Freud's initial understanding of it. There was an essential, pivotal point there in the subject's formation – a strange thing, it has to be said, one that had never been advanced or articulated till then. The step Freud takes is to make the subject's formation revolve around a threat that is precise, particularized, paradoxical, archaic and even horror-provoking in the strict sense of the term, and which arises at a decisive moment that is no doubt pathogenic, but also normative. This threat is not there alone and in isolation, but is coherent with the said Oedipal relationship between the subject, the father and the mother – the father here in the role of vehicle of the threat, and the mother being the intended object of a desire that is profoundly hidden.

You rediscover there, at the origin, precisely what needs to be elucidated – this third relationship in which the relationship to certain insignias will be entered into – insignias that are indicated in the castration complex, but in an enigmatic manner, since these insignias themselves have a singular relationship to the subject. They are under threat, we are told, and, by the same token, it's they that need to be gathered and received, and this in a relationship of desire with respect to a third term, which is the mother.

That's what we find at the start, and, having said that, we are faced with an enigma. We, those of us who are practitioners, have to grasp, coordinate and articulate this relationship, complex by

definition and in its essence, which we encounter in the life of our subject. We find a thousand forms, a thousand reflections, a
306 dispersion of images and fundamental relationships, all of whose repercussions, effects and multiple psychological facets we have to grasp in the experience of the neurotic subject. And then what happens?

What happens is this phenomenon that I will call the phenomenon of psychologizing motivation. We start by looking for the origin and meaning of the fear of castration in the individual, and this leads us to a series of displacements and transpositions. I will summarize them for you.

First, the fear of castration is related to the father as object, to fear of the father.

Considering the impact of this fear leads us to appreciate its relationship to a tendency or a desire in the subject, that of his bodily integrity. Consequently, we find the notion of narcissistic fear promoted.

Then, still pursuing a line that is necessarily genetic – that is, one that goes back to origins – as soon as we look for the genesis of what subsequently takes place in the individual, we discover the fear of the female organ, there in the foreground and supported by clinical material, which is always there for us to grasp the ways in which a particular effect is embodied. And in an ambiguous manner – either this organ becomes the locus of the threat against the incriminated organ, or on the contrary it's the model for this organ's disappearance.

Finally, even further back, going back even further still, to the first moment – a striking and singular endpoint at which we have gradually arrived, and I won't go through the list of authors again today, but for this first moment, you know that it's Melanie Klein – what is there at the origins of the fear of castration is the phallus itself, hidden in the depths of the maternal organ. Right at the origins, the paternal phallus is perceived by the child as having its seat inside the maternal body, and this is what the subject dreads.

Is it not already quite striking to see the threatening organ appear as a mirror image before the threatened organ, and in a way that I would describe as more and more mythical the more distant its origins? For the final step to be taken, the father's organ inside the mother's vagina must be regarded as threatening, by virtue of the fact that the subject himself, at the roots of what is called his aggressive, sadistic and primordial tendencies, makes it his ideal weapon. At the first moment, everything thus comes down to a sort of pure reflection of the phallic organ considered as the support of a primitive tendency that is one of pure and simple aggression.

The castration complex is here reduced to the isolation of a partial, primordial, aggressive, and henceforth disconnected, drive.

As a result, all the efforts of authors then tend to reintegrate the 307
castration complex into its context as a complex, which is where it began, and where it was the profound motivation for being the central feature of subjective economy in the original exploration of the neuroses. Authors thus go to the greatest lengths to restore it, all the same, to this place, so much so that when we consider these things, what we see emerging is a set of concepts vainly circling one another. This is how it looks if we closely examine the economy of what Melanie Klein describes as taking place at the level of the early Oedipus complex. This expression is nothing but a contradiction in terms – it's like saying 'pre-Oedipal Oedipus complex'. It's the Oedipus complex before any of the characters in the Oedipus complex have emerged. The interpretative signifiers that she uses to name the drives she encounters, or thinks she encounters, in the child, her very own signifiers, imply the entire dialectic that was at issue in the first place.

And so, we have to go back over this dialectic, in its essence, from the start.

2

Castration is an essential feature, if we consider it in the way it has been promoted by analytic experience and analytic theory, and by Freud, and from the start. Let's now work out if we can see what it means. Prior to being fear, prior to being lived, prior to being psychologizable, what does castration mean?

Castration is not actual castration. It's linked to a desire, as I have said. It's even linked to the evolution, progress and maturation of desire in the human subject.

While it's castration, it's quite clear, furthermore, that it is difficult to centre the link with this organ on the notion of the castration complex. It has often been observed that castration is not directed at the genital organs in their totality, and indeed it's for that reason that in the woman it does not take on the aspect of a threat against the female genital organs as such, but the female genital organs insofar as they are something else – specifically, the phallus. Similarly, it has been possible to legitimately pose the question whether in the man it was necessary to single out the penis as such in the notion of the castration complex, or include in it the penis and the testicles. In truth, these discussions are a good indication that what is at stake is something other than this or that. It's something

308 that has a particular relationship with the organs, but a relationship whose signifying character is not in doubt from the outset. It is its signifying character that is predominant.

Let's just say that, at the very least, a minimum has to be retained to define what the castration complex is in its essence – it's the relationship of a desire to what for the moment I will call a mark.

In order for desire to successfully traverse phases and come to maturity, both Freudian experience and analytic theory teach us that something as problematic to situate as the phallus has to be marked by the fact that it's retained only insofar as it has experienced the threat of castration.

This must be maintained as the essential minimum beyond which we go off into synonyms, shifts in meaning, equivalences and, as a consequence, obscurity. We literally no longer know what we are saying if we do not retain these characteristics as essential. Isn't it better to look, first, in the direction of the relationship as such between these two poles, between desire and the mark, before heading off to look for it in the various ways in which it's embodied for a subject? As soon as we deviate from this starting point, the reason for this link can only become increasingly enigmatic, problematic and, before long, avoided.

I insist upon this feature of the mark. Moreover, outside analysis, in all its other interpretative or meaningful manifestations, and certainly in everything that embodies it ceremoniously, ritually or sociologically, the mark is the sign of what supports this castrating relation whose emergence in anthropology analysis has made it possible for us to appreciate. Let's not forget the religious incarnations in which we recognize the castration complex – circumcision, for example, to call it by its name, or again, in the rites of puberty, this or that form of inscription, marking or tattooing, linked to a particular phase which unambiguously presents itself as the accession to a certain stage of desire. All of that always present itself in the form of a mark and an impression.

You are going to tell me, 'Here we are, then, the mark – not something difficult to come across. Even where there are flocks, each shepherd has his little mark in order to distinguish his ewes from everybody else's.' This is not such a stupid remark, for indeed there is a relationship, even if it's only that the mark presents itself as a kind of transcendence in relation to the formation of a flock. Should that be sufficient for us? It's indeed true that, in a certain way, circumcision presents itself as constituting a particular flock, the flock of God's chosen ones. Are we not merely rediscovering
309 that? Certainly not. What analytic experience, and Freud, brought us at the beginning is that there is a close, even intimate relationship

between desire and the mark. The mark is not simply there as a sign of recognition for the shepherd, whom we would have difficulty locating if required. Where man is concerned, the marked living being has a desire which does not fail to have a certain intimate relationship with the mark.

We mustn't go too quickly and say that this mark modifies desire. In this desire, there is perhaps, from the outset, a gap that makes it possible for this mark to have its special effect. What is certain is that there is a close relationship between what is characteristic of desire in man and the effect, role and function of the mark. Once again, we see here signifier and desire together, which is what the entire investigation we are developing here is about.

I would not like to stray too far, but here is one small parenthesis, all the same. Let's not forget that the question quite obviously leads to the function of signifiers in man, and you are not hearing it said here for the first time. If Freud wrote *Totem and Taboo,* if he had an essential need to do so and derived an essential satisfaction from it – read Jones's text and you will see the importance it had for him – it was not just under the heading of applied psychoanalysis. His satisfaction wasn't in rediscovering the little human animal that he found himself occupied with in his consulting rooms, magnified to the dimensions of the heavens. It was not the celestial dog in relation to the terrestrial dog, as in Spinoza. For him, it was an absolutely essential myth – so essential that, for him, it was not a myth. What is the meaning of *Totem and Taboo*?

The meaning of it is that, if we want to understand anything about Freud's specific enquiry concerning the experience of the Oedipus complex in his patients, we are necessarily led to the theme of the murder of the father.

This is not something that Freud wonders about. But, I ask you, what can it mean that in order to conceptualize the passage from nature to humanity one has to pass via the murder of the father?

According to his method, which is the method of an observer and a natural scientist, he groups facts together and amasses all the documents that his researches bring him concerning this crossroads. There's no doubt we see, occupying the foreground, the point at which his own experience and the ethnological material meet. It doesn't matter that the latter is more or less outdated. It's not important any more. What counts is the fact that the point at which he ends up, which he was happy with, and where he saw that the signs whose tracks he was following were converging, was the point 310
at which the function of a phobia meets the theme of the totem. And this is indistinguishable from a development that places the function of signifiers in the foreground.

A phobia is a symptom in which the signifier is isolated, and promoted as isolated, in the foreground. I spent last year explaining this to you by showing you how the signifier of a phobia can have thirty-six thousand significations for the subject. The key point is the missing signifier that would make it possible for the significations, at least for a time, to settle down a little. Without it, the subject is literally overwhelmed by them. A totem is the same thing – a signifier of all trades, a key signifier, the one owing to which everything falls into place, and first and foremost the subject, for the subject discovers what he is in this signifier, just as it's in the name of this totem that what is prohibited comes to be organized for him.

But what is this still veiling or hiding from us, in the end? What is being hidden by the father's murder, inasmuch as taking place around him is the revolution whereby the young males of the horde are seeing that what will become the primitive law – that is, the prohibition of incest – is emerging? To put it simply, it hides the close link that exists between death and the emergence of signifiers.

We all know that in the ordinary course of events life scarcely pauses over the corpses it creates. Big fish eat little fish – or even, once they have killed them, don't eat them. The movement of life reduces down to the same level whatever is there for life to abolish, and it's already a problem to know in what way a death is memorized, even if that memorization remains implicit in some ways, that is, even if, as seems to be the case, it's in the nature of this memorization for the fact to be forgotten by the individual, whether it concerns the murder of the father or the murder of Moses. It's in the nature of a mind to forget what remains absolutely necessary as the key or pivotal point around which it revolves. For a death to be memorized, a link needs to have been turned into a signifier in such a way that this death exists in the real in some other way, in life's abundance. There is no existence of death. There are the dead, and that's it. And when they're dead, nobody in life pays attention to them any longer.

In other words, what is it that accounts both for Freud's passion when he writes *Totem and Taboo* and for the dazzling impact of a book that is very generally rejected and reviled on its publication? And everyone says, 'What's this guy telling us? Where has this come from? What right does he have to be telling us this? We ethnographers have never seen anything like it before.' This doesn't prevent this book from being one of the major events of our century, one
311 that has profoundly transformed the entire inspiration for critical, ethnological, literary and anthropological work.

What does this mean, if not that Freud conjugates two things – desire and the signifier. He conjugates them in the sense in which

one says one conjugates a verb. He brings the category of this conjugation into the heart of thinking about man that before him had remained, I should say, academicizing – designating thereby an ancient philosophical affiliation which, from Platonism up to the Stoic and Epicureans sects, and passing via Christianity, has had the profound tendency to forget the organic relationship between desire and signifiers, to exclude desire from signifiers, to reduce it, to account for it in a particular economy of pleasure, to include what is absolutely problematic, irreducible and, strictly speaking, perverse within it, and to avoid what is the essential, living characteristic of the manifestations of human desire, at the forefront of which we must place not only its unadapted and unadaptable, but its fundamentally marked and perverted, character.

It's the state of this link between desire and mark, desire and insignia, and desire and signifier that we are trying to work out here.

3

Let's now turn to the three little formulas I have written out for you.

Today, I merely want to introduce them and tell you what they mean, because we will not be able to progress any further than that. To my mind, these formulas are the ones that make it possible for us to articulate not only something of the problem that I have just put to you, but even all the meanderings, or even wanderings, of analytic thought concerning what still remains our fundamental problem, which is, let's not forget, the problem of desire.

Let's start by clarifying what is meant by the letters that are up there. The little *d* is desire. The $ is the subject. The little *a* is the little other, the other insofar as he is our semblable, insofar as his image grabs, captivates and supports us, and insofar as we constitute around him this first order of identifications which I have defined for you as narcissistic identification, which is the small *e*, the ego.

The first line places these letters in a certain relationship to one another where the arrows indicate that it cannot go from one side to the other, no matter which side it starts from, but that it stops at 312
the point where one directional arrow meets another with the opposite sign. The egoic or narcissistic identification finds itself here in a particular relation with the function of desire. I will come back to this commentary.

The second line is about what I constructed my entire discourse around at the start of the year when I was trying to get you to see in jokes a certain fundamental relationship that desire has, not with signifiers as such, but with speech – namely, with demand. The D

written here stands for demand. The big A that comes next is the big Other, the locus, seat or witness that the subject makes reference to as the locus of speech, in his relationship with any kind of little *a*. There is no need here to remind you how much, over a long period of time, and by coming back to it incessantly, I have declared that the big Other as the locus of speech, articulated as such, is necessary. The little *d* is found here, and also, for the first time, the little *s*, with the same signification that it normally has in our formulas, namely that of the signified. The little *s* of big A designates what in the Other is signified, and signified with the help of signifiers – that is, what in the Other, for me as a subject, takes on the value of a signified – that is, what earlier I was calling insignias. It's in relation to these insignias of the Other that the identification occurs whose product and outcome is the constitution of the big I, which is the ego-ideal, in the subject. The mere constitution of these formulas presents you with the fact that access to the identification of the ego-ideal is only possible once the term 'the big Other' is taken into account.

As with the previous lines, the third is trying to articulate a problem in a reference chain [*chaîne-repère*]. This is the problem that I am formulating here with you today.

The delta is precisely what we are enquiring about, namely the very mainspring by which the human subject is placed in a certain relationship with the signifier, the human subject in his essence as a subject, as total subject, as subject in his completely open, problematic and enigmatic character – and which this symbol expresses.

Here we see the subject returning again, this time in relation to the fact that his desire goes through a demand, that he speaks it and that this has a number of effects. Next, you have the big S which is, as usual, the letter I use to designate the signifier. The formula explains that the big S of barred Ⱥ is precisely what Φ, the phallus, produces. In other words, the phallus is the signifier that introduces something new into Ⱥ, introduces it only into Ⱥ, and at the level of Ⱥ – owing to which this formula will be illuminated by the effects of signifiers.
313 This precise point of impact on the Other is what this formula will enable us to clarify.

Let's now return to the matter at hand.

Man's relationship to desire is not a pure and simple relationship of desire. In itself, it isn't a relationship with an object. If the relationship with an object were already established, there would be no problem for analysis. Men would, as we can assume for the majority of animals, go to their object. Man would not have this second relationship, as it were, to the fact that he is a desiring animal, which conditions everything that happens at the level we call perverse – namely, that he enjoys his desire. The entire evolution of desire has

its origins in these lived facts that are classed in, let's say, the masochistic relation, because this is the one we are told to consider first in the genetic order, although one comes to it by a kind of regression. The one that suggests itself as the most exemplary and the most pivotal is either the so-called sadistic relationship or the scopophilic relationship.

It's quite clear that it's through a reduction, the manipulation or second-order artificial decomposition of what is given in experience that we isolate them in the form of drives that are interchangeable and equivalent to one another. The scopophilic relationship, insofar as it conjugates exhibition and voyeurism, is always ambiguous – the subject sees himself being seen, one sees the subject as seen, but, of course, one does not just see him, but sees him in his jouissance, in that species of irradiation or phosphorescence that emerges by virtue of the fact that the subject finds himself in a position that comes from some sort of primitive gap, in some way extracted from his relationship of involvement with an object, and from there he fundamentally grasps himself as the patient in that relation. The fact that what we find at the core of the analytic exploration of desire is masochism stems from there – the subject grasps himself as suffering, and he grasps his existence as a living being as one of suffering, that is, as being a subject of desire.

Where is the problem now? Human desire will always remain irreducible to any form of reduction and adaptation. No analytic experience goes against this. The subject does not simply satisfy a desire, he derives enjoyment from desiring, and this is an essential dimension of his enjoyment. It's completely erroneous to omit this primitive datum which, I have to say, the so-called existentialist investigation has illuminated and cast in a certain light. If what I am saying here for you, as best I can, is to mean anything, it requires you to refer to our daily experience, but that is elaborated over the course of pages that are masterful in a variety of ways by Mister Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*. It isn't always absolutely rigorous 314
philosophically, but it's certainly the work of an undisputed literary talent. What is striking is that it has only been possible for things of this order to be articulated so brilliantly since analysis gave the dimension of desire freedom of the city.

Mister Jones, whose usefulness to and function in analysis are in direct proportion to what he didn't understand, very quickly tried to expound the castration complex by finding an equivalent for it. To be frank, the phallic signifier was the object of what one could perhaps call a veritable phobia throughout his entire existence as a writer and analyst. The best of his writing, which culminates in his article on the phallic phase, consists precisely in saying this – why

privilege this damned phallus that we find here under our feet at every moment, this inconsistent object, moreover, whereas other things are just as interesting? The vagina, for example. And, effectively, the man is right. It's quite clear that this object is no less interesting than the phallus. We know this. It's just that what astonishes him is that they don't have the same function. He was, strictly speaking, condemned to understand nothing, insofar as, from the outset, from his first sentence, as soon as he tried to spell out what the castration complex is in Freud, he felt the need to produce an equivalent for it, instead of clinging to what there is in the Oedipus complex that might be tough, even irreducible, namely the phallus signifier.

Jones didn't lack an orientation. Perhaps he had only one failing, which was to think that God created them man and woman. This is the sentence with which he ends his article, 'The Phallic Phase', thereby clearly showing the biblical origins of his conviction. Since God created them man and woman, they are therefore well made to go together, and that is where it has to culminate, and if not, we need to say why.

Now, precisely, in analysis we appreciate that when one is asked to say why, one gets into all sorts of complications. This is why, from the start, he substituted the term *'aphanisis'* for the castration complex, which is a word he went looking for in a Greek dictionary, and which, it has to be said, is not one of the words most commonly used by authors. It means disappearance. Disappearance of what? Disappearance of desire. It's what the subject is afraid of in the castration complex, according to Mister Jones. With his jaunty little step of a Shakespearean character, he seems to be unaware that it was already an enormous problem that a living being might feel threatened, as if by some danger, by the disappearance, lack or withdrawal, not of his object, but of his desire. There is no other
315 way of making *aphanisis* equivalent to the castration complex than by defining it as he does, namely as the disappearance of desire. Isn't there something there that completely lacks foundation? That there is already something there that stands at a second or third degree in relation to a relation described in terms of need is not in doubt. However, he does not give the slightest impression of being aware of this.

That said, even if we allow that all the complications suggested by merely posing the problem in these terms have already been resolved, the subject's relationship to the Other remains to be structured, insofar as it's in the Other, in the gaze of the Other, that he apprehends his own position. It's not for nothing that I am singling out the scopophilic position – it's because it's effectively at the core,

not only of this position, but also of the Other's attitude, insofar as, although the sadistic position can be described as sadistic in the strict sense, there is no sadistic position that is not accompanied by a degree of masochistic identification. The human subject is, thus, in a detached relationship to his own being, which places him in a position with respect to the Other such that, in both what he grasps and what he enjoys, we are dealing with something other than a relation to the object, we are dealing with a relation to his desire. What we now need to know is this – what does the phallus as such do there? That's where the problem is.

To solve it, let's refrain from trying to engender or imagine the term in question through a genetic reconstitution founded on what I would call the fundamental references of modern obscurantism. I am thinking of formulas that, in my opinion, are so much more stupid than what you find in the little books of catechism, of which an example is: ontogenesis recapitulates phylogenesis. When our great-grandchildren come to know that in our day this was sufficient to explain a heap of things, they will say to themselves that man really is a weird thing – moreover, without realizing what they will have in its place in their time.

It is, then, a question of knowing what the phallus is doing there. For today, let's set out what the existence of the third line comprises, namely that the phallus plays the role of a signifier. What does that mean?

To clarify, let's start with the second line, which means that man has a certain relationship with the little other which is structured like what I have just called human desire, in the sense in which this desire is already fundamentally perverse, and that as a consequence all his demands are marked by a particular relationship, represented by this new little lozenge symbol that we keep coming across in these formulas. It simply implies – this is its entire meaning – that 316
everything here is controlled by this quadratic relationship that from the outset we have always placed at the foundation of our way of articulating the problem, and which says that there is no conceivable – nor articulable, nor possible – $\mathcal{S}$ that is not sustained by the ternary relationship A-a'-a. That's all the lozenge means. In order for demand to exist, to have a chance, or to be something, there needs to be a certain relationship between s(A) and desire as it's structured, A $\lozenge$ d. This refers us back to the first line.

There is, effectively, an organization to these lines. The first indicates that narcissistic identification, namely what constitutes the subject's ego, takes place in a certain relationship all of whose variations, differences and nuances we have seen over the course of time – prestige, presence, domination – in a certain relationship with

the image of the other. You find what corresponds to the ego, its correlate, in what lies on the other side of the point of revolution of this table, namely the double line of equivalence there in the middle. The very possibility of the existence of an ego is thus brought into relationship with the subject's fundamentally desiring nature, tied to the avatars of desire, which is expressed here in the first part of the first line.

Similarly, what does all identification with the insignias of the Other, that is, of the third party as such, depend on? On demand. On demand and on the Other's relations with desire.

This is quite clear and quite apparent, and it enables the term by which Freud designates what we quite incorrectly call – I will say why – frustration to be given its full value. Freud says *Versagung*. We know from experience that it's insofar as something is *versagen* that the phenomenon of secondary identification, or identification with the insignias of the Other, is produced in the subject.

What does that imply? That in order for anything to be able to be established for the subject between the big Other as the locus of speech and the phenomenon of his desire – which is located on a completely heterogeneous plane, since it has a relation to the little other as his image – in order to explain human desire as perverse desire, it's necessary that something introduce, into the Other, this same relationship with the little other that is required, necessary and phenomenologically tangible. It's the need for this problem to be spelled out that I am proposing today.

This may seem obscure to you. I will only tell you one thing – it's this. To say that not only does this become increasingly obscure, but that it's also all a muddle, is to say nothing at all. It's possible, on the other hand, that in saying this we will manage to contribute a little bit of order.

317 I propose that Φ, the phallus, is this signifier by which the relationship to *a*, the little other, is introduced into A as the locus of speech, and insofar as the signifier plays a part.

There you are. This looks like it's biting its own tail – but it has to bite its own tail. It's clear that the signifier plays a part, since we encounter this signifier every step of the way. We have encountered it from the outset, since man would not enter into culture – or rather into society if we distinguish between culture and society, but it's the same thing – if the relationship to the signifier were not there at the origin.

Just as we have defined the paternal signifier as the signifier which establishes and authorizes the play of signifiers in the locus of the Other, there is another privileged signifier which has the effect of instituting in the Other the following, thereby changing its

nature – and this is why on the third line the symbol for the Other is barred – namely, that it isn't purely and simply the locus of speech, but that it is, like the subject, implicated in the dialectic located on the phenomenal plane of reflection with respect to the little other. What this adds is that this relationship exists inasmuch as the signifier inscribes it.

I ask you to keep this in mind, no matter how difficult it might be for you. You will stop there for today. I will show you what this makes possible to illustrate and formulate another time.

26 March 1958

XVIII

SYMPTOMS AND THEIR MASKS

My interpretations and his
The case of Elisabeth von R.
Dissociating love and desire
Articulated desire is not articulable
Laughter and identification

Today I would like to bring you back to one primitive understanding of the object of our experience, that is, the unconscious.

My aim, in short, is to show you the pathways and possibilities that the discovery of the unconscious opens up for us, without having you forget the limits it places on our powers. It is, in other words, about my showing you from what perspective, from what approach we get an insight into the possibility of normativization – therapeutic normativization – when the entire analytic experience is there to remind you that it nevertheless runs up against the antinomies internal to all normativization in the human condition.

Analysis even makes it possible for us to go into the nature of these limits in depth.

1

One cannot but be struck by the fact that, in one of his last articles – the one whose title has been incorrectly translated as 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable', whereas in fact it's about the finite or the infinite, and where the question is whether an analysis comes to an end or must be situated in a kind of infinite range – Freud points out the projection to infinity of the aim of analysis in the clearest way possible, at the level of concrete experience, as he says, emphasizing what for man is irreducible in the castration complex, for woman

in *Penisneid*, that is, in a particular fundamental relationship to the phallus.

What was it that the Freudian discovery emphasized at the outset? It emphasized desire. What Freud essentially discovers, 320
what he apprehends in every kind of symptom, whether they are pathological symptoms or whether they are what he interprets in what till then had presented itself as more or less reducible to normal life – namely, dreams for example – is always a desire.

Moreover, in dreams, he doesn't just talk about desire but about the fulfilment of desire, *Wunscherfüllung*. We should not fail to be struck by this fact – namely, that he speaks about the satisfaction of desire, precisely, in dreams. He also indicates that, in symptoms themselves, there is something that resembles this satisfaction, but it's satisfaction whose problematic character is quite marked, since it's also satisfaction turned upside down.

It already seems, then, that desire is linked to something that is its appearance and, to use this word, its mask. In the way desire presents itself to us in analytic experience, the close link that it maintains with what cloaks it, problematically, invites us to reflect upon this as an essential problem.

Several times recently, I have emphasized the way desire, insofar as it appears in consciousness, manifests itself in a paradoxical form in analytic experience – or, more precisely, how much the latter has promoted this characteristic inherent in desire qua perverse desire, which is a second-order desire, an enjoyment of desire qua desire.

Speaking generally, it's not analysis that discovered the function of desire, but it has made it possible for us to see just how far down goes the fact that human desire is not directly implicated in a pure and simple relationship with the object that satisfies it, but that it's just as much linked to the position that the subject adopts in the presence of this object as it is to the position he adopts outside his relations with the object, in such a way that nothing in his relations with an object is ever completely exhausted.

Moreover, analysis is well placed to remind us of the fact, which has always been known, that desire is restless, fleeting and elusive in nature. It evades synthesis by the ego and leaves it no other way out than that of being nothing but an illusory affirmation of synthesis. While it's always me who desires, this can only be grasped in me in the diversity of these desires.

Behind this phenomenological diversity, behind the contradiction, the anomaly and the aporia of desire, it's certain, moreover, that there exists a deeper relationship, which is the subject's relationship to life and, as one says, to the instincts. By taking this 321
approach, analysis helps us make progress on the subject's situation

in relation to his position as a living being. But analysis makes us experience the intermediaries through which the aims or ends, not only of life, but perhaps also of what lies beyond life, are realized. What Freud envisaged, effectively, was some sort of teleology of first vital ends, of ultimate ends that life supposedly aims at lying beyond the pleasure principle – and this is a return to the equilibrium of death. Analysis enabled us, I won't say to define all that, but to catch a glimpse of it, insofar as it has also made it possible for us to follow the course of the fulfilment of desires.

There have always been glimpses of human desire in its internal relations with the Other's desire. One doesn't need to refer to the first chapter of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* to encounter the paths that a reasonably in-depth reflection would enable this research to take. This is in no way to detract from the originality of the new phenomenon that Freud contributes, and which makes it possible for us to throw such essential light on the nature of desire.

The approach that Hegel takes in his first study of desire is far from being, as one thinks from the outside, a uniquely deductive approach. It's a matter of capturing desire through the intermediary of the relations of self-consciousness with the constitution of self-consciousness in the other. The question that this raises, then, is how the dialectic of life itself can be introduced via this intermediary. This can only be translated in Hegel through what, when the occasion arises, he calls a synthesis. Freudian experience shows us quite a different pathway, even though, very curiously and also very remarkably, desire appears there just as profoundly tied to the relationship with the other as such, even though it appears as unconscious desire.

Now let's go back and place ourselves at the level of what this approach to unconscious desire was in the experience of Freud himself, in his experience as a human being. We have to imagine the first moments at which Freud encountered this experience with its quality of surprising novelty, appealing, I won't say to intuition, but rather to divination, since it was about comprehending something beyond a mask.

Now that psychoanalysis is established and has developed into a discourse that is so broad and shifting, we can imagine – but we
322 imagine this fairly poorly – what the significance was of what Freud introduced when he started reading his patients' symptoms and his own dreams and started bringing us the notion of unconscious desire. Indeed, that is what is missing for us to evaluate the true value of his interpretations. We are always quite astonished by what very often appears as their extraordinarily interventionist

nature compared to what we allow ourselves to do, and, I would say, compared to what we may and may no longer allow ourselves to do.

One may even add that to some extent his interpretations strike us as wide of the mark. Have I not pointed out to you a thousand times, concerning the case of Dora for example, or his interventions in the analysis of the young homosexual woman whom we have discussed at length here, to what extent Freud's interpretations – and he recognizes this himself – were connected with his incomplete knowledge of psychology, in particular that of homosexuals in general, but also of hysterics? The inadequate knowledge that Freud possessed at that time means that, in more than one case, his interpretations look too directive in nature, almost forced and precipitate all at once, which effectively gives full value to the term 'an interpretation wide of the mark'.

Still, it's certainly true that these interpretations, at that moment, and up to a point, looked like they had to be made and looked like efficacious interpretations for resolving a symptom. What does that mean?

Obviously, this raises a problem. To begin to solve it, we have to mention that when Freud gave interpretations of this nature, he found himself faced with quite a different situation from the present one. Effectively, everything that in a verdict-interpretation emerges from the mouth of an analyst, insofar as there is interpretation in the strict sense – this verdict, what is stated, proposed and given as true literally gets its value from what is left unsaid. The question, therefore, is what is the background of the unsaid against which an interpretation is being given.

At the time when Freud was giving Dora his interpretations, he was telling her, for example, that she was in love with Herr K. and he would indicate to her, in no uncertain terms, that normally she should be redoing her life with him. This comes as a surprise for us, and all the more so because we know that this was out of the question for the best of reasons, and ultimately Dora wants to have nothing to do with it. Nevertheless, an interpretation of this order, when Freud made it, appeared against a background that carried no presumption for the patient that her interlocutor was there to rectify her understanding of the world or bring her object relation to maturity. For a subject to expect such things from the mouth 323
of an analyst, there has to be an entire cultural atmosphere and none of this had been formed as yet. In actual fact, Dora does not know what to expect, she is taken by the hand, and Freud tells her, 'Speak', and there is nothing else on the horizon of an experience conducted in this way – unless implicitly, for, merely by virtue of the

fact that she is told to speak, something of the order of truth has to come into play.

This situation is far from being like ours. Today, the subject comes to analysis already with the idea that the maturation of the personality, the instincts and the object relation is a reality that is already organized and normativized, and the analyst stands as the measure of this. The analyst seems to be like the possessor of the pathways into and the secrets about what initially presents itself as a network of relations, and, while not all are known to the subject, at least their general outline is available to him – at least in the notion that there are these grand lines. He has the idea that pauses in his development are conceivable, that progress is an achievement. In short, there is an entire background concerning the normativization of his person, his instincts and so on – add whatever you like to the list. This all implies that when an analyst intervenes he intervenes from a position, it's said, of judgement, of ratification – there is an even more precise word that I will point you to later – which gives his interpretation a completely different weight.

To get a good grasp of what is in question when I speak to you of unconscious desire in the Freudian discovery, one has to return to these times of freshness in which nothing was implied in the analyst's interpretation, except for immediately detecting, behind something that paradoxically presented itself as completely closed, an x that lies beyond.

Each and every one of you here goes crazy over the term 'meaning'. I don't think that this term is anything but a weakening of what was originally involved, whereas the term 'desire', in what it binds and gathers together as identical with the subject, gives what was encountered in the initial understanding of the analytic experience its impact. That's what we should return to if we wish to bring together both where we are now and what is essentially signified not only by our experience but by its possibilities – I mean, by what makes it possible.

This is also what has to keep us from sliding down the slope and giving into the tendency, I would almost say the trap, in which we are ourselves implicated along with the patient that we introduce into the experience – this would be to lead him down a path that would rest upon a number of circular arguments, I mean upon the
324 idea that an ultimate solution can be given to his condition that would in the end allow him to become, let's use the word, identical to some object or other.

Let's return, then, to the problematic character of desire such as it presents itself in analytic experience, that is, in every type of symptom.

2

Here, what I am calling a symptom in the most general sense is a morbid symptom as well as a dream and anything that's analysable. What I am calling a symptom is anything that is analysable.

A symptom appears behind a mask, appears in a paradoxical form.

The pain of one of the first hysterics that Freud analyses, Elisabeth von R., initially appears to present itself in a way that is completely closed off. Freud, little by little, with patience that can truly be said here to be inspired by some kind of instinct of a sleuth, relates it to the patient's lengthy presence at the side of her ill father and to the impact, while she was caring for him, of something else that at first he glimpses as if through a fog – namely, the desire that bound her at that time to one of her childhood friends whom she had hoped to make her spouse. Something else presents itself subsequently, also in an incompletely unveiled form, namely her relations with the spouses of her two sisters. The analysis makes us dimly aware that, in various forms, they represented something of importance for her – she detested one of them for some kind of indignity, vulgarity or masculine loutishness, the other on the other hand she seems to have found infinitely seductive. It effectively seems that her symptom precipitated around a number of encounters, and around a sort of oblique meditation concerning the otherwise very good relations between this brother-in-law and one of her sisters. I am going back over these details so as to focus the mind by way of examples.

It's clear that there we are at a primitive period of analytic experience. That Freud should purely and simply say to the patient, as he did not fail to do, that she was in love with her brother-in-law and that her symptoms, namely the pain in her leg, crystallized around this suppressed desire. We now feel and we know, after all the experiences we have had since, that, for a hysteric, this is forcing things – like telling Dora that she was in love with Herr K.

When we come across an observation like this, we experience first 325
hand the above view that I am putting to you. You don't need to turn the observation upside down to do it, for – while Freud doesn't formulate it like this, diagnose it or discern it – he provides all its elements in the clearest of manners. Up to a point, beyond the words that he puts into his paragraphs, the very composition of his observation allows it to appear in a way that is infinitely more convincing than anything he says.

What does he highlight concerning Elisabeth von R.'s experience? Precisely the fact that, in his words and in his experience, in

many cases the appearance of hysterical symptoms is bound up with the experience, in itself so difficult, of being entirely devoted to the care of a sick person and playing the role of nurse – and even more so, when one considers the impact that this function has when it's taken on by the subject with respect to someone close. Then, all the ties of affection, even passion, attach the carer to the cared for. The subject thus finds herself in the position of having to satisfy, more so than on any other occasion, what can be emphatically described as a demand. The subject's entire submission, indeed abnegation, in relation to demand is really given by Freud as one of the essential conditions of the situation, insofar as it turns out to be hysterogenic here in this case.

This is made all the more important by the fact that for this hysteric, in contrast with others that he also gives as examples, both the personal and family history is extraordinarily vague and underemphasized, and that, as a consequence, the term 'hysterogenic situation' here becomes highly significant. Freud, moreover, indicates as much.

In the middle formula of my three formulas, I thus isolate, here, the function of demand. Correlatively, as a function of this background position, I would say that essentially the question is about the interest that the subject takes in a situation of desire.

Freud makes only one mistake here, if I may say so, and it's that he is somewhat led along by the requirements of language, orientates the subject prematurely and implicates her in this situation of desire in an overly defined way.

There is a situation of desire and the subject takes an interest in it. But now that we know what an hysteric is, we cannot even add 'whatever side she takes'. This would effectively already imply that she takes one side or another – that she is interested in her brother-in-law from the perspective of her sister or in her sister from the
326 perspective of her brother-in-law. An hysteric's identification is perfectly capable of subsisting, in a correlative manner, in several directions. Here it's twofold. Let's say that the subject is interested, that she is implicated, in the situation of desire and that that's essentially what is represented by a symptom – and this reintroduces the notion of a mask.

The notion of a mask means that desire presents itself in an ambiguous form that does not make it possible for us to orientate the subject in relation to this or that object in the situation. The subject is interested in the situation as such, that is to say, in the relations of desire. This is exactly what is expressed by the symptom that appears, and it's what I call the element of a mask in a symptom.

This is the respect in which Freud can say to us that symptoms speak in the session. The 'it speaks' that I am always talking to you about is there from the first of Freud's formulations, expressed in the text. He will later say that the stomach noises of his patients, when they come to be audible in a session, have the signification of words. But here, what he is telling us is that the pains that reappear, worsen and become more or less intolerable during the session itself are part of the subject's discourse, and that he measures the extent of the heartburn, the impact and the revelatory value of what the subject is avowing and releasing into the session by the tone and modulation of his speech. The trace, the centripetal direction of this trace, the progress of the analysis, is measured by Freud by the very intensity of the modulation by which the subject registers a greater or lesser intensification of his symptom during the session.

I took this example – I could just as well take others, I could just as well take the example of a dream – in order to centre on the problem of symptoms and unconscious desire. The question is that of the link with desire, which remains a question mark, an x, an enigma, which the symptom cloaks itself in – the link, that is, with the mask.

We are told that, insofar as a symptom is unconscious, it is, in short, and to a certain extent, something that speaks and of which one can say with Freud – with Freud from the outset – that it's articulated. A symptom, therefore, goes in the direction of the recognition of desire. But what was the nature of this symptom that is the desire to be recognized, before Freud turned up and, following him, his whole crowd of disciples, the analysts? This recognition has a tendency to surface, to find its own way, but it only manifests itself through the creation of what I have been calling a mask, which is something closed. This recognition of desire is recognition by nobody, it doesn't target anybody, since nobody was able to read it till someone began to discover the key.

This recognition is presented in a form that is closed off to the 327
other. Recognition of desire, then, but recognition by nobody.

On the other hand, insofar as desire is a desire for recognition, this is something other than a desire. Moreover, we are told as much – this desire is a repressed desire. It's for this reason that our intervention adds something more to a simple reading. It's a desire that the subject excludes insofar as he wants it to be recognized. As a desire for recognition, it's perhaps a desire, but, at the end of the day, it's a desire for nothing. It's a desire that is not there, a rejected, excluded desire.

This twofold characteristic of unconscious desire, which, by identifying it with its mask, turns it into something different from

anything that can be directed towards an object – we must never forget this.

3

That's what enables us literally to read the analytic meaning of what is presented as one of the most essential of Freud's discoveries, namely, the debasement, the *Erniedrigung*, of love life, which stems from the depths of the Oedipus complex.

Freud presents the mother's desire as being at the bottom of this debasement for certain subjects, who, we are specifically told, have not abandoned their incestuous object – well, they have not abandoned it sufficiently, for, ultimately, we learn that no subject ever abandons it completely. There must, of course, be something that corresponds to this greater or lesser abandonment, and we diagnose – fixation on the mother.

These are cases in which Freud presents to us the dissociation of love and desire.

These subjects are incapable of contemplating being with a woman who for them has the full status of being lovable and human, of being in the sense of complete, of a being who, as the saying goes, is able to give and give herself. There is an object there, we are told, which of course means that it's there under a mask, for it isn't the mother that the subject addresses, but the woman who succeeds her and takes her place. Here, then, there is no desire. On the other hand, Freud tells us, these subjects get their pleasure from prostitutes.

What is the meaning of this? As we are at the moment of an initial exploration of the obscurity surrounding the mysteries of desire, I will say – it's inasmuch as the prostitute is the complete opposite of the mother.

328 Is this entirely sufficient? Is she the complete opposite of the mother? We have made enough progress since then in learning about images and fantasies of the unconscious to know that what the subject seeks in prostitutes is, as it happens, nothing other than what ancient Rome openly displayed, sculptured and represented at the entrance to brothels – namely, the phallus – the phallus insofar as it's what inhabits the prostitute.

What the subject seeks in a prostitute is the phallus of all the other men; it's the phallus as such, the anonymous phallus. There is something problematic here, in an enigmatic form behind the mask, which binds desire to a privileged object whose importance we have only too well come to appreciate by following the phallic

phase and the defiles through which subjective experience has to pass in order for the subject to be able to reconnect with his natural desire.

What we are here calling the mother's desire is a symbolic label or designation of what we observe in the facts, namely, the correlative and fractured promotion of the object of desire into two irreconcilable halves. On the one hand, what on our own interpretation can be put forward as being the substitute object, the woman insofar as she is the heir to the mother's function, and insofar as she is dispossessed and deprived of the element of desire. On the other hand, this element of desire itself, which is tied to something extraordinarily problematic and, also, presents itself with the characteristic of a mask and a mark – with the characteristic, let's use the word, of a signifier. Everything happens as if, as soon as it's a question of an unconscious desire, we find ourselves in the presence of a mechanism, a necessary *Spaltung* which makes desire – which for a long time we have presumed alienated in a quite special relationship with the other – appear here as marked, not only by the need for an intermediary in the other as such, but also by the mark of a special signifier, a chosen signifier, which here happens to be the obligatory path which, as it were, the course of the vital force, desire in this case, must follow.

The problematic feature of this particular signifier, the phallus, is the question. That's where what we are considering is located. What raises all the difficulties for us is there. How are we to think about the fact that we have encountered this obstacle along the path to so-called genital maturation? Besides, it's not simply an obstacle, it's an essential defile which makes it the case that it's only through the intermediary of a certain position adopted in relation to the phallus – for the woman, as lack, for the man, as threatened – that what presents itself as what will be, let's say, the best outcome necessarily comes about.

We see here that by intervening, interpreting and naming something, we are always doing more, whatever we do, than we think. 329
The precise word that I wanted to give you on this point earlier is the verb 'to ratify'. We identify the same with the same, and we say, 'That's it.' We substitute someone for this 'nobody' to whom the symptom is addressed inasmuch as it is there on the path to the recognition of desire. We thus always misrecognize, to some extent, the desire that wants to be recognized, inasmuch as we assign an object to it, whereas it's not about an object – desire is desire for this lack which, in the Other, designates another desire.

That will now introduce us to the second of these three formulas that I am proposing to you here, namely the chapter of demand.

4

In the way I am tackling things and returning to them, I am trying to spell out for you the originality of this desire which is in question at every moment of an analysis by leaving aside the monitoring we can bring to it in the name of a more or less theoretical idea about an individual's maturation.

I think you must be starting to understand that when I speak of the function of speech, or the instance of the letter in the unconscious, it's clearly not in order to eliminate what is irreducible and unformulatable in desire – not the preverbal, but what lies beyond words.

I say this with respect to a comment that, in the event, was recently made by some very ill-advised person about the fact that certain psychoanalysts – as if there are all that many – gave too much importance to language with respect to this famous 'unformulated' that some philosophers, I do not know why, have made their personal property. This person whom I describe as ill-advised, as it happens, which is the least of what I think, declared that the unformulated is not unformulatable. I would answer them in the following way, which one would do better to pay attention to rather than strive to implicate each and every one in his personal squabbles, for it's a remark that philosophers don't yet seem to be aware of. The perspective is the opposite – the fact that desire is not articulable is no reason for its not being articulated.

What I mean is that in itself desire is articulated, insofar as it's
330 tied to the presence of signifiers in man. Still, this does not mean that it's articulable. Precisely because it essentially involves a link with signifiers, it's never fully articulable in any given case.

Let's now return to this second chapter, which is that of demand, where we are in the articulated articulable, in the actually articulated.

For the moment we are concerned with the link between desire and demand. We won't get to the end of this discussion today, but I will devote the next time to these two terms, desire and demand, and to the paradoxes in desire as masked desire that I designated just before.

Desire is articulated in demand necessarily, because we are only able to approach it through some demand or other. As soon as the patient contacts us and comes to see us, it's to demand something, and we are already getting very involved and being very specific about the situation simply by saying to him, 'I'm listening'. It's appropriate, therefore, to start again on what one might call the premises of demand, on what produces a demand about demand, on what constitutes the situation for a demand and on the way in which demand takes effect inside an individual's life.

What institutes a demand? I am not going to redo the 'Fort-Da' dialectic for you. Demand is linked above all to something that is there in the very premises of language, namely the existence of an appeal, which is both the basis of presence and the term that makes it possible to reject it, a game of presence and absence. The object called for by the first words is already no longer an object pure and simple, but a symbol-object – it becomes what the desire for presence makes of it. The initial dialectic is not that of the part object, breast-mother, nourishment-mother or total mother-object as in some kind of Gestaltist approach, as if it were a question of an ever-expanding acquisition. The baby at the breast is well aware that the breast extends to the armpit, neck and hair. The object in question is the symbolic parenthesis of presence, inside of which is the sum of all the objects it can bring. This symbolic parenthesis is already more precious than any good. None of the goods it contains are capable by themselves of satisfying the appeal for presence. As I have already observed several times, none of these goods in particular can be used for anything other than crushing this appeal at its source. The child feeds, perhaps begins to sleep, and at this moment, obviously, there is no longer any question of an appeal. Any relationship with any part-object, as we say, within the maternal presence, is not 331
satisfaction as such, but a substitute, the crushing of desire.

The causal role of the object's symbolization, this object appealed to as object, as the object in its presence, is already marked by the fact – we, too, have read this, but, as always, we don't know how to extract all the consequences from what we read – that an aspect of the mask appears in the object.

What does our good friend, Mister Spitz, contribute, if not that? What is initially recognized by the baby at the breast is the headpiece [*frontal grec*], framework or mask, with a characteristic of the beyond that characterizes this presence as symbolized. His researches effectively go beyond this presence insofar as it's masked, symptomatized and symbolized. With no ambiguity in his behaviour, the child shows us that he possesses the general outline of this beyond.

In another connection, I have already spoken of the very unusual character of the child's reaction to the mask. You put on a mask, you take it off and the child beams – but if, from under this mask, another mask appears, then he no longer laughs and even becomes quite anxious.

There is not even any need to undertake these tiny little exercises. One has to have never observed a child over the course of his development in his first months to be unaware that even before speech, the first true communication – that is, communication with what is

beyond what you are for him as a symbolized presence – is laughter. Before talking, the child laughs. The physiological mechanism of laughter is always linked to smiling, relaxation and a level of satisfaction. People have spoken about the outline of a smile on a sated child, but the child laughing at you laughs at you present and awake and in relation not only to the satisfaction of desire but, after and beyond, to what lies beyond presence insofar as it is able to satisfy him and possibly match his desire. The familiar presence, the presence he is accustomed to, which he knows is capable of satisfying his desires in their diversity, is appealed to, apprehended and recognized in this so special code that in the preverbal child is his first laughter in the presences that care for him, feed him and respond to him.

Laughter is also a response to all the maternal games that are the first activities in which modulation and articulation, as such, are brought to him. Laughter is rightly linked to the beyond, as I called it in all the early remarks in my lectures this year on witticisms –
332 beyond the immediate, beyond all demand. Whereas desire is linked to a signifier which happens to be the signifier of presence, the first laughter is addressed beyond this presence, to the subject behind it.

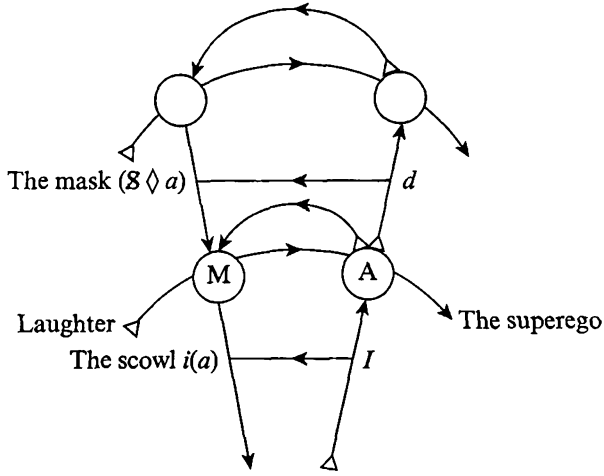
From that moment, from the beginning, as it were, we find the root of the identification that will take place successively, over the course of the child's development, with the mother first and then with the father. I am not saying that this step exhausts the question, but identification is precisely the correlate of this laughter.

The opposite of laughter is, of course, not tears. Tears express colic, they express need. Tears are not a communication, tears are an expression, whereas laughter, inasmuch as I am obliged to articulate it, is a form of communication.

What is the opposite of laughter? Laughter communicates, it's an address to the one who, beyond the signified presence, is the mainspring, the resource of pleasure. Identification? That is the contrary. You are no longer laughing. You are as serious as a Pope, or as a Papa. You act nonchalantly because the person who is there is scowling, because it's no doubt not the moment to laugh. It's not the moment to laugh because this is not the point at which needs are to be satisfied. Desire models itself, as they say, on the person who holds the power to satisfy it and brings the resistance of reality up against it – where reality is perhaps not entirely what one says it is, but it is surely present here in some form and, frankly, already in the dialectic of demand.

According to my old schema, we can see what is at issue in laughter appear when demand reaches its destination, which is beyond the mask, and there it encounters not satisfaction, but a message

of presence. When the subject acknowledges the fact that he does indeed have before him the source of all his goods, that is surely when laughter breaks out and the process does not need to be taken any further.



The process may also have to be taken further, however, if he gets scowled at and the demand is rejected. Then, as I've told you, what is at the origin of this need and desire appears in a transformed form. The scowl gets transferred into the circuit and ends up here [*i(a)*], the place where it's not for nothing that we encounter the other's image. What is known as the ego-ideal is produced at the conclusion of this transformation of demand. However, on the signifying line, the principle of what is called prohibition and superego, articulated as coming from the Other, emerges.

Analytic theory has always had great difficulty in reconciling the existence, the coexistence, the co-dimensionality of the ego-ideal 333
and the superego, whereas they correspond to different formations and productions. However, it's sufficient to draw this essential distinction between need and the words in which need is expressed to understand how these two products can be both co-dimensional and different. Even in its most primitive forms, the superego is formulated along the [lower] line of the articulation of signifiers, the line of prohibition, whereas the ego-ideal is produced along the [upper] line of the transformation of desire, insofar as it's always linked to some kind of mask.

In other words, the mask is constructed in dissatisfaction, via the intermediary of rejected demand. This is the point I wanted to bring you to today.

But, then, what is the outcome of this? There should be, in sum, as many masks as forms of dissatisfaction.

Yes, that is actually how things seem, and you can take that as your guide with certainty. In the psychological dimension that unfolds following frustration, so alive for some subjects, you can pick out this relationship between dissatisfaction and the mask in their very declarations, and this would mean that, up to a point, there would be as many masks as there are forms of dissatisfaction. The plurality of a subject's relationships with others, according to the diversity of his dissatisfaction, poses a problem here. It's possible to say that, up to a point, it would make every personality a moving mosaic of identifications. What enables a subject to see himself as a subject requires the intervention of a third dimension, which I will leave aside for today and keep in reserve for next time.

334 This dimension is not introduced by genital maturation, as is said, nor by the gift of oblativity, nor by any of the other moralizing blatherings that are the completely secondary features of the question. It's no doubt necessary that a desire intervene therein – a desire that is not a need, but *eros*, a desire that is not autoerotic, but, as they say, alloerotic, which is another way of saying the same thing. It's just that saying that is not enough, since genital maturation is not sufficient to bring about the decisive subjective reworking that will enable us to grasp the link between desire and the mask.

Next time we will see the essential condition that binds the subject to a prevailing, privileged signifier that we call – not by chance, but because concretely it is this signifier – the phallus. We shall see that this is the stage at which, paradoxically, what enables a subject to see himself as one across the diversity of masks is realized, but also, moreover, to see what makes him fundamentally divided, marked by an essential *Spaltung* between what is desire and what is mask.

16 April 1958

XIX

SIGNIFIER, BAR AND PHALLUS

Desire is eccentric to satisfaction
Outline of the graph of desire
Friday's footprint
Aufhebung of the phallus
The Other's castration

Today, we are going to keep exploring the distinction between desire and demand, which we think of as so essential to a well-conducted analysis that we believe that, without it, it will irresistibly slide into a practice of speculation founded on the terms 'frustration' on the one hand and 'gratification' on the other, which, to my mind, constitutes a real deviation in its approach.

What we will do, then, is continue along the direction that we have already given a name to – the distance between desire and demand, their *Spaltung*.

'*Spaltung*' is not a term I choose at random. It was, if not introduced, at least strongly emphasized in Freud's last work, the one he was in the middle of writing when he died. This '*Ichspaltung*' is truly a point of convergence in Freud's final meditation. We cannot say that it brought him back to it again and again because we only have a fragment of several pages which is in volume 17 of the *Gesammelte Werke* and which I advise you to read if you wish to get a sense of the question that this *Spaltung* raises in Freud's mind. You will see, however, the force with which he emphasizes that the ego's synthetic function is far from being everything as far as the psychoanalytic *Ich* is concerned.

I am, therefore, going to pick up from what I was saying last time, for I believe that one can only make progress here by taking three steps forward and two steps back, by starting again and advancing one small step at a time. I will move fairly quickly, all the same, and

remind you of what I insisted on when I spoke about desire, on the one hand, and demand, on the other.

336 **1**

As far as desire is concerned, I emphasized that it's inseparable from the mask, and I quite especially illustrated this for you by recalling that it's too swift a move to make a symptom the simple underside in relation to an outside.

I spoke to you about Elisabeth von R., about whom, as I was telling you, by simply reading Freud's text, one is able to formulate, since he himself articulates it, that her pain in the upper-right thigh *is* her father's desire and her childhood friend's desire. In effect, this pain comes up when the patient evokes the time she was entirely enslaved to her sick father's desire and demands, and when her attraction to her childhood friend's desire, which she reproached herself for having taken into consideration, was at work in the margins. The pain in her left thigh *is* the desire of her two brothers-in-law, one of whom, the spouse of her younger sister, represents the good masculine desire, and the other, the bad – the latter was considered, moreover, by all these women as quite a nasty man.

Beyond this remark, what we have to consider before we can understand what our interpretation of desire means is that in a symptom – and this is what 'conversion' means – desire is identical to somatic manifestation. The latter is the front, as the former is the back.

Moreover, since, if we have made any progress, it's only because things have been introduced in problematic form, I introduced the problematic of desire insofar as analysis reveals it to us as determined by an act of signification. But the fact that desire is determined by an act of signification does not at all yield its meaning in any final form. It's possible that desire is a by-product, as it were, of the act of signification.

I cited a number of articles that formed a true introduction to the question of perversion, insofar as it presents itself as a symptom and not as the pure and simple manifestation of an unconscious desire. For me, these articles re-establish the moment at which the authors realize that there is just as much *Verdrängung* [repression] in a perversion as in a symptom. In one of these articles, published in the *International Journal*, fourth year, with the title 'Neurosis and Perversion', the author, Otto Rank, considers the fact that a subject, a neurotic, immediately after having successfully performed

his first coitus with satisfaction – this is not to say that others won't also be subsequently – commits a mysterious act, unique in his existence. Returning home from the place of the woman who had 337
granted him her favours, he performs a particularly successful exhibition – I think I already alluded to this in a seminar last year – in the sense that it's performed with the greatest abundance and security at one and the same time. He drops his pants, effectively, and displays himself on the embankment of the railway line, lit up by a train as it goes past. He thus happens to display himself to a whole crowd of people without running the slightest risk. The author interprets this act within the general economy of the subject's neurosis in a way that is more or less successful.

I am not going to elaborate on this aspect, but I will pause at the following – to be sure, for an analyst, it's certain that this is a significant act, as one says, but what does it mean?

I repeat, he has just engaged in his first act of copulation. Does his act mean that he still has it? That it's at everyone's disposal? That it has become, as it were, his personal property? What does he want, then, by displaying it? Does he want to efface himself behind what he is displaying, to be no longer anything but the phallus? All of this is equally plausible about this one same act, and within the one same subjective context.

What, however, seems worth emphasizing more than anything – and this is underlined and confirmed by the patient's words, the context of the observation and the very sequence of things – is that this first coitus was fully satisfying. His satisfaction is captured and realized. But what the act in question shows especially, prior to any other interpretation, is what is left to be desired beyond satisfaction.

I'm only recalling this little example so as to focus your minds on what I mean when I speak about the problematic of desire as being determined by an act of signification – this is distinct from any graspable meaning. Considerations of this kind, which display desire's profound coherence and coalescence with a symptom, or a mask's with what appears in a desire's manifestation, put many futile questions back in their place, questions that one always asks oneself about hysteria, but even more so about all kinds of sociological, ethnographical and other facts, where one always sees people tying themselves up in knots over the question.

Let's take an example. An excellent small book by Michel Leiris has just appeared in a tiny collection by *L'Homme*, published by Plon, about the facts of possession and the theatrical aspects of possession, which he discusses on the basis of his experience amongst the Ethiopians of Gondar. Reading this book, you can clearly see

how perfectly the incontestably consistent facts about trances line up or match up with the externally typified, determined, expected,
338 known and mapped-out-in-advance features of the said spirits. The latter supposedly take possession of the people who are the site of all these singular manifestations. This can be observed in the ceremonies known as ceremonies of *wadāgā*, for what's involved can be found there, in the region indicated. There is more. One is struck not only by the conventional part played in the manifestations that are reproduced with the incarnation of this or that spirit, but also by their disciplinable character – to the point where subjects perceive it as a veritable training of these spirits who are, however, supposed to be taking possession of them. The order is reversed – the spirits have to behave themselves, they have an apprenticeship to undertake.

Possession, and everything it implies concerning phenomena powerfully inscribed in the emotions, in a 'pathetics' by which the subject is totally possessed for the duration of its manifestation, is perfectly compatible with the entire signifying richness linked to the domination that the insignias of the god or genie exercise. Attempting to inscribe the thing in the category of simulation, imitation and other terms of this nature would create an artificial problem in order to satisfy the demands of our own mentality. The very identity between the manifestation of desire and its forms is quite apparent here.

The other term to inscribe in this problematic of desire, and on which, in contrast, I insisted last time, is desire's eccentricity in relation to all forms of satisfaction. This term makes it possible for us to understand what, in general, desire's deep affinity with pain is. Ultimately, what desire borders on – not in its developed, masked forms, but in its pure and simple form – is the pain of existence. The latter represents the other pole, the area within which its manifestation presents itself to us.

By describing thus, at the other pole of the problematic, what I call the wandering movement of desire, its being off-centre in relation to satisfaction, I am not claiming to solve the question. This is not an explanation I am giving here, it's a view of the problem. This is what we have to go into more deeply today.

I return to the other element of the diptych I proposed last time, that is, the identificatory and idealizing function, insofar as it comes to depend on the dialectic of demand. Effectively, everything that takes place in the register of identification is founded on a relationship to signifiers in the Other – signifiers which, in the register of demand, are characterized on the whole as a sign of the Other's presence. Something is also instituted there that must bear a relationship to the problem of desire, which is that the sign

of presence comes to dominate the satisfactions that this presence brings. This is what makes it the case that, so fundamentally, in such 339
an extended and constant manner, the human being engages as much in empty speech as in more substantial satisfactions – or at least in an appreciable and quite measurable proportion in comparison with the latter. The fundamental characteristic of what I have just been discussing is about this.

Here, again, a complementary parenthesis to what I said last time. Does this mean that the human being is the only being who engages in empty speech? Up to a point, it isn't out of the question that some domestic animals have certain satisfactions linked to human speech. I have no need to evoke these things, but we do learn quite strange things if we can trust the words of those who are called, more or less appropriately, specialists, and who seem to have a degree of credibility. I thus allow myself to say that minks that have been kept in captivity for money, namely, to derive profit from their pelts, waste away and will yield the furriers only fairly mediocre products unless one converses with them. This makes rearing minks very onerous, apparently, and adds to the overall cost. What's apparent here, and we lack the means to pursue this any further, has to be linked to the very fact of being enclosed, that minks in their natural state, to all appearances and till further notice, do not have the possibility of having this satisfaction.

I would simply like to go from there to giving you an indication of the direction from which, in connection with our problem, we can refer to Pavlovian studies on conditioned reflexes. At the end of the day, what are conditioned reflexes?

In their most widespread form, which occupies the greater part of experience, the existence of conditioned reflexes rests on the intervention of signifiers in a more or less predetermined, innate cycle of instinctive behaviours. All the little electrical signals, the little buzzers and little bells which are drummed into the poor animals so as to make them secrete, on command, their various physiological productions, their gastric juices – they are all actually signifiers, really, and nothing but. They are the fabrication of experimenters for whom the world is very clearly constituted by a number of objective relations – a world an important part of which is formed by what one can rightly single out as properly signifying. In any case, the purpose of dreaming up and constructing all these things is to show the path of progressive substitution by which psychical progress can be conceived.

One might wonder why, at the end of the day, when these 340
animals are so well trained, they don't end up having acquired

some kind of language. Now, precisely, this leap isn't made. When the Pavlovian theory became interested in what happens in man with respect to language, Pavlov took the very correct position, where language is concerned, of speaking, not of a prolongation of significations as it's brought into play in conditioned reflexes, but of a second system of significations. This is to recognize – implicitly, for this is perhaps not fully articulated in the theory – that there is some difference between them. To try to define this difference, I would say that it's due to what I call the relationship to the big Other, insofar as it is the locus of a unitary system of signifiers. I would also say that what the discourse of animals lacks is concatenation.

Ultimately, I would state the simplest formula in this way – no matter how elaborate these experiments, what is not found, and what there is perhaps no question of finding, is the law by which the signifiers involved are organized. This comes down to saying that this is the law by which the animals would be organized. It's completely clear that there is no trace of reference to any such law, that is, to anything that goes beyond a signal or a short chain of signals, once they've been introduced. No kind of law-like extrapolation is visible there, and that's why one can say that no one has ever managed to establish a law. I repeat, this is still not to say that there is no dimension of the Other with a big 'O' for animals, but only that, effectively, nothing like a discourse ever comes of it for them.

Where are we now? If we summarize what is involved in a subject's relationship to signifiers in the Other, namely what is happening in the dialectic of demand, it's essentially this. What characterizes a signifier is not that it's substituted for the subject's needs – which is the case in conditioned reflexes – but that it's capable of being substituted for itself. A signifier is essentially substitutive in nature in relation to itself.

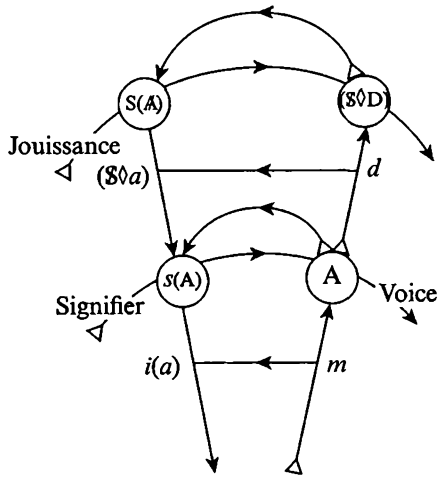
In this direction, we can see that what is dominant, what matters, is the place it occupies in the Other. What points in that direction, and this is what I am trying to formulate here in various ways as essential to the signifying structure, is this topological, not to say typographical, space whose law is the law of substitution. The numbering of places provides the fundamental structure of a signifying system as such.

What one calls identification emerges – this is a fact highlighted by experience – inasmuch as the subject presents himself within a
341 world that is structured in this way in the position of Other. In the absence of satisfaction, a subject will identify with the subject who is able to accede to his demand.

2

I left you last time with this question – so, why not the greatest plurality of identifications? As many identifications as there are unsatisfied demands? As many identifications as there are Others that place themselves in the subject's presence as responding, or not responding, to his demand?

This distance, this *Spaltung*, is reflected here in the construction of this little schema that I am putting on the blackboard for you for the first time today.



Here, we again find the three lines I have already repeated twice for you [see the formulas at the start of Chapter XVII, p. 285]. I think that you have them in your notes, but I can go over them for you.

The first line links the small *d* of desire to the image of *a* [*i(a)*], on the one hand, and, on the other, to *m*, which is the ego – by the intermediary of the subject's relation to small *a* [$ ◊ *a*].

The second line represents demand, inasmuch as it goes from demand to identification, passing through the position of the Other 342
in relation to desire. Thus, you see the Other split in two. Desire is there beyond it. This line passes through the signified of A [*s*(A)], which is placed here, on the schema at this first stage that I detailed for you last time when I told you that the Other only corresponds to demand. Because of the something that is what we are looking for, at a second moment it will divide in two and establish itself in a relationship that is not single but double – and which I have already started through other avenues – with two signifying chains.

The first chain, which is here when it's single and the only one, is situated at the level of demand – this is a signifying chain which demand has to pass through to emerge. Then, something intervenes to double the signifying relation.

What does this doubling of the signifying relation correspond to? The bottom line can, for example, amongst other things – not in a univocal way, naturally – be identified, as has been done till now, with the mother's response. This is what happens at the level of demand where the mother's response lays down the law all by itself – that is, subjects the subject to its arbitrariness. The other line represents the intervention of another instance, corresponding to the paternal presence, and to the modes under which this instance is felt beyond the mother.

Of course, it's not so simple. If it were all only a question of Mummy and Daddy, I would find it difficult to see how we could explain the facts we are dealing with.

We shall now go into the question of the *Spaltung* – the gap between desire and demand responsible for this discordance or divergence that establishes itself between these two terms. This is why we still need to go back over what a signifier is.

I know, you ask yourselves this every time we part – 'So, what on earth does he mean?' You are right to ask because, to be sure, things are not said this way, it's not so common.

Let's return to the question of what a signifier is at the elementary level. I propose that you stop and think about a number of remarks. For example, do you not think that with signifiers we are touching on something with respect to which one could speak of 'emergence'?

Let's begin with what a trace is. A trace is an imprint, not a signifier. One does, however, get the sense that there may be a relationship between the two, and in actual fact what is called the material of signifiers always partakes in something of the evanescent
343 character of a trace. That even seems to be one of the conditions for the existence of signifying material. It is not a signifier, however. Friday's footprint that Robinson Crusoe discovers during his walk on the island is not a signifier. On the other hand, if we suppose that for one reason or another he, Robinson Crusoe, effaces this trace, then the dimension of signifiers is clearly introduced. As soon as it's removed, where removing it has a meaning, that of which there is a trace is manifestly constituted as signified.

If the signifier is thus a hollow, it's insofar as it bears witness to a past presence. Conversely, in what is a signifier, in fully developed signifiers in speech, there is always a passage, that is, something following each of the elements that are articulated together and that are, by nature, fleeting and evanescent. It's this passage from one

to the next that constitutes the essential feature of what I call the signifying chain.

This passage, insofar as it's evanescent, is the very thing that becomes voice – I won't even say 'signifying articulation', for it's possible that the articulation remains enigmatic, but it's the voice that sustains this passage. It's also at this level that what corresponds to what we initially designated as the signifier as bearing witness to a past presence emerges. Conversely, when the passage is present, something emerges that deepens it, that is beyond it and that makes it a voice.

What we still find there is that if there is a text, if the signifier is inscribed among other signifiers, what remains after the effacement is the place where one has done the effacing, and this place also sustains transmission. Transmission is something essential there, since it's due to it that what is linked together in the passage adopts the consistency of voice.

As to the question of emergence, this is one essential point to grasp, which is that a signifier as such is something that can be effaced, leaving nothing but its place – that is, it can no longer be found. This is an essential property, and it means that, while one can speak of emergence, one cannot speak of development. In reality a signifier contains this property within itself. I mean that one of the fundamental dimensions of a signifier is to be able to cancel itself out. It is a possibility that in this context we can describe it as a mode of the signifier itself. It's materialized by something very simple which we are all familiar with, and we cannot allow the trivial nature of its use to hide its originality – it's the bar. Every kind of signifier is by nature something that can be barred.

Ever since there have been philosophers who think, a great deal has been said about *Aufhebung*, and they have learnt to make a more 344
or less cunning use of it. The word essentially means cancellation – for example, I cancel my subscription to a newspaper, or my reservation somewhere. It also means, owing to an ambiguity of meaning that renders it valuable in the German language, raise to a power, to a higher situation. It doesn't seem that one dwells enough on the fact that properly speaking there is only one kind of thing that, in general terms, can be annulled, and that is a signifier. In truth, when we cancel anything else, whether it's imaginary or real, we thereby elevate it to the grade, to the title of a signifier.

There is, therefore, in signifiers, in a chain of signifiers, in operating with or using them, something that is always apt to demote them from their function in a line or in a lineage – the bar is a sign of bastardry – to demote them as such by virtue of the properly signifying function of what I will call 'high regard'. I mean that a signifier can

have a place in what is pre-given in a battery of signifiers, insofar as this battery forms a particular system of signs that are available in an actual, concrete discourse, and also that it can always lose the function its place creates for it and be torn from this place in the constellation that the signifying system introduces when it applies itself to the world and punctuates it. From there, it falls from discredit [*déconsidération*] into desideration [*désideration*], where it's marked by the fact that it leaves something to be desired.

I am not just amusing myself by playing on words. I merely wish, through the use of words, to show you which direction brings us closer to our object, which is desire, by exploring its links with the play of signifiers. Contrasting 'consideration' with 'desideration' marked by the bar of the signifier is, of course, only a beginning and doesn't solve the question of desire, whatever homonymy the conjunction of these two terms which meet in the Latin etymology of the French word '*désir*' lends itself to.

The fact remains that it's when a signifier is present as struck out, marked by the bar, that we have what one can call a product of the symbolic function. It's a product insofar as it's isolated and distinct from the general chain of signifiers and the law it establishes. It's only when it can be barred that a signifier acquires its proper status, that is, enters into this dimension which makes every signifier, in principle – to specify what I mean here – revocable.

The term '*Aufhebung*' is used by Freud, and in some quite amusing places where no one seems to have thought of looking for it. Ah! All
345 of a sudden, when Freud uses it, we wake up. It's not that the word has the same resonance for him as it does for Hegel.

Every signifier is revocable in principle. As a result, for anything that is not a signifier – that is, for the real in particular – the bar is one of the surest and shortest ways to raise it to the dignity of a signifier.

I have already pointed this out to you in an extremely precise manner with respect to the fantasy of the child being beaten.

3

At the outset, this sign that the child is being beaten by the father is the sign of the hated brother's humiliation. I showed you that at the second stage of this fantasy's evolution, the one that Freud indicates as having to be reconstructed, as never having been perceived, except obliquely and in exceptional cases, when it's a question of the subject himself, this sign becomes on the contrary the sign of love. He, the subject, being beaten, is loved. The change in the meaning of

this action in the interval does not fail to raise a problem, however. The same act which, when it applies to the other, is taken to be abusive and perceived by the subject as the sign that the other is not loved, assumes an essential value when it's the subject who becomes its support. This is only conceivable, properly speaking, via the function of signifiers.

It is inasmuch as this act raises the subject himself to the dignity of a signifier-subject that at this moment he is brought into its positive inaugural register. It institutes him as a subject with whom there can be a question of love.

This is what Freud – we must always come back to Freud's sentences, they are always lapidary – expresses in 'Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes' when he says that the child who is being beaten, then, becomes loved, valued on the plane of love. And then he introduces a remark that was merely implicit in '*Ein Kind wird geschlagen*' ['A Child is Being Beaten'], a text I started to analyse and comment on. Here, Freud formulates it explicitly, without absolutely explaining it, but orientating it with this prodigious flare of his. It's exactly what is in question in the dialectic of the recognition of the beyond of desire. I will summarize what he says: this very peculiar rigidity, *Starrheit*, that can be detected in the monotonous formula 'a child is being beaten' probably allows of only one meaning – the child who is 346
being beaten, and thereby valued, *nichts anderes sein, als die Klitoris selbst*, is nothing other than the clitoris itself [see *SE* 19: 254]. In this study we are dealing with young girls.

'*Starrheit*' – the word is very difficult to translate into French because it has an ambiguous meaning in German. It means both a stare, in the sense of a fixed look, and rigid. They are not absolutely unrelated, although there is contamination of two meanings which have an analogy in history. That's actually what is at issue, namely that here we see something highlighted whose place as a knot to be untied I have already indicated, and this is the relationship that exists between the subject as such, the phallus as problematic object and the essentially signifying function of the bar insofar as it enters into play in the fantasy of the child that is being beaten.

For that, it isn't enough to be satisfied with this clitoris which leaves a lot to be desired in many respects. It's a matter of seeing why it's there in a particular position that is so ambiguous that, ultimately, although Freud recognizes it in the child being beaten, the subject on the other hand does not recognize it as such. It's in fact a question of the phallus inasmuch as it occupies a certain place in the economy of the subject's development and is the indispensable support of subjective construction as the pivot of the castration

complex and *Penisneid*. It now remains to be seen how it enters into play in the subject's capture by the signifying structure, one of whose essential terms I have just recalled – or conversely.

For this we should pause for a moment at the mode in which the phallus can be considered. Why does one speak of the phallus, and not simply of the penis? Why do we effectively see that it's one thing to bring the phallus into play in the way we do, but that the way the penis comes in as a substitute for it in a more or less satisfactory manner is another thing, both for the masculine subject and the feminine subject? To what extent is the clitoris possibly involved in what we can call the economic functions of the phallus?

Observe what the phallus is originally. It's the phallos, φαλλός.

We find it attested for the first time in Greek Antiquity. If we go to the texts, to different places in Aristophanes, Herodotus, Lucian and so on, we see first of all that the phallus is not at all identical to the organ as an appendage of the body, a prolongation, a member or a functioning organ. The use of the word that dominates by far is its employment with respect to a simulacrum, an insignia, in whatever way it's presented – a raised staff with the male organ hanging from it, an imitation of the male organ, a piece of wood, a piece of leather
347 and other varieties in which it's presented. It's a substitute object and, at the same time, this substitution has one property very different from substitution in the sense we have just been hearing about, sign-substitution. One could almost say that this object has all the features of a real substitute, of what in a good story we call, and with always more or less of a smile, a dildo, a *gode michet*, from *gaude mihi*, one of the most unusual of objects, by their rarity, that exist in human industry. All the same, it's something whose existence, and whose very possibility, one cannot fail to take into account.

I also note that the olisbos is often confused in Greek with the phallus.

There is no doubt that this object played a central role at the heart of the Mysteries, since the final veils that the initiation raised were placed around it. That is, at the level of the revelation of meaning, it was considered to have an ultimate meaningful character.

Doesn't that put what this is about – namely, the prevailing economic role of the phallus, insofar as it represents desire in its most manifest form – on the right path?

I would contrast it term for term with what I was saying about the signifier, which is essentially hollow and introduces itself as such into the fullness of the world. Conversely, what presents itself in the phallus is what in life manifests itself in the purest manner as turgescence and growth. We get the clear sense that the image of the phallus goes to the very heart of the term '*pulsion*' [drive],

which we use to translate the German term '*Trieb*' into French. This is the privileged object of the world of life, and its Greek appellation relates it to everything belonging to the order of flux and sap, and even the vein itself, for it seems that this is the same root as in '*phleps*', 'φλεψ' and '*phallos*'.

It seems, then, that things are such that this extreme point of the manifestation of desire in its vital appearances can only enter the field of signifiers by unleashing the bar. Everything in the order of the intrusion of vital growth as such is here highlighted or maximized in this form or image. And, as experience shows – all we are doing here is reading it off – this is precisely what introduces what appears in the human subject who does not possess the phallus with the connotation of absence there where it is not to be since it is not, which makes her regarded as castrated, whereas, conversely, the one who has something, and can claim to resemble it, is taken to be threatened with castration.

I alluded to the Mysteries of Antiquity. It's altogether striking to see that on the rare frescoes conserved remarkably intact, those of the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii, it's very precisely just along- 348
side the place where the unveiling of the phallus is represented that different kinds of demons appear, represented on an impressive, life-size scale and able to be identified by a number of cross-references. There is one on a vase in the Louvre and others in other places. These demons – winged, booted, not helmeted, but almost, and in any case armed with a *flagellum* – are beginning to administer the ritual punishment to one of the applicants or initiates who are in the image. Thus, the fantasy of flagellation emerges in the most direct of forms and in the most immediate of connections with the unveiling of the phallus.

We don't need to undertake any kind of investigation into the depths of the Mysteries to know what texts of all sorts attest to – that, in every ancient cult, as one gets closer to the cult, that is to say, to the signifying manifestation of the fertile power of the Great Goddess, the Syrian goddess, everything that has a reference to the phallus is the object of amputations, marks of castration or prohibition that are increasingly accentuated. Specifically, the eunuch character of the priests of the Great Goddess is attested in texts of all kinds.

The phallus always finds itself covered by a bar placed over its accession to the domain of signifiers, that is, over its place in the Other. And this is how castration is introduced into development. It's never – you see this directly in observations – by means of a prohibition on masturbation, for example. If you read the observation on Little Hans, you will see that the first prohibitions have no effect

on him. If you read the history of André Gide, you will see that his parents fought during all his early years to stop him from it, and that Professor Brouhardel, showing him the huge pikes and the long knives that he had on his wall – because it was already the fashion amongst doctors to have a whole second-hand shop at one's place – promised him that if he did it again it would be sawn off. And the child Gide recounts very well that he did not believe in such a threat for one single moment, because he thought it was excessive – in other words, nothing more than the occasion for the emergence of Professor Brouhardel's own fantasies.

That's not at all what this is about. As the texts show us, and observations as well, this has to do with that being in a world who, in reality, would have the least cause to consider herself castrated, namely, the mother. It's in the place where castration in the Other manifests itself, where it's the Other's desire that is marked by the signifying bar – it's essentially here, in this way that, for a man as
349 for a woman, this something specific that functions as the castration complex is introduced.

When we spoke about the Oedipus complex at the start of last trimester, I stressed the fact that the first person to be castrated in the intersubjective dialectic is the mother. This is where the position of castration is encountered in the first instance. If the destinies of the boy and the little girl are different, it's because castration is first of all encountered in the Other.

The little girl combines this perception with what it is that the mother has deprived her of. What is perceived in the mother as castration is, then, also perceived as castration for her and initially presents itself in the form of a reproach against the mother. This rancour then comes to be added to those that earlier frustrations have given rise to. It's in this mode that the castration complex first presents itself to the girl.

The father only enters here in the position of a replacement for what she initially finds herself deprived of, and this is why she moves onto the plane of the experience of privation. It's because the real penis of the father – which, we are told, she expects as a substitute for what she perceives to be what she has been deprived of – already appears at the symbolic level that we are able to speak of privation, with both the crisis that the latter engenders and the crossroads that presents itself to the subject of either renouncing her object, which is the father, or renouncing her instinct by identifying with the father.

This produces a curious consequence. Precisely as a result of having been introduced into the woman's castration complex in the form of a symbolic substitute, the penis is the source in the woman of all sorts of conflicts of the conflicts-of-jealousy type. The

partner's infidelity is experienced in her as a real privation. The emphasis is quite different here from the same conflict seen from the side of the man.

I'm going through this quickly. I will come back to it, but there is one more thing that we really must see. If the phallus is encountered in the barred form where it has the place of indicating the Other's desire, what about the subject? In my remaining comments I will show that the subject also has to find his place as a desired object in relation to the Other's desire. Consequently, and as Freud indicates to us with such remarkable insight in 'A Child is Being Beaten', it's always insofar as the subject is and is not the phallus that he will ultimately have to be situated and find his identification as subject. In short, as we can see, the subject is, as such, himself a subject marked by the bar.

This is manifest in the woman. Today I have been exploring the effects of her development concerning the phallus in one simple indi- 350
cation. The woman – the man also, moreover – finds herself caught in an insoluble dilemma, around which it's necessary to place all the typical manifestations of her femininity, whether neurotic or not. As to finding her satisfaction, there is first of all the man's penis, then, by substitution, the desire for a child. I'm doing no more here than indicating what is current and classical in analytic theory. But what does that mean? That, ultimately, she will only obtain satisfaction that is as deep, fundamental and instinctual as that of maternity, and as demanding moreover, via the pathways of lines of substitutions. It's inasmuch as the penis is initially a substitute – I would go so far as to say a fetish – that the child, he too, is, then, in a certain way, a fetish. There you have the pathways by which the woman finds what is, let's say, her instinct and her natural satisfaction.

Conversely, for everything that is aligned with her desire, she will find herself tied to the necessity that to a variable degree is implied by the function of the phallus, to be this phallus, insofar as it's the very sign of what is desired. However *verdrängt* the phallus's function may be, it's what the manifestations of what is thought of as femininity correspond to. The fact that she displays herself and offers herself as an object of desire identifies her in a latent and secret manner with the phallus and situates her being as subject as the desired phallus, the signifier of the Other's desire. This being locates her beyond what one may call feminine masquerade, since everything that she displays of her femininity is ultimately linked to this profound identification with the phallic signifier, which is the most linked with her femininity.

What we see appear here is the root of what, in the subject's completion on the path to the Other's desire, can be called her profound

Verwerfung, her profound rejection, qua being, of how she appears as a woman. Her satisfaction goes via a substitutive path, whereas her desire manifests itself on a plane where it can only end in a profound *Verwerfung*, a profound estrangement of her being in relation to how she feels she is obliged to appear.

Don't think that the situation is any better for the man. It's even more comical. The phallus, he has it, the poor bastard, and indeed it's the knowledge that his mother doesn't have it that traumatizes him – for then, since she is much stronger, where does that leave us? Karen Horney revealed one of the most essential sources of the disturbances of the castration complex in the primitive fear of women. Just as the woman is caught in one dilemma, so the man
351 is caught in another. For him, masquerade is established along the lines of satisfaction, because he resolves the question of the danger that threatens what he effectively has, we well know how, namely by simply identifying with the one who possesses its insignias and gives every appearance of having escaped the danger – that is, with the father. Ultimately, man is only virile through an indefinite series of proxies that come to him from all his male ancestors, passing via his immediate ancestor.

But conversely, in line with desire, that is, inasmuch as he has to find his satisfaction with a woman, he also is going to seek the phallus. Now – we all have testimony of this, clinical and other, I will come back to it – it's because he does not find this phallus there where he is looking for it, that he looks for it everywhere else.

In other words, for the woman, the symbolic penis is inside, as it were, the field of her desire, whereas for the man it's outside. This explains why men always have centrifugal tendencies in monogamous relationships.

Inasmuch as she is not herself, that is, inasmuch as in the field of her desire she has to be the phallus, the woman experiences the *Verwerfung* of subjective identification, the one that arises where the second line, the one starting with the capital D, ends. [See the formulas on p. 285.] And it's inasmuch as he is not himself either, insofar as he satisfies, that is, insofar as he obtains the Other's satisfaction, but only perceives himself as the instrument of that satisfaction, that the man finds himself in love outside his Other.

The problem of love is the problem of the profound division it introduces into the subject's activities. What is at issue for a man, following the very definition of love, 'to give what one does not have', is to give what he does not have, the phallus, to a being who is not it.

23 April 1958

THE DIALECTIC OF DESIRE AND DEMAND IN THE CLINICAL STUDY AND TREATMENT OF THE NEUROSES

XX

THE DREAM BY THE BUTCHER'S BEAUTIFUL WIFE

The Other's desire
Unsatisfied desire
The desire for something other
Barred desire
Dora's identification

If the things of man, which we are concerned with in principle, are marked by his relationship to signifiers, one cannot use signifiers to speak about these things in the way one does when speaking about things that signifiers help him pose. In other words, there has to be a difference between the way we speak about the things of man and the way we speak about other things.

We know very well today that things are not indifferent to being explored by signifiers, that they bear a relationship to the order of the logos and that this relationship has to be studied. We are well placed, more so than our predecessors were, to appreciate that language penetrates things, makes furrows in them, raises them up and disrupts them even if only modestly. But in the end, at the point where we are now, we know, at least we suppose, that unless we're wrong things did not develop in language. That, at least, was where one started for the work of science as it's currently constituted, the work of the science of *phusis*.

Think, first, of purifying language – that is, of reducing it to the necessary minimum for it to be able to grasp onto things, which is the principle of what is called the transcendental analytic. In short, people have contrived to disconnect language as much as possible – not totally, of course – from the things with which it was deeply connected up until a certain period that corresponds more or less to the beginning of modern science, in order to reduce it to its interrogative function.

Now, everything has become complicated. Do we not observe

strange upheavals in things, which are certainly not unconnected to the way in which we question them? And, moreover, curious
356 impasses in language, which, as soon as we start speaking about things, becomes strictly incomprehensible to us? But that is not our concern. We are dealing with man. And, here, I want you to observe that the language in which to question him has not yet been discovered.

We think we have discovered it when we employ the discourse of the Academy or of psychiatric psychology – until otherwise informed, they are the same thing – for the things of man. We ourselves can very adequately perceive the poverty, and moreover the immutability, of the constructions that we engage in, for, if the truth be known, over the century since in psychiatry one has been speaking about hallucinations, almost no progress has been made and they can still not be defined in any other than a ridiculous manner.

The entire language of psychiatric psychology presents the same handicap, moreover, and makes us aware of its profound stagnation. We say that such-and-such a function is being reified, and we feel the arbitrariness of these reifications, when for example we speak in a Bleulerian language about dissociation in schizophrenia. And when we say 'reify' we get the impression that we are formulating a valid critique. What does that mean? It's not at all that we are reproaching this psychology with having turned man into a thing. If only it did make a thing of him, for that is indeed the aim of a science of man. But, precisely, it makes of him a thing that is nothing other than prematurely frozen language, which hastily substitutes its own form of language for something that is already woven into language.

What we call 'formations of the unconscious', what Freud presented us with under this heading, are nothing other than the grip of a certain primary in language. This is why he called it 'primary process'. Language marks this 'primary', and this is why the ground for Freud's discovery, that of the unconscious, can be said to have been prepared by the enquiry into this primary, inasmuch as its structure as language was detected first.

I said 'prepared'. Freud's discovery effectively made it possible for the enquiry into this 'primary' to be prepared for and for an accurate enquiry into primary tendencies to be commenced. But we will not be at that point as long as we haven't first focused on what has to be recognized, namely that this primary is first and foremost woven from language. This is why I am returning you to it. Those who dazzle you with the synthesis of psychoanalysis and biology are showing you that it's obviously a lure, not only by virtue of the fact that till now there have been absolutely no developments in

this direction, but because until further notice it's a swindle even to promise them.

I am, then, now at the point of trying to show, project and situate 357
here, with you, what I am calling the texture of language. That does not mean that we exclude the primary inasmuch as it's something other than language. It's what we are looking for as we move forward.

1

In previous classes, we got to a point where we were touching on what I called the dialectic of desire and demand.

I was saying to you that, in demand, identification is with the object of a sentiment. Why, in the end, is that so? Precisely because nothing intersubjective can be established unless the Other with a big 'O' speaks. Or, again, because the nature of speech is to be the speech of the Other. Or, again, because everything that is a manifestation of primary desire is necessarily established on what Freud, following Fechner, calls the other scene, because that is necessary for man's satisfaction inasmuch as, being a speaking being, his satisfactions have to pass through the intermediary of speech.

This one fact introduces an initial ambiguity. Desire is obliged to be mediated by speech, and it's apparent that it is only in the Other as the locus of speech that this speech gains its status, becomes established and develops in its nature. Now, it's clear there is no reason why the subject should be aware of this. I mean that the distinction between the Other and him himself is the most difficult of distinctions to make at the outset. Freud thus emphasizes the symptomatic value of this moment of childhood in which the child thinks his parents know all his thoughts, but he explains the link between this phenomenon and speech very well. Since the subject's thoughts have been formed in the Other's speech, it's quite natural that in the beginning his thoughts should belong to this speech.

On the imaginary plane, on the other hand, at the start there is only a weak border between the subject and the other, an ambiguous border in the sense that it can be crossed. The narcissistic relation is open, effectively, to permanent transitivism, as the child's experience shows here also.

These two forms of ambiguity, these two limits – one located on the imaginary plane, the other belonging to the symbolic order whereby desire is grounded in the Other's speech – these two forms of crossing-over which mean that the subject is alienated are not

to be confused with one another. As experience shows, it is, on the contrary, their discordance that opens up an initial possibility for
358 the subject to differentiate himself as such. Of course, he differentiates himself most particularly on the imaginary plane, establishing himself in a position of rivalry with his semblable in relation to a third object. But there always remains the question of what happens when there are two of these subjects, namely, when it's a question of the subject sustaining himself in the presence of the Other.

This dialectic is limited to the one called the dialectic of recognition, of which you have some idea, at least some of you do, due to what I have communicated about it here. You know that a certain Hegel sought the mainspring of this in the conflict of enjoyment and in the struggle called the struggle to death from which he extracted his entire master–slave dialectic. All this is very important to know, but of course this does not cover the entire field of our experience, and for the best of reasons. The fact is that there is something other than the dialectic of the master–slave struggle. There is the child's relationship to its parents, and there is, precisely, what occurs at the level of recognition when what is involved is not a struggle, not a conflict, but a demand.

It is, in short, a question of seeing when and how the subject's desire, alienated in demand, profoundly transformed by the fact of having to pass through demand, can and must be reintroduced. These are simple things I am telling you today.

Primitively, the child, in its impotence, finds itself entirely dependent on demand, that is, on the Other's speech, which modifies, restructures and profoundly alienates the nature of its desire. This dialectic of demand corresponds more or less to the period that is called, rightly or wrongly, pre-Oedipal and, surely rightly, pre-genital. By virtue of the ambiguity of the limits between the subject and the Other, we see introduced into demand the oral object, an object which is incorporated inasmuch as it's demanded on the oral level, and the anal object, the support of the dialectic of the primitive gift, essentially tied in the subject to the fact of satisfying or not satisfying an educative demand, that is, the demand to accept or not to accept to let go of a certain symbolic object. In short, the profound reworking of initial desires by demand is permanently palpable for us in the dialectic of the oral object and particularly in that of the anal object – and the result of this is that the Other with whom the subject is involved in the relation of demand is itself subject to a dialectic of assimilation, incorporation or rejection.

Something different, then, has to be introduced – something by which the originality, irreducibility and authenticity of the subject's

desire is re-established. The progress that is made at the time of the so-called genital stage means nothing else. It consists in the fact that 359
the subject, installed in the initial, pre-genital dialectic of demand, encounters another desire at some point, a desire that has not yet been integrated, and cannot be integrated without much greater critical and even more profound reworkings than is the case for the initial desires. The usual way in which this other desire is introduced for the subject is as the Other's desire. The subject recognizes a desire beyond demand and locates it beyond the first Other to whom he addresses his demand – let's say, to focus our minds, the mother.

What I am saying here is just one way of expressing what people have always taught, which is that it's via the Oedipus complex that genital desire is assumed and takes its place in subjective economy. But what I intend to draw your attention to is the way this desire of the Other's functions, insofar as it makes it possible for the real distinction between the subject and the Other to become established once and for all.

At the level of demand, there is a situation of reciprocity between the subject and the Other. If the subject's desire depends entirely on his demand of the Other, what the Other demands also depends on the subject. This is expressed in the relations between child and mother by the fact that the child knows full well that he, too, holds some part of the mother's demand that he can refuse – by refusing for example to accede to the request for excremental regulation. This relationship between the two subjects over demand demands to be completed by the introduction of a new dimension which makes the subject something other than a dependent subject, whose relation of dependence makes this being essential. What must be introduced, and which is there right from the start, latent from the outset, is that beyond what the subject demands and beyond what the Other demands of the subject, there has to be the presence and the dimension of what the Other desires.

Initially, this is profoundly veiled for the subject but nevertheless immanent to the situation, and it's what is going to unfold, little by little, in the experience of the Oedipus complex. It is essential in the structure, and it is more original and more fundamental than the perception either of the relations between the father and the mother, which I have expanded on in what I have called the paternal metaphor, or of any point that results in the castration complex and constitutes a development in what lies beyond demand.

The fact that the subject's desire is initially located and discovered in the existence as such of the Other's desire – desire as distinct from demand – is what I want to illustrate for you today with an example. Which example? It is a requirement that it be the first one.

360 Effectively, if what I am suggesting really is an introduction to everything regarding the structuration of the unconscious in relation to signifiers, then we ought to find our example immediately.

2

I have already alluded here to what we can point to in the initial observations Freud makes on hysteria. Let's go, then, to the time when Freud spoke about desire for the first time.

He speaks about it in relation to dreams. I have previously commented on what Freud extracts from the inaugural dream of Irma, the dream of her injection, and I won't go back over it. The second dream is one of Freud's own dreams – since he also analyses some of his own dreams in the *Traumdeutung* – the dream of Uncle Joseph. I will analyse it some other time, because it's so entirely convincing, and it illustrates very well the schema of the two intertwined loops in particular – nothing shows better the two levels on which a dream unfolds, the properly signifying level which is the level of speech, and the imaginary level where in some way the metonymic object is embodied.

I will, then, take the third dream Freud analyses. It appears in the fourth chapter, '*Die Traumentstellung*', 'Distortion in Dreams'. It's the dream by the woman whom we shall call the butcher's beautiful wife. Here is the dream. Freud says:

> I wanted to give a supper-party, but I had nothing in the house but a little smoked salmon. I thought I would go out and buy something, but remembered then that it was Sunday afternoon and all the shops would be shut. Next I tried to ring up some caterers, but the telephone was out of order. So I had to abandon my wish to give a supper-party. [*SE* 4: 147]

That is the text of the dream. Freud scrupulously notes the manner in which the text of a dream is verbalized, and it's on the basis of this verbalization, a kind of written text of the dream, that the analysis of a dream always and only seems conceivable to him.

> I answered, of course, that analysis was the only way of deciding on the meaning of the dream. [*SE* 4: 147]

In fact, the patient had contradicted him with this dream, saying:

> You're always saying to me that a dream is a fulfilled desire. Here, I have the greatest difficulty fulfilling my desire. [*SE* 4: 146]

Freud continues:

> I admitted that at first sight it seemed sensible and coherent and looked like the reverse of a wish-fulfilment. 'But what material did the dream arise from? As you know, the instigation to a dream is always to be found in the events of the previous day.' 361
>
> ANALYSIS. – My patient's husband, an honest and capable wholesale butcher, had remarked to her the day before that he was getting too stout and therefore intended to start on a course of weight-reduction. He proposed to rise early, do physical exercises, keep to a strict diet, and above all accept no more invitations to supper. She laughingly added that her husband, at the place where he regularly lunched, had made the acquaintance of a painter, who had pressed him to be allowed to paint his portrait, as he had never seen such expressive features. Her husband however had replied in his blunt manner that he was much obliged, but he was sure the painter would prefer a piece of a pretty young girl's behind to the whole of his face. She was very much in love with her husband now and teased him a lot. She had begged him, too, not to give her any caviare. [*SE* 4: 147]

What did that mean?

> She had wished for a long time that she could have a caviare sandwich every morning but had grudged the expense. [*SE* 4: 147]

Or, rather, she didn't grant herself that licence.

> Of course her husband would have let her have it at once if she had asked him. But, on the contrary, she had asked him *not* to give her any caviare, so that she could go on teasing him about it. [*SE* 4: 147]

Then Freud makes this parenthesis:

> This explanation struck me as unconvincing. Inadequate reasons like this usually conceal unconfessed motives. They remind one of Bernheim's hypnotized patients. When one of these carries out a post-hypnotic suggestion and is asked why he is acting in this way, instead of saying that he has no idea, he feels compelled to invent some obviously unsatisfactory reason.

> The same was no doubt true of my patient and the caviare. I saw that she was obliged to create an unfulfilled wish for herself in her actual life; and the dream represented this renunciation as having been put into effect. But why was it that she stood in need of an unfulfilled wish? [*SE* 4: 147–8]

A further parenthetical remark by Freud:

> The associations which she had so far produced had not been sufficient to interpret the dream. I pressed her for some more. After a short pause, such as would correspond to the overcoming of a resistance, she went on to tell me that the
362 day before she had visited a woman friend of whom she confessed she felt jealous because her [my patient's] husband was constantly singing her praises. Fortunately this friend of hers is very skinny and thin and her husband admires a plumper figure. I asked her what she had talked about to her thin friend. Naturally, she replied, of that lady's wish to grow a little stouter. Her friend had enquired, too: 'When are you going to ask us to another meal? You always feed one so well.'
>
> The meaning of the dream was now clear, and I was able to say to my patient: 'It is just as though when she made this suggestion you said to yourself: "A likely thing! I'm to ask you to come and eat in my house so that you may get stout and attract my husband still more! I'd rather never give another supper-party." What the dream was saying to you was that you were unable to give any supper-parties, and it was thus fulfilling your wish not to help your friend to grow plumper. The fact that what people eat at parties makes them stout had been brought home to you by your husband's decision not to accept any more invitations to supper in the interests of his plan to reduce his weight.' All that was now lacking was some coincidence to confirm the solution. The smoked salmon in the dream had not yet been accounted for. 'How', I asked, 'did you arrive at the salmon that came into your dream?' 'Oh,' she replied, 'smoked salmon is my friend's favourite dish.' I happen to be acquainted with the lady in question myself, and I can confirm the fact that she grudges herself salmon no less than my patient grudges herself caviare. [*SE* 4: 148]

It's at this point that Freud introduces the text of the dream that bears another interpretation, one that enters into the dialectic of identification:

> She had 'identified' herself with her friend. I believe she had in fact done this; and the circumstance of her having brought about a renounced wish in real life was evidence of this identification. [*SE* 4: 149]

I think you must already sense the outline that is being drawn in this simple text. I could have opened the *Traumdeutung* at any other page, we would have found the same dialectic. This dream, which was the first to fall into my hands, will show us the dialectic of desire and demand, which is particularly straightforward in the hysteric.

Let's keep on reading, so that we can pursue to the end what this very important text articulates for us. It is in short one of the first very clear articulations, by Freud, of what hysterical identification signifies. He spells out its meaning. I will leave out several lines so as not to go on too long. He discusses what is called hysterical imitation, the hysteric's sympathy for the other, and criticizes, with great energy, the simple reduction of hysterical contagion to pure and simple imitation.

The process of hysterical identification, he says, 363

> is a little more complicated than the common picture of hysterical imitation; it consists in the unconscious drawing of an inference, as an example will make clear. Supposing a physician is treating a woman patient, who is subject to a particular kind of spasm, in a hospital ward among a number of other patients. He will show no surprise if he finds one morning that this particular kind of hysterical attack has found imitators . . . but the psychical infection has occurred along some such lines as these. As a rule, patients know . . . [*SE* 14: 149]

You have to be aware of the importance that such a remark carries, I am not saying simply at the time at which it was made, but for us still.

> . . . more about one another than the doctor does about any of them; and after the doctor's visit is over they turn their attention to one another. [*SE* 4: 149]

An essential comment. In other words, the human object continues to live out its little special relationship to signifiers, even after the observer, whether a behaviourist or not, has shown an interest in his photography.

> Let us imagine that this patient had her attack on a particular day; then the others will quickly discover that it was caused by a letter from home, the revival of some unhappy love-affair, or

> some such thing. Their sympathy is aroused and they draw the following inference, though it fails to penetrate into consciousness: 'If a cause like this can produce an attack like this, I may have the same kind of attack . . .' [*SE* 4: 150]

Articulation of the elementary symptom with an identification in discourse, with a situation articulated in discourse

> . . . since I have the same grounds for having it.' If this inference were capable of entering this consciousness, it might possibly give rise to a fear of having the same kind of attack. But in fact the inference is made in a different psychical region, and consequently results in the actual realization of the dreaded symptom. Thus identification is not simple imitation but assimilation on the basis of a similar aetiological pretension; it expresses a resemblance and is derived from a common element which remains in the unconscious. [*SE* 4: 150]

The term '*appropriation*' [in the French, the English gives 'assimilation'] is not a particularly good translation. It's rather, 'made one's own'. Freud says:

> A hysterical woman identifies herself in her symptoms most readily – though not exclusively – with people with whom she has had sexual relations or with people who have had sexual relations with the same people as herself. Linguistic usage takes this into account, for two lovers are spoken of as being 'one'. [*SE* 4: 150]

The problem raised by Freud is the relation of identification with the jealous friend. In this respect I want to draw your attention to the following – the desire we encounter from the very first steps of the analysis, and on the basis of which the solution to the puzzle will unfold, is desire as unsatisfied. At the time of this dream, the patient was preoccupied with creating an unsatisfied desire for herself. What is the function of this unsatisfied desire?

What we effectively read in the dream is the satisfaction of a wish, a wish to have an unsatisfied desire. And what we discover in this connection is the underlying situation, which is man's fundamental
364 situation, between demand and desire, to which I am trying to introduce you, and which effectively I am introducing you to via hysteria, because the hysteric is suspended between this necessary split, as I was showing you earlier, between demand and desire. Here, it could not be any clearer.

What was she asking for before the dream, in her life? What is this patient, very much in love with her husband, asking for? It's love, and hysterics, like everybody else, ask for love – except that, for them, it's more of an encumbrance. What does she desire? She desires caviar. You just have to read. And what does she want? She wants not to be given caviar.

The question is precisely knowing why, for a hysteric to enter into a commerce of love that she finds satisfying, it's necessary, first, that she desire *something else*, and the caviar has no other role than to be this something else, and, in the second place, that in order for this something else to fulfil the function that is its task to fulfil, precisely, one doesn't give it to her. Her husband would ask for nothing better than to give her caviar, but she imagines it would probably be so that he would be left alone. But what Freud tells us in so many words is that she wants her husband not to give her caviar so that they can continue to be madly in love, that is, tease one another and make each other's lives endlessly miserable.

These structural elements, apart from the fact that we have stopped to think about them, are not particularly original, but they are beginning to take on meaning here. What is expressed is a structure which, beyond its comical side, has to represent something necessary. The hysteric is precisely a subject who finds it difficult to establish a relation – one that enables her to retain her place as a subject – with the constitution of the Other as big Other and bearer of the spoken sign. This is the very definition that one can give of the hysteric. In a word, the hysteric, man or woman, is so open to suggestion through speech that there must be something in it.

In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* Freud enquires into the way in which hypnosis arises, when its relation to sleep is far from being transparent, and when the tendency that suits it to certain people, whereas others refuse it and radically distance themselves from it, remains enigmatic. But everything seems to show, however, that what occurs in hypnosis is made possible in a subject by the purity of certain circumstances – I would even say by libidinal attitudes. What is at issue, if not places or positions that we are in the process of throwing light on? The unknown element Freud speaks of revolves around the way demand and desire are articulated. That is what I will try to show later.

If a subject has to create an unsatisfied desire for himself, it's 365
because this is the condition for a real Other to be constituted for him, that is, one that is not entirely imminent to the reciprocal satisfaction of demand or to the entire capture of the subject's desire by the Other's speech. That the desire in question is, by its nature, the Other's desire is very precisely what the dialectic of

dreams introduces us to, since the patient does not want this desire for caviar to be satisfied in reality. And this dream incontestably tends to satisfy her with respect to the solution to the problem she is pursuing.

What is the desire for caviar represented by in the dream? By the intermediary of the person in the dream, the friend with whom – Freud points out the signs – she identifies. Her friend is also an hysteric, or not, it doesn't matter, it's all pure hysterico-hysterical. The patient is hysterical, and the other is as well, to be sure, and all the more easily because the hysterical subject is almost entirely constituted on the basis of the Other's desire. The desire that the subject makes clear in the dream is the preferred desire of her friend, the desire for salmon, and even when she is unable to give a dinner party, this is all that she is left with, smoked salmon, which is an indication of the Other's desire as well as of the fact that it's capable of being satisfied, but only for the Other. 'Besides, there is nothing to worry about, we have some smoked salmon.' All the same, the dream does not say that things come to the point where she gives it to her friend, but the intention is there.

On the other hand, what gets stranded is her friend's request, the dream's genetic element. She asked her if she could come to dinner at her place where one eats so well, and where, moreover, one can meet the handsome butcher. This amiable husband who always speaks so well of her friend must also have his own little desire inside his head, and the backside of the young girl evoked so promptly in relation to the proposition by the amiable painter who would like to draw him and sketch such an interesting, expressive face is certainly there as proof. In a word, everyone has his little desire beyond, simply more or less intensified.

Except that, in the specific case of an hysteric, desire as lying beyond all demand, that is, as having to occupy its function in the name of a refused desire, plays a role very much in the foreground. You will never understand anything about hysterics, him or her, if you don't start with this primary, structural element. Moreover, in man's relationship to signifiers, the hysteric is a primordial structure. Should you push the dialectic of demand far enough with a subject, you will always encounter the *Spaltung* between demand and desire at some point in the structure, at the risk of committing major
366 errors, that is, of rendering the patient hysterical, for everything that we analyse there is, of course, unconscious for the subject. In other words, an hysteric does not know that he cannot find satisfaction in the demand, but it's quite essential that you yourself know this.

These notations are now going to enable us to begin to point to what the little diagram that I drew for you last time means, the

interpretation of which it was a little premature to give you then. [See the diagram on p. 321.]

As I have told you, what manifests itself as a need must be expressed in demand, that is, must be addressed to the Other [A]. An encounter takes place opposite, or does not take place, and it occupies the place of the message [s(A)] – that is, what in the Other is signified. Then, a relic of demand is produced, which consists in the alteration of what manifests itself in the still unformed state of the subject's desire, which manifests itself in principle in the form of the subject's identification. I will come back to this next time, with Freud's text in hand, and you will see that the first time he speaks in a fully articulated manner about identification – you can already look it up if your heart is in it – primitive identification is not articulated in any other way than I have noted for you here.

You are aware, moreover, that down the path along which the narcissistic short-circuit is introduced, there already exists a possibility, an opening, an outline.

What's essential in what I gave you when describing the function of the phallus is that it's the signifier that is the mark of what the Other desires insofar as it itself, as a real, human Other, is, in its economy of being, marked by the signifier. It's this formula that we are precisely in the process of studying. It's precisely insofar as the Other is marked by the signifier that a subject can through there, and only through there – through the intermediary of the Other – recognize that he, too, is marked by the signifier, that is, that there is always something that remains beyond what can be satisfied through the intermediary of the signifier, that is, through demand. This split created around the action of signifiers, this irreducible residue linked to signifiers, also has its own sign, but this sign is going to be identified with this mark in the signified. This is where a subject must encounter his desire.

In other words, it's insofar as the Other's desire is barred that the subject will recognize his own barred desire, his own unsatisfied desire. It's at the level of this desire, barred through the intermediary of the Other, that the subject's encounter with his most authentic desire, namely genital desire, occurs. It's for this reason that genital desire is marked by castration, in other words by a 367
particular relationship to the signifier phallus. The two things are equivalent.

What we find first off corresponds to demand, that is, at an initial stage, the mother's speech. This speech itself has a relation to a law that lies beyond, and which, as I have shown, is incarnated by the father. This is what constitutes the paternal metaphor. But you have the perfect right to think that not everything is reducible to this

layering of speech, and I think that this sort of lack must have left you – you too – with something to be desired when I explained it to you.

Effectively, beyond speech and beyond over-speech, beyond the law of the father, whatever one calls it, something else is required. This is the capacity in which this chosen signifier, the phallus, is introduced and, naturally, it's situated at the same level as the law. Under normal conditions, it's located at a second order of the encounter with the Other. This is what, in my little formulas, I have called S(Ⱥ), the signifier of barred A. It's precisely the question of what I have just now defined as being the function of the signifier phallus – namely, the function of marking what the Other, as marked by the signifier, that is, as barred, desires.

Where is the subject? When we are no longer dealing with the ambiguous subject, at one and the same time perpetually dipping into the speech of the Other and getting caught up in the specular, dual relationship with the little other, but rather with the constituted and completed subject of the Z-shaped formula – this is the subject insofar as the bar has been introduced, namely, insofar as he himself is also marked somewhere by the relationship to signifiers. This is why we find it here, in [$ ◊ D], where the subject's relation to demand as such happens.

How are we to explain the necessary stage by which the Oedipus complex is integrated with the castration complex, namely, the structuration of the subject's desire through them? How does that happen? You can see it set out on this diagram. This beyond-the-relationship-to-the-Other's-speech is introduced through the signifier phallus. But, of course, once it is constituted and the signifier phallus is there in this place as the Other's desire, it doesn't remain there, but becomes integrated into the Other's speech and, with all the consequences that follow, occupies its place this-side-of, in the primitive place of the speech relationship with the mother. It's here that it plays its role and takes on its function.

In other words, this beyond I have posited, inasmuch as I am attempting to determine the requisite stages for the integration of speech to enable desire to take its place for the subject, remains
368 unconscious for the subject. Henceforth, this is where the dialectic unfolds for him, without him knowing that this dialectic is only possible insofar as his desire, his true desire, finds its place in a relationship, which therefore remains unconscious for him, with the Other's desire. In short, these two lines are normally interchangeable [see lines 2 and 3 on p. 285].

Solely because they have to be interchangeable, all sorts of accidents can happen in the interval. We will encounter these accidents

in various forms. I simply wish to point out to you today the elements of the deficiency that is always to be found in hysterics.

3

Take the Dora case.

In her we see this beyond-the-Other's-desire produced in its pure state, and we can point out why a portion of the set of elements is missing. There is absolutely no mention of the mother. You have perhaps observed that she is completely absent from the case. Dora is exposed to her father. It's from her father that she wants love.

It has to be said that before the analysis Dora's life is neatly balanced. Before the drama explodes, she had come up with a very good solution to her problems. Her demand is addressed to her father, and things go very well because her father has a desire, and things go even better because this desire is an unsatisfied desire. Dora, as Freud does not hide from us, knows full well that her father is impotent and that his desire for Frau K. is a barred desire.

But what we also know – Freud only found this out a little too late – is that Frau K. is the object of Dora's desire, because she is the father's desire, the father's barred desire.

Just one thing is necessary to maintain this equilibrium. It's that Dora succeed in achieving somewhere self-identification that stabilizes her and enables her to know where she is, and to do so as a function of her demand which is not satisfied, a demand for love from her father. This works so long as there is a desire, a desire that cannot be satisfied, neither for Dora, nor for her father.

That all depends on the place in which the identification called the ego-ideal takes place. You can see it on the schema [p. 321], normally it's always produced after the line of the Other is crossed twice, at I(Ⱥ). It's the same in the Dora case, except for the fact that the father's desire is represented by the second line. It's after the two lines cross that the hysteric's identification becomes actual, here, in [$ ◊ *a*]. It's no longer a question of an identification with the father, 369
as is the case when the father is purely and simply the one to whom demand is addressed. Don't forget, there is now a beyond, and this suits the hysteric very well for her satisfaction and equilibrium. The identification is with a little other who is in a position to satisfy her desire. This is Herr K., the husband of Frau K., this Frau K. who is so seductive, charming and radiant, the real object of Dora's desire. Identification occurs here because Dora is an hysteric and because in the case of an hysteric, the process cannot go any further.

Why? Because desire is the sole element to have charge of taking the place of the beyond located by the subject's own position with respect to demand. Because she is an hysteric, she does not know what she is demanding. She simply has the need for this desire to be there beyond, somewhere. But for her to be able to draw upon this desire, complete herself with it and discover her identification, her ideal in it, there needs to be, at least at the level of this beyond-demand, an encounter that enables her to rely upon and locate herself on this line, and this is where Herr K. comes in, where, as is obvious to all observation, she finds her other, in the sense of little *a*, the other in whom she recognizes herself.

This is the reason that she is extremely interested in him, to the point of initially deceiving her world, that is, to the point where Freud believes that she loves this Herr K. She doesn't love him, but he is indispensable to her, and even much more indispensable to her for desiring Frau K. As I have already pointed out to you a hundred times, that is super-demonstrated by the fact that the circulation completely short-circuits, and that vis-à-vis the little *a* Dora falls back into a situation of aggressive fury that manifests itself with one huge slap. This is fury towards the other insofar as he is your semblable, and that, being your semblable, he quite simply steals your existence from you. The fatal words that Herr K. says to her – he knows nothing of what he is saying, the poor unfortunate man, and does not know that he is the support of Dora's identification – namely, that his wife means nothing to him, are precisely what Dora cannot tolerate. She cannot tolerate it. Why?

One says, and with very good reason, except that it's incomplete, that Dora is manifestly structured in a homosexual way, inasmuch as any hysteric can be. After what Herr K. says to her, normally she should be very pleased. Not at all. This is precisely what triggers her fury, because at that moment her beautiful hysterical construction of identification with the mask, with the insignias of the Other – namely with the abundant masculine insignias that Herr K., and not her father, presents her with – collapses. She then simply falls back onto
370 the demand, onto the claim for love from her father, and she enters into a quasi-paranoid state when she much more objectively thinks of herself as what she effectively is for her father, namely an object of exchange, someone to amuse Herr K., while he, her father, can take care of Frau K. As vain as this is, that's all it takes, and you get a good sense, in this case, of the very function of desire.

Following Herr K.'s words, our hysteric falls from on high and returns to the entirely primitive level of demand. She simply demands that her father take care of her, that he give her his

love – in other words, according to our definition, everything that he does not have.

Today, I've performed the first little exercise at the barre for you in an attempt to show you what the meaning of the relationship between desire and demand is. As you become more and more accustomed to it, you will be able to go much further and with much greater confidence.

30 April 1958

XXI

THE 'STILL WATERS RUN DEEP' DREAMS

Madame Dolto and the phallus
An hysteric's jacket
The unconditional in the demand for love
The absolute condition of desire
The Other become object of desire

We'll start with recent events which those of you who attended the society's scientific presentation last night will be able to appreciate. Someone spoke about heterosexual relationships. This is exactly what I, too, am trying to talk about.

1

From the point of view that was presented to us, a heterosexual relationship proves to be essentially formative. It was, in short, a primary given in the evolving tension between parents and child. From another perspective, which is our point of departure, this is precisely what is in question – is the heterosexual relationship between human beings something simple?

The truth of the matter is that if we hold fast to primary experience, it seems that it is not. If it were simple, it should constitute a series of harmonious islands within the human world, at least for those who had managed to clear away the worst of the undergrowth. It doesn't seem that up till now we can consider that analysts – but, after all, do we need to invoke analysts on the matter? – speak with a single voice and say that, even when it has come to completion, the heterosexual relationship presents itself to man as anything other than unstable, since the least one can say is precisely that the entire problem with it revolves around this. Take for example Balint's writings, which are quite focused on this, since even the title

of his collection is *Genital Love* – which attests to the existence of a completely ultimate *Spaltung* and the juxtaposition of the current of desire and the current of tenderness. The entire problem of the heterosexual relationship is constructed around this juxtaposition. 372

The remarks I have just been making detract none of the interest from what was said last night, far from it – even if only for the terms of reference that were used and, for example, the conscious and aesthetic valorization of the sexual organ, to use the speaker's own terms, which from her perspective constitute the fundamental stage of the Oedipus complex. As Madame Dolto was saying, the sexual organ, its symbol, presents itself as a beautiful and good form. The sexual organ is beautiful, she added. It's a question, obviously, of a remark coming from the speaker's perspective, and it is clearly flattering for those who possess this male organ.

Nevertheless, this doesn't seem to be a given that we can embrace in any univocal manner, even if merely by reference to the reservations of one of the people who intervened, authoritatively, on the subject, giving us what one can call ethnological observations. Primitive peoples, good old primitive peoples, have always been a reference point for anthropologists, but it doesn't seem, if the truth be known, that any of the earliest data – if primitive people were in fact the earliest – about the beautiful and good form of the phallus is to be found there either.

If you refer to these documents as a whole – I'm not talking about learned documents, those things that are devised in the ethnographer's study, but about testimonials of the experience of those ethnographers who have been in the field, amongst the said primitives, good or bad – it seems that it is truly a basis and a principle of the relations between the sexes, even in the most backward tribes, that the phallus's erection at least be hidden. It's striking to note that even in tribes that possess only the most primitive forms of clothing, the existence of something that is used precisely to hide the phallus, a penis sheath for example, is the one remaining remnant of clothing.

Also, quite a large number of ethnographers have recorded the sort of irritation, as if with a truly primary response, that the persons of female sex experience in the presence of manifestations of an erection of the phallus. There are the very rare cases where there is no clothing at all, amongst the Nambikwara for example, whom as you know our friend Lévi-Strauss visited on several occasions and has spoken about at length. On the question that I put to him in this connection, Lévi-Strauss told me, repeating what he says in his book, *Tristes Tropiques*, that he never observed an erection in the presence of the group. Sexual relations occur without any special 373

concealment, a few feet away from the group, during the evening round the campfire, but an erection, either during the day or at that time, doesn't occur in public. This isn't entirely irrelevant to our subject.

There is the notion of the beautiful-and-good form. Situating the meaning of the phallus in such terms seems to arise from a fairly unique natural perspective. On the other hand, I am well aware that there is the beautiful and good form of a woman. It's certainly valued by every element of civilization, but, well, even if only because of the individual variety, it can't be said that we can, in this respect, speak univocally of a beautiful and good form. Let's say, in any case, that this beautiful and good form leaves more room for variation than the other. Undoubtedly, behind every woman there is the silhouetted form of the Venus de Milo or Aphrodite of Cnidus, but ultimately it's not always with unambiguously favourable results. Daumier has been much criticized for having given the Greek gods the rather crumpled forms of the bourgeois men and women of his time. He was criticized for it as if it were a sacrilege. This is precisely the point at which the problem I am indicating is situated – if it is obviously so deplorable to humanize gods, it is undoubtedly because humans are not always so easily deified.

In short, if what's necessary for the perpetuation of the human race lies in the hands of this beautiful and good form, the overall indication is that we make do with middling requirements, which the term 'beautiful and good form' perhaps doesn't tend to evoke. It at least remains fairly puzzling.

In fact, everything remarkable and appropriate that has been said to emphasize this beautiful and good form of the phallus is precisely what is being called into question here. This doesn't of course eliminate its typical prevalence as a form. The discourse that I am maintaining here, inasmuch as it is founded on and directly continues both Freud's own discourse and his experience, is intended to give a different idea of the meaning of the phallus.

The phallus is not a form. It doesn't have the form of an object, insofar as a form remains a captivating and fascinating form – at least not in one sense, for the problem remains intact in the other. The attraction between the sexes is something infinitely more complex than an imaginary attraction, as the entire economy of analytic doctrine shows us. As for us, we are committed to following the path that gives the solution to the problem in accordance with this formula, which itself is none other than a statement that needs to be developed if it is to be understood – the phallus is neither a fantasy, nor an image, nor an object, not even a part object, not even an internal one. It's a signifier. It's solely the fact

that it is a signifier that makes it possible to conceptualize and articulate the diverse functions it assumes at different levels of the intersexual encounter. 374

A signifier. It's not enough to say it's a signifier. Which signifier? It's the signifier of desire. That of course throws up the further question – what does 'signifier of desire' mean? It's certain that the scope of this affirmation implies that first we say what desire is.

Desire isn't something self-evident in the function it fulfils in our experience. It's not simply intersexual appetite, intersexual attraction or the sexual instinct. It's also well understood that this notion doesn't eliminate the existence of tendencies that are more or less accentuated, that vary from one individual to the next, and have the primary characteristic of expressing – in general let's say – greater or less power in each individual with respect to sexual union. This in no way resolves the question of the constitution of desire as we locate it in this or that individual, whether neurotic or not. The constitution of his desire is something other than whatever sexual potency he carries around with him.

They are some remarks to put us back on track after the sense of disorientation that the point of view perhaps gave us last night – we will now quietly return to Freud's text.

2

Today isn't the first time I have made this remark, but I will convey it to you today – one is filled with awe at the existence of this text, *Die Traumdeutung*. One is filled with awe at it as if it were a kind of miracle, because it is actually not too much to say that it can be read as thought in motion. But it's a lot more than this.

At times things are brought in that correspond to a composition that is overdetermined – here the word would apply well – on several levels. Merely by taking this text in the way I said I would last time, that is, by selecting the first dreams, one can see that the significance of what comes first goes well beyond the reasons put forward for placing them first in the chapters. For example, it's regarding the day's residues, insofar as they enter into account in the determinism of dreams, that a number of the initial dreams are presented there, like the one I commented on last time, the dream by the butcher's beautiful wife, as I call it.

As you saw, I chose it in order to examine the question of demand and desire. It wasn't I who put demand and desire in the dream, they're there. And Freud didn't put them there, he read them in it. He saw that the patient has a need to create an unsatisfied desire 375

for herself, it's he who tells us. Of course, when Freud wrote *Die Traumdeutung*, he wasn't there to give this name along with a little lamp. But if he approached and composed things in this order, it's because he was urged on by a concern that may well go beyond the divisions of the chapters. Effectively, this dream presents a characteristic that especially offers an introduction to the problem that is fundamental to the perspective that I am trying to promote here, that of desire.

As to demand, it is hardly necessary to say that it, too, is everywhere. The reason the dream occurred is that a friend asked the patient if she could come to dinner at her place. In the dream itself, the request is there in the clearest of forms. The patient knows that everything was closed that day and that she was unable to make up for her inadequate provisions and offer the dinner as she should, and then she requests, in the clearest and most isolated manner in which one could present a request, since she makes it over the telephone, which at the time – this text is in the first edition – was not in widespread use. The telephone is actually there with its full symbolic power.

Let's go on a bit further. What are the first dreams that we encounter in the chapter on the 'Material and Sources of Dreams'?

The first dream we encounter is the dream of the botanical monograph, which is one of Freud's own. I am going to leave that one – not that it doesn't contribute exactly what we can expect today as I try to show you how the phallic signifier's relations with desire function, but simply because it's one of Freud's dreams, and so it would take a little bit longer and it would be a little bit more complicated to show you this. I will do it later if I have the time, for it is absolutely clear and structured exactly along the lines of the little schema I started drawing for you in relation to the hysteric's desire. But Freud is not purely and simply an hysteric. If he has the relation to hysteria that every relationship with desire comprises, it's in a slightly more elaborate manner.

We will therefore skip the dream of the botanical monograph and come to the patient who, as Freud tells us, is an hysteric. We are therefore returning to the hysteric's desire.

> An intelligent and cultivated young woman, reserved and undemonstrative in her behaviour, reported as follows: *I dreamt that I arrived too late at the market and could get nothing either from the butcher or from the woman who sells vegetables.* An innocent dream, no doubt; but dreams are not as simple as that, so I asked to be told it in greater detail. She thereupon gave me the following account. *She dreamt she was going to the market with*

her cook, who was carrying the basket. After she had asked for something, the butcher said to her: 'That's not obtainable any longer', and offered her something else, adding 'This is good too.' She rejected it and went on to the woman who sells vegetables, who tried to get her to buy a peculiar vegetable that was tied up in bundles but was of a black colour. She said: 'I don't recognize that; I won't take it.' [*SE* 4: 183] 376

Freud's commentary is essential here, since we weren't the ones who analysed this patient. At the time *Die Traumdeutung* appeared, it was more or less as if the first work on atomic theory had appeared without any kind of link with the physics that preceded it. Besides, the book was greeted with almost total silence.

It is, then, on the first pages of this book that, when speaking of the presence of recent and indifferent material in dreams, Freud calmly laid out for his readers the following comments. 'She had actually gone to the market too late and had got nothing.' An attempt to attach this dream to the events of the day. 'One is tempted to say: the butcher's shop was already closed.' Here he isn't saying that he is reporting the words of the patient, he is putting himself forward by saying that that is what the utterance obviously is. 'But, stop – *Doch halt.* Was not that, or rather its opposite, a vulgar description of a certain sort of slovenliness in a man's dress?' It seems in effect that in the language of the Viennese, at least in familiar terms, it's customary to say to someone who has forgotten to button up his pants, 'Your butcher's shop, the door of your butcher's shop, is open – *Du hast deine Fleischbank offen.*' As Freud recognizes. 'However, the dreamer herself did not use the phrase.' And he adds, 'She may have perhaps avoided using it' [*SE* 4: 183].

That said, let's go on a little further. 'When anything in a dream has the character of direct speech, that is, when it is said or heard and not merely thought (and it is easy as a rule to make the distinction with certainty).' It's therefore a question of words inscribed in a dream as if written on a banner. One doesn't escape the implications of the situation. It's something that can be easily distinguished, Freud tells us – namely, the factor of language, which he invites us always to take as a factor that has its own value. 'It is derived from something actually spoken in waking life – though, to be sure, this something is merely treated as raw material and may be cut up and slightly altered and, more especially, divorced from its content. In carrying out an interpretation, one method is to start from spoken phrases of this kind. What, then, was the origin of the butcher's remark, '*That's not obtainable any longer*'?'

This sentence, '*Das is nicht mehr zu haben*', is recalled by Freud at the time he is writing the case of the Wolf Man, as an indication of the fact that for a long time he has been interested in the difficulty involved in reconstructing what is pre-amnesic in the subject's life
377 prior to infantile amnesia. Indeed, it is in relation to this that he said that to the patient.

> A few days earlier I had explained to the patient that the earliest experiences of childhood were '*not obtainable any longer* as such', but were replaced in analysis by 'transferences' and dreams. So *I* was the butcher and she was rejecting these transferences into the present of old habits of thinking and feeling. What, again, was the origin of her own remark in the dream, '*I don't recognize that; I won't take it*'? '*Das kenne ich nicht, das nehme ich nicht.*' For the purposes of the analysis this had to be divided up. '*I don't recognize that*' was something she had said the day before to her cook, with whom she had had a dispute; but at the time she had gone on: '*Benehmen Sie sich anständig*', '*Behave yourself properly!*' [*SE* 4: 184]

As Freud says, what has been retained in the dream is precisely the element of language, the part that has no signification, '*Das kenne ich nicht*', whereas the censor has moved the second sentence over onto the servant. What therefore appears in the dream, '*Das kenne ich nicht, das nehme ich nicht*', gives meaning to what has been retained from '*Das kenne ich nicht, Benehmen Sie sich anständig.*'

Freud continues:

> At this point there had clearly been a displacement. Of the two phrases that she had used in the dispute with her cook, she had chosen the insignificant one for inclusion in the dream. But it was only the repressed one, '*Behave yourself properly!*' that fitted in with the rest of the content of the dream: those would have been the appropriate words to use if someone had ventured to make improper suggestions and had forgotten 'to close his meat-shop'.
>
> The allusions underlying the incident with the vegetable-seller were a further confirmation that our interpretation was on the right track. A vegetable that is sold tied up in bundles (lengthways, as the patient added afterwards) and is also black, could only be a dream-combination of asparagus and black (Spanish) radishes. No knowledgeable person of either sex will ask for an interpretation of asparagus. But the other vegetable – *Schwarzer Rettig* ['black radish'] – can be

> taken as an exclamation – *'Schwarzer, rett' dich!'* ['Blacky! Be off!'] –; and accordingly it too seems to hint at the same sexual topic which we suspected at the very beginning, when we felt inclined to introduce the phrase about the meat-shop being closed into the original account of the dream. We need not enquire now into the full meaning of the dream. So much is quite clear: it *had* a meaning and that meaning was far from innocent. [*SE* 4: 184–5]

I apologize if this might have seemed a bit long. I would simply like to refocus things on this little dream, now that we know so much and have a tendency to read a little too quickly.

Here, we find represented in the clearest of manners another 378
example of the hysteric's relationship to desire as such, the place of which, as I indicated last time, the hysteric has a need for in her dreams and symptoms – a need for its place to be marked somewhere. But here something else is in question, namely, the place of the phallus signifier.

Let's mix our theoretical discourse in with references to dreams so as to vary things a bit and not to lose our attention. Three other dreams by the same patient are subsequently mentioned, and we will make use of them at the appropriate moment. Let us pause for a second over what needs to be stressed.

Like the other day, the question is what place to give desire. But this time, this place isn't marked in the field external to the subject. It's not about desire, insofar as the subject rejects it for herself beyond demand and only accepts it in the dream as the Other's desire, who, here, is her friend. It's about desire insofar as it is supported, by hypothesis, by the phallus signifier. Let's see what function the signifier plays in this case.

As you can see, Freud introduces the phallus signifier here without hesitation or ambiguity. The only element that he has not stressed as such in his analysis, since he has to leave something for us to do, is the following, and it is altogether striking. The entire ambiguity of the subject's behaviour in relation to the phallus resides in this dilemma, which is that the subject may either have or be this signifier.

The reason that this dilemma arises is that the phallus isn't the object, but the signifier, of desire. The dilemma is absolutely essential. It lies at the heart of all the shifts, transmutations and sleights of hand, I would say, of the castration complex.

Why does the phallus come into this dream? From this perspective, I think that it's not at all overstepping the mark to say that the phallus is, as such, actualized in this hysteric's dream around

Freud's sentence, '*Das ist nicht mehr zu haben*', that is, 'That's not obtainable any longer.'

I obtained confirmation about the absolute use of the verb '*avoir*', to have, as in the linguistic usage that has us say, '*l'avoir*', to have it, or, even better, '*en avoir ou pas*', to have some or not, which also has significance in German. It's a question here in this sentence of the phallus insofar as it emerges as the object that is lacking.

Who is it that lacks the object? This is, of course, what it would be good to know, but nothing is more uncertain than that it is purely and simply the object that the biological subject lacks. Let's say,
379 first, that it presents itself in signifying terms as linked to the sentence that expresses the fact that it is what is no longer obtainable – *Das ist nicht mehr zu haben*. This isn't an experience of frustration. It's a signification, a signifying articulation of the object lack, as such.

This of course tallies with the notion that I am placing in the foreground, that here the phallus is the signifier insofar as – who doesn't have it? – insofar as the Other doesn't have it. With the phallus it is effectively a matter of something that is articulated on the plane of language, and which therefore is located as such on the plane of the Other. It's the signifier of desire insofar as desire is articulated as the Other's desire. I will return to this presently.

We'll now take the second dream by the same patient. It's a dream that is purportedly innocent.

> Her husband asked her: 'Don't you think we ought to have the piano tuned?' And she replied: 'It's not worth while ['*Es lohnt nicht*' – which means something like, 'it's not worth it']; the hammers need reconditioning in any case.'

Freud comments in these terms:

> This was the repetition of a real event of the previous day . . .. But what was the explanation of her dreaming it? But why does she dream about it? She told me that the piano was a *disgusting* old *box*, that it made an *ugly noise*, that it had been in her husband's possession before their marriage, and so on.

In a footnote, he says, 'This last was a substitute for the opposite idea [that is that her husband did not have it before their marriage], as the course of the analysis will make clear.'

> '*It's not worth while.*' These were derived from a visit she had paid the day before to a woman friend. She had been invited to take off her jacket, but had refused with the words: 'Thank

you, but *it's not worth while*; I can only stop a minute. As she was telling me this, I recollected that during the previous day's analysis she had suddenly caught hold of her jacket, one of her buttons having come undone. Thus it was as though she were saying: 'Please don't look; *it's not worth while*.' In the same way the 'box' ['*Kasten*'] was a substitute for a chest ['*Brustkasten*']; and the interpretation of the dream led us back at once to the time of her physical development at puberty, when she had begun to be dissatisfied by her figure. We can hardly doubt that it led back to still earlier times, if we take the word '*disgusting*' into account and the '*ugly noise*', and if we remember how often – both in *doubles entendres* and in dreams – the lesser hemispheres of a woman's body are used, whether as contrasts or as substitutes, for the larger ones. [*SE* 4: 185–6]

We find ourselves here on the other side of the question. If the phallus is the signifier of desire, the Other's desire, and the problem that presents itself to the subject from the very first step of the dialectic of desire, then the other side is this – a question of being or not being the phallus.

Let's put all our faith in this function as a signifier that we are granting the phallus, and let's say the following – just as 'one cannot be and have been', so too 'one cannot be and not be'. If it is necessary that what one is not is what one is, what remains is not to be what one is, that is, what remains is to reject what one is in appear- 380
ance, which is very precisely the woman's position in hysteria. As a woman, she makes a mask of herself. She makes a mask of herself precisely so that, behind this mask, she can be the phallus. The entire behaviour of hysterics manifests itself in the gesture of this hand placed on her button – the meaning of which Freud's eye accustomed us to see a long, long time ago – accompanied by this sentence, 'It's not worthwhile.' Why isn't it worthwhile? Because there is, of course, no question of looking further, because further on is where the phallus should be. But it's truly not worthwhile looking, '*Es lohnt nicht*', because you won't find it there.

For the hysteric, it is a matter of seeing and knowing, as Freud immediately gives us in a note addressed, '*Für Wissbegierige*' ['For anyone curious to know'], which is translated into French as, '*A ceux qui voudraient l'approfondir*', 'For anyone who would like to go into it in depth'. More rigorously, 'To lovers of knowledge'.

This brings us to the heart of what I have perhaps already referred to with this term – borrowed from a morality that despite everything bears the imprint of a human experience that is perhaps richer than a lot of others, moral theology – the *Cupido sciendi* [the curiosity or

desire to know]. We can choose this term for translating '*le désir*', although the equivalences between languages always raise delicate questions. With respect to desire, I have already obtained '*Begierde*' ['desire'] from my German-speaking friends, which one finds in Hegel, but which some find too animal. It's funny that Hegel has employed it for the master–slave, a theme which isn't overly imbued with animality.

'If anyone is curious to know,' Freud says in this footnote, 'I may add that the dream concealed a phantasy of my behaving in an improper and sexually provocative manner, and of the patient putting up a defence against my conduct' [*SE* 4: 185fn]. Being provocative towards an hysteric is liable to produce the desire, but beyond what is known as a defence. That is, it indicates the place – beyond appearance, beyond the mask – of something that is presented to desire, something which, of course, it can't be offered access to, since it is something that is presented behind the veil but which can't be found there either. It's not worthwhile unbuttoning my jacket, because you will not find the phallus there, but if I place my hand on my jacket, it is so that you desire, inside my blouse, the phallus, which is the signifier of desire.

These remarks lead me to think about how to define this desire in a fully rigorous way, in such a way as to give you a good sense of what we are talking about.

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3

Someone I was in conversation with called my little interwoven lines, the ones I have been refining for you over time, a little Calder mobile. It's quite a well-chosen expression, to my mind. The issue is not to stop there but to try to spell out what we mean by desire as such.

In this dialectic, we locate desire as what on this little mobile is located beyond demand. Why does there need to be anything beyond demand? There needs to be something beyond demand, inasmuch as, for the requirements of articulation, demand diverts, changes and transposes need. Therefore, there is the possibility of a residue.

Insofar as man is caught in the signifying dialectic, there is something that doesn't work – whatever optimistic people think when they point to all the positive things that take place between children and their parents, in terms of locating the other sex. Now this is precisely the level at which we come in.

There is, then, a residue. What form does it take? What form does it take, necessarily? It's now no longer a question of sexual desire,

and we shall see why later, why it must come to this place. But we are considering the general relationship between a man's needs and signifiers, and we find ourselves faced with the following question. Is there anything that restores this margin of deviation marked by the impact of signifiers on needs? And in what form does that beyond appear, if indeed it appears at all? Experience proves that it does appear. And it's what we call desire. This is how we can formulate one possible form of its appearance.

The manner in which desire in the human subject must manifest itself depends on what is determined by the dialectic of demand. If demand has a particular effect on needs, it also has its own characteristics. I have already formulated the characteristics belonging to it. Demand, merely by virtue of being articulated as a demand, even when it isn't a demand for the Other, explicitly establishes the Other as absent or present, and as giving or not giving this presence. That is, demand is fundamentally a demand for love – a demand for what is nothing, no particular satisfaction, a demand for what the subject brings purely and simply by responding to the demand.

This is where the originality of introducing the symbolic in the 382
form of demand shows its originality. The originality of the introduction of demand in comparison with need is located in what is unconditioned in demand, namely, that demands are made against a background of the demand for love.

If the introduction of demand carries some loss with it, in whatever form, in relation to need, does what is thereby lost have to end up beyond demand? It's clear that if it has to end up beyond demand, that is, beyond the distortion introduced by the dimension of demand, it's inasmuch as we must rediscover in this beyond something where the Other loses its predominance, and where need, insofar as it stems from the subject, occupies the primary place.

However, since need has already passed through the filter of demand onto the plane of the unconditioned, it is only in the name of a second negation, as it were, that we encounter there, beyond, the margin that was lost in demand. What we find in this beyond is precisely the feature of absolute condition that is present in desire as such.

This feature is, of course, borrowed from need. How could we form desires, if it were not by borrowing the raw materials from our needs? But that passes to a state that isn't one of unconditionality, since it involves something borrowed from a particular need, but one of absolute condition, one that is without measure and incommensurate with the need for an object of any kind. This condition can be deemed absolute for the precise reason that it abolishes the dimension of the Other, that it's a requirement where the Other

doesn't have to respond yes or no. This is the fundamental characteristic of human desire as such.

Every desire in its pure state is something that, uprooted from the soil of needs, assumes the form of an absolute condition in relation to the Other. It's the margin or result of the subtraction, as it were, of the requirements of need from the demand for love. Conversely, desire presents itself as what, in the demand for love, rebels against being reduced to a need, because in reality it satisfies nothing other than itself, that is, desire as an absolute condition.

This is the reason that sexual desire will come to that place, insofar as it presents itself, in relation to the subject or the individual, as essentially problematic and on the two planes of need and the demand for love.

On the plane of need, Freud wasn't the first to emphasize this – ever since the world has been the world, people have wondered how
383 the human being, who has the property of recognizing what is to his advantage, can bear and accept this sexual need which undeniably pushes him to aberrant extremes that correspond to no immediately rationalizable need, and which introduces, let's say, what is called the dialectic of the species into the individual. Thus, by its very nature, sexual need already presents itself as problematic in the subject, as we define him – even if philosophers have articulated this differently – that is, as someone who is able to rationalize his needs and articulate them in terms of equivalences, that is, in terms of signifiers.

Moreover, with respect to the demand for love, this sexual need will become desire, specifically, since it can only place itself at the level of desire as we have just defined it. Sexual desire presents itself in a problematic manner from the perspective of the demand for love, whatever one says, whatever holy water one tries to cover it with in the name of 'oblation'. With respect to what in all languages is called 'stating one's demands', the question of desire is problematic, inasmuch as – in order to express things in the most common form of language, which here is revealing – in whatever manner demand is formulated, what takes shape is that the Other comes into play in the form of the instrument of desire as soon as sexual desire is in question.

It's for this reason that sexual desire, insofar as it is a question, is placed at the level of desire. Insofar as it is a question, it can't really be articulated. There are really no words for it – hear it from the horse's mouth, since it perhaps won't do any harm for me to say that not everything is reducible to language. I have always said so, of course, but I haven't been heard. I repeat it – there are no words to express something, something that has a name, which is desire.

For expressing desire, as popular wisdom knows very well, there are only sweet nothings.

The question of the signifier of desire, then, arises as such. What it is expressed by isn't just any ordinary signifier. It's effectively something that borrows from prevailing forms of thrust or vital flux, but it is still as a signifier that it is less caught up in the dialectic, along with what the mortification that passing into the register of signifiers always comprises for anything that attains the dimension of signifiers.

Here, the ambiguous mortification presents itself in the form of a veil, one that we see reproduced every day in the form of the hysteric's jacket. This is the fundamental position of woman in relation to man where desire is concerned, namely that above all don't take 384
a look there, inside her jacket, because of course there is nothing there, there is nothing but the signifier. But it is nothing other than the signifier of desire.

Behind this veil, there is, or there is not, something that must not be shown, and this is why the demon I was talking about concerning the unveiling of the phallus in the sacred Mysteries is called the demon of shame. 'Shame' has a different meaning and significance in man and woman, whatever its origin, whether it is the horror of it that a woman has, or something that quite naturally arises from the oh-so delicate souls of men.

I alluded to the veil that quite often covers the phallus in man. It's exactly the same thing that normally covers a woman's being almost entirely, inasmuch as what is precisely there lying behind, and which is veiled, is the signifier phallus. What Freud called, concerning the female sex, *Abscheu*, the horror that corresponds to absence as such, the Medusa, is connected with the unveiling that would only show nothing, that is, the absence of what is unveiled.

We are told that sexual progress or maturation would entail passing from a partial object to a total object. What I have managed to introduce on the perspective that I am giving you on the play between the subject of desire and the signifier of desire, and which is far from having been exhausted, already suffices to completely reverse notions like this that obscure the whole dialectic about approaching the other in the sexual relation. There is, here, a real camouflage or evasion. In coming to the place of desire, the other does not in any way become the total object, but on the contrary the problem is that the other totally becomes an object as instrument of desire. The problem is maintaining the two positions compatible with one another.

There is, on the one hand, the position of the Other as Other, as the locus of speech, to whom demand is addressed and whose

radical irreducibility manifests itself in the fact that it can give love, that is, something that is all the more totally gratuitous because there is no support for love, since, as I have been telling you, to give one's love is to give nothing of what one has, for it's precisely insofar as one doesn't have it that love is at issue. But there is discordance between what there is that is absolute in the subjectivity of the Other who gives or doesn't give love and the fact that, to gain access to the Other as object of desire, it is necessary for it totally to become an object. It's in this vertiginous or nauseous, to call it by its name, gap that the difficulty of accessing sexual desire is located.

385 In the *Studies on Hysteria*, Breuer connects the manifestation of hysterical symptoms in the form of nausea and disgust to the phenomena of dizziness. He refers to the work of Mach on motor sensations, showing, with an extraordinary intuition, that the essential source of this labyrinthine phenomenon, in which we see this series, dizziness, nausea, disgust, appear, lies in the discordance between optical sensations and motor sensations [*SE* 2: 210–11].

I have in fact already observed in more than one person, to the point where the analysis of such a thing is possible, the sort of short-circuit that is established between the phallus signifier, in the form of which the perception of the Other in desire is actualized, and what, at that moment, can only appear empty to the subject, namely, the place that the organ would normally occupy, I mean between the legs, and which is at that moment evoked only as a place. I have ten observations I could give you on this point, in all sorts of forms, whether totally clear and raw or variously symbolic, with the subject stating it clearly, nevertheless – it's insofar as the Other as object of desire is perceived as the phallus and insofar as, as such, he is perceived as a lack at the place of his own phallus, that the subject experiences something that resembles a very curious form of dizziness. Someone has even gone so far as to compare it to a kind of metaphysical dizziness experienced in other circumstances, the rarest of circumstances, with respect to the notion of being itself, insofar as it lies subjacent to everything that is.

I will end there today. We will come back to the dialectic of being and having in the hysteric, and we will progress further when we see what point this takes us to in the obsessional.

I will tell you this straightaway, and you must feel it anyway – this isn't unconnected to an entire dialectic, a different one, an imaginary one, for which a theory has not only been proposed to you, but patients have been more or less forced to swallow it with a particular

technique concerning obsessional neurosis, and where the phallus as imaginary element plays the dominant role therein.

We shall see what theoretical and technical rectifications we can contribute by no longer regarding the phallus as an image or a fantasy, but as a signifier.

7 May 1958

XXII

THE OTHER'S DESIRE

Three articles by Maurice Bouvet
The graph of desire
The third 'still waters run deep' dream
The future of the obsessional's fixed ideas
The supports of desire

Fonderung : Demand *Begehren* : Desire *Bedürfnis* : Need	*Wunsch* : The dream's desire

Our trajectory, in which the theme of the phallus plays an essential role, has brought us to the point of grasping more fully what in analysis is advanced concerning the notion of object.

We must both centre our attention on the effective function that the object relation plays in contemporary analytic practice, the way it's used and the services that that renders, and at the same time attempt to spell out more fully what we have specified in speaking about the phallus.

1

As to the first part of this programme, we can refer to an article that with time has come to assume historical value, published in 1953 in the *Revue Française de Psychanalyse,* authored by Maurice Bouvet and on '*Le moi dans la névrose obsessionelle*' ['The Ego in Obsessional Neurosis']. In reality, it's solely about object relations in the obsessional, and something to explore would be why the author gave it this unsuitable title, when he actually says nothing about the ego in obsessional neurosis, except – it's weak, it's strong.

The author has, at the end of the day, adopted an attitude of prudence on this matter that one can only praise.

I will mention two earlier articles by the same author. One, dated 388
December 1948, appeared in 1950 in the same journal under the title '*Incidences thérapeutiques de la prise de conscience de l'envie du pénis dans la névrose obsessionnelle féminine*' ['Therapeutic Effects of Becoming Aware of Penis Envy in Obsessional Neurosis in Women']. The freshness of this first approach to the function of the penis in obsessional neurosis gives this article its value. It enables one to gauge how much things have gone rather downhill since, for this still new experience provides an interesting reflection on the question. The other was published in the July–September 1948 issue, '*Importance de l'aspect homosexuel du transfert dans quatre cas de névrose obsessionnelle masculine*' ['Importance of the Homosexual Aspect of the Transference in Four Cases of Obsessional Neurosis in Men'].

These are the three things to read, since there are not all that many articles written in French on the topic. They show reasonably well the level that things are now at on these problems. Moreover, rereading them can't fail to create an overall impression that will provide a basis for what we can manage to explore, or so it seems to me, concerning the exact articulation of the issue, and will enable us to situate the value and significance of a therapeutic approach centred thereon. When one sees object relations being articulated in synoptic tables enabling one to follow the object's progressive constitution, one realizes that these are, at least in part, false windows. I do not believe that either the genital object or the pre-genital object has any other significance here than to embellish the beauty of the said synoptic tables.

What gives the object relation its value and is its pivot, what introduced the notion of object into the analytic dialectic, is above all what is known as the part object. The term is taken from Abraham's vocabulary, in a manner that isn't quite exact, since what the latter spoke of was the partial love for the object, and this shift in meaning is itself already significant. It requires no great effort to identify the part object purely and simply with this phallus we are talking about – and must all the more readily talk about given that we have endowed it with such significance, which removes any discomfort we might have over treating it as a privileged object. We know that it deserves this privilege as a signifier. It's because of their extraordinary discomfort at giving such privilege to a particular organ that authors have ended up not mentioning it at all, whereas it's in virtually every analysis.

If you reread these articles, you will see that there is one enormous fact, centre stage, across every page, which is that the phallus is taken – not only by the psychoanalyst in question, but by all those who listened to him – at the level of fantasy. From the author's
389 perspective, the treatment for obsessional neurosis entirely revolves around the incorporation or imaginary introjection of this phallus that appears in the analytic dialogue in the form of a phallus attributed to the analyst and to which all fantasies refer.

There are, supposedly, two phases. In the first, fantasies of incorporation and devoration of this fantasmatic phallus have a clearly aggressive and sadistic character at the same time as it's experienced as horrible and dangerous. These fantasies have the value of being capable of revealing the subject's position in relation to the object constitutive of its stage, which, in this instance, is that of the second phase of the anal-sadistic stage, marked by fundamental tendencies to destroy the object. From there, one moves to a second phase in which one begins to respect the object's autonomy in an at least partial form.

The entire dialectic of the moment – the subjective moment, I would say here – at which obsessional neurosis is situated is, it's claimed, suspended at the point of maintaining a certain form of the part object. A world can be established around this object – a world that isn't completely destined to be fundamentally destroyed by the stage immediately subjacent to the precarious equilibrium which the subject has achieved. The obsessional is effectively presented as always ready to lapse into destruction of the world, since, from the perspective from which the author expresses himself, one also thinks in terms of the subject's relationship to his environment. It is through maintaining the part object – maintenance that requires an entire scaffolding, which is precisely what constitutes obsessional neurosis – that the subject is said to avoid lapsing into a permanently threatening psychosis. This is quite clearly what the author considers to be the very basis of the problem.

Still, one can't fail to object that whatever the obsessional's parapsychotic symptoms – depersonalization, for example, disturbances of the ego and feelings of estrangement and the darkening of the world, all feelings obviously touching on mood [*couleur*], even perhaps on the structure of the ego – the cases of transition from obsession to psychosis, while they have always existed, have always been extremely rare. Authors observed long ago that, on the contrary, there was a sort of incompatibility between the two afflictions. When a real obsessional neurosis is involved, the idea that one runs the risk in analysis of not curing the subject but of seeing him lapse into psychosis is a risk that seems extraordinarily

fantasmatic, for it's really the thing that one runs the least risk of. That an obsessional, in the course of an analysis, even subsequent to an unfortunate or even wild therapeutic intervention, lapses into 390
psychosis is very, very, very rare. Personally I've never seen it in my practice, thank God. Nor have I ever had the impression that this was a risk I was running with these patients.

An appraisal like that must betray a little more than a simple lack of discernment in clinical experience. One can assume that the author's concern to assure the coherence of his theory leads him further than he wants. Very probably there is, no doubt, also something that goes even further, and which derives from the author's own particular position when faced with the obsessional. It's not a question of speaking about the countertransference of a particular person, but of the countertransference in a more general sense, where one may consider it as formed by what I often call the analyst's prejudices, in other words, the background of things said or not said against which his discourse is articulated.

This practice is led, then, in the specific therapeutics with obsessional neurosis, to take as its pivot the fantasy of the imaginary incorporation of the phallus, the analyst's phallus. It's a bit difficult to see at what moment, or why, the about-turn occurs, unless it's through what one may suppose is a kind of effect by attrition. It's actually a bit mysterious. We are told there is a moment where, by virtue of the 'working through' or of insistence in the treatment, the incorporation of phallic fantasies seems to have a completely different value to the subject. What appears to have been the incorporation of a dangerous and in some way repudiated object in these fantasies suddenly changes in nature, provoking acceptance and becoming a welcome object, an object that is a source of power – 'source', the word is there, I am not the one creating this metaphor.

Doesn't this introjection, which has become, we are told, conservative, 'have traits in common with religious communion in which one swallows without chewing?' [p. 172] One adds by way of commentary that the 'feelings of happiness' that this fantasy supposedly brings 'comprises no destruction, similar in that respect to the sucking fantasies of Abraham's melancholics' [p. 172].

These traits are not chosen in any tendentious way. We do get the sense that in an analysis conducted in this way something effectively occurs like a kind of ascesis that plays principally on fantasies, no doubt in doses, with barriers, with the brakes on and in stages, with all the precautions that the technique carries, and that it enables the subject of an obsessional neurosis to enter into new relationships with the object. It is more difficult to see what one wants out of it,

which the author calls the distance from the object. If I understand well, it's a matter of enabling the subject to get closer to the object and pass through a phase in which this distance is nullified and,
391 no doubt, then recovered – at least, we have to hope so. An object which has all the powers of fear and danger successively concentrated upon itself subsequently becomes the symbol by which a libidinal relation that is considered more normal and described as genital is established.

From our perspective, we remain perhaps a little more strict than the author who congratulates himself on having achieved the aim of having garnered from a patient, after a number of months of treatment, the following declaration – 'I had an extraordinary experience, that of being able to enjoy my husband's happiness, I was extremely moved to observe his joy, and his pleasure was my pleasure' [p. 164].

I ask you to weigh these terms. They are certainly not without value. They describe very well an experience that implies no lifting of the said patient's prior frigidity. The extraordinary experience of being able to enjoy her husband's happiness is something frequently observed, but it still doesn't signify that the patient has in any way attained orgasm. The patient remains, we are told, semi-frigid. This is why one remains a little surprised when the author immediately adds: 'Is this not the best way to characterize adult genital relations?' [p. 164].

The notion of adult genital relations is obviously what gives this entire perspective the character of being a construction of false windows. It's not very clear what 'adult genital relation' means when you examine it closely.

As soon as the author tries to explain himself, he doesn't seem to find either the simplicity or the unity that that seems to imply. 'As to affirming the ego's coherence, not only does it emerge from the disappearance of an obsessional symptomatology and phenomena of depersonalization, but also it translates into the achieving of a sense of freedom of unity which is a new experience for these subjects' [p. 164]. Nor do these optimistic approximations exactly correspond to our experience of what progress and cure really represent in obsessional neurosis.

We clearly see here what kind of mountain, wall or ready-made conception we are dealing with when it's a question of appraising what an obsessional structure is, the manner in which it's lived and the manner in which it evolves. Here we are trying to articulate things in a completely different register. I don't think I am any more complicated than others, and if you can manage to familiarize yourselves with the measures I bring into play here, and count them, you

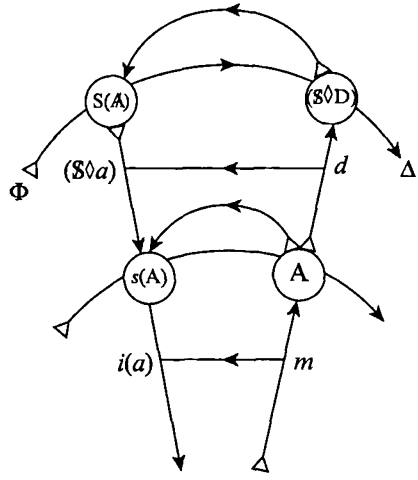
will see that, in the end, there are not that many more things and that this is simply articulated in another less unilinear way.

I am well aware that the desire to have a synoptic table corresponding to or contradicting the one by Mrs Ruth Mack Brunswick 392
lies deep in the heart of many in the audience. We will perhaps get there one day, but before we do it's perhaps best to proceed step by step and start by criticizing the notion of the phallus as a part object whose present use, which involves clear dangers, has to be put in its proper place.

We are trying to articulate this place with the use of this little schema.

2

It would be possible to cover the entire schema with signs and equations, but I do not want to give you the impression of something artificial, even though I have tried to reduce things to their essential necessity.



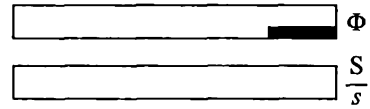
We've already placed here the big A, the big Other, which is where the code is located and receives demands. It's in the passage from A to the point where the message is that the signified of the Other [s(A)] is produced. And then, need, which begins here, finds itself transformed there [at A], and is characterized differently at the different levels. If we take this line [that starts bottom right and ends bottom left] as the line of the realization of the subject, at the end it translates into something that always emerges more or less as an

identification, that is, as the remodelling, as the transformation also and ultimately the passage of the subject's need through the defiles of demand.

Now, we know that this isn't sufficient to constitute a satisfactory
393 subject, a subject who holds together over the requisite number, let's say four, of points of support. This is why there is a field beyond demand.

What I have already tried to define by characterizing it as the signifier of desire is initially articulated there, in its topological place, and I have explicitly presented it to you as this Φ. There is, effectively, a necessity linked to this topology, which is that it's in the field lying beyond demand that sexual desire comes to be situated and, at the same time, undergoes the articulation particular to this beyond.

The line on which the drive, the tendency as such, is inscribed and the place assigned to the capital Phi in the beyond-demand coincide here by virtue of the structural necessity that something come and superimpose itself on the set of signifiers to make a signified of it, which is what we usually place below the bar of our formulation, big S over small s. Here the signified is initially a 'to be signified'.



The phallus is this particular signifier which, in the body of signifiers, is specialized for designating the overall effects of the signifier, as such, on the signified. That goes a long way, but there is no way of not going this far to give the phallus its signification. It occupies a privileged place here in what of the signifier will be produced in the beyond of desire – that is, the entire field located beyond the field of demand.

To the extent that this beyond of desire is symbolized, there is the possibility – this is simply articulating the sense of what I am saying – that there is a relationship between the subject and demand as such: [$ ◊ D]. It is quite clear that such a relationship assumes that the subject isn't completely included therein prior to the moment at which this beyond is constituted, even if, by hypothesis, the subject is constituted through being articulated, thanks to the phallus signifier.

On the near side, which is the field of demand, the pure and simple Other creates all the law of the subject's constitution – even if only taken simply at the level of the existence of his body – by virtue of the fact that the mother is a speaking being. The fact that she is a

speaking being is absolutely essential, whatever Spitz might think. It's not only the little kisses and cuddles and dabs of eau de cologne that constitute a relationship to the mother. The mother has to speak to him or her, everyone knows that. Not only does she speak to him, undoubtedly, but a mute nurse would not fail to produce certain fairly visible consequences on the infant's development.

Beyond this Other, if something called the beyond of desire is 394
constituted by signifiers, we then have the possibility of the relationship [$ ◊ D]. $ is the subject as such, a less complete, barred subject. That means that a complete human subject is never a pure and simple subject of knowledge, as all of philosophy constructs it, well and truly corresponding to the *percipiens* of this *perceptum* that is the world. We know that there is no human subject who is a pure subject of knowledge, save reducing him to a photoelectric cell or an eye or, again, to what in philosophy is called a consciousness. But as we are analysts, we know that there is always a *Spaltung*, that is, there are always two lines along which he is constituted. This, moreover, is where all our problems of structure originate.

Here on the upper left, what has to be formed? It's precisely what I no longer call the signified of A, *s*(A), but the signifier of A, S(A), insofar as the subject knows this *Spaltung*, is structured by it and has already undergone its effects. That means that he is already marked by this signifier-effect that is signified by the phallus signifier. This is, therefore, the A insofar as the phallus is barred within it and brought to the state of a signifier. This Other as castrated is represented here in the place of the message. The terms are inverted in relation to the message at the lower level. Desire's message is that.

Nevertheless, this isn't to say that this message is easy to receive, precisely because of this difficulty of articulating desire, which brings it about that there is an unconscious. In other words, we must imagine, in fact, that what is presented here as on the upper level of the schema is ordinarily on the lower level and not articulated in the subject's consciousness, although well and truly articulated in his unconscious. It's even because it's articulated in his unconscious that it exists. This is the question we are asking here – it's articulable in the subject's consciousness, but up to a point, and the question is knowing precisely what point.

What does the hysteric who we spoke about last time show us? The hysteric, of course, isn't psychoanalysed, otherwise, by hypothesis, she would no longer be an hysteric. The hysteric, as I have said, situates this beyond in the form of a desire that is the Other's desire. I will justify that to you a little bit more later, but for now – because, if one is trying to articulate something, it's quite necessary to start by commenting on it – I will tell you that things happen as follows.

In the first loop, the subject, via the manifestation of need, its tension, crosses the first signifying line of demand, and we can place
395 here, so as to topologize things, the ego's [*m*] relation to the image of the other, the imaginary little *a* [*i(a)*]. Similarly, in the second loop the little *d* of desire – which in the Other as big Other enables the subject to access this beyond that is to be signified and which is the field we are in the process of exploring, that of his desire – occupies the corresponding place to that of the little *m*. This simply expresses the fact that the subject will encounter the desire of the Other as such, in the place at which the subject has sought to articulate his desire.

I have been developing this using other terms over a long period of time, but also using the formula that the desire in question, namely desire in its unconscious function, is the Other's desire. This is a formula founded on [analytic] experience and which was verified last time when I spoke about the hysteric with reference to dreams.

Let's pick up this thread.

3

These are not selected dreams, any more than I give you selected texts of Freud.

If you apply yourselves to reading Freud, as it seems is starting to happen, I can't advise you too much to read him entirely, failing which you run the risk of coming across passages that will perhaps not have been selected, but which will be no less a source of all sorts of errors, even of *fausses reconnaissances*. You have to see what place such-and-such a text fits into in – I won't say the development of a thought, even though it would be right to say so, but ever since we started talking about thought, the term has become so hackneyed that we never quite know what we are talking about – the development of the research, the efforts of someone who has a certain idea about his magnetic field, as it were, and can only achieve it through a particular detour. Each of these detours has to be judged by the road taken overall.

Thus, I didn't choose the two dreams from last time, the hysteric's dreams, at random. I explained to you how I chose them. I chose the first dream because I came across it after other dreams, and I explained the reasons why I didn't choose them first. I will come back to this. The dream of the botanical monograph can help us understand what there is to demonstrate, but since it's one of Freud's dreams, it's best to explain it later.

First, I will continue the discussion of the hysteric's dream.

The hysteric showed us that what she discovers in the Other's desire is what can be called her point of support – this isn't a term whose use I reserve for myself, and if you read Mr Glover on obsessional neurosis, you will see that he uses exactly the same term to say that when one has withdrawn obsessional neurotics' obsessions from them, they lack their point of support. You'll see that the terms I make use of I have in common with other authors – we are all trying to metaphorize our experience, our little impressions. The hysteric, then, takes her point of support, as I was saying, from a desire that is the Other's desire. It's this creation of a desire beyond demand that is essential, and I think I have articulated it adequately. 396

One might mention here the third dream that I did not have time to explore last time, but I can easily read it out to you now.

> She was putting a candle in a candlestick; but the candle broke so that it wouldn't stand up properly. The girls at her school said she was clumsy; but the mistress said it was not her fault. [*SE* 4: 186]

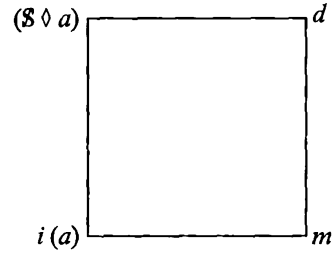
This is Freud's comment on the dream: 'The occasion for the dream was a real event. The day before she had actually put a candle into a candlestick, though it did not break.' That is symbolic, and, to be frank, we know what a candle signifies. 'If it won't stand up properly, it means that the man is impotent.' And Freud emphasizes the 'It was not her fault, *Es sie nicht ihre Schuld*' [*SE* 4: 186].

'But could a carefully brought-up young woman, who had been screened from the impact of anything ugly, have known that a candle might be put to such use?' [*SE* 4: 187]. On this point we learn that during a boating trip, she had heard a rather unseemly students' song about the use that the Queen of Sweden made of Apollo's candles, behind closed shutters. She did not understand. Her husband explained the Apollo to her, behind closed shutters of course, and it all re-emerges and suitably frolics around when the occasion arises.

Here we see the phallus appear in a raw state, one might say, and appear isolated, with the status of a part, if not a flying, object. Although we don't know from what moment of this patient's analysis – for she is clearly in analysis – this dream was extracted, the important point is obviously in the 'It was not her fault'. The fact is that it's at the level of the others. It takes place in the presence of all the others, and it's because of the teacher that all the little classmates stop their mocking. The symbol of the Other is evoked, and it corroborates and confirms – this is what I want to get to – what was already present in the dream called the dream by the butcher's

beautiful wife, that is, that in hysteria, which is in short a mode of constitution of the subject precisely concerning her sexual desire, the
397 stress is to be placed not only on the dimension of desire insofar as it's opposed to that of demand, but above all on the Other's desire, the position or the place of desire in the Other.

I reminded you how Dora lives up till her hysterical position collapses. She is very much at ease, apart from some minor symptoms, but they are precisely those that constitute her as an hysteric and can be read in the *Spaltung* of these two lines. We shall return to the overdetermination of symptoms, which is tied to the existence of these two signifying lines. What we saw the other day is that Dora subsists as a subject insofar as she demands love, like every good hysteric, but also insofar as she supports the Other's desire as such – it's she who supports it, it's she who is its support. Everything is going along very well, rolling along as happily as can be, and without anyone having anything to be worried about. Saying that she supports the Other's desire is the most suitable expression for the style of her position and action in relation to her father and to Frau K. As I have been indicating, it's inasmuch as she comes to identify with Herr K. that the whole little construction is possible. In the face of desire, she is the support, in that place, of a certain relationship with the other, the imaginary other, indicated by [$\$ \lozenge a$].



Here I've drawn a little square whose four corners are represented by the ego, the image of the other, the now constituted subject's relationship to the imaginary other, and desire. These are the four feet on which a human subject can normally stand, a human subject constituted as human – that is, who is neither more nor less aware of the functioning and strings of the mechanism controlling the marionette of the other in which he sees himself, that is, in which he is capable, or more or less capable, of orientating himself.

The hysterical subject is here, opposite the Other's desire, and, as I showed last time, without things actually going beyond, because,
398 ultimately, one can say that, in the hysteric, the line of return from

[$ ◊ *a*] back to *i(a)* is weaker. This, moreover, is the reason that the hysteric has all kinds of difficulties with her imaginary, here represented by the other's image, and that she is susceptible to seeing effects of fragmentation and various forms of disintegration appear in it, which are what she makes use of in her symptoms.

So much for the hysteric. How do we now formulate what occurs in an obsessional structure?

Obsessional neurosis is much more complicated than hysterical neurosis, but not so much more. If one succeeds in pointing out the essential things, one can formulate it, but if one doesn't, which is certainly the case with the author that I was speaking about before, Bouvet, one literally ends up lost in it, one floats around between the sadistic, the anal, the part object, incorporation and distance from the object. One literally doesn't know where to turn. It's exceedingly diverse clinically, as the author shows in his cases – which it seems scarcely possible to bring under one single clinical rubric – that go by the names of Pierre and Paul, without mentioning the Moniques and the Jeannes. In the clinical material in the article, '*Le moi*', there are only Pierre and Paul. Now, obviously, Pierre and Paul are completely different subjects from the point of view of the object's features. One can hardly place them under the same heading – which isn't an objection in itself, since for the moment we are not in a position to articulate any other nosological categories ourselves.

It is very striking to see that, ever since we have been treating obsessional neurosis, we are incapable of dismembering it, as would obviously be required of us clinically given the diversity of aspects it presents us with. One recalls the fine words of Plato about the knife of the good cook, the one who knows how to cut at the joints. In the current state of things, no one, and particularly no one who has ever worked with obsessional neurosis, is capable of formulating it correctly. This is quite an indication of some theoretical deficiency.

Let's go back to where we were.

What does the obsessional do in order to consist as a subject? He is like the hysteric, rest assured. Immediately before any serious elaboration – namely, before Freud – a Mr Janet managed to carry out a very curious exercise of geometrical superimposition, a point-by-point correspondence of images, as they say in geometry, of transformation of figures, where the obsessional is thought of, as it were, as a transformed hysteric. The obsessional, too, is orientated towards desire. If it were not a question of desire above all else, there 399
would be no homogeneity in the neuroses.

Except, there you have it. What, in his final formulation, does Freud tell us? What is his final word on obsessional neurosis, which classical theory echoes?

Freud said many things over the course of his career. He initially observed that what one may call the obsessional's primitive traumatism contrasts with the hysteric's primitive traumatism. In the hysteric, there is a sudden seduction, an intrusion or an irruption of the sexual into the subject's life. In the obsessional, inasmuch as the psychic traumatism supports the critique of reconstruction, the subject has, on the contrary, played an active role from which he has derived pleasure.

That was the first approximation. This was followed by all the developments in the *Rat Man*, namely the appearance of the extreme complexity of his affective relations, and notably the emphasis placed on affective ambivalence, the active–passive, masculine–feminine opposition and, most important thing of all, the love–hate antagonism. You must reread the *Rat Man* like the Bible, moreover. The case is rich with everything that still remains to be said on obsessional neurosis. It's a topic for study.

Where did Freud ultimately end up, in his final metapsychological formulation? Clinical experiences and metapsychological developments brought aggressive tendencies to light, which brought him to draw the distinction between life instincts and death instincts that has not stopped tormenting analysts since. According to Freud, in the obsessional there is a defusion of the early intrications of life instincts and death instincts. The detachment as such of destructive tendencies took place at too early a stage in him for it not to have marked all his subsequent development and installation in his particular subjectivity.

How is this to be inserted into the dialectic that I am presenting to you? Much more immediately, concretely and perceptibly. If these terms 'demand' and 'desire' begin to find their logic in your head, you will find a daily use for them, at least in your analytic practice. On a daily basis you will be able to use them before they wear out, but you will always come back to asking yourselves whether it's a question of desire and demand or desire or demand.

What does what I have just gone over for you concerning the instincts of destruction mean? The latter manifest themselves in clinical experience, which at first we have to take at the common
400 and ordinary level of what we know about obsessionals – not even those that we analyse, but those whom, simply as informed psychologists, we see living and breathing and on whose behaviour we are capable of assessing the effect of neurosis. It is quite clear that the obsessional has a tendency to destroy his object. It's merely a matter of not being satisfied with what is almost a self-evident truth of experience and seeing what the obsessional's destructive activity is close up.

That is what I propose to do.

As clinical experience clearly demonstrates, the hysteric lives entirely at the level of the Other. She emphasizes being at the level of the Other, and that is the reason that the Other's desire must exist, for without it, what would the Other be, apart from the law? The centre of gravity of the hysteric's constitutive movement is initially located at the level of the Other. Likewise, for reasons that are not impossible to spell out, and which are, in sum, identical with what Freud says when speaking of the early defusion of instincts, it's the aim of desire as such, of this beyond-demand, that is constitutive of the obsessional. But with one obvious difference from the hysteric.

I would like you to have some experience with a child who is going to become an obsessional. I believe that there are no young subjects where it's more tangible that what I called desire is located in the margin of need. As I tried to spell out for you last time when I presented to you that the margin of need, whose range is necessarily a limited range – as when one speaks of a company of limited liability, for need is always something whose range is limited – the margin, then, exists between need and the unconditional character of the demand for love. How did I define this desire as such? As something that, precisely because it has to be situated beyond, negates the element of otherness that is included in the demand for love.

But, so as to preserve the unconditional character of this demand by transforming it into an absolute condition of desire, into desire in a pure state, the Other is negated. By virtue of the fact that the subject has had to know, and break through, the unconditioned in the demand for love, which has a limit-character, this character remains and finds itself transferred onto need.

The young child who becomes an obsessional is this young child of whom the parents say – everyday language and the language of psychologists converge – 'He does have his fixed ideas [*idées fixes*]'. The ideas he has are no more extraordinary than those of any other child, if we think about the things he demands. He will demand a little box. It's not such a big deal, a little box, and there are lots of children where one won't pause for a moment over this demand 401
for a little box – except psychoanalysts, of course, who will find all sorts of fine allusions here. In fact, they wouldn't be wrong, but I find it more important to see that there are some children, amongst all children, who demand little boxes, and their parents find that this demand for a little box is strictly speaking intolerable – and it is intolerable.

One would be wrong to think that it would be enough to send the said parents to parenting school for remediation, because, contrary to what people say, the parents are implicated. It's not for nothing

that one is obsessional. One has to have a model for that somewhere. So much is granted, but in the reception itself, the fixed-idea aspect that the parents point to is completely discernible, and is always immediately discerned, even by people who are not part of the parental couple.

In this very particular requirement that manifests itself in the way the child demands a little box, what is intolerable for the Other and which people loosely call a fixed idea, is that it isn't a demand just like any other, but that it presents with the characteristic of being an absolute condition, which is the very characteristic that I have been referring to as specific to desire. For reasons whose correspondence you can see with what might in this case be called strong drives, the emphasis for the subject is placed on what will be the element of the initial foundation of this tripod – which must subsequently have four legs if it's to stand up – namely, on desire. And not merely on desire, but on desire as such, that is, insofar as, in its constitution, it entails the Other's destruction. Desire is the absolute form of need, need that has passed to the state of an absolute condition, insofar as it lies beyond the unconditional demand for love, of which it can sometimes become the proof.

As such, desire negates the Other as such, and this is what renders it, like the desire for the little box in the young child, so intolerable.

Pay close attention here, because when I say that desire is the destruction of the Other I am not saying the same thing as when I say that the hysteric seeks her desire in the Other's desire. When I say that the hysteric seeks her desire in the Other's desire, it's the desire that she attributes to the Other as such. When I say that the obsessional puts his own desire before everything else, that means that he seeks it in a beyond by aiming for it as such in its constitution as desire, that is, insofar as it destroys the Other. That is the secret of the profound contradiction between the obsessional and his desire.

402 Thus aimed for, desire carries within itself this internal contradiction, which constitutes the impasse of the obsessional's desire and which authors try to translate by speaking about this perpetual and instantaneous toing-and-froing between introjection and projection.

I must say that this is something extremely difficult to represent to oneself, above all when one has adequately indicated, as the quoted author does in certain places, the extent to which the mechanisms of introjection and projection bear no relationship to one another. I have spelt it out for you more powerfully than this author has, but it's where one has to start from, all the same – namely, that the mechanism of projection is imaginary, and that the mechanism of introjection is symbolic. They bear absolutely no relationship to one another.

On the other hand, you can see, and you will find this in your experience on condition that you are alert to it, how the obsessional is inhabited by desires which, provided you tackle them a little bit, you will see swarming with an extraordinary species of vermin. If you steer the culture of obsessional neurosis in the direction of fantasy – it doesn't take much, it's enough to have the elements of your transference that I was talking about before – you will see a proliferation of said vermin in just about anything you like. That's why the culture of obsessional neurosis doesn't last long.

But, in the end, to see what's essential, what happens when, from time to time, the obsessional, taking his courage in his two hands, endeavours to cross the barrier of demand, that is, sets out in search of the object of his desire? For a start, he doesn't find it easily, even though there are many things that he is already accustomed to and can use as a support, even if it's only a little box. It is clear that down this path the most extraordinary accidents will befall him – accidents that one will try to account for at different levels by bringing in the superego, and a thousand other functions which, of course, do exist. But, much more radically than all that, the obsessional, insofar as his fundamental movement is directed at desire as such, above all in its constitution as desire, is moved to aim for what I am calling the Other's destruction.

Now it's in the nature of desire as such to require the Other's support. The Other's desire isn't a means of access to the subject's desire, it's quite simply the place of desire, and all movement by the obsessional towards his desire runs into a barrier which is absolutely tangible in the movement of his libido, as it were. In an obsessional's psychology, the more something plays the role of the object, even momentarily, of desire, the more the subject's law of approach in relation to this object will literally manifest itself in a lowering of libidinal tension. And this, to the point where, when he possesses 403
the object of his desire, nothing exists for him any longer. This is absolutely observable, and I will try to show it to you with some examples.

The problem for the obsessional is therefore entirely one of providing support for this desire – a desire which, for him, conditions the Other's destruction, where desire itself comes to disappear. There is no big Other here. I am not saying that the big Other doesn't exist for the obsessional, I am saying that there isn't one, where his desire is involved, and this is for the reason that he is seeking the only thing that, outside this point of reference, can maintain this desire as such in its place. The entire problem of the obsessional is to find the only thing that can give his desire a semblance of support, corresponding to this point that the hysteric, owing to her identifications, occupies

so easily, namely what is opposite *d*, the formula $\mathbb{S}$ in relation to little *a*.

The hysteric finds support for her desire in her identification with the imaginary other. What takes its place and function in the obsessional is an object, one that is always – in a veiled form, no doubt, but recognizable – reducible to the phallus signifier.

I will end there today. In what follows, you will see the consequences for the behaviour of the obsessional vis-à-vis this object, and also vis-à-vis the little other. I will show you next time how a number of far more common truths can be deduced – for example, that the subject can only truly focus his desire by contrasting it with what I will call absolute virility, and also that insofar as he has to show his desire, since for him this is the essential requirement, he can only show it elsewhere, some place where he is required to surmount some exploit.

The performance aspect of all the obsessional's activity finds its reasons and motives here.

14 May 1958

XXIII

THE OBSESSIONAL AND HIS DESIRE

The duality of desire
The significance of fantasy
Sadistic scenarios
Permission, prohibition, exploit
The significance of acting out

Our exploration of neurotic structures as conditioned by what I call formations of the unconscious led us last time to the point of talking about the obsessional, and I ended by saying that he has to constitute himself in the face of his evanescent desire.

I started to show why his desire is evanescent on the basis of the formula 'Desire is the Other's desire'. The reason for that is to be found in a fundamental difficulty in his relationship with the Other, insofar as it's the locus where the signifier organizes desire.

It's this dimension that I am trying to articulate here, because I think that both the difficulties in theory and the deviations in practice were introduced by the failure to have identified it.

In passing, I want you to appreciate what Freud's discovery consists in and what the meaning of his work is, when it is considered once one has gone through it sufficiently and as a whole. The fact is that desire is organized by signifiers – but, of course, inside this phenomenon the subject tries to express, to manifest in an effect of signifiers as such, what is happening in his own approach to the signified.

Freud's work itself is inserted into this effort, up to a point. Many have spoken of naturalism with respect to him, of an effort to reduce human reality to nature. There is nothing of the sort. Freud's work is an attempt at a pact between the being of man and nature. This pact is without doubt sought elsewhere than in any innate relationship, since man is always experienced in Freud's work on the basis of the fact that he is constituted as a subject of speech, as the *I* of

406 the speech act. How can one deny it, since in analysis he is experienced in no other way? He finds himself, then, opposite nature, in a position that is different from that of being an immanent vehicle of life. The subject's relationship to nature comes to be formulated internally to the experience he has of speech.

His relationship to life comes to be symbolized by the phallus signifier, this lure he extracts from forms of life, and it's here that the central point is located, the most tangible and most significant of all the signifier crossroads that we explore over the course of a subject's analysis. The phallus is its pinnacle, its point of equilibrium. It's the signifier par excellence of man's relationship to the signified and is in a privileged position as a consequence.

Man's insertion into sexual desire is destined to a special problematic, the primary feature of which is that it has to find a place in something that preceded it, which is the dialectic of demand, insofar as demand always demands something that is more than the satisfaction which it's appealing to, something that goes beyond. Hence the problematic and ambiguous character of the place in which desire is located. This place is always beyond demand inasmuch as demand aims for the satisfaction of need, and it lies on this side of demand inasmuch as the latter, by virtue of being articulated in symbolic terms, goes beyond all the satisfactions to which it appeals, inasmuch as it's a demand for love, which targets the being of the Other and aims to obtain from the Other this essential presentification, inasmuch as the Other gives his very being, which lies beyond all possible satisfaction and is precisely what is aimed at in love.

It's in the virtual space between the appeal for satisfaction and the demand for love that desire has to assume its place and be organized. This is why we can only locate it in a place that is always double with respect to demand, both beyond and short of, according to the aspect under which we are considering demand – demand in relation to a need, or demand structured in terms of signifiers.

As such, desire always goes beyond every possible kind of response at the level of satisfaction, in itself calls for an absolute response and henceforth projects its essential characteristic of being an absolute condition onto everything that is organized in the interval internal to the two planes of demand – the signified plane and the signifier plane. It's in this interval that desire has to find its place and be articulated.

For precisely this reason, the Other becomes the relay for the subject's access to his desire. The Other as locus of speech, insofar
407 as demand is addressed to it, will also be the locus in which desire, or the possible formulation of desire, has to be discovered. This is

where a contradiction is constantly operating, for this Other is possessed by a desire – a desire which, inaugurally and fundamentally, is alien to the subject. Hence, the difficulties in formulating desire, difficulties at which the subject will stumble, made all the more significant by the fact that we see him developing the neurotic structures that the analytic discovery has made it possible to describe.

These structures differ according as the emphasis is placed on the unsatisfaction of desire – and this is the mode in which the hysteric accesses its field and its necessity – or on the dependence on the Other for access to this desire, which is the mode in which this access is made available to the obsessional. By virtue of this fact, as I said at the end of the last session, something happens for the obsessional here in [$ ◊ *a*], which is different from hysterical identification.

1

For the hysteric, desire is a point of enigma, and we always bring to it, as it were, this sort of forced interpretation that characterizes all Freud's early explorations of hysteria.

Effectively, Freud didn't see that for the hysteric desire is located in a position such that telling her 'This or that person is whom you desire' is always a forced, inexact interpretation, wide of the mark. Either in Freud's initial observations, or later in the case of Dora, or even, if we extend the meaning of the word 'hysteria' to the case of the young homosexual woman that I discussed at length here last year, there is no example where Freud didn't make this mistake, and which didn't, at least, result, with no exception, in the patient's refusal to agree to the meaning of the desire of her symptoms and acts, whenever he went about it this way. Effectively, an hysteric's desire is not a desire for an object, but a desire for a desire, an effort to maintain herself opposite this point at which she calls for her desire, this point where the Other's desire is situated.

She identifies with an object, on the contrary. Dora identifies with Herr K., Elizabeth von R. identifies with different characters in her family or in her entourage. To describe the point where she identifies with someone, the terms 'ego' and 'ego-ideal' are equally inappropriate – in fact, for her, this someone becomes her other ego. It's a matter of an object the choice of which was always explicitly articulated by Freud in a manner consistent with what I am now telling you, namely that it's insofar as she or he recognizes in another man or in another woman the signs of her or his desire, 408
namely, that she or he is faced with the same problem of desire as the

other is, that identification arises – with all the forms of contagion, crisis, epidemic and symptomatic manifestations that are so typical of hysteria.

The obsessional has different relations, for the reason that the problem of the Other's desire presents itself to him in a completely different way. To spell this out, I am going to try to get to it through the stages that our experience offers us.

In a certain manner, it doesn't much matter from what direction we approach the obsessional's lived experience. We mustn't lose sight of its diversity. The paths traced out by analysis, those by which our experience – where, it has to be said, we're groping around – have encouraged us to find the solution to the problem of the obsessional, are incomplete or biased. Of course, they give us material. We can explain this material and the manner in which it's used in different ways in relation to the results obtained.

First, we can criticize the approaches themselves. The critiques have to converge. In spelling this experience out in the way in which it has been effectively oriented, it incontestably emerges that both theory and practice have tended to be centred on the subject's use of his fantasies. Now, the role of fantasies in the case of obsessional neurosis has something puzzling about it inasmuch as the term 'fantasy' is never defined. We have spoken at length here about imaginary relationships, about the image's function as a guide for the instinct, so to speak, as channelling or indicating the path to the instinct's realizations. We also know to what extent the use – insofar as one can discern it with certainty – of the image's function is diminished in man, since it seems to be reduced to the specular, narcissistic image. It is, however, an extremely polyvalent and not neutralized function, since it functions on the level of relations that are both aggressive and erotic.

How can we articulate the essential, prevailing imaginary functions, the ones everybody speaks of, that are at the heart of analytic experience, those of fantasy, at the point we have come to?

I believe that at this place [$\$ \lozenge a$], the schema presented to us here opens up the possibility of locating and articulating the function of fantasies. I ask you to represent it to yourselves first of all through an intuitive aspect, taking into account the fact that this isn't a real space, of course, but a topology in which homologies can be sketched out.

The relationship to the image of the other, *i(a)*, is located at
409 the level of an experience integrated into the original circuit of demand where the subject initially addresses himself to the Other for the satisfaction of his needs. It's therefore somewhere along this circuit that transitivism and the effect of one's 'presence' are

accommodated, placing the subject in a certain relationship to his semblable as such. The relationship to the image is thus found at the level of experiences from the time at which the child enters into the game of speech, at the limit of the passage from the infant state to the speaking state. Having said this, I would say that, in the other field, the one in which we look for the pathways to the realization of the subject's desire through access to the Other's desire, the function of fantasy is located at a homologous point – that is, at [$ ◊ *a*].

I will define fantasy, if you are happy with this, as the imaginary captured in a particular use of signifiers. Moreover, it manifests itself and is observable in characteristic ways, even if it's only when we speak of sadistic fantasies, for example, which play such an important role in the economy of an obsessional.

Do take good note that if I am describing it in these terms, if I qualify as sadistic the tendency that these manifestations represent for us, it's in connection with a particular work. This work itself is not presented as an investigation into instincts, but as a game which the term 'imaginary' would be very far from being adequate to characterize, since it's a literary work. I am referring to scenes, or to scenarios in fact – which are, therefore, profoundly expressed in signifiers. Well then, whenever we speak of fantasies, we must not misrecognize the scenario or story aspect, which constitutes one of their essential dimensions. They are not blind images of the instinct of destruction, they are not something in which the subject – I myself struggle to create an image of this that will explain to you what I mean – sees red all of a sudden when confronted with his prey, but a fantasy is not only something that the subject articulates into a scenario, but also something which the subject puts himself into. The formula, S with the little bar – that is, the subject at the most articulated point of his presentification in relation to the little *a* – is quite valid there for every kind of properly fantasmatic elaboration of what I call the sadistic tendency, inasmuch as it can be implicated in the economy of an obsessional.

You will notice that there is always a scene in which the subject is present in the scenario in different masked forms, in which he is implicated in a variety of images, in which another as semblable and also as the subject's reflection is presented. I would go even further – no one places sufficient emphasis on the presence of a certain type of instrument.

I have already alluded to the importance of whipping fantasies. Freud singled them out as seeming to play a very special role in 410
the female psyche. This is one aspect of the precise contribution he made on this topic. He came at it from an angle that came out of his experience, but this fantasy is far from being limited to the field

and cases that Freud spoke of on that occasion. If you look closely, it was quite legitimate to limit it in that way, inasmuch as this fantasy plays a particular role at a turning point in the development of female sexuality and at one particular place – quite precisely, insofar as the function of the phallus signifier comes into play. But this function plays no lesser role in obsessional neurosis and in every other case where we see so-called sadistic fantasies appear.

What is the element that gives this instrument its enigmatic prevalence? No one can say that its biological function would be explained in any way. You might imagine it could by looking for it along the lines of some sort of relationship with superficial excitations, stimulations of the skin, but you sense to what extent these explanations would have an incomplete and almost artificial character. What becomes attached to the function of this element, which appears so often in fantasies, is a signifying multivalence that does rather tilt the balance towards the signified than towards anything of any kind that could be deduced from the order of biological needs, or from anything else.

This notion of fantasy as something that undoubtedly partakes of the imaginary order, but which, at whatever point of its articulation, only ever functions in the economy through its signifying function, seems essential to me, and it has not been formulated as such till now. I would go further – I do not believe that there is any other way of conceptualizing what are called unconscious fantasies.

What is an unconscious fantasy, if not the latency of something which, as we know through everything that we have learnt about the organization of the structure of the unconscious, is completely thinkable in terms of a signifying chain? The fact that in the unconscious there are signifying chains, subsisting as such, which, from there, structure and act on the organism and influence what appears externally as a symptom, is the heart of the analytic experience. It's much more difficult to conceptualize the unconscious impact of whatever is imaginary than it is to put fantasies themselves at the level of a common measure that presents itself to us at the level of the unconscious – that is, signifiers. Fantasy is essentially an imaginary embedded in a particular signifying function.

I am not able to develop this approach any further for the
411 moment, and I intend simply to situate the fantasmatic effect at this point – barred S in relation to small *a*. It's characterized by being an articulated and always complex relation, a scenario, one able to remain latent for a long time at a certain point in the unconscious, even as it is organized nevertheless – just as a dream, for example, can only be conceptualized if the signifier function gives it its structure, consistency and, thereby, its insistence.

A common fact of experience, and one of the very first facts, concerning the analytic investigation of obsessionals is to observe the place that sadistic fantasies occupy for the obsessional. They occupy this place but do not necessarily occupy it in an overt and declared manner. On the other hand, in the obsessional metabolism, the various efforts the subject makes towards a re-equilibration make evident what the object of his equilibrating search is, namely, to successfully recognize himself in relation to his desire.

When we see a pure obsessional, in a state of nature, as happens to us or is said to happen to us in our published observations, we find someone who speaks to us above all about all sorts of impediments, inhibitions, barriers, fears, doubts and prohibitions. We also already know that at that point he won't speak to us about his fantasmatic life, but will take advantage of our therapeutic interventions or of his own autonomous attempts at a solution, at finding an outcome or elaborating his properly obsessional difficulty. He will reveal to us the more or less predominant invasiveness of his psychic life by fantasies. You know how much these fantasies are capable of assuming a truly invasive, absorbing and captivating form in certain subjects, capable of swallowing up whole areas of their psychic life, lived experience and mental occupations.

We describe these fantasies as sadistic – this is, as it happens, merely a label. In fact, they confront us with an enigma, insofar as we are unable to be satisfied with describing them as the manifestations of a tendency but must see in them an organization that itself signifies the subject's relations with the Other as such. Indeed, the question is about finding a formula for the economic role of these fantasies insofar as they are articulated.

It's characteristic of these fantasies in the obsessional subject to remain in the state of fantasies. They are only actualized in quite exceptional circumstances, and these actualizations are, moreover, always disappointing for the subject. In effect, we observe here the mechanics of the obsessional's relationship to desire – the more he strives to approach the object, by the means that have been proposed to him, the more his desire dies away to the point 412
of extinction or disappearance. I would say the obsessional is a Tantalus, had Tantalus not been presented to us through what is quite a rich iconography as an image that is above all oral. But it is, however, not for nothing that I present it thus, because we shall see the oral underpinning of what constitutes the point of equilibrium of obsessional fantasies as such.

Still, this oral dimension must exist, since, in the end, this is the plane of fantasy attained by the analyst I alluded to in connection with the therapeutic line traced out in the series of three articles I

have been referring to. Many analysts engaged in a practice of fantasmatic absorption in order to find a way for the obsessional to be given a new mode of equilibration, a certain temperament for him to realize his desire.

Some of the results there are undeniable, even if they remain subject to criticism.

2

You can already see that by approaching things from this angle we are only seeing one side of the problem. From the other side, one has to gradually deploy the whole range without misrecognizing what is present in the most apparent manner in the obsessional's symptoms, which are normally called the demands of the superego.

How should we think about these demands? What are their roots in the obsessional? That's what we will look at now.

We can identify, and we can read, what is going on in the obsessional at the level of this schema in a way that will subsequently prove to be no less fertile than what we have demonstrated so far.

One could say that the obsessional is always in the process of asking permission. You can see this concretely in what the obsessional tells you in his symptoms, where this is inscribed and frequently articulated. If we have confidence in the schema, this occurs at the level of [$ ◊ D]. To ask permission is, as a subject, to have a certain relationship to one's own demand. To ask permission, to the very extent that the dialectic with the Other – the Other as one who speaks – is called into question, challenged and even put in danger, is ultimately to apply oneself to restoring this Other and to place oneself in the most extreme dependence on
413 him. This already shows us the extent to which it's essential for the obsessional to maintain this place. It's where we see the relevance of what Freud always calls '*Versagung*', refusal. Refusal and permission mutually imply one another. A pact is refused against the background of a promise. This is more valuable than talking about frustration.

It's not at the level of demand pure and simple that the problem of relations with the Other arises, at least not when it involves a complete subject. The problem only arises in these terms when we try to take recourse in development and imagine a small child, powerless with its mother, like an object at the mercy of someone. But as soon as the subject is in a relationship with the Other whom we have defined in terms of speech, there is a virtual point somewhere beyond any response from the Other, and very precisely insofar as

speech creates this point beyond his response. Not only is it virtual, but, in truth, if there were no analysis, we would not be sure that anyone attains this point – save through this spontaneous master analysis that we always assume is possible in someone who perfectly fulfils this 'know thyself'. But we have all kinds of reasons for thinking that till now this point has never been designated in any strict manner except in analysis.

What the notion of *Versagung* designates, properly speaking, is a situation in which the subject has a relation to demand. I ask you to take the same little step forward as the one I asked you to take concerning fantasy. When we talk about stages or fundamental relations with the object, and we describe them as oral, anal or even genital, what are we talking about? About a certain kind of relation that structures the subject's *Umwelt* around a central function and defines his relationship with the world over the course of his development. Everything that comes from his environment would thus have a special signification due to the refraction that is undergone through the typical oral, anal or genital object. There is a mirage here – the notion of it is only ever reconstructed after the fact and projected back into development.

The conception I am criticizing is not even usually articulated in such an elaborate manner and it very frequently turns out to be avoided. One speaks of the object, then, as a side issue. One speaks of the environment, without thinking for a single instant about what the difference is between the typical object of a relation that is defined by a stage – as a reject, for instance – and the actual environment with multiple instances of a plurality of objects to which the subject, whatever he is, is subjected, whatever one says, from earliest infancy.

Until further notice, we must similarly have the greatest doubts about the supposed absence of objects for the child at the breast, his supposed autism. If you want to take my word for it, you will consider this notion to be purely illusory. It's enough to resort to 414
the direct observation of very young children to learn that this isn't so, that for them the objects of the world are as multiple as they are interesting and stimulating.

So, what's this about? What have we discovered? We can define it and articulate it as being effectively a certain style of demand in the subject. Where did we discover these manifestations that have us talking about successively oral, anal and indeed genital relationships with the world? We discovered them in the analyses of people who left the stages in question behind ages ago, the stages concerning the child's development. We say that the subject regresses to these stages – what do we mean by that?

Responding by saying that there is a return to one of the imaginary stages of infancy – if these are at all conceivable, but let's allow that they are – is a lure which doesn't yield the true nature of the phenomenon. Is there anything that looks like such a return? When we speak of fixation at a certain stage in the neurotic subject, what could we try to formulate that would be more satisfactory than what we are usually given?

What we effectively see in analysis is that over the course of regression – we shall see more clearly what this term means in what follows – the subject articulates his current demand in analysis in terms that enable us to recognize a particular relationship, respectively oral, anal or genital, with a particular object. This means that if these relationships of the subject have been able to exercise a decisive influence over the entire length of his development, it's insofar as, at a certain stage, they have shifted to the function of signifiers.

While, at the level of the unconscious, the subject articulates his demand in oral terms and articulates his desire in terms of absorption, he finds himself in a particular relationship [$ ◊ D], that is, at the level of a virtual signifying articulation which is that of the unconscious. This is what makes it possible for us to describe as a fixation at a certain stage something that will present with a particular value at some moment in the analytic exploration, and we might think there is some interest in having the subject regress to this stage so that something essential about the mode in which his subjective organization presents itself can be clarified.

But what interests us is to give neither gravitation nor compensation nor even symbolic return to what at a given moment of development has been, more or less with reason, the subject's unsatisfaction on the plane of an oral, anal or other demand – unsatisfaction at which, supposedly, he is arrested. If we are interested in this, it's solely because this is the moment of his demand where the problems in his relationships with the Other arise, insofar as they have been determinant for setting his desire in place.

In other words, everything that comes under demand in the subject's experience is over, once and for all. The satisfactions and compensations we might give him will never be anything but symbolic, and giving them to him can even be considered a mistake, even if it were possible to do so.

It's not completely impossible, precisely, owing to the intervention of fantasies, of this more or less substantial something supported by fantasy. But I believe that this is a mistake in the orientation of analysis, for at the end of an analysis it leaves the question of relations with the Other not settled.

3

I would say that the obsessional, like the hysteric, needs an unsatisfied desire, that is, a desire beyond demand. The obsessional resolves the question of the evanescence of his desire by turning it into a forbidden desire. He has it supported by the Other through the Other's prohibition.

Nevertheless, this manner of getting the Other to support his desire is ambiguous, because a forbidden desire does not, however, mean a strangulated desire. Prohibition is there to sustain desire, but it has to be present for it to be sustained. This, then, is what the obsessional does, and the question is how.

The way in which he does this is, as you know, very complex. He displays it and doesn't display it at one and the same time. In short, he disguises it, and it's easy to understand why. His intentions are, as it were, not pure.

As has already been noted, this is what has been referred to as the aggressiveness of the obsessional. Every time his desire emerges is said to be, for him, an occasion where this projection, this fear of reprisal, will inhibit all of its manifestations. I think this is a first approach to the question, but I don't think it's everything. It is to misrecognize quite fundamentally what is at issue simply to say that the obsessional is switching back and forth and that when his desire appears it becomes aggressive by going too far, redescends or swings back into the disappearance of this aggressiveness, linked to the fear of effective retaliation on the part of the other, namely, the fear of himself undergoing destruction equivalent to that of the desire he displays. 416

I think there is room to take a global apprehension of what's at stake in the case at hand, and there is perhaps no better way of doing this than to pass through the illusions that the relationship with the other gives rise to in us, we other analysts, and inside analytic theory.

The notion of the relationship with the other is invariably influenced by a slippage that tends to reduce desire to demand. If desire is effectively what I have said it is here, that is, what is produced in the gap that speech opens up in demand, and if it's therefore, as such, beyond all concrete demand, it's clear that every attempt to reduce desire to something from which one demands satisfaction encounters an internal contradiction. Almost all analysts in their community presently take the summit and acme of the subject's happy attainment of what they call genital maturity to be access to 'oblativity' – namely, access to recognition of the other's desire as such. I gave an example of this, in a passage by the author I have

been examining, with the profound satisfaction brought by the satisfaction given to the other's demand, which is commonly known as altruism. It's precisely missing what is effectively to be resolved in the problem of desire.

When all is said and done, I think the term 'oblativity', as it's presented to us from this moralizing perspective, is, and one can say this without any distortion of terms, an obsessional fantasy. It's quite certain that in analysis, as things present themselves – for reasons that are very easy to understand, I am talking of temperaments that our practice theorizes – hysterical temperaments are much rarer than obsessional natures. One part of the indoctrination of analysis is constructed along the lines and according to the pathways of obsessional wishes. Now, the illusion, the very fantasy that is within reach of the obsessional is ultimately that the Other as such gives his consent to his desire.

In itself this carries extreme difficulties, since if it's necessary that he give his consent, it's necessary that it be given in a way that is completely different from a response to just any satisfaction, different from a response to a demand. But, all things considered, that is preferable to eluding the problem and giving him a short-circuited solution by thinking that ultimately it's sufficient to come to an agreement – that to find happiness in life it's enough not to inflict on others the frustrations that one has been the object of oneself.

417 Some of the unfortunate and utterly confusing outcomes of analysis find their origins in a number of presuppositions concerning what constitutes a good termination of analytic treatment, presuppositions whose effect is to exalt the obsessional subject via the perspective of his good intentions, which then become rapidly established and incite him to give himself over to one of the most common of these tendencies, which is expressed more or less as follows – 'Do not do to others what you would not like to be done to yourself.' This categorical imperative, structuring in morals, does not always lend itself to practical employment in existence, and it's completely beside the mark when it's a question of performing something like sexual intercourse.

The order of the relationship with the Other that consists in putting oneself in his place is a tempting slippage, and all the more so if the analyst, being precisely in an aggressive relationship vis-à-vis the little other, his semblable, is quite naturally tempted to occupy the position of sparing him, as it were. Sparing the other is what lies at the heart of an entire series of ceremonials, precautions and detours – in short, all the tricks of the obsessional. If the aim is to generalize what was manifesting itself in his symptoms – not without reason no doubt, and in a much more complicated

manner – if the aim is to turn it into a moralizing extrapolation and propose to him what one calls the oblative outcome, that is, submission to the Other's demands, as the aim and outcome of his problems: well then, this detour is really not worth the effort. As experience shows, this is only substituting one symptom for another, and a very serious symptom, because it doesn't fail to engender the re-emergence – in other more or less problematic forms – of the question of desire, which has never been and can in no way be resolved by going down this path.

From this perspective, it can be said that the paths the obsessional finds for himself, and down which he seeks the solution to the problem of his desire, are otherwise adequate – even if they are not adapted – because at least the problem can be clearly read in them. Amongst the modes of solution, there are some for example that are located at the level of an effective relationship with the other. The manner in which the obsessional conducts himself with his semblable when he is still capable of doing so and not submerged by his symptoms – and it's rare that he is entirely – is in itself sufficiently indicative. This no doubt leads down a dead-end path but still gives what is not such a bad indication for the direction.

For example, I have spoken to you about the exploits of obsessionals. What are these exploits? For there to be an exploit, there 418
have to be at least three people, because one does not carry out one's exploits all alone. There have to be at least two of you, there must be something like that for there to be a winning performance, a sprint. Then, there also has to be someone who records and is the witness. What the obsessional is striving to obtain in an exploit is very precisely what earlier I called the Other's permission, in the name of something that is very polyvalent. One can say – he earned what he strived to achieve. But the satisfaction he strives to obtain is not at all to be classified on the terrain on which he earned it.

Observe the structure of our obsessionals. What does what one calls 'an effect of the superego' mean? It means that they inflict upon themselves all kinds of particularly hard, punishing tasks, that they succeed at them, moreover, and that they succeed at them all the more easily because it's what they want to do – but there, they succeed very, very brilliantly, in the name of which they would have the right to a little holiday where you could do whatever you wanted, hence the well-known dialectic of work and holidays. For the obsessional, work is powerful, being done so as to free up the time for sailing, which will be holiday time – and the holidays habitually turn out to be more or less wasted. Why? Because what it was about was obtaining the Other's permission. Now, the other – I'm speaking now of the actual other, the other that exists – has

absolutely nothing to do with all this dialectic, for the simple reason that the real other is far too preoccupied with his own Other and has no reason to fulfil this mission of giving the obsessional's exploit its little crown – namely, what would be precisely the realization of his desire, insofar as this desire has nothing to do with the terrain on which the subject has demonstrated all his abilities.

This is all a very tangible phase, one whose humorous aspect is well worth making the effort to display. But it's not limited to that. The interest of concepts such as the big Other and the little other is to structure the lived relationships in many more than one direction. One may also say, from a certain angle, that in his exploit the subject dominates, tames and even domesticates a fundamental anxiety – this has been said by other people than me. But there again, one misrecognizes a dimension of the phenomenon, namely, that what's essential is not in the skill or in the risk taken, which for the obsessional is always a risk taken within very strict limits – a skilful economy strictly differentiates everything that the obsessional risks in his exploit from anything that resembles the risk of death in the Hegelian dialectic.

419 In the obsessional's exploit there is something that always remains irremediably fictitious, for the reason that death, I mean there where the real danger is, does not reside in the adversary he appears to be defying, but completely elsewhere. It's precisely on the side of this invisible witness, this Other who is there as the spectator, the onlooker, and who is going to say about the subject, 'Decidedly,' as it's expressed somewhere in Schreber's delusion, 'he's a horny bastard!' We re-encounter this exclamation, this way of feeling the effects, as implicit, latent and wished for throughout the dialectic of exploits. Here the obsessional is in a particular relationship to the other's existence as his semblable, as the one in whose place he can put himself, but it's precisely because he can put himself in his place that in reality there is no kind of essential risk in what he demonstrates in his effects of presence, sports and the risks more or less taken. Ultimately, this other with whom he is playing is only ever an other who is he himself and who, already, will in any case leave him with the laurels, from whichever side he approaches things.

But the important one is the Other before whom all of this takes place. He's the one that has to be preserved at any cost, the locus in which the exploits are registered and his history inscribed. This place has to be maintained at any cost. This is what makes the obsessional cling to everything that belongs to the verbal order, the order of the computus, recapitulation, inscription and falsification, too. What the obsessional wants to maintain above all without giving the appearance of doing so, giving the appearance of aiming at

something else, is this Other where things are articulated in terms of signifiers.

That, then, is an initial approach to the question. Beyond all demands, beyond everything that this subject desires, there is the question of seeing what on the whole the obsessional's conduct aims at. It's quite certain that the essential aim is to maintain the Other. This is the primary, preliminary aim, solely inside of which the so difficult validation of his desire can be accomplished. What can, what will this validation be? This is what we will have to spell out subsequently. But first we needed to fix the four points of his conduct so that the trees didn't hide the forest from us.

The satisfaction of surprising one or other of the little mechanisms of his conduct, with its own style, must not fascinate and stop us. Obviously, stopping at any particular detail of an organism always produces satisfaction that is not entirely illegitimate, since, at least in the domain of natural phenomena, the detail always effectively reflects something of the totality. But in a matter which is about an organization that is as little natural as that of a subject's relations to signifiers, we can't totally trust the reconstruction of the 420
entire obsessional organization on the basis of one mechanism of defence or another – if it's at all possible to enter all of that in the catalogue of mechanisms of defence.

I'm trying to do something different. I'm trying to get you to find the four cardinal points around which each of the subject's defences is orientated and polarized. Here we already have two today. We first addressed the role of fantasy. We can now see, with respect to the exploit, that the Other's presence as such is fundamental. There is a further point, which I would at least like to introduce you to.

Hearing me speak about exploits, you have no doubt been thinking about all sorts of behaviour by your obsessionals. There is one exploit that perhaps does not completely deserve to be pinned down by this same name. It's what in analysis is called 'acting out'.

On this, I undertook – I hope you will undertake it too, at my example, even if it would only be to confirm what I am advancing – some investigations in the literature. It's surprising to see how difficult it is to extract oneself from it. The best article on the subject is the one by Phyllis Greenacre, called 'General Problems of Acting Out', published in the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* in 1950 – a completely remarkable article in that it shows that till now nothing valuable has been formulated on this.

I believe that we have to limit the problem of acting out, and that it's impossible to do this if one holds on to the general notion that it's a symptom, a compromise, that it has a double meaning or that it's an active repetition, for this is to drown it in compulsions to

repeat in their most general forms. If the term has any meaning, it's insofar as it designates a kind of act that arises out of an attempt at a solution to the problem of demand and desire. That's why it's produced in a specific manner in the course of an analysis, because, whatever one effectively does with it outside analysis, it's an attempt to solve the problem of the relationship between desire and demand.

Acting out is certainly produced on the way to the analytic realization of unconscious desire. It's extremely instructive, because if we look carefully for what characterizes the effect of acting out, we will find there are all kinds of absolutely necessary components, and for example what absolutely distinguishes them from what is called a bungled action, or what I more correctly call a successful action – I mean a symptom, inasmuch as it clearly reveals a tendency. Acting
421 out always comprises an element that is highly significant, and precisely because it's enigmatic. We will only ever call acting out an act that presents with a particularly unmotivated character. That doesn't mean that it doesn't have a cause, but that psychologically it lacks motivation, for it's an act that is always signified.

Moreover, an object always plays a role in acting out – an object in the material sense of the word, which I will be led to come back to next time to show you, actually, the limited function that the role of the object should be granted in this entire dialectic. There is almost an equivalence between fantasy and acting out. Acting out is in general structured in a way that comes very close to that of a scenario. In its own way, it's at the same level as fantasy.

One thing distinguishes it from fantasy and also from an exploit. Whereas an exploit is an exercise, a tour de force or a sleight of hand designed to give pleasure to the Other, who, as I've said, couldn't give a damn about it, acting out is different. It's always a message, and it's for that reason that we are interested in it when it occurs in an analysis. It's always addressed to the analyst in that the latter is not, in brief, all that badly placed, but not completely in his place either. It's in general a hint that the subject is giving us and this can sometimes go a long way and sometimes be very serious. If the acting out occurs outside the confines of the treatment, I mean afterwards, it's obvious that the analyst can hardly benefit from it.

Whenever we are led to designate, in a precise way, this paradoxical act that we try to circumscribe under the name 'acting out', we see that it's a question of bringing out into the open, along this line, the subject's relations with demand, which reveals that every relationship to this demand is fundamentally incapable of making it possible for the subject to gain access to the effective reality of the effect signifiers have upon him, that is, for him to place himself at the level of the castration complex.

It's possible to miss this – I will try to show it to you next time – inasmuch as, in this interval, this intermediary space in which one sees all these opaque acts that go from exploit to fantasy, and from fantasy to a passionate and indeed partial love – Abraham never spoke of part object, he spoke of partial love of the object – the subject has obtained illusory solutions concerning the object and, in particular, this solution that appears in the form of what one calls the homosexual transference in obsessional neurosis.

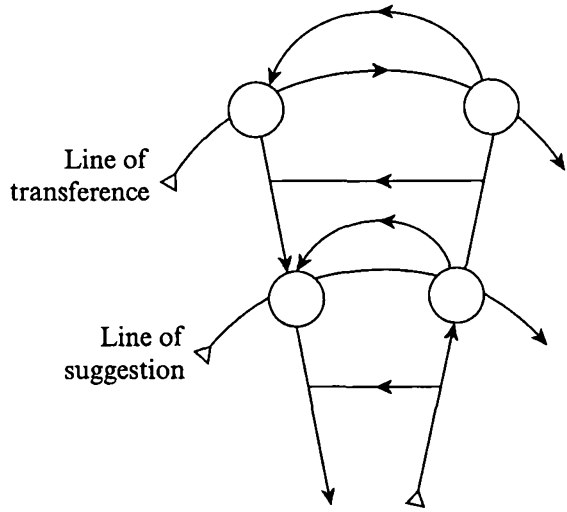
That's what I call the illusory solution. I hope next time to show you in detail why it's an illusory solution.

21 May 1958

XXIV

TRANSFERENCE AND SUGGESTION

Three forms of identifications
On two lines
Regression and resistance
Significance of an action
Technique – theirs and ours



In the few remaining seminars we have left this year, we are going to move into the field that Freud opened up after the Second World War, during the 1920s – the field described as the second topography. Effectively, only the path we have taken this year, giving formations of the unconscious their full scope, makes it possible for us not to lose our way concerning the meaning of this topography.

We will, then, be led to indicate what this model means and, in particular, why the function of the ego in it has moved into the foreground. It has quite another meaning, so much more complex, than the one that it's customary to give it and which inspires the use that has been made of it since. That's the direction.

I will start by pointing out that Freud devotes a chapter to 424
identification in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. You have to read this chapter to see the relevance of transferring the three types of identification distinguished by Freud onto this schema here. For us, at the point at which we find ourselves, this schema has to have the value of a mediation – it gives you a formulation or even an interpretation of what, on the one hand, the structure of the unconscious is insofar as it's fundamentally structured as speech and, on the other, the structure of the topography that emerges from it.

The various organs, as it were, of the Freudian model originate in a schema also – this famous schema in the shape of an egg, where you imagine you can intuit the relations between the id, the ego and the superego. In it you see an eye and a sort of pipette entering into the substance that is supposed to represent the superego. It's a very useful schema, and has precisely the inconvenience of representing topological things through spatial schemes. There is, however, a necessity here that I myself do not escape, since I too represent the schema by a spatial schema, but I have tried to do it with the least inconvenience possible. Thus, imagine that you take my little network, crumple it up, make it into a little ball and put it in your pocket. Well then, in principle, the relations still remain the same, inasmuch as they are relations of order.

It's obviously more difficult to do this with the schema of the egg, since it's entirely oriented towards spatial projection. Consequently, you imagine that Freud wants the id to designate an organ that exists somewhere and on which there is a protuberance representing the ego, which appears here like an eye. But read the text – no allusion is made to anything that might have this substantial character or that might authorize representing these instances as differentiated organs. The Freudian differentiations are of a different kind and are placed in a completely different order from the development of bodily organs precisely in that they are supported by identifications.

It's important to bear this in mind, even if only because it can be far-reaching. There are people who imagine that when they carry out a lobotomy they are taking out a slice of the superego. Not only do they believe it, but they write as much and they do it with this in mind.

425

1

Freud distinguishes three types of identification. This tripartition is spelt out clearly, and one finds it summarized in a single paragraph in the text.

The first type of identification is '*die ursprünglichste Form der Gefühlsbindung an ein Objekt*', 'the original form of emotional tie with an object' [*SE* 18: 107–8].

The second form is one that Freud particularly dwelt on at length in this chapter, which is the concrete basis of all his reflection on identification and is fundamentally linked to everything on the topic – '*sie auf regressivem Wege zum Ersatz für eine libidinöse Objektbindung wird, gleichsam durch Introjektion des Objekts ins Ich.*' The second form of identification occurs 'in a regressive way [and] it becomes a substitute for a libidinal object-tie, as it were by means of introjection of the object into the ego' [*SE* 18: 107–8]. This second form of identification is the one that throughout Freud's discourse in *Group Psychology*, but also in *The Ego and the Id*, presents him with the most problems, by virtue of its ambiguous relation to the object. It's here also that all the problems of analysis gather, in particular that of the inverted Oedipus complex. Why, at a particular moment, in certain cases, and in the form of the inverted Oedipus complex, does the object, which is an object of libidinal attachment, become an object of identification?

Sometimes it's more important to keep open the problem raised than to solve it. There is absolutely no obligation for us to represent to ourselves a possible solution to the question raised. This question is perhaps the central question, the question that we will always be condemned to fall short of, the one that forms the pivotal point. There must be such a point somewhere, because, wherever we place ourselves and consider every question solved, there will always remain the question why we are there – how did we get to the point where everything is clear?

Still, in the present case, it's clear that there must be a point that keeps us, precisely, immersed in the question. I'm not saying that this is the point in question, but Freud, in any case, circles around it and in no way claims to have solved it. What is important, on the other hand, is to see how the coordinates of this zero point vary.

426 I repeat, the essential question is that of the passage, attested in experience, of the love for an object to the ensuing identification.

The distinction Freud introduces here between libidinal erotic attachment to the loved object and the identification with the same is no different from the one I alluded to at the end of one of our

recent seminars concerning the relation to the phallus, namely, the opposition between being and having. But added to this is what Freud says his experience gives him – this identification is always regressive in nature. The coordinates of the transformation of a libidinal attachment into an identification indicate that there is regression.

I think you know enough about this for there to be no need for me to dot the i's. At least I've already spelt out in previous sessions what regression confirms. There is still the question of how to articulate it. I articulate it by suggesting that it's the choice of signifiers that gives an indication of regression. Regression to the anal stage, with all its nuances and varieties, even to the oral stage, is always the presence of regressive signifiers in the subject's discourse.

There is no other regression in analysis. That the subject starts to whimper like a baby on your couch or even act like one – it sometimes happens, but in this sort of play-acting we are not accustomed to seeing the true regression that is observed in analysis. When that does happen, it generally doesn't augur very well.

From where we are now, we are going to try to see what these two forms of identification mean on our schema. Let's place ourselves here, at the level of the subject's need – the term is used in Freud.

I would point out to you in passing that Freud, and precisely in connection with the advent of identification in relation to investment in the object, tells us that it has to be admitted that investment in the object stems from the id which perceives the promptings, pressures and erotic tensions as needs, which clearly shows that the id puts itself forward as being quite ambiguous.

I also point out to you in passing that the French translation of these chapters renders them unintelligible and sometimes makes them say exactly the opposite of Freud's text. The term '*Objektbindung*', 'object-tie', investment in the object, is translated as concentration on the object, which is incredibly obscure.

However that may be from the perspective of need, these lines give us the two horizons of demand. Here we find demand as articulated demand, insofar as the demand for the satisfaction of a need must pass via the defiles of the articulation that language renders obligatory. Moreover, by virtue of the sole fact that it passes over to 427
the level of the signifier, as it were, in its existence and no longer in its articulation, there is an unconditional demand for love, and, as a result, at the level of the one to whom demand is addressed, that is, the Other, it is itself symbolized – which means that it appears present against the background of absence and can be made present as absence. Note that even before an object is loved in the erotic sense of the term – in the sense in which the eros of the loved object

can be perceived as a need – the position of demand, as such, creates the horizon of the demand for love.

On this schema, the two lines on which the subject's need is articulated as signifiers – that of demand as demand for the satisfaction of a need and that of the demand for love – are separated by reason of topological necessity, but the earlier comments apply. The separation does not mean that they are not one single, unique line on which what the child articulates for the mother is inscribed. There is an ongoing superimposition of the unfolding of what takes place on each of these lines.

You can see an immediate application of this. This ambiguity is very precisely that which, over the length of Freud's work, is maintained in a constant manner between the notion of transference – I mean, the action of transference in analysis – and the notion of suggestion.

Freud is always telling us that, after all, transference is suggestion and that we make use of it under that name – except, he adds, we do something completely different with it, since we interpret this suggestion. Now, if we are able to interpret suggestion, it's clearly because it has a background. The transference exists there potentially. We know very well that it exists, and I will immediately give you an example of it.

Transference is already potentially the analysis of suggestion, it's itself the possibility of the analysis of suggestion, a second articulation of what in suggestion simply imposes itself upon the subject. In other words, the horizon on which suggestion is based is there at the level of demand, the demand that the subject makes of the analyst simply by virtue of the fact that he is there.

This demand does not lack variety. What are these demands? How are we to situate them? It's interesting to take stock of them at the start, for there is enormous variation. There really are people for whom the demand to be cured is there, insistent at every moment. Others, more informed, know that it's to be deferred till tomorrow. There are others who are there for something other than for the demand to be cured, they are there to find out. There are those who are there to become analysts. But what is the importance
428 of knowing the place of demand, given that the analyst, even if he does not respond to demand, responds to it simply by virtue of the fact that he is instituted, which is constitutive of all the effects of suggestion?

The idea one normally has is that the transference is that thanks to which suggestion works. Freud himself writes that if it's appropriate to allow the transference to establish itself, it's because it's legitimate to use the power of – what? Of the suggestion that the

transference gives rise to. Transference is here thought of as the analyst's seizing power over the subject, as the affective tie that makes the subject dependent on him, and which it's legitimate for us to make use of for an interpretation to work. What does that mean, if not to declare in the clearest of manners that we use suggestion? To call things by their name, it's because the patient has come to love us that our interpretations are ingested. We're on the plane of suggestion. Now, of course, Freud does not intend to limit himself to that.

We are told, 'Yes, it's simple, we are going to analyse the transference. As you will see, this makes the transference completely disappear.' I stress these terms because they are not mine but those that are implicit in all discussions about the transference as an affective capture of the subject. To think that what differentiates one from someone who uses his power as the support for getting the patient to accept an interpretation, and who is therefore suggesting, is the fact that one is going to analyse this effect of power, is nothing other than an infinite deferral of the question – since it's still on the basis of the transference that one is going to analyse the fact that the subject has accepted the interpretation. There is no possibility of exiting the infernal circle of suggestion by that route. Now, we suppose, precisely, that something else is possible, which is, then, that the transference is something different from the use of power.

The transference is already in itself an open field, the possibility of a signifying articulation other than and different from the one that imprisons the subject in demand. This is why it's legitimate, whatever its contents might be, to place this line on the horizon. I will call it the line of transference. It's something articulated which exists potentially, beyond what is articulated on the plane of demand where you find the line of suggestion.

Now, there on the horizon is what demand as such produces, namely, the symbolization of the Other and the unconditional demand for love. This is where the object will subsequently come to be lodged, but as an erotic object that becomes the subject's aim. When Freud tells us that the identification that succeeds and replaces this aimed-at love object is regression, what that is about is the ambiguity between the line of transference and the line of suggestion.

I formulated this a long time ago, right at the outset – it's along 429
the line of suggestion that identification in its primary form occurs, the one we are so familiar with, which is identification with the insignia of the Other as the subject of demand, he who has the power to satisfy it or not satisfy it and marks this satisfaction at every moment with something that is in the foreground – his language, his speech.

I have stressed the essential importance of spoken relations with the child. All other signs, the mother's entire miming, as they were saying last night, are articulated in signifying terms that crystallize themselves into the conventional character of this so-called emotional mimicry by which the mother communicates with the child. Every type of expression of the emotions in man has a conventional character. You don't need to be Freudian to know that the supposedly spontaneous expression of the emotions turns out on examination to be not only problematic but massively variable. What in one particular area of signifying articulation signifies a given emotion may have a completely different expressive value in another.

Therefore, if identification is regressive, it's precisely insofar as the ambiguity between the line of transference and the line of suggestion remains permanent. In other words, in the developments and detours of analysis, we shouldn't be astonished to see regressions punctuated by a series of correlated identifications which mark their rhythm and tempo. They are different, moreover – there can't be both regression and identification at the same time. One is the halts and stops of the other. But it remains the case that if there is transference, it's precisely so that the upper line can be maintained on another plane than the plane of suggestion – that is, it is held in view, not as something to which no satisfaction of demand corresponds, but as a signifying articulation as such. That's what distinguishes one from the other.

You will say to me, 'What is the operation by which we keep them distinct?' Our operation is precisely abstinent or abstentionist. It consists in never ratifying demand as such. We know that, but although this abstention is essential, it isn't sufficient on its own.

But this is stating the obvious – these two lines can remain distinct because it's in the nature of things for them to remain distinct. In other words, they can remain distinct because for the subject they are distinct and because between the two there is this entire field which, thank goodness, is not slim, and which is never abolished. It's called the field of desire.

430 Henceforth, all that is asked of us is not to encourage this confusion by our presence there as Other. Now, by virtue of the simple fact that we are there to listen as Other, that is difficult – and all the more so if, in the way we enter into it, we accentuate the feature of analysis described as permissive. It's permissive purely on the level of verbal play, but that is sufficient. It's sufficient that things are permissive on the verbal plane for the patient to be satisfied, not, of course, on the real plane, but on the verbal plane. And it's enough that he be satisfied on the plane of demand for the confusion

between the line of transference and the line of suggestion to be irremediably established. This means that, by virtue of our presence, and insofar as we listen to the patient, we have a tendency to confuse the line of transference with the line of demand. We are therefore, in principle, harmful.

If regression is our path, it's a receding path. It doesn't designate the aim of our action, but its detour. We must keep this constantly in mind. There is an entire technique of analysis which has no other aim than to establish this confusion, and this is why it results in a transference neurosis. You will then see it in writing in a journal called *La revue française de psychanalyse* that, as to resolving the question of the transference, there is only one thing to do – sit the patient down, say nice things to him, show him how nice things are outside, tell him to go on his way and leave quietly so as not to disturb the flies. And that's from a great practitioner.

Thank goodness that there is something between the two lines that stops this irremediable confusion from becoming established. And it's obvious that the hypnotists, or simply those who have become interested in hypnosis, know full well that no suggestion, however successful it may be, will take hold of the subject completely.

Let's ask this question here – what resists?

2

It's desire that resists.

I won't even say this or that of the subject's desires, since this is obvious – but essentially the desire to have one's desire. This is even more obvious, but that is no reason not to say it.

What the schema enumerates and organizes are the forms necessary for maintaining desire, owing to which the subject remains a divided subject, which is in the very nature of the human subject. If 431
he is no longer a divided subject, he is mad. He remains a divided subject because there is a desire, the field of which can't be so easy to maintain either, since I am explaining to you that a neurosis is constructed in the way it's constructed so as to maintain something articulated called desire.

That's the right definition. Effectively, neurosis is not a greater or lesser force or weakness of desire, nor is fixation to be imagined as the fact that at some point the subject has put his foot in a pot of glue. If fixation resembles anything, it's more like pickets that are designed to keep something in that would otherwise escape.

The force of desire in neurotics, what is called the quantitative element, is very variable. This variation constitutes one of the most

convincing arguments for establishing the autonomy of what one calls the structural modification in neurosis. It's blatantly obvious in experience that neurotics who have the same form of neurosis are diversely gifted people with respect to what one of the authors in question calls somewhere, concerning an obsessional neurosis, 'the exuberant and precocious sexuality' of one of his patients.

In the event, this involves a subject of whom it's said that when he masturbated he would lightly pinch the outside part of his foreskin. Convinced that he would cause irreparable lesions, he didn't dare wash his penis, and he had to consult a doctor given the repeated failure of his attempts at coitus. We know very well that these are only symptoms and that the subject will show himself to be, in the midst of his analysis, very capable of fulfilling his duties as a husband and satisfying his wife. But in the end, whatever force we suppose his symptoms to be supported by, we are nevertheless not going to describe as 'exuberant' a sexuality that lets itself languish and be deceived to the point where one can give a similar description of a subject who is already at an advanced age. This does not mean that another obsessional neurotic will not show you a different picture, justifying one in describing his sexuality as exuberant, even as precocious.

This altogether tangible difference between clinical cases doesn't prevent us from recognizing that it's one and the same obsessional neurosis in every case. This is why an obsessional neurosis is situated somewhere else entirely than in the quantitative element of desire. If this does enter into play, it's solely insofar as it will have to pass through the defiles of structure, for what characterizes neurosis is structure.

In the case of the obsessional, whether his desire is strong or weak, whether the subject is in the midst of puberty or comes to us when he is forty or fifty years old – that is, at a time at which
432 his desire is nevertheless in decline and he desires to get some idea about what's happened, that is, something he has never understood anything about in his existence till then – in every case it will emerge that he has been preoccupied during the whole of his existence with placing his desire in a strong position and constituting a stronghold for his desire, doing it on the plane of essentially signifying relations. In this stronghold there dwells either a weak or a strong desire, that's not the question. One thing is certain, it's that strongholds are always double-edged. Those that are built to protect one from the outside are even more annoying for those that are inside, and that's the problem.

The first form of identification is, then, defined for us as the original tie with an object. It is, to schematize things, the identification

with the mother. The other form of identification is the regressive identification with the love object, that is, identification insofar as it should occur somewhere else, at a point on the horizon that is not easy to reach because the demand is precisely unconditional or, more exactly, submitted to the one condition of the existence of signifiers inasmuch as, without the existence of signifiers, there is no possible opening for the dimension of love as such. The latter is therefore entirely dependent upon the existence of signifiers, but, within this existence, it isn't dependent on any particular articulation. It's for this reason that it isn't easy to formulate since nothing can complete it or fulfil it, not even the totality of my discourse throughout my entire existence, since it is, in addition, the horizon of my discourses.

This raises precisely the question of what the barred S means at this level. In other words, what subject is in question?

There is no reason to be astonished that this only ever forms a horizon. The entire problem is that of knowing what will be constructed in this interval. The neurotic lives the paradox of desire exactly like everybody else, for no human inserted into the human condition ever escapes it. The only difference that characterizes the neurotic with respect to desire is that he is open to the existence of this paradox as such, which of course doesn't simplify existence for him, but doesn't place him in such a bad position either from a certain point of view.

We might directly formulate the philosopher's point of view some time and call him into question in the same way. The neurotic is effectively on a path that has some kinship with what the philosopher formulates, or at the very least with what he should formulate, since, to be honest, have you ever seen this problem of desire well and truly carefully, correctly and powerfully articulated in the philosopher's approach? Until now, what appears to me to be one of 433
the most characteristic things about philosophy is that this is one of the most carefully avoided things in its field.

That would encourage me to make another aside about the philosophy of action, which would end with the same conclusions, namely that what's said about it is nonsense. One sees in it some kind of intrusion of spontaneity or originality by man, insofar as he transforms the givens of the problem or the world, as we say. It's odd that no one ever highlights what, for me, is a truth of experience, namely the profoundly paradoxical character of action completely akin to the paradox of desire. I was beginning to introduce its traits and contours to you last time when alluding to the character of exploit, performance, demonstration and indeed even desperate outcome in an action.

The terms I am using are not my own, because Freud uses the term '*vergreifen*' ['to make a mistake'] to designate paradoxical, generalized action, human action. Human action is particularly present when one claims to designate it as concordant with history. My friend Kojève speaks of crossing the Rubicon as a point of concordance, a harmonious solution between Caesar's present, past and future, although the last time I crossed the Rubicon, I only saw it dry. It was immense when Caesar crossed it, but it wasn't the same season. Even if Caesar crossed the Rubicon with the genius of Caesar, there is always in the fact of crossing the Rubicon something that involves jumping into the water, since it's a river.

In other words, human action is not as harmonious as all that. For us other analysts, it's the most astonishing thing in the world that no one in psychoanalysis has proposed to formulate what pertains to action from this paradoxical perspective from which we constantly view it. Moreover, we never see anything but this, which makes it quite difficult to define acting out clearly. In a certain sense, it's an action just like any other, but one that stands out because it's brought about by our use of the transference – that is, we are doing something extremely dangerous, and all the more so since, as you can see from what I am suggesting to you, we do not have a very precise idea of what this is.

Perhaps a word, in passing, on resistance will clarify what I mean. In some cases, the subject does not accept the interpretations that we present to him on the plane of regression. It seems to us that it
434 fits, and to him it doesn't seem to fit at all. So one says to oneself that the subject is resisting and that in the end he will give way if we insist, seeing that we are always ready to play the card of suggestion. Now, this resistance may not be without its value. What value does it have? Inasmuch as it expresses the necessity to articulate desire in some other way, namely on the plane of desire, it has the very precise value that Freud gives it in some of his texts. He calls it *Übertragungswiderstand*, transference-resistance, because it's the same thing as transference. It involves transference in the sense I am talking to you about at the moment. Resistance aims to maintain the other line, that of transference, where the articulation has another requirement than the one we give it when we respond to demand immediately. This reminder only corresponds to things that are self-evident, but self-evident things that needed to be articulated, nevertheless.

To conclude on the second identification, at what point do we judge that what happens is regressive? It's the fact that the transference is an appeal that makes possible this disruption by signifiers that we call regression, but it mustn't stop there. On the contrary,

it must take us further. That's what we are trying to set our sights on for the moment, namely, how are we to operate with the transference? The transference quite naturally tends to deteriorate into something we can always satisfy in some way at its regressive level, hence the fascination with the notion of frustration, hence the various formulations that are expressed in a thousand ways in object relations and the conception of analysis that follows.

Every way of articulating analysis always tends to deteriorate, which does not prevent analysis from being something else, nevertheless.

3

Freud formulates the third form of identification for us as one that may arise with any new perception of a common quality shared with a person who is not at all an object of the sexual drive, '*sie drittens bei jeder neu wahrgenommenen Gemeinsamkeit mit einer Person, die nicht Objekt der Sexualtriebe ist*' [*SE* 18: 108]. Where is this third identification located?

Freud illustrates this for us in a manner that leaves no ambiguity over how it is to be recorded on the schema. As I have been telling you lately, in Freud it's always said in the clearest of fashions. He takes hysterical identification as an example. For the hysteric, her problem is focusing her desire somewhere, in the sense in which an optical instrument makes it possible to focus on a point. This desire comes to present special difficulties for her. Let's attempt to spell 435
them out more precisely.

For her, her desire is destined to some sort of impasse since she can only actually focus it on the condition that she identify with something, a small trait, it doesn't matter what. Where I say 'an insignia', Freud speaks of a trait, a single trait, *einziger Zug*, it doesn't matter what, of someone else, someone with whom she can sense that there is the same problem of desire. This means that for the hysteric her impasse opens wide the doors to the other – at least, the doors to all the others, that is, to all possible hysterics, even to all hysterical moments of all others, insofar as for an instant she can sense in them the same problem, which is that of the question about desire.

For the obsessional, although the question is articulated a little differently, it's exactly the same from the point of view of the relation, the topology – and with reason. The identification in question is placed here, at [$\$ \lozenge a$], which, as I pointed out to you last time, is where fantasy is. There is a point at which the subject has to establish

a certain imaginary relationship with the other, not in itself, as it were, but insofar as this relationship brings him satisfaction. Freud makes quite clear that it's a question here of a person who has no relationship with any sort of *Sexualtrieb*. This is something else – he is a support for, a puppet of fantasy.

Here, give the word 'fantasy' as large an extension as you like. This is fantasy such as I formulated it last time, insofar as it can be an unconscious fantasy. The only use for the other, which is not insignificant, is this – to enable the subject to maintain a particular position that avoids the collapse of desire, that is, that avoids the problem of the neurotic.

That's the third form of identification, which is essential.

It would take too long now to start reading Bouvet's article published in *La revue française de psychanalyse*, in which my paper '*L'agressivité en psychanalyse*', 'Aggressiveness in Psychoanalysis', also appears. This article is titled '*Importance de l'aspect homosexuel du transfert*', 'Importance of the Homosexual Aspect of the Transference', and I ask you to read it, as I will be returning to it. Today I would just like to spell out the precise point at which I indicate the error in the analytic technique in question.

What happens in analysis, insofar as the phallic object, and especially the analyst's phallus, appears in fantasies happens at a point of proliferation that has already been instituted, but which can always be stimulated. This is the point at which, through his fantasy, the subject as obsessional maintains the possibility of sustaining himself in the face of his desire – a possibility that is much more difficult and dangerous than for the hysteric. It's here, therefore, that
436 ø, the fantasmatic phallus, appears. It's in this technique that I am referring to that the analyst becomes pressing and insistent through his interpretations, so that the subject agrees to enter into communion with, swallow and fantasmatically incorporate this part object into himself.

I am saying this is mistaking levels. It's moving the plane of demand, which is called into question here, onto the plane of suggestive identification. It's favouring a certain imaginary identification by the subject through benefiting, as it were, from the hold that the openly suggestive position gives the analyst on the basis of the transference. It's giving a false, diverted solution to what is being questioned – I am not saying in his fantasies, but in the material that he effectively brings to the analyst. This is visible in the observations themselves, upon which one intends to construct an entire theory about the part object, the distance from the object, the introjection of the object and all that follows. I will give you an example.

It's palpable at every moment in this observation that the solution to the analysis of the obsessional is that he come to discover castration for what it is, that is, as the law of the Other. This Other that is castrated. For reasons that have to do with his mistaken implication in this problem, the subject feels that he himself is threatened by this castration at a level that is so acute that he can't come near his own desire without feeling its effects. What I am saying is that the horizon of the Other, the big Other as such, distinct from the little other, is tangible in this observation at every turn.

The following memories come back to him – the first time he approaches a young girl, he flees in anxiety, goes and confides in his mother and feels completely reassured as soon as he says to her, 'I will tell you everything' [p. 432]. One can only take this material literally. His virtual subjective support immediately passes via a distraught reference to the Other as the locus of verbalization. This is where, henceforth, the subject will be entirely invested. It is his one possible refuge when confronted with the panic he experiences on approaching his desire. It's already inscribed and it's a matter of finding out what is going on underneath.

Once certain fantasies have come to light after all sorts of solicitations from the analyst, we come to a dream that the analyst interprets as the fact that the subject's passive homosexual tendency is becoming apparent. Here is the dream. 'I accompany you home. In your bedroom there is a big bed. I lie down on it. I feel extremely awkward. There is a bidet in the corner of the bedroom. I am happy, although I feel uneasy' [435]. We are told that following the subject's preparation over the earlier period of his analysis, he does not experience much difficulty in admitting the passive homosexual meaning of the dream.

Is this sufficient for this formulation, in your opinion? Without 437
even returning to the observation – where all the indications are there to demonstrate that this is not sufficient – if we limit ourselves to the text of the dream, one thing is certain, which is that the subject comes and puts himself, so to speak, in the Other's place: 'I am in your home. I am lying on your bed.'

Passive homosexual? Why? Until evidence arises to the contrary, nothing appears there that in this particular case makes the Other an object of desire. On the contrary, what I clearly see designated here, in a third position, and in the corner, is something that is fully articulated and that nobody seems to have paid attention to, whereas it is, however, not there for no reason. It's the bidet.

One can say about this object both that it presentifies the phallus and does not show it, since I do not see any indication in the dream that anybody is engaged in using it. The bidet is there, indicating

what is problematic. It's not for nothing that this famous part object enters. It's the phallus, but, as it were, as a question – does the Other have it or does he not? This is the moment to show it. Is the Other it or is he not it? That's what's in the background. In short, it's a question of castration.

This obsessional is, moreover, prey to all sorts of obsessions of cleanliness, which clearly show that this instrument is a possible source of danger. The bidet has presentified the phallus for him, at least his own, for a long time. What is problematic for this subject is the question concerning the phallus.

[It is the question concerning the phallus] insofar as the latter enters into play as the object of this symbolic operation which, in the Other, at the level of signifiers, makes it the signifier of what has been struck by the action of signifiers, of what is subject to castration. The aim is not to know whether in the end the subject feels comforted by taking a higher power inside himself, by assimilating himself to one who is stronger than he, but to know how he will have effectively resolved the question implicit on the horizon, in line with what the structure of neurosis indicates, namely, the acceptance or not of the castration complex, insofar as castration can only be realized as a function of signifiers.

This is where the two techniques differ, independently of the legitimacy linked to the structure and very meaning of obsessional desire.

Merely on the plane of the therapeutic solution obtained, by simply considering the resulting knot, closure or, let's say, scar,
438 there is no doubt that a certain technique is unfavourable to a correct outcome and doesn't correspond to what one may call a cure, nor even to any form of orthopaedics, not even one that limps.

Only the other one is capable of giving, not just the correct, but the effective solution.

4 June 1958

XXV

THE SIGNIFICATION OF THE PHALLUS IN THE TREATMENT

Reading the schema
The reduction to demand
From fantasy to message
The treatment of a female obsessional neurosis
Beyond the castration complex

I am going to return to my comments, still with the help of our little schema.

Some of you are wondering about the little lozenge sign that is being used when, for example, I write $ opposite little *a*. This doesn't seem extremely complicated to me, but well, since some of you are wondering about it, I will give a response.

1

I remind you that the lozenge in question is the same thing as the square in a much older fundamental schema that I reproduced in a simplified form for you here in January [see p. 142], and on which I inscribed the subject's relationship to the Other as the locus of speech and message. I gave this as a first approximation of what comes from the Other and encounters the barrier of the *a*–*a'* relationship, which is the imaginary relation.

The lozenge expresses the subject's relationship – whether barred or not barred, according to the case, that is, according to whether it's marked by the effect of signifiers or whether we are simply considering it as a still indeterminate subject, not split by the *Spaltung* that results from the action of signifiers – this subject's relationship, then, with what is determined by this quadratic relationship. When I write it like that [$ ◊ *a*], the subject's relationship to the little other – that is, to the semblable or the imaginary other – the other vertices

of this framework are not otherwise determined. If I write $ in relation to demand, namely [$ ◊ D], it's the same, this doesn't prejudge the corner of this little square where demand intervenes as such, that is, the articulation of a need in the form of signifiers.

On this year's schema [see Appendix A] we have a line at the upper level, which is a signifying and articulated line. Since it's produced on the horizon of every signifying articulation, it's the fundamental background to every formulation of a demand. At the lower level, this is articulated in general, however poorly. We have a precise articulation, a succession of signifiers, of phonemes.

Let's comment on the upper line, which lies beyond all signifying articulation.

This line corresponds to the effect of the signifying articulation taken as a whole, insofar as, through its mere presence it makes the symbolic appear in the real. It makes this horizon or possibility of demand, this power of demand which is essentially and by nature – place as much ambiguity on that as you like – a demand for love, a demand for presence, appear in its totality and insofar as it's articulated.

The reason I'm talking about love here is to pin something down. Hatred happens to have the same place. The ambivalence of love and hate can only be conceptualized within this horizon. It's also within this horizon that we are able to see this third term, ignorance, a homologue of love and hate in relation to the subject, come to the same spot.

On the upper line on the left, we have the signifier of the Other as marked by the action of the signifier, that is, the barred A – S(Ⱥ). This precise point is the homologue of the point at which, on the line of demand, the return from demand's passage through the Other, which is called the message, s(A), appears in the fundamental schema of every demand. If you like, what has to be produced at the point of the message on the second line is precisely the message of a signifier that signifies that the Other is marked by this signifier. That doesn't mean that this message is produced. It's there as the possibility of being produced.

This is, moreover, also the homologue of this point at which the demand arrives at the Other, that is, where it's subjected to the code's existence in the Other, the locus of speech. Also, on this horizon you have what can arise in the form of what is called conscious awareness. But it's not simply conscious awareness, it's the formulation by the subject as speaking subject of his demand as such, in relation to which he situates himself – [$ ◊ D]. That this has to be able to occur is the fundamental presupposition of analysis itself. It's what occurs in the first steps in an analysis. In

the foreground, but not essentially, is the subject's renewal of his demands. Of course, in a certain way it is a renewal, but it's an articulated renewal. It's in his discourse that, through the form and nature of his demand, the subject reveals the signifiers in which his demand is formulated, either directly or implicitly in his discourse – and it's surely always much more important for us when it's implicit. It's insofar as this demand is formulated in archaic signifiers that we speak, for example, of anal or oral regression.

Last time I wanted to introduce the fact that everything that arises in the nature of transference is suspended from the existence of the upper line. We can mark its beginning with a Φ and its end with a Δ, the meaning of which I will speak about later. This line is the foundation of the effect of signifiers in subjective economy.

Transference, strictly speaking, is situated relative to this line. Everything that is of the order of transference, in accordance with the analyst's action or his non-action, in accordance with his abstention or his non-abstention, always tends to get played out in this intermediary zone, but, equally, can always be brought back to the articulation of demand. Even more, it's in the nature of verbal formulation in analysis that something is being articulated on the plane of demand at every moment. But if the analytic law is that none of the subject's demands are to be satisfied, it's for no other reason than that we speculate on the fact that demand will always tend to be played out elsewhere than on the plane of precise, formulated demands, ones that are susceptible to being satisfied or not satisfied. Everybody is in agreement – what is being played out isn't that we frustrate the subject of what he can ask us on a particular occasion, whether it be simply to answer him or, in the extreme case, to hold his hand. What is being played out is a more profound frustration, one that stems from the very essence of speech insofar as it makes the horizon of demand appear, which I have quite simply called, to focus the mind, the demand for love, and which can also be the demand for something else. For example, a particular demand concerning the recognition of his being, with all the conflicts that that brings out if the analyst, through his presence, and as a semblable, denies it – the Hegelian negation in the relationship between consciousnesses looms here, if needs be. Or again, a demand to know, which, naturally, is also on the horizon of the analytic relation.

What does that have to do with symptoms? In what way can it be used for the resolution of neuroses? This is where we have to introduce the intermediary zone. 442

The four vertices of that other locus of the subject's reference to the Other, which is the imaginary locus of reference inasmuch as here it's only a false vertex, are situated in a topological relationship

with these two lines insofar as they are formed by speech whenever it is articulated in speech in analysis.

The ego's narcissistic or specular relationship to the other's image is prior, lies on this, the near side and is entirely implicated in the first relation to demand. This relationship lies along the line *m–a*.

Beyond, the intermediary zone, the zone of all articulations, extends from the [lower] line of articulated demand to the [upper] line of its essential horizon. The upper line is also articulated, of course, since what supports it is articulated, but this doesn't mean that it's articulable, since nothing suffices to formulate what is here on the horizon – the final term, properly speaking – in any completely satisfactory manner, except by the indefinite continuation of the development of speech.

What is called desire, indicated by the small *d*, is located in this intermediary zone. It's desire that is properly called into question in the subject's entire economy and that is involved in what is revealed in analysis, that is, in what starts to budge in speech in a game of oscillation between the signifiers at the level of need, as it were, and what results, beyond the articulation of signifiers, from the constant presence of signifiers in the unconscious, insofar as signifiers have already moulded, formed and structured the subject. Desire, man's desire insofar as it's the Other's desire, is located in this intermediary zone. It lies beyond need, beyond the articulation of need that the subject is led to by the necessity to declare it for the Other, beyond all satisfaction of a need. It's present in the form of an absolute condition and is produced in the margin between the demand for the satisfaction of needs and the demand for love. Man's desire is always, for him, to be sought in the locus of the Other as the locus of speech, which means that desire is a desire structured in this locus of the Other.

That is the entire problematic of desire. It's what makes it subject to the dialectic and the formations of the unconscious. That is why we are involved with it and are able to have an influence on it, according to whether it is or is not articulated in speech in analysis. There would be no analysis if it weren't for this fundamental situation.

We have here, in [$\$ \lozenge a$], the guarantor and support of desire, the point at which it attaches itself to its object, which, far from being
443 natural, is always formed by a particular position the subject takes in relation to the Other. Helped by this fantasmatic relation, man finds his bearings and situates his desire. Hence the importance of fantasies. Hence the rarity of the term 'instinct' in Freud – it's always a question of the drive, *Trieb*, the technical term we give to this desire insofar as speech isolates it, fragments it and places it in

this problematic and disjointed relationship to its aim that one calls the direction of the tendency, and whose object is, moreover, subject to substitution and displacement or, indeed, to all forms of transformation and equivalents, but is also offered to love, which makes it a subject of speech.

2

Last time we got to the point of focusing on some studies of an obsessional neurosis which I have several times invited you to read carefully, and which have to be relevant to what is being said here, even if only because some of the terms involved – 'distance from the object', 'phallic object', 'object relation' – can't fail to invite retrospective evaluation in the light of what I am bringing you here.

I took, then, the account of the treatment of two cases of obsessional neurosis drawn from the article '*Importance de l'aspect homosexuel du transfert*', ['Importance of the Homosexual Aspect of the Transference'] and I pointed out to you the problematic character of the result of this or that suggestion, let's say direction, or even interpretation. In reference to one dream in particular, I stressed how much certain presuppositions and certain simplifications of the system led to missing certain prominent elements and therefore the dream itself.

He speaks of a homosexual transference dream, as if that could have a meaning where the dream itself gives the image of what it is about, that is, a relation that is far from being dyadic. The subject, then, was transported into the analyst's bed, both at ease and in an attitude that one could describe as one of expectation, according to the manifest content, on the condition that one not neglect the explicit and essential presence of this bed. I showed you the presence of an object in the striking form of the famous bidet. One is even more astonished that the analyst doesn't dwell on this, since another text by the same author shows that he is far from ignoring the properly phallic signification of what some analysts have called the hollowed out or cuplike penis, inasmuch as it's one of the forms in which the phallus signifier can be presented at the level of the adoption of the phallic image by the female subject. This kind of Grail was at least likely to capture the attention and even give rise to some caution in one who interprets in terms of a two-person relationship.

I have read this second article again. I have also read the earlier one, which isn't the most interesting to critique, since matters there are brought to the level of the self-evident. Let's randomly choose this intervention. One similar in nature had already been given

previously, but he returns to it because the subject had been pulled so far in the direction of deepening the homosexual transference that the transference situation was becoming clearer and clearer, frankly homosexual, and so he had to insist to overcome a number of silences.

> I therefore alluded to the fact that if between men there exist affective relations that are referred to by the name 'friendship' and by which nobody feels humiliated, these relations always take on a certain character of passivity for one of the partners when he finds it necessary to receive teaching, directives or some encouragement from the other. At this difficult moment the idea came to me of using an analogy that would be able to be felt *de plano* by this former officer. Why do men get themselves killed in combat for a leader that they love, unless it's precisely because they accept his instructions and his orders with a total absence of resistance, that is, with total passivity? They thus embrace the sentiments and thoughts of the leader to the point of identifying with him, and they sacrifice their lives as he himself would if he were to find himself in their place. [p. 425]

You can see that an intervention of this kind has to require a fairly large chunk of silence, above all when one is aware that the analyst chooses this example because his patient is an officer.

> They can only act in this way because they passively love their leader. This remark did not make all the subject's reservations disappear immediately, but it enabled him to continue to be objective when he was going to revive other homosexual situations with me, ones that were more specific. [p. 426].

And this is effectively what happens.

It's perfectly clear that the orientation of the treatment opens the door to an entire imaginary collaboration in the two-person relation between the analysand and the analyst and proceeds in a way that, as the observation itself bears out, isn't only systematic, but truly insistent. On the two planes of remembering and the analytic situation, it chooses everything in the material that goes in the simplifying direction of elaborating the two-person relation insofar as it has a homosexual signification.

Whereas the interpretation must essentially bear upon the han-
445 dling of signifiers, whereas this requires that it be brief, and whereas later I will insist upon the mark that the introduction of a signifier

must give it, we have here an intervention whose significant, understandable and persuasive character is manifest and which consists in inducing the subject precisely to live the analytic situation as a simple two-person relation. One does not need to be an analyst to point out that such an intervention is akin to suggestion, if only by virtue of the sole fact that it chooses one signification that it returns to three times.

This study of approximately six pages shows us the stages of the analysand's relationship to the analyst in the form of facilitating an understanding of the two-person situation in terms of homosexual relations. To be sure, homosexuality is classically presented to us in Freudian doctrine as a libidinal relationship underlying all relations considered from the social angle, but this is announced in a highly ambiguous form that doesn't enable it to be distinguished from what is strictly speaking the homosexual drive, insofar as the latter is characterized by this choice of erotic object of the sex opposite the one that the norm may wish for – which is different in nature from the libidinal underpinnings of social relations.

Whatever the theoretical difficulties thus raised, the use of this reference in this observation, and I am not saying that it's illegitimate in itself, appears in a systematic form within the therapeutics as a veritable indoctrination, and this raises the problem of the direction of the treatment overall. We can clearly see to what extent this indoctrination can have certain effects, but do you not also see, by the same token, that there is a choice here over the type of intervention with respect to obsessional neurosis? All that you know, moreover, about this subject's relationship to himself, his existence and the world, which is called an obsessional neurosis, is infinitely more complex than a relationship of libidinal attachment to the subject of his own sex, at whatever level it happens to be articulated.

From Freud's first observations, we all know the role played by the destructive drive directed at one's semblable and consequently turned back upon the subject, and we all know that many other elements are involved – elements of regression and fixation in the libidinal evolution, which are far from being as simple as one makes the famous link between the sadistic and the anal, a link that can in no way be taken as simple, or even as having been elucidated.

In short, the fact that such a direction of the treatment is full of effects turns out to be articulated into a much fuller perspective on what is going on. I am not saying that what I am contributing 446
is completely sufficient, but it already makes it possible to arrange better the different registers into which things can be put. We can situate here, in [$ ◊ *a*], what, in short, is a detail in the economy of the obsessional, namely the role that is played in it at one point by

identification with another who is a little *a*, an imaginary other. This is one of the modes thanks to which the subject somehow more or less balances his obsessional economy.

It may have some therapeutic effect to go along with this, to give the subject the satisfaction of validating his relationship – which appears with regularity in the history of obsessionals – with another who is his point of reference, whose approval and criticisms he demands, and with whom he identifies as someone who is stronger than he, as the author in question says, and on whom, one can truly say, he relies as in a dream, to endorse this mechanism, which is surely a defence mechanism by which the subject balances the problematic of his relationship to the Other's desire. This may have some therapeutic effect, but it's far from having any just by itself.

Equally, the evolution of the author's work shows that things have been pushed by him in a direction that places more and more emphasis on what he calls distance from the object, which ends up being quite especially centred on the elaboration of a fantasy, the fantasy of fellatio, and not with just any phallus, but with the phallus that is a part of the imagined body of the analyst. The imaginary support derived from the semblable, the homosexual other, is embodied, materialized in this experience that is given to us as being comparable to Catholic Communion, to the ingestion of the host.

We can thus see here an elaboration of the fantasy being pursued along the same lines, this time taken further, and we can see what it produces. What it's about can be located on the schema. The relationship [$\$ \lozenge a$] at the level of fantasy, that is, the level of the original fantasmatic production that makes it possible for the subject to place himself and come to terms with his desire, moves onto the level of a response to a demand, which is the level of the message. It's not for nothing that in this observation you now see the image of the good mother appear, the benevolent mother, or that he speaks of the creation of the infantile female superego. Ratifying the subject's fantasmatic production at the level of the signified of the Other, $s(A)$, reduces the complex formations of desire in the subject to the demand articulated in the subject's immediate relationship to the analyst.

'But what if it works?' you will say to me. Effectively, why not?
447 Isn't this an idea one can have of analysis? I reply that not only is it not sufficient, but that these observations themselves enable us to see that, while this orientation doesn't fail to have certain effects, what is produced is very far from the cure-effect that we might expect, like the supposed genital satisfaction that is said to be attained. How can one not see the paradox of representing it by the fact that the

subject lets himself be loved by his analyst? On the contrary, we very obviously see the opposite in it. The subjective reduction of symptoms is achieved via a regressive process, not in the purely temporal sense, but in the topical sense as well, insofar as there is a reduction of everything in the order of desire – its production, organization and maintenance – onto the plane of demand. The stages of the treatment, very far from being interpretable in the sense of an amelioration and normalization of relations with the other, are marked by sudden outbursts which take various forms, including acting out.

I showed you one last year in the case of a subject strongly marked by perverse tendencies. The outcome of things was a true acting out by the subject who went to look through the door of the lavatories on the Champs-Élysées at women urinating – that is, who went in search of the woman as phallus, literally. This was the abrupt outbreak of something which was excluded under the influence of demand and made its re-entry here in the form of an isolated act in the life of the subject which had the compulsive form of an acting out and assured the presentification of a signifier as such. Further testimonies show us still other forms – for example a problematic and paradoxical infatuation in subjects for whom there are no grounds for considering them in themselves to be so-called latent homosexuals ignorant of the fact. They have what they have that is homosexual, and they have precisely no more of it than what one can see in the abrupt infatuation for a semblable when it's merely the forced production of the relationship to *a* – induced by this way of directing the analysis. This truly is the artificial product of the analyst's interventions. At this level, the practice lacks all critique and finesse, to a degree that discourages commentary.

This is also why I would like to take another example that issues from the work of the same author, and which, it seems to me, would have been much more interesting, and suited to showing the development that his elaborations on these subjects might have taken, had they been given a different orientation.

3

448

I have in mind the 1950 article entitled *'Incidences thérapeutiques de la prise de conscience de l'envie du pénis dans la névrose obsessionnelle féminine'* ['Therapeutic Effects of Becoming Aware of Penis Envy in Obsessional Neurosis in Women'].

This observation is of great interest because we do not have all that many analyses of obsessional neurosis in women and also because it contributes to painting a picture of the problem of the

sexual specificity of the neuroses. Those who might think that it's for reasons that have to do with their sex that subjects choose this or that inclination in neuroses will see on this occasion how much what is in the order of structure in neurosis leaves very little place to being determined by the position of sex, in the biological sense. Effectively, here one rediscovers, and in a very interesting manner, the famous prevalence of the phallic object that we see at play in masculine obsessional neuroses.

This is how the author conceives and articulates the progress of the analysis.

> Like the male obsessional, the woman has a need to identify with man in a regressive manner so as to be able to free herself of the anxieties of early childhood; but whereas the former will rely upon this identification to transform the infantile love object into an object of genital love . . .

This corresponds closely to what I pointed out to you earlier in the paradox of identification in the male subject – with the analyst as it happens – since she effects the passage from infantile love object to genital love object on her own, which at the very least poses a problem.

> . . . she, the woman, basing herself at first on this same identification, tends to abandon this initial object and orientate herself towards a heterosexual fixation, as if she were able to proceed to a new feminine identification, this time with the person of the analyst. [pp. 215–16]

It's said with a striking, but necessary, ambiguity that the identification with the analyst, specified as such here, and which bears upon an analyst of the male sex, ensures by itself, quite simply, as if it were self-evident, access to genitality. It's an assumption. Not imprudently, there are no great claims of extraordinary improvement in this case.

Concerning the identification with the analyst, one observes, not without a certain embarrassment, or even a certain surprise, that it occurs in two successive modes. The first is initially conflictual, that is, one of revendication and hostility with respect to the man. Then, to the extent that this relationship, as we are told, 'becomes more relaxed', a very unusual problematic present itself. The need to think of the progress of the treatment on the basis of identification obliges one to accept that the female identification with the analyst
449 is rendered possible, we are told, by a 'fundamental ambiguity of the

person of the analyst'. This is, surely, not an explanation we're likely to be satisfied with.

> It goes without saying that the interpretation of the transference phenomena is here particularly delicate. If the personality of the male analyst is initially apprehended as that of a man, with all the prohibitions, fears and aggressiveness that that comprises, shortly after the desire to possess the analyst's phallus . . .

This is something we will have to evaluate.

> . . . and the correlative desire to castrate him are brought to light, and if by virtue of this fact the effects of the pre-cited detente have been obtained, this personality of the male analyst is assimilated to that of a benevolent mother. Does not this assimilation demonstrate that the essential force of the anti-male aggressiveness is to be found in the initial destructive drive of which the mother was the object?

Here a Kleinian horizon will always provide some support.

> Becoming conscious of one brings with it the right to the free exercise of the other, and the liberating power of this becoming conscious of the desire to possess the phallus then becomes manifestly understandable, even as the passage from one identification to the other as a function of a fundamental ambiguity . . .

Here we reencounter the phrase mentioned earlier.

> . . . of the person of the analyst whose male aspect is initially only apparent to the patient. [p. 216]

That effectively says it all. The direction of the treatment rests upon the interpretation that it's about a desire for phallic possession and, correlatively, a desire for the castration of the analyst. On closer inspection, this is far from representing what is effectively present in the observation. I will take things in the order in which they are presented to us.

She is a woman, fifty years of age, in good health, mother of two children, practising in a paramedical profession. She comes for a series of obsessional phenomena that are of a common kind – an obsession with having contracted syphilis, and she sees in it some

kind of prohibition bearing upon the marriage of her children, which moreover she was unable to prevent concerning her oldest, an obsession with infanticide, an obsession with poisoning – in short, a whole series of common obsessions in obsessional manifestations in a woman.

Even before he lists them, the author tells us about the prevailing manner of obsessions with a religious theme. As with all obsessions with a religious theme, there are all kinds of insulting, scatological phrases that impose themselves on the subject in strict contradiction with her own convictions. One of the elements that the author stresses in the subject's relationship – she is a Catholic – to religious reality is the presence of Christ's body in the host. In place of the host, she represents to herself in her imagination the masculine genital organs, without there being any question of hallucinatory
450 phenomena, as is made clear to us. Several lines further on, an important detail is pointed out concerning the principal religious theme of this obsessional woman, which is that her mother alone was responsible for her Catholic education, which only ever had the character of obligation and constraint. Her conflict with her managed to be referred onto the spiritual plane, we are told. We won't dispute that. It's a fact that has its significance.

Before we come to the type of interpretation that will be given subsequently, I would like to stop you for a moment at this symptom, which is in itself very apt to persuade me to make several remarks. The genital organs, we are told, are present there in the place of the host, and out front. What can that mean for us? I mean, for us analysts. Here, indeed, is a case where we must give this superimposition its value, if we are analysts. What do we call repression, and above all the return of the repressed, if not something that seems to influence one from below and rises to the surface, as Scripture characterizes it, or like a stain that with time floats to the surface?

Here, then, is a case in which, if we want to grant things their textual importance, as it's our position as analysts to do, we can try to articulate what it is that it's returning from.

This woman who has received a religious education must at least have, like anyone in the Christian religion, a religious sense of what Christ is. Christ is the Word, the Logos – this has been drummed into us by our Catholic education. That he is the Word made flesh isn't in doubt in the slightest, it's the most abridged form of the *Credo*. He is the totality of the Word. Now, what we see appearing and substituting itself for him is, in a manner that converges with all our efforts to formulate the analytic experience, what we have been led to call the privileged, unique signifier, insofar as it designates the effect of the signifier, as such, upon the signified. What is produced,

then, in this symptom is the substitution, for the subject's relationship to the Word made flesh or even for the totality of the Word, of a privileged signifier which serves to designate the effect, mark, imprint or wound of signifiers as a totality, insofar as they bear upon the human subject and insofar as, via the instance of the signifier, there are things in it that come to be signified.

Let's continue with the case. What do we find further on? The subject says that she has dreamed that she was stomping on the head of Christ and crushing it, and this head, she adds, 'looked like yours'. Her associations – 'Each morning on my way to work I go past a funeral parlour in which four Christs are on display. When I look at them, I have the sensation of stepping on their penises. I feel 451
a kind of intense pleasure and anxiety' [p. 225]. We find here, once again, the identification of Christ with the Other as locus of speech. The subject crushes the figure of Christ with her heel – let's not forget that Christ is here materialized in an object, namely the crucifix, and that it's possible that in this case he is, in his totality, the phallus. We can't fail to be struck by this, above all if we continue to spell out the details that the observation provides us with.

The reproaches that she will make to her analyst about the inconvenience that through her treatment he brings into her existence are going to be materialized in the fact that she is unable to buy herself shoes. The analyst doesn't fail to recognize here the phallic value of the shoe and, in particular, of the heel that she made good use of for crushing the head of Christ. Notice in this respect that fetishism, especially shoe fetishism, is almost never observed in women. Hence, the significance of the appearance of the phallic signification of shoes at this point in the analysis. Let's try to understand it.

One doesn't have to go very far to understand it, while the analyst does everything at this moment to suggest to the subject that there is in her a desire to possess the phallus. In itself, this is perhaps not, my goodness, the worst thing he could say, if it were not for the fact that for him that means that the subject has the desire to be a man. Which she doesn't stop contradicting and protests with the greatest energy, right to the end, that she has never had the desire to be a man. Effectively, perhaps desiring to possess the phallus and desiring to be a man are not the same thing, since analytic theory itself supposes that things can resolve themselves in a very natural manner, and who wouldn't inform themselves about it?

But let's see how the analysand replies at this point. 'When I am well dressed' – that is, when I'm wearing pretty shoes – 'men desire me, and I tell myself, with very real joy, "And now they too will get their comeuppance. I am happy imagining that they will suffer as a result"' [p. 223]. In short, she brings the analyst back to solid,

economical ground, namely – if there is a relationship to the phallus in her relations with man, what is it?

Let's try to spell this out ourselves.

There are several elements here, and first off the relationship with the mother, which we are told is profound, essential and truly coherent with the real subject. We are told about the mother's relations with the father, which have manifested themselves in several ways, in particular that the father had not been able to overcome the wife's attachment to a first, incidentally platonic, love. If such a thing is indicated in the observation, it must have occupied a certain place.

452 The subject's relations with her mother are presented to us thus – she judges her in the most favourable manner in every respect, more intelligent than her father, she is fascinated by her energy and so on.

> The rare moments when her mother relaxed filled her with an unspeakable joy . . .. She always considered that her younger sister was preferred over her . . .. Also, moreover, anybody who interfered in this union with her mother became the object of death wishes, as is shown by important material, either oneiric or infantile, relative to the desire for the death of her sister. [p. 219]

Is this not sufficient to show that what is in question is, as I have stressed to you, what the subject's relationship to her mother's desire is? The problem of desire is introduced into the subject's life early, is particularly manifest in the history of obsessionals and results in the fact that the subject envisages her end for herself, not as having this or that, but as first being the object of the mother's desire, with what that entails – that is, deducing what is, but is unknown. Everything that, for the subject, henceforth binds approaching her own desire to an effect of destruction and, at the same time, defines this desire's approach as such to the phallus, insofar as in itself it is the signifier of the effect of desire in the subject's life, will depend on the object of the mother's desire.

For the subject in question, the problem is not, as in the phobic, for example, whether the mother has the phallus or not, it's what the effect in the Other is of this x that is desire, in other words, what he himself will be – whether he is or isn't what the Other's desire is. This is what we see coming into the foreground here. It's quite nice that it's with respect to the Logos made flesh, namely the Other as marked by the word, that the substitution of the phallus signifier occurs at this point and at this level.

I will formulate my thoughts further. Freud saw and designated the frontier of analysis as stopping at a point that in certain cases, he

says, prove to be irreducible, leaving this sort of wound that for the subject is the castration complex. Its prevailing manifestation can be summarized, in short, as this – man, the male, can only have the phallus against the background of the fact that he doesn't have it, and that the same thing exactly is present in woman, namely that she doesn't have the phallus against the background of the fact that she has it, for otherwise how would it be possible for her to be enraged by this irreducible *Penisneid*? Don't forget that *Neid* doesn't simply mean a wish but means that that renders me literally enraged. All the underpinnings of aggressiveness and anger are indeed in this original *Neid*, both in modern German and, even more so, in old 453
forms of German and even Anglo-Saxon.

If on one occasion Freud recorded there the *unendlich*, infinite, projected to infinity, which was poorly translated as 'interminable', character of what can happen in an analysis, it's undoubtedly, after all, because there were things that he did not see or that he had not had the opportunity to encounter or articulate, although many indications in his work go in this direction, and specially his final article on the *Spaltung* of the ego, which I shall come back to. He doesn't see that the solution to the problem of castration in both man and woman doesn't revolve around the dilemma of having or not having the phallus, for the solution is only found when the subject perceives that there is one thing that is in any case to be recognized, which is that he isn't the phallus. It's from the moment of realization in analysis that the subject isn't the phallus that he is capable of normalizing his natural position, and that he either has it or doesn't have it. That's the final term, the ultimate signifying relationship around which it's possible to resolve the imaginary dead-end created by the function that the image of the phallus comes to adopt at the level of the signifying plane.

This is exactly what happens in the case of our subject under the effect of the first manifestations of her being caught in the mechanism of the transference, which is a more elaborate articulation of symptomatic effects. In a way that is completely recognizable in what I have just quoted to you today, she presents the shoe fantasy to herself.

It's a question of the possession or non-possession of feminine or phallic shoes, the shoes that in this particular case we will call fetishistic. What function does the shoe adopt for a masculine subject, inasmuch as what he rejects in his perversion is that the woman is castrated? The fetishist's perversion in the masculine subject consists in affirming that the woman has it against the background of not having it. Without that, there would be no need of an object to represent it – an object which, on top of everything else, is manifestly

independent of the woman's body. Well then, as the transference is developing, the subject goes about fomenting the following, which in appearance is the same thing, namely that she has it. She stresses that she wants to have it in the form of clothing, in the form of these clothes that will excite men's desire, and owing to which, as she expresses it, she will be able to disappoint them in their desire. In appearance it's the same thing, but it's completely different according to whether it's posed by the subject herself, that is, by the woman, or by the man opposite. Also, what she demonstrates when the occasion arises is that by wanting to present herself as having
454 what she knows perfectly well she doesn't have, at issue is something that for her has a completely different value, which I have called the value of masquerade. She makes a mask of her femininity.

On the basis of the fact that the phallus is for her the signifier of desire, the issue is that she presents the appearance of it, appears to be it. The issue for her is being the object of a desire, and a desire that she herself knows full well she can only disappoint. She expresses it explicitly when the analyst interprets it for her as being about a desire to possess the phallus, which shows us once again the divergence that is established between being the object of the Other's desire and having or not having the organ that bears its mark.

We come, then, to a formula, which is the following – the original desire is, 'I want to be what she, the mother, desires.' In order to be it, I must destroy what at present is the object of her desire.

The subject wishes to be what the mother's desire is. What she needs to be brought to see in the treatment is that man isn't the object of this desire in himself, that man is no more the phallus than woman is, whereas what constitutes her aggressiveness with respect to her husband as a man – I will show this to you even more clearly next time – is that she considers that he is, I'm not saying that he has, that he is the phallus, and it's in the name of this that he is her rival and that her relations with him are marked by the sign of obsessional destruction.

According to the essential form of obsessional economy, this desire for destruction turns back against her. The aim of the treatment is to bring to her awareness that 'you are yourself that which you want to destroy, insofar as you, too, wish to be the phallus'. In a certain way of pursuing the treatment, the 'You are this that you wish to destroy' is replaced by a desire for the destruction of the analyst's phallus, captured in improbable and fleeting fantasies. 'You want to destroy my phallus, the phallus of your analyst,' the analyst says, 'and so, I give it to you.' In other words, the conception of the treatment is that the analyst fantasmatically gives the phallus and consents to a desire of phallic possession. Now, this isn't what is at

issue, and one of the proofs of this is that at the almost final point to which the analysis seems to have been pursued, we are told that the patient retains all her obsessions except that they no longer cause her anxiety. They have all been ratified by the analysis, and they jam up. The fact that they still exist is of some importance.

What does the patient do? The observation states this in total innocence – she intervenes with her oldest son with all her force, a son of whom she has always been scared stiff, because in fact he is the only one whose masculine reactions she has never been able to 455
master very well, by telling him that he urgently needs to go and do an analysis himself. What does that mean, if not that she hands back this phallus that the analyst thinks is the solution to the situation, insofar as he himself, taking the position of the benevolent mother, gives it to the patient. At the one point at which she effectively has the phallus, she returns it to him. Give-and-take.

The analyst has oriented the entire analysis around this, which is that the patient wishes to be a man. Right to the end, she is not entirely convinced of this. However, it's true that possessing or not possessing this phallus brought her some appeasement. But the heart of the matter, the essential, isn't resolved – the signification of the phallus as the signifier of desire.

11 June 1958

XXVI

THE CIRCUITS OF DESIRE

The basis of interpretation
The Other of the Other
Symptom and castration
Obsessional distance
Little theory of blasphemy

Today is the 18th June. The part the signifier plays in politics – the signifier 'no' when everybody is sliding towards dreadful consent – hasn't ever been studied to date. The 18th June is also the anniversary of the foundation of the French Society of Psychoanalysis. We also said 'No' at one moment.

Last time I began commenting on the case of an obsessional woman treated by one of our colleagues, and I started to outline several of the principles that can be deduced from the way we formulate things and that make it possible to form an opinion as to the well or poorly directed way in which a treatment is conducted when centred on a phenomenon that obviously exists in the material brought by the analysis, namely, the coming to consciousness of penis envy.

Although overall I think you see the value of the use we make of our schema and categories, there are naturally always some who are a little behind. Certain schemas that you have pondered and conceptual oppositions that you found easy to retain find themselves a little shaken up and put back in question by developments as we progress – and this disconcerts you.

Someone was wondering, for example, whether one wasn't compelled to see a contradiction between what I contributed last time and a principle that it was thought we could settle on. In summary, I am supposed to have said – at least this is what was heard – that the sexual development of women was obliged to go via this, which was that she has to be the phallus against the background of not

being it, and that for the man, the castration complex can be formulated as this, that he has the phallus against the background of 458
not having it, or of being threatened with not having it. These are obviously schemas to which, from a certain angle, one can oppose this or that phase of sexual development. It's completely insufficient to remain there, since the dialectic of being and having also applies to them both.

The man must also realize that he isn't it. This is even the direction in which we can situate a portion of the problems implicated in the solution to the castration complex and *Penisneid.* We shall see this in more detail, which will enable you, I hope, to reposition statements that are not false in themselves, but which constitute partial views.

With this aim in mind, we will start again from our schema today.

1

It's exceedingly important to suitably articulate the different lines along which psychoanalysis develops. An article that I advise you to read on the matter is one by Glover called 'Therapeutic Effects of Inexact Interpretation', which appeared in October 1931 in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis.*

This is one of the most remarkable and intelligent articles that could be written on such a subject. It truly clarifies the starting point from which to examine the question of interpretation.

At the time Glover is writing Freud is still alive, but he has already produced the great turning point in analytic technique around the analysis of resistances and aggressiveness. Glover claims that this orientation in analysis implies the path or the covering, one might say, in the sense in which one has to cover ground, of the sum of phantasy systems,* that we have learnt to recognize in analysis owing to the accumulation of experience and the development of acquired notions.

It's clear that we know a lot more about it now than right at the start of analysis, and the question arises regarding the worth of our therapeutics at the time at which we didn't know the whole range of these fantasy systems. Were incomplete therapeutic treatments less valuable than those we undertake today? It's a very interesting question, and it leads Glover to draw up a general situation about all the positions taken by whoever finds himself in the position of consultant in relation to every kind of disorder. Having done this, he generalizes and extends the notion of interpretation to every 459
formulated position taken by whomever one consults and draws

up a scale of the different positions of the doctor in relation to the patient.

There is here an anticipation of the doctor–patient relation, as we say today, but articulated in a manner which has not been developed along these lines, and which I regret, because it poses a sort of general law, namely, that insofar as we misrecognize the truth included in a symptom, we find ourselves complicit in symptomatic formations.

This begins with the general practitioner who says to the patient, 'Get a grip on yourself, go to the country, get a new pastime.' He resolutely places himself in a position of misrecognition, and by virtue of this fact immediately occupies a certain place, that isn't ineffective, since it can be very well recognized as the very place in which certain symptoms are formed. His function in relation to the patient can be situated using the very terms of analytic topography. I'll say no more.

Glover observes at one point that the tendency of the modern therapeutic analysis* of his time is to bring all interpretation to bear on sadistic systems and guilt reactions, and that till recently none of that had been emphasized. There's no doubt that one alleviated the patient's anxiety, but one left this famous sadistic system unresolved, unsuppressed and consequently repressed.

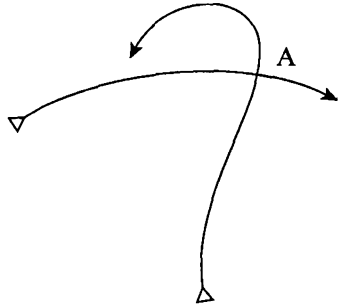
That's an example of the direction in which he takes his remarks, and it's indeed something it would be interesting to return to today.

What does it mean, for example, when one speaks of the advent of the analysis of aggressiveness? For a time, analysts were so impressed by the discovery they had made that it had become a standing joke. Analysts in training would greet one another by saying, 'And so, have you analysed your aggressiveness?' We can locate what this discovery represented, effectively, on our fundamental schema. It's what I was trying to do earlier, for in the end we can also wonder about this. When I was teaching you that the narcissistic system was fundamental to the formation of aggressive reactions, I would often observe how much our use of the term 'aggressiveness' was marked by ambiguity. The aggressiveness provoked in the imaginary relationship with the little other can't be confused with the sum of aggressive power.

To recall things that are self-evident, violence is essential to aggression, at least on the human plane. It isn't speech, it's even the
460 exact contrary. What can be produced in any relationship between humans is violence or speech. If violence, in its essence, is differentiated from speech, the question arises of the extent to which violence as such – to differentiate it from the use we make of the term 'aggressiveness' – can be repressed, since we have made it a principle

that, in principle, only what reveals itself to have attained the structure of speech, that is, a signifying articulation, can be repressed. If what belongs to the order of aggressiveness comes to be symbolized and captured in the mechanism of what is repression, unconsciousness, what is analysable, and even, let's say, as a general rule, what is interpretable, it's from the angle of the murder of the semblable, who is latent in the imaginary relationship.

Let's again spell out our little schema in its simplest form, which shows us the intersection of the tendency – the drive, if you wish, insofar as it represents an individualized need – with the signifying chain into which it has to be articulated. This already makes it possible for us to make several remarks.



Let's make a supposition. Let's suppose that for the human being there is only reality, this famous reality that we make use of willy-nilly. Suppose that that's all there is. It isn't unthinkable that something signifying articulates this reality. To focus your mind, let's suppose that, as some schools say, a signifier is simply a kind of conditioning – I won't say of reflexes, but of something that is reducible to reflexes.

The fact that language belongs to another order than that which we artificially create in animals in the laboratory by teaching them to secrete gastric juices at the sound of a bell does not prevent the sound of the bell from being a signifier. One may therefore suppose a human world completely organized around a coalescence of each of the needs that are to be satisfied, with a number of predetermined signs. If these signs are valid for everyone, this 461
must in principle make an ideally functioning society. Every expression of the drive commensurate with needs will be associated with a diverse and varied sound of the bell, which will function in such a way that he who hears it will immediately satisfy the said need.

This is how we arrive at the ideal society. What I am depicting is what has always been dreamt of by utopians, namely a perfectly

functioning society, and it culminates in the satisfaction of each according to his needs. One adds, to be honest, that everyone participates according to their merits, and that's where the problems start.

In short, if this schema remains at the level of the intersection of the signifiers and the thrust or tendency of need, where does it end? In the subject's identification with the Other, insofar as the latter articulates the distribution of the resources that are capable of responding to need. This isn't how it is, thanks to the sole fact that it is necessary to take the background of demand into account, even if it is only to explain the subject's articulation into an order that exists beyond the order of the real, which we call the symbolic order, and which complicates it, superimposes itself on it, but does not adhere to it.

However, already at this level, something of a natural, organic order intervenes, as soon as this simple state of the schema exists, and complicates it, at least in man.

The subject is here, the mythical child who acts as the background to our psychoanalytic speculations. He starts expressing his needs in the presence of his mother. It's here, in A, that he encounters the mother as a speaking subject, and it's here, in $s(A)$, that the message ends, at the point at which the mother satisfies him. As I have already pointed out, it's not at the point at which the mother does not satisfy him, frustrates him, that the problems begin. That would be too simple, although one always comes back to this, precisely because it is simple.

The interesting problem did not go undetected by a Winnicott, for example, whose mind and practice, as we know, cover the entire range of the current development and techniques of psychoanalysis up to and including an extremely precise consideration on the fantasmatic systems that are in the field bordering on psychosis. In his article on transitional objects, which I have mentioned to you, Winnicott shows with the greatest precision that the essential problem is to know how the child emerges from satisfaction, and not from frustration, to construct a world for himself.

462 Inasmuch as a world that comprises something beyond demand is articulated for a human subject, it's when demand is satisfied, and not when it's frustrated, that what Winnicott calls transitional objects appear, that is, these little objects that very early on we see assuming an extreme importance in the relationship with the mother – a piece of nappy that the child pulls at jealously, a scrap of anything, a rattle. It's essential to appreciate how early this transitional object is in the child's system of development.

That said, let's pause at frustration, that is, at what happens when the message does not arrive.

2

The relationship with the mother, where the mother imposes, more than her law, what I have called her omnipotence or capriciousness, is complicated by the fact that, as experience shows, the child – the human child and not just any young – is open to an imaginary-order relationship with the image of one's own body and the image of the other, and at a date we tried to determine three years ago when we were interested in the mirror stage.

The mirror stage hasn't just evaporated since. I am very fond of those of you who say that every year brings something different and that the system changes. It doesn't change, but I am simply trying to get you to cover the field. On our schema, we can see that the mirror stage is placed prior to what occurs on the line of the return from need, whether satisfied or not. The subject experiences, for example, reactions of disappointment, unease or dizziness in his own body in relation to the ideal image he has of it and which assumes a predominant value in him because of a feature of his organization that we have tied, with more or less justification, to the prematurity of his birth.

In short, from the outset we can see two circuits interfering with one another. The first is the symbolic circuit in which – let's say, so as to give you an idea, something familiar for you to hang your hat on – the subject's relationship with the infantile female superego is inscribed. There is, on the other hand, the imaginary relationship with the ideal self-image that finds itself more or less affected, even damaged, by frustrations or disappointments. Thus, it turns out that the circuit is being played out on two planes from the outset, a symbolic plane and an imaginary plane. On the one hand, the relationship to the primordial object – the mother or the Other as locus where the possibility of formulating need in signifiers is located. On the other, the image of the other, little *a*, where the subject has a kind of link to himself, to an image that represents the line of his 463
own completion – imaginary completion, of course.

Everything that we have said since the beginning of the year, when we started to take things at the level of wit, has shown us the relevance of what this schema indicates, namely that nothing in mental life corresponding to what analytic experience gives us can be organized unless there exists, beyond the Other placed primordially in the position of omnipotence by its power – not of frustration, for that's insufficient, but of *Versagung*, with the ambiguity of promise and refusal that this word contains – the Other of this Other, as it were, that is, what makes it possible for the subject to become aware of this Other, the locus of speech, as itself symbolized.

You get the sense that the system of the familial Oedipal triangle comprises something more radical than anything that this social experiment of the family gives us, and indeed it is this that gives this Oedipal triangle and the Freudian discovery their permanence. This is why I told you that there the Father, with a capital F, is never just a father, but rather the dead father, the father as the vehicle of a signifier, a second-order signifier that authorizes and founds the entire system of signifiers and makes it possible for the first Other, that is, the first subject to whom the speaking subject addresses himself, itself to be symbolized.

The articulated, human world is able to assume its proper dimension solely at the level of this Other, the Other of the law properly so called, a law – I am going to insist on this – that is embodied. Experience shows us the extent to which an Other in the background in relation to the Other is indispensable and without which the universe of language cannot be articulated, this universe such as it shows itself to be effective in the structuration, not only of needs, but also of this thing called desire whose original dimensions I am trying to demonstrate to you this year.

If the Other qua locus of speech were able to be simply the locus of the sound of the bell I was talking about before, it would not be an Other strictly speaking, but only the organized locus of the system of signifiers that introduced order and regularity into the vital exchanges within a particular species.

It's difficult to see who could have organized this. It's possible to envisage that in a given society men full of benevolence spend their time planning it and getting it to work. It's even possible to say that this is one of the ideals of modern politics. It's just that that isn't what the Other is.

The Other isn't purely and simply the locus of this perfectly organized and fixed system. It is itself a symbolized Other, and this
464 is what gives it its appearance of freedom. The Other, potentially the Father, the locus in which the law is articulated, is itself subject to the signifying articulation and, even more than subject to signifying articulation, it's marked by it, with the denaturing effect that the presence of signifiers entails.

What this is about is still far from having come to a state of perfect conceptualization, but, in the name of a working hypothesis to illustrate my thought, I would say that the effect of signifiers upon the Other, the mark that it suffers at this level, represents castration as such.

With respect to the triad of castration–frustration–privation, I have previously emphasized that in castration the agent is real, it's a real father that one needs, that the action is symbolic, and that

it bears upon an imaginary object. Here again we find that this is necessary. As soon as something real happens at the level of the law, and it matters not whether the father is more or less deficient here or whether something replaces him, takes his place, the following occurs – its background is reflected in the system of demand in which the subject is instated. Far from the system of demand being perfect, fully productive or in full use, it introduces into itself, in the background, the effect of signifiers on the subject, the mark of signifiers on the subject and the dimension of lack these signifiers introduce into the subject.

This introduced lack is symbolized as such in the system of signifiers as the effect of signifiers on the subject, that is, the signified. Strictly speaking, the signified does not arise so much from the depths, as if life lived on significations, but from language and signifiers, and this imprints this sort of effect that is called the signified upon life. This symbolization is primitive, as indicated by what I have contributed on castration.

What acts as a support for the symbolic action called castration is an image chosen from the imaginary system as its support. The symbolic action of castration chooses its sign, which is borrowed from the imaginary domain. Something in the image of the other is chosen to carry the mark of a lack, which is this very lack by which the living thing, because it's human – that is, has a relationship to language – sees itself as excluded from the omnitude of desires, as something limited, as local, as a creature, sometimes as a link in the lineage of life, one of those through whom life passes. Each animal is effectively only one of the individuals that realize the type, and in the name of this, in relation to the type, each individual may be considered already dead. We, too, we are already dead in relation to the movement of life. But through language, and by contrast with animals, we are capable of projecting this move- 465
ment in its totality, and even more, in its totality as having arrived at its end.

This is exactly what Freud articulates in the notion of the death instinct. He means that for man life is already projected as having arrived at its conclusion, that is, at the point at which it returns to death. Man is this animal-being captured and articulated in a signifying system that makes it possible for him to dominate his immanence as a living thing and perceive himself as already dead. And he only does it in an imaginary, virtual or even speculative manner.

There is, of course, no corresponding experience of death, which is why it's symbolized in another way. It's symbolized by the specific organ where the thrust of life appears in its most tangible form. That

is why it's the phallus, insofar as it represents the rise of vital power, that takes its place in the order of signifiers and represents what is marked by signifiers – that which signifiers strike with the essential decline where this lack-in-being [*manque-à-être*], the scale of which signifiers introduce into the life of a subject, can be articulated.

This is what makes it possible for us to understand the order in which things presented themselves to us for analysis, once one has not simply gone from the School to the phenomenon, but starts with the phenomena as one sees them appear in the neuroses. They were the ground chosen to manifest that articulation in its essence, because it is here that it appears in its disorder. Our experience has proven to us that it has always been in disorder that we could more easily learn to uncover the inner workings and articulations of order.

What initially revealed itself, through Freud, to an experience that immediately made the underpinnings of the castration complex evident was the apprehension of subjects' symptoms.

3

What does 'symptom' mean? Where is it located on this schema?

It's located at the level of signification. This is what Freud contributed – a symptom is a signification, it's a signified. Far from involving solely the subject, his history and his entire anamnesis are implicated. That is why one can legitimately symbolize it in this place by a small $s(\mathrm{A})$, signified of the Other coming from the locus of speech.

466 But what Freud also taught us is that a symptom is never simple and that it's always overdetermined. There is no symptom whose signifier has not been provided by a prior experience. This experience is always located at the level involving what is suppressed. Now, the heart of everything that is suppressed in the subject is the castration complex. It's the signifier of barred A that is articulated in the castration complex but neither necessarily nor always totally articulated therein.

What is the famous traumatism we began with, the famous primal scene that enters into the subject's economy, which is in play at the heart and on the horizon of the discovery of the unconscious? What is it, if not a signifier whose impact on life I began describing to you earlier? The living being is grasped as living, as alive, but with this gap or distance that is precisely what constitutes both the signifying dimension's autonomy and the trauma or primitive scene. What is this, then, if it's not this life that grasps itself in a

horrible apperception of itself, in its total foreignness and opaque brutality as the pure signifier of an intolerable existence for life itself as soon as it moves away from it to see the trauma and the primal scene? This is how life sees itself as a signifier in a pure state, which can in no way be articulated or resolved. When Freud begins to formulate what a symptom is, the signifiers in the background in relation to the signified are implicated by him in the formation of every symptom.

What we have been studying recently in the hysteric makes it possible for us to locate where the problem of neurosis is to be found. It stems from the relationship signifiers have with the position of the subject dependent on demand. This is why the hysteric has to articulate something that we will provisionally call her desire and this desire's object insofar as it isn't the object of need. This is what led me to insist somewhat on the so-called dream by the butcher's beautiful wife.

It appears there in a completely clear fashion, and Freud says it at the very dawn of psychoanalysis – that for the hysteric the question is one of making the object of desire subsist as distinct from and independent of the object of all need. The relationship to desire, to its constitution and to its being maintained in an enigmatic form in the background in relation to all demand is the hysteric's problem.

What is my hysteric's desire? It's what opens up for her, I won't say the universe, but an entire world that is already quite vast indeed, by virtue of what one can call the dimension of hysteria latent in every kind of human being in the world. The hysteric finds 467
herself initially going straight to the point by means of anything that can pose as a question about her own desire, what I have called the x, the inexpressible desire, with whatever might happen in this order to all her hysterical brothers and sisters – and it's on that, as Freud formulates it, that hysterical identification is based. All hysterics respond to everything in the order of questions about desire as they currently arise for others, above all for hysterical others, but also for others who may be hysterical only occasionally, even in a latent manner, inasmuch as a hysterical way of posing the question is apparent in them.

For the hysteric, this question about her desire opens up the world to her, a world of identifications that place her in a special relationship with the mask, I mean with anything that in any way is able to fix and symbolize, according to a certain type, the question about desire. This question, which allies her to other hysterics and which is an appeal to hysterics as such, has essentially identified her with a sort of general mask under which every possible mode of lack is active.

We now come to the obsessional. The obsessional's structure, such as I am trying to make progress into it, is also indicated by a particular relationship to desire. This isn't the relationship d_x, but another, which today I will call d_o.

The obsessional's relationship to his desire is subject to the fact, which we are long familiar with thanks to Freud, that an early role is played therein by what is called the *Entbindung*, the unbinding of the drives, the isolation of destruction. The entire structure of the obsessional is, as such, determined by the fact that the initial access to his desire is through the Other's desire, as it is for every subject, and by the fact that the Other's desire is initially destroyed and annulled. In saying this, I am not saying anything terribly new, I am simply articulating it in a new way.

Those who already have an obsessional in hand may know that it's an essential trait of his condition that his own desire decreases, blinks, wavers and disappears the closer he gets to it. Desire shows itself here to bear the mark of the fact that desire has initially been encountered by the subject as something that destroys itself, inasmuch as it presented itself to him as that of his rival, and he responded to it in the style of this reaction of destruction that is subjacent to his relationship to the image of the other insofar as it dispossesses and ruins him. The obsessional's approach to his desire remains, therefore, struck by this mark such that every time he approaches it, it disappears.

468 This is what the author I am talking about and have been critiquing for several lessons perceives in the form of what he calls distance from the object, which he initially confuses with what he calls the object's destruction. He has the idea about the psychology of the obsessional that he is someone who has to perpetually defend himself from madness, defined as the object's destruction. That is only a projection which stems from the inadequacies of the said author's thought on the theoretical plan, but where personal factors also enter, for it's only a fantasy, a fantasy in some ways required by the imaginary perspective from which he engages with the solution to the problem of desire for the obsessional. Moreover, it's common experience that there isn't the slightest danger of psychosis for the typical obsessional, wherever you lead him – and I will tell you, when the moment comes, to what extent an obsessional differs in structure from a psychotic.

On the other hand, what has been perceived therein, although poorly translated, is that the obsessional only maintains a possible relationship with his desire from a distance. What has to be maintained for the obsessional is the distance from his desire and not the distance from the object. The object in this instance has quite

a different function. What experience shows us in the clearest of manners is that he has to maintain himself at a certain distance from his desire for this desire to subsist.

But there is another facet that can be observed in the clinical setting, concretely, when the obsessional establishes a relationship with the other that is fully formulated at the level of demand, whether it concerns his mother, initially, or his spouse. What can this term 'spouse' mean for us analysts? It becomes fully articulated at the level at which we are trying to situate things. He or she is the one with whom it's always necessary, one way or another, whether one likes it or not, to return to being in a relationship of demand. Even if one shuts up over a whole range of things, it's never painless. Demand demands to be pushed to the end.

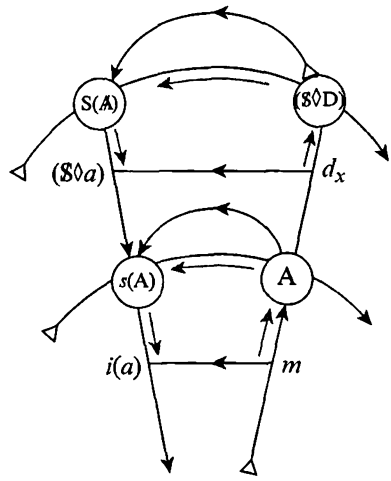
What happens on the plane of the obsessional's relationships with his or her spouse? It's very exactly this, which is the most subtle thing to see, but you will observe it if you make the effort – the obsessional spends his time destroying the Other's desire. Entering into the obsessional's domain ends, in the normal case, if one gets taken in by it, with a muted attack or permanent erosion which tends to culminate in the abolition, devaluation and disparagement in the other of what is his own desire.

There are no doubt nuances. These are terms that require practice 469
at handling, but in the absence of these terms, nothing would make it possible for us even to perceive the true nature of what is happening. I have already highlighted elsewhere, in the obsessional's infancy, the quite special, accentuated character that the articulation of demand assumes for him early on.

You are beginning to be able to situate him on this schema. This small child is always demanding something, and the surprising thing is that of all children who effectively spend their time demanding something, he is the one whose demand is always experienced, and by those who have the best intentions, as being properly speaking unbearable. He is a pest, as we say. It's not that he asks for things that are more extraordinary than others do. It's in the way he demands them. The specific character of the formulation of demand for one who is already obsessional when it manifests itself at the time of the decline of the Oedipus complex or in the so-called latency period lies in the subject's relationship to demand.

As for our hysteric, we have seen that in order to sustain her enigmatic desire, the little *a* for her is employed as an artifice. We can represent it with two parallel tensions – one at the level of the idealizing formation, [$\$ \lozenge a$], the other at the level of the identification with a little other, *i(a)*. Think of Dora's feelings towards Herr

K. Incidentally, every hysteric has a comparable support in one or other phases of her history and comes to play the same role as *a*.



The hysteric's circuit

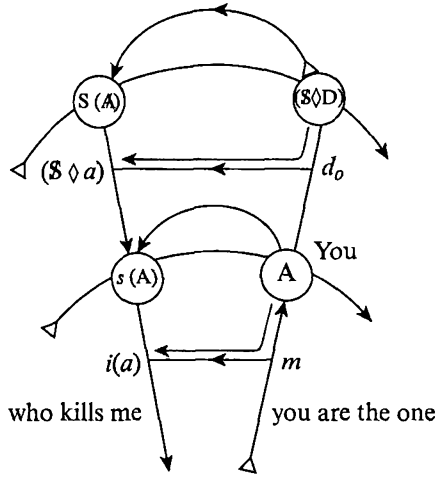
The obsessional does not take the same route. He is more centred on coming to terms with the problem of his desire. He starts from
470 a different place and with other elements. It's in a certain early and essential relationship with his demand, [$ ◊ D], that he is able to maintain the necessary distance for this desire – annulled in its essence, this blind desire whose position must be assured – to be possible for him somewhere, but from a distance. We are going to circumscribe the obsessional's relationship with his desire. The subject's specific relationship to his demand is one of its first traits. There are more.

What is an obsession? You know the importance that the verbal form has therein, to the point where one can say that an obsession is always verbalized. Freud is in no doubt about this. Even when dealing with latent obsessional behaviour, he only considers that it has revealed its structure when it adopts the form of a verbal obsession. He even goes so far as to say that in the treatment of an obsessional neurosis the first steps have been taken only when one has obtained the full development of the subject's symptoms, which can present itself as a worsening, clinically.

What is at question in all obsessional forms is well and truly articulated destruction. Is there a need to insist upon the verbal character of the formulas of undoing that are a part of the structure of the obsession itself? Everybody knows that what makes its essence and power phenomenologically anxiety-provoking for the subject is that

it's about destruction through words and signifiers. The subject finds himself prey to what one calls magical – I don't know why, why not quite simply say 'verbal'? – destruction of the Other, which is given in the very structure of symptoms.

You have seen the hysteric's circuit which terminates on the two 471
planes – idealization or identification at the upper level is the symbolization paralleling what takes place on the imaginary plane. If I have allowed myself to use this schema to the end and inscribed the destructive schema of the relationship to the other on it, I would say that for the obsessional the circuit goes something like this.



The obsessional's circuit

The fear of harming the Other with one's thoughts, tantamount to saying with one's words, brings us to an entire phenomenology which it would be worth dwelling on for a good bit of time. I don't know if you've ever been interested in the theme of blasphemy. It makes a very good introduction to verbal obsessions. What is blasphemy? I'd very much like some theologian to give me an answer. Let's say that blasphemy diminishes a pre-eminent signifier, where it's a question of ascertaining at what level of signifying authorization, as it were, it is located. This signifier is related to the supreme signifier called the Father, with which it should not be completely confused, even if it plays a homologous role. That God has a relationship to signifying creation as such isn't in doubt, nor is the fact that blasphemy is situated solely in this dimension. Blasphemy diminishes this signifier to the rank of object. In a way, it identifies the Logos with its metonymic effect and brings it down a notch. This

remark undoubtedly does not constitute a full response to the question of blasphemy, but it's surely an approach to the phenomenon of the verbal sacrilege that can be observed in obsessionals.

As always, it's again in Freud that we find the most colossally exemplary things. Recall the episode in the case of the *Rat Man* of this furious anger that grips him towards his father at the age of four, if my memory is correct. He starts rolling around on the ground, calling him, 'You towel, you plate, and so on.' There is a veritable collision and collusion between the essential 'you' of the Other and this diminished effect of the introduction of signifiers into the human world, which is called an object and especially an inert object, an object of exchange, of equivalences. The multitude of substantives summoned up in the child's rage indicate this well enough. It's not a question of knowing whether the father is a lamp, a plate or a towel. It's about bringing the Other down to the level of an object and destroying it.

Since we're obliged to leave it there for today, I would say that what is happening here, the structure of which we shall see next time, shows us that it is only with a particular articulation of signifiers that the obsessional subject manages to preserve the Other, so much so that the effect of destruction is also the means by which he aspires to sustain it by virtue of the articulation of signifiers.
472 You find here the very fabric of the world in which the obsessional lives. The obsessional is a man who lives amongst signifiers. He is very firmly installed amongst them. There is absolutely nothing to fear with respect to psychosis. This signifier suffices to preserve the dimension of the Other in him, but it is a dimension that in some way is idolized [*idôlatrée*]. French makes it possible to formulate this in a manner that I once introduced here – 'Thou art the one who will . . . '. That's what the subject formulates to the Other.

For the obsessional that is where it stops. Full speech in which the subject's engagement is articulated into a fundamental relationship with the Other can't be achieved, unless by this repetition that a comedian used to make use of. 'To be or not . . .', and the guy scratches his head before continuing, 'To be or not, to be or not', and so on. And it's in repeating it that he finds the end of the sentence, '*Tu es celui qui me, tu es celui qui me, tu es celui qui me tues*', 'You are the one who, you are the one who, you are the one who kills me.'

Here the French language gives us a fundamental schema of the obsessional relationship with the Other. The formulation that founds it ends on the Other's destruction, but because this is a signifying articulation, it makes the Other subsist as a result.

Within this formulation we see what the place of the phallus

signifier is with respect to being and having, which is where we stopped at the end of our last session. This will enable us to see the difference between a solution that enables the obsessional to show what really is his relationship to the phallus, as the signifier of the Other's desire, and one that consists in satisfying demand in a sort of imaginary mirage by granting him his object through the symbolization of an imaginary fantasy by the analyst. This is the dimension in which the entire observation that we have been critiquing unfolds. The illusory solution consists, in short, in saying to the woman, 'You envy the penis? Well then . . .'. This is what Casimir-Perier said to a guy who had him cornered up against a streetlamp: 'What do you want?' The guy replies, 'Freedom!' 'Well then, you have it,' Casimir says to him, slips through his legs and goes off, leaving him dumbstruck.

This may not be quite what we would expect from an analytic solution. The very termination of the case by a euphoric identification, intoxicating for the subject, the description of which completely matches a masculine ideal located in the analyst, perhaps brings a change in the subject's equilibrium, but this is surely not a genuine response to the obsessional's question.

18 June 1958

XXVII

EXITING VIA THE SYMPTOM

From the speech of the Other to the unconscious
The significance of regression
Why we are not monkeys
The psychotic and the Other's desire
The neurotic and the image of the other

We got to the point last time of starting to circle around the constellation of the obsessional's desire.

I spoke to you in this regard about the position of his demand, whose especially insistent character that renders it so difficult to tolerate is experienced very early by the Other, about his need to destroy the Other's desire, and about the function of some of his fantasies. My intention today is thus under way.

In the work I have chosen to make the object of a critique that stems less from a polemic than from a systematic analysis of all that emerges from what the author himself formulates, it isn't pointless that the phallic fantasy should present itself in the form of penis envy in the woman over the course of the analysis of an obsessional neurosis. This is not the work that will prove that I give an exaggerated importance to the phallus signifier. But the importance of the phallus signifier is not all I teach you. There's also the question of knowing how to make use of it – without, for all that, going in for a facile little game of criticizing and judging from the outside the outcome of a treatment that, in any case, is presented as unfinished and that we have not entered into. Let's simply say that none of what I give you as the significant elements in the direction of the treatment are not to be found. The general direction of the treatment is remarkable for its hesitations, even for a direction that is frankly opposed to the one that to us might seem logical.

My critique never starts just with the case considered as a factual report, but with the author's own questions, which you will always

find expressed at the right moment, for it's one of the properties of the human mind that common sense in particular is, as has been said 474
with reason and not without irony, the most fairly distributed thing in the world. There is no doubt that what is an obstacle here for us was already an obstacle in the mind of authors, and in this case these obstacles are clearly articulated. There are questions, there are even remarks concerning the paradoxical outcome, the non-outcome of what one was looking for, and there are, finally, contradictions which the author does not perhaps give as much importance to as he might have, but which may be described as contradictions since they appear in black and white in his text.

I will first go straight to the heart of the matter and raise the difference between, on the one hand, what is represented as articulated, and not as articulable, and, on the other hand, what the aim was and what was actually achieved in this treatment.

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Let's take as our point of departure our schema on which a number of positions he completes appear, positions that enable us to orientate ourselves in what we are more familiar with. These positions are represented there in a particular order and topology.

Let's once more ask ourselves what the line at the top of our schema is. It's a signifying line, in that it's structured like a language. Also, while it's structured like a language, it's a sort of phrase that the subject is unable to articulate, which we have to help him articulate and which in sum structures the neuroses overall.

A neurosis is not identical to an object, it's not a kind of parasite, foreign to the personality of the subject. It's an analytic structure which is in his acts and his conduct. Progress in our conception of neurosis has shown that it's not only made up of symptoms that are decomposable into their signifying elements and the signified effects of these signifiers – since this is how I have retranslated what Freud articulates – but that the entire personality of the subject bears the mark of these structural relationships. In the way it's employed here, the word 'personality' goes well beyond its primary acceptation, with what that comprises that is static and confluent with what is called character. It's not that. It's the personality in the sense in which it designates, in behaviour, in relationships with the Other and with others, a certain movement that is always found to be the same, a scansion, a certain way of moving from the other to the 475
Other and moreover to an Other that is always and endlessly being re-found and forming the very variations of obsessional action.

Obsessional or hysterical behaviour is overall structured like a language. What does that mean? It isn't enough to say that beyond articulated language, beyond discourse, all of a subject's acts would have this sort of equivalence to language that is there in what is called '*un geste*', gesture, inasmuch as a gesture is not simply a well-defined movement, but is also actually a signifier. The expression that fits perfectly is '*une geste*', a gest in the sense of a '*chanson de geste*', a gest such as *The Song of Roland* – that is, the sum of one's history.

It's ultimately speech, if you will. The sum of the neurotic's behaviour presents itself like speech, and even like full speech, in the sense in which we saw its original mode in the engagement in the form of a discourse. It's full, but entirely cryptographic speech, unknown to the subject as to its sense, even though he pronounces it with all his being, in everything he manifests, everything he evokes and has ineluctably realized down a certain path of completion and incompletion, if nothing in this order of oscillation called analysis intervenes. It's speech pronounced by the barred subject, barred to himself, which we call the unconscious. It's what we represent in the form of a sign, $.

We have now come to the point of introducing a distinction at the level of the Other. We have defined the Other as the locus of speech. This Other is instituted and takes shape through the sole fact that the subject speaks. By virtue of this sole fact, the big Other is born as the locus of speech. That does not mean, though, that it is realized as a subject in its alterity. The Other is invoked whenever there is speech. I think that there is no need to go back over this as I have insisted on it enough. But this beyond that is articulated in the upper line of our schema is the Other of the Other.

This is speech that is articulated on the horizon of the Other. The Other of the Other is the locus in which the Other's speech takes shape as such. There is no reason for it to be closed off from us. That the Other as locus of speech is immediately and effectively given to us as a subject, a subject who thinks of us as his Other, is even the root of the intersubjective relation. This is the principle of all strategy. When you play chess with someone, you attribute to him as many calculations as you make yourself. Well then, whereas we can say that this Other of the Other should be the most transparent to us and given along with the very dimension of the Other, why do we claim that this Other of the Other is the locus in which the discourse of the unconscious is articulated – articulated but not articulable by
476 us? Why do we have to? By what right?

It's very simple. The conditions of human life mean that the latter is engaged in the conditions of speech, and we are subject to the Other by the conditions of demand, but without knowing what our

demand is for the Other. Why don't we know this? What gives it this opacity? These things are self-evident, but they're still self-evident things whose coordinates are not the least useful things to spell out, for we are always happy to obscure them in the form of premature objectifications.

We don't know how this Other, which becomes *unbewusst* and assumes a paradoxical position in discourse, receives our demand or intervenes in our strategy. That's what I mean when I say that the unconscious is the Other's discourse. This happens virtually on the horizon of the Other of the Other, inasmuch as it's here that the speech of the Other is produced insofar as it becomes our unconscious, that is, what necessarily presents itself in us solely by virtue of the fact that in this locus of speech we bring to life an Other capable of responding to us. This is why it's opaque for us, it's that there is something in it that we are not aware of and that separates us from its response to our demand. This is nothing other than what is called his desire.

This remark, self-evident in appearance only, derives its value as a function from the fact that this desire is located between the Other as pure and simple locus of speech and the Other insofar as it's a being of flesh whom we are at the mercy of for the satisfaction of our demand. That this desire is located there conditions its relationship to this symbolization of the signifier's action which forms what we call a subject, and which we symbolize with our $.

The subject is something other than a *soi-même*, for which in English one uses the elegant word 'self'. The fact of saying it in English isolates it and makes it possible to clearly distinguish what it signifies, namely what is irreducible in the individual's presence in the world. This self* becomes a subject, properly speaking, and a barred subject in the sense in which we symbolize it, inasmuch as it's marked by the condition that subordinates it not only to the Other as locus of speech, but also to the Other as itself. This is not the subject of the relationship to the world, of the eye's relationship to the world or of the subject–object relationship which is that of knowledge [*connaissance*]. This is the subject who is born at the moment of the human individual's emergence in the conditions of speech, and insofar, therefore, as it's marked by the Other, itself conditioned and marked by the conditions of speech.

What do we see, then, on this horizon that is rendered opaque 477
by the obstacle of the Other's desire? Insofar as the Other no longer responds, the subject is referred back to his own demand, he is placed in a certain relationship to his own demand which is designated here by the symbol of the little lozenge that I explained to you last time. Here, 'big A is not answering' ['*grand A ne répond plus*'],

a very famous sentence with different initials. At the level of the subject, what tends to be produced on the horizon is that the subject is referred to a confrontation with his own demand, in the forms of signifiers that are, as it were, encompassing in relation to the subject and that the subject himself becomes the sign of. It's the horizon of this non-response from the Other that we see delineated in an analysis, inasmuch as at the start the analyst initially comes to be nothing other than the locus of speech, than an ear that listens and does not respond.

This is what is going to push the subject to detach himself from these forms of demand that appear to us implicitly in his discourse in the form of what we call anal phase, oral phase and whatever kind of phase you like. What do we mean when we speak of these phases? Don't forget that our subject does not progressively return to the state of an infant before our eyes. We do not go in for a fakir-like operation that would see the subject going back over the course of time and being reduced at the end to the seed that created him. It's all about signifiers. What we call oral phase or anal phase is the manner in which the subject articulates his demand via the appearance in his discourse, in the broadest sense of the term, in the manner in which his neurosis presents itself before us, of signifiers that were formed at such-and-such a stage of his development and that he uses to formulate his demand in recent or older phases.

What is called fixation is the prevalence retained by this or that form of oral, anal or other signifier, with all the nuances that you have learnt to formulate. It is the special importance that certain systems of signifiers have retained. Regression is what occurs when these signifiers are returned to in the subject's discourse by virtue of the fact that speech, simply through being speech, without having anything in particular to demand, appears in the dimension of demand. This is how the entire perspective is retroactively opened up to this condition of demand in which the subject has lived since his early and most tender childhood.

The whole question is what we do with regression. We are there to respond to it, or to say what happens when we don't respond to it, and whatever else we can do. This is the aim that is worth achieving.

478 Regression is the regression of discourse. The signifiers involved belong to the structure of discourse, and that's where we will always discover them. This is what is represented by these two lines.

$$\Sigma$$

$$S_1 \text{---} S_2 \text{---} S_3 \text{---} S_4$$

$$s_2 \text{---} s_3 \text{---} s_4 \text{---} s_5$$

The upper line is the line of signifiers. Underneath we find significations, always produced according to the law of the signifying chain. These two things are equivalent – the anticipation of the signifying sequence, where the signifying chain opens out before it the horizon of its own completion, and at the same time its retroaction once the signifying term has arrived that, as it were, completes the sentence and brings it about that what is produced at the level of the signified always has a retroactive function. Here, S_2 is already taking shape by anticipation when S_1 starts and is only completed when S_2 retroacts upon S_1. A certain lag always exists between signifier and signification, and it's what makes all signification – insofar as it's not natural signification linked to a completely momentary beginning of the instance of need in a subject – an essentially metonymic factor related to what binds the signifying chain together and constitutes it as such. These links and knots are indicated, for the moment and so as to differentiate them, by a sigma, if you will, thus designating this [plane] beyond the signifying chain.

Confronting the subject with demand brings about a reduction in the discourse in which we implicitly discern these elementary signifiers in what forms the crux of our experience. This is the way we re-encounter the same structural laws in all the subject's conduct, in the manner in which he sometimes expresses it to us, down to the scansion or the motor articulation of his discourse, inasmuch as a stammering, a mumbling or any other speech difficulty, as I have expressed myself elsewhere, may be significant for us and refer to a signifier of demand as oral or anal lack.

The small group of studies directed by the friendliest of my colleagues, namely Lagache, made the discovery, with an astonishment that must have arisen from a permanent misunderstanding, that everywhere we encounter the word '*instinct*' in the French translation of Freud, one never finds anything in the German text other than the term '*Trieb*'. I translate it as '*pulsion*', which, to be honest, rather obscures the thing. The English term is 'drive', 479
whereas we have nothing in French able to translate it. The scientific word would be '*tropisme*', designating certain irresistible attractions considered as irreducible to physicochemical attraction, which supposedly operates in animal behaviour. This word is said to make it possible to exorcize the finalistic side that is always there in the term '*instinct*'. What we encounter here in the Freudian notion of *Trieb* is also of this order. One could translate it by '*attirance*', 'attraction', except that the human being is not this obscure subject that we encounter in gregarious forms of organic attraction towards an element of climate, for example, or of any other nature.

It's obvious that this is not where our interest develops, we in the field that we are called to explore in analysis, where we are led to speak of these various oral, anal, genital and other phases. In analytic theory, effectively, a certain necessity places the subject in a relationship of subordination, dependence, organization and attraction – in relation to what? To signifiers borrowed from the array of a certain number of his own organs.

This is to say nothing other than that an oral or anal fixation that survives in an adult subject depends on a certain imaginary relation. But what I am also articulating is that the latter is brought to the function of a signifier. If [this relation] were not isolated as such, mortified, it could not have the economic action that it has in the subject, and for a very simple reason, which is that the images are only ever tied to the arousal and satisfaction of need. Now, no one ever neglects to say that in analysis the subject remains attached to oral images there where there is no question of food, anal images there where there is no question of excrement. It's therefore the case that these images exist outside their text, that it's not purely and simply a question of need and that they have assumed another function. It's the signifying function that is involved. The drive, as such, is precisely the manipulable expression of concepts that are valid for us, and which express the subject's dependence in relation to a certain signifier.

What's important is that the subject's desire, encountered as beyond demand, renders it opaque to our demand and installs its own discourse as something that, even though necessary to our structure, is in certain respects impenetrable to us, which makes it an unconscious discourse. This desire, which is its condition, is therefore itself subject to the existence of a certain signifier effect, which I explained to you starting in January under the name of the paternal metaphor.

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This metaphor is established on the mother's original, opaque and obscure desire, initially completely closed off to the subject, whereas, on the horizon, the Name-of-the-Father appears as the support of the order instituted by the signifying chain. I have already symbolized it for you in the relationship between two signifiers, one being in two different positions – the Name-of-the-Father over the Mother's Desire and the Mother's Desire over its symbolization.

What it determined as a signified is produced through a metaphoric effect.

$$\frac{S}{S'} \cdot \frac{S'}{x} \rightarrow S\left(\frac{S}{\text{phallus}}\right)$$

Where the Name-of-the-Father is lacking, the metaphorical effect is not produced and I cannot manage to bring to the light of day what makes the x designate the phallus signifier. This is what occurs in psychosis, insofar as the Name-of-the-Father is rejected, is the object of an original *Verwerfung* and does not enter into the cycle of signifiers, and this is also why the Other's desire, namely the mother's desire, is not symbolized there.

If we had to represent the place of psychosis on the schema, we would say that this desire as such – I don't mean as existing, for everyone knows that even the mothers of psychotics have a desire, though this is not always certain – is not symbolized in the system of the psychotic subject, and, as a consequence, the speech of the Other does not pass into his unconscious at all, but the Other as the locus of speech speaks to him incessantly. This does not necessarily mean you or me, but more or less the totality of what is offered to him as the field of perception.

This field speaks to him of us, naturally, and also, to take the first example that comes to mind, the well-known one that was recounted to us last night, a red car may mean for the delusional subject that he is immortal. Everything addresses him because nothing in the order of the symbolic organization intended to send the Other there where he should be, that is, into his unconscious, is achieved. The Other speaks to him in a manner homogeneous with the first and original speech, which is the speech of demand. This is why everything is in voices, and why the 'it speaks' that is in the unconscious for the neurotic subject is on the outside for the psychotic subject. There are no grounds for astonishment that it speaks and that it speaks out loud in the most natural manner. If the Other is the locus of speech, that's where it speaks, and that's where it resounds in all directions.

We find an extreme case of this at the height of the outbreak of 481
psychosis, where, as I have always formulated it for you, what is *verworfen*, or rejected from the symbolic, reappears in the real. The real in question here consists of the hallucinations, that is, the Other insofar as it speaks. It's always in the Other that it speaks, but here it takes the form of the real. The psychotic subject is in no doubt that it's the Other who speaks to him, and who speaks to him with all the signifiers that one can collect by the bucketful in the human world, since everything we are surrounded by has the character of being marked by signifiers. Think of all the posters around our streets.

The qualities of desertion and dissolution will be more or less pronounced according to the state of the psychosis. As we see it,

and as Freud articulates it for us, what psychosis articulates into is designed precisely to supplete this absence at its organized point, I mean dependent upon the signifying structure of the Other's desire. The forms of psychosis from the most benign to the extreme state of dissolution present us with a pure and simple discourse of the Other, scanded here, in $s(A)$, in the form of a signification.

Two years ago, I showed you some very curious cases of the decomposition of speech, which via the structure presented to us on this graph – I couldn't show you at the time – turn out to have arisen from a code of messages about the code. What is sent from A is everything that the subject possesses for bringing the Other's discourse to life. Schreber's 'fundamental language', each word of which itself comprises a kind of definition which comes with the issuing of the word itself, is a code of messages about the code. Conversely, these phrases, 'How is it . . .', 'You have only to . . . me', 'Perhaps he would like . . .' – and even the 'He would like' is too much – are a series of messages that only aim at what in the code refers to the message. The particles, personal pronouns and auxiliary verbs designate the place of the messenger. This can be precisely recorded on the graph, but as I do not want to linger too long, I refer you to my article on the psychoses that is going to be published, in which I synthesize my course from two years ago and what I am doing for you this year.

Take the delusion of jealousy. Freud formulates it as the subject's negation of a fundamental 'I love him' concerning less the homosexual subject than the semblable subject, which is, of course, thereby homosexual. Freud says, 'It is not me he loves, it's her.' What does that mean, if not that, in order to create an obstacle to the pure and simple outbreak of the speech of interpretation, the delusion of jealousy attempts to restore, to restitute the Other's desire. The
482 structure of the delusion of jealousy consists precisely in attributing to the Other a desire – a kind of desire in outline, roughed out in the imaginary – that is the subject's desire. It's attributed to the Other – 'It is not me he loves, it's my spouse, he is my rival.' As a psychotic I try to establish in the Other this desire that is not given to me because I am psychotic, because this essential metaphor that gives the Other's desire its primordial signifier, the phallus signifier, has not been produced anywhere.

This phallus signifier nevertheless remains something fairly obscure to be acknowledged as essential, and in some way preferentially so in relation to all sorts of other objects that we occasionally see playing a homologous role. The phallus signifier is open to all sorts of equivalences, with the excremental signifier, for example, or the breast signifier, specifically the extremity of the breast, every

infant's object. It can be very difficult for you to perceive what gives the phallus its privilege – it's obviously through being in a certain place in what has the highest functions in the individual's relationship to the species, namely what one calls the genital phase.

It's for this reason that it's more especially dependent than any other on a function of significance. Other objects – the maternal breast or this part of the body which, in the form of excreta, present themselves as able to be an occasion of loss for the subject – are, to a certain degree, given to the outside as objects, whereas the phallus is currency in the love transaction and needs to pass to the state of a signifier in order to serve as a means in the way scoria or shells serve as objects of exchange in certain remote tribes. That's already in the natural order.

However, it's not quite the same for the phallus. In its real, organic form, that of the penis or of what corresponds to it in the woman, for it to become a detachable object, fantasmatically or otherwise, there has to be a lot more than for the aforementioned objects which are predetermined for this. One cannot insist too much on the enigma contained in the castration complex or *Penisneid*, inasmuch as what is involved here really is very much attached to the body, and that, after all, is under no greater threat than any member, arm, leg or even nose or ears.

This element is only a point of sensuality on the body, and this is how the subject discovers it in the first place. Masturbatory autoerotism, which effectively plays such a big role in the subject's history, is not at all in itself liable to trigger such catastrophes as those we know about through experience, so long as the organ is not captured in the play of signifiers, in the paternal metaphor, in the maternal or 483
paternal prohibition. This organ is for the subject originally nothing but a point of sensuality on his own body, in his organic relationship to himself, and much less subject to obsolescence than any of the other elements that have assumed the significance of a signifier in earlier demands. It's precisely for this reason that the grasp of the metaphorical chain must be playing its role, more for it than for any other, in making it a signifier, which as a result becomes the privileged signifier of the relationship to the Other of the Other, and this makes it a central signifier of the unconscious.

We can also grasp here how the dimension that analysis opened up for us on this subject was completely unexpected in comparison to everything that had been formulated previously, if one thinks that it's only an organ with which a living being maintains innocent relations. Let's not forget how it is in our fraternal species, the monkeys. It suffices to visit the Vincennes Zoo around the little trenches circling a particular platform to appreciate with what

calmness this brave and brazen tribe of baboons and others, into which we would be wrong to project our own anxieties, pass their days engaged in florid sex, without the slightest concern in the world for what the neighbours think, except to help them from time to time with their collective festivities. There is a world between the relationship that this animal species, more or less erect in its posture, maintains with what hangs down below its belly and the relationship that man maintains with the same. Originally and signage-wise, this relationship makes the phallus the object of a cult. From the beginning of time, the erection as such has been a signifier, and it's not for nothing, we can sense it, that in our very ancient cultures the raised stone has such an impact as a signifier in the grouping of the human collectivity.

The emergence of the phallus in this essential role is certainly not primordial, but depends on something else, namely on its metaphorical passage to the rank of signifier, on which will depend, in turn, all possibility of situating the Other's desire, insofar as the subject has to find the place of his own desire therein and has to find out how to signify it. The encounter between the subject's desire and the Other's desire is subject to accidents, and this is where, quite naturally, we see the phallus signifier functioning for a subject who is placed in typical, abnormal, deficient or pathological conditions with respect to the four cardinal points of the definition of desire.

This constellation remains complete in the neurotic. It's incomplete for the psychotic.

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As I've said, the obsessional is someone who, in this relationship to the Other's desire, finds himself primordially, originally marked by the defusion of instincts. Its first outcome, the result at the beginning, the one that is going to condition all later difficulties, will be to undo the Other's desire. What does that mean, if we give what I have just been formulating here its full meaning?

Undoing the Other's desire is not the same thing as having been unable to grasp the Other's desire owing to the inadequacies or deficiencies of the metaphorical act, of the Name-of-the-Father. Moreover, if in a real that is more or less delusional the Other's desire, instituted and symbolized by the phallus, is negated as such, the subject's original relationship to his own desire will be founded on the disavowal of the Other's desire. The term '*Verneinung*' applies here in the sense in which Freud shows us its two sides – that it's articulated, symbolized, but carries the sign 'No'. That's what

the obsessional finds himself confronted with as the very basis of his position, and to which he responds with formulas of suppletion, of compensation.

I'm not saying anything new here, I am only rearticulating the triad emphasized by every author with respect to the obsessional – undoing, isolation, defence reaction. Observe simply that for us to be able to speak about undoing, it must involve signifiers, because one doesn't undo anything that is not a signifier. There is not the slightest conceivable undoing at the animal level, and if we did find something that resembles it, we would say that it's the beginnings of symbolic formation. Undoing is not simply the effacement of the trace, which I have spoken to you about, but on the contrary it's placing an elementary signifier in parentheses to say, 'That's not it' – but having said this, it's still posed as a signifier. It's still a matter of signifiers.

If the obsessional is led to undo so many things, it's because they are things that can be formulated. Namely, a demand, as we know. Except it's a demand for death. This demand for death, above all when it's premature, results in the Other's destruction, first and foremost the Other's desire and, along with the Other, equally, whatever the subject may have to articulate himself into. As a consequence, it's all the more necessary to isolate the parts of discourse to be retained in comparison with those that absolutely must be effaced and undone so that the subject himself is not thereby destroyed. It's a perpetual game of yes and no, of separating and sorting, of what 485
in his speech and in his very demand destroys him, in contrast with what can preserve him and is also necessary for the preservation of the Other, for the Other only exists as such at the level of signifying articulation.

The obsessional subject is caught in this contradiction. He is constantly occupied in maintaining the Other and making him subsist through imaginary formulations which occupy him more than anyone. They are established to support the Other who is perpetually in danger of falling, of succumbing to the demand for death, for this Other is the essential condition for him to maintain himself as a subject. He could not subsist as a subject were this Other effectively undone.

What most particularly presents itself at the signifying level as having been undone is what marks the place of the Other's desire as such, namely the phallus. The d_0 I spoke about last time, which situates the obsessional's desire, is equivalent to the undoing of the phallus. Everything in analysis revolves around something that has the closest of relationships with the signifier. The resulting method is one that takes the function of the phallus as a signifier into account,

while the other, for having failed to elucidate it, is thereby reduced to groping around in the dark.

What does this difference consist in? You will find the golden rule for it if you make the effort to read the article that I referred you to, at the risk of creating a gigantic demand of the publisher. But perhaps this risk is not so great. This rule of demarcation demands that one respond to the question of the basis on which, on what premises, the subject is liable to enter into a completed and complete relationship with his own desire. My response is that the subject, insofar as he must assume his genital desire as a human subject and not just as an animal, must make the phallus signifier function as an essential signifier of this desire. It's because the phallus signifier is there in the circuit of the subject's unconscious articulation that the human subject can be human, even when he fucks.

That doesn't mean that the human subject can't occasionally fuck like an animal. It's even an ideal fidgeting away in the very depths of the hopes of human subjects. I don't know whether the thing is often achieved, though some people have boasted that they have got to that point, and one does not see why one would not believe them, but what does it matter? For us, experience shows us that it's subject to much greater difficulties, which are signifier difficulties.

The endless ambiguities that surface with respect to the genital stage and the phallic stage – has either been attained? does the child
486 attain the genital stage before the latency period? or is this simply a phallic stage? and so on – would perhaps be less obscure if one were to appreciate that 'phallic stage' simply means access to genital desire at the level of signification. The two things are different. On a first approach, it was possible to say that the child manages to accede to the phallic stage only, and this is very probably true, even though one can debate the point whether autoerotic activity is genital – which, ultimately, is also true. But that's not what is important for us. It's not a matter of genital desire that seems to appear, effectively, as representing the first spurt of physiological evolution, but of its structuration on the phallic plane, and this is what is subsequently decisive for neurosis.

It's a question of realizing something at the level of the unconscious, which is equivalent to what, at the lower level [of the graph], is full speech, there where the discourse articulated in the locus of the Other returns to the subject as a signified, involving the ego that the subject has concretely located in relation to the image of the other. At the upper level, attaining unconscious articulation assumes that the circuit, which starts from the subject's confrontation with his completed demand, is formulated in a desire that is articulated as such and satisfies the subject, to which the subject is

identical, and terminates in the place of the Other, who, here, is a human being marked by language and the drama of the castration complex, in other words, another me. What is formulated here is not 'I am the phallus', but, on the contrary, 'I am there in the very place that the phallus occupies in the articulation of signifiers.' This is the full meaning of '*Wo Es war, soll Ich werden.*'

The subject caught in the movement of signifiers must come to think, not that he is what he was confronted with as a child, the signifier of desire that took the total object, the mother, this phallus, away from him, but that he is merely subject to the requirement that this phallus occupy a certain place. It's only on the basis of the realization that he is not it that the subject is able to accept what over the entire process has been profoundly called into question, namely, to accept having it when he has it and not having it when he does not have it. This locates him in this place, S(Ⱥ), in the articulation of the upper signifying chain. Only the elucidation of the subject's relationship to the phallus, insofar as he is not it but must come to its place, is properly suited to make it possible to conceptualize the ideal achievement that Freud formulates with his *Wo Es war soll Ich werden.*

That is the necessary condition for orientating our interventions and technique. How do we get to this point? This will be the aim of my Seminar next year, which I will call 'Desire and Its Interpretation'. What are the directions and directives that give us 487
access to this final message designated by the Freudian formula with its pithy, pre-Socratic turn? We'll try to spell this out. In the absence of such access, what is produced is very precisely what neurosis, or any other anomalous form of evolution, spontaneously realizes.

For the hysteric, the place of desire is located in a deep incertitude which obliges him or her to take a detour and which she or he takes following the model of what makes it possible for him or her to situate his or her ego. Like all subjects, the hysteric fixes the place of his ego by detouring via the image of the other. It's characteristic of the hysteric to obtain the place for desire in exactly the same way at the upper level. The hysteric separates herself from and turns away from the Other and from the signified of the Other so as to come to locate herself in a certain ideal type by means of an image with which she identifies. It's by an analogous detour, as I have explained to you, that Dora identifies with Herr K. in order to locate the point on which the question of her desire bears, namely – how is it possible to desire a woman when one is impotent?

For the obsessional, the procedure is the same, with one small difference. Whereas the hysteric tries to locate the difficulties of her position at the level of the ideal, of the mask of identification, the obsessional, on the contrary, places himself at what can be called the

stronghold of his ego in an attempt to find the place of his desire. Hence these famous Vauban-like fortifications which I have spoken about elsewhere, these fortresses inside which a desire always under the threat of destruction barricades itself, and which are constructed on the model of his ego and in relation to the image of the other.

The obsessional's relationship to the image of the other consists very precisely in the signifier phallus insofar as it is always under the threat of destruction because it is caught in the negation of rediscovering it in the relationship with the Other. For every obsessional, man or woman, at some moment in their history you will always see appearing the essential role of identification with the other, a semblable, a friend, a brother scarcely older, a friend the same age, who, in every case, has for him the prestige of being more virile and of having the power. The phallus appears here in a form that is not symbolic but imaginary. We can say that the subject complements himself with an image stronger than himself, an image of power.

It's not I who formulate this, you will see it in its place in the article that I was quoting from, for functionally it is essential enough for it to be recognized by those who have been inspired by their own experience of these subjects. The emphasis is put on the image of the other as a phallic form, this time in the imaginary sense.
488 That is what here takes on the value and function, no longer as the symbolization of the Other's desire, but as an imaginary formation of prestige, presence and precedence. I've already pointed out its function at the level of the narcissistic relation. This is what is produced as such in obsessional symptoms, in all the obsessional's history, and it's where the special function assumed by the subject's fantasmatic relationship to the imaginary other who is his semblable is marked.

The distinction between the presence of the Other with a big O and the presence of the other with a little o is tangible in the development of the case, if you read it carefully. You will note, for example, a very curious evolution between the beginning of the treatment when she *cannot* speak and later on when she does not *wish* to speak, because it's at the level of speech that the analysand's relationship with the analyst is instituted, and she denies herself at that level. Even if this is not how he expresses it, the analyst clearly perceives that she denies herself because her demand can only be a demand for death. Later, something else happens, and it's very amusing to see that the analyst clearly perceives that there is a difference, that relations have improved. Nevertheless, she is still not speaking, for now she does not want to speak. The difference between the two is that when one does not wish to speak it's because of the presence of the Other with a big O. However, what is disturbing is that, if she

does not wish to speak, it's because what has come to the place of this Other is precisely the other with a little o that the analyst has done everything to present. Why? Because, following things closely as he does, he clearly sees that the content of what the subject brings indicates the place that the phallic fantasy plays in it. Of course, this is how the subject is defending herself, whereas her analyst spends his time drumming into her that she would like to be a man.

It depends on how one hears it. It's true that the subject, at the imaginary level, effectively makes this phallus a breast, and that the condition of man insofar as he is equipped with the phallus, and uniquely insofar as he is equipped with the phallus, represents an element of power for him. The question is why she has such a great need of the reference to this element of power that is the phallus.

From another angle, it's with complete authenticity that she absolutely denies having the slightest desire to be a man. However, on that, one does not let go of her, I mean that for example one interprets in summary terms of aggressiveness or, even, of a desire to castrate the man, things that are much more complex and that have to be articulated quite differently if we follow what I am outlining here. The entire evolution of the treatment, the manner in which it's directed – and this is the entire ambiguity that exists 489
between interpretation and suggestion – tends, on the other hand, towards the fact that an Other (not to employ any other term, for it is indeed the Other, and nobody is in any doubt, if I may say so, the author himself emphasizes it sufficiently in the manner in which he formulates his own action and in other ways as well), that an Other, a benevolent mother, a much more gentle Other than the one whom the subject had to contend with, intervenes to tell her, according to the very formula that the author uses somewhere else in terms that are more or less the following – 'This is my body, this is my blood, this phallus, you can trust me, a man, absorb it, I authorize you to have it, this phallus, it's what must give you force and vigour, and it will resolve all your obsessional difficulties.'

In fact, the result is that not a single one of the obsessions has yielded, they are simply undergone and experienced without guilt. That is strictly modelled on what I have been telling you, and it's what would normally be the result of such a mode of intervention.

Conversely, as I have said to you, it's striking to see at the end of the treatment, at the point at which one has let her go, the patient send her own son to the analyst. This action is rather astonishing, because, we are told, the subject has experienced a holy terror of this son all her life, and one clearly feels, from the context and the images of it that the analyst creates for himself, that there has always been a problem with this son, which is the least one can say.

. Wouldn't the fact that this son is offered to the analyst at the end be the acting out that marks precisely what has been missed? – at this point where the phallus is altogether something other than an accessory of power, where it's truly this signifying mediation by which what takes place between man and woman is symbolized. Didn't Freud show, in the woman's relations with the father, the equivalence between the desire for the symbolic gift of the phallus and the child that subsequently comes to be substituted for it? That is, the child occupies the very place that has not been worked through and elucidated in the treatment, that is, a symbolic place. The subject, despite herself, in a manner that is certainly unconscious and identical to an acting out when something has been missed in an analysis, shows that something else should have been realized.

The treatment effectively ends in a kind of intoxication of power and goodness, a quasi-manic intoxication, which is usual in and an indication of treatments that end with an imaginary identification. The fact is that the treatment has done nothing other than drive to its ultimate consequences and facilitate by way of suggestive approbation what was already to be found in the mechanisms of the
490 obsession, namely, the absorption or incorporation of the phallus at the imaginary level, which is one of the mechanisms of obsession. It's down this same path, chosen from the mechanisms of defence, that the solution, as it were, is given. Added to this is the approval of what is now a good mother, the mother who allows the phallus to be absorbed.

Should we be satisfied with having, as the solution to a neurosis, what is only one of its components merely pushed to its final stage – a symptom that is more successful, in sum, and disengaged from the others?

I don't think that we can consider ourselves to be entirely satisfied. Nor do I think I have said everything that I could say with respect to this treatment, whereas time has caught up with us once again.

Between now and next time I will choose the three or four points in the observation that will highlight even more what I have just articulated for you today.

Then I will make some concluding remarks on our 'formations of the unconscious', to sum up the circuit that we have taken this year, following which all that will be left for us to do is wait for next year to undertake a new stage.

25 June 1958

XXVIII

YOU ARE THE ONE YOU HATE

From the demand for death to the death of demand
Commandment, guilt without law, superego
Avatars of the phallus signifier
Misery of the gendarme
Not legitimating penis envy

We have come to the end of this year's Seminar, which I called 'Formations of the Unconscious'. Perhaps now you can at least appreciate the appropriateness of the title. Formations, forms, relations, topology perhaps – I had my reasons for avoiding scaring you off at the outset.

If something is to remain as a step on which we can place a foot to climb up onto the following rung next year, it's this – one can't articulate anything that arises from these mechanisms of the unconscious, which are at the foundation of Freud's experience and discovery, merely by referring to tensions, by considering them as inserted into a kind of maturational progress, fanning out from the pre-genital to the genital. Moreover, one cannot only stress relations of identification such as they are apparently – and I say 'apparently' – given over the course of Freud's oeuvre, as if one wanted to reduce the experience to a collection of characters in the style of an Italian comedy, where first would come the mother, then the father, capped off by several others. It's impossible to articulate anything concerning the progress and fixation of desire, or concerning this intersubjectivity that effectively occupies the foreground of our experience and preoccupations, unless we situate it in relation to the necessary relations that impose themselves not only on man's desire, but on the subject as such, and which are the relations between signifiers.

This is why over the course of this year I have tried to familiarize you with this little graph that for some while it has seemed to

me, I'm speaking for myself, timely to make use of to support my experiences. It makes it possible to discern the places where this
492 signifier manifests itself – this signifier encountered everywhere, and with reason, since it cannot fail to be involved directly or indirectly, whenever it's a question of not just any signification but signification insofar as explicitly engendered by the conditions imposed upon the living organism that has become the support, the prey or even the victim of speech, and which is called man. Today, I will place you at the edge of the pluripresence, I would say, of the phallus signifier, always the same, the one that we have been occupied with for several sessions. It's extremely important to clearly distinguish the places where this signifier makes its appearance in the subject in any given case.

That becoming conscious of penis envy is crucial in the analysis of a female obsessional neurosis goes without saying, for never to have encountered the phallus in the analysis of an obsessional neurosis, or any other kind of neurosis, female or not, would be really quite odd.

By dint of pushing the analysis in the sense indicated in the so-called *La psychanalyse d'aujourd'hui*, by dint of reducing fantasmatic products of the transference to what someone has called 'this so simple reality' of the analytic situation, namely that there are two people there who, of course, have nothing to do with these fantasies, it's perhaps possible that one can completely manage to do without the phallus in the interpretation of an analysis, but we're not there yet. In truth, no analysis ever takes place in the way outlined in this book.

We obviously have to do something with the phallus signifier. Saying that becoming conscious is the key to the solution of obsessional neurosis is not saying very much, for everything depends on the manner in which one interprets this signifier at the different points at which it appears and where the function it plays is not homologous. Not everything is reducible to penis envy in the sense in which it would concern rivalry with the male, as one ultimately ends up formulating it in this observation by lumping together the patient's relations with her husband, her analyst and others in general, which is falsified by the observation itself. That's obviously the angle from which the phallus appears. It appears at several points.

We are not going to claim to give an exhaustive analysis of an observation that is, moreover, given to us as an incomplete analysis and that we only have partial documentation for. But we have enough to get a good idea of it, nevertheless. I will start, then, by making some remarks about this observation which will introduce some other properties of the graph that we will make use of.

1

What is pointed out to us in this observation is the very lively sense 493
of guilt that accompanies the obsessions in the patient, for example, her religious obsessions. The appearance of such a marked sense of guilt in an obsessional neurosis presents a paradox, since surely the subject considers correlatively that the parasitic thoughts that are imposed on her are foreign to her, and that she is more the victim of them than responsible for them. This will make it possible, perhaps, to formulate something about the sense of guilt.

For some time now, hardly anyone ever speaks about anything but the term 'superego', which seems to cover everything here. One can't really say that it has thrown much light on things. The idea has been put about that the superego is a much older formation, more archaic, than what one had initially thought, namely that the superego could be considered as the creation corresponding to the decline of the Oedipus complex and to the introjection of the Oedipal figure considered to be eminently prohibitive, the paternal figure. You are aware that experience has forced us to admit that there is an older superego. What imposed this older origin upon us was not without relationship to, on the one hand, the effects of introjection and, on the other, the effects of prohibition. Still, let's try to get a closer look at these things.

Here is an obsessional neurosis and, as in all neuroses, what we have to make apparent initially, precisely insofar as we are not hypnotists and do not work through suggestion, is a dimension beyond, where, in some way, we offer to meet the subject at one point. This is what is represented here by the upper line, the horizon of signifying articulation. There, the subject, as I explained to you at length last time, is confronted with his demand. This is what is involved when we speak of an alternating process of successive regressions and identifications. The two alternate to the extent that when the subject encounters an identification when regressing he stops along the path of this regression. Regression is entirely inscribed, as I have shown you, in this retroactive opening that is presented to the subject as soon as he speaks, inasmuch as speech makes the whole history of this demand, in which his entire life as a man who speaks has been inserted, emerge right down to its origins.

If we examine this closely, without doing anything but rediscover what has always been formulated, there is a fundamental form that 494
we find on the horizon of every demand by an obsessional subject, and it constitutes precisely the greatest obstacle to his formulating his demand. This is what experience teaches us to qualify as

aggressiveness and which has increasingly led us to take into consideration what can be called a death wish.

This is the major, inaugural difficulty, faced with which the obsessional's demand shatters, fragments and disarticulates, and it motivates the undoing, the isolation and all the defences – and, very primordially for the grand obsessionals, this silence that is often so prolonged that you have all the difficulty in the world overcoming it in the course of an analysis. I mention it here because it's precisely what is present in the case on which I am basing myself. It's very much the case that this demand is a demand for death. It's striking to see how it spreads throughout the text of the observation without ever being formulated, as if it were some kind of natural expression of a tension. In reality, it's a matter of the relationship between the demand for death and the difficulty of articulation itself, which is implied in the same pages, with the exception of several lines, and absolutely never brought into focus. Isn't that, however, the phenomenon that warrants being paid attention to?

If this demand is a demand for death, it's because the obsessional's first relations with the Other, as Freud and analytic theory teach us, essentially consist of the contradiction that the demand that is addressed to the Other, on which everything depends, has the demand for death as its horizon, and this is for a reason that is attached to the hook of our question mark. Let's not be precipitate, we shall see why and how this can be conceptualized. It's not so simple to speak with Mrs Melanie Klein of primordial aggressive drives if we start from there. Let's leave there this kind of primordial badness where, if he could, the infant's first movement, as the Marquis de Sade emphasizes, would be to bite and tear at the mother's breast.

It is, however, not fruitless that articulating the problem of desire in its fundamental perversity takes us back to the divine marquis, who was not alone in his day to have raised the question of the relations between desire and nature in a very intense and pressing manner. Is there harmony or fundamental disharmony between the two? This is the crux of the passionate questioning that is inseparable from the entire philosophy of the *Aufklärung* and which has contributed an entire literature. In my very first Seminars I drew on this to show a kinship or an analogy – I'll return to this next year with respect to desire – between Freud's initial inquiry and the philosophical inquiry of the *Aufklärung*, accompanied by all the literary eroticism that is its indispensable correlate.

495 We do not know, then, where this demand for death comes from. Before saying that it emerges from the most primordial instincts or from a nature turned against itself, let's start by situating it there

where it is, that is, at the level – I won't say at which it's articulated – but at which it prevents any articulation of the subject's demand, where it creates an obstacle to the obsessional's discourse, both when he is alone with himself and when he begins his analysis, and finds himself in this disarray that our analyst occasionally describes from time to time. At the start of her analysis, the analysand effectively presents with an impossibility to speak that translates into reproaches, even insults, even listing everything that creates an obstacle to a patient speaking to a doctor – 'I know doctors well enough to know that they make fun of their patients amongst themselves. You are more knowledgeable than I am. It's impossible for a woman to speak to a man' [p. 221].

This is a deluge, which shows the emergence, in correlation with the activity of speech, of the difficulty of mere articulation. The crux of the demand that the simple fact of entering into the field of analytic therapeutics entails is immediately present. If the demand for death is located there where we placed it, that is, on the horizon of speech, implicated at the crux of all possible articulation of speech, and if it is what is creating an obstacle here, then this schema will perhaps show a little more clearly the logical articulation that supports it, not without some suspension of, or pauses in, thought.

For the obsessional subject, the demand for death represents a dead-end from which what one improperly calls ambivalence results, which is rather a seesaw or swinging movement where the subject is sent back and forth as if between the two buffers of a dead-end that she is unable to escape from. As the schema expresses, the demand for death necessarily has to be formulated in the locus of the Other, in the discourse of the Other, which means that the reason for it is not to be sought in any kind of history involving the mother, for example, as the object of this death wish over some particular frustration. The demand for death concerns the Other in an internal manner. The fact that this Other is the locus of demand effectively entails the death of demand.

The demand for death is unable to be sustained in the obsessional without itself bringing in this kind of destruction that here I am calling the death of demand. It's condemned to an endless to-and-fro, which means that as soon as it starts to be articulated, it dies out. This constitutes the crux of the difficulty of articulating the obsessional's position.

Between the obsessional subject's relationship to his demand [$ ◊ D], and the Other, A, which is so panic-inducingly necessary to him, sustains him and without which he would be something other than an obsessional, we find desire, *d*, annulled in him, but whose 496

place is maintained. We have described this desire as a *Verneinung*, for it is expressed but in a negative form. We see it appear, effectively, in this form when an analysand, after having said, 'It's not that I'm thinking about such a thing,' expresses to us an aggressive, disapproving or depreciative desire about us. He is effectively displaying his desire there, but he is only able to show it as disavowed. Now, how does it happen that this form of desire is still correlated with guilt feelings, when it has been disavowed?

This is where our schema makes it possible for us to move forward and make some distinctions that will be useful for us later.

2

The obscurities concerning the effects of the superego corresponding to the growth of our experience of this agency arise essentially from the absence of a fundamental distinction. We need to distinguish between guilt and the relationship to the law. There is a relationship between the subject and the law. As to guilt, it's born without any kind of reference to this law. This is the fact that analytic experience has contributed.

The naive move in the dialectic of the relationship between sin and the law was expressed in the words of St Paul, that is, that it's the law that makes the sin. From which it results, as in the sentence of old Karamazov on which I insisted at one time – 'If God does not exist, everything is permitted'.

One of the strangest things there is, and it required analysis to bring it to us, is that there is no need of any kind of reference, either to God or to his law, for man to be literally swimming in guilt. Experience shows us. It even seems that one is able to formulate the contrary expression, namely that 'if God is dead, nothing is permitted'. I have already spoken about this in its time.

How, then, do we formulate the appearance of guilt feelings in the life of the neurotic subject?

Let's go back to the first steps of analysis. In what respect did Freud initially show the sense of guilt to be fundamental, an essential subjective manifestation of the subject? It was with respect to the Oedipus complex. The contents of analysis revealed a desire that till then had been profoundly hidden, the desire for the mother, in her
497 relationship with the intervention of a character who is the father as he emerged from the initial observation of the Oedipus complex, a terrifying and destructive father. This is effectively what becomes apparent in the form of castration fantasies, a discovery of analysis that one did not have the slightest suspicion of before – and whose

character, as I think I have spelt out for you this year, is necessarily unthinkable, unless we hold that the phallus is a privileged vital image raised to the signification of a signifier. It assumes here the function of castration as that which marks the impact of the prohibition that strikes desire. In fact, everything that refers to the superego in our experience has to be articulated in three stages which correspond strictly – one, two, three – to the three lines schematized here: the upper line, the line of desire and the line of demand.

For the neurotic, this line on the horizon is not formulated, and that's why he is neurotic. Here the command reigns supreme. Call it what you like, call it the Ten Commandments, why not? I have previously told you that the Ten Commandments were most likely the laws of speech, that is, that all disorders start to affect the way speech functions when they are not respected. Concerning the demand for death, it's obviously the '*Tu ne tueras point*', 'Thou shalt not kill', that is on the horizon and makes it so dramatic. But punishment doesn't derive its impact from the response that comes to that place. The fact is that, for reasons that have to do with the structure of the Other for man, the demand for death is equivalent to the death of demand.

This is the level of the commandment. It exists – so much so that, in truth, it emerges on its own. If you read the notes Freud made on his case of the Rat Man – this is the very nice supplement published in the *Standard Edition*, where one finds certain chronological elements that are valuable to know – you will see that the first obsessional content the subject speaks to him about is that of the commands he receives: You will sit your examination before such and such a date, or what would happen if I received the command, 'You will slit your throat'?, and you know in what a state of panic he enters when the command comes to mind – 'You will slit the old lady's throat', since she is keeping his girlfriend away from him.

We also see these commands appear in the clearest of manners in another context, in psychotics. They receive these commands, and one of the key points of classification is to know to what extent they obey them. In a word, psychosis places the autonomy of this function of command on the horizon of the subject's relationship to speech, an experience that we can only take as fundamental. The command may remain veiled. For the obsessional, it's veiled and 498
fragmented and only appears in bits.

Where, and on what line, do we locate guilt?

Guilt, as M. de la Palice would say, is a demand experienced as prohibited. Everything is normally drowned in the term 'prohibition', the notion of demand remaining avoided, whereas

it seems that the two go together – which is not certain either, as we shall see. Why is this demand experienced as prohibited? If it were simply experienced as prohibited because, as one says, it has been defended against, there would be no problem. At what level, at what point, do we see the phenomenon appear in clinical work that makes us say that guilt has emerged? What does neurotic guilt consist in? It's truly stupefying that no analyst, not even any phenomenologist, mentions this essential dimension, articulates it or makes a criterion of it – the sense of guilt appears in connection with approaching a demand experienced as forbidden because it kills desire, and this is precisely where it differs from diffuse anxiety, and you know to what extent that differs from the emergence of the sense of guilt.

Guilt is inscribed in the relationship between desire and demand. Everything that goes in the direction of a particular formulation of demand is accompanied by the disappearance of desire, and does so through a mechanism whose threads we can see on this little graph. Precisely because it is on this little graph, the subject can't perceive or determine it in its lived mainspring, inasmuch as the subject is always condemned to be in one of these places, but can't be in all of the places at the same time. That's what guilt is. That's where prohibition appears, but this time not insofar as it is formulated – insofar as the prohibited demand strikes desire down, makes it disappear, kills it.

That, then, is clear. It's insofar as the obsessional is condemned to carry out his battle to save his subjective autonomy, as they say, at the level of desire that everything that appears at this level, even in a disavowed form, is linked to this aura of guilt.

Underneath, in this instance, I will call the third level, unless someone disputes this way of situating it, that of the superego.

In the case we are following, I have no idea why but it's called the female superego, whereas it's ordinarily considered to be the maternal superego in all the other texts in the same register – an anomaly that is no doubt to be attributed to the theme of penis envy that concerns woman as such. The archaic, maternal superego, the one to which the effects of the primordial superego of which Melanie
499 Klein speaks are attached, is linked to the first Other as the support of the subject's first demands of the emerging, I would almost say innocent, demands at the level of the first vague articulations of his need and his first frustrations on which there is so much insistence these days. We can now understand how, through confusing these lines, this superego could be placed on the same line of sight as what is produced at the upper level, that of the command and guilt, which is linked to the Other of the Other.

What do we have here at the level of the first Other and its first demands? We have the phenomenon that has been called dependence. Everything about the maternal superego is articulated around this. What makes it possible for us to place them in the same register? Placing them in the same register is not to confuse them, as if at the outset there were only the infant and the mother and the relation was dual. If this were the case, it would be quite different from what we have articulated in the relationship of demand as well as in that of guilt. In reality, initially there is the two-tiered structure that we see here, because it has to be admitted at the outset that, solely by virtue of the fact that signifiers are involved, there are two horizons of demand. I explained this to you by telling you that behind even the most primitive demand – for the breast and the object that represents the maternal breast – there is this doubling-up created in demand by the fact that demand is a demand for love, an absolute demand, a demand that symbolizes the Other as such, which therefore differentiates the Other as a real object, capable of giving satisfaction, from the Other as symbolic object which gives or refuses presence or absence – a matrix in which those fundamental relationships on the horizon of all demand – love, hatred and ignorance – will crystallize.

The first relationship of dependence is threatened by the loss of love and not simply by the privation of maternal care, and this is why it's already in itself homogeneous with what will subsequently become organized according to the perspective of the laws of speech. The latter are already instant, virtual and preformed from the very first demand. Doubtless, they are not complete and formulated, and this is why an infant doesn't begin to be an obsessional from its first feed. But from its first feed, it can very well already start to create this gap, which will mean that it will be in the refusal to feed that he will find the evidence he requires of his maternal partner's love. In other words, we can see signs of anorexia appearing very early.

What is specific to the case of the obsessional? The case of the obsessional is suspended from the early formation, along this horizon of demand, of what I have been calling the demand for death. The demand for death is no pure and simple drive to kill. 500
It's an articulated demand, and solely by virtue of the fact that it's articulated, it's not produced at the level of the imaginary relationship with the other. This is not a dual relation. It looks beyond the imaginary other to the symbolized being of the other, and it's also for that reason that it's experienced and lived in the subject on its return. The fact is that the subject, because he is a speaking subject, and solely for this reason, is unable to harm the other without

harming himself, so much so that the demand for death is the death of demand.

It's internal to this that what I will call the avatars of the phallus signifier are located.

3

How can one not fall about in astonishment and stupor when one sees, effectively, if one knows how to read, the phallus signifier re-emerging at all points of the obsessional's phenomenology? Nothing makes it possible to conceptualize this polypresence of the phallus in various symptoms if not its function as a signifier. This confirms the signifier's impact on the living being, which is destined by speech to fragment into all sorts of signifier effects.

We are told in this observation that the woman is possessed by *Penisneid*. That's all very good, but then why is the first of her obsessions to be cited the obsessive fear of having contracted syphilis? This will lead her, as he writes, to oppose, in vain moreover, the marriage of her oldest son, the one I have placed so much emphasis on for the signification he has throughout the observation.

We would always do well to pay attention to the miracles and sleights of hand that are performed on us in both observations and theory. We would do well from time to time to polish up and shine our capacity for being surprised. What do we see in the male obsessional subject? The fear of being contaminated and of contaminating, the widespread experience of which shows us how important it is for him. The male obsessional has in general been initiated fairly early on to the dangers of so-called venereal diseases, and everyone knows the place that, in a large number of cases, this fact can have in his psychology. I am not saying that it is a constant, but we are accustomed to interpret it as going well beyond the rationality of things. As always, this is in Hegel. Even though for some time things have been going so well owing to the use of medication, it nevertheless remains the case that the obsessed remains very obsessed about anything that can create impulsive acts in the libidinal order. As for us, we remain accustomed to seeing an aggressive impulse showing through the libidinal drive, which means that in some way the phallus is something dangerous.

501

If we hold to the idea that the subject has a relation of narcissistic demand to the phallus, it seems very difficult to explain this first obsession. Why? Precisely because at this level, the use this woman makes of the phallus is strictly equivalent to that of a man, that is, by the intermediary of her son, she takes herself to be dangerous.

When the occasion arises she gives it as her prolongation, which is to say that as a consequence no *Penisneid* stops her. She has the phallus in the form of this son, she actually does have this phallus, since it's on it that she crystallizes the same obsession as male patients do.

I won't go on endlessly about the obsessions of infanticide that follow, the obsessions of poisoning and the rest. I will limit myself to saying very quickly that the case, with all its significance, confirms what I have been putting forward on this topic. I will read this because it's worth it. 'The violence of her complaints against her mother were testimony to the immense affection that she had for her' [p. 219]. After having several times circled around the possibility or not of a truly Oedipal relation by introducing arguments foreign to the question, he writes, 'She considered her to be from a higher milieu than her father, judged her to be more intelligent and was above all fascinated by her energy, character, decisiveness and authority' [p. 219].

That's the start of a paragraph about getting us to see the imbalance in the parental relation, which undeniably exists, and stressing the oppressed, I would say even depressed, aspect of the father in the presence of a mother who may have been virile, since this is how one interprets the fact that the subject requires that the phallic attribute be linked, in one way or another, to the mother.

'The rare moments when the mother relaxed filled her with unspeakable joy' [p. 219]. But up to this point there had never been any question of a frankly sexualized desire to possess the mother. Effectively, there is no trace of anything like it. See how he expresses himself – the patient 'was tied to her', the mother, 'on an exclusively sadomasochistic plane. And then there came to light the mother–daughter alliance that operated extremely rigorously here, and any transgression of the pact produced a movement of extreme violence, which, up till recently, was never objectified. Every person who meddled in this union was the object of death wishes' [p. 219].

This is a truly important point, and you will come across it 502
again, and not only in obsessional neuroses. From whatever angle we look at the frequency of this in our analytic experience, these powerful daughter–mother links, this sort of knot, once again places us before a phenomenon that goes well beyond the bodily differences between beings. What is expressed there is exactly the ambiguity or ambivalence which makes the demand for death and the death of demand equivalent. This shows us moreover that the demand for death is really there. I'm not saying anything new here, for Freud sometimes very clearly saw this demand for death, which Mrs Melanie Klein tried to relate to the subject's primordial

aggressive drives, whereas it's there in the link that binds the subject to the mother.

This observation shows us, however, that that is not all. The demand for death is the mother's own demand. The mother carries this demand for death within herself, and she exercises it upon the unfortunate paternal character, a corporal in the Gendarmerie, who, despite his goodness and gentleness which the patient initially speaks of, shows himself to be unhappy, depressed and taciturn throughout his life, never manages to overcome the mother's rigidity, nor to prevail over his wife's attachment to a first, incidentally platonic, love, is jealous, and breaks his silence only to explode in emotional outbursts which always end in his defeat. No one doubts that the mother played a part in this.

One glosses this in terms of what is called the castrating mother. Perhaps that is the place to examine things more closely and to see that here, much more than a question of castration for this man, it's a question of the privation of the loved object that the mother seems to have been for him and of the onset of this depressive position in him that Freud teaches us to recognize as determined by a death wish against oneself – and which is directed at what? What else, if not at a loved and lost object. In short, the demand for death was already present in the subject's previous generation. Is it the mother who embodies it?

At the level of the subject, the demand for death is mediated by an Oedipal horizon that makes it possible for it to appear on the horizon of speech and not in its immediacy. If it were not thus mediated, we would not have an obsessional, but a psychotic. On the other hand, in the relations between the father and the mother, this demand for death is not mediated for the subject by anything that would indicate any respect for the father, to his being placed by the mother in a position of authority and support of the law. The demand for death in question at the level at which the subject sees it involved in the relationship between the parents is a demand for death directly directed at the father, who turns
503 the aggression in against himself, hence the misery, the partial deafness and the depression. This is thus quite different from the demand for death always involved in all intersubjective dialectic, which finds expression in a court of law when the prosecutor says, 'I demand the death penalty.' He is not demanding it from the subject in question, he is demanding it from a third party who is the judge, which is the normal Oedipal position.

This, then, is the context in which the subject's *Penisneid,* or what one is calling such, is led to play its role. We see it here in the form of this dangerous weapon, which is there only as a signifier of the

danger manifested by the emergence of desire in the context of this demand. We shall also see this characteristic of signifiers manifest itself in the detail of a number of the subject's obsessions.

One of her first obsessions is a very nice one. It's the fear of putting pins in her parents' bed. And why? To prick her mother, not her father. This is the first level of the appearance of the phallic signifier. Here it's the signifier of desire as dangerous and guilty. It doesn't have the same function at another moment, when it appears altogether clearly, but in the form of an image. Wherever I have shown it to you here, it's been veiled, it's been in the symptom, it has come from elsewhere, it has been fantasmatic interference. For us, as analysts, it suggests the place where it exists as a fantasy, but it's something different when it gets projected out before the image of the host.

I have already alluded to these profane obsessions the subject is obsessed by. To be sure, the religious life is present in the obsessional in a profoundly reworked form, one infiltrated by symptoms, but, by a curious sort of conformity, his religious life, and especially his sacramental life, shows itself to be perfectly suited to giving the obsessional's symptoms the groove, the mould into which he so easily flows, especially in the Christian religion. I do not have much experience of obsessions in Muslims, for example, but it would be worth the effort to see how they manage it, I mean how the horizon of their belief, such as it's structured in Islam, gets implicated in an obsessional phenomenology. Whenever Freud had an obsessional with a Christian background, whether the Rat Man or the Wolf Man, he clearly showed the importance of Christianity in their evolution and economy. One cannot fail to see that with its articles of faith the Christian religion places us before this astonishing, bold – to say the least – and cheeky solution, which consists in having this function of the signifier whose action marks life as such borne by an incarnated person, a god-man. The Christian Logos as incarnated Logos gives a precise solution to the system of the relations between 504
man and speech, and it's not for nothing that God incarnate was called the Word.

Also, we should not be astonished that in this observation it's at the level of the ever-renewed symbol of this incarnation that this subject conjures up the phallus signifier, which is substituted for her therein. Of course, this signifier doesn't form part of the religious context as such, but if what we say is true, it's no surprise to see it appear in this place.

In this place, it's clear that it plays quite a different role from where it was when we interpreted it at the beginning. When it appears again at a later point in the observation, it would be equally

erroneous to interpret its function as homogeneous with the manner in which it intervenes here at the level of the symptom.

When, at a much later period of the observation, the subject communicates this fantasy to her analyst – 'I dreamt that I was crushing the head of Christ under my feet, and this head looked like yours' [p. 225], the function of the phallus is not, as one feels obliged to say, identified there with the analyst as the vehicle of the phallus. If the analyst is identified with the phallus, it's insofar as, at this moment in the history of the transference, he incarnates the effect of signifiers for the subject and the relationship to speech, whose horizon she then begins to project a little bit further owing to a number of the effects of the detente that has taken place in the treatment. To interpret this at the time in a homogeneous manner in terms of *Penisneid* was to miss the opportunity to relate the patient to what is more profound in her situation. Perhaps she would then have been able, effectively, to perceive the relationship that, in the distant past, she had formed between this x that fundamentally provoked the Other's demand as a demand for death and the very first perception that she would have had of the intolerable rivalry in the form of the mother's desire attached to this far-off love that distanced her from both her husband and her child. The phallus has to be situated here at the level of the signifier of the Other as barred, S(Ⱥ), as identical to the profoundest signification that the Other has attained for the subject.

The phallus appears again in the same place at a slightly later moment in the analysis, at a time when many dreams that have brought it to light from this angle have come under consideration. In one of these dreams that are the most commonly observed in the majority of neuroses, the patient sees herself as a phallic being, seeing one of her breasts replaced by a phallus, or a phallus located between her two breasts. That is one of the most frequent oneiric fantasies that one can encounter in any analysis.

505 Is this, as we are told, about a 'desire for a masculine identification with possession of the phallus'? [p. 224]. He has a go at speculating – 'If she sees her own breasts transformed into a penis, isn't she transferring the oral aggressiveness primitively directed against the maternal breast onto the man's penis?' [p. 224]. That is one kind of reasoning. But on the other hand he observes how extensive the phallus is in its given form. We well know that its presence can be polyphallic. As soon as there is more than one phallus, I would almost say that we find ourselves before the outline of this fundamental image that is quite well represented by Diana of the Ephesians, whose body consists of a cascade of breasts.

At a time when the analyst has already drawn an equivalence between shoes and the phallus, a dream immediately follows the

two first attempts which, according to the analyst, confirms it. 'I get my shoe repaired at the shoemakers, then I climb onto a balcony decorated with blue, white and red paper lanterns, where there are only men – my mother is in the crowd, admiring me' [pp. 224–5]. Can we be satisfied here with speaking of *Penisneid*? Isn't it obvious that the relationship to the phallus is of a different order? The dream itself indicates that it's linked to a relationship of exhibition, and not in the presence of those who carry it, the other men there with her on the balcony – whose blue, white and red paper lanterns, this is almost too good to be true, evoke for us all sorts of variously obscene backgrounds – but in the presence of her mother.

We find here this compensatory fantasmatic relationship I was talking about last time, a relationship of power, no doubt, but in relation to a third party, who is her mother. The presence of the phallus in the subject's relationship to the image of her semblable, the little other, the image of the body, is precisely the image whose true function in the subject's equilibrium is to be studied, rather than interpreted and purely and simply assimilated to its function at the time of its other appearances. This is testimony here to a flagrant lack of criteria in the orientation of interpretation.

Finally, then, where are all the analyst's interventions in this observation going? Towards facilitating in the subject what he calls the becoming conscious of some sort of lack of or nostalgia for the penis, by facilitating her exit from her fantasies by centring her on a less powerful fantasy, whereas the majority of the facts go against this interpretation.

The analyst has changed the meaning of the phallus for the patient, he has rendered it legitimate for her. This comes down more or less to teaching her to love her obsessions. This is the evaluation of this therapeutics that we are given – the obsessions have not diminished, the patient simply no longer feels guilty about them. The result is brought about by an intervention essentially centred on 506
the fabric of her fantasies and their value as fantasies of rivalry with man, rivalry supposed to transpose some kind of aggressiveness towards the mother, the roots of which are never touched.

We end up with this. The analyst's operation of authorization disconnects the fabric of her obsessions from a fundamental demand for death. In operating in this way, he authorizes and ultimately legitimates her fantasy and, as one can only legitimate in a block, her abandonment of the genital relationship is, as such, consummated. When the subject learns to love her obsessions, inasmuch as they are invested with the full signification of what happens to her, we see at the end of the case all kinds of extremely euphoric intuitions develop.

I invite you to refer to it, since it's getting too late for me to read it out to you today. You will certainly find this style of narcissistic effusion – a phenomenon at the end of analyses that some people have emphasized. The author doesn't have too many illusions on this count. 'The positive transference', he writes, 'became clearer with these very strongly pregenitalized Oedipal characteristics' [p. 233]. And he concludes on a note of profound incompleteness, with very few illusions over the possibility of a truly genital solution, as one says.

What, it seems to me, has not at all been seen is the close correlation between this result and the very mode of interpretation, namely, that it targets the reduction of demand rather than its elucidation. It's all the more paradoxical since these days one is accustomed to stressing the importance of the interpretation of aggressiveness. Perhaps this term is just too vague for practitioners to be always able to use it to find their way around. The term 'demand for death' could be profitably substituted for it, as it is in German, to indicate the level of subjective articulation of demand that one can be required to achieve.

4

Since I alluded to the commandments earlier and also spoke of Christianity, I would like to finish by drawing your attention to what is not one of the least mysterious of the commandments. It's not a moral commandment, since it's founded on identification. It's the one that, on the horizon of all the commandments, is promoted in its Christian wording in the formula 'You will love your neighbour as yourself.'

507 I do not know if you have ever paused over what that entails. It entails all sorts of objections. First, the beautiful souls cry, '"As yourself!" But more! Why "as yourself"? That's so little!' The more experienced people say to themselves, 'But seriously, is it so certain that one loves oneself?' Experience effectively proves that we have the strangest and most contradictory feelings about ourselves. And then, this 'yourself' may seem, if we take it from a certain perspective, to place egoism at the heart of love. How is one to make it the measure, the model and the paragon of love? This is what surprises one most.

These objections are completely valid, in fact, and one can make them apparent by the impossibility of responding to this sort of interpellation in the first person. No one has ever suggested that 'I love my neighbour as myself' could be a reply, because then the

weakness of the formulation of the commandment would become apparent to the eyes of all. If, however, it is worth dwelling on, it's because it illustrates what earlier I called the horizon of the words of the commandment.

If we formulate it where it has to begin, that is, in the locus of the Other, it reveals itself to be something quite different, namely a circle, symmetrical and parallel to the one that, as I showed you, is subjacent to the position taken by the Other at the simple level of the first demand, and which says, 'You are the one who kills me.' The 'as yourself' at the level at which the commandment is formulated in being completed by it can't be the expression of any kind of egoism, inasmuch as the 'you' leads us to recognize in this 'yourself' nothing other than the '*tu*', thou. The Christian commandment henceforth reveals its value in being extended – '. . . as yourself you are, at the level of speech, the one you hate in the demand for death, because you are unaware of it'.

This is where it meets the point on the horizon at which Freud's counsel is formulated, his '*Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*'.

It's also what another wise saying expresses in its 'You are that.'

This is what must in the end come to mark the subject's authentic and full assumption in his own speech.

This means that the subject must recognize where he is on this horizon of speech without which nothing in analysis can be formulated except the tracing out of false pathways and the production of misrecognition.

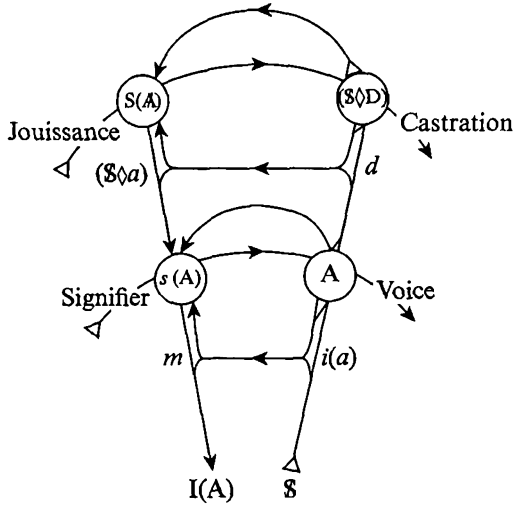
2 July 1958

APPENDICES

A

THE GRAPH OF DESIRE

The definitive version of the major schema elaborated over the course of the Seminar, subsequently called 'The Graph of Desire', can be found on page 692 of *Écrits*. This 'complete graph' was preceded by several versions that represent the stages of its development (pp. 681, 684 and 690). The complete form is reproduced below.



B

EXPLANATION OF THE SCHEMAS

On 31 January 1958, between weeks eleven and twelve, Lacan met with a small group of participants who had asked him for further explanation of the schemas he had introduced at his Seminar. This discussion (perhaps in the form of a response to questions) was not taken down in full and the notes taken by Paul Lemoine, which consist of a summary plus some drawings, are the only record. These are reproduced below in expanded form, and should be read with the obvious caveat: this is not one of Lacan's written texts, nor is it a class from his Seminar.

1 The signifying chain

It is not possible to define the analytic field without establishing the structuring function of signifiers in relation to the subject and their constitutive value in the subject qua speaking subject. In a word, the human subject cannot be disconnected from discourse – more precisely, from the signifying chain.

Some authors have managed to avoid this fact in the name of mechanistic or biologistic prejudices, but the psychoanalytic experience is of the highest importance for showing that it is unavoidable. It shows, effectively, that at the level of the signifying chain as such, subjects are captured in the Other, that is, the unconscious, and no subject has access to the unconscious without the Other's intervention.

The theme of the father, which is one of the themes of social life, but which is also present in the unconscious closest to the primitive instincts, can only be identified on the condition that the Name-of-the-Father as a signifying knot be brought into play. A signification that stems from the signifying chain's relation to itself converges on this signifier. If this were not so, the Name-of-the-Father could not

enter into any form of intersubjectivity whatsoever. It's effectively the signifying chain that differentiates the human subject from animal life. For the animal, there is, in a certain sense, a form of intersubjectivity, but it is completely different in kind. The same goes for identification: no system of identification is conceivable unless one brings into play something that is foreign to animal life, namely the signifying chain.

This has major consequences for [analytic] practice. For want of having understood this, a certain analyst (Bouvet) leaves himself open to deviations in technique by virtue of the prevailing importance he gives to the homosexual relationship between the analyst and the analysand, and to imaginary fellatio, a term that is ambiguous with 'imaginary filiation'. For him, everything takes place at the level of the imaginary relationship, the one that links the ego to the little other. On the contrary, Schema L [see *Écrits*, p. 53] is intended precisely to indicate that the question is whether, along the vector that goes from the Other to the subject, there is anything that traverses this imaginary relationship or not. 514

2 This year's schema

This year's schema is only a response to the quilting points that link the signifier to the signified.

The terms I have put there have a transformative role, in this respect. In themselves, their only originality is as signifiers. Our interest in them lies not so much in their meaning, which is necessarily ambiguous and even contradictory, but in their conjunction as signifiers.

This schema can be reduced to the following, which stands for the signifying chain.

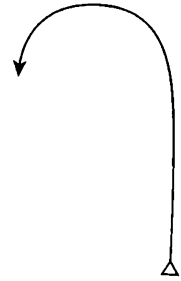
$$\frac{S \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots}{s \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots}$$

I only have to bend the line you see there.

The retroactive effect of signifiers acts upon the signifieds. Whatever form we give this term 'signifying chain', as soon as there is a signifying chain, there is a sentence. And there is a sentence whenever something is complete at the level of signifiers, that is, all

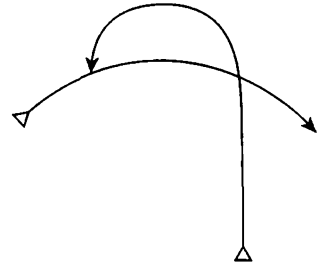
the signifiers that have been uttered, in their place, between the start and the punctuation. Meaning is formed when the final word of the sentence has been uttered. Consider my example of the line from Athaliah: 'Yes, I come into the temple to worship the Lord.' We can represent this retroaction of the signifier on the schema. When point p is attained, when it is produced, something is obtained at an earlier point, at p'.

What comes next represents the discourse's intention for you, which also has to be indicated inasmuch as the discourse is not
515 detached from the concrete individuality who is uttering it.



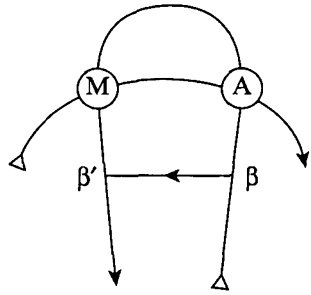
As analysts, we have at our disposal this middle term that enables discourse to be inserted into the human subject, namely, the term 'desire'. Desire's point of departure is at the same level as the point from which the signifying chain departs. Everything else is situated from there.

The duality of the subject operates in an 'intersubjective conjunction'. From its first cry, the newborn baby connects with the mother from whom it will acquire the use of the signifying chain. That's essentially the schema.



The encounter with the Other is projected onto that. The message is the result. For the message to be formed, it is sufficient that there be a receiver* and a sender*.

The support by desire is inscribed the length of the line of retroaction. The action of speaking has effects on the desire of the subject who articulated it, and these effects are produced retroactively. The result is inscribed at the end of the retrograde vector.



At the level of the short-circuit A, β, β′, M, the subject is an animal. Everything that happens at the animal level happens at β, β′. The specular imaginary confrontation $a - a'$ is located at this level. 516

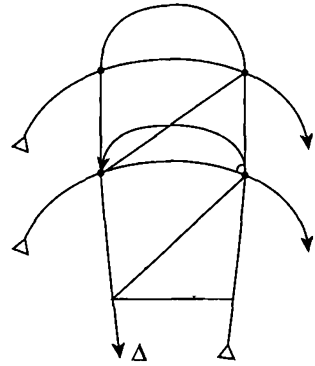
3 Concerning the Oedipus complex

This schema thus shows the place of the imaginary mother–phallus–child triad introduced last year with respect to the most primitive perversions like fetishism. I didn't feel comfortable about giving it to you without first being able to situate it like this today. There are other relations, also in the neuroses, that can be established prior to the Oedipus complex, but the subject has to be structured Oedipally for it to be possible to formulate anything about them.

The relationship to the mother in masculine homosexuality is structured in a current drama that is being played out between S, a, a′, A. The notion of the phallic woman, which is usually brought into the account in such cases, is confused and doesn't fit what we learn from analysis. It's actually a question of the mother's relationship to the father's speech. The mother currently lays down the law.

Further verification of the significance of this schema reveals the meaning of the identification with the father that occurs at the end of the Oedipus complex. It makes it possible to situate the paradoxes of the subject's relations to the penis: the appendage

required of the eroticized object, the threat of terror that is formed fantasmatically.



Inasmuch as I have been able to combine this schema and the schema where the code turns back upon the message – which introduces intersubjectivity and the relationship to the Other, not as present, but as produced by speech itself – we can start to give meaning to the term 'identification' by superimposing the two triangles.

Identification is Dante's condemned couple, who kiss on the mouth and each becomes the other.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The schema constructed over the course of this Seminar ('the graph of desire') acquired its definitive form in 'Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire', written in 1962. See, in particular, *Écrits*, pp. 681–93.

For the first part of *Formations of the Unconscious*, Lacan refers to 'The instance of the Letter', a text from May 1957 (*Écrits*, pp. 412–41).

Following the first seven chapters of the Seminar, over December and January, Lacan wrote 'On a Question Prior to Any Possible Question of Psychosis' (*Écrits*, pp. 445–88).

Lacan wrote 'The Youth of Gide' (*Écrits*, pp. 623–44) over the February vacation and it was published in April. One finds an echo of it in Lesson XIV of the Seminar, the first lesson of the part, 'The Significance of the Phallus'.

The six lessons of this part, as well as the lesson of 7 May, are influenced by the prospect of the public lecture that Lacan was to give in Munich on 9 May called 'The Signification of the Phallus' (*Écrits*, pp. 575–84).

Finally, the last part coincides with 'The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power', a paper presented at Royaumont in July (*Écrits,* pp. 489–542).

*

I would like to express my gratitude to Judith Miller, the young girl of the 'Ahht!', who was the first reader of the manuscript and proofs, and made many useful suggestions.

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notes of this Seminar from January 1958 on. Paul does not seem to have attended the first trimester; he possessed a photocopy of the first seven lessons that had been typed up for Lacan.

Readers in a position to send me new information or offer corrections and improvements are kindly invited to write to me care of the publisher.

J.-A. M.

TRANSLATOR'S ENDNOTES

The following notes refer to page and paragraph of the present English edition.

Chapter I The Famillionaire

(3, 3) See 'The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason since Freud', *Écrits*, pp. 412–41.

(4, 4) See *The Seminar, Book I, Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953–1954*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. John Forrester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

(5, 1) See *The Seminar, Book II, The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–1955*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

(5, 2) See *Seminar II*, Chs 15 and 16; see also 'Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"', *Écrits*, pp. 6–48, esp. pp. 35–9 and the section titled 'Parenthesis of Parentheses', pp. 41–6, added in 1966.

(5, 2) See *Écrits*, pp. 35–8.

(6, 1) See *The Seminar, Book III, The Psychoses, 1955–1956*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: Norton, 1993).

(6, 1) The French term '*suppléance*' refers to the act of replacing someone unable to carry out their duties. It conveys the sense of making up for a lack. I have resurrected the old English term 'suppletion', which refers to remedying a deficiency or supplementing a lack. In *Écrits* the verb '*suppléer*' is translated as 'to make up for' or 'to supplement'.

(6, 3) See *Seminar III*, Ch. 21.

(7, 2) '*Point de capiton*' is translated here and in *Seminar III* as quilting point, and as button tie in *Écrits*.

(7, 4) See *Le séminaire, Livre IV, La relation d'objet* (*The Object Relation*), *1956–1957*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 1998).

(7, 5) See *Écrits*, pp. 428–9.

(8, 8) Lacan is referring to Bertrand Russell's theory of 'logically proper names', set out in his 1918 paper, 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism'. See Bertrand Russell, *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* (London: Routledge, 2009), particularly the introduction by David Pears.

(16, 2) Heinrich Heine, *Travel Pictures*, trans. Peter Wortsman (Brooklyn, NY: Archipelago Books, 2008); also available in his *Selected Prose*, trans. and ed. Ritchie Robertson (London: Penguin, 1993).

(16, 3) See Heinrich Heine, *Travel Pictures*, trans. Peter Wortsman (New York: Archipelago Books, 2008), pp. 123 and 124.

(18, 6) Freud compares witticisms and the comic in Chapter 7 of *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, *SE*, Vol. 8.

(18, 8) The reference is to a remark found in the last paragraph on p. 430 in *Écrits*, where '*alibi*' is translated as ruse.

Chapter II The *Fat-millionaire*

(20, *ch.title*) Homophonic with '*famillionaire*', the '*fat-millionaire*' can mean the conceited, smug or fatuous millionaire.

(21, 3) See Freud, *Jokes*, *SE* 8: 16ff and Heine, *Travel Pictures*, Bk. 3, Pt. 2, Ch. 8.

(22, 2) '*Tendance*' here renders Freud's '*Tendenz*', translated as purpose in *SE*. See, for example, 'The Purposes of Jokes', Ch. 3 in *Jokes*.

(22, 3) See, for example, *SE* 8: 54, where Freud introduces the term 'joke-work', along the lines of the 'dream-work'. The relationship between dreams and witticisms is discussed in Ch. 6 in *Jokes*.

(23, 1) At this point the discussion constantly refers to Jacques Lacan 'The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud', in *Écrits*, pp. 412–41.

(23, 5) See Roman Jakobson, 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances', in Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague: Mouton, 1956), pp. 53–87.

(29, 3) The speaker has unwittingly invented the expression, '*C'est signé que non*' ('It's signed with a "No"', we might say), through confusing it with the fixed expression, '*C'est signe que . . .* ', which means 'It is a sign, or the proof, that . . . '.

(29, 4) Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, *SE*, Vol. 6. See also Freud's 1898 paper, 'The Psychical Mechanism of Forgetfulness', *SE* 3: 289–97.

(30, 2) The allusion is to the two-volume collection of articles, *La psychanalyse d'aujourd'hui* [*Psychoanalysis Today*], ed. Sacha Nacht (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956).

(30, 4) See Freud, *Psychopathology*, *SE* 6: 9–11.

(36, 1) *Le Prométhée mal enchaîné* was published in 1895. See *Marshlands and Prometheus Misbound*, trans. George Painter (New York: Mcgraw-Hill, 1965).

Chapter III The *Miglionaire*

(43, 3) See above, p. 36.

(43, 4) André Gide, *Paludes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973) is a short novel originally published in 1895, translated as *Marshlands*. See Gide, *Marshlands and Prometheus Misbound.*

(43, 5) That is, he plays no part in choosing who will receive the gift.

(45, 6) See *Jokes*, *SE* 7: 140–2. Freud here speaks of the 'subjective determinants' of wit.

(47, 1) The reference is to Émile Littré, *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, first published by Hachette 1863–1872, and now available online at <http://littre.reverso.net/dictionnaire-francais/>.

(47, 2) See Charles Chassé, *Lueurs sur Mallarmé* (Paris: Editions de la Nouvelle revue critique, 1947) and Les *clés de Mallarmé* (Paris: Aubier, 1954).

(50, 3) See the graph, Ch. 1, p. 10, where the metonymic object is located at β'.

(54, 5) '. . . *le comte ne la contente pas, à ceci près que le comte, s'il est, comme je le dis, aussi peu contentant, peut ne s'apercevoir de rien.*'

(55, 1) The response is a meaningless one that plays on the standard response to being asked how one is, which is to say '*Et toi?*' ('And you?') by instead giving a silly response, '*Et toile à matelas!*', 'And a mattress-cover!' To respond, '*Et toile à édredon!*', 'And an eiderdown-cover!', would ruin the effect.

Chapter IV The Golden Calf

(58, 1) What is 'a bit too swift' is this one-line summary of the philosophical enterprise that goes from the formal logic of Aristotle to the transcendental logic of Kant.

(61, 4) On metaphor, see *Seminar III*, Chs 17 and 18, esp. pp. 219ff, as well as 'The Instance of the Letter'.

(61, 5) See *Jokes*, *SE* 8: 88.

(63, 3) '*Le premier vol de l'Aigle*' plays on the two meanings of '*vol*', flight and theft. The expression 'the flight of the Eagle' refers to Napoleon I's successful return from exile on Elba in 1815 and reinstatement as Emperor.

(63, 4) See *Jokes*, *SE* 8: 37.

(64, 6) The reference is to Corneille, *Le Cid*, Act 4, Scene 3.

(65, 2) See *Écrits*, p. 422.

(66, 5) '*Un village de trente âmes*' (a village of thirty souls) means a small village with few inhabitants.

(67, 1) '*Trente feux*' (thirty fires) refers to there being thirty houses in a settlement or village.

(67, 3) 'Without Poland there'd be no Poles' are the last words of Jarry's play *Ubu Roi*. See Alfred Jarry, *Ubu Roi*, trans. Beverly Keith and G. Legman (New York: Dover, 2003).

(70, 2) See Félix Fénéon, *Novels in Three Lines*, trans. Luc Santé (New York: New York Review of Books Classics, 2007).

(71, 6) For this and the following three paragraphs, see the diagram on page 10.

(72, 6) In a footnote to *Capital*, Ch. 1, Sec. 3, Pt. A, 'Elementary or Accidental Form of Value', Marx writes: 'In a sort of way, it is with man as with commodities. Since he comes into the world neither with a looking glass in his hand, nor as a Fichtian philosopher, to whom "I am I" is sufficient, man first sees and recognizes himself in other men. Peter only establishes his own identity as a man by first comparing himself with Paul as being of like kind. And thereby Paul, just as he stands in his Pauline personality, becomes to Peter the type of the genus homo.' *Das Kapital: A Critique of Political Economy* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2009), p. 18.

Chapter V A Bit-of-Sense and the Step-of-Sense

(76, 5) See, in particular, *SE* 8: 131.

(77, 6) Ernst Kris, 'Ego Psychology and Interpretation in Psychoanalytic Therapy', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 20/1 (1951): 15–29. Lacan mentions Kris's article in 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis', *Écrits*, p. 244.

(78, 5) Act 3, Scene 2. The scene was censored after the second performance.

(80, 4) The delta is the small triangle at the lower right-hand side of the diagram.

(83, 1) *The Interpretation of Dreams, SE,* Vols. 4 and 5; *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, *SE* Vol. 6; and *Jokes*, Vol. 8.

(84, 4) See Octave Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*, trans. Pamela Powesland, foreword by Maurice Bloch (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1990). Originally published as *Psychologie de la colonisation* (Paris: Seuil, 1950).

(85, 2) The 'secondary circuit of need' refers to the level of pretext or invention mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

(85, 3) These are the three moments numbered I, II and III on the diagram.

(87, 3) '*Peu de sens*' means 'little sense' as in '*Cela a peu de sens*', 'That makes little sense', or even 'no sense', but Lacan is also drawing on the stand-alone meaning of the substantive as in '*un peu*', 'a bit', 'a little', to form '*le peu de sens*', 'the bit of sense'. '*Peu de sens*' is translated as 'scant meaning' in *Écrits*.

(87, 4) An allusion to Albert Camus, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1957, and his novel *The Outsider*.

(87, 4) Lacan is playing on the homophony of '*veau*', veal, and '*vaut*', which is the third-person singular of '*valoir*', to be worth.

(88, 2) See *Jokes*, *SE* 8: 143.

(89, 1) '*Pas*' is an adverb of negation, as in the expression '*pas de sens*', which occurs in expressions such as '*Ça n'a pas de sens*', 'That makes no sense'. '*Pas*' is also a substantive. In Lacan's examples, a '*pas de vis*' is a screw thread, while a '*pas de quatre*' is a dance in ballet for four dancers; it appears as a geographical term in '*Pas de Suse*' which refers to Susa in Italy and in '*Pas de Calais*' which is the French term for the Straits of Dover.

(90, 3) While '*motif*' and '*mobile*' mean roughly the same, namely motive, '*mobile*' is usually restricted to the legal context of motive for a crime. Lacan is referring to *Jokes*, *SE* 8, Ch. 5, 'The Motives of Jokes – Jokes as a Social Process'.

Chapter VI Whoah, Neddy!

(92, 6) Lacan is referring to the 'subjective determinants' of the joke-work, *SE* 8: 142. Shortly after (144), Freud quotes Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, V.ii:

> A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
> Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
> Of him who makes it . . .

(95, 1) *SE* 8: 115. The example is discussed in 'The Instance of the Letter', *Écrits*, p. 436.

(96, 3) Freud refers to the expression 'psychical scene of action', which is likely to be a reference to Fechner. See *Jokes*, *SE* 8: 176.

(99, 1) Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, trans. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (London: Macmillan, 1935).

(107, 1) *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *SE* 4: 283.

(107, 3) Freud refers to the 'outer shell' of a joke in *Jokes*, *SE* 8: 55.

(107, 4) 'Être *de la même paroisse*' literally means coming from the same parish, but figuratively the expression indicates a shared perspective on things, having much in common, coming from the same background, thinking alike, and so forth.

Chapter VII *Une Femme de Non-Recevoir*, or: A Flat Refusal

(109, 1) '*En esprit*'. '*Trait d'esprit*' and '*mot d'esprit*' are translated here as 'joke' or 'witticism'.

(113, 1) 'Rough breathing' refers to the diacritical mark in ancient Greek that is placed *inter alia* over the α to indicate that it is aspirate. It is represented here by an inverted comma.

(113, 3) See the 'optical model' in 'Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation: "Psychoanalysis and Personality Structure"', in *Écrits*, pp. 543–74 and the discussion in *Seminar I*, Chs 10 and 11.

(114, 2) See Freud, *Jokes*, Ch. 7, 'Jokes and the Species of the Comic'.

(115, 2) The French here is untranslatable. The expression '*une fin de non-recevoir*' is a legal expression meaning the rejection of a claim. In ordinary, somewhat elevated language it means a flat refusal, in the sense of dismissing out of hand. Lacan's patient unwittingly creates the new expression '*une femme* [a woman] *de non-recevoir*', which sounds very similar to the original expression, but doesn't exist in French.

(117, 1) See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), First Part, Sec. 54.

(117, 1) Léon Dumont, *Des causes du rire* (Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010); Georges Dumas, 'Les rires et les larmes', in *Traité de psychologie*, ed. Georges Dumas et al. (Paris: Alcan, 1923), Vol. 1, Bk. 3, Ch. 3.

(118, 2) See Heinrich von Kleist, 'The Puppet Theatre', in *Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. David Constantine (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2004).

(121, 6) '*Die Kunst-Religion* [Religion in the Form of Art]' is Ch. 7, Pt. B, of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind.*

(122, 2) Lacan has in mind Aristophanes' *Assemblywomen.* See Aristophanes, *The Assemblywomen* in *The Birds and Other Plays*, trans. David Barrett and Alan H. Sommerstein (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978).

(122, 4) See *The Assemblywomen,* p. 127.

(124, 2) Molière, *School for Wives*, trans. Ranjit Bolt (London: Oberon Books, 2012). Text references are to act, scene and line of this edition.

> Un air doux, et posé, parmi d'autres enfans,
> M'inspira de l'amour pour elle, dès quatre ans.
> (I. i. 28–9)

(124, 5) A reference to Colette's 1919 novella, *Mitsou; or How Girls Grow Wise*, trans. Jane Terry (London: Victor Gollancz, 1930).

(124, 6) 'Horace avec deux mots en ferait plus que vous' (V. iv. 1605).

(125, 2) The exchange takes place in Act 2, Scene 4.

Chapter VIII Foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father

(129, 2) The 'earlier schema' is schema L. See *Écrits*, p. 40.

(130, 1) Gisela Pankow was at this time a colleague of Lacan's at the French Psychoanalytic Society. Her book, *L'Etre-là du schizophrène: Contribution à la méthode de structuration dynamique dans les psychoses* [*Being-There of the Schizophrenic: A Contribution to the Method of Dynamic Structuration in the Psychoses*] (Paris: Aubier, 1981), which presents her work on psychosis dating back to 1956. It was on a visit to the US in the 1950s that she met Gregory Bateson.

(130, 1) See Gregory Bateson et al., 'Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia', *Behavioral Science* 1 (1956): 251–64; and Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1972).

(135, 2) *Une vérité de M. de la Palice* is a truism or tautology.

(136, 3) '*Tu*' is the second-person singular personal pronoun. It is homophonic with '*tue*' and '*tues*', present-tense singular forms of the verb '*tuer*', to kill.

(136, 4) See *Seminar III,* Chs 22–4, especially p. 272, fn. 3.

(137, 4) Charles Blondel, *The Troubled Conscience and the Insane Mind,* trans. F. G. Crookshank (London: Kegan Paul & Co., 1928).

(139, 3) See *Seminar III,* Ch. 4.

(140, 2) The *Grundsprache* is briefly mentioned in *Seminar III,* p. 108, and at greater length in 'On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of the Psychoses', *Écrits,* p. 450. See D. G. M. Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness,* 2nd edn, trans. Ida MacAlpine and Richard A. Hunter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 12–13.

Chapter IX The Paternal Metaphor

(146, 5) Charles Odier, 'Une névrose sans complexe d'Oedipe?', *Revue française de psychanalyse* 6 (1933): 298–343.

(151, 3) See Henri Wallon, 'Les milieux, les groupes et la psychogenèse de l'enfant', *Enfance* 12/3–4 (1959): 287–96. Originally published in *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie* 16 (1954): 2–13.

(160, 7) Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Before Sunrise', *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* trans. Thomas Common (New York: Start Publishing, 2012), pp. 244–8.

(161, 2) Possibly a reference to French humourist, Pierre Henri Cami.

Chapter X The Three Moments of the Oedipus Complex (I)

(163, *line 2*) Freud's 'Der Untergang des Ödipuskomplexes', translated as 'The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex' in *SE* 19, is translated into French as 'Le déclin du complexe d'Oedipe'.

(166, 4) The reference is to First Corinthians 3: 18, 'beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord'.

(170, 3) Ernest Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not* was translated into French as *En avoir ou pas.* The French literally means to have some or not.

(171, 2) See Sigmund Freud, *Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy, SE* 10: 5–149.

(177, 2) See the final session of *Le séminaire IV,* Ch. 24.

Chapter XI The Three Moments of the Oedipus Complex (II)

(183, 4) The 'ferret' is a reference to a children's song, '*Le jeu du furet*', the opening lines of which are:

> *Il court, il court, le furet*
> *Le furet du bois, mesdames,*
> *Il court, il court, le furet*
> *Le furet du bois joli.*
>
> He runs, he runs, the wood ferret does,
> The wood ferret, my Ladies,
> He runs, he runs, the ferret does
> The pretty wood ferret.

(187, 5) This article is his 'On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis', *Écrits*, pp. 447–88. It was originally published in *La psychanalyse* 4 (1959): 1–50.

(192, 3) This is most likely a reference to Freud's remark, added to the 1915 edition of *The Three Essays on Sexuality SE* 7: 146, n.1: 'The absence of a strong father in childhood not infrequently favours the occurrence of inversion.'

(196, 2) See Rudolf Loewenstein, 'Phallic Passivity in Men', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 16 (1935): 334–40.

Chapter XII From Image to Signifier – in Pleasure and in Reality

(197, 1) Charles Rycroft, 'Symbolism and Its Relationship to the Primary and Secondary Processes', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 37 (1956): 137–46.

(197, 2) See Ernest Jones, 'Theory of Symbolism', *British Journal of Psychology* 9 (1918): 181–229.

(200, 2) See D. W. Winnicott, 'Metapsychological and Clinical Aspects of Regression Within the Psycho-Analytical Set-Up', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 36 (1955): 16–26.

(200, 4) D. W. Winnicott, 'Primitive Emotional Development', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 26 (1945): 137–43.

(203, 4) The 'Letter 52' Lacan refers to is a letter from Freud to Wilhelm Fliess dated 6 December 1896. It was published in *The Origins of Psycho-Analysis: Letters to Wilhelm Fliess, Drafts and Notes, 1887–1902*, ed. Marie Bonaparte, Anna Freud and Ernst Kris, trans. Eric Mosbacher and James Strachey (London: Imago, 1954), 173–81. It appeared in a new translation as the letter of 6 December 1896 in *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887–1904*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 207–15.

(204, 2) See *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *SE* 4: 130.

(208, 2) See Susan Isaacs, 'The Nature and Function of Phantasy', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 29 (1948): 73–97, esp. 94.

(209, 3) This diagram is a rudimentary version of the R Schema set out in Lacan, 'Question', *Écrits*, p. 462.

(212, 4) See Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1958), Vol. 2, Ch. 42, 'Life of the Species', pp. 510–16.

(213, 4) Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006).

(214, 6) '*Tendance*' here means drive.

(215, 1) Sigmund Freud, '"A Child is Being Beaten" A Contribution to the Study of the Origin of Sexual Perversions', *SE* 17: 179–204.

Chapter XIII Fantasy, Beyond the Pleasure Principle

(216, 1) Lacan will refer to three papers by Ernest Jones on female sexuality: 'The Early Development of Female Sexuality', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 8 (1927): 459–72; 'The Phallic Phase', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 14 (1933): 1–13; and 'Early Female Sexuality', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 16 (1935): 263–73. All three are reprinted in his collection, *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, 5th edn (1948; repr. London: Karnac, 1977), while the first and the third are also reprinted in Russell Grigg, Dominique Hecq and Craig Smith (eds), *Female Sexuality: The Early Psychoanalytic Controversies* (London: Rebus, 1999; repr. London: Karnac, 2015). Hanns Sachs's article was published in English as 'On the Genesis of Perversions', trans. Ruth B. Goldberg, *American Imago* 48 (1991): 283–93.

(216, 1) Otto Rank, 'Perversion and Neurosis', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 4 (1923): 270–92.

(218, 5) 'Constructions in Analysis', *SE* 23: 257–69.

(220, 3) 'Not clearly sexual, not in itself sadistic, but yet the stuff from which both will later come' ('A Child is Being Beaten', *SE* 17: 187). An allusion to the third witch's prophesy to Banquo, 'Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none' (*Macbeth*, I. iii).

(220, 3) See Sigmund Freud, 'The Economic Problem of Masochism', *SE* 19: 159–70, esp. 164.

(227, 4) The line is spoken by the chorus in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*:

(228, 4) See Freud, 'Economic Problem of Masochism', *SE* 19: 159; see also a footnote by James Strachey in 'Instincts and Their Vicissitudes', *SE* 14: 121.

> Not to be born is best
> When all is reckoned in, but once a man has seen the light
> The next best thing, by far, is to go back
> Where he came from. (lines 1388–91)

(229, 1) See Freud, 'Economic Problem of Masochism', *SE* 19: 160.

Chapter XIV Desire and Jouissance

(236, 7) The person in question would be either Jean Laplanche or Jean-Bertrand Pontalis whose joint publication, 'Fantasme originaire, fantasme des origines, origine du fantasme', appeared in *Les temps modernes* 215, in April 1964, and was published as a monograph by Hachette in 1985. It was published as 'Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality' in *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 49 (1968): 1–18, and reprinted in *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. Victor Burgin, James Donald and Cara Kaplan (London: Methuen, 1986).

(237, 4) Lacan had neglected to mention 'The Early Development of Female Sexuality' the previous week.

(238, 1) Joan Riviere, 'Womanliness as a Masquerade', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 10 (1929): 303–13; reprinted in Grigg et al. (eds), *Female Sexuality*, pp. 172–82.

(240, 3) See *Le séminaire IV*, Ch. 8.

(242, 3) Jean Delay, *La jeunesse d'André Gide* (Paris: Gallimard, 1956); *The Youth of André Gide*, abridged and trans. June Guicharnaud (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

(242, 4) The story Gide refers to is actually mentioned in Georges Sand, *Histoire du véritable Gribouille* (1850).

> Gribouille throws himself into the water one day that it is raining very hard, not to avoid the rain, as his wicked brothers say, but to avoid his brothers, who are laughing at him. For some time, he struggles in the water and tries to swim; then he lets himself go and as soon as he lets himself go, he floats; then he feels himself becoming tiny, light, odd, vegetal; leaves sprout out of him all over his body; and soon Gribouille turns into a slender, graceful sprig of oak, which the water gently deposits on the bank of the stream . . . no schoolboy was ever troubled by any page of Aphrodite so much as I – ignorant little boy that I was – by the metamorphosis of Gribouille. (André Gide, *If it Dies . . .*, trans. Dorothy Bussy (London: Penguin, 1977), pp. 60–1)

Also see Lacan's detailed study of Gide in the article, published in 1958, 'The Youth of Gide, or the Letter and Desire', *Écrits*, pp. 623–44.

(243, 2) André Gide, *Strait Is the Gate*, trans. Dorothy Bussy (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969).

(244, 7) André Gide, *Madeleine*, trans. Justin O'Brien (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 1989), pp. 30–1.

> *Personne ne peut soupçonner ce qu'est l'amour d'un uraniste, dégagé de toutes le contingences sexuelles: quelque chose de si fort, de si bien préservé, quelque chose d'embaumé contre quoi le temps n'a plus prise.* (No one has any idea what the love of a uranist is, devoid of all its sexual contingencies: something so strong, so well preserved, something embalmed against

which time is powerless.) (Jean Schlumberger, *Madeleine et André Gide* (Paris: Gallimard, 1956), p. 193)

(245, 2) Harpagon is the protagonist of Molière's play, *The Miser*. When Madeleine Gide informed her husband that she had burnt all his letters, he wrote in his journal, 'I immediately felt ruined. I no longer have any heart for anything, and all the light in my heaven is extinguished' (*Madeleine*, p. 68).

(246, 5) Jean Genet, *The Balcony*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Grove Press, 1966). The play premiered in Paris in 1957.

Chapter XV The Girl and the Phallus

(256, 1) Melanie Klein introduced a distinction, not drawn by Freud, between largely unconscious 'phantasies' and 'fantasies' such as daydreams, reveries, imagined scenarios, and the like. Lacan is here using the term '*fantaisie*' for the former.

(268, 4) Claude Lévi-Strauss (1949), *Elementary Structures of Kinship* revised edn (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1969).

Chapter XVI Insignias of the Ideal

(274, 1) The term was introduced in 1917 by Johan H. W. van Ophuijsen. See his 'Contributions to the Masculinity Complex of Women', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 5 (1924): 39–49; repr. in Grigg et al. (eds), *Female Sexuality*.

(274, 5) Helene Deutsch, 'The Significance of Masochism in the Mental Life of Women', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 11 (1930): 48–60, repr. in Grigg et al. (eds), *Female Sexuality*; Karen Horney, 'On the Genesis of the Castration Complex in Women', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 5 (1924): 50–65.

Chapter XVII The Formulas of Desire

(286, 2) '*Ce que femme veut, Dieu veut*' is a French saying which literally means 'What a woman wants, God wants'.

(291, 3) There is a passing simile in the *Ethics*, Pt. 1, Proposition 17, Corollary 2, where Spinoza contrasts the 'celestial' constellations *Canis Major* and *Canis Minor* with the 'terrestrial' barking animal.

Chapter XVIII Symptoms and Their Masks

(305, 3) Elisabeth von R. was one of Freud's early patients. Her case is discussed in *Studies on Hysteria*, *SE* 2: 135–81.

(308, 2) See 'On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love', *SE* 11: 177–90.

(308, 5) *Donner et se donner. 'Aimer, c'est tout donner et se donner soi-même (to love is to give everything and to give oneself)'* is a line from a French hymn, popular at the wedding Mass.

(311, 3) See René Spitz, *The First Year of Life: A Psychoanalytic Study of Normal and Deviant Development of Object Relations*, in collaboration with W. Godfrey Cobliner (New York: International Universities Press, 1965). The book is based on the author's *'Genèse des premières relations objectales* (Genesis of the First Object Relations)', published in the *Revue française de psychanalyse* in 1954.

(314, 3) The French *'oblativité'*, here rendered as 'oblativity', means the propensity to give oneself to others or to God without an expectation of reciprocity, to dedicate oneself to a cause without expecting anything in return. In French psychoanalysis and psychology it has come to refer to something like authentic generosity and altruistic behaviour.

Chapter XIX Signifier, Bar and Phallus

(315, 3) See Sigmund Freud, 'Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence', *SE* 23: 275–8.

(316, 6) Otto Rank, 'Perversion and Neurosis', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 4 (1923): 270–92.

(317, 6) See Michel Leiris, *La possession et ses aspects théâtraux chez les Éthiopiens de Gondar* (Paris: Plon, 1958).

(330, 2) See Karen Horney, 'The Dread of Woman: Observations on a Specific Difference in the Dread Felt by Men and Women Respectively for the Opposite Sex', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 13 (1932): 348–60.

Chapter XX The Dream by the Butcher's Beautiful Wife

(334, 3) The reference is to Immanuel Kant. See his *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

(338, 4) Lacan is quoting from the French translation of *Die Traumdeutung*. This and following quotations are from *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *Standard Edition* 4: 147–50.

(347, 2) 'Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria', *SE* 7: 7–122.

Chapter XXI The 'Still Waters Run Deep' Dreams

(351, 1) See Michael Balint, 'On Genital Love', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 29 (1948): 34–40. The article was subsequently included in his *Primary Love and Psychoanalytic Technique* (London: Hogarth Press, 1952), pp. 128–40.

(351, 2) The phrase, '*la belle et bonne forme*', is something of a fixed expression in French. It reflects the ancient Greeks' usage of the term '*kalokagathia*' to indicate that which is beautiful-and-good, referring to Plato's identification of the two.

(351, 5) Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973).

(358, 2) '*En avoir ou pas*' is also the French title of Ernest Hemingway's 1937 novel, *To Have and Have Not*.

Chapter XXII The Other's Desire

(366, 3) Maurice Bouvet, 'Le moi dans la névrose obsessionnelle', *Revue française de psychanalyse* 17 (1953): 111–96.

(367, 2) Maurice Bouvet, 'Incidences thérapeutiques de la prise de conscience de l'envie du pénis dans la névrose obsessionnelle féminine', *Revue française de psychanalyse* 14/2 (1950): 215–43.

(367, 2) Maurice Bouvet, 'Importance de l'aspect homosexuel du transfert dans quatre cas de névrose obsessionnelle masculine', *Revue française de psychanalyse* 13 (1948): 419–55.

(367, 4) See Karl Abraham's table of the 'Stages of Libidinal Organization' in 'Origins and Growth of Object Love', Pt 2 of 'A Short Study of the Development of the Libido', *Selected Papers of Karl Abraham* (London: Hogarth Press, 1927), p. 497; reprinted in Grigg et al. (eds), *Female Sexuality*, p. 87.

(369, 4) This is Karl Abraham's 'later anal-sadistic stage'. See 'Stages of L ibidinal Organization', in Grigg et al. (eds) *Female Sexuality*, p. 87.

(371, 2) I haven't been able to find the table Lacan is referring to.

(375, 1) See Edward Glover, 'A Developmental Study of the Obsessional Neuroses', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 16 (1935): 131–44.

(378, 1) See Freud's 1896 paper, 'Further Remarks on the Neuro-Psychoses of Defence', *SE* 3: 162–85.

(378, 2) 'Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis', *SE* 10: 155–318.

Chapter XXIII The Obsessional and his Desire

(390, 6) '*Versagung*' is translated as 'frustration' in *SE*.

(397, 6) Phyllis Greenacre, 'General Problems of Acting Out', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 19 (1950): 455–67.

Chapter XXIV Transference and Suggestion

(400, 1) This is the id, ego, superego model, also referred to as the structural model.

(408, 2) Bouvet, 'Importance de l'aspect homosexuel', p. 434.

Chapter XXVI The Circuits of Desire

(432, 1) The date marks General de Gaulle's 'call to arms' of 18 June 1940 for the French to resist the German occupation of France.

(433, 4) Edward Glover, 'The Therapeutic Effect of Inexact Interpretation: A Contribution to the Theory of Suggestion', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 12 (1931): 397–411.

(436, 5) D. W. Winnicott, 'Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena – A Study of the First Not-Me Possession', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 34 (1953): 89–97. Lacan's article, 'Some Reflections on the Ego', was published in the same issue.

(446, 2) See 'Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis', *SE* 10: 205.

(446, 4) See *Seminar III*, Ch. 22.

Chapter XXVII Exiting via the Symptom

(449, 1) 'Common sense is the most fairly distributed thing in the world, for each one thinks he is so well-endowed with it that even those who are hardest to satisfy in all other matters are not in the habit of desiring more of it than they already have.' The opening words of René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method for Rightly Conducting One's Reason.*

(453, 3) This study group included Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, the authors of *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: The Hogarth Press, 1973).

(455, 1) Compare this diagram with the slightly different one in Lacan's 'Question', *Écrits*, p. 465.

(456, 2) For further discussion, see Lacan, 'Question', *Écrits*, p. 452.

(456, 2) See Sigmund Freud, 'Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)', *SE* 12: 59–65.

(456, 3) See Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, *SE* 22: 80.

Chapter XXVIII You Are the One You Hate

(456, *ch. title*) *'Tu es celui que tu hais'*, 'You are the one you hate', and *'Tu es celui que tu es'*, 'You are the one you are', are homophonic.

(466, 3) Sacha Nacht (ed.), *La psychanalyse d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956).

(471, 3) See Sigmund Freud, 'Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis', *SE* 10: 187. '"If you received a command to take your examination this term at the first possible opportunity, you might manage to obey it. But if you were commanded to cut your

throat with a razor, what then?" He had at once become aware that this command had already been given, and was hurrying to the cupboard to fetch his razor when he thought: "No, it's not so simple as that. You must go and kill the old woman."'

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Jacques Lacan

Desire and Its Interpretation

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan
Book VI

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller

Translated by Bruce Fink

polity

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Abbreviations

Écrits	*Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, by Lacan
GW	*Gesammelte Werke*, by Sigmund Freud (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag)
IJP	*International Journal of Psychoanalysis*
PQ	*Psychoanalytic Quarterly*
PUF	Presses Universitaires de France
RFP	*Revue Française de Psychanalyse*
SE	*Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*

Words followed by an asterisk (*) are found in English in the original.

Bibliographical Note

All quotations from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* are from The Complete Pelican Shakespeare: *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (New York: Viking Press, 1969). Exact quotes from Shakespeare's and other authors' texts are placed in double quote marks, whereas Lacan's paraphrases or extrapolations of their texts are placed in single quote marks.

All references here to Lacan's *Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966) are to the pagination of *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006). When I refer to Lacan's Seminars, I provide the pagination of the English editions, when they exist; when they do not, I give the page number(s) in the French editions. All the extant Seminars except the present one were published in French by Éditions du Seuil in Paris. Seminars that have yet to be published in French are indicated by volume number and date of class.

References to Freud's work here are always to *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (24 volumes) published in London by Hogarth Press, abbreviated here as SE, followed by the volume number and page(s).

All text in square brackets has been added by the translator.

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Illustration plate 1 *Ophelia*, Sir John Everett Millais
Illustration plate 2 *Melancholia*, Albrecht Dürer

Book VI

Desire and Its Interpretation

1958–1959

INTRODUCTION

I

CONSTRUCTING THE GRAPH

Reintroducing the word "desire"
Poets and philosophers
The three schemas
A defense against distress
Darwin and the Devil's shudder

This year we are going to talk about desire and its interpretation.

A psychoanalysis is a therapeutic process, as people are wont to say. Let us say that it is a treatment, a psychical treatment.

This treatment concerns different levels of the psyche, first and foremost what I will call marginal or residual phenomena, such as dreams, slips of the tongue, and witticisms. These were the first scientific objects of psychoanalytic experience and the ones I emphasized last year.

Examining the curative aspect of this treatment, we find that it also concerns symptoms, broadly speaking, insofar as they manifest themselves in subjects in the guise of inhibitions. The latter form symptoms and are sustained by symptoms.

Lastly, it is a treatment that modifies structures – namely, those that are known as neuroses or neuropsychoses – which Freud at first characterized as "neuropsychoses of defense."

In what way does psychoanalysis intervene so as to deal at various levels with these different phenomenal realities? It intervenes insofar as they involve desire.

The phenomena that I called residual or marginal were initially apprehended by Freud, in the symptoms that we see described from one end of his work to the other, under the heading of desire and as significant as regards desire.

Similarly, anxiety [*angoisse*], inasmuch as we consider it to be key to the determination of symptoms, arises only insofar as some activity that enters into the play of symptoms becomes eroticized – or, to put it better, is taken up in the mechanism of desire.

Finally, what does the very term "defense" mean when it is used regarding the neuropsychoses? What is there a defense against, if it is not desire itself?

To conclude this introduction, it will suffice to indicate that libido, a notion that lies at the heart of psychoanalytic theory, is nothing but the psychical energy of desire.

I previously indicated in passing – recall my metaphor of the factory – that in order for the notion of energy to hold up, certain conjunctions of the symbolic with the real are necessary. I cannot, however, go into this specific point right now.

Analytic theory is thus thoroughly based on the notion of libido – that is, on the energy of desire.

1

Yet, as we have been seeing for some time now, analytic theory is moving ever further in a different direction.

Those who champion this new orientation very consciously indicate its originality, at least those among them who are most conscious of what they are doing. Fairbairn, who is the most typical representative of this trend, has written on several occasions – because he never stops writing – and, specifically, in a collection entitled *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality*, that modern psychoanalytic theory has changed its axis somewhat compared to the one Freud initially gave it, inasmuch as it no longer considers libido to be "pleasure-seeking"* but, rather, to be "object-seeking."*

I have frequently discussed this trend, which views libido as correlated with an object that is supposed to be in some sense predestined for it. I have already shown you its impact on psychoanalytic theory and technique in a thousand ways. I believe that I have managed on several occasions to designate the deviations from analytic practice that this trend entails, several of which might well be characterized as dangerous.

In order for us to broach the problem we will be focusing on this year, I wish to point out the importance of simply reintroducing the
13 word "desire" into our vocabulary, a word that is manifestly veiled in all of current psychoanalytic experience. By reintroducing it, we produce a feeling, not of revitalization, but of disorientation. I mean that, if instead of speaking about "libido" or the "genital object," we speak about "genital *desire*," it may seem harder to take for granted that the development of this desire automatically implies the possibility of opening oneself up to love, or the possibility of a total actualization of love. The latter seems to have become a doctrinal

tenet in a certain perspective regarding the maturing of libido over time.

This trend regarding the maturing of libido is all the more surprising in that it has arisen at the heart of a doctrine that was the first to not simply highlight but even to account for what Freud classified under the heading of debasement in our love lives. Freud argued that, whereas desire seems in fact to bring with it a certain quantum of love, it is very often a love that leads to conflict within oneself, a love that is not owned, a love that refuses to be owned.

On the other hand, the simple fact that we reintroduce the word "desire" – instead of currently used terms like "affectivity" and "positive" or "negative feeling" that stem from what I would call a disgraceful approach to the forces at work in the analytic relationship, especially regarding transference – creates a split that will in and of itself, it seems to me, have an enlightening effect.

Indeed, if – instead of considering transference to be constituted by affects or positive or negative feelings, given everything those terms bring with them that is vague and veiled – we name what is experienced here with the single term "desire," and speak of sexual desire and aggressive desire with respect to the analyst, it will become immediately visible that these desires do not constitute the whole of transference. It will become clear that transference must be defined by something other than more or less confused references to the notion of affect, whether positive or negative.

The final benefit of pronouncing the word "desire" and of using it in its fullest sense is that we will ask ourselves, "What is desire?"

This is not a question that we will be able to answer simply. Were 14
I not bound here by what I might call an urgent rendezvous with the needs of psychoanalytic practice, I would allow myself an investigation into the meaning of the word "desire" in the work of those who are the most qualified to highlight its usage – namely, poets and philosophers. But I will not do so.

We will see how the word "desire" is used, transmitted, and functions in poetry later, assuming we take our investigation far enough. If it is true, as all of my work this year will show you, that desire's position is profoundly marked by, moored to, and riveted to a certain linguistic function – that is, to a certain relationship between the subject and the signifier [or: system of signifiers, *le signifiant*] – psychoanalytic experience will take us far enough in this exploration (at least I hope it will) for there to be ample time to take advantage of the specifically poetic evocation of this term. This will also allow us, in the end, to better understand the relations between the nature of poetic creation and desire.

I will simply comment that the difficulties characteristic of the game of hide-and-go-seek that lies at the basis of what our experience reveals to us can already be seen in the fact, for example, that poetry clearly bridles, as it were, at the depiction of desire's object. In this respect, figurative poetry – the kind that I would say virtually paints beauty's "roses and lilies" – always expresses desire with a singular coldness. Curiously enough, the opposite is true in the type of poetry that is dubbed metaphysical. This is owing to the law that, strictly speaking, rules the evocation of desire. For those among you who read English, I will refer here only to the most eminent of the metaphysical poets of English literature, John Donne, inviting you to read a famous poem like "The Ecstasy," for example, in order to observe how impressively the question of the structure of our relation to desire is raised in it.

The very title of Donne's poem indicates the beginnings of the direction taken by the poetic approach to desire, on the lyrical level at least, when desire itself is targeted. To be sure, when the poet's play girds itself with dramatic action, it goes much further in rendering desire present to mind. For the time being, I will leave this dimension to one side. But I am mentioning it already because we broached it last year – it is the dimension of comedy. We will have to come back to it later.

Let us not dwell on poets any longer here. I mentioned them only as a preliminary pointer, and in order to indicate that we will return to them later, more or less sporadically. I would like to dwell for a moment, instead, on a position espoused by certain philosophers, for it is quite exemplary, I believe, as regards where the problem lies for us.

I have taken the trouble to write the following terms on the blackboard for you: "pleasure-seeking"* and "object-seeking."* Speculative thinkers and moralists have always broached the problem in just such terms. I am referring to theoretical morality, the morality that is enunciated in the form of precepts and rules and in the operations of philosophers – above all, those referred to as ethicists.

I have already pointed out to you the basis of all morality that one could call "physicalistic," in the sense in which, in medieval philosophy, people talked about the physical theory of love as opposed to the ecstatic theory of love. Up to a certain point, we could say that every theory of morality that has hitherto been expressed in the philosophical tradition has, in short, taken as its basis what one might call the hedonistic tradition. The latter involves establishing a sort of equivalence between two terms, pleasure and the object, in the sense in which the object is the libido's natural object insofar as

it is a boon [*bienfait*]. Once one adopts this criterion, pleasure must be admitted into the ranks of the goods [*biens*] sought by the subject and even into the ranks of the Sovereign Good, even if one refuses oneself pleasure.

Once we enter into Scholastic debates, the hedonistic ethical tradition no longer surprises us and we no longer perceive its paradoxes. Yet, in the end, what could be more contrary to what I shall call the experience of practical reason than the supposed convergence of pleasure with the good?

If we look at it closely – if we look, for example, at how things are expressed in Aristotle's work – what do we see being developed? In Aristotle's work it is very clear, things are very pure: pleasure and the good can only be equated in what I will call the master's ethics. This flattering ideal awards itself the term "temperance," 16
as opposed to "intemperance," suggesting as it does the subject's mastery over his own habits. Yet the inconsistency of this theory is quite striking.

If you reread the famous passages [in Aristotle's *Ethics*, Book 7] concerning the use of pleasures, you will see that everything that enters into this moralizing perspective has to do with the register of mastery, with a master's morality, and with that over which the master can achieve mastery [*discipliner*]. He can achieve mastery over many things, primarily his behavior when it comes to his habits – in other words, when it comes to the handling and use of his ego. But as concerns desire, things are quite different.

Aristotle – who was quite lucid about and conscious of what results from this practical and theoretical conceptualization of ethics – himself recognizes that desires (*epithumia*) go beyond a certain limit, which is precisely that of mastery and the ego, and that they very quickly enter the realm of what he calls "brutishness" or "beastiality." Desires are exiled from the field proper to man, assuming man identifies with the master's reality. Brutishness is, in this case, akin to perversion. Aristotle has, moreover, in this regard a singularly modern conception that might be translated by saying that the master cannot be judged on this score. This is almost tantamount to saying, in our vocabulary, that he cannot be recognized as responsible [for his desires]. These texts are worth recalling to mind and will enlighten you if you reread them.

In the camp opposing this particular philosophical tradition, there is someone whom I should like to name. He is, in my view, the precursor of something that I believe to be new, that we must consider to be new in, let us say, the progress or meaning of a certain relationship of man to himself, which is that of psychoanalysis such as Freud developed it. This someone is Spinoza.

It is, after all, in his work that we read, at least with a rather exceptional stress, a formulation like the following: "Desire is the very essence of man." So as not to separate the beginning of his formulation from what follows, I will add: "inasmuch as it is understood to be based on one of his inclinations, understood as determined and dominated by one of his inclinations to do something."

We could already spell out in detail what in this formulation
17 remains unrevealed, as it were. I say "unrevealed" because, of course, one cannot translate Spinoza using Freud. But I am mentioning it here as a quite singular bit of evidence. I no doubt have a greater fondness for Spinoza's work than others do, owing to the fact that I spent a lot of time reading Spinoza a very long time ago. Yet I do not believe that this is the reason why, in rereading his work on the basis of my own experience, it seems to me that someone who is involved in Freudian practice can feel quite at home reading texts like *De Servitute Humana*, written by someone for whom all of human reality is structured and organized on the basis of the attributes of divine substance. But let us leave this introductory remark aside as well for the time being, with the understanding that we will return to it.

I would like to give you a far more accessible example, with which I will conclude my philosophical references to our topic. I selected it at the most accessible level, or even the most common you can find. Open the dictionary by the late, charming Lalande, his *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie* ["Technical and Critical Dictionary of Philosophy" (Paris: PUF, 1960)]. Attempts to establish such dictionaries are extremely perilous and yet simultaneously fruitful, language being crucial to every problem we examine. You can be sure that in putting together a dictionary, you will come up with something suggestive. Here we find the following: "Desire: *Begehren, Begehrung.*" It is worth recalling what desire means in German philosophy; it is:

> A spontaneous and conscious need tending [*tendance*] toward a known or imagined end. Desire is thus based on need, of which it is a special and more complex case. It opposes the will (or willing in general) insofar as the will also presupposes: (1) at least temporary coordination of the needs; (2) opposition between the subject and the object; (3) consciousness of its own effectiveness; and (4) an idea of the means by which the wished-for end can be realized.

These reminders are extremely useful, except for the fact that, in an article designed to define desire, there are but two lines to situate

it in relationship to the needs, while the rest is related to the will. This is what the discourse on desire in this dictionary comes down to, except that the following is added to it: "Lastly, according to 18
certain philosophers, there is a specific kind of fiat in the will that is irreducible to the needs and that constitutes freedom." There is an air of irony in that last line, which is quite striking on the part of this philosophical author.

In a footnote, Lalande adds, "Desire is the need to procure oneself an emotion that has already been experienced or imagined; it is the natural will to have a certain pleasure." He follows this with quotes from the work of Rauh and Revault d'Allonnes, the term "natural will" being of interest as a reference. To which Lalande personally adds the following:

> This definition strikes me as a bit too narrow in that it does not adequately take into account the fact that certain needs precede their corresponding emotions. Desire essentially seems to me to be the desire for an act or a state, without a [mental] representation of the affective character of this end being necessary in every case.

I think he is referring to the representation of pleasure or of something else. Whatever the case may be, it certainly does not fail to raise the question of what is at stake, whether it is the representation of pleasure or pleasure itself. I certainly do not believe that it is a simple task to home in on the signification of desire by means of such a dictionary, all the more so in that one cannot say that the way was paved for this task by the tradition to which the author refers.

Is desire a psychological reality that rebels against all organization? Would we manage, in the final analysis, to broach the reality of desire by subtracting the characteristics indicated [by Lalande], insofar as they are those of the will? We would then have the contrary: we would have a non-coordination of the needs, even if only temporary; and the opposition between the subject and the object would truly disappear. Similarly, we would be faced with a need lacking in consciousness of its own effectiveness, and without an idea of the words by which it would realize the desired end. In short, we would find ourselves in a field in which psychoanalysis has contributed more precise formulations.

In effect, within these negative determinations, psychoanalysis very precisely traces out different levels: the drive, inasmuch as it is the non-coordination of the needs, even if only temporary; and fantasy, inasmuch as it introduces an essential link [*articulation*] or, more precisely, an altogether blatant type of link within the vague

determination that we designate as the non-opposition between the subject and the object. It will be our goal this year to try to define what fantasy is, perhaps even a bit more precisely than the psychoanalytic tradition has hitherto been able to.

As for what remains of Lalande's definition, which implies idealism and pragmatism, I will retain but one thing for the time being – namely, how difficult it seems to be to situate and analyze desire with reference to objects alone.

I am going to stop here, in order to turn more specifically to the terms with which I believe I can lay out the problem of our experience for you this year: the terms "desire" and its "interpretation."

2

The internal or connecting link between desire and its interpretation in psychoanalytic experience has a feature that habit alone stops us from seeing – namely, the degree to which the interpretation of desire is already, in and of itself, subjective [or: concerns the subject, *subjective*], being linked just as internally to the very manifestation of desire.

You are aware of the vantage point from which we, I won't say are starting out, but are making headway. We have been working together for quite some time. We have been trying to conceptualize the outlines of our experience for five years already. These outlines are converging this year on a problem – which may be where all these points, some of which are quite far flung, converge – a problem that I am trying to pave a way to broach for you.

Since we have marched side by side these last five years, I can immediately posit that psychoanalysis essentially shows us what I will call the taking up [*prise*] of man in the constituent [*constituant*] of the signifying chain. This taking up is undoubtedly linked to the existence of human beings, but it is not coextensive with it. Humans speak, and in order to speak they must enter into language and into a pre-existing discourse. The law of subjectivity that psychoanalysis forcefully brings out – namely, the fundamental dependence of subjectivity on language – is so essential that all of psychology literally hinges on it.

I will say that, at the very least, there is a form of psychology that is utterly subject to language, the psychology that we can define as the sum total of studies concerning what I might call sensory experience [*sensibilité*], in the broadest sense, insofar as that experience functions so as to maintain totality or homeostasis. What is involved are, in short, an organism's sensory functions. Here everything is

included: not only all of the experimental data of psychophysics, but also everything that can be contributed, most broadly speaking, by employing the notion of form in grasping the means by which constancy is maintained in an organism. An entire field of psychology is inscribed therein; it is sustained by the experience that is characteristic of it and it gives rise to research that continues to be carried out.

Nevertheless, the subjectivity in question – insofar as man is caught up in language, whether he likes it or not, and insofar as he is caught up in it far beyond his knowledge of it – is not immanent in sensory experience, if we understand the latter in terms of the stimulus–response pair. This is because the stimulus is given [by a researcher] as a function of a code that imposes its own order on need [that of the subject involved in the experiment], which must express itself in that code.

From an experimental perspective, one can at least try to account for the workings of the stimulus–response cycle in terms of signs. One can say that a stimulus is a sign given by the external environment that requires an organism to respond or defend itself, and that the organism in turn gives a sign. If you tickle the soles of a frog's feet, the frog responds with a certain muscular relaxation. But when it comes to subjectivity that is caught up in language, it is not a sign that is given, but rather a signifier.

Keep in mind the following, which appears to be simple: in the theory of communication, people talk about the sign as something that addresses someone and concerns a third thing that the sign represents. Quite recently again, we have been told that three is the minimum number of terms. Without even bothering to include a sender, they claim that, apart from someone who hears, we need but a sign, which signifies the third thing that the sign simply represents.

Now, as regards signifiers, this construction is false because a signifier does not concern a third thing that it supposedly represents 21
but concerns another signifier that it is not.

I would like to show you, not the genesis, but rather the construction of the three schemas I just put up on the blackboard [Figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3]. Now don't go thinking that we are talking about "stages" [*étapes*] here, even if we do occasionally find something like stages that are in fact gone through by the subject. The subject must come to occupy his place therein, but don't think of these schemas as typical stages of development; what is at stake is rather a generation, or a logical anteriority of each schema with respect to the one that follows it.

What does capital D represent? D represents the signifying chain. This basic, fundamental structure subjects every manifestation of language to the condition of being regulated by a succession – in

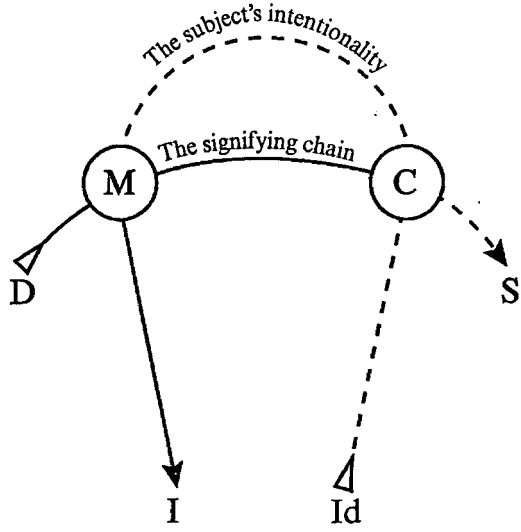

Figure 1.1: The first level (*étage*)

other words, by diachrony, that is, by something that unfolds over time. S stands for "signifier."

I will leave to one side the temporal properties that are involved; we will perhaps be led to return to them later. Let us say that the fullness of the fabric [*étoffe*] of temporality, as they say, is not at all
2 involved here. Things boil down to the notion of succession here and to what it may already imply as regards the notion of scansion, but we are not there yet.

Our concern is with the subject's involvement [or: embeddedness, *implication*] in the signifier. It can only be established on the basis of a discrete or differential element.

Given what I just pointed out – namely, that a signifier is defined and takes on its value and meaning on the basis of its relationship to another signifier in a system of signifying oppositions – the signifying chain develops in a dimension that implies a certain synchrony of signifiers: a signifying battery.

We can raise a question: "What is the smallest possible battery?" I've tried to answer this little question. It seems to me that four is the smallest possible battery. Can one construct a language with four signifiers? I do not believe that it is unthinkable. Trying to figure out if it is possible will not lead you too far away from your experience, but let us leave that to one side. It is clear that, given the current state of affairs, we are far from being reduced to only four.

The following is of the essence: that which is indicated by the

dotted line intersects the line that represents the signifying chain twice, first on the right and then on the left [*d'avant en arrière*].

The first intersection [the one on the right] takes place at the synchronic level, that of the simultaneous existence of signifiers. Point C is what I call the point at which the dotted line intersects the code. In other words, we have here the play of the signifier, something akin to a chatterbox. The child addresses a subject whom he knows to be a speaking subject, whom he has seen speaking, and who has talked his ear off since the beginning of his awakening to the light of day. Very early on, the subject must learn that, in order for his needs to be satisfied, their manifestations have to stoop to get through this doorway or narrow passageway.

M, the second point of intersection, is the one where the message is produced. It is always through the retroactive play of a series of signifiers that signification is, in fact, affirmed and becomes precise. It is only afterward that the message takes form, on the basis of the signifier or code that precedes it. Conversely, the message, as it is being formulated, constantly gets ahead of the code, placing a bet on the future [*tire une traite*].

I have already told you what results from the intentional process 23
that runs from the id to capital I.

What is at its origin presents itself in the form of the blossoming of need, or of "disposition" [or: predisposition, *tendance*], as psychologists say. This is represented in my schema at the level of the id. Here there is no return pathway that closes the circle, for the id is caught up in language, but it does not know what it is; it is not reflected on the basis of this innocent approach to language in which the subject initially turns himself into discourse.

The fact that the subject has relations with other speaking subjects results in the following, even when this is only just barely apprehended by him: what I have called the first or primal identification, I, occurs at the end of the intentional chain.

This is the first realization of an ideal about which one cannot even say at this point in the schema that it involves an ego-ideal, but simply that the subject receives the first stamp [*seing*] or *signum* of its relationship with the Other here.

3

Now for the second stage of the schema.

It can be thought to overlap in a sense with a certain stage of development, assuming that we do not view these stages as discontinuous. There are clear discontinuities in development, but they are

not found in the stages of this schema. These discontinuities can be found, as Freud observes somewhere, at the level of the judgment of attribution in relation to simple naming. That is not what I am talking about now, although I will turn to it later.

The first part of this schema represents the infant (*infans*) level of discourse, for it is perhaps not even necessary that the child begin to speak before the mark or seal placed on need by demand begins to work, as his alternating cries show. The second part implies that the child, even if he does not yet know how to speak coherently [*tenir un discours*], already knows how to speak, for this starts quite early on.

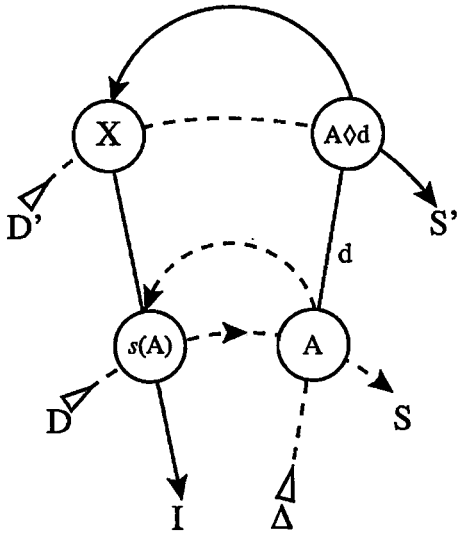

Figure 1.2: The second level

When I say that he knows how to speak, I mean that, at the second level of the schema, there is something that goes beyond being in the grip of language. There is a relationship here with the Other, strictly speaking, inasmuch as there is an appeal to the Other as presence, presence against a background of absence. This is the moment of the *fort-da* that so impressed Freud in 1915, as we can determine, when he had been called in to see one of his grandsons, the one who would later go on to become a psychoanalyst. I am speaking of the child whom he observed.

At the first level, what the chain of discourse articulates as existing beyond the subject imposes its form on the subject, whether he likes it or not. We have here, as it were, an innocent apprehension by the subject of linguistic form. But beyond this articulation and

beyond this apprehension, something else occurs, which is based on his experience of language – namely, the subject's apprehension of the Other as such. This takes us to the second level of the schema.

The Other involved is the one who can respond to the subject, answer his call. We see this Other to whom he fundamentally asks a question in *The Devil in Love* by Jacques Cazotte; it is the bellowing of the terrifying form that represents the appearance of the superego, in response to he who invoked it in a Neapolitan cave; the response is "*Che vuoi?*" or "What do you want?" The subject asks the Other what he wants. The question is asked from the place where the subject first encounters desire, desire being initially the Other's desire.

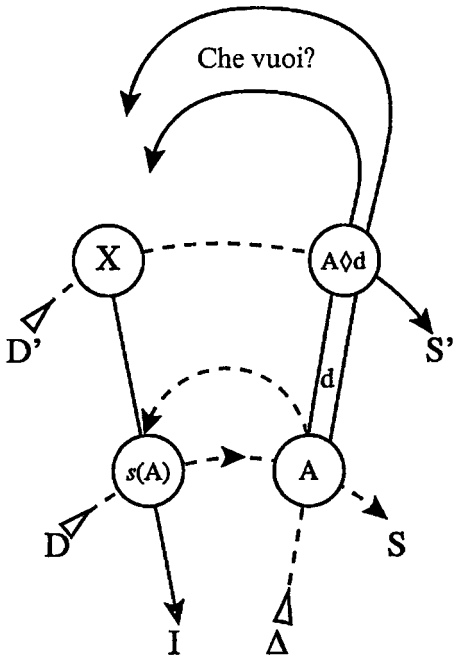

Figure 1.3: The second level completed by *"Che vuoi?"*

This experience of the Other's desire is essential because it allows the subject to realize something that is beyond linguistic articulation, around which the following revolves: it is the Other who does or does not enunciate certain signifiers. Up until then, the battery of signifiers, among which a choice could be made, was there, but only in itself. Now, experience shows that this choice is commutative, inasmuch as it is within the Other's power to make it such that one or another of the signifiers be there.

This entails that two new principles be introduced, at this level of
26 experience. They are added to what was initially a pure and simple principle of succession implying the principle of choice.

The first new principle is that of substitution. The following point is essential: what I call the "bar" between the signifier and the signified is established for the subject on the basis of commutativity. That is to say, there is coexistence or simultaneity, which is marked at the same time by a certain impenetrability, between the signifier and the signified. I mean that the difference or distance between the signifier and the signified is maintained.

$$\frac{S}{s}$$

Curiously enough, group theory, as we learn about it in the abstract study of sets, shows us the absolutely essential link between all commutativity and the very possibility of using what I am calling the "bar," a sign that is used to represent fractions. This is a tangential remark that I shall set aside for the time being.

From the moment at which the structure of the signifying chain makes us call on the Other [*a réalisé l'appel de l'Autre*] – in other words, at which the process of enunciation is distinguished from the formulation of the enunciated and is superimposed on it – the taking up of the subject in the articulation of speech, a taking up that was initially innocent, becomes unconscious. Similarly, the commutativity of the signifier becomes an essential dimension for the production of the signified. This means that the very substitution of one signifier for another signifier comes to lie at the origin of the multiplication of significations that characterize the enriching of the human world in an effective way – that is, in a way that reverberates in the subject's consciousness.

A second new principle can also be seen: the principle of similarity. A certain dimension, the metonymic dimension, begins to operate as a function of the fact that, within the signifying chain, one signifying term may resemble another. It is essentially in this dimension that the characteristic and fundamental effects of what we might call poetic discourse – that is, the effects of poetry – are produced. I will show you this in what follows.

27 What happens at this second stage [*étape*] will thus allow us to situate the appearance of what constitutes the signified of the Other, $s(A)$ – as opposed to the signifier given by the Other, $S(A)$ – in the very place where the message was in the first schema. The latter [$S(A)$] is produced along the dotted chain line, since it is a chain that is only partially articulated, merely

implicit, and represents the subject solely insofar as he underpins speech.

As I told you, the second stage [*étape*] is produced by the experience of the Other as an Other who has a desire. From the very first moment of its appearance, at its very origin, desire, *d*, is manifested in the interval or gap that separates the pure and simple linguistic articulation of speech from what marks the fact that the subject actualizes something of himself in it, something that has no scope or meaning except with respect to the production of speech, and that is his being – what language calls "being."

A horizon of being is situated for the subject between, on the one hand, the manifestations of his demand [*demande*] and what these manifestations have made him become and, on the other hand, the demand [*exigence*] to be recognized by the Other, which we might, in this case, call the demand [*exigence*] to be loved. We want to know if he can reach that horizon or not.

The experience of desire is situated in this interval or gap. It is first apprehended as being experience of the Other's desire, and it is within this experience that the subject has to situate his own desire. His own desire cannot be situated anywhere other than in this space.

4

This [Figure 1.4] represents the third stage [*étape*], form, or phase of the schema.

Here is what constitutes it. Finding himself in the primitive presence of the Other's desire as obscure and opaque, the subject has no recourse, he is *hilflos*. *Hilflosigkeit*, to use Freud's term, is known in French as the subject's "distress." It is the foundation of what, in psychoanalysis, has been explored, experienced, and qualified as "trauma."

What Freud taught us, at the end of the journey that allowed 28
him to finally situate the experience of anxiety in its true place, is that anxiety has nothing to do with the in some sense diffuse, or so it seems to me, nature of what people call the existential experience of anxiety.

In philosophy, people have gone so far as to say that anxiety confronts us with nothingness. Such formulations are assuredly justifiable from a certain vantage point. Nevertheless, you should be aware that, on this topic, Freud teaches us something that is positive and clearly formulated. He views anxiety as something that is thoroughly situated in a theory of communication, when he says that anxiety is a signal. Assuming that desire must be produced in the

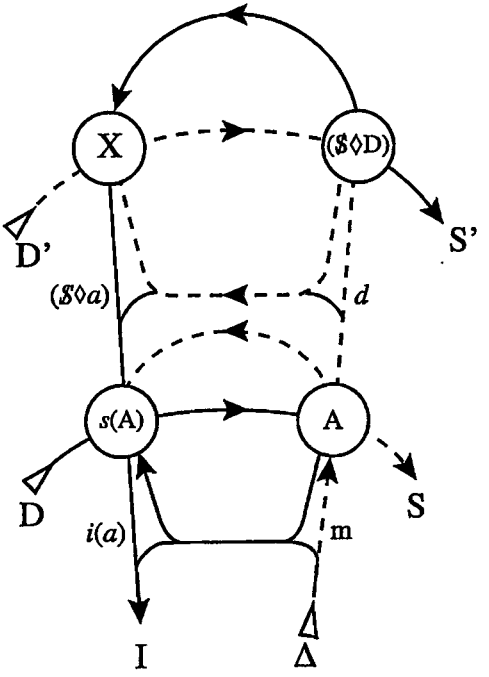

Figure 1.4: The third stage [*étape*]

very same place where distress originates and is experienced, anxiety is not produced at the level of desire.

We will carry out a detailed, line-by-line study of Freud's work entitled *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*. As it is our first class of the year, I can only sketch out for you today a few major points that we will come back to, specifically the following: Freud tells
29 us that anxiety is produced as a signal in the ego, on the basis of *Hilflosigkeit*, which anxiety is called upon to remedy insofar as it is a signal. I realize that I am going too quickly and that this would warrant an entire Seminar; but I will not be able to talk to you about anything if I do not begin by tracing out the pathway that we must follow.

Specular experience – that is, the experience of one's relationship to the other's image insofar as it is at the core of the ego's *Urbild* – comes in at this third stage. We thus find here anew what I laid out at the end of my first Seminar concerning the relationship between the ideal ego and the ego-ideal. I am not simply alluding here to what I said and propounded about specular relations – namely, the subject's confrontation with his own image in the mirror – but to the O–O' schema: the one where we find the concave mirror,

which allows us to conceptualize the function of a real image that is itself reflected, and that cannot be seen as reflected except from a certain position – namely, a symbolic position which is that of the ego-ideal.

We shall use all of this in a context that will give it a very different resonance, insofar as we shall be led to reconceptualize it in the context of the kind of symbolic action that I am showing you to be essential.

If the imaginary element – namely, the relationship between the ego, *m* [for *moi*], and the other, *i(a)* – thus comes in at the third stage of the schema, it is inasmuch as it allows the subject to deal with his distress in his relationship with the Other's desire.

How does he deal with it? With something he borrows from the game of mastery that the child, at a specific age, learned to handle with reference to his semblable as such. We are talking here about the experience of the semblable in the sense in which he is a gaze, the other who gazes at you, and who brings into play a certain number of imaginary relations, first and foremost, the relations of bearing [*prestance*], and also those of submission and defeat. The subject proceeds by means of this.

In other words, just as we must not say that the soul thinks, but, like Aristotle, that man thinks *with* his soul, we must say that the subject defends himself with his ego. This is what psychoanalytic practice shows us.

The subject defends against his distress; and with the means 30
given to him by his imaginary experience of his relationship with the other, he constructs something with the other that, unlike specular experience, is flexible. In effect, what the subject reflects are not simply games of bearing, and not simply his appearance to the other in [the form of] prestige and feigning; it is himself as a speaking subject. This is why fantasy is what I am designating to you here as the exit or reference point by which desire learns to situate itself.

I formulate fantasy for you with the following symbols: ($◊*a*). The subject is barred here because he is a speaking subject, one who relates to the other as a gaze – that is, to the imaginary other. Whenever you come up against something that is a fantasy, strictly speaking, you will see that it can be articulated in these primary terms, qua relationship between the speaking subject and the imaginary other. This is what defines fantasy. The function of fantasy is to provide the subject's desire with its proper level of correction or situation. This is why human desire is fixed, attached, and coapted, not to an object, but always essentially to a fantasy.

This is a fact of experience. Although it managed to remain

mysterious for a long time, let us not forget that it is nevertheless an experiential fact that psychoanalysis made common knowledge.

It is only thanks to psychoanalysis that this ceased being an anomaly – something opaque, something like a deviation, corruption, or perversion of desire.

It is on the basis of psychoanalysis that all of this – which can at times be called corruption, perversion, deviation, or even delusion – was conceptualized and articulated in a dialectic that, as I have just shown you, can reconcile the imaginary with the symbolic.

5

I realize full well that I am not leading you along an easy path in our first class of the year. But if I did not begin by laying out our main terms immediately, if I confined myself to proceeding slowly, step-
31 by-step, in order to suggest to you the need for such and such a term, what could I accomplish?

If I did not immediately provide you with what I call the graph [of desire], I would have to provide you with it little by little as I did last year, and this would make it all the more obscure. This is why I decided to begin with it directly. Which is not to say that, by doing so, I have made your task easier.

To ease your task, I would now like to give you a little illustration, taken from the simplest level, since what is involved are the relations between the subject and the signifier. The least one can expect, and the first thing one can expect, from a schema is to see what purpose it can serve with respect to commutation.

I recalled an anecdote I had once read in Darwin's book, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, which, I must say, amused me quite a bit. Darwin recounts that at a soirée he heard a man named Sydney Smith, who was, I assume, a high-society Englishman of Darwin's time, come out quite placidly with the following sentence: "I hear that dear old Lady Cork has been overlooked."*

Etymologically speaking, "to be overlooked"* means that one has not been noticed, that one has been neglected or forgotten – by an overseer, for example. Literally, someone's eye passed over you. The verb "to overlook"* is commonly used in English, but there is no corresponding expression in French. This is why languages are so useful and so harmful at the same time; they allow you to avoid making an effort, to avoid carrying out in French the substitution of signifiers thanks to which we might manage to target a certain signified; for we would have to change the entire context in order to obtain the same effect.

Darwin marvels at the fact that the quip was perfectly clear to everyone present. In fact, no one there had the slightest doubt that it meant that the Devil had overlooked the dear old lady and had forgotten to carry her off to the tomb, which seems to have been at that time, in the minds of his audience, her natural place, even the place they wished she would occupy. Darwin raises a question about this but leaves the question unanswered. "What did Sydney Smith do in order to have this effect?" he asks himself more or less, and opines, 32
"I truly can't say."

We should appreciate the fact that he highlights, in an especially significant and exemplary way, that he experienced his own limits in broaching this question. Since Darwin had broached the problem of the emotions in a certain way, he could have said that the expression of the emotions was nevertheless involved here because the subject did not manifest any emotion – because he said it "placidly"* – but that would perhaps have been taking things a bit far. In any case, Darwin does not say that. He was truly astonished by the fact he relates, and we must take him literally, because, as always when we study a case, we must not reduce it by rendering it vague. Everyone understood that the guy was talking about the Devil, Darwin says, whereas the Devil was nowhere to be found in what he said. And this is what is interesting: the fact that Darwin tells us that the Devil's shudder was felt by all those assembled there.

Let us now try to understand this a bit. I will not dwell on Darwin's intellectual limitations – we will inevitably come to them, but not right away. What is clear is that there is, right from the outset, something along the lines of knowledge here, and this is what is striking. There is no need to posit the principle of metaphorical effects – that is, the substitution of one signifier for another – nor to require Darwin to have had some inkling of it, to immediately realize that the effect of Smith's statement stemmed first and foremost from the fact that he did not say what was expected.

A sentence that begins with "Lady Cork" should usually end with "ill."* [We would usually expect to hear something like,] "I hear she is not well." It seems, in fact, that everyone was expecting news concerning the old lady's health, for, when people talk about old ladies, it is always their health that is foremost in their minds at the outset. A substitution thus took place here: the expected news was replaced by something else, which was, in certain ways, irreverent. Smith did not say that she was on death's doorstep, nor did he say that she was quite well; he said that she had been forgotten.

What then came into play to produce this metaphorical effect? If the word "overlooked"* had been expected, there would have been no such effect. It is inasmuch as it was not expected, but was 33

rather put in the place of another signifier, that a new signified was produced. It was neither along the lines of what was expected, nor of what was unexpected. This unexpected thing was not characterized as unexpected, but it was something original that had to be created in the minds of all of those present in accordance with their own ways of thinking. In any case, a new signified arose from something that made it such that, for example, Sydney Smith came across in his circle as a witty man – in other words, as someone who did not express himself in clichés.

But why the Devil? It will help us a great deal to look at our little schema. If we create schemas, it is in order to use them. We could arrive at the same result without it, but the schema guides us and shows us what is really [*réel*] happening. What is rendered present here is, strictly speaking, a fantasy.

And by what mechanisms? It is here that the schema allows us to go further than the naive notion, I would say, that things are designed to express something that wants to be communicated, an emotion, as they say, as if emotions did not pose in and of themselves plenty of other problems – namely, what they are, assuming they do not already need to be communicated.

Our speaker was perfectly placid, we are told. In other words, he presented himself in some sense in a pure state, the presence of his speech being a pure metonymic effect, I mean his speech qua speech in the continuity of speech. And in this continuity he conjured up the following: the presence of death insofar as a subject can or cannot escape it.

Stated differently, he conjured up the presence of something that is closely tied to the coming into the world of the signifier itself. In effect, if there is a dimension in which death (or the fact that there is no longer any death) can be both directly conjured up and at the same time veiled (but is, in any case, incarnated), in which death can become immanent in an act, it is certainly that of signifying articulation.

It is clear that this subject who spoke so easily of death did not wish Lady Cork especially well. But, on the other hand, the perfect placidity with which he spoke of her implies that, in this regard, he had dominated his desire, insofar as his desire could express itself as
34 in *Volpone* where we find the lovely formulation, "Die, and stink"! Sydney Smith did not say that; he simply and serenely articulated that the fate that awaits each of us in turn had been forgotten for a moment. But this was not the Devil, if I may put it thus, it was death, and it would come one day or another. Simultaneously, this character presented himself as someone who was not afraid of comparing himself with the lady about whom he was speaking, not

afraid to place himself at the same level, subject to the same flaw, and thus to the same final equalization by the absolute master [i.e., death] that he rendered present to mind here.

In other words, in his full command of the language, he revealed himself as having a sort of familiarity with what is veiled in language. This suggests something on which I want to end class today, which was missing in everything I said in my discussion of the three stages, and it will complete the mainspring of what I wanted to formulate for you.

In the first schema, we have the innocent image of the subject. He is unconscious of course, but it is an unconsciousness that is just waiting to be [or: is itching to be, *ne demande qu'à*] transformed into knowledge. Let us not forget that the Latin term *scire* is present in "unconsciousness" [*inconscience*], and that even in French *avoir conscience* [to be aware] implies the notion of knowledge.

In the next two stages, we have, as I told you, a far more conscious use of knowledge; the subject knows how to speak and he speaks; this is what he does when he calls on the Other. It is nevertheless here that we find the originality of the field that Freud discovered, which he calls the unconscious.

There is, in fact, something in this Other that always places the subject at a certain distance from his being, and which makes it such that he can never join up with that being, can never reach it except in "the metonymy of being" in the subject that is known as desire. Why is that? Because at the level at which the subject is himself caught up in speech, and thereby in a relationship with the Other as the locus of speech, there is a signifier that is always missing. Why? Because it is the signifier that is specifically assigned to the relationship between the subject and the signifier [or: signifying system, *le signifiant*]. This signifier has a name; it is the phallus.

Desire is the metonymy of being in the subject; the phallus is the metonymy of the subject in being. We will come back to this. The phallus is the signifying element that is subtracted from the chain of speech, insofar as speech is involved in any and every relationship 35
with the Other. This is the ultimate principle which is such that the subject, inasmuch as he is caught up in speech, falls under the sway of what has been conceptualized under the heading of the "castration complex," with all its clinical consequences.

What is suggested by any type of usage – I would not say pure, but perhaps rather impure – of "the tribe's words"? Every type of metaphorical inauguration, assuming it is audacious, defies what language always veils. What it always veils is, in the final analysis, death. This always tends to bring out the enigmatic figure of the missing signifier: the phallus. It is the phallus that appears here, and

as always, in a diabolical form, as it is called – ear, skin, even the phallus itself.

The phenomenon is inscribed here, of course, in the tradition of English wit, which, although restrained, nevertheless dissimulates a violent desire. But metaphorical usage suffices, in and of itself, to make the image of the subject, insofar as he is marked by his relation to the special signifier known as prohibition, appear in the imaginary – that is, in the other who is there as a spectator: little *a*.

In this case, Sidney Smith violated a prohibition, for one simply does not speak of old ladies in this manner. He revealed what lies beyond the prohibitions that constitute the law of language. Wishing to speak as placidly as possible, he nevertheless made the Devil appear. So much so that dear old Darwin wondered, 'How the *devil* did he do that?'

I will leave it at that for today.

Next time, we will once again take up a dream found in Freud's work, and we will try to apply our analytic methods to it. This will simultaneously allow us to situate different modes of interpretation.

November 12, 1958

II

37

FURTHER EXPLANATION

Two levels and four processes
Continuity and fragmentation
The two *I*'s
What does "I desire you" mean?
From the first to the second topography

I will first lay out the limits of what I would like to do in class today.

I will thus enunciate what I mean to show you by taking up the example of the interpretation of a dream, as well as the use of what we have, for some time now, been conventionally calling the graph [of desire].

As I do not wish to discuss things in a way that goes over your heads, if I dare express myself thus, I would like it if a certain communication, as they say, could be established through this discussion. I did not fail to receive echoes of the difficulties that some of you, even many of you, had last time when faced with the repositioning of this graph, even though the graph is far from being new to all of you.

We constructed this graph together last year, and perfected it progressively. You watched it come together to answer the needs of a certain formulation centered around what I called "unconscious formations." The fact that its usage is not yet unequivocal to you, as some have remarked, is not surprising, since a part of what I shall have to explain this year about desire will show you its utility and will simultaneously teach you how to use it.

Our first order of business is thus to understand it. This is precisely what seems to have been difficult for some here, to different degrees, perhaps less than they let on. I would like you to note that the term "understanding" [*compréhension*] – I assure you that I am not being ironic here – is problematic. If there are among you some who always understand, in every situation and at all times, I

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congratulate and envy them. Even after twenty-five years of practice, that is not the case for me.

The term "understanding" truly shows us the dangers it brings with it. In all understanding there is a danger of illusion, to such a degree that the point is not so much to understand what I am doing as to know what I am doing. They are not always the same thing. They cannot be confused, and you will see that there are internal reasons for not confusing them. You can, in certain cases, know what you are doing and where you are at, without always understanding what is at stake, at least not immediately.

To pique your interest, I will say that I think I can today, if I have enough time, begin to show you how this graph, and this graph alone, I believe – or something analogous, for we must not become too attached to how it is clothed – can eminently help you distinguish three things that you all too frequently confuse to the point of slipping carelessly from one to the other: the repressed, desire, and the unconscious, to simply take up the way Freud defines them.

The graph is designed to help us map things. Before applying it, let me reconstruct it step by step so that, at least, what is represented by what I call the two levels will no longer be in doubt.

The difficulty for many of you has to do with the fact that these two levels do not correspond to anything that is usually presented to you as what I might call the architecture of the upper and lower functions: the functions of synthesis and of automatisms. It is precisely because you do not find these architectonics therein that the two levels confuse you. I am therefore going to try to reformulate them for you.

It seems that what is especially difficult to some of you is the second level [*étage*] of the construction, which is not necessarily a second stage [*étape*] – "level" being abstractly defined because, as this graph is a discourse, one cannot say everything at the same time.

I will thus take things up anew.

39

1

What is my goal in constructing this graph? To show the relations between the speaking subject and the signifier, relations that are essential to us insofar as we are psychoanalysts.

In the final analysis, the question around which these two levels are divided is the same for the speaking subject as it is for us. This is a good sign. I was just saying, "Do we know what we are doing?" Does the subject himself know what he is doing when he speaks? This means, "Can he, in fact, signify his own signifying action to

himself?" It is around this very question that the two levels can be differentiated.

As this seems to have escaped some of you, I will tell you immediately that we must view the two levels as functioning at the same time in even the slightest speech act. And you will see what I mean by "speech act" [*acte de parole*] and how far I take this term.

What I will tell you is something that I had the opportunity to formulate for one of you to whom I gave a bit of additional explanation after the last class. I am mentioning this because my interlocutor indicated that it included something he had not perceived at the time.

Namely, how to think about the processes that occur in the subject insofar as the signifier is involved in his activity. The processes in question begin simultaneously at four different points: Δ, A, D, and *X*. These points are, respectively – and you will see what underpins my exposé today – the subject's intention, the subject qua speaking I, the act of demanding, and *X*, which we will give a certain name later and which I will leave unspecified for the time being.

The processes are thus simultaneous in the four trajectories, D→S, Δ→I, A→*s*(A), and the trajectory of the upper line [D'→S'

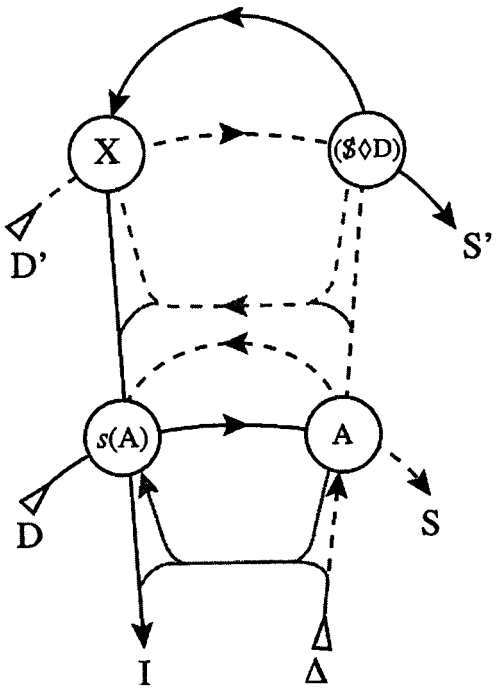

Figure 2.1: The simultaneity of the four trajectories

or possibly ($◊D)→X]. I believe that this should now be sufficiently clear.

If these two levels exist, it is because the subject does something that is related to the signifier's predominant action or structure.

40 Let us begin by detailing what happens at the lower level. Here the subject receives, or is submitted to, this structure. This is especially apparent and illustrated – not uniquely, but especially – in the context of demand.

Pay close attention to what I am saying here, for it is not in the least bit improvised. Those who are taking notes have the right idea. The fact that it is especially illustrated [in the context of demand] is such that it is especially comprehensible, but at the same time it can be such that you do not see it in all its generality, which leads to a certain amount of incomprehension. You should get it into your heads right away that it is dangerous to think you understand.

At the lower level of the graph we find a line that represents the intentionality of the subject, the intentionality of what we assume the subject to be. The subject in question has not yet become a speaking subject; he is the subject about whom people speak. I would even say that he is the one people have always spoken about up until now, for I do not believe that anyone has ever truly and

41 clearly made the distinction that I am trying to make here between the subject and the speaking subject. To put it in a nutshell, [the former] is the subject of knowledge, a subject who is correlated with the object and around whom the eternal question of idealism revolves, he himself being an ideal subject.

This subject has always been problematic in some way, since after all, as people have remarked and as his name indicates, he is merely supposed [to exist]. This is not true of the subject who speaks, for he forces us to take notice of him.

In the context of demand, what is involved is the first state – a state without form, so to speak – of our subject, of he whose conditions of existence we are trying to spell out by means of the graph. Here the subject is no more than the subject of need. He expresses need in his demand. This is my precise point of departure.

It follows that the subject's need is profoundly modified by the fact of having to be expressed in demand, passing thus through the defiles of the signifier. Without going any further into this point, because I assume we all agree on it, I simply want to point out what happens owing to the exchange that occurs between the unconstituted, primitive position of the subject of need and the structural conditions that are imposed by the signifier.

You see in the schema that the line of demand, D→S, is continuous [it is a solid, not a dotted, line] until it arrives at A, whereas

beyond A it is fragmented. Inversely, the part of the line that precedes $s(A)$, the line that represents the subject's intentionality here [running from Δ to A to $s(A)$], is fragmented, and it only becomes continuous afterward – that is, in the segment $s(A) \rightarrow I$. Let us even provisionally say – for I will have to emphasize this later on – that it is continuous in that segment insofar as we do not have to take into account the line $A \rightarrow m \rightarrow i(a) \rightarrow s(A)$ [see Figure 1.4].

Why is this so? I will tell you why briefly, because I must not talk endlessly about the graph, and because we will have occasion to return to it.

Let us begin by investigating what is represented by the continuity of the line $D \rightarrow S$ up to point A.

Capital A is, as you know, the locus of the code, the locus in which the treasure trove of language in its synchrony resides, I mean the sum total of the taxiematic elements without which beings who are subject to the conditions of language have no means by which to communicate. The continuity of the line $D \rightarrow S$ up to point A represents the synchrony of the systematic organization of language. 42
Synchronically, it [A] is posited as a system or set in which each element has its own value insofar as it is distinct from the other elements of the system – that is, from the other signifiers. This is the mainspring of everything I say about communication. What is always forgotten in theories of communication is that what is communicated is not the sign of something else; it is simply the sign of what [or: of the fact that, *de ce que*], in its place, another signifier is not.

It is on the basis of the solidarity of this synchronic system, insofar as it resides in the locus of the code, that the discourse of demand takes on its solidity prior to arriving at the code. Stated otherwise, we see in diachrony – in other words, in the unfolding of this discourse – what is known as the minimum duration necessary for the satisfaction of the slightest goal (even what is known as "magical satisfaction") – namely, the time it takes to speak [*le temps de parler*].

Since the discourse of demand is composed of signifiers, the line that represents it *should* appear here in the fragmented form in which we see it subsist – namely, in the form of a succession of discrete elements, which are thus separated by intervals. If it is nevertheless continuous here, it is owing to the synchronic solidarity of the code from which the succession of elements is borrowed. Continuity expresses the solidity of diachronic assertion, in the constitution of what is called the time it takes to formulate something, the time it takes for demand to be articulated. This is why, prior to or shy of the code, the line of demand is presented here as continuous.

Why, then, is the line that represents the subject's intentionality fragmented here? [Lacan is presumably pointing to the dotted line running from Δ to A to *s*(A).]

Let us note that the context of demand, in and of itself, simplifies the supposed diversity of the subject – in other words, the moments and variations of this point [Δ], which presents itself as essentially shifting [*mouvant*]. The problem of the continuity of the subject has, as you know, been apparent to psychologists for a long time. How can a being, who is essentially given over to what one might call fluctuations [*intermittences*] – not merely those of the heart, as some have said, but of many other things – establish himself and assert himself as an ego? This is the problem at hand. Now, putting a need
43 into play in demand is already something that assuredly simplifies the subject with respect to the more or less chaotic and random interferences of the different needs among themselves.

If, nevertheless, the first part of the line Δ→I, namely, the part up until *s*(A), appears in a fragmented form, it is because it represents the retroactive effect of the form of discourse's discrete elements on this shifting [*mouvance*]; the latter is both continuous and discontinuous, and assuredly confused, and we must assume it to be that of the primitive manifestation of needs [or: of (pre)disposition, *de la tendance*]. Discursivity is retroactively imposed on need, which is thereby subjected to its form. This is why the line appears in a fragmented form shy, not of the code, but of the message.

What happens beyond the message [*s*(A)]? I have underscored it at other times, so I can cover it quickly here. It is the following: the subject identifies with the Other to whom his demand is addressed [*l'Autre de la demande*], insofar as this Other is omnipotent. I do not think that I need to go back over the topic of omnipotence, which is sometimes attributed by psychoanalysts to thought and sometimes to speech. The fact remains that we see here, as I have often pointed out, how wrongheaded it is to attribute omnipotence to the subject; we can see here the depreciative stance that psychologists get into the habit of adopting, inasmuch as they are always more or less pedantic, in the original sense of the term. For the omnipotence in question here is that of the Other, insofar as the Other quite simply has the sum total of signifiers at his disposal.

To show you that by articulating things in this way we are not moving away from concrete experience, I will expressly point them out in development, and more precisely in language acquisition, which lies at the heart of mother–child relations.

Capital I – at which the segment that begins from *s*(A), the signified of A, arrives – is what primary identification is based on. Edward Glover conceptualized this as the first nucleus of the formation of

the ego. This process leads to the nucleus of identification because the mother is not simply the person who offers the breast [*sein*]; she is also the one who gives the seal [*seing*] of signifying articulation. This is not due simply to the fact that she speaks to her child, for it is quite clear that she speaks to him well before she can assume that he understands what she is saying, just as he understands some of what 44
she is saying long before she thinks he does. In effect, before properly linguistic exchange occurs, all sorts of games – hiding games, for example, that so quickly make children smile or laugh – already involve symbolic action, strictly speaking.

While playing these games, what a mother reveals to her child is the function of symbols qua revealing. In making something disappear and reappear – his own face, for example, by covering and then uncovering the child's face – she reveals the revealing function to him. It is already a function raised to the second power.

It is here that the first identifications occur with what people call the mother as omnipotent.

As you can see, this has a very different scope than the pure and simple satisfaction of need.

Let us turn now to the second level of the graph, my presentation of which last time seems to have created a bit of difficulty for some of you.

2

At the second level of the graph, the subject is something other than a subject who passes through the defiles of signifying articulation. It is the subject who begins to speak – that is, the subject qua *I*.

I must, nevertheless, stop before providing a specific formulation in order to add an essential proviso. After all, I would not be dwelling on this *I*, for it is not our concern today, if I had not alluded, in previous work, to the *I* in "I am thinking, therefore I am." This is merely a parenthetical remark.

All the difficulties that have arisen regarding the *I* have concerned this "I am thinking, therefore I am." But this is said to be pointless, because the *I* was unjustifiably introduced into what is after all merely a *cogitatum* – that is, an "it [*ça*] is thinking." Why then would I be *I* in that?

I believe that all the difficulties that have been pointed out here stem from a failure to distinguish between two subjects in the way that I first formulated the distinction between them. In the experience that philosophy invites us to consider, people refer, more or 45
less wrongly, to the fact that the subject is faced with an object, an

imaginary object, consequently; it should come as no surprise that the *I* turns out to be but one object among others. If, on the contrary, we take up the question at the level of the subject defined as speaking, it takes on a totally different import, as phenomenology shows us and as I will simply indicate now. For those who would like to read something about the *I* of the *cogito*, let me remind you that there is an article I have already mentioned by Sartre in the journal *Recherches philosophiques*.

The *I* involved in the *cogito* is not simply the *I* that is articulated in discourse, the *I* insofar as it is pronounced in discourse, and that linguists have, at least for some time now, been calling a "shifter." The *I* of the *cogito* is a semanteme whose only articulable use depends on the code, I mean that it purely and simply depends on the lexically articulable code. On the other hand, the shifter *I*, as the most basic experience shows, is related to nothing that can be defined as a function of other elements of the code, thus to a semanteme, but is simply defined as a function of the messaging act. It designates he who underpins the message – namely, someone who varies from one moment to the next.

That's all there is to it. But let us note that the upshot is that the shifter *I* is essentially distinct from what one might call the true subject of the act of speaking as such, as I will show you quite quickly. It is even what gives the simplest *I* discourse the appearance of indirect discourse. I mean that this *I* could rather easily be followed in discourse itself with a parenthesis: "I (who am speaking)" or "I (am saying that . . .)."

This is made quite clear, as others before me have noted, by the fact that a discourse that formulates "I am saying that . . .," and adds, "and I am repeating," is not saying something devoid of value with the second clause, for it is distinguishing between the two *I*'s that are in question: "the one who said that . . .," and the one who endorses what the latter said. If you need other examples to grasp this, I would propose the difference between the *I* in "I love you" and the one in "I am here."

Owing to the structure that I am evoking, the *I* in question is especially tangible where it is fully hidden, that is, in forms of discourse that realize what I will call the vocative function – namely, the forms whose signifying structure brings out the fact that the addressee is absolutely not *I*. It is the *I* of "Rise and walk" [Luke 5:23].

This same fundamental *I* can be found in any imperative vocative form and in a certain number of other forms, too, that I will provisionally place under the heading of vocative. It is, if you will, the vocative *I* about which I spoke to you already in my Seminar on Schreber [Seminar III]. I am not sure I was able to bring it out fully at that time.

There is also an *I* that underlies the sentence "You are the one who will follow me" [*Tu es celui qui me suivras*] which I emphasized in that Seminar. It is inscribed, with the whole problem of a certain future tense, in vocatives, strictly speaking, vocatives of vocation. For those who were not here at that time, let me recall the difference we find in French – it is a subtlety that not every language allows us to bring out – between *Tu es celui qui me suivras* and *Tu es celui qui me suivra* without an *s* [both mean "You are the one who will follow me"]. In this case, the difference in the performative power of the "you" is in fact an actual difference of the *I* insofar as it is involved in this act of speaking. We see clearly here that the subject always receives his own message in an inverted form – namely, that it is the *I* that must own itself here via the form it gives to the "you."

This discourse – in other words, the discourse that is formulated at the second level – is a discourse with which we have always been familiar. Every discourse is the Other's discourse, even when it is the subject who speaks it. In this regard, the distinction between the two levels is merely arbitrary.

Nevertheless, what we find at the second level is fundamentally a call for being [*un appel de l'être*], which is made with more or less force. It always more or less contains a "So be it!" ["*Soit!*"], and we have here yet another of the marvelous homophonic equivocations for which French allows. In other words, it contains a "*Fiat*" which is the source and root of what, in need, comes to be inscribed for speaking beings in the register of wanting [*vouloir*]. Or, stated otherwise, it is the root of the *I* insofar as the latter splits into the two terms that we are examining here: the one in the imperative "Rise and walk" and the other in the erection by the subject of his own *I*.

You can now see at what level the question that I articulated last 47
time in the form "*Che vuoi?*" is situated. "*Che vuoi?*" is, as it were, the Other's response to the subject's act of speaking. This question responds – indeed, I would say that questions always respond. This response prior to the question responds to the question – that is, to the redoubtable question mark whose very form in my schema articulates the act of speaking.

The act of speaking goes much further than the speech of the subject alone, since his whole life is taken up in acts of speaking. His life as such – namely, all his actions – are symbolic actions if only because they are recorded, because they are subject to recording, and because they are often actions designed to be taken note of. Like everything that happens before the examining magistrate, everything the subject does can be held against him. All his actions are imposed upon him in a language context, and his very gestures

are never anything but gestures chosen in a pre-established ritual, namely in a linguistic articulation. To the question, "Does he know what he is doing?" Freud answers "No." This is exactly what is expressed by the second level of my graph. The latter takes on its value only on the basis of the Other's question, "*Che vuoi?*": "What do you want?"

Prior to the moment at which the question is asked, we are mired in ignorance and stupidity. I am trying to show here that didacticism does not necessarily involve stupidity. I obviously cannot demonstrate this on the basis of those of you who are present here.

With regard to this question and in the responses given to it, the second level of the schema spells out where the following intersect anew: the true discourse offered up by the subject, on the one hand, and what is manifested in the guise of wanting [*vouloir*] in the articulation of speech, on the other hand. Where are these intersections located? Therein lies the whole mystery of the symbol that seems opaque to some of you.

The discourse that presents itself at this level as a call for being is not what it seems to be, as Freud tells us. This is what the second
48 level of the graph tries to show us. I can only be surprised if you did not immediately recognize this.

What did Freud actually say? What do we, insofar as we are psychoanalysts, do every day? We bring out the fact that at the level of speech acts, the code is given, not by primitive demand, but by a certain relationship between the subject and this demand, insofar as the subject remains marked by manifestations [*avatars*] of this demand. We call these the oral, anal, and other forms of unconscious articulation.

The first point of intersection [($◊D)] thus does not seem to me to raise many objections. We take quite simply as a premise that the second level, the code of discourse, which is being's true discourse, corresponds to the formula ($◊D) – the subject, qua marked by the signifier, in the presence of his demand as providing the material [for it].

What can we say now regarding the message the subject receives?

I have alluded to this message several times; I have given it several forms, all of which are more or less slippery, and this is no accident, for the whole aim of analysis is to figure out what it is. For the time being, at this point in my discourse, I can still leave it in a problematic state and symbolize it with a presumed signifier. It is a purely hypothetical form, an x. It is one of the Other's signifiers, of course, since it is at the level of the Other that the question is raised; it is the signifier of an Other who is missing a part – namely, who is missing the problematic element in the question about this message.

Let me summarize. The subject's situation at the level of the unconscious, such as Freud articulates it – and it is not me but rather Freud who says this – is that he does not know with what he is speaking. We must thus reveal to him the properly signifying elements of his discourse. Nor does he know the message that really comes back to him at the level of being's discourse [*du discours de l'être*] – let us say "truly," if you prefer, but I will not take back "really."

In other words, the subject does not know the message that comes back to him from the response to his demand in the field of what he wants. But you already know the answer, the true response. There can only be one. Namely, the signifier, and nothing but it, that is especially designed to designate the relations between the subject 49
and the signifier [or: signifying system as a whole, *le signifiant*]. This signifier is the phallus, and I have already told you why.

I ask those who are hearing this for the first time to accept it provisionally. This is not the point; the point is that the subject cannot have the answer [*réponse*], because the only answer is the signifier that designates his relations with the signifier. The subject annihilates himself and disappears to the degree that he articulates this answer. This is what makes it such that the only thing he can sense about it is a threat directly targeting the phallus – namely, castration, or the notion of the lack of the phallus, which is what the termination of analysis revolves around in both sexes, as Freud formulated it and as I am pointing out. But my goal is not to repeat such elementary truths.

I know that it gets on some people's nerves that I have been juggling being and having a little too much for a while, but they will get over it. For it does not mean that along the way we cannot harvest something precious, a clinical harvest – a harvest that can even allow people who follow my work to present themselves with all the characteristics of what I would call medical charlatanism.

What we must do now is situate what desire means.

As I have said, the second level of the graph, like the lower level, involves a synchronic treasure trove or battery of unconscious signifiers for each subject, and a message in which the response to "*Che vuoi?*" is announced. As you may have noticed, the latter is announced dangerously. I will mention this, too, in passing – just to evoke in you colorful memories of what makes the story of Abelard and Heloise the most beautiful love story.

What does desire mean? Where is it situated? In the complete form of the graph you have a dotted line that runs from the code, at the second level, to its message via two elements: *d*, which signifies the place where the subject descends [or: gets off or dismounts, *descend*], and $ across from little *a*, which signifies fantasy [see Figure 1.4].

This has a homologous layout to the line that, starting from A, includes the ego in discourse – the *m* on the schema, let us call it the "filled-out" person – and the image of the other, *i(a)*. Symbolization
50 of the specular relationship [between *m* and *i(a)*] is, as I told you, fundamental to the establishing of the ego.

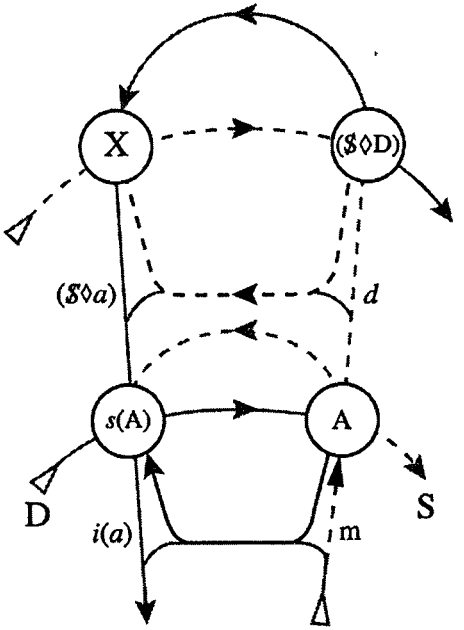

Figure 2.2: The homology between the two relationships

The homological relationship between the two levels warrants fuller discussion. I will not provide it today, not because I do not have time, for I am inclined to take my time to tell you what I have to tell you, but because I prefer to approach things in an indirect manner.

This is what seems to me to be most likely to get you to grasp its scope.

3

You undoubtedly can now guess at the riches that stem from the fact that an imaginary relationship is inscribed in the field of the determinant gap between the two discourses, an imaginary relationship that homologically reproduces the relationship with the other involved in the game of bearing [between *m* and *i(a)*].

You may have some inkling of it, but it is altogether insufficient 51
to have such an inkling. Before articulating it fully, I would simply like to get you to dwell for a moment on what is implied by the term that is situated or planted in this economy: "desire."

As you know, Freud introduced this term at the very beginning of psychoanalysis. He introduced it regarding dreams in the form of *Wunsch*. *Wunsch* is not, in and of itself, desire; it is a formulated or articulated desire – in other words, it is rightfully laid out on this line. What I would like you to ponder momentarily is the distinction between *Wunsch* and what deserves to be called "desire" in what I am introducing and establishing this year.

You have undoubtedly read *The Interpretation of Dreams* and we are going to begin to talk about it now. Just as last year we began by talking about *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, this year we will begin by talking about dreams.

You must have noticed right from the outset, and all the way to the end of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, that you do not find desire in it in the form in which, I would say, you constantly deal with it in your analytic experience – namely, in the form in which it gives you a hard time owing to its excesses, deviations, and (why not say it after all?) all-too-frequent failings. I am referring to sexual desire, the desire that plays tricks. We should nevertheless note that, for some time now, a quite remarkable placing of sexual desire in the shadows has been occurring in the entire analytic field. You should thus note the difference [between Freud's work and others']. Assuming that you read *The Interpretation of Dreams* carefully, in other words, that you do not continue to think about your own little problems while your eyes scan its pages, you perceive that it is very difficult to grasp the desire that we are supposed to find everywhere in every dream.

Recall the "inaugural dream," that of Irma's injection, about which we have already spoken a number of times, about which I have written a little and will write more, and about which we could talk inordinately. What exactly does it mean? This remains very unclear.

In the desire in the dream, Freud wants to make Irma give in; he wants her to no longer, as he tells us, stubbornly reject his interpretations. What does he want? Does he want to undress her? Does he want to get her to talk? Does he want to discredit his colleagues? 52
Does he want to force his own anxiety out of hiding to so great an extent as to see it projected onto Irma's throat? Or does he want to calm his anxiety regarding the harm he did to Irma? But this harm is, it seems, irremediable, as is clearly articulated in the dream. Is this what is at stake, to prove that no crime was committed? This would not stop us from saying that, since no crime was committed,

everything will be fine, since everything has been repaired; and, moreover, all of this is due to the fact that certain people take incredible liberties, that someone else is responsible, and so on and so forth. We could go exceedingly far with all of that.

Let me point out, moreover, that Freud himself energetically underscores in a footnote in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, added in the seventh edition, that he never said that the desire at work in a dream is always a sexual desire. He did not say the opposite of that either, but in any case he did not say that; he writes this to respond to those who reproached him for it.

But let us not be fooled by this. Sexuality is always involved in dreams to some degree. But it is involved in some sense tangentially or in some roundabout way. We want to discover why, but to discover why I want to dwell for a moment on obvious things we know from the usage and employment of language.

What does it mean when a man says to someone – to a man or to a woman, we have to choose, for if it is a man, that will perhaps entail a number of contextual references – what does it mean when a man says to a woman, "I desire you"? Does it mean, as the moralizing optimism with which you see me doing battle from time to time in psychoanalytic theory would have it, "I am ready to grant your being as many, if not more rights than my own; I am willing to provide for all your needs and think about your satisfaction? Lord, thy will be done before my own"? It suffices to mention this to make you smile, as I see people doing around the room. Moreover, when one chooses the right words, no one is fooled by the aim of a term like this one [i.e., "desire"], as genital as that aim may be.

53 Another possible statement is the following; let us say, to use the crudest, most direct terms, "I want to sleep with you, I want to fuck you." It is much truer, we must admit. But is it as true as all that? It is true in a certain context, a social context, I would say. After all, given the extreme difficulty we have following through on the formulation "I desire you," we can perhaps find nothing better to prove it.

Believe me, it perhaps suffices that such speech not be linked to the incommensurable quandaries and dish-breaking brought on by statements that *have* a meaning, and that it be pronounced only *in petto* [in private] for us to immediately grasp that, if "I desire you" has a meaning, it is a meaning that is much more difficult to formulate. "I desire you," articulated in one's own mind, so to speak, concerning an object, has more or less the meaning "You are beautiful," around which all those enigmatic images, whose flow is known in my book as desire, collect and condense. In other words, "I desire you because you are the object of my desire." Stated differently, "You are the common denominator of my desires."

God only knows – if I can bring God into the picture, and why not? – what desire stirs up in one. It is something that in reality mobilizes and orients something quite different in one's personality than that toward which, conventionally speaking, one's precise goal seems to be oriented. To refer to an infinitely less poetic experience perhaps, but it seems that one need not be an analyst to mention it, we cannot misrecognize how quickly and front and center the structure of fantasy emerges in connection with the slightest distortion of the personality, as they say, or of images.

The subject's involvement in desire always brings out this structure, and it is rightfully predominant. To tell someone, "I desire you," is to tell him, "I include you in my fundamental fantasy." But experience does not always show us this, except in the case of those nice, instructive little perverts, little and big.

Since I have decided this year not to go beyond a certain time limit during which I ask you to listen to me here, and I still hope to hold myself to that, I will leave it there, at a point that falls far short of where I thought I would stop today, and put an end to your travails for the time being.

I will conclude by designating the key or decisive point in fantasy 54
where desire must be interpreted, assuming the term "desire" has a different meaning than that of the wish in a dream.

This point is located here on the graph. You might say that it is part of the dotted circle that traces out a type of little tail at the second level. I would simply like to say, in order to whet your appetite a bit, that elements spin around this dotted circuit. It is constructed in this way because, once it is fueled [or: powered up, *alimenté*] by the beginning, it goes around inside indefinitely. What are these elements? They are the ones that have been repressed. In other words, it is the locus of the unconscious as such, as located on the graph. This and this alone is what Freud spoke about up until 1915, when he wrote two articles that are entitled "The Unconscious" and "Repression."

I will pick it up there the next time, to tell you to what extent Freud articulated the very substance of what I am trying to convey to you regarding the signifier. What Freud himself clearly and unambiguously formulated is that the only thing that can be repressed are signifying elements. This is found in Freud's work. The only thing missing there is the word "signifier." I will show you, by re-examining the article on the unconscious, that only signifiers can be repressed.

On the graph you see the two systems that are juxtaposed.

The dotted system, as I have said, is the locus of the unconscious, the one where the repressed goes around and around until it makes

itself felt – in other words, until some part of the message at the level of being's discourse [*discours de l'être*] upsets the message at the level of demand, which is the whole problem of psychoanalytic symptoms.

There is another dotted system. It is the one that paves the way for what I call the little landing – namely, the discovery of manifestations [*l'avatar*]. While we were already having so much trouble getting used to the first system [the first topography: conscious, preconscious, and unconscious], Freud made the fatal kind deed [*bienfait*] of taking the next step himself before his death by proffering the second topography [id, ego, and superego], which is the little landing I mentioned. He discovered the register of the other system.

In other words, Freud asked himself what happens at the level of the prediscursive subject as a function of the fact that the subject who speaks does not know what he is doing when he speaks – that is, as a function of the unconscious that Freud truly discovered. Let us say, if you will, to schematize things, that Freud sought to figure out at what level the ego is constituted with regard to the original place from which it speaks, and at what moment it is constituted with respect to an aim which is that of the endpoint of the process at I.

Freud also discovered a primitive discourse there, which is both purely imposed and marked by a fundamental arbitrariness, which continues to speak. It is the superego.

Nevertheless, he also left something undone. He left us something to discover and articulate, which completes his second topography and which allows us to resituate it in and restore it to the whole of his discovery. It is the fundamentally metaphorical function of language.

November 19, 1958

ON DESIRE IN DREAMS

III

THE DREAM ABOUT THE DEAD FATHER: "HE DID NOT KNOW HE WAS DEAD"

Taking being literally
From associationism to psychoanalysis
Affects and signifiers
Elision = metaphor
The instance of the half-dead

I will begin by keeping my promises.

Last time I mentioned an article by Sartre that is entitled "The Transcendence of the Ego: Outline of a Phenomenological Description." You can find it on pages 85–123 of volume 6 of the *Recherches philosophiques* [1936–37], an excellent journal that the war put an end to, as did the death of its publisher, Boivin. As for Freud's remark [also mentioned last time], it is found on page 397 [SE V] of his *Interpretation of Dreams*:

> The assertion that all dreams require a sexual interpretation, against which critics rage so incessantly, occurs nowhere in my *Interpretation of Dreams*. It is not to be found in any of the numerous editions of this book and is in obvious contradiction to other views expressed in it.

Many of you attended the clinical paper presented last night on the topic of obsessives by one of our comrades, who is an excellent psychoanalyst. You heard him speak about desire and demand. We are trying to highlight the difference in structure between desire and demand here because the distinction between them is not simply theoretical, but is linked to the crux of our practice and applies directly to clinical work, bringing it alive and rendering it, I would say, understandable.

I would almost say that, if you sense that there is something inadequate here, it is a sign of the fact that we have explored this

distinction too exclusively at the level of understanding. The level of understanding is far from exhausting the mainsprings of structure that we are trying to penetrate, because it is on structure that we are attempting to have an impact. The distinction between demand and desire immediately clarifies demand. But it truly locates human desire in its place – in other words, at its strictly enigmatic point.

The relationship between the subject and the signifier is key to all of this. What characterizes demand is not simply that it is a relationship between one subject and another subject; it is that this relationship is constituted by language as an intermediary – that is, by the signifier.

As promised, we will turn now to the topic of what desire is insofar as it is the bedrock of dreams. It is not easy to know what the desire that is the motor force of a dream is. At the very least you realize that it is twofold.

First of all, it initially aims at safeguarding sleep – Freud articulates this in the most explicit of terms – that is to say, at safeguarding the state in which reality is suspended for the subject. Secondly, it [*désir*] is a death wish [*désir de mort*]. It is a death wish by way of contrast [*d'autre part*], and at the same time it is a death wish in a perfectly compatible way, inasmuch as it is often by means of this second desire that the first is satisfied, the death wish being that by which the wishing subject [*sujet de la* Wunsch] is satisfied.

I would like to place this subject in brackets of some sort. We do not know what the subject is and yet we would like to know who the wishing subject in the dream is. When certain people say that he is the ego, they are mistaken – Freud assuredly asserts the opposite. And if we say that he is the unconscious, we are not saying anything. Thus when I say that the wishing subject is satisfied, I am bracketing the subject. The only thing Freud tells us is that there is a wish that is satisfied.

Satisfied by what? I would say that "it is satisfied by being." You should understand this in the sense of "by [coming into] being, it is satisfied." That is all we can say, for dreams do not bring with them any other satisfaction than satisfaction at the level of wishes – in other words, a verbal satisfaction, so to speak. The wish in a dream makes do with appearances. The character of this satisfaction is thus reflected in language, in this "satisfied by being" as I expressed myself a moment ago, in which the ambiguity of the word "being" shows through.

51 Being is there, it slips in everywhere, and it also takes on the grammatical form of referring to being, "satisfied being" [*l'être satisfait*]. Can this be broached from the perspective of substance? There is nothing substantial in being other than the word itself, "it is satisfied

by being." We can only broach being by taking it literally. In the final analysis, wishes are satisfied by something like being. All in all, it is only in dreams, at least at the level of being, that wishes can be satisfied.

Here I would like to provide a short preamble, as I often do, and take a look back in order to open your eyes to something that comprises no less than the whole history of psychological speculation.

1

As you know, modern psychology began with formulations involving psychological atomism.

You are all aware that we are no longer at that point, that we have abandoned associationism, as it is called, and that we have made considerable progress since we began taking into consideration the demand for totality, the unity of the field, intentionality, and other forces.

Yet the question is hardly settled, precisely because of Freudian psychoanalysis. People fail to see how this settling of accounts, which is not really one, actually played out. I mean that people completely overlook the essence, and simultaneously the persistence, of what was supposedly eliminated.

It is true that associationism, which belongs to the tradition of the British psychological school, initially involves a thorough misunderstanding, as it were.

The problem is that of the field of the real and of our psychological apprehension of it. What we in fact need to explain is not only that there are men who think, but that there are men who move around in the world while apprehending the field of objects in a more or less suitable way. Now, where does this field of objects get its fragmented, structured character from? From the signifying chain, quite simply. Associationism does nothing, in fact, but immediately provide the field of the real with the fragmented and structured character of the signifying chain. 62

Once this is realized, people naturally perceive that something has gone awry. They tell themselves that there must originally, as it were, be relations with the real that are less structured by the signifying chain, without even realizing that it is the signifier that is at work. People thus go off in search of cases in which our apprehension of the world seems to be more primitive, on the basis of a proportionalist notion of things. They look to animal psychology, they mention all the visual ways in which animals manage to structure their world, and they make this into the foundation of human apprehension of

the real. They thereby challenge the well-known elements of associationism for being based on a first and false conception of this apprehension of the real, they proceed to eliminate those elements, and they bury the whole thing in a sort of field theory in which the real appears to be animated by the vector of a primordial desire.

They then imagine that they have solved the problem, whereas, in fact, they have done nothing at all. They have described something else, another psychology, one that seeks to grasp the degree to which the subject's sensorimotor field is coapted to its *Umwelt* – that is, to its surroundings. Nevertheless, the elements of associationism live on perfectly well despite the establishment of this new psychology. Associationism is not in the least eliminated; the field that is targeted by psychology has simply been displaced.

The proof of this is found in the psychoanalytic field where all the principles of associationism reign supreme. Nothing thus far has managed to gloss over the fact that when we analysts began exploring the field of the unconscious, we did so on the basis of something that in theory is called "free association," and we continue to do so every day. Even though the term is approximate and inexact, the aim of free association remains valid for designating analytic discourse.

Consider the earliest experiments with word association. Even if they no longer have any therapeutic or practical value to us, they still orient us in our exploration of the field of the unconscious. This
63 alone suffices to show us that we operate in a field in which words or signifiers reign supreme.

What is associationism – and thus what comes after it related to the same experiential ground – based on? On the observation that elements, atoms, or ideas – as people say, no doubt approximately and insufficiently, but not for no reason – are coordinated at a certain level in a subject's mind. And what did the first experimental explorations of the phenomenon show? That it is conditioned by what people called relations of contiguity. Examine the texts to see what they talk about and what examples they are based on, and you will clearly see that this continuity is nothing but the discursive combination on which the effect that I call metonymy is based.

There is contiguity between two things that occur to us, inasmuch as they are evoked in memory at the level of the laws of association. A life event was experienced in a context that we can, overall, call a random context. One part of the event being evoked, the other part comes to mind. An association based on contiguity is thereby constituted, which is nothing other than an encounter. What does this mean? It means in short that the contiguity disintegrates [*elle se brise*], and that its elements are taken up in one and the same

narrative text. If we speak here of contiguity, it is inasmuch as the event evoked in memory is a narrated event, inasmuch as a narrative forms the text thereof.

There is, by way of contrast, the kind of contiguity that we see in an experiment involving word association, for example. One word brings another with it. I [the experimenter] say the word "cherry" and the subject mentions the word "table." It is a relationship based on contiguity because on such and such a day there were cherries on the table.

A relationship based on similarity is different from a relationship based on contiguity, but it is also a relationship between signifiers inasmuch as similarity involves the passage from one term [to another] owing to a similarity of being. There is a similarity between them insofar as, the one and the other being different, some existing subject [or: extant subject, *sujet d'être*] makes them similar. I am not going to enter into the entire dialectic of the same and the other, with everything that it brings with it that is difficult and infinitely richer than a first glance allows us to suspect. Those who are interested in it can read Plato's *Parmenides*. They will see that they can 64
spend quite a lot of time on it before exhausting the topic.

What I am simply saying here, and what I am trying to get you to sense, is that there are other usages than metonymic usages. If I speak of lips as being like cherries, I make a metaphorical use of the word "cherry." Someone says the word "lip" and it brings to my mind the word "cherry" – why are they linked? Because they are both red? Because they both have the same shape, analogically? Because they are similar owing to some attribute? No, not just that. Regardless of what is involved, we are immediately, and this is palpable, faced with an altogether substantial effect that is known as a metaphorical effect. When I speak of cherries with regard to lips in a word-association experiment, there is no ambiguity whatsoever – we are at the level of metaphor in the most substantial sense of the term. And at the most formal level, a metaphorical effect always comes down to an effect of substitution [of one term for another] in the signifying chain, as I have shown you.

If cherries come to mind here, it is inasmuch as they can be inscribed in a context, whether structural or not, in which lips figure. To which you could object that cherries might come to mind in relation to lips owing to the function of contiguity, it being possible that cherries disappear between the lips, or that a woman presented me with cherries while holding them with her lips. This is of course possible. It can happen. But what sort of contiguity is involved, if not the contiguity of the narrative I mentioned earlier?

From the vantage point of the real, we must not allow ourselves

to be deluded by the event in which this contiguity was integrated, which was such that a cherry was in fact momentarily in contact with the lips. What is important here is not that a cherry touch the lips but that it be swallowed. It is not that it be held with the lips, it is that it be offered to us via an erotic gesture. If we stop the cherry for an instant while it is in contact with the lips, it is as a function of a snapshot [flash*] that is provided by the narrative. What momentarily suspends the cherry between the lips is a sentence and words.

Inversely, it is because the dimension of narrative that can freeze the frame [flash*] exists that the image created by the suspension of the narrative in effect becomes, in this case, something that stimulates desire. It is the involvement of language in the act that sets the tone here. It is after the fact that language introduces into the act a stimulation or stimulating element that is related to the stopping of the narrative. This suspension, which at times comes to fuel the act itself, takes on the value of fantasy, which gives a specific meander [*détour*] of the act an erotic signification.

This, I believe, suffices to show you that the instance of the signifier is at the crux of the very structuring of a certain psychological field. It is not the totality of the field. It is a part of it, assuming that we conventionally call "psychology" a discipline constituted on the basis of what I will call an intentional or appetitive unitary theory. The fact remains that the presence of the signifier, as Freud never ceases to remind us, is articulated in an infinitely more insistent, powerful, and effective way in analytic experience.

We have an odd tendency to forget this. People would like psychoanalysis to go in the same direction as psychology did. They accept the unconscious only in the realm of a clinical force field. In this perspective, psychoanalysis is a type of well or drilling path, as it were, that runs parallel to the general development of psychology, which has supposedly given us access to elemental forces, to a field of depths reduced to the life functions, whereas what we see at the surface is thought to be the field of the conscious and the preconscious.

This is a mistake.

And it is precisely in this context that what we say takes on its value.

2

Did some of you follow my advice and reread the two articles by Freud that came out in 1915?

If you consult, for example, his article on the unconscious

[*Unbewusste*], the part that is most relevant to our topic, you will observe that what is at work [in the unconscious] is nothing other than signifying elements. When I speak here about the signifier, those who understand absolutely nothing unremittingly repeat that I am espousing an intellectualist theory, to which they naturally oppose affective life and dynamics. I am far from contesting the existence of the latter, since it is precisely in order to explain them 66
clearly that I am mentioning Freud's article on the *Unbewusste*. We will thus turn to a consideration of unconscious feelings, inasmuch as Freud mentions them.

In the third part of his article, Freud explains very clearly that the only thing that can, strictly speaking, be repressed is what he calls the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*. The German here means "representative of the representation." Of what? Of drive impulses, which he calls *Triebregungen* here, which we can even refer to more exactly as the units [*unité*] of drive motion.

Freud's text leaves absolutely no ambiguity on this score: we cannot consider the *Triebregungen* to be unconscious, nor can we consider them to be conscious. What does this mean? It means that what we call *Triebregung* must be taken as an objective concept. It is an objective unit because we look at it and it is neither conscious nor unconscious; it simply is what it is – namely, an isolated fragment of reality that we conceptualize as having its own active impact.

It is thus, in my view, all the more remarkable that what represents the *Triebregung* – namely, the "representative of (the) representation," this is the exact value of the German term, and it is the sole representative of the drive (*Trieb*) – is said by Freud to belong to the unconscious. Now, the latter implies the exact term that I wrote on the board earlier with a question mark next to it – namely, an unconscious subject.

You, of course, can already see *not* where I am heading with this, but where we will necessarily wind up. Whereas Freud, at his time, was at the stage at which things could be said in the form of scientific discourse, you must clearly sense that this *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* is strictly equivalent to the notion of the signifier, to the term "signifier."

I am merely announcing this to you, even if its demonstration strikes me as already quite advanced; if not, what was the point of everything I said to you earlier today? I will, naturally, demonstrate it to you more thoroughly, ever more thoroughly. The signifier is precisely what is at work here.

Freud, on the other hand, articulates in the most unmistakable way that none of what we connote with the terms sensation, feeling, and affect, which he lumps together, can be called unconscious

except when we express ourselves sloppily. Depending on the
67 context, such sloppiness, like all sloppiness, may or may not have disadvantages; but when it comes to theory he categorically denies such things any and all possibility of unconscious impact. This is expressed and repeated by Freud in a manner that can leave no doubt or ambiguity.

When we talk [sloppily] about an affect as being unconscious, we are implying that the affect is perceived but misrecognized. Misrecognized in what regard? In what it is connected with, but that does not make it unconscious, for it has nevertheless been perceived. It has simply, as Freud tells us, become connected to a different representation, one that is not repressed. Stated otherwise, the affect had to adapt to the context found in the preconscious; this allows the affect to be taken by consciousness – which in this case is not very exacting – to be a manifestation of this preconscious context. This is articulated by Freud, and not just once, but a hundred times; he reiterated it when discussing all kinds of different topics.

It is precisely here that we come upon the enigma of what is known as the transformation of affect; affect turns out to be incredibly plastic. Moreover, all psychoanalytic writers are struck by this as soon as they take up the topic of affect – in other words, every time their eyes alight on it, I mean insofar as they dare broach the topic. For, what is altogether striking is that someone like me, who apparently is developing an intellectualist form of psychoanalysis, is going to spend a whole year talking about it, whereas you can count on the fingers of one hand the small number of articles that have been devoted to the topic of affect in psychoanalysis – even though analysts talk about it constantly when they present a case, for naturally they always resort to affect.

To the best of my knowledge, there is but one worthwhile article on the topic of affect, an article by Glover, which is often mentioned in texts by Marjorie Brierley. Glover endeavors to take a step forward regarding the discovery of the notion of affect, Freud's discussions of the topic leaving a little something to be desired. Glover's article is, moreover, appalling, as is the whole of Brierley's book, which is devoted to what she calls *Trends in Psycho-Analysis*. It is a rather fine illustration of all the truly absurd places in which psychoanalysis is currently sticking its nose – morality, personology, and other eminently practical perspectives around which our era's blah blah blah loves to spin its wheels.

68 To return to the things that concern us, namely to serious things, what do we read in Freud's work? We read that, as regards affect, the problem is to figure out what becomes of it when it is disconnected from the repressed representation and no longer depends on

anything but the substitute representation to which it has managed to get connected. A possibility that is characteristic of it – that of being annexed by another representation – corresponds to this being "disconnected"; it is in this respect that affect presents itself in analytic experience as something problematic.

We see this, for example, in the hysteric's lived experience. Psychoanalysis began with this and this is where Freud set out from when he began to formulate analytic truths. We see affects arising in the ordinary, comprehensible, communicable text of hysterics' everyday lives, and the affects that are there – and that appear to be integrated into the whole text of their lives except to those with a more exacting gaze – are nevertheless the transformation of something else.

This something else is worth dwelling on, for it is not another affect which would supposedly be in the unconscious. Freud rules that out absolutely. It is absolutely nothing of the kind. There is absolutely nothing which is really in the unconscious at that moment. What is transformed is the purely quantitative factor of the drive. The "something else" is the quantitative factor in a transformed guise.

The point then is to figure out how such transformations are possible – namely, for example, how an affect which is in the depths, an affect about which we might conclude that it corresponds to such and such in the unconscious text, can present itself in another guise in the preconscious context.

What does Freud tell us? A first citation: "The whole difference arises from the fact that ideas [*Vorstellungen*] are cathexes – basically of memory-traces – whilst affects and emotions correspond to processes of discharge, the final manifestations of which are perceived as feelings" [SE XIV, p. 178]. This is the rule of affect formation.

As I told you, affect refers to a quantitative factor. By that Freud means that it is not simply changeable and mobile, but that it is subjected to the variable constituted by this factor. He articulates this precisely by saying that the vicissitude of an affect may be threefold: "Either the affect remains, wholly or in part, as it is; or it is transformed into a qualitatively different quota of affect, above 69
all into anxiety" – this is what he writes in 1915, and we see here the outlines of the position he articulates in 1926 in *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety* in the context of the second topography – "or it is suppressed, i.e., it is prevented from developing at all" [SE XIV, p. 178].

"In comparison with unconscious ideas," Freud writes, "there is the important difference that unconscious ideas continue to exist after repression as actual structures in the system *Ucs.*, whereas all

that corresponds in that system to unconscious affects is a potential beginning which is prevented from developing" [SE XIV, p. 178].

I could not avoid providing this preamble before beginning to raise questions here about the interpretation of the desire in dreams.

I announced that I would borrow for this purpose a dream taken from Freud's work, since he is, after all, the best guide for us if we want to be sure of what he means when he talks about the desire in a dream.

3

I will borrow a dream from the article entitled "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," published in 1911 just before the case of Schreber.

I have chosen to extract a dream and Freud's analysis of it from this particular text because in it Freud articulates in a simple, exemplary, significant, and unambiguous way how he intends to handle *Vorstellungsrepräsentanzen*, inasmuch as in this article the formulation of unconscious desire is examined.

The upshot of the whole of Freud's work as regards the relations between the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanzen* and the primary process – insofar as they are under the sway of the first principle, known as the pleasure principle – leaves no room for doubt. There is no other way to conceptualize the opposition between the pleasure principle and the reality principle if it is not to realize that what we are told about the emergence of hallucinations by which the primary process – that is, desire at the level of the primary process – finds its satisfaction concerns not simply an image but a signifier.

70 It is, moreover, surprising that people did not discover this in other realms, I mean on the basis of clinical work. If people never realized this in other realms, it is because the notion of the signifier had not yet been developed at the moment of the great blossoming of classical psychiatry. For in what form do hallucinations usually present themselves in the lion's share of clinical experience? What are the major forms that are the most problematic and insistent in which hallucinations arise for us? They are those of verbal hallucinations, or verbally structured hallucinations, when there is an intrusion or inmixing into the field of reality, not of an image or fantasy, not of something that a simple perceptual process would prop up, but a signifier. If a hallucination poses its own specific problems to us, it is because it involves signifiers, not images, things, or perceptions, not those "false perceptions of reality," as people put it. In Freud's work, this is unmistakable.

At the end of the article, Freud mentions a dream to illustrate what he calls a *neurotische Währung*, a "neurotic currency" [*valorisation*, which also means "valuation"], insofar as the primary process irrupts into it. *Währung* is a term we should keep in mind, as it is not very common in German. It is related to the verb *währen* [to last], which is a durative form of the verb *wahren* [to look after, keep, safeguard, or protect]. While it means duration, it is most commonly used in the sense of value or valuation.

The dream in question was dreamt by a subject who was mourning the loss of his father whom he had, Freud tells us, nursed throughout the long painful illness that led to his death. Here is the dream:

> His father was alive once more and was talking with him in his usual way. But he felt it exceedingly painful that his father had really died, only without knowing it. [SE XII, p. 225]

It is a short dream. And it is one that the patient had repeatedly in the months following his father's passing. It is a dream that, as always, Freud brings us in the form of a transcript, for what is essential in Freudian analysis is always based on the narrative of the dream as it is initially articulated. How does Freud broach it?

It is out of the question, of course – if only because of the distinction Freud always made between the manifest content and the latent content – that Freud ever thought a dream could be immediately brought into connection with what, in psychoanalysis, people have 71
no compunction about calling "wishful thinking,"* a term that has no equivalent in French. By pronouncing it, I would almost like to force it to make a sound like that of an alarm bell. The use of such a term should, all by itself, put analysts on their guard or even on the defensive, and persuade them that they have set off down the wrong path.

Freud does not even for an instant entertain this "wishful thinking." He does not say that, if the subject dreams about his father it is simply because he needs to see him and that to see him gives him pleasure. That is not at all sufficient, for the simple reason that this dream does not seem to bring any satisfaction whatsoever with it. Its painful character is quite clearly indicated, and this should allow us to avoid jumping to such inane conclusions. Nevertheless, if I am bringing this up here, it is in order to indicate the possibility of doing so, even though in the end I do not believe that any analyst could go that far when it comes to a dream. And it is precisely because we cannot go that far when it comes to dreams that psychoanalysts are no longer interested in dreams.

How does Freud broach things? We will stick to the level of his text:

> The only way of understanding this apparently nonsensical dream is by adding "as the dreamer wished" or "in consequence of his wish" after the words "that his father had really died," and by further adding "that he [the dreamer] wished it" to the last words. The dream-thought then runs: it was a painful memory for him that he had been obliged to wish for his father's death (as a release) while [his father] was still alive, and how terrible it would have been if his father had had any suspicion of it! [SE XII, p. 225]

This leads us to give its full weight to the way in which Freud approaches the dream: via the signifier. What Freud inserts into the text, and what he lays out for us as allowing us to understand the dream, as delivering up the meaning of the text, are clausulae. I will try to articulate what they are at the linguistic level.

Please pay attention to what I am saying here. I am not saying that this is the interpretation. It may in fact be the interpretation, but I am not yet saying so. I am freezing the frame here at a moment at which a certain signifier is designated as being produced by the fact that it is missing. It is by resituating it in the context of
72 the dream that we can immediately accede to what we are given to understand to be the meaning of the dream.

We find ourselves faced with a typical case here, a case in which one's self-reproach concerning a loved one leads back to the infantile signification of a death wish. The term transference, *Übertragung*, is used here by Freud in the way he first used it in *The Interpretation of Dreams* to designate the carryover of an early situation – of an early death wish, in this instance – into a current situation. A wish that is analogical, homologous, parallel, or in any way similar is introduced in order to revive the archaic wish in question.

Freud thus approaches the problem via the signifier. It is on that basis that we can try to elaborate what interpretation means. But let us begin by settling a score with the type of interpretation we set aside, which refers to "wishful thinking."* One remark will suffice here.

This English term cannot be translated by *pensée désireuse* or *pensée désirante* for a very simple reason. It has a meaning, of course, but people use it in analysis in a context in which that meaning is not valid. Whenever you encounter the term, in order to put the pertinence of its usage to the test, you need but make the following distinction. It must not signify "take one's desires for realities," as people say nowadays [in French] – that is the meaning

of thought insofar as it slip slides and gives way – but rather "take one's dream for reality." This in and of itself makes it altogether inapplicable to the interpretation of dreams, to this type of comprehension of dreams. In the case of dreams, it simply means that we dream because we dream. An interpretation at this level is in no wise applicable at any moment to dreams.

We must thus turn to the procedure known as the addition of signifiers.

If we follow Freud here, this procedure assumes that there had been a prior subtraction of a signifier – "subtraction" is the exact meaning of the term that Freud uses to designate the operation of repression in its pure form, in its *unterdrückt* effect, I would say. It is here that we find ourselves brought up short by something that appears to be an objection and an obstacle.

If we had not decided in advance to find everything in Freud's 73
work wonderful – in other words, if we had not decided in advance to believe we believe, as Prévert puts it – we would stop to consider the following: that the pure and simple restoring of the two clausulae, "*nach seinem Wunsch*" and "*daß er* [*der Träumer*] *es wünschte*" – that is, that the son wished for his father's death – provides nothing, strictly speaking, as regards what Freud himself designates as the final goal of interpretation, namely, the reconstruction of the unconscious desire in the dream.

What are we actually formulating with these additions? Nothing but what the subject already knew perfectly well. During his father's extremely painful illness, the subject indeed wished for his father's death as a solution and end to his torments. Naturally, he did everything possible to hide this desire or wish from his father, but it was totally accessible to the son in this context, in his recent life experience. We need not even speak about it being preconscious in this regard – it was a conscious memory that was part and parcel of the continuous text of his consciousness.

It is thus the dream that subtracts from its text an element that is not at all hidden from the subject's conscious mind. And it is thus the phenomenon of subtraction that takes on a positive value here, as it were. I mean that this is the problem of repression. What is repressed here is indubitably a *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*, one that is even quite typical.

If something deserves to be termed a *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*, it is certainly something that is, in and of itself, I would say, a form that is devoid of meaning. Taken all by itself, isolated [from its context], "as he wished" means nothing. It means "in consequence of the wish mentioned earlier." The meaning depends on the sentence that came before it.

This is the direction in which I would like to lead you in order to get you to grasp the irreducible character of what is at stake in any and every conception based on an imaginary elaboration – or even on an abstraction of object-like data – whereas what is actually involved is the signifier and the originality of the field that is established by the signifier's action in the psyche, lived experience, and the human subject. What we have here are signifying forms that hang together only insofar as they are linked with other signifiers.

74 I am well aware that I am raising points here that would require far more discussion.

Psychologists from what is known as the Marburg School, which involved a small group of people working in a closed circle, conducted all sorts of experiments, with a great deal of perseverance, regarding a kind of intuition that they called thought without images. The point was, without using images, to think up kinds of forms that were nothing but signifying forms without any context, *in statu nascendi*. Moreover, the problems that are raised here for us by the notion of *Vorstellung* warrant that we recall that Freud attended the course given by Brentano for two years, we having unambiguous evidence thereof. It would be necessary to examine Brentano's *Psychologie* and his conception of *Vorstellung* in order to grasp the exact weight this term could have had in Freud's mind and not simply in my interpretation.

What is the problem we encounter? It is that of the relationship that exists between repression, on the one hand, insofar as it applies, as Freud tells us, to something like *Vorstellungen*, and the appearance, on the other hand, of a new meaning owing to something which, to our way of thinking, at the point where we are making headway, is different from repression – namely, the elision of the two clausulae in the context of the preconscious. Is this elision the same thing as repression? Is it the precise counterpart or contrary of repression?

We must first explain this elision at the most formal level. What effect does it have? It is clear that it has a meaning effect. I am saying "elision" and not "allusion," for it is not a "figuration," to use everyday language. Far from alluding to something that preceded it – namely, the relations between the father and the son – the dream introduces something that sounds absurd and has an entirely original range of signification at the manifest level. What is involved is a *figura verborum*, a figure of words [or trope], to employ a term that is a counterpart to the first one. The elision creates a signified effect. In this regard it is equivalent to the substitution of a blank or zero for the missing terms – but a zero is not nothing. In short, the effect involved can be qualified as a metaphorical effect.

The dream is a metaphor. In this metaphor, something new emerges that is a meaning or signified. The latter is undoubtedly enigmatic, but it is certainly not something that we have no need to take into account. It is, I would say, one of the most essential forms of human experience, since it is this very image which, for centuries, forced people, at one moment or another of mourning in the course of their existence, onto the most hidden of pathways that led them to consult necromancers. 75

What necromancers summoned up in the magic circle were what are called shades [or spirits, *ombres*], and what took place was no different than what takes place in this dream. A shade is a being who is there without us knowing how he exists, and before whom one can literally say nothing. This being speaks, of course, but that is not important, for, up to a certain point, what he says is also what he does not say, and the dream does not even tell us what it is. His speech only takes on its value owing to the fact that the person who summoned this loved one from the nether regions can literally say nothing to him regarding his innermost truth.

This confrontation, structured scene, or scenario invites us to wonder what it is. What is its import? Does it have the fundamental, structured, and structuring value of what I am trying to lay out for you this year by the name of fantasy? Is it a fantasy? Are there a certain number of characteristics that can be required in order for us to recognize the characteristics of fantasy in such a scenario?

Unfortunately, we cannot begin to answer these questions until next time. But rest assured that we will answer them very precisely. Our answers will allow us to glimpse the way in which it is in fact a fantasy and in what regard it is a dream fantasy [*un fantasme de rêve*].

Let me make a first point right away. In the precise sense that we can give the word "fantasy," a dream fantasy takes very specific forms, and it does not have the same import as that of a waking fantasy, whether it be unconscious or not. We will see in this regard how we must conceptualize the function of fantasy.

A second point: we will see on this basis where what Freud called the mechanisms of the dream-work [*élaboration*] are situated – namely, in the relationship between the repressed, which is assumed to be prior, and the signifiers about which I showed you to what degree Freud pinpoints them and how he articulates the impact of their absence in terms of pure signifying relations, by which I mean relations that exist between signifiers. 76

We will try to situate the signifiers of the narrative – first, "he is dead," second, "he did not know it," and third, "as the dreamer wished" [see SE V, pp. 430–1] – and put them to work along the

trajectories of the chains that I call the "chain of the subject" and the "signifying chain," respectively, such as they are posited, repeated, and insistently presented to you in the form of our graph of desire.

You will see what this graph can do for us, and that there is no possible functioning of discourse except on the basis of structures in which the topological position of elements and of their relations are inscribed. You will also see that the notion of these structures alone allows us to give meaning to the analysis of this dream. In other words, up to a certain point, we can say that the two clausulae in question are truly the content of the repressed – namely, the *Real verdrängt*, as Freud puts it, what is really repressed.

But that is not enough. We must also distinguish how and why the dream uses these elements. They are undoubtedly repressed, but at the level of the dream they are not repressed. Whereas the earlier immediately lived experience brought them into play as such, in the dream, far from being repressed, they are elided as clausulae. Why? In order to produce what sort of effect? It is not easy to say. In short, it is a signification that is produced, there is no doubt about that; but we will shall see that the elision of the same wish can have effects that are altogether different in different structures.

To pique and stimulate your curiosity a bit, I would simply like to observe that there is perhaps a relationship between the elision of the clausula "as he wished," and what we see in other contexts, which are not dream contexts – in psychosis, for example, where we sometimes observe a misrecognition of death, misrecognition by the subject of his own death. At the formal level, it suffices that the words "he did not know it" or "he wanted to know nothing about it" be linked otherwise with "he is dead" for the one to lead to the other, unless we immediately distinguish the clinical contexts, as *Verwerfung* [foreclosure] is distinguished from *Verneinung* [negation].

77 In psychosis this articulation can lead to feelings of being invaded or penetrated, or to fertile moments in which the subject thinks that he in fact has across from him something far closer still to a dream image than we might expect – namely, someone who is dead. The subject lives with a dead man, but a dead man who quite simply does not know that he is dead.

Perhaps we can go so far as to recognize a similar phenomenon in normal life, the kind we experience every day. Perhaps it happens to us more often than we think to have in our presence someone who appears to behave satisfactorily, socially speaking, but who – in terms of his being of interest to us, in terms of what allows us to get along with a human being – is truly dead, and has been for some time, dead and mummified, who is just waiting for the pendulum

to swing – for I know not what, for [the last straw that reveals he is mere] semblance – to be reduced to the sort of dust that must spell his demise. I know more than one of them. Now that I have brought this to your attention, look around among those you know.

Being half-dead is perhaps far more prevalent than we think in relations between subjects. Isn't it true that the part of every living being that is half-dead does not leave us a perfectly clear conscience? Perhaps a large part of our behavior with our fellow men sets off in us an incidental reaction that is always present and essential, which is denoted by the precautions we must take in order not to comment to the half-dead that where he is, where he is in the process of talking to us, he is half-prey to death.

Perhaps this is something that we must take into account, whose importance we must weigh, when we take it upon ourselves to listen to the speech, revelations, and free discourse of people undergoing analysis. Undertaking something so audacious with analysands cannot fail to have an impact upon ourselves, which is precisely what we defend against most strongly. [We defend against] what there is in us that is most fictitious and most repeated – namely, what is half-dead in us, too.

At the point at which we have arrived at the end of today's class, I have raised more questions than I have answered.

If this dream teaches us something about the relations between 78
the subject and desire, it is because it has a value that should not surprise us given its protagonists – namely, a father, a son, death incarnate, and, as you will see, a relationship to desire.

It is thus no accident that I chose this example and that we will have to explore it further next time.

November 26, 1958

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IV

LITTLE ANNA'S DREAM

Hallucination, between pleasure and reality
The topology of signifiers
The palimpsest of repressions
The *I* of the statement and the *I* of enunciation
Repression, from the unsaid to not-knowing

I left you last time in the midst of discussing a dream, a dream that at least superficially seems simple. I announced that, with regard to this dream, we would strive to articulate the strict meaning we give here to the following terms: the desire in the dream and interpretation. We will return to those. I also think that this dream is quite valuable, theoretically speaking.

I have once again been rereading *The Interpretation of Dreams*, having told you that this was the first text we would be examining this year on desire and its interpretation.

I must admit that, up until a certain point, I allowed myself to reproach people in the analytic community for being unfamiliar with its twists and turns – which is indisputable – yet my reproach, like every reproach, has another facet, which is that of an excuse. For in fact, it does not suffice to have read this book hundreds of times in order to remember its contents. This is a phenomenon that we encounter quite often, but that has been brought home to me especially clearly the last few days. Everyone knows how easily we forget everything that has to do with the unconscious.

For example, it is quite obvious to what degree people forget funny stories and stories that are considered to be witty. This highly significant fact cannot be explained even one iota outside of a Freudian perspective. Let us say that you are meeting with some friends. Someone makes a joke, not even recounting a funny story, but making a pun at the beginning of the get-together or at the end
80 of the lunch, and by the time the coffee comes at the end of the meal

you ask yourself, "What was that incredibly funny thing the person sitting to my right said earlier?" And you cannot for the life of you recall it. This is an almost sure sign of the fact that witticisms arise from the unconscious.

When we read or reread *The Interpretation of Dreams*, we have the impression that it is what I would call a magical book, if the word did not lend itself, in our vocabulary, to so much ambiguity and even error, which is quite unfortunate. We stroll through *The Interpretation of Dreams* as if we were truly in the book of the unconscious, which is why we have so much trouble holding onto what is so well articulated in it. We have here a phenomenon that is worth noting.

To that we have to add the almost insane distortion introduced by the French translation. The more closely I examine it, the more I find truly inexcusable the crude inaccuracies it contains. Some of you ask me for explanations and I immediately refer back to the text. There is, for example, in Chapter VI, devoted to the dream-work, a section entitled "Considerations of Representability," the first page of which in the French translation is more than just a web of inaccuracies – it has nothing whatsoever to do with the German text, and it confuses everything and puzzles us. I will not develop this point any further, but obviously none of this makes it especially easy for readers of the French to get a handle on *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

We began to decipher the dream we took up last time in a way that may not have seemed very straightforward to you, but which was nevertheless intelligible, at least I hope it was. To clearly see what is at stake, we will articulate it using the graph of desire.

If a dream interests us, it is in the sense in which it interests Freud – that is, in the sense in which it fulfills [*réalisation*] desire. Desire is at work in the dream here insofar as the dream is its fulfillment. How are we going to be able to articulate it? I will first bring up another dream, one I already mentioned before [see Seminar V, Chapter XII], and whose exemplary value you will see. It is not terribly well known – one has to go looking for it.

At the beginning of Chapter 3, whose title is "A Dream Is the Fulfillment of a Wish," we find dreams whose existence I am sure none of you are unaware of, children's dreams, and they are presented to us by Freud as what I will call an early stage of desire in dreams.

The dream I will discuss was already included in the first edition of 81
the *Traumdeutung* [*The Interpretation of Dreams*]. Freud mentions it at the moment at which he begins to spell out the nature of dreams for his contemporaries. The fact that the *Traumdeutung* takes the

form of an expository text explains many things to us, especially the fact that things are brought out first in a sweeping sort of way, giving us a first approximation of things, only to be unpacked later.

When we do not look very closely at this passage, we content ourselves with what Freud says about the direct, undistorted (that is, without *Entstellung*, distortion) character of children's dreams, whereas dreams usually appear to us in a profoundly modified guise as regards their deepest thought content. In children, it is all supposedly quite simple – desire purportedly goes straight, and as directly as possible, to what the subject desires. Freud gives us several examples of this. The first is worth recalling, because it truly illustrates his point. Here it is:

> My youngest daughter [Anna Freud] who was at that time nineteen months old, had a fit of vomiting one fine morning and was forced to fast. During the night that followed this day of fasting, we heard her call out in her dream "*Anna F.eud, Er(d)beer, Hochbeer, Eier(s)peis, Papp!*"

Er(d)beer is a child's way of pronouncing strawberries, *Hochbeer* also means strawberries, *Eier(s)peis* corresponds more or less to the word "custard," and *Papp* means porridge. Freud tells us the following:

> She thus used her name to express taking possession, and the enumeration of all the prestigious dishes, or those that seemed to her such, [to express] food worth desiring.

The appearance of strawberries in the dream (in the form of two varieties, *Erdbeer* and *Hochbeer* – I did not manage to precisely pin down *Hochbeer*, but Freud's commentary suggests that they correspond to two varieties of strawberries) was a demonstration or protest against the health police in the house, and was rooted in the circumstance clearly registered by Anna that the day before the nurse had attributed her illness to having eaten too many
82 strawberries. Because of the nurse's unwanted and annoying recommendation, Anna immediately took revenge on her in her dream.

Leaving aside the dream that Freud's nephew Hermann had, which raises other problems, I would point to a passage that is not found in the first edition, because it was added later after discussions of the Viennese school, the minutes of which we have. Ferenczi corroborated Freud's views by reminding people of the proverb, "Pigs dream of acorns and geese dream of corn." Freud then brought up the proverb, "What do geese dream of? Maize," that he undoubtedly

did not borrow so much from the German context, I think, given the specific form of the last word. Lastly, there was the Jewish proverb, "What do chickens dream of? They dream of millet."

Let us dwell upon this for a moment.

I will begin with a brief tangential remark.

1

Regarding Granoff's paper last night, I mentioned an essential problem, which is that of the difference between the directive of pleasure and that of desire.

Let us return for a moment to the directive of pleasure and let me spell it out once and for all as quickly as possible.

It is obviously related to questions people ask me or that arise about the function I attribute to *Vorstellung* in what Freud calls the primary process.

To put it concisely, as this is but a parenthetical remark, when we investigate the function of *Vorstellungen* in the pleasure principle we realize that Freud gives it short shrift. To put it in a nutshell, we could say that he needs an element with which to construct what he perceives intuitively and that he finds this element in *Vorstellungen*.

It is characteristic of brilliant intuition to come up with something that had absolutely never been perceived hitherto. This is the conception of the primary process as distinct and separate from the secondary process. We do not perceive how original this is; we think 83
that what Freud is saying is comparable to what we thought before, whereas it is utterly and completely different. The composition or synthesis of these two principles is highly original.

The primary process signifies the presence of desire, but not of just any old desire. It signifies the presence of the desire that presents itself as the most fragmented. As for the perceptual element, it is what Freud uses to explain and get us to grasp what is at stake.

When the primary process alone is active, what happens? It leads to hallucination. Recall the first schemas Freud gives us on this score. Hallucination is produced by a process of regression that he calls "topographical." The different schemas Freud drew of what motivates and structures the primary process all have in common the fact that they are grounded in the trajectory of the reflex arc, with its two pathways – the afferent pathway, the afference of something known as sensory "stimuli," and the efferent pathway, the efference of something that is known as "motor activity" [SE V, p. 537].

In this perspective perception is conceptualized, in a way I would call terribly debatable, as something that accumulates somewhere on the side of the senses owing to a flood of excitations and stimuli from the outside world, and it is situated at the origin of action. All kinds of other things are assumed to happen afterward. Namely, it is here that Freud inserts a whole series of superimposed layers that run from the unconscious to the preconscious and so on, to arrive at something that may or may not lead to motor activity.

Whenever Freud speaks to us about what happens in the primary process, look closely at what is involved: a regressive movement. When excitation's advance toward motor activity is, for some reason, blocked, something like regression always occurs. It is here that something appears, a *Vorstellung*, which turns out to give the excitation in question a satisfaction that is, strictly speaking hallucinatory.

This is what is new in what Freud introduced.

The schemas he uses are provided for their functional value, I mean in order to establish, as Freud explicitly says, a series or
84 sequence, which should be considered to be temporal rather than spatial, as he points out [SE V, p. 537]. To Freud, the hallucinatory phenomenon is of interest, I would say, owing to its insertion in a circuit. In short, what Freud describes to us as being the result of the primary process is the fact that something in the circuit gets turned on.

I will not provide a metaphor here. I will merely indicate, in substance, what is highlighted by the explanation Freud draws from the phenomenon and the translation he gives of it, by referring here to the functioning of a circuit with a homeostatic goal, running through a series of relays in which the electrical activity is always implicitly measurable by reflexometry. Under certain conditions, the fact that something happens at the level of one of the relays takes on, in and of itself, the value of a terminal effect, identical to what we see occur in any kind of measuring device when, in a series of lights, one of them goes on. What is important is not so much what appears – namely, light – but what it indicates by way of a certain tension (which is produced, moreover, owing to a resistance) and state of the whole circuit at a given point in time.

Let us begin by underscoring the fact that an hallucination does not in any wise correspond to a need, to use that word, for naturally no need is satisfied by an hallucinatory satisfaction. Need, in order to be satisfied, requires the intervention of the secondary process – and even of secondary processes, for there is a wide variety of them – and these processes exact realities, as their name indicates. They are under the sway of the reality principle.

If there are secondary processes that occur, they only occur because there were primary processes. This is a truism, but the following remark is no less obvious, which is that the division between the two principles makes instinct unthinkable, however it may be conceptualized. Instinct evaporates.

Consider what all research regarding instinct – especially the most modern, elaborate, and intelligent – is moving toward. It aims to explain how a structure that is not purely preformed (we are no longer at that stage, we no longer view instinct like Fabre did, to us instinct is a structure that engenders and maintains its own sequential chain) lays down pathways in the real that lead a living being 85
toward objects that have not yet been tested by that being.

This is the problem of instinct. We are told that there is an appetitive stage and then a searching stage. The animal puts itself in a certain state involving motor activity that leads to movement in all sorts of directions. We arrive next at a stage of specialized triggering. Even if this specialized triggering gives rise to a behavior that leads him astray – in other words, even if he grabs onto a few colorful bits of string, as it were – the fact remains that he detected these bits in the real.

What I would like to indicate to you here is that an hallucinated behavior can be radically distinguished from a self-guided behavior based on a regressive cathexis, as it were, which is translated by the lighting up of a light along the conducting circuits. This luminous phenomenon can, at most, illuminate an already tested object. But if the object just so happens to already be there, it does not in any way show us the way to it – and still less, of course, if it shows the very same object when the object is not there, which is what actually happens in hallucinatory phenomena. At best, the subject can inaugurate on that basis the mechanism of searching, and this is what happens in the secondary process.

In short, according to Freud the secondary process takes the place of instinctual behavior. But, on the other hand, it is absolutely different from it, since, owing to the existence of the primary process, the secondary process presents itself as behavior that tests whether something is an hallucinatory reality or an experience (*Erfahrung*) that is at first organized like the effect of a light on a circuit. The secondary process accounts for judging behavior – "judgment" being a word that is proffered by Freud when he explains things at this level.

It should be clear that I am not endorsing all of this. I am extracting the meaning of what Freud articulates in order to transmit it to you.

In the final analysis, human reality is constructed, according to Freud, against a backdrop of prior hallucination, which is the

universe of pleasure in its illusory essence. The whole process is out in the open. I am not saying that it betrays itself – not even!

What term does Freud constantly use when he needs to explain the succession of impressions into which the process of the psychi-
86 cal apparatus breaks down, and specifically in the *Traumdeutung*? The term is *niederschreiben*. We encounter this term every time he postulates, in this text and in all the others too, a succession of levels, piled on top of each other, on which elements come to be written – *niederschreiben* does not mean to be stamped, it means to be inscribed – and registered, which Freud formulates differently at different moments in his thinking. In a first layer, what is at stake, for example, are relations of simultaneity, which will later be organized in other layers.

This is how the schema breaks down into a succession of inscriptions, of *Niederschriften* – a word that we cannot actually translate – that are superimposed on each other. Everything that happened at the outset – that is, prior to arriving at another form of articulation which is that of the preconscious – namely, everything that is strictly speaking in the unconscious, can only be conceptualized in a sort of typographical space. We find here a true topology of signifiers. This conclusion is inescapable when we follow Freud's articulation exactly.

In letter 52 to Fliess, we see that Freud is necessarily led to assume at the outset a kind of ideal, that cannot be taken to be a simple *Wahrnehmung*, a taking of truth [*prise de vrai*]. If we literally translate this topology of signifiers, we arrive at a *begreifen* [grasping or comprehending] of reality, a term Freud uses all the time.

How, according to Freud, do we manage to get a handhold on reality? Not at all through a selective triage, nor by anything that resembles what every theory of instinct presents as the first approximate behavior that directs an organism along the pathways of successful instinctual behavior. What is involved is, instead, a veritable, recurring critique of the signifiers that are evoked in the primary process. This critique, like all critique, does not of course eliminate what came before it, and which it concerns, but rather complicates it. It complicates it by connoting it as what? As indices of reality that are themselves part of the signifying order.

What I am articulating here as being what Freud conceptualizes and presents to us as the primary process emphasizes the function of the signifier, but there is absolutely no way to escape this emphasis. If you peruse any of the texts he wrote at the different stages of his
87 work, you will see that he repeated this every time he broached the problem, from its introduction in the *Traumdeutung* right up until

what he formulated about it later when he proposed a second way of laying out his topography, starting in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*.

What happens now to representations [*Vorstellungen*]?

Allow me to provide an image for a moment by playing with the etymology, as I did for [*wahrnehmung*, interpreting it as the kind of] taking of truth that would lead a sort of ideal subject to the real, which would lead him to alternatives by which he would create the real through his propositions [*induit le réel dans ses propositions*] – breaking the word *Vorstellungen* down as follows: *Vor-stellungen*.

Vorstellungen have a signifying organization. If we wanted to speak in Pavlovian terms, we would say that they are not part, at the outset, of a first system of significations connected to need, but are part of a second system of significations. They resemble the lighting up of a light in a slot machine when the ball has fallen in the right hole. The right hole, as Freud also says, means the same hole in which the ball fell before. The primary process does not seek a new object but rather an object to be found anew, and it does so by means of a *Vorstellung* that is evoked anew because it was the *Vorstellung* that corresponded to a first facilitation [*frayage*, corresponding to Freud's *Bahnung*]. The lighting up of the light pays a bonus. That's the pleasure principle.

Except that in order for this bonus to be paid, there has to be a certain reserve of coins in the machine. In this case, the reserve is reserved for the second system – that is, for the secondary processes. In other words, the switching on of the light is a satisfaction only within the machine's overall workings, insofar as the machine is that of a gambler from the moment at which he begins to gamble.

That said, let us return to Anna's dream.

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Anna's dream is presented by Freud as a dream that manifests desire in the naked state.

It seems quite impossible to me, in the revelation of this nakedness, to avoid or elide the very mechanism by which this nakedness is revealed. In other words, the mode of revelation of this nakedness cannot be separated from the nakedness itself.

I have the impression that this so-called naked dream is known to us only by hearsay. When I say that, it does not at all mean what certain people have claimed I have said, that in short, we never know what someone has dreamt except by what he tells us of it, such that everything related to a dream should be bracketed owing to the

fact of his having related it. While it is certainly not insignificant that Freud grants so much importance to the *Niederschrift* that constitutes the dream's residue, it is clear that this *Niederschrift* is related to an experience that the subject tells us about.

Freud is light years from sanctioning for so much as an instant the obvious objection that a spoken narrative is one thing, whereas a lived experience is something else. On the contrary, he rejects it energetically and he even expressly grounds his entire analysis in the narrative, going so far as to advise us to use a sort of *Niederschrift* technique, based on how the dream is *set down in writing*. This clearly shows what he thinks, at bottom, about lived experience – namely, that such experience gains from being broached via the signifier. If experience is articulated, it is not its own doing, of course, for it is already structured as a series of *Niederschriften*.

We have here a kind of palimpsest writing, as it were, assuming we could imagine a palimpsest on which the different superimposed texts were related to each other, even if we did not know how. But if we tried to determine how, we would see that the relationship between them was far more to be sought out in the shape of the letters than in the meaning of the text. I am thus not in the process of saying that.

What I am saying in this case is that what we know of Anna's dream is strictly speaking what we know at the very moment at which it occurs as an articulated dream. Stated otherwise, the
89 degree of certainty we have about this dream is linked to the fact that we would also be far more certain about what pigs and geese dream about if they themselves told us their dreams. But in this earliest example, we have more. The exemplary value of the dream overheard by Freud is that it was spoken out loud while Anna was sleeping, and this leaves no room for ambiguity whatsoever concerning the presence of the signifier in its actual text.

It is impossible to cast the slightest doubt on the dream by pointing to the supposedly added character of the information that comes to us about it through speech. We know that Anna Freud is dreaming because she pronounces the words, "*Anna F.eud, Er(d)beer, Hochbeer, Eier(s)peis, Papp!*" We know nothing about the dream images in this case, but they find in these words a symbolic "affix" [*affixe*], if I may borrow a term from the theory of complex numbers, an affix in which we in some sense see the signifier present itself in a flocculated state – in other words, in a series of names.

These names constitute a sequence whose choice of elements is not random. In effect, as Freud tells us, what is involved here is precisely everything that she was prohibited, inter-dicted, from having, everything which, when she asked for it, she was told "No, you can't

have any!" This common denominator brings unity to the diversity of terms, even if we cannot but observe conversely that this diversity reinforces the unity and even designates it. In short, this series juxtaposes this unity to the electiveness of need satisfaction.

People attribute a desire to pigs and to geese. Well, you need but reflect on the effect it would have if, instead of saying, as in the proverb, that pigs dream of *kukuruz*, maize, we set out to enumerate everything that pigs presumably dream of. You would see that this would have a rather different effect. And even if we wanted to claim that only an insufficient education of the glottis stops pigs and geese from making this known to us – and even if we argued that we could make up for this by perceiving in both species the equivalent, so to speak, of linguistic articulation in certain tremblings of their mandibles – the fact remains that it would hardly be likely that these 90
animals would include their own names, as Anna Freud does, in the sequence.

Let us even assume that our pig is named Toto and our goose is named Bel-Azor. If something like this were to occur, it would turn out that they would mention their names in a language which obviously – no more nor less obviously, moreover, than in human beings, but in human beings we see this less clearly – has nothing whatsoever to do with the satisfaction of their needs, since they would go by these names in the farmyard – in other words, in a context that corresponds to the needs of men, not to their own needs.

As I said earlier, we want to dwell first of all on the fact that Anna Freud articulates words. The mechanism of motor activity is thus not absent from this dream, since it is thanks to motor activity that the dream comes to our attention. But secondly, we want to dwell on the fact that the signifying structuring of the dream sequence places a message at the top (or beginning), as you can see illustrated if you know how people communicate using the complicated machines that are those of our modern era. For example, when one places a telephone call from the head to the tail of an airplane, or from one phone booth to another, one announces oneself, one announces who it is that is speaking. Anna Freud, at nineteen months of age, in her dream, announces herself; she says, "Anna Freud," and then she provides a series. I would almost say that after having heard her speak her dream aloud, one expects but one thing, which is that she say at the end, "Over and out!"

This introduces us to what I call the topology of repression – the clearest, the most formal as well, and the most articulated.

At the moments at which Freud speaks, at least twice in the *Traumdeutung*, about the *anderer Schauplatz* ["other stage (or scene)"; see SE IV, p. 48, and SE V, p. 536] – a term that had struck

him when he read Fechner's work, so much so that we get the impression that it was a kind of lightning bolt, illumination, or revelation to him – he always highlights the fact that it is not another neurological locus. I would say that this other locus must be sought out in the structure of the signifier itself.

What I am trying to show you with this graph is the very structure of the signifying system. As soon as the subject enters into it, with the minimal hypotheses required by the fact that the subject enters
91 into the play of the signifier – namely, that the signifier is given and that the subject is defined as nothing more than what is going to enter into the signifying system – things necessarily become organized accordingly, and all sorts of consequences flow therefrom. This necessity is based on the fact that there is a topology that we must conceptualize; it suffices to conceptualize it as constituted by two superimposed chains.

How do things present themselves in Anna Freud's dream? They present themselves in a problematic and ambiguous way which, up to a certain point, legitimates the distinction Freud makes between a child's dream and an adult's dream.

Where is the chain of names that is found in Anna Freud's dream situated? On the upper or the lower chain?

You may have noticed that, in the upper part of the graph, the chain is represented as a dotted line – this emphasizes the element of discontinuity in the signifier – whereas the lower chain is represented as a continuous line [see, for example, Figure 2.1]. I told you, moreover, that both chains are involved in every process.

At the level at which we are posing the question, what does the lower chain mean? It is the level of demand, and – inasmuch as I told you that the subject qua speaking takes on solidity there that is borrowed from the synchronic solidarity of the signifier – it is quite obviously related to the unity of a sentence. This is what got people talking, and in a way that spilled a lot of ink, about the function of holophrasis, of a sentence qua whole. There is no doubt that holophrasis exists.

Holophrasis has a name: interjection. To illustrate the function of the lower chain at the level of demand, it is "[Give us] bread!" or "Help!" These interjections reside in the dimension of universal discourse. I am not speaking for the time being about children's discourse. This form of sentence exists; I would even say that in certain cases it takes on a value that is quite pressing and exacting. Need, which must undoubtedly pass through the defiles of the signifier qua need, is expressed here in a way that is certainly deformed but at least monolithic, with the proviso that it is the subject himself who constitutes the monolith in question at this level.

What happens on the upper line is something else altogether. What one can say about it is not easy to say, but for good reason – it is because what happens on the upper line is the basis for what 92
happens on the lower line.

Even in something that is presented to us as being as primitive as Anna's dream, something indicates to us that the subject is not simply constituted in the sentence and by the sentence; whereas, when an individual, crowd, or mob cries "[Give us] bread!" the whole weight of the message bears upon the sender. The latter is the dominant element and this cry suffices, all by itself, in the forms that I just mentioned, to constitute this sender as a subject who is truly unique, even if he has a hundred or a thousand mouths. He need not announce himself – the sentence announces him adequately.

By way of contrast, when a human subject operates with language, he counts himself, and that is even his initial position. I am not sure if you remember a certain test Binet came up with, designed to shed light on difficulties subjects have going beyond a certain stage, which I personally find far more suggestive than the stages mentioned by Piaget. I will not tell you what stage it is because I do not want to go into detail here, but it seems to be distinctive and consists in the fact that the subject realizes that there is something fishy in the sentence, "I have three brothers, Paul, Ernest, and me."

This [kind of construction] seems quite natural to the child up until a rather advanced age, and for the best reason imaginable, because it truly captures the human subject's involvement in the act of speech – he counts himself therein, he names himself therein. It is thus the most natural and the most coordinated form of expression, so to speak. It is simply that the child has not yet found the correct formulation, "There are three brothers in my family: Paul, Ernest, and me." But we should certainly not feel obliged to reproach him for this, given the ambiguities of the function of being and having. It is clear that a step must be taken in order for a distinction to be made between the *I* qua subject of the statement [*l'énoncé*] and the *I* qua subject of enunciation [or: enunciating subject], for that is what is involved here.

When we take the next step, we say that what is articulated on the lower line is the process of the statement [*le procès de l'énoncé*]. In the dream we talked about last time, what is stated is that "He is dead."

Let me observe in passing that everything that is novel about the dimension that speech introduces into the world is already implied in this statement. "He is dead" means absolutely nothing in any perspective other than that of speaking. "He is dead" means "He 93
no longer exists." One need not say it since he is already no longer

there. In order for us to say "He is dead," he must have been a being who was underpinned by speech.

We do not expect anyone to realize that, of course; but we do expect people to realize that the act of enunciating the statement "He is dead" commonly requires that we have at our disposal in discourse itself all sorts of landmarks [*repères*] that are distinguished from landmarks derived from the statement of the process [*l'énoncé du procès*]. If what I am saying here were not obvious, all of grammar would evaporate.

For the time being, I am simply getting you to note the need to use the future perfect, inasmuch as there are two temporal landmarks. One of them concerns the act that will be involved – for example, in the statement "At such and such a time, I will have become her husband"; this is the landmark of the *I* that will be transformed by marriage. Nevertheless, since you express it in the future perfect tense, there is a second temporal landmark: the current point from which you are speaking, which situates [*repère*] you as the *I* in the act of enunciation. There are thus two subjects – that is, two *I*s.

The stage that the child must reach in Binet's test – namely, the distinction between these two *I*s – seems to me to have literally nothing to do with the well-known reduction to reciprocity that Piaget makes into the pivotal point of the child's ability to use personal pronouns. But let us leave this aside for the time being.

3

We have thus begun to grasp these two [horizontal] lines as representing what is related to the enunciation process, on the one hand, and what is related to the process of the statement, on the other.

There are two lines, but that is not because each one represents a specific function. We encounter a twofold structure whenever language functions are involved.

Let us say, moreover, not only that there are two of them, but that they will always have opposite structures, the one being discontinuous while the other is continuous, and conversely.

Where is Anna Freud's articulation situated?

94 I am not developing this topology in order to simply give you the answer. I mean, I am not going to declare right from the outset "it is here or there" because it suits me or even because I might see a bit more than you do, since I am the one who constructed this thing and I know where I am going with it. If I have formulated this question, it is because the question arises of what this articulation represents,

which is the guise in which the reality of Anna Freud's dream presents itself to us.

This child was quite capable of perceiving the meaning of what her nurse said. Whether true or false, Freud implies this. Freud assumes it to be true, and rightly so, of course, because a nineteen-month-old child very clearly understands when her nurse is about to make life difficult for her.

What she enunciates in her dream is articulated in a form that I called flocculated. Signifiers follow one another in a certain order, but this order takes the form of a piling up. These signifiers are superimposed on each other, as it were, in the form of a column. They replace each other, like so many metaphors for each other. What we need to bring out here is the reality of the satisfaction qua interdicted.

We will not go any further with Anna Freud's dream. Since the topology of repression is involved in it, we will take the next step now by asking ourselves how what we are beginning to articulate allows us to clarify what is at stake in an adult's dream. What is the true difference between the form taken by the child's desire in Anna Freud's dream and the form taken by an adult's dream? The latter is assuredly more complicated since it is going to give us far more trouble, at least as regards its interpretation.

What Freud says on this score is in no way ambiguous – it suffices to read what he says. The function of what intervenes is akin to censorship. Censorship operates exactly as I illustrated it in the course of my previous Seminars. I am not sure if you recall the well-known story we liked so much, that of the typist caught up in the Irish revolution who said, "If the King of England were an idiot, then all would be permitted." I gave you a different explanation of it, based on what we find in Freud's work regarding punishment dreams. Specifically, we assumed the existence of a law stipulating that "Whoever shall say that the King of England is an idiot will have his head cut off," and I proposed we imagine that the next night I dream 95
that I have my head cut off.

There are still simpler forms that Freud also articulates. Since for some time now people have managed to get me to read the Tintin comic books, I will borrow an example from him. In a Tintinesque vein, I can evade the censorship in another manner: I can articulate out loud, "Whoever says that General Tapioca is no better than General Alcazar will have to deal with me." If I articulate something like that, it is clear that neither General Tapioca's supporters nor General Alcazar's supporters will be satisfied, and, what is more surprising still, those who support both of them will be the least satisfied.

Freud explains this very precisely: what is said places us before a highly peculiar difficulty which, at the same time, opens up very specific possibilities. Here is what is quite simply at stake.

What a child has to deal with is an interdiction, a no-saying [or: saying no, *dit que non*] – shaped by some principle of censorship and by the entire process of education – in other words, he has to deal with an operation on the signifier that makes it into something unspeakable. Yet the signifier is spoken, which assumes that the subject realizes that the no-saying remains said even if it is not executed. The upshot is that "doing but not saying" is distinct from "obeying and not doing."

Stated otherwise, the truth of desire is in and of itself an offense against the authority of the law. Thus the possible outcome of this new drama is to censure the truth of desire. But, censorship, however it operates, is not something that can be sustained with the stroke of a pen, because it is the enunciation process that is targeted.

To stop a statement from being enunciated, some pre-knowledge of the process of the statement is necessary. All discourse that is designed to banish this statement from the enunciation process is thus going to find itself more or less seriously at odds with its goal. The matrix of this impossibility is presented in the upper line of our graph – and it will provide us with plenty of other matrices. The fact that a subject articulates his demand means that he is caught up in a discourse in which he himself cannot help but be constructed
96 as an agent of enunciation, and this is why he cannot give up this statement, because he would thereby efface himself as a subject who knows what is at stake.

The relationship between these two lines that represent the enunciation process and the statement process is quite simple: it is the whole of grammar. If you like, I can tell you where and how, in what terms and in which tables, this has been articulated within the framework of a rational grammar. But for the time being, what we are dealing with is the following: Repression, when it arises, is essentially linked to something that appears to be absolutely necessary – namely, that the subject be effaced and disappear at the level of the enunciation process.

How and by what empirical pathways does the subject accede to this possibility? It is altogether impossible even to articulate it if we do not grasp the nature of the enunciation process.

As I have said, all speech begins from the intersection that I situate at point A on the graph. In other words, all speech [or every word, *toute parole*], insofar as the subject is implicated in it, is the Other's discourse [*discours de l'Autre*]. It is for this exact reason

that children initially believe that all of their thoughts are known to others.

As opposed to the definition given by psychologists, thought is not a first sketch of action. Thought is first and foremost something that is part and parcel of the dimension of the unsaid [*non-dit*] that I have just introduced by way of the distinction between the enunciation process and the statement process. But, of course, in order for something unsaid to be unsaid, one must speak. In order for the unsaid to subsist, it must be spoken at the level of the enunciation process – that is, qua the Other's discourse. This is why children do not doubt for a single instant that those who represent for them the locus in which this discourse resides – that is, their parents – know their thoughts.

This is, in any case, their first impression. It persists as long as something new has not been introduced, which we have not yet articulated here, concerning the relation between the upper line and the lower line – namely, what, apart from grammar, keeps them at a certain distance from each other.

I have no need to tell you how grammar keeps us at a distance in sentences like "I do not know if he is dead," "He is not dead as far as I know," "I have not heard he was dead," and "I am afraid he is dead" [*C'est la crainte qu'il fût mort*]. All of these subtle taxemes, 97
which run the gamut from the subjunctive to a *ne* that Le Bidois calls, in a way that is truly incredible for a philologist who writes for the *Le Monde* newspaper, "the expletive *ne*" – all of this is designed to show us that a whole part of grammar, the essential part, the taxemes, are designed to maintain a necessary distance between the two lines.

Next time, I will situate the articulations at stake here on these two lines. For a subject who has not yet learned these subtle forms [of expression], the distinction between the two lines comes well before. Certain conditions are required to reach this goal, which form the basis of the investigation that I am engaging in today. I would simply say that whenever the distinction between the two lines is based on the difference of tense [*temps*], which is not simply a temporal landmark, but a tension-related landmark, you can see the relationship that exists between this and the topology of desire.

This is where we are at. For a while, children are, in short, entirely caught up in the play of these two lines. What does it take here to bring about repression?

I hesitate to do something which, after all, I would not want to appear as it in fact is – making concessions. This involves appealing to notions of development. I would say that in the empirical process at the level at which repression occurs, an intervention, accident, or

impact of an empirical kind is certainly necessary – but the necessity with which this empirical impact reverberates, the necessity that this empirical impact precipitates in its form, is of another nature.

Whatever the case may be, at a certain moment a child perceives that the adults who were supposed to know all his thoughts actually don't. This assumes that he not take the step, at least not immediately, of entering into the fundamental possibility of what I will briefly and rapidly designate as the so-called mental form of hallucination. In the latter, we see the primitive structure of what I will call the backdrop of the enunciation process – parallel to the ongoing statement of existence – which is known as the echo of actions, the echo of explicit thoughts.

The fact remains that if a *Verwerfung* [foreclosure] has not
98 occurred, the child perceives at a certain moment that the adult who supposedly knows all his thoughts doesn't in the slightest. The adult actually does not know – whether in a dream "He knows he is dead" or "He does not know he is dead." Next time, we shall see the exemplary signification of this relationship in this case. We need not for the time being link these two terms, knowledge and death, for the reason that we have not yet gone far enough in formulating what will be targeted by repression.

What is the fundamental possibility of what can but be the goal of this repression, assuming it is successful?

It is not simply that it assigns the sign "no" to the unsaid, which says that the unsaid is not said, all the while leaving it said. If the unsaid involved in repression is truly such a thing, there is no doubt that the kind of negation that is at work here is so primordial that Freud situates *Verneinung* [negation] – which nevertheless appears to be one of the most elaborate forms of repression in the subject, since we find it in subjects with a high psychological efflorescence – right after the earliest *Bejahung* [affirmation]. You will observe that it is thus true that he proceeds, as I am doing for the time being, by means of a possibility – and even by means of a deduction – that is logical, rather than pointing to its genesis at a specific moment in time [*génétique*].

The earliest negation is what I am in the process of talking to you about regarding the unsaid. The next step is "He does not know," by means of which the Other, who is the locus of my speech, becomes the dwelling place of my thoughts; and by means of which the subject's *Unbewusste* [unconscious] can be established, into which the content of repression will enter.

Do not ask me to go any further or any more quickly here than I am already going. Although I tell you that the subject proceeds by following the example of this Other in order for the repression

process [*processus du refoulé*] to be inaugurated in him, I never said that it was an easy example to follow. Moreover, I have already indicated that there is more than one mode of negation, since I mentioned in this regard *Verwerfung* [foreclosure] and I also mentioned *Verneinung* [negation] again. I will rearticulate the latter next time.

Verdrängung, repression, cannot be such an easy operation to bring about, since what it involves in essence is that the subject be effaced. As regards repression, it easily comes to the child's attention that the others, the adults, know nothing. Naturally, a subject who comes into existence does not know that, if the adults know nothing, 99
it is, as we all know, because they have had all kinds of experiences involving repression. A subject knows nothing of this, and it is not an easy task for him to imitate them. For a subject to hide himself qua subject requires a form of sleight of hand that is rather trickier than many others I am led to present to you here.

There are three ways in which the subject can perform this trick: through *Verwerfung* [foreclosure], *Verneinung* [negation], and *Verdrängung* [repression].

Verdrängung involves the following: in order to mark what must be made to disappear as unsaid, in a way that is at least possible if not durable, the subject operates by the pathway of the signifier; he operates on the signifier. This is why, regarding the dream about the dead father that I mentioned last time – around which we continue to dance here even if I did not actually get back to it in today's class – Freud articulates that repression bears essentially on the elision of two clausulae, namely, "*nach seinem Wunsch*" and "*daß er* [*der Träumer*] *es wünschte*."

At its origin or root, repression, as it is presented in Freud's work, cannot be articulated otherwise than as bearing on the signifier.

We did not take a major step today, but we nevertheless took an additional step.

This step will allow us to see what sort of signifiers the operation of repression comes to bear on, for not all signifiers can be equally damaged, repressed, or rendered fragile.

It is of essential importance that we were already able to see that repression bears on what I called two clausulae, for this will put us in a good position to designate what is at stake, strictly speaking, when we talk, first, about the desire in a dream, and then about desire *tout court*.

December 3, 1958

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V

THE DREAM ABOUT THE DEAD FATHER: "AS HE WISHED"

The foreclusive and the discordant
The subject's vacillation when faced with the object of desire
"To be a beautiful blonde and popular, too . . ."
The dream laid out on the graph
Death, pain, castration, and necessity

At the point at which I left you last time, you could already see that I was tending to broach our topic, desire and its interpretation, by means of a certain ordination of signifying structure.

I showed you that what is enunciated in the signifier involves an internal split [*duplicité*] between the process of the statement and the process of the act of enunciation.

I emphasized the difference between the *I* of the statement and the *I* of enunciation. The former is involved in every statement insofar as, like any other [subject], it is the subject of a stated process, for example, which is moreover not the only mode of statement. The latter is involved in any and every enunciation, but especially when it announces itself as the *I* of enunciation.

The way in which this *I* announces itself is not unimportant. In little Anna Freud's dream, it announces itself by naming itself at the beginning of the dream's message. I indicated to you that something ambiguous remained there – is this *I*, qua *I* of enunciation, authenticated at that moment, or not? I am hinting that it is not yet authenticated, which is what accounts for the distinction Freud makes between the desire in a child's dream and the desire in an adult's dream.

In children, something has not yet been completed, precipitated by the structure, or distinguished in the structure. I showed you the
102 reflection and trace of this something, an undoubtedly late trace, in a psychological test. Although the clearly defined conditions of the experiment do not allow us to judge in advance what the situation is

for the subject at his core, it appears that the difficulty distinguishing between the *I* of enunciation and the *I* of the statement lasts a long time, going so far as to manifest itself in a form of fumbling that occurs during a test that chance and psychological flair made Binet point out, "I have three brothers, Paul, Ernest, and me," where we see that the subject does not yet know how to "uncount" himself.

The trace that I pointed out is an index – there are others too – of the element that is essential to the subject, which is constituted by the difference between the *I* of enunciation and the *I* of the statement. As I told you, we are not taking things up by way of deduction, but by a pathway about which I cannot say that it is empirical, since it was already traced out and constructed by Freud.

Freud tells us that the desire in an adult's dream is a borrowed desire, which is the mark of repression, a repression he characterizes at this level as [an instance of] censorship. What does he emphasize when he takes up the mechanism of censorship? He emphasizes the impossibilities of this censorship, and it is in this sense that he shows us what censorship is. I was trying to get you to dwell for a moment on this point by showing you the type of contradiction in terms implicit in anything that is unsaid at the level of enunciation, I mean the self-contradictory nature of a formulation like, "I am not saying that . . ."

Last time, I tried to convey this to you in various funny forms: "Anyone who says such and such about so and so whose speech must be respected, who must not be offended, will have to deal with me!" What does this mean, if not that in taking this obviously ironic stand, I find myself proffering exactly what one must not say?

Freud himself often highlighted how frequently dreams adopt this path – namely, that what they articulate as not being supposed to be said is [*est*] precisely what they have to say, and is that by which what is effectively said in the dreams transits.

As this formulation "I am not saying that . . ." brings us to something that is connected with the signifier's deepest structure, I would like to dwell on it further before taking an additional step.

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It is no accident that Freud makes *Verneinung* [negation], in the article he devotes to it, into the mainspring and the very root of the most primitive phase in which the subject is constituted as such, and is specifically constituted as unconscious.

A question thus begins to arise for us regarding the relation between *Verneinung* and the earliest *Bejahung* [affirmation] – that is

to say, between *Verneinung* and a signifier's access to the dimension of questions, for that is what a *Bejahung* is.

What is inscribed at the earliest [*plus primitif*] level? Is it, for example, the coupled terms "good" and "bad"? You are aware of the role this couple, which is clearly very early, has played in certain psychoanalytic approaches. To choose one or another of such primitive terms, or to refuse to do so, is already to opt for an entire orientation of one's analytic thinking.

I am dwelling on the function of the *ne* [not] in the formulation "I am not saying . . . [*Je ne dis pas* . . .]" because I believe that it is the essential articulation. By saying that one is not saying something, one says it. This makes clear, through a sort of *reductio ad absurdum*, what I have already pointed out to you as the most radical property, as it were, of the signifier.

If you recall, I already tried to direct you down the pathway of an exemplary image that showed the relationship between the signifier and a certain type of index or sign that I called a trace, that the signifier itself already bears, which is the mark of some sort of flip side of the stamp of the real.

I spoke to you about Robinson Crusoe and the trace of Friday's footstep [Seminar III, p. 167]. Is that trace already a signifier? I told you that the signifier begins not with a trace, but with the fact that one effaces the trace. Nevertheless, an effaced trace does not a signifier make. What inaugurates the signifier is the fact that it is posited as capable of being effaced. Stated otherwise, Robinson Crusoe effaces the trace of Friday's footstep, but what does he put in its place? If he wishes to remember where Friday's foot was, at the very least he makes a cross at that spot – in other words, a bar [or: line, *barre*] and another bar on top of that one. This is what specifies the signifier.

104 The signifier presents itself both as being able to be effaced and as being able, in the very operation of effacement, to subsist as such. I mean that the signifier presents itself as already endowed with the properties characteristic of the unsaid. With my bar, I cancel out the signifier, but I also perpetuate it indefinitely, inaugurating the dimension of the signifier as such. To make a cross is to do something that, strictly speaking, does not exist in any form of mapping available to animals.

We must not believe that nonspeaking beings, such as animals, map nothing, but they do not intentionally leave traces of traces with something that is said [*avec le dit*]. When we have time, we will turn to the mores of the hippopotamus, and we will see what he deliberately leaves on his tracks for his fellow creatures. What man leaves behind him is a signifier, a cross, a bar qua barred.

One bar is covered over by another bar, indicating that it is, as such, effaced. The function of the no of the no [or the no's no, *non du non*], insofar as it is a signifier that cancels itself out, in and of itself warrants a very long discussion. Logicians, who are always overly psychological in bent, have, strangely enough, left aside the earliest facet of negation in the formulations and classifications of it that they have provided.

You may or may not know what the different modes of negation are. I do not intend, after all, to tell you everything that can be articulated about this concept as regards what distinguishes the meaning of negation from privation, and so on. We must rely on the phenomenon of speaking, linguistic experience, to find what is earlier than all of that and more important to us. I will focus on that alone.

I cannot avoid turning here, at least momentarily, to research that has an experiential value – namely, the research that was done by Édouard Pichon, who was, as you know, one of our elder psychoanalysts, and who died at the beginning of the war from a serious heart condition. Pichon perceived something regarding negation and he made a distinction of which you should at least have a little glimpse, notion, or idea.

It was in his capacity as a logician that he made this distinction, 105
but he manifestly wanted to be a psychologist and he wrote that what he was doing was exploring the realm that runs *Des Mots à la pensée*, from words to thought – like so many others, he was quite capable of deluding himself. Luckily for us, what is weakest in his work is the claim that he is working upward from words to thought. But he turned out to be an admirable observer of linguistic usage. I mean that he had a feeling for the stuff of language which was such that he taught us a great deal more about words than about thought.

He dwelled especially on the use of negation in French, and in this realm he could not avoid making a discovery that he formulated with the distinction between the "foreclusive" and the "discordant." I will immediately give you some examples of this.

Let us consider a sentence like, *Il n'y a personne ici* [No one is here, or There is no one here]. This is foreclusive – it is ruled out for the time being that there is anyone here. Regarding this, Pichon pointed out that whenever you are dealing with a pure and simple foreclosure, French always employs two terms: a *ne*, and secondly something that is represented here by the word *personne*, but that can be represented by other words like *pas* and *rien*, as in *Je n'ai pas où loger* ["I have no place to stay"] and *Je n'ai rien à vous dire* ["I have nothing to say to you"].

Moreover, he observed that there is a very large number of uses of *ne*, and they are the most indicative – they are, as usual, those that

pose the most paradoxical problems – in which it appears all alone. A *ne* all alone is never, or almost never, used to indicate pure and simple negation, which is the kind of negation that in German is incarnated in the word *nicht* and in English in the word *not.* By itself, *ne*, when it is left to its own devices, expresses what Pichon called discordance. Now this discordance is situated precisely in between the enunciation process and the statement process.

I am going to discuss the example on which Pichon dwelled the most, for it is especially illustrative. It is the use of *ne* that people who understand nothing – in other words, people who want to understand – call the "expletive *ne*." I mentioned this last time, when I referred to an article in *Le Monde* that had struck me as slightly scandalous as regards this so-called expletive *ne*.

This *ne*, which is altogether essential to the use of the French language, is the one that is found in sentences like *Je crains qu'il*
106 *ne vienne*. Everyone knows that it means *Je crains qu'il vienne* [I am afraid he is coming] and not *Je crains qu'il ne vienne pas* [I am afraid he is not coming], but in French this is how you say it. In other words, at this point in its linguistic usage, French grasps the *ne* somewhere at the level of its wandering, as it were, as it descends from the enunciation process to the statement process.

At the level of enunciation, negation concerns the very articulation of the signifier, the pure and simple signifier said to be in action [or: at work, *en acte*]. It is the negation in *Je ne dis pas que . . .* – for example, *Je ne dis pas que je suis ta femme* [I am not saying that I am your wife]. At the level of the statement, it becomes the following negation: *Je ne suis pas ta femme* [I am not your wife].

We are obviously not here to explore the genesis of language, but something related to it is implied in psychoanalytic practice. Freud's articulation of negation implies, in any case, that negation descends from enunciation to the statement. Why should we be astonished by this? For, after all, every negation in statements involves a certain paradox, since it posits something in order to posit it at the same time as nonexistent – well, at least in a certain number of cases.

The level at which discordances are introduced is situated somewhere between enunciation and statement. Since some aspect of my fear precedes the fact that he is coming, since I am hoping he will not come, can I do otherwise than articulate *Je crains qu'il ne vienne*? In passing, this grabs ahold, as it were, of the discordant *ne* that is distinguished from the foreclusive *ne* in the realm of negation.

You will tell me, "This phenomenon is peculiar to the French language alone. You yourself said so earlier when you mentioned

the term *nicht* in German and the term *not* in English." Quite so. But that is not what is important.

In English, for example, we find traces in the articulation of the linguistic system of something analogous. I cannot bring this out here, as I am not here to give you a class on linguistics, but keep in mind that, in English, negation cannot be applied purely and simply to the verb that designates the process in statements. You do not say "I eat not,"* but rather "I do not eat."* In other words, for everything involving negation, statements are led to borrow a form that is based on the use of an auxiliary [verb], the auxiliary being typically what introduces the dimension of the subject into a statement, as in 107
"I don't eat,"* "I won't eat,"* or "I won't go."*

In French, *Je n'irai pas* [I won't go] merely expresses the fact that the subject will not go, whereas "I won't go"* implies a resolution on the subject's part not to go.

The fact that in English all pure and simple negation brings out something like an auxiliary dimension is the trace of something that links negation to the earliest position of enunciation in an essential manner.

Thus at the outset, the subject is constituted in the process of distinguishing between the *I* of enunciation and the *I* of the statement. In our last class, I began to articulate what comes next, the second time or stage.

That is what we will turn to now.

2

In order to show you by what route the subject enters into a dialectic involving the Other [*la dialectique de l'Autre*], insofar as this dialectic is imposed on him by the very structure of the difference between enunciation and statement, I have led you by a path that is not the only one possible, but that I deliberately made an empirical one – in other words, I have introduced the subject's real history into it.

The next step in this history is, as I told you, the dimension of "knowing nothing about it."

The subject puts it to the test against the backdrop of the idea that the Other knows all about his thoughts, since at the outset his thoughts are, by their very nature and structure, this Other's discourse. The discovery that the Other knows nothing about his thoughts, which is factually true, inaugurates the pathway by which the subject develops the opposite requirement that lies within the unsaid. From there, he will have to find the difficult path by which he must implement the unsaid in his being, going so far as to become

the sort of being with which we deal – namely, a subject who has the dimension of the unconscious.

The essential step that psychoanalysis has us take in the experience of humanity is that – after many centuries in which philosophy has, I would say, entered obstinately and ever further into a discourse in which the subject is merely the correlate of the object in
108 the knowledge relationship, where he is what is presupposed by the knowledge of objects, where he is a sort of strange subject about which I said somewhere, I do not recall where, he could fill up philosophers' weekends, because the rest of the week (namely, during the workweek) everyone can naturally neglect altogether this subject who is in some sense but the shadow and underside [*doublure*] of objects – we analysts realized that something about this subject had been overlooked, namely, the fact that he speaks.

This is the case only from the moment at which we can no longer overlook him – that is, from the moment at which his domain as a subject who speaks stands on its own two feet, as it were, whether the subject is there or not. But what completely changes the nature of his relations to the object is the crucial thing known as desire.

It is in the field of desire that we try to articulate the relations between the subject and the object. These are relations involving desire, for it is in the field of desire that psychoanalytic experience teaches us that the subject must be articulated. The relationship between the subject and the object is not based on need; it is a complex relationship that I am trying to elucidate for you.

I will begin by quickly indicating that, inasmuch as the relationship between the subject and the object is situated in the field of desire, the object cannot be the correlate of, or something that merely corresponds to, one of the subject's needs. The object is something that props the subject up at the precise moment at which the subject has to face, as it were, his existence. The object is something that props him up in his existence in the most radical sense – namely, in the sense in which he exists in language. Otherwise stated, the object is something that is outside of him and whose true linguistic nature he can grasp only at the very moment at which he, as a subject, must be effaced, vanish, or disappear behind a signifier. At that moment, which is a moment of panic, so to speak, the subject must grab hold of something, and he grabs hold of the object qua object of desire.

Someone whom I will not name immediately today, in order not to create confusion, someone who is quite contemporary but is now dead, wrote somewhere: "To ascertain exactly what the miser whose treasure was stolen lost: thus we should learn much." This is exactly what we must learn, I mean learn for ourselves and teach to others.

Psychoanalysis is the first locus or dimension in which one can 109
ascertain this. Of course, in order to get you to grasp what I mean, I will have to find another example, a more noble example, because the miser is ridiculous – in other words, far too close to the unconscious for you to be able to bear it.

If I were to articulate it to you in the same terms that I used in speaking of existence earlier, in two minutes you would take me for an existentialist, which is not what I want. I will take an example from the film by Jean Renoir entitled *La Règle du jeu* [*The Rules of the Game*].

In this film there is a character played by Marcel Dalio, who is an old man – the kind we see in everyday life, in certain social circles, and we must not believe that he is limited to this particular social circle – who collects objects and especially music boxes. If you still remember the film, recall the moment at which, in front of quite a few people, Dalio comes across his latest find: an especially beautiful music box. At that moment the character is literally in a position which is one we can or rather must call shame [*pudeur*] – he turns red, effaces himself, disappears, and is very ill at ease. What he has shown, he has shown – but how could the onlookers understand that we are faced here with the precise point of oscillation that manifests itself to the highest degree in the subject's passion for the object he collects, which is one of the forms of the object of desire?

Is what the subject shows none other than the major point, the most intimate point of himself? No, for what is propped up by this object is precisely what the subject cannot reveal even to himself. It is something that is at the cusp of the greatest secret. It is in this direction that we must seek to figure out what the treasure chest is for the miser. Another step is certainly required here for us to move from the level of the collector to that of the miser. This is why misers can only be presented in comedic registers.

But this has already introduced us to what is at stake when the subject finds he has begun, starting at a certain moment, to articulate his wish insofar as it is secret. How does he express his wish here? This expression varies according to different languages, and according to the forms that are characteristic of each language to which I alluded last time. Different modes and registers have been 110
invented, which all strike different chords. Do not always lend credence to what grammarians say on this score – the subjunctive is not as subjunctive as it seems, and other verbal modes can express the type of wish in question here just as well.

I looked around for something that could illustrate this for you and, I do not know why, a little poem came back to me from the

recesses of my memory, which I had some trouble reconstructing, and even resituating.

Être une belle fille
blonde et populaire
qui mette de la joie dans l'air
et lorsqu'elle sourit
donne de l'appétit
aux ouvriers
de Saint-Denis.

[To be a beautiful blonde
and popular, too,
who brings joy to all
and when she smiles
makes the workers
in Saint-Denis horny.]

This was written by a contemporary of ours, a discrete poetess. She happens to be petite and black, and undoubtedly expresses, in her nostalgia for making the workers in Saint-Denis horny, something that can be rather strongly tied to some stray moment of her ideological reveries. But we cannot say that such is her usual occupation.

I would like to get you to dwell on this phenomenon, this poetic phenomenon, for a moment, because we find here first of all something that is quite important as concerns temporal structure.

We have here what is perhaps the pure form, I am not saying of a wish [*voeu*], but of what is wished for [*souhaité*] – that is to say, of what in a wish is enunciated as wished for. As you see, what is wished for presents itself here in the infinitive tense, and the primitive subject seems to be elided here. But this does not mean anything – in reality she is not in the least bit elided. By entering into the structure in order to map the position of what is articulated here, we see that this articulation is situated before the subject and determines her retroactively. We are not talking here either about a pure and simple aspiration or a regret, but rather about an articulation that is positioned before the subject as retroactively determining her to be a certain type of being.

111 This doesn't mean much. The fact remains that what is wished for is articulated in this way. We have here something that we have reason to remember when we seek to give meaning to the sentence with which *The Interpretation of Dreams* ends: "Indestructible desire models the present on the image of the past." We immediately chalk

up what this sentence, whose purring we hear, says to repetition or ex post facto action; but is this so very clear if we examine it closely? If indestructible desire models the present on the image of the past, it is perhaps because, like the proverbial carrot held out in front of the donkey, it is always in front of the subject and always retroactively produces the same effects.

Once we have indicated the structural characteristics of this statement, we are simultaneously confronted with its ambiguity. After all, the gratuitous characteristic, as it were, of this enunciation does not fail to have certain consequences, which nothing stops us from exploring. Hence the following remark.

Having gone back to the text [of the poem], I saw that it was entitled, as if by chance, *Voeux secrets* [Secret wishes]. This is thus what I retrieved from my memory when, some twenty-five or thirty years after reading it, I was looking for something that would bring us to the secret of wishes. This secret wish is poetically expressed – that is, it is, of course, communicated. And this is the whole problem – how to communicate to others something that has been constituted as a secret? Answer: through some sort of lie.

In fact, to us, and we are a bit cleverer than others are, this can in the final analysis be translated by saying, "*True as it is* that I am a beautiful blonde and popular, too, I desire to bring joy to all and make the workers in Saint-Denis horny." Now, it is not clear or self-evident that every being, no matter how generous or poetic or a poetess, has such a strong desire to bring joy to all. After all, why bring joy to all? Why if not in fantasy and in order to demonstrate to what degree the object of fantasy is metonymic? Joy therefore circulates here like a metonymy.

As for the workers in Saint-Denis, they take a lot. Let them divide it up among themselves. In any case, there are enough of them that we would not know which one of them to turn to.

In this digression, I have introduced the structure of wishes to you by the pathway of poetry. We can now enter into it by the pathway of serious things – I mean by locating the actual role that is played in it by desire. 112

3

We have seen, as we should have expected, that desire has to find its place somewhere on the graph between, on the one hand, the point from which we began when we said that the subject is alienated there [A], inasmuch as he must enter into the defiles of the signifier – in other words, essentially the alienation of the appeal [to the Other],

that related to need – and, on the other hand, the beyond in which the dimension of the unsaid is introduced as essential.

The dream that I selected, the one involving the dead father, will allow us to show how and where desire is articulated.

This dream is assuredly among the most problematic, insofar as it is a dream in which a dead man appears. The appearance of dead people in dreams is far from having revealed its secret to us, even if Freud talked a good deal about it already – see page 433 of the German edition [SE V, p. 431]. Throughout his analysis of dreams in the *Traumdeutung*, Freud never stopped emphasizing the profound ambivalence of feelings we have about those we love and respect, this having been his first take on the psychology of the unconscious. He broached this topic anew regarding the dream about the dead father, which I selected in order to begin to try to spell out for you the function of desire in dreams.

I remarked last time that we always forget what is in the *Traumdeutung*. Having decided for various reasons to reread the first edition of it, I realized that I had forgotten that this dream was only added in 1930. More precisely, it was first added as a footnote shortly after its publication in the *Sammlung kleiner Schriften zur Neurosenlehre*, 1913, volume 3, page 271 of the second edition, and it was moved into the text in the 1930 edition. Since then it has thus been in the main body of the *Traumdeutung*.

I will indicate once again how this dream goes. The dreamer sees his father appear before him, a father whom he has just lost after a long, drawn-out, and tormenting illness. The dreamer sees his father
113 in front of him and is "penetrated," as Freud tells us, with profound pain at the thought that his father is dead and "did not know it." Freud emphasizes the absurd resonance of this formulation and he tells us that it can be understood if we add that the father was dead "as he [i.e., the son] wished." In short, "he did not know" that it was "as he wished" that "he was dead."

These are the elements that I must thus situate on the different levels of the graph. We will try to verify this in detail at the experiential level.

I will place "he did not know" on the lower line, insofar as it is essentially related to the dimension of the constitution of the subject. It is, in effect, on the basis of a useless "he did not know" that the subject must situate himself, and it is precisely here that he must constitute himself as not knowing, for it is the only exit offered to him in order for what is not said to actually take on the import of the unsaid.

"He did not know" is situated at the level of the statement, but it is clear that no statement of this type can be made, if it is not

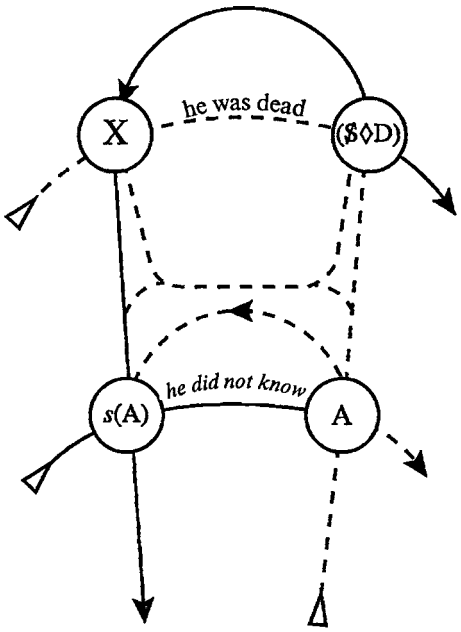

Figure 5.1: Interpretation between statement and enunciation

propped up by an underlying enunciation. Indeed, "he was dead" means absolutely nothing to a being who does not speak. We have 114
proof thereof. I would go even further – this is continually shown by the immediate indifference that most animals manifest to the remains or cadavers of their fellow beings once they are cadavers.

An animal can, no doubt, be attached to the deceased. People talk about dogs being so attached. But it should be pointed out that dogs are exceptions in the sense that, although they do not have an unconscious, they have a superego. Stated otherwise, [to be attached to a dead being] it is necessary that something come into play that allows for the emergence of something along the lines of signifying articulation. But let us leave that aside.

"He was dead" already assumes that the subject has entered into something like existence. Existence here is nothing other than the fact that a subject, from the moment at which he is posited in the signifier, can no longer destroy himself; he enters into this intolerable sequence that immediately unfolds for him in the imaginary, and which is such that he can no longer conceive of himself except as forever re-emerging in existence.

This is not a philosophical construction. I have been able to observe it in those whom we call patients. It was, I remember, one

of the turning points of the inner experience of a female patient of mine when, in a certain dream – which did not arrive at just any old moment in her analysis, naturally – she alighted upon something that was apprehended and experienced in a dream, which was nothing other than a sort of pure feeling of existence. It was the sense of existing, as it were, in an indefinite way. And from the heart of this existence a new existence continually re-emerged for her – for her innermost intuition, so to speak – a new existence that extended as far as the eye could see. Existence was apprehended and felt by her to be something that, by its very nature, is extinguished only to re-emerge forever further on, and this was accompanied in her by intolerable pain.

This is quite close to what the content of the dream [about the dead father] brings us. For the person who has the dream is the dreamer. It is always good to keep this in mind when we talk about the characters in a dream. Here, as the dream is that of a son, the question of what we call identification arises especially easily. We have no need for dialectic to think that there is some identificatory relationship between the subject and his own dreamlike fancies [*fantaisies de rêve*].

What do we see here? We have a dreamer, in pain of the most pro-
115 found kind, standing before his father. And we have a father who does not know he is dead, or more precisely – for we must consider the verb tense in which the subject apprehends and communicates it to us – *il ne savait pas* ["he did not know"].

I am emphasizing this point without being able to emphasize it maximally for the time being. The rule that guides me here is to proscribe half-baked formulations and to always strive not to give you approximations. But as, on the other hand, I cannot give precise formulations from the outset, this leads me at times to be less than clear, and in any case naturally leaves certain doors open.

As for dreams, it is important that we remember the way in which they are communicated to us. It is always by a statement. A dreamer recounts what to us? Another statement, but it is not at all adequate to say that. He presents this other statement to us as an enunciation.

Indeed, if a dreamer tells us a dream, it is for an entirely different reason than for the statement he recounts to us. It is in order for us to seek its key or meaning – that is to say, in order for us to figure out what it means. From this vantage point, the fact that "he did not know" – which is inscribed on the graph at the first level of the split – is said in the imperfect tense takes on great importance.

For those who are interested in the relationship between a dream and the speech by which we become cognizant of it, let us continue and see how things break down.

What do we find on the side of what is presented in the dream as the subject? We find an affect: pain. Pain related to what? To the fact "that [his father] was dead." What corresponds to this pain on the father's side is "he did not know." He did not know what? The same thing, "that he was dead." By way of a complement, I would add "as he wished."

THE SUBJECT'S SIDE	THE FATHER'S SIDE
pain	he did not know
(owing to the fact) that he was dead	that he was dead
as he wished	

Figure 5.2: Distribution of the four elements between the two characters in the dream

When Freud tells us that the meaning, and implicitly the interpretation, of the dream is found in "as he wished," it all seems quite simple. Yet I have indicated that it is not quite so simple. But what does this mean? If we are at the level of the signifier, as Freud formally indicates – not just in this passage, but also in the one about repression that I asked you to reread – you must immediately see that we can make more than one use of "as he wished." 116

Where does "he was dead as [the dreamer] wished" take us? It seems to me that some of you at least can recall the point to which I once led you in discussing the story of Oedipus.

Recall that, after having exhausted in every form the pathway of desire, insofar as it is not known to the subject, and suffering the effect of punishment – for what crime? for no other crime than that of having existed in this desire – Oedipus finds himself led to a point where he can proffer no other exclamation than *me phúnai*, "Never to have been born," where existence, having arrived at the extinction of his desire, ends up. Well, the pain that the dreamer feels in the dream – let us not forget that he is someone about whom we know nothing other than the immediately prior fact that he witnessed his father's demise in the course of a long illness – is close, in experience, to the pain of existence when nothing any longer inhabits it other than existence itself, and that everything, when suffering is excessive, tends to abolish a term that cannot be uprooted: the desire to live.

If the pain of existing after desire had dried up was experienced by someone, it was no doubt by he who was far from being a stranger to the dreamer – namely, his father. But what is certain, in any case, is that the dreamer knew about this pain. We will never know if he who felt this pain in the real knew or did not know the meaning of

the pain, but what *is* clear is that the dreamer does not know what he is taking on, which is the pain itself. He does not know it in the dream, of course – nor, quite surely, outside of the dream – before interpretation leads us there.

117 The proof thereof is that in the dream he can only articulate this pain in a way that, in his relation to the other, is both faithful and cynical, and takes an absurd form. What does this form correspond to? If we turn back to the short section in the *Traumdeutung* that discusses absurd dreams [SE V, pp. 426–45], we see that the impression of absurdity, which is often linked in dreams to a sort of contradiction that is linked to the structure of the unconscious itself, can lead to something laughable, but that in certain cases absurdity is introduced to express a particularly violent repudiation of the designated meaning. Freud says this quite specifically regarding this dream, and it confirms what I was trying to articulate for you here even before having reread the passage.

What does "he did not know" mean? It assuredly means that the dreamer can see that his father did not know the dreamer's wish – his wish that his father die in order to be done with his suffering. In other words, at this level, the dreamer is cognizant of his own wish. He can see – or not see, it all depends on what point he is at in his analysis – that, in the past, he himself had wished his father would die, although not for the sake of his father, but of the son, his rival.

But there is something that he cannot see at all at the point he is at, which is that he has taken on his father's pain without knowing it. He cannot see, moreover, that it is absolutely necessary for him to keep situating ignorance across from him [i.e., outside of himself] – in the father as a character in the dream, that is, in the object, in the form "he did not know" – in order not to know that it would have been better to have never been born. If there is nothing at the end of existence but the pain of existing, it would be so much better to take that pain as though it were the other's [*l'assumer comme celle de l'autre*] – as though it were that of the other who is there, and who continues to speak, just like I, the dreamer, continue to speak.

That would be far preferable than to see the final mystery revealed, which is the most secret content of this wish. What is it in the final analysis? We have no element of it in the dream itself, we know it only through our knowledge of analytic experience. Its secret content is the wish for the father's castration – in other words, the wish par excellence which, at the moment of the father's death, is reflected back onto the son because it is his turn to be castrated. This he must not see at any cost.

Although I am not, for the time being, in the process of detail-
118 ing the terms and stages by which to lay out the interpretation [of

this dream], it is easy to show on the graph that a first interpretation can immediately be made at the lower level, at the level of the continuous line on which are inscribed the dreamer's words "he did not know." This would be a remark of the type: "In your dream, your father has no pain, since, as you wished, he did not know you had enunciated this wish." This would be all fine and well, but on condition that the analyst already include in this remark something problematic that would be such as to make emerge from the unconscious what had up until then been repressed and discontinuous at the upper level – namely, that "[his father had been] dead" already for a long time "as he wished," as in his Oedipal wish.

However, the point now is to give its full import to what, as we saw earlier, goes well beyond this wish.

In effect, the wish to castrate the father, which is reflected back on the dreamer, has an import that goes beyond any and all justifiable desire. This wish here is but the mask of what is most profound in the structure of desire as it is revealed in the dream – namely, the structuring, signifying necessity that prohibits the dreamer from escaping from the concatenation of existence insofar as it is determined by the nature of the signifier. This necessary sequence is not expressed by "his wish"; it is expressed by nothing other than the essence of *selon* [as, in *selon son voeu*, as he wished].

In the end, *Verdrängung* rests entirely on the problematic of the subject's effacement, which is, in this case, his saving grace, at this final point where the subject is doomed to a final ignorance. This is the meaning I tried to convey to you at the very end of our last class. The mainspring of *Verdrängung* is not the repression of something full that is discovered, seen, and understood, but rather the elision of a pure and simple signifier, that being *nach* or *selon* – the elision of what serves as the signature of the agreement or discordance, the agreement or discord between enunciation and the signifier, the relationship between what lies in the statement and what lies in the necessities of enunciation. Everything revolves around the elision of a clausula – that is, of a pure and simple signifier.

In the final analysis, what is manifested in the desire in the dream is the following: "he did not know." What does that thus mean, in the absence of any other signification that we have within our grasp?

We will see it when we take up the dream of someone we know better, namely Freud. Next time we will take up a dream that is quite 119
close to this one in the *Traumdeutung* – the dream in which Freud sees his father again in the guise of Garibaldi [SE V, pp. 427–9, 447–8, 478]. We will go further with that one, and we will see what Freud's desire truly is. Those who reproach me for not making enough of anal eroticism will be repaid in spades.

For the time being, let us stick to the dream about the dead father.

This schematic dream figures the dreamer's confrontation with death. But the shade who is summoned up by the dream makes his mortal meaning fall away. What, indeed, does the appearance of a dead man mean, if not that the dreamer is not dead, because he can suffer in the dead man's stead?

But that is not all. Behind this suffering there lies a lure, the only one the subject can still hold onto at this crucial moment. And what is it? It is the lure of his rival, the lure of killing the father, the lure of imaginary fixation.

We will pick it up there next time, for I believe that, with what I have said today, I have sufficiently paved the way for the elucidation of the constant formula of fantasy in the unconscious: barred S, lozenge, little *a* (*$◊a*).

The subject, insofar as he is barred, canceled out, and abolished by the action of the signifier, finds his prop in the other who, for the speaking subject, is what defines the object as such. We will try to identify this other, who is the prevalent object of human eroticism.

In fact, we will identify him very quickly. Those who attended the first year of this Seminar heard me talk about this for a whole term. This other is the image of one's own body, in the broad sense we shall give it.

In this case, it is here – in this human fantasy, which is the subject's fantasy and which is no longer anything but a shade – that the subject maintains his existence, maintains the veil that is such that he can continue to be a subject who speaks.

December 10, 1958

VI

INTRODUCING THE OBJECT OF DESIRE

The three levels of interpretation
The algorithm ($\$ \lozenge a$) guides us
From castration to aphanisis
From use to exchange
From hippos to women

Last time, I mentioned Jacques Damourette and Edouard Pichon's *Des Mots à la pensée: Essai de grammaire de la langue française*. The details about foreclosure and discordance that I mentioned can be found in two different places in the second volume, where we find a whole, condensed entry on negation. There, in particular, you will see that the foreclusive is incarnated in French by such odd words as *pas* and *point*, as well as by *personne*, *rien*, *goutte*, and *mie*, that bear in themselves the sign of their origin in traces. In effect, they are all words that designate traces. It is here that the symbolic act of foreclosure or rejection is found in French, the word *ne* remaining reserved for the discordance that negation more originally is.

Last time I tried to show you that, at its origin, in its linguistic root, negation is something that emigrates from enunciation toward the statement.

I showed you in what respect this could be represented on the little graph that we use here, by situating the elements of the dream "he did not know he was dead" on it.

It was around the phrase "as he wished" that we designated the point of desire's real impact, inasmuch as the dream both bears and marks it.

To continue to break new ground, we must ask ourselves in what way and why such action is possible on the part of desire in dreams.

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1

I indicated at the end of the last class by what path I intend to investigate the function of desire, as it is articulated in Freud's work, namely at the level of unconscious desire – that is, on the basis of the formula ($\$ \Diamond a$) to which we are led by everything we have demonstrated regarding the structure of the dream about the dead father.

What does the dream consist of? It shows us the confrontation between the subject and an other, a small other in this case.

In the dream, the father seems to be alive again, and he turns out to be related to the subject in ways whose ambiguities we began to investigate. It is the father who makes it such that the subject takes upon himself what I called the pain of existing. It is the father whose soul the subject witnessed to be in agony. It is the father whose death he wished for – insofar as nothing is more intolerable than existence reduced to itself, existence beyond anything that can sustain it, existence sustained despite the abolition of desire.

I indicated what we could glimpse here by way of a distribution of intra-subjective functions, as it were. The subject takes responsibility for the other's pain, all the while rejecting onto the other what he does not know – namely, the subject's own ignorance. His desire is, in effect, to stay ignorant. This is the precise desire in the dream.

The desire for death takes on its full meaning here. It is the desire not to awaken – not to awaken to the message, the most secret message that is borne by the dream itself, which is that the subject, through his father's death, is now confronted with death, having been protected from it hitherto by the father's presence. "Confronted with death" – what does that mean? Confronted with an x that is linked to the father's function, that is present here in the pain of existing, and that is the pivotal point around which what Freud discovered in the Oedipus complex revolves – namely, the signification of castration.

Such is the function of castration.

What does "to take castration upon oneself" [*assumer la castration*] signify? Does one ever truly assume [one's own] castration? What is this sort of point on which the last waves of "Analysis
123 Terminable and Interminable," as Freud calls it, crash? And up to what point is the analyst not simply within his rights, but in a position to be able to interpret it in this dream and regarding this dream?

At the end of what I said last time about the dream, I raised, without answering it, a question regarding the three ways in which the analyst can bring the subject's "as he wished" into the interpretation.

There is, first of all, the way that proceeds according to [*selon*] the subject's speech, according to what he wanted, which he recalls perfectly well, it having not been forgotten by him in the least. "He did not know, as he wished." The phrase "as he wished" is inserted here at the level of the statement line.

Re-established afterward at the level of the upper line – that is, at the level of the enunciation that is hidden in unconscious memory – it restores the traces of the Oedipus complex, which are those of the child's desire for the father's death: "He was dead, as he wished."

Recall here what Freud tells us about the child's desire, which is, when any dream forms, the capitalist, the latter finding his entrepreneur in a current desire. The current desire, which is far from always being unconscious, is the one that is expressed in the dream, and it is strictly speaking the desire in the dream. In this case, once the phrase "as he wished" is restored to the level of the child's desire, isn't it clear that the latter finds itself in a position to go in the direction of the desire in the dream?

What is, in effect, the desire in this dream? It is indisputably – at this crucial moment in the subject's life, the disappearance of his father – to interpose the image of the object [*i(a)*], in order to make it into the prop of a perpetual ignorance veiling desire. In short, "he did not know" buttresses what was up until then desire's alibi. It maintains and perpetuates the very function of prohibition that the father conveyed. The latter is what gives desire here its enigmatic and even abyssal form. It separates the subject from his desire; it gives the subject shelter from or a defense, in the final analysis, against this desire; it gives him a moral excuse not to confront it.

This was very clearly glimpsed by Ernest Jones, whose extraordinary insights about certain points of this psychical dynamic I will have the opportunity to show you today.

Lastly, can't we say that there is some intermediate stage of the interpretation of the dream to which the pure and simple interpretation of Oedipal desire is connected, like: "You wished 124
for your father's death at such and such a time and for such and such a reason"? You will recognize the nature of this third stage once I have designated it as "identification with the aggressor." Identification with the aggressor lies somewhere in one's childhood. Haven't you recognized that, being one of the typical forms of defense, it is essential, and that it emerges at the very place where "as he wished" is elided?

The meaning of "as" [*selon*] is undoubtedly essential if we are to reach a full interpretation of the dream.

The fact remains that the conditions and opportunities that allow the analyst to reach it will depend on the stage of the treatment

and on the context of the response that the subject gives – by what means? By his dreams – since we know that the dreams dreamt by a subject in analysis are responses to the analyst, at least to what the analyst has become in the transference – but essentially, I would say, by the logical position of terms.

The fact remains, above all, that we can wonder if, to the question "What is the wish in 'as he wished'?" we do not always risk giving some precipitated or premature response, and thus giving the subject an opportunity to avoid what is at stake – namely, the dead end in which he is placed by the fundamental structure that turns the object of any desire into the prop of an essential metonymy.

As such, in effect, the object of human desire presents itself in a vanishing form, about which we can perhaps glimpse that castration turns out to be what we might call the final temperament.

In order to investigate more precisely what human desire means and signifies, we are thus led to broach the question from the other end, an end that is not given in dreams – namely, to take up the question via our algorithm, in which the barred S is confronted with and placed across from little *a*, the object.

2

I introduced the algorithm ($\$ \lozenge a$) last time. Why not put it to the test
125 of the phenomenology of desire, as the latter presents itself to us as analysts? If we allow ourselves to be guided by this algorithm, it will lead us to investigate together our shared experience.

Let us try to see in what form the desire that is in us – that has been there since Freud, that lies at the heart of analysis, and that curiously enough has not been investigated as it should have been heretofore – presents itself in the subject.

The subject is not obligatorily nor always a neurotic subject. But if he is, it is no reason to assume that our research concerning desire does not have to take his structure into account, for that structure reveals a more general structure. The neurotic indubitably finds himself situated somewhere along the continuum of an experience that, to our way of thinking, is universal. All of Freud's theories are constructed upon this foundation.

Before examining some of the ways in which the dialectic of the relations between the subject and his desire have already been broached – that is, before coming to Jones's thought, which I mentioned earlier – I want to discuss something I came across quite recently in my clinical practice, which seems rather well designed to introduce what I am seeking to illustrate.

The patient in question was impotent. It is not bad to start with impotence in order to begin to investigate what desire is. We are sure, in any case, to be talking about human beings.

He was a young man who, of course, like many of those who are impotent, was not at all impotent. He had made love quite normally in the course of his existence, and had had a few liaisons. He was married and it was with his wife that things were not working anymore. This is not to be chalked up to impotence. The term does not seem appropriate given that the problem concerned the precise object with whom relations were for him the most desirable, for he loved his wife.

Now, here is more or less what, after a certain amount of analytic work, emerged from the subject's remarks. It was absolutely not the case that he had no passion [*élan*] for her, but if he allowed himself to be guided by it on any particular night, would he be able to sustain it? This was the particular point he was at in his analysis.

Things had gone very far in the conflict ignited by the difficulty he had been having. Did he have the right to impose on his wife some 126
new test, some new addition to his attempts and failures? In short, was this desire – whose possibility of fulfillment was far from zero, as one could sense in every regard – legitimate?

I cannot take my discussion of this particular case any further here, and give you the whole case history, if only because it is an ongoing analysis, and for many other reasons as well. This is one of the disadvantages we always encounter when we allude to ongoing analyses. I will thus borrow from other analyses a term that is altogether decisive in certain developments, which sometimes lead to detours, or even what we call perversions, which are of a much greater structural importance than what, so to speak, nakedly played itself out in this case of impotence.

Does he have a big enough phallus? In certain cases, the question emerges in the subject's lived experience and comes to the light of day in analysis. It may serve a decisive function, and, as in other places, reveal a structure: the point at which the subject raises the question. From certain angles or directions, this question can in and of itself lead the subject to try out a whole series of solutions, which – being superimposed, forming a series, and being added to each other – can lead him quite far from the field of a normal execution of what he has everything he needs to execute.

This "big enough phallus," or more exactly this phallus that is essential to the subject, thus turns out to be foreclosed at a certain moment of his experience. This is something that we encounter in a thousand different forms, which naturally are not always apparent or manifest, but which are latent. But it is precisely in the case in

which this moment or stage of the subject's experience is exposed for all the world to see [*à ciel ouvert*] that, as La Palice would say, we can see and put our finger on it, and also give it its full import.

At the moment of the subject's life at which he encounters the sign of desire, which is often situated at the moment of the awakening of puberty, we see him more than once confronted, as it were, with something that is similar to what I mentioned earlier – is his desire legitimated or sanctioned by something else? We can take up what appears here already in a flash, in the phenomenology in which the
127 subject expresses it, in the following form – does he have at his disposal an absolute weapon? If he does not, he will find himself drawn into a series of identifications, alibis, and games of hide and seek that may take him very far afield.

For the aforementioned reasons, I cannot go into the dichotomies that are at work here. This is not too important, for the essence of what I want to indicate does not lie there. The point is to get you to grasp where desire finds the origin of its peripeteia.

The subject always alienates his desire in a sign, promise, or anticipation, something that brings a possible loss with it as such. Because of this possible loss, desire turns out to be linked to the dialectic of a lack. It is subsumed by a stage [*temps*] which, as such, is not there – no more than a sign is desire – a stage which, in part, is yet to come. In other words, desire must confront the fear that it will not stay the same over time and that, qua *artifex*, it perishes, if I may put it thus.

Of course, the desire that man feels and senses as an *artifex* can perish only with regard to the artifice of his own speaking. It is in the dimension of speaking that this fear develops and stabilizes. And it is here that we encounter a term that is so surprising and that has so curiously been left behind by psychoanalysis, the one that Jones makes into the mainstay of his reflections or meditations on castration – namely, "aphanisis."

In the as-it-were modern practice of analysis, whose norms reorient the analyst's relation to the patient in an entirely different direction, the phenomenology of castration is ever more veiled, as we see in recent publications. On the other hand, at the stage [in the history] of psychoanalysis at which Jones found himself, different tasks forced themselves on him; he was confronted with the need to give Freud's thought a certain interpretation, exegesis, apology, and explanation concerning what is involved in the castration complex, in particular. It was there that he found a way to get his point across – a ruse, if you will – that consists in saying that people are afraid of being deprived of their own desire.

The word "aphanisis" means disappearance. As you will see

in Jones's text, what is at stake is the disappearance of desire. Aphanisis served him as a sensible introduction to a problematic that gave the dear man a lot of worries, of which he never managed 128
to rid himself – that of the relations between women and the phallus.

From the outset, he used the term to give men and women's relations to their desire the same common denominator. This was tantamount to a dead end, for it completely neglected what Freud discovered – namely, that these relations are fundamentally different owing to the asymmetry in the different sexes with regard to the phallus as a signifier. I believe that I have conveyed this to you adequately enough that, for the time being, we can take this for granted, at least provisionally.

Moreover, this use of "aphanisis," whether it was at the root of Jones's invention or whether it only arose from its consequences, marked a sort of inflection point that, in short, deflected its author from the true question, which is, "What does the possibility of aphanisis signify in the structure of the subject?" Doesn't it oblige us to [postulate] a structuring of the human subject as such, precisely insofar as he is a subject for whom existence is supposable and presupposed beyond desire, a subject who exists and subsists outside of his desire?

The question is not whether or not we must objectively take into account desire in its most radical form – namely, the desire to live or the "life instinct," as we say. What psychoanalysis shows us is entirely different – it is that the desire to live is, as such, subjectively put into play in the subject's lived experience. This does not merely mean that human experience is sustained by desire – this we naturally suspect to be true – but that the human subject takes desire into account and counts on it.

When the dear old and well-known *élan vital* [vital impulse] – that charming incarnation of human desire in nature that truly warrants the term anthropomorphism, and with which we try to make nature, about which we do not understand much, hang together – is at stake, the human subject sees it before him and is afraid that it will fail him.

What is at stake here is, all the same, something other than reflections of the unconscious. In and of itself, this suggests that we would do well to have a few structural requirements here. I mean that the subject/object relationship, which is conceived of as immanent, as it were, in the pure dimension of knowledge, nevertheless raises prob- 129
lems for us that are a bit more complicated once desire comes into the picture, as Freudian practice proves to us.

Since we began with impotence, we can turn now to the other term. Human beings sometimes manage to satisfy their desire,

sometimes managing to anticipate it being satisfied. But when they are within range of satisfying it, I mean when they are not struck with impotence, it also sometimes happens that they become afraid of satisfying it – whereas, on this score, someone who is impotent fears neither potency nor impotence. The very remarkable cases in which the subject is afraid of the satisfaction of his own desire occur more often than they should. This is because the satisfaction would then make him dependent on the other who is going to satisfy him.

This is an everyday occurrence, phenomenologically speaking. It happens all the time in human experience. There is no need for us to refer to the great dramas that have taken on the role of exemplary illustrations of this problematic in order for us to observe how someone's life story unfolds. The subject spends his time avoiding each and every opportunity to encounter what has always been his most powerful desire in life. For the dependence on the other that he is afraid of, which I just mentioned, is there too.

In fact, dependence on the other is the form in which what the subject fears is presented in fantasy, and it makes him deviate from the path of satisfying his desire.

The fear in question may not concern what one might simply call the other's caprice [or whim]. I am not sure you realize that the word "caprice" has little to do with the usual etymology, that found in the Larousse dictionary, which relates it to goats [*chèvre*]. The French have in fact borrowed it from Italian, in which *capriccio* means *frisson* [thrill, chill, or shiver]. It is the very same word that is so cherished by Freud, *sich sträuben*, which signifies *se hérisser* [i.e., to bridle, prickle, stand up straight, or be rubbed the wrong way], and which is, as you know, throughout his work one of the metaphorical forms in which he incarnates in the most tangible way possible how resistance manifests itself. He uses it in every context, when speaking about his wife, when speaking about Irma, and when speaking in general about subjects who resist.

What the subject is afraid of when he thinks about the other is not essentially becoming dependent on his caprice [or whim], but the fact that the other will mark this caprice with a sign [*c'est que l'autre ne marque ce caprice de signe*]. This is what is veiled. There is no ade-
130 quate sign of the subject's goodwill if not the totality of the signs by which he subsists. In truth, there is no other sign of the subject than the sign of his abolishment as a subject, the sign that is written $.

This shows you, in short, that, as regards his desire, man is not true, since – however little or much courage he puts into it – the situation radically escapes him. When he finds himself in the presence of object *a*, the subject vanishes. What I wanted to convey to you on this score last time was called, by someone who spoke with me

afterward, "an umbilication of the subject at the level of his will," an image that I quite willingly accept inasmuch as it is strictly in line with what Freud designates when he speaks about dreams.

A dream's navel is the point of final convergence of all the signifiers in which the dreamer is caught up, to such an extent that Freud calls it the "unknown" [SE V, p. 525]. He himself did not realize what was at stake in this *Unbekannt* [unknown], which is a very strange term to flow from his pen and concerns the radical difference of the unconscious that he discovered. As I have tried to show you, the Freudian unconscious is not constituted and instituted as unconscious in the simple dimension of the subject's innocence with respect to the signifier that organizes and articulates in his stead, for we find in the subject's relation to the signifier an essential impasse. I just reformulated this by telling you that there is no other sign of the subject than the sign of his abolition as a subject.

As you might well suspect, things do not remain at this stage. After all, if there were nothing but an impasse here, it would not take us very far, as they say. The characteristic of impasses is that they are fruitful, and this impasse is of interest to us only owing to the ramifications that we see it develop, which are precisely those where desire comes in.

Let us try to perceive this sort of aphanisis at the moment in your analysis at which it must appear in a flash. However, it is not merely an experience, there are mental modes in which you are led to conceptualize it.

Regarding the Oedipus complex, people tell you that there is a moment at which the subject flees [*se dérobe*]. It is the so-called moment of the inverted Oedipus in which the [male] subject glimpses a solution to the Oedipal conflict in the possibility of purely and simply attracting the love of the strongest party – namely, the father. If he then flees from this love, it is, we are told, because his narcissism is threatened, for to receive the father's love implies castration 131
for him.

People tell you this as if it were self-evident, because when they cannot resolve a problem, they naturally consider it to be comprehensible, and this is what usually makes it such that it is nevertheless not as clear as all that. This is certainly the case here.

This solution is indeed possible, all the more possible in that it is, at least in part, the path that is usually followed, the one that leads to the introjection of the father in the form of the ego-ideal. In any case, that is what it looks like. But, if the so-called inverted Oedipus is involved in the normal solution, this moment was nevertheless perceived and especially brought out in the problematic

of homosexuality in which the subject feels his father's love to be essentially threatening. We qualify this threat as a castration threat, not having a more suitable term at our disposal.

But this term is not all that unsuitable, after all. Psychoanalytic terms have, in the end, fortunately retained enough meaning and fullness, enough dense, heavy, and concrete character, to continue to guide us.

People sense that there is some narcissism involved here, narcissism being involved at this particular turning point in the Oedipus complex. This is confirmed by later pathways of the dialectic that lead the subject into the path of homosexuality. These later pathways are, as you know, far more complex than the pure and simple, summary requirement that the object have a phallus, even if this requirement is fundamentally hidden therein.

But that is not where I would like to head now. I will simply note that, at the outset of the problematic of the signifier, the subject, in order to deal with the suspension of desire, has more than one trick up his sleeve, as it were.

These tricks naturally bear first and foremost on the manipulation of the object, the manipulation of *a* in the formula.

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3

The taking up of the object in the dialectic of the subject's relations with the signifier must be placed at the core of the relationship to the phallus that I have tried to articulate for you over the past few years.

The relationship to the phallus is seen all the time and everywhere. Need I recall to mind the moment in little Hans's life when, at the age of two, he asked about every object, "Does it have a widdler, a *Wiwimacher*, or not?" It suffices to observe children to see this essential function operating right out in the open in all its forms.

Freud remarks in passing that the question raised by Hans constitutes a mode of interpretation of the phallic form, which defines a sort of analysis. This position, of course, merely translates the presence of the phallus in the dialectic, without informing us in any way either about the nature of the process or about its stability, or even about its goal, which I tried to show you at the time [in Seminar IV]. What I simply want to indicate is that we constantly find evidence that we are not going astray here, and that the terms involved are truly the following: the subject, owing in this case to his disappearance, faced with an object, which sometimes turns out to be the essential signifier around which the fate of the entire relationship between the subject and object is played out.

I will begin by rapidly mentioning in what sense, in the most general sense, the object, I mean little *a* in our algorithm, impacts what one might call the instinctual specificity of need.

When the signifier's interposition makes a relationship between the subject and the object impossible – in other words, when the subject cannot maintain himself in the presence of the object – we know what happens: his object undergoes a sort of volatilization that in our concrete practice we call the possibility of displacement. This does not simply mean that the human subject, like all animal subjects, sees his desire displace from one object to another, but that displacement itself is what allows the fragile equilibrium of his desire to be maintained.

In the final analysis, what does displacement involve? What it involves is, I will say, the thwarting of satisfaction while nevertheless preserving an object of desire. But, on the other hand, it is still, as it 133
were, a way of metonymically symbolizing satisfaction.

We are heading straight for the dialectic of the treasure chest and the miser, which is far from being the most complicated, even if people barely perceive what is at stake. Which is, namely, that in this case, a certain retention of the object – as we say, bringing in an anal metaphor – is the necessary condition for desire to subsist. But this is only to the degree to which the retained object, which props up desire, not itself be the object of any jouissance.

Legal terminology bears traces of this. When we say in French that we give someone the *jouissance* [usufruct] of a piece of property, what do we mean? We mean precisely that it is altogether humanly conceivable to possess property that one does not enjoy but that someone else enjoys [or benefits from, *jouisse*]. Here the object reveals its function as desire's collateral [*gage*], so to speak, not to say desire's hostage.

We can, if you will, try to connect this up with animal psychology. As regards ethology, I myself am inclined to believe what one of our colleagues said that was most exemplary and most colorful. I realized this while reading a monograph that the publisher Plon just brought out entitled *L'Ordre des choses* [*The Order of Things*]. I did not want to tell you the title because reading the book would distract you from our work here; but fortunately it is a short book, and it is by Jacques Brosse, someone who was completely unknown up until now.

The book is a sort of brief natural history – that is how I interpret it – fitting for our times. I mean by this that the book reminds us of what we find so subtle and charming when we read Buffon's work, and can never find in any contemporary scientific publication. But what stops us from giving ourselves over to this kind of exercise,

even if we know much more about the behavior of animals and ethology than Buffon did? What we find in specialized journals is unreadable. What is said in this short monograph is expressed, as you will see, in a style that I must say is verily and truly remarkable. Read, above all, the middle section, which is called "parallel lives" and which discusses the lives of tarantulas and ants.

I thought of this short book because its author has something in common with me, which is that the question of mammals is resolved for him. Apart from man, who is an essentially problem-
134 atic mammal – it suffices to consider the role that breasts [*mammes*] play in our imagination – there is but one truly serious mammal, which is the *'potamus*. Everyone agrees here, at least those who have some slight degree of sensitivity. T. S. Eliot, whose metaphysical ideas are awful, but who is nevertheless a great poet, immediately symbolized the militant Church as a hippopotamus – we will come back to that.

What does the hippopotamus do? People highlight the difficulties of his existence. They are great, so it seems, and one of the essential things he does is guard his grazing ground [*pacage*] – because he must nevertheless have a reserve of resources – with his excrement. This is an essential point: he maps his territory, as it is called, by delimiting it with a series of relays or points designed to adequately indicate to all those whom this concerns – namely, his fellow creatures – that this is his turf. As you see, we find a first sketch of symbolic activity in animals. In mammals, it is a specifically excremental symbolism.

Whereas the hippopotamus thus turns out to guard his grazing ground with his excrement, man does not guard his grazing ground with shit; it is his shit that he keeps as collateral for the essential grazing ground, the grazing ground that remains to be determined. This is the dialectic of what people call anal symbolism, which was one of the hitherto absolutely unsuspected dimensions that Freud revealed to us – a new revelation of the *Noces chymiques*, if I may put it thus, of man with his object.

In truth, the progress made by man depends on language alone – this singular intermediary – and we do not know where it comes from. It seriously complicates our relationship with objects – in other words, it leads us to have a problematic relationship with objects.

This is, in short, the same question that Marx raises, without resolving it, in his polemic with Proudhon – namely, how is it that human objects shift from having use value to having exchange value? I simply wanted to indicate to you why this happens and give at least a brief sketch of an explanation.

You must read a piece by Marx called *The Misery of Philosophy:*

A Response to Proudhon's "Philosophy of Misery" (1948). The pages 135
in which he ridicules Proudhon for having decreed that the shift from use value to exchange value occurred by a sort of pure decree among those who were cooperating – and we would have to figure out why they began cooperating and with the help of what – are rather salubrious. The way in which Marx excoriates Proudhon for a full twenty or thirty pages, without counting the rest of the book, provides good intellectual training.

This is thus what happens regarding objects and the meaning of their volatilization. To value an object is also to devalue it, I mean to rip it away from the field of pure and simple need. This is, after all, merely a reminder of the essential phenomenology, the phenomenology of property [or commodities, *bien*], strictly speaking – and in every sense of the word *bien*, imagine that! But let us leave that merely sketched out for the time being.

Let us simply say that when the object involved is another person, or other people [*l'autrui*], and especially a sexual partner, a certain number of consequences ensue, of course, which are all the more palpable since we were talking earlier about the social dimension. What is at stake here is assuredly at the very root of the social contract. We must, in effect, take into account the elementary structures of kinship in which the female partner is, as Lévi-Strauss demonstrated, an object of exchange, and in a way that is not lacking in latency or repercussions.

This exchange is not self-evident. Indeed, as an object of exchange women are, as it were, a very bad deal for those who carry out the operation, since all of this brings about a real mobilization, as it were, known as the offering [*prestation*] of the phallus, the contractual renting out of its services. Here we situate ourselves naturally in the perspective of social utilitarianism, which, as you know, presents several disadvantages. This was my precise point of departure earlier.

Once women are included in this dialectic, namely as socialized objects, they undergo a transformation that is truly disturbing. It is amusing to see how Freud, in the innocence of his youth, spoke of it. See pages 192–3 of the first volume of Jones's biography of Freud.

In a letter to his fiancée, Freud indicates what purpose a woman, a 136
good woman, serves. He does so in connection with the topic of the emancipation of women in John Stuart Mill's work, which, as you know, Freud translated for a while, at the insistence of Gomperz. This is quite priceless when you think that his passion for his fiancée was, at the time, at its height.

The letter ends with the fact that a woman must stay in her place and render all the services that are expected of her – this at a time

at which Freud was willingly making himself the possible mentor of his wife – and which are no different from the famous *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* [children, kitchen, and church]. I must read you a passage here based on the English, since Jones's biography has never been published in another language: "Law and custom have much to give women that has been withheld from them, but the position of women will surely be what it is: in youth an adored darling and in mature years a loved wife." We have here something that is not devoid of interest to us, for it shows us both from what experience Freud began and the path he had to travel.

Faced with this problematic position, another solution is possible for the subject. And it is no accident that we have broached the question from the angle of the social dialectic, for this other solution, as we also know from Freud's work, is identification. Identification with what? Identification with the father.

Why identification with the father? Because, as I already indicated, the father is in some way perceived as someone who has succeeded in really overcoming the impasse in the conjugal link, because he is supposed to have really castrated the mother. I say "supposed to have" [*censé*] because, naturally, it is merely supposed.

We have here the problematic of the father. If I am emphasizing it again today, it is perhaps because of what was said at our scientific meeting last night regarding the father's imaginary function, his lordliness [*seigneurialité*] in certain spheres of culture.

The figure of the father does not fail to present all sorts of possibilities for slippage. In effect, we must see that the solution that is prepared here, as it were – namely, identification with the father – stems directly from the fact that the father is already a *type*, in the strict sense of the term. There is no doubt but that this type is subject to temporal variations, but this does not bother us because
137 we cannot conceive of it otherwise than in relation to an imaginary function. It is thanks to the subject's identification with the father ideal, which denies the reality of the subject's relationship with his father, that we can perhaps say that, on average, wedding nights turn out alright, and in the final analysis are a success – even if a truly rigorous statistical study of them has never been done.

Whatever the case may be, to us, identification with the father, which is obviously linked not only to factual data but also to imaginary data, resolves nothing when it comes to the problematic of desire – neither for us nor, of course, for our patients, and perhaps on this point we are no different from them.

Identification with the father's image is but a specific case of what we must now broach as being the most general solution of the subject/object relationship, the most general solution of the

confrontation between the barred subject and object *a*, the object as *a* – namely, the introduction of the imaginary function in its most general form, otherwise stated, the dimension of narcissism.

It is narcissism that offers the subject a prop, solution, or solution pathway to the problem of desire. Human eros gets caught up in a relationship with a certain image that is none other than that of one's own body. Here an exchange or reversal occurs by which I am going to try to articulate for you the confrontation between $ and little *a*.

As it is already a quarter to two, and as I was unable to take things any further today, we will begin anew on this point when we meet on January 7th after the Christmas vacation.

We will finally have the opportunity to specify little *a* in its essence, function, and essential nature.

I have already indicated at length in prior Seminars that any and every human object is fundamentally marked by a narcissistic structure, by a profound relationship with narcissistic eros. In the most general structure of fantasy, this human object normally ends up receiving the lion's share of the subject's *Angst* – that is, neither more nor less than his affect in the presence of desire, this fear, this feeling of imminence that I mentioned earlier, it being what essentially thwarts the subject when he is on the verge of realizing his desire. The whole nature of fantasy is to transfer this fear to the object.

In studying anew a certain number of fantasies whose dialectic we 138
have hitherto developed, we will see that the subject's affect in the presence of his desire is transferred onto the object qua narcissistic. A single fundamental fantasy, "a child is being beaten," will suffice – because it was one of the first that was discovered – to bring out the most essential features of this transfer.

What then becomes of the subject? How is he structured? Why is he structured as an ego and as an ego-ideal? We can only glimpse this in its absolutely rigorous structural necessity as the return or echo of the affect that the subject delegated to the object, *a*.

We have never yet truly spoken about *a*, in the sense that I have not yet shown you that it must necessarily be posited not qua *a* but qua image of *a*, image of the other, which is one and the same thing as the ego. I designate this image with a capital I, for *Idéal du moi* (ego-ideal), insofar as it is itself the heir of the subject's first relationship, not with his own desire, but with his mother's desire. This ideal thus takes the place of what it felt like to the subject to be a child who was wanted.

Following this necessary development, capital I comes to be inscribed in a certain trace. A transformation of the algorithm is

necessary here, that I can already put on the blackboard as a sort of preannouncement. The I is inscribed in a certain relationship to the other, *a*, inasmuch as the latter is affected by the subject himself, inasmuch as the latter is affected by his desire.

$$\frac{i(a)}{\$} \quad \lozenge \quad \frac{a}{\mathrm{I}}$$

Formula of the ego-ideal

We will see this next time.

December 17, 1958

VII

DESIRE'S PHALLIC MEDIATION

The symptom in the RIS knot
The imaginary interposition of the dead father
The signifying privilege of the imaginary phallus
The subject's primary masochism
Love and desire in men and women

Our practice confronts us with the need to make an essential distinction between two functions. There is in the subject what we must call desire. And yet this desire's constitution, manifestation, and contradictions – which, in the course of treatments, come out clearly between the subject's discourse and his behavior – oblige us to distinguish it from the function of demand.

If there is something that psychoanalysis has brought out – not only in its original Freudian form but also in the contradictions that have arisen subsequently – it is certainly the role played by demand and its problematic character.

The development of psychoanalysis since Freud's time has, in effect, granted ever greater importance and emphasis to what, going by various names, converges in the final analysis on the general notion of dependency neurosis. This is where the theoretical slippages, not to mention failures in terms of practice, of a certain conception of the results [*réduction*] that must be obtained by therapeutic treatment converge. What is hidden or veiled behind the notion of dependency neurosis is the fundamental fact of demand, whose effects impress, compress, and oppress the subject.

Have we adopted the right attitude toward this function, which we reveal to be formative in the genesis of the subject? Have we adopted, I mean, an attitude that allows for the elucidation of symptoms as well as for their alleviation?

Symptoms do not result from the mere subtraction or suspension that is known as frustration, nor are they merely a sort of

140 deformation of the subject – however it might be envisioned – owing to something that is supposedly doled out as a function of a certain relationship to the real. For an imaginary frustration is, as I have said, always related to something real. Between what we in fact discover in psychoanalysis as the aftermath, consequences, and effects of frustration, on the one hand – and even its long-lasting effects, for it makes an impression on us – and symptoms, on the other hand, there is something known as desire that is characterized by an infinitely more complex dialectic.

Now, what I have tried to demonstrate is that desire does not result from a few impressions left by the real, but rather that it cannot be grasped or understood except in the tightest knot by which the real, the imaginary, and its symbolic meaning are tied together for man. This is why the relationship between desire and fantasy is inscribed on the graph in the field that lies midway between the two structural lines of any and every signifying enunciation [d→($◊*a*)].

If what constitutes a symptom – namely, let us say, a metaphorical phenomenon, that is, interference by a repressed signifier with a patent signifier – is truly based on desire, we would be barking up the wrong tree altogether were we not to seek to situate, organize, and structure the place of this desire.

We have begun to do so this year, by taking up a dream that I have already discussed at length.

1

It turns out that Freud highlighted this odd dream, the one in which the dead father appears, on two different occasions. After having given it an especially useful place in his 1911 article on the two principles of mental functioning [SE XII, pp. 225–6], the pleasure principle and the reality principle, he integrated it into the *Traumdeutung*.

I have tried to situate the elements of this dream on what we might call the graph of the inscription of the elementary biological subject – that is, the subject characterized by need – in the defiles of demand. This graph includes a chain or articulation that is fundamentally twofold, which corresponds to a structural distinction. I showed you how we must view it.

Namely, we must see that demand is never purely and simply a
141 demand for something, since behind every precise demand, every demand for satisfaction, there is, owing to language, the symbolization of the Other, the Other as presence and absence, the Other who may be a subject who provides the gift of love. What he gives is

beyond anything he can give. What he gives, he gives by his presence and by his presence alone. What he gives is precisely that nothing which amounts to everything in the determination of presence versus absence.

I have articulated this dream by didactically shifting onto the twofold nature of signs something that allows us to grasp, in the dream's structure, the relationship that is established by the fantasized production whose structure Freud attempted to elucidate throughout his life, and first of all, masterfully, in the *Traumdeutung*.

The son, who is in mourning for a father whom he undoubtedly loved and whom he watched over until the very end of his death throes, makes his father reappear under conditions that the dream articulates with exemplary simplicity. The father appears as he was when alive, he speaks, and before him the son remains dumb, oppressed, and gripped by pain – pain, he says, that stems from the thought "that his father was dead and did not know it." We must complete this, as Freud tells us, "that he was dead as he [the dreamer] wished. He did not know" what? That it was "as he wished."

This is the whole dream. If we try to go further into its construction and examine its structure more closely, we note that the subject is confronted with a certain image under very specific conditions. I would say that a distribution or dividing up is established between this image and what the subject assumes responsibility for in his dream, which will show us the essence of the phenomenon.

I have already tried to home in, so to speak, on the structure of this dream by distributing the dream's characteristic signifying themes on what we might call a signifying ladder.

"He did not know," which I have situated on the upper line of the graph, is an essentially subjective reference, for it concerns nothing factual as such. It concerns the deepest dimension of the subject, going to the core of his structure, and we know that this structure is ambiguous here. "He did not know" is attributable not only to the person to whom it is attributed by the dreamer – in a paradoxical, absurd, and contradictory way that even resonates nonsensically, 142
since we are, after all, talking about someone who is dead – but it is also present in the structure of the dreamer inasmuch as he too shares in this ignorance, and this is essential.

How does the subject position himself in the suspension, as it were, of the dream narrative? He views himself as knowing what the other does not know. The upshot is that the other's subjective position is that he is found wanting [*d'être en défaut*], so to speak.

The statement that he is dead obviously cannot affect him. But a symbolic expression like *être mort* ["to be dead" or "dead being"]

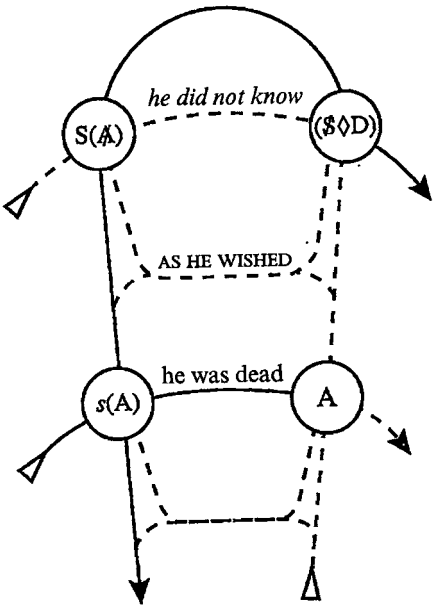

Figure 7.1: New distribution of the statement and enunciation

harbors within itself a paradox, for it makes the very person that it concerns subsist, preserving him in being, whereas there is no being here who can be dead. There can be no symbolic assertion of someone being dead [*de l'être mort*] that does not immortalize him, in a certain manner. This is clearly what is at work in the dream about the dead father.

The fact remains that the position of this being who is found wanting, that this subjective minus value [*moins-value*], does not aim at the fact that he is dead but that he is the one who does not know it. This is how the subject [i.e., the dreamer] is situated in relation
143 to the other. Not only does the other not know that he is dead but I would say that, in the end, he must not be told this. Such protecting of the other is always found more or less at the root of any and all communication between beings, where the question of what one can and what one cannot make known to the other always arises. This is something whose impact you should always weigh carefully whenever you are engaged in analytic discourse.

We talked last night about those who cannot speak, those who encounter obstacles to expressing themselves. What was at issue was the resistance of discourse itself, strictly speaking. It is essential that we mention this dimension if we are to relate the dream about the dead father to another dream, one that I will borrow from a page

near the end of *Trotsky's Diary in Exile*. It is a dream he had shortly after the end of his stay in France, I believe.

It is an especially poignant dream. Trotsky had it at a moment when, perhaps for the very first time, he began to notice the first signs of the diminishing of his life force that had been so inexhaustible. In his dream he sees his companion Lenin, and Lenin conveys to him that Trotsky is perhaps no longer at the height of his powers, as his old companion had always known him to be. But faced with this old companion, who emerges so significantly at a critical moment in his own vitality, what Trotsky thinks, in a way whose value derives from the ambiguity we always encounter in dialogue, is that he should spare Lenin's feelings. And wishing to remind him of a time related to the precise moment at which Lenin's own forces failed him, Trotsky says to him, in order to designate to him the moment at which he died, "the moment at which you were very, very ill . . ." – as if some precise formulation of what was involved would, by its mere utterance, have blown away the shade in the dream with which Trotsky himself was grappling, at the same turning point in *his* existence.

Well, if in the distribution between the two figures who confront each other in the dream about the dead father, ignorance is imputed to the other, how can we fail to see that there is also, conversely, the subject's own ignorance? For the dreamer does not know, not simply the signification of his dream – namely, everything that underlies it and that Freud brings out, that is, his unconscious history, his old wishes for his father's death – but, further still, the nature of the pain that he (the dreamer) feels. In seeking its origin, we have realized 144
that it was the pain that he had felt and glimpsed while witnessing his father's last moments on earth. But it is also the pain of existence as such, at the limit at which this existence subsists in a state where we no longer apprehend anything but its inextinguishable character and the fundamental pain that accompanies it when all desire disappears from it, when all desire has vanished from one's existence.

This is the exact pain that the subject takes on, but he explains it absurdly since he explains it solely by the other's ignorance. In the final analysis, if we look very closely, this ignorance is no more a reason for his pain than the affect that emerges in an hysterical fit is explained by the context from which it seems to arise, the affect being in fact related to some other context.

It is precisely by taking this pain on himself that the subject blinds himself to what has taken place in his immediate proximity – that is, to the fact that his father's death throes and disappearance have actually threatened him, the son. He experienced these things, and in the dream he distances himself from them by recalling his father's

image to mind. This image separates him from the sort of abyss or vertigo that opens up before him whenever he is confronted with the final term of his existence, and attaches him to something that calms men down – namely, desire. What he needs to interpose between himself and unbearable existence is, in this case, a desire.

He does not cite just any old prop for his desire, just any old desire, but the closest and most urgent one, the best one, the desire that had long dominated him, the one he had subdued but that he must now bring back to life imaginarily for a while.

In the power struggle that lies at the core of his rivalry with his father, it is the dreamer who finally wins out. If he triumphs, it is because the other does not know, whereas he does. Here we see the flimsy footbridge [*passerelle*] thanks to which the subject does not feel directly invaded – or swallowed up by the gaping hole that opens up before him – when he is directly confronted with the anxiety that death provokes.

To put this more crudely, we know that the death of one's father is always experienced as the disappearance of a sort of shield, of the interposition or substitution that the father was with respect to the absolute master, death.

145 We thus begin to see a sort of prefiguration of something; we see something being sketched out. What is it, if not the formula that I am trying to present, which is what props desire up – the fundamental formula of the essential intra-subjective relationship within which all desire, as such, must be inscribed: ($◊*a*)?

2

In this simplest form possible, the formula ($◊*a*) expresses the same relationship as the one that interposes itself in the partially unconscious discourse coming from the Other with a capital *O* [*grand Autre*] and going toward the subject, in the quadrilateral schema that you already know, the one known as the L schema.

The imaginary tension *a*–*a'* between the ego and the other – that we could call, in certain regards, the tension between little *a* and the *image of a* – generally structures the relationship between the subject and the object, whereas the formula ($◊*a*) specifically expresses the absence of the subject that is characteristic of the impact of desire on the relationship between the subject and the imaginary functions.

Indeed, desire as such raises for man the question of his subjective elision, $, with regard to any and every possible object.

To the degree to which the subject is inscribed in the dimension of speech as a plaintiff [or: petitioner, *demandeur*], he approaches

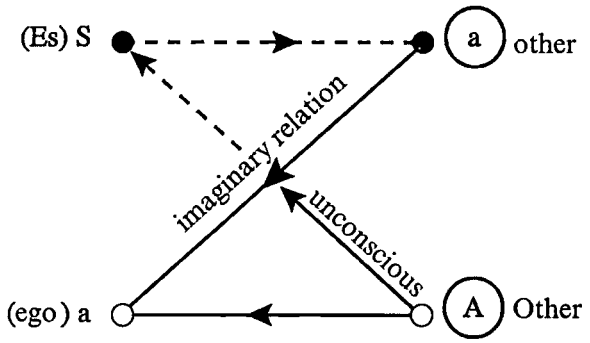

Figure 7.2: The L schema

the most elaborate and evolved object that certain analysts more or less deftly conceptualize as the object of "oblativity." This notion is 146
problematic, as I have often indicated. I, too, try to conceptualize what is involved here and endeavor to formulate it more rigorously.

Inasmuch as a subject, qua desire – that is, in the fullness of a human destiny which is that of a speaking subject – approaches this object, he finds himself caught in a sort of impasse. He cannot reach this object qua object except by finding himself, as a subject of speech, effaced in a kind of elision that leaves him in the darkness brought on by trauma, and in what is, strictly speaking, beyond anxiety itself. Or else he finds that he must take the place of the object, substitute himself for it, and subsume himself under a certain signifier.

Which one? The phallus. For the time being, I am simply stating this. I am not justifying it; our whole discussion will justify it. All of psychoanalytic experience attests to it. It is owing to this that, in every instance of assuming a fully developed [*mûre*] position, the one we refer to as genital, something occurs which has an impact at the imaginary level – it is called castration.

It is from this perspective alone that one can understand the problematic of the phallic phase that raised truly infinite questions and contradictions from which analysts have found it impossible to extricate themselves. The dialogue between Freud and Jones on this topic is, I would say, singularly moving. It suffices to see the impasse that Jones ends up in when he revolts against the conception – which is too simple for his taste – that Freud offers of the phallic function, as the one and only term around which all concrete and historical development of sexuality in men and women revolves. Jones highlights instead what he refers to as the functions of defense linked to the image of the phallus.

Freud and Jones end up saying the same thing, but they come at

it from different angles. If they assuredly cannot agree, it is because they do not have at their disposal the central notion according to which the phallus must, in this case, be conceptualized as subtracted, as it were, from the imaginary community, as isolated when confronted with the variety and multiplicity of other images that come to take on bodily functions. Its function is privileged, it constituting the signifier of the subject.

147 Let us look at this still more closely, and distinguish the level of the call [*appel*] from that of the wish [*voeu*].

The level of the call is first, immediate, apparent, and spontaneous. When we call out, "Help!" or "Give us bread!" – each of which is, in the end, a cry – the subject is identical to his need for an instant, and in the most total way possible. A call must, nevertheless, be articulated at the interrogative [*quésitif*] level of demand. It is articulated in the experience between child and mother, and in everything he puts in her place – namely, the whole society that speaks her [or: his, *sa*] language.

On the other hand, the articulation of the votive [*votif*] level is at one remove. It is the dimension in which the subject, throughout his life, must find himself anew – that is to say, must find what got away from him because it was outside and beyond all that is filtered out by language qua form. As it develops, such filtration rejects and represses ever more thoroughly that part of the subject's need that tended to be expressed at first. What we do in analysis is attempt to go beyond what was filtered out, shaped, and transformed by the subject's speech.

We could say that everything that must be articulated at the interrogative level resides in the Other, here at A [on the lower level of the graph], as a predetermined code that completely pre-exists the subject's experience, it being offered up to the play of language – that is, to the first signifying battery the subject experiences, assuming he learns to speak.

What do we do in analysis, what do we encounter, and what do we recognize when we say that the subject is at the oral stage or at the anal stage, etc.? We must first of all express it in a full-fledged form, which assumes that we do not forget the complete element – namely, that what is always involved is the subject qua marked by speech and in a certain relation to his demand. Next, we must see that an interpretation by which we convey to the subject the structuring of his demand, does not simply consist in getting him to recognize the oral, anal, or other character [*caractère*] of the demand in question, but, literally, to confront him with this characteristic [*caractère*]. What we interpret is not simply a characteristic that is immanent in the subject's demand; we confront the subject with the structure of his demand as such.

It is precisely at this point that the emphasis of our interpretation must shift, oscillate, and vacillate. If we know how to emphasize it in a certain way, we teach the subject to recognize at the upper level 148
of the graph – which is the votive level, the level of what he wishes for, the level of his wishes insofar as they are unconscious – the signifying props that are hidden and unconscious in his demand. Interpretation must stay entirely within this register. In short, we do nothing but teach the subject, as it were, to speak and to recognize himself as a subject in what corresponds to D [on the graph; see Figure 2.2], yet without giving him answers.

On the other hand, to reveal this unconscious vocabulary to the subject without confronting him with his demand comes down to producing a collapse in the function of the subject as such; it comes down to asking him to efface himself and disappear. This is clearly what happens in a type of psychoanalytic practice in which the analysis of the unconscious is reduced to teaching the patient a vocabulary. What disappears and escapes, what turns out to be progressively eliminated, is the requirement that the subject manifest himself – beyond all of that – in his being. Constantly bringing him back to the level of demand – which is known in a certain form of technique as "analyzing the resistances" – ends up purely and simply eliminating his desire.

It is simple and easy to see that the two levels of the graph include the vector of a retroactive response. In the subject's relation to the Other, this vector goes backward toward the subject in order to confirm the meaning of his demand for him, and at times to identify him with his own demand. Similarly, at the level at which the subject seeks to recognize himself in what is beyond this demand, there is a place for a response, which is schematized by the abbreviation S(Ⱥ), which is the signifier of barred A. This is a reminder that the Other too is marked by the signifier, that he too is in a certain way abolished in discourse.

This serves no other function than to indicate a theoretical point, and we shall see the form it must take. Let us simply say that this form is essentially the recognition of what is castrated in any living being who attempts to approach this living being when the latter is approached through language. Of course, it is not at this level that we can instantly give an answer, but we must target, respect, and explore it.

In order to do so, we can use what the subject already expresses beyond the answer's locus – namely, the imaginary situation in 149
which he places, maintains, and suspends himself in a position that, in certain ways, assuredly includes the artifices of defense. This is what leads to the ambiguity of so many manifestations of desire,

of perverse desire, for example. This is the most essential point at which the subject's being attempts to express and assert itself.

This is all the more important to consider, as it is precisely here, in this very locus, that we expect what we so blithely call optimal genital development to occur, and the fully developed [*achevé*] object to appear. Thanks to which we should note that everything that constitutes the relations between men and women, as Jones expresses himself biblically somewhere, remains marked by structural difficulties that stem from the fact that man is a speaking subject and that express the relationship between $ and *a*. Why are there such difficulties?

Up to a certain point in development, the vocabulary and code of demand can pass through a certain number of relations that involve a detachable object – namely, to limit ourselves to two, nourishment in oral relations and excrement in anal relations. Nevertheless, when genital relations are at stake, it is quite clear that it is only through a type of borrowing or continuation of the subject's signifying fragmentation in relations involving demand that something can appear to us – and indeed appears to us, but in a morbid way, including all its symptomatic forms of impact – namely, the phallus. And this is true for a good, simple reason, which is that the phallus is not a detachable object and that it only becomes one by shifting to the status of a signifier.

What is involved in optimal genital development is based on the following, that nothing that presents itself in the subject as related to the fulfillment of his desire can, to put it as clearly as possible, be demanded [or: asked for, *se demander*]. The essence of neurosis, the essence of what we deal with when we work with those characterized by neurotic structure, consists very precisely in the fact that what cannot be demanded in this realm – that is to say, everything having to do with desire – is nevertheless inscribed and formulated in the register of demand. This neurotic phenomenon appears, more or less sporadically, in the development of all subjects characterized by neurotic structure.

While rereading Jones's work recently, I re-examined every-
150 thing he wrote about the phallic phase. What he contributes that stems from his most perceptive and direct experience is always very interesting.

> I could relate cases of a number of male patients whose failure to achieve manhood – in relation to either men or women – was strictly to be correlated with their attitude of needing first to acquire something from women, something which of course they never actually could acquire. [p. 461]

"Why?" asks Jones, and when he asks why in his article and in this context, it is a genuine question. He does not know why, but he underscores it as a point on the horizon, an opening, a perspective, and a point where he no longer has any guide.

> Why should imperfect access to the nipple give a boy the sense of imperfect possession of his own penis? I am quite convinced that the two things are intimately related, although the logical connection between them is certainly not obvious. [p. 461]

At least, not to him.

Even the most superficial phenomenology allows us to see at every moment the necessary preconditions for a subject to be able to fully put his desire into action. We can reconstruct them in detail right up to the point of finding what I would call the labyrinthine pathways into which his desire skids. Here we see what constitutes an essential fact – namely, the position he took up in the structural relation between desire and demand.

This is why people say, for example, that the continued existence of the incestuous position in the unconscious has variously ravaging consequences on the manifestations and fulfillment of the subject's desire. If this proposition has any meaning, it is only inasmuch as this so-called incestuous position, which is supposedly preserved somewhere in the unconscious, is a position characterized by demand. When Jones says that the subject must, at a given moment, choose between his incestuous object and his sexual organ [*sexe*], 151
and that if he wants to preserve the one he must give up the other, I would say that what he has to choose between at such an early moment is between his demand and his desire.

After these general indications, I am now going to start down a path that is designed to show you the actual structuring of desire at the imaginary level, and what it has in common with imaginary elements that are inflected and taken up in the necessary play of the signifying game, inasmuch as this game is commanded by the twofold structure of the votive and the interrogative.

3

Let us consider the most banal or common fantasy, the one Freud paid special attention to: "A child is being beaten" [SE XVII, pp. 179–204].

Let us re-examine it from the perspective I am developing in order to see in what respect fantasy is desire's necessary prop.

Freud encountered the *Schlagephantasie* [beating fantasy], in his own era, in a certain number of predominantly female subjects. When the first phase of the fantasy is remembered, whether in fantasies or in the subject's memories, it is described, Freud tells us, by the following sentence: *Der Vater schlägt das Kind* [The father is beating the child]. Freud underscores the fact that, in this case, the child who is being beaten is, in relation to the subject, in a position that is expressed by the more complete sentence: "The father is beating the child that I hate."

Freud thus brings us from the initial point to the very heart of being, where the most intense degree of love and hate is situated. In effect, the other child is represented here as being subjected, by the father's violence and whim [*caprice*], to a maximal fall from grace [*déchéance*] or symbolic devaluing, as being absolutely frustrated and deprived of love. Hatred targets him in his very being, targeting in him what is demanded beyond all demand – namely, love. The so-called narcissistic injury done to the hated child is utter and complete here.

The child's subjective fall from grace, which is linked for him to his first encounter with corporal punishment, leaves various traces depending on the modalities of its repetition. In the times in which
152 we live, children are mostly spared such punishment. Nevertheless, as everyone can observe, if it happens that a child who has never been beaten is, late in the game, the object of physical chastisement, however justified it may be, this experience has prostrating consequences for him, at least momentarily, that one cannot imagine in advance.

Be that as it may, assuming we agree that the earliest stage of the beating fantasy is as Freud presents it to us, "Profound transformations [take] place between this first phase and the next" [SE XVII, p. 185]. Freud describes the second phase as follows:

> The person beating remains the same (that is, the father); but the child who is beaten has been changed into another one and is now invariably the child producing the fantasy. The fantasy is accompanied by a high degree of pleasure, and has now acquired a significant content, with the origin of which we shall be concerned later. Now, therefore, the wording runs: "I am being beaten by my father." [p. 185]

But Freud adds the following:

> This second phase is the most important and the most momentous of all. But we may say of it in a certain sense that it has

> never had [any] real existence. It is never remembered, it has never succeeded in becoming conscious. It is a construction of analysis, but it is no less a necessity on that account. [p. 185]

My sense is that no one gives enough weight to the consequences of Freud's assertion here. In the final analysis, we never encounter the most significant phase. Nevertheless, it has to exist since it leads to a third phase.

Now, the formulation of the second phase is of great interest to us. It is tantamount, in effect, to the formulation of primary masochism. The latter comes in at the precise moment at which the subject gets closest to realizing himself as a subject in the signifying dialectic.

Freud rightly says that something essential happens between the first and the second phase: the subject sees the other being cast down from his dignity as an elevated subject, as a little rival. The opening that ensues makes him perceive that his whole being, qua existing being, resides in the very possibility of subjective cancellation. It is in coming as close as possible to being abolished that he weighs the dimension in which he subsists as a being who is subject to will, a 153
being who can formulate a wish.

We must seek out the phenomenology of masochism in masochistic literature, whether we like it or not, and whether it is pornographic or not. What is the essence of the masochist's fantasy, in the end, whether we look at a classic novel or a recent novel brought out by a semi-clandestine publisher? The subject imagines a series of experiences that go in a direction whose flank, border, or limit is based essentially on the fact that he is purely and simply treated like a thing, like something that, at its most extreme, is negotiated, sold, mistreated, and removed from any and every votive possibility of viewing himself as autonomous. He is treated like a dog, I would say, and not just any old dog – a dog that is mistreated and especially like a dog who has already been mistreated.

This is the turning or pivotal point of the second phase that we can only assume to exist. It is also the transformational base starting from which the subject will seek to enter into the final phase, in order to find therein the swivel or balance [or: tipping] point of his position – namely, $. For once he has entered into the dialectic of speech, assuming he enters into it, he must formulate himself as a subject somewhere.

Nevertheless, in the end, the neurotic subject is like Picasso. Picasso once came out with the following truly sovereign formulation: "I do not seek, I find." In effect, there is a certain type of person who seeks, and another type that finds. Believe me, neurotics

– namely, everything man's struggle with speech spontaneously produces in subjects – find.

I would point out in this connection that *trouver* [to find] comes from the Latin word *tropus* [trope]. This refers quite explicitly to what I always talk about, the difficulties of rhetoric. It is curious that in the Romance languages the word that designates the fact of finding is borrowed from the language of rhetoric, whereas in the Germanic languages it is a different root that serves this purpose.

Let us stop for a moment at this third phase at which the subject thus gains his balance. It is immediately known to us, but perhaps
154 worth dwelling on nevertheless. What do we see right off the bat in the fantasy *On bat un enfant* ["A child is being beaten"]?

Who is doing the beating? It is *On* [the impersonal pronoun One]. When Freud would insistently ask his patient who was doing the beating, this person or that, there was nothing doing, he remained evasive. It was only after a certain amount of interpretive work that the subject could refind a certain paternal figure or image in his fantasy, insofar as the latter served as a prop for his desire when masturbating. But at the outset, the subject of the sentence was completely neutralized: it was *On*.

As for who is beaten, it is not difficult to grasp. It is multiple – many children, boys when the fantasizer is a girl. But there is no necessary connection between the sex of the child who fantasizes and the sex of the image fantasized about.

The greatest variations and uncertainties center, too, on the position of the child whose fantasy it is. We know that, up to a certain point, the child – in some way, whether it is a or a', $i(a)$ or a – is involved in this fantasy since he is the one who has it. But the child does not situate himself anywhere in a precise, unequivocal manner; his position swivels indefinitely.

I would now like to highlight something that is closely related to what I earlier called the distribution of the intra-subjective elements of the dream. Where is affect emphasized? In the dream about the dead father, this affect is pain and it targets the dreaming subject. Similarly, in the fantasy "a child is being beaten," which is indisputably a sadistic fantasy – and, moreover, in virtually all sadistic fantasies that we can observe, taken in their broadest extension – affect targets the fantasized image of the partner, not so much insofar as he is beaten but insofar as he is going to be beaten or does not know how he will be beaten.

I will come back to this extraordinary element when we talk about the phenomenology of anxiety. But I am already pointing out to you a nuanced distinction found in Freud's text, and which no one naturally has ever brought out regarding anxiety. We must not confuse

the pure and simple loss of the subject in the darkness of subjective indetermination with something that is completely different from it: the fact that the subject becomes alert or erect, as it were, when faced with danger.

In *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*, Freud introduces a still more astonishing phenomenological distinction that is so subtle that it is not easy to translate into French. It is the distinction between *abwarten*, which I will endeavor to translate by *subir* [to undergo], *n'en pouvoir mais* [to be unable to do anything about it], or *tendre le dos* [brace oneself], and *erwarten*, which is *s'attendre à* [to expect]. The affect that is emphasized and attached to the other or partner – attached to he who is across from one, little *a* – is situated in this register or range in the sadist's fantasy. 155

Where, in the final analysis, is this subject – this subject who, in this case, is prey to something that he does not have [and that he would have to have] in order to know where he is? It would be easy to say that he is between the two [the beater and the beaten]. I would go further still – I would say that he is so truly between the two that he plays, in an exemplary manner, the role of the instrument with which the one hits the other. The subject is identical here to the instrument.

Indeed, the instrument is very frequently the essential personage in the imaginary structure of desire that we are trying to formulate here. We are always flabbergasted to see this, and we always have the best of reasons to be astonished by this, unless we do not want to see it. What is most paradoxical and the biggest warning for us is, in short, that the subject abolishes himself behind this signifier, which is altogether unveiled here in its nature as a signifier, insofar as he recognizes his essential being in it, if it is true that we can say with Spinoza that this essential being is his desire.

It is, in effect, to this same crossroads that we are led whenever a sexual problematic is brought up. The crux of the sexual problematic in women is the phallic phase. We began with this two years ago and Jones returns to it constantly in order to dispute and develop it. Jones's text manifests the kind of working over of a topic that we see in the course of a psychoanalysis.

The central focus of the phallic phase in girls is the relationship between hatred for the mother and desire for the phallus. It is on this very point that Freud bases the requirement [or: demand, *exigence*] that everyone have a phallus, a requirement that plays a role in the resolution of the Oedipus complex in boys, and a role in the entry into the Oedipus complex for girls. This requirement has a truly fundamental, generative [or: developmental, *génétique*] character.

The link between hatred for the mother and desire for the phallus

is the strict meaning of *Penisneid* [penis envy]. Jones rightly underscores the ambiguities encountered every time we use this term. If
156 the desire to have a penis is inscribed in a rivalry with another, it presents itself in an ambiguous guise that clearly shows us that its meaning must be sought out beyond this. "Desire for the phallus" means desire mediated by the phallus. The mediating phallus plays an essential role in the mediation of desire.

This leads me to formulate the problem in terms that already introduce what I will later have to develop in my analysis of the construction of fantasy. We will have to figure out how to situate the place of the phallus as a signifier in imaginary experience. The latter, as we know, is profoundly structured by narcissistic forms that govern the relations between the subject and his semblable – that is to say, between the speaking subject, $, and little *a*, the other that the subject bears within himself.

Today, we have identified it with *a*. This means that the imaginary other is what the subject has inside himself as a "drive" – I put it in quotes, for what we have here is a drive that is not yet developed, a drive before it is taken up in the signifying dialectic, a drive in its primitive nature where it represents one or another manifestation of the subject's need. Nevertheless, if the subject, through the intermediary of specular reflection, must situate his needs in the image of the other, we see on the horizon what I initially referred to as the first identification with the Other in the radical sense – namely, identification with the Other's insignias. This is, in other words, the signifier capital I over little *a*.

$$\frac{\mathrm{I}}{a}$$

I am going to put on the board a schema that will be recognized by those who were here for the first year of my Seminar, when we spoke about narcissism. It is the schema of the parabolic mirror thanks to which we can make the image of a hidden flower appear in a vase sitting on a tray, whether it is lit from below or on the tray; owing to the property of spherical rays, this image is projected as a real image. This means that it momentarily produces the illusion that the flower is in the vase.

157 To conjure up this image in space, we must have a little screen over here [Lacan points to a part of the schema]. This might seem mysterious, but it is not. In effect, the illusion – namely the sight of this real image in the air – can only be perceived within a certain spatial field which is precisely determined by the diameter of the spherical mirror and mapped out in relation to the center of the mirror. The

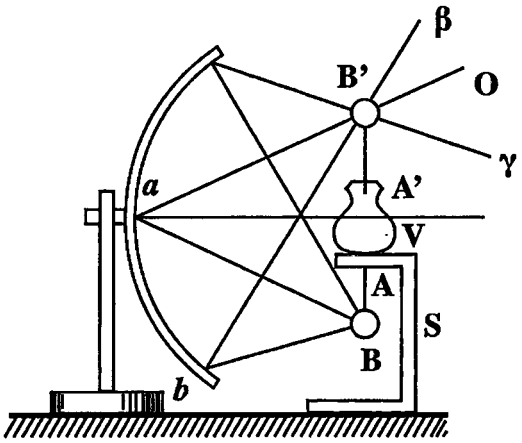

Figure 7.3: The inverted bouquet illusion

upshot being that, if the mirror is narrow, in order to see the image one must place oneself in a field where the rays reflected from the mirror cross anew its center, which assumes a certain lighting up [or: blossoming, *épanouissement*] of the spatial zone.

What was important in my little explanation back then was the following: if someone wanted to see this fantasized image get produced somewhere in space – inside the vase, or a little to the side of it, it makes no difference – where there is already a real object, and if this observer is situated at S_1, he could rotate the plane mirror in order to occupy the symmetrical and virtual position S_2, which is

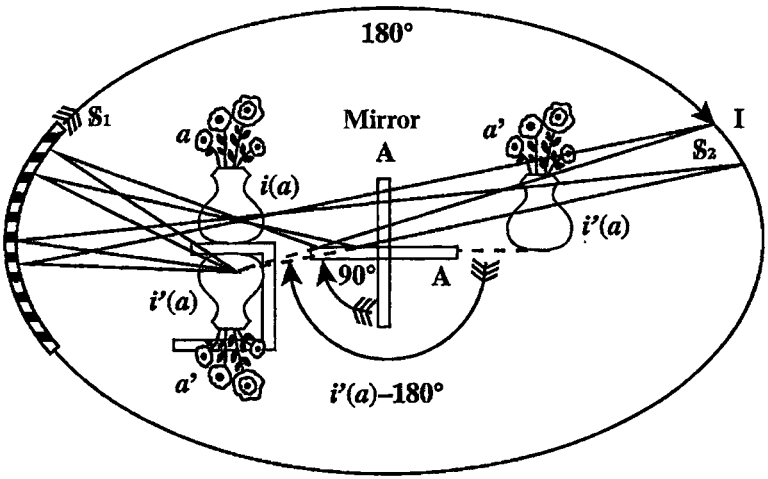

Figure 7.4: Rotation of the plane mirror

inside the cone of visibility of the image, and he would see the image of the flower in the plane mirror at the symmetrical point.

158 In other words, the ray of light that is reflected toward the observer is strictly symmetrical to what occurs on the other side, insofar as this observer has virtually come to occupy the place from which he will see the vase in the plane mirror – which he can expect since he is there – and, on the other hand, the real image which is produced in a place where he cannot see it directly.

This optical device is thus apt for representing the relationship or interplay between the subject's imaginary elements and his symbolic identificatory elements. I do not think that the way in which it does so betrays the psychoanalytic tradition, since, in the *Traumdeutung*, Freud offers up a schema of successive lenses in which the progressive passage from the unconscious to the preconscious is refracted. He was thus looking for analogous references in optics, as he says precisely [SE V, pp. 536, 611].

This is but a metaphor, one that represents the specular pathway by which the subject tries in fantasy to return to his place in the symbolic. Consequently, the $ is something other than an eye. The spherical mirror, which helps him return to his place in the symbolic, represents capital A here – it is a symbolic mirror. It is not the mirror in front of which the small child plays. What we have here is in fact a certain reflection that is constructed with the help of words,

159 in the course of the first learning of language, and thanks to which the subject learns to situate at the right distance the insignias with which he identifies.

These symbolic insignias correspond to what, on the other side, are the first imaginary ego identifications. We thus already find something preformed and open to symbolic fragmentation at the imaginary level, but which only enters into the play of fragmentation inasmuch as the symbolic exists and opens up its field to him. It is inside this field that, owing to the symbolic, a transformation of the imaginary relation occurs which is such, as I am already indicating to you, that there will always be, in erotic relations with the other, however advanced or fully developed we assume them to be, a reduction point that you can grasp as extrapolations of the erotic blueprint [*épure*] between subjects.

What is the transformation that is undergone by the first, fundamentally specular relationship between a and a' or $i(a)$, which regulates the relations between the subject and the other? The imaginary set of fragmented bodily elements must be distributed across the puppet with which we deal in the symbolic, inasmuch as we are puppets and our partners are too. But these puppets are missing something: the phallus.

The phallus is busy elsewhere, in the signifying function. When faced with the other, the subject identifies with the phallus, but he fragments qua himself when he is in the presence of the phallus. To spell this out as clearly as possible, I will ask you to dwell on what happens in relationships between men and women, even the most loving.

In men, desire is found outside the love relationship. The fully developed form of this relationship assumes, in effect, that the subject gives what he does not have, which is the very definition of love. On the other hand, the ideal form of desire, as it were, is realized in him inasmuch as he finds anew the complement of his being in a woman, insofar as she symbolizes the phallus.

In love, man truly becomes a slave of [*s'aliéné à*] the object of his desire, a slave to the phallus. But in the erotic act this same phallus nevertheless reduces the woman to being an imaginary object. This is why we find in men a splitting of the object [of love from that of desire], even at the very heart of the deepest, most intimate love relationships. I have often emphasized this when I have criticized the so-called genital relationship.

When we turn, on the other hand, to women's relationships to men, which people like to believe are more monogamous, we see that they present the same ambiguity – except that women find the real phallus in men. They are thus in a position to in fact obtain from such relationships a jouissance that satisfies their desire. 160

But, to the degree to which their desire is satisfied at the level of the real, their love, not their desire, concerns beings who are beyond the encounter with desire – namely, men insofar as they are deprived of the phallus, men insofar as, by their nature as fully developed beings, speaking beings, are castrated.

January 7, 1959

A DREAM ANALYZED BY ELLA SHARPE

VIII

THE LITTLE COUGH AS A MESSAGE

The enigma of enunciation
The subject's being lies in fantasy
The positional affects of being
Text and context of the dream
The brilliant Ella Sharpe

Since we spoke about desire quite a lot in the last few classes, we are now going to begin to broach the topic of interpretation. The graph of desire will serve us here, in the following form:

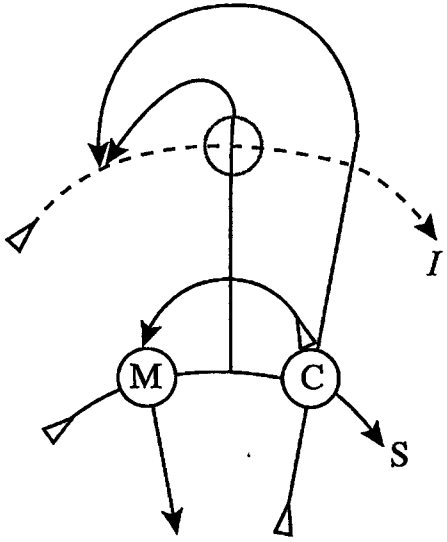

Figure 8.1: Simplified graph

I will talk today about the interpretation of a dream that I will take as an example. I would like to introduce it by making a few

remarks about what results from the indications Freud gives us on the topic of the interpretation of dreams.

164

1

In Chapter 6 of the *Traumdeutung*, Freud discusses the subject's mental impressions at the moment at which he recounts a dream.

We find that he has the impression that there is something missing in his narrative, which he has forgotten, or something that is ambiguous, doubtful, or uncertain. He underscores this uncertainty, doubtfulness, or ambiguity by saying things like, "It's not clear," "It was either this or that," "I don't remember now," or "I can no longer say." He even calls into question the degree of reality of what he saw in the dream – whether the fact that something was asserted in it with such realism that he took notice of it or that the dream struck him, on the contrary, as absurd. All of this, Freud tells us, in every case, must be taken to enunciate what he calls one of the "latent dream-thoughts."

In short, everything regarding the dream-text that is said by the subject as an aside – as if in the form of annotations accompanying a musical score to provide accents of tonality, like *allegro*, *crescendo*, or *decrescendo* – is part and parcel of the dream-text. This is truly fundamental.

I believe that for most of you, whom I assume to be already familiar with the *Traumdeutung* and the technique of dream interpretation, this is not new. I am thus merely recalling it to mind, for I do not have time here to go into the specific examples of this that we find in Freud's work. We see there, for instance, how the feeling of doubt the subject experiences at the moment at which he recounts a dream is integrated by Freud as one of the elements of the dream – indeed, as an element without which the dream cannot be interpreted.

Many of Freud's disciples took this rule of thumb regarding dream interpretation as an article of faith, without looking any further, lending credence, in some sense, to the unconscious. We, on the other hand, cannot simply accept it as it is. We do not take Freud's approach to interpretation as our point of departure without raising questions about what it implies.

Freud tells us that when your memory of a dream begins to fade, or on the contrary is called into question or stressed, this is not due solely to the unconscious tension that is at work there, but is con-
165 nected to the latent dream-thoughts themselves. What does this imply? What we have agreed to call the graph of desire allows us to indicate and articulate it more clearly and surely.

What do we do when we communicate a dream, whether it be in or outside of analysis? What, among all the possible enunciations, specifies the enunciation of a dream? Statements [*énoncés*] have, in effect, a certain structure with respect to the subject, and people did not wait for psychoanalysis to formulate it.

Among a discourse's event-related statements – I mean the statements that report events – we can legitimately distinguish, with regard to the signifying register, statements that we can group under the general heading of indirect speech [*discours indirect*]. These are statements that relate the enunciations of other subjects – that is, the signifying articulations of other people. Many things are introduced thereby, including statements involving hearsay: "I was told . . .," "So-and-so said . . .," and "Someone told me that this is what happened. . . ." Indirect speech is the most fundamental, or one of the most fundamental, forms of everyday speech [*discours universel*], for most of the things that we report stem from what we have gleaned from others.

Let us say that, generally speaking, a statement involves the reporting of a pure, simple, factual statement that we take as our own, on the one hand, and the dimension of enunciation that is latent, that is not necessarily made clear, but that becomes so as soon as we report someone else's statement, on the other hand. But we can also relate one of our own statements: we can say that we said such and such, that we bore witness to something to someone, and we can even enunciate that a statement we made [at a certain time and place] was completely false – in other words, we can admit that we lied.

One of these possibilities will hold our attention for a moment. What do we do when we enunciate a dream? We do something that is not entirely unique, at least not in the way I am going to define it now.

How did people view dreams before we psychoanalysts weighed in on the age-old debate? People objected to Freud that dreams have no signification and that they are simply the product of 166
unfocused [*décomposition*] mental activity. This so-called scientific position was, as it turned out, maintained for only a short time in history, whereas Freud underscored the fact that he was merely aligning himself with the longer-standing tradition. It is already quite important to know, as I just indicated, that the longer-standing tradition never failed to wonder about the signification of dreams.

In other words, as soon as a subject recounts his dream to someone else, the very form of enunciation in which he states the dream involves a question mark that is not just any old question

mark, for it assumes that behind the dream there is something of which the dream is the signifier. We can write this, in our way of formalizing things, as follows: *E(e)*. It involves the enunciation [*E*] of a statement [*e* for *énoncé*] that is itself marked by enunciation – in other words, that is itself assumed to take on a value which, naturally, is not factual or event-related.

In order to remain in the purely descriptive dimension, we must add a supplemental point here.

A small child who begins to tell you his dreams, says, "Last night, I had a dream." His spontaneous attitude is the same as the traditional attitude, but it is highly ambiguous here. If we observe closely, it is as if, at some moment, it had been revealed to the child that he had the possibility to express such things. And it goes so far that quite frequently one cannot truly know, at the age at which the child begins to tell you such matters in confidence, whether what he tells you is truly what he dreamt or something he brings you because he knows that people dream and that people can recount their dreams.

As we observe when we have contact with children, their dreams often seem to verge on fabrication. But if children have and tell dreams in such ways, it is with the lowercase *e*, marked by enunciation. There is something beyond the statement with which they play a game with you, making you wonder or become fascinated.

In short, every type of statement that recounts a dream, whether it be in or outside of analysis, corresponds to the formula *E(e)*. This formula is not specific to dreams alone. I would say that it is the general formula of enigmas.

What then is signified by what Freud means? Let us look at it
167 on our little graph, which in this case takes the form you see on the blackboard [Figure 8.1]. How are we going to project the different elements of this formalization onto it? We can do so in several different ways.

This graph is of interest to us because it is structural. It is a structure that allows us to map the relationship between the subject and the signifier. In effect, from the very moment at which the subject is caught up in the signifier – and it is essential that he be caught up in it, for that is what defines him, the subject being the relationship between the individual and the signifier, between the individual and the signifier's structure – a network is necessarily imposed that forever remains fundamental. Let us thus try to see here how we can distribute the various functions involved in the enunciation of a dream on the graph.

A dream, which is a spontaneous creation, presents itself at first

glance as being relatively total or monolithic – it is, I would say, a total statement. In French we say, "*J'ai fait un rêve*" [literally: "I made a dream," instead of "I had a dream" as in English], and we distinguish the dream from the one that followed it, which was not the same. A dream has the character of a discourse. At the moment at which we have/make a dream, nothing reveals the fragmentation or decomposition of the signifier in it. We have all sorts of retroactive indications that the fragmentation is there, having an impact on the function of all discourse, but at the moment at which the subject generates a discourse, and inasmuch as he cleaves to it, the choice he makes at each moment among signifiers remains in abeyance and unnoticed – otherwise it would be far more arduous for him to communicate it.

Insofar as it is given to us as a whole, a dream is the statement or signifying chain that is produced at the lower level of the graph, and that presents itself in the usual form of language, a form that is all the more global since it is closed. Nevertheless, the subject must make his report, must produce an enunciation about this statement; he must situate himself in relation to it, and stress certain portions of it to you in accordance with the greater or lesser degree of conviction he has about them. All of that, which accompanies the dream and which, in some sense, comments on it from a position for which the subject assumes more or less responsibility, is inscribed at the level of discourse for the Other, which is also the discourse in which the subject assumes responsibility for his dream.

In other words, when he tells you his dream, the subject himself is already present within the statement. And it is in the discourse in which the subject assumes responsibility for the dream vis-à-vis the person to whom he tells it that, as we see, he stresses certain things 168
and downplays others, expressing his greater or lesser assumption of responsibility for the narrative. He says, "It seemed to me, it appeared to me, that this was what happened at that moment." "At that moment, it was as if the person in the dream were at the same time someone else or turned into someone else."

These are what I am calling "stresses" [*accents*]; they are the different modes of enunciation according to which the subject assumes more or less responsibility for the lived experience of his dream, of this psychical event. These modes are situated on our graph on the line of the *I* of enunciation, a line that is fragmented and discontinuous. The graph indicates to you that this fragmentation is a feature of what is articulated at the level of enunciation, insofar as it involves the signifier.

I placed at the lower level the retroactive effect of the code [C] on the message [M], which, at every moment, gives meaning to a

sentence. Let us note that phrasal units come in different sizes. At the end of a long lecture [*discours*], at the end of one of my classes here, for example, or at the end of one of my year-long Seminars, there is something that retroactively closes [*boucle*] the meaning of what I enunciated to you previously. But, up to a certain point, a similar loop [*boucle*] forms after each of the parts of my lecture, after each of the paragraphs.

We might want to know what the smallest unit is in which we find the effect that I call a "signification effect" – which must, in order to deserve its name, be a new creation, something made of language that goes beyond the usual ways of using the signifier. The smallest unit is obviously a sentence.

Let us ask now how this unit presents itself when a dream is reported to us. It is altogether clear here that what the subject does or does not assume responsibility for, believes or does not believe, or calls into question is not necessarily the whole of what he tells us. The subject's enunciative grip [*prise*] may be of a smaller scope: he may take responsibility for or challenge but one single sentence or even just fragments of a sentence.

In other words, the retroactive loop introduces the possibility of a much smaller degree of fragmentation at the upper level than at the lower level.

This remark puts us on the scent of what Freud implies when he
169 says that when the dreamer stresses the fact that he does or does not assume responsibility [for certain details], it is connected to the latent dream-thoughts.

Which tells us that this stress is situated at the level of enunciation, inasmuch as it is there that the importance of the signifier implied by free association is highlighted.

2

The signifying chain has two facets.

The first is the unity of a sentence's meaning, its phrasal signification or monolithic nature – in short, its "holophrastic" character. More accurately put, a sentence can be taken to have a meaning that is unique, to be something that forms a [single] signifier, even if it is transitory, but which stands on its own two feet, as it were, for as long as it exists.

The other facet of the signifier is what we call "free association." The latter is such that, for each of the elements of a sentence – no matter how minutely we break it down, stopping only when we reach its phonetic elements – something can intervene that makes

one of its signifiers disappear and puts another signifier in its place. Therein lies the essential property of the signifier.

This is related to the aspect of the subject's will [*vouloir*] that is indicated by the retroactive loop. Without the subject knowing it, in a way of which he is unconscious and which is beyond his intention, his speech is at every moment affected by some parenthetical clause [*incidente*] that intervenes in the choice of elements in the signifying chain. We see the effects of this emerge at the surface, for example in the form of a phonemic slip of the tongue – this is the most elementary form. The simple change of a syllable in a word suffices to show that another signifying chain is present and active there, this second signifying chain having interrupted the first one in order to implant another meaning in it.

At the level of the assuming of responsibility for the statement by the subject, which is apparently the most developed level, the interpretive rule proposed by Freud implies that the *I* is posited as conscious. Nevertheless, we shall not say that the statement is produced by this *I*, since the enigma here remains complete: whose statement is it that we talk about at the level of enunciation? The subject does not come down on any one side; but if he says "I dreamt," it is with a characteristic connotation and stress that shows 170
that he who has dreamt nevertheless presents himself to the subject as problematic.

Who is the subject of enunciation contained in the statement in question? Thus far, we are still at the stage of wondering about this. This subject was long considered to be a god, before becoming, more or less with Aristotle, the "himself" of the subject.

As for what lies beyond the subject – that is to say, the Freudian unconscious – the question of its alterity is no less perennial. An entire oscillation or vacillation is produced around it. What the subject then takes up from this beyond is of the same fragmenting nature and has the same value as a signifying element, as what is produced in the spontaneous phenomenon of substitution or malfunctioning of the signifier, which is what Freud shows us to be the normal pathway for deciphering the meaning of a dream.

In other words, the fragmentation that occurs at the level of enunciation, insofar as the latter implies assumption of responsibility for the dream by the subject, is situated for Freud at the same level and is of the same nature as the pathway of the dream's interpretation – namely, the maximal breaking down [*décomposition*] or spelling out of signifying elements. This spelling out highlights the dream's possibilities, which appear only inasmuch as the signifying chain is intersected by all the other chains that can cross it and interweave with it, at each of its elements and at each of the gaps that it leaves.

When does interpretation most nearly approach what Freud considers to be unconscious? When, in the subject's discourse, we make the current signification vacillate in order to allow the signifiers that are involved in the enunciation to become detached from each other. This is true of dreams in a still more exemplary fashion than of any other sort of discourse.

What are we on the trail of in psychoanalysis? What are we analysts seeking? We are looking for something essential that happened in the subject that keeps certain signifiers repressed. Well, this unconscious lies precisely in the gaps where the signifier is involved. The signifier also puts us on a path toward the subject's desire.

Desire is the *x* in the subject that is caught up in the signifying
171 network, in the links in the signifying system, that is subjected to the filtering and sifting of the signifier. Our goal is to reveal and restore it in his discourse. How can we do so? What does it imply that we can do so?

According to Freudian theory and practice, as I have told you, the status of desire is to be excluded and enigmatic. With respect to the subject, it is essentially tied to the existence of repressed signifiers as such, and restoring desire involves the return of these signifiers. But this is not to say that restoring these signifiers purely and simply enunciates desire.

What is articulated in repressed signifiers, which is always a demand, is one thing; desire – inasmuch as desire is that by which the subject situates himself, owing to the existence of discourse, with respect to this demand – is another. It is not so much a matter of what he demands but of what he is as a function of this demand.

To the degree to which his demand is repressed or masked, the subject's being is expressed in a closed way in his desire's fantasy. There would be no question of the subject's being if there were no demand or discourse. It is fundamentally language that introduces the dimension of being for the subject and at the same time robs him of it.

The restoring of the meaning of the fantasy – that is, of something that is imaginary – is inscribed on the graph [see Figure 2.2] between the two lines: between the statement of the subject's intention, on the one hand, and the enunciation in which the subject reads his intention in a profoundly decomposed, fragmented, and refracted form through spoken language [*langue*], on the other. Fantasy – in which the subject usually suspends his relationship to being – is always enigmatic, more enigmatic than anything else. And what does the subject want? That we interpret it.

To interpret desire is to restore something to which the subject cannot gain access by himself – namely, the affect that designates his being and that is located at the level of the desire that is truly

his. I am referring here to the precise desire that intervenes in one or another of his life events – whether masochistic desire, suicidal desire, or even selfless [*oblatif*] desire. What must happen is that something that occurred in a way that was closed off to the subject take on anew its meaning in relation to the masked discourse that is involved in this desire, take on anew its meaning in relation to being, confronting the subject with being.

This true meaning is, for example, meaning that is defined by what I would call "positional affects related to being." These are 172
the affects that we refer to with essential terms – "love," "hate," and "ignorance" – but there are many others as well which we should catalogue and examine.

What people refer to as affect is not something that is purely and simply opaque and closed off, not something that is somehow beyond discourse or a nucleus of lived experience that comes to us out of the blue. Affect is something that is always and very precisely connoted by a certain stance the subject adopts with respect to being. I mean, with respect to being insofar as what is proposed to him is, in its fundamental dimension, symbolic. But it also happens that, on the contrary, affect constitutes, within the symbolic, an eruption of the real that is highly disturbing.

It is hard not to see that a fundamental affect like anger is nothing but the following: the real that intervenes at the very moment at which we have woven a fine symbolic web, where everything is going well, order, law, our merit, and our pleasure [*bon vouloir*]. We realize suddenly that the square pegs do not fit into the round holes. That is the origin of anger as an affect. All is well on the bridge formed by the ships on the Bosphorus, but a tempest blows in that whips up the sea. All anger involves whipping up the waters.

Affect can also be related to the intrusion of desire itself. This intrusion gives rise to a form of affect to which we will return.

But when it comes to a whole category of fundamental affects at least, affect is essentially the connotation that is characteristic of a stance adopted by a subject – a stance that involves, among other possible stances, putting himself into play or putting himself to work in relation to the necessary lines that are imposed on him by his envelopment in the signifier.

3

Let us now turn to an example.

I have selected this example from someone posterior to Freud. It allows us to clearly articulate what we mean in psychoanalysis by

the desire in a dream. And in order to proceed in a way that leaves no room for an overly arbitrary choice, I selected Chapter 5 of the
173 book entitled *Dream Analysis* by Ella Sharpe, in which she proceeds to analyze a single, simple dream, one whose analysis she takes as far as possible, as far as is possible for her, that is.

In the preceding chapters, she discusses a certain number of perspectives, laws, and mechanisms, examining, for example, the impact of dreams in psychoanalytic practice, and – going further still – the problems posed by the analysis of dreams or of what happens in the dreams of people who are in analysis. But Chapter 5 is the crux of the book, for in it she provides a singularly exemplary dream. She uses it to bring in and illustrate everything she has to say regarding the way in which analytic practice shows us that we must in fact be guided when we analyze dreams.

What this practitioner contributes that is new – in other words, that is not already included in Freud's *Traumdeutung* – is essentially the idea that a dream is not simply something that turns out to be significant, but that it plays a role in the ongoing analytic dialogue, which is not the same at one moment in the analysis as it is at another. In short, dreams accompany analytic discourse in an active, determined way that clarifies and extends the work accomplished. Briefly stated, dreams are dreamt not only for the analysis but often for the analyst, and they bear a message within the analysis.

Ella Sharpe, like a number of other authors, should be credited for not shying away from dream analysis, whereas certain analysts believe they have no need to concern themselves with dreams – I drew this to your attention in the talk I gave at Royaumont on the direction of the treatment – because they believe they involve some sort of intellectual activity.

The status of thought with regard to dreams is no inconsiderable question. It is all a matter of how we stress it. If dreams present themselves as the subject matter of discourse or discursive elaboration, this fact is in itself important as regards the nature of the unconscious. The unconscious is not located in some sort of psychical pouch [*besace*] in which it is found in some unconstituted state, but is rather located in the latencies of discourse. Is it shy of or is it immanent in what the subject formulates, with respect to his discourse or his enunciation? That is another question. The fact
174 remains that it is legitimate to take dreams as they have always been taken – that is, as "the royal road to the unconscious" [SE V, p. 608].

To come now to the dream that Sharpe presents us, I will begin by reading it to you, before showing you the problems that it poses. I will highlight a brief warning she provides about the topic, and will,

in fact, highlight the whole chapter. Our coordinates apply, as you will see, better than any others, to what she enunciates, while allowing us to better orient ourselves in it.

The patient in question arrives at his session one day – I will mention various circumstances that help us contextualize the dream later, for he only recalls them after having certain very important associations [– and eventually proffers the following]:

> I do not know why I should now think of my dream last night. It was a tremendous dream. It went on for ages and ages. It would take me the rest of the hour to relate it all. But don't worry; I shall not bore you with it all for the simple reason that I cannot recall it. But it was an exciting dream, full of incident, full of interest. I woke hot and perspiring. It must have been the longest dream I ever had. [p. 132]

He says that he does not remember the infinity or flood of elements in the dream he had, but brings up a rather short scene instead.

"*I dreamt I was taking a journey with my wife around the world. . . .*" There is a subtle nuance here that is perhaps not sufficiently emphasized. The order in which the circumstantial complements appear is worth noting, for it is not, it seems to me, the normal order in French, which would be: "I was taking a journey around the world with my wife." I do not believe that I am mistaken in saying that the patient's wording might be striking even to an English ear.

> *I dreamt I was taking a journey with my wife around the world, and we arrived in Czechoslovakia where all kinds of things were happening. I met a woman on a road, a road that now reminds me of the road I described to you in the two other dreams lately in which I was having sexual play with a woman in front of another woman.* [p. 132]

Here, Sharpe switches from italics to Roman type to indicate that 175
the patient is making a tangential remark about the dream.

> So it happened in this dream. [Then back to the dream itself in italics, interspersed with associations in Roman type:] *This time my wife was there while the sexual event occurred. The woman I met was very passionate looking* and I am reminded of a woman I saw in a restaurant yesterday. She was dark and had very full lips, very red and passionate looking . . .

The patient thus describes them both as passionate looking.

> . . . and it was obvious that had I given her any encouragement she would have responded. She must have stimulated the dream, I expect. In the dream the *woman wanted intercourse with me and she took the initiative which as you know is a course which helps me a great deal.* If the woman will do this I am greatly helped. In the dream *the woman actually lay on top of me; that has only just come to my mind. She was evidently intending to put my penis in her body. I could tell that by the manoeuvers she was making. I disagreed with this, but she was so disappointed I thought that I would masturbate her.*

Here again the patient editorializes: "It sounds quite wrong to use that verb transitively. One can say 'I masturbated' and that is correct, but it is all wrong to use the word transitively" [pp. 132–3].

In effect, the English verb "masturbate" does not take on the reflexive form as in French. The English "I masturbate" means "*Je me masturbe*" in French [the latter is a reflexive construction]. The analyst immediately picks up on this remark. The patient then adds a few confirmatory remarks, beginning to associate to his own masturbatory activities. He goes further into things later, too.

So there we have the statement of the dream. It gives you an inkling of why it will be of interest to us here.

I am, I must say, adopting a thoroughly arbitrary mode of exposition here, and I could just as easily approach things differently. Don't think that the pathway by which I am proceeding here is one that I am recommending you follow systematically when you interpret dreams. I am doing so here simply in order to provide a quick sketch of what we are trying to see and demonstrate.

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In the dream about the dead father, I was able to designate – following Freud, and in such a way that you could see my approach was not devoid of artifice – the signifiers "as he wished," "he" referring here to the son. Similarly, we shall see in the dream reported by Sharpe's patient with what signifier the fantasy in the dream [*fantasme du rêve*] culminates. This fantasy is expressed in the following words: "I disagreed with this, but she was so disappointed I thought that I would masturbate her." The subject immediately remarks that it is altogether incorrect to use the verb "to masturbate" transitively. The entire analysis of the dream will show us that the true meaning of what is at stake here can be found by re-establishing the intransitivity of the verb.

She is "so disappointed" by what? The whole text of the dream indicates it well enough: she is disappointed by the fact that our subject is barely participating, even though, according to what he says, everything in the scene in the dream is designed to incite him to

do so, such that he would normally be greatly aided by the position she assumes. This is no doubt what is at work here, and I will say that the second part of the sentence ["I thought that I would masturbate her"] presents itself as having an understandable content, a feature that closely corresponds to what Freud articulates as being one of the characteristics of dream formation – namely, secondary revision.

Nevertheless, the subject himself observes that this is not as straightforward as it seems because his use of the verb does not sound quite right. It suffices for us to follow the rule of thumb given by Freud to realize that this observation puts us on the trail of the dream-thought. And therein lies the desire.

In effect, the subject tells us that one would usually say, 'I thought she could masturbate,' which is the normal form in which the wish would present itself: 'She can just go ahead and masturbate if she isn't happy!' The subject indicates rather energetically that masturbation is an activity that is not transitive, in the sense that it is not carried out by one subject on another, but rather intransitive, which means in this case something done by the subject to himself, since "I masturbated" means "*Je me suis masturbé.*" It is important not to come down on any particular side here; we must simply note that the first indication given by the subject immediately goes in the direction of rectifying a signifying articulation.

We are now going to turn to an earlier part of the chapter – prior 177
to the narrative of the dream, before the arrival center stage of this scene, and before the account of this particular session – where we find a short preamble by the author regarding the patient's psychical constellation. What she puts into her premises are found anew in her results. And we will find reasons to critique these results.

Let us turn immediately to what will allow us to move forward here. Ella Sharpe comments that the patient is obviously very bright. We will get a better and better sense of his behavior as we focus in on things.

He is a man of a certain age who is married and works as a lawyer. What she tells us is worth being highlighted word for word. "When the time came for him to practise at the bar he developed severe phobias. Put briefly this" – this is all she tells us about the mechanism of his phobia, but we lend credence to what she says because she is one of the best analysts, one of the most intuitive and penetrating who ever lived – "meant that he dare not work successfully but that he must stop working in reality because he would be only too successful" [p. 127]. The comment the analyst makes here – that it was not that he had an affinity to failure, but rather that he stopped short, as it were, when the immediate possibility of throwing his

ample gifts into relief presented itself – is worth keeping in mind. You will see how we shall make use of it in what follows.

Let us leave aside what the analyst tells us right from the outset about how this might connect up with his father – we will return to it later. We simply need to know that his father died when the patient was three years old and that he had said nothing about him in his analysis for a very long time other than that he "is dead" [p. 126]. This rightly draws the analyst's attention. She hears – and it seems hardly possible to dispute this – that he does not wish to recall that his father ever lived. When he recalls that his father was alive, it is, she tells us, an altogether "startling"* event for him that frightens him [p. 126].

The subject's stance in the analysis is immediately taken to imply that the death wish he had toward his father is the mainspring both of this forgetting of his living father and of any and every articulation of his desire, inasmuch as the dream reveals it. Nevertheless, nothing indicates to us in any way that this aggressive intention is at
178 the origin of a fear of reprisal. An attentive study of the dream will allow us to show this in detail.

What else does the analyst tell us about this patient? She tells us that that day, like other days, she did not hear him arrive at her office, and on this score she provides a short paragraph that is truly brilliant on the topic of the patient's nonverbal presentation. Her description corresponds to the recent trendy practice of noting in patients all the little behavioral details that an attentive analyst knows how to detect. She tells us that she can never hear this one arrive.

The reader grasps from the context that people reach her office by climbing a flight of stairs. She can easily detect a patient of hers who climbs the stairs two at a time, because he makes an "extra thud"* [p. 129]. The English term here has no equivalent in French, designating as it does a flat, dull sound, the sound that might be made by a foot on a stair covered with carpet, a sound that gets a bit louder when one goes up the stairs two at a time. "Another [patient] hurries and I detect the hustle. . . ." The whole paragraph runs on in this vein and is quite delectable, literarily speaking. It is nevertheless but a tangent, for what is important is what this particular patient does.

The patient is perfectly polite, a bit uptight, and always does things in the exact same way:

> He never varies. He always gets on the couch one way. He always gives a conventional greeting with the same smile, a pleasant smile, not forced or manifestly covering hostile impulses. There is never anything as revealing as that would

be. [p. 130]

The analyst's sensibility keeps her well oriented here: "There is no sign of hurry, nothing haphazard, no clothes awry; no marks of a quick toilet; no hair out of place. [. . .] He lies down and makes himself easy" [p. 130].

And he never immediately mentions any sort of upsetting event, for example, that his maid did something that made him late for his session – if she did, it will only be mentioned after quite a while, at the end of the session or even at the next session. "He talks the whole hour, clearly, fluently, in good diction, without hesitation and with many pauses. He speaks in a distinct and even voice for it expresses thinking and never feeling" [p. 130].

As for what should be made of the distinction between thought and feeling, we will all naturally agree [that it is spurious]. What is important here is obviously to know what is signified by the specific mode of communication adopted by the subject. We see here a sort 179
of sterilization of the text of the session that makes the analyst wish that something more deeply felt would come out. Nevertheless, the fact that the subject expresses himself in this way must naturally have a meaning. Any analyst would think that the patient must be afraid of something. The absence of feelings, as the analyst puts it, does not necessarily imply that there is absolutely nothing to include under the heading of feeling.

I spoke earlier about affect as concerning and revealing the subject's relation to being. We must wonder what, in this case, can be communicated by the pathway of affect. It is all the more germane to wonder about this as the session that day opens with a communication regarding affect.

The discordance that exists between the analyst's silence when faced with something she had already noted a few days earlier, and the surprise she experiences, as she herself notes, the day the patient begins talking about it to her of his own accord, clearly shows what additional step must be taken with respect to the analyst's ordinary stance in order to gauge what is at stake in this particular case. For what begins to open up here, is going to open up more and more, as we shall see, right up until the analyst's final interpretation and its astonishing effect. What is truly astonishing is not the simple fact that this interpretation was made, but that it is classified by Sharpe as a satisfying and even exemplary interpretation owing to its fruitful nature.

What happens? In this context, which is characterized by the subject's perfect politeness – he keeps his nose completely clean – something has been happening for the last few days. He has been

arriving at his analyst's door, and just before entering he has been going "Uh, hum!" That is even saying too much, for it is, as Sharpe tells us, the "discreetest of coughs" [p. 130].

Ella Sharpe was a brilliant woman, as every aspect of her style indicates. She was some sort of elementary school teacher before becoming an analyst, which is very fine training for being able to see deeply into people's psychology. She was certainly a very talented woman. She hears this "little cough" as though it were the arrival of the dove at Noah's Ark. The cough announces that, hidden somewhere, there is a place where feelings live. Oh, she tells herself, I
180 would never speak to him about that, because if I did he would tuck it all away again.

This is the classic analytic stance in such cases. The rule is to never make comments to a patient about his physical comportment at a certain stage of his analysis, when it is important to simply observe it. I mean, his way of coughing, lying down, buttoning or unbuttoning his jacket, everything that his ingrained motor bearing says about him – inasmuch as this attitude can take on the value of a signal and inasmuch as all of that goes right to the quick of his narcissism.

Yet, this rule in no wise applies to something like this little cough. Here we see the symbolic power and dimension insofar as it extends to everything in the vocal register. Regardless of the fact that a cough may give the impression of being a purely somatic event, it is situated in the same dimension as sounds like "Uh, huh" and "Yes . . ." that certain analysts sometimes make, quite authoritatively, and that clearly have the effect of encouraging the patient to say more.

The best proof of this is that, to the analyst's great surprise, the cough is the first thing the patient speaks to her about that day. In his "customary even and deliberate voice," he tells her:

> I have been considering that little cough that I give just before I enter the room. The last few days I have coughed I have become aware of it, I don't know whether you have. To-day when the maid called me to come upstairs I made up my mind I would not cough. To my annoyance, however, I realized I had coughed just as I had finished. It is most annoying to do a thing like that, most annoying that something goes on in you or by you that you cannot control, or do not control. One would think some purpose is served by it, but what possible purpose can be served by a little cough of that description it is hard to think. [p. 131]

The analyst advances with snakelike stealth, and asks, well, "What purpose could be served" by it?

He replies, "Well, it is the kind of thing that one would do if one were going into a room where two lovers were together." He recounts that he once did something like that when he was a child 181
before entering a room where his brother was with his girlfriend – he coughed just before entering because he thought they were perhaps kissing and that it would be better if they stopped before he came in, for they would then feel less embarrassed than if he surprised them.

The analyst then asks, "And why cough before coming in here?" He replies:

> That is absurd, because naturally I should not be asked to come up if someone were here [. . .]. There is no need for a cough at all that I can see. It has, however, reminded me of a phantasy I had of being in a room where I ought not to be, and thinking someone might think I was there, and then I thought to prevent anyone from coming in and finding me there I would bark like a dog. That would disguise my presence. The "someone" would then say, "Oh, it's only a dog in there." [pp. 131–2]

"A dog?" the analyst cautiously inquires. The patient continues:

> That reminds me of a dog rubbing himself against my leg, really masturbating himself. I'm ashamed to tell you because I did not stop him. I let him go on and someone might have come in. [p. 132]

Then he coughs lightly and recounts the dream I mentioned earlier.

We will come back to this in detail next time, but can't we already note that the dream comes to his mind right after the coughing episode? In all probability, the little cough is a message. Sharpe herself suspects as much, moreover, since she brings it into the analysis of the dream and even places it in the spotlight. The little cough is a message, but we want to know about what.

Secondly, we can observe that it is a message twice over [or: to the second power, *au second degré*], insofar as the patient speaks about it explicitly and not unconsciously, and it is by this very pathway that he introduces the dream. Were he simply to say, "I coughed," it would already be a message, but he does not simply say that he coughed, he says, 'I coughed, and that means something.' And immediately afterward, he begins telling stories that are singularly

182 suggestive. The cough obviously means 'I am here. If you're doing something fun but that you would rather not have somebody else see, it's time to cut it short.'

But we will fail to see what is at stake in this cough if we do not take into account the narrative that is provided at the same time. He tells us that he thought of dissimulating his presence in a room – his presence *as such*, I would say – by doing the very thing that would obviously attract attention, namely, barking. This presents itself with all the trappings of fantasy.

First of all, it is the subject himself who presents this as a fantasy, one he had in his childhood. Moreover, nothing shows better than this fantasy in what way the subject fills out his empty form – namely, that he must adorn himself [or: invest or protect himself, *se parer*] with a signifier, that he finds himself adorned by the effect of the signifier. Indeed, we find anew here all the characteristics of the use made by children of what present themselves as natural signifiers, when they use them as attributes to signify something – a dog, for example, which children sometimes call a bowwow. But here, where the subject is included in a fantasized activity, he attributes the bowwow to himself.

In this fantasy, in short – a fantasy that is altogether unrealizable [*inapplicable*] – if he signals his presence it is insofar as he makes himself into something other than what he is. He is supposed to manifest himself as other than he is; he makes himself absent; he even banishes himself from the realm of speech, making himself into an animal, literally naturalizing himself. No one will go check to see if he is there because he will have presented and articulated himself in the most elementary signifier [barking]. They will not think "There's nothing there," but literally that "There is no one there [*Il y a personne*]." This is truly what the subject announces to us in his fantasy: Inasmuch as I am in the presence of the Other, I am no one. This is Odysseus' response, "*οὔτις*" [meaning nobody or no one] when asked his name by the Cyclops.

These are no more than the subject's associations to his dream. We will have to take the analysis further in order to see in what sense and how the subject is no one [*personne*]. There is of course something correlated to this on the side of the other who must be warned and who turns out to be, in this case as in the dream, a woman. His relation to women in general certainly plays a role in the situation.

To articulate the something that the subject is not, and that he
183 cannot be, will direct us, as you shall see, toward the most fundamental of symbols involved in the subject's identification.

If the subject absolutely wants, and everything points to this, his

female partner to masturbate, to take care of herself, it is assuredly so that she will not take care of him. Why doesn't he want her to take care of him? In what way doesn't he want it?

The usual time granted to us for this class does not allow us to articulate it today, so we shall put it off till next time.

January 14, 1959

IX

THE FANTASY ABOUT THE BARKING DOG

The cough, a signifier of the Other
Analyzing the fantasy without understanding it
Dogs go meow, cats go bowwow
Darwin and the duck's quack
Masturbating dog = ego-ideal

When we ended last time, we were in the middle of analyzing a dream that Ella Sharpe calls "single" – that is, singular or unique. She devotes an entire chapter to it; it is a chapter on which the whole earlier part of her book converges, and she [then goes on to] add to it in various ways.

Her book, which is made up of lectures given to analysts-in-training and based on some thirty years of wide-ranging psychoanalytic experience, is original in that it is explicitly devoted to the analysis of dreams, which is why it is important to us.

This extremely interesting dream was the main topic of one session she had with a patient. Her discussion of it – along with the connections she establishes, not merely among the dream associations and her interpretations, but also among all the messages of the session taken as a whole – demonstrates that she has considerable sensitivity regarding the direction and meaning of the analysis.

She interprets the dream line by line, as one should. As we shall see in detail, she interprets it as though it were a desire linked to her patient's wish for omnipotence. Whether this is justified or not, you should already realize that, if this dream can be of interest to us, it is with respect to the angle by which I tried to show you what is ambiguous and misleading in the one-sided notion according to which – in the wish for omnipotence, this wish for the possibility or perspective of potency that one might call the neurotic wish – it is always the subject's omnipotence that is at issue.

For it is quite obvious that the omnipotence at issue is the

omnipotence of discourse. This does not imply in the least that the subject feels himself to be the mainstay or guardian of discourse. If 186
what he is dealing with is the omnipotence of discourse, it is via the Other that he proffers it.

This is especially forgotten in the way Ella Sharpe orients her interpretation of the dream.

1

I will begin by indicating to you what we will see at the end, because we will probably not manage to finish our discussion of the dream in today's class. Such an elaborate piece of work brings up a host of things – and a still greater host of things when we realize that, in the final analysis, almost nothing has been said on the topic [of dreams], even though we operate in this realm every day.

Ella Sharpe thus argues with her patient about his wish for omnipotence, and as she puts it, his aggressive omnipotence [p. 145].

To begin with, this patient, about whom she absolutely does not give us all the background information, has in his profession – he is a lawyer – major difficulties whose neurotic character is so obvious that she goes into them in detail. Indeed, she indicates that it is not so much that he is afraid of failure but rather of success, of having too much success. It is by modulating the very definition of his symptom that she highlights a split and introduces into the analysis a nuance that warrants our attention owing to its obviously subtle nature.

She mentions that the patient has other difficulties as well that go beyond his professional activities, extending to the whole of his relations with other people. They manifest themselves especially in games – in tennis, for instance. The sorts of difficulties he has concern, for example, the fact that he has a hard time doing what is necessary to win a game or a set – namely, to corner his adversary at one end of the tennis court and, as people often do, hit the ball to the opposite end of the court where his opponent cannot reach it. The highlighting of such symptoms by the analyst is quite helpful in confirming that the patient suffers from a problem manifesting his potency, or more accurately stated, his power.

This leads her to intervene in a certain way, which elicits in the patient a certain number of reactions in which she clearly rejoices, 187
in a word. This is the crowning moment at which she indicates where his desire lies, and it is truly in the sense in which we define desire here. One might almost say that she aims at desire in its relation to demand – as you will see, this is truly what she does.

The problem is that she interprets this desire as if it were an aggressive conflict, situating it at the level of an imaginary conflict. She thinks essentially and primarily in terms of dyadic relations. I will show you what justifies her in broaching things in this way, but I want to immediately raise the question here whether the appropriateness of this type of interpretation is truly legitimated by the two reactions with which she justifies it.

The first reaction comes three days after the session in which the patient related to her the lovely dream we discussed, which was a crucial moment in the analysis and one in which she delivered the first sketch of her dyadic-type interpretation that his aggressiveness was grounded in a [feared] repercussion or transference of his wish for omnipotence. The patient tells her what resulted from this – for the first time in ages, since childhood, he wet his bed! This is striking and astonishing in an adult patient. We will come back to this in detail in order to indicate the problem that is raised by it.

The second reaction occurs in the course of the week that followed the session in which he recounted the dream, on the occasion of a game of tennis that he lost. He happened to have one of those difficulties well known to tennis players who have the opportunity to glimpse the way they put their abilities to work, who are sometimes unable to garner the reward for their obvious superiority, for they are unable to manifest it. One of his usual partners teased him regarding the lost game, with a sensitivity to his unconscious impasses that in the end constitute the fabric of this game, and that are reflected in the skirmishing dialogue between the players, joking and teasing each other about which one got the upper hand. At that point, the patient became so furious he grabbed his opponent by the neck and cornered him in the back of the court, ordering him to never tease him like that again [pp. 147–8].

I am not saying that the general direction of and order in which Ella Sharpe made her interpretations have no foundation whatsoever. We shall see that she employed elements that ring true on the
188 basis of the minutest dissection of the material. But she also has preconceived ideas. The latter are, after all, often founded – for an error is never generated except through a lack of truth – but they are grounded in another register that she knows neither how to articulate nor how to handle, even if she provides us with the necessary elements, which is what makes this case study precious to us.

The point on which her interpretation bears is at a lower degree of complexity, since she situates everything at the level of imaginary rivalry and power struggles. Yet if we carefully sift the material included in her text, we will see – and in a striking manner, I believe – what she leaves out. What is at work in the session she analyzes,

and the dream that lies center-stage in that session, manifests itself with so much coherence that it incites us to see if we cannot center things better with the help of the categories that I have been proposing for a long time, and whose map I have tried to give you in the form of the topological schema, the graph, that we use.

Let me remind you that in the dream the patient takes a journey with his wife around the world. He arrives in Czechoslovakia, "where all kinds of things were happening" [p. 132]. He underscores the fact that there were plenty of things that took place before that moment in the dream, but that he has forgotten them, such that the dream does not take very long to recount.

He meets a woman on a road, and the road reminds him of another road he has dreamt about, which he already described to his analyst in two recent dreams. On this road, there had been "sexual play with a woman," and this had occurred "in front of another woman" [p. 132]. The same thing happens in this dream, as he tells us in a digression.

> *This time my wife was there while the sexual event occurred. The woman I met was very passionate looking* and I am reminded of a woman I saw in a restaurant yesterday. She was dark and had very full lips, very red and passionate looking, and it was obvious that had I given her any encouragement she would have responded. She must have stimulated the dream, I expect. In the dream the *woman wanted intercourse with me and she took the initiative which as you know is a course which helps me a great deal.* If the woman will do this I am greatly helped. In the dream the *woman actually lay on top of me; that has only just* 189
> *come to my mind. She was evidently intending to put my penis in her body. I could tell that by the manoeuvers she was making. I disagreed with this, but she was so disappointed I thought that I would masturbate her.* [pp. 132–3]

Immediately thereafter comes the remark that only makes sense in English: "It sounds quite wrong to use that verb transitively. One can say 'I masturbated' and that is correct" [p. 133]. We shall see in what follows in the text another example that clearly shows that when you employ "to masturbate" in English, in French it means "*se masturber.*" The originally reflexive nature of the verb is so strong that the patient makes on this score what is, strictly speaking, a philological remark, and it is obviously no accident that he does so at that very moment.

As I said last time, if we proceed as we did in the previous dream, we can complete this sentence by restoring the avoided signifiers,

as follows: "she was so disappointed" to not have my penis, or to not have a penis, that I thought 'she should masturbate,' and not "I would masturbate her." She can just go ahead and masturbate! You will see in what follows what allows us to complete things in this way.

After that, we have a series of associations and a dialogue between the analyst and the patient. They do not go very far, but nevertheless give us quite enough food for thought. As there are almost three pages of them in all, I will pick up on them later so as not to tire you.

Ella Sharpe wrote this chapter for pedagogical purposes. Finding herself in a didactic role, she summarizes what we read in the session and establishes a catalogue of what the patient brought her, in order to show to those she is teaching exactly what the material is from which she makes a choice in order to ground both the interpretation that she has in mind and her selection of a part of the interpretation to convey to the patient. She emphasizes the fact that the two are far from coinciding, since what should be said to the patient is probably not all of what there is to say about the patient. In what the patient brought her, there are things that are worth saying and others that should not be said.

The first thing he brought up was the cough, the little cough that
190 the patient gave that day before entering the consulting room, and that she had already heard him give at the same moment for the past few days.

Given the way the patient behaves, which is so contained and uptight, so obviously indicative of defense – Sharpe senses this very clearly and she is far from reducing it to a defense like "defense against his own feelings" – she sees in this cough a manifestation, that she considers spontaneous, of a more immediate presence than his attitude in which everything is reflected upon and in which nothing is reflected. This "little cough," as the patient calls it, might have given no pause for thought to others, whereas for her, however miniscule it may be, it is literally like an olive branch. In this cough she hears the announcement that some sort of drop in the level of the floodwaters has begun. Thus it is as if she says to herself, "Let's respect that," and refrains from pointing it out to him.

Then the unexpected happens: the patient himself begins talking at great length about the little cough. I discussed this with you last time, and we will return to it and to the way in which Ella Sharpe understands it – and to the way in which we should, in my view, understand it.

In this crucial session, the patient does not bring up the dream he had right away. He begins by recounting the series of associations that came to him after having noticed the cough he was giving

before entering the consulting room, whereas he had always climbed the flight of stairs so discreetly that the analyst did not hear him. He had resolved not to cough again this time, but a cough came out all the same. It bothers him a lot that there is something in him that he cannot control, and he wonders what it might mean.

We are now going to return to what he says by following the way in which Ella Sharpe registers it in her own perspective. She establishes a catalogue of what she calls the "ideas concerning the purpose of a cough" [p. 136].

First of all, this cough brings with it "thoughts of lovers being together." What did the patient say? After having spoken about his cough and wondered what purpose it might have served, he said the following:

> Well, it is the kind of thing that one would do if one were going into a room where two lovers were together. If one were approaching such a place one might cough a little discreetly and so let them know they were going to be disturbed. I have done 191
> that myself when, for example, I was a lad of fifteen and my brother was with his girl in the drawing-room I would cough before I went in so that if they were embracing they could stop before I got in. They would not then feel as embarrassed as if I had caught them doing it. [p. 131]

It is not insignificant to underscore in this regard that the cough is a message. The patient indicated this, and we suspect as much anyway because everything that followed corroborated it. Let me immediately comment on this.

Even if this seems a bit persnickety, consider nevertheless that the order of the remarks that I am going to make now will show you that starting from here, everything else follows – namely, what I called the drop in level that characterizes Sharpe's interpretation. Given the way she analyzes things, she does not grasp, or at least does not highlight, what it is important to bring out. Which is that the subject did not simply cough but that he in some sense came to tell the analyst – to her great surprise, even she mentions this – that it was a message. She leaves this out.

We need but look at the catalogue she establishes of her total number of kills [or: of hits, *tableau de chasse*] – we are not yet at the stage of examining what she chooses to put in that catalogue, which depends on what she at first recognized – to observe that she takes note of the cough, but that she elides the fact, which she herself nevertheless underscores, that the subject wonders what its purpose is, what it announces. Yet this is the important point regarding this

message-bearing cough, assuming it is a message: the subject literally begins by saying that the cough is a message; he marks it as a message. Moreover, in the dimension in which he announces that it is a message, he wonders what the purpose of the message is.

What happens in analysis, according to the definition and articulation that we are trying to give of it? An analysis is first and foremost a discourse. We cannot forget its structural framework. Our requirement that this discourse be dissected [*désarticuler*] does not proceed from any particular persnicketiness, but merely reflects our interest in analyzing it, strictly speaking.

We are going to see what its importance is. Up to a certain point,
192 we can already begin to get our bearings thanks to our graph. When the patient wonders what his cough is about, it is a question raised to the second power [*au second degré*] regarding the event. He raises this question using the Other as his starting point [*à partir de l'Autre*; see Figure 9.1], since it is insofar as he is in analysis that he raises the question.

I would say that, in this case, the patient shows himself to be further advanced than Sharpe imagines he is, as is witnessed by her surprise. This reminds us of how parents are always behind the curve regarding what their children do and do not understand. Here the analyst is behind the curve, for the patient had long since figured out that it was important to wonder about symptoms that arose in connection with the analysis, and that the slightest hitch gave rise to a question.

In short, the question regarding the cough as a message is clearly presented in the form of a question mark in the upper part of the graph [Figure 9.1]. In order to allow you to locate the point we are at, I am also including the lower part of the graph, which I defined in another context by telling you that it was the level of the Other's discourse.

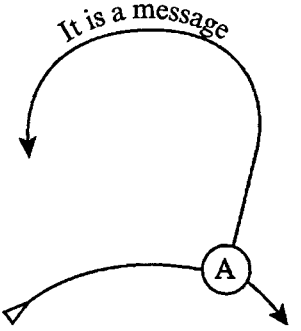

Figure 9.1: It is a message

It is quite clear here that the subject has entered into analytic discourse and that he literally raises a question concerning the Other that is in him – namely, his unconscious. This level of articulation is insistently present in every subject inasmuch as he asks himself, "But what does this Other want?"

This is not an innocent statement that is supposedly made within the analysis. There is absolutely no doubt but that this question is 193
enunciated at a level that is distinguished from the first verbal level, that of innocent statements, and that it clearly indicates the locus where we situate what must in the end be the shibboleth of analysis – namely, the signifier of the Other [or: the Other's signifier, *le signifiant de l'Autre*]. This signifier is precisely what is hidden from the neurotic, inasmuch as he does not know its impact and he wonders about it. In this case, he recognizes it but he is far from having an answer. Hence the question, "What is this signifier of the Other doing in me?"

Let us say, in short, in terms that are suitable here at the beginning of my exposé, that the subject is, and for good reason, far from being able to recognize that the Other is castrated, but no further than he is from being able to recognize that he himself is. For the time being, from this position of innocence or educated ignorance [*ignorance docte*], which is constituted by the fact of being in analysis, he simply wonders what this signifier is insofar as it signifies something in his unconscious which is the signifier of the Other.

This is what is elided in Sharpe's way of proceeding.

She enumerates his "ideas concerning the purpose of a cough" – this is her way of approaching things. Naturally, they are ideas concerning the cough, but they already give us a great deal more than a simple linear chain of ideas.

Something is already sketched out, which is mapped, here in particular [Lacan is undoubtedly pointing to part of the graph], on our graph.

2

Sharpe tells us that the cough first brings with it "thoughts of lovers being together" [p. 136].

I read you what the patient said, and in my view it can in no wise be summarized in that way.

If we listen to him, he imagines someone who arrives as a third party, interrupting lovers who are together. He arrives as a third party, but not in just any old way, since he orchestrates things so as not to arrive as a third party in an overly embarrassing way.

In other words, it is very important, right from the outset, to point out that if there are three people involved, the being together
194 [of the two lovers] involves variations over time, coherent variations – namely, they are together as long as the third party is outside. Once the third party has entered, they are no longer together – that is plain to see.

It should be clear to you that if it took us a week of meditation to get to the bottom of what the patient tells us – as it is going to take us two classes to cover the material this dream brings with it and its interpretation – the analysis of it might appear to be something insurmountable, especially because things could only expand still further and we would be quickly overwhelmed. But in reality, this is not a valid objection at all, for the very good reason that, to a certain extent, what is essential is in the schema that has already been traced out. That is to say that, when the third party is outside, the two are together; when the third party is inside, the two are no longer together.

I am not saying that everything we are going to see regarding the dream is already contained in this, for that would be a bit simplistic. But we are going to see the following develop, extend and, in short, become involute like a leitmotif that is indefinitely reproduced and enriched at every point of the fabric, eventually constituting the entire texture of the whole. You will see what that texture is.

Which idea does Sharpe highlight next? The "rejection of a sexual phantasy concerning the analyst" [p. 136]. Does that account for what the patient brings up?

Immediately after he explains to her what purpose the cough might serve if there are lovers in the room, the analyst asks him the following question: "And why cough before coming in here?" He replies,

> That is absurd, because naturally I should not be asked to come up if someone were here, and I do not think of you in that way at all. There is no need for a cough at all that I can see. It has, however, reminded me of a phantasy I had of being in a room where I ought not to be . . . [pp. 131–2]

This is what Sharpe summarizes by saying that we have here the "rejection of a sexual phantasy concerning the analyst." Is this sound?

It seems to me that we are not dealing with an absolute rejection here, but rather with an admission; it is a roundabout admission, naturally, but an admission nonetheless owing to the associations that follow it. One cannot say that the subject is in a position of pure

and simple negation, that he is purely and simply rejecting the analyst's proposal, which seems like it could serve, on the contrary, as a model interpretation in being so opportune, since it leads to everything that follows. A sexual fantasy associated with the patient's entrance into the analyst's office, where she is supposed to be alone, is clearly what is at issue, and you will see quickly enough that it does not take a genius to shed light on it. 195

The third element the patient's associations bring us is, according to Sharpe, a fantasy: the "phantasy of being where he ought not to be, and barking like a dog to put people off the scent" [p. 136]. "To put off the scent" is a metaphorical expression, and there is always a reason why one metaphor is used instead of another; yet there is no trace of the word "scent" in what the patient tells us. We have no means of knowing whether it is repressed or not. I am saying this because scent is what certain analysts joyfully look forward to. Let us confine our attention here to what the patient tells us about the dream.

In response to the analyst's question, he says: "It has, however, reminded me of a phantasy I had of being in a room where I ought not to be" – this conforms to what the analyst surmises* – "and thinking someone might think . . ." [p. 131].

The structure here is twofold, as it refers to the subjectivity of another person: 'I think that someone might think. . . .' This is what I will emphasize, for is absolutely rampant [in this patient's discourse], it is what is constantly at work here, and it is here alone that we can focus in on his desire. This is also what is constantly left out of Sharpe's account, and of the way in which she accounts for the different impacts of need [*incidences tendancielles*].

The patient proffers the following: I had a fantasy in which I was "thinking someone might think I was there, and then I thought to prevent anyone from coming in and finding me there I would bark like a dog. That would disguise my presence. The 'someone' would then say, 'Oh, it's only a dog in there'" [p. 131].

The patient clearly indicates that this fantasy dates back to late childhood or early adolescence. Despite the not very coherent, paradoxical, and even absurd nature of the fantasy, Sharpe nevertheless perceives its full value, and includes it in her catalogue of important ideas. She thus summarizes it in the terms I mentioned: "Phantasy of being where he ought not to be, and barking like a dog to put people off the scent" [p. 136]. 196

This is correct, except that, if he imagines being where he ought not be, the goal of the fantasy – its meaning or obvious content – is to show that he is not where he is. This is the flip side. It is very important because, as we shall see, it characterizes and is the very structure of every subjective assertion made by the patient.

To cut to the chase, as the analyst does, and tell him that he wanted, at some point, to kill his fellow man, and that what he fears here are repercussions and reprisals, is assuredly to take a stand, and under conditions in which your chances of being wrong and of succeeding at the same time – in other words, your chances of in effect getting him to subjectively adopt or subjectify what you are cutting to the chase about – are particularly obvious. This is what makes Sharpe's text interesting.

In any case, this interpretation brings out his structure insofar as it manifests itself here, and already appears in the fantasy – namely, that he is not where he is. We are going to see both the meaning this interpretation may have and a completely different interpretation to which this could perhaps lead.

Whatever the case may be, he does not employ just any old means to make himself not be where he is; he sets about barking like a dog. To do so in a room where one ought not to be is certainly not the best way of going unnoticed. From the vantage point of reality, it is only too clear that this fantasy is untenable.

The only value of this sentence [describing the fantasy] is to get us to observe that we are not in the realm of the comprehensible but of imaginary structure. When we hear things like that during sessions, we believe we understand, but this is a retroactive effect – the patient seems to understand and that is good enough for us. Being understandable is, as I have already told you, a characteristic of any and every affect, of the whole margin, accompaniment, or fringes of inner discourse – and, especially, such as we can reconstruct it when we have the feeling that it is not as continuous as we think. Continuity is an effect that is primarily obtained by means of affect. It is a law: the less affects have an explainable cause [*sont motivés*], the more understandable they appear to be to the subject.

197 But there is no reason for us to follow his lead here. This is why the remark I made, as obvious as it may seem, nevertheless has its import. What we need to analyze is the fantasy, and without understanding it – in other words, by finding within it the structure it reveals.

Now what does this fantasy mean here? Earlier, it was important for us to see that the subject told us that his cough was a message. Similarly, it is important to perceive that this fantasy truly makes no sense, owing to its totally impossible efficacy, and that by barking, the subject simply says, "It's [only] a dog."

Here, too, he makes himself into something other than what he is [*il se fait autre*], but that is not the point. He does not wonder here what the signifier of the Other in him is – he has a fantasy.

Nevertheless, when such fantasies are brought up in analysis, we should perceive what precious material we have been given.

He makes himself into something other than what he is with the help of what? A signifier, precisely. Barking is the signifier here of what he is not. He is not a dog, but thanks to this signifier, in the fantasy, he obtains the desired result: he is other than what he is.

3

Although we have not exhausted everything that came out solely in association with the cough – for there is yet a fourth element that we will examine later today – I am going to turn to a different topic: the function of the signifier in fantasy.

We are going to set this dream aside in order to come back to a small, elementary, clinical observation that I alluded to at the end of a recent scientific paper, which I mentioned I would bring to you here.

It must be said that, given how abundant psychoanalytic material is, what should be taught is so incommensurate with what is taught – in other words, with what gets repeated over and over – that some days I truly feel ridiculously crushed by the task I have undertaken.

In the case of Ella Sharpe's patient, it is clear that he considers himself to be sufficiently hidden by his fantasized barking. Consider his words: "It's [only] a dog" [p. 132]. I would like to draw your 198
attention here to a point that concerns child psychology.

We would like to understand children, so we try to construct a psychology about them that is referred to in French as "genetic" [*génétique*, referred to in English as "developmental"]; it consists in wondering how the dear little ones, who are so dumb, begin to acquire their ideas. We wonder how children proceed. We say that their world is initially autoerotic, and that objects only come into view later. I hope that you all have enough experience with children, thank God – if not directly, at least via patients who tell you stories about their children – to see that no one is more interested in objects and in the reflections of objects than very young children.

But let us leave that to one side, for the point, for the time being, is to perceive how the signifier begins to operate for children. I say that we can see it operate in children, at the source or origin of its grasp on the world that is offered to them; this world is above all a world of language, a world in which people speak to them, which obviously requires a rather astounding adjustment [or: confrontation or alignment, *affrontement*] on their part. How does the signifier enter into their world?

I have already alluded to the following fact that people can take note of, on the condition that they have an attentive ear rather than trying to confirm at any cost the preconceived notions with which they begin to broach children.

A friend of mine recently made the following comment to me: having decided to look after his child himself, a child to whom he devotes a lot of time, he had only ever spoken to his child about the family dog by calling it "the dog." He did not fail to be a bit surprised at the fact that the child, who had clearly figured out what was designated by the adult's initial name for the animal, began to call it a "bowwow."

"Bowwow," which the child used solely to designate the dog, is the feature that was first chosen by the child among the dog's myriad characteristics. And why should we be surprised by this? The child obviously is not going to begin by listing his dog's qualities. Well before being able to handle any sort of attribute, he begins to bring into play what he can say about it – namely, that by which the animal presents itself as itself producing a sign, which is not a signifier.

199 Let us note that language is served here by a boon offered to it by something that is rather isolated in what manifests itself – namely, the animal's presence – in order to furnish material, something that is already laryngeal. The child takes this material as what? As something that replaces "the dog," a term that he has already clearly heard and understood, to such an extent that, when one says "dog," he can just as easily direct his gaze at the dog as at a picture of the dog. To replace "dog" by "bowwow" is to create a first metaphor, and it is here that predication first begins to operate. Nothing is closer to the true genesis of language.

People have noticed that, in primitive forms of language, metaphors are what play the role of adjectives. This is confirmed in this child, except that we do not find ourselves faced here with some mysterious primitive operation of the mind, but rather with a structural necessity of language, a necessity which is such that in order for something to be generated in the realm of the signified, one signifier must be substituted for another.

You will ask, "Why assert that it is the substitution of 'bowwow' for 'dog' that is essential? How do you know that?"

I will answer first by a common enough observation that was recounted to me not long ago by people who speak to me at times, in a way which, although it is not directly clarified by the investigative maps I provide, is oriented by my teaching. From the moment a child has learned to call a dog "bowwow," he will call a slew of other things "bowwow" that have absolutely nothing to do with dogs.

This immediately shows you that what we are talking about here is the transformation of a sign [the dog's barking] into a signifier, and the power of the signifier being put to the test. It is put to the test of all sorts of substitutions and thus it is of little importance whether it is substituted for other signifiers or for real things.

The culminating point of this process is the decisive moment that I highlighted at the end of the aforementioned scientific paper, in which the child declares with the greatest authority and insistence that "dogs go meow" and "cats go bowwow." This is an absolutely decisive culmination, for it is at this moment that primitive metaphor – which is purely and simply constituted by means of signifying substitution – engenders the category of qualifiers [or: attribution, *qualification*].

Pay close attention here. We can, in this case, formalize the step or progress that is being made here. 200

I would say that a monolinear chain is at first established, which says "dogs" = "bowwow." Next, the child superimposes and combines one chain with another; he makes one chain, "dogs go bowwow," intersect another chain, "cats go meow." In short, by substituting "meow" for "bowwow," he creates the possibility of a division of each of the chains into two parts, one of which will provisionally be fixed in place and the other of which will no less provisionally be mobile. One part of the chain will remain, and the part that can be exchanged will revolve around it.

In other words, the signified S' of cats is associated with S, "bowwow," which is the signifier of dogs [i.e., which signifies dogs]. This presupposes that below – and to begin with, there is no below – the child links "meow," the signifier of cats, with the signified of "bowwow," that is, dogs.

$$\frac{S' \ . \ S}{S \ . \ S'}$$

Crossing and exchange

The importance that the child gives to this exercise is quite obvious and it is demonstrated by the following fact: if the parents are so tactless as to intervene and to correct, reprimand, or berate him for proffering such nonsense, the child reacts very emotionally – in short, he cries. For he knows perfectly well what he is doing, unlike the adults who think that he is uttering stupidities. He is constructing a metaphor.

According to the formulation that I have given of it, a metaphor, from the vantage point of the graph, consists essentially of the

following: something at the level of the upper line is displaced or elided with respect to something that in the lower line, that of the signified, is also displaced. The enunciation "dogs go bowwow" is a simple imitative connection with respect to reality. From the moment the game begins, from the moment "dogs go bowwow" and "bowwow," which is elided, sinks into the what lies below the enunciation concerning the dog, the latter becomes a true signifying enunciation.

201 Whether the dog is indicated or named makes no difference. But when a quality is attributed to him, it is literally not on the same line; it is on that of quality as such, where there are those who go "bowwow" and those who go "meow," and there are also all of those who make other sounds, all of which are implied in the vertical schema [of paradigmatic relations]. Here the dimension of adjectives begins to be born from metaphor.

As you know, such things have been glimpsed for quite some time – Darwin discussed them long ago. But, having no linguistic theory at his disposal, such things remained very problematic to him. But it is such a general, essential, and functionally dominant phenomenon in child development that Darwin, even though he was mostly inclined to provide naturalistic explanations, did not fail to be struck by the following fact.

He found it quite funny that a child, who was already astute enough to detach the "quack" from the duck that made it, applied this "quack" to a whole series of objects whose generic nature is sufficiently indicated by the fact that, if I recall correctly, wine and a sou were included among the objects.

I am not too sure what the term "sou" designated, if it was a "penny"* or something else; I did not verify what it meant at Darwin's time, but in any case it was a coin. Darwin, floundering around for an explanation, observed that the coin had the image of an eagle in one corner, thanks to which one could explain that the quack was unified and tied in general to volatiles. The wine obviously still posed a problem, but perhaps we could simply assume that there is some relationship between wine and, let us say, liquids, insofar as ducks paddle around in them.

Nevertheless, even if we would like to believe that it is its liquid nature that allows the child to apply the duck's quack to wine, and that he applies it to the coin because an image as ambiguous as that of an eagle with its wings spread on the coin can be, by a child, assimilated to his apperception of ducks, the fact remains that we observe once again that what is at stake is far more marked and shot through and through with the signifying element than it is associated with the contiguity of perception. In any case, it is in the

register of the signifying chain that we can grasp what grounds the child's apprehension of the world as a world structured by speech. 202

It is not that he is seeking the meaning or essence of birds, fluid, or coins. It is that he literally finds them through the use of nonsense. If we had time, we would raise questions regarding what nonsense is technically – I mean, "nonsense"* as it is understood in English.

Nonsense is a [literary] genre. The English language has two eminent examples of nonsense: Edward Lear, the author of books of nonsense that he defined as such, and Lewis Carroll, whose *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* I think you all know, at the very least.

If I had an introductory book to recommend to anyone who was going to become a child psychiatrist or psychoanalyst, I must say that, rather than any of the books by Jean Piaget, I would recommend beginning by reading a book which I have the best reasons to think, given what we know about the author, is based on profound experience of children's mental play – namely, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.*

There he would grasp the value, impact, and dimension of nonsensical play as such. Today I can do no more here than mention this.

I brought all of this up as a kind of parenthesis regarding the comment made by Sharpe's patient, "It's only a dog."

We shall return to him now in concluding today's class.

4

"It's only a dog" must be interpreted in a signifying manner.

Some facet of the fantasy is sketched out here.

Indeed, you will find anew here what I proposed as the formula of fantasy – namely, that the subject appears elided in it. It is not him, inasmuch as there is another there, an imaginary other, little *a*. This is a first indication, which will allow you to see that there is a fantasy as such in this scene, and which will assure you of the validity of our mapping of the fantasy.

Let me turn to the fourth association that Ella Sharpe lists in her catalogue of ideas. "Dog again brought memory of masturbating a dog" [p. 136]. 203

As we have seen, the verb "to masturbate" in fact has a naturally intransitive use. We have here a dog that is masturbating, given that the patient recounted this memory right after talking about the scene involving "It's only a dog": "That reminds me of a dog

rubbing himself against my leg, really masturbating himself. I'm ashamed to tell you because I did not stop him. I let him go on and someone might have come in" [p. 132].

The "memory of masturbating a dog" in Sharpe's list takes on the connotation of an element that should be placed at the end of the chain [of associations]. Is that something that should completely satisfy us here? I don't believe so. This element allows us, in effect, to go a bit further into what is at stake in the message that brings the dream in its wake.

Nothing is clearer in this case than the line that is followed by the patient's associations. Where is it? It is in the subject's enunciation. This first loop of associations is drawn on the graph [Figure 9.2] with a dotted line.

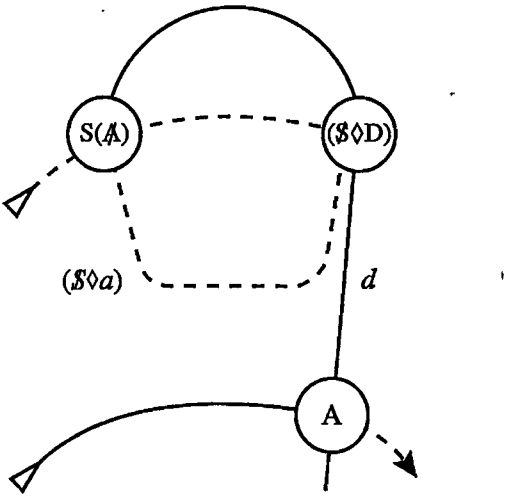

Figure 9.2: The first loop of associations

As in ordinary and normal speech, the signifying elements of this dotted chain pass through the two landmarks of the message and
204 the code. But at the upper level where we are, the message and the code are of a different nature than they are at the lower level, where the Other, A, merely designates the partner who speaks the same language as the subject.

The upper line of associations arrives at the point S(Ⱥ), the signifier of the Other which is in me. That is the question. What the subject begins to spill out regarding this does no less than pass through the point ($◊*a*) – we will return to this – and then through *d*, the level at which the question of his desire is located.

What does the patient do by giving a little cough at the very moment he enters a place where there is something he knows nothing about? "Sexual phantasy concerning analyst," says Sharpe [p. 136], but what fantasy is it? What is shown by the associations that follow is his own fantasy – namely, that if he were in the place of the other person, he would think first of all about not being there, or more precisely, about being taken for something other than himself.

So what do we arrive at now? We arrive at something that actually happened. A scene is suddenly revealed here. It is related by the patient. What happened?

The dog, insofar as it is [the patient] himself, was not there. Now we have a dog, and this time he is no longer fantasized but real. This time, it is an other who is no longer a signifier at all, but who is an image, a companion in the room, and a companion who is all the more obviously close to him, likened to him, as it is against his own leg that the dog masturbates.

How can we schematize what happened at that moment? We know that the other – in this case, the animal qua real – had a relationship with the subject, because the latter took the time to tell us about it beforehand. The subject could be this animal in his imagination, on the condition of taking on the signifier "barking." This other who was present masturbated. He showed the patient something – he showed him, very precisely, how to masturbate.

Was the situation then over with? No. As the patient himself tells us, there was the possibility that someone else might come in. And then, how shameful! The situation would no longer be tenable. The subject would literally die [*disparaître*] of shame if someone witnessed what was happening.

In other words, this is what is articulated here: 'Show me what I must do, on the condition that the other – insofar as he is the Other with a capital *O*, the third party – not be there. I watch the other that I am, this dog, on the condition that the Other not come in, otherwise I would die of shame. But on the contrary, this other that I am – namely, this dog – I view him as the ego-ideal, as doing what I do not do' – as an ideal of "potency," as Sharpe puts it later. 205

Assuredly this must not be taken in the sense in which she understands it, because this has nothing to do with words. It is inasmuch as the dog is not a speaking animal that he can be the model and ideal image here, and that the subject can see in him what he wants to see – namely, that he be shown what he must do and what he can do, as long as he cannot be seen by the Other, the one who might enter and who speaks.

Otherwise stated, it is insofar as I have not yet entered my analyst's office that I can imagine her, Ella Sharpe, the poor, dear

woman, showing me how to masturbate. And I cough in order to warn her that she must get back into her normal position.

We have here an oscillation [or: game, *jeu*] between two figures of the other – the one who does not speak and that we imagine, and the one to whom we are going to speak, but who is asked to ensure that the confrontation not occur too quickly, that the subject not start to disappear [*disparaître*].

It is in this oscillation that we find the pivotal point where the patient suddenly remembers the dream he had.

We will come back to the dream next time, and we shall see that it runs quite counter to the patient's fantasy that was created in the waking state, whose main lines we homed in on today.

January 21, 1959

X

THE IMAGE OF THE INSIDE-OUT GLOVE

The link between fantasies and dreams
Behind the door lies an enigma
The Queen of Sweden and the Lady from China
The narcissistic relationship to the penis
Separating the male and female principles

We already make use of the notion of desire, practically speaking, in our analytic work.

What am I trying to do here? I am trying to show you that, in the use we make of it, we unwittingly presuppose a number of coordinates that are always the same, coordinates that I am attempting to situate.

It is worth recognizing them, for when we fail to do so, our thinking always slips a bit to one side or the other, and gets caught up in ill-defined relationships. This can put us at a disadvantage when it comes to interpretation.

Today I am going to continue to analyze the dream that I chose from Ella Sharpe's work owing to the fact that it is exceptionally well elucidated. And we shall see things from two different perspectives.

On the one hand, what is most acute, astute, and remarkable in what she says – in her account of the session in which this dream is analyzed and of the two following sessions – fits so well into the categories that I am trying to teach you how to use, that these categories allow us to give their full value to the elements she assembles. Nevertheless, on the other hand, in failing to perceive the originality of these elements, she minimizes their import, in a sense, taking their color and relief down a notch. She mixes them up and reduces them to more rudimentary and simplistic notions, which stop her from getting as much out of what she has in the palm of her hand as she might otherwise.

In order to help you firmly fix in your mind something that should
208 continue to get a bit better and more precisely sketched out, I will begin by turning to the graph again for a moment.

I think you are beginning to glimpse what the two different levels of the graph mean.

What, in short, does this trajectory [Lacan is pointing at a part of the graph] – which loops back on itself, and which is that of analytic enunciation insofar as it is liberated, I would say, by the rule of free association – tend to do? It brings out, as far as possible, what is included in every discourse – namely, a signifying chain insofar as it breaks down into what we are all familiar with: interpretable elements. These interpretable elements, insofar as they are pinpointed, appear precisely to the degree to which the subject tries to recover [*se reconquérir*] what he originally was, tries to be beyond what demand has frozen or imprisoned in him when it comes to his needs.

In effect, in the expression of his needs, the subject finds himself initially caught in and poured into [the mold of] necessities that are characteristic of demand, and that are based on the following: the form of demand is already altered and alienated by the fact that we are obliged to think in (the form of) language, and that demand must already be inscribed in the Other as a register and in the Other's code. What need is at its core cannot be the same as it is at its point of arrival where it can only be reconquered, or conquered beyond demand, in a linguistic guise, in the form of the subject who speaks.

It is at this level that the initial gap or distance arises between the subject and need. The subject of need [or: the subject as need, *le sujet du besoin*] is in a relationship that is in some sense immanent in life; he is entirely coextensive with his participation in life. On the contrary, the *x* that is called "what the subject wants" refers to the subject insofar as he constitutes himself by declaring himself to be and by being in a certain relationship to being.

There is a gap between the purely and simply *interrogative* language of demand, on the one hand, and the language with which the subject answers the question of what he wants and constitutes himself in relation to what he is, on the other. It is in this gap that what is known as desire arises. This is why, in the bipartite nature of the graph, desire finds its place somewhere in the upper part.

There is some sort of homology between desire and the function played by the ego.

The ego, which is constituted in a certain imaginary relationship to the other, the little other, then finds itself caught up in the Other's
209 discourse, the discourse of the Other with a capital *O*. In effect, to call on the Other is not merely to aim at the satisfaction of need; the

call loops back on itself [*il se reprend lui-même*] in order to instate itself in what I have sometimes called "full speech." This is committed speech in which the subject constitutes himself in relation to another person by telling the latter, "You are my master" or "You are my wife."

You can follow its trajectory on the graph: the ego [*m* on the graph; see Figure 2.2] is caught up in the Other's discourse [A], which instates it in relation to an object [*i(a)*], before returning here in the form of a message [*s*(A)]. The simple fact that I speak of myself as me [*de moi comme moi*] is based on the capturing of the ego in the Other's discourse. It is a statement that is articulated in a fragmentary way and requires a special type of deciphering in desire.

Where is desire inscribed [on the graph]? With respect to the upper level of discourse – where the subject, through a lifetime of effort, tends to develop fully in something in which his being declares itself – desire, inasmuch as it is a reflection or effect of this effort, situates itself halfway to it. Just as the ego is constituted in a certain relationship to the imaginary other, desire is instituted and fixated in a certain relationship to fantasy.

The subject qua vanishing, the subject insofar as he vanishes in a certain relationship to his elective object, is what I designate for you as fantasy. Fantasy always has this structure. It is not simply an object-relation. It is something that cuts. It implies a certain vanishing or signifying blacking out [*syncope*] of the subject in the presence of an object.

Fantasy involves a certain adjustment [*accommodation*] by the subject to or fixation of the subject on an object that has an elective value.

The elective nature of this value is what I am trying to demonstrate to you this year with the help of a certain number of examples.

The most recent, which I borrowed from Ella Sharpe, requires a demonstration that I must now conclude.

1

In the fantasy that is recounted by Sharpe's patient as a sort of preface or prelude to the dream, the oppositional relationship between the subject and a certain object is implicit.

The patient arrives for his session and begins to speak about his cough, providing a message about a message. His cough is designed 210
to mysteriously warn two people who might be in an amorous embrace in a room, before he enters, warning them that it is time to separate.

Secondly, his associations show us that this cough is closely tied to a fantasy that he immediately recounts. In a past fantasy, he imagined that, being somewhere and not wanting to be found there – because he ought not to be there, wherever that was – he could bark like a dog. And everyone would say to themselves "Oh, it's [just] a dog!" The barking thus turns out to be the signal by which the subject profoundly absents himself from where he is, signaling that he is other than what he is. The cough, for its part, is correlated with the following: the fact that a couple of others, alone together in a room, are doing something pleasurable [*prend du plaisir*].

But a third association shows us that the subject himself is included in this couple. The dog that he pretended to be, barking in order to make himself into something other than he was, emerges in a memory of a real event, one in which a dog began masturbating on his leg. What would have happened if someone had come in and seen *them*?

In short, something structural is sketched out here.

What is at stake in the fantasy of the two, the one across from the other in a certain enclosed space, in the imaginary relationship, is adequately clarified by the memory – which comes back to him right after recounting this fantasy – of the dog, who is, after all, himself imaginary, masturbating on his leg. Masturbation thus shows that he is not absent from the pair of lovers.

As we might have expected, the subject identifies with all parties to the fantasy. The subject is both the one who is outside and announces himself, and the one who is inside and is involved in a couple relationship, with all that the couple relationship brings with it by way of shared imaginary fascination. But that is not what is essential here.

It is the structure that we must bring out. Either the two elements of the imaginary, dyadic couple remain together in a shared fascination with the act – including embracing, coupling, and specular fascination – and the other must not be there; or the other shows himself, the two then separate, and the couple dissolves.

But this structure also distorts the problem.

What does the subject tell us? He tells us that he gave a little cough before entering his analyst's consulting room, whereas it is
211 clear that if he was invited to go up the stairs, it was because no one else was there – she was all alone. Moreover, he says, these are not things that I would allow myself to think about you. Which is precisely the problem.

By coughing, the subject does something whose signification he himself is not aware of, since he wonders what this cough can mean. Let us say that with this cough, as [when he imagines] barking like

a dog, he makes himself other than he is. He himself does not know what the message is and yet he announces himself by coughing. What does he imagine in announcing himself by coughing? What does he imagine there is in that room?

He tells us that this cough is, in this case, an impulse or compulsion that escaped him, and it bothers him that it did so. I highlighted in this regard how striking Sharpe's attitude about it is – she feels that she certainly must not talk with him about it because the subject is not conscious of it, and he must not be made conscious of it. In fact, he is so conscious of it that it is he himself who talks to her about it and who underscores the fact that it is a message but that he does not know what the message is.

What does he imagine there is in the room? What object lies behind the door while he is outside, announcing himself, in a way that alienates him, with his little cough, with this message he does not understand? His association that leads from the cough to barking like a dog shows us that he manifests his presence by the cough in order to announce himself as an other – that is, as someone other than himself.

In a vague and ambiguous way, the subject in some sense traces out a first loop here. First he speaks of his cough as a message. Then he has an association, which is the fantasy in which he imagines being a dog. Next comes the memory of something that really happened, his coupling with a dog in a room. He thus goes successively through something that reflects his desire and then incarnates his fantasy. The circle closes on itself there. Then he changes register.

It was on this point that my last class on this patient ended. Sharpe notes that, at this very moment, the subject gives another little cough, as if to punctuate what he just said, and begins recounting the dream that I already read to you.

I want to tell you what our aim is now going to be. We are going to juxtapose the fantasy and the dream – in other words, we will examine which aspect of the relationship between desire and fantasy 212
is manifested in the dream. We will then see, as I already told you, that the dream and the fantasy emphasize things very differently.

In the fantasy, what is emphasized is the subject.

The subject barks like a dog. The barking is both a message or announcement *and* what disguises him. By barking, he announces himself as other than he is. He does not know why he proceeds in this way, but his associations to the cough indicate that the point for him is to put himself in the position of either not being there or, if he is there, of announcing himself as other than he is, in such a way that the couple separates and that what there was to be seen behind the

door disappears. What does he imagine was going on in the room before he entered? Therein lies the enigma.

The enigmatic character of what is hidden from him is clearly underscored by the fact that at the moment of entering the analyst's consulting room, he gave this confounded little cough. Why does he want to announce his presence in this way? What can there be behind the door? What can he imagine? What is veiled is the right-hand side of the formula for fantasy [($\lozenge a$)], the object, x. This object is not, I would say, his analyst, but what is found in the room.

Let us now turn to the dream. What is foregrounded there is an object.

This object is an imaginary element, but not just any old which one. As this object figures in a dream, you must expect it to be marked by a certain function, and what I have taught you about dreams would have no meaning if this function were not a signifying function. As we know, what is on the right of the relationship inscribed in the formula for fantasy has a complex function – it is not simply an image, but a signifying element. Nevertheless, this remains veiled and enigmatic to us, and we cannot articulate it as such.

On the other side of the relationship, on the left, there is the subject [$].

All we know about him is that in the fantasy he announced himself as other than he was – in other words, as a subject marked by the signifier, as a barred subject. In the dream, on the other hand, we have an image [of the object, i.e., the woman], and what we do not know is who is on the other side – namely, the subject.

213 What is he in the dream? This is what Sharpe tries to articulate for him in her interpretation.

We will now turn to the associations the subject has to his dream.

2

The narrative of the dream concludes with the patient's remark about the use of the verb "to masturbate."

He employed it transitively in the sentence "she was so disappointed I thought I would masturbate her," whereas it is the intransitive use that is correct. Something different is obviously at stake here – namely, the fact that the patient masturbates. This is clearly what the analyst thinks, for she suggests it to him immediately; he acquiesces and notes that he almost never masturbated anyone else, recalling that he did it but once with another boy. Then he continues:

> The dream is in my mind vividly. There was no orgasm. I remember her vagina gripped my finger. I see the front of her genitals, the end of the vulva. Something large and projecting hung downwards like a fold on a hood. Hoodlike it was, and it was this that the woman made use of in maneuvering

– he used the same term, "maneuvering," in his narrative of the dream –

> to get my penis. The vagina seemed to close round my finger. The hood seemed strange. [p. 133]

The analyst asks, "What else do you think of – let the look of it be in your mind."

> I think of a cave. There is a cave on the hillside where I lived as a child. I often went there with my mother. It is visible from the road along which one walks. Its most remarkable feature is that it has an overhanging top to it which looks very much like a huge lip. [pp. 133–4]

A cave with a part that projects forward is something like the grotto of the Cyclops in Capri, the coast of which is strewn with such caves.

Here he has a remarkable association:

> There is some joke about the labia running crosswise and not longitudinally, but I don't remember how the joke was arranged, some comparison between Chinese writing and our own, starting from different sides, or from bottom to top. Of course the labia are side by side, and the vagina walls are back and front, that is, one longitudinal and the other crosswise. I'm still thinking of the hood. [p. 134] 214

The best-known "jokes,"* those that are part of Britain's cultural heritage, usually take the form of limericks.* A limerick* is something that is very important and revealing, I will do no more than indicate this. I looked through a rather large collection of some 3,000 limericks to find the one mentioned by the patient. It surely exists, for some of the ones I saw were quite similar to it.

I do not know why the theme of China comes into it. The inversion of the direction of writing refers back to the similarity, and at the same time to the difference, between the genital slit and the mouth. There is also what is presupposed regarding the transversal

nature of the vagina behind the line of the genital slit. Stated otherwise, all of this is highly ambiguous.

Limerick number 1,381 of a special collection I consulted is the one that most closely approximates the patient's joke.* It is amusing owing to the fact that it is not clear why China comes into the limerick.* It is rather remarkable that one finds in it, as in the one we are looking for, the essential superimposition of the image of a mouth and of a genital image.

There was a young lady from China
Who mistook for her mouth her vagina.
Her clitoris huge
She covered with rouge,
And lipsticked her labia minor.

215 [Lacan provides a French translation of it.] It loses a good deal of its zest in translation.

What am I going to highlight here? This is the kind of thing that makes analysts immediately slip into thinking in terms of imaginary elements alone – associating, for example, the mouth with the vagina, or the mother's breast with the earliest sense of being swallowed up or devoured. One can, indeed, find all sorts of ethnological, folkloric, and psychological evidence that shows that the earliest relationship between the child and what one might call the maternal image is a relationship of content and container.

But I ask you, doesn't it seem worth retaining here something that has much the same inflection as when, a couple of years ago, I drew your attention to the big giraffe and the small giraffe in Freud's case of little Hans? What was essential was not that these elements were the mother and the phallus, but what little Hans did with them – he could sit on them or crumple them up. I told you at that time that the giraffes were symbols. One might say – in a way that is more nuanced, more interrogative, and easier to confirm – that, in fantasy, they were already things that were transformed into paper.

In order to underscore what is at stake, it is not pointless to introduce here the imaginary element that is so remarkable in the dream, and that was very precisely depicted as the fold of a hood. This is not negligible. It is something that already has a certain structure, that covers, that crowns, and that is also feared. The finger introduced into this sexual, vaginal element, which seems to "close round" it, gives us a very precise image. There is no need to drown it in a general structure of envelopment, devouring, or swallowing up, especially given the fact that it is explicitly connected in the dream to the patient's finger.

I would even say that the essential question is, does he or doesn't he put his finger there? It is clear that he does put his finger there and that he does not put anything else there; he specifically does not put his penis there, even though his penis is clearly present in this relationship with what comes to envelop or act like a glove on his hand. This is quite salient and brought center stage as a result of "[considerations of] representability" in the dream, as Freud puts it, in order to designate the third element at work in the *Traumarbeit* – that is, the dream-work.

The question is what we should do with it. Should we immediately reduce it to a series of time-tested [*rédimées*], preformed significa- 216
tions? Should we place behind this image everything we are used to finding there, having put it there ourselves, as if we were pulling it out of a magician's hat? No. We are going to stop and respect it as something that has a specific value.

Assuming you have a little bit more in your head than novelistic notions about what such a fantasy can be, you should realize that such an elaborate image warrants time and attention, and that it is important above all not to submerge it – for example, in the very general notion of being inside the mother's womb, which people talk about so much in relation to fantasies. Moreover, what the dream presents us with here is certainly not the inside of the uterus, since it is "overhanging,"* there being an edge that projects outward.

Sharpe, because she is very astute, underscores a bit further on, in a passage we may turn to later, that we find ourselves presented here with something remarkable – namely, a "projection,"* she says, and she announces immediately thereafter that it "is equivalent to a penis" [p. 144].

That is possible, but why be in such a rush? All the more so in that she also underscores that it is difficult not to consider this projection as related to the presence of the vagina. This is quite seriously emphasized in the dream, and when we consider the very maneuver that the patient engages in – I would say that he substitutes himself for himself by placing his finger and not his penis there – how can we fail to see that this so-to-speak localized thing in this fantasy indeed has, as the patient articulates it, the closest relationship with the front and back wall of the vagina?

In short, to a physician whose profession it is to practice medicine – which was not the case of Sharpe who taught in the humanities, which gave her a fine perspective on psychology – it sounds like vaginal prolapse. It sounds like a prosection or downward displacement of the vaginal walls, the front wall first of all, and then perhaps the back wall, and at a still later stage, it is the extremity of the cervix

that appears in the genital orifice. This is extremely common and poses all sorts of problems to surgeons.

This immediately brings into play, of course, the fantasy of the phallic woman. This is so true that I wanted to remind you of an
217 episode from the life of Christina, Queen of Sweden, who was a friend of Descartes' and, like all the women of her time, tough. The women from that marvelous half of the seventeenth century had an influence on history that one cannot overemphasize. I was not able to go back and check the passage, but the fact is well enough known not to be new, I believe, to some of you.

One day, the Queen herself saw appear, there, in the orifice of her vulva, the tip of her uterus which, without us knowing why, turned out, at that particular moment of her life, to hang down. It was a very typical case of uterine prolapse. Seeing this, and lapsing into unbelievable flattery, her doctor fell to his knees before her and said, "It's a miracle! Jupiter has finally given you your true sexual organ." This proves that the fantasy of the phallic woman was not born yesterday in the history of medicine and philosophy.

Now that is not what is going on in the dream in question. It is found neither in the narrative nor in the associations, and, even though the subject must have seen, according to the analyst, his mother's genitals, there is no reason to assume, for example, that the patient's mother had a uterine prolapse. Although you never know.

Whatever the case may be, in Sharpe's articulation of her understanding of what happens, she brings out the following: that certain of the patient's imaginings lead her to think that he likely saw quite a number of things from below. It is in order for her interpretation to be coherent that Sharpe must necessarily assume that he had a certain apprehension of female genitalia, and specifically of his mother's, from under the skirts. Why shouldn't we go in this direction? You will see that *we* are far more justified in doing so than the analyst herself, but we are not at that point just yet.

Before going any further, I will simply indicate to you that, when we refer to body images, and we have them play a role in interpretation, it is important to be precise. One must especially not confuse dread, desire, or fear of the return to the womb with the relationship with the vagina. The latter is not something that the subject is incapable of having some direct or indirect apprehension of, as the case study we are examining clearly shows, after all.

218 I will highlight now the point on which it is worth dwelling. The patient immediately associates the dream image that is given special emphasis, as I said, with something from an entirely different register, with a ditty. Whether we call it a "joke"* or a "limerick"* makes little difference.

It was not simply to amuse myself that I gave you an example of a limerick*; it was to give you an idea of the style of the thing, which is characterized by extreme literary rigor. It is a defined genre in literary history, a genre that has the strictest of laws, laws that concern writing. We did not find a direct reference to writing in the limerick* that I managed to dig up for you, but the patient asserts that there was a reference to writing in the one he heard. The reference was to the different direction of the lines of writing in our way of writing and the Chinese way. He mentions it at the very moment at which it suddenly comes to his mind that the word "labia" means lips, which creates a connection between the labia majora and the lips of the mouth. It is this same reference to writing that leads him to compare the labia majora to the vaginal walls.

Let us chalk these connections up to the symbolic order, for there is nothing more symbolic than the lines of Chinese characters. This reference is well designed to indicate to us that, in any case, this dream element has a signifying value. It is precisely at this point that some aspect of the relationship between desire and fantasy manifests itself in the dream, insofar as desire must adjust and adapt to it.

Fantasy finds its place on the graph of desire halfway between the signifier of the barred Other, $S(\not A)$, and the signified of the Other, $s(A)$ [see Figure 2.2].

Don't you see that what I am saying here merely expresses in a more articulated way something about our experience when we try to focus in on what the subject's desire is? We are always trying to home in on the subject's position in relation to a certain object that lies midway between a pure and simple signification – that would be owned by him, that would be clear and transparent to him – $s(A)$, on the one hand, and something closed and enigmatic that is not at all a fantasy, or a need, pressure, or "feeling,"* but that is always something akin to a signifier as such, $S(\not A)$, on the other hand.

Between these two poles, there is the object.

The object appears here in the form of an extremely clear and precise visual representation, but at the same time, with his associations, the patient alerts us to the fact that it is signifying. 219

3

What shall I do now? Shall I enter into the way the analyst interprets it? Yes? [The audience acquiesces.] In that case I must make known to you all the material we have at our disposal.

When the patient says "I'm still thinking of the hood," the analyst asks, "Yes, how now?" The patient replies, "A funny man at one

of the earliest golf courses I remember." The man ran after him and, the patient adds, "He said he could get me a golf bag cheaply and the material would be 'motor hood cloth'" [p. 134]. That is the fabric people used for the hoods of cars. "It was the accent I remember. I shall never forget it." Here he imitates the man's accent. "Imitating him like that reminds me of a friend who broadcasts impersonations" – "broadcast" is the operative word here –

> which are very clever, but it sounds "swank" to tell you, as swanky as telling you what a marvellous wireless set I have. It picks up all stations with no difficulty.
>
> My friend has a splendid memory. She remembers her childhood too, but mine is so bad below eleven years. I do remember, however, one of the earliest songs we heard at the theatre and she imitated the man afterwards. [p. 134]

It is a tasteful British music-hall song called "Where did you get that hat, where did you get that tile?" The word "tile" especially designates what was known at the time as a "tube," meaning a top hat. It can also mean hat or a man's hat.

The patient continues, "My mind has gone to the hood again and I am remembering the first car I was ever in, but of course they were
220 called motors then when they were new." The patient is undoubtedly somewhat advanced in years. "I remember the hood of it, that's 'motor hood' again you see." Here he describes the remarkable features of the hood. "It was strapped back when not in use. The inside of it was lined with scarlet." And he continues:

> The peak of speed for that car was about sixty [miles per hour], as much as is good for the life of a car. Strange how one speaks of the life of a car as if it were human. I remember I was sick in that car, and that reminds me of the time I had to urinate into a paper bag when I was in a railway train as a child. Still I think of the hood. [p. 135]

We will stop our examination of his associations here, even though they do not go very far yet, because I want to juxtapose what I am bringing you here with the way in which the analyst begins to interpret the material. She says:

> The first thing of importance is to find the cardinal clue to the significance of the dream. We can do that by noting just the moment when it came to the patient's mind. He had been speaking of the incident of a dog masturbating on his leg. The

> moment before he had been speaking of imitating the dog himself, that is, he identified himself with the dog. Then he gave a cough. Then he remembered the dream, a long and exciting dream from which he awoke hot and perspiring. The deduction concerning the significance of the whole dream is that it is a masturbation phantasy. [p. 138]

I couldn't agree more. "That is of first importance." I concur. "The next thing to notice in connection with this masturbation fantasy is the theme of potency." By this she does not mean sexual potency, but power in the most general sense of the term, "omnipotence," as she puts it later on. "He is travelling around the world. It is the longest dream he has ever had." That is what the patient said:

> It would take a whole hour to relate. Correlate with that his deprecation of "wind" regarding his friend's impersonations which are broadcast to the world, and his own wireless set which picks up every station. Note his own imitation of the man whose accent attracted him, a strong colloquial accent, 221
> and incidentally he said with regard to this man "he had once been a butcher."
>
> Impersonation here, whether via friend or himself, has the significance of imitating a stronger or better-known person. [pp. 138–9]

Is she mistaken? "This is again a further clue to the meaning of the masturbation phantasy, that is, a phantasy in which he is impersonating another person, one of immense power and potency" [p. 138].

The simple fact that, regarding these impersonations and the possession of a radio, the patient excuses himself for bragging or putting himself forward a bit too much signifies that we have here a fantasy of omnipotence, behind which his masturbation fantasy supposedly lies. Omnipotence has to be of primary importance. This is what the analyst considers to be self-evident. Can we endorse that?

Once again, I ask you to simply note the facts of the case. The least one can say is that there is perhaps some confusion in maintaining that what is at stake here is an omnipotence that is wished for or more or less secretly owned by the subject, whereas, if we stick with a first take on the dream – that is, its manifest content – it seems that, rather than expanding, the subject shrinks. Moreover, the analyst herself underscores this shrunken side of the subject when "hood" reappears in another context.

In fact, the analyst goes much further in her speculations than in the interpretation [she proffers to him]. For she is so influenced

by a certain apprehension of the shrunken nature of the subject's presence in his hood fantasy that she always says that he saw or perceived this or that when he was a "tiny" boy. But what do we in fact see? We see that the subject shrinks in the presence of this vaguely tentacular appendix. He dares at most touch it with a finger, without knowing whether his finger will be covered and protected by it or squeezed, imprisoned, and ripped off by it. In any case, the patient pushes this signifying object away from him and from the exercise of his potency, at least from his sexual potency.

It is perhaps going a bit far to say so, but I see the same confusion here between the omnipotence attributed to the patient, even when it is more or less denied by him, and the omnipotence of speech,
222 which is, on the contrary, altogether clear in this case. Yet there is a world of difference between them. For it is precisely in connection with speech that the patient has difficulty.

He is a lawyer and has plenty of talent, but he is plagued by very severe phobias whenever he has to appear in court and speak. We are told at the outset that his father died when he was three years old and that the patient [referred to in the case study as Robert] had a great deal of trouble remembering him. What is the only memory that remains absolutely clear to him? It is when his family told him his father's final words. They were, "Robert must take my place." What did he mean by that? Was the son afraid of his father's death? The dying father spoke; he said, "take my place." But which place? The one I occupy here [in the family] or the one in which I am dying?

The subject's difficulty with respect to speech, the distance which is such that he uses speech in order to be elsewhere, and, conversely, that nothing is more difficult for him than not simply to speak but to say something about his father's speech – this was only very recently accomplished, the analyst tells us, and it was "startling"* to him "when he thought that he must have heard his father speak" [p. 126] – shouldn't all of that incline us to be at least a bit circumspect here? Shouldn't that incline us to highlight in him, more than in others, the division between the Other qua speaking and the other qua imaginary?

The analyst finds confirmation of the patient's omnipotence in the fact that he refers to the dream as "tremendous" [p. 132]. We can only know that it was tremendous from the patient. He is the one who tells us he had a tremendous dream, that there were many scenes before this one, that there was a whole journey around the world, and a hundred thousand adventures that would take forever to recount, but that he will spare the analyst an account of them. But in the end, the mountain turns out to be a molehill: a very short story. We are told that there is a horizon of omnipotence indicated

in the narrative, but it is never narrated. Omnipotence is always connected with the Other, with the world of speech as such.

Must we rush, as Sharpe does, to attribute to the patient's structure not simply a fantasy of omnipotence but also the aggressiveness that it implies? The bias that sometimes colors her interpretations 223
is often based on the fact that she overlooks a difference in level, which, when it is sufficiently emphasized in the structure itself, must be respected. It is, moreover, on this condition alone that we know that this difference in level exists.

> The next question that arises from that is why this phantasy of extreme power? The answer is given in the dream. He is going round the world. I would put as commensurate with this idea the actual memory that came to him when he was describing the hood in the dream which was so strange, for it brought out not only the fact that he was describing a projection, a fold of a hood, but that the hood was also overhanging like a lip of a cave. So that we get directly the hood and lips of the vulva compared with the great cave on the hillside to which he went with his mother. Hence the masturbation phantasy is one associated with immense potency because he is dreaming of compassing mother earth, of being adequate to the huge cave beneath the protruding lips. That is the second thing of importance. [p. 139]

When you examine the analyst's train of thought here, you cannot fail to sense that a jump has been made. The fact that there may be a relationship between the childhood memory in which he gets coverage [*subit une couverture*], as they say, and the signifying value of what I will call the fantasy of prolapse need not be ruled out, naturally, there obviously being some relationship owing to the fact of his free association. But to consider on this basis that we are dealing with the classic topic of the Oedipal relation, as it were, the one that rises to the level of embracing one's mother – which here becomes embracing mother earth herself, embracing the entire world – a step has nevertheless been made which seems to me to have perhaps been made a bit too quickly.

It is important not to overlook the fact that, alongside the grandiose schema of the Oedipal hero who proves himself to be at his mother's level, Freud clearly isolated this moment from a phase of development in which the owning of his actual sexual organ is precisely related in the male child to a feeling of inadequacy – which runs counter to what Sharpe says – regarding what he has at his disposal compared to what would be required by an enterprise like conquering or having sex with his mother. This element plays an

224 indisputable role, which is manifested quite insistently, in a very large number of cases concerning the subject's narcissistic relationship to his penis, insofar as it is considered by him as more or less insufficient, as too small.

And we must not believe that the only thing that comes into play in this regard is the relationship with his semblables: his male rivals. Clinical practice shows us, on the contrary, that the inadequacy of the penis with respect to the female genitalia, assumed to be altogether enormous compared to the male organ, is much too important for us to proceed so quickly.

The analyst continues:

> Next I would draw your attention to the associations concerning lips and labia. The woman who was a stimulus for the dream had full red passionate lips. In the dream he had a vivid picture of the labia and the hood. The cave had an overhanging lip. He thinks of things longitudinal like labia and then of cross-wise things – where I would now suggest the mouth as compared with the vulva. [p. 139]

No comment.

> He thinks, moreover, of the first motor he was in and of its hood and of the scarlet lining in that motor. He then thinks immediately of the speed of the car, and says "the peak of its speed" was so many miles an hour, and then speaks of "the life of the car" and notices that he talks of a car as if it were human.
>
> From the fact of the dream picture of the vulva and the hood . . . [p. 140]

I am going to skip here a little,

> I should deduce that the memory of the actual cave which he visited with his mother also acts as a cover memory [i.e., a screen memory]. I would deduce that there is projected on to the motor with its scarlet lined hood this same forgotten memory and that the peak of speed has the same significance as the projection in the genitals in the dream – it is the peak of the hood. I infer there is an actual repressed memory of seeing the genitals of someone much older than himself; of seeing them when he was very tiny and I infer this from both the car and the cave and going round the world in conjunction with the immense potency required. The peak, the hood, I interpret as the clitoris. [p. 140]

I was saying earlier that the mountain made of the dream gives 225
rise to a molehill. We have something analogous here, in what I would almost call the analyst's droning on and on.

I am willing to admit that this "peak of speed" can be identified with the peak of the hood, but if it is truly so peaked and enormous, how can we associate it with a real, lived, childhood memory? There is something excessive here in concluding so brazenly that we have here a screen memory related to an actual sight of the female genitalia and especially of the clitoris. This is nevertheless what the analyst comes to, by highlighting, as a key element, the fact that:

> The patient's sister is eight years older than himself. Considering the references made to his woman friend's voice, that is to sound, accent, sound of a man's voice, and considering that the reference to her is in connection with male impersonation, I deduce that at least when very tiny he saw her genitals, noticed the clitoris, and heard her urinate. [p. 140]

And right after that she has to mention the following: "But considering all the work in analysis we have done so far I believe in addition there was some babyhood situation in which he had a quite definite opportunity of seeing his mother's genitals" [pp. 140–1].

All of these details make the analyst surmise that at such a moment he would have been "laid on the floor on a blanket" [p. 141].

4

Why am I making all of these critical remarks? I will have to show my cards here and tell you where I am going with this.

My goal is to teach you how to spell out, as it were, the direction taken by a certain number of inflections that the analyst imposes on the comprehension of the material that she presents to us, inflections that, far from making that material seem all the more limpid to us, stop us from providing an accurate interpretation of it.

The path her thought process takes leads her to extremely active and even brutal interpretations. She suggests to the patient that 226
the crux of the matter is the aggressive nature of his own penis. His penis as an aggressive organ brings into play the harmful and deleterious nature of the water it releases when he urinates [p. 146]. The analyst thus obtains an effect that should not surprise us much, which is that an adult patient, who is somewhat advanced in years, ends up urinating in his sleep the following night [p. 147]. You have already heard me mention it, but let us leave that to one side.

To get a little bit ahead of myself regarding what I believe I can demonstrate to you by continuing this slow and painful job of analyzing line by line, where does the question arise in what one might call the patient's fundamental fantasy, inasmuch as it is rendered present in the transference? The patient imagines something, we do not know what, about his analyst. I will tell you later how the analyst herself conceptualizes the point they are at in the transference. In any case, at the moment of the session in which he recounts the dream, the transference is of a clearly imaginary type.

The analyst is essentially focused and centered, with regard to the patient, on the dyadic relation, that of one ego to another. The analyst senses very clearly everything rigid, measured, and defensive in the patient's attitude in her presence. This implies that he is in the closest of specular relations with her. But, as opposed to what she says, this is far from indicating that there is no transference – it is a certain type of transference, a type that is fundamentally dyadic and imaginary.

So what is this analyst, who is but a reflection of the patient, doing in her consulting room? This is indisputable: he is clearly warning her with his little cough not to get caught masturbating. That is what he assumes her to be doing.

But how do we know this? We do not know it immediately, and that is very important. How can we know it? We know it from the dream, where it is altogether clear, since it is exactly what the patient says – namely, that someone is masturbating.

The analyst correctly recognizes that the masturbator in question is the patient – that is, the dreamer [p. 138]. Yet the fact that, in the narrative of the dream, the patient manifests his intention to
227 masturbate the woman, while adding that "to masturbate" is an intransitive verb, tips us off. That is to say that the signifying fantasy in question is one of a close connection between a male and a female element, caught up in a sort of envelopment.

Let me explain. I do not mean that the patient is simply caught or contained in the other, but that, inasmuch as he masturbates *her*, he *himself* masturbates, but also does not masturbate. In short, the fundamental image presented in the dream is that of a sort of glove or sheath turned inside out.

Sheath and vagina are, moreover, the same words: *gaine* [sheath] is the same word as *vagin* [vagina]. We have here a linguistic coincidence that is not lacking in signification. There would be a great deal to say, from a linguistic perspective, about sheaths, gloves, and scabbards [*la gaine, le gant, le fourreau*]. And it is extremely important to map an entire chain of images, because they are constantly present, not only in this specific case, but in many others as well.

What is involved here is both the imaginary and the signifying character in the dream who is the central image with which the subject in some sense sees that any and all possible expression of his sexuality is enveloped or caught up. It is in relation to this image that he situates his desire. It is there that his desire is in some sense stuck.

I will try to show this to you because I must do a little bit more to justify this notion.

In his series of associations, an idea arises that had flashed through the patient's mind, the analyst tells us, during the preceding associations. The patient "attended a function at which the King and the Queen were to be present" [p. 143]. He was haunted by the idea of his car breaking down in the middle of the road and thereby blocking the way for the royal automobile.

The analyst sees in this yet another manifestation of the patient's omnipotence that he fears will be used against him. She even goes so far as to see in it the fact that the patient must have taken the opportunity to interfere in some primal scene by stopping his parents from having intercourse [p. 145]. We will see all of this in detail next time, but what is quite striking, it seems to me, is the function of the car.

The patient is in a car, he is afraid it will break down, but with this breakdown, if it occurs, he is far from separating anyone at all. He 228
blocks traffic, he undoubtedly blocks others, he blocks everything – this we know because that is what is at stake, that is why he is in analysis – everything stops, he stops the royal, parental couple, who are together in one car, a car that envelops them, like the hood of the car he mentions in his associations as having the same characteristic as the cave's cover.

Sharpe is writing at the time at which Melanie Klein began to come to prominence in English society and began to articulate things of high clinical caliber. Was it truly worth Klein's while to have spoken so much about the "combined parent" – that bi-parental monster, so to speak – if we cannot recognize here the incredibly specific presence of an ambiguous character related to a certain way of apprehending sexual relations?

Let us say, to take this a step further, that what is at stake in the subject is precisely this: to separate the parents, to separate the male and female principles in them. I would say, in a certain way, that what is proposed here – what is targeted on the horizon by psychoanalytic interpretation – is nothing other than a kind of psychical circumcision. For in the final analysis, what is this protruding, prolapsed vagina?

It is over there, it comes over here, and moreover it presents itself in the form of something that is nowhere, that slips away. I spoke earlier of the magician's hat, but in truth we are familiar with this

sort of magic trick; one such trick is called the "egg bag." You turn a specially designed bag inside out and right side in over and over, and first you find nothing in it and then you find in it what you slipped into it with a deft movement.

This sort of perpetual presence and non-presence of the subject has yet another facet, which we find in masturbation as well, inasmuch as masturbation already implies the presence of a certain female element. This is why I speak of a certain circumcision. This protruding element in his dream is also, in certain ways, the foreskin.

Another set of his memories brings out for us the fact that there is a certain relationship between him and the sexual act. There was indisputably one in his childhood. But where was he? He was in his bed and, as you will see, tightly tucked in with pins securing his sheets [p. 141]. There are other elements that also show us the patient
229 strapped into his pram [p. 136]. To the degree to which he himself is bound and blocked, he cannot enjoy his fantasy and participate in it except through a supplemental, derivative, displaced activity: compulsive urination. The sort of supplement or false jouissance he gets from urination is something that we frequently note in patients who have been in close proximity to parental coitus.

What does he become at that moment? He becomes the female partner about whom he tells us that she has such a need for him that he must show her [how to do] everything, and he must do everything, becoming feminized in the process. Insofar as he is impotent, as it were, he is male. And it is clear that this brings him some compensation at the level of his ambition to garner power. But inasmuch as he is liberated, he is feminized.

The problem lies in this duplicitous game of hide and seek or of the non-separation of the two facets of femininity and masculinity in him; it lies in a type of unique fantasized apprehension of genital desire, which is fundamentally masturbatory.

I hope to show next time just how justified I am in orienting my interpretations in this direction, in order to allow the subject to take the next step forward.

January 28, 1959

XI

SACRIFICING THE TABOO QUEEN

Aphanisis, Jones's term
Where is the phallus?
Cons abound
Chess as a metaphor
Countertransferential pickles

We have now arrived at a point at which we can try to interpret the dream that Ella Sharpe's patient recounted.

This is an enterprise we can only undertake, and for theoretical purposes alone – that is, as an exercise – thanks to the exceptionally detailed discussion of the dream in her book.

According to Sharpe, and I take her word for it, this dream occupied a crucial point in the analysis.

1

Her patient had a "tremendous dream," and it would take him hours to recount it. But he forgot most of it, remembering only the following.

It takes place on a road in Czechoslovakia. He finds himself there, having undertaken a journey around the world with his wife. I even highlighted the fact that he said "a journey with my wife around the world" [p. 132].

On this road, he is prey to the sexual undertakings of a woman who, let me point out, presents herself in a way that is not indicated in the initial dream-text. The patient says, "the woman actually lay on top of me; that has only just come to my mind. She was evidently intending to put my penis in her body." He adds that "the woman [was] maneuvering to get my penis" [pp. 132–3], an expression we will have to come back to later.

Naturally, he adds, "I disagreed with this, but she was so disappointed I thought that I would masturbate her" [p. 133]. He makes
232 a remark here about the fundamentally intransitive nature of the verb "to masturbate" in English [p. 133]. It is already in our interest to realize that what is involved here is, of course, masturbation on the part of the patient himself. Sharpe herself realizes this, although she does not stress as directly as I do the fact that this is based on the grammatical nature of the patient's remark.

Last time, I highlighted the value of an image that appears less in the associations than in the narrative of the dream – namely, the fold, as in the fold of a "hood."* And I showed that resorting to the stock images taken into account by classical psychoanalytic doctrine – even though these manifestly stem from experience – perhaps leads analysts to force things a bit when these images are made to serve as so many separate objects, without very carefully situating their function in relation to the subject. I thus underscored what is paradoxical in the overly hasty interpretation that this odd appendix, this protrusion from the female genitalia, is a sign that what we are dealing with here is the maternal phallus.

Such haste also led Sharpe to take another leap, it being so true that, as opposed to what people say, one imprudent step can only be corrected by another. We learn less from our mistakes than people think, for the only way of saving ourselves from a mistake is to make another one that compensates for it.

I am not saying that Sharpe is completely wrong. I am trying to articulate better ways of proceeding, which might have allowed for greater accuracy. With the caveat, of course, that we can never actually confirm this since we will never have the experience with the patient we would have to have in order to do so.

What is the next leap I mentioned? It concerns the phallus, less that of his imagined partner in the dream than his own. The analyst agrees that the dream has a masturbatory character to it, because everything that comes out in the patient's speech corroborates this. But the patient's phallus is immediately viewed by her to be an instrument of aggression and destruction of an extremely primitive type, such as we find in what we might call psychoanalytic imagery [p. 143].

This is the direction in which Sharpe's thoughts run right from the outset, even though she is far from communicating to him the
233 whole of her interpretation [pp. 144–5]. In the first place, she points out to him elements of what she calls "omnipotence." Secondly, she says that what appears in the dream is masturbation. And thirdly, that this masturbation is omnipotent, in the sense that the patient's phallus is a "biting and boring thing" [p. 146].

We have here a true theoretical extrapolation on the analyst's part! In truth, there are no grounds – either in the dream or the associations – for immediately asserting that the patient's phallus is an aggressive organ here and that the subject is afraid of the possible repercussions of his aggression. When we read such a formulation in Sharpe's case study, we cannot help but realize that it is in no wise justified by the case at hand and that it is motivated instead, without her telling us so, by her theory.

To her credit, she informs us so amply and carefully about her patient – as regards the major issues in his life and what she sees in front of her, which she senses in such detail and with such finesse – that we are justified in saying she is clearly taking a leap. I readily concede that this leap seemed necessary to her. But whether this leap seems necessary to us is another question, and it is here that we will try to re-examine the analysis.

My goal is not to replace the imaginary equivalents she prioritizes with other interpretations, in the sense in which it is ordinarily understood, as in "this bit of data must be understood as follows." The point is not to know what each element of the dream means at one moment or another. On the whole, we can even say that these elements are quite correctly gauged by her, given the tradition of psychoanalytic experience in force at the time at which Sharpe is working, and they are, moreover, perceived with great discernment and finesse.

The point is to see if the problem cannot be clarified by being articulated in a way that better links the interpretation with what I am trying to stress here – namely, the intersubjective topology. This is what I am always trying to construct or reconstruct for you, in various forms, inasmuch as this topology is the very topology of our experience. In psychoanalysis, the places of the subject, the little other, and the Other with a capital *O* must always be indicated for each phenomenon if we wish to avoid getting bogged down in a sort of tangle, knotted up by a thread that no one knows how to untie, and which forms the daily bread, as it were, of our psychoanalytic explanations. 234

I have already discussed this dream, and in several different ways, enough to be able to begin to articulate something simple and direct, something that is not at all absent from the case study, but that emerges from the reading I have provided of it.

I would say that in reading the preamble that Sharpe provides to her account of the session in which the dream was recounted, where she details the reasons that led the patient to analysis, a word immediately comes to mind – and it is not impossible that it came to her mind, as it is not peculiar to the terminology we use here. To

mention it is not to bring in a notion that was beyond her ken, for when she wrote this text, in 1937, the British psychoanalytic scene was dominated by discussions I have spoken to you about regarding the phallic phase and the phallic function in female sexuality, especially the discussions that took place between Ernest Jones and Joan Riviere, whose article "Womanliness as Masquerade" we have explored here [in Seminar V, pp. 254–5].

Jones introduces a term at one point, which he considers necessary if we are to begin to understand what, in psychoanalysis, is truly the most difficult thing to understand, not simply to bring into play – namely, the castration complex. The word Jones introduces is "aphanisis," a word he introduced into psychoanalytic terminology in an interesting way. We cannot consider it to be absent from the British scene, as a great deal was made of it at the time.

Jones understands this term to mean disappearance. We will see further on what he means by that. But I am going to use the word in an entirely different way for the time being – in short, in an impressionistic way – regarding what Sharpe presents us, that is, regarding what is constantly found in the dream material and what surrounds it, as well as in the patient's behavior.

The patient presents himself to her in a way that she describes very prettily – namely, with a sort of profound absence that gives
235 her the sense that there is not a single one of his remarks or gestures which has not been thoroughly thought out or which includes any affect. He keeps his nose completely clean. Moreover, he does not announce his arrival – he simply appears, and as soon as he appears he is even more unfathomable than if he were not there.

Let us first consider what he brings up during that day's session prior to recounting the dream.

The patient himself tells us that he is wondering what purpose his little cough might serve [p. 131]. It is designed to make something, which must be there behind the door, disappear. He does not know what it is. He says so himself: regarding the analyst what could there be there that would have to disappear? He recalls in this connection that, in other circumstances, in another context, coughing served as a warning: he coughed to tell a pair of lovers to separate, to move apart, for the situation would otherwise have been embarrassing when he entered, and so on and so forth.

What about the dream itself?

Here, too, we are in the presence of three people, for, above and beyond his sexual partner and himself, there is his wife. She must not be forgotten, even though the subject, after having mentioned her once, says nothing further about her. What exactly does he do with his partner? In a word, he slips away [*il se dérobe*].

But is it so clear that he slips away? What he enunciates next proves that he is far from being completely absent, since he tells us that he put his finger in this sort of protruding, inside-out, prolapsed vagina that I highlighted. Questions arise here, too, and we are going to raise them. What is at stake? What is the crux of the scene? I am raising the question inasmuch as one can raise such a question about a dream. I am raising it only insofar as all of Freudian theory requires us to raise it.

'What come next in his associations are memories connected to the hood constituted by the female genitalia: the cave and Chinese writing. He then recalls someone who, on a golf course, offered him a golf bag.

The patient found him to be quite a character and speaks about him with a kind of amused joy [pp. 134 and 139]. The way he talks 236
about him suggests that the guy was truly the kind about whom one could wonder where he had been knocking about up until then. With a face like that and such a gift of gab, what must he have been? "He had once been a butcher," the patient says in passing [p. 139]. God only knows why he was a butcher! The style and general tenor of the scene, and the fact that the patient immediately begins to imitate the guy's accent, shows that the guy was a conman,* some sort of swindler.

' This scene brings up the idea of imitation, which leads the patient to think of his female friend who does such fine imitations of men and who has such talent, talent that she uses in "broadcasting."* Now the first thing that comes to his mind about this is that he is talking too much about knowing such a remarkable person, and that he seems to be bragging or laying it on a bit thick. I checked the word he uses: "swank" is a word that had only recently come into use at that time, and that one might almost consider to be slang.* He uses it to say that he has the impression he is showing off by talking about his friend.

In sum, he does not want to take up too much space on this occasion – he shrinks and disappears. Briefly stated, what we see at every moment and what constantly returns as a theme or leitmotif in the patient's remarks brings to mind the term "aphanisis" – except that its meaning here seems more like "to make disappear" than "to disappear." There is a perpetual game here in which we sense that, in various forms, something that I will call, if you will, the interesting object is never there. The patient is never where we expect him to be, he slips from one point to another in a sort of conman's game. I highlighted this last time. I am going to highlight it again and you will see where this will take us. It will take us to what characterizes what the analyst is confronted with at every level. The patient never

puts anything out there without immediately, in some way, taking the essential part of it back.

Here let me comment on the use made by Jones of the term "aphanisis," inasmuch as we find a reversal of perspective in his work that is open to criticism.

Jones studies his patients as they approach the castration complex. What he sees in them at that moment, what he understands or senses, is the fear of aphanisis in the sense of a fear that their desire will disappear. In a sense, he tells us that castration is the
237 symbolization of the loss of desire, although he does not formulate it in this way, since he does not have the theoretical means by which to do so.

It is clear, and I have already emphasized this before, that from any sort of developmental perspective it is very difficult to explain how someone, at a moment of his development at which he is supposed to be at some sort of animal level of subjectivity, begins to see need [*tendance*] detach from itself and become a fear of its own loss. Yet it is here that Jones proposes to make aphanisis into the substance of the fear of castration.

I will point out that this should be broached from the exact opposite direction: it is precisely because there can be castration, it is precisely because the play of signifiers is involved in castration, that a dimension develops in the subject whereby he can become fearful and alarmed at the possible future disappearance of his desire.

Let us begin by observing that it is difficult to conceive how something like desire – if we give it its full meaning, the meaning of need at the level of animal psychology – can be altogether accessible in human experience. Thus, to speak not only of the presence of desire, but of the fear of its absence [*défaut*] as well, constitutes a step that must be explained. In order to explain it, I tell you that the human subject, insofar as he must become inscribed in the signifier, finds a position there on the basis of which he can effectively call his need into question, inasmuch as that need is caught up, modified, and identified in demand. In this context, everything can be quite easily conceptualized.

How do we explain the function of the castration complex? We have to know in what way the assumption by the subject of a position in the signifier implies the loss or sacrifice of one of his signifiers.

I will leave this question to one side for the time being. I will confine myself to saying that, as opposed to what Jones believes, the fear of aphanisis in neurotic subjects must be understood from the perspective of an insufficient articulation or partial foreclosure of the castration complex on their part.

It is because the castration complex does not shelter a subject

from the sort of confusion or provoking of anxiety that is manifested in the fear of aphanisis that we effectively see it in neurotics.

We are going to have the opportunity to verify this regarding Sharpe's patient.

2

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Let us return to the dream-text and to the images we spoke about last time – namely, the representation of the female genitalia in the form of a prolapsed vagina.

This sort of scabbard, sack, or sheath constitutes a rather strange image here, although it is not at all an exceptional or unique case. But we still do not encounter it often and it has not been described in any sort of standardized way in the psychoanalytic literature.

This image is employed here in the signifying articulation of the dream, which means that it takes on its value on the basis of what occurs, on the basis of the reason why it is used. One can raise a question about it: what does it mean to the characters who are present? What we in fact see is that the subject puts his finger in there.

He does not put his penis in there, certainly not, but he puts his finger in there. He turns inside out, re-sheaths, or "reinvaginates" what is "devaginated," and it is almost as if some kind of con [*geste d'escamoteur*] were taking place. In effect, he puts something in there in the place of what he should put in there, but he also shows that something can be put in there.

Assuming that something can in fact be suggested by the shape of what is presented, namely, the female phallus – this phallus being clearly at stake in the phrase "to get my penis"* – we are justified in wondering what the patient is showing us, since it is as if what were involved here were more an act of exhibitionism than an act of copulation. Let us not forget that this occurs in front of a third party.

I have already mentioned the prestidigitator's move in the trick known as "the egg bag." It involves a wool bag in which the magician alternately makes an egg appear and disappear, making it appear when one does not expect to see it and disappear just when one does.

The showing in question is all the more striking in that the patient's associations have shown us very clearly that he always warns people when he is about to appear, such that nothing of what was there before is seen; or else, as in his fantasy, he has himself taken for a barking dog such that people say, "Oh, it's only a dog." 239

The same sort of conning [*escamotage*] is always going on, in which we do not know what is being hidden [*escamoté*].

It is assuredly and above all the subject himself who is being hidden. But if we seek to locate exactly in the dream what is at stake in this conning, the phrase "to get my penis"* allows us to say that it is certainly the phallus that is at stake. We are, I would say, so habituated and hardened by analytic routine that we almost do not stop and take notice of this particular facet of the dream.

The verb chosen by the subject to designate what the woman here intends to do, "get," has many different uses, all of which go in the sense of obtain, win, grab, grasp, or engage. In general, it concerns something that one obtains. We naturally hear this with the note and echo of *femina penem devoret* [the woman devours the penis], but it is not as simple as all that. Indeed, what is involved in this case is, in the final analysis, far from falling under any such heading. If what is at stake is to get the penis, in any form whatsoever, real or imaginary, the first question we must raise is, "Where is this penis?"

It seems self-evident that it is there, since the patient, according to the account given of the dream, said that the woman was maneuvering "to get [his] penis." We are led to believe from the outset that his penis is situated somewhere in the dream. But if one takes a close look at the text, absolutely nothing indicates this. We cannot conclude that the patient's penis is there just because the partner is trying to get it. This does not in any way suffice to tell us where it is. It is perhaps somewhere else altogether than where our need to complete the scene – in which the subject seems to slip away from the woman's efforts to get his penis – makes us see it. It is not as simple as all that. Where is it? Indeed, we see that therein lies the question.

It is from this starting point that we can realize what is at stake in the odd discordance or strangeness presented by the enigmatic sign that the dream proposes to us – namely, the relationship that indubitably exists between what happens in the dream and masturbation. What does this mean? It is worth looking at the exact
240 passage, for it is highly instructive, even if it is not elucidated or even formulated in the analyst's comments.

What we see is that masturbating the other and the patient masturbating are one and the same thing. Generally speaking, one can even go so far as to say that whatever resembles masturbation here effectively involves a secret narcissistic identification on the patient's part with the other. This involves less a body-to-body identification than an identification of the other's body with the penis. A whole set of stroking [*caresse*] activities bring the phallus into play, inasmuch as, as I have shown you already, it imaginarily emerges in what is beyond the natural partner.

I will add that the more the stroking takes on the character of pleasure that is detached, autonomous, and insistent – and even verges on what is called in this case, more or less correctly, a certain sadism – the more obvious this becomes. In effect, the fact that the phallus is involved as a signifier in the relationship between the subject and the other is such that it can be sought out in the realm beyond the embracing of the other where every kind of standard form, that is more or less accentuated in the sense of perversion, begins. It is in this respect that, to the subject, to masturbate the other subject is completely different from allowing his own phallus to be grabbed by the other. This then allows us to posit that, to this patient, masturbating the other is strictly equivalent to engaging in masturbation himself.

I have shown you the meaning of the partner's actions that the subject qualified with the phrase "to get my penis." They are almost tantamount to checking. The point is to ensure that what lies opposite is something terribly important to the subject, something that certainly has the closest connection with the phallus; but these actions show, too, that the phallus is not there, that it is something that flees and slips away, not simply owing to the subject's will, but owing to some structural feature.

This is what is truly in question here, and it colors everything that comes up in his associations to the dream. We find it again both when he is talking about his female friend who behaves so remarkably when she imitates men's voices perfectly, and when discussing this sort of incredible conman [*escamoteur*], this false nice guy whom the subject remembers after all those years. With his unbelievable gift of gab, this character offers him something that is again, oddly 241
enough, one thing instead of another – namely, an envelope in which to wrap up something, but it is a bag made of a material that is designed for some other purpose, it being designed to make a car top ["hood" in the patient's 1930s' vocabulary]. And what is the bag for? To put his golf clubs in.

To the patient, things always present themselves in a problematic form. Regardless of what element is involved, it always takes on the same character. Whatever presents itself is never altogether what it seems to be; it is never the real deal.

Let us examine what comes immediately thereafter. Everything that occurs to him is problematic in nature. Childhood memories emerge suddenly. Long ago he had another compulsion, different from the compulsive little cough just before his sessions. Why the devil did he have to "collect leather straps"* and cut up his sister's sandals?

> I thought I wanted the strips to make something useful but I expect something quite unnecessary. I dislike thinking it was a compulsion; that's why the cough annoys me. I suppose I cut up my sister's sandals in the same way. I have only the dimmest memory of doing it. I don't know why nor what I wanted the leather for when I had done it. [p. 135]

Here again, we find ourselves faced with a sort of slipping away [*fuite*]. Another one will follow. "I suddenly thought of straps that one sees a child fastened by in a 'pram.'" He curiously and negatively introduces the notion of pram: "immediately I wanted to say there was no 'pram' in our family, and I then thought how silly you are, you must have had a 'pram'" [p. 135]. The analyst notes that there must surely have been one since there were two older children
242 in the family [p. 138]. The same style dominates all of the patient's associations: one thing appears in the form of something else that is missing.

What is the next step that is directly connected to this? "I've suddenly remembered I meant to send off letters admitting two members to the Club. I boasted of being a better secretary than the last and yet here I am forgetting to give people permission to enter the Club" [pp. 135–6]. Immediately thereafter comes a citation – which is put in quotes in Sharpe's text, even though she does not highlight it, as it is well known to the British reader – from the "General Confession," namely one of the prayers found in *The Book of Common Prayer*, which lays out the religious duties of members of the Church of England.

I did not come across *The Book of Common Prayer* for the first time in reading Sharpe's text. I will simply mention here a very pretty object that was created twenty or twenty-five years ago in the surrealist community by my friend Roland Penrose. He showed the inner circle a *Common Book of Prayer* which, when you opened it, had a mirror on each side of the flat inside cover.

This is highly instructive, for the only fault one can find with Sharpe, to whom this text was certainly much more familiar than it is to us, is that she does not mention that the citation given by the patient does not match the text of *The Book of Common Prayer*. He says, "We have undone those things we ought to have done and there is no good thing in us" [p. 136], whereas the original says, "We have *left* undone those things . . ."

A minor detail, you might say. But after that a whole sentence is missing from the "General Confession" which is in some sense the counterpart of the prior one: "And we have done those things which we ought not to have done." The patient feels no need to confess

this, and for good reason: in the final analysis, his only concern is with *not doing* things. *Doing* things is not his thing! This is why he says he is altogether incapable of doing anything, for fear of succeeding all too well, as the analyst points out. 243

This is one point, and not an insignificant one at that. But I want to get to another point. Instead of the missing sentence, the patient adds, "and there is no good thing in us" [p. 136]. This is a total invention on his part. In *The Book of Common Prayer* we find no such thing. We find instead, "there is no health in us." I believe that the "good thing" that he substituted for it is what is truly at work: the good object is not there. This is truly what is involved. He confirms once again for us that what is at stake is the phallus.

It is very important to the subject to say that the good object is not there. We again come across the expression, "it is not there" [i.e., the good thing is not there in us]. It is never where we expect it to be. It is assuredly a "good thing," which is of the utmost importance to him, but it is no less clear that what he tends to show or demonstrate is always one and the same thing – namely, that it is never there. It is never where one could get it or take it. This is what dominates all of the material.

He could not stop himself from cutting the leather straps of his sister's sandals. In light of what I just said, it is possible that the connection with the other compulsion, the cough, now seems less surprising to you. The compulsion to cut has, in effect, a relation with something that, like everyone else, we are only too happy to associate with the theme of castration.

This is a very common psychoanalytic interpretation. If you read Fenichel's work, you will see that boys who cut girls' braids off do so because of their castration complex. But how can we know what exactly is going on without considering each case in great detail? Is it retaliation for castration that involves castrating someone other than oneself? Or is it, on the contrary, the taming of castration by subjecting the other to a castration that is not a true castration and thus does not seem to be as dangerous as all that? Could it be a domestication, as it were, or devaluation of castration, all the more so in that it is always possible that the cut braids will grow back – in other words, reassure you against castration? In short, one could bring to this everything that the sum total of psychoanalytic experience allows us to connect up with this theme. 244

If we force ourselves not to be hasty, and to maintain things at the level at which we have formulated them heretofore, we will say the following: there is no doubt but that there is some link with castration here. It is obvious that castration is part, as it were, of the context, and that the subject has some relation to castration. But

nothing thus far allows us to postulate that castration is the effect here of the patient's aggressive intention primitively turned back against himself; and we would have even less reason to indicate this to the patient as directly as the analyst did.

Isn't it far more interesting to raise and continually renew the following questions: "Where is the phallus?" "Where must we theorize it to be?" and "What do we know about it?"

3

The analyst goes out on a limb when she says to the patient that the phallus is somewhere very far back in you; it is part of an old rivalry with your father; it is there at the crux of your primordial wishes for omnipotence; it is there at the source of your fear of retaliation for your own aggression. Nothing in the text allows us to articulate any such thing.

Let us try to raise these questions ourselves and perhaps even answer them a bit more brazenly than we might normally be wont to.

It seems to me that we cannot react to a case study that was written up and that we read in the same way as we talk to our students about their cases. If I were dealing with a student, I would speak much more severely in such an instance. I would say, "What could have possibly inspired you to say such a thing?" I would inquire as to where the countertransference came in.

It may seem brazen to raise such concerns about the text of an author who was, at that point in time, someone we would have had good reason to lend credence to overall. I smiled to myself
245 when I wondered about this, because she struck me as a bit over the top here. Well, one is never wrong, in the final analysis, to be a bit overly audacious, for it sometimes happens that we find what we are looking for in that way. And in this case I had to look prior to finding. I mean that I had read the first few pages of Sharpe's chapter somewhat distractedly – for, as usual, one never reads very well – whereas there was something quite lovely there.

You recall the passage about the dead father, the father whom the analyst cannot manage to bring back to life in the patient's memory. She says that she had recently gotten things moving a bit such that the patient marveled at the thought that he must have heard his father speak when he was little. Right after that she notes that the patient has the same difficulty with her: "He has no thoughts about me."

That is something that might already have grabbed our attention.

"He has no thoughts about me. He feels nothing about me. He cannot believe in the theory of transference" [p. 126]. It must be admitted that this is worrisome. But the fact that the patient is not aware of it doesn't mean there isn't any manifestation of transference, for there is, all the same, a kind of obscure gathering of anxiety here and there. This comment escaped me because I had not clearly realized the import of what was to follow.

When you read this you think that it is a general observation of the kind Sharpe sometimes makes.

> I think the analysis might be compared to a long-drawn-out game of chess and that it will continue to be so until I cease to be the unconscious avenging father who is bent on cornering him, checkmating him, after which there is no alternative to death. [p. 127]

This curious reference to the game of chess, that nothing seems to hint at in the case study, should give us pause for thought. When I read that page I did not immediately consider its import as regards the transference.

As I was reading this passage, it led me to think, "That's very nice. One should compare the whole unfolding of an analysis to a game of chess." Why? Because what is most beautiful and salient in the game of chess is that each of the pieces is a signifying element. The game involves a series of moves that respond to each other, based on the 246
nature of these signifiers, each having its own characteristic movement based on its position as a signifier; and what occurs is the progressive reduction of the number of signifiers left in the game. One could, after all, describe an analysis in the same way, by saying that what we need to do is eliminate a sufficient number of signifiers for there to remain few enough of them for us to clearly sense where among them the subject's position within the structure lies. Having returned to this notion since then, I believe that it can, in effect, take us quite far.

Regarding Sharpe, everything that I know about her work from other texts or have been able to find out about her indicates that there is in her conception and interpretation of psychoanalytic theory a profound highlighting of the signifying nature of things. She accentuates metaphor in a way that is in no wise discordant with what I teach you. She always knows how to underscore the kind of substitution in symptoms that is, strictly speaking, linguistic in nature, and she employs this in her analyses of literary themes that constitute a considerable part of her work. Similarly, all of the rules regarding technique that she provides are profoundly marked by her experience and apprehension of the play of signifiers as such.

One might say that she misrecognizes on this occasion that, at the level of speech, which is of primary importance in this case study, it is her own intentions that are expressed in the term "corner." She herself mentions "cornering him" [p. 127] in the text, before it appears in the patient's discourse when, two sessions after the one in which she provides the interpretation of the dream, he mentions, as I have already indicated, that he finds it impossible in another game, that of tennis, to corner his opponent and deliver the final blow by sending a ball where his opponent cannot reach it. The analyst shows her true colors here.

I am not, for all that, saying that the patient sees them. It is clear that Sharpe is a good analyst.

She tells us in detail how she operates in this analysis. You may have noticed, she says to her students, that it is a case in which I
247 make only the briefest of remarks or else I stay quiet. Why? Because absolutely everything indicates to me that this patient's professed wish to be helped implies the exact opposite – namely, that above all, he wants to remain sheltered, with his little cover or car top [or: hood, *capote*] over him.

To be under the hood* is a thoroughly fundamental position for this patient. Sharpe senses that. Everything related to the effaced memory of the pram revolves around the fact that he was "pinned in bed." He also seems to have very precise notions about what being tied up like that can lead to in a child, even though he can find nothing in his memory that allows him to recall it. Yet he is assuredly wedded to the position of being tied up.

The analyst is, therefore, far from allowing this countertransferential element, which would be too interventionist and aggressive, to appear in the game of chess. But my point is the following: it is precisely because she so clearly senses the aggressive import of the analytic game for this patient that she does not see its exact import. Namely, that what is at stake has the closest relations with signifiers. If we wonder where the phallus is, it is in this direction that we must search for it.

Consider, if you will, the quadrangular schema on which we find the subject, the other, the ego qua other's image, and the Other with a capital *O* [the L schema]. Here the question is where the signifier as such appears. The phallus is never where we expect it to be, but is there all the same. It is there like the purloined letter, where one least expects it and yet where everything points. To put it the way the metaphor of the game of chess allows us to formulate it, I would say that the subject does not want to lose his queen [*dame*].

Let me explain. In his dream, the phallus is not what is present or what the subject is looking at. That is not where the phallus is. The

analyst, in her interpretation, perceives this obscurely, as if through a veil – the subject has a certain relation to omnipotence, to potency in short, to power. His power, in this case the phallus, is what he has to preserve at any cost. He must keep the phallus on the sidelines, because otherwise he might lose it in the game.

So this phallus that is kept on the sidelines is, in the dream, represented quite simply by the person who would seem least likely to represent it – namely, his wife. 248

His wife is far from being what she appears to be, a witness to the masturbation scene, for nothing actually indicates that seeing plays an essential role here.

Keep the following in mind, because it is such a clinically obvious fact that it is absolutely unbelievable that it is not common knowledge in psychoanalysis: the female partner qua Other is precisely what represents to this subject, as to many subjects, what is in some sense most taboo in his power and which thus turns out to dominate the entire economy of his desire.

I would say that it is because his wife is his phallus that he made the infinitesimal slip that I mentioned in passing when he spoke about making "a journey with his wife around the world," and not a journey around the world with his wife. Sharpe sees a hint of omnipotence in the phrase "around the world." I believe that the secret of omnipotence in this patient lies in the phrase "with my wife." What is crucial for him is that he not lose her.

This is, in the final analysis, what he must misrecognize, and it is precisely what must be called into question in the analysis. But in order to do so, he would have to realize that his wife is, in this case, the analyst.

The subject does not want to lose his queen, I would say, because he is like those second-rate chess players who believe that to lose their queen is to lose the game, whereas to win at chess is to arrive at what one calls an endgame. In an endgame, your ability to move is the simplest and most reduced, you have a minimum of choices – I mean that your king cannot move to a square that is controlled by your opponent's pieces – and the point is to maneuver in such a way as to get the upper hand. At times, it is advantageous to sacrifice one's queen. This is what the subject absolutely does not want to do.

Why? Because for him the phallic signifier is identical to everything that transpired in his relationship with his mother. The case study clearly hints at the shaky and deficient nature of what the father was able to contribute. We fall back, of course, onto an already known facet of the subject's relation to the parental couple. 249

What is important, however, is not to go down this particular path, but rather to stress the very hidden, secret relationship

between the subject and his partner. This relationship is what must be brought out at the moment at which it appears in the analysis. This moment is the one at which the subject, with his little cough, warns his analyst – if she had, as occurs in the dream, happened to turn her bag inside out, as it were, or showed her cards – to turn it right side in before he arrives; because were he to see that, were he to see that there is nothing but a bag, he might lose everything.

The prudence the patient shows is exactly what keeps him in a relationship to his desire that restrains him like a tightened strap, like the pram-pinned* position of his childhood, and that can only be fantasized. Namely, that he himself must be tied up, in a pram* or elsewhere, truly squeezed and swaddled, so that the signifier or image of his dreamed-of omnipotence can be elsewhere.

This is also how we must understand the whole discussion of automobiles in which omnipotence plays a capital role.

Everyone senses the connection between power and these problematic instruments of our civilization, automobiles – their horsepower, speed, and "peak of speed"* – and everyone obviously considers them to be phallic equivalents, the backup potency of those who are impotent. But at the same time everyone knows that automobiles are coupled with their drivers and that cars are infinitely feminine in nature. It is no accident that in French *automobile* is a feminine noun. And we just so happen to give all kinds of little nicknames to our cars that make them sound like partners of the fairer sex. The patient himself makes problematic remarks on this topic; you recall this one: "Strange how one speaks of the life of a car as if it were human" [p. 135].

This is old hat, of course, but it is no less obvious that there is something quite odd about automobiles – namely, the signifying ambiguity which is such that they are simultaneously what protect
250 him, what strap him in, and what envelop him. In relation to him, they have the exact same position as the protruding hood in the dream – the same word is employed in both cases – this bizarre sexual protuberance in which he happens to place his finger, and which is, moreover, not red-striped but rather lined with red fabric [p. 135]. I had underscored this before but poorly translated it.

Let us turn now to what his analyst tells him.

During the session in which he recounts the dream, she begins to talk to him about his aggression. The next day, we learn that what resulted from this was a curious manifestation on his part, the nature of which she does not completely pick up on, and which one might call psychosomatic: prior to entering the consulting room that day, instead of a cough he experienced a "slight colicky pain" [p. 146]. God only knows if he had to clench his sphincter at that

moment. As I said earlier, this is because, at the moment of entering the analyst's consulting room for the next session, he has everything to lose.

Yet it is not that day but the next that Sharpe makes the interpretation that she herself considers to be the most illuminating.

The patient tells her that the night before he had already had "a colicky pain" upon leaving the house. What does he speak about next? He says that "he had been unable to use his car because certain repairs had not been finished." He could not ball his mechanic out, because "[t]he garage man was so very good, so very kind; it was impossible to be angry with him." And Sharpe tells us that he added, no doubt with a note of irritation in his voice: "Not that the car was imperative for him at the moment; it was not a necessity, but he wanted it, he liked it" [p. 146].

The analyst plainly perceives that libido is involved here. "For once," she says, "I was able to deal with the libidinal wishes" [p. 147]. Here we could not agree with her more. If I am critiquing Sharpe's work, it is because I find that she is admirably sensitive at every point in this case study. She understands the importance of the desire present in the patient's life, desire being characterized by its unexplained nature [*son caractère non-motivé*]. In this case, he has no need for the car. She clearly realizes that this is the first time she has heard something like this from him, the first time he has declared a desire to her, a desire that is explicitly presented by the patient as unreasonable.

She jumps on this – in other words, she underscores it to him. Curiously enough, there is some sort of problem with the projector here, and the image suddenly becomes fuzzy. Whereas Sharpe 251
always very precisely recounts what she said to the patient, even the most audacious or risky things, here we do not know exactly what she said. This is very annoying! What we surmise is that she was, in short, overjoyed and said something like, "You have finally admitted that you desire something," and then compared the mechanic to his father. But we will never know the exact words she uttered.

What we *do* know is that she told him something that was similar enough to what she had already told him that, the next day, the patient comes in and reports, half-contentedly, half-wryly, that the night before he wet his bed.

As I already told you, such a transitory symptom – however much it signifies that a nerve has been hit and has certainly reverberated – cannot in and of itself be considered to absolutely confirm that what was said went in the right direction, assuming something was said.

Bed-wetting, assuming we have some notion of what it represents, is certainly an activation of the penis that I would qualify as

personal. But it is nevertheless not a genital activation. It is the penis as a real organ that, as clinical work shows us, is very frequently activated in children in response to their parents' sexual activity. It is inasmuch as children, whether male or female, are at a point at which they are profoundly interested in the sexual interactions between their parents that bed-wetting incidents occur that activate the real [i.e., biological] organ as such.

If the activating of the organ as real, not as signifying, shows us that Sharpe's intervention had a certain import, the question is to know whether its import was opportune. This remains to be seen in greater detail.

Yet another reaction follows this intervention. The patient recounts, not without a modicum of self-satisfaction, or so it seems to me, that he was no longer allowing his tennis partners to mock him; he had, in fact, grabbed one of them by the collar and squeezed his throat in the back of the court forcefully enough to stop him from ever mocking him again.

252 It is quite clear that this can in no way be considered to be the type of reaction we should truly wish to obtain. We should not in any case confuse cornering the other during a match and "cornering" him by grabbing his throat [because of his mockery] about the match. These are by no means one and the same thing.

Cornering your opponent after a match and grabbing him by the throat is not a suitable reaction here. It does not even for an instant make you more able to corner him during the game itself – in other words, when relations with the Other occur, the Other as the locus of speech, the locus of the law, the locus of the rules of the game. This is precisely what is missed by this slight drop in the level of Sharpe's analytic intervention.

I think that we have taken things far enough today.

Next class will be the last on what can be gleaned from the analysis of this case in the literature regarding desire and its interpretation. With the help of the graph and related notions, I will try to provide you with several formulas indicating how we should conceptualize the function of what we should very precisely attribute to the phallic signifier in all its generality.

I will also endeavor to show you how you can try to situate the phallic signifier in this schema, in order to help you map this out in your own analytic work.

Furthermore, I will provide you with something that is borrowed from the writings of an author whose work I have already mentioned here, Lewis Carroll. "He thought he saw a Garden-Door" – that famous door to the heavenly garden known as the womb, on

which all psychoanalytic theories are currently centered or by which they have been swallowed up:

He thought he saw a Garden-Door
That opened with a key:
He looked again, and found it was
A Double Rule of Three.

Next time, I will show you what this "rule of three" is.

February 4, 1959

XII

THE LAUGHTER OF THE IMMORTAL GODS

To be and not to be the phallus
To be not without having it
Being and the One
Critique of Melanie Klein
The other's image and capital *I*

I announced last time that today I would wrap up our study of the dream that we have gone through quite thoroughly as regards its interpretation, but I will be obliged to devote yet one more class to it.

I will begin with a brief reminder.

It was dreamt by a patient who is a lawyer who has serious difficulties in his profession. Ella Sharpe approaches things with circumspection, the patient having every appearance of keeping his nose clean, even though one cannot exactly call his behavior rigid. She does not fail to underscore that everything he recounts is thought out, not felt.

At the point they are at, he has a remarkable dream, which was a turning point in the analysis. The patient boils it down into a few words, even though it was, as he says, "a tremendous dream," so tremendous that, had he remembered it, he would never finish recounting it. Only a fragment of it emerges, and this fragment presents, to a certain degree, characteristics of a recurring dream – I mean, a dream he has already had.

He undertook a journey, as he says, "with his wife around the world" – I highlighted that – and he finds himself in Czechoslovakia. This is the only point on which Sharpe tells us that she obtained insufficient clarification, not having asked the patient what the word Czechoslovakia meant to him, and she regrets having failed to do so. We, however, might have some thoughts about it.

"Sexual play with a woman in front of another woman," his

wife, occurs there [p. 132]. The woman with whom this sexual play occurs adopts a dominant position with respect to him. Moreover, 254
she tries to maneuver in such a way as "to get [his] penis." He does not mention this while recounting the dream, but it comes up in his associations.

I mentioned the very specific nature of the verb "to get" in English. To get is to obtain, but in all sorts of possible ways. "To get" is a verb that is far less limited than *obtenir* [obtain] in French – it is to obtain, catch, grasp, and finish off [*en finir avec*]. And if the woman managed "to get [his] penis," that would mean she had it.

Nevertheless, his penis enters even less into action as the dream ends on the following wish: given how disappointed the woman was, he thought that she should masturbate. As I told you, this is the secret meaning of that moment in the dream, for, in the patient's telling of it, it manifests itself in the following form: the patient thinks that he would be willing to "masturbate her."

There is, in fact, a true exploration of something that is presented to us by the patient as "hoodlike,"* which is interpreted by Sharpe, with a great deal of insistence and care, as being equivalent to a hood. When we look closely, as we have, what should attract our attention is that a female sexual organ is there and not a hood. It is a sort of inside-out or prolapsed vagina, and it is as if the patient's pseudo-masturbation were nothing but an attempt to verify that the phallus is absent.

This is the sense in which I said that the imaginary structure, the manifest articulation, should at least oblige us to limit a bit the extension we give to the register of the signifier. This is in short why I raise the question whether, by using a more prudent method, which might be considered stricter, we cannot arrive at greater precision in the interpretation.

Yet this cannot spare us from taking into account the structural elements with which we have decided to familiarize ourselves. Indeed, we must do so extensively enough that these signifiers allow us to differentiate the meaning of each individual case. In doing so, we see that *the most particular cases are always those whose value is the most universal.*

Nothing included in this case study should be overlooked, because what we want to do is no less than indicate in this case that 255
without which one cannot give the function of the phallus its true position – namely, its character as a signifier.

1

Whereas the function of the phallus is always so important, so immediate, and so much at the crux of things in psychoanalytic interpretation, its handling always leads to impasses.

The most striking among them are those that Melanie Klein's theory translates and betrays [*traduit, trahit*], when, as we know, she makes the phallus into the most important object.

In Klein's theory, and in her interpretation of psychoanalytic experience, how is the phallic object introduced? It is the substitute, she tells us, the first substitute that lies within a child's grasp concerning its own experience, whether we are talking about a little girl or a little boy. It is a sign that is more convenient than others, easier to handle, and more satisfying. This conception is well designed to raise questions about the status and exact role of this entity, about the mechanisms at work, and so on.

Klein describes for us an altogether primordial fantasy in which the subject is in a conflictual and profoundly aggressive relationship with the mother's body, which Klein conceptualizes as the container of good and bad objects, which are there inside of her in a sort of primitive jumble. The subject covets these objects, desires them, and wants to rip them away – these radically different terms are all unfortunately juxtaposed, and this creates difficulties. But Klein does not tell us how to conceptualize the outcome of this conflict, nor does she tell us why such precedence is granted to the phallic object within the mother's body.

Moreover, all of this is conveyed to us with a tone of the greatest authority, and in a startlingly cut-and-dried style. Her statements are so categorical that I would almost say they are not open for discussion. Nevertheless, after having heard them, one cannot fail to recover one's presence of mind and wonder at every moment what she is aiming at. Is it the child who is corroborating the predominance
256 of the phallic object or is it Klein herself? What is it that signals that a specific object takes on the meaning of the phallus? I must say that in many cases we are not enlightened as to how to interpret her remarks.

As it turns out, people wonder about my remarks too. I am aware that some of you wonder where the sign of the phallus must be placed among the different elements on the graph on the basis of which we are trying to orient our experience of desire and its interpretation. I have had a few echoes regarding the questions this has given rise to for some of you – for example, what is the relationship between the phallus and the Other with a capital *O* that we speak about as the locus of speech?

There is, indeed, a relationship between the phallus and the Other with a capital *O*. But it is certainly not a relationship that places the former beyond the latter, in the sense in which the phallus would be the being of the Other with a capital *O* – assuming someone raised the question in these terms. If the phallus has a relationship with something, it is with the *subject's* being.

This is the new and, I believe, important point that I am trying to make about the subject's entry into the dialectical movement that occurs during the unconscious development of various stages of identification, running from the earliest relationship with the mother to the beginnings of the Oedipus complex and of the Law. Although what I have highlighted here is quite palpable in case studies, especially in those concerning the origin of perversions, the relationship between the subject and the phallic signifier nevertheless often remains veiled.

Two years ago, when I began to re-examine the function of the phallus, I took as my point of departure the following: things are very different depending on whether what is involved is for the subject to purely and simply be the phallus in relation to the Other, or whether the relationship to the phallus is already there in the Other, having been established by some pathway, mainspring, or mechanism whose impact on the subject's further development remains to be indicated. In the latter case, as the mother herself already has a certain relationship to the phallus, the subject can only manage to get himself valued in this context by entering into competition with it.

Next, I juxtaposed the two possible forms that can be assumed by the relationship between the subject and the phallic signifier, by introducing an essential distinction: that between being and having. It is essential inasmuch as being and having do not arise at the same 257
stage of identification; the impact is not the same in the one case as in the other. There is a true dividing line between the two: one cannot both be the phallus and have it. In order for the subject, under certain conditions, to come to have it, he must give up on being it.

Nevertheless, things are far less easy to formulate if we try to home in as closely as possible on the dialectic that is at work. When I say that the phallus has a relationship to the subject's being, I am not referring to the pure and simple subject, the so-called subject of knowledge who is a noetic prop for all objects. I am referring to a speaking subject, a subject insofar as he takes on his identity in the field of language. In this regard I would say that the subject both is and is not the phallus. This is why the phallus serves an essentially signifying function.

I will ask you to excuse the algebraic tone things will take on today, but we must learn to set ideas out clearly, since, for some of you, questions arise. In my notation, ($◊*a*), something presents itself as being a barred subject – namely, a desiring subject [or: subject of desire, *sujet du désir*] – insofar as, in his relationship to the object, he himself is profoundly called into question. This is what constitutes the specificity of his desire. And it is to the degree to which the subject is a barred subject, insofar as he is a speaking subject, that one can say that it is possible, under certain conditions, to designate him with the phallic signifier [*lui donner comme signifiant le phallus*].

The subject both is and is not the phallus. He *is* it, because it is the signifier with which language designates him, and he *is not* it inasmuch as language and the law of language take it away from him.

In fact, these things do not take place at the same level. If the law takes it away from him, it is precisely in order to make things work out; it is because a certain choice is made at that moment. In the final analysis, the law brings a definition, distribution, or change in level into the situation. The law reminds the subject that he has it or does not have it. But what happens in fact occurs entirely in the interval between this signifying identification and this distribution of roles: the subject is the phallus, but the subject, of course, is not the phallus.

258 In the usage of the verb *être* [to be] in French, there is a certain slippage that the very form of the play of negation in speech allows us to grasp in a formulation that I will emphasize, inasmuch as it expresses what happens at the decisive moment, the one around which the assumption [*assomption*] of castration revolves. The formulation is as follows: one can say that the subject both is and is not the phallus, but "he is [also] not without having it."

It is in the inflection of "not being without" – it is around the subjective assumption that is inflected between being and having – that the reality of castration is played out. The central value that the phallus takes on is based on the fact that, in a certain experience, the subject's penis has been weighed in the balance against the object, and has taken on a certain function as an equivalent or standard in the relationship with the object. And one can say that, up to a certain point, it is to the degree to which he gives up his relationship to the phallus that the subject can possess the infinity of objects that characterize the human world.

Note that the formulation, "he is not without having it," whose modulation and stress I beg you to retain, can be found in other forms in all languages – we will come back to this.

Now this is valid only for men. For women, relations to the phallus and to the phallic phase, which has an essential function

in the development of female sexuality, must be formulated in the exact opposite manner. This suffices to indicate that, when it comes to sexuality, male subjects and female subjects begin from different points.

A female subject's relation to the phallus can be formulated as follows: "She *is* without having it." This is the only precise formulation that allows us to leave behind the ambiguities, contradictions, and impasses around which we revolve concerning female sexuality. It is this "being without having it" that gives a woman's position its transcendence and that will later allow us to theorize the relationship between a woman and the phallus, a relationship that is highly specific and permanent, whose irreducible nature was insistently underscored by Freud, and that is psychologically translated by him in the form of *Penisneid* [penis envy].

To state things in an extreme manner in order to get them across as clearly as possible, I would say that the penis is restored to a man by a certain action that one can almost say deprives him of it.

This formulation is not exact. I am providing it in order to get 259
you to open up your ears – the second one should not lead those who heard the first one to disparage it – but it nevertheless has its importance because it indicates where the junction occurs between the phallus and what are known as the first relations between the child and the maternal object.

These relations are usually broached developmentally. This is precisely what we must re-examine, and I am going to try to do so with you right now.

2

The question for us is to know how to use our algebraic elements to formulate what is involved in these much talked-about relations. Once we have such a formulation, we will be able to conceptualize how these relations are linked to the privileged signifier whose function I am trying to situate here.

If we endorse what psychiatrists claim, the relationship between the child and the mother comes first. Melanie Klein adds to this the notion that the child's first relations are established with the mother's body.

These relations, which are considered to be imaginary, are said to find their ideal locus, as it were, in her body. This is why, as everyone knows, Klein locates the relationship between form and symbol in the earliest experience of the mother's body, even if it is always an imaginary content that she brings out. Nevertheless, when reading

her accounts thereof, one has a hard time grasping what the relationship between image and symbol is supposed to be here.

Whatever the case may be, whether it is an image or a symbol, the mother's body is assuredly a sort of One. The opposition between image and symbol almost completely overlaps the philosophical opposition between Being and the One laid out in Plato's famous text, the *Parmenides*. Moreover, the child's relationship with its mother is entirely centered around an apprehension of her unity or totality.

Indeed, according to Klein, the child, as I have told you, apprehends primordial objects as being contained, outside of himself,
260 in the mother's body. The latter presents itself to the child as the universal container of all objects, both good and bad, which reside there, if not in a chaotic state, at least in one of primal disorder. The child's experience progressively teaches him to grasp the plurality of these multiple relations and various fragmented objects in the unity of the privileged object – that is, the maternal object – and this will pave the way for him toward his own unity. What Klein believes is essential to the child's development is this early shift from fragmentation to unity.

How can we formulate this in our algebra? Let us begin by noting that there are obviously not just two terms here, but four. The primordial relationship between the child and the mother's body is the framework in which relations between the child and his own body come to be inscribed.

I have for a long time been trying to explain these relations to you with the notion of specular affect, inasmuch as this term designates the structure of what is known as narcissistic affect. You know that I refer in this context to a very early [*originale*] experience, which occurs at a specific moment of development, and in which the subject recognizes himself both as separate from the image of his own body and as having a special relationship with that image. He accedes to this specular relationship either owing to an experience involving a mirror or in a certain transitive identificatory relationship in the course of games of bearing with the little other – the word "little" indicating here the fact that it involves young comrades.

It is not with just any little others that the subject can have this experience. Age plays a role here that I have stressed when I have written about it. The comrades must be around the same age as the child, indeed quite close to the same age, and their motor development must not go beyond a certain limit. Thus, the mother cannot play this role for the child.

Eros or libido plays a special role here, in the sense that this first relationship holds up only when it is linked to a second one.

The couple involving the child and the little other who represents his own image to him [*a–a'*] becomes juxtaposed to a second relationship in which this couple interferes and under which it becomes subsumed. This second relationship, which is going to come to regulate what happens in the specular couple [*a–a'*], is the larger and more obscure relationship between the child – whose primitive endeavors are motivated by need-based propensities [or: (pre)disposition, *tendances*] – and the mother's body, insofar as the 261
latter is, in effect, the imaginary object of primal identification.

Our point of departure here thus includes two elements: on the one hand, the subject in this primitive, not yet constituted state witnessed by the unconstituted form in which the newborn's cry – his first wailing, or his need-based calling for something – presents itself, and, on the other hand, his mother's body, this universal container which presents itself as a One at the level of the Other. It is the way in which relations between these two elements are established that regulates the relationship of the other two elements [*a–a'*] right from the outset. These latter elements are, on the one hand, the subject insofar as he constitutes himself specularly – namely, as an ego, and let us not forget that the ego is the other's image – and, on the other hand, a certain other who must be different from the mother: the little other.

The first correspondences between the subject and his own identity do not develop in a simple specular relationship. They develop in a quadripartite relationship. Do not forget that all psychoanalytic authors situate the locus of psychotic or parapsychotic anomalies – which have an impact on the integration, at the borders of the bodily image, of one or another term of the subject's autoerotic relations with himself – in the central relationship between mother and child.

One can easily conceptualize this with the help of the little schema I have used in the past and that I recently recalled to mind, that of the well-known concave mirror [see Figure 7.4]. It involves making appear at the center of a spherical mirror, not the fantasy of a flower, but a real image of a flower inside an actually existing vase. This is achieved only if one looks on from a specific vantage point that is situated in an area determined by lines extending from the mirror's edges. This setup allows us to imagine what is involved in the relationship between mother and child. Just as you must situate yourself in a certain position with respect to the mirror to see the illusion materialize [*se réaliser*], it is inasmuch as the child identifies with a certain position of his being within the mother's powers that he comes into being [*se réalise*].

This is underscored by everything I have said about the importance of the first relations between mother and child. A child must

become satisfactorily integrated into the world of insignias that are represented by all his mother's behaviors. If he has situated himself favorably with respect to his mother, then the *x* that is hidden from
262 him – namely, his tendencies, drives, or desires – can be situated either inside himself, outside himself, or be missing altogether [*manquant à lui*], so to speak. If he has not situated himself favorably, his relationship with his drives will be more or less distorted or deflected right from the outset.

It is not that complicated to imagine this. Recall to mind the manifest, crucial experience described long ago around which my explanation of narcissism revolved. It is the famous example given by St. Augustine in his *Confessions*, that of a child who sees his foster brother being nursed. He writes, "*Vidi ego et expertus sum zelantem parvulum: nondum loquebatur et intuebatur pallidus amaro aspectu conlactaneum suum*," which I have translated as follows: "I saw with my own eyes and knew very well an infant in the grip of jealousy: he could not yet speak, and already he observed his foster brother, pale and with a bitter look." In Latin, *amaro* is a bit different from the French *amer* [bitter]; one might translate it as *empoisonné* [poisoned or envenomed], but that does not quite satisfy me either.

Once this experience is formalized, its absolutely general scope appears. It involves the relationship of the subject to his own image – that is, to his semblable – but only inasmuch as the subject sees this semblable in a certain relationship with his mother, his mother serving as the earliest [*primitive*] ideal identification here, the first form of the One.

Analysts speak more readily of the mother as a totality than as the One. Ever since they began exploring children's earliest experiences with their mothers, they have been making such a big deal out of totality that they no longer talk about anything else: totality this, realization of totality that. It is as if they were so caught up in this aspect of things that they have forgotten what psychoanalytic experience shows us when it is pursued tenaciously to the outer edge of what we see in the phenomena – which is that it is impossible for human beings to accede to an experience of totality, because they are divided and ripped apart, no analysis being able to restore totality.

The reason for this is that another factor is involved in the dialectic of this experience. If I try to delineate this dialectic as I do, it is because this way of delineating things is literally imposed on us by experience – and, in the first place, by the fact that human
263 beings cannot help but consider themselves to be nothing more than beings who are, in the end, missing something. Whether they are male or female, they are castrated beings. This is why, in our

experience of the One, the phallus is essentially related to the dialectic of Being.

Let us come to the moment at which the subject has managed, not without dragging his feet, to overcome fragmentation and assume totality. This is the crucial moment known as the "depressive phase" around which the child's development revolves, according to Klein. This moment arrives when the mother as a totality has finally been perceived by the subject and the subject's first ideal identification occurs.

What happens to the specular couple given this new relationship with the mother? As I told you, the other – the little other or semblable – is in possession of the mother's breast. I add that, owing to this fact, the subject becomes aware of the desired object as such.

I ask you to dwell on this experience, which will be essential to our formalization. It is crucial because it grants the object, which is in this case the mother's breast, the special value of being desired at the same time as it makes the subject conscious of himself as deprived.

According to Ernest Jones – and he says this, naturally, in his discussion of the phallic phase – all deprivation generates a feeling of frustration. Whereas it is exactly the opposite. It is to the degree to which the subject is imaginarily frustrated that his first apprehension of the object, insofar as he is deprived of it, is born.

The subject first has an experience of his semblable, the one who is relating to his mother in a way that should be his, the one who is usurping his role. He feels this imaginary gap as a frustration. He thus experiences himself as deprived. I say that the gap is imaginary because, after all, nothing proves that the subject himself is deprived – some other may be being deprived, he may be taken care of once his turn comes, etc.

With deprivation, a process begins that will allow this object to enter into a new relationship with the subject. Must we put an index on this subject, a little *i* to show that he is imaginary, given the sort of passionate self-destruction that is absolutely characteristic of the pale, distraught visage depicted to us by the literary brush of he who tells us this story, namely St. Augustine? Or is he a subject whom 264
we can already conceptualize as, strictly speaking, inscribed in the symbolic order? We do not yet know.

As for the object, on the other hand, it is clear that it is symbolized and that it has taken on signifying value in this experience. The object involved – namely, the mother's breast – can be conceptualized not only as being there or not being there, but it can also enter into a relationship with something else that takes its place; and, by dint of this fact, it becomes a signifying element. In any case, Klein, without realizing the import of what she is saying at that moment,

asserts that there can be something better than the mother's breast – namely, the phallus.

She does not tell us why, however. The point remains mysterious. I say that it all depends on the essential moment that I have pointed to: the moment in child development that involves the birth of metaphor.

Recall what I told you recently about the specific forms of children's activity that disconcert adults and make them react awkwardly, the example I gave you being of a child who – not content to call what you always told him was called "dog" by a signifier he himself picked, "bowwow" – decrees that dogs go meow and that cats go bowwow.

This little tale was designed to illustrate for you the activity of substitution wherein lies the entire mainspring of symbolic progress. This occurs long before the child speaks in an articulated fashion, and there is strictly speaking no articulation without substitution. Nevertheless, if the field of substitutional activity goes far beyond the passionate experience of a child who feels frustrated, the latter is, in any case, included in the former. We can thus formalize this by writing that the other's image [*i(a)*] is substituted for the subject insofar as he is caught up in his annihilating passion – which is, in this case, jealous passion.

$$\frac{i(a)}{\$}$$

The subject who has been replaced [*substitué*] in this way finds himself in a certain relationship to the object [*a*], but only insofar as the latter replaces totality [i.e., the mother as I]. And it is here that we enter into symbolic activity, strictly speaking, the activity that makes human beings into speaking beings and defines all of their future relations with the object.

$$\frac{i(a)}{\$} \lozenge \frac{a}{\mathrm{I}}$$

265 That said, how can these fundamental distinctions help us orient ourselves in Ella Sharpe's case study if we preserve their thoroughly primitive character? We must, on the contrary, use them to create distinctions that will allow us to draw the maximum benefit from facts that are given to us in the dream-experience and in the remarks of the specific patient whose case we are analyzing.

This is what we are going to do now.

3

Ella Sharpe's case can be broached from many different angles. Let us take it up, as far as possible, from the most salient and symptomatic of angles.

We must simultaneously attempt to focus, at every instant, on the relationship known as desire – that is, the relationship between the subject and the object insofar as it is a relationship involving human desire.

Let me remind you that we must always locate therein the relationship of $ across from little *a*, which is the formula of fantasy, and which implies that the subject verges on being annihilated in his relationship with the object. As the above schema indicates, this formula is itself inscribed in a quadruple relationship, which shows us how the subject manages to give form to what he himself is when he desires – namely, a barred subject who is fundamentally pallid and anguished. He does so by substituting the other's image, *i(a)* – namely, the successive identifications that will come to constitute the ego – for himself.

What do we find in the different symptomatic elements that can be seen in the material Sharpe's patient presents us? 266

He tells us that he used to cut the straps of his sister's sandals. This comes up in the course of his associations to the dream, after a certain number of comments are made and questions asked by the analyst, which are quite minimal, but not negligible for all that, which are simply designed to get him to go further, and which lead him little by little, one thing leading to another, to this point. After the hood and the fact that the hood is shaped like the female genitalia, after the hood [or: top] of the car and the straps that serve to hold it down, we arrive at the straps that he would cut off his sister's sandals, without him being able to recall what purpose he intended to use them for at the time, and without him being able to demonstrate that he had any need for them.

These are the exact same terms he uses about his car. In the second session after the one in which he recounted the dream, he tells his analyst that his garage man did not get his car back to him but that he is not thinking of making a scene about it with the nice guy. He has no need for the car, but he would like to have it, even though it is not necessary to him; he says, 'I love it.'

Here, it seems, we have two forms of the object with which the subject has a relationship whose odd character he himself points out by saying that they correspond to no need on his part.

I am not the one who is saying so. I am not saying that "modern man has no need for his car," even though anyone who looks closely

at the matter will realize that this is all too obvious. The patient himself says so. He says, in short, "I don't need my car. But I love it, I desire it." And as you know, it is here that Sharpe, with a swift reaction, like that of a hunter who has located her prey – namely, the very object she is seeking – intervenes so energetically, but without telling us, curiously enough, in what terms she did so.

Let us begin to describe what is at stake. And since I want to start with what is simplest, what can be most easily situated in an equation with which you are already long familiar, I would say that the straps are little *a*. There was even a time at which he collected straps.

I will oblige myself to follow my own formulas to some degree, since if I propose them, they must serve some purpose. The image
267 of *a*, *i(a)*, here is clearly his sister, about whom we have not spoken much, as we never suspect how complicated it is to bring out the slightest little thing, when it comes to explaining what we are dealing with.

$$\frac{\text{his sister}}{\$} \lozenge \frac{\text{straps}}{X}$$

His sister is eight years older than him. We know this because it is mentioned in the case study. Sharpe does not make much use of this fact, but what is clear is that if she is eight years older than him, she was eleven when he was three, which is the age at which he lost his father.

A certain taste for the signifier has the advantage of making us do a little arithmetic now and then. This is not illicit, for there is no doubt but that, when they are young, children never stop calculating their ages and their differences in age from each other. We, thank God, manage to forget that we are over fifty, and we have reasons for doing so, but children are very concerned with knowing their ages. Having performed this little calculation, one notices something that is very striking: the patient tells us that his memories only begin at age eleven. This is included in the case study even though the author does not make much of it.

This is not simply a random find that I am supplying you with here, because, if you now reread the case study, you will see that it goes much further. Just before telling us that he has virtually no memory of anything that happened before the age of eleven, he tells us about his female friend who is incredibly smart and cool, and who can do impersonations – that is, she can imitate anyone, especially men, in an amazing way, she being called on to do so by the BBC.

It is striking that he speaks about that just before making a

remark that seems to stem from a completely different register – namely, that he has no memories of his life prior to age eleven. It seems that this must have some connection with the fact that he is imaginarily alienated in his sister. His sister is clearly *i(a)* for him, and this can explain many things to us, including the fact that he 268
denies that his family ever had a "pram,"* which is a little stroller – a sort of car – for children. At that level, it is in the past, it is his sister's.

All the same, there was a moment at which he caught up with his sister, as it were. He encountered her at the very point at which he had left her regarding a crucial event. Sharpe is right to say that the father's death was crucial. The father's death left the subject confronted with all sorts of elements, except one, which would probably have been very precious in allowing him to overcome the various captivations [*captations*] that arose later. In any case, this is the point that will, of course, be a bit mysterious to us – why straps?

The patient himself emphasizes the fact that he has no idea why. Thank God we are analysts and we can guess that this element is what is there at the level of $ and is located across from it [capital I]. Because we are familiar with other case studies, we must give some idea of what is located at I in this schema.

It is something that is obviously connected with – I will not say castration, for if it were castration that was well assimilated, registered, and assumed by the subject, this little transitory symptom which involved cutting up straps would not have appeared. This symptom obviously revolved around castration, but we have no right to extrapolate for the time being.

In the case at hand, what is capital I, the ego-ideal? We can permit ourselves not to conclude just yet. After all, if someone is in analysis, it is precisely in order to try to understand a little, and to understand what is included in capital I.

I already indicated last time that this patient's ego-ideal identification was extremely peculiar, and that we needed to dwell on it. We can try to specify it now by referring to his relation with his analyst, which has something more developed about it than the I. Well, let us begin by raising questions based on what was going on in the analytic situation at that time.

There are many different ways of broaching this, for one can truly say that all roads lead to Rome in this case. One can begin from the 269
mass of things the subject brings up in reaction to Sharpe's interpretations. In this regard, we agree with him: what are essential are the straps and the car. They are obviously not identical, for something changed in the interval between them.

Concerning the car, the patient adopted a stance, making some critical remarks that bear traces of a certain irony: "Strange how one speaks of the life of a car as if it were human" [p. 135]. I do not need to stress this, because you can sense, as I already observed, that the obviously symbolic nature of his car has its importance. It is clear that in the course of the patient's existence, his car has been a more satisfying object than the straps were, for the simple reason that he still does not understand anything about the straps, whereas he is able to say that even if the car does not really satisfy a need, he is very attached to it. And, moreover, he has fun with it; he is its master; he is happy when he is in his car.

What is the image of *a* here? We obviously find different things depending on whether we take things up at the level of fantasy or at the level of the dream. One might also say that there is fantasy on both sides – fantasies in the dream and those in the daydream.

In the daydream, which is also of value, we know what the other's image is. It is something in relation to which the patient adopted very peculiar attitudes. The other's image is the couple of lovers whom – despite the excuse he gives [for coughing], which is that he does not want to disturb them – he never fails, let us note, to disturb in the most concrete way: by ordering them to separate. The other's image is also that other about which everyone will say – recall the rather piquant fantasy that he recalled – 'Oh, there's no need to verify what there is in that room, it's only a dog.'

The other's image is, in short, something that leaves very little room for sexual intercourse. The *i(a)* requires either separation or, on the contrary, an animal phallus, a phallus that is kept entirely on the sidelines. If there is a phallus, it is a dog's phallus.

270 As you see, the situation seems to have further disintegrated.

If the patient has, for a long time, been someone who has been propped up by his identification with a woman, we observe that his relationship to sex, including embracing and genital satisfaction, presents itself in a way that, in any case, leaves open or gaping the problem of what the phallus has to do with it. It is quite certain, in any case, that the patient is uncomfortable. The question of double or single in the other's image is present – if it is double, it is separated, and if it is single, it is not human. Things do not go smoothly in either case.

As for the subject in the latter case ["it's only a dog"], we need not wonder, as in the former case, what he is or where he is. It is altogether clear: there is no longer anyone there, there is truly *οὔτις* [no one], a term I mentioned [at the end of Chapter VIII].

What about as regards the dream? A woman does everything possible to get his penis, but nothing happens. One can do whatever one

wants with the hand, and even show that there is nothing up one's sleeve, but as for him, there is no one there [*personne*]!

As for his fantasy, it is "What is there in the place where he must not be?" There is in effect no one there. There is no one there because, if there is a phallus, it is that of the dog who masturbated in a room which he would have been very upset if someone had come into. In any case, he is not there.

What do we find at the level of capital I? To be sure, there is Ella Sharpe; she is not without having some relationship to it. With a little cough, he warns her in advance *de ne pas mettre son doigt, elle non plus, entre l'arbre et l'écorce* [not to meddle in other people's affairs either; literally, not to put her finger between the tree and the bark], to invert the usual formulation – in other words, he warns her that if she is in the process of doing something more or less suspect to herself, she must put all that away before he arrives.

Ella Sharpe must, in short, be completely out of reach of the subject's blows. This is what I expressed last time when I referred to the comparison between analysis and a game of chess, with the following words: the subject does not want to lose his queen. He does not want to lose his queen because his queen is undoubtedly the key to all of this, because none of this can hold up unless nothing changes 271
as regards the queen, because omnipotence is connected with the queen.

What is strange is that Sharpe sniffs out and sees the idea of omnipotence everywhere – so much so that she says to the patient that he believes himself to be omnipotent because he had "a tremendous dream," for example, even though he is incapable of coughing up any more of it than the little scene that takes place on a road in Czechoslovakia. But it is not the patient who is omnipotent. It is the Other who is omnipotent and this is why the situation is especially frightening to him.

Let us not forget that we are talking about a patient who cannot manage to speak up for a defendant in court [*plaider*]. He cannot, and this is very striking. Why can't he manage to speak up in court? Is it because he must not affect the Other by assuming the place where one always places oneself if one is going to speak up – namely, the Other's place?

In other words, the Other – and in this case, we are talking about women – must absolutely not be castrated. I mean that the Other carries within itself the signifier that takes on all values. And this is indeed how we should consider the phallus.

I am not the only one who does so. Read Chapter 11 of Melanie Klein's book, *The Psychoanalysis of Children*, regarding

the development of little girls. Klein clearly says that all the needs a subject has, and of every kind – oral, anal, and urethral – are centered on the phallic signifier. Even before we can speak of genital needs, the phallic signifier takes on all values and especially the drive-related values and aggressive tendencies that the subject has been able to develop.

Incapable of putting the phallic signifier into play, the phallic signifier remaining inherent in the Other as such, this patient finds himself broken down [like a car, *en panne*], as we see him.

But what is altogether striking is that, here, as in every case in which we find ourselves presented with resistance on the patient's part, this resistance is the analyst's resistance. Indeed, if there is something that Sharpe seriously does not allow herself here, it is to speak up [*plaider*]. In this case, where there is a barrier that is there
272 to be crossed, that she could cross, she stops herself from crossing it. Why? She does not know why, but it is clear that she admits she does so. She does not allow herself to cross this barrier because she does not realize why the patient is keeping his nose clean, what he is keeping his nose clean in order to defend against.

It is not, as she thinks, because of some supposed aggression he feels toward his father. The father has been dead and gone for a long time and she has had a terrible time trying to bring him ever so little back to life in the analysis.

Nor is it because of some conflict regarding homosexuality. It is not because he happens to be more or less courageous or aggressive in the presence of people who mock him about his tennis playing because he does not know how to deliver the final "shot."* It is not about inciting the patient to use the phallus as a weapon. None of that is germane here.

The patient is not yet at the point where he must agree to perceive that women are castrated. I am not saying *that women do not have the phallus*, which is what he demonstrates quite ironically in his dream fantasy [*fantasme de rêve*], but rather that the Other as such, owing to the fact that it is included in the Other as language, is subjected to the following: women *are* without having it.

This is precisely what he cannot in any wise accept. To him, women must not be without having it and this is why he cannot let women risk it at any cost. Let us not forget that, in his dream, his wife is on the sidelines. She is there, but apparently plays no role whatsoever. He never even mentions that she is watching. It is there, as it were, that the phallus is tucked away. The patient never has to risk the phallus himself, because it is in play solely in a corner where no one would ever dream of looking for it.

The patient does not go so far as to say that it is located in a

woman, yet it is located in a woman – namely, inasmuch as Sharpe is there.

It is not especially inconvenient that his analyst is a woman. It could even be quite convenient if she realized what needed to be said to the patient – namely, that she is there as a woman and that to dare to speak up and plead his case in front of a woman raises questions and difficulties for him, this being precisely what he does not do.

She realizes that he does not do it, and this crucial moment of the analysis revolves around it. She then incites him to use the phallus 273
as a weapon. She says 'Your penis is something that has always been excessively dangerous; don't be afraid of it; that's what it's about; it is boring and biting.' There is nothing in the material that gives us any sort of indication that the patient's phallus is aggressive, and yet this is the way in which Sharpe interprets it.

I do not think that is the best thing to do. Why not? Because of the position the patient has and has apparently kept, and that he will cling to all the more tightly after this intervention, in any case. What position is that? The position that he occupied at a moment in his childhood, the one we are trying to pin down on the basis of the fantasy of the straps that are cut and everything connected to them – namely, identifications with his sister and the absence of a pram. Is there something further? The position that he is sure he must have experienced in his childhood, as you will see if you attentively reread his associations. What experience? Him tied down, him being "pinned"* into his bed.

He was certainly held down and constrained in positions that allow us to suspect some suppression of childhood masturbation or, in any case, of experiences that are not unrelated to his first erotogenic emotions, which everything inclines us to think were traumatic.

Sharpe interprets everything the patient mentions about being tied up in the sense of saying that it is certainly in connection with some primal scene involving parental intercourse. This intercourse, she says, must have been interrupted by him, either by crying or by some sort of intestinal trouble. This is where she comes back to the "colicky pain" that replaces the cough at the moment at which he knocks on her door, and that seems to her to be proof of the accuracy of her interpretation [p. 146].

I wouldn't be so sure. What is a "colicky pain," in reality? It is when the subject releases what is inside his body, either as he did when he was little or later when something by way of a transitory symptom was produced, echoing what was occurring in the analysis. It is a form of incontinence. This does not, however, tell us what its function is.

As you know, this incontinence is then reproduced at the urethral level, but with a different function, no doubt. I already said how
274 important it is to note that every instance of bed-wetting echoes the presence of parents who are having sexual relations. Let us be prudent here. It is important to not always give an unequivocal finality to certain effects. An effect can have its own cause and then later be used secondarily by the subject to intervene as a third party in interparental relations in order to disturb them and even interrupt them.

But quite recently – in other words, at a time not far from that of the dream in question – the patient had a rather unusual fantasy which Sharpe takes to solidly confirm the notion that the patient sought to interrupt his parents while they were having intercourse. He was afraid one day that his car, which is clearly ever more identified with him, would break down, and that it would break down in the middle of a road which was to be taken by the royal couple itself. One might believe that this couple was placed there in order to remind us of the game of chess; but, wherever you find the king, think less of the father than of the subject himself.

Be that as it may, the patient manifests a bit of anxiety. [It is as if he thought,] "Don't let my car break down when I have to go to the function at which the royal couple is expected."

The year is 1934, and the British crown is not being worn by a queen who has a mere consort by her side; we are talking about a real king and queen who might be blocked by the patient's car. Should we thus be satisfied with simply saying [as Sharpe seems to], "Here is something that imaginarily, fantastically renews one of the patient's aggressive attitudes, an attitude of rivalry comparable to that which one can attribute to the fact of wetting his bed"? I am not so sure.

If this fantasy should make us think of something, it is the fact that the royal couple is not in just any old place – it is blocked in a car that is stopped and is thus exposed to the gaze of onlookers. What is involved here seems far more akin to the frantic search for the phallus than a minor instance of bed-wetting.

As regards the subject, the phallus is a sort of slippery, darting animal [*furet*] which is nowhere, which one must find, and about which it is clear that one will never find it. The subject is in his car, under this hood, under the top, inside the protective shell that has
275 long been constructed around his ego, and this also gives him the possibility of slipping away with a "peak of speed."

On the other hand, at the moment at which the king and queen are going to be blocked under the roof of their car and thus visible to one and all, they are going to find themselves in the same position

in which we long ago heard the laughter of the Olympians echo. The subject will be in the position of Vulcan who captures Mars and Venus in one and the same net.

Everyone knows that the laughter of the gods who were assembled on that occasion still resounds in our ears and in Homer's verses.

Where is the phallus? It is always the mainspring of comedy.

Let us not forget, after all, that this fantasy [of blocking the royal couple's car] is above all a fantasy that revolves far more directly around a notion of incongruity than of anything else. It is closely connected with what constitutes the unity of the dream with all that surrounds it – namely, the fundamental situation of aphanisis, not in the sense of the disappearance of desire, but in the strict sense that the word deserves if we make the following noun with it: *aphanisos*. It is less "to disappear" than "to make disappear."

Quite recently, a talented writer by the name of Raymond Queneau used the following words as the epigraph to a lovely novel, *Zazie in the Metro*: ο πλασας ηφανισεν, "He who made it, made it disappear"; he carefully hid its mainsprings.

In the final analysis, this is clearly what is at stake. Aphanisis here is the hiding [*escamotage*] of the object in question – namely, the phallus. If the subject cannot accede to the Other's world, it is inasmuch as the phallus is not included in the game, being preserved, instead, on the sidelines.

As you will see, what makes people most neurotic is not the fear of losing the phallus or the fear of castration.

The thoroughly fundamental mainspring of neurosis is not to want the Other to be castrated.

February 11, 1959

SEVEN CLASSES ON *HAMLET*

XIII

IMPOSSIBLE ACTION

Freud on *Hamlet*
A more fundamental framework
Oedipus and Hamlet
The first threads
Ophelia, barometer of desire

I believe that we have taken the structural analysis of the model dream found in Ella Sharpe's book far enough for you to have at least been able to see how important this work is to us, given the path we are trying to follow this year, regarding desire and its interpretation.

Although some of you told me you were unable to figure out in what way I referred to Lewis Carroll in the second-to-last class, I am surprised you did not recall the "double rule of three" I used to organize the two stages of the relationship between the subject and the more or less fetishistic object.

This led in the end to what was expressed as capital I, identification with the Ideal. I intentionally left unanswered what identification boiled down to in the first of the two equations I provided regarding the case, the equation involving his sister's sandals, by writing an x in the place of I.

I do not believe any of you failed to realize that this x was, naturally, the phallus.

$$\frac{\text{his sister}}{\$} \lozenge \frac{\text{straps}}{\text{Phallus}}$$

But what is important here is where the phallus is situated. It is situated precisely in the place of primal identification, I, identification with the mother. This is because the subject did not, in fact,

280 want to deny [*dénier*] his mother the phallus. As psychoanalytic theory has always taught us, subjects want to continue to believe their mothers have a phallus. They refuse the Other's castration.

As I told you, the patient did not want to lose his queen, since it was the game of chess that was at issue. He did not want to put Ella Sharpe into any position but that of the idealized phallus, a position he cautioned her to stay in by giving a "little cough" before entering her consulting room. He instructed her to make certain traces disappear so that he would not in any way have to bring them into play in the analysis.

Regarding the idealized phallus, we will perhaps have the opportunity to return to Lewis Carroll this year. You will see that this is literally what is involved in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*. These two Alice tales are virtually an epic poem of phallic avatars. You can already go ahead and start reading them so that you will be prepared for certain things I may be led to say about them.

Something may have struck you in what I told you and highlighted about the position of Ella Sharpe's patient with respect to the phallus, regarding the opposition between being and having. When I told you that the question that arose for him was that of being, and that he would have had to *be it without having it*, which is how I defined the feminine position, it is impossible that there did not arise in you, regarding this *being and not being the phallus*, an echo that truly forces itself upon us regarding the whole of this particular case study.

It echoes Hamlet's "To be or not to be" which has always been so enigmatic – it has almost become a joke – and which tells a great deal about the style of Hamlet's position.

If we follow this pathway, we will immediately be led to one of the earliest topics of Freud's thought, regarding the way in which the position of desire is organized.

Indeed, it is in the very first edition of the *Traumdeutung* that Freud raised the topic of *Hamlet* to a rank equivalent to that of Oedipus. He had no doubt been thinking about the so-called Oedipus complex for some time by then, as we know from letters he wrote [to Fliess] that were not intended for publication. Oedipus
281 makes his first appearance in print in the *Traumdeutung* in 1900. The footnote regarding *Hamlet* was published at the same time and it was moved into the main body of the text in 1914.

The topic of *Hamlet* was returned to on many occasions after Freud broached it, and I probably will not examine every author who has turned his attention to it. You are aware that Ernest Jones was the first to do so after Freud. Ella Sharpe also formulated a

number of things about *Hamlet* that are not devoid of interest, the study of Shakespeare's work having been at the crux of her training. We will perhaps have the opportunity to come back to this.

I believe that taking up the topic of *Hamlet* can serve to bolster our work here on the castration complex, work that aims to indicate how it is concretely articulated as the work of analysis unfolds.

Today we will begin to clear the ground for such an undertaking.

We will begin by asking ourselves what Freud meant by taking up *Hamlet*, and what is demonstrated by what later authors were able to say about it.

1

Here is Freud's comment on *Hamlet*, which is worth reading at the outset of our study of it. I will give it to you in translation.

Freud has just spoken about the Oedipus complex for the first time, and it is worth pointing out that he introduces it regarding "Dreams of the death of persons of whom the dreamer is fond" [Chapter 5, section d]. The dream that served as our point of departure and first guide this year was chosen by me from another chapter of the *Traumdeutung*, because it was one of the simplest having to do with a dead person.

In talking about it, I highlighted something that initially presented itself quite naturally – namely, three signifiers that were pinpointed by Freud – and showed the relationships among them with the help of the two lines of intersubjectivity, one above the other, each of which doubles the other.

The famous words "he did not know" appear in the dream in a form which is incarnated, in some sense, by the father himself, and in a place which is that of the father. It is the precise fact that the father is unaware [or: unconscious, *inconscient*] that is enunciated in 282
the words "he did not know." The image of the father here incarnates the subject's own unconscious, as well as his unconscious wish for his father's death.

The son has another wish regarding his father, one he is aware of, which is why he can want his father not to become aware of it. It is a sort of well-meaning wish, a wish for a relieving or consoling death. We thus see that the subject's lack of awareness regarding his Oedipal death wish is incarnated, in the dream image, in the form of a wish that the father not know that the son had formulated a well-meaning death wish toward him. "He did not know," the dream says absurdly, "that he was dead." This is where the dream-text ends.

As for the expression "as he wished," which is not included in the dream and is not known to the subject, even if it is known to the fantasized father, Freud tells us that *this* is the signifier that we must consider to be repressed.

Here now is Freud's footnote on *Hamlet*:

> Another of the great creations of tragic poetry, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, has its roots in the same soil as *Oedipus Rex*. But the changed treatment of the same material reveals the whole difference in the mental life of these two widely separated epochs of civilization: the secular advance of repression in the emotional life of mankind. [Lacan comments: "the translation of Freud's term *Gemütsleben* by *vie sentimentale* ("emotional life" here) is approximate."] In the *Oedipus* the child's wishful fantasy [*Wunschphantasie*] that underlies it is brought into the open and realized as it would be in a dream. [SE IV, p. 264]

Freud did, in fact, stress that Oedipal dreams are like offshoots of the unconscious desires that are their primary source and that never stop resurfacing. As for Sophocles' *Oedipus* and other versions of the Oedipus tale in Greek tragedy, they are like the development and fabrication of the unconscious desires that always emerge. This is how things are articulated by Freud verbatim, who tells us that in *Hamlet* the child's desire "remains repressed; and – just as in the case of a neurosis – we only learn of its existence from its *Hemmungswirkungen*, its inhibiting consequences."

> Strangely enough, the overwhelming effect produced by the more modern tragedy has turned out to be compatible with the fact that people have remained completely in the dark as to
283 the hero's character. The play is built up on Hamlet's hesitations over fulfilling the task of revenge that is assigned to him; but its text offers no reasons or motives for these hesitations and an immense variety of attempts at interpreting them have failed to produce a result. According to the view which was originated by Goethe and is still the prevailing one today, Hamlet represents the type of man whose power of direct action is paralyzed by an excessive development of his intellect [*Gedankentätigkeit: "Von des Gedankens Blässe angekränkelt"*]. (He is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.") According to another view, the dramatist has tried to portray a pathologically irresolute character which might be classed as neurasthenic. The plot of the drama shows us, however, that Hamlet is far from being represented as a person incapable of taking any action. We

> see him doing so on two occasions: first in a sudden outburst of temper, when he runs his sword through the eavesdropper behind the arras

– you are aware that this is a reference to Polonius, and that Hamlet kills him while having a talk with his mother that is far from being crucial – nothing in the play is ever crucial, except for its lethal ending, for there, everything that had been put off until then in the nexus of the action accumulates, in the form of cadavers, in a few short moments –

> and secondly in a premeditated and even crafty fashion, when, with all the callousness of a Renaissance prince, he sends the two courtiers [Lacan comments: "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who turn out to be false friends"] to the death that had been planned for himself. What is it, then, that inhibits him in fulfilling the task set him by his father's ghost? [SE IV, pp. 264–5]

You recall that the play opens with the appearance of this ghost on the platform of Elsinore Castle before two guards who soon afterward alert Hamlet to this.

> The answer, once again, is that it is the peculiar nature of the task. Hamlet is able to do anything – except take vengeance on the man who did away with his father and took that father's place with his mother, the man who shows him the repressed wishes of his own childhood realized. Thus the loathing which should drive him on to revenge is replaced in him by self-reproaches, by scruples of conscience, which remind him that he himself is literally no better than the sinner whom he is to punish. Here I have translated into conscious terms what was bound to remain unconscious in Hamlet's mind. [SE IV, p. 265]

Freud's first commentary situates Hamlet's place in such a finely balanced way that it paves, as it were, the straight and narrow way we must simply go down in order to follow his lead. This is altogether clear, so much so that everything contributed by later authors appears to be nothing but so many excursions or embroideries – and, as you will see, sometimes rather farfetched ones – around 284
Freud's initial sketch. It occasionally happens that the points on which these later authors focus, as psychoanalytic theory advances, are valid and confirmed by the play, but it is at the cost of the kind of rigor with which Freud situated the problem right from the outset.

At the same time, I would say that the whole question lies in what is situated by Freud at the level of "scruples of conscience," which is in short the point in his footnote that has been least exploited and investigated.

Since these scruples of conscience are presented to us as being the way in which we can express at the conscious level what remains unconscious in "the hero's character," it seems legitimate all the same to wonder how this is articulated in the unconscious. Scruples of conscience can only be viewed as a symptomatic development. Now one thing is clear, which is that a symptomatic development is not located in the unconscious; it is located in the conscious, constructed in some way by means of defense. We must thus ask ourselves what in the unconscious corresponds to this conscious structure, and this is precisely the question we are going to try to answer.

Be that as it may, we see that it did not take Freud long to throw a first bridge over the abyss that is *Hamlet*. In truth, it is striking that *Hamlet* remained a total literary enigma until Freud came along. Which does not mean that it is no longer an enigma, but we at least have this first bridge. Other works are similarly enigmatic, like Molière's *Misanthrope*.

Let me read you the remainder of the paragraph:

> The distaste for sexuality expressed by Hamlet in his conversation with Ophelia fits in very well with this: the same distaste which was destined to take possession of the poet's mind more and more during the years that followed, and which reached its extreme expression in *Timon of Athens*. [SE IV, p. 265]

I will read you the end of the note too, for in the space of two short sentences, it paves the way for those who have since tried to organize the whole of Shakespeare's work by considering its development as indicative of a personal problem involving repression.
285 One of whom was Ella Sharpe, who did so in her article on *Hamlet* that came out in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* and was republished after her death in the volume of her *Collected Papers*. It was certainly imprudent of her to schematize things in this way; in any case her approach can be criticized from a methodological standpoint, which is not to say that she discovered nothing of value.

Here is a bit more of the footnote:

> For it can of course only be the poet's own mind which confronts us in *Hamlet*. I observe in a book on Shakespeare by Georg Brandes (1896) a statement that *Hamlet* was written

> immediately after the death of Shakespeare's father (in 1601), that is, under the immediate impact of his bereavement and, as we may well assume, while his childhood feelings about his father had been freshly revived. It is known, too, that Shakespeare's own son who died at an early age bore the name of "Hamnet" . . . [SE IV, pp. 265–6]

We can see, in these simple indications, that Freud leaves far behind him what later authors focused on.

I, for one, would like to broach the play on the basis of notions that I have managed to spell out here since the beginning of the year. For I believe they allow us to bring together in a more synthetic and striking way the various mainsprings of what occurs in *Hamlet*.

Thanks to them, we can in some sense simplify the multiplicity of agencies [*instances*] we often find ourselves faced with in current psychoanalytic commentaries, which smack of reduplication, when we see, for example, the same article take up successively the same case, it does not matter which one, in terms of the opposition between the unconscious and defense, then in terms of the opposition between the ego and the id, and, to top it all off, adding everything that can be said when one brings in the superego – these different vantage points never being unified. This tends to give these commentaries a vagueness and excessive weight that makes them of little use to us in our experience.

We try here to develop guides that allow us to resituate the different organs of the mental apparatus, which Freud gave us in the successive stages of his thought, in a way that takes into account the 286
fact that they only partially overlap, semantically speaking.

It is not by putting them all together into one big set that we can make them function properly. We can do so, as it were, only by situating them in a framework that we attempt to make more fundamental, in such a way that we know what we are doing with all these references when we work with them.

Let us thus begin to spell out the great tragedy of *Hamlet*.

2

As evocative as Freud's footnote was, I must nevertheless remind you what the play is about.

It begins shortly after the death of a king who was, as his son Hamlet tells us, truly admirable – an ideal king and father – and who died mysteriously.

The story people were told about his death is that he was bitten by

a snake in an orchard, an "orchard"* that has been interpreted by psychoanalysts. Very soon after his death, Hamlet's mother married her late husband's brother, Claudius. Claudius is execrated by our hero for reasons that go well beyond the rivalry Hamlet may feel toward him for having taken the throne from Hamlet, including everything he suspects regarding the scandalous goings-on that led his uncle to replace his father.

Moreover, the father then appears as a "ghost"* in order to reveal to Hamlet under what conditions the dramatic betrayal occurred, which, as the ghost tells him, was clearly an assassination. While he was sleeping, a poison, mysteriously named "Hebenon,"* was poured into his ear. This passage has obviously excited the curiosity of psychoanalysts.

"Hebenon" is a made-up sort of word. I am not sure whether it is found in any other text. People have tried to find various equivalents for it, and have come up with a word that is close to it in sound:
287 "henbane." It is quite clear that this assassination through the ear could in no way satisfy a toxicologist, and it has led to plenty of interpretations on the part of analysts.

Let us immediately consider something that stands out for us owing to points we have highlighted. Let us use the keys we have developed here, even if it seems to you that the conditions that led to their emergence are ever so peculiar. The fact that they were created for very specific purposes does not rule out the fact that, in accordance with one of the clearest phases of psychoanalytic experience, what is most particular is what has the most universal value.

It is in this sense that the sentence "He did not know he was dead," which I brought out in the analysis of the dream about the dead father, is of fundamental importance. Indeed, keeping the Other in the dark regarding any specific circumstance is absolutely foundational in one's relation to the Other. You are well aware of this, since you are taught that one of the major turning points in a child's soul is the moment at which the child, after having believed that all his thoughts are known to his parents, realizes that it is nothing of the sort.

We should always have qualms about using expressions like "all his thoughts." We are the ones who call them "thoughts"; as for what the subject experiences, these "thoughts" are all there is. All there is is known to his parents, including even his innermost impulses [*mouvements*].

Hence the importance of the moment at which he realizes that the Other may not know. This "not knowing" in the Other is correlated with the very constitution of the subject's unconscious, and it is indispensable that we take this into account. One is, in some

sense, the flip side of the other and perhaps its very foundation. I say "perhaps" because this formulation does not suffice to constitute them as such.

Whatever the case may be, one thing is clear, which serves us as a guide as we broach the tragedy of *Hamlet*. Namely, that we are going to try to refute the historical notion – which is a bit superficial all the same, clearly related to the atmosphere and style of that time – that what we have in *Hamlet* is some sort of modernist tale and that with respect to the incredible stature of Antiquity's writers, Modern writers are but poor degenerates. This is truly a nineteenth-century-type comment, and it is no accident that Freud cites Georg Brandes; we will never know whether Freud was familiar with Nietzsche's work at that time, even if it is probable. But we might find this reference to Modern writers inadequate. Why would Modern writers be more neurotic than those of Antiquity? It is, in any case, a *petitio principii*. What we are trying to articulate should go further than this *petitio principii* or than the simplistic explanation that "things are going to pot because things are going to pot." 288

What we have before us is a work the first threads of which we are going to begin to tease apart.

The first thread in *Hamlet* is that the father quite clearly knows that he is dead as his brother Claudius wished, Claudius having wanted to take his place. The crime is not hidden from him, but from the world, a world that is represented on the stage. This is a crucial point, without which the drama of *Hamlet* could not, of course, even exist.

This point is brought out by Jones, in an article that is easy to lay your hands on, "The Death of Hamlet's Father." Jones mentions there that Shakespeare introduced an essential difference into the original saga in which the king was assassinated in front of everyone, owing to something having to do with his relations with his wife. There, the king was murdered by his brother, but everyone knew it, whereas in *Hamlet* the thing is hidden, but the father knows it. This is what is important. Indeed, it is the father himself who informs us of it.

Horatio comments to Hamlet: "There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave / To tell us this" [I, v, 124–5]. Freud cites this several times, it sounding a bit like a proverb. If it is the Oedipal theme that is, in fact, at work here, we already know quite a bit about it. But when *Hamlet* was written, not much was yet known about it. It is significant that the fable is designed in such a way that the father does know.

This is an absolutely essential element, and it constitutes a major difference in thread with respect to the first major tale, the tragedy

of *Oedipus*. Oedipus does not know. But once he does, once he has discovered everything, the drama moves into high gear, and continues right up to his self-punishment – in other words, his resolving of things. But the Oedipal crime is committed by Oedipus unwittingly
289 [*dans l'inconscience*]. In *Hamlet*, the Oedipal crime is known, and it is known to its victim, a victim who emerges in order to bring it to the subject's awareness [*connaissance*].

You can begin to see the pathway I am following and the method I am adopting.

It is a classical method that proceeds by comparison, comparison of different threads of a structure that is taken to be an articulated whole; and nowhere is there more articulation than in what is located in the realm of the signifier. I never stop highlighting the very notion of articulation, and it is, in short, consubstantial with the signifier. After all, we only speak of articulation in the world because the signifier gives meaning to this term. Otherwise there is nothing but continuity and discontinuity, but no articulation.

We will proceed by a sort of comparison of the homologous threads in the two phases, *Oedipus* and *Hamlet*, just as Freud compares them, and in order to grasp how things cohere. If in one of the two dramas we come across a note that is the exact opposite of that found in the other play, we will try to see if, why, how, and to what degree we find a corresponding modification in it. I assume that bringing out these correlations will lead us to the junction [*joint*] of the kind of causality at work in these two tragedies.

The initial idea is thus that what is most instructive to us are these correlated modifications. Highlighting them and writing them out in a quasi-algebraic way will allow us to group together the signifying mainsprings and make them more or less utilizable.

In the dream about the dead father, we placed "he did not know" on the upper line [of the graph]. In *Hamlet*, we place "he knew he was dead" there, for the father knows he is dead in accordance with the murderous wish, his brother's wish, that led him to his grave.

What is the relationship between Claudius and Hamlet like?

In the psychoanalytic tradition, people always go straight for superimposed identifications. The most convenient concepts being the least developed ones, God only knows where people will stop in their use of these identifications. In the final analysis, we are told that Claudius is a form of Hamlet. What he does is what Hamlet wants to do. This is to jump the gun.

290 Indeed, in order to situate Hamlet's position with respect to his desire, we are obliged to bring in the "scruples of conscience." This gives rise, in the relationship between Hamlet and Claudius, to a twofold position that is profoundly ambivalent. If Hamlet relates to

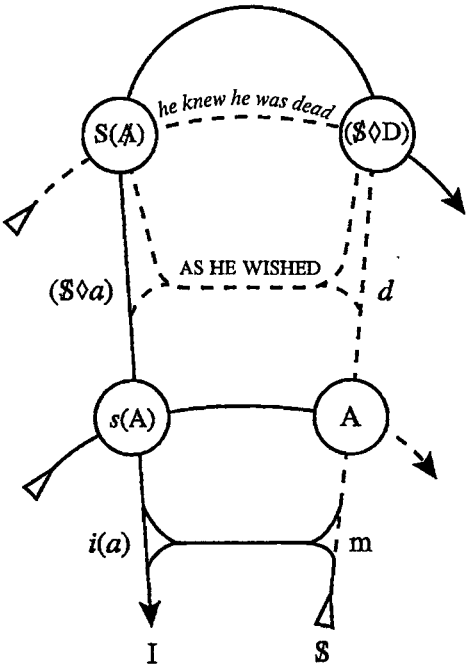

Figure 13.1: The "He knew" in *Hamlet*

Claudius as a rival, we see that this rivalry is quite odd and at one remove, because Claudius is also in reality he who has done what Hamlet would not have dared to do. Because of that, Claudius is surrounded by some sort of mysterious protective shield that we must strive to define.

If Hamlet leaves him unscathed, it is because, we are told, of his scruples of conscience. But how much weight do they carry with respect to what is forced on him once the ghost* has literally ordered him to take revenge on Claudius for him? From the moment of this initial encounter, Hamlet, in order to take action against his father's murderer, who is also the usurper who dispossessed him, is armed with all the necessary feelings – a feeling of having been usurped, of rivalry, and of vengeance – as well as with the explicit order received from a father who is above all admired. 291
Surely, everything in Hamlet is aligned for him to act, and yet he does not act.

This is obviously where the problem begins.

To move in the direction of solving it, we must arm ourselves with the greatest simplicity; I mean that we are always led astray when we employ ready-made keys instead of really grappling with

the question. Freud tells us that Hamlet's scruples of conscience are the conscious representation of something that is articulated in the unconscious. So what we have to do is find what this unconscious desire means. And we can already say with Freud that, given the way things begin, there is clearly something wrong with Hamlet's desire.

It is here that we are going to select our pathway, which is not easy, as we are not much further along than those who went before us.

What we are going to do is take the tragedy as a whole and consider how Hamlet conducts himself throughout it.

3

Since we have spoken about Hamlet's desire, we must situate his fantasy, inasmuch as fantasy is for us the axis, soul, center, and touchstone of desire.

Analysts have, naturally, looked into this, but they have confined their attention to the relations between Hamlet and the *conscious* object of his desire, about which Shakespeare cannot be said to withhold details from us. But that is not exactly it; that is perhaps not in the same register as fantasy.

In the play, we have a sort of barometer of Hamlet's position with regard to desire. We have it most obviously and clearly in the form of the character Ophelia.

Ophelia is quite obviously one of the most fascinating creations that has ever been offered up to human imagination. It is remarkable to see what we might call the drama of the female object – the drama of desire, such as it appears at the beginning of a civiliza-
292 tion in the form of Helen [of Troy] – incarnated in the drama and misfortune of Ophelia, which is perhaps also a culmination. As you know, this drama has been taken up in many forms by artists, whether poets or painters, at least in the pre-Raphaelite era, who went so far as to provide us with polished paintings in which we find the very same terms as those provided by Shakespeare regarding Ophelia floating in her dress down the river into which she, in her madness, allowed herself to slip – for Ophelia's suicide is ambiguous [see Plate 1].

Freud tells us that we see in the play, correlated with what we might strictly speaking call the main drama, a horror of femininity as such, whose terms are articulated, in the strictest sense of the word, by Hamlet himself. For he throws in Ophelia's face all the degrading, fickle, and corrupting possibilities linked to the unfolding of women's lives when they allow themselves to be dragged into

all the acts that little by little make them into mothers – in the name of which Hamlet pushes Ophelia away in what seems to be a most sarcastic and cruel way.

There is an essential correlation between the development of Hamlet's position with respect to Ophelia and what determines his overall position with respect to desire.

Let us note in passing that we are presented with an interpretation of this development by a wild, amateur psychoanalyst: Polonius, Ophelia's father. He immediately locates the cause of Hamlet's melancholia. According to Polonius, the problem is that although Hamlet wrote love letters to Ophelia, she responded sharply to them, following instructions that Polonius gave her, he adhering solely to his duty as a father. Stated otherwise, Polonius believes that Hamlet is lovesick. One can always find an easy, external interpretation of events; and Polonius, who is quite a caricature of a character, is there to represent for us the ironic outcome this easy approach deserves.

Although the change in Hamlet's sexual position is profound and altogether crucial, no one doubts but that it is organized somewhat differently. What is involved naturally concerns the relation between Hamlet and what? His action, essentially. Hamlet needs to take action and his entire position as a subject [or: subject position, *position de sujet*] depends upon it.

We see, quite precisely, throughout this play that Hamlet is fundamentally in a position, with respect to action, that the English language designates with a word that is far more often used in 293
English than in French: procrastinating. In French we would say *ajournement* (putting off) or *retardement* (delaying). Indeed, this is what is involved: Hamlet procrastinates, and he does so throughout the play, making it the procrastination play *par excellence*.

We want to know both what it means that whenever he has the opportunity to take the action in question, he puts it off, and what is determinant at the end when he finally takes the plunge. The question that arises is that of the signification of the action he is expected to take. This is the point to be brought out regarding procrastination, at least in this case.

What I have already pointed out to you indicates this adequately: the action Hamlet is expected to take has nothing to do with an Oedipal action – namely, revolt against his father or conflict with his father, in the sense that it is creative in the psyche.

Hamlet's action is not the same as that of Oedipus. Oedipus' action sustained Oedipus' life. It made him into the hero he was prior to his fall, while he knew nothing. It gave the story's conclusion its dramatic character. Hamlet, on the other hand, knows that

he is guilty for being. It is unbearable to him to be. Well before the beginning of the drama, Hamlet knows what it means to have committed the crime of existing. It is on the basis of this beginning that he finds himself faced with a choice, a choice in which the problem of existence arises in his own terms – namely, "To be, or not to be,"* which irremediably involves him in being, as he quite clearly articulates.

It is precisely because, in *Hamlet*, the Oedipal drama is there at the beginning and not at the end that a choice is offered to the hero between *being* and *not being*. The very fact that there is this *either/or* proves that he is caught up in the signifying chain, in what makes it such that he is in any case a victim of this choice.

Let me read the passage to you [Lacan reads aloud part of Letourneur's eighteenth-century translation, which he considers to be the best translation of *Hamlet* into French]:

To be, or not to be – that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep –
294 No more – and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to . . .

I believe these words are intended to have an impact on us.

To die, to sleep –
To sleep – perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil

– "This mortal coil"* is not exactly our envelope, but rather the sort of twist of something that is wrapped around us –

Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? [III, i, 56–76]

What does Hamlet find himself faced with when the question "To be, or not to be" arises? He must confront the place occupied by what his father told him. And what his father told him as a ghost is that he was taken by surprise "in the blossoms of [his] sin" [I, v, 76]. The son must deal with the place occupied by the Other's sin, a sin that was not redeemed [*payé*] by the Other.

The one who knows here [the father] is someone who has not paid [*payé*] for the crime of existing, unlike Oedipus who paid for a crime he did not know he had committed. The consequences for the next generation are not inconsequential, moreover, since Oedipus' two sons dream only of killing each other with all the vigor and conviction one might desire. Things are altogether different in Hamlet's case.

Hamlet can neither pay in his father's stead nor leave the debt unpaid. In the final analysis, he must get the debt paid, but, in the conditions in which he finds himself, the blow strikes him. Following a dark plot, which we will discuss at length, it is only after Hamlet has been wounded that he can strike, with the very weapon from which he has received his mortal wound, the criminal who is there within range – namely, Claudius.

The mainspring that constitutes the whole difficulty of the problem Hamlet faces in assuming responsibility for his action [*assumer son acte*], is the fact that both the father and son know – for both of them, their eyes have been opened. We want to figure out by what pathways Hamlet can take action. What are the roundabout pathways that will render possible an action that is in itself impossible, owing to the fact that the Other knows? What are the pathways that will finally allow Hamlet to accomplish what must be accomplished? 295

These are the pathways that must hold our interest; they are the ones that we will find instructive.

This is the true problem that needed to be introduced today.

I must mention the end of the play, and point out to you how Hamlet finally manages to take action. Let us not forget that, although he manages to do so and although Claudius is struck dead at the end, the job has nevertheless been seriously botched.

Hamlet has had to do nothing less than run through someone whom he certainly cast into the abyss, as you will see – namely, his friend and companion Laertes. Just before that, his mother accidentally poisoned herself with the very goblet that was supposed to have served as a backup murder weapon in case the poisoned tip of the foil did not touch Hamlet. It is only after a number of other victims have fallen, and not before having been dealt a mortal blow himself, that Hamlet can stab Claudius.

Even though he does run him through, even though a sort of rectification of desire occurs *in extremis* that makes it possible for him to act, there is nevertheless something here that raises a question for us. How was the act accomplished? The key, what makes it such that this incredible play has never been replaced by another, better one, bears precisely on this point.

For, in short, what are these great mythical themes that creative poets have been testing their mettle against throughout the ages? This long series of variations for centuries upon centuries is nothing but a sort of long approximation that is such that the myth, whose every possibility has been exploited, ends up by entering, strictly speaking, into our subjectivity and psychology. I maintain, and I will unambiguously maintain – and in doing so, I believe that I am
296 following in Freud's footsteps – that poetic creations generate psychological creations more than they reflect them.

. The primordial relationship of rivalry between son and father has always had something diffuse about it. As taken up by Shakespeare, this is what gives *Hamlet* its depth and constitutes its veritable crux.

It is precisely because something – namely, castration – is missing in the original, initial situation of the drama of *Hamlet*, insofar as it is distinct from that of Oedipus, that things present themselves in the play in the form of a slow zigzagging progression, following many a detour, a slow birthing of the necessary castration.

It is precisely because something finally becomes equivalent to what was missing, because something finally is realized, that Hamlet takes the final action to which he succumbs. Things having gone so far that he cannot live on, others, like Fortinbras, who are always ready to receive an inheritance, will succeed him.

March 4, 1959

XIV

THE DESIRE TRAP

Myriad commentaries
A bird catcher's net
The unfolding of the play
The "play scene"*
The key point

Last time we began working on *Hamlet*.

Our turning to *Hamlet* was no accident, even if I told you that it came up owing to the formulation "to be or not to be" that forced itself on me as we examined the dream recounted by Ella Sharpe.

I was led to reread some of what has been written about *Hamlet* by psychoanalysts and also by certain authors who wrote about it prior to them. And since these various writers, at least the best among them, never fail to mention those who had written about *Hamlet* well before themselves, I must say that I was led quite far, and even got lost along the way now and then, not without pleasure.

A problem arises here, that of how to bring all this material together in relation to our precise goal, which is to give meaning, or at least new meaning, to the function of desire in psychoanalysis and in analytic interpretation. It should not give us too much trouble, however, because what distinguishes the tragedy of *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, as I hope to convince you, is essentially that it is the tragedy of desire.

Hamlet must have been performed for the first time in London during the 1601 winter season, although that is not entirely clear; yet it is what the most rigorous texts suggest. The famous first quarto edition of the text at the time was virtually a "pirate" edition, for it had not been reviewed by the author, but had been borrowed from what were known as "prompt-books,"* booklets used by onstage prompters. This edition – it is quite amusing to know these little tidbits of literary history – remained unknown until 1823 when

298 someone finally got his hands on one of these grimy copies, grimy because they were handled a great deal, probably having been used during performances. The First Folio edition, the main edition of Shakespeare's work, did not start coming out until after his death in 1623, prior to the still larger edition in which the plays are divided into acts; this explains the fact that the division into acts is far less decisive and clear in Shakespeare's plays than in those by other authors. In fact, it is not thought that Shakespeare ever dreamt of dividing his plays into five acts. This is of some importance, because we shall see how *Hamlet* is divided up.

The winter of 1601 was two years before the death of Queen Elizabeth, and we can view the turning point that *Hamlet* marks between the two periods of Shakespeare's life as approximately repeating, as it were, the drama related to the transition between two eras in the kingdom, for the tone changes completely when James I takes the throne. Something is already announced, as a certain author once put it, that breaks the crystalline charm of the reign of Elizabeth I, the "Virgin Queen," who had managed to procure many long miraculous years of peace following what constituted in the history of England, as in many other countries, a period of chaos – chaos into which England promptly fell anew, with the whole drama of the Puritan revolution.

In short, 1601 already announces the death of the Queen, which obviously could not have been foreseen, with the execution of her lover, [Robert Devereux, the second] Earl of Essex; this took place the same year as the first performance of the play. These historical reference points are not irrelevant, and I am not the only one who has tried to situate *Hamlet* in its historical context. But none of what I just told you is highlighted by any psychoanalytic writers, even though such reference points are quite important.

In truth, what has been written about *Hamlet* by psychoanalytic authors can hardly be qualified as enlightening. But today I will not critique what a certain type of analytic interpretation degenerates into when it takes up *Hamlet* line by line. I have been trying to find something of interest in it, but, as a matter of fact, one can say nothing about it except that the more writers adopt this line-by-line approach, the more their understanding of the whole text and of its coherence dissipates.

I must say, too, about our Ella Sharpe, whom I make much of,
299 that in her paper* on *Hamlet* – which was, it is true, unfinished,* having been discovered after her death – she greatly disappointed me. I will nevertheless discuss her paper because it is indicative. It so closely follows the exact same trend that we see dominating psychoanalytic theory, a trend I have been led to explain and critique,

that it is worth highlighting. Nevertheless, we are not going to begin with her paper.

We are going to begin with Jones's article published in 1910, which marks an important date in psychoanalytic history; it is a must-read. It came out in the *American Journal of Psychology* [XXI, 1 (1910): 72–113] and is not easy to get your hands on currently. In a small re-edition he brought out, Jones, I believe, added a few things to his theory of *Hamlet*. The article is entitled "The Oedipus Complex as an Explanation of Hamlet's Mystery: A Study in Motive."

In it, Jones takes up the problem masterfully posed by Freud in the course of the half-page I read you last time, and about which we can say, in the final analysis, that everything is already there, since even distant points on the horizon are already sketched out – namely, the problematic signification of the female object for Shakespeare. This is, I think, absolutely central.

Freud mentioned *Timon of Athens*, which is why Ella Sharpe tried to explore that particular connection. She turned all of Shakespeare's work into a sort of vast cyclothymic oscillation, distinguishing the rising pieces – in other words, the ones we might consider to be optimistic, those in which aggression is directed toward the outside world – from those of the descending phase in which aggression strikes the hero or the poet. This is, according to her, how we can classify Shakespeare's plays and sometimes even date them. I do not believe this is altogether valid.

For the time being, and given where we are at, we will confine our attention to *Hamlet*. I will perhaps make a few points about what follows or precedes it, about *Twelfth Night* or *Troilus and Cressida*, for it is almost impossible, I believe, not to take them into account, given to how great a degree they clarify the problems that we are going to first bring up in connection with *Hamlet* alone.

1

300

With his grand style of documentation and the solidity that characterizes his writings and highly distinguishes his contributions, Ernest Jones provides a sort of summary of what he quite rightly calls "Hamlet's mystery."

Now either you realize the magnitude of the question or you do not. For those who do not, I am not going to repeat here what we find in Jones's article. Look into it yourselves in one way or another.

I must tell you that the mass of writings on *Hamlet* is unequaled. The abundance of literature on the play is nothing short of incredible. More incredible still is the extraordinary range of

interpretations that have been given of it. The most contradictory interpretations have followed one another, having been rolled out in the course of history, posing a problem about the problem – namely, why is everybody trying so hard to understand something in it?

These interpretations provide the most varied, incoherent, and extravagant results, yet we cannot say that they go too far.

Just about everything has been said about *Hamlet*. To give you an extreme example, there is even something called *Popular Science Monthly* – which must be some sort of popularizing publication on more or less medical topics – that published in 1880 an article entitled "The Impediment of Adipose [: A Celebrated Case]." In it we are told that Hamlet is fat and out of breath at the end of the play, and there is a whole discussion of Hamlet's adipose. [By way of a second extreme example,] someone by the name of Vining revealed in 1881 that Hamlet was a woman disguised as a man, whose goal throughout the play was to seduce Horatio, and it was in order to win Horatio's heart that Hamlet did everything he did. It makes for rather nice reading and I cannot even say that it is of absolutely no interest to us, for it is clear that Hamlet's relations with other men are closely related to the problem posed by the play.

Returning to serious matters, let us recall with Jones that critics have tended to go in one of two directions. And when there are two directions in logic, there is always a third [or: middle, *tiers*] one, for,
301 as opposed to what we tend to think, the middle is not as excluded as all that. And it is obviously the middle one that is interesting in this case.

The two different directions have been sustained by some pretty hard hitters.

The first includes those who have explored Hamlet's psychology. They obviously take precedence; they must be given pride of place in our esteem. We find here Goethe, and Coleridge, too, who in his *Lectures on Shakespeare* adopted a highly distinctive stance that I think Jones could have made more of. Jones, curiously enough, primarily provides an extraordinarily in-depth commentary on works on *Hamlet* in German, which proliferated and were even very long-winded. Even though they are not identical, the stances adopted by Goethe and Coleridge are nevertheless closely related, for both of them emphasize Hamlet's intellect.

Schematically put, let us say that, according to Goethe, Hamlet is action paralyzed by thought. As we know, this conception has had many adherents over the centuries. People have pointed out, and not irrelevantly, of course, that Hamlet had lived for a bit too long in Wittenberg; this has led some people to attribute his intellectual problems to too great a familiarity with what is depicted to us, not

unjustifiably, as one of the centers where young German students receive a certain kind of education. From this perspective, Hamlet is, in short, a man who sees all the elements of the game of life, all its complexities and motives, and whose ability to take action is, owing to this knowledge, suspended and paralyzed. This is, strictly speaking, a Goethean problematic, and it did not fail to become quite influential, owing especially to the charm and seductiveness of Goethe's style and personality.

Coleridge goes in the same direction. I do not have time to read you a long passage – one that is far less sociological and far more psychological in nature, indeed it is a brilliant bit of psychology – that he devotes to Hamlet's psychasthenic character; to his inability to select a path and, once selected, to truly commit to it; and to his hesitation between multiple motives. What I would like to mention is a comment Coleridge makes in passing, in his easy conversational style, that in my view goes right to the quick: "I have a smack of Hamlet myself, if I may say so."

Coleridge recognizes himself in Hamlet and he is not the only writer to do so. One can find a similar remark in the work of a 302
quasi-contemporary of ours who wrote some incredible things in his *Essays on Shakespeare*. I am referring to Hazlitt, who is not even mentioned by Jones – wrongly so, for he wrote the most remarkable things on the topic at the time.

Coleridge goes further still when he says that, in the final analysis, this tragedy has been examined so often that we barely know how to discuss it anymore, no more than we would know how to describe our own faces. He provides another note that goes in the same general direction, and these are lines that I will make much of.

I will only briefly mention the second direction, the one that attributes Hamlet's bind [*embarras*] to an external difficulty – that is, to a problem that comes from the outside.

This conception was developed by a set of German literary critics; the two main critics here, Klein and Werder, were late nineteenth-century Berliners, and Jones rightly groups them together. According to these critics, the task Hamlet undertook was to get his people to recognize Claudius' guilt, Claudius having killed Hamlet's father, married his mother, and usurped the throne of Denmark. This conception does not stand up to scrutiny, however, for the difficulties Hamlet supposedly has in carrying out his task – in either of two ways, either in getting Claudius' guilt recognized before killing him, or in first murdering him and then justifying it afterward – are very easily dissipated just by reading the text, for in it Hamlet never asks himself this sort of question.

His purpose is to take revenge for his father on the person who

murdered him and who at the same time seized the throne and the father's wife, whom the father loved more than anything else. These crimes must be atoned for through the most violent action: murder. Not only is this purpose never called into question by Hamlet, but I will read you passages in which he calls himself a coward, while frothing at the mouth onstage, despairing of ever being able to decide to take action. He never doubts this purpose for even a moment. He does not call the validity of this task into question in the slightest.

At the same period, there was a writer named Loening, whom Jones makes much of, who decisively critiqued the theories put forward by Klein and Werder. Let me mention in passing that Jones gives Loening very high praise. He mentions several of Loening's remarks that appear to me to be very insightful indeed.

303 But none of this is terribly important, since this approach is no longer germane from the moment we consider the third direction, the one Jones associates with psychoanalysis. The deliberateness with which I am laying all of this out is necessary, as these earlier views constitute the backdrop against which the mystery of *Hamlet* presents itself to us.

The third conception is as follows: although Hamlet does not doubt even for an instant that he must accomplish this task, for some reason unknown to himself this task disgusts him. In other words, the difficulty resides in the task itself, not in the subject or in what is supposedly happening in the outside world (needless to say, as regards the direction that plays up the outside world, there are versions that are far more subtle than the one I mentioned earlier). It is the task itself that is posited as essentially problematic.

Such is the very solid way in which Jones situates the psychoanalytic perspective on *Hamlet*, and it should serve us as a lesson in method.

Jones shows, moreover, that the notion of an internal contradiction in the task itself was not invented by psychoanalysts; it was already mentioned by Loening, if we are to lend credence to the quotes from his work that Jones provides, and by a certain number of other authors as well. These authors clearly saw that we can grasp the problematic, conflictual nature of the task from certain signs whose clear character no one needed psychoanalysis to notice: namely, the myriad different, self-contradictory, and inconsistent reasons Hamlet gives for deferring the task, for not carrying it out when the opportunity presents itself. Long before psychoanalysis, psychologists had already noticed the superstructural, rationalized, and rationalizing nature of the reasons Hamlet gives, and Jones brings this out very clearly.

Yet the question is to figure out wherein lies the conflict. Those who have written in this vein allow us to glimpse that there is something that presents itself on the surface, and then a sort of underlying difficulty which – although it is not, strictly speaking, articulated as unconscious – is considered to be deeper and partially uncontrolled, not completely elucidated or perceived by the subject. Jones critiques their theories with the considerable know-how we generally find in his articles, which played a considerable role in getting the notion of the unconscious itself accepted by a broad swath of intellectuals.

On the one hand, Jones knows how to powerfully articulate what 304
these authors, some of whom are quite subtle, have argued to be the underlying motives that are blocking Hamlet's action. They have, for example, mentioned a juridical motive – namely, whether or not he has the right to do what he is asked to do. Lord knows that these German authors made no bones about appealing to all sorts of registers, all of this having taken place in a highly Hegelian era. On the other hand, Jones can blithely wax ironic on this score, for he convincingly shows that the unconscious mainspring has nothing to do with motives of a lofty or highly abstract kind, related to morality, the State, or Absolute Knowledge, but that there must be something far more radical and concrete at work.

It was around 1909 that Freud's ideas first began to make it to America, and Jones decided to write and publish an account of Freud's theory of dreams, as we find it in his well-known lectures at Clark University that were first published in English, if memory serves me well.

But what we are concerned with here is Jones's study of *Hamlet* that he publishes in 1910, a study that is designed to lead us to the following conclusion: "We thus reach the apparent paradox that the hero, the poet, and the audience are all profoundly moved by feelings due to a conflict of the source of which they are unaware" ["The Oedipus Complex as an Explanation of Hamlet's Mystery," p. 86]. Even though this does not seem terribly substantial, it should not stop us from realizing that Jones's analysis of *Hamlet* truly goes as far as anyone could have gone at that point in time, I believe, in bringing out what we might call the mythical structure of the Oedipus complex in the unfolding of the drama.

[On the topic of myth,] I must say that we are not all so enlightened as to be able to laugh unconcernedly when we see Hamlet associated with all kinds of people, including Telesphorus, Amphion, Moses, Pharaoh, Zoroaster, Jesus, and Herod, everyone being lumped together in the same package. Around 1900, two authors published an article entitled "Hamlet in Iran" in a well-known journal, in

which they relate the myth of *Hamlet* to Iranian myths of the legend of Pyrrhus, about which another writer made a great deal in an unknown, inaccessible journal. It is essential to remark what sort of plunge has been taken at this level, even if I am not saying that it is the only one possible.

Indeed, although a psychological approach to the case of Hamlet preceded the birth of psychoanalysis, as I mentioned, the first
305 psychoanalytic step consisted in transforming the psychological approach, not by referring to some deeper form of psychology but by referring to a mythical structure that is assumed to have the same meaning for all human beings.

Nevertheless, something more is necessary, for *Hamlet* is not, after all, the Pyrrhus saga, stories about Cyrus with Cambyses, or about Perseus and his grandfather Acrisius.

It is something else. And we are going to see what that something is.

2

It is not just because there have been myriad commentaries on *Hamlet* that we are talking about it.

The French can, in the end, have no real idea what *Hamlet* is about because, owing to something quite odd, I think I can say, based on my own experience, it cannot be performed in French. I have never seen a good staging of *Hamlet* in French, nor have I ever seen any French actor capable of playing the part of Hamlet or even a French version of the text that was comprehensible.

For those of you who read the text in English, it knocks your socks off, bowls you over, and is altogether unimaginable! There is not a single line or reply in the English text of *Hamlet* that does not hit you with a force and violence that makes the play absolutely stupefying at every moment. One imagines that it must have just been written, that it could not have been written three centuries ago.

In England, where the play is performed in English, a performance of *Hamlet* is always a major event. I would go even further, because, after all, one cannot gauge the audience's psychological tension if not at the box office. I will say what it is like for the actors, which is doubly instructive.

First of all, it is altogether clear that to be cast as Hamlet is, for a British actor, the crowning moment of his career. When it is not the crowning moment, it is nevertheless after having acted in the play that he wishes to retire happily by giving his farewell performance, even if his role was nothing but that of the first gravedigger. There

is something important here, and we will have to figure out what it means, for I am not mentioning it at random.

Secondly, there is something curious, which is that, in the end, 306
when a British actor manages to get the part of Hamlet, he plays the role well – indeed, they all play it well. Stranger still is the fact that people talk about this or that actor's Hamlet. There are as many Hamlets as there are great actors. People still talk about Garrick's Hamlet, Kean's Hamlet, and so on. This is also extraordinarily instructive.

If there are as many Hamlets as there are great actors, I believe that it is for a reason analogous to the one that makes every performance of the play into a major event and generates such an enormous mass of commentary. It is not the same reason, because it is not same thing to play the role of Hamlet as it is to be interested in it as a spectator or critic. But all this converges on the fact that we can, in the end, believe that if this is the way it is, it is because of the structure of the problem that *Hamlet* itself poses regarding desire.

My thesis here, which I will ask you to consider, is that *Hamlet* brings out the different levels, indeed the very framework that I am trying to present to you here, the framework in which desire is situated. The place of desire is so excellently and exceptionally articulated in *Hamlet* that everybody, I would say, recognizes himself in it. The structure of the play is a type of network or bird catcher's net in which man's desire is caught. And his desire is essentially articulated there in the coordinates that Freud reveals to us – namely, in connection with the Oedipus complex and castration.

This nevertheless assumes that *Hamlet* is not simply another edition or version of the eternal, typical drama or conflict, that of the hero's struggle against the father, the tyrant, the good or bad father. Shakespeare takes things so far that the way in which the fundamental structure of the eternal saga, found over and over since the beginning of time, presents itself is profoundly modified.

Here I am sketching out points that I will fill in later.

The coordinates of this conflict are modified by Shakespeare in such a way as to be able to bring out how, under certain atypical conditions, the problem of desire is played out, in its most essentially problematic nature, inasmuch as man is not simply invested or possessed by it, but must situate or find this desire – and find it at 307
the greatest personal cost and suffering, so much so that he can find it only *in extremis*, namely in an action that can only be completed or realized for him on condition that it be lethal.

This incites us to examine the unfolding of the play more closely. I do not want to draw this out interminably, but I must nevertheless bring out the most salient features.

Act I concerns what one might call the presentation of the problem. And here, at the point of intersection, accumulation, and confusion around which the play revolves, we must nevertheless come back to something simple, which is the text. You are going to see that its composition is worth keeping in mind, for it is not something amorphous that wanders off in one direction and then in another.

As you will see, the play begins with a changing of the guard on the platform of Elsinore Castle, and I must say that it is one of the most masterful openings of all of Shakespeare's plays. Not all of them are as masterful from the very moment the curtain rises.

The guard changes at midnight and there are some very cute, striking things in the text. For example, it is the guard who comes to relieve the others who asks "Who's there?" whereas it should be the other way around. Indeed, everything happens abnormally, they are all anxiety-ridden by something they are expecting, and this something only takes forty lines to show up.

Although it is midnight when the changing of the guard occurs, one o'clock sounds from a bell when the ghost appears. And from the moment at which the ghost appears, things move very quickly, but the action is interspersed with rather curious moments of stagnation.

Immediately thereafter, there is a scene in which the king and queen appear, and the king says that it is high time to set aside our mourning; [it is as if he were saying,] "We can cry with one eye but let us laugh with the other" ["With an auspicious and a dropping eye"; I, ii, 11]. Hamlet, who is there, shows how revolted he is by the swiftness of his mother's remarriage and the fact that she married someone who, compared to his father, is totally inferior in character.

At every moment, we see in Hamlet's words an exaltation of his father as a being on whom, as he says later,

> every god did seem to set his seal
> To give the world assurance of a man. [III, iv, 62–3].

308 It is quite a bit later in the play that this sentence is announced by Hamlet, but he expresses similar sentiments right from this early scene.

Hamlet presents himself as having the sense that he has been betrayed and brought down by his mother's conduct – namely, her hasty remarriage, two months, as we are told, after her husband's death. We find this in the famous dialogue with Horatio:

> Thrift, thrift, Horatio. The funeral baked meats
> Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables. [I, ii, 180–1]

I need not remind you of these well-known facts.

In Scene 3, Ophelia and her father Polonius are introduced in connection with a rebuke that Laertes makes to his sister Ophelia, the young girl Hamlet was in love with, as he tells us himself, and whom he is currently repelling sarcastically, given the state he is in. People have rightly wanted to attribute an important role to Laertes with respect to Hamlet in the mythical unfolding of the story, and we will come back to this. Polonius and Laertes successively lecture the unhappy Ophelia about the importance of being prudent and warn her to be wary of Hamlet.

Scenes 4 and 5 bring us the encounter between Hamlet, who has been joined on the platform of Elsinore Castle by Horatio, and his father's ghost. In this encounter Hamlet shows himself to be courageous and impassioned, for he does not hesitate to follow the ghost off to one side and have a rather horrifying conversation with him. Let me underscore the fact that its horrifying nature is articulated by the ghost himself; he cannot reveal to Hamlet the horrible, abominable place where he lives and all that he suffers there, for his son's mortal organs could not bear it. And he gives him an order or command.

It is interesting to immediately note that the command consists of the following: that, however he decides to do it, Hamlet must put an end to the queen's scandalous lust and, moreover, in doing so, he must restrain his own thoughts and feelings – he must not let himself indulge in excessive thoughts about his mother.

Although certain writers have made much of a sort of problematic backdrop in the orders given to Hamlet by the ghost, since the ghost warns the son that he must not trust himself in his relations with his mother, it seems that none of them have pointed out the decisive point – namely that, despite the horrible accusations that are 309
categorically pronounced by the ghost against Claudius, the ghost revealing to Hamlet that he was killed by Claudius, the question to be resolved does not concern the assassin but rather, essentially, already, and immediately, the mother. The order given by the ghost* is not in itself an order. What it enunciates immediately brings to the fore the mother's desire [or: desire for the mother, *le désir de la mère*] as such. This point is absolutely essential and we shall return to it.

Act II is taken up with what we might call the organization of surveillance around Hamlet. We have a sort of prodrome in the guise of the instructions that Polonius, the Lord Chamberlain, gives someone concerning the surveillance of his own son, Laertes, who has left for Paris. It is rather amusing and it shows how the group including Polonius, Laertes, and Ophelia duplicates the one including Claudius, Hamlet, and the queen.

Polonius explains to his henchman how he must proceed in informing him about his son. We have here a purple passage on the *eternal truths about police work* that I need not go into [II, i, beginning]. Then we have the arrival, which had been announced in the first act, of Guildenstern and Rosencrantz.

They are not simply the puffed-up characters people think they are. They are former friends of Hamlet's. And Hamlet, who mistrusts them, makes fun of them, rails them, undoes them, and plays an extremely subtle game with them under the cover of madness – we shall see what Hamlet's madness or pseudo-madness means, for it has raised questions – clearly appeals to their former friendship at one moment, with a tone that would be worth highlighting if we had the time.

This tone proves that Hamlet appeals to them without having any confidence in them, and that he does not for even a second drop the ruse or game he is playing with them. Nevertheless, there is a moment at which he is able to speak to them in a certain tone of voice. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, in coming to sound him out, are working for the king, and Hamlet senses this. He encourages them to admit to him that they were sent to him, asking them what it is they have come to do. And his friends are sufficiently shaken up for one of them to ask the other, "What say you?" [II, ii, 286]. But nothing comes of this, and things unfold in such a way that the
310 wall between them never comes down. That would have unraveled a situation that, from one end to the other, seems to be inextricably knotted up.

At that moment, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern present the actors they have met on their way to see Hamlet and whom Hamlet knows. Hamlet has always been interested in theater and he welcomes these actors in a remarkable way.

Here, too, we must read the first samples they give him of their talent. Hamlet asks them to recite a passage from the tragedy in which Aeneas recounts the end of Troy and the killing of Priam. We have here a lovely scene in English in which we see Pyrrhus hang a dagger over Priam and remain there:

> So as a painted tyrant Pyrrhus stood,
> And like a neutral to his will and matter
> Did nothing. [II, ii, 468–70]

As doing nothing is one of the fundamental themes of the play, it is worth mentioning that it is first presented in this image and by means of actors. This is what is going to give Hamlet the idea of using the actors in the scene that constitutes the body of the third

act – this is absolutely essential – a scene that the English have a fixed term for, "the play scene"* or "play-within-the-play scene."*

Hamlet concludes:

. . . The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. [II, ii, 590–1]

This rhyme, like the sound of cymbals, puts an end to a long tirade by Hamlet that is entirely written, let me point out, in blank verse.

It is of great introductory value, since this is where the second act ends and the third begins, the one in which the play scene occurs.

The play scene is essential and we are going to examine it now.

3

311

What precedes what I called "the sound of cymbals," namely Hamlet's solitary monologue onstage, shows us the violence both of Hamlet's feelings toward Claudius and of the accusations he levels at himself:

. . . Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' th' throat
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha! [II, ii, 556–61]

This gives us the general style of the play, which knocks our socks off. And right after that, Hamlet talks about his current stepfather:

'Swounds, I should take it, for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should ha' fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal. [II, ii, 561–5]

We spoke about "kites"* when we discussed Freud's essay "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood" [1910]. A kite is a kind of bird. Hamlet is talking about his stepfather as if he were a slave being offered up as a victim to the Muses. And here begins a whole series of insults:

> . . . Bloody, bawdy villain!
> Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain! [II, ii, 565–6]

The important point here is that these insults are addressed both to the person designated by the context – namely, Claudius – and to Hamlet himself. This is the culminating moment of the second act.

Now what constitutes the crux of Hamlet's despair is that he saw the actor, who was playing the part of Aeneas, crying as he described the sad fate of Hecuba, before whom her husband Priam was carved up into little pieces:

> When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
> In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs. [II, ii, 501–2]

Indeed, after not having budged for a long time, with his dagger poised above Priam, Pyrrhus takes a malicious pleasure, as the text tells us, in cutting up Priam's body in front of this woman who is described quite well, wrapping some sort of blanket around his raw-boned flanks.

The theme of the passage is that, despite the actor's crying, paleness, and broken voice in speaking about Hecuba, Hecuba is nothing to this actor. Thus there are people who can arrive at this high pitch of emotion for something that in no wise concerns them. This is what triggers Hamlet's despair, he feeling nothing of the sort.

One cannot overly stress the importance of this passage in presenting what will come afterward – namely, the play scene. Hamlet has recourse to it because he is in some sense caught up in its mood and he seems to suddenly perceive what can be achieved with it. What leads him to it? There is certainly a rational motive here, which is to suss out the king's conscience. In order to do so, Hamlet is going to have the play performed in front of the king, with a few changes introduced by himself, so as to observe the king's emotions and get him to betray himself.

And this is in fact what happens. At a certain point, the king can no longer stand it. The way in which he committed the crime is portrayed so precisely onstage, Hamlet providing a running commentary on it, that the king abruptly cries: "Lights, lights, lights!" and bolts out noisily. Hamlet says to Horatio that there is no longer any doubt [as to Claudius' guilt].

313 The play scene is thus essential and I am not the first psychoanalyst to have raised questions as to its function. Otto Rank did so before me in his article "*Das 'Schauspiel' in* Hamlet," which came out in *Psychoanalytische Beiträge zur Mythenforschung* in

1919 (Vienna-Leipzig[: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag], pp. 72–85). The function of the play scene is articulated there in a way that we will return to, but in any case it is clear that this scene raises questions that go beyond its functional role in the unfolding of the play.

We need to know up to what point and how we can interpret the details of the text. Rank confines his attention to listing all the features that show that, in the very structure of the fact of watching a play, there is something that evokes the child's first observations of parental intercourse. This is Rank's view.

I am not saying that it is worthless or even that it is false; I believe it is incomplete. It is worth spelling out [the function of the play scene] in the unfolding of the play as a whole. For in inventing this play scene, what is Hamlet doing? He is trying to create a structure and bring about the disguised dimension of truth that I somewhere called its "fictional structure" – without which he would be unable to reorient himself, beyond the more or less effective nature of the action designed to get Claudius to betray himself.

Rank thus touched on something. There is in Hamlet something that concerns his own orientation with respect to himself. I am merely indicating this to show the interest of the questions that are raised here.

4

Things are not all that simple here, and the third act does not end without the consequences of this articulation appearing in the following form: Hamlet is urgently summoned to his mother's side, she, naturally, being unable to take it any longer. These are the very words she uses: "O Hamlet, speak no more" [III, iv, 90].

As Hamlet is walking toward his mother's apartments, he sees Claudius moving, if not toward an admission of guilt [*résipiscence*], at least toward repentance [*repentir*]. This is the so-called scene of 314
the "prayer of repentance" [III, iii, 76]. This man who has, in some sense, been caught in the very web of what he continues to possess – namely, the fruits of his crime – raises up to God some kind of prayer that he may have the strength to find a way out of it. Hamlet, stumbling upon the king when he is literally on his knees and does not see him, has him at his mercy, revenge being at arm's length. This is where he stops.

If I kill him now, he says to himself, won't he go straight to heaven? Hamlet's father had clearly stressed that he was suffering all the torments of some sort of hell or purgatory. Wouldn't Hamlet

be sending Claudius straight to eternal happiness? That is precisely what he must not do, he concludes. It was nevertheless an opportunity to set things right.

I did not bring up the alternative "to be or not to be" the last time for no reason. In my view, it is the very crux of the matter.

Hamlet tells us that his father, owing to the moment at which he died, remains stuck forever "in the blossoms of [his] sin." The line drawn at the bottom of the "audit" [III, iii, 81] or tallying up of his life is such that he remains identical to the sum total of his crimes. It is when faced with this that Hamlet stops, saying, "to be or not to be."

Suicide is not as simple as all that. We are not exactly in the process of imagining, as he did, what happens in the hereafter. What is at stake is simply the following: putting an end to someone's life does not stop a being from remaining identical to all that he did in the course of his life. In this case, there is no "to be or not to be" – whatever the case may be, "to be" is forever.

Hamlet, too, is confronted with this. It is because he is not purely and simply the vehicle of the drama, the one through whom passions transit – as in the case of Eteocles and Polynices who persist in the crime their father [Oedipus] committed by castrating himself – it is because he is concerned with the eternal "to be" of the said Claudius that, at that precise moment, in a way that turns out to be altogether coherent, he does not even draw his sword from its scabbard.

This is essential: what he wants to do is surprise the other in the excess of his pleasures, in other words, in relations with the queen. The key point here is desire for the mother [or: the mother's desire, *désir de la mère*]. And he is going, in effect, to have an emotional scene with his mother that is one of the most extraordinary things ever seen on the stage.

315 In this scene, in which a mirror is held up to the mother so she can see herself as she truly is, there is a dialogue between a son who indisputably loves his mother as she loves him – this we are told – beyond all expression, in which he incites her to break the bonds of what he calls "that monster, custom":

> That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
> Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,
> That to the use of actions fair and good
> He likewise gives a frock or livery . . . [III, iv, 162–5]

Here he enjoins her to begin to break her habit and not sleep that night with Claudius. It is all put quite crudely, marvelously so. As you will see, he tells her, it will get easier and easier after that.

There are two lines that must, it seems to me, be pointed out, for they echo each other, and everything is going to revolve around them.

At a certain moment, in the course of the play scene, poor Ophelia, about whom I have not yet said much, tells Hamlet that he is doing a fine job playing the part of the chorus – in other words, that he is giving a good running commentary on the play. He responds:

> I could interpret between you and your love, if I
> could see the puppets dallying. [III, ii, 237–8]

We try to imagine what is happening onstage. In any case, what is at stake is something that is happening between "you" and "your love."

In the scene with the mother now, when the ghost appears – for the ghost appears in it, and at a moment at which Hamlet's entreaties are beginning to flag – it is in order to tell Hamlet:

> O, step between her and her fighting soul!
> Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.
> Speak to her, Hamlet. [III, iv, 114–6]

The ghost, who appears only to Hamlet here, whereas everyone can usually see it when it appears, has come to tell him to "step between her and her fighting soul." "Conceit" is unequivocal. It is used a lot in this play, precisely in relation to the soul. Conceit is *concetto*, an elaborate literary style, and it is the word that is used to describe the style of the *précieux*. The ghost thus says that conceit works the most powerfully in tired bodies. "Speak to her, Hamlet."

This place between one thing and another where Hamlet is always asked to enter, operate, and intervene shows us the true situation of 316
the drama. This appeal is significant – significant to us, because it is here that we analysts must intervene, "between her and her . . .," that is our job. "Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works" is an appeal addressed to us analysts.

Here, once again, Hamlet caves in. He leaves his mother, telling her to go ahead and allow herself to be caressed after all; Claudius is going to come and give her a big fat kiss on the cheek and caress her neck. He abandons his mother, he literally allows her to go back, to return, as it were, to giving herself over to her desire. This is how Act III ends, except that in the meantime the unfortunate Polonius has had the misfortune of stirring behind the arras and being run through by Hamlet with his sword.

5

We arrive now at the fourth act.

It begins rather prettily with a true manhunt, which Hamlet seems to find highly amusing. He hid Polonius's body somewhere and he yells out "Hide fox, and all after" [IV, ii, 29–30]. In the end he tells them not to wear themselves out, for before the end of the month they will begin to smell him – "you shall nose him" – near the stairs [IV, iii, 36], and let no more be said about it.

Shortly before that we have an important comment:

> The body is with the king,
> but the king is not with the body.
> The king is a thing [. . .] of nothing. [IV, ii, 26–9]

This is one of Hamlet's schizophrenic-sounding remarks. It does not fail to give us something that is helpful to us in interpreting the play, as we shall see later on.

Act IV is an act in which many things happen very quickly. Hamlet is, for example, sent off to England and returns before you can say boo. We know why: he uncovered the plot against him – namely, that he was being sent to his death. His return is accompanied by some drama, because Ophelia in the meantime has gone crazy – owing to her father's death, let us say, and probably to something else as well – and Laertes has revolted and has been plotting a minor coup.
317 The king has put a stop to his revolt by telling him that Hamlet is the guilty party, but that no one can be told about it because he is too popular; the thing can be handled quietly by organizing a fixed duel in which he will perish. And this is precisely what happens.

The first scene in Act V is the cemetery scene. I alluded earlier to the first gravedigger. I am sure you all recall the astounding remarks exchanged by the characters who are digging Ophelia's grave and who are tossing around a skull as they speak, one of which is caught by Hamlet who gives a speech about it.

Since I mentioned actors earlier, let me observe that no one has ever seen, as far back as theatre wardrobe assistants can remember, a Hamlet and a first gravedigger who were not ready to kill each other. The first gravedigger has never been able to stand the tone with which Hamlet speaks to him. This detail is worth noting in passing, for it shows us just how powerful the relationships highlighted in this drama can be.

Let us turn to the following, which I will bring more fully to your attention next time.

After having been prepared by the long and powerful cemetery scene, the dénouement arrives. We are aware of Hamlet's ever-flagging desire, that exhausted, unfinished, and unfinishable thing that characterizes his position. Why are we suddenly going to see what was impossible become possible? Why are we suddenly going to see Hamlet accept Laertes's challenge under the most unlikely conditions? These conditions are all the more curious as Hamlet is serving as Claudius' champion here.

We see Hamlet best Laertes in all the bouts. He lands him two or three hits, whereas Hamlet himself had been granted a handicap when the bet was placed. And when he is pricked with the poisoned tip, according to plan, a sort of confusion nevertheless ensues in which he winds up wielding the poisoned rapier and wounding Laertes with it. And it is once they are both mortally wounded that the last blow is struck, which is leveled at he who should have been dispatched from the outset – namely, Claudius.

I did not mention Millais's painting of Ophelia floating down the river at random last time. In concluding today, I want to propose another painting. I would like someone to paint a canvas in which 318
we would see the cemetery on the horizon and over here the open grave, with people coming out of it – like those who, at the end of the Oedipus tragedy, disperse and cover their eyes so as not to see what is happening – namely, something like the liquefaction of M. Valdemar.

Something different is at work here. Something has happened to which not enough importance has been attributed. Hamlet, who has just returned unexpectedly, thanks to the pirates who allowed him to foil the plot to assassinate him, happens upon Ophelia's burial. He has not yet heard about her death; he did not know what had happened during his brief absence. We see Laertes clawing at his own chest, and jumping into the grave in order to embrace his sister's cadaver one last time, loudly proclaiming his despair.

Not only can Hamlet not stand this display of grief over the loss of a girl whom he had clearly mistreated up until then, but he throws himself into the grave with Laertes after having truly bellowed, having given a war cry in which he says the most unexpected thing: who is grieving the death of this young girl? And he concludes, "This is I, Hamlet the Dane" [V, i, 244–5].

No one has ever heard him claim that he was Danish. He abhors the Danish! Suddenly, a revolution takes place in him owing to something that is highly significant, I can say, with respect to our schema. It is insofar as $ is there in a certain relationship with little *a* that he suddenly identifies with something that for the very first time makes him find his desire in its totality.

We see Hamlet and Laertes disappear into the hole. They grapple with each other for a while down there. People finally separate them and pull them out. This is what would be depicted in the painting: a hole from which we would see things escaping.

We will see what this might mean next time.

March 11, 1959

XV

THE MOTHER'S DESIRE

From mystery to illusion
Hamlet, a mode of discourse
The prohibition from which the unconscious arises
Hamlet's impure desire
The circuit of desire

Psychoanalytic principles are such that, in order to arrive at a goal, we must not be in a hurry.

Some of you may believe – I think there are not many of you who do – that we have ventured far from clinical work here. This is not at all true, for we are right smack in the middle of it. Given that what we are trying to do is situate the meaning of desire, human desire, the way in which we proceed in order to map it with regard to what has, moreover, been one of the main topics of psychoanalytic thought since the beginning cannot in any way force us to take a detour from what is most urgently required of us.

A great deal has been said about *Hamlet*, and I have tried to show you just how massive the literature on the play is.

Since I spoke to you last time, a document arrived on my doorstep which, in my desire for perfectionism, I had been dying to see – namely, Ernest Jones's *Hamlet and Oedipus* [New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1949]. In reading it, I perceived that Jones updated his discussion of *Hamlet* so that it takes into account developments in psychoanalysis since 1909. He no longer refers there to Loening as a worthy commentator, but rather to Dover Wilson who wrote a lot about Hamlet and did so very cogently. As I myself had read some of Wilson's work, I believe I have already managed to convey the substance of it to you.

We must now take a step back from all of that.

Jones's speculations are, however, quite penetrating and one might say that, on the whole, they stand apart from everything

else that has been written on the subject of *Hamlet* by the analytic community.

320 Jones points out highly pertinent things, such as the fact that Hamlet is not a real person, which is just plain common sense. What can it then mean to raise the most profound questions about his character? This point is perhaps worth dwelling on a bit more seriously than people ordinarily do.

I am going to begin today by doing so.

1

As always, when we are in a field that concerns psychoanalytic exploration as such, on the one hand, and a specific object, on the other, the pathway that must be followed is twofold.

The path our train of thought follows is based on a certain preexisting idea we have about the object. It is quite obvious that there are things here whose groundwork should, I would say, be laid immediately.

For example, at the most basic level, in works of art, and especially in dramatic works, there are *characters*, in the sense in which we understand the term in French. A character is someone about whom we assume the author knows everything. The author has created a character, and he is supposed to move us by setting his character traits in motion. In and of itself, this is assumed to introduce us to a supposed reality that is beyond what is given to us in the work of art.

I would say that *Hamlet* has the very important property of making us realize to what degree we must at least suspend judgment regarding this viewpoint – which is widely shared and which we spontaneously adopt whenever we examine a work of art – if not refute it altogether.

In fact, there are two handholds that we can solidly latch onto in every art, they being absolutely solid reference points. We shall see what they are.

Hamlet is a mirror, we are told, in which we all, whether readers or spectators – but let us leave to one side the spectators, who are unfathomable – see ourselves as we want to. Even if this notion is not in the least bit satisfying, the fact remains that if we put together everything that has been proposed and asserted about this play, we cannot fail to realize that, as I think I made sufficiently clear last
321 time, the interpretations by critics contradict each other, they being strictly speaking irreconcilable, which clearly suggests that there is some mystery here. I also mentioned that, for actors, the role of

Hamlet is *the* role *par excellence*, and that people also talk about this person's Hamlet and that person's Hamlet – there are as many Hamlets as there are actors of a certain caliber.

But this goes beyond simply noting a range of Hamlets.

I assume that certain people were a bit put out by all the hubbub there was around Shakespeare's tri-centennial in 1864, there having been a resurgence of Shakespearean themes and a passionate revival of his work on the part of the entire British literary establishment. And in 1917, John Robertson, in his *Mystery of Hamlet*, actually voiced the opinion that *Hamlet* was, strictly speaking, vacuous; that it did not hold water; that there is no key to Hamlet as a character; and that Shakespeare had done what he could to patch up *Hamlet*, which was attributed to an author named Kyd, and had already been performed a dozen years before the autumn of 1601 when we are more or less certain that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* showed for the first time. Philological exploration has, moreover, gone quite far in that direction since 1917.

The Austrian playwright Grillparzer – to whom Freud refers in passing, which is significant, and about whom Jones speaks at the end of the second chapter of his book – goes so far as to articulate in no uncertain terms that the reason for *Hamlet*'s success is its "impenetrability." It is, admittedly, a rather curious opinion; in any case, one cannot deny that it is a strictly anti-Aristotelian opinion, insofar as Aristotle considers the hero's similarity, *omoios*, to us as what accounts for the effect of both comedy and tragedy.

Nevertheless, the fact that such varied things can be said about *Hamlet* is worth pondering.

Let me add that we find here a whole gamut of differing opinions, that present a whole series of nuances. It is not the same thing to say that it is the impenetrability of *Hamlet* that makes for its success as it is to say that *Hamlet* is a failure as a play, as is maintained by no less than T. S. Eliot, who, in a certain milieu, is considered to be more or less the greatest modern English poet. According to Eliot, 322
Shakespeare was not equal to the task of dealing with his hero. If Hamlet is someone who is unequal to the task he is supposed to perform, Shakespeare was just as unequal to the task of articulating Hamlet's role.

These are opinions that one might well consider to be problematic. I am enumerating them for you in order to lead you toward what is at stake. I believe that the most nuanced opinion is the most accurate: there is in the relationship between *Hamlet* and we who apprehend it, whether as readers or spectators, a phenomenon characterized by illusion.

To say *this* is quite different from saying that Hamlet is simply

vacuous [*le vide*]. An illusion is not a vacuum [*le vide*]. In order to produce a ghostlike effect onstage – an effect like the one provided, if you will, by my little concave mirror with the real image that emerges and that can be seen only from a certain angle and from a certain point in space – a good deal of machinery is required. If *Hamlet* is an illusion, or the organization of an illusion, we are not dealing with the same species of illusion as we would be if everyone were speculating about something vacuous. It is important to make this distinction; everything seems to confirm that something like this is involved.

This is the first handhold we can solidly latch onto.

For example, W. F. Trench [*Shakespeare's Hamlet*, London: 1913], who is cited by Jones, writes the following: "We find it hard, with Shakespeare's help, to understand Hamlet: even Shakespeare, perhaps, found it hard to understand him: Hamlet himself" – you can see that the passage is an amusing one, and the author's pen and thinking is sliding toward the following – "finds it impossible to understand himself." That is possible. "Better able than other men to read the hearts and motives of others" – this concerns neither ourselves nor Shakespeare, but rather Hamlet, who, as you know, plays all the time at taking apart whatever is said by his interlocutors, by those who come to interrogate or try to trap him – "he is yet quite unable to read his own" [Jones, *Hamlet and Oedipus*, p. 57].

Right after quoting this, Jones tells us what he thinks of these lines. Although he had begun by indicating his reservations about considering fictional characters to be real – having said that we must not allow ourselves to be led to speak of Hamlet like a real person,
323 and that we have to seek elsewhere when it comes to interpreting the play (which is the traditional position in psychoanalysis, and harbors within it, I believe, an error or fallacy to which I would first like to draw your attention) – Jones himself ends up saying the following: "I know of no more authentic statement than this in the whole literature on the Hamlet problem" [p. 57].

In a different text, Jones tells us that, in short, "we reach the apparent paradox that the hero, the poet, and the audience are all profoundly moved by feelings due to a conflict of the source of which they are unaware." This remark makes us realize the strict equivalence of the first two terms: the hero and the poet are strictly equivalent to their discourse; they exist only through their discourse. If one wishes to talk about the communication of what is in their unconscious, one cannot in any case say that such communication is embodied in anything other than the articulation of the dramatic discourse itself.

Let us leave the hero to one side. If you follow me in the pathways along which I am trying to lead you, you will see that he is in fact strictly identical to words – above all, when we begin to sense that, in *Hamlet*, what gives our hero his highest dramatic value is that he is a mode of discourse. This is the second handhold that I will ask you to latch onto. This phenomenon is of the same ilk as the aspect that eludes the grasp of everything we can say regarding his consistency. In other words, *Hamlet* proves to be an exemplary work here.

The way in which a work touches us, and most profoundly so – that is, at the unconscious level – has to do with its composition and organization. Although there is no doubt but that we get caught up in it at the level of the unconscious, it is not because of the presence of something in front of us that can really have an unconscious. I mean that, as opposed to what people think, we are not dealing with the poet's unconscious. His unconscious undoubtedly manifests itself in several traces in the work that are not deliberate, such as slips and symbolic elements that went unnoticed by the poet, but this is not what we consider to be of major interest.

One can find a number of such traces in *Hamlet*. This is what Ella Sharpe tried to do, as I told you last time. She tried to root 324
out, here and there, traces of some sort of fixation on feminine or oral metaphors in Hamlet's character. I assure you that, as regards the problem Hamlet poses, this truly seems to be secondary and almost childish, without, of course, being absolutely of no interest whatsoever.

When you go looking in this way, from this perspective, for anything in a work that can tell you something about the author, you are engaging in a biographical investigation about him rather than analyzing the import of the work as such. If *Hamlet* is of major importance to us, it is because its structural value is equivalent to that of *Oedipus*. What interests us and can allow us to structure certain problems is obviously based on the play's deepest plot, the whole of the tragedy, and its articulation as such. This is obviously something other than a fleeting revelation by the author about himself.

This is what I am in the process of emphasizing. The work is of importance to us owing to its organization – that is, owing to the superimposed planes [*plans*] this organization brings with it within which the true dimension of human subjectivity can find its place. If you will allow me to provide a metaphor here, I would say that in order to give its full depth to a play, as one would to a theatre hall or to a set onstage, we need to have multiple superimposed sets [*plans*], side struts [*portants*], and a whole machinery [of pulleys and ropes, for example]. It is within the depth that is thus created that

the problem of the articulation of desire can be posed in the fullest way possible.

To spell this out even further: if *Hamlet* has special import to us, if it is truly the greatest drama or one of the greatest dramas of modern tragedy – *Faust* being one of the other greatest dramas – it is not simply because we are dealing with Shakespeare, however marvelous we may assume him to be, and the fact that his life took such and such a turn at a certain moment in time. This is not to deny that *Hamlet* was written at a certain moment in Shakespeare's life, a moment at which something important quite clearly happened.

The only thing we can say for sure is that it involved his father's death. To confine our attention to that would be to content ourselves with very little; people naturally assume that other things related to this event occurred in his life. In any case, *Hamlet* marks
325 an obvious turning point in Shakespeare's production and in the orientation of his work.

Prior to *Hamlet*, he wrote a series of comedies and historical tragedies. These are the two genres that Shakespeare brought to their highest degree of beauty, perfection, and ease. Up until then, one can almost say that he had two great specialties which he practiced masterfully and brilliantly, placing him at the level of the most successful authors of his time.

After *Hamlet*, the picture changes. He writes things that go beyond all limits, that no longer have anything to do with any known literary canon, that are no longer of the same type – consider, for example *King Lear* and many other plays as well, ending with *The Tempest*. These confront us with something else altogether, a human drama that develops and is of an entirely different register. This is the Shakespeare who is the crowning jewel of human history and of the human drama, the Shakespeare who opens up a new dimension in our understanding of mankind.

Thus something truly happened at that moment in his life. But does the fact that we are certain about this allow us to conclude that it was his father's death? Yes, of course, in a sense. But let us observe, nevertheless, that if *Hamlet* is the play that presents itself most as an enigma, it is only too obvious that a play that constitutes a problem is not automatically a good play. An awful play can also pose a problem. And the author's unconscious is probably just as or even *more* present in many a bad play than in many a good one.

If we are moved by a play, it is not because it represents a great deal of effort on the author's part or because of what its author reveals unbeknownst to himself. I repeat that it is because of the space it offers us, owing to the multiple dimensions of its development, in which to lodge what is hidden in *us* – namely, our relationship to our

own desire. If this possibility is eminently offered to us by *Hamlet*, it is not because Shakespeare was caught up at that moment in a personal drama. It is because this play furnishes the layering of myriad dimensions and organized levels – and in some ways, the maximum possible number of dimensions and levels – necessary to provide the space for what lies within us to resonate there.

If we take things as far as possible, we believe that we can grasp Shakespeare's personal drama, and yet it eludes us. People have gone so far as to say that it was the drama that furnished the material for the *Sonnets*. You are aware that Shakespeare was doubly deceived, both by his male friend/protector and by his mistress. Yet that particular drama most probably occurred at a different period in Shakespeare's life, a more subdued one. Moreover, we have no certainty about these details; we have but the testimony of the *Sonnets* themselves, a testimony that has itself been elaborately worked over. 326

I believe that *Hamlet's* seductive power stems from a different source. We can at times try to imagine what might lie behind *Hamlet*. But what is at stake is not what lies behind it but rather the composition of the work itself. What we must dwell on is the high degree of perfection to which the author managed to take it. It is this singular, exceptional articulation that distinguishes Shakespeare's *Hamlet* from all the earlier versions of *Hamlet* that philology has allowed us to discover.

If Shakespeare was able to create such a work, it is probably because of a deepening, which is as much that of his skill as a writer as that of his experience of life as a man, a man who certainly did live and had a happy life. Everything suggests, in effect, that his life involved all kinds of temptations [*solicitations*] and passions. But the fact that Shakespeare's own personal drama may lie behind *Hamlet* is secondary with regard to what constitutes its structure. It is this structure that accounts for the effect *Hamlet* has on us.

This is all the clearer as Hamlet himself, as writers have put it metaphorically, is a character whose depths we cannot fathom, not simply because of our ignorance. Indeed, he is a character who is made up of something: the empty place in which we can situate our ignorance. This is what is important, because a situated ignorance is not purely negative – it renders the unconscious present, no more, no less. This is what gives *Hamlet* its power and its import.

I believe I have succeeded in conveying to you the specifically psychological dimension that is involved in a play like this one, without denying it, without leaving anything aside, and with a plethora of nuances. Certain people say that what I am engaged in is an exercise in what is known as "applied psychoanalysis," whereas it is exactly

327 the opposite. What I am working on here is psychoanalytic theory. Compared to the theoretical question whether psychoanalysis can adequately discuss works of art, any sort of clinical question is one that falls under the heading of applied psychoanalysis.

Some of you who are here listening to me will no doubt want me to say a bit more about this. Ask me questions, should you have any. [Silence.]

If *Hamlet* is truly what I say it is – namely, a composition or structure in which desire can find its place, and be situated in a sufficiently correct and rigorous way for all desires, or, more precisely, all problems raised by the relationship between the subject and desire, to be projected onto it – it should suffice in some sense to read it. I was thus alluding to people who might raise questions about the role of those who act in the play. Where do we situate the role of theatre and performance [*représentation*]?

It is clear that it is not at all the same thing to read *Hamlet* as to see it performed. I do not think this can pose a problem for you for long. In the perspective that I am trying to develop here concerning, in short, the function of the unconscious, the unconscious is defined as the Other's discourse [*le discours de l'Autre*]. Nothing can better illustrate this than the perspective given to us by an experience like that of the audience's relationship to *Hamlet*. It is clear that the unconscious is rendered present here in the form of the Other's discourse, which is a thoroughly written discourse. The hero is present here only through this discourse, as is the poet. Having been dead for a long time, what a poet bequeaths us is, in the final analysis, his discourse.

The dimension that is added by performance – namely, by the actors who perform the play – is strictly analogous to that by which we ourselves are invested in our own unconscious. We are the ones who furnish the material that constitutes our relationship to the unconscious, namely, the signifier – this is what I teach and what I spend my time telling you – with our imaginary, that is, with our relationship to our own body, for that is the imaginary.

People say that I neglect the existence of the body and that I have
328 an incorporeal theory of psychoanalysis. At least that is what you might conclude when you hear about what I say from those who live a bit far from here, for people talk.

Yet what I say is that it is with our own bodily members that we create the alphabet of the discourse that is unconscious – and, of course, we each do so in different ways, for, although we are all caught up in the unconscious, we do not all use the same elements. Analogously, an actor lends his members and presence, not simply like a puppet, but with an unconscious that is truly real – namely, the relationship of his members to his own history.

Plate 1 *Ophelia*, Sir John Everett Millais

Plate 2 *Melancholia*, Albrecht Dürer

If there are good and bad actors, it is to the degree, I believe, to which an actor's unconscious is more or less compatible with this lending of himself as a puppet. Either he lends himself to it or he does not; this is what accounts for the fact that an actor has more or less talent and genius, and even – why not? – that he is more or less suited for certain roles. Even those who have a very wide range can, after all, play certain roles better than others.

Put differently, actors are obviously necessary. It is to the degree to which there is some agreement between what they must perform for us and something that may, indeed, have the closest relationship with their unconscious that they include something in their interpretation of their roles that indisputably adds something – something that is far from constituting the crux of what is communicated, for the crux is the performance of the drama as it was written.

This perspective could open a door for us and take us quite far, I believe, into the psychology of the actor. There are, of course, laws of general compatibility. The relationship between the actor and performance possibilities raises a problem of psychology that is specific to actors. Whether certain psychological makeups are especially well suited for acting is a question that has been broached, notably by someone I saw again recently, and whose article that came out a few years ago on what he called "Hysteria and Theatre" was promising. I will perhaps have the opportunity to speak about it with interest, even if I do not, of course, completely agree with it.

Having addressed this point, let us now return to our main topic.

2

329

What I am trying to get you to understand about the effect of *Hamlet* is essentially the way in which desire can and must find its place in the play as it was written. What, therefore, is this structure in which desire finds its place?

At first glance, it may seem that what I am saying is no different from what is commonly said about *Hamlet* in the psychoanalytic community. Did I make all of these introductory remarks simply in order to end up agreeing with such classic and even banal viewpoints? You will see that it is nothing of the sort.

Let us nevertheless begin with what we are usually told. And don't think that it is all so simple and unequivocal. A certain rectitude is what it is hardest for writers themselves to maintain as they formulate their notions about *Hamlet*, for what constantly occurs is a kind of evasion or oscillation, several examples of which you will see in what I will discuss.

As a first approximation, about which everyone is in agreement, Hamlet is someone who knows not what he wants. When he sees the troops of the young Fortinbras march off and disappear at the far end of the stage, he becomes embittered, suddenly struck by the fact that these people are going to engage in a great action for a trifle, for a little patch of Poland. They are going to sacrifice everything, their lives even, whereas he is there doing nothing even though he has everything he needs to take action: "cause, and will, and strength, and means," as he puts it himself. Hamlet is stuck at the stage of saying, but "'This thing's to do'" [IV, iv, 44–5].

Why doesn't Hamlet take action? This is the question everyone raises. Why is his will* or desire in abeyance? This intersects, as it were, what Sir James Paget, who is cited by Jones, wrote about hysterical paralysis: "Hamlet's advocates say he cannot do his duty, his detractors say he will not, whereas the truth is that he cannot will."

What does the psychoanalytic tradition tell us about this? It says that everything in this case depends on his desire for his mother. Being repressed, this desire makes it such that the hero cannot
330 move forward to take the action he is ordered to take, namely to take revenge on a man who is the current – and oh so illegitimate, because criminal – possessor of the maternal object. And if Hamlet cannot strike he who is designated as the target of his revenge, it is because he himself had in short already committed [in fantasy] the crime for which he was supposed to wreak vengeance.

Inasmuch as the backdrop here – so we are told – is the memory of his childhood desire for his mother and of his Oedipal desire to kill his father, Hamlet thus turns out to be in some sense an accomplice of the current possessor, who is a *beatus possidens* in his eyes. Since he is this man's accomplice, he cannot attack him without attacking himself. But this could also mean – and this mechanism is, nevertheless, the one that is more palpable [*sensible*] in the play – that he cannot attack this possessor without awakening in himself the ancient desire for which he feels guilty.

But must we, after all, remain fascinated by a schema that is surrounded by an aura that gives it an untouchable, non-dialectical, unfathomable character? Can't we also say that all of this can be put the other way around? If Hamlet had immediately attacked his stepfather, people would say that he had taken the opportunity to assuage his own guilt by situating the true guilty party outside himself.

To put it as bluntly as possible, Hamlet does not take action, whereas everything conspires to make him do so.

There is, first of all, the superego commandment, which is in some

sense materialized here by a father who returns from the afterlife in the form of a ghost to order Hamlet to wreak vengeance. And this father is provided with all the sacred character of one who returns from beyond the grave, still greater authority stemming from his grandeur, his charm [*séduction*], the fact that he is a victim, and the fact that he was atrociously dispossessed not only of his love object but also of his power, his throne, his very life, his salvation, and his eternal happiness. There is no doubt whatsoever that the father incites Hamlet to take action.

Something else, too, pushes him in the same direction, something one might call, in this case, Hamlet's "natural desire." If, because this desire is repressed, he cannot feel it, and if he is effectively separated from his mother, it is nevertheless indisputable that the fact that his desire is fixated on her affects him; this is what is most certain and apparent in Hamlet's role. I deliberately called this 331
repressed desire "natural" here, for when Jones wrote his article on *Hamlet*, he was still trying to make the case to his readers that the dimension of repression and censorship exists, and every page he writes on this occasion tends to give this censorship a social origin. Curiously enough, he says, "the trends most likely to be 'repressed' are those belonging to what are called the natural instincts."

This truly raises a question. After all, if the dimension of repression and censorship really arises from society, why wasn't society organized in such a way as to satisfy the most natural desires? This question could perhaps take us a bit further.

It is quite palpable, indeed, that the necessities of the life of a group, or sociological necessities – the things we never seem to notice – do not exhaustively explain the sort of prohibition from which the dimension of the unconscious arises in human beings. They explain it so inadequately that, in order to explain the very principles of repression, Freud had to invent a primal myth – a pre-social myth, let us not forget, since it is the one that founds society – that described in *Totem and Taboo*. In Jones's commentary, and because of the date at which it was penned, Jones unfortunately still believes that prohibitions, censorship, and even the Oedipus complex are, at the unconscious level, sociological products, which is a mistake on Jones's part. It may be a deliberate, apologetic mistake, the kind of mistake made by someone who wishes to convince, who wishes to conquer a certain audience of social psychologists. This view is, nevertheless, problematic.

But let us return to our Hamlet.

We see him actuated in the end by two different impulses: an imperative impulse, commanded doubly by his father's authority and by the love Hamlet bears his father, and the impulse to defend

his mother and keep her for himself, both of which must drive him in the same direction – to kill Claudius. How could two positive things zero out? It is quite odd.

I realize that this sometimes happens. I encountered a very fine example of this when I broke my leg recently: you shorten one leg,
332 then you shorten the other leg, and in the end there is no more shortening. It is a very fine exercise for us, for we deal with things like this. Yet is that what is involved here?

I do not think so. If we thought it was, we would wind up in an illusory dialectic and content ourselves with a schema that would, after all, only be justified, no doubt, by the fact that there is this character named Hamlet and we feel we have to come up with some explanation for him. The fact remains, all the same, that we have put our finger on something essential here.

There is something that makes Hamlet's action difficult for him, that makes his task repugnant to him, and that thrusts him into a problematic position with respect to his own action; and this something, this *x*, is his desire. The impure nature of this desire plays an essential role, but it does so unbeknownst to Hamlet. In some sense, it is inasmuch as his action is not disinterested, not motivated in some Kantian way, that Hamlet cannot carry it out.

I believe that this is something we can in fact assert. Let us not, however, forget that it was pretty much known prior to psychoanalytic investigation. We have traces of this – and this is partly why Jones's bibliography is of interest, for it shows us this – in the works of certain authors who glimpsed this in writings around 1880 or 1890, long before Freud began to articulate the *Ödipuskomplex*. Nevertheless, I believe that we can analytically formulate something more accurate than these authors did, and go further than what the theories psychoanalysts have provided on this topic boil down to. In order to do so, we need but carefully read the text of the play.

When we do so, we cannot fail to realize that what Hamlet is constantly dealing or grappling with is a desire which is far from being his own. As it is situated in the play, it is the desire, not *for* his mother, but *of* his mother – that is, it is his mother's desire. That alone is what is at work.

The pivotal point is his encounter with his mother after the "play scene."* I would have to read the whole scene with you.

Hamlet has had a play performed that has had an effect on the king's conscience. As everyone grows more and more anxious about Hamlet's intentions, it is decided that he will be asked to have a
333 talk with his mother. This is exactly what he wants. He is going to take the opportunity, he says, to twist the knife in the wound – he

explicitly mentions daggers [III, ii, 381] – in his mother's heart. Then we have a long scene, which is a theatrical climax, the closet scene about which I said last time that it is virtually unbearable to read, in which he pathetically implores his mother to sit up and take notice of what she is doing.

I am sorry I cannot read the whole scene with you here, but please do so yourselves, pen in hand, as one does in school. Hamlet says to her, 'What the heck kind of life are you leading? You're no spring chicken anymore, you should calm down a bit!' These are the sorts of things he says to her in his admirable language. They are things we cannot believe anyone would ever say, and that could not be said in any more penetrating a manner; they are things that could not correspond any better to what, in effect, Hamlet has rushed to say to his mother – things that are designed to break her heart and that she experiences as such, as she herself says to him: "O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain" [III, iv, 157]. And she literally groans under the pressure.

The mother is at least forty-five years old at this point. We are more or less certain that Hamlet is thirty. This is debatable, but in the graveyard scene there is an indication from which it can be deduced, for Hamlet remembers poor Yorick who died about thirty years ago and who kissed him on the lips. It is important to keep in mind that Hamlet is not some naive young man.

Back, now, to the closet scene. Hamlet compares his father to Hyperion –

> A combination and a form indeed,
> Where every god did seem to set his seal

– and next to him we have this piece of rubbish, "A king of shreds and patches" [III, iv, 103], a conman or pimp with whom you are up to your ears in mud. This is what his speech is about, and it is worth articulating. You will see further on what is at stake. But, whatever the case may be, it is about his mother's desire, and about a plea on Hamlet's part, which is a demand of the following sort: get hold of yourself, get control of yourself, follow – as I told you last time – the pathway of good manners, begin by no longer sleeping with my uncle. He says it that directly. And everyone knows, he says, that appetite comes with eating, and that this devil, habit, which ties us to the worst possible things, can also work in the opposite way: once you start behaving better, it will get easier and easier.

What do we see here if not the articulation of a demand which is 334
manifestly made by Hamlet in the name of something that is at the level, not simply of the law, but of dignity, and which is expressed

with force, vigor, and even cruelty – the least one can say about it is that it leads to discomfort.

The point they arrive at is one where the mother is literally panting, so much so that people have wondered if the ghost that reappears in the closet is not there in order to say to Hamlet 'Tallyho, tallyho! Go on!' But in a certain respect the ghost also calls Hamlet to order; he protects the mother against some sort of overflowing aggression on the son's part, before which she herself momentarily trembles: "What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?" [III, iv, 22]. How far will you go? His father reminds him to "step between her and her fighting soul!" [III, iv, 114].

At the climax of the scene Hamlet suddenly backs down and says to her, now that I have said all that, do as you like and go recount all of that to Uncle Claudius. You're going to allow him to give you a little kiss on the cheek, a little tickle on the neck, a little scratch on the stomach, and all will end as usual in a complete shambles. This is exactly what Hamlet says.

We are following the oscillating motion we see in Hamlet here. He storms, he insults, he implores, and then his discourse collapses – he gives up. We see in his very words a disappearance or vanishing of his appeal when he consents to his mother's desire, laying down his arms before something that seems ineluctable.

His mother's desire here takes on anew for him the value of something that can in no way be dominated, moved, or eliminated.

3

I have proceeded even more slowly than I had imagined I would. I will thus be forced to stop at a point which, as you see, will require us to spend perhaps two more of our meetings deciphering *Hamlet*.

335 Today, in concluding, I will try to show you the relationship between what I am in the process of articulating and the graph of desire.

Where do I want to lead you with *Hamlet*? I will tell you very precisely, by reminding you first what the graph tells us about the location of desire.

This is the upper level of the graph. On the lower line, $s(A) \rightarrow A$, you have the elementary discourse of demand, the one that subjects the subject's need to the consent, caprice, and arbitrary will of the Other as such. The Other's discourse thus has the power to structure human tension and intention in the fragmentation brought on by the signifier. This is the first stage, the first relationship to the Other.

What is at stake for the subject within the Other's discourse that

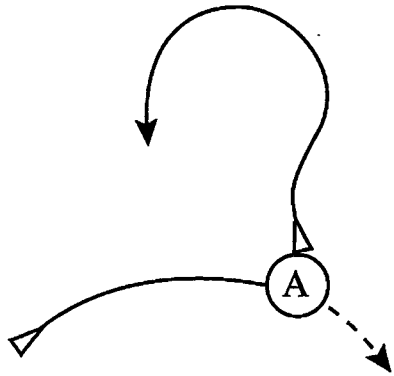

Figure 15.1: The interrogative hook

shapes him – that is, within this already structured world? He must orient himself therein, locate himself therein. The Other's demand having necessarily fragmented and fractured him, if he is to be able to locate himself, he must go through a fundamental stage in which what becomes *his* discourse is taken beyond the Other. It is there that the subject questions himself about what is known as his "will,"* his own will – namely, about what is the most problematic for him, as we analysts know – that is, what he truly desires. The subject must go beyond the necessities of demand inasmuch as he seeks to find anew [*retrouver*] his desire in its ingenuous nature.

How can desire be refound? This is a problem we always have to 336
deal with. In other words, what happens beyond the Other, at the upper level of the graph?

We find there the interrogative hook that I have drawn here,

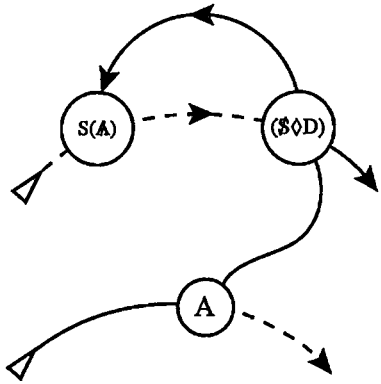

Figure 15.2: The unconscious signifying chain

whose uninterrupted line represents the subject's questioning about what he wants, but that is not all we find there. Psychoanalysis tells us that we also find what allows the subject to orient himself there [*s'y retrouver*] – namely, a signifying chain that I draw with a dotted line. It is homologous to the signifying chain at the lower level, but here it is strictly speaking called the unconscious, and it provides the signifying basis by which the subject can get his bearings there.

On the right, you see ($◊D), which is the subject's relation to his own demand. Indeed, a register is established here, thanks to which the subject can perceive not, as people say, that his demand is oral, anal, or this or that, but that, qua subject, he has a special relationship with capital D – in other words, with a certain form of demand. And this is why I inscribed this abbreviation on the upper level in the place where the code is found [on the lower level, namely: A].

The hooked line that goes beyond the Other, the one that represents the subject's questioning, is drawn here with an uninterrupted line. Why? Because it is conscious. In effect, before there were psychoanalysts, human beings asked themselves the question – and constantly asked themselves the question, believe you me, as they still do in our time, and as they have done since Freud's time – where their true will lies. This line thus belongs to the personality system as

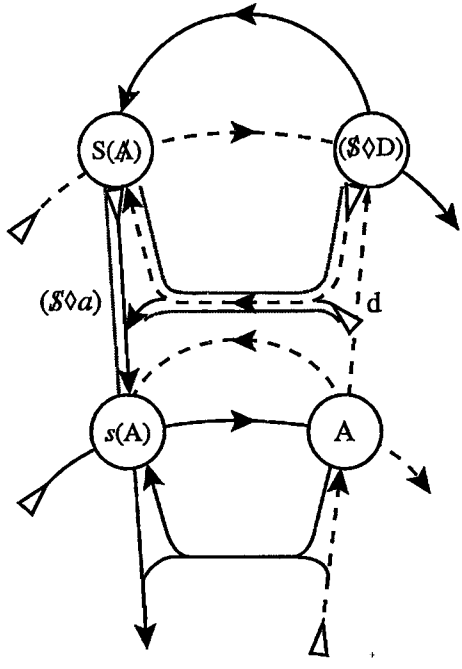

Figure 15.3: The line of desire

such. Call it conscious or preconscious – for the time being I will not go into any further details about it. 337

But what does the graph tell us about desire? Desire is an *x*, and that *x* is situated somewhere on the line that returns from the unconscious code [$◊D] – in the opposite direction from the intentional line which is across from it – namely, the return segment: ($◊D)→d. Desire [d] is there, floating somewhere in what lies beyond the Other [A].

Yet we also know that desire is subjected to a certain regulation. The latter is represented for us here by the height at which it is fixated [*hauteur de fixation*], as it were, at the level of a determinate point of the line which, returning from the unconscious message, S(Ⱥ), goes in the direction of *s*(A), the Other's message at the imaginary level. This line stops midway at ($◊*a*), for it is fantasy that regulates the height at which desire is fixated and determines its location.

You will note in passing that the relationship between desire and fantasy is homologous to the relationship between the ego [*m* for *moi*] and the image of the other [*i(a)*; see Figure 1.4].

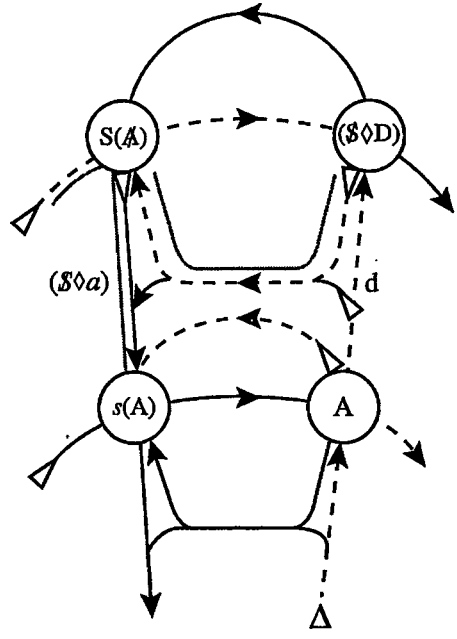

Figure 15.4: The unconscious circuit of desire

Let us now follow the whole of the circuit indicated by the dotted line, that is, the unconscious circuit. 338

It begins on the right, at the extremity of the unconscious vector,

provisionally denoted Δ. It rises to the level of the message, S(Ⱥ), continues over to the code ($◊D), drops back down to the level of desire, d, and from there heads toward fantasy ($◊*a*). This is the circuit of the formation of desire at the level of the unconscious, and these are the stages it goes through and the directions in which it goes through them. If you are attentive to the way the graph is constructed, you will notice that the line d→($◊*a*) is a return pathway with respect to the unconscious, but that it itself has no return path toward the unconscious.

Now this circuit is going to help us follow the very movement of Hamlet's desire, assuming we stick to the scene in the closet in which the son confronts his mother.

What can we say about this, if not, in the first place, that there is no moment at which the formulation "man's desire is the Other's desire" is more tangible or manifest, no moment at which it is more
339 completely realized, no way in which it could more thoroughly cancel out the subject?

In other words, the subject does not address the Other with his own will, but rather with a will of which he is at that moment the medium and representative – namely, his father's will, as well as the will of the social order, and of modesty and decency, too. I am not giving all of these terms to make things sound sophisticated, for I have already discussed the demon of shame [*Écrits*, p. 584 n] and you will see the role it plays in what follows. At the first stage, the subject articulates a discourse to his mother that goes beyond her qua Other, but only to back down and return to the strict level of the Other before whom he can but bow.

The movement of this scene can be depicted more or less as follows.

The subject's plea goes beyond the Other, trying to join up with the level of the code or law ($◊D), and then drops backs down. Except that the subject's drop does not stop at the level of the line d→($◊*a*), where he would meet up with his own desire, for he no longer has any desire – Ophelia has been rejected, and we shall see next time what role she plays here. Schematically put, let us say that it is as if the subject, in dropping back down along the return pathway, returned purely and simply to the Other's message – as if he could receive no other message from the Other's articulation than the Other's signified, *s*(A) – namely, his mother's response.

And what is this message? 'I am what I am. In my case there's nothing to be done, I'm a true genital personality' – I'm referring here to the way in which this term is used in volume 1 of *La Psychanalyse d'aujourd'hui* – 'I know nothing of mourning.' "The funeral baked meats / Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables"

[I, ii, 180–1]. "Thrift, thrift!" is Hamlet's comment on this. She is simply a gaping cunt. When one leaves, another enters. That is what is being said here.

If *Hamlet* is the drama of desire, what is the drama of desire? We have seen it throughout this scene, it is the drama that there may be a worthy object and an unworthy object. 'Madam, I beg you to show some propriety here. There is a huge difference between that god and this piece of garbage!' That is what is involved here.

It is quite odd that we use a word like "object" all the time, but that the first time we encounter it [in the play] we do not recognize it, even though there is talk of nothing else from one end of *Hamlet* to the other. No one has ever discussed "object relations" regarding 340
Hamlet. People remain confused about this and yet it is the only thing that is at stake. The discourse I alluded to earlier concerning the true genital personality, whether female or male, is a coherent discourse, for it tells us that one of the characteristics of the true genital personality is that it mourns only lightly. This can be found in the first volume of *La Psychanalyse d'aujourd'hui.* It is a marvelous commentary on the dialectic of *Hamlet.*

Now, we cannot but be struck by the fact that it is by means of mourning that we see the object come into view. I will go a bit quickly here because I must give you a glimpse of the horizons I am heading toward; but we can already say that *Hamlet* will perhaps allow us to add something to what Freud provides in *Trauer und Melancholie* ["Mourning and Melancholia"]. Freud tells us there that when mourning takes place, it is owing to introjection of the lost object. But in order for it to be introjected, there is perhaps a prior condition – namely, that it be constituted as an object. And its constitution as an object is perhaps not purely and simply related to the co-instinctual stages that are usually mentioned.

Something else already gives us an indication that, with the question of mourning and the object, we have arrived at the heart of the problem. This is where I ended last time, and our next few classes will follow up on this. It is the key point, the decisive point starting from which Hamlet takes the bit between his teeth, as it were.

For, as has been clearly noted, after having long dallied, Hamlet has a sudden burst of energy. He dives headfirst into an improbable situation that presents itself.

He must kill his stepfather. He is asked to win a sort of wager for this stepfather. The wager consists in fencing with someone about whom the least one can say is that, given the moment in time at which this is occurring, he knows this man is not favorably disposed toward him. For it is neither more nor less than the brother of the unhappy Ophelia, who has just put an end to her life, and she has

done so owing to problems in which Hamlet played an important part. Hamlet knows, in any case, that this man holds it against him. Hamlet likes this man a lot, as he tells him, and nevertheless it is with him that he is going to cross swords to win a bet for the very person whom he must, in theory, slaughter.

341 He suddenly proves to be a true, absolutely unprecedented killer, and does not allow Laertes to hit him even once [at first]. It is quite clear that we have here a headlong rush forward on Hamlet's part. What is the decisive point that leads Hamlet to take the bit between his teeth?

It is the point on which I ended last time, with my little map of the graveyard and of the two guys grappling with each other at the bottom of the grave, which is an odd scene, all the same, and truly Shakespearean, for there is no trace of it in the earlier versions of *Hamlet*.

What happens? Why did Hamlet decide to jump in? Because he could not bear to see someone other than himself showing everyone what? Overflowing grief.

I would have to support what I am telling you here with a reading of *Hamlet*, but it would take me too long to do so. There is not a single word I am using here that is not based on something found in the text. Hamlet says it himself: 'I couldn't bear for Laertes to make such a big deal of or place such emphasis* on his mourning' [see V, i, 264–71]. He explains this afterward in order to excuse himself for having been so violent: the ostentatious display of the other's pain,

> The bravery of his grief did put me
> Into a tow'ring passion [V, ii, 78–9].

Hamlet sees Laertes jump into the grave in order to embrace his sister, and he jumps in after him to do the same. I must say that we might well form curious ideas about what must be happening in the grave, and I suggested this to you last time with my little imaginary painting. Stated otherwise, Hamlet proceeds by the pathway of mourning, but it is a type of mourning that is adopted in the narcissistic relationship that obtains between *m*, the ego, and the image of the other, *i(a)*.

The backdrop is this scene in which Hamlet suddenly sees the passionate relationship of a subject with an object, this relationship being manifested by someone else [Laertes]. This scene grabs him and offers him a prop by which his own relationship as a subject, $, with Ophelia – little object *a*, which had been rejected owing to the confusion or compounding of objects – is suddenly re-established.

And it is this suddenly re-established level that is momentarily going to make a man of him. It is, in other words, going to make him into someone capable – for only a brief moment, no doubt, but a moment that suffices for the play to end – of fighting and killing.

I am not, of course, saying that Shakespeare said all of these pretty things to himself. The fact remains that he included, in the 342
play's articulation, an odd character like Laertes in order to have him serve – at the crucial moment of the play, at its climax – the role of an example and prop. Hamlet furiously wrestles him to the ground, and gets him into a hold from which he literally leaves other than before, with the cry I mentioned last time: "This is I, Hamlet the Dane" [V, i, 245].

I will invite you to read the commentaries that have been written about this cry, as they corroborate what I am telling you – namely, that this is the moment at which something happens that allows Hamlet to take hold of his desire anew. This proves to you that we are clearly at the heart of the economy of what is involved.

Of course, this almost has but a limited interest, after all, which is that of showing us on which point all the avenues of the play's articulation converge. Our interest is constantly focused on these avenues, and it is owing to the meanders of the action that we participate in the drama. The interest of getting to the graveyard scene has to do with the fact that prior to it there were four acts in which other things happened, things that we are now going to re-examine by reversing course.

In the foreground, there is the role of the play scene. What is this performance [*représentation*]? What does it mean? Why did Shakespeare find it to be indispensable? It has more than one motive, more than one *raison d'être*, but we will try to see its most profound *raison d'être*.

I believe that I have adequately indicated to you today why we are studying *Hamlet*, and sketched out what it means to us. The stakes for us are psychoanalytic experience and the articulation of its structure. Once we have completed this study, what will we be able to keep that will be useful and schematic to us in mapping desire?

I will tell you. I will show you what Hamlet's desire is. It is the neurotic's desire at every moment of its impact [*incidence*].

People have said that Hamlet's desire is an hysteric's desire. This is perhaps quite true. Other people have said that it is an obsessive's desire. That, too, might be argued, for it is a fact that he is full of psychasthenic symptoms, even severe ones. But that is not the point. In truth, Hamlet is both. He is purely and simply the place of desire. Hamlet is not a clinical case. Hamlet, of course – this is all 343

too obvious, and there is no need to recall it to mind – is not a real being. Hamlet is, if you will, a sort of hub where a desire is situated, and we can find all the features of desire in him.

We can interpret and orient his desire in the same way as we work with an hysteric's desire in a dream – namely, his desire is there unbeknownst to the subject, and he is thus forced to construct it. It is in this respect that I will say that Hamlet's problem is closer to the hysteric's desire, for his problem is to find anew the place of his desire. Moreover, what Hamlet does closely resembles what an hysteric is capable of doing – in other words, creating an unsatisfied desire for himself.

But it is equally true that Hamlet's is an obsessive desire, inasmuch as he attempts to prop himself up on the basis of an impossible desire. This is not quite the same thing.

Both are true. You will see that we will go as much in one direction as in the other when we interpret Hamlet's remarks and actions. What you must manage to grasp is something that is more radical than this or that type of person's desire, than the desire with which you pinpoint hysterics versus obsessives.

When our colleague N* mentions the hysteric's character, it is in order to say that everyone knows that an hysteric is incapable of loving. When I read things like that, I always want to ask the author, "And what about you? Are you capable of loving?" He says that hysterics are detached from reality – what about him?

Doctors always talk as if they themselves were perfectly well ensconced in their boots, the boots of love, desire, will, and all that follows therefrom. Yet this is a very odd position, and we should have long since realized that it is a dangerous position. It is the kind of position that makes people adopt countertransferential stances owing to which they understand nothing about the patients with whom they work.

This is the realm in which we operate, which is why it is essential to articulate where desire is situated.

March 18, 1959

XVI

THERE IS NO OTHER OF THE OTHER

A father who knew the truth
The meaning of the symbol S(Ⱥ)
The big secret of psychoanalysis
The object, a cursor of the level of desire
The "fading"* of the subject

'Give me my desire!' This is the meaning I told you *Hamlet* has for all those – whether critics, actors, or spectators – who take it up.

This is so, as I also said, because of the exceptional and brilliant structural rigor the Hamlet theme reaches in this play, after an obscure development that began in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with Saxo Grammaticus, continued on in the novelistic version by Belleforest, and then, no doubt, in a sketch by Kyd. There was another sketch by Shakespeare himself, it seems, before it arrived at the form in which we have it today.

This form is characterized, in my view, using the method we employ here, by something that I call structure.

I am trying to give you a key to this structure that allows you to orient yourselves with complete confidence – namely, the topological shape that I call the graph and that we might call a gramma [or: writing, letter, or element with which terms are formed, *gramme*].

1

Let us return to our *Hamlet*.

Given that I have been speaking to you about the play for three classes already, I imagine you have all read it at least once. Let me try to summarize its movement, which is simple and yet profoundly marked by the detours that have allowed for so many different interpretations.

346 If it can be simultaneously so simple and yet endless, it is not very difficult to know why: *the tragedy of Hamlet is the encounter with death.*

Others, to whom I alluded in our preceding classes, have emphasized the first scene, which so prodigiously foreshadows what is to come. It takes place on the platform of Elsinore Castle. The ghost that the sentinels have already seen twice, returns in its hellish form [*forme d'En-bas*], and no one yet knows, at this point in time, what this form is, what it is bringing with it, or what it means.

On this point, I mentioned a comment by Coleridge. I am mentioning him again today because I perhaps gave you the impression two classes back that I was criticizing him. In telling you that he did no better than to see himself in Hamlet, the character, I seemed to be minimizing the import of his commentary, whereas he was the first to have sounded the depths of *Hamlet* – and of many other things as well. He underscores in his notes on the play, which are so fine – and easily accessible, as they are included in his *Lectures on Shakespeare* – that owing to Shakespeare's art, even Hume, who was otherwise so opposed to ghosts, "could not but have had faith in this Ghost dramatically," says Coleridge, "let his anti-ghostism have been as strong as Sampson against other ghosts less powerfully raised."

Here Sampson lies prostrate [*terrassé*], and this is indubitably because Shakespeare came very close to something that was not a "ghost"* but rather an actual encounter, not with a dead man [*le mort*], but with death itself [*la mort*]. The encounter with death is, in short, at the crux of the play. *Hamlet's venturing out to meet with death* is the point from which we must set out in order to conceptualize what we are promised from the very first time the ghost appears, at the precise moment at which the clock strikes one o'clock, "The bell then beating one" [I, i, 39].

We find this "one"* again at the end of the play. It is the moment at which, after many detours, Hamlet finds himself on the verge of taking the action that will simultaneously seal his fate. Advancing almost with his eyes closed toward the man he must kill, he ends up telling Horatio – and this is not at just any old moment – that "a man's life's no more than to say 'one'" [V, ii, 74].

Obviously, in order to approach this moment, he takes side streets; he takes the long way around [*l'école buissonnière*], as they
347 say. This exact expression can be found in the text. I am borrowing it from Horatio, a paragon of modesty and kindness, at the moment at which he comes to assist Hamlet. He says at that point that he has "a truant disposition," which means that he moseys along [I, ii, 168]. No one says that about Hamlet, yet that is what has always struck

critics. Why doesn't Hamlet go straight for it? Instead, he tarries. In short, what we are trying to fathom here is why he does so.

Don't think that, on this point, we are taking the long way around or a side street. The route we are following is no doubt different from that followed by the critics who have preceded us, but it differs from theirs only in the following respect, that it situates the question in a slightly different place. What they have said does not lose its import for all that. The proof thereof is that what they sensed was immediately foregrounded by Freud.

What are we told first? We are told that the action in question, the action of putting someone to death – an action that is so pressing and that in the final analysis takes such a short time to execute, we not knowing why it takes the hero so long – encounters an obstacle in Hamlet, that of desire.

This discovery is both a reason and a paradox. For, as I showed you, Hamlet's enigma remains unsolved, and we are forced to contemplate the following: the desire in question, since it is the desire discovered by Freud – that is, desire for the mother, desire insofar as it incites rivalry with he who possesses her – this desire should, good Lord, go in the same direction as the action. What, then, can it mean if desire serves to obstruct action here?

Let us begin to decipher it. This will lead us, in the end, to the mythical function of Hamlet that makes him Oedipus' equal.

Claudius must be killed. He must be murdered by Hamlet – indeed, Hamlet wants to commit the murder – and it will be a just murder. As opposed to what certain authors have suggested, as I told you, Hamlet is not conflicted over rights or orders – that is, the grounds for the serving of justice. There is no ambiguity in his mind between public order, the execution of the law, and private tasks. He has no doubt but that this murder is exactly what the law commands. But what we immediately see when we read the text is *the close link between this murder*, whose necessity he does call into question, *and his own death.*

This murder is not committed until Hamlet has already been 348
given a fatal blow, in the short space of time remaining to him between the deathblow and the moment at which he will be no more. We must take this rendezvous with death, to which we can give its full meaning, as our point of departure.

This last of all rendezvous, onto which Hamlet's action is projected and by which he orients himself at the end, has no meaning except in relation to the subject as we attempt to define and articulate him here: a subject that has not yet come to light because his advent was delayed by strictly philosophical articulations; the subject as Freud tells us he is constructed; a subject who is distinguished from

the subject Western philosophy has been talking about since there has been a theory of knowledge; a subject who is in no wise the universal prop of objects, but who is in some sense the negative of that subject and his ubiquitous prop; a subject insofar as he speaks, and insofar as he is structured in a complex relationship with the signifier, the very relationship we are trying to formulate here with the help of the graph.

To trace it out once again, the intersection of demand's intention and the signifying chain occurs for the first time at point A, which we have defined as the Other with a capital *O*, qua locus of truth.

This is the locus in which speech is situated. Taking up its place there, speech establishes the order of truth, an order that is evoked and invoked whenever the subject articulates something, whenever he speaks. Indeed, speech does something that is different from all the immanent forms of captivation of one [person] with respect to another, since it establishes a third element – namely, the locus of the Other in which speech is inscribed as truth even when it lies. Nothing in the imaginary register can be equated with that.

This discourse for the Other, or reference to the Other, extends beyond the Other, inasmuch as it is taken up by the subject on the basis of the Other in order to constitute the question, "What do I want?" Better stated, the question is addressed to the subject here, and in an already inverted form: "What do *you* want?"

Beyond alienated demand – in the system of discourse that is located at A, residing in the locus of the Other – the subject, propelling himself, wonders what he is as a subject. What must he
349 encounter beyond the locus of truth? Beyond the locus of truth, he must encounter what the very genius, not of language, but of the extreme metaphor that tends to be formulated when we are faced with certain significant spectacles, calls by a name that we will recognize here in passing: the *moment* [literally: hour, *heure*] of truth.

In an era in which all of philosophy has taken the path of articulating what links time [*temps*] with being, let us not forget that past, present, and future, the constitutive times [or: tenses, *temps*] of temporality, are those of grammar. The notion that time is mapped only with respect to the act of speaking is quite elementary. The present is the moment at which I am speaking, and nothing else. It is strictly impossible for us to conceptualize a temporality in the animal dimension – in other words, in the dimension of appetite. Even the ABCs of temporality require the structure of language.

In going beyond the Other – in this discourse which is no longer a discourse for the Other, but the Other's discourse, strictly speaking, in which the dotted [or: discontinuous or broken, *brisée*] line of unconscious signifiers is constituted, in this Other in which the

subject advances owing to his question – what the subject aims at is, in the final analysis, the moment [*heure*] of the encounter with himself, with his will, with something that we are going to try to formulate. We cannot immediately enumerate its elements, even if certain signs here nevertheless represent them for us, signs that serve us as a map or prefiguration of the tiering [or: layering or different levels, *étagement*] of what awaits us in what one might call the stages or necessary steps of the question.

Let us nevertheless note what Hamlet demonstrates to us on this score.

Hamlet, as I told you, is not this or that, is neither an obsessive nor an hysteric. Why? Because he is first and foremost a poetic creation. Hamlet does not have a neurosis; he demonstrates neurosis to us, which is something altogether different than to be neurotic. Nevertheless, when we look at Hamlet in a certain mirrored lighting, specific sentences make him appear to have something bordering on obsessive structure. This has to do with the element that reveals structure in the obsessive, the element that is highlighted maximally by obsessive neurosis – namely, that the major function of desire consists here in keeping at bay and awaiting the hour of the desired encounter.

Here I am using a term that Freud provides us in *Inhibitions,* 350
Symptoms and Anxiety – namely, *Erwartung*, which he explicitly distinguishes from *abwarten*, meaning to brace oneself [*tendre le dos*]. *Erwartung* means to await (or expect) it, in the active sense, and also to make it wait. Playing a game with respect to the moment of the encounter essentially dominates the obsessive's relation to his desire. Hamlet certainly shows us a whole dialectic, a whole range of other ways of playing with the object as well, but this is the most obvious one; it is the one that appears on the surface, strikes us, provides the style of the play, and has always constituted its enigma.

Let us now try to discern the coordinates that the play gives us in other elements.

What, in short, distinguishes Hamlet's position from that of Oedipus? What makes it such a striking variation on the latter? Oedipus did not beat around the bush like Hamlet did, as Freud nicely remarks in his explanatory footnote.

When people throw in the towel, they resort to the following sort of rot: "Good Lord, everything is going to pot, we modern folk are in a period of decadence, we go back and forth 600 times before doing what other people – the good, courageous, people of yore – did right off the bat." This is not an explanation, and we should be suspicious of any reference to the idea of decadence. If it is true that our contemporaries have arrived at such a pass, we must, at least if we are

psychoanalysts, consider that it is for some other reason than the supposed fact that their nerves are not as solid as their fathers' were.

We can examine what is involved from other angles. I believe we must situate the question elsewhere. I have already drawn your attention to an essential element that is constitutive of the structure of the Oedipus myth: Oedipus did not have to go back and forth dozens of times before taking action; he did so even before thinking about it and without even knowing he was doing it.

Recall now what I began our Seminar with this year. From what angle did I present the gramma to you as the key to the problem posed by desire? It is no accident that I chose a very simple dream from "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," the one in which the dead father appears. Recall that I wrote on the upper line [of the graph], the line of enunciation in the dream, "he
351 did not know." This is where I situate the blissful ignorance of those who are submerged in the necessary drama that follows from the fact that the subject who speaks is subjected to the signifier. Let me note in passing that no one explains why this is so.

For if the father, who had fallen asleep in the garden, was laid low by having this delicate juice, hebenon, poured into his ear (*oneille*, as Jarry writes it, instead of *oreille*), he should not have been aware of it. We are never told that he woke up from his sleep to observe what was happening, and the scurf patches that covered his body were never seen by any but those who discovered his corpse. We must then assume that people in the hereafter are very well informed about how they got there. Although this might, in theory, be possible, it is nevertheless not something that we must immediately consider to be true. I am saying all of this to underscore the arbitrary nature of the father's initial revelation, the revelation that gives the entire plot of *Hamlet* its impetus.

The fact that the father reveals the truth about his death is an essential coordinate in *Hamlet*, which distinguishes the play from what occurs in the myth of Oedipus. A veil is lifted, the one that weighs on the articulation of the unconscious line. This is the veil that we analysts try to lift in our clinical practice and, as you know, we certainly have our work cut out for us.

Analysts' interventions aim to re-establish the coherence of the signifying chain at the level of the unconscious. If these interventions present so many difficulties and are met with so much opposition on the subject's part – so many refusals, everything we refer to as "resistance," which is the pivotal point of the whole history of psychoanalysis – we can but assume that this veil must serve an essential function in preserving the safety, I would say, of the subject insofar as he speaks.

In *Hamlet*, the question is resolved – the father knew. And because he knew, Hamlet also knows. In other words, he has the answer. He has the answer, and there can be only one answer.

This answer cannot necessarily be formulated in psychological terms. I mean, it is not an answer that is necessarily comprehensible, and still less one that hits you in the gut. But it is a fatal type of answer, all the same.

Let us try to see what this answer is.

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I already symbolized this answer for you because I was forced to, owing to which I asked you to lend me credence. It is, in short, the message [S(Ⱥ)] at the point at which it is constituted on the upper line, that of the unconscious.

But it is easier and more honest to ask someone to lend you credence regarding something which at the outset has no meaning whatsoever, for that does not tie your hands in any way, except that it perhaps requires you to seek out this meaning, which nevertheless leaves you free to create it by yourself.

I began to articulate this answer in the following form. First of all, we have capital S, which stands for "signifier." This already distinguishes the answer at the level of the upper line from the answer at the level of the lower line, which is written with a lowercase *s*, standing for "signified."

In effect, at the level of simple discourse, the meaning of what we meant is shaped by the speech that unfolds at the level of the Other. The answer is thus always, with respect to this speech, the Other's signified, *s*(Ⱥ). But there is something beyond simple discourse where the subject asks himself the question, "Who is speaking?" "Who meant this or that at the level of the Other?" "What have I, in the final analysis, become in all of that?" At this level, the answer is, as I told you, the signifier of the Other with a bar through it: S(Ⱥ).

There are a thousand ways to begin to discuss what this symbol includes, but since we are talking about *Hamlet*, we will choose the clear, obvious, emotional, and dramatic pathway today. It is furnished to us by *Hamlet*, and the value of the play is that it allows us to accede to the meaning of S(Ⱥ).

The meaning of what Hamlet learns from his father is right in front of our noses and very clear indeed. It is the irremediable, absolute, unfathomable betrayal of love – of the purest love, the love this king had. Like all men, this king may, of course, have been a serious rascal, but with his wife, in any case, he went so far as to shield her

face from "the winds of heaven" [I, ii, 141] – at least if we are to take Hamlet's word for it. The meaning of what Hamlet learns from his
353 father is the absolute duplicity of what had seemed to Hamlet to be the very epitome and essence of beauty and truth.

The answer lies there. Hamlet's truth is a hopeless truth. There is no trace in the whole play of an ascension toward something that might lie beyond this, some sort of redemption. We are told that the first encounter [was with what] came from hell. *Hamlet* is, in effect, situated in the infernal relationship to the Acheron, which Freud chose to move, since he was unable to bend the higher powers to his will.

Nothing is more clear, simple, or obvious, and it is nevertheless quite curious to see that certain writers barely highlight this regarding *Hamlet*, out of some sort of sense of propriety – one must not alarm sensitive souls, no doubt.

But however painful this answer may be, I am only giving it to you as a single step forward in the realm of what is sensed or felt. For any conclusion or verdict, as radically as it may take on the guise of what is known as pessimism, is nevertheless designed to cast a veil over what is at stake.

We must be able to formulate this answer in a way that homes in more closely on what led me to choose this abbreviation, S(Ⱥ). This abbreviation does not imply that whatever happens at the level of A is of no value whatsoever – otherwise stated, that all truth is fallacious. This is the kind of comment that can make people laugh in those amusing postwar periods, when people come up, for example, with things like the philosophy of the absurd, which is appreciated above all in underground nightclubs [*caves*]. Let us try to articulate something more serious, or lighter in tone.

I believe that the moment has come to deliver up to you what, in essence, this abbreviation means, even though you are likely to think I am coming at it from a rather peculiar angle. Still, I do not believe it to be a contingent one.

Barred A means the following. At A – which is not a being, but rather the locus of speech, the locus where the whole system of signifiers, that is, a whole language, resides in a developed or enveloped form – something is missing. What is missing can only be a signifier, hence the S. The formulation that gives S(Ⱥ) its most radical value is as follows: the signifier that is missing at the level of the Other.

This is the big secret of psychoanalysis, if I may say so myself. The big secret is that there is no Other of the Other.

354 Indeed, psychoanalytic experience reveals to us that the subject who speaks is necessarily structured in a way that distinguishes him from the perennial subject, even if the latter has been revamped in

the course of developments in philosophy in a sense that might well strike us, after all – from a certain perspective, looking at things retrospectively – as delusional. It may be a "fecund delusion," but that does not stop it from being delusional. In traditional philosophy, the subject subjectifies himself indefinitely. If I am because I think, I am because I think that I am, and so on and so forth – there is no reason for that to ever stop. People have long since perceived that it is not so clear that I am because I think, and that we can only be sure of one thing, which is that I am because I think that I am. That is surely true. Yet, what psychoanalysis teaches us is something else altogether. It is that I am precisely *not* the one who is in the process of thinking that I am, for the simple reason that, owing to the fact that I think that I am, I am thinking in the locus of the Other. The upshot being that I am something other than he who thinks "I am."

Now, the problem is that I have absolutely no guarantee that this Other, owing to what he has in his system, can give me back, if I may express myself thus, what I gave him – namely, his being and his essence as truth. As I told you, there is no Other of the Other. There is no signifier in the Other that can, in this case, answer for [*répondre de*] what I am. And to state things differently, the hopeless truth I mentioned earlier, the one we encounter at the level of the unconscious, is a faceless, closed truth, a truth that can be bent in any direction one likes. As we know only too well, it is truth without truth.

This is what constitutes the biggest obstacle to those who try to broach our work from the outside – that is, from other fields. As they do not participate with us in *work in which interpretations are designed to have an effect*, which can only be conceptualized as metaphorical, and inasmuch as our interpretations always play and resonate between the two lines of the graph, they cannot understand what is involved in psychoanalytic interpretation.

If we can speak of a signifier that the Other does not have at its disposal, it is because this signifier is nevertheless somewhere. With this little gramma, I am telling you where it is so that you do not lose your bearings. If I have done so as carefully as I could, it was 355
certainly not in order to make things more confusing for you.

You can recognize the signifier of the barred Other wherever you find the bar on the Other. The hidden signifier, the one that is not at the Other's disposal, is precisely the one that concerns us. It is the very signifier that we bring into play, insofar as we mere simpletons have been caught up in this damned thing known as *logos* ever since we were born. It is the part of us that is sacrificed therein.

It is not purely and simply sacrificed, physically sacrificed, as they

say, or really sacrificed, but symbolically sacrificed. Now this part of you that has taken on a signifying function is not nothing. Which is why there is only one and not dozens of them. We are talking very precisely here about the enigmatic function of what we call the phallus.

The phallus is something that is sacrificed from the organism, from life, from the vital pressure [*poussée vitale*], and that ends up symbolized. "Vital pressure" is, as you know, an expression that I do not believe we should use in just any old which way, but which – once clearly delineated and symbolized, and put in its place, especially where it serves a function, where it is in fact caught up, namely in the unconscious – takes on meaning. Vital turgidity – this enigmatic, universal thing that is more male than female, but which the female can nevertheless become a symbol of – is what is involved in the phallus. Although it is the very symbol of the life that the subject makes signifying, the phallus is not available in the Other and cannot in any way guarantee the signification of the Other's discourse. In other words, regardless of how much he may have sacrificed his life, it is not given back to him by the Other. The Other replies: S(Ⱥ).

Hamlet's point of departure is the answer given by the Other, and it is because he has received a radical revelation [from the ghost] that he is led to follow the whole trajectory that the play traces out, which leads him to his rendezvous with fate.

In order to reach it with him, we are now going to return to what happens in the play.

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Without returning for the time being to the questions I mentioned last time that are raised by the play scene, the scene in which we see the traveling actors, today I would like to bring up an essential element.

It concerns what we are approaching, after having established the function of the two lines of the graph – namely, what lies in the gap between them. The distance the subject can maintain between the two lines is where he breathes freely, as it were, as long as he lives, and this is what we call desire.

Now I have already told you what pressure, abolition, and destruction this desire undergoes because it meets up with [*se rencontre avec*] a certain something from the real Other – the mother as she is, this mother like so many others – who is less desire than gluttony and even engulfment, albeit structured.

Well, this something was obviously, for Shakespeare – at this point in his life, we do not know why, but after all, what difference does it make? – a revelation. The problem posed by women was certainly always present in Shakespeare's work, and there had been man-eaters [*luronnes*] before *Hamlet*, but there were never any as abyssal, ferocious, or sad before *Hamlet*.

See *Troilus and Cressida*, for example. The play was performed the year after *Hamlet*, and perhaps allows us to go more deeply into what Shakespeare thought about women at that time. It is a true marvel, one of the most sublime creations, I believe, one can find in the whole of dramatic literature, and its value has certainly not been fully appreciated.

What is the climax of the play in *Hamlet*? It is undoubtedly the dialogue between Hamlet and his mother, the main lines of which I discussed last time. He implores his mother in more or less the following terms: 'Don't destroy beauty, the world order, don't confuse Hyperion himself' – it is his father whom he designates thusly – 'with the most abject of beings.' And then we see him back down, give up his plea before what he knows to be the fatal necessity of a sort of desire that brooks nothing and withholds nothing.

There are myriad passages I could cite to illustrate Shakespeare's thinking about women. I will confine myself to one that I came 357
across while on vacation, in an entirely different context. It is from *Twelfth Night*.

It concerns someone – The Duke, as they call him – who is quite in love, but who is also, it must be said, rather nutty, even if he is a good man. In order to win his heart, a girl who loves him approaches him – even though nothing in his behavior calls his interest in women into question, since he is in love with a woman – disguised as a boy, which is, all the same, an odd way to get oneself appreciated as a girl. I am not giving you these details at random, but because of what they contribute to the creation of a character whom I am going to introduce to you, Ophelia.

This disguised girl, Viola, is a creation that predates Ophelia. *Twelfth Night* precedes the writing of *Hamlet* by about two years. We have here an example of the way in which the women Shakespeare created come in succession and are transformed, their truly immortally poetic nature manifesting a whole facet of his genius. They are, as you know, among the most fascinating, attractive, captivating, and simultaneously equivocal women in literature. The boy-girl or girl-boy is quite a typical creation here, and a feature appears in it that is going to introduce us to our topic today, introduce us to the next step we are going to take – namely, the role of the object in desire.

After having taken this opportunity to contextualize for you our question about Ophelia, let me return to *Twelfth Night*.

Consider what Duke Orsino – without knowing that the person before him is a girl, much less that she loves him – replies to her fallacious questions. He is in deep despair, and the girl says to him, "How can you complain?"

> Say that some lady, as perhaps there is,
> Hath for your love as great a pang of heart
> As you have for Olivia. You cannot love her. [II, iv, 88–90]

This is, indeed, the case; this is what he suffers from.

> You tell her so. Must she not then be answered? [II, iv, 91]

'You must not, thus, hold against others what you yourself would certainly do.' The Duke, who is blind and stuck in the enigma,
358 addresses a whole speech to her about the difference between woman's desire and man's desire:

> There is no woman's sides
> Can bide the beating of so strong a passion
> As love doth give my heart; no woman's heart
> So big to hold so much; they lack retention. [II, iv, 92–5]

And everything he goes on to say shows desire to be, in essence, the distance found in the specific relationship the subject as barred has with the object expressed in the symbol little *a* – in other words, in the relationship ($\$ \lozenge a$), which I place on the graph on the line that returns from the *x* of unconscious will, and which is, as it were, the cursor of the level at which desire in the subject, strictly speaking, is situated.

I would like now to introduce Ophelia as a character by taking advantage of what philological, textual research has contributed about her antecedents, so to speak. As the play we are studying was written by Shakespeare, we should pay attention to how he transformed the open weave canvas [or: framework, *canevas*] he received from his predecessors. This canvas had already evolved quite a bit, but we are led to believe that it offered still more, and this was undoubtedly enough for it to be accepted. Whatever the case may be, this evolution shows us quite a vista and the vast amount of ground that Shakespeare covered.

Some cretin whose work I read mentioned how happy he was the day he realized – something he should have long since noticed, but

that it took him forever to see – that there is someone who plays the role of Ophelia in Belleforest's tale. In Belleforest's text we are just as perplexed by what happens to Hamlet – namely, that he plainly seems to be crazy. We are not very reassured, for it is clear that this madman nevertheless knows rather well what he wants, and what he wants is what we do not know – it is many things. What he wants is a question for all the other characters.

He is sent a prostitute who, drawing him into the deepest depths of the woods, is supposed to get him to reveal his innermost thoughts while someone else eavesdrops, someone who will then know a bit more about what he wants. The strategy fails, as it should, thanks, I believe, to the girl's love for him. What is clear is that the cretin in question was thrilled to come across this sort of arche-Ophelia, believing that she accounted for the ambiguities in Ophelia's character.

I will obviously not examine with you all of Ophelia's lines here, 359
but you are aware that this incredibly emotional, overwhelming character – whom we might call one of the great figures of humanity – is presented in an extremely ambiguous light. No one has ever yet been able to say if Ophelia is innocence itself that is speaking and that alludes to the most carnal impulses with the simplicity of purity that knows no shame, or whether she is, on the contrary, a slut who is ready for anything. Her lines are tantamount to smoke and mirrors, and they allow for every possible sort of interpretation. Above all, they exude a great deal of charm, something we sense quite palpably in the madness scene, for example.

In truth, it is surprising that our biases concerning the character, nature, signification, and, in a word, mores of women are still so deeply ingrained in us that people can continue to raise such questions about Ophelia. The thing is, in fact, altogether clear. If, on the one hand, Hamlet behaves toward Ophelia with quite exceptional cruelty – cruelty that troubles us, that smarts, as they say, and that gives us the impression that the young woman is a victim – we sense, on the other hand, that she is not, and far from it, the disembodied or disincarnate creature she was made out to be in the pre-Raphaelite painting I mentioned. She is something else altogether.

It seems that Ophelia is quite simply what every girl is, whether or not she has gone beyond the taboo against deflowering – after all, we know nothing about it, and the question seems not to be raised regarding Ophelia. What we want to know is why Shakespeare brought in this character who seems to represent a type of extreme point on a curved line running from his first heroines, who are boy-girls, to something that later returns to the same formula, but transformed, in another guise.

Ophelia seems to be Shakespeare's consummate female character, she being a bud about to blossom – a bud that is threatened by an insect eating away at its heart – offering us a view of life that is ready to blossom and of life that bears all lives within itself. This is, moreover, how Hamlet qualifies her when he pushes her away: you will be "a breeder of sinners" [III, i, 121–2]. In short, Ophelia presents us with the image of someone who is bursting with life and who, more than any other female character, I believe, illustrates for
360 us an equation I have highlighted in my classes, the equation girl = phallus. This is something we can very easily recognize in her.

I will not dwell on things that seem to me to owe, in fact, but to an odd coincidence. I was curious to see where the name Ophelia came from, and I found references to it in an article in Boisacq's etymological dictionary of Greek. Shakespeare undoubtedly did not have at his disposal the dictionaries we use today, but one occasionally comes across, in writings of his time, alongside unbelievable ignorance, such stupefying and penetrating things that coincide with the findings of the most modern criticism, that I can in this case bring out something that is in notes I forgot to bring with me today.

It is in Homer's work, if I recall correctly, that we find *ophelio*, meaning "to make swell or enlarge." The word is used for molting or the fermentation of living things, more or less in the sense of "allowing something to change" or "to thicken." The funniest thing – I cannot help but mention it – is that in the same article, Boisacq, who was an author who paid close attention to the way in which he strung together his signifying chains, felt it necessary to explicitly refer to the verbal form of the word: *ophallos*.

We don't need Boisacq's commentary to see the connection between Ophelia and *phallos*. We see it in the structure. The point is not to indicate now in what respect Ophelia can be the phallus; since she truly *is* the phallus, as we say, it is worth examining how Shakespeare has her fill this role.

What is important here is the fact that Shakespeare takes to a new level what he finds in Belleforest's work. In the legend, as it is related by Belleforest, the courtesan is the bait designed to rip Hamlet's secret away from him – that is, the dark designs he is mulling over – and the goal is to get him to confess them within earshot of those around him who are not too sure how far he might go. Shakespeare transposes this to the upper level where the true question resides: Ophelia, too, is asked to investigate a secret, but, as I will show you next time, it is the secret of desire.

The relations between Hamlet and Ophelia are punctuated in the course of the play by a series of stages [*temps*] that we will examine,
361 for what is articulated there will allow us to grasp in an especially

lively way the relationship between the subject insofar as he speaks – that is to say, insofar as he is subjected to his rendezvous with fate – and the object. But this term must take on another meaning, the meaning it has in psychoanalysis and owing to psychoanalysis. It is no accident that the term "object" has become so prevalent and that it is now so much more widespread and omnipresent than it was in Freud's work, to the point that certain people talk about a shift that has made it change meaning; for libido, which was previously defined as pleasure-seeking, is now defined as object-seeking.

As I have told you, psychoanalysis has taken the wrong road. It formulates and defines this object in a way that misses its goal, in a way that does not undergird what is truly involved in the relationship with the object as such, such as it is inscribed in the formula ($\$ \lozenge a$). The castrated subject, $, is subjected there to something that I will teach you to decipher next time with the name I give it, "the fading* of the subject," as opposed to the notion of the "splitting"* of the object.

What is the object of desire? On a certain occasion, which was no other, I think, than our second class this year, I quoted something the author of which I hope someone here has since identified. She said that what the miser misses when he loses his treasure would, if we knew what it was, teach us a lot about human desire. It was Simone Weil who said that.

This is what we are going to try to home in on as we examine the thread that runs throughout the tragedy between Ophelia and Hamlet.

April 8, 1959

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XVII

OPHELIA, THE OBJECT

The paradoxes of fantasy
When fantasy emphasizes object (*a*)
. . . and when it emphasizes the barred subject
Hamlet is forever on other people's time
The pathology of fantasized vacillation

It was essentially in order to bait you that I announced that I would talk today about Ophelia as bait. But I suspect I will keep my word, for this object, topic, or character fits nicely into the series of remarks I have made at our last four meetings, which is designed to point out the tragedy of desire in *Hamlet*.

If this play can be characterized as the tragedy of desire, it is to the degree to which desire as such – human desire, the desire we deal with in psychoanalysis, the desire that we are in a position to inflect, depending on our aim with regard to it, but that we sometimes confuse with other things – can only be conceptualized and situated with respect to the fixed coordinates of subjectivity whose function Freud demonstrated.

These coordinates install the subject and the signifier at a certain distance from each other. They situate the subject as dependent on the signifier in a specific way. This means, for example, that we cannot account for psychoanalytic experience by basing it on the idea that the signifier is but a pure and simple reflection, product, or even instrument of what people sometimes call interpersonal relations. The signifier is, on the contrary, one of the essential, initial components of a topology without which all psychoanalytic phenomena would be reduced or flattened out, which would then render us unable to account for what one might call the presuppositions of our experience.

If, in following this path [regarding desire], I have selected *Hamlet*
364 as an example, it is because it offers us a very lively dramatic sense of

the coordinates of this topology. I attribute its exceptional power to captivate us to this. It is also what makes me say that, if critics have such a preference for this play and if it never fails to seduce those who go see it, this is because the poet has in some way incorporated insights from his own experience into it. Everything indicates this, in fact, at the sort of turning point that *Hamlet* represents in Shakespeare's opus. One can also say that his experience as a poet, in the technical sense of the term, little by little showed him the way forward here.

It is essential to grasp the import, in his creation, of certain twists and turns that I believe we can interpret with the help of the landmarks articulated in our gramma. A certain twist is employed differently in *Hamlet* than in the plays by Shakespeare that preceded it, than in the earlier tales by Saxo Grammaticus and Belleforest, and than in the plays of which we have but a few fragmentary details. The character involved in this twist is Ophelia, a character who is present in the story right from the beginning.

As I told you, Ophelia is a trap.

Right from the outset of the *Hamlet* legend, Saxo Grammaticus' Ophelia is a trap into which Hamlet does not fall, first of all because he is forewarned, and secondly because the bait itself – namely, the character – does not lend herself to it, even though she has been in love with Prince Hamlet for a long time, as Belleforest's text tells us.

Shakespeare did something completely different with Ophelia. Perhaps he merely deepened the role that the plot assigns to Ophelia in the legend, destined as she is to find out and appropriate Hamlet's secret. Nevertheless, in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, she becomes one of Hamlet's innermost elements, Hamlet having lost the pathway of his desire.

Ophelia is an essential element in the progression that makes Hamlet move toward what, last time, I called the moment [*heure*] of his fatal rendezvous, his rendezvous with the action he carries out in spite of himself in some sense.

We are going to see still more clearly to what degree Hamlet is the image of the level of the subject at which his fate is articulated in terms of pure signifiers, one might say, the subject being in some 365
sense but the flipside of a message that is not even his own.

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The first step we took along this pathway was thus to articulate to what degree the play is the drama of desire insofar as desire is related to the Other's desire.

I showed you to what degree this play is dominated by the Other whose desire we are talking about here. She is unambiguously the mother – that is to say, the primordial subject to whom demands are addressed. This subject [the mother, not the child] is, as I showed you, the true all-powerful subject that we always talk about in psychoanalysis. Women are not in themselves omnipotent – they do not have within themselves the dimension of the so-called omnipotence of thought; what is at issue here is the presumed omnipotence of the subject to whom one's first demands are addressed; as I told you in our first discussions on the topic, omnipotence is always attributed [by the child] to that subject.

What we find at the level of the Other's desire primarily presents itself to Prince Hamlet – that is, to the main character – as a tragedy, as the drama of a subjectivity, Hamlet's, a subjectivity that is always present and, as we may say, far more than in any other drama. The drama always presents itself in a twofold manner, its elements being both inter- and intra-subjective.

Thus, from the subject's perspective, from that of Prince Hamlet, the Other's desire – that is, his mother's desire – essentially presents itself as a desire that cannot tell the difference between an eminent, idealized, and exalted object, Hamlet's father, and a disparaged object worthy only of scorn, Claudius, the criminal and adulterous brother. If the mother cannot distinguish between them, it is because of something in her that is akin to an instinctual voracity. Let us say that the sacrosanct "genital object" that we find in recent psychoanalytic terminology presents itself in her as no other than the object of a jouissance that is truly the direct satisfaction of a need.

This dimension is essential, and it forms one of the poles between which Hamlet's plea to his mother vacillates. I showed this to you in the scene in which, when face to face with her, Hamlet calls on her to become abstinent, in the crudest and cruelest terms, moreover, at
366 the moment at which he communicates to her the essential message that the ghost, his father, charged him with transmitting. Suddenly this plea collapses, and Hamlet sends his mother back to Claudius' bed, back to the caresses of a man who will not fail to make her yield yet again.

In the sort of collapsing or caving in that manifests itself at the end of Hamlet's plea, we find the very model that allows us to conceptualize in what respect there is a waning [*retombée*] of his own desire, of his impulse toward the action he is dying to take, the whole world becoming a living reproach to him that he is not equal to his own will. If this action founders [*retombe*] in the same way as his plea to his mother does, it is essentially because of the dependence of the subject's desire on the Other subject. This is the major

accent, the very accent of the drama of *Hamlet*, what one might call its constant dimension.

What we need to do now is see in a more articulated way – entering into psychological detail that would remain, I must say, fundamentally enigmatic if it were not enlisted in the overall aim that constitutes the meaning of *Hamlet* as a tragedy – how this reverberates in the very heart of Hamlet's will, which, on my graph, is the hook or question mark constituted by the "*Che vuoi?*" of the subjectivity that is constituted in the Other and articulated in the Other [see Figure 1.3].

This is the thrust of what I have to say today. It concerns what one might call the imaginary setting [or: regulating, *réglage*] that is brought about by what constitutes desire's prop.

Here, at the beginning of the curve that represents the assumption by the subject of his essential will, we have an indeterminate, variable point [d]. This point is determined [*réglé*] on the basis of something that lies somewhere across from it, and as we can immediately say, at the level of the unconscious subject [see, for example, Figure 15.4]. I designate the endpoint of what constitutes the subject's question as S barred in the presence of little *a* ($\$ \lozenge a$), and call it fantasy. In the psychical economy, it represents something you are familiar with; this something is ambiguous because, when we broach it from a certain phase, it is in fact a final term in the conscious, the endpoint of all human passion insofar as it is marked by some of the traits that we refer to as "traits of perversion."

The mystery of fantasy, insofar as it is in some sense the final 367
term of a desire, is based on the fact that it always presents itself in a more or less paradoxical guise. This explains why the Ancient Greeks rejected the dimension of fantasy as absurd. The essential step in interpreting it was only made in the modern era, by psychoanalysis. In effect, it could only be conceptualized by being related to an unconscious economy that underpins it qua perverse. If fantasy appears as the endpoint of desire, as its final term and enigma, it can only be understood in terms of an unconscious circuit that is articulated through a signifying chain that is profoundly different from the one that the subject commands, $s(A) \rightarrow A$, which initially lies at the level of demand.

In the lower chain, fantasy both intervenes and does not intervene. Some aspect of fantasy does not normally arrive there by the pathway ($\$ \lozenge a) \rightarrow s(A)$; it does not usually reach $s(A)$. If it *does* reach $s(A)$, we find ourselves in an atypical situation. Fantasy usually remains unconscious; it is separate, it does not arrive at the message, at the Other's signified [$s(A)$], which is the module or sum total of all the significations acquired by the subject in interpersonal exchange

and all of discourse. Nevertheless, at certain phases, which are more or less pathological, it goes beyond this.

Later on, I will give names to the moments at which it goes beyond this, the latter occurring only in a single direction, as the schema indicates. I am pointing out this essential articulation because we are, in short, here in order to make headway in using the device I call the gramma; but for the time being we are simply going to see how something in Shakespeare's tragedy functions – namely, what I have called the moment at which Hamlet's desire founders, inasmuch as it makes sense to relate it to this imaginary setting [*réglage*].

In this mapping, Ophelia is situated at the level of the letter *a*. This letter is inscribed in our symbolization of fantasy, fantasy being the imaginary prop or substrate of desire insofar as desire is different from demand and also from need. This *a* corresponds to something toward which all of psychoanalysis is currently heading when it seeks to define the object and object relations.

There is something right-minded in the current direction of analy-
368 sis. As object relations theory usually articulates it, the object clearly plays a decisive role: it fundamentally structures the subject's way of apprehending the world. However, in the majority of the recent works that attribute a more or less major role to object relations – whether it be the volume that came out in our neck of the woods, the one to which I have already alluded as the most caricatural example, or others that are more elaborate, those by Federn, for example, and certain others – the explanations we ordinarily find are marked by an error and a confusion based on the theorization of the object as a so-called pre-genital object. Moreover, the genital object itself is situated by their authors within the various forms of the pre-genital object: the oral object, the anal object, and so on.

The confusion in question can be seen on our schema [the graph of desire]. It involves mistaking the dialectic of the object for the dialectic of demand. This confusion is understandable because in both cases the subject finds himself in the same position in his relationship with the signifier: he is eclipsed there.

Consider two points on our gramma. Over here we have the code at the level of the unconscious, ($◊D) – in other words, the series of relationships that the subject has with a certain apparatus of demand. Over there we have the imaginary relationship ($◊*a*) that preferentially constitutes him in a certain position, which is also defined by his relationship to the signifier, wherein he is faced with an object *a*. The subject is eclipsed at both of these points.

I began to articulate this eclipsed status last time with the term "fading."* I selected this term for all sorts of philological reasons, and also because it has become quite familiar to us in the context

of the communication devices we use. Fading* is precisely what happens in a communication device designed to transmit sound when someone's voice disappears, or breaks up, only to reappear owing to some variation in transmission quality. I will naturally provide real examples to fill out what is merely a metaphor here.

It is thus insofar as the subject is in one and the same moment of oscillation – the one that characterizes fading* when faced with demand and when faced with the object – that the confusion can occur.

What are known as object relations are, in fact, always relations between the subject and, not objects, as people say, but rather signifiers of demand; and these relations arise especially at the specific moment called "the fading* of the subject." Inasmuch as demand remains fixed, one can articulate the various modes of the signifying apparatus that correspond to the different types of demand – oral, anal, and so on – in a way that clinically corresponds, in effect, to the relationship to the object. The fact remains that it is highly problematic to confuse the relationship to the signifier with the relationship to the object. 369

For the object, qua object of desire, has a different meaning. All kinds of things make it necessary not to overlook this, even when we would like to give, as people do, their full, determinant, primitive value to the signifiers of demand, insofar as they are oral or anal signifiers, in order to make them correspond to all the subdivisions and different orientations or polarizations the object itself can take on in relationship to the subject. The correlation between the object and the subject as marked by the bar is, let me point out, the very thing that is overlooked by object relations theory as it is currently formulated.

Even when we consider the subject at the most primitive stages of the oral period – as it has been articulated, for example, by Melanie Klein in a way that is experience-near, rigorous, and precise – we find ourselves faced with certain paradoxes that are visible in Klein's texts. These paradoxes cannot be inscribed in a straightforward theorization of the subject as faced with an object that corresponds to a need, the breast in this case, if only because the subject is faced specifically with the nipple [*mamelon*].

A paradox arises here because, right from the outset, another enigmatic signifier presents itself at the horizon of this relationship. This fact is clearly brought out by Klein. Her only claim to fame in this context is that she does not hesitate to run headlong toward something, which is to ratify what she encounters in her clinical experience. Lacking an adequate theory, she clearly contents herself with rather poor explanations; yet she plainly attests to the fact that

the phallus is already there, as such, [in the relationship between the child and the breast] and as, strictly speaking, destructive with regard to the subject. Right from the outset, she makes the phallus into a primordial object that is both the best and the worst, and
370 around which all the avatars of the paranoid phase and the depressive phase revolve.

I am doing no more here, of course, than mentioning this and recalling it to mind. If S barred is of interest to us today, it is not, in fact, insofar as it is connected up with demand but with the element that we are going to try to home in on as closely as possible this year: little *a*.

Little *a* is the essential object around which the dialectic of desire revolves. The subject experiences himself here as faced with an element that is alterity at the imaginary level, as I have already formulated and defined it many times. It is an image, and it is pathos.

The other, which the object of desire is, serves a function that defines desire with twofold coordinates such that it does not aim at an object that satisfies a need, not in the slightest, but rather at an already-relativized object – I mean an object that has some relation to the subject, and specifically the subject who is present in fantasy. This is phenomenologically obvious and I shall return to it later on.

The subject is present in fantasy, and the object – which is the object of desire solely insofar as it is one of the terms in fantasy – takes the place, I would say, of what the subject is deprived of symbolically. This may appear a bit abstract to those here who have not followed the whole of my preceding path with me. For them, let me say that, in the articulation of fantasy, the object takes the place of what the subject is deprived of – namely, the phallus. It is owing to this that the object assumes the function it has in fantasy, and that desire is constituted with fantasy as its prop. It is difficult, I think, to go any further regarding what I mean about desire and its relationship with fantasy.

The object in fantasy is the alterity – image and pathos – by which an other takes the place of what the subject is deprived of symbolically. This formulation indicates the direction that allows us to conceptualize in what respect this imaginary object finds itself in a position in which what one might call the virtues or the dimension of being converge on it; it goes so far as to become the true decoy [or: lure, *leurre*] of being that the object of human desire is. This is what Simone Weil realized when she pointed to the thickest, most opaque relation that can be presented to us regarding man and the object of his desire – namely, the relationship between the miser and
371 his treasure. The fetishistic character of the object of human desire is most blatant there. All of desire's objects are fetishistic in character.

It is quite comical to hear, as I did recently, some guy try to explain the relationship between the theory of signification and Marxism by saying that we cannot broach the theory of signification without taking interpersonal relations as our point of departure. He went rather far, since, after three minutes, he claimed that the signifier is the instrument thanks to which men transmit their private thoughts to their fellow men. These are the exact words of someone who supposedly based his ideas on Marx's work. If we do not take interpersonal relations as our foundation, we fall, according to him, into the trap of fetishizing what is involved in the realm of language.

I assuredly agree that we encounter something fetishistic, but I wonder if what is known as a fetish is not one of the very dimensions of the human world, and precisely the dimension *we* must account for. If we locate interpersonal relations at the root of everything, we end up relating the fetishization of human objects to some sort of interpersonal misunderstanding, which in turn means relating it to significations. Similarly, the private thoughts in question – in a developmental perspective, I think – must make us laugh, for if they are already there, why bother to look any further?

In short, it is rather surprising that a thesis that considers human subjectivity to precede human praxis can be defended by someone who considers himself to be a Marxist. It seems to me, on the contrary, that it suffices to open the first volume of *Capital* to realize that the very first step of Marx's analysis of the fetishistic nature of commodities consists precisely in broaching the problem from the level of the signifier, even if the term is not used there. The relations between values are defined as signifying relations, and all subjectivity, and possibly even that of fetishization, comes to be inscribed within this signifying dialectic. This is true beyond a shadow of a doubt.

This is but a simple tangent – a reflection of the occasional indignation and boredom I feel when I have wasted my time – that I am 372
pouring into your ears.

2

Let us now try to use this relationship, $ in the presence of little *a*, which to us is the fantasized prop of desire. We must articulate it clearly. What does *a*, this imaginary other, mean?

It means that something more encompassing than a person can be included therein – a whole chain or scenario. I have no need to return here to what I brought out last year in my analysis of Jean Genet's *The Balcony*. To explain what I mean in this context, I need

but refer to what we might call the diffuse brothel, inasmuch as it becomes the cause of what analysts think of as the sacrosanct genital stage.

What is important in the structural element of imaginary fantasy that is situated at the level of *a*?

First of all, its opaque character, which specifies it in the most accentuated forms as the pole of perverse desire – stated otherwise, it is the structural element of the perversions. Perversion is characterized by the fact that in perverse fantasy, the entire emphasis is placed on the side of the strictly imaginary correlative. In other words, it is placed on the other, little *a*, or the parenthesis ($a + b + c$, etc.), in which the most elaborate objects can be found together and combined depending on the trajectory, consequences, and residues in which the function of a fantasy in a perverse desire crystallizes.

Nevertheless, what is essential is the phenomenological element that I alluded to earlier. As strange or bizarre as fantasy in perverse desire may appear to be, desire is always in some way involved – involved in a relationship that is always linked to pathos, to the pain of existing as such, of existing purely and simply, or existing as a sexual term. If a sadistic fantasy subsists, it is quite obviously because he who is subjected to the abuse in the fantasy interests the subject, insofar as the subject himself might be exposed to the same
373 sort of abuse. We can but be surprised that people thought even for a single instant that they could avoid this dimension by relating sadistic tendencies to primal aggression, pure and simple.

But I am already saying too much here. If I am doing so, it is merely in order to emphasize the direction in which we must now articulate the true opposition between perversion and neurosis. Perversion is situated at exactly the same level, as you will see, as neurosis; it is something that is, of course, articulated, interpretable, and analyzable. Nevertheless, in perversion, something concerning the essential relationship between the subject and his being becomes fixated on imaginary elements, as people have always said, in an essentially localized form, whereas neurosis is distinguished by the fact that the emphasis is placed there on the other term of fantasy – in other words, the barred subject.

I told you that fantasy as such is situated at the extreme point of subjective questioning – at its tip, endpoint, or reflection – inasmuch as, beyond demand, the subject attempts to get his bearings anew [*se resaisir*] in the dimension of the Other's discourse in which he must refind what was lost owing to the fact of his entrance into discourse. As I told you, what is involved is, in the final analysis, not the level of truth but the moment of truth.

This allows us to designate what most profoundly distinguishes

neurotic fantasy from perverse fantasy. Perverse fantasy, as I told you, can be called upon [*appelé*], it is located in space, it suspends some sort of essential relationship to time – it is not strictly speaking atemporal, but lies outside of time. In neurosis, on the other hand, the subject's relationship to time is all too infrequently talked about, whereas it is the very basis of the subject's relations to his object at the level of fantasy.

In neurosis, the object takes on a signification that must be sought out in what I call "the moment [*heure*] of truth." The object there is always an hour ahead of schedule or an hour behind. Hysteria is characterized by the function of a desire qua unsatisfied, and obsession by the function of an impossible desire; but beyond those two terms, there is a phenomenon that has a twofold and inverse relationship to them. This phenomenon constantly arises and manifests itself in the obsessive's procrastination, which is moreover founded on the fact that he always prepares himself for things when it is too late [*anticipe trop tard*]. Similarly, the hysteric always repeats what 374
initially occurred in her trauma – namely, something that came too soon, a fundamental unreadiness [*immaturation*].

The subject always seeks to find his moment [*heure*] in his object. One might even say that he learns how to tell time from it. This is the foundation of neurotic behavior, in its most general form. It is here that we once again intersect Hamlet.

Hamlet has been assigned every form of neurotic behavior, no matter how extreme – depending on which analyst was interpreting him – even character neurosis, for a legitimate reason that runs throughout the plot and that truly constitutes one of the common factors of Hamlet's structure. The first factor is his dependence on the Other's desire – that is, on his mother's desire. The second common factor, which I will ask you to look for when you read or reread the play, is that Hamlet is always tributary to the other's time [*suspendu à l'heure de l'autre*], and this is true right up until the end of the play.

Do you recall one of the first turning points we discussed as we began to decipher the text of *Hamlet*, the one that is situated after the play scene, the scene involving the traveling actors? The king gets upset about what is happening onstage, and visibly betrays his own crime in front of everyone, proving that he cannot bear the sight of it. Hamlet triumphs, exults, and scorns the man who has thus given himself away. Then he goes to the rendezvous with his mother that he had scheduled before the play scene, a rendezvous that everyone was pressing him to have as soon as possible. The major scene that I have already so often emphasized takes place with her.

On the way to the rendezvous, Hamlet comes across the king, who

is praying. Shaken to his very foundations by the scene that has just shown him the visage of his own actions, his own scenario, Claudius prays. Hamlet stands there before the king, and everything seems to suggest that the latter is not only disinclined to defend himself, but that he does not even perceive the threat that hangs over him. Hamlet stops at that point because it is not the right time [*heure*].

It is not the other's time [*heure*]. It is not the right moment [*heure*] for him to account for himself to God. To kill him now would be too good for him and too bad for Hamlet's father. It would not sufficiently revenge the latter's death because, owing to Claudius' repentance in his prayer, salvation might be open to him. Be that as it may, one thing is clear, which is that, having just caught the king's conscience as he had hoped – "The play's the thing / Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king" [II, ii, 590–1] – Hamlet stops. Not for a single instant does he think this is the right time. Whatever may happen afterward, this is not the other's time, and he refrains from acting. Similarly, whatever Hamlet does, it is only and always on the other's time that he does it. He puts up with anything and everything.

Let us not forget, all the same, that at the outset of the play – disgusted as he was already, even before his encounter with the ghost* and the unveiling of the crime, by his mother's remarriage – he was thinking of one thing and one thing alone: leaving for Wittenberg. Someone recently underscored this by commenting on a certain practical style that is tending to become established in contemporary mores; he noted that Hamlet was the finest example of the fact that one can avoid many dramas by issuing people passports, allowing them to leave town, in time. If Hamlet had been granted his passport to leave for Wittenberg, there would have been no drama.

It is owing to his parents' agenda [*heure*] that he stays put. It is in accordance with the other's schedule [*heure*] that he puts his crime on hold. It is owing to his stepfather's plans [*heure*] that he departs for England. It is owing to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's mission [*heure*] that he is led to send them to their deaths, thanks to the rather prettily executed trick that so impressed Freud. And it is all the same owing to Ophelia's time, the time at which she commits suicide, that the tragedy finds its terminus at a moment at which Hamlet – who has just, it seems, perceived that it is not so difficult to kill someone, the time "to say 'one'" – will not even have time to say "Phew!"

People propose that he do something that in no way resembles an opportunity to kill Claudius – namely, fight in a very pretty fencing contest. All the details of the contest have been minutely worked

out. The stakes involve what we will call a series of objects, in the collector's [*collectionniste*] sense of the term, for they are all precious objects, collector's objects. We would have to re-examine the text, for even here there are subtleties and we enter into the realm of collections – they involve "rapiers" and "their assigns" [V, ii, 145], things that have value only as luxury objects. Hamlet is in fact provoked to engage in a sort of jousting, it being asserted that he is the inferior fencer and must be granted a handicap in the challenge.* In 376
short it is a complicated ceremony.

We, of course, realize that it is a trap concocted by his stepfather and his friend Laertes. But let us not forget that for him it is tantamount to accepting once again to take the long way around [*l'école buissonnière*]. They are going to have a lot of fun.

He nevertheless feels a little warning in his heart; something stirs him up. The dialectic of presentiment on the hero's part gives emphasis to the drama for a moment. But it is still essentially on the other's time, and far more ridiculously, in order to win the other's bet for him – recall that it is not Hamlet's possessions that are wagered – that he agrees to fight this battle for his stepfather's benefit and as his advocate. In theory, the battle will be courteously fought, yet Hamlet will be facing off against someone who is presumed to be a more accomplished fencer than him and who, as such, will arouse feelings of rivalry and honor in him, a trap in which they are sure they will catch him.

And he runs straight into the trap. The only thing that is new at this point is, I would say, the heat and heart with which he runs. Right up till the end – right up until the final hour [*heure*], an hour that is so determinate that it will be his own hour, for he will be mortally wounded before he can strike his enemy – it is always by the other's watch [*heure*] that the plot of the tragedy proceeds and is brought to an end. This is an absolutely essential framework if we are to conceptualize what is involved.

If Hamlet, the character, and the drama of *Hamlet* metaphysically resonate with the problematic of the modern hero, it is inasmuch as something has, in effect, changed for heroes in relation to their destiny. As I told you, what distinguishes Hamlet from Oedipus is that Hamlet knows. Led to this critical point, we are now in a position to explain what I have called superficial features, such as Hamlet's madness.

In the tragedies of Antiquity we encounter heroes who *are* crazy, but to the best of my knowledge there are none who – in tragedy, as I said, I am not talking about legends – *act* crazy. Does everything in Hamlet's madness come down to pretending to be crazy? Let us consider this.

377 Why is he acting crazy? Undoubtedly because he knows that he is the weaker party. As superficial as this feature may be, I am pointing it out, not because it corroborates my perspective [but simply because it is secondary]. Nevertheless, if we consider it carefully, it is not secondary if we wish to understand what Shakespeare meant to convey to us with *Hamlet*. Pretending to be crazy is, in fact, an essential feature of the original legend, as we find it in the versions written by Saxo Grammaticus and Belleforest.

Shakespeare selected the theme of a hero who is forced to act crazy in order to continue down the path that leads him to accomplish his task. This is a strictly modern dimension. He who knows is intrinsically in such a dangerous position, is so doomed to failure and sacrifice, that his path must be, as Pascal says somewhere, one in which he is crazy like everyone else.

Pretending to be crazy is one of the dimensions of what I might call the politics of the modern hero. It should not be overlooked, for it is what Shakespeare latched onto when he decided to write the tragedy of *Hamlet*. This is essentially what the prior authors bequeathed him. And the whole point is to figure out what the madman is thinking.

The fact that Shakespeare selected his subject within this problematic is altogether essential.

We have now arrived at the point at which Ophelia must play her part.

3

If the play truly has in its structure everything that I have just laid out, why bother to bring in Ophelia?

Some of you reproach me for having only timidly made headway. I do not think that I have shown exceptional timidity. I would not like to encourage you to proffer the sort of twaddle with which psychoanalytic texts abound; I simply was astonished that no one had mentioned that Ophelia is *omphalos*, given that one finds so many other wild and crazy things, things that do not pull any punches, merely by opening up Ella Sharpe's "Unfinished Paper on *Hamlet*,"
378 which was perhaps regrettably uncompleted at her death and that maybe should never have been published.

Ophelia is obviously essential. She will forever be linked to the figure of Hamlet, for centuries to come. Since it is too late for me to be able to complete my discussion of Ophelia today, I simply want to punctuate for you what happens in the course of the play.

We first hear her spoken about as the cause of Hamlet's sorry

state. This is Polonius's psychoanalytic-style wisdom: "Hamlet is sad because he is not happy, and if he is not happy it is because of my daughter. You don't know her? She is a rare flower – and I, her father, will naturally not tolerate this."

We see her do something that immediately shows her to be someone quite remarkable – namely, she makes clinical observations. She is, in fact, fortunate enough to be the first person Hamlet runs into after encountering the ghost.* Right after this encounter, which shook him up rather badly, he meets Ophelia, and the way he behaves with her is, I believe, worth repeating here. [As she tells her father:]

My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,
No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,
Ungartered, and down-gyved to his ancle,
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors – he comes before me.
[. . .]
He took me by the wrist and held me hard.
Then goes he to the length of all his arm,
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow
He falls to such perusal of my face
As 'a would draw it. Long stayed he so.
At last, a little shaking of mine arm
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being. That done, he lets me go,
And with his head over his shoulder turned 379
He seemed to find his way without his eyes,
For out o' doors he went without their helps
And to the last bended their light on me. [II, i, 77–100]

Polonius immediately cries, "Mad for thy love?" [85] Yet, in my view, Hamlet's obvious scrutiny of Ophelia shows us Hamlet questioning the object, taking some distance with respect to the object as if to endeavor to identify it, something that has now become difficult for him, and vacillating in the presence of what had hitherto been a supremely exalted object to him. This gives us the first stage [*temps*] of the relation to the object, which involves, as it were, estrangement.*

We cannot say any more about that. Nevertheless, it would not be much of a stretch to designate this moment, at which Hamlet is so sartorially disheveled, as strictly pathological. We can consider it to be akin to those periods in which some sort of subjective disorganization irrupts. Such a phenomenon takes place inasmuch as something vacillates in someone's fantasy and brings out its components, which are registered in what is known as an experience of depersonalization. This is what is manifested in his symptoms. The imaginary limits between the subject and the object manage to be transformed and pass over into the realm of what is known as the fantastical, in the strict sense of the term.

This is exactly what happens when something in the imaginary structure of fantasy, ($\$\lozenge a$), establishes a communication pathway with what far more easily reaches the level of the message, $s(A)$ – namely, the other's image, $i(a)$, insofar as it is my own ego [*m*], which is situated below the message. Authors like Federn indicate with a great deal of finesse the necessary correlations between the feeling of one's own body and the strangeness of what happens to the subject in certain crises, breaks, or attacks [*atteinte*] of the object at the level specified by ($\$\lozenge a$).

If I have perhaps forced things a little bit here in my design to get you interested, it was to show you in what respect this drama is related to certain specific experiences in our clinical work. We will no doubt return to this, but keep in mind, at any rate, that if we do not refer to this pathological schema, it is impossible to clearly situate what Freud situated for the first time at the analytic level:
380 *das Unheimliche* [the uncanny]. The phenomenon is not linked, as certain people thought, to irruptions of the unconscious, but to a sort of imbalance that occurs in fantasy when, going beyond the limits initially assigned to it, it breaks down and meets back up with the other's image. This is actually but one facet of it.

In Hamlet's case, it seems that after this episode Ophelia has completely ceased to exist for him as a love object. "I did love you once," says Hamlet [III, i, 115]. His cruel aggression, along with his highly sarcastic remarks, make these scenes with Ophelia among the strangest in classical literature. Certain writers have struck the same cord in rather extreme plays, but it is quite unusual to see a scene like the one that takes place between Hamlet and Ophelia be given such a central role, to see it right smack in the middle of a tragic play.

In Hamlet's attitude toward Ophelia, we find a trace of the imbalance in the fantasized relationship that I mentioned earlier – the fantasy tilts toward the object, toward perversion. This is one of the features of their relationship. Another is that the object in question is no longer treated as she had been before – that is, as a woman.

To Hamlet, Ophelia becomes a bearer of children and of sins of all ilks. She is doomed to engender sinners and to then have to succumb to all sorts of calumny. She becomes the pure and simple medium for a form of life that is, in its essence, now condemned. In short, what happens at this moment is the destruction or loss of the object, which is reintegrated into its narcissistic frame.

To the subject, the object appears outside, as it were. The formulation that I provided earlier indicates to you what this object is equivalent to, what it takes the place of, and what cannot be given to the subject except at the moment at which he literally sacrifices himself, at which he is no longer it himself, at which he rejects it with his whole being. This object is clearly no other than the phallus.

Yes, Ophelia is at that moment the phallus, the phallus qua signifying symbol of life, the phallus that the subject externalizes and rejects as such. This is the second stage of the relationship to the object.

We do not have much time left and so I hesitate to give you all the 381
coordinates here. I will return to this. But the fact that this is what is involved – namely, a transformation of the formula [($\$ \lozenge a$) into] ($\$ \lozenge \varphi$) in the guise of rejection [*rejet*] – is demonstrated, once you realize it, by something that has nothing to do with the etymology of Ophelia's name.

First of all, the only thing at issue here is fecundity. "Conception is a blessing," Hamlet says to Polonius, "but as your daughter may conceive, friend, look to 't" [II, ii, 184–6]. The entire dialogue with Ophelia shows that woman is conceptualized here only as carrying the vital turgescence that must be cursed and stopped up. As semantic usage shows, "nunnery" could also at that time designate a brothel.

Secondly, the relationship between the phallus and the object is also designated by Hamlet's attitude toward Ophelia during the play scene. When his mother, who is also there, asks him to sit by her, he replies, "No, good mother. Here's metal more attractive" [III, ii, 105], and puts his head between Ophelia's legs, asking her explicitly, "Lady, shall I lie in your lap?" [107]. The phallic quality of the object of desire [*Le rapport phallique de l'objet du désir*] is clearly indicated here.

I do not believe that it is superfluous to indicate, furthermore, since the iconography [devoted to *Hamlet*] has highlighted this so emphatically, that among the flowers surrounding Ophelia as she drowns, there are "dead men's fingers" [IV, vii, 170], and explicit mention is made of the fact that they are called by a cruder name by common folk. The plant in question is *orchis mascula*, and it bears some relation to mandragora [or mandrake] and thus to the

phallic element. I looked up dead men's fingers in the *New English Dictionary*, but I was highly disappointed to find that, even though the name is cited in reference to the term "finger," no mention is made there of what Shakespeare was alluding to with this term.

I have already led you to the third stage of the relation to the object several times, and I am going to end with it again today. It is the stage of the cemetery scene. We should highlight here a connection between what presents itself as a reintegration of *a* and Hamlet's possibility of finishing things off [or: coming full circle, *boucler la boucle*] – in other words, of finally running headlong toward his destiny.

The cemetery scene, which may seem completely gratuitous, is of absolutely capital importance. It is specifically designed so that
382 something occurs, something that Shakespeare found in none of the earlier versions: a furious battle at the bottom of a grave. I have already emphasized this.

In this scene, the highest function of the object is in some sense traced out. The object is reconquered here only at the price of mourning and death. It is on this point that I believe I will be able to complete our discussion of *Hamlet* next time.

April 15, 1959

XVIII

MOURNING AND DESIRE

Procrastination and precipitation
A mathematical metaphor of the phallus
Hamlet and his double
Why and how Hamlet acts crazy
On what is foreclosed in the real

Hamlet, as I have been telling you, cannot stand to have to keep an appointment. For him, the appointment [*rendez-vous*] always comes too soon and so he postpones it.

The commentaries that I have become more and more familiar with in the course of our study of *Hamlet* would like to dismiss the element of procrastination. But we cannot in any way agree to do so. To my way of thinking, procrastination remains one of the essential dimensions of the tragedy.

Yet, when Hamlet takes action it is always with precipitation. He takes action when it suddenly seems to him that an opportunity is presenting itself, when an event beyond his control, resolution, and decision seems to call out to him and offer him some sort of ambiguous opening, which is, strictly speaking, what introduced the perspective that we analysts call flight into the dimension of achievement [*accomplicement*].

This is never clearer than at the moment at which he runs headlong at something that is stirring behind the arras and kills Polonius. There are other such moments as well. For example, when he awakens at night on the boat during the storm, you see the almost mysterious way in which he, while virtually in an altered state, breaks the seals of the message Guildenstern and Rosencrantz are carrying. Consider, too, the almost automatic way in which he substitutes one message for another and, thanks to his ring, re-creates the royal seal, before availing himself of the prodigious opportunity offered when the pirate ship attacks, he taking advantage of the

occasion to escape from his guardians, who then unsuspectingly proceed toward their own execution [IV, vi].

We have here a true phenomenology of the life of the neurotic,
384 since we must call a spade a spade. Its tenor is easily recognizable and almost well known to us from our practice, and from our theory as well. But beyond these tangible characteristics, there is the structural reference that runs throughout the play which I highlighted last time: Hamlet is always operating on the Other's time [*à l'heure de l'Autre*].

This is merely a mirage, of course. There is no Other of the Other, as I explained before by giving you what I called the final answer, in the form of the signifier of the barred Other [S(Ⱥ)]. In the signifier, there is no guarantor of the dimension of truth that is founded by the signifier. For Hamlet, the only time [*heure*] is his own time and there is also but one time: the moment [*heure*] of his downfall. The entire tragedy consists in showing us Hamlet's implacable progress toward that hour.

Nevertheless, the appointment with his downfall is not solely related to the common lot, and thus applicable to all human destiny. If Hamlet's fate did not have a specific sign, it would not have the eminent value that it has for us. What is it, then, that specifies his destiny, that gives it its highly problematic value?

This is the point we have arrived at. This is where we ended last time.

1

What is Hamlet missing?

To what extent does the general outline of the tragedy of *Hamlet*, as Shakespeare composed it, allow us to locate a lack that goes beyond the approximations with which we always make do? Such approximations make for the confusion inherent not only in the language we use, but also in the way we act with our patients, and even – it must be admitted – in the suggestions we make to them.

Let us nevertheless begin with an approximate formulation of what is at stake. What Hamlet is always missing is, as we might put it in everyday language, that he does not set his sights on any goal, his action having no object(ive), the latter always involving what we call arbitrariness. As we have seen, and we have even begun to
385 explore why, Hamlet is someone who, as womenfolk are wont to say, does not know what he wants.

This first dimension is in some sense made clear in the lines Shakespeare has him proffer at a certain turning point that is quite

significant, which is his eclipse in the tragedy, I mean the brief moment at which he is not present. This is when he is at sea, having embarked only to return exceedingly quickly, having barely left port.

Ever obedient, Hamlet leaves for England in compliance with the king's orders. He encounters Fortinbras's troops at the Danish border, Fortinbras being someone who forms part of the backdrop of the tragedy; he is mentioned right from the beginning and cleans house at the end of the play, collecting the dead and putting the pieces back together. Consider how our Hamlet speaks of Fortinbras. He is struck when he sees the valiant troops that are going to conquer a few acres of Poland in the name of a more or less futile *casus belli*, and it gives him the opportunity to reflect on his own conduct.

> How all occasions do inform against me
> And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
> If his chief good and market of his time
> Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
> Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and godlike reason
> To fust in us unused . . . [IV, iv, 32–9]

"Reason" in this context is grand or fundamental discourse, what I will call "actual [or: concrete, *concret*] discourse" here.

> . . . Now whether it be
> Bestial oblivion

– this is one of the key words of the dimension of his being in the tragedy –

> Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
> Of thinking too precisely on th' event –
> A thought which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom
> And ever three parts coward – I do not know
> Why yet I live to say, "This thing's to do,"
> Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
> To do 't. Examples gross as earth exhort me.
> Witness this army of such mass and charge,
> Led by a delicate and tender prince,
> Whose spirit, with divine ambition puffed
> Makes mouths at the invisible event,

Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father killed, a mother stained,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men
That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! [IV, iv, 40–66]

Such are Hamlet's meditations on what I will call the object(ive) of human action. This object(ive) leaves the door open to all sorts of specifications on which we ordinarily dwell. For example, the shedding of blood for a noble cause, for the sake of honor, honor also being designated by the fact of having given one's word – we will call that a gift or oblativity.

It is clear that, as analysts, we cannot fail to encounter instances of such concrete resolve or be struck by their weight, whether in flesh or commitments. Nevertheless, when I write the formula ($\$\Diamond a$) for you, it is not in order to try to provide the usual form – that is, the lowest common denominator – of such resolve. It is not an articulation that could be characterized as a mere formalism.

Indeed, this formula is inscribed at the end of the question that the subject raises in the Other, when seeking a final answer, by asking the Other: "What do you want?" "*Che vuoi?*" But the subject has no chance of receiving an answer; there is nothing there that is in fact open to investigation, except under special conditions that we call analytic – except, in other words, with the assistance the subject receives from exploring the unconscious signifying chain that was
387 discovered by Freud's practice. On the graph, this chain is represented by the upper circuit.

What we are dealing with here is the imaginary short circuit that lies halfway between the upper and the lower circuits, where desire connects up with what lies across from it: fantasy. What I express in the formula ($\$\Diamond a$) is the general structure of fantasy. The subject designated by the barred S is the subject insofar as he is irreducibly affected by the signifier, with all the consequences that stem

therefrom, in particular the fact of placing him in a certain, specific relationship with an imaginary conjunction in its essence, *a* – not the object *of* desire, but the object *in* desire.

The function of the object in desire is what we need to broach, and it is because the tragedy of *Hamlet* allows us to broach it and spell it out in an exemplary manner that I am examining the structure of this text with such unflagging interest.

Let us look more closely. The formula ($\$ \Diamond a$) signifies the following: a specific object becomes an object of desire insofar as the subject is deprived of something of himself that has taken on the value of the very signifier of his alienation – and this something is the phallus – deprived of something that is related to his very life because it has taken on the value of what links him to the signifier.

To be an object of desire is quintessentially different from being an object of any specific need. The temporal subsistence of the object in desire is related to the following: it takes the place of what remains masked to the subject, owing to its nature – namely, that part of himself that he sacrifices, the pound of flesh involved in his relationship to the signifier. It is because something takes its place that this something becomes an object in desire.

What is involved here is profoundly enigmatic, because it is fundamentally a relationship to something that is hidden or occulted. If this is the way it is – please allow me a formulation that came to me while I was jotting down some notes and that has just come back to me, but don't take it as a doctrinal formulation, take it at most as something designed to give you an image – it is insofar as human life can be defined as a form of arithmetic in which zero would be an irrational number.

This formulation is a mere mathematical metaphor. In speaking of the irrational, I am not referring to some sort of unfathomable 388
affective realm, but to something that we encounter in mathematics in the form of what is known as an imaginary number, which is $\sqrt{-1}$. In effect, if there is something that does not correspond to anything that can be intuited and whose entire function must nevertheless be maintained, it is clearly the relationship between the object and the hidden element – which is the subject's living prop – inasmuch as, taking on the function of the signifier, it cannot be subjectified as such.

The square root of minus one cannot in itself correspond to anything real, in the mathematical sense of the term. The same is true of the object. This is why we cannot grasp its true function except by running through the whole series of its possible relations with barred S – in other words, the S that, at the precise point at which *a* takes on its maximal value, can only be occulted.

Does the tragedy of *Hamlet* allow us to run through *all* of the functions of the object? That would be saying a lot, but it allows us in any case to go much further in this direction than people have ever gone by any other pathway.

Let us begin from the end, from the encounter, the time of the rendezvous or final action into which Hamlet at last throws the entire weight of his life, which is what carrying out his action costs him.

2

The final action deserves to be called an action that Hamlet activates and that he undergoes, for everything surrounding this action is colored by a mort-like tone [*un air d'hallali*].

At the moment at which he takes action, Hamlet is also Diana's hunted-down stag. The plot against him is closing in on him, with incredible cynicism and malice – I am not sure you realize this – on the parts of Claudius and Laertes, whatever their different motives may be. A tarantula-like being is probably also involved in the plot: the ridiculous courtesan [Osric] who comes to propose that Hamlet participate in the contest in which the conspiracy against him is hidden.

Such is the structure. It is quite clear. I have already emphasized several of its features.

389 The contest that is proposed to him thrusts him into the position of being another's champion, since Hamlet is the one who is to uphold the bet or wager made by his uncle and stepfather, Claudius. The stakes are objects *a*, with all their brilliance. Like all objects and stakes in the world of human desire, they are essentially characterized by what the religious tradition, in exemplary images, teaches us to call *vanitas*, which refers to petit point tapestries in which we see a proliferation of pricey objects weighed in the balance against death.

The king has wagered "six Barbary horses," against which Laertes has wagered "six French rapiers and poniards" – namely, all the gear required by duelists – and their "assigns," such as the girdles and hangers they are hung from (their scabbards, I believe). Three of them have what the text calls "carriages," an especially precious word that designates a kind of hoop in which one hangs one's sword [V, ii, 143–8]. This collector's term also means the carriage of a cannon, and the double meaning gives rise to a whole exchange between Hamlet and Osric who informs Hamlet about the conditions of the contest. In a rather long dialogue, the quality, number, and panoply of these objects is designed to dazzle us, giving a lively

tone to a trial whose paradoxical and even absurd nature I have already mentioned.

Hamlet seems once again to show interest, as though nothing in him could get in the way of his being fundamentally open to whatever comes along. His answer here is very significant:

> Sir, I will walk here in the hall. If it please his
> majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me. Let the
> foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king
> hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can; if not, I
> will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits. [V, ii, 167–71]

It is in this regard that the final action shows us the very structure of fantasy. The hero is finally at his maximal resolve. Yet, as always, just before his resolve, we see him literally rent himself out to someone else, and for nothing whatsoever, as gratuitously as possible, this other person being his enemy and the very man he must strike down. He places what he must accomplish in the balance with the things of this world that interest him the least, for these collector's objects are not at that moment his major concern, and, what is more, he is going to strive to win them for someone else. 390

There is, of course, this *i(a)* at the lower level of the graph with which the others believe they can captivate him. It is not altogether foreign to him, naturally, though not in the way the others think. But he is nevertheless intrigued at the level at which the others situate him. In being pitted against a rival who is, as it turns out, admired, his honor is at stake – in other words, he is intrigued at the level that Hegel calls the fight to the death of pure prestige.

We cannot fail to dwell for a moment on the sureness of the connection established by Shakespeare, for you recognize in it an element that has long been part of our discourse and dialogue here – namely, the mirror stage. It is expressly stated in the text that Laertes is, at this level, a semblable for Hamlet. He is indirectly Hamlet's semblable – at least within a parody.

I am referring to the response he makes to Osric, the overly narrow-minded courtesan. Coming to Hamlet to propose that he participate in a duel, Osric highlights the outstanding skill of the adversary to whom Hamlet will have to prove his mettle. Hamlet cuts him off and ups the ante:

> Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you,
> though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dozy
> th' arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in
> respect of his quick sail. [V, ii, 112–15]

And he gives an extremely precious, complicated speech that in some sense parodies the style of his interlocutor, before concluding,

> I take him to be a soul of
> great article, and his infusion of
> such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him,
> his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace
> him, his umbrage, nothing more. [V, ii, 115–19]

In short, regarding Laertes' qualities, Hamlet refers to the other's image as something that cannot fail to be completely absorbing to he who contemplates it. All of this is puffed up in a highly Gongoresque manner, in the fullest sense of the word *concetto*, and it is with this same attitude and on the same ground that Hamlet meets Laertes prior to the duel. It is quite significant that the playwright situates the manifest point of aggressiveness at the height of
391 imaginary absorption, formally articulated as a specular, mirror relationship.

The person we most admire is the one we are battling. He who is my ideal ego is also he who must be killed, according to Hegel's formulation regarding the impossibility of our coexisting. Hamlet only kills him in a way that we might call disinterested, in the midst of a contest. He only enters into it [*s'y engage*] in a way that one might qualify as merely formal, or even fictional. Thus it is without foreknowledge that he nevertheless begins to play the most serious of games.

What does this mean? It means that he does not enter the game with, let us say, his phallus. It means that what presents itself in this aggressive relationship is a decoy or mirage; that it is in spite of himself that he is going to lose his life in it; and that it is unbeknownst to him that he is going, at that precise moment, to both carry out his action and meet with his own death. The two occur almost simultaneously.

To say that he does not enter the game with his phallus is a way of expressing what we are in the process of seeking – namely, where the lack lies, where the specificity of Hamlet's position as a subject in the drama resides. He plays the game all the same, for the foils merely appear to be buttoned. In reality, there is at least one that is not buttoned, one that, at the moment at which the swords are distributed, has already been carefully marked in advance as the one to be given to Laertes. That sword has a true "unbated" point and it is, moreover, "envenomed" [V, ii, 306].

It is striking that the scriptwriter's gall meets up here with what one might call the playwright's formidable intuition. During the

fight, the poisoned weapon changes hands, God only knows how. This must be one of the difficulties of the staging, and the script-writer does not work terribly hard to explain it to us. After Laertes has dealt Hamlet the blow from which he cannot recover, from which he must perish, there is a sort of scuffle in which they are grappling with each other, and a few moments later the poisoned rapier is in Hamlet's hand. No one gives much thought to explaining how such an astonishing switch can occur.

No one need, moreover, give it any thought, for what is at stake is to show that the instrument of death, the instrument that kills – which is in this case the most veiled instrument of the drama, one which Hamlet can only receive from the other – lies elsewhere 392
than in what can be represented materially here. For the accomplishment of Hamlet's desire does not take place at the level of the skill displayed [or: parrying, *parade*] in the contest, at the level of the rivalry with he who is his semblable, albeit more handsome than him, the rivalry with the *himself* [*moi-même*] that he can love. The drama is played out beyond that. And the phallus is what lies beyond that.

In the end, Hamlet identifies with the fatal signifier in the course of his encounter with the other. Curiously enough, this is found in the text itself, where we come across the word "foil."

The King mentions foils when they are handed out: "Give them the foils, young Osric" [V, ii, 248]. Before that, Hamlet had said, "Give us the foils." But, in between these two occurrences of the word, Hamlet makes a pun:

> I'll be your foil, Laertes. In mine ignorance
> Your skill shall, like a star i' th' darkest night,
> Stick fiery off indeed. [V, ii, 244–6]

[Lacan comments on how French translators have tried to render this.] "Foil" cannot mean rapier [alone] here. It had another perfectly well-known meaning at the time, which was even rather frequently used: "foil," which is the same word as *feuille* in old French, is used preciously to designate the foil leaf in which something precious is carried – that is, a case or setting [*écrin*].

In short, Hamlet says, in fighting with you, Laertes, I will be your setting, I will merely highlight "your star-like brightness in the dark sky." These are, moreover, the very conditions on which the duel was accepted. Hamlet, who is thought to have no chance of winning, will be proclaimed the winner if, in the course of twelve passes, his opponent does not hit him three times more than he hits his opponent. Given the way the wager is structured, if Laertes obtains only

seven hits to Hamlet's five, Laertes will have lost. Hamlet is thus given a handicap.

One of Hamlet's functions is to constantly play on words, proffer double entendres, and equivocate. The pun involving "foil" is not included here by accident, and it is justifiable to explore what is included in its depths. When he says to Laertes "I'll be your foil," Hamlet uses a word that also means rapier. The subject thus identi-
393 fies with the mortal phallus itself here. "I'll be your foil," he says to Laertes, "to showcase your skill," but a moment later Laertes' sword strikes, the sword that fatally wounds Hamlet before he himself has it in hand and completes his trajectory by killing both his opponent and he who is the final object of his mission – namely, the king.

Let me repeat that it is no accident that this word is used in the text. It is altogether justifiable to highlight it. The play of signifiers belongs to the very texture of *Hamlet*. A whole discussion should be devoted to this specific dimension.

You are aware of the essential role played by the clowns known as court jesters [*fous*]. With their no-holds-barred way of speaking, they can allow themselves to reveal people's most hidden motives and character traits that politeness prohibits people from mentioning directly. It is not just cynicism that is involved, nor is it just a more or less insulting, playful way of speaking. These characters operate primarily by equivocating, speaking metaphorically, punning, concocting *concetti*, speaking preciously, and replacing one signifier with another, the essential function of all of which I emphasize here.

This way of proceeding gives Shakespeare's theatre as a whole a tenor that is absolutely characteristic of his style and creates its psychological dimension. The fact that Hamlet is such an anxiety-provoking character must not hide from us the fact that, in a certain way, this tragedy raises someone who is, strictly speaking, a fool, clown, or jokester, to the rank of a hero. As someone once pointed out, to remove the jests from *Hamlet* would be to cut out four-fifths of the play.

Indeed, one of the dimensions in which the play's dramatic tension unfolds is constant equivocation. The latter is in some sense dissimulated, as it were, by the masked aspect of things – what gets played out between Claudius, the tyrant and usurper, and his killer, Hamlet, is the unmasking of the latter's intentions. Namely, why is he pretending to be mad [or: playing the fool, *faire le fou*]? We must not, for all that, forget the way in which he pretends to be mad, which gives his discourse an almost manic quality.

Hamlet never stops latching onto ideas and chances to equivocate

on the fly, and these ideas allow him to momentarily blind his 394
adversaries with a sort of flash of meaning. The latter do not see discordant speech in them. They find them strange, in that they are especially relevant, and they are struck by them so much that they themselves sometimes become inventive and even tell tall tales. It is thus not simply a hiding game [*jeu*] that is being played, but a mind game [or: play of wit, *jeu d'esprit*] that is being played out at the level of signifiers and in the dimension of meaning. Therein lies what one might call the very spirit [or: wit, *esprit*] of the play.

This ambiguous disposition makes all of Hamlet's remarks – as well, thus, as the reaction of those around him – into a problem in which the spectator himself gets lost in ceaseless wondering. It is at this level that the play takes on its full import. I am only recalling this to mind here in order to emphasize that there is nothing excessive or arbitrary about giving its full weight to this last pun on the word "foil."

Such is the nature of the constellation within which Hamlet's final action unfolds during his duel with Laertes.

For Hamlet, Laertes is a sort of semblable or double who is more handsome than Hamlet himself. As I have already said, this element is located at the lower level of our graph, at *i(a)*. Hamlet, for whom men and women are no longer anything but insubstantial and putrid shadows, finds a worthy rival in this remodeled semblable, whose presence allows him, at least for a moment, to uphold the human wager [*soutenir la gageure humaine*] that he, too, is a man.

The remodeling here is but a consequence, not a point of departure. I mean that it is the consequence of what is manifested in the situation – namely, the subject's position in the presence of the other qua object of desire. The presence of the phallus is immanent in this object. The phallus cannot assume its formal function except with the disappearance of the subject himself.

What makes it possible for the subject to succumb even before taking in hand the foil* with which he himself becomes a killer?

This brings us back to that very odd crossroads whose essential character I have already indicated – namely, the cemetery scene and what occurs in the vault.

3 395

We will now broach a topic that should interest one of our colleagues who, as it turns out, has done especially fine work on both jealousy and mourning. The jealousy involved in mourning is, in effect, one of the most salient aspects of this tragedy.

Reread the end of the act in which we find the cemetery scene, which I have now commented on three times in the course of this Seminar. There Hamlet articulates exactly what he finds unbearable in Laertes' attitude, bearing, and ostentation at the moment at which Ophelia is being buried. His partner's ostentatious mourning has the effect of ripping him away from himself; he is overwhelmed and shaken to his very foundations, to the point of not being able to handle it.

This first manifestation of Hamlet's rivalry with Laertes is far more authentic than the second. Hamlet approaches the duel with all the ceremony of courtly manners and with a buttoned foil, whereas in the cemetery scene he goes straight for Laertes' throat, jumping into the hole in which Ophelia's body has just been lowered. And he hurls:

> 'Swounds, show me what thou't do:
> Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? [. . .]
> I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?
> To outface me with leaping in her grave?
> Be buried quick with her, and so will I.
> And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
> Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
> Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
> Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,
> I'll rant as well as thou. [V, i, 261–70]

At that, everyone is appalled and hurries to separate these warring brothers who are choking each other.

Hamlet then adds the following:

> Hear you, sir.
> What is the reason that you use me thus?
> I loved you ever. But it is no matter.
> Let Hercules himself do what he may,
> The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. [V, i, 275–9]

I will leave some of you the task of bringing out the full value of this proverbial element, as I cannot dwell on it now. Hamlet later explains to Horatio what is essential here: he could not bear to see "the bravery of [Laertes'] grief" [V, ii, 79].

This brings us to the very heart of the dimension of mourning, which is going to open up an entire problematic for us. What
396 relationship is there between what I have formulated in the form of ($\$ \lozenge a$), concerning the constitution of the object in desire, and

mourning? Let us broach what presents itself to us via its most manifest characteristics, which can also seem to be furthest from the heart of what we are seeking here.

We have seen Hamlet behave quite scornfully and cruelly toward Ophelia. I highlighted the degrading, humiliating aggression to which he constantly subjected her, she who suddenly became for him the very symbol of the rejection of his desire. We cannot fail to be struck when this object suddenly reassumes its full value to him. Consider in what terms the challenge he addresses to Laertes begins:

> I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers
> Could not with all their quantity of love
> Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her? [V, i, 56–8]

In short, it is to the extent to which Ophelia has become an impossible object that she once again becomes the object of his desire. This feature completes in another guise what I said about the structure of Hamlet's desire. We believe we find ourselves here on a familiar path, where we can recognize one of the characteristics of the obsessive's desire, but let us not too quickly stop at such overly obvious appearances.

What characterizes the obsessive is not so much that the object of his desire is impossible, for there is always a note of impossibility in the object of desire, which has to do with the very structure and foundations of desire. The fact that the object of desire is impossible is just one of the especially manifest forms of an aspect of human desire. What specifically characterizes the obsessive is that he emphasizes the encounter with this impossibility. In other words, he orchestrates things in such a way that the object of his desire takes on the essential value of signifying this impossibility.

Something more profound is in store for us, however, which concerns mourning.

Our theory, our tradition, and Freud's formulations have already taught us to formulate mourning in terms of object relations. There have long been psychologists who think, yet Freud was the first – isn't it striking? – to highlight the object that is mourned. It is in a certain identificatory relationship that this object takes on its import, and that its manifestations come together and become organized.

With the vocabulary we have learned to use here, can't we try to rearticulate more precisely the [kind of] identification involved in 397
mourning, which Freud tried to define most precisely by designating it as an incorporation? Exploring the question with the help of my symbolic devices [*appareils*], we will see that only they bring

out consequences that I believe are new and eminently suggestive regarding the function of mourning. I mean that they open up for us effective and fruitful insights we cannot reach by any other pathway.

The nature of identification must be clarified by the categories that I have been developing here with you for years – namely, those of the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real.

What is meant by incorporation of the lost object? What does the work of mourning consist of? Not being suitably articulated, the topic remains bogged down in obscurity, which explains why we have made so little progress down the path that Freud paved for us concerning mourning and melancholia.

Let us confine our attention to the first, most obvious aspects of the experience of mourning. The subject succumbs to the vertigo of pain, and finds himself in a certain relationship to the missing object that is, in some sense, illustrated for us by what occurs in the cemetery scene. Laertes jumps into the grave and, out of his mind, embraces the object whose disappearance is causing him pain. It is clear that the object here has an existence that is all the more absolute because it no longer corresponds to anything that exists.

In other words, mourning, which involves a veritable, intolerable loss to human beings, gives rise in them to a hole in reality [*réel*]. The relationship in question is the converse of the one that I proposed with the term *Verwerfung* [foreclosure] when I told you that what is rejected in the symbolic reappears in reality. This formulation, like its converse, should be taken literally.

The truly intolerable dimension of human experience that comes with mourning is not the experience of your own death, which no one has, but that of the death of another person, when that other person is essential to you. Such a loss constitutes a *Verwerfung*, a hole, [not in the symbolic] but in reality. Owing to the same correspondence as the one I articulate regarding *Verwerfung*, this hole turns out to provide a place onto which the missing signifier is projected.

What we have here is the signifier that is essential to the structure
398 of the Other, the signifier whose absence renders the Other unable to give you your answer. You can only redeem [or: pay for, *payer*] this signifier with your flesh and blood. It is essentially the phallus behind the veil.

This signifier finds its place here. And at the same time it cannot find its place because this signifier cannot be articulated at the level of the Other. Owing to this, and as in psychosis, all the images that have to do with the phenomena of mourning proliferate in its place. Mourning is akin to psychosis in this regard.

Among these phenomena we should include those by which is

manifested, not some specific form of madness, but one of the most essential forms of collective madness in the human world. If some rite has not been performed for the departed, for the person who has just disappeared, strange things begin to happen. This is what explains, for example, the appearance, at the most basic level in the tragedy of *Hamlet*, of an image that can affect the soul of each and every one of us – namely, the ghost.*

What, in the final analysis, are funeral rites designed to do? To propitiate [*satisfaire à*] what we call the memory of the departed. And what do these rites involve if not the total, massive intervention, from hell to heaven, of the entire symbolic system [*jeu symbolique*].

I would love to have the time to devote several classes to the subject of funeral rites through an ethnological investigation. I recall having spent some time, many years ago, reading a book which admirably does so and which is exemplary in that it is from a civilization that is distant enough from our own for the function of such rites to be strikingly brought out in it. It is [Confucius' *Book of Rites:*] *Liji*, a sacred Chinese book.

Funeral rites have a macrocosmic nature, since there is nothing that can fill the hole in the real with signifiers unless it is the totality of the signifier itself. The work of mourning is carried out at the level of logos – I am saying this so as not to say at the level of the group or community, even though the group and the community as culturally organized naturally support this. The work of mourning presents itself first of all as a palliative for [*satisfaction donnée à*] the chaos that ensues owing to the inability of all signifying elements to deal with the hole in existence that has been created by someone's death. 399
The entire signifying system is brought to bear on even the slightest case of mourning.

This is what explains the fact that all folk beliefs establish the closest relationship between two facts: if something is overlooked, elided, or refused in the propitiation [*satisfaction*] owed to the departed, all kinds of phenomena occur that stem from the coming into play and operating of the power of ghosts and worms [*larves*] in the place left unfilled by the missing signifying rite.

We see here a new dimension of the tragedy of *Hamlet*.

I told you at the outset that *Hamlet* is a tragedy of the underworld. The ghost* appears owing to an unatonable offense. In this perspective, Ophelia appears to be neutral, as nothing other than a victim offered up to [propitiate] the primordial offense. Polonius's death; the extraordinary scene of his cadaver being ridiculously dragged by the foot and hidden in defiance of the sensibility and concern of all and sundry; Hamlet who is suddenly and literally out of control [*déchaîné*], who makes fun of everyone who asks where the cadaver

is and who enjoys coming up with a whole series of enigmas in very bad taste which culminates in the formulation, "Hide fox, and all after" [IV, ii, 29], which refers to a kind of hide-and-go-seek game – all of that derides what is at stake, which is a mourning that has not been completed [*satisfait*].

I have not yet been able to give you the last word today, but you can already catch a glimpse here of the paradoxical relationship between fantasy, ($\$ \lozenge a$), and the object-relation, which seems to be only distantly related to it, but on which mourning allows us to shed light.

Next time we will go into detail, once again taking up the twists and turns in *Hamlet*, inasmuch as the play allows us to better grasp the economy, which is tightly linked here, of the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic.

In the course of our exploration, many of your preconceived ideas will perhaps break down and even, I hope, be shattered. Nevertheless, I think that you will be prepared for it by my commentary on this tragedy in which we are spared no cadavers. This purely
400 ideational damage will no doubt seem insignificant to you next to the damage Hamlet leaves in his wake.

In short, you can find consolation for the perchance difficult path I am taking you down with this Hamletesque formulation: you can't make a Hamlet without breaking eggs.

April 22, 1959

XIX

PHALLOPHANIES

Hamlet and *Oedipus*
Mourning the loss of the phallus
. . . and its transformation into a signifier
Forms of the subject's disappearance
A real and rotten phallus

If the tragedy of *Hamlet* is the tragedy of desire, it is time to notice what one always notices last – namely, what is most obvious.

Indeed, I do not believe that any author has ever dwelt on the fact that people talk about nothing but mourning from one end of *Hamlet* to the other, a fact that is difficult to overlook once it is formulated. This is where we left off last time.

The first remark Hamlet makes in the play concerns the scandalous nature of his mother's remarriage so soon after her husband's death. The mother herself, in her anxiety to know what is tormenting her beloved son, calls it "our o'erhasty marriage":

> I doubt it is no other but the main,
> His father's death and our o'erhasty marriage. [II, ii, 56–7]

No need to remind you of Hamlet's words about the leftovers of the funeral meal being served at the wedding feast: "Thrift [*Économie*], thrift, Horatio!" [I, ii, 180]. The word he uses nicely alerts us to what is overlooked when we explore the world of objects on the basis of the modern conceptual framework involving use value and exchange value, not to mention all the related notions that have been generated around them. Perhaps Marxist economic analysis, which dominates the thinking of our era, neglects something whose power and amplitude we deal with all the time: ritual values.

Even though we constantly pinpoint these latter in our practice, it might be worth our while to isolate and articulate them as essential.

I mentioned the function of rituals in mourning last time. Rituals serve a mediating function with regard to the gap opened up by [the loss of a loved one, leading to] mourning. More accurately speaking, mourning coincides with an essential gap, the major symbolic gap, the symbolic lack – in short, the point *x*, of which the dream's navel, which Freud mentions somewhere, is perhaps but a psychological correlate.

Thus we cannot fail to be struck by the fact that, in all the major instances of mourning that are called into question in *Hamlet*, what we always find is that the rituals have been abbreviated or carried out clandestinely. Polonius is buried secretly, quickly, and uncer-emoniously for political reasons. And you remember what happens with regard to Ophelia's burial.

Whereas she probably died having wanted to die, having deliber-ately drowned herself – that, at least, is the people's opinion – she was nevertheless buried on Christian ground and granted some modicum of Christian rites. The gravediggers are sure that, had she not been a gentlewoman, she would have been treated otherwise – which is the way the preacher says it should have been, for he believed she should have been denied funeral honors – she would have been thrown into "ground unsanctified," and "Shards, flints, and pebbles [would have been] thrown on her" [V, i, 216–8]. Here, too, the preacher only agreed to limited rites ["maimed rites"].

All of this is clearly emphasized at the end of the cemetery scene. We cannot but take all of these elements into account, especially when we add plenty of others to them. The father's shade [*ombre*] has an unatonable grievance, for he was, we are told, forever offended, having been surprised "in the blossoms of [his] sin" [I, v, 76]. This is not the least of the mysteries we encounter when we try to decipher the meaning of this tragedy. Before his death, the father did not have time to prepare himself to appear at the Last Judgment.

We have here traces, "clues"* as they say in English, eminently significant ones, which converge too obviously for us not to consider
403 them. We are obliged to wonder, as we began to do last time, about the relationship between the drama of desire and what is involved in mourning and its exigencies.

This is the point I would like to focus on today in order to try to explore the nature of the object with you.

1

We broach the object in psychoanalysis in various forms. We broach it here in the sense of the object of desire. There is, it seems,

a simple relationship between the object and desire. But can the rendezvous between desire and its object be articulated as if it were a mere appointment*? Perhaps it is something else.

We broach the question from a different angle when we speak of the object with which the subject identifies in mourning, and which he can, so people say, reintegrate into his ego.* What do we have here? Aren't there in fact two phases, which are not articulated and synchronized in psychoanalysis? Isn't this a problem that requires us to try to make headway here?

What I have just said about mourning in *Hamlet* must not hide from us the fact that, in both *Hamlet* and *Oedipus*, mourning is premised on a crime. Up to a certain point, all the instances of mourning that come cascading down on us are the aftermath and consequences of the crime that sets the drama in motion. It is in this respect that *Hamlet* is, I am saying, an Oedipal drama, a drama that I consider to be *Oedipus'* equal, and that I rank at the same functional level in the genealogy of tragedy.

It is the role played by crime in *Hamlet* that put Freud, and his disciples after him, on the scent of the importance this play takes on for us as analysts. In the psychoanalytic tradition, Hamlet is situated at the heart of speculation about origins, since we are in the habit of recognizing in Oedipus's crime the most essential plot [*trame*] involving the subject and what we call the Other here – namely, the locus in which the law is inscribed. Connecting these things should give us the opportunity to return to the way in which relations between the subject and what one might call the original crime have been articulated up until now and to recall a few essential terms.

Instead of doing what people always do, leaving things vague in a way that does nothing to facilitate speculation, we are going to 404
introduce a clear distinction. We are presented with two stages.

First, there is Freud's myth, which deserves to be called one. *Totem and Taboo* lays out what we can, strictly speaking, call a myth. I already touched on this point when I told you that Freud's construction is perhaps the only example of a myth that has been concocted in our own time.

This myth indicates to us the early, essential, and altogether necessary link that is such that we cannot conceptualize the law, as an order, except on the basis of a still earlier fact that presents itself as a crime. This is the meaning of Freud's myth. The crime is the primal killing of the father. In Freud's view, it forms, let us note, the horizon or endpoint of the problem of origins in all psychoanalytic matters, for Freud finds it everywhere and no topic seems to him to have been exhausted if it has not yet been connected up with it. It is all too obvious that this primal killing of the father has a mythical

necessity for him, whether he situates it at the origin of the primal horde or at the origin of the Judaic tradition.

The relationship between the primal law and the primal crime is one thing; the drama that shapes the Oedipus complex is another. By this, I mean what happens when the tragic hero – who is Oedipus, but who is also, virtually, each of us at some point of our being when we reproduce the Oedipal drama – kills his father and sleeps with his mother, accomplishing at the tragic level, in a sort of lustral bath, the rebirth of the law.

Oedipus corresponds perfectly to the definition I just gave of ritual reproduction of the myth. Oedipus is, in short, completely innocent and unconscious. He repeats – unbeknownst to himself, in the sort of dream his life consists of, "Life is a dream" – actions that run from the crime to the restoring of order and the punishment he administers to himself, which makes him seem castrated to us at the end.

This castration is the essential element to take into account, and it remains veiled when one confines oneself to the level at which we see the genesis of the primal murder. In the final analysis, the meaning that shines through is that this punishment, sanction, or castration
405 contains its result – namely, the humanization of man's sexuality – within itself, under lock and key. It is a key that we, owing to our practice, are in the habit of using in order to account for all the incidents that arise in the course of the unfolding of desire.

It is worth bringing out here the various dissymmetries between the tragedy of *Oedipus* and that of *Hamlet*, even if to spell them out in detail would be almost too clever [*brillante*].

In *Oedipus*, the crime occurs during the hero's generation. In *Hamlet*, it occurs in the prior generation. In *Oedipus*, the crime is committed when the hero does not know what he is doing and is in some sense guided by *fatum* [fate]. In *Hamlet*, the crime is committed in a deliberate manner, since it is committed through treachery.

In *Hamlet*, the crime catches its victim, Hamlet's father, while he is sleeping. There is something about this sleep that absolutely does not fit in [or: does not make sense, *pas intégré*]. Whereas in *Oedipus* the hero plays out the drama the way each of us repeats it in his dreams, in *Hamlet* the father has truly been taken by surprise in a way that is completely foreign to his train of thought at the time. As he puts it, he was "Cut off even in the blossoms of [his] sin" [I, v, 76]. A blow strikes him, coming from a quarter from which he did not expect it; it is a true intrusion from the real, a true breaking of the thread of destiny. He dies on a bed of flowers, as Shakespeare's text tells us, and during the play scene the actors even go so far as

to reproduce this bed of flowers for us in their sort of preliminary pantomime. There is undoubtedly some sort of mystery here.

Furthermore, this exceedingly odd fact – namely, the irruption of a criminal act that is so foreign to the subject – appears in some sense to be counterbalanced by the fact that in this case the subject knows. I mean that Hamlet is informed by his father, who knows what happened. This paradoxical contrast, which I pointed out to you from the outset, is certainly not one of the least enigmatic elements of the play.

The drama of *Hamlet*, as opposed to that of *Oedipus*, does not begin from questions like "What is happening?" "What crime was committed?" and "Who is the guilty party?" It begins from the revelation of the crime, whispered into the subject's ear, and it is on the basis of this revelation that the drama unfolds. This revelation – and we see all of its ambiguity and its contrast with *Oedipus* – can thus be written in the way I notate messages from the unconscious: namely, 406
as the signifier of barred A, S(Ⱥ).

In the, as it were, "normal" form of the Oedipus complex, this signifier manages to get incarnated in the figure of the father. The sanction given by the locus of the Other, the truth about truth [*la vérité de la vérité*], is expected from the father and is called for from him, insofar as he should be the author of the law. Nevertheless, he is never anything more than someone who is subject to the law; he cannot guarantee it, no more than anyone else can, for he, too, has to submit to the bar, which makes him a castrated father inasmuch as he is a real father.

Things are quite different – even if they can be symbolized in the same way – not at the end of *Hamlet*, but at its outset. In the father's message, with which the drama begins, we see the Other present himself in the most signifying form as a barred A. He has been wiped away not only from the surface of the living, but from the recompense that should have been his. The crime sent him into the bowels of hell – in other words, he has a debt that he has been unable to pay, an unatonable debt, as he puts it. To his son, this is the most horrible and anxiety-provoking meaning of the father's revelation.

Returning to the case of Oedipus, we see that he himself paid. He presents himself as someone who shoulders the burden of the discharged debt in his destiny as a hero. What Hamlet's father shall complain of for all eternity is that the thread of his destiny was interrupted and broken, such that he will never be able to answer for it. As you see, our investigation, as it progresses, is leading us to what is involved in retribution, punishment, and castration, and is heading toward the relationship to the phallic signifier, since it is in this sense that we have begun to articulate castration.

We see an ambiguity here in relation to what Freud formulated, in a way that was a bit *fin de siècle* – namely, that we are doomed to no longer experience the Oedipus complex except in a somewhat distorted form. This assertion is assuredly echoed in *Hamlet*. Consider one of his first cries at the end of the first act:

> The time is out of joint. O cursed spite
> That ever I was born to set it right! [I, v, 188–9]

There is no way to translate the word "spite," which is found throughout Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, into French except with the word "*dépit*." *Dépit* has, however, taken on a subjective meaning for us. The first step I would have to take in order to help you understand the Elizabethans would be to make a certain number of words double-jointed again. *Dépit* must be situated somewhere between objective and subjective spite.

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We seem to have lost this reference point. We no longer know how to articulate words that can lie between objective and subjective, that can operate both at the heart of the subject's lived experience and at the level of the world order. What Hamlet is designating when he says "O cursed spite" is what he is bitterly disappointed about: the way in which time is unjust to him, or what he can designate as injustice in the world. Perhaps you recognize here in passing the mistake made by the beautiful soul, which we have not left behind, far from it, despite all our efforts, but that Shakespeare's vocabulary transcends, and it is no accident that I so blithely mentioned his *Sonnets*.

In the lines, "The time is out of joint. O cursed spite / That ever I was born to set it right!" something is justified but also deepened that may appear to us to illustrate in *Hamlet* a decadent form, a sort of incomplete *Untergang* [fall or dissolution] of the Oedipus complex.

This contrasts with what Freud describes in each individual's life in his 1924 paper entitled *Das Untergang des Ödipuskomplexes* ["The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex"].

I would now like to draw your attention to this short text, which you can find in volume XIII of Freud's *Gesammelte Werke* [pp. 395–402].

2

What, in the final analysis, is the enigma of the Oedipus complex? Freud highlights that it is not simply the fact that the subject wants

to kill his father and rape his mother, but that this [desire] comes to dwell in the unconscious.

And it so clearly dwells in the unconscious that, in the course of the so-called latency period – which is, in human beings, the source of the building blocks [*points de construction*] of their entire objective world – subjects are no longer thinking about this. This goes so far, as you know, that Freud suggests – at least when he first provides this theoretical formulation – that the ideal case would be that no longer being concerned with it becomes definitive, happily so.

Let us consider what Freud says. Afterward we will see in what respect this can help us in our current undertaking. The Oedipus complex begins its *Untergang* – its decline or dissolution, which 408
is decisive for the whole of the subject's later development – after what?

Freud tells us that the subject must have tried out and experienced both vertices of the Oedipal triangle. Inasmuch as a boy, as his father's rival, wants to take his father's place, he becomes the target of a concrete threat, which is no other than that of castration: he will be castrated. If, instead, he takes his mother's place, he will lose the phallus anyway – Freud says this literally – since at the point at which the Oedipus complex comes to fruition, the boy has also fully realized that women are castrated.

At the level of the relationship to the thing known as the phallus, the subject thus finds himself in a bind that leaves him no way out. This situation, in which the phallus is the key, constitutes the essential drama of the Oedipus complex insofar as it marks, I would say, the juncture and turning point that conveys the subject from the level of demand to that of desire.

I said "thing" [known as the phallus], not "object," inasmuch as what is involved is something real, something that is not yet symbolized but that may, in some sense, become symbolized. In short, it is what we can call a signifier, vaguely speaking.

Freud thus presents the phallus to us as the key to the *Untergang* of the Oedipus complex. The Oedipus complex begins to dissolve when the subject enters into a relationship, we might say, of lassitude – this is what we find in Freud's text – with regard to gratification. This is when the subject realizes that no gratification can be expected in this context; he knows that the articulated emergence of the *thing* will not occur; and he gives up trying to be equal to the task. Freud articulates it for the boy and still more for the girl, for he places her in a position about which I will not say that it is not dissymmetrical, but it is *not so very* dissymmetrical.

In short, the subject must mourn the loss of the phallus. This comes across very clearly – the *Untergang* of the Oedipus complex is

played out around mourning. How can we not but relate this to the general problematic of mourning?

Let me underscore that the moment at which the dissolution of the Oedipus complex occurs plays a decisive role in what follows, not only because the fragments and detritus it leaves in its wake, which are more or less incompletely repressed, will come out at puberty in the form of neurotic symptoms, but above all because,
409 as the shared experience of psychoanalysts attests, the subject's normalization at the genital level depends on this moment – not in the subject's unconscious economy alone but in the subject's imaginary economy as well. Which is to say that there is no happy outcome as regards genital maturity except by going through the entirety of the Oedipus complex, insofar as its consequence, in both men and women, is the scar [or: mark, *stigmate*] of the castration complex. Synthesizing this with the mechanism of mourning, as it is described to us by Freud, will perhaps allow us to clarify the mechanism of mourning the loss of the phallus, which is no doubt peculiar since the phallus is an object like no other.

But, I ask you, what defines the scope and limits of the set of objects that we may be led to mourn? This, too, has never before been articulated. We suspect, of course, that the phallus is different from the other objects that we may be led to mourn. Here as everywhere else, it must have its own separate place; but this is precisely what must be specified. And, as in many cases, to specify something is to indicate its place against a backdrop. It is in pinpointing it against this backdrop that the place of the backdrop also manages to get retroactively specified.

What I am calling the place of the object in desire is completely new territory. Our analysis of *Hamlet* is designed, in the end, to help us make headway in this realm. I am tilling this ground here by plowing a series of concentric rows. I am conveying it to you in a way that is at times emphatic, at times resonant. And I hope to make it more and more precise as we go on.

What does Freud tell us about mourning the loss of the phallus? He presents the subject's narcissistic demand [*exigence*] as one of its fundamental mainsprings, insofar as this demand is what gives the phallus its value, which is precisely what we are seeking. He brings in this factor without the slightest precaution, as he always does. I mean that he shakes us up, as is his wont, and thank God he did it his whole life long; if not, he would never have gotten to the end of what he needed to sketch out in his field.

The subject thus gets to the point at which he is in the presence of the final exit from his Oedipal demands; he is at the critical moment
410 at which he realizes that he will be castrated and deprived of the

phallus in either case. Well, Freud tells us, rather than abandon the phallus, he prefers to abandon, as it were, a whole part of himself, which will henceforth and forever be prohibited to him. This part is what is transmitted by the dotted signifying chain found at the top of the graph of desire [see Figure 15.4].

Stated otherwise, the subject lets go of what was most important to him – namely, the love relationship as it presented itself to him in the parental dialectic into which he had to enter one way or another – because, Freud tells us, of his narcissistic relationship with a term that was introduced right from the outset and that has enigmatically and yet clearly run throughout his experience: the phallus.

What can this mean to us, in our vocabulary? This vocabulary can shed light on what is at stake in what Freud designates as a narcissistic demand, and which he had to leave to one side, as I was just saying, because he did not have the time to dwell at length on his premises, and because he needed to go right to the quick, to the core of the subject. Which is, moreover, how every action is grounded, still more every true action, as is, or should be, the action we are concerned with here – namely, psychoanalytic action.

Let us thus translate this into our own terms and reference points: to say that the demand in question is narcissistic implies that it is situated at the imaginary level. On the other hand, the subject's demand for love has begun to express itself in the field organized by the symbolic, what we call the locus of the Other. The critical moment arrives once the subject has run the gamut of all possible relations there and has reached the end. The upshot is the loss of the phallus, experienced as a radical loss that no satisfaction can plug up.

I have already indicated that what happens then is akin to a psychotic mechanism: the subject can only respond to this mourning with his imaginary texture. What Freud presents us, in a veiled form, as the narcissistic link between the subject and the phallus, allows us to identify the phallus with something that represents lack as such in the subject at the imaginary level. This lack places something in reserve – in the form of nihilation [or: obliteration or "nothingizing," *sous une forme néantisée*], as it were – something that will serve as a mold in which the subject's assumption of his position in the genital function will later be recast.

But isn't this to conclude too quickly about what is involved? 411
Doesn't this lead us to believe, as we ordinarily do, that the relationship to the genital object is a relationship that changes from positive to negative? As you will see, it is nothing of the sort. Our notation is superior because it allows us to articulate how the problem really presents itself. Let me specifically remind you of what I already laid

out when I distinguished among the functions of castration, frustration, and deprivation [see Seminar IV].

If you recall, I wrote the following: *castration* is a symbolic action, *frustration* is an imaginary term, and *deprivation* is a real term. I also indicated their relations to objects: I told you that castration is related to the imaginary phallic object; that frustration, which is imaginary in nature, is always related to a real possession [*bien*] or term; and that deprivation, which is real, is related to a symbolic term. I added at that time that there is no sort of gap or crack in the real. Lack always involves something that is missing from its [usual] place; the fact of being missing from its place is [what is known as] a symbolic lack [*Tout manque est manque à sa place, mais le manque à sa place est manque symbolique*].

Table 19.1: Table of lacking objects

AGENT	LACK	OBJECT
	Castration S	i
Symbolic mother	Frustration I	r
	Deprivation R	s

The column on the left [Table 19.1] concerns the agent of these actions. I only discussed one of the agents: the agent of frustration – namely, the mother. I showed you that, qua locus of the demand for love, she is at first symbolized in the twofold register of presence and absence, and that she thereby finds herself to be in the position
412 of setting the generative [or: developmental, *génétique*] dialectic in motion, inasmuch as, qua real mother, she turns what the subject is really deprived of – the breast, for example – into a symbol of her love.

I stopped there, leaving blank the boxes corresponding to the term "agent" in the other two relationships. As for its place, the term "agent" is related to the subject. I could not at that time clearly articulate the different stages of the subject. It is only now that I can indicate what is involved.

At the level of frustration, where I had placed the mother's actual locus, I am inscribing the term by which everything that happens owing to her takes on its value – in other words, the A of the Other insofar as it is there that demand is articulated.

At the level of castration, we have a subject qua real, but in the form in which we have learned to formulate and discover it since – in

other words, as the speaking or actual subject. He is marked by the sign of speech. We write this, of course, as barred S.

It seems to me that this is what philosophers have been trying to articulate for some time concerning the peculiar nature of human action. It is impossible to broach this topic without realizing that there is something fishy in the illusory idea of turning some sort of absolute beginning into a final term with which to pinpoint the notion of the agent. People have tried, over time, to present this something fishy to us in the form of varied speculations about a type of freedom that is supposedly at the same time necessity. This is the terminus at which philosophers have arrived in articulating the following: that there is no other true action than to align yourself in some sense with God's will.

What I am contributing here can at least claim to stem from a completely different register owing to the specific quality of its articulation. I say that the subject, qua real, stands in a specific relation to speech, and that this relation gives rise in him to an eclipse or fundamental lack that structures him at the symbolic level in relation to castration. I am not saying that this is a pot of gold or a skeleton key that opens all doors. It is no more than the beginning of an articulation, but it is something that has never been said before, and this is perhaps worth emphasizing.

What then appears at the level of deprivation? What does the subject who has been symbolically castrated become at this level? 413
Note that he has been symbolically castrated at the level of his position as a speaking subject, and not at the level of his being. What is involved becomes far clearer and easier to indicate once we formulate the problem in terms of mourning. The being in question must mourn something that he must offer up as a sacrifice or holocaust, in order to raise it to the level of its function as a missing signifier.

At the imaginary level, the subject is identical to the biological images that guide him and that trace out the wake prepared for his behavior,* for what is going to attract him, by all the pathways of voracity and coupling. It is at the imaginary level that something is caught up, marked, and subtracted. The upshot is a really deprived subject. Our conceptual framework and knowledge do not allow us to locate or situate this deprivation anywhere in the real, because the real as such is defined as always full.

We encounter here again, but in a different and otherwise highlighted form, something that has been remarked by what is rightly or wrongly known as existentialist thought – namely, that it is the living, human subject who introduces a "nihilation" [*néantisation*] into reality. That is what *they* call it; we give it a different name.

This nihilation, which comforts philosophers, and even grants them pleasant weekends – see Raymond Queneau's novel [*Le Dimanche de la vie*, *The Sunday of Life*] – is inadequate for us and does not satisfy us, given the more than artificial uses to which it is put in modern dialectical prestidigitation.

We call it minus phi ($-\varphi$). It is what Freud pinpointed as essential in the mark left on man by his relation to logos – that is, castration, which is, in effect, assumed [*assumée*] here at the imaginary level. This notation will allow us to define desire's object *a* as it appears in our formulation of fantasy, and we will situate it in relation to the categories, chapter headings, and registers we are used to working with in psychoanalysis.

Desire's object *a* is the object that sustains the relationship between the subject and what he is not – up to that point, we go more or less as far, although a bit further, than what traditional and existentialist philosophy formulated as the negativity or nihilation of the existing subject – but we add: it sustains the relationship between the subject and what he is not *insofar as he is not the phallus.*

414 Object *a* sustains the subject in the privileged position he is led to occupy in certain situations, which is strictly speaking the following: that he is not the phallus.

It has now become essential for us to provide an apt definition of object *a*. At the very least, the time has come for us to try to see how what we have rightly or wrongly begun to articulate as being the object, up until now in our field, is organized and at the same time differentiated.

We are going to have to raise the question: with this object, insofar as it is *a*, are we defining the genital object? Does this mean that pre-genital objects are not objects? I am not answering this question; I am simply saying that it arises as soon as we formulate the problem in this way.

It is clear that the answer cannot be altogether simple. Nevertheless, our way of formulating the question has at least one advantage, which is to allow us to see the distinction, angle, or cleavage plane that arises between the phallic phase (or stage) – or what has been called that up until now (I am closely following the generally accepted vocabulary here) – and the genital phase (or stage), the one in which the formation and maturation of the object occurs. In [the psychoanalytic literature that has come out in] recent years, it has, indeed, been quite impossible to grasp the relationship between the two.

At the level of deprivation, in which the subject is a desiring subject, his position is always veiled. His position can only be glimpsed in "phanies" [appearances or manifestations], lightning-fast

appearances of its reflection at the level of the object, in the form of having it or not having it. But, as such, the subject's radical position is that of *not* being the phallus – he himself being a negative object, as it were. You see how far I am taking this.

The three forms in which the subject appears at the level of the three terms, castration, frustration, and deprivation, may well be called alienated, on the condition of giving this alienation a tangibly different, varied articulation in each case. At the level of castration, the subject appears in a blacking out [*syncope*] of the signifier [S]. Things are quite different when he appears at the level of frustration, as subjected to the law that applies to everyone, the Other's law [A]. They are different again when, at the level of deprivation, he himself must situate himself in desire.

This latter form of the subject's disappearance thus appears to us to have an odd originality with respect to the other two, which incites us to go further into it. 415

This is in fact what occurs in our practice, and what the unfolding of the tragedy of *Hamlet* leads us toward.

3

The "something . . . rotten" [I, iv, 90] that poor Hamlet needs to set right is closely related to his position as a subject with respect to the phallus.

Throughout the play, we sense that the phallus is present everywhere in the obvious mess [*désordre*] that is Hamlet's whenever he approaches the hotspots, as it were, of his action. Today I can only quickly indicate to you the points that allow us to follow him step by step.

There is something very strange in the way Hamlet speaks about his dead father; he does so with an idealizing exaltation that more or less boils down to the following: his voice fails him when he tries to say what he has to say about him. In truth, he chokes, only to conclude with one of the specific forms of the signifier known as "pregnant"* in English [II, ii, 206–7] – in other words, an expression that has meaning beyond its meaning – he finds nothing other to say about his father than that he was "a man" like any other. What he means to say is obviously the exact opposite. This is the first trace of what is involved.

There are many other traces as well. The rejection, abuse, and scorn he heaps on Claudius smacks mightily of negation [*dénégation*]. He generates a slew of insults about him, especially in front of his mother, culminating in an expression that cannot fail to indicate

to us that here, too, there is something problematic: "A king of shreds and patches" [III, iv, 103].

We cannot fail to connect this up with an obvious fact in the tragedy of *Hamlet*, and one that distinguishes it from the Oedipal tragedy: after the father has been killed, the phallus is still there.
416 It is quite plainly there, for it is Claudius who is given the task of embodying it. What is constantly at stake is Claudius' real phallus.

In short, Hamlet has nothing else to reproach his mother for than to have gotten herself filled up by it the minute his father disappeared. And he ends up sending her back, with discouraged arm and speech, to this fatal and fateful object which is quite real here. The whole drama seems to revolve around this.

We are obliged to think that there is something very powerful attaching his mother to her partner, given the human feelings she displays in other contexts; indeed, she does not appear to us to be a woman who, by nature, is so very different from other women. It seems that Hamlet's action revolves and hesitates around this point. Here his "daunted genius" trembles, as it were, before something completely unexpected.

For the phallus is in an entirely ectopic position here with respect to the Oedipal position as it is articulated by psychoanalysis. The phallus is clearly real here; it is in this respect that it is important to strike it, and Hamlet always balks at doing so. His uncertainty and hesitation before the object that must be struck is manifest at the moment at which he finds our Claudius praying and says to himself that he could obviously kill him: "Now might I do it pat" [III, iii, 73]. The precise mainspring of what constantly deflects Hamlet's arm is the very narcissistic link that Freud tells us about in "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex." One cannot strike the phallus because, even if it is clearly real, it is but a shadow [*ombre*].

I will ask you to contemplate this in connection with all sorts of very strange, paradoxical things, and especially in connection with how very much we were all stirred up at the time when we wondered why, after all, no one had assassinated Hitler. He perfectly incarnated the object whose function Freud outlines in his *Massenpsychologie* where he spells out how a mass of people becomes homogenized by way of identification with an object on the horizon, an object x, which is unlike any other. Doesn't that link up with what we are talking about here?

What is involved is the altogether enigmatic manifestation of the signifier of power as such. When it presents itself in a particularly
417 striking form in reality [*réel*], as occurs in *Hamlet* – that of a criminal who becomes instated as the usurper – Oedipus deflects Hamlet's arm, not because Hamlet is afraid of this man whom he scorns, but

because he knows that what he must strike is something other than what is there. This is so true that, two minutes after stumbling upon Claudius praying, when he arrives in his mother's closet and begins to shake her up bigtime, he hears a sound behind the curtain and runs headlong at it without even looking.

Some astute commentator has pointed out that Hamlet cannot possibly believe it is Claudius behind the tapestry, for he just left Claudius in the next room. Nevertheless, after he has eviscerated poor Polonius, he reflects,

> Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
> I took thee for thy better. [III, iv, 32–3]

Everyone believes that he wanted to kill Claudius, but he stopped short of killing him because he wanted to have a better one – in other words, to catch Claudius himself "in the blossoms of [his] sin" [I, v, 76]. Given how he presented himself there, he was not the right one.

It is the phallus that is at stake here. Which is why Hamlet can never reach it until the moment at which he has sacrificed – in spite of himself, moreover – his entire narcissistic attachment. It is only when he is fatally wounded, and knows that he is, that he can perform the action that lays Claudius low.

This is odd, obvious, and also inscribed, I would say, in all sorts of little enigmas of Hamlet's style.

Consider the moment at which he shoves Polonius – who for him is merely a "calf," a "capital . . . calf" [III, ii, 101–2], that he has in some sense offered up as a sacrifice to his father's manes and whose assassination barely affects him – into a closet under the stairs. Everybody asks him what is going on and he comes out with a few of his little jokes that are always so disconcerting to his enemies.

Everyone wonders if this is truly the whole story, whether what he says is what he means, for what he says tickles everybody's funny bone, but in order for him to say what he says he must know so much that they cannot believe it, and so on and so forth. This should sound rather familiar to us, given how subjects often reveal things to us.

Hamlet thus says the following things, which have remained up until now quite perplexing to commentators. "The body is with the king" – please note that he does not use the word "corpse," he says "body" – "but the king is not with the body" [IV, ii, 26–7]. I would ask you to simply replace the word "king" with the word "phallus" to realize that it is the phallus that is involved here. For the body is tightly bound up in this business of the phallus, but on the other

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hand the phallus is bound to nothing and always slips between your fingers.

Immediately thereafter, he adds, "The king is a thing –" "A thing, my lord?" his interlocutors ask [IV, ii, 27–8], completely shocked as they are whenever he comes out with one of his aphorisms, and Hamlet replies, "Of nothing" [29]. At which point commentators tend to calm down, thinking that it must be a quotation from the *Psalms* in which it is said that "Man is like a thing of nought." I think that in order to shed light on this it is better to rely on Shakespeare's own work.

An attentive reading of the *Sonnets* inclines me to believe that, in his own life, Shakespeare was imbued with a rather extreme and peculiar desire. Somewhere, in one of the sonnets, whose audacity we can hardly imagine – I am astonished that people can talk about them as though they were ambiguous – he speaks to his love object who, as everyone knows, was of the same sex as him, quite a charming young man, it seems, who appears to have been the Earl of Essex. Your looks leave nothing to be desired, he says to this young man; you look like a woman in every regard; there is but "one thing" that nature wanted to give you, God only knows why, and I unfortunately could not care less about this little thing: it is "to my purpose nothing." Too bad it delights women. And Shakespeare adds, oh well, as long as "Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure."

The terms "thing" and "nothing" are used in their strict sense here, and they are indubitably part of Shakespeare's standard vocabulary. Yet this vocabulary is of but secondary importance here, after all. The question is whether we can fathom Shakespeare's creative position.

At the sexual level, his position can undoubtedly be called inverted, but it is perhaps not all that perverted at the level of love.

To enter into the path of the *Sonnets* will allow us to indicate a
419 little more precisely the dialectic of the subject with the object of his desire. In particular, we shall see what happens at moments when the object – disappearing and vanishing step by step by some pathway, the major one being the pathway of mourning – exposes the true nature of what corresponds to it in the subject for a while, a while that can last no more than an instant: what I will call appearances of the phallus, "phallophanies."

I will leave it at that today.

April 29, 1959

THE DIALECTIC OF DESIRE

XX

THE FUNDAMENTAL FANTASY

No pre-established harmony between desire and the world
Synchrony's privilege
Desire and reality in Glover's work and in Hartmann's
Our experience with homosexuality
The dialectic grasped in its synchronic structure

We are thus talking about desire. The path I have been following this year, like any path, sometimes obliges me to take long detours. This is why I tried, during the break over the last two weeks, to re-center things in order to conceptualize anew the origin and aim of our work here.

This led me to come up with a clarification of the topic, which is also, I believe, designed for you, and which will be but yet another way for us to focus our attention in order to make headway in our research.

At the point we are at, let us try to articulate that with which *we* have a rendezvous. It is not simply the rendezvous of this Seminar, nor the rendezvous of our daily work as analysts. It is above all the rendezvous we have with our function as analysts and with the meaning of analysis.

If psychoanalysis were merely a therapeutic enterprise – like others that have appeared in the course of history – which is more or less founded and successful, we could not fail to be surprised by its longevity. There is no prior example of any theory or psychical orthopedics that has lasted for more than half a century.

What has allowed for the longevity of psychoanalysis, and of the role it plays beyond its use by physicians, that no one, in the end, dreams of disputing? We cannot fail to sense that it is the fact that psychoanalysis brings something with it that concerns man in a way that is simultaneously new, serious, and authentic – new in what it contributes, serious in its import, and authenticated by what? 424

Surely by something other than its often debatable and sometimes precarious results.

What is most characteristic here is, I think, the feeling people have that the thing I once called "the Freudian thing" is something that is being talked about for the first time. I would go further still, to the point of saying, regarding the authenticity of the thing, that its clearest manifestation, what attests to it every day, is the bountiful verbiage that surrounds it.

Indeed, what is striking, when you consider the massive production of psychoanalytic literature, is that its authors always strive to articulate the principle that guides their actions in analysis, without ever arriving, in the end, at anything that is closed, finished, or satisfying. This perpetual dialectical slippage, which constitutes the very movement and life of analytic research, attests to the specificity of the problem with which our research is connected.

Everything that our research includes that is clumsy, confused, or not terribly well founded, even in its principles, everything our practice contains that is equivocal – in which we always encounter what we intended to avoid, namely suggestion, persuasion, construction, and even initiation into mysteries – all of these contradictions in the psychoanalytic movement do no more than point out the specificity of the Freudian thing.

1

The Freudian thing is desire. That is how I am envisioning it this year at least, as an hypothesis, but one which is supported by the concentric progress of my previous work.

Nevertheless, in saying that the Freudian thing is desire, we perceive a sort of contradiction, insofar as the whole thrust of analysts' attempts at theorization seems to go in the direction of making desire lose the accent it originally had – and that it still has, as we cannot fail to note when we deal with it in our experience.

We cannot in any way view desire as functioning in a reduced or normalized way, in conformity with the requirements of some sort of preformed organic system that supposedly leads it down
425 pathways traced out in advance, and along which we would have to redirect it when it goes off course. On the contrary, ever since Freud began to develop psychoanalysis, desire has presented itself with the characteristic designated by the English word "lust,"* which means both covetousness [or: longing, *convoitise*] and lasciviousness [*luxure*]. The same word is included in the German term *Lustprinzip* [known in English as the pleasure principle], and

you are aware that it is ambiguous insofar as it oscillates between pleasure and desire.

In psychoanalytic experience, desire presents itself at first as a problem [*trouble*]. It disturbs [*trouble*] our perception of the object. We see this in poets' and moralists' curses: desire denigrates, disorganizes, debases, and in any case undermines the object, going so far at times as to even dissolve he who perceives it – namely, the subject.

We find the very same perspective at the heart of Freud's position. Nevertheless, *Lust*, as it is brought to the fore by Freud, is formulated in a radically different way from everything that could have been said up until then about desire. The *Lustprinzip* is presented to us as being, at its very core, opposed to the reality principle. The original experience of desire seems to run counter to the construction of reality. The seeking [*recherche*] involved in it is blind in nature. In short, desire presents itself as a torment to man.

Now all those who had tried before Freud to spell out the meaning of the pathways taken by man in his quest had always adopted the principle that man seeks his own good. Over the centuries, philosophers never formulated a single moral theory in which the pleasure principle, whatever it may be, was not immediately defined as hedonistic. This means that man, whether he knows it or not, fundamentally seeks his own good, such that the errors and aberrations of his desire in practice can only be viewed as accidents.

Freud, on the other hand, proffers for the first time a theory of human nature whose principle fundamentally contradicts the hedonistic principle. An entirely different emphasis is given to pleasure, inasmuch as, in Freud's work, the very signifier is contaminated by the specific accent with which *Lust*, "lust"* – covetousness and desire – presents itself.

As opposed to what a harmonious and optimistic idea of human development might, after all, lead us to believe, there is no pre-established harmony between desire and the way the world works. 426
Desire is not organized or put together in that way, psychoanalytic experience teaching us that things go in an entirely different direction. As I have indicated here, psychoanalysis leads us down a path of experience whose very development makes us give up the emphasis on primordial instincts, invalidating it for us.

This means that the history of desire is organized in the form of a discourse that unfolds in the realm of the nonsensical [*l'insensé*]. This is the unconscious. The displacements and condensations in its discourse are undoubtedly the same as the displacements and condensations in discourse in general – in other words, metonymies and metaphors. But in this case they are metaphors that generate

no meaning, and displacements that bring no being with them and in which the subject does not recognize anything that is displaced.

Psychoanalytic experience has advanced by devoting itself to the exploration of the discourse of the unconscious. The core dimension involved there is diachrony. Yet it is synchrony that constitutes the essence of the work we are engaged in here this year. I am attempting to reconceptualize the status of desire in order to situate it in the synchronic dimension.

Whenever we broach our experience – whether by reading the major account of it, the textbook* of the earliest experience of psychoanalysis, namely, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, or by considering a series of interpretations in any given analytic session – we realize that every interpretation involves a deferral [*renvoi*] from one wish to another in which the movement of the subject is inscribed, as well as the distance at which he finds himself from his own wishes. Although this mechanism of endless deferral never presents us with desire in anything but an articulated form, it nevertheless presupposes something that necessitates it at its core.

It is here that our strictly linguistic reference to structure comes into play. It reminds us that there can be no use of symbolism without there being primordially – that is, prior to any and all use of speech, which is known as discourse – a synchronism, that is, a language structure qua synchronic system. It seems to me that it is thus legitimate to hope that we will also manage to locate the function of desire in synchrony.

427 What we call man is therefore an x, a barred subject, insofar as he is the subject of logos and insofar as he constitutes himself as a subject in the signifier.

Where is desire situated in the synchronic relationship between the subject and the signifier?

It is enough to see what pathways psychoanalytic research, in its neglect of structural organization, is following today to sense just how necessary it is to re-elaborate or revamp the concept of desire, as we are doing, on this basis.

2

When, a few minutes ago, I mentioned the theoretical distinction made by Freud between the pleasure principle and the reality principle, did you realize that we had reached the precise point at which writers try to theorize analysis in the very terms that I said should be avoided because desire does not square with them?

It squares with them only to the degree to which these authors feel

a need to believe that desire coincides with what everyone else thinks it is. They do everything possible to deduce their idea of optimal, or at least desirable, development from the notion that experience supposedly converges on maturation.

At the same time, if these writers could in fact formulate psychoanalytic theory in such terms and be content with the idea that the subject ontologically adapts to his experience of the world, this would mean they had abandoned all contact with their practice as analysts. The further they try to take this project, the more they make revealing mistakes – mistakes that reveal that they need to formulate things differently – and the more they arrive at paradoxes.

I will give an example, which I will take from one of the best analytic authors around, one who pays the most attention to formulating things correctly, not only regarding our practice but also regarding the sum total of our practice's initial data, and who also deserves credit for having striven to survey the notions and concepts we employ. I am talking about Edward Glover.

His work should be read because of the vast number of cases that 428
it summarizes. It is among the most useful to anyone who wishes to know what he is doing, which is still more indispensable in analysis than elsewhere. I will take up one of his many articles, one you must read, which came out in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* in October 1933, volume 14, number 4 [pp. 486–504]. It is entitled "The Relation of Perversion-Formation to the Development of Reality-Sense."

Many things in this article are worth discussing, if only the initial terms Glover provides in view of correctly broaching what he intends to show us. Specifically:

1 He defines "reality-sense" as "a faculty the existence of which we infer by examining the processes of reality-testing" [p. 486]. It is sometimes of great interest that things be formulated clearly.
2 He defines "efficient reality-testing" as the capacity, "for any subject who has passed the age of puberty, [. . .] to retain psychic contact with the objects that promote gratification of instinct, including here both modified and residual infantile impulse" [p. 486].
3 He defines "objectivity" as "the capacity to assess correctly the relation of instinctual impulse to instinctual object, whether or not the aims of the impulse are, can be or will be gratified" [p. 486].

These are his very important premises. You cannot fail to be struck by the fact that the author defines the term "objectivity" in

a way in which it is not usually defined. This reminds us that not everything Freud said has been completely forgotten, because this definition of objectivity overthrows what hitherto seemed to us to be a category necessitated by our worldview.

On this basis, Glover undertakes a study of what is meant by perversion formations, understood most broadly, in relation to reality-sense. What is, in the end, the spirit of the article? It is to conceptualize perversion as a means by which a subject can deal with everything that does not fit for him into a coherent reality, including rips and things that flop.* Perversion is very precisely articulated by Glover as the "means of salvation for the subject to assure continuous existence to this reality."

This is quite an original viewpoint, since the upshot is that perversion becomes ubiquitous. Glover then tries to trace out
429 a developmental chronology, establishing a timeline on which psychotic disturbances are the earliest occurrences and neurotic disturbances come later. Between the two he situates drug addiction, which thus corresponds in his view to an intermediate stage. The point for him is, in short, to determine the chronological turning points or historically important developmental moments that give rise to different problems.

This point of view is open to criticism, as is every such attempt to provide a simple developmental timeline of analyzable complaints. As we cannot enter here into a detailed critique of the article, I will select a single paragraph that highlights the paradox that arises whenever people attempt to reduce the desire function or desire principle we deal with, to a preliminary, preparatory, not-yet-informed stage which involves adaptation to reality – whenever, that is, people attempt to reduce it to the first form of our relationship to reality. The principle that serves as Glover's point of departure, here as elsewhere, in developing his theory is, in effect, to classify perversion with respect to reality-sense.

I will simply indicate to you the consequences this principle brings with it by citing a short passage from his article, which differs from thousands of others in his writings only by the colorful, literary, paradoxical, and truly expressive form in which it is presented. Let me make it clear that this article was written during what one might call Glover's Kleinian phase, his work here having a great deal in common with Klein's system – in spite of the struggle against Klein he felt he had to engage in at the theoretical level.

In this passage, Glover is discussing the moment at which, he tells us, the subject's so-called paranoid phase gives way to the "reality system" that he calls "oral-anal." Glover describes the external world, in which children supposedly live, as something that

"represent[s] a combination of a butcher's shop, a public lavatory under shell-fire, and a post-mortem room" – and Glover explains to us here that the point at that moment is to transform this world, which is rather tumultuous and catastrophic, "into a more reassuring and fascinating chemist's shop," one in which there is nevertheless a 430
little problem: "the poison cupboard is left unlocked" [p. 492].

This is quite cute and picturesque. But however implicit, profound, and buried children's experience may be, or we may assume it to be, there is nevertheless a problem in theorizing that children actually broach reality in the form of a butcher's shop, a public lavatory under shell-fire, or a morgue.

It is not because this formulation is initially shocking that we can rule it out, but at the same time we would be justified in doubting its accuracy. It obviously cannot coincide with the usual form of child development, especially when one views this development as characterized by the ways in which the subject adapts to reality.

At the very least, such a formulation necessarily implies the hypothesis of a twofold reality. In one form of reality we could locate behaviorism, but there would be another reality on whose eruptions in the subject's behavior we would then have to keep an eye. Otherwise stated, we are immediately obliged to restore the autonomy and originality of another dimension which is not primitive reality, but which is, right from the outset, something that goes beyond the subject's lived experience.

Once it is articulated, this contradiction becomes so obvious that I may need to apologize for having discussed it at such length. Nevertheless, it is so well disguised in certain people's work that it gives rise to a serious equivocation in the use of the term "reality." When we assume that reality undergoes a development parallel to that of the instincts – and this is the most widespread belief – we arrive at strange paradoxes that inevitably have repercussions on analytic practice.

If we assume that desire is already there – in other words, that it exists in reality – it becomes necessary to talk about it, not in a disguised form, but in its earliest form: instinct. The latter is supposedly involved in both evolution and in psychoanalytic experience. To say that desire is inscribed in a realm that is homogeneous with reality, that it is part and parcel of the same realm as reality, and that it can be thoroughly explained and taken up in terms of reality – these being formulations that we find nowadays in virtually all of psychoanalytic theory – implies the following paradox: what allows 431
the world to achieve its full objectivity is the maturing of desire. This proposition is part and parcel of the basic belief system of a certain form of analysis.

Here I would like to raise a question about what this means concretely. What is a world, to we living beings? What is reality in Hartmann's version of psychoanalysis, for example?

Hartmann gives full credit to the structuring elements that ego organization brings with it. This ego, he says, has adapted in such a way as to move about efficiently within constituted reality. Well I, too, would like to provide an image that conveys to you what we are talking about. To give you a concrete image of the most typical and developed form of world we are talking about, adult reality, I will liken it to the world of American lawyers.

For the world of American lawyers is not simply an important field in our universe, but is, it seems to me, currently the most elaborate world that we can define when it comes to our relationship with reality – or at least with what we call such. For we find there the complete gamut running from a certain violence – whose presence is essential, fundamental, and can always be required so that one cannot say that reality is in any way elided there – to subtleties of legal procedure that allow one to introduce into this world all sorts of paradoxical novelties, novelties that are defined by a relationship to the law that is essentially constituted by the detours required to obtain the most perfect violation of that very law.

Such is the world of reality. Now, what relationship can there be between this world and what one might call a "mature desire," in the sense of genital maturity?

The question can assuredly be answered in several ways, one of which is that of experience – namely, the sexual behavior of American lawyers. Now, nothing so far seems to confirm that there is an exact correlation between the optimal development of a world, all of whose activities are so well managed, and a perfect harmony
432 in relations with the other, inasmuch as these relations involve some success or concord at the level of love. Nothing proves it, and almost no one would even dream of maintaining it.

I am merely sketching out for you where the question arises. The question is based on the fact that there is a confusion here regarding the term "object."

There are, on the one hand, objects that are supposedly situated in reality, in the sense that I have just articulated it; and there are, on the other hand, objects that are inscribed in the relationship between the subject and the object, a relationship that at least latently implies knowledge. When people claim that the object matures as desire matures, what object are they talking about?

It is an object that is quite different from the one that we can actually situate in the place where an objective mapping allows us to characterize reality-based relations. We have long been familiar

with the object we are talking about; it goes by the name of the object of knowledge, even if it is altogether veiled there.

This object has been the goal, aim, and endpoint of research for millennia. Such research is still there, behind the fruits it yielded when it became what we call "science," after having had to follow the pathways of the subject's rootedness in the world for a long time. It was undeniably on the basis of this rootedness, I mean at the philosophical level, that science was able to find its point of departure at a certain moment, even if science – like a child who becomes independent after having been nourished for many years – has now taken its distance from this form of reflection. We see traces of this original rootedness in the guise of the theory of knowledge.

In this realm, people came as close as they could to a profound identification between the two terms in the subject/object relationship. For them, knowing is related to a co-naturalness, and any attempt to grasp the object manifests something related to a harmony that has to exist.

Let us not forget that this is certainly but the result of a specialized practice, one that stands out in a history that gave rise to several branches. I will confine my attention here to our branch, that of Greek philosophy.

The attempt to pinpoint and promote what is known as the object involves a theoretical attitude which we would be completely wrong 433
to think that, now that results have been obtained, we can eliminate, as if this theoretical stance had no impact on its effect.

What did this attempt to know imply about the status of desire? We analysts are certainly able to raise this question, but it was not unnoticed by religious thinkers, and we can, here as elsewhere, merely follow in their wake. Inasmuch as religious practice has other aims than psychoanalysis, it has specified this desire as the desire to know, *cupido sciendi*. We merely add our own two cents' worth to this when we indicate that it has a more fundamental basis: some ambivalent drive like scopophilia or even oral incorporativeness.

Be that as it may, one thing is clear, which is that the development of knowledge, including the implicit notions about the object it brings with it, results from a choice. The establishment of every philosophical position has, throughout the ages, necessarily involved being recognized as a stance that involves sacrificing something. The entrance of the subject into the realm of what is known as pure research [*recherche désinteressée*], the fruit of which is objectivity – after all, attaining objectivity has never been defined in any other way than as grasping a certain reality from an unbiased [*désintéressée*] perspective – entails the exclusion, at least in theory, of a certain form of desire.

This is the perspective from which the concept of the object was developed. It is not pointless for us to reintroduce it here. After all, we know what we are doing, because this perspective is implicit in the presupposition of a virtual and latent correspondence – which must always be found anew or obtained – between the investigation of desire and the object that this investigation explores.

We have reason to distinguish, on the contrary, between the object that satisfies the desire for knowledge – the philosophical notion of which has been the fruit of centuries of elaboration – and the object of a desire.

It is owing to a confusion between these two notions that analysts
434 have been so easily led to posit a correspondence between a certain constituting of the object and a certain maturing of the drive.

Taking a stand against this, I have tried to provide you with a different formulation of the relationship between desire and its object, which I claim to be closer to our experience.

We are now going to turn to the true articulation, which I call synchronic.

3

The symbolic formula ($\$ \lozenge a$) gives form to what I call the fundamental fantasy.

This is the true form of the supposed "object-relation," not the form in which it has been articulated up until now.

To say that we are talking here about the fundamental fantasy means nothing more than that, from a synchronic perspective, it gives desire its minimal supporting structure.

It contains two terms and their twofold relationship to each other constitutes fantasy. Their relationship is still more complex insofar as the subject is constituted qua desire in a tertiary relation to fantasy.

Today I will take up this tertiary perspective. Moreover, I will show that the subject's assumption [*assomption*] involves *a*. This is just as legitimate as to show that it involves the barred subject, given that desire is sustained in a confrontational relationship to ($\$ \lozenge a$).

I believe that I have already taken things far enough here that it will not shock you, throw you off, or surprise you if I claim that object *a* is defined first of all as the prop that the subject gives himself inasmuch as he falters [*défaille*] . . . – I will interrupt myself here for a moment and begin by saying something approximate that may have some impact on you – . . . *inasmuch as he falters in his certainty as a subject*. Now I will give you the exact term, but it is

not very intuitive, which is why I did not want to give it to you right away: *inasmuch as he falters in his designation as a subject.*

What is at stake here is based entirely on what happens in the Other, inasmuch as the Other is the locus of the subject's desire. Now, in the Other, in the Other's discourse which the unconscious 435
is, the subject is missing something [or: something is not available to the subject, *quelque chose fait défaut au sujet*]. We will come back to this later, we will come back to it as often as necessary, and we will come back to it right up to the end.

Owing to the very structure that establishes the relationship between the subject and the Other qua locus of speech, something is missing [*fait défaut*] at the level of the Other. What is missing there is precisely that which would allow the subject to identify himself as the subject of his own discourse. Insofar as this discourse is the discourse of the unconscious, the subject instead disappears in it.

In order to designate himself, the subject must consequently employ something that is taken at his own expense. Not at his expense as a subject constituted in speech, but at his expense as a real, live subject, at the expense of something which, taken by itself, is not a subject at all. The subject who pays the price necessary to be able to locate himself as faltering is thus brought into the dimension that is always present whenever desire is involved: having to pay for castration.

Stated otherwise, something real, which he has a hold on in an imaginary relationship, is raised to the pure and simple function of a signifier. This is the final and most profound meaning of castration as such.

Freud's essential discovery is the fact, which had been overlooked hitherto, that castration is involved as soon as desire manifests itself clearly as such. This fact opened up for us all sorts of historical perspectives, which people have translated in various mythical fashions, and which people then tried to reduce to developmental terms. This developmental approach – involving the diachronic dimension – was undoubtedly fruitful, but it cannot spare us the trouble of exploring the other dimension, the synchronic dimension, to see what the essential relationship involved *there* is.

The latter is the relationship between the subject and the signifying system [*le signifiant*], inasmuch as the subject cannot designate himself in it, or name himself as a subject in it. He must make up for this inability [*défaut*] through personal sacrifice [*payer de sa personne*], as it were. I am trying to be as evocative as I can be here, and thus am not always employing the most rigorous terms.

We can find an analogue of what happens next in the function of 436
certain symbols that linguists distinguish in the lexical system, which

go by the name "shifter symbols."* I have already mentioned the personal pronoun "I," which designates the person who is speaking. At the unconscious level, the same is true for little *a*. This *a*, which is not a symbol but rather one of the subject's real elements, is what intervenes to support the moment, in the synchronic sense, at which the subject falters in attempting to designate himself [or: because he designates himself, *défaille pour se désigner*] at the level of the instance of desire.

I realize that mental gymnastics of this kind can be tiring to you. Which is why, in order to give you a break, I will illustrate this with terms from our concrete practice. I have said that *a* is the effect of castration. I did not say that it was the object of castration. The object of castration is what we call the phallus. What is the phallus?

We see it appear in what, last time, I called the artificial phallophanies of analysis. Here too, psychoanalysis shows itself to be an original, absolutely unique form of practice, for before it there was no form of alchemy, whether therapeutic or not, in which the phallus appeared. In the work of Hieronymus Bosch, there are all sorts of detached members. And there is the anything but fragrant *flatus* [gas] that Ernest Jones took as the prototype for the Holy Ghost. We have very clear images of all this, but you can note that we do not see the phallus very often. Yet we ourselves see it, and we also realize that it is not very easy to pinpoint exactly. This is but a tangent.

Our experience with homosexuality only became defined once we began to analyze homosexuals. At first, people did not analyze them. In 1905, Professor Freud could not go any further, as he tells us in *The Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, than the notion that male homosexuality is based on the subject's narcissistic requirement that his object have a phallus, it being considered essential by the subject.

Then we began analyzing homosexuals. Have a look at the truly
437 exemplary work done by Felix Boehm, who was one of the first to have taken an interest in this. His work begins in the 1920s and continues up until 1933 and beyond that as well. I mentioned a number of other works on homosexuality when I spoke to you about the importance of the articles by [text missing here].

Such analytic work showed that homosexuality is far from being a primordial, instinctual requirement, and that it cannot be identified with a pure and simple fixation or deviation of instinct. People also realized that the phallus that plays a role, of one kind or another, in the mechanism of homosexuality is far from having the same status as other objects, and they identified it, perhaps too hastily, with the father's phallus. The latter was supposed to have its home in the

woman's vagina, and to be feared because of that, which supposedly explains why the subject finds himself forced into an extreme position, that of homosexuality. We see there, in any case, a phallus of an entirely different import, with a thoroughly different function, and situated in an altogether different place than what had been mentioned earlier.

That's not all. After being overjoyed, as it were, that we now had the bull by the horns, we continued to analyze homosexuals and realized that the image of the phallus as an appendix that the subject at first believes women have, inasmuch as they are not yet castrated, is not the last word regarding this matter.

Indeed, in being looked at more closely, this image – which at a later date was brought into play in the psychoanalytic theorization of homosexuality – turned out to be what one might call an evagination, that is, the turning inside out of the vagina. In this fantasy – that we already encountered in the dream of the hat turned inside out whose analysis I went through with you at such length – the phallic appendix seems to be made from the externalization of the insides. Thus, in analysis, when one presents a homosexual the everyday dialectic of his desire, in a certain investigatory perspective, this turns out to be the final imaginary term with which he finds himself confronted.

The homosexual in question here is one of those who was analyzed by Boehm, and on this point I am relying heavily on his work, which is especially illustrative and confirmed by a great deal of 438
experience.

What can we say about this fantasy if not that the phallus presents itself here in a radical form, inasmuch as its function, in the end, is to show on the outside what is in the subject's imaginary inside?

We should almost not be surprised that a certain convergence is established here between the imaginary and symbolic.

What is found in the imaginary in an inside-out, extirpated, almost detached, but not yet detached position with respect to the inside of the body can be raised quite naturally to the function of a symbol, without for all that being detached from its radical insertion, which is such that it is felt to be a threat to the integrity of one's self-image.

4

I do not want to end today on the point I just made.

For it is not what will provide us with the meaning and function of little *a* as an object, most generally speaking.

Inasmuch as the subject is desire, he is always imminently threatened with castration. What props his position up is, as I told you, the object in fantasy, which is the most complete form of the object. I would now like to show you in what sort of synchrony this relationship can be articulated.

Let me underscore the word *synchrony*, for the necessity of discourse will force me to give you a formulation of it that is diachronic. The upshot being that you will be prone to confusing it with some sort of genesis. Yet it is nothing of the sort.

The relations between the letters that I am now going to write on the blackboard [see Table 20.1] are designed to allow you to situate little *a* in its proper place. It is insofar as the subject is in the presence of imminent castration that he is related to this object. I will provisionally designate this relation to the object as the price that must be paid [*rançon*] for the subject's position, because I must also emphasize what I mean by talking about this relation as desire's prop.

439 Table 20.1 Synchronic schema of the dialectic of desire

A	D
rS	D
A	S
a	$
A'	
A"	
A"'	

How is the synchronic relationship generated? We begin from the earliest subjective position, that of demand. You see it indicated on the top line, on the right, by capital D. It is the manifestation, illustration, or example in the individual's behavior that allows us to grasp essentially how the subject is constituted insofar as he enters into the signifier.

The synchronic relationship in question is established according to a very simple algorithm, which is that of division. It is indicated by the vertical line. A horizontal line separating the levels is provided here, too, but there is nothing essential about it since it can be repeated at each level.

The subject's most primordial relationship is that involving demand addressed to the Other qua locus of speech. The Other figures here in the form of the letter capital A. It is on the basis of the relationship A divided by D that the dialectic begins whose remainder will give us the position of *a*, the object.

At the beginning of this process, the subject's need is primordially articulated in terms of a signifying alternative, and everything is established that later structures the subject's relationship to himself known as desire. The Other, who is someone real here, a real subject, rS, finds himself in a position – owing to the fact that he is called upon by demand – to transform demand, whatever it may be for, into something else, which is a demand for love, insofar as the latter purely and simply refers to the presence/absence alternative. This is why, in the second row, I place a bar on capital D. 440

Let me point out in passing that I could not fail to be surprised, touched, and even moved when I found in Shakespeare's *Sonnets* the literal term "present-absent," complete with a hyphen, at the point at which he was describing love relationships.

We thus see the subject constituted here insofar as the Other is a real person, the one through whom demand itself becomes laden with signification, the one through whom the subject's demand becomes something other than what it explicitly asks for, which is the satisfaction of a need.

There is no subject except to another subject – this is a principle we must maintain as having forever been true. Owing to the fact that the Other is primordially posited as he who, in the presence of demand, can play a certain game or not, the Other is already established as a subject and as a term in the tragedy that is going to be played out. In other words, the introduction of the subject or individual into the signifier takes on the function of subjectifying the Other, which is what leads me to write the letter capital S preceded by a lower case r below the letter capital A.

It is insofar as the Other himself is a subject that our subject is instated, and that he can establish himself as a subject in a new relationship to the Other – one in which he must get himself recognized as a subject by this Other, no longer as demand, nor as love, but as a subject.

Am I in the process of attributing here to some sort of larva all the dimensions of self-consciousness concocted by philosophical reflection? This is not what is involved. Or, better stated, this is involved but in a form that is truly concrete and real, instead of being hidden or veiled as it is in philosophy.

What guarantee can he find for the Other's function and functioning in reality, as responding to his demand? What can attest to the truth of the Other's behavior, whatever it may be? What is at the concrete foundation of the notions of truth and of intersubjectivity? What gives its full meaning to the term "truth"* in English, which simply expresses Truth with a capital T? Everything depends on what we call in French, in a breaking down of language that turns

441 out to be a product of the linguistic system, *foi en la parole*, "faith in speech." In other words, in what respect can we count on the Other?

This is what is at issue when I tell you that "there is no Other of the Other." What does this mean if it is not that no signifier exists that can guarantee any concrete, serial manifestation of signifiers. It is here that the term A barred comes in.

Under the pressure of the subject's demand for a guarantor, what happens at the level of the Other is primordially something related to a lack [Ⱥ] in relation to which the subject must situate himself. Let us note that this lack is produced at the level of the Other qua locus of speech and not at the level of the Other qua real. Nothing real on the Other's side [of the table] can make up for this, except by a series of additions, A', A", A"', that will never be exhausted.

The Other will manifest himself to the subject, over the course of his entire existence, through gifts or refusals. But that will never be situated anywhere other than in the margins of the fundamental lack that is itself found at the level of the signifier. The subject will be historically invested in all sorts of experiences with the Other, the maternal Other in this case, but none of that will be able to exhaust the lack that exists at the level of the signifier as such, which is the level at which the subject must situate himself in order to constitute himself as a subject and get himself recognized by the Other.

The subject himself is marked by this failure [*défaillance*] or non-guarantee at the level of the truth about the Other [or: level of the Other's truth, *niveau de la vérité de l'Autre*]. And this is why he will have to institute what I already tried to broach earlier in the form of his genesis – namely, little *a*. These two terms, S barred and little *a*, face each other in the fourth row of the table.

Little *a* is that something that turns out to be subjected to the condition of expressing the subject's final tension, the tension that is the remainder or residue, the tension that lies in the margins of all of these demands [or: latent within all of these demands, *en marge de toutes ces demandes*], and that none of these demands can exhaust. This something is destined to represent a lack and to represent it with a real tension on the subject's part.

This is the hitch [*os*], so to speak, in the object's function in desire. This is the price that has to be paid for the fact that the subject cannot situate himself in desire without castrating himself – in other words, without losing what is most essential about his life. Simone
442 Weil's remark, "To ascertain exactly what the miser whose treasure was stolen lost: thus we should learn much," already pinpointed what this form is situated around, it being one of the most exemplary forms of desire.

It is, naturally, in order to save his life that the miser keeps little

a, the object of his desire, locked up in an enclosure – which, let us note, is an essential dimension. But owing to this very fact, this object turns out to be a mortified object. What is placed in a treasure chest is removed from the circuit of life, being subtracted therefrom, in order to be preserved as the shadow of nothing, and this is what makes it the miser's object.

Thus the French expression *Qui veut garder sa vie, la perd*, "he who wishes to save his life will lose it," is corroborated. Does this imply that he who consents to lose his life finds it anew as directly as all that? Not so fast. We will try to see next time where he finds it anew.

Our trajectory today shows us – and this is not the least contribution it makes – that the path the subject goes down to find his life anew will in any case present him with what he consents to lose: the phallus.

If the subject has mourned the loss of the phallus – which, as I have indicated, is a necessary stage – from then on he can only aim at the phallus as a hidden object.

Little *a* is an obscure, opaque term, part and parcel of a nothing to which it is reduced. It is beyond this nothing that the subject will seek out the shadow of that life of his which he at first lost.

The table on the blackboard gives you the contours of the functioning of desire. It shows you that the lost object, the object to be found anew, is not the one that the developmental perspective has proposed as the primal object of a primordial impression. It is part and parcel of desire's very nature to constitute the object in accordance with this dialectic.

We will pick it up there next time.

May 13, 1959

XXI

IN THE FORM OF A CUT

The subject's "*Est-ce?*"
Real versus knowledge
On the subject's real
Three examples of object *a*
Breathing and the voice

We are going to pick up today where we left off last time. I had formalized a sort of operation for you in the form of a subjective division involving [or: in, *dans*] demand. We shall return to it, and this will lead us next to examine the formula for fantasy, inasmuch as it props up the pivotal relationship that I am trying to lay out this year in the functioning of psychoanalysis.

1

You may recall that I put the letters A/D on the board in order to designate demand's imposition or proposition [or: proposal, *proposition*] in the Other's locus, which I presented to you as the earliest ideal stage [see Table 20.1].

This is no more than a reconstruction, naturally. And yet nothing is more concrete or real. It is to the degree to which a child's demand begins to be articulated that the process begins – or at least I intend to show that it begins – by which the *Spaltung* [splitting] brought on by [*du*] discourse, that is expressed in the effects the unconscious has, forms.

Now I am going to write rA/S on the board. To the right, we have the subject's first position, grasped in the act of the first articulation of demand. Its necessary counterweight is the position of the real Other, rA, insofar as it is all-powerful in responding to this demand. This stage is essential if we are to understand the foundation of the

first relationship to the Other, who is the mother here, where we find the first form of omnipotence. 444

Nevertheless, as I said, it is not by examining the Other, but rather by considering what occurs at the level of demand that we are going to extend the process of logical generation. I had expressed it to you last time with the letters rS/$\not$D. On the left, I introduced the Other as a real subject, whereas demand, which is initially demand for the satisfaction of a need, turns out to take on a different import as it becomes demand for love, and this is what is designated by the D shown here with a bar through it.

I no longer recall if it was in this form that I wrote it on the board. [The audience says yes.] Fine. It does not matter much, anyway, since this is designed to generate the entire palette of the subject's real experiences, which will be inscribed in a certain number of responses, whether gratifying or frustrating. Even though they are, of course, highly essential, inasmuch as a certain modulation of the subject's history is inscribed in them, they do not affect the formal, synchronic analysis that I am currently conducting here.

If we begin from an initial stage at which the Other is the real Other who responds to demand, we see that at the next stage, the subject questions the Other as a subject, our subject appearing to himself to be a subject inasmuch as he is viewed as a subject by this Other. The relationship, designated by A/S, is the first stage of the actual constitution of the subject.

This means that the subject is constituted in relation to another subject, one who speaks. He must get his bearings in the fundamental strategy that arises with the appearance of the dimension of language, and that begins with this dimension alone. Owing to the fact that the Other has become structured in language, she becomes the possible subject of a strategy, with respect to which the subject himself can be constituted as a subject recognized in the Other, as a subject to another subject.

On the one hand, there can be no subject who is not a subject to another subject; on the other hand, it is only as a speaking subject, as a subject of speech, that the first subject can be established as such. And since the Other is herself marked by the necessities of language, she is no longer a real Other; rather, she is established as the locus of the articulation of speech [or: locus in which speech is articulated]. The first possible position for a subject as such – a subject who can grasp himself as a subject, who can grasp himself as a subject in the Other, insofar as this Other thinks of him as a subject – is created in that locus. 445

As I mentioned last time, there is nothing more concrete than this. It is in no wise a stage in philosophical thinking; it is something

primitive that is established in a trusting relationship. To what degree and up to what point can I count on the Other? What portion of the Other's behavior is reliable? What consequences can I expect from what she has already promised?

These are the questions around which one of the earliest conflicts in the relationship between the child and the Other revolves, even what is undoubtedly the earliest conflict, from the vantage point that interests us. This – and not pure and simple frustration or gratification – is the basis on which the principles of the child's history are built; this is the mainspring of what is repeated at the deepest level of his destiny; this is what commands his behavior's unconscious modulation. Psychoanalysis, and even our daily experience of psychoanalysis, teaches us that the question whether the subject can or cannot rely on some Other is what determines what we find to be most crucial in the patient's unconscious modulation, whether he be neurotic or not.

At this stage, the Other is a subject of speech [or: a speaking subject or one of speech's subjects, *sujet de la parole*], insofar as speech is primordially articulated. It is in relation to the Other thus defined that the subject himself is constituted as a subject who speaks, and not as some sort of primitive knowing subject – that is, not as the subject talked about by philosophers. The subject at stake here is posited as being observed by the Other and as being able to respond to him in the name of a shared strategy. He is the one who can interpret everything the Other articulates about her most profound intention and about her good or bad faith.

At this level – at which the subject is in abeyance – S is truly posited, if you will allow me a play on words, not only as the S written with a letter, but also as the *Es* of Freud's topography of the subject. This S is the id [*Ça*], and in an interrogative form. If you add a question mark, S is in fact articulated as *Est-ce?* ["Is it?" or "Is this?"] This is all the subject thus far formulates about himself at this level. He is here *in statu nascendi*, in the presence of the Other's speech [*articulation*], inasmuch as that speech responds to him.

In this speech, the Other responds to the subject beyond what
446 the latter formulated in his demand. If the subject wants to get his bearings [or: get ahold of himself, *se saisir*] in the beyond that speech brings with it [*dans cet au-delà de la parole*], he will thus have to take a step that brings him to the following stage: *a*/$ [see Table 20.1].

This subject is marked with a bar that primordially divides him from himself qua subject of speech. It is thus as a barred subject that he can, must, and intends to find the answer. But he does not find

it, for at this level he encounters in the Other the hollow or empty space that I formulated by telling you that "there is no Other of the Other"; that no possible signifier can guarantee the authenticity of the series of signifiers; that there is nothing, at the level of the signifier, that guarantees or authenticates the signifying chain or speech in any way. This is why the subject depends so essentially on the Other's goodwill.

It is at this point that the subject brings in from elsewhere – namely, from the imaginary register – a part of himself that is involved in the imaginary relationship to the other. This is little *a*. It arises at the very place where S wonders what he truly is and what he truly wants.

What we call object *a* is undoubtedly the object of desire, but on condition that we make it clear that it does not, for all that, adapt to desire. It comes into play in a complex that we will call fantasy. The subject manages to prop himself up with this object at the moment at which he vanishes when faced with the signifier's failure [or: inability, *carence*] to answer for his place as a subject at the level of the Other.

At the level at which the subject attempts to reconstruct himself, to meet back up with himself in the demand he makes to the Other, and to authenticate himself as a subject of speech, the operation of division stops. For the quotient that the subject is seeking to reach remains in abeyance [or: suspended] in the presence of the appearance, at the level of the Other, of the remainder [object *a*] owing to which the subject himself pays the ransom for, and comes to make up for [*suppléer*] the deficiency [or: absence, *carence*] of the signifier that responds to him at the level of the Other. This quotient [$] and this remainder [*a*] remain in each other's presence here and prop each other up, as it were. Fantasy is nothing but the perpetual confrontation between barred S and little *a*.

The barred subject marks the moment of the subject's fading* in which the subject finds nothing in the Other that can clearly guarantee the subject, that authenticates him, that allows him to situate and name himself at the level of the Other's discourse – in other words, qua subject of the unconscious. It is in response to this moment that an imaginary element, the correlative term of fantasy's structure, arises to make up for [or: to stand in for, *comme suppléant du*] the missing signifier. I designate this element in its most general form as S's prop at the moment at which S tries to designate himself [*s'indiquer*] as the subject of unconscious discourse. 447

It seems to me that I need say nothing further on this point. I am going to say a bit more anyway to indicate what this means in Freud's discourse. Let us reconsider, for example, Freud's claim,

Wo Es war, soll Ich werden, translated as follows: *Là où C'était, là Je dois devenir* [Where it (or id) was, I must come into being].

This is very precise. What is involved here is *Ich* [that is, the personal pronoun I], which is not *das Ich*, the ego. *Ich* is used here as the subject of the sentence. *Là où C'était* means where It/id [*Ça*] speaks – in other words, where just a moment before, there was something: unconscious desire.

It is there [where unconscious desire was] that *I* must designate myself, that *I* must be. This *I* is the goal, end, and terminus of analysis before it names itself, forms, and is articulated – assuming it ever does or is, because the *soll Ich werden* in Freud's formulation must be understood as *dois-Je devenir* [I must become]. The I is the subject of a becoming, of a duty [*devoir*] that is proposed to us.

Freud tells us in this sentence that we must reconquer the lost field of the subject's being. And he illustrates it with a lovely comparison to Holland and its peaceful draining of the Zuider Zee, of the submerged lands. What is at stake here is the field of the unconscious that we must win back in the course of the Great Work of psychoanalysis.

But a question arises: before this is done, what designates to us the place, *là où Ça était* [where It/id was], the place of the *I* that must come to light? The index of desire, precisely speaking. I mean of desire qua function and terminus of what is at stake in the unconscious, desire sustained by the coexistence and opposition of two terms, $ and little *a*.

At this edge where the unconscious begins, the subject loses himself. We are not just talking here about the absence of something that one might call consciousness. Another dimension begins here where it is no longer possible for the subject to know either who he is or where he is. Any and all possibility of naming himself ends here.

But at this terminus we also find the index [of desire]. The object right in front of the subject indubitably fascinates him. But this is
448 not its major function. Appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, this object is also what stops the subject from blacking out, from having his pure and simple existence wiped out.

This is what constitutes the structure of what I call fantasy. We are now going to see just how broadly the formula for fantasy can be applied. We are thus going to consider fantasy's synchronic function.

What does that mean?

What is involved is the place occupied by fantasy in the subject's self-references, his references to what he is at the level of the unconscious – not when he wonders about what he is, but when he

is, in short, borne along [*porté*] by the question about what he is, *which is the very definition of neurosis.*

2

What is targeted at the moment of desire is, as I say, a naming of the subject that proves to be deficient [*défaillante*].

In fantasy, the subject is on the verge of this naming, and this is what defines fantasy's structural role.

This is a culminating point at which the subject undergoes – maximally, as it were – what one might call the virulence of logos, at which he registers the full alienating effect of his involvement in logos.

The fact that man is caught in the grips of logos – that is, in the fundamental combinatory that is its essential characteristic – undoubtedly raises a question: what does it mean for man to be necessary to the action of logos in the world? But it is for others to answer that question. What we must examine here is what the upshot of this is for man and how man deals with it. The first formulation that might come to mind is that he must really bear [*soutenir*] it, he must sustain it [*soutienne*] with his real, with himself as real – which is also what always remains most mysterious to him.

A digression would not be amiss here, in order to try to grasp what the term "real" – a term that I employ, contrasting it with the symbolic and the imaginary – can, in the final analysis, actually mean, which is something that a number of you have been wondering about for a long time. 449

On this point, it is certainly worth noting that our era, which has witnessed the invention of psychoanalysis, is also an era in which something has been forced on us, despite our ever-so-great resistance to it: a crisis in the theory of knowledge, or a crisis of knowledge itself.

I already endeavored to draw your attention to what the scientific venture signifies last time. Science was created and grafted onto a longstanding culture that involved adopting a stance that was biased [*partiale*] enough for us to call it partial [*partielle*]. Indeed, it involved a certain retreat – on the part of man, for whom the world was present – from stances that were initially contemplative.

As I have pointed out, we can assuredly specify these stances as constituting a discipline, ascesis, or choice. They did not entail a desiring stance as such, but rather the election of a certain form of desire – namely, as I said, the desire to know. What resulted from this is, as we know, science, our modern science, which is

distinguished from others by the exceptional grip [*prise*] it has on the world – a grip that reassures us, in a way, when we speak of reality.

We know that we have at least some handle [*prise*] on the real. But what sort of handle is it, after all? Is it a cognitive handle? Do we take cognizance of the real? I can provide only a partial answer here.

If we consider what results from the scientific process at the point we are at today, and especially at the point at which the development of physics has arrived – which is the form of this process in which the grip of our symbolic chains on something that we call experiments [or: experience, *l'expérience*], which are constructed experiments, has gone the furthest and has encountered the greatest success – doesn't it seem to you immediately, at first glance, that we have less than ever the feeling that we have reached the ideal that the earliest philosophy set for itself?

From a Greek, Aristotelian, perspective, the goal of knowing – what rewarded the efforts of the philosopher or sage – was identification with the being that was known. At the end of the process, the
450 subject – or rather he who was thinking, he who was seeking knowledge, for he was not called a subject at the time – was supposed to identify with the object of his contemplation. What do we identify with at the end of the process of modern science? I do not believe that there is a single branch of science that proposes anything of the sort, whether it be the branch in which we have arrived at the most perfect and most advanced results [physics], or even the branch in which science is still taking its first step, trying to sketch out its foundations – I am referring to the form of psychology known as behaviorism.

The latter is still but a science in its infancy. It seems to want to imitate the little angel in Dürer's *Melencolia I*, the one who, alongside the adult Melencolia, is just beginning to spread its wings [see Plate 2]. Behaviorism can, nevertheless, be instructive to us. It shows us that when people found a psychology that claims to be scientific, they begin by positing that they are going to do simple behaviorism – in other words, they are going to confine themselves to looking at what is right in front of them and will above all refuse any sort of aim involving identification [with the object of study]. Above and beyond the method at stake, there is at the very crux of science a refusal to believe that one can, in the end, arrive at what Antiquity's ideal of knowledge entailed.

What is truly exemplary in behaviorism is such as to make us contemplate what we are told by another form of psychology – which we do not formulate as a science, of course, but which is nevertheless considered to be paradoxical with respect to the method thus far defined for a scientific approach – Freudian psychology.

The latter states, in effect, that a subject's real must not be conceptualized as correlated with some sort of knowledge. From the outset, the real, as a real in which a subject is involved, is not situated with respect to a knowing subject, since something in the subject is articulated that is beyond any possible knowledge he may have. Yet he is already a subject.

Furthermore, the subject recognizes himself in the fact that he is a subject of a chain that is articulated like a discourse is. Now, a discourse cannot be sustained without some sort of prop, and it would not be going too far to qualify this prop with the term "being." After all, if the term "being" means anything, if we give it its minimal definition, it is the real inasmuch as the real is inscribed in the symbolic.

A real is involved in this chain, and Freud tells us that it is coherent and commands the subject's behavior, beyond all the motives that are accessible to the play of consciousness [or: cognition or knowledge, *connaissance*]. It is a real that is articulated in the symbolic, that has come to occupy a place in the symbolic, and that has come to occupy it beyond the knowing [or: conscious] subject. This is truly something that deserves to be designated as along the lines of being, in the full sense of the word. 451

We arrive here at the end of the digression I began earlier.

It is at the very moment at which the branch of the tree of knowledge known as science – and which has given us results that undoubtedly go much further than any sort of effect expected from knowledge – proved to disappoint knowledge's hope of attaining identification with the object, that Freud pointed (in an experience of subjectivity as it is established in the confidential disclosing of things that goes on in analysis) to a chain in which things are articulated in a way that is structured just like any other symbolic chain, just like what we know as discourse, but which is not accessible to the subject. For, as opposed to what occurs in contemplation, the subject cannot rely on that chain as though it were an object in which he can recognize himself. On the contrary, he fundamentally misrecognizes itself in it.

The harder he tries to broach this chain and to name or locate himself there, the less he can do so.

He is only ever there in gaps and cuts. Every time he tries to get his bearings there, he is only ever in a gap.

This is why the imaginary object of fantasy with which he then tries to prop himself up is structured as it is.

There are many other things to demonstrate about the formalization ($\$ \lozenge a$), but I would now like to show you how little *a* is constructed.

3

Let us first consider the formal properties of object *a* in the structure of fantasy, such as analytic experience allows us to recognize them.

As I just mentioned, the subject encounters himself as a cut or
452 gap at the endpoint of his questioning. Moreover, it is essentially in the guise of a cut that *a* shows us its form, in all its generality. I am simply going to list here a certain number of shared properties of the different forms of this object that are already known to you.

For those of you who are analysts, I can proceed quickly, with the proviso that I will have to go into detail and comment on this again later. What, for example, is going to allow us to recognize that the object in fantasy takes the form of a cut? Frankly, I believe that, at the level of the result, you will be a step ahead of me, at least I dare to hope so.

The subject, at the point at which he wonders about himself as a barred subject, finds nothing to prop himself up with but a series of terms that we call *a* insofar as they are objects in fantasy. As a first approximation, we can provide three examples of this. This does not imply that there are only three, but almost.

This list is not altogether exhaustive, inasmuch as taking things up at the level of what I will call the result – in other words, at the level of *a* qua constituted – is not a terribly legitimate approach. If I am adopting it, it is simply in order to start from already familiar terrain, in order to make it easier for you to cover the ground we need to cover. It is not the most rigorous pathway, as you will see when we follow the pathway of structure, which begins with the barred subject, insofar as it is the latter who necessitates the term "object." I am beginning with the object because it will allow you to get your bearings more easily.

There are three types of little *a* that have heretofore been identified and located in analytic experience: *a*, φ, and d.

The first type is the one that, rightly or wrongly, we usually call the pregenital object.

The second type is the sort of object that is involved in what is known as the castration complex, and you are aware that, in its most general form, it is the phallus.

The third type introduces the only term that will perhaps surprise you as new – but, actually, I think that those of you who have taken a close look at what I have written about the psychoses will not be terribly puzzled here. The third type of object [d] – which fulfills the exact same function with respect to the subject at his breaking point
453 and fading* – is neither more nor less than what is commonly called

a "delusion." This is why Freud wrote, very early on in his practice, in his first reflections, "they love their delusions as they love themselves," "*Sie lieben also den Wahn wie sich selbst*" [SE I, p. 212].

We are going to take up these three forms of the object one by one in order to grasp what in their form allows them to serve the function of becoming signifiers that the subject draws from his own substance in order to be able to bear [*soutenir*] [something right] in front of him: the hole or absence of the signifier at the level of the unconscious chain.

As a pregenital object, what does little *a* mean?

A formulation comes to mind here, which summarizes, for more than one materialist thinker, what is, after all, the functioning of an organism, even if it is human, at the level of material exchanges: namely, and I am not the one who invented this, that an animal is nothing more than a tube with two orifices, one that things go into and another that things come out of. Well, this is how the so-called pregenital object is constituted, inasmuch as it comes to serve its signifying function in fantasy.

What nourishes the subject is cut off from him at a certain moment, not to mention the fact that, at times, things are reversed – this is the oral-sadistic stage – he himself cuts it off, or at least endeavors to bite it off. There is thus, on the one hand, the object qua object involved in weaning, which means, strictly speaking, the object involved in the cut [or: object cut off, *objet de coupure*], and there is, on the other hand, at the other end of the tube, the object he ejects and that is cut from him. All training in rituals and forms of toilet training thus consists of teaching the subject to cut from himself what he himself ejects.

In everyday analytic practice, what we make into the fundamental form of the object of the so-called oral and anal stages is tantamount to cutting [*la coupure*]. At the oral level, the object is the nipple, that part of the breast that the subject can hold in his buccal orifice, which is also what he is separated from. The object is also excrement, which at a different moment becomes the most significant form of the subject's relationship to objects, too.

These objects are very precisely selected insofar as they manifest in their form, in an exemplary manner, the structure of cutting [*coupure*]. Owing to this, they serve as props at the level of the signifier where the subject turns out to be situated as structured by a cut [*coupure*]. This explains why these objects are chosen over others. 454

People could not fail to ask why, if it were simply a question of the subject eroticizing one or another of his vital functions, there would not also be a more primitive and fundamental stage in which

he would be attached to a function that is just as vital as that of nourishment – the latter starting at the mouth and ending with excretion from the intestinal orifice – namely, breathing.

Yet breathing does not in any way involve the element of cutting. Breathing does not cut itself off, and if it is cut off, it is in a way that does not fail to generate some drama. Nothing is inscribed in a cutting off of breathing except in an exceptional manner. Breathing is rhythm, pulsation, and vital alternation; there is nothing about it that allows us to symbolize, at the imaginary level, precisely what is at stake – namely, a gap or cut.

This is not to say, however, that nothing that goes through the respiratory orifice can, as such, be subjected to scansion, since it is through this very same orifice that the voice passes. Now, vocal production is something that is cut and scanned [*se scande*]. This is why later today we will come back to the voice when we turn to delusions.

When cutting or scansion is not imposed on this production, and it is simply *pneuma* or *flatus* [breath or wind], then, at the deepest level of our experience of it in the unconscious, it is not specified as being of a respiratory order, but is related to anal *flatus*. Furthermore, the latter paradoxically turns out to symbolize most profoundly what is at issue whenever the subject is symbolized by the phallus at the level of the unconscious. This is one of those unpleasant surprises that psychoanalysis has sprung on us.

It is to Jones's credit that he glimpsed this, and I recommend you read his studies on the topic.

455 Let us turn now to the second level.

I call it second merely for the artificial purposes of exposition, for there is neither a first nor a second level. All objects *a* have the same function. At the point we are at along our path, we simply want to know why they take one form or another. When we describe their form synchronically, however, we try to bring out their common characteristics.

When we turn to the castration complex, we find another form of little *a*, which is mutilation.

In effect, if what is at issue is cutting, it is necessary and sufficient that the subject separate himself from some part of himself, that he be able to mutilate himself. At first glance, this does not seem to introduce anything terribly new, as analytic writers have clearly seen, they reminding us what we have learned about mutilation from history and ethnography. Which is that – among all the initiation rites by which man seeks to define his access to his own reality, to a higher level of self-realization, and to the consecration of his full-fledged manhood – there are a certain number of forms

of marking [*stigmatisation*] that I do not need to list for you here. Mutilation is one of them, and it plays an especially eminent role.

I will simply remind you now, taking the opportunity to put our finger on it, that what is involved here again, in another form, is something that we can clearly call a cut – truly so inasmuch as the cut inaugurates the shift to a signifying function here. What remains of this mutilation is a mark. Owing to this fact, a subject – who has undergone the mutilation as a particular individual in the flock – henceforth bears the mark of a signifier that extracts him from an initial state in order to convey him toward and identify him with the power to be different and better. This is the meaning of every type of initiatory practice.

This signification is found again at the level of the castration complex. Which is not to say that we have exhausted the question of what is at stake at this level. You must have noticed the ambiguities that revolve around the function of the phallus since I first began trying to broach it with you.

In a certain way, at the level of the castration complex, it is the 456
phallus that is marked and raised to the function of a signifier. Nevertheless, castration is not altogether implied by the ceremonies that lead to one or another type of deformity or circumcision. We must not confuse the mark that is brought to bear in this way on the phallus with the specific function of negativization that is ascribed to the phallus in the castration complex and that constitutes a type of extirpation.

We cannot grasp the latter at this stage in my exposition. We will return to it next time, I think, when we will have to explain a problem that arises for us, now that we are broaching these things anew and are inventorying them. I am simply indicating this to you today.

Why was Freud able to do something so outrageous at the outset, which involved tying the castration complex to something that inspection shows is not all that closely related to it – namely, a dominating, cruel, tyrannical function, that of a sort of absolute father? This is assuredly a myth. And like everything Freud bequeathed us – and this is quite miraculous – it is a myth that holds up. I will try to explain why.

Let us return to initiation rites, and the forms of marking and mutilation they entail. They are designed, by those who practice them, to transform the subject. This is why the angle from which we are broaching them today clearly shows that, in their fundamental function, they play the role of little *a*.

Initiation rites in primitive societies are designed to change the meaning of the subject's natural desires, which are allowed to run

free and remain inchoate at the pre-initiation stage. The point is to give those desires a function with which the subject's being can identify and by which it can be designated as such, he becoming thereby, as it were, a full-fledged man. There are rites for becoming a woman, too. Mutilation serves to orient desire here, to have it function as the kind of index I spoke about earlier.

As an index of what? Of something that is actualized but that cannot be expressed except in a symbolic beyond. Today I have
457 called this beyond "being." Let us thus say that mutilation indexes the actualization of the subject's being here.

A few tangential remarks are in order here.

It is of course no accident if what receives a signifying mark in initiation rites is whatever sticks out. The phallic appendage is not the only one, as you know, that is employed for this purpose, even if there is no doubt but that the relationship of the subject to himself that makes him most apprehensive – namely, that of tumescence – naturally designates the phallus as the object that is most often offered up to the cutting function, and in a way that is more assuredly feared and scabrous than when it comes to any other object.

The same is true of the function of narcissism as the imaginary relationship of the subject to himself, which must be taken as the main structural support in which the formation of the significant object is inscribed. In our experience of the mirror stage, the subject turns out to be able to place his own tension or erection in the image of himself that comes to him from the other – namely, from beyond himself.

This is what allows us to perceive what may be legitimate in how the tradition of philosopher/psychologists had already broached the function of the ego. I am alluding here to what Maine de Biran contributed in his subtle analysis of the feeling of effort. Effort is a pressure [or: push or thrust, *poussée*] apprehended by the subject from both sides at once, inasmuch as he is the author of the pressure, but also the one who contains it, inasmuch as he feels [*éprouve*] the pressure he exerts within himself. Nevertheless, although he perceives himself [*s'éprouve*], he is never able to grasp himself, since there is, strictly speaking, no possible cut or mark here.

This allows us to notice the link that must be located between the experience of tumescence and that of fatigue – I mean what is known, at the level of erotic practice, as the neurotic's fatigue, whose mirage-like character and unobjectifiable nature you are aware of, since it has nothing to do with any muscular fatigue we can factually measure. If the effort cannot in any way serve the subject, nothing allowing us to stamp it with a signifying cut, this fatigue, which is

symptomatic and paradoxical, seems conversely to be the aftermath 458
or trace in the subject of an effort on his part to "turn (or make) into signifiers" [*signifiantiser*], as I will call it.

It is here that we might be able to find, in its most general form, what – at the level of the subject's tumescence or pressure – shows us the limits at which possible consecration in the signifying mark vanishes. I felt it was important to mention this in passing.

We come now to the third form of little *a*, inasmuch as it can serve as an object.

Here I would really like it if people would try not to get this wrong, even though I do not have enough time today to go into all the details about what I will emphasize. Without undertaking a close rereading, which I will ask you to do, of what I wrote in "On a Question Preliminary to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis" [in *Écrits*] – in which I laid out what allows us to formulate, in such an advanced and developed way, Judge Schreber's delusion – what I think is most likely to show you what is at stake and how I mean it is to try here to spell out the voice's function in delusions.

We will not be able to understand the phenomenological characteristics of the voice in delusions unless we have first been able to grasp in what respect it corresponds quite specifically to the formal requirements of little *a*, insofar as it can be raised to the signifying function of a cut or gap as such.

In the usual case, a subject produces a voice. I would go even further and say that the function of the voice always brings into discourse the subject's weight, his real weight. A raised voice [*La grosse voix*], for example, must be included in the formation of the superego as an agency, in which it represents the agency of an Other manifesting himself as real.

Is this the voice that is heard by someone who is delusional? Is it what Jean Cocteau tried to pinpoint the dramatic function of in his work entitled *La Voix humaine* [*The Human Voice*]? It suffices to consider the everyday experience we in fact have of the voice in an isolated form – in the very form in which Cocteau, with a great deal of relevance and flair, showed us its pure impact – namely, on the telephone.

What does the voice itself teach us, beyond what it says on the telephone? There is certainly no reason to lay out here the whole 459
range of experiences of it that one may have. It should suffice to mention the times you try to place an order, or make any other sort of request, at a shop, and lo and behold you end up with one of those voices, at the other end of the line, whose indifference immediately informs you of the ill-will of the person you are dealing with,

his well-established will to elude what may be pressing or personal in your request. This sort of voice instantly indicates that you can expect nothing from the person with whom you are speaking. I will call this type of voice, using a term that has been beautifully crafted by the genius of the French language, *une voix de* "contremaître" [the voice of a foreman, supervisor, or overseer] – it is not that this guy is against [*contre*] the master [*maître*], but he is truly the contrary of the master. It is in this way that certain voices can sometimes convey vanity, irrelevance, and bureaucratic emptiness.

Is that what I mean when I speak of the voice functioning at the level of *a*? No, absolutely not.

In delusions, the voice presents itself as pure articulation, and this is what renders paradoxical what a person having a delusion tells us when we question him about the nature of the voices he hears. What he has to communicate always seems to slip away in the oddest way, whereas there is nothing more solid to him than the consistency and existence of the voice as such. Of course, it is precisely because the voice is reduced in his experience to its most cutting and purest form that the subject can but take it to be forcing itself on him.

This is why I emphasized, when we analyzed Judge Schreber's delusion, the (characteristic of) cutting that is altogether obvious there, since the voices heard by Schreber articulate only the beginnings of sentences, such as, *Sie sollen werden.* . . . The sentences are interrupted before the significant words are uttered, allowing a call for signification to arise after the sentence is cut short. The subject is indeed concerned by this [or: caught up in this, *y est intéressé*], but solely insofar as he himself disappears, succumbs, and is swallowed up whole in a signification that targets him only very generally.

460 Before closing, I will summarize for you what I have tried to home in on today with the words *il l'intéresse* [it interests him, concerns him, he is caught up in it].

I agree that today's class has perhaps been one of the most difficult of all those I have ever given here. You will, I hope, be rewarded next time, when we will proceed by less austere pathways.

I have asked you today to hold onto the notion of interest [*intérêt*]. He who is concerned [*intéressé*] is the subject inasmuch as he resides in the gap constituted by unconscious discourse [*l'intervalle du discours de l'inconscient*]. The subject is, strictly speaking, the metonymy of the being who expresses himself in the unconscious chain.

If the voices and senseless sentences get the subject especially interested in the delusion, it is for the same reason as for all the other forms of the object that I have enumerated for you today. It is

at the level of the cut or gap that he becomes fascinated and fixated in order to sustain himself [or: thereby sustaining himself] – at the instant at which he targets himself and questions himself – as a being, as the being of his unconscious.

I do not want to close, however, without conveying – at least to those who have come here for the first time today – the import of the little link this lecture constitutes between others I have given lately.

It is important for us to see what we must do about fantasy, whose most radical and simple forms I have shown you, forms in which, as we know, it constitutes the preferred objects of the subject's unconscious desire. But fantasy is mobile. If we upset it, we must not believe that it can, just like that, jettison one of its members. I know of no examples of fantasies which, when suitably attacked, do not react by reiterating their fantasy form.

We are aware how complicated fantasy can become. In its so-called perverse form, it insists, it preserves and complexifies its structure, and it strives to ever more closely serve its function.

"Interpret fantasy," people say.

Is it purely and simply a question of bringing the subject back to actuality as we see it, to the actuality of reality that we can define 461
as men of science, or as men who imagine that everything can be cognized, known? It seems that a major trend in analytic technique is inclined to reduce the subject to reality functions – reality, for certain analysts, seeming not to have to be articulated otherwise than as the world of American lawyers, as I called it last time. Isn't this enterprise indubitably beyond the scope of the means employed by those with a certain modicum of conviction?

Doesn't the place occupied by fantasy require us to take another dimension into account? This dimension is that of what one might call the subject's true exigencies. This dimension cannot be confused with reality; it cannot be reduced to the everyday world; it is a dimension of being.

In this dimension, the subject bears within himself something that is, good Lord, perhaps as hard to bear as Hamlet's message, and which may doom him to a fatal destiny.

The main question is to know what value we analysts grant the experience of desire. Is it to us but a simple bump in the road, something rather bothersome, something that will go away if we wait long enough, when old age sets in, allowing the subject to quite naturally return to the pathways of peace and wisdom? Or does desire designate something else to us?

How should we operate with this something else?

What is our mission? What, in the final analysis, is our duty?

These are the questions I am raising when I speak about the interpretation of desire.

May 20, 1959

XXII

CUT AND FANTASY

Choice, drive, and repetition
The creative cut
Details in works of art
Is the ghost* a liar?
Hamlet's fantasy

Today we will continue our study of the place where fantasy as a function is situated. Fantasy includes the part of the subject that is marked by speech's effects, in relation to an object *a* that we tried to define last time.

1

You know where fantasy as a function is situated on what I call the graph.

It is, in short, very simple. The intersecting of the two signifying chains, the upper and lower chains [left-to-right arrows], by a loop which is that of subjective intention, defines four points. I have referred to those on the right, A, and above it, ($◊D), as the points at which we find the code, whereas the other two are points at which we find the message, S(Ⱥ), and below it *s*(A), owing to the retroactive effect of the signifying chain as regards signification.

These are thus the four points that we have learned to give the following significations. The two points on the lower chain are loci where the subject's intention encounters the concrete fact that there is language. Today we are going to examine the other two signs – namely, the barred subject in the presence of D and the signifier of the barred Other.

I have long since elucidated what the two signifying chains represent.

464 The lower chain is that of the subject's actual discourse. As a first sketch, let us say that it is accessible to consciousness. That said, it is because it is based on illusions, as psychoanalysis has taught us, that we assert it to be completely transparent to consciousness.

If it were not, why would I have spent several years emphasizing what is illusory in this transparency effect, and used every means to convince you of this? I tried to show you, using a fable that you perhaps recall, that it is theoretically possible to imagine that a specular image can subsist independently of any subjective prop; it can persist long after the subject has ceased to exist; and it can even produce effects owing to a mechanism that persists in the subjective nothingness realized by the destruction of all life. I showed you this not for the simple pleasure of constructing such an apparatus, but to illustrate the fact that a montage structured like the montage of the signifying chain can be assumed to last far longer than any of the subjects who prop it up.

Our practice, which constantly brings us into contact with the subject's systematic misrecognition [*méconnaissance*], teaches us that consciousness – insofar as it gives us the feeling of being "me" [*moi*] in discourse – is not an immediately given fact, but is, rather, first experienced in an image, that of one's semblable. This experience throws an appearance of consciousness over what is implied by the subject's relations to the earliest, naive signifying chain, by his relations to innocent demand and actual discourse. I am talking about the type of discourse that flies from one mouth to the next, that gets repeated by one person after another, that organizes what there is by way of discourse in history itself – this actual, shared, everyday speech [*discours universel*] that envelops everything that in fact occurs at a greater or lesser distance from it, that envelops all real, social activity of human groups.

The other signifying chain [i.e., the upper chain] is the one that is clearly shown in psychoanalytic experience to be inaccessible to consciousness. That said, given that we doubt whether the first chain is altogether conscious, to characterize the second chain as inaccessible to consciousness raises many questions about the meaning of this inaccessibility. We must thus indicate what we mean by it.

465 Must we assume that the chain that is inaccessible to consciousness is constructed like a signifying chain? I will return to this later. Let us consider it first as it presents itself to us.

We have here the line $S(\not A)\rightarrow(\$\lozenge D)$, which is drawn as a dotted line in order to indicate that the subject does not articulate it as a discourse. What he currently articulates is something different, something that is situated in the intentional loop $(\$\lozenge D)\rightarrow S(\not A)$. In effect, it is inasmuch as the subject situates himself as operating

within the play of speech while alienated by signifierness [*en tant qu'agissant dans l'aliénation de la signifiance avec le jeu de la parole*] that he articulates himself very precisely as a question or an enigma.

This is tangible in human development when, beyond the first demand, with all the consequences it already has, the child seeks to ratify [*sanctionner*] things in the realm established by signifierness – he says "What?" and he says "Why?" This constitutes an explicit reference to discourse and transforms the subject's first intention, that involving demand, into a second intention, that involving discourse itself. Here, discourse itself is questioned, things are questioned in relation to it, in relation to how they are situated in discourse. We are no longer dealing here with exclamations, interpellations, or cries based on need, but rather with naming.

I show the subject's second intention beginning from the locus A. Indeed, it is because the subject is thoroughly alienated by spoken articulation [i.e., speech] and signifierness that a question arises, the one I expressed last time in the guise of *Est-ce?* with a question mark. I expressed it thus not to indulge in equivocation, but because this guise corresponds to the current stage of my formulation of the topic here. In effect, once the subject has been instituted *in* speech, he tries to situate himself as the subject *of* speech [or speaking subject, *sujet* de *la parole*]. This is why he asks "Is it?" "What?" "Why?" "Who is speaking?" and "Where is it speaking?" What we see here is questioning that is internal to discourse, to the established locus of speech.

This question in effect constitutes the subject as a subject of speech. But the fact remains that, at this level, what is articulated at the level of the signifying chain is not articulable. The existence of the unconscious stems from that.

Some of you may worry that I am presenting the relationship between the unconscious chain and the subject's questioning as 466
identical to the relationship between the earliest discourse involving demand and the intention that arises out of need, as if this were an arbitrary construction.

Let me simply remind you that if the unconscious has a meaning, this meaning has all the characteristics of the signifying chain as a function. And I will complete this brief reminder by alluding to a little story that most of my audience here has already heard me tell when I spoke about the signifying chain. Those who do not recall it can have a look at the published version of it.

I am alluding to the fable of the white disks and the black disks [pinned to three prisoners' backs]. This fable illustrates something structural in subject-to-subject relationships, inasmuch as there are three subjects involved. In this fable, a pair of differential signs,

white and black, allows us to discern the relationship between one subject and two others. Each subject situates himself with respect to the reasoning process engaged in by the other two subjects, which is based on the color of the disks that they see him and one of the others wearing. The three go through a succession of synchronous oscillations that lead them to conclusively make what I will call a *Wahl*, a choice, a fundamental choice, by which each of them decides what color disk he is wearing, white or black, and shows himself ready to declare it, which is what the fable was constructed for in the first place.

Now, isn't that something we are familiar with from the structure of the drive?

In this fable, we find identification relative to others, negation, refusal to articulate, and defense, which are as consistent with the drive as are two sides of the same coin. The matter is concluded with a decision that marks for the subject the fact that he indeed always makes the same choice in the same situations. We refer to this power of repetition, depending on whom we are dealing with, as we can – as a masochistic tendency, a penchant for failure, the return of the repressed, or a fundamental evoking of the primal scene – but we are dealing with one and the same thing: repetition in the subject of a type of sanction [*sanction*] whose forms go well beyond the characteristics of the content.

In essence, the unconscious always presents itself to us as an indefinitely repeated articulation. If it is legitimate to situate it on the graph in the form of a dotted line, it is, as I have said, because
467 the subject does not accede to it. At this level, the subject is, in the end, he who bears the mark or stigmata of a repetition that remains not only ambiguous, but strictly speaking inaccessible to him, until psychoanalytic experience – which puts a stop to it – allows him to name, situate, and designate himself in it as the medium [*support*] of the sanction.

He cannot say "I" at this level. Things present themselves, on the contrary, as "coming from the outside" [*Ça arrive du dehors*]. To say that a thing is coming is already a lot, for he can only read it as "it is speaking" [*Ça parle*]. There is such a great gap here that it is not clear that the subject can, in any way, bridge it and attain the goal that Freud enjoins us to aim at with the commandment *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden.*

Let us now turn to ($◊D). What is signified by this so-called code point, symbolized here by the confrontation between the barred subject and demand, capital D?

Let me emphasize first that this point only takes on its import when the deciphering of the coherence of the upper chain begins

in the course of psychoanalysis. It is the precise point at which the chain of the subject's speech – insofar as he wonders about himself in what lies beyond actual discourse – encounters demand.

The subject in question here is the one that we retroactively assume to be the medium of the articulation of the unconscious [*l'articulation de l'inconscient*], inasmuch as he sees it, hears it, and reads it. He is the subject qua subject of the unconscious. What role does demand play here? It is assigned its truly symbolic form, and this is what is meant by the lozenge, ◊, between $ and D.

Demand comes in at this level inasmuch as, beyond what it insists on by way of need satisfaction, it presents itself as a demand for love that establishes the Other to whom it is addressed as someone who can be present or absent. It is in this respect that demand, whether it be oral or anal, takes on a metaphorical function here, and comes to symbolize a relationship with the Other. The subjective relationship to demand plays a code function here, inasmuch as it allows us to constitute the subject as being situated, for example, at the level of what, in our vocabulary, we call the oral or anal stage.

With the code, the subject can receive as a message a question that connotes, in what lies beyond the Other, the first taking up of 468
the subject in the signifying chain. It is a question that comes from the Other – on this [curved upper] line, which is also dotted – in the form "*Che vuoi?*": "What do you want?" It is also a question that the subject, again in what lies beyond the Other, asks himself in the form *Est-ce?*

The answer is symbolized on the schema by the Other's signifierness [*signifiance*] qua S(Ⱥ).

I grant this signifierness a broader meaning at this level, into which the adventure of the actual subject – that is, his subjective history – is going to flow. In its most general form, this meaning can be enunciated as follows: there is nothing in the Other or signifierness that can suffice at this level of signifying articulation; there is nothing in signifierness that can guarantee truth; there is no other guarantee of truth than the Other's good faith; and this good faith always presents itself to the subject in a problematic form. Everything that the realm of speech brings into existence for the subject continues to depend on utter and complete faith in the Other.

Does this mean that the subject is done with his question here? This is precisely where we come to fantasy.

I already showed you last time that fantasy is the point we concretely butt up against by which we approach the shores of the unconscious. At the precise point at which the subject finds nothing that can articulate him qua subject of his unconscious discourse, fantasy plays for him the role of an imaginary prop.

This is what we are returning to today, for we must more closely examine what this phenomenon is about.

2

As you see on the graph, I locate fantasy across from the [vertical] line A→($◊D) where the subject situates himself in order to accede to the level of the unconscious chain.

Let me remind you of what I said last time. Everything transpires as if, in fantasy, the object plays the same role qua mirage as the image of the specular other, *i(a)*, plays with respect to the ego, *m*, at the lower level. Except that in fantasy, the object is the imaginary
469 prop of a relationship involving cutting with which the subject must prop himself up at this level. This leads us to a phenomenology of cutting.

We have seen the object at three levels: the pregenital object, castrating mutilation, and hallucinatory voices. Let me point out in passing that, as the third object here involves an incarnated voice, it is less an interrupted discourse than a voice that is cut from the text of the subject's internal monologue.

Let us see today if there is not a good deal more to say about this, assuming we return to the meaning of what I already discussed last time, concerning the difference between the vantage point of the real and the vantage point of knowledge.

The point is to know what level we are at here regarding the subject, when we introduce him as barred S. Is this *Est-ce?* [pronounced exactly like S] anything other than an equivocation, which can be given whatever meaning we like? Are we going to dwell on the fact that it is a conjugation of *Esse*, the verb "to be" in Latin?

I already commented on this a bit last time when I talked about reality. Indeed, the subject does not simply refer to discourse, but also to some facet of reality. If there is something that we can coherently call reality, I mean the reality we make a point of mentioning in analytic discourse, I would situate it on the graph in the field that is below actual discourse.

In fact, actual discourse envelops the field of reality and encloses it within itself; it constitutes a reserve of knowledge that can be extended to everything that speaks to man. I mean that man is not obliged to constantly recognize every aspect of his reality and history that he has already included in his discourse. It is here, for example, that alienation, as it is presented in Marxist dialectic, can be coherently articulated.

I would go further still: let us not forget the cut. It is already at

work in the first type of fantasy object, the pregenital object. What are fantasy objects here if not real objects? As separated as they may be from the subject, they are nevertheless closely related to his life drives.

In short, it is only too obvious that reality is not a compact continuum; it is made up of cuts, including and going far beyond the 470
cuts made by language.

Plato long ago compared the philosopher to a good cook, one who knows how to place his knife in the right place, and cut through the joints [of an animal carcass] without crushing them. Up to a point, the relationship between real cuts and linguistic cuts thus seems to agree with what the philosophical tradition has always assumed – namely, that what is involved is merely the overlapping of one system of cuts with another. Yet if I say that Freud's question comes in here, it is inasmuch as the distance that science has now covered allows us to formulate that the scientific venture goes far beyond the notion that natural cuts are overlaid by cuts made by discourse, made by any discourse whatsoever.

Efforts – that essentially involved eliminating the mythological elements from all scientific explanation – have led us to the point we are at right now, which seems to me to be adequately characterized, without being overly dramatic, by the term "disintegration of matter." This term is well designed to suggest to us that it is not pure and simple knowledge that is at work in the scientific venture.

Situating ourselves at the level of the real, or, if you will, of what I will provisionally call "the great All" – with all the necessary irony, for I am certainly not inclined to call it that – science and its venture do not in any way show us the real lining up with its own cuts [*se renvoyant à lui-même ses propres coupures*], but rather cuts which are elements that create something new that has the virtue of proliferating.

As human beings, we certainly cannot deny that a question arises here: that of knowing whether the consequences of what manifests itself in this way do not go somewhat beyond us in our mediating function. This remark, which I am deliberately keeping sober and limited in scope, nevertheless takes on a current and dramatic accent which I assume has not escaped you. In short, it is only too clear that man enters into this game at his own expense.

There is perhaps no reason for us to go further here. Indeed, if I have referred to the scientific venture, it was not in order to mention all the dramatic effects it has had on human history. It was in order 471
to home in on the relationship between the subject and the sort of cut constituted by the fact that he *is* not in a certain unconscious discourse, and that he does not know what he is in it.

The subject as real insofar as he enters into the cut, the advent of the subject at the level of the cut, his relationship to something that we must call the real, but which is symbolized by nothing: this is what is at stake. I designate the specific point of the subject's relationship to what we might call his "pure being as a subject" – and this will perhaps seem to you to be going too far – at the level of the cut, which I have called a pure manifestation of this being.

Desire's fantasy [*le fantasme du désir*] thus takes on the function of designating this point. This is why, at another point in time, I defined the function fulfilled by fantasy as a metonymy of being, and identified desire itself at this level.

It should be clear that the question remains entirely open at this level whether we can call what is indicated in this way "man." Indeed, what can we call "man," if not what has already been actually symbolized and which, whenever people talk about it, turns out to be laden with all sorts of historical admissions [*reconnaissances*]? The word "humanism" generally designates nothing here, even if there is, of course, something real in it, which is necessary, and which suffices to assure, in psychoanalytic practice itself, the dimension – which we usually, and rather improperly, I believe, call a depth, so let us instead say a beyond – which is such that being can be identified with none of the roles (to employ the term currently used) that it takes on.

To my mind, the dignity, so to speak, of this being has nothing to do with the fact that he is cut – if I may express myself thus, with the whole backdrop, and especially the castrating references, you may attribute to this – nor with the fact that he is *un coupable* [a guilty party, but also someone who is cuttable], to allow myself a play on words. His dignity is based on the cut itself.

The cut is, in the end, the final structural characteristic of the symbolic order. It is in this direction – and I am saying so in passing – that I have already taught you to seek the meaning of what Freud called the death instinct, that by which the death instinct may turn out to converge with being.

472 As all of this may be a bit problematic to you, I would now like to try to fill it out by referring to a work of art, and to works of art in general, in order to illustrate what is involved here.

3

I will begin with a very interesting article, that does not go too far: Kurt Eissler's "The Function of Details in the Interpretation of Works of Literature," which came out in *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*.

Eissler begins his discourse, and ends it, too, with a remark that one may qualify in various ways, depending on whether one considers it to be confused or simply unexplained. The term "detail" seems to him to be particularly apposite when it comes to the work of a specific author [Ferdinand Raimund] who is completely unknown outside of Austrian circles, an "actor-poet" who Eissler considers to be a sort of unrecognized Shakespeare. I am taking up his article here because I am going to return to Hamlet later today.

Regarding this quasi-Shakespeare who lived in nineteenth-century Vienna, Eissler tells us one of those pretty little stories that are quite typical of what is known as "applied psychoanalysis." In other words, like others before him, he finds in the life of this author a certain number of indicative and paradoxical elements that allow him to raise questions that must forever remain unanswered. We thus learn that Raimund was especially affected, five years before writing one of his chefs-d'oeuvre, by the death of someone who was a sort of model for him, but a model who was so thoroughly embraced that all kinds of questions about paternal, maternal, and sexual identifications arise, as well as any other identifications you might like to add to the mix. The question in itself leaves me rather cold. It is one of those gratuitous papers which, in this genre, appear again and again with an annoying note of conviction. But that is not what is at issue.

Eissler emphasizes the function of what in English he calls the "relevant detail,"* the one that does not fit in with the rest and attracts attention [p. 19]. Eissler's ears perk up when, in a rather 473
well-constructed play by Raimund, something comes out of the blue, as it were, something that nothing has prepared us for. One thing leads to another and Eissler manages to find a certain number of biographical facts of obvious interest. What is at stake is thus the value of relevant details as a guide.

Eissler contrasts what happens in clinical work to what often happens in the so-called applied psychoanalysis of a literary work. He repeats this contrast twice, and if I had time I would read the passages to you to convey their curious opacity [pp. 3 and 19].

In short, he says that a symptom and a relevant detail play more or less the same role, with the following proviso: in analysis, we begin from a symptom that is taken to be relevant by the subject, and it is by interpreting it that we move toward a solution. In the case of a literary work, on the other hand, it is the detail that introduces us to the problem. It is when we find something in a text – he does not even go so far as to define what a text is – that is not especially well motivated, a discordant element, that a path opens up that can lead us to the author's personality.

When we look more closely, this does not amount to much of a contrast. Moreover, if there is a contrast to be made, there is also a parallel to be made. Eissler's remark should lead him to realize that discordance in the symbolic – in the symbolic as such, in a written work, and at least in this one – plays a functional role that can be thoroughly identified with a real symptom, in any case from the standpoint of the progress of an analysis, if this progress is to be considered to involve progress in knowledge of the subject.

Be that as it may, this comparison of two things is of genuine interest. But the question arises whether only typographical errors are going to turn out to be of significance to us in literary works. And why not, after all? It is clear that, in the analysis of literary works, typographical errors – you understand what I mean by that, what presents itself to us as a discontinuity – can tip us off as to where to seek, in its unconscious import, one or another incident of
474 the author's life that might shed major light on it, and this is in fact what happens in this article.

In any case, doesn't this shed light for us on the dimension of works of art? Owing to this sole fact – but as we shall see, it also goes well beyond this fact – we can no longer consider a work of art to be a transposition or sublimation, call it as you will, of reality. One can no longer say that it involves imitation or amounts to mimesis, for it always constitutes a profound reworking of the said reality. But I believe that we have already gone well beyond this point, and it is not to this that I wish to draw your attention.

I will say, confining my attention here to written works of art, that artworks, far from transfiguring reality in any way whatsoever, no matter how broadly viewed, bring the advent of cutting [*la coupure*] into their very structure, because a subject's real is manifested therein, insofar as, beyond what he says, he is an unconscious subject.

The subject is certainly prohibited from acceding to his relation to the advent of cutting, since his unconscious lies there. On the other hand, this access is not prohibited to him insofar as he is familiar with fantasy – namely, insofar as he is actuated by the relationship known as desire. Now, fantasy is intimately woven into literary works. Hence it becomes possible for a literary work to express the dimension of a subject's reality, which is the advent of being beyond all possible subjective realization, as I called it earlier.

The form of the work of art – of the work of art that succeeds as well as of the one that fails – has the virtue of involving this dimension. If I may use, in this regard, the topology of my graph to convey this, this dimension is not parallel to the field of reality created in reality [*réel*] by human symbolization, but cuts across

it, inasmuch as man's most intimate relationship to the cut goes beyond all natural cuts. For there is the essential cut constituted by his existence – namely, the fact that he is here and that he must be situated in the very advent of the cut.

This is what is involved in works of art, and especially in the one we have broached most recently because it is, in this regard, the most problematic work – namely, *Hamlet*.

4 475

There are all sorts of relevant things in *Hamlet*, too, in the sense of details that do not fit or make sense.

I would even say that it is owing to them that we made headway, but in a completely enigmatic way, for we were unable to ever do otherwise than wonder about what such relevance* means. One thing is clear, which is that we can never rule out the possibility that Shakespeare wanted it this way.

Kurt Eissler may find it bizarre – rightly or wrongly, it does not matter – that Ferdinand Raimund mentions, at a certain moment in his play, a period of five years that no character had ever mentioned before, and claim this is a relevant* detail that puts him on the scent of something. I did not proceed in the same way at all regarding *Hamlet*. For I was sure that the fabric of relevant details could not in any case be purely and simply resolved by saying that Shakespeare allowed himself to be led here by some sort of divine inspiration [*bon génie*]. I had the impression that Shakespeare himself had contributed to it.

But had he contributed to it nothing other than the manifestation of his deepest unconscious, it is in any case the architecture of these relevant details that shows us that he managed to make the major assertion that I described earlier. Namely, that he brought out the most profound facet of the subject as a speaking subject – in other words, his true relationship to the cut.

This is what the architecture of *Hamlet* shows us, inasmuch as the tragedy is founded on the subject's relationship to truth.

In contrast to the dream with which we began our exploration this year – that in which the dead father appears before his son, a son who is suffering greatly – in *Hamlet* the father knows he is dead and tells his son how he died, they then being the only two who know this. Shakespeare's text differs on this point from the Hamlet story as it is found in the prior literature where the murder took place publicly; in prior accounts, everyone knew that there was a crime and Hamlet acted crazy in order to dissimulate his intentions.

In Shakespeare's version, there are only two who know, one of
476 whom is a ghost.* The ghost* makes his appearance right from the beginning of *Hamlet*, and other commentators have demonstrated the function served by the fact that it is foregrounded in this way. Now, what is a ghost* if not a representation of the kind of paradox that only works of art can pose? Shakespeare makes his altogether believable to us.

What does his ghost* say? He says very strange things and I am astonished that no one – I am not saying has attempted to psychoanalyze the ghost* – but has wondered much about what he says. What he says is that the betrayal was absolute, there having been nothing greater or more perfect than his loyalty to his wife, the queen; there is no more complete betrayal imaginable than the one that laid him low. Everything that falls under the heading of good faith, loyalty, and vows is thus presented to Hamlet as not merely being revocable, but as having actually been revoked.

This absolute revocation unfolds at the level of the signifying chain, but it is quite different from the fact I spoke to you about that there is no signifier that could constitute a guarantee [*la carence du signifiant de la garantie*]; for something is clearly guaranteed here, which is an untruth. This sort of revelation, as it were, of a lie – a theme that would be worth exploring in its own right – leads to the sort of stupor with which Hamlet is overcome after his father's revelations. It is translated in Shakespeare's text in a remarkable manner, for when Hamlet is asked what the ghost* told him, he does not want to say, and for good reason, yet he expresses it in a very specific way:

> There's never a villain dwelling in all Denmark
> But he's an arrant knave. [I, v, 23–4]

In other words, he expresses himself in the register of tautology.

But let us leave that aside, for these are mere details and anecdotes. The question lies elsewhere. It is the following: how did we make such a mistake?

For it is generally agreed that dead men don't tell lies. Why is that? For the same reason, perhaps, which makes it such that all of our science still maintains the internal postulate that Einstein – who occasionally said things that were not altogether superficial, philosophically speaking – highlighted in his own terms by saying, "God may be subtle, but he is assuredly honest." Can we say as much
477 about a father who categorically claims that he is being subjected to all of hell's torments owing to absolutely odious crimes? There is some discordance here that cannot fail to make our ears perk up.

Can't we discern the effect on Hamlet of his father's assertion that he is eternally damned? We can conceptualize that Hamlet remains trapped within this claim [*parole*] and that this dooms him to see truth forever escape him. Mustn't we wonder what this claim means, at least functionally, with respect to the genesis and unfolding of the entire drama?

Many other things could be connected up with this, including something that is said by the ghost:*

> But virtue, as it never will be moved,
> Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
> So lust, though to a radiant angel linked,
> Will sate itself in a celestial bed
> And prey on garbage. [I, v, 53–7]

Which radiant angel are we talking about here? It is the angel who introduced lewdness into this broken love relationship. The entire responsibility for the sin falls on the angel. But is it really possible that, here more than anywhere else, he who bears witness in this case to the harm that has forever been done him bore no responsibility whatsoever? This is, of course, the key that can never be turned, the secret that can never be found out.

Yet doesn't a clue put us on the scent here of the word that will tip us off as to what is at stake? This word, here as elsewhere, is fantasy. And the clue? However primitive we may assume the brains of Shakespeare's contemporaries to have been, and rightly so, it was quite a curious choice, all the same, on the playwright's part to cast a never-to-be-resolved enigma in the form of a vial of poison poured into someone's ear. Let us not forget that the ear in question is that of Hamlet, Hamlet the father, for both he and his son are named Hamlet.

Psychoanalysts have only glancingly touched on this point. A few have indicated that some symbolic element must perhaps be recognized here. Yet it is something that can, in any case, be situated using our method: it is the father's revelation, whose paradoxical nature I just highlighted, that lives on in its consequences.

His revelation is presented to us in the form of the wall that it forms, the hole that it digs, and the impenetrable enigma that 478
it constitutes. We have here a structure that is not merely fantasized, but that fits in perfectly well with what takes place – for, if there is anyone who gets poisoned through the ear, it is Hamlet himself. And what plays the role of poison in his case is his father's speech.

Shakespeare's intention is somewhat clarified thereby. First he

shows us the relationship between desire and this revelation. Hamlet remains devastated by this revelation for two full months. How does he little by little reclaim the use of his members? Through a work of art. The actors come just at the right time for him to bench test "the conscience of the king," as the text tells us [II, ii, 591].

It is clearly by means of this test that he is able to enter back into action, back into a circuit that necessarily unfolds starting from the first of the consequences of his father's revelation. This character who, from the moment of his father's revelation, wished only for his own dissolution –

> O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,
> Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew [I, ii, 129–30]

– is overtaken at the end of the [actors'] play by a kind of drunkenness that has a very precise name, which is that of *artifex*. He is overjoyed at having managed to corroborate the ghost's horrific story, he can no longer be held back, and Horatio just barely manages to contain Hamlet's exuberance by grabbing onto his coattails.

When Hamlet asks Horatio, couldn't I now "get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?" the latter replies, "Half a share" [III, ii, 267–9]. He knows what is going on. Things are far from having been settled for Hamlet by means of this play; it is not because he is *artifex* [ingenious, crafty, or artful] that he has now found his role. But it is enough for us to know that he is *artifex* to understand that he will accept the first role he finds. He will, in the final analysis, do whatever he is ordered to do – I will read you the passage in the text another time.

A certain poison, once ingested by a rat – and you realize that rats are never far from all such goings-on, especially in *Hamlet* – gives the rat a thirst from which it will die, for thirst completely dissolves this mortal poison in him. Well, this is the sort of thing Hamlet was immediately inspired to do.

Something can be added to what I just told you, which allows
479 me to emphasize this more forcefully. An author by the name of Walter Wilson Greg was astonished by something that every spectator should have long since noticed – namely, that Claudius shows himself to be completely impervious to what precedes the scene in which Hamlet has the unfolding of his crime acted out before him. There is, in fact, by way of a prologue, a long pantomimed scene in which we see the queen of comedy proclaim her loyalty to and love for the king of comedy; this precedes the scene in which the king, who has fallen asleep in the very same garden, has poison poured into his ear by a third character. Claudius displays no reaction

whatsoever to the prologue. Walter Wilson Greg concludes that the ghost was lying, perish the thought!

Whole careers have been wagered on this point! John Dover Wilson wrote an extremely long book explaining how it is possible that Claudius, who is so obviously guilty, did not recognize himself in the scene, and constructed all sorts of minute logical arguments to demonstrate that he did not recognize himself in it because he was looking elsewhere at the time. This is not indicated in the staging. Perhaps this is not worth the work of a lifetime, after all.

Can't we suggest that Claudius was assuredly in on these dark dealings, since he admits it himself and proclaims it to heaven? He has destroyed not only the conjugal balance of Hamlet the father, but a great deal else, and his own life to boot. It is quite true that his crime, as he says, smells bad: "O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven" [III, iii, 36].

Claudius clearly realizes that there is a smell of sulfur in the air. He even asks Hamlet, "Is there no offense in 't?" To which Hamlet replies, "no offense i' th' world" [III, ii, 224–7]. But when the actor playing Lucianus, the king's nephew, comes on stage and pours poison into the sleeping man's ear, and Hamlet tells Claudius that the assassin is now going to win the love of the king's spouse, Claudius feels that things have gone a bit too far and, cut to the quick, he jumps to his feet.

In truth, things remain totally ambiguous. From that time on, everyone is appalled, the entire court considers Hamlet to be impossible, and the courtesans are all on the king's side. This is because they have not recognized Claudius' crime, for no one knows anything about how Claudius exterminated Hamlet the father, and, apart from Hamlet and his confidant, no one ever knows anything about it until the very end.

The function of fantasy thus seems to be truly different here from that of "the means employed" [*moyen*], as it is put in detective novels.

This becomes much clearer if we assume, and I believe I am making this assumption plausible to you, that Shakespeare was one of those beings who went the furthest in exploring subjective oscillations, to the point that his work describes for us a sort of cartography of all possible human relations, but includes the scar known as desire as a contact point, which irreducibly designates his being. This is what makes it such that his work, each part of which corroborates the rest, displays a miraculous unity.

Isn't it absolutely marvelous that he himself undoubtedly experienced the adventure described in the sonnet* that allows us to precisely corroborate the fundamental positions of desire? I will come back to this later.

This astonishing man lived through the era of Elizabethan England without going unnoticed, of course, having written almost forty plays, and we no doubt have some traces of him, I mean some first-hand accounts. Yet you need but read one good book that summarizes more or less everything that has been found out about Shakespeare to see that, apart from the fact that he surely existed, we truly cannot say anything about him, his attachments, his milieu, his loves, or his friendships. Everything has disappeared without a trace.

Our author presents himself to us analysts as the enigma we can point to in our history that has the most radically and forever vanished, dissolved, and disappeared.

May 27, 1959

XXIII

THE FUNCTION OF THE SUBJECTIVE SLIT IN PERVERSE FANTASIES

Not one
The Last Judgment
An artificial perversion
Voyeurism and exhibitionism
When little *a* is the Other's desire

I am continuing my attempt to articulate what must guide our actions in psychoanalysis insofar as we deal therein with a subject's unconscious.

I know that this is not easy to do. Which is why I do not allow myself just any old thing in the kind of formulation to which I would like to lead you. My tangents are related to the sense I have that I need to convey to you the importance of the approach I am taking. This does not mean that I always succeed in speaking in such a way that you do not lose your bearings along the way. I nevertheless ask you to follow and trust me.

And to begin from where we left off last time, I will articulate more simply what I formulated – not without precautions, not without making an effort to avoid ambiguities – when I foregrounded the term "being."

1

I am going to take some pretty gigantic steps here by asking that, however risky this may appear to you, we reintegrate into our everyday thinking terms that are so massive [*gros*] that for several centuries now no one has dared go near them without respectfully trembling. I am speaking about Being and the One.

It is only by using them that we can test their coherence. Let us say that what I call being – and what I went so far last time as to call

"pure being" at a certain level of its emergence – must be situated in relation to terms by which we orient ourselves here, namely the real and the symbolic.

We are not idealists, as it is put in books of philosophy; we are not among those who think that being precedes thought. But in order to orient ourselves in our work as analysts, we need to refer to being – no less than that! I am sorry to have to invoke the firmament of philosophy for you; I am only doing so because I feel forced to do so and, after all, because I cannot find anything better with which to make headway.

I will thus say that being truly is the real insofar as it manifests itself in the symbolic. This means that being is at the level of the symbolic. In any case, we need not consider to lie elsewhere than in the symbolic the simple fact that we add something to a thing when we say that it *is* this or that, this comment targeting the real, because it is in the symbolic that the real is affirmed or rejected or denied.

Being lies nowhere else – let this be quite clear – than in gaps, where it is the least signifying of signifiers – namely, the cut [*la coupure*]. Being is the same thing as cutting [*la coupure*]. Cutting renders being present in the symbolic.

What about the "pure being" that we are also talking about? I will put it more directly, since it seems – and I am quite willing to admit this – that certain formulations that I proposed last time struck some of you as circumlocutory, not to say confused. The pure being in question is the same being whose general definition I just gave, and this is so because a signifying chain, going by the name of the unconscious, subsists in accordance with a formulation that you will be so kind as to allow me to propose: every subject is *not one* [*tout sujet est* pas un].

Here I must request that you be so indulgent as to go along with me. This simply means that you will not imagine that I am proposing what I am proposing with fewer precautions than I proposed being. I am asking you to credit me for having already perceived what I am now going to propose before coming to speak to you about it today: namely, that the One [*l'Un*] is not an *un*equivocal notion.

Encyclopedias of philosophy remind us that there are different
483 uses of this term. The One that is the All is not to be confused, in its various guises, with the One as a number, 1, the latter presupposing the whole system and series of numbers, the one that can actually be isolated. It appears that, if things are correctly deduced, the first One [the All] is secondary to the institution of numbers themselves.

In any case, empirical approaches leave no doubt about this. It is not at random that I will refer here to what purports to be the most basic approach, that of English psychology, when it attempts to

reconstruct the ways in which numbers became part of our experience. Moreover, I have already pointed out that it is impossible to structure human experience, I mean the most common actual experience, without beginning from the fact that human beings count and count themselves [or: are counted, *se compte*].

I will say, in an abbreviated way – for I cannot go any further without assuming that you have by now digested what I have already said, owing to the time you have had to reflect – that desire is closely related to what happens owing to the fact that human beings must express themselves in the signifier; and that, qua being, it is in the gaps of the signifying chain that a human being appears as a barred subject. I shall try to articulate the level at which the subject is a barred subject further on with the help of a notion that I will deliberately begin by making more ambiguous than that of the One as I have just introduced it, because I do not think that people have yet realized how ambiguous this notion is. It is the notion of the *not one*. It is insofar as the barred subject appears here as *not one* that we will deal with him today.

Let us nevertheless take things up again at the level of experience, I mean at the level of desire here.

If desire serves the subject as an index at the point at which he cannot designate himself without vanishing, I will say – to play on words and their ambiguities – that at the level of desire the subject *counts himself* [or: is counted, *se compte*]. This is what I want to draw your attention to first. Given our usual inclination to forget what we are dealing with in the experience of those that we have the audacity to take on, our patients, I will ask you to consider your own experience here – in desire we count ourselves (as) counting [*nous nous comptons comptant*].

It is in desire and not in the computus [*comput*] that the subject appears as counting, where we say he has to come to terms with what, in the final analysis, makes him who he is. Must analysts be 484
reminded that nothing more definitively constitutes proof of the subject's presence than desire? The fact that, from that point on, the counting begins to change by giving itself over to all sorts of transactions that dissolve it into variously fiduciary equivalents – this is obviously a whole separate problem. But a moment inevitably comes at which one must pay cash [*payer comptant*].

When people come to see us for analysis, it is usually because things do not work out for them when it comes time to pay the piper [*payer comptant*], regardless of what is involved, whether it be sexual desire or action, in the simplest sense of the term. The question of the object arises here. It is clear that if the object were simple, it not only would not be difficult for the subject to deal directly [*comptant*]

with his feelings, but, if you will allow me this play on words, he would be more often content [*content*, another homonym] with the object, whereas, instead, he has to content himself with it [*s'en contente*], which is a horse of a different color.

This is obviously related to the fact that, when it comes to desire, the object that is able to satisfy us is not, to say the least, easily accessed. I would even say that it is not easy to find it, and this is true for structural reasons which we are now going to try to examine. I do not seem to be making headway quickly here, but it is because it is difficult, even if, let me repeat, we are talking about everyday experience.

If the object of desire were the most mature and "adult" of objects, as people put it in the sort of blithering drunkenness in which they exalt "genital desire," we would not constantly be dealing with the division that regularly enters into the register of the object, and that forces us to distinguish between the level at which the object is an object of love or, as people put it, of tenderness – whereby we give another person the gift of our uniqueness – and the level at which this same other person is considered to be an instrument of our desire.

Since the supposition that subjects can be very conciliatory and can harmonize these two levels seems to be more or less problematic, people rely on the other's love [or: love for the other, *l'amour de l'autre*] to resolve everything. But in doing so, they go beyond the limits of our model, because they rely in the final analysis not on our own dispositions, but on the other's, on his affection [*tendresse*]. We expect that the other – and undoubtedly at the cost of a certain decentering of himself – will live up to the most exacting standards of what desire requires by way of an object.

In the end, it seems that people quite simply bring back in here
485 old religious distinctions, in a more or less disguised fashion – for example, the distinction between loving affection, in the concrete (or, as it is put, "passionate" or "carnal") sense of the term, and charitable love [or: Christian love, *amour de charité*]. If this is truly what is involved, why not send our patients to pastors who will preach it to them better than we can?

Thus one cannot say that we do not receive a warning from our patients, who are very good at anticipating slippage in our terminology. They tell us now and then that if we are going to preach fine moral principles, they can go and get them elsewhere. Curiously enough, it sometimes happens that this gets on their nerves so much that they do not want to hear any more about it. I am being flippantly ironic here. Nevertheless, it is not pure and simple irony.

I would go further still. I would say that, in the final analysis, the

only theory of desire in which we can recognize – assuming we dot the i's and cross the t's – a sketch of the numbers that will serve me in articulating this to you, is the theory that is oriented by religious dogma. It is no accident that desire is clearly inscribed in religious discourse – in protected corners of it, naturally, whose access is reserved, not open to ordinary mortals or the faithful – in corners that are referred to as mystical. As such, the satisfaction of desire is tied to an entire divine organization which, to ordinary mortals, presents itself in the form of the mysteries – to others too, probably, whom I have no need to name. We need but consider what terms that are quite vibrant, like those of "incarnation" and "redemption," represent to believers with sensitive souls.

But I will go still further. We would be quite wrong not to see that the most profound of all dogmas, which is known as the Trinity, is not unrelated to the number three, which we deal with constantly, inasmuch as we perceive that there is no possible balanced access to so-called normal desire without an experience that involves a certain subjective triad. Why not say these things, since we find them in an extremely simple form here?

As for me, I will say that not only do I not balk at such references, I like them just as much as the somewhat vague apprehensions of 486
primitive ceremonies – whether totemic or others – in which the best elements are not very different from these structural elements. Of course, it is precisely because we try to broach things in a way which, even if it is not exhaustive, does not involve the angle of mystery, that I believe there is some interest in our following this pathway.

Similarly, it is not superfluous to recall to mind here certain questions with a moral or even, I would say, a social horizon. It seems clear in contemporary experience that there cannot be satisfaction of one person without the satisfaction of all [*tous*]. This is at the core of a movement which, even if we are not very involved with others in it, impinges on us from every direction, and certainly enough to be ready to disrupt many of our creature comforts.

Let us not forget, however, that the satisfaction in question is such that we must ask whether it concerns solely the satisfaction of needs. The people I am talking about – let us put them under the heading of the movement that considers itself to be Marxist in perspective, and whose main principle is the one I just expressed – would not dare to claim this, since the precise goal of this movement, with the revolutions that it brings with it, is in the end to have "everyone" [*tous*] accede to freedom – a freedom that is no doubt far off, and posited as having to be post-revolutionary. Yet what other content can we give this freedom than the notion that each person has his own desire at his disposal?

Now, in this perspective, the satisfaction of desire is a post-revolutionary matter, which is something we perceive every day, and which does not make things easy. We cannot, in effect, defer the desire we deal with to a post-revolutionary stage.

You realize, of course, that I am not criticizing one lifestyle or another, whether it lies shy of or beyond a certain border. The question of desire remains at the forefront of the preoccupations of the powers that be, by which I mean that there has to be some social and collective way of managing* desire. This is no easier to do on one side of a certain curtain than on the other. The point is always
487 to temper a certain discontent, the discontent in civilization, as Freud called it. There is no other discontent in civilization than the discontent of desire.

To hammer this home for you, I would ask each of you – not as analysts, for analysts are overly inclined, less here than elsewhere, to believe they are destined to rule over other people's desires – what the expression "to realize your desire" means to you at the heart of your existence. What does it mean to realize your desire?

Desires do get realized, after all! Things happen. Things get deflected a bit to the right, a bit to the left, twisted, confused, and become a greater or lesser pain in the neck, but there are nevertheless things that at a certain moment we can summarize by saying, "This went in the direction of realizing my desire." Nevertheless, if I ask you to articulate what it means to realize your desire, I am wagering that you will not be able to express it very easily.

If I may highlight a formidable bit of black humor that the religion I referred to a moment ago, the one that is alive and well around us, the Christian religion, proposed that goes by the name of the Last Judgment, I will simply ask you if I shouldn't project the following question onto this most suitable locus.

On the day of the Last Judgment, won't what we will be able to say about what we have done, in our unique existence, to realize our desire weigh as heavily as what we will have done along the lines – which does not refute it in the slightest, which does not counterbalance it in any way – of doing what is known as the good?

We are now going to return to the topic of the structure of desire.

2

It is no longer simply a question of the function of the object as I tried to formulate it two years ago, nor is it the function of the subject, which, as I have tried to show you this year, is distinguished, at the key point of desire, by a vanishing of the subject insofar as he

must name himself. What interests us is the correlation between the two. 488

The correlation is such that the object has the precise function of signifying the point at which the subject cannot name himself. It is in this respect that modesty [*pudeur*] is, I would say, the royal form of what shows up in symptoms in the guise of shame and disgust.

Nevertheless, before going into this, I will ask for a moment of your attention to make a remark that I am obliged to leave here as a marker, without being able to explore it as I would like.

Comedy, as opposed to what stupid people think, is what gives us the most profound access to the workings of the [theatrical] stage insofar as it grants human beings a spectral decomposition of their situation in the world. Comedy goes beyond modesty, whereas tragedy ends with the name of the hero and with total identification of the hero. Hamlet is Hamlet, he is [the person who goes by] that specific name. And this is even so because his father before him was already Hamlet. In the final analysis, everything resolves there: Hamlet is definitively abolished in his desire. I think I have now said enough about Hamlet.

But comedy is a very curious sort of desire trap. Whenever a desire trap functions, we are in the realm of comedy. It is desire insofar as it appears where we were not expecting it. The ridiculous father, the hypocritical pious person, the virtuous man in the throes of adultery – that's the stuff of comedy. There has to be an element which is such that desire is not owned. It is masked and unmasked, it is buffeted about, and it is occasionally punished, but only for appearances' sake. For in true comedies, punishment never even grazes the raven's wing of desire, the latter getting off absolutely scot-free. Tartuffe is exactly the same when the exempt taps him on the shoulder as he was before. Arnolphe goes "whew" – in other words, he is still Arnolphe, and there is no reason why he would not start up again with another Agnes. Harpagon is not cured by the more or less artificial conclusion of Molière's comedy. In comedies, desire is unmasked, not refuted.

I have given you but a quick sketch here. What I would like to go into with you now is how we must situate ourselves in analysis with regard to desire. Thus I am going to present something to you that will serve this purpose. 489

As one of our great poets – even though he was a still greater painter [Picasso] – put it, desire can be caught "by the tail," in other words, in fantasy. The subject, insofar as he desires, does not know where he is at with regard to unconscious articulation, that is, with regard to the sign or scansion he repeats qua unconscious. Where is the subject himself? Is he where he desires? The aim of my class

today is to show you that the subject is not where he desires, but that he is somewhere in fantasy, and that the way we interpret depends on that.

Some time back I discussed a fine case study that came out in Belgium in a little bulletin, which concerns the appearance of a transitory perversion during a psychoanalytic treatment.

The patient was incorrectly diagnosed as suffering from a form of phobia, whereas something else was clearly involved. The case study is very conscientious, and is useful to us owing to questions that the author – that is, the woman who directed the treatment [Ruth Lebovici] – herself raises. Had she been better guided herself, she would no doubt have had all the qualities necessary to see much more clearly and to go much further. In the name of certain principles, in the name of the so-called reality principle in this case, the analyst was wrong to allow herself to meddle with the subject's desire as if she were dealing with something that had to be put back in its place [or: put away, *remis en place*].

The patient thus begins to fantasize that the treatment will not be over until he has had sexual intercourse with the analyst. It is obviously no accident if something as crude as this comes to the fore during analytic treatment. It is undoubtedly a result of the general orientation of the treatment.

The crucial point was the interpretation of a fantasy. The fantasy involved, quite magnificently, I will not say a man in a suit of armor, but a suit of armor advancing behind the subject and armed with a syringe full of bug spray – the funniest and most stereotypical representation of the destructive phallus one can imagine. In retrospect,
490 the author was embarrassed to realize that it was her interpretation that set off the subsequent artificial perversion.

In effect, she interpreted his fantasy in terms of reality, as reflecting a real experience he had had of the phallic mother. Yet a close examination of the case – starting from any point at which one cares to take it up – clearly shows that the subject brought out here the necessary, yet missing, image of a father, inasmuch as a father is required to stabilize the subject's desire. Nothing could be more satisfying than to see this missing character appear in the form of a montage, which gives us the living image of the subject as reconstructed with the help of cuts or joints in the suit of armor, which are truly pure articulations [*jointures*].

It is in this direction that one could concretely rethink the type of intervention that would have been necessary. The "cure" in this case could perhaps have been obtained more easily than by creating a transitory perversion that was played out in reality; this indisputably shows us in what respect the reference to reality, in a

certain form of practice, represents a regression when it comes to treatment.

I am now going to indicate what I would like to convey to you regarding the relations between $ and *a*, by first providing a model of them, which is no more than a model: *fort-da*.

I have no need to comment on it otherwise than to remind you that we can theoretically consider it to be the first moment of the subject's entry into the symbolic order. *Fort-da* resides in the alternation of a signifying pair with regard to a small object, whatever it may be. The element in question may be a ball, or just as easily a bit of string, or a worn-out edge of bedding, as long as it holds fast and can be thrown away and reeled back in. This moment is situated just before the one in which we see the appearance of $ – in other words, before the moment at which the subject wonders about the Other as present or absent.

This is thus the locus or level at which the subject enters into the symbolic order. This entrance immediately brings out something that Winnicott designated with the term "transitional object," which he invented. In his thought, which revolves altogether around the earliest experiences of frustration, the transitional object is necessary to all of human development. The transitional object is the 491
little ball involved in the *fort-da* game.

When can we consider this game to be given its function in desire? From the moment at which it becomes a fantasy. For that, the subject must no longer enter into the game, he must short-circuit it, in order to bring himself forward [*s'anticiper*] and include himself altogether in the fantasy, where he catches hold of himself [or: gets his bearings, *se saisit*] in his very disappearance. He does so with a certain amount of difficulty, of course, but for what I call fantasy, qua prop of desire, it is necessary that the subject be represented therein at the very moment of his disappearance.

I am not saying anything extraordinary here. I am simply articulating the idea Ernest Jones dwelt on when he attempted to give concrete meaning to the term "castration complex." He identified the castration complex with the fear of the disappearance of desire, and that is exactly what I am saying to you in a different form.

Why did Jones go there and not elsewhere? For reasons based on the requirements of his personal understanding: this is how things were phenomenologically understandable to him. People are clearly impeded by the limits of understanding when they try to understand at any cost. And these are the limits that I am trying to get you to go a bit beyond by inviting you to stop trying to understand. It is in this regard that I am not a phenomenologist.

Since the subject fears that his desire may disappear, this must

clearly signify that in some way he wants to desire [*il se désire désirant*]. This is the structure of the neurotic's – pay attention here – the neurotic's desire.

I will not take up neurosis right away because that would strike you as involving an overly simple doubling of the type "I desire to desire" [*je me désire désirant*] and "I want to desire and to be desired" [*je me désire désirant désiré*], etc. That is not what is involved here at all.

To show this to you, it is worth once again spelling out perverse fantasy.

492

3

Today I will examine one of the most accessible perverse fantasies, which is, moreover, closely related to the one I mentioned earlier in the case study [by Ruth Lebovici].

It is the fantasy of the exhibitionist, that of the voyeur too, for it is perhaps fitting not to confine ourselves to the way the structure in question is usually portrayed.

People generally tell us: "The perverse fantasy involving the scoptophilic drive is very simple and very pretty. People naturally like to look, and people naturally like to be looked at." These are among the "charming life drives," as Paul Éluard puts it somewhere. We have here, in short, something that is known as the drive, and that enjoys "putting on a show" [*donner à voir*], to borrow the lovely title of Éluard's book of poetry. It is a manifestation of the [human] form offering itself of its own accord to the other.

Let me point out that this is not insignificant, for it already implies a certain subjectivity.

At our society's scientific meeting last night, we were talking about the implicit subjectivity there may be in the life of an animal. It is hardly possible to conceptualize this "putting on of a show" [*donner à voir*] itself without hearing the word *donner* [to give] in the full sense of the virtues of the gift [*don*], which implies a reference – undoubtedly innocent, not intentional – of this form to its own richness. We know of many concrete indications of the extravagant lengths to which animals go in their captivating display, and especially in sexual display.

I am not going to trot out the stickleback again here – I think I have spoken about it often enough for what I am saying today to make sense to you. I will simply say that, however instinctual we assume it to be, a certain behavior can include in its trajectory a little backward motion, and simultaneously an anticipatory motion,

that the graph shows you in the trajectory of speech. In the drive's exuberance to show itself – the drive such as we find it in nature – a temporal projection is tangible.

As a side note, I will recommend that the person who spoke last night about this topic take note of the following: in certain circumstances, we undoubtedly observe a temporal anticipation or expectation on the part of animals. But what can justify you in characterizing the disappointment of this expectation as a "deception" [*tromperie*]? There is reason to temper this, and in my view, until someone convinces me of the contrary, I will say that the medium [of deception] seems to me to be constituted by a promise. In order to be able to talk about deception, instead of disappointment of an expectation, we have to assume that the animal promises itself to succeed with one or another of its behaviors, and therein lies the whole question. 493

Let us return now to our exhibitionist.

Is he inscribed in the dialectic of "showing"? In no way, shape, or form. Yet, showing is connected here to the pathways of the Other. In effect, in the exhibitionist's relationship to the Other – the terms I am going to employ somewhat awkwardly in order to convey something to you are certainly not the best, or the most literary – it is necessary that this Other be, as far as desire is concerned, complicit (and Lord knows that she is truly complicit at times) in what is happening in front of her and which takes on the value of a break.

Note that this break is not just any old break. It is essential that it be a desire trap. It is perceived by the Other to whom it is addressed, insofar as it goes unnoticed to, let us say, most people. Everyone thus knows that there is no true exhibitionist in private life – apart from some supplemental subtlety, of course. In order for there to be pleasure, the exhibition must take place in a public space.

So here we show up in our big clodhoppers and we tell the exhibitionist: "My little friend, you expose yourself from so far away because you are afraid of getting close to your object. Move closer, move closer." What a load of malarkey! Do you think exhibitionists don't fuck? Clinical experience shows us this is not the case. They are at times very good husbands with their wives. But their desire lies elsewhere and their satisfaction requires other conditions. These are conditions on which we must dwell here.

The satisfaction of so-called exhibitionist desire requires that a specific kind of communication occur with the Other. It is necessary that the exhibition, as a manifestation of being and the real, be inscribed in the symbolic frame as such. This is precisely what necessitates a public space, in order that one be quite sure that one is within the symbolic frame.

494 Stated differently, whereas people reproach exhibitionists for not daring to get close to their objects, for giving into some sort of fear, I am saying that the satisfaction of their desire depends on the condition that there be maximal danger. On this point, the same people, without worrying about the contradiction between this and their preceding remark, say that exhibitionists seek out danger.

This is not impossible, but before going that far let us observe what sometimes happens for what figures here as the object, namely the interested party or parties, one or more little girls – over whom let us shed a tear in passing like kind souls. Little girls, especially if there are several of them, are sometimes highly amused by this. This may even be part of the exhibitionist's pleasure, as a variant. An essential element of the situation is thus the Other's desire, insofar as she is surprised, is involved beyond all modesty, or is complicit here – all such variations are possible.

What about the exhibitionist himself? There is what he shows, you will tell me. Indeed, this is what I pointed out the structure of to you and just indicated again. Nevertheless, I would say that in this case what he shows – which is rather variable, and more or less glorious – is in fact redundant, hiding rather than revealing what is at stake.

Don't kid yourself here – what he shows, the erection that attests to his desire, is distinct from the apparatus of that desire. The apparatus that instates what is glimpsed in a certain relationship to what is not glimpsed is what I quite crudely call a pair of pants that opens and shuts. It is essentially constituted by what we might call the slit in desire. There is no erection, however successful one may suppose it to be, that can take the place of the essential element in the structure of the situation here – namely, the slit itself. The subject designates himself in the slit; and he designates himself, strictly speaking, as what must be filled by the object.

We will come back to this later, because I want to corroborate this with the correlative phenomenology of the voyeur. Here I think I can proceed more quickly. Nevertheless, as going too quickly always allows one to dissimulate what is at stake, I will broach the voyeur with the same circumspection.

495 Regarding the scoptophilic drive, people always omit what is essential, which is the slit. For a voyeur, the slit is an absolutely indispensable structural element. And the terms of the relationship between what is glimpsed and what is not glimpsed, even though they are distributed differently here than for exhibitionists, are nevertheless quite distinct.

Let me go into this in detail. Since the satisfaction here, which is voyeuristic, is based on an object – in other words, on an other – it is

important that the person who is seen be involved in the scene. This is part of the fantasy.

There is no doubt but that the object seen is very often seen unbeknownst to her. The, let us say, female object – since it seems that it is no accident that the object spied on is female – undoubtedly does not know that she is being seen. But the voyeur's satisfaction, I mean what props up his desire, involves the following element. As innocently, as it were, as she presents herself, something in her lends itself to the function of a spectacle. The object is out in the open; she is potentially participating in the dimension of indiscretion. The voyeur's jouissance reaches its true height when something in the gestures of the woman he is spying on allows him to suspect that, in some way, she is capable of offering herself up to his jouissance.

The secretly observed creature is all the more "eroticizable," I would say, when something in her gestures reveals her to be offering herself up to what I will call the "invisible hosts of the air." It is no accident that I am alluding here to the angels of Christianity that Anatole France had the gall to invoke in this context. Read his *Revolt of the Angels*, and at the very least you will see a precise link between the dialectic of desire and the virtual nature of an eye that can never be grasped but that can always be imagined. In his book, *La Rôtisserie de la reine Pédauque*, the aim of which is very focused, Anatole France knows what he is doing when he refers to the *Comte de Gabalis* regarding the mystical wedding of men with sylphs and undines.

The voyeur's pleasure is thus at its height when he catches the creature in an activity in which she appears in a secret relationship to herself, in gestures that betray the permanence of an unavowed witness.

Isn't it obvious to you that, in both cases, the subject is reduced to the artifice of the slit? This artifice occupies the place of the subject, and shows him to be truly reduced to the miserable function that is 496
his. Insofar as he is in his fantasy, the subject is the slit.

The form that corresponds to it in the place of a woman's sexual organ is, according to our field, what is symbolically the most unbearable. What relationship is there between the subjective slit and the female slit? This is a separate question that I will leave for future discussion.

Let us now reconsider the whole. Let us begin with the famous poetic metaphor from *La Jeune Parque*, "*Je me voyais me voir*" [I saw myself seeing myself]. It is clear that no desire realizes this dream of perfect closure or complete self-sufficiency, if not the poetic virgin's superhuman desire.

What justifies the voyeur's and the exhibitionist's entry into the

situation? The fact that they put themselves in the place of *Je me voyais* [I was looking at myself]. But the Other does not see her *Je me voyais*; her jouissance is unconscious; she is in some sense decapitated by the third party. The Other does not know that she may potentially be seen by a voyeur. When faced with an exhibitionist, she does not know what is represented by the fact that she is shaken by what she sees – in other words, by the unusual object that is presented to her. This object has an effect on the Other only inasmuch as she is in fact the object of the exhibitionist's desire, but without her knowing it, without her recognizing it at that precise moment.

We are thus faced with twofold ignorance here. The Other does not realize what is supposed to be realized in the mind of someone who exhibits herself or is seen, not knowing that she is a possible manifestation of desire. Inversely, the exhibitionist or the voyeur is not aware of the function of the cut in his desire; he does not realize that the cut abolishes him in a clandestine automatism, that it crushes him in a moment whose spontaneity he absolutely does not recognize. What is actually communicated by the act – which is unknown although present, yet in abeyance – is then at its acme, and that is what is designated by the cut, whereas the subject is aware only of an oblique maneuver like that of a shameful animal that exposes itself to blows.

Regardless of the form in which the slit presents itself – whether as part of a shutter, telescope, or any sort of screen – it is what allows the perverse subject to enter into the Other's desire. This slit is the symbolic slit of a more profound mystery that we must elucidate. Namely, where in the unconscious is it fitting to situate the pervert?
497 What is his relationship to the structure of desire itself? For what he aims at is the Other's desire, reproducing the structure of his own.

The perverse solution to the problem of the subject's situation in fantasy is the following: target the Other's desire and believe one sees an object therein.

It is late enough that I could stop here.

That, too, would be a cut. But it would have the disadvantage of being arbitrary, and of stopping me from showing you the originality of this solution when compared to the neurotic solution. At the very least, you should realize that it is of interest to compare them.

I will show you the function played by the neurotic subject in his fantasy on the basis of the pervert's fundamental fantasy. I fortunately already indicated this function to you earlier – he wants to desire, as I put it. Now why can't he desire? Why is it so necessary that he desire? Everyone knows what is involved here – the phallus, strictly speaking. You have seen that, up until now, I have left to

one side the role played in this economy by the phallus, the good old phallus of yesteryear.

Twice – once in our re-examination of the Oedipus complex last year, and once in my article on the psychoses – I showed you that the phallus is linked to the paternal metaphor – namely, insofar as it gives the subject a signified. But it was impossible to bring it back into the dialectic at issue today without first introducing a structural element into the constitution of fantasy, an element whose symbolism I will ask you to accept – in a last effort before we part today.

I have written on the blackboard all the different types of cuts, including those that reflect the subject as a cut [*la coupure du sujet* (this schema is missing)].

This is how we will henceforth notate the barred subject in fantasy. Remember that I asked you to accept the notion of the "not one." You see that I allow myself to be so ridiculous here as to even refer to the notation of the square root of minus one, $\sqrt{-1}$, concerning imaginary numbers.

When I told you about the vanishing of the subject, I left you on the verge of this "not one." I will begin with it next time and even with the *comme pas un* [like no one else], which brings up the subject's uniqueness. If I am asking you to notate it in this way, it is precisely in order that you not see in it the most general form, and 498
therefore the vaguest form, of negation.

If it is so difficult to speak of negation, it is because no one knows what it is. Yet at the beginning of this year I pointed out the difference between foreclosure and discordance. For the time being, it is in this closed – but for that reason decisive – symbolic form that I am pointing out another form of negation, one that situates the subject on another scale altogether.

As for little *a*, with which the subject is confronted in fantasy, you realize that I showed you today that it was more complicated than the three forms I had given you as a first sketch, since, in the cases that I presented to you, little *a* is the Other's desire.

June 3, 1959

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XXIV

THE DIALECTIC OF DESIRE IN NEUROSIS

The traumatic Other
The hysteric and his double
The obsessive's hiding place
To be the phallus or to be no one
When jouissance crushes desire

In our last class, I laid out the structure of fantasy insofar as it props up, as I put it, the subject's desire.

Where it is possible to grasp fantasy in a structure that is sufficiently complete, it can in some sense serve as a hub for what we are led to relate to it as regards different, let us say, nosological structures, those we encounter in our practice – in other words, the relationship between the subject's desire and what I have long designated, from a psychoanalytic perspective, as not simply its reference point but its essence: the Other's desire.

As announced, today I will try to situate the position of desire for you in the different clinical structures, and to begin with, in neurotic structure.

1

Last time I discussed perverse fantasies to help you locate in them what corresponds to the function of the subject and what corresponds to the function of the object.

Fantasy is the prop and index of a certain position of the subject in desire. At the outset, it is the other's image that serves to prop up the subject, at least at the point at which he qualifies as desire. Later comes the more complex structure known as fantasy.

500 For profound reasons, I decided to take up a specific, especially exemplary form of perverse fantasy last time, the one that is found

among exhibitionists and voyeurs. I showed you that – as opposed to what is all too often said when people jump the gun – they are not reciprocal positions that complete each other: "the one who shows" and "the one who sees." On the contrary, these two positions are strictly parallel, paradoxically enough.

In both cases the subject turns out to be indicated in the fantasy by what I called the slit or gap, something that is both a hole and a flash in the real, inasmuch as the voyeur spies from behind his shutter and the exhibitionist opens his screen just slightly, leaving it ajar. The subject is indicated here in his place in the activity. He is nothing but the flash of the object people speak of, and which is experienced and perceived by the subject as the opening up of a gap that situates him as open. Open to what? To a desire other than his own, his own desire being profoundly impacted, struck, and shaken by what is perceived during the flash.

In one case, [what is perceived is] the Other's emotion that goes beyond her modesty; in the other case, [what is perceived is] the opening up of the Other, the Other's virtual expectation, inasmuch as this Other does not sense that she is seen and yet is perceived as offering herself up to be seen – this is what characterizes the object's position in the structure. The latter is so fundamental that it was noted from the very moment psychoanalysis first investigated the causes and stigmata that generate the neurotic position. I mean that there is, at the starting point of neurosis, a perceived scene, the so-called primal scene.

If the primal scene is part and parcel of this structure, it is undoubtedly insofar as it reverses it. This reversal is such that the subject sees something open up, suddenly perceives a gap whose traumatic value is related to the Other's desire, which is truly glimpsed and perceived. The Other's desire remains like an enigmatic nucleus until later, when, after the fact, the subject can reintegrate that lived moment in the chain, which will not necessarily be the right chain, but which will in any case be a chain that constitutes a whole unconscious modulation – a chain that thus constitutes the nucleus of neurosis.

Let us now turn our attention to the structure of fantasy.

As I stress, what makes for its value as an index is a suspended or stopped time, an interruption [*temps d'arrêt*] that corresponds to a 501
moment of action at which the subject can only establish himself in a certain way, x – which is precisely what we are trying to pinpoint in the function of desire – on condition that he lose all sense [*sens*] of his position, which is marked by the fact that the fantasy is opaque to him. *We* can designate his place in fantasy, and he can perhaps glimpse it himself; but the meaning [*sens*] of the position, the reason

why he is there, and what comes to light regarding his being – that he cannot say.

This is the essential point – aphanisis occurs. The term is no doubt a felicitous one. In any case, it serves us, even if – as opposed to the function given to it by Jones in his interpretation of the castration complex – its form remains enigmatic to us.

Indeed, if the word "aphanisis" – disappearance or "fading,"* as I put it – can serve us regarding fantasy, it is not as the aphanisis of desire; it is insofar as an aphanisis of the subject occurs at the height of desire. Where *it speaks* in the unconscious chain, the subject cannot situate himself in his place, or articulate himself as *I*. He can only indicate himself qua disappearing from his position as a subject.

As I have defined it, this is the extreme, imaginary point where the subject's being resides, as it were, in its greatest density. This is merely an image that I am providing so that you can have a metaphor to latch onto. The subject's being must be articulated and named in the unconscious, but in the end, it cannot be. It is solely indicated at the level of fantasy by what turns out to be a slit, a structure based on a cut [*structure de coupure*].

In each and every domain, it is legitimate to situate an imaginary point if we can spell out its structure by what begins from there. Here the imaginary point will allow us to situate what actually occurs in the different forms of the subject.

These different forms need not be homogeneous – a form that is comprehensible to a subject situated on one side is not necessarily comprehensible to a subject situated on the other side. We know only too well what can lead us astray in understanding a psychosis. When we try to reconstruct and lay out a structure, as is the case here, we must be careful not to understand.

Let me remind you that we find a trace of the notion of the disappearance of the subject in Freud's work when he talks about the
502 dream's navel as the point at which all the dreamer's associations converge only to disappear. At that point, they can only be related to what he calls the *Unerkannt*. This is what is at issue here.

What does the subject see opening up [*s'ouvrir*] across from him at the moment at which he disappears? Nothing but another gap. This may go so far as to engender an infinite reflection of one desire in another desire. But the concrete thing that experience shows us in the voyeur's and the exhibitionist's fantasy – even if it is not very easy to grasp – is that the subject turns out to be dependent on the Other's desire, indeed, at its mercy.

This is precisely what is involved in little Hans's neurosis, which I spoke to you about at length two years ago.

I highlighted the crisis that little Hans encountered at a certain moment of his development. This crisis went much further than his rivalry, which was nevertheless critical, with the new person on the scene, his little sister; and it was much more serious than the first stirrings of sexual maturation that made him capable of having erections, and even – the question remains an open one according to specialists – orgasms. As I stressed, spelled out, and even hammered home, the crisis in question did not arise at the interpsychological level, strictly speaking, or at the level of the integration of a new drive [*tendance*]. There was a crisis because, at that specific moment in time, and owing to the effect of a certain closing down [*fermeture*], the subject found himself confronted with his mother's actual desire, and he had no recourse in the presence of this desire.

In his 1917 article entitled "The Unconscious," Freud calls the fact of having no recourse *Hilflosigkeit*. *Hilflosigkeit* comes before anything else – before anxiety, for example, which already involves a first sketch of an organization inasmuch as it involves expectation, *Erwartung*, even if one does not know what one is expecting, and even if one does not articulate it immediately. Prior to anxiety there is *Hilflosigkeit*, the fact of having "no recourse."

Having "no recourse" in the face of what? This can only be defined as the Other's desire. The relation between the subject's desire and the Other's desire is dramatic, inasmuch as the subject's desire must be situated in relation to the Other's desire, but the latter literally absorbs his and leaves him no recourse. An essential structure – not only neurosis, but every analytically defined structure – is constituted by this drama.

We will begin here with neurosis. Nevertheless, since we started 503
with something rather different, perversion, you can glimpse in what way perversion is related to the same drama. I will nevertheless point out that I only brought in perversion regarding the instantaneous moment of fantasy – fantasy that in perversion is the only thing that reveals the *passage à l'acte* [acting out].

In the case of little Hans, what is related to the structure that I am formulating for you here is the fertile moment of neurosis known as a phobia. It is the simplest form of neurosis. We can put our finger on what characterizes the solution that it brings with it, and I have already discussed this with you at length: it is the coming into play of the phobic object insofar as it is an all-purpose signifier [*signifiant à toutes fins*].

The phobic object is situated between the subject's desire and the Other's desire, and it fulfills a function of protection or defense there. There is no ambiguity whatsoever regarding Freud's formulation here. What is fear of the phobic object designed to protect

the subject from? Freud tells us that it protects him from desire's approach [*l'approche de son désir*]. If we look more closely, we see that his desire is at stake insofar as Hans is defenseless in relation to what emerges [*s'ouvre*] for him in the Other – the mother in this case – as the sign of his absolute dependence on her.

She will take him to the ends of the earth; she will take him further still; she will take him with her as often as she herself disappears, slips away. At that moment she no longer appears to him only as someone who can satisfy all of his demands; she appears to him with the supplemental mystery of being herself prey [*ouverte*] to a lack whose meaning appears to Hans to be in a certain relationship to the phallus – a phallus that he does not have.

It is at the level of the mother's want-to-be [*manque-à-être*] that for Hans a drama begins [*s'ouvre*] that he cannot resolve without forging the phobic signifier whose polyvalent function I showed you. This signifier is a kind of skeleton key, a key that opens all doors, allowing him to protect himself against the emergence of an anxiety that is far more dreadful than the fear that is localized by the phobia.

All experienced analysts have perceived this, and in an unequivocal way. But what is worth examining is the following: how – at this moment, which involves a relationship based on desire – can the
504 subject (the subject who in the structure of fantasy is juxtaposed as $ to *a*) find something that lightens his load [or: improves his situation, *allège sa part*], find something that sustains his presence, find something to latch onto? This is, in short, where a symptom is going to be produced, inasmuch as, in neurosis at its most profound level, it concerns the subject's position most generally.

I will proceed as follows, if you will be so kind as to allow me to. First, we are going to unpack this, then we are going to inquire whether the structure of fantasy is as fatal as all that. At the onset of the whirlwind of fantasy, on the verge of the point of loss or disappearance indicated in the structure of fantasy, there is something that holds or stands firm – how is this something possible?

The neurotic accedes to fantasy. He accedes to it at certain specific moments at which his desire is satisfied. But as we all know, this is merely a functional use of fantasy. On the other hand, his relation to his whole world, and to the real others in it, is profoundly marked by what? By a repressed drive, as people have always said.

It is this repressed drive that we are trying to explain a bit better, a bit more precisely, and in a way that is more clinically obvious.

We are going to begin by indicating how it presents itself.

2

Let us consider obsessives, if you will, and hysterics. Let us consider them together inasmuch as they shed light on a certain number of each other's features.

Given that the object in fantasy is connected to the Other's desire, the goal is not to approach it. There are obviously several ways of reaching this goal.

One way, as we have seen, is by creating a phobic object, a prohibited object. What must be prohibited? In the final analysis, a jouissance that is dangerous because it exposes the true abyss of desire to the subject.

I already sketched out two other ways to you in the paper I gave at Royaumont. The subject can sustain his desire when faced with 505
the Other's desire in two manners: as an unsatisfied desire – that is the case in hysteria – or as an impossible desire, which is the case in obsession.

Let me remind you of the example of the butcher's wife, in which the structure of unsatisfied desire appears most clearly [SE IV, pp. 146–51; *Écrits*, pp. 522–3]. In her associations to the dream she had, the hysteric's operation is in some sense avowed: the butcher's wife wants to eat caviar, but she does not want her husband to buy it for her, because her desire for it must remain unsatisfied. This is one of the little maneuvers with which the fabric, text, and everyday life of the hysteric is woven. But the structure thus illustrated in fact goes much further.

This little tale reveals the function that the hysteric grants herself: she herself is the obstacle, she is the one who does not want. Stated otherwise, in her fantasy she comes to occupy the tertiary position between the subject and the object which was occupied by the phobic signifier in our earlier example. Here, she is the one who is the obstacle. She derives jouissance from blocking desire. This is one of the fundamental functions of hysterical subjects in the situations they fabricate: stopping desire from being satisfied so that they themselves can remain what is at stake in desire.

The place the hysteric takes on in such situations is that of what we might call, using an English word, a "puppet,"* something like a dummy but with the more extended meaning of pretense. The hysteric in effect brings in a shadow, who is her double, in the guise of another woman; the hysteric's desire manages to slip in by means of this other woman, but in a hidden way, for she must not see it. This position is so common that it is truly recognizable in case studies, assuming we have this kèy at our disposal.

Although the hysteric presents herself in this case as the mainspring of the machine on which these sorts of marionettes depend, even in relation to each other, in a redoubled relationship which is that of the subject in relation to the object, ($◊a), she nevertheless plays her part in the game in the form of she who is at stake, in the final analysis. The obsessive, on the other hand, has a rather different position. He stays outside the game.

Trust in these formulations when you are dealing with subjects who can be clinically qualified as obsessive. The obsessive is someone who is truly never where something that could be called
506 his desire is at stake. He is not where he apparently runs a risk. He makes $ – the disappearance of the subject at the point of desire's approach – into his weapon and his hiding place. He has learned how to use $ in order to be elsewhere.

He can only do so by putting off or deferring until later his commitment to a true relationship involving desire. Whereas the relation to desire in hysteria has an instantaneous structure, the obsessive always puts off until tomorrow committing his true desire. This does not mean that he commits to nothing while awaiting that day, far from it – [in the meantime,] he proves himself. Moreover, he may go so far as to consider what he does as a means of acquiring merit. What does he think he merits? The Other's deference to his desires [*Des mérites à quoi? – à la révérence de l'Autre à l'endroit de ses désirs*].

You will clearly observe this mechanism, which shows up everywhere, even when the obsessive does not recognize it. But it is important that you are able to recognize and designate it. It would be inopportune, indeed, if you were led to crush this mechanism in the analysis under the weight of all the intersubjective relations it brings in its wake, and which can only be conceptualized as organized with respect to the fundamental relation or relations that I am trying to spell out for you.

What shows its face in this neurotic position is a call for help by the subject, for help sustaining his desire, for help sustaining it in the presence of the Other's desire, for help constituting himself as desiring.

As I said last time, the only thing he does not know is that his approach is profoundly marked by the danger constituted for him by desire's drift. In constituting himself as desiring and in the very constitution of his desire, he defends against something. His very desire is a defense and can be nothing else. This is what the subject does not perceive.

Yet in order to sustain his desire he must always call on something that presents itself in a tertiary position for help in dealing with the Other's desire. This is where he situates himself in order for the

wannabe [*aspirante*], vanishing relation of $ when faced with *a* to be tenable.

The role of this thing is to allow the subject to symbolize his situation in relation to the real Other – in other words, to keep a situation in which he can be recognized and satisfied as a subject going. When 507
in analysis he is able to get some perspective on his situation, he is shocked to perceive that the subject who is sustained in this situation is prey to all sorts of contorted and paradoxical attitudes. This allows him to realize that he is a neurotic prey to symptoms.

And it is here that the element that psychoanalytic experience has taught us to consider a key point of signifying functions – the phallus – comes in.

3

If the phallus plays a key role here, it is obviously insofar as it is a signifier.

This signifier is linked to something that Freud – who absolutely did not hide its place in the economy of the unconscious – called the law.

It is fruitless to try to reduce the phallus to the status of something that is balanced by and juxtaposed with some other functional correspondent in the opposite sex. Although this conception has generative [or: developmental, *génétique*] value, as it were, from the vantage point of the subject's interrelations, it neglects what is essential in valuing the phallus – namely, that it is not purely and simply an organ.

At the level at which it is an organ, it is the instrument of a jouissance, and it is not integrated into the mechanism of desire, for the latter is situated at another level. To understand what the mechanism of desire is, we must define it as seen from the other side, in other words once cultural relations have been instituted – whether it be on the basis of the myth of the killing [of the primal father] or not.

Desire is distinguished from all demands by the fact that it is a demand that is subject to the law. This formulation is almost painfully obvious, but we must nevertheless realize that this is what is involved when Freud distinguishes demands that correspond to the so-called needs related to the survival of the species or of the individual from demands that are situated at another level.

Why tell us that the demands that are situated at this other level are different from the first demands in that they can be deferred? After all, to say that sexual desire in men can be deferred in its 508
effects – that is, in its execution [*passage à l'acte*] – is not unambiguous. Why can it be deferred more easily in men than in animals,

where such deferral is not terribly well tolerated? It is undoubtedly owing to genetic flexibility, but it owes [still more] essentially to the fact that the primal order of exchanges is built on sexual desire, the primal order that founds the law by which the realm of numbers comes alive in human interpsychology – namely, the so-called law of marriage and kinship.

Nothing is articulated in psychoanalysis if not at this level. And it is at this level that we see the fundamental signification of the phallus appear. Fundamentally speaking, the phallus is the subject qua object of sexual desire, this object being subjected to what I will call the law of fertility.

It is in the guise of a fertility symbol that the phallus plays a role in initiation ceremonies, when it is unveiled at the end of those ceremonies to the people who participate in them. As for the father, who, for a subject, is the "author of his days," as they say in French [figuratively, "my revered father"], he is merely the signifier of what I am calling the law of fertility here, inasmuch as this signifier regulates desire by tying it to a law.

This is where the whole dialectic of desire comes in.

In the law of exchanges – defined by the fundamental relations that regulate desire's interreactions in culture, real bonds, relations with real others, and the real creation of a line of descent – the subject presents himself qua phallus. But desire comes in along the trajectory of the functionalization of the subject qua phallus. In effect, the subject's being – at the point of its loss – is expressed in desire because, as we have seen, the subject can no longer get his bearings [*se saisir*] in desire starting at a certain moment: he is no longer, he fails to be [*il manque à être*]. It is this lack [*manque*] that encounters the phallic function. And the balance [or: tipping] point – the one we dwelt on at the end of the dream recounted by Ella Sharpe's patient – is produced by this encounter.

I also connected this up with my humungous digression on *Hamlet*, inasmuch as, in this patient's dream, he presented us, in the purest form, the alternative "to be or not . . ."* that I highlighted so extensively.

We are considering here the moment at which the subject gets close to his desire, at which he just barely puts his finger on it, at
509 which he must choose to be completely taken up in the devouring desire of a woman or to be no one. It is immediately thereafter that he is summoned to be or not to be. It must be noted that the second "to be"* in this formulation does not have the same meaning as the first one. In the second one, what comes to light is the "not to be" of desire's primordial structure. In the first one, the point for Hamlet is to be what he can be as a subject – in other words, "to be the

phallus." But to be the phallus that is marked as the Other's exposes him to the threat "not to have it."

If you will allow me to use a so-called logical sign, the V which is used to designate the "either/or" of disjunction, I would say that the subject sees here that there is a choice to be made. Either "not to be it," not to be the phallus, and disappear, fail to be. Or, if he is it, in other words, if he is the phallus for the Other in the intersubjective dialectic, "not to have it." This is the game that is at work. And it is in this game that the neurotic senses that getting close to or integrating his [or: her, *son*] desire threatens him with loss.

The "not one," by which the barred subject in desire's fundamental structure designates himself, is transformed into a "one too many" or "something that is too much." Or it is transformed into "something missing" for men who are threatened by castration, and for women for whom the phallus is experienced as an absence.

This is why not everything is resolved at the end of the psychoanalytic demystification of the neurotic's position. At least this is what Freud tells us based on his own experience: there is something that takes the form of a remainder, and which in all cases is such that the subject remains in an inadequate position, that of peril as regards the phallus in men, and that of absence of the phallus in women.

This is perhaps owing to the approach that was initially adopted to solve the neurotic's problem. This approach leads us to neglect the transverse dimension – namely, that by which the subject, when it comes to desire, is dealing with the manifestation of his being as such, with himself as the possible author of the cut.

In other words, analysts tend to try to shrink the neurotic's desiring position, whereas they should strive to free up desire's true position and release it from being bogged down in the specific dialectic which is that of the neurotic.

4 510

How can I go back over these points in order to better convey to you how they are linked? For I have assuredly led you along the purest path already.

It is clear that this brings with it not only all the subject's anecdotal history, but also other elements of his past, which are structural and which I brought out years ago. I am talking about the narcissistic drama, the subject's relation to his own image, and his narcissistic relation to the other's image.

As Freud often stressed in his own terms, it is here, of course, that, in the final analysis, the fear of losing the phallus, or the feeling

of not having [or: missing or lacking] a phallus, comes in for the subject.

In other words, the ego is involved. It can intervene at the level of the complex dialectic in which the subject is afraid of losing what constitutes his privilege in relation to the other. But let us note that, if it intervenes, it is certainly not because of something that we could call its weakness, for in every case in which we observe a weakness of the ego, we witness, on the contrary, a diffusing or even a blockage of the situation.

I need but refer here to a case that you are all familiar with. It is a notorious case of Melanie Klein's, the case of Dick ["The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego," *IJP* 11 (1930): 24–39]. Klein describes a child who, assuming he had truly been brought into the relationship between desire and the signifier, found himself completely dependent on the imaginary level in relation to the other, on the possible relation with the other at the gestural, communicative, and life-sustaining level.

As we do not know everything about this case, we can merely say that it is a remarkable one, inasmuch as this child, who does not speak, is already so open to and touched by Klein's spoken interventions that for us, in our register, his behavior is truly striking. In effect, right from his first moments with Klein it is clear that the only structures in the world that are accessible and available to him are those that bear within themselves the characteristics of the signifying chain.

511 He plays, for example, with a train, which is a little chain – that is, a series constituted by elements that are attached to each other. We have a door that opens or closes, which is tantamount to the simplest form of the alternative "yes or no" that conditions the signifier as such. "A gate must be open or closed," as I reminded you here when I tried to show you how we can put cybernetic schemas to use with our symbols.

The child's behavior is limited to that; and yet, simply by grazing it with words that are nevertheless sentences, something essentially verbal, what do Klein's interventions immediately do? The child's first reaction is, in my view, almost unbelievable in its exemplary character: he runs into the dark "space between the outer and inner doors of the [consulting] room" [p. 31]. We are surprised that Klein – who, in certain ways, so clearly saw the structural elements of introjection and expulsion, namely, the limit of the outer world of what one might call the inner shadows with regard to a subject – did not see the import of this intermediary zone, which is nothing less than the one where, to our way of thinking, desire is situated.

This zone is neither outside nor inside, and however small it may

be in this subject, it is articulated and constructed. We find in certain primitive village structures these sorts of empty spaces between the village and pure, unadulterated nature. Let us say that it is in this sort of "no man's land"* that the little subject's desire broke down.

It is here that the ego might possibly intervene. Naturally, as I have repeated dozens of times, it is to the degree to which this ego is not weak, but strong, that the subject's resistances are organized, they being the very forms of his neurotic construction's coherence. This is how the subject organizes himself in order to subsist as desire, in order not to be the place of this desire, in order to be sheltered from the Other's desire as such. It is the distance that is maintained between his most profound manifestation as desire and the Other's desire; it is the means [*alibi*] by which he constitutes himself as phobic, hysteric, or obsessive respectively.

I must return here to the elaborate example Freud provides us of a fantasy, "A child is being beaten." It is worth returning to it after having taken this detour. In it, we can perceive the stages at which we find anew the structural relationship that I am trying to formulate today.

What do we have here? An obsessive fantasy. Girls and boys use 512
this fantasy to arrive at what? Masturbatory jouissance. The relationship to desire is clear. What is the function of this jouissance? Its function here is that of any and every satisfaction of need in relation to that which lies beyond it, which is determined by human language. Which is to say that masturbatory jouissance is not the solution to desire here; it represents, instead, the crushing of desire – just as a child at the breast crushes his demand for love from his mother with the satisfaction of nursing.

This is virtually countersigned by the testimony of history.

I alluded at the time [I discussed Freud's paper, "A Child is Being Beaten"] to the hedonist perspective and its inability to truly characterize human desire. Let us not forget one of its paradoxical points, which has an exemplary character for us – even though it was obviously left in the shadows by those who have gone down in history as sages. Their discipline had as its aim – qualified as philosophical, and for reasons that were after all, valid, since they were methodological – the choice of a stance with respect to desire, consisting at the outset of excluding it and rendering it null and void.

Every perspective that is, strictly speaking, hedonistic shares in this exclusionary stance, as is demonstrated by the paradoxical example that I will remind you of here, the stance of the cynics. Tradition has, as we know from Chrysippus, if I recall correctly, passed this down to us. Diogenes the Cynic claimed that the solution to the problem of sexual desire was, as it were, at hand's reach

for each of us, and, through an act that was not one of exhibitionism but of demonstration, he proved it brilliantly by masturbating in public.

The obsessive's fantasy bears a relation to jouissance, and this relation can even become one of its conditions. But it also has a structure whose value as an index, as I call it, Freud demonstrated to us, inasmuch as this fantasy indicates nothing other than a feature of the subject's history, a feature that is inscribed in his diachrony. Namely, that the subject, in a forgotten past, saw, Freud's text tells us, a rival – whether of the same sex or of the opposite, it does not matter – being subjected to punishment by the beloved being, the father in this case, and was overjoyed by this early situation.

513 In what way does the fantasized instant perpetuate, as it were, this favorite instant of happiness? It is here that the intermediary stage that Freud designates takes on its demonstrative value. This stage, he tells us, [is never remembered; it] can only be reconstructed.

Freud sometimes tells us that certain unconscious stages are altogether inaccessible. Whether he is right or wrong in this precise case is not germane. Thus he is not wrong, but that is not what is of importance here; what is important is that he designates this intermediate stage as something that can only be reconstructed.

At the first stage of the fantasy's construction, we find the memory of a moment of triumph on the subject's part, a memory that is merely repressed, at worst, and can thus be brought to light: a memory of the other, the rival brother, falling prey to the anger of the beloved object [the father here] and to the punishment that the beloved object is meting out to him. At the third stage, the fantasized instant plays the role of an index inasmuch as it immortalizes, as it were, this stage by making it into a point that something entirely different is attached to – namely, the subject's desire. But the process involves an intermediary stage which is, I will say, strictly speaking metaphorical.

What is at work in the second stage, which is, as Freud tells us, essential to understanding the functioning of this fantasy? The subject puts himself in his rival's shoes: it is the subject himself who is punished. What is the subject seeking in this metaphor or transference? We find ourselves faced here with an utter and complete enigma.

How strange it is to proceed, after the moment of his triumph, to a scene in which he himself suffers the other's humiliating defeat! Freud does not hide the fact that we find ourselves faced here with the ultimate enigma of what in psychoanalysis we call masochism. A conjunction presents itself here in a pure form, a conjunction by which something in the subject perpetuates the happiness of

the initial situation in a hidden, latent, unconscious situation of unhappiness.

In this hypothetical second stage, what is involved is, in short, the oscillation, ambivalence, or, more precisely, ambiguity of the act being engaged in by the authority, the father here, inasmuch as the punishment is also a form of recognition. The subject slides here from a short-lived incident in his life history to a structure in which he appears as an actual being. The decisive step of his jouissance lies 514
– insofar as it leads to the fantasized instant, "a child is being beaten" [*On bat un enfant*, literally "someone is beating a child"] where he himself is no longer anything but *On* ["someone"] – in the fact of alienating himself, in other words, in taking the other's place as a victim.

On the one hand, the subject is *On bat* ["someone is beating"], the instrument of alienation insofar as it devalues [the one who is beaten]. This is why I told you that, up to a certain point, he purely and simply becomes the phallic instrument, insofar as it is the instrument here of his cancellation.

On the other hand, he is confronted with what? With "a child," a faceless, sexless child, a child who is no longer the child originally involved in the first stage, nor even the child the subject himself was at the second stage. A close examination of the succession of fantasies laid out by Freud shows that the subject is confronted here with what one might call an extract of the object.

We nevertheless see traces, in the recounting of the fantasy, of what constitutes the subject's favorite instant of jouissance. I will juxtapose the neurotic's jouissance next time with something very unusual, whose common factor does not seem to have been found up until now. It is not perversion in general – which plays a pivotal role in the structure we are exploring – that is at work, but rather homosexuality.

To confine our attention today to neurosis, I will tell you what its most common, fundamental structure is, in the final analysis.

If the neurotic wants to desire, what does he desire? He desires what allows him to sustain his desire in its very precariousness, without knowing that all of his phantasmagoria is designed for this purpose and that his symptoms, which in themselves provide so little satisfaction, are the very locus where he finds jouissance.

The subject thus does not present himself as a "pure being" [*être pur*] – which is what I began from in order to indicate to you what is meant by the subject's relation to the real – but a "being for" [*être pour*].

The ambiguity of the neurotic's position lies precisely in this metonymy, which is such that it is in this *être pour* that all of his *pour être* [in order to be] lies.

June 10, 1959

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XXV

THE EITHER/OR CONCERNING THE OBJECT

Perverse fantasy and perversion
Fantasy and the construction of reality
The paradox of the bad internal object
The radical nature of female jealousy
The function of substitutes in neurosis

There is something instructive, I will not say "even in," but "above all in" mistakes [*erreurs*] – or instances of going astray [*errances*], if you will.

This is why you have noticed that I rather constantly refer to the hesitations and impasses that manifest themselves in psychoanalytic theory, and use them as being in and of themselves revealing as concerns the structure of the reality we deal with.

In this regard, there is something interesting, noteworthy, and significant to us in a paper that is not very old, since it came out in 1956 in the July–October issue of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. It was written by several of our Parisian colleagues, whose names I will not mention, since I am not targeting their position insofar as it may be personal.

They endeavored to closely define the meaning of perversion. Curiously enough, the article's conclusions are as reserved as they could possibly be. The only formally articulated conclusion included is, however, rather striking: "Thus there is no specific unconscious content in the sexual perversions, since we find the same content in cases of neurosis and psychosis."

The entire article illustrates this, but in a way that is not altogether convincing. Even without taking a bird's eye view, we realize that the article is based on a constantly maintained confusion between perverse fantasy and perversion. The authors note that there are conscious and unconscious fantasies in the neuroses and
516 the perversions that seem to overlap, and to our astonishment they

facilely conclude therefrom that there is no fundamental difference, from the vantage point of the unconscious, between neurosis and perversion.

We find in this article reflections that are presented without taking any precautions or manifesting any regard for the psychoanalytic tradition, and that proceed toward a sort of overturning of the values and principles of that tradition. The authors stop only once they have concluded that perversion is, in short, an abnormal relation that is eroticized. It thus does not involve the relationship to an object, but rather the eroticization of a relation for economic reasons. To anyone who undertakes an even slightly sensible examination of the matter, this eroticized relation to the object can be only of "soporific value."

I myself am now led, after having begun last time to broach the relationship between fantasy and neurosis in order to indicate their most general terms, to discuss the relationship between fantasy and perversion.

1

First a word about what has happened in the course of the history of psychoanalysis, which can be laid out more rigorously in light of our progress here.

Very shortly after having spelled out the functions of the unconscious, especially in hysteria, the neuroses, and dreams, Freud was led to posit the presence in the unconscious of what he called *polymorph perverse Anlage*: a "polymorphously perverse disposition" [GW V, p. 91; SE VII, p. 191].

For a time, one that has long since passed, naturally, things remained at that point. Nevertheless, what people failed to realize, it seems, is that in formulating the notion of a polymorphously perverse disposition in the unconscious, Freud discovered nothing less than the very structure of unconscious fantasies. He observed that their structure resembles the relational mode that blossoms, comes fully to the light of day, and is demonstrated in the perversions.

In effect, the form taken by unconscious fantasies overlaps what occupies the imaginative field of the pervert's desire.

What perverts stage in their fantasies presents itself in a way that 517
is obvious in clinical work. It presents itself as a movie* sequence, by which I mean a sequence that is isolated [*coupée*] from the development of the drama – is that what is called a "rush"*? I'm not sure of the term – like trailers that are designed to whet our appetite to come back next week to see the film from which the images we are

watching were extracted. What is seductive about them is that they are removed [*désinsérées*] from the chain and disconnected from the plot.

Something like that is involved in perverts' fantasies. Naturally, psychoanalysis has taught us to recontextualize them, link them back up with the fuller plot, and reattach them to the subjects' histories. To varying degrees, and even at the cost of several modifications, some touching up, and reversals, they reassume their place and meaning. Nevertheless, the extraction [*désinsertion*] by which they present themselves confirms what I have formulated regarding the position of desire – namely, that desire is situated in what is beyond what is nameable, in what is beyond the subject.

I will add in passing, and as a reminder, that this is what retrospectively explains the characteristic quality that fantasies, whether those of a pervert or not, take on when they are avowed. Namely, the state of being ill at ease that we should give a name to when it is at its height, and which often stops patients from revealing their fantasies for a long time. This ridiculous facet can only be explained by the relations that we have already been able to perceive between the position of desire and the realm of comedy.

A question thus immediately arose [in the analytic literature] as to the real nature of perverse fantasy. Is it absolutely crucial, natural, and definitive, or should it be viewed instead as something as complex, elaborate, and in short, significant as a neurotic symptom?

This question gave rise to a whole way of thinking that became integrated into the problem of perversion, and that plays an essential role in the elaboration of what is known as object relations theory.

It was at this point in time that people gave object relations a developmental definition. People did not simply turn the steps
518 regulating the subject's development into specific stages [*momentalités*] of his Eros – that is, erogenous phases – but into modes of his relation to the world. I need not remind you here of the initiators – Abraham, Ferenczi, and others – of the so-called tables of correlated stages, which made the so-called dispositional reservoirs [or: reservoirs of the tendencies, needs, or drives] correspond to specific libidinal forms of the ego.* A particular ego* structure, specifying a certain type of relation to reality, was supposed to correspond to every form of libido.

You are aware of what this theory has brought with it by way of clarity and even enrichment, and also what it has posed by way of problems. Writers have tried to show us the aforementioned correspondences in concrete cases, but it suffices to read their works to realize that these correspondences are always established in a somewhat theoretical way, and that their own texts suggest that

an accurate assessment of things is lacking. Right from the very first discussions, an opposition between "partial object" and "total object" is made, for example, but in a way that is unsustainable in my view.

In more recent works, we find, for example, the notorious notion, which I have often mentioned, of "distance from the object," which so thoroughly dominates articles dealing with rules of technique. A certain French author believes that the notion of distance is decisive in obsessive neurosis, whereas it is in certain perversions that it plays a decisive role – for example, the distance of an object [from oneself] is obviously far more manifest in the phenomenology of fetishism. Many other forms [of perversion] can be articulated in much the same way.

The first truth we will have to bring out here is that the notion of distance is so essential that it is perhaps, after all, truly unelimina-ble from desire itself, by which I mean that it is necessary in order to maintain, sustain, and even preserve the dimension of desire. It would be hard, indeed, to conceptualize how desire could sustain itself were the myth of a relationship to the object without any distance from it to be realized.

We have here – in a truly mythical form, I am saying – the idea of a sort of harmony [*accord*] between subject and object. This harmony has two facets, two faces, or two mirages: animal on the one side and mystical on the other. Needless to say, this idea in no way coincides with the facts of experience or with psychoanalytic 519
theory, which views the object as a remainder [or: leftover, *reste*].

Thus the supposed "bad distance at which the obsessive stays from the object" is also thought to be corrected and rectified, overcome in the *hic et nunc* [here and now] of the analytic relationship. And this is supposed to happen owing to an ideal and even idealizing identification with the analyst, who is considered in this case not as an object but as the prototype of a satisfying object-relation. What exactly can such an ideal correspond to when one tries to realize it in analysis? I have already broached this question, but we will have to return to it later to formulate it differently.

The problems raised by object relations have been broached far more assiduously and seriously in other contexts by other groups. As you know, I place Edward Glover's work at the top of the list; I have already mentioned his article entitled "The Relation of Perversion-Formation to the Development of Reality-Sense" which came out in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* in 1933.

In his concern to construct a developmental theory of the relations between the subject and the world – that is, the reality around him – Glover demands that development be examined as closely

as possible: through reconstruction in the analyses of adults, and through the direct observation of behavior in children. He proposes to situate the perversions on a timeline that includes, as it were, the times in life at which the different psychical anomalies we deal with in analysis arise. He lays out a whole series of them, and the order in which they appear on his timeline is, as usual, open to criticism. Without going into it in detail, I will point out that he highlights the extremely early nature of psychotic disturbances – paranoid disturbances in particular – and situates after them the different forms of neurosis in order from the earliest to the latest.

The earliest is obsessive neurosis, which is thus located right at the border with paranoid forms of psychosis. Glover felt that he had rather precisely situated the relations between paranoia and the neuroses in an article on "drug addictions"* written the year before this one. In it he tried to situate the perversions in terms of the stage at
520 which they arise, the time in life at which they begin, and the mode of the subject's relationship to the real to which they correspond.

In his view, the standard paranoid stage, which is considered to arise very early on in life, is characterized by a highly specific mode of object-relation, linked to primitive mechanisms of projection and introjection. This is where he situates drug addictions.* He clearly indicates that, on this point, he endorses Klein's theory, whereas, as you know, he went on to very publicly critique her.

This is the context in which the instructive passage I read you a few classes ago appears, where, in a brilliant, metaphorical way, Glover does not hesitate to compare the child's earliest world to "a combination of a butcher's shop, a public lavatory under shell-fire, and a post-mortem room" [*IJP* 14, no. 4 (1933): 492]. The stage that follows this inaugural spectacle of life brings with it what is assuredly a far more benign organization, that of a pharmacy with its store of objects, some beneficial, some poisonous. This passage shows us in what direction Glover and Klein – for there is no difference between them here – seek to define fantasy as functioning in such a way as to organize the construction of reality by the subject.

In her article "The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego" [*IJP* 11 (1930): 24–39], Klein clearly articulates the way in which objects are successively mastered by the child. At the outset, owing to frustrations the child undergoes, objects are sources of anxiety to him, which is why his fundamental relations with those around him are colored by aggression and sadism. The subject's interest next shifts to more benign objects, objects that are further removed from his needs; these objects become, in turn, imbued with the same anxiety. The progressive extension of the child's world is understood to proceed in this manner.

Note that we have here a mechanism that we might call "contraphobic" – phobic objects are replaced by contraphobic objects, even if the latter become phobic in turn. It is thus in a contraphobic dialectic that the progressive extension of the world of objects – in other words, the conquest of reality – supposedly comes about.

To determine whether this conception corresponds to clinical work or not is not my direct interest here. In clinical work, many things run counter to it. I believe that it attests to a unilateral viewpoint, inasmuch as such a mechanism, even if it plays a role in the conquest of reality, does not strictly speaking constitute reality. 521

But my goal here is not to critique Klein's theory. I am after something else altogether – namely, to shed light on the nature of a function, that of desire. We immediately see the consequences of her theory, for Glover arrives at a paradox, which should certainly be more instructive to him than it is to us, for there is nothing in it for us to be surprised by.

What he concretely tries to do is to situate the various perversions with respect to a dialectic or mechanism that he hopes to integrate into the notion of steady ego* development, ego development that supposedly parallels changes in the libido. The upshot is that the subject's entire fate and structuring turn out to be theorized as a purely individual experience of the conquest of reality. That is the whole story.

This is what makes for the difference, for example, between the theory I provide you with of the phobias, and that proposed by certain recent French authors.

The latter seek to reconstruct the development of a phobia on the basis of structural forms of childhood experience – the way, for example, in which the child negotiates his relations with those around him, or deals with the passage from light to darkness. Development is understood here as something that is purely experimental, the possibility of phobia being deduced from and generated by a concrete experience of fear.

What I teach you here, on the other hand, is that there can be no accurate theory of phobia that does not include the true function of the signifier. This function presupposes the existence of a dimension which is not that of the relation of the subject to those around him, or to any reality, if it is not the reality and dimension of language. The fact that the subject must situate himself in discourse and manifest himself there as a being is where it all starts.

It is striking to see how greatly someone as perspicacious as Glover can misjudge the phobias. In his attempt to explain the development and stabilization of a phobia, he declares the following: "It is more advantageous to suffer from a tiger-phobia in London than in an

522 Indian jungle." One could retort that this is not the register in which the problem arises. One could even reverse his claim and say that a tiger-phobia would be quite advantageous in helping an Indian child adapt to his real situation, whereas it is quite cumbersome to suffer from a tiger-phobia if one lives in London, whether one is a child or further along in one's development. For in London, the behavior of a subject who is prey to such a phobia would surely be quite constricted and would bear no relation whatsoever to reality.

Glover then finds himself faced with the following problem: how can one situate perversion in a developmental perspective when it includes the widest variety of distortions of reality? He can only do so by isolating different types of perversion and inserting them into every supposed or presupposed stage of development. He is thus obliged to accept the existence of very archaic perversions, ones that are more or less contemporary with the paranoid or even the depressive phase, alongside other perversions that are situated at very advanced stages of development – not simply phallic, but Oedipal and even genital, strictly speaking.

Breaking perversion down into different types does not seem to Glover to constitute an objection to his conceptualization, and here is why. The perspective from which he begins forces him, when all is said and done, to define perversion as one of the various forms of reality testing.* When reality testing fails in some way or location, perversion comes to cover over the hole* through a specific mode of apprehending reality – which is, in this case, a psychical reality, a projected and indeed introjected reality.

Perversion thus serves the function of safeguarding reality for the subject, for otherwise the equilibrium of the whole of reality would be threatened by some overload [*décharge*] or moment of instability. Perversion serves to repair [*reprise*] – in the sense in which one speaks in French of a fabric that is darned [*reprisé*] – reality and, moreover, serves as reality's keystone. In short, perversion is unambiguously conceptualized by Glover as a form of salvation when compared with the supposed threat of psychosis.

That is one way of looking at it. Perhaps certain case studies do,
523 in fact, include elements that seem to corroborate this, but many others would have us look elsewhere.

Nevertheless, it seems quite paradoxical to grant perversion an economic role that is contradicted by many elements – not to mention the fact that it is certainly not the precarious nature of the pervert's edifice that strikes us, at least at first glance, either clinically or in psychoanalytic experience.

Before moving on, I will point out here in what regard Klein picks up on and takes a first stab at the question I am raising here.

2

Klein postulates two stages, the paranoid phase and the depressive phase that follows it.

In the second phase, the subject relates to his major, prevalent object, his mother, as a whole [person]. Prior to that, he deals only with separate elements that a split divides into good and bad objects, giving rise thereby to the operations of projection and introjection. All of this characterizes the paranoid barrier.

What is going on in this initial process, situated at the outset of the subject's life, if we reformulate it from our own vantage point?

What Klein shows us is, in short, that reality, as based on the child's first apprehensions of the object, comes from the fact that the object – whether it is good or bad, beneficial or frustrating – is first and foremost meaningful [*significatif*]. The strict opposition between good and bad, without any nuances or intermediary states [*transitions*] – without taking into account in the slightest degree the fact that it is the same object, the mother, who can be good or bad at different times – makes it clear that what is involved here are not a child's actual experiences, with everything such experiences usually bring with them that is transitional, but rather a shift in the function of the object itself to that of a signifying opposition.

This is what is at the crux of the whole of Klein's theory.

People rarely notice, it seems to me, that, as well-founded as it may be, it is diametrically opposed to what I have brought out in our practice – namely, that the lively communication that takes place in the course of mothering plays an essential role in the child's development. It belongs to a different register, one that is contemporary with hers, but cannot be confused with hers. 524

What Klein proposes is a sort of primitive algebra that we can say connects up perfectly with what I am trying to bring out here under the following heading: "function of the signifier." What Klein rightly or wrongly describes to us, and we need but register this, are the earliest forms of the functioning of the signifier, whether the signifier is in fact present at that early moment in time or simply a *Rückphantasie*, a fantasy that is constructed retrospectively.

What value does the frontier between her two phases thus take on? I am referring to the stage between the paranoid phase – with its division between good objects that are "internalized"* by the child and bad ones that are rejected – and the depressive phase where the notion of the subject as a whole comes into view. Let us note that it is, in fact, only from the moment at which the subject considers himself to be a whole [entity] that there can be an inside and

an outside. It is only then that it is conceivable that the process of "internalization"* and "externalization,"* of introjection and projection – which is decisive in Klein's eyes in structuring the primitive animal – can occur.

The conceptual landmarks we use here allow us to grasp what is at issue in the move from one phase to the next. What Klein calls the primitive division of objects into good and bad is transferred, she says, into another register, which is that of the subject's inside and outside. Now we can relate this register – without, I believe, going too far out on a limb – to what I call the mirror stage. It is the other's image that gives the subject the notion [*forme*] of the other's unity, on the basis of which the division between inside and outside can be established, and with regard to which good and bad objects are then redeployed.

The good objects must come inside, and the bad ones must remain outside. What Klein manages to define here in the clearest possible way, because it is forced on us by experience, can be formulated in our own terms: the discourse that really organizes the world of objects in accordance with the subject's being goes, I would say, beyond the discourse in which the subject recognizes himself in the ordeal constituted by the mirror stage, [where] it is in the relationship of narcissistic identification of one image with another that he recognizes himself as mastery and as a unique ego – as mastery of an ego.

525 In order to understand what is at stake in what Klein describes, we must accept the non-overlapping nature of two experiences (note that I myself am not saying that the whole of development is necessarily organized in this way):

1 the experience that defines the subject as an object of the first identification with the mother, and in particular with her insignias; this experience continues to have an assimilating value to the subject, going beyond what he will be able to place inside himself;
2 the register of experience that defines this inside and in which the subject is *i(a)* – in other words, typically and ideally, the image of his young semblable, with whom we most clearly see him have his first experiences of mastery and bearing.

Between the two there is a field, *x*, where *i(a)* is both part of the subject and not part of the subject. What is it? It is what Klein calls the bad internal object.

People do not seem surprised by the paradox that it constitutes with respect to the premises we began from, whereas it presents itself immediately in Klein's dialectic, and in the most manifest way possible, as a problematic object.

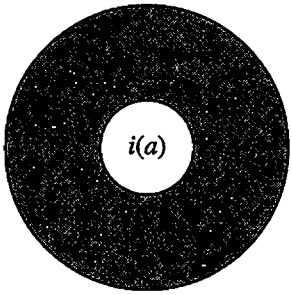

Figure 25.1: The bad internal object

Indeed, if we look at it from the outside, as it were, where the subject is not a subject but where we must take him to be a real being, we can wonder whether the subject is not, in fact, the bad object with which he supposedly identifies. Conversely, if we look at it from the inside – from the point of view of *crasia* or mastery, from the point of view of the subject's first attempt to stand up, assert himself, and contain himself – a question arises. Does the subject 526
have the bad object – which will play an absolutely decisive role thereafter – or doesn't he?

According to Klein, as we have seen, the division of objects into good and bad determines the subject's structuring process. The child internalizes good objects, making them part of himself right from the outset, whereas he rejects the bad objects as being not him. The paradox of the bad internalized object thus comes to the fore: the subject internalizes it, making it his own, and at the same time he in a sense disavows [*dénie*] it for being virtually bad.

The bad object never stops presenting itself, with regard to the subject's being, in the form of a permanent, anxiety-producing enigma. What will put an end to it is clearly the later function of prohibition. Prohibition puts an end to it by introducing an essential delineation into the bad object: if the subject is the bad object, he does not have it; insofar as he *is* [*est*] identified with it, he is forbidden to *have* [*ait*] it – we should take advantage of the similarity in pronunciation in French between the subjunctive of the verb *avoir*, to have, and the present tense of the verb *être*, to be. Otherwise stated, insofar as he is it, he does not have it, and insofar as he has it, he is not it.

Stated in still other terms, it is at the level of the bad object that the subject experiences the slavery of his mastery, if I may put it thus. The true master – everyone knows that he has no face, that he is somewhere in language, although he may even be nowhere in it – allows the subject limited use of the bad object itself, insofar as

it is an object that is not situated with respect to demand, an object that cannot be demanded. It is on this basis that what we encounter in our practice takes on its import.

We can see this in a striking way in the precise cases that Klein presents.

The incredibly inhibited child [Dick] whom she presents in "The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego" has manifestly arrived at an impasse, which is constituted by the field of what truly cannot be demanded. As soon as she begins to speak to him, what she immediately achieves crystallizes in a panicked question: "Nurse coming?"* Immediately thereafter, Klein
527 indicates, as an astonishing, decisive fact, that the child allows himself to enter into contact with objects, from which he initially appeared to be oddly separate.

He does so, as you recall, by making a little cut or tear with the help of a pair of scissors. The child can hardly be called inept, for he is able to handle all sorts of things, like door-handles [p. 29], but he has never been able to hold scissors before. Here, however, he manages to hold them, use them, and detach a tiny lump of coal from something that is not devoid of signification, since it is part of the train set [*chaîne du train*] with which people have managed to get him to play.

What is involved here is a "tender."* I won't go here into all the curious plays on words that could be made around this English word. It is not the *Carte du Tendre* we are used to, but the Carte du Tender.

In truth, the child isolates himself, defines himself, and situates himself in this little piece that is detached from the signifying chain – in this remainder, this minuscule lump, this sketch of an object, appearing here only in the form of a little bit, a very little bit. A similar little bit suddenly gives rise to both panic and sympathy on his part when he sees pencil shavings on Klein's lap [p. 33].

At that point, showing some emotion for the first time in the presence of this other person, he cries out, "Poor Mrs. Klein!"

3

Thus desire is not demand. This first intuition, which we experience at every moment and which brings us back to the earliest conditions, must not stop us from looking further.

Someone comes to see us for an analysis. Why? What is he asking for? In theory, satisfaction and well-being – except that satisfaction does not always bring him well-being, far from it. How do analysts

usually respond to him? They set about organizing his history as a subject, as one might organize the history of psychoanalysis or the history of technique, in order to respond to his demand for satisfaction. By what pathway? By attempting to obtain a reduction of his 528
desires to his needs.

Isn't it paradoxical to do so? For all of our work is, we can say, sustained in the dimension of desire. This is, moreover, as obvious to the subject as it is to us: to us, because everything that we have formulated will come down to what I will say; and to the subject, because in the final analysis, he knows this full well when he comes to see us.

I was just informed that someone is in the process of writing an important thesis on the social signification of psychoanalysis, and this led me to believe that it will include elements that are extremely rich in experience and especially well thought out. I think that the social representation of psychoanalysis is in fact much less distorted in society as a whole than we tend to think. Owing to that, I dare to hope that something – which is frankly at the very basis and core of what is implied by the fact that a person comes to see us – will come out of this thesis in the clearest way possible: the fact that at the root of his demand we find that he does not trust (in) his desire [or: he does not have faith in (or rely on) his desire, *il ne se fie pas à son désir*]. What all of the subjects who contact us have in common is that they do not trust (in) their desire.

The fact that, owing to our artifices, their desire can, following our lead, be reduced to need – or even be led toward sublimation along the elevated pathways of love – does not alter the fact that what characterizes their desire at the outset is that there is something that cannot actually be demanded, and regarding which a question arises. This is the dimension of desire, strictly speaking.

In order to introduce the dialectic of desire, do you recall what I did at a very precise moment, namely two and a half years ago? I began from what Freud says regarding the Oedipus complex in women [Seminar IV, Chapters 6–8]. Isn't what I have just said legible in the fact that there is good reason to pinpoint – in psychoanalytic practice, in our work with the unconscious – what women demand at the outset, which is that by which, Freud tells us, they enter into the Oedipus complex? They do not demand satisfaction; they demand to have what they do not have. What is involved is, as you know, the phallus.

This is the source of the myriad problems that arise when one tries to reduce the unfolding of the dialectic of desire in women to a 529
natural process.

Whether we manage to reduce it to a natural process or not, we

must deal with something that emerges at a critical moment, that Freud highlights, in the development of little girls. Whether it is a primary or a secondary process does not matter much to us, after all; it is a salient and irreducible process, in any case. It is the following: what little girls demand – namely, to have the phallus – they demand to have in the place where they would have had it if they were men. This is what is involved and there are no two ways about it.

They will no doubt manage to have it – to have this phallus which is a signifier, a signifier, I repeat – to really have it in a man. This is even what makes it such that women are in a highly privileged position and that their affective problems are relatively simple compared to those experienced by men, but this relative simplicity must not blind us. The fact remains that at the outset, the real phallus that women can have enters into their dialectic and its unfolding as a signifier. Owing to which, they will always have it, at a certain level of their experience, *en moins* (as an absence, as something missing).

Naturally, I always reserve for women the marginal possibility [*possibilité-limite*] of perfect union with a being – namely, that in a sexual embrace there could be a complete fusion for a woman between her beloved and his organ. The fact remains, however, that in everyday experience, the difficulties that present themselves regarding sex revolve precisely around the following point: the ideal moment – which is in some sense poetic and even apocalyptic – of perfect sexual union is only situated in the margins [*limite*], whereas in fact, in the everyday test of experience, women, even when they fully realize their femininity, always deal with the phallic object qua separate. It is precisely because they deal with the phallus as such and in this register that their actions and impact can be perceived by men as castrating.

Moreover, they remain unconscious of this, until they go into analysis, just as they remain unconscious of the fact that symbolically they *are* the very phallus they do not *have* inasmuch as they are the object of the Other's desire. They do not know either of these things.

This specific position lasts as long as they remain unconscious of
530 it, which means as long as it exists solely for the Other [*en tant qu'elle ne vaut que pour l'Autre*], the partner. Nevertheless, the extremely odd and paradoxical formulation by which women's relations to the phallus are resolved is that, in the unconscious, they both are it and have it.

The peculiar position of the phallus alongside the ideal woman, alongside this woman in her fantasized world, is one of the oddest effects of our relationship to discourse. In the unconscious, she is it and she has it, in the best of cases – except that she can only know it

via her desire. Consequently, there is an odd similarity between her as it were trans-subjective formulation – that is, between her unconscious formulation – and that of the pervert.

What have we discovered about women's unconscious economy if not that they manage to find phallic equivalences for all the objects that can be separated from them, including, and first on the list, the most natural object that separates from them – namely, the children to whom they give birth? I am merely reciting the ABCs of psychoanalytic doctrine here. Owing to this fact, the objects from which they separate end up taking on for them, as naturally as can be, if you will, the function of objects of desire. And this is what explains, I believe, the lower frequency of perversion in women. Insofar as their satisfactions are inscribed in a cultural context – and it is out of the question that they not be – they manage to be situated in the dialectic of separation, which is the dialectic of desire's signifying objects.

More than one analytic author has already clearly expressed what I have just said – and in a way that will undoubtedly appear far more concrete to you – by saying that, if there are fewer perversions among women than among men, it is because they generally manage to satisfy their perverse tendencies in their relations with their children. This is not why "your daughter is mute," but it is why there are a number of children who need our help. As you see, we come back here to first truths; but it is not pointless to return to them, assuming we do so by the proper pathway.

I will take advantage of the point we are at here to also give you an indication designed to temper what the male portion of my audience might experience by way of surprise and even impatience when faced with one of the odd features of their relations with their partners of the opposite sex. I mean what is commonly referred to 531
as jealousy.

Psychoanalysts, who have brought us so much clarity, have naturally brought us just as much obscurity. As Nestroy, whom Freud greatly appreciated, said, "every step forward is only half as big as it looks at first." This is why the problem of female jealousy has been conflated in psychoanalysis with the very different problem of male jealousy. Assuming the two sexes have very different ways of loving, female jealousy is something that, I believe, can truly be situated only at the most radical point.

Consider my little illustration of demand, if you recall it [Table 20.1]. The subject questions his relationship to the Other and then strikes the Other with signifying death, as it were, as Ⱥ, only to himself appear as fallen, $, in the presence of this little *a* which is, in the final analysis, the remainder of the division: an irreducible and

undemandable something that is the object of desire. Well, insofar as the subject, the woman here, makes herself into an object of love, she views this remainder as what is most essential to her. Which is why she attributes so much importance to manifestations of her partner's desire.

For in the end, it is obvious that in real life, love and desire are two different things. We should speak clearly and say that we can love someone a great deal and desire someone else.

To the degree to which women occupy the specific position that I mentioned, they know the value of desire full well. They know that, beyond all of love's sublimations, desire has a relationship to being, even in its most limited, restricted, fetishistic, and, in short, its stupidest form – that is, even in the marginal form in which in fantasy the subject, qua blinded, is literally nothing more than a prop and a sign, the sign of little *a* as the signifying remainder of relations with the Other. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, women view little *a* as ultimate proof that the Other is verily and truly addressing them.

A man can truly love a woman with all the affection and devotion we can imagine, but the fact remains that if he desires another woman – even if the first woman knows that what he desires in this other woman is her shoe, the hem of her dress, or the makeup
532 she wears on her face – his homage to being thus goes to the other woman.

It is necessary to remind people of first truths from time to time, which is why I think you will excuse the possibly forced tone of this digression.

Let us now consider the exact nature of the zone of the object in which this ambiguity is established. What is the true function of the phallus? You cannot fail to feel it has already been singularly sketched out by what I told you earlier today about the bad internal object.

One could say that, in the guise of the phallus, the paternal metaphor, as I have called it, institutes a split in the object that precisely overlaps, as we should have expected, what I consider to be the general form of prohibition – namely, either the subject is not it or the subject does not have it.

If the subject is the phallus – something that can be immediately illustrated when the subject is the object of his mother's desire – then he does not have it, in other words he has no right to use it; this is the basic meaning of the law prohibiting incest. On the other hand, if he has it, in other words if he has identified with his father, then he clearly is not the phallus.

This is what is signified, at the symbolic level that I will call radical, by the introduction of the Oedipus complex as a dimension.

And everything that will ever be said on this topic will always boil down to the "either/or" that introduces the realm of an object that one cannot demand.

How is the neurotic characterized? He of course makes use of this alternative [either/or], and since he fully situates himself in the Oedipus complex, in its signifying structuring, he makes use of it in a way that I will call metonymic. I would even say that this metonymy is regressive to the degree to which "he is not it" presents itself there as prior to "she does not have it."

Allow me to explain this. The neurotic uses the fundamental alternative in a metonymic form in that, for him, "not to have it" is the form in which he disguisedly asserts himself "to be it." He "does not have" the phallus "in order to be" the phallus in a hidden, unconscious way. It is on this somewhat enigmatic "in order to be" [*pour être*] that I ended last time.

Note that "it is an other who has it," whereas "he is it" unconsciously. In his desiring function, the subject elects a substitute. This is the crux of neurosis. Consider what actually happens at the end of the obsessive's complicated maneuvers – he is not the one who enjoys. Similarly for the hysteric: she is not the one who is enjoyed. 533

The imaginary substitution that is at work here is a substitution of the ego for the subject – that is, for the $ that is involved at the level of desire. It is because the ego takes the place of the subject that he brings demand into desire's question. Someone who is not the subject, but who is his image [i.e., the ego], is substituted for him in the dialectic of desire.

This is why the neurotic can only demand substitutes, in the final analysis. What is characteristic about his experience, and he may even sense this, is that he demands everything that he demands for something else [or: for some other reason, *autre chose*]. This is the other consequence of the role that the imaginary comes to play and what I called the neurotic's regressive metonymy, for in this realm he cannot be stopped – once the subject has been replaced at the level of his desire, he can only demand replacements while believing he is demanding what he desires.

To take this a step further, experience shows that the ego, owing to its very form – that is, insofar as it is the reflection of a reflection, and is the other's form – also takes the place of the person from whom [*dont*] the subject demands something. Nowhere more easily than in the neurotic does this separate ego come to take the place of the separate object that I designate as the earliest form of the object of desire.

The neurotic's altruism is, as opposed to what people say, permanent. To obtain the satisfactions he seeks, nothing is more common

than to see him take a pathway about which we can say that it consists in *devoting himself to satisfying* – as much as he can here – all of the other's demands, even though he knows that those demands constitute a perpetual obstacle to his own desire. In other words, in his devotion to the other, he blinds himself to his own lack of satisfaction.

These are things that are not, I think, comprehensible outside of the perspective that I am trying to articulate for you here.

For the neurotic, the barred S of the formula ($\$\Diamond a$) transforms
534 – I am saying this summarily and with caveats – into something in which identification of his unconscious being with the phallus is inscribed. For this reason, I will give it the same sign as the subject: just as there is a "barred subject," I will write "barred phallus." This barred phallus finds itself in the presence of an object that I will write in the most general form of an object of desire – namely, in the form of the imaginary other in which the subject situates himself and finds himself anew: $\Phi \Diamond i(a)$.

We must now turn to perversion, but as it is late, I will defer this till next time. I cannot advance any more quickly here. See nothing in this but an effect of the difficult ground we must cover.

June 17, 1959

XXVI

THE FUNCTION OF SPLITTING* IN PERVERSION

The locus of perverse desire in *Lolita*
A feature of masochistic jouissance
The machine in schizophrenia
The idolized woman in homosexuality
Desire on the horizon or desire at the heart of . . .

The difficulty we are facing is not a new one; it is one of those about which the entire ethical tradition has speculated. Need I echo here from long, long ago the bitterness of the sages or pseudo-sages regarding the disappointing nature of human desire?

The question takes on an explicit form in psychoanalysis, where the partial nature of the drives appears right from the outset, as does the fact that our connection with the object depends on the complex, complicated, and incredibly risky arrangement of those drives. All access to the object, insofar as it depends on a combination of partial drives, is fundamentally problematic in character.

If there is a theory here, it runs counter to the notion of instinct, as counter to that notion as one can possibly imagine. However flexibly one may posit its hypothesis of finality, the whole theory of instinct is, as it were, based on the centering of the object. In other words, the natural process of the living organism is such that an object is progressively fixated in a certain field and caught there in a certain behavior. The process presents itself in the guise of a progressive concentration of the field.

The process and dialectic that psychoanalysis shows us is altogether different. Here, we progress on the contrary through the addition and combination of partial drives. It is only after taking the trouble to synthesize all sorts of interchangeable and variable drives, and at the endpoint of highly diverse combinations, that we manage to conceptualize the advent of a satisfying object, one that corresponds to the two poles of masculinity and femininity.

536 This might lead you to think that (*$◊a*) – situated on the graph we use here to map the position of desire in a speaking subject – is a very simple notation. In line with this, we might say the following: in desire, something is required, which is the relationship between the subject and the object; little *a* is the object, barred S is the subject, and that's it. What is most original in this notation is still the little bar on S, which reminds us that, at the culminating point at which desire is rendered present to mind, the subject is himself marked by speech. But this amounts, after all, to nothing more than a reminder that the drives are fragmented.

It is worth pointing out here that this notation is broader in scope.

It does not designate a relationship between the subject and the object; it designates fantasy, insofar as fantasy sustains the subject as desiring – in other words, at a point beyond his discourse. This notation signifies that the subject is present in fantasy as the subject of unconscious discourse. He is present in fantasy insofar as he is represented there by the function of cutting, that is, by the essential function that is his in discourse – and not in just any old discourse; it is a discourse that escapes him [or: slips out, *lui échappe*], the discourse of the unconscious.

If you follow the thread of this notation, you will not fail to be struck by the fact that it brings out dimensions that are always overlooked when it comes to perverse fantasies.

1

I already indicated to you last time how prudently we must broach such fantasies.

Perverse fantasies are not perversion proper.

The biggest mistake we – such as we are, in other words, insofar as we are more or less neurotic around the edges – can make is to imagine that we understand perversion because we have access to perverse fantasies. For the comprehensive access that we have to perverse fantasies does not give us access to perversion as a structure, even if those fantasies call, as it were, for a reconceptualization of perversion.

537 If you will allow me to take a little liberty in my discourse today in order to give myself over to a little gambol outside it, I will discuss with you a book marked by the seal of our times, which is entitled *Lolita*.

I am no more asking you to read this book than a whole series of others that could indicate a certain constellation of interest

around the mainspring of desire. There are things that are better constructed than *Lolita* at a theoretical level, so to speak, but it is a rather exemplary product all the same.

For those who open the book, nothing will seem obscure as to the function that is reserved for *i(a)* in it. This function is manifested in it in a way that is all the less ambiguous as, curiously enough, the author expresses a frank opposition to what he calls "Freudian voodooism." He nevertheless clearly attests, several times and in a way that he truly does not perceive, to the symbolic function of the image *i(a)*. For example, the hero, shortly before approaching Lolita decisively, has a dream in which she appears in the form of "a small hairy hermaphrodite."

But that is not what is of the essence. What is of the essence lies in the structure of the work, emphasizing, as it does, the brilliant contrast between the first and the second part, between the sparkling nature of desire as long as it is contemplated by the subject for some thirty years of his life, then its prodigious decline into an embroiled reality in the course of the miserable voyage of this couple across America the beautiful, during which the subject finds himself without any means whatsoever to get through to his partner. This is why *Lolita* presents all the characteristics of the subject's relation to a fantasy that is strictly speaking neurotic.

What is exemplary here is the way in which, owing to the very coherence of the construction, perverse desire shows itself. This desire does not appear in the hero, but in someone else [*un autre*] who is both more and something quite other than his double, for he is literally his persecutor. He appears in the margins of the story, as if the desire at stake in the subject could only live in another person, where it is literally impenetrable and altogether unknown. This substitution is clearly avowed in the novel.

The character who takes the hero's place at a certain moment in the plot is a pervert, strictly speaking. He really accedes to the 538
object. The key to this character is only given to us by his final groans when he is shot by the hero with a revolver. The relation to the object relies, in effect, on a sort of negative of the hero. This configuration has something exemplary about it, which can serve us as a schema for understanding that it is only by extrapolating that we can grasp perverse structure.

The structure of desire in neurosis is of a very different nature from the structure of desire in perversion, but we can nevertheless say that the two structures are opposites.

What will serve us here as a pole in broaching perversion is the most radical of the perverse positions of desire, the one that is placed by analytic theory at the basis of development, as its earliest

point, and also at the endpoint of the most extreme regressions – namely, masochism.

Why not begin by highlighting something obvious that fantasy brings the subject, in order to underscore the degree to which certain levels are neglected when analysts rush to provide collapsed formulations of the nature of masochism?

People tend, as we know, to reduce masochism in its various forms to the subject's most basic relation to his own life. They invoke certain valid and precious indications given by Freud on this topic in order to justify their conflation of masochism with the death instinct and to maintain that something that runs counter to the organization of the instincts makes itself immediately felt at the very level of the drive, viewed as an organic impulse. There is undoubtedly some sort of target here on which it may be of interest to set our sights in order to raise certain questions.

If we return to our schema – the one that situates desire in a relationship in which the subject's relation to discourse takes the form of a long division [Table 20.1] – a singular feature that we would be wrong to neglect shines forth from within the fantasy world [*la fantasmatique*] of what people call masochism.

While conceptualizing masochism as the result of one of the most central instincts, analysts are undoubtedly in agreement that
539 masochistic jouissance essentially requires one not to go beyond a certain point when it comes to physical abuse. Now certain features of this jouissance, when they are highlighted, are, I believe, such as to enlighten us as regards at least a middle register [*médium*] of this jouissance, in which we can recognize the relationship between the subject and the Other's discourse.

Indeed, it suffices to have had a masochist confide in you – or to have read any of the numerous writings that are devoted to masochism, some decent ones having come out again just recently – to recognize that an essential dimension of masochistic jouissance lies in the specific sort of passivity experienced by the subject: he enjoys thinking that his fate is being decided in some upper echelon, by a certain number of people who are around him and who debate his fate in his presence as if he were not there. Isn't this one of the most salient and perceptible dimensions of the masochist's jouissance? The subject himself emphasizes this as one of the constituent features of masochistic relationships.

In short, nothing allows us to better grasp the fact that the subject is constituted as a subject in discourse than this fantasy in which discourse itself is lit up, explicit, and revealed. The possibility that this discourse may view the subject as nil [*néant*] is taken to extremes here.

We find here one of the first steps – a step, good Lord, that is rather important, since it is starting from it that a certain number of symptomatic manifestations will develop – a step from which we can see the following relationship sketch itself out on the horizon: the relationship there may be between the death instinct, considered to be one of the most central instances, and what in discourse gives us a prop without which we cannot accede to the death instinct – namely, the cut – a prop of nonbeing, the latter being one of the earliest, constitutive, and implicit dimensions which is at the root of all symbolization.

For a whole year, the one I devoted to Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* [Seminar II], I explained that the true function of symbolization must be located in the foundation of the cut. A cut is that by which the current of an early tension, whatever it may be, is taken up into a series of alternatives that inaugurate what one might call the most basic machine. This machine is precisely what we rediscover in a detached and isolated form at the core of schizophrenia. In schizophrenia, the subject identifies with the very discordance between this machine and his life-sustaining [*vital*] current. 540

We are putting our finger here – I am pointing this out in passing – in an exemplary way, which is both radical and altogether accessible, on one of the most eminent forms of the function of *Verwerfung* [foreclosure]. Assuming that the cut is both constitutive of discourse and irremediably external to it, one can say that the subject is *verworfen* [foreclosed] insofar as he identifies with the cut. It is because of this that he apprehends himself and perceives himself to be real.

Here I am merely indicating to you another form of Descartes' "I am thinking, therefore I am," a form that is, naturally, articulated and explored quite differently than in Descartes' work, but that I do not view as fundamentally distinct from his. What we have in addition to the Cartesian dimension is that the discourse in which the subject participates escapes him [*lui échappe*], and he is [divided in] two unbeknownst to himself. Insofar as he is the cut in this discourse, the subject is at the pinnacle of an "I am" whose singular property is to get its bearings [*se saisir*] in a reality that is truly the last reality in which a subject can get his bearings – namely, in the possibility of cutting the discourse somewhere, of providing punctuation.

The subject's essential being lies in this property. For the only real intrusion that he radically brings to the world as a subject nevertheless excludes him from it.

The upshot being that it will require, on the basis of all of his other life-sustaining relations, every detour that we analysts are aware of in order for the *I* to become reintegrated into the world.

2

Last time I spoke briefly about the way things work for neurotics.

As I said, for neurotics, the problem involves the paternal metaphor – that is, the fiction, whether real or not, of he who enjoys the object in peace. At what cost? At the cost of something perverse.

541 I also said that the paternal metaphor actually masks a metonymy. Behind the metaphor of the father as a subject of the law [or: law-abiding subject, *sujet de la loi*], as a peaceful possessor of jouissance, the metonymy of castration is hidden.

If you examine it closely, you will see that the son's castration is but the consequence or equivalent of the father's castration here. All the primitive myths that underpin Freud's myth of the [primal] father indicate this sufficiently: prior to the establishment of the heavenly monarchy, Cronos castrates Uranus, and Zeus castrates Cronos.

The metonymy in question is based, in the final analysis, on the fact that there is never just one phallus in the game. And this is precisely what must not be seen in neurotic structure. The neurotic can only be the phallus in the name of the Other [or: on the Other's behalf, *au nom de l'Autre*]. He does not have it – this is, as everyone knows, what we call the castration complex. There is thus someone who has the phallus, someone upon whom the neurotic's being depends. But if no one has the phallus, the neurotic has it still less, naturally.

What is the neurotic's desire?

As the entire development of Freud's work indicates, the neurotic is altogether dependent on the signifier's good faith. The neurotic latches on to this mythical guarantee in order to live in something other than a permanent state of vertigo. Moreover, as everyone knows, there is a close, historical relationship between Freud's anatomy of this desire and the characteristics of the era in which we live and about which we cannot know to what form of human – vaguely predicted by prophets of various ilks – it will lead or stumble.

This allows us to arrive at a condensed formulation, which in a certain way summarizes what I would like to convey to you: the neurotic's desire is, I would say, what is born when there is no God.

This is tangible in our practice as long as we do not hesitate to articulate it. But don't put words in my mouth; don't say that I am saying the situation is simpler when there is a God. I am saying that the suspension of the supreme Guarantor is what the neurotic hides within himself, and that it is at this level that the neurotic's desire is situated, stops, and is in abeyance.

The neurotic's desire is a desire only on the horizon of all of his behaviors. Indeed, if I can relay to you one of those formulations that allow you to recognize the style of a behavior, I would say that, 542
with regard to the desire in which he situates himself, the neurotic is always on his own horizon and preparing his own advent.

If you will allow me an expression that is modeled on all sorts of things we see in everyday life, the neurotic is always busy packing his bags or examining his conscience – it's the same thing – or organizing his labyrinth – that's the same thing, too. He gathers his bags, he forgets some of them or he checks them at the baggage checkroom, but they amount to nothing more than luggage for a trip he will never take.

This is an absolutely essential point to consider if we wish to realize that – notwithstanding what lazy thinking proposes, thinking that inches along the edge of the phenomenon like a snail, without ever trying to get a bird's eye view of it – there is a very distinct contrast to be made between the structure of the neurotic's desire and the structure of the pervert's desire.

There is a gap for the pervert too, of course. He, too, represents his being in the cut, since this is the fundamental subjective relationship. The only question is thus to know how this cut is experienced and borne by the pervert.

Here we can assuredly take into account work done by analysts over the years, insofar as their experience with perverse patients has allowed them to articulate theories which, although they sometimes contradict each other or fit together badly, are nevertheless suggestive of the type of difficulty they deal with. We can speak of it as material that, in and of itself, betrays certain structural necessities, necessities which are precisely those that we are trying to formulate here. I will thus say that the attempt we are making here to establish the real function of desire can include everything up to and including the discrete delusion, and even the well-organized delusion, to which certain analysts have been led who have broached the topic from the angle of behavior.

I will give you an example. I think that, overall, no one currently has more to say about perversion than a man who is very discreet and funny – I am talking about William H. Gillespie. To those who 543
read English, I recommend they peruse the following articles, all of which came out in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, and from which they will learn a great deal: Gillespie's first paper on the topic, "A Contribution to the Study of Fetishism" (1940); then his "Notes on the Analysis of Sexual Perversions" (1952); and finally his most recent article, "The General Theory of Sexual Perversion" (1956).

One gets the impression that the author is a free spirit who gauges rather well the different directions from which people have attempted to broach perversion. Perversion is, naturally, far more complex than one might imagine when one confines one's attention to the summary view that it is the drive nakedly showing itself, and that's it. Which is not, for all that, to lend credence to the approach that tends to lump perversion and neurosis together.

I will go straight to what must be expressed, and which will henceforth serve us as a landmark for examining perversion in certain ways.

The notion of splitting* [in French, *refente*] is essential to Gillespie's conception of perversion. We could applaud him for this – but don't believe that I am going to rush to do so – believing that his conception overlaps the function in which I teach you to recognize the subjective component of fantasy: the subject's identification with the slit [*fente*] or cut provided by discourse. It just so happens that the type of precipitation implied by this recognition has already led certain writers who have studied perversion to insights of which they were a bit ashamed.

In order to corroborate this, I need but refer to the third case Gillespie discusses in the second of his articles. I will briefly depict the patient for you. He is a thirty-year-old fetishist. In the course of his analysis, it comes out that his fantasy is to be split in two by his mother's teeth while he penetrates her, she suddenly changing "into a hairy gorilla-like creature." The creature's cutting edge, as it were, is represented by the fact that "she bites off his female nipples," which he turns out to have; and [in another fantasy] she kicks him, her shoe "splitting up his anus and rectum" [p. 75].

In short, there is a whole decomposition/recomposition that goes
544 on here, Gillespie relating it to what he calls castration anxiety, including his mother's demand [that he be a girl] or regret [that he wasn't], and identification with the female genitalia as split. This identification, which grows out of one of Melanie Klein's theories, is not, I must say, demonstrated in this case; it is simply assumed by the analyst at the end of the analysis.

Gillespie concludes with a sort of insight or intuition that is only half-owned, it remaining a question for him. This is, in my view, indicative of the extremes to which he – someone who attentively followed the way the explanation, that only analysis was able to give, of the deepest recesses of perverse structure has developed over the course of time – was led. Gillespie writes, "The configuration of the material at this point led me to a speculation about the phantasy associated with the split ego" [p. 75].

As I believe you know, Freud died before he could complete his

article *Die Ichspaltung*, "The Splitting of the Ego." The article was found after his death and it led Gillespie to speculate about the connection between the split ego and the split object.

Gillespie asks:

> Is not the female genital the split object *par excellence*, and cannot the phantasy of a split ego arise from an identification with this split genital? I am aware that when we speak of splitting of the ego and of the object we are referring to mental mechanisms which we assume to underlie the phenomena,

– he is essentially telling us that we are doing science here and are working with scientific concepts –

> and that phantasies pertain to a different level of discourse. [p. 75]

Here the type of question that Gillespie raises becomes interesting:

> [N]evertheless, phantasies, our own no less than our patients', must always play a part in the way we conceptualise these underlying processes. It seems to me, therefore, that the phantasy of being oneself split in pieces just as the vulva is split may 545
> well be very relevant to the mental mechanism of splitting of the object and introjection of the split object, leading to splitting of the ego. It is implicit, of course, in such a phantasy of the vulva as a split object that it was once intact, and that the splitting is the result of a sadistic attack, whether by the father or by oneself. [p. 75]

We cannot fail to be struck by such considerations, coming as they do from someone as prudent and measured as Gillespie. It is clear that he allows himself to go as far as his thought can take him when he reduces the explanation he gives of the subject's personality structure to a sort of primordial identificatory schema, that of splitting. His whole article is devoted to this, not just this one particular case.

Splittings,* which are what are often today called "divisions in the personality,". are in effect tangible and come apart in the transference with perverts. Nevertheless, to model the division of the pervert's personality on the two flaps of an organ from which fantasy life originates strikes me as laughable if not disconcerting.

What we find here under the heading of splitting,* and which must be grasped, in extremely different forms, at every level of the

pervert's personality formation, is something I have already indicated – for example, in the article I devoted to the case of André Gide, a writer who was so remarkably studied by Jean Delay.

3

In the case of André Gide, splitting* presents itself in the form of an opposition between two identificatory sections, one of which is specifically linked to his narcissistic image of himself, *i(a)*, and the other to his mother.

This illustrious patient tells us this in a thousand different ways in his work, and we must undoubtedly take the importance of his literary work into account, for it adds something to the subject's stability.

But it is not about this topic that I would like to fully elaborate
546 what I am indicating to you. As the time left to us this year is almost gone, I must prime the pump a bit and propose a few little things designed to show you what our work here this year now allows us to broach.

In the very title of my article on Gide, I foregrounded a relationship that is especially salient in his case, the one that the schema of fantasy spells out between desire and the letter. What does this mean? It means that we must situate the process of sublimation, assuming we wish to give the term "sublimation" a suitable meaning, in the reconversion of desire into a production involving symbols – which is not the supra-reality people think it is. It is, on the contrary, essentially made up of shards of reality, of the latter's decomposition into signifying parts. Sublimation, I am saying, lies in the reconversion of desire's impasse into signifying materiality.

There is no doubt but that Gide deserves to be situated in the category of subjects who raise the problem of homosexuality for us. And what do we see in his case, if not the twofold relationship between the subject and a divided object?

On the one hand, the object is narcissistic, the reflection of this ungracious – or even "disgraced," as a certain writer put it – boy that Gide was early on. In his furtive relations with narcissistic objects, the presence of the phallus is essential. It is in this regard that Gide is homosexual.

Nevertheless, and it is to Jean Delay's credit to have shown this to us in his biography of Gide, it is altogether impossible to focus on one of the sexual anomalies of Gide as a subject without juxtaposing it with what Gide himself attested to with the following formulation:

"No one can imagine the love of an Uranist." What is at issue here is his hyper-idealized love for his wife.

Its origins are very clearly spelled out by Delay, and I had no trouble at all bringing them together and highlighting everything that connects this love to his relationship with his mother. It is not solely a question of the real mother as we know her, but of the mother insofar as she harbors within herself a structure whose true nature we will try to detect. I will immediately say that the presence – I would go even further and say the topography – of the bad object is essential to that structure.

I cannot dwell here on each point of Gide's history, such as his work, at its different stages, lays it out. I will confine my attention to 547
citing the following passages:

> But to show how greatly a child's instinct may go astray, I will mention more particularly two of the themes that gave me physical enjoyment [*jouissance*]: one was furnished me very innocently by George Sand in her charming story of *Gribouille.* Gribouille throws himself into the water one day that it is raining very hard, not to avoid the rain, as his wicked brothers say, but to avoid his brothers, who are laughing at him. For some time, he struggles in the water and tries to swim; then he lets himself go; and as soon as he lets himself go, he floats; then he feels himself becoming tiny, light, odd, vegetable; leaves sprout out of him all over his body; and soon Gribouille turns into a slender, graceful sprig of oak, which the water gently deposits on the bank of the stream. Absurd! But that is my very reason for telling it; I say what is true and not what I think may redound to my credit. No doubt "the grandmother of Nohant" had not the slightest intention of writing anything demoralising; but I bear witness that no schoolboy was ever troubled by any page of *Aphrodite* so much as I – ignorant little boy that I was – by the metamorphosis of Gribouille. [pp. 50–1]

Before returning to this passage, whose importance we must not overlook, I will add the second example that Gide gives us of a fantasy that gave rise to his earliest jouissances:

> There was also a stupid little play of Madame de Ségur's called *Les Dîners de Mademoiselle Justine.* There is a passage in it where the servants take advantage of their masters' absence to have a bout of gormandising; they ransack the cupboards; they gorge themselves with food; then suddenly, as Justine is stooping to lift a pile of plates out of the cupboard, the coachman

> steals up behind her and puts his arm around her waist; Justine is ticklish and drops the pile. Crash! The whole of the crockery is smashed to pieces. This disaster made me swoon with delight. [p. 51]

Could we need anything further to realize in what respect this second fantasy illustrates something that is altogether primordial, which we must articulate in the relationship between the subject and the cut? In such subjects, it is very common that one of the fun-
548 damental fantasies of their first masturbatory experiences is also a fantasy involving a verbal revelation. I might mention, for example, a subject whose fantasy revolved around an actual sexual initiation.

In the first of Gide's fantasies, the relationship that is revealed of the subject to something detached, which progressively blossoms, presents us with the realm of the subject's identification with the phallus, inasmuch as the phallus emerges from his fantasizing about an object inside his mother. This is a structure that is commonly encountered and demonstrated by a hundred different psychoanalytic case studies, such that no analyst could refuse to recognize it. But it is not enough to see that an identification, representing one of the subject's first erotic experiences, is caught up in the fantasy and propped up by it. We must figure out what sort of identification we are talking about here.

In the neurotic's metonymy, the subject is, as I have said, the phallus – ultimately, in other words, at a point he can only reach in the receding perspective of his symptoms – only insofar as he does not have it. This is what must not be revealed. The upshot is that as the analysis proceeds, his castration anxiety grows.

In perversion, on the other hand, there is something that we might call a reversal of the proof process. What must be proven by the neurotic – namely, the continued existence of his desire – becomes the basis of the proof in perversion. The latter in some sense restores to its place of honor what is known in analysis as a *reductio ad absurdum*.

For the pervert, in effect, a conjunction is made that unites "he is it" and "he has it" into a single term. For this it is enough that there be a slight opening that allows for a very specific identification with the Other – namely, that "he has it" be in this case "she has it." This "she" is the object with whom he first identified. He will have the phallus – whether this object has transformed into a fetish, in one case, or into an idol, in the other. We have here the wide range of forms taken by homosexual love, from the fetishistic form to the idolatrous form illustrated by Gide.

A bond is established, if I may put it thus, in the natural medium

[or: prop, *support*]. Perversion presents itself as a sort of natural simulation of the cut. It is here that Gillespie's intuition serves us as a sort of index. What the subject does not have, he has through [or: 549
in, *dans*] the object. What the subject is not, his ideal object is. In short, a certain natural relationship is taken up as material for the subjective split which, in perversion as in neurosis, must be symbolized. The subject is the phallus qua object within the mother, and he has it in [or: possesses it via] the object of his desire.

This is more or less what we see in male homosexuals. What about female homosexuals? Recall the case of the so-called young homosexual woman, which we analyzed here in comparing it to the case of Dora. What happens at the turning point at which Freud's young patient runs headlong toward homosexual idealization? She is clearly the phallus, but in what respect?

What is at stake there is also the phallus as an object within the mother. This can be seen very clearly when, at the climax of the crisis, she throws herself over the guardrail onto the railroad tracks below. Freud sees an identification with this maternal attribute in this *niederkommen* [to deliver or give birth]. In falling like an object, she makes herself into the phallus. Her suicide attempt constitutes a supreme effort to give the phallus to her idol. More precisely, by giving what she does not have – namely, the phallus that is the object of her adoration – to the odd character who is the object of her homosexual love, she raises this person to new heights of idealization.

I am proposing this as a structure. You will find it in every case, if you take the trouble to study it – not only in perversion in general, but especially in homosexuality.

It is of course relevant to object that this form is extremely polymorphous, all the more so in that the ordinary use of the term "homosexuality" leads us to subsume under it I don't know how many varied forms that experience presents us with. It is certainly legitimate to include all sorts of peripheral, intermediary forms between perversion and psychosis, let us say, such as drug addiction or other forms in our nosographic field. But wouldn't it be of interest, after all, to situate something that could constitute the crux of homosexuality in terms of perversion?

Let us take our bearings, for example, from what I tried to formulate last time as the point on which the neurotic's desire for desire is based. I said that it is thanks to the relationship between the ego and the image of the other that a whole game of substitutions can be established in which the neurotic never has to put what is at stake 550
– namely, that he is the phallus, that is, clearly $\Phi\Diamond i(a)$ – to the test. Well, in homosexuality I will say that what we are dealing with is

the relationship between the primal, symbolic identification, I, and narcissistic, specular identification, *i(a)*.

In homosexuals, there is already a schism in the subject that is traced out between I – his first identificatory, symbolic accession to the primordial relationship with his mother – and his first *Verwerfungen* [foreclosures]. This is connected to the subject's second identification, his imaginary identification with his specular form, *i(a)*. And this is what the subject uses to symbolize the term in which he inscribes himself insofar as he intervenes in the fantasized relationship, the term that, following Gillespie, I call "split."

In neurotics, the Other's desire frightens the subject, the subject feeling that he is the one who runs all the risks. In homosexuals, on the other hand, the Other's desire finds its symbol, having emerged from the mother, in the phallus, which is the essential signifying element here, the center around which the whole of the pervert's construction gets organized. Which means that, in his case, the Other's desire is what is the farthest removed and hardest to access. This is what makes for the depth and difficulty of the analyses of childhood experience that have allowed us to proffer constructions and speculations related especially to the subject's earliest object identifications.

Had Gide offered himself up at his own expense to psychoanalytic exploration, nothing says that it could have been taken far enough. In any case, he did not do so. His analysis occurred only in a so-called sublimated dimension. But, as superficial as it was, it nevertheless gives us strange hints about his relationship to the object. There is one in particular with which I will close today.

It concerns something that appears to be a little behavioral quirk. To the best of my knowledge, no one has given it much consideration, whereas its symptomatic accent is almost a dead giveaway as to what is at issue – namely, what lies beyond the mother figure, or, more precisely, her inside, her very heart. For what lies at the heart of the earliest identification is found anew at the foundation of the perverse subject's very structure.

Desire is on the horizon of all of the neurotic's demands, which are deployed at length and are literally interminable. By way of contrast, desire "is at the heart" of all of the pervert's demands and, in reading that desire as it unfolds, it indisputably appears tied to
551 aesthetic requirements. But what is most striking is the modulation of the successive themes around which it unfolds.

How can we fail to feel transported to the furthest reaches of fragmenting experience when – right from the first lines of the volume [*If It Die . . .*], and on the first six or seven pages – Gide's fragmented, kaleidoscopic vision appears? But there is more. At a certain

moment, Gide has a certain perception that he articulates in the notion that, no doubt, "there is reality and there are dreams," but "there is *another* reality as well" [p. 20]. Further on, he recounts the so-called story of the knot in a wooden door. This is what I would like to get at. It is the tiniest of hints, but for us, as everyone knows, these are the most important ones.

In a wooden door somewhere in the town of Uzès, there is a hole because a knot was removed from it. And the young Gide is told that at the bottom of the hole is a little marble that his father slipped in there when he was Gide's age. Gide then tells us, to the admiration of those interested in character, that he spent the whole of the next year letting the nail on his pinky grow so it would be long enough to extract the little marble from the hole in the wood.

When he managed to do so, he found that he had in hand nothing more than a grayish object that he would be ashamed to show anyone [pp. 46–7]. This led him to put it back in its place, cut his fingernail, and not talk about it to anyone – except to us, posterity, who have immortalized this story.

It would, I think, be difficult to find a better introduction to the notion of the object, an object that is, in the final analysis, rejected through a magnificent *Sublimierung* [sublimation]. It is clearly the form in which the perverse subject's relationship to the internal object presents itself. For the object that he tracks down with perseverance is an object at the heart of the Other.

The imaginary dimension of the Other's desire – his mother's desire in this case – which is primordial in nature, plays the central, decisive, symbolizing role here; this allows us to postulate that at the level of desire, the pervert identifies with the imaginary form of the phallus.

It is on this topic that next week I will give the last class of the year.

June 24, 1959

CONCLUSION AND OVERTURE

XXVII

TOWARD SUBLIMATION

Critique of so-called reality
Defending the dimension of desire
The inexorability of the real
Reducing drives to signifiers
Perversion's value as a protest

We have now arrived at the end of a year that I have devoted, at my risk as much as yours, to desire and its interpretation.

The question that preoccupied me, and that I have continued to work on without deviating from it, was, as you may have noticed, that of the place of desire in the economy of psychoanalytic experience. I believe, in fact, that the specific interpretation of any desire must begin from there.

It has not been easy to pinpoint the place of desire. Today, by way of conclusion, I would simply like to mention the cardinal points that can help us situate the function of desire, such as I have spelled it out this year, in a way that I hope conveyed its importance to you.

1

At the point in analytic history at which we find ourselves, and which began already about twenty years ago, the case studies that people enjoy publishing concern cases that, compared to the typical neuroses found in the older psychoanalytic literature, involve "neurotic character" [*caractères névrotiques*] – that is, cases that are situated at the very edge of neurosis.

We find this constantly, and it can be seen in almost any modern psychoanalytic text you care to open.

I read a number of them recently, in order to be up to speed, and the question I would raise concerns how the subjects we meet with in

analysis are broached. Where is psychoanalytic thinking at concern-
556 ing what constitutes the crux of the progress implied by experience? Well, in short, one might say that with a surprising consistency, and almost regardless of which school an analyst gets his watchwords from, psychoanalysis is currently dominated by object relations. Everything is converging on object relations.

Among the organizing poles of psychoanalytic thought that structure research today, object relations is most closely connected to Melanie Klein's work. It is true that the inclusion of her notions in such articles seems symptomatic, rather than reflecting the circulation of a theory that has been particularly well thought out. Nevertheless, none of the other contemporary poles of psychoanalytic thought has strayed far from this one, object relations having come to dominate our entire conception of analytic progress.

If this observation is not the least striking of those we could make here, the following is more striking still. When one concretely follows the unfolding of a case study written in order to illustrate any structure whatsoever in our nosological field, one realizes that the analysis seems to be carried out, for at least a certain period of time, along lines that one might well qualify as those of moralizing normalization.

I am not saying that analysts' interventions go directly in this direction – that depends on the case – but this perspective gives analysts their bearings. This can be seen in the very way in which analysts articulate the particularities of a subject's position with respect to those around him, with respect to the object he deals with. The subject is always situated with respect to a supposedly normal way of approaching other people, and it is in comparison with this normal way that analysts gauge the deficiencies of their patients' apprehension of the object. Analysts' minds dwell essentially on deterioration in the dimension of the other, an other who is always mapped as being forever neglected, forgotten, ousted from his position as an independent, autonomous subject, and stripped of his status as a pure, absolute other. And that's it. In every case, analysts' attention is entirely focused on the patient's ability (or lack thereof) to appreciate other people in all their depth and autonomy.

What is most striking is not so much this mapping, with all the cultural presuppositions it entails, for it is no worse than any other, after all. It is the implicit rallying of analysts to what one might call
557 a system of values, which, although it is implicit, is nevertheless present.

At the beginning of an analysis, we see the analyst talk at length with the subject about the inadequacies of his affective apprehension of other people. Next we see some sort of turning point in the

concrete analysis, unless it simply reflects haste on the analyst's part to summarize what seems to him to be the final key to the analysis. In any case, we generally see the essentially moralizing discussion of the case suddenly slip into the background, and note that the final explanation of the patient's problems involves a series of extremely early identifications, which, regardless of what they are called, are always more or less directly linked to the notion of good and bad objects, internalized or interjected objects, or externalized,* projected objects.

To have recourse to such early identifications always betrays a certain Kleinian penchant on the analyst's part. It sometimes happens that this penchant is masked by the highlighting of the sources of the patient's fixations, which are designated using older terms, borrowed from drive theory – people say, for example, that in such and such a case, oral sadism profoundly impacted the Oedipal relationship. But in order to explain this particularity of the Oedipal drama, analysts always end up referring to something in the realm of early identifications. The entire development of the subjective drama of a neurosis is, after all is said and done, attributed to those identifications, as is the entire development of a perversion.

Now these identifications leave the very notion of subjectivity extremely ambiguous. In such accounts, the subject essentially appears to be an identification with something that he may consider to derive more or less from himself. Therapeutic progress is presented as entailing a rearrangement of these identifications in the course of an experience that appeals to reality as its guiding principle.

Things thus take on an extremely random appearance, because in the final analysis, *the* reality referred to is nothing more than *a* reality, the reality presumed to exist by the analyst. This reality implies – in a form that is still more implicit this time, still more masked, and which can be altogether scabrous – an ideal of normality [*normativité*] that turns the analyst's ideals into the final standard that the patient, in concluding, in an identificatory conclusion, is 558
encouraged to rally around: "I am, in the end, what I recognize to be good in myself. I aspire to conform to an ideal of normality which, although hidden and implicit, is nevertheless the one I recognize, after so many detours, as having been designated for me." The analysis proceeds here by what is tantamount to a subtle set of suggestions; they may be more subtle than other suggestions, but in the end they are still suggestions.

The form of practice that has become organized in this way, through a sort of progressive departure from Freud's recommendations, masks ever more completely the essential question that lies at

its heart, and without which there cannot be, I believe, any accurate assessment of psychoanalytic action – namely, the question of the place of desire. My theorization of desire is designed to foreground – in a way that is not ambiguous, but truly crucial – the notion that what we are dealing with is a subjectivity.

Is desire [the same thing as] subjectivity? This question did not have to await the arrival on the historical stage of psychoanalysis to be raised. It has always been there, since the origin of what one might call "ethical practice." Desire is both subjectivity – it is what is at the very heart of our subjectivity, what is most essentially subjective – and at the same time its opposite, for it opposes subjectivity like a resistance, a paradox, or a rejected, refutable nucleus.

It is on this basis, as I have said several times, that ethics developed in a tradition at the end of which we find Spinoza's enigmatic formulation: "desire, *cupiditas*, is the very essence of man." This formulation is enigmatic inasmuch as it leaves a question unanswered: is what we desire the same as what is desirable?

Even in psychoanalysis, we observe a distance between what is desired and what is desirable. Psychoanalytic practice has been established and formulated on this very basis. Desire is not simply exiled, or pushed away when it comes to action and to the crux of our servitude, as it had been prior to analysis. It is questioned as being the key or the mainspring in us of a whole series of actions and behaviors that are understood to represent what is most profoundly
559 true about us. This is the ideal aim from which analytic practice constantly tends to deviate.

Does this mean that the desire in question is a pure and simple vital impulse, as people thought for a long time? Not at all, since, as soon as we spell out our practice, we find that the more we examine this desire, the less it resembles a pure and simple impulse. Rather, it disintegrates, falls apart, and deviates ever more from anything that might be characterized as a harmonious relationship. In the progressive regression involved in psychoanalytic experience, no desire ever fails to present itself as problematic, dispersed, polymorphous, contradictory, and, in short, far from any oriented coaptation.

We need to set our sights on experience involving desire [*expérience du désir*], which is absolutely original and irreducible. We cannot leave it without exploring it, without producing some theory that gives us a fix on its meaning – whereas, as I have said, everything in the way in which psychoanalytic experience is currently formulated is designed to veil the meaning of desire and to make us turn away from it.

Transference is the only way the pathways toward the object can

be cleared in psychoanalysis. But to define transference as an experience of repetition obtained through regression, which itself depends on frustration, is merely to point to the negative, for it leaves aside the fundamental relationship between frustration and demand. It is only my way of formulating things that allows us to see that, if demand regresses in analysis, it is because – presenting itself there as a developed demand – it remains unanswered.

Analysts today profess to answer it themselves, in a roundabout way, in order to guide their patients toward the object. This gives rise to all kinds of incredible ideas, including that of the "adjustment of the distance" from the object, which I have already critiqued. Although this notion plays a role in the French context above all, it shows clearly enough, all by itself, what sort of contradictory impasse analysis has gotten into by focusing so narrowly on object relations; for every relationship – regardless of what you may say about it, regardless of what it may be, regardless of the normal state it should supposedly conform to – clearly presumes the maintenance of a certain distance. As a matter of fact, we can recognize in this notion an abbreviated and backwards application of several of my considerations on the mirror stage and the narcissistic relationship; they were part of the theoretical baggage of the authors who brought so-called "analytic action" to the fore at a time when they could not situate its place with more encompassing references. 560

In fact, everything that is organized in such terms – relating psychoanalytic experience to something that is supposedly based, in the end, on reality, and takes this reality as the standard of what must be eliminated in the transferential relationship, correlating this eliminating action with the more or less thought-out notion of "ego distortion" [*distorsion du moi*] with reference to what supposedly subsists in the ego that might possibly function as an ally in the endeavor to reduce analysis to a specific reality – does no more than restore the separation between doctor and patient on which the entire classical nosography is based.

In and of itself, this does not constitute an objection; but the ineffectiveness of a subjective therapeutics that is in no way distinguished from pre-analytic psychotherapy does. The patient's experience is delivered over here to the omnipotent norm constituted by the physician's judgment. Although the patient is assuredly taken to be a man like oneself [*semblable*], he is viewed as following the wrong path, with everything that this brings with it as concerns distance and uneliminable misrecognition. The intersubjective structuring that analysis establishes is strictly distinguished from the one that came before, in that, as far from our norms as the patient may be – possibly even verging on psychosis and madness – we assume him to

be our fellow man, to whom we are linked by the bonds of kindness [*charité*] and respect for [those made in] our image.

Such a relationship undoubtedly constituted historical progress in our way of behaving with mental patients. But the decisive step established by psychoanalysis was to consider the patient essentially, owing to his nature, as a speaking subject who, regardless of his position, is caught up – just like we are – in the consequences and risks speech entails.

This perspective suffices to thoroughly change our relations with this passive subject. Indeed, it implies that desire, far from being equatable with the feeling of an obscure and radical pressure [*poussée*], is situated beyond it.

This drive, call, or pressure is only of interest, exists, is defined,
561 and is theorized by Freud inasmuch as it is caught up in the unusual temporal sequence that we call the signifying chain. This chain has a marked impact on everything we deal with, such as pressure. The signifying chain disconnects pressure from everything that defines it and situates it as life-sustaining, rendering it separable from everything that assures its living consistency. The signifying chain makes it possible – as Freud proposes right from the beginning – for the [drive's] pressure to be separated from its source, object, and tendency [or: (pre)disposition, *tendance*], as it were. It is even separated from itself, since it is recognizable in an inverted form in the tendency. This pressure is primitively and primordially decomposable and decomposed, and in short, in a state of signifying decomposition.

Desire is not this sequence. It is a mapping of the subject with respect to this sequence, whereby he is reflected in the dimension of the Other's desire.

Let us take an example. Let us consider the earliest form of it that we find in psychoanalytic experience – namely, the child's relationship to a newborn who enters the family constellation.

What people call in this case an "attack" is not an attack, it is a death wish. As unconscious as we assume it to be, it is something that is expressed as follows: "Would that he die!" [*Qu'il meure !*] And this can only be conceptualized in the register of articulation – in other words, where signifiers exist. The rival semblable is attacked in articulated signifying terms, however primitive we assume them to be, whereas an animal, when he attacks his little semblables, bites them, pushes them, and even shoves them out of the nest in which they are fed. The fact that this early rivalry becomes unconscious [in human beings] is related to the existence of an articulation, as rudimentary as we may assume it to be, whose nature is not essentially different from that of the spoken articulation "Would that he die!"

It is because signifiers are involved here that "Would that he die!" can remain hidden behind "Oh, he's so cute!" or "I love him," which is the later discourse that is superimposed on the earlier one. The desire we deal with is situated in the gap between these two discourses.

We might hypothesize that Melanie Klein's bad object is constituted in this gap. We see now how the rejected drive and the 562
introjected object can converge here in such an ambiguous manner.

But how is their relationship in the gap structured? What form does the imaginary function take on here insofar as it is attached to and reaches the two chains of discourse, the repressed chain and the patent, manifest chain?

In order to know exactly at what level desire is situated, we must now go into this in detail.

2

You may at some point have gotten the impression, or suggested, that my conception of desire here is phallocentric.

It is quite obvious that the phallus plays an essential role in this dialectic. But how can we truly understand its function without the help of the ontological landmarks that I am attempting to introduce?

Let us first see how we can conceptualize Klein's use of the phallus, when she deals with a child's earliest experience.

At a point in time at which a child is caught up in certain developmental difficulties that can, at times, be severe, Klein will immediately interpret the little toy he is holding – with which he touches something else in the course of the play with which the analysis begins – by saying: "That is daddy's penis."

Someone who is not part of her group recounted these experiences to me very faithfully. No one outside her group can fail to be somewhat shocked by the incredibly brutal brazenness of such an interpretation – but still more by the fact that, in the end, it takes. In certain cases the child may resist the interpretation; but if he does, it is assuredly, and Klein does not doubt this, because something is at stake there which must not make us despair that it will not be comprehended later on. And Lord knows that Klein allows herself to repeat her interpretations again and again.

It is clear that the phallic symbol enters into the child's play at this very early stage, as if the subject were merely awaiting it. Klein at times justifies her interpretive use of the phallus by saying that it is simply a nipple that is easier to handle and more convenient, but 563
this is tantamount to begging the question. What justifies such an interpretation in our register can only be expressed in the following

terms: in most cases, the child has only the most indirect experience of this object and accepts it only as a signifier. It is as a signifier that the impact of the phallus is justified most clearly.

We are perhaps doomed to never know whether a child, at his age, takes the phallus to be a signifier or an element of reality. But what is clear is that whenever Klein refers to the phallus, it is because, whether she knows it or not, she has no better signifier of desire at her disposal.

If there is something that the phallus qua signifier signifies, it is desire for the Other's desire [*désir du désir de l'Autre*], and this is why it plays its specific role at the level of the object. Nevertheless, I am far from remaining in the phallocentric position that is attributed to me by those who look only at the outer appearance of what I am in the process of formulating. The true problem lies elsewhere. The true problem is that the object we are dealing with from the outset when it comes to desire is in no wise an object that is predestined to satisfy the instincts, in no wise an object destined to satisfy the subject by serving as his instinctual complement; the object of desire is the signifier of desire for desire [*signifiant du désir du désir*].

The object of desire – in other words, object *a* on the graph, if you will – is actually the Other's desire insofar as it comes to the attention [or: knowledge or consciousness, *connaissance*] – assuming the word has a meaning – of an unconscious subject. Which is to say that the object is in a contradictory position with respect to the unconscious subject; this is indicated by the formulation "consciousness of an unconscious subject." The latter is not at all unthinkable; it remains an open question, which means that, if the object comes to [the attention of] the unconscious subject, it comes there insofar as the object is itself the wish to recognize it, being a signifier of its recognition [*reconnaissance*]. In short, desire has no other object than the signifier of its recognition.

The character of the object qua object of desire must thus be sought out where human experience shows it to us in its most paradoxical form – that of fetishes, as we commonly call them.

Fetishes are always more or less implicit in everything that gen-
564 erally constitutes objects of exchange among people; but they are of course masked there by the regular or regulated nature of these exchanges. People have spoken about commodity fetishism, and it is not simply a homophony, for the two uses of the word "fetish" definitely share a meaning. Nevertheless, when we talk about the object of desire, we must first and foremost emphasize the fact that it is borrowed from signifying material.

"I saw the devil the other night," Paul-Jean Toulet says somewhere, "and when you look under his fur . . ." The poem ends with

"The fruits of Science do not all fall, you see!" Well, let this be the case for us here, too, that they do not all fall – so that we will perceive that it is less the hidden fruits than the mirage, or fur, present in desire that counts. A fetish is in fact the fur, edge, fringe, or frill, the thing that hides, and nothing is better designated to serve the function of signifier of the Other's desire.

Let us start again from the child's relationship to the demanding subject [or: the subject to whom he addresses his demands, *sujet de la demande*]. In this relationship, the child first deals with the mother's desire – in other words, with what the demanding subject truly is apart from demand. Now, the child cannot decipher this desire, if not in the most virtual way, by means of a signifier – a signifier that we analysts, regardless of what we do in our discourse, relate to the phallus as a yardstick [*commune mesure*], a central point of the signifying game here.

The phallus is nothing other than the signifier of the desire for desire. Desire has no other object than the signifier of its recognition. This is what allows us to no longer be dupes of the exchange that occurs at the level of desire, when we realize that the subject has shifted to the other side of the subject/object relationship – namely, that he has become *a*. We must conceptualize the fact that in this position, the subject is no longer anything but the signifier of the recognition of desire, no longer anything but the signifier of desire for desire.

Yet it is important to maintain an opposition, that of $ across from *a*, on the basis of which this exchange occurs. As for the barred subject, he is a subject here who is undoubtedly imaginary, but in the most radical sense, in the sense that he is the pure subject of disconnection or of spoken cuts [*de la coupure parlée*], insofar as such cuts constitute the essential scansions on which speech is built. This 565
subject is grouped here with a signifier that is nothing other than the signifier of the being with whom the subject is confronted, insofar as this being is himself marked by the signifier. As for little *a*, the object of desire, it is a residue or remainder by nature – namely, the residue left by the being with whom the speaking subject is confronted, the remainder of any and every possible demand.

It is in this way that the object meets up with the real; it is in this way that the object shares in it. I am saying "the real" here, not "reality," because reality is constituted by all the halters that human symbolism, more or less perspicaciously, throws around the neck of the real insofar as it fabricates the objects of its experience with it. Let us note that what characterizes objects of experience is precisely that they leave aside – as La Palice would say – everything in the object that is not encompassed by this experience.

This is why, as opposed to what people believe, experience, so-called experience, is a double-edged sword. If, for example, you find yourself in a historical predicament, in resolving it your chances of making mistakes, even serious ones, are just as great if you trust to experience as if you neglect it, for the very simple reason that, by definition, trusting to experience involves overlooking what is new in the present situation.

The object at stake, insofar as it meets up with the real, shares in it in the sense that the real here presents itself as what resists demand, as what I will call the inexorable. The object of desire is what is truly inexorable. If it meets up with the real – the real that I discussed when I analyzed the case of Schreber – it is because it is in the form of the real that it best incarnates this inexorability. The form of the real that is called inexorable is found in the fact that the real always returns to the same place.

This is why, curiously enough, we see the prototype of the real in the heavens. How else can we explain man's interest, at the origin of cultural experience, in an object that is truly the least interesting for any purpose that is vital to him – namely, the stars?

If culture and the subject's position in the realm of desire – inasmuch as his desire is established – are fundamentally instituted in this symbolic structure as such, our interest in the stars is explained
566 by the fact that they are what is the most purely real in all of reality.

Their mapping requires a single condition. With respect to what does the shepherd, in his solitude – the first to begin to observe that which has no other interest than the fact that it always returns to the same place – map it if not to that with which he establishes himself as an object – namely, with respect to a kind of slit?

However primitive you may presume them to be, slits are what allow us to map the real when it returns to the same place.

3

This is what we thus arrive at by positing that the object of desire must be fundamentally defined as the signifier of a relationship that is itself a relationship, and that is thus in some sense endlessly reflected.

If desire is desire for the Other's desire, it begins with the enigma of what the Other's desire actually is. The Other's desire is fundamentally articulated and structured in the subject's relation to speech – in other words, in disconnecting from everything that has to do with mere survival.

This desire is the central, pivotal point of the entire economy we

deal with in analysis. If we fail to locate its function, we are necessarily led to find our bearings only in what is in fact symbolized by the terms "reality," "existing reality," and "social context." When we stick to that dimension, we are led, it seems, to overlook another dimension, the dimension of desire that Freud especially reintegrated into human experience as something that is absolutely essential.

Here certain facts that I have often relied on take on their value, facts that show what analysts' interventions lead to when they attempt to reduce transferential experiences to the current reality – this oh so simple reality, as people say, as if it were not artifice itself – of the analytic session. We must obviously take up whatever the subject experiences, as naturally as can be – and for good reason, because that is what we expect from him – but we must certainly not 567
reduce it to any immediate reality.

I have often emphasized, in different ways, the common characteristic of phenomena that occur whenever analysts' interventions – in an overly insistent and even brutal manner – aim to prove that one of the patient's typical object relations is being repeated in the reality of the analysis. Whereas myriad case studies attest to the regular occurrence of these phenomena, it does not seem that analysts have always identified them.

Whatever the case may be, I will refer once again to the notorious case study that appeared in the *Bulletin des analystes belges* which I have already critiqued once, because it strikingly intersects the article in which Glover attempts to situate the function of perversion in relation to the system of the subject's reality.

In the first case study, the female analyst, when her patient tells her about his fantasy of sleeping with her, literally tells him the following: "You are scaring yourself about something that you know will never happen." This speaks volumes about the style of her analytic interventions. I will not discuss the analyst's personal motives that can be glimpsed here. I will confine my attention to what orients her in her actions, inasmuch as she was being supervised by someone whom I already alluded to today when I spoke about the topic of distance [from the object].

Whatever role panic may have played in this comment on the analyst's part, people will try to justify it as an accurate assessment of the said reality – namely, the relationship between objects in each other's presence. It is clear that this relationship is decisive, because right after the analyst makes this comment, something occurs that is the very topic of the paper: the brutal emergence in the subject of shame that has haunted him, that related to being too tall. Moreover, we find here a whole series of themes akin to those of depersonalization, which must not be underestimated.

This patient was probably not very well diagnosed – he is said to have a phobia, whereas the case definitely suggests traces of paranoid illusions. But what is clear is that what occurs is a neo-formation. The explicit topic of the article is, moreover, what the
568 author refers to as the subject's "transitory perversion" – I am not the one who is saying he had one. For he runs, at a certain point, to a geographic place – a movie theater – where things were arranged in such a way that it was easy for him to observe females urinating, there being a slit in the partition wall between cubicles. This had played absolutely no role in his symptomatology prior to that time.

Now, a similar phenomenon is noted on page 494 of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (XIV, 4 [October 1933]) in Glover's article, "The Relation of Perversion-formation to the Development of Reality-sense." Glover's case is quite similar to the preceding one, in the sense that Glover suggests a diagnosis of paranoia, whereas I would, on the other hand, willingly propose phobia. Interventions on Glover's part – that were undoubtedly similar to those made by the abovementioned analyst – produce an analogous staging of a transitory and occasional perverse explosion. There is no essential difference between the two cases.

This should also be related to an example I emphasized in my paper, "Function and Field of Speech and Language" – namely, Ernst Kris's interpretation of a phobic fear of plagiarizing that a patient of his felt. Kris told him that he was not a plagiarist at all, the patient promptly rushing out of the consulting room and into a restaurant where he asked for a dish of "fresh brains" – to the great joy of his analyst who saw in it a truly significant reaction to his interpretation.

Let us say that this is, in an attenuated form, how the subject's characteristic dimension reacts whenever an analyst's intervention attempts to collapse it, or to compress it into a pure and simple reduction to facts that people refer to as objective, whereas they are merely coherent with the analyst's own biases.

4

If you will be so kind as to allow me to, I will end today with a remark that introduces the place where we analysts must situate ourselves with respect to desire.

This cannot, in fact, work if we do not know how to coherently
569 conceptualize our function with respect to social norms.

If there is a practice that should teach us how problematic social norms are – how much they must be questioned, and how much they

are designed to do something other than adapt [people to reality] – it is clearly psychoanalysis.

In our work with the logical subject, a dimension is revealed to us that is always latent, but also always present, in intersubjective relationships. This dimension, which is that of desire, is found in a relation of interaction and exchange with everything that crystallizes on that basis in social structure. If we know how to take this dimension into account, we should arrive at more or less the following conception.

What I designate by the word "culture" – a word I am not very attached to, not at all, when you come right down to it – is a certain history of the subject in relation to logos. This relation to logos was assuredly able to remain masked over the course of time, and in our era it is difficult not to see what sort of gap it represents and at what distance it is situated with respect to a certain social inertia. This is why Freudianism exists in our time.

Some facet of what we call culture passes over into society. We can provisionally define the relationship between culture and society as a relationship of entropy, inasmuch as what passes over from culture into society always includes a disintegrating function.

What presents itself in society as culture – and which has thus entered, in various guises, into a certain number of stable conditions, which are also latent, that determine the circuits of exchanges within the flock – establishes a movement or dialectic in society that leaves open there the same gap as the one in which we situate the function of desire. It is in this sense that we can posit that the perversion that is produced reflects, at the level of the logical subject, a protest against what the subject undergoes at the level of identification, insofar as identification is the relationship that establishes and organizes the norms of social stabilization of the different functions.

Here we cannot fail to see what relates any structure that is similar to perversion to what Freud enunciates in his article "Neurosis and Psychosis" in the following terms: "It will be possible for the ego to avoid a rupture in any direction by deforming itself, by submitting to encroachments on its own unity and even perhaps by effecting a cleavage or division of itself" [SE XIX, pp. 152–3]. Here Freud provides one of those insights that always make his texts especially illuminating, compared to the more ordinary analytic literature we generally read. "In this way the inconsistencies, eccentricities and follies of men (*Inkonsequenzen, Verschrobenheiten und Narrheiten der Menschen*) would appear in a similar light to their sexual perversions, through the acceptance of which they spare themselves repressions" [p. 153]. 570

Freud is targeting here, in the clearest fashion possible, what

presents itself in our social context as paradoxes, inconsistencies, confusional states, and madness. *Narr* means "court jester" in the fabric of the most common and ordinary social life.

We could say, in short, that something like a circuit is established that alternates between, on the one hand, the conformism, or socially conformist forms, of so-called cultural activity – the term "cultural" truly outdoes itself here, defining everything about culture that is capitalized on and becomes alienated in society – and perversion, on the other hand, inasmuch as perversion represents, at the level of the logical subject, and through a series of gradations, a protest that, with regard to conforming, arises in the dimension of desire, insofar as desire is the subject's relation to his being.

Here we encounter "sublimation," a notorious notion that we will perhaps begin to discuss next year. In truth, nothing better justifies what I am in the process of endeavoring to propose than Freud's notion of sublimation.

What exactly is sublimation? What can it be, if we define it, as Freud does, as "a sexual activity insofar as it is desexualized"? How can we even conceptualize such a thing, when what is involved no longer includes a source, a direction of the tendency, or an object, involving instead the very nature of what is called, in this case, the energy invested.

In order to grasp to what degree this notion is problematic, I think it suffices to read an article by Glover in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* in which he broaches the topic of sublimation, with
571 the critical concerns that are uniquely his. This notion remains problematic, unless we define it as the very form into which desire flows. What Freud in fact indicates is that this form can be emptied of the sexual drive; or, more precisely stated, that the drive, far from being equatable with the substance of sexual relations, is this very form. Put differently, the drive can ultimately be reduced to the pure play of the signifier. Which is how we can define sublimation as well.

Sublimation, as I wrote somewhere, is that by which desire and the letter can be equated. Here – at a point as paradoxical as perversion is, perversion being understood in its most general form as what in human beings resists all normalization – we can see a discourse being produced, a process apparently starting from nothing [*élaboration à vide*] that we call sublimation, and which is, in both its nature and its products, distinct from the social value it will later be granted. The difficulties we find in attaching the notion of social value to the term "sublimation" are especially well brought out in the article by Glover that I mentioned.

Sublimation is thus truly placed at the level of the logical subject, where everything that is, strictly speaking, creative work in the

realm of logos is established and unfolds. On that basis, cultural activities – with all the impacts and risks they involve, up to and including the revamping of formally established conformisms and even their explosion – come more or less to be inserted into society, finding their place at the social level.

To situate at its proper and organizing level what is at stake in desire, we could, at least provisionally, point to the closed circuit constituted by the four terms on the graph: *d*, ($◊*a*), S(Ⱥ), and ($◊D).

The problem we arrive at here is the same one I left you with last year in the paper I gave at the Royaumont Congress, "Direction of the Treatment."

The subject's desire, qua desire for desire, opens out onto the cut or pure being, manifested in Ⱥ in the form of lack. In the end, what desire does the subject confront in analysis if it is not the analyst's desire? It is precisely for this reason that it is so necessary that we 572
remain mindful of this dimension regarding the function of desire.

Psychoanalysis is not a simple reconstruction of the past, nor is it a reduction to pre-established norms; analysis is neither an epos nor an ethos. If I had to compare it to something, it would be to a narrative that would itself be the locus of the encounter at stake in the narrative.

The problem of analysis resides in the paradoxical situation in which we find the Other's desire that the subject must encounter – that is, our desire, which is only too present in what the subject assumes we are asking from him. Indeed, the Other's desire, which for us is the subject's desire, must not be guided toward our desire but toward an other. We help ripen the subject's desire for someone other than ourselves. We find ourselves in the paradoxical position of being desire's matchmakers, or its midwives – those who preside over its advent.

How can we occupy such a position? It can only be occupied by maintaining an artifice which is that of the whole of the fundamental rule of psychoanalysis. But what is the final mainspring of this artifice? As always, it is both the most trivial and yet the most hidden truth.

Psychoanalysis is undoubtedly a situation in which the analyst agrees to let all demands be addressed to him without responding to any of them. But is the mainspring of our presence found solely in the fact that we do not respond (it being clear that our not responding is far from absolute)? Must we not leave room for an element that is immanent in the situation and recurs at the end of each session? I mean the empty space [*vide*] to which our desire must be confined, the place that we leave for desire so that it can situate itself there – in short, the cut.

The cut is undoubtedly the most effective mode of psychoanalytic

interpretation. Many analysts would like to make it mechanical and subject it to a preordained length of time. Well, I not only cut sessions altogether differently, but I add that it is one of the most effective methods of intervening. Let us emphasize this and develop it.

That said, let us not forget the presence, in this cut, of what we have learned to identify as the phallic object, which is latent in every relationship involving demand as the signifier of desire.

573 In closing today, and to remind you of something that will be a sort of pre-announcement of what I will talk about in class next year, I would like to conclude with a sentence that I will propose to you as an enigma. We shall see if you are any better at deciphering spoonerisms than the myriad visitors I have tested.

In a journal entitled *Phantômas* that came out in Brussels around 1953–4, the poet Désiré Viardot proposed a little hermetic enigma, and we shall see if someone in the audience can immediately find the key: "Women have a mark of fancy on their skin" [*La femme a dans la peau un grain de fantaisie*].

This mark [or: touch] of fancy is assuredly what is at stake, in the final analysis, in what modulates and models the relations of the subject on the person to whom he addresses his demands, whoever that may be. And it undoubtedly plays a role in the fact that we discovered the horizon of the subject who contains everything in the form of the universal Mother.

This is what makes it such that we can at times be mistaken about the subject's relation to the All, believing that it will be delivered up to us by analytic archetypes, whereas it is something else altogether that is involved – namely, the gap that opens out onto something radically new that is introduced by any and every cut based on speech.

Here it is not from women alone that we must wish for this touch of fancy – or this "touch of poetry" [*grain de poésie*] – it is from psychoanalysis itself.

July 1, 1959

APPENDIX

MARGINALIA ON THE SEMINAR ON DESIRE

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Some useful references,
along with associations that came to mind
by Jacques-Alain Miller.

I Constructing the Graph

4. Fairbairn
Nowadays, when you come across a name like Fairbairn that you do not know, you look it up on Wikipedia and you find a solid article which, even to someone like me who knew him, is informative. There is a photo of him in uniform, but my impression is that it must be of someone who has the same name as him, the Lieut. Col. William E. Fairbairn [the photo has since been taken down]. In this case, I will simply provide the Wikipedia article [Miller provides the article found at https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Ronald_Dodds_Fairbairn; the English-language Wikipedia site is far more extensive.]

After the entry, references are provided. His *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality* was published in 1952 by Tavistock and republished in paperback* in 1994 (under the Routledge imprint in the United States and Canada). 576

6. Roses and lilies [*Les roses et les lys*]
Do a Google search for these words and you find a Wikipedia article about a song written in honor of Henry IV. The song is entitled *Vive Henri IV!* and is said to have been "long popular in France." In the second stanza, added in 1770, one finds the following simplistic verses:

Comme nos pères
Chantons en vrais amis

Au choc des verres
Les roses et les lys.

[Let us sing – as true friends, just like our fathers did, clinking our glasses – to roses and lilies.]

What sorts of examples can we find of what Lacan calls "figurative poetry"? The simplest are the *Blasons du corps féminin.*

6. John Donne

Your turn to look up Donne. I could write at length about the man and his work. At Janson-de-Silly high school, I had an excellent English teacher by the name of Kerst, who wrote some fine textbooks. He had no compunction about making us read, translate, and comment on a poem by Donne entitled *The Flea*, one of the funniest and most erotic poems I have ever read. That gave me a taste for Donne and he remains my favorite English poet. When I met Lacan, I was happy that he knew and liked Donne's work. The fact that Lacan's theory accounts for what I had always experienced – namely, the strong libidinal content of signifying subtleties – played an important role in rallying me to his ideas. I very much admired Jean Fuzier's translation of Donne's poems into French.

577 6. The physical theory of love as opposed to the ecstatic theory of love

Here Lacan follows the work of Pierre Rousselot, *Pour l'Histoire du problème de l'amour au Moyen Age* [*The Problem of Love in the Middle Ages: A Historical Contribution* (Milwaukee WI: Marquette University Press, 2002)], Rousselot having invented this distinction. Those who believe in the physical – that is, natural – conception of love base love on "the natural propensity beings have to seek their own good." Those who believe in the ecstatic conception of love juxtapose love for others with selfish inclinations; to their way of thinking, the more love places the subject "outside of himself," the more closely it corresponds to its concept.

Rousselot was a Jesuit and was Henri de Lubac's teacher. I heard about Rousselot's work through Lacan, but I already knew Lubac from his *Drame de l'humanisme athée* ["Drama (or Tragedy) of Atheistic Humanism"]. François Regnault had me read his treatise on the four meanings of the Scriptures, and gave me Lubac's *La Postérité spirituelle de Joachim de Fiore* [Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2014 (1979–81)] for my birthday. Such admirable scholars! The tragedy of my own atheistic humanism is that I do not appeal to Jesuits. They flocked to Lacan but have deserted me, holding me responsible for Lacan's drift toward logic. Gentlemen, this is a false

and absurd notion, rotten to the core, but as André Maurois, who is quoted in the *Robert* dictionary under the heading *faux* [false], once said, "nothing is more difficult to refute than what is completely false."

7–8. Aristotle on brutishness [or: beastiality]; Spinoza and desire; Lalande's *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie* [a dictionary]
Look them up yourselves! "Charming Lalande" suggests that Lacan knew him. I know nothing about it. And in my day, people did not read his dictionary.

9. Rauh and Revault d'Allonnes
Check them out yourself.

11. The stimulus-response cycle
People spent a lot of time thinking about this back then. Someone could write a book on its history, and perhaps has already done so. There is, in any case, a well-known book by Canguilhem, *La Formation du concept de reflexe aux XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles* (Paris: 578
PUF, 1955; it was republished by Vrin in Paris in 1994). Regarding the reflex arc in Lacan's work, one should at least be familiar with (1) *Der Aufbau des Organismus*, by Kurt Goldstein [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1934; *The Organism: A Holistic Approach to Biology Derived from Pathological Data in Man* (New York: Zone Books, 1995)], and (2) Merleau-Ponty's second thesis, *The Structure of Behavior*, which was first published by PUF in 1942 [Boston: Beacon Press, 1963]. Lacan never stopped reformulating his notions about this.

11. Three is the minimum number of terms
Lacan is thinking of the schema found in *The Meaning of Meaning*, by I. A. Richards and C. K. Ogden (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1945 [1923]).

12. The graph
In Lacan's earlier work, see Seminar V where Lacan introduces the first stage of the graph; in his later work, see the article in which he finalizes his conception four years later: "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious," *Écrits*, pp. 671–702. As Lacan himself indicates, this article, which summarized the remarks he made in 1960 at the famous colloquium in Royaumont which was in theory designed to make his ideas known outside of the circle of his students, was not published as

planned, and was not made known to the public or to myself until 1966 with the publication of *Écrits*.

15. Jacques Cazotte's *The Devil in Love*
The Wikipedia.fr article on Cazotte, who died by the guillotine, is excellent. Nevertheless, it fails to mention the following: the very fine text by Nerval on Cazotte in *Les Illuminés*, which one must read; the preface by Nodier on Cazotte in his edition of the *Contes* [Tales]; Breton's preface to the 1954 edition of *Melmoth ou l'Homme errant* (published by Pauvert); Bastien's 1816–17 edition of the *Oeuvres badines et morals, historiques et philosophiques*, which was the first complete edition of the work with the exception of two brochures written on the occasion of the *Querelle des Bouffons*. I was familiar with Cazotte's work, and had read *The Devil in Love*, before meeting
579 Lacan, through Nerval, Nodier, and Breton, and through a book that became very well known by Max Milner, *Le Diable dans la littérature française, de Cazotte à Baudelaire, 1772–1861*, which I purchased at Corti's bookshop which I would stop by at after school at Louis-le-Grand. A textbook published by Hatier in 1984 continued the study from Cazotte to Gracq. Pierre Castex, in his *Anthologie du conte fantastique français* (Paris: Corti, 1963), considers Cazotte to be "the true inventor of modern fantastical literature." Borges wrote a preface for the edition of *The Devil in Love* that came out in *La Bibliothèque de Babel*; it is intelligently discussed by Ricardo Romero Rozas in *Jorge Luis Borges et la littérature française* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2011), which I have in the form of an e-book. Many different editions of *The Devil in Love* are available today.

16. The "bar"
See *Écrits*, pp. 414–17.

17. *Hilflosigkeit*
On this topic, see Freud's *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*, and Lacan's Seminar X.

18. *Urbild*
This term is repeatedly found in Lacan's earliest texts and Seminars devoted to the imaginary in its relations with the symbolic. The same is true of references to mirror schemas.

19. Man thinks with his soul
This is one of Lacan's favorite sentences. We find this use of the word "with" in the title of "Kant with Sade." By highlighting the instrumental nature of the soul, Lacan is fully aligned with

Aristotle's *De anima* [On the Soul]. According to Aristotle, the soul is analogous to the hand (432a1).

20. Darwin 580

Lacan is mistaken in thinking that he read this anecdote in Darwin's book, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. It is found in *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin, Including an Autobiographical Chapter*, which was edited by his son, Francis Darwin (London: John Murray, 1887); here is the relevant passage from volume 1, page 75:

> Of other great literary men, I once met Sydney Smith at Dean Milman's house. There was something inexplicably amusing in every word which he uttered. Perhaps this was partly due to the expectation of being amused. He was talking about Lady Cork, who was then extremely old. This was the lady who, as he said, was once so much affected by one of his charity sermons, that she borrowed a guinea from a friend to put in the plate. He now said "It is generally believed that my dear old friend Lady Cork has been overlooked," and he said this in such a manner that no one could for a moment doubt that he meant that his dear old friend had been overlooked by the devil. How he managed to express this I know not.

Who was Sydney Smith? "An English wit, writer and Anglican cleric," according to Wikipedia.org, which provides a fine article on him. We learn there that he may have been the model for Henry Tilney, the hero of *Northanger Abbey*, which is perhaps Jane Austen's most beautiful novel.

22. *Volpone*

This is a reference to the play by Ben Jonson, *Volpone, or the Fox*, a fox hated by Christine Angot who only liked hedgehogs.

The entire text has been made available online by Project Gutenberg, and includes the following introduction:

> The greatest of English dramatists except Shakespeare, the first literary dictator and poet-laureate, a writer of verse, prose, satire, and criticism who most potently of all the men of his time affected the subsequent course of English letters: such was Ben Jonson.

I first discovered the play through the film by Maurice Tourneur made in 1941, starring Harry Baur (as Volpone), Louis Jouvet, and

Charles Dullin. I liked the film because the minor role of Voltore was played by Jean Témerson, the younger brother of Louis
581 Témerson (known as Bébé), who was a neighbor of mine and had been wounded in the First World War; he and his wife Juliette (often called Yéyette) would look after my brother and me when my parents went out. Bébé's wisdom had a profound influence on me. He was a serious *marcheur* [womanizer], as people put it at the time, and he strongly advised me not to defer experiencing the pleasures the opposite sex could offer me. It is to him that I owe having understood already at ten years of age the meaning of the expression, rarely used today, "half-virgin" [*demi-vierge*]. The Témersons were Jewish, and acting in a film in 1941 must have been rather complicated for them. When I read the stenography of this Seminar for the first time, I was enchanted to see that Lacan knew the play.

The article provided by Wikipedia.org is solid. I would like to have read everything listed under the heading "further readings," but the truth is that I have read none of the works included there.

23. The absolute master
This is an allusion to Hegel's master/slave dialectic.

23. "The tribe's words"
This is a reference to Mallarmé's verse "*donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu*," found in *Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe*. [In English, see "The Tomb of Edgar Poe," translated by Peter Manson (Miami, FL: Miami University Press, 2013):

> They, like an upstart hydra hearing the angel once
> purify the meaning of tribal words
> proclaimed out loud the prophecy drunk
> without honour in the tide of some black mixture.]

24. Ear, skin, even the phallus
The pointy leaves of red Romaine lettuce are known in France as *oreilles du diable*, "devil's ears." The sea, when it is whipped up by a choppy swell, is described as *la peau du diable*, "the devil's skin." The devil's tail [or: dick, *queue*] figures in the French expression, *tirer le diable par la queue* [literally, to pull the devil by the tail; figuratively, to live from hand to mouth].

II Further Explanation

Here and there in the chapter: Glover, Sartre, Judge Schreber,
Abelard and Heloise, and Freud
I'll let you look them up yourselves.

III The Dream about the Dead Father

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50. Marjorie Brierley
Brierley was a Kleinian analyst (1893–1984) whose contributions were collected in *Trends in Psycho-Analysis* (London: Hogarth, 1951). Her article "Affects in Theory and Practice" [*IJP* 18 (1937): 256–68] had a significant impact.

55. Believe we believe, as Prévert puts it
A reference to Jacques Prévert's famous "*Tentative de déscription d'un dîner de têtes à Paris-France*" (in *Paroles* [Paris: Gallimard, 1949], p. 7).

56. Psychologists from what is known as the Marburg School; Brentano
Brentano is a crossroads where Freud, Husserl, and Heidegger all meet up. Freud was especially interested in his *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1874) [*Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (London and New York: Routledge, 1973)], from which Husserl drew the notion of intentionality, and Heidegger was especially interested in his book on Aristotle, *Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles* [Hildesheim, Zurich, and New York: Georg Olms, 1984 (1862); *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1975)]. Freud and Husserl both came from Moravia. Judith and I made a pilgrimage to Prague when Czechoslovakia still existed. We visited the Spielberg in memory of Fabrice del Dongo; Freiberg (Pfibor) in memory of Freud; Prostejov in memory of Husserl; and the Kromeriz Castle to contemplate Titian's *The Flaying of Marsyas* for a full hour. Ernst Mach was also born in Moravia, as was Gödel, not to mention Mendel, Mucha, Schumpeter, Zatopeck, or Alfred Brendel. Or Janacek or Kundera. It is a place where the Spirit has passed.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire was a prison for certain peoples, but it also allowed kids born in the boonies like Freud and Husserl to have fine careers, one in Vienna, and the other in Germany.

Lacan was fond of empires, and at the age of twenty he thought of moving to the French colonies, partly in order to spread Charles Maurras's ideas.

Brentano was the nephew of Bettina von Arnim, a strange bird. Wikipedia has a suggestive article on her.

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IV Little Anna's Dream

71. Binet

This example has become famous since the publication of Seminar XI, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, in which Lacan referred to it. It comes from Alfred Binet and Théodore Simon, *La Mesure de développement de l'intelligence chez les jeunes enfants* (1905), in the chapter entitled "critique of absurd sentences," which can now be found in the form of an e-book published by L'Harmattan. I'd like to publish e-books from now on. I want to, I just don't know how to.

Binet was born Alfredo Binetti and was from Nice. He was Babinski's protégé. "He married the daughter of the embryologist, Édouard-Gérard Balbiani, and began studying natural science at the Sorbonne under his father-in-law's supervision." Isn't that unbelievable! He studied under the supervision of his wife's father! Isn't that against the law? And such a one claims to measure intelligence!

V The Dream about the Dead Father (II)

86. *Être une belle fille* ["To be a beautiful blonde"]

The poetess in question is Lise Deharme (1898–1980), who was one of Surrealism's muses. André Breton, whom she is said to have "fascinated," turned her into the character Lise Meyer in his novel *Nadja*. She was a brunette and somber. She established a literary salon in Neuilly and, in 1933, created an ephemeral journal, *Le Phare de Neuilly*, to which Lacan contributed his well-known sonnet, *Hiatus irrationalis*. That same year, she brought out a small collection of poetry, *Cahier de curieuse personne* (Paris: Cahiers Libres, 1933), in which we find the poem entitled *Voeux secrets* (p. 27). The text of the poem is preceded by an epigraph from Louis Aragon's work: "Des chansons sortaient de la bouche des égouts" [Songs came out of the mouth of sewers (or manholes)], which comes from his poem, *Transfiguration de Paris* (found in *La Grande Gaîté* [Paris: Gallimard, 1929]).

VII Desire's Phallic Mediation 584

115. Trotsky's dream
See *Trotsky's Diary in Exile, 1935* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1976). Trotsky was better than the Trotskyites, just as Lacan was better than the Lacanians. For Jesus and his followers, that is obvious. Have masters always been better than their disciples? No. Consider, for example, Aristotle and Alexander the Great. Or Raymond Aron and Kissinger. In science, the disciple is there to go further than the master. But a problem arises when the scientific spirit disappears. Yet in science, too, it is something of a knife fight.

123. A recent novel
The novel in question was *Histoire d'O*, which was overly kitsch. I never liked the story. It's shoddy. It was clear that it was "Made in Gallimard," just as Robbe-Grillet's eroticism was "Made in Minuit." I read it shortly after beginning my studies at l'École normale supérieure. The only funny moment comes right at the beginning, when he asks O to take off her panties in the taxi. Nothing to write home about. Sade's *Juliette* and *Justine* are solid gold ingots. No comparison.

VIII The Little Cough as a Message

142. Ella Sharpe
See Ella Freeman Sharpe, *Dream Analysis* (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1937). A new edition came out in 1978 with a preface by Masud Khan.

IX The Fantasy about the Barking Dog 585

166. Darwin
Darwin granted his young disciple George John Romanes access to his notes. The anecdote is recounted in a book written by Romanes, *Mental Evolution in Man: Origin of Human Faculty* [London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1888], in Chapter 13 entitled "Roots of Language," p. 283. Psychologists who specialize in language acquisition consider the following passage to be the first observation of the phenomenon that is known today as "overextension":

For instance, the late Mr. Darwin gave me the following particulars with regard to a grandchild of his own, who was then living in his house. I quote the account from notes taken at the time.

"The child, who was just beginning to speak, called a duck 'quack'; and, by special association, it also called water 'quack.' By an appreciation of the resemblance of qualities, it next extended the term 'quack' to denote all birds and insects on the one hand, and all fluid substances on the other. Lastly, by a still more delicate appreciation of resemblance, the child eventually called all coins 'quack,' because on the back of a French sou it had once seen the representation of an eagle. Hence, to the child, the sign 'quack,' from having originally had a very specialized meaning, became more and more extended in its signification, until it now serves to designate such apparently different objects as 'fly,' 'wine,' and 'coin.'"

X The Image of the Inside-Out Glove

178. Limericks

I am inclined to think that the collection Lacan consulted was the one that was, at the time, the most complete: *The Limerick: 1700 Examples with Notes, Variants, and Index* by Gershon Legman, published in English in Paris by the *École des Haute Études* in 1953. The author, who was an American persecuted for obscenity by the U.S. Postal Service, was forced to go into exile. He later brought out *The New Limerick: 2750 Unpublished Examples, American and*
586 *British* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1977). The article about him on Wikipedia.org depicts him as a rather colorful nonconformist.

Just for the heck of it, I will provide here a few other vaginal limericks:

There was a fat lady of China
Who'd a really enormous vagina,
And when she was dead
They painted it red,
And used it for docking a liner.

There once was a lady from China
Who went for a cruise on a liner
She slipped on the deck
And twisted her neck
And now she can see right behind her.

The was a young lady from Cue
Who filled her vagina with glue.
She said with a grin,
"If they pay to get in,
They'll pay to get out of it too . . ."

180. Christina, Queen of Sweden
The flattering physician was French: the abbot Bourdelot. I assume that Lacan had read the anecdote in René-Jean Denichou's doctoral dissertation in medicine entitled *Un Médecin du Grand Siècle: l'abbé Bourdelot* (Paris: Louis Arnette, 1928). Dr. Bertrand Lahutte tried to find the book for me at the *Bibliothèque interuniversitaire de santé*, but it was not there.

XI Sacrificing the Taboo Queen 587

198. *Femina penem devoret*
The stenography reads "*femina curam et penem devoret*," which is obviously erroneous. No matter how I varied the terms or put them together, I was unable to find any corresponding literary or medical expression using Google. Nor was I able to find any enlightenment in [Krafft-Ebing's] *Psychopathia Sexualis*, in James Noel Adam's *Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), or in several other collections of maxims. Nevertheless, Google provided one and only one occurrence of two of the words together: *penem devoret*. It occurs in a passage of the German edition of the *Kamasutra* (II, 9, 19) regarding the "mouth congress," *auparishtaka*, in the ultimate form known as *sangara* (in Latin, *devoratio*), in which the partner puts the entire penis in his or her mouth in order to stimulate it to ejaculation.

In any case, longstanding medical tradition has generally preferred to employ Latin when sexual, salacious, and scabrous matters are being discussed. In this case, the formulation chosen by Lacan undoubtedly refers to fellatio, which he figuratively associated with the words "to get my penis" before rejecting this reading. It is possible that we are not dealing here with a true citation, but merely an approximate allusion.

I have opted to provide in the text a reading which, although incomplete, is correct; it signifies that "the woman eats up" or "swallows the penis."

200. Roland Penrose
Lacan may have known him when the two associated with Picasso. Penrose brought surrealism to England and became the main British surrealist artist. The date Lacan provides here suggests that the work in question might have been presented in Paris in 1947 at the famous Surrealist exhibition in Aimé Maeght's gallery. I have never seen a reproduction of it, nor do I know where it is today.

588 209. Lewis Carroll
The verses cited come from *The Mad Gardener's Song*, which is found in *Sylvie and Bruno*:

He thought he saw a Garden-Door
That opened with a key:
He looked again, and found it was
A Double Rule of Three:
"And all its mystery," he said,
"Is clear as day to me!"

XII The Laughter of the Immortal Gods

218. St. Augustine
This passage, which is often mentioned by Lacan, is found in Chapter 7 of Book I of Augustine's *Confessions*.

229. The laughter of the gods
This episode is narrated in the *Odyssey*, Book 8, lines 266–369. It has often been represented in art, but people generally leave out the gods who have been summoned by Vulcan. You can find them in the painting by Maarten van Heemskerck, *Vulcan, Venus, and Mars* ([a.k.a. *Mars and Venus Trapped in Vulcan's Net*] *c.* 1540), which is displayed at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

XIII Impossible Action

234. These two Alice tales are virtually an epic poem of phallic avatars
Lacan commented on this in a charming little paper that I published in the journal *Ornicar?* [50 (2002): 9–12], entitling it "Hommage rendu à Lewis Carroll."

239. Spell out the great tragedy of Hamlet 589
I have relied here on the text of *Hamlet* provided in 2006 by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor in *The Arden Shakespeare*, which is now in its third edition since 1899. The text has a reputation for being the best, and the notes it provides help resolve various difficulties.

240. A poison, mysteriously named Hebenon
The reader can find a very complete discussion of the "cursed hebona" (*Hamlet*, I, i) and the many hypotheses about it put forward over the centuries in the excellent study by Anatoly Lieberman entitled *An Analytic Dictionary of English Etymology: An Introduction* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), pp. 110–11. Lieberman concludes that "hebona" undoubtedly stands for "henbane," but that it is impossible to know why Shakespeare, and Marlowe before him (who speaks of the "juice of Hebon" in *The Jew of Malta*, 1589) did not use its real name: "It remains a mystery."

It seems to me that the two poets might well have balked at the triviality of the word "henbane," which literally signifies "chicken poison." In French, the plant in question, *Hyoscyamus niger*, is also known as "pigs' beans."

It is of some interest to know the pharmacological profile and historical fate of this toxic plant. Like *belladonna* [or deadly nightshade] and *daturas* [or devil's trumpets], it has an impact on the central nervous system. It has anesthetic effects, can induce drunkenness, sleep, and/or visual hallucinations, and gives the subject the feeling he is flying. It was part and parcel of the pharmacopeia of black magic. Its use as a hallucinogen was already mentioned in the Sumerian clay tablets; it was used as an aphrodisiac in the Middle Ages, where it was called "*l'herbe au somme*" (the sleeping herb or grass); it was used in making a cream that sorcerers were said, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to smear on their bodies before flying off to their witching-hour ceremonies. See, among others: Anthony John Carter, "Narcosis and Nightshade," *British Medical Journal*, 313 (1996): 1630–2; Anthony John Carter, "Myths and Mandrakes," *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 96 (2003): 144–7; Claude Myers, "Mythologies, histoires, actualités 590
des drogues" (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007); and the well-documented Wikipedia.fr article on *jusquiame noire.*

The infamous Dr. Crippen supposedly poisoned his wife in 1910 with a poisonous alkaloid extracted from henbane, scopolamine.

244. Ophelia floating in her dress
I initially imagined that I would put Millais's *Ophelia* on the cover of Seminar VI. But at the last moment I balked. To illustrate desire, one can do better. I preferred the sinuous, luminous body of Bronzino's *Venus*, surrounded by enigmatic figures whose meaning has never been completely discovered. Lacan liked this canvas.

246. Letourneur
Pierre-Prime-Félicien Letourneur, *libraire du Roy* (the King's bookseller), was the first person to bring Shakespeare to France. He translated all of Shakespeare's work, including *Hamlet* in 1779. This was the translation that Raymond Queneau included in his collection, *Écrivains célèbres* (Paris: Mazenod, 1971).

XIV The Desire Trap

252. The Impediment of Adipose
The article in question, entitled "The Impediment of Adipose: A Celebrated Case," was published in *Popular Science Monthly* 17 (1880). Its author was Euphemia Vale Blake. It can be found on Wikisource.

252. Someone by the name of Vining
Edward Payson Vining, *The Mystery of Hamlet: An Attempt to Solve an Old Problem* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1881).
591 "For Vining, Hamlet was not only a 'womanly man,' but 'in very deed a woman, desperately striving to fill a place for which she was by nature unfitted . . .'"

252. Goethe
See Wolfgang Höllrigl's *Wenn Shakespeare und Goethe Bridge gespielt hätten. Ein heiterer Versuch, Dichtern und Schriftstellern, die über Bridge nichts geschrieben haben, zu untersteen, sie hätten das getan!* (Munich: Idea Verlag, 1999).

253. Coleridge
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare and Other English Poets* (London: G. Bell, 1883).

253. Hazlitt
William Haziett, *Lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth, and Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (London: R. Hunter, 1817).

267. M. Valdemar
Valdemar is a character invented by Edgar Allan Poe in his 1845 story, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," which was separately republished as *Mesmerism in Articulo Mortis*, and later as "The Last Days of M. Valdemar." Like "The Purloined Letter," it was included in a collection prepared by Baudelaire, *Histoires extraordinaires* (1856). Lacan refers to it on page 486 of *Écrits*: he compares the IPA to M. Valdemar, and tells us that his own "return to Freud" amounts to giving a decent burial to an organization that has outlived its purpose.

XV The Mother's Desire 592

269. Dover Wilson
John Dover Wilson, *What Happens in* Hamlet (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1951 [1935]).

271. Kyd
It seems that the source of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was a play by Thomas Kyd that has now been lost, and that scholars designate as the *Ur-Hamlet.*

271. T. S. Eliot
See Eliot's "Hamlet and His Problems," an essay written in 1919, which came out in 1920 in the collection *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism.* It was subsequently included in Eliot's *Selected Essays, 1917–1932* (London: Faber and Faber, 1932).

277. An article that came out a few years ago
The article in question is "Hystérie et théâtre" by P. C. Racamier. It came out in the journal *L'Évolution psychiatrique*, 2 (1952): 257–89.

XVI There is No Other of the Other

292. A comment by Coleridge
Coleridge's comment can be found in the annotations he made to his specially bound edition of Shakespeare, specifically those annotations made in preparation for the lecture he gave on January 7, 1819: "Hume himself could not but have faith in this Ghost dramatically, let his anti-ghostism be as strong as Sampson against

ghosts less powerfully raised." The passage is included in *Coleridge's Criticism of Shakespeare: A Selection*, edited by R. A. Foakes (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1989), p. 81.

593 This is a supposition on Coleridge's part, for Hume nowhere mentions the ghost in *Hamlet*. Hume's well-known critique of ghosts can be found in his *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (London: A. Millar, 1748), Section 10 entitled "Of Miracles."

296. "Oneille," as Jarry writes it

The word is found for the first time in *Ubu roi*: "Un soldat dit: Seigneur Ubu, voilà le ciseau à oneille qui tombe" (Act III, scene 8). It is found anew in Act IV, scene 5: "*Père Ubu : Eh ! sire Cotice, votre oneille, comment va-t-elle? – Cotice : Aussi bien, Monsieuye, qu'elle peut aller tout en allant très mal.*" And so on.

In addition, *L'Almanach du Père Ubu* (1899) includes a calendar in which September 29 is the day of St. Oneille. *L'Almanach de 1901* provides a "pataphysical calendar" on which April 25 becomes Flunky 6, the saints day of hussy Oneille. I did not look any further.

A recent volume devoted to *Ubu enchaîné* [Ubu Bound] says the following about the word "*oneille*": "The *r* in *oreille* (which emigrated to '*merdre*' [a condensation of *mère*, mother, and *merde*, shit]) is replaced by an *n* in order to create a new Ubu-like neologism. '*L'oneille*' is a part of the body that is subjected to Ubu's punishments: the *oneilles* are rubbed, pulled, twisted, ripped off, or plugged up by the *gidouille* [another made-up word meaning something like belly]. Such phonetic distortions roll off Ubu's tongue whenever he loses his cool (and one finds this also in vowels, such as '*ji ti . . .*')." This passage is from the "Dossier pédagogique édité par la délégation à l'action culturelle de l'Académie de Caen," directed by Nicole Cellier and Ivan Perrot, 2012.

According to Carey Taylor, in "Le vocabulaire d'Alfred Jarry," *Cahiers de l'Association international des études françaises*, 11 (1959): 307–22, the word was probably a slang term used by Jarry's fellow students at his high school in Rennes.

Lastly, the Collège de patapsychique published in 1947, through Les Films Arquevit, a brochure entitled *Zoneilles*. It is a film script written by Michel Arnaud, Raymond Queneau, and Boris Vian.

594 XVIII Mourning and Desire

331. The way the wager was structured

The 2006 Arden edition considers the precise terms of the wager to constitute "an insoluble problem" (p. 444), and indicates that a

debate on the topic in the *Times Literary Supplement* on February 6, 2004, was unable to clarify the matter.

XIX Phallophanies

348. The functions of castration, frustration, and deprivation
Lacan maintains here, in Seminar VI, that prior to this he had left empty the squares corresponding to castration and deprivation in the "agent of frustration" column. However, in Seminar IV, two years earlier, we find on page 59 a table of the three functions, which was completed on page 215; in those two boxes we find "the imaginary father" and "the real father," the explanation for which is found on pages 219–21. Lacan had apparently forgotten he had already completed the table.

350. See Raymond Queneau's novel
Lacan often mentioned the novel by Queneau entitled *Le Dimanche de la vie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952) [*The Sunday of Life* (Surrey, UK: Alma Books, 2013)], seeing in it an illustration of what awaits man when he arrives at "absolute knowledge" (*das absolute Wissen*), assuming it exists, this being the final stage of the trajectory proposed in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807).

There is no doubt but that Queneau's novel is full of indications and allusions to Hegel's work, whose presence is constant in Lacan's teaching – especially in the form of the famous master/slave dialectic that Kojève took to be its fundamental matrix. It is well known that Lacan and Queneau both attended the Seminar that Kojève devoted to Hegel's *Phenomenology* from 1933 to 1936. Queneau published a write-up of the Seminar in a book entitled *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel: Leçons sur la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit professées de 1933 à 1939 à l'École des Hautes Études* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947) [abridged and translated into English as *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit* (New York: Basic Books, 1969)]. As for Lacan, who did not often give such praise, he referred to Kojève as "*mon maître*" (my master or teacher) in Seminar VIII, *Transference*. In fact, the only other person that he 595
honored in this way was de Clérambault, whom he called "my only master in psychiatry" (*Écrits*, p. 51).

According to Lacan, Queneau's novel derides men who have attained absolute knowledge. Lacan mentions in this regard "the advent of the lazy bumpkin and of the good for nothing, demonstrating the knowledge that can satisfy animals in the form of absolute laziness" [*Autres Écrits* (Paris, Seuil: 2001), p. 331] as well

as "the satiated rest of a sort of colossal seventh day on this Sunday of life on which the human animal can finally shove its muzzle in the grass, the great machine being henceforth calibrated down to the last carat of the materialized nothingness provided by this conception of knowledge" [Seminar IX, class given on November 22, 1961].

Lacan's interpretation here is not original. It stems directly from Kojève's work. According to Kojève, the attaining of absolute knowledge and the concomitant appearance of the "Sage" imply the disappearance of what he calls "Man," the end of history, and a return to our animal nature. To his way of thinking, the novel by his student Queneau described this "post-historical" state of humanity, and he said so in an article written shortly after the novel came out, "Les Romans de la sagesse" [*Critique*, LX (1952)]. This article had quite an impact.

Now, this doctrine of absolute knowledge is completely Kojèvian in inspiration. Hegel did not in any way intend to close his *Phenomenology of Spirit* on this Ubu-like "end of history" that inspired a bestseller by someone who was a neo-conservative at the time, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992). Inspired by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disappearance of the Soviet Union, Francis Fukuyama prophesied "the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government."

At the end of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, as a science of consciousness, "pure knowledge distills out, as the final and absolute truth of this consciousness," which "is liberated from its immediacy and its concreteness," as Hegel wrote in his *Science of Logic*. As Gwendolyn Jarczyk and Pierre-Jean Labarrière, whose fine analysis I am following here, indicate, absolute knowledge is, rather, a "level of intelligibility" in which consciousness overcomes its dualism, allowing contingency to find its place in the element of the concept; see *De Kojève à Hegel* (Paris: Alvin Michel, 1996), p. 221, and the entirety of their conclusion.

596 Note, furthermore, that while Queneau's *Sunday of Life* refers to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the expression "the Sunday of life" is found in Hegel's *Aesthetics*, at the end of the chapter devoted to painting, from which the novel's epigraph is borrowed: "it is the Sunday of life which equalizes everything and removes all evil; people who are so wholeheartedly cheerful cannot be altogether evil and base" [G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, vol. 2, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 877].

This passage stems from Hegel's solid praise of the Dutch Protestants, who "had overcome the Spanish despotism of church and crown" [p. 885]. According to him, the Dutch are heroic,

prudent, and modest, and rose up "without any fear of exposing themselves to all sorts of danger in face of the tremendous repute of the Spanish domination of half the world" [p. 885]. Through painting, this population "wishes now in painting too to delight in this existence which is as powerful as just, satisfying, and comfortable" [p. 886]. The expression "the Sunday of life" is also found in the introduction to Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*: it is the day of the Lord, that allows us to "devote ourselves to what is True, and to bring it to consciousness" (as cited in the Pléiade edition of his complete works, volume 3 [Paris: Gallimard, 2006], p. 1678).

Hegel's sympathy for the institution of the Sunday of life and for the Dutch bourgeoisie, which was industrious and courageous, without being prideful, is thus quite clear, as is Queneau's for these characters, "little people, who are not imbeciles," as he put it in an interview (cited in the above-mentioned edition, p. 1674). In *L'Oeil écoute*, Claudel also spoke about Dutch painting in positive terms, and Roland Barthes saw in Dutch painting "all history reach[ing] the grandeur of its own mystery" (in *Essais Critiques* [Paris: Seuil, 1964], p. 28 [*A Barthes Reader* (New York: Macmillan, 1983), p. 72]).

These positive appraisals contrast with the scorn with which Kojève and Lacan greet the characters in Queneau's *The Sunday of Life*. Must we see in this an aristocratic reaction to the "everyday folk" Queneau included in his novels and about whom he speaks tenderly? It is more complicated than that, and the three pals must be distinguished here.

Kojève could not identify with the rebellious people described by Hegel in his *Aesthetics*. He was, as it were, an Imperial. The admiration he had for Stalin is well documented, and he dreamt of a Latin Empire for France. The ambitions of the Habsburgs certainly did not seem monstrous to either Kojève or Hegel.

To the best of my knowledge, it was Queneau, not Kojève, who 597
mischievously fused the Sunday of life with absolute knowledge, and the chapter on painting in Hegel's *Aesthetics* with Chapter 8 of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. In this way he inscribed the everyday folk in his novels in the sweeping gesture of his sardonic master, who became a member of the Common Market's upper administration.

As for Lacan, the notion of wisdom – promoted by Kojève in "Les Romans de la sagesse" as a state of "perfect satisfaction [. . .] accompanied by a fullness of self-consciousness" – could not but repulse him. To praise the absence of division, whether in the subject, knowledge, or satisfaction, was contrary to his most consistently expressed views. The present Seminar clearly attests to this:

Hamlet, a king's son who pretends to be crazy, is the opposite of Valentin Brû [in Queneau's *The Sunday of Life*]. Valentin "devotes his vast leisure time," says Kojève jokingly, "to identifying the nothingness of his subjective certainty with the Annihilation of temporal Being-in-itself." Hamlet's bustling activity, which his uncertainty brings on, is deployed in the dimension of language; and time, with which he is grappling, is not "in itself," but "for others," calibrated to other people's time, as Lacan says. With Hamlet, Shakespeare reinvents the tragic hero, whereas Queneau incarnated the Kojevian Sage in the soldier Brû.

In homage to the master? Or to deride him? The question has long been raised whether Kojève, who published little, rushed to bless Queneau's novel. But this Sage was already a deriding of Hegel by his commentator.

Lacan spoke again about *The Sunday of Life* in his seminar later on. But I have said enough here.

353. A "capital . . . calf"
See *Hamlet*, III, ii, 101–2. Polonius indicates that he once acted the part of Julius Caesar, killed by Brutus, in a play. Hamlet qualifies Caesar as "so capital a calf." The Arden edition suggests that the adjective "capital" may imply a pun on "capitol," and indicates that "calf" also means fool.

598

XX The Fundamental Fantasy

361. "The Relation of Perversion-Formation to the Development of Reality-Sense."
I published a French translation, by Jean-Louis Henrion and Sophie Poloczanska, of this article in the journal *Ornicar?*, 43 (1987): 17–37.

368: Anything but fragrant *flatus*
See Ernest Jones's 1922 article, "A Study of the Holy Ghost Concept," found in *Essays in Applied Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 2 (London: Hogarth, 1951), pp. 358–73.

XXI In the Form of a Cut

375. The process of logical generation
In notes taken by those present at the Seminar, we find the following schema, which appears to represent a reworking by Lacan of the schema he had provided the week before, modified in order to

show in what respect "it is not by examining the Other, but rather by considering what occurs at the level of demand that we are going to extend the process of logical generation":

Table A.1: The Process of Logical Generation

A	$D \rightarrow S(\not A)$
rA	S
a	$

To my mind, we have here a quick sketch that was designed to show a specific point in passing. I did not want to include it in the main body of the text since, in the remainder of class XXI, Lacan goes back to commenting on the fuller schema he had provided in class XX.

378. Let us reconsider, for example, Freud's claim, *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden* 599

This is the penultimate sentence in Lecture 31 of Freud's *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, entitled "The Dissection of the Psychical Personality." The last sentence is "It is a work of culture – not unlike the draining of the Zuider Zee" [SE XXII, p. 80].

383. *Sie lieben also den Wahn wie sich selbst*

This sentence is found in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess. See *Briefe an Wilhelm Fliess* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1986), p. 110 [SE I, p. 212].

384. Breathing

Lacan mentions a breathing stage here, comparable to the oral or anal stage, in order to suggest that there is no such thing. Jean-Louis Tristani tried to demonstrate just the opposite in his book *Le Stade du respir* (Paris: Minuit, 1978).

386 and 387. Maine de Biran and Cocteau

I no longer have time to take up the *Mémoire sur la decomposition de la pensée* or *La voix humaine*.

XXII Cut and Fantasy

392. Imagine that a specular image can subsist independently of any subjective prop

Lacan is alluding here to *The Invention of Morel*, a novel by Adolfo Bioy Casares (who was a friend of Borges's) that Lacan commented

on in Seminar II. The novel came out in 1940 and bears some affinity to H. G. Wells's novel, *The Island of Doctor Moreau.*

600 393. The fable of the white disks and the black disks
Lacan is referring his audience to his paper, "Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty," which came out in the journal *Cahiers d'art*, 1940–4, and was republished in *Écrits*, pp. 161–75. A whole book was devoted to the study of this paper: Erik Porge, *Se Compter trois. Le temps logique de Lacan* (Paris: Erès, 1990). I did a detailed examination of the article in my course, *L'Orientation lacanienne* (forthcoming).

397. Plato long ago compared the philosopher to a good cook
Lacan is alluding here to Plato's *Phaedrus*, 265e. A dialectician must be able to divide things "into species according to the natural formation, where the joint is, not breaking any part as a bad carver might."

398. A very interesting article by Kurt Eissler, that does not go too far
The reference here is to Kurt Eissler's "The Function of Details in the Interpretation of Works of Literature," which came out in *PQ* 28 (1959): 1–20.

404. Walter Wilson Greg
Greg was a major Shakespearean scholar of the last century; Dover Wilson's *What Happens in* Hamlet, which came out in 1935, was dedicated to him. The book's "epistle dedicatory" is a bravura passage. Greg had published an article entitled "Hamlet's Hallucination" in *The Modern Language Review* in October 1917; in that article he made the point about Claudius mentioned by Lacan. Dover Wilson had a revelation when he read Greg's article a month later: "From the first, I realized that I had been born to answer it." He, in effect, dedicated his whole life to *Hamlet*. This extraordinary episode was the inspiration for Pierre Bayard's *Enquête sur Hamlet. Le dialogue de sourds* (Paris: Minuit, 2002).

601 **XXIII The Function of the Subjective Slit in Perverse Fantasies**

407. I am speaking about Being and the One
I would note here that Lacan was familiar with the work of Étienne Gilson. He very much appreciated his type of erudition.

408. English psychology
I balk at the thought of saying anything here about John Stuart Mill, whose work I studied in the past.

411. There cannot be satisfaction of one person without the satisfaction of all
This is Lacan's version of communism, as inspired by Kojève. He first formulated it, or something like it, in the "Rome Report," if memory serves.

413. *Tartuffe*
Lacan is alluding here to the famous scene in Act V. It was in Lacan's company that I recall seeing the best production of *Tartuffe* I have ever seen, which was directed by Planchon. When I knew Lacan, he almost never went to performances anymore, except those of Fellini, Molière, and Mozart.

413. Arnolphe
Lacan commented on Molière's *L'École des femmes* in his Seminar. Arnolphe's "*Ouf!*" comes in Act V, Scene 9, line 1765. In the latest edition of Corneille's theatrical works published by Gallimard in the Pléiade edition, one finds a note by Georges Couton regarding "*ouf.*"

413. Desire can be caught "by the tail"
Lacan is alluding here to the play by Picasso, *Le Désir attrapé par la queue* (Desire Caught by the Tail). The famous group photo by Man Ray was taken at a private performance of the play.

414. A fine case study that came out in Belgium in a little bulletin 602
Lacan is referring here to Ruth Lebovici's case study; see *Écrits*, p. 540.

415. The subject fears that his desire may disappear
This is the well-known "aphanisis" that captured Lacan's attention and that he returned to several times. He ends up saying the following on the topic: "there is no subject without aphanisis (disappearance) of the subject somewhere, and it is in this alienation, in this fundamental division, that the dialectic of the subject is established" (Seminar XI, p. 221). The whole of Chapter 17 [in Seminar XI] is worth reading, as is the paper he comments on there, "Position of the Unconscious" (*Écrits*, pp. 703–21).

416. Paul Éluard
The collection entitled *Donner à voir* [Paris: Gallimard, 1978] was first published in 1939; it can now be found in volume one of Éluard's complete works published by Gallimard in the Pléiade edition. I was unable to find the phrase "*charmantes pulsions vitales*" [charming life drives].

419. Anatole France [. . .] refers to the *Comte de Gabalis*
The stenography gives the name as Cabanis. The context shows that Lacan was not talking about the seventeenth-century physiologist, but was referring to a famous book by the abbot Henri de Montfaucon de Villars, *Le Comte de Gabalis, ou Entretiens sur les sciences secrètes.*

See the excellent edition of this work edited by Didier Kahn and published by Honoré Champion in 2010; it includes an adaptation by Blaise de Vignenère of the *Liber de Nymphis* by Paracelsus (1583). Be sure to read the fascinating introduction. Montfaucon de
603 Villars's style is borrowed from Pascal's in his *Provinciales*, and his ideas are borrowed from Descartes. He wishes to "destroy belief in the Devil's actions."

Lacan liked Anatole France's work. In *La Rôtisserie de la reine Pédauque,* France includes "editorial notes" referring to cabalists and their beliefs in sylphs, salamanders, and so on, especially in the *Comte de Gabalis*, the 1700 edition of which he recommends.

Coming after Lacan's borrowing of the question "*Che vuoi?*" from Jacques Cazotte, this allusion to *Le Comte de Gabalis* demonstrates Lacan's interest in literature *noir*, and also in the period that saw the decline of magic and the rise of scientific discourse.

XXIV The Dialectic of Desire in Neurosis

424. *Unerkannt*
The German term means less what is unknown than what is unrecognized. Lefebvre translated it into French as the *non connu* (not known). The word can be found in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, VI, D, regarding the dream's navel: "This [tangle] is the dream's navel, the spot where it reaches down into the unknown" [this is Strachey's translation in SE V, p. 525].

424. Little Hans's neurosis
Lacan devoted half of Seminar IV to a commentary on little Hans. Hans having no recourse when faced with his mother's desire:

Hilflosigkeit. Freud uses the term in his 1917 metapsychological paper, "The Unconscious" [SE XIV, pp. 166–215].

427. The paper I gave at the Royaumont Congress
A reference to "Direction of the Treatment," *Écrits*, pp. 489–542.

430. The so-called law of marriage and kinship 604
Lacan is obviously thinking here of Lévi-Strauss's thesis, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*.

432. Melanie Klein
The case of little Dick is related by Klein in her article, "The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego" [*IJP* 11 (1930): 24–39].

432. Cybernetic schemas
See Seminar II, the chapter entitled "Psychoanalysis and Cybernetics" [and *Écrits*, pp. 33–46].

433. A child is being beaten
Freud's article came out for the first time in *Int. Z. Psychoanal.*, 5 (1919): 151–72 [SE XVII, pp. 179–204]. Lacan commented on it in Seminar V, the year before this one, and often referred to it. *La Psychanalyse*, the journal of the Société française de psychanalyse, of which Lacan was one of the editors, published a translation of it.

433. Diogenes the Cynic
Diogenes Laertius, in Book VI, 69, of *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, relates the following about Diogenes of Sinope, also known as the dog: "It was his habit to do everything in public, the works of Demeter and of Aphrodite alike. [. . .] Behaving indecently in public, he wished 'it were as easy to banish hunger by rubbing the belly.'"

XXV The Either/Or Concerning the Object 605

436. Our Parisian colleagues
Lacan is referring to the article by S. Nacht, R. Diatkine, and J. Favreau, "The Ego in Perverse Relationships," which came out in *IJP* [37 (1956): 404–13] and in the journal of the Société parisienne de psychanalyse the same year ["*Le moi dans la relation perverse*," *RFP* 20 (1956): 457–78].

437. Polymorphously perverse disposition
Polymorphously perverse tendencies or inclinations were brought out by Freud in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. This is common knowledge.

438. So-called tables of correlated stages
See Karl Abraham's 1916 paper, "The First Pregenital Stage of the Libido," which, according to Ferenczi, earned the author the Freud prize [in 1918]; see, also, his 1924 "Short Study of the Development of the Libido, Viewed in the Light of Mental Disorders." Both articles can be found in his *Selected Papers on Psycho-Analysis* (London: Hogarth Press, 1927). See Sandor Ferenczi's *A Theory of Genitality* (London: Karnac, 1989).

439. The supposed "bad distance at which the obsessive stays from the object"
The reference here is to Maurice Bouvet's notion that Lacan often takes aim at in the years that followed the 1953 split. See Bouvet's 1958 article, "Les variations de la technique (distance et variations)" [Variations in Technique (Distance and Variations)] in volume one of his *Oeuvres psychanalytiques* (Paris: Payot, 1967), pp. 251–93.

606 440. An article on "drug addictions"* written the year before
The reference here is to Edward Glover's article "On the Aetiology of Drug-Addiction," *IJP* 13 (1932): 298–328.

440. Melanie Klein
Lacan is commenting here on her 1930 article, "The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego" [*IJP* 11 (1930): 24–39].

447. An important thesis on the social signification of psychoanalysis
Lacan is undoubtedly referring here to Serge Moscovici's thesis, which was published as *La Psychanalyse, son image, son public* (Paris: PUF, 1961).

449. "Your daughter is mute"
The expression is from Molière. It is spoken by Sganarelle, speaking about Lucinde, Géronte's daughter, in *The Doctor in Spite of Himself*, Act II, Scene 4. Here is the passage:

> Which is caused by the acridity of the humors engendered in the concavity of the diaphragm, it happens that these vapors

. . . *Ossabandus, anorexia, mausoleum, amo, amas, amamus, candida albicians, tyranasaurus rex, potarium, invertabratum, quipsa milus.* This is precisely what has rendered your daughter mute.

449. Nestroy
The sentence can be found in "The Question of Lay Analysis," which came out in 1926, regarding psychoanalysis as practiced by those who are not medical doctors [SE XX, pp. 183–258]. This was a crucial episode: Freud argued against the attempt that was being made by doctors to monopolize psychoanalysis. Here is the relevant passage:

> If I seem to be aggressive, that is only a way of defending myself. And when I think of all the mischief some analysts have done with the interpretation of dreams I might lose heart and echo the pessimistic pronouncement of our great satirist Nestroy when he says that every step forward is only half as big as it looks at first. (p. 193)

Johann Nestroy (1801–62) was, starting in 1833, a shining light in Austrian culture. He was a satirist. He used irony, insinuation, 607
and Viennese dialect to convey his criticism of the old regime that Metternich devoted himself to defending in Austria and in the part of Europe that was involved in the Holy Alliance. He wrote more than eighty plays from 1840 to 1850. He had a deep influence on Karl Kraus, and was cited several times by Freud, who appreciated his work.

XXVI The Function of Splitting in Perversion

454. *Lolita*
Lolita needs no introduction. The book, and then the film by Stanley Kubrick, have been discussed by numerous literary critics. Lacan's clinical commentary here stands in stark contrast to everything else I have read. Nabokov had nothing but scorn for psychoanalysis.

457. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*
The year that Lacan devoted to Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* was that in which he gave Seminar II.

457. "I am thinking, therefore I am"
Lacan very often commented on and varied Descartes' formulation of the cogito. See, in particular, "The Instance of the Letter" (*Écrits*, p. 429) and "Subversion of the Subject" (*Écrits*, p. 694); in the latter Lacan identified the signified of the proper name with the square root of negative one, namely, "what the subject is missing in thinking he is exhaustively accounted for by his cogito – he is missing what is unthinkable about him." Later on, Lacan revamped this significantly in Seminar XII and in the summary of that Seminar which he wrote for the *Annuaire de l'École des Hautes Études*.

459. Gillespie
Here are the exact references to the articles by W. H. Gillespie that are cited by Lacan: "A Contribution to the Study of Fetishism," *IJP*
608 21 (1940): 401–15; "Notes on the Analysis of Sexual Perversions," *IJP* 33 (1952): 397–402; "The General Theory of Sexual Perversion," *IJP* 37 (1956): 396–403.

461. "*Die Ichspaltung*"
Freud stopped writing mid-sentence, as it were, while he was working on his article "*Die Ichspaltung* [The Splitting of the Ego] im Abwehrvorgang [in the Defensive Process]" [SE XXIII, pp. 275–8] and he left it unfinished. Lacan refers to it in the last sentence of his paper on "The Direction of the Treatment" (*Écrits*, p. 537).

462. The article I devoted to the case of André Gide
Lacan is referring here to his paper entitled "The Youth of Gide, or the Letter and Desire" (*Écrits*, pp. 623–44). It originally came out in the journal *Critique* [131 (April 1958): 291–315], and discusses Jean Delay's book, *The Youth of Gide*, and Jean Schlumberger's book, *Madeleine et André Gide*.

462. Ungracious – or even "disgraced," as a certain writer put it – boy
Lacan is referring here to Mauriac, who is cited by Jean Delay in *La Jeunesse de Gide* (*The Youth of Gide*), vol. I, p. 225 n.1.

463. Gide's history
The passages cited by Lacan come from *Si le grain ne meurt*. In the Pléiade edition of Gide's *Journal, 1939–1949* [Paris: Gallimard, 1954], see pp. 386 and 387.

XXVII Toward Sublimation 609

474. Desire, *cupiditas*
The sentence is from Spinoza's *Ethics*. It opens the appendix to Book III entitled "General Definition of Emotions," and reads as follows: "Desire [*cupiditas*] is man's very essence, insofar as it is conceived to be determined, from any given affection of it, to do something."

477. Phallocentric conception
In his paper "On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis," Lacan makes the "problem of the perversions" revolve around a child's identification with the imaginary object of his mother's desire, insofar as she symbolizes it in the phallus. And he adds: "The phallocentrism produced by this dialectic is all that need concern us here" (*Écrits*, p. 463).

478. Paul-Jean Toulet
As a young man, Lacan had a special predilection for this poet. He cites here a poem from the collection entitled *Les Contrerimes* (1921), found in *Œuvres complètes*, published in 1986 by Robert Laffont. Here is the complete text of the poem in question, *J'ai vu le Diable, l'autre nuit*.

J'ai vu le Diable, l'autre nuit;
Et, dessous sa pelure,
Il n'est pas aisé de conclure
S'il faut dire: Elle, ou: Lui.

Sa gorge, – avait l'air sous la faille,
De trembler de désir:
Tel, aux mains près de le saisir,
Un bel oiseau défaille.

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Telle, à la soif, dans Blidah bleu,
S'offre la pomme douce;
Ou bien l'orange, sous la mousse,
Lorsque tout bas il pleut.

"Ah !" dit Satan, et le silence
Frémissait à sa voix,
"Ils ne tombent pas tous, tu vois,
Les fruits de la Science."

482. Ernst Kris's interpretation
Lacan is referring here to Kris's paper, "Ego Psychology and Interpretation in Psychoanalytic Therapy," which was presented in New York in December 1948, and published in *PQ*, 20, no. 1 (1951): 15–30. Lacan had mentioned it in "Function and Field of Speech and Language," but above all in his response to Hyppolite on pages 327–32 of *Écrits*. He often returned to it. I published a French translation of it by Jacques Adam in *Ornicar?* 46 (1988): 5–20.

483. "Neurosis and Psychosis"
This text by Freud can be found in SE XIX, pp. 149–53, and the passage in question is from pages 152–3. Lacan returned to sublimation at some length the next year in Seminar VII.

486. A mark of fancy
The journal *Phantômas* was the main organ of surrealism in Belgium. The first issue was printed on December 15, 1953. Désiré Viardot was one of the three members of the editorial board. Philippe Hellebois was willing to help me find the exact location of the spoonerism cited by Lacan. He found it in Désiré Viardot's *Ripopée*, Brussels (1956), p. 7, in the following form: "Like all women, I have a mark of fancy on my skin." This fifteen-page brochure is presented as the first work in the "collection of experimental literature" by *Phantômas* publishers.

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THE ETHICS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

1959–1960

THE SEMINAR OF
JACQUES LACAN
BOOK VII

Edited by
Jacques-Alain Miller

Translated with Notes by
Dennis Porter

By Jacques Lacan

TELEVISION

THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN BOOK I

THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN BOOK II

THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN BOOK III

THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN BOOK VII

ECRITS: A SELECTION

FEMININE SEXUALITY

THE FOUR FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS
OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

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JACQUES LACAN

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TRANSLATED WITH NOTES BY

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Some of the problems of translating Jacques Lacan's *Seminars* into English have already been pointed out by the translators of *Seminars I* and *II*, John Forester and Sylvana Tomaselli, and there is no point in repeating their helpful comments here. It is, however, important to recall that the *Seminars* now in the process of being translated were delivered from notes to an audience that for the most part had been following the progress of Lacan's thought over many years and was composed to a great extent of psychoanalysts or psychoanalysts in training. These circumstances account in part for his non-academic mode of exposition and the frequent complexity of the syntax. They also explain the closeness Lacan apparently felt to his audience, the assumptions he was able to make about the knowledge his listeners possessed, the frequent references to previous *Seminars* or to other activities of the *Société Française de Psychanalyse*, and the apparent allusiveness of some of his remarks. The latter in particular seems to derive both from what he felt he could take for granted among those who knew his work well and from a pedagogical style that made great demands on a listener.

Jacques-Alain Miller's French edition of the *Ethique de la Psychanalyse* is without a critical apparatus, like the other Lacan *Seminars* that have so far been published. Miller reproduces Lacan's lectures virtually unmediated, and it seemed proper to model the English edition of the work on the French. As a consequence, footnotes have been kept to a minimum; they are chiefly limited to linguistic difficulties where for one reason or another English is unable to render fully the significance of the French–the most obvious of such cases is Lacan's not infrequent plays on words. However, a bibliography of authors and works cited by Lacan in the course of the *Seminar* is included. I have also followed the French edition in leaving German and Greek words in the original where Lacan did so in the context of analyzing German or Greek texts; in most cases, he gave at the same time a French equivalent or a para-

phrase of a concept's meaning. Only in the case of titles have I given the English translation in brackets after the first occurrence.

The task of the translator is, I take it, a critically self-effacing one that insofar as possible avoids the temptation to play editor by reducing ambiguities or by "naturalizing" the strangeness of an original in its passage into the native idiom. Thus, the goals I gave myself were accuracy rather than elegance and a flexibility of tone that matches the different registers of Lacan's expository style. The excitement for those who encounter his *Seminars* in the original French is in the experience of a thought in the making. And it is important to render in the English this liveliness of a distinguished mind at work before an audience, even at the occasional cost of some awkwardnesses. The difficulty was in trying to render in a different linguistic code a captivating spoken word that sometimes meanders, throws out asides, refers backwards or anticipates future problems, moves through passages dense with difficult ideas, narrates an illustrative comic anecdote, draws out the forgotten etymological significance of a word or resorts suddenly to popular speech. The pleasure for the translator is in discovering equivalents for such movements within the very different resources of his own language.

It is for the most part not Lacan's psychoanalytic or philosophical discourse that causes difficulties, but his syntax and, given that the Norton edition of the *Seminars* has as its potential audience the English-speaking world as a whole, his use of familiar language and colloquialisms. As far as the former is concerned, Lacan frequently uses French prepositions and prepositional phrases in startlingly new ways; thus one of the most difficult words to translate turned out to be "de." As for Lacan's colloquialisms, it seemed to me important wherever possible to find equivalents that were not too obviously recognizable as "Americanisms" or as "Britishisms," but have a more general currency. Finally, a few minor errors in the French have been corrected in the translation.

I would like to thank my colleague Edward S. Phinney for help with the Greek and Susan Barrows both for her editorial support and for a careful reading of the manuscript.

DENNIS PORTER
Amherst, Massachusetts, October 1991

I

Outline of the seminar

THE ATTRACTION OF TRANSGRESSION[1]
FROM ARISTOTLE TO FREUD
THE REAL
THE THREE IDEALS

I announced that the title of my seminar this year was *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*. I do not think that this is a subject whose choice is in any way surprising in itself, although it does leave open for some of you the question of what I might have in mind.

It was certainly not without some hesitation and even trepidation that I decided to tackle it. I, in fact, decided to do so because the subject follows directly from my seminar of last year, if it is true that we can consider that work as completely finished.

In any case, we must move forward. Given all that is implied by the phrase, the ethics of psychoanalysis will allow me, far more than anything else, to test the categories that I believe enable me, through my teaching, to give you the most suitable instruments for understanding what is new both in Freud's work and in the experience of psychoanalysis that derives from it.

New in relation to what? In relation to something that is both very general and very specific. Very general to the extent that the experience of psychoanalysis is highly significant for a certain moment in the history of man, namely, the one we are living in, although this does not imply we are able – far from it – to specify what the collective work we are engaged in means. Very specific, on the other hand, like our daily work, namely, in the way in which we have to respond in experience to what I have taught you to articulate as a demand, a patient's demand, to which our response gives an exact meaning. And in our response itself we must maintain the strictest discipline, so as not to let its deeply unconscious meaning be adulterated by that demand.

[1] Lacan's word here, "la faute," is particularly difficult to put into English because of the great range of its potential equivalents – from wrong, error, mistake to blame, misconduct and offense – and because the most obvious choice does not have the moral resonances of the French. "The Attraction of the Fault" not only does not suggest anything, but even manages to sound like pidgin English. And the same is true of "The Universe of the Fault."

In speaking of the ethics of psychoanalysis, I chose a word which to my mind was no accident. I might have said "morality" instead. If I say "ethics," you will soon see why. It is not because I take pleasure in using a term that is less common.

1

Let us begin by noting this – something that, in a word, makes the subject eminently accessible and even tempting. It is my belief that no one who is involved with psychoanalysis has not been drawn to treat the subject of its ethics. I am not the one who created the expression. Moreover, it is impossible not to acknowledge that we are submerged in what are strictly speaking moral problems.

Our experience has led us to explore further than has been attempted before the universe of transgression. That is the expression which, with an extra adjective, my colleague Hesnard uses. He refers to the morbid universe of transgression. And it is doubtless from this morbid point of view that we approach it at its highest point.

In truth, that point of view is impossible to dissociate from the universe of transgression as such. And the link between transgression and morbidity has not failed in our time to mark with its seal all thought about morals. It is even strange sometimes – something I have drawn your attention to before in my asides – to see in religious circles a certain vertigo seize those who are engaged in thinking about moral questions when they come face to face with what our experience has to offer. It is remarkable to see how they, as it were, give in to the temptation of an excessive and even comic optimism, and start to think that a decline of morbidity might lead transgression to vanish.

In fact, what we are dealing with is nothing less than the attraction of transgression.

And what is this transgression? It is certainly not the same as the one the patient commits with the expectation of being punished or punishing himself. When we speak of the need for punishment, we are certainly referring to a transgression which is on the path of this need and which is sought out to obtain this punishment. But that way we are only carried a little further toward some yet more obscure transgression which calls for punishment.

Is it the transgression that Freud's work points to from the beginning, the murder of the father, the great myth that he places at the origin of the development of civilization? Or is it that even more obscure and original transgression for which he finds a name at the end of his work, in a word, the death instinct, to the extent that man finds himself anchored deep within to its formidable dialectic?

It is between these two terms that one finds in Freud a body of thought, a

development whose precise significance it will be our task to determine. But it is not, in truth, in the sphere either of practice or of theory that is to be found all that which makes me emphasize the importance of the ethical dimension in my experience and my teaching of Freud. In effect, as has been quite properly pointed out, not everything in ethics is simply related to the sense of obligation.

Moral experience as such, that is to say, the reference to sanctions, puts man in a certain relation to his own action that concerns not only an articulated law but also a direction, a trajectory, in a word, a good that he appeals to, thereby engendering an ideal of conduct. All that, too, properly speaking constitutes the dimension of ethics and is situated beyond the notion of a command, beyond what offers itself with a sense of obligation. That is why I believe it necessary to relate the dimension of our experience to the contribution of those who have attempted in our time to advance moral thought – I am, in fact, alluding to Fritz Rauh, whom we will be concerned with as one of our reference points in this exercise.

But I am certainly not one of those who gladly sets the sense of obligation aside. If there is, in fact, something that psychoanalysis has drawn attention to, it is, beyond the sense of obligation properly speaking, the importance, I would even say the omnipresence, of a sense of guilt. Certain internal tendencies of ethical thought attempt to evade what it must be said is this disagreeable aspect of moral experience. If I am certainly not one of those who attempt to soften, blunt, or attenuate the sense of guilt, it is because in my daily experience I am too insistently brought back to it and reminded of it.

It nevertheless remains true that analysis is the experience which has restored to favor in the strongest possible way the productive function of desire as such. This is so evidently the case that one can, in short, say that the genesis of the moral dimension in Freud's theoretical elaboration is located nowhere else than in desire itself. It is from the energy of desire that that agency is detached which at the end of its development will take the form of the censor.

Thus something is enclosed in a circle that was imposed on us, deduced from what is most characteristic in our experience.

A certain philosophy – it immediately preceded the one which is the nearest relative to the Freudian enterprise, the one which was transmitted to us in the nineteenth century – a certain eighteenth-century philosophy assumed as its task what might be called the naturalist liberation of desire. One might characterize this thought, this particularly practical thought, as that of the man of pleasure. Now the naturalist liberation of desire has failed. The more the theory, the more the work of social criticism, the more the sieve of that experience, which tended to limit obligation to certain precise functions in the social order, have raised in us the hope of relativizing the imperative, the contrary, or, in a word, conflictual character of moral experience, the more

we have, in fact, witnessed a growth in the incidence of genuine pathologies. The naturalist liberation of desire has failed historically. We do not find ourselves in the presence of a man less weighed down with laws and duties than before the great critical experience of so-called libertine thought.

If we find ourselves led to consider even in retrospect the experience of that man of pleasure – through reflection on what psychoanalysis has contributed to the knowledge and the circumstances of perverse experience – we will soon see that in truth everything in this moral theory was to destine it to failure.

In effect, although the experience of the man of pleasure presents itself with an ideal of naturalist liberation, one has only to read the major authors – I mean those who in expressing themselves on the subject have adopted the boldest approaches to libertinage, and even to eroticism itself – to realize that this experience contains a note of defiance, a kind of trial by ordeal in relation to that which remains the terminal point of this argument, an undoubtedly diminished but nevertheless fixed term. And that is nothing less than the divine term.

As the creator of nature, God is summoned to account for the extreme anomalies whose existence the Marquis de Sade, Mirabeau, and Diderot, among others, have drawn our attention to. This challenge, this summoning, this trial by ordeal ought not to allow any other way out than the one that was, in effect, realized historically. He who submits himself to the ordeal finds at the end its premises, namely, the Other to whom this ordeal is addressed, in the last analysis its Judge. That is precisely what gives its special tone to this literature, which presents us with the dimension of the erotic in a way that has never been achieved since, never equaled. In the course of our investigation, we definitely must submit to our judgment that which in analysis has retained an affinity with, a relationship to, and a common root with, such an experience.

Here we are touching on a prespective that has been little explored in analysis. It seems that from the moment of those first soundings, from the sudden flash of light that the Freudian experience cast on the paradoxical origins of desire, on the polymorphously perverse character of its infantile forms, a general tendency has led psychoanalysts to reduce the paradoxical origins in order to show their convergence in a harmonious conclusion. This movement has on the whole characterized the progress of analytical thought to the point where it is worth asking if this theoretical progress was not leading in the end to an even more all-embracing moralism than any that has previously existed. Psychoanalysis would seem to have as its sole goal the calming of guilt – although we know well through our practical experience the difficulties and obstacles, indeed the reactions, that such an approach entails. This approach involves the taming of perverse *jouissance,* which is assumed to emerge from

the demonstration of its universality, on the one hand, and its function, on the other.

No doubt the term "component," used for designating the perverse drive, is in this situation given its full weight. Last year we explored the expression "component drive"; in a whole section of our remarks we were concerned with the insights that analysis affords concerning the function of desire and with the deep finality of that really remarkable diversity, which explains the value of the catalogue of human instincts that analysis has allowed us to draw up.

Perhaps the question will only be seen in sharp relief, when one compares the position that our point of view of the term desire has led us to, with that which is, for example, articulated in the work of Aristotle in connection with ethics. I will give him an important place in my discussion, including particularly that work which lays out Aristotelian ethics in its most elaborate form, the *Nicomachean Ethics*. There are two points in Aristotle's work in which he shows how a whole register of desire is literally situated by him outside of the field of morality.

Where a certain category of desires is involved, there is, in effect, no ethical problem for Aristotle. Yet these very desires are nothing less than those notions that are situated in the forefront of our experience. A whole large field of what constitutes for us the sphere of sexual desires is simply classed by Aristotle in the realm of monstrous anomalies – he uses the term "bestiality" with reference to them. What occurs at this level has nothing to do with moral evaluation. The ethical questions that Aristotle raises are located altogether elsewhere – I will give you an idea later of their thrust and essence. That is a point of special importance.

On the other hand, if one believes that the whole of Aristotle's morality has lost none of its relevance for moral theory, then one can measure from that fact how subversive our experience is, since it serves to render his theory surprising, primitive, paradoxical and, in truth, incomprehensible.

But all that is just a stop on our journey. What I really want to do this morning is to give you an outline of this seminar.

2

We are faced with the question of what analysis allows us to formulate concerning the origin of morality.

Is its contribution limited to the elaboration of a mythology that is more credible and more secular than that which claims to be revealed? I have in mind the reconstructed mythology of *Totem and Taboo*, which starts out from the experience of the original murder of the father, from the circumstances that give rise to it and its consequences. From this point of view, it is the

transformation of the energy of desire which makes possible the idea of the genesis of its repression. As a result, the transgression is not in this instance just something which is imposed on us in a formal way; it is instead something worthy of our praise, *felix culpa,* since it is at the origin of a higher complexity, something to which the realm of civilization owes its development.

In short, is everything limited to the genesis of the superego whose description is formulated, perfected, deepened, and made more complex as Freud's work progresses? We will see that this genesis of the superego is not simply a psychogenesis and a sociogenesis. Indeed, it is impossible to articulate it by limiting oneself merely to the register of collective needs. Something is imposed there whose jurisdiction is to be distinguished from pure and simple social necessity – it is properly speaking something whose unique scope I am trying to make you appreciate here in terms of the relation to the signifier and to the law of discourse. We must maintain the autonomy of this term if we want to be able to locate our experience precisely or simply correctly.

Here no doubt the distinction between culture and society contains something that might appear new or even divergent in comparison with what is found in a certain kind of teaching of the analytical experience. I hope, in fact, to point out to you the references to such a distinction and the scope they occupy in Freud himself, a distinction whose authority I am far from alone in promoting or emphasizing the need for.

And in order to draw your attention immediately to the work in which we will take up the problem, I refer you to *Civilization and Its Discontents,* published in 1922 and written by Freud after the working out of his second topic, that is to say after he had placed in the foreground the highly problematic notion of the death instinct. You will find expressed there in striking phrases the idea that what, in brief, happens in the progress of civilization, those discontents that are to be explored, is situated, as far as man is concerned, far above him – the man involved here being the one who finds himself at that turning point in history where Freud himself and his work are situated. We will come back to the significance of Freud's formula and I will draw your attention to its significance in the text. But I believe it to be important enough for me to point it out to you right away, and already sufficiently illuminated in my teaching, where I show the originality of the Freudian conversion in the relation of man to the logos.

This *Civilization and Its Discontents* that I invite you to get to know or to reread in the context of Freud's work is not just a set of notes. It is not the kind of thing one grants a practitioner or a scientist somewhat indulgently, as his way of making an excursion into philosophical inquiry without our giving it all the technical importance one would accord to such a thought coming from someone who considers himself to belong to the category of

philosopher. Such a view of this work of Freud's is widespread among psychoanalysts and is definitely to be rejected. *Civilization and Its Discontents* is an indispensable work, unsurpassed for an understanding of Freud's thought and the summation of his experience. It illuminates, emphasizes, dissipates the ambiguities of wholly distinct points of the analytical experience and of what our view of man should be – given that it is with man, with an immemorial human demand, that we have to deal on a daily basis in our experience.

As I have already said, moral experience is not limited to that acceptance of necessity, to that form in which such experience presents itself in every individual case. Moral experience is not simply linked to that slow recognition of the function that was defined and made autonomous by Freud under the term of superego, nor to that exploration of its paradoxes, to what I have called the obscene and ferocious figure in which the moral agency appears when we seek it at its root.

The moral experience involved in psychoanalysis is the one that is summed up in the original imperative proposed in what might be called the Freudian ascetic experience, namely, that *Wo es war, soll Ich werden* with which Freud concludes the second part of his *Vorlesungen (Introductory Lectures)* on psychoanalysis. The root of this is given in an experience that deserves the term "moral experience," and is found at the very beginning of the entry of the patient into analysis.

That "I" which is supposed to come to be where "it" was, and which analysis has taught us to evaluate, is nothing more than that whose root we already found in the "I" which asks itself what it wants. It is not only questioned, but as it progresses in its experience, it asks itself that question and asks it precisely in the place where strange, paradoxical, and cruel commands are suggested to it by its morbid experience.

Will it or will it not submit itself to the duty that it feels within like a stranger, beyond, at another level? Should it or should it not submit itself to the half-unconscious, paradoxical, and morbid command of the superego, whose jurisdiction is moreover revealed increasingly as the analytical exploration goes forward and the patient sees that he is committed to its path?

If I may put it thus, isn't its true duty to oppose that command? One finds here something which belongs to the givens of our experience as well as to the givens of preanalysis. It is enough to see how the experience of an obsessional is structured at the beginning to know that the enigma concerning the term "duty" as such is always already formulated even before he formulates the demand for help, which is what he goes into analysis for.

In truth, although the response to the problem that we are proposing here is obviously illustrated in the conflict of an obsessional, it nevertheless has a universal validity; that is why there are different ethics and there is ethical

thought. It is not simply the philsosopher's thought alone that seeks to justify duty, that duty on which we have shed a variety of light – genetical and originary, for example. The justification of that which presents itself with an immediate feeling of obligation, the justification of duty as such – not simply in one or other of its commands, but in the form imposed – is at the heart of an inquiry that is universal.

Are we analysts simply something that welcomes the suppliant then, something that gives him a place of refuge? Are we simply, but it is already a lot, something that must respond to a demand, to the demand not to suffer, at least without understanding why? – in the hope that through understanding the subject will be freed not only from his ignorance, but also from suffering itself.

Isn't it obvious that analytical ideals are normally to be found here? They are certainly not lacking. They grow in abundance. The evaluation, location, situation, and organization of values, as they say in a certain register of moral thought, that we propose to our patients, and around which we organize the assessments of their progress and the transformation of their way into a path, is supposed to be part of our work. For the moment I will mention three of these ideals.

The first is the ideal of human love.

Do I need to emphasize the role that we attribute to a certain idea of "love fulfilled"? That is an expression you must have learned to recognize and not only here, since, in truth, there is hardly an analyst who writes who has not drawn attention to it. And you know that I have often taken aim at the approximative and vague character, so tainted with an optimistic moralism, which marks the original articulations taking the form of the genitalization of desire. That is the ideal of genital love – a love that is supposed to be itself alone the model of a satisfying object relation: doctor-love, I would say if I wanted to emphasize in a comical way the tone of this ideology; love as hygiene, I would say, to suggest what analytical ambition seems to be limited to here.

It is a problem that I will not expand on indefinitely, since I have not stopped making you think about it since this seminar began. But so as to give it a more marked emphasis, I will point out that analytical thought seems to shirk its task when faced with the convergent character of our experience. This character is certainly not deniable, but the analyst seems to find in it a limit beyond which it is difficult for him to go. To say that the problems of moral experience are entirely resolved as far as monogamous union is concerned would be a formulation that is imprudent, excessive, and inadequate.

Analysis has brought a very important change of perspective on love by placing it at the center of ethical experience; it has also brought an original note, which was certainly different from the way in which love had previously been viewed by the *moralistes* and the philosophers in the economy of inter-

human relations. Why then has analysis not gone further in the direction of the investigation of what should properly be called an erotics? That is something that deserves reflection.

In this connection the topic I have placed on the agenda of our forthcoming conference, namely, feminine sexuality, is one of the clearest of signs in the development of analysis of the lack I am referring to with regard to such an investigation. It is hardly necessary to recall what Jones learned from a source that to my mind is not especially qualified, but which, believe it or not, is nevertheless supposed at the very least to have transmitted in his exact words what it heard from Freud's own mouth. Jones tells us that this person told him confidentially that one day Freud said something like "After some thirty years of experience and thought, there is still one question to which I am still unable to find an answer; it is 'Was will das Weib?' " What does woman want? Or more precisely, "What does she desire?" The term "will" in this expression may have that meaning in German.

Have we gone much further on that subject? It will not be a waste of time if I show you the kind of avoidance that the progress of research in analysis has practiced in answering a question that cannot be said to have been invented by it. Let us just say that analysis, and the thought of Freud in particular, is connected to a time that articulated this question with a special emphasis. The Ibsenian context of the end of the nineteenth century in which Freud's thought matured cannot be overlooked here. And it is, in brief, very strange that analytical experience has if anything stifled, silenced, and evaded those areas of the problem of sexuality which relate to the point of view of feminine demand.

The second ideal, which is equally as remarkable in analytical experience, is what I shall call the ideal of authenticity.

I do not think I need to emphasize it particularly. It will not have escaped you that if psychoanalysis is a technique of unmasking, it presupposes such a point of view. But, in fact, it goes further than that.

It is not simply as a path, stage, or measure of progress that authenticity suggests itself to us; it is also quite simply as a certain norm for the finished product, as something desirable and, therefore, as a value. It is an ideal, but one on which we are led to impose clinical norms that are very precise. I will illustrate the point in the very subtle observations of Helene Deutsch concerning a type of character and of personality that one cannot describe as maladjusted or as failing to meet any of the norms demanded by social relations, but whose whole attitude and behavior are visible in the recognition – of whom? – of the other, of others, as if marked by that note that she calls in English "as if," and which in German is "als ob." I am touching here on the point that a certain register – which is not defined and is not simple and cannot be situated other than from a moral perspective – is present, control-

ling, insisted on in all our experience, and that it is necessary to calculate to what extent we are adequate to it.

That something harmonious, that full presence whose lack we as clinicians can so precisely gauge – doesn't our technique stop half-way toward what is required to achieve it, the technique that I have christened "unmasking"? Wouldn't it be interesting to wonder about the significance of our absence from the field of what might be called a science of virtues, a practical reason, the sphere of common sense? For in truth one cannot say that we ever intervene in the field of any virtue. We clear ways and paths, and we hope that what is called virtue will take root there.

Similarly, we have recently forged a third ideal, which I am not sure belongs to the original space of analytical experience, the ideal of non-dependence or, more precisely, of a kind of prophylaxis of dependence.

Isn't there a limit there, too, a fine boundary, which separates what we indicate to an adult subject as desirable in this register and the means we accord ourselves in our interventions so that he achieves it?

It is enough to remember the fundamental, constitutive reservations of the Freudian position concerning education in the broad sense. There is no doubt that all of us, and child analysts in particular, are led to encroach on this domain, to practice in the space of what I have called elsewhere an orthopedics in its etymological sense. But it is nevertheless striking that both in the means we employ and in the theoretical competence we insist on, the ethics of analysis – for there is one – involves effacement, setting aside, withdrawal, indeed, the absence of a dimension that one only has to mention in order to realize how much separates us from all ethical thought that preceded us. I mean the dimension of habits, good and bad habits.

It is something we refer to very little because psychoanalytic thought defines itself in very different terms, in terms of traumas and their persistence. We have obviously learned to decompose a given trauma, impression, or mark, but the very essence of the unconscious is defined in a different register from the one which Aristotle emphasizes in the *Ethics* in a play on words, ἔθος / ἦθος.[2]

There are extremely subtle distinctions that may be centered on the notion of character. Ethics for Aristotle is a science of character: the building of character, the dynamics of habits and, even more, action with relation to habits, training, education. You must take a look at his exemplary work, if only to understand the difference between our modes of thought and those of one of the most eminent forms of ethical thought.

[2] Both ἦθος and ἔθος derive from a Greek verb meaning "to repeat." Their meanings came to be differentiated insofar as ἦθος is active and refers to the capacity of creatures to form habits, whereas ἔθος connotes a condition in a passive sense.

3

So as to emphasize what today's premises are leading us toward, I will simply note that although the topics on which I have attempted to open up different perspectives are varied, I will try next time to start from a radical position. In order to point out the originality of the Freudian position in ethical matters, I must underline a slippage or a change of attitude relative to the question of morality as such.

In Aristotle the problem is that of a good, of a Sovereign Good. We will have to consider why he emphasized the problem of pleasure, its function in the mental economy of ethics from the beginning. It is something that we cannot avoid, not least because it is the reference point of the Freudian theory concerning the two systems φ and ψ, the two psychical agencies that he called the primary and secondary processes.

Is the same pleasure function at work in both of these articulations? It is almost impossible to isolate this difference if we do not realize what took place in the interval. Even if it is not my role and if the place I occupy here doesn't seem to make it obligatory, I will not, in fact, be able to avoid a certain inquiry into historical progress.

It is at this point that I must refer to those guiding terms, those terms of reference which I use, namely, the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real.

More than once at the time when I was discussing the symbolic and the imaginary and their reciprocal interaction, some of you wondered what after all was "the real." Well, as odd as it may seem to that superficial opinion which assumes any inquiry into ethics must concern the field of the ideal, if not of the unreal, I, on the contrary, will proceed instead from the other direction by going more deeply into the notion of the real. Insofar as Freud's position constitutes progress here, the question of ethics is to be articulated from the point of view of the location of man in relation to the real. To appreciate this, one has to look at what occurred in the interval between Aristotle and Freud.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was the utilitarian conversion or reversion. We can define this moment – one that was no doubt fully conditioned historically – in terms of a radical decline of the function of the master, a function that obviously governs all of Aristotle's thought and determines its persistence over the centuries. It is in Hegel that we find expressed an extreme devalorization of the position of the master, since Hegel turns him into the great dupe, the magnificent cuckold of historical development, given that the virtue of progress passes by way of the vanquished, which is to say, of the slave, and his work. Originally, when he existed in his plenitude in Aristotle's time, the master was something very different from

the Hegelian fiction, which is nothing more than his obverse, his negation, the sign of his disappearance. It is shortly before that terminal moment that in the wake of a certain revolution affecting interhuman relations, so-called utilitarian thought arose, and it is far from being made up of the pure and simple platitudes one imagines.

It is not just a matter of a thought that asks which goods are available on the market to be distributed and the best way to effect the distribution. One finds there an investigation of something of which Mr. Jakobson, who is here today, first found the key, the little latch, in a hint he gave me concerning the interest of a work of Jeremy Bentham's that is ordinarily neglected in the summary of his contribution traditionally given.

This personage is far from meriting the discredit, indeed the ridicule, which a certain critical philosophy might formulate concerning his role in the history of the development of ethics. We will see that it is in relation to a critical philosophy or, more properly, a linguistic one that his thought is developed. It is impossible to measure so well anywhere else the emphasis given in the course of this revolution to the term real, which in his thought is placed in opposition to the English term "fictitious."[3]

"Fictitious" does not mean illusory or deceptive as such. It is far from being translatable into French by "fictif," although this is something that the man who was the key to his success on the continent, Etienne Dumont, did not fail to do – he was also responsible for popularizing Bentham's thought. "Fictitious" means "fictif" but, as I have already explained to you, in the sense that every truth has the structure of fiction.

Bentham's effort is located in the dialectic of the relationship of language to the real so as to situate the good – pleasure in this case, which, as we will see, he articulates in a manner that is very different from Aristotle – on the side of the real. And it is within this opposition between fiction and reality that is to be found the rocking motion of Freudian experience.

Once the separation between the fictitious and the real has been effected, things are no longer situated where one might expect. In Freud the characteristic of pleasure, as that dimension which binds man, is to be found on the side of the fictitious. The fictitious is not, in effect, in its essence that which deceives, but is precisely what I call the symbolic.

That the unconscious is structured as a function of the symbolic, that it is the return of a sign that the pleasure principle makes man seek out, that the pleasurable element in that which directs man in his behavior without his knowledge (namely, that which gives him pleasure, because it is a form of euphony), that that which one seeks and finds again is the trace rather than the trail – one has to appreciate the great importance of all of this in Freud's

[3] In English in the original.

thought, if one is to understand the function of reality.

Certainly Freud leaves no doubt, any more than Aristotle, that what man is seeking, his goal, is happiness. It's odd that in almost all languages happiness offers itself in terms of a meeting – τυχη. Except in English and even there it's very close. A kind of favorable divinity is involved. *Bonheur* in French suggests to us *augurum,* a good sign and a fortunate encounter. *Glück* is the same as *gelück.* "Happiness" is after all "happen"[4]; it, too, is an encounter, even if one does not feel the need to add the prefix, which strictly speaking indicates the happy character of the thing.

It is nevertheless not clear that all these terms are synonyms – I hardly need to remind you of the story of the individual who emigrated from Germany to America and who was asked, "Are you happy?" "Oh, yes, I am very happy," he answered, "I am really very, very happy, *aber nicht glücklich!*"

It does not escape Freud's attention that happiness as far as we are concerned is what must be offered as the goal of our striving, however ethical it might be. But what stands out clearly – in spite of the fact that it is not given sufficient importance on the grounds that we cease to listen to a man as soon as he steps outside his sphere of expertise – is that I prefer to read in *Civilization and Its Discontents* the idea Freud expresses there concerning happiness, namely, that absolutely nothing is prepared for it, either in the macrocosm or the microcosm.

That is the point which is completely new. Aristotle's thought on the subject of pleasure embodies the idea that pleasure has something irrefutable about it, and that it is situated at the guiding pole of human fulfillment, insofar as if there is something divine in man, it is in his bond to nature.

You should consider how far that notion of nature is different from ours, since it involves the exclusion of all bestial desires from what is properly speaking human fulfillment. Since Aristotle's time we have experienced a complete reversal of point of view. As far as Freud is concerned, everything that moves toward reality requires a certain tempering, a lowering of tone, of what is properly speaking the energy of pleasure.

That has a huge importance, although it may seem to you as men of our time rather banal. I have even heard it said that Lacan doesn't say much more than "The king is naked." Perhaps after all I was the one referred to, but let us assume the best, namely, that it had to do with my teaching. Of course, I do teach in a somewhat more humorous way than my critic thinks – I don't under the circumstances have to reflect on his hidden intentions. If I do say "The king is naked," it is not in the same way as the child who is supposed to have exposed the universal illusion, but more in the manner of Alphonse Allais, who gathered a crowd around him by announcing in a sono-

[4] In English in the original.

rous voice, "How shocking! Look at that woman! Beneath her dress she's stark naked!" Yet in truth I don't even say that.

If the king is, in fact, naked, it is only insofar as he is so beneath a certain number of clothes – no doubt fictitious but nevertheless essential to his nudity. And in connection with these clothes, as another good story of Alphonse Allais demonstrates, his very nakedness might never be naked enough. After all, a king can be skinned alive as easily as a female dancer.

In truth, the point of view of this absolutely closed character reminds us of the way in which the fictions of desire are organized. It is in this respect that the formulas I gave you last year on the fantasm are significant and that the notion of desire as desire of the Other assumes its full weight.

I will end today with a note concerning the *Traumdeutung (The Interpretation of Dreams)* taken from the *Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. A second factor that guides us, writes Freud, one that is much more important and is completely overlooked by the layman, is the following. It is certainly true that the satisfaction of a wish does give pleasure but, as is well known, the dreamer – I don't think I am going too far when I find here a Lacanian emphasis in a certain way of posing the problem – does not have a simple and unambiguous relationship to his wish. He rejects it, he censures it, he doesn't want it. Here we encounter the essential dimension of desire – it is always desire in the second degree, desire of desire.

In truth, we can expect Freudian analysis to create a little order in that sphere to which critical thought has turned in recent years, namely, the famous, indeed over-famous, theory of values – the very one that allows one of its proponents to say that the value of a thing is its desirability. Pay attention now – the point is to know if it is worthy of being desired, if it is desirable for one to desire it. The result is a kind of catalogue that in many ways might be compared to a second-hand clothes store in which one finds piled up the different judgments that down through the ages and up to our time have dominated human aspirations in their diversity and even their chaos.

The structure embodied in the imaginary relation as such, by reason of the fact that narcissistic man enters as a double into the dialectic of fiction, will perhaps find its explanation at the end of the inquiry we are conducting this year into the ethics of psychoanalysis. In the end you will see emerge the question posed by the fundamental character of masochism in the economy of the instincts.

No doubt something should remain open relative to the place we currently occupy in the development of erotics and to the treatment to be given, not simply to one individual or other, but to civilization and its discontents. Perhaps we should give up the hope of any genuine innovation in the field of ethics – and to a certain extent one might say that a sign of this is to be found

in the fact that, in spite of all our theoretical progress, we haven't even been able to create a single new perversion. But it would be a definite sign that we have really arrived at the heart of the problem of existing perversions, if we managed to deepen our understanding of the economic role of masochism.

Since it is useful to give oneself a goal that is attainable, that will, I hope, in the end be the point with which we will conclude this year.

November 18, 1959

INTRODUCTION TO THE THING

II

Pleasure and reality

THE MORAL AGENCY ACTUALIZES THE REAL
INERTIA AND RECTIFICATION
REALITY IS PRECARIOUS
OPPOSITION AND INTERSECTION OF THE PRINCIPLES

Honey is what I am trying to bring you, the honey of my reflections on something that, my goodness, I have been doing for a number of years and which is beginning to add up, but which, as time goes by, ends up not being that much out of proportion with the time you devote to it yourselves.

If the communication effect here sometimes presents difficulties, reflect on the experience of honey. Honey is either very hard or very fluid. If it's hard, it is difficult to cut, since there are no natural breaks. If it's very liquid, it is suddenly all over the place – I assume that you are all familiar with the experience of eating honey in bed at breakfast time.

Hence the problem of pots. The honey pot is reminiscent of the mustard pot that I have already dealt with. The two have exactly the same meaning now that we no longer imagine that the hexagons in which we tend to store our harvest have a natural relationship to the structure of the world. Consequently, the question we are raising is in the end always the same, i.e., what is the significance of the word?

This year we are more specifically concerned with realizing how the ethical question of our practice is intimately related to one that we have been in a position to glimpse for some time, namely, that the deep dissatisfaction we find in every psychology – including the one we have founded thanks to psychoanalysis – derives from the fact that it is nothing more than a mask, and sometimes even an alibi, of the effort to focus on the problem of our own action – something that is the essence and very foundation of all ethical reflection. In other words, we need to know if we have managed to do anything more than take a small step outside ethics and if, like the other psychologies, our own is simply another development of ethical reflection, of the search for a guide or a way, that in the last analysis may be formulated as follows: "Given our condition as men, what must we do in order to act in the right way?"

This reminder seems to me difficult to disagree with, when every day of

our lives our action suggests to us that we are not far removed from that. Of course, things present themselves differently to us. Our way of introducing this action, of presenting and justifying it, is different. Its beginning is characterized by features of demand, appeal and urgency, whose specialized meaning places us closer to earth as far as the idea of the articulation of an ethics is concerned. But that does not change the fact that we may in the end, or at any point whatsoever, discover such an articulation once again in its completeness – the kind of articulation that has always given both meaning and arguments to those who have reflected on morals and have tried to elaborate their different ethics.

1

Last time I sketched an outline of what I wish to cover this year. It extends from the recognition of the omnipresence of the moral imperative, of its infiltration into all our experience, to the other pole, that is to say, the pleasure in a second degree we may paradoxically find there, namely, moral masochism.

In passing, I pointed out the unexpected and original approach I intend to develop with reference to those fundamental categories of the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real, that I use to orient you in your experience. My thesis, as I already indicated – and don't be surprised if it first appears confused, since it is the development of my argument that will give it weight – my thesis is that the moral law, the moral command, the presence of the moral agency in our activity, insofar as it is structured by the symbolic, is that through which the real is actualized – the real as such, the weight of the real.

A thesis that may appear to be both a trivial truth and a paradox. My thesis involves the idea that the moral law affirms itself in opposition to pleasure, and we can sense that to speak of the real in connection with the moral law seems to put into question the value of what we normally include in the notion of the ideal. Thus for the moment I will not attempt to polish further the blade of my argument, since what will likely constitute the thrust of my purpose has precisely to do with the meaning to be given to the term real – within that system of categories that I profess as a function of our practice as analysts.

That meaning isn't immediately accessible, although those among you who have wondered about the final significance I might give the term will nevertheless have already noticed that its meaning must have some relationship to that movement which traverses the whole of Freud's thought. It is a movement which makes him start with a first opposition between reality principle and pleasure principle in order, after a series of vacillations, oscillations and

imperceptible changes in his references, to conclude at the end of the theoretic formulations by positing something beyond the pleasure principle that might well leave us wondering how it relates to the first opposition. Beyond the pleasure principle we encounter that opaque surface which to some has seemed so obscure that it is the antimony of all thought – not just biological but scientific in general – the surface that is known as the death instinct.

What is the death instinct? What is this law beyond all law, that can only be posited as a final structure, as a vanishing point of any reality that might be attained? In the coupling of pleasure principle and reality principle, the reality principle might seem to be a prolongation or an application of the pleasure principle. But, on the other hand, this dependent and limited position seems to cause something to emerge, something which controls in the broadest of senses the whole of our relationship to the world. It is this unveiling, this rediscovery, that *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is about. And in this process, this progress, we see before our eyes the problematic character of that which Freud posits under the term reality.

Is it a question of daily reality, of immediate, social reality? Of conformity to established categories or accepted practices? Of the reality discovered by science or of the one which is yet to be discovered? Is it psychic reality?

It is on the road to the investigation of this reality that we find ourselves as analysts, and it leads us a long way from something that can be expressed under the category of wholeness. It leads us into a special area, that of psychic reality, which presents itself to us with the problematic character of a previously unequaled order.

I will, therefore, begin by attempting to explore the function that the term reality played in the thought of the inventor of psychoanalysis and, at the same time, in our own thought, the thought of those of us who have followed in his path. On the other hand, I will straight away point out to those who might be inclined to forget it, or who might think that I am following in this direction only by referring to the moral imperative in our experience – I will point out that moral action poses problems for us precisely to the extent that if analysis prepares us for it, it also in the end leaves us standing at the door.

Moral action is, in effect, grafted on to the real. It introduces something new into the real and thereby opens a path in which the point of our presence is legitimized. How is it that psychoanalysis prepares us for such action, if it is indeed true that this is the case? How is it that psychoanalysis leaves us ready, so to speak, to get down to work? And why does it lead us in that way? Why, too, does it stop at the threshold? That's where one finds the other pole on which I will focus what I hope to formulate here – it being understood that what I pointed to last time constitutes the limits of the things I have to say – and the extent to which we claim to be able to formulate an ethics. I will say right off that the ethical limits of psychoanalysis coincide

with the limits of its practice. Its practice is only a preliminary to moral action as such – the so-called action being the one through which we enter the real.

Among all those who have undertaken the analysis of an ethics before me, Aristotle is to be classed among the most exemplary and certainly the most valid. Reading him is an exciting activity and I cannot recommend too highly that by way of an exercise you find out for yourselves – you will not be bored for a moment. Read the *Nicomachaen Ethics*, which of all his treatises scholars seem to attribute to him with the least hesitation and which is certainly the most readable. There are no doubt a number of difficulties to be found at the level of the text, in its digressions and in the order of his arguments. But skip over the passages that seem too complicated or acquire an edition with good notes that refers you to what it is sometimes essential to know about his logic in order to understand the problems that he raises. Above all, don't overburden yourself by trying to grasp everything paragraph by paragraph. Try instead to read him from beginning to end and you will certainly be rewarded.

One thing at least will emerge, something that to some extent the work has in common with all the other ethics – it tends to refer to an order. This order presents itself first of all as a science, an ἐπιστήμη, the science of what has to be done, the uncontested order which defines the norm of a certain character, ἔθος. Thus the problem is raised of the way in which that order may be established in a subject. How can a form of adequation be achieved in a subject so that he will enter that order and submit himself to it?

The establishment of an ἦθος is posited as differentiating a living being from an inanimate, inert being. As Aristotle points out, no matter how often you throw a stone in the air, it will never acquire the habit of its trajectory; man, on the other hand, acquires habits – that's what is meant by ἦθος. And this ἦθος has to be made to conform to the ἤθος, that is to an order that from the point of view of Aristotle's logic has to be brought together in a Sovereign Good, a point of insertion, attachment or convergence, in which a particular order is unified with a more universal knowledge, in which ethics becomes politics, and beyond that with an imitation of the cosmic order. The notions of macrocosm and microcosm are presupposed from the beginning in Aristotle's thought.

It is then a question of having a subject conform to something which in the real is not contested as presupposing the paths of that order. What is the problem constantly taken up and posed within Aristotelian ethics? Let us start with him who possesses this science. Of course, the one whom Aristotle addresses, that is the pupil or disciple, by the very fact that he listens is supposed to participate in this scientific discourse. The discourse in question, the ὀρθὸς λόγος, the right discourse, the appropriate discourse, is therefore already introduced by the very fact that the ethical question is posed. In that way the problem is clearly returned to the point where Socrates had left it

with an excessive optimism that did not fail to strike his immediate successors – if the rule of action is in ὀρθὸς λόγος, if there can be no good action except in conformity with the latter, how is it possible that what Aristotle calls intemperance can survive? How is it possible that a subject's impulses draw him elsewhere? How is that to be explained?

However superficial this demand for an explanation may seem to us, since we believe we know so much more about the matter, it nevertheless constitutes the greater part of the substance of Aristotle's thought in the *Ethics*. I will come back to this later in connection with Freud's reflections on the same topic.

For Aristotle the problem is delimited by the conditions imposed by a certain human ideal that I already briefly referred to in passing as that of the master. It is a question for him of elucidating the relationship that may exist between ἀκολασία, intemperance, and the fault revealed relative to the essential virtue of the master, that is of the man whom Aristotle is addressing.

I think I indicated enough last time that the master in antiquity isn't exactly the heroic brute who is represented in the Hegelian dialectic, and who functions for Hegel as an axis and turning point. I will not elaborate here on what is representative of the type; it is enough to know that it is something that enables us to appreciate properly the contribution of Aristotle's ethics. This comment undoubtedly causes us to set limits on the value of his ethics, to historicize them, but one would be wrong to assume that that is the only conclusion to draw. From an Aristotelian perspective, the master in antiquity is a presence, a human condition joined in a much less narrowly critical way to the slave, than Hegel's perspective affirms. In fact, the problem posed is one that goes unresolved from an Hegelian perspective, that of a society of masters.

Other comments, too, may contribute equally to limit the significance for us of Aristotle's ethics. Note for example that the ideal of this master, like that of god at the center of an Aristotelian world governed by νοῦς, seems to be to avoid work as much as possible. I mean to leave the control of his slaves to his steward in order to concentrate on a contemplative ideal without which the ethics doesn't achieve its proper aim. That tells you how much idealization there is in the point of view of Aristotelian ethics.

Consequently, his ethics is localized, I would almost say limited to a social type, to a privileged representative of leisure – the very term σχολαστικός suggests it. Yet, on the other hand, it is all the more striking to realize how an ethics articulated within such specific conditions still remains full of resonances and lessons. The schemas it proposes are not useless. They may be found in partially unrecognizable forms at the level of our approach to Freud's experience. These schemas may be recomposed or transposed in such a way that we will not be putting our new honey into the same old containers.

One can say right off that the search for a way, for a truth, is not absent from our experience. For what else are we seeking in analysis if not a liberating truth?

But we must be careful. One must not always trust words and labels. This truth that we are seeking in a concrete experience is not that of a superior law. If the truth that we are seeking is a truth that frees, it is a truth that we will look for in a hiding place in our subject. It is a particular truth.

But if the form of its articulation that we find is the same in everyone though always different, it is because it appears to everyone in its intimate specificity with the character of an imperious *Wunsch*. Nothing can be compared to it that allows it to be judged from the outside. The quality that best characterizes it is that of being the true *Wunsch*, which was at the origin of an aberrant or atypical behavior.

We encounter this *Wunsch* with its particular, irreducible character as a modification that presupposes no other form of normalization than that of an experience of pleasure or of pain, but of a final experience from whence it springs and is subsequently preserved in the depths of the subject in an irreducible form. The *Wunsch* does not have the character of a universal law but, on the contrary, of the most particular of laws – even if it is universal that this particularity is to be found in every human being. We find it in a form that we have categorized as a regressive, infantile, unrealistic phase, characterized by a thought abandoned to desire, by desire taken to be reality.

That surely constitutes the text of our experience. But is that the whole of our discovery, is that the whole of our morality? That attenuation, that exposure to the light of day, that discovery of the thought of desire, of the truth of that thought? Do we expect that as a result of its mere disclosure the area will be swept clean for a different thought? In one way, it is indeed so, it is as simple as that. Yet at the same time if we formulate things thus, then everything remains veiled for us.

If the reward or the novelty of the psychoanalytic experience were limited to that, it wouldn't go much further than the dated notion that was born long before psychoanalysis, namely, that the child is father of the man. The phrase comes from Wordsworth, the English romantic poet, and is quoted respectfully by Freud.

It is no accident that we discover it in that period with its fresh, shattering, and even breathtaking quality, bursting forth at the beginning of the nineteenth century with the industrial revolution, in the country that was most advanced in experiencing its effects, in England. English romanticism has its own special features, which include the value given to childhood memories, to the whole world of childhood, to the ideals and wishes of the child. And the poets of the time drew on this not only for the source of their inspiration, but also for the development of their principal themes – in this respect they

are radically different from the poets who preceded them and especially from that wonderful poetry of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, which for a reason that escapes me is called metaphysical.

That reference to childhood, the idea of the child in man, the idea that something demands that a man be something other than a child, but that the demands of the child as such are perpetually felt in him, all of that in the sphere of psychology can be historically situated.

Another man who lived in the first half of the nineteenth century, a Victorian from the early period, the historian Macaulay, noted that at the time, rather than call you a dishonest man or a perfect idiot, one preferred the excellent weapon of affirming that your mind was not fully adult, that you retained characteristics of a juvenile mentality. This attitude, which is historically datable since you find no evidence of it in any previous history, is the sign of an interval, a break in historical development. In Pascal's time, when one speaks of childhood, it is simply to say that a child is not a man. And if one speaks of adult thought, it is in no way in order to discover there traces of infantile thought.

For us, the question is not posed in those terms. If we do nevertheless constantly pose it thus, if it is justified by the contents and the text of our relationship to the neurotic and by the reference in our experience to individual genesis, this also disguises what lies behind it. For in the end, no matter how true it may be, there is a very different tension between the thought that we have to deal with in the unconscious and the thought that we characterize, goodness knows why, as adult. We constantly come upon the fact that this adult thought runs out of steam relative to the famous child's thought that we use to judge our adult. We use it not as a foil, but as a reference point, a vanishing point, where unfulfillments and even degradations come together and reach their end. There is a perpetual contradiction in the reference we make to these things.

Before coming here today I read in Jones a kind of celebration of the sublime virtues of social pressure, without which our contemporaries, our fellow humans, would be vain, egotistical, sordid, sterile, etc. One is tempted to comment in the margin, "What are they but that?" And when we speak of the adult human being, what is our reference? Where is this model of the adult human being?

These considerations incite us to reexamine the true, solid backbone of Freud's thought. No doubt psychoanalysis has ended up ordering all the material of its experience in terms of an ideal development. But at its beginning it finds its terms in a wholly different system of references, to which development and genesis only give intermittent support – this is, I believe, something that I have made you appreciate sufficiently, even if I am obliged on this occasion to refer to it only in passing. The fundamental reference is

the tension or, to designate it finally by its name, the opposition between the primary process and the secondary process, between the pleasure principle and the reality principle.

2

Freud in the course of his so-called auto-analysis writes in a short letter, it is number 73: "*Meine Analyse geht weiter,* my analysis continues. It is my principal interest, *meine Hauptinteresse.* Everything remains obscure, even the problems involved, but there is a feeling of comfort. It is as if," he writes, "one had only to reach into a larder and take what one wanted. The unpleasant thing," he says, "are the *Stimmungen,*" in the most general sense we can give to that word, which has a special resonance in German, namely, moods or feelings, which by their very nature cover, hide – what precisely? *Die Wirklichkeit,* reality.

It is in terms of *Wirklichkeit* that Freud questions what presents itself to him as a *Stimmung.* The *Stimmung* is that which reveals to him what he has to look for in his auto-analysis, what he is questioning, the moment when he has the feeling of having, as in a dark room, in a larder or *Vorratskammer,* everything he needs, and that it is waiting there for him, in store for him. But he isn't led toward it by his *Stimmungen.* Such is the meaning of his sentence – the most unpleasant experience, *das Unangenehmste,* is the *Stimmungen.* Freud's experience begins with the search for the reality that is somewhere inside himself. And it is this that constitutes the originality of his point of departure. Moreover, he adds in the same vein that "even sexual excitement is for someone like me unusable in this approach. Even there I do not trust myself to see where are the final realities." And he adds, "I maintain my good humor in this whole business." Before achieving results, we must be patient a little longer.

I bring to your attention in passing a recent little book by Erich Fromm that I won't say I recommend to you, since it is a strangely discordant, almost insidious work, that is close to being defamatory. It is called *Sigmund Freud's Mission* and it makes insinuating points that are not without interest and that concern the special traits of Freud's personality, invariably seen from an obviously belittling point of view. In particular, he selects from the text Freud's sentences on sexual excitation in order to have us draw the conclusion that by the age of forty Freud was already impotent.

We are now in a position to analyze Freud's 1895 manuscript concerning his fundamental conception of the structure of the psyche, a manuscript that chance has placed in our hands. He had thought of calling it *Psychology for the Use of Neurologists.* Since he never published it, the draft remained attached

to a packet of letters to Fliess, and it is available to us thanks to the acquisition of these collections.

It is, therefore, not only proper but necessary that we begin at that point our analysis of the meaning in Freud's thought of the thematics of the reality principle in opposition to the pleasure principle. Is there or is there not something distinctive relative to the development of his thought there, and at the same time to the directions taken by our own experience? It is here that we may find that hidden backbone which, I believe, is required on this occasion.

The opposition between the pleasure principle and the reality principle was rearticulated throughout Freud's work – 1895, the *Entwurf (Project for a Scientific Psychology);* 1900, Chapter VII of the *Traumdeutung,* with the first public rearticulation of the so-called primary and secondary processes, the one governed by the pleasure principle and the other by the reality principle; 1914, return to the article from which I selected the dream that I discussed at length last year, the dream of the dead father, "he didn't know"; the article, "Formulieringen über die Zwei Prinzipen des Psychischen Geschehens," that one might translate as "Of the Structure of the Psyche"; 1930, that *Civilization and Its Discontents* which, I promised you, we will get to by way of conclusion.

Others before Freud spoke of pleasure as a guiding function of ethics. Not only does Aristotle set great store by it, but he finds it impossible not to place it at the center of his ethical teaching. What is happiness if it doesn't contain the bloom of pleasure? A significant part of the discussion of the *Nicomachaen Ethics* is designed to restore the true function of pleasure to its proper place; strangely enough it is introduced in such a way that it is given a value that is not merely passive. Pleasure in Aristotle is an activity that is compared to the bloom given off by youthful activity – it is, if you like, a radiance. In addition, it is also the sign of the blossoming of an action, in the literal sense of ἐνέργεια, a word that expresses the true praxis as that which includes its own end.

Pleasure has no doubt been given other modulations down through the ages as sign, stigmatum, reward, or substance of the psychic life. But let us consider the case of the man who questions us directly, of Freud.

What cannot fail to strike us right away is that his pleasure principle is an inertia principle. Its function is to regulate by a kind of automatism everything that comes together through a process that, in his first formulation, Freud tends to present as dependent on a preformed apparatus that is strictly limited to the neuronic apparatus. The latter regulates the facilitations that it retains after having suffered their effects. It is essentially a matter of everything that results from a fundamental tendency to discharge in which a given quantity is destined to be expended. That is the point of view from which the functioning of the pleasure principle is first articulated.

That attempt at a hypothetical formulation is offered in a way that is unique in Freud's extant writings. And one shouldn't forget that he came to dislike it and didn't want to publish it. No doubt he wrote it in response to certain demands for coherence he made of himself when confronted by himself. But it must be said that this formulation apparently makes no reference to the clinical facts, which doubtless constituted for him the whole force of the demands he had to deal with. He discusses those questions with himself or with Fliess, which under the circumstances comes to the same thing. He presents himself with a probable and coherent representation, a working hypothesis, in order to respond to something whose concrete, experimental dimension is masked and avoided here.

He claims it is a question of explaining a normal functioning of the mind. In order to do this he starts with an apparatus whose basis is wholly antithetical to a result involving adequation and equilibrium. He starts with a system which naturally tends toward deception and error. That whole organism seems designed not to satisfy need, but to hallucinate such satisfaction. It is, therefore, appropriate that another apparatus is opposed to it, an apparatus that operates as an agency of reality; it presents itself essentially as a principle of correction, of a call to order. I am not exaggerating things. Freud himself insists that there must be a distinction between the two apparatuses, although he admits he can find no trace of them in the anatomical structures sustaining them.

The reality principle or that to which the functioning of the neuronic apparatus in the end owes it efficacy appears as an apparatus that goes much further than a mere checking up; it is rather a question of rectification. It operates in the mode of detour, precaution, touching up, restraint. It corrects and compensates for that which seems to be the natural inclination of the psychic apparatus, and it radically opposes it.

The conflict is introduced here at the base, at the origins of an organism which, let us say, seems after all to be destined to live. Nobody before Freud, and no other account of human behavior, had gone so far to emphasize its fundamentally conflictual character. No one else had gone so far in explaining the organism as a form of radical inadequation – to the point where the duality of the systems is designed to overcome the radical inadequation of one of them.

This opposition between the φ system and the ψ system, which is articulated throughout, seems almost like a wager. For what is there to justify it, if it isn't that experience of ungovernable quantities which Freud had to deal with in his experience of neurosis? That is the driving imperative behind the whole system.

We sense directly that the justification for giving such prominence to quantity as such has nothing to do with Freud's desire to bring his theory into

conformity with the mechanistic ideas of Helmholtz and Brücke. For him it corresponds rather to the most direct kind of lived experience, namely, that of the inertia which at the level of symptoms presented him with obstacles whose irreversible character he recognized. It is here that one finds his first advance in darkness toward that *Wirklichkeit,* which is the point to which his questioning returns; it is the key, the distinctive feature of his whole system. I ask you to reread this text, without wondering along with the annotators, commentators and connotators who have edited it whether this or that is closer to psychological or physiological thought, whether this or that refers to Herbart, Helmholtz, or anyone else. And you will see that beneath a manner that is cool, abstract, scholastic, complex and arid, one can sense a lived experience, and that this experience is at bottom moral in kind.

People play the historian on this topic, as if to explain an author like Freud in terms of influences had any value, to explain him by means of a greater or lesser similarity between one of his formulas and those which had been used by some previous thinker in a context that was different. But since it is an exercise that people engage in, why shouldn't I do the same, in my own way? Isn't the functioning of the apparatus that supports the reality principle strangely similar to what one finds in Aristotle?

Freud's task is to explain how the activity of review and restraint functions or, in other words, how the apparatus which supports the secondary processes avoids the occurrence of catastrophes that would inevitably follow the lapse of too much or too little time or the abandonment to its own devices of the pleasure principle. If the latter is released too soon, the movement will be triggered simply by a *Wunschgedanke;* it will necessarily be painful and will give rise to unpleasure. If on the other hand the secondary apparatus intervenes too late, if it doesn't give the little discharge required to attempt the beginning of an adequate solution through action, then there will be a regressive discharge, that is to say, an hallucination, which is also a source of displeasure.

Well now, this theory is not unrelated to Aristotle's ideas concerning the question of how it is that someone who knows may be intemperate. Aristotle offers several solutions. I will skip the earlier ones, which introduce syllogistic and dialectical elements that are relatively remote from our concerns here. He also attempts a solution that is not dialectical but physical – he nevertheless advances it in the form of a syllogism of the desirable.

I believe that Chapter V of Book VII on pleasure is worth reading in its entirety. Beside the major premise – one must always taste what is sweet – there is a particular, concrete minor premise, i.e., this is sweet. And the principle of wrong action is to be found in the error of a particular judgment relative to the minor premise. Where is the error found? Precisely in the circumstance that the desire which is subjacent to the major premise causes

the wrong judgment to be made concerning the reality of the supposed sweetness toward which the action is directed.

I can't help thinking that Freud, who had attended the lecture series given by Brentano on Aristotle in 1887, is transposing here the properly ethical articulation of the problem on to a hypothetical, mechanistic point of view. And he does so in a way that is purely formal and gives the question a completely different accent.

In truth, it is no more of a psychology than any other of those that were devised at the time. Let us have no illusions; as far as psychology is concerned, nothing has been achieved so far that is superior to Freud's *Entwurf*. Everything that has been devised concerning the functioning of the psyche under the assumption that the mechanisms of the nervous system can account for what is concretely perceived by us as the field of psychological action has a similar air of fanciful hypothesis.

If Freud returns to the logical and syllogistic articulations, which have always been used by ethical philosophers in their field, it is in order to give them a very different meaning. We must remember that in interpreting the true content of his thought, which is to say what I have taught you. The ὀρθὸς λόγος that concerns us here are not simply major premises; they concern rather the way in which I have taught you to articulate what goes on in the unconscious; they concern the discourse that is employed on the level of the pleasure principle.

It is in relation to this ὀρθός, ironically highlighted by inverted commas, that the reality principle has to guide the subject in order for him to complete a possible action.

3

From a Freudian point of view, the reality principle is presented as functioning in a way that is essentially precarious.

No previous philosophy has gone so far in that direction. It is not that reality is called into question; it is certainly not called into question in the way that the idealists did so. Compared to Freud the idealists of the philosophical tradition are small beer indeed, for in the last analysis they don't seriously contest that famous reality, they merely tame it. Idealism consists in affirming that we are the ones who give shape to reality, and that there is no point in looking any further. It is a comfortable position. Freud's position, or that of any sensible man for that matter, is something very different.

Reality is precarious. And it is precisely to the extent that access to it is so precarious that the commandments which trace its path are so tyrannical. As guides to the real, feelings are deceptive. That intuition which animates the whole auto-analysis of Freud expresses itself thus concerning the approach

to the real. Its very movement can only begin to occur by means of a primary defense. The profound ambiguity of this approach to the real demanded by man is first inscribed in terms of a defense – a defense that already exists even before the conditions of repression as such are formulated.

In order to emphasize what I am calling the paradox of the relationship to the real in Freud, I will put this on the board – the pleasure principle on the one hand and reality principle on the other. Once you have been gently reassured by these two terms, things seem to go along by themselves. Speaking broadly, one can say that the unconscious is on one side and the conscious on the other. Please bear that in mind in your attempt to follow the points I am trying to bring out.

What are we led to articulate the apparatus of perception onto? Onto reality, of course. Yet, if we follow Freud's hypothesis, on what theoretically is the control of the pleasure principle exercised? Precisely on perception, and it is here that one finds the originality of his contribution. The primary process, as he tells us in the seventh part of the *Traumdeutung*, tends to be exercised toward an identity of perception. It doesn't matter whether it is real or hallucinated, such an identity will always tend to be established. If it isn't lucky enough to coincide with reality, it will be hallucinated. The risk is in the possibility of the primary process winning out.

On the other hand, what does the secondary process tend toward? Once again you should look at Chapter VII, but it is already articulated in the *Entwurf*. It tends toward an identity of thought. What does that mean? It means that the interior functioning of the psychic apparatus – I will discuss next time how it might be represented schematically – occurs as a kind of groping forward, a rectifying test, thanks to which the subject, led on by the discharges that follow along the *Bahnungen* already established, will conduct the series of tests or of detours that will gradually lead him to anastomosis and to moving beyond the testing of the surrounding system of different objects present at that moment of its experience. One might say that the backcloth of experience consists in the construction of a certain system of *Wunsch* or of *Erwartung* of pleasure, defined as anticipated pleasure, and which tends for this reason to realize itself autonomously in its own sphere, theoretically without expecting anything from the outside. It moves directly toward a fulfillment highly antithetical to whatever triggers it.

In this preliminary approach, thought ought to appear to be on the level of the reality principle, in the same column as the reality principle. But it is by no means the case, since as described by Freud, this process is in itself and by nature unconscious. Understand that unlike that which reaches the subject in the perceptual order from the outside world, nothing that takes place at the level of these tests – thanks to which, by means of approximations in the psyche, the facilitations are realized that enable the subject to

make his action adequate – is perceptible as such. All thought by its very nature occurs according to unconscious means. It is doubtless not controlled by the pleasure principle, but it occurs in a space that as an unconscious space is to be considered as subject to the pleasure principle.

Of everything that occurs at the level of inner processes, and thought itself is such a process, according to Freud, the only signs of which the subject is consciously aware are signs of pleasure or pain. As with all the other unconscious processes, nothing else reaches the level of consciousness but those signs there.

How then do we have some apprehension of those processes of thought? Here again Freud responds in a fully articulated way – only insofar as words are uttered. An idea that, with the tendency to facility characteristic of all thought that in spite of itself is tainted by a kind of parallelism, is commonly interpreted as follows: "It is, of course, clear that what Freud is telling us there is that words are that which characterizes the transition into the preconscious." But the transition of what precisely?

Of what else but movements that belong to the unconscious? Freud tells us that the thought processes are only known to us through words, what we know of the unconscious reaches us as a function of words. The idea is articulated in the most precise and the most powerful of ways in the *Entwurf*. For example, without the cry that it elicits, we would only have the most confused notion of an unpleasant object, a notion that would indeed fail to detach it from the context of which it would simply be the evil center, the object would instead be stripped of the particularity of its context. Freud tells us that a hostile object is only acknowledged at the level of consciousness when pain causes the subject to utter a cry. The existence of the *feindlicher Objekt* as such is the cry of the subject. This notion is expressed in the *Entwurf*. The cry fulfills the function of a discharge; it plays the role of a bridge where something of what is happening may be seized and identified in the consciousness of the subject. This something would remain obscure and unconscious if the cry did not lend it, as far as the conscious is concerned, the sign that gives it its own weight, presence, structure. It gives it as well a potentiality due to the fact that the important objects for a human subject are speaking objects, which will allow him to see revealed in the discourse of others the processes that, in fact, inhabit his own unconscious.

We only grasp the unconscious finally when it is explicated, in that part of it which is articulated by passing into words. It is for this reason that we have the right – all the more so as the development of Freud's discovery will demonstrate – to recognize that the unconscious itself has in the end no other structure than the structure of language.

It is this that gives value to atomistic theories. The latter do not cover any of those things they claim to cover, namely, a certain number of atoms of the

neuronic apparatus, supposedly individualized elements of the nervous system. But, on the other hand, the theories of relations of contiguity and continuity illustrate admirably the signifying structure as such, insofar as it is involved in any linguistic operation.

What do we see offered with this double intersection of the respective effects of the reality and pleasure principles on each other?

The reality principle controls what happens at the level of thought, but it is only insofar as something emerges from thought which can be articulated in words in interhuman experience that it is able as a principle of thought to come to the knowledge of the subject in his consciousness.

Conversely, the unconscious itself is to be situated at the level of elements, of logical components which are of the order of λόγος, articulated in the form of an ὀρθὸς λόγος hidden at the heart of the spot where the transitions, the transferences motivated by attraction and necessity, and the inertia of pleasure occur for the subject, those operations, in short, which cause one sign rather than another to be valorized for him – to the extent that this sign may be substituted for the earlier sign or, on the contrary, have transferred to it the affective charge attached to a first experience.

Thus at these three levels we see three orders emerge as follows.

First, let us say, there is a substance or a subject of psychic experience, which corresponds to the opposition reality principle / pleasure principle.

Next, there is the process of experience, which corresponds to the opposition between thought and perception. And what do we find here? The process is divided according to whether it is a question of perception, and, therefore, linked to the activity of hallucinating, to the pleasure principle, or to a question of thought. This is what Freud calls psychic reality. On one side is the process as fictional process. On the other are the processes of thought through which instinctual activity is effectively realized, that is to say, the appetitive process – a process of search, of recognition and, as Freud explained later, of recovery of the object. That is the other face of psychic reality, its unconscious process, which is also its appetitive process.

Finally, on the level of objectification or of the object, the known and the unknown are in opposition. It is because that which is known can only be known in words that that which is unknown offers itself as having a linguistic structure. This allows us to ask again the question of what is involved at the level of the subject.

Consequently, the oppositions fiction / appetite, knowable / unknowable divide up what takes place at the level of the process and of the object. What is involved at the level of the subject? We need to ask ourselves, what is the division of the two sides between the two principles at this level?

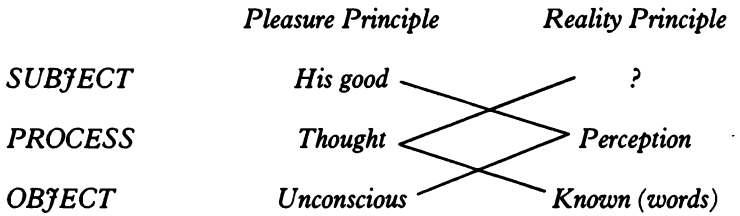
I would propose the following. As far as the pleasure principle is concerned, that which presents itself to the subject as a substance is his good.

Insofar as pleasure controls subjective activity, it is the good, the idea of the good, that sustains it. That is why ethical thinkers have at all times not been able to avoid trying to identify these two terms, which are after all fundamentally antithetical, namely, pleasure and the good.

But over and against that, how does one qualify the substratum of reality of subjective activity?

What is the new figure that Freud gave us in the opposition reality principle / pleasure principle? It is without a doubt a problematic figure. Freud doesn't for a moment consider identifying adequacy to reality with a specific good. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* he tells us that civilization or culture certainly asks too much of the subject. If there is indeed something that can be called his good or his happiness, there is nothing to be expected in that regard from the microcosm, nor moreover from the macrocosm.

It is with this question mark that I will end today.



November 25, 1959

III

Rereading the *Entwurf*

AN ETHICS NOT A PSYCHOLOGY
HOW REALITY IS CONSTITUTED
A TOPOLOGY OF SUBJECTIVITY

I have up till now taken account of a number of points in Freud's work. And last time you saw how I was led in particular to refer to that curiously situated work, the *Entwurf*.

You are aware of the reservations that one might have relative to the correspondence with Fliess. It is not a work as such; the text we have isn't complete. But it is certainly extremely valuable, and especially its supplementary material, among which the *Entwurf* has a special place.

1

The *Entwurf* is very revealing of a kind of substructure of Freud's thought. Its obvious relationship to all the formulations of his experience that Freud was led to offer subsequently makes it especially precious.

What I had to say about it last time expressed well enough the way in which it will appear in my commentary this year. Contrary to received opinion, I believe that the opposition between the pleasure principle and the reality principle or between the primary process and the secondary process concerns not so much the sphere of psychology as that of ethics properly speaking.

There was in Freud the perception of the proper dimension in which human action unfolds. And in the appearance of an ideal of mechanistic reduction acknowledged in the *Entwurf*, one should simply see a compensatory movement or the other face of Freud's discovery of the fact of neurosis, which is from the beginning seen in that ethical dimension where it is, in effect, situated. The proof of this is in the fact that conflict is in the foreground, and that from the outset this conflict concerns the moral order in what we might call a massive way.

That's not such a novelty. Every builder of an ethics has had to face the same problem. It is, in fact, in this connection that it is interesting to write a history, or a genealogy, of morals. Not in Nietzsche's sense, but as a series

of ethical systems, i.e., of theoretical reflection on moral experience. That way one understands the central significance of problems that have been posed since the beginning and that have been pursued with a notable constancy.

After all, why is it necessary that thinkers in the field of ethics always return to the ethical problem of the relation of pleasure to the final good, whenever the guidance of human action from a moral point of view is concerned? Why do they always return to this same theme of pleasure? How does one explain that internal demand which constrains the ethical philosopher to try to reduce the antimonies associated with this theme? – from the fact that pleasure appears in many cases to be the end which is in opposition to moral effort, but that the latter has nevertheless to locate its ultimate point of reference there, a point of reference to which the good that is supposed to orient human action is finally reduced. That's an example, and by no means the only one, of the kind of knot which one comes upon in solutions to the problem. It is instructive for us to see the constancy with which the problem of conflict is posed within every discussion of morals.

Freud in this respect appears as no more than a descendent. Yet he contributes something unmatched in significance, something that has changed the problems of the ethical perspective for us to a degree that we are not yet aware of. That is why we need reference points, and I have already alluded to some of those that we will need to take account of this year.

One has to choose, since I don't intend to highlight all those writers who have discussed morals. I have discussed Aristotle because I believe that the *Nicomachean Ethics* is properly speaking the first book to be organized around the problem of an ethics. As you know, there are plenty of others around, before, after, and in Aristotle's work itself, who focus primarily on the problemn of pleasure. I will not be referring to Epictetus or Seneca here, but I will be discussing utilitarian theory insofar as it is significant for the new direction which culminated in Freud.

I will indicate today the interest of the analysis I will be giving of certain works in the same terms that Freud used in the *Entwurf*, when he designated something which, to my mind at least, is close to the language that I have taught you over the years to pay attention to in the functioning of the primary process, namely, *Bahnung* or facilitation.

As far as the statement of the problem of ethics is concerned, Freud's discourse facilitates something that allows us to go further than anyone has gone before in a domain that is essential to the problems of morality. That will be the inspiration for our discussion this year; it is around the term reality in the true meaning of the word – a term we always use in such a careless way – that the power of Freud's conception is situated. And it is a power that one can measure through the persistence of Freud's name in the development of our analytical activity.

It is obvious that it is not the poor little contribution to a physiology of

fantasy involved, which explains the passionate interest we might take in reading the *Entwurf*.

You will no doubt be told that this text is difficult, but it is also exciting. Not so much in French as in German, for the French translation is extraordinarily awkward. It is wanting in precision, emphasis, and resonance throughout. In brief, I am obliged to evoke or to provoke at this point the sense of regret some of you may have that you don't know German. In German it is a brilliant, pure text; it suggests a virgin source and is altogether remarkable. The outlines of the French translation obliterate that and make it grey. Make the effort to read it and you will realize how true my comment is that one finds there something very different from a work constructed of hypotheses. It is Freud's first skirmish with that hyperbole of reality he had to deal with in his patients. There we have it; around forty years old he discovers the true dimensions, the profoundly meaningful life, of that reality.

It is not out of a vain concern to refer you to a text that I draw your attention to the *Entwurf*. Yet why not, after all? You all know that on occasion I know how to take liberties with Freud's texts and affirm my distance. If for example I have taught you the doctrine of the dominance of a signifier in a subject's unconscious chain, it is so as to emphasize certain characteristics of our experience. By virtue of a distinction that I don't fully agree with, a distinction that does nevertheless express something, the paper we heard last night called the above "the experience of the content." And it affirmed in opposition to it the scaffolding of concepts. Well now, this year I am proposing not simply to be faithful to the text of Freud and to be its exegete, as if it were the source of an unchanging truth that was the model, mold and dress code to be imposed on all our experience.

What are we going to do? We are going to look for the phylum and the development of the concepts in Freud – in the *Entwurf*, in Chapter VII of the *Traumdeutung* – where he publishes for the first time the opposition between the primary and the secondary processes, and his conception of the relationship between the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious – in the introduction of narcissism into this economy; then in what is called the second topic, with its emphasis on the reciprocal functioning of the ego, the superego and the outside world, which gives a complete expression to things that we may have glimpsed as new shoots in the *Entwurf;* and finally in the later texts that are still centered around the same theme, "How is reality constituted for man?", namely, in the 1925 article on *Verneinung*, which we will look at again together, and in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, the discontents of man's situation in the world. The German term is *Kultur*, and we will perhaps have to try to define its exact meaning in Freud's writings. He never takes over concepts in a neutral, conventional sense; a concept has always for him a fully assumed significance.

It turns out then that if we are following so closely the development of

Freud's metapsychology this year, it is in order to uncover the traces of a theory that reflects an ethical thought. The latter is, in fact, at the center of our work as analysts, however difficult it may be to realize it fully, and it is also the latter which holds together all those who constitute the analytic community – that dispersion, which often gives the impression of being a mere scattering, of a fundamental intuition that is taken up by each one of us from one perspective or another.

If we always return to Freud, it is because he started out with an initial, central intuition, which is ethical in kind. I believe it essential to emphasize that, if we are to understand our experience and animate it, and if we are not to lose our way and allow it to be degraded. That's the reason why I am tackling this subject this year.

2

Last time I was pleased to hear an echo, a kind of response.

Two of you who for other reasons are involved in rereading the *Entwurf* – because they are working on a lexicon and perhaps for personal reasons – came to tell me after my seminar how happy they were with the way in which I had discussed Freud's text; it helped justify the interest of their own rereading.

I, therefore, had no difficulty remembering – it is something of which I am painfully aware – that this seminar is a seminar, and that it would be a good idea if it were not simply the signifier "seminar" alone that maintained its right to such a denomination. That is why I asked one of the two people to come and tell us the thoughts inspired in him by the way in which I related the subject of this seminar to the *Entwurf*. You will hear Jean-Bertrand Lefèvre-Pontalis, but his colleague, Jean Laplanche, and he are currently equally on top of the *Entwurf*, a work that, as Valabrega noted just now, you really have to have fresh in your memory, if you are to say anything valid about it. Is that really true? I don't know, for one ends up realizing that it's not as complicated as all that.

Mr. Lefèvre-Pontalis: "There is a slight misunderstanding that I would like to clear up. I am by no means a specialist of the *Entwurf* and I haven't reread it – I am in the process of reading it. Dr. Lacan asked me to go over a number of points made in his seminar last week, including especially the question of the relation to reality, that he described as particularly problematic, if not downright paradoxical, in this early text of Freud." (Mr. Lefèvre-Pontalis's presentation followed.)

3

I would like to thank you for what you have done today. It will perhaps enable us to introduce this year a way of dividing up the seminar that will

allow me to stop now and then, to take a rest, and at the same time have another use.

It seems to me that you presented with remarkable elegance the vital armature of a problem where one risks getting lost in details that are, I must say, extraordinarily tempting. I did occasionally regret that you didn't enter into the detail of the position of the *Bahnung*, on the one hand, and the *Befriedigungserlebnis*, on the other. I also regretted that you didn't remind us of the topology that the system φ , ψ, ω, presupposes. All that might perhaps have illuminated things. But it is clear that one could spend a whole term, indeed a year, simply in the attempt to rectify the distortions of certain of the *Entwurf*'s original intuitions, distortions caused by the English translation.

I notice an example of this more or less at random. *Bahnung* is translated into English by "facilitation." It is obvious that the word has an exactly opposite meaning. *Bahnung* suggests the creation of a continuous way, a chain, and I even have the feeling that it can be related to the signifying chain insofar as Freud says that the development of the ψ apparatus replaces simple quantity by quantity plus *Bahnung*, that is to say its articulation. The English translation, "facilitation," slides over the thing.

The French translation was modeled on the English text. As a result, all its mistakes have been multiplied, and there are even cases where its text is absolutely unintelligible compared to a simple German text.

Nevertheless, I do believe that you emphasized the points that our following discussions will take up, discussions that will lead us back to the relationship between the reality principle and the pleasure principle. You showed the paradox involved by indicating that the pleasure principle cannot be inscribed in a biological system. Yet, my goodness, the mystery isn't so great if we see that this state of affairs is supported in the following way, namely, that the subject's experience of satisfaction is entirely dependent on the other, on the one whom Freud designates in a beautiful expression that you didn't emphasize, I am sorry to say, the *Nebenmensch*. I will have the opportunity to proffer a few quotations so as to show that it is through the intermediary of the *Nebenmensch* as speaking subject that everything that has to do with the thought processes is able to take shape in the subjectivity of the subject.

I ask you to refer to the double column table that I drew for you last time. This diagram will be of use to us until the end of our presentation and will enable us to conceive of the pleasure function and the reality function in a relationship that we will have to bind together more and more closely. If you approach them in another way, you end up with the paradox that you perhaps overemphasized today, namely, that there is no plausible reason why reality should be heard and should end up prevailing. Experience proves it to be overbundant for the human species, which for the time being is not in danger of extinction. The prospect is exactly the opposite. Pleasure in the human economy is only ever articulated in a certain relationship to this point, which

is no doubt always left empty, enigmatic, but which presents a certain relationship to what man takes to be reality. And it is through this that we manage to approach ever more closely that intuition, that apperception of reality which animates the whole development of Freud's thought.

Freud posits that the ψ system must always contain a certain level of $Q\dot{\eta}$ quantity, which will play to the end an essential role. The discharge cannot, in effect, be complete, reach a zero level, after which the psychic apparatus achieves a final state of rest. The latter is certainly not the plausible goal or end of the functioning of the pleasure principle. Freud wonders, therefore – and this is something that the translation misses – how one can justify that it is at such a level that the quantity which regulates everything is maintained.

You perhaps skipped a little quickly over the reference to the ψ system and the φ system. If the one is related to exogenous stimulations, it isn't enough to say that the other is related to endogenous stimulations. An important part of the ψ system is, in fact, constituted of raw Q quantities from the outside which are transformed into quantities that are by no means comparable to those that characterize the ψ system, among which the latter system organizes whatever reaches it from the outside, and does so in a way that is clearly expressed by Freud as apparently being similar to Fechner's theory – it is a matter of the transformation of what is pure and simple quantity into "complication." Freud uses the same Latin term, *complicationes*.

Thus we have the following scheme. On the one hand is the φ system. On the other is the ψ system, which is a highly complex network capable of shrinkage and of *Aufbau*, that is to say of extension. At this point of the theory, there occurs between the two a crossing over, which is indicated in Freud's little diagram. Once a certain limit is passed, that which arrives as quantity is completely transformed as far as its structure is concerned. This notion of structure, of *Aufbau*, is represented by Freud as essential. He distinguishes in the ψ apparatus between its *Aufbau*, to retain quantity, and its function, which is to discharge it, *die Funktion der Abfuhr*. The function isn't simply to circulate and discharge; it appears at this level as split.

One must realize that this apparatus is presented to us as isolated in a living being. It is the nervous system that is being studied and the totality of the organism. The latter is an extremely important point whose significance is to my mind obvious. It affirms and sustains itself in a very different way from the hypotheses that Freud evokes nicely when he says that if one has a taste for them, one should only take them seriously once their arbitrary nature has been attenuated – *die Willkürlichkeit der Constructio ad hoc*. It seems obvious to me that this apparatus is a topology of subjectivity, of subjectivity insofar as it arises and is constructed on the surface of an organism.

There is also in the ψ system an important portion that Freud distinguishes from the part called the nucleus, namely, the *Spinalneuronen*, which are open

to endogenous stimulation, a stimulation on the side where there is no apparatus transforming the quantities.

One finds there a wealth of material that, given your wholly legitimate purpose to simplify, you failed to mention. By way of linking up with what I will have to say next time, I will do so.

There is, for example, the notion of *Schlüsselneuronen,* which have a certain function in relation to that part of the ψ system which is turned toward endogeny and which receives its quantities. The *Schlüsselneuronen* are a particular form of discharge that occurs within the ψ system. Yet paradoxically that discharge has as its function to increase the pressure. He also calls these *Schlüsselneuronen, motorische Neuronen* and I don't think it is a mistake. They provoke stimulations that occur within the ψ system, a series of movements which increase the tension still further and which as a result are at the origin of current neuroses. And this is a problem which has been particularly neglected, but that is for us of great interest.

We will not go into that now, however. The important point is that everything that happens here offers the paradox of being in the same place as that in which the principle of articulation by the *Bahnung* reigns, the same place, too, in which the whole hallucinatory phenomenon of perception occurs, of that false reality to which, in brief, the human organism is predestined. It is again in this same place that the processes oriented and dominated by reality are unconsciously formed, insofar at least as it is a question of the subject finding the path to satisfaction. In this instance satisfaction should not be confused with the pleasure principle – this is a topic that emerges, oddly enough, at the end of the third part of the text. You could not, of course, lead us right through such a rich text. When Freud sketches out what the normal functioning of the apparatus might represent, he speaks not of specific reaction but of specific action as corresponding to satisfaction. There is a big system behind that *spezifische Aktion,* for it can only correspond, in fact, to the refound object. We find here the foundation of the principle of repetition in Freud, and it is something we will have to come back to. That specific action will always be missing something. It is not distinguishable from what takes place when a motor reaction occurs, for it is, in effect, a reaction, a pure act, the discharge of an action.

There is a very long passage that I will have occasion to come back to and to distill for you. There is no more vibrant commentary on the gap that is inherent in human experience, on the distance that is manifested in man between the articulation of a wish and what occurs when his desire sets out on the path of its realization. Freud expresses there the reason why there is always something that is far from finding satisfaction and which doesn't include the characteristics sought in a specific action. And he concludes with the words – I seem to remember that they are the last words of his paper –

"monotonous quality." Compared with anything the subject seeks out, that which occurs in the domain of motor discharge always has a diminished character.

We cannot avoid giving that remark the approbation of the most profound moral experience.

By way of concluding these thoughts today, I will draw your attention to the analogy that exists between, on the one hand, that search for an archaic – one might almost say a regressive – quality of indefinable pleasure which animates unconscious instinct as a whole and, on the other, that which is realized and satisfying in the fullest of senses, in the moral sense as such.

That is far more than an analogy; it reaches a level of profundity which has perhaps never previously been articulated as such.

December 2, 1959

IV

Das Ding

SACHE UND WORT
NIEDERSCHRIFTEN
NEBENMENSCH
FREMDE

I am going to try to speak to you about the thing – *das Ding*.

If I introduce this term, it is because there are certain ambiguities, certain insufficiencies, in relation to the true meaning in Freud of the opposition between reality principle and pleasure principle; that is to say in relation to the material which I am trying to explore with you this year, so as to make you understand its importance for our practice as an ethics. And these ambiguities have to do with something that is of the order of the signifier and even of the order of language. What we need here is a concrete, positive and particular signifier. And I don't find anything in the French language – I would be grateful to those who might be sufficiently stimulated by these remarks to suggest a solution – anything that could correspond to the subtle opposition in German, which it is not easy to bring out, between the two terms that mean "thing" – *das Ding* and *die Sache*.

1

We have only one word in French, the word "la chose" (thing), which derives from the Latin word "causa." Its etymological connection to the law suggests to us something that presents itself as the wrapping and designation of the concrete. There is no doubt that in German, too, "thing" in its original sense concerns the notion of a proceeding, deliberation, or legal debate. *Das Ding* may imply not so much a legal proceeding itself as the assembly which makes it possible, the *Volksversammlung*.

Don't imagine that this use of etymology, these insights, these etymological soundings, are what I prefer to guide myself by – although Freud does remind us all the time that in order to follow the track of the accumulated experience of tradition, of past generations, linguistic inquiry is the surest vehicle of the transmission of a development which marks psychic reality. Current practice, taking note of the use of the signifier in its synchrony, is

infinitely more precious to us. We attach a far greater weight to the way in which *Ding* and *Sache* are used in current speech. Moreover, if we look up an etymological dictionary, we will find that *Sache,* too, originally had to do with a legal proceeding. *Sache* is the thing that is juridically questioned or, in our vocabulary, the transition to the symbolic order of a conflict between men.

Nevertheless, the two terms are not at all equivalent. For that matter you may have noted last time in Mr. Lefèvre-Pontalis's remarks a quotation of terms whose thrust, as he brought out in his presentation, was to raise this question, it seems to me, in opposition to my doctrine – and it is all the more praiseworthy in his case since he doesn't know German. It had to do with that passage in Freud's article entitled "The Unconscious," in which the representation of things, *Sachvorstellung,* is on every occasion opposed to that of words, *Wortvorstellung.*

I will not enter today into the discussion of the factors that would allow one to respond to that passage, so often invoked at least in the form of a question mark, by those of you who are inspired by my lectures to read Freud. It is a passage which appears to them to constitute an objection to the emphasis I place on signifying articulation as providing the true structure of the unconscious.

The passage in question seems to go against that, since it opposes *Sachvorstellung,* as belonging to the unconscious, to *Wortvorstellung,* as belonging to the preconscious. I would just beg those who stop at that passage – the majority of you presumably do not go and verify in Freud's texts what I affirm here in my commentaries – I would beg them to read together, one after the other, the article called *"Die Verdrängung"* or "Repression," which precedes the article on the unconscious, then that article itself, before arriving at the passage involved. I will just note for the rest of you that it has precisely to do with the question that the schizophrenic's attitude poses for Freud, that is to say, the manifestly extraordinary prevalence of affinities between words in what one might call the schizophrenic world.

Everything that I have just discussed seems to me to lead in only one direction, namely, that *Verdrängung* operates on nothing other than signifiers. The fundamental situation of repression is organized around a relationship of the subject to the signifier. As Freud emphasizes, it is only from that perspective that it is possible to speak in a precise, analytical sense – I would call it operational – of unconscious and conscious. He realizes that the special situation of the schizophrenic, more clearly than that of any other form of neurosis, places us in the presence of the problem of representation.

I will perhaps have the opportunity to come back to this text later. But you will note that by offering the solution he seems to be offering in opposing *Wortvorstellung* to *Sachvorstellung,* there is a problem, an impasse, that Freud

himself emphasizes and that can be explained by the state of linguistics in his time. He, nevertheless, understood and formulated admirably the distinction to be made between the operation of language as a function – namely, the moment when it is articulated and, in effect, plays an essential role in the preconscious – and the structure of language, as a result of which those elements put in play in the unconscious are organized. In between, those coordinations are set up, those *Bahnungen,* that concatenation, which dominate its whole economy.

I have digressed too much, since today I only want to restrict myself to the remark that Freud speaks of *Sachvorstellung* and not *Dingvorstellung.* Moreover, it is no accident if the *Sachvorstellungen* are linked to *Wortvorstellungen,* since it tells us that there is a relationship between thing and word. The straw of words only appears to us as straw insofar as we have separated it from the grain of things, and it was first the straw which bore that grain.

I don't want to begin developing a theory of knowledge here, but it is obvious that the things of the human world are things in a universe structured by words, that language, symbolic processes, dominate and govern all. When we seek to explore the frontier between the animal and the human world, it is apparent to what extent the symbolic process as such doesn't function in the animal world – a phenomenon that can only be a matter of astonishment for us. A difference in the intelligence, the flexibility, and the complexity of the apparatuses involved cannot be the only means of explaining that absence. That man is caught up in symbolic processes of a kind to which no animal has access cannot be resolved in psychological terms, since it implies that we first have a complete and precise knowledge of what this symbolic process means.

The *Sache* is clearly the thing, a product of industry and of human action as governed by language. However implicit they may first be in the genesis of that action, things are always on the surface, always within range of an explanation. To the extent that it is subjacent to and implicit in every human action, that activity of which things are the fruit belongs to the preconscious order, that is to say, something that our interest can bring to consciousness, on condition that we pay enough attention to it, that we take notice of it. The word is there in a reciprocal position to the extent that it articulates itself, that it comes to explain itself beside the thing, to the extent also that an action – which is itself dominated by language, indeed by command – will have separated out this object and given it birth.

Sache and *Wort* are, therefore, closely linked; they form a couple. *Das Ding* is found somewhere else.

I would like today to show you this *Ding* in life and in the reality principle that Freud introduces at the beginning of his thought and that persists to the end. I will point out the reference to it in a given passage of the *Entwurf* on

the reality principle and in the article entitled "Die Verneinung" or "Denegation" in which it is an essential point.

This *Ding* is not in the relationship – which is to some extent a calculated one insofar as it is explicable – that causes man to question his words as referring to things which they have moreover created. There is something different in *das Ding*.

What one finds in *das Ding* is the true secret. For the reality principle has a secret that, as Lefèvre-Pontalis pointed out last time, is paradoxical. If Freud speaks of the reality principle, it is in order to reveal to us that from a certain point of view it is always defeated; it only manages to affirm itself at the margin. And this is so by reason of a kind of pressure that one might say, if things didn't, in fact, go much further, Freud calls not "the vital needs" – as is often said in order to emphasize the secondary process – but *die Not des Lebens* in the German text. An infinitely stronger phrase. Something that *wishes*. "Need" and not "needs." Pressure, urgency. The state of *Not* is the state of emergency in life.

This *Not des Lebens* intervenes at the level of the secondary process, but in a deeper way than through that corrective activity; it intervenes so as to determine the $Q\dot{\eta}$ level – the quantity of energy conserved by the organism in proportion to the response – which is necessary for the conservation of life. Take note that it is at the level of secondary process that the level of this necessary determination is exercised.

Let us return to the reality principle that is thus invoked from the point of view of its necessity effect. This remark puts us on the track of what I call its secret, namely, the following: As soon as we try to articulate the reality principle so as to make it depend on the physical world to which Freud's purpose seems to require us to relate it, it is clear that it functions, in fact, to isolate the subject from reality.

We find in it nothing more than that which biology, in effect, teaches us, namely, that the structure of a living being is dominated by a process of homeostasis, of isolation from reality. Is that all Freud has to tell us when he speaks of the functioning of the reality principle? Apparently, yes. And he shows us that neither the quantitative element nor the qualitative element in reality enters the realm – the term he uses is *Reich* – of the secondary process.

Exterior quantity enters into contact with the apparatus called the φ system, that is to say, that part of the whole neuronic apparatus which is directly turned to the exterior or, roughly speaking, the nerve ends at the level of the skin, the tendons, and even the muscles and the bones, deep sensitivity. Everything is done so that Q quantity is definitely blocked, stopped in relation to that which is supported by another quantity, the $Q\dot{\eta}$ quantity – the latter determines the level that distinguishes the ψ apparatus within the neu-

ronic whole. For the *Entwurf* is, in fact, the theory of a neuronic apparatus in relation to which the organism remains exterior, just as much as the outside world.

Let us turn to quality. There, too, the outside world doesn't lose all quality. But, as the theory of the sensory organs shows, this quality is inscribed in a discontinuous way, according to a scale cut off at each end and shortened in relation to the different sensory fields in question. A sensory apparatus, Freud tells us, doesn't only play the role of extinguisher or of shock-absorber, like the φ apparatus in general, but also plays the role of sieve.

He doesn't go any further in the direction of potential solutions that properly belong to the domain of the physiologist, of the man who wrote *The Sensations*, Mr. Piéron. The question of whether, in the field likely to provoke visual, auditory or other perceptions, the choice is made in this way or that is not pursued further. Still, we do have there also the notion of a deep subjectivization of the outside world. Something sifts, sieves, in such a way that reality is only perceived by man, in his natural, spontaneous state at least, as radically selected. Man deals with selected bits of reality.

In truth, that only occurs in a function which is localized in relation to the economy of the whole; it doesn't concern quality to the extent that it provides deeper information, that it achieves an essence, but only signs. Freud only sees them playing a role insofar as they are *Qualitätszeichen*, but the function of sign isn't significant in relation to opaque and enigmatic quality. It is a sign to the extent that it alerts us to the presence of something that has, in effect, to do with the outside world; it signals to consciousness that it has to deal with the outside world.

Consciousness has to come to terms with that outside world, and it has had to come to terms with it ever since men have existed and thought and tried out theories of knowledge. Freud doesn't take the problem any further except to note that it is certainly highly complex and that we are still a long way from being able to outline a solution of that which organically determines its particular genesis so precisely.

But given this, is that all that is involved when Freud speaks to us of the reality principle? Isn't this relation no more than that which certain theorists of behaviorism suggest to us? The kind which represents the fortunate encounters of an organism faced with a world where it doubtless finds something to eat and of which it is capable of assimilating certain elements, but which is in principle made up of random events and chance meetings, chaotic. Is that all Freud expresses when he speaks of the reality principle?

That is the question I am raising here today with the notion of *das Ding*.

2

Before going any further, I will once again draw your attention to the contents of the little table with its double column that I introduced two weeks ago (see p. 34).

In one column there is the *Lustprinzip;* in the other, the *Realitätsprinzip.* Unconscious activity is on the side of the pleasure principle. The reality principle dominates that which, whether conscious or preconscious, is in any case present in the order of reasoned discourse, articulatable, accessible and emerging from the preconscious. I pointed out that to the extent that they are dominated by the pleasure principle, the thought processes are unconscious, as Freud emphasizes. They are only available to consciousness to the extent that they can be verbalized, that a reasoned account brings them within range of the reality principle, within range of a consciousness that is perpetually alert, interested through the investment of its attention in discovering something that may happen, so as to allow it to find its bearings in the real world.

It is in his own words that the subject in the most precarious of ways manages to grasp the ruses thanks to which his ideas are made to fit together in his thought, ideas that often emerge in the most enigmatic of ways. The need to speak them, to articulate them, introduces within them an often artificial order. Freud liked to insist on this point when he said that one always finds reasons for finding this attitude or that mood come over one, one after the other, but there is after all nothing to confirm that the true cause of their successive emergence is given us. It is precisely this that analysis adds to our experience.

There is always an abundance of reasons to make us believe in some rational explanation for the sequentiality of our endopsychic forms. However, as we know, in the majority of cases their true connections are to be found somewhere completely different.

Thus the process of thought is to be found in the field of the unconscious – I mean that thought process through which access to reality finds its way, the *Not des Lebens,* which maintains at a certain level the investment of the apparatus. It is only accessible through the artifice of the spoken word. Freud even goes so far as to say that it is only insofar as relations are spoken that we can hear ourselves speak, that there is *Bewegung,* movement of speech – I don't think the use of this word is very common in German, and if Freud uses it, it is to emphasize the strangeness of the notion he insists on. It is only insofar as this *Bewegung* announces itself in the ω system that something may be known concerning whatever is introduced into the circuit to any degree – into the circuit that at the level of the φ apparatus tends above all to discharge

itself through movement, so as to maintain tension at the lowest possible level.

The conscious subject is aware of what is involved in the process of *Abfuhr,* and appears under the sign of the pleasure principle only insofar as there is something centripetal in the movement, that there is a sense of movement toward speech, a sense of effort. And that would be limited to a dim perception, capable at the most of opposing in the world the two important qualities that Freud doesn't fail to characterize as monotonous – i.e., immobility and mobility, that which can move and that which it is impossible to move – if certain movements of a different structure didn't exist, that is, the articulated movements of words. That is once again something that is characterized by monotony, pallor, lack of color, but that is also the way everything that has to do with the thought processes reaches consciousness, with those tiny attempts to proceed from *Vorstellung* to *Vorstellung,* from representation to representation, around which the human world is organized. It is only insofar as something in the sensory-motor circuit manages to interest the ψ system at a certain level that something is perceived retroactively, something tangible, in the form of a *Wortvorstellung.*

That is how the conscious system, the ω system, can register something that happens in the psyche. Freud refers to it on a number of occasions, not without caution and sometimes ambiguously, as an endopsychic perception.

Let me emphasize further what is going on in the ψ system. From the *Entwurf* on, Freud isolates an *Ich* system. We will see its metamorphoses and transformations in subsequent developments of the theory, but it appears right away with all the ambiguity that Freud will reaffirm later when he says that the *Ich* is to a great extent unconscious.

The *Ich* is precisely defined in the *Einführung des Ichs* as a system that is uniformly invested with something which has a *Gleichbesetzung* – Freud did not write that term but I am following the drift of what he says relative to an equal, uniform investment. There is in the ψ system something that is constituted as an *Ich* and which is "eine Gruppe von Neuronen . . . . die konstant besetz ist, also dem durch die sekundäre Funktion erforderten Vorratsträger entspricht" – the term *Vorrat* in particular is repeated here. The maintenance of this investment characterizes a regulatory function there. And I am speaking of function here. If there is an unconscious, it is the *Ich* insofar as it is an unconscious function. And we have to deal with it insofar as it is regulated by that *Besetzung,* by that *Gleichbesetzung.* Whence the value of the decussation on which I insist and which we will see maintained in its duality throughout the development of Freud's thought.

Now the system which perceives and registers, and which will later be called the *Wahrnehmungsbewusstsein,* is not on the level of the ego to the extent

that it maintains equal and uniform and, as far as possible constant, the *Besetzung* that regulates the functioning of thought. Consciousness is elsewhere; it is an apparatus that Freud has to invent, that he tells us is intermediary between the ψ system and the φ system, yet that at the same time everything in the text informs us we should not put at the boundary between them. The fact is that the ψ system enters directly, doubtless through an apparatus, and spreads itself directly throughout the φ system, where it only gives up a part of the quantity that it brings with it.

The ω system functions elsewhere in a more isolated position, one that is less easily situated than any other apparatus. In fact, it isn't from exterior quantity that the ω neurons extract their energy, Freud tells us; one can assume at most that they "sich die Periode aneignen," they appropriate the period. That is what I was alluding to just now when I was referring to the choice of sensory apparatus. It plays a guiding role there in relation to the contributions coming from the *Qualitätszeichen,* in order to allow with the least movement all those departures that are individualized as attention paid to this or that chosen point on the circuit, and that will permit a better approximation to the process than the pleasure principle would tend to make automatically.

As soon as Freud tries to articulate the function of this system, something strikes us about this coupling, this union, which seems a fusion, between *Wahrnehmung,* perception, and *Bewusstsein,* consciousness, expressed in the symbol W-Bw. I enjoin you to refer to letter 52 that, as Lefèvre-Pontalis noted last time, I have remarked on a number of times.[1] It is a letter in which Freud begins to explain to Fliess in confidence his conception of how the unconscious must work. His whole theory of memory has to do with the sequence of *Niederschriften,* of inscriptions. The fundamental demand to which the whole system responds is that of ordering, in a coherent conception of the psychic apparatus, the different fields of that which he finds effectively functioning in the memory traces.

In letter 52 *Wahrnehmung,* that is to say the impression of the external world as raw, original, primitive, is outside the field which corresponds to a notable experience, namely, one that is effectively inscribed in something that, it is quite striking to note, Freud expresses right at the beginning of his thought as a *Niederschrift,* something that presents itself not simply in terms of *Prägung* or of impression, but in the sense of something which makes a sign and which is of the order of writing. And I wasn't the one who made him choose that term.

The first *Niederschrift* occurs at a certain age that his first estimate has him situate before four years old, but that's not important. Later, up to the age

[1] *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, pp. 158–162.*

of eight, another, more organized *Niederschrift,* one that is organized in terms of memories, seems to me to constitute more precisely an unconscious. It's not important if Freud is right or wrong; we have seen since how we can trace the unconscious and its organization of thought much further back. What is important is that next we have the level of the *Vorbewusstsein* and then that of the *Bewusstsein* insofar as it is not the sign of a time but of a terminus. In other words, that discussion which takes us forward from a meaning of the world to speech that can be formulated, the chain that extends from the most archaic unconscious to the articulate form of speech in a subject, all that takes place between *Wahrnehmung* and *Bewusstsein,* between glove and hand, so to speak. The progress that interests Freud is then situated somewhere that, from the point of view of the topology of the subject, is not easily identified with a neuronic apparatus. Yet what goes on between *Wahrnehmung* and *Bewusstsein* must after all have to do with the unconscious, since that's how Freud represents it to us – this time not simply in the form of a function, but of an *Aufbau,* of a structure, as he puts it himself in making the opposition.

In other words, it is to the extent that the signifying structure interposes itself between perception and consciousness that the unconscious intervenes, that the pleasure principle intervenes. Yet it is no longer in the form of a *Gleichbesetzung* or the function of the maintenance of a certain investment, but insofar as it concerns the *Bahnungen.* The structure of accumulated experience resides there and remains inscribed there.

At the level of the *Ich,* of the functioning unconscious, something regulates itself that tends to exclude the outside world. On the other hand, what is expressed at the level of *Übung* is discharge. And one finds the same intersection as in the whole economy of the apparatus. The structure regulates discharge; the function restrains it. Freud also calls that *Vorrat,* provisions; this is the word he uses for the larder of his own unconscious, *Vorratskammer. Vorratsträger* is the *Ich* as the basis of quantity and of energy that constitutes the core of the psychic apparatus.

On that basis there enters into play what we will see function as the first apprehension of reality by the subject. And it is at this point that that reality intervenes, which has the most intimate relationship to the subject, the *Nebenmensch.* The formula is striking to the extent that it expresses powerfully the idea of beside yet alike, separation and identity.

I ought really to read you the whole passage but I will limit myself to the climactic sentence: "Thus the complex of the *Nebenmensch* is separated into two parts, one of which affirms itself through an unchanging apparatus, which remains together as a thing, *als Ding.*"

That's what the awful French translation you have at your disposal misses when it says "something remains as a coherent whole." It has nothing to do

with an allusion to a coherent whole that would occur in the passage from the verb to the noun, quite the contrary. The *Ding* is the element that is initially isolated by the subject in his experience of the *Nebenmensch* as being by its very nature alien, *Fremde*. The complex of the object is in two parts; there is a division, a difference in the approach to judgment. Everything in the object that is quality can be formulated as an attribute; it belongs to the investment of the ψ system and constitutes the earliest *Vorstellungen* around which the destiny of all that is controlled according to the laws of *Lust* and *Unlust*, of pleasure and unpleasure, will be played out in what might be called the primary emergences of the subject. *Das Ding* is something entirely different.

We have here an original division of the experience of reality. We find it as well in *Verneinung*. Look it up in the text. You will find the same function with the same significance of that which, from within the subject, finds itself in the beginning led toward a first outside – an outside which, Freud tells us, has nothing to do with that reality in which the subject will subsequently have to locate the *Qualitätszeichen*, signs that tell him that he is on the right track in his search for satisfaction.

That is something which, even prior to the test of this search, sets up its end, goal and aim. That's what Freud indicates when he says that "the first and most immediate goal of the test of reality is not to find in a real perception an object which corresponds to the one which the subject represents to himself at that moment, but to find it again, to confirm that it is still present in reality."

The whole progress of the subject is then oriented around the *Ding* as *Fremde*, strange and even hostile on occasion, or in any case the first outside. It is clearly a probing form of progress that seeks points of reference, but with relation to what? – with the world of desires. It demonstrates that something is there after all, and that to a certain extent it may be useful. Yet useful for what? – for nothing other than to serve as points of reference in relation to the world of wishes and expectations; it is turned toward that which helps on certain occasions to reach *das Ding*. That object will be there when in the end all conditions have been fulfilled – it is, of course, clear that what is supposed to be found cannot be found again. It is in its nature that the object as such is lost. It will never be found again. Something is there while one waits for something better, or worse, but which one wants.

The world of our experience, the Freudian world, assumes that it is this object, *das Ding*, as the absolute Other of the subject, that one is supposed to find again. It is to be found at the most as something missed. One doesn't find it, but only its pleasurable associations. It is in this state of wishing for it and waiting for it that, in the name of the pleasure principle, the optimum tension will be sought; below that there is neither perception nor effort.

In the end, in the absence of something which hallucinates it in the form

of a system of references, a world of perception cannot be organized in a valid way, cannot be constituted in a human way. The world of perception is represented by Freud as dependent on that fundamental hallucination without which there would be no attention available.

3

Here we come to the notion of the *spezifische Aktion* of which Freud speaks on a number of occasions, and that I would like to shed some light on here. There is, in fact, an ambiguity in the *Befriedigungserlebnis*. What is sought is the object in relation to which the pleasure principle functions. This functioning is in the material, the web, the medium to which all practical experience makes a reference. How then does Freud conceive of this experience, this specific action?

In this connection one has to read his correspondence with Fliess to appreciate the significance of it, and in particular that letter referred to above, which still has a lot to tell us. He says that an attack of hysteria is not a discharge. It is a warning to those who always feel the need to place the emphasis on the role of quantity in the functioning of affect. There is no field more favorable than that of hysteria to suggest to what extent in the concatenation of psychic events a fact is a question of relative contingency. It is by no means a discharge, *sondern eine Aktion* – an action, moreover, which is *Mittel von Reproduktion von Lust.*

We will see how what Freud calls an action is made clear. The essential characteristic of any action is to be a *Mittel,* a means of reproduction. In its root at least it is this: "Das ist er [der hysterische Anfall] wenigstens in der Wurzel." And elsewhere "sonst motiviert er sich von dem Vorbewusstsein allerlei Gründen" – an action may be motivated on all kinds of grounds which are located at the level of the preconscious.

Immediately afterwards Freud explains what its essence consists of. And he illustrates at the same time what an action as *Mittel zur Reproduktion* means. In the case of hysteria, of a crisis of tears, everything is calculated, regulated, and, as it were, focused on *den Anderen,* on the Other, the prehistoric, unforgettable Other, that later no one will ever reach.

The thoughts we find expressed here allow us to make a first approach to the problem of neurosis and to understand its correlative or regulatory term. If one goal of the specific action which aims for the experience of satisfaction is to reproduce the initial state, to find *das Ding,* the object, again, we will be able to understand a great many forms of neurotic behavior.

The behavior of the hysteric, for example, has as its aim to recreate a state centered on the object, insofar as this object, *das Ding,* is, as Freud wrote somewhere, the support of an aversion. It is because the primary object is an

object which failed to give satisfaction that the specific *Erlebnis* of the hysteric is organized.

On the other hand – this is Freud's distinction and we don't need to give it up – in obsessional neurosis, the object with relation to which the fundamental experience, the experience of pleasure, is organized, is an object which literally gives too much pleasure. Freud perceived this clearly; it was his first apperception of obsessional neurosis.

What in its various advances and many byways the behavior of the obsessional reveals and signifies is that he regulates his behavior so as to avoid what the subject often sees quite clearly as the goal and end of his desire. The motivation of this avoidance is often extraordinarily radical, since the pleasure principle is presented to us as possessing a mode of operation which is precisely to avoid excess, too much pleasure.

So as to move fast – as fast as Freud in his first apperceptions of ethical reality, insofar as it functions in the subject whom he is dealing with – I will outline the positing of the subject in the third of the major categories that Freud distinguishes at the beginning – hysteria, obsessional neurosis, and paranoia. As far as paranoia is concerned, Freud gives us a term that I invite you to reflect on as it first emerged, namely, *Versagen des Glaubens*. The paranoid doesn't believe in that first stranger in relation to whom the subject is obliged to take his bearings.

The use of the term belief seems to me to be emphasized in a less psychological sense than first seems to be the case. The radical attitude of the paranoid, as designated by Freud, concerns the deepest level of the relationship of man to reality, namely, that which is articulated as faith. Here you can see easily how the connection with a different perspective is created that comes to meet it – I already referred to it when I said that the moving force of paranoia is essentially the rejection of a certain support in the symbolic order, of that specific support around which the division between the two sides of the relationship to *das Ding* operates – as we will see in subsequent discussions.

Das Ding is that which I will call the beyond-of-the-signified. It is as a function of this beyond-of-the-signified and of an emotional relationship to it that the subject keeps its distance and is constituted in a kind of relationship characterized by primary affect, prior to any repression. The whole initial articulation of the *Entwurf* takes place around it. Let us not forget that repression still posed a problem for Freud. And everything that he will subsequently say about repression, in its extraordinary sophistication, can only be understood as responding to the need to understand the specificity of repression compared to all the other forms of defense.

It is then in relation to the original *Ding* that the first orientation, the first choice, the first seat of subjective orientation takes place, and that I will sometimes call *Neuronenwahl,* the choice of neurosis. That first grinding will

henceforth regulate the function of the pleasure principle.

It remains for us to see that it is in the same place that something which is the opposite, the reverse and the same combined, is also organized, and which in the end substitutes itself for that dumb reality which is *das Ding* – that is to say, the reality that commands and regulates. That is something which emerges in the philosophy of someone who, better than anyone else, glimpsed the function of *das Ding,* although he only approached it by the path of the philosophy of science, namely, Kant. In the end, it is conceivable that it is as a pure signifying system, as a universal maxim, as that which is the most lacking in a relationship to the individual, that the features of *das Ding* must be presented. It is here that, along with Kant, we must see the focal point, aim and convergence, according to which an action that we will qualify as moral will present itself. And which, moreover, we will see present itself paradoxically as the rule of a certain *Gut* or good.

Today I will simply emphasize this: the Thing only presents itself to the extent that it becomes word, hits the bull's eye,[2] as they say. In Freud's text the way in which the stranger, the hostile figure, appears in the first experience of reality for the human subject is the cry. I suggest we do not need this cry. Here I would like to make a reference to something that is more inscribed in the French than in the German language – each language has its advantages. The German *das Wort,* word, is both *le mot* and *la parole* in French. The word *le mot* has a particular weight and meaning. "Mot" refers essentially to "no response." "Mot," La Fontaine says somewhere, is what remains silent; it is precisely that in response to which no word is spoken. The things in question are things insofar as they are dumb – some people might object that these things are placed by Freud at a higher level than the world of signifiers that I have described as the true moving force of the functioning in man of that process designated as primary. And dumb things are not exactly the same as things which have no relationship to words.

It is enough to evoke a face which is familiar to everyone of you, that of the terrible dumb brother of the four Marx brothers, Harpo. Is there anything that poses a question which is more present, more pressing, more absorbing, more disruptive, more nauseating, more calculated to thrust everything that takes place before us into the abyss or void than that face of Harpo Marx, that face with its smile which leaves us unclear as to whether it signifies the most extreme perversity or complete simplicity? This dumb man alone is sufficient to sustain the atmosphere of doubt and of radical annihilation which is the stuff of the Marx brothers' extraordinary farce and the uninterrupted play of "jokes"[3] that makes their activity so valuable.

[2] The French here contains a pun: "faire mouche" means to hit the bull's-eye and by analogy with that Lacan creates the phrase "faire mot," to become word.

[3] In English in the original.

Just one more thing. I have spoken today of the Other as a *Ding*. I would like to conclude with something that is much more accessible to our experience. And that is the isolated use that French reserves for certain forms of the pronoun of interpellation. What does the emission, the articulation, the sudden emergence from out of our voice of that "You!" *(Toi!)* mean? A "You" that may appear on our lips at a moment of utter helplessness, distress or surprise in the presence of something that I will not right off call death, but that is certainly for us an especially privileged other – one around which our principle concerns gravitate, and which for all that still manages to embarrass us.

I do not think that this "You" is simple – this you of devotion that other manifestations of the need to cherish occasionally comes up against. I believe that one finds in that word the temptation to tame the Other, that prehistoric, that unforgettable Other, which suddenly threatens to surprise us and to cast us down from the height of its appearance. "You" contains a form of defense, and I would say that at the moment when it is spoken, it is entirely in this "You," and nowhere else, that one finds what I have evoked today concerning *das Ding*.

So as not to end with something that might seem to you to be so optimistic, I will focus on the weight of the identity of the thing and the word that we can find in another isolated use of the word.

To the "You" which, according to me, tames, but which tames nothing, a "You" of vain incantation and fruitless connection, there corresponds what may happen to us when some order comes from beyond the apparatus where there lurks that which, along with ourselves, has to do with *das Ding*. I am thinking of what we answer when we are made responsible or accountable for something. "Me!" (Moi!).[4] What is this "Me!", this "Me!" all by itself, if it is not a "Me!" of apology, a "Me!" of refusal, a "Me!" that's simply not for me?

Thus from its beginning the "I" as thrust forth in an antagonistic movement, the "I" as defense, the "I" as primarily and above all an "I" that refuses and denounces rather than announces, the "I" in the isolated experience of its sudden emergence – which is also perhaps to be considered as its original decline – this "I" is articulated here.

I will speak about this "I" again next time in order to explore further the way in which moral action presents itself as an experience of satisfaction.

December 9, 1959

[4] It should be noted that the emphatic first pronoun "moi" is also used in French to mean both "self" and "ego."

V

Das Ding (II)

THE *COMBINATOIRE* OF THE *VORSTELLUNGEN*
THE LIMIT OF PAIN
BETWEEN PERCEPTION AND CONSCIOUSNESS
THE INTERSAID OF *VERNEINUNG*
MOTHER AS *DAS DING*

Freud comments somewhere that if psychology succeeded in making some people anxious, by insisting excessively on the reign of the instincts, it nevertheless also promoted the importance of the moral agency.

This is an obvious truth, one that is confirmed every day in our practice.

Furthermore, we still do not rate highly enough in the world outside the exorbitant character of the power of the sense of guilt, which is exercised without the subject's knowledge. Thus it is that which presents itself in the massive guise of the sense of guilt that I believe is important to focus on more narrowly this year. Moreover, it is important to articulate it so as to bring out the originality, the revolution in thought, that was the effect of the Freudian experience in the field of ethics.

1

Last time I tried to show you the meaning in Freudian psychology of the *Entwurf* in connection with which Freud organized his first intuition concerning what takes place in the experience of the neurotic. I tried, in particular, to show you the pivotal function that we must accord something which is to be found in a detour taken by the text. And it is one that it is important not to miss, especially since Freud picks up on it again in a variety of forms right to the end. I mean *das Ding*.

Right at the beginning of the organization of the world in the psyche, both logically and chronologically, *das Ding* is something that presents and isolates itself as the strange feature around which the whole movement of the *Vorstellung* turns – a *Vorstellung* that Freud shows us is governed by a regulatory principle, the so-called pleasure principle, which is tied to the functioning of the neuronic apparatus. And it is around *das Ding* that the whole adaptive development revolves, a development that is so specific to man insofar as the symbolic process reveals itself to be inextricably woven into it.

We find *das Ding* again in the *Verneinung* article of 1925, an article that is full of ideas and also of questions. It occurs in a formula which we must assume to be essential since it is placed at the center of the article and is, so to speak, the crucial enigma. *Das Ding* has, in effect, to be identified with the *Wieder zu finden,* the impulse to find again that for Freud establishes the orientation of the human subject to the object. Yet you should note that this object is not even stated. And here we might give its due to a certain textual criticism, whose attachment to the signifier sometimes seems to take a talmudic turn. It is remarkable that the object in question is nowhere articulated by Freud.

Moreover, since it is a matter of finding it again, we might just as well characterize this object as a lost object. But although it is essentially a question of finding it again, the object indeed has never been lost. In this orientation to the object, the regulation of the thread, the *Vorstellungen* relate to each other in accordance with the laws of a memory organization, a memory complex, a *Bahnung* (that is to say, a facilitator, but also, I would say more decidedly, a concatenation) whose neuronic apparatus perhaps allows us to glimpse those operations in a material form, and whose functioning is governed by the law of the pleasure principle.

The pleasure principle governs the search for the object and imposes the detours which maintain the distance in relation to its end. Even in French the etymology of the word – which replaced the archaic "quérir ("to search")" – refers to *circa,* detour. The transference of the quantity from *Vorstellung* to *Vorstellung* always maintains the search at a certain distance from that which it gravitates around. The object to be found confers on the search its invisible law; but it is not that, on the other hand, which controls its movements. The element that fixes these movements, that models the return – and this return itself is maintained at a distance – is the pleasure principle. It is the pleasure principle which, when all is said and done, subjects the search to encounter nothing but the satisfaction of the *Not des Lebens.*

Thus the search encounters in its path a series of satisfactions that are tied to the relation to the object and are polarized by it. And at every point they model, guide and support its movements according to the particular law of the pleasure principle. This law fixes the level of a certain quantity of excitation which cannot be exceeded without going beyond the limit of the *Lust/Unlust* polarity – pleasure and unpleasure are the only two forms through which that same and single mode of regulation we call the pleasure principle expresses itself.

The admission of quantity is regulated by the width of the channels that do the conducting, by the individual diameters that a given organism can support – the thing is expressed metaphorically by Freud, but it is almost as if we were to take it literally. What happens once the limit is exceeded? The

psychic impulse is not as such capable of advancing any further toward what is supposed to be its goal. Instead it is scattered and diffused within the psychic organism; the quantity is transformed into complexity. In a kind of expansion of the lighted zone of the neuronic organism, here and there in the distance, it lights up according to the laws of associative facilitation, or constellations of *Vorstellungen* which regulate the association of ideas, unconscious *Gedanken,* according to the pleasure principle.

The limit has a name. It is something more than the *Lust/Unlust* polarity Freud speaks of.

I would have you note that it is avoidance, flight, movement, which in the beginning, even before the system starts to function, normally intervenes in order to regulate the invasion of quantity in accordance with the pleasure principle. And it is to the motor system that the function of regulating the bearable or homeostatic level of tension for the organism is handed over in the end. But the homeostatis of the nervous system, which is the site of autonomous regulatory mechanism, is distinct from the general homeostasis (with all the potential for conflict that that implies), the homeostasis which activates the balance of moods. The balancing of moods occurs, but as an order of stimulation arising from within. That is how Freud expresses it. Certain stimulations come from within the nervous system, and he compares them to external stimulations.

I would like us to stop for a moment at this limit of pain.

Those commentators who collected the letters to Fliess consider that Freud slipped up by using the term *motorisch,* motor, instead of *secretorisch,* cell, nucleus, organ. I once said that it did not seem to be clear that it was such a slip. Freud tells us, in effect, that in the majority of cases, the reaction of pain derives from the fact that the motor reaction, the flight reaction, is impossible. And the reason for this is that the stimulation, the excitation, comes from within. Consequently, it seems to me that this so-called slip is only present in order to point to the fundamental homology between the relationship of pain and the motor reaction. Besides – this idea occurred to me a long time ago, and I hope you will not find it absurd – in the organization of the spinal marrow, the neurons and axons of pain coexist at the same level and at the same spot as certain neurons and axons of the tonic motor system.

Thus, even pain must not be simply attributed to the register of sensory reactions. I would say, and this is something that the surgery of pain reveals, that it is not a question of something simple, which can be considered a simple quality of sensory reaction. The complex character of pain, the character that, so to speak, makes it an intermediary between afferent and efferent, is suggested by the surprising results of certain operations, which in the case of some internal illnesses, including some cancers, allow the notation of

pain to be preserved, when the suppression or removal of a certain subjective quality has been effected, which accounts for the fact that it is unbearable.

All this belongs to the sphere of modern physiological research, and it does not yet allow us to explain the problem fully. I will, therefore, limit myself to suggesting that we should perhaps conceive of pain as a field which, in the realm of existence, opens precisely onto that limit where a living being has no possibility of escape.

Isn't something of this suggested to us by the insight of the poets in that myth of Daphne transformed into a tree under the pressure of a pain from which she cannot flee? Isn't it true that the living being who has no possibility of escape suggests in its very form the presence of what one might call petrified pain? Doesn't what we do in the realm of stone suggest this? To the extent that we don't let it roll,[1] but erect it, and make of it something fixed, isn't there in architecture itself a kind of actualization of pain?

What happened during the period of the Baroque, under the influence of an historical movement that we will come back to later, would support this idea. Something was attempted then to make architecture itself aim at pleasure, to give it a form of liberation, which, in effect, made it blaze up so as to constitute a paradox in the history of masonry and of building. And that goal of pleasure gave us forms which, in a metaphorical language that in itself takes us a long way, we call "tortured."

I hope you will pardon my digression, since it does, in fact, point in the direction of the themes we will take up again later, in connection with the man of pleasure and the eighteenth century, and the very style it introduced into the investigation of eroticism.

Let us return to our *Vorstellungen*, and try to understand them now, to surprise them in their operations, so as to understand what is involved in Freudian psychology.

The character of imaginary composition, of the imaginary element of the object, makes of it what one might call the substance of appearance, the material of a living lure – an apparition open to the deception of an *Erscheinung*, I would say, if I took the liberty of speaking German; that is to say, that by means of which the appearance is sustained, but which is also at the same time an unremarkable apparition – something that creates that *Vor*, that third element, something that is produced starting from the Thing. *Vorstellung* is something that is essentially fragmented. It is that around which Western philosophy since Aristotle and *φαντασία* has always revolved.

Vorstellung is understood by Freud in a radical sense, in the form in which it appears in a philosophy that is essentially marked by the theory of knowl-

[1] The pun here involves a reference to the French proverb "Pierre qui roule n'amasse pas mousse." – "A rolling stone gathers no moss."

edge. And that is the remarkable thing about it. He assigned to it in an extreme form the character philosophers themselves have been unable to reduce it to, namely, that of an empty body, a ghost, a pale incubus of the relation to the world, an enfeebled *jouissance*, which through the age-old interrogations of the philosophers makes it the essential feature. And by isolating it in this function, Freud removes it from its tradition.

And the sphere, order, and gravitation of the *Vorstellungen*, where does he locate them? I told you last time that if one reads Freud carefully, one has to locate them between perception and consciousness, between the glove and the hand.

It is between perception and consciousness that is inserted that which functions at the level of the pleasure principle. Which is what precisely? – The thought processes insofar as they regulate by means of the pleasure principle the investment of the *Vorstellungen*, and the structure in which the unconscious is organized, the structure in which the underlying unconscious mechanisms are flocculated. And it is this which makes the small curds of representation, that is to say, something which has the same structure as the signifier – a point on which I insist. That is not just *Vorstellung*, but as Freud writes later in the same article on the unconscious, *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz;* and he thus turns *Vorstellung* into an associative and combinatory element. In that way the world of *Vorstellung* is already organized according to the possibilities of the signifier as such. Already at the level of the unconscious there exists an organization that, as Freud says, is not necessarily that of contradiction or of grammar, but the laws of condensation and displacement, those that I call the laws of metaphor and metonymy.

Why should it be a surprise, therefore, if Freud tells us that these thought processes that take place between perception and consciousness would not mean anything to consciousness, if they were not transmitted there by the mediation of a discourse, of that which can be clarified in the *Vorbewusstsein*, in preconsciousness? But what does that mean? Freud leaves us with little doubt; it is a question of words. And we must, of course, situate the *Wortvorstellungen* that are involved in relation to our argument here.

Freud tells us this is not the same thing as the *Vorstellungen* whose thought processes of superposition, metaphor and metonymy we follow through the unconscious mechanism. It is something entirely different. The *Wortvorstellungen* inaugurate a discourse that is articulated on the thought processes. In other words, we know nothing about our thought processes, unless we engage in psychology – allow me to say that to make my point more forcefully. We only know them because we are speaking of something which goes on inside us, because we are speaking of them in terms that are unavoidable – terms whose indignity, emptiness and vanity we are also aware of. It is from that moment when we speak of our will and our understanding as distinct facul-

ties that we have a preconscious, and that we are able, in effect, to articulate in a discourse something of that chattering by means of which we articulate ourselves inside ourselves, we justify ourselves, or we rationalize for ourselves, with reference to this or that, the progress of our desire.

It is definitely a discourse that is involved. And Freud emphasizes that, after all, we know nothing else except this discourse. That which emerges in the *Bewusstsein* is *Wahrnehmung*, the perception of this discourse, and nothing else. That is exactly what he thinks.

That is why he tends to reject utterly superficial representations or, to use Silberer's term, the functional phenomena. There are no doubt in a given phase of a dream things that represent the functioning of the psyche to us imagistically – a notable example represents the layers of psychic activity in the form of the game of Chutes and Ladders. What does Freud say? Involved here is the production of dreams by a mind given to metaphysics or, in other words, to psychology, which tends to expand on what the discourse necessarily imposes on us when we should be trying to distinguish a certain rhythm in our inner experience. But this representation, Freud tells us, overlooks that structure, that most profound gravitation, which is established at the level of the *Vorstellungen*. And he affirms that these *Vorstellungen* gravitate, operate exchanges and are modulated according to laws that you will recognize, if you have followed my teaching, as the fundamental laws of the signifying chain.

Have I managed to make myself understood? It seems to me difficult to be any clearer as far as this essential point is concerned.

2

We have now reached the point where we must distinguish the effective articulation of a discourse, of the gravitation of the *Vorstellungen*, in the form of *Vorstellungsrepräsentanzen* of these unconscious articulations. We must examine what in such circumstances we mean by *Sachvorstellungen*. The latter are to be set in polar opposition to word play, to *Wortvorstellungen*, but at this level they go together. As far as *das Ding* is concerned, that is something else. *Das Ding* is a primordial function which is located at the level of the initial establishment of the gravitation of the unconscious *Vorstellungen*.

I did not have time last week to make you appreciate how in ordinary German usage there is a linguistic difference between *Ding* and *Sache*.

It is clear that in every case they cannot be used interchangeably. And that even if there are cases where one can use either one, to choose one or the other in German gives a particular emphasis to the discourse. I ask those who know German to refer to the examples in the dictionary. One does not use *Sache* for religious matters, but one nevertheless says that faith is not *jeder-*

man Ding – it is not for everybody. Master Eckhart uses *Ding* to refer to the soul, and heaven knows that for Master Eckhart the soul was a *Grossding*, the biggest of things. He certainly would not use the term *Sache*. If I wanted to make you sense the differences by giving you a general measure of the way in which the use of the signifier breaks down differently in German relative to French, I would cite this sentence that I was on the point of citing last time, but that I held back because I am not after all a Germanist, and I wanted to make use of the interval to test it on the ears of some people whose mother tongue is German. One could say that "Die Sache ist das Wort des Dinges." Or, in French, "L'affaire est le mot de la chose ("The affair is the word of the thing.")."

It is precisely as we shift into discourse that *das Ding*, the Thing, is resolved into a series of effects – in the sense that one can say *meine Sache*. That suggests all my kit and caboodle, and is something very different from *das Ding* – that thing to which we must now return.

You will not be surprised if I tell you that at the level of the *Vorstellungen*, the Thing is not nothing, but literally is not. It is characterized by its absence, its strangeness.

Everything about it that is articulated as good or bad divides the subject in connection with it, and it does so irrepressibly, irremediably, and no doubt with relation to the same Thing. There is not a good and a bad object; there is good and bad, and then there is the Thing. The good and the bad already belong to the order of the *Vorstellung;* they exist there as clues to that which orients the position of the subject, according to the pleasure principle, in connection with that which will never be more than representation, search for a privileged state, for a desired state, for the expectation of what? Of something that is always a certain distance from the Thing, even if it is regulated by the Thing, which is there in a beyond.

We see it at the level of what the other day we noted were the stages of the φ system. Here there are *Wahrnehmungszeichen*, here there is *Vorbewusstsein*, here there are the *Wortvorstellungen*, insofar as they reflect in a discourse what goes on at the level of the thought processes. And the latter are themselves governed by the laws of the *Unbewusst*, that is to say, by the pleasure principle. The *Wortvorstellungen*, as a reflection of discourse, stand in opposition to that which is ordered in the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanzen* according to an economy of words. And in the *Entwurf* Freud calls these *Vorstellungsrepräsentanzen* conceptual memories, which is no more than a first approximation of the same notion.

At the level of the φ system, that is to say, at the level of what takes place before the entry into the ψ system, and the crossover into the space of the *Bahnung* and the organization of the *Vorstellungen*, the typical reaction of the organism as regulated by the neuronic system is avoidance. Things are *ver-*

meidet, avoided. The level of the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanzen* is the special site of *Verdrängung.* The level of *Wortvorstellungen* is the site of *Verneinung.*

I will stop there for a moment to explain the meaning of a point which is still a problem for some of you in connection with *Verneinung.* As Freud notes, it is the privileged means of connotation at the level of discourse for whatever is *verdrängt* or repressed in the unconscious. *Verneinen* is the paradoxical way in which what is hidden, *verborgen,* in the unconscious is located in spoken, enunciated discourse, in the discourse of *Bewusstwerden; verneinen* is the manner in which what is simultaneously actualized and denied comes to be avowed.

One should continue this study of *Verneinung* that I have just begun with a study of the negative particle. Following Pichon's example, I have already pointed out here the subtly differentiated use in French of this pleonastic "ne," which, as I showed, makes it seem paradoxical when, for example, the subject enunciates his own fear.

We do not say "Je crains qu'il vienne" ("I am afraid he may come"), as logic would seem to demand, but "Je crains qu'il ne vienne" ("I am afraid he may [not] come").[2] This "ne" has a floating place between the two levels of the graph that I showed you how to use, so as to distinguish between the level of enunciation and the level of the enunciated. By enunciating "I am afraid that . . .," I make it appear both in its reality, and in its reality as a wish –" . . . he may come." And it is here that in French the little "ne" is interposed, which points to the discordance between the levels of enunciation and of the enunciated.

The negative particle "ne" only emerges at the moment when I really speak, and not at the moment when I am spoken, if I am on the level of the unconscious. And I think it is a good idea to interpret Freud in a similar way when he says that there is no negation at the level of the unconscious. Given that immediately afterwards, he shows us that there is indeed negation. That is to say, in the unconscious there are all kinds of ways of representing negation metaphorically. There are all kinds of ways of representing it in a dream, except, of course, for the little negative particle "ne," because the particle only belongs to discourse.

The concrete examples show us the distinction that exists between the function of discourse and the function of speech.

Thus the *Verneinung,* far from being the pure and simple paradox of that which presents itself in the form of a "no," isn't just any old "no." There is a whole world of no-saying *(non-dit),* of interdiction *(interdit),* since it is in that very form that the *Verdrängt,* which is the unconscious, essentially pre-

[2] As Lacan's example suggests, the pleonastic "ne" in French grammar is a kind of submerged negation used after verbs of fearing and certain conjunctions. My bracketed "not" is designed to suggest the effect, since it has no equivalent in English.

sents itself. But the *Verneinung* is the most solid beachhead of that which I would call the "intersaid" *(entre dit)* in the same way that we say "interview." One might just as easily explore a little common usage in the sphere of the language of love, in all that is said when, for example, one says, "I do not say that . . ." or quite simply in the way people express themselves in Corneille: "No, I do not hate you."

You can see that in this game of Chutes and Ladders, from a certain point of view *Verneinung* represents the inverse of *Verdrängung*, and that there is a difference of organization between them with relation to the function of avowal. Let me point out to those for whom this still constitutes a problem that there is a correspondence between that which is fully articulated at the level of the unconscious, *Verurteilung*, and that which takes place at the level pointed to by Freud in letter 52, in the first signifying signification of *Verneinung*, that of *Verwerfung*.

One of you who shall remain nameless, Laplanche, in a dissertation on Hölderlin that we will, I hope, have the opportunity to discuss here some time, asked himself and asked me, what *Verwerfung* might be. He wanted to know if it was the paternal No / Name (Nom-*de*-père), as is the case in paranoia, or the No / Name of the Father (Nom-*du*-père).[3] If that's what it is, there are few pathological examples that put us in the presence of its absence, of its effective refusal. If it is the No / Name of the Father, are we not entering into a series of difficulties concerning the fact that something is always signified for the subject who is attached to experience, whether present or absent, something which for one reason or another and to a variety of degrees has come to occupy that place for him?

Of course, the notion of signifying substance cannot fail to create a problem for an alert mind. But don't forget that we are dealing with the system of the *Wahrnehmnungszeichen*, signs of perception, or, in other words, the first system of signifers, the original synchrony of the signifying system. Everything begins when several signifers can present themselves to the subject at the same time, in a *Gleichzeitigkeit*. It is at this level that *Fort* is the correlative of *Da*. *Fort* can only be expressed as an alternative derived from a basic synchrony. It is on the basis of this synchrony that something comes to be organized, something that the mere play of *Fort* and *Da* could not produce by itself.

I have already asked the question here as to what the critical conceivable minimum is for a signifying scale, if the register of the signifier is to begin to organize itself. There cannot be a two without a three, and that, I think, must certainly include a four, the quadripartite, the *Geviert*, to which Hei-

[3] In the context of this discussion of forms of denial, it seems appropriate to remind the English-speaking reader of the pun contained in the spoken French of the *Nom-du-Père*.

degger refers somewhere. As we will see, the whole psychology of the psychotic develops insofar as a term may be refused, a term that maintains the basic system of words at a certain distance or relational dimension. Something is missing and his real effort at substitution and "significization" is directed in desperation at that. Let us hope that we will have the opportunity to return to the problem, along with the remarkable analysis that Laplanche has given of a poetic experience which displays and which unveils it, and makes it apparent in a way that is especially revealing, namely, the case of Hölderlin.

The function of this place is to contain words, in the sense in which contain means to keep – as a result of which an original distance and articulation are possible, through which synchrony is introduced, and it is on the foundation of synchrony that the essential dialect is then erected, that in which the Other may discover itself as the Other of the Other.

The Other of the Other only exists as a place. It finds its place even if we cannot find it anywhere in the real, even if all we can find to occupy this place in the real is simply valid insofar as it occupies this place, but cannot give it any other guarantee than that it is in its place.

It is in this way that another typology is established, the typology which institutes the relation to the real. And now we can define this relation to the real, and realize what the reality principle means.

3

The whole function of that which Freud articulates in the term superego, *Uberich,* is tied to the reality principle. And this would be no more than a banal play of words, if it were merely an alternative way of designating what has been called the moral conscience or something similar.

Freud gives us a completely new theory by showing us the root or psychological operation of something that in the human constitution weighs so heavily on all those forms of which there is no reason why we should misunderstand any, including the simplest, namely, that of the commandments and, I would even say, the ten commandments.

I will not avoid discussing these ten commandments that we might assume we know all about. It is clear that we see them functioning, if not in ourselves, at least in things in a singularly lively way. It will, therefore, perhaps be appropriate to look again at what Freud articulates here.

What that is, I will put in the following terms, terms that all the commentaries seem designed merely to make us forget. As far as the formation of morality is concerned, Freud contributes what some call the discovery and others the affirmation, and I believe is the affirmation of the discovery, that the fundamental or primordial law, the one where culture begins in opposi-

tion to nature, is the law of the prohibition of incest – nature and culture being precisely distinguished in Freud in a modern sense, that is to say, in the way in which Lévi-Strauss might articulate them today.

The whole development of psychoanalysis confirms it in an increasingly weighty manner, while at the same time it emphasizes it less and less. I mean that the whole development at the level of the mother/child interpsychology – and that is badly expressed in the so-called categories of frustration, satisfaction, and dependence – is nothing more than an immense development of the essential character of the maternal thing, of the mother, insofar as she occupies the place of that thing, of *das Ding*.

Everyone knows that its correlative is the desire for incest, which is Freud's discovery. There is no point in affirming that it is to be found somewhere in Plato, or that Diderot spoke of it in *Rameau's Nephew* or *The Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage*. That is of no interest to me. What is important is that there was a man who at a given historical moment stood up to affirm: "That's the fundamental desire."

And we must grasp this thought firmly in our hand. Freud designates the prohibition of incest as the underlying principle of the primordial law, the law of which all other cultural developments are no more than the consequences and ramifications. And at the same time he identifies incest as the fundamental desire.

Claude Lévi-Strauss in his magisterial work no doubt confirms the primordial character of the Law as such, namely, the introduction of the signifer and its *combinatoire* into human nature through the intermediary of the marriage laws, which are regulated by a system of exchanges that he defines as elementary structures – this is the case to the extent that guidance is given concerning the choice of a proper partner or, in other words, order is introduced into marriage, which produces a new dimension alongside that of heredity. But even when Lévi-Strauss explains all that, and spends a lot of time discussing incest in order to show what makes its prohibition necessary, he does not go beyond suggesting why the father does not marry a daughter – because the daughters must be exchanged. But why doesn't a son sleep with his mother? There is something mysterious there.

He, of course, dismisses justifications based on the supposedly dangerous biological effects of inbreeding. He proves that, far from producing results involving the resurgence of a recessive gene that risks introducing degenerative effects, a form of endogamy is commonly used in all fields of breeding of domestic animals, so as to improve a strain, whether animal or vegetable. The law only operates in the realm of culture. And the result of the law is always to exclude incest in its fundamental form, son / mother incest, which is the kind Freud emphasizes.

If everything else around it may find a justification, this central point

nevertheless remains. If one reads Lévi-Strauss's text closely, one can see that it is the most enigmatic and the most stubborn point separating nature from culture.

And I want to make you stop there. What we find in the incest law is located as such at the level of the unconscious in relation to *das Ding*, the Thing. The desire for the mother cannot be satisfied because it is the end, the terminal point, the abolition of the whole world of demand, which is the one that at its deepest level structures man's unconscious. It is to the extent that the function of the pleasure principle is to make man always search for what he has to find again, but which he never will attain, that one reaches the essence, namely, that sphere or relationship which is known as the law of the prohibition of incest.

This metaphysical analysis is not worthy of our interest, however, if it cannot be confirmed at the level of the effective discourse which manages to put itself at the disposition of man's knowledge, that preconscious or unconscious discourse or, in other words, the effective law, or, in other words again, the famous ten commandments I was speaking about just now.

But are there ten commandments? My goodness, perhaps there are. I tried to add them up by going back to the source. I took down my copy of Silvestre de Sacy's Bible. It is the closest thing we have in French to those versions of the Bible that have exercised such a decisive influence on the thought and history of other peoples – in one case, inaugurating Slav culture with Saint Cyril and, in another, that of the authorized version of the English; one can say that, if one does not know it by heart, one finds oneself an outsider among them. We do not have the equivalent of that. But I nevertheless advise you to take a look at the seventeenth-century version, in spite of its inaccuracies and mistakes, since it was the version people read, and on the basis of which generations of clergymen have written and fought over the interpretation of a given prohibition, both past and present, that is inscribed in its pages.

I thus took down the text of that Decalogue that God dictated before Moses on the third day of the third month after the flight from Egypt, in the dark cloud on Mount Sinai, accompanied by flashes of lightning and the command to the people not to come near. I must say I would like one day to have someone more qualified than I to analyze for us the diverse forms that the interpretation of these ten commandments have undergone – from the Hebrew texts to the one in which it appears as the quiet droning of the rhythmic lines of the catechism.

However negative the ten commandments may seem, I will not linger long over their character as prohibitions – we are always being told that morality doesn't only have a negative side, it also has a positive side – but I will note, as I have before in this place, that they are perhaps only the commandments

of speech. By that I mean they clarify that without which no speech is possible – notice that I did not say discourse.

I just gave you an indication there, since I could hardly go any further, and I pick up the trail again here. This is what I want to point out. In the ten commandments, which constitute almost everything that, against all odds, is accepted as commandments by the whole of the civilized community – civilized or not, or almost civilized, but since we only know the other, uncivilized part by means of a number of cryptograms, let us limit ourselves to the so-called civilized portions – in the ten commandments, it is nowhere specified that one must not sleep with one's mother. I do not think that the command "to honor" her should be considered as the least suggestive of this, either negatively or positively – in spite of what in the Provençal tales of Marius and Olive is known as "performing honorable service."[4]

Couldn't we next time try to interpret the ten commandments as something very close to that which effectively goes on in repression in the unconscious? The ten commandments may be interpreted as intended to prevent the subject from engaging in any form of incest on one condition, and on one condition only, namely, that we recognize that the prohibition of incest is nothing other than the condition sine qua non of speech.

This brings us back to questioning the meaning of the ten commandments insofar as they are tied in the deepest of ways to that which regulates the distance between the subject and *das Ding* – insofar as that distance is precisely the condition of speech, insofar as the ten commandments are the condition of the existence of speech as such.

I am simply on the point of broaching this topic, but I beg you right away not to stop at the idea that the ten commandments are, so to speak, the condition of all social life. For from another point of view, how can one not in truth see, when one merely recites them, that they are in a way the chapter and verse of our transactions at every moment of our lives? They display the range of what are properly speaking our human actions. In other words, we spend our time breaking the ten commandments, and that is why society is possible.

I do not for all that have to push the paradox to its extreme, like Bernard de Mandeville in *The Fable of the Bees,* when he demonstrates that private vices constitute public wealth. It is not a question of that, but of seeing what kind of preconscious immanence the ten commandments correspond to. I will take up the question there next time – not, however, without making a detour through that fundamental reference I evoked when I spoke to you for the first time of what might be called the real.

[4] The reference here is to the Provençal material of Marcel Pagnol's trilogy of plays on Marseilles life, *Marius, Fanny,* and *César.*

The real, I have told you, is that which is always in the same place. You will see this in the history of science and thought. This detour is indispensable if we are to reach the great revolutionary crisis of morality, namely, the systematic questioning of principles there where they need to be questioned, that is, at the level of the imperative. That is the culminating point for both Kant and Sade with relation to the Thing; it is there that morality becomes, on the one hand, a pure and simple application of the universal maxim and, on the other, a pure and simple object.

This point is essential if one is to understand the step taken by Freud. By way of conclusion today I would just like to bring to your attention something that a poet, who happens to be a friend of mine, once wrote: "The problem of evil is only worth raising as long as one has not fixed on the idea of transcendence by some good that is able to dictate to man what his duties are. Till that moment the exalted representation of evil will continue to have the greatest revolutionary value."

Well now, the step taken by Freud at the level of the pleasure principle is to show us that there is no Sovereign Good – that the Sovereign Good, which is *das Ding,* which is the mother, is also the object of incest, is a forbidden good, and that there is no other good. Such is the foundation of the moral law as turned on its head by Freud.

Now we have to consider where the positive moral law comes from that has remained quite intact, and that we are literally capable of "banging our heads against the wall for," to borrow an expression made famous by a film, rather than see it overturned.[5]

What does this mean? It means, and this is where I am leading you, that what you were looking for in the place of the object that cannot be found again is the object that one always finds again in reality. In the place of the object impossible to find again at the level of the pleasure principle, something has happened that is nothing more than the following: something which is always found again, but which presents itself in a form that is completely sealed, blind and enigmatic, the world of modern physics.

You will see that it is in relation to this that the crisis of morality was played out at the end of the eighteenth century at the time of the French revolution. And it is to this that Freud's doctrine constitutes an answer. It sheds a light on the subject that, I hope to be able to show you, has not yet yielded up all its implications.

December 16, 1959

[5] The reference is to Georges Franju's *La Tête contre les Murs.*

VI

On the moral law

THE CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON
PHILOSOPHY IN THE BOUDOIR
THE TEN COMMANDMENTS
THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

What if we brought a simple soul into this lecture hall, set him down in the front row, and asked him what Lacan means.

The simple soul will get up, go to the board and will give the following explanation: "Since the beginning of the academic year Lacan has been talking to us about *das Ding* in the following terms. He situates it at the heart of a subjective world which is the one whose economy he has been describing to us from a Freudian perspective for years. This subjective world is defined by the fact that the signifier in man is already installed at the level of the unconscious, and that it combines its points of reference with the means of orientation that his functioning as a natural organism of a living being also gives him."

Simply by writing it on the board and putting *das Ding* at the center, with the subjective world of the unconscious organized in a series of signifying relations around it, you can see the difficulty of topographical representation. The reason is that *das Ding* is at the center only in the sense that it is excluded. That is to say, in reality *das Ding* has to be posited as exterior, as the prehistoric Other that it is impossible to forget – the Other whose primacy of position Freud affirms in the form of something *entfremdet*, something strange to me, although it is at the heart of me, something that on the level of the unconscious only a representation can represent.

1

I said "something that only a representation can represent." Do not look upon that as a simple pleonasm, for "represent" and "representation" here are two different things, as the term *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* indicates. It is a matter of that which in the unconscious represents, in the form of a sign, representation as a function of apprehending – of the way in which every

representation is represented insofar as it evokes the good that *das Ding* brings with it.

But to speak of "the good" is already a metaphor, an attribute. Everything that qualifies representations in the order of the good is caught up in refraction, in the atomized system that the structure of the unconscious facilitations imposes, in the complex mechanism of a signifying system of elements. It is only in that way that the subject relates to that which presents itself on the horizon as his good. His good is already pointed out to him as the significant result of a signifying composition that is called up at the unconscious level or, in other words, at a level where he has no mastery over the system of directions and investments that regulate his behavior in depth.

I will use a term here that only those who have present in their minds the Kantian formulas of *The Critique of Practical Reason* will be able to appreciate. I invite those who do not have them present in their minds or who have not yet encountered what is, from more than one point of view, an extraordinary book to make good their memories or their general knowledge.

It is impossible for us to make any progress in this seminar relative to the questions posed by the ethics of psychoanalysis if you do not have this book as a reference point.

So as to motivate you to look at it, let me emphasize that it is certainly extraordinary from the point of view of its humor. To remain poised at the limit of the most extreme conceptual necessity produces an effect of plenitude and content as well as of vertigo, as a result of which you will not fail to sense at some point in the text the abyss of the comic suddenly open up before you. Thus I do not see why it is a door that you would refuse to open. We will in any case see in a minute how we can open it here.

It is then, to be explicit, the Kantian term *Wohl* that I propose in order to designate the good in question. It has to do with the comfort of the subject insofar as, whenever he refers to *das Ding* as his horizon, it is the pleasure principle that functions for him. And it does so in order to impose the law in which a resolution of the tension occurs that is linked to something that, using Freud's phrase, we will call the successful lures – or, better yet, the signs that reality may or may not honor. The sign here is very close to a representative currency, and it suggests an expression that I incorporated into one of my first lectures, that on physical causality, in a phrase that begins one of its paragraphs, i.e., "more inaccessible to our eyes that are made for the signs of the money changer."

Let me carry the image further. "The signs of the money changer" are already present at the base of the structure which is regulated according to the law of *Lust* and *Unlust,* according to the rule of the indestructible *Wunsch* that pursues repetition, the repetition of signs. It is in that way that the subject regulates his initial distance to *das Ding,* the source of all *Wohl* at the

level of the pleasure principle, and which at its heart already gives rise to what we may call *das Gut des Objekts,* the good object – following the Kantian example, as the practitioners of psychoanalysis have not failed to do.

On the horizon, beyond the pleasure principle, there rises up the *Gut, das Ding,* thus introducing at the level of the unconscious something that ought to oblige us to ask once again the Kantian question of the *causa noumenon. Das Ding* presents itself at the level of unconscious experience as that which already makes the law. Although it is necessary to give this verbal phrase, "makes the law," the emphasis it receives in one of the most brutal games of elementary society and that is evoked in a recent book by Roger Vailland. It is a capricious and arbitrary law, the law of the oracle, the law of signs in which the subject receives no guarantee from anywhere, the law in relation to which he has no *Sicherung,* to use another Kantian term. That is also at bottom the bad object that Kleinian theory is concerned with.

Although it must be said that at this level *das Ding* is not distinguished as bad. The subject makes no approach at all to the bad object, since he is already maintaining his distance in relation to the good object. He cannot stand the extreme good that *das Ding* may bring him, which is all the more reason why he cannot locate himself in relation to the bad. However much he groans, explodes, curses, he still does not understand; nothing is articulated here even in the form of a metaphor. He produces symptoms, so to speak, and these symptoms are at the origin of the symptoms of defense.

And how should we conceive of defense at this level? There is organic defense. Here the ego defends itself by hurting itself as the crab gives up its claw, revealing thereby the connection I developed between the motor system and pain. Yet in what way does man defend himself that is different from an animal practising self-mutilation? The difference is introduced here by means of the signifying structuralization in the human unconscious. But the defense or the mutilation that is proper to man does not occur only at the level of substitution, displacement or metaphor – everything that structures its gravitation with relation to the good object. Human defense takes place by means of something that has a name, and which is, to be precise, lying about evil.

At the level of the unconscious, the subject lies. And this lying is his way of telling the truth of the matter. The ὀρθὸς λόγος of the unconscious at this level – as Freud indicates clearly in the *Entwurf* in relation to hysteria – is expressed as πρώτου ψεῦδος, the first lie.

Given the amount of time I have been discussing the *Entwurf* with you, do I need to remind you of the example that he gives of a female patient called Emma, whom he doesn't mention elsewhere and who is not the Emma of the *Studies on Hysteria?* It is the case of a woman who has a phobia about going into stores by herself because she is afraid people will make fun of her on account of her clothes.

Everything is related to an early memory. At the age of twelve she went into a store and the shop assistants apparently laughed at her clothes. One of them attracted her and even stirred her in some strange way in her emerging puberty. Behind that we find a causal memory, that of an act of aggression she suffered in a shop at the hands of a *Greis*. The French translation, modeled on the English, which was itself particularly careless, says "shopkeeper" – but an old fogey is involved, an elderly man, who pinched her somewhere under her dress in a very direct manner. This memory thus echoes the idea of a sexual attraction experienced in the other.

All that remains in the symptom is attached to clothes, to the mockery of her clothes. But the path of truth is suggested in a masked form, in the deceiving *Vorstellung* of her clothes. In an opaque way, there is an allusion to something that did not happen on the occasion of the first memory, but on the second. Something that wasn't apprehended in the beginning is apprehended retroactively, by means of the deceitful transformation – *proton pseudos*. Thus in that way we have confirmation of the fact that the relationship of the subject to *das Ding* is marked as bad – but the subject can only formulate this fact through the symptom.

That is what the experience of the unconscious has forced us to add to our premises when we take up again the question of ethics as it has been posed over the centuries, and as it has been bequeathed us in Kantian ethics, insofar as the latter remains, in our thought if not in our experience, the point to which these questions have been brought.

The way in which ethical principles are formulated when they impose themselves on consciousness or when about to emerge from preconsciousness, as commandments, has the closest relationship to the second principle introduced by Freud, namely, the reality principle.

The reality principle is the dialectical correlative of the pleasure principle. One is not simply, as one at first imagines, the application of the consequence of the other; each one is really the correlative of the other. Without this neither one would make any sense. Once again we are led to deepen the reality principle in a way I suggested in connection with the experience of paranoia.

As I have already told you, the reality principle isn't simply the same as it appears in the *Entwurf*, the testing that sometimes takes place at the level of the ω system or the *Wahrnehmungsbewusstsein* system. It doesn't function only on the level of that system in which the subject, probing in reality that which communicates the sign of a present reality, is able to adjust correctly the deceptive emergence of the *Vorstellung* as it is provoked by repetition at the level of the pleasure principle. It is something more. Reality faces man – and that is what interests him in it – both as having already been structured and

as being that which presents itself in his experience as something that always returns to the same place.

I pointed it out when I was discussing the case of President Schreber. The function of the stars in the delirious system of that exemplary subject shows us, just like a compass, the polar star of the relation of man to the real. The history of science makes something similar seem plausible. Isn't it strange, paradoxical even, that it was the observations of shepherds and Mediterranean sailors of the return to the same place of an object which might seem to interest human experience least, namely, a star, that revealed to the farmer when he should sow his seeds? Think of the important role that the Pleiades played for Mediterranean navigators. Isn't it remarkable that it was the observation of the return of the stars to the very same places that, repeated over the centuries, led to the structuralization of reality by physics, which is what we mean by science? The fruitful laws involved came down to earth from the sky, to Galileo from the physics of the peripatetic philosophers. However, from that earth, where the laws of the heavens had been rediscovered, Galilean physics returned to the sky by demonstrating that the stars are by no means what we had believed them to be, that they are not incorruptible, that they are subject to the same laws as the terrestrial globe.

Furthermore, if a decisive step in the history of science was already taken by Nicolas of Cuse, who was one of the first to formulate the idea that the stars were not incorruptible, we know something else, we know that they might not be in the same place.

Thus that first demand that made us explore the structuralization of the real down through history in order to produce a supremely efficient and supremely deceptive science, that first demand is the demand of *das Ding* – it seeks whatever is repeated, whatever returns, and guarantees that it will always return, to the same place – and it has driven us to the extreme position in which we find ourselves, a position where we can cast doubt on all places, and where nothing in that reality which we have learned to disrupt so admirably responds to that call for the security of a return.

Yet it is to this search for something that always returns to the same place that what is known as ethics has attached itself over the centuries. Ethics is not simply concerned with the fact that there are obligations, that there is a bond that binds, orders, and makes the social law. There is also something that we have frequently referred to here by the term "the elementary structures of kinship" – the elementary structures of property and of the exchange of goods as well. And it is as a result of these structures that man transforms himself into a sign, unit, or object of a regulated exchange in a way that Claude Lévi-Strauss has shown to be fixed in its relative unconsciousness. That which over generations has presided over this new supernatural order

of the structures is exactly that which has brought about the submission of man to the law of the unconscious. But ethics begins beyond that point.

It begins at the moment when the subject poses the question of that good he had unconsciously sought in the social structures. And it is at that moment, too, that he is led to discover the deep relationship as a result of which that which presents itself as a law is closely tied to the very structure of desire. If he doesn't discover right away the final desire that Freudian inquiry has discovered as the desire of incest, he discovers that which articulates his conduct so that the object of his desire is always maintained at a certain distance. But this distance is not complete; it is a distance that is called proximity, which is not identical to the subject, which is literally close to it, in the way that one can say that the *Nebenmensch* that Freud speaks of as the foundation of the thing is his neighbor.

If at the summit of the ethical imperative something ends up being articulated in a way that is as strange or even scandalous for some people as "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," this is because it is the law of the relation of the subject to himself that he make himself his own neighbor, as far as his relationship to his desire is concerned.

My thesis is that the moral law is articulated with relation to the real as such, to the real insofar as it can be the guarantee of the Thing. That is why I invite you to take an interest in what I have called the high point of the crisis in ethics, and that I have designated from the beginning as linked to the moment when *The Critique of Practical Reason* appeared.

2

Kantian ethics appears at the moment when the disorienting effect of Newtonian physics is felt, a physics that has reached a point of independence relative to *das Ding,* to the human *Ding.*

It was Newtonian physics that forced Kant to revise radically the function of reason in its pure form. And it is also in connection with the questions raised by science that a form of morality has come to engage us; it is a morality whose precise structure could not have been perceived until then – one that detaches itself purposefully from all reference to any object of affection, from all reference to what Kant called the *pathologisches Objekt,* a pathological object, which simply means the object of any passion whatsoever.

No *Wohl,* whether it be our own or that of our neighbor, must enter into the finality of moral action. The only definition of moral action possible is that which was expressed in Kant's well-known formula: "Act in such a way that the maxim of your action may be accepted as a universal maxim." Thus action is moral only when it is dictated by the motive that is articulated in the maxim alone. To translate *allgemeine* as "universal" is not quite right,

since it is closer to "common." Kant contrasts "general" with "universal," which he takes up in its Latin form. All of which proves that something here is left in an undetermined state. *Handle so, dass die Maxime deines Willens jederzeit zugleich als Prinzip einer allgemeinen Gesetzgebung gelten könne.* "Act so that the maxim of your will may always be taken as the principle of laws that are valid for all."

That formula, which is, as you know, the central formula of Kant's ethics, is pursued by him to the limit of its consequences. His radicalism even leads to the paradox that in the last analysis the *gute Wille,* good will, is posited as distinct from any beneficial action. In truth, I believe that the achievement of a form of subjectivity that deserves the name of contemporary, that belongs to a man of our time, who is lucky enough to be born now, cannot ignore this text. I simply emphasize it as we continue on our merry way, for one can, in fact, get by with very little – the person to our right and the person to our left are nowadays, if not neighbors, then at the very least people who, from the point of view of volume, are close enough to prevent us from falling down. But one must have submitted oneself to the test of reading this text in order to measure the extreme, almost insane character of the corner that we have been backed into by something that is after all present in history, namely, the existence, indeed the insistence, of science.

If, of course, no one has ever been able to put such a moral axiom into practice – even Kant himself did not believe it possible – it is nevertheless useful to see how far things have gone. In truth, we have built another bridge in our relation to reality. For some time transcendental aesthetics itself – I am referring to that which is designated as such in *The Critique of Pure Reason* – is open to challenge, at the very least on the level of that play of writing where theoretical physics is currently registering a hit. Henceforth, given the point we have reached in the light of our science, a renewal or updating of the Kantian imperative might be expressed in the following way, with the help of the language of electronics and automation: "Never act except in such a way that your action may be programmed." All of which takes us a step further in the direction of an even greater, if not the greatest, detachment from what is known as a Sovereign Good.

Let us be clear about this: when we reflect on the maxim that guides our action, Kant is inviting us to consider it for an instant as the law of a nature in which we are called upon to live. That is where one finds the apparatus that would have us reject in horror some maxim or other that our instincts would gladly lead us to. In this connection he gives us examples that are worth taking note of in a concrete sense, for however obvious they may seem, they perhaps suggest, at least to the analyst, a line of reflection. But note that he affirms the laws of *nature,* not of *society.* It is only too clear that not only do societies live very well by reference to laws that are far from promoting

their universal application, but even more remarkably, as I suggested last time, these societies prosper as a result of the transgression of these maxims.

It is a matter then of a mental reference to a nature that is organized according to the laws of an object constructed at the moment when we raise the question of our rule of conduct.

So as to produce the kind of shock or eye-opening effect that seems to me necessary if we are to make progress, I simply want to draw your attention to this: if *The Critique of Practical Reason* appeared in 1788, seven years after the first edition of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, there is another work which came out six years after *The Critique of Practical Reason*, a little after Thermidor in 1795, and which is called *Philosophy in the Boudoir*.

As, I suppose, you all know, *Philosophy in the Boudoir* is the work of a certain Marquis de Sade, who is famous for more than one reason. His notoriety was accompanied from the beginning by great misfortunes, and one might add by the abuse of power concerning him – he did after all remain a prisoner for twenty-five years, which is a long time for someone who, my goodness, as far as we know, never committed a serious crime, and who in certain of our modern ideologies has been promoted to a point where one can also say that there is at the very least some confusion, if not excess.

Although in the eyes of some the work of the Marquis de Sade seems to promise a variety of entertainments, it is not strictly speaking much fun. Moreover, the parts that seem to give the most pleasure can also be regarded as the most boring. But one cannot claim that his work lacks coherence. And, in a word, it is precisely the Kantian criteria he advances to justify his positions that constitute what can be called a kind of anti-morality.

The paradox of this is argued with the greatest coherence in the work that is entitled *Philosophy in the Boudoir*. A short passage is included in it that, given the number of attentive ears here, is the only one that I expressly recommend you read – "Frenchmen, one more effort to become republicans."

As a result of this appeal, which supposedly came from a number of cells that were active at that time in revolutionary Paris, the Marquis de Sade proposes that, given the ruin of those authorities on which (according to the work's premises) the creation of a true republic depends, we should adopt the opposite of what was considered up to that point as the essential minimum of a viable and coherent morality.

And, in truth, he does quite a good job in defending that proposal. It is no accident if we first find in *Philosophy in the Boudoir* the praise of calumny. Calumny, he writes, can in no sense be injurious; if it imputes to our neighbor worse things than one can justifiably impute to him, it nevertheless has the merit that it puts us on guard against his activities. And the author proceeds in like manner to justify point by point the reversal of the fundamental imperatives of the moral law, extolling incest, adultery, theft, and everything

else you can think of. If you adopt the opposite of all the laws of the Decalogue, you will end up with the coherent exposition of something which in the last instance may be articulated as follows: "Let us take as the universal maxim of our conduct the right to enjoy any other person whatsoever as the instrument of our pleasure."

Sade demonstrates with great consistency that, once universalized, this law, although it gives libertines complete power over all women indifferently, whether they like it or not, conversely also liberates those same women from all the duties that civilized society imposes on them in their conjugal, matrimonial and other relations. This conception opens wide the flood gates that in imagination he proposes as the horizon of our desire; everyone is invited to pursue to the limit the demands of his lust, and to realize them.

If the same opening is given to all, one will be able to see what a natural society is like. Our repugnance may be legitimately related to that which Kant himself claims to eliminate from the criteria of the moral law, namely, to the realm of sentiment.

If one eliminates from morality every element of sentiment, if one removes or invalidates all guidance to be found in sentiments, then in the final analysis the Sadian world is conceivable – even if it is its inversion, its caricature – as one of the possible forms of the world governed by a radical ethics, by the Kantian ethics as elaborated in 1788.

Believe me, there is no lack of Kantian echoes in the attempts to articulate moral systems that one finds in a vast literature that might be called libertine, the literature of the man of pleasure, which is an equally caricatural form of the problem that for a long time preoccupied the *ancién regime*, and from Fénelon on, the education of girls. You can see that pushed to its comically paradoxical limit in *The Raised Curtain* by Mirabeau.

Well now, we are coming to that on account of which, in its search for justification, for a base and support, in the sense of reference to the reality principle, ethics encounters its own stumbling block, its failure – I mean there where an aporia opens up in that mental articulation we call ethics. In the same way that Kantian ethics has no other consequence than that gymnastic exercise whose formative function for anyone who thinks I have called to your attention, so Sadian ethics has had no social consequences at all. Understand that I don't know if the French have really tried to become republicans, but it is certain that just like all the other nations of the world, including those who had their revolutions after them – bolder, more ambitious, and more radical revolutions, too – they have left what I will call the religious bases of the ten commandments completely intact, even pushing them to a point where their puritan character is increasingly marked. We've reached a situation where the leader of a great socialist state on a visit to other contemporary cultures is scandalized to see dancers on the Pacific coast of

the noble country of America raising their legs a little too high.

We are thus faced here with a question, that is to say, the question of the relationship to das Ding.

This relationship seems to me to be sufficiently emphasized in the third chapter of *The Critique of Practical Reason* concerning the motives of practical pure reason. In effect, Kant acknowledges after all the existence of *one* sentient correlative of the moral law in its purity, and strangely enough, I ask you to note, it is nothing other than pain itself. I will read you the passage concerned, the second paragraph of the third part: "Consequently, we can see *a priori* that the moral law as the determining principle of will, by reason of the fact that it sets itself against our inclinations, must produce a feeling that one could call pain. And this is the first and perhaps only case, where we are allowed to determine, by means of *a priori* concepts, the relationship between a knowledge, which comes from practical pure reason, and a feeling of pleasure or pain."

In brief, Kant is of the same opinion as Sade. For in order to reach *das Ding* absolutely, to open the flood gates of desire, what does Sade show us on the horizon? In essence, pain. The other's pain as well as the pain of the subject himself, for on occasions they are simply one and the same thing. To the degree that it involves forcing an access to the Thing, the outer extremity of pleasure is unbearable to us. It is this that explains the absurd or, to use a popular expression, maniacal side of Sade that strikes us in his fictional constructions. We are aware at every moment of the discomfort in living constructions, the kind of discomfort that makes it so difficult for our neurotic patients to confess certain of their fantasms.

In fact, to a certain degree, at a certain level, fantasms cannot bear the revelation of speech.

3

We are then brought back again to the moral law insofar as it is incarnated in a certain number of commandments. I mean the ten commandments, which in the beginning, at a period that is not so remote in the past, were collected by a people that sets itself apart as a chosen people.

As I said, it is appropriate to reconsider these commandments. I noted last time that there is a study to be done for which I would gladly call upon one of you as the representative of a tradition of moral theology. A great many questions deserve our attention. I spoke of the number of commandments. There is also the matter of their form and the way in which they are transmitted to us in the future tense. I would be glad to call upon the help of someone who knows enough Hebrew to answer my questions. In the Hebrew version is it a future tense or a form of the volitive that is used in *Deuteronomy*

and *Numbers*, where we see the first formulations of the Decalogue?

The issue I want to raise today concerns their privileged structure in relation to the structure of the law. I want today to consider two of them.

I must leave to one side the huge questions posed by the promulgation of these commandments by something that announces itself in the following form: "I am what I am." It is, in effect, necessary not to draw the text in the direction of Greek metaphysics by translating as "he who is," or "he who am." The English translation, "I am that I am," is, according to Hebrew scholars, the closest to what is meant by the formulation of the verse. Perhaps I am mistaken, but since I do not know Hebrew and while I wait on further information on the subject, I rely on the best authorities, and they are of one mind on the question.

That "I am what I am" is announced first of all to a small people in the form of that which saved it from the misfortunes of Egypt, and it begins by affirming, "You will adore no God but me, before my countenance." I leave open the question of what "before my countenance" means. Does it mean that beyond the countenance of God, i.e., outside Canaan, the adoration of other gods is not inconceivable for a believing Jew? A passage from the second Book of Samuel, spoken by David, seems to confirm this.

It is nevertheless the case that the second commandment, the one that formally excludes not only every cult, but also every image, every representation of what is in heaven, on earth, or in the void, seems to me to show that what is involved is in a very special relationship to human feeling as a whole. In a nutshell, the elimination of the function of the imaginary presents itself to my mind, and, I think, to yours, as the principle of the relation to the symbolic, in the meaning we give that term here; that is to say, to speech. Its principal condition is there.

I leave aside the question of rest on the sabbath day. But I believe that that extraordinary commandment, according to which, in a land of masters, we observe one day out of seven without work – such that according to humorous proverbs, the common man is left no happy medium between the labor of love and the most stultifying boredom – that suspension, that emptiness, clearly introduces into human life the sign of a gap, a beyond relative to every law of utility. It seems to me, therefore, that it has the most intimate relationship to something that we are on the track of here.

I leave aside the prohibition on murder, for we will have to come back to that in connection with the respective significance of the act and its retribution. I want to take up the prohibition on lying insofar as it is related to what presented itself to us as that essential relationship of man to the Thing, insofar as it is commanded by the pleasure principle, namely, the lie that we have to deal with every day in our unconscious.

"Thou shalt not lie" is the commandment in which the intimate link between

desire, in its structuring function, with the law is felt most tangibly. In truth, this commandment exists to make us feel the true function of the law. And I can do no better than to place it beside the sophism in which is manifested most strikingly the type of ingenuity that is furthest from the Jewish or talmudic tradition, namely, the paradox of Epimenides, he who affirmed that all men are liars. What am I saying, in proposing the articulation of the unconscious that I gave you; what am I saying, responds the sophism? – except that I, too, lie, and, consequently, I can affirm nothing valid concerning not simply the function of truth, but even the significance of lying.

"Thou shalt not lie" as a negative precept has as its function to withdraw the subject of enunciation from that which is enunciated. Remember the graph. It is there that I can say "Thou shalt not lie" – there where I lie, where I repress, where I, the liar, speak. In "Thou shalt not lie" as law is included the possibility of the lie as the most fundamental desire.

I am going to give you a proof that is to my mind nevertheless valid. It concerns Proudhon's famous phrase: "Property is theft." Another proof is that of the cries of anguish lawyers emit whenever it is a question, in some more or less grotesque and mythical form, of using a lie detector. Must we conclude from this that the respect of the human person involves the right to lie? Surely, it is a question and not an answer to reply "yes, certainly." One might say, it's not so simple.

What is the source of that rebellion against the fact that something exists which may reduce the question of the subject's speech to a universally objectified application? The point is that speech doesn't itself know what it is saying when it lies, and that, on the other hand, in lying it also speaks some truth. Moreover, it is in this antinomic function between the law and desire, as conditioned by speech, that resides the primordial authority which makes this commandment among all ten one of the cornerstones of that which we call the human condition, to the extent that that condition merits our respect.

Since time is getting on, I will skip quickly forward to the issue that is the object of our discussion today relative to the relationship between desire and the law. It is the famous commandment that affirms the following – it makes one smile, but when one thinks about it, one doesn't smile for long: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, neither his man servant, nor his maid servant, neither his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that belongs to thy neighbor."

Putting the wife between the house and the donkey has given rise to more than one idea that one can recognize there the exigences of a primitive society—a society of Bedouins, "wogs," and "niggers." Well, I don't agree.

The law affirmed there, the part concerning one's neighbor's wife at least, is still alive in the hearts of men who violate it every day, and it doubtless has

a relationship to that which is the object of our discussion today, namely, *das Ding*.

It is not after all a question of just any good here. It is not a question of that which creates the law of exchange and covers with a kind of amusing legality, a kind of social *Sicherung*, the movements, the *impetus*, of human instincts. It is a question of something whose value resides in the fact that none of these objects exists without having the closest possible relationship to that in which the human being can rest as if it were *die Trude, das Ding* – not insofar as it is his good, but insofar as it is the good in which he may find rest. Let me add *das Ding* insofar as it is the very correlative of the law of speech in its most primitive point of origin, and in the sense that this *Ding* was there from the beginning, that it was the first thing that separated itself from everything the subject began to name and articulate, that the covetousness that is in question is not addressed to anything that I might desire but to a thing that is my neighbor's Thing.

It is to the extent that the commandment in question preserves the distance from the Thing as founded by speech itself that it assumes its value.

But where does this take us?

Is the Law the Thing? Certainly not. Yet I can only know of the Thing by means of the Law. In effect, I would not have had the idea to covet it if the Law hadn't said: "Thou shalt not covet it." But the Thing finds a way by producing in me all kinds of covetousness thanks to the commandment, for without the Law the Thing is dead. But even without the Law, I was once alive. But when the commandment appeared, the Thing flared up, returned once again, I met my death. And for me, the commandment that was supposed to lead to life turned out to lead to death, for the Thing found a way and thanks to the commandment seduced me; through it I came to desire death.

I believe that for a little while now some of you at least have begun to suspect that it is no longer I who have been speaking. In fact, with one small change, namely, "Thing" for "sin," this is the speech of Saint Paul on the subject of the relations between the law and sin in the Epistle to the Romans, Chapter 7, paragraph 7.

Whatever some may think in certain milieux, you would be wrong to think that the religious authors aren't a good read. I have always been rewarded whenever I have immersed myself in their works. And Saint Paul's Epistle is a work that I recommend to you for your vacation reading; you will find it very good company.

The relationship between the Thing and the Law could not be better defined than in these terms. And we will come back to it now. The dialectical relationship between desire and the Law causes our desire to flare up only in

relation to the Law, through which it becomes the desire for death. It is only because of the Law that sin, ἁμαρτία – which in Greek means lack and non-participation in the Thing – takes on an excessive, hyperbolic character. Freud's discovery – the ethics of psychoanalysis – does it leave us clinging to that dialectic? We will have to explore that which, over the centuries, human beings have succeeded in elaborating that transgresses the Law, puts them in a relationship to desire that transgresses interdiction, and introduces an erotics that is above morality.

I don't think that you should be surprised by such a question. It is after all precisely something that all religions engage in, all mysticisms, all that Kant disdainfully calls the *Religionsschwärmereien,* religious enthusiasms – it's not an easy term to translate. What is all this except a way of rediscovering the relationship to *das Ding* somewhere beyond the law? There are no doubt other ways. No doubt, in talking about erotics, we will have to talk about the kind of rules of love that have been elaborated over the centuries. Freud said somewhere that he could have described his doctrine as an erotics, but, he went on, "I didn't do it, because that would have involved giving ground relative to words, and he who gives ground relative to words also gives ground relative to things. I thus spoke of the theory of sexuality."

It's true: Freud placed in the forefront of ethical inquiry the simple relationship between man and woman. Strangely enough, things haven't been able to move beyond that point. The question of *das Ding* is still attached to whatever is open, lacking, or gaping at the center of our desire. I would say – you will forgive the play on words – that we need to know what we can do to transform this dam-age into our "dame" in the archaic French sense, our lady.

Don't laugh at this sleight of hand; it was in the language before I used it. If you look up the etymology of the word "danger," you will see that exactly the same ambiguity exists from the beginning in French: "danger" was originally "domniarium," domination. The word "dame" gradually came to contaminate that word. And, in effect, when we are in another's power, we are in great danger.

Therefore, next year we will try to advance still further into these incontestably perilous waters.

December 23, 1959

THE PROBLEM OF SUBLIMATION

VII

Drives and lures

THE DOMAIN OF THE PASTORAL
THE PARADOX OF THE MORAL CONSCIENCE
WORLD AND BODY
LUTHER
THE PROBLEM OF THE OBJECT RELATION

During the retreat of the vacation, I felt the need to make a little excursion into a certain domain within the treasure house of English and French literature. "Quaerens," not "quem devorem," but rather "quod doceam vobis" – seeking what to teach you and how, on the subject that we are navigating towards under the title of the ethics of psychoanalysis. You can certainly sense that it must be leading us toward a problematic point, not only of Freud's doctrine, but also of what one might call our responsibility as analysts.

It is a point that you haven't yet seen rise up on the horizon. And, my goodness, there is no reason why you should, since up till now this year I have avoided using the term. It is something that is so problematic for the theorists of analysis, as you will see from the testimony of the quotations I will cite; yet it is so essential. It is what Freud called *Sublimierung*, sublimation.

1

Sublimation is, in effect, the other side of the research that Freud pioneered into the roots of ethical feeling, insofar as it imposes itself in the form of prohibitions, of the moral conscience. It is the side that is referred to in the world in a manner that is so improper and so comical to a sensitive ear – I mean in the world outside the field of psychoanalysis – as the philosophy of values.

We who find ourselves, along with Freud, in a position to give a radically new critique of the sources and the incidence of ethical thought, are we in the same fortunate situation concerning its positive side, that of moral and spiritual elevation, that of the scale of values? The problem seems much more uncertain and more delicate there, but one cannot for all that say we may

neglect it for the sake of the more immediate concerns of straightforward therapeutic action.

In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality,* Freud uses two correlative terms concerning the effects of the individual libidinal adventure: *Fixierarbeit* is the fixation that is for us the register of explanation of that which is, in fact, inexplicable, and *Haftbarkeit,* which is perhaps best translated by "perseverance" but has a curious resonance in German, since it means also "responsibility," "commitment." And that is what is involved here; it concerns our collective history as analysts.

We are caught up in an adventure that has taken a certain direction, a certain contingency, certain stages. Freud didn't finish at a stroke the trail he blazed for us. And it may be that, on account of Freud's detours, we are attached to a certain moment in the development of his thought, without fully realizing its contingent character, like that of every effect of our human history.

In accordance with a method you are familiar with – for if it isn't mine, it is at least known to me – let us try to take a few steps backwards, two, for example, before taking three steps forward. That way we may hope to gain one.

A step backward then: let us remember that psychoanalysis might seem at first to be of an ethical order. It might seem to be the search for a natural ethics – and, my goodness, a certain siren song might well promote a misunderstanding of that kind. And indeed, through a whole side of its action and its doctrine, psychoanalysis effectively presents itself as such, as tending to simplify some difficulty that is external in origin, that is of the order of a misrecognition or indeed of a misunderstanding, as tending to restore a normative balance with the world – something that the maturation of the instincts would naturally lead to. One sometimes sees such a gospel preached in the form of the genital relation that I have more than once referred to here with a great deal of reservation and even with a pronounced skepticism.

A great many things immediately present themselves in opposition. It is in any case in just such a simple way that analysis leads us in the direction of what, for reasons that I do not believe are merely picturesque, one might call the domain of the pastoral.

The domain of the pastoral is never absent from civilization; it never fails to offer itself as a solution to the latter's discontents. If I use that name, it is because over the centuries that is how it has happened to present itself openly. Nowadays, it is often masked; it appears for example in the more severe and more pedantic form of the infallibility of proletarian consciousness – something that has preoccupied us for so long, although in recent years it has receded a little. It appears also in the form of the somewhat mythical notion I referred to just now concerning the hopes, however vague, that were raised

by the Freudian revolution. But it's the same old idea of the pastoral. And, as you will see, it concerns a very serious debate.

Perhaps we need to rediscover it, to rediscover its meaning. There is perhaps a good reason why we should reexamine the archaic form of the pastoral, reexamine a certain return to nature or the hope invested in a nature that you shouldn't imagine our ancestors thought of in simpler terms than we do. We will see whether the inventions that the *ingenium* of our ancestors attempted in this direction teach us something that needs to be elucidated for us, too.

Obviously, as soon as one takes a look at Freud's thought as a whole, one sees immediately that there is something that from the beginning resists being absorbed into this domain. And it is that through which I began to attack the problem of the ethics of psychoanalysis with you this year. Freud allows us, in effect, to measure the paradoxical character or practical aporia of something that is not at all of the order of difficulties that an improved nature or a natural amelioration can present. It is rather something that introduces itself immediately as possessed of a very special quality of malice, of bad influence – that is the meaning of the French word *méchant*. Freud isolates it increasingly in the course of his work up to *Civilization and Its Discontents*, where he gives it its fullest articulation, or in his studies of mechanisms such as the phenomenon of melancholia.

What is this paradox? It is that the moral conscience, as he says, shows itself to be the more demanding the more refined it becomes, crueller and crueller even as we offend it less and less, more and more fastidious as we force it, by abstaining from acts, to go and seek us out at the most intimate levels of our impulses or desires. In short, the insatiable character of this moral conscience, its paradoxical cruelty, transforms it within the individual into a parasite that is fed by the satisfactions accorded it. Ethics punishes the individual relatively much less for his faults than for his misfortunes.

This is the paradox of the moral conscience in what I hesitate to call its spontaneous form. Rather than speak of the investigation of the moral conscience functioning in a natural state – we would never find our way through that – let us choose the other dimension covered by the meaning of the term "natural"; and let's call it the critique, by means of psychoanalysis, of wild, uncultivated ethics, such as we find it functioning all alone, especially in those whom we deal with as we explore the level of affect or pathos, and of pathology.

It is here that analysis sheds some light, and it does so, in the end, on that which in the depths of man might be called self-hate. It is something that is suggested by the classical comedy whose title is *He Who Punishes Himself*.[1]

It is a little comedy which belongs to the New Comedy taken over from

[1] A play by Terence usually translated in Englsh as *The Self-Tormentor*.

Greece by Latin literature. I don't especially recommend that you read it, for after that fine title you would only be disappointed by the text. You would only find, like everything else, a concrete satire of character traits, precise notations of forms of the ridiculous. But don't forget that the function of comedy is only apparently without profundity. Through the very fact of the play of the signifier, through the simple force of signifying articulation, we find ourselves going beyond something that is simply depiction or contingent description, to the revelation of what lies below. Comedy makes us rediscover what Freud showed was present in the practice of nonsense.

We see the depths emerge, we see something that detaches itself beyond the exercise of the unconscious, there where Freudian research invites us to recognize the point where the *Trieb* is unmasked – the *Trieb* and not the *Instinkt*. For the *Instinkt* is not far from the field of *das Ding* in relation to which I invite you to recenter this year the way in which the problems around us are posed.

The *Triebe* were discovered and explored by Freud within an experience founded on the confidence he had in the play of signifiers, in the play of substitutions; the result is that we can in no way confuse the domain of the *Triebe* with a reclassification of human beings' associations with their natural milieu, however new that reclassification may seem. The *Trieb* must be translated insofar as possible with some ambiguity, and I like sometimes to say *dérive* in French, "drift." It is in any case "drive" that is used in English to translate the German word. That drift, where the whole action of the pleasure principle is motivated, directs us toward the mythic point that has been articulated in terms of an object relation. We have to be precise about the meaning of this and to criticize the confusions introduced by ambiguities of signification that are much more serious than the signifying kind.

We are now getting close to the most profound things Freud had to say about the nature of the *Triebe*, and especially insofar as they may give satisfaction to the subject in more than one way, notably, in leaving open a door, a way or a career, of sublimation. Within psychoanalytic thought, this domain has remained until now almost undisturbed; only the boldest spirits have dared to approach it, and even then not without expressing the dissatisfaction or unassuaged thirst Freud's formulations left them with. I will be referring here to a few texts found at more than one point in his work, from the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* to *Moses and Monotheism*, and including *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, the *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, and *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

Freud invites us to reflect on sublimation or, more exactly, he proposes – in a way that enables him to define the field – all kinds of difficulties that merit our attention today.

2

Since the problem of sublimation is situated for us in the field of the *Triebe*, I would like first to look for a moment at a passage taken from the *Introductory Lectures*, that is to say a work that has been translated as *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. It is on page 358, Volume XI, of the *Gesammelte Werke*[2]:

> Therefore, we have to take into consideration the fact that the drives *[Triebe]*, the pulsating sexual excitements, are extraordinarily plastic. They may appear in each others' places. One of them may accumulate the intensity of the others. When the satisfaction of one is denied by reality, the satisfaction of another may offer total compensation. They behave in relation to each other like a network, like communicating channels that are filled with water.

We can see there the metaphor that is no doubt at the origin of that surrealist work which is called *Communicating Vases*.

Freud goes on, and I paraphrase, "They behave, therefore, in that way; and this is true in spite of the fact that they may have fallen under the domination or the supremacy of the *Genitalprimat*. Thus the latter must not be thought to be so easy to gather into a single *Vorstellung*, representation."

Freud warns us in this passage – and there are plenty of others – that even when the whole *Netz der Triebe* has fallen beneath the *Genitalprimat*, it is not so easy to conceive of the latter structurally as a unitary *Vorststellung*, a resolution of contradictions.

We know only too well that that in no way eliminates the communicating or fleeting, plastic character, as Freud himself puts it, of the economy of the *Triebregungen*. In short, as I have been teaching you for years, that structure commits the human libido to the subject, commits it to slipping into the play of words, to being subjugated by the structure of the world of signs, which is the single universal and dominant *Primat*. And the sign, as Peirce put it, is that which is in the place of something else for someone.

The articulation as such of the possibilities of *Verschiebbarkeit*, or the displacement of the natural attitude, is elaborated at length and ends up in this passage with the elucidation of the *Partiallust* in the genital libido itself. In short, an approach to the problem of *Sublimierung* must begin with a recognition of the plasticity of the instincts, even if one acknowledges subsequently, for reasons to be explained, that complete sublimation is not possible for the individual. With the individual – and as long as it is a question of the individual with all that that implies concerning internal dispositions and external actions – we find ourselves faced with limits. There is something that cannot

[2] S.E., *XV*, p. 345.

be sublimated; libidinal demand exists, the demand for a certain dose, of a certain level of direct satisfaction, without which harm results, serious disturbances occur.

But our point of departure is the relationship of the libido to that *Netz*, that *Flüssigkeit*, that *Verschiebbarkeit* of the signs as such. It is to this in any case that we are always brought back whenever we read Freud with an attentive eye.

Let me posit another essential point of articulation, necessary if we are to move forward once more.

It is obvious that the libido, with its paradoxical, archaic, so-called pregenital characteristics, with its eternal polymorphism, with its world of images that are linked to the different sets of drives associated with the different stages from the oral to the anal and the genital – all of which no doubt constitutes the originality of Freud's contribution – that whole microcosm has absolutely nothing to do with the macrocosm; only in fantasy does it engender world. That's Freud's doctrine, contrary to the direction in which one of his disciples, namely Jung, wanted to take it – this schism within Freud's entourage occurring around 1910.

This is important particularly at a moment when it is obvious that, even if one once located them there, there is no point now in seeking the phallus or the anal ring in the starry sky; they have been definitely expelled. For a long time even in scientific thinking, men seemed to inhabit cosmological projections. For a long time a world soul existed, and thought could comfort itself with the idea that there was a deep connection between our images and the world that surrounds us. This is a point whose importance does not seem to have been noticed, namely, that the Freudian project has caused the whole world to reenter us, has definitely put it back in its place, that is to say, in our body, and nowhere else. Let me remind you in this connection to what extent, in the period which immediately preceded the liberation of modern man, both scientific and theological thought were preoccupied by something that Freud did not hesitate to mention and to call by its name, but about which we never speak anymore, namely, the figure who was for a long time known as the prince of this world, *Diabolus* himself. The symbolic here is united with the diabolic, with all those forms that theological preaching has so powerfully articulated.

Read a little Luther; not just the *Table Talk*, but the *Sermons* as well, if you want to see to what extent the power of images may be affirmed, images that are very familiar to us because they have been invested with the quality of scientific authentification on a daily basis through our psychoanalytic experience. It is to those images that the thought of a prophet refers whose influence was such a powerful one, and who renewed the very basis of Christian teaching when he sought to express our dereliction, our fall in a world where

we let ourselves go. His choice of words is in the end far more analytic than all that modern phenomenology has been able to articulate in the relatively gentle terms of the abandonment of the mother's breast; what kind of negligence is that which causes her milk to dry up? Luther says literally, "You are that waste matter which falls into the world from the devil's anus."

That is the essentially digestive and excremental schema forged by a thought that draws the ultimate consequences from the form of exile in which man finds himself relative to any good in the world whatsoever.

That's where Luther leads us. Don't imagine that these things didn't have an effect on the thought and the way of life of people of the time. One finds articulated here precisely the essential turning point of a crisis from which emerged our whole modern immersion in the world. It is to this that Freud came to give his approval, his official stamp, when he made that image of the world, those fallacious archetypes, return once and for all there where they belong, that is in our body.

Henceforth we are to deal with the world where it is. Do these erogenous zones, these fundamental points of fixation, open onto rosy possibilities and pastoral optimism? Does one find here a path that leads to freedom? Or to the strictest servitude? These erogenous zones that, until one has achieved a fuller elucidation of Freud's thought, one can consider to be generic, and that are limited to a number of special points, to points that are openings, to a limited number of mouths at the body's surface, are the points where Eros will have to find his source.

In order to realize what is essential and original in Freud's thought here, it is sufficient to refer to those openings that the exercise of poetic lyricism gives. According to a given poet, to Walt Whitman for example, imagine what as a man one might desire of one's own body. One might dream of a total, complete, epidermic contact between one's body and a world that was itself open and quivering; dream of a contact and, in the distance, of a way of life that the poet points out to us; hope for a revelation of harmony following the disappearance of the perpetual, insinuating presence of the oppressive feeling of some original curse.

Well now, Freud, on the contrary, emphasizes a point of insertion, a limit point, an irreducible point, at the level of what we might call the source of the *Triebe*. And it is precisely that that our experience then encounters in the irreducible character – once again the ambiguity is clear – of these residues of archaic forms of the libido.

These forms, we are told on the one hand, are not susceptible to *Befriedigung*. The most archaic aspirations of the child are both a point of departure and a nucleus that is never completely resolved under some primacy of genitality or a pure and simple *Vorstellung* of man in human form by androgynous fusion, however total one may imagine it. There always remain dreams of

these primary, archaic forms of the libido. That is a first point that experience insists on and Freudian discourse articulates.

On the other hand, Freud reveals the opening, which at first sight seems limitless, of the substitutions that may occur at the other end, at the level of the goal.

I have avoided the word *Objekt*, which never fails to appear at the point of one's pen as soon as one begins to differentiate what is involved in sublimation. One cannot characterize the sublimated form of the instinct without reference to the object, whatever one does. In a minute I will read you some passages which will show you the scope of the difficulty.

It is a question of the object. But what does the object mean at that level? When Freud at the beginning of his more emphatic formulations of his doctrine begins his first topic by articulating that which concerns sublimation, notably in the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, sublimation is characterized by a change of objects, or in the libido, a change that doesn't occur through the intermediary of a return of the repressed nor symptomatically, indirectly, but directly, in a way that satisfies directly. The sexual libido finds satisfaction in objects; how does it distinguish them? Quite simply and massively, and in truth not without opening a field of infinite complexity, as objects that are socially valorized, objects of which the group approves, insofar as they are objects of public utility. That is how the possibility of sublimation is defined.

Thus we find ourselves here in a position to hold firmly in our hands the two ends of a chain.

On the one hand, there is the possibility of satisfaction, even if it is substitutive, and through the intermediary of what the text calls a *Surrogate*. On the other hand, it is a question of objects that are going to acquire collective social value. We find ourselves here faced with a trap into which thought, with its penchant for facility, would love to leap, merely by constructing a simple opposition and a simple reconciliation between the individual and the collectivity.

It doesn't seem to be a problem that the collectivity might find satisfaction there where the individual happens to need to change his batteries or his rifle from one shoulder to the other; where, moreover, it would be a matter of an individual satisfaction that is taken for granted, all by itself. Yet we were told at the beginning how problematic the satisfaction of the libido is. Everything that has to do with the *Triebe* raises the question of plasticity and of limits. Thus the formulation suggested above is far from being one that Freud could adhere to.

Far from adhering to it, he establishes a relation in the *Three Essays* between sublimation in its most obvious social effects and what he calls *Reaktionsbildung*. That means that right away, at a moment when things cannot yet be

articulated powerfully, for want of that component of his topic he will produce later, he introduces the notion of reaction formation. In other words, he illustrates a given character trait, a trait acquired through social regulation, as something which, far from occurring as a direct consequence or as in line with a specific instinctual satisfaction, necessitates the construction of a system of defenses that is, for example, antagonistic to the anal drive. He, therefore, introduces the idea of an opposition, an antinomy, as fundamental in the construction of the sublimation of an instinct. He thus introduces the problem of a contradiction in his own formulation.

Thus, that which is presented as a construction in opposition to an instinctual tendency can in no way be reduced to a direct satisfaction in which the drive itself would be saturated in a way that would have no other characteristic than that it succeeds in receiving the seal of collective approval.

In truth, the problem Freud raises relative to sublimation only comes fully to light at the time of his second topic. We will have to approach that from *Zur Einführung des Narzissmus* ("On Narcissism: An Introduction"), a work that is not only the introduction to narcissism, but also the introduction to the second topic.

3

In this text that our friend Jean Laplanche has translated for the *Society* and that you should look up in the *Gesammelte Werke,* Volume X, pages 161–162[3], you will find the following comment: "What we have to seek is that which now presents itself to us concerning the relations of this formulation of the ideal to sublimation. Sublimation is a process that concerns object libido."

I would just point out that the opposition *Ichlibido / Objektlibido* only begins to be articulated as such on an analytical level with the *Einführung*. This text complements the articulation first given by Freud of the fundamentally conflictual position of man relative to his satisfaction as such. That is why it is essential to introduce *das Ding* at the beginning.

That is *Das Ding* insofar as, if he is to follow the path of his pleasure, man must go around it. One must take one's time to recognize, to find out for oneself, to take one's time to see that Freud is telling us the same thing as Saint Paul, namely, that what governs us on the path of our pleasure is no Sovereign Good, and that moreover, beyond a certain limit, we are in a thoroughly enigmatic position relative to that which lies within *das Ding,* because there is no ethical rule which acts as a mediator between our pleasure and its real rule.

[3] S.E., *XIV*, p. 94.

And behind Saint Paul, you find the teaching of Christ when he is questioned just before the final Easter [la dernière Pâques]. There are two versions, that of the Gospel according to Saint Mathew and that of the Gospels of Mark and Luke. In Saint Mathew's Gospel, where it is clearest, he is asked, "What good must we do to achieve life eternal?" In the Greek version, he answers, "Why do you speak to me of good? Who knows what is good? Only He, He who is beyond, our Father, knows what is good. And He told you, Do this, Do that, Don't go any further." One just has to follow his commandments. Then after that there is the statement, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." That's the commandment that appropriately enough, given its obvious relevance, is the terminal point of *Civilization and Its Discontents;* it is the ideal end to which his investigation by necessity leads him – Freud never held back from anything that offered itself to his examination.

I cannot urge you too strongly to appreciate, if you are able, what in Christ's answer has for so long been closed to aural apprehension, apart from that of knowing ears – "They have ears but they hear not," the Gospel tells us. Try to read the words of the man who, it is claimed, never laughed; read them for what they are. From time to time, you will be struck by a form of humor that surpasses all others.

The parable of the unfaithful steward, for example. No matter how seldom one has been to church, one is nevertheless used to having that parable trotted out. And it occurs to no one to be surprised by the fact that the Son of Man, the purest of the pure, tells us that the best way to achieve salvation for one's soul is to embezzle the funds one is in charge of, since that, too, may lead the children of light to grant you, if not a reward, then at least a certain gratitude. From the point of view of a homogeneous, uniform, and stable morality, there is some contradiction there, but perhaps one could confirm it with other insights of a similar kind – such as, for example, the terrific "joke,"[4] "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's" – and after that get on with it! It is a form of paradox that may lead to all kinds of evasions or ruptures, to all the gaps opened up by nonsense – those insidious dialogues, for example, in which the interlocutor always manages to slip out of the traps that are set for him.

To come back to our subject for the moment, the good as such – something that has been the eternal object of the philosophical quest in the sphere of ethics, the philosopher's stone of all the moralists – the good is radically denied by Freud. It is rejected at the beginning of his thought in the very notion of the pleasure principle as the rule of the deepest instinct, of the realm of the drives. This is confirmed in a thousand different ways, and is for example consistent with Freud's central question, which concerns, as you know, the Father.

[4] In English in the original.

To understand Freud's position relative to the Father, you have to go and look up the form it is given in Luther's thought, when he had his nostrils tickled by Erasmus. Reluctantly, after a great many years, Erasmus had finally published his *De Libero Arbitrio,* so as to remind the excitable mad man from Wittenberg that the authoritative Christian tradition, from the words of Christ to Saint Paul, Saint Augustine and the Church Fathers, led one to believe that works, good works, were not nothing, and that to be sure the tradition of the philosophers on the subject of the Sovereign Good was not to be just thrown out.

Luther, who up to that point had remained reserved in his relations with the figure of Erasmus – although he did privately indulge in a little irony on the subject – then published his *De Servo Arbitrio* in order to emphasize both the fundamentally bad character of the relations between men and the fact that at the heart of man's destiny is the *Ding,* the *causa,* which I described the other day as analogous to that which is designated by Kant as at the horizon of his *Practical Reason* – except that it is a pendant to it. To coin a phrase whose approximate Greekness I will ask you to forgive, it is the *causa pathomenon,* the *cause* of the most fundamental human passion.

Luther writes of the following – God's eternal hatred of men, not simply of their failures and the works of their free will, but a hatred that existed even before the world was created. You see that there are reasons why I advise you to read religious authors from time to time; I mean good ones, of course, not those who are all sweetness and light, although even they are sometimes rewarding. Saint François de Sales on marriage is, I assure you, better than Van de Velde on ideal marriage. But in my opinion Luther is much more interesting. That hatred which existed even before the world was created is the correlative of the relationship that exists between a certain influence of the law as such and a certain conception of *das Ding* as the fundamental problem and, in a word, as the problem of evil. I assume that it hasn't escaped your attention that it is exactly what Freud deals with when the question he asks concerning the Father leads him to point out that the latter is the tyrant of the primitive horde, the one against whom the original crime was committed, and who for that very reason introduced the order, essence, and foundation of the domain of law.

Not to recognize the filiation or cultural paternity that exists between Freud and a new direction of thought – one that is apparent at the break which occurred toward the beginning of the sixteenth century, but whose repercussions are felt up to the end of the seventeenth century – constitutes a fundamental misunderstanding of the kind of problems Freud's intellectual project addresses.

I have just finished a digression of some twenty-five minutes. And it was designed to tell you that, just after 1914 with the *Einführung,* Freud introduces us to something that dodges the issue again by articulating things that

are, of course, essential, but of which one must know the context, namely, the problem of the object relation.

This problem of the object relation has to be read "Freudianly." You can, in fact, see it emerge in a narcissistic relation, an imaginary relation. At this level the object introduces itself only insofar as it is perpetually interchangeable with the love that the subject has for its own image. *Ichlibido* and *Objektlibido* are introduced by Freud in relation to the difference between *Ich-ideal* and *Ideal-ich,* between the mirage of the ego and the formation of an ideal. This ideal makes room for itself alone; within the subject it gives form to something which is preferred and to which it will henceforth submit. The problem of identification is linked to this psychological splitting, which places the subject in a state of dependence relative to an idealized, forced image of itself – something that Freud will emphasize subsequently.

It is through this mirage relation that the notion of an object is introduced. But this object is not the same as that which is aimed at on the horizon of the instinct. Between the object as it is structured by the narcissistic relation and *das Ding,* there is a difference, and it is precisely on the slope of that difference that the problem of sublimation is situated for us.

In a short note in the *Three Essays,* Freud gives us a kind of brief summary in the style of an essay on the difference that strikes us between the love life of antiquity, of pre-Christians, and our own. It resides, he says, in the fact that in antiquity the emphasis was on the instinct itself, whereas we place it on the object. The Ancients feted the instinct, and, through the intermediary of the instinct, were also ready to honor an object of lesser, common value, whereas we reduce the value of the manifestation of the instinct, and we demand the support of the object on account of the prevailing characteristics of the object.

Moreover, Freud wrote a great many other pages where he discussed disparaging commentaries on love life – commentaries made in the name of what? In the name of an incontestable ideal. You can read the following in *Civilization and Its Discontents:* "Among the works of that sensitive English author, Galsworthy, whose worth is universally acknowledged nowadays, I once really enjoyed one story. It was called *The Apple Tree,* and it shows how there is no room anymore in contemporary civilized life for the simple, natural love of two human beings of the pastoral tradition."[5]

The whole passage flows forth spontaneously in a way that I call excessive. How does Freud know that we emphasize the object, whereas the Ancients put the accent on the instinct? You will respond that there is no example of ideal exaltation in any Greek tragedy, unlike our own classical tragedies. Yet Freud hardly explains the question.

[5] S.E., *XXI,* p. 105, Note 2.

Next time we will have to compare our ideal of love with that of the Ancients by referring to some works of history and to a given historical moment that will also have to be defined. It is no more or less than a structuralization, a historical modification of Eros. It is, of course, of great importance that courtly love, the exaltation of woman, a certain Christian style of love that Freud himself discusses, mark a historical change. And I will be leading you into that territory.

It is nevertheless true, as I will show you, that in certain authors of antiquity – and interestingly enough in Latin rather than Greek literature – one finds some and perhaps all the elements that characterize the cult of an idealized object, something which was determinative for what can only be called the sublimated elaboration of a certain relationship. Thus what Freud expresses over-hastily and probably inversely, concerns a kind of degradation which, when one examines it closely, is directed less at love life than at a certain lost cord, a crisis, in relation to the object.

To set out to find the instinct again is the result of a certain loss, a cultural loss, of the object. That such a problem exists at the center of that mental crisis from which Freudianism emerged is a question that we will have to ask ourselves. The nostalgia expressed in the idea that the Ancients were closer than we are to the instinct perhaps means no more, like every dream of a Golden Age or El Dorado, than that we are engaged in posing questions at the level of the instinct because we do not yet know what to do as far as the object is concerned.

At the level of sublimation the object is inseparable from imaginary and especially cultural elaborations. It is not just that the collectivity recognizes in them useful objects; it finds rather a space of relaxation where it may in a way delude itself on the subject of *das Ding*, colonize the field of *das Ding* with imaginary schemes. That is how collective, socially accepted sublimations operate.

Society takes some comfort from the mirages that moralists, artists, artisans, designers of dresses and hats, and the creators of imaginary forms in general supply it with. But it is not simply in the approval that society gladly accords it that we must seek the power of sublimation. It is rather in an imaginary function, and, in particular, that for which we will use the symbolization of the fantasm ($\$ \diamond a$), which is the form on which depends the subject's desire.

In forms that are historically and socially specific, the *a* elements, the imaginary elements of the fantasm come to overlay the subject, to delude it, at the very point of *das Ding*. The question of sublimation will be brought to bear here. That is why I shall talk to you next time of courtly love in the Middle Ages, and, in particular, of *Minnesang*.

In an anniversary way, since last year I talked to you about *Hamlet*, I shall

speak about the Elizabethan theater, which is the turning point in European eroticism, and civilized as well. It is at that moment, in effect, that the celebration of the idealized object occurs that Freud talks about in his note.

Freud left us with the problem of a gap once again at the level of *das Ding*, which is that of religious men and mystics, at a time when we could no longer rely on the Father's guarantee.

January 13, 1960

VIII

The object and the thing

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF AFFECTS
THE KLEINIAN MYTH OF THE MOTHER
KANTIAN FABLES
SUBLIMATION AND PERVERSION
THE FABLE OF JACQUES PRÉVERT, COLLECTOR

We are progressing this year around an axis that I take to be essential, namely, that *Ding*, which is not without causing problems, indeed, not without causing some doubts to emerge as to its Freudian legitimacy, at least among those who reflect and who retain their critical intelligence, as they should, in the presence of what I formulate here before you.

I take full responsibility for *das Ding*, whose exact importance you can imagine to the extent that it has proved to be necessary if we are to make any progress. You will be able to appreciate its merits in the use made of it. But I will also be talking about it specifically again.

1

Some might say or think that I have only taken up a small detail of Freud's text in the *Entwurf*.

But experience tells us precisely that in texts like those of Freud nothing is outdated, in the sense that it is simply borrowed from somewhere, the product of scholarly parroting; nothing goes unmarked by that powerful articulatory necessity that distinguishes his discourse. That's what makes it so significant when one notices places where his discourse remains open, gaping, but nevertheless implying a necessity that I think I have made you sense on a number of occasions.

And that's not all. This *Ding*, whose place and significance I have tried to make you feel, is absolutely essential as far as Freud's thought is concerned; and as we go forward, you will see why.

What is involved is that excluded interior which, in the terminology of the *Entwurf*, is thus excluded in the interior. In the interior of what then? Of something that is precisely articulated at that moment as the *Real-Ich*, which means then the final real of the psychic organization, a real conceived of as hypothetical, to the extent that it necessarily presupposes the *Lust-Ich*. It is

in the latter that one finds the first sketches of the psychic organization, that is to say, of the organism whose development shows us that it is dominated by the function of *Vorstellungsrepräsentanzen*. And these are not only representations but the representatives of representation – something that corresponds very precisely to the path taken by so-called psychological knowledge before Freud, insofar as it first took its form from atomism. That ideational elementarity is in brief the truth of the atomism involved.

Through a kind of essential need, the whole effort of psychology has been to try to free itself from that. But it can only free itself or rebel against atomism by failing to recognize that flocculation which submits its material – and the material here is psychic – to the texture on which thought is founded, in other words, the texture of discourse as signifying chain. It is the very web on which logic rises up, with both the surplus and the essential it brings with it, which is the negation, the "splitting," the *Spaltung*, the division, the rending, that the inmixing of the subject introduces there. Psychology is subjected to the atomic condition of having to use *Vorstellungsrepräsentanzen* because it is in them that psychic material if flocculated. Doubtless psychology attempts to free itself from this necessity, but its efforts to achieve it have thus far been crude.

I don't need to do more than remind you of the confused nature of the recourse to affectivity; it reaches a point where, even when the reference is made within analysis, it always leads us toward an impasse, toward something that we feel is not the direction in which our research can really make progress.

Of course, it is not a matter of denying the importance of affects. But it is important not to confuse them with the substance of that which we are seeking in the *Real-Ich*, beyond signifying articulation of the kind we artists of analytical speech are capable of handling.

As far as the psychology of affects is concerned, Freud always manages to give in passing significant and suggestive hints. He always insists on their conventional and artificial character, on their character not as signifiers but as signals, to which in the last analysis they may be reduced. This character also explains their displaceable significance, and, from the economic point of view, presents a certain number of necessities, such as irreducibility. But affects do not throw light on the economic or even dynamic essence which is sought at the horizon or limit from an analytical perspective. That is something more opaque, more obscure, namely, analytical metaphysics's notions concerning energy.

It is true that this metapsychology has come nowadays to be organized in strangely qualitative categories. One only has to remember the function recently advanced of the term desexualized libido. That reference to a qualitative notion is increasingly difficult to maintain on the basis of any experience, and even

less on the basis of an experience that could be called affective.

We will perhaps look into the psychology of affects together someday. In order to impress upon you the inadequacy of what has so far been done on the subject, especially in psychoanalysis, I should simply like to propose to you a few incidental subjects to reflect on – an affect such as anger, for example. I am giving you there a few practical little exercises in passing. The use of precise categories that I invite you to refer to might perhaps explain why there has been so much interest in anger in the history of psychology and of ethics, and why we have been so little interested in it in psychoanalysis.

Does, for example, what Descartes says about anger satisfy you fully? The working hypothesis that I am suggesting, and we will have to see whether it does the trick or not, is that anger is no doubt a passion which is manifested by means of an organic or physiological correlative, by a given more or less hypertonic or even elated feeling, but that it requires perhaps something like the reaction of a subject to a disappointment, to the failure of an expected correlation between a symbolic order and the response of the real. In other words, anger is essentially linked to something expressed in a formulation of Charles Péguy's, who was speaking in a humorous context – it's when the little pegs refuse to go into the little holes.

Think about that and see if you find it useful. It has all kinds of possible applications, up to and including offering a clue as to the possible outline of a symbolic organization of the world among the rare animal species where one can, in fact, observe something that resembles anger. It is, after all, surprising that anger is remarkably absent throughout the animal realm as a whole.

The direction taken by Freudian thought has involved locating affect under the heading of a signal. A sufficient indication of this is that, by the end, Freud came to evaluate anxiety itself as a signal. What we are looking for, however, is beyond the organization of the *Lust-Ich* insofar as it is entirely linked in a phenomenal way to the greater or lesser investment of the system of the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanzen,* or, in other words, of the signifying elements in the psyche. This is something that is calculated to allow us to define the field of *das Ding* at least operationally, as we attempt to advance on the terrain of ethics. And since Freud's thought progressed from a therapeutic starting point, we can try to define the field of the subject insofar as it is not simply the field of the intersubjective subject, the subject subjected to the mediation of the signifier, but what is behind this subject.

With this field that I call the field of *das Ding,* we are projected into something that is far beyond the domain of affectivity, something moving, obscure and without reference points owing to the lack of a sufficient organization of its register, something much more primitive that I have already tried to describe to you in our previous discussion this year. It isn't just the register of the

Wille in Schopenhauer's sense of the word, insofar as, in opposition to representation, it is the essence of life whose support it is. It is a register where there is both good and bad will, that *volens nolens*, which is the true meaning of the ambivalence one fails to grasp, when one approaches it on the level of love and hate.

It is on the level of good and bad will, indeed of the preference for the bad at the level of negative therapeutic reaction, that Freud at the end of his thinking discovers once again the field of *das Ding*, and points out to us the space beyond the pleasure principle. It is an ethical paradox that the field of *das Ding* is rediscovered at the end, and that Freud suggests there that which in life might prefer death. And it is along this path that he comes closer than anyone else to the problem of evil or, more precisely, to the project of evil as such.

This is pointed to in everything that we have seen at the beginning of this year's seminar. Is it to be found in a corner of Freud's work where one might overlook it, might consider it as merely contingent or even outmoded? I believe that everything in Freud's thought proves that that is by no means the case. And in the end Freud refers to this field as that around which the field of the pleasure principle gravitates, in the sense that the field of the pleasure principle is beyond the pleasure principle. Neither pleasure nor the organizing, unifying, erotic instincts of life suffice in any way to make of the living organism, of the necessities and needs of life, the center of psychic development.

Clearly, the term "operational" has its value on this occasion as it does in all thought processes. This *Ding* is not fully elucidated, even if we make use of it. The label "operational" may leave you with a certain comic dissatisfaction, since what we are trying to point to there is precisely that which each and every one of us has to deal with in the least operational of ways.

I don't want to indulge in overdramatization. All ages have thought they had reached the most extreme point of vision in a confrontation with something terminal, some extra-worldly force that threatened the world. But our world and society now bring news of the shadow of a certain incredible, absolute weapon that is waved in our faces in a way that is indeed worthy of the muses. Don't imagine that the end will occur tomorrow; even in Leibnitz's time, people believed in less specific terms that the end of the world was at hand. Nevertheless, that weapon suspended over our heads which is one hundred thousand times more destructive than that which was already hundreds of thousands of times more destructive than those which came before – just imagine that rushing toward us on a rocket from outer space. It's not something I invented, since we are bombarded everyday with the news of a weapon that threatens the planet itself as a habitat for mankind.

Put yourself in that spot, which has perhaps been made more present for

us by the progress of knowledge than it was before in men's imagination – although that faculty never ceased to toy with the idea; confront that moment when a man or a group of men can act in such a way that the question of existence is posed for the whole of the human species, and you will then see inside yourself that *das Ding* is next to the subject.

You will see that you will beg the subject of knowledge who has given birth to the thing in question – the other thing, the absolute weapon – to take stock, and you will also wish either that the true Thing be at that moment within him (in other words that he not let the other go or, in common parlance, "let it all blow up") or that we know why.

Well now, after that short digression that was suggested to me by the word "operational," and from a less dramatic point of view – one no longer dares say eschathological, given the very precise materialization of things – I will take up our discussion again where we are in effect concerned with the essence of *das Ding*. Or, more exactly, in what way are we concerned with it in the domain of ethics?

2

It is not just a matter of drawing close to *das Ding*, but also to its effects, to its presence at the core of human activity, namely, in that precarious existence in the midst of the forest of desires and compromises that these very desires achieve with a certain reality, which is certainly not as confused as one might imagine.

The demands of reality, in effect, present themselves readily in the form of social demands. Freud cannot not consider them seriously, but one has to indicate immediately the special approach he adopts; it permits him to transcend the simple opposition between individual and society, in which the individual is straightway posited as the eventual site of disorder.

Note right off that it is quite unthinkable nowadays to speak abstractly of society. It is unthinkable historically, and it is unthinkable philosophically, too, for the reason that a certain Hegel revealed to us the modern function of the state, and the link between a whole phenomenology of mind and the necessity which renders a legal system perfectly coherent. A whole philosophy of law, derived from the state, encloses human existence, up to and including the monogamous couple that is its point of departure.

I am concerned with the ethics of psychoanalysis, and I can't at the same time discuss Hegelian ethics. But I do want to point out that they are not the same. At the end of a certain phenomenology, the opposition between the individual and the city, between the individual and the state, is obvious. In Plato, too, the disorders of the soul are also referred to the same dimension – it's a matter of the reproduction of the disorders of the city at the level of

the psyche. All of that is related to a problematic that is not at all Freudian. The sick individual whom Freud is concerned with reveals another dimension than that of the disorders of the state and of hierarchical disturbances. Freud addresses the sick individual as such, the neurotic, the psychotic; he addresses directly the powers of life insofar as they open onto the powers of death; he addresses directly the powers that derive from the knowledge of good and evil.

Here we are then in the company of *das Ding,* trying to get along with it.

What I am saying should in no way surprise, for I am only trying to point out to you what is going on in the psychoanalytical community. The analysts are so preoccupied with the field of *das Ding,* which responds so well to the internal necessity of their experience, that the development of analytic theory is dominated by the existence of the so-called Kleinian school. And it is striking to note that whatever reservations or even scorn another branch of the analytic community may express for that school, it is the latter that polarizes and orients the whole development of analytic thought, including the contribution of our group.

Let me suggest then that you reconsider the whole of Kleinian theory with the following key, namely, Kleinian theory depends on its having situated the mythic body of the mother at the central place of *das Ding.*

To begin with, it is in relation to that mythic body that the aggressive, transgressive, and most primordial of instincts is manifested, the primal aggressions and inverted aggressions. Also in that register which currently interests us, namely, the notion of sublimation in the Freudian economy, the Kleinian school is full of interesting ideas – not only Melanie Klein herself but also Ella Sharpe, insofar as on this point she follows Klein completely. Recently, an American author, who isn't at all Kleinian, has written on sublimation as the principle of creation in the fine arts. In an article that I shall come back to later, entitled "A Theory Concerning Creation in the Free Arts," after a more or less exhaustive critical examination of Freudian formulations on sublimation and of Kleinian attempts to explain its full meaning, the author, M. Lee, ends up attributing to it a restitutive function. In other words, she finds there more or less of an attempt at symbolic repair of the imaginary lesions that have occurred to the fundamental image of the maternal body.

I will bring the texts involved, if you don't know them. But I can tell you right away that the reduction of the notion of sublimation to a restitutive effort of the subject relative to the injured body of the mother is certainly not the best solution to the problem of sublimation, nor to the topological, metapsychological problem itself. There is nevertheless there an attempt to approach the relations of the subject to something primordial, its attachment to the fundamental, most archaic of objects, for which my field of *das Ding,* defined operationally, establishes the framework. It allows us to conceive of

the conditions that opened onto the blossoming of what one might call the Kleinian myth, allows us also to situate it, and, as far as sublimation is concerned, to reestablish a broader function than that which one necessarily arrives at if one accepts Kleinian categories.

The clinicians who do on the whole accept them end up – I will tell you so now and explain why later – with a rather limited and puerile notion of what might be called an atherapy. All of that which is included under the heading fine arts, namely, a number of gymnastic, dance and other exercises, is supposed to give the subject satisfactions, a measure of solution to his problems, a state of equilibrium. That is noted in a number of observations that are still rewarding. I am thinking especially of Ella Sharpe's articles, which I am far from depreciating – "Certain Aspects of Sublimation and Delirium" or "Similar and Divergent Unconscious Determinants, which Subtend the Sublimations of Pure Art and Pure Science."

To read these papers is to realize how such an orientation reduces the problem of sublimation and yields somewhat puerile results. The approach involves valorizing activities that seem to be located in the register of a more or less transitory explosion of supposedly artistic gifts, gifts which appear in the cases described to be highly doubtful. Completely left out is something that must always be emphasized in artistic production and something that Freud paradoxically insisted on, to the surprise of many writers, namely, social recognition. These objects play an essential role in a question that Freud doesn't perhaps take as far as one would like, but which is clearly linked to the championship of a certain progress – and God knows that such a notion is far from being unilinear in Freud – to the celebration of something that achieves social recognition. I won't go any further for the moment. It is enough to note that Freud articulates it in a way that may seem completely foreign to the metapsychological register.

Note that no correct evaluation of sublimation in art is possible if we overlook the fact that all artistic production, including especially that of the fine arts, is historically situated. You don't paint in Picasso's time as you painted in Velazquez's; you don't write a novel in 1930 as you did in Stendhal's time. This is an absolutely essential fact that does not for the time being need to be located under the rubric of the collectivity or the individual – let's place it under the rubric of culture. What does society find there that is so satisfying? That's the question we need to answer.

The problem of sublimation is there, of sublimation insofar as it creates a certain number of forms, among which art is not alone – and we will concentrate on one art in particular, literary art, which is so close to the domain of ethics. It is after all as a function of the problem of ethics that we have to judge sublimation; it creates socially recognized values.

In order to refocus our discussion onto the level of ethics, one could hardly

do better than to refer to that which, however paradoxical it may seem, has proved to be pivotal, namely, the Kantian perspective on the field.

Alongside *das Ding*, however much we may hope that its weight will be felt on the good side, we find in opposition the Kantian formula of duty. That is another way of making one's weight felt. Kant invokes the universally applicable rule of conduct or, in other words, the weight of reason. Of course, one still has to prove how reason may make its weight felt.

There is always an advantage to reading authors in the original. The other day I brought to your attention the passage on the theme of *Schmerz*, of pain, as a correlative of the ethical act. I observed then that even some of you to whom these texts were once familiar didn't pick up on the reference. Well now, if you open up *The Critique of Pure Reason*, you will see that in order to impress upon us the influence of the weight of reason, Kant invents for his didactic purposes an example which is magnificent in its freshness. A double fable is involved that is designed to make us feel the weight of the ethical principle pure and simple, the potential dominance of duty as such against all, against all that is conceived as vitally desirable.

The key to the proof lies in a comparison between two situations. Suppose, says Kant, that in order to control the excesses of a sensualist, one produces the following situation. There is in a bedroom the woman he currently lusts after. He is granted the freedom to enter that room to satisfy his desire or his need, but next to the door through which he will leave there stands the gallows on which he will be hanged. But that's nothing, and is certainly not the basis of Kant's moral; you will see in a moment where the key to the proof is. As far as Kant is concerned, it goes without saying that the gallows will be a sufficient deterrent; there's no question of an individual going to screw a woman when he knows he's to be hanged on the way out. Next comes a situation that is similar as far as the tragic outcome is concerned, but here it is a question of a tyrant who offers someone the choice between the gallows and his favor, on the condition that he bear false witness against his friend. Kant quite rightly emphasizes here that one can conceive of someone weighing his own life against that of bearing false witness, especially if in this case the false witness is without fatal consequences for the person bearing it.

The striking point is that the power of proof is here left to reality – to the real behavior of the individual, I mean. It is in the real that Kant asks us to examine the impact of the weight of reality, which he identifies here with the weight of duty.

To follow him onto this ground is to discover that he misses something. It is after all not impossible that under certain conditions the subject of the first scenario will not so much offer himself up to be executed – at no point is the fable taken to this point – but will at least consider doing so.

Our philosopher from Königsberg was a nice person, and I don't intend to imply that he was someone of limited stature or feeble passions, but he doesn't

seem to have considered that under certain conditions of what Freud would call *Uberschätzung* or overevaluation of the object – and that I will henceforth call object sublimation – under conditions in which the object of a loving passion takes on a certain significance (and, as you will see, it is in this direction that I intend to introduce the dialectic through which I propose to teach you how to identify what sublimation really is), under certain conditions of sublimation of the feminine object or, in other words, the exaltation we call love – a form of exaltation that is historically specific, and to which Freud gives us the clue, in the short note I spoke to you about the other day, in which he says that in the modern period the emphasis of the libido is on the object rather than on the instinct (which is in itself something that poses an important question, one that, with your permission, I will be introducing you to, one that requires you to spend a few sessions on something in German history whose form I referred to the other day in connection with Hamlet, namely, the *Minne,* or, in other words, a certain theory and practice of courtly love – and why wouldn't we spend some time on that given the time we give to ethnographic research? – especially if I assure you that it concerns certain traces within us of the object relation that are unthinkable without these historical antecedents), under certain conditions of sublimation, then, it is conceivable for such a step to be taken. After all, a whole corpus of tales stands for something from a fantasmic, if not from a strictly historical point of view; moreover, there are a great many stories in the newspapers that are relevant. All of which leads to the conclusion that it is not impossible for a man to sleep with a woman knowing full well that he is to be bumped off on his way out, by the gallows or anything else (all this, of course, is located under the rubric of passionate excesses, a rubric that raises a lot of other questions); it is not impossible that this man coolly accepts such an eventuality on his leaving – for the pleasure of cutting up the lady concerned in small pieces, for example.

The latter is the other case that one can envisage, and the annals of criminology furnish a great many cases of the type. It is something that obviously changes the facts of the situation, and at the very least the demonstrative value of Kant's example.

I have outlined then two cases that Kant doesn't envisage, two forms of transgression beyond the limits normally assigned to the pleasure principle in opposition to the reality principle given as a criterion, namely, excessive object sublimation and what is commonly known as perversion. Sublimation and perversion are both a certain relationship of desire that attracts our attention to the possibility of formulating, in the form of a question, a different criterion of another, or even of the same, morality, in opposition to the reality principle. For there is another register of morality that takes its direction from that which is to be found on the level of *das Ding;* it is the register that makes the subject hesitate when he is on the point of bearing false witness

against *das Ding*, that is to say, the place of desire, whether it be perverse or sublimated.

3

We are only stumbling along here, following the paths of analytical good sense, which isn't, in fact, a very different good sense of the common or garden kind. What one finds at the level of *das Ding* once it is revealed is the place of the *Triebe*, the drives. And I mean by that the drives that, as Freud showed, have nothing at all to do with something that may be satisfied by moderation – that moderation which soberly regulates a human being's relations with his fellow man at the different hierarchical levels of society in a harmonious order, from the couple to the State with a capital S.

We must return now to the meaning of sublimation as Freud attempts to define it for us.

He attaches sublimation to the *Triebe* as such, and that's what makes its theorization difficult for psychoanalysts.

Please forgive me if I don't today read given passages of Freud that might perhaps bore you and that I will take up at the right moment, when you will understand the value of going in one direction or another, of confirming if we are really aligned with Freudian theory. But I don't believe I can hold the interest of most of you here without explaining what my aim is or where I'm taking you.

Sublimation, Freud tells us, involves a certain form of satisfaction of the *Triebe*, a word that is improperly translated as "instincts," but that one should translate strictly as "drives" *(pulsions)* – or as "drifts" *(dérives)*, so as to mark the fact that the *Trieb* is deflected from what he calls its *Ziel*, its aim.

Sublimation is represented as distinct from that economy of substitution in which the repressed drive is usually satisfied. A symptom is the return by means of signifying substitution of that which is at the end of the drive in the form of an aim. It is here that the function of the signifier takes on its full meaning, for it is impossible without reference to that function to distinguish the return of the repressed from sublimation as a potential mode of satisfaction of the drive. It is a paradoxical fact that the drive is able to find its aim elsewhere than in that which is its aim – without its being a question of the signifying substitution that constitutes the overdetermined structure, the ambiguity, and the double causality, of the symptom as compromise formation.

The latter notion has never failed to cause problems for theoreticians and analysts alike. What can this change of aim mean? It is a matter of aim and not strictly speaking of object, although, as I emphasized last time, the latter soon enters into consideration. Don't let us forget that Freud points out early on that it is important not to confuse the notion of aim with that of object.

And there is a special passage that I will read you at the appropriate moment, but I will give you the reference right away. If I remember correctly, in *Einführung des Narzissmus* Freud emphasizes the difference that exists between sublimation and idealization as far as the object is concerned. The fact is that idealization involves an identification of the subject with the object, whereas sublimation is something quite different.

To those who know German I suggest you read a little article by Richard Sterba that appeared in *Internationale Zeitschrift* in 1930, "Zur Problematik der Sublimierungslehre" ["On the Problematic of the Doctrine of Sublimation"]; it summarizes the difficulties that analysts found in the notion at the time – that is after an essential article by Bernfeld on the subject and also one by Glover in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* of 1931, "Sublimation, Substitution and Social Anxiety."

This article in English will cause you much more difficulty. It's very long and difficult to follow because it literally parades the standard of sublimation across all the notions known to analysis at that time in order to see how one might apply it to this or that level of the theory. The result of this survey is surprising. It gives rise to a review of the whole of psychoanalytic theory from one end to the other, but it clearly shows, at least, the extraordinary difficulty that exists in using the notion of sublimation in practice without giving rise to contradictions, and this text is riddled with them.

I would like to try now to show you in what way we are going to posit sublimation, if only so as to be able to allow you to appreciate its functioning and value.

The satisfaction of the *Trieb* is, then, paradoxical, since it seems to occur elsewhere than where its aim is. Are we going to be satisfied with saying, like Sterba for example, that, in effect, the aim has changed, that it was sexual before and that now it is no longer? That is, by the way, how Freud describes it. Whence one has to conclude that the sexual libido has become desexualized. And that's why your daughter is dumb.

Are we going to be satisfied with the Kleinian register, which seems to me to contain a certain though partial truth, and speak of the imaginary solution of a need for substitution, for repair work with relation to the mother's body?

These formulae will provoke anyone who is not content with verbal solutions – that is, solutions without real meaning – into questioning more closely what sublimation is all about.

You should sense immediately which direction I intend to take. The sublimation that provides the *Trieb* with a satisfaction different from its aim – an aim that is still defined as its natural aim – is precisely that which reveals the true nature of the *Trieb* insofar as it is not simply instinct, but has a relationship to *das Ding* as such, to the Thing insofar as it is distinct from the object.

We have to guide us the Freudian theory of the narcissistic foundations of the object, of its insertion in the imaginary register. The object that specifies directions or poles of attraction to man in his openness, in his world, and that interests him because it is more or less his image, his reflection – precisely that object is not the Thing to the extent that the latter is at the heart of the libidinal economy. Thus, the most general formula that I can give you of sublimation is the following: it raises an object – and I don't mind the suggestion of a play on words in the term I use – to the dignity of the Thing.

That is significant, for example, in relation to something that I alluded to at the limit of our discussion, something I will get to next time, the sublimation of the feminine object. The whole theory of the *Minne* or of courtly love has, in effect, been decisive. Although it has completely disappeared nowadays from the sociological sphere, courtly love has nevertheless left traces in an unconscious that has no need to be called "collective," in a traditional unconscious that is sustained by a whole literature, a whole imagery, that we continue to inhabit as far as our relations with women are concerned.

This mode was created deliberately. It was by no means a creation of the popular soul, of that famous great soul of the blessed Middle Ages, as Gustave Cohen used to say. The rules of polite conduct were articulated deliberately in a small literary circle and, as a result, the celebration of the object was made possible – the absurdity of which I will show you in detail; a German writer who is a specialist of this medieval German literature has used the expression "absurd *Minne*." This moral code instituted an object at the heart of a given society, an object that is nevertheless completely natural. Don't imagine they made love in those days any less than we do.

The object is elevated to the dignity of the Thing as we define it in our Freudian topology, insofar as it is not slipped into but surrounded by the network of *Ziele*. It is to the degree that this new object is raised to the function of the Thing at a certain historical moment that one is able to explain a phenomenon which, from a sociological point of view, has always struck those who considered it as frankly paradoxical. We will certainly not be able to exhaust the totality of signs, rites, themes and exchange of themes, especially of literary themes, that have constituted the substance and effective influence of this human relation, which has been defined in different terms according to the times and places of its occurrence – courtly love, *Minne*, and all the other forms. Just remember that the circle of male and female *précieux* at the beginning of the seventeenth century is the last manifestation of the phenomenon in our own cycle.

That is nevertheless not the last word on the subject, for it is not enough to say, "They did that" or "That's how it is," for the matter to be solved, for the object to come and play the required role. I am not concerned only with giving you the key to that historical event; what I seek in the end, thanks to

that distant affair, is both to get a better grasp of something that has happened to us, relative to the Thing, as the result of a collective education that remains to be defined and is called art, and to understand how we behave on the level of sublimation.

The definition I gave you doesn't close the debate, first, because I must confirm and illustrate it for you, and, second, because I have to show you that, if the object is to become available in that way, something must have occurred at the level of the relation of the object to desire; it is quite impossible to explain it correctly without reference to what I had to say last year on the subject of desire and its behavior.

4

I will end today with a little fable in which I would like you just to see an example, albeit a paradoxical and demeaning one, that is yet significant for what goes on in sublimation. Since we have remained today on the level of the object and the Thing, I wanted to show you what it means to invent an object for a special purpose that society may esteem, valorize, and approve.

I draw on my memories for this fable, that you can, if you like, place in the psychological category of collecting. Someone who recently published a work on collectors and those sales thanks to which collectors are presumed to get rich, has long asked me to give him some ideas on the meaning of collecting. I didn't do it because I would have had to tell him to come to my seminar for five or six years.

There's a lot to say on the psychology of collecting. I am something of a collector myself. And if some of you like to think that it is in imitation of Freud, so be it. I believe my reasons are very different from his. I have seen the remains of Freud's collections on Anna Freud's shelves. They seemed to me to have to do with the fascination that the coexistence of [. . .][1] and of Egyptian civilization exercised over him at the level of the signifier rather than for the enlightened taste of what is called an object.

What is called an object in the domain of collecting should be strictly distinguished from the meaning of object in psychoanalysis. In analysis the object is a point of imaginary fixation which gives satisfaction to a drive in any register whatsoever. The object in collecting is something entirely different, as I will show in the following example, which reduces collecting to its most rudimentary form. For one usually imagines that a collection is composed of a diversity of elements, but it is not necessarily true at all.

During that great period of penitence that our country went through under Pétain, in the time of "Work, Family, Homeland" and of belt-tightening, I

[1] This ellipsis is there in the French edition.

once went to visit my friend Jacques Prévert in Saint-Paul-de-Vence. And I saw there a collection of match boxes. Why the image has suddenly resurfaced in my memory, I cannot tell.

It was the kind of collection that it was easy to afford at that time; it was perhaps the only kind of collection possible. Only the match boxes appeared as follows: they were all the same and were laid out in an extremely agreeable way that involved each one being so close to the one next to it that the little drawer was slightly displaced. As a result, they were all threaded together so as to form a continuous ribbon that ran along the mantlepiece, climbed the wall, extended to the molding, and climbed down again next to a door. I don't say that it went on to infinity, but it was extremely satisfying from an ornamental point of view.

Yet I don't think that that was the be all and end all of what was surprising in this "collectionism," nor the source of the satisfaction that the collector himself found there. I believe that the shock of novelty of the effect realized by this collection of empty match boxes – and this is the essential point – was to reveal something that we do not perhaps pay enough attention to, namely, that a box of matches is not simply an object, but that, in the form of an *Erscheinung*, as it appeared in its truly imposing multiplicity, it may be a Thing.

In other words, this arrangement demonstrated that a match box isn't simply something that has a certain utility, that it isn't even a type in the Platonic sense, an abstract match box, that the match box all by itself is a thing with all its coherence of being. The wholly gratuitous, proliferating, superfluous, and quasi absurd character of this collection pointed to its thingness as match box. Thus the collector found his motive in this form of apprehension that concerns less the match box than the Thing that subsists in a match box.

Whatever you do, however, you don't find that in a random way in any object whatsoever. For if you think about it, the match box appears to be a mutant form of something that has so much importance for us that it can occasionally take on a moral meaning; it is what we call a drawer. In this case, the drawer was liberated and no longer fixed in the rounded fullness of a chest, thus presenting itself with a copulatory force that the picture drawn by Prévert's composition was designed to make us perceive.

So now, that little fable of the revelation of the Thing beyond the object shows you one of the most innocent forms of sublimation. Perhaps you can even see something emerge in it that, goodness knows, society is able to find satisfaction in.

If it is a satisfaction, it is in this case one that doesn't ask anything of anyone.

January 20, 1960

IX

On creation *ex nihilo*

THE WONDERS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS
THAT WHICH IN THE REAL SUFFERS FROM THE SIGNIFIER
THE FABLE OF THE POT AND THE VASE
INTRODUCTION TO CATHARISM
THE DRIVE, AN ONTOLOGICAL NOTION

I will take up my discussion of the function I attribute to the Thing in the definition of sublimation with an amusing anecdote.

After leaving you the other day, I was conscious-stricken as I often am when I feel that I haven't exhausted the bibliography on a subject I am treating, and I looked up that very afternoon two articles by Melanie Klein that are referred to by Glover. They have been collected in *Contributions to Psychoanalysis*

The first of the articles, "Infant Analysis," of 1923, contains some very important things on sublimation and on the secondary phenomenon of inhibition – that is to say, on how, in Klein's conception, functions in the child that are sufficiently libidinalized through sublimation are subsequently subjected to an effect of inhibition.

I am not going to spend time on this, for it is to the very conception of sublimation that I want to draw your attention; all the misunderstandings that follow derive from the lack of insight into this problem.

It was the second, 1929 article, entitled "Infantile Anxiety Situations Reflected in a Work of Art and in the Creative Impulse," that I regretted not having looked at. It is short, but as sometimes happens, it gave me the satisfaction of fitting my purposes like a glove.

1

The first part is a discussion of the musical composition of Ravel based on a scenario by Colette, *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*. I read it with pleasure, which was by no means guaranteed, since it speaks of the work in German and English translations.

Melanie Klein is amazed that the work of art follows so closely a child's fantasms concerning the mother's body, those concerning primitive aggression and the counteraggression it feels. In short, it is a quite long and agree-

able statement of those features in the imagination of the creator of the work, and especially of the composer, that are in remarkable accordance with the primordial and central field of the psychic structure as indicated by the Kleinian fantasms derived from child analysis. And it is striking to perceive their convergence with the structural forms revealed in the work of art – not that all of this is fully satisfying for us, of course.

The second part of the article is more remarkable; it is this part that is amusing. Here it is a question of a reference to the article of an analyst called Karin Mikailis, who under the title "Empty Space" narrates a case history which has a certain piquancy. According to the four pages that summarize it, a striking limit case is involved. But it isn't described in such a way that one can offer a certain diagnosis or know if it should be described as melancholic depression or not.

The case concerns a patient whose life is briefly sketched out and who is called Ruth Kjar. She was never a painter, but at the center of the lived experience of her crises of depression this woman always complained of what she called an empty space inside her, a space she could never fill.

I won't bother you with the episodes of her life. In any case, helped by her psychoanalyst, she gets married, and once she is married things go well at first. Yet after a short period of time, we find a recurrence of the attacks of melancholia. And here we come to the wonder of the case. We find ourselves, in effect, in the domain of those wonders of psychoanalysis that works of this kind bring out, although not without a certain naive satisfaction.

For a reason that isn't made clear, the walls of the young couple's house are covered with the paintings of the brother-in-law, who is a painter, including one room in particular. Then at a given moment, the brother-in-law, who is talented, although we have no means of verifying this, sells one of his paintings, which he takes down from wall and carries away. It leaves an empty space on the wall.

It turns out that this empty space plays a polarizing and precipitating role in the attacks of melancholic depression that start up again at this point in the life of the patient. She recovers from them in the following way. One fine day she decides to "daub a little"[1] on the wall, so as to fill up that damned empty space that has come to have for her such a crystallizing power, and whose function we would like to know more about in her case, with a better clinical description. So as to fill up that empty space in imitation of her brother-in-law, she tries to paint a painting that is as similar to the others as possible. She goes to an artists' supply shop to look for colors that are the same as those of her brother-in-law's palette, and she begins to work with an enthusiasm that to me seems characteristic of the beginning of a phase tending

[1] In English in the original.

toward depression. And out of this there emerges a work of art.

The amusing part of the story is that when the thing is shown to the brother-in-law and the patient's heart is beating with anxiety as she waits for the connoisseur's verdict, he almost flies into a rage. "You will never make me believe that it is you who painted that," he tells her. "It's the work of an artist, not just an experienced artist, but a mature one. The devil take your story. Who could it possibly be?" They are unable to convince him, and he continues to swear that if his sister-in-law painted that, then he can conduct a Beethoven symphony at the Royal Chapel, even though he doesn't know a note of music.

This tale is narrated with a lack of critical distance at the hearsay involved, which cannot fail to inspire some reservations. Such a miracle of technique is after all worth subjecting to some fundamental questions. But it is not very important from our point of view. Melanie Klein finds confirmation of a structure that seems to her illustrated admirably there. And you cannot fail to see how that structure coincides with the central plan I use to present a topological diagram of the way in which the question of what we call the Thing is raised.

As I said before, the Kleinian doctrine places the mother's body there, and she locates the phases of all sublimation there, including such miraculous sublimations as that of this spontaneous accession – one might call it an illumination – of a novice to the most expert forms of pictorial technique. Mrs. Klein finds her theory confirmed – and that no doubt explains her lack of astonishment – by the series of subjects painted by her patient with the purpose of filling up the empty space. First, there is a nude negress, then a very old woman with all the signs of the weight of years, of disillusion, of the inconsolable resignation of extremely advanced age, and the series ends with the rebirth, the reemergence into the light of day, of the image of her own mother at the height of her beauty. As a result of which, we have according to Melanie Klein, Q.E.D., all we need to understand the motivation of the whole phenomenon.

The amusing thing here is surely what we are told concerning the topology in which the phenomena of sublimation are situated. But you must sense that we are left a little in the dark concerning its very possibilities.

I am trying to give you the information about sublimation required if we are to account for its relation to what we are calling the Thing – in its central position as far as the constitution of the reality of the subject is concerned. How can we define it more precisely in our topology?

The little example from last time borrowed from the psychology of collecting – an example that you would be wrong to hope exhausts the subject, although it does allow us to go quite a long way in the right direction – illustrates, in brief, the transformation of an object into a thing, the sudden

elevation of the match box to a dignity that it did not possess before. But it is a thing that is not, of course, the Thing.

If the Thing were not fundamentally veiled, we wouldn't be in the kind of relationship to it that obliges us, as the whole of psychic life is obliged, to encircle it or bypass it in order to conceive it. Wherever it affirms itself, it does so in domesticated spheres. That is why the spheres are defined thus; it always presents itself as a veiled entity.

Let's say today that if the Thing occupies the place in the psychic constitution that Freud defined on the basis of the thematics of the pleasure principle, this is because the Thing is that which in the real, the primordial real, I will say, suffers from the signifier – and you should understand that it is a real that we do not yet have to limit, the real in its totality, both the real of the subject and the real he has to deal with as exterior to him.

In effect, the first relation that is constituted in the subject in the psychic order, which is itself subject to homeostasis or the law of the pleasure principle, involves flocculation, the crystallization into signifying units. A signifying organization dominates the psychic apparatus as it is revealed to us in the examination of a patient. Whereupon we can say in a negative way that there is nothing between the organization in the signifying network, in the network of *Vorstellungsrepräsentanzen,* and the constitution in the real of the space or central place in which the field of the Thing as such presents itself to us.

It is precisely in this field that we should situate something that Freud presents, on the other hand, as necessarily corresponding to the find itself, as necessarily being the *wiedergefundene* or refound object. Such is for Freud the fundamental definition of the object in its guiding function, the paradox of which I have already demonstrated, for it is not affirmed that this object was really lost. The object is by nature a refound object. That it was lost is a consequence of that – but after the fact. It is thus refound without our knowing, except through the refinding, that it was ever lost.

We come once again upon a fundamental structure, which allows us to articulate the fact that the Thing in question is, by virtue of its structure, open to being represented by what I called earlier, in connection with boredom and with prayer, the Other thing.

And that is the second characteristic of the Thing as veiled; it is by nature, in the refinding of the object, represented by something else.

You cannot fail to see that in the celebrated expression of Picasso, "I do not seek, I find," that it is the finding *(trouver),* the *trobar* of the Provençal troubadours and the *trouvères,* and of all the schools of rhetoric, that takes precedence over the seeking.

Obviously, what is found is sought, but sought in the paths of the signifier. Now this search is in a way an antipsychic search that by its place and func-

tion is beyond the pleasure principle. For according to the laws of the pleasure principle, the signifier projects into this beyond equalization, homeostasis, and the tendency to the uniform investment of the system of the self as such; it provokes its failure. The function of the pleasure principle is, in effect, to lead the subject from signifier to signifier, by generating as many signifiers as are required to maintain at as low a level as possible the tension that regulates the whole functioning of the psychic apparatus.

We are thus led to the relation between man and this signifier – something that will allow us to take another step forward.

If the pleasure regulates human speculation with the law of the lure right through the immense discourse that isn't simply made up of what it articulates but also of all its action – insofar as it is dominated by that search which leads it to find things in signs – how then can the relation of man to the signifier, to the extent that he can manipulate it, put him in relationship with an object that represents the Thing? We thus come to the question of what man does when he makes a signifier.

2

As far as the signifier is concerned, the difficulty is to avoid leaping on the fact that man is the artisan of his support system.

For many years now I have habituated you to the notion, the primary and dominant notion, that the signifier as such is constituted of oppositional structures whose emergence profoundly modifies the human world. It is furthermore the case that those signifiers in their individuality are fashioned by man, and probably more by his hands than by his spirit.

And here we encounter linguistic usage that, at least in connection with sublimation in the sphere of art, never hesitates to speak of creation. We must now, therefore, consider the notion of creation with all it implies, a knowledge of the creature and of the creator, because it is central, not only for our theme of the motive of sublimation, but also that of ethics in its broadest sense.

I posit the following: an object, insofar as it is a created object, may fill the function that enables it not to avoid the Thing as signifier, but to represent it. According to a fable handed down through the chain of generations, and that nothing prevents us from using, we are going to refer to what is the most primitive of artistic activities, that of the potter.

Last time I spoke to you about a match box; I had my reasons and we will come back to it. It will also perhaps enable us to explore further our dialectic of the vase. But the vase is simpler. It was certainly born before the match box. It has always been there; it is perhaps the most primordial feature of human industry. It is certainly a tool, a utensil that allows us to affirm unam-

biguously a human presence wherever we find it. This vase which has always been there, and which has long been used to make us conceive the mysteries of creation by means of parables, analogies and metaphors, may still be of use to us.

To have confirmation of the appropriation of the vase for this purpose, look up what Heidegger affirms when he writes about *das Ding*. He's the last in a long line to have meditated on the subject of creation; and he develops his dialectic around a vase.

I will not be concerned here with the function of *das Ding* in Heidegger's approach to the contemporary revelation of what he calls Being and that is linked to the end of metaphysics. You can all of you easily go to the volume entitled *Essays and Lectures* and to the article on *das Ding*. You will see the function Heidegger assigns it of uniting celestial and terrestrial powers around it in an essential human process.

Today I simply want to stick to the elementary distinction as far as a vase is concerned between its use as a utensil and its signifying function. If it really is a signifier, and the first of such signifiers fashioned by human hand, it is in its signifying essence a signifier of nothing other than of signifying as such or, in other words, of no particular signified. Heidegger situates the vase at the center of the essence of earth and sky. It unites first of all, by virtue of the act of libation, by its dual orientation – upwards in order to receive and toward the earth from which it raises something. That's the function of a vase.

This nothing in particular that characterizes it in its signifying function is that which in its incarnated form characterizes the vase as such. It creates the void and thereby introduces the possibility of filling it. Emptiness and fullness are introduced into a world that by itself knows not of them. It is on the basis of this fabricated signifier, this vase, that emptiness and fullness as such enter the world, neither more nor less, and with the same sense.

This is the moment to point to the fallacious opposition between what is called concrete and what is called figurative. If the vase may be filled, it is because in the first place in its essence it is empty. And it is exactly in the same sense that speech and discourse may be full or empty.

That's a question that we took up at a certain conference at Royaumont, where I insisted on the fact that a mustard pot possesses as essence in our practical life the fact that it presents itself as an empty mustard pot. This comment, that must at the time have passed for a *concetto* or conceit, will find its explanation in the argument I am developing here. Go as far as your fantasy allows you in this direction. I don't, in fact, mind if you recognize in the name of Bornibus, which is one of the most familiar and opulent forms taken by a mustard pot, a divine name, since it is Bornibus who fills those pots.

We are limited to this – we are, so to speak, bound by Bornibus.[2]

The example of the mustard pot and the vase allows us to introduce that around which the central problem of the Thing has revolved, to the extent that it is the central problem of ethics, namely, if a reasonable power created the world, if God created the world, how is it that whatever we do or don't do, the world is in such bad shape?

The potter makes a pot starting with a clay that is more or less fine or refined; and it is at this point that our religious preachers stop us, so as to make us hear the moaning of the vase in the potter's hand. The preacher makes it talk in the most moving of ways, even to the point of moaning, and makes it ask its creator why he treats it so roughly or, on the contrary, so gently. But what is masked in this example of creationist mythology – and strangely enough by those who use the example of the vase, which is so familiar in the imagery of the act of creation (I told you that they are always writers who work at the borderline between religion and mythology, and there's a good reason for that) – is the fact that the vase is made from matter. Nothing is made from nothing.

The whole of ancient philosophy is articulated around that point. If Aristotelian philosophy is so difficult for us to think, that is because it must be thought in a style that never omits the fact that matter is eternal, and that nothing is made from nothing. In consideration of which, it remains mired in an image of the world that never permitted even an Aristotle – and it is difficult to imagine in the whole history of human thought a mind of such power – to emerge from the enclosure that the celestial surface presented to his eyes, and not to consider the world, including the world of interhuman relations, the world of language, as included in eternal nature, which is fundamentally limited.

Now if you consider the vase from the point of view I first proposed, as an object made to represent the existence of the emptiness at the center of the real that is called the Thing, this emptiness as represented in the representation presents itself as a *nihil,* as nothing. And that is why the potter, just like you to whom I am speaking, creates the vase with his hand around this emptiness, creates it, just like the mythical creator, *ex nihilo,* starting with a hole.

Everyone makes jokes about macaroni, because it is a hole with something around it, or about canons. The fact that we laugh doesn't change the situation, however: the fashioning of the signifier and the introduction of a gap or a hole in the real is identical.

I remember that one evening when I was dining at the home of a descen-

[2] Bornibus is the trade name of a well-known French manufacturer of mustard. The pun at the end of this sentence depends on a play of words between Bornibus and "se borner," "to limit oneself."

dant of one of those royal bankers who welcomed Heinrich Heine to Paris just over a century ago, I astonished him by telling him – he remains astonished up to this day, and is still clearly not ready to get over it – that modern science, the kind that was born with Galileo, could only have developed out of biblical or judaic ideology, and not out of ancient philosophy or the Aristotelian tradition. The increasing power of symbolic mastery has not stopped enlarging its field of operation since Galileo, has not stopped consuming around it any reference that would limit its scope to intuited data; by allowing free rein to the play of signifiers, it has given rise to a science whose laws develop in the direction of an increasingly coherent whole, but without anything being less motivated than what exists at any given point.

In other words, the vault of the heavens no longer exists, and all the celestial bodies, which are the best reference point there, appear as if they could just as well not be there. Their reality, as existentialism puts it, is essentially characterized by facticity; they are fundamentally contingent.

It is also worth noting that in the end what is expressed for us in the energy / matter equivalence is that one final day we may find that the whole texture of appearance has been rent apart, starting from the gap we have introduced there; the whole thing might just disappear.

The introduction of this fabricated signifier that is the vase already contains the notion of creation *ex nihilo*. And the notion of the creation *ex nihilo* is coextensive with the exact situation of the Thing as such. It is effectively relative to this that through the ages, and especially those ages that are closest to us, those that have formed us, the articulation or the balance of the moral problem is situated.

A passage in the Bible that is marked by a tone of gay optimism tells us that when the Lord completed his famous six-day creation, at the end he contemplated the whole and saw that it was good. You could say the same thing of the potter when he has made his vase – it's good, it's right, it holds together. In other words, it's always fine from the side of the work.

Yet everybody knows what may emerge from a vase or what can be put in one. And it is obvious that the optimism is in no way justified by the way things function in the human world, nor by what is born of its works. Thus it is around the question of the benefit or the cost of a work that the crisis of consciousness has crystallized, which in the West at least was in the balance for centuries and which ended in the period I referred to the other day, when I quoted a classic passage from Luther – a man who long tormented Christian consciousness,[3] to the point of affirming that no merit should be attributed to any work.

[3] This is one of the occasions when the single French word "conscience" implies both "consciousness" and "conscience."

It is by no means a heretical position without validity; there are good grounds for such a position. So as to orient you in the flood of sects that consciously or unconsciously broke away over the question of evil, the simple tripartition which emerges from the example of the vase, as we articulated it, is excellent.

In his troubled search for the source of evil, man finds himself faced with the choice of these three because there are no others.

There is the work, and this is the position of renunciation which other bodies of traditional wisdom than our own have adopted. Every work is of and by itself harmful, and it engenders the consequences that it gives rise to, that is to say, at least as many negative as positive ones. This position is formally expressed in Taoism, for example, to the point where it is barely tolerated for one to use a vase as a spoon – the introduction of the spoon into the world is already the source of a whole flood of dialectical contradictions.

Then there is matter. We find ourselves here faced with those theories that you have, I assume, heard something about, the theories of the sect called the Cathars – a name whose origin is unknown to us.

This is something I need to develop a little.

3

I am not going to give you a lecture on Catharism, but I will mention where you can easily find a good bibliography on the subject in a book that you have no doubt heard of, namely, *Love and the Western World* by Denis de Rougemont. It's not the best book on the subject, nor the most profound, but it's fun to read.

I reread the whole thing in the revised edition, and on a second reading I disliked it less than I had expected. I even liked it. You will find expressed there in connection with the author's particular theory all kinds of facts which enable us to understand the profound crisis that Cathar ideology, or rather theology, represents in the development of Western man's thought, since it is Western man who is at issue here – although the author does show that the questions involved probably had their origin at the limit of what we usually call the West, a term that I have no particular fondness for, and that one would be wrong to see as the center of my thought.

In any case, at a certain point in the collective life of Europe, the question was asked as to what was wrong with the creation as such. It was asked by people about whom it is very difficult for us to know exactly what they thought, or what at a deeper level the religious and mystical movement we call the Cathar heresy, in effect, represented. One can even say that it is the only example in history in which a temporal power proved to be so efficient that it succeeded in eliminating almost all traces of the trial. Such was the *tour de force* realized by the holy Catholic church of Rome. We are reduced to seek-

ing documents in out-of-the-way corners and few of them are very satisfying. The Inquisition's trial transcripts have vanished, and all we have are a few indirect testimonies here and there. A Dominican father tells us, for example, that the Cathars were good people, deeply Christian in their way of life and exceptionally pure in their morals.

I'm willing to believe that their morals were of an exceptional purity, since they had basically to desist from any act that might in any way favor the perpetuation of the world, considered as execrable and bad in its essence. The practice of perfection thus consisted essentially in seeking to achieve death in the most advanced state of detachment, which was a sign of reintegration into an Edenic world characterized by purity and light, the true world of the original good Creator, whose creation had been sullied by the intervention of the bad Creator or Demiurge. The latter had introduced that horrible element, generation, as well as corruption, which is to say transformation.

It is from the Aristotelian perspective of the transformation of matter into another matter, which engenders itself, that the perpetuity of matter became the site of evil.

The solution, as you see, is simple. It has a certain coherence, if it doesn't have all the rigor one would like.

One of the rare solid documents that we have on the enterprise, for we do not really know what was the basic doctrine of the Cathars, is a late work, which is, therefore, likely to provoke some doubt. It was discovered in 1939 and was published with the name the *Book of Two Principles*. It is easy to find under the title *Cathar Writings*, a fine book edited by René Nelli.

Evil is in matter. But evil can be elsewhere as well. The question remains open. And it is no doubt an indispensable key if one is to understand what happened historically to moral thought on the topic of evil. Evil may be not only in works, not only in execrable matter – from which the whole subsequent ascetic task will consist in turning away, without, however, entering the world we call mystic, and which might just as well be called mythic or indeed illusory – evil may be in the Thing.

It may be in the Thing insofar as it is not the signifier that guides the work or insofar as it is not the matter of the work either, but only insofar as, at the heart of the myth of the creation on which the whole issue depends, it maintains the presence of the human factor. And it should be noted parenthetically that whatever you do – even if you don't give a tinker's cuss for the Creator – it is nevertheless true that you think of the notion of evil and interrogate it in creationist terms. The Thing is, in effect, involved insofar as it is defined by the fact that it defines the human factor – although, as we know, the human factor escapes us.

In this connection the human factor will not be defined otherwise than in

the way that I defined the Thing just now, namely, that which in the real suffers from the signifier.

Note the following: Freudian thought directs us to raise the problem of what it is exactly that one finds at the heart of the functioning of the pleasure principle, namely, a beyond of the pleasure principle, and very probably that which the other day I called a fundamentally good or bad will. It is, of course, true that all kinds of traps and temptations present themselves to your thinking, such as the question of whether what we call man – as if it were so easy to define man – is fundamentally good or bad. But it's not a question of that; it is rather a question of the whole. The fact is man fashions this signifier and introduces it into the world – in other words, we need to know what he does when he fashions it in the image of the Thing, whereas the Thing is characterized by the fact that it is impossible for us to imagine it. The problem of sublimation is located on this level.

That is why I have chosen the history of the *Minne* as a point of departure. I began there because it is of exemplary value, and because the word is unambiguous in German. The *Minne* is quite distinct from *Liebe,* whereas in French we only have the word "amour," love.

The problem posed for the author referred to is that of the link that may exist between the highly profound and secret heresy which began to dominate Europe from the end of the eleventh century on – although we don't know how far back things actually went – and the appearance, articulation, establishment, of a whole moral code, of a whole ethic, a whole way of life, that is called courtly love.

I am not forcing things in saying that once one has examined all the historical, social, political, and economic evidence, and applied all the available modes of interpretation of the superstructure, our contemporary historians are unanimous in giving up on the question. Nothing offers a completely satisfying explanation of the success of this extraordinary fashion at a period which was not, believe me, so mild or civilized – on the contrary. Society was just emerging from the first feudal period, which in practice can be summed up as being dominated across a large area of geographical space by the manners of bandits; and then one suddenly finds codes that regulate the relations between man and woman that have all the characteristics of a stupefying paradox.

Given the time, I am not even going to begin my discussion today. You should nevertheless be aware of what I shall be talking about next time. It will have to do with the ambiguous and enigmatic problem of the feminine object.

Don't imagine that it is something exclusive to me; I will not attempt to exercise my feeble powers of investigation on the subject. But the fact is that

this object of praise, of service, of devotion, and of all kinds of sentimental, stereotyped behavior on the part of the defender of courtly love relative to the Lady, leads one commentator to say that they all seemed to have been praising the same person. And it is a fact that is calculated to leave us with a question mark. The Romance scholar in question is Mr. André Morin, a Professor in the Department of Literature at the *Université de Lille,* to whom we also owe a fine anthology of *Minnesang* published by Aubier.

The creation involved is a function of an object about which we naturally wonder: what was the exact role played by creatures of flesh and blood who were indeed involved in the matter? We have no trouble in naming the ladies and people who were at the center of the spread of this new style of behavior and of existence at the moment when it emerged. We know the first stars of this veritable social epidemic as well as we know Mr. Sartre or Miss de Beauvoir. Eleanor of Aquitaine is not a mythical figure, and nor is her daughter, the Countess of Champagne.

The important point will be to see how certain of the enigmas that historians raise in this connection may be resolved as a function of the doctrine that I am expounding here, the analytical doctrine. To what extent does it allow us to explain the phenomenon as a work of sublimation in its purest sense?

You will see in detail how it was possible to give an object, which in this case is called the Lady, the value of representing the Thing. So as to give you an idea of the path we will follow to the moment when I leave you in February, note that this will allow me to go on and show the subsequent developments of that construction relative to the feminine object, including the problematic character that it still possesses for us today. We will consider it in terms of the analytical structure.

Beyond the February break, my aim is to allow you to calculate at its true worth the originality of the Freudian contribution.

The idea of creation is cosubstantial with your thought. You cannot think, no one can think, except in creationist terms. What you take to be the most familiar model of your thought, namely, evolutionism, is with you, as with all your contemporaries, a form of defense, of clinging to religious ideals, which prevents you from seeing what is happening in the world around you. But it is not because you, like everyone else, whether you know it or not, are caught up in the notion of creation, that the Creator is in a clear position for you.

It is obvious that God is dead. That is something Freud expresses from one end of his myth to the other; since God derives from the fact that the Father is dead, that clearly means we have all noticed that God is dead. And that is why Freud reflects so intensely on the subject. But at the same time,

because it was the originary dead Father that God releases, he, too, was dead from the beginning. The question of the Creator in Freud is, therefore, attached nowadays to that which continues to function on that level.

That is the goal of our inquiry this year; the form of the question concerning what the Thing is all about has to be addressed by us. It is something that Freud considers in his psychology of the drive, for the *Trieb* can in no way be limited to a psychological notion. It is an absolutely fundamental ontological notion, which is a response to a crisis of consciousness that we are not necessarily obliged to identify, since we are living it.

However we live it, in any case, the intention of what I am trying to expound before you is to attempt to make you aware of it.

January 27, 1960

X

Marginal comments

GNOMIC PROPOSITIONS
ART, RELIGION, SCIENCE
ON THE SUBJECT OF SPITZ
ANAMORPHOSIS AND ARCHITECTURE
THE PRIMACY OF THE *ES*

I am not this morning in the state of readiness I consider necessary for me to conduct my seminar in the usual manner. And this is especially the case, given the point we have reached, when I particularly want to be able to present you with some very precise formulas. You will thus allow me to put it off until next time.

The break caused by my absence of two weeks comes at a bad time, since I would have liked to go beyond what I announced last time that I would be dealing with – after having dealt with it, of course.

1

Courtly love is, in effect, an exemplary form, a paradigm, of sublimation. We only have essentially the documentary testimony of art, but we still feel today the ethical ramifications.

If on the subject of courtly love, apart from the lively archaeological interest in the matter, we still only have the documentary testimony of art in a form that is almost dead, it is obvious that its ethical ramifications are still felt in the relations between the sexes.

The long-lasting influence of the effects of a phenomenon that one might think is little more than an issue of aesthetics is thus of a kind to make us aware of the importance of sublimation – something that psychoanalysis has specifically foregrounded.

I would like to be at the top of my form in order to show you how the question has been posed historically, and how it is posed from the point of view of method, for I believe that there again we are in a position to throw some light on admitted difficulties that historians, Romance scholars, philologists, and various specialists who have approached the problem have encountered. They apparently recognize that they have in no way managed

to reduce the phenomenon of courtly love in its historical emergence to an identifiable form of conditioning.

The recognition of the fact is common, and I would say almost uniform. One encounters a paradoxical phenomenon, one that is almost taken for granted; in every example of this kind scholars have often been led to examine influences – something that in many cases is only a way of displacing the problem. They tell us that the origin of the problem is to be found in the transmission of something that happened somewhere else. Yet we still need to know how that happened somewhere else. But in the event that is precisely what gets lost.

In this case, the recourse to influences is far from having illuminated the problem. We will try to approach the problem at its very center, and we will see that Freudian theory is of a kind to shed a certain light there. Thus in this way I take up the problem not only for its value as example but also for its value relative to method.

To start out from this very specific point doesn't mean that everything that concerns sublimation is to be considered from the perspective developed here, namely, from the point of view of the man / woman relation, of the couple. I do not claim to reduce sublimation to that, nor even to center it on that. I believe on the contrary that to start out from this example is essential in order to arrive at a general formula, whose beginnings we can find in Freud, if we know where to look for it – and I don't mean search for this or that detail.

If I proceed sometimes by emphasizing one of Freud's sentences, an isolated formula, or, I was about to say, some gnomic proposition, then I am very conscious of making that gnomic proposition work for me. When I give you a formula such as "The desire of man is the desire of the Other," it is a gnomic formula, although Freud didn't seek to present it as such. But he does so from time to time without doing it on purpose. Thus I once quoted a very short formula which brought together the respective mechanisms of hysteria, obsessional neurosis and paranoia with three forms of sublimation, art, religion and science. At another point he relates paranoia to scientific discourse. These clues will help us articulate in all its generality the formula in which we will in the end order the function of sublimation with reference to the Thing.

This Thing is accessible in very elementary examples, which are almost of the type of the classic philosophical demonstration, including a blackboard and a piece of chalk. I referred last time to the schematic example of the vase, so as to allow you to grasp where the Thing is situated in the relationship that places man in the mediating function between the real and the signifier. This Thing, all forms of which created by man belong to the sphere of sublimation, this Thing will always be represented by emptiness, precisely because it cannot be represented by anything else – or, more exactly, because it can

only be represented by something else. But in every form of sublimation, emptiness is determinative.

I will point out right away three different ways according to which art, religion and the discourse of science turn out to be related to that; I will point this out by means of three formulas that I don't say I will retain at the end, when we have completed our journey together.

All art is characterized by a certain mode of organization around this emptiness. I don't believe that that is a vain formula, in spite of its generality, in guiding those who are interested in explaining the problems of art; and I believe I have the means of illustrating that to you in a variety of striking ways.

Religion in all its forms consists of avoiding this emptiness. We can illustrate that in forcing the note of Freudian analysis for the good reason that Freud emphasized the obsessional traits of religious behavior. Yet although the whole ceremonial phase of the body of religious practices, in effect, enters into this framework, we can hardly be fully satisfied with this formula. A phrase like "respecting this emptiness" perhaps goes further. In any case, the emptiness remains in the center, and that is precisely why sublimation is involved.

As for our third term, the discourse of science, to the extent that it finds its origin in our tradition in the discourse of wisdom or of philosophy, the term Freud uses in connection with paranoia and its relation to psychic reality, the term, *Unglauben*, finds its full meaning there.

I emphasized this fact in passing in a recent Seminar; *Unglauben* is not the negation of the phenomenology of *Glauben*, of belief. Freud never returned to the subject in a comprehensive and definitive way, yet it nevertheless runs throughout his work, and he gives extreme importance to this function in the *Entwurf*. The phenomenology of belief remained for him an obsession to the end; thus *Moses and Monotheism* is constructed in its entirety in order to explain the fundamental phenomena of belief.

More profound and more dynamically significant for us is the phenomenon of unbelief. It is not the suppression of belief, but it has to do with man's relationship to the world and to truth that is specific to man, a relationship he inhabits.

In this connection you would be wrong to trust in summary oppositions or to think that history has known sensational turning points, such as the supposed passage from the theocratic age to so-called humanist forms of liberation of the individual and of reality. The conception of the world is not decisive here. On this occasion, it has nothing to do with something resembling a *Weltanschauung* – and certainly not mine. I am only pointing the way here, I am only trying to help you orientate yourself in the bibliography of significant works on the subject, works by specialist who in their different fields are

equipped with some talent for analysis. I advise you to look up the work of an historian, Lucien Fèbvre, who is the author of the widely accessible, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century*. It is a work that enables you to see how the thoughtful use of historical methods allows us to pose more precisely the question of the forms of development of thinking on the subject of problems of faith.

If you have the time and you would like to read something amusing, you should read a little book by the same author that is supplementary but not secondary, not a little boat bobbing in the wake of a ship; it is called *Concerning the Heptameron*. The author of the *Heptameron* is Marguerite de Navarre, whom, I hope, you will not mix up with Queen Margot, the wife of Henry IV. She is not just a libertine author, but turns out to have written a treatise that is mystical in kind. But that is not something which excites the astonishment of the historian.

He tries to show us what the collections of tales that go under the title of the *Heptameron* might mean in the context of the time and of the psychology of their author. And he does it in such a way as to allow us to read that work with not so much a more informed eye as an eye that doesn't censure the text or, in particular, the reflections of each of the characters after each of the tales that are supposed to be true, and that certainly are for the most part. The thoughts of the respondents that belong to the register of moral and even formal religious reflection are usually censured because one assumes at the beginning that they are no more than the accompanying sauce. But that is something it is important not to get wrong – in any dish it is the sauce that is the essential ingredient. Lucien Febvre teaches us how to read the *Heptameron*. Yet if we knew how to read, we wouldn't need him.

As far as unbelief is concerned, it is from our point of view a place in discourse that is to be conceived precisely in relation to the Thing – the Thing is repudiated or foreclosed in the proper sense of *Verwerfung*.

In the same way that in art there is a *Verdrängung*, a repression of the Thing, and in religion there is probably a *Verschiebung* or displacement, it is strictly speaking *Verwerfung* that is involved in the discourse of science. The discourse of science repudiates the presence of the Thing insofar as from its point of view the ideal of absolute knowledge is glimpsed, that is, something that posits the Thing while it pays no attention to it. As everyone knows, this point of view has historically proved in the end to be a failure.

The discourse of science is determined by this *Verwerfung*, and, in the light of my formula that what is foreclosed in the symbolic reappears in the real, this is probably why it leads to a situation in which, at the end of physics, it is something as enigmatic as the Thing that is glimpsed.

I will postpone until next time a discussion of my paradigm of courtly love, an example of sublimation in art whose vital effects we still come across. We

will take note of them after I come back from my trip; we will take a sampling of these traces, of the indisputable effects of the primary signifying construction that is determinative in the phenomenon of courtly love. And we will attempt to recognize in contemporary phenomena something that can only be explained through recourse to such an origin.

Since I am engaged in marginal commentary today, let me point out in passing that you would be wrong to think that this concept of the Thing to which I am giving a new development this year wasn't, in fact, immanent in our discussions of previous years.

Moreover, since there are those who question certain characteristics of my style, let me remind you for example of the expression "The Freudian Thing" that was the title of something I wrote, and it wouldn't be a bad idea for you to look it up. That text and that title surprised because if one starts to analyze my intentions from a philosophical point of view, one comes to relate them to a concern that was very popular at one time, namely, the resistance to reification. Of course, I never said anything about reification. But intentions can always be wrapped around a discourse. It is clear that if I chose such a title, I did so deliberately. If you reread the text, you will see that I am essentially speaking of the Thing. And I speak about it in a way that was evidently the cause of the undoubted discomfort the text provoked at the time. The fact is I sometimes make the Thing itself speak.

2

I would like now to make sure that today's meeting might be of some use to those who have travelled some distance to get here.

Given the point we have reached in my Seminar, it seems likely that some of you may have questions to ask me or answers to give, so as to suggest the meaning for them of some element or other in my argument.

I know that it is never easy to break the silence in a crowd, to ring one's little bell, so to speak. I will, therefore, give you the opportunity to ask me a written question. The only disadvantage there is that I am free to read it as I see fit.

At the same time we are going to do something unexpected that strikes me as a good idea. Some of you attended the scientific meeting of our Society yesterday. I don't know how it ended because I had to leave after having responded at some length to the lecturers, people for whom I have the greatest affection, and after I had expressed my deep interest in their work. They are here today and I would like to ask Smirnov for some clarification on the subject of Spitz's "No and Yes."[1]

[1] The words in quotation marks here and in the following paragraph are in English in the original.

Why did you not tackle the "Yes"? [Mr. Smirnov's answer.]

Let me explain to those who do not know the text that it is a book belonging to a series of investigations founded on the direct observation of newborn babies or more precisely of infants, that is to say, up to the point of the appearance of articulated language as such. Within this dimension, Spitz claims to find the "No" as a "pattern," as a semantic form in a certain number of gestures and expressions, and primarily in "rooting" – that is to say, in the oscillating gesture of the head that the infant makes in its approach to the breast. The word is very difficult to translate into French, but there is a correlative in the English text in the word "snout," which clearly indicates what is involved.

I am far from being critical of Spitz. I intend rather to defend him. I don't mean he is right, but the work is good and sharply articulated. And I would fault you with failing to have brought out the fact that the phenomenon is analogous to what occurs in traumatic neurosis – it is, he says, the last memory before the emergence of the catastrophic reaction.

I embarrassed you by asking you to comment on Spitz's other works, namely, his fiction on *The Primal Cavity* or at the very least his references to the screen of the dream.

Spitz doesn't on the whole elaborate on the fact that a form of reaction deriving from an earlier stage may be used in a critical situation. That seems to be a very useful idea, however, something that should always be emphasized. I think you made the point, unless it was Laplanche.

Spitz is reduced to having a mechanism as passive as that of traumatic neurosis intervene. He thus implies some preceding frustration of the infant. He considers the act of "rooting" to be a trace which remains inscribed after something like the refusal or withdrawal of the breast that immediately precedes it. It is surprising that he expresses it in an isolated form, on the basis of a given case, and not in general.

[Statements by Mr. Smirnov and Laplanche; a question from Mr. Audouard: "Why do you speak to us about the Thing instead of simply speaking about mediation?"]

To answer you briefly right away, I note that you have always been attentive to the note of what one might call Hegelian reinterpretations of analytical experience. We are concerned here with the Freudian experience as an ethics, which is to say, at its most essential level, since it directs us towards a therapeutic form of action that, whether we like it or not, is included in the register or in the terms of an ethics. And the more we deny this, the more it is the case. Experience demonstrates this: a form of analysis that boasts of its highly scientific distinctiveness gives rise to normative notions that I characterize by evoking the curse Saint Matthew utters on those who make the bundles heavier when they are to be carried by others. Strengthening the

categories of affective normativity produces disturbing results.

It is clear that we put the accent on the irreducible element in the instinct, on that which appears at the limit of a mediation and that reification is unable to encompass. But in encircling that something whose limits we explore, we are encircling the empty image.

The deliberate intention to emphasize this notion has never been absent from what I have said thus far. If you look up the texts I referred you to on this subject, you will see that there is no ambiguity. That Hegelian radicalism that was rashly attributed to me somewhere by a contributor to *Les Temps Modernes* should in no way be imputed to me. The whole dialectic of desire that I developed here, and that I was beginning at the very moment the rash individual was writing that particular sentence, is sharply distinguished from such Hegelianism. It is even more marked this year. The inevitable character seems to me to be especially marked in the effect of sublimation.

Mr. X: The formula for sublimation that you have given us is to raise the object to the dignity of the Thing. This Thing doesn't exist to start with, because sublimation is going to bring us to it. The question I have is, therefore, isn't this Thing not really a thing, but on the contrary a Non-Thing, and isn't it through sublimation that one comes to see it as being the Thing (. . .)?

What you are saying strikes me as on the right track; it's obvious you follow my presentation of these questions without difficulty. Something is offered to us as analysts, if we follow the sum of our experience and if we know how to evaluate it. You state that the attempt at sublimation tends in the end to realize the Thing or to save it. It's true and it's not true. There's an illusion there.

3

Neither science nor religion is of a kind to save the Thing or to give it to us, because the magic circle that separates us from it is imposed by our relation to the signifier. As I have told you, the Thing is that which in the real suffers from this fundamental, initial relation, which commits man to the ways of the signifier by reason of the fact that he is subjected to what Freud calls the pleasure principle, and which, I hope it is clear in your minds, is nothing else than the dominance of the signifier – I, of course, mean the true pleasure principle as it functions in Freud.

In brief, it is the effect of the influence of the signifier on the psychic real that is involved, and it is for this reason that the activity of sublimation is not

purely and simply senseless in all its forms – one responds with whatever is at hand.

I wanted to have here today, so as to be able to show it to you at the end of the Seminar, an object that to be understood, if not to be described, demands a long commentary on the history of art. That one managed to construct such an object and to find pleasure in it requires that we make a significant detour.

I will describe it to you. It is an object that embodies an anamorphosis. I assume that many of you know what that is. It is any kind of construction that is made in such a way that by means of an optical transposition a certain form that wasn't visible at first sight transforms itself into a readable image. The pleasure is found in seeing its emergence from an indecipherable form.

Such a thing is extremely widespread in the history of art. Just go to the Louvre; you will see Holbein's painting of *The Ambassadors* and at the feet of one of the two men, who is just as well built as you or I, you will see an enigmatic form stretched out on the ground. It looks roughly like fried eggs. If you place yourself at a certain angle from which the painting itself disappears in all its relief by reason of the converging lines of its perspective, you will see a death's head appear, the sign of the classic theme of *vanitas*. And this is found in a proper painting, a painting commissioned by the ambassadors in England, who must have been very pleased with his work; and what was at the bottom must have amused them a lot, too.

This phenomenon is datable. It was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that things reached this point of heightened interest and even of fascination. In a chapel built by order of the Jesuits in Descartes's time, there existed a whole wall some eighteen meters long that represented a scene from the life of the saints or a nativity scene, and that was completely unreadable from any point in the room, but if one entered by a certain corridor, you can see for a brief moment the extraordinarily dispersed lines come together and perceive the body of the scene.

The anamorphosis I wanted to bring here is much less voluminous. It belongs to the collector I have already referred to. It is formed of a polished cylinder that has the function of a mirror, and around it you put a kind of bib or flat surface on which there are also indecipherable lines. When you stand at a certain angle, you see the image concerned emerge in the cylindrical mirror; in this case it is a beautiful anamorphosis of a painting of the crucifixion copied from Rubens.

This object could never have been produced, never have had a necessary meaning without a whole preceding development. There is behind it the whole history of architecture as well as that of painting, their combination and the history of this combination.

To put it briefly, primitive architecture can be defined as something organized around emptiness. That is also the authentic impression that the forms

of a cathedral like Saint Mark's give us, and it is the true meaning of all architecture. Then subsequently, for economic reasons, one is satisfied with painting images of that architecture, one learns to paint architecture on the walls of architecture; and painting, too, is first of all something that is organized around emptiness. Since it is a matter of finding once more the sacred emptiness of architecture in the less marked medium of painting, the attempt is made to create something that resembles it more and more closely, that is to say, perspective is discovered.

The following stage is paradoxical and quite amusing; it shows how one strangles oneself with one's own knots.

From the moment when perspective was discovered in painting, a form of architecture appears that adopts the perspectivism of painting. Palladio's art, for example, makes this very obvious. Go and see Palladio's theater in Vicenze, a little masterpiece of its kind that is in any case instructive and exemplary. Neoclassical architecture submits itself to the laws of perspective, plays with them, and makes them its own. That is, it places them inside of something that was done in painting in order to find once again the emptiness of primitive architecture.

From that point on one is entangled in a knot which seems to flee increasingly from the meaning of this emptiness. And I believe that the Baroque return to the play of forms, to all manner of devices, including anamorphosis, is an effort to restore the true meaning of artistic inquiry; artists use the discovery of the property of lines to make something emerge that is precisely there where one has lost one's bearings or, strictly speaking, nowhere.

Rubens' painting that suddenly appears in the place of the unintelligible image reveals what is at issue here. At issue, in an analogical or anamorphic form, is the effort to point once again to the fact that what we seek in the illusion is something in which the illusion as such in some way transcends itself, destroys itself, by demonstrating that it is only there as a signifier.

And it is this which lends primacy to the domain of language above all, since with language we only ever have to do with the signifier in all cases. That is why in raising the problems of the relationship of art to sublimation, I will begin with courtly love. One finds there texts which show in an exemplary way its conventional side, in the sense that language always involves artifice relative to anything intuitive, material or lived.

This phenomenon is all the more striking since we see it develop at a period of uninhibited fucking. I mean that they didn't attempt to hide it, didn't mince their words.

The coexistence of two styles on the subject is the remarkable thing.

You introduce the idea of the Thing and the Non-Thing. It is, if you like, true that the Thing is also the Non-Thing. In reality, the Non- as such is certainly not individualized in a significant way. Exactly the same problem is

posed by the Freudian notion of *Todestrieb*, whereas Freud tells us at the same time that there is no negation in the unconscious.

We don't make a philosophy out of it. I remind you of the notion that I modified the other day, so as not to give the impression that I don't accept my responsibilities: when I talk about the Thing, I am certainly talking about something. But I am, of course, talking operationally, with reference to the place that it occupies in a certain logical stage of our thought and of our conceptualization, with reference to its function in what concerns us.

Yesterday evening I referred to and denounced the substitution for Freud's whole classic topology of the term "ego" – something that is particularly regrettable in someone as deeply immersed in analytical thought as Spitz.

It is indeed difficult to recognize in that concept the essential function with which analytical experience began, that was its shock value as well as its echo and suite. Let us not forget that Freud, in effect, immediately countered it with the invention of the term *das Es*. That primacy of the *Es* is now completely forgotten.

To some extent, the *Es* is not sufficiently emphasized by the way it is presented in the texts of the second topic. It is to remind us of the primordial and primary character of this intuition in our experience at the level of ethics that this year I am calling a certain zone of reference "the Thing."

Mr. Laplanche: I would like to ask a further question on the relationship of the pleasure principle to the play of the signifier.

This relationship is founded on the fact that the pleasure principle basically involves the sphere of investment, *Besetzung*, and its *Bahnungen*, and it is facilitated by the *Vorstellungen* and even more by what Freud calls the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanzen* – a term that appears very early, before the article on the *Unconscious*. Each time a state of need arises, the pleasure principle tends to provoke a reinvestment in its content – in inverted commas, that is, since at this metapsychological level clinical practice is not involved – an hallucinated reinvestment of what had previously been a satisfying hallucination.

The diffuse energy of the pleasure principle tends toward this reinvestment of representation. The intervention of the reality principle can only therefore be a radical one; it is never a second stage. Naturally, there is no adaptation to reality that doesn't involve a phenomenon of tasting, of sampling, by means of which the subject manages to monitor, one might almost say with his tongue, that which enables him to be sure that he isn't dreaming.

This is what constitutes the originality of Freud's thought and no one, moreover, has been mistaken about that. It is both paradoxical and provocative. Before Freud no one has ever dared articulate the functioning of the psychic apparatus in that way. He describes it on the basis of his experience

of the irreducible element he saw emerge at the core of hysterical substitutions; the first thing that poor, defenseless man can do when he is tortured by need is to begin to hallucinate his satisfaction, and after that he can only monitor the situation. Fortunately, he more or less makes at the same time the gestures required to attach himself to the zone in which this hallucination coincides with the real in an approximative form.

If the basic texts are to be respected, that's the miserable beginning from which the whole dialectic of experience is articulated in Freudian terms. That's what I told you when I discussed the relationship between the pleasure principle and the signifier.

Thus the *Vorstellungen* have right from the beginning the character of a signifying structure.

February 3, 1960

XI

Courtly love as anamorphosis

ON THE HISTORY AND ENDS OF ART
THE SUBLIMATION OF THE FATHER
ON THE SUBJECT OF BERNFELD
THE VACUOLE AND THE INHUMAN PARTNER
NEGOTIATING THE DETOUR

Why is this example of anamorphosis on this table?[1] It is here to illustrate my ideas.

Last Time I sketched out the meaning or the goal of art in the usual sense we give that term – the fine arts, for example. I'm not the only psychoanalyst to have been interested in that. I've already mentioned Ella Sharpe's article on the subject of sublimation, an article that starts out with the cave walls of Altamira, which is the earliest decorated cave to have been discovered. Perhaps what we described as the central place, as the intimate exteriority or "extimacy," that is the Thing, will help us to shed light on the question or mystery that remains for those who are interested in prehistoric art, namely, its site as such.

1

It is surprising that an underground cavern was chosen. Such a site only creates obstacles to the viewing that one assumes is presupposed by the creation and observation of the striking images which decorate the walls. The production of images and their viewing could not have been easy given the forms of lighting available to primitive men. Yet in the beginning those paintings that we take to be the earliest productions of primitive art were thrown up on the walls of a cavern.

One could call them tests in both senses of the word, subjective and objective. Tests no doubt for the artist, for, as you know, these images are often painted over each other; it's as if in a consecrated spot it represented, for each subject capable of undertaking such an exercise, the opportunity to draw or project afresh what he needed to bear witness to, and to do so moreover over what had already been done before. That suggests the idea of something

[1] For a description of an anamorphosis in the form of an object, see page 135.

like the updating of a certain creative potential. Tests also in the objective sense, for these images cannot fail to seize us as being deeply linked both in a tight relationship to the world – and by that I mean to the very subsistence of populations that seem to have been composed chiefly of hunters – and to something that in its subsistence appears as possessing the character of a beyond of the sacred – something that we are precisely trying to identify in its most general form by the term, the Thing. I would say it is primitive subsistence viewed from the perspective of the Thing.

There is a line which runs from that point to the other end, infinitely closer to us, in the exercise of anamorphosis, probably around the beginning of the seventeenth century. And I pointed out the interest that exercises of this kind had for the constructive thought of artists. I tried to make you understand briefly how the genesis of this tradition might be sketched.

In the same way that the exercise on the wall consists in fixing the invisible inhabitant of the cavern, we see the link forged between the temple, as a construction around emptiness that designates the place of the Thing, to the figuration of emptiness on the walls of this emptiness itself – to the extent that painting progressively learns to master this emptiness, to take such a tight hold of it that painting becomes dedicated to fixing it in the form of the illusion of space.

I am moving fast and I just throw out these crumbs so that you can put them to the test of whatever you may subsequently read on the subject.

Before the systematic establishment of geometrical laws of perspective formulated at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, painting passed through a stage in which various artifices made it possible to structure space. The double band that appears in the sixth and seventh centuries on the walls of Santa Maria Maggiore is one way of treating certain stereognoses. But let's leave that aside. The important thing is that at a given moment one arrives at illusion. Around it one finds a sensitive spot, a lesion, a locus of pain, a point of reversal of the whole of history, insofar as it is the history of art and insofar as we are implicated in it; that point concerns the notion that the illusion of space is different from the creation of emptiness. It is this that the appearance of anamorphoses at the end of sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries represents.

I spoke last time of a Jesuit convent; it was a mistake. I checked in Baltrusaïtis's excellent dictionary of anamorphoses, and it is a convent of the Minim Friars in Rome as well as in Paris. I don't know why I also placed Holbein's *Ambassadors* in the Louvre, when the painting is in the National Gallery in London. You will find in Baltrusaïtis's book a subtle study of that painting and of the skull that emerges when, having passed in front of it, you leave the room by a door located so that you see it in its sinister truth, at the very moment when you turn around to look at it for the last time.

Thus, as I say, the interest of anamorphosis is described as a turning point when the artist completely reverses the use of that illusion of space, when he forces it to enter into the original goal, that is to transform it into the support of the hidden reality – it being understood that, to a certain extent, a work of art always involves encircling the Thing.

This also allows us to approach a little closer to the unanswered question on the ends of art: is the end of art imitation or non-imitation? Does art imitate what it represents? If you begin by posing the question in those terms, you are already caught in the trap, and there is no way out of remaining in the impasse in which we find ourselves between figurative and so-called abstract art.

We can only sense the aberration that is articulated in the unyielding position of the philosopher; Plato places art at the lowest level among human works, since for him everything that exists only exists in relation to the idea, which is the real. Everything that exists is already no more than an imitation of a more-than-real, of a surreal. If art imitates, it is shadow of a shadow, imitation of an imitation. You can, therefore, see the vanity of the work of art, of the work of the brush.

That's a trap one must not enter. Of course, works of art imitate the objects they represent, but their end is certainly not to represent them. In offering the imitation of an object, they make something different out of that object. Thus they only pretend to imitate. The object is established in a certain relationship to the Thing and is intended to encircle and to render both present and absent.

Everybody knows this. At the moment when painting turns once again upon itself, at the moment when Cézanne paints his apples, it is clear that in painting those apples, he is doing something very different from imitating apples – even though his final manner of imitating them, which is the most striking, is primarily oriented toward a technique of presenting the object. But the more the object is presented in the imitation, the more it opens up the dimension in which illusion is destroyed and aims at something else. Everyone knows that there is a mystery in the way Cézanne paints apples, for the relationship to the real as it is renewed in art at that moment makes the object appear purified; it involves a renewal of its dignity by means of which these imaginary insertions are, one might say, repetitively restated. The fact is, as has been noted, such insertions cannot be detached from the efforts of earlier artists to realize the ends of art in their own way.

Obviously, the notion of historicity should not be used here without great caution. The expression "history of art" is highly misleading. Every appearance of this way of proceeding consists in overthrowing the illusory operation so as to return to the original end, which is to project a reality that is not that of the object represented. In the history of art, on the other hand, by virtue

of the necessity that supports it, there is only substructure. The relation of the artist to the time in which he appears is always a contradictory one. It is against the current, in opposition to reigning norms – including, for example, political norms, or indeed, systems of thought – that art attempts to operate its miracle once more.

With the anamorphosis I have here, we find ourselves faced with a game that may seem futile to you, when you think of the sophisticated operational techniques required for the success of such a little artifact. And yet how can one not be touched or even moved when faced with this thing in which the image takes a rising and descending form? When faced with this sort of syringe which, if I really let myself go, would seem to me to be a kind of apparatus for taking a blood sample, a blood sample of the Grail? But don't forget that the blood of the Grail is precisely what is lacking.

The argument I have been developing thus far in my lecture should be interpreted only in a metaphorical way. I have only been following this line of argument because I want to discuss today that form of sublimation which appeared at a certain moment in the history of poetry, and which interests us in an exemplary way in connection with something that Freudian thought has placed at the center of our interest in the economy of the psyche, namely, Eros and eroticism.

I just wanted to point it out to you at the beginning: you might almost structure around this anamorphosis the ideas I am sketching out for you on the subject of the ethics of psychoanalysis. It is something that is wholly founded on the forbidden reference that Freud encountered at the terminal point of what in his thought one might call the Oedipus myth.

2

It is remarkable that the experience of what goes on in the neurotic caused Freud to leap to the level of the poetic creation of art, to the drama of Oedipus, insofar as it is something datable in the history of culture. You will see this when we take up *Moses and Monotheism,* which I asked you to read during our break. There is in Freud no distance from the facts of the Judeo-Greek experience, and I mean by that those that characterize our culture in its most modern everyday life.

It is equally striking that Freud couldn't fail to pursue his reflection on the origins of morality to the point of examining Moses' action. When you read the astonishing work that is *Moses and Monotheism,* you will see that Freud cannot help revealing the duplicity of his reference, of the reference that I have declared to you over the years to be the essential reference, namely, the No / Name-of-the-Father in its signifying function.

From a formal point of view, Freud makes recourse to paternal power for

a structuring purpose that appears to be a sublimation. He emphasizes, in the same text in which he leaves at a distance the primordial trauma of the murder of the father – and without worrying about the contradiction – that this sublimation emerges at a given historical date against the background of a visible, evident fear that she who engenders is the mother. There is, he tells us, genuine progress in spirituality in affirming the function of the father, namely, of him of whom one is never sure. This recognition implies a whole mental elaboration. To introduce as primordial the function of the father represents a sublimation. But, Freud asks, how can one conceive of this leap, this progress, since, in order to introduce it, it was necessary that something appear that imposes its authority and its reality from outside?

He himself underlines the impasse constituted by the fact that sublimation exists, but that such sublimation can only be motivated historically by means of the myth to which it has recourse. At that point the function of myth becomes evident. In truth, this myth is nothing other than something that is inscribed in the clearest of terms in the spiritual reality of our time, namely, the death of God. It is as a function of the death of God that the murder of the father which represents it in the most direct way is introduced by Freud as a modern myth.

It is a myth that has all the properties of a myth. That is to say that it doesn't explain anything, anymore than any other myth. As I pointed out in citing Lévi-Strauss and especially in referring to that which buttresses his own formulation of the issue, myth is always a signifying system or scheme, if you like, which is articulated so as to support the antimonies of certain psychic relations. And this occurs at a level which is not simply that of individual anguish and which is not exhausted either in a construction presupposing the collectivity, but which assumes its fullest possible dimension.

We suppose that it concerns the individual and also the collectivity, but there is no such opposition between them at the level involved. For it is a matter here of the subject insofar as he suffers from the signifier. It is in this passion of the signifier that the critical point emerges, and its anguish is no more than an intermittent emotion that plays the role of an occasional signal.

Freud brought to the question of the source of morality the invaluable significance implied in the phrase *Civilization and Its Discontents* or, in other words, the breakdown by means of which a certain psychic function, the superego, seems to find in itself its own exacerbation, as the result of a kind of malfunctioning of the brakes which should limit its proper authority. It remains to be seen how within this breakdown in the depths of the psychic life the instincts may find their proper sublimation.

But to begin with, what is the possibility we call sublimation? Given the time at our disposal, I am not in a position to take you through the virtually absurd difficulties that authors have encountered every time they have tried

to give a meaning to the term "sublimation." I would nevertheless like one of you to go to the *Bibliothèque Nationale,* look up Bernfeld's article in volume VIII of *Imago* entitled "Bemerkungen über Sublimierung," ["Observations on Sublimation"], and give us a summary of it here.

Bernfeld was a particularly powerful mind of the second generation, and in the end the weaknesses of his articulation of the problem of sublimation are of a kind that will prove illuminating. He is first of all quite troubled by Freud's reference to the fact that the operations of sublimation are always ethically, culturally, and socially valorized. This criterion, external to psychoanalysis, certainly creates a difficulty, and on account of its extra-psychological character clearly merits to be emphasized and criticized. But as we will see, this character causes less difficulty than at first appears.

On the other hand, the contradiction between the *Zielablenkung* side of the *Strebung,* of the *Trieb* or drive, and the fact that that takes place in a domain which is that of the object libido, also poses all kinds of problems for Bernfeld – problems that he resolves with the extreme clumsiness which characterizes everything that has so far been said on the analysis of sublimation.

According to him, at the point he reached around 1923–1924, we must start from the part of the instinct that may be employed for the ends of the ego, for the *Ichziele,* in order to define sublimation. And he goes on to give examples whose naiveté is striking. He refers to a certain little Robert Walter, who like many children tries his hand at poetry even before puberty. And what does he tell us on the subject? That to be a poet is an *Ichziel* for the boy. It is in relation to that choice fixed very early that everything that follows will be judged, namely, the way in which at the onset of puberty the upheaval of his libidinal economy, which is clinically perceptible although quite confused in this case, will be seen to be gradually integrated into the *Ichziel.* In particular, his activity as a little poet and his fantasms, which were quite separate at the beginning, come to be progressively coordinated.

Bernfeld thus assumes the primordial, primitive character of the goal set by the child to become a poet. And a similar argument is to be found in the other, equally instructive examples he gives us – some of which concern the function of the *Verneinungen,* of the negations that occur spontaneously among groups of children. He was, in effect, very interested in this question in a publication devoted to the problems of youth for which he was responsible at the time.

The important point to note on the subject is the following, and it is something that is to be found in all formulations of the problem, including Freud's. Freud points out that once the artist has carried out an operation on the level of sublimation, he finds himself to be the beneficiary of his operation insofar as it is acclaimed after the fact; it brings in its wake in the form of glory, honor, and even money, those fantasmic satisfactions that were at the origin

of the instinct, with the result that the latter finds itself satisfied by means of sublimation.

That is all well and good as long as we assume that the already established function of poet exists on the outside. It seems to be taken for granted that especially among those whom Bernfeld calls eminent men, a little child might choose to become a poet as an ego goal. It is true that he hastens to add parenthetically that, in using the expression "hervorragender Mensch," eminent man, he is divesting it as much as possible of all connotations of value – something that is very strange as soon as one starts to talk of eminence. To be frank, the dimension of the eminent personality cannot be eliminated. And we see that, in fact, in *Moses and Monotheism* it isn't eliminated by Freud, but thrust into the foreground.

What needs to be justified is not simply the secondary benefits that individuals might derive from their works, but the originary possibility of a function like the poetic function in the form of a structure within a social consensus.

Well now, it is precisely that kind of consensus we see born at a certain historical moment around the ideal of courtly love. For a certain highly restricted circle, that ideal is to be found at the origin of a moral code, including a whole series of modes of behavior, of loyalties, measures, services, and exemplary forms of conduct. And if that interests us so directly, it is because its central point was an eroties.

3

What interests us here very probably emerged in the middle or at the beginning of the eleventh century, and continued into the twelfth or even, in Germany, to the beginning of the thirteenth. The phenomenon in question is courtly love, its poets and singers, who were known as "troubadours" in the South, as "trouvères" in the North of France, and as "Minnesänger" in the Germanic realm – England and parts of Spain were only involved at second hand. These games were linked to a very precise poetic craft and emerged at that moment, only to be eclipsed subsequently to the point where the following centuries only retained a somewhat dim memory of them.

At the high point, which stretches from the beginning of the eleventh century to the first third of the thirteenth, the very special technique of these courtly love poets played a highly important role. It is difficult for us today to evaluate precisely the importance of that role, but certain circles – in the courtly love sense, court circles, aristocratic circles – that occupied an elevated position in society were certainly influenced markedly.

The question as to whether there were, in fact, formal lessons in love has been raised. The way in which Michel de Nostre-Dame, otherwise known as Nostradamus, represents at the beginning of the fifteenth century the way in

which juridical power was exercised by the Ladies – whose extravagant Languedocian names he cites – cannot fail to excite a thrill in us at its strangeness. This is something that was faithfully reproduced by Stendhal in *On Love,* an admirable work on the subject, and one that is very close to the interest displayed by the romantics in the resurgence of the poetry of courtly love, which was called Provençal at the time, but which was, properly speaking, from the region of Toulouse or indeed from the Limousin.

The existence and operations of these tribunals devoted to the casuistry of love and evoked by Michel de Nostre-Dame are open to debate and often debated. Nevertheless, we do have certain texts, including especially the work by Andreas Capellanus that Rénouart discovered and published in 1917. The shortened title is *De Arte Amandi,* which thus makes it a homonym of Ovid's treatise – a work that was passed down to posterity by the clergy.

This fourteenth-century manuscript that Rénouart discovered in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* gives us the text of judgments handed down by Ladies, who are well-known historical figures and include Eleanor of Aquitaine. She was successively – and this "successively" involved a great degree of personal involvement in the unfolding drama – the wife of Louis VII the Younger and Henry Plantagenet, whom she married when he was Duke of Normandy and who subsequently became King of England, with all that that involved relative to claims made on French territory. Then there was her daughter, who married a certain Henry I, Count of Champagne, and still others who were historical figures. In Capellanus's work they are all said to have participated in tribunals devoted to the casuistry of love, and such tribunals all presuppose perfectly coded points of reference that are by no means vague, but imply ideals to be pursued, of which I will give you some examples.

It doesn't matter whether we take them from the Southern French domain or the German domain except as far as the signifier is concerned, which in the former case is the "langue d'oc" and in the latter the German language – this is after all a poetry written in the vernacular. Except for the signifier, then, the terms overlap, repeat each other; both involve the same system. They are organized around diverse themes, the first of which is mourning, and even mourning unto death.

As one of those put it who at the beginning of the nineteenth century in Germany formulated its characteristics, the point of departure of courtly love is its quality as a scholastics of unhappy love. Certain terms define the register according to which the Lady's values are attained – a register indicated by the norms which regulate the exchanges between the partners of the strange rite, namely, reward, clemency, grace or *Gnade,* felicity. So as to imagine the extremely rarified and complex organization concerned, think of the seventeenth-century Map of Love *(Carte du Tendre),* although what one finds there is a far more pallid version; the *précieuses,* too, at another historical moment

placed the emphasis on a certain social art of conversation.

With courtly love things are all the more surprising because they emerge at a time when the historical circumstances are such that nothing seems to point to what might be called the advancement of women or indeed their emancipation. To give you an idea of the situation, I would just refer to the story of the Countess of Comminges, the daughter of a certain William of Montpellier, that took place at the time of the full flowering of courtly love.

There was a certain Peter of Aragon, who was King of Aragon and was ambitious to extend his power north of the Pyrenees in spite of the obstacle raised at the time by the first historical campaign of the north against the south, namely, in the form of the Albigensian crusade and Simon de Montfort's victories over the Counts of Toulouse. By reason of the fact that the lady in question was the natural heir upon the death of her father of the county of Montpellier, Peter of Aragon wanted her. She was, however, already married, and seems to have been someone who was not cut out to involve herself in sordid intrigues. She was of a highly reserved personality, not far from sainthood in the religious sense of the word, since it was at Rome that she ended her days with a reputation for saintliness. Political intrigue and the pressure of the noble Lord Peter of Aragon forced her to leave her husband. Papal intervention obliged the latter to take her back, but on her father's death, everything happened in accordance with the will of the powerful Lord. She was repudiated by her husband, who was used to such things, and she married Peter of Aragon, who proceeded to mistreat her to such a degree that she fled. And that is why she finished her days in Rome under the protection of the Pope, who turned out to be on occasion the only protector of persecuted innocence.

The style of this story simply shows the effective position of woman in feudal society. She is, strictly speaking, what is indicated by the elementary structures of kinship, i.e., nothing more than a correlative of the functions of social exchange, the support of a certain number of goods and of symbols of power. She is essentially identified with a social function that leaves no room for her person or her own liberty, except with reference to her religious rights.

It is in this context that the very curious function of the poet of courtly love starts to be exercised. It is important to recall his social situation, which is of a kind to throw a little light on the fundamental idea or graphic style that Freudian ideology can give to a fashion whose function the artist manages in a way to delay.

Satisfactions of power are involved, Freud tells us. That is why it is all the more remarkable to emphasize that in the whole collection of *Minnesange*, there are numerous poets who occupy positions that are not inferior to those of emperor, king, or prince. There are, in fact, 126 *Minnesange* in the *Manes*

manuscript collection, which was in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and which Heinrich Heine used to go and pay homage to, as if to the very beginnings of German poetry. But after 1888, as the result of negotiations I know nothing about, but that were certainly justified, it was given back to the Germans and is now in Heidelberg.

The first of the troubadours was a certain Guillaume de Poitiers, the seventh Count of Poitiers and ninth Duke of Aquitaine. Before he devoted himself to his early poetic activities in the sphere of courtly love poetry, he appears to have been a formidable brigand of the kind that, goodness knows, every right-minded feudal nobleman of the period seems readily to have been. In a number of historical situations that I won't go into, he can be seen to have behaved in conformity with the norms of the most barbarous practice of ransom. That was the kind of service one could expect from him. Then, from a particular moment on, he became the poet of that singular form of love.

I urge you right away to read those specialized works that contain a thematic analysis of the veritable love ritual which was involved. The question is, How should we situate it as analysts?

I will just mention in passing a book that is somewhat depressing in the way it solves problems by neatly avoiding them, although it is full of material and quotations, namely, *The Joy of Love* by Pierre Perdu, which was published by Plon. Another work of a very different type, since it deals less with courtly love than its historical relations, is also worth reading, and that is the nice little collection of Benjamin Perret, which, without explaining very well what it's about, he has called *The Anthology of Sublime Love*. Then there is René Nelli's book, published by Hachette, *Love and the Myths of the Heart*, in which I find a certain philogenic moralism along with a lot of facts. And finally you have Henry Corbin's *The Creative Imagination* from Flammarion; however, it goes much further than the limited domain that interests us today.

I am not going to expatiate on the obvious themes of this poetry, both for lack of time and because you will find them in the examples in which I will show what might be called their conventional origin. On this subject all the historians agree: courtly love was, in brief, a poetic exercise, a way of playing with a number of conventional, idealizing themes, which couldn't have any real concrete equivalent. Nevertheless, these ideals, first among which is that of the Lady, are to be found in subsequent periods, down to our own. The influence of these ideals is a highly concrete one in the organization of contemporary man's sentimental attachments, and it continues its forward march.

Moreover, march is the right word because it finds its point of origin in a certain systematic and deliberate use of the signifier as such.

A great deal of effort has been expanded to demonstrate the relationship between this apparatus or organization of the forms of courtly love and an intuition that is religious in origin, mystical for example, and that is supposed

to be located somewhere in the center that is sought, in the Thing, which comes to be exalted in the style of courtly love. Experience has shown that this whole effort is condemned to failure.

On the level of the economy of the reference of the subject to the love object, there are certain apparent relationships between courtly love and foreign mystical experiences, Hindu or Tibetan, for example. As everyone knows, Denis de Rougemont made a great deal of this, and that is why I told you to read Henry Corbin's book. There are nevertheless serious difficulties and even critical impossibilities involved, if only because of dates. The themes in question among certain Moslem poets from the Iberian peninsula, for example, appear after Guillaume de Poitier's poetry.

Of interest to us from a structural point of view is the fact that an activity of poetic creation was able to exercise a determining influence on manners at a time – and subsequently in its historical consequences – when the origin and the key concepts of the whole business had been forgotten. But we can only judge the function of this sublimated creation in features of the structure.

The object involved, the feminine object, is introduced oddly enough through the door of privation or of inaccessibility. Whatever the social position of him who functions in the role, the inaccessibility of the object is posited as a point of departure. Some of those involved were, in fact, servants, *sirvens*, at their place of birth; Bernard de Ventadour was, for example, the son of a servant at Ventadour castle, who was also a troubadour.

It is impossible to serenade one's Lady in her poetic role in the absence of the given that she is surrounded and isolated by a barrier.

Furthermore, that object or *Domnei*, as she is called – she is also frequently referred to with the masculine term, *Mi Dom*, or my Lord – this Lady is presented with depersonalized characteristics. As a result, writers have noted that all the poets seem to be addressing the same person.

The fact that on occasion her body is described as *g'ra delgat e gen* – that means that plumpness was part of the sex appeal of the period, *e gen* signifying graceful – should not deceive you, since she is always described in that way. In this poetic field the feminine object is emptied of all real substance. That is what made it easy subsequently for a metaphysical poet such as Dante, for example, to choose a person whom we definitely know existed – namely, little Beatrice whom he fell for when she was nine years old, and who stayed at the center of his poetry from the *Vita Nuova* to *The Divine Comedy* – and to make her the equivalent of philosophy or indeed, in the end, of the science of the sacred. That also enabled him to appeal to her in terms that are all the more sensual because the person in question is close to allegory. It is only when the person involved is transformed into a symbolic function that one is able to speak of her in the crudest terms.

Here we see functioning in the pure state the authority of that place the instinct aims for in sublimation. That is to say, that what man demands, what he cannot help but demand, is to be deprived of something real. And one of you, in explaining to me what I am trying to show in *das Ding*, referred to it neatly as the vacuole.

I don't reject the word, although its charm derives from the virtual reference to histology. Something of that order is, in effect, involved, if we indulge in that most risqué of reveries associated with contemporary speculation that speaks of communication in connection with transmission inside organic structures – transmission that functions pseudopodically. Of course, there is no communication as such. But if in a monocellular organism such communication were organized schematically around the vacuole, and concerned the function of the vacuole as such, we could, in fact, have a schematic form of what concerns us in the representation.

Where, in effect, is the vacuole created for us? It is at the center of the signifiers – insofar as that final demand to be deprived of something real is essentially linked to the primary symbolization which is wholly contained in the signification of the gift of love.

In this connection I was struck by the fact that, in the terminology of courtly love, the word *domnei* is used. The corresponding verb is *domnoyer*, which means something like "to caress," "to play around." *Domnei*, in spite of the fact that its first syllable in French is an echo of the word "don," gift, is, in fact, unrelated to it. It is related instead to the *Domna*, the Lady, or in other words, to her who on occasion dominates.

That has its amusing side. And one should perhaps explore historically the quantity of metaphors that exist around the term "donner," to give, in courtly love. Can "donner" be situated in the relationship between the partners as something that is predominantly on one side or the other? It has perhaps no other cause than the semantic confusion produced in connection with the term *domnei* and the use of the word *domnoyer*.

The poetry of courtly love, in effect, tends to locate in the place of the Thing certain discontents of the culture. And it does so at a time when the historical circumstances bear witness to a disparity between the especially harsh conditions of reality and certain fundamental demands. By means of a form of sublimation specific to art, poetic creation consists in positing an object I can only describe as terrifying, an inhuman partner.

The Lady is never characterized for any of her real, concrete virtues, for her wisdom, her prudence, or even her competence. If she is described as wise, it is not because she embodies an immaterial wisdom or because she represents its functions more than she exercises them. On the contrary, she is as arbitrary as possible in the tests she imposes on her servant.

The Lady is basically what was later to be called, with a childish echo of

the original ideology, "cruel as the tigers of Ircania." But you will not find the extreme arbitrariness of the attitude expressed any better than among the authors of the period themselves, Chrétien de Troyes, for example.

4

Having brought out the artifices embodied in the construction of courtly love and before proceeding to show you to what extent these artifices have proved to be so durable, thus complicating still the relations between men and the service of women, I would like to say one other thing. The object in front of us, our anamorphosis, will also enable us to be precise about something that remains a little vague in the perspective adopted, namely, the narcissistic function.

You are aware that the mirror function, which I thought it necessary to present as exemplary of the imaginary structure, is defined in the narcissistic relation. And the element of idealizing exaltation that is expressly sought out in the ideology of courtly love has certainly been demonstrated; it is fundamentally narcissistic in character. Well now, the little image represented for us by this anamorphosis permits me to show you which mirror function is involved.

It is only by chance that beyond the mirror in question the subject's ideal is projected. The mirror may on occasion imply the mechanisms of narcissism, and especially the diminution of destruction or aggression that we will encounter subsequently. But it also fulfills another role, a role as limit. It is that which cannot be crossed. And the only organization in which it participates is that of the inaccessibilty of the object. But it's not the only thing to participate in that.

There is a whole series of motifs, which constitute the presuppositions or organic givens of courtly love. There is, for example, the fact that the object is not simply inaccessible, but is also separated from him who longs to reach it by all kind of evil powers, one of the names for which, in the charming Provençal language, is *lauzengiers*. The latter are the jealous rivals, but also the slanderers.

Another essential theme is that of the secret. It embodies a certain number of misapprehensions, among which is the idea that the object is never given except through an intermediary called the *Senhal*. It is something also found in Arab poetry in connection with similar themes, where the same curious rite always strikes commentators, since the forms are sometimes highly significant. In particular, at a certain point in his poems, the extraordinary Guillaume de Poitiers calls the object of his aspirations *Bon vezi*, which means "Good neighbor." As a result of which, historians have abandoned themselves to all kinds of conjectures and have been unable to come up with any-

thing better than the name of a Lady who, it is known, played an important role in his personal history, a forward woman apparently, whose estates were close to Guillaume's.

What is for us much more important than the reference to the neighbor, who is supposedly the Lady whom Guillaume de Poitiers occasionally played naughty games with, is the relationship between the expression just referred to and the one Freud uses in connection with the first establishment of the Thing, with its psychological genesis, namely, the *Nebenmensch*. And he designated thereby the very place that from the point of view of the development of Christianity, was to be occupied by the apotheosis of the neighbor.

In brief, I wanted to make you realize today, first, that it is an artificial and cunning organization of the signifier that lays down at a given moment the lines of a certain asceticism, and, second, the meaning we must attribute to the negotiation of the detour in the psychic economy.

The detour in the psyche isn't always designed to regulate the commerce between whatever is organized in the domain of the pleasure principle and whatever presents itself as the structure of reality. There are also detours and obstacles which are organized so as to make the domain of the vacuole stand out as such. What gets to be projected as such is a certain transgression of desire.

And it is here that the ethical function of eroticism enters into play. Freudianism is in brief nothing but a perpetual allusion to the fecundity of eroticism in ethics, but it doesn't formulate it as such. The techniques involved in courtly love – and they are precise enough to allow us to perceive what might on occasion become fact, what is properly speaking of the sexual order in the inspiration of this eroticism – are techniques of holding back, of suspension, of *amor interruptus*. The stages courtly love lays down previous to what is mysteriously referred to as *le don de merci*, "the gift of mercy" – although we don't know exactly what it meant – are expressed more or less in terms that Freud uses in his *Three Essays* as belonging to the sphere of foreplay.

Now from the point of view of the pleasure principle, the paradox of what might be called the effect of *Vorlust*, of foreplay, is precisely that it persists in opposition to the purposes of the pleasure principle. It is only insofar as the pleasure of desiring, or, more precisely, the pleasure of experiencing unpleasure, is sustained that we can speak of the sexual valorization of the preliminary stages of the act of love.

Yet we can never tell if this act or fusion is a matter of mystical union, of distant acknowledgment of the Other or of anything else. In many cases, it seems that a function like that of a blessing or salutation is for the courtly lover the supreme gift, the sign of the Other as such, and nothing more. This phenomenon has been the object of speculation that has even gone as far as

identifying this blessing with that which in the *consolamentum* orders the relations between the highest ranks of initiates among the Cathars. In any case, before reaching that point, the stages of the erotic technique are carefully distinguished and articulated; they go from drinking, speaking, touching, which is in part identified with what are known as services, to kissing, and the *osculum,* which is the final stage before that of the union in *merci.*

All that has come down to us in such an enigmatic form that, in order to explain it, the attempt has been made to relate it to Hindu or even Tibetan erotic practices, since it seems that the latter have been codified in the most precise way and constitute a disciplined asceticism of pleasure from which a kind of lived substance may emerge for the subject. It is only on the basis of extrapolation that it is supposed something analogous was effectively practiced by the troubadours. Personally, I don't believe a word of it. Moreover, without assuming an identity between the practices taken from different cultural spheres, I do believe the influence of this poetry has been decisive for us.

Following the notable failure of the different attempts to explain in terms of influence the emergence of this particular kind of idealizing cult of the feminine object in our culture, I am struck most by the fact that a number of the most ascetic and most paradoxical of the texts utilized in the discourse of courtly love are taken over from Ovid's *Art of Love.*

Ovid wrote in a sparkling verse form a little treatise for libertines in which one learns for example, in which neighborhoods of Rome one can meet the prettiest little whores. And he develops his theme in a poem in three parts that ends with the direct evocation of what can only be called the game of the two-backed beast. In the midst of all that one also comes across formulas such as *Arte regendus Amor,* "Love must be ruled by Art." And then, ten centuries later, with the help of those magic words, a group of poets starts to introduce all that word for word into a veritable operation of artistic incantation.

One also reads *Militiae species amor est,* "Love is a kind of military service" – which means for Ovid that the ladies of Rome aren't as easy as all that. And then in the discourse of chivalry, in a form that is nicely outlined in *Don Quixote,* such terms begin to resonate so as to evoke an armed militia devoted to the defense of women and children.

You can certainly understand the importance I attribute to such well-attested analogies, for it is clear that in the priesthood itself, Ovid's *Ars Amandi* had not been forgotten; Chrétien de Troyes even translated it. It is through these kinds of revivals that one is able to understand what the function of the signifier means. And I would like to make my boldest assertion today at this point in affirming that courtly love was created more or less as you see the fantasm emerge from the syringe that was evoked just now.

That doesn't mean that something fundamental isn't involved, however; otherwise it would be inconceivable that André Breton could celebrate in this day and age *l'Amour fou*, "the madness of love," as he puts it in terms dictated by his concerns, or by his interest in the relationship to what he calls "objective chance." That is a strange signifying configuration, since who, a century or so from now, on reading these things in their context, will understand that objective chance means things that occur and are all the richer in meaning because they take place somewhere where we are unable to perceive either rational, or causal, or any other kind of order, that can justify their emergence in the real?

In other words, it is once again in the place of the Thing that Breton has the madness of love emerge.

As I take leave of you today and remind you that we will meet again three weeks from now, I would like to conclude with four lines from a poem, which, thanks to my memory, came to mind this morning. They are from another surrealist poet, Paul Eluard. They are in their poetic context exactly at that frontier or limit which in my own words I am attempting to enable us to localize and feel:

> Against this dilapidated sky, these panes of fresh water,
> Which face will appear and, like a sonorous shell,
> Announce that the night of love has turned to day,
> Open mouth joined to a mouth that is closed?[2]

February 10, 1960

[2] *Capitale de la Douleur*

XII

A critique of Bernfeld

REACTION FORMATION AND SUBLIMATION
THE PRECOCIOUSNESS OF SUBLIMATION
BETWEEN FREUDIAN AESTHETICS AND ETHICS
SUBLIMATION AND IDENTIFICATION
A CURIOSITY

Let us not forget that this year I resolved that this seminar would be a real seminar.

This is all the more essential because we have among us not a few people capable of contributing, including someone whom I can call our friend. That is Pierre Kaufmann, who is an *assistant* at the Sorbonne. He has been following what goes on at this seminar for a long time now, and has been attentive to its work in the most useful of ways. Perhaps some of you follow his philosophical chronicle that appears in *Combat* on Thursdays. He has several times discussed my teaching, on the occasion of the Royaumont Conference, for example, or quite recently when he was good enough to give an account of work that was useful to an author such as Henri Lefebvre – he had complained of a deficiency of some kind in my teaching on the basis of the mere sight of a part of it or of an article.

In any case, four weeks ago I referred to a little article by Bernfeld. It was the "Bemerkungen über Sublimierung," which appeared in *Imago* in 1922. Mr. Kaufmann was good enough to show an interest in it, and our discussion progressed to the point where he brought me something which appeared to me to be both suggestive and promising enough for me to encourage him to develop it as far as time and interest permitted. He will thus present the thoughts that were inspired by Bernfeld's article and the further developments it inspired in him.

Please note especially that on a number of occasions in this presentation very interesting allusions will be made – I can only call them allusions, when I think of all that Mr. Kaufmann has added relative to the sources of the matter he was dealing with in the field of psychology at the moment when he became interested in it. In France, as in the English-speaking countries, we are quite ignorant of a whole, extremely rich German tradition, which shows that Freud, in fact, was the object of readings that were careful and extensive, or, in a word, immense.

On many points, we have a lot to learn about things that even Mr. Kaufmann hasn't yet formulated completely or published. You will get some idea of that today.

I now give him the floor and thank him in advance for what he has prepared for us. [Mr. Kaufmann's talk followed.]

1

What emerges from your talk is the frequent obscurity of Bernfeld's theory or at least of the application of it he attempts to give to the case under consideration. The result is quite ambiguous and gives rise to a problem. It is, in short, Bernfeld's thesis that one can only talk of sublimation when there is a transfer of energy from the object libido to the *Ichziele*.

The *Ichziele* are preexistent, and there is sublimation when libidinal energy is reinvigorated, updated, as the child enters the phase of puberty. A part of the energy is transferred from the aims of pleasure to the aims of the *Ichgerechte*, which are in conformity with the ego. And although the Freudian distinction between *Verdrängung* and *Sublimierung* is maintained, it is nevertheless only at the moment when *Verdrängung* appears that *Sublimierung* is perceptible. For example, it is only when the love of the child for the person Melitta is felt as a process of repression that that which is not completely obscured by the force of the latter is able to pass to the level of sublimation. Thus for him there is a kind of synchrony between the two processes. Let's say that Bernfeld is only able to grasp sublimation when he has the immediate correlative of repression.

Mr. Kaufmann: . . . Although he says that there is some ambiguity in the *Three Essays*, he nevertheless adds that it is clear that sublimation is distinguished from reaction formation by the non-repressed character of the libido.

Dr. Lacan: In reality, the greatest ambiguity reigns in the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* on the subject of the relations between spiritual reaction and *Sublimierung*. The problem begins with the text on pages 78 and 79 of the *Gesammelte Werke*. At that time this articulation of the problem caused a great many difficulties for the commentators. People wondered, depending on the different passages, whether Freud turns *Sublimierung* into a particular form of reaction formation or whether, on the contrary, reaction formation isn't to be located within a form in which *Sublimierung* would have a broader significance.

The only important thing to remember is the little sentence to be found at the bottom of note 79, which concludes the whole paragraph on reaction formation and sublimation. It makes a distinction that hasn't been further

developed, as Bernfeld quite properly notes: "There may be sublimations by means of other, simpler mechanisms."

To summarize, the way of analyzing the economy of energy sources in the poetic activity of the young boy called Robert leaves an obvious residue that Bernfeld himself points to on page 339 as follows: "Aus dem Rest der Melitta geltenden Objektlibido entwickeln sich Stimmungen." – Melitta is the girl he loves. And then on page 340, Bernfeld writes: "Die Energie, mit der die tertiare Bearbeitung vollzogen wird, ist nun unbezweifelbar unverdrängte Objektlibido." There's where the problem lies if we make the phenomenon of sublimation dependent on the distinction between *Libidoziel, Ichziele, Lustziele.* And Sterba, too, in an article that appeared the previous year comes up against the same problem. If everything depends on the redirection of the energy from one sphere to another, or a certain set of aims which undergoes a profound disturbance at the time of puberty, then when Bernfeld identifies that crucial point which seems so important to him in the poetic production of the boy, he is led expressly to refer the poetic vocation to the *Ichziele.* And he resolves the question by saying that to become a poet is an aim of the ego, which was manifested very early in the boy in question. These precocious activities are, in Bernfeld's eyes, only to be distinguished by the fact that they reflect what he has learned at school in a diffuse and non-personalized way, as a result of which all the productions of the time are marked with the sign "of little value." They only seem to become interesting from the moment when the person concerned feels himself to be dramatically engaged in his activities.

I am emphasizing factors that present the author in the most favorable of lights. But in a more or less fleeting way, how many children are there who during the latency period don't engage in poetic activity periodically? Freud was in a good position to observe it in one of his children. There is a problem there that is different from that of cultural transmission or imitation. The problem of sublimation has to be posed early, but we don't for that reason have to limit ourselves to individual development. The reason why there are poets, why a poetic vocation may suggest itself early to a young human being, cannot simply be solved as with Bernfeld by considering genetic development and the new characteristics that appear at the moment when sexuality becomes an issue in an obvious way.

To fail to recognize that sexuality is there from the beginning in the young child, and is an even greater factor during the phase that precedes the latency period, is to fly in the face of the whole Freudian enterprise and discovery. If so much insistence has been placed on the pregenital sources of sublimation, it is for that reason. The problem of sublimation is raised long before the moment when the division between the aims of the libido and the aims of the ego are clear, apparent, and accessible on the level of consciousness.

If I may be permitted to emphasize here something that I have taught you, I would say that the term I use in the effort to articulate sublimation in relation to what we have to deal with, *das Ding*, or what I call the Thing, refers to a decisive place around which the definition of sublimation must be articulated – even before *I* was born, and, obviously, therefore, before the *Ichziele*, the aims of the *I* appear.

The same remark applies to the comparison you have made between the use I make of the image of the Thing and what Simmel does with it.

There is in Simmel something of interest to me, since he has the notion not only of distanciation but also of an object that cannot be attained. But it is nevertheless an object. On the other hand, what cannot be attained in the Thing is precisely the Thing – i.e., it's not an object. And the difference is a radical one that has to do with the appearance between his time and mine of the difference that is the Freudian unconscious.

Simmel comes close to something that you have interpreted as an apprehension of anality, but he is unable to grasp it fully precisely because of that fundamental difference.

Mr. Kaufmann: . . . As far as Bernfeld is concerned, the problem is merely made more confusing if the notion of value is introduced into the analysis of sublimation. He says, for example, that on the level of analysis one shouldn't distinguish between the work of an artist and a stamp collection. . . .

Dr. Lacan: Not only between a collection of works of art and a stamp collection, but between an art collection, and, in a given child or patient, a collection of dirty bits of paper. He resists introducing criteria that are alien to the criteria of psychic development.

The last part of the article has to do with an effort to articulate sublimation on to his curious experiment with groups of young people.

The verification of the size of the penis is in his eyes the essential significant element of that period when children engage in reciprocal exhibitionism. According to him there is here a conflict between the ego and the object libido. On the one hand, the ego exhibits itself narcissistically as the most handsome, strongest and biggest. Another part is opposed to the ego because it goes in the direction of genital excitation.

In the history of the association involved, that is for him the decisive side of the internal or esoteric ceremony of the group. It is from that point on that according to him one can talk of sublimation in their group activity.

The problematic character of all his needs to be emphasized, especially if one adds that, among those who consider themselves to be the strongest and boldest, this exhibitionism is accompanied by collective masturbation.

Mr. Kaufmann: . . . In short, Bernfeld was out of luck. He treated sublimation in connection with the ideal ego just before Freud was in a position to inform him of the nature of this ideal ego, and, in particular, of the need to take into consideration the relation to the other.

Dr. Lacan: You are an optimist. Those who have written on the subject afterwards also don't seem to have profited from the introduction of the ideal ego. Just read them, including in the end the "Observations on Sublimation" and the article "Neutralisation and Sublimation," which appeared in *Analysis Studies;* you won't find there the least attempt to articulate sublimation on to the ideal ego. And that's as far as we've got, that's the point we are starting from here.

2

I would like to thank you for your presentation today. So as to highlight what we have learned, I hope you will allow me to quote the sentence that expresses the essence of Bernfeldian theory: "Those components of the whole that are instinctive emotion and that are held together under the pressure of repression may be sublimated. Thus the particular qualities of these components enable the ego function to be supported through the reinforcement of ego instincts that are currently threatened."

That's the definition to which he holds and which includes the two extremes you refer to. That is, either the ego is strong, and those whose ego instincts are precociously powerful form an aristocracy, an elite – and it is futile for him to say parenthetically that no emphasis is placed on value, given that it is after all impossible to avoid such an emphasis. Or the ego instincts are threatened and have to call for the assistance furnished by the drives, to the extent, that is, that they can escape recuperation. That's the position Bernfeld reaches.

It is, I assume, clear to you all that what I am concerned with this year is situated somewhere between a Freudian ethics and a Freudian aesthetics. Freudian aesthetics is involved because it reveals one of the phases of the function of the ethics. And it really is surprising that it hasn't been given greater prominence, given that in another form the subject has preoccupied psychoanalysis – Jones, for example, is always talking about the moral complacency which is in a way that which ethics makes use of in order to render the Thing inaccessible to us, when it already was inaccessible from the beginning.

I am trying to show you how Freudian aesthetics, in the broadest meaning of the term – which means the analysis of the whole economy of signifiers – reveals that the Thing is inaccessible. That needs to be placed right at the

start of the problem, so as to be able to articulate its consequences, and especially the question of idealization. In any case, you saw last time, in connection with the sublimation involved in the moral code of courtly love, the beginnings of the emergence of an ideal type.

By way of conclusion, I would like to introduce a word whose full meaning will be apparent later on. Insofar as we distinguish in the sphere of ethics between two levels that are already there in classical thinkers – and that is discussed in a passage of *De Officiis* to which I shall refer you later – the question is whether the *summum bonum* should be articulated according to *honestas,* that is the style of the *honnête homme* – and which must, therefore, be articulated as a certain form of organization, a certain life style that is located in relation to the initial sublimation – or according to *utilitas,* a concept that is at the basis of the utilitarianism, with which I began by posing the problem of ethics this year, and whose true essence I propose to show.

March 2, 1960

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

A CURIOUS CASE OF SUBLIMATION

I have for you today something curious and amusing. But I believe that we analysts are perhaps alone in being in a position to situate things properly.

Last time when Mr. Kaufmann had finished talking about Bernfeld's article, I stated that the problem we face is that of establishing the link between sublimation and identification. Before we leave the subject of sublimation as I have outlined it for you around the notion of the Thing – and it may still seem enigmatic and veiled for very good reasons – I would like to present you with a text, as it were as a note, on the subject of what might be called the paradoxes of sublimation.

Sublimation is not, in fact, what the foolish crowd thinks; and it does not on all occasions necessarily follow the path of the sublime. The change of object doesn't necessarily make the sexual object disappear – far from it; the sexual object acknowledged as such may come to light in sublimation. The crudest of sexual games can be the object of a poem without for that reason losing its sublimating goal.

In short, I don't think it a waste of time for me to read you a piece of evidence from the file of courtly love that even the specialists themselves literally don't know what to do with; they can't make head or tail of it.

There aren't two poems like this in the literature of courtly love. It's a *hapax*, a single occurrence. It appears in the work of one of the most subtle and polished of the troubadours, whose name is Arnaud Daniel, and who is famous for his extraordinarily rich formal inventiveness, most notably in the poetic form of the sestina, which I don't have time to go into here; however, you should at least know the name.

Arnaud Daniel wrote a poem on the oddest of those relations of service that I told you about between the lover and his Lady; it is a whole poem that is distinguished by the fact that, much to the delight of a number of startled writers, it breaches the boundaries of pornography to the point of scatology.

The poem is concerned with a case that seems to be presented as a question

to be resolved in terms of the moral casuistry of courtly love. The case involves a Lady, called *Domna* Ena in the poem, who orders her knight to put his mouth to her trumpet – an expression that is quite unambiguous in the text; and the order is designed to test the worthiness of his love, his loyalty and his commitment.

So as not to make you wait any longer then, I will read the poem – in French because I don't think that any of you can understand that lost language which is the *langue d'oc*, a language that nevertheless has its style and its value. The poem is in stanzas of nine lines with a single rhyme, which changes with every stanza.

> Though Lord Raimond, in agreement with Lord Truc Malec, defends Lady Ena and her orders, I would grow old and white before I would consent to a request that involves so great an improriety. For so as "to put his mouth to her trumpet," he would need the kind of beak that could pick grain out of a pipe. And even then he might come out blind, as the smoke from those folds is so strong.
>
> He would need a beak and a long, sharp one, for the trumpet is rough, ugly and hairy, and it is never dry, and the swamp within is deep. That's why the pitch ferments upwards as it continually escapes, continually overflows. And it is not fitting that he who puts his mouth to that pipe be a favorite.
>
> There will be plenty of other tests, finer ones that are worth far more, and if Lord Bernart withdrew from that one, he did not, by Christ, behave like a coward if he was taken with fear and fright. For if the stream of water had landed on him from above, it would have scalded his whole neck and cheek, and it is not fitting also that a lady embrace a man who has blown a stinking trumpet.
>
> Bernart, I do not agree in this with the remarks of Raimon de Durfort, in saying that you were wrong; for even if you had blown away gladly, you would have encountered a crude obstacle, and the stench would soon have smitten you, that stinks worse than dung in a garden. You should praise God, against whomsoever seeks to dissuade you, that he helped you escape from that.
>
> Yes, he escaped from a great peril with which his son also would have been reproached and all those from Cornil. He would have done better to go into exile than to have blown in that funnel between spine and mount pubic, there where rust colored substances proceed. He could never have been certain that she would not piss all over his snout and eyebrows.
>
> Lady, may Bernart never venture to blow that trumpet without a large bung to stop up the penile hole; then only could he blow without peril.

This quite extraordinary document opens a strange perspective on the deep ambiguity of the sublimating imagination. One should first note that all the poetic works of the *trouvères* and *troubadours* have not come down to us, and that we only find some of Arnaud Daniel's poems in two or three manu-

scripts. Yet this poem, whose literary merit goes far beyond what a translation is able to reveal, not only was not lost but is to be found in some twenty manuscripts. We have other texts which show that two other *trouvères*, Trumalec and Raymond de Durfort, participated in this debate, arguing on the other side, but I won't go into that.

We find ourselves here faced with a sudden reversal, a strange reaction. Heaven knows that Arnaud Daniel went a long way in the direction of lending the greatest subtlety to the pact between lovers. Doesn't he push desire to the extreme point of offering himself in a sacrifice that involves his own annihilation? Well, he is the very same one who turns out to have written a poem, however reluctantly, on a subject that must have concerned him in some way for him to have taken so much trouble with it.

The idealized woman, the Lady, who is in the position of the Other and of the object, finds herself suddenly and brutally positing, in a place knowingly constructed out of the most refined of signifiers, the emptiness of a thing in all its crudity, a thing that reveals itself in its nudity to be the thing, her thing, the one that is to be found at her very heart in its cruel emptiness. That Thing, whose function certain of you perceived in the relation to sublimation, is in a way unveiled with a cruel and insistent power.

It is nevertheless difficult not to note echoes of this elsewhere, for the oddness involved is not without precedents. Remember, for example, the origin of the flute evoked in Longus's pastoral romance. Pan pursues the nymph Syrinx, who runs away from him and disappears among the reeds. In his rage, he cuts down the reeds, and that, Longus tells us, is the origin of the flute with pipes of unequal length – Pan wanted, the subtle poet adds, to express in that way the fact that his love was without equal. Syrinx is transformed into the pipe of Pan's flute. Now on the level of derision that is to be found in the strange poem that I brought to your attention here, we find the same structure, the same model of an emptiness at the core, around which is articulated that by means of which desire is in the end sublimated.

I wouldn't tell all if I didn't add to the file, in case it proves useful, that Dante places Arnaud Daniel in Canto XIV of his *Purgatory* in the company of sodomites. I haven't been able to pursue the particular genesis of this poem beyond that.

I am now going to ask Madame Hubert to speak. She will be talking to you about a text that is frequently referred to in analytic literature, namely, Sperber's article entitled "On the Influence of Sexual Factors on the Origin and Development of Language," but it also touches on all kinds of problems relative to what we have to say about sublimation.

In his article on the theory of symbolism – an article on which I wrote a commentary in our journal but which, I have heard, is not particularly accessible to a reader – Jones expressly singles out the Sperber article. If, he says,

Sperber's theory is true, if we must consider certain forms of primitive work, agricultural work, in particular, the relations between man and the earth, as the equivalent of the sexual act, features whose traces are, as it were, retained in the meaning we give that primitive relation, then can this be explained by the process of symbolization? Jones says no. In other words, given the conception he has of the function of the symbol, he considers that what is involved is by no means a symbolic transposition, neither can it be registered as a sublimation effect. The sublimation effect is to be taken in its liberality, in its authenticity. The copulation between the ploughman and the earth is not a symbolization but the equivalent of a symbolic copulation.

It is worth taking the time to reflect on that, and in my article I draw certain consequences to which I will return. Sperber's text appeared in the first issue of *Imago*, and it is perhaps even more difficult to find than the others. But so that it may receive its due, Mrs. Hubert has been good enough to concentrate on it, and she will tell us today what it contains.

March 9, 1960

THE PARADOX OF *JOUISSANCE*

XIII

The death of God

ON SEXUAL SYMBOLISM
FROM THE *NUMEN* TO MOSES'S MESSAGE
THE GREAT MAN AND HIS MURDER
FREUD'S CHRISTOCENTRISM
JOUISSANCE AND DEBT

If I wanted you to be acquainted with Sperber's article, it is because it is coupled to our sublimation train.

1

I will not engage in a serious critique of the text, for I hope that after several years of following my teaching here, most of you have found something irritating in the way in which Sperber proceeds. Though his goal is undoubtedly interesting, his mode of demonstration has its weaknesses. To refer to the fact that words with an original sexual meaning started to take on a series of meanings increasingly remote from their primitive meaning, as a way of proving the common sexual origin in a sublimated form of fundamental human activities, is to adopt an approach whose demonstrable value seems to me to be eminently refutable from the point of view of common sense.

That words whose meaning was originally sexual spread out so as to overlay meanings that are very remote doesn't mean as a consequence that the whole field of meaning is overlaid in that way. That doesn't mean that all the language we use is in the end reducible to the key words it contains, words whose valorization is considerably facilitated by the fact that one accepts as proven what is, in fact, most questionable, namely, the notion of a root or radical, and what in human language would be its constitutive link to sense.

This emphasis placed on roots and radicals in languages making use of inflections raises particular problems that are far from being applicable to human language universally. What would be the case with Chinese, for example, where all the signifying units are monosyllabic? The notion of a root is highly tenuous. In fact, what is involved is an illusion that is linked to the development of language, of the use of the language system, which can only seem very suspect to us.

That doesn't mean that Sperber's remarks concerning the use of words

with what might be called sexual roots in Indo-European languages are of no interest. But they can hardly satisfy us from the perspective in which I believe you have been trained and formed by me, a perspective which involves distinguishing properly the function of the signifier or the creation of signification through the metonymic and metaphoric use of signifiers.

That's where the trouble begins. Why are those zones in which sexual signification spreads outward, why are those rivers through which it ordinarily flows – and, as you have seen, in a direction that isn't just random – specially chosen, so that in order to reach them one uses words that already have a given usage in the sexual sphere? Why is it precisely in connection with a half-failed act of pruning, with an act of cutting that is blocked, thwarted, messed up, that one should evoke the presumed origin of the word and find it in the hole drilling activities of work in its most primitive of forms, with the meaning of sexual operation, of phallic penetration? Why does one resurrect the metaphor "fuck" in connection with something that is "fucked up?" Why is it the image of the vulva that surfaces to express a number of different acts, including those of escaping, of fleeing, of cutting and running *(se tailler)*, as the German term in the text has often been translated?

I have, in fact, tried to find confirmation of the historical moment when that nice little expression, *se tailler* (to cut and run), in the sense of "to flee" or "to escape," first appeared. I haven't had time to find out, and I didn't discover it in the dictionaries and other sources that I have at my disposal. It is true that I don't have in Paris the dictionaries that give the popular meanings of words. I would like someone to do some research on the topic.

Thus, why in our everyday life do we find that in our metaphors a certain type of meaning is involved, certain signifiers that are marked by their primitive use in connection with the sexual relation? Why, for example, do we use some slang expression that had originally a sexual significance in order to evoke metaphorically situations that have nothing to do with sex? The metaphorical usage involved is employed to obtain a certain modification.

But if it were only a question of showing how in the normal diachronic development of linguistic usage sexual references are used in a certain metaphorical sense – that is, if I were only concerned with providing another example of certain aberrations of psychoanalytic speculation – I wouldn't have presented you with the Sperber text. If it is still interesting, it is because of what is to be found on its horizon, something that isn't demonstrated there, but which in its intention it strives for, and that is the radical relationship that exists between the first instrumental relations, the earliest techniques, the principal actions of agriculture, such as that of opening the belly of the earth, or again the principal actions in the making of a vase that I have previously emphasized, and something very precise, namely, not so much the sexual act as the female sexual organ.

It is insofar as the female sexual organ or, more precisely, the form of an opening and an emptiness, is at the center of all the metaphors concerned, that the article is of interest and is valuable in focusing our thought, for it is obvious that there is a gap in the text, a leap beyond the supposed reference.

One takes note of the fact that the use of a term that originally meant "coitus" is capable of being extended virtually infinitely, that the use of a term that originally meant "vulva" is capable of generating all kinds of metaphorical uses. And it is in this way that it began to be supposed that the vocalization presumed to accompany the sexual act gave men the idea of using the signifier to designate either the organ, and especially the female organ, in a noun form, or the act of coitus in a verbal form. The priority of the vocal use of the signifier among men is thus supposed to find its origin in the chanted calls that are assumed to be those of primitive sexual relations among humans, in the same way that they are among animals and especially birds.

The idea is very interesting. But you can sense right away the difference that exists between the more-or-less standardized cry that accompanies an activity and the use of a signifier that detaches a given articulatory element, that is to say, either the act or the organ. We don't find the signifying structure as such here; nothing implies that the oppositional element which forms the structure of the use of signifiers – and is already fully developed in the *Fort-Da* from which we took our original example – is given in the natural sexual call. If the sexual call can be derived from a temporal modulation of the act whose repetition may involve the fixation of certain elements of vocal activity, it still cannot give us even the most primitive structuring element of language. There is a gap there.

Nevertheless, the interest of the article is in making us see the way in which what is essential in the development of our experience and in Freud's doctrine may be conceived, that is to say, that sexual symbolism in the ordinary sense of the word may polarize at its point of origin the metaphorical play of the signifier.

That's all I have to say on the subject today, with the understanding that I may return to it later.

2

I wondered how I should take up the thread of our discussions, how I should start out again today.

As the result of conversations I have had with some of you, I said to myself that there would be some value in my giving you an idea of the lectures, comments, and conversations in which I engaged in Brussels. The fact is, when I have something to communicate to you, it is always related to the line of thought I am pursuing, and even when I take it out into the world, I do

little more than take it up more or less at the point I have reached.

But to suppose that you already know implicitly what I said up there, which isn't the case, would be to take too great a leap forward. It is, in fact, important that the issues raised not be ignored.

That may seem to you to be an unconventional way of proceeding, but given the distance we still have to go, I don't have time to indulge in professorial scruples. Mine is not a professor's role. I don't even like to put myself in the teaching situation, since a psychoanalyst who speaks to an initiated audience is in the position of a propagandist. If I agreed to talk at the Catholic University of Brussels, I did so in a spirit of mutual assistance; it was in order to support the presence and the activities of those who are our friends and colleagues in Belgium. This concern is not for me the primary one, of course, but it is a secondary one.

I thus found myself in front of an audience that was very large and of which I had a very good impression, summoned there by the Catholic University. And that alone is enough to explain my motivation for speaking to them of what Freud has to say about the function of the Father.

As you might expect from me, I didn't mince my words or censor my language. I didn't attempt to attenuate Freud's position on religion. Moreover, you know what my position is concerning the so-called religious truths.

It is perhaps worthwhile to be more precise on the subject for once, although I believe I have made it clear enough. Whether from personal conviction or in the name of a methodological point of view, the so-called scientific point of view – a point of view that is by the way reached by people who otherwise consider themselves to be believers, but who in a certain sphere assume they are required to put aside their religious point of view – there is a paradox involved in practically excluding from the debate and from analysis things, terms, and doctrines that have been articulated in the field of faith, on the pretext that they belong to a domain that is reserved for believers.

You once heard me make a series of remarks on a passage from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans in connection with the theme that it is the Law which causes sin. And you saw that, thanks to an artifice I could have done without, namely, the substitution of the term the Thing for what the text calls sin, I was able to achieve a very precise formulation of what I had to say at the time on the subject of the knot of the Law and desire. Well, that particular example was not chosen by chance – it belonged to a certain order of effectiveness in relation to a special case, and by means of a kind of sleight of hand it was unusually helpful in leading to something I needed at the time to bring to your attention.

We analysts, who claim to go beyond certain conceptions of prepsychology relative to the phenomena of our own field or who approach human realities without prejudice, do not have to believe in these religious truths in any way,

given that such belief may extend as far as what is called faith, in order to be interested in what is articulated in its own terms in religious experience – in the terms of the conflict between freedom and grace, for example.

A notion as precise and articulate as grace is irreplaceable where the psychology of the act is concerned, and we don't find anything equivalent in classic academic psychology. Not only doctrines, but also the history of choices, that is, of heresies that have been attested to in this sphere, and the succession of emotional outbursts that have motivated a certain number of directions taken in the concrete ethics of generations, all belong to our sphere of inquiry; they, so to speak, demand all of our attention in their own register and mode of expression.

It is not enough that certain themes be raised only by those who believe they believe – after all, how can we know? – for the whole field to be reserved for them alone. If we accept that they truly believe, then they are not beliefs for them but truths. What they believe in, whether they believe they believe in it or they don't – nothing is more ambiguous than belief – one thing is certain, they believe they know. The knowledge in question is like any other, and for this reason it falls into the field of inquiry that we should conduct on all forms of knowledge; and such is the case, because as analysts we believe that there is no knowledge which doesn't emerge against a background of ignorance.

That is the reason why we accept as such the idea of other forms of knowledge than the kind that is founded scientifically.

It was not useless, then, for me to confront an audience that represents an important sector of the public. Whether or not I may have caused an ear or two to prick up is problematic; the future alone will reveal that. Moreover, it won't have the same impact on a very different audience, like you.

Freud himself took an unequivocal position on the subject of religious experience. He said that everything of that kind that implied a sentimental approach meant nothing to him; it was literally a dead letter for him. Yet if we in this assembly have the position on the letter that we do, that doesn't solve a thing; however dead it might be, that letter was nevertheless definitely articulated. Well now, faced with people who are supposed not to be able to dissociate themselves from a certain message concerning the function of the Father – given that it is at the heart of the experience defined as religious – I had no discomfort in affirming that as far as that matter was concerned, "Freud had what it took," as I put it in a subtitle that was found a little startling.

You only have to open the little book entitled *Moses and Monotheism* that Freud cogitated over for some ten years, for after *Totem and Taboo* he thought of nothing but that, of Moses and the religion of his fathers. And if it weren't for the article on the *Spaltung* of the ego, one might say that the pen fell from

his hands at the end of *Moses and Monotheism*. Contrary to what has been suggested to me over the last few weeks in connection with Freud's intellectual production toward the end of his life, I don't at all think that there was a decline. Nothing seems to me to be more firmly articulated in any case and more in conformity with all Freud's previous thought than this work.

It bears on the monotheistic message as such; and for him there is no doubt that it contains an uncontestable weight of superior value over any other. The fact that Freud was an atheist doesn't make any difference. For the atheist that Freud was, if not necessarily for all atheists, the goal of the radical core of this message was of decisive value. On the left of this message, there are some things that are henceforth outdated, obsolete; they no longer hold beyond the manifestation of the message. On the right, things are quite different.

The situation is quite clear from the spirit of Freud's argument. That doesn't mean that there is nothing at all outside of monotheism, far from it. He doesn't give us a theory of the gods, but enough is said concerning the ambiance that is usually connoted by "pagan," a late connotation linked to its retreat to the milieu of the peasantry. In that pagan ambiance at the time when it was flourishing, the *numen* rises up at every step, at the corner of every road, in grottoes, at crossroads; it weaves human experience together, and we can still see traces of it in a great many fields. That is something that contrasts greatly with the monotheistic profession of faith.

The numinous rises up at every step and, conversely, every step of the numinous leaves a trace, engenders a memorial. It didn't take much for a new temple to be erected, for a new religion to be established. The numinous proliferates and intervenes on all sides in human experience; it is, moreover, so abundant that something in the end must be manifested through man; its power cannot be overcome.

It is to this immense envelopment and at the same time to a degradation that the genre of the fable bears witness. Ancient fables are full of meanings that remain richly rewarding, but we have trouble realizing that they could have been compatible with something like a faith in the gods, because, whether they are heroic or vulgar, they are shot through with a kind of riotousness, drunkenness, and anarchy born of divine passions. The laughter of the Olympians in the *Iliad* sufficiently illustrates this on the heroic plane. There's a lot to be said about this laughter. From the pen of the philosophers, on the other hand, we have the other side of this laughter, of the derisory character of the adventures of the gods. It is difficult for us to conceive this.

In opposition to this we have the monotheistic message. How is it possible? How did it rise to this level? The way in which Freud articulates it is crucial if we are to appreciate the level at which its progress is to be situated.

For him everything is founded on the notion of Moses the Egyptian and of Moses the Midianite. I believe that an audience of people like you, eighty per cent of whom are psychoanalysts, should know this book by heart.

Moses the Egyptian is the Great Man, the legislator, the politician, the rationalist, the one whose path Freud claims to discover with the historical appearance in the fourteenth century B.C. of the religion of Akhenaton – something that has been attested by recent discoveries. This religion promotes a unitarianism of energy, symbolized by the sun from which it radiates and spreads out across the earth. This first attempt at a rationalist vision of the world, which is presupposed in the unitarianism of the real, in the substantive unification of the world centered on the sun, failed. Hardly had Akhenaton disappeared, when religious ideas of all kinds begin to multiply again, especially in Egypt; the pandemonium of the gods returns to take charge once more and utterly wipes out the reform. One man keeps the flame of this rationalist cause alight, Moses the Egyptian; it is he who chooses a small group of men and leads them through the test that will make them worthy to found a community based on his principles. In other words, someone wanted to create socialism in a single country, except, of course, there was in addition no country but just a bunch of men to carry the project through.

That's Freud conception of the true Moses, the Great Man; and what we need to know is how his message has come down to us.

You will perhaps respond that this Moses was after all a bit of a magician. How otherwise did he produce the swarms of locusts and frogs? But that was his business. It's not an essential question from the point of view that concerns us here, that of his place in religion. Let's leave the question of magic aside, although it doesn't seem to have hurt him with anyone.

On the other hand, there is Moses the Midianite, the son-in-law of Jethro, whom Freud also calls the one from Sinai, from Horeb, and Freud teaches us that this one was confused with the other. It is this one who claims to have heard the decisive word emerge from the burning bush, the word that cannot be eluded, as Freud eludes it: "I am," not as the whole Christian gnosis has attempted to interpret it, "he who is" – thereby exposing us to difficulties relative to the concept of being that are far from being over, and which have perhaps contributed to compromising exegesis – but "I am what I am." Or, in other words, a God who introduces himself as an essentially hidden God.

This hidden god is a jealous God. He seems to be very difficult to dissociate from the one who, according to the Bible, proclaims in that same ambiance of fire which makes him inaccessible the famous ten commandments to the assembled people, who are required to remain at a certain distance. Given that these commandments turn out to be proof against anything – and by

that I mean that whether or not we obey them, we still cannot help hearing them – in their indestructible character they prove to be the very laws of speech, as I tried to show you.

Moses the Midianite seems to pose a problem of his own – I would like to know whom or what he faced on Sinai and on Horeb. But after all, since he couldn't bear the brilliance of the face of him who said "I am what I am," we will simply say at this point that the burning bush was Moses's Thing, and leave it there. In any case, we still have to calculate the consequences of that revelation.

By what means is the problem resolved for Freud? He considers that Moses the Egyptian was assassinated by his little people, who were less docile than ours relative to socialism in a single country. And then these people went on to devote themselves to all kinds of paralyzing observances at the same time that they caused trouble for countless neighbors – for we shouldn't overlook what is, in effect, the history of the Jews. One only has to read a little into these ancient works to realize that they knew all about colonial ambition in Canaan. They even managed to induce neighboring populations to have themselves circumcised on the quiet, and then they profited from the paralysis that that operation between your legs causes for a time, in order to wipe them out. But I don't mention that simply to record grievances about a stage of the religion that is now far behind us.

Having said that, however, it's clear that Freud doesn't for a moment doubt that the major interest of Jewish history is that of being the bearer of the message of one God.

And that's where things stand. We have the dissociation between the rationalist Moses and the inspired, obscurantist Moses, who is scarcely ever discussed. But basing his argument on the examination of historical evidence, Freud finds no other path adapted to the transmission of the rationalist Moses' message than that of darkness; in other words, this message is linked through repression to the murder of the Great Man. And it is precisely in this way, Freud tells us, that it could be transmitted and maintained in a state of efficacy that can be historically measured. It's so close to the Christian tradition that it's really remarkable; it is because the primordial murder of the Great Man reemerges in a second murder that in a sense translates and brings it to light, the murder of Christ, that the monotheistic message is completed. It is because the secret malediction of the murder of the Great Man – which itself only draws its power from the fact that it echoes the inaugural murder of humanity, that of the primitive father – it is because this event emerges into the light of day, that what, in the light of Freud's text, we are obliged to call Christian redemption may be accomplished.

That tradition alone pursues to the end the task of revealing what is involved in the primitive crime of the primordial law.

How after that can one avoid taking note of the originality of Freud's position relative to all that is to be found in the field of the history of religions? The history of religions consists essentially of establishing the common denominator of religiosity. We stake out the religious region in man within which we are required to include religions as different as one from Borneo, Confucianism, Taoism, and the Christian religion. It's not without its difficulties, although, when one sets out to produce typologies, there's no reason why one shouldn't end up with something. And this time, one ends up with a classification of the imaginary, which is in opposition to that which characterizes the origin of monotheism, and which is integrated into the primordial commandments insofar as they are the laws of speech: "Thou shalt not make a carved image of me," and so as to avoid that risk altogether, "Thou shalt not make any image at all."

And since I have happened to talk to you about the primitive sublimation of architecture, let me say that the problem of the temple that was destroyed without trace remains. To which symbolic order, to which set of precautions, to which exceptional circumstances did it appeal for everything to be destroyed, everything down to the remotest corner that might have made possible the reappearance, on the sides of a vase – and it wouldn't have been difficult – of images of animals, plants, and all those forms that were outlined on the walls of the cave? This temple was, in effect, only supposed to be the cover of what was at its center, of the Ark of union, that is the pure symbol of the pact, of the tie that bound him who said "I am what I am," and gave the commandments, to the people who received them, so that among all peoples it might be distinguished as the one that had wise and intelligent laws. How was this temple to be constructed so as to avoid all the traps of art?

It's a question that cannot be answered by any document, by any material image. I simply leave it open.

3

What is involved here is discussed by Freud in *Moses and Monotheism* in connection with the business of the moral law. He thoroughly integrates it there into the adventure which, as he writes in his text, only found its further development and its fulfillment in the Judeo-Christian story.

As far as other religions are concerned – he vaguely defines these as Oriental, thereby alluding apparently to a whole range that includes Buddhism, Lao-Tseu, and others – he affirms, with a boldness that one can only wonder at, that they are all nothing more than the religion of the Great Man. Thus things there remained stuck halfway, more or less aborted, without reaching the point of the primitive murder of this Great Man.

I am far from agreeing with all that. Yet in the history of the avatars of

Buddhism, one can find a great many things which, legitimately or not, can be made to illustrate Freud's theory; in other words, it is because they did not push the development of the drama through to the end that they stayed where they are. But it is, needless to say, odd to find this strange Christocentrism in Freud's writings. There must have been a reason for him to have slipped into it almost without realizing it.

In any case, we find ourselves brought back to following the path to the end.

So that something like the order of the law may be transmitted, it has to pass along the path traced by the primordial drama articulated in *Totem and Taboo*, that is to say, the murder of the father and its consequences, the murder at the origin of culture of the figure about whom one can say nothing, a fearful and feared as well as dubious figure, an all-powerful, half-animal creature of the primal horde, who was killed by his sons. As a result of which – and the articulation here is important – an inaugural pact is established that is essential for a time to the institution of that law, which Freud does his best to tie to the murder of the father and to identify with the ambivalence that is thus at the basis of the relations between son and father or, in other words, involves the return of love once the act is accomplished.

All the mystery is in that act. It is designed to hide something, namely, that not only does the murder of the father not open the path to *jouissance* that the presence of the father was supposed to prohibit, but it, in fact, strengthens the prohibition. The whole problem is there; that's where, in fact as well as in theory, the fault lies. Although the obstacle is removed as a result of the murder, *jouissance* is still prohibited; not only that, but the prohibition is reinforced.

This fault that denies is thus sustained, articulated, made visible by the myth, but at the same time it is also camouflaged by it. That is why the important feature of *Totem and Taboo* is that it is a myth, and, as has been said, perhaps the only myth that the modern age was capable of. And Freud created it.

It is important to grasp what is embodied in this fault. Everything that passes across it is turned into a debt in the Great Book of debts. Every act of *jouissance* gives rise to something that is inscribed in the Book of debts of the Law. Furthermore, something in this regulatory mechanism must either be a paradox or the site of some irregularity, for to pass across the fault in the other direction is not equivalent.

Freud writes in *Civilization and Its Discontents* that everything that is transferred from *jouissance* to prohibition gives rise to the increasing strengthening of prohibition. Whoever attempts to submit to the moral law sees the demands of his superego grow increasingly meticulous and increasingly cruel.

Why isn't it the same in the other direction? It is a fact that it isn't the case

at all. Whoever enters the path of uninhibited *jouissance*, in the name of the rejection of the moral law in some form or other, encounters obstacles whose power is revealed to us every day in our experience in innumerable forms, forms that nevertheless perhaps may be traced back to a single root.

We are, in fact, led to the point where we accept the formula that without a transgression there is no access to *jouissance*, and, to return to Saint Paul, that that is precisely the function of the Law. Transgression in the direction of *jouissance* only takes place if it is supported by the oppositional principle, by the forms of the Law. If the paths to *jouissance* have something in them that dies out, that tends to make them impassable, prohibition, if I may say so, becomes its all-terrain vehicle, its half-track truck, that gets it out of the circuitous routes that lead man back in a roundabout way toward the rut of a short and well-trodden satisfaction.

That is the point that our experience leads us to, on condition that we are guided by Freud's articulation of the problem. Sin needed the Law, Saint Paul said, so that he could become a great sinner – nothing, of course, affirms that he did, but so that he could conceive of the possibility.

Meanwhile, what we see here is the tight bond between desire and the Law. And it is in the light of this that Freud's ideal is an ideal tempered with civility that might be called patriarchal civility, in the full idyllic sense. The father is as sentimental a figure as you can imagine, the kind of figure suggested by the humanitarian ideal that resonates in Diderot's bourgeois dramas, or indeed in the figures that are the favorites of eighteenth-century engravings. That patriarchal civility is supposed to set us on the most reasonable path to temperate or normal desires.

Yet what Freud is proposing through his myth is, in spite of its novelty, not something that wasn't from a certain point of view a response to a demand. The demand to which it was, in fact, a response is not difficult to see.

The myth of the origin of the Law is incarnated in the murder of the father; it is out of that that the prototypes emerged, which we call successively the animal totem, then a more-or-less powerful and jealous god, and, finally, the single God, God the Father. The myth of the murder of the father is the myth of a time for which God is dead.

But if for us God is dead, it is because he always has been dead, and that's what Freud says. He has never been the father except in the mythology of the son, or, in other words, in that of the commandment which commands that he, the father, be loved, and in the drama of the passion which reveals that there is a resurrection after death. That is to say, the man who made incarnate the death of God still exists. He still exists with the commandment which orders him to love God. That's the place where Freud stops, and he stops at the same time – the theme is developed in *Civilization and Its Discontents* – at the place that concerns the love of one's neighbor, which is some-

thing that appears to be insurmountable for us, indeed incomprehensible.

I will attempt to explain why next time. I just wanted to emphasize the fact today that there is a certain atheistic message in Christianity itself, and I am not the first to have mentioned it. Hegel said that the destruction of the gods would be brought about by Christianity.

Man survives the death of God, which he assumes, but in doing so, he presents himself before us. The pagan legend tells us that at the moment when the veil of the temple was rent on the Aegean Sea, the message resounded that "The great Pan is dead." Even if Freud moralizes in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, he stops short at the commandment to love thy neighbor. It is to the heart of this problem that his theory of the meaning of the instinct brings us back. The relationship of the great Pan to death was, then, a stumbling block for the psychologism of his current disciples.

That's why my second lecture in Brussels turned on the question of love of one's neighbor. It was another theme I had in common with my audience. What I did, in fact, come up with, I will allow you to judge next time.

March 16, 1960

XIV

Love of one's neighbor

A SPECIAL GOD
FOOL AND KNAVE
THE TRUTH ABOUT TRUTH
WHY *JOUISSANCE* IS EVIL[1]
SAINT MARTIN
KANTIAN TALES

You know that last time I picked up my discussion with you by connecting it to my lecture to the Catholics.

Don't imagine that that was an easy way out. I didn't merely serve up again what I had to say in Brussels; I didn't tell them half of what I told you.

What I laid out last time concerning the death of God the Father will lead us to another question today, one that will show you Freud situating himself directly at the center of our true experience. For he doesn't attempt to evade the issue by making generalizations about the religious function in man. He is concerned with the way in which it manifests itself to us, that is to say, in the commandment which is expressed in our civilization in the form of the love of one's neighbor.

1

Freud confronts this commandment directly. And if you take the time to read *Civilization and Its Discontents*, you will see that that is where he begins, where he remains throughout, and where he ends up. He talks of nothing but that. What he has to say on the subject should under normal circumstances make our ears ring and set our teeth on edge. But that doesn't happen. It's a funny thing, but once a text has been in print for a certain period of time, it allows the transitory vertigo that is the vital source of its meaning to evaporate.

So I will try to reanimate the meaning of Freud's lines today. And since that will lead me toward some pretty potent notions, all I can do is ask language, what Freud would call *logos*, to lend me a measured tone.

God, then, is dead. Since he is dead, he always has been. I explained to

[1] It should be borne in mind throughout the following discussion that "le mal" in French includes the ideas both of "evil" and of "suffering."

you Freud's theory on the topic, namely, the myth expressed in *Totem and Taboo*. It is precisely because God is dead, has always been dead, that it was possible to transmit a message via all those beliefs which made him appear to be still alive, resurrected from the emptiness left by his death in those non-contradictory gods whom Freud indicates proliferated above all in Egypt.

The message in question is that of a single God who is both the Lord of the universe and the dispenser of the light that warms life and spreads the brightness of consciousness. His attributes are those of a thought which regulates the order of the real. It is Akhenaton's God, the God of the secret message that the Jewish people bears by reason of the fact that, by assassinating Moses, it reenacted the archaic murder of the father. That, according to Freud, is the God to whom the sentiment, of which only a few are capable, is addressed, namely, *amor intellectualis Dei*.

Freud also knows that, although that love is articulated now and then in the thought of such exceptional men as the famous polisher of lenses who lived in Holland, it is nevertheless not of such great importance; it didn't prevent the construction in the same period of Versailles, a building whose style proves that the Colossus of Daniel with the feet of clay was still standing upright, as is still the case, although it had collapsed a hundred times.

No doubt a science has been erected on the fragile belief I was discussing, namely, the one that is expressed in the following terms, which always reappear at the horizon of our aims: "The real is rational, the rational is real."

It's a strange thing that if the science in question has made use of the belief, it has nevertheless remained subservient, remained in the service of the colossus I just referred to, the one that has collapsed a hundred times and is still there. The fervent love that a solitary individual like Spinoza or Freud may feel for the God of the message has nothing to do with the God of the believers. Nobody doubts that, and especially the believers themselves, who, whether Jews or Christians, have never failed to cause Spinoza trouble.

But it is odd to see that for some time now, since it became known that God was dead, the believers involved practice ambiguity. By referring to the dialectical God, they are seeking an alibi for the crisis of confidence in their faith. It is a paradoxical fact, which hadn't occurred before in history, that the torch of Akhenaton functions nowadays as an alibi for the disciples of Ammon.

And I don't say this to slander the historical role played by the God of the believers, the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition. That the message of Akhenaton's God was preserved in the tradition of the latter made it worthwhile for Moses the Egyptian to be confused with the Midianite, with the Moses whose Thing, speaking from the burning bush, affirmed himself to be a special God – not the only God, note, but a special God, compared to whom

all the others don't count. I don't want to emphasize more than necessary the line I am pursuing today on this point; it's not, strictly speaking, that it is forbidden to honor other gods, but you musn't do it in the presence of the God of Israel – the distinction is no doubt important for historians.

We who are trying to articulate Freud's thought and experience so as to give them their due weight and importance, we will articulate it in the following form: if this Symptom-God, this Totem-God or taboo, is worthy of our pondering the claim to turn him into a myth, it is because he was the vehicle of the God of truth. It is by means of the former that the truth about God could come to light, namely, that God was really killed by men, and that once the thing was reenacted, the primitive murder was redeemed. Truth found its way via him who the Scriptures no doubt call the Word, but also the Son of Man, thereby admitting the human nature of the Father.

Freud does not overlook the No/Name-of-the-Father. On the contrary, he speaks about it very well in *Moses and Monotheism* – in a contradictory way clearly, if you fail to take *Totem and Taboo* for what it is, namely, a myth; and he says that in human history the recognition of the function of the Father is a sublimation that is essential to the opening up of a spirituality that represents something new, a step forward in the apprehension of reality as such.

Freud also doesn't overlook – far from it – the real father. It is desirable according to Freud that in the course of the adventure of the subject, there is, if not the Father as God, then at least the Father as good father. I will read you some time the passage in which Freud speaks almost tenderly of the exquisiteness of that virile identification which flows from the love for the father and from his role in the normalization of desire. But that result only occurs in a favorable form as long as everything is in order with the No/Name-of-the-Father, that is to say, with the God who doesn't exist. The resulting situation for this good father is a remarkably difficult one; to a certain extent he is an insecure figure.

We know this only too well in practice. And it is also articulated in the Oedipus myth – although the latter also shows as well that it is preferable for the subject himself to be unaware of these reasons. But he now knows them, and the fact of knowing them is precisely that which has certain consequences in our time.

These consequences are self-evident. They can be seen in common speech and, indeed, in the speech of the analyst. If we want to complete the task we have given ourselves this year, it is only fitting that we articulate them.

Let me note in passing that as the first person to demystify the function of the Father, Freud himself couldn't be a thoroughly good father. I don't want to dwell on it today; it is something we can sense through his biography, and

it could be the topic of a special chapter. Suffice it to characterize him as what he was, a bourgeois whose biographer and admirer, Jones, calls "uxorious." As we all know, he wasn't a model father.

There, too, where he was truly the father, the father of us all, the father of psychoanalysis, what did he do but hand it over to the women, and also perhaps to the master-fools? As far as the women are concerned, we should reserve judgment; they are beings who remain rich in promise, at least to the extent that they haven't yet lived up to them. As for the master-fools, that's another story altogether.

2

To the extent that a sensitive subject such as ethics is not nowadays separable from what is called ideology, it seems to me appropriate to offer here some clarification of the political meaning of this turning point in ethics for which we, the inheritors of Freud, are responsible.

That is why I spoke of master-fools. This expression may seem impertinent, indeed not exempt from a certain excess. I would like to make clear here what in my view is involved.

There was a time, an already distant time right at the beginning of our Society, you will remember, when we spoke of intellectuals in connection with Plato's *Meno*. I would like to make a few condensed comments on the subject, but I believe they will prove to be illuminating.

It was noted then that, for a long time now, there have been left-wing intellectuals and right-wing intellectuals. I would like to give you formulas for them that, however categorical they may appear at first sight, might nevertheless help to illuminate the way.

"Fool" *(sot)* or, if you like, "simpleton" *(demeuré)* – quite a nice term for which I have a certain fondness – these words only express approximately a certain something for which the English language and its literature seem to me to offer a more helpful signifier – I will come back to this later. A tradition that begins with Chaucer, but which reaches its full development in the theater of the Elizabethan period is, in effect, centered on the term "fool."[2]

The "fool" is an innocent, a simpleton, but truths issue from his mouth that are not simply tolerated but adopted, by virtue of the fact that this "fool" is sometimes clothed in the insignia of the jester. And in my view it is a similar happy shadow, a similar fundamental "foolery," that accounts for the importance of the left-wing intellectual.

[2] In this and subsequent passages, the words "fool" and "knave" along with "foolery" and "knavery" in quotation marks are in English in the original.

And I contrast this with the designation for that which the same tradition furnishes a strictly contemporary term, a term that is used in conjunction with the former, namely, "knave" – if we have the time, I will show you the texts, which are numerous and unambiguous.

At a certain level of its usage "knave" may be translated into French as *valet*, but "knave" goes further. He's not a cynic with the element of heroism implied by that attitude. He is, to be precise, what Stendhal called an "unmitigated scoundrel." That is to say, no more than your Mr. Everyman, but your Mr. Everyman with greater strength of character.

Everyone knows that a certain way of presenting himself, which constitutes part of the ideology of the right-wing intellectual, is precisely to play the role of what he is in fact, namely, a "knave." In other words, he doesn't retreat from the consequences of what is called realism; that is, when required, he admits he's a crook.

This is only of interest if one considers things from the point of view of their result. After all, a crook is certainly worth a fool, at least for the entertainment he gives, if the result of gathering crooks into a herd did not inevitably lead to a collective foolery. That is what makes the politics of right-wing ideology so depressing.

But what is not sufficiently noted is that by a curious chiasma, the "foolery" which constitutes the individual style of the left-wing intellectual gives rise to a collective "knavery."

What I am proposing here for you to reflect on has, I don't deny, the character of a confession. Those of you who know me are aware of my reading habits; you know which weeklies lie around on my desk. The thing I enjoy most, I must admit, is the spectacle of collective knavery exhibited in them – that innocent chicanery, not to say calm impudence, which allows them to express so many heroic truths without wanting to pay the price. It is thanks to this that what is affirmed concerning the horrors of Mammon on the first page leads, on the last, to purrs of tenderness for this same Mammon.

Freud was perhaps not a good father, but he was neither a crook nor an imbecile. That is why one can say about him two things which are disconcerting in their connection and their opposition. He was a humanitarian – who after checking his works will contest that? – and we must acknowledge it, however discredited the term might be by the crooks on the right. But, on the other hand, he wasn't a simpleton, so that one can say as well, and we have the texts to prove it, that he was no progressive.

I am sorry but it's a fact, Freud was in no way a progressive. And as far as this is concerned, there are even some extraordinarily scandalous things in his writings. From the pen of one of our guides, the little optimism mani-

fested for the perspectives opened by the masses is certainly apt to shock, but it is indispensable for us to remember that, if we want to know where we stand.

You will see in what follows the usefulness of such remarks, which may appear crude.

One of my friends and patients had a dream which bore the traces of some yearning or other stimulated in him by the formulations of this seminar, a dream in which someone cried out concerning me, "But why doesn't he tell the truth about truth?"

I quote this, since it is an impatience that I have heard expressed by a great many in other forms than dreams. The formula is true to a certain extent – I perhaps don't tell the truth about truth. But haven't you noticed that in wanting to tell it – something that is the chief preoccupation of those who are called metaphysicians – it often happens that not much truth is left? That's what is so risky about such a pretension. It is a pretension that so easily lands us at the level of a certain knavery. And isn't there also a certain "knavery," a metaphysical "knavery," when one of our modern treatises on metaphysics, under this guise of the truth about truth, lets a great many things by which truly ought not to be let by?

I am content to tell the truth of the first stage and to proceed step by step. When I say that Freud is a humanitarian but not a progressive, I say something true. Let's try to follow the thread and take another true step.

We started out from the truth, which we must take to be a truth if we follow Freud's analysis, that we know God is dead.

However, the next step is that God himself doesn't know that. And one may suppose that he never will know it because he has always been dead. This formula nevertheless leads us to something that we have to resolve here, to something that remains on our hands from this adventure, something that changes the bases of the ethical problem, namely, that *jouissance* still remains forbidden as it was before, before we knew that God was dead.

That's what Freud says. And that's the truth – if not the truth about truth, then at least the truth about what Freud has to say.

As a result, if we continue to follow Freud in a text such as *Civilization and Its Discontents,* we cannot avoid the formula that *jouissance* is evil. Freud leads us by the hand to this point: it is suffering because it involves suffering for my neighbor.

This may shock you, upset certain habits, cause consternation among the happy souls. But it can't be helped; that's what Freud says. And he says it at the point of origin of our experience. He wrote *Civilization and Its Discontents* to tell us this. That's what was increasingly announced, promulgated, publicized, as analytical experience progressed. It has a name; it's what is known as beyond the pleasure principle. And it has effects that are by no means

metaphysical; they oscillate between a "certainly not" and a "perhaps."

Those who like fairy stories turn a deaf ear to talk of man's innate tendencies to "evil, aggression, destruction, and thus also to cruelty." And Freud's text goes on: "Man tries to satisfy his need for aggression at the expense of his neighbor, to exploit his work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to appropriate his goods, to humiliate him, to inflict suffering on him, to torture and kill him."[3]

If I hadn't told you the title of the work from which this passage comes, I could have pretended it was from Sade. Moreover, my upcoming lecture will, in effect, concern the Sadean account of the problem of morality.

For the time being, we will stick to Freud. *Civilization and Its Discontents* concerns the effort to rethink the problem of evil once one acknowledges that it is radically altered by the absence of God. This problem has always been avoided by the moralists in a way that is literally calculated to arouse our disgust once we have been alerted to the terms of the experience.

Whoever he might be, the traditional moralist always falls back into the rut of persuading us that pleasure is a good, that the path leading to good is blazed by pleasure. The trap is striking, for it has a paradoxical character that lends it its air of audacity. One is, so to speak, swindled in the second degree; one assumes there is just a hidden drawer, and one is pleased to have found it, but one is screwed even more when one has found it than if one hadn't even suspected its existence. Something that is relatively rare, for everyone can see that there's something fishy.

What does Freud have to say about this? Even before the formulations of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* it is evident that the first formulation of the pleasure principle as an unpleasure principle, or least-suffering principle, naturally embodies a beyond, but that it is, in effect, calculated to keep us on this side of it rather than beyond it. Freud's use of the good can be summed up in the notion that it keeps us a long way from our *jouissance.*

Nothing is more obvious in our clinical experience. Who is there who in the name of pleasure doesn't start to weaken when the first half-serious step is taken toward *jouissance?* Isn't that something we encounter directly everyday?

One can understand, therefore, the dominance of hedonism in the moral teachings of a certain philosophical tradition, whose motives do not seem to us to be absolutely reliable or disinterested.

In truth, it isn't because they have emphasized the beneficial effects of pleasure that we criticize the so-called hedonist tradition. It is rather because they haven't stated what the good consisted of. That's where the fraud is.

In the light of this one can understand that Freud was literally horrified by

[3] S.E. *XXI,* p. iii.

the idea of love for one's neighbor. One's neighbor in German is *der Nächste*. "Du sollst den Nächsten lieben wie sich selbst" – that's how the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is expressed in German. Freud underlines the excessive side of this by means of an argument that starts from several different points, which are, in fact, one and the same.

In the first place, the neighbor, whose fundamental nature is, as you have seen, revealed in Freud's writings, is bad. But that's not all there is to it. Freud also says – and it shouldn't make you smile just because it is expressed in a somewhat sparse manner – my love is something precious and I'm not going to give it whole to whomever claims to be what he is, simply because he happened to come by.

Freud makes comments about this that are quite right, moving comments on the subject of what is worth loving. He reveals how one must love a friend's son because, if the friend were to lose his son, his suffering would be intolerable. The whole Arisotelian conception of the good is alive in this man who is a true man; he tells us the most sensitive and reasonable things about what it is worth sharing the good that is our love with. But what escapes him is perhaps the fact that precisely because we take that path we miss the opening on to *jouissance*.

It is in the nature of the good to be altruistic. But that's not the love of thy neighbor. Freud makes us feel this without articulating it fully. We will now attempt, without forcing anything, to do so in his stead.

We can found our case on the following, namely, that every time that Freud stops short in horror at the consequences of the commandment to love one's neighbor, we see evoked the presence of that fundamental evil which dwells within this neighbor. But if that is the case, then it also dwells within me. And what is more of a neighbor to me than this heart within which is that of my *jouissance* and which I don't dare go near? For as soon as I go near it, as *Civilization and Its Discontents* makes clear, there rises up the unfathomable aggressivity from which I flee, that I turn against me, and which in the very place of the vanished Law adds its weight to that which prevents me from crossing a certain frontier at the limit of the Thing.

As long as it's a question of the good, there's no problem; our own and our neighbor's are of the same material. Saint Martin shares his cloak, and a great deal is made of it. Yet it is after all a simple question of training; material is by its very nature made to be disposed of – it belongs to the other as much as it belongs to me. We are no doubt touching a primitive requirement in the need to be satisfied there, for the beggar is naked. But perhaps over and above that need to be clothed, he was begging for something else, namely, that Saint Martin either kill him or fuck him. In any encounter there's a big difference in meaning between the response of philanthropy and that of love.

It is in the nature of the useful to be utilized. If I can do something in less

time and with less trouble than someone near me, I would instinctively do it in his place, in return for which I am damned for what I have to do for that most neighborly of neighbors who is inside me. I am damned for having assured him to whom it would cost more time and trouble than me, what precisely? – some measure of ease that only means something because I imagine that, if I had that ease or absence of work, I would make the best possible use of it. But it is far from proven that I would know how to do so, even if I had all the power required to satisfy myself. Perhaps I would simply be bored.

Consequently, by granting others such power, perhaps I am just leading them astray. I imagine their difficulties and their sufferings in the mirror of my own. It is certainly not imagination that I lack; it is, if anything, tenderness, namely, what might be called the difficult way, love for one's neighbor. And here again you may note how the trap of the same paradox occurs to us in connection with the so-called discourse of utilitarianism.

I began my lectures this year with the onerous topic of the utilitarians, but the utilitarians are quite right. They are countered with something that, in effect, only makes the task of countering them much more difficult, with a sentence such as "But, Mr. Bentham, my good is not the same as another's good, and your principle of the greatest good for the greatest number comes up against the demands of my egoism." But it's not true. My egoism is quite content with a certain altruism, altruism of the kind that is situated on the level of the useful. And it even becomes the pretext by means of which I can avoid taking up the problem of the evil I desire, and that my neighbor desires also. That is how I spend my life, by cashing in my time in a dollar zone, ruble zone or any other zone, in my neighbor's time, where all the neighbors are maintained equally at the marginal level of reality of my own existence. Under these conditions it is hardly surprising that everyone is sick, that civilization has its discontents.

It is a fact of experience that what I want is the good of others in the image of my own. That doesn't cost so much. What I want is the good of others provided that it remain in the image of my own. I would even say that the whole thing deteriorates so rapidly that it becomes: provided that it depend on my efforts. I don't even need to ask you to go very far into your patients' experience: if I wish for my spouse's happiness, I no doubt sacrifice my own, but who knows if her happiness isn't totally dissipated, too?

Perhaps the meaning of the love of one's neighbor that could give me the true direction is to be found here. To that end, however, one would have to know how to confront the fact that my neighbor's *jouissance*, his harmful, malignant *jouissance*, is that which poses a problem for my love.

It wouldn't be difficult at this point to take a leap in the direction of the excesses of the mystics. Unfortunately, many of their most notable qualities always strike me as somewhat puerile.

No doubt the question of beyond the pleasure principle, of the place of the unnameable Thing and of what goes on there, is raised in certain acts that provoke our judgment, acts of the kind attributed to a certain Angela de Folignio, who joyfully lapped up the water in which she had just washed the feet of lepers – I will spare you the details, such as the fact that a piece of skin stuck in her throat, etc. – or to the blessed Marie Allacoque, who, with no less a reward in spiritual uplift, ate the excrement of a sick man. The power of conviction of these no doubt edifying facts would vary quite a lot if the excrement in question were that of a beautiful girl or if it were a question of eating the come of a forward from your rugby team. In other words, the erotic side of things remains veiled in the above examples.

That is why I will have to back up a little. We are now on the threshold of exploring something which has after all attempted to break down the doors of the hell within. Its claim to do so is clearly much greater than ours. Yet it is our concern, too. And that is why, in order to show you step by step the ways in which access to the problem of *jouissance* may be envisaged, I will lead you through what someone by the name of Sade has had to say about it.

I would certainly need a couple of months to talk about Sadism. I will not talk about Sade as eroticist, for he is definitely an inferior eroticist. The path of *jouissance* with a woman is not necessarily to subject her to all the acts practiced on poor Justine. On the other hand, in the domain of the articulation of ethical questions, it seems to me that Sade has some very solid things to say, at least in connection with the problem that currently concerns us.

4

Before I take up the question next time, I would like to end today by making you sense this in connection with a contemporary example, namely, Kant's, which I have already devoted some time to – and it's not for nothing that it is contemporary with Sade.

In the example in question Kant claims to prove the weight of the Law, formulated by him as practical reason, as something that imposes itself in purely reasonable terms, that is to say, divorced from all pathological affect, as he puts it, which means with no motive that appeals to the subject's interest. This is a critical exercise that will bring us back to the very center of the problem we are addressing today.

Let me remind you that Kant's example is made up of two little stories. The first concerns the individual who is placed in the situation of being executed on his way out, if he wants to spend time with the lady whom he desires unlawfully – it's not a waste of time to emphasize this, because even the apparently simplest details constitute traps. The other case is that of someone who lives at the court of a despot and who is put in the position of either

bearing false witness against someone who, as a result, will lose his life or of being put to death himself if he doesn't do it.

Thereupon, Kant, our dear Kant, tells us in all his innocence, his innocent subterfuge, that in the first case everyone, every man of good sense, will say no. For the sake of spending a night with a woman, no one would be mad enough to accept an outcome that would be fatal to him, since it isn't a question of combat but of death by hanging. For Kant, the answer to the question is not in doubt.

In the other case, whatever the degree of pleasure promised as a result of bearing false witness or whatever the harshness of the penalty following the refusal to bear such witness, one can at least assume that the subject stops to reflect for a moment. One might even conceive that, rather than bear false witness, the subject will envisage accepting his own death in the name of the so-called categorical imperative. In effect, if an assault on the goods, the life, or the honor of someone else were to become a universal rule, that would throw the whole of man's universe into a state of disorder and evil.

Can't we stop here and offer our critique?

The striking significance of the first example resides in the fact that the night spent with the lady is paradoxically presented to us as a pleasure that is weighed against a punishment to be undergone; it is an opposition which homogenizes them. There is in terms of pleasure a plus and a minus. I will not quote the worst examples – in his *Essay on Negative Greatness,* Kant discusses the feelings of the Spartan mother who learns of the death of her son on the field of honor. And the little mathematical calculation Kant makes concerning the pleasure the family derives from the glory, from which one has to deduct the pain felt at the boy's loss, is quite touching. But it is important to note that one only has to make a conceptual shift and move the night spent with the lady from the category of pleasure to that of *jouissance,* given that *jouissance* implies precisely the acceptance of death – and there's no need of sublimation – for the example to be ruined.

In other words, it is enough for *jouissance* to be a form of evil, for the whole thing to change its character completely, and for the meaning of the moral law itself to be completely changed. Anyone can see that if the moral law is, in effect, capable of playing some role here, it is precisely as a support for the *jouissance* involved; it is so that the sin becomes what Saint Paul calls inordinately sinful. That's what Kant on this occasion simply ignores.

Then there is the other example, whose little errors of logic should not, between ourselves, be overlooked. The circumstances involved are somewhat different. In the first case, pleasure *and* pain are presented as a single packet to take or leave, in consideration of which one avoids the risk and gives up *jouissance.* In the second case, there is pleasure *or* pain. It's not insignificant that I underline it, for this choice is destined to produce in you a certain

effect of *a fortiori,* as a result of which you may be deceived about the real significance of the question.

What's at issue here? That I attack the rights of another who is my fellow man in that statement of the universal rule, or is it a question of the false witness as such?

And what if I changed the example a little? Let's talk about true witness, about a case of conscience which is raised if I am summoned to inform on my neighbor or my brother for activities which are prejudicial to the security of the state. That question is of a kind that shifts the emphasis placed on the universal rule.

And I who stand here right now and bear witness to the idea that there is no law of the good except in evil and through evil, should I bear such witness?

This Law makes my neighbor's *jouissance* the point on which, in bearing witness in this case, the meaning of my duty is balanced. Must I go toward my duty of truth insofar as it preserves the authentic place of my *jouissance,* even if it is empty? Or must I resign myself to this lie, which, by making me substitute forcefully the good for the principle of my *jouissance,* commands me to blow alternatively hot and cold? Either I refrain from betraying my neighbor so as to spare my fellow man or I shelter behind my fellow man so as to give up my *jouissance.*

March 20, 1960

XV

The *jouissance* of transgression

THE BARRIER TO *JOUISSANCE*
THE RESPECT OF THE IMAGE OF THE OTHER
SADE, HIS FANTASM AND HIS DOCTRINE
METIPSEMUS
FRAGMENTED AND INDESTRUCTIBLE

I announced that I would talk about Sade.

It is not without some vexation that I take up the subject today because of the break for the vacation, which will be a long one.

I would like at least during this lecture to clear up the misunderstanding that might occur because we are dealing with Sade, and it might be thought that that constitutes a wholly external way of looking upon ourselves as pioneers or militants embracing a radical position. Such a view implies that, as a result of our function or profession, we are destined to embrace extremes, so to speak, and that Sade in this respect is our progenitor or precursor, who supposedly opened up some impasse, aberration or aporia, in that domain of ethics we have chosen to explore this year, and that we would be well-advised to follow him.

It is very important to clear up that misunderstanding, which is related to a number of others I am struggling against in order to make some progress here before you.

The domain that we are exploring this year isn't interesting for us only in a purely external sense. I would even say that up to a certain point this field may involve a certain degree of boredom, even for such a faithful audience as you, and it's not to be neglected – it has its own significance. Naturally, since I am speaking to you, I try to interest you; that's part of the deal. But that mode of communication which binds us together isn't necessarily calculated to avoid something that the art of the teacher normally proscribes. When I compare two audiences, if I managed to interest the one in Brussels, so much the better, but it isn't at all in the same way that you here are interested in my teaching.

If I adopt for a moment the point of view of what one finds in the situation, not so much of the young analyst, as of the analyst beginning his practice – and it's such a humanly sensitive and valid position – I would say that it is conceivable that what I am attempting to articulate under the title of the

ethics of psychoanalysis comes up against the domain of what might be called analysis's pastoral letter.

Even then I am ascribing to what I am aiming at its noble name, its eternal name. A less flattering name would be the one invented by one of the most unpleasant authors of our time, "intellectual comfort." The question of "How does one proceed?" may, in effect, lead to impatience and even disappointment, when one is faced with the need to approach things at a level, that, it seems, is not that of our technique on the basis of which a great many things are to be resolved – or such at least is the promise. A great many things perhaps, but not everything. And we shouldn't necessarily turn our eyes away from those things that our technique warns us constitute an impasse or even a gap, even if all the consequences of our action are in question.

As for this young person who is beginning his practice as an analyst, I would call what is involved here his skeleton; it will give his action a vertebrate solidarity, or the opposite of that movement toward a thousand forms which is always on the point of collapsing in on itself and of becoming caught up in a circle – something that a certain number of recent explorations give the image of.

It is, therefore, not a bad idea to expose the fact that something may degenerate from the expectation of assurance – which is doubtless of some use in the exercise of one's profession – into a form of sentimental assurance. It is as a result of this that those subjects whom I take to be at a crossroads in their existence turn into prisoners of an infatuation that is the source of both an inner disappointment and a secret demand.

And if we are to make any progress, this is what the perspective of the ethical ends of psychoanalysis, whose significance I am trying to demonstrate here, has to combat. It is something one encounters sooner rather than later.

1

Our path thus far has led us to a point that I will call the paradox of *jouissance*.

The paradox of *jouissance* introduces its problematic into that dialectic of happiness which we analysts have perhaps rashily set out to explore. We have grasped the paradox in more than one detail as something that emerges routinely in our experience. But in order to lead you to it and relate it to the thread of our discussion, I have chosen this time the path of the enigma of its relation to the Law. And this is something that is marked by the strangeness of the way the existence of this Law appears to us, as founded on the Other as I have long taught you.

In this we have to follow Freud; not the individual with his atheistic profession of faith, but the Freud who was the first to acknowledge the value and relevance of a myth that constituted for us an answer to a certain fact

that was formulated for no particular reason, but that has wide currency and is fully articulated in the consciousness of our time – though it went unnoticed by the finest minds and even more so by the masses – I mean the fact we call the death of God.

That's the problematic with which we begin. It is there the sign appears that I presented to you in my graph in the form of S (O). Situated as you know in the upper left section, it signifies the final response to the guarantee asked of the Other concerning the meaning of that Law articulated in the depths of the unconscious. If there is nothing more than a lack, the Other is wanting, and the signifier is that of his death.

It is as a function of this position, which is itself dependent on the paradox of the Law, that the paradox of *jouissance* emerges. This I will now try to explain.

We should note that only Christianity, through the drama of the passion, gives a full content to the naturalness of the truth we have called the death of God. Indeed, with a naturalness beside which the approaches to it represented by the bloody combats of the gladiators pale. Christianity, in effect, offers a drama that literally incarnates that death of God. It is also Christianity that associates that death with what happened to the Law; namely, that without destroying that Law, we are told, but in substituting itself for it, in summarizing it, and raising it up in the very movement that abolishes it – thus offering the first weighty historical example of the German notion of *Aufhebung*, i.e., the conservation of something destroyed at a different level – the only commandment is henceforth "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The whole thing is articulated as such in the Gospel, and it is there that we will continue on our way. The two notions, the death of God and the love of one's neighbor, are historically linked; and one cannot overlook that fact unless one attributes to everything that occurred in history in the Judeo-Christian tradition as constitutionally just a matter of chance.

I am aware of the fact that the message of the believers is that there is a resurrection in the afterlife, but that's simply a promise. That's the space through which we have to make our way. It is thus appropriate if we stop in this pass, in this narrow passage where Freud himself stops and retreats in understandable horror. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is a commandment that seems inhuman to him.

Everything he finds objectional is summed up in this phrase. As the examples he cites confirm, it is in the name of the most legitimate ἐυδαιμονία on all levels that he stops and rightly acknowledges, when he reflects on the commandment's meaning, the extent to which the historical spectacle of a humanity that chose it as its ideal is quite unconvincing, when that ideal is measured against actual accomplishments.

I have already referred to what it is that arouses Freud's horror, arouses the horror of the civilized man he essentially was. It derives from the evil in which he doesn't hestitate to locate man's deepest heart.

I don't really need to emphasize the point where I bring my two threads together to form a knot. Man's rebellion is involved here, the rebellion of *Jederman,* of everyman, insofar as he aspires to happiness. The truth that man seeks happiness remains true. The resistance to the commandment "Thou shalt love they neighbor as thyself" and the resistance that is exercised to prevent his access to *jouissance* are one and the same thing.

Stated thus, this may seem an additional paradox, a gratuitous assertion. Yet don't you recognize there what we refer to in the most routine way each time we see a subject retreat from his own *jouissance?* What are we drawing attention to? To the unconscious aggression that *jouissance* contains, to the frightening core of the *destrudo,* which, in spite of all our feminine affectations and quibbles, we constantly find ourselves confronting in our analytical experience.

Whether or not this view is ratified in the name of some preconceived view of nature, it is nevertheless true that at the heart of everything Freud taught, one finds the following: the energy of the so-called superego derives from the aggression that the subject turns back upon himself.

Freud goes out of his way to add the supplementary notion that, once one has entered on that path, once the process has been begun, then there is no longer any limit; it generates ever more powerful aggression in the self. It generates it at the limit, that is to say, insofar as the mediation of the Law is lacking. Of the Law insofar as it comes from elsewhere, from the elsewhere, moreover, where its guarantor is lacking, the guarantor who provides its warranty, namely, God himself.

To say that the retreat from "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is the same thing as the barrier to *jouissance,* and not its opposite, is, therefore, not an original proposition.

I retreat from loving my neighbor as myself because there is something on the horizon there that is engaged in some form of intolerable cruelty. In that sense, to love one's neighbor may be the cruelest of choices.

That, then, is the nicely whetted edge of the paradox I am asserting here. No doubt in order to give it its full weight, one should take it step by step, so that by understanding the way in which that intimate line of demarcation appears, we may not so much know as feel the ups and downs to be found on its path.

We have, of course, long learned to recognize in our analytical experience the *jouissance* of trangression. But we are far from knowing what its nature might be. In this respect our position is ambiguous. Everybody knows that we have restored full civil rights to perversion. We have dubbed it a compo-

nent drive, thereby employing the idea that it harmonizes with a totality, and at the same time shedding suspicion on the research, which was revolutionary at a certain moment in the nineteenth century, of Krafft-Ebing with his monumental *Psychopathia Sexualis*, or also on the work of Havelock Ellis.

Incidentally, I don't want to fail to give the latter's work the kind of thumbs down I think it deserves. It offers amazing examples of a lack of systematicity – not the failure of a method, but the choice of a failed method. The so-called scientific objectivity that is exhibited in books that amount to no more than a random collection of documents offers a living example of the combination of a certain "foolery" with the sort of "knavery," a fundamental knavery, that I invoked last time as the characteristic of a certain kind of thought known as left-wing, without excluding the possibility of its spreading its stain to other domains. In short, if I recommend reading Havelock Ellis, it is simply in order to show you the difference, not just in results but in tone, that exists between such a futile mode of investigation and what Freud's thought and experience reintroduce into the domain – it's simply a question of responsibility.

We are familiar with the *jouissance* of transgression, then. But what does it consist of? Does it go without saying that to trample sacred laws under foot, laws that may be directly challenged by the subject's conscience, itself excites some form of *jouissance?* We no doubt constantly see the strange development in a subject that might be described as the testing of a faceless fate or as a risk that, once it has been survived by the subject, somehow guarantees him of his power. Doesn't the Law that is defied here play the role of a means, of a path cleared that leads straight to the risk? Yet if the path is necessary, what is the risk that is involved? What is the goal *jouissance* seeks if it has to find support in transgression to reach it?

I leave these questions open for the moment so as to move on. If the subject turns back on his tracks, what is it that guides this backtracking? On this point, we find a more motivated response in analysis; we are told that it is the identification with the other that arises at the extreme moment in one of our temptations. And by extreme here I do not mean it has to do with extraordinary temptations, but with the moment when one perceives their consequences.

We retreat from what? From assaulting the image of the other, because it was the image on which we were formed as an ego. Here we find the convincing power of altruism. Here, too, is the leveling power of a certain law of equality – that which is formulated in the notion of the general will. The latter is no doubt the common denominator of the respect for certain rights – which, for a reason that escapes me, are called elementary rights – but it can also take the form of excluding from its boundaries, and therefore from its protection, everything that is not integrated into its various registers.

And the power of expansion is also seen in what I expressed last time as the utilitarian tendency. At this level of homogenization, the law of utility, as that which implies its distribution over the greatest number, imposes itself in a form that is effectively innovative. It is an enchanting power, scorn for which is sufficiently indicated in the eyes of us analysts when we call it philanthropy, but which also raises the questions of the natural basis of pity in the sense implied by that morality of feeling which has always sought its foundation there.

We are, in effect, at one with everything that depends on the image of the other as our fellow man, on the similarity we have to our ego and to everything that situates us in the imaginary register. What is the question I am raising here, when it seems to be obvious that the very foundation of the law "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is to be found there?

It is indeed the same other that is concerned here. Yet one only has to stop for a moment to see how obvious and striking the practical contradictions are – individual, inner contradictions as well as social ones – of the idealization expressed relative to the respect that I formulated for the image of the other. It implies a certain continuity and filiation of problematic effects on the religious law, which is expressed and manifested historically by the paradoxes of its extremes, i.e., the extremes of saintliness, and moreover by its failure on the social level, insofar as it never manages to achieve fulfillment, reconciliation, or the establishment on earth of what is promised by it.

To emphasize the point even more strongly, I will refer directly to something that seems to be opposed to this denunciation of the image, that is to the statement which is always listened to with a kind of more-or-less amused purr of satisfaction, "God made man in his own image." Religious tradition once again reveals more cunning in pointing to the truth than the approach of psychological philosophy imagines.

You can't get away with answering that man no doubt paid God back in kind. The statement in question is of the same inspiration, the same body, as the holy book in which is expressed the prohibition on forging images of God. If this prohibition has a meaning, it is that images are deceitful.

Why is that? Let's go to what is simplest: if these are beautiful images – and goodness only knows that religious images always correspond by definition to reigning canons of beauty – one doesn't notice that they are always hollow images. Moreover, man, too, as image is interesting for the hollow the image leaves empty – by reason of the fact that one doesn't see in the image, beyond the capture of the image, the emptiness of God to be discovered. It is perhaps man's plenitude, but it is also there that God leaves him with emptiness.

Now God's power resides in the capacity to advance into emptiness. All of that gives us the figures of the apparatus of a domain in which the recognition

of another reveals itself as an adventure. The meaning of the word *recognition* tends toward that which it assumes in every exploration, with all the accents of militancy and of nostalgia we can invest in it.

Sade is at this limit.

2

Sade is at this limit, and insofar as he imagines going beyond it, he teaches us that he cultivates its fantasm with all the morose enjoyment – I will come back to this phrase – that is manifest in that fantasm.

In imagining it, he proves the imaginary structure of the limit. But he also goes beyond it. He doesn't, of course, go beyond it in his fantasm, which explains its tedious character, but in his theory, in the doctrine he advances in words that at different moments in the work express the *jouissance* of destruction, the peculiar virtue of crime, evil sought for evil's sake, and, in the last instance, the Supreme-Being-in-Evil – a strange reference made by the character of Saint-Fond, who proclaims in *The Story of Juliette* his renewed but not particularly new belief in this God.

This theory is called in the same work the System of Pius VI, the Pope who is introduced as one of the characters in the novel. Taking things even further, Sade lays out a vision of Nature as a vast system of attraction and repulsion of evil by evil. Under these circumstances the ethical stance consists in realizing to the most extreme point this assimilation to absolute evil, as a consequence of which its integration into a fundamentally wicked nature will be realized in a kind of inverted harmony.

I am just pointing to something that appears not as stages of thought in search of a paradoxical formulation, but much more as its wrenching apart, its collapse, in the course of a development that created its own impasse.

Can't one nevertheless say that Sade teaches us, in the order of symbolic play, how to attempt to go beyond the limit, and how to discover the laws of one's neighbor's space as such? The space in question is that which is formed when we have to do not with this fellow self whom we so easily turn into our reflection, and whom we necessarily implicate in the same misrecognitions that characterize our own self, but this neighbor who is closest to us, the neighbor whom we sometimes take in our arms, if only to make love to. I am not speaking here of ideal love, but of the act of making love.

We know well how the images of the self may frustrate our propulsion into that space. Don't we have something to learn about the laws of this space from the man who enters it with his atrocious discourse, given that the imaginary capture by the image of one's fellow man functions as a lure there?

You can see where I am taking you. At the precise point to which I attach our inquiry, I am not prejudging what the other is. I simply emphasize the

lures of one's fellow man because it is from this fellow as such that the misrecognitions which define me as a self are born. And I will just stop for a moment and refer to a little fable in which you will recognize my personal touch.

I once spoke to you about a mustard pot. If I draw three pots here, I simply demonstrate that you have a whole row of mustard or jam pots. They stand on shelves and are numerous enough to satisfy your contemplative appetites. Note that it is insofar as the pots are identical that they are irreducible. Thus at this level we come up against the condition of individuation. And that's as far as the problem usually goes, namely, that there is this one, which isn't that one.

Naturally, the affected quality of this little trick doesn't escape me. But do try to understand the truth it hides, like all sophisms. I don't know if you have noticed that the etymology of the French word *même* (self) is none other than *metipsemus*, which makes this *même* in *moi-même* redundant. The phonetic evolution is from *metipsemus* to *même* – that which is most myself in myself, that which is at the heart of myself, and beyond me, insofar as the self stops at the level of those walls to which one can apply a label. What in French at least serves to designate the notion of self or same *(même)*, then, is this interior or emptiness, and I don't know if it belongs to me or to nobody.

That's what the use of my sophism signifies; it reminds me that my neighbor possesses all the evil Freud speaks about, but it is no different from the evil I retreat from in myself. To love him, to love him as myself, is necessarily to move toward some cruelty. His or mine?, you will object. But haven't I just explained to you that nothing indicates they are distinct? It seems rather that they are the same, on condition that those limits which oblige me to posit myself opposite the other as my fellow man are crossed.

And here I should make my approach clear. Panic drunkenness, sacred orgy, the flagellants of the cults of Attis, the Bacchantes of the tragedy of Euripides, in short, all that remote Dionysionism lost in a history to which reference has been made since the nineteenth century with the expectation of restoring, beyond Hegel, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, the vestiges still available to us of the sphere of the great Pan, in an apologetic, utopian and apocalyptic form that was condemned by Kierkegaard and not less effectively by Nietzsche – that's not what I mean when I speak of the sameness *(mêmeté)* of someone else and myself. That is by the way why I finished the seminar before last with the evocation of the statement that is correlative to the rending of the veil of the temple, namely, Great Pan is dead.

I will say no more today. It's not just a question of my prophesying in my turn, but I will take an appointment with you for the time when I will have to try to justify why and from what the Great Pan died, and at the precise moment no doubt that the legend points to.

3

It is Sade's approach that concerns us now, insofar as it points the way to my neighbor's space in connection with what I will call – thereby paraphrasing the title of the work of his that is called *Ideas on the Novel* – the idea of a technique oriented toward a sexual *jouissance* that is not sublimated.

This idea shows us all kinds of lines of divergence, to the point that it gives rise to the idea of difficulty. Consequently, it will be necessary for us to evaluate the scope of the literary work as such. And isn't that quite a detour, which will definitely set us back again, and haven't I been criticized for being slow for some time now?

To finish rapidly with this further refinement, I will need to evoke several directions from which Sade's work may be grasped, if only to indicate the one that I am choosing.

Is this work a form of witness? A conscious or unconscious witness? Don't think in terms of the psychoanalytic unconscious here; I mean by "unconsious" here the fact that the subject Sade wasn't fully aware of the conditions in which he as nobleman found himself, during the period from the beginning of the French Revolution and down through the Terror, which he was to live through only to be banished to the asylum at Charenton, apparently at the will of the First Consul.

In truth, Sade seems to me to have been fully aware of the relationship of his work to the attitudes of the type I called the man of pleasure. The man of pleasure as such bears witness against himself, by publicly confessing the extremes to which he may go. The great joy with which he recalls the emergence of this tradition historically is a clear sign of the point the master always reaches when he doesn't bow his head before the being of God.

There is no reason to hide in any way the realistic side of Sade's atrocities. Their developed, insistent, extravagant character is so obvious and constitutes such a challenge to credibility that the idea that this is an ironic discourse becomes quite plausible. It is nevertheless true that the things involved are commonly found in the works of Suetonius, Dion Cassius and others. Read the *Memoirs on the Great Days in Auvergne* by Esprit Fléchier, if you want to learn what a great Lord at the beginning of the seventeenth century could get up to with his peasants.

We would be quite wrong to think that, in the name of the self-restraint the fascinations of the imaginary impose on our weakness, men are incapable in certain situations of transgressing given limits without knowing what they are doing.

In this connection, Freud helps us out with that absolute lack of subterfuge, that total absence of "knavery" that characterizes him, when he doesn't hesitate to make the point in *Civilization and Its Discontents* that there is noth-

ing in common between the satisfaction a *jouissance* affords in its original state and that which it gives in the indirect or even sublimated forms that civilization obliges it to assume.

In one place he doesn't disguise his view of the fact that those *jouissances* which are forbidden by conventional morality are nevertheless perfectly accessible and accepted by certain people, who live under a given set of conditions and whom he points to, namely, those whom we call the rich – and it is doubtless the case that, in spite of obstacles that are familiar to us, they sometimes make the most of their opportunities.

To make things clear, let me use this passage to make an incidental remark, similar to the remarks Freud makes on the subject, but that are often omitted or neglected. The security of *jouissance* for the rich in our time is greatly increased by what I will call the universal legislation of work. Just imagine what social conflicts were like in times past. Try to find something equivalent nowadays not at the frontiers of our societies, but within them.

And now a point on the value of Sade's work as witness of reality. Shall we investigate its value as sublimation? If we consider sublimation in its most developed form, indeed in the fiercest and most cynical form in which Freud took pleasure in representing it, namely, as the transformation of the sexual instinct into a work in which everyone will recognize his own dreams and impulses, and will reward the artist for having given him that satisfaction by granting the latter a fuller and happier life – and for giving him in addition access to the satisfaction of the instinct involved from the beginning – if we seek to grasp the work of Sade from this perspective, then it's something of a failure.

It's something of a failure, if one thinks of the amount of time poor Sade spent either in prison or interned in special institutions. As for the work itself, at least *The New Justine* along with *The Story of Juliette* had a great deal of success during his lifetime in an underground form, a success of the night, a success of the damned. But I won't insist on that here. If I refer to it, it is so as to cast some light on those sides of Sade that are worth illuminating.

Let us now try to see how we should situate Sade's work. It has been called an unsurpassable body of work, in the sense that it achieves an absolute of the unbearable in what can be expressed in words relative to the transgression of all human limits. One can acknowledge that in no other literature, at no other time, has there been such a scandalous body of work. No one else has done such deep injury to the feelings and thoughts of mankind. At a time when Henry Miller's stories make us tremble, who would dare rival the licentiousness of Sade? One might indeed claim that we have there the most scandalous body of work ever written. Thus, as Maurice Blanchot puts it, "Isn't that a reason for us to be interested in it?"

And we are interested in just that way here. I urge you to make the effort

to read the book in which two articles by Blanchot on Lautréamont and Sade are to be found. They constitute a part of the material to be put in our file.

That is certainly saying a lot then. It seems, in fact, as if one cannot conceive of an atrocity that isn't to be found in Sade's catalogue. The assault on one's sensibility is of a kind that is literally stupefying; in other words, one loses one's bearings. As far as this is concerned, one might even say that the effect in question is achieved artlessly, without any consideration for an economy of means, but through the accumulation of details and perepetia, to which is added a whole stuffing of treatises and rationalizations whose contradictions are of particular interest to us and that we can analyze in detail.

It takes a crude mind to assume that the treatises are simply there to make the erotic passages acceptable. Even minds that are far subtler have attributed to such treatises, dubbed digressions, a loss of suggestive tension on the level that the subtler minds in question – I am thinking of Georges Bataille – consider to be that of the works' true value, namely, their power to open up the possibility of the assumption of being on the level of immorality.

That's a mistake. The real problem is something else. It is nothing else but the response of a being, whether reader or writer, at the approach to a center of incandescence or an absolute zero that is physically unbearable. The fact that the book falls from one's hands no doubt proves that it is bad, but literary badness here is perhaps the guarantee of the very badness or *mauvaisité*, as it was still called in the eighteenth century, that is the object of our investigation. As a consequence, Sade's work belongs to the order of what I shall call experimental literature. The work of art in this case is an experiment that through its action cuts the subject loose from his psychosocial moorings – or to be more precise, from all psychosocial appreciation of the sublimation involved.

There is no better example of such a work than the one which I hope some of you at least are addicted to – addicted to in the same sense as "addicted to opium" – namely, the *Songs of Maldoror* by Lautréamont. And it is only fitting if Maurice Blanchot combines the points of view he presents us with on these two authors.

But with Sade the social reference is retained, and he claims to valorize socially his extravagant system, whence his astonishing avowals that suggest incoherence and lead to a multiple contradiction, which one would be wrong to ascribe purely and simply to the absurd. The absurd has recently become a somewhat too convenient category. One respects the dead, but I can't avoid noting the indulgence shown by a certain Nobel Prize winner to all the mumbo jumbo on the topic.[1] That prize is a wonderful universal reward for "knav-

[1] The reference is to Albert Camns, who received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1957.

ery"; its honor roll bears the stigmata of a form of abjection in our culture.

By way of conclusion, I will focus on two terms that point to the next stage in our project.

When one approaches that central emptiness, which up to now has been the form in which access to *jouissance* has presented itself to us, my neighbor's body breaks into pieces. Proclaiming the law of *jouissance* as the foundation of some ideally utopian social system, Sade expresses himself in italics in the nice little edition of *Juliette* published recently by Pauvert, though it is still a book that circulates surreptiously: "Lend me the part of your body that will give me a moment of satisfaction and, if you care to, use for your own pleasure that part of my body which appeals to you."

We find in this formulation of the fundamental law, which expresses the side of Sade's social system that claims to be socially viable, the first considered manifestation of something that we psychaoanlysts have come to know as part object.

But when the notion of part object is articulated in that way, we imply that this part object only wants to be reintegrated into the object, into the already valorized object, the object of our love and tenderness, the object that brings together within it all the virtues of the so-called genital stage. Yet we should consider the problem a little differently; we should notice that this object is necessarily in a state of independence in a field that we take to be central as if by convention. The total object, our neighbor, is silhouetted there, separate from us and rising up, if I may say so, like the image of Carpaccio's San Giorgio degli Schiavone in Venice, in the midst of a charnel house figure.

The second term that Sade teaches us concerns that which appears in the fantasm as the indestructible character of the Other, and emerges in the figure of his victim.

Whether in *Justine* itself or in a certain Sadean posterity that is less than distinguished, namely, that erotic or pornographic posterity, which recently produced one of its finest works, *The Story of O-*, the victim survives the worst of her ordeals, and she doesn't even suffer in her sensual power of attraction, that the author never ceases evoking, as is always the case in such descriptions; she always has the prettiest eyes in the world, the most pathetic and touching appearance. That the author always insists on placing his subjects under such a stereotyped heading poses a problem in itself.

It seems that whatever happens to the subject is incapable of spoiling the image in question, incapable even of wearing it out. But Sade, who is different in character from those who offer us these entertaining little stories, goes further, since we see emerge in him in the distance the idea of eternal punishment. I will come back to this point, because it amounts to a strange contradiction in a writer who wants nothing of himself to survive, who doesn't even want any part of the site of his tomb to remain accessible to men, but wants

it instead to be covered with bracken. Doesn't that indicate that he locates in the fantasm the content of the most intimate part of himself, which we have called the neighbor, or in other words the *metipsemus?*

I will finish my lecture today on a point of detail. By what deep attachments is it that a certain relationship to the Other, that we call Sadistic, reveals its true connection to the psychology of the obsessional? – the obsessional, whose defenses take the form of an iron frame, of a rigid mold, a corset, in which he remains and locks himself up, so as to stop himself having access to that which Freud somewhere calls a horror he himself doesn't know.

March 30, 1960

PARENTHESIS

The Death Drive According to Bernfeld

You will not be hearing the continuation of my last lecture today. You will not be hearing it for personal reasons.

The break occasioned by the vacation was used by me to prepare an article for the next issue of our periodical, which is devoted to structure, and it took me back to an earlier period of my thinking. It also broke my rhythm relative to the subject I am exploring with you, namely, the deeper dimension of analytical thought, work and technique that I am calling ethics.

I read over what I said last time, and, believe me, it's not bad at all. It is because I want to stay at that level that I will postpone the continuation until next time.

We have at present reached that barrier beyond which the analytical Thing is to be found, the place where brakes are applied, where the inaccessibility of the object as object of *jouissance* is organized. It is in brief the place where the battlefield of our experience is situated. This crucial point is at the same time the new element psychoanalysis brings, however inaccessible it may be in the field of ethics.

In order to compensate for that inaccessibility, all individual sublimation is projected beyond that barrier, along with the sublimations of the systems of knowledge, including – why not? – that of analytical knowledge itself.

That's something I will probably be obliged to articulate for you next time; that is to say, the last word of Freud's thought, and especially that concerning the death drive, appears in the field of analytical thought as a sublimation.

From this point of view, it seemed to me to be useful, by way of a parenthesis, to give you the background against which this notion might be formulated. In the usual spirit of a seminar, I have, therefore, asked Mr. Kaufmann to summarize for us what the representatives of a good psycho-

analytic generation, namely, Bernfeld and his collaborator Freitelberg, thought up on the subject of the meaning of the drive, so as to try to give it its fullest extension in the scientific context of the time, where they believe it should be situated.

As a result, you will learn about a moment in the history of psychoanalytic thought today. You know the importance I attach to such moments, precisely because in their very aporia I often teach you to find an authentic ridge in the land across which we are traveling.

You will see the difficulties encountered by Bernfeld in his attempt to insert the death drive in a theory of energy that is no doubt already dated, but that is definitely that of the context in which Freud was speaking. Mr. Kaufmann has made a great many helpful comments on the common fund of scientific notions from which Freud borrowed some of his terms, terms that we misread simply by taking them as is, and limiting ourselves to Freud's enunciation of them alone. It is, of course, true that their internal coherence gives them their meaning, but knowing from which period discourse they were borrowed is never futile. [Mr. Kaufmann's presentation follows]

I would like to thank Mr. Kaufmann emphatically for having helped us to unravel the chain of reflections represented by these three essential articles of Bernfeld's.

If to some of you – and I hope that such is the case with as few as possible – the whole thing may have seemed to be a mere detour relative to the overall plan of our research, it is certainly not an *hors-d'oeuvre*. If the death drive in Freud encounters in Bernfeld's work the objection that it supposedly teaches us nothing about the phenomenon from within, you will see that it teaches us a lot about the space in which Freud's thought moves. In a word, you have heard enough to know that this dimension is, properly speaking, that of the subject. It is the necessary condition for the natural phenomenon of the instinct in entropy to be taken up at the level of the person, so that it may take on the value of an oriented instinct and is significant for the system insofar as the latter as a whole is situated in an ethical dimension.

We would be wrong to be surprised, otherwise this would be neither the method nor the therapeutic nor indeed ascetic way, of our analytical experience.

April 27, 1960

XVI

The death drive

MARX AND THE PROGRESSIVES
JOUISSANCE, THE SATISFACTION OF A DRIVE
THE SYSTEM OF POPE PIUS VI
CREATIONISM AND EVOLUTIONISM
WOMAN AS *EX NIHILO*

I wouldn't want to begin my seminar today without telling you briefly what I didn't have time to tell you yesterday at the meeting of our Society.

We heard a remarkable paper, given by someone who wasn't trying to revolutionize the field of hysteria, and who wasn't in a position to bring us an immense or original body of experience, since the person involved is only just beginning his career in psychoanalysis; nevertheless, his very complete and, as was noted, perhaps overly rich presentation was extremely well articulated.

That doesn't mean that it was perfect. And if I had felt it necessary to force the issue by intervening after the somewhat premature termination of the discussion, I would certainly have rectified certain points made concerning the relations of the hysteric to the ego ideal and the ideal ego, notably in the element of uncertainty in the linking of these two functions.

But that isn't important. A presentation of the kind in question reveals how the categories that I have been striving to promote in this seminar for years prove to be useful and allow one to articulate things with some precision. They shed a light that is adequate to the limits of our experience. And however much one may take issue with some point of detail or other, you can see the theoretical concepts come alive as if by themselves, and make contact with the level of experience.

We have spoken about the relations between the hysteric and the signifier. In our clincial experience we can feel its presence at every moment, and last night you were presented with what might well be called a well-oiled machine that started working before your very eyes. So many points were presented to the test of experience, but the whole brought you into direct contact with the convergence of the theoretical notions I have given you and the structure that concerns us, namely, a structure that is defined by the fact that the

subject is to be situated in the signifier. Directly in front of us, we see appear the "It speaks."[1]

The "It speaks" derived from theory joins everyday clinical experience.

We saw the hysteric come alive in her own sphere, and not by reference to obscure forces that are unevenly divided in a space that is not moreover homogeneous – the latter is typical of a discourse that only claims to be analytical. The reason it can only claim to be analytical is that it alienates itself in all kinds of references to sciences that are altogether worthy in their own domain, but which are often only involved by the theorist so as to mask his clumsiness in moving about in his own sphere.

This is not simply a form of homage paid to the work you heard, nor is it a simple *hors-d'oeuvre* to what I am attempting with you, but a reminder that I am trying with all the means at my disposal, which are simply those of experience, to make the ethical dimension of psychoanalysis come alive before you.

1

I don't claim to do anything more this year than I have done in years past in the form of a progressive development – from the first reference to speech and to language up to the attempt last year to define the function of desire in the economy of our experience – that is guided by Freudian thought.

In this discussion of Freud's thought I do not proceed like a professor. The usual approach of professors to the thought of those who happen to have taught us something in the course of human history generally consists in formulating it in such a way that it can only be seen from its narrowest and most partial side. Hence the impression of taking in deep breaths one always has when one goes directly to the original texts – I am, of course, referring to texts that are worthwhile.

One never goes beyond Descartes, Kant, Marx, Hegel and a few others because they mark a line of inquiry, a true orientation. One never goes beyond Freud either. Nor does one attempt to measure his contribution quantitatively, draw up a balance sheet – what's the point of that? One uses him. One moves around within him. One takes one's bearings from the direction he points in. What I am offering you here is an attempt to articulate the essence of an experience that has been guided by Freud. It is in no way an effort to measure the volume of his contribution or summarize him.

[1] "Le ça parle." "Le ça" is the everyday French word Lacan prefers to translate "das Es." That is why "it" seems more appropriate in this particular context than "Id."

That the ethical dimension is the stuff of our experience is revealed to us in the implicit deviations in ethics that appear in the so-called objectifying notions which have been gradually laid down through the different periods of analytical thought. Isn't an implicit ethical notion contained in the concept of the offering that you often see me criticize here? Don't those unformulated, scarcely acknowledged, yet often explicit goals that are expressed in the notion of remaking the subject's ego or of accomplishing through analysis the restructuring of the subject's ego – not to speak of reformation or reform with all its implications in analysis – don't they all imply an ethical dimension? I just want to show you that it doesn't correspond to the reality of our experience, to the real dimensions in which the ethical problem is posed. Freud suggests as much through the particular orientation he has opened up for us.

Thus by leading you on to the ground of the ethics of psychoanalysis this year, I have brought you up against a certain limit that I illustrated through a confrontation, or heightening of the difference by contrast, of Kant and Sade, however paradoxical that may seem. I have led you to the point of apocalypse or of revelation of something called transgression.

This point of transgression has a significant relation to something that is involved in our inquiry into ethics, that is to say, the meaning of desire. And my discussions of previous years have taught you to make a strict distinction between desire and need in Freudian experience, which is also our own daily experience. There is no way one can reduce desire in order to make it emerge, emanate, from the dimension of need. That provides you with the framework in which our research progresses.

Let me come back to something which has a contingent character in the comments I have made to you. In a byway of one of my lectures, I made a paradoxical and even whimsical excursion on the topic of two figures that I set in opposition to one another, those of the left-wing intellectual and the right-wing intellectual.

By using these two terms in a certain register and by setting them up in opposition to each other, I might have seemed to bear witness to that imprudence which encourages indifference on political questions. In brief, it turned out that I was criticized for having emphasized in terms I chose with some care that Freud wasn't a progressive – yet I did go out of my way to say that Freud's ethics in *Civilization and Its Discontents* were humanitarian, which is not exactly to say that he was a reactionary.

The remarks made struck some as dangerous, although their accuracy was not, in fact, challenged. I was surprised that something of the kind was said to me, and especially given the political orientation from which it came. To those who may have been similarly surprised, I would encourage them to

take the time to look these things up by reading certain short works – that's always a valuable exercise, if one wants to check up on the movements of one's feelings.

I have brought one such work today. It is the first volume of Karl Marx's *Philosophical Works,* translated by Molitor, and published by Alfred Coste. I encourage those concerned to read, for example, "The Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law," or quite simply that curious little work called "The Jewish Question." Perhaps they would get a more precise notion of what Marx would think, if he were alive now, about what is called progressivism; and I mean by that a certain style of ideology, characterized by its generosity and apparently widespread in our bourgeoisie. The way in which Marx would evaluate such progressivism will be apparent to all those who look up those sources I just mentioned; they are a good, healthy standard of a certain kind of intellectual honesty.

Thus, in saying Freud was not a progressive, I didn't at all want to say, for example, that he wasn't interested in the Marxist experience. But it is nevertheless a fact that he wasn't a progressive. I am not imputing things of a political nature to Freud in saying that; it is just that he did not share certain types of bourgeois prejudice.

However, it is also a fact that Freud wasn't a Marxist. I didn't emphasize that because I don't really see the interest or the ramifications of it. I will reserve for later a discussion of the interest that the dimension opened up by Freud might have for Marxism. This point will be much more difficult to introduce, since up to now no one among the Marxists seems to have noticed particularly – if it is true that Marxists still exist – the meaning embodied in the experience opened up by Freud.

Marx takes up the tradition of a thought that culminated in the work which was the object of his perspicacious comments, namely, Hegel's *Philosophy of Law* – a work that articulates something that, as far as I know, we are still immersed in, namely, the foundation of the State, of the bourgeois State, which lays down the rules of a human organization founded on need and reason. Marx makes us see the biased, partial and incomplete character of the solution given in this framework. He shows that the harmony between need and reason is at this level only an abstract and dissociated solution.

Need and reason are harmonized only in law, but everyone is left a victim of the egoism of his private needs, of anarchy and of materialism. Marx aspires to the creation of a State where, as he puts it, human emancipation will be not only political but real, a State where man will find himself in a non-alienated relation to his own organization.

Now you know that, in spite of the openings that history has given to the direction pointed to by Marx, we don't seem to have produced integral man yet. On this road, Freud shows us – and it is in this sense that he doesn't go

beyond Marx – that, however far the articulation of the problem has been taken by the tradition of classical philosophy, the two terms of reason and of need are insufficient to permit an understanding of the domain involved when it is a question of human self-realization. It is in the structure itself that we come up against a certain difficulty, which is nothing less than the function of desire, as I have articulated it in this seminar.

It is a curious and even paradoxical fact – but analytical experience can be registered in no other way – that reason, discourse, signifying articulation as such, is there from the beginning, *ab ovo;* it is there in an unconscious form before the birth of anything as far as human experience is concerned. It is there buried, unknown, not mastered, not available to him who is its support. And it is relative to a situation structured in this way that man at a subsequent moment has to situate his needs. Man's captivity in the field of the unconscious is primordial, fundamental in character. Now, because this field is organized logically from the beginning, it embodies a *Spaltung,* which persists in the whole subsequent development; and it is in relation to this *Spaltung* that the functioning of desire as such is to be articulated. This desire reveals certain ridges, a certain sticking point, and it is for this reason that Freudian experience has found that man's route to the integration of self is a complicated one.

The problem involved is that of *jouissance,* because *jouissance* presents itself as buried at the center of a field and has the characteristics of inaccessibility, obscurity and opacity; moreover, the field is surrounded by a barrier which makes access to it difficult for the subject to the point of inaccessibility, because *jouissance* appears not purely and simply as the satisfaction of a need but as the satisfaction of a drive – that term to be understood in the context of the complex theory I have developed on this subject in this seminar.

As you were told last time, the drive as such is something extremely complex for anyone who considers it conscientiously and tries to understand Freud's articulation of it. It isn't to be reduced to the complexity of the instinct as understood in the broadest sense, in the sense that relates it to energy. It embodies a historical dimension whose true significance needs to be appreciated by us.

This dimension is to be noted in the insistence that characterizes its appearances; it refers back to something memorable because it was remembered. Remembering, "historicizing," is coextensive with the functioning of the drive in what we call the human psyche. It is there, too, that destruction is registered, that it enters the register of experience.

This is something that I will now attempt to illustrate by leading you into the sphere, not so much of the myth of Sade (the term is inappropriate) but of the fable of Sade.

2

On page seventy-eight of Volume IV of *Juliette* in the edition that is most easily accessible to you, namely, Jean-Jacques Pauvert's, Sade expounds the *System of Pope Pius VI*, since it is to this pope that the theories in question are imputed.

Sade lays out for our benefit the theory that it is through crime that man collaborates in the new creations of nature. The idea is that the pure force of nature is obstructed by its own forms, that because the three realms present fixed forms they bind nature to a limited cycle, that is, moreover, manifestly imperfect, as is demonstrated by the chaos and abundance of conflicts as well as the fundamental disorder of their reciprocal relations. As a result, the deepest concern that can be imputed to this psychic subject that is Nature is that of wanting to wipe the slate clean, so that it may begin its task once more, set out again with a new burst of energy.

This discussion is completely literary, in the sense that it is not scientifically founded, but is rather poetic in character. In this luxuriant hodge-podge, from time to time one comes across what some people might take to be tedious digressions. But as you will see, they are entertaining to read. Thus, although reading always risks distracting one's audience's attention, I am going to read a passage from Sade's system:

> Without destruction the earth would receive no nourishment and, as a result, there would be no possibility for man to reproduce his species. It is no doubt a fateful truth, since it proves in an invincible way that the vices and virtues of our social system are nothing, and that the very vices are more necessary than the virtues, because they are creative and the virtues are merely created; or, if you prefer, the vices are causes and the virtues no more than effects. . . . A too perfect harmony would thus be a greater disadvantage than disorder; and if war, discord and crime were banished from the earth, the power of the three realms would be too violent and would destroy in its turn all the other laws of nature. The celestial bodies would all stop. Their influences would be halted by the excessive power of one of them; there would be neither gravitation nor movement. It is thus men's crimes that introduce disorder into the sphere of the three realms and prevent this sphere from achieving a level of superiority that would disrupt all the others, by maintaining the perfect balance Horace called *rerum concordia discors*. Thus crime is necessary in the world. But the most useful crimes are no doubt those that disrupt the most, such as *the refusal of propagation* or *destruction;* all the others are worthless or rather only those two are worthy of the name of crime. Thus only the crimes mentioned are essential to the laws of the three realms and essential also to the laws of nature. A philosopher in antiquity called war *the mother of all things*. The existence of murderers is as necessary as plagues; without both of them everything in the universe would be upset. . . . such dissolution serves nature's purposes, since it

> recomposes that which is destroyed. Thus every change operated by man on organized matter serves nature much more than it opposes it. What am I saying? The service of nature requires far more total destructions . . . destructions much more complete than those we are able to accomplish. Nature wants atrocities and magnitude in crimes; the more our destructions are of this type, the more they will be agreeable to it. To be of even greater service to nature, one should seek to prevent the regeneration of the body that we bury. Murder only takes the first life of the individual whom we strike down; we should also seek to take his second life, if we are to be even more useful to nature. For nature wants annihilation; it is beyond our capacity to achieve the scale of destruction it desires.

I presume that you have grasped the significance of the core of this last statement. It takes us to the heart of what was explained last time, in connection with the death drive, as the point of division between the Nirvana or annihilation principle, on the one hand, and the death drive, on the other – the former concerns a relationship to a fundamental law which might be identified with that which energetics theorizes as the tendency to return to a state, if not of absolute rest, then at least of universal equilibrium.

The death drive is to be situated in the historical domain; it is articulated at a level that can only be defined as a function of the signifying chain, that is to say, insofar as a reference point, that is a reference point of order, can be situated relative to the functioning of nature. It requires something from beyond whence it may itself be grasped in a fundamental act of memorization, as a result of which everything may be recaptured, not simply in the movement of the metamorphoses but from an initial intention.

This is to schematize what you heard last time in Mr. Kaufmann's very full and helpful summary of the work of Bernfeld and Feitelberg; it brought out the three stages at which the death drive is articulated. At the level of material systems considered to be inanimate – and, therefore, including that which involves material organization within living organisms – the operation of an irreversible tendency that proceeds in the direction of the advent of a terminal state of equilibrium is, properly speaking, something that in energetics is known as entropy. That is the first meaning that can be given to the death drive in Freud. Is that what is, in fact, involved?

Bernfeld and Feitelberg's text adds something particularly relevant to Freud's on the subject of the difference introduced by a living structure. In inanimate physical systems the dimensions of intensity and extension involved in the formula of energetics are homogeneous. According to Bernfeld living organizations as such are distinguished by the element of structure – in Goldstein's sense of the structure of an organism – that causes the two poles of the equation to become heterogeneous. That is posited at the elementary level between the nucleus and the cytoplasm as well as at the level of superior

organisms between the neurological apparatus and the rest of the structure. That heterogeneity is responsible for the conflict at the level of the living structure from the beginning.

It is at this point that Bernfeld says, "I will stop here." According to him, what one finds in the drive as articulated by Freud is a general tendency of all systems to return to a state of equilibrium insofar as they are subject to the energetic equation. That may be called an instinct, as the orthodox Freudian, Bernfeld, expresses it, but it isn't what we psychoanalysts designate as the drive in our discourse.

The drive as such, insofar, as it is then a destruction drive, has to be beyond the instinct to return to the state of equilibrium of the inanimate sphere. What can it be if it is not a direct will to destruction, if I may put it like that by way of illustration?

Don't put the emphasis on the term "will" here. Whatever interest may have been aroused in Freud by an echo in Schopenhauer, it has nothing to do with the idea of a fundamental *Wille*. And it is only to make you sense the difference of register relative to the instinct to return to equilibrium that I am using the word in this way here. Will to destruction. Will to make a fresh start. Will for an Other-thing, given that everything can be challenged from the perspective of the function of the signifier.

If everything that is immanent or implicit in the chain of natural events may be considered as subject to the so-called death drive, it is only because there is a signifying chain. Freud's thought in this matter requires that what is involved be articulated as a destruction drive, given that it challenges everything that exists. But it is also a will to create from zero, a will to begin again.

This dimension is introduced as soon as the historical chain is isolated, and the history presents itself as something memorable and memorized in the Freudian sense, namely, something that is registered in the signifying chain and dependent on its existence.

That's what I am illustrating by quoting the passage from Sade. Not that Freud's notion of the death drive is not a notion that is scientifically unjustifiable, but it is of the same order as Sade's Pope Pius VI. As in Sade, the notion of the death drive is a creationist sublimation, and it is linked to that structural element which implies that, as soon as we have to deal with anything in the world appearing in the form of the signifying chain, there is somewhere – though certainly outside of the natural world – which is the beyond of that chain, the *ex nihilo* on which it is founded and is articulated as such.

I am not telling you that the notion of the death wish in Freud is not something very suspect in itself – as suspect and, I would say, almost as ridiculous as Sade's idea. Can anything be poorer or more worthless after all

than the idea that human crimes might, for good or evil, contribute in some way to the cosmic maintenance of the *rerum concordia discors?*

It is even doubly suspect, since it amounts in the end to substituting a subject for Nature – and that is how I read *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.* However we construct this subject, it turns out to have as its support a subject who knows, or Freud, in effect, since he is the one who discovered the beyond of the pleasure priniple. Nevertheless, Freud is consistent with himself in also pointing, at the limit of our experience, to a field in which the subject, if he exists, is incontestably a subject who doesn't know in a point of extreme, if not absolute, ignorance. One finds there the core of Freudian exploration.

I don't even say that at this point of speculation things still have a meaning. I simply want to say that the articulation of the death drive in Freud is neither true nor false. It is suspect; that's all I affirm. But it suffices for Freud that it was necessary, that it leads him to an unfathomable spot that is problematic, since it reveals the structure of the field. It points to the site that I designate alternatively as impassable or as the site of the Thing. Freud evokes there his sublimation concerning the death instinct insofar as that sublimation is fundamentally creationist.

One also finds there the essential point of the warning whose tone and note I have given you on more than one occasion: beware of that register of thought known as evolutionism. Beware of it for two reasons. What I have to tell you now may seem dogmatic, but that's more apparent than real.

The first reason is that, however much the evolutionist movement and Freud's thought may share in terms of contemporaneity and historical affinities, there is a fundamental contradiction between the hypotheses of the one and the thought of the other. I have already indicated the necessity of the moment of creation *ex nihilo* as that which gives birth to the historical dimension of the drive. In the beginning was the Word, which is to say, the signifier. Without the signifier at the beginning, it is impossible for the drive to be articulated as historical. And this is all it takes to introduce the dimension of the *ex nihilo* into the structure of the analytical field.

The second reason may seem paradoxical to you; it is nevertheless essential: the creationist perspective is the only one that allows one to glimpse the possibility of the radical elimination of God.

It is paradoxically only from a creationist point of view that one can envisage the elimination of the always recurring notion of creative intention as supported by a person. In evolutionist thought, although God goes unnamed throughout, he is literally omnipresent. An evolution that insists on deducing from continuous process the ascending movement which reaches the summit of consciousness and thought necessarily implies that that consciousness and that thought were there at the beginning. It is only from the point of view of

an absolute beginning, which marks the origin of the signifying chain as a distinct order and which isolates in their own specific dimension the memorable and the remembered, that we do not find Being *[l'être]* always implied in being *[l'étant]*, the implication that is at the core of evolutionist thought.

It isn't difficult to make what is called thought emerge from the evolution of matter, when one identifies thought with consciousness. What is difficult to make emerge from the evolution of matter is quite simply *homo faber*, production and the producer.

Production is an original domain, a domain of creation *ex nihilo*, insofar as it introduces into the natural world the organization of the signifier. It is for this reason that we only, in effect, find thought – and not in an idealist sense, but thought in its actualization in the world – in the intervals introduced by the signifier.

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This field that I call the field of the Thing, this field onto which is projected something beyond, something at the point of origin of the signifying chain, this place in which doubt is cast on all that is the place of being, on the chosen place in which sublimation occurs, of which Freud gives us the most massive example – where do the view and notion of it emerge from?

It is also the place of the work that man strangely enough courts; that is why the first example I gave you was taken from courtly love. You have to admit that to place in this beyond a creature such as woman is a truly incredible idea.

Rest assured that I am in no way passing a derogatory judgment on such beings. In our cultural context, one isn't exposed to any danger by being situated as absolute object in the beyond of the pleasure principle. Let them go back to their own problems, which are homogeneous with our own, that is to say, just as difficult. That's not the issue.

If the incredible idea of situating woman in the place of being managed to surface, that has nothing to do with her as a woman, but as an object of desire. And it is that which has given rise to all the paradoxes of the famous courtly love that have caused so many headaches, because those concerned associate it with all the demands of a form of love that obviously has nothing to do with the historically specific sublimation in question.

The historians or poets who have attacked the problem cannot manage to conceive how the fever, indeed the frenzy, that is so manifestly coextensive with a lived desire, which is not at all Platonic and is indubitably manifested in the productions of courtly poetry, can be reconciled with the obvious fact that the being to whom it is addressed is nothing other than being as signifier. The inhuman character of the object of courtly love is plainly visible. This love that led some people to acts close to madness was addressed at living beings, people with names, but who were not present in their fleshly and

historical reality – there's perhaps a distinction to be made there. They were there in any case in their being as reason, as signifier.

By the way this is what explains the extraordinary series of ten-line stanzas by the poet Arnaud Daniel that I read to you. One finds there the response of the shepherdess to her shepherd, for the woman responds for once from her place, and instead of playing along, at the extreme point of his invocation to the signifier, she warns the poet of the form she may take as signifier. I am, she tells him, nothing more than the emptiness to be found in my own internal cesspit, not to say anything worse. Just blow in that for a while and see if your sublimation holds up.

That's not to say there is no other solution to the perspective of the field of the Thing. Another solution that is also historically specific and, curiously enough, occurs at a period that isn't so different from the one I have just referred to, is perhaps a little more serious. It is called in Sade the Supreme-Being-in-Evil.

I say Sade because I prefer relatively close, living references to remote ones, but it is not just an invention of Sade's. It belongs to a long historical tradition, which goes at least as far back as Manicheism, if not beyond, that Manicheism which was already referred to in the time of courtly love.

In the time of courtly love there were people to whom I made a passing reference, the Cathars, and they did not doubt the fact that the Prince of this world was quite similar to this Supreme-Being-in-Evil. The *Grimmigkeit* of Boehme's God, fundamental evil as one of the dimensions of supreme life, proves that it is not simply in libertine and antireligious thought that this dimension may be evoked.

The Cathars were not Gnostics; everything indicates that they were even good Christians. The practice of their sacrament, the *consolamentum,* is sufficient proof of that. The idea they had of salvation, which is not different from the fundamental idea of Christianity, was that there is a word that saves; and the *consolamentum* was nothing more than the transmission from one subject to another of the blessing of this word. They were people who placed all of their hope in the advent of a word. In short, people who took quite seriously the message of Christianity.

The trouble is that for such a word to be not so much effective as viable, it has to be separated from discourse. Yet there is nothing more difficult than separating a word from discourse. You put your faith in a word that saves, but as soon as you begin at this level, the whole discourse comes running after you. And this is something that the Cathars didn't fail to notice in the shape of the ecclesiastical authorities, who manifested themselves briefly as the bad word and taught them that one still has to explain oneself even if one belongs to the pure. Now everybody knows that as soon as one begins to be questioned by discourse on this subject, even if it is the discourse of the

Church, then the matter can only end in one way. You are definitively silenced.

We have now arrived at a certain limit, that is to say, the field which opens on to what is involved relative to desire. How can we get any closer? How can we question this field? What happens when one doesn't project one's dreams there in a sublimated way, and that thematics emerges to which the most sober of minds are reduced, the most commonplace and the most scientific, even including a certain petty bourgeois from Vienna? What happens to us whenever the hour of desire sounds?

Well, we don't get any closer and for the best of reasons.

This will be the focus of my next lecture. One doesn't get any closer on account of the very reasons that structure the domain of the good in the most traditional sense, which is linked by a whole tradition to pleasure. It wasn't the coming of Freud that introduced a radical revolution in antiquity's point of view on the good insofar as it can be deduced from the paths of pleasure. I will try next time to show you where things stood at the time of Freud; this historical crossroads I am taking you back to is that of utility.

This time I hope to gauge for you in a definitive way and from a Freudian point of view the ethical register of utilitarianism. Freud on this occasion allows himself to go definitively beyond it; he articulates that which is basically valid in it and that which at the same time bounds it, and points to its limits.

I will try to discuss the point of view not only of the progress of thought, but also of the evolution of history, in order to demystify the Platonic and the Aristotelian view of the good, indeed of the Supreme Good, and to situate it on the level of the economy of goods.[2] It is essential to grasp the issue from the Freudian perspective of the pleasure principle and the reality principle, if one is go on to conceive the novelty of what Freud brings to the domain of ethics.

Beyond this place of restraint constituted by the concatenation and circuit of goods, a field nevertheless remains open to us that allows us to draw closer to the central field. The good is not the only, the true, or the single barrier that separates us from it.

What is this second barrier? I will tell you right away, and it will probably seem quite natural to you once I haave told you. But it isn't after all so self-evident. It is a domain in relation to which Freud always revealed a great deal of reticence; and it really is strange that he didn't identify it. The true barrier that holds the subject back in front of the unspeakable field of radical desire that is the field of absolute destruction, of destruction beyond putrefaction,

[2] English usage, unlike French usage, generally limits the plural of "the good," namely, "the goods" to a specific and material meaning. Here and in what follows, however, "goods" in the plural is to be read as also retaining the ethical connotations implied by the singular.

is properly speaking the aesthetic phenomenon where it is identified with the experience of beauty – beauty in all its shining radiance, beauty that has been called the splendor of truth. It is obviously because truth is not pretty to look at that beauty is, if not its splendor, then at least its envelope.

In other words, I will explain next time our forward march resumes that on the scale that separates us from the central field of desire, if the good constitutes the first stopping place, the beautiful forms the second and gets closer. It stops us, but it also points in the direction of the field of destruction.

That in this sense, when one aims for the center of moral experience, the beautiful is closer to evil than to the good, shouldn't, I hope, surprise you very much. As we have long said in French: "Better is the enemy of the good."

May 4, 1960

XVII

The function of the good

SAINT AUGUSTINE AND SADE
MEMORY, FACILITATION, RITE
THE SUBJECT, ELISION OF A SIGNIFIER
THE TEXTILE FABLE
UTILITY AND *JOUISSANCE*

We have reached the barrier of desire then, and, as I indicated last time, I will speak about the good. The good has always had to situate itself on that barrier. I shall be concerned today with the way in which psychoanalysis enables one to articulate that situation.

I will speak then about the good, and perhaps what I have to say will be bad in the sense that I don't have all the goodness required to speak well of it. I won't perhaps speak too well of it because I am myself not quite well enough to speak at that high level the subject requires. But the idea of nature that I have told you about means that I will not be stopped by such an accidental contingency. I simply ask you to excuse the presentation if at the end you are not completely satisfied.

1

The question of the good is as close as possible to our sphere of action. All exchanges between men and especially interventions of the type we engage in are usually placed under the tutelage and authority of the good – the perspective is a sublime one, indeed a sublimated one. Now sublimation could be defined from a certain point of view as an opinion in the Platonic sense of the term, an opinion arranged in such a way as to reach something that might be the object of science, but that science doesn't manage to reach where it is to be found. A sublimation of any kind, even including that universal, the good itself, may be momentarily in this brief parenthesis considered to be a phony science.

Everything in your analytical experience suggests that the notion and finality of the good are problematic for you. Which good are you pursuing precisely as far as your passion is concerned? That question concerning our behavior is always on the agenda. At every moment we need to know what our effective relationship is to the desire to do good, to the desire to cure.

We have to deal with that as if it were something that is likely to lead us astray, and in many cases to do so instantly. I will even add that one might be paradoxical or trenchant and designate our desire as a non-desire to cure. Such a phrase is meaningful only insofar as it constitutes a warning against the common approaches to the good that offer themselves with a seeming naturalness, against the benevolent fraud of wanting-to-do-one's-best-for-the-subject.

But in that case what do you want to cure the subject of? There is no doubt that this is central to our experience, to our approach, to our inspiration – wanting to cure him from the illusions that keep him on the path of his desire. But how far can we go in this direction? Moreover, even if these illusions are not respectable in themselves, the subject still has to want to give them up. Is the limit of resistance here simply individual?

Here the question of different goods[1] is raised in their relation to desire. All kinds of tempting goods offer themselves to the subject; and you know how imprudent it would be for us to put ourselves in a position of promising the subject access to them all, to follow "the American way." It is nevertheless the possibility of having access to the goods of this world that determines a certain way of approaching psychoanalysis – what I have called "the American way." It also determines a certain way of arriving at the psychoanalyst's and making one's demand.

Before entering into the problem of different goods, I would like to sketch out the illusions on the path of desire. Breaking these illusions is a question of specialized knowledge – knowledge of good and evil indeed – that is located in this central field whose irreducible, ineradicable character in our experience I have attempted to show you. It is bound up with that prohibition, that reservation, that we explored specifically last year when I spoke to you about desire and its interpretation. I pointed to its essential character in the notion of "he didn't know," which is in the imperfect tense in French and which remains centrally within the field of enunciation, or in other words within the deepest relationship of the subject to signifying practice. That is to say, the subject is not the agent but the support, given that he couldn't even calculate the consequences. It is through his relationship to signifying practice that, as a consequence, he emerges as subject.

Moreover, to refer to that fantasmic experience that I chose to produce before you so as to exemplify the central field involved in desire, don't forget the moments of fantasmic creation in Sade, moments in which one finds expressed directly – in diabolically jubilatory terms that make it intolerable to read – the idea that the greatest cruelty is that the subject's fate is displayed before his eyes with his full awareness of it. The plot against the

[1] See note 2 above, p. 216.

victim is openly hatched in front of him. The value of this fantasm is that it confronts the subject with the most radical kind of interrogation, with a final "he didn't know," insofar as expressed thus in the imperfect tense, the question asked is too much for him. I just ask you to recall the ambiguity revealed by linguistic experience in connection with the French imperfect. When one says "a moment later and the bomb exploded (éclatait)," that may mean two contradictory things in French, namely, either the bomb did, in fact, explode or something happened which caused it not to explode.

We have now reached the subject of the good. The subject is in no sense new, and one has to admit that thinkers from earlier periods, whose concerns may for one reason or another seem dated to us, nonetheless sometimes formulate the issues in interesting ways. I have nothing against bringing them to your attention, however strange they may seem when presented here out of context in an apparently abstract form that doesn't seem designed to arouse our interest. Thus, when Saint Augustine writes the following in Book VII, Chapter XII, of his *Confessions*, I think it deserves far more than an indulgent smile.

That everything that is, is good, because it is the work of God.

I understood that all corruptible things are good, and that they wouldn't be corruptible if they were sovereignly good; no corruption would occur if they were not good. For if they were of sovereign good, they would be incorruptible, and if they had no good in them, there would be nothing in them capable of being corrupted, since corruption injures that which it corrupts, and it can only injure it if diminishes good.

And now we come to the core of the argument in the French version of the Garnier edition.

Thus either corruption causes no damage, which cannot be upheld, or all things that are corrupted lose some good, which is undeniable. That if they had lost everything that was good, they would no longer exist at all. Or in other words, if they continued to live without being susceptible to corruption any longer, they would be in a more perfect state than they were before having lost all that was good about them, since they would remain forever in an incorruptible state.

I assume that you grasp the core and indeed the irony of this argument, and moreover that it is precisely the question that interests us. If it is unbearable to realize that everything that is good is extracted from the heart of all things, what can we say of that which remains, which is, after all, something, something different? The question goes echoing down through the centuries and down through human experience. We find it again in *The Story of Juliette*, with the difference that it is attached, as it should be, to the question of the Law, and in a no less odd way. I would like to draw your attention to this

oddness because it is the oddness of a structure that is at issue. Sade writes as follows:

> Tyrants are never born out of anarchy. One only ever sees them rise up in the shadow of laws; they derive their authority from laws. The reign of law is, therefore, evil; it is inferior to anarchy. The greatest proof of this position is the obligation of any government to plunge back into anarchy whenever it wants to remake its constitution. In order to abrogate its ancient laws, it is obliged to establish a revolutionary regime in which there are no laws. Under this regime new laws are eventually born, but the second is less pure than the first since it derives from it, since the first good, anarchy, had to occur, if one wanted to achieve the second good, the State's constitution.

I give you this as a fundamental example. The same kind of argument, formulated by minds that were certainly very remote from one another in their concerns, clearly shows that some form of necessity must exist there that gives rise to this sort of logical stumbling along a certain path.

As far as we are concerned, the question of the good is articulated first of all in its relationship to the Law. On the other hand, nothing is more tempting than to evade the question of the good behind the implication of some natural law, of some harmony to be found on the way to the elucidation of desire. Yet our daily experience proves to us that beneath what we call the subject's defenses, the paths leading to the pursuit of the good only reveal themselves to us constantly, and I would add, in their original form, in the guise of some alibi on the part of the subject. The whole analytical experience is no more than an invitation to the revelation of his desire; and it changes the primitiveness of the relationship of the subject to the good compared to everything which up to that point had been articulated by the philosophers. One has undoubtedly to look closely, for it seems at first that nothing is changed, and that with Freud the compass still points toward the register of pleasure.

I have emphasized this since the beginning of the year: from the origin of moral philosophy, from the moment when the term ethics acquired the meaning of man's reflection on his condition and calculation of the proper paths to follow, all meditation on man's good has taken place as a function of the index of pleasure. And I mean all, since Plato, certainly since Aristotle, and down through the Stoics, the Epicureans, and even through Christian thought itself in Saint Thomas Aquinas. As far as the determination of different goods is concerned, things have clearly developed along the paths of an essentially hedonist problematic. It is only too evident that all that has involved the greatest of difficulties, and that these difficulties are those of experience. And in order to resolve them, all the philosophers have been led to discern not true pleasures from false, for such a distinction is impossible to make, but the true and false goods that pleasure points to.

Doesn't Freud's articulation of the pleasure principle give us an advantage, a reward in terms of knowledge and clarity?

Isn't it in a definitive way profoundly different from the meaning previously given to pleasure by anyone else?

2

Let me just draw your attention to the fact that the conception of the pleasure principle is inseparable from the reality principle, that it is in a dialectical relationship with it. But one has to begin, and I would simply like to begin by pointing out what Freud articulates exactly.

Notice how the pleasure principle is articulated from the *Entwurf*, where we began this year, right up to the end in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. The end illuminates the beginning, and one can already see in the *Entwurf* the nerve center to which I want to draw your attention for a moment.

Apparently there is no doubt that the pleasure principle organizes the final reactions for the human psyche, there is no doubt that pleasure is articulated in relation to the presupposition of a satisfaction, and it is driven by a lack in the order of need that the subject becomes caught up in its toils, until a perception occurs that is identical to that which first gave satisfaction. The crudest of references to the reality principle indicates that one finds satisfaction along paths that have already procured it. But look a little closer: is that all Freud has to say? Certainly not. The originality of the *Entwurf* resides in the notion of facilitations that control the distribution of libidinal investments in such a way that a certain level beyond which the degree of excitation is unbearable for the subject is never exceeded.

The introduction of the function of facilitations opens on to a theme that will become increasingly important as Freud's thought develops, in light of the fact that Freud's thought is his experience.

I have been criticized for having said that, from the point of view of ethics, our experience derives its exemplary value from the fact that it doesn't recognize the dimension of habit, in terms of which human behavior has customarily been assumed to be a process of improvement, of training. In this connection, the notion of facilitation has been used against me. I reject this opposition. The recourse to facilitation in Freud has nothing at all to do with the function of habit as it is defined when one thinks of a learning process. With Freud, it is not a question of creative imprinting but of the pleasure engendered by the functioning of the facilitations. Now the core of the pleasure principle is situated at the level of subjectivity. Facilitation is not a mechanical effect; it is invoked as the pleasure of a facility, and it will be taken up again as the pleasure of a repetition or, more precisely, as repetition

compulsion. The core of Freudian thought as it is deployed by us as analysts, whether we attend this seminar or not, is that the function of memory, remembering, is at the very least a rival of the satisfactions it is charged with effecting. It has its own dimension whose reach goes beyond that of a satisfying finality. The tyranny of memory is that which is elaborated in what we call structure.

Such is the originality, the breakthrough, one cannot avoid emphasizing, if one wants to see clearly what is new in the conception of human behavior introduced by Freudian thought and experience. No doubt if someone wants to fill that fault line, he can always claim that nature involves cycles and returns. Faced with that objection, I won't affirm that he's mad; I will just suggest the terms you may use to respond.

A natural cycle is perhaps immanent in everything that exists. Moreover, it is highly diverse in its registers and levels. But I ask you to consider the break that, in the order of the manifestation of the real embodied in the cycle, is introduced by the simple fact that man is the bearer of language.

His relation to a couple of signifiers is all it takes, such as, for example, to make a traditional reference in the sketchiest of modes, *yin* and *yang*, that is to say, two signifiers, one of which is assumed to be eclipsed by the rise and return of the other – I don't care particularly for *yin* and *yang;* you can choose sine and cosine instead if you like. In other words, the structure engendered by memory must not in our experience mask the structure of memory itself insofar as it is made of a signifying articulation. If you omit it, you absolutely cannot maintain the register that is essential in the articulation of our experience, namely, the autonomy, the dominance, the agency of remembering as such, and not at the level of the real, but of the functioning of the pleasure principle.

This is not a Byzantine discussion. Thus if we create a fault line and an abyss, alternatively we fill in elsewhere something that also had the appearance of a fault line and an abyss. And it is here that one can see that the subject as such is born, a subject, moreover, whose emergence is unjustified by anything else.

As I have already pointed out, the finality of the evolution of matter toward consciousness is a mystical, elusive notion, and one that is properly speaking historically indeterminable. There is no homogeneity between the order of the apparition of phenomena, whether they be premonitory, preliminary, partial, or preparatory to consciousness, and any kind of natural order, because it is through its current state that consciousness manifests itself as a phenomenon whose activity is completely erratic and, I would even say, fragmented. It is at levels that are very different from our relationship to our own real that the mark or the touch of consciousness appears, but in the absence of any

continuity or homogeneiety of consciousness. Freud came up against this fact more than once in his investigations, and he always emphasized the fact that consciousness cannot be functionalized.

With relation to the functioning of the signifying chain, on the other hand, our subject has a place in history that is quite solid and almost locatable. The function of the subject on its emergence, of the original subject, of the subject that may be traced in the chain of phenomena, we have a completely new formula for him, one that is capable of objective localization. A subject originally represents nothing more than the following fact: he can forget. Strike out that "he"; the subject is literally at his beginning the elision of a signifier as such, the missing signifier in the chain.

Such is the first place, the first person. Here the appearance of the subject is manifested as such; and it makes us directly aware of why and in what way the notion of the unconscious is central in our experience.

If you start at that point, you will see the explanation of a great many things, including that strange phenomenon that can be pinpointed in history that we call rites. I mean those rites by which man in so-called primitive civilizations believes he must accompany one of the most natural things in the world, namely, the return of natural cycles themselves. If the Emperor of China doesn't start the ploughing at a given day in spring, the rhythm of the seasons will be spoiled. If order is not preserved in the Royal House, the domain of the sea will advance upon the domain of the land. We still find echoes of this at the beginning of the sixteenth century in Shakespeare. What is this, if it isn't the essential relation, the one which binds the subject to the production of meaning and which makes him from the beginning responsible for forgetting? What relation can there be between man and the return of the sunrise, if it is not the case that as a speaking man he is sustained in a direct relation to the signifier? To refer to myth, the original position of man in relation to nature is that of Chantecler – which is a theme to be found in a minor poet, who might be approached more sympathetically, if I hadn't started another seminar by denouncing the figure of Cyrano de Bergerac by reducing him to a grotesque lucubration that had nothing to do with the monumental structure of the character.

We have now reached the point where we must raise the question of the good at this level.

3

The question of the good is situated athwart the pleasure principle and the reality principle. There's no possibility that from such a point of view we can escape conflict, given that we have regularly shifted the center.

It is impossible at this point not to bear witness to the following fact, one that is too little articulated in the Freudian conception itself, namely, that reality is not the simple dialectical correlative of the pleasure principle. Or more exactly, that reality isn't just there so that we bump our heads up against the false paths along which the functioning of the pleasure principle leads us. In truth, we make reality out of pleasure.

This is an essential notion. It is wholly summed up in the notion of praxis in the two senses that that word has acquired historically. On the one hand, in the domain of ethics, it concerns action, insofar as action has not just an ἔργον as its goal, but is also inscribed in an ἐνέργεια; on the other hand, it has to do with making, with the production *ex nihilo* I spoke to you about last time. It is no accident if these two meanings are subsumed under the same term.

We must see right away how crude it is to accept the idea that, in the ethical order itself, everything can be reduced to social constraint, as is so often the case in the theoretical writings of certain analysts – as if the fashion in which that constraint develops doesn't in itself raise a question for people who live within the realms of our experience. In the name of what is social constraint exercised? Of a collective tendency? Why in all this time hasn't such social constraint managed to focus on the most appropriate paths to the satisfaction of individuals' desires? Do I need to say anymore to an audience of analysts to make clear the distance that exists between the organization of desires and the organization of needs?

But who knows? Perhaps I need to insist after all.

Perhaps I would get a stronger reaction from an audience of school boys. They at least would realize right away that the order imposed in their school is not designed to enable them to jerk off under the best possible conditions. I nevertheless assume that the eyes of an analyst are made to interpret that which runs through a certain dream world, which we call, significantly enough, utopia. Take Fourier, for example, since reading him is by the way such fun. The farcical effect his work generates is instructive. He shows how distant what is called social progress is from whatever is done in the expectation, not so much of opening up the flood gates, as of merely thinking through a given collective order in terms of the satisfaction of desires. For the moment we just want to know if we can see a little more clearly here than others.

We are not the first to have gone along this road. As for myself, there is among those assembled here an audience of Marxists, and I assume that those who are part of it can recall the intimate, profound relationship, a relationship woven into the lines of the text, between what I am proposing here and Marx's fundamental discussions concerning the relations between man and the object of his production. To hurry things along, that brings us back to

that point at which I left you in a digression of my lecture before last, namely, with Saint Martin cutting in two with his sword the large piece of cloth in which he was enveloped for his journey to Cavalla.

Let's take up the point as it stands, at the level of different goods, and let's ask ourselves the question of what that piece of cloth is.

Given that with it one can make a piece of clothing, the piece of cloth has a use value with which others before me have been concerned. You would be wrong to think that the relation of man to the object of his production at its fundamental level has been completely elucidated – even by Marx, who took things very far in this respect.

I am not going to offer here a critique of economic structures. Something very interesting did happen to me, however, one of those things I enjoy because their meaning is to be found at a level that is within our grasp but that is always more or less mystifying. It seems that in my last seminar I am supposed to have made an allusion to a given chapter of the latest book of Sartre, to his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. I like the idea, since I am about to refer to it; the only problem is that the point in question has to do with thirty pages that I read for the first time last Sunday.

I don't know what to say about the work as a whole because I have only read these thirty pages, but I must say that they are pretty good. They concern precisely the original relations of man to the object of his needs. It seems to me that it is in this particular register that Sartre intends to take things to their final term, and if that is his purpose, if he does manage to be exhaustive, the work will certainly prove useful.

This fundamental relationship is defined starting from the notion of scarcity as that which founds man's condition, as that which makes him man in his relation to his needs. For a body of thought that aims for total dialectical transparency, such a final term is certainly rather obscure, whereas we have managed to introduce into this cloth, whether rare or not, a little breath of air which sets it floating and enables us to describe it in less opaque terms.

Psychoanalysts have given themselves plenty of room in the effort to see what this cloth symbolizes; they tell us what it both shows and hides, that the symbolism of clothes is a valid symbolism, without our knowing whether at any given moment what is being done with this cloth-phallus concerns disclosure or concealment. The profound bivalence of the whole of analytical theory on the subject of the symbolism of clothes enables us to evaluate the impasse reached with the notion of the symbol as handled up till now in psychoanalysis. If you are able to find the large volume of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* that was produced for Jones's fiftieth birthday, you will see an article by Flügel on the symbolism of clothes in which you will find the same impasses I pointed to, in the last issue of our journal, in Jones's

own articulation of symbolism, but in an even more striking and almost caricatural form.

In any case, all the absurd things that have been said about symbolism do nevertheless lead us somewhere. There is something hidden there, and it is always, we are told, that damned phallus. We are brought back to something that one might have expected would have been thought of right off, that is to say, to the relationship of the cloth to the missing hair – but it's not missing everywhere on our body. At this point we do find a psychoanalytic writer who tells us that all the cloth we are concerned with is nothing more than the extrapolation or development of woman's fleece, the famous fleece that hides the fact that she doesn't have what it takes. These apparent revelations of the unconscious always have their comic side. But it's not completely screwy; I even think that it's a nice little fable.

Perhaps it might even contain an element of phenomenology relative to the function of nudity. Is nudity purely and simply a natural phenomenon? The whole of psychoanalytic thought is designed to prove it isn't. The thing that is particularly exalting about it and significant in its own right is that there is a beyond of nudity that nudity hides. But we don't need to engage in phenomenology; I prefer fables.

The fable on this occasion concerns Adam and Eve, with the proviso that the dimension of the signifier also be present, the signifier as introduced by the father in the benevolent directions he gives: "Adam, you must give names to everything around you." Here is Adam, then, and here is the famous hair of an Eve that we hope is worthy of the beauty that this first gesture evokes. Adam pulls out one of her hairs. Everything I am trying to show you here turns on a hair, a frog's hair.[2] Adam pulls out a hair from the woman who is given to him as his wife, who has been expected for the whole of eternity, and the next day she comes back with a mink coat over her shoulders.

Therein lies the power of the nature of cloth. It's not because man has less hair than other animals that we have to check out everything that down the ages will burst forth from his industry. If we are to believe the linguists, the problem of different goods is raised within a structure. At the beginning everything is structured as a signifier, even if only a chain of hairs is involved.

Textile is first of all a text. There is cloth, and – let me invoke the driest of minds, Marx, for example – it is impossible to posit as primary some producers' cooperative or other, unless, of course, one wants to make a psychological fable. In the beginning there is the producer's inventiveness, namely,

[2] The pun in the French – "poil de grenouille" – turns on the fact that as well as connoting something that does not exist, the phrase also reminds the listener of the slang meaning of "grenouille" as a pejorative term for a woman, e.g., "grenouille de bénitier."

the fact that man – and why he alone? – begins to weave something, something that isn't in the form of a covering or cocoon for his own body, but something that as cloth is going to take off on its own in the world, is going to move around. Why? Because this cloth has time value.

That's what distinguishes it from any form of natural production. One can come close to it in the creations of the animal world, but it is originated only when it is fabricated, when it is open to the world, to age and to newness; it is use value, time value; it is a reservoir of needs; it is there whether one needs it or not; and it is around this cloth that a whole dialectic of rivalry and of sharing is organized, wherein needs will be constituted.

In order to grasp this, simply set in the distance in opposition to this function, the word of the Messiah according to the Gospel when he shows men what happens to those who trust in the Father's Providence: "They weave not neither do they spin; they offer men an imitation of the robe of the lilies and the plumage of birds." This is a stupefying abolition of the text by the word. As I pointed out last time, the chief characteristic of this world is that one has to uproot it from its text if one is to have faith in it. But the history of humanity takes place in the text and it is in the text that we have the cloth.

Saint Martin's gesture means in the beginning that man as such, man with his rights, begins to be individualized as soon as one begins to make holes in this cloth through which his head and his arms can emerge, through which, in effect, he begins to organize himself as clothed, that is to say, as having needs that have been satisfied. What can there be behind this? What in spite of that can he continue to desire? – I say "in spite of that" because from that moment on we know less and less about it.

We have now reached the crossroads of utilitarianism.

Jeremy Bentham's thought is not the simple continuation of that gnoseology to which a whole tradition tirelessly devoted itself in order to reduce the transcendental or supernatural dimension of the progress of knowledge that supposedly needed elucidating. Bentham, as that work of his which has recently drawn some attention, *The Theory of Fictions*, shows, is the man who approaches the question at the level of the signifier.

With relation to institutions in their fictive or, in other words, fundamentally verbal dimension, his search has involved not attempting to reduce to nothing all the multiple, incoherent, contradictory rights of which English jurisprudence furnishes an example, but, on the contrary, observing on the basis of the symbolic artifice of these terms, which are themselves also creators of texts, what there is there that may be used to some purpose, that is to say, become, in effect, the object of a division. The long historical development of the problem of the good is in the end centered on the notion of how goods are created, insofar as they are organized not on the basis of so-called natural and predetermined needs, but insofar as they furnish the material of

a distribution; and it is in relation to this that the dialectic of the good is articulated to the degree that it takes on effective meaning for man.

Man's needs find their home on the level of utility, which involves that portion of the symbolic text that may be of some use. At this stage there is no problem; the greatest utility for the greatest number – such indeed is the law in the light of which the problem of the function of goods is organized. At this level we find ourselves, in effect, prior to the moment when the subject puts his head through the holes in the cloth. The cloth is so made that the greatest number of subjects possible may put their heads and their limbs through it.

Yet all this talk wouldn't mean anything if things didn't start functioning differently. Now in this thing, whether it be rare or not, but in any case a made thing, in all this wealth finally – whatever its correlative in poverty – there is from the beginning something other than use value. There is its *jouissance* use.

As a result, the good is articulated in a wholly different way. The good is not at the level of the use of the cloth. The good is at the level where a subject may have it at his disposal.

The domain of the good is the birth of power. The notion of control of the good is essential, and if one foregrounds this, everything is revealed concerning the meaning of the claim made by man, at a certain point in his history, once he has managed to achieve control of himself.

It was Freud, not me, who took upon himself the task of unmasking what this has effectively meant historically. To exercise control over one's goods, as everyone knows, entails a certain disorder, that reveals its true nature, i.e., to exercise control over one's goods is to have the right to deprive others of them.

There is, I think, no point in making you sense the fact that historical destiny is played out around such a situation. The whole question concerns the moment when one can consider that this process has come to an end. For this function of the good engenders, of course, a dialectic. I mean that the power to deprive others is a very solid link from which will emerge the other as such.

Remember what I once told you concerning privation, which has subsequently caused a problem for some of you. You will see clearly in this connection that I don't say anything by chance.

Opposing privation to frustration and castration, I said that it was a function instituted as such in the symbolic order, to the extent that nothing is deprived of nothing – which doesn't prevent the good one is deprived of from being wholly real. The important thing is to recognize that the depriving agent is an imaginary function. It is the little other, one's fellow man, he who is given in the relationship that is half rooted in naturalness of the mirror

stage, but such as he appears to us there where things are articulated at the level of the symbolic. There is a fact observed in experience that one always has to remember in analysis, namely, what is meant by defending one's goods is one and the same thing as forbidding[3] oneself from enjoying them.

The sphere of the good erects a strong wall across the path of our desire. It is, in fact, at every moment and always, the first barrier that we have to deal with.

How can we conceive crossing over it? That is a problem I will take up next time, when I point out that a radical repudiation of a certain ideal of the good is necessary, if one is to grasp the direction in which our experience is leading.

May 11, 1960.

[3] The play on words in French depends on using "défendre" both in the sense of "defend" – "défendre ses biens" – and "forbid" – "se défendre à soi-même d'en jouir."

XVIII

The function of the beautiful

THE DUPLICITY OF THE GOOD
ON THE POTLATCH
THE DISCOURSE OF SCIENCE FORGETS NOTHING
OUTRAGE AND PAIN

It seemed to me this morning that it wasn't inappropriate to begin my seminar by asking the question, Have we crossed the line?

I don't mean in what we are doing here, but in what is happening out there in the world in which we live. It isn't because what is occurring there makes such a vulgar noise that we should refuse to hear it.

At a time when I am speaking to you about the paradox of desire – in the sense that different goods obscure it – you can hear outside the awful language of power. There's no point in asking whether they are sincere or hypocritical, whether they want peace or whether they calculate the risks. The dominating impression at such a moment is that of something that may pass for a prescribed good; information addresses and captures impotent crowds to whom it is poured forth like a liquor that leaves them dazed as they move toward the slaughter house. One might even ask if one would allow the cataclysm to occur without first giving free reign to this hubbub of voices.

Is there anything more disconcerting than the transmission via those little machines that we all possess of what are known as press conferences? Or, in other words, questions that are stupidly repeated to which the leader replies with a false casualness, while he calls for more interesting questions and even on occasion engages in witticisms.

There was one somewhere yesterday, in Paris or in Brussels, that told us about our gloomy future. I swear it was absurd. Don't you think that the only way to adjust our hearing to what is proclaimed may be formulated along the lines of "What does *it* mean? What is *it* aiming at?" Yet everyone falls asleep on the soft pillow of "*It*'s not possible" – whereas, in fact, nothing is more possible, the possible is above all that. That's possible because the possible is that which can answer man's demand, and because man doesn't know what he is setting in motion with his demand.

The frightening unknown on the other side of the line is that which in man we call the unconscious, that is to say the memory of those things he forgets.

And the things he forgets – you can see in which way – are those things in connection with which everything is arranged so that he doesn't think about them, i.e., stench and corruption that always yawn like an abyss. For life after all is rottenness.

And it is even more so recently, since the anarchy of forms, that second destruction that Sade was talking about the other day in the quotation I read you – the destruction that calls for subversion even beyond the cycle of generation-corruption – are for us pressing problems. The possibility of a second destruction has suddenly become a tangible reality for us, including the threat of anarchy at the level of the chromosomes of a kind that could break the ties to given forms of life. Monsters obsessed a great deal those who up to the eighteenth century still attributed a meaning to the word "Nature." It has been a long time since we accorded any importance to calves with six feet or children with two heads. Yet we may now perhaps see them appear in the thousands.

That is why when we ask what is beyond the barrier erected by the structure of the world of the good – where is the point on which this world of the good turns, as we wait for it to drag us to our destruction – our question has a meaning that you would do well to remember has a terrifying relevance.

1

What is beyond this barrier? Don't forget that if we know there is a barrier and that there is a beyond, we know nothing about what lies beyond.

It is a false beginning to say, as on the basis of our experience some have, that it is the world of fear. To center our life, even our religion, on fear as a final term is an error. Fear with its ghosts is a localizable defense, a protection against something that is beyond, and which is precisely something unknown to us.

It is at the moment when these things are possible but wrapped in the injunction "Thinking about them is prohibited," that it is appropriate to point out the distance and the proximity that links this possible to those extraordinary texts that I have chosen this year as the fulcrum of my proof, namely, Sade's works.

One doesn't have to read very far for this collection of horrors to engender incredulity and disgust in us, and it is only fleetingly, in a brief flash, that such images may cause something strange to vibrate in us which we call perverse desire, insofar as the darker side of natural Eros enters into it.

In the end, any imaginary or indeed real relationship to the research appropriate to perverse desire only suggests the incapacity of natural desire, of the natural desire of the senses, to go very far in this direction. On this path, this desire quickly gives up, is the first to give up. It is no doubt understandable

if modern man's thought seeks the beginning, the trace, the point of departure there, the path toward self-knowledge, toward the mystery of desire, but, on the other hand, all the fascination that this beginning exercises over both scientific and literary studies – witness for example the revels to be found in the works of the not untalented author of *Sexus, Plexus* and *Nexus*[1] – founders on a rather sterile pleasure-taking. We must be lacking in the proper method, if everything that has been elaborated on the topic by writers or scientists was outdistanced in advance some time ago, was rendered thoroughly outdated by the lucubrations of someone who was only after all a country squire, a social example of the degeneration of the nobility at a time when its privileges were about to be abolished.

It is nevertheless the case that Sade's extraordinary catalogue of horrors, which causes not only the senses and human possibilities but the imagination, too, to flinch, is nothing at all compared to what will, in effect, be seen on a collective scale, if the great and very real explosion occurs that threatens us all. The only difference between Sade's exorbitant descriptions and such a catastrophe is that no pleasure will enter into the motivation of the latter. Not perverts but bureaucrats will set things off, and we won't even know if their intentions were good or bad. Things will go off by command; they will be carried through according to regulations, mechanically, down the chain of command, with human wills bent, abolished, overcome, in a task that ceases to have any meaning. That task will be the elimination of an incalculable waste that reveals its constant and final dimension for man.

Let us not forget that that has, in effect, always been one of the dimensions in which we can recognize what a fond dreamer once charmingly referred to as "the humanization of the planet." There's never any problem in recognizing man's passage through the world, his footstep, mark, trace, touch; there where one finds a huge accumulation of oyster shells, only man can have manifestly been. The geological ages have left their waste, too, waste that allows us to recognize order. But the pile of garbage is one of the sides of the human dimension that it would be wrong to mistake.

Having sketched the outlines of this sepulchral mound at the limit of the politics of the good, of the general good, of the good of the community, we will pick up again where we left off last time.

What is the sphere of the search for the good composed of, once it has been undeceived of the error of judgment that I cited by way of example in Saint Augustine?

His reasoning is as follows: it is by the mental process of the subtraction of the good from the good that one ends up refuting the existence of anything else but the good in being, given that that which remains, since it is more

[1] The author referred to is, of course, Henry Miller.

perfect than that which previously was, can in no way be evil. Saint Augustine's reasoning here is calculated to surprise us, and we cannot help wondering what the historical emergence of such a form of thought signifies. It's a question I will leave open.

Last time we defined the good in symbolic creation as the *initium* that is the point of departure of the human subject's destiny in his coming to terms with the signifier. The true nature of the good, its profound duplicity, has to do with the fact that it isn't purely and simply a natural good, the response to a need, but possible power, the power to satisfy. As a result, the whole relation of man to the real of goods is organized relative to the power of the other, the imaginary other, to deprive him of it.

Let us recall the terms around which, in the first year of my seminar devoted to Freud's *Technical Writings,* I organized the ideal ego and the ego ideal, terms that I represented in my graph. The big I designates the identification of omnipotence with the signifier, with the ego ideal. On the other hand, as image of the other, it is the *Urbild* of the ego, the original form on the basis of which the ego models itself, sets itself up, and operates under the auspices of pseudomastery. We will now define the ego ideal of the subject as representing the power to do good, which then opens up within itself the beyond that concerns us today. How is it that as soon as everything is organized around the power to do good, something completely enigmatic appears and returns to us again and again from our own action – like the ever-growing threat within us of a powerful demand whose consequences are unknown? As for the ideal ego, which is the imaginary other who faces us at the same level, it represents by itself the one who deprives us.

At these two poles of the structuralization of the world of goods, what is it we see outlined?

On the one hand, starting with the unveiling with which the revelation of classical philosophy terminates, that is to say, starting with the point at which Hegel is said to have been stood on his feet, the social conflict proves to be the thread which gives meaning to the enlightened segment of history in the classical sense of the term.

On the other hand, at the other end, there appears something that looks to us like a question offering hope.

2

Scientific research conducted in what is problematically referred to as the "human sciences" has revealed that for a very long time, outside the domain of classical history, man in non-historical societies has, it is believed, invented a practice conceived to have a salutary function in the maintenance of intersubjective relations. In my eyes this is like the little stone that was miracu-

lously made to inform us that not everything is caught up in the necessary dialectic of the competition for goods, of the conflict between goods, and of the necessary catastrophe that it gives rise to, and that, moreover, in the world we are exploring, there have existed signs that positively show how men have thought that the destruction of goods as such might be a function expressive of value.

I assume you are all well enough informed so that I don't have to remind you what a potlatch is. Let me just note briefly that it concerns ritual ceremonies involving the extensive destruction of a variety of goods, consumer goods as well as luxury goods and goods for display. The practice is found in societies that are now no more than relics, vestiges of a form of human social existence that our expansion has tended to wipe out. The potlatch bears witness to man's retreat from goods, a retreat which enabled him to link the maintenance and discipline of his desire, so to speak – insofar as this is what concerns him in his destiny – to the open destruction of goods, that were both personal and collective property. The problem and the drama of the economy of the good, its ricochets and rebounds, all turn on this point.

Furthermore, as soon as that key is given us, we clearly see that it is not simply the privilege of primitive societies. I couldn't find today the piece of paper on which I noted that at the beginning of the twelfth century – that through courtly love marked the rise to the surface in European culture of a problematic of desire as such – we see appear in a feudal rite the manifestation of something wholly analogous. The rite in question occurred at a festival, a meeting of barons somewhere in the region of Narbonne, and it involved huge destruction, not only of the goods that were consumed directly as part of the festivities, but also of animals and harnesses. Everything occurred as if the foregrounding of the problematic of desire required as its necessary correlative the need for ostentatious forms of destruction, insofar as they are gratuitous. Those who in the community claim to be privileged subjects, feudal Lords, those who set themselves up as such in this ceremony, throw down challenges to each other, rival each other in attempting to destroy the most.

This is at the other extreme the only example we have of the order of destruction that is carried out consciously and in a controlled way, that is to say, in a very different way from that massive destruction which we have all witnessed, given that we belong to generations that are relatively close to it. This latter destruction seems to us to be an inexplicable accident, a resurgence of savagery, whereas it is rather necessarily linked to the leading edge of our discourse.

A new problem arises for us, one that even Hegel found obscure. For a long time in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel tried to articulate the problem of human history in terms of conflicts between discourses. The tragedy

of Antigone especially appealed to him because he saw the clear opposition there between the discourse of the family and that of the state. But in my opinion things are much less clear.

As far as we are concerned, we find in the discourse of the community, of the general good, the effects of a scientific discourse in which we see revealed for the first time the power of the signifier as such. That question is our very own. As far as we are concerned, the question raised is subsumed beneath the order of thought that I am trying to present to you here.

The sudden, prodigious development of the power of the signifier, of the discourse that emerged from the little letters of mathematics and that is distinct from all previously existing discourses, becomes an additional alienation. In what way? Insofar as it is a discourse that by reason of its structure forgets nothing. That is why it is different from the discourse of primary memorization, which carries on inside us without our knowledge, different from the memorizing discourse of the unconscious whose center is absent, whose place is identified through the phrase "he didn't know," that is precisely the sign of that fundamental omission in which the subject is situated. At a certain moment in time, man learned to emit and place the discourse of mathematics in circulation, in the real as well as in the world, and that discourse cannot function unless nothing is forgotten. It only takes a little signifying chain to begin to function based on this principle, for things to move forward as if they were functioning by themselves. So much so that we even wonder if the discourse of physics, as engendered by the omnipotence of the signifier, will reach the point of the integration of nature or its disintegration.

This fact strangely complicates the problem of our desire, even if it is doubtless no more than one of its phases. Let us just say that, as far as the man who is talking to you is concerned, it is there that one finds the revelation of the decisive and original character of the place where human desire is situated in the relationship of man to the signifier. Should this relationship be destroyed?

I take it that you might have heard in the report we had on the contribution of one of Freud's disciples – an open-minded and cultured man, but not exactly a genius – that it is in that direction that the question of the meaning of the death drive lies. It is insofar as this question is tied to history that the problem is raised. It is a question of the here and now, and not *ad aeternum*. It is because the movement of desire is in the process of crossing the line of a kind of unveiling that the advent of the Freudian notion of the death drive is meaningful for us. The question is raised at the level of the relationship of the human being to the signifier as such, to the extent that at the level of the signifier every cycle of being may be called into question, including life in its movement of loss and return.

And it is this that gives a no less tragic meaning to something that we analysts are the bearers of. In its own cycle the unconscious now appears to

us as the field of a non-knowledge, even though it is locatable as such. Yet in this field where we have to function everyday, we cannot fail to recognize the following fact that every child could understand.

The desire of the man of good will is to do good, to do the right thing, and he who comes to seek you out, does so in order to feel good, to be in agreement with himself, to identify with or be in conformity with some norm. Now you all know what we nevertheless find in the margin, but also perhaps at the limit of that which occurs on the level of the dialectic and progress of the knowledge of the unconscious. In the irreducible margin as well as at the limit of his own good, the subject reveals himself to the never entirely resolved mystery of the nature of his desire.

The reference the subject makes to some other seems quite absurd, when we see him continually refer to the other – and we certainly see more than a few of these others – as if he were someone who lives harmoniously and who in any case is happier than the analysand, doesn't ask any questions, and sleeps soundly in his bed. We don't need to see this other come and lie down on our couch, however solid and together he may be, to know that this mirage, this reference of the dialectic of the good to a beyond that, by way of illustration, I will call "the good that musn't be touched," is the very text of our experience.

I would even add that this register of a *jouissance* as that which is only accessible to the other is the only dimension in which we can locate the strange malaise that, if I'm not mistaken, only the German language has managed to point to – along with other psychological nuances concerning the gap in man – with the word *Lebensneid*.

Lebensneid is not an ordinary jealousy, it is the jealousy born in a subject in his relation to an other, insofar as this other is held to enjoy a certain form of *jouissance* or superabundant vitality, that the subject perceives as something that he cannot apprehend by means of even the most elementary of affective movements. Isn't it strange, very odd, that a being admits to being jealous of something in the other to the point of hatred and the need to destroy, jealous of something that he is incapable of apprehending in any way, by any intuitive path? The identification of this other virtually in the form of a concept may in itself suffice to provoke the movement of malaise concerned; and I don't think one has to be an analyst to see such disturbing undulations passing through subjects' behaviors.

Now we have reached the frontier. What will enable us to cross it?

3

One finds at this frontier another crossing point, which enables us to locate precisely an element of the field of the beyond-the-good principle. That element, as I have said, is the beautiful.

I just want to introduce you to the problematic today. I will limit myself to two articulations.

Freud was extremely prudent in this connection. On the nature of the creation that is manifested in the beautiful, the analyst has by his own admission nothing to say. In the sphere that calculates the value of the work of art, we find ourselves reduced to a position that isn't even that of schoolchildren, but of pickers up of crumbs. Moreover, that's not all, and Freud's text is very weak on the topic. The definition he gives of sublimation at work in artistic creation only manages to show us the reaction or repercussions of the effects of what happens at the level of the sublimation of the drive, when the result or the work of the creator of the beautiful reenters the field of goods, that is to say, when they have become commodities. One must recognize that the summary Freud gives of the artist's career is practically grotesque. The artist, he says, gives a beautiful form to the forbidden object in order that everyone, by buying his little artistic product, rewards and sanctions his daring. That is a way of shortcircuiting the problem. And Freud is perfectly aware of the limits he imposes on himself in a way that is perfectly obvious when the problem of creation – which he leaves aside as outside the range of our experience – is added to it.

We are thus brought back again to all the pedantic thoughts that in the course of centuries have been expressed about the beautiful.

Everyone knows that in every field those who have something to say – that is in this case the creators of beauty – are understandably the most dissatisfied by pedantic formulas. Yet something that has been expressed by almost all of them, especially by the best but also at the level of common experience, does make the rounds, namely, that there is a certain relationship between beauty and desire.

This relationship is strange and ambiguous. On the one hand, it seems that the horizon of desire may be eliminated from the register of the beautiful. Yet, on the other hand, it has been no less apparent – from the thought of antiquity down to Saint Thomas who has some valuable things to say on the question – that the beautiful has the effect, I would say, of suspending, lowering, disarming desire. The appearance of beauty intimidates and stops desire.

That is not to say that on certain occasions beauty cannot be joined to desire, but in a mysterious way, and in a form that I can do no better than refer to by the term that bears within it the structure of the crossing of some invisible line, i.e., outrage. Moreover, it seems that it is in the nature of the beautiful to remain, as they say, insensitive to outrage, and that is by no means one of the least significant elements of its structure.

I will show it to you then in the detail of analytical experience, show it to you with pointers that will enable you to be alert to it when it occurs in an analytical session. With the precision of a Geiger counter, you can pick it up by means of references to the aesthetic register that the subject will give you

in his associations, in his broken, disconnected monologue, either in the form of quotations or of memories from his schooldays. You don't, of course, always deal with creators, but you do deal with people who have had a relationship to the conventional sphere of beauty. You can be sure that the more these references become strangely sporadic and peremptory with relation to the text of the discourse, the more they are correlative of something that makes its presence felt at that moment, and that belongs to the register of a destructive drive. It is at the very moment when a thought is clearly about to appear in a subject, as in the narration of a dream for example, a thought that one recognizes as aggressive relative to one of the fundamental terms of his subjective constellation, that, depending on his nationality, he will make some reference to a passage from the Bible, to an author, whether a classic or not, or to some piece of music. I mention this today to show that we are not far from the very text of our experience.

The beautiful in its strange function with relation to desire doesn't take us in, as opposed to the function of the good. It keeps us awake and perhaps helps us adjust to desire insofar as it is itself linked to the structure of the lure.

You can see this place illustrated by the fantasm. If there is "a good that mustn't be touched," as I was saying earlier, the fantasm is "a beauty that musn't be touched," in the structure of this enigmatic field.

The first side of this field is known to us, it is the side that along with the pleasure principle prevents us from entering it, the side of pain.

We must ask ourselves what it is that constitutes that field. The death drive, says Freud, primary masochism. But isn't that to take too big a leap? Is the pain that denies access to the side the whole content of the field? Are all those who express demands for this field masochists after all? And I can tell you right off, I don't think so.

Masochism is a marginal phenomenon and it possesses something almost caricatural that moral inquiry at the end of the nineteenth century has pretty much laid bare. The economy of masochistic pain ends up looking like the economy of goods. One wants to share pain as one shares heaps of other things that are left over; and one even comes close to fighting over it.

But isn't there something there that involves a panicky return to the dialectic of goods? In truth, the whole behavior of the masochist – and I mean by that the perverse masochist – points to the fact that it is a question of a structural feature in his behavior. Read Mr. Sacher-Masoch. He's an enlightening writer, although he doesn't have the stature of Sade, and you will see that in the end the point aimed at by the position of the perverse masochist is the desire to reduce himself to this nothing that is the good, to this thing that is treated like an object, to this slave whom one trades back and forth and whom one shares.

But one shouldn't after all proceed too quickly to break inventive homon-

ymy, and the fact the masochism has been called by this name for so long by psychoanalysis is not without reason. The unity that emerges from all the fields which analytical thought has labeled masochism has to do with the fact that in all these fields pain shares the character of a good.

We will continue our inquiry next time with relation to a document.

It's not exactly a new document. Down through the centuries longwinded commentators have cut their teeth and sharpened their nails on it. This text appeared in the field where the morality of happiness was theorized and it gives us its underlying structure. It is there that its underlying structure is the most visible, there where it appears on the surface. That which over the centuries has caused the greatest problems, from Aristotle down to Hegel and Goethe, is a tragedy, one that Hegel considered the most perfect, but for the wrong reason, namely, *Antigone*.

Antigone's position relates to a criminal good. One would have to have a character that was deeply out of touch with the cruelties of our time to attack the subject, if I may say so, by focusing on the tyrant.

We will, therefore, take up the text of *Antigone* together, since it will enable us to point to a fundamental moment, to reach an essential reference point in our investigation of what it is man wants and what he defends himself against. We will see what an absolute choice means, a choice that is motivated by no good.

May 18, 1960

THE ESSENCE OF TRAGEDY

A commentary on Sophocles's *Antigone*

XIX

The splendor of Antigone

THE MEANING OF CATHARSIS
HEGEL'S WEAKNESS
THE FUNCTION OF THE CHORUS
GOETHE'S WISH

I told you that I would talk about *Antigone* today.

I am not the one who has decreed that *Antigone* is to be a turning point in the field that interests us, namely, ethics. People have been aware of that for a long time. And even those who haven't realized this are not unaware of the fact that there are scholarly debates on the topic. Is there anyone who doesn't evoke *Antigone* whenever there is a question of a law that causes conflict in us even though it is acknowledged by the community to be a just law?

And what is one to think of the scholars' contribution to the discussion of *Antigone?* What is one to think of it when one has, like me, gone over the ground for one's own interest and for the interest of those one is speaking to?

Well now, while I have tried to omit nothing that seemed important in all that has been said on the question, so as not to deprive either you or me of the help that I might derive from this lengthy historical survey, I have nevertheless often had the impression that I was lost in quite extraordinary byways. One learns that the opinions formulated by the pens of our great thinkers over the centuries are strange indeed.

1

Antigone is a tragedy, and tragedy is in the forefront of our experiences as analysts – something that is confirmed by the references Freud found in *Oedipus Rex* as well as in other tragedies. He was attracted by his need of the material he found in their mythical content. And if he himself didn't expressly discuss *Antigone* as tragedy, that doesn't mean to say it cannot be done at this crossroads to which I have brought you. It seems to me to be what it was for Hegel, although in a different way, namely, the Sophoclean tragedy that is of special significance.

In an even more fundamental way than through the connection to the

Oedipus complex, tragedy is at the root of our experience, as the key word "catharsis" implies.

For you the word is no doubt more or less closely associated with the term "abreaction," which presupposes that the problem outlined by Freud in his first work with Breuer, namely, that of discharge, has already been broached – discharge in an act, indeed motor discharge, of something that is not so simple to define, and that we still have to say remains a problem for us, the discharge of an emotion that remains unresolved. For that is what is involved here: an emotion or a traumatic experience may, as far as the subject is concerned, leave something unresolved, and this may continue as long as a resolution is not found. The notion of unfulfillment suffices to fill the role of comprehensibility which is required here.

Read over Freud and Breuer's opening pages and, in the light of what I have attempted to focus on for your benefit in our experience, you will see how difficult it now is to be content with the word "fulfillment" that is employed in this context, and to state simply, as Freud does, that the action may be discharged in the words that articulate it.

That catharsis which in this text is linked to the problem of abreaction, and which is already specifically invoked in the background, has its origins in the thought of classical antiquity. It is centered on Aristotle's formula at the beginning of Chapter VI of his *Poetics:* Aristotle there explains at length, in a classification of the genres, what must be present for a work to be defined as a tragedy.

The passage is a long one and we will return to it later. One finds there a description of the distinguishing characteristics of tragedy, of its composition, and of what, for example, distinguishes it from epic discourse. I simply put on the blackboard the end point or final words of this passage, what in logical causality is known as its τέλος. It is formulated by Aristotle as δι' ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν. That is to say, a means of accomplishing the purgation of the emotions by a pity and fear similar to this.

These words which seem so simple have over the centuries produced a flood – indeed a whole world – of commentaries, whose history I can't even begin to trace here.

The references I will make to this history are highly selective and to the point. We usually translate the word "catharsis" by something like "purgation." And thus, all of us here, especially if we are doctors, are, from the school desks of our so-called secondary schools on, more or less familiar with the term "purgation," which has a certain Moliéresque meaning. And this is the case because the Moliéresque element here merely echoes an ancient medical concept, namely, in Molière's own words, the one which involves the elimination of "peccant humors."

Moreover, that is not very far from what the term still, in fact, evokes. But it also has a different resonance. And to make you sense it right away, I can simply point out what in the course of our work here I recently expounded for you with reference to the name of the Cathars.

What are the Cathars? They are the pure. Καθαρός is a pure person. And the word in its original sense doesn't mean illumination or discharge, but purification.

Doubtless in classical antiquity, too, the term "catharsis" was already used in a medical context, in Hippocrates, for example, with a specifically medical meaning; it is linked to forms of elimination, to discharge, to a return to normality. But, on the other hand, in other contexts it is linked to purification and especially to ritual purification. Hence the ambiguity which we, as you might suspect, are far from the first to discover.

So as to refer to a specific individual, I will mention the name of Denis Lambin, who reinterprets Aristotle in order to emphasize the ritual function of tragedy and the ceremonial sense of purification. It's not a matter of affirming that he is more or less right than someone else, but of simply identifying the sphere in which the question is raised.

We shouldn't, in fact, forget that the term catharsis is strangely isolated in the context of the *Poetics*. It's not that it isn't developed and commented on there, but we will learn very little about it until some new papyrus is discovered. I assume you know that what we have of the *Poetics* is only a part, roughly half, in fact. And in the half that we have there is only the passage referred to which discusses catharsis. We know that there was more because at the beginning of Book VIII, in the numbering of Didot's classic edition of the *Politics*, Aristotle speaks of "that catharsis which I discussed elsewhere in the *Poetics*." In Book VIII his subject is catharsis in connection with music, and as things turned out, it is there that we learn much more about catharsis.

In this text catharsis has to do with the calming effect associated with a certain kind of music, from which Aristotle doesn't expect a given ethical effect, nor even a practical effect, but one that is related to excitement. The music concerned is the most disturbing kind, the kind that turned their stomachs over, that made them forget themselves, in the same way that hot jazz (*le hot*) or rock 'n' roll does for us; it was the kind of music that in classical antiquity gave rise to the question of whether or not it should be prohibited.

Well now, says Aristotle, once they have experienced the state of exaltation, the Dionysian frenzy stimulated by such music, they become calm. That's what catharsis means as it is evoked in Book VIII of the *Politics*.

Yet not everyone enters into such states of excitement, even if everyone is in the position of being at least slightly susceptible. There are the παθητικοί as opposed to the ἐνθουσιαστικοί. The former are in the position of being prey to other passions, namely, fear and pity. Well, it turns out that a form

of catharsis or calming effect will be granted them by a certain music also, by the music, one may assume, that has a role in tragedy. And this comes about through pleasure, Aristotle tells us, leaving us once again to reflect on what might be meant by pleasure and at what level and why it is invoked on this occasion. What is this pleasure to which one returns after a crisis that occurs in another dimension, a crisis that sometimes threatens pleasure, for we all know to what extremes a certain kind of ecstatic music may lead? It is at this point that the topology we have defined – the topology of pleasure as the law of that which functions previous to that apparatus where desire's formidable center sucks us in – perhaps allows us to understand Aristotle's intuition better than has been the case heretofore.

In any case, before I go on to define the beyond of the apparatus referred to as the central point of that gravitational pull, I want to emphasize that element in modern literature which has given rise to the use of the term catharsis in its medical sense.

The medical notion of Aristotelian catharsis is, in effect, more or less current in a sphere that goes far beyond the realm of our colleagues, the writers, critics, and literary theoreticians. But if one seeks to determine the culminating moment of this conception of catharsis, one reaches a point of origin beyond which the concept is much broader and where it is far from obvious that the word catharsis has only the medical connotation.

The triumph of the latter conception of its meaning has a source to which it is worth making an erudite reference here. The paper in question is by Jakob Bernays and it appeared in a review in Breslau. I couldn't tell you why Breslau is involved, since I wasn't able to consult enough biographical material on this Jakob Bernays. If I am to believe Jones's book on Freud, the latter, as you will probably have realized, belongs to the same family from which Freud took his wife, namely, a distinguished Jewish bourgeois family, that had long since acquired a form of nobility in the sphere of German culture. Jones refers to Michael Bernays as a professor in Munich, who was condemned by his family as a political apostate, as someone who changed his political allegiance for the sake of his career. As for Jakob Bernays, if I am to believe the person who looked into this for me, he is simply mentioned as someone who had a distinguished career as a Latinist and a Hellenist. Nothing further is said except that he didn't achieve his academic success at the same cost as Michael.

What I have here is an 1880 version of two papers by Jakob Bernays, reprinted in Berlin, on the subject of Aristotle's theory of drama. They are excellent. It is rare to find such a satisfying work by an academic in general, and even more so by a German academic. It is as clear as crystal. And it is no accident if the virtual universal adoption of the medical notion of catharsis occurs at that time.

It is a pity that Jones, who was himself so knowledgeable, didn't believe it appropriate to place a greater emphasis on the personality and the work of Jakob Bernays; little attention has been paid to him. It is nevertheless difficult to imagine that Freud, who was by no means indifferent to the reputation of the Bernays' family, wasn't aware of him. It would have been a way of referring Freud's original use of the word catharsis to its best source.

Having said that, I will now return to what most concerns us in this commentary on *Antigone*, namely, the essence of tragedy.

2

Tragedy – we are told in a definition that we can hardly avoid paying attention to, since it appeared scarcely a century after the time of the birth of tragedy – has as its aim catharsis, the purgation of the *τιαθήματα*, of the emotions of fear and pity.

How is one to understand that formula? We will approach the problem from the perspective imposed on us by what we have articulated on the subject of the proper place of desire in the economy of the Freudian Thing. Will this allow us to take the additional step required by this historical revelation?

If the Aristotelian formulation appears at first sight to be so closed, it is due to the loss of a part of Aristotle's work as well as to a certain conditioning within the very possibilities of thought. Yet is it so closed to us after all as a consequence of the progress made in our discussions of ethics here over the past two years? What in particular has been said about desire enables us to bring a new element to the understanding of the meaning of tragedy, above all by means of the exemplary approach suggested by the function of catharsis – there are no doubt more direct approaches.

In effect, *Antigone* reveals to us the line of sight that defines desire.

This line of sight focuses on an image that possesses a mystery which up till now has never been articulated, since it forces you to close your eyes at the very moment you look at it. Yet that image is at the center of tragedy, since it is the fascinating image of Antigone herself. We know very well that over and beyond the dialogue, over and beyond the question of family and country, over and beyond the moralizing arguments, it is Antigone herself who fascinates us, Antigone in her unbearable splendor. She has a quality that both attracts us and startles us, in the sense of intimidates us; this terrible, self-willed victim disturbs us.

It is in connection with this power of attraction that we should look for the true sense, the true mystery, the true significance of tragedy – in connection with the excitement involved, in connection with the emotions and, in particular, with the singular emotions that are fear and pity, since it is through their intervention, *δι' ἐλέου καὶ φόβου*, through the intervention of pity and

fear, that we are purged, purified of everything of that order. And that order, we can now immediately recognize, is properly speaking the order of the imaginary. And we are purged of it through the intervention of one image among others.

And it is here that a question arises. How do we explain the dissipatory power of this central image relative to all the others that suddenly seem to descend upon it and disappear? The articulation of the tragic action is illuminating on the subject. It has to do with Antigone's beauty. And this is not something I invented; I will show you the passage in the song of the Chorus where that beauty is evoked, and I will prove that it is the pivotal passage. It has to do with Antigone's beauty and with the place it occupies as intermediary between two fields that are symbolically differentiated. It is doubtless from this place that her splendor derives, a splendor that all those who have spoken worthily of beauty have never omitted from its definition.

Moreover, as you know, this is the place that I am attempting to define. I have already come close to it in previous lectures, and I attempted to grasp it the first time by means of the second death imagined by Sade's heroes – death insofar as it is regarded as the point at which the very cycles of the transformations of nature are annihilated. This is the point where the false metaphors of being (*l'étant*) can be distinguished from the position of Being (*l'être*) itself, and we find its place articulated as such, as a limit, throughout the text of *Antigone,* in the mouths of all the characters and of Tiresias. But how can one also not fail to see this position in the action itself? Given that the middle of the play is constituted of a time of lamentation, commentary, discussions, and appeals relative to an Antigone condemned to a cruel punishment. Which punishment? That of being buried alive in a tomb.

The central third of the text is composed of a detailed series of vowel gradations, which informs us about the meaning of the situation or fate of a life that is about to turn into certain death, a death lived by anticipation, a death that crosses over into the sphere of life, a life that moves into the realm of death.

It is surprising that dialecticians or indeed aestheticians as eminent as Hegel and Goethe haven't felt obliged to take account of this whole field in their evaluation of the effect of the play.

The dimension involved here is not unique to *Antigone.* I could suggest that you look in a number of places and you will find something analogous without having to search too hard. The zone defined in that way has a strange function in tragedy.

It is when passing through that zone that the beam of desire is both reflected and refracted till it ends up giving us that most strange and most profound of effects, which is the effect of beauty on desire.

It seems to split desire strangely as it continues on its way, for one cannot

say that it is completely extinguished by the apprehension of beauty. It continues on its way, but now more than elsewhere, it has a sense of being taken in, and this is manifested by the splendor and magnificence of the zone that draws it on. On the other hand, since its excitement is not refracted but reflected, rejected, it knows it to be most real. But there is no longer any object.

Hence these two sides of the issue. The extinction or the tempering of desire through the effect of beauty that some thinkers, including Saint Thomas, whom I quoted last time, insist on. On the other hand, the disruption of any object, on which Kant insists in *The Critique of Judgment.*

I was talking to you just now of excitement. And I will take a moment to have you reflect on the inappropriate use that is made of this word in the usual translation into French of *Triebregung,* namely, "émoi pulsionnel," "instinctual excitement."[1] Why was this word so badly chosen? "Emoi" (excitement) has nothing to do with emotion nor with being moved. "Emoi" is a French word that is linked to a very old verb, namely, "émoyer" or "esmayer," which, to be precise, means "faire perdre à quelqu'un ses moyens," as I almost said, although it is a play on words in French, "to make someone lose" not "his head," but something closer to the middle of the body, "his means." In any case a question of power is involved. "Esmayer" is related to the old gothic word "magnan" or "mögen" in modern German. As everybody knows, a state of excitement is something that is involved in the sphere of your power relations; it is notably something that makes you lose them.

We are now in a position to be able to discuss the text of *Antigone* with a view to finding something other than a lesson in morality.

A thoroughly irresponsible individual wrote a short time ago that I am powerless to resist the seductions of the Hegelian dialectic. The reproach was formulated at a time when I was beginning to articulate for you the dialectic of desire in terms that I have continued to employ since. And I don't know if the reproach was deserved at the time, but no one could claim that the individual involved is especially sensitive to these things. It is in any case true that Hegel nowhere appears to me to be weaker than he is in the sphere of poetics, and this is especially true of what he has to say about *Antigone.*

According to Hegel, there is a conflict of discourses, it being assumed that the discourses of the spoken dialogues embody the fundamental concerns of the play, and that they, moreover, move toward some form of reconciliation. I just wonder what the reconciliation of the end of *Antigone* might be. Fur-

[1] There is an additional problem in English, since the equivalent for the German "Triebe" and the French "pulsion," i.e., "drive," has no adjectival form.

ther, it is not without some astonishment that one learns that, in addition, this reconciliation is said to be subjective.

Let us not forget that in Sophocles's last play, *Oedipus at Colonus*, Oedipus's final malediction is addressed to his sons; it is the malediction that gives rise to the catastrophic series of dramas to which *Antigone* belongs. *Oedipus at Colonus* ends with Oedipus's last curse, "Never to have been born were best . . ." How can one talk of reconciliation in connection with a tone like that?

I am not tempted to regard my own indignation as particularly worthy; others have had a similar reaction before me. Goethe notably seems to have been somewhat suspicious of such a view, and so was Erwin Rohde. When I went and looked up his *Psyche* recently, a work that I made use of to bring together classical antiquity's different conceptions of the immortality of the soul, and that is an admirable work, which I strongly recommend, I was pleased to come across an expression of the author's astonishment at the traditional interpretation of *Oedipus at Colonus*.

Let us now attempt to wash our brains clean of all we have heard about *Antigone* and look in detail at what goes on there.

3

What does one find in *Antigone?* First of all, one finds Antigone.

Have you noticed that she is only ever referred to throughout the play with the Greek word ἡ παῖς, which means "the child"? I say that as a way of coming to the point and of enabling you to focus your eye on the style of the thing. And, of course, there is the action of the play.

The question of the action in tragedy is very important. I don't know why someone whom I'm not very fond of, probably because he is always being shoved under my nose, someone called La Bruyère, said that we have arrived too late in a world that is too old in which everything has already been said. It's not something I've noticed. As far as the action of tragedy is concerned, there's still a lot to be said. It's far from being resolved.

To return to Erwin Rohde, whom I complimented just now, I was astonished to find that in another chapter he explains a curious conflict between the tragic author and his subject, a conflict that is caused by the following: the laws of the genre oblige the author to choose as frame a noble action in preference to a mythic action. I suppose that is so that everyone already knows what it's all about, what's going on. The action has to be emphasized in relation to the ethos, the personalities, the characters, the problems, and so forth, of the time. If that's true, then Mr. Anouilh was right to give us his little fascist Antigone. The conflict that results from the dialogue between the

poet and his subject is, according to Erwin Rohde, capable of generating conflicts between action and thought, and in this connection, echoing a great many things that have already been said before, he refers with some relevance to the figure of Hamlet.

It's entertaining, but it must be difficult for you to accept, if what I explained last year about *Hamlet* meant anything to you. *Hamlet* is by no means a drama of the importance of thought in the face of action. Why on the threshold of the modern period would *Hamlet* bear witness to the special weakness of future man as far as action is concerned? I am not so gloomy, and nothing apart from a cliché of decadent thought requires that we should be, although it is a cliché Freud himself falls into when he compares the different attitudes of Hamlet and Oedipus toward desire.

I don't believe that the drama of Hamlet is to be found in such a divergence between action and thought nor in the problem of the extinction of his desire. I tried to show that Hamlet's strange apathy belongs to the sphere of action itself, that it is in the myth chosen by Shakespeare that we should look for its motives; we will find its origin in a relationship to the mother's desire and to the father's knowledge of his own death. And to take a step further, I will mention here the moment at which our analysis of *Hamlet* is confirmed by the analysis I am leading up to on the subject of the second death.

Don't forget one of the effects in which the topology I refer to may be recognized. If Hamlet stops when he is on the point of killing Claudius, it is because he is worried about that precise point I am trying to define here: simply to kill him is not enough, he wants him to suffer hell's eternal torture. Under the pretext that we have already busied ourselves a great deal with this hell, should we see it as beneath our dignity to make a little use of it in the analysis of a text? Even if he doesn't believe in hell anymore than we do, even if he's not at all sure about it, since he does after all question the notion – "To sleep, perchance to dream . . ." – it is nevertheless true that Hamlet stops in the middle of his act because he wants Claudius to go to hell.

The reason why we are always missing the opportunity of pointing to the limits and the crossing-points of the paths we follow is because we are unwilling to come to grips with the texts, preferring to remain within the realm of what is considered acceptable or, in other words, the realm of prejudices. If I were not to have taught you anything more than an implacable method for the analysis of signifiers, then it would not have been in vain – at least I hope so. I even hope that that is all you will retain. If it is true that what I teach represents a body of thought, I will not leave behind me any of those handles which will enable you to append a suffix in the form of an "-ism." In other words, none of the terms that I have made use of here one after the other – none of which, I am glad to see from your confusion, has yet managed to

impress itself on you as the essential term, whether it be the symbolic, the signifier or desire – none of the terms will in the end enable anyone of you to turn into an intellectual cricket on my account.

Next then in a tragedy, there is a Chorus. And what is a Chorus? You will be told that it's you yourselves. Or perhaps that it isn't you. But that's not the point. Means are involved here, emotional means. In my view, the Chorus is people who are moved.

Therefore, look closely before telling yourself that emotions are engaged in this purification. They are engaged, along with others, when at the end they have to be pacified by some artifice or other. But that doesn't mean to say that they are directly engaged. On the one hand, they no doubt are, and you are there in the form of a material to be made use of; on the other hand, that material is also completely indifferent. When you go to the theater in the evening, you are preoccupied by the affairs of the day, by the pen that you lost, by the check that you will have to sign the next day. You shouldn't give yourselves too much credit. Your emotions are taken charge of by the healthy order displayed on the stage. The Chorus takes care of them. The emotional commentary is done for you, The greatest chance for the survival of classical tragedy depends on that. The emotional commentary is done for you. It is just sufficiently silly; it is also not without firmness; it is more or less human.

Therefore, you don't have to worry; even if you don't feel anything, the Chorus will feel in your stead. Why after all can one not imagine that the effect on you may be achieved, at least a small dose of it, even if you didn't tremble that much? To be honest, I'm not sure if the spectator ever trembles that much. I am, however, sure that he is fascinated by the image of Antigone.

In this he is a spectator, but the question we need to ask is, What is he a spectator of? What is the image represented by Antigone? That is the question.

Let us not confuse this relationship to a special image with the spectacle as a whole. The term spectacle, which is usually used to discuss the effect of tragedy, strikes me as highly problematic if we don't delimit the field to which it refers.

On the level of what occurs in reality, an auditor rather than a spectator is involved. And I can hardly be more pleased with myself since Aristotle agrees with me; for him the whole development of the arts of theater takes place at the level of what is heard, the spectacle itself being no more than something arranged on the margin. Technique is not without significance, but it is not essential; it plays the same role as elocution in rhetoric. The spectacle here is a secondary medium. It is a point of view that puts in its place the modern concerns with *mise en scène* or stagecraft. The importance of *mise en scène* should not be underrated, and I always appreciate it both in the theater and

in the cinema. But we shouldn't forget that it is only important – and I hope you will forgive the expression – if our third eye doesn't get a hard-on; it is, so to speak, jerked off a little with the *mise en scène.*

In this connection I have no intention of giving myself up to the morose pleasure I was denouncing earlier by affirming a supposed decline in the spectator. I don't believe in that at all. From a certain point of view, the audience must always have been at the same level. *Sub specie aeternitatis* everything is equal, everything is always there, although it isn't always in the same place.

But I would just mention in passing that you really have to be a student in my seminar – by which I mean someone especially alert – to find something in the spectacle of Fellini's *La Dolce Vita.*

I am amazed at the murmur of pleasure that that name seems to have aroused among a significant number of you here today. I am ready to believe that this effect is only due to the moment of illusion produced by the fact that the things I say are calculated to emphasize a certain mirage, which is, in effect, the only one aimed at in the series of cinematographic images referred to. But it isn't reached anywhere except at one single moment. That is to say at the moment when early in the morning among the pines on the edge of the beach, the jet-setters suddenly begin to move again after having remained motionless and almost disappearing from the vibration of the light; they begin to move toward some goal that pleased a great many of you, since you associated it with my famous Thing, which in this instance is some disgusting object that has been caught by a net in the sea. Thank goodness, that hadn't yet been seen at the moment I am referring to. Only the jet-setters start to walk, and they remain almost always as invisible, just like statues moving among trees painted by Uccello. It is a rare and unique moment. Those of you who haven't been should go and observe what I've been teaching you here. It happens right at the end, so that you can take your seats at the right moment, if there are any seats left.

Now we are ready for *Antigone.*

Our Antigone is on the point of entering the action of the play, and we will follow her.

4

What else can I tell you today? I am hesitating because it is late. What I want to do is lead you from one end to the other to make you appreciate its scope.

There is nevertheless one thing that you could do between now and next time, and that is read the play. I don't suppose that alerting you last time by telling you that I would be talking about *Antigone* was even enough to make you glance at it, given the average level of zeal you display. It would, how-

ever, not be without interest if you did so before next time.

There are a thousand ways of doing so. First of all, there's Mr. Robert Pignarre's critical edition. For those who know Greek, I recommend the interlinear translation, since a word by word rendering is amazingly instructive, and I will be able to make you see the extent to which my points of reference are perfectly articulated in the text by the signifiers, so that I don't have to search for them all over the place. If I find a word now and then which echoes what I have to say, that would be a by no means arbitrary mode of confirmation. On the contrary, I will show you that the words I use are the words that are to be found running like a single thread from one end of the play to the other, and that these words give it its structure.

There is one other thing I would like to point out.

One day Goethe in a conversation with Eckermann was in a speculative mood. A few days previously he had invented the Suez canal and the Panama canal. I must say that you have to be quite brilliant to have extremely clear views on the subject of the historical function of these two pieces of equipment in 1827. Then one day he comes across a book that had just come out and has been completely forgotten since by a certain Irish, which is a nice little commentary on Antigone, and that I know through Goethe.

I don't see how it is so different from Hegel's commentary; it's a little more simpleminded, but there are some amusing things in it. Those who sometimes criticize Hegel for the extraordinary difficulty of his statements will find their taunts ratified by Goethe's authority. Goethe certainly rectifies the Hegelian view that Creon is opposed to Antigone as one principle of the law, of discourse, to another. The conflict is thus said to be linked to structures. Goethe, on the other hand, shows that Creon is driven by his desire and manifestly deviates from the straight path; he seeks to break through a barrier in striking at his enemy Polynices beyond limits within which he has the right to strike him. He, in fact, wants to inflict on him that second death that he has no right to inflict on him. All of Creon's speeches are developed with that end in view, and he thus rushes by himself toward his own destruction.

If it's not exactly stated in those terms, it is implied, intuited, by Goethe. It is not for him a question of a right opposed to a right, but of a wrong opposed to – what? To something else that is represented by Antigone. Let me tell you that it isn't simply the defense of the sacred rights of the dead and of the family, nor is it all that we have been told about Antigone's saintliness. Antigone is borne along by a passion, and I will try to tell you which one it is.

But one thing is strange, and that is that Goethe tells us he was shocked, rattled, by one point in her speeches. When every move has been made, her capture, her defiance, her condemnation, and even her lamentations, and she stands on the edge of the celebrated tomb with the martyrdom that we have

witnessed already behind her, Antigone stops to justify herself. When she has already seemed to have been moved to a kind of "Father, why hast thou forsaken me?", she steps back and says, "Understand this: I would not have defied the law of the city for a husband or a child to whom a tomb had been denied, because after all," she says, "if I had lost a husband in this way, I could have taken another, and even if I had lost a child with my husband, I could have made another child with another husband. But it concerned my brother αὐτάδελφος, born of the same father and the same mother." The Greek term that expresses the joining of oneself to a brother or sister recurs throughout the play, and it appears right away in the first line when Antigone is speaking to Ismene. Now that Antigone's mother and father are hidden away in Hades, there is no possibility of another brother ever being born:

μητρὸς δ'ἐν Ἅιδου καὶ πατρὸς κεκευθότοιν
οὐκ ἔστ' ἀδελφὸς ὅστις ἄν βλάστοι ποτέ

The sage from Weimar finds that all that is a bit strange. He's not the only one. Over the centuries the reasoning found in that extraordinary justification has always left people uncertain. It's important that some madness always strike the wisest of discourses, and Goethe cannot help emitting a wish. "I wish," he says, "that one day some scholar will reveal to us that this passage is a later addition."

This is the truth of a prudent man, one who knows the value of a text, one who always takes care not to formulate ideas prematurely – for isn't that how one exposes oneself to all kinds of risks? – and naturally when one makes such a wish, one can always hope that it will be realized. But there were at least four or five nineteenth-century scholars who said that such a position is untenable.

A story just like it is said to be in Herodotus, in the third book. In truth, there isn't too great a relationship apart from the fact that it is a question of life and death and of a brother, father, husband and child. It concerns a woman who as a result of her lamentations is offered the possibility of choosing one person in her family to be pardoned, the whole family having been condemned, as was possible at the Persian court. The woman explains why she chooses her brother over her husband.

On the other hand, just because two passages resemble each other doesn't mean to say that one is copied from the other. Why, in any case, would the copied lines have been inserted there? In other words, this passage is so little apocryphal that these two lines are quoted roughly ninety years later by Aristotle in the third book of his *Rhetoric* in a passage that explains how one should explain one's acts. It is difficult to believe the someone who was living ninety years after Sophocles would have quoted these lines as a literary example,

if they carried with them the odor of a scandal. That seems to render the thesis of a latter addition highly doubtful.

In the end, precisely because it carries with it the suggestion of a scandal, this passage is of interest to us. You can already see why; it is only there so as to furnish additional evidence to something that next time I will try to define as the aim of *Antigone*.

May 25, 1960

XX

The articulations of the play

I would like to try today to talk about *Antigone*, the play written by Sophocles in 441 B.C., and in particular about the economy of the play.

With the category of the beautiful, Kant says that only the example – which doesn't mean the object – is capable of assuring its transmission insofar as this is both possible and demanded. Now, from every point of view, this text deserves to play such a role for us.

As you in any case know, I am reopening the question of the function of the beautiful in relation to that which we have been considering as the aim of desire. In a word, it may be that something new on the subject of the function of desire may come to light here. That is the point we have reached.

It is only a single point on our path. Don't be astonished at how long that path is, Plato says somewhere in the *Phaedrus*, which is itself a dialogue on the beautiful: Don't be astonished if the detour is such a long one, for it is a necessary detour.

Today we need to make progress in our commentary on *Antigone*.

Read this truly admirable text. It is an unimaginable highpoint, a work of overwhelming rigor, whose only equivalent in Sophocles's work is his final work, *Oedipus at Colonus*, which was written in 401.

I will now attempt to analyze this text with you so as to make you appreciate its extraordinary stature.

1

As I said last time then, we have Antigone, we have something going on, we have the Chorus.

On the other hand, as far as the nature of tragedy is concerned, I quoted the end of Aristotle's sentence on pity and fear effecting the catharsis of the emotions, that famous catharsis the true meaning of which we will try to

grasp at the end. Strangely enough, Goethe saw the function of this fear and pity in the action itself. That is, the action would provide us with a model of the balance between fear and pity. That is certainly not what Aristotle says; what he says is as inaccessible to us as a closed road on account of the curious fate that has left us with so little material to confirm what he says in his text, because so much of it has been lost down through the centuries.

I will tell you one thing right away. Please note, and this is my first point, that at first glance, of the two protagonists, Creon and Antigone, neither one seems to feel fear or pity. If you doubt that, it is because you haven't read *Antigone,* and since we are going to read the play together, I hope to point it out to you in the text.

My second point is that it is not "seems," but it is "certain" that at least one of the protagonists right through to the end feels neither fear nor pity, and that is Antigone. That is why, among other things, she is the real hero. Creon, on the other hand, is moved by fear toward the end, and if it isn't the cause of his ruin, it is certainly the sign of it.

Let us now take up the question from the beginning.

It's not even that Creon says the play's opening words. As composed by Sophocles, the play begins by introducing us to Antigone in her dialogue with Ismene; and she affirms her position and her reasons from the opening lines. Creon isn't even there as a foil. He only appears later. He is nevertheless essential for our demonstration.

Creon exists to illustrate a function that we have shown is inherent in the structure of the ethic of tragedy, which is also that of psychoanalysis; he seeks the good. Something that after all is his role. The leader is he who leads the community. He exists to promote the good of all.

What does his fault consist of? Aristotle tells us, using a term that he affirms falls directly within the province of tragic action, ἁμαρτία. We have some trouble translating that word. "Error," we say, and in order to relate it to ethics, we interpret it as "error of judgment." But perhaps it isn't as simple as that.

As I told you last time, almost a century separates the period of the creation of great tragedies from their interpretation by philosophical thought. Minerva, as Hegel has already said, takes flight at twilight. I'm not too sure, but I think we should remember this formula, which has been so often evoked, to recall that there is after all some distance between the teachings embodied in tragic rites as such and their subsequent interpretation in the form of an ethics, which with Aristotle is a science of happiness.

Nevertheless, it is true that we do note the following. And I would not have any difficulty finding ἁμαρτία in others of Sophocles's tragedies: it exists, it is affirmed. The terms ἁμαρτάνειν and ἁμαρτήματα are to be found in Creon's own speeches, when at the end he succumbs to the blows of fate. But

ἁμαρτία does not appear at the level of the true hero, but at the level of Creon.

His error of judgment (and we come closer to it here than that thought which is fond of wisdom ever has) is to want to promote the good of all – and I don't mean the Supreme Good, for let us not forget that 441 B.C. is very early, and our friend Plato hadn't yet created the mirage of that Supreme Good – to promote the good of all as the law without limits, the sovereign law, the law that goes beyond or crosses the limit. He doesn't even notice that he has crossed that famous limit about which one assumes enough has been said when one says that Antigone defends it and that it takes the form of the unwritten laws of the Δίκη. One thinks one has said enough when one interprets it as the Justice or the Doctrine of the gods, but one hasn't, in fact, said very much. And there is no doubt that Creon in his innocence crosses over into another sphere.

Note that his language is in perfect conformity with that which Kant calls the *Begriff* or concept of the good. It is the language of practical reason. His refusal to allow a sepulcre for Polynices, who is an enemy and a traitor to his country, is founded on the fact that one cannot at the same time honor those who have defended their country and those who have attacked it. From a Kantian point of view, it is a maxim that can be given as a rule of reason with a universal validity. Thus, before the ethical progression that from Aristotle to Kant leads us to make clear the identity of law and reason, doesn't the spectacle of tragedy reveal to us in anticipation the first objection? The good cannot reign over all without an excess emerging whose fatal consequences are revealed to us in tragedy.

What then is this famous sphere that we must not cross into? We are told that it is the place where the unwritten laws, the will or, better yet, the Δίκη of the gods rules. But we no longer have any idea what the gods are. Let us not forget that we have lived for a long time under Christian law, and in order to recall what the gods are, we have to engage in a little ethnography. If you read the *Phaedrus* I was talking about just now, which is a reflection on the nature of love, you will see that we have changed the very axis of the words that designate it.

What is this love? Is it that which, as a result of the fluctuations of the whole Christian adventure, we have come to call sublime love? Is it, in effect, very close, although it was reached by other paths? Is it desire? Is it that which some people believe I identify with a certain central sphere, namely, some natural evil in man? Is it that which Creon somewhere calls anarchy? In any case, you will see that the way in which the lovers in the *Phaedrus* act in relation to love varies according to the "epopteia" in which they have participated. "Epopteia" here means initiation in the sense that the term has in antiquity; it designates very detailed ceremonies in the course of which cer-

tain phenomena occur. One comes upon these down through the centuries – and down to the present time, if one is willing to go to other regions of the globe – in the form of trances or phenomena of possession in which a divine being manifests itself through the mouth of someone who is, so to speak, willing to cooperate.

Thus Plato tells us that those who have undergone an initiation to Zeus do not react in love in the same way as those who were initiated to Ares. Just replace those names with those who in a given province of Brazil stand for a spirit of the earth or war or of a sovereign being. It is not our intention to engage in exoticism here, but that is what is involved.

In other words, this whole sphere is only really accessible to us from the outside, from the point of view of science and of objectification. For us Christians, who have been educated by Christianity, it doesn't belong to the text in which the question is raised. We Christians have erased the whole sphere of the gods. And we are, in fact, interested here in that which we have replaced it with as illuminated by psychoanalysis. In this sphere, where is the limit? A limit that has no doubt been there from the beginning, but which doubtless remains isolated and leaves its skeleton in this sphere that we Christians have abandoned. That is the question I am asking here.

The limit involved, the limit that it is essential to situate if a certain phenomenon is to emerge through reflection, is something I have called the phenomenon of the beautiful, it is something I have begun to define as the limit of the second death.

I first brought this to your attention in connection with Sade as something that sought to pursue nature to the very principle of its creative power, which regulates the alternation of corruption and generation. Beyond that order, which it is no longer easy for us to think of and assume in the form of knowledge – and that is taken to be a reference point in the development of Christian thought – Sade tells us that there is something else, that a form of transgression is possible, and he calls it "crime."

As I indicated, the form of the crime may only be a ridiculous fantasm, but what is in question is that which the thought points to. The crime is said to be that which doesn't respect the natural order. And Sade's thought goes as far as forging the strangely extravagant notion that through crime man is given the power to liberate nature from its own laws. For its own laws are chains. What one has to sweep aside in order to force nature to start again from zero, so to speak, is the reproduction of forms against which nature's both harmonious and contradictory possibilities are stifled in an impasse of conflicting forces. That is the aim of Sadean crime. It isn't for nothing that crime is one boundary of our exploration of desire or that it is on the basis of a crime that Freud attempted to reconstruct the genealogy of the law. The frontiers represented by "starting from zero," *ex nihilo,* is, as I indicated at

the beginning of my comments this year, the place where a strictly atheist thought necessarily situates itself. A strictly atheist thought adopts no other perspective than that of "creationism."

Moreover, nothing demonstrates better that Sadean thought is situated at that limit than the fundamental fantasm one finds in Sade, a fantasm that is illustrated in a thousand or more exhausting images that he gives us of the manifestations of human desire. The fantasm involved is that of eternal suffering.

In the typical Sadean scenario, suffering doesn't lead the victim to the point where he is dismembered and destroyed. It seems rather that the object of all the torture is to retain the capacity of being an indestructible support. Analysis shows clearly that the subject separates out a double of himself who is made inaccessible to destruction, so as to make it support what, borrowing a term from the realm of aesthetics, one cannot help calling the play of pain. For the space in question is the same as that in which aesthetic phenomena disport themselves, a space of freedom. And the conjunction between the play of pain and the phenomena of beauty is to be found there, though it is never emphasized, for it is as if some taboo or other prevented it, as if some prohibition were there, which is related to the difficulty we are familiar with in our patients of admitting something that properly speaking belongs to the realm of fantasm.

I will point it out to you in Sade's texts, where it is so obvious that one fails to see it. The victims are always adorned not only with all kinds of beauty, but also with grace, which is beauty's finest flower. How does one explain this necessity, if not by the fact that we need to find it hidden, though imminent, however we approach the phenomenon, in the moving presentation of the victim or also in every form of beauty that is too obvious, too present, so that it leaves man speechless at the prospect of the image that is silhouetted behind it and threatens it. But what precisely is the threat, since it isn't the threat of destruction?

The whole question is so crucial that I intend to have you go over the passages of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* that are concerned with the nature of beauty; they are extraordinarily precise. I will leave them aside for the moment except to note the following: the forms that are at work in knowledge, Kant tells us, are interested in the phenomenon of beauty, though the object itself is not involved. I take it you see the analogy with the Sadean fantasm, since the object there is no more than the power to support a form of suffering, which is in itself nothing else but the signifier of a limit. Suffering is conceived of as a stasis which affirms that that which is cannot return to the void from which it emerged.

Here one encounters the limit that Christianity has erected in the place of all the other gods, a limit that takes the form of the exemplary image which

attracts to itself all the threads of our desire, the image of the crucifixion. If we dare, not so much look it in the face – given that mystics have been staring at it for centuries, we can only hope that it has been observed closely – but speak about it directly, which is much more difficult, shall we say that what is involved there is something that we might call the apotheosis of sadism? And by that I mean the divinization of everything that remains in this sphere, namely, of the limit in which a being remains in a state of suffering, otherwise he can only do so by means of a concept that moreover represents the disqualification of all concepts, that is, the concept of *ex nihilo*.

Suffice it for me to remind you of what you as analysts encounter directly, in other words the extent to which the fantasm that guides feminine desire – from the reveries of pure young virgins to the couplings fantasized by middle-aged matrons—may be literally poisoned by the favored image of Christ on the cross. Need I go further and add that in connection with that image Christianity has been crucifying man in holiness for centuries? In holiness.

For some time now we have discovered that administrators are saints. Can't one turn that around and say that saints are administrators, administrators of the access to desire, for Christianity's influence over man takes place at the level of the collectivity? Those gods who are dead in Christian hearts are pursued throughout the world by Christian missionaries. The central image of Christian divinity absorbs all other images of desire in man with significant consequences. From an historical point of view, we have perhaps reached the edge of this. It is what in the language of administration is referred to as the cultural problems of underdeveloped countries.

I am not as a result going to promise you a surprise here, whether it be a good one or a bad one. You will come upon it, as *Antigone* says, soon enough.

Let us go back to *Antigone*.

2

Antigone is the heroine. She's the one who shows the way of the gods. She's the one, according to the Greek, who is made for love rather than for hate. In short, she is a really tender and charming little thing, if one is to believe the bidet-water commentary that is typical of the style used by those virtuous writers who write about her.

By way of introduction, I would just like to make a few remarks. And I will come right to the point in stating the term that is at the center of Antigone's whole drama, a term that is repeated twenty times, and that given the shortness of the text, sounds like forty – which, of course, does not prevent its not being read – ἄτη.

It is an irreplaceable word. It designates the limit that human life can only

briefly cross. The text of the Chorus is significant and insistent – ἐκτος ἄτας. Beyond this *Atè*, one can only spend a brief period of time, and that's where Antigone wants to go. It's not a moving little journey at all. One learns from Antigone's own mouth testimony on the point she has reached: she literally cannot stand it anymore. Her life is not worth living. She lives with the memory of the intolerable drama of the one whose descendence has just been destroyed in the figures of her two brothers. She lives in the house of Creon; she is subject to his law; and that is something she cannot bear.

She cannot bear, you tell yourselves, to live with someone whom she abhors. But why not after all? She is fed and housed, and in Sophocles, she isn't married off like Giraudoux's Electra. Don't imagine by the way that Giraudoux invented that. It was Euripides, but in his play she isn't married off to the gardener. So that's the situation: Antigone cannot bear it, and it weighs down on her in such a way as to explain the resolution, which is affirmed from the beginning in her dialogue with Ismene.

This dialogue is of an exceptional harshness. Ismene points out that "Really, given our situation, we don't have much room to maneuver, so let's not make things worse." Antigone jumps on her right away, saying, "Especially now, don't ever say that again, for even if you wanted to, I won't have anything to do with you." And the term ἔχθρα, emnity, is used in connection with her relationship with her sister and what she will find in the other life when she finds her dead brother again. She who later on will say, "I am made for love rather than hate," is immediately introduced with the word emnity.

In the course of events, when her sister comes back to her to share her fate, and even though she hasn't committed the forbidden deed, Antigone will reject her also with a cruelty and a scorn that are consciously calculated. She says to Ismene, "Go back to your Creon, since you love him so."

This then is how the enigma of Antigone is presented to us: she is inhuman. But we shouldn't situate her at the level of the monstrous, for what would that mean from our point of view? That's all right for the Chorus, which is present throughout the whole story, and which at a certain moment after one of those breath-taking lines that are typical of Antigone, cries out, "She is ὠμός." We translate that as best we can by "inflexible." It literally means something uncivilized, something raw. And the word "raw" comes closest, when it refers to eaters of raw flesh. That's the Chorus's point of view. It doesn't understand anything. She is as ὠμός as her father – that's what the Chorus says.

What does it mean to us if Antigone goes beyond the limits of the human? What does it mean if not that her desire aims at the following – the beyond of *Atè?*

That same word *Atè* is to be found in "atrocious." That's what is involved here, and that's what the Chorus repeats at a given moment in its speech with

an emphasis that is technical. One does or does not approach *Atè*, and when one approaches it, it is because of something that is linked to a beginning and a chain of events, namely, that of the misfortune of the Labdacides family. As one starts to come close to it, things come together in a great hurry, and what one finds at the bottom of everything that goes on at every level in this family, the text tells us, is a *μέριμνα*, which is almost the same word as *μνήμη*, with an emphasis on "resentment." But it is very wrong to translate it thus, for "resentment" is a psychological notion, whereas *μέριμνα* is one of those ambiguous words that are between the subjective and the objective, and that properly speaking give us the terms of signifying speech. The *μέριμνα* of the Labdacides is that which drives Antigone to the border of *Atè*.

One can no doubt translate *Atè* by "misfortune," but it doesn't have anything to do with misfortune. It is this meaning that is assigned by doubtless implacable gods, as she might say, which renders her pitiless and fearless. It is also this that, so as to have her appear in the course of carrying out her act, causes the poet to create the following fascinating image, namely, that first occasion when during the night she goes and covers her brother's body with a fine layer of dust, so that it is disguised enough to be hidden from view. One cannot, of course, expose to the eyes of the world that carrion flesh visited by dogs and birds, who come to tear off strips and carry them away, as the text says, only to leave them on the altars in town centers where they promote horror and pestilence.

Thus Antigone carries out the deed the first time. But what goes beyond a given limit must not be seen. The messenger goes and tells Creon what has happened, assuring him that no trace has been found, that there is no way of knowing who did it. The order is given to scatter the dust once again. But this time Antigone is caught in the act. Upon his return the messenger describes what happened in the following terms: first, they removed the dust that was covering the body, and then, they placed themselves up-wind so as to avoid the awful smells, because it stank. But a strong wind began to blow, and the dust started to fill the air and even, the text tells us, the heavens themselves. And at the very moment when everyone tries to escape, to cover their heads with their arms, and to go to earth at the spectacle of the change in nature, little Antigone appears at the height of the total darkness, of the cataclysmic moment. She appears once more beside the corpse, emitting moans, the text says, like a bird that has just lost its young.

It's a very strange image. And it is even stranger that it should be taken up and repeated by other authors. I found in Euripides' *Phoenissae* four lines where she is also compared to the lonely mother of a lost brood, who emits pathetic cries. That proves what the image of a bird always symbolizes in classical poetry. Let us not forget how close pagan myth is to ideas of metamorphosis – remember the transformation of Philomen and Baucis. It is the

nightingale that appears in Euripides as the image of that which a human being is transformed into through his plaintive cries. The limit we have reached here is the one where the possibility of metamorphosis is located – metamorphosis that has come down through the centuries hidden in the works of Ovid and that regains its former vitality, its energy, during that turning point of European sensibility, the renaissance, and bursts forth in the theater of Shakespeare. That's what Antigone is.

The movement of the play toward its climax will from now on be obvious to you.

I must clear the ground further, but it's impossible not to point in passing to a few lines spoken by Antigone. Lines 48, 70, and 73, where Antigone expresses a kind of idiocy that is apparent at the end of a sentence in the word *μετά*.

Μετά means "with" or "after." Prepositions don't have the same function in Greek as they do in French, in the same way that particles play a different role in English from what we know in French. Μετά is, properly speaking, that which implies a break. In response to Creon's edict, she says, "But it has nothing to do *with* my concerns." At another moment, she says to her sister, "If you wanted to come *with* me now and to carry out the sacred task, I would no longer accept you." She says to her brother, "I will lie down, my loving friend, my almost lover, here *with* you." Μετά is placed each time at the end of the line in an inverse position, for normally this preposition like the word "with" is placed in front of the noun. This feature implies in a signifying form the kind of fierce presence Antigone represents.

I will skip the details of her dialogue with Ismene. The commentary could go on and on; it could take at least a year. I am sorry that I cannot contain the extraordinary substance of the style and metre involved in the framework of a seminar. I will pass on. After this opening, which demonstrates that the die is already cast, we have the Chorus. This alternation between action and the Chorus is something that, I believe, recurs five times.

But be careful. It is said that tragedy is an action. Is it *ἄγειν*? Is it *πράττειν*? The signifier introduces two orders in the world, that of truth and that of the event. But if one wants to retain it at the level of man's relations to the dimension of truth, one cannot also at the same time make it serve to punctuate the event. In tragedy in general there is no kind of true event. The hero and that which is around him are situated with relation to the goal of desire. What occurs concerns subsidence, the piling up of different layers of the presence of the hero in time. That's what remains undetermined: in the collapse of the house of cards represented by tragedy, one thing may subside before another, and what one finds at the end when one turns the whole thing around may appear in different ways.

An illustration of that is the following: after having broadcast the fact that

he will never yield an inch in his responsibilities as ruler, Creon starts to lose his nerve once old Tiresias has finished giving him a piece of his mind. He then says to the Chorus, "Shouldn't I perhaps, after all . . . perhaps yield?" He says it in terms that, from the point of view of what I am arguing here, are extraordinarily precise, for *Atè* is used there again with a special appositeness. At that moment it is clear that if he had been to the grave before finally and belatedly granting the corpse its funeral honors, something that does after all take a little time, the worst might have been avoided.

Only there it is, it is probably not for nothing that he begins with the corpse; he wants, as they say, to come to terms with his conscience. Believe me, that is always the element that leads everyone astray whenever reparations are to be made. I have only given you a little illustration, for at every moment in the unfolding of the drama the question of temporality, of the way in which the threads in place are joined together, remains decisive, essential. But it is no more comparable to an action than what I referred to earlier as subsidence, as a collapse back onto its premises.

Thus, after the first dialogue between Antigone and Ismene, the music, the Chorus, the song of liberation, Thebes is beyond the power of those whom one might well call the barbarians. The style of the poem, which is that of the Chorus, represents Polynices's soldiers and his shadow strangely enough as a huge bird hovering above the houses. The image of our modern wars as something that glides overhead was already made concrete in 441 B.C.

Once this first musical entrance is finished – and one cannot help feeling that there is some irony involved on the part of the author – it's over or, in other words, things are about to begin.

3

Creon arrives and makes a long speech justifying his actions. But in reality there is only a docile Chorus there to hear him, a collection of yes-men. There follows a dialogue between Creon and the Chorus. The Chorus itself hasn't altogether given up the idea that there is something excessive in Creon's statements, but at the very moment when it is about to express the thought, that is when the messenger arrives and narrates what has happened, it gets told off in no uncertain terms.

The character of the messenger in this tragedy is a formidable one. He turns up shuffling and mumbling, and he says, "You can't imagine how much I have been thinking things over on my way here, and how many times I came close to taking off in a hurry. That's how a short trip turns into a long one." He's an impressive talker. He even goes so far as to say, "I am sorry to see that you are of the opinion that it is your opinion that you believe in lies."

In short, I am suspected of being suspicious. That style of δοκεῖ Ψευδῆ δοκεῖν resonates with the discourse of the Sophists, since Creon answers him right away, "You are in the process of making points on the subject of the δόξα." In brief, throughout a whole ridiculous scene the messenger engages in idle speculations about what has happened, and in particular speculations about their safety, in the course of which the guards are in a state of panic, in which they nearly come to blows before they draw lots in order to decide which one of them will be chosen to go as messenger. After having got it all out, he is the object of a stream of threats from Creon, who is the person in power and who on this occasion is excessively limited; Creon lets him know that they can all expect the worst if the guilty person is not found in a hurry. "I've come out of this in quite good shape," the messenger comments, "since I haven't been strung up right away to the end of a branch. They won't see me again in a hurry."

This scene is a bit like the entrance of the clowns. But the messenger is quite subtle; he is very clever when he says to Creon, "What is offended just now? Is it your heart or your ears?" He makes Creon turn around in circles; Creon is forced to face the situation in spite of himself. The messenger then explains, "If it is your heart, then it is the one who did the deed that offends it; I only offend your ears." We have already reached the height of cruelty but we're having fun.

And what happens immediately afterwards? A hymn of praise to mankind. The Chorus sets out to praise mankind. I am constrained by the time, so I can't go on, but I will take up this praise of mankind next time.

Then right after the extraordinary tall tale that is this hymn of praise to man, we see Antigone's guard turn up without any concern for verisimilitude, temporal verisimilitude at least. The guard is delighted. He's had a rare piece of luck; his responsibility in the case has been absolved once he has laid hands on the guilty party. Then the Chorus sings its song on mankind's relation to *Atè*. I'll come back to that, too, another time.

Next comes Hemon, who is Creon's son and Antigone's fiancé. He begins a dialogue with his father. The only confrontation between the father and son causes the dimension to appear that I began to discuss concerning the relations of man to his good; there is a moment of doubt, a hesitation. This point is extremely important if we want to be clear about Creon's stature. We will see later what he is, that is, like all executioners and tyrants at bottom, a human character. Only the martyrs know neither pity nor fear. Believe me, the day when the martyrs are victorious will be the day of universal conflagration. The play is calculated to demonstrate that fact.

Creon doesn't lose his nerve, far from it; his son leaves to the sound of the most terrible threats. And what bursts forth again at that very moment? The Chorus once more, and what does it have to say? Ἔρως ἀνίκατε μάχαν,

"Invincible love of combat." I suppose that even those who do not know Greek have heard at one time or other those three words that have come down through the centuries with a number of melodies in their wake.

That song bursts forth at the very moment when Creon decrees the punishment Antigone will be made to undergo: she will be placed alive in a tomb – something that doesn't suggest too tender an imagination. Let me remind you that in Sade it is number seven or eight on the list of ordeals to which the hero is submitted – the reference is a useful one for you to realize the significance of what is involved here. It is precisely at this moment that the Chorus says in so many words: "This story is driving us mad; we are losing our grip; we are going out of our minds; as far as this child is concerned we are moved to . . . ," what the text, using a term whose appositeness I ask you to remember, calls ἵμερος ἐναργής.

Ἵμερος is the same term that in the *Phaedrus* points to what I am trying to grasp here as the reflection of desire of the kind by which even the gods are bound. It is the term used by Jupiter to designate his relations with Ganymede. Ἵμερος ἐναργής is literally desire made visible. This is what appears at the moment when the long scene that leads up to the punishment takes place.

After Antigone's speech, in which is to be found the passage discussed by Goethe that I talked about the other day, the Chorus starts up again with a mythological song in which at three different moments it evokes three especially dramatic destinies that are all on the boundary between life and death, the boundary of the still living corpse. Antigone herself even refers to the image of Niobe, who is imprisoned in the narrow cavity of a rock and will be exposed forever to the assault of rain and weather. It is around this image of the limit that the whole play turns.

At the moment when it is moving more and more toward a kind of explosive climax of divine delirium, the blind Tiresias appears. He doesn't simply announce the future, however, because the revelation of his prophecy has a role to play in the preparation of that future. In his dialogue with Creon he withholds what he has to say until the latter – in whose rigid mind everything is political or, in other words, a question of interest – is foolish enough to say a sufficient number of insulting things for Tiresias to come out with his prophecy. The value attributed to the words of a seer is, as in all circumstances where tradition counts, decisive enough for Creon to give in and resign himself to countermanding his own orders, which, of course, proves catastrophic.

The situation is heightened even further. In its penultimate appearance the Chorus breaks out in a hymn to the most hidden and supreme god, Dionysos. The spectators imagine that this is once again a hymn of liberation, that everyone is comforted, everything will work out all right. Those, on the other

hand, who knew what Dionysos and his savage followers represent realize that the hymn breaks out because the limits of the field of the conflagration have been breached.

After that there is hardly room for the final twist of the action, the one in which the deluded Creon goes and knocks in desperation at the doors of the tomb within which Antigone has hanged herself. Hemon kisses her and emits a few final groans, but we do not know what happened in the sepulcre any more than we know what goes on when Hamlet goes down into the sepulcre. Antigone was after áll walled in at the limit of *Atè*, and one is justified in wondering at which moment Hemon entered the tomb. As when the actors turn their faces away from the spot where Oedipus disappears, we don't know what happened in Antigone's tomb.

In any case, when Hemon emerges, he is possessed by divine *μανία*. He shows all the signs of someone who has lost his reason. He attacks his father, misses him, and kills himself. And when Creon returns to the palace where a messenger has already preceded him, he discovers his wife is dead.

At that point the text shows us, in terms that are calculated to remind us where the limit is situated, a Creon who is out of his mind demanding that he be carried off – "Drag me out by my feet." And the Coryphaeus manages to find the strength to engage in a play of words in saying, "You're right to say that: the pain that one feels in one's feet is the best kind of pain; unlike other kinds, it doesn't last long."

Sophocles is no pedantic schoolmaster, but unfortunately he has been translated by pedants. In any case, that's how the corrida ends. Have the arena raked over, the bull removed, and cut off his you-know-what, if there is any left. That's the style in which he has been rendered. May he go off to the bright sound of little bells.

It is more or less in these terms that the play of Antigone has been translated. Next time I will take a little time to point out a few essential points that will enable you to link my interpretation directly to the very terms used by Sophocles.

I hope that that will take no more than half of my time, and that I will be able to speak afterwards about what Kant has to say on the subject of the beautiful.

June 1, 1960

XXI

Antigone between two deaths

THE-RACE-IS-RUN
SOPHOCLES'S ANTI-HUMANISM
THE LAW OF *EX NIHILO*
THE DEATH DRIVE ILLUSTRATED
COMPLEMENT

I did recommend an interlinear edition of *Antigone* to those of you who know enough Greek to get by, but it's not available. Use the Garnier translation instead, since it's not bad at all.[1]

The following lines of the Greek text are the ones that concern us: 4–7, 323–325, 332–333, 360–375, 450–470, 559–560, 581–584, 611–614, 620–625, 648–650, 780–805, 839–841, 852–862, 875, 916–924, 1259–1260.

Lines 559–560 give us Antigone's attitude toward life. She tells us that her soul died long ago and that she is destined to give help, *ὠφελῆν*, to the dead – we spoke about the same word in connection with Ophelia.

Lines 611–614 and 620–625 have to do with the Chorus's statements on the limit that is *Atè*, and it is around this that what Antigone wants is played out.

I already pointed out last time the importance of the term that ends both of these passages, *ἐκτὸς ἅτας*. *Ἐκτός* signifies an outside or what happens once the limit of *Atè* has been crossed. When, for example, the guard comes and tells of the event that challenges Creon's authority, he says at the end that he is *ἐκτὸς ἐλπίδος*, outside or beyond all hope; he no longer hopes to be saved. *Ἐκτὸς ἅτας* has the meaning of going beyond a limit in the text. And it is around this notion that the Chorus's song is developed at that moment, in the same way that it says that man goes toward *πρὸς ἅταν*, that is, toward *Atè*. In this business the whole prepositional system of the Greeks is so vital and suggestive. It is because man mistakes evil for the good, because something beyond the limits of *Atè* has become Antigone's good, namely, a good that is different from everyone else's, that she goes toward, *πρὸς ἅταν*.

So as to take up the problem in a way that allows me to bring my comments together, I must return to a simple, clean, unencumbered view of the tragic hero, and in particular of the one who concerns us, Antigone.

[1] The best equivalent in English is, of course, the Loeb bilingual edition.

1

One thing has struck a commentator on Sophocles – commentator in the singular, for I have been surprised to find that it is only in a relatively recent book on Sophocles by Karl Reinhardt that something important has been brought out, namely, the special solitude of Sophoclean heroes, μονούμενοι, which is a nice term used by Sophocles, along with ἄφιλοι and φρενὸς οἰοβῶται, that is to say, those who lead their thoughts to graze far off. But it is nevertheless certain that it is not this that is involved here, for in the end tragic heroes are always isolated, they are always beyond established limits, always in an exposed position and, as a result, separated in one way or another from the structure.

It is strange that something very obvious has been overlooked. Let us examine the seven plays of Sophocles that are extant of the twenty-five which he is said to have produced during a life of ninety years, sixty of which he devoted to tragedy. They are *Ajax, Antigone, Electra, Oedipus Rex, The Trachiniae, Philoctetes,* and *Oedipus at Colonus.*

A certain number of these plays remain familiar to us, but you are not perhaps aware that *Ajax* is a very odd piece of work. It begins with the massacre of the Greeks' flock by Ajax. Because Athena doesn't wish him well, he goes crazy. He imagines he is massacring the Greek army, but it is their flock instead. Afterwards he awakens from his craziness, is overcome with shame, and goes and kills himself in a corner. There is absolutely nothing else in the play but that, which is, after all, rather peculiar. As I was saying the other day, there isn't even the suggestion of a perepetia. Everything is there from the beginning; the trajectories that are set in motion have only to come crashing down one on top of the other as best they can.

We will leave *Antigone* aside for one moment, since we are discussing it.

Electra, τόο, is an odd play of Sophocles. In Aeschylus we find the *Choephoroe* and the *Eumenides,* where the death of Agamemnon gives rise to all kinds of things. And once his murder has been avenged, Orestes then has to deal with the avenging divinities who protect the maternal blood. There is nothing comparable in Sophocles. Electra is in certain ways the very double of Antigone – "Dead in life," she says, "I am already dead to everything." Moreover, at that climactic moment when Orestes is making Aegisthus jump for it, he says to him, "Do you realize you are talking to people who are just like the dead? You are not talking to the living." It is an extremely odd note and the whole thing ends abruptly just like that. There isn't the least trace of anything superfluous. Everything ends abruptly. The end of *Electra* involves an execution in the proper sense of the word.

We can leave aside *Oedipus Rex,* given the perspective I am adopting here.

In any case, I am not claiming to promulgate a general law, since we know nothing of the greater part of Sophocles's work.

The Trachiniae has to do with the end of Hercules. Hercules has come to the end of his labors, and he knows it. He is told he will be able to go and rest, that his work is over. Unfortunately, he mixed up the last of his labors with the desire for a female captive, and because she loves him, his wife sends him the delightful tunic that she has been keeping since the beginning in case of need, as a kind of weapon to be reserved for the right moment. She sends it to him and you know what happens. The whole end of the play is taken up with Hercules's groans and roars of pain as he is consumed by the burning cloth.

Then there is *Philoctetes*. Philoctetes is a character who has been exiled on an island. He has been rotting away there for ten years, and then he is asked to render the community a service. All kinds of things happen, including the moving struggle with his conscience of the young Neoptolemes, who is dispatched to serve as bait in an attempt to deceive the hero.

Finally, there is *Oedipus at Colonus*.

You have no doubt noted the following. If there is a distinguishing characteristic to everything we ascribe to Sophocles, with the exception of *Oedipus Rex*, it is that for all his heroes the race is run. They are at a limit that is not accounted for by their solitude relative to others. There is something more; they are characters who find themselves right away in a limit zone, find themselves between life and death. The theme of between-life-and-death is moreover formulated as such in the text, but it is also manifest in the situations themselves.

One could even fit *Oedipus Rex* into this context. The hero has a characteristic that is both unique to him and paradoxical in relation to others. At the beginning of the drama he has attained the height of happiness. Yet Sophocles represents him as driven to bring about his own ruin through his obstinacy in wanting to solve an enigma, to know the truth. Everyone tries to prevent him, including especially Jocasta, who is always saying, "That's enough; we already know enough." Still he wants to know and in the end he does know. Yet I do grant that *Oedipus Rex* is an exception; it doesn't fit the general formula of the Sophoclean hero, who is marked by a stance of the-race-is-run.

Let us now return to Antigone, whose race is run in the most obvious of ways.

On one occasion I showed you an anamorphosis; it was the finest I could find for our purpose, and it is indeed exemplary, far beyond anything one could have hoped for. Do you remember the cylinder from which this strange phenomenon rises up? It cannot properly speaking be said that from an optical point of view there is an image as such. Without going into the optical

definition of the phenomenon, one can say that it is because an infinitesimal fragment of image is produced on each surface of the cylinder that we see a series of screens superimposed; and it is as a result of these that a marvelous illusion in the form of a beautiful image of the passion appears beyond the mirror, whereas something decomposed and disgusting spreads out around it.

That's the kind of thing that is involved here.What is the surface that allows the image of Antigone to rise up as an image of passion? The other day I evoked in connection with her the phrase, "Father, why hast thou abandoned me?" which is literally expressed in one line. Tragedy is that which spreads itself out in front so that that image may be produced. When analyzing it, we follow an inverse procedure; we study how the image had to be constructed in order to produce the desired effect. So let's begin.

I have already emphasized the implacable side of Antigone; the side that shows neither fear nor pity is apparent at every point. Somewhere in order to deplore this, the Chorus calls her, line 875, *αὐτόγνωτος*. That should be heard alongside the *γνῶθι σεαυτόν* of the Delphic oracle. One cannot ignore the meaning of the kind of self-knowledge attributed to her.

I have already indicated her extreme harshness when she tells Ismene of her purpose at the beginning. "Do you realize what is happening?" she asks. Creon has just promulgated what is called a *κήρυγμα* – a term that plays an important role in modern protestant theology as a dimension of the revelation. Her manner is as follows: "Here's the situation then. This is what he has proclaimed for you and me." Then she adds in the lively style of the text: "I speak for me." And she goes on to affirm that she will bury her brother.

We will see what that means.

2

From then on things move fast. The guard comes and announces that the brother has been buried. At this point I am going to draw your attention to something that reveals the importance of Sophocles's work for us.

Some people have said, and I seem to remember that it is the name of one of the many works that I consulted, that Sophocles is a humanist. He is found to be human since he gives the idea of a properly human measure between a rootedness in archaic ideals represented by Aeschylus and a move toward bathos, sentimentality, criticism, and sophistry that Aristotle had already reproached Euripides with.

I don't disagree with the notion that Sophocles is in that median position, but as far as finding in him some relationship to humanism is concerned, that would be to give a wholly new meaning to the word. As for us, we consider ourselves to be at the end of the vein of humanist thought. From our point

of view man is in the process of splitting apart, as if as a result of a spectral analysis, an example of which I have engaged in here in moving along the joint between the imaginary and the symbolic in which we seek out the relationship of man to the signifier, and the "splitting" it gives rise to in him. Claude Lévi-Strauss is looking for something similar when he attempts to formalize the move from nature to culture or more exactly the gap between nature and culture.

It is curious to note that on the edge of humanism it is also in this analysis, in this gap of analysis, of limits, in this attitude that the race is run, that the images rise up that turn out to be the most fascinating of that whole period of history which can be dubbed humanist.

I find for example the point in the text that you have in your hands, lines 360–375, very striking; it concerns the moment when the Chorus bursts forth just after the departure of the messenger whose comic responses and shuffling movements, when he comes to announce the news that may cost him dearly, I referred to earlier. It is really terrible, the Chorus says, to see someone so obstinate about believing he believes. Believing he believes what? Something that no one for the moment has the right to imagine, that is the play of *δοκεῖ δοκεῖν*. That's the element I sought to emphasize in that line along with the other response: "You're playing the fool with your stories about the *δόξα*." That's an obvious allusion to the philosophical games of the time that focused on a theme. The scene itself is quite ridiculous, for we are not really interested in whether the guard will be skinned alive or not on account of the bad news he bears, and he in any case gets out of it with a flourish.

Immediately afterwards in line 332 the Chorus breaks out in the chant that I said the other day was a celebration of mankind. It begins as follows:

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κ' οὐδὲν ἀν-
θρώπου δεινότερον πέλει·

The lines mean literally: "There are a lot of wonders in the world, but there is nothing more wonderful than man."

As far as Lévi-Strauss is concerned, what the Chorus says about man here is really the definition of culture as opposed to nature: man cultivates speech and the sublime sciences; he knows how to protect his dwelling place from winter frosts and from the blasts of a storm; he knows how to avoid getting wet. Yet there is a slippage here; there is, it seems to me, an undeniable irony in what follows, in the famous phrase *παντοπόρος ἄπορος*, which has given rise to a debate on the subject of its punctuation. The accepted punctuation seems to be the following: *παντοπόρος, ἄπορος ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἔρχεται τὸ μέλλον.*

Παντοπόρος means "he who knows all kinds of tricks" – man knows a lot of tricks. *Ἄπορος* is the opposite; it means when one has no resources or defenses against something. You are, I suppose, familiar with the term apo-

ria. Ἄπορος means one that is "screwed." As the proverb from the Vaud region has it, "Nothing is impossible for man; what he can't do, he ignores." That's the tone of the text.

Next we have – *ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἔρχεται τὸ μέλλον.*

Ἔρχεται means "he advances." Ἐπ' οὐδὲν means "toward nothing." Τὸ μέλλον can be translated quite innocently as "the future"; it also means "that which must happen," but at other moments it signifies μέλλειν, "to delay." As a result, τὸ μέλλον opens up a semantic field that isn't easy to identify precisely with a corresponding French term. The problem is usually solved by saying, "Since he is highly resourceful, he will never be without resources whatever he has to face." The thought strikes me as a little petty bourgeois. It's not clear that it was the poet's intention to emit such a platitude.

In the first place, it is difficult to disconnect the two terms that are joined at the beginning of the sentence, παντοπόρος ἄπορος. I also note that later on in line 370 we find another conjunction, ὑφίπολις ἄπολις, that is to say "he who is both above and outside the city." And this is the definition of a character generally identified, as I will explain later, with Creon, with his deformation. At the same time I am not sure that ἄπορος ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἔρχεται can be translated as "because he doesn't approach anything without resources." It isn't at all in conformity with the genius of the Greek language in this case. Ἔρχεται requires that ἐπ'οὐδὲν be attached to it. Ἐπ' agrees with ἔρχεται, not with ἄπορος. We are the ones who find there someone who is ready for everything, whereas it is literally a question of the following: "He advances toward nothing that is likely to happen, he advances and he is παντοπόρος, "artful," but he is ἄπορος, always "screwed." He knows what he's doing. He always manages to cause things to come crashing down on his head.

You should respond to this turning point as to something in the style of Prévert. And I will confirm that such is the case. Just afterwards one finds the line Ἅιδα μόνου φεῦζιν οὐκ ἐπάζεται, which means that there is only one thing he can't come to terms with and that has to do with Hades. Dying is something he doesn't know how to come to terms with. The important point occurs in what follows, – *νόσων δ'ἀμηχάνων φυγὰς*. Having said that there is one thing that man hasn't managed to come to terms with, and that is death, the Chorus says that he has come up with an absolutely marvelous gimmick, namely, translated literally, "an escape *into* impossible sicknesses." There is no way of ascribing another meaning to that phrase than the one I ascribe. The translations usually attempt to say that man even manages to come to deal with sickness, but that's not what it means at all. He hasn't managed to come to terms with death but he invents marvelous gimmicks in the form of sicknesses he himself fabricates. There is something extraordinary about finding that notion expressed in 441 B.C. as one of mankind's essential dimensions. It wouldn't make any sense to translate that as "an

escape *from* sicknesses." Sickness is involved here μηχανόεν. That's quite a gimmick he has invented; make of it what you will.

In any case, the text repeats that man has failed relative to Hades, and we enter immediately afterwards into μηχανόεν. There is something related to σοφόν in that, a term that isn't so simple. I would just remind you of the analysis of the Heraclitean sense of σοφόν, "wise," and ὁμολογεῖν, "to say the same thing," that is to be found in the Heidegger text I translated for the first issue of *La Psychanalyse*. That σοφόν still has all of its primitive vigor. There is something of *sophos* in the mechanism, μηχανόεν. There is something ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ'ἔχων, which transcends all hope and which ἕρπει. It's this that directs him sometimes toward evil and sometimes toward the good. That is to say that this power or *mandate*, as I translated the word *sophos* in the article I was talking about, which is laid upon him by this good, is an eminently ambiguous one.

Right afterwards we find the passage beginning νόμους παρείρων, etc., upon which the whole of the play is going to turn. For παρείρων means undeniably "to arrange the laws wrongly, to weave them together wrongly, to get them all mixed up." Χθονός is "the earth," and Θεῶν τ'ἔνορκον δίκαν is "that which is formulated or told in the law." That's the thing we appeal to in the silence of the analysand. We don't say "Speak." We don't say "Enunciate" or "Recount," but "Tell." But that's exactly what we shouldn't do. That Δίκη is essential and constitutes the dimension of enunciation or ἔνορκον, confirmed by an oath of the gods.

There are two obvious dimensions that may be distinguished without difficulty: on the one hand, the laws of the earth and, on the other, the commandments of the gods. But they may be confused. They don't belong to the same order, and if one mixes them up, there will be trouble. There will be so much trouble that the Chorus, which in spite of its vacillations does cleave to a fixed line, affirms, "In any case, we don't want to be associated with so and so." The point is to proceed in that direction is properly speaking τὸ μὴ καλόν or something that isn't "beautiful," and not, as it is translated, because of the very audacity of the idea, something that isn't "good." Thus the Chorus doesn't want the character in question as its παρέδρος, that is as its companion or immediate neighbor. The Chorus doesn't want to be with him in the same central point we are talking about. It doesn't want to have close relations with him, nor does it want to ἴσον φρονῶν, to have the same desire. It separates its own desire from the desire of the other. And I don't think I am forcing the issue when I find here an echo of certain formulas that I have given you.

Does Creon confuse νόμους χθονός with the Δίκη of the gods? The classical interpretation is clear: Creon represents the laws of the city and identifies them with the decrees of the gods. But it's not as obvious as that, for it cannot be denied that Antigone is after all concerned with the chthonic laws,

the laws of the earth. I haven't stopped emphasizing the fact that it is for the sake of her brother who has descended into the subterranean world that she opposes *κήρυγμα*, that she resists Creon's order; it is in the name of the most radically chthonian of relations that are blood relations. In brief, she is in a position to place the *Δίκη* of the gods on her side. In any case the ambiguity is obvious. And this is something that we will shortly see confirmed.

I have already pointed out how, after the condemnation of Antigone, the Chorus emphasizes the fact that she went in search of her *Atè*. In a similar vein, Electra says, "Why do you always plunge yourself into the *Atè* of your house, why do you persist in referring to the fatal murder in front of Aegisthus and your mother? Aren't you the one who brings down all kinds of evil on your head as a result?" To which the other responds, "I agree but I can't help it."

It is because she goes toward *Atè* here, because it is even a question of going *ἐκτὸς ἅτας*, of going beyond the limit of *Atè*, that Antigone interests the Chorus. It says that she's the one who violates the limits of *Atè* through her desire. The lines I referred to above concern this and especially those that end with the formula *ἐκτὸς ἅτας*, to go beyond the limit of *Atè*. *Atè* is not *ἁμαρτία*, that is to say a mistake or error; it's got nothing to do with doing something stupid.

When at the end Creon returns bearing something in his arms, lines 1259–1260, and, as the Chorus tells us, it seems to be nothing other than the body of his son who has committed suicide, the Chorus then says, "If we may say so, it is not a misfortune that is external to him; it is *αὐτὸς ἁμαρτών*, his own mistake. He's the one who made the mistake of getting himself into the mess." *Ἁμαρτία* is the word used, that is "mistake" or "blunder."

That's the meaning Aristotle insists on, and to my mind he's wrong, for that is not the quality which leads the tragic hero to his death. It's only true for Creon the counter- or secondary hero, who is indeed *ἁμαρτών*. At the moment when Eurydice commits suicide, the messenger uses the word *ἁμαρτάνειν*. He hopes, we are told, that she isn't going to do something stupid. And naturally he and the Coryphaeus stiffen in anticipation because no noise is heard. The Coryphaeus says, "That's a bad sign." The mortal fruit that Creon harvests through his obstinacy and his insane orders is the dead son he carries in his arms. He has been *ἁμαρτών*; he has made a mistake. It's not a question here of *ἀλλοτρία ἄτη*. *Atè* concerns the Other, the field of the Other, and it doesn't belong to Creon. It is, on the other hand, the place where Antigone is situated.

3

And it is to Antigone that we must now turn.

Is she, as the classic interpretation would have it, the servant of a sacred

order, of respect for living matter? Is hers the image of charity? Perhaps, but only if we confer on the word charity a savage dimension. Yet the path from Antigone's passion to her elevation is a long one.

When she explains to Creon what she has done, Antigone affirms the advent of the absolute individual with the phrase "That's how it is because that's how it is." But in the name of what? And to begin with on the basis of what? I must quote the text.

She says clearly, "You made the laws." But once again the sense is missed. Translated word for word, it means, "For Zeus is by no means the one who proclaimed those things to me." Naturally, she is understood to have said – and I have always told you that it is important not to understand for the sake of understanding – "It's not Zeus who gives you the right to say that." But she doesn't, in fact, say that. She denies that it is Zeus who ordered her to do it. Nor is it Δίκη, which is the companion or collaborator of the gods below. She pointedly distinguishes herself from Δίκη. "You have got that all mixed up," she, in effect, says. "It may even be that you are wrong in the way you avoid the Δίκη. But I'm not going to get mixed up in it; I'm not concerned with all these gods below who have imposed laws on men." ὥρισαν, ὁρίξω, ὅρος means precisely the image of an horizon, of a limit. Moreover, the limit in question is one on which she establishes herself, a place where she feels herself to be unassailable, a place where it is impossible for a mortal being to ὑπερδραμεῖν, to go beyond νόμιμα, the laws. These are no longer laws, νόμος, but a certain legality which is a consequence of the laws of the gods that are said to be ἄγραπτα, which is translated as "unwritten," because that is in effect what it means. Involved here is an invocation of something that is, in effect, of the order of law, but which is not developed in any signifying chain or in anything else.

Involved is an horizon determined by a structural relation; it only exists on the basis of the language of words, but it reveals their unsurpassable consequence. The point is from the moment when words and language and the signifier enter into play, something may be said, and it is said in the following way: "My brother may be whatever you say he is, a criminal. He wanted to destroy the walls of his city, lead his compatriots away in slavery. He led our enemies on to the territory of our city, but he is nevertheless what he is, and he must be granted his funeral rites. He doubtless doesn't have the same rights as the other. You can, in fact, tell me whatever you want, tell me that one is a hero and a friend, that the other is an enemy. But I answer that it is of no significance that the latter doesn't have the same value below. As far as I am concerned, the order that you dare refer me to doesn't mean anything, for from my point of view, my brother is my brother."

That's the paradox encountered by Goethe's thought and he vacillates. My brother is what he is, and it's because he is what he is and only he can be

what he is, that I move forward toward the fatal limit. If it were anyone else with whom I might enter into a human relationship, my husband or my children for example, they are replaceable; I have relations with them. But this brother who is ἄθαπτος, who has in common with me the fact of having been born in the same womb – the etymology of the word ἀδελφός embodies an allusion to the womb – and having been related to the same father – that criminal father the consequences of whose crimes Antigone is still suffering from – this brother is something unique. And it is this alone which motivates me to oppose your edicts.

Antigone invokes no other right than that one, a right that emerges in the language of the ineffaceable character of what is – ineffaceable, that is, from the moment when the emergent signifier freezes it like a fixed object in spite of the flood of possible transformations. What is, is, and it is to this, to this surface, that the unshakeable, unyielding position of Antigone is fixed.

She rejects everything else. The stance of the-race-is-run is nowhere better illustrated than here. And whatever else one relates it to, is only a way of causing uncertainty or disguising the absolutely radical character of the position of the problem in the text.

The fact that it is man who invented the sepulchre is evoked discretely. One cannot finish off someone who is a man as if he were a dog. One cannot be finished with his remains simply by forgetting that the register of being of someone who was identified by a name has to be preserved by funeral rites.

No doubt all kinds of things may be added to that. All the clouds of the imaginary come to be accumulated around it as well as the influences that are released by the ghosts who multiply in the vicinity of death. But at bottom the affair concerns the refusal to grant Polynices a funeral. Because he is abandoned to the dogs and the birds and will end his appearance on earth in impurity, with his scattered limbs an offense to heaven and earth, it can be seen that Antigone's position represents the radical limit that affirms the unique value of his being without reference to any content, to whatever good or evil Polynices may have done, or to whatever he may be subjected to.

The unique value involved is essentially that of language. Outside of language it is inconceivable, and the being of him who has lived cannot be detached from all he bears with him in the nature of good and evil, of destiny, of consequences for others, or of feelings for himself. That purity, that separation of being from the characteristics of the historical drama he has lived through, is precisely the limit or the *ex nihilo* to which Antigone is attached. It is nothing more than the break that the very presence of language inaugurates in the life of man.

That break is manifested at every moment in the fact that language punctuates everything that occurs in the movement of life. Αὐτόνομος is the word the Chorus uses to situate Antigone; it tells her, "You are going off toward

death without knowing your own law." Antigone knows what she is condemned to, that is, to take part, so to speak, in a game whose outcome is known in advance. It is, in effect, posited as a game by Creon. She is condemned to the sealed chamber of the tomb in which she will be put to the test, namely, that of knowing if the gods below will come to her aid. It is at this point in her ordeal that Creon pronounces his condemnation, when he says, "We'll see how useful your loyalty to the gods below will be. You will have the food that is always placed next to the dead by way of an offering, and we'll see just how long you last with that."

It is at that moment that the tragedy is illuminated with a new light, in the form of Antigone's κομμός, her complaint or lamentation. And it is significant that certain commentators have been scandalized by it.

4

When does this complaint begin? From the moment when she crosses the entrance to the zone between life and death, that is to say, when what she has already affirmed herself to be takes on an outward form. She has been telling us for a long time that she is in the kingdom of the dead, but at this point the idea is consecrated. Her punishment will consist in her being shut up or suspended in the zone between life and death. Although she is not yet dead, she is eliminated from the world of the living. And it is from that moment on that her complaint begins, her lamentation on life.

Antigone will lament that she is departing ἄταφος, without a tomb, even though she is to be shut up in a tomb, without a dwelling place, mourned by no friend. Thus her separation is lived as a regret or lamentation for everything in life that is refused her. She even evokes the fact that she will never know a conjugal bed, the bond of marriage, that she will never have any children. The speech is a long one.

It has occurred to some commentators to cast doubt on this side of the tragedy in the name of the so-called unity of the character represented as the cold and inflexible Antigone. The term ψυχρόν is that of coldness and frigidity. Creon calls her "a cold object to caress," line 650, in a dialogue with his son, so as to let him know that he's not losing very much. Antigone's character is contrasted with her complaint so as to bring out the lack of verisimilitude in an outburst that, it is held, should not be attributed to the poet.

It's an absurd misinterpretation, for from Antigone's point of view life can only be approached, can only be lived or thought about, from the place of that limit where her life is already lost, where she is already on the other side. But from that place she can see it and live it in the form of something already lost.

And it is from the same place that the image of Antigone appears before us as something that causes the Chorus to lose its head, as it tells us itself, makes the just appear unjust, and makes the Chorus transgress all limits, including casting aside any respect it might have for the edicts of the city. Nothing is more moving than that ἵμερος ἐναργής, than the desire that visibly emanates from the eyelids of this admirable girl.

The violent illumination, the glow of beauty, coincides with the moment of transgression or of realization of Antigone's *Atè*, which is the characteristic that I have chiefly insisted on and which introduced us to the exemplary function of Antigone's problem in allowing us to determine the function of certain effects. It is in that direction that a certain relationship to a beyond of the central field is established for us, but it is also that which prevents us from seeing its true nature, that which dazzles us and separates us from its true function. The moving side of beauty causes all critical judgment to vacillate, stops analysis, and plunges the different forms involved into a certain confusion or, rather, an essential blindness.

The beauty effect is a blindness effect. Something else is going on on the other side that cannot be observed. In effect, Antigone herself has been declaring from the beginning: "I am dead and I desire death." When Antigone depicts herself as Niobe becoming petrified, what is she identifying herself with, if it isn't that inanimate condition in which Freud taught us to recognize the form in which the death instinct is manifested? An illustration of the death instinct is what we find here.

It is at the moment when Antigone evokes Niobe that the Coryphaeus sings her praise, line 840: "You then are half-goddess." Then Antigone's response bursts forth, and she is far from being a half-goddess: "This is absurd; you are making fun of me." And the word she uses means "outrage," which, as I have already indicated, is manifestly correlated to the moment of crossing over. The Greek word is used here in its proper sense, which is directly related to the term meaning to cross over – "outrage" is to go "out" or beyond *(c'est aller outre)*, go beyond the right one has to make light of what happens at the greatest of costs. Ὑβρίζεις is the term Antigone confronts the Chorus with: "You do not realize what you are saying. You outrage me." But her stature is far from diminished as a result, and her complaint, the κομμός, her long complaint, follows immediately.

The Chorus then goes on to make an enigmatic reference to three quite disparate episodes from the history of mythology. The first concerns Danae, who was shut up in a bronze chamber. The second is to Lycurgus, the son of Dryas, King of the Edonians, who was mad enough to persecute the servants of Dionysos, to pursue and terrify them, and even to rape their women and to make divine Dionysos jump into the sea. This is the first mention we have of the Dionysiac. In Book II of the *Iliad* we find Dionysos in a death-

like state, and he goes on to revenge himself by transforming Lycurgus into a madman. There are a number of different forms of the myth – perhaps he was imprisoned; blinded by Dionysos's madness he even killed his own sons whom he mistook for vine shoots, and he hacked off his own limbs. But that's not important because the text only refers to the vengeance of Dionysos the God. The third example, which is even more obscure, concerns the hero Phineas, who is at the center of a whole bundle of legends that are full of contradictions and extremely difficult to reconcile. He is found on a cup as the object of a conflict between the Harpies, who torment him, and the Boreads, the two sons of Boreas who protect him, and on the horizon there passes, strangely enough, the wedding procession of Dionysos and Ariadne.

There is certainly a lot to be gained in the interpretation of these myths, if it turns out to be possible. Their disparate character and the apparent lack of relevance to the issues at hand is certainly one of the burdens that the tragic texts impose on their commentators. I don't pretend to be able to solve the problem, but it was by bringing to the attention of my friend Lévi-Strauss the difficulty of this passage, that I recently managed to interest him in Antigone.

There is nevertheless something that one can point to in this rash of tragic episodes evoked by the Chorus at the moment when Antigone is at the limit. They all concern the relationship of mortals to the gods. Danae is entombed because of the love of a god; Lycurgus is punished because he attempted to commit violence on a god, and it is also because she is of divine descent that Cleopatra the Boread and rejected companion of Phineas is implicated in the story – she is referred to as ἄμιππος, that is to say, as swift as a horse, and it is said that she also moves faster across solid ice than any steed; she's a skater. Now the striking thing about Antigone is that she undergoes a misfortune that is equal to that of all those who are caught up in the cruel sport of the gods. Seen from the outside by us as ατραγωδόι, she appears as the victim at the center of the anamorphic cylinder of the tragedy. She is there in spite of herself as victim and holocaust.

Antigone appears as αὐτόνομος, as a pure and simple relationship of the human being to that of which he miraculously happens to be the bearer, namely, the signifying cut that confers on him the indomitable power of being what he is in the face of everything that may oppose him.

Anything at all may be invoked in connection with this, and that's what the Chorus does in the fifth act when it evokes the god that saves.

Dionysos is this god; otherwise why would he appear there? There is nothing Dionysiac about the act and the countenance of Antigone. Yet she pushes to the limit the realization of something that might be called the pure and simple desire of death as such. She incarnates that desire.

Think about it. What happens to her desire? Shouldn't it be the desire of

the Other and be linked to the desire of the mother? The text alludes to the fact that the desire of the mother is the origin of everything. The desire of the mother is the founding desire of the whole structure, the one that brought into the world the unique offspring that are Eteocles, Polynices, Antigone and Ismene; but it is also a criminal desire. Thus at the origin of tragedy and of humanism we find once again an impasse that is the same as Hamlet's, except strangely enough it is even more radical.

No mediation is possible here except that of this desire with its radically destructive character. The fruit of the incestuous union has split into two brothers, one of whom represents power and the other crime. There is no one to assume the crime and the validity of crime apart from Antigone.

Between the two of them, Antigone chooses to be purely and simply the guardian of the being of the criminal as such. No doubt things could have been resolved if the social body had been willing to pardon, to forget and cover over everything with the same funeral rites. It is because the community refuses this that Antigone is required to sacrifice her own being in order to maintain that essential being which is the family *Atè*, and that is the theme or true axis on which the whole tragedy turns.

Antigone perpetuates, eternalizes, immortalizes that *Atè*.

June 8, 1960

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

I would like now to focus on the meaning I give to such an exploration of the tragedy of *Antigone*.

It may have seemed demanding to some of you. For some time now I have used the metaphor of the rabbit and the hat in connection with a certain way of making something appear from analytical discourse that isn't there. I might almost say that on this occasion I have put you to the test of eating raw rabbits. You can relax now. Take a lesson from the boa constrictor. Have a little nap and the whole thing will pass through. You will even notice on waking that you have digested something after all.

It is on account of the procedure I have adopted – and it's no doubt quite a demanding one obviously, quite a tough one – of requiring you to accompany me in breaking the stones along the road of the text that it will enter your body. You will see in retrospect that even if you are not aware of it, the latent, fundamental image of Antigone forms part of your morality, whether you like it or not. That's why it is important to analyze its meaning, and it's not the watered-down meaning in the light of which its lesson is usually transmitted.

Involved here is nothing more nor less than the reinterpretation of the Sophoclean message. You can certainly resist this resharpening of the text's high points, but if you decide to reread Sophocles, you will perceive the distance we have traveled. Even if I am challenged on a given point – for I don't exclude the possibility that I, too, on occasion may misinterpret something – I believe I have dissipated the all-encompassing nonsense in which Sophocles is carefully preserved by a certain tradition.

While I was discussing that with some of you who were countering my views with memories they had of reading *Oedipus at Colonus* – memories that were obviously influenced by the scholarly interpretation – I remembered a little footnote. There are people here who like footnotes. So I will read one that is to be found in a work that psychoanalysts ought to have read at least

once, namely, Erwin Rohde's *Psyche*, of which there exists an excellent French translation.

On the whole, you will find more there, and more that is certain, concerning that which Greek civilization has handed down to us than in any work originally written in French. The most brilliant people on earth don't have all the arrows in their quiver. As it is, we are unfortunate enough to have a romantic movement that didn't rise much above the level of a certain idiocy, and we by no means possess all the advantages when it comes to erudition.

On page 463 of the French translation of Erwin Rohde's book, you will find a little footnote on *Oedipus at Colonus*, which I have already discussed with you in terms that are directly related to what I am concerned with today. Rohde writes: "One only has to read the play with an open mind to realize that this savage, angry, pitiless old man who calls down horrible curses on his sons" – Rohde is perfectly correct, for twenty minutes before the end of the play, Oedipus is still crushing Polynices beneath the weight of his curses – "and who as a man thirsty for revenge looks forward passionately to the misfortunes that are about to descend on his native town, has none of that profound peace of the gods, of that transfiguration associated with the penitent, which traditional exegesis is pleased to observe in him. The poet does not make a habit of disguising life's realities, and here he shows himself to be fully aware that destitution and misfortune do not usually have the effect of transfiguring man; they depress him rather and strip him of his nobility. His Oedipus is pious. He was from the beginning in *Oedipus Rex*, but in his distress he turns savage."

That is the testimony of a reader who is not especially concerned with the problems of tragedy, since his work is an historical account of the different concepts that the Greeks had of the soul.

As far as we are concerned, I have tried to show you that at a time that preceded the ethical formulations of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, Sophocles presents us with man and questions him along the paths of his solitude; he situates the hero in a sphere where death encroaches on life, in his relationship, that is, to what I have been calling the second death here. This relationship to being suspends everything that has to do with transformation, with the cycle of generation and decay or with history itself, and it places us on a level that is more extreme than any other insofar as it is directly attached to language as such.

To put it in the terms of Lévi-Strauss – and I am certain that I am not mistaken in invoking him here, since I was instrumental in having had him reread *Antigone* and he expressed himself to me in such terms – Antigone with relation to Creon finds herself in the place of synchrony in opposition to diachrony.

I have stopped half-way in what I might have said about the text. We are

not in a position to exhaust its significance this year, if only for reasons of time, but it is clear that the question raised at the end concerns what I shall call the divine use of Antigone.

In this connection one might make a number of comparisons. Antigone hanging in her tomb evokes something very different from an act of suicide, since there are all kinds of myths of hanged heroines, including girls, such as that of Erigone, who is linked to the advent of the cult of Dionysos. Dionysos has given wine to her father, but because he doesn't know its properties, he violates her and dies. She then hangs herself on his tomb. It is an explanatory myth of a whole rite in which we see more or less simplified and symbolic images of girls hanging from trees. In short, one finds there a whole ritual and mythical background, which may be brought back to resituate in its religious harmony all that is produced on the stage. It is nevertheless true that from a Sophoclean perspective the hero has nothing to do with that kind of use. Antigone is someone who has already set her sights on death. The invocation that is wrapped around this stem is something else; it doesn't have to do with human defiance here.

That's as far as I will go today. Involved in what I had to say to you about catharsis is the beauty effect. The beauty effect derives from the relationship of the hero to the limit, which is defined on this occasion by a certain *Atè*. And on that subject I will now, so to speak, pass the word to someone else *(passer la parole)*, conscious of the fact that I am using the very definitions of the structure of the seminar.

In effect, I don't want to be the one who, like some jack-of-all trades, takes upon himself alone the task of poking about in all those more-or-less heterogeneous fields that offer the traditional formulations of these things.

At a certain level within you, I mean all of you individually at a certain point in your thinking, there is a form of resistance to the things I am trying to express, and it consists of making sympathetic comments that are more-or-less ambiguous in kind on what has come to be known as my learning or, as is also said, my cultural background. It's something I don't like. It also has a negative side; one wonders where I find the time to assemble all that. But you will recognize that my existence began a little before yours. I may not have had two hundred years of mowing like an English lawn, but I am getting there. In any case, I am closer than you are, and I've had time to forget several times over the things I discuss with you.

I would, therefore, like today to ask someone to speak about the beautiful who seems to me to be particularly well-equipped to discuss it in relation to something that I take to be essential for the continuation of my argument; that something is the definition of the beautiful and the sublime as articulated by Kant.

Involved there is a form of category analysis that is of the highest signifi-

cance in any effort to connect up with the topological structuration that I am pursuing with you here. It seems to me essential to take the time to recall Kant's insights, if you have already read *The Critique of Judgment*, or to hear what they are, if you haven't yet had the opportunity to read that work. That is why I have asked Mr. Kaufmann to speak to us now.

You will see afterwards the use that we might make of the work he will be presenting for your benefit today. [Mr. Kaufmann's presentation followed.]

You were certainly right to state that infinitesimal calculus is evoked behind the experience of the sublime. One should note that in Kant's time infinitesimal calculus still harbored a kind of mystery of the signifier that has totally disappeared since that time.

The 1764 passage you quoted from Kant should really be communicated to Claude Lévi-Strauss, as the inaugural speech he gave on being appointed to his Chair at the *Collège de France* is already implied there. I don't mean by that antedated, but anticipated precisely in a way that is not emphasized at all in Rousseau. Kant already founds the ethics of ethnography there.

The work you presented today suggested to the audience here, which is heterogeneous in its educational background, the idea of structures around which Kant both regroups and dissociates the idea of the beautiful. We might have placed in the background the idea of pleasure in Aristotle and have quoted the nice little definition he gives of it in the *Rhetoric*.

We will use that as a fulcrum – something that is in traditional philosophy – when we take up again where we left off the question of the effect of tragedy. Although we think we always have to defer to Aristotle, that effect concerned cannot be fully explained in terms of moral catharsis.

June 15, 1960

THE TRAGIC DIMENSION OF PSYCHOANALYTIC EXPERIENCE

XXII

The demand for happiness and the promise of analysis

DESIRE AND THE LAST JUDGMENT
THE SECOND DEATH
THE FABLE OF THE CLODHOPPERS
HADES AND DIONYSOS
THE ANALYST'S DESIRE

The report I gave two years ago at Royaumont on "The Direction of the Cure" is to appear in the next issue of our review. The text is somewhat thrown together because I wrote it between two seminars I was giving here. I shall keep its improvised form, although I will try to fill out and rectify certain things to be found there.

1

I said somewhere that an analyst has to pay something if he is to play his role.

He pays in words, in his interpretations. He pays with his person to the extent that through the transference he is literally dispossessed. The whole current development of analysis involves the misrecognition of the analyst, but whatever he thinks of that and whatever panic reaction the analyst engages in through "the countertransference," he has no choice but to go through it. He's not the only one there with the person to whom he has made a commitment.

Finally, he has to pay with a judgment on his action. That's the minimum demanded. Analysis is a judgment. It's required everywhere else, but if it seems scandalous to affirm it here, there is probably a reason. It is because, from a certain point of view, the analyst is fully aware that he cannot know what he is doing in psychoanalysis. Part of this action remains hidden even to him.

And it is this that justifies the direction I have been taking you in this year, the point to which I have suggested you follow me, namely, there where the question of exploring the general ethical consequences involved in Freud's opening up of the relationship to the unconscious is raised.

I grant that there was the appearance of a detour, but it was necessary so as to bring you closer to our ethics as analysts. A few reminders were neces-

sary before I could bring you closer to the practice of analysis and its technical problems. In the present state of affairs, they can hardly be resolved through such reminders.

In the first place, is it the end of analysis that is demanded of us? What is demanded can be expressed in a simple word, *bonheur* or "happiness," as they say in English. I'm not saying anything new in that; a demand for happiness is doubtless involved here.

In the report I referred to earlier – which, now that I see it in print, seems a little too aphoristic, which explains why I will attempt here to lubricate its hinges a little – I allude to the question without explaining it further. The business is not helped by the fact that happiness has become a political matter. I won't go any further into this, but it is the reason why I ended the lecture called "Dialectical Psychoanalysis" – a lecture in which I brought to an end a certain period of activity in a group that we have broken with since – with the words, "There is no satisfaction for the individual outside of the satisfaction of all."

To refocus analysis on the dialectic makes evident the fact that the goal is indefinitely postponed. It's not the fault of analysis if the question of happiness cannot be articulated in any other way at the present time. I would say that it is because, as Saint-Just says, happiness has become a political matter. It is because happiness has entered the political realm that the question of happiness is not susceptible to an Aristotelian solution, that the prerequisite is situated at the level of the needs of all men. Whereas Aristotle chooses between the different forms of the good that he offers the master, and tells him that only certain of these are worthy of his devotion – namely, contemplation – the dialectic of the master has, I insist, been discredited in our eyes for historical reasons that have to do with the period of history in which we find ourselves. Those reasons are expressed in politics by the following formula: "There is no satisfaction for the individual outside of the satisfaction of all."

It is in such a context that analysis appears to be – without our being able to explain why precisely it is the case in this context – and the analyst sets himself up to receive, a demand for happiness.

I have set out to show you this year the distance traveled since Aristotle, say, by choosing among some of the most crucial concepts. I wanted to make you feel the extent to which we approach these things differently, how far we are from any formulation of a discipline of happiness.

There is in Aristotle a discipline of happiness. He shows the paths along which he intends to lead anyone who is willing to follow him in his problematic, paths which in different spheres of potential human activity lead to the realization of one of the functions of virtue. Such virtue is achieved through μεσότης, something that is far from being a simple golden mean or a process

linked to the avoidance of excess; instead it is supposed to enable man to choose that which might reasonably allow him to realize himself in his own good.

Please note that one finds nothing similar in psychoanalysis. Along paths that would appear surprising to someone straight out of high school, we claim to allow the subject to put himself in a position such that things mysteriously and almost miraculously work themselves out right, provided he grasp them at the right end. Goodness only knows how obscure such a pretension as the achievement of genital objecthood *(l'objectalité genitale)* remains, along with what is so imprudently linked to it, namely, adjustment to reality.

One thing only alludes to the possibility of the happy satisfaction of the instinct, and that is the notion of sublimation. But it is clear that if one looks at the most esoteric formulation of the concept in Freud, in the context of his representing it as realized preeminently in the activity of the artist, it literally means that man has the possibility of making his desires tradeable or salable in the form of products. The frankness and even cynicism of such a formulation has in my eyes a great merit, although it is far from exhausting the fundamental question, and that is, How is it possible?

The other formulation consists of informing us that sublimation is the satisfaction of the drive with a change of object, that is, without repression. This definition is a profounder one, but it would also open up an even knottier problematic, if it weren't for the fact that my teaching allows you to spot where the rabbit is hidden.

In effect, the rabbit to be conjured from the hat is already to be found in the instinct. This rabbit is not a new object; it is a change of object in itself. If the drive allows the change of object, it is because it is already deeply marked by the articulation of the signifier. In the graph of desire that I gave you, the instinct is situated at the level of the unconscious articulation of a signifying series and is for this reason constituted as fundamental alienation. That is why, on the other hand, each of the signifiers composing this series is joined by a common element.

In the definition of sublimation as satisfaction without repression, whether implicitly or explicitly, there is a passage from not-knowing to knowing, a recognition of the fact that desire is nothing more than the metonymy of the discourse of demand. It is change as such. I emphasize the following: the properly metonymic relation between one signifier and another that we call desire is not a new object or a previous object, but the change of object in itself.

Let me cite as an example something that occurred to me when I was preparing these comments for you, so that I could give an image of what I mean by sublimation. Think of the shift from a verb to what in grammar is called its complement or, in a more philosophical grammar, its determina-

tive. Think of the most radical of verbs in the development of the phases of the drive, the verb "to eat." There is "eating." That is how the verb, the action, appears head-first in many languages, before there is any determination as to who is involved. Thus one sees here the secondary character of the subject, since we don't even have the subject, the something that is there to be eaten.

There is eating – the eating of what? Of the book.

When in the *Apocalypse* we read this powerful image, "eat the book," what does it mean? – if it isn't that the book itself acquires the value of an incorporation, the incorporation of the signifier itself, the support of the properly apocalyptic creation. The signifier in this instance becomes God, the object of the incorporation itself.

In daring to formulate a satisfaction that isn't rewarded with a repression, the theme that is central or preeminent is, What is desire? And in this connection I can only remind you of what I have articulated in the past: realizing one's desire is necessarily always raised from the point of view of an absolute condition. It is precisely to the extent that the demand always under- or overshoots itself that, because it articulates itself through the signifier, it always demands something else; that in every satisfaction of a need, it insists on something else; that the satisfaction formulated spreads out and conforms to this gap; that desire is formed as something supporting this metonymy, namely, as something the demand means beyond whatever it is able to formulate. And that is why the question of the realization of desire is necessarily formulated from the point of view of a Last Judgment.

Try to imagine what "to have realized one's desire" might mean, if it is not to have realized it, so to speak, in the end. It is this trespassing of death on life that gives its dynamism to any question that attempts to find a formulation for the subject of the realization of desire. To illustrate what I am saying, if we pose directly the question of desire on the basis of that Parminedean absolutism, which eliminates everything that is not being, then we will say, nothing is from that which is not born, and all that exists lives only in the lack of being.

2

Does life have anything to do with death? Can one say that the relationship to death supports or subtends, as the string does the bow, the curve of the rise and fall of life? It is enough for us to take up again the question that Freud himself thought he could raise on the basis of his experience – everything points to the fact that it is effectively raised by our experience.

In what I was saying a moment ago, I wasn't talking about that death. I am interested in the second death, the one that you can still set your sights

on once death has occurred, as I showed you with concrete examples in Sade's texts.

After all, the human tradition has never ceased to keep this second death in mind by locating the end of our sufferings there; in the same way it has never ceased to imagine a second form of suffering, a suffering beyond death that is indefinitely sustained by the impossibility of crossing the limit of the second death. And that is why the tradition of hell in different forms has always remained alive, and it is still present in Sade in the idea he has of making the sufferings inflicted on a victim go on indefinitely. This refinement is attributed to one of the heroes of his novels, a Sadist who tries to assure himself of the damnation of the person he sends out of life into death.

Whatever the significance of the metapsychological imagining of Freud's that is the death instinct, whether or not he was justified in forging it, the question it raises is articulated in the following form by virtue of the mere fact that it has been raised: How can man, that is to say a living being, have access to knowledge of the death instinct, to his own relationship to death?

The answer is, by virtue of the signifier in its most radical form. It is in the signifier and insofar as the subject articulates a signifying chain that he comes up against the fact that he may disappear from the chain of what he is.

In truth, it's as dumb as can be. Not to recognize it, not to promote it as the essential articulation of non-knowledge as a dynamic value, not to recognize that the discovery of the unconscious is literally there in the form of this last word, simply means that they don't know what they are doing. Not remembering this fundamental principle causes the proliferation that one can observe in analytical theory, a whole jungle, a veritable downpour of references – "It's coming down in handfuls," as they say in Charente – and one cannot help noticing the note of disorientation with which it resonates.

I read no doubt a little hastily the translation of Bergler's last work. He always has something scathing and interesting to say, except that one has the impression of a wild stream of unmastered notions.

I wanted to show you how the function of the signifier in permitting the subject's access to his relationship to death might be made more concrete than is possible through a connotation. That is why I have tried to have you recognize it in our recent meetings in an aesthetic form, namely, that of the beautiful – it being precisely the function of the beautiful to reveal to us the site of man's relationship to his own death, and to reveal it to us only in a blinding flash.

Since I asked Mr. Kaufmann to remind you last time of the terms according to which, right at the beginning of the period of man's relation to happiness that we are still living in, Kant thought it necessary to define the relation to the beautiful, I have subsequently heard the complaint that the thing wasn't

made vivid enough for you by means of an example. Well, let me try to give you one.

Remember the four moments of the beautiful as they were articulated for you. I will try by means of a graduated process to illustrate that for you. For the first step I will draw on an element of my daily experience.

My experience is not that vast, and I have often said to myself that I haven't had sufficient taste for it – things don't always seem to me to be that much fun. Nevertheless, something always turns up to enable one to find an image for that path of the in-between where I am attempting to lead you.

Let us just say that, unlike Mr. Teste, if stupidity is not my strong point, I'm not particularly proud of the fact.[1]

I'm just going to tell you a little incident.

I was in London once in what they call a kind of "Home," where I was being welcomed as a guest of an institution which disseminates French culture. It was in one of those charming little areas of London at some distance from the center, toward the end of October when the weather is often delightful. I was the recipient of a form of hospitality that was marked by a kind of Victorian monasticism in a charming little building. The style of the establishment was marked by the delicious smell of toast and the menace of those inedible gelatine desserts that they are in the habit of consuming over there.

I wasn't alone but was with someone who has agreed to accompany me through life, one of whose characteristics is an extreme sense of uniqueness. In the morning this person, that is to say my wife, suddenly says out of the blue: "Professor D . . . is here." He is or was one of my mentors at the *Ecole des Langues Orientales*. It was very early in the morning. "How do you know?" I asked her, since I assure you Professor D . . . is not a close friend of mine. I was told: "I've seen his shoes."

I must say that I couldn't help feeling startled by that answer; I was also skeptical. To read the highly personal traits of an individuality into a pair of clodhoppers sitting outside a door didn't seem to me to be sufficiently convincing evidence, and there was nothing else that allowed me to believe that Professor D . . . might be in London. I found the thing quite funny and didn't attach any importance to it.

I made my way at that early hour along the corridors without thinking anything more about it. And it was then that to my astonishment I saw Professor D . . . in person slipping out of his bedroom in his dressing gown, exposing as he went a pair of long and highly academic drawers.

I find that experience highly instructive, and it is on that basis that I intend to suggest to you the notion of the beautiful.

Nothing less was required than an experience in which the universality

[1] The reference is to Paul Valéry's short work of fiction, *Monsieur Teste*.

belonging to the shoes of an academic was intimately joined to whatever it was that was absolutely specific to Professor D . . . , for me to invite you quite simply to think of Van Gogh's old shoes – on the basis of which Heidegger has given us a dazzling image of what a work of beauty is.

You must imagine Professor D . . .'s clodhoppers *ohne Begriff*, with no thought of the academic, without any connection to his endearing personality, if you are to begin to see Van Gogh's own clodhoppers come alive with their own incommensurable quality of beauty.

They are simply there; they communicate a sign of understanding that is situated precisely at equal distance from the power of the imagination and that of the signifier. This signifier is not even a signifier of walking, of fatigue, or of anything else, such as passion or human warmth. It is just a signifier of that which is signified by a pair of abandoned clodhoppers, namely, both a presence and a pure absence – something that is, if one likes, inert, available to everyone, but something that seen from certain sides, in spite of its dumbness, speaks. It is an impression that appears as a function of the organic or, in a word, of waste, since it evokes the beginning of spontaneous generation.

That factor which magically transforms these clodhoppers into a kind of reverse side and analogue of two buds proves that it is not a question of imitation – something that has always taken in those who have written on the topic – but of the capture, by virtue of their situation in a certain temporal relationship, of that quality through which they are themselves the visible manifestation of beauty.

If you don't find this example convincing, find others. What I am, in effect, attempting to show here is that the beautiful has nothing to do with what is called ideal beauty. It is only on the basis of the apprehension of the beautiful at the very point of the transition between life and death that we can try to reinstate ideal beauty or, in other words, the function of that which sometimes reveals itself to us as the ideal form of beauty, and in the first place the famous human form.

If you read that work of Lessing's which is so rich in all kinds of insights, the *Laocoon*, you will find that he is absorbed from the beginning in the conception of the dignity of the object. Not that it is as the result of historical progress that the dignity of the object has finally been abandoned, thank God, since everything seems to indicate that it always was. Greek artists didn't restrict themselves to producing images of the gods; as we learn from Aristophanes's writings, paintings of onions cost a lot of money. It is thus not just with the Dutch painters that people began to realize that any object may be the signifier by means of which that reflection, mirage, or more or less unbearable brilliance we call the beautiful starts to vibrate.

But since I have just referred to the Dutch, take the example of the still life. You will find there moving in the opposite direction from that of the

clodhoppers discussed above, as they began to bud, the same crossing of the line. As Claudel showed so admirably in his study of Dutch painting, it is to the extent that the still life both reveals and hides that within it which constitutes a threat, denouement, unfolding, or decomposition, that it manifests the beautiful for us as a function of a temporal relation.

Moreover, insofar as it engages the ideal, the question of the beautiful can only be found at this level as operating at the limit. Even in Kant's time it is the form of the human body that is presented to us as the limit of the possibilities of the beautiful, as ideal *Erscheinen*. It once was, though it no longer is, a divine form. It is the cloak of all possible fantasms of human desire. The flowers of desire are contained in this vase whose contours we attempt to define.

And it is this that leads me to posit the form of the body, and especially its image, as I have previously articulated it in the function of narcissism, as that which from a certain point of view represents the relationship of man to his second death, the signifier of his desire, his visible desire.

The central mirage is to be found in Ἵμερος ἐναργής, which both indicates the site of desire insofar as it is desire of nothing, the relationship of man to his lack of being, and prevents that site from being seen.

3

Here we can take the question even further. Is it the same shadow that is represented by the human body; is it this same image that constitutes a barrier to the Other-thing that lies beyond?

That which lies beyond is not simply the relationship to the second death or, in other words, to man to the extent that language demands of him that he realize the following, namely, that he is not. There is also the libido, that is to say, that which at fleeting moments carries us beyond the encounter that makes us forget it. And Freud was the first to articulate boldly and powerfully the idea that the only moment of *jouissance* that man knows occurs at the site where fantasms are produced, fantasms that represent for us the same barrier as far as access to *jouissance* is concerned, the barrier where everything is forgotten.

I should like to introduce here, as a parallel to the function of the beautiful, another function. I have named it on a number of occasions without emphasizing it particularly, but it seems to me essential to refer to it here. It is with your permission what I shall call Αἰδώς or, in other words, a sense of shame. The omission of this barrier, which prevents the direct experience of that which is to be found at the center of sexual union, seems to me to be at the origin of all kinds of questions that cannot be answered, including notably the matter of feminine sexuality, which is a subject that is on the agenda of

our research activities – though I am not responsible for that.

The end of *Antigone* offers us the substitution of some bloody image of sacrifice that is realized in the mystical suicide. Clearly, beyond a certain point we do not know what goes on in Antigone's tomb. Everything points to the fact that what occurs there takes place as a crisis of *μανία* – Antigone attains the same level as that at which both Ajax and Hercules perish. I won't take up the question of Oedipus's end.

In this connection I have found no better a source than the Heraclitean aphorisms that we owe to the denunciatory references of Saint Clement of Alexandria – he found in them the sign of pagan abominations. I have retained a small fragment that says, *εἰ μὴ γὰρ Διονύσωι Πομπὴν ἐποιοῦντο καὶ ὕμνεον αἰσμα*, "clearly, if they did not organize processions and feasts to Dionysos accompanied by the singing of hymns" – and it is here that the ambiguity begins—*αἰδοίοισιν ἀναιδέστατα Εἰργασίάν* – what would they perform? the most disrespectful of homages to something shameful." That is in a sense one way of reading it. And, Heraclites goes on, Hades and Dionysos are the same thing to the extent that both of them *μαίνονται*, they enter a state of delirium and start to perform like hyenas. The reference is to bacchic processions that are linked to the appearance of all manner of forms of trance.

You should realize that Heraclites didn't at all like extreme religious ceremonies and had no sympathy for ecstacy – a lack of sympathy that is very different from that of a Christian or a rationalist. And he leads us up to the point where he says that if it weren't a reference to Hades or a ceremony of ecstacy, it would be nothing more than an odious phallic ceremony, an object of disgust.

Yet it isn't clear that one should rely on this translation. There is an obvious play on words between *αἰδοίοσιν ἀναιδέστατα* and *Ἄιδης*, which means invisible. *Αἰδοῖα* means the shameful parts, but it can also mean something respectable and venerable. The term song isn't missing. In the end, in singing their praises with great pomp to Dionysos, the members of his sect do not really know what they are doing. Aren't Hades and Dionysos one and the same thing?

It's a question that is also raised for us. Do the fantasm of the phallus and the beauty of the human image find their legitimate place at the same level? Or is there, on the contrary, an imperceptible distinction, an irreducible difference, between them? The whole Freudian enterprise has come up against that issue. At the end of one of his final papers, "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," Freud tells us that in the end the aspiration of the patient collapses into an ineradicable nostalgia for the fact that there is no way he can be the phallus, and that since he cannot be it, he can only have it in the condition of the *Penisneid* in a woman or of castration in a man.

That's something to remember whenever the analyst finds himself in the

position of responding to anyone who asks him for happiness. The question of the Sovereign Good is one that man has asked himself since time immemorial, but the analyst knows that it is a question that is closed. Not only doesn't he have that Sovereign Good that is asked of him, but he also knows there isn't any. To have carried an analysis through to its end is no more nor less than to have encountered that limit in which the problematic of desire is raised.

That this problematic is central for access to any realization of oneself whatsoever constitutes the novelty of the analysis. There is no doubt that in the course of this process the subject will encounter much that is good for him, all the good he can do for himself, in fact, but let us not forget what we know so well because we say it everyday of our lives in the clearest of terms: he will only encounter that good if at every moment he eliminates from his wishes the false goods, if he exhausts not only the vanity of his demands, given that they are all no more than regressive demands, but also the vanity of his gifts.

Psychoanalysis makes the whole achievement of happiness turn on the genital act. It is, therefore, necessary to draw the proper consequences from this. It is doubtless possible to achieve for a single moment in this act something which enables one human being to be for another in the place that is both living and dead of the Thing. In this act and only at this moment, he may simulate with his flesh the consummation of what he is not under any circumstances. But even if the possibility of this consummation is polarizing and central, it cannot be considered timely.

What the subject achieves in analysis is not just that access, even if it is repeated and always available, but something else that through the transference gives everything living its form – the subject, so to speak, counts the vote relative to his own law. This law is in the first place always the acceptance of something that began to be articulated before him in previous generations, and which is strictly speaking *Atè*. Although this *Atè* does not always reach the tragic level of Antigone's *Atè*, it is nevertheless closely related to misfortune.

What the analyst has to give, unlike the partner in the act of love, is something that even the most beautiful bride in the world cannot outmatch, that is to say, what he has. And what he has is nothing other than his desire, like that of the analysand, with the difference that it is an experienced desire.

What can a desire of this kind, the desire of the analyst, be? We can say right away what it cannot be. It cannot desire the impossible.

I will give you an example of that in a compact definition, which an author managed to come up with before he disappeared, of a function that seemed to him to be essential in the dual relationship with the analyst, a relationship that exists to the extent that we respond to the demand of happiness, but that

does not exhaust the analysis. This function, which is namely that of distance, is defined in the following terms: the gap between the way in which the subject expresses his instinctual "drives"[2] and the way in which he would be able to express them if the process of arranging and organizing them weren't available.

In the light of my teaching, the truly aberrant and contradictory character of such a formulation is apparent. If the instinct is the effect of the mark of the signifier on needs, their transformation as an effect of the signifier into something fragmented and panic-stricken that we call the drive, what can such a definition of distance mean?

In the same way, if the analyst's desire is an experienced desire, it is impossible for the analyst to agree to remain in the trap that is the desire to reduce such a distance to nothing. The function of the analyst would essentially be that of a "joiner" (*un rappocher*), as the same theoretician expresses it. The same fantasm is involved here, namely, that of the incorporation or ingestion of the phallic image to the extent that it is actualized in a relationship that is entirely governed by the imaginary. In that direction the subject can achieve nothing but some form of psychosis or perversion, however mild its character, for the term "joiner" that is placed by the author concerned at the center of the analytical dialectic does no more than reflect a desire of the analyst, whose nature the latter misperceives as a result of an inadequate theory of his position; it is the desire to draw closer to the point of being joined to the one who is in his charge.

One can only say of such an aspiration that it is pathetic in its naiveté. And one is only surprised that it could have been formulated other than as a dead-end to be dismissed.

That, then, is what I wanted to remind you of today, so as to indicate to you the direction taken by our research on the subject of the beautiful and, I would add, the sublime. We haven't yet extracted from the Kantian definitions of the sublime all the substance we might. The conjunction of this term with that of sublimation is probably not simply an accident nor simply homonymic.

We will take up the question of this satisfaction next time for our profit; the promise of analysis grants no other.

June 22, 1960

2. In English in text.

XXIII

The moral goals of psychoanalysis

THE BOURGEOIS DREAM
OEDIPUS, LEAR, AND THE SERVICE OF GOODS
THE INCORPORATION OF THE SUPEREGO
THE THREE FATHERS
UNRECONCILED OEDIPUS

At the point where I am about to bring to an end the risky topic that I chose to explore with you this year, I believe I cannot do enough to articulate the limit of the progress I wanted you to make.

I will spend next year outlining the ends and the means of analysis in relation to each other. Though that's not necessarily the title I will give the Seminar. It seems to me to be indispensable that we stop for a moment to consider something that remains obscure in what might be called the moral goals of psychoanalysis.

1

To promote in the practice of analysis a form of psychological normalization implies what might be called rationalizing moralization. Furthermore, to aim for the fulfillment of what is known as the genital stage, that is, a maturation of the drive and object, which would set the standard for a right relationship to reality, definitely embodies a certain moral implication.

Should the theoretical and practical purpose of our action be limited to the ideal of psychological harmonization? In the hope of allowing our patients to achieve the possibility of an untroubled happiness should we assume that the reduction of the antimony that Freud himself so powerfully articulated may be complete? I am referring to what he expresses in *Civilization and Its Discontents* when he affirms that the form in which the moral agency is concretely inscribed in man – and that is nothing less than rational according to him – the form he called the superego, operates according to an economy such that the more one sacrifices to it, the more it demands.

Are we entitled to forget that threat, that cleavage in the moral being of man, in the doctrine and practice of psychoanalysis? In truth, that is what happens; we are only too inclined to forget it, both in the promises that we believe we can make, and in those that we believe we can make to ourselves

in the matter of a given outcome of our therapy. It's serious, and it's even more serious when we are in a position to give to an analysis its full significance; I mean when we are faced by the conceivable end of an analysis in its training function in the fullest sense of the term.

If we are to consider an analysis completed for someone who is subsequently to find himself in a responsible position relative to an analysis, in the sense that he becomes an analyst himself, should it ideally or by right end with the position of comfort that I categorized just now as a moralizing rationalization of the kind in which it often tends to express itself?

When in conformity with Freudian experience one has articulated the dialectic of demand, need and desire, is it fitting to reduce the success of an analysis to a situation of individual comfort linked to that well-founded and legitimate function we might call the service of goods? Private goods, family goods, domestic goods, other goods that solicit us, the goods of our trade or our profession, the goods of the city, etc.

Can we, in fact, close off that city so easily nowadays? It doesn't matter. However we regulate the situation of those who have recourse to us in our society, it is only too obvious that their aspiration to happiness will always imply a place where miracles happen, a promise, a mirage of original genius or an opening up of freedom, or if we caricature it, the possession of all women for a man and of an ideal man for a woman. To make oneself the guarantor of the possibility that a subject will in some way be able to find happiness even in analysis is a form of fraud.

There's absolutely no reason why we should make ourselves the guarantors of the bourgeois dream. A little more rigor and firmness are required in our confrontation with the human condition. That is why I reminded you last time that the service of goods or the shift of the demand for happiness onto the political stage has its consequences. The movement that the world we live in is caught up in, of wanting to establish the universal spread of the service of goods as far as conceivably possible, implies an amputation, sacrifices, indeed a kind of puritanism in the relationship to desire that has occurred historically. The establishment of the service of goods at a universal level does not in itself resolve the problem of the present relationship of each individual man to his desire in the short period of time between his birth and his death. The happiness of future generations is not at issue here.

As I believe I have shown here in the sphere I have outlined for you this year, the function of desire must remain in a fundamental relationship to death. The question I ask is this: shouldn't the true termination of an analysis – and by that I mean the kind that prepares you to become an analyst – in the end confront the one who undergoes it with the reality of the human condition? It is precisely this, that in connection with anguish, Freud designated as the level at which its signal is produced, namely, *Hilflosigkeit* or

distress, the state in which man is in that relationship to himself which is his own death – in the sense I have taught you to isolate it this year – and can expect help from no one.

At the end of a training analysis the subject should reach and should know the domain and the level of the experience of absolute disarray. It is a level at which anguish is already a protection, not so much *Abwarten* as *Erwartung*. Anguish develops by letting a danger appear, whereas there is no danger at the level of the final experience of *Hilflosigkeit*.

I have already told you how the limit of this region is expressed for man; it touches the end of what he is and what he is not. That is why the myth of Oedipus acquires its full significance here.

2

Today I will once again bring you back to the passage through that intermediary region, and I remind you that in the Oedipus story one must not overlook the time that passes between the moment when Oedipus is blinded and the moment when he dies. And it is, moreover, a special, unique death that, as I have already said, constitutes a genuine enigma in Sophocles.

One shouldn't forget that in a sense Oedipus did not suffer from the Oedipus complex, and he punished himself for a sin he did not commit. He simply killed a man whom he didn't know was his father, a man whom, according to the realistically motivated form in which the myth is presented, he met on the road along which he was fleeing because he had got wind of something quite unpleasant concerning him with relation to his father. He flees those whom he thinks are his parents, and commits a crime in trying to avoid it.

He doesn't know that in achieving happiness, both conjugal happiness and that of his job as king, of being the guide to the happiness of the state, he is sleeping with his mother. One might therefore ask what the treatment he inflicts on himself means. Which treatment? He gives up the very thing that captivated him. In fact, he has been duped, tricked by reason of the fact that he achieved happiness. Beyond the sphere of the service of goods and in spite of the complete success of this service, he enters into the zone in which he pursues his desire.

Note carefully the dispositions he makes; at the moment of death, he remains unmoved. The irony of the French expression for hale and hearty, *bon pied bon oeil*,[1] should not mean too much in his case, since the man whose feet are swollen has also lost the sight of his eyes. But that doesn't prevent him from demanding everything or, in other words, all the honors due his rank. The

[1] It means literally "good foot good eye."

memory of the legend allows us to perceive something that is emphasized by modern ethnography, because after the sacrifice he was sent the victim's thigh instead of its shoulder – it might be the other way round – and he sees in this lapse an intolerable insult and breaks with his sons to whom he had handed over power. Then in the end his curse on his sons bursts forth, and it is absolute.

It is important to explore what is contained in that moment when, although he has renounced the service of goods, nothing of the preeminence of his dignity in relation to these same goods is ever abandoned; it is the same moment when in his tragic liberty he has to deal with the consequence of that desire that led him to go beyond the limit, namely, the desire to know. He has learned and still wants to learn something more.

In order to make myself understood, I should perhaps evoke another tragic figure, one who is no doubt closer to us – King Lear.

I cannot give a detailed analysis of the significance of the play here. I just wanted to make you understand what Oedipus's crossing over means on the basis of *King Lear*, where we find that crossing over in a derisory form.

King Lear, too, gives up the service of goods, gives up his royal duties; the old fool believes he is lovable and, therefore, hands over the service of goods to his daughters. But you must not assume that he gives up anything. It's supposed to be the beginning of freedom, a life of festivities with his fifty knights, lots of fun, during which time he stays in turn with each of those two shrews whom he thought he could entrust with the duties of power.

In the meantime, there he is with no other warrant than that of loyalty, of an agreement founded on honor, since he conceded the power he had of his own free will. Shakespeare's formidable irony mobilizes a whole swarm of destinies that devour each other, for it isn't just Lear but all the good people in the play whom we see condemned to suffering without remission for having trusted to simple loyalty and to agreements founded on honor. I don't have to emphasize the fact; just read the play again.

Lear as well as Oedipus shows us that he who enters that space, whether it be by the derisory path of Lear or the tragic one of Oedipus, finds himself alone and betrayed.

Oedipus's last word is, as you know, that phrase μὴ φύναι which I have repeated here any number of times, since it embodies a whole exegesis on negation. I indicated to you how the French language raises it in that little pleonastic "ne" which no one knows what to do with, since it dangles there in an expression such as "je crains qu'il ne vienne" ("I'm afraid he is coming"), which would be just as pleased if it weren't there like a particle oscillating between a coming and fear of it.[2] It has no *raison d'être* except for that

[2] See note 2 on p. 64 on the pleonastic "ne."

of the subject itself. In French it is the remains of that which means μὴ in Greek, a word that does not signify a negation. I could show it to you in any text.

Other texts give expression to it, such as *Antigone,* for example, in the passage where the guard, in speaking about the person whom he does not yet know to be Antigone, says: "He left without leaving a trace." And the guard adds in the lesson chosen by the editor: "ἔφευγε μὴ εἰδέναι." In principle that means he avoided its being known that it was him – τό μὴ εἰδέναι – as a variant suggests. But if one took the first version with its two negations literally, one would have to say he avoided its not being known that it was him. The μὴ is there to indicate the *Spaltung* between the enunciation and the enunciated that I have already explained. Μή φύναι means "rather not to be."

That's the choice with which a human existence such as Oedipus's has to end. It ends so perfectly that he doesn't die like everybody else, that is to say accidentally; he dies from a true death in which he erases his own being. The malediction is freely accepted on the basis of the true subsistence of a human being, the subsistence of the subtraction of himself from the order of the world. It's a beautiful attitude, and as the madrigal says, it's twice as beautiful on account of its beauty.

Oedipus shows us where the inner limit zone in the relationship to desire ends. In every human experience that zone is always relegated to a point beyond death, since the ordinary human being conducts himself in the light of what needs to be done so as not to risk the other death, the death that simply involves kicking the bucket. *Primum vivere* – questions relating to being are always postponed to later, which does not, of course, mean that they aren't there on the horizon.

Here then are the topological notions without which it is our experience that it is impossible to find one's way or to say anything that is not simply confusing and a going round in circles – and that's true of even the most eminent of authors. Take, for example, the article by Jones that is remarkable in all kinds of ways, "Hatred, Culpability and Fear," in which he shows the circularity of these terms, though it's not an absolute one. I beg you to study it pen in hand, for we will be dealing with it next year. You will see how many things would be illuminated if the principles we are articulating were applied.

Let us take up those principles again in connection with the common man who concerns us here; let us try to see what they imply. Jones, for example, has perhaps expressed better than others the moral alibi that he called *moralisches Entgegenkommen,* that is, a kind of consent to the moral demand. In effect, he shows that very often there is nothing more in the duties man imposes on himself than the fear of the risks involved in failing to impose

those duties. One should call things by their name, and it's not because one hangs up a triple analytical veil that it doesn't mean what it says: psychoanalysis teaches that in the end it is easier to accept interdiction than to run the risk of castration.

Let's try to practice a little brain-washing on ourselves. Before going into the question further, which is often a way of avoiding it, what does it mean to say, as Freud does, that the superego appears at the moment of the decline of the Oedipus complex? Of course, we have in the meantime made a little progress by demonstrating that one was born before, in reaction to sadistic drives, according to Melanie Klein, although no one has been able to prove that the same superego is involved. But let's limit ourselves to the Oedipal superego. The fact that it is born at the moment of the decline of the Oedipus complex means that the subject incorporates its authority into himself.

That ought to put you on the right track. In a famous article called "Mourning and Melancholia," Freud also says that the work of mourning is applied to an incorporated object, to an object which for one reason or another one is not particularly fond of. As far as the loved object that we make such a fuss about in our mourning is concerned, we do not, in fact, simply sing its praises, if only because of the lousy trick it played on us by leaving us. Thus, if we are sufficiently cruel to ourselves to incorporate the father, it is perhaps because we have a lot to reproach this father with.

It is here that the distinctions I presented to you last year may prove useful. Castration, frustration, and privation are not the same thing. If frustration properly belongs to the symbolic mother, he who is responsible for castration, according to Freud, is the real father, and as far as privation is concerned, it's the imaginary father. Let us try to understand the function of each of these elements at the moment of decline of the Oedipus complex and of the formation of the superego. Perhaps that will shed a little light, and we won't have the impression of reading two different lines at the same time when we take account of the castrating father, on the one hand, and the father as origin of the superego, on the other. This distinction is basic to everything Freud articulated, and in particular to the question of castration once he began to spell it out – the phenomenon is indeed a stupefying one since it is a notion that had never even been broached before him.

The real father, Freud tells us, is a castrating father. In what way? Through his presence as real father who effectively occupies that person with whom the child is in a state of rivalry, namely, the mother. Whether or not that is the case in experience, in theory there is no doubt about it: the real father is elevated to the rank of Great Fucker – though not, believe me, in the face of the Eternal, which isn't even around to count the number of times. Yet doesn't this real and mythical father fade at the moment of the decline of the Oedipus complex into the one whom the child may easily have already discovered at

the relatively advanced age of five years old, namely, the imaginary father, the father who has fucked the kid up.

Isn't that what the theoreticians of analytical experience say as they mumble away? And doesn't one find the point of difference there? Isn't it in connection with the experience of privation the small child undergoes – not because he is small but because he is human – in connection with what the child experiences as privation, that the mourning for the imaginary father is forged? – that is a mourning for someone who would really be someone. The perpetual reproach that is born at that moment, in a way that is more or less definitive and well-formed depending on the individual case, remains fundamental in the structure of the subject. It is this imaginary father and not the real one which is the basis of the providential image of God. And the function of the superego in the end, from its final point of view, is hatred for God, the reproach that God has handled things so badly.

I believe that that is the true structure of the articulation of the Oedipus complex. If you break it down in that way, you will find that the detours, hesitations, and gropings of different authors in their attempts to explain various difficulties and details will be much clearer. In particular, you will also be able to see, in a way that is otherwise impossible, what Jones really means when he speaks of the relationship between hate, fear, and guilt in connection with the genesis of the superego.

3

To pick up the thread, let us say, would to God that the drama took place at the bloody level of castration and that the poor little man flooded the whole world with his blood like Kronos Uranus!

Everyone knows that castration is there on the horizon and that it never, of course, occurs. What does happen relates to the fact that the little man is rather a paltry support for that organ, for that signifier, and that he seems rather to be deprived of it. And here one can see that his fate is common to that of the little girl, who also can be explained much more clearly from this angle of vision.

What is in question is the moment when the subject quite simply perceives that his father is an idiot or a thief, as the case may be, or quite simply a weakling or, routinely, an old fogey, as in Freud's case. He was if you like an agreeable and kind old fogey, but he must, like all fathers, have communicated in spite of himself the series of shocks we call the contradictions of capitalism; he left Freiberg where there was nothing to do anymore in order to move to Vienna, and it is the kind of thing that doesn't go unnoticed in the mind of a child, even if he is only three years old. And it was because Freud loved his father that he felt obliged to restore his stature to the point

of attributing to him the gigantic proportions of the father of the primitive horde.

But that's not what resolves the fundamental questions; that's not the essential question, as the story of Oedipus tells us. If Oedipus is a whole man, if Oedipus doesn't have an Oedipus complex, it is because in his case there is no father at all. The person who served as father was his adoptive father. And, my good friends, that's the case with all of us, because as the Latin has it, *pater is est quem justae nuptiae demonstrant*, that is to say, the father is he who acknowledges us. We are at bottom in the same boat as Oedipus, even if we don't know it. As far as the father that Oedipus knew is concerned, he only becomes the father, as Freud's myth indicates, once he is dead.

It is thus there, as I've said a hundred times, that one finds the paternal function. In our theory the sole function of the father is to be a myth, to be always only the Name-of-the-Father, or in other words nothing more than the dead father, as Freud explains in *Totem and Taboo*. But for this to be developed fully, of course, the human adventure has to be carried through to its end, if only in outline; that zone Oedipus enters after having scratched out his eyes has to be explored.

It is always through some beneficial crossing of the limit that man experiences his desire. Others have expressed the idea before me. The whole meaning Jones discovers in connection with aphanisis is related to this; it is linked to the important risk, which is quite simply the loss of desire. Oedipus's desire is the desire to know the last word on desire.

When I tell you that the desire of man is the desire of the Other, I am reminded of something in a poem by Paul Eluard that says "the difficult desire to endure" *(le dur désir de durer)*. That is nothing more than the desire to desire.

For the ordinary man, given that Oedipus's mourning is at the origin of the superego, the double limit – from the real death risked to the preferred or the assumed death, to the being-for-death – only appears as veiled. It is a veil that Jones calls hate. You can grasp in this the reason why any alert author locates the final term of the psychic reality we deal with in the ambivalence between love and hate.

The external limit that keeps man in the service of the good is the *primum vivere*. It is fear, we are told, but you can see how superficial its influence is.

Between the two for the ordinary man lies the exercise of his guilt, which is a reflection of his hatred for the creator, whoever he may be – for man is creationist – who made him such a weak and inadequate creature.

All this nonsense is meaningless for the hero, for the one who has entered that zone, for Oedipus who goes as far as the μὴφῦναι of true being-for-death, goes as far as a malediction he acquiesces in or an engagement with

annihilation that is taken to be the realization of his wish. There is nothing else here except the true and indivisible disappearance that is his. Entry into that zone for him is constituted of a renunciation of goods and of power that is supposed to be a punishment, but is not, in fact, one. If he tears himself free from the world through the act of blinding himself, it is because only he who escapes from appearances can achieve truth. This was known in antiquity; the great Homer was blind and so was Tiresias.

For Oedipus the absolute reign of his desire is played out between the two, something that is sufficiently brought out by the fact that he is shown to be unyielding right to the end, demanding everything, giving up nothing, absolutely unreconciled.

I showed you the reverse and derisory side of this topology, which is the topology of tragedy, in connection with poor Lear, who doesn't understand a thing and who makes the ocean and the earth echo because he tried to enter the same region in a salutary way with everyone agreeing. He appears in the end as still not having understood a thing and holding dead in his arms the object of his love, who is, of course, misrecognized by him.

Thus defined, that region enables us to posit the limits that illuminate a certain number of problems that are raised by our theory and our experience. We have never stopped repeating that the interiorization of the Law has nothing to do with the Law. Although we still need to know why. It is possible that the superego serves as a support for the moral conscience, but everyone knows that it has nothing to do with the moral conscience as far as its most obligatory demands are concerned. What the superego demands has nothing to do with that which we would be right in making the universal rule of our actions; such is the ABC of psychoanalytic truth. But it is not enough to affirm the fact; it must be justified.

I believe that the schema I have proposed to you is capable of doing that, and that if you stick with it you will find a way of not getting lost in that labyrinth.

Next time, I will start out on the path that all this has been leading to – a more precise grasp of catharsis and of the consequences of man's relationship to desire.

June 29, 1960

XXIV

The paradoxes of ethics *or* Have you acted in conformity with your desire?

THE COMIC DIMENSION
THE FABLE OF THE CASH REGISTER
DESIRE AND GUILT
GIVING GROUND RELATIVE TO ONE'S DESIRE
RELIGION, SCIENCE AND DESIRE

We come now to our final talk.

By way of conclusion I propose to make a certain number of comments, some of which are conclusive and others experiential or suggestive. You will not be surprised, for we haven't brought our discussion to a close, and it's not easy to find a medium when one has to conclude on a subject that is by its very nature excentric. Let's say that today I am proposing "a mixed grill."[1]

1

Since one should always start up again with a definition, let's say that an ethics essentially consists in a judgment of our action, with the proviso that it is only significant if the action implied by it also contains within it, or is supposed to contain, a judgment, even if it is only implicit. The presence of judgment on both sides is essential to the structure.

If there is an ethics of psychoanalysis – the question is an open one – it is to the extent that analysis in some way or other, no matter how minimally, offers something that is presented as a measure of our action – or it at least claims to. At first sight the idea may occur to someone that it offers a return to our instincts as the measure of our action. Such seems to belong to a time long past, but there are perhaps those here and there whom that prospect frightens. I have even had someone raising objections of that kind to me in a

[1] In English in the original.

philosophical society, objections that I thought had disappeared over forty years ago. But it is true to say that by now everyone has been sufficiently reassured on that topic; nobody seems to fear a moral cleansing of that kind as the result of an analysis.

I have often shown you that in, so to speak, constructing the instincts, in making them the natural law of the realization of harmony, psychoanalysis takes on the guise of a rather disturbing alibi, of a moralizing hustle or a bluff, whose dangers cannot be exaggerated. That's a commonplace as far as you are concerned, and I won't pursue it.

To limit ourselves to something that can be said right off, that everyone has known for a long time now, and that is one of the most modest features of our practice, let us say that analysis progresses by means of a return to the meaning of an action. That alone justifies the fact that we are interested in the moral dimension. Freud's hypothesis relative to the unconscious presupposes that, whether it be healthy or sick, normal or morbid, human action has a hidden meaning that one can have access to. In such a context the notion of a catharsis that is a purification, a decantation or isolation of levels, is immediately conceivable.

That hardly seems to me to qualify as a discovery; rather, it is the minimal position that is fortunately not too obscured in the common notion of psychoanalysis: in what goes on at the level of lived experience there is a deeper meaning that guides that experience, and one can have access to it. Moreover, things cannot be the same when the two layers are separated.

That doesn't take us very far. It is the embryonic form of a very old *γνῶθι σεαυτόν*, though it obviously has its own particular emphasis, which is related to an excessively general form of all that goes under the name of inner progess. But it is already enough to situate the sharp difference I have emphasized this year that is introduced, if not by analytical experience, then at least by Freudian thought.

What does this difference consist of? It may be measured in the response given to the question that ordinary people ask themselves, a question that we answer more or less directly. The question is, once it is over, once the return to the meaning of an action has been accomplished, once the deep meaning has been liberated – that is to say, separated out through a catharsis in the sense of decantation – will everything work out all right by itself? Or, to be precise, will there be nothing but goodness?

That takes us back to a very old question. A certain Mencius, as he was called by the Jesuits, tells us that it can be judged in the following way. In the beginning, goodness was natural to man; it was like a mountain covered with trees. Only the inhabitants of the surrounding area started to cut the trees down. The blessing of the night was that it gave rise to a fresh growth of suckers, but in the morning the herds returned to eat them and in the end the mountain was denuded, so that nothing grew on it.

You see that the problem is not a new one, then. The goodness in question is so far from being confirmed in our experience that we start out from what is modestly called the negative therapeutic reaction, something that at the more remarkable level of literary generality I last time called a malediction assumed or agreed to in the μή φύναι of Oedipus. Not that the problem doesn't remain whole; that is decided beyond the return to sense.

I asked you this year to enter into a mental experiment, an *experimentum mentis* as Galileo called it – contrary to what you may think he was much better acquainted with mental experiments than with those of the laboratory, and without it in any case he would certainly not have taken the decisive step. The *experimentum mentis* that I have been proposing to you throughout the year is directly connected to something that our experience points to whenever we try to articulate it in its own topology, in its own structure, instead of reducing it to a common denominator or common standard, instead of making it fit into preexisting pigeon-holes. The experiment consisted in adopting what I called the point of view of the Last Judgment. And I mean by that choosing as the standard of that reconsideration of ethics to which psychoanalysis leads us, the relationship between action and the desire that inhabits it.

To make you understand this relationship, I had recourse to tragedy, that is to a reference one cannot avoid, as is proved by the fact that Freud was obliged to make use of it from the beginning. The ethics of psychoanalysis has nothing to do with speculation about prescriptions for, or the regulation of, what I have called the service of goods. Properly speaking, that ethics implies the dimension that is expressed in what we call the tragic sense of life.

Actions are inscribed in the space of tragedy, and it is with relation to this space, too, that we are led to take our bearings in the sphere of values. Moreover, this is also true of the space of comedy, and when I started to talk to you about the formations of the unconscious, it was, as you know, the comic that I had in mind.

Let us say by way of a preliminary sounding that the relationship between action and the desire which inhabits it in the space of tragedy functions in the direction of a triumph of death. And I taught you to rectify the notion as a triumph of being-for-death that is formulated in Oedipus's μή φὺναι, a phrase in which one finds that μή, the negation that is identical to the entrance of the subject supported by the signifier. There lies the fundamental character of all tragic action.

A preliminary sounding of the space of comedy shows it is less a question of a triumph than of a futile or derisory play of vision. However little time I have thus far devoted to the comic here, you have been able to see that there, too, it is a question of the relationship between action and desire, and of the former's fundamental failure to catch up with the latter.

The sphere of comedy is created by the presence at its center of a hidden signifier, but that in the Old Comedy is there in person, namely, the phallus. Who cares if it is subsequently whisked away? One must simply remember that the element in comedy that satisfies us, the element that makes us laugh, that makes us appreciate it in its full human dimension, not excluding the unconscious, is not so much the triumph of life as its flight, the fact that life slips away, runs off, escapes all those barriers that oppose it, including precisely those that are the most essential, those that are constituted by the agency of the signifier.

The phallus is nothing more than a signifier, the signifier of this flight. Life goes by, life triumphs, whatever happens. If the comic hero trips up and lands in the soup, the little fellow nevertheless survives.

The pathetic side of this dimension is, you see, exactly the opposite, the counterpart of tragedy. They are not incompatible, since tragi-comedy exists. That is where the experience of human action resides. And it is because we know better than those who went before how to recognize the nature of desire, which is at the heart of this experience, that a reconsideration of ethics is possible, that a form of ethical judgment is possible, of a kind that gives this question the force of a Last Judgment: Have you acted in conformity with the desire that is in you?

This is not an easy question to sustain. I, in fact, claim that it has never been posed with that purity elsewhere, and that it can only be posed in the analytical context.

Opposed to this pole of desire is traditional ethics – not completely, of course, for nothing is new, or everything is new, in human thought. That's something I wanted to make you feel by choosing the example of the antithesis of the tragic hero in a tragedy, an antithesis who nevertheless embodies a certain heroic quality, and that is Creon. With reference to this example, I spoke to you of the service of goods that is the position of traditional ethics. The cleaning up of desire, modesty, temperateness, that is to say, the middle path we see articulated so remarkably in Aristotle; we need to know what it takes the measure of and whether its measure is founded on something.

An attentive examination shows that its measure is always marked with a deep ambiguity. In the end the order of things on which it claims to be founded is the order of power, of a human – far too human – power. We are not the ones to say so, but it is obvious that it can hardly take two steps in expressing itself without sketching in the ramparts that surround the place where, as far as we are concerned, the signifiers are unleashed or where, for Aristotle, the arbitrary rule of the gods holds sway – insofar as at this level gods and beasts join together to signify the world of the unthinkable.

The gods? We don't mean by that the prime mover, but mythological gods. We, of course, know how to contain the unleashing of the signifiers, but it is not because we have staked almost everything on the No/Name-of-the-Father

that the question is simplified. If you go and take a close look at it – and it's worth the trouble – you will see that Aristotle's morality is wholly founded on an order that is no doubt a tidied-up, ideal order. But it is nevertheless one that corresponds to the politics of his time, to the organization of the city. His morality is the morality of the master, created for the virtues of the master and linked to the order of powers. One shouldn't be contemptuous of the order of powers – these are not the comments of an anarchist – one simply needs to know their limit with relation to our field of inquiry.

As far as that which is of interest to us, namely, that which has to do with desire, to its array and disarray, so to speak, the position of power of any kind in all circumstances and in every case, whether historical or not, has always been the same.

What is Alexander's proclamation when he arrived in Persepolis or Hitler's when he arrived in Paris? The preamble isn't important: "I have come to liberate you from this or that." The essential point is "Carry on working. Work must go on." Which, of course, means: "Let it be clear to everyone that this is on no account the moment to express the least surge of desire."

The morality of power, of the service of goods, is as follows: "As far as desires are concerned, come back later. Make them wait."

2

It is worth recalling here the line of demarcation with reference to which the question of ethics is raised for us. It is also a line that marks an essential end in the development of philosophy.

Kant is the person I have in mind because he renders us the greatest service by introducing the topological milestone that distinguishes the moral phenomenon. And by that I mean the field that is of interest to moral judgment as such. It is a limited categorical opposition no doubt, purely ideal, but it was essential that someone someday articulate it by purifying it – catharsis – of all interest, which does not mean of the interests linked to mental pathology, to the *pathologisches,* but simply to sensible, vital human interests. For it to be valorized as the properly ethical field, none of our interests must be in any way involved.

A decisive step is taken there. Traditional morality concerned itself with what one was supposed to do "insofar as it is possible," as we say, and as we are forced to say. What needs to be unmasked here is the point on which that morality turns. And that is nothing less than the impossibility in which we recognize the topology of our desire. The breakthrough is achieved by Kant when he posits that the moral imperative is not concerned with what may or may not be done. To the extent that it imposes the necessity of a practical reason, obligation affirms an unconditional "Thou shalt." The importance of

this field derives from the void that the strict application of the Kantian definition leaves there.

Now we analysts are able to recognize that place as the place occupied by desire. Our experience gives rise to a reversal that locates in the center an incommensurable measure, an infinite measure, that is called desire. I showed you how one can easily substitute for Kant's "Thou shalt" the Sadean fantasm of *jouissance* elevated to the level of an imperative – it is, of course, a pure and almost derisory fantasm, but it doesn't exclude the possibility of its being elevated to a universal law.

Let us stop here and look at the prospects on the horizon. If Kant had only designated this crucial point for us, everything would be fine, but one also sees that which the horizon of practical reason opens onto: to the respect and the admiration that the starry heavens above and the moral law within inspires in him. One may wonder why. Respect and admiration suggest a personal relationship. That is where everything subsists in Kant, though in a demystified form. And that is where my comments on the basis furnished by analytical experience relative to the dimension of the subject in the signifier are essential. Let me illustrate this briefly.

Kant claims to find a new proof of the immortality of the soul in the fact that nothing on earth satisfies the demands of moral action. It is because the soul remains hungry for something more that it needs an afterlife, so that the unrealized harmony may be achieved somewhere or other.

What does that mean? That respect and that admiration for the starry skies had already grown fragile at that moment in history. Did they still exist in Kant's time? As far as we are concerned, when we look at the vast universe, doesn't it seem to us that we are in the middle of a huge construction site surrounded by various nebulae with one funny little corner, the one we live in, that has always been compared to a watch that someone forgot? Apart from that, it is easy to see if there is no one there, if, that is, we give a meaning to what might be construed as a presence. And there is no other articulatable meaning to give this divine presence except that which functions for us as a criterion of the subject, namely, the dimension of the signifier.

The philosophers can speculate all they want on the Being in whom act and knowledge are one, the religious tradition is not misled: only that which can be articulated by means of a revelation has the right to be recognized as one or more divine persons. As for us, only one thing could convince us that the heavens are inhabited by a transcendent person and that is a signal. What signal? Not the one that defines the theory of communication, which spends its time telling us that one can interpret the warning rays that traverse space in terms of signs. Distance creates mirages. Because these things come from far off, people believe that they are messages we are receiving from stars three hundred light-years away. But they are no more messages than when we look

in a bottle. It would only be a message if some explosion of a star at these immense distances corresponded to something that was written down somewhere in the Great Book – in other words, something that would make a reality of what was happening.

Some of you recently saw a film that didn't exactly excite me, but since then I have revised my impression, for there are some interesting details. It's Jules Dassin's film, *Never on Sunday*. The character who is presented to us as marvelously at one with the immediacy of his supposedly primitive feelings, in a small bar in Piraeus, starts to beat up those who are sitting around because they haven't been speaking properly, that is to say in conformity with moral norms. On other occasions, in order to express his immense excitement and his happiness, he picks up a glass and shatters it on the ground. And every time a glass is shattered, we see the cash register vibrate frenetically. I see that as a beautiful touch, a stroke of genius. That cash register defines very clearly the structure that concerns us.

The reason why there is human desire, that the field can exist, depends on the assumption that everything real that happens may be accounted for somewhere. Kant managed to reduce the essence of the moral field to something pure; nevertheless, there remains at its center the need for a space where accounts are kept. It is this that is signified by the horizon represented by his immortality of the soul. As if we hadn't been plagued enough by desire on earth, part of eternity is to be given over to keeping accounts. In these fantasms one finds projected nothing but the structural relationship that I attempted to indicate on the graph with the line of the signifier. It is insofar as the subject is situated and is constituted with relation to the signifier that the break, splitting or ambivalence is produced in him at the point where the tension of desire is located.

The film I just referred to, in which I learned afterwards the director, Dassin, plays the role of the American, presents us with a nice and curious model of something that can be expressed as follows from a structural point of view. The character who plays the satirical role, the role that is offered for our derision, namely, Dassin as the American, finds himself to be as the producer and creator of the film in a position that is more American than those whom he makes fun of, that is, the Americans.

Don't misunderstand me. He is there in order to undertake the reeducation of a good-hearted whore. And the irony of the screenwriter is to be found in the fact that in carrying out this pious mission he is in the pay of the one whom we might call the Grand Master of the brothel. The deeper meaning is signaled to us by the placing before our eyes of an enormous pair of black glasses – he is someone whose face is for good reason never shown. Naturally, when the whore learns that it is the character who is her sworn enemy who is paying the piper, she eviscerates the beautiful soul of the American in

question, and he who has conceived such great hopes is made to look very foolish.

If there is a dimension of social criticism in this symbolism – that it to say that what one finds hidden behind the brothel are the forces of order, so to speak – it is somewhat naive to make us hope at the end of the screenplay that all that is needed to solve the problem of the relations between virtue and desire is to close down the brothel. There runs constantly throughout the film that old *fin de siècle* ambiguity, which involves identifying classical antiquity with the sphere of liberated desire. It is not to have gone beyond Pierre Louÿs to believe that it is somewhere outside her own situation that the good Athenian prostitute can focus all the light of the mirages she is at the center of. In a word, Dassin didn't have to confuse what flows from the sight of this attractive figure with a return to Aristotelian morality, which he fortunately doesn't spell out in detail.

Let's get back on track. This shows us that on the far edge of guilt, insofar as it occupies the field of desire, there are the bonds of a permanent book-keeping, and this is so independently of any particular articulation that may be given of it.

Part of the world has resolutely turned in the direction of the service of goods, thereby rejecting everything that has to do with the relationship of man to desire – it is what is known as the postrevolutionary perspective. The only thing to be said is that people don't seem to have realized that, by formulating things in this way, one is simply perpetuating the eternal tradition of power, namely, "Let's keep on working, and as far as desire is concerned, come back later." But what does it matter? In this tradition the communist future is only different from Creon's, from that of the city, in assuming – and it's not negligible – that the sphere of goods to which we must all devote ourselves may at some point embrace the whole universe.

In other words, this operation is only justified insofar as the universal State is on the horizon. Yet nothing indicates that even at that limit the problem will disappear, since it will persist in the consciousness of those who live with that view of things. Either they imply that the properly statest values of the State will disappear, that is organization and policing, or they introduce a term such as the universal concrete State, which means no more than supposing things will change on a molecular level, at the level of the relationship that constitutes the position of man in the face of various goods, to the extent that up till now his desire was not there.

Whatever happens to that point of view, nothing is structurally changed. The sign of this is, first, that, although the divine presence of an orthodox kind is absent, the keeping of accounts certainly is not and, second, that for the inexhaustible dimension that necessitates the immortality of the soul for Kant, there is substituted the notion of objective guilt, which is precisely

articulated as such. From a structural point of view in any case, nothing is resolved.

I think I have now sufficiently outlined the opposition between the desiring center and the service of goods. We can now come to the heart of the matter.

3

It is in an experimental form that I advance the following propositions here. Let's formulate them as paradoxes. Let's see what they sound like to analysts' ears.

I propose then that, from an analytical point of view, the only thing of which one can be guilty is of having given ground relative to one's desire.

Whether it is admissible or not in a given ethics, that proposition expresses quite well something that we observe in our experience. In the last analysis, what a subject really feels guilty about when he manifests guilt at bottom always has to do with – whether or not it is admissible for a director of conscience – the extent to which he has given ground relative to his desire.

Let's take this further. He has often given ground relative to his desire for a good motive or even for the best of motives. And this shouldn't astonish us. For guilt has existed for a very long time, and it was noticed long ago that the question of a good motive, of a good intention, although it constitutes certain zones of historical experience and was at the forefront of discussions of moral theology in, say, the time of Abelard, hasn't enlightened people very much. The question that keeps reappearing in the distance is always the same. And that is why Christians in their most routine observances are never at peace. For if one has to do things for the good, in practice one is always faced with the question: for the good of whom? From that point on, things are no longer obvious.

Doing things in the name of the good, and even more in the name of the good of the other, is something that is far from protecting us not only from guilt but also from all kinds of inner catastrophes. To be precise, it doesn't protect us from neurosis and its consequences. If analysis has a meaning, desire is nothing other than that which supports an unconscious theme, the very articulation of that which roots us in a particular destiny, and that destiny demands insistently that the debt be paid, and desire keeps coming back, keeps returning, and situates us once again in a given track, the track of something that is specifically our business.

Last time I opposed the hero to the ordinary man, and someone was upset by that. I do not distinguish between them as if they were two different human species. In each of us the path of the hero is traced, and it is precisely as an ordinary man that one follows it to the end.

The fields that I sketched out last time – the inner circle to which I gave

the name being-for-death, in the midst of desires, renouncing entry into the external circle – are not in opposition to the triple field of hatred, guilt and fear as the ordinary man is in opposition to the hero. That's not the point at all. That general form is definitely traced by the structure in and for the ordinary man. And it is precisely to the extent that the hero guides himself correctly there that he experiences all the passions in which the ordinary man is entangled, except that in his case they are pure and he succeeds in supporting himself there fully.

Someone among you has baptized the topology that I have sketched out for you this year with the apt and somewhat humorous phrase, the zone between-two-deaths. Your vacation will give you the time to consider whether its rigor seems to you to be especially effective. I ask you to think it over.

In Sophocles you will encounter again the dance between Creon and Antigone. It is obvious that to the extent that his presence in the zone indicates that something is defined and liberated, the hero bears his partner into that zone along with him. At the end of *Antigone* Creon henceforth speaks loudly and clearly of himself as someone who is dead among the living, and this is because he has literally lost all other goods as a result of the affair. As a consequence of the tragic act, the hero frees his adversary too.

There is no reason to limit the exploration of this field simply to Antigone. Take the example of *Philoctetes*, where you will learn other aspects of the question, that is to say, that a hero doesn't have to be heroic to be a hero. Philoctetes isn't much of a man. He went off all excited and full of enthusiasm to die for his country on the shores of Troy, and he wasn't even wanted for that. He was dumped on an island because he smelled so bad. He spent ten years there consumed with hatred. The first fellow who comes looking for him, a nice young man called Neoptelemes, cons him like a baby, and in the end he nevertheless goes off to the shores of Troy because Hercules appears as a *deux ex machina* to offer a solution to all his sufferings. This *deus ex machina* isn't nothing, but everybody has known for a long time that he simply serves as a frame and limit to tragedy, that we don't have to take any more account of it than we do of the supports that define the area of the stage.

What makes Philoctetes a hero? Nothing more than the fact that he remains fiercely committed to his hate right to the end, when the *deus ex machina* appears like the curtain falling. This reveals to us not only that he has been betrayed and he is aware that he has been betrayed, but also that he has been betrayed with impunity. This is emphasized in the play by the fact that Neoptelemes, who is full of remorse because he betrayed the hero and thereby demonstrates his noble soul, comes to make proper amends and gives him back the bow that plays such an essential role in the tragic space of the play

– because it operates there like a subject that is spoken about and addressed. It is the space of the hero and for good reason.

What I call "giving ground relative to one's desire" is always accompanied in the destiny of the subject by some betrayal – you will observe it in every case and should note its importance. Either the subject betrays his own way, betrays himself, and the result is significant for him, or, more simply, he tolerates the fact that someone with whom he has more or less vowed to do something betrays his hope and doesn't do for him what their pact entailed – whatever that pact may be, fated or ill-fated, risky, shortsighted, or indeed a matter of rebellion or flight, it doesn't matter.

Something is played out in betrayal if one tolerates it, if driven by the idea of the good – and by that I mean the good of the one who has just committed the act of betrayal – one gives ground to the point of giving up one's own claims and says to oneself, "Well, if that's how things are, we should abandon our position; neither of us is worth that much, and especially me, so we should just return to the common path." You can be sure that what you find there is the structure of giving ground relative to one's desire.

Once one has crossed that boundary where I combined in a single term contempt for the other and for oneself, there is no way back. It might be possible to do some repair work, but not to undo it. Isn't that a fact of experience that demonstrates how psychoanalysis is capable of supplying a useful compass in the field of ethical guidance?

I have, therefore, articulated three propositions.

First, the only thing one can be guilty of is giving ground relative to one's desire.

Second, the definition of a hero: someone who may be betrayed with impunity.

Third, this is something that not everyone can achieve; it constitutes the difference between an ordinary man and a hero, and it is, therefore, more mysterious than one might think. For the ordinary man the betrayal that almost always occurs sends him back to the service of goods, but with the proviso that he will never again find that factor which restores a sense of direction to that service.

We come finally to the field of the service of goods; it exists, of course, and there is no question of denying that. But turning things around, I propose the following, and this is my fourth proposition: There is no other good than that which may serve to pay the price for access to desire – given that desire is understood here, as we have defined it elsewhere, as the metonymy of our being. The channel in which desire is located is not simply that of the modulation of the signifying chain, but that which flows beneath it as well; that is, properly speaking, what we are as well as what we are not, our being and

our non-being – that which is signified in an act passes from one signifier of the chain to another beneath all the significations.

I explained this last time with the metonymy of "eating the book" that no doubt just came to me, but if you examine it a little more closely, you will see that it is the most extreme of metonymies – something that shouldn't surprise us on the part of Saint John, the man who placed the Word at the beginning. It really is a writer's idea, and he was an incomparable one. But eating the book is, after all, something that confronts what Freud imprudently told us is not susceptible to substitution and displacement, namely, hunger, with something that isn't really made to be eaten, a book. In eating the book we come into contact with what Freud means when he speaks of sublimation as a change of aim and not of object. That's not immediately clear.

The hunger in question, sublimated hunger, falls in the space between the two, because it isn't the book that fills our stomach. When I ate the book, I didn't thereby become book any more than the book became flesh. The book became *me* so to speak. But in order for this operation to take place – and it takes place everyday – I definitely have to pay a price. Freud weighs this difference in a corner of *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Sublimate as much as you like; you have to pay for it with something. And this something is called *jouissance*. I have to pay for that mystical operation with a pound of flesh.

That's the object, the good, that one pays for the satisfaction of one's desire. And that's the point I wanted to lead you up to, so as to shed a little light on something that is essential and that isn't seen enough.

It is, in effect, there that the religious operation lies, something that is always interesting for us to consider. That good which is sacrificed for desire – and you will note that that means the same thing as that desire which is lost for the good – that pound of flesh is precisely the thing that religion undertakes to recuperate. That's the single trait which is common to all religions; it is coextensive with all religion, with the whole meaning of religion.

I can't develop this further, but I will give you two applications that are as expressive as they are brief. In a religious service the flesh that is offered to God on the altar, the animal sacrifice or whatever, is consumed by the people of the religious community and usually simply by the priest; they are the ones who stuff themselves with it. The form is an exemplary one; but it is just as true of the saint, whose goal is, in effect, access to sublime desire and not at all his own desire, for the saint lives and pays for others. The essential element in saintliness resides in the fact that the saint consumes the price paid in the form of suffering at two extreme points: the classic point of the worst ironies relative to religious mystification, such as the priests' little feast behind the altar, and the point of the last frontier of religious heroism as

well. There, too, we find the same phenomenon of recuperation.

It is in this respect that great religious work is distinguished from what goes on in an ethical form of catharsis, which may bring together things as apparently foreign to each other as psychoanalysis and the tragic spectacles of the Greeks. If we found our measure there, it is not without reason. Catharsis has the sense of purification of desire. Purification cannot be accomplished, as is clear if one simply reads Aristotle's sentence, unless one has at least established the crossing of its limits that we call fear and pity.

It is because the tragic *epos* doesn't leave the spectator in ignorance as to where the pole of desire is and shows that the access to desire necessitates crossing not only all fear but all pity, because the voice of the hero trembles before nothing, and especially not before the good of the other, because all this is experienced in the temporal unfolding of the story, that the subject learns a little more about the deepest level of himself than he knew before.

For anyone who goes to the *Théâtre-Français* or the Theater of Athens, it will last as long as it lasts. But if, in the end, Aristotle's formulations mean anything, it is that. One knows what it costs to go forward in a given direction, and if one doesn't go that way, one knows why. One can even sense that if, in one's accounts with one's desire, one isn't exactly in the clear, it is because one couldn't do any better, for that's not a path one can take without paying a price.

The spectator has his eyes opened to the fact that even for him who goes to the end of his desire, all is not a bed of roses. But he also has his eyes opened – and this is essential – to the value of prudence which stands in opposition to that, to the wholly relative value of beneficial reasons, attachments or pathological interests, as Mr. Kant says, that might keep him on that risky path.

I have given you there an almost prosaic interpretation of tragedy and its effects, and however vital its peaks may be, I am not happy to have reduced it to a level that might lead you to believe that what I take to be essential in catharsis is pacificatory. It may not be pacificatory for everybody. But it was the most direct way of reconciling what some have taken to be the moralizing face of tragedy with the fact that the lesson of tragedy in its essence is not at all moral in the ordinary sense of the word.

Of course, not every catharsis can be reduced to something as external as a topological demonstration. When it is a matter of the practices of those whom the Greeks called μαινόμενοι, those who go crazy through a trance, through religious experience, through passion or through anything else, the value of the catharsis presupposes that, in a way that is either more-or-less directed or wild, the subject enters into the zone described here, and that his return involves some gain that will be called possession or whatever – Plato doesn't hesitate to point this out in the cathartic procedures. There is a whole

range there, a spectrum of possibilities, that it would take a whole year to catalogue.

The important thing is to know where all that is to be located in the field whose limits I have outlined for you this year.

4

And now a word in conclusion.

The field that is ours by reason of the fact that we are exploring it is going to be in one way or another the object of a science. And, you are going to ask me, will this science of desire belong to the field of the human sciences?

Before leaving you this year, I would like to make my position on the subject very clear. I do not think, given the way that field is being laid out, and I assure you it is being done carefully, that it will amount to anything else but a systematic and fundamental misunderstanding of everything that has to do with the whole affair that I have been discussing here. The fields of inquiry that are being outlined as necessarily belonging to the human sciences have in my eyes no other function than to form a branch of the service of goods, which is no doubt advantageous though of limited value. Those fields are in other words a branch of the service of those powers that are more than a little precarious. In any case, implied here is a no less systematic misunderstanding of all the violent phenomena that reveal that the path of the triumph of goods in our world is not likely to be a smooth one.

In other words, in the phrase of one of the exceptional politicians who has functioned as a leader of France, Mazarin, politics is politics, but love always remains love.

As for the kind of science that might be situated in that place I have designated the place of desire, what can it be? Well, you don't have to look very far. As far as science is concerned, the kind that is presently occupying the place of desire is quite simply what we commonly call science, the kind that you see cantering gaily along and accomplishing all kinds of so-called physical conquests.

I think that throughout this historical period the desire of man, which has been felt, anesthetized, put to sleep by moralists, domesticated by educators, betrayed by the academies, has quite simply taken refuge or been repressed in that most subtle and blindest of passions, as the story of Oedipus shows, the passion for knowledge. That's the passion that is currently going great guns and is far from having said its last word.

One of the most amusing features of the history of science is to be found in the propaganda scientists and alchemists have addressed to the powers that be at a time when they were beginning to run out of steam. It went as follows: "Give us money; you don't realize that if you gave us a little money, we would

be able to put all kinds of machines, gadgets and contraptions at your service." How could the powers let themselves be taken in? The answer to the question is to be found in a certain breakdown of wisdom. It's a fact that they did let themselves be taken in, that science got its money, as a consequence of which we are left with this vengeance. It's a fascinating thing, but as far as those who are at the forefront of science are concerned, they are not without a keen consciousness of the fact that they have their backs against a wall of hate. They are themselves capsized by the turbulent swell of a heavy sense of guilt. But that isn't very important because it's not in truth an adventure that Mr. Oppenheimer's remorse can put an end to overnight. It is moreover there where the problem of desire will lie in the future.

The universal order has to deal with the problem of what it should do with that science in which something is going on whose nature escapes it. Science, which occupies the place of desire, can only be a science of desire in the form of an enormous question mark; and this is doubtless not without a structural cause. In other words, science is animated by some mysterious desire, but it doesn't know, any more than anything in the unconscious itself, what that desire means. The future will reveal it to us, and perhaps among those who by the grace of God have most recently eaten the book – I mean those who have written with their labors, indeed with their blood, the book of Western science. It, too, is an edible book.

I spoke about Mencius earlier. After having made the statements that you would be wrong to consider optimistic about the goodness of man, he explains very well that what we are most ignorant about is the laws that come to us from heaven, the same laws as Antigone's. His proof is absolutely rigorous, but it is too late for me to repeat it here. The laws of heaven in question are the laws of desire.

Of him who ate the book and the mystery within it, one can, in effect, ask the question: "Is he good, is he bad?" That question now seems unimportant. The important thing is not knowing whether man is good or bad in the beginning; the important thing is what will transpire once the book has been eaten.

July 6, 1960

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JACQUES LACAN

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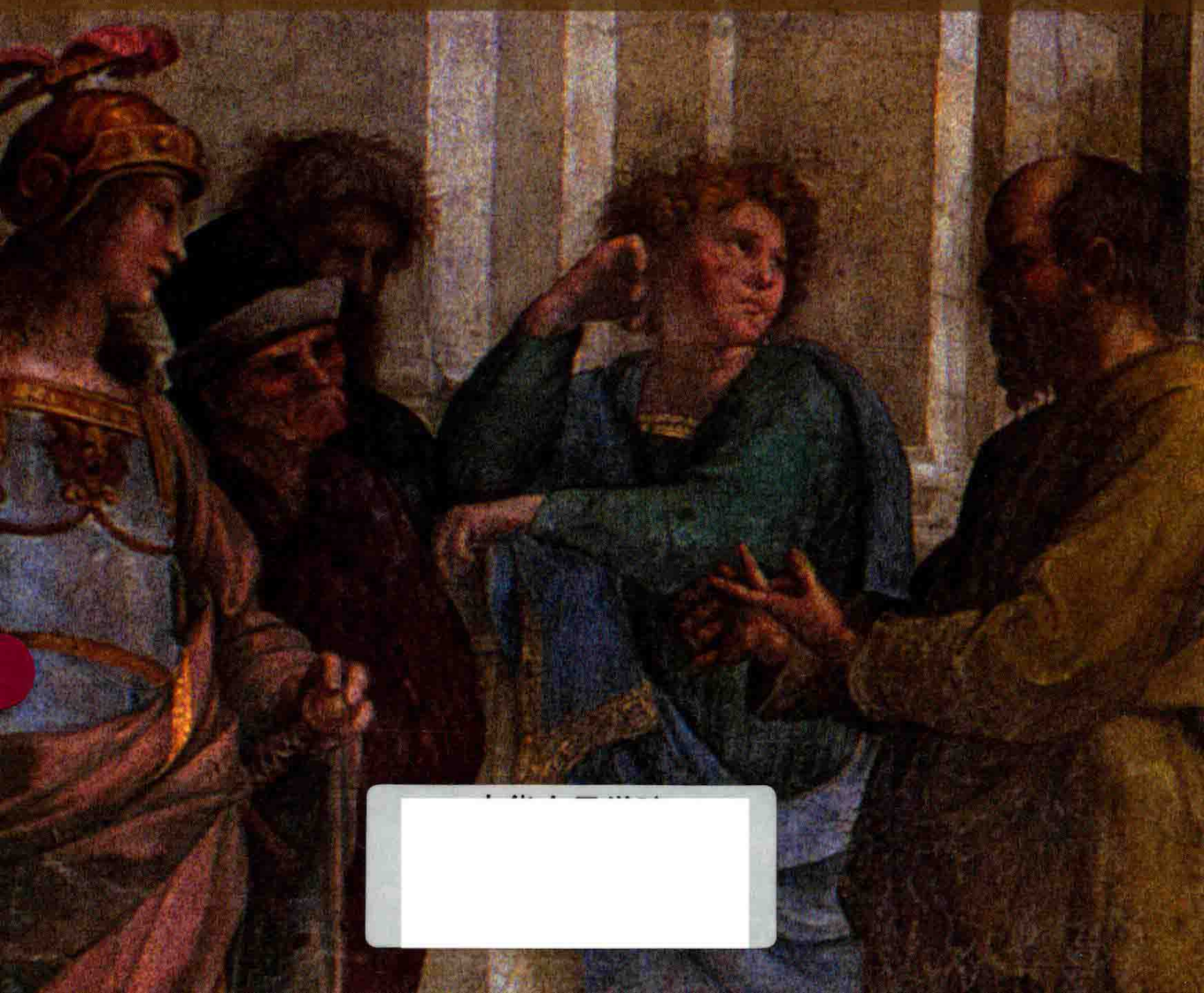

"Alcibiades attempted to seduce Socrates, he wanted to make him, and in the most openly avowed way possible, into someone instrumental and subordinate to what? To the object of Alcibiades' desire – *ágalma*, the good object.

I would go even further. How can we analysts fail to recognize what is involved? He says quite clearly: Socrates has the good object in his stomach. Here Socrates is nothing but the envelope in which the object of desire is found.

It is in order to clearly emphasize that he is nothing but this envelope that Alcibiades tries to show that Socrates is desire's serf in his relations with Alcibiades, that Socrates is enslaved to Alcibiades by his desire. Although Alcibiades was aware that Socrates desired him, he wanted to see Socrates' desire manifest itself in a sign, in order to know that the other – the object, *ágalma* – was at his mercy.

Now, it is precisely because he failed in this undertaking that Alcibiades disgraces himself, and makes of his confession something that is so affectively laden. The daemon of Αἰδώς (*Aidós*), Shame, about which I spoke to you before in this context, is what intervenes here. This is what is violated. The most shocking secret is unveiled before everyone; the ultimate mainspring of desire, which in love relations must always be more or less dissimulated, is revealed – its aim is the fall of the Other, A, into the other, *a*."

Jacques Lacan

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Transference

Translator's Note

All quotations from Plato's *Symposium* are from the excellent rendition by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff in *Plato on Love: Lysis, Symposium, Phaedrus, Alcibiades, with Selections from Republic and Laws*, edited by C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis, IN, and Cambridge, England: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006). Since Lacan sometimes quotes from Léon Robin's translation into French, and sometimes provides his own rendition or paraphrasing, I do not always supply the exact translation found in *Plato on Love*, adapting it instead to fit what Lacan seems to me to be trying to convey. Indeed, it is not always easy to know when Lacan is providing his own rendition of the Greek and when he is putting words in a character's mouth that correspond to his own interpretation of the import of that character's speech.

I have relied for the Greek on the Loeb Classical Library edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983) and on the Greek spellings and transliterations provided by Rachel Rue, Ph.D., who was kind enough to scour the manuscript for me.

All references here to Lacan's *Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966) are to the French pagination included in the margins of *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006), translated by B. Fink in collaboration with R. Grigg and H. Fink. When I refer to Lacan's seminars, I provide the pagination of the French editions, followed – after a slash – by the page number in the English editions (published by Norton), when they exist; in the case of Seminar III, I give only the French page numbers, as they are included in the margins of the English edition. All but one of the extant seminars in French were published by Éditions du Seuil in Paris. *Le séminaire, Livre VI: Le désir et son interprétation (1958–1959)* [*The Seminar, Book VI: Desire and Its Interpretation*], was published in 2013 by La Martinière in Paris.

References to Freud's work here are always to *The Standard*

Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (24 volumes), published in London by the Hogarth Press, abbreviated here as *SE*, followed by the volume number and page(s).

Note that throughout this Seminar I have translated *l'analysé* as "the analysand" (instead of as the more cumbersome "person analyzed"), even though Lacan had not yet begun to use *l'analysant* here.

Le réel means both reality and the real (Lacan defining the latter in opposition to the imaginary and the symbolic). It is not always clear which is intended at which point in his work, so whenever I translate *le réel* as "reality" instead of as "the real," I include the French in brackets.

Despite assistance from Rachel Rue, from my wife, Héloïse Fink, and from Russell Grigg and Dan Collins, numerous errors no doubt remain here. Lacan's incredibly broad background and in-depth knowledge of numerous fields are such that I have surely misunderstood specialized terminology, overlooked references to specific authors, and just generally misinterpreted the French – Lord knows it is easy enough to do given Lacan's singular style! His oral work presents additional problems, given the number of homophonies French allows for; I have attempted to address some of these (along with alternative readings and translations, as well as likely sources of Lacan's discussions) in my endnotes. The latter are keyed to the pagination of the present English edition. Numbers found in the margins here correspond to the pagination of the 2001 French edition.

Readers who believe they have found mistakes of whatever kind are encouraged to send comments to me at <brucefinkanalyst@gmail.com>. I consider this translation to be, like my others (for which updates can be found in the form of PDFs at <http://brucefink.com/bruce-fink-library/>), a work in progress, and hope to improve on the text here in future editions.

Abbreviations Used in the Text and Notes

Écrits	*Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*
GW	*Gesammelte Werke* by Sigmund Freud (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag)
IJP	*International Journal of Psychoanalysis*
IPA	International Psychoanalytical Association
PQ	*Psychoanalytic Quarterly*
PUF	Presses Universitaires de France
RFP	*Revue Française de Psychanalyse*
SE	*Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*

Words followed by an asterisk (*) are found in English in the original.

Book VIII

Transference

1960–1961

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INTRODUCTION

I

IN THE BEGINNING WAS LOVE

Plato's *Schwärmerei.*
Socrates and Freud.
A critique of intersubjectivity.
The beauty of bodies.

I announced that this year I would discuss transference "in its subjective disparity, its supposed situation, and its excursions into the realm of technique."

"Disparity" is not a term I chose lightly. It essentially highlights the fact that transference involves much more than the simple notion of a dissymmetry between subjects. Right from the outset, "disparity" implies that I reject the idea that intersubjectivity alone can furnish the framework within which the phenomenon of transference is situated. Different languages offer more or less apt words with which to express the kind of disparity I have in mind. I have been trying to find something equivalent to the word "odd"* to qualify the essentially uneven [*impair*] nature of transference. There is no term in French with which to designate it, apart from *imparité*, which is not currently in use.

"Its supposed situation," my title continues, referring thereby to the attempt that has been made in recent years in analysis to organize what takes place during treatment around the notion of situations. "Supposed" is included there to alert you to the fact that I do not endorse this attempt, or at least that I propose to correct it. I do not think one can purely and simply say of analysis that it constitutes a situation. If it is a situation, then it is a situation that can also be said not to be a situation, or again that it is a rather artificial [*fausse*] situation.

As for "technique," everything that is proffered on that score must be viewed in relation to the principles, or at least to the search for principles, already evoked by my title, with its allusion to differences

in approach. To put it in a nutshell, a correct topology is required here and, consequently, a rectification of what is commonly implied
12 by our everyday use of the theoretical notion of transference. The goal is to relate this notion to an experience. We are, however, extremely familiar with this experience, at least insofar as each of us has practiced analysis in one form or another.

It has taken me a long time to come to this crux of our experience. Depending on when one takes this seminar – in which I have been guiding a number of you for some years – to have begun, it is in either its eighth or tenth year that I am finally broaching transference. You will see that this long delay was not accidental.

Let us thus begin.

1

"In the beginning –"

You all immediately infer that I am paraphrasing the sentence, "In the beginning was the Word" [John 1:1].

"*Im Anfang war die Tat*," says another.

A third sustains that first – that is, at the beginning of the human world – there was praxis.

This gives us three apparently incompatible statements. But, in fact, from the perspective of analytic practice [*expérience*], what counts is not their value as statements but rather their value as enunciations or announcements – that is, the respect in which they bring out the *ex nihilo* character of all creation and demonstrate its intimate connection with the evocative power of speech. In this respect, all three obviously prove to come under the first statement, "In the beginning was the Word."

I am mentioning this so as to distinguish it from what I am saying, and from the point from which I am setting out to grapple with this most opaque term, this core of our experience: transference.

I intend to start, I would like to start, I will try to start today – beginning with all the necessary clumsiness – with the fact that the term "in the beginning" certainly has another meaning in psychoanalysis.

In the beginning of analytic practice was, let us recall, love. This beginning was not akin to the self-transparency of enunciation that
13 gave meaning to the three sentences mentioned before. It was a dense, jumbled [*confus*] beginning. A beginning not of creation but rather of training. I will come later to the historic moment at which, in the encounter between a man and a woman, Josef Breuer and Anna O., recounted in the inaugural case of the *Studies on Hysteria*, what was

already a form of psychoanalysis emerged – Anna herself named it the "talking cure,"* referring to it also as "chimney sweeping."*

Before coming to that, I want to familiarize those of you who weren't here last year with some of the terms around which our exploration of what I called the ethics of psychoanalysis revolved.

Last year I endeavored to explain to you – to refer back to the word "creation" I mentioned a moment ago – the creationist structure of the human *ethos* as such, that is, the *ex nihilo* that subsists at its core, constituting "the core of our being," to borrow Freud's expression (*Kern unseres Wesen*). I wanted to show that this *ethos* wraps around the *ex nihilo* as subsisting in an impenetrable void.

To broach the subject, and to designate this characteristic of impenetrability, I began, as you may remember, with a critique whose aim it was to explicitly reject what you will allow me – or at least those of you who were here will allow me – to call Plato's *Schwärmerei.*

For those of you who don't know it, in German *Schwärmerei* means daydream or fantasy involving some enthusiasm, especially related to superstition. In short, it implies a negative assessment [of superstition] that was made at a later date from the perspective of a religious orientation. The word *Schwärmerei* is clearly inflected in this way in Kant's texts. Well, Plato's *Schwärmerei* consists in having projected the idea of the Sovereign Good onto the impenetrable void.

Such is the path that, with more or less success of course, I deliberately tried to trace out: what happens to us when we reject Plato's notion of the Sovereign Good as occupying the center of our being?

In order to relate that discussion to our practice, I naturally proceeded, with a critical aim, on the basis of what might be called Aristotle's conversion from Platonism. Aristotle is indubitably outmoded as far as ethics is concerned, but from our temporal vantage point, where we are obliged to show the historical fate of 14
ethical notions starting from Plato, it is clearly essential to refer to Aristotle.

In tracing what Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* provides by way of a decisive step in the construction of ethical reflection, it is difficult not to see that, while Aristotle maintains the notion of the Sovereign Good, he profoundly changes its meaning. Through an inverse reflective shift, he turns the Sovereign Good into contemplation of the stars, the world's outermost sphere. And it is precisely because this sphere – which to Aristotle was an absolute, uncreated, and incorruptible entity – has been decisively exploded in our time into a shimmering expanse of galaxies, the last word in our cosmological investigations, that Aristotle can be taken as a crucial reference point for the notion of the Sovereign Good in Antiquity.

We were led into a tight spot by his step, the same tight spot as countless others who have attempted to take ethical reflection further. We had to either accept or reject what ethical reflection or thought has never been able to shake off – namely, that there is no good, *bon*, *Gute*, or pleasure that is not based on the Good [*Bien*]. It was up to us to seek the principle of *Wohltat*, right action [*bien agir*], and what it implies allows us to say that it is perhaps not simply good deeds, even if they are raised to the Kantian power of a universal maxim.

If we are to take seriously the fallacy of so-called moral satisfactions that Freud pointed out, insofar as an aggressiveness lurks within them that succeeds in stealing from he who carries out such deeds his own jouissance, while his misdeeds [*méfait*] have endless repercussions on his social partners – what these long conditionals and circumstantials indicate is the exact equivalent of *Civilization and Its Discontents* in Freud's work – we must ask ourselves by what means we are to honestly handle desire. In other words, how are we to keep desire in our deeds – that is, to preserve the relationship between desire and action? In action, desire ordinarily achieves its demise [*collapsus*] rather than its fulfillment, and, at best, a deed presents desire with its mere feat, its epic, heroic exploit [*geste*]. How, I ask, are we to maintain what might be called a simple or salubrious relationship between desire and action?

Let's not mince words about the meaning of "salubrious" in the context of Freudian practice. It means unburdened, as unburdened as possible of the infection that, to my mind – but not to mine alone, to everyone's from the moment they begin to engage in ethical reflection – is the seething ground [*fond grouillant*] of every social institution as such.

This assumes, of course, that psychoanalysis, in its very user's guide, does not respect the opaque spot [*taie*], newly invented cataract, moral wound [*plaie*], or form of blindness constituted by a certain practice deriving from the so-called sociological point of view. I could recount here what a recent meeting showed me about the vacuity and scandalousness to which sociological research leads – research that claims to reduce an experience like that of the unconscious to two, three, or maybe four sociological models – but my irritation, which was very great at the time, has subsided, and I will leave the authors of such exercises in futility to the truisms that will welcome them with open arms.

I should point out that in speaking of sociology in such terms, I am obviously not referring to the level at which Lévi-Strauss' thought is situated – I refer you to his inaugural lecture at the Collège de

France – for he explicitly engages in an ethical meditation on social practice. His twofold reference to a cultural norm on the one hand, that is more or less mythically situated in the Neolithic era, and to Rousseau's political meditations on the other, is sufficiently indicative here. But let us set this aside – it is of no concern to us in the present context.

I will merely recall here that it was by examining Sade's savage reflections regarding ethics, and by following the insulting paths of Sadean jouissance, that I showed you one of the possible means of access to the properly tragic frontier where Freud's *Oberland* [highland] lies. It is at the heart of what some of you dubbed the "between-two-deaths" – a perfect expression for designating the field in which everything that happens in the universe traced out by Sophocles is articulated, and not just in the adventure of *Oedipus Rex* – that a phenomenon is situated about which I think I can safely say that we have introduced a guidepost in the ethical tradition, that is, in reflection on motives and motivations for doing the Good. I designated this guidepost as beauty insofar as it dresses up – or rather functions as a final barrier to access to – the final or mortal thing, at the point where Freud's thought made its ultimate admission with the term "death drive."

Please excuse this long detour. It was but a short summary by which I thought I should outline what we stated last year. This detour was necessary to remind you where we left off concerning the 16
function of beauty, as it will be a springboard for what I will have to say this year. Indeed I need not, for most of you, mention what is constituted by the term "the beautiful" or "beauty" as it is inflected in what I called Plato's *Schwärmerei.*

As a hypothesis, we are provisionally going to assume that the latter constitutes – at the level of an adventure that, if it is not psychological, is at least individual – the effect of a form of mourning that we can qualify as immortal, because it is at the very source of everything that has been articulated since then in our tradition concerning the idea of immortality: the immortal mourning for he who accepted the wager of sustaining his question, the same question raised by everyone who speaks, so much so that he received this question from his own daemon in an inverted form, to use our own expression. I am talking about Socrates, Socrates thus placed at the origin – and why not say so right away? – of the longest transference, giving this expression its fullest import, that history has ever known.

I hope to get you to sense this – Socrates' secret will be behind everything I will have to say about transference this year.

2

This secret was admitted to by Socrates. But it is not because one admits to having a secret that it stops being a secret. Socrates claims to know nothing, except how to recognize what love is, how to infallibly recognize, he tells us – I am referring to Plato's account in the *Lysis*, 204c – when he meets a couple, who is the lover and who is the beloved.

Socrates often refers to love and this brings us back to our point of departure, as I intend to highlight it today. Indeed, however prudish or improper it was to keep partially veiled the inaugural incident that dissuaded the eminent Breuer from following through on his first sensational experiment with the talking cure,* it is clear that it
17 was a love story. It is equally clear that it was not unrequited – in other words, love was not felt solely by the patient.

It is not enough to say, in the exquisitely measured terms of our vocabulary, as Ernest Jones does in the first volume of his biography of Freud, that Breuer must have fallen prey to what we call a somewhat pronounced countertransference. It is clear that Breuer loved his patient. By way of proof, we need no more evidence than what, in such cases, is the true bourgeois outcome: the return to renewed conjugal fervor and the abrupt departure for Venice, which even bore fruit in the form of a new daughter being added to the family – Jones sadly tells us that her death was tied to the catastrophic invasion of Vienna by the Nazis.

There is no point ironizing about such incidents, except, of course, insofar as they present what is typical of certain so-called bourgeois ways of dealing with love. They reveal the need for or necessity of an awakening regarding the neglect of the heart that goes together so well with the kind of abnegation characteristic of bourgeois duty.

But this is not what is essential here. What difference does it make whether Breuer resisted or not? What we should instead celebrate about that moment is that it foreshadowed the break between Freud and Breuer 10 years before it occurred. The latter's work with Anna O. took place in 1882, and it took 10 years for Freud's experience to result in the *Studies on Hysteria,* written with Breuer, and 15 years for them to go their separate ways. It's all there. Little Eros, whose mischievousness struck the one like a bolt from the blue and forced him to take flight, found his master in the other, Freud. Why?

I could say – if you'll allow me to strike a lighter note for a moment – that it was because all possibility of retreat had been cut off for Freud. This fact arises from the same context as the one we know of now that his correspondence with his fiancée has been published – the intransigent love he espoused. He would meet ideal

women, who responded to him physically like porcupines, *Sie streben dagegen*, he wrote in the dream of Irma's injection, where the allusions to his own wife are neither obvious nor admitted to – "they always rub me the wrong way." The *Frau Professor* [the Professor's wife] appeared in every case as an element of the permanent picture Freud provided us with of his thirst, and she was occasionally a 18
source of marvel to Jones who, if my informants are to be trusted, himself knew what it meant to be submissive.

This would constitute a curious common denominator between Freud and Socrates, Socrates having had, as you know, dealings at home with an unmanageable shrew. The difference between the two, insofar as it was palpable, is that outlined by Aristophanes between the pompous otter and the Lysistrata-like weasel [*belette*] whose powerful bite can be sensed in the dialogues in his plays – a simple difference in odor.

But enough on this topic. I reckon that it is but a secondary connection, and that this datum concerning married life is in no way indispensable, each of you should be reassured, to your proper conduct. We must look further to approach the mystery in question.

The approach adopted by Freud – unlike Breuer, and regardless of the reasons why – made him master of the fearsome little god, Eros. Like Socrates, Freud chose to serve the god in order to make use of him. It is in this "making use of" Eros – which nevertheless had to be emphasized – that our problems begin. Making use of him for what?

This is why I had to remind you of the mile markers of our work last year – making use of Eros for the Good? We know that the realm of Eros goes infinitely beyond any field the Good can cover. At the very least, we take it for granted and this is why the problems posed by transference merely begin here. It is, moreover, something that is ever fresh in my mind. It is in yours too, inasmuch as people commonly say concerning transference that you must in no way, whether premeditated or permanent, posit as the primary aim of your action your patient's own good – supposed or otherwise – but rather his eros.

I don't think I should pass up the opportunity to remind you once again here of what the Socratic and Freudian endeavors – at their most scabrous – have in common. I will do so by pointing to the similarity of their outcomes via the duplicity of the terms in the following condensed expression: Socrates, too, chose to serve Eros in order to make use of him [*pour s'en servir*], to serve Eros in using him [*en s'en servant*]. Note that it took Socrates quite far – to a far-off place that people strive to camouflage by turning it into a pure and simple accident of what I earlier called the seething ground of

the social infection. But wouldn't we be doing Socrates an injustice –
19 tantamount to refusing to accept his viewpoint – were we to believe that he didn't know full well that he was going against the tide of the whole social order within which his daily practice was situated? Wasn't his behavior truly insane and scandalous, despite the praiseworthy light his disciples devotedly cast on it by emphasizing its heroic facets? It is clear that they could not but record a major characteristic of Socrates, that Plato himself qualified with a term that has remained famous to those who have taken up the problem of Socrates: his ἀτοπία (*atopía*) within the order of the city.

In the social bond, opinions have no place if they are not borne out by all that ensures the city's equilibrium, and thus Socrates not only did not have his place – he was no place. What is so surprising if an act that is so powerfully unclassifiable that its aftershocks are still felt in our own times, and that has found a place – what is so surprising about the fact that it resulted in a death sentence? It resulted, in the clearest fashion possible, in real death, inflicted at a time chosen in advance, with everyone's consent and for the good of all. And, indeed, writers in the centuries that have since passed have never been able to decide whether the sanction was just or unjust. Where will Socrates' fate – a fate that can, without exaggerating, it seems to me, be considered necessary, not extraordinary – take him now?

As for Freud, on the other hand, wasn't it in strict accordance with the rigor of his path that he discovered the death drive? It too was quite scandalous, albeit less costly to Freud himself. But does this amount to a true difference?

Formal logic has been repeating for centuries, and its insistence is not unfounded, that Socrates is mortal and thus that he, in any case, had to die sooner or later. But it is not the fact that Freud died peacefully in his bed that concerns us here. Last year, I endeavored to show you how what I sketched out converges with Sadean aspirations. The idea of eternal death must be distinguished here from death insofar as it makes being itself into a detour – we being unable to know whether or not it makes sense. The idea of eternal death must be distinguished from the other death as well, the second, that of the body, the body that uncompromisingly obeys Eros. Eros is that by which bodies come back together, according to Plato into a single soul, according to Freud with no soul at all, but in any case into but one – Eros is what unites unitively.

20 You could, of course, interrupt me here by asking, "Where are you leading us?" "Eros," you will grant me, "is clearly the same in both cases, even if we can't bear it. But why are you trotting out the two deaths – last year's old hat? Are you still mulling it over? And what are you trying to convey with it?" The river that

separates them. "Are we dealing with the death drive or dialectic?" My answer is, "Yes." Yes, if the one brings the other with it and astonishes you.

I am willing to admit that I'm getting off track, that I need not take you through all the most far-reaching paradoxes, and that by doing so at the outset, I am making sure you are astonished – if you weren't already – by Freud if not by Socrates.

If you are unwilling to be astonished by anything, these paradoxes will undoubtedly prove simple to resolve. You merely take as your point of departure something as easy as pie, as clear as day: intersubjectivity. I intersubjectivize you, you intersubjectivize me by my chinny chin chin – the first one who laughs will get a well-deserved slap.

Doesn't everyone know by now that Freud mistakenly thought that was all there was in the sadomasochist constant? Narcissism supposedly explained everything. And people ask me, "Didn't you yourself almost endorse the same view?" It should be said that at the time I was already restive regarding the function of the narcissistic wound, but that's of no importance. People will tell me that my untimely Socrates should also have come back to [the notion of] intersubjectivity. In all, he committed but one mistake, and that was to swim against the tide of the masses, which should always be our guide. Everyone knows that one has to wait for the masses before making the slightest wave on the shore of justice, for they will necessarily arrive there tomorrow. This is how astonishment works – things get chalked up to wrongdoing [*faute*]. Errors will never be anything other than errors of judgment.

That's that, without counting my personal motives – my ever-present need to exaggerate, related to my inclination to make things sound good [*faire beau*], beauty showing up here again. It's a perverse tendency. Thus my sophistry may be superfluous. So we'll begin again by starting from scratch, and I will take up anew – coming back down to earth – the power of understatement to aim without your being even slightly astonished.

3 21

Isn't intersubjectivity what is most foreign to the analytic encounter? Would it resurface if we were to flee from it, convinced that it must be avoided? Freudian practice congeals as soon as intersubjectivity appears on the scene. The former flourishes only in the latter's absence.

Are the doctor and the patient, as they say in talking about us – that

doozy of a relationship people get all worked up about – going to outdo each other at intersubjectivizing each other? Perhaps, but in this case it can be said that both are rather uneasy. "He's telling me that to reassure me or make me happy," thinks the one. "Is he trying to pull a fast one on me?" thinks the other. Dick and Jane relationships get off to a bad start if they start out on this footing. They are doomed, if they stay at this level, to go nowhere. Which is why doctor/patient and Dick and Jane relationships must at all costs differ from diplomatic negotiations and ambushes.

With all due respect to Henri Lefebvre, what is known as poker, theory as poker, is not discussed in von Neumann's work, despite what Lefebvre has recently claimed. This means that, owing to my benevolence, I can deduce but one thing: Lefebvre knows nothing more of von Neumann's theory than the title of the latter's book that appears in the Hermann publishing house catalogue. It is true that, at the same time, Lefebvre situates the very philosophical discussion that held us in thrall at the level of poker. If he is not within his rights to do so, I can, after all, but wish him all the credit that comes from having done so.

Returning to the thoughts of our intersubjective couple, my first concern as an analyst would be not to get myself into a situation where my patient would have to confide such reflections to me. The simplest way to spare him that is precisely to avoid any attitude which would incline him to accuse me of attempting to reassure him, much less seduce him. Even if I try to absolutely avoid any such attitude, it could happen that I let something slip out anyway – if, for example, I see the patient, at the end of his rope, adopt a certain attitude. Even in this case, I can only say something about it if I stress that I assume that he is doing so unbeknown to himself. And even then I have to be cautious in order to avoid a misunderstanding –
22 namely, seeming to accuse him of some kind of trickery [*finasserie*], whether calculated or not.

I am not saying that it is the job of analysis to rework intersubjectivity in such a way as to raise it to a second power – as if the analyst were expecting the patient to impale himself [*s'enferrer*] so that the analyst could then roast him on the spit [*le tourner*]. No, intersubjectivity is withheld or, better still, put off indefinitely to allow another handhold [*prise*] to appear, whose essential characteristic is that it is transference itself.

The patient himself knows it; he calls for it; he wants to be found out elsewhere. You may retort that this is another aspect of intersubjectivity and that I, strangely enough, am supposedly the one who paved the way here. But whoever introduced the idea, it can only be attributed to me mistakenly.

And in fact, if I hadn't formalized the subjective alterities involved in the analytic setting in the guise of bridge players, no one could have claimed I took a step that converges with the falsely audacious schema Rickman once proffered that goes by the name of "two-body psychology."*

Such creations always have a certain modicum of success, given the state of amphibious respiration in which analytic thought maintains itself. Two conditions suffice for their success. First, that they be supposed to stem from honorable zones of scientific activity, whereby psychoanalysis can be made to seem relevant and shine anew – for what is relevant today quickly loses its luster. This is the case here, for Rickman was a man who, just after the war, had the advantageous aura of having been involved in the Russian Revolution, which was supposed to have given him plenty of experience in interpsychology. The second condition for success is not to rock the boat of analytic routine. This is how people repave a path for intellectual guidance that leads nowhere.

The name "two-body psychology"* could at least have had the virtue of awakening us to how the attraction of bodies it evokes might relate to the supposed analytic situation. But, curiously enough, the attraction of bodies is the very meaning that is elided when people use the term.

It is odd that we are obliged to turn to Socrates to realize its import. In Socrates' discourse, I mean in the dialogues in which he is made to speak, he refers constantly to the beauty of bodies. It 23
animates, so to speak, the moment of questioning we haven't taken up yet where we still don't even know how the functions of the lover and the beloved are divided up. At least a spade is called a spade there, which allows us to make, in this regard, some useful remarks.

If something in the impassioned questioning that characterizes the beginning of the dialectical process is, in fact, related to the body, it must be stated that, in analysis, this relationship is highlighted by traits whose value derives from its particularly negative impact. Socrates' ugliness gives us the most noble example of the fact that analysts – I hope that no one here will feel that I am singling him out – aren't well known for their physical charms. But at the same time it also reminds us that ugliness in no way constitutes an obstacle to love. I must nevertheless stress the fact that the ideal physical appearance of the psychoanalyst – or, in any case, the way in which the analyst is pictured in the popular mind – also includes an obtuse denseness and a narrow-minded brutishness that truly raise the whole question of prestige.

The silver screen is the most revealing medium in this regard. To refer only to Hitchcock's most recent film [*Psycho*], consider in what

form the unscrambler of enigmas appears, the one who is presented there as deciding irrevocably at the end when there is no longer any other recourse. Quite frankly, he is endowed with all the features of the untouchable.

We touch here on an essential element of the convention as it concerns the analytic setting. In order for it to be violated in a way that is not revolting, the person who plays the role of analyst – sticking with film, consider here the movie *Suddenly Last Summer* – the therapist, he who pushes *caritas* [charity] to the point of kissing back an unfortunate woman who kisses him on the lips, must be a good-looking guy. In film, this is absolutely essential. True, he is also a neurosurgeon and he is promptly sent back to his trephines. The situation couldn't last.

Overall, analysis is the only praxis in which charm is a disadvantage. It would break the spell [*charme*]. Who ever heard of a charming analyst?

24 These are not irrelevant remarks, even though they may seem designed to amuse you. It is important for them to be made at the appropriate stage. It is no less notable that in guiding the patient, the very access to the body that medical examination seems to require is forgone, as a rule. This is worth pointing out. And we cannot explain why it is forgone simply by saying that it is in order to avoid excessive transferential effects. Why would such effects be any more excessive in this realm than in others? It is not due to anachronistic prudishness, traces of which subsist in rural areas, in Islamic harems, and in Portugal where, incredibly enough, doctors auscultate beautiful foreigners only through their clothing. We up the ante. Auscultation, however necessary it may seem at the outset of treatment or may be in the course of it, constitutes a breaking of the rules.

Let us look at things from a different angle. There is nothing less erotic than the reading of the body's momentary states at which certain psychoanalysts excel, for one might say that these bodily states are translated into signifying terms. The focal distance at which this reading can occur demands on the analyst's part as much aversion as interest.

Let us not too quickly decide what all of this means.

One could say that the neutralization of the body, which seems, after all, to be the first goal of civilization, is related here to a greater urgency, and that all these precautions assume that the body can be abandoned. I'm not sure about that. Here I am simply asking what this bracketing [*epoché*] is. It would show poor judgment on our part if we were not to recognize at the outset that psychoanalysis requires, right from the beginning, a high degree of libidinal subli-

mation at the level of collective relations. The extreme decency that one can truly claim to be maintained in the majority of cases in the analytic relationship makes us think that, if the regular confinement of the two interested parties in an enclosed space sheltered from all uninvited interruption only very rarely leads to bodily coercion [*contrainte par corps*] of one by the other, it is because the temptation to which this kind of confinement would give rise in any other occupation is lesser here than elsewhere. Let's leave it at that for the moment.

The analytic cell, even if it is comfy and cozy, is nothing but a bed for lovemaking. This is due to the fact that, despite all the attempts that have been made to reduce it to the common denominator of a situation – with all the connotations we can provide for this familiar 25
term – entering into it is *not* a situation. As I said earlier, it is the most artificial situation going.

What allows us to understand this is precisely the reference I will try to take up next time to what is, in the social context, the situation of love itself. It is to the extent that we can home in on what Freud discussed on more than one occasion – namely, the status [*position*] of love in society, a precarious status, a threatened status, and, to come right out with it, a clandestine status – that we can appreciate why and how, in the most protected context of all, that of the analyst's office, the status of love becomes even more paradoxical.

I will arbitrarily end our discussion today on this point. It will suffice if you see from what direction I intend to broach the topic.

Breaking with the tradition that consists in abstracting from, neutralizing, and emptying of all its meaning what may be involved in the foundations of the analytic relationship, I intend to use an extreme question as my springboard: what is presupposed by the fact of isolating oneself with another in order to teach him what he is lacking?

This situation is still more redoubtable if we consider that, by the very nature of transference, he will find out what he is lacking insofar as he loves [*en tant qu'aimant*]. If I am there for his own good, it is certainly not in the comfortable old sense in which the Thomist tradition articulates it as *Amare est velle bonum alicui*, since this "good" [*bien*] is already a term that is more than just problematic. If you were willing to grant what I said last year, you know that it is outdated.

I am not there, in the final analysis, for a person's own good, but in order that he love. Does this mean that I must teach him how to love? Clearly it seems difficult to avoid this necessity. As for what it means to love and what love is, we will have to indicate that the

two things are not identical. As for what it means to love and to know what it is to love, I must at least, like Socrates, be able to credit myself with knowing something about it. Now if we take a look at the psychoanalytic literature, we see that this is what people talk about the least. It seems that love in its primordial, ambivalent coupling with hate is a self-evident term. Don't think of my humorous observations today as anything other than remarks designed to tickle your funny bone.

26 A long tradition, nevertheless, exists concerning love. It has most recently led to a huge harebrained lucubration by Anders Nygren who splits it into two radically opposed terms: Eros and Agápe. But before that, people debated about nothing else for centuries. Isn't it astonishing that we analysts – who make use of love and talk about nothing else – can be said to present ourselves as truly deficient when compared to this tradition? We haven't made even a partial attempt to add to – much less revise – what has been developed over the centuries on the subject of love or provide something that might be not unworthy of this tradition. Isn't that surprising?

In order to bring this home to you, I have selected as the subject matter for my next class a text of truly monumental interest, which lies at the origin of our whole tradition concerning the structure of love – Plato's *Symposium*.

If someone who is sufficiently interested wants to dialogue with me about it, I anticipate that it can only be to our advantage to read a text that is chock full of enigmas, where everything remains to be demonstrated – especially everything that the very mass of religious lucubrations that has permeated every fiber of our being, that is present in all our experiences, owes to this extraordinary testament to Plato's *Schwärmerei*.

I'll show you what we can find in it and what we can deduce from it by way of essential landmarks, even regarding the history of the debate about what really took place in the first psychoanalytic transference. I think that, once we have put it to the test, you will have no doubt as to our ability to find all the possible keys in it.

Assuredly, these are not terms that I would easily allow to be published in a summary of our work, since they are so showy. Nor are they formulations that I would like to have repeated outside of this room to furnish fodder for the usual tomfoolery. I will expect you to take into account this year among whom we find ourselves and who we are.

November 16, 1960

THE MAINSPRING OF LOVE

A COMMENTARY ON PLATO'S *SYMPOSIUM*

II

SET AND CHARACTERS

29

Alcibiades.
Scholars.
The *Symposium*, a session.
Recording on the brain.
Greek love.

Today we are going to begin our examination of the *Symposium*. At least that is what I promised you.

What I spoke about last time seems to have affected you in different ways. The tasters have been sampling the vintage. "Will it be a good year?" they wonder. I can only hope no one will dwell for too long on what may appear approximate in certain of the strokes with which I am trying to sketch out our path.

Last time I tried to show you the pillars of the scene that provides the context for what I have to say about transference. It should be quite clear that my reference to the body, in particular when beauty may be one of its attributes, was not simply an opportunity to be witty regarding transference.

It has been objected that in movies, which I took as an example of widespread views about psychoanalysts' looks, it sometimes happens that the psychoanalyst is a good-looking guy, and not only in the exceptional case I mentioned. My response is that such is the case precisely when analysis is taken as an occasion for comedy.

In short, you will see that the main points I brought out last time find their justification in the path we shall have to follow today.

How shall I relate what is at stake in the *Symposium*? It isn't easy, given the style and limits imposed upon me by my position and objective, which, let it not be forgotten, is specifically that of psychoanalytic practice. To set myself the task of making a nice orderly 30
commentary of this extraordinary text would perhaps require me to make a long detour, which would then leave us too little time

for other parts of the field to which the *Symposium* seems to me to provide an illuminating introduction – this is why I chose it. It will thus be necessary to proceed in a way which is obviously not that of what one might call academic commentary.

Furthermore, I must assume that at least some of you are not truly familiar with Plato's work. I'm not saying that I consider myself thoroughly equipped in this regard either. But I do have enough experience with it, and enough of a grasp of it, to think that I can allow myself to direct a spotlight on the *Symposium* while giving proper consideration to the whole backdrop of the dialogue. Moreover, I bid those who are equipped to do so to monitor what I say, and to let me know, should the occasion arise, what might be, not arbitrary – it obviously must be – but forced or off the mark in its arbitrariness.

What's more, I have nothing against a certain roughness or newness – I even think it should be emphasized – in taking up a text like the *Symposium*. This is why you will excuse me for presenting it to you in a way that is a bit paradoxical at first, or that may seem paradoxical to you.

It seems to me that whoever reads the *Symposium* for the first time, if he is not obsessed with the fact that it is a text from a respected tradition, cannot fail to feel flabbergasted, to put it approximately.

I would go still further. If he has a bit of historical imagination, he must wonder how such a thing could have been preserved for us throughout what I would willingly refer to as the generations of monks and ignoramuses, all of them vocationally unsuited to transmit a text to us that is quite akin – due to at least one of its parts, in other words, its end, and one cannot but be struck by this fact – to (and why not just say so?) what is nowadays called a specialized literary genre, the kind that may fall within the ambit of police investigations.

Indeed, if you simply know how to read – and just once won't hurt you (I think that after my announcement the last time many of you went out and bought the text, and have thus no doubt had a
31 look at it) – you cannot help but be struck at least by what transpires in the second part of this dialogue between Alcibiades and Socrates.

What transpires between Alcibiades and Socrates goes beyond the limits of the symposium itself.

1

What then is a symposium?

It is a ceremony with rules, a sort of ritual, intimate contest

among the elite, or parlor game. The holding of such a symposium is thus not simply an occasion for Plato's dialogue, but refers to the mores and real customs variously observed in different localities in Greece, and, I might add, in certain cultural strata. The regulation imposed is by no means unusual: each person must do his share by giving a short speech on a specific topic.

A rule is announced at the beginning of this symposium that no one is to drink to excess. The reason why is ostensibly that most of the people there already have splitting headaches from having drunk a bit too much the day before, but it also makes us appreciate the importance and gravity of the elite group formed by the fellow drinkers assembled that evening. Something nevertheless happens that was not expected – pandemonium, as it were.

At a point at which the meeting is far from over, and at which a guest by the name of Aristophanes is about to say something – to rectify some point or request an explanation [212c] – a group of people turn up at the doorstep and enter, all of whom are completely smashed, namely, Alcibiades and his companions. And Alcibiades, in a rather offhand manner, takes it upon himself to preside over the symposium, and begins to speak of things whose scandalous nature I intend to bring out.

This requires our forming a certain notion of who and what Alcibiades and Socrates are, which will take us quite far afield.

For the commonly accepted account, read what Plutarch says in his *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, and you will get an idea of Alcibiades' general character. But you will have to make an effort there too, for his life is described by Plutarch in what I will call an 32
Alexandrian atmosphere – in other words, a funny time in history where everything seems to transform characters into mere shadows of themselves. I am referring to the moralistic tone of the works that have been handed down to us from that era, involving a coming out of the shadows, or νεκυία (*nekuía*) as it's put in the *Odyssey*. Plutarch's fabrications or characters, colored by the fact of having, moreover, served as models or paradigms for the whole of the moralist tradition that followed, have a *je ne sais quoi* that reminds us of zombies. It isn't easy to make veritable blood flow anew through their veins. But try to imagine, on the basis of the one-of-a-kind career Plutarch outlines for us, who Alcibiades could have been, this man who shows up before Socrates – in other words, before he who declares elsewhere that he was Alcibiades' πρῶτος ἐραστής (*prótos erastés*), the first to have ever loved Alcibiades.

Alcibiades was a sort of early Alexander. All of his political adventures were beyond a shadow of a doubt marked with the stamp of defiance and extraordinary daring – *tour de force* – and

the inability to either situate or stop himself at any point. He would turn the situation around wherever he went, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat for whichever camp he aligned with, but would be chased away or exiled by everyone – precisely, it must be pointed out, because of his misdeeds.

It seems that Athens lost the Peloponnesian War because the city felt the need to call Alcibiades back from the fray right in the middle of the hostilities to make him account for an obscure event, that of the so-called mutilation of the ἑρμαῖ (*hermaí*), which, with hindsight, strikes us as just as inexplicable as it is far-fetched, but which surely involved at its root an element of profanation and, strictly speaking, insult to the gods.

Nor can we completely let Alcibiades and his companions off the hook. The people of Athens were no doubt justified in calling him to account. The practice in question was suggestive, by analogy, of some kind of black mass. We cannot but notice the context of insurrection and subversion of the polis' laws from which a character like Alcibiades emerges – a context implying a break with and contempt for the forms, traditions, laws, and no doubt religion itself.

This is the kind of disturbing background he brought with him. He also exercised, wherever he went, a truly remarkable fascination on people [*séduction*]. After the suit brought against him by
33 the people of Athens, he sided with the enemy, Sparta, he himself having played a role in setting the two cities at odds, since prior to that he had done everything in his power to ensure that the peace talks between them fell through.

So he sided with Sparta, and right away found nothing better, nothing more worthy of his fame, than to get the queen pregnant, in plain sight of and with full cognizance of everyone. It turned out that it was well known that the king, Agis, had not slept with his wife for ten months, for reasons I'll spare you. The queen thus bore Alcibiades' child. "I didn't do it for pleasure's sake," he tells us, "but rather because it seemed a worthy undertaking to ensure a throne to my descendants, and to thus honor Sparta's throne with someone of my lineage."

As you may well imagine, such things can captivate people for a while, but are not easily forgiven. You know, of course, that Alcibiades, after having bestowed this present – along with several ingenious ideas concerning battle tactics – set up headquarters elsewhere, taking the opportunity to do so in a third camp, that of the Persians. He paid a visit to the person who represented the power of the king of Persia in Asia Minor, namely, Tissaphernes, who, Plutarch tells us, hardly liked Greeks – in fact he hated them, but he was taken with [*séduit*] Alcibiades.

From then on Alcibiades knuckled down to the business of restoring Athens' good fortune. He did so thanks to conditions whose history is also highly surprising, as it seems that it was in the thick of a network of double agents and constant double-crossing. All the warnings he sent the Athenians were immediately rerouted and passed on to Sparta and to the Persians themselves, who then informed the person in the Athenian fleet who had passed on the news, such that Alcibiades wound up being informed, in turn, that people in high places were perfectly well aware that he had betrayed them.

In any case, each of these people got on as best he could. What is clear is that in the midst of all this, Alcibiades reversed Athens' fortune. And consequently, although we cannot be absolutely sure of the particulars, which vary from one ancient historian's account to another, we should not be surprised to learn that Alcibiades returned to Athens with all the signs of an unprecedented triumph that, despite the joy of the Athenian people, marked the beginning of a swinging back of the pendulum of public opinion. For here we are dealing with someone who could not avoid being, at every turn 34
of the way, the kind of guy about whom people could not but have an opinion.

His death, too, was very strange. Questions remain as to who was responsible for it. It seems that, after a series of reversals of fortune, each more astonishing than the one before – as if, in any case, regardless of the trouble he got into, he could never be defeated – a sort of immense tide of hatred ended up doing him in, employing the means that legend or myth tells us must be used with scorpions. He was surrounded by a circle of fire – but he managed to escape from it, and it was only at some distance that he could be laid low with javelins and arrows.

Such was Alcibiades' incomparable career. While I have highlighted his highly active, exceptional, powerful, penetrating mind, I would nevertheless say that this character's most salient feature was the added luster of what is said of his looks [*beauté*]. Not only his precocious good looks as a child, insofar as we know that it is altogether related to the history of the dominant form of love at that time in Greece, namely, love for children, but also his long-preserved attractiveness, which even late in life made him someone who seduced people as much with his looks as with his exceptional intelligence.

Such was the man. Here we see him show up at the symposium, at this contest assembling serious learned men, albeit in the context of Greek love, which I'll stress later, that already provides a backdrop of constant eroticism to the speeches on love. He tells everyone

about something that can be summed up in these words: the vain efforts he made when he was young, when Socrates loved him, to get Socrates to fuck him.

He goes into it at length, furnishing plenty of details and describing it in the crassest of terms. He quite clearly wanted to make Socrates lose control, show some emotional turmoil, and yield to direct corporal come-ons – physical contact. All of this is said publicly, by a man who is drunk, no doubt, but whose words Plato doesn't consider it beneath his dignity to repeat right down to the last detail.

I'm not sure I'm getting my point across. Imagine that a book comes out, not now – for Plato brings it out some 50 years after
35 the scene it relates took place. But imagine that a book comes out some time in the future, to avoid ruffling anyone's feathers, in which a celebrity, Kennedy, for example, a Kennedy who is simultaneously James Dean, recounts in a book designed for the elites that he did everything, when he was in college, to get ____ to make love to him – I'll let you fill in the blank with someone's name. You needn't absolutely restrict yourself to teachers, since Socrates was not exactly a teacher, but he was one all the same, a rather unusual one at that. Imagine that it is someone like Massignon, and at the same time Henry Miller. That would make waves, and would spell trouble for Jean-Jacques Pauvert who would publish the book. Keep this in mind when considering that it is thanks to those who we must call the Brothers variously ignoramus that this astonishing book has been handed down to us through the centuries, such that we no doubt have the complete text. This is what I was thinking, not without some degree of admiration, in thumbing through the admirable edition Henri Estienne gave us, which includes a Latin translation. This edition is quite definitive – it is such a perfect critical edition that even now, in all other editions, whether more or less scholarly, its pagination is provided. Those of you for whom this is all a bit new should know that the little 872a's and so on you see in the margins refer to Henri Estienne's pagination dating back to 1575.

Henri Estienne certainly wasn't an ignoramus [*un ignorantin*], but it's a bit hard to believe that someone who was capable of devoting himself to compiling such monumental editions – though this wasn't all he did – was sufficiently open to life to fully appreciate the contents of this text, inasmuch as it is a text about love.

Other people were interested in love during the same era as Henri Estienne, and I can certainly tell you that, when I talked last year at length about sublimation as concerns love for women, the author I didn't mention was neither Plato, nor any other scholar, but rather

Marguerite de Navarre. I alluded to her without spelling it out. Keep in mind that, for the sort of banquet or symposium constituted by her *Heptaméron*, she carefully excluded the people with ink on their hands who appeared at the time as overhaulers of the contents of libraries. She wanted only cavaliers and lords, people who, when 36
speaking of love, spoke of something they had time to experience. And in all commentaries on the *Symposium*, it is this very dimension which is often lacking, leaving something to be desired. But that is of little consequence.

For those who never wonder whether their understanding, as Jaspers says, extends to the limits of the concrete, perceptible, or comprehensible, the story of Alcibiades and Socrates has always been hard to swallow. By way of proof I need but mention the fact that Louis [or Loys] Le Roy, Ludovicus Regius, the first French translator of these texts that had just surfaced in Western culture from the Orient, quite simply stopped translating when he reached Alcibiades' entrance. He went no further. It seemed to him that enough fine speeches had already been made – which is, indeed, true. The scene with Alcibiades seemed to Le Roy superfluously tacked on – apocryphal.

He wasn't the only person to behave this way either. I'll spare you the details, but one day Racine received the manuscript of a translation of the *Symposium* from a lady who had worked on it, asking him to look it over. Racine, a sensitive man, considered it to be untranslatable – not just the story of Alcibiades, but the whole *Symposium*. We have his notes, which prove that he looked very closely at the manuscript that had been sent to him. But as for correcting it, for it required nothing less than total revamping – only someone like Racine could translate the Greek – he refused. It didn't tickle his fancy.

Third reference: a long time ago I was lucky enough to come across handwritten notes of a course on Plato given by Victor Brochard, which had been tucked away somewhere. They are quite remarkable: the notes were exceptionally well taken, the writing exquisite and, concerning the theory of love, Brochard referred to everything relevant – the *Lysis*, the *Phaedrus*, and above all the *Symposium*. But he plays a very cute little game of substitution when it comes to the part about Alcibiades – he shifts gears and redirects things toward the *Phaedrus*, which becomes his new focus. He doesn't take it upon himself to account for the story of Alcibiades.

This reserve on his part is rather deserving of our respect. It at least attests to his sense that there was something there that raised a question. And I prefer this to seeing it resolved by the sorts of unusual hypotheses that are not infrequently proposed.

The most amazing of them, never in a million years would you guess it – and Léon Robin rallies to it, which is astonishing – is that Plato was concerned in this last scene to make people give his master his due. Scholars have discovered that, several years after
37 Socrates' death, a man by the name of Polycrates brought out a pamphlet in which one sees Socrates collapse under the weight of various accusations that are conveyed by three people. Polycrates is supposed to have made one of the three, Anytus, furnish an indictment whose main claim was that Socrates was responsible for what I told you about earlier – namely, the trail of corruption and scandal Alcibiades left in his wake his whole life long, including the string of problems, if not catastrophes, he created.

It must be agreed that the idea that Plato was trying to exonerate Socrates and his mores, if not his influence, by presenting us with such a scene of public confession, has truly got it all backward. What could people who come up with such hypotheses possibly be thinking? The idea that Socrates resisted Alcibiades' come-ons, and that this, in and of itself, would justify presenting this part of the *Symposium*, insofar as it was designed to improve the public's view of Socrates' mission, personally leaves me dumbfounded.

One of the two following things must be true – either we have to come to grips with a whole series of reasons Plato never mentions or else this scene in fact serves a purpose. Why does Alcibiades burst in? And why does he sit beside Socrates, who can be associated with him, who no doubt hails from a rather more distant shore, but who is the most indissolubly bound up with him in some way? Alcibiades' arrival here in the flesh is, in fact, closely related to the question of love.

Let us now see what it's about, since this is the focal point of everything at stake in the *Symposium*. It is here that will be most deeply illuminated, not so much the nature of love, but what interests us in this context – namely, the relationship between love and transference. This is why I am emphasizing the shift [*l'articulation*] between the speeches given at the symposium – at least according to the text of it that is reported to us – and Alcibiades' bursting onto the scene.

2

First I must sketch out for you the meaning of these speeches, but even before that, I must say something about the text thereof which is communicated to us – in other words, the narrative.

38 What is this text? And what is Plato telling us? One can raise this

question right from the outset. Is it fiction or a fabrication, as many of his dialogues clearly are, being compositions that obey certain laws? Lord knows that much could be said about this. Why this genre? Why this law of the dialogue? We will have to leave certain things aside, and I will simply indicate to you that there is a whole lot to know in this vein. But the *Symposium* nevertheless has another feature that is not so very different from the way in which certain of his other dialogues are presented to us.

To give you a glimpse of what I mean, first let me say that we are going to take the *Symposium* as a sort of account of psychoanalytic sessions. For it is indeed a question of something like that. As the dialogue progresses, and the contributions by the different persons participating in the symposium lead one to the next, something happens, which is that each flash is illuminated by the one that follows, and then at the end, life – Alcibiades' presence – bursts onto the scene, this being reported to us as a raw and even disturbing fact. It is up to us to grasp the meaning of Alcibiades' speech.

Assuming then that this is what we are dealing with, we have, according to Plato, a sort of recording of it. As there were no tape recorders at the time, we'll call it a recording on the brain.

Recording on the brain is an exceedingly old practice, which underlay for many centuries the way people who participated in serious events listened, for as long as writing hadn't taken on the dominant role in our culture that it has nowadays. Since things can be written, those that are to be remembered are remembered for us in what I've called the kilos of language – stacks of books and piles of paper. But when paper was rarer and books far more difficult to manufacture and distribute, it was essential to have a good memory, and, if I may say so, to experience everything one heard with an eye to storing it in one's memory. It is not simply at the beginning of the *Symposium*, but in all the traditions we know of, that we find evidence that the oral transmission of the sciences and wisdom was absolutely essential. It is by this pathway, moreover, that we know something of them. In the absence of writing, the oral tradition served as their medium. 39

This is what Plato is referring to when he tells us how the text of the *Symposium* comes down to us. He has someone named Apollodorus tell the story. We know this character because he existed historically. He is supposed to have come into the picture just over 30 years before the appearance of the *Symposium*, if we take its date of publication as *circa* 370 B.C. It is thus before Socrates' death that Apollodorus hears, Plato tells us, the account of what happened. And Apollodorus is supposed to have heard it from Aristodemus, who attended the supposed symposium 16 years earlier, since we are given to believe it took place in 416 B.C.

It is thus 16 years after the fact that a character extracts from his memory the verbatim text of what was supposedly said. Consequently, the least one can say is that Plato takes all the necessary steps to make us believe in this brain recording which was widely practiced, and which was always practiced in such phases of culture. He stresses the fact that "Aristodemus," I am quoting 178a, "couldn't remember exactly what everyone said," no more than Apollodorus himself did – parts of the tape were damaged and there might be gaps at certain points. Obviously none of this can definitively answer the question of historical veracity, but it nevertheless rings true. If it is a lie, it is a pretty one. And as it is, moreover, manifestly a work on love – and we will perhaps come to where the notion arises that, after all, only liars can fittingly respond to love – the *Symposium* would certainly seem to be the choice reference, concerning love, of Socrates' action. This, indeed, is conveyed to us unambiguously.

This is clearly why the *Symposium* is such an important piece of evidence. We know that Socrates himself asserts that he truly knows only about what falls under the heading of love. No doubt the *Theages*, where he says so, was not written by Plato, but it is nevertheless a dialogue by someone who wrote about what was known of Socrates and what had been handed down about him. In it, Socrates is attested to have expressly said that he knew nothing, all in all, but this little bit, σμικροῦ τινος (*smikroú tinos*), of science,
40 μαθήματος (*mathématos*), which concerns matters of love, τῶν ἐρωτικῶν (*tón erotikón*). Socrates repeats this, and in exactly the same terms, at one point in the *Symposium* [177d].

What is the topic of the *Symposium*? The topic was proposed by the character, Phaedrus [177a–c]. He is no other than the character for whom another dialogue was named, one I referred to last year regarding beauty, in which love is also discussed, for the two are linked in Plato's thought. Phaedrus is said to be πατὴρ τοῦ λόγου (*patér toú lógou*), the father of the topic that is taken up in the *Symposium* [177d]. The topic is the following – what is the purpose of being knowledgeable about love? And we know that Socrates claims to be knowledgeable about nothing else.

It becomes still more striking when the following remark is made, a remark you will be able to fully appreciate when you go back to the text – Socrates says almost nothing in his own name. I will tell you today if we have time that this almost-nothing is important – I even think we are reaching the point where I can say so – it is no doubt essential, for it is around this almost-nothing that the scene really revolves, and that they begin, as was to be expected, to truly delve into the topic.

Socrates, in a sense, calibrates or adjusts the level at which things must be taken up and, in the final analysis, he does not rate love as highly as all that compared to the others present. What he says consists rather in framing [*cadrer*] things, adjusting the lights in such a way that one sees precisely the level, which is middling. If Socrates tells us something, it is assuredly that love is not divine. He doesn't rate it that highly, but it is nevertheless what he loves. In fact, he loves it and it alone.

It is worth pointing out the moment at which he begins to speak – just after Agathon. I will bring the characters in one at a time, instead of presenting them all at the outset. There is Phaedrus, Pausanias, and Aristodemus who is a party crasher – in other words, he ran into Socrates, and Socrates brought him along. There is also Eryximachus who counts as a colleague for most of you since he is a medical doctor, and Agathon who is the host. Socrates, who invited Aristodemus, arrives very late because, on the way, he had what we might call a fit [*crise*]. Socrates' fits consisted in stopping short, and standing still in some spot on one foot. That evening he stopped at the house next door where he had no business being. He remained 41
glued there in the foyer between the umbrella stand and the coat rack, and there was no way to rouse him. One must provide a bit of atmosphere for these things. These stories are not nearly as boring as they make them out to be in junior high school.

Some day I'd like to give a talk – in which I'd take my examples from the *Phaedrus*, or from one of Aristophanes' plays – on an absolutely essential trait without which there is no way of understanding how what I will call the lit circle is situated in everything Antiquity has bequeathed us.

We live in the midst of constant light. The night is brought to us on a stream of neon. But try to imagine that up until a relatively recent era – there's no need to go back as far as Plato – night was night. When, at the beginning of the *Phaedrus*, someone comes knocking to wake up Socrates because he has to rise a little before daybreak – I hope it's in the *Phaedrus*, but that's of little importance, it's at the beginning of one of Plato's dialogues – it's a whole to-do. He gets up and finds himself truly in the dark, for he knocks things over at every step. The same thing happens at the beginning of one of Aristophanes' plays. When one is in the dark, one is truly in the dark. It is at such times that you cannot recognize the person who is touching your hand.

The *Heptaméron*, to mention what was still common in Marguerite de Navarre's era, is full of stories that turn on the fact that at that time, when you slipped into a lady's bed at night, it was considered entirely possible to pass yourself off as her husband or her lover, as

long as you kept your mouth shut. It seems that went on all the time. Obviously, what I will call, with an altogether different meaning, the spreading of light, changes many things in the realm of human relations. To us, night is not a consistent reality – it cannot be poured from a ladle or form a blanket of darkness. That deprives us of certain things, many things.

All of this to return to our topic, which is that to which we must come – namely, what is signified by the lit circle in which we find ourselves, and what was at issue when love was talked about in Greece.

42 When it was talked about, well, as Mr. de La Palice would say, it was Greek love that was at issue.

3

You'll have to get used to the idea that Greek love was love for pretty boys. And . . . that's it.

It is quite clear that when people spoke of love they were speaking of nothing else. All the attempts we make to situate this in its proper context are doomed to failure. To try to see exactly what it is, we are no doubt obliged to push back the furniture in a certain way, re-establish certain perspectives, and look at it from a different angle, by saying that there wasn't necessarily only that, obviously, naturally. The fact remains that, as far as love was concerned, that's all there was.

You will tell me that love for boys is something that was universally accepted. Some of our contemporaries have been saying so for a long time, regretting that they weren't born a bit earlier. But no. The fact remains that in a whole part of Greece it was not at all thought well of, and that in a whole other part of Greece – Pausanias says so himself in the *Symposium* – it was thought well of. And as it was in the totalitarian part of Greece, among the Boeotians and Spartans, where everything that was not prohibited was compulsory, that it was not only thought well of, but the mandatory form of service, there was no getting around it. There are people who are far superior to us, says Pausanias – it's well thought of by we Athenians, but it's prohibited nevertheless, and naturally that makes it all the more invaluable [182].

All of this teaches us little, except that it was more credible, on condition that we understand more or less what it corresponded to. To get some idea of it, we must refer back to what I said last year about courtly love. It wasn't the same thing, but it served an analogous function in the society. It was quite obviously a kind of sublimation – recall that I tried last year to provide a slight rectification in your minds regarding the real function of sublimation.

It involved nothing that we can situate within the register of 43
regression on a societal scale. While it is true that psychoanalytic theory points to fraternity among men as the basis of the social bond – homosexuality attaching man to the neutralization of the bond – that's not what is at issue here. It is not in the least a question of the dissolution of the social bond and a return to some sort of innate form. It is obviously something else – it is a fact of culture. This form of love was practiced by the masters of Greece – people of a certain social class and milieu, people at a level at which culture reigned supreme and was developed. This love was obviously the great center of elaboration of interpersonal relationships.

Let me remind you, in another guise, of what I indicated at the end of an earlier Seminar – the schema of the relationship between perversion and culture, insofar as culture is distinct from society. While society leads, via censorship, to a form of disintegration which is called neurosis, perversion can be understood, contrariwise, as a kind of elaboration, construction, or even sublimation – to use that word – when it is a product of culture. The circle closes: perversion contributes elements that shape [*travaillent*] society, and neurosis favors the creation of new cultural elements.

This doesn't stop Greek love from being a perversion, however sublimated it may be. No culturalist viewpoint can prevail here. Let it not be retorted, on the basis of the pretext that it was an accepted, approved, and even celebrated perversion, that it was not a perversion. Homosexuality still was what it is, a perversion. To maintain, in order to be accommodating, that if we treat homosexuality, it's because in our era it's something else altogether – it's no longer in style, while at the time of the Greeks it served a cultural function, and was as such worthy of our highest regard – is truly to skirt the issue.

The only thing that distinguishes contemporary homosexuality from Greek perversion is, I believe – well – hardly to be found anywhere but in the quality of its objects. High-school students here are pimply and turned into blithering idiots by the education they receive. In Greece, the conditions were favorable for their being objects of homage, without it being necessary to go find these objects in dark alleys or in the gutter. That's the whole difference. 44
But the structure is in no way different.

This is scandalous given the eminent dignity we have bestowed upon the Greek message. People shroud themselves in this context in fine words. "Nevertheless," they say, "don't think women weren't paid suitable homage, for all that. Don't forget that Socrates, for example, in the *Symposium*, while saying very little in his own name, has a woman, Diotima, speak in his stead. Don't you see that this

proves the supreme homage was paid, even in Socrates' own words, to women?" That, at least, is what the kind souls never fail to trot out in this context. And they add, "You know, from time to time he went to visit Lais, Aspasia, and Theodota who was Alcibiades' mistress" – anything and everything they can find in the gossip of the historians. And then there's the amazing Xanthippus [Socrates' wife] to whom I alluded last week. "She was there the day of his death, you know, and she even wailed so loudly she deafened all around." There's just one hitch – it is attested to in the *Phaedo* – and it is that Socrates bids those present to get her out of there as quickly as possible and put her to bed straight away so that they can talk in peace, there being only a few hours left. If it weren't for that, the dignity of women in Greece would be safe and sound.

Personally, I don't question the importance of women in ancient Greek society. I would even say it was rather considerable, and you will see its import in what follows. The fact is that they had what I would call their true place. And not only their true place, but an altogether eminent role in love relations. We have all kinds of proof thereof. It turns out, in fact, assuming, as usual, that we know how to read – you can't read ancient authors with blinders – that they had a role that is veiled for us, but that is nevertheless eminently theirs in love: quite simply the active role. The difference between the women of Antiquity and modern women is that the women of Antiquity demanded their due – they attacked men.

This is quite palpable in many cases. Once you have opened your eyes to this point of view, you will notice many things in ancient history that otherwise seem strange. Aristophanes, who was a very
45 fine music-hall director, did nothing to conceal how the women of his time behaved. There has never been anything more characteristic and direct concerning women's doings, and this is precisely why learned love [*l'amour savant*], so to speak, sought refuge elsewhere. We have here one of the keys to the question, and it is not such as to surprise psychoanalysts terribly much.

All of this may seem to be a rather long detour for our undertaking, which is to analyze a text that aims at discovering what it means to be learned in love. Please excuse this detour. We know that the *Symposium* dates back to the time of Greek love and that this love was, so to speak, "schoolish," in other words, love of pupils. For technical reasons – for reasons of simplification, exemplification, and use as a model – this love allows us to understand a connection [*articulation*] that is always elided in what is overly complicated in love involving women. It is in this respect that this love for school[boys] [*amour de l'école*] can legitimately provide us and everyone with schooling in love [*d'école de l'amour*].

Which doesn't mean it should be reinstituted. I would like to avoid all possible misunderstandings – soon people will be saying that I am advocating Platonic love. There are many reasons why it can no longer serve as a love school. Were I to tell you which reasons, I would be making great lunging thrusts with a sword into the curtains without being sure what lies behind them. I generally avoid such things, believe me. There are reasons why it should not be reinstituted, and why it would even be impossible to do so. One of the reasons, which will perhaps surprise you if I propose it here, is that for us, at the stage we are at, love – and its phenomenon, culture, and dimension – has for some time now been disconnected from beauty. That may surprise you, but that's the way it is.

Even if you haven't yet noticed, you will if you reflect a bit. Consider it from both sides, from that of beautiful artworks, on the one hand, and from that of love, on the other, and you will realize that it is true. It is, in any case, a condition that makes it difficult to prepare you to see what is at stake, and it is precisely why I have taken this long detour. We now return to beauty, whose tragic function I brought out last year, since it supplies the true meaning of what Plato tells us about love.

Moreover, it is quite clear that, currently, love is no longer situ- 46
ated at the level of tragedy at all, nor at another level I'll talk about later. It is at the level of what is called Polyhymnia in Agathon's speech [187e]. This is the level of what presents itself as the most vivid materialization of what is essential in fiction, which for us is film.

Plato would be overjoyed by this invention. There is no better illustration in the arts of what Plato places at the beginning of his vision of the world. What is expressed in his myth of the cave is illustrated every day for us by the dancing beams that shine on the screen, showing all our feelings in a shadowy state. In contemporary art, the defense and illustration of love most clearly belong to this dimension.

This is why I told you before – a remark that was not without eliciting your reluctance, made as it was as an aside, but which will nevertheless be the linchpin of our progress here – that love is a comical feeling. But an effort is necessary to arrive at the focal point at which one can appropriately appreciate its import.

There are two things that I've noted about love in my prior work, and I will remind you of them here.

The first is that love is a comical feeling. You will see what illustrates it in our investigation, and we will come full circle in this regard, which will allow us to bring up again what is essential – the true nature of comedy. It is so essential and indispensable that it is

why there is in the *Symposium* a presence that, for a long time, commentators were never able to explain, that of Aristophanes, who was nevertheless, historically speaking, Socrates' sworn enemy.

The second thing I wanted to mention, which we'll come across constantly and which will serve us as a guide, is that love is giving what you don't have. You will also see this appear in one of the essential full spirals of what we will encounter in our commentary.

In any case, to begin the step-by-step examination by which Socrates' speech will have an enlightening function for us, let us assume that Greek love allows us to isolate in a love relationship the two partners in the neuter. It is a question of something pure that is naturally expressed in the masculine, and that first allows us
47 to articulate what happens in love at the level of the couple formed by the lover and the beloved, ἐραστὴς (*erastés*) and ἐρώμενος (*erómenos*), respectively.

Next time I will show you how the process that unfolds in the *Symposium* allows us to characterize these two functions, the lover and the beloved, with all the rigor of which psychoanalysis is capable.

In other words, at a time at which psychoanalysis did not yet exist, and the unconscious in its true function in relation to the subject was assuredly the most unsuspected of dimensions – thus with all the limitations this implies – something was quite explicitly articulated that converges with the crowning point of our experience, the same thing I tried to lay out for you under the twofold heading of *The Relation to the Object*, one year, and *Desire and Its Interpretation* two years later. To formulate it in the terms we arrived at, you will clearly see that the lover appears here as the desiring subject [*le sujet du désir*], with all the weight that the term "desire" has for us, and the beloved as the only one in the couple who has something.

The question is to figure out whether or not what he has bears a relation, I would even go so far as to say, any relation whatsoever, to what the other, the desiring subject, is lacking.

The question of the relations between desire and that upon which it becomes fixated has already led us to the notion of desire qua desire for something else. We arrived at this by analyzing the effects of language on the subject. It is quite strange that a dialectic of love, that of Socrates, that was established entirely by means of dialectic and by putting the imperatorial effects of questioning as such to the test, does not bring us to the same crossroads. It does much more – it allows us to go beyond, and to grasp the moment at which a shift or reversal occurs in which, from the conjunction of desire with its object qua inadequate, the signification called love must arise.

Anyone who has not grasped this shift [*articulation*] and the conditions it implies in the symbolic, imaginary, and real, cannot grasp what is at work in the effect called transference, whose automatic functioning is so strange. Nor can he compare transference and love or gauge the share or dose of illusion or truth that must be attributed to each and both. 48

In this respect, the investigation to which I have introduced you today will turn out to be of inaugural importance to us.

November 23, 1960

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III

THE METAPHOR OF LOVE

Phaedrus

The other's being: an object?
From "Know thyself" to "He doesn't know."
The gods belong to the real.
Orpheus, Alcestis, and Achilles.

Last time we ended with the positions of ἐραστὴς (*erastés*) and ἐρώμενος (*erómenos*), the lover and the beloved, the dialectic in the *Symposium* allowing us to present them as the basis, crux, or essential articulation of the problem of love.

The problem of love interests us insofar as it allows us to understand what happens in transference – and, to a certain extent, because of transference.

To justify such a long detour, which may seem superfluous to those of you who are attending this Seminar for the first time this year, I will try to help you immediately grasp the import of our study here.

1

It seems to me that at some stage of his training, something must occur to the psychoanalyst that can give him pause for thought at more than one turning of the way.

Isn't the simplest point – one that is difficult to avoid, it seems to me, starting at a certain age, and that must already pose for you, very directly and in and of itself, the problem of what love is – the following? Hasn't it ever struck you at some turning of the way that something was missing in what you gave to those closest to you?
50 And not simply that something was missing, but that there was something that left the abovementioned loved ones irremediably missed by you? What could that be?

Being an analyst allows you to understand it – with those close to you, you have merely revolved around the fantasy that you have basically sought to satisfy through them. This fantasy has more or less replaced them with its own images and colors.

The being you can suddenly be reminded of by some accident, of which death is clearly the example that makes us best understand its full resonance, this veritable being – should you so much as call it to mind – flees and is already eternally lost. Yet it is this being that you are attempting to connect up with along the paths of your desire. But this being [*être-là*, which is also the French for *Dasein*] is yours. As analysts, you are well aware that it is, in some sense, because you failed to want it that you also basically missed it. But at least here you are at the level of something that is your own fault, and your failure reflects the precise magnitude of that fault.

Is it because you made mere objects, so to speak, of these other people you have cared for so poorly [*mal*]? Would that you *had* treated them like objects, objects whose weight, taste, and substance we savor! Today you would be less troubled by your memories of them. You would have given them their due, paid them the proper homage and love. You would have at least loved them as thyself, except that thou hardly [*mal*] lovest thyself. But it is not even the fate of the barely [*mal*] loved that we have all known. You wanted to make subjects, so to speak, of them – as if that were the end-all of the respect they deserved, respect, so to speak, for their dignity, the respect owed to your semblables.

I'm afraid that this neutralized use of the expression, "our semblables," is quite different from what is at issue in the question of love. I suspect that the respect you have for these semblables all too quickly tends to come down to chalking everything up to their whimsical resistance, narrow-minded ideas, and inborn stupidity – in short, to their own "beeswax." Let them work it out for themselves. This is, I think, the basic reason why you stop short of infringing on their freedom, one of your common behavioral traits. "Freedom to be indifferent [*Liberté d'indifférence*]," people say. However, it is not their freedom but rather yours.

It is here that a question arises in analysts' minds: "What is our relation to our patient's being?" We are well aware that it is what is at stake in analysis. Is our access to this being the access allowed by 51
love? Does this access bear any relation to what we can know about the nature of love, beginning with the question that I am raising this year? As you will see, this will take us rather far. There is a metaphor in the *Symposium* that I intend to make use of in this regard. It seems, indeed, that there were, at the time, statues representing a satyr or a silenus on the outside, and inside of which something was

lodged, as in Russian dolls. We don't really know what was inside, but they were assuredly precious objects. In any case, Alcibiades compares Socrates to these small objects. My question will aim, but only at the end of our exploration, at what, in analysis, there must be, can be, or is supposed to be inside.

I am trying to broach the problem of the relation of the analysand to the analyst, which manifests itself in the odd phenomenon known as transference, in a way that homes in on it as closely as possible and that eludes its forms as little as possible. Every analyst knows it, but people more or less seek to extract its true weight or avoid it altogether. We can do no better, in this regard, than to begin with an investigation of what the phenomenon of transference is supposed to imitate to the greatest extent, even to the point of becoming indistinguishable from it – namely, love.

One of Freud's famous articles sets off in this direction, "Observations on Transference-Love," a text which is part of what are usually called his "Papers on Technique." It situates transference with respect to what it is closely related to. But there has always been an uncertainty in the problem of love, an internal dissension, some kind of duplicity, which is precisely what we must try to focus in on. It can be shed light on by the ambiguity of something else, which is the substitution that takes place in the process – which, after attending this Seminar for a while, you should know is something that happens in analytic action and that I can summarize for you.

He who seeks us out does so on the basis of the assumption that he doesn't know what he has, and the whole unconscious, the fundamental "he doesn't know," is already implied therein. It is in this way that a bridge is erected that can link up our new science with the whole "know thyself" [γνῶθι σαυτόν (*gnóthi sautón*)] tradition.

There is, of course, a fundamental difference. The emphasis shifts completely due to this "he doesn't know." I believe I've said enough about it already not to have to do anything other than point out the difference in passing.

52 It is a question of what the subject truly has in himself, of what asks to be educated, brought out, and cultured in accordance with all traditional pedagogical methods – which take refuge behind the fundamentally revelatory power of a dialectic, and are the shoots and suckers of Socrates' inaugural method insofar as it is philosophical. Is this where we are going to lead someone who seeks us out as analysts?

In your sole capacity as readers of Freud's work, you should already know something of what, at first glance at least, manifests itself as the paradox of what is considered to be the term, *telos*, end,

or termination of analysis. What does Freud tell us if not that, in the final analysis, what is found at the end of this path by those who follow it is essentially nothing other than a lack?

Whether you call this lack "castration" or *Penisneid* ["penis envy"], it is a sign or metaphor. But if this is truly what analysis runs up against in the end, isn't there already some ambiguity here? In short, in recalling the twofold register between the beginning or theoretical starting point of an analysis and its end, it does not escape me that its first appearance may seem deceptive, and quite necessarily so. Its whole unfolding is nevertheless inscribed therein. The course of an analysis involves, strictly speaking, the thorough revelation of something that is called the unconscious Other.

To anyone who is listening to me talk about it for the first time – but I suspect this is not the case for any of you here – all of this can only be taken as an enigma. But that is not why I am presenting it to you – I am doing so in order to assemble the terms in which our action is formulated. It is also in order to immediately sketch out the general trajectory we will follow. It is but a question, for goodness' sake, of immediately apprehending the analogy between this unfolding and these terms, on the one hand, and the fundamental, original situation of love, on the other. The latter, while obvious, has never, to the best of my knowledge, been situated in the terms in which I propose that we articulate it right away, the two terms with which we are beginning: *erastés*, the lover (or ἐρῶν, *erón*, the one who loves [*l'aimant*]), and *erómenos*, the one who is loved (the beloved).

Isn't all of this best laid out right at the outset? There's no point playing hide-and-seek. We can see it right away in such a gathering – isn't it essentially what the *erastés* or lover is lacking that characterizes him for all those who come into contact with him? As 53
analysts, we can immediately add that he knows not in what he is lacking, furnishing the particular accent of inscience that is characteristic of the unconscious.

On the other hand, hasn't the *erómenos* or loved object always been situated as the one who knows not what he has, what he has that is hidden, and which makes him appealing? Isn't what he has something that, in love relationships, is destined not only to be revealed, but to come into being, to be rendered present, whereas up until then it was merely possible? In short, let us state it with an analytic accent, or even without such an accent: the beloved doesn't know either. But it is a matter of something else in his case – he knows not what he has.

Note that the two terms that, in their essence, constitute the lover and the beloved in no way coincide. What the one is missing

is not what is hidden in the other. This is the whole problem of love. Whether one knows it or not is of no consequence. In the phenomenon of love, at every step of the way one encounters the wrenching and discordance associated with it. No one needs, for all that, to dialogue [διαλέγεσθαι (*dialégesthai*)] or dialectize, διαλεκτικεύεσθαι (*dialektikeúesthai*) about love to be involved in this gap or discord – it suffices to be in the thick of it, to be in love.

Does that say it all? Is that sufficient? I can't go any further here. I'm already going pretty far in saying this. I am exposing myself to the risk of a certain immediate misunderstanding. But I have no intention here of misleading you, so I'll lay my cards on the table at once.

Of course things go further. We can provide here, in the terms we use, a formulation that takes up anew what is already indicated in the analysis of the creation of meaning in the signifier–signified relation, provided we are prepared to see in what follows how it should be handled and its truth. Love as a signifier – for to us it is a signifier and nothing else – is a metaphor, assuming that we have come to understand metaphor as substitution.

This is where we enter uncharted waters. For the time being I bid you to simply accept it, and to consider what I am saying as what it is: an algebraic formula. It is insofar as the function of *erastés* or the person who loves, as a lacking subject, comes to take the place of, or is substituted for, the function of *erómenos*, the loved object, that the signification of love is produced.

It will perhaps take me some time to explain this formulation. We
54 have the time to do so in the year before us. At least I won't have failed to give you, right from the outset, this reference point which can serve, not as a riddle, but as a landmark that may help you navigate around certain ambiguities in the discussions to come.

2

Let us now enter into the *Symposium* whose set I depicted and whose characters I presented last time.

These characters have nothing primitive about them, despite the fact that they present us with a simplification of the problem [of love]. They are highly sophisticated characters – that's the word for it! Let me retrace now one of the staves [*portées*] I spoke with you about last time, for I think it's important that it be stated as provocatively as possible.

It really is quite funny that, in close to 24 centuries of religious thought, there hasn't been a single reflection on love, whether by

libertines or clerics, which hasn't referred to this inaugural text. Now, after all, to someone who happens along unawares – to the country bumpkin who leaves his little patch of ground [*lopin*] outside Athens – this symposium, taken in its outer trappings, seems rather like a gathering of aging fairies, as people call them, a meeting of old faggots [*lopes*]. Socrates is 53, Alcibiades, who is apparently still handsome, is 36, and Agathon himself, whose house they are meeting at, is 30 – he has just won the prize for the best tragedy, and this is what allows us to precisely establish the year of the symposium [416 B.C.].

One must not stop at such outward appearances. It is always in sitting rooms – in other words, in places where people are not especially good-looking – at the homes of duchesses, in the course of an evening, that the most refined things are said. They are lost forever, naturally, but not for everyone, in any case not for those who say them. Here, for once, we have a chance to know what these characters, each in his turn, exchanged that particular evening.

A lot has been said of the *Symposium*. You don't need me to tell you that those whose job it is to be philosophers, philologists, and Hellenists have scrutinized it with a magnifying glass. I haven't 55
exhausted the sum total of their remarks, though they are not inexhaustible, as they always revolve around one point. However far from inexhaustible they may be, it is nevertheless out of the question for me to go into all of the little debates that have sprung up over one line or another. First of all, it is not clear that it would prevent me from leaving out something important. And furthermore, it is not easy for me, being neither a philosopher, a philologist, nor a Hellenist, to put myself in their shoes and give you a class on the *Symposium*. All I can hope to do is to give you a first take on it.

I hope you won't imagine that I am relying on a first reading alone. Be so kind as to believe that I am not taking up this text for the first time strictly for the purposes of this Seminar. Be so kind as to also believe that I have taken some pains to refresh my memory of the works that have been devoted to the text, and to familiarize myself with those I had previously neglected.

I am telling you this to beg your pardon for having discussed the last part first. I did so because I think it's the best part. Of course, on the basis of the very method that I am teaching you, what I see in the text must be greeted by you with some reservations. It is here that I run the greatest risks – you should be grateful to me for running them in your stead. Let this serve simply as an introduction to your commentaries, which should not so much target what I am going to tell you about what I've understood, as what is in the text itself. The latter, after what I tell you, will seem to you to be what

attracted my attention. Whether my understanding of it be true or false, the signifiers that justify it in the text are impossible for you to ignore, even if you understand them differently than I do.

I will thus skip the first few pages, pages which are always found in Plato's dialogues. This dialogue is not like the others, but one nonetheless encounters here a situation constructed to create what I called the illusion of authenticity – distance, indications of transmission, of who repeated what another told him. This is always the way Plato attempts to create a certain depth at the outset, and it no doubt serves, in his eyes, to amplify what he has his characters say.

56 I will also skip over the rules I mentioned last time, the laws of the symposium. I indicated that the laws were not simply local or improvised, but based on a prototype. A symposium was something that had its laws – although no doubt not exactly the same ones everywhere, in Athens and in Crete, for example.

I will skip over all these references, in order to come to the unfolding of a ceremony that involves something that must have a name – a name which, I might mention in passing, can be debated – a "eulogy" of love. Is it ἐνκώμιον (*enkómion*) or is it ἐπαίνεσις (*epaínesis*)? I will skip that discussion – it is of interest, but only of secondary interest. Today I would simply like to situate the progression of events through the succession of speeches.

The first speech is made by Phaedrus. Phaedrus is another rather odd character. His character traits should be traced, although this is not terribly important. For the time being, you should simply know that it is odd that he is the one who proposed the topic, who is the πατὴρ τοῦ λόγου (*patér toú lógou*) [177d], the father of the topic, for we know him a bit from the beginning of the *Phaedrus* – he's a curious sort of hypochondriac. This may serve us a bit further on.

Now that I think of it, let me take the opportunity to apologize for something. When I spoke to you about darkness last time, I referred, I don't know why, to the *Phaedrus*. It occurred to me later that it is not the *Phaedrus* which begins with nighttime, but the *Protagoras*. That corrected, let us proceed.

Phaedrus, Pausanias, and Eryximachus. Aristophanes was supposed to have spoken before Eryximachus, but he had the hiccoughs and let Eryximachus speak before him. It is a perennial problem to figure out why Aristophanes, the comic poet, was there with Socrates, when everyone knows that he didn't just criticize Socrates, but ridiculed and defamed him in his comedies. Indeed, historians generally hold him partly responsible for Socrates' condemnation and tragic fate. There is no doubt a profound reason for his presence here, as I said, for which I am not offering, no more than anyone

else, a final answer. But perhaps we can try to shed a few dim rays of light on the question.

Then comes Agathon, and after Agathon, Socrates. This constitutes what is, strictly speaking, the symposium, that is, everything that happens up until the crucial moment which, as I pointed out last time, should be considered essential: Alcibiades' entrance. 57
The latter is accompanied by the breaking of all the rules of the symposium, if nothing else by the mere fact that Alcibiades shows up drunk, declares himself to be essentially drunk, and is thereby immersed in drunkenness as such.

Suppose you were to claim that the *Symposium* is of interest primarily because it shows how difficult it is to say something about love that holds water. If that were all that were at issue, we would be purely and simply mired in full-blown cacophony. But what Plato shows – at least this is what I maintain, and it is not especially audacious to do so – in a way that is never revealed or brought to light, is that the contour traced out by this difficulty indicates to us the point at which lies the fundamental topology which stops us from saying anything about love that holds water.

What I am saying here is not very new. No one dreams of disputing it, certainly none of the people who have studied this so-called "dialogue" – in quotes, because it is barely a text that deserves such a title, as it is a series of eulogies, a series of ditties or drinking songs in honor of love. Since, of course, the speakers at the symposium are a bit smarter than others, it takes on more importance. Moreover, we are informed that it is a topic that is not often selected, which might surprise us at first.

We are told that each person transposes the topic into his own key. But we don't really know why, for example, Phaedrus is given the task of introducing it from the standpoint, we are told, of religion, myth, or even ethnography. And, in effect, there is some truth in all of that. Our Phaedrus introduces love by telling us that it is μέγας θεὸς (*mégas theós*), a great god. That's not all he says, but he refers to two theologians, Hesiod and Parmenides, who, for different reasons, spoke of the genealogy of the gods, which is of great significance. I don't feel obliged to go into Hesiod's *Theogony* and Parmenides' *Poem* just because a verse of each is quoted by Phaedrus. I will nevertheless mention that two or three years ago, maybe four, a very important study of Parmenides' *Poem* came out, by a contemporary of ours by the name of Jean Beaufret. But let us leave that aside and try to figure out what there is in Phaedrus' discourse.

There is thus a reference to the gods in it. Why to the gods in 58
the plural? I don't know what meaning the gods may have for you, especially the gods of Antiquity, but they are spoken about

enough in this dialogue for it to be rather useful, if not necessary, that I answer as if you had asked me, "What do you really think of the gods? Where are they situated in relation to the symbolic, imaginary, and real?" It is not a pointless question by any means. Right up to the end of the *Symposium*, the question at issue is whether or not love is a god, and we make at least some progress by the end of the dialogue inasmuch as we know with certainty that it is not.

I am not going to give you a class in this context on the sacred. It will suffice if I make a few formulaic statements about the topic. The gods – insofar as they exist for us in the register that allows us to make headway in our practice, if it is true that my three categories are of any use to us whatsoever – quite certainly belong to the real. The gods are a mode by which the real is revealed.

This is why all philosophical progress tends, by its own inherent necessity, to eliminate them. And it is why Christian revelation, as Hegel so astutely remarked, is also situated along the path of their elimination – it is a bit more advanced, it goes a little further down the road that leads from polytheism to atheism. Compared to the notion of god as the height of revelation, of *numen*, as real shining and appearance – this is fundamental – the mechanism of Christian revelation is indisputably situated along the path that leads to the reduction and, in the final analysis, abolition of the notion. Indeed, it tends to displace the God of Christian revelation – and the same is true of dogma – onto the Word, Logos. Stated differently, it is situated on a path parallel to that trodden by the philosopher, insofar as he is destined to deny the gods.

Man will thus seek in Logos, in other words, at the level of signifying articulation, the revelations he encountered up until then in the real – in the real in which what revealed itself was, moreover, real – through the real that displaces [the God of Christian revelation].

This is what any investigation does which, at the outset of the philosophical approach, tends to articulate itself as science, and Plato teaches us, rightly or wrongly, faithfully or unfaithfully [*au vrai ou au pas vrai*], that this was what Socrates was doing. Socrates demanded that we not be content with that to which we have this
59 innocent relation known as δόξα (*dóxa*) [opinion], and which is – why not, for God's sake? – sometimes right [*vrai*], but rather that we ask why, that we be satisfied only by the assured truth [*vrai assuré*] which he calls ἐπιστήμη (*epistéme*): science, knowledge that provides its reasons. This, Plato tells us, was the point of Socrates' φιλοσοφεῖν (*philosopheín*) [philosophizing].

I have already mentioned what I called Plato's *Schwärmerei*. One must indeed believe that something of his enterprise remained

stymied in the end, since the rigor and talent deployed in demonstrating such a method didn't stop so many things in Plato's work from being used by all the mystagogies. I am speaking above all of gnosis and of everything in Christianity itself which has always remained gnostic. The fact remains that it is clear that what Plato liked was science. How could we hold it against him for not having followed this path all the way, right from its very first step?

Whatever the case may thus be, to introduce the problem of love, Phaedrus refers to the notion that love is a great god, almost the oldest of the gods, born right after Chaos, Hesiod says. Love is also the first god thought of by the mysterious goddess, the primordial Goddess of Parmenides' poem.

We cannot now determine – and the enterprise is perhaps impossible to carry out in any case – everything these terms might have meant in Plato's day. But try, nevertheless, to entertain the idea that the first times people said these things, they could not possibly have had the appearance of stupefying provincialism they had, for example, in the seventeenth century in which, when one spoke of Eros, everyone played at it. In the 1600s, it was situated in a wholly different context, that of courtly culture, with echoes of *L'Astrée*, and all that followed – namely, words with no import. Here words have their full import, and the discussion is truly theological.

To convey this import, I have found nothing better than to tell you – if you really want to grasp it – to get a hold of Plotinus' second *Ennead*, where you will see that what he is talking about is situated at approximately the same level. Eros is at issue there too; in fact, it is the only thing at issue there. You cannot, if you have at least cursorily read a theological text on the Trinity, fail to notice that Plotinus' discourse – written at the end of the third century A.D. – 60
is, if we change but three words in it, quite simply a discourse on the Trinity. Zeus, Aphrodite, and Eros are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. I say that simply to allow you to imagine what is at stake when Phaedrus speaks of Eros.

For Phaedrus, to speak of love is, in short, to speak of theology. It is very important to realize that his speech begins with such an introduction, as for many people even today, and especially in the Christian tradition, for example, to speak of love is to speak of theology.

But his speech does not stop there. It continues with an illustration of these ideas. The type of illustration employed is also quite interesting in its own right.

For it speaks to us of divine love, and specifically of its effects.

3

The eminence of love's effects depend on the degree of dignity they involve.

We encounter here a theme which has since worn a bit thin in the rhetoric that has grown up around love – namely, that love is a bond against which no human effort can prevail. An army made up of beloveds and lovers – the implicit classic illustration is the famous Theban legion – would be invincible, inasmuch as the beloved for his lover, and the lover for his beloved, are eminently able to represent the highest moral authority, that before which one does not yield, that before which one cannot bring dishonor upon oneself. This notion leads, at its most extreme, to love as at the heart of the ultimate sacrifice.

I find it noteworthy that Euripides' version of Alcestis surfaces here, illustrating once again what I formulated for you last year as what delimits the zone of tragedy – namely, the between-two-deaths. I will summarize it: King Admetus is a happy man, but a man to whom death has suddenly signaled its imminence. Alcestis [the king's wife], the incarnation of love, is the only one who is willing to take the king's place to satisfy death's due – the only one among all the relatives, including the king's elderly parents who in
61 all probability have very little time left to live, and the king's friends and children.

In a speech in which it is essentially male love that is discussed, this may seem remarkable, and it is worth keeping in mind. Alcestis is thus offered up to us as an example. This lends import to what is to come. Indeed, two examples follow on that of Alcestis, both of which, in the words of the orator, were also situated in the field of the between-two-deaths.

The first, Orpheus, managed to descend into hell to seek out his wife Eurydice. As you know, he came back up empty-handed because of a mistake he made, that of looking back before he was allowed to. This mythic theme is reproduced in many legends of other civilizations than Greece, one of which is a famous Japanese legend. The other example Phaedrus provides is that of Achilles.

Showing you what results from a comparison of these three heroes is as far as I can take things today. It is a first step which will already put you on the scent.

Let us consider first Phaedrus' remarks about Orpheus [179d]. What interests us here is Phaedrus' commentary – not whether he gets to the bottom of things, nor whether it's justified – we cannot go that far. What concerns us is what he says. And it is precisely the strangeness of what he says that should attract our attention.

He tells us that the gods did not at all appreciate what Orpheus, son of Oeagrus, did. The reason he gives is found in the interpretation he proposes of what the gods did to the guy, who was not so great as all that, who had gone soft [*amollī*] – we don't know why Phaedrus has got it in for him, or why Plato does either. The gods didn't show him a real woman, but rather the wraith of a woman. This echoes what I began my talk with earlier regarding the relation to the other – namely, the difference between the object of our love insofar as our fantasies cover it over, and the other's being, insofar as love wonders whether or not it can reach it.

In death, Alcestis truly takes the place of or substitutes for the other's being, according to Phaedrus. You will find a term in the text, and you won't be able to say that I put it there – ὑπεραποθανεῖν (*hyperapothaneín*). The substitution or metaphor I was telling you about earlier is literally realized here. Alcestis authentically takes Admetus' place. Paul Ricoeur, who has the Greek text open before 62
him, can find ὑπεραποθανεῖν at 180a. Orpheus having been eliminated from the contest for merit in love, this expression is provided to signal the difference between Alcestis and Achilles.

The case of Achilles is rather different. He is the one who chooses ἐπαποθανεῖν (*epapothaneín*). He is *the one who will follow me*. He follows Patroclus in death.

To understand what this interpretation of Achilles' gesture would have meant to an ancient Greek would warrant a great deal of commentary. It is much less clear than the case of Alcestis. We are forced to consult Homer's texts, where it turns out that Achilles in fact had a choice. The question is whether or not to kill Hector merely to avenge Patroclus' death. "If you don't kill Hector," his mother Thetis tells him, "you will return home in peace, and you will live happily to a ripe old age. If you kill him, your fate is sealed – it is death that awaits you." Achilles doesn't doubt what she says, for there is another passage where he himself has the thought, as an aside, "I could leave in peace." But then, it's unthinkable, and he says why. This choice is considered, all by itself, to be as decisive as Alcestis' sacrifice. The choice of *Moira*, fate, has the same value as the substitution of being for being.

There is really no need to add to this, as Mario Meunier, who is otherwise a fine scholar, does in a footnote (why he does so, I don't know) that in what follows Achilles kills himself on Patroclus' tomb. I have looked a great deal into Achilles' death the past few days, as it bothered me, and I can't find a reference anywhere in the legend of Achilles which would allow one to say such a thing. I have, moreover, seen a great many versions of Achilles' death, certain of which attribute to him activities that are rather curious from the vantage

point of Greek patriotism, as he is supposed to have betrayed the Greek cause for the love of Polyxena, who is a Trojan woman. This would diminish some of the import of Phaedrus' speech.

Sticking to the speech itself, what is important is that Phaedrus gives detailed consideration to the respective functions of Patroclus and Achilles in their erotic bond. He sets us straight: "Don't imagine for a minute that Patroclus was the beloved, as was generally
63 believed. It turns out," says Phaedrus, "upon careful scrutiny of the characteristics of the characters, that the beloved could only have been Achilles, who was younger and still beardless." I am highlighting this because the question is constantly raised whether one must love them before or after their beards begin to grow. The Greeks talk of nothing else. We encounter this discussion of beards everywhere. We can thank the Romans for having done away with this problem for us. There must be some reason for it. In any case, Achilles didn't have a beard. Therefore he must have been the beloved. Patroclus was ten years older than Achilles. A careful examination of the texts shows that Patroclus must have been the lover.

That's not what interests us – it is simply the first indication of something that bears a relation to what I specified as the target starting from which we are going to make headway. Indeed, what the gods find sublime, more marvelous than anything else, is when the beloved behaves as one would expect a lover to behave. With respect to this point, the example of Alcestis is strictly opposed to that of Achilles.

What does this mean? It is what the text says. One cannot imagine why Phaedrus would tell this whole story that runs on for two pages if it were of no importance. You think I am exploring the *Carte du Tendre* [the Map of the Tender Feelings], but it isn't me, it's Plato. And it is very well articulated. One must deduce therefrom what forces itself upon us. Since Phaedrus explicitly contrasts Achilles with Alcestis, and tips the scales in favor of giving the gods' love prize to Achilles, this means that Alcestis was in the position of the *erastés*, of the lover. It is insofar as Achilles was in the position of the beloved that his sacrifice was so much more admirable than hers.

In other words, the entire theological speech by Phaedrus, the hypochondriac, culminates in pointing out that what I earlier called the signification of love leads to this. Its most sensational, remarkable, sanctioned appearance, crowned by the gods who give Achilles a special place on the Isles of the Blest – as everyone knows it is an island that still exists at the mouth of the Danube, on which they have now stuck an insane asylum or some sort of reform school – is precisely related to the fact that in this case a beloved behaved like a lover.

I won't be able to go any further today, but I would like to end with something suggestive, which will perhaps allow us to raise a practical question here. It is the following: in an erotic couple, it is, 64
on the whole, on the side of the lover that one finds activity in the natural position, so to speak.

This remark will be full of consequences for us if, in considering the Alcestis/Admetus couple, you are willing to glimpse something that lies especially within your ken due to what we discover in psychoanalysis about what women can experience regarding their own lack. Why not formulate, at a certain level at least, that in a couple, a heterosexual couple in this case, we find in the woman both lack, as we say, but also, and at the same time, activity?

In any case, Phaedrus never suspects that it could be otherwise. Now what do we find in the other half of the couple? In the beloved, *erómenos*? – or to put it in the neuter, ἐρώμενον (*erómenon*), for what is it that one "eromenoses," one errs or loves, in this whole story of the *Symposium*? It is something that is very often put in the neuter: τὰ παιδικά (*tá paidiká*) [darling]. It is the object. What this designates – namely, a neuter function – is associated with the function of what is loved. It is in the beloved that we find the element of strength.

You will see this in what follows, when we will have to articulate why the problem is situated at a more complex level when heterosexual love is at issue. At that level, it can be plainly seen that the distinction between activity and strength is useful. But it was important to pinpoint it at the moment at which we encounter it so clearly illustrated in the example of Achilles and Patroclus. It is illusory to think that strength is identical to activity, and that Achilles is not the beloved just because he seems to be stronger than Patroclus. This is refuted here in the text, and this is what we should learn from it in passing.

Having arrived at this point in his speech, Phaedrus gives the floor to Pausanias, who for centuries has been taken to express Plato's opinion regarding love for boys.

I will take special pains in dealing with Pausanias. He is a very odd character indeed, and is far from deserving the esteem in which he has been held, having been considered to have Plato's *imprimatur*. He is, in my view, an altogether episodic character, who is never theless important from a certain vantage point – inasmuch as the 65
best comment to jot down in the margin next to his speech is the Christian truth that the kingdom of heaven is off-limits to the rich.

I hope to show you why next time.

November 30, 1960

67

IV

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE RICH

PAUSANIAS

The myth of the beloved's molting.
The rules of Platonic love.
Calvinist love.
Kojève and Aristophanes' hiccoughs.

Today I am going to try to make some headway in my analysis of the *Symposium*, as it is the path I have chosen by which to present you the topic of transference this year.

Last time we proceeded as far as the end of the first speech, that by Phaedrus. You know which speeches follow – those by Pausanias, Eryximachus, Aristophanes, and Agathon, the host of the symposium at which Aristodemus was present. From start to finish it is Apollodorus who narrates, repeating what he heard from Aristodemus. Socrates speaks after Agathon, and you will see how unique the path is that he takes to express what he knows love to be. You know that the last episode is Alcibiades' entrance, an astonishing public confession in its quasi-indecency, which has remained an enigma to all commentators. There is also something after that entrance, but we'll come to that later.

I would like to avoid leading you along this path step by step, speech by speech, in such a way that you will, in the end, be either lost or bored, or lose sight of the goal toward which we are headed. This is why I began class last time with these words about the object, the object's being: we can always tell ourselves, with more or less good reason, but always with some reason, that we have missed it – that we have failed it.

I will come back to the other's being, this being that it was fitting for us to try to reach while there was still time, indicating what is at
68 stake in relation to the two main terms of what is, in this case, called "intersubjectivity."

1

When people invoke intersubjectivity, they are claiming that we must recognize in the other a subject like ourselves. Access to the other's being supposedly lies quintessentially in this direction.

But there is also another direction, one that I indicate when I try to articulate the function of desire in the apprehending of the other as it occurs in the *erastés-erómenos* couple, which has been the organizing principle of all reflection on love from Plato right up until Christian reflection.

I think I have already indicated clearly enough that, in desire, the other as a being [*l'être de l'autre*] is not a subject. *Erómenos* is *erómenon*, in the neuter, and also *tá paidiká*, in the neuter plural – things about the beloved child, one might translate it. The other, insofar as he is aimed at in love, is, as I said, aimed at as a beloved object.

What does this mean? What can we say we have missed in he who is already too far away for us to make good our having failed him? It is clearly his quality as an object. What sparks off the movement involved in the access to the other that love gives us is the desire for the beloved object, which I would compare, if I wished to illustrate it, to a hand that reaches out to pick a fruit when it is ripe, to draw close a rose which has opened, or to stir a fire, the logs of which suddenly burst into flames.

Try to follow me so that you will grasp what I'll say next. With this image, which I won't develop any further, I am sketching out before you what is known as a myth. You will see it in the miraculous character of what follows. Last time I told you that the gods, the starting point in the *Symposium* – *mégas theós*, love is a great god, Phaedrus says right at the outset – are a manifestation of the real. Now any shift from this manifestation to a symbolic order distances us from the revelation of the real.

Phaedrus tells us that Love is the foremost of the gods imagined by the Goddess in Parmenides' *Poem*. Jean Beaufret, in his book, identifies the Goddess with truth – with better reason I think than with any other function – with the radical structure of truth. Recall 69
the way I talked about it in "The Freudian Thing." Truth's first imagining or invention is Love. Hence Love is presented to us here as having no father or mother. There is no genealogy of Love. Yet already in Hesiod's work, in the most mythical forms of the presentation of the gods, a genealogy is sketched out: a system of kinship, a theogony, or a symbolism.

What is the Christian God – who, owing to His internal organization, is at the midpoint about which I spoke to you between

theogony and atheism, this trine God, one and yet three – if not the radical articulation of kinship as such, of what is most irreducibly and mysteriously symbolic about it? The most hidden relationship – and, as Freud says, the least natural, the most purely symbolic – is that of father to son. The third term remains present there, going by the name of love.

This was our point of departure: Love is a god, in other words, a reality that manifests and reveals itself in the real. As such, we can only speak of it through myth. This is also what allows me to lay out before you our orientation here, by directing you toward the formula, metaphor, or substitution of *erastés* for *erómenos*. This metaphor generates the signification of love.

To illustrate it for you, I will take the liberty of completing my image and of truly making it into a myth.

The hand that extends toward the fruit, the rose, or the log that suddenly bursts into flames – its gesture of reaching, drawing close, or stirring up is closely related to the ripening of the fruit, the beauty of the flower, and the blazing of the log. If, in the movement of reaching, drawing, or stirring, the hand goes far enough toward the object that another hand comes out of the fruit, flower, or log and extends toward your hand – and at that moment your hand freezes in the closed plenitude of the fruit, in the open plenitude of the flower, or in the explosion of a log which bursts into flames – then what is produced is love.

But we must not stop there. We must say that what we are looking at here is love – in other words, that it's your love when you were first *erómenos*, the beloved object, and suddenly you become *erastés*, he who desires.

70 Consider what I mean to emphasize with this myth. Every myth is related to the inexplicable nature of reality [*réel*], and it is always inexplicable that anything whatsoever responds to desire.

The structure in question is not one of symmetry and reciprocity [*retour*]. For this symmetry is not symmetrical, since insofar as the hand extends, it extends toward an object. The hand that appears on the other side is the miracle. But we are not here to orchestrate miracles. We are here for something quite different – to know. What must be emphasized in this context is not what happens between here and the hereafter, but rather what happens here – in other words, the substitution of *erastés* for *erómenos* (or for *erómenon*).

A few of you thought there was some vagueness in what I articulated last time concerning the metaphorical substitution of *erastés* for *erómenos*, feeling it contradicted the supreme example to which the gods award the crown, before which the gods themselves are

astonished, ἀγασθέντες (*agasthéntes*) [179c and 180a]. Namely, that Achilles, the beloved, *epapothaneín*, dies, let's say – to remain imprecise for we will see what this means – for Patroclus, which is why Achilles is superior to Alcestis who offered to die instead of the husband whom she loves. The term used by Phaedrus to describe her, *hyperapothaneín*, is contrasted with *epapothaneín*. She dies in the stead, ὑπέρ (*hypér*), of her husband. The case of Achilles is different, because Patroclus is already dead.

Alcestis changes places with her husband who is called upon by death – she crosses the space I mentioned earlier which is between the one that is here and the hereafter. She does something that serves to wrest from the gods a disarming testimony before this extremity, that wins her the singular prize of being able to come back among human beings from death as what lies beyond [life].

But there is something still more remarkable, as Phaedrus explains. It is even more remarkable that, instead of returning to his land to be with his father amid his fields, Achilles accepted his tragic destiny, his fatal destiny, the certain death that was promised to him, if he avenged Patroclus. Now Patroclus was not his beloved. Achilles was the beloved. Phaedrus claims – rightly or wrongly, and this is of little consequence to us – that Achilles was the beloved of the couple, and that he could have occupied only that position. Through his action, which comes down to accepting his fate as it was written, he places himself, not in the stead of, but rather in the wake of Patroclus. He makes of Patroclus' fate the debt he must pay, the debt with which he must come to terms. And this is what 71
commands, in the eyes of the gods, the most necessary and the greatest admiration, for the level attained by Achilles in the order of love's manifestations is, as Phaedrus tells us, higher. Achilles is more honored by the gods, inasmuch as it is they who judge his action. They are full of admiration, strictly speaking, and simultaneously astonished – for they are overwhelmed by the value of love as they see it manifested by humans. To a certain extent, the gods, being impassive and immortal, are unable to understand what happens at the mortal level. They detect a certain gap between themselves and mortals, and view what happens in the manifestation of love as a miracle.

Emphasis is thus placed in Phaedrus' speech, where *epapothaneín* is contrasted with *hyperapothaneín*, on the fact that Achilles, *erómenos*, turns into *erastés*. The text says so and affirms it – it is as *erastés* that Alcestis sacrifices herself for her husband, and this is a less radical, total, and brilliant manifestation of love than the switching of roles that takes place in Achilles when he changes from *erómenos* into *erastés*.

Thus it is not a question, in this *erastés* over *erómenos*, of a relation whose amusing image would be that of the lover over the beloved, "the father over the mother," as Jacques Prévert says somewhere. This is no doubt what led Mario Meunier to make the bizarre error I mentioned to you of claiming that Achilles kills himself on Patroclus' tomb. One cannot say that Achilles, as *erómenos*, replaces Patroclus, since Patroclus is already out of range, already out of reach. The event that is, strictly speaking, miraculous in itself is that Achilles the beloved becomes the lover.

This is how the phenomenon of love is brought into the *Symposium*'s dialectic.

2

We cannot take up Pausanias' speech in all its details, line by line, because of time constraints. We must punctuate [*scander*] it.

You have all read the *Symposium* in enough depth for me to say that this speech begins with the distinction between two orders of
72 love. Love, says Pausanias, is not one. We must determine which kind of love we should praise. *Enkómion* and *épainos*, which for some reason I called *epaínesis* last time, are slightly different in nuance. The praising, *épainos*, of love must thus begin with the fact that love is not one. The distinction is based on its origin. "Love and Aphrodite are inseparable" [180d], he says, but there are two Aphrodites.

One Aphrodite has nothing to do with women – she had no mother, for she was born from the projection onto Earth of the rain engendered by the primal castration of Uranus by Cronus. Urania – that is, Heavenly Aphrodite – was born therefrom, and thus owes nothing to sexual difference.

The other Aphrodite was born somewhat later, from the union of Zeus and Dione. Let me remind you that the whole history of the advent of he who governs the present world, Zeus, is linked – see Hesiod – to his relations with the Titans who are his enemies, and Dione is a Titaness. I will not stress the point any further. The Aphrodite born of man and woman is called Pandemos [or Common Aphrodite]. The deprecatory, scornful tone is explicit in Pausanias' speech – she is the common Venus, altogether plebian, the Venus of those who confuse one form of love with the other, who seek it at base levels, who do not make love into the kind of elevated subjugation that Uranian Aphrodite provides.

Such is the theme around which Pausanias' speech develops. Unlike Phaedrus' speech – which is a myth lover's [*mythomane*]

speech, in the strict sense of the word, a speech about a myth – Pausanias' speech is a sociologist's discourse, or rather, for that would be exaggerating, the discourse of an observer of societies. Everything in it apparently hinges on the diversity of positions in the Greek world with respect to higher love, the kind of love that develops between those who are both the strongest and the most vigorous, and who are also the most intelligent, ἀγαθοὶ (*agathoí*) [181e], who know how to think – in other words, between people situated at the same level owing to their capacities: men.

Customs, Pausanias tells us, differ greatly between Ionia and Persia, on the one hand, where this kind of love – he adduces evidence of this – would be disapproved of, and Elis and Sparta, on the other, where this love is more than simply approved of, since it appears to be very unseemly for the beloved to refuse to grant his favors to his lover: he must χαρίζεσθαι (*charízesthai*) [gratify, 182b]. The Athenians seem to Pausanias to have a superior apprehension of the rite, so to speak, of the social shaping of love relationships.

If Pausanias approves of the fact that the Athenians erect obsta- 73
cles, forms, and prohibitions – at least this is how, in a more or less idealized form, he presents it to us – it is because these practices correspond to a certain goal. This love quite deliberately manifests itself, is borne out, and is established over a certain span of time, and what's more, over a span which is comparable, he says formally, to that of marriage. There is a love contest, ἀγωνοθετῶν (*agonothetón*) [184a] – love presides over struggle and rivalry among candidates, by putting to the test those who compete for the position of lover. May the best man win.

This ambiguity is oddly maintained for a full page. Where do we situate the virtue or function of he who chooses the winner? For while Pausanias would like he who is loved to be at least a bit more than a child, and already capable of some discernment, he is in any case the one of the two who knows the least, the one who is least capable of judging the virtue of what one could call the beneficial relationship between the two. This is left to a kind of test [184a] between the two. Virtue is also found in the lover – namely, in the way in which his choice is made, according to what he seeks in the beloved. What he seeks in the beloved is something to be given to the beloved. Both are going to meet up at a point that Pausanias refers to somewhere as the place where "these two principles [of conduct] coincide absolutely" [184e], at which the conjunction or combining takes place. What is it really?

It has to do with an exchange. The lover, as Léon Robin translates it in the text of the Budé edition, shows that he is able to contribute something whose object is intelligence, φρόνησις (*phrónesis*), and the

whole of the field of merit or excellence, ἀρετὴ (*areté*). The beloved needs to gain in education, and generally in knowledge, παιδεία (*paideía*) and σοφία (*sophía*). They will meet up here and, according to what Pausanias says, constitute a partnership at the highest level [184e]. It is at the level of κτάομαι (*ktáomai*) – an acquisition, profit, acquiring, or possession – that this couple comes together, and this couple will forever articulate the so-called higher form of love: the love which, even once the partners have changed, will be called "Platonic love" for centuries to come.

Reading this speech, it seems to me very difficult not to realize under what heading such a psychology falls. The whole speech is elaborated in terms of a valuation [*cotation*] of values, a search for listed values [*valeurs cotées*]. The point is clearly to invest one's
74 psychic funds properly. If Pausanias demands somewhere that severe rules – I'm referring back to the earlier part of his speech – be imposed on the blossoming of love and the courting of the beloved, these rules are justified by the fact that too many favors, πολλὴ σπουδὴ (*pollé spoudé*) – here the investment I just mentioned is clearly at stake – should not be expended or wasted on young things who aren't worth it [181d–e].

This is, moreover, why we are requested to wait for them to be further along in their development so that we know what we are dealing with. Later on, Pausanias says that those who muddle the order of candidacy [*postulance*] and merit are savages and barbarians. In this respect, access to the beloved must be limited, he says, by the same kinds of prohibitions and laws by which we strive to impede access to freeborn women, it being through such women that two families of masters are united. These women represent in themselves whatever you like in terms of a name, value, firm, or dowry, as we call it today. This is why they are protected by orders. It is a comparable protection which must prohibit those who are not worthy of it from gaining access to the desired object.

The further you go in this speech, the more you see what I mentioned at the very end of the last class – namely, the psychology of the rich.

Rich people existed before the rise of the bourgeoisie. Even in agricultural or still more primitive economies, the rich exist. The rich have existed and manifested themselves since the beginning of time, if nothing else in their periodic spending on lavish festivities. The first duty of the rich in primitive societies is to spend money on luxuries.

It is quite strange that, as societies evolve, this duty seems to shift to a secondary or at least clandestine level. But the psychology of rich people is entirely based on the fact that what is at stake in their

relations with others is value. It is a question of what can be valued according to the available modes of comparison and scale, of what can be compared in open competition, which is, strictly speaking, that of the possession of goods.

What is at issue is possession of the beloved, because he is a good fund of capital – the very word is there, χρηστὸς (*chrestós*) [183e] – and a lifetime will not be enough to turn it to good account. As we know from Aristophanes' comedies, several years after this sympo- 75
sium Pausanias takes things a bit further with Agathon, who is the beloved here as everyone is well aware, even though he's already had hair on his chin – which is of great importance in this context – for many moons.

Agathon is 30 years old [at the time of the symposium], and has just won first prize in the competition for the best tragedy. Pausanias runs away with him years later to what Aristophanes calls the Isles of the Blest, namely, a place far away, not just in the countryside, but in a distant land. It is not Tahiti, but Macedonia, where he remains for as long as his safety is assured. Pausanias' ideal in matters of love is sheltered capitalization, the stocking up of what rightfully belongs to him because he has been able to discern it and put it to good use.

We can, I think, discern the successor of this type of character, as we glimpse him in Plato's dialogue, in another type that I will designate for you rapidly because he's located at the other end of this chain.

He's someone I met, not in analysis – I wouldn't talk to you about him if he were – but I got to know him well enough for him to open up his heart, or what passed for one in his case, to me. He was quite famous and was reputed to have a lively feeling of the limits imposed, in love precisely, by a rich person's position. He was an excessively rich man, and had – and this is no metaphor – safes full of diamonds, because you never know what might happen. It was right after World War II, and the whole planet could have gone up in smoke.

He was a rich Calvinist. I apologize to any of you who are of this faith. I don't believe that it is the privilege of Calvinism to create rich people, but it is not unimportant to mention this detail, for one can nevertheless observe that Calvinist theology has had the effect of bringing to light as one of the elements of moral guidance that it is on Earth that God rewards the people he loves with plentiful goods. Elsewhere as well perhaps, but it starts here on Earth. The idea that observance of the divine commandments brings success here on Earth did not fail to bear fruit in all sorts of enterprises. Be that as it may, the Calvinist in question treated

the order of merits he acquired here on Earth for the afterlife exactly as he would have treated entries in an account book: "Such
76 and such an object bought on such and such a day." All of his actions were directed toward acquiring a well-stocked safe for the hereafter.

Digressing in this way, I don't want to seem to be telling a facile apologue, but it is impossible not to complete the picture with a sketch of his matrimonial fate. One day he knocked someone over on the street with the bumper of his humungous car, despite the fact that he always drove very carefully. The person who had been run over shook it off. She was pretty and a concierge's daughter, which is not altogether incompatible with being pretty. She reacted coldly to his apologies, even more coldly to his proposal to indemnify her, and still more coldly to his proposals to go have dinner together. In short, as his access to this miraculously encountered object became more and more difficult, his opinion of her grew higher and higher. "Here is a sure value," he said to himself. All of which led him to marriage.

We find here the same theme as that laid out in Pausanias' speech. For Pausanias tells us to what extent love is a value. Consider for a minute, he tells us, that we forgive everything done in the name of love. If, in order to obtain a position, a public function, or some social advantage, a man resorted to the least of the extravagances that we allow when it comes to relations between a lover and the person he loves, he would be dishonored: he would be guilty of what one might call moral baseness, ἀνελευθερία (*aneleutheria*), for that is what flattery, κολακεία (*kolakeia*), entails. Flattery is not a worthy means for a master to use to obtain what he desires.

Thus the more something goes off the red-alert value charts [*cote d'alerte*], the better we can gauge what love is. It is the same basic register as the one that led my good Calvinist, accumulator of goods and merits, to in effect have an amiable wife for a while, provide her of course with jewels – which every evening were taken off her body and placed in a safe – and then end up in a situation whereby one day she ran off with an engineer who made 50,000 francs a month.

I don't want to seem to be overdoing it on this score. Pausanias' speech is curiously presented to us as an example of the fact that there is, in love in Antiquity, some kind of glorification of the moral quest. Even before we get to the end of his speech we notice that it
77 clearly shows the error of any ethics that latches only onto what one might call outward signs of value.

Indeed, Pausanias cannot do otherwise than end his speech by saying that, if everyone accepted the primacy of these fine rules

by which value is granted only on the basis of merit, what would happen? Let us read a translation of 185a–b:

> Only in this case, we should notice, is it never shameful to be deceived; in every other case it is shameful, both for the deceiver and the person he deceives. Suppose, for example, that someone thinks his lover is rich and accepts him for his money; his action won't be any less shameful if it turns out that he was deceived and his lover was a poor man after all. For the young man has already shown himself to be the sort of person who will do anything for money – and this is far from honorable. By the same token, suppose that someone takes a lover in the mistaken belief that this lover is a good man and likely to make him better himself, while in reality the man is horrible [κακὸς (*kakós*), fundamentally vile], totally lacking in virtue; even so, it is noble for him to have been deceived.

Strangely enough, people generally try to see in this the first manifestation in history of what Kant called righteous intention. It seems to me that it is truly to lapse into a singular error not to see instead the following.

We know from experience that the entire ethics of educational or pedagogical love, in matters of homosexual and even heterosexual love, always involves some sort of illusion. It is this illusion which, in the end, rears its ugly head. You may, at some point, have had someone – and, as we are talking about Greek love, [we'll take a homosexual example] – brought to you [for treatment] by his protector, assuredly with the best of intentions on the latter's part. I doubt you have seen any patently Good effect stem from this more or less enthusiastic protection, concerning the development of he who has been designated to you as the beloved – that is, as the object of a love that presents itself as a love of the Good, love for the acquisition of the best goods. This is what allows me to tell you that this is far from being Plato's opinion.

Indeed, Pausanias' speech concludes rather abruptly, I must say, with lines [185e] that say more or less the following: "Uranian love, that's the good stuff, and those who don't have it, well, let them 78
resort to the other, Pandemos, common Venus, the great scoundrel, who doesn't have it either. They can go fuck off if they want it. It's on that note," he says, "that I will conclude my speech on love. As for the plebs and their common love, I have nothing more to say." If Plato agreed with that, do you think that we would see what occurs immediately afterward?

3

Immediately afterward, Apollodorus speaks in his own name, saying "Παυσανίου δὲ παυσαμένου" (*Pausaníou de pausaménou*), "Pausanias having paused" [185c].

The expression is difficult to translate, and there is a short footnote which says that "no French expression corresponds to" it, the "numerical symmetry of the syllables" being important; "there is probably an allusion; see the introduction to the volume." Léon Robin wasn't the first to have raised an eyebrow at this expression. Already in Henri Estienne's edition we find a marginal note. Everyone has raised an eyebrow at this "*Pausaníou de pausaménou*" because they sensed something intentional here. I will show you that people have not realized exactly what it was.

Immediately after having made this clever remark, Apollodorus emphasizes that it is a pun – "You see, I have learned from the masters to ἴσα λέγειν (*ísa légein*), to speak by isology." One can translate this as a play on words, but isology is truly a technique. I will spare you an account of all the efforts that have been made to find out who the master was. Was it Prodicus [of Ceos]? Or was it Isocrates instead? There is *iso* in Isocrates, and it would be particularly *iso* to isologize Isocrates. This leads to problems – you cannot begin to imagine what these problems have generated by way of research! Were Isocrates and Plato buddies?

People reproach me for not always citing my sources – well, starting today, I have decided to do so. Here my source is Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, a sensational character. If you can read German and you come across his books, buy them. I would love to have his book on Simonides [of Ceos]. He was an erudite German from the beginning of the century, an exceptional person whose works on Plato are truly enlightening. He is not the person I'm refer-
79 ring to here concerning "*Pausaníou de pausaménou*," for he didn't pay any particular attention to this bit of banter.

I don't think there is any reference here [at 185c], however distant, to the way in which Isocrates handles isology when it comes to demonstrating, for example, the merits of a political system. The whole discussion that you find on this point in the preface to the *Symposium* by Léon Robin is surely interesting, but it has no bearing on the problem. Here's why.

My mind was no doubt already made up concerning the import of Pausanias' speech, and last time I even explained my impression completely in telling you that it is the epitome of the Christian curse that what is most worthwhile is forever refused to the rich. But I think I had a confirmation of that, which you will be the judge of,

last Sunday when I was – I am continuing to cite my sources – with Kojève. I would be distressed if I had neglected to tell you of his importance in my own training, and I think certain people here know that I am indebted to him for having introduced me to Hegel's works.

I was thus with Kojève and, of course, since I'm always thinking of you, I spoke with him about Plato. Kojève is doing something that has nothing to do with philosophy now, for he's an eminent man. But he nevertheless writes from time to time a couple of hundred pages on Plato, producing manuscripts that circulate in various places. He shared with me on this occasion a number of things he very recently discovered in Plato, but he could tell me nothing about the *Symposium* because he had not reread it, and because it does not fall within the ambit of his current work.

Thus my efforts were not rewarded, although I was very encouraged by many things he told me about other aspects of Plato's work, namely, about the following, which is quite obvious – that Plato hides from us what he thinks just as much as he reveals it to us. It is thus only as a function of each individual's abilities – in other words, up to a certain limit which assuredly cannot be gone beyond – that we can glimpse it. You shouldn't hold it against me, therefore, if I don't give you the last word on Plato, because Plato has clearly decided not to give it to us.

At this point, when everything I am telling you about Plato has perhaps led you to open up the *Phaedo*, for example, it is important that you realize that the goal of the *Phaedo* is perhaps not entirely to 80
demonstrate, appearances notwithstanding, the immortality of the soul. I would even say that its goal is obviously the contrary. But let us set that aside.

As I was saying goodbye to Kojève, I remarked to him, "We didn't get around to speaking about the *Symposium* very much." And as Kojève is a very, very proper guy, in other words, a snob, he replied, "In any case, you will never be able to interpret the *Symposium* if you do not know why Aristophanes had the hiccoughs."

I had already told you that this was very important. It is obviously very important. Why would he have the hiccoughs if there were no reason for it?

Naturally, I had no idea why he had the hiccoughs. But encouraged by this little prod, I said to myself, "Let's take another look at it." I did so quite reluctantly, as a matter of fact, expecting merely to once again come across boring speculations on the value, perhaps even the psychosomatic value, of hiccoughing and sneezing in Antiquity. I very distractedly opened up my copy again, and looked at the text where "*Pausaníou de pausaménou*" appears, for it is immediately

thereafter that Aristophanes is to be given the floor, and I noticed that for 16 lines [185d–e] the only topic of conversation is how to stop his hiccoughs. When will his hiccoughs stop? Will they stop, or won't they? If they don't, you take this kind of thing, and in the end they will. Such that with the παῦσαί (*paúsai*), παύσωμαι (*paúsomai*), παύσῃ (*paúsei*), παύεσθαι (*paúesthai*), παύσεται (*paúsetai*), and the *Pausaníou de pausaménou* at the beginning, we find seven repetitions of *paus* in these lines, making for an average interval of two and a seventh lines between the occurrences of this constantly repeated word. If you add to this the occurrences of "it will" or "it will not help," and the "I will do what you told me to do," where the term ποιήσω (*poiéso*) [to make] is repeated with almost equal insistence, the homophonies and isologies come up every line and a half. Hence it is extremely difficult not to see that, if Aristophanes has the hiccoughs, it's because throughout Pausanias' discourse he's been splitting his sides laughing – and Plato has been doing the same.

In other words, the fact that Plato gives us something like "it's tempting to tempt temptation," and then repeats for 16 lines the word "tempting" and the verb "to tempt," should make our ears prick up. There is no other example in any of Plato's texts
81 of a passage so directly similar to certain passages in the *Vermot Almanac*. Which brings up one of the authors I cut my teeth on – I read for the first time a Platonic dialogue by Courteline in the *Vermot Almanac* that is called "Theodore Looks for Matches," which is truly a kingly portion.

I think my claim is sufficiently clear that, for Plato himself, insofar as he speaks here through Apollodorus, Pausanias' speech is quite ridiculous.

As we don't have much time left, I will not analyze for you the speech that follows, that of Eryximachus, who speaks instead of Aristophanes. We will discuss the meaning of the doctor's speech on the nature of love next time.

We will also see something that I think is much more important – Aristophanes' role. His speech will take us a step further, making it the first step that really enlightens us, even if it didn't enlighten Antiquity's readers, to whom Aristophanes' speech always remained enigmatic, like an enormous mask. It involves a *dioecisme*, διασχισθησόμεθα (*diaschisthisómetha*) [193a], as he puts it, a being separated in two, a *Spaltung* or splitting,* which, while not identical to what I have developed for you with the Graph of Desire, is certainly not totally unrelated.

After Aristophanes' speech, we will look at Agathon's speech. I can already tell you, so that you know where we are going between

now and next time – and here I need no scholarly preparation to showcase this feature – that there is but one thing that Socrates articulates when he speaks in his own name and that is that the speech given by Agathon the tragic poet isn't worth a wooden nickel. People say that it is in order to spare Agathon's feelings that Socrates has himself replaced, so to speak, by Diotima and gives us his theory of love from her lips. I absolutely cannot see how one can spare the feelings of someone who has just been executed. And this is precisely what Socrates does to Agathon.

I beg of you, starting now, to broach the crux of the matter, if only to raise objections if there's any reason to do so. After all the fine things that Agathon, in his turn, says of love – not all the good things [*biens*] about love, all the profit that can be drawn from love, but all its virtues and beauties, for nothing is too good to be chalked up to love's credit – what does Socrates articulate? In one fell swoop, 82
Socrates undercuts all of that, bringing things back to their root, by asking, "Love? Love of what?"

From love we thus shift to desire. And the characteristic of desire, insofar as Ἔρως ἐρᾷ (*Éros . . . erá*) [200a], that is, Eros desires, is that what is at stake – in other words, what desire is supposed to bring with it, beauty itself – is lacking in it, ἐνδεής (*endeés*) [and ἐνδεὴς, 200e, 201b], ἔνδεια (*éndeia*). In these two terms, desire is lacking; desire is in itself identical to lack. Therein lies the entire personal contribution Socrates makes in his own name in his speech in the *Symposium*.

Starting from this, something is going to begin, something that is far from attaining the status of anything you can hold in the palm of your hand. And how would that even be conceivable? Up until the end, on the contrary, we get mired ever deeper in the shadows, and we will find here the ever darker night of Antiquity. Everything there is to be said about the conception of love in the *Symposium* begins here.

December 7, 1960

83

V

MEDICAL HARMONY

ERYXIMACHUS

On the supposed science in love.
From the good to desire.
Medicine and science.
The path of comedy.

It is important to see the nature of the undertaking into which I have been drawn, in order for you to be able to put up with the detours, insofar as they may be fastidious. For, after all, you don't come here to listen to me comment on a Greek text, in the treatment of which I do not claim to be exhaustive.

I do the majority of the work for you, in other words, in your stead, in your absence, and the best service I can do you is to incite you to look at the text. If you have looked at the text at my suggestion, it will perhaps happen that you read to some extent with my glasses. Which is probably better than not reading at all.

We must not lose sight of what we are destined to arrive at, the goal that dominates this whole undertaking, and you must grasp in what respect you can accompany it, providing more or less commentary on it. We are trying to answer the question from which we began – the simple question of transference.

1

In saying that this question is simple, I mean that it involves terms that have already been elaborated.

Here is a man, a psychoanalyst, from whom people seek knowledge [*science*] of what is most intimate about them – this is truly
84 the state of mind with which people commonly approach him – and thus of what should immediately be assumed to be most foreign to him. And yet, at the same time, what we encounter

at the beginning of an analysis is that he is assumed to have this knowledge [*science*].

I am defining the situation here in subjective terms, in other words, from the perspective of the person who requests to do an analysis. For the time being we needn't bring in everything this situation objectively implies and that sustains it – namely, the specificity of what is proposed in this science, in other words, the unconscious as such. The subject has no notion of that, whatever his wishes to the contrary may be.

Defined simply in this subjective way, how does this situation generate something – as a first approximation – akin to love? One can, roughly speaking, define transference as something like love.

Let me try to put this better and go a bit further. Transference is something that calls love into question, calling it into question deeply enough, from the vantage point of analytic reflection, to have introduced what is known as "ambivalence" as an essential dimension of it. This is a new notion compared to the philosophical tradition whose very origins we are, not fruitlessly, investigating here. The close connection between love and hate is absent at the beginning of this tradition, if we situate this beginning – one must situate it somewhere – as Socratic.

But today we are going to see that there is something prior to it that serves as its point of departure.

I would not be sticking my neck out so very far by raising this question – which articulates the possibility of the emergence of transference – if, in some way, the tunnel hadn't already been started at the other end. We are going toward something that we know, having already seriously studied the topology of what the subject must find in analysis in the place of what he is seeking. If he sets off in search of what he has, but does not know he has, what he discovers is what he is lacking in. It is precisely because I have articulated this before that I dare raise the question that I first formulated. What he finds in analysis is articulated in the form of what he is lacking – namely, his desire.

Desire is not a good [*un bien*] in any sense of the term. It certainly 85
is not a good in the sense of a κτῆσις (*ktésis*) [180b provides κτῆσιν (*ktésin*)], something one could have in some way. An inversion must be detected in the time – "time" defined in both chronological and topological senses – it takes for transference love to blossom, which turns the search for a possession [*un bien*] into the realization of desire.

You understand, of course, that when I say "realization of desire," I assume that it is clearly not possession of an object. Indeed, it involves the emergence of desire as such in reality. This is

what led me to present the *Symposium* to you this year. It was not an accidental encounter. But as I was seeking, in the midst of my memories, where to find the central axis of what I have been able to retain in what I have learned, guided by some compass deriving from experience, it seemed to me that the *Symposium*, regardless of how far it is from us, is the place where the meaning of this question is debated in the most vibrant way, particularly the moment which concludes it at which Alcibiades appears.

Alcibiades breaks in strangely, in all senses of the term, both at the level of the dialogue's composition and in the supposed scene. All of a sudden, the series of ordered speeches, announced in the *Symposium*'s agenda, is manifestly broken by the eruption of the true party – the upheaval this different order introduces. But Alcibiades' words themselves also constitute an avowal of his own discordance. What he says truly reflects his suffering, his having been ripped apart by Socrates' attitude, which still leaves him wounded, almost as much as at the time [they had been seeing each other], bothered by some kind of strange wound.

Why does Alcibiades make this public confession? And why does Socrates make the interpretation that Alcibiades' confession has an immediate aim – namely, to separate Socrates from Agathon – an interpretation that immediately leads to a return to order? All of you who have looked at this text since I began speaking about it have been struck by what this strange scene has in common with all sorts of instantaneous situations and positions that occasionally arise in the transference. This remains impressionistic, and it will require a much closer and more finely honed analysis to see what is delivered up to us by a situation that is manifestly not to be attrib-
86 uted to a sort of "presentiment of *sychanalisse*," as Aragon calls it in his *Traité du Style*. No, it is rather an encounter – the appearance of several outlines that are revealing to us.

I have been taking my time in showing this to you not simply in order to get a running start before the leap which must be, as Freud says, that of a lion – in other words, a single bound. I have been doing so because, in order to understand the full meaning of the scene between Alcibiades and Socrates, we must understand the general design of the work. It is indispensable to map out the terrain. If we do not know what Plato means by presenting this scene, it is impossible to situate its import.

We have now arrived at the speech given by Eryximachus, the medical doctor.

2

Let us hold our breath for a moment. The fact that he is a physician should pique our interest.

Should Eryximachus' speech lead us to do research on the history of medicine? I could not even sketch out such a task for all sorts of reasons. First of all because it's not our concern here, and this detour would be rather excessive. Second, because I don't truly believe it would be possible.

I don't think that Eryximachus is specified, in other words, that in bringing in this character Plato has a particular doctor in mind. But the fundamental features of his position remain to be examined. They are not necessarily historically accurate features, except insofar as they provide a very general dividing line [between positions or schools], but they will perhaps give us pause to reflect for a moment, in passing, on what medicine is.

Others have already noted that Socrates makes frequent references to medicine. When he wishes to bring his interlocutor to the level of dialogue where he intends to direct him toward the perception of a rigorous approach, he often refers to some technician's art. If you want to know the truth about such and such a subject, he often asks, who would you ask? And among the technicians, doctors are far from being excluded. They are even treated with special reverence. They are certainly not situated, in Socrates' eyes, at a lower level than the others. It is nevertheless clear that the rule of the medical approach cannot be reduced to any sort of intellectual hygiene.

The doctor in question here, Eryximachus, speaks as a doctor, 87
and he immediately declares medicine to be the greatest of all the arts. Medicine is the great Art.

I will only briefly mention that we find confirmation here of what I said to you last time about Pausanias' discourse. In beginning, Eryximachus expressly formulates the following: "Since Pausanias, after a fine beginning" – which is not a very good translation for ὁρμήσας (*hormésas*) [185e] – "having given a fine thrust at the beginning of his speech, did not end as brilliantly, as appropriately," etc. It is thus clear to everyone that Pausanias' speech ended badly – this is taken to be obvious. It must be said that our ears are not exactly attuned to that, and that we don't have the impression that Pausanias' speech concluded as badly as all that. We are, after all, used to hearing such idiotic claims about love. It is all the more strange to see to what extent Eryximachus' words meet with everyone's approval, as if everyone found Pausanias' speech woolly-headed, and as if all the crude jokes about *pausaménou* were transparent to Antiquity's readers.

I think it is rather essential that we articulate what we can gather about these matters of tone, to which the mind's ear always pays attention, even if it doesn't openly make a criterion of it. Socrates refers to tone all the time, in Plato's texts. How often, before beginning his own speech, or making an aside in someone else's speech, does he invoke the gods in a formal way, so that the tone will be sustained, maintained, and harmonized. As you will see, this is very close to the heart of my theme today.

Before taking up Eryximachus' speech, I would like to make a few comments whose retrospective nature, although it leads us to some first truths, still is not easily spelled out. I will show you in passing that medicine has always considered itself scientific. It is in your stead, as I was saying earlier, that over the past few days I have tried to make sense of this brief chapter in the history of medicine. In order to do so, I obviously had to leave behind the *Symposium* and look at various other parts of Plato's opus.

88 As neglected as this aspect of your medical training may have been, you have heard of a series of schools in Antiquity. The most famous, the school that no one is unaware of, is that of Hippocrates. Prior to that there had been the Cnidus school in Rhodes, and even before that, a school headed by Alcmaeon centered in Croton, whose speculations are impossible to dissociate from those of a scientific school that flourished at the same time and in the same place – namely, that of the Pythagoreans. But to speculate on the essential role and function of Pythagoreanism in understanding Plato's thought would, as you know, involve a detour in which we would literally get lost. Instead I will try to bring out the themes that are strictly related to our topic – namely, the meaning of the *Symposium* as a work, insofar as it is problematic.

We don't know very much about the character Eryximachus himself, but we know certain things about a number of other characters who appear in Plato's dialogues, and who are directly related to Alcmaeon's medical school, inasmuch as the latter is itself related to the Pythagoreans. For example, Simmias and Cebes, who speak with Socrates in the *Phaedo*, are disciples of Philolaos, one of the masters of the first Pythagorean school. If you look back at the *Phaedo*, you will see that their answers to Socrates' first propositions on what must ensure the immortality of the soul include the exact same terms as Eryximachus' speech – first and foremost, the notion of ἁρμονία (*harmonía*), harmony or concord [*accord*].

Medicine, as you can see here, has always considered itself scientific. It is in this respect, moreover, that it has always showed its weaknesses. Through a sort of internal positional necessity, it has

always referred to the science of its era, whether good or bad. Good or bad, how can you know that from the vantage point of medicine?

My sense is that our science – our physics – is good science, but that for many centuries we had very poor physics. This is, in fact, quite clear. But what is not clear is what medicine should do with science. In other words, how, through what opening, from what end, should medicine approach science? For something has not been elucidated in medicine, which can hardly be considered negligible, 89
since it concerns the very idea of health.

What is health? You would be wrong to believe that even in modern medicine – which believes itself to be scientific compared to all other forms of medicine – it is completely clear. From time to time, the ideas of normality and pathology are proposed to some student as a dissertation topic, in general by people with training in philosophy. There is, on that subject, an excellent book by Canguilhem, his *Essai sur quelques problèmes concernant le normal et le pathologique* (*The Normal and the Pathological*), but its influence is obviously quite limited in strictly medical circles. Without attempting to speculate at the level of Socratic certitude about the very idea of health, we can say that what show – all by themselves, especially for we psychiatrists and psychoanalysts – how problematic the idea of health is, are the very means we use to achieve a state of health. To put it in more general terms, these means show that, whatever the nature of health and the propitious form that supposedly corresponds to health may be, we are led to postulate, at the crux of this propitious form, paradoxical states, to say the least – states whose manipulation in our therapies is responsible for the return to an equilibrium which, on the whole, remains rather unexamined.

This is what we find at the level of the postulates of the medical position that are least susceptible of demonstration. It is this very position that is maintained here in Eryximachus' speech by the name *harmonia*. We don't know what kind of harmony is involved, but the notion is truly fundamental to any medical position as such. All we have to seek is concord. And we haven't gotten much further than Eryximachus concerning the essence or substance of this idea of concord.

It is a notion that is borrowed from an intuitive domain and, in this respect, is simply closer to its sources. But it is also historically more defined, and more palpable, inasmuch as it is explicitly related to the field of music, which is taken as a model here. Concord is the Pythagorean form par excellence. And everything that is in any way whatsoever related to the concord of tones – even if it is of a more subtle nature, even if it is the tone of speech I mentioned

earlier – brings us back to the same assessment. It was not idly that
90 I mentioned the ear in passing – the evaluating of consonances is essential to the notion of harmony.

As soon as you get into the text of this speech – I will spare you the boring chore of reading it line by line, which is never very easy with such a large audience – you will see how essential the notion of concord is to understanding the way the medical position is presented here.

3

Everything articulated here is a function of a medium that we can neither exhaust, nor in any way reconstruct – namely, the themes of prior discussions that we can assume to be present in the minds of the participants.

Let us not forget that we find ourselves at the historic climax of a particularly active era. The sixth and fifth centuries of Hellenism are overflowing with intellectual creativity. You can consult on this subject fine works, for example, for those of you who read English, a long book the likes of which only English publishers can afford the luxury of publishing, a book which is part and parcel of the philosophical legacy, Bertrand Russell having written it for us in his old age.

This volume makes a fine New Year's present – its wide margins are illustrated with admirable color illustrations that are extremely simple and aim at firing a child's imagination – and it contains everything one must know from the fertile period to which I am referring today, that of the pre-Socratics and Socrates, up until our times, in other words up until English positivism. No one truly important is left out. If your only concern is to be unbeatable at fashionable dinners, you will know everything once you've read this tome, except of course the only important things – namely, those that are not known. But I nevertheless recommend that you read the book. It is called *Wisdom of the West*. It will fill in for you, as it would for anyone, a considerable number of almost necessary lacunae in your store of general knowledge.

Let us try to organize what we see when we set out to understand what Eryximachus means.

91 The people of his time find themselves faced with exactly the same problem as us. And yet they go more directly to the essential antinomy. Is it because they don't have such an abundance of minute facts with which to fill out their discourse? That hypothesis is based on deception and illusion. This antinomy is clearly the one

that I began to bring out for you earlier – in any case, we cannot allow ourselves to take any sort of concord at face value. Experience teaches us that concord hides something in its bosom, and the whole question is to know what can be required of the concord's underpinnings – from the point of view of what cannot be decided by experience, it always involving, as it does, something a priori, apart from which it cannot be posited.

Must we require similarity at the heart of concord or can we remain satisfied with dissimilarity? Does every concord assume some principle of concord? Can that which is in tune [*l'accordé*] come out of what is out of tune? Come out of conflict? Don't imagine for a minute that it was Freud who first raised this question. The proof is that it is the first issue Eryximachus' speech raises. The notion of discord and concord – for us, in other words, the notion of the function of anomaly compared to normality – has pride of place in his speech, starting at about the ninth line, 186b:

> Dissimilar subjects desire and love objects that are themselves dissimilar. Therefore, the love manifested in health is fundamentally distinct from the love manifested in disease. And now recall that, as Pausanias claimed, it is as honorable to yield to a good man as it is shameful to consort with the debauched . . .

Here we are led to the question of physical health, and of what this virtue [health] and this disorder [*dérèglement*] signify.

We immediately find a formulation that I can but point out on the page. Not that it gives us much, but it should nevertheless be of interest to analysts in passing. For there is some rustling here that should hold our attention. Eryximachus tells us, and this is a word-for-word translation, that "medicine is the science of the erotics of bodies," ἐπιστήμη τῶν τοῦ σώματος ἐρωτικῶν (*epistéme ton tou sómatos erotikón*) [186c]. No better definition, can, it seems to me, be given of psychoanalysis.

He adds, πρὸς πλησμονὴν καὶ κένωσιν (*pros plesmonén kai kénosin*), "in regard to repletion and depletion," to quote the brutal translation. What I wish to underscore here are the two terms "full" and "empty" – whose role we shall see in topology and in intellectual 92
positions – and what is at stake at this meeting point of physics and medical practice. This is not the only text in which "full" and "empty" are mentioned. It is one of the fundamental intuitions that should be highlighted in the course of any study of Socratic discourse.

He who would engage in such an enterprise would not have to go far to find an additional reference. See the beginning of the

Symposium. Socrates is dawdling in the foyer of the neighboring house, where we can imagine him in the position of a gymnosophist, standing on one foot like a stork, totally immobile until he has found the solution to some problem. He shows up at Agathon's later than everyone expected him to. "So, you found your thing! Come sit by me," Agathon says to him. And Socrates replies something like, "Maybe, and then again maybe not, but what you are hoping for is that what I now feel full of will pass over into your emptiness, like what happens between two vases when a bit of wool is strung between them" [175c–d]. This amusing physics experiment must have been, for some unknown reason, conducted quite often, as this allusion was probably telling for everyone present. The movement from the inside of one vase to another, the transformation of the full into the empty, the communication of contents, is one of the main images that regulates what one could call the "fundamental covetousness" of all these philosophical exchanges. It should be kept in mind in trying to understand the meaning of the speech proffered here.

A little further on one finds a reference to music as a principle of concord, which is the basis of what is offered up to us as the essence of the function of love between beings. This brings us, on the next page, in section 187, to the choice which is vivid in Eryximachus' speech and which I told you was primordial concerning the subject of what can be conceived of as at the crux of concord – namely, the similar and the dissimilar, order and conflict.

When it comes to defining harmony, Eryximachus notes the paradox found in the work of an author who preceded them by about a century, Heraclitus of Ephesus [187a]. Indeed, Heraclitus explicitly referred to the opposition of contraries as being the principle of composition for every unit [or One; *unité*]. The One is
93 constituted, Eryximachus tells us, by "being at variance with itself," "like the attunement of a bow or a lyre." This ὥσπερ ἁρμονίαν τόξου τε καὶ λύρας (*hósper harmonían toxou te kai lýras*) is extremely famous, if only for having been cited here in passing. But it is cited in the work of many other authors as well, and has been handed down to us in several scattered fragments that German scholars have collected concerning pre-Socratic thought. Among those that remain by Heraclitus, this one is truly central. In the book by Bertrand Russell that I recommended to you earlier, you will in fact find an illustration of a bow and its cord, showing the vibration that leads to the arrow's flight [p. 24].

What is striking is Eryximachus' evident bias, the reason for which we do not immediately see, against Heraclitus' formulation. He thinks it must be modified. It seems that he must have criteria

whose source we cannot easily fathom. We find ourselves here at a crossroads where we are in no position, above all regarding characters so far in the past, so phantomlike, to determine how much should be attributed to prejudice, a priori judgment, choices made in accordance with a certain consistency of themes in a theoretical system, or psychological tendencies. We must confine ourselves to noting that there is, in fact, something here that is echoed in many other places in Plato's discourse. Some aversion is expressed here to the idea of referring to any conjunction of contraries whatsoever, even if one situates it in reality [*réel*], as involved in the creation of a phenomenon which seems to me to have nothing to do with it – namely, that of concord. It seems that when it comes to concerning oneself with the idea of harmony – to speak in medical terms, of diets and doses – the idea of measure and proportion must be maintained at its very core. Heraclitus' vision of conflict as in itself creative can in no way be defended here to certain people's satisfaction – or perhaps to certain schools' satisfaction, a question we shall leave in abeyance.

I do not share Eryximachus' bias. All kinds of models in physics have given us the idea of the fecundity of contraries, contrasts, and oppositions, and the notion of an absolute non-contradiction of a phenomenon with its opposing principle. On the whole, physics supports far more the image of waves than that of forms, Gestalts, "whole forms" [*la bonne forme*], despite what modern psychology has made of them. We cannot fail to be surprised, it seems to me, at 94
finding maintained here, and elsewhere in Plato's work, the idea of some kind of impasse or aporia, some kind of preference one must have for the necessarily fundamental character of concord with concord or of harmony with harmony.

4

If you look at the *Phaedo*, a dialogue that constitutes an extremely important backdrop for our understanding of the *Symposium*, you will see that the whole discussion with Simmias and Cebes is based on the notion of harmony.

As I was telling you last time, Socrates' whole argument for the immortality of the soul is presented in the *Phaedo* in a way that clearly takes the form of a sophism, which is no other than that around which my remarks revolve – namely, that the very idea of the soul qua harmony excludes the possibility of its rupture. When his two interlocutors object that this soul, whose nature implies constancy, permanence, and duration, could easily vanish at the same

time that the corporeal elements – whose conjunction constitutes the soul's harmony – disperse, Socrates answers by saying nothing more than that the idea of harmony in which the soul participates is in itself impenetrable, and that it would slip away or take flight at the very approach of whatever could call its constancy into question.

The idea that anything whatsoever that exists could participate in the Platonic idea as incorporeal essence proves to be fictional in nature, an illusion. Things go so far in the *Phaedo* that it is impossible not to remark that there is no reason to believe Plato was any less aware of this illusion than we are. Our claim to be more intelligent than the person who wrote Plato's work is quite unbelievable, unimaginable, and truly astounding.

This is why, when Eryximachus sings his little song, without it immediately having any obvious consequences, we can ask ourselves what Plato meant by having this series of sallies take place in this particular order in the *Symposium*. At least we have realized that Pausanias' speech, which immediately precedes this one, is
95 ridiculous. And if we keep in mind the overall tone that characterizes the *Symposium*, we certainly have the right to wonder whether what is at stake isn't consonant with comedy as such. In discussing love, it is clear that Plato chose the path of comedy.

Everything will confirm this in what follows, and I have my reasons for beginning to assert it now, at the moment at which our famous comedian is going to take center stage. People have been trying to figure out for ages why Plato had him come to the *Symposium* in the first place. It is scandalous, because this famous comedian was one of the people responsible for Socrates' death.

The *Phaedo*, namely, the drama of Socrates' death, is presented to us with the lofty character lent it by the tragic tone with which we are familiar. It is not, however, quite so simple, since there are also comic elements in it, but tragedy dominates and it is staged for us. In the *Symposium*, on the contrary, there is not one single aspect of the dialogue that cannot be suspected of comedy, right down to the incredibly short speech Socrates makes in his own name.

So as to leave nothing out, I would like to respond to one of my auditors whose presence honors me most, and with whom I had a short discussion on the subject. Not without reason, motive, or accuracy, my interlocutor thought he had noticed that I was taking Phaedrus' speech at face value, unlike that of Pausanias. Well, in the sense of what I am asserting here, Phaedrus' speech, in referring to the gods' assessment regarding the topic of love, has no less ironic value than that of Pausanias. For, in fact, the gods cannot understand anything about love. The expression "divine stupidity" should, in my book, be more widespread. It is often suggested by the

behavior of the beings we address precisely when it comes to love. Asking the gods to take the stand and give testimony about what is at stake in love seems to me, in any case, not to be discordant with what follows in Plato's discourse.

Here we are on the verge of Aristophanes' speech. But we won't turn to it just yet. I would simply like to bid you to complete, with your own means, what remains to be seen in Eryximachus' speech.

It was an enigma to Léon Robin that Eryximachus relied on the opposition of Heavenly and Common love, given what he says about the medical – physical – handling of love. In fact, I think that astonishment is truly the only fitting attitude we can adopt in 96
response to Robin's astonishment, for the question is clarified in Eryximachus' own speech, confirming the context in which I have been trying to situate it for you.

While Eryximachus refers to astronomy in relation to the effects of love in section 188, it is inasmuch as the harmony with which one must try to converge [*confluer, s'accorder*] concerning the fine order of the health of men is the very same harmony that dictates the order of the seasons. When it is the kind of love in which people get carried away, in which there is hubris or excess, the kind that prevails during certain seasons, then disasters begin, and mayhem ensues, "destruction," as he expresses himself – damage, under which heading fall epidemics, but also frost, hail, blight, and a whole slew of other things [188b].

This brings us back to a context in which we can use the notions that I propose, as the most far-reaching categories to which we are forced to refer if we are to found a valid discourse about analysis – namely, the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real.

People are surprised that a Bororo identifies with a macaw. Doesn't it strike you that it isn't in the least a question of primitive thought, but rather of a primitive position of thought concerning what thought is about for everyone, for you and for me? Questioning not his place, but his identity, man must situate himself, not on the inside of the limited enclosure which is his body, but in the total, crude reality [*réel*] he deals with. We cannot escape the law whose consequence is that we will always have to situate ourselves at the precise point of this delineation of reality [*réel*], which constitutes the progress of science.

In Eryximachus' time, no one had the slightest idea what a living tissue as such was, and it is thus out of the question that the doctor could make anything else of humors than humidity, in which natural vegetation can proliferate in the world. The disorder that leads men to excess owing to intemperance and to getting carried away is the same disorder that leads to the disorders of the seasons enumerated here.

Chinese tradition presents us with the Emperor accomplishing with his hand the major rites upon which the balance of the whole
97 Middle Kingdom depends, tracing out the first furrows at the beginning of the year whose direction and straightness are designed to ensure the balance of nature. There is nothing in this position, I dare say, that isn't natural. Eryximachus endorses the notion of man as microcosm, that is, not that man is in himself a synopsis or image of nature, but that man and nature are one and the same – one wouldn't dream of composing man of anything but the order and harmony of cosmic components. Hasn't this position, despite what we think we have reduced biology to, left some traces in our intellectual presuppositions? I wanted to leave you with that question today.

Assuredly, to detect those traces is not as interesting as to notice where, at what more fundamental level, we analysts situate ourselves when, to understand ourselves, we use notions like the "death instinct." As Freud himself did not fail to recognize, it is an Empedoclean notion.

I will show you next time that the formidable gag constituted by Aristophanes' speech, manifestly presented as the entrance of a clown onto the scene of Athenian comedy, explicitly refers – I will provide you with proof thereof – to the cosmological conception of man. And on this basis I will show the surprising opening that results therefrom, an opening left gaping in the idea of love that Plato may have had.

I will go so far as to say that, in and of itself, the discussion of love leads to a radical ridiculing of the incorruptible, immaterial, superessential, purely ideal, participatory, eternal, and uncreated order, which is the order that all of Plato's work reveals to us – perhaps ironically.

December 14, 1960

VI

99

DERIDING THE SPHERE

ARISTOPHANES

From the universe to truth.
Socrates and his witness.
The clown [*pitre*].
Perfect motion.

My talk today will, I hope, pass through its winter solstice before the celestial conjunction.

Led by its orb, you may have felt we were getting further and further afield from the topic of transference. Rest assured, however, that today we will reach the nadir of this ellipse. From the moment we divined that there was something we could learn from the *Symposium*, and inasmuch as that turns out to be valid, it was necessary to take as far as we are going to today the analysis of important parts of the text that might seem to have no direct bearing on our topic.

But no matter, we are now involved in the endeavor, and once one has begun to follow a certain path in discourse, there is a sort of non-physical necessity that makes itself felt when we wish to take it all the way.

Our guide here is a discourse, Plato's discourse in the *Symposium*. Like a musical instrument, or rather a music box, it is full of all the significations to which it has given rise throughout the centuries, and this is why part of our effort here is to home in as closely as possible on its meaning. In order to understand and judge it, one cannot but mention the discursive context – in the sense of a concrete universal discourse – in which it is situated.

Let me try to make sure you are getting my point. It is not my goal, strictly speaking, to situate the *Symposium* historically. You certainly realize that such is not my method of commentary, and 100
that I always examine a discourse with an eye to what it leads us to understand. I do so even with discourses developed at a very

distant era in which things we must understand were not clearly visible. But in the case of the *Symposium*, it is impossible for us not to consider the relationship between discourse and history – not how the discourse is situated in history, but how history itself arises from a certain way that discourse enters into reality [*réel*].

I must thus remind you that the *Symposium* is situated in the second century of the birth of concrete discourse about the universe. Let us not forget the philosophical efflorescence, so to speak, in the sixth century B.C. It was all the stranger and odder owing to the echoes or other modes of a sort of terrestrial chorus, heard at the same era in other civilizations, there being no apparent relationship among them. But I don't even want to so much as sketch out the history of the sixth-century philosophers, from Thales to Pythagoras or to Heraclitus and so many others. What I'd like to bring out is that for the first time in the Western tradition – the tradition discussed in the book by Bertrand Russell that I recommended to you last time – a discourse developed that deliberately targeted the universe, aiming to render it discursive.

At the beginning of this first step of science as wisdom, the universe appears as a universe of discourse. In a sense, there will never be any universe other than a universe of discourse. And everything we encounter from that era, right down to the very definition of the elements, whether four or more, bears the mark, seal, or stamp of the requirement or postulate that the universe must give itself over to the signifying order.

The point was not, of course, to find parts of speech [*éléments de discours*] in the universe, but rather parts that were organized the way speech is. All the steps articulated at that time by the advocates and inventors of this vast investigative movement show that, if one cannot discuss one of the universes thus formed in a manner that is coherent with the laws of speech [*discours*], it must be totally rejected. Recall the *modus operandi* of Zeno the dialectician who, when it came to defending his master, Parmenides, provided sophistical arguments designed to cast his adversary into an irremediable quandary.

Thus, as a backdrop to the *Symposium*, and in the rest of Plato's work as well, we see an attempt that is grandiose in its innocence:
101 the hope harbored by the first so-called physical philosophers to find the ultimate handhold on reality [*réel*] thanks to the guarantee provided by discourse. Discourse was, in the end, their only instrument of experimentation.

Please excuse me for not going into this topic at any greater length. I do not intend to give a talk on Greek philosophy. I am

simply providing you with the minimal background you must have to interpret this particular text, if you are to judge it accurately.

1

I must first remind you that reality [*réel*] and a hold on reality [*réel*] did not have to be conceptualized at that time as correlated with a subject, even if it was a universal subject. Such a hold is correlated with a term that I will borrow from Plato, who, in the course of a digression in *The Seventh Letter*, names what is sought through the operation of the dialectic, τὸ πρᾶγμα (*to prágma*).

This is the very term I had to bring out last year in my discussion of ethics, and that I called "the Thing." It is not *die Sache*, an affair, [but rather *das Ding*] – you can understand the latter, if you prefer, as the main concern [*la grande affaire*] or ultimate reality. It is what the very thinking that takes it on and disputes it depends on, and such thinking is, so to speak, but one of the ways to put *to prágma*, the Thing, into practice. It is the essential praxis.

You should realize that theory, the word for which – *theoria* – arose at that very time, as contemplative as it may be made out to be, is not merely contemplative, and the praxis out of which it grows, Orphic praxis, demonstrates this rather well. Theory is neither, as our use of the word implies, the abstraction of praxis, nor its general reference, nor the model of its application. Right from its very first appearance, theory is praxis itself. Theory is itself the exercise of power, *to prágma*, the main concern.

One of the masters of that era – and the only one I choose to cite, for, thanks to Freud, he is one of the patron saints of analytic speculation – Empedocles, in his no doubt legendary trappings (and his trappings are what are important, for they are the trappings that have been bequeathed to us), is all powerful. He claims to be master of the elements, able to resuscitate the dead, a magician, and a lord of the royal secret in the same land where charlatans with a similar style appeared later. People ask him for miracles and he performs 102
them. Like Oedipus, he does not die, but rather returns to the center of the world in the fire of a volcano and the abyss.

As you will see, this remains quite close to Plato. Thus it is no accident that, at a much more rationalist era, we quite naturally borrow his reference to *to prágma*.

But what about Socrates? It would be quite odd if the whole historical tradition were mistaken in saying that he contributed something original against this backdrop – a break or opposition. Socrates explains his position – insofar as we can trust Plato, who

presents him to us in fact, presumably in the context of historical testimony – as involving a need to take a step back, feeling weary and disgusted by the contradictions generated by the first philosophical attempts as I have just characterized them.

It is Socrates who comes up with the new and essential idea that one must first guarantee knowledge. To show everyone that they know nothing is a path that is in itself revealing – it reveals a virtue which, in its finest successes, does not always succeed. In what Socrates calls *epistéme*, science, what he finds, in the end, what he brings out or detaches, is that discourse engenders the dimension of truth. Discourse, which is ensured by a certainty inherent in its very action, ensures truth as such wherever it can. It is nothing but this practice of discourse.

When Socrates says that it is not him but rather truth itself that refutes his interlocutors, he demonstrates something whose most solid feature is its reference to a primitive combinatory, which, as the basis of our discourse, is always the same. The upshot being, for example, that your father is not your mother, and that it is by the same token, and by this token alone, that one can declare that what is mortal must be distinguished from what is immortal. Indeed, Socrates refers the whole ambition of discourse to the domain of pure discourse. He is not, as people say, the one who brings man back to man or measures all things by man. Protagoras is the one who came up with the watchword, "Man is the measure of all things." Socrates brings truth to the level of discourse. He was, so to speak, a supersophist, and therein lies his mystery, for had he merely been a supersophist, he would have given rise to nothing more than the sophists did – namely, what remains of them: their dubious reputation.

103 It is something other than a temporal subject that inspired his action. Here we come to Socrates' *atopía*, to his unsituable side. This is what interests us. We sense here something that can enlighten us concerning the *atopia* that is demanded of us as analysts.

It is certainly on the basis of his *atopia*, of the "nowhereness" of his being, that Socrates sparked off a whole line of research – the facts attest to it. Its fate is linked, in an ambiguous fashion, to a whole history that can be broken down into the history of consciousness, as we say today, the history of religion, the history of morals or politics, and perhaps even the history of art, though certainly to a lesser extent. I could merely designate this whole ambiguous line, which is both widespread and vigorous, by mentioning the question trotted out anew by the most recent imbecile, "*Pourquoi des philosophes*?" ["What are philosophers for?"], if we didn't already sense that this line is part and parcel of the

torch handed down, although it is in fact foreign to everything it illuminates – the Good, Beauty, Truth, the Same – even as it prides itself on dealing with them.

If we try to read Socrates' heritage [*descendance*], relying on contemporary or almost contemporary witnesses, as well as distant effects, the idea might come to us that it is a sort of perversion without an object.

In truth, when one tries to focus in on, approach, imagine, or get a fix on who this person could, in fact, have been, believe me, it's tiring. I can formulate the effect of this fatigue no better than with the words that came to me one Sunday evening: "This Socrates character is killing me." Strangely enough, I woke up the next morning in a much better mood.

It seems impossible not to begin by taking what is attested to by Socrates' entourage literally, right up to just before his death, which is that he said that, in short, we can fear nothing of a death about which we know nothing – and in particular, he added, we don't know that it might not be a good thing [*Apology*, 29a].

We are so used to hearing nothing but lofty sentiments in classical texts that, when we read this, we no longer pay any attention to it. But it is striking to bring this out in the context of Socrates' final days, when, surrounded by his remaining faithful students, he casts a last glance askance [*regard en dessous*], a glance Plato fixes on paper, for he was not present, that he calls the bull's look [*Phaedo*, 117b]. Consider his attitude during the trial. If the *Apology* repro- 104
duces exactly what he said to his judges, it is difficult to believe, in listening to his defense, that he did not want to die. In any case, he explicitly repudiates any pathos that might be seen in his situation, thereby provoking his judges, who were used to ritual supplications by the accused parties.

I am trying, this being a first approximation, to get at the enigmatic nature of a desire to die. It can, no doubt, be considered ambiguous, as we are dealing with a man who spent 70 years trying to satisfy this desire, and it is clear that it cannot be taken in the sense of a tendency toward suicide or failure, or in the sense of any kind of masochism, whether moral or otherwise. But it is difficult not to formulate the tragic minimum related to the deportment of this man in a sort of gratuitous no man's land* or between-two-deaths.

As you know, when Nietzsche discovered Socrates it went to his head. *The Birth of Tragedy* grew out of it, as did all of his subsequent work. The tone I am adopting in speaking to you of it no doubt indicates some impatience with it on my part, but it is nevertheless indisputable, and Nietzsche put his finger on it: it suffices to open almost any one of Plato's dialogues to see Socrates' profound

incompetence every time he broaches the topic of tragedy. Look at the *Gorgias* – tragedy is touched on there and executed in three lines among the arts of flattery as one rhetoric among others, and there is nothing more to be said of it [502b–d]. Nothing tragic, no tragic sense of life, as we say nowadays, sustains Socrates' *atopia*, only a daemon. Don't forget this δαίμων (*daimon* or *daemon*), for Socrates talks about it incessantly.

This daemon seems to haunt him [*l'hallucine*] in order to allow him to survive in space, warning him of possible pitfalls: "Don't do that!" And then there is the message of a god, Socrates himself attesting to the role it played in what one might call his vocation. One of his disciples had the idea, a rather ludicrous idea it must be said, to go consult the god at Delphi, Apollo. The god up and answered, "There are several wise men, one of whom isn't bad, that's Euripides; but the wisest of them all, the *crème de la crème*, is Socrates." Following which, Socrates said to himself, "I must carry out the god's oracle. I didn't realize I was the wisest, but since he said so, I must be." Socrates presents the shift in his path toward public life in those terms. He is, in a word, a madman who believes
105 he is in the god's ordained service. He is a messiah and, what's more, finds himself in the company of chatterboxes.

There is no other guarantor of the Other's words than those very words, and no other source of tragedy than this very fate, which may seem to us in a certain sense pretty damn insignificant. All of this leads him to yield to the gods the better part of the ground about which I was speaking to you last time, that of the reconquest of reality [*réel*], the philosophical conquest – in other words, scientific conquest.

In this respect, if I tell you that the gods belong to reality [*les dieux sont du réel*], it is not in order to be paradoxical, like certain people have told me. You had a lot of fun, they said, in surprising us when you asked, "What are the gods?" Everyone expected you to say they are symbolic, and you had a good laugh in telling us they are real. Well, that is not at all the case. I'm not the one who invented this. To Socrates' mind, manifestly, the gods were real and real alone.

And this reality [*réel*], once we've given it its due, is nothing as regards the principle of Socrates' behavior, which aims only at truth. He is prepared to obey the gods on occasion, provided that one defines this obedience to him. Is this to obey them, or rather to ironically fulfill his responsibility to beings who also have their necessity? In fact, we sense no necessity here which does not recognize the supremacy and the necessity inherent in the deployment of truth – in other words, in science.

What might surprise us is the seductive power of such a severe

discourse, which is attested to us here and there in one or another of the dialogues. Even when repeated by children or women, Socrates' discourse exercises an amazing [*sidérant*] charm, that's the word for it. Thus spoke Socrates – a force is transmitted that raises up those who approach him at the simple rustling of his words, Plato's texts always say, and certain say upon mere contact with him.

Observe furthermore that he does not have disciples but, rather, close friends. There are curious onlookers as well, not to mention the enthralled – *santons* as they are referred to in Provençal tales – people who are transported. Other people's disciples also occasionally come knocking at his door.

Plato is none of the above. He is a latecomer who is much too young to have been able to see anything but the end of the phenomenon. He was not one of the friends who were there during the last moments. And that ultimately accounts, let it be said in passing, for the style of testimony to which he holds fast every time he speaks of 106
his strange hero: "So and so heard it from so and so who was there, during such and such a visit when they had such and such a debate." In one case, he says he had the recording on the brain at first hand, and in another case, at second hand.

Plato is a very unusual kind of witness. One might say that he lies and on the other hand that he is truthful even when he lies, for in his very investigating of Socrates, it is Plato's own question that shows through [*se fraye son chemin*].

Plato is completely different from Socrates. He does not go about barefoot. He is no errant philosopher, nor does any god speak to him or call him. Indeed, it seems to me that the gods don't mean much to him. Plato is a master, a true master, a master from the time when the city was falling apart, carried away by the democratic winds that were a prelude to the great imperial forces – a sort of Marquis de Sade, but funnier.

Naturally, no one can ever imagine the nature of the powers the future holds in store. The great tumblers [*bateleurs*] of the world tribe – Alexander, Seleucus, and Ptolemy – all such mystical military men were still unthinkable. What Plato saw on the horizon was a communitarian city, as thoroughly revolting to his way of thinking as it is to ours. A well-organized stud farm [*haras*] for everyone, that is what he promises us in a pamphlet, which has always been the bad dream of all those who cannot get over the ever greater discord between society and their sense of the good. It is called the *Republic*, and everyone has taken it seriously, believing that it was what Plato truly wanted.

There are several other misunderstandings and mythical lucubrations. The myth of Atlantis, for example, seems to me rather to

echo the failure of Plato's political dreams, and it is not unrelated to the venture of the Academy. But perhaps you will think that my paradox should be better corroborated, and this is why I will move on.

What Plato wants, in any case, is the Thing, *to prágma*.

Plato took up at a literary level the torch of the wise men from the century before. The Academy was a city, a refuge reserved for the best and brightest; and what we know of what he dreamt about during his trip to Sicily is situated in the context of that enterprise, whose horizon certainly went quite far. Curiously enough, such a dream came to him in the same places where his adventure echoes Alcibiades' dream, Alcibiades having clearly dreamt of a Mediterranean empire whose center would be Sicily. Plato's dream
107 bore the mark of higher sublimation. It is a sort of utopia of which he thought he could be the leader. In the case of Alcibiades, all of that obviously sinks to a lower level, and perhaps would go no further than the height of masculine elegance. But it would be to disparage this metaphysical dandyism not to see the range of which he was capable.

I think there are good reasons to read Plato's texts from the perspective of what I call his dandyism, and to see his writings as the outer trappings. I would go so far as to say that he tosses us, we dogs, little good and bad scraps of an often rather infernal sense of humor. But it is indisputable that he has been understood otherwise. The fact that Christian desire, which has so little to do with all these adventures, the fact that a desire whose crux or essence is the resurrection of bodies – read Saint Augustine to see the place this occupies – the fact that Christian desire saw itself in Plato, according to whom the body must dissolve in a supra-terrestrial beauty and be reduced to an extraordinarily decorporalized form, is a sign of utter and complete misunderstanding.

The delusional nature of the return of such a discourse in a context that is contradictory to it leads us precisely to the question of transference. What else could this be but Plato's fantasy, already asserting itself as a transference phenomenon? Don't imagine that these are but general considerations, for we are going to home in as closely as possible on them.

How did the Christians – to whom a god, reduced to the symbol of the Son, had given his life as a sign of love – let themselves be fascinated by the speculative inanity (recall the term I used earlier) offered up as fodder by the most disinterested of men, Socrates? Mustn't one recognize therein the effect of the only palpable convergence between the two creeds – the Word presented as an object of adoration?

One cannot deny that love has, in Christian mysticism, produced rather extraordinary fruits and follies, according to the Christian tradition itself. In contrast to that, it is important to delineate the scope of love in the transference produced around this other, Socrates, who was merely a man who claimed to know something about love, but who left only the most simply natural proof thereof.

Which is the fact that his disciples teased him for losing his head now and then for a handsome young man, and as Xenophon tells us, to have once, though it didn't go very far, touched the naked 108
shoulder of the young Critobulus with his shoulder. Xenophon tells us what resulted therefrom: it left Socrates sore – nothing more, but nothing less either. This is not insignificant for such a tried and true cynic – for we can already see in Socrates all the facets of the cynics. The anecdote proves how violent his desire was, but it also shows that love is a somewhat instantaneous function for him. In any case, it allows us to realize that to Plato these love affairs were sheer foolishness.

The mode of ultimate union with *to prágma*, the Thing, is certainly not to be sought in the meaning of effusive outpourings of love, in the Christian sense of the term. The reason why the only person who speaks of love suitably in the *Symposium* is a clown [*pitre*] – you will see what I mean by this term – need be sought nowhere else.

2

To Plato, that's all Aristophanes is: a clown. Comic poets are clowns, to Plato's way of thinking.

Aristophanes, who is, believe me, hardly one of the hoi polloí, is also an obscene character. Need I remind you what you find when you open any one of his comedies? The least of the things shown on the stage is the following, for example, something found in his play entitled *Thesmophoriazusae*: Euripides' relative disguises himself as a woman to expose himself to Orpheus' fate – in other words, to be ripped to shreds by the assembly of women in Euripides' stead. Given that women at that time removed their body hair, as they still do today in the Orient, the hair on his ass is burned before us onstage, and I will spare you the rest of the details.

His plays go beyond anything you can see nowadays except on the stage of a music hall in London, and that is saying a lot. The jokes are better, but are no more distinguished for all that. The term "Bugger" [*cul béant*] is repeated ten times in a row [*The Clouds*, 1080–1100] to designate the group from which it is appropriate to choose the people that today, in our languages, we would

call the candidates most apt to play all the progressive roles, for Aristophanes has it in for them in particular.

109 In short, shouldn't the fact that, to say the best things about love, Plato chooses a character of this type – and what's more, one who played a role of which you are aware in slandering Socrates – get the old brain in gear?

I am going to immediately illustrate what I mean by emphasizing that Plato has him say the best things about love. Even as stuffy a scholar, careful and measured in his judgments, as Léon Robin – the academic who established the edition that I have before me – can sometimes be, even he could not fail to be struck by this. So much so that it made him cry, "Aristophanes is indeed the first to speak of love like we speak of it, and says things that get us choked up."

Aristophanes makes the following rather sophisticated remark, the kind of remark one does not expect from a buffoon, but this is precisely why Plato has him say it. "No one," he says, "would think it is ἡ τῶν ἀφροδισίων συνουσία (*he ton aphrodisíon sunousía*)" – it has been translated by "shared enjoyment of love" [*communauté de la jouissance amoureuse*], a translation that seems abominable to me, but Léon Robin provided a much better one in his translation in the Pléiade edition, "the sharing of sexual enjoyment" [*partage de la jouissance sexuelle*] – "no one would think [. . .] mere sex is the reason each lover takes so great and deep a joy in being with the other," in Greek, οὕτως ἐπὶ μεγάλης σπουδῆς (*hoútos epí megáles spoudés*) [192c]. It is the same σπουδή (*spoudé*) that we saw last year in Aristotle's definition of tragedy, and it means solicitude, care, and eagerness, but also seriousness. In fact, people who love each other have a funny seriousness about them.

But let us leave aside this psychological observation to designate wherein lies the mystery. Aristophanes tells us that it is something altogether different that their soul manifestly desires, something it is unable to express, but that it divines nevertheless, and that it proposes in the form of an enigma. "Suppose two lovers are lying together, and Hephaestus," more commonly known as Vulcan, the character with the anvil and hammer,

> stands over them with his mending tools, asking, "What is it you human beings really want from each other?" And suppose they're perplexed, and he asks them again: "Is this your heart's desire, then – for the two of you to become parts of the same whole, as near as can be, and never to separate, day or night?
> 110 Because if that's your desire, I'd like to weld you together and join you into something that is naturally whole, so that the two of you are made into one. Then the two of you would share one

> life, as long as you lived, because you would be one being, and by the same token, when you died, you would be one and not two in Hades, having died a single death. Look at your love, and see if this is what you desire: wouldn't this be all the good fortune you could want?"
>
> Surely you can see that no one who received such an offer would turn it down; no one would find anything else that he wanted. Instead, everyone would think he'd found out at last what he had always wanted: to come together and melt together with the one he loves, so that one person emerged from two. [192d–e]

This is what Plato has Aristophanes say, but that's not all. You know that Aristophanes tells some rather tall tales, which he himself claims to lie somewhere between the laughable and the ridiculous, depending on whether people laugh at what the comedian intended, or at the comedian himself. It is clear that Aristophanes makes people laugh, and that he goes beyond this, into the realm of the ridiculous. Is Plato going to have Aristophanes make us laugh at love? What we see here already attests to the contrary.

Nowhere, not at any moment of the other speeches in the *Symposium*, is love ever taken as seriously or as tragically as it is by Aristophanes. Here we are at the same exact level where we moderns situate love – after courtly love's sublimation which I spoke to you about last year, and after what I might call the romantic confusion concerning this sublimation – namely, the narcissistic overestimation of the subject, of the subject assumed to reside in the beloved object.

At Plato's time we aren't there yet, thank God, apart from this strange Aristophanes, but he is a buffoon. Rather we are at the stage of an in some sense zoological observation of imaginary beings, which derives its value from what it evokes in real beings and from what certainly can be held therein to be derisory.

We are dealing here with beings cut into two, like hard-boiled eggs sometimes are, bizarre beings like the ones we find on the sandy sea floor – plaice, sole, and flounder – which seem to have everything necessary, two eyes and paired organs, but which are so flattened out that they seem to be but half of a complete being.

The first behavior that follows the birth of beings born from such 111
a partition – which is the bedrock of what turns up here all of a sudden, in a light we find so romantic – is a panic-stricken destiny which makes each of these beings seek first and foremost its other half, and then – sticking to that other half tenaciously and, so to speak, hopelessly – perish beside its other half due to its inability to

come together with it. This is what Aristophanes depicts in his long, detailed discussion in an extremely colorful way, projecting it onto the level of myth. Such is the image of love relationships forged by the sculptor that the comic poet proves to be here.

Is it here that we must conclude that there is something laughable in Aristophanes' words and that we have managed to put our finger on it? Of course not. But this is nevertheless inserted in a piece that irresistibly brings to mind what we might see even nowadays in a circus arena, if the clowns entered, as they sometimes do, hugging, attached two by two, coupled stomach to stomach, and took a few turns around the arena in a great twirling of four arms, four legs, and two heads. In and of itself, it is something that would go very well with the way of fabricating the kind of chorus that produces, in another genre, *The Wasps*, *The Birds*, and even *The Clouds*, about which we will never know how far things went when they were performed.

But here, what kind of ridiculousness is in question? Is it simply the in itself rather joyful character of this clownish image, as I called it?

Here I will go off on a bit of a tangent, and I will ask you to forgive me if it takes us rather far afield, for it is essential.

3

I am not the only one who knows how to read a text, for Léon Robin was also struck by something, to such an extent that he extraordinarily emphasized it – namely, the spherical nature of the people invented by Aristophanes.

It is difficult not to see this, for this sphericalness or circularity, this σφαῖρα (*sphaíra*), is repeated with such insistence. We are told
112 that the back and the flanks, πλευρὰς κύκλῳ ἔχον (*pleurás kúklo échon*) [189e], are "all continuous in a very round way." We must imagine that, as I said earlier, as two wheels connected to one another which are nevertheless flat, while here it is round.

It is round, and this bothered Léon Robin, who did not hesitate, though not without a footnote, to change a comma that no one has ever challenged, saying, "I did it this way because I don't want people to emphasize the sphere so much, for the cut is more important." Far be it from me to try to diminish the importance of this cut, which we will return to later. But it is difficult not to see that we are faced with something very unusual here, the crux of which I will immediately reveal: what is derided here, what is cast in this ridiculous form, is the sphere itself.

Naturally, that doesn't make you laugh, because spheres don't mean anything to you. But remember that for many centuries it wasn't that way.

You are only familiar with the sphere as a fact of psychological inertia known as the "whole form" [*bonne forme*]. A number of people, Ehrenfels and others, have realized that shapes have a certain tendency toward perfection – a tendency, in other words, to become like spheres when we are not sure what they are. The idea is that spheres are what give the optical nerve the most pleasure. This is very interesting, but only begins to scratch the surface of the problem, for let me point out to you in passing that the notion of *Gestalten*, which is so unthinkingly used as a foundation, merely pushes the problem of perception back a notch. If there are such whole forms, perception must consist in rectifying them in the direction of partial [*mauvaises*] forms – namely, true forms. But enough on the dialectic of whole forms.

Spherical shapes have an entirely different meaning here than in this factual observation [*objectivation*] whose interest is limited to psychology. In Plato's work, and well before him, this shape, *Sphaíros*, in the masculine, as Empedocles also says – there isn't enough time for me to read the verses – is a being who is "self-identical on all sides, without limits, σφαῖρος κυκλοτερής (*sphaíros kukloterés*), which takes the form of a ball, reigns in its royal solitude, full of its own contentment, and of its self-sufficiency." The *sphaíros* that haunted ancient thought was the shape taken, at the center of Empedocles' world, by the phase of unification [*rassemblement*] characteristic of what he calls, in his metaphysics, *Philíe* or *Philótes*, love, which he elsewhere calls σχεδύνη Φιλότης (*schedúne Philótes*), love which unites, agglomerates, assimilates, and agglutinates. To agglutinate is κρῆσις (*krésis*), the *krésis* of love. 113

It is quite curious to see Freud write that love is a pure and simple unifying force, with limitless powers of attraction, opposing it to Thanatos – whereas he also gives us, in a discordant way, such a different notion, and one which is so much more fruitful: the love/hate ambivalence.

We find this sphere everywhere. I was talking to you last week about Philolaos. He situates this sphere at the center of a world in which the earth has an eccentric position and, as you know, this was already suspected at Pythagoras' time. Yet it is not the sun that occupies the center but the spherical central fire, to which the face of the inhabited earth always turns its back. In relation to this fire, we are like the moon in relation to our earth, which is why we do not feel it. It seems that it was in order that we not be wiped out by [*rayés par*] the central shining [*rayonnement*] that Philolaos

invented this harebrained lucubration of the anti-earth, which already puzzled people in Antiquity, including Aristotle himself. What need could there have been for this strictly invisible body, which was assumed to harbor within itself all powers opposed to those of the earth, and which at the same time played the role of firebreak? It's something to analyze, as they say.

All of this is merely designed to introduce you to the dimension – to which, as you know, I attribute great importance – of the astronomical or Copernican Revolution. And in order to make this as clear as possible, let me repeat that it is not the so-called geocentricism dismantled by the said canon Copernicus that is important, which is why it is, indeed, quite false and pointless to call the astronomical revolution Copernican. In his book *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*, he provides a figure of the solar system that resembles ours, that resembles those in our seventh-grade textbooks where we see the sun at the center and all the stars revolving around it in orbits. But this was hardly a new schema. Everybody in Copernicus' time – I'm not the one who discovered this – knew that in Antiquity a man named Heraclides and another known as Aristarchus of Samos had come up with the same diagram. This is perfectly well attested to in the historical record.

Copernicus is merely a fantasy on the part of history. It would have been different if his system had been not closer to the image
114 that we have of the real solar system, but truer – in other words, less encumbered than the Ptolemaic system of imaginary elements that have nothing to do with the modern symbolization of the stars. But the fact is that the Copernican system is nothing of the kind, since it is chock full of epicycles.

What are epicycles? They are an invention that no one could believe in. People didn't believe in the reality of epicycles. Don't imagine that they were dumb enough to think that we find in the sky what you see when you open up your watch: a series of little wheels. But they did have the idea that the only imaginable motion was circular motion. Everything one sees in the sky is very hard to interpret, for the little wandering planets play all sorts of irregular tricks [*entourloupettes*] among themselves and the point was to explain the zigzags. So people were only satisfied when each element of their circuit could be reduced to a circular motion.

What is odd is that they didn't manage to do a better job of it. One might think that, in theory, if we combine enough circles on top of turning circles, we could manage to account for anything. It turned out to be impossible, because the more closely people observed the heavenly bodies, the more things remained to be explained – if

nothing else, once the telescope appeared, their variation in size. But in any case, Copernicus' system was just as replete as Ptolemy's with this imaginary superfluity that weighed it down and encumbered it.

Over Christmas vacation you must read, and – you will see that it is possible – for pleasure, how Kepler began with the elements of the same *Timaeus* that I am going to speak to you about, in other words, from a purely imaginary – with the accent that this term has in the vocabulary that I use with you – conception of the universe. His universe was entirely regulated by the properties of the sphere, defined as the shape that bears within itself the virtues of self-sufficiency, such that it can combine in itself the eternity of place and eternal motion.

Kepler's speculations are of this type. They are, moreover, refined, because he stupefies us by bringing in the five perfect solids that can be inscribed within a sphere – as you know there are only five of them. This old Platonic speculation, which had already been superseded 30 times over, came back at this turning point of the Renaissance at which Plato's manuscripts were reintegrated into the 115
Western tradition, and literally went to the head of this character whose personal life, in the context of the revolution of the peasants, and then of the Thirty Years' War, is really quite weird. Well, the said Kepler, who was seeking the celestial harmonies, managed – through prodigious tenacity, in which one can clearly see the game of hide-and-seek characteristic of an unconscious formation – to give the first take on what the birth of modern science really consists of. It was in seeking a harmonic relationship that he arrived at the relationship between the speed of a planet in its orbit and the area of the surface covered by the line that links the planet to the sun. In other words, he perceived simultaneously that the planetary orbits are ellipses.

Alexandre Koyré wrote a beautiful book that is called *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*, which was published by Johns Hopkins University Press and was recently translated into French. And I was wondering what Arthur Koestler, who is not always the best inspired author, had done with Kepler. I assure you that *The Sleepwalkers*, which everyone is talking about, is his best book. It is phenomenal, marvelous. You don't even need to know elementary mathematics; you will understand everything through his biographies of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo. Koestler manifests some partiality for Galileo – Koestler was a communist, after all. He says so himself.

Be that as it may, it is absolutely true that Galileo never paid the slightest attention to what Kepler had discovered. The brilliant step he made in his invention of modern dynamics is to have found the

exact law of gravity. In spite of this essential step, and despite the fact that it was regarding geocentricism that he ran into all kinds of trouble, the fact remains that he was just as behind the times as everybody else, just as reactionary, just as wedded to the idea of perfect circular motion as the only motion possible for the heavenly bodies. To put it in a nutshell, Galileo did not even get as far as what we call the Copernican Revolution, even though we know it was not started by Copernicus. You see how long it takes truths to clear a pathway for themselves when faced with a prejudice as solid as the perfection of circular motion.

I could talk to you about this for hours, for it is very amusing to consider why it is so, and to see what the properties of circular
116 motion truly are and why the Greeks made the circle into a symbol of the limit, πεῖραρ (*peírar*), as opposed to the ἄπειρον (*ápeiron*). Curiously enough, it is precisely because it is one of the things that is most likely to lapse into the apeiron. I should cut this sphere – which, as you know, served in the usual symbol for infinity [∞] – down to size, reduce it to a point, and infinitize it for you.

There is a lot to say. Why does this shape have the finest virtues? To answer this question would take us to the heart of problems concerning the function and value of intuition in mathematical construction.

Prior to all of the exercises that allowed us to disexercise the sphere, it continued to work its charms on dupes because mental φιλία (*philía*) stuck to it, and dirtily, like a strange kind of glue. This was the case for Plato at least, and I refer you to his *Timaeus* and his long discussion of the sphere there in which he depicts it for us in great detail. This corresponds curiously, like an alternating strophe, to what Aristophanes says of his spherical beings.

On the one hand, in the *Symposium*, Aristophanes tells us that these beings have feet – small members that point and turn. But on the other hand, in the *Timaeus*, Plato, with a striking accent since he is discussing geometry, feels the need to observe in passing that the sphere has everything it needs inside itself. It is round, it is full, it is content, it loves itself, and above all it needs neither eyes nor ears since it is by definition the envelope of everything that can be alive. By virtue of this, it is the living being par excellence, and this gives us moreover the intellectual dimension in which biology could develop – we must take the notion that this form is what essentially constitutes the living being as an extremely strict imaginary spelling out [*épellement*].

Thus the sphere has neither eyes nor ears, neither feet nor arms [33b], and it is left with but one motion, the perfect motion: revolving around itself in a circle. The six [other] forms of [motion] –

toward the top, toward the bottom, to the left, to the right, forward, and backward [– are excluded (34a–b)]. On the basis of a comparison of the *Symposium* and the *Timaeus* – and of the two-step mechanism that consists in having the person who is for Plato the only one worthy of speaking of love clown around – we see that in 117
Aristophanes' discourse, Plato seems to be having a good time by turning his own conception of the world and of the world soul into a comical exercise.

Aristophanes' discourse derides Plato's *sphaíros* [sphere] as it is articulated in the *Timaeus*.

We don't have much time left and there would be plenty to add. But to show you that the astronomical reference is sure and certain in this context, I will nevertheless supply proof, for it might seem to you that I'm simply having a good time. The three types of sphere that Aristophanes imagined – the one that is all male, the one that is all female, and the one that is male and female, the androgynes as they're called (beings of each type have a pair of genitals) – have origins. And what are these origins? They are stellar. The males come from the sun, the all-women come from the earth, and the androgynes from the moon – confirming, moreover, in this way the lunar origin, as Aristophanes tells us, of those who have a propensity for adultery, for it is tantamount to having a composite origin [190a–b]. So much for the astronomical element.

Well, doesn't something show its face here that reveals the mainspring of our fascination with the spherical shape?

It is the shape that one is not supposed to mess with or contest. For centuries it left the human mind in error, in the error of refusing to think that, in the absence of any action or foreign impulse, a body is either at rest or in uniform rectilinear motion. A body at rest was supposed to not be able to have, apart from rest, anything other than circular motion, and all of dynamics was ruled out. Now, doesn't the incidental illustration that is furnished by Plato, who one can also call a poet, show us that what is at stake in shapes in which nothing sticks out or can be latched onto, has its foundations in the imaginary structure? But what is our attachment to such shapes due to, insofar as it is affective, if not to the *Verwerfung* [foreclosure] of castration?

This is so true that we find it in Aristophanes' discourse. These beings, split in two like pear halves, die, at a time x that is not specified since it is a mythical time, in a futile attempt to fuse anew. They are doomed to vain efforts to procreate in the earth, and I will skip the whole mythical discussion as it would take us too far afield. How is their problem to be resolved? Aristophanes speaks to 118
us here exactly like little Hans does: their genitalia – which are in

the wrong place, because they are where they were when the beings were round, that is, they are on the outside – are unscrewed and screwed back onto the stomach, just like the faucet in Hans' dream as reported in Freud's case history.

It is unique and astonishing to see in Plato's work that the possibility of amorous relief is connected to something that is indisputably related, to say the least, to an operation involving the subject's genitalia. Whether we place this under the heading of the castration complex or not, it is clear that the text stresses the shift of the genitalia to the front side [191b]. This does not merely mean that the genital organ now has the possibility of serving as a copula, allowing junction with the beloved object, but that it is literally printed over [*en surimpression*] this object, almost superimposed on it. This is the only point at which the function of the genitals is betrayed or translated. Since we know that Plato's grasp of tragedy – he gives us a thousand proofs of this – did not go much further than Socrates', how can we fail to be struck by the fact that here, for the first and only time, he brings into play the genital organ as such in a discourse concerning a serious matter, that of love?

This confirms what I told you was essential to the mainspring of comedy, which is always, in the end, a reference to the phallus. And it is no accident that Aristophanes is the one who talks about it. He is the only one who can do so. But Plato does not realize that in having him speak of it, he has delivered to us – to those of us here – the linchpin that shifts the entire discourse that is to follow into another register.

This is where we will pick up the thread next time.

December 21, 1960

VII

THE *ATOPIA* OF EROS

AGATHON

119

The commandments of the second death.
The signifier and immortality.
The analyst's desire.
The tragedian's macaronic fancy.

Let me pause briefly before leading you into the great enigma of transference love.

I have my reasons for occasionally pausing: it is important that we understand each other and that we not lose our bearings.

1

Since the beginning of this year I have felt a need to remind you that, in everything I have taught you, I have done nothing but point out that Freud's doctrine situates desire in a dialectic.

On this note, I must stop to remark that we are taking the road less traveled by. For I have already stated hereby that desire is not a life function, in the sense in which positivism defines life. Desire is caught up in a dialectic because it hinges – I have already said how it hinges, in the form of metonymy – on a signifying chain. The latter is, as such, both constitutive of the subject and that by which the subject is distinct from individuality taken simply as *hic et nunc* [here and now]. Keep in mind that this *hic et nunc* is what defines individuality.

Let us make an effort to delve into what individuation or the instinct of individuality is, inasmuch as individuation requires each individual, or so we are told in psychology, to conquer anew all of 120
real structure, whether by experience or learning. This is no small task, and one cannot conceptualize it without the presupposition that it is at least already prepared for by an adaptation or a whole

set of adaptations. The human individual, as knowledge, is taken to be the flower of consciousness at the end of an evolutionary process.

I profoundly doubt that. Not that I consider it to be a fruitless direction or a dead end. I doubt it insofar as the idea of evolution gets us intellectually used to all sorts of elisions that are highly debilitating for reflection, especially as concerns our ethics as analysts. In any case, it seems essential to me to re-examine these elisions, and to indicate or reopen the gaps left in the theory of evolution insofar as it always tends to cover them over in order to make our practice [*expérience*] easier to conceptualize. If evolutionary theory is true, one thing is nevertheless certain, which is that evolution is not, as Voltaire said in another context, as natural as all that.

As for desire, it is in any case essential that we examine its conditions. The latter are given to us by our practice, which overturns the whole problem of givens. Indeed, what we find is that the subject keeps an articulated chain outside of consciousness, making it inaccessible to consciousness. It is a demand, and not a pressure, malaise, imprinting, or any other term you might try to use to characterize it as primitive – that is, as definable in terms of instincts [*tendanciellement*]. On the contrary, a trace is traced out there, so to speak, that is encircled by a line [*trait*], isolated as such, and raised to an ideographic power, let's say, on the condition that it be emphasized that we are not dealing with an index that can be attributed to anything isolated whatsoever. Rather, it is always linked to a concatenation, on one line, with other ideograms that are themselves encircled by the function that makes them signifiers. This demand constitutes a constant, albeit latent, claim upon the subject that is inaccessible to him. It is a statute or set of specifications that must be met. It is not the modulation that would result from some sort of phonetic inscription of the negative recorded on film or tape but, rather, a trace that goes into effect once and for all. It is a kind of recording, but only if you emphasize the term "record," with its
121 connotation of classification in a file. It is a kind of memory, but only in terms of the meaning this word takes on in the realm of electronic machines.

Well, it was Freud's genius to have designated the medium of this chain. I think I have sufficiently shown you – and I will show it to you again, above all in an article I felt I needed to rewrite on the basis of what I said at the conference in Royaumont, and which will be published – that, in speaking of the id, Freud designated the death drive itself as the medium of this chain, insofar as he emphasized the lethal character of repetition compulsion.

Death. What Freud articulated as a tendency [*tendance*] toward

death, as the desire of an unthinkable subject who presents himself in the living being in which it speaks [*ça parle*], is responsible for the eccentric position of desire in man, which has always constituted a paradox for ethics. This paradox is altogether unsolvable, it seems to me, from the perspective of evolutionary theory. How could desires – in what one might call their transcendental permanence, namely, the transgressive character that is fundamental to them – be neither the effect nor the source of what they constitute, that is, a permanent disorder in a body assumed to be subject to the statute of adaptation, regardless of the impact its effects are acknowledged to have?

Here, as in the history of physics, people have up until now merely tried to save the appearances. And I think I have helped you realize the import, and have given you ample opportunity to assess the importance, of what is meant by "saving the appearances" when it comes to epicycles in the Ptolemaic system.

Don't imagine that the people who taught this system for centuries – with the proliferation of epicycles it required, from about 30 to about 75 depending on the accuracy demanded of the system – truly believed in epicycles. Not for a minute did they believe that the heavens were made like little armillary spheres. They manufactured them with their epicycles, and I saw some recently in a hallway at the Vatican – quite a nice collection – showing the movements of Mars, Venus, and Mercury. A certain number of epicycles must be placed around each little ball in order for it to mimic a planet's movements, but no one ever seriously believed in them. Saving appearances simply meant accounting for what one saw in accordance with a theoretical requirement: the bias in favor of the perfection of the circle.

Well, it is more or less the same when one tries to explain desires 122
by the system of needs, whether individual or collective. And I submit that no one in psychology – and by that I mean the psychology that runs through the entire moralist tradition – believes that any more, no more than anyone ever believed in epicycles, even at the time when people were working on them. In both cases, saving appearances means nothing but the following: trying to reduce to forms that are assumed to be perfect and necessary to the foundations of deduction, what can in no way – not with any good reason at least – be thus reduced.

I am trying to ground with you the basic topology of desire, its interpretation, and – in short – its rational ethics. The "between-two-deaths" – which is not so difficult to grasp, because it simply means that, for humankind, the two borders related to death do not overlap – grew out of this topology over the course of the last year.

The first border – whether linked to the fundamental time period [*échéance*] we call old age, aging, or decline, or to an accident that cuts the thread of life – is that at which life effectively ends and comes undone. Hence it is obvious, and has always been obvious, that man's situation is characterized by the fact that this border does not overlap with the second death, which can be most generally defined by saying that in it man aspires to annihilate himself in order to have his being inscribed [in history]. The hidden contradiction or rub is that man aspires to destroy himself in the very act of becoming immortal.

You will find this point throughout [Agathon's] speech, as well as in the others. You find myriad traces of it in the *Symposium*. I attempted to illustrate it for you last year by showing you the four corners of the space in which tragedy is situated. There is not one tragedy that is not shed light on thereby, precisely because an aspect of tragic space has been stolen [*dérobé*], to use that word, from poets in the course of history – in the seventeenth century, for example.

Consider any of Racine's tragedies and you will see that, in order for there to be any semblance of tragedy, the space of the between-two-deaths must in some way be invoked. If something resembling tragedy subsists in *Andromachus*, *Iphigenia*, or *Bajazet* – need I
123 remind you of the plot? – it is because the two deaths are always there, regardless of how they may be symbolized. What lies between Hector's death and the death that is hanging over Astyanax's head is but the sign of another doubling [*duplicité*]. The hero is always placed in imminent danger of death but faces it in order to be remembered by posterity, which is a derisory form of the problem. This is what is signified by the two terms we continually encounter that refer to the twofold nature [*duplicité*] of the lethal function.

True enough. But while this may be necessary to maintain the framework of tragic space, we must still figure out how it is inhabited. I would simply like to clear away in passing the cobwebs that obstruct a direct view, in order to incite you to look at Racine's tragedies, pinnacles of Christian tragedy, which remain, through all their lyrical vibrations, so rich in poetic resonance.

Take *Iphigenia* for example. Everything that takes place in the play is irresistibly funny, you can see for yourselves. Agamemnon is fundamentally characterized there by his terror of the conjugal scene – "There, those are the cries I was afraid of hearing" [Act IV, Scene 5] – while Achilles appears in an unbelievably superficial position.

Why? I will try to indicate why a little later, in terms of Achilles' relation to death, a traditional relation for which he is always one of the first cases cited by Socrates' most intimate circle when they

exhibit their moralism. The history of Achilles, who deliberately prefers a death that will make him immortal to a refusal to fight that would spare his life, is mentioned everywhere, including in the *Apology*, where Socrates talks about it in order to define what his own conduct will be before his judges [28c–d]. We find echoes of it even in Racine's tragedies, cast in another light, which is far more important. It is one of the commonplaces which, in the course of the centuries, ceaselessly sound, echoing ever more loudly with a resonance that is increasingly hollow and bombastic.

What is lacking in tragedy when it is pursued beyond the range of limits that gave it its place in the living, breathing world of Antiquity? There is some kind of shadow, obscurity, or occultation 124
related to the commandments of the second death.

There is no trace of these commandments in Racine, because by his time we are no longer in a context in which the Delphic oracle can make itself heard. The playwright gives us mere cruelty, vain contradiction, and absurdity. The characters talk on and on, dialoguing and soliloquizing, saying nothing more, in the end, than that there has surely been some sort of misunderstanding somewhere.

This is not at all the case in ancient tragedy. The commandment of the second death is ever present there. Being present there in a veiled form, it can be formulated and acknowledged as linked to the debt that accumulates without there being a guilty party and that is paid by a victim who does not deserve the punishment. It is, in short, the "he did not know" that I wrote for you at the top of the Graph of Desire, on the enunciation line that is fundamental to the topology of the unconscious. This is what is already achieved in ancient tragedy, or rather prefigured – I would say, were it not an anachronistic word – in relation to Freud, who immediately recognized it as being related to the *raison d'être* he had just discovered in the unconscious.

Freud recognized his discovery and his field in the tragedy of Oedipus, but it was neither because Oedipus killed his father nor because he wanted to sleep with his mother. A very amusing mythologist, Robert Graves – who has compiled a vast collection of myths in a work of no renown, but which is very useful and highly practical, two small volumes that were published by Penguin Books, in which he has gathered all of ancient mythology – thinks he is being clever concerning the Oedipus myth. "Why didn't Freud," he asks, "seek out his myth among the Egyptians, where the hippopotamus is said to sleep with its mother and crush its father? Why didn't he call it the hippopotamus complex?" He thinks he has, thereby, given Freudian mythology a fine punch in the gut.

But this is not why Freud chose Oedipus. Many heroes other

than Oedipus kill their fathers and want to sleep with their mothers. The reason Freud found his fundamental figure in the tragedy of Oedipus lies in the fact that "he did not know" he had killed his father and was sleeping with his mother.

The fundamental terms of our topology have now been recalled to mind. This reminder was necessary to continue our analysis of the
125 *Symposium*, in order that you perceive why it is of interest that it is now Agathon, the tragic poet, who gives a speech on love.

But I must prolong this pause a little longer to clarify my remarks on the subject of what, little by little, through the *Symposium*, I am proposing concerning the mystery of Socrates.

2

I told you last time that for a while I had the feeling that I was killing myself over the mystery of Socrates. It does not seem to me to be unsituable. It is precisely because I believe, on the contrary, that we can situate it perfectly well that we are justified in beginning with this mystery in our research this year.

What is the mystery of Socrates? I will remind you of it in the same annotated terms that I have just rearticulated for you, so you can compare it with Plato's texts, which are our firsthand documents. Since I have noticed that, for some time now, it is no longer in vain that I recommend certain readings to you, I will not hesitate to invite you to supplement the *Symposium* – which almost all of you have now read – with the *Phaedo*, which will give you a fine example of Socratic method and suggest why it is of interest to us.

I would say that the mystery of Socrates – and one must look at this firsthand document in order to make it shine anew in all its originality – is the instituting of what he calls science, *epistéme*.

You can verify what it means in the text. It is quite obvious that it has neither the same meaning nor the same accent in the *Phaedo* as it has for us, since there was not at the time even the slightest beginning of what has since been articulated for us under the heading of "science." The best formulation you can give for the instating of this science – in what? in consciousness – in a position, in an absolute dignity, or more precisely in a position of absolute dignity, is to say that it involves nothing other than what we can express in our vocabulary as the promotion of the signifier itself to a position of absolute dignity. What Socrates calls science is what is necessarily imposed on every interlocution as a function of a certain manipula-
126 tion or internal coherence that is linked, or that he believes to be linked, to the sole, pure, and simple reference to the signifier.

As you will see, in the *Phaedo* Socrates is pushed as far as he can go by the disbelief of his interlocutors who, however constraining his arguments may seem, do not altogether agree, no more than anyone would, with his assertion that the soul is immortal. What he refers to in the final analysis, and in a less and less convincing way, at least to us, are properties such as even and odd. It is on the basis of the fact that the number three cannot in any way be qualified as even and on other such points that he bases his demonstration that the soul cannot be said to be destructible, as it is at the very crux of life [103d–106d]. You will see to what extent what I call the privileged reference to the signifier, which is proposed as a sort of cult or essential rite, accounts for everything that the emergence of Socrates in the midst of the Sophists contributes that is new, original, decisive, fascinating, and seductive – there is historical testimony of this.

The second term I will extract from the testimony that has been handed down to us is as follows: thanks to Socrates, his total presence, his destiny, his death, and what he asserts before dying, it appears that this promotion [of the signifier to a position of absolute dignity] is consistent with the effect I showed you, which is to abolish in a man, totally it seems, what I would call, borrowing Kierkegaard's terms, fear and trembling. Fear and trembling before what? Not the first, but rather the second death.

Socrates does not hesitate on this score. He claims that it is in this second death – embodied in his dialectic by the fact that he raises the coherence of the signifier to an absolute power, to the power of being the sole ground of certainty – that he, Socrates, will indubitably find eternal life.

On the condition that you not read anything more into what I am going say, I will take the liberty of tracing out tangentially, as a sort of parody, the appearance of Cotard's syndrome. Socrates, the indefatigable questioner, seems to me to overlook the fact that his mouth was flesh, and it is in this sense that his assertion is coherent, though not his certainty. Don't we almost find ourselves faced here with an apparition that is foreign to us, with a manifestation that I 127
would qualify – to use our jargon in order to make myself perfectly clear and progress quickly – as akin to the psychotic core? I am thinking of the way, the very exceptional way, I assure you, Socrates implacably unfolds his arguments, which are not really arguments, but also posits before his disciples, the very day of his death, the assertion, perhaps more affirmative than any ever before heard from him, that he, Socrates, is serenely leaving this life for a truer, immortal life. He does not doubt but that he will join those who still exist for him, let us not forget it, the Immortals. The notion of the Immortals cannot be eliminated or removed from his thought. It is

in terms of the antinomy between the Immortals and the mortals, which is absolutely fundamental in ancient thought, and no less, believe me, in ours, that his living, real-life testimony takes on its full value.

Let me thus summarize. This indefatigable questioner – who is not a speaker, who keeps his distance from rhetoric, metrics, and poetics, who eliminates metaphor, who lives entirely in the game, not of the finessed [*forcée*] card, but of the forced question, and who derives all of his sustenance from it – generates before our eyes and develops throughout his life what I will call a formidable metonymy. Its result, which is historically attested as well, is a desire that is embodied in an assertion of immortality, an immortality that is, I would say, fixed – sad "immortality, all black and gold" [*immortalité noire et dorée*], wrote Valéry – a desire for infinite discourses.

Indeed, while he is sure he will join the Immortals in the next world, he is also, he says, more or less certain he will be able to continue his little verbal exercises for all eternity with interlocutors worthy of him: those who came before him and all those who will come to join him later [*Apology*, 40d–41c]. Admit it: this conception, as satisfying as it may be for people who like allegorical painting, is nevertheless a fancy which singularly smacks of delusion. To argue about even and odd, the just and the unjust, the mortal and the immortal, hot and cold, and about the fact that hot cannot allow cold within itself without weakening, without retiring in its essence of hot to one side, as is explained at length in the *Phaedo* [103c] as the main reason for the immortality of the soul – to debate about that for all eternity is a very odd conception of happiness.

Let us put things in perspective. One man thus experienced the question of the immortality of the soul. I would go even further:
128 the soul as we still handle it today and are still weighed down by it, the notion or figure of the soul that we have – which is not the conception that developed in the course of all the waves of the traditional legacy – the soul we deal with in the Christian tradition has as its internal brace, frame, or truss the by-product of Socrates' delusion of immortality. We are still living off it.

What I would simply like to conjure up before you is the energy behind Socrates' assertion concerning the immortality of the soul. Why is that? It is obviously not for the import that we can give it now, for it is quite obvious that after several centuries of exercise and even of spiritual exercises, the rate, so to speak, of belief in the immortality of the soul – among all of those here before me, whether believers or nonbelievers – is quite tempered, as one says that a scale is tempered. No, that is not the point. If I ask you to reflect on the postulation of the immortality of the soul at that time, on certain

grounds, by a man who, in his wake, astonished his contemporaries by his discourse, it is in order to get you to wonder about the following, which is quite important: for this phenomenon to have occurred, for a man – who has, over Nietzsche's Zarathustra, the advantage of having existed – to have acceded to this same "Thus spoke . . . ," as they say, what must Socrates' desire have been?

This is the crucial question that I think I can raise here, and all the more easily since I have at length described for you the topology that gives it its meaning.

Open any of Plato's dialogues to a passage related directly to Socrates as a person, and you can check the well-founded nature of what I am telling you about the forthright, paradoxical position of his assertion of immortality, and about what it is founded on – namely, his idea of science insofar as I situate it as the pure and simple raising of the function of the signifier in consciousness to an absolute value. To what does the position he introduces correspond? To what *atopia*? As you know, I am not the one who applied this term, *atopia*, to Socrates. To what *atopia* of desire?

Atopos refers to a case that is unclassifiable or unsituable. *Atopia*, you cannot put it anywhere. That's the point. This is what Socrates' contemporaries were whispering about him.

Doesn't this *atopia* of desire about which I am raising a question, 129
coincide to me, to us, in a certain way with what I might call a certain topographical purity? For it designates the central point at which, in our topology, the space of the between-two-deaths is found in a pure state, emptying out the place of desire as such. Desire is no longer anything but its place there, insofar as it is no longer anything for Socrates than a desire for discourse, revealed discourse, discourse that is forever revealing. Hence the *atopia* of the Socratic subject, assuming that such a purified place of desire was never occupied by any man before him.

I will not answer this question, confining myself to raising it. It is plausible and, at the very least, it gives us a first landmark by which to situate the question, one that we cannot eliminate once we have raised it. And, after all, I am not the one who first raised it – it was already posed as soon as we realized that the complexity of the topic of transference could in no way be limited to what takes place in the subject known as the patient, he who is analyzed. Consequently, the question arises of articulating, in a slightly more sophisticated way than has ever been done up until now, what the analyst's desire must be.

It does not suffice to speak of training *catharsis* or of purification, so to speak, of the bulk of the analyst's unconscious. Such a notion remains terribly vague. Analysts must be credited with the fact that,

for some time now, they have not been satisfied with it. We must realize, not in order to criticize them, but rather in order to understand the obstacle at hand, that we don't have at our disposal even the slightest sketch of what one could nevertheless articulate so easily, in the form of a question, concerning what must be attained in someone so that he may be an analyst. People say that he must come to know a little bit more about the dialectic in his unconscious. But what exactly does he know about it in the final reckoning? And, above all, how far does what he knows about it have to go concerning the very effects of knowledge? I will simply raise the following question: what must remain of his fantasies? You know that I can go further still and say of his *fantasy*, assuming that there is one fundamental fantasy. If castration is what must be accepted at the end of an analysis, what role
130 must the scar of castration play in the analyst's Eros?

These are questions that are more easily raised than answered. Which is why people do not raise them. And, believe me, I would not raise them either in a void, for the simple purpose of sparking your imagination, if I did not think that there must be a method – a method that broaches this from a different angle or even proceeds indirectly or in a roundabout fashion – by which to shed some light on these questions that we obviously cannot for the moment answer utterly and completely. All I can say for the time being is that it does not seem to me that what is called the doctor–patient relationship – with all it brings with it by way of presuppositions, prejudices, and molasses attracting swarms of flies – allows us to make much headway in this direction.

We must thus try to articulate and situate what the analyst's desire should be, and what it is fundamentally. And we must do so in accordance with the markers that can, on the basis of an already sketched out topology, be designated as the coordinates of desire. We cannot find appropriate landmarks by referring to articulations of the situation for the therapist or the observer, nor in any of the phenomenological notions of "situation" being elaborated around us. For the analyst's desire is not such that it can be explained by reference to a dyad. It is not the relationship to the patient that can, through a series of eliminations and debarments, give us the key thereto. Something more intrapersonal is at stake.

Nor is this to say that the analyst must be a Socrates, a virtuous person [*un pur*], or a saint. Explorers like Socrates, the virtuous, and saints can, no doubt, give us several indications concerning our field. But they do not go far enough – upon reflection, all of our science, I mean experimental science, is related to this field. Yet it is precisely because they are the ones who do the exploring that we can perhaps define, in terms of longitude and latitude, the coordinates

the analyst must be able to attain simply in order to occupy the place that is his, defined as the place he must offer up as vacant to the patient's desire in order for the latter to be realized as the Other's desire.

It is in this respect that the *Symposium* is of interest to us and that it is useful terrain to explore. This is due to the privileged place that testimony about Socrates occupies in it, inasmuch as this text is sup- 131
posed to show him grappling with the problem of love right before our very eyes.

I believe I have said enough to justify why we are approaching the problem of transference through a commentary on the *Symposium*. I felt it was necessary to recall these coordinates to mind before we enter into what occupies the central or almost central place in this famous dialogue – namely, Agathon's speech.

3

Is it Aristophanes or Agathon who occupies the central place? Why bother to try to decide? The two of them certainly occupy the central place, since everything that was demonstrated before turns out, apparently, to be already remote and devalued when their turns come, and what comes afterward is no other than Socrates' speech.

Concerning the speech by Agathon, the tragic poet, one could say a great many things – not simply for the sake of erudition – that would lead us into details about and even into a history of tragedy, of which I gave you a brief sketch a bit earlier. What is of importance is not that, but rather to get you to see its role in the economy of the *Symposium*.

As you have seen, Agathon's speech takes up five or six pages in the French translation by Robin, published in the Guillaume Budé collection. I will begin with its pinnacle, and you will see why. Let me remind you that I am here less in order to provide you with an elegant commentary, than to lead you to what the *Symposium* can or should provide us.

The least one can say of Agathon's speech is that it has always struck readers for its extraordinary sophistry, in the modern, everyday, pejorative sense of the word. His sophistry here consists in saying that Love "does no wrong to gods or men, nor they to him." Why? Because "if anything has an effect on him, it is never by violence," for everyone knows that "violence never touches Love." Thus "the effects he has on others are not forced, for every service we give to Love," so we are told, "we give willingly. And whatever one person agrees on with another, when both are willing, that is

right and just; so say the laws that are kings of society" [196b–c].
132 Morality – love is what is at the very core of the laws of the city, and so on and so forth. As love is the strongest of all desires, irresistible passion, it is tempered with moderation, for moderation is what regulates desires and pleasures. Love must thus, by all rights, be identified with moderation.

Manifestly, a bit of fun is being had here. Who is having fun? Is it simply we the readers? We would be wrong to think that we are alone. Agathon certainly does not play a secondary role here, if only for the fact that, at least according to the givens of the situation, he is Socrates' beloved. Let us give Plato the benefit of the doubt by believing that he is having a bit of fun as well with what I will now call – and I will justify it better a little later – the tragedian's macaronic discourse. But I am sure, and you too will be sure as soon as you read it, that we would be wrong not to realize that it is neither simply us nor Plato having a bit of fun here. As opposed to what commentators have said, it is altogether out of the question that Agathon not know perfectly well what he is doing.

Things go so far and he gets so carried away that, at the pinnacle of his speech, Agathon says to us, "I am suddenly struck by a need to say something in poetic meter" [197c].

He expresses himself in the following terms – εἰρήνην μὲν ἐν ἀνθρώποις (*eirénen men en anthrópois*) [peace among people] – which means that love puts an end to all the ruckus [*rififi*]. Quite an unusual conception. It must be admitted that up until this idyllic modulation, one hardly suspected any such thing.

But to spell it out for you letter by letter, he tops it all off by saying, πελάγει δὲ γαλήνην (*peláge de galénen*), which means that everything has stopped, a flat sea [no waves or wind]. We must keep in mind what a flat sea meant in Antiquity – it meant that nothing was going right, that the ships were blocked at Aulis, and when that happened in the middle of the deep blue sea, people were bothered by it, almost as bothered as when that happened to them in bed. To evoke *peláge de galénen* concerning love makes it quite clear that a bit of fun is being had here. Love is what makes you break down, it's what leads to a fiasco.

This is not all – afterward, Agathon says, there is no more wind among the winds. He goes on – love, there is no more love, νηνεμίαν (*nenemían*), ἀνέμων (*anémon*) [stillness, without wind]. It sounds, moreover, like the forever comic verses of a certain tradition, like the following two verses by Paul-Jean Toulet:

133 *Sous le double ornement d'un nom mol ou sonore,*
Non, il n'est rien que Nanine et Nonore.

This is the sort of realm we are in here. And we have κοίτην (*koíten*) in addition, which means in bed, beddy-bye, no more wind in the sails, all the winds have gone to sleep. Then we have ὕπνον τ' ἐνὶ κήδει (*húpnon t'ení kédei*). Strangely enough, love brings us "sleep amidst our worries," as one might translate it at first glance, but look closely at the meaning of these cadences and of κῆδος (*kédos*).

This Greek term is quite rich in connotations, which allow us to reassert the value of what Émile Benveniste once – with no doubt a great deal of goodwill toward me, but perhaps nevertheless missing something essential in that he did not follow Freud – articulated concerning the ambivalence of signifiers for our first issue of *La Psychanalyse*. *Kédos* does not simply mean worry, but also kinship. ὕπνον τ' ἐνὶ κήδει (*húpnon t'ení kédei*) [regard for another] sketches it out for us as [in the SiRonga proverb]: "A relative by marriage is an elephant's shank," as one finds it in Lévi-Strauss' work. This *húpnos*, peaceful sleep, *t'ení kédei*, in relation to in-laws, seems to me to be worthy of crowning verses that are indisputably designed to wake us up in case we have not yet understood that Agathon is making fun of something.

Moreover, from this moment on, he literally lets loose, and tells us that love is what liberates us, alleviating us of "the belief that we are strangers to each other." Naturally, when one is possessed by love, one realizes that we are all part of one big happy family, and it is truly from that moment on that one feels all warm inside and at home, and so on and so forth. This goes on line after line [197c–d] – I will leave you the pleasure of spending your evenings savoring it.

Do you agree that love clearly "moves us to mildness" and "removes from us wildness," that it spreads "kindness" and is incapable of "meanness"? Agathon provides here an enumeration on which I would like us to dwell at length. Love is said to be the father of Τρυφή (*Truphé*), Ἁβρότης (*Habrótes*), Χλιδή (*Chlidé*), Χάριτες (*Chárites*), Ἵμερος (*Hímeros*), and Πόθος (*Póthos*). One can, as a first approximation, translate – well-being, delicateness, languidness, graciousness, ardor, and passion. It would take us more time than we have here to carry out the twofold task of finding the French equivalent for the Greek terms, and to compare them with 134
the headings of kind deeds and honesty in courtly love, as we discussed them last year. It would thus be easy for you to see that it is impossible to be satisfied when Léon Robin relates Agathon's list to the *Carte du Tendre*, as one could to the virtues of the knight in the *Minne* that he does not even mention.

Taking text in hand, I could show you that not one of these terms lends itself to such a parallel. *Truphé*, for example, which people

willingly translate as "well-being," is, by most authors, and not just the comic authors, used with the most unpleasant connotations. In Aristophanes, for example, the word designates what is suddenly introduced by a woman or wife into the peace enjoyed by a man – her unbearable pretensions. The woman known as τρυφερά (*trupherá*) is an unbearable snob, one who does not for a single second stop telling her husband that her father and her family are better than his. And so on and so forth. Every one of these terms is habitually and for the most part conjoined or juxtaposed by Antiquity's authors – whether tragedians or even poets like Hesiod in this case – with αὐθαδία (*authadía*), which signifies one of the most unbearable forms of hubris and smugness.

I merely wish to point these things out to you in passing. Let us move on. Love "cares well for good men, cares not for bad ones. In pain, in fear, in desire or speech," etc. Such translations signify absolutely nothing, for we have in Greek ἐν πόνῳ, ἐν φόβῳ [. . .], ἐν λόγῳ (*en póno*, *en phóbo* [. . .], *en lógo*), which means, "in deep trouble, in fear [. . .], in discourse." And κυβερνήτης, ἐπιβάτης (*kubernétes*, *epibátes*) is the one who is at the helm. It is also the one who is ready to guide. In other words, they're having quite a fine time. *Póno*, *phóbo*, *pótho*, and *lógo* are all jumbled up here [197d–e]. The point is always to produce an ironic effect, and even disorientation. This, for a tragic poet, has no other meaning than to stress that love is what is truly unclassifiable, blocking every important situation. Love is what is never in its place and is always inopportune.

Whether or not this conception can be defended is not the issue and, strictly speaking, it is certainly not the acme of what the
135 *Symposium* teaches us about love. What is important is that it is the tragic poet who gives the only speech about love that is openly and completely derisory. To seal the well-foundedness of this interpretation, it suffices to read Agathon's conclusion. "This, Phaedrus, is the speech I have to offer. Let it be dedicated to the god, part of it in fun, part of it moderately serious, as best I could manage."

The speech itself is affected, so to speak, by its connotation as jesting speech, the speech of a jokester. This is all Agathon as such – in other words, as he who is being celebrated here, let us not forget, for his triumph at the tragedy competition, the day after his victory – has the right to say about love.

There is nothing here that should throw us off. In every tragedy situated in its full context, in other words in the context of Antiquity, love always figures as a marginal incident and drags behind, so to speak. Rather than being what directs and runs on ahead, love merely lags behind in tragedy. This is the exact term that you will

find in Agathon's speech – love lags behind what he compares it to, strangely enough, in one passage: *Áte*.

I pointed out the function of Ἄτη (*Áte*) in tragedy last year. *Áte* means mischief [195d], the thing that has arisen as an obstacle and can never be exhausted. It is the calamity that lies behind every tragic adventure and that – as the poet tells us, for it is to Homer that people refer here – "gets around only by running on the heads of men with its feet which are too tender to touch the ground" [*Iliad*, XIX, 91–4]. Thus *Áte* moves rapidly and indifferently, striking and forever dominating, making heads bow down and driving men crazy. Oddly enough, Agathon mentions *Áte* in order to tell us that Love must, like *Áte*, have very delicate feet since it can only walk on the heads of men. Confirming yet again the fanciful nature of Agathon's speech, he makes a number of jokes on this score about the fact that, after all, skulls are perhaps not as soft as all that [195e].

Our entire experience of tragedy confirms the analysis we are making of the style of this speech. Owing to the Christian context, [the idea that one has an] ultimate destiny is purged [*vidé*], as are the closed and incomprehensible nature of the fatal oracle and the inex
pressibility of the commandment as regards the second death. It is 136
inasmuch as this commandment can no longer be sustained – since we find ourselves faced with a god who is unable to give senseless orders and who removes death's cruel sting – that love appears. Love takes their place, filling up this emptiness [*vide*].

Racine's *Iphigenia* offers us the finest illustration of this, embodying this change in some sense. We had to reach a Christian context for Iphigenia to no longer suffice as a tragic figure, and for it to be necessary to double her with Eriphilia. And rightly so, not simply so that Eriphilia could be sacrificed in Iphigenia's stead, but because Eriphilia is the only one who is truly in love. Her love is depicted as terrible, horrible, evil, and tragic in order to restore a certain depth to tragic space. It is also because every time this love – with which the play is quite concerned, with Achilles primarily – manifests itself as love pure and simple, and not as dark love [*amour noir*] or jealous love, it is irresistibly comic.

In short, we find ourselves at a crossroads at which, as will be recalled in the final conclusions of the *Symposium*, it is not enough, in speaking of love, to be a tragic poet. One must also be a comic poet.

It is at this point that Socrates responds to Agathon's speech. To appraise how he does so, it was necessary, as you will see in what follows, to articulate it with all the stress that I felt I needed to give it today.

January 11, 1961

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VIII

FROM *EPISTÉME* TO *MÝTHOUS*

From love to desire.
The limits of Socratic knowledge.
Socrates "diocesed."
Masculine desirable, feminine desiring.
Love as *metaxú*.

We have now reached the point in the *Symposium* at which Socrates is going to take the floor and give an *épainos* or *enkómion*. The two terms are not exactly equivalent, as I mentioned in passing some time ago, but I didn't want to dwell on their difference as it would have taken me off on quite a tangent.

In praising love, we are told by Socrates himself, and his word cannot be disputed in Plato's work, that if he knows anything, if there is anything about which he is not ignorant, it is about matters of love. Let us not lose sight of this in all that takes place.

1

Last time I emphasized, in a way which I believe was convincing enough, the strangely derisory character of Agathon's discourse.

Agathon the tragedian speaks of love in a way that gives you the feeling he is playing the fool in his macaronic speech. The impression he gives us at every instant is that he's pulling our leg a bit. I stressed – both in the content and body of his arguments, on the one hand, and in his detailed elocutionary style itself – the exceedingly provocative nature of the short verses he comes up with at one point, and how disconcerting it is to see the theme of the *Symposium*
138 culminate in such a speech. My reading of his speech is not new, although the function I give it in the unfolding of the *Symposium* perhaps is. The derisory character of his speech has always given

pause to those who have read it and commented upon it. So much so that the German scholar from the beginning of the century – whose name, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, the day I mentioned it, made you laugh, though I don't know why – says, following thereby in the footsteps of almost all those who came before him, that Agathon's speech is characterized by its *Nichtigkeit*, its vacuousness.

It is thus quite odd that Plato put this speech in the mouth of the person who immediately precedes Socrates, and who is, let us not forget, Socrates' beloved at the moment of the symposium.

There is a sort of interlude even before Agathon takes the floor. Socrates says something like, "After all we have just heard, and if now Agathon is going to add his speech to the others, how am I going to be able to speak?" [194a]. Agathon, for his part, apologizes, and announces some hesitation, fear, and intimidation too, about speaking before an audience that is, let us say, so enlightened, so intelligent, so ἔμφρονες (*émphrones*) [sensible, 194b]. And here a debate begins with Socrates, who questions Agathon in more or less the following terms: "Are you, then, embarrassed to show yourself to be possibly inferior only in front of us? Would you be serene about putting forward less well-assured ideas in front of others, in front of a crowd or throng?" [194b–d]. Here, by goodness, we don't know very well what we're getting into. The direction could be rather risqué. Is he trying to get at some sort of aristocratism of dialogue? Or, as seems more likely, for all of Socrates' practice attests to it, is the point, rather, to show that even an ignoramus or slave is capable of revealing in himself the seeds of sure judgment and truth when appropriately questioned?

As they proceed in this direction, Phaedrus interrupts: "Agathon, don't let Socrates get you going. He knows nothing more pleasurable," he says expressly, "than to speak with the one he loves, and once we get started in such a dialogue, we'll never see the end of it" [194d]. On that note, Agathon commences his speech, after which Socrates finds himself in a position to correct him.

It is all too easy for Socrates to do so. His method immediately proves to be brilliantly superior, and effortlessly brings out what has just dialectically exploded in Agathon's speech. The procedure 139
is such that it can only be a refutation or annihilation of Agathon's speech, revealing its ineptitude and vacuousness, which commentators, namely the one I mentioned earlier, think Socrates is loath to take too far for fear of humiliating his interlocutor. This would, in their view, explain why Socrates stops short, and proceeds instead by means of she who will go down in history as but a prestigious figure, Diotima, the stranger from Mantinea. If Socrates has Diotima speak in his stead, if he has himself instructed by her here,

it is supposedly so as not to put himself any longer in the position of grandmaster in relation to Agathon, to whom he has dealt a decisive blow.

According to this view, Socrates gives the floor to an imaginary character who instructs him in order to attenuate the distress he has caused Agathon.

I beg to differ with this view. If we examine the text more closely, we cannot say that this is its precise meaning. At the very point where people try to show us that Agathon admits he got off track – "It turns out, Socrates, I didn't know what I was talking about in that speech" [201b] – the impression we are left with in listening to him is rather that of someone who replies something like, "We are not on the same level, I spoke in a way that had a meaning and an underside; we might even go so far as to say that I spoke by enigma" – don't forget αἶνος (*aínos*) and αἰνίττομαι (*ainíttomai*), which take us to the very etymology of the word "enigma" – "I adopted a certain tone in saying what I said."

Furthermore, we find in Socrates' reply that there is a certain way of conceptualizing the kind of praise that involves enveloping the object of praise with all that is best. Socrates denigrates this approach for a moment, but did Agathon really adopt it? On the contrary, it seems that in the very excessive quality of his speech, there was something that was simply asking to be heard. In short, if we understand Agathon's answer in what I think is the right way, we may have the impression for an instant that Socrates, by introducing his critique, dialectic, or mode of interrogation here, ultimately finds himself in a pedantic position.

It is clear that there was something ironic in what Agathon said. Socrates, who tramples over everything with his hobnailed boots, changes the rules of the game. And actually, when Agathon retorts,
140 Ἐγώ, φάναι, ὦ Σώκρατες (*Egó, phánai, O Sókrates*) and so on – "I'm not going to argue or debate with you, but I agree; go to it in your own way, using your own *modus operandi*" [201c] – we have the impression of someone withdrawing here and saying to Socrates, "Let us now shift to another register, to another way of speaking." But we cannot agree with the commentators, even with the one whose translation I have before me, Léon Robin, that this constitutes a sign of impatience on Agathon's part.

To determine whether or not Agathon's speech can be bracketed from this truly paradoxical game, from this sophistic *tour de force*, we need but take seriously – which is the right way to go about it – what Socrates says about it himself. To avail myself of the French term that is most apt here, I would say that Agathon's is a speech that shocks [*sidère*] or dumbfounds [*méduse*] him. This is expressly

stated in the text, for Socrates puns on the name Gorgias and the Gorgon's head [198c]. Agathon's speech, which closes the door to the dialectical game, fascinates Socrates and turns him, as he says, to stone. Such an effect should not be neglected.

Socrates, naturally, shifts things to the level of his method, as it is presented to us by Plato. This involves his method of questioning, his way of questioning, and also of articulating and dividing the object – that is, his way of operating in accordance with this *diaíresis* thanks to which the object is presented for examination and situated in a certain way whose register we can locate. The Socratic method thus promises at the outset a development of knowledge that will constitute progress. But the import of Agathon's speech is not annihilated for all that. It is situated in another register, yet it remains exemplary and plays an essential role in the progress of what is shown to us by way of the succession of eulogies concerning love.

It is probably significant, and rich in instruction, suggestions, and questions for us, that it is Agathon the tragedian who turns love into a comical *romancero*, so to speak, and that it is Aristophanes the comedian who speaks of love in the sense of passion, with an almost modern accent. Socrates' intervention comes as a kind of rupture or break, but one that does not discredit or annihilate what was just stated in Agathon's speech. Can we consider meaningless or as merely antiphrastic the fact that Socrates emphasizes only the fact that it was καλὸν λόγον (*kalón lógon*), a fine speech [198b]? What is ridiculous and can give rise to laughter is often evoked in the text that precedes this, but Socrates in no wise seems to tell us this is 141
the case when he makes his shift in register. At the very moment at which he introduces the wedge that his dialectic rams into the topic to contribute what one expects from the Socratic light, we have the sense of a discordance, and not of a comparison designed to altogether annul what was formulated in Agathon's speech.

With Socrates' questioning, with what is articulated as being Socrates' own method – by which, if you will allow me this Greek pun, the *erómenos*, the beloved, becomes ἐρωτώμενος (*erotómenos*), the questionee – a topic is raised that I have announced several times since the beginning of my commentary: the function of lack.

Everything Agathon says, for example, about the beautiful – that it belongs to love and that it is one of love's attributes – succumbs to Socrates' questioning: "Is the love about which you spoke love of something? Does loving and desiring something mean having it or not having it? Can one desire what one already has?" [199e–200a].

I will skip over the details regarding the way this question is articulated. Socrates casts it and recasts it with an acuity that, as usual, turns his interlocutor into someone he can handle and manipulate.

This is precisely the ambiguity of Socrates as a questioner – he is always the master, even when this may in many cases seem to us, his readers, to be an easy way out. It is, moreover, of little import to know what, in this case, must or can be rigorously developed. What concerns us here is the testimony that constitutes the essence of Socrates' questioning, and also what Socrates introduces, wants to produce, and conventionally speaks about.

We are told that his adversary is unable to refute the conclusion that "such a man or anyone else who has a desire, desires what is not at hand and not present, what he does not have, and what he is not, and that of which he is in want; for such are the objects of desire and love" [200e]. The text is certainly weakly translated: ἐπιθυμεῖ (*epithumeí*) means he desires, τοῦ μὴ ἑτοίμου (*tou me hetoímou*) is strictly speaking "what is not ready to wear," τοῦ μὴ παρόντος (*tou me paróntos*), what is not there, ὃ μὴ ἔχει (*ho me échei*), what he does not have, ὃ μὴ ἔστιν αὐτὸς (*ho me éstin autós*), what he is not
142 himself, and οὗ ἐνδεής ἐστι (*hou endeés estí*), that which he is lacking or essentially lacks.

This is what is articulated by Socrates in what he brings to this dialogue. It concerns something which he says is not situated at the level of word play, by which the subject is captured, captivated, transfixed, and fascinated, and it is in this respect that his method is distinguished from that of the Sophists. He makes the progress of the discourse he develops – with no concern for elegance, so he tells us, using everyday words – reside in the exchange, dialogue, or consent obtained from the person with whom he is speaking. Such consent is presented as the springing forth or necessary emergence of knowledge that his interlocutor already has.

This is, as you know, the linchpin of the whole Platonic theory of the soul, its nature, consistency, and origin. All of this knowledge is already and has forever been there in the soul, and it suffices to pose the right questions to re-evoke and reveal it. This attests to the pre-existence of knowledge, which is why we can but presuppose that the soul partakes of an infinite anteriority. The soul is not merely immortal – it has always been in existence. This is what paves the way for reincarnation and clears the way for metempsychosis. It is, no doubt, what accompanies the development of Platonic thought at the level of myth, which is not that of dialectic.

Something should strike us in this regard. Having introduced what I earlier called the wedge of the function of lack as constitutive of love relations, Socrates goes no further when speaking in his own name. To ask why he substitutes Diotima's authority for his own is to raise a good question.

Yet to say that it is in order to spare Agathon's pride is to answer

this question a bit too easily. If things stand as we are told, Plato could simply execute an altogether elementary judo or jiu-jitsu move, since Agathon expressly says, "Please excuse me, I didn't know what I was saying; my concern lies elsewhere." It is not so much Agathon as Socrates who is in a pickle here. Since we cannot in any way assume that Plato intended to show Socrates to be pedantic or heavy-handed, after Agathon's assuredly lighthearted speech, were it only for its amusing style, we must surely conclude that if Socrates hands the floor over to someone else in his speech, 143
it is for some other reason than because he himself cannot continue without offending Agathon.

This other reason can be immediately situated – it is due to the nature of the affair or thing, *to prágma*, that is at stake.

2

We can suspect, and what follows confirms it, that Socrates is necessarily led to proceed in this manner because they are speaking of love.

Let us note, indeed, the point on which his question bears. The function of lack, to which he gave its own efficacy, is quite patently a return to the desiring function of love: the substitution of ἐπιθυμεῖ (*epithumeí*), he desires, for ἐρᾷ (*erá*), he loves. We can point in the text to the moment at which, asking Agathon whether he thinks love is or is not the love of something, he substitutes the term "desire" for the term "love" [200a].

One might legitimately object, in the name of the very method which is that of Socratic knowledge, that the way love is related to desire is not, strictly speaking, articulated here as a substitution. We have every right to remark that the substitution is carried out a bit quickly here. Which is not to say, however, that Socrates errs in this context, since it is clearly around the articulation of love-Eros and desire-Eros that the entire dialectic developed in the dialogue as a whole in fact revolves. The thing nevertheless needs to be pointed out in passing.

Let us note again that it is hardly accidental that we find thus isolated what is, strictly speaking, Socrates' presentation. Socrates goes so far that what, last time, I called his method – which is to bring to bear the effect of his questioning on what I call the coherence of the signifier – becomes manifest and visible in the very flow of his speech. Consider the way in which he poses his question to Agathon: εἶναι τινὸς ὁ Ἔρως ἔρως, ἢ οὐδενός (*eínai tinós ho Éros éros, e oudenós*), "Is Love such as to be love of something or of nothing?"

[199d]. As the Greek genitive, like the French genitive, has its ambiguities, "something" can take on two meanings here, and these two meanings are articulated in a heavy-handed, almost caricatural way,
144 in the distinction that Socrates draws – τινὸς (*tinós*) can mean being someone's descendant. "I'm not asking," he says, "if he is born of some mother or father" [199d], referring to the whole theogony that was discussed earlier on in the dialogue. The point is not to know from what Love descends, from whom, from what god, it comes – "my kingdom is not of this world," as it is said. The point is, rather, to know, at the level of the questioning of the signifier, what love as a signifier is correlated with.

To the first way of understanding the question [199d], Socrates opposes an example that we cannot help noticing. It is the same thing, he says, to ask regarding "Father," "When you say father, what does that imply?" It is not a question of a real father – that is, what he has by way of a child – but rather of the fact that, when one speaks of a father, one necessarily talks about a son. The father is, by definition, father of a son insofar as he is a father. "You'd tell me, of course, if you wanted to give me a good answer," as Léon Robin translates the Greek, "that it's of a son or a daughter that a father is the father" [199d]. Here we are in the specific realm of Socrates' dialectic, which consists in questioning the signifier as to its coherence as a signifier. Socrates is very nimble and sure-footed on this turf. This is what allows the rather quick substitution I mentioned earlier between Eros and desire to occur. To his mind, this is a form of marked progress that is made possible, he says, by his method.

If he yields the floor to Diotima, isn't it because, concerning love, the Socratic method itself can go no further? Everything shows this to be true, and Diotima's speech itself does so as well.

Why should we be surprised by this? If the *initium* [beginning] of the Socratic approach constitutes a step forward compared to that of his contemporaries, the Sophists, it is because this knowledge – the only certain knowledge, as Socrates tells us in the *Phaedo* – can be asserted on the sole basis of the coherence of discourse that involves dialogue and that revolves around apprehension of the necessity of the law of the signifier. Need I remind you that what is involved when one speaks of even and odd is a domain entirely enclosed within its own register? I think that I have taken enough pains in my teaching here and given you enough exercises to have shown you that even and odd owe nothing to any other experience than to that of the play of signifiers themselves. There is nothing even or odd, in other words countable, other than what has already
145 been raised to the function of a signifying element or seed of the

signifying chain. One can count words or syllables, but one can only count things on the basis of the fact that words and syllables are already counted.

We are clearly at this level when Socrates situates himself outside of the confused world of the debate among the physicists who preceded him, and outside of the discussion of the Sophists who exploit, at various levels, what I might call, in an abbreviated way – and you know that I only resolve to do so with all kinds of reservations – the magical power of words. Socrates, on the contrary, asserts that knowledge resides within the play of the signifier. He posits at the same time that this knowledge, which is entirely transparent to itself, is what constitutes its truth.

Now, haven't we taken a step forward in the same realm that leads us to disagree with Socrates? Socrates' no doubt essential step ensures the autonomy of the law of the signifier, and prepares for us the field of the word that allowed him to criticize all human knowledge as such. But the novelty of psychoanalysis, assuming that what I have been teaching you about the Freudian revolution is correct, is precisely the fact that something can find sustenance in the law of the signifier, not only without involving knowledge but by explicitly excluding it, by constituting itself as unconscious – in other words, as necessitating the eclipse of the subject at the level of knowledge, in order to subsist as an unconscious chain, as constituting what is fundamentally irreducible in the subject's relationship to the signifier.

This is why we are the first, if not the only, people not to be necessarily surprised that the specifically Socratic discourse, that of ἐπιστήμη (*epistéme*), knowledge transparent to itself, cannot be pursued beyond a certain limit concerning a particular object, when this object – assuming that it is the one on which Freud was able to shed new light – is love.

Whatever the case may be, whether you follow me or you do not follow me here, it is clear that in a dialogue like Plato's *Symposium* – which over the ages has, as you know, lost little of its strength, constancy, or interrogative power, retaining all the perplexity that has developed around it – we cannot remain satisfied with an explanation as pitiful as the following, that if Socrates has Diotima speak in his stead, it's simply in order to avoid excessively ruffling 146
Agathon's feathers.

If you will allow me an equally ironic comparison, imagine that I have been asked to expound the whole of my doctrine concerning analysis, whether verbally or in writing, it makes little difference, and in doing so, at a particular turning point, I give the floor to Françoise Dolto. You would say, "There must be some reason for

it. Why is he doing it?" Assuming, of course, that if I give her the floor it is not in order to have her say something stupid. That would not be my method and, moreover, I would have a hard time putting stupid words in her mouth.

Socrates has far less of a hard time with this, as you will see: Diotima's speech is full of glaring gaps. This allows us to easily understand why Socrates does not take responsibility for it. Moreover, Socrates points out these gaps with a whole series of responses that are – it's quite striking, and it suffices to read the text to see this – increasingly amused. His replies are at first quite respectful, and then more and more of the kind, "You think so?" and then, "So be it, let us go as far as the point to which you are dragging me," and in the end, it becomes clearly, "Knock yourself out, my dear girl, I'm listening, go on" [204c, 206e, 208b].

Here I cannot fail to point something out that seems not to have struck commentators. Aristophanes introduces a term concerning love which is transcribed quite simply in French by the word "*dioecisme*," which qualifies the *Spaltung* or division of the round primitive being, that is, of the derisory sphere in Aristophanes' image, whose value I talked about [two classes back]. He uses this word in comparison with a practice that was common in the context of community relations, relations of the city, the mainspring of all politics in Greek society. This dioecism consisted, when one wanted to finish off an enemy city, and this is still done in our times, in dispersing its inhabitants and placing them in what were called relocation camps. This happened shortly before the moment at which the *Symposium* came out, and it is even one of the landmarks that allows us to date it. For it seems that there is something anachronistic here, as the event to which Plato alludes, namely, an initiative on the part of Sparta, took place *after* the supposed meeting narrated in the *Symposium*.

This dioecism is very telling to us. It wasn't at random that I used the term *Spaltung* earlier, which evokes the subjective split. Isn't it
147 insofar as something about love evades Socrates' knowledge that he himself disappears, "dioecizes," and has a woman speak in his stead? Why not say the woman who is in him?

Be that as it may, no one disputes the idea – and certain people have stressed it, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff for one – that there is a difference in register between what Socrates develops with his dialectical method, and what, in Plato's testimony, he presents us in the form of a myth. This is not the case here alone – these things are always clearly separated in Plato's texts. When one arrives, and in plenty of fields other than love, at a certain terminus regarding what can be obtained at the level of *epistéme* or knowledge, myth is necessary in order to go further.

It is quite conceivable to us that there is a limit to knowledge, assuming that the latter is solely what can be accessed by purely and simply bringing the law of the signifier into play. In the absence of far-reaching conquests based on experiments, it is clear that in many domains – and even in domains in which we have no need for such conquests – it is urgent to give myth the floor.

What is remarkable is the rigor of this shifting of gears to the level of myth. Plato always knows perfectly well what he is doing or having Socrates do. Everyone knows that they are speaking in myths, μύθους (*mýthous*). I am not talking about myths in the common meaning of the word, for μύθους λέγειν (*mýthous légein*) does not mean that but, rather, "what people say." And in all of Plato's work, in the *Phaedo*, the *Timaeus*, and the *Republic*, myths arise when Plato needs them in order to fill the gap in what can be assured dialectically.

On this basis, we will be able to see more clearly what might be called the headway made by Diotima's speech.

Someone who is here today once wrote an article entitled, if memory serves me well, "*Un désir d'enfant.*" This article was entirely constructed around the ambiguity of the expression *désir d'enfant*, for it can mean either that the child is the one who desires or that someone desires to have a child. It's no accident that signifiers work in this way, and the proof thereof is that it is around this very ambiguity that Socrates' approach to the problem revolves. Indeed, what was Agathon saying in the final analysis? That Eros is 148
eros – that is, desire – of beauty, in the sense that, I would say, it is the god Beauty who desires. And what does Socrates retort? That a desire for beauty implies that one does not possess beauty.

One might be tempted to shy away from such verbal arguments, but they are not useless in nature, nor do they constitute a sort of needling or hand waving. The proof thereof is that it is around these two terms that Diotima's whole speech develops.

3

To clearly highlight the continuity between Diotima and himself, Socrates tells us that Diotima commenced her dialogue with him at the same level and with the same kinds of arguments that he used with Agathon.

The stranger from Mantinea is presented to us as a priestess and magician. Let us not forget that at this turning point in the *Symposium*, the arts of divination are spoken of at length – in particular, the way of having one's wishes fulfilled by the gods and of

influencing natural forces. Diotima is highly knowledgeable in all such matters of γοητεία (*goeteía*), sorcery, or "mantic," as the Count of Cabanis would have said. *Goeteía* is a Greek term and is found in the dialogue. We are thus told something about her to which surprisingly little attention has been paid, which is that she was successful through her artifices in delaying the plague for ten years, in Athens to boot. It must be admitted that this familiarity with the powers of the plague should give us pause for thought and help us situate the stature and approach of the person who is going to speak to us about love.

Things are thus introduced at this level, and Diotima goes on by responding to Socrates, who is, on this occasion, pretending to be naive or feigning that it is all Greek to him. He asks her the following question, "So, if love is not beautiful, is it ugly?" [201e]. Indeed, this is where his method leads, a method said to be one of more or less, yes or no, presence or absence. This is what is specific to the law of the signifier: whatever is not beautiful is ugly. This is, at least, what is rigorously implied by following Socrates' ordinary way of questioning. To which the priestess is in a position to answer, "Watch your tongue! Do you really think that, if a thing is not
149 beautiful, it has to be ugly?" [201e]. Diotima then recounts for us the myth of the birth of Love, and it is worth our while to dwell upon it.

This myth is found only in Plato's work. Among the innumerable mythical narrations of the birth of Love found in the literature of Antiquity, and I took the time to look through a number of them, there is no trace of anything that resembles what is enunciated here. Plato's is nevertheless the myth that has remained the most popular. It thus seems that someone, who owes nothing to tradition in this regard, to be explicit, a writer of the era of the *Aufklärung* like Plato, is altogether capable of forging a myth, a myth that must have been enthusiastically handed down through the ages for it to function as such. Can anyone be unaware of the fact that Love is the son of Πόρος (*Póros*) and Πενία (*Penía*) since Plato first said so?

The translator whose work I have before me, simply because it is placed opposite the Greek text, translates *Póros* with some relevance as Expedient. If that means Resource, it is certainly a valid translation. *Astuce* [cunning, ruse] is too, since Poros is the son of Μῆτις (*Métis*), which means something closer to invention than to wisdom. Opposite him we find the female character who will be the mother of Love, *Penía*, namely Poverty, even Abject Poverty. She is characterized in the text as ἀπορία (*aporía*) – namely, she has no resources. She herself is aware that she has no resources. The word "aporia," as you know, is the one that serves us concerning philosophical argumentation: it refers to an impasse, something that

makes us throw in the towel, having exhausted our resources. So we have the female Aporia opposite Poros, the Expedient, which seems rather enlightening.

What is so nice about this myth is the way Aporia engendered Love with Poros. At the moment at which this happened, it was Aporia who was awake, who had her eyes wide open. She had, we are told, come to the festivities in honor of the birth of Aphrodite and, like any self-respecting Aporia in this hierarchical era, she remained on the steps near the door. Being Aporia – in other words, having nothing to offer – she did not enter the banquet hall. But the great thing about parties is precisely that things happen at them that overturn the ordinary order of events. Poros falls asleep. He falls asleep because he is drunk, and this is what allows Aporia to get herself knocked up by him, and to have this kid named Love, whose date of conception thus coincides with Aphrodite's date of birth. 150
This is why, we are told, love always has some obscure relationship with beauty, which is what is in fact at stake in the remainder of Diotima's speech. Love and beauty are connected owing to the fact that Aphrodite is a beautiful goddess.

Things are stated quite clearly here: masculinity is desirable, femininity is active. This is, at any rate, how things present themselves at the moment of Love's birth.

If I trot out in this regard the formulation that "love is giving what you don't have," there is nothing artificial about it and it's not simply in order to rehash one of my old stock phrases. It is obvious that this is what is at stake here, as the poor Aporia, by definition and structure, has nothing to give above and beyond her constitutive lack or aporia. The expression "giving what you don't have" is literally written out in section 202a of the text of the *Symposium*: ἄνευ τοῦ ἔχειν λόγον δοῦναι (*áneu tou échein lógon doúnai*). It is the exact same formulation, although it is proffered here as regards discourse – in particular, as regards the fact that [one can have a correct opinion or judgment] without having a reason or worthwhile explanation to give for it.

This is said at the moment at which Diotima is led to say what love belongs to. Well, love belongs to a zone, to a form of affair, thing, *prágma*, or praxis that is at the same level and of the same quality as δόξα (*dóxa*). In other words, there are discourses, behaviors, or opinions – those are the translations we provide for the term *dóxa* – that are true without the subject being able to know it. *Dóxa* might well be true, but it is not *epistéme*; it is one of the stock tenets of Platonic doctrine to distinguish the field of *dóxa* from that of *epistéme*. Love as such is part of the former field. It lies between *epistéme* and ἀμαθία (*amathía*) [ignorance], just as it lies between

the beautiful and the ugly. It is neither the one nor the other. This might well remind us of Socrates' objection, an objection which is no doubt trumped up, that if love is lacking in beauty, it must be ugly. Yet it is not ugly. The whole domain exemplified by *dóxa*, to which we constantly return in Plato's work, shows that love is, to use Plato's term, μεταξύ (*metaxú*) – that is, between the two.

But that's not all. We cannot remain satisfied with such an abstract, even negative, definition of what is in-between. It is here that Diotima brings in the notion of the demonic as the intermediary between immortals and mortals, between gods and men. This notion is essential here, in that it confirms what I told you we should
151 think concerning what the gods are – namely, that they belong to the field of the real. The gods exist – their existence is in no wise disputed here. The demonic, daemon, or δαιμόνιον (*daimónion*) – and Love is far from the one example – is that by which the gods convey their message to mortals, whether they are asleep or awake.

Something strange that does not seem to have attracted much attention either is who this "whether they are asleep or awake" concerns? The gods or men? I assure you that in the Greek text there is room for doubt. Everyone translates it commonsensically – as related to men – but it is in the dative, which is precisely the case of the *theoí* in the sentence, such that it is another little enigma upon which we will not dwell for long. Let us simply say that this myth situates the demonic order where our psychology speaks of animism.

This should incite us to rectify our overly cursory idea of the notion a primitive person would have of the animistic world. What we are told in passing is that it is the world of messages that we would call enigmatic, which means – but only to us – messages in which the subject does not recognize his own contribution. If the discovery of the unconscious is essential, it is because it has allowed us to extend the field of messages we can authenticate, in the only proper meaning of the term, insofar as it is grounded in the domain of the symbolic. In other words, many of the messages that we believe to be opaque messages from reality [*réel*] are merely our own. This is what we have reclaimed from the world of the gods. Here, at the point at which we have arrived in the *Symposium*, this has not yet been reclaimed.

Next time, we will continue to examine Diotima's myth from end to end, and having given it a thorough working over, we will see why it is doomed to leave opaque the object of the praises that constitute the rest of the *Symposium*. The only field in which the elucidation of its truth can develop is the one that follows Alcibiades' entrance.

Far from being a mere add-on, a null and void part, or one

which must simply be rejected, Alcibiades' entrance is essential. It is only in the action that develops afterward between Alcibiades, 152
Agathon, and Socrates that we can effectively delineate the structural relationship in which we can recognize what the discovery of the unconscious and the practice of psychoanalysis – namely, the experience of transference – finally allow us as analysts to be able to express dialectically.

January 18, 1961

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IX

EXIT FROM THE ULTRA-WORLD

The fascination with beauty.
Identification with what is supremely lovable.
Socrates' "he did not know."
It takes three to love.
The object of unique covetousness.

Last time we got as far as the point where, in speaking of love, Socrates has Diotima speak in his stead.

I underscored the astonishing substitution that occurs at the dialogue's acme or point of maximum interest, placing a question mark next to it. Socrates has just provided the decisive turning point by showing lack to be at the heart of the question of what love is. Love can, in effect, only be articulated around lack, owing to the fact that love can but lack what it desires. I showed you that Socrates' questioning, with its ever triumphant and magisterial style, is the crux of his dialectic insofar as he brings it to bear on the coherence of the signifier. It is at the point at which he distinguishes *epistéme*, science, from every other kind of knowledge that, strangely enough, he ambiguously yields the floor to she who, in his stead, expresses herself through myth. I pointed out to you that the Greek term for myth is not as narrow as it is in our language, due to the distance we have placed between myth and science: μύθους λέγειν (*mýthous légein*) is both a precise story and discourse – in a word, it is what people say. This is what Socrates defers to in letting Diotima speak.

I briefly highlighted the relation between this substitution and the dioecism whose form and essence Aristophanes had already outlined as being at the heart of the problem of love. By an odd division, it is perhaps the woman in Socrates, I said, that he allows to speak at this point.

The set or succession of forms, the series of transformations – in the sense the latter term takes on in combinatories – [in Diotima's

speech] is expressed in a geometrical demonstration. And it is in the 154
transformation of figures as her speech proceeds that we will try to find the structural landmarks which, for us and for Plato who is our guide here, provide the coordinates of the dialogue's theme – namely, love.

1

Examining Diotima's speech, we see something develop in it that makes us slip further and further away from the original notion Socrates introduced in his dialectic by positing the term "lack."

What Diotima questions us about, what she leads us toward, is already sketched out in the question she asks at the point at which she takes up Socrates' speech, "What is he who loves lacking in?" Here we find ourselves immediately drawn into the dialectic of good things [*biens*], concerning which I ask you to recall my Seminar last year on ethics. "Why does he who loves love these things?" [204d–e]. He loves them, she continues, in order to enjoy them. Then she stops and a backward movement begins.

Is the dimension of love thus going to be said to arise from all good things [*biens*]? Diotima here refers to something as worthy of note as what I accentuated as being the original function of creation as such: ποίησις (*poíesis*). When we speak of *poíesis*, she says, we are talking about creation, but don't you see that the use we make of it is more limited when we are referring to poetry and music? The name for the whole serves to designate the part [205c]. Similarly, every aspiration toward good things is a sort of love, but in order for us to speak of love, strictly speaking, something must be made more specific. This is how she introduces the theme of the love of beauty. Beauty specifies the direction in which the call or attraction to possession, to the enjoyment of possessing, to the constitution of a κτῆμα (*ktéma*) arises. This is the point to which Diotima leads us in order to define love.

In the course of her speech, a moment of surprise or a jump is clearly emphasized. In what sense is this good thing [*bien*] related to beauty or specified especially as beauty? It is here that Socrates 155
attests, in one of his replies, to the fact that he marvels at sophistic discourse, that he is shocked by it, as I mentioned last time. Diotima proves here that she has the same priceless authority as that with which the Sophists exercised their fascination, and Plato warns us that in this sense she expresses herself exactly like them [208b].

What she presents is the following: beauty has nothing to do with having, with anything that can be possessed, but rather with being, and specifically with mortal being.

What is characteristic of mortal being is that it perpetuates itself through reproduction. Reproduction and destruction, such is the alternation that rules the realm of what is perishable. Such is also the feature that makes it an inferior order of reality – at least this is how it is described in the Socratic view, as much by Socrates as by Plato. It is precisely because the human realm is afflicted with this alternation of generation and corruption that it finds its eminent rule elsewhere, higher up, in the realm of essences – which is afflicted by neither generation nor corruption – that of the eternal forms, participation in which alone assures that what exists is grounded in being.

And beauty? In the movement of generation, which is the mode by which what is mortal reproduces itself, approaching thereby the permanent and the eternal, its fragile mode of participating in the eternal – in this very movement or distant form of participation, it is beauty that helps us, as it were, get over the difficult hurdles. Beauty is the mode of a kind of giving birth – which is not painless, but which involves the least pain possible. It is the painful escape route of all that is mortal toward what it aspires to: immortality. Diotima's whole speech articulates the function of beauty as being first and foremost an illusion, a fundamental mirage, by which perishable and fragile beings are sustained in their quest for permanence, which is their essential aspiration.

One finds therein almost shameless occasion for a whole series of slippages that amount to so many dissimulations. Diotima introduces first, as being of the same order, the constancy whereby the subject recognizes himself as always being the same in his life, his short life as an individual, despite the fact that there is not a single detail of his carnal reality, from his hair right down to his bones,
156 which is not the locus of perpetual renewal. The underlying theme is that nothing is ever the same, everything is in flux, everything changes, and yet something recognizes itself, affirms itself, tells itself that it is always itself. This is what Diotima refers to significantly in order to tell us that the renewal of beings via generation is analogous, and in the final analysis, of the same nature. The fact that beings succeed one another by reproducing the same type – in other words, the mystery of morphogenesis – is the same as what sustains the form in its constancy.

Here we see a prime reference to death, and a pinpointing of the function of the mirage of beauty as that which guides the subject in his relationship to death, insofar as he is both outstripped and directed by immortality. It is impossible, in this respect, for you not to be reminded of what I tried to broach last year concerning the function of beauty as a defense, where beauty intervenes as a barrier

at the limit of the zone I defined as lying between-two-deaths. If there are two desires that captivate man, on the one hand in relation to eternity, and on the other in relation to reproduction, complete with the corruption and destruction it involves, beauty is designed to veil his desire for death insofar as it is unapproachable. This is clear even at the beginning of Diotima's speech.

We find anew here the ambiguous phenomenon that I brought out concerning tragedy. Tragedy evokes or approaches the desire for death which, as such, hides behind the evocation of *Áte*, the fundamental calamity around which the tragic hero's fate revolves; and tragedy is also, for us, insofar as we are called upon to participate in it, the culminating moment in which the mirage of tragic beauty appears.

This is the ambiguity around which I told you the slippage in Diotima's whole speech occurs. I will leave you to trace it yourselves through all its developments. The desire *for* beauty [*désir de beau*] – desire insofar as it attaches itself to this mirage and gets caught up in it – is what corresponds to the hidden presence of the desire for death. The desire that comes from beauty [*désir du beau*] is what, reversing this function, makes the subject choose the trace or appeals [*appels*] of what the object offers him, or at least certain objects. It is here that the slippage occurs in Diotima's speech that turns beauty – which was not, strictly speaking, a medium, but rather a transition or passageway – into the very goal that is sought. In remaining, so to speak, the guide, the guide becomes the object(ive) or rather takes 157
the place of the objects that can be its prop. And this transition is explicitly indicated in her speech.

But this transition is distorted [*faussée*]. Diotima goes as far as possible in developing functional beauty, beauty in its relation to the aim of immortality, and does not eschew paradox, since she specifically evokes the tragic reality to which we referred last year. She goes so far as to raise a question, which is not without eliciting some cynical smiles: "Do you actually believe that those who prove themselves capable of the most beautiful acts, like Alcestis" – about whom I spoke last year concerning tragedy's between-two-deaths – "insofar as she accepted to die in Admetus' stead, did not do it so that people would talk about it, so that discourse would forever immortalize her?" [208d]. This is where Diotima stops, saying, "While you have been able to follow me thus far, I don't know if you will be able to go as far as *époptie*," evoking thereby the dimension of the mysteries [209e–210a].

She then resumes her speech in this other register, wherein what was but a transition [or guide] becomes a goal. Developing the theme of what we might call a Platonic Don Juanism, she shows

us the ladder that proposes itself at this new phase, which develops in an initiation-like vein – we see objects dissolve, in a progressive climb, into pure beauty, beauty in itself, unadulterated beauty [211d–e]. Diotima abruptly shifts to a theme that certainly seems to no longer have anything to do with that of reproduction, and that moves from love, not only for a handsome young man, but for the beauty in all beautiful young people, to the essence of beauty, and then from the essence of beauty to eternal beauty. She thus takes a very lofty perspective, to the point of grasping the play, in the world order, of the reality that revolves around the fixed plane of the stars, which is, as I have already indicated, that by which [human] knowledge joins up with that of the Immortals in Plato's perspective.

I think I have sufficiently made you sense the dissimulation by which, on the one hand, beauty – at first defined and encountered as a bonus along the path of being – becomes the goal of the pilgrimage, while, on the other hand, the object – at first presented as the prop of beauty – becomes the transition toward beauty.

158 To return here to my own terminology, one might say that the dialectical definition of love, as it is developed by Diotima, intersects with what I have tried to define as the metonymic function in desire. What is at issue in her speech is something beyond all objects that resides in the movement of a certain aim and a certain relation – that of desire – through all objects and toward an unlimited perspective.

On the basis of numerous clues, one might believe that this is the last word of the discussion in the *Symposium*. This is basically what we have long been used to taking as Plato's view of Eros.

Erastés, *erón*, the lover, is led toward a distant *erómenos*, by all the *erómenoi*, all that is lovable, all that is worthy of being loved. It is a distant *erómenos* or *erómenon*, for his quest can also have a neuter goal. The problem then is what is signified by and what can continue to signify – beyond this outstripping, this marked jump – that which presented itself at the beginning of the dialectic as *ktéma*, the goal of possessing.

The step we have made no doubt adequately indicates that the aim is no longer to be situated at the level of having, but rather at the level of being, and also that this progression or ascesis involves a transformation or becoming of the subject: a final identification with what is supremely lovable. In short, the further the subject goes in his aim, the more he is within his rights to love himself, so to speak, via his ideal ego. The more he desires, the more he himself becomes desirable.

Theologians point at this in order to tell us that Platonic Eros cannot be reduced to what Christian *Agápe* has revealed to us, inasmuch as in Platonic Eros, the loving person aims only at his own perfection – love aims only at its own perfection.

Now, the commentary that I am in the process of offering on the *Symposium* seems to me apt to show that this is not at all the case.

This is not where Plato leaves off, on the condition that we are willing to look beyond the immediate terrain and ask ourselves, first, what is signified by the fact that Socrates has Diotima speak in his stead and, second, what happens once Alcibiades arrives on the scene.

2

159

Let us not forget that Diotima first introduces love as not at all partaking of the nature of the gods, but rather of that of daemons, insofar as their nature lies between that of Immortals and mortals.

Let us not forget that, in order to illustrate it and ensure that its impact is felt, she supplies nothing less than a comparison with what, in Plato's discourse, lies midway between *epistéme*, science in the Socratic sense, and *amathía*, ignorance – namely, *dóxa*, true opinion [202a]. *Dóxa* is no doubt true, but the subject is unable to account for it – he does not know in what way it is true.

I highlighted in this context two statements that are very striking. The first, ἄνευ τοῦ ἔχειν λόγον δοῦναι (*áneu tou échein lógon doúnai*), characterizes *dóxa* as giving an answer without having one, echoing the formulation I myself have proposed here that love is giving what you don't have. The other formulation, which stands opposite the first, and which is no less worthy of being emphasized, is on the courtyard side, so to speak, looking out toward *amathía*. *Dóxa*, indeed, is not ignorance either, for how could what perchance hits the real and encounters what is, τὸ γὰρ τοῦ ὄντος τύγχανον (*to gar tou óntos túngchanon*), be absolute ignorance [202a]?

This is what we must perceive in what I might call the Platonic staging of the dialogue. Even though it is posited at the outset that the only matters about which Socrates knows anything are matters of love, he can only speak of them by remaining in the zone of the "he did not know." Even when knowledgeable, he himself cannot speak of what he knows and must have someone else speak who speaks without knowing.

This is what allows us to situate in its proper context, for example, the intangibility of Agathon's response, when he eludes Socrates' dialectic by saying to him quite simply, "Let's just say that I didn't know what I meant." This is why. This – in the extraordinarily derisory way I have brought out – is what makes for the import of Agathon's speech, the peculiar import it derives from the fact that these words are put in a tragic poet's mouth. The tragic poet,

as I showed you, can speak of love only in a clownish way, just as
160 Aristophanes, the comic poet, has been given the job of bringing out the passionate aspects that we associate with the tragic landscape.

"He did not know." The myth Diotima introduces concerning the birth of Love takes on its full meaning here. Love is conceived while Poros is asleep, Poros being the son of Metis, Invention, the all-knowing and all-powerful, the most resourceful. It is while he is sleeping, at a moment at which he longer knows anything, that the encounter takes place through which Love is engendered. She who slips in, owing to her desire to produce this birth, Aporia, the feminine Aporia, is *erastés*, the originally desiring person in the veritably feminine position I have emphasized several times. She is quite precisely defined in her essence or nature, let me stress this, before the birth of Love, by what she is lacking – there is nothing *erómenon* about her. In the myth, Aporia, absolute poverty, is at the doorstep of the banquet of the gods being held the day of Aphrodite's birth. She is in no wise recognized, she has in herself none of the qualities [*biens*] that would give her the right to sit at the table of true beings [*étants*]. It is in this respect that she is *prior* to Love. The metaphor by which we always recognize that love is operating, even when it is hidden in the shadows, the metaphor whereby *erón* or *erastés* is restored to *erómenon*, is missing here due to the absence of *erómenon* at the outset. It is the logical time before the birth of Love that is thus described here.

On the other hand, the "he did not know" is absolutely essential. Allow me to highlight what came to me last night while I was trying to punctuate this structural, connecting moment.

It was the echo of the admirable poem from which I deliberately selected an example in order to try to demonstrate the fundamental nature of metaphor. The poem, "Booz Sleeping," would alone suffice, despite all the objections our snobbery might have against it, to make Victor Hugo a poet worthy of Homer. You will not be surprised at the following two verses which suddenly came to me, having known them forever:

Booz ne savait point qu'une femme était là,
Et Ruth ne savait point ce que Dieu voulait d'elle.

Booz did not know that a woman was there,
and Ruth did not know what God wanted from her.

Reread the poem and you will see that it lacks none of the features that give the fundamental drama of Oedipus its eternal meaning and
161 weight, not even the between-two-deaths evoked several stanzas before these concerning Booz's age and widowhood.

Voilà longtemps que celle avec qui j'ai dormi,
Ô Seigneur ! a quitté ma couche pour la vôtre;
Et nous sommes encor tout mêlés l'un à l'autre,
Elle à demi vivante et moi mort à demi.

She with whom I slept has long since,
O Lord! left my bed for yours;
Yet we are still mingled with one another,
She half-living and I half-dead.

We have here the between-two-deaths and its relation to the tragic dimension evoked in it as constitutive of paternal transmission – nothing is missing in this poem. Which is why the metaphorical function is found throughout the poem. Everything is taken to extremes, right up to the aberrations, so to speak, of the poet, since he goes so far as to say what he has to say by forcing the themes he uses: "*Comme dormait Jacob, comme dormait Judith*" ("As Jacob slept, as Judith slept"). Yet it was never Judith who slept, it was Holofernes. But so what? Hugo is right all the same. What we glimpse in effect at the end of the poem is what is expressed by the wonderful image with which it concludes:

et Ruth se demandait,
Immobile, ouvrant l'oeil à moitié sous ses voiles,
Quel Dieu, quel moissonneur de l'éternel été
Avait, en s'en allant, négligemment jeté
Cette faucille d'or dans le champ des étoiles.

and Ruth wondered,
Lying motionless and half-opening her eye beneath her veils,
What God, what harvester of eternal summer,
Had, in departing, negligently thrown
This golden sickle into the field of stars.

The billhook [with which Cronus castrated Uranus] could not fail to be included at the end of this complete constellation that constitutes the paternity complex.

This digression, for which I beg your pardon, concerning the "he did not know," seems to me essential to make you understand what is at stake in Diotima's speech. Socrates can only locate himself in his knowledge here by showing that there can be no discourse on love but from the point at which he did not know. This is the mainspring of what is signified by Socrates' choice of this way of teaching at this precise moment in the dialogue.

But at the same time, we have proof that this is not what allows us
162 to grasp what takes place in love relations either. What allows us to is precisely what will follow – namely, Alcibiades' entrance.

3

The marvelous, splendid, oceanic unfolding of Diotima's speech ends without Socrates having, in sum, made any attempt to resist.

Significantly, right after her speech, Aristophanes raises his index finger to say, "Let me get a word in edgewise all the same." An allusion has been made to a certain theory, indeed to Aristophanes' theory, which the good Diotima has just nonchalantly kicked out of the way [205d–e]. This is significantly anachronistic, for while Socrates says that Diotima told him all of this some time before, it doesn't stop him from having her talk about the speech Aristophanes just made. Aristophanes has a thing or two to say in response, and for good reason. Plato indexes this point, showing that there is someone who is not content. Let us see, using my method, which is to stick to the text, whether what develops afterward does not bear some relation to this index, even if this raised index finger, which says it all, gets cut off. And by what? By Alcibiades' entrance.

Here, a change of scene takes place before our very eyes.

We must clearly indicate first of all into what world it suddenly casts us anew, after the great fascinating mirage. I say "anew," for this world is not the ultra-world, it is the world *tout court*, in which we know, after all, how love is experienced. Despite all these fine stories, as fascinating as they may seem, a bit of tumultuous ruckus – the entrance of a few drunkards – suffices to bring us back to reality [*réel*].

We are now going to see incarnated the transcendence by which we have seen played out, in a ghost-like way, the substitution of one for another. And if, as I teach you, it takes three to love, not just two, well, we are going to witness it here.

Alcibiades enters, and it is not unfitting that you see him emerge in the shape in which he appears, with his formidable countenance due not only to his officially drunk state, but also to the large quantity of garlands he is wearing that manifestly have an eminently exhibitionistic meaning in the divine position he assumes as a leader of men [*chef humain*] [212d–e].

163 Never forget what we are missing out on by no longer wearing wigs. Try to imagine what the learned as well as the frivolous agitations of seventeenth-century conversations might have been like when each of the speakers shook, with each of his words, his lionlike

mane, which was moreover a magnet for filth and vermin. Picture to yourself the wig of the seventeenth century. From the perspective of its mantic effect, we are missing out on quite a bit.

Not Alcibiades, however, and he goes right to the only person whose identity he is able to discern given his inebriated condition. Thank God it is the man of the house, Agathon. He goes to lie down next to him, without realizing where that places him, namely, in the *metaxú* position, in-between, between Socrates and Agathon – in other words, precisely at the point at which we have arrived, where the debate swings between the game of he who knows and, knowing, shows that he must speak without knowing, and he who, not knowing, spoke no doubt like a birdbrain, but very well nevertheless, as Socrates himself emphasizes when he comments, "You said some very fine things." This is where Alcibiades seats himself, not without jumping up when he perceives that that damned Socrates is there too.

I will not take our analysis of what is contributed by the whole scene which begins with Alcibiades' entrance all the way today, although not for personal reasons. I will nevertheless sketch out the first outlines of what the scene introduces.

Well, let's say that there is a stage-like atmosphere to it. I will not accentuate the caricatural aspect of things. I spoke offhandedly of this symposium as an assembly of old faggots, given that they are not all characterized by the first flush of youth, yet they are not without being based on a certain model. Alcibiades is a real piece of work. And when Socrates asks to be protected from Alcibiades who does not allow him to look at anyone else, it is not because commentaries on the *Symposium* have been provided over the centuries by university professors, with all that implies both by way of nobility and universal missing the point – we are not going to let this make us overlook the fact that what is happening here is, strictly speaking, as I have already mentioned, scandalous in nature.

We must recognize that the dimension of love is in the process of showing itself to us in a way in which one of its characteristics certainly must be sketched out. First of all, it is clear that when this 164
dimension manifests itself in reality [*réel*], it does not tend toward harmony. The beauty toward which the procession of desiring souls seemed to climb certainly does not seem to structure everything into a kind of convergence.

Oddly enough, it is not clear, in love's manifestations, that you call on everyone else to love what you love, to join with you in the ascension toward *erómenon*. The first thing we see is that Alcibiades wants to keep Socrates – this eminently lovable man, since he is depicted as a divine personage right from the very first words of the dialogue – for himself.

You will tell me that you don't believe it, basing yourselves on all sorts of things that prove it. That's not the point. We are following the text, and this is what is presented in it. And not only is this what is presented in it, but it is this very dimension that is, strictly speaking, introduced here.

Is it a question of competition? If the word is taken in the sense and function I gave it when I articulated the transitivisms by which the object is constituted, insofar as it institutes communication between two subjects, no. Something of a different order is introduced here. The object of unique covetousness, so to speak, is introduced and constituted as such at the heart of love's action. One wants to shove aside the competition for this object that one is averse to even having shown.

Recall that this is how I introduced it in my discourse three years ago [Seminar V]. Remember that, in order to define object *a* in fantasy, I took the example, in *La Grande Illusion* by Renoir, of Dalio showing his little automaton, and the woman-like blushing with which he effaces himself after having set it in motion. Alcibiades' public confession is played out in this same dimension, accompanied by some kind of uneasiness of which Alcibiades himself is so well aware that he even mentions it in his speech [214d].

We are no doubt in the truth of wine – this is explicitly stated – *in vino veritas*. Kierkegaard takes up this point when he writes his own *Symposium* ["In Vino Veritas" in *Works of Love*] – but one must truly have gone beyond all the bounds of propriety to speak of love as Alcibiades does when he exposes what transpired between himself and Socrates.

165 What kind of object is there behind all of this that leads to such a vacillation in the subject himself?

I will leave you today with the function of the object, insofar as it is specifically indicated in the whole of this text, in order to present it to you next time.

What I will tell you will revolve around a word that is found in the text, and whose use in Greek allows us to glimpse the history and function, which I believe I have refound, of the object at stake here. This word is ἄγαλμα (*ágalma*), which, we are told, is what is hidden within the disheveled silenus known as Socrates.

I leave you today with the unexplored enigma of this word in the dialogue itself.

January 25, 1961

X

ÁGALMA

Ágalma and the master.
The fetish function.
The god trap.
From the partial object to the other.
A subject is an other.

I ended last time – at a sort of way-station along our path – on a word about which I said I would leave it with its full enigmatic value until this time: *ágalma*.

I didn't realize I had put it so well. For many of you the enigma was so complete that people asked, "What? What did he say? Do you know?" Anyway, to those who manifested this worry, someone in my household was able to provide the following response – which proves that in my home secondary school serves at least some purpose – that it means "ornament" or "jewelry."

Be that as it may, this response was but a first take on what everyone should know: ἀγάλλω (*agállo*) means to "bejewel" or "adorn," and *ágalma* does in fact signify "ornament" or "jewelry" at first glance. But the notion of jewelry is not as simple as it may seem and one realizes right away that it can take us quite far. Why bejewel oneself? And with what?

If we are at the crux of something now, many different avenues must lead us here. The fact remains that I selected the word *ágalma* as the pivotal point of my explanation. Rather than take it as an attempt on my part to find something extremely unusual, assume that in a text like the *Symposium*, to which we attribute the utmost rigor, something leads us to this crucial point.

168

1

The word *ágalma* appears at the very moment at which I told you the scene changes completely. After the eulogistic games regulated up until then by the topic of love, Alcibiades, the actor who changes everything, enters.

The proof that he changes everything is that he himself modifies the rules of the game, assigning himself the place of he who presides over the symposium. From now on, he says, we are no longer going to provide eulogies of love, but of the other, and namely, of the person to our right. That's already going very far. If love is to be involved here, it's love in action, and it is the relation of the one to the other that will have to manifest itself here.

I have already pointed out to you a remarkable fact that is manifested as soon as things take off in this direction, led by the experienced director whom we assume to be behind this dialogue. I must say that this assumption is confirmed by the incredible intellectual genealogy that stems from the *Symposium*, the second to last echo of which I mentioned last time, Kierkegaard's "In Vino Veritas" [in *Works of Love*], and the last, which I have already mentioned as well, *Agape and Eros*, by Anders Nygren, it too being dependent upon the structure of the *Symposium*. As soon as this experienced director brings into play the other, there has to be more than one – there are two others here. In other words, there have to be at least three in all. This remarkable fact does not escape Socrates in his response to Alcibiades. After Alcibiades' extraordinary avowal, public confession, or outburst that lies somewhere between a declaration of love and almost, as it were, a defamation of Socrates, the latter responds: "It is not for my benefit that you have spoken, but for Agathon's."

This allows us to realize that we are shifting to another register than the one I pointed out in Diotima's speech. What was at stake there was a dyadic relation. He who begins to climb toward love proceeds by the path of identification and of production, as it were, aided by the marvel of beauty. He finds in beauty his terminus and identifies it with the perfection of the labor of love. We see there a twofold relationship whose goal is identification with the
169 Sovereign Good – something that I called into question last year. Something else is suddenly substituted here for the theme of the supreme Good – the complexity or, more precisely, the triplicity that proposes to provide us with what I consider essential in the psychoanalytic discovery: the topology from which the subject's relation to the symbolic results at its core, insofar as the symbolic is essentially distinct from the imaginary and its capture.

This is our terminus, and I will articulate it next time in concluding what I want to say about the *Symposium*, which will allow me to bring out old models that I gave you of intrasubjective topology, insofar as Freud's second topography must be understood accordingly. What I am pointing out today is essential if we are to intersect that topology, in the sense that we have to intersect it regarding the topic of love. In question here is the nature of love and a position, an essential but forgotten or elided connection, of which we analysts have nevertheless provided the linchpin that allows us to bring out its problematic. What I have to say regarding *ágalma* today will revolve around this.

It is all the more extraordinary and almost scandalous that the fact that we have here a specifically psychoanalytic notion has not been better highlighted before. I hope to help you put your finger on it later and obtain your consent on this point.

Here is how *ágalma* presents itself in the text. Alcibiades speaks of Socrates and says that he is going to unmask him. As you know, Alcibiades goes into considerable detail regarding his affair with Socrates. What did Alcibiades try to do? I would say that he tried to get Socrates to manifest his desire to him. He knows that Socrates has some desire for him, but what he wanted was a sign thereof.

Let us leave that in abeyance for a moment. It is too soon to ask why. We are merely at the beginning of Alcibiades' speech, and at first glance, it doesn't seem essentially different from what has been said thus far by the others. Early on, in Pausanias' speech, the question was what we look for in love, and it was said that what everyone looks for in the other – an exchange of courtesies – is what he contains that is *erómenon*, desirable. The very same thing seems to be at stake now.

Alcibiades tells us, as a sort of preamble, that Socrates is someone whose amorous inclinations draw him to pretty boys [216d]. He is ignorant of everything, he knows nothing – at least apparently. On this subject, Alcibiades repeats the famous comparison with the 170
silenus that he mentioned when beginning his eulogy, and which is twofold in scope. First of all, there is Socrates' appearance, which is anything but beautiful. But, on the other hand, this silenus is not simply the image designated by that name. It is also a wrapper that looks like a silenus usually looks: like a container or way of presenting something. There must have been some small items in the industry of the time – little silenuses that served as jewelry boxes or packaging in which to offer gifts.

This is precisely what is involved. This topological indication is essential. What is important is what is inside. *Ágalma* may well mean ornamentation or ornament, but here it means above all gem

or precious object – something that is inside. And it is with this that Alcibiades rips us away from the dialectic of beauty that had, up until then, served as the pathway, guide, or mode of capture along the pathway of the desirable. He makes the scales fall from our eyes regarding Socrates himself.

Let it be known, he says, that Socrates supposedly loves pretty boys; οὔτε εἴ τις καλός ἐστι (*oúte ei tis kalós estí*), but he couldn't care less whether one or the other of them is pretty, μέλει αὐτῷ οὐδέν (*mélei autó oudén*), he despises it on the contrary, καταφρονεῖ (*kataphroneí*), to an unbelievable extent, τοσοῦτον ὅσον οὐδ' ἂν εἷς οἰηθείη (*tosoúton hóson oud an heis oietheíe*), you can't even imagine how much [216d–e]. And in truth the goal he pursues – what is it exactly? I am underscoring it because it is in the text. It is expressly articulated at this point that it is not outward good things that he pursues, wealth, for example, about which everyone up until then – these are refined people, after all – has said this is not what we look for in others. It is not any of the other advantages either that may seem in some way to bring μακαρία (*makaría*), happiness, ὑπὸ πλήθους (*hupó pléthous*), to one and all [216e]. We would be completely mistaken to interpret this as if the point were to disdain the things that are considered good by the masses. What are dismissed here are precisely what was talked about up until this point: good things in general.

On the other hand, Alcibiades tells us, don't be fooled by Socrates' strange appearance – he pretends to be naive, εἰρωνευόμενος (*eironeuómenos*), questions, acts dumb to find out more, truly acts like a child, and spends his time bantering. But σπουδάσαντος δὲ αὐτοῦ (*spoudásantos de autoú*) – which is not "when he decides to be serious," as it is translated, but rather, "let's be serious, pay close
171 attention" – open this silenus up; ἀνοιχθέντος (*anoichthéntos*), partly open, I don't know if anyone has ever seen the ἀγάλματα (*agálmata*) that are inside [216e].

Alcibiades thus immediately calls into question whether anyone has ever been able to see what is at stake. We know that this is not merely an impassioned speech. It is the discourse of passion at its peak of trembling – namely, at a peak that is entirely contained in his preamble [*origine*], even before he explains himself. It is here, weighed down by everything he has to tell us, that he is about to let loose with a back kick. It is thus clearly the language of passion.

We immediately sense this unique, personal relationship. "No one has ever seen what is in question as I managed to. I saw it. I saw them, the *agálmata* that are already divine – χρυσᾶ (*chrusá*), they're wonderful, they're golden – totally beautiful, so utterly amazing that there was only one thing to do, ἐν βραχεῖ (*en bracheí*), and right

away, as directly as possible: to do everything Socrates ordered" [216e–217a]; ποιητέον (*poietéon*) – what must be done, what becomes one's duty – is to do everything it pleases Socrates to command.

I don't think that it is pointless to articulate such a text step by step. You don't read Plato the way you read *France-Soir* or the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*.

At stake here is something whose effects are surprising. On the one hand, no one tells us here what the *agálmata*, in the plural, are. On the other hand, they immediately lead to a subversion or falling under the spell of the commandments of he who possesses them. Doesn't this smack of the magic that I already pointed out to you regarding *Che vuoi*? It is truly this key, this essential razor's edge of the topology of the subject that begins with the question, "What do you want?" In other words, "Is there a desire that is truly your will?"

Alcibiades then goes on to say, since I thought Socrates was serious when he spoke of ἐμῇ ὥρᾳ (*emé hóra*) – it's translated as "the flower of my beauty" [or "my youthful bloom," 217a] – and the [account of the] whole seduction scene begins.

We won't go any further into it today. I will try to convey what makes the passage from the first moment to the next necessary – namely, why it is absolutely necessary that Socrates be unmasked. For the time being, I am simply going to dwell on these *agálmata*.

2

172

Give me enough credit to believe that this is not the sole text that made me curious about the meaning of *ágalma*. Not that there would be anything wrong with that, for the *Symposium* suffices to justify my interest in it, but I am going to tell you how it was.

Although I can't exactly date it, my first encounter with *ágalma* was one that, like all encounters, was unforeseen. The word struck me several years ago in a verse of Euripides' *Hecuba*, and you will easily understand why. It was shortly before I situated, here in this seminar, the function of the phallus in the essential place that analytic experience and Freud's doctrine show us it has in the connection between demand and desire, such that I did not fail to be struck in passing by the use of the term by Hecuba.

Hecuba says, "Where are they taking me, where are they deporting me to?" The tragedy of Hecuba is set at the moment of the capture of Troy, and Delos figures among the places that she envisions. Might she be deported to Delos, which is at once sacred and plague-stricken? As you may know, you didn't have the right to give birth there or to die there. And here, in her description of Delos, Hecuba

alludes to an object there that was famous. The way she speaks about it indicates that it was a palm tree. This palm tree, she says, is ὠδῖνος ἄγαλμα δίας (*odínos ágalma días*); ὠδῖνος (*odínos*) means from pain, and Dias designates Leto here [verse 461]. Hecuba is referring to the birth of Apollo and the *ágalma* of the divinity's [Leto's] pain.

We encounter anew here the theme of giving birth, but it is somewhat different in this case, for here there is a trunk or tree, a magic object erected and preserved as a landmark throughout the ages. This cannot fail to remind us, at least we analysts, of the register or theme of the phallus, insofar as the fantasy of the phallus is here, as we know, on the horizon, situating this infantile object. And the fetish that it remains cannot but echo this signification for us.

It is clear that *ágalma* cannot be translated in any way, shape, or form by "ornament" or "jewelry" here, or even, as we often see in published texts, by "statue." In many instances, when θεῶν ἀγάλματα
173 (*theón agálmata*) is translated quickly, it seems that the latter works and that it is a question in the text of statues of the gods.

You see why I think it's a term whose signification should be pointed out. There is a hidden accent here that reminds us not to let ourselves be led down the path of banalization that tends to ever more completely efface the true meaning of texts. Whenever you encounter the word *ágalma*, pay close attention. Even if it seems to have to do with statues of the gods, look closely and you will see that it always has to do with something else.

I am not talking in riddles here. I am giving you the key to the question by saying that this term always emphasizes the fetishistic function of the object.

I am not giving a course on ethnology or even linguistics here and, on this subject, I am not going to take up the fetishistic function of round rocks at the center of a temple, the temple of Apollo, for example, for that is very well known. You very often see the god himself represented. What is the fetish of such and such a tribe, for example, from a bend in the Niger? It is something unspeakable and shapeless, on which enormous quantities of liquids of various origins can at times be poured, liquids that are more or less sticky and disgusting – the accumulated superimposition of which, running from blood to shit, constitutes the sign that there is something around which all sorts of effects revolve. Fetishes are in themselves very different from images or icons, insofar as the latter are intended to be copies.

The special power of the object remains at the root of the usage whose accent, even for us, is still preserved in the terms idol and icon. The term idol, in the use made of it by Saint Polyeuctus, for example, means, "It's nothing at all, it's something you smash on

the ground." But all the same, if you say about someone, "That person is my idol," it doesn't simply mean that you turn him into a copy of yourself or himself, but that you make something else of him, around which something happens.

My goal here thus isn't to elaborate on the phenomenology of fetishes, but to show you the function this serves in its place. To do so, I can indicate to you that I tried, as far as I was able, to quickly look over the passages bequeathed to us by Greek literature where the word *ágalma* is used. If I don't read all of them to you, it's merely in 174
order to go more quickly. You should simply realize that it is from the multiple significations deployed that I am isolating the central function, the one that must be seen at the fringe of these uses. For in the type of teaching I provide here, we naturally don't believe that etymology consists in finding the meaning of a word in its root.

The root of *ágalma* is not easy to handle. Writers relate it to ἀγαυός (*agauós*), based on the ambiguous word ἄγαμαι (*ágamai*), "I admire," but also "I am envious" or "I am jealous of," which becomes ἀγάζω (*agázo*), "to bear with pain," which goes toward ἀγαίομαι (*agaíomai*), meaning "to be indignant." Writers looking for roots, I mean roots that bear meaning, which is absolutely opposed to the principle of linguistics, isolate γαλ (*gal*) or γελ (*gel*), the *gel* of γελάω (*geláo*), the *gal* which is the same as in γλήνη (*gléne*), pupil [as of the eye], and in γαλήνην (*galénen*), which I cited in passing the other day, the sea that shines because it is perfectly still. In short, the idea of sparkle [*éclat*] is hidden in the root. And Ἀγλαός (*aglaós*) [related to Ἀγλαία (*Aglaía*), the youngest of the three Graces or Charites], which means "shining" or "splendor," is there to provide us with a familiar echo. It doesn't run counter to what I have to say about it. I am mentioning it merely as an aside here, because it is simply an occasion to show you the ambiguities inherent in the idea that etymology takes us, not toward a signifier, but toward a central signification. For one could also take an interest, not in *gal*, but in the first part of the phonemic articulation, namely *aga*, which is truly the reason why *ágalma* interests us in its relation to ἀγαθός (*agathós*).

In such an etymological vein, you know that I don't balk at the import of Agathon's speech, but I prefer to go directly to the great fantasy in the *Cratylus*. You will see there that the etymology of Agathon is ἀγαστός (*agastós*), what is admirable. Lord knows why they need to go looking for *agaston*, what is admirable, in θοόν (*thoón*), what is quick. But that's the way everything is interpreted in the *Cratylus* [412c and 422a]. One finds some very nice things in the etymology of ἄνθρωπος (*ánthropos*), where there is articulated language [399a–c]. Plato truly was a very fine guy.

In truth, it is not in this direction that we must turn to establish the value of *ágalma*. *Ágalma* is always related to images, provided that you see that, as in every context, it is always related to a very specific type of image. I must select among the references. There are
175 some in Empedocles, in Heraclitus, and in Democritus. I'm going to take the most common ones, the poetic ones, the ones that everyone knew by heart in Antiquity. I found them in a line-by-line Greek/French edition of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. There are, for example, two occurrences in the *Odyssey*.

The first is in Book III of the Telemachy. The context concerns sacrifices that are being made for the arrival of Telemachus. The suitors, as usual, go out of their way, and sacrifice a βοῦς (*bous*), which is translated by "heifer" – it is a member of the ox family – to the god. And they expressly call on a certain Laerceus, who is a jeweler, like Hephaestus, and he is given the job of making an ornament, *ágalma*, for the horns of the beast. I'll skip the practical details concerning the ceremony. What is important is not what happens afterward – whether it is a voodoo-type sacrifice or not – but what they are said to be expecting from *ágalma*. *Ágalma*, in effect, is involved here. It is said expressly. *Ágalma* is the golden ornament itself and it is sacrificed to the hunger of the goddess Athena. The goal here is that, having seen it, κεχάροιτο (*kechároito*) [verse 438], she be gratified – let's use this latter word since it is part of our vocabulary. In other words, *ágalma* appears as a kind of god trap. There are things that attract the eyes of those real beings known as the gods.

Another example can be found in Book VIII of the *Odyssey*. We are told what happened at the capture of Troy, the famous story of the big horse that contained the enemies and all the misfortunes to come in its belly, the horse that bore within itself the destruction of the city. The Trojans, who pulled it inside their city walls, question each other and wonder what to do with it. They hesitate. It seems quite clear that this hesitation was fatal to them, for there were two things they could have done. Assuming the wooden horse was hollow, they could have opened up the stomach to see what was inside. Or, having dragged it to the top of the citadel, they could have let it sit there to be what? Μέγα ἄγαλμα (*Méga ágalma*) [verse 509]. It's the same idea as earlier: it's a charm. It is also something that is as cumbersome [*embarrassant*] to the Trojans as to the Greeks. It is an uncanny object. In short, it is this well-known extraordinary object that is still at the center of a whole series of contemporary preoccupations – I needn't mention here the surrealist horizon.

For the ancients, *ágalma* is also something with which you can, in short, attract divine attention. I could give you a thousand examples of this.

In another spot in Euripides' *Hecuba*, the story is told of the sacri- 176
fice of Polyxena to appease the ghost of Achilles. It's very pretty, and we have here an exception that gives us the opportunity to awaken the erotic mirages in ourselves. It is the moment at which the heroine herself offers a bosom that is akin, we are told, to *ágalma* [verse 561]. Nothing says we have to confine ourselves to what that evokes – namely, the perfection of the breasts in Greek statuary. Given that they were not museum pieces at the time, I believe that it has to do rather with what we see indications of everywhere, in the use made of the word *ágalma* when it is said that, in the course of ceremonies in sanctuaries and temples, one hangs up, ἀνάπτω (*anápto*), *agálmata*. The magical value of the objects mentioned here is related, instead, to that of something we know very well, what we call "ex-votos." In short, for people who were much closer than we are to the original differentiation of objects, Polyxena's breasts were as beautiful as those found on votive offerings [*ex-votos*]. Indeed, the breasts of votive figures are made on a lathe or in a mold and are always perfect.

There are plenty of other examples, but we can stop here. It is enough to indicate that *ágalma* has to do with the meanings *brillant* [sheen] and *galant* [gallant], the latter coming from *gal*, meaning *éclat* [sparkle or gleam] in Old French. In a word, what is at stake here if not the function we analysts have discovered that is designated by the term "partial object"?

3

The function of the partial object is one of the great discoveries of psychoanalysis. And what we analysts must be most surprised by in this case is that, having discovered such remarkable things, our efforts are always designed to efface their originality.

Somewhere in Pausanias' work [*Guide to Greece*], it is said that the *agálmata* that are related in such and such a sanctuary to witches and were placed there expressly to stop Alcmene from giving birth, were ἀμυδρότερα (*amudrótera*), a tad effaced. Well, that's it, we too have effaced as much as we could the meaning of the partial object. We had a real find there, that of the fundamentally partial nature of the object insofar as it is the pivotal point, crux, or key of human 177
desire. It was certainly worth dwelling on for a moment. But no, nay, our first effort was to interpret it as pointing toward a dialectic of totalization, to turn it into a flat, round, total object, the only one worthy of us – the spherical object without feet or paws, the other as a whole person, in whom, as everyone knows, our love irresistibly finds its terminus and its completion.

Even though we took things in this way, we didn't tell ourselves that this other, as an object of desire, is perhaps the summation of a pile of partial objects, which is not at all the same as a total object. We didn't tell ourselves that what we elaborate on, what we have to deal with on the basis of the bedrock [*fond*] we call the id, is perhaps but a vast trophy of all these objects. No, on the horizon of our own ascesis or model of love, we placed something other [*de l'autre*]. And we weren't completely wrong to do so. But we have made that other into another to whom the bizarre function we call oblativity is addressed. We love the other for himself. At least, we do so once we arrive at our goal, at perfection. The genital stage sanctions all of this.

We analysts have clearly gained something by developing a certain topology of the relationship to the other, and we are not the only ones to have done so since there is a great deal of contemporary and variously personalist speculation about it as well. But it is still quite funny that there is something that we have left altogether by the wayside here. And we are certainly obliged to leave it by the wayside when we consider things from the particularly simplified perspective that assumes the problem to be resolved with the idea of a pre-established harmony – namely, that in short it suffices to love genitally in order to love the other for himself.

I didn't bring with me today an incredible passage regarding genital characterology found in a volume entitled *La Psychanalyse d'aujourd'hui* [Contemporary Psychoanalysis] because I have mentioned it elsewhere, in an article that will come out soon ["The Direction of the Treatment"]. I have been pointing out to you for a long time now the ridiculous nature of the kind of preaching we hear around this ultimate idealness. We need not dwell on it today, but, when we look at the textual sources, there is at least one question to raise on this point. If so-called oblative love is merely the homologue, development, or blossoming of the genital act itself – which
178 would suffice, I would say, to reveal its secret, key, or measure – an ambiguity nevertheless persists about whether we seek, regarding this other (to whom we devote our oblativity in this love which is all love, all for the other), to bring him jouissance, as seems to be self-evident in the fact that it has to do with genital union, or rather to perfect him.

As soon as a writer, who is even the slightest bit concerned with writing in a style that is accessible to a contemporary audience, wants to discuss ideas as highly moral and topics as old as that of oblativity, the first thing he does to rouse us is bring out a latent binary opposition. For, in the final analysis, terms like "oblativity" cannot be sustained in such a simplified or even abraded form

except owing to what underlies them – namely, the altogether modern opposition between the subject and the object. And thus, it is around this opposition that such a writer is led to comment on this analytic theme: we take the other as a subject and not purely and simply as our object.

The object at stake here is situated as being valued for the pleasure, enjoyment [*fruition*], or jouissance it brings. It is taken to boil down what is unique in the other to an all-purpose function, insofar as he must be a subject to us. If we merely turn him into an object, he will be just any old object, an object like all the rest, an object that can be rejected or exchanged – in short, he will be profoundly devalued. This is the theme that underlies the idea of oblativity, as it is articulated when people make of it the necessary ethical correlate of access to true love, which would be adequately termed "genital."

Note that today I am less in the process of criticizing this analytic idiocy – which is why I don't feel the need to remind you of the texts that talk about it – than calling into question what it is based on, namely, the idea that the beloved or love partner would be in some way superior if he were, as we say in our existential-analytic vocabulary, considered as a subject.

I don't think that, after having given such a pejorative connotation to the fact of considering the other as an object, anyone has ever mentioned that to consider him as a subject is no better. Let us admit that one object is just as good as another [*en vaut un autre*], on the condition that we give the word "object" its original meaning, which aims at objects insofar as we distinguish them and can communicate about them. If it is deplorable that the beloved might ever 179
become an object, is it better for him to be a subject? To answer this question it suffices to note that if one object is no better than another [*en vaut un autre*], it's even worse in the case of the subject. For it is not simply another subject that he is equal to in worth [*qu'il vaut*] – a subject, strictly speaking, is an other [*en est un autre*].

Strictly speaking, the subject is someone to whom we can attribute what? Nothing other than the fact of being, like us, a being that is ἔναρθρον ἔχειν ἔπος (*énarthron échein épos*), that expresses itself in articulated language, that possesses the combinatory, and that can respond to our combinatory with its own combinations – someone we can thus bring into our calculation as someone who calculates like us.

I imagine that those of you who are trained in the method that I have inaugurated here are not going to contradict me on this point. It is the only sound definition of the subject, at least the only sound one for us, the only one that allows us to explain how a subject obligatorily enters into the *Spaltung* [splitting] determined by his submission to language.

On the basis of these terms, we can see how it is strictly necessary that there be in the subject a part where it [*ça*] speaks all by itself – in which respect the subject remains in abeyance. And we need to know – how can one ever forget this question? – what function is served by the fact that (in this elective, privileged relationship which is the love relationship) the subject with whom, among all others, we have a bond of love, is also the object of our desire. If one brings out the love relationship while holding in abeyance its anchor, pivotal point, center of gravity, or hook, it is impossible to say anything that is not simply a crock.

We must emphasize the correlative object of desire, for it is this – and not the object that is involved in equivalence, the transitivism of good things, or the transaction of covetous desires – that is the psychoanalytic object. The psychoanalytic object is the something that is the aim of desire as such, the something that emphasizes one object among all the others as incommensurate with the others. The introduction in analysis of the function of the partial object corresponds to this emphasis on the object.

I ask you to note, on this topic, that everything that makes metaphysical discourse seem weighty and noteworthy is always based on some ambiguity. In other words, if all the terms you use when you do metaphysics were strictly defined – each having an unequivocal
180 signification – if the vocabulary of philosophy triumphed, which is the eternal goal of professors, there wouldn't be any point in doing metaphysics any more because there wouldn't be anything left to say. You would notice then that mathematics is much better – there you can use signs with an unequivocal meaning because they don't have any meaning. This implies that when you speak in a more or less impassioned way about the relations between the subject and the object, it is because you are talking about the subject [metaphysically] as if it were something other than the strict subject I was talking about earlier. And you talk about the object, too, as something other than what I just defined – in other words, you talk about it as something that virtually verges on the strict equivalence of an unequivocal communication by a scientific subject. But if this object "impassions" you, it is because hidden inside it is *ágalma*, the object of desire. This is what makes it weighty; this is why it is important to know where this fabulous object is, what its function is, and where it operates in inter- and intrasubjectivity. This privileged object of desire culminates for each of us at the border or liminal point I have taught you to view as the metonymy of unconscious discourse. This object plays a role there that I tried to formalize in fantasy and to which I will return next time.

This object, however you talk about it in psychoanalytic work –

whether you call it the breast, the phallus, or shit – is always a partial object. This is what is at stake inasmuch as analysis is a method or technique that has made headway in the field of desire, a field that was left behind, decried, and excluded by philosophy because it wasn't manageable, because it wasn't accessible to philosophy's dialectic.

If we are unable to point out, in a strict topology, the function of what this partial object signifies – which is both so limited and so slippery in its figure – if you don't see the interest of what I am introducing today with the term *ágalma*, which is the main point of analytic practice, well, it would be too bad. I wouldn't believe it for a minute, especially when I note that, regardless of the misunderstanding on which it is based, things are such that all the most modern work in psychoanalysis' dialectic revolves around the fundamental function of the object.

The only proof I need provide of this is that reference to the object as good or bad is considered to be a primordial given in the Kleinian 181
dialectic. I ask you to dwell on that for a moment.

In our theoretical work we use a pile of things, and especially a pile of identificatory functions – for example, identification with the person from whom we demand something when we call for love. If our call is rejected, what results is identification with the very person we addressed as the object of our love, with a striking shift from love to identification. This is the third type of identification about which you have to read a bit of Freud, his *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, to see the tertiary function taken on by a certain characteristic object: the object insofar as it is the object desired by the other with whom we identify. In short, subjectivity is constructed in the plurality or pluralism of levels of identification that we call the ego-ideal, the ideal ego, and – something that has also been identified – the desiring ego.

But we still must figure out where the partial object is situated and functions in this articulation. Note simply that when we look for this object, *ágalma*, little *a*, the object of desire, in analytic theory as it is currently being developed by Kleinians, it is there right from the outset, before any dialectical development – it is already there as an object of desire. The weight or internal central core of the good or bad object figures in all psychology that relies for its elaboration on Freudian terms. It is this good object or bad object that Melanie Klein situates at the origin, at the beginning of beginnings, even prior to the depressive period. Isn't this sufficiently indicative all by itself?

I think I have done enough today in telling you that it is around this that, inside or outside of analysis, the division between two perspectives regarding love can and must be concretely drawn.

The one drowns, sends off course, masks, elides, and sublimates everything concrete in the experience of love, in an infamous ascension toward a supreme good [*bien*]. It is astonishing that in analysis we can still keep some vague threepenny glints of this with the term "oblativity," this sort of loving-in-God, so to speak, that is supposed to be at the basis of every love relationship. In the other perspective, and analytic work demonstrates this, everything revolves around
182 the privileged or unique point constituted somewhere by something we find in a being only when we truly love. But what is it? *Ágalma* – the object we have learned to discern in analytic practice.

I will try next time to situate this object in the threefold topology of the subject, the other with a lowercase *o*, and the Other with a capital *O*, and to reconstruct the point at which it comes into play.

And we shall see that it is only via the other and for the other that Alcibiades, like each and every one of us, wants to make his love known to Socrates.[12]

February 1, 1961

XI

BETWEEN SOCRATES AND ALCIBIADES

Why Socrates does not love.
"I am nothing."
Socrates' interpretation.
The revelation that is ours.

There are thus some *agálmata* in Socrates, and this is what aroused Alcibiades' love.

We are now going to return to the scene that stages Alcibiades addressing a speech to Socrates, to which Socrates responds by providing, strictly speaking, an interpretation of it. We will see in what respect his assessment can be corrected, but one could say that, structurally speaking, Socrates' intervention has, on the face of it, all the features of an interpretation.

Socrates' response is more or less as follows: "Everything you just said that was so extraordinary, so unbelievably impudent, everything you just revealed in speaking of me was in fact said for Agathon's sake" [222c–d].

To understand the meaning of the scene that unfolds between these two points – from Alcibiades' eulogy of Socrates to Socrates' interpretation and what follows thereafter – we must go back to an earlier moment in the text and examine it in detail. What is the meaning of what happens between Alcibiades and Socrates after Alcibiades' entrance?

1

As I told you, after Alcibiades' entrance, there are no more eulogies of Love, but solely of the person seated to one's right. What is important in the change is the following: the point is to make a eulogy, *épainos*, of another person and, in this dialogue, the action

184 [*passage*] of metaphor lies precisely herein. The eulogy of another person is substituted, not for the eulogy of Love, but for love itself, and this happens right from the word "go."

"Love for Alcibiades is no trifling matter to me," Socrates says, addressing Agathon, everyone knowing full well that Alcibiades was the love of Socrates' life. "Since I became enamored of him" – we will see the meaning that it is fitting to bestow upon these terms, Socrates here was the *erastés* – "he hasn't allowed me to say two words to anyone else – what am I saying, I can't so much as look at an attractive man but he flies into a fit of jealous rage. He yells; he threatens; he can hardly keep from slapping me around! Please, try to keep him under control," he says to Agathon. "The fierceness of his passion terrifies me!" [213c–d].

A short exchange then takes place between Alcibiades and Eryximachus and gives rise to a new agenda. Namely, it is agreed that each person will make a eulogy, each in his turn, of the person who is seated to his right. *Épainos*, the eulogy in question, has, as I told you, a symbolic function – more specifically, a metaphorical function. What it expresses has, indeed – from he who speaks to the person about whom he speaks – a certain function qua metaphor of love. To praise, *epainein*, has a ritual function here, which can be translated in the following terms: to speak highly of someone.

While we cannot exactly refer to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, as it was written later than the *Symposium*, in Book 1, Chapter 9, of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle distinguishes between *épainos* and *enkómion*. Up until now I have told you that I did not want to go into the difference between the two. We have nevertheless been led to it by the very nature of our endeavor.

What is specific about *épainos* can be seen very precisely in the way Agathon starts his speech. He begins with the nature of the object and only elaborates on its qualities afterward. This leads to a deployment of the object in its essence. *Enkómion* is difficult to translate into French, and the implied term κῶμος (*kómos*) is no doubt involved in some way. If we are to find some equivalent for it in French, it would have to be something like "panegyric." If we follow Aristotle, it's a question of braiding a wreath from the object's loftiest deeds – a point of view that goes beyond *épainos*' aim to get at one's essence, which is eccentric to it.

185 But *épainos* is not something that presents itself unambiguously at first. When it is decided that it is *épainos* that will be on the agenda, Alcibiades retorts that the remark Socrates made concerning Alcibiades' ferocious jealousy didn't have a word of truth in it. "The truth is just the opposite! He's the one who, if I dare praise

anyone else in his presence, even a god, will most surely" – and here he uses the same metaphor we saw earlier – τὼ χεῖρε (*to cheíre*), "beat me up" [214d].

We find in Socrates' reply here a tone, style, malaise, and confusion, an uncomfortable, almost panicked response of the "shut up" kind. "Hold your tongue!" it has been translated quite accurately [214d]. "By Poseidon," Alcibiades responds – which is no small matter – "don't you dare deny it! I would never – *never* – praise anyone else with you around."

"Well, why not do just that, if you want?" says Eryximachus. "Why don't you offer an encomium to Socrates?"

"Should I unleash myself upon him? Should I give him," Alcibiades asks, "his punishment in front of all of you? In making a eulogy of him, must I unmask him?" This is how his speech later unfolds. Indeed, it is not lacking in worry either, as if it were both a necessity of the situation and also an implied facet of the genre that a eulogy might go so far as to make people laugh at the person in question.

Alcibiades thus proposes a gentlemen's agreement*: "Must I speak the truth?" he asks.

Socrates does not refuse this, replying, "By all means, go ahead" [214e].

"Nothing can stop me now," says Alcibiades. "But here's what you can do: if I say anything that's not true, you can just interrupt, if you want, and correct me; at worst, there'll be mistakes in my speech, not lies. But you can't hold it against me if I don't get everything καταριθμῆσαι (*katarithmésai*), in the right order [. . .]. It is no easy task for one in my condition to give a smooth and orderly account of your bizarreness (*atopían*)!" [214e–215a] – here once again we come across the term *atopia*. Then the eulogy begins.

I indicated the eulogy's structure and theme to you last time. Alcibiades' speech is assuredly laughable – γέλως, γελοῖος (*gélos, geloíos*) – beginning as it does by presenting things through a comparison that I already highlighted. This comparison shows up three times in his speech, each time with an almost repetitive insistence. Socrates is compared in it to the satyr's crude and derisory outer crust or envelope. One must in some sense open it up to see inside what Alcibiades calls, the first time, *agálmata theón*, translated as 186
"the statues of the gods" [215b]. The next time he once again calls them godlike and amazing [216e]. The third time, he uses the term ἀγάλματ' ἀρετῆς (*agálmat' aretés*): the marvel of virtue, the marvel of marvels [222a].

During his speech we find a comparison with the satyr Marsyas which, when it is presented, is taken quite far. Despite Socrates'

protests, and he is certainly not a flautist [*flûtiste*], Alcibiades returns to the point and takes it still further. He doesn't simply compare Socrates to a box in the form of a satyr, to a more or less derisory object, but to the satyr Marsyas himself – and everyone knows from the legend that when Marsyas began to play, his song was irresistibly charming. The charm was so great that it aroused Apollo's jealousy, who had him skinned alive for having dared rival the supreme, divine music. The only difference, Alcibiades says, between Socrates and Marsyas is that Socrates is not a piper. He does not operate via music and yet the result is of the exact same order [215a–c].

Here we should refer to what Plato explains in the *Phaedrus* concerning the higher states, so to speak, of inspiration, as they are produced beyond the realm of beauty. There are different forms of going beyond that I will not take up here. Among the means used by those who are δεομένους (*deoménous*), who need the gods and initiations, there is the drunkenness brought on by a certain music that produces a state known as possession. Alcibiades refers specifically to this state when he says that it is what Socrates produces with his words. Although his words are unaccompanied, without musical accompaniment, he produces the exact same effect [215c].

When we listen to an orator, he says, even a first-rate orator, it has little effect on us. On the contrary, when it is you that we listen to, or even your words as related by another person, even if he is πάνυ φαῦλος (*pánu phaúlos*), a man of no consequence whatsoever, the listener, whether man, woman, or adolescent, is troubled, as if struck by a blow, and strictly speaking κατεχόμεθα (*katechómetha*) – we become possessed by them [215d].

This situates the experience that makes Alcibiades think that inside Socrates lies a treasure, an indefinable, precious object which will fix his resolve after having unleashed his desire. This object is
187 at the crux of what he says thereafter concerning his resolution and then his schemes designed to seduce Socrates. Let us dwell for a moment on this point.

Alcibiades had an experience with Socrates that was far from ordinary. Having made his decision, he knew he was treading on somewhat sure ground, for he knew that Socrates had long since been paying attention to what he calls his ὥρα (*hóra*) – we translate it as best we can – let's call it "sex appeal."* It seemed to Alcibiades that if Socrates would only deign to declare how he felt, Alcibiades would obtain from him precisely what was at stake – namely, what he himself defines as everything Socrates knows, πάντ' ἀκοῦσαι ὅσαπερ οὗτος ᾔδει (*pánt' akoúsai hósaper hoútos édei*) [217a]. He then provides us with the narrative of his seductive maneuvers. But can't we pause here a moment?

As Alcibiades already knows that he has captivated Socrates' desire, why can't he more truly presume that Socrates will comply with his wishes? Alcibiades already knows that he is Socrates' beloved, *erómenos*, so why does he need to have Socrates give him a sign of his desire? Socrates has never made a mystery of his desire in the past. His desire is recognized [*reconnu*] and, by dint of that very fact, known [*connu*], and thus one might think it is already avowed. What then is the meaning of these seductive maneuvers? Alcibiades spins his narrative with artfulness and detail, but at the same time with impudence and a challenge to his audience, which is so clearly felt to go beyond all limits that he introduces it with nothing less than the words that are spoken before the mysteries are revealed: "Cover your ears, you who are here" [218b]. This warning is addressed only to those who have no right to hear, and still less to repeat what is going to be said or how it is going to be said – that is, house slaves, who would be better off not hearing.

Socrates' behavior corresponds, after all, to the mysterious demand that Alcibiades makes. If, indeed, Socrates has always shown himself to be Alcibiades' *erastés*, it may seem in another register, in a post-Socratic perspective, that Socrates is demonstrating a great quality, which the French translator of the *Symposium* indicates in the margin with the term "temperance." But in this context, his temperance is not indicated as necessary. Perhaps Socrates proves that he is virtuous, but what relation could there possibly be between that and the subject in question if it is true that what we are being shown here concerns the mystery of love?

In other words, you see that I am trying to examine every facet of the situation that unfolds before us in the *Symposium*, in order to grasp the structure of this game. Let's immediately say that everything in Socrates' behavior indicates that his refusal to enter into the 188
game of love is closely related to the fact, posited at the outset as the point of departure, that he knows.

He knows the score in matters of love – that is even, as he says, the only thing he knows. I will propose that it is because Socrates knows that he does not love.

2

With this key in hand, let us give their full meaning to the words with which Socrates greets Alcibiades' invitation, after three or four scenes in which Alcibiades' attacks are shown to proceed with accelerating rhythm [217–219].

The ambiguities of the situation always verge on the γελοῖος

(*geloíos*), the laughable or comic. Indeed, they are buffoonish scenes, these invitations to dinner, which end with a guy who leaves very early, very politely, after having made others wait for him, who returns a second time, and who escapes once again, and with whom the following dialogue takes place under the covers: "Socrates, are you asleep?"

"No, no, not at all," he replies [218c].

It must be said that, in order to arrive at its endpoint, what is at work leads us along paths that are well designed to situate us at a certain level.

Once Alcibiades has truly said his piece, and has gone so far as to tell Socrates, "This is what I desire, and I would certainly be ashamed before people who might not understand; I am explaining to you what I want" [218c–d], Socrates replies, "If you are right in what you say about me, you are already more accomplished than you think. If I really have in me the power to make you a better man, then you can see in me a beauty that is really beyond description and makes your own remarkable good looks pale in comparison. But, then, is this a fair exchange that you propose? You seem to me to want more than your proper share: you offer me the merest appearance of beauty" – what, in the Socratic perspective on science, is illusion, fallacy, and *dóxa*, which does not know its function – "and in return you want" truth. And in fact, for goodness' sake, that means nothing more than "gold in exchange for bronze" [218d–e].

189 But, says Socrates – and we must take things as they are said here – "you should think twice, ἄμεινον σκόπει (*ámeinon skópei*), because you could be wrong, and οὐδὲν ὤν (*oudén on*), I may be of no use to you [219a]. The mind's sight," he continues, "becomes sharp only when the body's eyes go past their prime – and you are still a good long time away from that." But pay attention – where you see something, I am nothing.

What is Socrates refusing here? What is he refusing even though he has already shown himself to be what he has, I would say, almost officially shown himself to be in all of Alcibiades' remarks, to the extent that everyone knows that Alcibiades was his first love? What Socrates refuses to show Alcibiades is something that takes on another meaning. If it is definable in the terms I have given you, it would be the metaphor of love.

It would be the metaphor of love, insofar as Socrates would admit to being the beloved, and I would say even more, would admit to being the beloved unconsciously. Yet it is precisely because Socrates knows that he refuses to be, in whatever sense, whether justified or justifiable, *erómenos*, desirable – what is worthy of being loved.

Why doesn't he love? Why is it that the metaphor of love cannot

be produced, that there is no substitution of *erastés* for *erómenos*, that Socrates doesn't manifest himself as *erastés* at the place where *erómenos* was? Socrates can but refuse to do so because, to him, there is nothing in him that is lovable. His essence is οὐδὲν (*oudén*), emptiness or hollowness, and to use a term that was used later in neo-Platonic and Augustinian thought, κένωσις (*kénosis*) – this represents Socrates' central position.

This is so true that the term *kénosis*, emptiness or void – as opposed to the fullness of whom? of Agathon specifically – is present right at the beginning of the dialogue, when Socrates, after his long meditation in the foyer of the neighboring house, finally shows up at the banquet, sits down next to Agathon, and begins to speak. We think he is joking, that this is said in jest, but in a dialogue that is both as rigorous and austere in its unfolding as this one, can we believe that anything here is simply used as filler? Socrates says, "Agathon, you are the one who is full, and just as one makes a liquid move from a full vase to an empty one using a wick along which it flows, similarly I'm going to fill myself up" [175d–e]. This is, no doubt, said ironically, but it expresses something that is precisely what Socrates 190
presents as constitutive of his position, and what I have repeated to you many times. Here we hear the words from Alcibiades' very own lips – namely, that Socrates doesn't know anything except concerning matters of love. Cicero translates *amathía* as *inscientia* by forcing things a bit in Latin. *Inscitia* is brute ignorance, while *inscientia* is non-knowledge constituted as such, as empty [*vide*], as the attraction exercised by the void or vacuum [*vide*] at the center of knowledge.

I think that you get what I mean here, since I exposed to you the structure of substitution or actualized metaphor that constitutes what I call the miracle of the appearance of *erastés* at the very place where *erómenos* was. It is precisely because this is lacking here that Socrates can only refuse to give, so to speak, a simulacrum thereof. If he presents himself to Alcibiades as not being able to show him signs of his desire, it is insofar as he challenges the idea that he himself is, in any way, an object worthy of Alcibiades' desire, or of anyone else's for that matter.

Note thereby that the Socratic message, if it contains something that refers to love, certainly does not fundamentally begin from a center of love. Socrates is represented to us as an *erastés*, someone who desires, but nothing is further from his image than the radiant love which, for example, stems from Christ's message. Neither effusion, nor gift, nor mysticism, nor ecstasy, nor simple commandment flows from it. Nothing is further from Socrates' message than "Love thy neighbor as thyself," a formulation whose dimension is remarkably absent from everything he says.

This has always struck commentators, who, in their objections to the ascesis of Eros, say that what is commanded in this message is, "Love before all else in your soul what is most essential to you." This is only apparently the case, and the Socratic message, such as it is transmitted to us by Plato, does not make a mistake here, since, as you will see, the structure is preserved. It also allows us to more accurately glimpse the mystery hidden behind the Christian commandment precisely because it is preserved.

This is also why it is possible to provide a general theory of love, behind every manifestation that is a manifestation of love. This
191 may, at first glance, seem surprising to you, but keep in mind that once you have the key – I mean what I am calling the metaphor of love – you will see it everywhere.

I illustrated it for you with Victor Hugo's poem, but there is also the original book of the story of Ruth and Booz. If this story stands before us in a way that inspires us – except for those scoffers who see in it only a sordid story of an old letch and a washerwoman – it is because we take this inscience for granted: "Booz did not know that a woman was there." We also take for granted that Ruth is already the object Booz unconsciously loves. We categorically assume as well that "Ruth did not know what God wanted from her" and that the third party – the divine locus of the Other, insofar as the fate of Ruth's desire is inscribed in it – is what gives her nocturnal vigilance at Booz's feet its sacred character.

The whole mystery of the signification of love that the revelation of their desire takes on lies in the underpinning of inscience, in which the dignity of *erómenos* for each of the partners is already situated in a veiled anteriority.

3

Let us return to the *Symposium* to see what transpires.

Alcibiades does not understand. After having heard Socrates out, he says to him, "I really have nothing more to say. I've told you exactly what I think. Now it's your turn to consider what you think best for you and me" [219a]. He calls on him to, as we say, face up to his responsibilities.

To which Socrates replies, "We'll talk about all that. See you tomorrow. We still have a lot to say about it." In short, he situates things at the level of the continuation of a dialogue, leading Alcibiades down his own pathways. He thus makes himself absent to such an extent that Alcibiades' covetousness shows through.

Can we say that this covetousness is covetousness of what is best?

What counts is that it is expressed in terms of objects. Alcibiades does not say, "It's for my own good, or for my own misfortune, that I want what is incomparable, which lies in you – namely, *ágalma*." He says something more like, "I want it because I want it, whether it's for my own good or not." And it is precisely for this reason that Alcibiades reveals the central function of *ágalma* in the articulation 192
of love relations. It is also for this reason that Socrates refuses to respond at the same level.

Socrates' commandment is "concern yourself with your own soul, seek your own perfection." Through his attitude of refusal, severity, and austerity, through his *noli me tangere*, Socrates directs Alcibiades along the pathway of his own good. But is it even clear that we mustn't allow some ambiguity to subsist regarding this phrase, "his own good"? Isn't it the equating of the object of desire and "one's own good" that has been called into question since this dialogue by Plato resounded in the world? Shouldn't we translate it by the good such as Socrates, he who brings into the world a new discourse, traces out its path for those who follow him?

Observe that, in Alcibiades' attitude, there is something, I was going to say sublime, in any case absolute and impassioned, that verges on an entirely different character with another message – that of the Gospel, where we are told that he who knows that there is a treasure buried in a field, and we are not told what the treasure is, is capable of selling everything he has in order to buy that field and enjoy the treasure. This is the distance that separates Socrates' position from Alcibiades'. Alcibiades is a man imbued with desire [*l'homme du désir*].

But you will then retort, "Why does he want to be loved?" In truth, he already is and he knows it. The miracle of love has taken place in him insofar as he has become the one who desires. And when Alcibiades shows that he is in love, it is, as they say, no small potatoes. Because he is Alcibiades, he whose desires know no bounds, when he enters into the referential field that is for him the field of love, he shows a highly remarkable absence of fear of castration – in other words, a total lack of the famous *Ablehnung der Weiblichkeit* [repudiation of femininity]. Everyone knows that in Antiquity the most extreme kinds of virility were always accompanied by an utter and complete disdain for the possible risk of being called a woman, even by one's soldiers – which, as you know, happened to Caesar.

Alcibiades here throws a hissy fit in front of Socrates. He nevertheless remains Alcibiades at his own level. And this is why we must still, before moving on from Alcibiades' speech, grant full importance to the complement he provides his eulogy with – namely, the

astonishing portrait designed to complete the impassive figure of
193 Socrates. Impassivity means that Socrates cannot bear being placed in the passive [position], as the beloved, *erómenos*. Socrates' attitude – what Alcibiades describes to us as his courage – is constituted by a profound indifference to everything that happens around him, even the most dramatic of events [219d–221b].

Once we arrive at the end of this speech, in which the demonstration that Socrates is a being like no other culminates, Socrates responds to Alcibiades as follows: "You give me the sense of having all your wits about you" [222c]. Whereas Alcibiades had expressed himself with the caveat, "I don't know what I'm saying." If Socrates, who knows, says that Alcibiades gives him the impression of Νήφειν μοι δοκεῖς (*néphein moi dokeís*), having all his wits about him, it means, "Although you are drunk, I can read something in you." What is it? Socrates is the one who knows it, not Alcibiades.

Socrates points out what is at stake when Alcibiades mentions Agathon.

Indeed, at the end of his speech, Alcibiades turns toward Agathon to tell him, "I warn you, don't let Socrates fool you! Remember my torments; be on your guard" [222b]. He says it to Agathon incidentally. And in truth, Socrates' intervention, insofar as I called it an interpretation, would have no meaning did it not bear on this "incidentally." "How casually you let it drop," he says, "almost like an afterthought, at the very end of your speech!" [222c]. What Socrates tells us is that Agathon was in fact present as an aim in all of Alcibiades' circumlocutions, and that it was around him that his whole speech revolved. "As if your speech" – this is how it should be translated, and not "your language" – "had but the following goal: to enunciate that I should be in love with you and no one else, and that for his part, Agathon should let himself be loved by you and by no one else" [222c–d].

"This," he says, "is κατάδηλον (*katádelon*), entirely transparent, in Alcibiades' speech." Socrates says quite plainly that he can read this in Alcibiades' apparent speech. And, more precisely, it is in "this drama of your invention," as Socrates calls it, this σατυρικόν σου δρᾶμα (*satyrikón sou dráma*), "that the silenus metaphor is perfectly transparent and we see things" [222d].

Let us try, in effect, to recognize its structure. Socrates says to Alcibiades, "What you want, in the final analysis, is to be loved by me and to have Agathon be your object." No other meaning can be given to this speech, if not the most superficial psychological meanings, such as the vague awakening of jealousy in the other person, and there is no question of that here. This indeed is what is at stake, and Socrates admits it, showing his desire to Agathon and asking

him in sum what Alcibiades had at first asked of him. The proof 194
thereof is that if we consider all the parts of the *Symposium* as a long epithalamium [nuptial poem], and if what this whole dialectic leads to has any meaning, what happens at the end is that Socrates provides a eulogy of Agathon.

The fact that Socrates eulogizes Agathon is tantamount to responding to Alcibiades' demand. Not his past demand – his present one. When Socrates eulogizes Agathon, he pays Alcibiades back [*il donne satisfaction à Alcibiade*]. He pays him back for his just finished public declaration, his putting at the level of the universal Other what took place between them behind the veils of modesty. Socrates' response is as follows, "You can love he who I am going to praise because, by praising him, I will be able to transmit the image of you loving [*aimant*], qua image of you loving – that is how you will enter into the path of superior identifications traced out by the path of beauty."

But we must not misrecognize here that Socrates, precisely because he knows, replaces one thing with something else. It is neither beauty, nor ascesis, nor identification with God that Alcibiades desires, but rather this unique object, this special something he saw in Socrates and which Socrates turns him away from, because Socrates knows that he does not have it.

But Alcibiades still desires the same thing. What he is looking for in Agathon, make no mistake about it, is the same supreme point at which the subject is abolished in fantasy: his *agálmata*.

Socrates substitutes here his lure [*leurre*] for what I will call the lure of the gods. He does so quite authentically, insofar as he knows what love is. And it is precisely because he knows this that he is doomed to be mistaken – namely, to misrecognize the essential function of the targeted object constituted by *ágalma*.

Last night we heard about theoretical models [at a meeting of our Society]. It is impossible not to mention, in this regard, if only as a prop for our thought, the intrasubjective dialectic of the ego-ideal, ideal ego, and partial object, and not to recall the little schema of the spherical mirror I drew for you in the past.

In front of this mirror, the fantasy is created or arises of the real image of the vase hidden within the device. If this illusory image can be propped up and perceived as real, it is insofar as the eye adjusts to what the vase appears around – namely, the flower we have placed on top. I taught you to use these three notations – ego-ideal, ideal 195
ego, and *a*, the *ágalma* of the partial object – to grasp the reciprocal relations of the three terms in question every time something is constituted. What is this something? Precisely what is at stake at the end of the Socratic dialectic.

It concerns what Freud tells us is essential in falling in love – I

introduced this schema in order to give it consistency – namely, the recognition of the basis of the narcissistic image, insofar as this image constitutes the substance of the ideal ego.

The imaginary incarnation of the subject is what is at issue in this threefold reference. Be so kind as to allow me to finally tell you what I've been meaning to say: Socrates' daemon is Alcibiades.

It is Alcibiades, in the sense in which we are told in Diotima's speech that love is not a god, but rather a daemon – namely, a daemon who sends mortals the message that the gods wish to convey to him.

Which is why we couldn't fail, regarding this dialogue, to bring up the nature of the gods.

4

I am going to be away for two weeks and will leave you with a reading assignment: *De Natura Deorum* [*On the Nature of the Gods*] by Cicero.

It's a book that did me a good deal of harm a long time ago: a well-known pedant, seeing me with my nose in it, thought it did not bode well regarding the direction of my professional interests.

Read it in order to get up to speed. You will notice that Cicero is not the lout people try to depict him as by saying that the Romans were people who were simply dragging their feet. He's a guy who articulates things that go right to the quick.

You will also see all sorts of exceedingly funny things in it, as, for example, that in Cicero's time, people went to Athens to look for traces of the great pin-ups of Socrates' day. People went there saying to themselves, "I'm going to meet guys like Charmides on every block." You will see that, compared with the stir created by these Charmides, our Brigitte Bardot wouldn't stand a chance. Even the little street urchins had eyes this big [expansive hand gesture].

196 We find some pretty funny stuff in Cicero's work. There is, in particular, a passage I cannot recite for you, but which is of the following type: when it comes to the pretty boys that philosophers have taught us it is good to love, you can look for them, there's certainly one here and there, but that's all. What does this mean? Did the loss of political independence have, as an irremediable effect, some sort of racial decadence, or simply the disappearance of the mysterious sparkle [*éclat*], the ἵμερος ἐναργής (*hímeros enargés*), the shine [*brillant*] of desire Plato speaks about in the *Phaedrus*? We will never know anything about it.

You will learn plenty of other things [from *De Natura Deorum*] as

well. You will learn that it is a serious question to know where the gods are situated. The question has not lost its importance for us. If any of what I tell you here can serve you in some way, some day when there is a palpable slippage in your certainties, when you find yourself in a tough position – well, one of those things will be that I have reminded you of the real existence of the gods.

Why not then dwell on the scandalous objects that the gods of ancient mythology were? Without trying to reduce them to piles of files or to sets of themes, let us ask ourselves what it might have meant for the gods to act as you know they did, their most characteristic activities being theft, fraud, and adultery. I won't even mention impiety – that was their specialty.

In other words, the scandalous nature of ancient mythology frankly raises the question of what a god's love is. It reaches its height right at the outset in Homer's work. There is no way to behave more arbitrarily, unjustifiably, incoherently, or derisively than these gods do. Read the *Iliad* – they're always mixed up in men's affairs, intervening constantly. Yet we cannot think these stories were merely tall tales. I don't adopt this perspective, and no one can, not even the thickest Homais. No. They're there and that's all there is to it. What can it possibly mean that the gods only show themselves to men in this manner?

You have to see what happens when they take it into their heads to love a mortal woman, for example. Nothing will stop them until the mortal, out of desperation, turns into a laurel or a frog. Nothing 197
is further from the trembling one feels in one's being when in love than a god's desire, or a goddess' desire for that matter – I don't see why I shouldn't include them as well.

It took someone of Giraudoux's stature to represent the dimensions and resonance of the prodigious myth of Amphitryon. Even this great poet couldn't help but let Jupiter shine with something that might resemble a sort of respect for Alcmene's feelings, but that was clearly in order to make it plausible to us. For those who know how to hear, this myth remains the height of blasphemy, one might say, and nevertheless this was not at all how it was understood in Antiquity.

For here things go further than anything. Divine debauchery disguises itself as human virtue. When I say that nothing stops the Greek gods, I mean that they go so far as to make a mockery of even what is best. This is the whole key to the matter: the best ones, the real gods, take impassivity to the very point that I mentioned earlier – namely, to the point of being unable to put up with being called passive.

To be loved is to necessarily enter into the scale of the desirable; as

we know, Christian theologians were at great pains to rid themselves of it. For if God is desirable, then He can be more or less desirable. There is thus a whole scale of desire. And what do we desire in God if not what is desirable? But, then, can there be greater degrees of God? The upshot being that it was precisely at the moment at which people tried to give God His most absolute value that people found themselves caught up in a vortex out of which they could only climb with great difficulty to preserve the dignity of the supreme object.

The gods of Antiquity didn't beat around the bush. They knew they could reveal themselves to men only in the guise of something that would cause a ruckus, in the *ágalma* of something that breaks all the rules, as a pure manifestation of an essence that remained completely hidden, whose enigma was entirely below the surface. Hence the daemonic incarnation of their scandalous exploits. It is in this sense that I say that Alcibiades was Socrates' daemon.

Alcibiades provides the true representation, unbeknown to himself, of what is implied by the Socratic ascesis. He shows that the dialectic of love as it was later elaborated in Christianity is there – believe me, it's not absent. For it was around this dialectic that a crisis developed in the sixteenth century, one that called
198 into question the long synthesis – and, I would add, the long equivocation – concerning the nature of love that was sustained and developed throughout the Middle Ages in an oh so very post-Socratic perspective.

I mean, for example, that the god of John the Scot is no different from Aristotle's god, insofar as he acts as *erómenon*. They cohere – it is through his beauty that god makes the world go round. What a gap there is between this perspective and the one that is opposed to it! But what I am trying to express is that it is not really opposed.

People opposed to it the perspective of *agápe*, insofar as it explicitly teaches us that God loves us insofar as we are sinners, loves us as much for our evil doings as for our good deeds. This is, in effect, the meaning of the shift that took place in the history of the amorous sentiments, and curiously enough, at the precise moment at which Plato's message reappeared in its authentic texts [in the West]. Divine *agápe*, insofar as it is addressed to the sinner as such, is the core and crux of Luther's position. But don't believe that this is something that was limited to heresy, to a local insurrection within Catholicism. It suffices to take a look, even a superficial one, at what followed, the Counter-Reformation – namely, the eruption of what was called Baroque art – to realize that it signifies nothing other than the exposing, or erection as such, of the power of the image in all its seductive glory.

After the long misunderstanding that had sustained the Trinitarian relation in divinity, from the knowing to the known, and ascending

to the known in the knowing via knowledge, we can see in it the outlines of our own form of revelation – namely, that things go from the unconscious toward the subject who is constituted in his dependence, and ascend toward the core object that I call *ágalma* here.

Such is the structure that regulates the dance between Alcibiades and Socrates.

Alcibiades demonstrates the presence of love, but only insofar as Socrates, who knows, can be mistaken about its presence, and only accompanies him in being mistaken. The deception [*leurre*] is mutual. Socrates is just as caught up in the deception – if it is a deception and if it is true that he is deceived [*leurré*] – as Alcibiades is.

But which of them is the most authentically deceived, if not he who follows closely, and without allowing himself to drift, what is traced out for him by a love that I will call horrible?

Don't believe that she who was placed at the beginning of this 199
dialogue, Aphrodite, is a goddess who smiles.

A pre-Socratic by the name, I believe, of Democritus, says that Aphrodite was there all alone at the beginning. And it was even in this connection that the term *ágalma* appeared for the first time in Greek texts. Venus, as she is more commonly known, is born every day.

The birth of Aphrodite takes place every day, and to borrow a term from Plato himself – an equivocation that is, I believe, a true etymology – I will conclude my talk today with these words, καλημέρα (*kaleméra*), good day [*bonjour*], καλήμερος (*kalémeros*), good day and beautiful desire, based on the reflections I have contributed here about the relation of love to something that has always been called "eternal love." It should not be too burdensome for you to think about it if you recall that Dante [in the *Inferno*] explicitly places the words "eternal love" on the doors of Hell.

February 8, 1961

THE OBJECT OF DESIRE AND THE DIALECTIC OF CASTRATION

THE OBJECT OF DESIRE AND THE DIALECTIC OF CASTRATION

XII

TRANSFERENCE IN THE PRESENT

Decline of the Other.
Dignity of the subject.
Transference is not just repetition.
The true mainspring of love.
Socrates' interpretation.

I think most of you recall that we have arrived at the end of our commentary on the *Symposium*.

As I have, if not explained, at least indicated several times, this dialogue happens to have been historically at the origin, not only of what one might call an explanation of love in our cultural era, but also of the development of a function that is, on the whole, the deepest, most radical, and most mysterious of relations between subjects.

On the horizon of the commentary I proposed was the whole development of ancient philosophy right up until Christianity.

Ancient philosophy, as you know, did not simply promulgate a speculative position. Whole parts of the society were oriented in their practice by the speculation that stemmed from Socrates. It was not at all artificially or fictitiously that Hegel described positions like those of the Stoics and Epicureans as the antecedents of Christianity. Such positions were in fact experienced by a very large set of subjects as something that guided their lives in a way that was equivalent, prior, and preparatory to what the Christian position brought them afterward. The latter also involves a dimension that goes beyond speculation and that the *Symposium* itself has continued to mark deeply.

One cannot in effect say that the fundamental theological positions taught by Christianity were lacking in repercussions. They profoundly influenced each person's problematic, most notably the problematic of those people who found themselves, in the course of

history, at the forefront, assuming, as they did, roles as examples in a variety of ways – whether because of what they said or because of their directive action. This is what we call sainthood. This can only be indicated here on the horizon, yet it suffices for our purposes.

It suffices because if it were from this point of departure that I wanted to fuel what I have to say here, I would have broached things from a later point. I chose instead the initial point constituted by the *Symposium* and provided a commentary on it because it harbors within it something altogether radical concerning the mainspring of love – indeed, it is subtitled "On Love" [in Léon Robin's French edition] and it clearly announces that its main topic is love.

1

I don't think it would be exaggerating to say that the point with which I concluded last time has been neglected heretofore by all commentators on the *Symposium*, and that in this respect my commentary marks a milestone in the history of the development of the dialogue's potential.

I believe I was able to perceive the last word of what Plato meant to tell us about the nature of love in the very scenario of what happens between Alcibiades and Socrates. This presupposes that in the presentation of what one might call his thought, Plato deliberately created room for enigma – in other words, his thought is not entirely patent, delivered up, or spelled out in this dialogue.

Now there is nothing excessive in asking you to go along with me on this, for the simple reason that, according to all ancient and especially modern commentators on Plato – it is not the case of just one of them – an attentive scrutiny of the dialogues shows that they quite obviously contain an exoteric as well as a hermetic element. The most peculiar forms of hermeticism, right up to and including the most typical pitfalls bordering on illusion [*leurre*], on difficulty produced for its own sake, have as their aim not to be understand-
205 able to those who should not understand. This is truly fundamental in every one of Plato's exposés that has been handed down to us.

To admit this is also to admit what can always be risqué in making headway, going further, trying to break through, and guessing the deepest mainspring of what Plato tells us. But concerning the theme of love as it is presented to us in the *Symposium*, to which I have limited my attention here, it is difficult for us as analysts not to recognize the bridge that is standing there and the hand that is extended toward us in the articulation of the last scene in the *Symposium* – namely, the scene that unfolds between Alcibiades and Socrates.

I articulated and emphasized it to you in two stages. I showed you the importance, in Alcibiades' declaration, of the theme of *ágalma*: the object hidden within the subject, Socrates. I showed you that it is very hard not to take it seriously. In the form and articulation in which it is presented to us, Plato does not resort to metaphorical terms or pretty images when he tells us, roughly speaking, that Alcibiades expects a great deal of Socrates. A structure is revealed here, in which we can find anew what we are able to articulate as fundamental in what I will call the position of desire.

Apologizing to those of you who are recent arrivals here, I can assume that most of you are aware of the general outlines of my previous discussions on the position of the subject, outlines that are found in the topological summary we conventionally refer to here as the Graph.

Its general form is supplied by the splitting* or fundamental doubling of two signifying chains by which the subject is constituted. This requires that we admit that it has already been demonstrated that this doubling is, in and of itself, necessitated by the initial, inaugural, logical relationship between the subject and the signifier as such; and that the existence of an unconscious signifying chain stems from the sole position of the term "subject" qua determined as a subject by the fact that he props up the signifier [*il est le support du signifiant*].

Those for whom this is merely an assertion or proposition that remains to be demonstrated, should rest assured – we will come back to it. But for the purposes of our seminar this morning, I ask you to keep in mind that it has already been articulated here.

In relation to the unconscious signifying chain as constitutive of the subject who speaks, desire presents itself in a position that can only be conceptualized on the basis of the metonymy determined by 206
the existence of the signifying chain. Metonymy is the phenomenon that occurs in the subject as a prop for the signifying chain. Due to the fact that the subject undergoes the mark of the signifying chain, something is fundamentally instituted in him that we call metonymy, which is nothing other than the possibility of the infinite sliding of signifiers owing to [*sous*] the continuity of the signifying chain. Everything that at one time finds itself associated with the signifying chain – a circumstantial element, an aspect of activity, an element of the beyond [*l'au-delà*] or of the endpoint [*terme*] to which this activity leads – all of these elements can be taken as equivalent to each other under suitable conditions. A circumstantial element can take on the representative value of the endpoint of subjective enunciation – that is, the object toward which the subject heads or the subject's action itself.

Now it is precisely inasmuch as something presents itself as enhancing [*revalorisant*] this infinite sliding – this dissolving element that brings signifying fragmentation into the subject – that it takes on the value of the privileged object that puts a stop to the infinite sliding. An object can thus assume, in relation to the subject, the essential value that constitutes the fundamental fantasy. The subject himself realizes that he is arrested therein, or, to remind you of a more familiar notion, fixated. We call the object that serves this privileged function *a*. It is to the extent that the subject identifies with the fundamental fantasy that desire as such takes on consistency and can be designated – that the desire in question for us as well is rooted, by its very position, in *Hörigkeit* [bondage, sexual dependence]. In other words, to use our terminology, in the subject it stands for the desire of the Other with a capital *O* [abbreviated as A for *Autre*].

A is defined for us as the locus of speech, the locus that is always evoked as soon as there is speech, the tertiary locus that always exists in relations with the other, *a*, as soon as there is signifying articulation. This A is not an absolute other, an other that would be what we call, in our incoherent moral jargon, the other respected as a subject, as our equal, morally speaking. No, this Other, as I teach you to articulate it here, that is both necessitated and necessary as a locus, but at the same time constantly questioned as to what guaran-
207 tees it, is a perpetually vanishing Other which, due to this very fact, places us in a perpetually vanishing position.

Now love itself is related to the questioning of the Other regarding what he can give us and what he can furnish by way of an answer. Not that love is identical to each of the demands with which we assail the Other, for love is situated in what lies beyond this demand, insofar as the Other can or cannot respond to us as an ultimate presence.

The whole problem is to perceive the relationship that links the Other to which the demand for love is addressed, to the appearance of desire. The Other is no longer in any way our equal – this Other to whom we aspire, love's Other – but something that represents, strictly speaking, its deposing [*déchéance*]. I mean that it is something like an object.

What is at stake in desire is not a subject but rather an object. Herein lies what one might call the terrible commandment of the god of love. The commandment is to make of the object it designates to us something that, first of all, is an object, and, second, an object before which we falter, vacillate, and disappear as subjects. For it is we as subjects who suffer from this deposing [*déchéance*] or depreciation.

What happens to the object is precisely the opposite. The terms

I am using here are not the most suitable, but so what? The most important thing is that you get it and that I make myself understood. This object is overvalued. And it is insofar as it is overvalued that it serves the function of saving our dignity as subjects – that is, of making us something other than subjects subjected to the infinite sliding of the signifier. It makes of us something other than subjects of speech, turning us into something unique, inestimable, and irreplaceable in the final analysis, which is the true point at which we can designate what I have called the dignity of the subject.

The equivocal nature of the term "individuality" lies not in the fact that we are something unique, like the body which is specific – this one and not that one. Individuality consists entirely in the privileged relationship in which we culminate as subjects in desire.

Here I am merely repeating once more the merry-go-round of truth on which we have been spinning since the beginning of this Seminar.

My goal this year is to show what the consequences of transference are at the very heart of our practice.

2

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"How did it happen that we are coming to transference so late in the game?" you will ask me.

It is, of course, characteristic of truths to never show themselves completely. In short, truths are solids that are perfidiously opaque. They don't even have, it seems, the property we are able to produce in certain solids, that of transparency – they do not show us their front and back edges at the same time. You have to circumnavigate them [*en faire le tour*], and even do a little conjuring [*le tour de passe-passe*].

As for transference as we are broaching it this year – and you have seen how charmingly I have been able to lead you for a while in making you concern yourselves with love along with me – you must, all the same, have noticed that I approached it from a certain direction or angle, which not only is not the classic angle, but is not even the angle from which I had heretofore approached the topic with you.

Hitherto, I always remained reserved in what I asserted regarding transference, by telling you that one has to seriously distrust its appearances – namely, the phenomena that are most often designated with the terms "positive transference" and "negative transference." These terms are situated at the level of a simple collection, at the level of the everyday terms with which not only a more or less informed public, but even we analysts speak of transference.

I have always reminded you that we must begin with the fact that transference, in the final analysis, is repetition compulsion [*automatisme*]. Since the beginning of this year I have done nothing but lead you through the details of the movement in Plato's *Symposium*, where love alone is at work, and this was obviously designed to broach transference by another path. The goal now is to bring these two paths together.

The distinction [between transference and repetition compulsion] is so legitimate that one can find it in the work of other authors.

One reads very odd things in authors' texts, and one realizes that, lacking the proper reference points – that is, the guidelines I provide you with here – they arrive at things that are quite astonish-
209 ing. I would be more than happy if someone who is a bit incisive would give us a short report here on this topic, which we could truly discuss. I could even say that I wish someone would do so, at this point in my seminar, for precise, local reasons I don't want to dwell on, but that I will come back to. It is certainly necessary that some of you mediate between my rather heterogeneous audience and what I am in the process of trying to articulate for you. It is obviously very difficult for me, without such mediation, to make enough headway regarding subject matter that leads toward nothing less than placing the function of desire – not only in the analysand but essentially in the analyst – at the forefront of what I am articulating this year.

One wonders for whom the risk is greater. Is it for those who, for one reason or another, know something about it? Or is it for those who can still know nothing about it? Whatever the case may be, there must nevertheless be a way of broaching the topic before a sufficiently prepared audience, even if not everyone present has undergone an analysis.

That said, let me draw your attention to an article by Herman Nunberg, published in 1951 in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* [32: 1–9], entitled "Transference and Reality." This article, like everything else that has been written on transference, moreover, is exemplary as regards the difficulties that arise and the sleight of hand one encounters when authors lack a sufficiently methodical, situated, and enlightened approach to the phenomenon of transference. In this short article, which is exactly nine pages long, the author goes, in effect, so far as to distinguish transference from repetition compulsion. They are, he says, essentially different. Which is going pretty far, and it is certainly not what I am teaching you. I will thus request that, for next time, someone prepare for us a ten-minute report on what seems to him to result from the structure of the statements made in this article and how we can correct it.

For the moment, let us highlight what is involved.

Transference was originally discovered by Freud as a process, let me stress this, that is spontaneous. And, as we are talking about the historical beginning of the appearance of this phenomenon, a spontaneous process that was worrisome enough to scare one of its most eminent pioneers, Breuer, away from the first analytic investigation.

Transference was very quickly noticed and linked to the most 210
essential facet of the presence of the past insofar as it is discovered by analysis. I am weighing my terms very carefully, and I beg you to record what I am retaining in order to establish the main points of the dialectic in question.

It was also very quickly agreed, at the level of an attempt that was confirmed thereafter by experience, that the phenomenon is accessible to interpretation.

Interpretation already existed at that time, showing itself to be one of the tools necessary to induce the subject to remember. People perceived that something other than the tendency to remember was at work. They didn't yet know very well what it was. But, in any case, it was there. Transference was immediately agreed to be accessible to interpretation and thus permeable, so to speak, to the action of speech.

This immediately raised a problem that still remains unsolved for us today, which is the following.

The phenomenon of transference is itself positioned in such a way as to sustain the action of speech. In effect, at the same time at which transference was discovered, it was discovered that if speech hits home [*porte*], as it always had before this was noticed, it is because transference is involved in it. The upshot being that until the present time – and in fact the question has always remained on the agenda, the ambiguity remaining intact – as things stand, nothing can eliminate the fact that transference, no matter how much it is interpreted, retains within itself a kind of irreducible limit.

The topic has been discussed and rehashed at length by the most qualified authors in the field. Let me mention to you in particular an article by Ernest Jones in his *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, "The Action of Suggestion in Psychotherapy," but there are countless others.

What indeed is at issue? Under the normal conditions of analysis – in the case of neurosis, that is – transference is interpreted on the basis of and using the instrument of transference itself. It is thus impossible for the analyst not to analyze, interpret, and intervene in the transference from the position bestowed upon him by transference itself. In effect, there remains an irreducible margin of suggestion, an ever suspect element, which is not related to what

happens outside – one cannot know that – but rather to what the theory itself is capable of producing.

But, in fact, it is not such difficulties that thwart our progress in this area. We must nevertheless establish the limits – the theoretical
211 aporia – of the phenomenon. This is perhaps what will later allow us to go beyond it. Let us take careful note of the situation, and perhaps we can already perceive what paths will enable us to go beyond it.

The reality of transference is thus the presence of the past. Isn't there already something that stands out in this, allowing us to provide a more complete formulation? It is a presence that is a bit more than presence – it is a presence in action and, as the German [*Übertragung*] and French [*transfert*] terms indicate, a reproduction.

What is not brought out clearly enough in what is ordinarily said is in what respect this reproduction differs from a simple passivating of the subject. If the reproduction here is a reproduction in action, there is something creative in transference's manifestations. It seems to me essential to articulate this creative element. As always, just because I highlight it doesn't mean it is not already detectable in a more or less obscure way in what other authors have articulated.

If you read Daniel Lagache's landmark paper, you will see that this is the crux of the distinction he introduced between "repetition of need" and "need for repetition" which, in my opinion, remains a bit vacillating and murky as it does not take this last point into account. As didactic as this opposition may be, in reality it is not inclusive – it is not even truly at work for a single instant in what we experience in transference.

Consider first the need for repetition. There is no doubt about it, we can only formulate transference phenomena in the following enigmatic form: why must the subject eternally repeat a signification, in the positive sense of "signification," namely, what he signifies to us through his behavior? To call this a need is already to deflect what is at work. In this regard, to refer to an opaque psychological fact – as Daniel Lagache purely and simply does in his paper, namely, the Zeigarnik effect – better respects in the end what should be preserved that is strictly original in transference.

If, on the other hand, transference is the repetition of a need, a need that can manifest itself at one moment as transference and at another as need, it is clear that we arrive at an impasse, since we
212 also spend our time saying that it is but a shadow of a need, a need that has long since been outgrown, which is why its disappearance is possible.

We also arrive here at the point at which transference, strictly speaking, appears to be a source of fiction. In transference, the

subject fabricates or constructs something. Thus it is impossible, it seems to me, not to immediately include the term "fiction" in the function of transference. What is the nature of this fiction? And, second, what is its object(ive)? And if fiction is involved, what is being feigned? And since it is a matter of feigning, feigning for whom?

If we don't immediately answer by saying "for the person one is addressing," it is because we cannot add "knowing full well that one is doing so" [*le sachant*]. It is because we have already distanced ourselves, due to the phenomenon, from any hypothesis of what we might globally [*massivement*] term "simulation."

Thus it is not for the person one is addressing insofar as one knows that one is doing so. But this is not because it is the contrary – namely, that it is insofar as one does not know it that one must believe that the person one is addressing has, for all that, suddenly evaporated or vanished. Everything that we know of the unconscious right from the outset, on the basis of dreams, leads us to the conclusion that there are psychical phenomena which occur, develop, and are constructed in order to be heard [*entendus*, which also means "understood"] – which occur, develop, and are constructed for the Other who is there even if one does not know it. Even if one is not aware that they are there in order to be heard, they are there in order to be heard, and by an Other to boot.

Stated differently, it seems to me impossible to eliminate from the phenomenon of transference the fact that it manifests itself in a relationship with someone to whom one speaks. This fact is constitutive. It constitutes a border, and enjoins us at the same time not to drown the phenomenon of transference in the general possibility of repetition constituted by the very existence of the unconscious.

Outside of analysis, there are of course repetitions that are linked to the constancy of the signifying chain in the subject. These repetitions must be strictly distinguished from what we call transference, even if they can, in certain cases, have analogous effects. It is in this sense that we can justify the distinction into which someone who is nevertheless quite remarkable – Herman Nunberg – allows himself to slip, from an entirely different direction, that of error.

I am now going to slip in here a segment of our exploration of 213
the *Symposium* for a moment, in order to show you its stimulating character.

3

Recall the extraordinary scene constituted by Alcibiades' public confession, and let us try to situate it in our terms.

I'm sure you sense the quite remarkable weight that is attached to this action, sensing too that there is something here that goes well beyond a pure and simple account of what happened between Alcibiades and Socrates. It is not neutral. The proof thereof is that before even beginning, Alcibiades takes cover by calling for secrecy, not simply in order to protect himself. He says, "Let those who are neither capable nor worthy of hearing, the slaves who are here, plug up their ears, for there are things that are better not heard when one is unable to understand them."

Before whom is he confessing? The others, all the others, those who, through their assembly, body, or council, seem to give the greatest possible weight to what might be called the Other as tribunal. And what constitutes the value of Alcibiades' confession before this tribunal? It is that he recounts his attempt to make Socrates into something completely submissive and subordinate to a value other than that of a relationship of one subject to another subject. He attempted to seduce Socrates, he wanted to make him, and in the most openly avowed way possible, into someone instrumental and subordinate to what? To the object of Alcibiades' desire – *ágalma*, the good object.

I would go even further. How can we analysts fail to recognize what is involved? He says quite clearly: Socrates has the good object in his stomach. Here Socrates is nothing but the envelope in which the object of desire is found.

It is in order to clearly emphasize that he is nothing but this envelope that Alcibiades tries to show that Socrates is desire's serf in his relations with Alcibiades, that Socrates is enslaved to Alcibiades by his desire. Although Alcibiades was aware that Socrates desired him, he wanted to see Socrates' desire manifest itself in a sign, in order to know that the other – the object, *ágalma* – was at his mercy.

Now, it is precisely because he failed in this undertaking that Alcibiades disgraces himself, and makes of his confession something
214 that is so affectively laden. The daemon of Αἰδώς (*Aidós*), Shame, about which I spoke to you before in this context, is what intervenes here. This is what is violated. The most shocking secret is unveiled before everyone; the ultimate mainspring of desire, which in love relations must always be more or less dissimulated, is revealed – its aim is the fall of the Other, A, into the other, *a*. And on top of all that, it seems in this case that Alcibiades failed in his undertaking, insofar as it was designed to make Socrates fall off his pedestal.

What could more closely resemble what one might call a search for truth? One might believe that this is the endpoint of such a search, not in its function as a sketch, abstraction, or neutralization of all elements, but, quite the contrary, in what it contributes by way of resolution value, or even absolution. It is quite different, as you see, from the simple phenomenon of a so-called unaccomplished task [the Zeigarnik effect].

A public confession made, right up to its very last words, with all the religious overtones we rightly or wrongly attach to confession – this is certainly what seems to be involved. But doesn't it also seem fitting that the homage rendered to the master should end with this brilliant [*éclatant*] testimony to Socrates' superiority? Wouldn't that underscore what some have designated as the apologetic value of the *Symposium*?

You are indeed aware of the accusations with which Socrates, even after his death, remained charged, in particular in a pamphlet by a man named Polycrates. Everyone knows that the *Symposium* was in part written in response to the lampoon – we have several quotes from others who were also involved [in his condemnation] – which still accused Socrates of having corrupted Alcibiades and many others, by having indicated to them that the door to the satisfaction of their desires was wide open.

Now what do we see? A paradox. A truth is brought to light here, which seems in some sense to be self-sufficient, yet everyone senses that a question remains intact: why all of this? To whom is all of this addressed? Who is being instructed at the moment the confession takes place? It is certainly not Socrates' accusers. What desire induces Alcibiades to thus air his dirty laundry in public? Isn't there a paradox here that is worth pointing out? As you will see by looking closely at the text, it's not so simple.

What everyone perceives to be an interpretation by Socrates is, 215
indeed, an interpretation. Socrates retorts to Alcibiades, "Everything you just did, and Lord knows it isn't obvious, was for Agathon's sake. Your desire is more secret still than all the unveiling you have just given yourself over to. It now aims at yet another. And I will designate that other – it is Agathon."

Paradoxically, what Socrates' interpretation reveals, what it puts in the place of what is manifested, is not something fantasmatic, arising out of the depths of the past, but which no longer has any existence. If we are to believe Socrates, it is quite clearly reality itself that, in the process of the search for truth, serves as what we could call a transference. So that you will understand me clearly, [I will provide an analogy:] it is as if someone came forward during Oedipus' trial to say, "Oedipus is pursuing his search for truth,

which must lead to his own perdition, so breathlessly because he has but one goal and that is to run away with Antigone." Such is the paradoxical situation in which Socrates' interpretation places us.

There are, of course, myriad shimmering details. It is easy to see how pulling off such a brilliant act, showing what one is capable of, could serve to dazzle the ignorant. But nothing in all of that, Socrates tells us, holds up in the final analysis.

One can certainly wonder to what extent Socrates knows what he is doing when he says so. For in responding to Alcibiades, doesn't he seem to deserve Polycrates' accusation? Socrates – who is knowledgeable or learned in matters of love – designates to Alcibiades where his desire lies, and goes much further than simply designating it, as he, in some sense, vicariously plays this desire's game. Indeed, immediately afterward, Socrates is preparing to eulogize Agathon when suddenly, through a freezing of the camera, he is hidden, and we understand nothing due to the effect of the entrance of still more party crashers. Thanks to which the question remains unanswered. The dialogue can indefinitely go back over the same ground – we will never know what Socrates knew about what he was doing.

Or is it rather Plato who replaces him here? No doubt, since Plato wrote the dialogue, knowing a bit more about what Socrates knew, allowing centuries of readers to be misled concerning what he, Plato, designates to us as the true reason for love, believing instead that it lies in leading the subject to ladders which allow him to
216 ascend toward a beauty that is ever more confounded with supreme beauty. That being said, this is not at all what, in following the text, we sense we are obliged to conclude.

Insofar as we are analysts, we can say the following.

If, as seems to be indicated by his words, Socrates' desire is nothing other than to lead his interlocutors to γνῶθι σεαυτόν (*gnóthi seautón*) [know thyself], which is translated in an extreme manner, in another register, by "concern yourself with your soul," then we can imagine that this is to be taken seriously. On the one hand, in effect, and I will explain to you by what mechanism, Socrates is one of those to whom we owe it that we have a soul – I mean, he gave consistency to a certain point designated by Socratic questioning, with what it engenders by way of transference. But if it is true that what Socrates designates thusly is, unbeknown to him, the desire of the subject as I define it, and as Socrates effectively shows us that he makes himself into its accomplice – if this is so, and if he does so unbeknown to himself, we thus see Socrates in a place that we can understand completely, and we can understand at the same time how, in the end, he set Alcibiades ablaze.

For in its root and essence, desire is the Other's desire, and this is

strictly speaking the mainspring of the birth of love, if love is what occurs in the object toward which we extend our hand owing to our own desire, and which, when our desire makes it burst into flames, allows a response to appear for a moment: the other hand that reaches toward us as its desire.

This desire always manifests itself inasmuch as we do not know. "And Ruth did not know what God wanted from her." But in order not to know what God wanted of her, it must still have been clear that God wanted *something* of her. If she knows nothing about it, it is not because no one knows what God wants of her, but because, owing to this mystery, God is eclipsed – yet He is always there.

To the extent to which Socrates does not know what he himself desires – it being the Other's desire – Alcibiades is possessed by what? By a love about which one can say that Socrates' only merit is to designate it as transference love, and to redirect him to his true desire.

These are the points that I wanted to establish anew today, in order 217
to continue next time with what I think I can substantiate, namely, how the final articulation of the *Symposium* – this apologue or scenario verging on myth – allows us to structure the situation of the analysand in the presence of the analyst around the position of two desires.

We can thus truly restore it to its veritable sense of a situation involving two people, a real situation with two people. We can at the same time precisely situate the often extremely precocious love phenomena that occur therein – which are so disconcerting for those who broach them – as well as the phenomena that become even more complicated insofar as they come later, in short, all the content of what occurs at the imaginary level. It is at this level that modern theorists thought, not groundlessly, they had to construct the whole theory of object relations, as well as that of projection – a term which is far from adequate – and, in short, the whole theory of what the analyst is to the analysand during analysis.

This cannot be conceptualized without correctly situating the position that the analyst himself occupies in relation to the analysand's constitutive desire, which is that with which the subject engages in the analysis – namely, "What does he want?"

March 1, 1961

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XIII

A CRITIQUE OF COUNTERTRANSFERENCE

The unconscious is, at first, the Other's.
Desire in the case of the analyst.
The analytic game of bridge.
Paula Heimann and Money-Kyrle.
The latent effect linked to inscience.

Last time I ended, to your satisfaction so it seems, on a point regarding what constitutes one of the elements, and perhaps the fundamental element, of the subject's position in analysis. It was the question – which intersects for us the definition of desire as the Other's desire, a question that is, in short, marginal, but that thereby signals that it is fundamental to the position of the analysand in relation to the analyst, even if he does not formulate it to himself – "What does he [the analyst] want?"

After having gone that far, we are going to take a step back today, as I announced at the beginning of my talk last time, and start examining the ways other theorists generally manifest, in the evidence they provide of their praxis, the same topology as the one I am trying to ground here, inasmuch as it makes transference possible.

Attesting to it in their own way, they are not, in effect, obliged to formulate it in the same way I do. That seems obvious enough. As I wrote somewhere, one has no need for the blueprints of an apartment to bang one's head on the walls. I would go even further – for this operation, one can normally do perfectly well without the blueprints. But it's not true the other way around. As opposed to a primitive schema of reality testing, it is not enough to bang one's head on the walls to reconstruct the blueprints of an apartment, especially if one has this experience in the dark. An example dear to me is that of *Théodore cherche des allumettes*, a play which illustrates it for you quite amply.

220 This is perhaps a bit forced as a metaphor, though perhaps not as

forced as it may still seem to you. It is what we are going to see put to the test, the test of what occurs in our times when analysts speak of transference.

1

When analysts speak about transference nowadays, what are they talking about? Let us go right to what is foremost in their minds today on this topic. The topic arises at the precise point around which you no doubt sense that I am centering it this year, namely, around the analyst. And to be quite frank, what the most advanced and most lucid theorists articulate best when they discuss it is "countertransference," as they call it.

I would like to remind you of some basic facts about it. It is not because they are basic that they are always expressed, and, while they go without saying, they go even better with saying.

Concerning countertransference, there is first of all the commonly held view. It is the view held by each of us who has at least considered the problem a little bit. It is the first idea that one comes up with about it, the first in the sense of the most common idea, but it is also the oldest approach to the topic, for the notion of countertransference has always been around in psychoanalysis. Since very early on – since the beginning of the development of the notion of transference – everything in an analyst that represents his unconscious insofar as it is, I would say, unanalyzed, has been considered detrimental to his functioning and operating as an analyst.

In the commonly accepted view, it is inasmuch as something has remained in the dark that this something becomes the source of uncontrolled and above all blind responses. This is what leads to an emphasis on the need for a training analysis to be taken quite far – I am using vague terms to begin with – because, as one author wrote somewhere, were one to neglect some corner of the analyst's unconscious, veritable blind spots would result therefrom. This could lead in practice to more or less serious or unfortunate events: nonrecognition, missed opportunities, badly timed interventions, and perhaps even mistakes. Such a view is, in fact, proposed, though I would place it in the conditional tense, in quotes, indicating my 221
reservations – it is a view to which I do not immediately subscribe, but which is widely endorsed.

Yet one cannot but relate this view to another, which is that one must, in the end, have faith in the communication of unconsciouses to best provide the analyst with decisive insights.

Thus it would not be owing as much to one's long experience

as an analyst, or to extensive knowledge of what one is likely to encounter in patients' structures, that we could expect the most relevant interventions, the lion's spring that Freud mentions, which only happens once in the best of cases – no, it would be owing to the communication of unconsciouses. This purportedly gives rise to what, in analysis as it is currently practiced, goes furthest and deepest and has the greatest effect. There would be no analysis at all were any of the elements that supposedly attest to it to be lacking. The analyst is, in other words, presumed to be directly informed of what is going on in his patient's unconscious. The pathway by which this transmission occurs remains, nevertheless, quite problematic in the tradition. How can we conceptualize such a communication between unconsciouses?

I am not here to polarize antinomies or fabricate artificial impasses, even from a heuristic or critical standpoint. I am not saying that there is something unthinkable about this, or that it would be antinomical to define the model analyst both as he who, ideally, no longer has anything that is unconscious, but who at the same time has preserved a good deal of it. This would be to postulate an unfounded opposition.

To take things as far as they can go, one might theorize a reserve unconscious. It must be admitted that no one ever undergoes an exhaustive elucidation of the unconscious, regardless of how far his analysis is taken. If we accept the idea of an unconscious reserve, we can quite easily imagine that someone who is alerted to its existence by having undergone training analysis, knows, in some sense, how to play it like an instrument, like the shell of a violin whose strings he also possesses. It is certainly not a raw unconscious we find in him, but rather a supple unconscious, an unconscious plus experience of that unconscious.

After enumerating these reservations, we must still sense the legitimate necessity of elucidating the point of transition by which
222 this qualification is acquired, and by which what psychoanalytic doctrine claims to be fundamentally inaccessible to consciousness can be reached. Indeed, it is this very inaccessibility that we must always posit as the foundation of the unconscious. For it is not the case that it is accessible to men of goodwill – it is not. It is under strictly limited conditions that one can reach it, through a detour, the detour via the Other, and this makes analysis necessary and infrangibly eliminates the possibility of self-analysis. How can we situate the point of transition by which what is thus defined [as inaccessible] can nevertheless be used as a source of information included in a directive praxis?

To raise this question is not to erect a pointless antinomy. What

tells us that the problem can be validly raised in this way, I mean in a way that it becomes solvable, is that things really and truly do present themselves like this.

To you who at least have the keys, something immediately makes the point of access recognizable, which is that there is a logical priority in what you hear – namely, that it is first of all in the form of the Other's unconscious that all experience of the unconscious is gained. It was through his patients that Freud first encountered the unconscious. And for each of us, even if this fact is elided, it is first of all as the Other's unconscious that the idea presents itself that such a thing might exist. Every discovery of one's own unconscious presents itself as a stage of ongoing translation of an unconscious that is first of all the Other's. The upshot being that one should not be so surprised that one can admit that, even in the case of an analyst who has gone very far in this stage of translation, translation can always begin anew at the level of the Other. This obviously reduces much of the import of the possible antinomy I mentioned earlier, while simultaneously indicating that the antinomy can only be proposed illegitimately.

What I am telling you about the relation with the Other is designed to exorcize, in part, the fear we may feel of not knowing enough about ourselves. We shall come back to this, for I do not intend to absolve you of all concern on this score – that is quite far from my intent. But once we have accepted the function served by the Other, the fact remains that we encounter here the same obstacle we encounter in ourselves in our own analysis when the unconscious is involved. Namely, the highly essential, not to say historically original, element of my teaching: the positive power of misrecognition in the illusions of the ego, in the widest sense of the term – that is, in imaginary capture. 223

It is important to note here that this domain, which is thoroughly mixed together with the deciphering of the unconscious in our experience of our personal analysis, occupies a position that must be said to be different when it comes to our relation to the Other. Here appears what I would call the Stoic ideal people have of analysis.

People first identified the feelings, roughly speaking, negative or positive, that the analyst may have about his patient, which give rise in him to effects that are due to an incomplete reduction of the themes of his own unconscious. But if this is true for him as concerns his self-regard [*amour-propre*] in relation to the other with a lowercase *o* within him, the latter being that by which he sees himself as something other than what he is – and this was glimpsed and discovered well before psychoanalysis came on the scene – it in

no wise exhausts the question of what legitimately occurs when he deals with this other with a lowercase *o*, the imaginary other, outside of himself.

Let me spell this out. The path of Stoic apathy demands that we remain unmoved by the attempts at seduction – as well as by the punishments that may be meted out – by this other with a lowercase *o* found outside of us, insofar as he always has some power over us, whether great or small, if nothing else the power to burden us with his sheer presence. If the analyst deviates from the path of Stoic apathy, does this in and of itself mean that it is owing to some inadequacy in his training as an analyst? Absolutely not – at least in theory.

Accept this stage of my argument. That is not to say it is the place I will end up. Let me simply offer the following remark: we have no reason to posit that, in and of itself, the recognition of the unconscious places the analyst out of passion's range. This would be to imply that the total, overall effect, the entire impact of the sexual object – or of another object capable of producing some sort of physical aversion – always and essentially derives from the unconscious.

Why, I ask, would that be necessary to anyone other than those who make the serious mistake of identifying the unconscious as such with the total powers of the *Lebenstriebe* [life drives]? This is what radically distinguishes the import of the doctrine I am trying to articulate before you. There is, of course, a relationship between
224 the two. The point is to elucidate why this relationship can be established, why it is the tendencies of the life instinct that are thus offered up in this relationship to the unconscious. Note that it is not just any of those tendencies, but specifically those that Freud always and tenaciously designated as sexual tendencies. There must certainly be a reason why they are especially privileged, captivated, or captured by the mainspring of the signifying chain, insofar as it is the signifying chain that constitutes the subject of the unconscious.

That being said, at this stage of our investigation it is worth asking why an analyst, just because he is well analyzed, should be unaffected by the appearance of a hostile thought in the other presence there – and one must of course assume, in order for something of this kind to occur, that the presence not be that of a patient, but rather of a being who takes up space. The more we assume him to be imposing, full, and normal, the more legitimately all kinds of possible reactions can occur in his presence. Similarly, when the two are of opposite sexes, for example, why should love or hate reactions be excluded in and of themselves? Why should they disqualify the analyst from serving his function?

Formulating the question in this way, there is no other answer than the following – why indeed? Or better still: the better the analyst is analyzed, the more it will be possible for him to be frankly in love with – or frankly averse to or repulsed by – his partner, according to the most elementary modes of relations between bodies.

What I am saying may seem a bit excessive, in that it bothers us. If we feel that there must, all the same, be something to the requirement of analytic apathy, it must clearly be rooted elsewhere. But in that case it must be stated.

And I am equipped to state it.

2

If I could state it for you right away, if the path we have already traced out allowed me to convey it to you, I would of course do so. But part of the path remains to be traced out before I can give you a 225
strict, precise formulation.

Nevertheless, something can already be said about it, which might satisfy you up to a certain point. The only thing I ask of you is not to be too satisfied with it.

It is as follows – if the analyst achieves apathy, as in the general public's conception of him and in accordance with his deontological image, it is to the extent that he is possessed by a desire that is stronger than the other desires that may be involved – for example, the desire to get down to it [*en venir au fait*] with his patient: to take him in his arms or throw him out the window.

It happens. I dare say that I wouldn't expect much from someone who has never felt such desires. But apart from the very possibility of it happening, it should not become a regular thing.

Why not? Is it for the negative reason that one must avoid a type of total imaginary discharge of the analysis? No – and we need not develop that hypothesis any further, although it would be interesting – it is for the following reason, which I am bringing out here this year: the analyst says, "I am possessed by a stronger desire." He is grounded in saying so as an analyst, insofar as a change has occurred in the economy of his desire. And it is in this regard that Plato's texts can be mentioned.

Every now and then something encouraging comes my way. I have given you this year a long discourse or commentary on the *Symposium*, with which I am not dissatisfied, I must say, and it turns out that someone in my circle surprised me – and you should understand this surprise in the sense the word has in analysis, as something which is basically related to the unconscious – by pointing out that,

in one of his footnotes, Freud quotes part of Alcibiades' speech to Socrates [*SE* X, p. 240 n. 2].

Freud could have sought out a thousand other examples to illustrate what he was interested in at that precise moment, which was the death wish involved in love. He had but to bend over to scoop up piles of such examples. Someone once hurled at me an ejaculation, like a heartfelt cry, "Oh, how I would love it if you were dead for two years!" One need not look to the *Symposium* to find such examples. Thus I feel it is not inconsequential that, at an essential
226 moment in his discovery of the ambivalence involved in love, Freud referred to Plato's *Symposium*. It's not a bad sign. It is certainly not a sign that we were barking up the wrong tree.

In Plato's *Philebus*, Socrates says that the strongest of all desires must be the desire for death, since the souls that are in Erebus remain there. The argument is worth whatever it is worth, but it takes on illustrative value here in relation to what I have already indicated to you concerning the direction in which the reorganization or restructuring of the analyst's desire can be conceptualized. It is at least one of the moorings or anchoring points of the question. Surely we cannot confine our attention to that alone.

Nevertheless, we can go further in the same vein, regarding the analyst's detachment from repetition compulsion, which a good personal analysis is supposed to bring about. There is something that must surpass what I will call the particularity of its detour, go a bit beyond, and involve the specific detour Freud articulates when he posits that it is conceivable that the fundamental repetition of the development of life may be nothing other than the long detour of a compact, abyssal drive. He calls the latter the death drive, it being a level at which there is no longer anything but ἀνάγκη (*Anánke*), the necessity of the return to the initial state of inanimate matter.

This is no doubt a metaphor. A metaphor that is expressed only by extrapolation – at which certain people balk – on the basis of what is brought out by our practice, namely, the action of the unconscious signifying chain insofar as it leaves its mark on every manifestation of life in subjects who speak. But it is nevertheless a metaphor or an extrapolation that is not without its why and wherefore. At least it allows us to imagine that it contains a grain of truth, and that there may in fact be some relation between the analyst and Hades – death – as one of my students wrote in the first issue of our journal, adopting a beautifully haughty tone.

Does he or doesn't he play with death? I myself have written that, in the game of analysis, which certainly cannot be understood as involving only two players, the analyst plays with a dummy [*un mort*]. Thus we find again the common requirement that there be

in the other with a lowercase *o* something that is capable of playing the part of a dead man [*un mort*].

In his position in the game of bridge, the analyst as S has across 227
from him his own other with a lowercase *o* [*a* for *autre* in French], by which he is in a specular relationship with himself, insofar as he is constituted as an ego. If we locate here the designated place of the other who speaks and that the analyst hears – that is, the patient insofar as he is represented by the barred subject [$], the subject as unknown to him – the patient turns out to occupy *i(a)*, the place of the image of his own little *a*. Let us call the set of them as follows: the image of little *a* squared, $i(a)^2$. We will then have here the image, or rather the position, of the Other with a capital *O* insofar as it is the analyst who occupies it.

In other words, the analysand has a partner. You should not be surprised to discover that the analysand's own ego is attached to the same place. He must discover the truth of this other – the analyst as Other with a capital *O*.

The paradox of the game of analytic bridge is the abnegation which, unlike what happens in an ordinary game of bridge, is such that the analyst must help the subject figure out what is in his partner's hand. In order to direct this bridge game of loser wins, in theory the analyst should not have to make his life more complicated by having a partner. This is why it is said that the analyst as *i(a)* must act as a dummy. Which means that the analyst must always know which cards were dealt to whom.

I think that you will appreciate the relative simplicity of this solution to the problem. It is a common, exoteric, explanation for the outside world. It is simply a way of talking about what everyone believes, and someone who showed up here for the first time would find plenty of reasons to be satisfied with it and could go back to sleep soundly, reassured about what he had always heard – for example, that the analyst is a superior being.

Unfortunately, it doesn't hold water.

It doesn't hold water, and this is attested to by analysts themselves. Not simply by deploring the situation, tears in their eyes, and saying, "We are never equal to the task." While such declamations still exist, we have, thank God, been spared them for some time now – that's a fact. I am not personally responsible for this. I am simply noting it for the record.

Indeed, for some time now, people have accepted the idea that in analytic practice the analyst must take into account, in his information and his maneuvering, the feelings, not that he inspires, but that 228
he himself feels in the course of an analysis – namely, what is known as his countertransference.

3

It is to the best of analytic circles that I am alluding, and to the Kleinian circle to be specific.

You can easily get a hold of what Melanie Klein wrote on the subject, or what Paula Heimann wrote in an article entitled "On Counter-transference."

But you need not seek out this conception, that everyone currently takes for granted, in any one particular article. People articulate it quite openly, and above all they basically understand what they are articulating. It is nevertheless taken for granted. What is involved?

Countertransference is no longer considered in our time to be in essence an imperfection. Which does not, however, mean that it cannot ever be one. While it is no longer considered to be an imperfection, the fact remains that something makes it warrant the name "countertransference," as you will see.

Apparently, countertransference is exactly of the same nature as the other phase of transference, around which I tried to center the question last time by contrasting it with transference conceptualized as repetition compulsion – namely, transference insofar as it is said to be positive or negative, which everyone takes to imply the analysand's feelings for the analyst. Well, the countertransference in question – concerning which it is agreed that we must take it into account, even if it is a matter of some debate what we must do with it, and you will see at what level – consists of the analyst's feelings in analysis, which are determined at every instant by his relations with the analysand.

Of all the articles that I have read, I am selecting one almost at random, though it is never completely at random that we select anything, and there is probably a reason why I want to tell you the title of this one. It is a good article, whose title contains the very topic we are talking about today, "Normal Counter-transference and Some Deviations," which came out in the *International Journal*
229 *of Psychoanalysis* in 1956. The author, Roger Money-Kyrle, apparently belongs to the Kleinian circle, and is associated with Melanie Klein through Paula Heimann.

Before turning to this article, let me say a word about the article by Paula Heimann, who tells us about certain states of dissatisfaction and worry she felt. According to her, they even involved a certain premonition. She found herself in a situation which one need not be an old experienced analyst to have experienced, for it is only too frequently encountered during the initial stages of an analysis. The fact that a patient may precipitously, in a way patently determined by his analysis, though he may not be aware of it, make premature

decisions, enter into a long-term relationship, and perhaps even get married – Heimann is cognizant that this must be analyzed, interpreted, and, to a certain extent, countered. But in this particular case, she mentions an altogether bothersome feeling she has, which she takes to be, in and of itself, a sign that she is right to be especially worried [p. 82]. She shows in her article how it is this feeling that allows her to better understand things and make headway [p. 83].

Many other sorts of feelings can arise. Money-Kyrle's article mentions, for example, feelings of depression, a general decline in interest in things, "listlessness," and even a listlessness the analyst may feel about everything he comes into contact with. Money-Kyrle describes, for example, what resulted from a session in which it seemed to him that he was unable to adequately live up to what he calls a demanding superego.* It is not because the word "demand" is contained therein that you should remain at that level in understanding the particularly English emphasis. "Demand" is more than *demande* in French [which is often no stronger than "request" in English], it is a pressing exigency. The article is a good one to read because the author does not confine himself to description, but calls into question in this regard the role of the analytic superego. He does it in a way that will seem to you to present some kind of gap,* which only truly takes on its full importance if you refer to the Graph of Desire. It is beyond the locus of the Other that the bottom line represents the superego – a dotted line insofar as you dot it.

I am putting the rest of the Graph on the board so that you will realize in this regard how it can serve you, and in particular in understanding that everything should not always be attributed to the superego's severity, which is, in the final analysis, opaque. Such and such a demand can give rise to depressive effects and even more. 230
This occurs in the analyst insofar as there is continuity between the Other's demand and the structure known as the superego. You should understand that we indeed find the strongest effects of what is called the superego's hyperseverity when the subject's demand is introjected, passing as an articulated demand into he who is its recipient in such a way that this demand represents his own demand in an inverted form – for example, when a demand for love coming from the mother encounters in he who must respond to it his own demand for love addressed to his mother.

But I am merely indicating this here, as our path does not lead in that direction. It is but a tangential remark.

Let us turn to Money-Kyrle, an analyst who seems particularly agile and clever in recognizing his own experience. He highlights something that happened in his practice and presents it to us as an example. It seems to him to warrant communication, not as

an example of an accidental blunder that was more or less well corrected, but as a procedure that can be integrated into analytic technique. He underscores a feeling he detected in himself that he considered to be related to the trouble he was having analyzing one of his patients.

It occurred during the picturesque break in English life known as the weekend, and what he had done with his patient the week prior seemed problematic to him and left him unsatisfied. He tells us that he fell prey, without at first seeing the link at all, to a kind of exhaustion – let us call a spade a spade. During the second half of his weekend, he found himself in a state he could only recognize when he formulated it to himself in the exact same terms his patient had used – a state of disgust bordering on depersonalization.

The patient was, in effect, at times subject to phases verging on depression and paranoid phenomena, which were nothing new to either the patient or the analyst. It was one of those states that had given rise to the whole dialectic of the week, accompanied by a dream that the analyst had lit up in responding to. Rightly or wrongly, he had the feeling that he had not given the right answer, his feeling being based in any case on the fact that his answer had made the patient complain bitterly. Starting at that point, the
231 patient had become exceedingly mean to him. Thus the analyst wound up recognizing in what he himself felt, exactly what, at the outset, his patient had described about the patient's own state.

The analyst in question, like the other members of his circle, which I am referring to on this occasion as the Kleinian circle, immediately conceptualizes what is going on as representative of the effect of projection of the bad object, insofar as the subject, whether in analysis or not, is likely to project it into the other. It is not taken to be problematic, in a certain analytic milieu, to provide such explanations, despite the almost magical degree of belief they presuppose. It must not, nevertheless, be for no reason whatsoever that people slip into them so easily. This projected bad object must be understood as having quite naturally an effect, at least when it is a question of he who is coupled with the subject in a relationship as tight and coherent as that of a longstanding analysis.

Having an effect, to what extent? The article tells you – to the extent that it stems here from the analyst's failure to understand his patient. Thus it constitutes a deviation from "normal countertransference," and the article focuses on the possible utilization of such deviations.

As the beginning of the article tells us, "normal countertransference" occurs through the cyclical rhythm of introjection by the analyst of the analysand's discourse, and projection onto the analy-

sand of what is produced by way of imaginary effects in response to this introjection. The author considers these effects to be normal, and you will see just how far he goes. Countertransference is said to be normal when the introjected demand is completely understood. The analyst then has no problem situating himself in what clearly arises in his own introjection. He simply sees its consequences and has no need to even use them. What happens in this case, which is actually situated at the level of *i(a)*, is completely under control. The analyst is not surprised by what occurs in the patient – namely, that the patient projects onto him – and is not affected by it.

It is only when the analyst does not understand the patient that he is affected and that a deviation from normal countertransference occurs. Things can even go so far that the analyst effectively becomes the patient of the bad object that is projected into him by his partner. That is what happens in this case: Money-Kyrle expe- 232
riences something altogether unexpected, and it is only a thought which comes to him outside of the analytic setting that allows him – and this is perhaps only because the occasion is favorable – to recognize the very state described to him by his patient.

I am simply repeating it to you, without taking responsibility for the explanation given. I am not denying it either. I am provisionally bracketing it in order to go step by step, in order to lead you to the precise perspective to which I need to lead you in order to articulate something.

According to this experienced analyst, if the analyst does not understand, he nevertheless becomes the receptacle of the projection in question. He senses these projections like foreign objects in himself, which places him in the odd position of being a garbage dump.

If such things occurred with many patients, you see what this could lead to. When one is unable to situate what gives rise to such events, which are presented in a disconnected manner in Money-Kyrle's description, problems can arise.

This direction in analysis wasn't born yesterday. Ferenczi had already raised the question of knowing to what extent the analyst should reveal to his patient what the analyst really feels. It would be, according to him, in certain cases, a means of giving the patient access to that particular reality. No one dares to go that far today, especially not in the school to which I am referring. Paula Heimann says, for example, that the analyst must be very severe in his log and everyday hygiene, always being ready to analyze what he himself may feel in that register, but that, in the end, it is his own business, his aim being to try to race against the clock – in other words, to catch up for having perhaps gotten behind in understanding* his patient.

Be that as it may, I am taking the following step with our author, Money-Kyrle, who, while not Ferenczi, is not as reserved as Paula Heimann. On the basis of this localized point, the identicalness of the state he felt to that recounted by his patient at the beginning of the [session], he goes so far as to talk about it with his patient. And he notes the effect thereof – an immediate effect, for he tells us nothing of the later effects – which is obvious jubilation on the part of the patient. The latter deduces nothing else therefrom than, "Oh, so you admit it! Well, I'm very happy to hear it, for when you inter
233 preted that state to me the other day" – and indeed, the analyst had interpreted it, in a rather vague and fuzzy way, as the analyst himself realized – "I thought that what you were saying was all about you and not in the least about me."

We thus find ourselves in the midst of a complete misunderstanding, and we are content with it. In any case, the author is content with it, for he drops the subject there. The analysis, he tells us, begins anew, providing him, and we can but take his word for it here, every subsequent possibility to interpret. This was the precise point of the talk he gave in 1955 at the Geneva Congress, the text of which is contained in his article.

What is presented to us here as a deviation from [normal] countertransference is simultaneously posited as an instrumental procedure that can be codified. In similar cases, we should at least attempt to correct the situation as quickly as possible by recognizing the effects on the analyst and, by means of qualified statements, offer the patient something which certainly unveils, in some respect, the analytic situation as a whole. People expect a new departure to result therefrom, which will undo what had hitherto seemed to be an impasse in the analysis.

I am not saying that I think this is an appropriate way to proceed. I am simply remarking that if something like a new departure can be brought about in this manner, it is certainly not due to some privileged position. What I would say is that, to the extent that there is any legitimacy to this approach, it is our categories that in every case allow us to understand it.

I am of the opinion that it is not possible to understand it outside of the register of what I have pointed to as the place of *a*, the partial object, *ágalma*, in desire, insofar as desire is itself determined within a broader relationship, that of the demand [*exigence*] for love. It is only through this topology that we can understand such an approach. Indeed, this topology allows us to say that, even if the subject is unaware of it, by the very presupposition – I would even say, the objective presupposition – of the analytic situation, little *a*, *ágalma*, is already functioning in the other. It follows that what is

presented to us here as countertransference, whether normal or not, in fact has no reason to be specially qualified as such. What is at work is but an irreducible effect of the transference situation itself.

By the sole fact of transference, the analyst is situated in the posi- 234
tion of he who contains *ágalma*, the fundamental object involved in the subject's analysis, as linked and conditioned by the subject's vacillating relationship that I characterize as constituting the fundamental fantasy, inaugurating the locus in which the subject can be fixated as desire.

This is a legitimate effect of transference. There is no need to bring in countertransference, as if some aspect of the analyst himself were involved, and a faulty aspect to boot. But in order to recognize it, the analyst must know certain things. He must, in particular, know that his occupying the correct position is not contingent on the criterion that he understand or not understand.

It is not absolutely essential that he understand. I would even say that, up to a certain point, his lack of comprehension can be preferable to an overly great confidence in his understanding. In other words, he must always call into question what he understands and remind himself that what he is trying to attain is precisely what in theory he does not understand. It is certainly only insofar as he knows what desire is, but does not know what the particular subject with whom he is engaged in the analytic adventure desires, that he is well situated to contain within himself the object of that desire. This alone can explain certain of its effects that are, it seems, still so oddly frightening.

I read an article that I will reference more precisely next time, in which a guy who, despite a great deal of experience, wonders what one should do when, right from the very first dreams, and sometimes even before the analysis begins, the analysand himself clearly takes the analyst to be a love object. The response given by the author in question is a bit more reserved than that given by another who comes right out and says that, when things get off on that foot, there is no point going any further because there are too many reality elements.

Must we formulate things in such a way? If I allow myself to be guided by the categories we have produced, the very crux of the analytic situation is that the subject is introduced as worthy of interest and love, *erómenos*. The analyst is there for him. This is the manifest effect, so to speak. But there is a latent effect, which is related to his non-science or inscience. Inscience regarding what? Regarding the latent – I mean objective or structural – object of his desire. 235
This object is already in the Other, and it is inasmuch as this is the case that, whether he knows it or not, he is virtually constituted as

erastés. By virtue of this sole fact, he fulfills the condition for the metaphor or substitution of *erastés* for *erómenos*, which in and of itself constitutes the phenomenon of love. It is no surprise that we see its blazing effects right from the beginning of analysis in the form of transference love.

There is not, however, any reason to consider this to be a contraindication against analysis. It is here that the question of the analyst's desire – and to a certain extent, the analyst's responsibility – arises.

In truth, for the situation to be, as lawyers say regarding contracts, "perfect," it is enough to assume that the analyst, unbeknown to himself, places for a moment his own partial object, *ágalma*, in the patient with whom he is dealing. This is, in effect, contraindicated, but it is impossible, as you see, to situate, at least as long as the situation of the analyst's desire has not been precisely spelled out.

It will suffice that you read the paper by the author to whom I am alluding to see that he is forced, by the logic of his own discourse, to raise the question of what interests the analyst. And what does he tell us? That two things are involved in the analyst when he conducts an analysis, two drives.* It is quite strange to see qualified as passive drives the two that I will mention to you – the reparative drive* which, he tells us verbatim, runs counter to the latent destructiveness in each of us, and, second, the parental drive.*

This is how an analyst in a school as well developed as the Kleinian school formulates the position the analyst must adopt. I am not going to avert my gaze or protest loudly. I think that those of you who are regulars at my Seminar can easily see the scandalous nature thereof. But, after all, it is a scandal in which we essentially participate, for we constantly speak as if that is what is at work, even if we are well aware of the fact that we must not act as parents to the analysand. It suffices to hear what we say when we speak of the field of the psychoses.

The reparative drive,* what does that mean? A whole raft of
236 things. It has myriad implications for our practice. But wouldn't it be worthwhile articulating, in this regard, in what sense this reparative drive must be distinguished from the abuses of therapeutic ambition, for example?

In short, what I am challenging is not the absurdity of such a notion, but on the contrary what justifies it. I give the author and the whole school he represents credit for aiming at something that effectively has a place in our topology. But it must for once be articulated, situated, and explained otherwise. How can experienced authors speak of parental and reparative drives in analysis, and at

the same time say something which, on the one hand, must have a justification, but which, on the other, imperiously requires a veritable justification?

This is why, next time, I will rapidly summarize what I wound up presenting, in an apologetic manner, since the last time, to a philosophical group concerning the position of desire.

March 8, 1961

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XIV

DEMAND AND DESIRE IN THE ORAL AND ANAL STAGES

Psychoanalysts and drives.
The gaping maw of life.
From the pole to the partner.
Bout-de-Zan.
Counterdemand.

For those of you showing up here out of the blue today, I will provide a brief road map.

In this year's Seminar, I first attempted to reformulate, in more rigorous terms than have hitherto been employed, what one might call the theory of love, by commenting on Plato's *Symposium*. It is in the context of what I managed to situate thanks to this commentary that I am now beginning to articulate the nature [*position*] of transference, in the sense in which I announced it this year – in other words, in what I called its "subjective disparity."

By which I mean that the positions of the two subjects present are in no way equivalent. This is why one cannot speak of the "analytic situation," but merely of a pseudo-situation.

In the last two classes, I broached the topic of transference as regards the analyst. This does not mean that I grant the term "countertransference" the meaning it is usually given, which is that of a sort of imperfection in the analyst's purification in relation to the analysand. On the contrary, by "countertransference" I mean the analyst's necessary involvement in the transferential situation, which is precisely why we must distrust this unsuitable term. For, in fact, countertransference simply concerns the necessary consequences of the phenomenon of transference itself, assuming we analyze it correctly.

I introduced the topic by highlighting the fact that countertransference is currently conceptualized rather broadly in analytic
238 practice. Indeed, people think that what we might call a certain

number of affects, insofar as the analyst feels them in analysis, constitute an if not normal, at least normative, way of situating things in the analytic setting, and constitute part not only of the knowledge base at the analyst's disposal, but even of his possible interventions, in that he may communicate his feelings to the analysand.

I never said that I find this method legitimate. I noted that it has been introduced and promoted in practice, and that it has been received and accepted by a very broad swath of the analytic community.

This alone is sufficiently indicative. We shall endeavor for the time being to analyze how theorists who view the use of countertransference in this way legitimate it.

1

Theorists legitimate the use of countertransference by relating it to moments when the analyst does not understand [*incompréhension*]. It is as if his failure to understand the patient were in and of itself the criterion, watershed mark, or aspect that defines what obliges the analyst to shift to another mode of communication and to another instrument in order to get his bearings in the analysis.

It is around the term "understanding" [*compréhension*] that what I intend to show you today revolves, in order to allow you to hone in on what one might call, in our terms, the relation between the subject's demand and his desire. Let me remind you that I have foregrounded the following as the crux of the matter – whose repercussions [*retour*] I have shown to be necessary – namely, that what is at stake in analysis is nothing other than bringing to light manifestations of the subject's desire.

Where is understanding when we understand, when we think we understand? I posit that, in its surest and, I daresay, elementary form, our understanding of anything the subject tells us can be defined, at the conscious level, by the fact that we know how to respond to what he [*l'autre*] demands. It is insofar as we think we can 239
respond to his demand that we have the sense that we understand.

Concerning demand, however, we know a bit more than this first approximation. We know, for example, that demand is not explicit. It is even far more than implicit – it is hidden from the subject as if it had to be interpreted. Therein lies the ambiguity.

Indeed, we who interpret it respond to unconscious demand at the level of a discourse that to us is a concrete discourse. Therein lies the dodge [*biais*] or trap. We have always tended to slide toward an assumption that captivates us, which is that the subject should,

in some sense, be content with what we bring to light through our response – he should be satisfied with our response.

We know, nevertheless, that some resistance is always produced at this point. All the stages of the analytic theory of the subject – namely, the theory of the various agencies in him that we deal with – have stemmed from the situation of this resistance, from the way we can qualify it, and from the agencies to which we attribute it. Yet, without denying the role played by the subject's various agencies in resistance, isn't it possible to go further?

The difficulty of the relations between the subject's demand and the response made to him is situated farther along, at an altogether original point to which I tried to bring you by showing you what results in the subject who speaks from the fact – this is how I expressed myself – that his needs must pass through the defiles of demand. At this early point, it turns out that everything that is a natural tendency in the subject who speaks must be situated both in a beyond and shy of demand.

In a beyond that is the demand for love. And in a shy of that we call desire, with what characterizes it as a condition, which we call its absolute condition owing to the specificity of the object it involves: little *a*, the partial object. I tried to show you that the latter is included right from the outset in the fundamental text on the theory of love, the *Symposium*, in the guise of *ágalma*, inasmuch as I also identified *ágalma* with the partial object in psychoanalytic theory.

Today we will put our finger on it again by briefly retracing what
240 comes first in analytic theory – namely, *Triebe*, drives and their vicissitudes. We can then deduce what stems from them concerning what is important to us: the drive* involved in the analyst's position.

You recall that it is on this problematic point that I left you last time, insofar as an author [Money-Kyrle], the one who addresses the topic of countertransference, calls the drives involved in the analyst's position the parental drive,* the need to be a parent, and the reparative drive,* the need to go against the natural destructiveness assumed to reside in every subject insofar as he is analyzable.

You immediately grasped the brazenness and audacity of proposing such notions. It suffices to dwell upon them for but a moment to perceive the paradox therein. If the parental drive* must be present in the analytic situation, how can one even dare speak of transference since the analysand truly has a parent sitting across from him? What could be more legitimate than the fact that he falls into the very same position in relation to the analyst as the one he occupied during his whole upbringing in relation to people around whom were constructed the fundamental situations that constitute for him the signifying chain and repetition automatisms?

In other words, how can we fail to perceive that we are heading straight for an obstacle which will allow us to find our bearings? For we have here a direct contradiction, since we also say that the transference situation, as it is established in analysis, is at odds with the reality of the analytic situation? Certain people imprudently qualify the latter as a situation that is exceedingly simple, related to the *hic et nunc* of the relationship to the doctor. How can we fail to see that, if the doctor here is armed with the parental drive* – however evolved we may assume him to be in terms of his educative position – there is absolutely nothing that differentiates the subject's normal response to the situation from what could be considered the repetition of a past situation?

There is no way to even articulate the analytic situation without positing, at least to some extent, the exact opposite requirement. See, for example, the third chapter of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Freud, in taking up anew the kind of articulation at work in analysis, distinguishes there between remembering and reproducing – repetition compulsion, *Wiederholungszwang*. He considers the latter to be a partial failure of the aim of remembering in analysis – indeed, a necessary failure. He even goes so far as 241
to chalk up the function of repetition to the structure of the ego – sensing at this stage of his elaboration a need to characterize the ego as largely unconscious – certainly not the whole of the function of repetition, since the entire work is designed to show that there is something more, but the majority nonetheless. Repetition is chalked up to ego defense, while the remembering of the repressed is considered to be the true or ultimate endpoint of the analytic operation, even though it is perhaps considered to be inaccessible at that precise moment.

Remembering, as the ultimate aim, encounters a resistance situated in the unconscious function of the ego. Following out this line of thinking, Freud tells us that we must tread this path:

> the physician cannot, as a rule, spare the analysand this phase, but must let him relive anew a bit of his forgotten life. He [. . .] must see to it that a certain dose of *Überlegenheit*, superiority, be preserved, thanks to which the apparent reality, *die anscheinende Realität*, can always nevertheless be recognized anew by the subject as a reflection, a mirror effect of a forgotten past.

God knows to what misguided interpretations this indication of *Überlegenheit* has lent itself. The whole theory of the alliance with the so-called healthy part of the ego was built around it. Yet there is

nothing of the kind in these pages. I can highlight what must have struck you in passing, namely, the in some sense neutral character of this *Überlegenheit*, which is situated neither on the one side nor the other. Where is this superiority? Is it on the part of the doctor who, let's hope, doesn't lose his head? Or on the part of the patient?

In the French translation, which is just as bad as those that were done in other languages, it is oddly translated: "he must simply ensure that the patient preserve a certain degree of serene superiority" – there is nothing like that in the text – "which nevertheless allows him to note that the reality of what he reproduces is merely apparent."

This *Überlegenheit*, which can no doubt be required, must be situated in an infinitely more precise way than all the elaborations that claim to compare the current abreaction of what is repeated in treatment with a situation that is made out to be perfectly well known.

242 Let us thus begin with an examination of the stages, and the demands or requirements of the subject as we broach them in our interpretations. And let us start, following the diachrony known as the stages of the libido, with the simplest demand, the one to which we refer so frequently: oral demand.

2

What is an oral demand? It is the demand to be fed. To whom or what is it addressed? It is addressed to the Other who hears [*entend*], and who, at this primal level of the enunciation of demand, can truly be designated as what I call the "locus of the Other" – the Other-on [*l'Autre-on*] or "Otron," I would say, to make it rhyme with those designations familiar to us from physics. Thus we see that the demand to be fed is addressed by the subject, more or less unbeknown to himself, to this abstract Otron.

I have stated that every demand, due to the fact that it is [articulated in] speech, tends to be structured in the following way: it calls for an inverted response from the Other. Owing to its very structure, demand evokes its own form transposed according to a certain inversion. Due to its signifying structure, the demand to be fed is thus responded to, in a way that one can state to be logically contemporaneous with that demand, in the locus of the Other – that is, at the level of the Otron – with the demand to let oneself be fed.

We are very familiar with this in our practice. It is not a refined elaboration on a fictitious dialogue. It is what is at work every time the least little conflict breaks out in the relationship between a child and its mother which seems to be designed to form a circle

[*se boucler*] in a strictly complementary way. What could, on the face of it, respond better to a demand to be fed than a demand to let oneself be fed? Yet we know that it is in the very way in which these two demands meet that lies the tiny gap* or tear into which discordance – the preformed failure of the meeting – usually creeps. This failure consists in the fact that it is not a meeting up of tendencies, but rather a meeting up of demands.

In the first conflict that breaks out in the nursing relationship, in the encounter between the demand to be fed and the demand to let oneself be fed, the following become clear: [1] a desire goes beyond 243
[*déborde*] this demand; [2] the demand cannot be satisfied without the desire being extinguished; [3] it is so that the desire which goes beyond demand not be extinguished that the subject who is hungry does not let himself be fed – owing to the fact that a demand to let himself be fed responds to his demand to be fed – and refuses in some sense to disappear qua desire by being satisfied qua demand; [4] the extinction or crushing of demand through satisfaction cannot happen without killing desire. All sorts of discordances derive therefrom, the most intriguing of which is the refusal to let oneself be fed in the form of anorexia that is said, with more or less good reason, to be nervosa.

We find here a situation that I cannot better translate than by playing off the equivocations authorized by sounds in French phonemics. One cannot admit to the other what is most primordial, namely, "you are [what I] desire" [*tu es le désir*], without at the same time saying to him, "desire has been killed" [*tué le désir*] – in other words, without conceding to him that he kills desire, without abandoning desire as such to him. The primal ambivalence characteristic of all demand is that it is equally implied in every demand that the subject does not want the demand to be satisfied. The subject aims at safeguarding desire in and of itself, and attests to the presence of unnamed, blind desire.

What is this desire? We know, and can respond in the most classic and elementary way. Oral demand has another meaning beyond that of the satisfaction of hunger. It is a sexual demand. It is cannibalism at its root, as Freud tells us right from the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, and cannibalism has a sexual meaning. He reminds us – although this is veiled in his first formulation – that to feed oneself is, for man, linked to the goodwill of the Other, and linked to it by a polar relationship.

The fact, too, is that it is not on the bread alone of the Other's goodwill that the primitive subject must feed, but on the body of the person who feeds him. We must call a spade a spade – a sexual relationship is that by which the relationship with the Other gives

rise to a union of bodies. And the most radical union is that of the earliest absorption in which we can glimpse the outlines of cannibalism, which characterizes the oral stage as it is presented in analytic theory.

Let us note what is at stake here. I approached things from the most difficult angle by starting at the beginning, whereas it is always
244 by backing up, by proceeding retroactively, that we must figure out how things are constructed during real development.

There is a theory of the libido that you know I get up in arms about, even though it was proposed by one of my friends, Franz Alexander. Indeed, he makes libido into the surplus energy manifested in a living being once its needs related to self-preservation have been satisfied. It is a convenient theory, but nonetheless false. That is not sexual libido. Sexual libido is indeed a surplus, but a surplus that renders vain any satisfaction of need wherever libido is situated. And if need be – that's the word for it! – libido refuses the satisfaction of need to preserve the function of desire.

All of this is self-evident and confirmed in every quarter, as you will see by backing up and starting anew with the demand to be fed. You can immediately put your finger on it in that, owing to the very fact that the tendency of a hungry mouth is expressed in a signifying chain by the very same mouth, this mouth becomes able to designate the food it desires. Which food? The first thing that results therefrom is that the mouth can say, "Not that kind." Desire's negation or gap, its "I like this and nothing else," already enters into the picture here, the specificity of the dimension of desire bursting onto the scene.

Hence the extreme care we must take in our interpretations at the level of the oral register. For, as I have said, oral demand forms at the same point, at the level of the same organ, at which the tendency arises. This is precisely where the problem lies. It is possible to produce all sorts of equivocations in responding to this demand. Of course, the response made to demand nevertheless leads to the preservation of the field of speech, and thus to the possibility of ever finding anew the place of desire in this field, but it is also the possibility of all subjections – one attempts to force the subject, his need being satisfied, to simply be content with that. And on this basis one turns compensated frustration into the end-all [*terme*] of analytic intervention.

I am going to go further, and I truly have, as you will see, my reasons for doing so today. I'm going to move on to the so-called "anal libido" stage. For it is concerning the latter that I think I can touch on and refute a certain number of confusions that are very often made in analytic interpretation.

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What sort of demand is made in the anal stage?

I think you all have enough experience that I need not illustrate any further what I will call the demand to hold it, to hold in excrement, insofar as it no doubt founds something: the desire to evacuate. But it is not as simple as all that, for evacuation is also demanded [*exigée*] at a certain point by the educating parent. The subject is demanded to give something that satisfies the expectation of the educator, in this case, the mother.

What results from the complexity of this demand warrants that we dwell upon it, for it is essential. Let us note that it is no longer a question here of the simple relationship of a need to its demanded form, linked to surplus sexuality [*excédent sexuel*]. Something else is at work. It is a matter of disciplining need, and sexualization is produced only in the movement of a return to need. It is this movement which, so to speak, legitimates need as a gift to the mother, who expects the child to satisfy his functions and make something come out or appear that is worthy of everyone's approval.

The gift-like character excrement takes on has been well known and situated since the beginning of analytic practice. It is so clearly in the gift register that an object is experienced here that the child, in his occasional excesses, naturally uses it, one might say, as a means of expression. The excremental gift is part and parcel of psychoanalysis' oldest theme.

I would like, in this regard, to take as far as possible the extermination I am always trying to carry out of the myth of oblativity, by showing you what it is really related to here. The true field of oblativity is the field of the anal dialectic, and once you have perceived it, you will no longer be able to see it in any other way.

I have long been trying, in many different ways, to show you this road map. In particular, I mentioned to you that the very term "oblativity" is an obsessive fantasy. "Everything for the other person," the obsessive neurotic says, and this is indeed what he does, for being caught up in the perpetual giddiness [*vertige*] of destroying the other, he can never do enough to ensure that the other continue to exist. Here we see its root.

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The anal stage is characterized by the fact that the subject satisfies a need only in order to satisfy the other. He has been taught to defer this need, so that it may be founded or instituted solely as an occasion for satisfying the other as educator. The satisfaction of playing the doting parent [*pouponnage*], which involves the wiping of tushies, is first and foremost the other's satisfaction. It is insofar

as it is a gift that is demanded of the subject that one can say that oblativity is linked to the sphere of anal-stage relations.

Note the consequence thereof: the room that remains for the subject – in other words, desire – is symbolized in this situation by what is flushed away in the process. Desire, literally, goes down the tubes. The symbolization of the subject as that which disappears into the chamber pot or down the hole is encountered in our practice as related most profoundly to the nature [*position*] of anal desire.

This is what makes for both its attraction and also, in many cases, its avoidance. We are not always able to get the patient to see this. You can nevertheless tell yourself that, insofar as the anal stage is involved, you would be wrong not to distrust the relevance of your analysis if you have not encountered this on every occasion. As long as you have not located at this point the basic, fundamental relationship of the subject as desire with the most disagreeable object, I assure you that you will not have made great strides in the analysis of the conditions of desire.

This precise point is key. It is certainly as important, given the weight it has in analytic practice, as all the primitive oral objects, whether good or bad, that people comment on so much. You cannot deny that we are constantly being reminded of them in the analytic literature. If you have remained deaf [to this key point] for so long, it is because things are not indicated in the literature in their fundamental topology, as I am attempting to do for you here.

But then, you will ask me, what of sexuality and the infamous sadistic drive that, thanks to a dash, is conjugated to the term "anal," as if it were quite simply self-evident?

An effort is necessary here, an effort that we can call "understanding" only insofar as it involves a liminal understanding.
247 Sexuality can only come into the picture violently. This indeed is what happens, since it is sadistic violence that is involved. Yet it harbors within itself more than one enigma, and it makes sense for us to dwell on it.

It is in the anal relationship that the other as such becomes truly dominant. This is precisely why sexuality is manifested in the register characteristic of this stage. We can catch a glimpse of it by recalling its antecedent, which is qualified as oral-sadistic.

In effect, to speak of the oral-sadistic stage is, on the whole, to recall that, at its very foundations, life is devouring assimilation as such. In the oral stage, it is the theme of devouring that is situated in the bit of room [*marge*] occupied by desire; it is the presence of the gaping maw of life.

This fantasy is somehow reflected in the anal stage. The [imaginary] other, being posited as the second term, must appear as an

existence offered up to this gap [*béance*]. Will we go so far as to say that suffering is implied therein? [If so] it is a very peculiar kind of suffering. To mention a sort of fundamental schema that will situate for you the structure of sadomasochistic fantasy as well as possible, I will say that what is involved is suffering that is expected [*attendue*] by the other. Suspending the imaginary other over a chasm [*gouffre*] of suffering forms the apex and axis of sadomasochistic eroticization. What is no longer merely the sexual pole, but what is going to be the sexual partner, is instituted at the anal level in this relationship. We can thus say that there is already a sort of reappearance of sexuality here.

What constitutes something like sadistic or sadomasochistic structure in the anal stage marks – starting from a maximal eclipsing of sexuality, from a point of pure anal oblativity – the re-ascension toward what will be achieved at the genital stage. The genital stage – human Eros, desire in its normal fullness, which is situated neither as tendency or need, nor as pure and simple copulation, but as desire – finds its outlines or beginnings and has its point of re-emergence in the relationship to an other who is subject to the expectation of this suspended threat, this virtual attack that characterizes and founds for us what is known as the sadistic theory of sexuality, whose primitive character we are aware of in the vast majority of individual cases.

Moreover, what is at the origin of the sexualization of the other is based on a situational trait: in the first mode of its apperception, the other as such must be delivered over to a third party in order to be constituted as sexual. This is the origin of the ambiguity owing 248
to which, in the original experience discovered by the most recent analytic theorists, sexuality remains indeterminate between this third party and the other. In the first form of libidinal apperception of the other, at the level of the point of re-ascension starting from a certain momentary eclipsing of the libido as such, the subject does not know what he desires most, the other or the intervening third party [i.e., the Other].

This is essential to the structure of any sadomasochistic fantasy. Indeed, if I have provided here a correct analysis of the anal stage, the stage that constitutes this fantasy, let us not forget that the witness who is subject to this pivotal point of the anal stage is what he is – as I just said, he is a piece of shit. And, moreover, he is a demand – he is a piece of shit that demands nothing more than to be evacuated.

This is the true foundation of the whole of a radical structure that you will encounter in the fundamental fantasy of the obsessive neurotic in particular. He devalues himself, and locates the whole

game of the erotic dialectic outside of himself – he pretends, as the man said, to be its orchestrator. He bases the entirety of his fantasy on his own evacuation.

Things here are rooted in something which, once recognized, allows you to elucidate even the most banal points. Indeed, if things are truly fixated at the point of the subject's identification with little excremental *a*, what are we going to see? Let us not forget here, nevertheless, that the job of articulating this demand is no longer assigned, at least in theory, to the organ that is involved in the dramatic knotting of need with demand. In other words, one does not speak with one's *derrière* – except in Hieronymus Bosch's paintings. And yet we observe the curious phenomena of cuts followed by explosions, which allow us to glimpse the symbolic function of the excremental flow in the very articulation of people's speech.

A long time ago, and I think no one present today can remember it, there was a little character beloved by children, as there always have been – significant little characters in an infantile mythology that is, in reality, of parental origin. In our times, people talk a lot about Pinocchio, but at a time that I am old enough to remember there was Bout-de-Zan. The phenomenology of the child as a precious excremental object is altogether contained in this name, in
249 which the child is identified with the sweetish element of licorice, *glukurriza*, meaning "sweet root," which seems to be its Greek origin.

It is probably not insignificant that the word "licorice" provides us with one of the sweetest examples – that's the word for it! – of the utter ambiguity of signifying transcriptions.

Allow me this brief parenthetical remark. I came across this gem – which I found for you along the roadside of my trajectory – not just recently, by the way, as I have been saving this one for you for a long time. But since I came across it concerning Bout-de-Zan, I will give it to you now. "*Réglisse*" ["Licorice"] was originally "*glukurriza.*" Naturally, it does not come directly from the Greek, but when Latin people heard it they turned it into "*liquiritia,*" basing it on the word "*liquor.*" This gave rise in old French to "*licorice,*" and then "*ricolice*" by metathesis. "*Ricolice*" collided with "*règle*" [rule or ruler], *regula*, and that led to *rygalisse*. You have to admit that the encounter between "*licorice*" and "*règle*" is superb.

But that's not all, for the conscious etymology at which all of that ends up, and to which the most recent generations have confined their attention, is that "*réglisse*" should be written "*rai de Galice*" because licorice is made with a sweet root that is found only in Galicia. The *rai de Galice* is where we wind up after having started with the Greek root – in more ways than one!

I think that this little demonstration of signifying ambiguities will have convinced you that we're barking up the right tree.

In the final analysis, as we have seen, we must be reserved about understanding the other at the anal level even more so than elsewhere. Every understanding of his demand, in effect, implicates him so profoundly that we must look twice before broaching it [*aller à sa rencontre*]. What am I telling you, if not something that coincides with what you all know, at least those of you who have done a little bit of therapeutic work – namely, that one must not give the obsessive neurotic the slightest encouragement or absolution of guilt, or even give him any interpretive commentary that goes a bit too far. If you do, then you will have to go much further, and will wind up acceding – and yielding, much to your own detriment – to the precise mechanism by which he wants to make you eat, so to speak, his own being in the form of a piece of shit.

Your practice teaches you that this is not a process by which you 250
render him a signal service – quite the contrary.

It is elsewhere that symbolic introjection must be situated, insofar as it must restore in him the place of desire. Since – to get ahead of ourselves regarding the following stage – what the neurotic most commonly wants to be is the phallus, it is certainly to unduly short-circuit the satisfactions to be given him by offering him this phallic communion against which I have already formulated the most precise objections in my seminar on *Desire and Its Interpretation* [1958–9]. The phallic object as an imaginary object cannot, in any case, help completely reveal the fundamental fantasy. In fact it cannot help but respond to the neurotic's demand with what we might refer to approximately as an obliteration. Stated otherwise, it paves the way for the subject to forget a number of the most essential elements that played a part in his bumpy accession to the field of desire.

To pause for a moment at this point in the trajectory I have traced out today, I will say that if the neurotic is [constituted by] unconscious desire – in other words, repressed desire – it is above all insofar as his desire is eclipsed by a counterdemand; that the locus of the counterdemand is strictly speaking the same as the locus in which everything the outside world can add by way of a supplement to the construction of the superego – a certain way of satisfying this counterdemand – is placed and built up afterward; and that any premature mode of interpretation can be criticized inasmuch as it understands too quickly, and does not perceive that what it is most important to understand in the analysand's demand is what is beyond that demand. The space occupied by not understanding

[*la marge de l'incompréhension*] is the space occupied by desire [*la marge du désir*]. It is to the extent that this is not perceived that an analysis ends prematurely and is, quite frankly, botched.

The catch is, of course, that by interpreting, you give the subject something speech can feed on, even the very book that is behind it. Speech nevertheless remains the locus of desire, even if you provide it in such a way that this locus is unrecognizable, I mean even if it still cannot be inhabited by the subject's desire.

Responding to the demand for food or to frustrated demand with a nourishing signifier, leaves elided the fact that, beyond all nourish-
251 ing speech, what the subject truly needs is to signify metonymically, and this is situated at no point in such nourishing speech. Thus, every time you introduce metaphor – and you are probably obliged to do so – you remain on the very path that gives the symptom consistency. It is no doubt a more simplified symptom, but it is still a symptom, in relation, in any case, to the desire that must be brought out [*dégager*].

If the subject has this singular relationship to the object of desire, it is because he himself was initially an object of desire that became incarnate. Speech as the locus of desire is the *Poros* in which all resources reside. And desire, as Socrates originally taught us to articulate it, is above all lack of resources: aporia. This absolute aporia approaches sleeping speech, and gets herself knocked up with its object. What does this mean, if not that the object was [already] there, and that it was the object that was demanding to be brought to light?

Plato's metaphor of the metempsychosis of the wandering soul that hesitates before knowing where it is going to live, finds its medium, truth, and substance in the object of desire, which is there prior to its birth.

And when Socrates delivers a eulogy, *épainei*, of Agathon, he unwittingly does what he wants to do – namely, brings Alcibiades back to his soul – by bringing to life the object that is the object of his desire.

This object – which is the aim and end for each person, and undoubtedly limited because the whole lies beyond it – can only be conceptualized as beyond the end of each person.

March 15, 1961

XV

ORAL, ANAL, AND GENITAL

The jouissance of the praying mantis.
The Other, depository of desire.
Desire's dependence on demand.
The privilege of the phallus as an object.

We are going to wander, I have the urge to say, yet again through the labyrinth constituted by the nature [*position*] of desire. A certain returning to or rehashing of the topic – a certain working through,* as it's called – seems to me to be necessary for an exact positioning of the function of transference. I already indicated this last time and said why.

This is why I will return to it today in order to emphasize the meaning of what I said to you in re-examining the so-called stages of the migration of the libido to the erogenous zones. It is important to see to what extent the naturalist view implied by this definition can be articulated and resolved in our way of enunciating it, which centers it on the relationship between demand and desire.

1

Right at the outset of my discussion of them, I pointed out that there is a place for desire in the margins of demand as such; that it is these margins of demand that constitute desire's locus in a beyond and shy of, a twofold hollow that is already sketched out as soon as the cry of hunger gets articulated; and that, at the other extreme, the object known in English as the "nipple," the tip of the breast, ends up taking on its value as *ágalma*, marvel, and precious object in human eroticism, becoming the medium [*support*] of the pleasure and sensual delight of nibbling, in which what we might call a sublimated voracity is perpetuated, insofar as it takes this *Lust*, this pleasure.

254 Moreover, these *Lüste*, these desires – you are aware of the equivocation contained within the German term, the slippage of signification produced by the shift from the singular to the plural – the pleasure and covetousness the oral object brings with it stems from something else. It is in this respect, through a reversal in the use of the term "sublimation," that I am justified in saying that we see here a deviation in aim occurring in a way that does not happen when it comes to the object of need.

Indeed, the erotic value of this privileged object does not draw its substance here from primal hunger. The Eros that inhabits it comes *Nachträglich*, retroactively, only after the fact [*après coup*]. The place for this desire is prepared [*creusée*] in oral demand. Were there no demand, with love as the beyond [*l'au-delà d'amour*] it projects, there would be no place for desire shy of it, which is constituted around a privileged object. The oral stage of sexual libido requires the existence of a place that is hollowed out [*creusée*] by demand.

It is important to examine whether or not this presentation of things does not involve, through my own doing, some specification that one might consider overly biased. Mustn't we take Freud literally when he presents us, in one of his statements, with the pure and simple migration of an organic – or, might I say, mucosa-based – erogeneity? Couldn't one say that I am neglecting natural facts? Namely, for example, the instinctive devouring motions we find in nature that are related to the sexual cycle.

It is a fact that female cats [sometimes] eat their kittens, and if the great fantasmatic figure of the praying mantis haunts the analytic classroom, it is precisely because it presents a sort of main [*mère*] image or model of the function attributed to what people so brazenly, and perhaps so incorrectly, call the castrating mother. Yes, of course, in my own initiation to analysis, I willingly relied on this rich image, which echoes in the natural realm what presents itself in unconscious phenomena. By presenting this objection, you could suggest to me the need for an adjustment in the theoretical line with which I think I can satisfy you along with me.

I have spent some time dwelling on this image and what it represents. A simple glance at the diversity of animal ethology shows us, in effect, a rich variety of perversions. My friend Henri Ey looked at it closely, and even devoted an issue of *L'Evolution psychiatrique*
255 to the topic of animal perversions, which go further than anything human imagination has been able to invent. Taken in this sense, aren't we simply brought back to the Aristotelian view that situates the foundation of perverse desire in a realm lying outside of the human realm?

I will ask you to dwell on this for a moment and to consider what we do when we go no further than the fantasy of natural perversion. In asking you to follow me on this ground, I am not underestimating the extent to which such reflection may seem persnickety and speculative, but I think that it is necessary to isolate both what is founded and what is unfounded in this reference [to animals]. As you will immediately see, we will thereby meet up with what I designate as fundamental in subjectivization, as an essential moment of every instating of the dialectic of desire.

To subjectivize the praying mantis in this case is to make an assumption which is not excessive – that it has sexual jouissance. We, of course, know nothing about it. The praying mantis is perhaps, as Descartes would not have hesitated to say, a pure and simple machine, in the sense that machines take on in his terminology, which presupposes the elimination of all subjectivity. But we ourselves have no need to remain at the stage of minimalist positions. We can grant her this jouissance.

Is this jouissance – here is the following step – jouissance of something insofar as this jouissance [*elle*] destroys it? For it can indicate nature's intentions to us only on this basis.

To immediately point out what is essential, so that it may serve us as some kind of model of what is at issue – namely, our oral cannibalism and our primordial eroticism – we must imagine here that this jouissance is correlated with the decapitation of the partner that the praying mantis is supposed to know [*connaître*] to some degree as such.

I have no aversion to going this far. For, in fact, animal ethology is our major reference insofar as it maintains the dimension of knowing [*connaître*] that all progress in knowledge [*connaissance*] renders so vacillating for us in the human world because it is identified with the dimension of misrecognition [*méconnaître*] or *Verkennung*, as Freud says. It is the field of living beings that allows one to observe imaginary *Erkennung* [recognition], and the privileged status of a species' fellow beings [*semblable*] which goes so far, in certain cases, as to lead to organogenic effects. I won't go back over the old examples around which my exploration of the 256
imaginary revolved at the time at which I began to articulate something, my doctrine of analysis, which has been coming to fruition over the years before your eyes – namely, the female pigeon that does not fully develop into a female pigeon until she sees a pigeon-like image, a small mirror placed in her cage sufficing to produce this effect, and also the migratory locust that does not go beyond a certain stage [i.e., solitary] unless it encounters another migratory locust.

There is no doubt but that what fascinates not only us, but also the male praying mantis, is her standing-erect posture, a posture that looks to us like that of prayer, from which the praying mantis derives its name, not without finding some kind of vacillating echo [*retour*] in us. We observe that it is when the male is face-to-face with this fantasy – this incarnated fantasy – that he yields and is taken, called, aspirated, and captivated in an embrace that will be fatal to him.

It is clear that an image of the imaginary other as such is present in this phenomenon, and it is not excessive to assume that something is revealed therein. But does this mean that it already somehow prefigures an inverted replica of what presents itself in man as a sort of remainder and repercussion of a definite possibility, of the variations or play of natural tendencies?

While we may value this monstrous example, we must nevertheless note its divergence from what presents itself in human fantasy. In the latter, we can with certainty start with the subject, the only thing we are sure of, insofar as he is the prop [*support*] of the signifying chain. We thus cannot fail to remark that in what nature presents us with here, there is – from the [sexual] act to its excess, to what overflows it, to what leads it to a devouring surplus – something that signals to us that another structure, an instinctual structure, is being exemplified. The signal is that synchrony is involved. It is at the very moment of the [sexual] act that this complement [i.e., devouring] comes into play, exemplifying for us the paradoxical nature [*forme*] of instinct.

Isn't a limit thus sketched out here that allows us to strictly define in what sense the example of the praying mantis can be useful to us? This example serves only to provide the form of what we mean when we speak of a desire.

257 If we speak of the jouissance of the praying mantis as an other, if the praying mantis interests us in this case, it is because she either gets off [*jouit*] where the male's organ is, or she gets off elsewhere as well. But wherever she gets off – something we'll never know anything about, but so what? – the fact that she may get off elsewhere only takes on meaning on the basis of the fact that she gets off (or does not get off, it makes no difference) there. The fact that she may get off wherever she likes has no meaning – for the value taken on by this image – except in relation to a *there* of a virtual getting off. Whatever is at work, synchrony implies that it will never be anything but copulatory jouissance, even if it is indirect.

We can easily find, in the infinite natural variety of instinctual mechanisms, evocative forms, including, for example, those in which the copulatory organ is lost *in loco*, during consummation

itself. We can just as easily consider devouring to be one of the many forms of the primacy given to the individual female partner in copulation – as organized in accordance with its specific end – to constrain her to engage in an act that must be allowed to occur. The exemplary character of the image we are presented with thus only begins at the exact point to which we have no right to go.

Let me explain this. The female praying mantis devours the cephalic extremity of her male partner with her mandibles. Now, this part of her anatomy shares as such the property that constitutes, in living nature, the cephalic extremity – namely, a certain uniting of the individual tendency, and the possibility, in whatever register it is exercised, of discernment and choice. Otherwise stated, this leads us to believe that the praying mantis prefers *it* [*ça*], her partner's head, to anything else. We see here an absolute preference. *That* [*ça*] is what she loves.

It is insofar as she loves *that* [*ça*] – which looks to us like jouissance at the other's expense – that we begin to read into natural functions what is at stake: namely, moral meaning. In other words, we enter into the Sadean dialectic.

To prefer jouissance to the other turns out to be the essential dimension of nature, but it is only too plain to see that we are the ones who supply this moral meaning. We only supply it to the extent that we discover the meaning of desire as a relation to the partial 258
object in the other, and as a choice of that object.

Let us pay closer attention here. Can this example altogether validly illustrate for us the preference for the part over the whole, a judgment that can be illustrated by the erotic value given to the nipple I mentioned earlier? I'm not so sure. In the case of the praying mantis, it is less the part that is preferred to the whole – in the most horrible way, and in a way that would already allow us to short-circuit the function of metonymy – than the whole that is preferred to the part.

Indeed, let us not overlook the fact that, even in an animal structure as apparently far removed from us as that of the insect, the value of concentration, reflection, and totality somehow represented by the cephalic extremity assuredly functions. In any case, in fantasy, in the image that captivates us, the partner's acephalization appears with a particular emphasis. To go as far as we can, let us not overlook the fable [*fabulatoire*] value of the praying mantis, underlying what it represents in a certain mythology, or more simply in a kind of folklore, in everything Roger Caillois has highlighted in the register of *Myth and Man*. It was his first book, and it seems that he did not sufficiently indicate that, at this level, it is a matter of poetry. This image does not simply derive its savor from a reference

to the relation with the oral object such as it is traced out in the *koine* or common language of the unconscious. It involves a more accentuated feature, which designates for us a certain link between acephalia and the telos of the transmission of life, between acephalia and the handing of the torch from one individual to another in a signified eternity of the species – namely, that *Gelüst* [sexual desire or craving] does not involve the head [*ne passe pas par la tête*].

This is what gives tragic meaning to the image of the praying mantis, which has nothing to do with preference for the so-called oral object, which in human fantasy is never, on any occasion, related to the head.

Something altogether different is at work in the link between human desire and the oral stage.

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2

What can be glimpsed by way of a mutual identification between the subject and the object of oral desire goes toward a constitutive fragmentation [*morcellement*], as psychoanalytic practice immediately shows us.

During our recent convention in the provinces, these fragmenting images were said to be related to some kind of primitive terror that seemed, though I don't know why, to take on some kind of value as a worrisome designation for certain speakers, whereas it is clearly the most fundamental, widespread, and common fantasy, at the origin of all of man's relations with his soma. The panoply of anatomical morsels that fill Carpaccio's famous *Saint George and the Dragon* – hanging in the little church known as Saint Mary of the Angels in Venice – have appeared in everyone's dreams, whether they've been in analysis or not. And in the same register, the head that goes about all by itself, as in Cazotte's work, has no trouble telling its little stories.

But that is not what is important.

The discovery made by psychoanalysis is that the subject does not merely encounter images of his own fragmentation in the Other's field, but already, and right from the outset, encounters objects of the Other's desire – namely, the mother's objects, not simply in a state of fragmentation, but with the privileged status granted them by the mother's desire. In particular, as Melanie Klein tells us, one of these objects, the paternal phallus, is encountered right from the subject's first fantasies, and it is at the origin of the *fandum*, "it is going to speak, it must speak." The paternal phallus is perceived – in the internal realm of the mother's body, into which the first imagi-

nary formations are projected – as something that is distinguished as very highly accentuated or even dangerous.

In the field of the Other's desire, the subjective object already encounters identifiable occupants, against whose yardstick he must already be measured, against whom he must already be weighed. I am thinking of the little weights of various shapes that are used by primitive African tribes, where you see little twisted-up animals, or even clearly phalloform objects.

At the fantasmatic level, the privilege of the image of the praying 260
mantis derives solely from the fact – which is not, after all, all that well assured – that the praying mantis is supposed to eat a whole series of males, one after another. The shift to the plural is the essential dimension in which the praying mantis takes on fantasmatic value for us.

We have thus defined the oral stage. It is only within demand that the Other is constituted as a reflection of the subject's hunger. The Other is thus not merely hunger, but articulated hunger – hunger that demands. And the subject is thereby open to becoming an object, but the object of a hunger that he chooses, as it were.

The transition from hunger to eroticism is made by means of what I was earlier calling a preference. She likes something especially – *that* – out of gluttony for special treats [*d'une gourmandise*], so to speak. Thus we find ourselves back in the register of original sins. The subject places himself on the à la carte menu of cannibalism, which everyone knows is never absent from any communional fantasy.

Read on this score a treatise by an author I have spoken to you about over the years with a sort of periodic insistence, Baltasar Gracián. Obviously, only those of you who know Spanish can find it fully satisfying, unless you have it translated for you. For, although Gracián was translated very early on, as works were translated almost instantaneously in all of Europe at that time, several of his books have remained untranslated. I am referring here to his treatise on communion, *El Comulgatorio*, which is a fine text in the sense that something rarely avowed is revealed therein: the delights of consuming Christ's body are detailed in it and we are asked to dwell upon this exquisite cheek, this delicious arm – I will spare you all the other tidbits on which spiritual concupiscence dwells, thus revealing to us what is always implied in even the most elaborate forms of oral identification. You see here the earliest tendency being deployed by virtue of the signifier, in a whole field that is already created in order to be secondarily inhabited.

In opposition to this, I tried to show you last time a meaning of anal demand that is hardly ever or only poorly articulated.

Anal demand is characterized by a complete reversal of initiative, to the Other's advantage. It is there (in other words, at a stage which, in our normative ideology, is neither very advanced nor
261 mature) that lies the source of the discipline – I did not say "duty," but "discipline" – of toilet training [*propreté*], a word whose association with propriety the French language so prettily indicates, with what is proper to it: education and good manners. Here the demand is external, it comes from the Other, and it is posited as articulated as such.

The strange thing is that we must see here – and recognize in what has always been said and whose import no one seems to have truly grasped – the point at which the object as a gift is born. In this metaphor, what the subject can give is precisely correlated with what he can withhold – namely, his own scrap, his excrement. It is impossible not to see something exemplary here, which must indispensably be designated as the radical point at which the projection of the subject's desire onto the Other occurs.

There is a point in this stage at which desire is articulated and constituted, at which the Other is, strictly speaking, its depository. Furthermore, we are not surprised to see that idealists, enamored of the theme of a hominization of the cosmos or, as they are forced to express themselves in our times, of the planet, neglect that one of the manifest stages, since the beginning of time, of the hominization of the planet is that the human animal turns the planet into a garbage dump. The oldest evidence that we have of human agglomerations are enormous piles of shell debris which go by a Scandinavian name [*Kjökkenmödding*].

This is no accident. Moreover, if we are to some day reconstruct how man entered into the field of signifiers, we would have to designate it in those first piles.

The subject designates himself here in the evacuated object. It is, so to speak, the starting point of an *aphanisis* of desire. It is entirely based upon the effect of the Other's demand – the Other makes the decision. The root of the neurotic's dependence clearly lies here. This is the tangible note by which the neurotic's desire is characterized as pregenital. It depends so much on the Other's demand that what the neurotic demands of the Other in his neurotic demand for love, is that he be allowed to do something.

The place of desire manifestly remains, up until a certain degree, dependent upon the Other's demand.

3

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What meaning can we, in effect, give to the genital stage? The only meaning that we can give it is the following.

Desire should someday reappear as something that could rightfully be called natural desire, but, given its noble antecedents, it can never be such. In other words, desire should appear as what is not demanded, as aiming at what one does not demand.

Don't rush ahead and conclude, for example, that desire is what one takes. Whatever you say will never do anything more than make you fall back into the petty mechanics of demand.

Natural desire has the characteristic of not being able to be spoken in any way whatsoever, which is why you will never have any natural desire. The Other with a capital *O* – that is, the Other in which signs are situated – is already instated in that spot [*place*]. And signs suffice to institute the question "*Che vuoi?*" to which the subject has at first no response.

A sign represents something to someone and, as the subject does not know what the sign represents, faced with this question when sexual desire appears, he loses the someone to whom desire is addressed – in other words, himself. Thus is born little Hans' anxiety.

Here we glimpse what, prepared by the subject's fracturing owing to demand, is instated in the mother/child relationship, which we are going to keep – as it often remains – separate for a moment.

Little Hans' mother, and every other mother as well – "I call upon all mothers," as someone once said – defines her position by proffering the words, "That's terribly dirty," concerning what begins to arise in Hans by way of a little quivering or unambiguous stirring during the first awakenings of genital sexuality. That desire – he cannot even say what it is – is disgusting. But her words are strictly correlated with a no less recognizable interest in the object to which we have learned to give its full import – namely, the phallus.

In an undoubtedly allusive, but not ambiguous way, how many mothers, [if not] all mothers, faced with little Hans' or some other boy's little faucet, or whatever they call it, come out with remarks like, "My little boy is very well endowed" or "You will have 263
many children"? In short, the appraisal of the object – the object clearly remaining partial at this stage – still contrasts here with the refusal of desire, at the very moment of the encounter with what solicits the subject in the mystery of desire. The division is instituted between, on the one hand, the object that becomes the mark of special interest – which becomes *ágalma*, the pearl at the heart of the individual that trembles here around the pivotal point of his accession to living plenitude – and, on the other hand, a

debasement of the subject. He is esteemed as an object, but disparaged as desire.

It is around this that tallies will be made [*vont jouer les comptes*] and that the instating of the register of having revolves. It is worth our while dwelling upon this and I will go into greater detail here.

I have been announcing the theme of having to you for a long time with formulations such as, "Love is giving what you don't have." Of course, when a child gives what he has, it's at the preceding stage [i.e., the anal stage]. What doesn't he have, and in what sense? One can, certainly, make the dialectic of being and having revolve around the phallus. But it is not from that angle that you must look in order to understand things correctly.

What is the new dimension that is introduced by entry into the phallic drama? What he doesn't have at his disposal at the moment of the birth and revelation of genital desire is nothing other than the (sexual) act [*son acte*]. He has nothing but a promissory note. He institutes this act at the level of a project.

I beg you to notice here the power of linguistic determinations. Just as desire has, in many Romance languages, taken on the connotation of *desiderium* – of mourning and regret [for something lost] – it is not inconsequential that the early forms of the future tense were abandoned in favor of a reference to having. *Je chanterai* (I will sing) is exactly what you see written here: *Je chanter-ai* (I have to sing). This in fact comes from *cantare habeo*. The decadent Roman tongue found the surest path to rediscovering the true meaning of the future: *Je baiserai plus tard, J'ai le baiser à l'état de traite sur l'avenir, Je désirerai* [I'll fuck later, I have fucking in the form of an IOU, I will desire]. And this *habeo* introduces us to the *debeo* of the symbolic debt, to a revoked [*destitué*] *habeo*. This debt is conjugated in the future tense, when it takes the form of a commandment: *Tes père et mère honoreras* [Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother], and so on.

Today I want to detain you to make a final point, at the mere threshold of what results from this articulation, which is no doubt slow, but which is precisely designed so that you do not get ahead of yourselves.

264 The object in question – the phallic object – separated from desire, is not the simple specification, homologue, or homonym of the little imaginary *a* to which the full Other is debased. It is not the specifying, which finally comes to light, of what had earlier been the oral object and then the anal object. As I mentioned earlier today, when I pointed out to you the subject's first encounter with the phallus, the phallus is a privileged object in the field of the Other, an object that is subtracted from the status of the Other with a capital *O* as such.

In other words, at the level of genital desire in the castration stage – to the precise articulation of which all of this is designed to introduce you – little *a* is the Other minus *phi* [$a = A - \varphi$]. In this sense, *phi* comes to symbolize what the Other is missing because it is the noetic A, the full-fledged A, the Other insofar as one can have faith in its response to demand. The desire of this noetic Other is an enigma. This enigma is knotted to the structural foundation of its castration.

It is here that the whole dialectic of castration begins.

Be careful now not to confuse this phallic object with the sign of the Other's lack of response [*manque de réponse*]. The lack at stake here [i.e., the lack related to the phallic object] is the lack constituted by the Other's desire [*le manque du désir de l'Autre*]. The function taken on by the phallus – insofar as it is encountered in the field of the imaginary – is not that of being identical to the Other as designated by the lack of a signifier, it is that of being the root of this lack. For it is the Other who is constituted in a relation to this object *phi*, which is certainly a privileged relation, but a complex one.

It is here that we will find the crux of what constitutes the dead end and problem of love – namely, that the subject can only satisfy the Other's demand by demeaning the Other, turning this Other into the object of his desire.

March 22, 1961

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XVI

PSYCHE AND THE CASTRATION COMPLEX

Zucchi and Apuleius.
The tribulations of the soul.
The castration complex as a paradox.
The signifierness of the phallus.
The analyst's desire.

It is not because we are apparently fooling around with respect to your central concern that we do not find it anew at the extreme periphery. I happened to find it at the Borghese Gallery in Rome, almost without realizing it, in the most unexpected of places.

Experience has taught me to always look at what is near an elevator, as it is often significant and people never look there. This experience is altogether applicable to a museum and, applied to the museum in the Borghese Gallery, made me turn at the moment I left the elevator, thanks to which I saw something people never really pause to look at, and about which I have never heard anyone speak – a canvas by a painter by the name of Zucchi.

He is not a very well-known artist, although he has not entirely escaped the critics' notice. He is what is referred to as a Mannerist, from the first period of Mannerism, and he lived from approximately 1547 to 1590.

The painting I saw is called *Psiche sorprende Amore*, the latter being no other than Cupid [*Eros*]. It is the classic scene of Psyche casting light from her little lamp onto Cupid, who has for some time been her nocturnal lover and whom she has never seen.

You probably know a little something about this drama. Psyche, who is favored by an extraordinary love, for she is loved by Cupid himself, experiences happiness that could be perfect if she didn't become curious to see who Cupid is. It's not as if Psyche had never
266 been warned by her lover not to try to cast light upon him, though he is unable to tell her what sanction would result therefrom, but his

insistence on remaining invisible is extreme. Nevertheless, Psyche cannot do otherwise than succumb [to her curiosity], and it is at this moment that her misfortunes begin.

I can't recount all of them to you. First I want to show you what is involved, as this is what is important in my discovery. I was able to secure two reproductions of this canvas, and I am going to pass them around the room. I am adding to them a sketch made by a painter whose style will be recognized, I hope, even by those who do not know my family connections. Given his desire to oblige me, he was willing to prepare this little sketch for you this very morning, which will allow me to indicate what is at stake in my demonstration.

You see that the sketch by André Masson corresponds, in its main outlines at least, to what I am now passing around the room.

Let me mention that the tone of my voice today can be explained by the fact that I felt a need to go to the place on the Palatine Hill that, about 50 years ago, Commander Boni thought he could identify with what Latin authors call *mundus*. I managed to go down into it, but I'm afraid it's nothing but a cistern, and I managed to catch a sore throat down there.

1

I don't know if you have ever seen the story of Cupid and Psyche portrayed in this way, even though it has been treated in countless ways in both sculpture and painting. I personally had never seen Psyche appear in a work of art armed as she is in this painting, with what is represented here very clearly as a small blade: a scimitar.

Moreover, you will notice what is significantly projected here in the form of a flower, the bouquet of which it is a part, and the vase in which it is inserted. You will see that, in a very intense and accentuated way, this flower is, strictly speaking, the visual, intellectual center of the painting. This bouquet and this flower are, in effect, in the foreground, and they are backlit, in other words, they form a black mass, which is treated in a way that gives the painting its Mannerist flavor. 267
The whole scene is drawn in an extremely refined way.

There are certainly things we could say about the specific flowers that are included in the bouquet. But around this bouquet, coming from behind it, shines an intense light cast on the extended thighs and stomach of the figure who symbolizes Cupid. It is truly impossible not to see designated here – in the most precise way and as if it were being directly pointed to – the organ that, anatomically speaking, must be dissimulated behind this mass of flowers: Cupid's phallus.

This can be seen in the very manner of the painting, accentuated in such a way that there is nothing in what I am telling you that is in any sense an analytic interpretation. The thread that links the threat of the blade with what is designated to us here cannot fail to come to mind.

This is worth emphasizing, as it is not frequent in art. Many representations of Judith and Holofernes have been made, but that is not what is involved here, since they concern beheading. Nevertheless, the position of Psyche's other arm, which is extended and holds the lamp, is designed to remind us of the paintings of Judith and Holofernes, for the lamp is suspended here above Cupid's head.

You know that in the story it is a drop of oil – spilt owing to an abrupt movement on Psyche's part, as she is quite startled – which wakes up Cupid, inflicting, moreover, so the story tells us, a wound from which he suffers for a long time. If you look closely, you will notice that in the reproduction you have before you, there is something like a shaft of light which runs from the lamp and goes straight toward Cupid's shoulder. Nevertheless, the angle of this shaft does not allow us to believe that it is a drop of oil, but rather a ray of light.

Certain people will think that there is something quite remarkable here, which represents an innovation on the part of the artist, and thus an intention that we can unambiguously attribute to him – that
268 of representing the threat of castration in an amorous context. Were we to try to interpret things in this direction, I think that we would quickly have to retrace our steps.

We would quickly have to retrace our steps because – I haven't yet indicated this fact to you, but I hope it already occurred to some of you – this story, despite the success it has had in the history of art, is told to us by but a single text, which is *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius.

I hope, for the sake of your own pleasure, that you have read *The Golden Ass*. It is an inspiring text, I must say. If certain truths or esoteric secrets are, as has always been said, included in the book, in a mythical and colorful form, they are packaged in the most shimmering – not to say tickling and titillating – of ways. At first glance, it is truly something that has not yet been superseded, not even by the most recent productions which have, over the last few years in France, been a treat for us in the most blatant erotic genre, with all the nuances of sadomasochism that are the most common fodder of erotic novels.

The Golden Ass tells the horrible story of a young girl's abduction, accompanied by the most terrifying threats to which the girl is exposed in the company of the ass, he who speaks in the first person in this novel. It is during an intermezzo included in this rather racy

adventure that an old lady, in order to entertain the kidnapped girl for a moment, tells her at length the story of Cupid and Psyche.

Now it is due to the perfidious influence of Psyche's sisters – who constantly prod her to fall into the trap, to break the promises she has made to her divine lover – that she succumbs. The final means employed by her sisters are to suggest to her that Cupid must be a horrible monster or the most hideous of serpents, and that she must certainly be exposing herself to some serious danger by being with him. Following this, the mental short circuit occurs: she recalls the extremely insistent prohibitions imposed upon her by her nocturnal interlocutor in recommending that she in no case contravene his very severe prohibition not to try to see him, and she perceives only too clearly how his words intersect with what is suggested by her sisters. It is at this point that she takes the fatal step.

Prior to doing so, given what her sisters have suggested to her – in other words, what she thinks she will find – she arms herself. Which is why, despite the fact that the history of art gives us no other evi- 269
dence of this, to the best of my knowledge – I would appreciate it if someone, incited by my remarks here, could provide me with proof to the contrary – Psyche is represented as armed at this significant moment. It is clearly from Apuleius' text that the Mannerist in question, Zucchi, borrowed what constitutes the originality of the scene.

What does this imply? At the era at which Zucchi depicted this scene, the tale of Psyche and Cupid was widely known, and for all sorts of reasons. While it is attested to in but one literary text, it is attested to in many works in the plastic and figurative arts. I have heard, for example, that the sculpture group which is at the Uffizi in Florence represents a Cupid with a Psyche, but there both have wings. You will observe that in Zucchi's canvas, while Cupid has wings, Psyche does not.

Psyche is depicted with the wings of a butterfly [when she is depicted with wings]. I possess some Alexandrine objects in which Psyche is represented in several forms, frequently endowed with butterfly wings, which are, in this case, a sign of the immortality of the soul. You are aware of the stages of metamorphosis that the butterfly undergoes: it is born at first as a caterpillar or larva, then wraps itself in a sort of tomb or sarcophagus, in a way that reminds us of mummies, and stays in there until such time as it reappears in a glorified form. The theme of the butterfly as signifying the immortality of the soul had already appeared in Antiquity, and not simply in variously peripheral religions. It was even utilized in the Christian religion to symbolize the immortality of the soul, and it still is. It is very difficult to deny that what is at stake in the story is what one might call the trials and tribulations of the soul.

Only one mythological text transmitted this tale in Antiquity, that by Apuleius. Authors variously emphasize its religious and spiritual meanings, and willingly opine that we have in Apuleius' work but a degraded, Romanesque form, which does not allow us to grasp the original import of the myth. Despite their allegations, I, on the contrary, believe that Apuleius' text is extremely rich.

What is represented here by the painter is merely the beginning of the story. At a still earlier stage, we have what one might call Psyche's happiness, but also a first trial: Psyche is considered at the
270 outset to be as beautiful as Venus, and it is owing to a first persecution by the gods that she finds herself exposed on the peak of a rocky crag – another form of the myth of Andromeda – to a monster who was supposed to seize her. The monster turns out in fact to be Cupid, to whom Venus gave the task of delivering Psyche into the hands of he whose victim she was supposed to be. Cupid, who is slated to execute his mother's [Venus'] cruel orders, is seduced by Psyche, kidnaps her, and hides her in a deeply secluded place, in which she experiences, in short, the happiness of the gods.

The story would end there were poor Psyche not of a different nature than the divine nature, and did not prove to have the most deplorable weaknesses, among them family feeling: she spares no pains and never tires until she has obtained from Cupid, her unknown husband, permission to see her sisters again, and the entire remainder of the story stems from that. There is thus, before the moment represented in this little masterpiece, a brief earlier moment, but the whole tale unfolds afterward. I am not going to tell you the whole story, as that would get us off on a tangent.

This story is recounted, moreover, on the ceiling and walls of the charming Palazzo Farnese, having been painted by the brush of none other than Raphael himself. The scenes there are pleasant, almost too pleasant. We are no longer equal to the task of bearing such prettiness. It seems that what must have appeared as surprising beauty the first time the style sprang from Raphael's wonderful brush, has since become degraded for us. In truth, one must always keep in mind that a certain prototype or form must make, at the moment of its first appearance, an impression that is completely different from what it makes after having been, not simply reproduced thousands of times, but imitated thousands of times. In short, Raphael's paintings at Farnese sketch out for us the further development, scrupulously based on Apuleius' text, of Psyche's tribulations.

So that you will have no doubt that Psyche is not a woman, but rather the soul, suffice it to say that she appeals to Demeter, complete [as depicted in the Palazzo Farnese] with all the instruments and weapons of her mysteries, for it is clearly initiation into

the Eleusinian Mysteries that is involved here. She is rebuffed by Demeter because the latter wants above all not to anger her sister-in-law, Venus. What happens is as follows: having fallen – having made at the outset a faux pas of which she is not even guilty, for Venus' jealousy derives merely from the fact that she considers 271
Psyche as a rival – the unfortunate soul finds herself buffeted about, rebuffed by all sources of succor, even religious succor. One could thus establish a whole detailed phenomenology of the unhappy soul, compared with the consciousness qualified by the same adjective.

Let us make no mistake about it: couples are not the theme of this very pretty story of Psyche. The tale is not about relations between men and women – it suffices to be able to read to see what is truly hidden merely by being presented in the foreground and as overly obvious, as in [Edgar Allan Poe's] "The Purloined Letter" – it is about nothing other than the relations between the soul and desire.

It is in this respect that we can say, without forcing things, that to us the extremely detailed composition of this canvas gives – in an exemplary fashion, through the intensity of the isolated image produced here – a tangible character to what a structural analysis of the myth of Apuleius could be, an analysis that remains to be carried out.

I have said enough to you about what the structural analysis of a myth is, for you to at least know that it exists. Since Claude Lévi-Strauss analyzes a certain number of North American myths, I don't see why one would not devote oneself to the same kind of analysis concerning Apuleius' fable. We are, strangely enough, not as well-served in matters closer to us than in others, which seem to us further removed as to their sources.

We have but one version of this myth, Apuleius' version. But it does not seem impossible to work in a way that allows us to bring out a certain number of significant pairs of oppositions. Yet without Zucchi's help, we would perhaps run the risk of overlooking the truly primordial and primal nature of this moment in the tale of Psyche.

It is, nevertheless, the best-known moment: everyone knows that Cupid flees and disappears because little Psyche was too curious and, on top of that, disobedient. This is what, in our collective memory, has remained of the meaning of the myth. But something is hidden behind that and, if we are to believe what is revealed to us here by the painter's intuition, it is no other than the decisive moment that he painted.

This is certainly not the first time that such a moment appears in an ancient myth. But its emphasis, crucial character, and pivotal function had to wait many long centuries before being situated at 272
the center of the psyche by Freud.

2

Having made this find, it didn't seem to me to be useless to talk with you about it, because the tiny image that will remain engraved in your minds – due to the very fact that I am spending time on it this morning – turns out to illustrate what I can designate today only as the point at which the whole instinctual dynamic converges, insofar as I have taught you to consider its register to be marked by the workings of the signifier.

This is what allows me to highlight how the castration complex must be articulated at this level. It can only be fully articulated if we consider the instinctual dynamic that is going to be structured by the mark of the signifier. At the same time, the image's value lies in showing us that there is a superimposing or superimposition, a common center, in the vertical sense, between the soul and the point of production of the castration complex with which I left you last time. We are now going to pursue this topic further.

I took up the theme of desire and demand in chronological order, but I underscored for you at every moment the divergence, splitting,* or difference between desire and demand that marks all of the initial stages of libidinal evolution. I showed you that it is determined by *Nachträglich* – retroactive – action, starting at a certain point where the paradox of desire and demand appears with minimal clatter [*éclat*], which is the genital stage – insofar as we should, it seems, be able to distinguish between desire and demand at that point at least.

Demand and desire bear the mark there of division and shattering [*éclatement*], which still poses a problem for analysts, if you read their work – a question or enigma that is more often avoided than resolved and that goes by the name of the castration complex.

Thanks to this painting, you must see that the castration complex is, in its structure and instinctual dynamic, centered in such a way that it coincides exactly with what we might call the point at which the soul is born.

273 If this myth has any meaning, it is indeed that Psyche only truly becomes Psyche – in other words, not simply someone endowed with an extraordinary initial gift which makes her the equal of Venus, or with a veiled and unknown favor which offers her infinite and unfathomable happiness, but the subject of a pathos which is, strictly speaking, that of the soul – at the moment at which the desire that fulfilled her slips away and takes flight. Psyche's adventures begin at that very moment.

Venus, as I once told you, is born every day, and as Plato's myth tells us, owing to this very fact Cupid is thus also conceived every

day. But the birth of the soul is, in both the universal and the particular, for all of us and for each of us, an historic moment. It is from this moment on that the dramatic story with which we are faced unfolds in all its consequences.

One could, in the end, say that Freud went straight to this point. In closing, he stated that there is a final endpoint – this is articulated in "Analysis, Terminable and Interminable" – at which we arrive when we manage to eliminate in the subject every avenue for the resurgence or reviving of unconscious repetition, when we manage to make the latter converge with the bedrock – the term is in Freud's text – of the castration complex [*SE* XXIII, p. 252].

The castration complex is at work in men and in women – the term *Penisneid* [penis envy] is, in his text, one of the names of the castration complex. It is around this castration complex, and, so to speak, in starting anew on the basis of it, that we must put to the test once more everything that has, in a certain way, been discovered on the basis of this brick wall. Whether it is a matter of emphasizing the decisive and primordial effect of what pertains to knowledge's entreaties [*instances du savoir*], or a matter of operationalizing [*mise en fonction*] what is called the aggressiveness of primordial sadism or what has been articulated in the different possible views concerning the object – running the gamut from its decomposition [into partial objects] and its deepening, to the development of the notion of good and bad primordial objects – all of this can be resituated in an appropriate perspective only if we grasp where the divergence began. It began with this to some extent unsustainably paradoxical point: the castration complex.

The image that I am taking the time to show you today has the 274
benefit of incarnating what I mean by speaking of the castration complex as a paradox. Indeed, up until now, in the different stages we have studied, a divergence was present that was motivated by the distinction and discordance between what constitutes the object of demand – whether it be the subject's demand at the oral stage, or the Other's demand at the anal stage – and what, in the Other, is situated in the place of desire. This is what is masked and veiled to a certain degree in Psyche's case, although it is secretly perceived by the archaic, infantile subject. Now, would it not seem that, in what one might sweepingly call the third stage, and which is commonly known as the genital stage, the conjunction of desire – insofar as it can be involved in any of the subject's demands – must find its surety or carbon copy in the Other's desire?

If there is a point at which desire presents itself as desire, it is certainly at the point at which Freud's first accentuation was precisely made to situate it for us – in other words, at the level of sexual

desire, revealed in its real consistency, and no longer in a contaminated, displaced, condensed, or metaphorical fashion. Here we are no longer dealing with the sexualization of some other function, but with the sexual function itself.

To help you gauge the paradox in question, I was looking for something to point to this morning with which to exemplify the awkwardness of analysts when it comes to the phenomenology of the genital stage, and I stumbled upon an article by René de Monchy devoted to the castration complex in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis.*

What is an analyst who takes a renewed interest in our times in the castration complex – and there aren't many of them – led to in order to explain it? You'll never guess. I will summarize it for you very quickly.

There is a paradox which cannot fail to strike you, in the fact that the revelation of the genital drive is necessarily marked by the splitting* consisting in the castration complex.

The author, who has a certain knowledge base, mentions at the beginning of his article what are called "congenital reaction schemes."* They consist in the fact that, in small birds which have never had any experience of predators, it suffices to move a piece of paper in the approximate shape of a hawk over their cage to provoke all the fright reflexes. In short, the piece of paper serves
275 here as a decoy [*leurre*] or – as the author of this article expresses himself in French even though writing in English – *attrape.*

According to him, things are exceedingly simple. The primitive *attrape* in man must be sought out in the oral stage. It is the biting reflex – correlated with the well-known sadistic fantasies that the child may have, and which involve the sectioning of the object that is the most precious of all, the mother's nipple – that is the origin of what, in the later, genital stage, will be manifested (transformed into fellatio fantasies) as the possibility of depriving the sexual partner of his organ, of wounding or mutilating his genitalia. And this explains, not why your daughter is mute, but why the genital stage is marked by the possible sign of castration.

Such an explanation is telling as regards the present orientation of analytic thought, and of the reversal that has taken place in it that progressively places under the heading of primal drives, drives that become more and more hypothetical the more they approach the earliest moments of life. Which leads to the accentuation of the importance of constitution, of that *je ne sais quoi* that is innate in primordial aggressiveness.

Aren't *we* spelling things out correctly by dwelling instead on the problems that our practice commonly raises for us? I have already

mentioned here the notion found in one of Ernest Jones' articles, in which he is stirred by a certain need to explain the castration complex. I am referring to *aphanisis*, a common Greek term that was put on the agenda in the articulation of analytic discourse by Freud, which means disappearance. According to Jones, what is at work in the castration complex is the fear aroused in the subject by the disappearance of desire.

Those of you who have been following my teaching for some time cannot, I hope, fail to recall – and those who do not remember can have a look at the excellent summaries made by Lefèvre-Pontalis – that I have already made headway on this topic in my Seminar by saying that, while this is one way of articulating the problem, there is also a singular reversal that clinical practice allows us to point to. This is why I commented at length for you on the well-known dream of Ella Sharpe's patient in my Seminar *Desire and Its Interpretation*, 276
a dream that revolves entirely around the theme of the phallus. I will ask you to look at that summary, because I cannot repeat myself and the things said then were essential.

The meaning of what is at issue here is, as I indicated, the following: far from it being the case that the fear of *aphanisis* is projected, so to speak, onto the image of the castration complex, it is on the contrary the necessity or determination of the signifying mechanism that, in the castration complex, makes the subject not fear *aphanisis* at all in the majority of cases, but, rather, take refuge in it, tucking his desire away in his vest pocket. What analytic practice reveals to us is that it is more precious to hold onto desire's symbol – the phallus – than to hold onto desire itself. This is the problem with which we are presented.

I hope that you have carefully observed the flowers that are located in front of Cupid's genitals in Zucchi's painting. They are characterized by such abundance only so that one cannot see that there is nothing behind them. There is literally no room for even the smallest genitalia. What Psyche is about to cut off has already disappeared.

Moreover, if something strikes us as being juxtaposed here to the fine, beautiful human form of this woman, who is in fact divine, it is the extraordinarily composite character of the image of Cupid. His face is a child's face, but his body is Michelangelo-like in nature. It is a muscle-bound body, which has almost begun to shows signs of aging, not to say sagging. In addition to that, there are his wings.

You are all aware that the sex of angels was a subject of endless discussion. If people debated about it for so long, it was probably because no one knew very well where to stop. In any case, the Apostle tells us that whatever joys there may be in the resurrection

of the body, once the celestial feast has come, there will no longer be any sexual activity, whether active or passive.

The upshot being that what is at stake, and is concentrated in this image, is clearly the center of the paradox of the castration complex. It is that the Other's desire, insofar as it is approached at the level of the genital stage, can never in fact be accepted in what I will call its rhythm, which is at the same time its dissonance [*fuyance*].

This concerns first of all the paradoxes of the child's situation – namely, that we find in him a desire which is still fragile, uncertain, premature, and anticipated. But this observation hides from us what
277 is, in the final analysis, at stake: his psychical organization quite simply does not adapt, so to speak, insofar as it is psychical, to the reality of sexual desire, and this is true at every level. For the organ is brought in and approached only insofar as it is transformed into a signifier, and, in order to be transformed into a signifier, it is cut off.

Reread all that I taught you to read regarding little Hans. You will see that it is a question of nothing but this: does it have roots? Is it removable? In the end, Hans works it out – it can be unscrewed. It can be unscrewed and others can be put in its place. That is thus what is at stake.

What is shown to us here is this very elision, thanks to which it [the organ] is no longer anything but the very sign that I mentioned: the sign of absence. For what I taught you is the following – if *Phi*, the phallus as a signifier, has a place, it is precisely that of supplementing the Other at the point at which signifierness disappears – at the point at which the Other is constituted by the fact that a signifier is lacking somewhere. Hence the privileged value of this signifier, which can no doubt be written, but which can only be written in parentheses, by saying that it is the signifier of the point at which the signifying system [*le signifiant*] is lacking [S(Ⱥ)].

This is why it can become identical to the subject himself, at the point at which we can designate him as a barred subject [$] – in other words, at the sole point at which we analysts can situate a subject as such. I say, "we analysts," insofar as we are linked to the effects that result from the coherence of the signifier when a living being makes himself into its agent and its prop. If we accept this determination, this overdetermination as we call it, the subject then no longer has any other possible efficacy than on the basis of the signifier that makes him disappear. Which is why the subject is unconscious.

If people – even non-analysts – can speak of double symbolization, it is in the sense that the nature of the symbol is such that two registers necessarily stem therefrom: the one that is linked to the symbolic chain and the one that is linked to the problem or mess

that the subject was able to bring to it. For it is there that, in the final analysis, he situates himself in the most certain way.

In other words, the subject asserts that the dimension of truth is original only at the moment at which he uses the signifier to lie.

3

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I wanted to draw your attention this morning to the relation between the phallus and the effect of the signifying system [*le signifiant*], and to the fact that the phallus as a signifier – which means as given over to an entirely different function than its organic function – is the center of all coherent apprehension of what is at work in the castration complex.

But now I would like to introduce, not in a way that is already articulated and rational, but in a colorful way, what I will discuss next time.

It is, so to speak, beautifully represented thanks to Zucchi's Mannerism. Didn't it occur to you that by placing this vase of flowers in front of the phallus as lacking – and as such raised to major signifierness – the artist managed to anticipate by three and a half centuries (and unbeknown to me, I assure you, up until a few days ago) the very image I used to articulate the dialectic of the relations between the ideal ego and the ego-ideal?

I discussed it a very long time ago, but I completely reworked it in an article that will come out soon. I tried to fit the different pieces of the relation to the object as an object of desire – as a partial object with all the necessary focusing [*accommodation*] – into a system, in an amusing physics experiment that I called the inverted vase illusion.

What I hope to get you to realize is that the problem of castration, the center of the whole economy of desire such as analysis has developed it, is closely related to another problem, which is the following. How is it that the Other – which is the locus of speech, the legitimate subject, and the one with whom we have relations of good and bad faith – can and must become something precisely analogous to what can be encountered in the most inert object: namely, *a*, the object of desire? It is this tension, difference in altitude, or fundamental drop in level that becomes the essential regulation of everything that is problematic about desire in man. This is what must be analyzed, and I think that I can articulate it for you next time quite clearly.

I ended what I taught you about Ella Sharpe's dream with the following: "This phallus" – I said, speaking of a subject caught up in the most exemplary neurotic situation, insofar as it was that of *aphani-*

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sis brought on by the castration complex – "he is it and he is not it. Language allows us to perceive the interval between to be it and not to be it in a formulation into which the verb 'to be' slips: 'he is not without having it.' It is around the subjective assumption between being and having that the reality of castration is played out. And the phallus," I wrote at that time, "serves as an equivalent in the relation to the object. It is to the extent that he gives up the phallus that the subject is able to possess the plethora of objects that characterize the human world." In an analogous formulation, one might say that "a woman is without having it." Which can be experienced very painfully in the form of *Penisneid*, but which is – I am now adding this to what I said before – also a great strength. This is what Ella Sharpe's patient is not willing to perceive. He shelters the phallus as a signifier. And, I concluded, "there is undoubtedly something more neurosis-inducing than the fear of losing the phallus, which is not to want the Other to be castrated."

But today, now that we have examined the dialectic of transference in the *Symposium*, I am going to propose another formulation. If the Other's desire is essentially separated from us by the mark of the signifier, don't you now understand why Alcibiades, having perceived that the secret of desire lies in Socrates, demands in an almost impulsive way – with an impulsivity that is at the origin of all the false pathways of neurosis and perversion – to see Socrates' desire, which he knows exists since he acts on its basis, to see it in the form of a sign?

This is also why Socrates refuses. For this is but a short circuit. To see desire in the form of a sign is not, for all that, to accede to the course by which desire is taken up in a certain dependency, which is what one wishes to know.

You see here the beginning of the path that I am attempting to open up toward what the analyst's desire must be. In order for the analyst to have what the analysand lacks, he must have nescience qua nescience. He must be in the mode of having it; he too must
280 be not without having it; he must be but one short step away from being as ignorant as his analysand.

In fact, he too is not without having an unconscious. He is no doubt always beyond everything the analysand knows, without being able to tell him. He can only give him a sign. Being that which represents something to someone is the definition of the sign. Having on the whole nothing else that stops him from being the subject's desire, than the very fact of having it, the analyst is doomed to false surprise. But get it into your heads that he is only effective when he gives himself over to true surprise, which is untransmittable, and of which he can give only a sign.

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Representing something to someone is precisely what must be disrupted. For the sign that is to be given is the sign of the lack of a signifier. It is, as you know, the only sign that cannot be borne, because it is the one that induces the most unspeakable anxiety. It is nevertheless the only one that can make the analysand accede to the unconscious – to the "science without consciousness [*science sans conscience*]" concerning which you perhaps understand today, being presented with this painting, in what non-negative, but positive sense Rabelais says that it is "the demise of the soul."

April 12, 1961

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XVII

THE SYMBOL Φ

Arcimboldo and persona.
The lack of a signifier and questioning.
The signifier that is always veiled.
The phallus in hysteria and obsession.

I am recommencing my difficult discourse for you, which is ever more difficult owing to its aim.

It would, nevertheless, be inappropriate to say that I am leading you into unknown territory today. If I begin to lead you into a certain territory today, it is clear that I already began doing so right from the outset.

To speak, moreover, of unknown territory as concerns our territory, which is called the unconscious, is still more inappropriate. For what makes for the difficulty of this discourse is that I can tell you nothing about it which does not take on all its importance from what I don't say about it.

The idea is not that one mustn't say everything and that in order to speak accurately we cannot say all that we could formulate. There is something in this formulation that, as we realize at every moment, immediately casts the matter into the imaginary, which is essentially what happens due to the fact that human subjects are, as such, prey to the symbol.

But let's be careful here – at the point we have reached, should we put "to the symbol" in the singular or the plural? In the singular, assuredly, insofar as the one that I introduced last time is, strictly speaking, an unnamable symbol – we will see why and in what respect – the symbol uppercase *Phi* [Φ].

It is here that I must recommence my discourse today, to show you in what respect this symbol is indispensable to us if we are to understand the impact of the castration complex on the mainspring of transference.

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There is, in effect, a fundamental ambiguity between Φ and φ, between uppercase *Phi* as a symbol, and lowercase *phi*.

Lowercase *phi* designates the imaginary phallus insofar as it is concretely involved in the psychical economy at the level of the castration complex where we first truly encountered it, where the neurotic experiences it in a way that represents his particular mode of operating and maneuvering, with the radical difficulty that I am trying to articulate for you through the use I make of the symbol capital *Phi*.

Last time, and already many times before that, I designated this symbol, Φ, briefly, I mean in a quick and abbreviated manner, as a symbol [that arises or responds] in the place where the lack of a signifier occurs.

I once again unveiled, right at the beginning of the last class, the image that served us last time as a prop by which to introduce the paradoxes and antinomies related to various slippages, which are so subtle and difficult to recall in their various stages, and which must nevertheless be maintained if we wish to understand what is involved in the castration complex. They are, namely, the displacements, absences, levels, and substitutions in which the phallus intervenes, in its multiple and virtually ubiquitous formulations. In analytic work, it springs up constantly – at the very least in theoretical writings, that is undeniable – being reinvoked in the most various forms, even in studies of infancy concerning the very first pulsations of the soul. You see it identified, for example, with the force of the earliest aggressiveness, insofar as the phallus is the worst object [that is] eventually encountered in the mother's breast, and as it is also the most noxious [anal] object. Why this ubiquity?

I'm not the one who is suggesting it, for it is manifest in every attempt to formulate analytic technique, whether at an old, new, or revamped level. So let us try to introduce some order into things here, and see why I must emphasize this ambiguity or polarity, as it were. The polarity concerning the function of the phallus as a signifier involves two extremes: the symbolic and the imaginary.

I said "signifier," insofar as it is used as such. But when I pre- 283
sented it earlier, I called it a "symbol," and it is indeed, perhaps, the only signifier that, in our register, absolutely deserves to be called a symbol.

I thus unveiled anew for you this image of Zucchi's canvas, which is not a simple reproduction of the original from which I began as if from an exemplary image, laden in its composition with all the riches that a certain painterly art can produce, and whose Mannerist

mainspring I examined. I'm going to quickly pass around the image again, if only for those who were not able to see it last time. I would simply like, as a complement, to clearly stress, for those who were perhaps unable to grasp it precisely, what I intend to emphasize here concerning the importance of what I will call the Mannerist application. The word "application" must be used both literally and figuratively.

You see the bouquet of flowers in the foreground. Its presence is designed to cover over what must be covered over, which, as I told you, is less Cupid's threatened phallus – Cupid who is caught by surprise and discovered here owing to Psyche's question, "Who is this guy?" – than the precise point of an absent presence, an absence rendered present. The history of that era's painting technique requires us to draw a parallel here – not via my path, but via that of [art] critics who begin with premises that are altogether different from those that could guide me here.

Indeed, we have a few indications that the flowers were probably not painted by Jacopo, but by a brother or a cousin, Francesco, who, due to his technical prowess, was asked to come create this brilliant flourish – the flowers in their vase – in the suitable spot. Owing precisely to this probable collaborator, critics have emphasized the parallel between the technique employed here and that employed by someone I hope a certain number of you know, who was brought, several months ago, to the attention of those of you who stay somewhat abreast of various revivals in interest in phases of the history of art that are sometimes overlooked, veiled, or forgotten – namely, Giuseppe Arcimboldo.

Arcimboldo, who worked in part at the court of the infamous Rudolph II, King of Bohemia – who left behind other traces in the tradition of rare objects – is known for a singular technique which
284 sent out its most recent shoot in the work of my old friend Salvador Dalí in what he called paranoiac drawing. Having, for example, to represent the face of Rudolph II's librarian, Arcimboldo did so using an ingenious construction made of the primary tools of the librarian, namely, books, arranged on the canvas in such a way that the image of a face is much more than suggested – it truly forces itself upon the viewer. Similarly, the symbolic theme of a season, incarnated in the guise of a human face, was materialized by the fruits in season then, the assembling of which was carried out in such a way that a face in the form created is also forcibly suggested to the viewer.

In short, this Mannerist procedure consists in creating the essence of a human image through the coalescence, combination, or accumulation of a pile of objects, the sum total of which is given the

task of representing what is thus manifested both as substance and illusion. At the same time that the appearance of a human image is sustained, something is suggested that can be imagined in the ungrouping of the objects. These objects, which in some sense serve as a mask, simultaneously demonstrate the problematic [nature] of this very mask.

This is, in short, what we are dealing with every time the highly essential function of the persona comes into play, which is always in the foreground in the economy of human presence. For if there is a need for a persona, it is because, behind it perhaps, all form slips away and vanishes.

Assuredly, a persona results from a complex grouping [of objects]. Here indeed lies the illusion [*leurre*] and the fragility of its subsistence. Behind it, we know nothing of what can be sustained, for it is a twofold appearance that is suggested to us, a redoubling of appearance that leaves unanswered the question of what there is there in the end.

It is clearly in this register that we see, in the composition of this canvas, the way in which the question of what is at stake in what must concern us here – namely, Psyche's act – is sustained.

Psyche, who is fulfilled, wonders whom she is dealing with, and it is this precise special moment that captured the artist's attention, perhaps well beyond anything he himself could have put into words. He did write a discourse on the gods of Antiquity – I took the trouble to look at it, without having any great illusions about 285
it – and, in effect, there is not much to be gleaned from it. But his painting speaks loudly enough for itself.

In this image, the artist has grasped what last time I called the moment of the appearance or birth of Psyche – the sort of exchange of powers whose effect is that she becomes embodied. What follows is a whole string of misfortunes that befall her before she comes full circle, and finds anew what, at that instant, will disappear the instant thereafter for her, what she wanted to unveil and grasp: the face of desire.

2

What justifies my introducing the symbol capital Φ, since I designate it as what arises in the place of the missing signifier [*signifiant manquant*]? What does it mean for a signifier to be missing?

How many times have I told you that once the battery of signifiers is given – beyond a certain minimum which remains to be determined, but at the very least four should be able to suffice for

all significations, as Jakobson teaches us – nothing is missing. There is no language, however primitive it may be, in which everything cannot in the end be expressed, with the exception that – as the Vaudois proverb has it, "Everything is possible for man; what he cannot do he leaves aside" – what cannot be expressed in that language is, quite simply, neither felt nor subjectified.

For it to be subjectified would be for it to take up a position in a subject as valid for another subject – in other words, to shift to the most radical point where the very idea of communication is possible. Any signifying battery can tell you that what that battery cannot say signifies nothing in the locus of the Other. Now, everything that is signifying to us always occurs in the locus of the Other.

In order for something to signify, it must be translatable in the locus of the Other. Let us assume there is a language that does not have such and such a figure of speech – then it simply does not express it. Yet it signifies it nevertheless, for example, through the use of "shall" or "have." This is in fact what happens: I pointed out to you how, in French and English, the future tense is expressed. In
286 *je chanterai*, it is perfectly well attested that it is originally the verb "to have" [*avoir*] which is declined [*j'ai*]. "I shall sing" also indirectly expresses the future tense that English does not have.

There is no such thing as a missing signifier [*Il n'y a pas de signifiant qui manque*]. At what moment can a lack of a signifier possibly begin to appear? In the dimension that is subjective and that is called questioning.

I brought out, on an earlier occasion, the fundamental character of the appearance in the child of questioning as such. It is an already well-known fact, noted by the most ordinary observation. It is a particularly embarrassing moment [for adults] because of the nature of the child's questions. As soon as he knows how to work with and get around with the signifier, he enters a dimension that leads him to ask his parents the most inopportune questions which, as everyone knows, give rise to the greatest confusion in his parents and to answers by them that are almost necessarily impotent.

"What is running?" "What does 'stamping your foot' mean?" "What is an imbecile?" What makes us so unable to satisfactorily answer such questions? Something obliges us to answer in a way that is so especially inept, as if we did not know that to say, "Running means walking very quickly," is truly to botch it up; that to say, "'Stamping your foot' means that you're angry" is truly to proffer an absurdity; and I won't go into the definition we might provide of an imbecile. What is involved in this moment of questioning, if not that the subject distances himself from his use of the signifier itself, and is unable to grasp what it means for there to be words,

what it means to speak, and what it means to designate something so close to him with that enigmatic something known as a word or a phoneme?

The inability experienced at that moment by the child is formulated in questions that attack the signifier as such, at a moment at which the signifier's action is already indelibly etched into everything. Everything that later presents itself as a question in the aftermath of his pseudo-philosophical meditation, can, in the final analysis, but fall short. By the time the subject arrives at the question "What am I?" he will be still less far along – except, of course, if he undergoes an analysis. But if he does not – and it has not been within his power to do so for very long – by calling himself into question in the form "What am I?" he veils from himself that, to ask himself what he is, is to go beyond the stage of doubt concerning whether he is, for merely by formulating his question in this way, he immediately slips into metaphor – he simply does not realize it. The least we analysts can do is remember this ourselves in order to spare 287
him from once again making this age-old error, which threatens his innocence in every form, and to stop him from answering the question, for example – even with our consent – by concluding "I am a child."

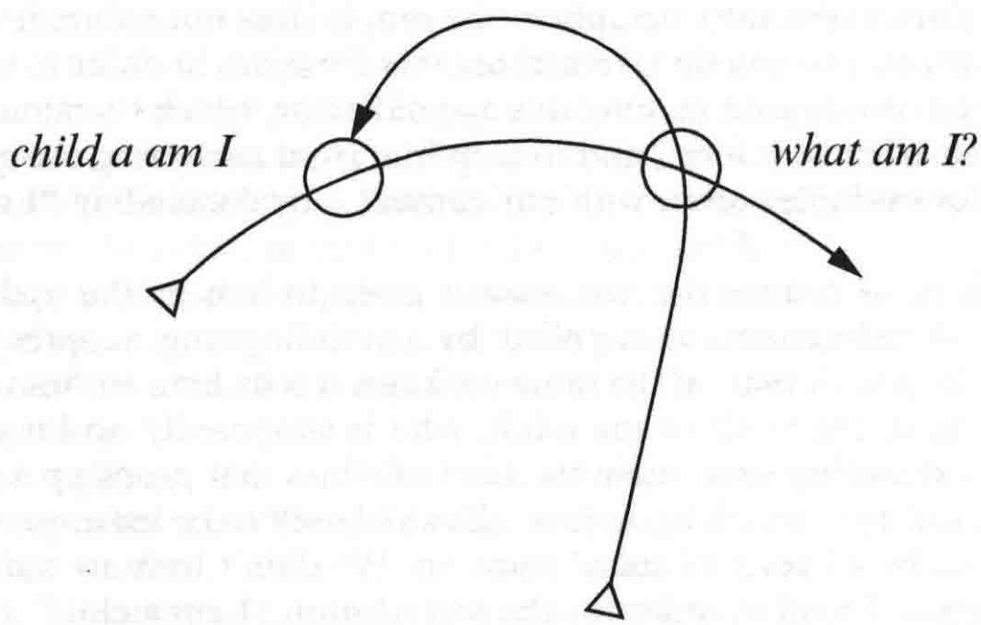
This is, of course, the new answer given to him by the updated form of indoctrination supplied by psychologizing suppression. And along with that, in the same package, it sells him, without him realizing it, the myth of the adult, who is supposedly no longer a child – spawning once again the kind of ethics that props up a supposed reality in which he, in fact, allows himself to be led around by the nose by all sorts of social claptrap. We didn't have to wait for analysis or Freud in order for the formulation "I am a child" to be introduced as a corset designed to straighten up what finds itself in a somewhat skewed position for whatever reason.

People go so far as to say that behind every artist is a child and that the artist represents the child's rights to people who are considered to be serious, who are not children. As I told you last year in my classes on *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, this conception dates back to the beginning of the Romantic period, starting more or less at the time of Coleridge in England, to situate it in a tradition, and I don't see why we would assume the task of taking up the torch.

I would like to get you to see, in this context, what I alluded to during our recent conference in the provinces.

The lower level of the Graph of Desire, with the two intersections of each of its two arrows, is designed to draw attention to the fact that simultaneity is not synchrony. Let us assume that the two tensors or vectors in question, that of intention and that of the

signifying chain, unfold simultaneously. You see that what occurs here by way of an inchoation [i.e., origin or beginning] in this succession – the succession, for example, of the different phonemic elements of the signifier – unfolds substantially before encountering the line on which what is called into being (namely, the intention to signify, we might even say need, as it were) assumes its place, a place that is hidden there. Similarly, this intersecting simultaneously takes place a second time. If *Nachträglich* indeed signifies something, it is the fact that meaning crystallizes out at the very instant at which a sentence ends. A choice has no doubt already been made along the way, but meaning is only grasped once the signifiers successively
288 piled up have, each in its turn, assumed their places, and unfolded in an inverted form – "I am a child" appearing on the signifying line in the order in which its elements are articulated.



What happens when meaning draws to a close [*s'achève*]? What happens is something that is always metaphorical in any and every attribution. I am nothing other than me who is speaking, and currently I am a child. By saying it, by asserting it, a hold or qualification of meaning is realized, thanks to which I conceptualize myself as having a certain relationship to objects that are infantile objects. I make myself into something other than what I could in any way think of myself as at first. I become incarnate, I crystallize, I make myself into an ideal ego, and I do so very directly in the process of this simple signifying inchoation, in the fact of having produced signs that can refer to the very moment of my speaking. The point of departure is in the "I," and the endpoint is in the "child" ["I am a child"].

What results here – whether I see it or not – is the enigma of questioning itself. This is what must next be taken up anew at the level

of capital A. The result of what I am appears in the form in which it remains a question. This result is for me the point aimed at or the correlative point at which I ground myself as an ego-ideal. It is on the basis of this point that the question has importance to me. It is here that the question summons me in the ethical dimension, and supplies the very form that Freud conjugates with the superego.

But what is the status of this noun [*nom*] which directly links up, as far as I know, with my signifying inchoation, and which qualifies the subject in an only partly legitimate way as a child? This answer is hurried and premature. With it, I basically elide the whole central operation that has occurred. What makes me rush headlong toward concluding I am a child is avoidance of the true answer, which must begin much earlier than any endpoint [*terme*] of the sentence. The answer to "What am I?" is nothing other that is articulable – in the same sense in which I told you that no demand can be borne – there is no other answer to "What am I?" at the level of the Other than "Let yourself be." And any hurrying in giving this answer, whatever it may be at the level of dignity, child or adult, is but something whereby I flee the meaning of this "Let yourself be."

What this adventure means, at the degraded point where we grasp it, is that what is at stake in every question formulated is not situated at the level of "What am I?" but at that of the Other, in the form that analytic practice allows us to unveil – namely, "What do you 289
want?" What is involved at this precise point is to figure out what we desire by raising the question. This is how the question must be understood. It is here that the lack of a signifier at stake in the phallus as Φ intervenes.

As we know, psychoanalysis has found that what the subject is faced with is the object of fantasy insofar as it presents itself as alone able to determine a special point in what must be called, alongside the pleasure principle, an economy regulated by the level of jouissance. Analysis also teaches us that by shifting the question to the level of "What does he want?" – of "What does the old coconut want?" – we encounter a world of hallucinated signs, and analysis represents reality testing to us as a way of sampling what? – the reality of the signs that arise in us in a necessary order, which is precisely what constitutes the dominance of the pleasure principle in the unconscious.

What is thus at stake in reality testing, let us observe, is assuredly to verify a real presence, but it is a presence of signs – as Freud emphatically stressed. The goal of reality testing is not to verify whether our representations correspond to something real – we have known for a long time that we don't succeed any better at this than philosophers do – but to verify that our representations are truly

represented, in the sense of *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*. The point is to ensure that the signs are there, but qua signs – since they are signs – of a relation to something else. This is what Freud means when he says the unconscious gravitates around a lost object that can only ever be refound – in other words, never truly refound.

290 The object can never be anything but signified, due to the very fact that the pleasure principle is a chain. The true, authentic object at stake when we speak of objects is in no way grasped, transmittable, or exchangeable. It is at the horizon of that around which our fantasies gravitate. And it is nevertheless with this that we must create objects that are exchangeable.

The problem is very far from working itself out. I sufficiently stressed last year what is at stake in utilitarian ethics. It plays a fundamental role in the recognition of objects constituted in what one might call the market for objects. These are objects that can be of use to everyone, and in this sense so-called utilitarian ethics is more than founded – there is no other. And it is precisely because there is no other that the difficulties that it supposedly entails are in fact perfectly well resolved.

Utilitarians are quite right when they say that whenever we are dealing with something that can be exchanged with our fellow men, the rule of this exchange is utility – not ours, but the possibility of use, utility for all and for the greatest number. This is clearly what creates the gap between the constitution of the extraordinary object that arises in fantasy and every kind of object in the so-called social world – that is, the world of conformity.

Indeed, the world of conformity is already coherent with a universal organization of discourse. There is no utilitarianism without a theory of fictions, and to claim that we can resort to a natural object, that we can even reduce the distances by which the objects of common consent are sustained, is to introduce a confusion or an additional myth into the problematic of reality. On the contrary, the object involved in the analytic relation to the object must be mapped at the most radical point at which the question of the subject's relation to the signifier is raised.

What is the subject's relation to the signifier? We deal, at the level of the unconscious chain, solely with signs. It is a chain of signs. Consequently, there is no end to each sign's deferral to the one that follows it. For the essence of communication with signs is to make a sign of that very other whom I address in order to incite him to aim in the same way as me at the object to which a certain sign refers.

291 The imposition of the signifier on the subject freezes him in the position characteristic of the signifier. The point is to find the guarantor of the chain that, transferring meaning from sign to sign,

must stop somewhere – to find what gives us the sign that we have a right to operate with signs.

It is here that the privilege of Φ among all signifiers arises. Perhaps it will seem overly simple, almost childish, to you if I emphasize what is at stake in this particular signifier.

This signifier is always hidden and veiled – to the extent, good gracious, that one is astonished, that one takes it to be a peculiar and almost exorbitant enterprise, to see its form in some obscure representation or artwork. It is more than rare, though of course it happens, to see it brought into a hieroglyphic chain or into a prehistoric rupestrian painting. We cannot say that it plays no role in human imagination, even prior to analytic exploration, and yet it is, of all our fabricated, signifying representations, the one most often elided or eluded. What does that imply?

Of all possible signs, isn't it the one that brings together in itself the sign and means of action along with the very presence of desire as such? If we allow the phallus to come to light in its real presence, isn't that apt to put a stop to the deferral that takes place in the chain of signs and, furthermore, to push the signs back into some kind of a shadow of nothingness? There is no surer sign of desire, on the condition that there is no longer anything but desire.

An either/or relationship becomes established between this signifier of desire and the entire signifying chain. Psyche was very happy in a relationship with what was not in any way a signifier, but the reality of her love for Cupid. But there you have it – she was Psyche and she wanted to know. She asked herself the question, because language already exists, and one does not spend one's life simply making love, but also chatting with one's sisters. Chatting with her sisters, she wanted to possess her happiness, which is not as simple as all that. Once one has entered into the order of language, to possess one's happiness is to be able to show it, to account for it, arrange its flowers – it is to be as good as her sisters by showing that she has something that is better than what they have, and not simply that she has something different. This is why Psyche showed up in the middle of the night with her lamp, and also with her little chopper.

There was absolutely nothing for her to chop, as I told you, 292
because the deed had already been done. There was nothing for her to cut, although she would have done well to cut the lights at the earliest possible occasion. She saw nothing but a great blinding light, followed, much to her dismay, by a prompt return to the shadows, concerning which she would have done better to take the initiative before her object was definitively lost. Cupid was wounded by this, and for a long time thereafter. He was only refound by Psyche after a long series of trials that she was made to undergo.

In the painting, Psyche is the one who is illuminated, and – as I have been teaching you for a long time concerning the slender form of femininity, at the border between puberty and prepubescence – she is the phallic image to us. Because of this, we realize that it is neither the woman nor the man who, in the final analysis, is the medium of the castrating action; it is this [phallic] image itself insofar as it is reflected – reflected onto the narcissistic form of the body.

The unnamed relationship – unnamed because it is unnamable, because it is unspeakable – between the subject and the pure signifier of desire is projected onto the localizable, precise organ, which can be situated somewhere in the whole of the bodily edifice. Hence the specifically imaginary conflict that involves seeing oneself as deprived or not deprived of this appendix.

It is around this imaginary point that the symptomatic effects of the castration complex develop.

3

I can only begin here to analyze the symptomatic effects of the castration complex. But I would like to remind you, by way of a summary, of what I have already said on this subject in a much more developed way when I spoke about something I have very often discussed – in other words, the neuroses.

What does the hysteric do? What, in the final analysis, does Dora do?

I have taught you to follow the pathways and detours of the labyrinth of complex identifications by which Dora finds herself confronted with something – with what? Freud himself stumbles and loses his way here. You know that he is mistaken concerning the
293 object of her desire, precisely because he seeks to situate Dora as an hysteric, first and foremost, with regard to her choice of object, an object that is no doubt little *a*.

It is quite true that, in a certain sense, Mr. K. is her little object *a*, and that, in fact, this is her fantasy, inasmuch as fantasy is what props up desire. But Dora would not be an hysteric were she content with this fantasy. She aims at something else, at something better, at A. She aims at the absolute Other.

I have been explaining to you for a long time that, for Dora, Mrs. K. incarnates the question, "What is a woman?" And because of this, at the level of fantasy, we do not see the relation of the fading* of the subject with respect to little *a*, but, as she is an hysteric, something else.

That something else is an uppercase A as such, in which she believes, unlike a paranoiac. "What am I?" has a meaning for her, which is not the meaning mentioned earlier, deriving from ethical or philosophical blunders, but a full and absolute meaning. And she cannot but encounter here, without knowing it, the sign Φ which corresponds to it, which is perfectly hermetic [*clos*] and always veiled. This is why she resorts to all kinds of substitutes, the closest forms, let it be noted, she can find for this sign, Φ. If you follow Dora's operations, or those of any other hysteric, you will see that what is always involved is an intricate game by which she can, so to speak, complicate the situation by slipping φ, the lowercase *phi* designating the imaginary phallus, where it is needed.

Her father is impotent with Mrs. K? Well, what difference does it make – she will serve as the copula herself. She will pay the price personally. She is the one who will sustain their relationship. And since that is still not enough, she will bring into play the image – which takes her place, as I showed you a long time ago [*Écrits*, pp. 221–2] and demonstrated – of Mr. K. She casts him into the abyss, into the darkest shadows, at the moment at which the beast says to her the only thing that he should not have said, "My wife means nothing to me." Namely, she doesn't excite me. "But if she doesn't get you hard, what good are you to me?"

For the only thing that matters to Dora, or to any other hysteric, is to be the procurer of this sign in an imaginary form. The hysteric's devotion, her passion to identify with all kinds of sentimental dramas, to be there, to sustain in the wings everything that can happen which is exciting and which is nevertheless none of her business – this is the mainspring or resource around which all of her 294
behavior revolves and proliferates.

She always exchanges her desire for this sign – we needn't look elsewhere for the reason for her so-called mythomania. There is one thing that she prefers to her own desire – she prefers to let her own desire go unsatisfied and have the Other hold the key to her mystery.

This is the only thing that is of importance to her, which is why, identifying with love's drama, she endeavors to reanimate, reinsure, recomplete anew, or repair that Other. We clearly must distrust this, with the whole of the reparative ideology of our initiative as therapists, of our analytic vocation. But it is not here that my warning can take on the most importance, for the path that reveals itself to us most easily is certainly not that of the hysteric.

There is another path, that of the obsessive, which is, as you all know, far more intelligent in its way of operating.

The formula for the hysteric's fantasy can be written as follows:

$$\frac{a}{(-\varphi)} \diamond A$$

Here we have *a*, the substitutional or metaphorical object, over something that is hidden – namely, minus *phi*, one's own imaginary castration – in one's relation to the Other. Today I will merely introduce the formula of the obsessive's fantasy, which is different. But before writing it on the board, I must provide a certain number of hints and indications that will set you on the right course.

We are aware of the difficulty encountered in handling the symbol Φ in its unveiled form. As I told you earlier, what is unbearable about it is that it is not simply a sign and a signifier but the presence of desire. It is the real presence [of desire].

I am asking you to grab hold of the thread that I am extending to you and that, given the time left us, I can only offer here as an indication to be taken up next time. At the root of fantasies and symptoms, of the points of emergence where we see the [hysteric] labyrinth let its mask slip off in some sense, we encounter something that I will call an insult to real presence. The obsessive, too, deals
295 with the mystery of the phallic signifier, Φ, and it is also of importance to him to make it manageable.

An author about whom I shall have to speak next time has broached – in a way which is certainly instructive and fruitful to us if we know how to critique it – the function of the phallus in obsessive neurosis. He took up the subject for the first time in a report on a case of obsessive neurosis in a woman, in which he stressed certain sacrilegious fantasies – in which the figure of Christ, and even Christ's phallus, were trampled underfoot – from which the patient derived a noticeable and avowed erotic aura. The author then immediately dove into the topic of aggressiveness and penis envy, in spite of the patient's protests.

Don't a thousand other facts that I could enumerate show us that it is appropriate for us to dwell far more on the phenomenology of this fantasizing that is all too quickly termed "sacrilegious"? We might recall here the fantasy of the Rat Man imagining that, in the middle of the night, his dead father is resuscitated and comes knocking at the door, the patient showing himself to his father as the patient is masturbating [*SE* X, pp. 204–5]. This too is an insult to real presence.

What we call aggressiveness always presents itself in obsessive neurosis as aggression toward the form of the Other's appearance that, on another occasion, I called "phallophany," the Other insofar as he can present himself as the phallus. To strike the phallus in the

Other, to strike it at the imaginary level, in order to heal symbolic castration is the pathway chosen by the obsessive neurotic to try to abolish the difficulty that I designate as "the parasitic nature of the signifier in the subject," and to try to restore primacy to desire, at the cost of degrading the Other, which makes the Other essentially a function of the phallus' imaginary elision.

At the precise point in the Other where he is in a state of doubt, suspension, loss, ambivalence, or fundamental ambiguity, the obsessive's relation to the object – to an object that is always metonymic, because for him the object is essentially interchangeable – is essentially governed by something that is related to castration, which takes on a directly aggressive form here: absence, depreciation, rejection, or refusal of the sign of the Other's desire. Not abolition or destruction of the Other's desire, but a rejection of its signs. This is what determines the exceedingly odd impossibility that the obsessive's own desire ever manifest itself. 296

Assuredly, to point out to him – insistently, moreover, as did the analyst to whom I was referring earlier – his relation to the imaginary phallus in order, so to speak, to familiarize him with its impasse – well, we cannot say that the solution to the obsessive's difficulties does not lie along this path. But how can we fail to note in passing that, after a certain stage of the working through* of imaginary castration, the subject was in no way relieved of his obsessions, but simply of the guilt attached to them?

What else is new! Such a therapeutic approach is thereby seen to be flawed. Where does it bring us? To the Φ function of the phallus as a signifier, as a signifier in the transference itself.

How does the analyst situate himself in relation to this signifier? If the question is essential here it is because it is already illustrated for us by the forms and impasses demonstrated to us by a certain therapeutic approach that is oriented as we just saw.

This is what I will try to take up for you next time.

April 19, 1961

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XVIII

REAL PRESENCE

The contemporary farce.
The obsessive's phallicism.
The signifier that is excluded from the signifying system.
Phobia and perversion.

On Saturday and Sunday I happened to open, for the first time, notes taken at different points of my Seminar over the last few years, to see whether the mile markers I gave you under the heading *The Relation to the Object*, and then *Desire and Its Interpretation*, converge without too much of a gap with what I am trying to articulate for you this year under the heading of *Transference*.

I realized, in effect, that in everything I discussed with you, and which is there, so it seems, in one of our Society's filing cabinets, there is a lot that you will be able to find anew at a time when people have the leisure to bring it out – at a point at which you will say to yourselves that, in 1961, someone was teaching you something.

It will not be said that I never allude to current events in my teaching – there would be something excessive about saying so. To corroborate this, I will thus read to you a little bit of what I also came across on Sunday, in the work of Jonathan Swift. I had far too little time to speak with you about him when I took up the symbolic function of the phallus, though the question is so ubiquitous in his work that one could say that, if we take his work as a whole, it is articulated in it.

Jonathan Swift and Lewis Carroll are two authors whom, while I don't have the time to make a regular commentary upon them, you would do well to consult in order to find a great deal of material that is very closely related, as closely related as possible, as closely as is
298 possible in literary works, to the topic I am currently broaching the most nearly.

In *Gulliver's Travels*, which I was perusing in a charming little edition dating back to the middle of the nineteenth century, illustrated by Granville, I found a passage in the third part, "A Voyage to Laputa," which is characterized by the fact that it is not limited to the trip to Laputa.

It is thus to Laputa, a formidable anticipation of space stations, that Gulliver heads, crossing several kingdoms about which he shares with us a number of significant viewpoints that have lost none of their savor. In particular, he has a discussion with an academic, and tells him that in the kingdom of Tribnia, known as Langden by its natives, where he had resided,

> The Bulk of the People consisted wholly of Discoverers, Witnesses, Informers, Accusers, Prosecutors, Evidences, Swearers; together with their several subservient and subaltern Instruments; all under the Colours, the Conduct, and pay of Ministers, and their deputies.

But let us not dwell on that theme.

Gulliver explains to us how the informers operate [regarding their enemies].

> Then, effectual Care is taken to secure all their Letters and other Papers, and put the Owners in Chains. These Papers are delivered to a Set of Artists, very dextrous in finding out the mysterious Meanings of Words, Syllables and Letters.

This is where Swift really gets going. And as you will see, it's quite pretty concerning the heart of the matter [*substantifique moëlle*].

> For Instance, they can decypher a Close-stool to signify a Privy-Council; a Flock of Geese, a Senate; a lame Dog, an Invader; the Plague, a standing Army; a Buzzard, a Minister; the Gout, a High Priest; a Gibbet, a Secretary of State; a Chamber pot, a Committee of Grandees; a Sieve, a Court Lady; a Broom, a Revolution; a Mouse-trap, an Employment; a bottomless Pit, the Treasury; a Sink, a C---t; a Cap and Bells, a Favourite; a broken Reed, a Court of Justice; an empty Tun, a General; a running Sore, the Administration.
>
> When this Method fails, they have two others more effectual; which the Learned among them call Acrosticks and Anagrams. First, they can decypher all initial Letters into political Meanings. Thus, N, shall signify a Plot; B, a Regiment of Horse; L, a Fleet at Sea. Or, secondly, by transposing the Letters of the Alphabet, 299

> in any suspected Paper, they can lay open the deepest Designs of a discontented Party. So for Example, if I should say in a Letter to a Friend, Our Brother Tom has just got the Piles; a Man of Skill in this Art would discover how the same Letters which compose that Sentence, may be analysed into the following words: Resist, ----- a Plot is brought home ----- The Tour.

I find it not unfitting to reconstruct, with the help of this text which is not so very old, the paradoxical ground of contemporary events, this paradoxical ground being so blatant in so many respects. For in truth, having been untimely awakened last night by someone who told me something that more or less all of you have heard – incorrect news, as it turns out – my sleep was momentarily troubled as I wondered whether I had failed to recognize the tragic dimension of recent events. This posed a problem for me after what I explained to you last year about tragedy, for nowhere could I see the appearance of what I then called the "reflection of beauty."

This effectively stopped me from falling back asleep for a while. I later fell asleep, leaving the question in abeyance. Upon waking this morning, the question had lost a bit of its hold [*prégnance*] over me. It seemed to me that we are still at the stage of farce. And the problem that I was raising suddenly vanished.

Having said that, we are going to take things up where we left them last time.

1

Last time, I put up on the board the following formula for the obsessive's fantasy:

$$\not{A} \Diamond \varphi\,(a, a', a'', a''', \ldots)$$

Thus presented in algebraic form, it is clear that it can but be opaque to those who were not present at my earlier discussions. So I will try, in speaking about it, to fill in the missing dimensions.

You know that this formula is juxtaposed to that of the hysteric, which I wrote for you last time as follows: *a* over minus *phi*, in relation to the Other with a capital *O* [uppercase A]. This relation can be read in several ways. "Desire for A" is one way of putting it.

300

$$\frac{a}{(-\varphi)} \Diamond \mathrm{A}$$

It is thus important that I indicate the respective functions attributed in my symbolization to uppercase *Phi* and lowercase *phi* – that is, to Φ and φ.

I'll ask you to try not to run headlong toward the analogies to which it is always easy and tempting to yield, saying to yourselves, for example, that Φ is the symbolic phallus and φ the imaginary phallus. This is perhaps true in a certain sense, but if you content yourselves with it you risk overlooking the interest of these symbolizations, symbolizations that, believe me, I do not take pleasure in uselessly multiplying in order to provide superficial analogies and intellectual aids. This is not the goal of a teaching, strictly speaking.

The point is to see what I intend these two symbols to represent, and all sorts of indications allow you to already foresee their importance and appreciate their usefulness.

For example, the year began with a very interesting lecture by my friend Georges Favez who, speaking to you about what the analyst is, and about his function for the analysand, concluded that, in the final analysis, the analyst takes on a fetishistic function for the patient. This was the formulation – around which he had grouped all sorts of converging facts in a certain way – with which his lecture ended. This is clearly a highly subjective view. Certainly, it does not leave him completely isolated, for this formulation was prepared by all sorts of things found in various articles on transference, but, nevertheless, one cannot deny that it takes a somewhat astonishing and paradoxical form. I told him that the things that I was going to articulate this year would not fail to respond in some way to the question raised by his talk.

Let us turn now to an author who has tried to articulate the unusual function of transference in obsessive neurosis. He has bequeathed us a body of work, which is now finished, which began with a discussion of the therapeutic impact of the recognition of 301
penis envy in obsessive neurosis among women, and arrived at a generalized theory of the function of the distance from the object in the handling of the transference, especially elaborated on the basis of his experience conducting analyses with obsessive neurotics. The main, active, and efficient mainspring of a subject's increased possession of the meaning of his symptom, especially when he is obsessive, is, according to this author, the imaginary introjection of the phallus – specifically insofar as it is incarnated in the imaginary fantasy of the analyst's phallus.

I have already sketched out for you my position regarding and critique of the work of this author, Maurice Bouvet, especially as concerns technique. Having more closely broached the topic of

transference, we shall now be able to hone this critique still further. This requires that we enter into a precise articulation of what the function of the phallus is, particularly in the transference.

I will try to articulate this function with the help of the terms that are symbolized here, Φ and φ. I fully realize that we never proceed by deduction, from high to low, so to speak, when we develop analytic theory. Nothing begins more clearly from the particular than analytic work. This is why we can still find something worthwhile in an articulation like that of the author to whom I am referring. This is also why his theory of the function of the phallic image in transference begins from an altogether localized experience, which can, in certain respects, limit its scope, but is also precisely what gives it its importance.

It is because Bouvet based himself, in an acute and accentuated way, on work with obsessives, that we must consider and debate what he concluded. We will also begin today with obsessives, which is why, at the beginning of class, I put up on the board the formula by which I am trying to articulate their fantasy.

I have already said a great deal to you about obsessives, and I don't intend to repeat it all here. The idea is not simply to repeat what is fundamentally substitutional, and perpetually eluded, in a sort of sleight of hand that characterizes the way in which the obsessive proceeds in his way of situating himself in relation to the Other, and more exactly, of never being at the place at which he seems to designate himself at any particular moment.

302 The formulation of the second term of the obsessive's fantasy [the part to the right of the lozenge] alludes precisely to the fact that objects are for him, as objects of desire, situated as a function [*mis en function*] of certain erotic equivalences – something we are used to indicating by speaking of the eroticization of his world, and especially of his mental world. This "situating as a function of" [*mise en function*] can be noted by φ. It suffices in effect to reread an analytic case study, assuming it is well done, in order to perceive that φ is precisely what underlies the equivalence instituted between objects at the erotic level. This φ is, in some sense, the unit of measurement by which the subject accommodates the function of little *a* – namely, the function of the objects of his desire.

In order to illustrate it, I need but point to the first case study of obsessive neurosis. But you will also find it in all the others, assuming they are worthwhile case studies.

Why does Freud call him *Rattenmann*, the Rat Man or "man with the rats," "rats" being in the plural, whereas in his fantasy – in which Freud broaches for the first time a type of inner view of the structure of his desire in the "horror" seen on his face of "a jouissance

of which he himself was unaware" [*SE* X, pp. 166–7] – there are not *several* rats, but only one, the one that figures in the well-known Turkish torture that I will have to come back to later? If Freud talks about the "man with the rats" with "rats" in the plural, it is clearly because the rat follows its path in a multiform manner in the whole economy of the peculiar exchanges, substitutions, and permanent metonymy of which the obsessive's symptomatology is the living example.

His formula concerning the payment of fees in analysis, "So many rats, so many florins" [*SE* X, p. 212], is but a specific illustration of the permanent equation of all the objects that are taken up into what is a sort of market – the metabolism of objects in symptoms. In a more or less latent fashion, it is part and parcel of a kind of common unit or gold standard. The rat symbolizes or occupies the place of what I call φ, insofar as it is a certain reduced form of Φ, even a degraded form of this signifier. We shall see what allows me to say so.

What does Φ in fact represent? The function of the phallus in its generality, for all subjects who speak. And the point is to perceive its status in the unconscious on the basis of the point that is given to us in the symptomatology of obsessive neurosis, where this function 303
emerges in forms that I refer to as degraded.

It emerges, you should observe, at the level of consciousness. This is what analytic work shows us very clearly in the structure of obsessive neurotics. Here the situating as a phallic function [*mise en fonction phallique*] is not repressed, in other words, profoundly hidden, as it is in the case of hysterics. The φ that is there in the position of situating all objects as a function of it, in the same position as the lowercase *f* of a mathematical formula, is perceptible and avowed in the symptom – it is conscious and utterly and completely visible. "Conscious," *conscius*, originally designates the possibility of the subject's complicity with himself, and thus also of a complicity with the Other who observes him. The observer has almost no problem being his accomplice. The sign of the phallic function emerges from every direction at the level of the articulation of symptoms.

It is in this context that the question can be raised of what Freud is trying, not without difficulty, to illustrate for us when he articulates the function of *Verneinung*. How can it be that things are both so obviously spoken and yet misrecognized? Were the subject but what is made of him by a certain psychologism, which continues to hold sway even at the very heart of our analytic societies, were the subject nothing other than the fact of seeing the other see you, how could one say that the function of the phallus is positioned in

such a way as to be recognized by the obsessive? For this function is absolutely blatant. And nevertheless, one might say that even in this blatant form, it shares in what we call repression. However avowed it may be, it is not avowed by the subject without the analyst's help. Without the help of the Freudian register, it is neither recognized nor even recognizable. It is here that we put our finger on the fact that to be a subject is something other than to be a gaze faced with another gaze, according to the formulation that I called psychologistic, which also goes so far as to include among its characteristics the existing Sartrean theory.

To be a subject is to have one's place in the Other [A], in the locus of speech. Now, a vicissitude can arise here that is designated by the bar that strikes through the A – namely, that the Other's speech is lacking. It is at the precise moment at which the subject – manifesting himself as the *phi* function in relation to the object – vanishes and fails to recognize himself, it is at this precise point that, in the absence of recognition, misrecognition automatically occurs. At
304 this point of absence [*défaut*], at which the function of phallicism to which the subject devotes himself winds up being covered over, the mirage of narcissism – that I would call truly frenetic in the obsessive subject – is produced in its stead.

This sort of alienation of phallicism is visibly manifested in the obsessive, for example, in what are called his thought disturbances. These latter can be expressed by the subject in a perfectly clear, articulated, and avowed way, and experienced as such. "It is not so much because what I think," the subject says to you in his discourse – implicitly, but in enough detail that the line can be drawn and the addition carried out on the basis of his declaration – "is culpable that it is difficult for me to sustain myself and to progress thereby; it is because it is absolutely necessary that what I think come from me and never from my neighbor, never from someone else."

How many times have we heard this – not only in the obsessive's typical situations, but in what I will call the "obsessivized" relations that we produce artificially in a relationship that is as specific as that of analytic teaching?

2

In my lecture in Rome ["Function and Field of Speech and Language"], I spoke of what I called the "wall of language" [*Écrits*, p. 282]. Nothing is more difficult than to back the obsessive neurotic up against the wall of his desire.

There is something that I don't think has ever truly been highlighted before, even though it is rather enlightening. In order to situate it, I will use a term you are aware I have already used for more than one purpose, *aphanisis*, introduced by Ernest Jones, in a way all of whose ambiguities I have indicated, to designate the disappearance – that is the meaning of the word in Greek – of desire.

No one has ever, it seems to me, pointed out a very simple fact that is quite tangible in the stories told by obsessives. When an obsessive is following a certain path of autonomous research, or self-analysis, as it were, [or] when he is proceeding along the path of what is known as "realizing his fantasy," regardless of its form, it is truly appropriate to employ the term *aphanisis*. It is even impossible to avoid this function at that point.

When people use the term, it is generally in order to designate, 305
first of all, a natural and ordinary *aphanisis*, which concerns the limited power a subject has to maintain an erection. Desire has, in effect, a natural rhythm. Even without evoking the extremes of the inability to keep it up or the most worrisome forms of the brevity of the act, one can remark that the subject is dealing here with a sort of obstacle or stumbling block that is fundamental in his relation to his fantasy. What is at stake for him is the end of the line: erection and then the fall of desire. There is a precise moment at which the erection goes down. Nevertheless, on the whole, my goodness, the obsessive is endowed with neither more nor less than what we might call quite ordinary genitality, which is even rather wimpy, it seems to me. Indeed, even if what is at stake in the avatars and torments inflicted upon him by the hidden mainspring of his desire were situated at this level, it would be appropriate for us to bring our efforts to bear elsewhere.

I always counterpunctually mention what we do not concern ourselves with at all, but I am astonished that we never ask ourselves why we do not concern ourselves with it. We do not concern ourselves, in effect, with the perfecting of athletic exercises with which to train for sexual embraces, nor with bringing bodies alive in the dimension of nudity and public displays [*la prise au ventre*]. Apart from a few exceptions – you are aware how thoroughly one of those exceptions was condemned, namely Reich – I don't think it is a field to which analysts have ever devoted much attention.

The obsessive can more or less figure out how to handle his desire. It is, in short, a question of mores, in a situation in which things, with or without analysis, are maintained in the realm of the clandestine, and in which cultural variations consequently don't mean much. What is at stake is thus situated somewhere else altogether, namely, at the level of the discordance between his fantasy – insofar

as it is precisely linked to the function of phallicism – and the act in which he aspires to incarnate it, which always falls short of the fantasy. And naturally, it is owing to the effects of the fantasy, this fantasy which is all about phallicism, that all the symptomatic consequences develop that are designed to contribute to it. The fantasy includes everything that contributes to [the act], in the so very typical and characteristic form of isolation, whose mechanism has been highlighted in the birth of the symptom.

306 If one thus finds in the obsessive the fear of *aphanisis* highlighted by Jones, it is insofar as, and solely inasmuch as, it is the putting to the test – which always turns into defeat – of the Φ function of the phallus. Its result is that the obsessive has no greater fear, in the end, than of what he imagines he aspires to: to act freely and to live in the state of nature, if I may put it thus. Natural tasks are not his thing, nor is anything else that leaves him master of his own ship, so to speak, along with God – namely, functions where he has extreme responsibility, pure responsibility, the responsibility one has toward the Other in which what I am articulating is inscribed.

The point I am designating is nowhere better illustrated, let me say in passing, than in the analyst's function, and specifically at the moment at which he proffers an interpretation. You see that in the course of my talk today, I haven't stopped situating the field uncovered for us by analytic action correlatively with the field of the neurotic's experience. It is necessarily the same, as it is there that one must go for it.

At the root of the obsessive's experience, there is always what I will call a certain fear of deflating related to phallic inflation. In a way, the Φ function of the phallus in obsession can be no better illustrated than by [La Fontaine's] fable of the frog that wanted to become as big as an ox. "The puny ninny," as you know, "swelled so much that it burst."

This is a moment of experience that is constantly renewed in the real dead end to which the obsessive is brought at the limits of his desire. It is, it seems, worth emphasizing, not simply in the sense of stressing a pathetic phenomenology, but also to allow you to articulate what is at stake in the Φ function of the phallus, insofar as it is hidden by having been exchanged for the φ function.

3

I began to articulate the Φ function last time by formulating a term: "real presence." I think your hearing is keen enough to realize that
307 I was putting it in quotes. Thus I did not introduce it alone: I spoke

of the insult to real presence, in such a way that no one could be mistaken on this point. It has nothing to do with a neutral reality.

If real presence fulfills the radical function toward which I am trying to steer you here, it would be very odd if it had not already been identified somewhere. And I suspect that you have all already perceived that it is a homonym, identical to what goes by that name in religious dogma, the dogma to which, in our cultural context, we accede from birth, so to speak. We have for a long time been more or less used to hearing this pair of words, "real presence," insofar as it constitutes a signifier, murmured in our ears concerning the Apostolic and Roman Catholic dogma of the Eucharist. Well, I assure you that there is no need to look far to realize that it is right at the surface of the obsessive's phenomenology.

Since I spoke earlier of the work of someone who endeavored to focus research about obsessive structure on the phallus, I am going to take up his first article, whose title I mentioned earlier when I spoke of the "Therapeutic Impact of the Recognition of Penis Envy in Obsessive Neurosis among Women." I will quote a few passages from the introduction, and you will see that right from the very first pages, all sorts of possibilities for a critical commentary present themselves:

> Like the male obsessive, the female needs to identify regressively with a man in order to be able to free herself from anxieties dating back to early childhood; but while the male can prop himself up on this identification, in order to transform the infantile love object into a genital love object, she, basing herself first on the very same identification, tends to abandon the first object [the mother] and to move toward a heterosexual fixation, as if she could proceed to a new feminine identification, this time based on the person of the analyst.

Further along, we read,

> Shortly after the desire to possess the phallus, and correlatively to castrate the analyst, is brought to light, and, because of this the aforementioned loosening up has occurred, the male 308
> analyst's personality is associated with that of a well-meaning mother.

Three lines further on, we come across the well-known "initial destructive drive that targets the mother" – in other words, we come across the major coordinates of the analysis of the imaginary that characterizes the way treatment is currently conducted.

I have only highlighted this topic in order to convey to you in passing the difficulties that this general interpretation – summarized here in the introduction to the article, which the whole of what follows supposedly illustrates – assumes to have been overcome. Yet I need but go half a page further on to enter into the phenomenology of what is at stake, and into what this author, who was a clinician, this being his first paper, decides to tell us about the fantasies of his patient, who is viewed as an obsessive.

The first thing that jumps out at us is the following: "She imagined to herself that there were male genitalia in the place of the communion wafer."

And then it is indicated, "without there being any hallucinatory phenomena involved." I don't doubt it. Everything that we see and articulate has gotten us used to seeing that what is involved is something else altogether. She superimposed male organs in a signifying form. Onto what, if not onto what to us is, in the most identifiable, symbolic way, real presence? The point is to eliminate this real presence, to break it or mash it up in the mechanism of desire. The sacrilegious fantasies that I borrowed last time from a little further on in the same case study highlight this well enough.

Don't imagine that this case study is unique. I will cite for you – among dozens of others, because the experience of an analyst in a field never goes beyond a hundred – the following fantasy, which an obsessive [I worked with] had at one point in his analysis.

The attempts to incarnate desire can go to an extreme of erotic acuteness in obsessives, at times when they encounter in a partner some willingness, whether deliberate or gratuitous, to go along with the degrading of the Other with a capital *O* into the other with a lowercase *o*, in the field in which their desire develops. At the very moment at which the subject in question thought he could maintain
309 a type of relationship – which is always accompanied in obsessive neurotics by everything correlated with extremely threatening guilt, which can be counterbalanced, in some sense, by the intensity of his desire – he formed the following fantasy with a partner who represented for him, at least momentarily, such a satisfying complement: having the communion wafer play a role in coitus, in such a way that, placed in the woman's vagina, the host would wind up serving as a hat atop the subject's penis at the moment of penetration.

Don't think that this is the kind of peculiarity found only in a specialized literary genre. It is very common in the register of fancy [*fantasie*], especially obsessives' fancies.

How can we stop ourselves from casting all of this into a banal register like that of the so-called distance from the object, insofar as the object in question would be defined objectively? This is nev-

ertheless what is described to us: the objectivity of the world, as it is recorded by the enumeration and the more or less harmonious combination of typical imaginary relationships; the objectivity of form, as it is specified by human dimensions; and the frontiers of the apprehension of the outer world, threatened by the difficulty of delimiting the ego with the objects of everyday communication. How can we not think, on the contrary, that there is something else, another dimension?

The point is nevertheless to situate this real presence somewhere, and in a register other than that of the imaginary. Let us say that it is inasmuch as I am teaching you to situate the place of desire in relation to the function of man as a subject who speaks that we can glimpse the fact that desire comes to inhabit the place of real presence and populates it with its ghosts.

But then what does Φ mean? Do I summarize it by designating the place of real presence insofar as it can only appear in the intervals between what the signifier covers (over)? Is it on the basis of these intervals that real presence threatens the whole signifying system? Yes, there is some truth to that. The obsessive shows it to you at every point of what you call his mechanisms of projection and defense, or more precisely, phenomenologically, of conjuring. The way he has of filling in everything that can present itself as a gap in the signifying system [*dans le signifiant*] – the way in which, for example, Freud's *Rattenmann* makes himself count up to so many between the flash of lightning and its thunder – is designated here in 310
its veritable structure. Why this need to fill in the signifying interval? Because something might be introduced there that would dissolve all of the phantasmagoria.

Apply this key to 25 or 30 of the symptoms with which the *Rattenmann* literally overflows and to all the case studies of obsessives, and you will put your finger on the truth of the matter. Moreover, you will situate at the same time the function of the phobic object, which is nothing other than the simplest form of this filling in.

What last time, concerning little Hans, I called the "universal signifier" realized by the phobic object is precisely that and nothing else. It is at a distant outpost, well before the hole – that of the gap brought about in the interval where real presence threatens – that a single sign stops the subject from approaching. This is why the mainspring of and the reason for phobia are not, as those who have but the word "fear" on their lips believe, a genital or even narcissistic danger. Owing to certain exceptional developments in the position of the subject with respect to the Other, as is the case in little Hans' relationship to his mother, what the subject is afraid of encountering is precisely a certain sort of desire that would be such

as to immediately make the whole signifying system fall back into the nothingness prior to creation.

But then why is the phallus situated at this place and in this role? It is regarding this point that I would like to proceed far enough today to get you to realize what I might call the suitability of this formulation. I am not saying that it is the product of a deduction, for it is experience – that is, empirical discovery – that assures us of it; but there is also something here that makes us perceive that, qua experience, it is not irrational. Thus it is experience that shows us the phallus. But the suitability of the formulation that I want to point out is determined by the fact that the phallus, as experience reveals it to us, is not simply the organ of copulation, but is taken up in a perverse mechanism.

Try to catch my drift here. I am now stressing that the phallus, Φ, can function in such a way as to signify the structural point that represents a lack in the signifying system [*le défaut du signifiant*]. What does this mean? What defines as a signifier something about which I have just said that, by hypothesis, by definition, from the very outset, it is the signifier that is excluded from the signifying system [*c'est le signifiant exclu du signifiant*]? Is it that it can only enter the signifying system by artifice, contraband, and degradation, which is
311 why we never see it except as a function of imaginary φ? But then what allows us to talk about it, nevertheless, as a signifier, and to isolate Φ as such? It is what I call the perverse mechanism.

Let us schematize the phallus, which is in some sense natural, as follows. What is the phallus? The phallus, as we see it in the organic function of the penis, is not a universal organ in the animal kingdom. Insects have other ways of hooking onto each other, and without going so far afield, the relations between fishes are not phallic relations. The phallus presents itself at the human level, among others, as the sign of desire. It is also the instrument and presence of desire, but I am highlighting here its quality as a sign to ask you to dwell on something we must keep in mind – is it simply because it is a sign that it is a signifier? We would be too quickly crossing a border were we to say that it all comes down to this, for there are nevertheless other signs of desire.

We observe, phenomenologically, the easier projection of the phallus, owing to its imposing form [*sa forme prégnante*], onto the female object, for example; this is what has led me to articulate many times, in the phenomenology of perversion, the famous equivalence "girl=phallus"* in its simplest form: the erect form of the phallus. But this does not suffice, although I consider this profound choice, whose consequences we encounter everywhere, to be sufficiently motivated.

A signifier – is it simply about representing something to someone? Is that even the definition of a sign? It is, but that's not all. I added something else last time when I reminded you of the function of the signifier, which is that the signifier does not simply serve to make a sign to someone but, at the same moment of the signifying mainspring or instance, to make a sign of someone – to make the sign assimilate the someone to whom the sign designates something, such that this someone also becomes this signifier.

It is in the moment that I explicitly designate as perverse that we find the instance of the phallus. The fact that a phallus that is shown also produces an erection in the subject to whom it is shown is not, in any sense whatsoever, a condition that satisfies any sort of natural requirement.

It is here that we see what we call, in a more or less confused way, the homosexual instance. And it is not for no reason that we always situate the etiology [of homosexuality] at the level of the male sexual 312
organ [*sexe*]. It is inasmuch as the result is, in short, that the phallus as a sign of desire is manifested as an object of desire, as an object that attracts desire. In this mainspring lies its signifying function, and it is thus that it is able to operate at this level, in this zone or sector, where we must both identify it as a signifier and understand what it is thus led to designate.

What it designates is nothing that is directly signifiable. It is what is beyond all possible signification, and namely the real presence to which I wanted to draw your attention today, as we will continue to work on it in this year's Seminar.

April 26, 1961

THE OEDIPAL MYTH TODAY

A COMMENTARY ON THE COÛFONTAINE TRILOGY BY PAUL CLAUDEL

XIX

SYGNE'S NO

. . . where we are supposed to know.
Contemporary tragedy.
Twitching on the part of life.
A breach beyond faith.

I am attempting this year to resituate the fundamental question that transference poses to us in our practice by orienting your thinking toward what the analyst's position must be in order to respond to transference.

I am endeavoring in this context to point out at the most essential level what this position must be when faced with the profoundest call for being that emerges at the moment at which the patient comes to us to request our help and aid. In order to be rigorous, fitting, and impartial, and to be as open as is required by the nature of the question that is posed to us, I formulate this by asking what the analyst's desire must be.

It is certainly inadequate to be content to think that the analyst, by virtue of his experience and science, is the modern equivalent or representative – who is authorized by the strength of research, a doctrine, and a community – of some sort of right of nature, and that it is his job to designate for us anew the way toward a kind of natural harmony that can be accessed through the detours of a revised practice.

If I used Socratic practice as a springboard here this year, it was essentially in order to center your thinking around something that is given right from the outset of the establishment of psychoanalytic practice: we are questioned [by patients] as if we knew, and even as if we were in possession of a secret, but a secret that is not everyone's secret – a secret that is specific to one person and one person alone.

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1

Those who seek us out already know, as obscurely as it may be – and if they don't know it, they will quickly be oriented toward this notion by analytic practice – that the secret we are presumed to possess is more precious than everything that is not known and that will continue not to be known – in the sense that this secret will answer for the fact that what we do know is only partial.

Is this true? Or isn't it? I need not come down on one side or the other. I am simply saying that this is the way analytic practice presents itself and is approached, and that this is the way that what it introduces that is new on the horizon of the men we, along with our contemporaries, are can be defined, in a certain respect.

Each of us who tries his hand at this experience, regardless of the side from which he approaches it, whether as an analysand or analyst, fundamentally has this presupposition. It can be found at a level that is truly central, nay essential, to our conduct. And when I say "this presupposition," I can even allow it to remain marked with a smidgeon of doubt, for this experience can be broached tentatively and, indeed, it is most often broached in that way by those who seek us out.

What is this presupposition? It is the presupposition that the impasses owing to our ignorance are perhaps only determined by the fact that we are mistaken regarding what we might call the power relations of our knowledge – that, in short, we create false problems. This presupposition or hope, as I would put it, and what it brings with it by way of optimism, is favored by something that is now widely accepted: desire does not show itself openly and is not where the secular experience of philosophy, to call a spade a spade, has designated it in order to contain it and, in a certain sense, rule out its right to govern us. This is so far from being the case that desires are everywhere and even at the very heart of our efforts to master them. This is so far from being the case that even when we attempt to combat them we do little more than execute them [*y satisfaire*]. I say "execute them" and not satisfy them [*les satisfaire*], because to say "satisfy them" would be going too far – it would be to take them to be localizable and graspable. I am using the expression "execute
317 them" here like when, conversely, we say, "shirk them" [*y couper*] or "not shirk them" [*n'y pas couper*] – as in a fundamental plan to shirk them.

Well, we can't shirk them [*on n'y coupe pas*] – indeed, we can shirk them so little that it does not suffice to avoid [satisfying] our desires to not feel more or less guilty. In any case, whatever we can attest to regarding our project, what analytic practice teaches us first and

foremost is that man is marked and troubled by everything that is called a symptom – inasmuch as symptoms are what bind him to his desires.

We can define neither their limit nor their place by executing them in some way; the latter, moreover, brings no pleasure with it.

It seems that such a bitter doctrine would imply that the analyst has, at some level, the strangest of standards. Indeed, stress is placed here on a huge extension of fundamental misrecognition – not, as had been done prior to analysis, in a speculative form whereby misrecognition was thought to arise in some way with the question of knowing, but in a form which I believe I can do no better than to call, at least for the time being, as it occurs to me now, "textual." It is textual in the sense that it is a misrecognition that is woven out of one's personal construction, in the broadest sense of the term – that by making this presupposition, the analyst should have, and by many people is expected to have, if not overcome the misrecognition itself, at least overcome the mainspring of this misrecognition. He should have gone beyond the stage that I have designated for you with the words "*Che vuoi?*" ["What do you want?"] beyond which knowledge of oneself supposedly cannot go. Or at the very least, the path of what I will call one's own good – insofar as it is harmony of oneself with oneself at the level of authenticity – should be open to the analyst. At least regarding this point of individual experience, something of this nature, of this natural disposition, should be able to be grasped that is supposed to be sustained by its own naïveté.

You are, moreover, aware of the degree to which, elsewhere than in psychoanalysis, skepticism – not to say disgust – or nihilism, to use the word employed by the moralists of our times to describe it, has gripped the whole of our culture regarding what one might call "the measure of man."

There is nothing further from modern, contemporary thought than the natural idea, which was so familiar to us for so many centuries, of striving to aim at the right standard of conduct, however it was understood, and without it even seeming that the notion we 318
formed of it could be critiqued.

What we thus presume regarding the analyst should not even be limited to the field of his action, having only a local scope insofar as he practices analysis and is present *hic et nunc* [here and now], as they say, but should be attributed to him as habitual. Let us give the word "habitual" its full meaning, the one that refers more to *habitus* in the Scholastic sense of the term – to the integration of oneself, to the constancy of action and form in one's own life, and to what constitutes the ground of all virtue – than to the meaning whereby "habitual" simply points toward the notion of imprinting and passivity.

Need I critique this ideal before we rule it out? It is not that one cannot find examples of pure-hearted analysts, but is it thinkable that this ideal should be required of the analyst right from the outset? Could it in any way be filled if it were attested to? Let us say that it is not terribly common and that analysts have no such reputation. Moreover, we could easily explain why we are disappointed with such ridiculous formulations that always get away from us, whenever we try to formulate in our magisterium something that rises to the value of an ethics.

When I try to lay bare for you the crux of recent and always worthy efforts that are made to detect the ideals implicit in our doctrine, it is not for the sheer pleasure of it, believe me, that I dwell on such and such a formulation of a supposedly analytic characterology in order to expose its weaknesses, its character as a blind window or childish opposition. We see, for example, people formulating the "genital character" of the end of an analysis, assimilating our goals to the pure and simple removal of impasses that they identify with the pregenital stage, which is supposed to be sufficient to resolve all its antinomies. I ask you to weigh the consequences of such a display of analysts' inability to conceptualize the truth of our practice.

The problem of human desire is situated in an entirely different relativity. And if we must be something other than simple companions to the patient in his search, let us at least not lose sight of this standard: that the subject's desire is essentially, as I have been teaching you, desire of the Other with a capital *O*. Desire can only be situated, positioned, and thus understood within a fundamental
319 alienation that is not simply tied to conflict among men, but to our relationship with language.

Desire of the Other – this genitive is both subjective and objective. Desire in the place where the Other is [i.e., to desire as if one were the Other] in order to be in the Other's place – desire for some alterity. To fulfill the search for the objective – namely, for what this other [the patient] who seeks us out desires – we must lend ourselves here to the function of the subjective, so that in some way we may be able, for a while, to represent, not what people believe – and it would be derisive, good Lord, admit it, and so terribly simplistic too [to believe] that we could be the object aimed at by this desire – but rather the signifier. Which is both far less, but also far more.

We must occupy the empty place where a signifier is summoned that can exist only by canceling out all the others, and that is the signifier Φ whose central position and condition in analytic practice I have been trying to demonstrate for you.

Our function, power, and duty are clear and all our difficulties come down to the following: we must know how to occupy its place

inasmuch as the subject must be able to detect the missing signifier there. And thus, through an antinomy or paradox, which is that of our function, we are summoned into being – into being nothing but real presence, and precisely inasmuch as it is unconscious – in the very place where we are supposed to know.

In essence, at the horizon of what our function in analysis is, we are there as that [*ça*] – precisely that [*ça*] which shuts up, and it shuts up in that it fails to come into being [*il manque à être*]. We are, in the final analysis, in our presence, our own subject, at the point at which it [*il*] vanishes or is barred. This is why we can occupy the very place where the patient, as a subject, effaces himself and subordinates himself to all the signifiers of his own demand.

This does not occur solely at the level of regression, the signifying treasure troves of the unconscious, or the vocabulary of *Wunsch*, inasmuch as we decipher it in the course of a psychoanalysis, but, in the final analysis, at the level of fantasy. I said "in the final analysis," insofar as fantasy is the only equivalent of the drive-related discovery by which it is possible for the subject to designate the place of the answer – the S(Ⱥ) that he expects from transference – and for the S(Ⱥ) to make sense.

In fantasy, the subject grasps himself as faltering [*défaillant*] when faced with a specific object, which is the imaginary degradation of the Other at this point of faltering. In the transference, in order for 320
us to enter into the fantasy at the level of $ for the passive subject, we must truly be this $ in a certain way; we must, in the final analysis, be the one who sees little *a*, the object in fantasy; we must, in any analysis whatsoever, and even in those that are the most foreign to us, be clairvoyant in the end, being the one who can see the object of the Other's desire, regardless of how far this Other may be from himself.

It is precisely because this is the case that, throughout the course of my teaching, and in every respect in which not only practice but also tradition can serve us, you have seen me revolve around what man's desire is. Along the path that we have followed together, you see alternate the scientific definition of what man's desire is – in the broadest sense of the term "scientific," the one that has been proposed since Socrates' time – with something that is diametrically opposed to it: tragedy, inasmuch as tragedy is graspable in the monuments of human memory. Need I recall to mind here that two years ago, I led you through the earliest drama of modern man, *Hamlet*? And that last year I tried to give you a glimpse of what ancient tragedy means to us here?

I am going to turn anew to the topic of tragedy now, owing to an

encounter – that's the word for it, an accidental encounter – with one of those formulations, which is neither better nor worse than the kind we see all the time in our circle, of what fantasy is. Indeed, I came across an articulation of the function of fantasy in the latest *Bulletin de Psychologie* and I can tell you that its very mediocrity gave me quite a start. But the author will not be too angry with me, I think, for saying so, since he is the very author who expressed the wish, some time back, to train a large number of mediocre psychoanalysts.

This is clearly what gave me the renewed, I cannot say courage, a bit more is needed for that, but fury necessary to fly off on yet another tangent, whose trajectory I hope you will have the patience to follow with me.

I looked around to see if I could find something in contemporary culture to use as a springboard for what I am trying to show you, which surely must always be there, and I would say, more than ever
321 in the years since psychoanalysis came into being, it being inconceivable that its invention was simply a miracle that arose out of some kind of individual accident called Freud, the Viennese petty bourgeois.

We assuredly find in our times – we sense this everywhere – all the elements of a kind of dramatic art that must allow us to situate at its proper level the drama we deal with as regards desire. One must not confine one's attention to the kind of med-student jokes one can hear almost anywhere – the kind one finds identified with fantasy, for example, in the article I mentioned a moment ago. The fact is certainly misleading to boot, because, as we can see clearly in the text, it was not even a case of someone who had been analyzed. It is the story of an itinerant stallkeeper who, from the very day he was told that he had only twelve months to live, was supposedly freed from his fantasy, as it is called in the paper – namely, his fear of venereal disease – and who from that point on treated himself to all he could get [*s'en serait payé*], as the author puts it; we might well wonder where the author got this vocabulary from, as one has a hard time imagining that the merchant in question could have said such a thing.

Such is the level – which is never critically assessed, so that it must be more than a little suspect to us – at which the attempt to broach human desire and its obstacles is currently situated.

Is it something else that led me to decide to lead you anew through an examination of tragedy inasmuch as it impacts us?

2

I will begin by telling you which tragedy I will discuss and how it serendipitously came about that I am turning to it.

It is a modern tragedy, by which I mean that it is contemporary. This time there is not but one extant copy of it. You can't find this tragedy absolutely everywhere nevertheless. Since I intend to lead you through a trilogy by Paul Claudel, I will tell you what made me decide to do so.

It had been a long time since I had reread this trilogy, including *The Hostage*, *Crusts*, and *The Humiliation of the Father*. I was fortuitously led back to it a few weeks ago, in a way that I will mention because it is amusing, at least for the personal use that I make of my own criteria.

And because, as I told you in a pithy formulation [*formule*], the 322
great thing about formulas is that you can take them literally – in other words, as stupidly as possible – and that they must lead you somewhere. This is the operational facet of formulas and it is true of my formulas as well. Now, I don't claim to be operational only with regard to other people's formulas.

I was reading the correspondence between André Gide and Paul Claudel, which I would say, just among ourselves, doesn't pull any punches – I recommend you take a look at it. But what I am going to say has no connection with the point of the correspondence, which hardly casts Claudel in a flattering light. That won't stop me from putting him in the spotlight he deserves as one of the greatest poets who ever lived.

In this correspondence, André Gide writes as head of *La Nouvelle Revue Française* – not simply the journal, but the series of books they published prior to 1914. He and Claudel are discussing the publication of *The Hostage* – and make sure you are sitting down for this – not as concerns its content but as concerns the role and function that I have attributed to the letter. For this is clearly the efficient cause of the fact you will hear me talk for a couple of classes about a trilogy that is unlike any other.

Indeed, one of the problems discussed in two or three of the letters is that in order to print *The Hostage*, they are going to have to cast a character that does not exist, not only at the *Nouvelle Revue Française*'s print shop, but at any other print shop: capital *U* with a circumflex over it. Never at any point in the French language has anyone needed a *U* with a circumflex accent. It is Paul Claudel who, in naming his heroine Sygne de Coûfontaine – with, owing to his discretionary poetic power, an accent on the *u* – creates this minor difficulty for his typographers. Lowercase *u* is not a problem but

uppercase *U* is, and in French the names of people in a play are, in a proper edition, always written in capital letters.

At the sign of this missing signifier, I thought there must be something fishy going on and that rereading *The Hostage* would take me much further. This is what led me to re-examine a large portion of Claudel's theatrical works and, as you likely expect, my efforts were amply rewarded.

To begin with *The Hostage*, let us note that Claudel wrote this play at a time when he was a civil servant in the Office of Foreign
323 Affairs, representing France in some capacity, something like an advisor, probably something more than an attaché. His exact title isn't important – what is important is that he worked for the Republic at a time when that still had a meaning. Now Claudel writes the following to André Gide: given the overly reactionary tone of the play, it would probably be better that it not be signed Claudel.

Let us not make light of this prudence. Prudence has always been considered a moral virtue. And believe me, we would be wrong to think that, just because prudence is perhaps no longer in season, we should be contemptuous of the last people who manifested it.

The values that play a role in *The Hostage* are what I will call values based on faith. The play involves a sad story supposed to have taken place at the time of Napoleon I, the story of a lady who, let us not forget, is getting to be a bit of an old maid as she has been working on a heroic project for some ten years, the tale being set at the height of Napoleon's power.

The play concerns how the Emperor coerced the Pope, and this is naturally transformed for the needs of the play. This situates us thus a little over ten years after the time at which the trials of Sygne de Coûfontaine first began.

Just by hearing her name, you have already realized that she is part of the former aristocracy, of those who were, among other things, dispossessed of their privileges and possessions during the French Revolution. Since that time, having remained in France whereas her cousin emigrated, she patiently worked to reconstitute the former Coûfontaine estate. This is not simply the result of some kind of tenacity on her part, but is represented as part and parcel of the pact with the land which, for two of the characters in the play, as well as for the author who has them speak, is identical to the constancy and value of nobility itself.

You will see in the text the admirable terms in which this bond with the land as such is expressed, which is not simply a de facto bond but clearly a mystical bond. It is also around this bond that an entire order of allegiances is defined which is, strictly speaking,

the feudal order; it ties the bond of kinship to a local bond around which everything that defines lords, vassals, birthrights, and clients 324
revolves. I can only very briefly mention all of these themes, for they are not the true reason for our interest in the play. In any case, I think that you will find all you could desire on these topics in the text itself.

It is in the course of this enterprise [reconstituting the former Coûfontaine estate] – which is thus founded on the dramatic, poetic exaltation of certain values that is recreated before us, values that are organized around a certain form of speech [giving one's word] – that the following event occurs.

Sygne de Coûfontaine's cousin, Georges – who has been absent because he emigrated, and who has, moreover, in the course of the preceding years clandestinely shown up at her home several times – reappears accompanied by someone whose identity is not initially revealed to us. He turns out to be none other than the supreme Father, the Pope, whose entire presence in the play will be literally defined as that of the representative on Earth of the Heavenly Father. The whole plot revolves around this fugitive, because it is owing to this cousin's aid that he is in hiding there, beyond the reach of the oppressor's power.

It is at this point that a third character comes into the picture, the one named Baron Turelure, Toussaint Turelure, whose image dominates the entire trilogy.

His portrait is drawn in such a way as to incline us to hate him. As if it were not already low and nasty enough for him to come and torment such a charming woman, he pays her a visit in order to blackmail her more or less as follows: "Mademoiselle, I have desired and loved you for many a year, but now that you have this old eternal daddy at your house, I will capture him and wring his neck if you do not accept my marriage proposal."

It is not undesignedly that I describe this core of the drama with a farcical note. The old Turelure is presented to us with all the attributes not merely of cynicism but of ugliness. It is not enough for him to be mean; he is also presented to us as lame, a bit twisted, and hideous. Moreover, he is the very same man who had everyone in Sygne de Coûfontaine's family decapitated in the good old days of 1793, and quite openly, such that he must also convince the lady to overlook that. Furthermore, he is the son of a sorcerer and a woman who was Sygne de Coûfontaine's wet-nurse and thus her servant – so when she marries him she will be marrying the son of her servant and the son of a sorcerer.

We might wonder whether there isn't something here that is a bit exaggerated in order to tug at the heartstrings of a public

325 for whom these old stories have nevertheless taken on a rather different import – namely, that the French Revolution proved by its aftermath to be something that cannot be judged solely by the yardstick of the martyrdom suffered by the aristocracy. It is clear that the play as it is written cannot be viewed in this way. It is not that this public is very extensive in our country, but one cannot say either that the spectators who went to see the play – who moreover came rather late in the play's history – were all, not partisans of the Count of Paris, for as everyone knows the Count of Paris is very progressive, but people who were missing the era of the Count of Chambord. It was instead an advanced, cultured, and educated public that, watching *The Hostage*, experienced the shock, let us say, of the tragedy involved in the unfolding of events.

Our goal is to understand what this emotion means – namely, not only the fact that the public gets into it, but also that (I promise that upon reading it, you will have no doubt about this) we have here a work that has, in the tradition of the theater, all the rights and merits owed to what is most grand. How can it be that this story – which appears to be a sort of wager and is taken so far as to be caricatural – moves us?

Let us go further. Don't rest content with the idea that what is at stake here is what is always evoked in us by the suggestion of religious values.

It is precisely this point that we are now going to investigate.

3

What is the mainspring, major scene, or crux of the tragedy?

He who encourages Sygne de Coûfontaine to accept the marriage proposal is not the horrible character – and, as you shall see, he is not simply horrible but of capital importance in the entire trilogy – known as Toussaint Turelure. It is Sygne de Coûfontaine's confessor: the priest Badilon, who is a saintly figure.

Sygne de Coûfontaine – who is not included in the play like her cousin is, but in the capacity of someone who has overcome myriad obstacles in her work to maintain the estate – is there at the moment at which her cousin comes to find her, and she learns from her cousin that he has just experienced in his own life and person
326 the most bitter betrayal [p. 18/14]. Indeed, he has realized that the woman he loved had been making a fool of him for many years, he being the only one who did not know it; in effect, she was the mistress of the person who is referred to in Claudel's text as the Prince

[*Dauphin*]. There never was a French Prince who emigrated at that time, but this is of no consequence here, for the point is to show the major characters, Sygne de Coûfontaine and her cousin, being thoroughly disappointed and truly tragically isolated.

This is not the whole story, however. Some sort of measles or whooping cough then struck not only the cousin's wife, an interesting character, but also her young children, his descendants [pp. 18–19/14–15]. He thus arrives on the scene deprived by fate of everything he had, except for his constancy in supporting the royal cause. And in a dialogue that is, in short, the tragic point of departure of what is going to unfold, Sygne and her cousin commit themselves to each other before God. Nothing, whether in the present or in the future, will ever allow them to make good on this commitment. Yet they make a commitment beyond all that is possible or impossible, they promise themselves to one another. Then Badilon, the priest, comes along to require Sygne, not to do anything specific, but to consider the fact that should she refuse what the awful Turelure has proposed, she will become the key to a historical moment in which the Father of all the faithful is delivered into the hands of his enemies.

Assuredly, Badilon the saint does not, strictly speaking, impose any precise duty on her. He goes further than that. He does not even appeal to her strength, as he says and as Claudel writes, but to her weakness [pp. 99–100/60]. He shows her the abyss that would open up for her should she accept the proposal by which she would become the agent of an act of sublime deliverance. Note that everything is designed here to show us that in doing so she must renounce in herself something that goes well beyond anything agreeable, any possible pleasure, or duty. She must renounce her very being – the pact that has kept her forever faithful to her own family, since what is being proposed is that she marry the very man who exterminated her family – and renounce the sacred commitment she has just made to the man she loves, her cousin. This is something that carries her, not to the limits of her life, for we know that she is a woman who would willingly sacrifice that, as she has shown in the past, but to the sacrifice of what for her, as for every being, is worth more than life itself – not simply her reasons for living but something in which she recognizes her very being.

We thus find ourselves carried, by what I am provisionally calling 327
a contemporary tragedy, to the limits of the "second death," the death that I taught you about last year when we discussed *Antigone*, except that here the heroine is asked to go beyond those limits.

Whereas I showed you last year what tragic fate signifies; managed to get you to locate it in a topology that we called Sadean,

namely, in a locus for which those attending the Seminar coined the phrase "between two deaths"; showed that this locus is outstripped by going – not as people say in a kind of refrain – beyond good and evil, which is a fine formulation by which to obscure what is at stake, but beyond beauty, strictly speaking; indicated that the limit of this domain, the limit of the second death, is designated and also veiled by what I called the phenomenon of beauty, the one that explodes in Sophocles' text at the moment at which – Antigone having gone beyond the limit of her condemnation by Creon, which is not simply accepted but provoked – the chorus bursts into song as follows: Ἔρως ἀνίκατε μάχαν (*Eros anikate machan*), "Eros (or Love), invincible in battle" [verse 781]; here, after 20 centuries of the Christian era, it is beyond this limit that Sygne de Coûfontaine's drama brings us.

Whereas Antiquity's heroine is identical to her destiny, *Até* – to the law that to her is divine and that sustains her in her trials – for this other heroine, it is against her will (against everything that determines it, not in her life but in her being) that, through an act of freedom, she goes against everything related to her being right down to its very roots.

Life is left far behind here. For don't forget, there is something else, something that is forcefully emphasized by the playwright, which is that given what she is and her relationship of faith with things of this world, to accept to marry Turelure cannot simply amount to accepting a constraint. Even the most execrable marriage is indissoluble. But we haven't seen anything yet. Marriage involves adherence to the duty of marriage insofar as it is a duty to love.

When I say that life is left far behind here, this is proven by the play's dénouement.

Sygne has thus given in, she has become the Baroness Turelure. We come now to the day of the little Turelure's birth – we will concern ourselves with his destiny next time, for he plays a role in the climax and end of the drama. In the besieged city of Paris, the
328 Baron Turelure – who comes to occupy center stage here, being the historical figure of this huge farce of brigadiers whose faithful and unfaithful oscillations around the great disaster history teaches us about – must that very day remit the keys of the great city to King Louis XVIII under certain conditions.

The ambassador of this negotiation – as you probably expect and as befits the beauty of the drama – is no other than Sygne's cousin in person. Whatever could possibly be the most odious in the circumstances of the encounter is included here by the author. For example, among the conditions that Turelure stipulates for his pretty and profitable betrayal – this is the only way in which

what he does is presented to us – is the fact that the Coûfontaine appanage, the little that remains of it, it being a mere shadow of its former self, but nevertheless something essential which is the very name Coûfontaine, will be passed on to the descendants of this misalliance.

Things having gone this far, don't be surprised that they end with a little assassination attempt. For once the conditions have been accepted, the cousin, who has not exactly shown largesse here, decides to bump Turelure off, as they say. The latter, being endowed, naturally, with all manner of cunning and malignancy, foresees this and he too has a little revolver in his pocket. By the time the clock has struck the hour three times, the two revolvers have gone off; and, naturally, it is not the villain who we find lying on the floor. What is crucial here is that Sygne throws herself in front of the bullet that is about to hit her husband and, having spared him, dies a few minutes later.

A suicide, we might say, and that would be accurate enough since everything in her attitude shows us that she has drunk the bitter cup without having found anything in it but what it is: absolute dereliction, being abandoned and sorely tried by the divine powers, and a decision to go all the way in what at this point hardly deserves to be called a sacrifice.

In short, in the final scene, prior to the act that leads to her death, Sygne is presented to us as having a facial tic [p. 105/63], thus signaling in some sense the poet's design to show us that the endpoint that is respected even by Sade, as I indicated last year – that endpoint being beauty that is unaffected by affronts – is gone beyond here.

No doubt this twitching on the part of life [*grimace de la vie*], on the part of a live person who is suffering, is more prejudicial to the status of beauty than the wincing of death [*grimace de la mort*] and the tongue hanging out we see on Antigone's face when she has 329
hung herself and Haemon discovers her.

So what happens at the very end? Where does the poet leave us in abeyance at the end of his tragedy? There are two endings, as I'll beg you to keep in mind.

One of the endings involves the entrance of the King. It is a buffoonish entrance, where Toussaint Turelure is justly compensated for his services and where the restored order assumes the appearance of the kind of caricatural bedlam the French public all too easily buys after what history has taught us about the results of the Restoration. In short, we have here a truly derisory Epinal-type image, which moreover leaves us no doubt regarding the poet's opinion about any sort of return to what is known as the *ancien régime*.

The second ending is quite interesting. It is intimately tied to what the poet is able to leave us with through the image of Sygne de Coûfontaine. What is involved here is her death – not that her death is left out of the first ending, naturally.

Just before the King enters the picture, Badilon reappears in order to exhort Sygne; but right up until the end he is unable to obtain from her anything other than a "no," an absolute refusal of peace, an absolute refusal to abandon or offer herself up to God who will receive her soul. All of the exhortations of this saint – he, too, being torn apart by the final consequence of what he himself has been the agent of – fail before this final negation. Sygne can find nothing, by any avenue whatsoever, that can reconcile her with a fate about which I would ask you to note that it goes beyond anything one can find in ancient tragedy related to what Paul Ricoeur – who, as I discovered, was studying the same things as I was in Antigone more or less at the same time – calls the function of the evil God [*Dieu méchant*].

The evil God of ancient tragedy is still something that is connected to man through the intermediary of *Até*, this named and articulated aberration that the evil God orchestrates. He is connected to the other's *Até*, as both Antigone and Creon say in Sophocles' tragedy, even though neither of them attended my Seminar. The other's *Até* has a meaning in which Antigone's fate is inscribed.

Here we have gone beyond all meaning. Sygne's sacrifice does nothing but deride her goals. The old man who had to be saved
330 from Turelure's clutches is represented to us right up until the end of the trilogy – despite being the supreme Father of the faithful, as he is – as an impotent Father who, compared to the ideals that are on the rise, has nothing to offer his flock except the empty repetition of traditional words which no longer have any power. The so-called restored legitimacy is but a decoy, fiction, or caricature, and is in reality but a continuation of the order that subverted the old regime.

What the poet adds in the second ending is the discovery by which his wager surfaces anew, in having Sygne exhorted by Turelure using the same words as are found on her family coat of arms, the motto that for her is the signification of her life: "*Coûfontaine adsum*, Coûfontaine, I am present."

Standing before his dying wife, who is incapable of speaking or is refusing to speak, he tries to at least obtain from her a sign – any sign whatsoever, were it only consent to have her child brought before her – of recognition of the fact that her action was designed to protect him, Turelure. To all of this the martyr merely replies, right up until her last dying breath, with a no.

What does it mean that the poet brings us to this extreme failure

[*défaut*], to this extreme derision of the signifier itself? What does it mean that such a thing is presented to us? It seems to me that I have already guided you sufficiently through the different stages of what I will call this outrageous fortune [*énormité*] for this to be clear to you.

You will say that we are tough cookies, that we've been around the block often enough that nothing impresses us any more – and yet! I realize that the poetry of Claudel has something in common with that of the surrealists. What we cannot doubt, in any case, is that Claudel at least imagined that he knew what he was writing. And whatever the case may be, it is written. Someone was able to imagine such a thing.

We spectators realize that if the point were merely to show us in an imaginative way a theme that has been drummed into us regarding the emotional conflicts of the nineteenth century, it would have no effect on us. We are well aware that this is not the point, that this is not what affects us, holds our attention, keeps us in suspense, hooks us, and propels us from *The Hostage* toward the final sequence of the trilogy. There is something else in this image for which we have no words. You recall Aristotle's terms that I quoted last year: δι ἐλέ ου κατ φόβου τεραίνουσα, in other words, not "by terror and by pity," but "all terror and pity having been gone beyond." What is presented to us here takes us yet further. It is the 331
image of a desire next to which only the reference to Sade still seems to be worth anything.

Doesn't it seem to you that the substitution of a woman's image for the sign of the Christian cross is not simply designated here but expressly situated in the text? The image of the crucifix lies at the horizon right from the beginning of the play, and we find it anew in the following play. But aren't you also struck by the following: the coincidence between this theme, insofar as it is truly erotic, with what is here – and without there being another thread or landmark that would allow us to transfix the entire plot or scenario – which is the theme of outstripping or creating a breach beyond all values based on faith?

Isn't this play – which is apparently by a believer, and from which believers, including the most eminent among them, Georges Bernanos [1888–1948] himself, turn away as from blasphemy – for us the index of a new meaning given to human tragedy?

This is what I will try to show you next time using the other two parts of the trilogy.

May 3, 1961

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XX

TURELURE'S ABJECTION

The father's (hi)story.
The father duped at dice.
How Freud operated.
The object of desire is its instrument.
Three generations suffice.

Please excuse me if, in this venue, which is open to one and all, I ask those united in shared friendship for Maurice Merleau-Ponty to cast their thoughts back for a moment on this man who was their friend and my friend. He was taken from us in a flash last Wednesday, the evening after our last class, and we learned of his death a few hours later. For me it was a direct blow to the heart.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty followed his own path and conducted his own research, which was not the same as mine. We began from different places, we had different aims, and I would even say that it was based on our different aims that we both ended up teaching. He had always wanted to teach, whereas I can say that it is quite in spite of myself that I occupy this podium.

I can also say that we did not have the time, owing to this untimely fatality, to find more connections between our work. He would have been sympathetic to what I teach you. And, believe me, this past week the profound mourning that I have experienced owing to his disappearance has made me wonder about the level at which I can occupy this position and in such a way that I can call myself into question in my own eyes. At least it seems to me that from him – from his responses, attitude, and amicable comments every time he joined us here – I received aid and confirmation that we shared a common idea of teaching, an idea that steers clear of all infatuation with principles and all pedantry as well.

334 You will thus excuse me if today, whereas I expected to arrive at the end of our present detour, the reasons for which I explained

to you last week, I am unable to take things any further than I will manage to. Be so kind as to pardon me for not having been able to devote the time to preparing that I usually do.

1

When we finished last week, we were discussing the end of *The Hostage* and the image it presents of Sygne de Coûfontaine who says no. This no is the very place to which a tragedy, that I will provisionally call Christian, pushes its heroine. It is worth dwelling on each of these terms.

I have spoken with you often enough about tragedy for you to know that according to Hegel in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Christian tragedy is related to reconciliation – *Versöhnung*. It is related to the kind of redemption that, in his view, resolves the fundamental impasse of Greek tragedy, and consequently does not allow it to establish itself at its own level, but instates at most the level of what we might call a divine comedy, comedy in which, in the final analysis, the strings are all held by He in whom all bonds – even those beyond our ken – are reconciled.

Our experience [of theater] undoubtedly runs counter to this noetic understanding where Hegel's perspective founders owing to a certain bias; for a human voice, that of Kierkegaard, emerged afterward and it contradicted Hegel. And Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, to which we devoted quite a lot of time two years ago [in Seminar VI], is there to show us something else, to show us that another dimension subsists, meaning that we cannot say that the Christian era puts an end to the dimension of tragedy.

Is *Hamlet* a tragedy? It surely is, and I believe I demonstrated this to you. Is it a Christian tragedy? This is where Hegel's investigation intersects ours, for in truth, we don't find the slightest trace of reconciliation in *Hamlet*. Despite the presence at the horizon of Christian dogma, there is no resorting at any point in *Hamlet* to the mediation of some sort of redemption. In *Hamlet*, the sacrifice of the 335
son remains purely tragic.

Nevertheless, we absolutely cannot eliminate something that is also quite present in this strange tragedy and that inscribes what, a few moments ago, I called the dimension of dogma or of Christian faith: the ghost* – he who, beyond death, reveals to the son that he was killed, how he was killed, and by whom he was killed – is a father who has been damned.

I just referred to this tragedy, whose resources I assuredly was unable to exhaust in my commentary on it, as "strange." I would

repeat the word "strange" when considering a supplemental contradiction that we did not dwell upon, which is that it is never doubted whether the father attests to the flames of hell and eternal damnation. Nevertheless, it is as a skeptic, as a student of Montaigne, as someone once put it, that Hamlet wonders, "To be, or not to be . . . To sleep: perchance to dream." Does the afterlife deliver us from this accursed life, from the ocean of humiliation and servitude that life is?

Thus we cannot avoid tracing out the scale that is established on the basis of the gamut which, running from ancient tragedy to Claudel's drama, could be formulated as follows.

In the case of Oedipus, the father is killed without the hero even knowing it. He did not know, not only that it was by his hand that his father was dead, but even that he was dead. The plot of the tragedy nevertheless implies that he is already dead.

In *Hamlet*, the father is damned. What can that mean beyond the fantasy of eternal damnation? Isn't this damnation tied to the emergence of the fact that in *Hamlet* the father begins to know? He assuredly does not know everything about the plot against him, but he knows more than we might think. He knows in any case who killed him and how he was killed. I left unsolved in my commentary on the play the mystery that is left unsolved by the playwright – the mystery of what is signified by the orchard* where death came to him in "the blossoms of [his] sin," as it says in the text [Act I, Scene 5] – and the further enigma that it is through the ear that the poison is administered. What enters through the ear if not speech? And behind this speech, what is the mystery of lust?

Doesn't some hubris – which is found in the form the ideal of the father takes in Hamlet's eyes – correspond here to the strange iniquity of his mother's jouissance? Nothing is said about this father
336 except that he embodied what we might call the ideal of the knight in courtly love. This man would strew flowers on the ground beneath his queen's feet. This man would wipe from her face, as the text tells us, the slightest gust of wind [Act I, Scene 2]. Such is the strange dimension in which his father's eminent dignity and the ever boiling source of his heart's indignation remains, and for Hamlet alone. This father is nowhere mentioned as a king nor is his authority ever debated, I would say. The father here is a sort of ideal for men and this, too, deserves to remain a question for us, for at each of these stages we can only hope the truth will appear in a subsequent revelation.

In light of what seems natural to us as analysts – namely, to project through history something like a question regarding the father that is repeated from age to age – you should thus pause to

observe to what degree the crux of the father's function was never investigated before psychoanalysis came on the scene.

The very figure of Antiquity's father, inasmuch as we have called upon it in our imagery, is that of a king. Throughout the Biblical texts, the figure of the divine father raises a question that underpins a whole line of research. Starting when did the God of the Jews become a father? Starting when in history? Starting when in the prophetic tradition? All of these things entail thematic, historic, and exegetical questions that are so profound that to merely mention them in this fashion is still not even to properly raise them. It is simply to comment that at some point the topic of the father – Freud's question, "What is a father?" – must have shrunk considerably for it to have taken on the obscure knot-like form, which is not simply mortal but murderous, in which it has become fixed for us in the form of the Oedipus complex.

God as creator, God as Providence – this is not what concerns us in the question of the father, even if all of these resonances form its backdrop. And it is possible that this backdrop will be retroactively clarified owing to the fact that we have articulated this question. Hence, whatever our tastes and preferences may be, and whatever Claudel's work might represent for each of us, isn't it opportune and indeed necessary for us to wonder what the thematics of the father can be in a tragedy – especially when it is a tragedy that appeared at 337
a point in time at which, owing to Freud, the question of the father had profoundly changed?

Thus I cannot believe that the fact that Claudel's tragedy is all about the father is an accident. The last part of his trilogy, which completes the series, is called *The Humiliation of the Father* [*Le Père humilié*]. Before, we had the father who has already been killed [Oedipus] and the father who was damned when he died [*Hamlet*]; now we have the humiliated father. What does this mean? What does Claudel mean by the term "humiliated father"? And first of all, in Claudel's thematics, where is this humiliated father? Where is the humiliated father – as they say in certain mystery postcards, "Where is the thief?" or "Where is the police officer?"

Who is the humiliated father? Is it the Pope? Although he is always called Pius [*Pie*], there are nevertheless two of them in the course of the trilogy. The first is a fugitive, but still less than a fugitive in that he is kidnapped, to the point that – and the ambiguity always relates to the wording of the titles – we can wonder if he is not in fact the Hostage. The other Pope, the Pius who appears at the end, in the third play, is the one who confesses in a highly touching scene that is clearly designed to exploit all the thematics of a certain characteristically Christian and Catholic feeling – that of "a

servant unto servants" [p. 361/186], he who makes himself into the smallest of the small. I will read you the scene in *The Humiliation of the Father* where the Pope confesses to a little monk who is himself but someone who tends geese or pigs, it doesn't matter which, and who naturally carries within himself the ministry of the most profound and the simplest wisdom.

Let us not dwell too long upon these all-too-beautiful images, where it seems that Claudel is instead sacrificing to what is taken much further in a whole form of English dandyism, starting some 200 years ago, in which Catholics and Catholicism are the very height of distinction.

The problem lies elsewhere. I do not believe that the humiliated father is the Pope. There are many other father-like figures around. All three plays revolve around nothing but that. Moreover, the father that we see the most often – the father whose stature verges on a kind of obscenity, the father whose stature is strictly speaking impudent, the father in whom we cannot fail to note certain echoes of the ape-like form in which Freud's myth [of the primal horde] makes him appear at the horizon – is clearly Toussaint Turelure. His
338 drama and death by murder not only constitute the pivotal point but, strictly speaking, the object of the trilogy's central play, *Crusts*.

Isn't the humiliation of the father shown to us through him? He is not simply impulsive or devalued; he takes on the form of the most extreme derision, a derision that even verges on the abject. Is this what we can expect from an author who professes to be Catholic and to revive and reincarnate traditional values before our very eyes? Isn't it strange that people didn't find this play scandalous, this play which – when it came out all by itself three or four years after *The Hostage* – endeavors to captivate and hold our attention with an episode in which a kind of sordidness, with Balzacian echoes, only recovers through a paroxysm, by going beyond all limits there too.

I don't know if I should ask for a show of hands from those who have not read *Crusts* since our last class. I suspect that it is not enough for me to put you on the scent for all of you to run headlong after it. I believe that I must thus briefly summarize what the play is about.

2

Crusts opens with a dialogue between two women.

Over 20 years have surely passed since Sygne de Coûfontaine's death, she having died the day the son she gave Toussaint Turelure

was baptized. Turelure, who wasn't terribly sprightly even at that time, has become a rather sinister old man. We don't see him, for he is hidden in the wings, but what we see are two women, one of whom is his mistress, Sichel, and the other of whom is his son's mistress, Lumîr. The latter has just returned from Algeria – a country that has taken on a certain importance since the time at which the play came out – where she left Louis de Coûfontaine. The son's name is naturally Louis, he having been named in honor of the King whose throne was restored to him.

I must seize the opportunity to slip in here an amusing little observation that I don't know if anyone here has already made. The name Louis comes from Ludovicus, Ludovic, Lodovic, and Clodovic that we find among the Merovingians, and is nothing other than Clovis with the C removed. That's easier to see when it's written. This makes Clovis the first Louis. And we might wonder if everything wouldn't have been different if Louis XIV had known that he was 339
actually Louis XV. Perhaps the style of his reign would have been different and so on indefinitely. Well, that was just an aside designed to provide a little comic relief.

While Louis de Coûfontaine is still on Algerian soil, at least people think he is, a woman shows up at Toussaint's house to demand what she rightfully has coming to her. This episode so overjoyed the two authors of a book of famous pastiches that they used the scene involving the old Toussaint as the theme of their imitation "in the style of Claudel." In their pastiche, they concocted for generations to come the famous reply, worthy of Claudel and truer than life, that is imputed to the parodic character when someone demands that he return a sum of which he has despoiled an unfortunate woman: "A penny saved is a penny earned."

The pennies in question are not the savings of the girl [Lumîr] who comes to demand that Toussaint Turelure repay them; they are no less than the fruit of the sacrifices made by Polish émigrés. A total of 10,000 francs, or even more, that was lent by the young woman – whose suitable role and function you will see further on – is what she demands. She asks the old Toussaint for them, even though it was not to him that she gave or lent this sum, but to his son. His son is now insolvent and cannot pay either these 10,000 francs or the other 10,000 francs he owes [p. 181/99]. Her goal is to obtain from the father a total of 20,000 francs dating back to the middle of the nineteenth century – in other words, at a time when a franc was a franc, believe you me, and it wasn't earned in a flash.

This young woman [Lumîr] meets another by the name of Sichel. Sichel is Toussaint's official mistress, and she can be rather prickly.

Some brashness comes with the job, and the woman who occupies it lives up to her role.

In short, these two women very quickly agree to try to figure out how to bump the old man off [*avoir la peau du vieux*]. Had they not wanted to get something else from him before they bumped him off, it seems that things would have been resolved still more quickly. Briefly stated, their approach absolutely does not involve tenderness or the highest form of idealism. These two women can truly be
340 qualified as ideal, each in her own way, as you will see, since I will come back to this. For we spectators, they manage to embody odd forms of seduction.

I must point out to you all the calculations, and even extreme calculations, that are made by these two women when faced with Turelure's avarice. Note that his avarice is equaled only by his dissipation, which is itself outstripped only by his utter and complete unscrupulousness, as Sichel herself says verbatim [p. 163/90]. The Polish character Lumîr – whose name Claudel explicitly tells us should be pronounced Loum-yir [p. 161/88] – is ready to go all the way to reclaim what she considers to be a possession, a sacred legacy for which she is responsible. She has given this legacy away, but absolutely must restore it now to those for whom she feels fealty and a unique allegiance. The latter are all the émigrés, all the martyrs, and even all those who died for the cause that stirs most the passions and is the most energizing: the cause of Poland divided, of Poland split up. The young woman is determined to go as far as one can go, even if she has to offer herself up and yield to what she knows to be the old man's desire.

She knows in advance what to expect from him. She is sure that from the moment a woman is his son's mistress, she is in no way for him a prohibited object – far from it! We find here anew a feature that has only surfaced quite recently in what I might call the ordinary thematics of certain functions of the father.

Her partner in the dialogue, Sichel, as I mentioned earlier, is a smart cookie and is fully aware of the situation. Here too we find something new – by which I mean something that, compared to the odd game we call the Oedipus complex, is added by Claudel. Note carefully that Sichel is not the mother [of Louis, Toussaint Turelure's son]. The mother is dead and thus out of the picture. Claudel's play is thus arranged in a way that is undoubtedly designed to bring out elements that will get us interested in this plot, topology, or fundamental dramatic action, inasmuch as something common to one and the same era connects it from one creator to another, from a reflective thinker [Freud] to a creative one [Claudel].

Sichel is not Louis' mother. She is not even the father's wife. She is

the object of the father's tyrannical, ambiguous desire. Sichel clearly points out that if there is something that attaches the father to her, it is a desire that is quite close to the desire to destroy her, since he 341
has also made her into his slave. And he is quite capable of speaking of his attachment to her as having arisen from the charming way she plays the piano and from her pinky as it is about to perfectly strike a note on the keyboard. Now, from the day she first began keeping the old man's accounts, she has never been able to open the piano [p. 179/98, but also p. 175/96].

Sichel thus has an idea. We see it come to fruition in the guise of Louis de Coûfontaine's sudden arrival at the point at which the plot thickens. For his arrival gives rise in his old father to a veritable gut-wrenching episode, a true fit of abject fear. "He's a comin' here?" the father suddenly cries [p. 181/98], dropping the fine way of speaking he had been adopting just a minute before to describe to the young woman I just mentioned [Lumîr] his poetic feelings for Sichel. "He's a comin' here?"

Indeed he is, and he is coming owing to a scheme developing in the wings, having received a letter from Sichel containing a warning. He comes to center stage, and the play culminates in a sort of singular game with four players [*partie carrée*], one might say, were it not that a fifth person enters into it: Sichel's father, the old Ali Habenichts, whose name is a play on *haben nichts*, meaning he who has nothing. He is an old loan shark and a sort of a doppelgänger of Toussaint Turelure. Turelure uses him as he orchestrates a complicated operation which consists of taking back the possessions of the Coûfontaines piece by piece from his own son, his son having had the objectionable idea to demand them from him as his inheritance as soon as he became an adult, plenty of legal papers in hand [p. 233/121].

You see how all of this comes together. It was no accident that I mentioned the Balzacian themes here. The circulation, metabolism, and conflict at the level of money is doubled by rivalry in the affective realm. The father sees in his son exactly what Freud brought to our attention: someone just like himself, a repetition of himself, a figure born of himself in whom he can see nothing but a rival. And when his son tenderly attempts to tell him at a certain moment, "Am I not a true Turelure?" the father roughly replies, "No doubt you are, but there's already one Turelure, and that's enough. As far as Turelures go, I fill the bill just fine all by myself" [p. 234/122]. This is another element in which we can recognize what Freud's discovery introduced.

But that's not all. We come next to what culminates after a dialogue in which Louis de Coûfontaine's mistress Lumîr had to

342 whip Louis into a frenzy with a slew of insults targeting his vanity [*amour-propre*] and narcissistic virility, as we say: she reveals to Louis that his father propositioned her – the very father who, through his plotting, wishes to force Louis into bankruptcy, into the corner of which he finds himself backed when the play begins; the very father who wishes to take not only Louis' land from him, planning to buy it back on the cheap thanks to his loan-shark intermediaries, but his woman as well [pp. 226–7/118–19]. In short, Lumîr arms Louis against his father, literally putting guns in his hands. And we witness onstage a murder that is very well prepared for at a woman's instigation. She is not simply a temptress here, but the person who plots and creates the entire artifice of the crime around which Louis himself accedes to the father function.

It turns out that both women collaborated in the murder we see take place onstage, the killing of the father on "the other stage" [*anderer Schauplatz*, "the other scene"]. As Lumîr says somewhere, "Sichel is the one who gave me the idea" [p. 230/120]. And indeed, it was during their first discussion that Sichel planted the seed in Lumîr's imagination – namely, that the old man who desires her, this character that Claudel depicts to us, is a scorned father who has, as it were, been duped [*joué*]. The duped father is certainly the fundamental theme of classical comedy, but here we must understand the word *joué* in a way that goes still further than decoy and derision. He is duped [*joué*], so to speak, at dice and he is duped because he is, in the final analysis, a passive element in the game; this is expressly mentioned at the end of the dialogue between the two women.

After having opened up and revealed all of their thoughts to each other, one says to the other, "Play [*jouez*] your game and I'll play mine – I have my trump cards too – both of us playing against the dead man [*le mort*]" [p. 176/96]. Toussaint Turelure makes his entrance at this exact moment and cries, "Hey, who is talking about death [*mort*]?" One of the women replies, "We were discussing the rules of whist and the game last night: the weaknesses and strengths of the dummy [*le mort*]" [p. 177/96]. At that, the old man, suspecting nothing, replies by making a few jokes about what he was left with in that game – namely, the high cards, naturally. Here we have true French elegance, something that is constantly alluded to in the play. "He is a Frenchman to the core!" Sichel says to Lumîr. "And you can
343 get anything you want from him, for he loves women. Oh! He is a true Frenchman! Anything except money." Money – yuck! [p. 171/94].

Isn't it striking that here again we stumble upon the image of a game with four players – whist in this case – which I have often mentioned in a different sense to designate the structure of the analytic situation?

Before the tragic scene occurs, the father is already dead, or almost. All you have to do is blow on him, and he'll keel over. And, indeed, this is what we are going to see. We find next a dialogue wherein the simultaneous presence of tragic and buffoonish dimensions would make it worth our while to read it together. It is, in fact, a scene that deserves, in the world's literature, to be highlighted as ultimately rather unique in kind, and its various twists and turns would also be worth dwelling on if our sole goal here were to provide a literary analysis. Unfortunately, I must push on a bit more quickly than I would if I were going to get you to savor all the different twists here.

Be that as it may, it is quite nice to see that one of these twists involves the son imploring the father to give him the 20,000 francs which he knows full well – and for good reason, since Louis and Sichel plotted the whole business long before – he has in his pocket, making a serious bulge [p. 239/125]. He implores his father to give them to him in order to allow him, not only to meet his commitments, not only to pay back a sacred debt, not only to avoid losing the little he, the son, possesses, but also so as not to be reduced to being no more than a serf on the very land to which he has devoted all his passion [p. 238/124]. For it is on this land near Algiers that Louis de Coûfontaine went to seek the re-jection [*rejet*] – in the sense of something that has sprung up anew and that spurts out, in the sense of an offshoot – the re-jection of his being, of his solitude, of this dereliction he has always felt, knowing that his mother did not want him and that his father, as he says, never watched him grow up with anything other than worried concern [p. 222/116].

What is involved here is a passion for the soil and the return to what he feels he was chased away from – namely, all recourse to nature. And, in truth, we have here a theme that would be well worth considering in the historical genesis of what we call colonialism, which is the theme of émigrés who did not simply invade colonized countries but who broke new ground. This resource given to all the lost children of Christian culture would certainly be worth isolating as an ethical mainspring that we would be wrong to neglect 344
at the present moment where we are weighing its consequences.

It is thus at the moment at which Louis finds himself at the height of this trial of strength between his father and himself that he pulls out the pistols that were put in his hands by Lumîr.

There are two pistols. Let us consider this for a moment. It is, strictly speaking, a theatrical artifice, trick, or nicety. He has been armed with two pistols – two pistols which, I'll tell you right away, will not go off even though they are both loaded.

This is the exact opposite of what happens in a famous passage

of the *Sapeur Camember* in which the soldier Pidou is given a letter from the general.

> "Look," Pidou says, "this letter ain't loaded. It's not that the general doesn't have the means necessary, but it ain't loaded. Well that won't stop it from going off all the same."

Here it is the exact opposite. Even though Lumîr has loaded them both, the pistols misfire [p. 247/128]. But that doesn't stop the father from dying. The poor guy dies of fright, and this is precisely what people had been expecting all along, since this is explicitly why Lumîr had given Louis one of the pistols, the little one, telling him,

> "This one is loaded, but with a blank; it will simply make noise and it is possible that that will be enough to make him croak. If it isn't, then you will use the big gun – that one has a bullet in it." [p. 230/120]

Louis got his education in a place where land was being cleared, but where one did not acquire the land – this is clearly indicated in the text – without rather roughly dispossessing other people [p. 216/113]. There is certainly no need to fear that the hand that will pull the trigger of the second gun will tremble any more than it will for the first. As Louis says later, he doesn't like pussyfooting around [p. 250/129]. It is not with a smile on my face that I'll go that far, "but as long as I'm there," he says, I might as well use both pistols at the same time.

Now as I said, whether loaded or not, neither of them goes off. There is nothing but noise, and yet this noise does the trick. As is very prettily described in the stage direction, the old man stops dead in his tracks, his eyes popping out and his jaw slack [p. 247/128]. We spoke last time about the twitching of life [*grimace de la vie*]; here the
345 wincing of death [*grimace de la mort*] is anything but elegant. And there you have it: the job is done.

As I told you, and as you see, all the niceties regarding the father's imaginary dimension are very well articulated here. Even when it comes to efficacy, the imaginary can suffice. This is demonstrated to us through an image. But in order for things to be still more lovely, Lumîr returns to the stage at that very moment.

Louis is not absolutely calm, naturally. He hasn't the slightest doubt that he has committed parricide, because, first of all, he clearly wanted to kill his father, and because he in fact succeeded in doing so. The terms and style of the concluding dialogue here are worth dwelling on and I will ask you to have a look at them. You

will savor them in all their coarseness. I have noted that certain people, and not the least attuned or worthy, find *Crusts* and *The Hostage* to be rather boring plays. I admit that I do not find all the twists and turns of the plot boring in the least. They are rather dark. What is unsettling to us is that this darkness is operative exactly at the same time as a sort of comedy whose quality may appear to be a bit too acerbic. Nevertheless, these are not its least merits.

The question, all the same, is where is this designed to lead us? What fascinates us in all this? I am quite sure that, in the final analysis, this demolition of the farcical father, who is massacred in this buffoonish way, arouses in us feelings that are not terribly well localized or localizable.

What is quite pretty, nevertheless, is to see how this scene ends, namely, with Louis saying, "Stop." Once the deed has been done, while the girl is slipping the wallet out of the father's pocket, Louis says, "Hold on a minute. Let me check something." He empties the little pistol, rifles through the stuff that was used at the time to load weapons, and sees that the small pistol was also loaded. He comments on this to the captivating woman who loaded his gun. She looks at him and gives no other reply than a gentle laugh [p. 250/129].

Doesn't this pose a problem for us? What does the poet mean by this? We will assuredly come to know this in the third act when Lumîr's true colors are shown. But up until this point we have been 346
shown nothing dark or fanatical in her. We will see what the nature of her desire is. The fact that, for her – a woman who considers herself most certainly doomed to the supreme sacrifice – this desire may go as far as being hanged, and the rest of the story confirms her conviction, does not exclude the fact that her passion for her lover, he who, to her, is truly her lover, Louis de Coûfontaine, may go so far as to wish for him a tragic end, for example, the gallows [p. 263/136].

The theme of love bound to death and, strictly speaking, of the lover who is sacrificed, is literarily shed light on for us by what we find in *The Red and the Black* [by Stendhal], at the horizon of the story of the two La Moles: the La Mole who was decapitated and whose head was supposedly received by a woman, and Julien Sorel whose bodily remains are accompanied by a certain Mademoiselle de la Mole – this one is imaginary – who kisses his decapitated head. We must keep in mind the extreme nature of Lumîr's desire. She summons Louis to follow her in the pathway of this desire, of this love that aims at nothing but consuming itself in an extreme instant. But Louis – who has committed parricide and received his inheritance by doing so, and has nevertheless entered into another

dimension than the one he knew hitherto – now turns into another Turelure, another sinister character whose caricature Claudel does not fail to draw for us in what follows.

Note carefully that Louis becomes an ambassador – we would be wrong to think that all these flourishes are included by Claudel without our being able to consider him to be ambivalent in some way deep within himself – and thus refuses to follow Lumîr. And it is because he does not follow her that he marries his father's mistress, Sichel.

I will skip the end of the play – namely, how it comes about that this sort of new start or metamorphosis leads him not only to empty out the pockets of the dead man and even slip on the dead man's boots, but also to get into bed with the same woman as him. We are faced here with gloomy stories of IOUs, all kinds of shady dealings, and an insurance policy that the ever clever father had taken out before his death to ensure that those who might get involved with him, especially Lumîr, would have very little pecuniary interest in wishing him dead [pp. 205–8/109–10]. He arranged things in such a way that his possessions were listed in the account books of his obscure associate, Ali Habenichts, as appearing to be owed to
347 Habenichts. It is insofar as Sichel hands this IOU over to Louis that she acquires a truly abnegating status in his eyes [p. 275/142]. He "abnegates," as Paul Valéry put it, his title by marrying her, and this is where the play ends – Louis de Coûfontaine gets engaged to Sichel Habenichts, the daughter of his father's partner in usury.

After such an ending, we can wonder still more about what the poet means, especially what he himself thinks about all this, having created what one might well call, strictly speaking, now that I have recounted it to you as I have recounted it, "this strange comedy." Just as there is, at the beginning of the trilogy, a tragedy that stares us straight in the face, that goes beyond every possibility or requirement imposed upon the heroine, in the place occupied by her image at the end, there can be nothing, at the end of the second play – that is, at the heart of Claudel's trilogy – but the total obscurity of a radical derision.

This goes as far as something, certain echoes of which can strike us as rather antipathetic, inasmuch, for example, as the position of the Jews is brought in here, without us really knowing why. For emphasis is placed here on Sichel's sentiments. She tells us what her position in life is. We must look, without any further reluctance, into this element of Claudel's thematics; moreover, I don't believe that anyone has ever imputed to Claudel sentiments that we could qualify, in any way whatsoever, as suspect. I mean that the grandeur, which is more than respected and exalted by him, of the

ancient Law never ceases in his dramatic work to inhabit even the least important characters who can be associated with it. And for him, all Jews are essentially associated with it, even if they turn out to reject that Law, saying that they aspire to put an end to it. What Jews pursue is the sharing by all of the only thing that is real, which is jouissance.

Indeed, this is truly Sichel's way of putting things, and this is how she is presented to us prior to the murder. And she is presented even more in this way afterward, when she offers to Louis the love that it turns out she has always had for him.

Doesn't this strange arrangement pose yet another problem for us? I can see that, having allowed myself to tell you the central story of *Crusts*, and I truly had to, I can hardly do any more today than 348
propose the following. Doesn't it seem to you that to see this play – which will perhaps be performed again, which has sometimes been performed, and which we can't say is badly constructed or that it does not make us feel a certain fondness for it – to see this play end after this strange event, confronts us with a figure (like when we say, in French, "a ballet figure") or cipher that is essentially presented to us in a form that is truly unheralded owing to its very opacity? We have here a scenario that solicits our interest solely at the level of the most total enigma.

We don't in any way have time to even begin to approach what would allow us to solve the enigma. But keep in mind that if I mention it to you – or if I simply remark that it is impossible not to make something of such a construction that appeared in, I won't say the century, but in the decade in which the Oedipus complex was brought to light – I have my reasons for doing so.

Understand why I am bringing it in here and what – along with the solution that I think I can provide to this enigma – justifies that I am bringing it to your attention at such length and in such detail.

3

The father.

At the beginning of psychoanalytic thought was the father, and in a form whose scandalous traits comedy is well designed to help us bring out. Psychoanalysis had to articulate a drama at the origin of the law; it should suffice for you to see it presented on the contemporary stage to gauge not simply its criminal character but the possibility of its caricatural or even abject decomposition, as I said earlier. If this is so, the problem is one of knowing how that was necessitated by our objective, which is certainly the only thing that

justifies us in our research. What made it necessary to bring out this image at the horizon of humanity, if it wasn't that it is part and parcel of the highlighting and implementing of the dimension of desire?

In other words, I am designating something that we tend to push ever further back from our horizon, and even paradoxically negate more and more in our practice as analysts: namely, the place of the father. Why? Quite simply because it disappears to the degree to
349 which we forget the meaning and direction of desire, to the degree to which our actions with those who seek us out tend to put this desire on some sort of gentle leash, to slip it some kind of soporific, and to make use of some form of suggestion that reduces desire to need. And this is why we have begun to see the mother ever more at the root of this Other that we evoke in our patients.

There is, unfortunately, something that resists this tendency, which is that we call this mother "castrating." Why? In what way is she castrating?

We know the answer thanks to analytic practice – it is truly the thread that keeps us in touch with this dimension, a dimension that must not be lost – and it is the following: from our standpoint, from our specialized point of view, the mother is all the more castrating insofar as she is not busy castrating the father.

Consider your clinical experience. Mothers who are busy castrating the father exist, but we would not bother talking about the castrating mother if there was no father, whether we see him or not, or whether there was no father to castrate. We wouldn't bother talking about her if the maintenance of the dimension of the father, drama of the father, or function of the father – around which revolves, as you see, what concerns us for the moment regarding our position in the transference – weren't at least possible, whether it be neglected or absent.

We are also well aware that we cannot operate as analysts the way Freud did either, Freud having adopted the position of the father. This is what stupefies us in his way of intervening. And this is why we no longer know where to situate ourselves – because we have not learned to rearticulate on that basis what our position must be. The result is that we spend our time telling our patients, "You take me to be a bad mother," but that is not the position we must adopt either.

The path to which I am trying to redirect you, with the assistance of Claudel's plays, involves re-situating castration at the heart of the problem. For castration is identical to what I will call the constitution of the desiring subject as such – not the constitution of the subject of need or of the frustrated subject, but of the subject of
350 desire. As I have sufficiently emphasized in this ongoing Seminar,

castration is identical to the phenomenon that is such that the object that desire lacks – since desire is [based on] lack – is in our experience identical to the very instrument of desire: the phallus.

The object that desire lacks – whatever it may be, and even at a level other than the genital level – must, in order to be characterized as an object of desire, and not the object of one or another of our frustrated needs, come to occupy the same symbolic place that is occupied by the very instrument of desire, the phallus – in other words, this instrument insofar as it is raised to the function of a signifier.

Next time I will show you that Claudel articulated this, whatever his reservations about it might have been, and even if the poet absolutely did not suspect how his creation could someday come to be formulated. This merely makes it all the more convincing, just as it is altogether convincing to see Freud already enunciate the laws of metaphor and metonymy in *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

Why is this instrument raised to a signifying function? Precisely in order to occupy the place I just spoke about, which is symbolic. What is this place? It is the neutral position [*point mort*] occupied by the father insofar as he is already dead [*mort*]. I mean that solely by virtue of the fact that the father is the one who articulates the law, the voice behind it can but falter. Either he is inadequately present or else, as a presence, he is only too present. [This neutral position] is the point at which everything that is enunciated passes anew through zero, between yes and no. I am not the one who invented the radical ambivalence between good and bad, love and hate, or complicity and alienation. In short, he who props up the law must die before the law can be instated as law.

It is not enough to simply say that desire as a phenomenon is produced at this level. We must also locate the radical gap, which is why I strive to come up with topological schemas for you that allow us to do so. In effect, this gap develops over time, and perfected desire is not simply this point, but rather what one might call a set in the subject whose topology I not only try to illustrate for you in a para-spatial sense, but whose various stages [*temps*] I endeavor to indicate. The explosion at the end of which desire's configuration 351
is realized can be broken down into three stages, and you can see this marked in different generations. This is why there is no need, in order to situate the composition of desire in a subject, to go all the way back, in a perpetual recurrence, to Adam, the father. Three generations are enough.

In the first generation we find the mark of the signifier. This is what is illustrated, in an extreme and tragic manner, in Claudel's composition by the image of Sygne de Coûfontaine, who is carried

to the very destruction of her being, because she is totally ripped away from all her attachments based on speech and faith.

We come now to the second stage. Even at a poetic level, poetry is not the endpoint. Even among the characters created by Claudel's imagination, this leads to the appearance of a child. People who speak and are marked by speech engender. Something slips into the interval which is at first *infans* [someone who does not speak], and this is Louis de Coûfontaine. In the second generation, we find an object that is totally rejected, an object that is not desired, an object inasmuch as it is undesired.

In this poetic creation, how is what will result therefrom in the third generation – in other words, in the only true generation – configured before our eyes? It is at the level of all the others, naturally, but I mean that the others are artificial decompositions of it – they are the antecedents of the only one that is of concern.

Between the mark of the signifier and passion for the partial object, how is desire composed?

This is what I hope to articulate for you next time.

May 10, 1961

XXI

PENSÉE'S DESIRE

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Saying no.
Tragedy is reborn . . .
. . . as is desire, myth, and innocence.
The Other incarnated in this woman.

> *Sygne:* Coûfontaine, I am yours; take me, and do with me as you will! [Make of me] your wife, if you so wish it, or, if you prefer, beyond the limits of this life, where earthly bodies are no more, our souls shall be joined together, and indissolubly made one. [p. 35/24]

I wanted to point out to you the repetition of an expression by which love is articulated throughout the text of Claudel's trilogy. Georges de Coûfontaine immediately responds to Sygne's words in *The Hostage* as follows:

> Oh, Sygne whom I have found at last, do not fail me as the world has failed me! Shall I, then, in the end, have something lasting, other than my own will? [p. 35/24]

Indeed, it's all right there. This man, who has been betrayed and abandoned by everyone, who leads, as he tells us, the life "of a hunted beast [. . .] with no sure refuge wherein to hide," recalls

> the saying of the monks of India, who proclaim that all this life is bad, a hollow illusion which remains with us only because we move in step with it, and which would pass from us, if we but sat quietly in one place. An unworthy dream! A sordid temptation! In this collapse of all my life, I, at least, remain unchanged, and my honor and my duty are unchanged. But you, Sygne, weigh carefully your words. Do not fail me; you

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too, in this hour of my approaching end, as all else has failed me! Do not deceive me [. . .]. [p. 36/25]

Such is the point of departure that lends gravitas to the tragedy. Sygne finds herself betraying the very person to whom she has committed herself with all her soul. We encounter the theme of the exchange of souls again later, distilled in a single instant in *Crusts*, in the course of a dialogue between Louis and Lumîr – Loum-yir, as Claudel expressly tells us the name of the Polish woman should be pronounced – when, after the parricide has occurred, she tells him that she will not follow him, that she will not return to Algeria with him, but instead invites him to come consummate with her the mortal adventure that awaits her. Louis has just undergone the metamorphosis that parricide brought to a head in him, and he refuses. He nevertheless oscillates one more time: he addresses Lumîr passionately, telling her that he loves her just the way she is and that there is only one woman for him. To which Lumîr herself, who is captivated by the call to death that provides the signification of her desire, replies:

Is it really true that there is only one woman for you? Yes, I know that it's true. Say what you want to! There is something in you now – at this moment – that understands me! Something that makes you my brother! It's a tearing away, an utter weariness, a void which nothing can fill! You are [like] no one, and no one is like you. You [stand] alone! And no matter how long you may live, the time will never come when you could have done otherwise than as you did! (*very softly*) You parricide! We're alone; wholly, completely alone in this [awful] desert. Two human souls knocking about in the void of life! Two souls which can belong to each other. Two souls which, in the space of a single second, like the thundering report of time that is annihilated, can, through each other and to each other, be all things! How sweet it is to live without looking ahead. If life were only longer! It might be worth while to be happy. But life is short; and there are ways of making it shorter yet! Yes, so
355 short that all eternity can be contained therein!

Louis: Eternity means nothing to me.

Lumîr: Yes! So short that all eternity can be contained therein! So short that this world, this life which we scorn and do not want, could be hidden away in it. This happiness on which people lay such stress! Ah, life could be so small and tight and narrow and brief that there would be no room in it for anything or any one – except you and me. [pp. 266–67/137–8]

And a bit further on she continues:

> I will be your country close held in your arms. To you I will be happiness foregone, the land of Ur, the old, old power of Consolation. You and I only exist; only you and I live in this world, and there will, throughout all time, be only this moment when we stood face to face – and saw! And we shall be able to understand – then – even that mystery which lies hidden deep within us. Come! There are ways of drawing our souls out of ourselves, as one can draw a flashing sword – loyal, clean, and with honor unbesmirched. Yes, there is a way to break the chain, to batter down the prison wall. And there's a way of pledging one's oath and of sacrificing oneself, heart and soul, to the other – the only other! We can do it like brave men! We can! In spite of the horrible night, and the rain, and the awful emptiness which surrounds us. Oh, it can be done! There is a way of giving all of oneself, and having faith, true faith, in the other. There's a way of so giving oneself that, believing implicitly in the flash of inspiration, each shall belong to the other and to him alone. [pp. 267–8/138]

Such is the desire that is expressed by she who Louis, after the parricide, casts aside in order to marry "his father's mistress," as it is put in the play. Herein lies the turning point of Louis' transformation. And it will lead us today to question the meaning of what will be born from him – namely, the feminine figure who, at the outset of the third play in the trilogy, is the counterpart of Sygne: Pensée de Coûfontaine.

By looking at her, we are going to examine what Claudel means here.

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Although it is easy and quite common in French to dismiss any speech that falls outside of the ruts of ordinary routine by saying, *c'est du Untel* ("That's vintage so-and-so") – and you are aware that people do not fail to say that about he who is speaking to you right now – it seems that no one even dreams of being astonished by what poets say. People are happy to accept poets' singularity. And when confronted with the strangeness of plays like Claudel's, no one any longer dreams of wondering about the improbabilities and scandalous traits he presents us or about what, in the final analysis, could have been his Christian aim and his plan.

What is the meaning of Pensée de Coûfontaine in the third play, *The Humiliation of the Father*? We are going to examine the signification of Pensée de Coûfontaine as we would examine that of a living personage. What is at stake is Pensée de Coûfontaine's desire, Pensée's desire. And in Pensée's desire we are, of course, going to find the very idea [*pensée*] of desire.

Do not take this to be an allegorical interpretation. The characters in Claudel's trilogy are symbols only inasmuch as they are at work at the heart of the impact of the symbolic on a person. And the ambiguity of the names that are attributed to them by the poet indicates that we are justified in interpreting them as instances of the impact of the symbolic on our very flesh.

It would be easy for us to read into the way Claudel spells the odd name, Sygne. The word begins with an S, and it truly invites us to recognize a sign [*signe*] therein. Moreover, there is the imperceptible change, the substitution of *y* for *i*. In this superimposing of the mark, one might recognize something that encounters – through some kind of convergence or Kabbalistic geomancy – my $, by which I demonstrated to you that the imposition of the signifier on man is something that both marks and disfigures him.

At the other end of the trilogy, we have Pensée. Here the word is left intact and in order to see what is meant by this Pensée of desire, we must clearly begin with what is signified by the passion undergone by Sygne in *The Hostage*.

357 The first play in the trilogy left us overcome by the figure of this sacrificed woman who shakes her head saying no, by the mark of the signifier raised to the highest degree: refusal raised to the position of a radical stance. This is what we must explore.

In exploring this stance, if we know how to examine it, we will find in it another of our terms that grows out of analytic practice, at its pinnacle. If you remember what I have taught you several times, here and elsewhere, in this Seminar and at our Society meetings, I asked you to overhaul the use that is currently made in psychoanalysis of the term "frustration." I did so to incite you to return to what Freud, who never uses the term "frustration," means by the original term *Versagung*, insofar as it goes well beyond and far deeper than any conceivable frustration.

Versagung implies not making good on a promise, on a promise for which one has already given up everything – this is the exemplary value of Sygne's character and drama. What she is asked to give up is what she has put all of her effort into, what she has hitched her entire life to, her life having already been marked by the sign of sacrifice. The dimension of sacrifice, raised to the second power, raised to the most profound refusal owing to the workings of the

Word, is open to endless realization. This is what is posited at the outset of Claudel's tragedy, and we cannot remain indifferent to it or simply consider it to be the extreme, excessive, or paradoxical form of a kind of religious madness [*folie*]. For, on the contrary, as I shall show you, this is precisely where we, as people of our own times, are situated to the very extent that this religious folly is not there for us.

Let us observe carefully what is at stake for Sygne de Coûfontaine. What is imposed upon her is not simply something like force or constraint. She is made to freely commit herself, according to the law of marriage, to someone whom she calls the son of her servant and of the sorcerer Quiriace. Nothing connected to what is imposed on her can be anything but accursed to her. Thus the *Versagung* here, the refusal from which she cannot free herself, becomes what the very structure of the word implies: *versagen* is refusal regarding what is said [*le dit*]; and, were I to equivocate in order to find the best translation, perdition. Everything that is a condition becomes perdition. And this is why not saying becomes saying no here.

We have encountered this extreme point before, but what I would 358
like to show you is that it is gone beyond here. We came across it at the end of the Oedipus tragedy in the με φυναι (*me phunai*) of *Oedipus at Colonus* [verse 1224], in the "would that I were not," which means "not to have been born." Let me remind you in passing that we find here the true place of the subject insofar as he is the subject of the unconscious – namely, the με, that is, the highly unusual "not" [*ne*], only vestiges of which we can still find in French, making paradoxical appearances in expressions like *je crains qu'il ne vienne* ["I'm afraid he may (not) come" or "I cannot but fear he is coming"] or *avant qu'il n'apparaisse* ["before he not but appear"]. It appears to be an expletive in such contexts, according to grammarians, whereas it is precisely there that the tip of desire's iceberg appears – not the subject of the statement who is "I," he who is currently speaking, but the subject in which enunciation finds its origin.

Oedipus leaves us with the Greek words *me phunai*: "would that I were not" – or, to follow the Greek even more closely, "were I not" – "not to be here" [*n'y être*], which sounds in French so curiously like the verb to be born [*naître*]. What is designated thereby if not the fact that owing to the imposition upon man of destiny and owing to prescribed exchange via kinship structures, something has been covered over that makes his entrance into the world an entrance into the implacable play of debt? In the final analysis, man is simply guilty of the responsibility [*charge*] he receives for the debt stemming from the *Até* that precedes him.

Something else has happened since that time. For us, the Word

has become incarnate. It has come into the world and, as opposed to what the Gospels say, it is not true that we have not recognized it. We have recognized it and are experiencing the aftermath of this recognition. We are at one of the stages of the consequences of this recognition. This is what I would like to try to articulate to you.

To us, the Word is not simply the law into which we insert ourselves in order that each of us bear responsibility for the debt that constitutes our fate. It opens up for us the possibility or temptation on the basis of which it is possible for us to curse ourselves, not only as a particular destiny or life, but as the very pathway by which the Word commits us, and as an encounter with the truth, as the moment of truth. We are no longer solely subject to feeling guilty owing to symbolic debt. We can, in the most proximate sense that the word indicates, be reproached for bearing responsibility for the debt. In short, it is the very debt that gave us our place that can be
359 stolen from us; and it is in this context that we can feel totally alienated from ourselves. Antiquity's *Até* no doubt made us guilty of this debt, but to give it up – as we can now – makes us responsible for a still greater misfortune owing to the fact that fate is no longer anything [for us].

In short, what we learn every day from psychoanalytic practice is that the guilt we still have, the guilt that is palpable to us in our work with neurotics, is the exact price we have to pay for the fact that the God of fate is dead. The fact that this God is dead is at the heart of what Claudel presents us.

The dead God is represented here by the proscribed priest who is no longer presented to us in any form but that of what is called the Hostage, who gives his name to the first play in the trilogy. The figure of Antiquity's faith is henceforth held Hostage by politics, prey to those who wish to use it for the purposes of restoring the old order.

But the flipside of this elimination of the dead God is that it is the faithful soul that is held Hostage, Hostage of a situation in which, beyond the endpoint of Christian truth, tragedy is truly reborn – namely, everything slips away from the soul if the signifier can be taken captive.

Naturally, only she who believes can be held hostage – namely, Sygne. And because she believes she must attest to what she believes. This is precisely why she is caught and captivated in a situation that it suffices to create for it to exist: to be called upon to sacrifice to the very negation of what she believes.

She is held hostage by the very negation she is subjected to of what is best in herself. What is presented to us goes much further than the misfortune of Job and his resignation. Job is weighed down

by misfortune that he has not deserved, but the heroine of modern tragedy is asked to assume responsibility for the very injustice she abhors as if it were a jouissance.

This is what is opened up as a possibility, for the being who speaks, by the fact that he props up the Word at the moment at which the Word is asked to guarantee him.

Man becomes a hostage of the Word because he tells himself – or, too, in order that he tell himself – that God is dead. At this moment a gap opens up in which nothing can be articulated except what is merely the very beginning of the expression "were I not," that can no longer be anything but a refusal, a no, a *ne*, a tic or grimace – in 360
short, this giving way of the body or psychosomatic phenomenon, which is the endpoint where we must encounter the mark of the signifier.

As it develops through the three stages of the tragedy, the drama is that of knowing how – based on this radical stance – a desire can be reborn and of knowing what desire it is.

It is here that we are transported to the other end of the trilogy, to Pensée de Coûfontaine.

2

Pensée de Coûfontaine is an indisputably seductive figure who is obviously presented to the play's spectators – and I will try to say who these spectators are later on – as the object of desire, strictly speaking.

It suffices to read *The Humiliation of the Father* – and what could be more unpleasant than this story? Could any staler crust of bread be offered to us than the import of this father who is presented to us as an obscene old man, and whose murder alone, which is portrayed to us, allows what was transmitted to Louis de Coûfontaine to be continued, which is merely the most degraded and degenerate figure of the father? It is enough to hear what each of you may well have noticed, the ingratitude represented by the appearance – during a night of festivities in Rome at the beginning of *The Humiliation of the Father* – of the figure of Pensée de Coûfontaine, to understand that she is presented here as a seductive object.

Why? And how? What does she balance out? What does she make up for? Is something that Sygne sacrificed going to be given to Pensée [p. 381]? To put it more explicitly, is it in the name of her grandmother's sacrifice that Pensée de Coûfontaine will warrant attention here?

An allusion is made to this at one point, in the dialogue between

the Pope and the two men who will represent the arrival of love in her life. This old family tradition is alluded to as if it were an ancient story that is told [p. 370/191]. The Pope himself, speaking to Orian who is the object of this love, uses the word "superstition": "Are you afraid of this poor girl? Empty superstition! Raise up your eyes! Show some courage!" [p. 381]. Are you going to give in, my son,
361 to this superstition? Is Pensée going to represent something like an exemplary figure, a rebirth of faith that was momentarily eclipsed? Far from it.

Pensée is freethinking, if one can put it thus, using a term that is hardly Claudel's here. Yet this is clearly what is involved. Pensée has but one passion, which is, as she tells us, for justice that goes beyond all the exigencies of beauty itself [p. 341/176]. What she wants is justice, and not just any old justice, not Antiquity's form of justice, some natural right to distribution or retribution – the justice she wants is absolute. It is the justice that inspires the rumbling and movement of the revolution that constitutes the background noise of the third play in the trilogy. This justice is the flipside of everything real, everything related to life that, owing to the Word, is felt to be an offense or abomination to justice. What is at work in Pensée's discourse is an absolute justice, with all its power to shake up the world.

As you can see, this is the furthest thing from the kind of preaching we might expect from Claudel as a man of faith. And this is what will allow us to give meaning to the figure on which the entire drama of *The Humiliation of the Father* converges.

In order to understand it, we must dwell a moment on what Claudel makes of Pensée de Coûfontaine, who is depicted here as the fruit of the marriage between Louis de Coûfontaine and the woman his father basically gave him as a wife solely by virtue of the fact that this woman was already his woman. We have here the extreme, paradoxical, and caricatural edge of the Oedipus complex. It is the furthest shore of Freud's myth that is offered up to us here: an obscene old man forces his sons to marry his wives, and he does so to the very extent that he wishes to steal theirs from them. This is a more advanced and expressive way to accentuate what comes to light in Freud's myth. It does not create a better quality father but rather another scoundrel [*canaille*].

And, indeed, this is how Louis de Coûfontaine is depicted to us throughout the play. He marries Sichel, a woman who wants him as the object of her jouissance. He marries this odd figure of a woman who rejects all the burdens of the law – namely hers, the ancient Law – as well as the status of the wife as a saintly figure who is the
362 epitome of patience. She is the one who finally brings to light her will to embrace the world.

What will come of this? What will be born from this is, oddly enough, the rebirth of the very thing that the tragedy in *Crusts* showed us was ruled out – namely, the very desire in its absolute character that was represented by the figure of Lumîr.

Lumîr is a rather odd name. Claudel's footnote regarding how to pronounce it (Loum-yir) should give us pause for thought. We should relate it to what Claudel tells us about the fancies of the old Turelure, who changes everyone's name in a derisory way, calling Rachel Sichel, which in German means, as the text tells us, sickle – and in particular, the sickle that portrays the crescent moon in the sky [pp. 167/91–2]. We have here an odd echo of the figure with which Victor Hugo's *Booz endormi* ends. Claudel constantly engages in the very same game of deforming people's names, as if he himself were taking on the role of the old Turelure. Lumîr is what we will encounter later in the dialogue between the Pope and the two brothers, Orso and Orian, in the form of light [*lumière*]: "cruel light."

This cruel light sheds light for us on what the character Orian represents, for, as faithful as he may be to the Pope, when he says "cruel light," it startles the Pope. The Pope retorts to him that light is not in the least bit cruel [p. 378/195].

Yet Orian is indubitably right when he says it. And the poet is on his side. Now, she who is going to come to incarnate the light that is obscurely sought for, without knowing it, by her own mother, the light sought through a form of patience [p. 393/202] that is ready to serve everyone and to accept everything, is Pensée, Sichel's daughter. Pensée is going to become the incarnate object of the desire for this light. And the poet cannot but imagine and portray this flesh-and-blood thought [*pensée*], this living Pensée, to us as blind.

I feel we should pause here for a moment. What does the poet intend by incarnating the object – the partial object, the object insofar as it is the resurgence and effect of the parental constellation – as a blind woman? This blind woman will be paraded before our eyes throughout the third play and in the most moving of fashions.

She appears at a costume ball which figures the end of a moment of Rome's history just prior to its capture by the Garibaldians. There is also another end that is celebrated in this late-night party, 363
that of a Polish nobleman who, pushed to the extreme limit of solvency, must surely see the bailiffs descend upon his property the next day [p. 315/162]. This Polish aristocrat is there to remind us, like a face on a cameo [p. 319/164], of someone we have heard about so often and who died so sadly. Let us forget about her. Let us not speak of her any more. The spectators all realize that the person in question is Lumîr. This aristocrat, characterized by all the nobility

and romanticism of martyred Poland, is nevertheless the type of nobleman who always inexplicably has a villa that he can liquidate.

It is in this context that we see the blind Pensée walking about as if she could see perfectly well. For her surprising sensitivity allows her, in the course of a preliminary visit, to locate – through her acute perception of echoes, approaches, and movements – the entire structure of a place as soon as she has gone up several steps [pp. 312–13/161]. Whereas we spectators know she is blind, the guests who are with her at the party are unaware of it for an entire act – especially he on whom her desire alights, Orian.

This character deserves a word of introduction for those who have not read the play. Orian, like his brother Orso, has the last name Homodarmes, which is truly Claudelian in inspiration, given its resonance owing to the same slightly deformed and accentuated construction as a signifier that we bizarrely encounter in so many characters in Claudel's plays. Recall to mind here Sir Thomas Pollock Nageoire. It makes as pretty a sound as the one we find in the passage on suits of armor in André Breton's "*Introduction au discours sur le peu de réalité.*"

These two characters, Orian and Orso, become involved in the plot. Orso is a nice boy who loves Pensée. Orian, who is not quite Orso's twin brother, since he is a year older, is the one on whom Pensée's desire alights. Why on him, if not for the fact that he is inaccessible? For in truth, Claudel's text or myth indicates to us that this blind girl can barely distinguish between their voices [pp. 423–8/216–9]. Indeed, at the end of the play, Orso is momentarily able to fool her into believing that he is Orian, who is dead. It is clearly because she sees something else that Orian's voice, even when it is Orso who speaks, makes her swoon.

But let us dwell for a moment on this blind girl. What is she trying to tell us? And to consider first what she projects before us, doesn't
364 it seem that she is protected by a sort of sublime figure of modesty, which is based on the fact that, since she is unable to see herself being seen, she seems to be sheltered from the sole gaze that unveils?

I do not believe it overly eccentric to bring in here the dialectic of the so-called exhibitionistic and voyeuristic perversions that I have already discussed with you. I pointed out to you that the latter cannot be grasped merely on the basis of the relationship between he who sees and he who shows himself to a partner who is simply other, whether object or subject. What is involved in the fantasy of both exhibitionists and voyeurs is a third element which implies that a certain complicity can blossom in the partner who receives what is shown to her; that what delights her in her apparently innocent solitude is offered up to a hidden gaze; that it is thus the very desire that

sustains its function in fantasy that veils from the subject his role in the exhibitionistic or voyeuristic activity; and that exhibitionists and voyeurs enjoy themselves in some sense qua seeing and showing, but without knowing what they see or show.

In the case of Pensée, she is unable to be caught in the act, as it were, owing to the fact that no one can show her anything that would subject her to the small other. Note, too, that one cannot spy on her without being, like Actaeon, struck with blindness and without beginning to be chewed to pieces by the pack of hounds of one's own desires.

We see here the mysterious power of the dialogue between Pensée and Orian – Orian, whose name is but one letter away from that of one of the hunters who Diana transformed into a constellation, Orion. All by itself, the mysterious avowal with which the dialogue ends, "I am blind" [p. 352/182], has the impact of the words "I love you," insofar as it obviates all consciousness in the other of the fact that "I love you" has been said, situating itself directly in him as speech. Who could say, "I am blind," if not from the place where speech creates night? Who, in hearing it, would not feel the depth of night being born within himself?

This is where I wish to lead you – to the distinction between two relationships: that of *seeing oneself* and that of *hearing oneself*. People have long since pointed out that it is characteristic of phonation to immediately echo in the subject's own ear as he speaks. But this does not imply that the other to whom his speech is addressed has the same place or structure as the other in the case of visual unveiling. This is because speech does not incite sight, precisely inas- 365
much as it is, in and of itself, blindness.

One can see oneself being seen, which is why one steals away [*on s'y dérobe*]. But one cannot hear oneself being heard. In other words, we are not heard where we hear ourselves [*on ne s'entend pas là où l'on s'entend*] – namely, in our heads. Or, rather, those who do, those who in fact hear themselves being heard, are madmen who are hallucinating. This is the very structure of hallucination. They can only hear themselves being heard in the place of the Other, where we hear the Other send our own message back to us in an inverted form.

What Claudel means by introducing blind Pensée is that it suffices that the soul – because it is the soul that is involved here – close its eyes to the world in order to be what the world is missing and the most desirable object in the world; this is indicated throughout the dialogue in the third play. Psyche, who can no longer light the lamp, sucks in, so to speak, or draws to herself Eros' being, which is lack. The myth of Poros and Penia is reborn here in the guise of spiritual blindness, for we are told that Pensée incarnates here the very figure

of the "Synagogue" [p. 341/176], such as it is represented in the portico of the cathedral in Reims, with her eyes blindfolded.

Moreover, Orian, who plays opposite her, is clearly he from whom a gift can be received, precisely because he is overabundance. Orian is another form of refusal. If he does not give Pensée his love, it is, as he says, because he owes his gifts to others, to everyone, to divine works. What he misrecognizes is precisely the fact that what is asked of him in love is not his *poros*, his resources, his spiritual richness, his overabundance, or even, as he puts it, his joy; rather, what is asked of him is precisely what he does not have [p. 393/201]. He is a saint, of course, but it is rather striking that Claudel shows us the limits of his saintliness here.

It is a fact that desire here is stronger than saintliness itself. It is a fact that, in the dialogue with Pensée, Orian the saint weakens and gives in; he loses the game, and, to call a spade a spade, goes ahead and screws little Pensée.

Which is exactly what she wants. Throughout the play, she has not lost a split second, a micro-second, in operating in this direction along pathways that I will not call the shortest, but that are assuredly the straightest and surest. Pensée de Coûfontaine is truly the rebirth of all that is ill-fated, which
366 begins with debauchery, continues with gambling one's honor, with misalliance, and with abjuration – the "Louis-Philippisme" that someone once called the "second *temps-pire*" – in order to be reborn from it as though before sin, as innocence, but not as nature for all that.

This is why it is important for us to see on what stage the drama reaches its climax.

3

This stage is found in the last scene.

Pensée shuts herself in with her mother, who takes her under her protective wing, because she became pregnant owing to Orian's handiwork. She suddenly receives a visit from his brother, Orso, who comes to convey Orian's final message to her, Orian now being dead. Both the logic of the play and the situation that was created earlier have paved the way for this scene, since all of Orian's efforts were designed to get Pensée and Orso to accept something outrageous: that they marry.

Orian the saint sees no obstacle to his good little brother finding happiness. That is just fine for Orso. He is a good courageous guy. And, moreover, Orso's declaration leaves no doubt that he is quite

capable of marrying a woman who does not love him. He is sure that he can break her down. He is courageous and takes up the challenge [p. 374/193]. He initially fought for those on the left; he was told [by Orian] that he had made a mistake, so he fought for those on the right. At first he was on the side of the Garibaldians and then he joined the Pope's soldiers [p. 337/174]. He is always there, fit as a fiddle – he's a guy you can count on.

We should not laugh too heartily at this stupid bastard, for it is a trap. And we will see later in what respect, for in truth, in his dialogue with Pensée, we are no longer inclined to laugh at him.

Who is Pensée in this scene? She is surely the sublime object – the sublime object insofar as I indicated its position to you last year as a substitute for the Thing. As you realized at the time, the nature of the Thing would not be so different from the nature of Woman, were it not true that, in relation to all the ways we have of approaching the Thing, Woman turns out to be something else altogether. Even the slightest woman, I would say. And in truth Claudel does not prove to us, no more than anyone else, that he has a very advanced idea of what a woman is – far from it.

Claudel's heroine, this woman that he creates before us, is the 367
woman [qua object] of a certain desire. Let us nevertheless give Claudel credit for the fact that elsewhere, in *Partage de midi*, he created a female character for us, Ysé, who is not so bad. She strongly resembles a real woman.

Here we are in the presence of an object of desire. And what I wish to show you, and this is inscribed in her image, is that it is a desire that no longer has, at this level of deprivation [*dépouillement*], anything but castration to separate it – I mean to separate it radically – from any natural desire.

If you observe what happens onstage, it is in fact rather beautiful. But in order to situate it exactly, I will ask you to recall to mind the anamorphic cylinder that I discussed with you here, the tube placed on a table, on which [an imitation of] a painting by Rubens was projected, that of *The Elevation (or Raising) of the Cross*, through the artifice of a sort of formless drawing astutely placed at its base. I thereby portrayed for you the mechanism for reflecting the fascinating figure, beauty rising up, such as it is projected at the extreme limit in order to stop us from going any further toward the heart of the Thing.

Assuming that the figure of Pensée, as well as the main lines of the play, are designed to take us to this limit that is a bit further off, what do we see, if not the figure of a woman who is deified in order to be crucified yet again here?

The posture of crucifixion is indicated in the text [pp. 305 and 439], and it insistently returns at many other points in Claudel's

work, from the Princess in *Tête d'Or*, to Sygne herself and Ysé, and to the figure of Doña Prouhèze. What does this figure bear within itself? A child, no doubt, but let us not forget what Claudel tells us, which is that the child comes alive and begins to move for the first time at the very moment at which Pensée takes, as she tells us, within herself the soul of he who is dead.

How is this capturing of the soul portrayed to us? It is a true act of vampirism. With the flaps of her shawl, Pensée wraps herself, as it were, around the basket of flowers that the brother, Orso, had sent, flowers that grew in soil that – as we learn from the dialogue, constituting a macabre note – contains the eviscerated heart of her lover, Orian. When she stands up again, she is supposed to have brought its symbolic essence inside herself [p. 439]. It is this soul that she presses, along with her own, she tells us, on the lips of the
368 brother, Orso – who has just committed himself to her in order to provide the child with a father – while telling him that he will never be her husband.

This transmission or odd realization of the fusion of souls is what the first two quotes I cited for you at the beginning of class today – from *The Hostage* on the one hand, and from *Crusts* on the other – indicate as love's supreme aspiration. Orso, who we know is going to join his brother in death, is the designated conveyor, vehicle, or messenger of this fusion of souls.

What does this mean? As I told you earlier, we must not kid ourselves or allow ourselves to be taken in by the ridiculousness of the poor Orso, whose very function as a fake husband, where he ends up, makes us laugh. In the final analysis, the place he occupies is the very place by which we ourselves are called upon to be captivated here. This fantasy is offered up to our desire, as though it revealed the structure of our desire, and it reveals the magnetic power in Woman that attracts us, and not necessarily, as the poet says, toward something lofty – this is a third power and it cannot be ours except by representing our downfall.

In desire there is always some delight in death, but in a death that we cannot inflict upon ourselves. We encounter anew here the four terms that are represented, as it were, in us: the two brothers, *a* and *a'*; we as subjects, inasmuch as we don't understand anything about it; and the figure of the Other incarnated in this woman. These four elements allow for the possibility of all sorts of varieties of inflicted death, among which we can enumerate the most perverse forms of desire.

Here it is solely the most ethical case that is realized, insofar as it is Orian – the true, perfect man who asserts himself and maintains his virility – who pays the price by dying. This reminds us that it

is true: he always and in every case pays the price – even when he reduces the price to the level of pleasure, in a way that is more costly for his humanity from a moral vantage point.

Thus ends the poet's plan. At the end of the tragedy of the subjects as pure victims of Logos or language, he shows us what becomes of desire. And regarding this desire, he makes it visible to us in the figure of this woman, this astounding [*terrible*] subject who goes by the name of Pensée de Coûfontaine.

She deserves her name Pensée, for she is thought about desire.

It is through love – the love that she expresses – for the other that 369
she becomes the object of desire by becoming frozen [*en se figeant*].

Such is the topology in which the long path of the tragedy culminates.

As in any process or progress of human articulation, it is only retroactively that we can perceive what converges in the lines traced out in the traditional past, and announces what one day comes to light. Throughout Euripides' tragedies, we encounter the relationship to desire, and especially to women's desire, as a sort of sore point or wound that exasperates him. We can fathom what people call Euripides' misogyny, which is a sort of aberration or madness that seems to strike all of his poetry, only on the basis of what it became by being filtered through the sublimation of the Christian tradition.

As for the quartering points [*points d'écartèlement*] of the terms whose intersection necessitates the effects with which we as analysts deal – those of neurosis insofar as in Freud's thought they are asserted to be earlier than those of the golden mean, earlier than those of normality – we must pinpoint them, explore them, and grasp their extremes if we want to be able to situate and orient our actions. We want to situate and orient them in such a way that they are not captive to the mirage of the virtues of mutual aid that it is always so easy for us to succumb to, but in such a way that they correspond to what may be there – even in the most obscure forms that must be revealed – in the other that we accompany in the transference.

Someone once said that "the extremes meet up in me." We must pinpoint them at least momentarily in order to be able – and this is what I will end with today – to locate exactly what our place must be at the moment at which the subject is on the only path to which we needed to lead him, the path where he must articulate his desire.

May 17, 1961

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XXII

STRUCTURAL DECOMPOSITION

The analyst: object or subject?
The structural analysis of myth.
So-called normality.
The earliest *Versagung*.
The subject exchanged for [the object of] his desire.

What are we going to do regarding Claudel this year, now that we no longer have enough time to formulate what we have to say about transference?

In certain respects, my Seminar this year might give you this particular feeling. At least it could to people less savvy than you. For everything I have said nevertheless has a common axis, which I believe I have articulated clearly enough for you to have realized that it is the crux of my aim this year. In order to designate it, I will try to describe it to you as follows.

1

People have spoken a great deal about transference since analysis first came into existence. And we are still talking about it today. It is not simply a theoretical hope. We should nevertheless know what we deal with incessantly, which is the means by which we sustain the movement of psychoanalytic practice. What I have been designating this year in order to broach the question has an axis that can be formulated as follows: "In what respect must we consider ourselves to be involved in the transference?"

To reformulate the question in this way does not mean that I believe we now know exactly what transference is. But I consider this way of reformulating the question to be necessary if we wish to grasp what has led to the very tangible divergences that have

occurred and to the most profound differences in standpoint that have appeared on this topic in the analytic community, not only most recently, but throughout the different stages of the historical development of psychoanalysis. This will allow us to conceptualize 372
in what sense each of these points of view regarding transference has a grain of truth in it and is utilizable – something that I believe is certain.

The question I am raising is therefore that of our participation in the transference. It is not the question of countertransference. People have turned countertransference into a giant grab-bag category of experiences that seems to comprise just about everything we are likely to feel in our work as analysts. People have, in this way, included all sorts of impurities in the analytic setting – for it is quite clear that we are human, and, as such, affected in a thousand ways by the patient's presence – and have now rendered this notion thoroughly useless. If we situate our participation in the transference under the heading of countertransference, defined thusly – and if we include casuistry in it as well, that is, the way in which we reckon what must be done in each case defined by its specific coordinates – we truly make any and all investigation impossible.

I will thus broach the topic of our participation in transference by asking, "How are we to conceptualize it?" This is the path that will allow us to situate what is at the heart of the phenomenon of transference in the subject – namely, the analyst.

Something is undoubtedly already suggested by this particular way of broaching the topic. Does our need to respond to the transference involve our being, or need we but define a line of conduct, a how to* guide to handling* something that lies outside of ourselves? If you have been following what I have been saying for a number of years, you cannot but guess the answer implied by what I am leading you to – namely, that our involvement in the transference is situated at the level of what I just designated when I said that it involves our being.

This is, after all, so obvious that it is recognized even by those analysts who are most opposed to my approach – I mean, those whose ways of broaching the analytic situation, both at its point of departure and at its destination, are so terribly under-articulated – and whose work I am most averse to; for someone of this ilk nevertheless one day proffered, not regarding transference, but regarding the analyst's action, that "the analyst cures not so much by what he says and does as by what he is."

Make no mistake about it: this kind of sweeping remark runs, it seems to me, absolutely counter to my way of proceeding, in the precise sense that it says something apt, but does so in such a way 373

that it immediately shuts the door to any further discussion. It is just the kind of thing that gets my dander up. What the analyst is clearly is precisely what has been at issue since the beginning.

When people define the analytic situation objectively, there is a given that is the following: the analyst plays his transferential role precisely to the degree to which he is, for his patient, what he is not at the level of what one might call "reality." This is what allows us to gauge transference's angle of deviation and to bring the patient to realize how far he is from reality [*le réel*], owing to the fiction he produces with the help of transference.

Nevertheless, there is clearly some truth to the idea that the analyst enters the picture through something like his being. This is quite probable. It is, first and foremost, a fact of experience. Why would there be any need for us to adjust or correct the analyst's subjective position – for us to attempt, as part of his training, to get him to take it up or down a notch – were it not so that something in his position could be called upon to function effectively in a relationship that can in no way be exhaustively formulated as a simple manipulation, even if it were mutual.

Everything that has been said since Freud's time concerning the import of transference thus brings the analyst into play as an actual being [*un existant*]. One could even divide rather clearly in two the different ways of articulating transference, in a way which, without exhausting the question, pretty well covers the whole spectrum. The two "trends," as they are referred to, in psychoanalysis today are associated with Melanie Klein, on the one hand, and Anna Freud, on the other; these names do not exhaustively describe the trends, but give us a shorthand with which to refer to them.

The Kleinian trend emphasizes the analyst's function as an object in the transference relationship. If you wanted to, you could even say that it is Melanie Klein who is more faithful to Freud's thought and tradition than Anna Freud, even if that was not, of course, Klein's point of departure; and that it is to the extent that she is faithful to Freud's thought and tradition that she is led to articulate the transference relationship in this way.

Let me explain what I mean. If Melanie Klein is led to make the analyst – the analytic presence in the analyst or the analyst's intention – function as a good or bad object for the subject, it is to the extent to which she believes the analytic relationship to be dominated by unconscious fantasies right from the very first words and
374 steps. This, for Klein, is what we are dealing with right from the outset, and we can – I am not saying that we should – interpret them right from the get-go.

I am not saying that this [recommendation regarding technique]

is a necessary consequence [of her conception of the role played by unconscious fantasies]. In fact I think that it is a consequence that is only necessary owing to the shortcomings of Kleinian thought, insofar as the function of fantasy – even though it is perceived in a very compelling [*prégnante*] way – is inadequately articulated by her; this is the major failing of her work. Even among her best acolytes and disciples, who certainly have tried to develop it on more than one occasion, her theory of fantasy has never been truly worked out.

There are nevertheless many extremely serviceable elements in it. For example, the primordial function of symbolization is articulated and emphasized there in a way that, in certain respects, verges on being highly satisfying. In fact, the entire key to correcting Klein's theory of fantasy can be found in the symbol I have proposed for fantasy: ($ ◇ *a*), which can be read as follows: "barred $, desire for *a*."

We want to know what $ is. It is not simply the noetic correlate of the object. $ is found in fantasy. It is not easy to broach the experience of fantasy without taking the path around it that I have been leading you along in a thousand different ways. It is in the detours we are forced to make as we broach the experience of fantasy that you will understand better – if you believe you have already glimpsed something, or you will understand for the first time if this has seemed obscure to you heretofore – what I am trying to propound with this formalization.

But let us continue. The other pole of the theory of transference emphasizes something that is just as irreducible and that is even more obviously true, which is that the analyst is involved in the transference as a subject. In this perspective – which I tagged with the name Anna Freud, and which is not a bad designation for it, in effect, although she is not the only analyst associated with it – emphasis is placed on the therapeutic alliance. This emphasis is internally coherent with its correlate – namely, the emphasis placed on the powers of the ego.*

The goal is not simply to recognize these powers objectively, but to know what place they should be given in therapeutic practice. And what are we told on this score? That in the whole first phase of the treatment there is no question of bringing in the unconscious, since at first we are dealing with nothing but defense, and for quite some time, moreover. That is the least you might be told. 375
Of course, this can be seen more clearly in practice than in what is doctrinally formulated, and it must be glimpsed between the lines of the theory.

Now, it is one thing to bring the importance of the defenses to the fore – this is ever so legitimate – and quite another to go so far

in one's theorizing as to make the ego* itself into a kind of inertial mass. It is characteristic of the school of Hartmann and his associates to even conceptualize the ego* as including elements that are, in the final analysis, irreducible and uninterpretable. This is what they quite clearly arrive at. I am not trying to make them say something they do not say – they say it themselves.

The following step is to say that this is, in the end, fine and dandy, and that we should even make the ego* still more irreducible by providing it with additional defenses.

This is a conceivable way of conducting an analysis. I am not rejecting the notion at this very moment. It is what the Anna Freudians do. But what I can nevertheless point out is that, compared to the Kleinian perspective, it does not seem that this one is the more Freudian – that is the least one can say.

But I have other fish to fry, don't I, in our pursuits this year, than to once again qualify this trend, to which I gave so much importance in the first years of my teaching, as eccentric. People thought they saw some sort of polemical intention in it, whereas I assure you that such was far from my mind. What is at stake is to change the level at which the mind itself is broached.

Things are no longer precisely the same today. These deviations came to fascinate the analytic community, and they went so far as to dispel the feeling that there were some questions left to be answered. Since that time we have regained some perspective and revived a certain inspiration, thanks to what is also no more than a return to psychoanalytic language, I mean to its structure, to what served to make it emerge at the outset in Freud's work. The situation is different now. The fact that even those who may feel a bit lost owing to the fact that at a certain moment in my Seminar we dove straight into Claudel's work, nevertheless have the feeling that his work is closely tied to the topic of transference, proves all by itself that something has sufficiently changed for there to no longer be any need to emphasize the negative facet of one trend or another.

376 It is not the negative facets that interest us, but the positive ones – those that can, at the point we are at now, serve as elements upon which to build.

2

I would like to draw your attention now to the function of myth in psychoanalysis.

In what way can Claudel's mythology, as I will call it by way of a shorthand, serve us?

I myself was surprised, which is amusing, when I perused lately a talk I gave that I had never reread, which Jean Wahl published without my correcting it. It dates back to a time when I gave some short lectures at the Collège Philosophique that were open to the general public. It was a lecture on obsessional neurosis whose title I no longer recall – it was something like "The Neurotic's Myth," which, as you see, brings us right to the heart of the question. In it I demonstrated the role of mythical structures in determining the Rat Man's symptoms.

I was supposed to correct the transcribed text of that talk for publication, but I considered the task to be impossible. Bizarrely enough, having let some time go by, I reread it without too much discontent and was surprised to see – I would have sworn that I had not done so – that in it I spoke about Claudel's *The Humiliation of the Father*. There must have been some reason for that. It is obviously not [merely] because I encountered the *U* with a circumflex over it that I have been speaking to you about Claudel's work.

So let us begin anew.

What does the analysand come looking for in analysis? He comes looking for what there is to be found, or, more precisely, if he comes looking, it is because there is something to be found. And the only thing to be found by him is, strictly speaking, the trope par excellence, the trope of tropes: what we call his fate [*destin*].

Were we to forget the relationship that exists between analysis and what we call fate, the sort of thing that is akin to a figure – in the sense in which in French we speak of a "figure of fate" or a "figure of speech" – we would simply forget the origins of psychoanalysis. For psychoanalysis could not have made the slightest step forward without this relationship. Parallel to this, a slippage has occurred in the course of the evolution of psychoanalysis to a form 377
of practice that is ever more insistent, striking, and demanding regarding results that must be produced. This is undoubtedly lucky in certain respects, but it risks making us forget the weight of myth. Fortunately, people in other fields have continued to be interested in myth.

There is something that, more legitimately than we perhaps think, comes back to us here in a roundabout way. After all, we are perhaps in some way responsible for their interest in the function of myth.

I alluded to this a long time ago, and more than alluded to it – I already articulated it in my lecture on the Rat Man. My Seminar on the Rat Man had already begun and people had come to work on this with me at my home. I brought in the structural articulation of myth, such as it has since been systematically applied and developed

by Lévi-Strauss in his own seminar. I tried to demonstrate its value to you in explaining the history of the Rat Man.

For those who may have overlooked something or who are unaware of this, I will briefly define the structuralist articulation of myth. Taking a myth as a whole, I mean the *épos* or story, the way in which it is recounted from end to end, we construct a model that is constituted solely by a series of oppositional designations of the functions that are involved – for example, in the Oedipus myth, the relationship between father and son, incest, and so on. Naturally, I am speaking schematically and boiling it down in order to indicate what is involved. We realize that a myth does not stop there, for there are the generations that follow. Since it is a myth, generations do not simply correspond to the order in which the actors make their entrances on stage – that is, to the simple fact that, when the old people are gone, there are young ones who show up for it to start again. What interests us is the signifying coherence that obtains between the first constellation and the one that follows. Something happens, for example, that you can qualify as you like – say, brothers who become enemies – and then the function of a transcendent love that runs counter to a law, like incest, appears, whose function is diametrically opposed to it; this gives rise to relations that can be defined by a certain number of oppositional terms. In a word, I am talking about Antigone.

It is a game [*jeu*] whose rules, which give it rigor, we must detect. And let us observe that there is no other conceivable rigor than the kind that is found in games. In the function and play [*jeu*] of myth,
378 transformations occur according to certain rules that, owing to this very fact, turn out to have a revelatory value that creates higher configurations or illuminating individual cases. In short, these rules yield the same kind of fecundity we find in mathematics. This is what is involved in the elucidation of myths. And this interests us quite directly, since we cannot possibly broach the subject with whom we deal in analysis without encountering the function of myth.

This is a fact that is attested to by analytic practice. In any case, right from psychoanalysis' very first steps, in the *Traumdeutung* [*The Interpretation of Dreams*] and the letters to Fliess, Freud relies on myth and specifically on the Oedipal myth. Today, psychoanalysts gloss over that or bracket it, and try to express everything about our practice in economic terms, as they are called: for example, the function of the conflict between primordial tendencies, including the most radical among them, defenses against the drive, [that is,] the conflict – designated topographically in the theory of narcissism – between the ego* and the ego-ideal,* on the one hand, and the id, on the other. To go in this direction, and to jettison the land-

mark of myth, must be qualified in our practice as a forgetting, in the positive sense that this word has for us.

This does not stop people from practicing in a way that continues to be an analytic form of practice. But it is an analytic form of practice that forgets its own terms.

As you see, I come – as I often do, as I almost always do – back to formulating the most basic things. It is not merely for the pleasure of spelling them out, although there is pleasure in doing so, but because it is what allows us to raise the right questions in all their density.

But what are they? Does analysis involve presenting a subject with his fate? Is that the true question? Of course not. That would be to situate ourselves in the position of a demiurge, which has never been that of psychoanalysis. But to remain at the level of an altogether preliminary overview, this is nevertheless a formulation that derives its value from the fact that it frees itself from the received ways of posing the question, which are no better than plenty of others.

This was how things stood before we believed we were strong and clever enough to talk about people who were not neurotic, but normal. Personally, I have never, in fact, believed I was so strong or clever not to feel my pen shake a little whenever I would broach the topic of what a normal person is. But Ernest Jones wrote a whole 379
article about it. He certainly was not lacking in courage. And it must be admitted that he managed to pull it off not too badly. Still, we can see the difficulty involved in the endeavor.

Be that as it may, it is truly only through subterfuge that we can bring into play in psychoanalysis any sort of notion of normalization. It is a theoretical view that considers only part of the picture, like when we talk, for example, about "instinctual maturation," as if that were the only thing involved. In such cases we give ourselves over to the kind of extraordinary vaticinations bordering on moralizing preaching, that are so likely to inspire distrust and make people recoil. To unthinkingly bring in the idea of a normal anything in our praxis – whereas we discover in it precisely to what degree the so-called normal subject is anything but normal – should arouse in us the most radical and the most assured suspicion as to its results. We should first ask ourselves whether we can employ the notion of normal for anything whatsoever connected with our practice.

Let us confine our attention for the moment to the following question: "Can we say that the mastery we have acquired – over the deciphering process by which we locate the figure of fate [*destin*] – allows us to obtain the least drama possible or a change of sign [from negative to positive]?"

If the human configuration we deal with is drama – whether

tragic or not – can we confine ourselves to aiming at the least drama possible, thinking that a well-informed subject (one well-informed subject in the hand is worth two in the bush) will find a way to get out while the getting is good? Why not, after all? It is a modest claim. But even this has never in any way corresponded, as you know, to our practice. This is not it.

I claim that the doorway through which we must pass in order to say things that make some sense, the one that gives us the sense we are on the right track, is the one I am going to indicate to you.

As always, what must be seen is closer to us than the point at which we stupidly grasp what is supposedly obvious, what people call "commonsensical" – namely, the point where the crossroads of fate [*destin*] begin, the crossroads of "normality" in this case. On the contrary, if there is something that Freud's discovery has taught us, it is to see in symptoms a figure that is related to the figure of
380 fate. We did not know this before and now we know it. Knowledge makes a difference. It does not allow us to situate ourselves on the outside, nor does it allow the subject to place himself to one side, and for everything to go on in the same old way – that would be a crude, absurd way of conceptualizing things. The fact of knowing or not knowing is thus essential to the figure of fate. This is the right doorway. And myth confirms it.

Myths are fashioned figures that can be related, not to language, but to the involvement of a subject caught up in language – and, to complicate matters still further, in the play of speech. On the basis of the relations between the subject and any signifier whatsoever, figures are fashioned in which we can observe necessary points, irreducible points, major points, or points of intersection that are, for example, the very ones I tried to depict in the Graph of Desire. This was an attempt on my part, and the point here is not to ask whether it is faulty or incomplete, or whether it could not perhaps have been much more harmoniously constructed or reconstructed by someone else – I am simply mentioning its aim here. The aim of a minimal structure including eight points of intersection seems to be necessitated by the very encounter between the subject and the signifier. And it is already quite a lot to be able to maintain, by virtue of this sole fact, the necessity of the subject's *Spaltung* [splitting].

This figure, graph, or set of mapped points, in addition to attention to facts, allows us to reconcile the true function of trauma with our experience of development. A trauma is not simply something that erupted at a particular moment and broke its way into a structure that we imagine to be total – certain people thought this was implied by the notion of narcissism. Trauma is the fact that certain events come to be situated at a certain place in this structure. By

occupying this place, these events take on the signifying value that is attached to this place by a specific subject. This is what constitutes the traumatic value of an event. Hence the value of going back to the experience of myth.

It should be clear to you that, as concerns Greek myths, we are not terribly well situated [to interpret them]. We have plenty of different versions, but they are not always the right ones, as it were. We have no guarantee of their origin. These are not contemporary versions nor even local versions; they are more or less allegorical or fictionalized rearrangements that cannot be used in the same way as we can use versions collected in real-time, as when we collect myths in a North or South American [tribal] population. We are unable 381
to do with the Greek material what someone like Boas is able to do with the material he collects. Moreover, when I wanted to present to you the model of what becomes of the Oedipal conflict when knowledge as such comes into the myth at one point or another, I sought it elsewhere – namely, in Shakespeare's creation of *Hamlet*, which I examined for you two years ago. And I had every right to do so since, right from the outset, Freud himself had broached things in this way.

I felt that I could indicate something that, in a particularly captivating way, is modified at a structural point. Indeed, it is quite an unusual, aporetic point in the subject's relationship to desire that *Hamlet* spotlighted for reflection, meditation, interpretation, research, and the structured puzzle it represents. I think I have succeeded well enough in conveying to you its specificity by highlighting the following: unlike the father who is killed in the Oedipal myth, we cannot say of the father who is killed in *Hamlet* that "he did not know," but rather that "he knew." Not only did he know, but this factor intervenes in the subjective impact that interests us here, the impact on the central character, Hamlet.

Hamlet is, in truth, the only character. What we have here is a drama that is contained entirely within Hamlet as a subject. He is told that his father was killed, and he is told enough for him to know a good deal about it, even knowing by whom his father was killed. That said, I have done no more than repeat what Freud said right from the outset.

This suggests a method by which we are required to gauge, regarding the structure itself, the effect of what our knowledge introduces. To make a sweeping claim, to put it in a way that allows us to locate the root of what is at stake, I would say that at the origin of every neurosis – as Freud says right from his earliest writings – there is, not what people later interpreted to be a frustration, an ill-defined but unpaid balance owed to one [*un arriéré laissé*

ouvert dans l'informe], but rather a *Versagung*. At the origin of every neurosis, there is, in other words, something that is much closer to refusal than to frustration, that is as internal as it is external, and that is truly placed by Freud in an "existential" position, to qualify it with a term that at least has some resonances popularized in our contemporary language. This position does not establish a sequential order from normal, to the possibility of *Versagung*, and then on to neurosis; it establishes a *Versagung* right at the origin, beyond which a path may lead to neurosis or to normality, neither being
382 worth more than the other in relation to what is, at the outset, the possibility of *Versagung*.

It is obvious that this untranslatable *Versagung* is only possible in the register of *sagen*, insofar as *sagen* is not simply the operation of communicating, but of speaking – that is, the emergence as such of the signifier insofar as it allows the subject to deny himself (something) [*se refuser*].

We cannot get past this earliest, primordial refusal [*refus*], this power of refusal in what it has that is prerequisite [*préjudicielle*] to all our experience. In other words, we analysts operate solely in the register of *Versagung*, and don't we know it! And we do so all the time. It is inasmuch as we try to skirt it – and don't we know it! – that our entire technique becomes structured around an idea that is stammeringly expressed in the term "non-gratification," which is found nowhere in Freud's work.

We must go into what this specific *Versagung* is, for it implies a progressive direction, which is the very one that we bring into play in analytic practice.

3

I consider the terms that I have just introduced to be applicable to Claudel's myth, and I am going to return to it for a moment in order to depict for you, in a spectacular fashion, the fact that we must be the messengers or vehicles of *Versagung*.

I think you no longer doubt at this point that what occurs in *Crusts* is the Oedipal myth. We virtually come upon my own play on words at the very moment at which Louis de Coûfontaine and Turelure find themselves face to face.

I am referring to the moment at which a kind of request for tenderness is formulated. It is the first time that such a thing happens. True, it occurs ten minutes before Louis does his father in. Louis says to him, "*Tu es le père* [You are my father], all the same." And this line is truly doubled by *tuer le père* [kill your father], which the

woman's desire, Lumîr, suggested to him, and which superimposes itself here literally in a way which, I assure you, does not simply owe to a lucky linguistic accident.

What does what is represented onstage here mean? It means, and this is explicitly stated, that it is at this very moment and owing to it that the boy becomes a man. Louis de Coûfontaine is told that this 383
parricide will weigh on him his whole life long, but also that from this moment on he is no longer a good-for-nothing who botches up everything and who allows his land to be stolen from him by a bunch of meanies and clever cheats. He is going to become a fine ambassador who is quite capable of performing all kinds of dastardly deeds. This brings a certain correlation to mind.

He becomes the father. He not only becomes the father, but when he talks about Turelure later, in *The Humiliation of the Father*, in Rome, he says, "I was probably the only man who really knew and understood him; he never wanted to hear about it; he was not the man people think he was" [p. 325/167] – undoubtedly allowing people to think that treasure troves of sensitivity and experience had accumulated in the old hoodlum's heart of hearts. But Louis de Coûfontaine becomes the father. Moreover, this is the only way he could become the father, for reasons that are tied to things that occurred before the dramatic action begins. Things got off to a very bad start, indeed.

But the construction of the plot makes it quite apparent to us at the same time that, owing to this, Louis is castrated. In other words, there can be no outlet, even if it is easy and quite simple, for the little boy's desire, his desire that is sustained in such an ambiguous way, as he says to Lumîr herself.

He has this outlet within hand's reach; he need but bring Lumîr with him to the Mitidja Plain and all will be well; they will even live happily ever after. But something happens. First of all, we do not really know if this is something he wishes to do or not; but one thing is clear, and this is that she does not want to go. She tells him, "You knock off daddy," and then she heads off toward her own fate, which is that of a desire, the true desire of a Claudelian character.

This drama may, for some, depending on their leanings, be redolent of the sacristy and thus be pleasing or displeasing, but that is not our concern here. My point in presenting it to you is that it is nevertheless a tragedy. It is quite funny that this led Claudel to adopt stances that are not designed to please us, but we have to make do with them and, if need be, try to understand him. From one end to the other of Claudel's work, from *Tête d'Or* to *The Satin Slipper*, we encounter the tragedy of desire.

The character who serves as its prop in this generation, Lumîr, thus jilts her former partner, Louis de Coûfontaine, and heads toward her desire, one that is clearly described to us by Claudel as a
384 desire for death. But – and it is here that I will ask you to pause for a moment to note this particular version of the myth – what is it that she thereby gives Louis?

Not his mother, obviously. His mother is Sygne de Coûfontaine, and she is situated in a place that is obviously not that of the mother when her name is Jocasta. But there is another woman, the father's mistress, the father always lying at the horizon of this story in a clearly marked way. This woman – who has herself been rehabilitated owing to the impact of desire – rehabilitates our excluded son, our unwanted child, our drifting partial object. She reinstates him, recreating with him the father who has been defeated. The result of the operation is thus to give him the father's woman.

Listen carefully to what I am saying here. In Claudel's trilogy, we have an exemplary structural decomposition of the function of what, in Freud's myth, takes the form of a type of hollow or vacuum toward which things are drawn, a vertiginous point of the libido that is represented by the mother.

It is getting late and I will have to stop here. Still, I do not want to leave you without indicating where we are heading.

This is not such an astonishing story to us, after all, for we are already a bit hardened by analytic practice. Castration is, in short, cut from such cloth: we take from someone [the object of] his desire and, in exchange, we give him to someone else – in this case, to the social order.

Sichel is the one who is wealthy and thus it is quite natural for Coûfontaine to marry her. Moreover, Lumîr clearly saw this coming: there is but one thing for you to do now, she says to Louis, and that is to "marry your father's mistress" [p. 268/139].

It is this specific structure that is important. It seems insignificant because we see it all the time, but it is rarely expressed as such.

I think you get the picture: [the object of] a subject's desire is taken from him and, in exchange, he is sold on the open market to the highest bidder. But isn't this precisely what happens at the outset, at the earlier stage, being illustrated in the first play in the trilogy in quite a different manner, designed this time to awaken our slumbering sensibility? Isn't this, I mean, what happens at the level of Sygne de Coûfontaine in a way that is clearly designed to be a bit more moving to us?

385 Everything is taken from Sygne. I am not saying that this is done for no reason – let us leave that aside. But it is quite clear, too, that this is done in order to give her, in exchange for what is taken from her, to what she most abhors.

I am thus led to end today in an almost overly spectacular fashion by playfully proposing an enigma. What is at stake is, in fact, far richer than the question I am currently raising here. I will articulate it far more profoundly next time. In the meantime, I want to allow you to dream about it.

You will see that in the third generation, it is the same blow that is to be dealt to Pensée. But here it has neither the same point of departure nor the same origin, and this is what will be instructive to us, even allowing us to raise questions about psychoanalysts. It is the same blow, but naturally the characters are kinder in her case, they have hearts of gold; even he who wishes to deal her the same blow – namely, Orian – has one. This is quite clearly not to her own detriment, but it is not for her own good either. He, too, wants to give her to someone whom she does not want, but this time the kid does not go along with it. She grabs her Orian in passing, in secret no doubt, for just as long as he is no longer anything but one of the Pope's defenders, albeit a cold one. As for the other, good Lord, he is a true gentleman and agrees to break off the engagement without balking.

What does this mean? As I already told you, it is a lovely fantasy and has not yet spoken its last word.

This nevertheless suffices for me to leave you with the question of what we are going to be able to do with it in order to better discern certain effects that are based on the fact that, as analysts, we enter into the subject's fate and become involved in it.

There is one more point that I must make before leaving you today.

The effects on man of the fact that he becomes subject to the law cannot be exhaustively summarized by saying that everything dear to his heart is taken from him and that he himself is given in exchange to the daily grind of the plot [*trame*] that knots the generations together. In order for it to be a plot that knots the generations together – once the operation by which you see the curious conjugation of a minus that is not coupled with a plus is complete – man still owes something. 386

This is where we will take up the question next time.

May 24, 1961

CAPITAL I AND LITTLE *a*

CAPITAL AND LABOUR

XXIII

SLIPPAGE IN THE MEANING OF THE IDEAL

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Effects of the psychoanalytic group.
Action as a response to the unconscious.
There is no such thing as a metalanguage.
Love and guilt.
"Extrojection."

How can we situate what the analyst's place must be in the transference? I told you last time that we must locate this place in two ways: where does the analysand situate the analyst and where must the analyst be in order to suitably respond to him?

The analytic relationship – a relationship that people often refer to as a "situation," as if the initial situation were constitutive – can only begin to develop on the basis of a misunderstanding. There is no overlap between what the analyst is for the analysand at the beginning of the analysis and what the analysis of transference will allow us to reveal as concerns what is implied, not immediately, but truly implied by the fact that a subject becomes involved in this psychoanalytic adventure about which he knows little or nothing at the outset.

In what I talked about last time, you might have grasped that it is the dimension of what is truly implied by the opening up, possibility, richness, and the whole future development of the analysis, that raises a question for us about the analyst. Isn't it at least probable and palpable that he must already place himself at the level of this truly, that he must truly be in the place where he must arrive at the end of the analysis, which is precisely the analysis of the transference?

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I am thus asking whether the analyst can be indifferent to his true position.

Let us clarify things more, for this might almost seem not to raise a question for you. Doesn't the analyst's science, you might say, make up for this? Yet the fact that the analyst may know something about the major and minor pathways of the analysis does not suffice, whether he likes it or not, to locate him in this place, no matter how he formulates it to himself. The divergences regarding the analyst's function in technique, once it has been theorized, bring this out quite clearly.

An analyst is not the only analyst around. He is part of a group, part of a "mass" of analysts, in the strict sense that this term takes on in Freud's work, *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse* [*Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*].

It is no accident that the topic is first broached by Freud at a moment at which a society of analysts already exists. Numerous problems connected with Freud's second topography are linked to what happens at the level of the relationship between the analyst and his own function. We have here a phase which, although it is not at all obvious, nevertheless warrants examination, especially by we analysts. I have referred to this on several occasions in my writings. However internally necessary we consider the emergence of the second topography in Freud's work to be, we certainly cannot, in any case, neglect the historical moment at which it arises. We have evidence of this; it suffices to open up Jones' biography of Freud to realize that at the point in time at which Freud developed this topography – we find it in particular in *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse* – he was thinking about how to organize an analytic society.

I mentioned my writings a few moments ago. In them, I pointed out, in a more acute way perhaps than I am doing right now, the drama that this problematic posed for him. In particular, I indicated what comes out quite clearly in certain passages cited by Jones: Freud's romantic conception of a kind of Comintern, a kind of secret committee functioning as such within psychoanalysis. Freud truly gave himself over to this idea in certain of his letters, and it was
391 clearly in this way that he in fact envisioned the functioning of the "group of seven" analysts in whom he truly trusted.

As soon as there is a large number or an organized mass of those who serve as analysts, all the problems that Freud mentions in this text clearly arise. As I have indicated in my writings, these are merely organizational problems of the group with respect to the existence of a certain discourse.

We should re-examine *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse* in order to apply its insights to the modified theory of the analyst's function that post-Freudian analysts developed. This would allow

us to see something that is almost immediately and intuitively tangible and comprehensible – the necessity or gravitational pull that made the analyst's function converge with the analyst's own image of it. This image is situated very precisely at a point that Freud teaches us to isolate, a point whose function he develops thoroughly at the time at which he articulates the second topography – namely, the *Ich-Ideal*, translated as the "ego-ideal" [*idéal du moi*].

This term is ambiguous. For example, in an article that is very important to us and to which I will refer later, "*Übertragung und Liebe*" by Jekels and Bergler – which was presented at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in 1933, published in *Imago* in 1934, and is easier to find in the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* where it was translated into English as "Transference and Love" in 1949 – *Ich-Ideal* is translated into English by "ego-ideal."* This play in the order of the words has a role that is hardly accidental.

If you do not know German, you might believe that *Ich-Ideal* means ideal ego [*moi idéal*]. I have pointed out that in the first article in which Freud talks about the *Ich-Ideal*, "On Narcissism: An Introduction," we occasionally come across the term *ideal Ich*. And Lord knows that, for all of us, it is an object of some debate. Some people, such as myself, say that we cannot even for an instant overlook such a variation on Freud's part, he being so precise with his signifiers, while other people say that it is impossible, upon examination of the context, to attribute any significance whatsoever to this variation.

What is clear is that even the latter are the first – as you will see in the very next issue of *La Psychanalyse* – to distinguish the ego-ideal from the ideal ego at the psychological level. I am referring here to my friend Daniel Lagache. In his article on "Psychoanalysis and Personality Structure," he draws a distinction between them that, without diminishing it for all that, I can say is descriptive, extremely refined, elegant, and clear. Phenomenologically speaking, the ego- 392
ideal and the ideal ego absolutely do not serve the same function.

In a response that I wrote up expressly for the same issue of *La Psychanalyse* on the topic Lagache wrote about, I simply made a few remarks, the first of which is that one could object that in proposing to provide a formulation that is, as he puts it, at some distance from experience, he himself abandons the method that he had announced he would follow in his metapsychology – that is, in his structural elaboration. Indeed, the clinical and descriptive distinction he draws between these two terms, "ego-ideal" and "ideal ego," is not sufficiently inscribed within the method he himself proposed to use. You will see all of this very shortly in the next issue of the journal.

Today I will perhaps go into the thoroughly concrete metapsychological way in which we can distinguish between their functions in the grand economic perspective introduced by Freud around the notion of narcissism. I will turn to it later; for the time being, I am simply highlighting the term *Ich-Ideal* or *idéal du moi* for you, inasmuch as it comes to be translated into English as "ego-ideal." In English, the respective places of the determinative and the determiner are far more ambiguous in a group of two terms; and we already find in "ego-ideal"* the semantic trace of an evolution or slippage of the function attributed to this term when people wanted to use it to indicate what the analyst becomes for the analysand.

It was said very early on that the analyst takes on the role of the analysand's ego-ideal. This is both true and false. It is true in the sense that this sometimes happens. It happens all too easily. I would even say – and I will provide you with an example of this later – it often happens that a subject attributes both strong and comfortable positions to the analyst that are clearly related to what we call resistance. Far from it being simply an apparent or occasional position, this is perhaps how certain analyses actually get started.

Which is not at all to say that this exhausts the question, or that the analyst can in any way be content with this – in other words, that he can push the analysis to its endpoint without flushing the subject out of the position he adopts, insofar as he places the analyst in the position of his ego-ideal. This thus even raises the question of what
393 this truth turns out to have to be in the future. In other words, if at the end, after the analysis of the transference, the analyst must not [. . .] which is not simply at play. This is something that has never been said before. For, in the final analysis, the article I was talking with you about earlier did not have the appearance, at the moment at which it came out, of actively seeking answers; it came out in 1933, and – compared to the 1920s, at which the turning point in analytic technique occurred, as everyone says – by then they had had time to reflect and to see clearly in this context.

I cannot go through this text with you in detail, but I will ask you to read it and we will talk about it in future classes. We are not going to dwell on it here, all the more so because the version I want to talk to you about is the English text. This is why it is the one I have with me today, even though the German text is more incisive. But rather than talk about the main lines of the original text, I want to indicate the semantic slippage that expresses what is produced, in effect, at a critical point in the analyst.

Insofar as he is an analyst – all by himself and captain of his own ship – he is confronted with his own action. What is at stake for him is the examination, exorcism, and extraction of himself that

is indispensable for him to have a clear view of his own personal relationship with the function of the ego-ideal, insofar as for him, as an analyst, and consequently in a particularly necessary way, this function is sustained within what I called the analytic group. If he does not acquire such a clear view, what occurs is what has effectively occurred – namely, a slippage of meaning that can in no way be conceptualized at this level as halfway outside the subject, or, to put it bluntly, as an error. On the contrary, this slippage implicates him profoundly and subjectively.

In 1933, psychoanalysts centered a whole paper on "Transference and Love" around the topic of the ego-ideal. Yet, 20 or 25 years later, theoretically articulated articles clearly state, without any ambiguity whatsoever, that relations between the analysand and the analyst are based on the fact that the analyst has an ego that one can call ideal.

In what sense is the analyst's ego said to be an ideal ego in those articles? In a sense that is quite different both from that of the ego-ideal and from the concrete sense of the ideal ego to which I alluded earlier. I am going to illustrate it for you: it is an ideal ego, so to speak, that has been realized – an ideal ego in the sense in which one says that a car is an ideal car. It is not a car's ideal, nor is it the 394
dream of a car when it is all by itself in the garage – it is a truly good and solid car.

Such is the meaning that this term ends up taking on. Were it no more than that – a literary creation, a certain way of saying that the analyst must intervene as someone who knows a bit more than the analysand does – it would be situated merely at the level of a platitude and probably would not have much import. But the fact is that the very slippage in meaning of these two signifiers – "ego" and "ideal" – translates something altogether different: the true subjective involvement of the analyst [in the analysis].

We should not be surprised by an effect of this kind. Something is merely being plastered over here. It is but the endpoint of an adventure whose mainspring is far more essential than the simply localized, almost caricatural point where we deal with it all the time, as if we were here for no other purpose.

Where did this come from? From the 1920 turning point. What did the 1920 turning point revolve around? It revolved around the fact – as the people of that time, the heroes of the first analytic generation, say – that interpretation was no longer functioning the way it had functioned prior to that. Times had changed and interpretation was no longer encountering the same success as it had. Why not? This did not surprise Freud. He had long since anticipated this. We can point to a very early passage in one of his "Papers on Technique" in

which he says, let us take advantage of the opening up of the unconscious, because soon it will have found another trick. What does that mean to us, to we who can, based on Freud's experience, and slipping alongside him, nevertheless find our bearings?

I propose that what Freud is saying there refers to the effect of a discourse – to wit, that of the first generation of analysts – that does not realize that it concerns the effect of another discourse: namely, that of the unconscious. It doesn't realize this even though the discourse of the unconscious was present already in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, where I teach you to recognize it and spell it out; for what is constantly involved there, going by the name "unconscious mechanisms," is but the effect of discourse. Freud is thus referring to the effect of a discourse [analytic discourse] that bears on the effect of a discourse [that of the unconscious] without realizing it, and this necessarily leads to a new crystallization of unconscious effects that renders the latter discourse more opaque.

What does "a new crystallization" refer to? It refers to observable effects – the fact, for example, that giving patients certain insights or keys, or using certain signifiers with them, no longer has the same effect as it did before.

395 Let us observe, however, that the subjective structures corresponding to this new crystallization need not be new. I am referring to the registers or degrees of alienation, as it were, that we can specify in the subject and qualify, for example, with the terms "ego," "superego," and "ego-ideal." These are like stable waves. Whatever happens, these effects make the subject beat a retreat; they immunize or inoculate him with respect to a certain discourse. They impede us from leading the subject where we want to lead him – namely, to his desire. This changes nothing as concerns the nodal points where he, as a subject, can recognize and instate himself.

This is what Freud notes at this turning point. If Freud attempts to define what the stable points and fixed waves are in subjective constitution, it is because these are what quite remarkably seem to him to be constants. But it is not in order to consecrate them that he concerns himself with them and articulates them – it is with a view to removing them as obstacles. Even when he speaks of the *Ich* and brings it to the fore, it is not in order to institute the so-called "synthetic function of the ego" as a type of irreducible inertia. This is nevertheless how it was interpreted thereafter.

We must reconsider all of this as an acting out* of the self-instituting of the subject in his relationship to the signifier, on the one hand, and to reality, on the other. It is in this way that we will be able to begin writing a new chapter on analytic action.

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Regarding what I am endeavoring to do here, one might say – with all the caveats implied by it – that I am attempting to provide an analysis, in the strict sense of the term, of the analytic community insofar as it is a mass organized by the analytic ego-ideal, such as it has in fact developed in the form of a certain number of mirages. First among these mirages is that of the "strong ego" that has been so often pointed to wrongly in places where people think they see it. To reverse the pair of terms that make up the title of Freud's text that I referred to earlier, one of the facets of my Seminar this year could be entitled *Ich-Psychologie und Massenanalyse*.

Indeed, *Ich-Psychologie* [ego psychology], which has come to the 396
fore in analytic theory, has for over a decade now been constituting a barrier to and creating inertia for any recommencing of psychoanalytic efficacy. And it is to the degree to which things have gotten to this point that we should interpellate the analytic community as such, allowing each of us to take a look at it, especially as regards what comes to alter the purity of the analyst's position in relation to his analysand, for whom he serves as a respondent. For the analyst himself is inscribed in and determined by the effects that result from the analytic mass – by which I mean the mass of analysts – given the current state of their constitution and their discourse.

One would not be at all mistaken were one to present in this way what I am telling you here.

This has nothing to do with an historical accident, the stress being laid on "accident." We are faced with a difficulty or impasse here that concerns what you heard me bring out pointedly earlier – namely, psychoanalytic action.

If there is a place where the term "action" – which has somewhat recently been called into question by the philosophers of our modern times – can be interrogated anew in a way that is perhaps decisive, it is, as paradoxical as this assertion may seem, at the level of the person whom one might believe abstains the most from it – namely, the analyst.

Over the last few years, I have often emphasized in my Seminar the original perspective that our very unusual experience of action as "acting out"* in the treatment must allow us to introduce into any and all thematic reflection about action. Recall what I told you about the obsessive and the style of his performances and even exploits – you can find it in the article in which I gave definitive shape to the talk I gave in Royaumont.

If there is something that the analyst can stand up and say, it is that action as such – human action, if you prefer – is always

enmeshed in the attempt or temptation to respond to the unconscious. And to anyone who is concerned, for whatever purpose, with what deserves to be called action – the historian, in particular, insofar as he does not give up on the meaning of history, many formulations of which make our heads spin – I would propose that he reconsider, as a function of the articulation I am providing, a question that we cannot eliminate from the text of history all the same:
397 namely, that its meaning does not purely and simply drag us along as though we were caught in a riptide, but that actions occur in it.

The action with which we are concerned is psychoanalytic action. And psychoanalytic action is indisputably an attempt to respond to the unconscious.

It is also indisputable that, when we call something that occurs in someone in analysis an "acting out"* – as our practice, this thing that constitutes a psychoanalyst, has gotten us into the habit of doing – we know what we are saying even if we do not know very well how to say it.

What is the most general formulation that we can provide for it? It is important to give the most general formulation, because if we provide particular formulations here, we obscure the meaning of things. If we say, for example, that "it is a relapse on the subject's part," or that "it is the effect of something stupid we did," we veil what is involved. This can, of course, be the case, but these are particular instances of the definition of acting out* that I am proposing to you. Since psychoanalytic action is an attempt (a temptation too, in its own way) to respond to the unconscious, acting out* is the type of action by which, at a certain moment of the treatment – undoubtedly inasmuch as it is especially prompted, perhaps by our stupidity, perhaps by the analysand's, but that is secondary and of little importance – the subject demands a more accurate response from us.

All action – whether it is an acting out* or not, whether it is psychoanalytic action or not – bears a certain relation to the opacity of the repressed. And the earliest action is related to the earliest repressed, that is, to the *Urverdrängt* [that which is primally repressed].

Freud's notion of *Urverdrängt* might strike you as opaque, which is why I am attempting to supply you with a meaning for it. The same thing is involved as what I tried to articulate for you last time by saying that we cannot but explore the earliest *Versagung*. This, too, is the same thing that is expressed on the theoretical level in my formulation that, appearances notwithstanding, there is no such thing as a metalanguage.

We can speak of metalanguage when, for example, I write little

signs like *a*, *b*, *x*, and *kappa* on the blackboard. That works, that functions – that's mathematics. But can there be a metalanguage as concerns what is known as speech – namely, the fact that a subject becomes involved in language? One can speak of speech, naturally, and you see that I am in the process of doing so. But in doing so, all of speech's effects are involved, which is why I am saying that, at the 398
level of speech, there is no such thing as a metalanguage – or, if you prefer, that there is no such thing as a metadiscourse. Or, finally, that there is no action that definitively transcends the effects of the repressed. If perhaps there is, in the end, some such action, it is at most the action by which the subject as such dissolves, is eclipsed, and disappears. It is an action about which nothing can be said. It is, if you will, the horizon of this action that gives fantasy its structure.

This is why my little notation for the structure of fantasy, ($\$ \diamond a$), is algebraic and why it can only be written with chalk on the blackboard. It is essential that we not forget this unsayable place insofar as the subject dissolves there and insofar as only algebraic notation can preserve it.

In the article entitled "Transference and Love" by Jekels and Bergler, presented in 1933 when they were still at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, there is a brilliant clinical intuition which, as usual, gives the article its weight and value. The depth and tone of this article clearly mark it as stemming from the first generation of analysts; and, even now, what we appreciate in an article is when it brings out something like this. The intuition is that there is a close relationship between love and guilt.

As opposed to the bucolic world of shepherds and shepherdesses where, we are told, love basks in pure beatitude, the authors bid us pay close attention to what we actually see. What we see is that love is not simply guilty in many instances – it is that people love in order to escape from guilt. This is obviously not the kind of thing one can come up with every day. It seems a bit simplistic to people who don't like Claudel – to me, it is of the same ilk.

If one loves, in short, it is because lurking somewhere is the shadow of "*Il vecchio con la barba*" [the old man with the beard] – as an hysterically funny woman I once traveled in Italy with called it – the one we see everywhere among the [Flemish or Italian] Primitives.

The following thesis is argued for quite nicely in the article: love is fundamentally the need to be loved by the very person who could make you feel guilty. If you are loved by that person, you feel much better.

This is one of those psychoanalytic insights that I would say is a top-quality truth [*de bon aloi*], but which is also a low-quality truth because it is an *aloi*, it is alloyed. It is not unalloyed – it is a 399

clinical truth. Moreover, it is a collapsed truth, as it were, a truth that crushes a certain articulation. If I want us to separate these two metals, love and guilt, it is not because I have a taste for juvenile schmaltz. It is because the importance of our discoveries rests entirely on the fact that in reality, as they say, we constantly deal with the effects of the tamping down [*tassement*] of the symbolic in the real. It is by making distinctions that we move forward and that we demonstrate the efficacious mainsprings with which we deal.

That said, even if guilt is not always and immediately involved in the triggering of love, in the flash of falling in love, or love at first sight, it is no less clear that, even in relationships that begin under such poetic auspices, in time it tends to happen that all the effects of active censure come to revolve around the beloved object. It is not simply that the whole system of prohibitions recrystallizes around that person, but that it is to that person that we come to ask for permission – a function that is ever so constitutive of human behavior. We would do well not to overlook – in truly authentic, high-quality love relationships – the impact, not of the ego-ideal, but rather of the superego as such, in its most opaque and unsettling form.

On the one hand, we find this clinical intuition in the article by our friends Jekels and Bergler. On the other hand, we see in it a partial and really brutal use – like that employed by the proverbial bull in a china shop – of the economic point of view that Freud theorized for us when he discussed narcissism. I am referring, in particular, to the idea that the libidinal equation aims, in the final analysis, at restoring an initial integrity, at reintegrating everything that was involved in what Freud calls, if I recall correctly, an *Abtrennung* [separation, division, or partitioning] – in other words, everything that experience led the subject to consider, at one time or another, as separate from himself. This notion, which is theoretical, is among the most precarious when it is applied in every register and at every level; and the function it plays in Freud's thought, at the time of his "On Narcissism: An Introduction," raises a question. We need to know whether we can use it in good conscience.

As Jekels and Bergler clearly state – for at that point in time, analysts were not built on an assembly line and they knew how to outline the aporias of a theoretical position – libidinal investment in
400 objects seems miraculous. And in fact, from their particular vantage point, it is a miracle. If the subject is truly constituted at the libidinal level in such a way that his end and goal is to be satisfied with an entirely narcissistic position, how can it be that, in general and on the whole, he does not manage to remain there? If something can make this monad quiver ever so slightly by way of a reaction, one can, of course, theoretically conceptualize that its goal is to return to

its initial position. But it is not easy to see what could give rise to the enormous detour that constitutes the complex and rich structuring with which we constantly deal in reality.

This is truly what is at stake, and it is what the authors of this article attempt to respond to throughout their article. They adopt this perspective – quite slavishly, I must say, following the trail blazed by Freud – concerning the mainspring of the complexification of the subject's structure: namely, the coming into play of the ego-ideal, which is my main topic today. In effect, Freud indicates, in "On Narcissism: An Introduction," that what is involved is the artifice by which the subject maintains his ideal – allow me to abbreviate it in this way because it is getting late – of omnipotence. In Freud's inaugural text, especially if one takes the trouble to read it, this is introduced and already clarifies enough things at this point that we do not ask for anything further. But given that Freud went on to rethink things quite a bit and rendered this first differentiation still more complex, the authors have to grapple here with yet another definition of the ego-ideal, that of an ego-ideal that restores the benefits of love to the subject. Freud explains that the ego-ideal is something that – having itself originated in the first lesions on one's narcissism – becomes domesticated anew by being introjected. As for the superego, we perceive that we are forced to admit that there must be another mechanism at work, for as introjected as it may be, it nevertheless does not become any more beneficial.

I will stop here today on this topic and come back to it at a later date. Jekels and Bergler are necessarily led to resort to the whole dialectic of Eros and Thanatos which, at that time, is no small matter. It gets pretty complex and is even rather nice. Have a look at the article – you will get your money's worth.

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Before leaving you today, I would like to propose something lively and amusing to you, designed to give you an idea of what a better presentation of the function of narcissism allows us to articulate more clearly, regarding the ideal ego and the ego-ideal, and in a way that confirms all of psychoanalytic practice since these notions were developed.

The ideal ego and the ego-ideal are, no doubt, closely related to the need to preserve one's narcissism. But we have reason to take into account what, after first broaching the question, I proposed to you by way of a necessary modification to psychoanalytic theory, given the path it followed whereby the ego was used as I indicated

earlier – this is what I teach you, or rather taught you, under the heading of the mirror stage. What are its consequences as concerns the economy of the ideal ego and the ego-ideal, and their relationship to the preservation of narcissism?

Well, since it is late, I will illustrate this to you in a way that will, I hope, amuse you. I spoke earlier of cars; using them, let us try to see what the ideal ego is.

The ideal ego is a boy from a good family sitting at the wheel of his little sports car. With it, he's going to take you for a ride. He's going to show off. He's going to take some risks, which is not a bad thing, he's going to be a bit reckless [*goût du sport*], as they say, and the point will be to know what meaning he gives this word and whether recklessness might not also imply defiance of the rules – I don't mean simply the rules of the road, but also of safety.

Be that as it may, this is the arena in which he must show – or not show, that is, show how it is suitable to show – that he is tougher than others, even if it means having people say he is going a bit too far. This is the ideal ego. Which is somewhat tangential, for what I want to talk about is its relationship to the ego-ideal. Indeed, the ego-ideal does not leave the ideal ego all by itself and objectless because, after all, on certain occasions – not on every occasion – if the kid gives himself over to scabrous deeds, why is that? In order to catch a girl's eye.

402 Is it as much about catching her eye as it is about the way in which he wants to catch it? The desire itself is perhaps of less import here than the way of satisfying it. This is why, as we know, the girl can be altogether superfluous and need not even be present.

In short, in this context, which is the one in which the ideal ego has just assumed its place in fantasy, we see more easily than elsewhere what regulates the tonal quality of the fantasy elements. We see that there must be something that slips between the two terms here [$ and *a*], so that one of the two can be elided so easily. We know which term it is that slips in. There is no need to comment on it further – it is lowercase *phi*, the imaginary phallus. And what is at stake here is truly something that is put to the test.

What is the ego-ideal? The ego-ideal, which is closely related to the play and function of the ideal ego, is truly constituted by the fact that at the outset, if he has his little sports car, it is because he is from a fine family, because he is a rich man's son, and because – to change registers – if Marie-Chantal, as you know, joins the Communist Party, it's to piss off her father.

To explore whether she does not in fact misrecognize her own identification here with what she is trying to obtain by pissing her father off is yet another tangent that we will not fly off on. Let us say

that both of them – Marie-Chantal and the rich man's son sitting at the wheel of his little car – would be quite simply enveloped in the world organized by the father were it not precisely for the signifier "father." For this signifier allows us, as it were, to extract ourselves from that world in order to imagine that we are pissing him off and to sometimes even succeed in doing so. This is what we analysts express by saying that, in such cases, he or she introjects the paternal image.

Isn't this also to say that the signifier is the instrument thanks to which these two characters, male and female, can "extroject" themselves from the objective situation? Introjection is, in short, the following: to organize oneself subjectively in such a way that the father – indeed, in the form of an ego-ideal that is not as mean as all that – is a signifier on the basis of which the youngster, whether male or female, can come to contemplate him- or herself not too unfavorably at the wheel of his little car or brandishing her Communist Party card.

In short, if, on the basis of this introjected signifier, the subject is judged disapprovingly [*le réprouve*], he thereby takes on the dimension of an outcast [*réprouvé*], which, as everyone knows, is not so 403
terribly disadvantageous, narcissistically speaking. But the upshot, then, is that we cannot so easily say, regarding the function of the ego-ideal,* that it brings together all that is narcissistically beneficial, as if it were purely and simply inherent to a single effect at the same point.

This is what I try to articulate for you with my little schema of the inverted vase, which I will not draw on the blackboard again because I do not have time, but which is, I imagine, still fresh in many of your minds. It is only from a specific point that, around the desired flowers, one can see an image arise, that of the vase. Note that this image is real. It is produced by means of the reflection generated by a spherical mirror – in other words, by the particular structure of the human being insofar as the hypertrophy of his ego seems to be tied to his prematurity at birth.

The necessary distinction between the locus where the narcissistic benefit is produced and the locus where the ego-ideal* functions forces us to question the relationship of each of these to the function of love in different ways. We must not present this relationship in a confused way, especially at the level at which we are now examining the analysis of transference.

In concluding today, allow me speak to you about the case of a female patient.

I would say that this patient takes more than just liberties with the

rights, if not the duties, stemming from the marital bond. And when she has an affair, Lord knows she is able to take its consequences to the most extreme point of what a certain social limit – that of the respect she derives from her husband's position – commands her to respect. Let us say that she is someone who knows how to sustain and deploy the positions of her desire admirably. And believe you me, she has, over time, figured out how to maintain altogether intact – in her family, I mean with her husband and her amiable kids – a force field of demands that is strictly centered on her own libidinal needs.

When Freud tells us somewhere, if I recall correctly, about women's *Knödelmoral* – which literally means a morality based on dumplings, namely, satisfactions that are demanded – we must not believe that this always backfires. There are women who succeed exceedingly well at it, except for the fact that they need an analysis.

What was I for this patient for quite some time? The authors of the article I mentioned earlier will give us the answer: I was her
404 ego-ideal, inasmuch as I was the ideal point at which order was maintained, and in a way that was all the more necessary since it was on this basis that all disorder was rendered possible. In short, it was essential at that point in time that her analyst not be immoral. Had I been so tactless as to approve of any of her excesses, the result would not, I suspect, have been pretty to behold. Moreover, anything possibly atypical that she could glimpse in my own family structure, or in the principles by which I was raising those under my roof, did not fail to open up for her all the depths of an abyss that she quickly covered over.

Don't go thinking that it is necessary that the analyst effectively demonstrate, thank God, all the ideal qualities that people attribute to him. She simply dropped hints to me on each occasion concerning what she did not want to know about me. The only thing that was truly important was the guarantee she had, believe me, that regarding herself, I would not trip up.

What does such a demand for moral conformity imply? Contemporary moralists have, as you suspect, the answer: in order to lead such a fulfilling life, this person must naturally not have been from the lower classes. And thus political moralists will tell you that what was truly of the essence was to keep a lid on questions that might have been raised concerning the legitimacy of social privilege, all the more so in that, as you may well imagine, she was a bit of a progressive.

But if we consider the true dynamic of the forces at play, it is here that the analyst can put in his own two cents' worth. With the abysses open, I could have acted in such a way as to bring about

perfect conformity between the ideals and the reality of the analysis. But I believe that the thing that, in any event, absolutely could not be debated was that she had the most beautiful breasts in town.

Which, as you can imagine, bra saleswomen never contradict.

May 31, 1961

405

XXIV

IDENTIFICATION VIA *"EIN EINZIGER ZUG"*

The primitive monad of jouissance.
Introjection of the imperative object.
The Other in the mirror stage.
The three modes.
On rich people and saints.

I am going to keep talking about my topic in view of arriving at my perhaps daring goal this year, which is to formulate what the analyst must truly be in order to respond to the transference – which also implies knowing what he must be and what he can be later on [in the analysis]. This is why I characterized my goal as daring.

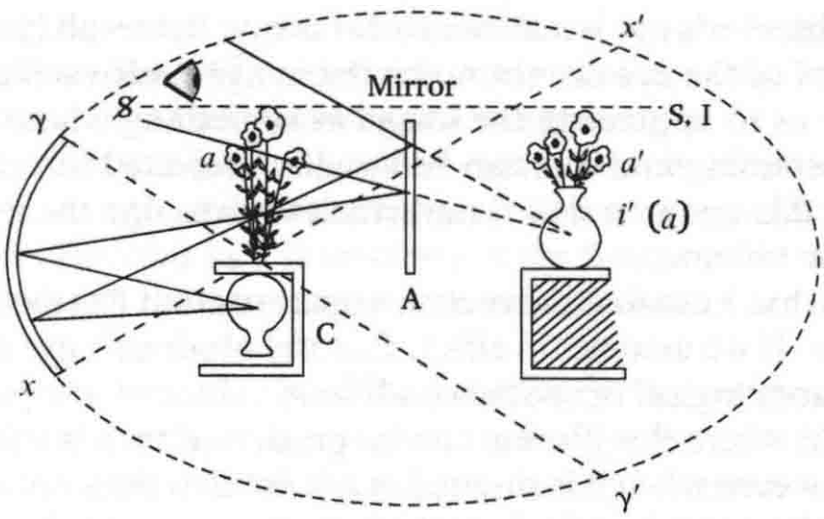
Last time you saw me sketch out – regarding the paper by Jekels and Bergler in *Imago* published in 1934, that is, a year after they presented it at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society – the idea that we are led to broach this question in terms of the function of narcissism, considered with respect to any and all possible libidinal cathexis.

You are aware of what allows us to view the field of narcissism as having already been extensively explored. We shall see in what respect our specific position, by which I mean the one that I have been teaching you here, broadens or rather generalizes the usually received view. By generalizing it, we can perceive certain traps that are included in the peculiarity of the stance that is ordinarily recommended by analysts.

1

I mentioned last time that one can find in Jekels and Bergler's article, entitled "*Übertragung und Liebe*" ["Transference and Love"], if not
406 all the dead ends to which the theory of narcissism risks leading those who articulate it, at least some of them. All of Balint's work,

for example, revolves around the notion of a supposedly primordial autoeroticism and around the way in which the latter is compatible both with the observed facts and with the necessary development of psychoanalytic practice.



Complete schema

I have just put up on the board, as a visual aid, a little schema that is not new and that you will be able to find in a better-drawn version in the next issue of *La Psychanalyse*. I did not want to include all the details that remind us of its relevance in the optical field in my drawing here today, both because I am not especially inclined to wear myself out and because they would have made this chalk-drawn schema more confused in the end.

Let me remind you of the old story of the illusion – which is one of the amusing experiments of classical physics – of the inverted bouquet: by means of a spherical mirror placed behind a certain device, we can make an image appear that, as I would like to point out, is real – by which I mean that it is not a virtual image, [virtual images being the kind] that are created by [ordinary flat] mirrors. Assuming that we have respected certain ambient lighting conditions carefully enough, the image of a bouquet – the bouquet being in reality hidden under a stand – appears to stand straight up above the stand [see *Écrits*, p. 673].

Such artifices are also used in all sorts of tricks that magicians perform onstage. All kinds of other things can be made to appear above the stand, too, not just a bouquet.

In the present instance, for reasons related to my presentation 407
and to the metaphorical usage of the schema I have in mind, it is the vase itself – the material vase as an authentic piece of pottery – that is hidden under the stand. [Thanks to the spherical mirror,] the vase then appears in the form of a real image [above the stand] on the

condition that the observer's eye be, on the one hand, sufficiently far away [from the spherical mirror], and, moreover, situated within the limits of a cone determined by the crossing lines [*xx'* and *yy'*] that start at the edges of the spherical mirror, intersect at its focal point, [and continue on from there].

If the observer's eye is sufficiently far away, the result is that small movements of the eye do not make the image itself vacillate much, and allow us to appreciate the image as something whose contours are self-sustaining and that can be visually projected through space. Although this image is flat, it nevertheless gives one the impression of a certain volume.

This is what I use to construct an apparatus that has metaphorical value to us. If we assume, in effect, that the observer's eye is – owing to certain topological or spatial conditions – situated at a point in the spatial field where this illusion can be produced, then it will perceive this illusion even when it is situated at a point that does not allow it to perceive this image directly. In order to make it possible for the eye to perceive it indirectly, one can use an artifice, which involves placing at a certain location a flat mirror – that I will call uppercase A owing to the metaphorical use that I will make of it later – in which the eye will see the same illusion reflected; it will see a virtual image of the real image. In other words, the eye will see the same illusion in the reflected form of a virtual image that would be produced if it were placed in real space – that is, at a point, with respect to the mirror, that is symmetrical to the point it occupies – and if the eye looked at what was happening at the focal point of the spherical mirror, namely, the point at which the illusion formed by the real image of the vase is produced.

In the classical experiment with the bouquet, the vase has its usefulness inasmuch as it allows the eye to focus in such a way that the real image appears to be located in space. As opposed to what is done in the classical experiment, I provide a real bouquet [above the stand] that the real image of the vase comes to surround at its base.

I call this mirror A, the real image of the vase *i(a)*, and the flowers *a*. As you will see, this will serve us as a visual aid for explanations
408 that I have to give concerning the implications of the function of narcissism inasmuch as the ego-ideal plays the role of the mainspring of narcissism that is introduced in Freud's original text, "On Narcissism: An Introduction" [*SE* XIV, pp. 73–102]. People make an incredibly big deal about its role as a mainspring when they tell us that the ego-ideal is also the pivotal point of the kind of identification whose impact is fundamental in the production of transference.

I truly did not select at random the article that I spoke to you about last time. It is, on the contrary, quite exemplary, significant, and well articulated with respect to the notion of the ego-ideal, as

this notion was created and generalized in the psychoanalytic milieu at the time the article was written. How did Jekels and Bergler conceptualize it at the moment at which they began to theorize a notion that was quite new in psychoanalytic theory owing to its topographical function? If you peruse a good cross-section of the clinical papers, case histories, and case presentations from that time, you will get a sense of the idea that authors of the time formed of it and the difficulties they encountered in applying it.

Here is, at least in part, what they came up with. If one reads them attentively enough, it appears that, in order to grasp the efficacy of the ego-ideal insofar as it is involved in the function of transference, they considered the ego-ideal to be a field that is organized in a certain way inside the subject.

The concept of an "inside" serves a major topological function in psychoanalytic thinking, since even introjection refers to it. The organized field was understood quite naïvely, inasmuch as no distinction was made at the time between the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real. In this state of imprecision and indistinctness regarding topological notions, we are truly forced to say that we must, in general, imagine this field in a spatial or quasi-spatial way. We must, in a nutshell, imagine it – this is not indicated, but it is implied in the way these authors spoke about it – as a surface or a volume. In both of these cases, we must imagine it as a form of something that – owing to the fact that it is modeled on the image of something else – presents itself as lending its support and foundation to the idea of identification. In short, it concerns a differentiation that is produced inside a certain topographic field by the specific operation known as identification.

Authors of the time wondered about these identified forms. What could be done with them so that they fulfilled their economic function? It is not my concern today – for it would take us too far afield 409
– to bring out what made Jekels and Bergler adopt the solution they did, a solution that was quite new, or at least not yet altogether popularized, at the time. In the text by Freud to which they referred, one can find certain tangential remarks related to this and a hint at the solution that they went on to propose quite emphatically. This solution involved assuming that the field in question is characterized by the fact that it is cathected with a neutral energy.

What was meant by the term "neutral energy" that was introduced into psychoanalytic dynamics? At the point in the evolution of the theory that we are examining, it meant nothing more than an energy characterized by the fact that it belongs to neither one nor the other – this is what is meant by the term "neutral" – of the two poles of drive energy. Recall that Freud's second topography

made him introduce the idea of an energy that is distinct from the libido – that of the *Todestrieb* [death drive], which is the function that henceforth came to be known by analysts as Thanatos, which certainly did not help clarify things – and made him pair up Eros and Thanatos as opposing terms.

It is in such terms that the new dialectic of libidinal cathexis was dealt with by Jekels and Bergler. Eros and Thanatos were employed by them as two primordial destinies behind all psychoanalytic mechanics and dialectic. And the vicissitude – *das Schicksal* [fate or destiny], to use the term Freud himself used regarding the drives – of this neutralized field was explained to us in their article. Their goal was to conceptualize this field and its economic function in a way that rendered it utilizable both in its characteristic function as an ego-ideal, and in the fact that the analyst is called upon to function in the place of this ego-ideal. This is what the authors were led to imagine.

Here we are obviously dealing with the highest, most developed form of metapsychology.

How are we to conceptualize the concrete origins of the ego-ideal? According to Jekels and Bergler – and it is legitimate on their part, our era being no better, given what the developments of Kleinian theory have since wrought – the origins of the ego-ideal are inseparable from those of the superego, even though they are distinct from the latter. In other words, they are paired together. Thus these authors could only conceptualize the origins of the ego-ideal and the superego as involving Thanatos.

410 Now, if one begins with a notion like that of an initially perfect narcissism as regards libidinal cathexis, and if one thinks that the primordial object is originally included in the subject in the narcissistic sphere – which is a primitive monad of jouissance, with which the infant is identified, in a way that is quite iffy – it is difficult to see what could lead to a subjective exit from it. Indeed, the authors themselves did not hesitate to consider such an exit to be impossible. As indeed it is, unless the ravaging power of Thanatos is also included in this monad. Why not consider this power to be the source of what obliges the subject, if I can put it so succinctly, to leave behind his narcissistic self-envelopment?

In short, Jekels and Bergler did not hesitate to attribute all creation of objects to Thanatos itself. Note that I am not in any way trying to argue in favor of their viewpoint, I am merely commenting on it, and I bid you consult their article to see whether I am faithfully reporting what they said. They themselves seemed quite struck by their claim, so much so that, in the final pages of their article, they raised a funny question: have we in fact gone so far as to say

that, in short, we only truly come into contact with any object whatsoever owing to the instinct of destruction?

In truth, although they raised this question in order to temper or lend a touch of levity to what they themselves proposed, nothing, after all, contradicts this feature that is necessary if one is led to follow the path that they follow. For the time being, moreover, this feature does not pose a problem for us. It seems to me that what they said is conceivable, at least locally, in a dynamic perspective, under the heading of a significant moment of early childhood experience. It is, perhaps, at a moment of aggression that the differentiation, if not of every object, at least of a highly significant object, indeed occurs.

In any case, once the conflict has begun, it is the fact that this object can be so thoroughly introjected that gives it its import and value. We thus find anew here Freud's classical, original schema regarding the introjection of an imperative, prohibiting, and essentially conflictual object.

For Freud told us that it is to the degree to which this object – the father, for example, in a first rough-and-ready schematization of the Oedipus complex – is internalized that it comes to constitute the superego. Overall, this represents progress, it being beneficial from a libidinal vantage point; for, by dint of being introjected, this object 411
enters – this is one of Freud's first points here – into a sphere that is sufficiently imbued with narcissism, merely because it is inside, and can be libidinally cathected by the subject. Note that it is easier to get oneself loved by one's ego-ideal than by the object on whom the ego-ideal was at one point modeled.

The fact remains that, even though it is introjected, the ego-ideal continues to be an unwieldy agency [*instance*]. And it is certainly this ambiguity that led Jekels and Bergler to theorize a field of neutral cathexis. The field at stake here is occupied and then evacuated, only to be reoccupied, by Eros and Thanatos, one after the other – the Manichaeism of the conceptualization bothering us a bit, we must say.

In the second stage, the possible function of the ego-ideal in *Verliebtheit* [being in love or infatuation] and in hypnosis was introduced – or more precisely, it is in feeling the need to accentuate it as a second stage that the authors realized that Freud had in fact introduced it from the outset.

"*Hypnose und Verliebtheit*" ["Being in Love and Hypnosis"] is the title of one of the chapters in *Massenpsychologie*.

Once it is constituted and introjected, the ego-ideal can be projected onto an object. In truth, the fact that classical psychoanalytic theory did not distinguish between the symbolic, the imaginary,

and the real means that the stages of introjection and projection appear to be, not obscure, but rather arbitrary, to be suspended, to be gratuitous, and to obey a necessity that can only be explained by the most absolute contingency. It is insofar as the ego-ideal can be projected anew onto an object that this object – if it happens to be favorably inclined toward you or to regard you kindly – will be endowed by you with the highest degree of amorous cathexis. The description of the phenomenology of *Verliebtheit* was presented here in a way that allowed it to be almost totally confused with the effects of hypnosis.

After this second projection, nothing could stop Jekels and Bergler from proposing a second introjection, a "re-introjection." In certain more or less extreme states, among which they did not hesitate to include manic states, the ego-ideal itself – caught up, as it is, in the enthusiasm of the effusive love involved in the second projection – can serve the same function for the subject as that established
412 in the *Verliebtheit* relationship of total dependency. The ego-ideal can itself become something equivalent to what, in love, can provide the full satisfaction of wanting to be loved, of *geliebt werden wollen.*

Although these descriptions, especially when illustrated, brought with them certain fragments of perspective, flashes of which we find anew in clinical work, we would not be showing some kind of exaggerated pernicketiness in conceptual matters to feel that, in many respects, we cannot be completely satisfied with them.

2

I am immediately going to highlight what I believe I can contribute here, and it is something that is articulated more elaborately by this little montage [i.e., the optical schema at the beginning of the present class].

Like every other schema of this type – of the topographical type, like the ones Freud himself provided – it not only does not claim to represent anything at the organic level, but could not even possibly do so. It should be quite clear that I am not one of those people who imagine that with the right surgical operation – a lobotomy, for example – one can remove the superego with a teaspoon. There are people who believe that and who have written that by lobotomizing someone, one removes the superego and sets it aside on a platter. That has nothing to do with what I am talking about here.

Let us observe what is articulated by the functioning implied by this little apparatus. It is no accident that it reintroduces a metaphor of an optical nature. It does so, not for reasons of convenience, but

rather for structural reasons. If mirrors are involved, it is because, as concerns the imaginary mainspring, what is based on mirrors goes much further than the model.

But beware: this schema is a bit more elaborate than is a child's concrete experience in front of a real surface – usually a flat mirror or a polished surface – that serves as a mirror. What is represented here as a flat mirror has a different use. The schema is of interest to us because it introduces the function of the Other with a capital *O*, whose initial, in the form of the letter A [for *Autre*, meaning Other], designates the flat mirror apparatus here, insofar as this function must be involved in the developments of narcissism that are known 413
as the ego-ideal and the ideal ego, respectively.

So as not to give you a dry description of this schema, which would simultaneously risk seeming arbitrary, which it is not, I will first introduce it with the kind of commentary Jekels and Bergler would have called for, inasmuch as they felt the need to broach a thought and mapping problem. My intent is certainly not to bring out the negative aspects of their theory, but rather what is positive about it, which is always more interesting.

Let us note thus that, if we follow them closely, the object is created, strictly speaking, by the destructive instinct, *Destruktionstrieb*, or Thanatos, as they called it. Why not call it "hatred"? Let us follow them step by step. If this is true, is there anything left of the object after the destructive effect? It is not at all unthinkable. Not only is it not unthinkable, but we find anew here what I myself theorize in another way at the level of what I call the imaginary field and its effects. What is left of the object, what survives after the libidinal effect of the destructive *Trieb*, after the action of Thanatos, is precisely what eternalizes the object in the guise of a form – this is what forever freezes it as a fixed type in the imaginary.

There is something in images that transcends the movement and changeability of life, in the sense that images live on after the death of living beings. According to Antiquity's *nous*, this is one of the first steps of art: that which is mortal is immortalized in statuary. This is also the function that is served in a certain way by the subject's image in my theory of the mirror [stage]. When this image is perceived by a child, something is suddenly proposed to him whereby he does not merely receive the sight of an image in which he recognizes himself; this image already presents itself as an ideal *Urbild*, as something that is both ahead of him and behind him, as something that has always existed, as something that subsists by itself, and as something before which he senses his own fissures as a prematurely born being and experiences himself as still insufficiently coordinated to correspond to it in its totality.

It is very striking to see a small child – who is sometimes still being supported by a little device with which he begins to try to make his first attempts to walk [a sort of walker], and for whom even the
414 attempt to take somebody's arm or hand is still characterized by dissymmetry and inadequacy – this being who is still insufficiently stable, even at the cerebellar level, nevertheless move about, lean in, and squirm, accompanying this with expressive gurgling sounds, in front of his own image in the mirror, assuming one has placed a mirror within range, and low enough to the ground for him to see it. He thus shows in a lively way the contrast between the traceable thing that is projected before him there – which attracts him and with which he persistently plays – and the incomplete thing that manifests itself in his own movements.

This is my old topic of the mirror stage, which I take to be an exemplary and highly significant landmark for us. It allows us to point out the key spots or crossroads [in development] and to conceptualize the renewal of the possibility, which is always open to the subject, of a self-fracturing, self-tearing, or self-biting when faced with what is both himself and an other. There is a certain dimension of conflict here that has no other solution than that of an either/or. Either he has to tolerate the other as an unbearable image that steals him from himself, or he must immediately break him, knock him over, or annul the position across from him, in order to preserve what is at that moment the center and drive of his being, which is evoked by the other's image, whether it be specular or incarnate [in another child like himself]. The link between this image and aggressiveness is quite clear here.

Is a development of the individual that leads to a sufficient consistency of the object and to the diversity of the object stage conceivable on this basis? We can say that attempts have been made to conceptualize it. Hegel's dialectic of the conflict [or struggle] of consciousnesses was nothing, after all, but an attempt to expound the whole world of human knowledge on the basis of a pure conflict that is radically imaginary and destructive at its root.

As you know, I have already indicated on various occasions the fissures and gaps in Hegel's conception. Without revisiting that discussion today, I will simply say that it is impossible to deduce, on this radically imaginary basis, everything that Hegel believed he could deduce with his dialectic. The hidden implications of this dialectic that allowed it to function could not in any way be produced on this basis. Even when a child's hand extends toward the face of his semblable and is armed with a stone – and this can be the hand of a very young child, believe me, as the most ordinary, direct obser-
415 vation shows, for a child need not be very old to have, if not the

vocation, at least the same impulse as Cain – if that hand is stopped by another hand, that of the person whom the child is threatening, and they lay that stone down together and it comes to constitute an object that is perhaps agreed upon or disputed, then it will become, as it were, the first stone of the world of objects. But it will not go beyond that; nothing can be built upon it.

We hear a sort of echo or overtone here of the apologue of he who must "cast the first stone" [John 8:7]. And indeed, it is quite necessary that, in the first place, this stone not be cast. And once it is not cast, it will not be cast for any other reason. But in order that something be founded that is open to dialectical development, the register of the Other with a capital *O* must come into play beyond this.

This is what is expressed by my optical schema. It is inasmuch as the third party, the Other with a capital *O*, intervenes in the relationship between the ego and the other with a lowercase *o* that something can function that gives rise to the fecundity of the narcissistic relationship itself.

Let me exemplify this with a movement made by children in front of mirrors, a movement that is well known and is not difficult to observe. A child, who is being held in the arms of an adult, is expressly confronted with his image. The adult, whether he understands what is going on or not, is amused by this. We must give full weight to the movement of the child's head when the child – even after having been captivated by the first intimations of the game he plays in front of his own image – turns around toward the adult who is holding him, without our being able to say, naturally, what he expects from the adult, whether it is some sort of agreement or attesting. Referring to the Other nevertheless clearly comes to play an essential role here. I am not exaggerating this role by articulating it in this way, as instituting what will become connected to the ideal ego and the ego-ideal, respectively, in the child's subsequent development.

What can come from this Other, insofar as the child in front of the mirror turns around to look at him? I would say that the only thing that can come from him is the sign "image of *a*" [*i(a)*] – a specular image that is both desirable and destructive, that is effectively desired or not desired. This is what comes from the person toward whom the child turns, to [*à*] the very place with which he identifies at that moment, inasmuch as he sustains his identification with the specular image.

What I will call the antagonistic nature of the ideal ego is palpable to us from this early moment on. In other words, already in this specular situation, a split occurs – this time at the level of the Other, for the Other, and by the Other – between the desired ego, by which 416

I mean the ego desired by him [the Other], and the authentic ego: the *authent-Ich*, if you will allow me to introduce a term which is not as new as all that in this context. Except that, in this early situation, it is the ideal that is there – I am speaking about the ideal ego, not the ego-ideal – the authentic ego being yet to come.

It is as things evolve – with all the ambiguity the term "evolution" brings with it – that the authentic ego will come to light; and this time it will be loved in spite of everything, in spite of the fact that it is not perfect. This is also how the ideal ego functions in the entire progression. All of its ensuing development, which appears to be progress, goes against the tide, involving risk and defiance.

What is the function of the ego-ideal here? You will tell me that it is the Other, the Other with a capital *O*. But you nevertheless sense that the Other is only involved here as the locus on the basis of which the ego constantly refers – in its emotional [*pathétique*] swings – to the image that is offered up to it and with which it identifies. The ego presents itself and sustains itself qua problematic only on the basis of the Other's gaze. The fact that this gaze may, in turn, be internalized, does not mean that it merges with the place and prop that have already been constituted in the form of an ideal ego. It means something else.

People claim that the ego-ideal is tantamount to the introjection of this Other. This is quite a stretch. It presumes the existence of a relationship of *Einfühlung* [understanding, empathy, or sensitivity] that is as total as what is implied by the reference to an organized being, the real being who holds the child in front of the mirror. This is, as you probably suspect, precisely what is in question.

Although this point must serve as our terminus today, I will tell you right away in what respect my solution differs from the one that is usually given.

It is extraordinarily important to recall that, right from his first steps in articulating *Identifizierung* [identification] – which I will return to later because it cannot be avoided – Freud implied that there is a first possible identification with the father as such, prior to the very first sketching out of the Oedipal situation. Did Freud have fathers on the brain? Whatever the case may be, Freud had the subject identify first with his father, and Freud developed quite a subtle terminology by calling this identification *exquisit männlich*, exquisitely virile [*SE* XVIII, p. 105].[15]

417 This undoubtedly occurs in the course of development. It is not a logical stage, but a developmental stage that is situated prior to the onset of the Oedipal conflict, so much so that Freud went on to write that it is on the basis of this primordial identification that desire

begins to point toward the mother and that the father consequently comes to be considered a rival.

I am not trying to say that this first stage of identification is clinically grounded. I am saying that the fact that it seemed necessary to Freud should not be considered an extravagance on his part or mere drivel. There must be a reason why this earlier stage seemed necessary to him and this is what I will try to show you in what follows.

Freud next spoke about regressive identification [*SE* XVIII, pp. 106–7], the identification that results from a love relationship, inasmuch as the object refuses to love one in return. Here we can already see why there had to be a stage of primordial identification, but this is not the only reason. The subject is thus able, through a regressive process, to identify with the object who disappoints his appeal for love.

After having presented these two modes of identification in Chapter 7, entitled *Die Identifizierung* ["Identification"], Freud introduced a third mode, the good old form of identification that we have known about since the case history of Dora: hysterical identification. This form stems from the fact that the subject recognizes in another person the total or global situation in which he or she lives. Our hysteric has a fit the day that, in the common area where slightly neurotic and nutty girls at a boarding school congregate, one of her friends receives a letter from her lover [*SE* XVIII, p. 107]. In my vocabulary, this is termed identification at the level of desire. Let us leave it aside for the time being.

Freud paused in his text to tell us expressly that, in the first two fundamental modes of identification, identification always occurs via *ein einziger Zug* [a single trait, stroke, or characteristic; *SE* XVIII, p. 107].

This removes many difficulties, in more than one respect – with respect, first of all, to what is conceivable, which we should not disdain. Second, it converges with a notion that we know well, that of the signifier.

This is not to say that this *einziger Zug*, this "single trait," is, for all that, a signifier. Not at all. It is quite probable, if we begin from the dialectic that I am trying to sketch out for you, that it is a sign. 418
To say that it is a signifier, something more is required. It must be used later in, or have a relationship to, a signifying battery. What is defined by this *ein einziger Zug* is the punctual character of the early reference to the Other when it comes to narcissism.

This is what allows us to answer the following question: how can the subject internalize the gaze of an Other who can at any moment change its preference for one or the other of the enemy twin brothers constituted by the ego and the image of the little specular other? We

must conceptualize the Other's gaze as being internalized by a sign. *Ein einziger Zug* is enough. There is no need for a whole organized field or for some sort of massive introjection. This point – capital I that stands for the single trait, this sign of the Other's assent, of the choice of love-object on which the subject can operate – is located there somewhere and is fixed in the ensuing mirror play. It suffices that the subject come to coincide with it in his relationship with the Other for this little sign, this *einziger Zug*, to be at his disposal.

We are right to radically distinguish the ego-ideal from the ideal ego. The ego-ideal is a symbolic introjection, whereas the ideal ego is the source of an imaginary projection. The narcissistic satisfaction that develops in the relationship with the ideal ego depends on the possible reference to this primordial symbolic term that can be mono-formal or mono-semantic – that is, *ein einziger Zug*.

This will be of capital importance in all of what I will have to say about this subsequently.

3

If you will grant me a little bit more time, I will begin to recall what I must consider to be clear to everyone here regarding my theory of love.

Love, as I have said, can be conceptualized only within the perspective of demand. Love exists only for beings who can speak. The dimension, perspective, or register of love develops, unfolds, and is inscribed within what one might call the "unconditional" nature of demand.

This is what stems from the very fact of demanding, regardless of what one demands. For in the register or order of demand qua pure – not when one demands this or that, in other words, some-
419 thing specific – demand is merely the demand to be heard [*entendue*, which also means understood].

I would go further still. Why does one want to be heard? For what might well be called "no reason." Which is not to say, nevertheless, that this does not take us quite far, for the place of desire is already entailed by this "for no reason."

It is precisely because demand is unconditional that it is not a question of a desire for this or for that, but a question of desire *tout court*. This is why the metaphor of the one who desires [*le désirant, erastés*], which I broached from every angle at the beginning of this year's Seminar, is implied right from the outset.

In love, the metaphor of the one who desires implies what it replaces in the metaphor – in other words, the one who is desired

[*erómenos*]. What is desired? It is that which is desiring in the other. This cannot happen unless the subject himself is situated [*colloqué*] qua desirable. Which is precisely what he demands when he demands to be loved.

In this context, I cannot fail to recall to mind, before coming back to it later, that love – as I have always told you and we find it necessitated again and again from every direction – is giving what you don't have. One cannot love without presenting oneself as if one does not have, even if one does. Love as a response implies the domain of not having.

I am not the one who invented this – Plato is. He came up with the idea that only *Penía*, Poverty, can conceive Love, as well as the plan to get herself knocked up at a party one night. Indeed, giving what you have is throwing a party [*c'est la fête*], not love.

Hence – and I am moving along rather quickly, but you will see that we shall land on our feet – for rich people, love exists; yes, even they think about it; but loving always requires refusal.

This is precisely what is annoying. It is not only those to whom something is refused who are annoyed. Those who refuse, rich people, are hardly any more at ease. The *Versagung* of rich people is found everywhere. It is not simply the character trait of avarice, it is far more constitutive of the position of rich people, regardless of what we believe. And the theme in folklore of Grisélidis – with all that she has that is captivating, whereas she is rather revolting all the same – is there to remind us of this.

While I am on the subject, I will go even further: rich people do not have a very good reputation. In other words, we progressives do not like them very much. But we should be suspicious of our dislike 420
for them. Perhaps our hatred of rich people is quite simply, by a secret pathway, part and parcel of a revolt against love. In other words, it is perhaps tied to a negation, a *Verneinung* of the virtues of poverty, which could well be at the origin of a certain misrecognition of what love is.

The sociological result is, moreover, rather curious. We obviously facilitate in this way many of the functions of rich people – we temper our behavior at their homes or, to be more exact, we give them a thousand excuses for avoiding their party-giving function. Which does not make them any happier.

In short, it is quite evident to analysts that rich people have great difficulty loving – which is what a certain preacher from Galilee noted in passing many moons ago. We would perhaps do better to pity rich people for this rather than hating them – unless hating is, after all, merely a mode of loving, which is quite possible.

What is clear is that wealth has a tendency to make you impotent.

Long experience as an analyst allows me to tell you that I consider this a well-attested fact. And this explains quite a few things – for example, the need to do things in a roundabout fashion. Rich people are forced to buy, because they are rich. And in order to make up for this, in order to try to find potency anew, they strive to devalue things by buying them [cheaply]. This [devaluing] comes from them, they do it for their own convenience. To achieve this, the simplest means is, for example, not to pay [for things]. They sometimes hope to provoke thereby what they can never acquire directly – namely, the Other's desire.

But so much for rich people. Léon Bloy once wrote a book entitled *La femme pauvre* [*The Woman Who Was Poor*]. I am annoyed because, for some time now, I have been referring to nothing but Catholic authors, but it is not my fault if I have, for eons, been finding very interesting things in their work. I would like it if, someday, someone would notice and put to good psychoanalytic use the extravagant things that are hidden in Bloy's book, which verges on the unbearable, and that only an analyst can understand. I have yet to see any of them take an interest in it. But Bloy would have done well to also write a book entitled *The Woman Who Was Rich.*

It is clear that only women can incarnate the ferociousness of wealth in a dignified manner. But that is not enough, and it poses for them, and especially for those who wish to win their love, very
421 specific problems. This would, however, require a return to the topic of feminine sexuality, and I apologize for merely indicating it to you as a toothing-stone.

Since I cannot go any further today, and since when I speak of love, it is very specifically in order to describe the field where I must say what our place must be in the transference, before leaving you today I would like to indicate something that bears on the topic of wealth, and to say a brief word to you about saints.

This should not seem to come out of the blue, for we have not yet finished with Claudel.

As you know, at the very end of *The Humiliation of the Father*, in the solution given to the problem of desire, we have a saint. He is Orian, about whom it is expressly said that if he does not want to give anything to little Pensée – who, fortunately, is quite capable of taking it from him by force – it is because he has far too much joy, nothing but joy, complete joy. And there is no point debasing such wealth by having a little affair – this is said in the text – one of those affairs that unfolds over the course of a few short nights at a hotel [p. 396/204].

Strange stuff. We would be going a bit too quickly were we to

try to discuss the psychology of creation and to simply think that Orian is terribly repressed. Perhaps Claudel was terribly repressed, too. But what is signified by poetic creation, what is signified by the function Orian serves in this tragedy – namely, the fact that it interests us – is something else altogether. And this is what I would like to point out to you by remarking that saints are rich. They do all they can possibly do to seem poor – this is true, at least in varied climes – but it is precisely in this respect that they are rich, and especially filthy compared to other rich people, for theirs is not the kind of wealth that you can get rid of so easily.

Saints exist entirely within the realm of having. They perhaps give up a few trivial things, but they do so in order to possess everything. And if you look closely at the life of the saints, you will see that saints cannot love God except as a name of their own jouissance. And, in the final analysis, their jouissance is always quite monstrous.

In the course of our psychoanalytic discussions here, we have spoken about a number of human types, including heroes. I am merely introducing the difficult topic of saints anecdotally here, rather as a prop, it being one of those that I think is necessary to 422
help us locate our own position.

As you can well imagine, I naturally do not situate us among the saints. Still, it is worth saying so. For by not saying so, it might remain an ideal, as they say, for many people.

There are many things about which one might be tempted to say that they are our ideal. What is ideal is at the heart of problems related to the analyst's position. I will return to this notion in what follows and you will see what it is about this category that we should abandon.

June 7, 1961

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XXV

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANXIETY AND DESIRE

The place of anxiety as a signal.
$a \neq i(a)$.
The unbearable object.
The place of pure desirousness.
Desire as a remedy for anxiety.

[The beginning of the class is missing.]

1

We shall immediately turn to the heart of a problem mentioned by Freud, that of the meaning of anxiety [*angoisse*]. We will go further still, since we will begin with a question that arises from the economic standpoint, which is that of figuring out, as Freud tells us, where the energy for anxiety as a signal comes from.

We find the following sentence on page 120 of the German edition of Freud's *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*: "*Das Ich zieht die (vorbewusste) Besetzung von der zu verdrängenden Triebrepräsentanz ab und verwendet sie für die Unlust-(Angst)-Entbindung.*" Translation: "The ego withdraws the preconscious cathexis from the *Triebrepräsentanz*" – that is, from what, in the drive, is a representative – "a representative that must be repressed. It transforms it in order to release unpleasure and *Angst*."

We must not alight upon a single sentence in Freud's work and immediately begin to excogitate about it. It is only after a good deal of reflection that I am asking you to turn to it now. I have carefully chosen it in order to incite you to reread *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* as soon as possible.

To return to my own topic, let us turn now to the crux of the matter. I have said enough about it for you to suspect that the

formula ($ ◇ *a*) must somehow be involved in the stage of the 424
orientation we are at, where fantasy is not simply formulated but brought up, broached, and tracked down in every possible manner. In order to grasp the necessity of this formula, you must realize that in this prop for desire, the respective functions of the two elements and their functional relationship cannot in any way be verbalized by any exhaustive attribute, which is why I must abbreviate them with two algebraic terms and amass their various characteristics around them.

$ is related to the fading* of the subject, whereas *a*, the little other, is related to the object of desire. The effect of this symbolization is already to show you that desire does not involve a simple subjective relationship to the object. It is not enough to say that, in the subject's relationship to the object, desire implies a mediation or a reflexive intermediary, if it merely involves, for example, the subject thinking of himself the way he thinks of himself in his knowledge relationship to the object. The whole theory of knowledge has been founded on this, which is precisely what the theory of desire is designed to call into question. This would have us shaking in our boots if others before us had not already called into question Descartes' "I am thinking, therefore I am."

Let us consider the sentence by Freud I mentioned earlier and try to apply this to it. This does not mean that I am immediately conveying you to the endpoint of my thought process; with the following questioning, I am conveying you halfway there. It is a problematic question, designed to orient you, to give you the illusion that you are the ones who are in the process of seeking – an illusion that will, moreover, be promptly realized, for I will not give you the final answer. It is not solely my question, but my method, too, that is heuristic. What does it thus mean to decathect the *Triebrepräsentanz* if we apply it to my own formulation? It means that anxiety is produced when the cathexis of little *a* is transferred to $.

$, however, is not something graspable; it can only be conceptualized as a place, since it is not even the subject's point of reflexivity, [that is, the place where] the subject could grasp himself, for example, as desiring [*comme désirant*]. The subject does not grasp himself as desiring. Nevertheless, in fantasy, the place where the subject could, as it were, grasp himself as such as desiring is always reserved. It is reserved so thoroughly that it is usually occupied by something homologous that is produced at the lower stage of the graph: *i(a)*. It is not necessarily occupied by that, but it is 425
ordinarily.

This is expressed by the function of the real image of the vase in the inverted vase illusion. The image of the vase is produced there

in such a way that it seems to surround the base of the stems of the flowers that elegantly symbolize little *a*. This is what is involved in the narcissistic image or phantom that comes to serve, in fantasy, as the illusion of aligning oneself [*se coapter*] with [the object of] desire, the illusion of having one's object in hand. If $ is thus a place that can, from time to time, be empty – namely, a place where nothing satisfying happens as regards the arising of the image – we can theorize that anxiety as a signal is perhaps produced in response to the call [for something to fill it].

I am going to try to demonstrate this exceedingly important point. One can say that Freud's last work on the subject [*Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*] gives us almost everything we need to resolve it, without quite giving it the final quarter turn, strictly speaking. In his text, the nut is never completely tightened.

Following Freud, let us say that anxiety as a signal is produced at the level of the ego. However, thanks to my formalizations, we shall perhaps be able to say a bit more about what is meant by "the level of the ego." My notations will allow us to break down the question, to articulate it more precisely, and to thereby go beyond certain points at which the question leads Freud to an impasse.

Here I am immediately going to make a leap.

2

When Freud tells us about the economic transformation necessary for the signal to be produced by saying that it must not require very much energy to produce a signal, he already indicates that there is a relationship between the production of the signal and something like a *Verzicht*, a renunciation – not that different from a *Versagung* – owing to the fact that the subject is barred. The *Verdrängung* of the *Triebrepräsentanz* [the repression of the drive's representative] also connotes the slipping away of the subject, which truly confirms the accuracy of my notation $.

My leap involves designating for you what I have been announcing here for a long time as the place where the analyst is truly
426 situated. Which does not mean that he occupies this place all the time, but it is the place where he waits. The word "waits" takes on its full import here, given what we will find anew here related to the function of waiting or *Erwartung* [anticipation or expectation] in order to structure the place of $ in fantasy.

I said that I was making a leap, in other words, that I would not immediately prove what I am asserting. Let us now take the steps necessary to understand what is involved.

One thing is given, which is that anxiety as a signal is produced somewhere, in a place that can be occupied by *i(a)* – the ego insofar as it is the image of the other, the ego insofar as it is, fundamentally, the function of misrecognition. It occupies this place not inasmuch as this image occupies it but qua place – in other words, inasmuch as this image can, on occasion, be dissolved there.

Note carefully that I am not saying that it is the absence of the image that provokes anxiety. I am saying what I have been saying forever – namely, that the specular relationship, the subject's earliest relationship to the specular image, arises in the so-called reaction of aggressiveness.

As I already indicated in my article on the topic, the mirror stage is not unrelated to anxiety. I even indicated that we can acquire a cross-sectional handle, as it were, on aggressiveness by orienting ourselves via the temporal relationship. Indeed, there are not only spatial relationships that refer to the specular image when it begins to come alive and become the other incarnate; there is also a temporal relationship – I hasten to see myself like the other, failing which where will I be?

If, however, you take a look at my articles – those who keep abreast of my work know that I discussed the function of haste in logic in a little sophism, the three prisoners problem – you will see that I am being more prudent here. I have my reasons for not taking the formulation all the way. The function of haste – namely, the way a man runs headlong toward his resemblance to another man – is not anxiety. In order for anxiety to be constituted, there must be a relationship at the level of desire. This is why I am leading you by the hand today to the level of fantasy in order to broach the problem of anxiety.

In order to show you where we are headed, I am going to get well ahead of myself, after which we will backtrack, darting hither and thither like jackrabbits.

Where is the analyst situated in the subject's relationship to 427
desire, in his relationship to an object of desire that we assume, in this case, to be an object that brings with it the threat in question, the threat that determines the *zu Verdrängen*, the [fact that it] "must be repressed"? It goes without saying that none of this is definitive, but since we are broaching the problem in this way, let us raise the following question: when faced with a dangerous object, since that is what is involved here, what would a subject ordinarily expect from someone who would dare occupy the place of his companion? The subject would expect his companion to give a danger signal, a signal that, in the case of a real danger, would lead the subject to get the hell out of there.

What I am introducing here is something that people complain that Freud did not include in his dialectic, for it was truly something that needed to be done. I say that the internal danger is altogether comparable to an external danger, and that the subject strives to avoid it in the same way that we avoid external dangers. Look at what this provides us by way of an effective articulation if we consider what actually happens in animal psychology.

Everyone has heard about the role played by signals among social animals like those that live in herds. When a predator shows up, the cleverest animal, or the one in the herd that is keeping watch, notices, smells, and locates it. Gazelles and antelopes raise their muzzles, make a little bellowing sound, and without delay the whole herd dashes off in the same direction. A signal as a reaction to a danger in a social complex, at the biological level, can thus be grasped in an observable society. Well, the same is true of anxiety as a signal – the subject can receive the signal from the alter ego, from the other who constitutes his ego.

You have heard me warn you at length against the dangers of altruism. I have explicitly told you to beware the pitfalls of *Mitleid* or pity, that which stops us from harming the other, the poor girl [*la pauvre gosse*], leading us to marry her and to both of us being bored for a long time to come – I am abbreviating here. However, if it is merely humane to alert you to the dangers of altruism, it does not mean that this is the final mainspring; and it is, moreover, in this respect that I am not, with respect to whomsoever I am speaking on a particular occasion, playing devil's advocate. The latter would bring him back to a healthy egoism and steer him away from this truly likable direction that involves not being mean. For,
428 in fact, this precious *Mitleid* or altruism merely covers over something else, and you can always find it, assuming that you look at it psychoanalytically.

He who is suffocated by this *Mitleid* is the obsessive, and the first step is to notice – using what I point out to you and what the whole tradition of moralists allows us to assert in this case – that what he respects, what he is unwilling to violate in the other's image, is his own image. If the inviolability of this image were not carefully preserved, what would arise would truly be anxiety.

Anxiety when faced with what? Not when faced with the other in whom he sees himself, the one I called "the poor girl" earlier, who is poor only in his imagination, for she is always much tougher than you might think. When faced with "the poor girl," he is scared to death of being faced with the other *a* – not the image of himself, but the object of his desire.

I will illustrate this with the following point, which is quite

important. Anxiety is undoubtedly produced topographically in the place defined by *i(a)* – in other words, as Freud articulated it in his last formulation, in the place of the ego. But there is no anxiety as a signal except insofar as it is related to an object of desire, inasmuch as the latter disturbs the ideal ego – that is, the *i(a)* that originates in the specular image.

Anxiety as a signal has an absolutely necessary connection with the object of desire. Its function is not exhausted in the warning that one must take off. Even as it serves this function, a signal preserves one's relationship with an object of desire.

This is the key to and the mainspring of what Freud accentuates in this text – as well as elsewhere, repeatedly and with the same accent, with the same choice of terms, and with the same incisiveness that is illuminating in his work – by distinguishing the situation of anxiety from that of danger and from that of *Hilflosigkeit* [helplessness or distress].

When in *Hilflosigkeit* or distress, the subject is purely and simply overwhelmed by a situation that irrupts, which he cannot cope with in any way. Between that and taking flight – flight which, not to be heroic here, Napoleon himself considered the truly courageous solution when it came to love – there is another solution and it is what Freud points out to us by underscoring the *Erwartung* character of anxiety.

This is its central feature. True, we can secondarily construe it to be a reason to take off, but that is not its essential characteristic. Its essential characteristic is *Erwartung*, and I designate it by telling you 429
that anxiety is the radical mode by which a relationship to desire is maintained.

When the object disappears – for reasons of resistance, defense, or other ways of canceling out the object – there remains what can remain, which is *Erwartung*. In other words, what remains is a pointing toward the object's place, a place where the object is now missing, where we are no longer dealing with anything but an *unbestimmte Objekt* [an uncertain, undecided, or indefinite object], or again, as Freud says, an object with which we are in a relationship of *losigkeit* [not having it]. When we are at this stage, anxiety is the final or radical mode in which the subject continues to sustain his relationship to desire, even if it is an unbearable mode.

3

There are other ways to sustain one's relationship to desire that concern the unbearable nature of the object. This is why I tell you

that hysteria and obsession can be defined on the basis of the two statuses of desire that I call "unsatisfied desire" and "impossible desire" – that is, desire instituted in its impossibility.

But it suffices that you cast your eyes now on the most radical form of neurosis, phobia, around which all of Freud's discourse revolves here, to see that it cannot be defined otherwise than by the following: phobia is designed to sustain a relationship to desire in the form of anxiety.

There is but one thing that must be added in order to fully define it, just as in the complete definition of hysteria and obsession one must add the metaphor of the other, at the point at which the subject sees himself as castrated, confronted with the Other with a capital *O*. In the case of Dora, for example, it is by means of Herr K. that Dora desires, yet she does not love him – she loves Frau K. It is by means of the man she desires that she finds her way toward the woman she loves. We must, similarly, complete our formulation of phobia.

Phobia involves the maintenance of a relationship to desire through anxiety, with a more precise supplement: the place of the object, insofar as it is aimed at by anxiety, is occupied by what I explained to you at length regarding little Hans – the function of
430 the phobic object, namely, Φ, capital *Phi*. In the phobic object, it is clearly the phallus that is at stake, but it is a phallus that takes on the value of all signifiers, occasionally even the value of the father.

What is remarkable in the case of little Hans is both the absence [*carence*] and the presence of the father – absence in the form of the real father, presence in the form of the symbolic father, who is invasive. If all of this can take place at the same level, it is because the phobic object has the infinite possibility of serving a certain missing or deficient function; the latter is precisely what would make the subject succumb were anxiety not to arise in that function's place.

Having taken this roundabout pathway, we can now grasp in what respect the function of anxiety as a signal warns about something, something very important in psychoanalytic practice and clinical work. The anxiety to which your patients are exposed is not at all, or is not only, as people think and as you always seek to confirm, as it were, internal to the subject. What is characteristic of the neurotic is to be, in this regard, according to André Breton's expression, a communicating vase. The anxiety your neurotic has to deal with, anxiety as energy, is an anxiety that he is in the serious habit of seeking with a magnifying glass, to the right and to the left, in one or the other of the Others with a capital *O* he deals with. Their anxiety is just as valid and useful to him as his homegrown variety is. If you do not take it into account in the economy of an analysis, you will go very

far astray. In many a case, you will be scratching your head, trying to figure out where a little resurgence of anxiety comes from when you least expect it. It is not necessarily his, and is not necessarily the anxiety you are already aware of owing to the prior months of analysis. There is also the anxiety of his neighbors that counts, not to mention your own.

Naturally, you imagine that you will find your way. You know that you have already received warnings on this score. I'm afraid that this does not alert you to much, for what these warnings imply is that your own anxiety must not enter into the picture. The analysis must be aseptically free of your own anxiety.

What can this mean at the level where I am trying to get you to stay this year, the synchronic level which does not provide the same ease as diachrony? The fact that you have largely gone beyond anxiety in your own prior analysis resolves nothing, for what we must know is in what current state you must be, as concerns your 431
desire, so that not only anxiety as a signal, but anxiety itself does not arise from you in an analysis. For if it arises, it is quite capable of being transferred to your patient's economy – and this all the more so the further along he is in his analysis, in other words, the more he seeks out the path of his desire at the level of the Other with a capital *O* that you are for him.

Be that as it may, in order to come full circle, we have to bring in the function of the Other with a capital *O* concerning the possibility of the arising of anxiety as a signal.

My earlier reference to animal herds clearly shows that signals operate within a necessary function of imaginary communication, and it is here that I want you to sense that, if anxiety is a signal, what this means is that it can come from someone else. The fact remains that, insofar as what is involved here is a relationship to desire, a signal is not exhaustively covered by the metaphor of the danger posed by the herd's enemy. Indeed, what distinguishes a human herd from an animal herd is – as everyone, except for the shakers and movers in group [*collective*] psychology, knows – that each subject himself is the enemy of the herd.

We find an interesting transposition, in this reference to the reality of the herd, of what Freud articulates for us as an internal danger. We find here the exact confirmation of what I always tell you – the universal, individual, and collective are situated at one and the same level. What is true at the individual level, this internal danger, is also true at the collective level. The danger that is internal to the subject is the same as the danger that is internal to the herd.

This is related to the originality of the very nature [*position*] of desire. Insofar as desire emerges in order to make up for a lack of

certainty or for the lack of a guarantee, the subject finds himself confronted with what is significant to him insofar as he is not simply an animal in a herd. He may be an animal in a herd, except that every elementary action on his part, which surely exists, is seriously disturbed owing to the fact that it is included – both at the collective and at the individual level – in his relationship to the signifier.

At the moment at which a social animal takes off upon hearing a signal given by a guard animal or some other animal, he is the herd. A speaking being, on the other hand, is essentially the want-to-be that has arisen out of a certain relationship to discourse – that
432 has arisen from a kind of poetry, if you will. The subject can only fill this want-to-be, as I have already indicated, through an action that – you will sense this better in the context of the parallel I am drawing – very easily takes on, indeed perhaps always radically takes on, the quality of a headlong flight.

But this action, which involves neither the level of coherence nor that of collective defense, does not in any way help out the herd. In short, the herd does not take very well to the subject's action, in theory, not to say that it wants nothing to do with it. And it is not simply the herd – reality wants nothing to do with his action either, because reality is precisely the sum total of certainties accumulated by adding up a series of prior actions. A new action is always unwelcome.

This is what allows us to correctly situate – in other words, in a way that intersects psychoanalytic practice – the nevertheless surprising fact, which is still more or less obvious, of the slight lifting of anxiety that occurs every time the subject's desire is truly at work. Here we are dealing both with the everyday level of experience and with what is essential – that is, with what is at the heart and root of our practice.

If psychoanalysis has not succeeded in getting men to understand that their desires, first, are not the same thing as their needs and, second, are in themselves of a dangerous nature, threatening to the individual – this is shed light on by the fact that their desires are obviously threatening to the herd – then I wonder what purpose psychoanalysis has ever served.

The point is to follow a certain upward path, and since we are already on our way, we are going to continue by raising an insidious question: "What must the analyst's *Versagung* be?" Here, frankly, I haven't yet taken things much further, but I ask you this: doesn't the analyst's fruitful *Versagung* consist in the fact that he refuses to give his own anxiety to the patient and leaves empty the place he is called upon to occupy as the other who is [expected] to give anxiety as a signal?

We can see highlighted here what I already pointed out last time when I said that the analyst's pure place, insofar as we can define it in and through fantasy, is that of pure desirousness [*désirant pur*].

The function of desire is always produced somewhere, whether the subject comes to occupy the place of *erómenos* or *erómenon*. This is why I had you engage in extensive deciphering of the theory 433
of love in Plato's *Symposium* at the beginning of this academic year. We must now manage to conceptualize how a subject can occupy the place of pure desirousness – in other words, abstract or subtract himself, in the relationship to the other, from any supposition of being desirable. What you have read of the statements made and responses given by Socrates in the *Symposium* must give you a glimpse of what I am telling you now.

If something is incarnated in and signified by the episode with Alcibiades, it is clearly the following: on the one hand, Socrates asserts that he knows nothing except about matters of love, and everything we are told about him is that he is desirous through and through and inexhaustibly so; yet, on the other hand, when it comes time for him to take up the position of he who is desired when faced with Alcibiades' public, scandalous, out-of-control, and drunk aggression, he literally is not up to it. I'm not saying that this resolves the matter, but it at least illustrates what I am talking to you about – it has a meaning that was at least incarnated somewhere.

I am not the only one to whom Socrates appears to be a human enigma, a one-of-a-kind case about which we know not what to do, with what kind of tweezers we can try to pick him up and examine him. Everyone has thought as much, whenever they genuinely raised the following questions: "How was this guy put together?" "And why did he create such chaos wherever he went simply by showing up and telling little stories that seem to be about everyday matters?"

I would like us to dwell a little while on the status of the place of the desirer [*désirant*]. It resonates or rhymes with what I will call the place of the entreater [*orant*] in prayer, for in prayer the entreater sees himself in the process of praying [*orer*]. There is no such thing as a prayer in which the entreater does not see himself praying.

This morning I thought of Priam [in the *Iliad*]. He is the very epitome of entreaters, having demanded that Achilles give him back the body of the last, or almost last, of his sons. In any case, he is attached to Hector.

What does he tell Achilles? He does not say much to him about Hector, first of all because it is not easy for him to talk about Hector given the state he is in at that moment, and second because it seems that whenever the living Hector is at stake, Achilles – who is hard to handle, not being master of his own impulses – begins to grow

furious, even though he has received divine instructions via his mother, Thetis, who came to tell him the following: the big boss came to see me expressly to tell me that he wants you to return Hector to his father, Priam.

434 Priam is not very sophisticated, psychologically speaking. Owing to the fact that he is in the position of the entreater, he exemplifies in his request the very figure of the entreater. His prayer has resonated since the beginning of our age, for even if you have not read the *Iliad*, the episode cannot be utterly unfamiliar to you given all the other models it has engendered. In his prayer, Priam's character is split in two, being accompanied by an other who is described and inserted into his prayer in the form of someone who is not there, namely, Peleus, Achilles' father. It is Priam who prays, but his prayer must necessarily involve another person. He does not simply invoke Achilles' father, but the figure of a father who is, perhaps, quite annoyed at that very moment because his neighbors are harassing him, but who knows he at least still has one son left, Achilles. In every prayer, you can thus find what I call the place of the entreater within the very discourse of the person who prays.

The desirer [*le désirant*] is not the same, which is why I am taking this roundabout route. The one who desires [*le désirant*] as such can say nothing about himself without abolishing himself as desiring. This is what defines the pure place of the subject qua desiring. Any attempt to explain oneself is, in this context, futile. Even a breaking off of speech can say nothing [*syncope du langage est impuissante à dire*] because, as soon as the subject speaks, he is no longer anything but a beggar [*quémandeur*] – he shifts to the register of demand, which is a horse of a different color.

This is no less important when the point is to formulate what traces out the specific form of the analyst's place in the response to the other that psychoanalysis constitutes.

I will end today on a point that will perhaps add yet another dead-end formulation to all those that I seem to have already served up to you. Here is the formulation, and it is of some interest since it brings together the elements I have just gone over: if anxiety is what I told you it is, a relationship that props up desire where the object is lacking, then by inverting the terms, we see that desire is a remedy for anxiety.

We observe this constantly in psychoanalytic practice. Anyone who is slightly neurotic knows as much about it as you do, if not even more. The support found in desire, as awkward as desire may be given all the guilt that accompanies it, is still much easier to maintain than the position of anxiety. The upshot is that, overall, for someone

who is a bit astute and experienced – I am speaking here about the analyst – it is good to always have within reach a little well-polished desire so as not to be prone to bringing into play in the analysis a 435
quantum of anxiety that would be neither opportune nor welcome.

Is this where I mean to lead you? Certainly not, for it is not easy to locate the walls of a hallway by feeling our way along with our hands. Our concern here is not with desire as an expedient but, rather, with a certain relationship to desire which must not be sustained merely from day to day.

Next week, I will return to the distinction, which I began talking about last time, between the subject's relation to the ideal ego and to the ego-ideal. This will allow us to find our way in the true topography of desire, thanks to the function of the *einziger Zug*, which fundamentally characterizes the ego-ideal and thus allows us to define the function of the object in relation to narcissism.

This is what I hope to be able to accomplish in the next class, placing it under the heading of Pindar's formulation, "A dream of a shadow is man," as he writes in the last verses of his eighth *Pythian Ode*.

June 14, 1961

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XXVI

"A DREAM OF A SHADOW IS MAN"

A fly in the field of the Other.
With an analyst, man awakens.
Abraham and partial love.
From narcissism to the object.
The fox and the tip of his nose.

Today we are going to try to talk a bit about the subject of identification inasmuch as we are led to it – as I hope you have figured out – as the terminus of the precise question around which my attempt to elucidate transference this year has revolved.

I announced last time that I would take things up again this time using as an epigraph Pindar's famous ejaculatory proclamation, found in his eighth *Pythian Ode* written for Aristomenes, the wrestler from Aegina who was the winner at the Pythian Games:

> Επἀμεροι·τἰ δέ τις ; τἰ δ' οὐ τις ; σκιᾶς ὄναρ ἄνθρωπος.
> [Creatures of a day! What is someone? What is no one?]
> A dream of a shadow is man.

I intentionally stress the need to distinguish between two different concrete levels of identification, making an obvious distinction that is phenomenologically within everyone's ken: the ideal ego is not to be confused with the ego-ideal. Psychologists [like Lagache] can discover this all by themselves, and they do not fail to do so, moreover. The fact that this is just as important in the articulation of Freud's dialectic is confirmed, for example, by the work I mentioned last time by Conrad Stein on primal identification, which ends with the recognition of something that is still obscure – namely, the difference between the two series of identifications that Freud
438 distinguishes and accentuates as ego identifications and ego-ideal identifications.

1

Let us thus turn to the little optical schema [see Chapter XXIV above] that you are beginning to become familiar with, and that you will come across again when you work at your leisure on the sixth issue of the journal *La Psychanalyse*, which will be published shortly.

The illusion that is represented here, known as that of the inverted vase, can only be produced for eyes that are situated somewhere within the cone produced by the point that joins the edge of the spherical mirror with the focal point where the illusion is produced. You are aware that this illusion, which is a real image, serves to metaphorize for us what I call *i* of *a*, written *i(a)*, which designates the specular image as a function. In other words, it is the specular image as such, imbued with the tone and specific accent of the power of fascination, with its own characteristic cathexis in the libidinal register, that is clearly distinguished by Freud with the term "narcissistic cathexis." This function, *i(a)*, is the core function of narcissistic cathexis.

These words do not suffice to define all the relations and impacts in which this function appears. What I will say today will allow you to approach more closely what is at stake, for it is also what I call the ideal ego as a function insofar as it is distinct from the ego-ideal as a function and is, indeed, opposed to it.

I trace out the operationalizing [*mise en fonction*] of the Other insofar as he is the Other of the speaking subject, the Other insofar as through him, as the locus of speech, the impact of the signifier comes into play for every subject – for every subject we deal with as psychoanalysts. We can pinpoint there the place of what will begin to function as an ego-ideal.

In my little schema, as you will see it published in the journal [see *Écrits*, p. 675], you will perceive that S, which is there to figure the subject as a function, is purely virtual. This function is, as it were, a necessity of thought, the very one that is at the crux of the theory of knowledge – namely, that we cannot conceptualize anything as an object that is not propped up by a subject. But, as analysts, we call into question the real existence of this function. Indeed, we 439
bring out the fact that the subject we deal with, owing to the fact that he is essentially a subject who speaks, cannot be confused with the subject of knowledge. It was truly a case of stating the obvious on my part when I reminded analysts that, to us, the subject is not the subject of knowledge, but the subject of the unconscious. We must not speculate about him as some sort of pure self-transparency of thought, since this is precisely what we contest. The idea that thought is transparent is a pure illusion.

I am aware that some of my comments get philosophers up in arms. Believe me, I have already had discussions with defenders of Descartes' position that went far enough for me to be able to say that there is room for possible agreement among us. But I will leave this debate to one side, since it is not what I am interested in today.

The subject who is indicated in my schema is thus in a position to accede to a grasp of the real image that is produced at *i(a)* only by means of an artifice. This is so because he is not there and because it is only by means of the Other as a mirror that he can come to situate himself there. As he is nothing, he cannot see himself there. Thus it is not he himself qua subject that he looks for in this mirror.

A long time ago, shortly after the war, in my paper on psychical causality delivered in the town of Bonneval, I spoke of a "mirror [that] shows him a surface in which nothing is reflected" [*Écrits*, p. 188]. At the time, this enigmatic comment led people to confuse what I was saying with some kind of more or less mystical ascetic exercise. You should now realize what I meant, or more precisely, you should begin to sense that in the analyst's function as a mirror, it is not the mirror of specular assumption that is involved. I am speaking of the place that the analyst must occupy, even if it is in the mirror that the specular, virtual image must be produced.

The image that is found at *i'(a)* is truly what the subject sees in the Other, but he only sees it insofar as he is situated in a place that cannot be confused with the place of what is reflected. No condition requires him to be at *i(a)* in order to see himself at *i'(a)*.

Certain conditions nevertheless require him to be in a certain field, the field traced out by the lines delimiting a certain conical volume. Why then, in this original schema, did I place S in the spot where you will find it in the published figure? Nothing implies that
440 he is there rather than elsewhere. He is there in theory because, with respect to the orientation of the figure, you see him appear in some sense behind *i(a)*, and because this position is not without having a phenomenological correspondent that is expressed rather well in the French expression – and it is no accident that it exists – *une idée derrière la tête* [literally, "an idea behind the head"; figuratively, "an idea in the back of one's mind"]. Why would ideas that are generally the ones that sustain us be qualified as "ideas behind the head"? It is no accident that analysts sit behind their patients. We will turn again later today to the topic of what is in front and what is behind.

Be that as it may, the position of S in the field of the Other – that is, in the virtual field that the Other develops, owing to its presence, as a field of reflection – can only be located here at the point designated by capital I, insofar as it is distinct from the place where *i'(a)* is projected. It is inasmuch as this distinction is not merely possible

but ordinary that the subject can apprehend what is fundamentally illusory about his narcissistic identification. There is the shadow, *der Schatten*, as Freud says somewhere [*SE* XIV, p. 249], precisely as regards the *verlorenes Objekt*, of the lost object, in the work of mourning. If *der Schatten* – the shadow or essential opacity that narcissistic structure brings to the object relationship – is surmountable, it is insofar as the subject can identify with something else.

I have figured the Other here in a form in which it is legitimate for us to figure it – as a mirror. It is the form in which existentialist philosophy grasps it, grasping it in that form to the exclusion of any other, and this is precisely what constitutes its limitation. The Other, that philosophy tells us, is he who sends our own image back to us. Now, if the Other is nothing but he who reflects my own image back to me, I am, in fact, nothing but what I see myself as. Literally, I am the Other with a capital *O* insofar as he himself, if he exists, sees the same thing as me. He, too, sees himself in my place. How am I to know if what I see myself as over there is not all there is? It is truly the simplest hypothesis to assume the Other to be a living mirror, such that when I gaze at him, it is him in me that gazes at himself, and who sees himself in my place, in the place that I occupy in him. Assuming he is nothing but his own gaze, he is the one who grounds the truth of this gaze.

In order to dissipate this mirage, something suffices, something is required, and something occurs every day that I represented to you earlier on as the movement of the small child's head when he turns around toward the person who is carrying him. It doesn't take much – a lightning flash (but that is already saying too much, 441
for flashes of lightning have always been taken to be no less than emblematic signs of the Father of the gods, and I am not bringing this up at random) or even just a fly buzzing about that passes into this field – for me to locate myself elsewhere, to lead me outside of the conical field in which *i(a)* is visible.

Don't think that by bringing in a fly, wasp, or anything else that makes noise and surprises us, I am just kidding around – because, as you very well know, even such a diminutive insect can be the elective object that suffices to constitute what I call the signifier of a phobia. Such an object can take on the altogether sufficient, operative function of calling into question the reality and consistency of the ego as an illusion. It is enough for anything that serves as a prop for the subject to move within the field of the Other for the Other's consistency – or more precisely, the consistency of what is there qua field of narcissistic cathexis – to be called into question by one of these deviations [*écarts*].

Indeed, if we rigorously follow Freud's teaching, although the

field of narcissistic cathexis is central and essential – and it is around this field that the entire fate of human desire is played out – it is not the only field. The proof thereof is that, at the very moment at which Freud introduces this field in his *Einführung* ["On Narcissism: An Introduction"], he distinguishes it from another field: that of the relationship to the archaic object, the nourishing field of the maternal object. This other field – which, in Freud's dialectic, takes on the value of being of an altogether different order, and which is, if I understood Conrad Stein correctly, what the latter identified in his work by the term "primal identification" – is, to my way of thinking, and this is something new that I am introducing, structured in an original, radical way by the presence of the signifier as such.

If I am introducing this notion, it is not for the sheer pleasure of contributing a new articulation of what is truly still the same field, but because the function of the signifier is decisive here. It is thanks to its function that what comes from this field allows the subject the possibility to exit from his pure and simple captivity in the narcissistic field. And it is only by pointing out that the function of signifying elements is essential that we can introduce clarifications and make possible distinctions that are imperiously necessitated by clinical questions that are as concrete as possible, as I will show you. It is
442 only by introducing the articulation of the signifier in structuring the field of the Other that clinical questions can be resolved that have hitherto remained unresolved, leading for this reason to irreducible confusions.

In other words, σκιᾶς ὄναρ ἄνθρωπος, "A dream of a shadow is man." It is on the basis of my dream, it is by moving about in the field of dreams insofar as it is the field of the wandering of signifiers, that I can glimpse the possibility of dissipating the effects of the shadow and know that it is merely a shadow. Naturally, there is something that I may for a long time still not know, which is that I am dreaming. But it is already at the level of dreams and in the field of dreams, assuming I know how to question them and articulate them, that I can not only triumph over the shadow but that I have my first access to the idea that there is something more real than the shadow – that there is, first of all and at the very least, a reality [*réel*] of desire that this shadow separates me from.

You will tell me that the world of reality [*réel*] is not the world of my desires. But Freud's dialectic also teaches us that I only proceed in the world of objects along the pathway of the obstacles placed before my desire. The object is *ob*. The object is found through objections. If the first step toward reality is made at the level of dreams and in dreams, I still have to wake up to get to this reality. But it does not suffice to topologically define this awakening by saying

that what wakes me up is when there is a little too much reality in my dream. In fact, I awaken when the satisfaction of demand appears in my dream. It is not the most common occurrence, but it happens.

The psychoanalytic path toward the truth about man has taught us what awakening is, and we glimpse what becomes of demand. The analyst articulates what man demands. With an analyst, man awakens. He realizes that for the million years that the human species has been here, it has not ceased to be necrophagous. This is the final word of what Freud articulates with the term "primal identification," the first type of identification: man has never ceased to eat his dead, even if he dreamt for a short space of time that he had definitively repudiated cannibalism.

It was important here for me to point out that it is precisely along the pathway whereby we are shown that desire is an oneiric desire – that desire has the same structure as dreams do – that the first correct step was made regarding the pathway toward reality.

It is because of dreams and in the field of dreams that we first 443
prove to be stronger than the shadow.

2

Now that I have articulated the relations between *i(a)* and I – although I am sorry that I have done so in such a way that you cannot already see their clinical implications – I am going to show the relations between this couple of terms and little *a*, the object of desire. This is what is important to me, and my prior discourse implies it, inasmuch as it suffices to guide us in the relations [between *a* and] *i(a)*.

I will return later to what, apart from the overall experience of dreams, justifies the emphasis I have placed on the signifier's function in the field of the Other. Whenever identifications with the ego-ideal are mentioned – for example, in the introjection involved in mourning around which an essential part of Freud's conception of identification revolves – you will see that, if we look closely at the clinical picture, we never encounter a global identification, the kind that would, with respect to the narcissistic identification that it combats, involve the enveloping of one being by another.

In order to illustrate what I have just said, consider the image we find in Christian icons: the mother with the child that she holds before her on her lap. Believe me, this figuration of the mother enveloping her child is no accident. If this were the crucial opposition between identifications, then compared to narcissistic identification, anaclitic identification should be like a vase containing within it a more limited world.

I will tell you right away that one of the most demonstrative texts on this topic is the *Versuch einer Entwicklungsgeschichte der Libido* by Karl Abraham. You must read his "Short Study of the Development of the Libido," which came out in 1924.

In his article, what is constantly at stake is to draw out the consequences of what Freud had just contributed regarding the mechanism of mourning and the identifications that it involves. Among the very numerous clinical illustrations Abraham provides of the reality of this mechanism, there is not a single example that
444 does not unambiguously give you the impression that the kind of introjection involved is not the introjection of the reality of another person as enveloping, overflowing, or all-inclusive, or even as a hodgepodge at times, but always the introjection of *ein einziger Zug*, a single trait. The illustrations of this that he supplies go very far, since in reality, despite his title, *Versuch*, an "essay" or "short study" on the development of the libido, what he talks about is the function of that which is partial in identification, and he does this alongside his study of development and under the aegis of this study, unless the latter is merely the excuse for the former, or perhaps even a subdivision of it.

Indeed, it is in this article that Karl Abraham introduced the notion that is incorrectly referred to as that of the "partial object," which has since circulated throughout psychoanalytic work, becoming the foundation on which quite a lot of theorization concerning the neuroses and perversions has been constructed. I will show you what it is actually about before returning to the brilliant illustrations he provides of it.

It will suffice for me to indicate to you exactly where you can find these things in the text, and you will see that there is nothing to object to in what I am formulating here. For Abraham's article has no meaning or import except insofar as it illustrates on every page what characterizes identification inasmuch as it is an ego-ideal identification – it is an identification via isolated traits, each of which is unique and has a signifying structure.

This is also what obliges us to look a bit more closely at what must be distinguished from it, assuming we wish to see clearly. Indeed, in the same context, and for good reason, Abraham introduces what is designated as the function of the partial object. This is precisely what is involved in the relations between $i(a)$ and a.

If you read Abraham's essay, you will find the following term, *Partialliebe*, partial love, used in connection with the object: partial love for the object. The object of this love, the more than exemplary object, the only true object – although others can be inscribed in the same structure – is the phallus. This is what

Abraham stresses. How does he conceptualize in his text the break or disjunction that gives the phallus its value as a privileged object? On every page, he manages to produce for us what is at stake in the following manner.

What does partial love for the object mean according to Abraham? It is not love for what goes by the name phallus that falls away in the process. It is truly love that is close to acceding to the normal object, love for the opposite sex, the kind of love tied to the capital, 445
structuring, and structural stage that we call the "phallic stage." It is truly love for another person, a person who is as complete as possible – minus the genitals.

By way of clinical examples, Abraham provides two cases of hysterical women [pp. 483–94] who have with their fathers certain relations that are entirely based on variations in the relationship [to the object]. In the first case, following a traumatic experience involving her father [at age six, she witnessed her parents having sexual intercourse and saw her father's naked body; p. 483], the father was no longer apprehended by the patient for anything other than his phallic value; but later on in the treatment, he appeared in her dreams with his complete image, except that this image was censured at the level of the genitals – he appeared devoid of pubic hair [p. 494]. All of Abraham's examples run along these lines: partial love for the object – that is, love for the object minus the genitals – provides a foundation for the imaginary separation of the phallus, insofar as the latter intervenes henceforth as a central and exemplary function.

The phallus is the pivotal function, I would say, in that it allows us to situate what is distinguished from it, namely *a* and, in little *a* qua little *a*, the general function of the object of desire. At the heart of the little *a* function – allowing us to group together the different modes of possible objects that intervene in fantasy – is the phallus. The latter is the object, as I have said, that allows us to situate the series of possible objects, their point of origin, what comes before and what comes after.

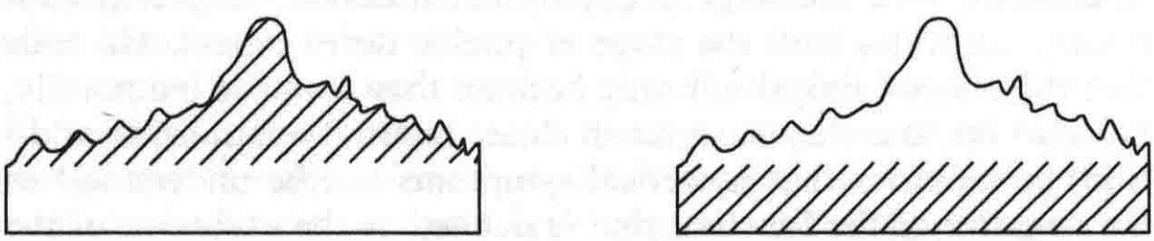
The crucial point is articulated on page 89 of the original edition [p. 495 in the English], where Abraham points out in a footnote that love for the object, with the exclusion of the genitals, appears to analysts to be the stage of psychosexual development that temporally coincides with the stage of phallic development. He adds that the two are linked not only because they coincide temporally, but also because they have much closer internal relations; in addition, he indicates that hysterical symptoms can be understood as the negative of the function that is defined as the exclusion of the genitalia.

I had not reread this text in a long time, having left it to two of you to do so for us. Perhaps it would not be a bad thing for you to realize that the algebraic formula that I gave for the hysteric's fantasy is manifest in Abraham's text. For the time being, it is something else that I wish to get you to see, which is also found in the text, but which I think no one has thus far noticed.

Abraham raises the following question: whence comes the struggle [*réluctance*] and, in short, raging will [*rage*] – a term that I am
446 introducing, but that is justified by his preceding lines – to castrate the other in the living flesh, a raging will that already wells up at the imaginary level? He answers this by saying: "*Wir müssen ausserdem in Betracht ziehen, dass bei jedem Menschen das eigene Genitale stärker als irgendein anderer Körperteil mit narzisstischer Liebe besetzt ist.*" "We must thus take into consideration the fact that in every man, the genitals, strictly speaking, are more cathected than any other part of the body in the narcissistic field." And so that there will be no mistaking what he thinks, Abraham indicates that this corresponds precisely to the fact that anything but the genitals must be cathected when it comes to the object.

I am not sure if you truly realize what such a modification implies, a modification that is not isolated here as if it were a mere slip of the pen; everything goes to show that this is what underpins all of Abraham's thought. I cannot in good conscience quickly glide over this point as if it were an everyday truth. Despite the obviousness and necessity of such an articulation, I do not believe that it has hitherto been pointed out by anyone.

Let us try to understand this with the help of the blackboard. [Lacan begins drawing a schema.] Here is the field of one's own body – in other words, the narcissistic field. The only reason for having brought in narcissism here is to show us that the process of cathexis' progress depends on the transformations of narcissism. Let us try to draw something that corresponds to what Abraham tells us – namely, that cathexis is never stronger than when it comes to the genitals. We arrive at the following graphic representation, where this [the uppermost squiggly line] represents the profile of narcissistic cathexis.



Narcissistic cathexis Object cathexis

Now what can we say about object cathexis? Abraham's sentence – if we are to take it seriously – implies that, as opposed to what we might at first think, the energy that is going to be transferred to the object is not subtracted from the summit, from the spot where there is maximal cathexis. It is not the regions that are the most cathected that lose some of their charge in order to begin to provide a little cathexis to the object. In Abraham's conceptualization, insofar as it is necessitated by the whole of his book – otherwise his book has no meaning whatsoever – it is, on the contrary, at the lowest levels of cathexis [of one's own body] that energy is taken so as to be used for object cathexis.

Abraham explains this to us in the clearest manner possible: it is inasmuch as the subject's own genitals remain cathected, that the object's genitals are not cathected.

There is absolutely no other way to understand what he says.

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Doesn't it seem, if you give this a little thought, that it leads us to an observation that has far more importance than we might think?

Indeed, there is something that it seems people don't realize about the mirror stage and the function of the specular image. If the kind of communicating, reversal, deflection [*déversement*], or interchanging [of libido] that takes place between the narcissistic object and the other object is regulated at the level of specular relations, mustn't we show a bit of imagination and give importance to what results from it? If, in the imaginary, the organizing center of the relationship to the other as sexual, or as not sexual, is situated in man at the specular stage, isn't it worth our while to dwell for a moment on the following point, that no one ever mentions? This economy has an intimate relationship with faces, with the "face-to-face relationship."

We often employ this term, emphasizing it in a certain way, but it does not seem that we have ever entirely emphasized what is original about it: we call the genital relationship that takes place *a tergo* a relationship *more canis*. It should not be good enough for cats, if you catch my drift. It would suffice for you to think of cat-like women to tell yourself that there is perhaps something decisive in imaginary structuring which is such that, for the vast majority of species, the relationship with the object of desire being structurally destined to come from behind, this relationship consists in covering or being covered. Rare are the species for which this thing must take place from the front. In our species, the sensitive moment of the

apprehension of the object is decisive, assuming you lend credence to both the experiential results of the mirror stage and what I have tried to find in it. I am speaking of an object that is defined by the
448 fact that, in animals that have an erect posture, something essential happens with the appearance of their ventral side. This is of capital importance.

It seems to me that people have never yet clearly brought out the full range of consequences of what I will call the various fundamental positions of eroticism. It is not that we do not see features of them here and there, or that psychoanalytic authors have not for a long time observed that almost all primal scenes evoke and reproduce the witnessing of coitus that occurs *a tergo*, and are connected to that. Why? I will not dwell here on a certain number of notations that could be put into some kind of order in this way, because I want to indicate to you that it is rather remarkable that the objects that turn out to have an isolated value in the imaginary composition of the human psyche, especially as partial objects, are not only situated in front, but stick out, as it were.

If we take as our frame of reference a vertical surface that is parallel to the surface of a mirror, and gauge in some sense the depth of what is at stake in the specular image, we can measure what comes forward with respect to this depth, as emerging from libidinal immersion. I am not speaking merely of the phallus, but also of the essentially fantasmatic objects known as the breasts.

I recently remembered, in this context, an episode in a book by the marvelous Madame Gyp, which is entitled *Petit Bob*. In it, Little Bob, who is an inimitable clown, notices two little sugar loaves, as he puts it, on a woman who is floating on her back in the water at the seaside; he discovers their appearance with wonder – and we sense some indulgence here on the author's part.

I believe that it is never a waste of time to read works by authors who take the trouble to transcribe for us what children say. This comment was surely a direct quote. The fact that Madame Gyp – who was the mother of a late lamented neurosurgeon, who may well have been the prototype of Little Bob – was, we must admit, a bit of an idiot, certainly does not mean that reading her work is any less profitable to us; quite the contrary.

We will thus perhaps see better now the true function that should be ascribed to the object relation to the nipple.* The tip of the breast also has a gestalt-like relationship insofar as it is set off from or isolated against a background. Owing to this, it is in a position of exclusion with respect to the profound relationship with the mother which is that of breast-feeding. Were it not so, perhaps one would not so often have such trouble getting infants to latch on to their

mothers' nipples. And perhaps the phenomena of anorexia nervosa 449
would also take a different shape.

You should thus keep in mind the little schema concerning the mainspring of the two-way link between narcissistic cathexis and object cathexis, a link that justifies its name and allows us to isolate its mechanism. Not every object must be defined, purely and simply, as a partial object – far from it – but the central characteristic of the relationship between one's own body and the phallus conditions the relationship to the most primitive objects after the fact, *nachträglich*. The fact that they are separable objects, that they are objects that can possibly be lost, and that they function as lost objects – all of these features would not be laid out in the same way were there not at the center the emergence of the phallic object as a blank spot on the body image.

Think of the islands you see on sailors' maps; what there is on the islands is not represented in the slightest, but merely the outlines. Well, the same is true for objects of desire in general. I will try to show this to you next time: the genital is like an island, and it is not enough to say that later on we will sketch in what there is on the island, that the thing will be taken care of, and that we will then enter thoroughly into genitality. No one has ever done the drawing. To characterize the object as genital does not suffice to define its relationship with the body. Nor does it suffice to qualify one's entry into the genital stage as post-ambivalent – no one has *ever* entered into it.

I will conclude here with a little image designed to get you to remember what is new in what I wished to add to your mental imagery today.

While I was contemplating the relationship between men and animals, it occurred to me that I should read up on hedgehogs to find out how they make love. It is clear that to do so *a tergo* must be rather inconvenient for them. I must give Jean Rostand a call to ask him what they do. But I will not dwell on this point. Hedgehogs figure in literature. Archilochus says the following in his *Epodes*: "The fox knows lots of tricks, the hedgehog only one – but it's a winner." Well, what is at issue here concerns the hedgehog.

Whether or not he was thinking of Archilochus, Jean Giraudoux 450
reveals the lightning-flash style of someone who also has a winning trick up his sleeve, which he attributes to the fox. He says – and it is possible that an association of ideas played a role here – perhaps the hedgehog, too, knows this particular trick. It would, in any case, be urgent for him to know it, for it has to do with the way to get rid of vermin, an operation that is more than merely problematic for the hedgehog.

Giraudoux's fox proceeds in the following manner. He wades very slowly into the water, going in tail first. He slips in slowly, letting the water envelop him until nothing remains above the surface but the tip of his nose. Then he dives in, in order to be thoroughly washed clean of everything that has infested him.

I hope this image will illustrate for you the relationship that I brought out today – namely, that everything that is narcissistic must be conceptualized as at the root of castration.

June 21, 1961

XXVII

MOURNING THE LOSS OF THE ANALYST

The little *a* of desire.
The Sadean line.
"I desire."
The relationship between I and *a*.

As I was preparing this last class of the year for you, Plato's invocation at the beginning of the *Critias* came to mind. He speaks there about tone as an essential element in the measure of what must be said. Would, indeed, that I could know how to maintain the right tone.

In order to do so, Plato mentions the topic he is going to discuss in this unfinished text, which is no less than the birth of the gods [106a–b]. This coincidence of topics did not displease me, since, tangentially no doubt, we came quite close to the same one, to the point of hearing someone – who professes, you may think, to be an atheist in certain ways – speak of the gods as that which is found in the real.

It turns out that, every week, more and more of you hear what I tell you as especially addressed to you. Not that I privately address whomsoever I please, since many of you, if not all of you, hear it. Nor is what I say addressed to you as a group either, for I observe that what each person hears leaves room among yourselves for dissent, if not discordance. A lot of room is thus left for different views. Perhaps this is what is known, strictly speaking, as "a voice crying in the wilderness" [*parler dans le désert*].

I can certainly have no reason to complain about having been deserted this year. As everyone knows, there can practically be a crowd of people in the desert, for a desert is not constituted by emptiness. What is important is the following that I dare to hope: that it is to some degree in the desert that you have come to find me. Let us not be too optimistic, nor too proud of ourselves; but let us say,

all the same, that you have had, all of you have had, some concern about where the desert ends.

452 This is why I ensure that what I tell you is never, in fact, cumbersome as concerns the role that I must play with some of you, which is that of your analyst. This is precisely related to what my Seminar this year aims at – namely, the position of the analyst. We are concerned with what is at the heart of the response that the analyst must provide in order to be equal to the power of the transference. I characterize this position by saying that the analyst must abstain from having any notion of an ideal analyst in the very place that is his. I believe that respecting this condition is likely to permit the necessary reconciliation of the two positions I hold for a number of you, being both your analyst and someone who speaks to you about analysis.

In various ways and under various headings, one can of course formulate something along the lines of ideals as regards the analyst. There are qualifications the analyst must have, and they already suffice to constitute a core of ideals. The analyst must not be altogether ignorant of a certain number of things, that is for sure. But this is not at all what is involved in his essential position.

Naturally, the ambiguity of the word "knowledge" [*savoir*] comes in here. If, in his invocation at the beginning of the *Critias*, Plato refers to knowledge as the sole guarantee that what he will broach will remain measured, it is because at his time, this ambiguity was much smaller. The meaning the word "knowledge" has for him is much closer to what I am aiming at when I try to articulate for you what the analyst's position is, and it is here that the choice I made this year to begin with the exemplary image of Socrates is truly justified.

1

Last time I arrived at what I believe to be a turning point in what I will have to articulate hereafter: the function of little object *a* in my schemas. It is, indeed, the function that I have thus far elucidated the least.

I broached it last time regarding the object qua part, a part that presents itself as separate – the "partial object," as they say. And, directing you to a text that I entreat you to peruse carefully during
453 the upcoming summer vacation, I pointed out that Karl Abraham, he who introduced the notion of the partial object, quite categorically means by it a love for the object from which a part is excluded. A partial object is an object minus this part.

Such is the foundation of the experience around which the

introduction of the partial object revolves, and you are aware of the interest that has since been granted it, in particular in Winnicott's speculations – those that are related, in the final analysis, to the meditations of the Kleinian circle.

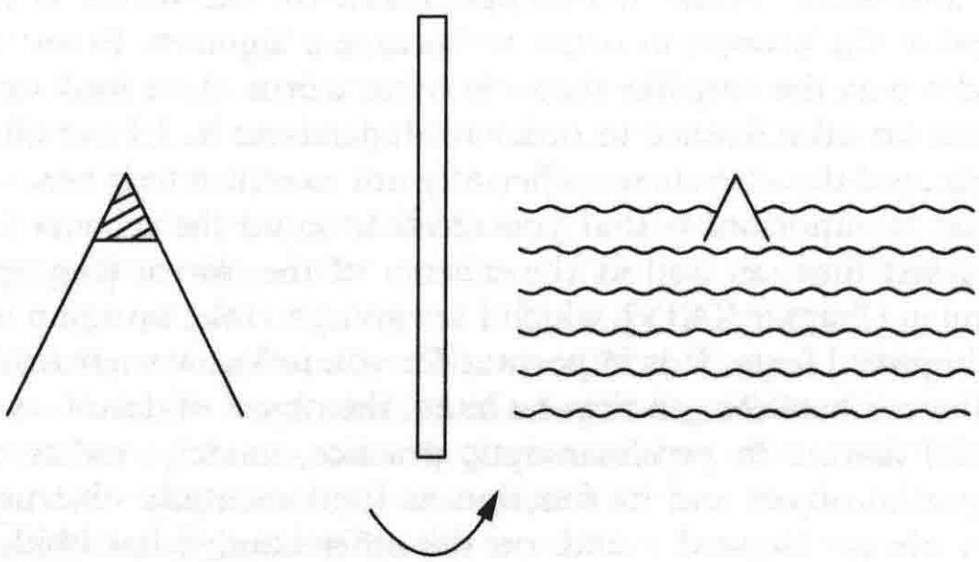
Those who listen to me, assuming they hear me, have been able to have for a long time, it seems to me, more than just a suspicion of the formal fine-tuning that we can perform regarding the partial nature of the object, insofar as it is very closely related to the function of metonymy. The latter lends itself to the same equivocations in grammar. There, too, you can hear that metonymy is "the part taken for the whole," a definition that allows for everything – both truth and error. Truth, if this part taken for the whole is transformed in the process in order to become a signifier. Error, if we consider only the part-like face – in other words, if we look only to a reality-based reference in order to understand it. I have already underscored this elsewhere sufficiently not to return to it here.

What is important is that you recall to mind the schema I presented last time, as well as the schema of the mirror [the optical schema in Chapter XXIV], which I am going to take up again today in a simplified form. It is important for you to know what relationship there is between, on the one hand, the object of desire – whose essential feature in psychoanalytic practice, namely, its structure as a partial object and its function as fundamentally obstructing, I have always stressed – and, on the other hand, what libidinally corresponds to it. The latter is what I brought out last time; it is what remains most irreducibly cathected at the level of one's own body: the basic fact of narcissism and its central core. The sentence by Abraham that I discussed involves this: it is inasmuch as the real phallus remains, unbeknown to the subject, that around which the maximum cathexis is preserved, that the partial object turns out to be elided or left blank in the image of the other qua cathected.

The very term "cathexis" [*investissement*] takes on all of its meaning from the ambiguity that we find in the German term *Besetzung*. What is involved is not merely a charge, but something that surrounds a central blank. If we must, in this context, latch onto something obvious, then let us take an image that seems, we might say, to stand erect at the height of desire's fascination, the image that is renewed with the same form of Plato's theme by 454
Botticelli's brush: the birth of Venus – that is, Heavenly Aphrodite – Venus rising from the waters, her body erect above the waves of bitter love. Venus – or even Lolita. What does this image teach us as analysts?

We have been able to identify it with the symbolic equation, to employ Fenichel's words, "Girl = Phallus."* The phallus is not

articulated here in a different way but, strictly speaking, in the same way. Where we symbolically see the phallus is precisely where it is not. Where we assume it to be behind a veil, having manifested itself in the erection of desire, is to the left side of the mirror in the [following] schema. If it is there before us, to the right, in the dazzling body of Venus, it is precisely insofar as it is not there. Whereas this form is invested, in the sense that I mentioned earlier, with all of the attractions, all the *Triebregungen* that surround it on the outside, the phallus, along with its charge, is located to the left of the mirror, within the narcissistic enclosure. This is why where it is, is also where it is not.



What emerges as a fascinating form turns out to be invested with libidinal waves. These waves come from the place where it [the phallus] was withdrawn – namely, from the narcissistic foundation, as it were, from which everything that comes to form the object's structure (as such, we might say, on the condition that we respect its relations and elements) is drawn. What constitutes the *Triebregung* at work in desire – desire in its privileged function as distinguished from demand and need – has its seat in the remainder, to which the mirage corresponds in the image, the mirage owing to which the image is identified with the part that is missing from it and whose invisible presence gives beauty its shine [*brilliance*]. This is what is
455 meant by Antiquity's term ἵμερος (*hímeros*), which I have mentioned many times here, going so far as to play on its equivocation with ἡμέρα (*ímera*), meaning day.

This is the central point around which what we must conceptualize as regards the function of little *a* is played out.

Be so kind as to recall the myth that I devised for you when we were talking about the *Symposium*, the myth of the hand that reaches out toward a log. In order for the myth to be true, this hand

must bring some rather amazing heat with it if the object is to burst into flames at its approach. It is a pure miracle, against which all kind souls rise up in protest. For however rare this phenomenon may be, it must still be considered both unthinkable and nevertheless unstoppable, in any case. It is indeed an utter miracle that, at the level of this induced fire, another hand appears. It is quite an ideal image, a phenomenon one can only dream of, like that of love. We all know that love's fires burn invisibly; we all know that a damp wooden beam can burn on the inside for a long time without anything being revealed on the outside; and, in short, we all know that, in the *Symposium*, it is left to the most complete simpleton [Eryximachus] to articulate in an almost derisive way that the nature of love is the nature of that which is humid, which essentially means the same thing as what is shown here on the board – that the reservoir of object love, insofar as it is love for what is alive, is the *Schatten*, the narcissistic shadow.

I announced the presence of this shadow last time, and I will go so far today as to call it a moldy stain [*tache de moisi*] – this is perhaps a better name for it than we might think, since the word *moi* [me or ego] is included in it. I would go so far as to intersect tender Fénelon's speculations on the ego – he, too, was wavy or slippery [*ondoyant*], as they say. He makes the ego into the sign of some sort of political maneuvering between the MRP and God. I would be just as capable as anyone else to take this metaphor very far, even so far as to make of my Seminar a message for your bed sheet. Must we not see an essentially human sign in the smell of dead rats that emanates from your laundry if you leave it on the edge of your bathtub for too long? If my style as an analyst emphasizes more willingly what people qualify or stigmatize with the term "abstraction," it is not simply the effect of a preference but perhaps simply in order to accommodate your sense of smell that I could tickle as well as anyone else.

Whatever the case may be, you can see behind this the outline 456
of the mythical point of libidinal development that psychoanalysis, without ever really knowing how to situate it on the scale, has termed the "urinary complex," with its obscure relationship to fire. These are antonymic terms, the one struggling against the other, which animated our primitive ancestors' play; as you know, psychoanalysis discovered that man's first playful reflex when faced with flames must have been to piss on them, an exploit that we find anew in *Gulliver's Travels*. The profound relationship between *uro*, I am burning, and *urina*, urine, is inscribed in the foundation of childhood experience – the operation of drying the sheets, dreams of laundry that is enigmatically starched, or erotic thoughts about

the laundress, which are familiar to those who were able to go see the splendid staging by Visconti of all possible whites [*blancs*, which also means "blanks"], materializing for us the fact that Pierrot is dressed in white as well as the question as to why.

In short, it is a small, clearly human environment that sets off a chain reaction around the ambiguous moment between enuresis and the first stirrings [*émois*] of the phallus. It is here that the dialectic of love and desire, in its most palpable roots, is played out.

How does the central object, the object of desire, present itself? Not wishing to take any further here the myth that is placidly incarnated in what we call the little geographical map, or little Corsica, that every analyst knows well, let us say that the object of desire presents itself, at the center of this phenomenon, as an object that has been saved from the waves of your love. Its place must be situated precisely – and this is the function of my myth – in the midst of the same burning bush in which "I am what I am" was one day announced, in the form of an opaque answer – at the very point we are still at when, not knowing who is speaking, we hear the question "*Che vuoi?*" proffered by the strange head of a metaphorical camel, out of which might just as well come the little faithful dog of desire.

This is the acme around which revolves what we deal with as regards the little *a* of desire.

2

We deal with this little *a* throughout the structure [of desire], for it is never superseded as regards its libidinal attraction.

457 Let us consider what precedes it in development – namely, the first forms of the object qua separate.

Breasts only take on their function in desire *nachträglich*, after the fact, inasmuch as they have already played their role in the same place in the dialectic of love, on the basis of early demands, on the basis of the *Trieb* [drive] involved in feeding, which is instated right from the outset because the mother speaks. At the level of oral demand, there is, in effect, an appeal to something beyond what can be satisfied by the object known as the breast. And the breast, which is quickly distinguished from its background, immediately takes on an instrumental value. It is not simply that which is taken, but also that which is pushed away or refused because one already wants something else.

I have already demonstrated what comes before what in the anal relationship, where the appeal to the mother's being goes beyond

anything she can provide by way of an anaclitic prop, a function in which being and having meld.

Lastly, it is on the basis of the advent of the phallus in this dialectic that the way is paved for the distinction between being and having, precisely insofar as they previously were combined.

Beyond the phallic object, the topic of the object opens up – and this is the right word for it – otherwise. To consider this emergence of what I would almost call the most sublime island – this fantasy, reflection, or image – in which the object is incarnated as an object of desire, the one that I brought to the fore earlier, it is clear that the phallus is incarnated precisely in that which is lacking in the image. The entire subsequent relationship between the subject and the object of desire originates therein.

The horizon of the relationship to the object is not, above all, that of a relationship that preserves. The point is to investigate what the object has under the hood, so to speak, from what cloth it is cut. This can be done along the lines by which we try to isolate the function of little *a*, the characteristically Sadean line, whereby the object is investigated to the very depths of its being, and made to turn itself inside out to show what is most hidden inside it, in order to fill in this empty form insofar as it is fascinating.

To what degree can the object bear such questioning? Perhaps to the point where the final want-to-be is revealed, to the point where the questioning merges with the very destruction of the object. Such is the endpoint – and this is why there is a barrier here that I situated for you last year, the barrier of beauty or form. The requirement to 458
preserve the object reflects back on the subject himself here.

Rabelais shows us Gargantua leaving home for war. "Keep this, which is most beloved, safe," his wife says to him, pointing with her finger at what, back then, it was much easier to designate unambiguously than in our own times, since the piece of clothing known as the fly or codpiece was quite glorious at the time. This means, first of all, that it cannot be safeguarded at home. But the second signification is just as full of the sapience that we never fail to find in Rabelais' statements – throw all of your forces into the battle, but keep this irreducibly at the center. Do not place this at risk.

This allows us to change the course of our dialectic. Indeed, all of this would be very pretty were it so easy to conceptualize desire on the basis of the subject, and we had to find anew at the level of desire a myth that developed at the level of knowledge, to turn the world into a sort of vast web extracted from the stomach of the subject qua spider.

Wouldn't it be simpler for the subject to say "I desire"? But it is not so simple to say so. It is much less simple, as you know from

experience, than to say "I love," oceanically, as Freud expresses himself so prettily in his critique of religious effusion. I love, I soak, I wet, I flood, and I drool to boot – all of which is, moreover, pure drivel – and most often barely enough to moisten a handkerchief, especially since such effusion is becoming rarer and rarer these days.

The great crybabies [*humides*] have been disappearing from this earth since the middle of the nineteenth century. If anyone can show me someone today who is like Louise Colet [1810–76], I would go out of my way to see her. It seems, rather, that this truly leaves the *I* in abeyance. It leaves it so well glued [*collé*], in any case, in fantasy that I defy you to find this *I* of desire anywhere else than where Jean Genet points it out in *The Balcony*.

I already spoke to you about Jean Genet – dear Genet – one day when I discussed him at length here [Seminar V, pp. 263–8]. You can easily find the passage where he admirably indicates what call-girls know full well, namely that, whatever the fanciful ideas of men may be who are thirsting to have their fantasies fulfilled, one feature is common to all of them: in the enactment, there must be one feature that seems *untrue*, because otherwise, perhaps, were it to become altogether true, they would no longer know which way
459 is up. The subject would perhaps no longer have any chance of survival. This is the place of the barred signifier, which is necessary in order for us to know that it is merely a signifier. This indication of something inauthentic is the place of the subject qua first person in fantasy.

The best way I have found to indicate it, as I have suggested several times, is to restore the subject to his true form. The cedilla of *ça* in French is not a true cedilla, but rather an apostrophe – it is the apostrophe from *c'est*, the first person of the unconscious. You can even cross out the *t* at the end: *c'es* is a way of writing the subject at the level of the unconscious.

We must not say that this is well designed to facilitate the shift from the object to object-relatedness [*objectalité*]. As you know, people even speak, on this score, of the shifting of certain lines within the spectrum. In fact, the gap between the object of desire and the real object, insofar as we can aspire to it, is fundamentally determined by the negative [non-included] or included nature of the appearance of the phallus. I was aiming at nothing else earlier when I sketched out for you a brief trajectory of the object from its archaic forms to the horizon of its destruction – that is, from the orificial or "anificial" object, were I to dare to put it thus, of our infantile past, to the object of the fundamentally ambivalent aim that persists right up to the endpoint of desire's aim. It is a pure lie, which has no

theoretical necessity whatsoever, to speak [as Abraham does] about a supposedly post-ambivalent stage in our relationship to the object of desire.

It is thus solely by establishing an order in the ascending and concording scale of objects with respect to the phallic summit that we can understand the link between the different levels involved, for example, in sadistic attacks, insofar as they in no wise involve the pure and simple satisfaction of a supposedly elemental aggression, but rather a way of questioning the object as to its being and drawing forth from it the split – the either/or – introduced between being and having on the basis of the phallic summit.

The fact that we find ourselves, after the phallic stage, "highly ambivalent like before," is not the worst outcome imaginable. Looking at things from such a vantage point will never get us very far. There is always a moment where we lose our grip on the object, qua object of desire, because we do not know how to take the question any further. To force a being – because this is the essence of little *a* – beyond life is not within the grasp of all and sundry.

This is not simply to allude to the fact here that there are 460
natural limits to coercion and to suffering itself. Even to force a being to have pleasure is not a problem that we can solve so easily, and for a very good reason: we are the ones who run the show and we are the ones who are involved. Everyone wonders at the fact that Sade's Justine is able to indefinitely bear up under all kinds of ill treatment, to the point that Jupiter himself must intervene, supplying a thunderbolt to put an end to it. But the fact of the matter is that, in truth, Justine is but a shadow. Juliet is the only one who exists. She is the one who dreams, and as such, as dreaming, she is the one who must necessarily – read the story – run all the risks endemic to desire, which are no slighter than those that Justine runs. Obviously, we hardly consider ourselves to be worthy of such company, for she takes things very far. We should not make too much of them in high-society conversations. People who care only about their own little selves can find scant interest in this.

Which brings us back to the subject. How can the whole dialectic of desire be based on the subject if this subject is nothing but an apostrophe, inscribed in a relationship that is, above all, a relationship to the Other's desire?

It is here that the function of capital I – the function of the signifier of the ego-ideal – comes in.

3

The ego-ideal as a function preserves *i(a)*, the ideal ego.

What is involved? What is involved is the precious thing with which we try to capture moisture [*de l'humide*], a ceramic bowl or a little pot, which has always been the symbol of that which is created [by humankind], in which everyone tries to give himself some measure of consistency. Many other shapes and models help out here [*y concourent*]. A prop must necessarily be constructed in the Other, the Other who determines whether the flower is enclosed or not [by the opening of the vase]. Why is this? It is because there is no other way in which the subject can subsist.

Doesn't psychoanalysis teach us, in this regard, that the radical function of the image in phobia is clarified analogically by what Freud uncovered in the ethnographic work of his time under the heading of totems? The latter has undoubtedly been considerably
461 revised since then, but if something remains of it, it is the following: we are willing to risk everything for pleasure, for a fight, or for prestige, including life itself, but we are not willing to risk a certain liminal image, not willing to risk the dissolution of the very riveting, the dissolution of that which rivets the subject to this image – a fish or a tree. The fact that a Bororo is not a macaw is not a macaw phobia, even if it apparently involves similar taboos. The sole common factor between phobia and totemism is the image itself in its function of isolating and discerning the object – namely, the ideal ego.

The metaphor of he who desires [*désirant*] in just about anything can always, in fact, become urgent again in an individual case. Think of Little Hans. It is at the moment at which he who is desired finds himself defenseless – with respect to the Other's desire that threatens *i(a)* – [that is,] the riveting or limit that the eternal artifice reproduces – that the subject pulls himself together and appears to be locked in the bearskin before having killed it. But in reality it is a bearskin that has been turned inside out, and it is on the inside of it that the phobic defends [*défend*] the other side of the specular image.

Of course, the specular image involves cathexis, but it also involves defense. It is a dam against the Pacific of motherly love. Let us simply say that the cathexis of the Other is, briefly stated, prohibited [*défendu*] by the ideal ego. The final cathexis of the phallus itself is, in a certain way, defended against by the phobic. I would go so far as to say that phobia is the luminous signal that appears to warn you that you are running on the last little bit of libido left in the tank. You can keep driving for a little while on it. This is what phobia means and this is why the phallus as a signifier is its prop.

I need not remind you of everything that, in our past discussions, illustrates and confirms this way of envisioning things. Recall simply the dream related by Ella Sharpe that I commented on for you. Remember the little cough with which the subject alerted his analyst to his presence before entering her office, and everything that was hidden behind it, and which came out along with his usual reveries.

What would I do, he said, if I were someplace where I would not want people to know I was? I would make a little barking sound and the people there would tell themselves, "Oh, it's only a dog." The patient had this association to his cough also owing to a dog that once began to masturbate on his leg [pp. 130–2]. What do we find in this exemplary story? That the subject, who was more than ever 462
in a defensive posture at the moment he entered the analyst's consulting room, was pretending to be a dog. He pretended to be one, but it was everyone else who was a dog before he entered, and he was wanting them to don anew their human appearance before he entered. Don't go imagining that this suggested some kind of special interest in dogs on his part. In this example, as in every other, to be a dog had but a single meaning: it meant that one goes "bowwow," and nothing else. I would bark and the people would say to themselves, "It's a dog." The words "It's a dog" had the value there of an *einziger Zug*.

Consider the schema in Freud's *Massenpsychologie* [*Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*] with which he shows us the origin of the kind of identification that is characteristic of the ego-ideal. How does he do so? He does so via group psychology. What thus happens, he asks, prefacing in this way Hitler's grand explosion onto the scene, such that everyone enters into a sort of fascination that allows them to be taken as a mass, as a kind of amorphous gel, as what is known as a crowd? In order for all those subjects to collectively have, at least for a moment, the same ideal, which allows virtually anything to happen for a rather short period of time, all external objects must, he explains, be taken to have a common trait, an *einziger Zug*.

Why is this of interest to us? It interests us because what is true at the collective level is also true at the individual level. The relationship between the subject and outside objects revolves around the function of the ideal. In the world of a subject who speaks – in other words, in what we call the human world – we purely and simply encounter a metaphorical attempt to attribute a trait in common to all objects; it is purely and simply by decree that we can try to attribute a common feature to their diversity. As concerns the animal kingdom, in which the psychoanalytic tradition has shown the exemplary play of defensive identifications, the subject can – in

order to subsist in a world where his *i(a)* is respected – decree that everything, whether dogs, cats, skunks, or deer, goes "bowwow." This is the function of the *einziger Zug*.

It is essential to keep it structured in this way, for outside of this register, it is impossible to conceptualize what Freud means when he talks about the psychology of mourning and melancholia. What distinguishes mourning from melancholia?

In mourning, it is quite clear that its length and difficulty stem from the metaphorical function of the traits attributed to the love
463 object insofar as they are narcissistic privileges. In a manner that is all the more significant, since he says it in a way that seems to surprise even him, Freud clearly emphasizes what is at stake: mourning consists in authenticating the real loss little by little, piece by piece, sign by sign, element capital I by element capital I, until they are all exhausted. When that is done, the mourning is over.

But what does this imply if the object was a little *a*, an object of desire? The object is always masked behind its attributes, it is almost trivial to say so. Naturally, the matter only begins to become serious when it becomes pathological – in other words, when we are talking about melancholia. There the object is, curiously enough, much harder to get a handle on, even though it is certainly present and triggers infinitely more catastrophic effects. For these effects go so far as to dry up what Freud calls the most fundamental *Trieb*, the one that makes you want to go on living.

It is necessary to study this text and grasp what Freud indicates in it regarding some kind of disappointment that he is hard-pressed to define but that is nevertheless there. With an object that is so thoroughly veiled, masked, and obscure, what traits show through? The subject cannot investigate any traits of an object that cannot be seen, but we analysts, insofar as we work with the subject, can identify some of them via those that he criticizes in himself. "I am nothing, I am nothing but rubbish."

Observe that his specular image is never involved in his self-criticism. The melancholiac never tells you that he looks bad, that his face is at its worst, or that it is contorted; instead he tells you that he is the lowest of the low, that he brings on one catastrophe after another for his entire family, and so on. In his self-accusations he remains entirely within the realm of the symbolic. Let us add "having" to the list – he is broke. Doesn't this help put us on the scent?

I will merely indicate it to you today by designating a specific point which, in my eyes, at least for the time being, is a point where mourning and melancholia meet up. It is a question of what I will call, not mourning, nor depression owing to the loss of an object,

but remorse of a certain type triggered by a dénouement that involves something along the lines of suicide on the part of the object. Remorse, thus, regarding an object that has entered in some way into the field of desire and that, owing to its own actions or some risk it took in a venture, has disappeared.

Analyze such cases. The path is traced out for you by Freud when he indicates that, already in normal mourning, the drive that the subject turns against himself could well be an aggressive drive 464
toward the object. Plumb the dramatic remorse when it arises. You will perhaps see that it turns against the subject a maelstrom of insults that may be akin to what we find in melancholia. Its source lies in the following: if the object who has thus disappeared went so far as to destroy himself, it was not worth my while to have taken so many precautions with him; it was useless for me to have turned away from my own true desire for his sake.

As extreme as this example may be, it is not so very rare. The same disposition is encountered when a certain loss arises after the long embraces between desiring subjects that we call the oscillations of love.

This brings us to the heart of the relationship between capital I and little *a*, at a point of fantasy where the safety provided by the limit is always called into question; we must know how to get the subject to stay away from this limit. This requires, on the analyst's part, a complete comprehension of the function of the signifier, regarding which he must grasp by what mainspring or means, in what roundabout manner, the function of the signifier is always involved when the position of the ego-ideal is at issue.

But there is still something else that, arriving now at the end of my talk today, I can merely indicate, which concerns the function of little *a*.

What Socrates knew and what the analyst must at least glimpse is that at the level of little *a*, the question is entirely different from the question of access to some ideal. Love can only surround this island, this field of being. And the analyst cannot help but think that any object whatsoever can fill it. This is where we analysts are led to vacillate, regarding the limit where – with any object whatsoever, once it has entered into the field of desire – the following question arises: "What are you?" There is no object that is of any greater value than another – this is the mourning around which desire for the analyst [*le désir de l'analyste* also means "the analyst's desire"] is centered.

At the end of the *Symposium*, consider who Socrates is going to praise – he is going to praise the idiot of idiots, the most idiotic of them all, and even the only thoroughgoing idiot [*con*] in the place [Agathon]. And think about the fact that this idiot is the one who

was given the job of saying, in a ridiculous form, what is truest about love. He does not know what he is saying, he utters stupidities, but
465 no matter, he is nevertheless the beloved object. And Socrates says to Alcibiades, "Everything that you have just said to me was for his ears."

This is the analyst's function, along with what it brings with it by way of a certain mourning. We meet up here with a truth that Freud himself left outside of the field of what he could understand.

Oddly enough – and this is probably owing to reasons of comfort, the reasons that I exposed to you today by formulating the need to preserve the pot or vase [*potiche*] – people do not seem to have realized that this is what is meant by "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

People do not want to translate this, because it probably would not be Christian, in the sense of a certain ideal – and believe me, Christianity has not yet said its last word – but it is a philosophical ideal.

This means that, regarding anyone, you can raise the question whether desire is totally destructive. With anyone, you can try to determine how far you will dare to go in questioning a being – at the risk to yourself of disappearing.

June 28, 1961

Translator's Endnotes

In these notes, the numbers in parentheses refer first to the page number of the present English edition and then, after a comma, to the paragraph number (note that partial and short paragraphs are counted, as are chapter titles and the block of subheadings, counted as one paragraph, located just below each chapter title).

Chapter I – In the Beginning Was Love

(3,3) The announcement can be found in the journal *La psychanalyse* 6 (1961): 313.

(3,4) As an adjective, *impair* (uneven) means odd, odd-numbered, or unpaired.

(4,5) Lacan discusses John's "In the beginning was the Word" at length in an interview found in *The Triumph of Religion* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013).

(4,6) "In the beginning was the deed" is from Goethe, *Faust*, Part I; it is quoted on the last page of Freud's *Totem and Taboo*.

(4,7) "Praxis" is an obvious reference to Marx.

(4,11) *Confus* (jumbled) can also mean confused or embarrassed.

(5,3) *Kern unseres Wesen* (the core of our being) is found in *SE* V, p. 603, and *SE* XXIII, p. 197.

(7,1) Lévi-Strauss' inaugural lecture was published in English as Chapter 1 ("The Scope of Anthropology") of *Structural Anthropology*, vol. 2, trans. M. Layton (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

(8,3) This version of Breuer's story comes from Freud and Jones (see *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, vol. I, pp. 222–6), but it is contested by Breuer's biographer, Albrecht Hirschmüller (1978/1989). Hirschmüller admits, however, that Jones had access to letters that he himself never saw. One of the only convincing points Hirschmüller makes is that, whereas Jones claims that the result of the second honeymoon in Venice was the conception of Breuer's youngest daughter, Dora, she was actually born on March 11, 1882, thus three months *before* Anna O.'s treatment ended.

(9,1) See *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *SE* IV, pp. 106–21 and *passim*; on p. 107, Freud says, "she showed signs of recalcitrance"; in *GW* II/III (1942), he writes, "*Dabei zeigt sie etwas Sträuben wie die Frauen*" (p. 111), and "*Sie sträubt sich*" (p. 115), "She was recalcitrant" (p. 110 in the English). The German cited in the text of the seminar appears to be erroneous.

(9,2) Aristophanes often uses the Greek term for "weasel" (in French, *belette*) – see, for example, *Peace*, *The Frogs*, *The Wasps*, *Ecclesiazusae* (or *The Assemblywomen*), *The Acharnians*, and *The Clouds* – to refer to girls (or prostitutes) and, by extension, to the female genitalia.

(10,4) Cf. Freud's comment that life is but a long detour on the way to death in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle, SE* XVIII, pp. 38–9. Other versions would have us read: "We must distinguish between the idea of eternal death – the death that makes being itself into a detour, we being unable to know whether or not it makes sense – and the second death, that of the body" instead of "The idea of eternal death must be distinguished here from death insofar as it makes being itself into a detour – we being unable to know whether or not it makes sense. The idea of eternal death must be distinguished from the other death as well, the second, that of the body."

(10,5) A possible allusion to the River Styx.

(11,3) Lacan is paraphrasing a children's nursery rhyme here: "*Je te tiens, tu me tiens, par la barbichette. Le premier de nous deux qui rira aura une tapette.*" There is a game that accompanies it in which two children hold each other by the chin, and sing this little song: "I hold you, you hold me, by the chinny chin chin; the first one of us who laughs will get a little slap." Whoever laughs first during or after the end of the song receives a little slap [*tapette*] on the cheek. Lacan changes the *tapette* into a *soufflet* – a real slap – and qualifies it as "well-deserved."

(11,4) Alternative readings for the last sentence of this paragraph (*Les erreurs ne seront jamais que des erreurs judiciaires*): "Errors will never be anything other than judicial errors" or "Errors are never just judicial errors." Other versions add "regardless of personal motives" at the end of this sentence instead of at the beginning of the next sentence.

(12,1) *La relation berger-bergère* (Dick and Jane relationships): all lovers became associated with shepherds and shepherdesses in French eighteenth-century literature, and even much earlier. See, for example, Jehan de Brie's 1379 treatise, written at the request of King Charles V, "Le vray regime et gouvernement des bergers et bergères" in which he teaches the practice of "L'art de Bergerie" (as mentioned in Marguerite Favier's *Christine de Pisan: Muse des cours souveraines*. Lausanne: Editions Rencontre, 1967, p. 142). One might also say "boy/girl relationships" or "man/woman relationships."

(12,2) Other versions read: "poker, the theory of which is not discussed" instead of "poker, theory as poker, is not discussed." The reference here is to J. von Neumann and O. Morgenstein's *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953).

(12,3) *Prendre une telle attitude* (adopt a certain attitude) could, alternatively, be rendered as "strike a certain pose" or "adopt a certain posture (or stance)."

(12,4) *S'enferrer* (to impale himself) could also be rendered as "to run himself through," "to sabotage himself," "to get himself stuck," or "to fall into his own trap." *Le tourner* (roast him on the spit) could also be rendered as "shape him on the lathe" or "turn him inside out."

(12,5) Lacan himself discussed intersubjectivity in "Function and Field" in *Écrits*.

(13,1) On analysis and bridge, see "Direction of the Treatment" in *Écrits*, pp. 589–91. On this "two-body psychology," see John Rickman, *Selected*

Contributions to Psycho-Analysis (New York: Basic Books, 1957; Glasgow: The University Press, 1957), above all Chapters 19, 21, and 22.

13,2) "Interpsychology" is a reference to Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), who lived during the Russian Revolution. His work was largely unknown in the West until it was published in 1962.

13,4) One might read "movement of questioning" instead of "moment of questioning."

14,7) "Bracketing" is a term borrowed from Edmund Husserl. Other versions read "what the body is" instead of "what this bracketing is."

15,1) *Contrainte par corps* (bodily coercion) is a legal term for imprisonment for unpaid debts (in debtors' prison). One might perhaps read *étreinte* (embrace) or *contacte* (contact) here instead of *contrainte*.

15,6) *En tant qu'aimant* (insofar as he loves) could also be rendered here as "insofar as he begins to love." *Amare est velle bonum alicui* means "To love is to wish another well." Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1156a (regarding friendship).

16,2) See Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953).

Chapter II – Set and Characters

(21,3) In 212c, Aristophanes is starting to comment on what Socrates said in 205e that alluded to his own speech (188c and following).

(21,5) *Nekuía* refers to a sacrifice associated with the conjuring up of the dead in order to learn about one's future; it can be found in the title of Book XI in the *Odyssey*, rendered by Robert Fitzgerald as "A Gathering of Shades" and by others as "Trip to the Dead." On *prótos erastés*, see Plato's *Alcibiades I* (103a).

(22,2) The *hermaí* were heads of the god Hermes on a plinth with a phallus.

(24,3) Lacan is perhaps referring here to a French Orientalist (1883–1962), Louis Massignon, a professor at the prestigious *Collège de France* and then at the *École des hautes études*, who wrote a number of works on Islamic mysticism. Though married, he was nevertheless ordained as a preacher of the Melkite Church. Regarding "the Brothers variously ignoramus," Lacan is playing on the fact that a certain order of Catholic monks, those of the Order of St John of God, had, for humility's sake, taken on the name of *les ignorantins* or the *Frères ignorantins*. By inserting the word *diversement* between *Frères* and *ignorantins*, the brothers become ignorant to varying degrees.

(25,1) Lacan did, in fact, mention Marguerite de Navarre in the class of Seminar VII given on February 3,1960 (p. 156/131).

(25,3) The "lady" in question was the Abbess of the Royal Abbey of Fontevrault, de Rochechouart-Mortemart.

(26,1) Socrates was accused by Meletus II, Anytus, and Lycon in 399 B.C., and was tried, convicted, and executed. Several years after the trial (i.e., in 393 B.C.), the orator Polycrates wrote an "Accusation of Socrates," which he put in Anytus' mouth as if it had been the case made by the prosecution at Socrates' trial. Xenophon, in his *Memorabilia*, was in part responding to Polycrates' accusation, even though it was not the actual speech given at Socrates' trial.

(26,2) *Le pavé de l'ours* (has truly got it all backward) is an expression from La

Fontaine: an unintentional mistake made in the attempt to be serviceable, whose effect is quite the opposite of that intended.

(28,2) In 177d and 209e, we find τὰ ἐρωτικά (*ta erotiká*), meaning erotics, love matters, or the art of love. The Greek *smikroú tinos* is from the *Theages* (128b).

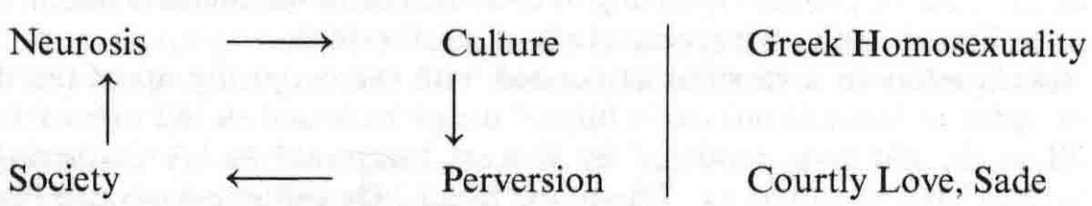
(29,1) *Moyenne* (middling): Lacan is no doubt referring here to Socrates' situating of love as *metaxú*, in between or midway between mortals and immortals (202d–e). See further on.

(29,4) As Lacan indicates in Chapter III below, it is in Plato's *Protagoras*. See the beginning of Aristophanes' play, *Ecclesiazusae* or *The Assemblywomen*.

(30,3) A reference to Jacques II de Chabannes, lord of La Palice, in whose "honor" the word *lapalissade* – something that goes without saying, being so clearly self-evident – was forged, though not because he himself was prone to truisms. A ditty written about him by some soldiers who served under him was misunderstood owing to an ambiguity of writing: "*Hélas, s'il n'était pas mort,/ Il ferait encore envie*" was read as "*Il serait encore en vie*" (Alas, if he weren't dead,/ He'd still be alive).

(31,1) Other versions would have us read: "It involved nothing that we *cannot* situate within the register of regression on a societal scale" instead of "It involved nothing that we *can* situate within the register of regression on a societal scale."

(31,2) This may be a reference to the end of Seminar VI. Here is one possible rendition of the schema:



(33,1) The "great lunging thrusts with a sword into the curtains" is an obvious allusion to Hamlet and Polonius.

(33,7) Reading *notre investigation* (our investigation) for *votre* (your investigation). Love was first declared to be a comical feeling by Lacan in *Le séminaire, Livre V, Les formations de l'inconscient* [*Unconscious Formations*] (Paris: Seuil, 1998), p. 136.

(34,2) "Love is giving what you don't have" can be found in "Direction of the Treatment," a paper given by Lacan in 1958 and found in *Écrits*, p. 618.

Chapter III – The Metaphor of Love: Phaedrus

(36,1) The French title of this chapter, *La métaphore de l'amour*, could alternatively be translated as "Love as a Metaphor."

(37,2) Note that Lacan lost his own father shortly before he gave this class.

(37,3) *Semblable* (semblable) is often translated as "fellow man" or "counterpart," but in Lacan's usage it often refers specifically to the mirroring of two imaginary others (*a* and *a'*) who *resemble* each other (or at least see themselves in each other). Here that is perhaps not so much the case, but I have employed throughout the somewhat obsolete English "semblable" found, for example, in *Hamlet*, Act V, Scene II, line 124: "his semblable

is his mirror; and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more." Note that it was used by Virginia Woolf in *Between the Acts* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1941).

(37,4) "Beeswax," to be understood as in the expression, "mind your own beeswax," meaning "mind your own business."

(38,3) "Observations on Transference-Love" is found in *SE* XII, pp. 159–71.

(38,4) "Know thyself" is the famous precept found at Delphi. See Plato, *Alcibiades I* (124b).

(39,1) See Freud's "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" in *SE* XXIII, pp. 250–3.

(39,3) Interestingly enough, *aimant* (lover) also means magnet.

(40,1) The word διαλεκτικεύεσθαι (*dialektikeúesthai*) is apparently known from only one source: Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book 8, Chapter 13.

(40,3) On the creation of meaning, see especially "Instance of the Letter" in *Écrits*.

(40,7) *Portée* has many meanings, including import, range, span, litter (of pups, for example), maximum weight, best throw, and stave (in music).

(42,4) As Lacan indicates in the next chapter, it should be *épainos* (commendation or praise) not *epaínesis* (praise for the fallen). *Enkómion* and *épainos* are found in the *Symposium* at 177b.

(43,5) See Jean Beaufret, *Le poème de Parménide* (Paris: PUF, 1955).

(45,3) *L'Astrée* is a gigantic pastoral novel by Honoré d'Urfé, published in 60 volumes between 1607 and 1627.

(47,2) See also ὑπεραποθανεῖν (*hyperapothaneín*) at 179b.

(47,3) *Celui qui me suivra* (the one who will follow me [in death]); *epapothaneín* means to die immediately afterward. Cf. Seminar III, *The Psychoses*, trans. R. Grigg (New York: Norton, 1993), Chapters 22–4, p. 315ff.

(48,4) The *Carte du Tendre* is a seventeenth-century map of the tender/amorous sentiments – perhaps a forerunner to Adam Smith's (1759) *Theory of Moral Sentiments* – drawn by Madeleine de Scudéry. It purported to trace out all the stages of love, all the stages of development of the tender feelings, as well as all of the obstacles and problems one might encounter along love's path such as jealousy and despair. It can be found in her 10-volume novel *Clélie* (1654–60). The map can be found in Joan DeJean's *Tender Geographies: Women and The Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

(49,3) This seems to be a play on words, as the French *eromène* (which is not a real verb, but a Gallicized version of the Greek *erómenos*, which I have attempted to render in English by "eromenoses") could be seen to be composed of Eros, *errer* (to wander aimlessly, drift, or to make a mistake), and *mener* (to lead).

(49,6) *Imprimatur* means approval or authorization to print. Cf. Mark 19:24: "Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Chapter IV – The Psychology of the Rich: Pausanias

(50,3) Certain versions indicate that Lacan wrote a line in Greek on the blackboard before this class that can be rendered more or less as follows: "Redoubled desire is love, but redoubled love turns into delusion."

(51,6) "The Freudian Thing" was originally published in *Évolution Psychiatrique* XXI/1 (1956): 225–52; it was republished in *Écrits*.

(52,2) Lacan clearly has in mind here the following writing (which is articulated at the end of this section as "*erastés* over *erómenos*"):

$$\frac{\textit{Erastés}}{\textit{Erómenos}}$$

(52,4) Lacan presumably meant to say, "the explosion of a log which bursts into flames," but apparently said, "the explosion of a hand which bursts into flames."

(54,1) See Jacque Prévert's poem, *La pêche à la baleine*.

(54,7) *Mythomane* (myth lover) can often be figuratively rendered as "pathological liar" or "inveterate taleteller," in the sense of someone who makes up stories that he or she tries to pass off as reality. If the second half of the word, "mane," is taken to derive from *manus*, meaning hand, it might instead be understood to imply a maker of myths. I have taken it to be constructed like *mélomane*, meaning "music lover" – hence "myth lover." Other versions of the Seminar provide *mythologue* (mythologist, a studier of myths) instead of *mythomane*.

(55,5) Léon Robin's translation of the *Symposium* (in French, *Le banquet*) can be found in Plato, *Oeuvres complètes*, Volume IV, Part 2 (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1966 [originally published in 1929]). It was published in the Collection des Universités de France, under the patronage of the Association Guillaume Budé.

(56,2) *Valeurs cotées* (listed values) literally refers to securities listed on a stock exchange. *Pollé spoudé* is sometimes rendered in English as "all this time and effort" or a "sad waste of attentions."

(56,3) *Postulance* (candidacy) means applying for a position, there being an implicitly competitive application/selection process.

(57,2) One finds χρηστοῦ (*chrestoú*) at 183e. *Chrestós* means "good" or "useful."

(58,4) *Cote* (level) is a financial term meaning valuation, rating, quotation, and so on. *Cote d'alerte* is usually rendered as "danger level." At the time, 50,000 francs a month was not much, by way of comparison.

(59,1) Lacan slightly abbreviates and modifies Léon Robin's translation of 184e–185b, p. 22 (See note to page 55, paragraph 5, above.) The passage runs roughly as follows: "In this case, even if one were to be completely deceived, there would be no dishonor. Suppose, in effect, that one had, in order to become rich, given one's favors to a lover believed to be rich, and been completely deceived, there being no pecuniary advantage as the lover turned out to be poor. [. . .] General opinion would have it that one has thereby shown one's true colors: a willingness to do anything at anyone's behest for money – not a pretty thing. Let us follow the same reasoning to its end: suppose that, having given one's favors to a lover one believes to be virtuous, hoping to improve oneself through his friendship, one is mistaken, and the lover in question turns out to be κακὸς (*kakós*) [in the text we find κακοῦ (*kakoú*)], fundamentally base, a villain lacking in all merit, possessing no virtue, it is nevertheless a fine thing to be deceived."

(59,5) Lacan is clearly extrapolating here, as this is not literally found at the end of Pausanias' speech.

(60,4) The book Lacan says he would like to get his hands on is likely *Sappho und Simonides. Untersuchungen über griechische Lyriker* (Berlin: 1913).

(62,2) The *Vermot Almanac* was founded by Joseph Vermot and first published in 1886. The volume in which Georges Courteline's very short play appears dates from 1911 (there is no English translation of which I am aware). Much, if not all, of the work appearing in the almanac was considered to be humorous. "Théodore cherche des allumettes," can be found in Courteline, *Théâtre complet* (Paris: Flammarion, 1961), pp. 287–97, where it is listed as having been performed at Grand-Guignol on October 10, 1897. Virtually the entire play takes place in the dark.

(62,5) Instead of διασχισθησόμεθα (*diaschisthisómetha*), the French edition reads διῳκίσθημεν (*dioikísthemen*), which I have been unable to find in any dictionary or edition of Plato's work. It also provides *dioecisme*, which at least in English (dioecism) refers to the fact that the male and female sexual organs are found in different individuals of a species. The Graph of Desire can be found in *Écrits*, p. 817.

Chapter V – Medical Harmony: Eryximachus

(66,3) Lacan erroneously suggests that the citation from Aragon comes from *Le Paysan de Paris*, whereas it is found in his *Traité du Style* (Paris: Gallimard, 1928), republished in *L'imaginaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), p. 148. Here is the passage: "Avec le plus grand sérieux il se trouve des particuliers qui pour faire valoir leur romantisme de chevet prétendent que le digne pisseur de copie bien que n'ayant pu lire Freud a eu, comment dirais-je, le pressentiment de la sychanalisse, et tel est le génie de Prou, comme on prononce à droite."

(67,3) The name Plato chose for the doctor here, Eryximachus, is apparently a play on the words for "belch-fighter." See *Plato on Love*, p. 42 n. 59.

(68,3) Cnidus is sometimes also spelled Knidos. Lacan provides a name for Alcmaeon's school in Croton, the *Alcmeonides* (perhaps Alcmaeonidae in English, like the family in Athens), which I have been unable to confirm. Alcmaeon reputedly thought that health involved a harmony of, balance of, or state of equilibrium between opposites.

(68,4) *Accord* (concord) can mean concord, harmony, accord, agreement, attunement, and the like, while *accordé* can mean granted, agreed to, or in tune. I have translated *accord* and its derivatives as "concord" throughout Lacan's discussion of Eryximachus' speech, unless noted otherwise.

(69,2) See Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, trans. C. R. Fawcett, introduction by Michel Foucault (New York: Zone Books, 1991). The French edition was published by PUF in 1966 and was based on Canguilhem's 1943 doctoral dissertation in medicine.

(70,5) See Bertrand Russell, *Wisdom of the West: A Historical Survey of Western Philosophy in Its Social and Political Setting* (New York: Doubleday, 1959; London: Rathbone Books, 1959).

(72,3) Other English translations of ὥσπερ ἁρμονίαν τόξου τε καὶ λύρας include: "The One at variance with itself is drawn together, like harmony of bow

or lyre" and "The One is united by disunion like the harmony of the bow and the lyre." This fragment by Heraclitus is found, for example, in Diels-Kranz, fragment B51; in G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), p. 193, it is fragment 212.

(74,6) The auditor in question was apparently Paul Ricoeur.

(75,1) *N'être pas hétérogène* (not to be discordant) strikes me as erroneous in this context; my impression is that Lacan means that asking the gods to act as judges in matters of love *is discordant* with what follows in Plato's discourse. Unless, of course, he is referring to the fact that everything in the dialogue is said tongue-in-cheek.

(75,6) On Bororos and macaws, see *Écrits*, pp. 117–18.

(76,4) Reading *immatériel* (immaterial) instead of *matériel* (material).

Chapter VI – Deriding the Sphere: Aristophanes

(77,2) *Pitre* can mean fool, clown, or buffoon.

(77,3) This class took place on December 21, 1960, the date of the winter solstice.

(78,2) "Other civilizations" is a likely reference at least to Indian philosophies.

(78,5) The early "physical philosophers" are also known as "natural philosophers."

(79,2) Plato, *The Seventh Letter*, 341c. In Jowett's translation: "the matter itself." See Heidegger's *Being and Time* on *to prágma*.

(79,3) Lacan contrasted *die Sache* with *das Ding* in Seminar VII, during the class given December 9, 1959. Praxis (πράξις, *práxis*), the act of practicing something or putting something into practice, comes from πράσσω (*prásso*, to do), *to prágma* (neuter): affair, event, or praxis.

(79,4) On the notion of theory among the Greeks, see Arthur Koestler's *The Sleepwalkers*.

(80,5) See *Pourquoi des philosophes* (1957), a book by Jean-François Revel; it can be found in a recent edition of his works, *Jean-François Revel* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1997); the book is also mentioned in *Écrits*, p. 516. The title might also be rendered as "Why are there philosophers?"

(81,5) The passage in the *Phaedo*, 117b, is sometimes rendered as "looking up at the man [who brought him the hemlock] with wide open eyes," but there is also some evidence that Socrates' eyes were set wide apart on his face, giving the impression that he could see like a bull or other animal with eyes set on either side of its head.

(83,2) *Santons* are Christmas nativity scene figurines that are especially popular in Provence.

(83,6) A *bateleur* is literally a juggler or tumbler, but can figuratively refer to a charlatan or fool.

(85,2) See Xenophon, *The Shorter Socratic Writings*, ed. R. C. Bartlett (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 150; the passage is from *Symposium*, Chapter 4, pp. 27–8.

(85,6) William Arrowsmith renders the Greek here with "Bugger"; see *Three Comedies by Aristophanes: The Birds, The Clouds, The Wasps* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1969), pp. 79–80.

(86,4) The Loeb edition gives "the mere amorous connection," while Jowett gives

"desire of the other's intercourse." *Plato on Love* gives "the intimacy of sex" [192c].

87,4) "The narcissistic overestimation of the subject" refers back to Lacan's discussion at the beginning of Chapter 3.

88,6) The term *sphaíra* actually is not found in the *Symposium*, where one finds instead *strongúlos* (sphere) at 189e. It is likely that the reference here is to Empedocles and to Plato's *Timaeus* 33b–34a. In *Plato on Love*, 189e is rendered as "completely round, with back and sides in a circle."

89,2) Christian von Ehrenfels introduced the term *Gestalt*. See his *Über Gestaltqualitäten*, "On the Qualities of Form," 1890.

89,3) Kirk and Raven render this passage as "equal [to himself] from every side and quite without end, he stays fast in the close covering of Harmony, a rounded sphere rejoicing in his circular solitude" (fragment 421, pp. 325–6). Empedocles employs *sphaíros* as a masculine noun; ancient Greek more generally uses the feminine form *sphaíra*.

91,4) Arthur Koestler, *The Sleepwalkers* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1959).

92,2) The Greek ἄπειρον (*ápeiron*) means unlimited, infinite, or indefinite; from a- (without) and πεῖραρ (*peírar*) meaning end or limit.

92,4) Reading *désexercer* (disexercise) instead of *désexorciser* (dis-exorcize), which does not seem to exist in French or English. One could possibly read instead *déséthiquer* (de-ethicize, that is, to dissociate from ethics, i.e., "the finest virtues" mentioned in the previous paragraph) or simply *exorciser* (exorcize).

93,1) "All the other six [forms of motion] were taken away from him" (*Timaeus*, 34a). The French version of the *Timaeus* Lacan may have been using seems to equivocate about these six forms.

93,2) It is thought, however, that the *Timaeus* was written *circa* 360 B.C., whereas the *Symposium* is thought to have been written *circa* 385–380 B.C. – that is, some 20 years earlier.

Chapter VII – The *Atopia* of Eros: Agathon

96,3) *Poussée* (pressure) is the usual French translation of Freud's *Drang*, one of the four components of the drive; see *SE* XIV, p. 122.

96,4) Lacan is likely referring here to "Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation: 'Psychoanalysis and Personality Structure,'" the second paper he presented at the Royaumont Colloquium, held July 10–13, 1958. In *Écrits*, he tells us that the final redaction occurred over Easter vacation in 1960. It was first published in *La Psychanalyse* VI (1961): 111–47.

97,1) *Ça* in French also means the id. *Tendance* (tendency [but also impulse or urge]) was an early French translation of Freud's *Trieb* (drive), which was later dropped, for the most part, in favor of *pulsion*. Lacan sometimes uses *pulsion* (drive), but often uses *tendance* where English would use "drive."

02,2) See Paul Valéry, *Le cimetière marin* ("The Graveyard by the Sea" or "The Sailors' Cemetery").

06,5) The verses in poetic meter may be rendered as follows:

> [Love] gives peace to men and stillness to the sea,
> Lays winds to rest, and careworn men to sleep. [197c]

(106,7) See Paul-Jean Toulet's *Les Contrerimes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), p. 152.

(107,2) Émile Benveniste, "Remarques sur la fonction du langage dans la découverte freudienne," *La Psychanalyse* 1 (1956). Reprinted in E. Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966). In English, see "Remarks on the Function of Language in Freudian Theory," in *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. M. E. Meek (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1971), pp. 65–75. On the SiRonga proverb, see "Function and Field," *Écrits*, p. 276. The quote is from the epigraph to Lévi-Strauss' on the SiRonga proverb, see *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, where *cuisse* (thigh, or leg or shank, for a piece of meat, as we are talking about food here) is infelicitously rendered in the English translation as "hip."

(107,4) Love is said to be the "father of elegance, luxury, delicacy, grace, yearning, desire" (197d). *Minne* (or *Minnesang*) refers to the German courtly love tradition.

Chapter VIII – From *Epistéme* to *Mýthous*

(113,3) *Romancero* refers to a collection of Spanish epic poems in octosyllables.

(116,2) Keep in mind that Lacan often uses *le signifiant* (the signifier) to talk about the signifying system as a whole.

(116,4) On even and odd, see Seminar II, *The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis*, Chapters 15 and 16, and the "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'" in *Écrits*.

(119,4) W. Granoff gave a talk in October 1955 at the Société Française de Psychanalyse, entitled "Desire for children, children's desire," which was published in *La Psychanalyse* 2 (1956). *Désir du beau* can be rendered in English either as "desire for beauty" or "beauty's desire." I don't believe that "desire of beauty" can convey both of these simultaneously in English.

(120,1) *Goeteía* means witchcraft, sorcery, or trickery.

Chapter IX – Exit from the Ultra-World

(125,4) *Ktéma* means possession, having, good, property, or treasure.

(127,3) My sense is that Lacan's distinction here between *désir* du *beau* and *désir* de *beau* is designed to capture Diotima's shift from our desire for beauty, insofar as we wish to possess it – possess the person we find beautiful (forever) – to desire insofar as it is inspired by beauty, insofar as we are inspired, in the presence of beauty, to *poiesis*: to create speeches about virtue, for example. Beauty, in the latter case, seems to be desire's muse.

(127,4) *Époptie* may strike the reader as strange here, since in the Greek we find ἐποπτικά (*epoptiká*), which is the neuter plural adjective meaning "the Mysteries." However, in Robin Léon's commentary on the passage, we find "*Alors l'initié contemple* (époptie) *et adore*," which could be rendered as "Then the initiate contemplates and adores." *Époptie* thus seems to be a Gallicized version of the Greek verb, which Lacan employs too.

(129,5) The English in 202a reads, "for what hits on the truth cannot be ignorance" or "for how could what hits the truth be ignorance?"

(130,4) *Écrits*, pp. 506–7. See Victor Hugo, *La Légende des siècles*, Booz endormi. In French and English, see *The Penguin Book of French Poetry, 1820–1950*, ed. W. Rees (London: Penguin Books, 1990), pp. 62–8. On metaphor, see Seminar III, Chapters 17 and 18.

(131,6) Lacan seems to get the story backward here: Cronus castrates his father, Uranus. Cronus is overthrown by his son, Zeus, not castrated (although in some versions, his stomach is cut open). Yet the French versions read: "The billhook with which Cronus was castrated . . ."

(134,2) On transitivism, see "The Mirror Stage" in *Écrits*.

(134,3) Lacan mistakenly refers here to Renoir's *La Règle du jeu*.

Chapter X – *Ágalma*

(136,3) "There are two others here" is a likely reference to the notion that it takes three to love, and possibly to the three prisoners problem in "Logical Time"; see Lacan's comments on the latter in Seminar XX, *Encore*. See also his comments on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and on Goethe in *Écrits*, p. 506 n. 1.

(139,3) Regarding *Che vuoi?*, see "Subversion of the Subject" in *Écrits*, p. 815. "*Che vuoi?*" (not "*Chè vuoi?*" as found in my translation of *Écrits*) is the spelling used by Jacques Cazotte in *Le Diable amoureux et la Patte du chat* (Geneva: Editions de Crémille, 1968), p. 18. See, also, the annotated French edition by Annalisa Bottacin (Milan: Cisalpino-La Goliardica, 1983), pp. 56–7. In English, see *The Devil in Love* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1925).

(140,1) Leto was a lover of Zeus', and the mother of Apollo and Artemis. An English translation of the passage reads as follows: "Or to an island home, sped on my way in grief by an oar plied in the brine, to spend a life of misery in the house, there where the date palm, first of all its line, and the laurel tree sent up their holy shoots as an adornment dear to Leto to grace the birth of her children by Zeus? Shall I with the maidens of Delos sing in praise of the golden headband and bow of the goddess Artemis?" from *Euripides: Children of Heracles, Hippolytus, Andromache, Hecuba* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 441.

(140,2) Lacan may be alluding here to the so-called maternal phallus and its role in fetishism. *Cet objet infantile* (this infantile object) might also allude to the infant as a (phallic) object.

(141,4) "Articulated language" is not found in the *Cratylus* but is discussed by the French translator, Louis Méridier, who mentions "ἔναρθρον ἔχειν ἔπος [*énarthron échein épos*], avoir une parole articulée," in a footnote of his edition (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1969 [originally published much earlier]).

(143,1) For *agálmata*, see Homer's *Odyssey*, Book III, verse 274. Reading, in the last sentence of the paragraph, *seins* (breasts) instead of *saints* (saints), which are perfect homonyms in French. Lacan might be playing off the two meanings. Useful information on the use of the term *ágalma* can be found in Catherine M. Keesling's *The Votive Statues of the Athenian Acropolis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

(143,2) It seems there may be a problem of transcription here, Lacan perhaps having said *galer* or *gala*. *Galant* is the present participle of the verb *galer*, meaning to have fun, have a good time. *Gala* comes from the Old French

gale, meaning pleasure or rejoicing (*réjouissance*). The idea of *éclat* is not found in the *Dictionnaire étymologique* by Bloch et von Wartburg, which is Lacan's favorite for Old French.

(143,4) Pausanias (*c.* 180 A.D.). The passage referred to by Lacan is found in Book IX, Chapter 11, entitled Boiotia: "Here are portraits of women carved in relief; the carvings are already rather faint [*amudrótera éde ta agálmata*]. The Thebans call them the Witches and say they were sent by Hera to interfere with Alkmene's birthpains. They were preventing the birth [*tais ôdisin*], but Teiresias' daughter Historis thought up a trick against them: she yelled with triumph for them to hear, as if the baby was born; the legend is that the witches went away deceived, and Alkmene had her baby." Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*, vol. 1, trans. P. Levi (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), pp. 330–1.

(144,1) "Oblativity" is a supposed tendency to give to others selflessly or disinterestedly that was discussed in French analytic texts of the 1950s (the adjectival form is "oblative"). The term was introduced by Laforgue in 1926 and was rendered as "self-sacrifice" in Lacan's "Some Reflections on the Ego," *IJP* XXXIV 1 (1953): 17. It's often a synonym for altruism. On the so-called genital stage, see "Direction of the Treatment," *Écrits*, pp. 605–7.

(148,3) We could alternately read: "And we shall see that it is only via the other and for the other that Alcibiades, like each and every one of us, wants to make Socrates realize how much he loves Alcibiades [*veut faire savoir à Socrates son amour*]."

Chapter XI – Between Socrates and Alcibiades

(149,2) I have left out the first heading included by the editor here, finding no connection between it (*L'état de perversion*, The state of perversion or The perverse state) and this particular chapter of the Seminar.

(150,5) English has the term "encomium" with which the Greek ἐνκώμιον (*enkómion*) is generally rendered.

(151,1) We saw *to cheíre* earlier (213d), and it was translated there as "slapping me around."

(152,1) There may be a play on words here, since while literally a *flûtiste* is a piper or flautist (and the satyr Marsyas was a well-known piper), figuratively it refers to someone who is not serious, a "joker" we might say colloquially in American English, and *flûter* can imply that when you speak no one listens to what you say.

(153,2) Lacan may be referring to the fact that Léon Robin begins this section with the subtitle "Socrate: sa maîtrise de lui-même" (Socrates' self-mastery) in his first translation of the *Symposium* in Plato, *Oeuvres complètes*, Volume IV, Part 2 (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1989 [originally published in 1938]), p. 80; or with the subtitle "La spiritualité de l'amour chez Socrates" (The spirituality of Socrates' love) in his later translation in *Plato, Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), p. 755.

(157,2) *Noli me tangere* is usually rendered as "touch me not" or "do not hold on to me" (John 20:17).

(157,4) On the "repudiation of femininity," see Freud (1937), "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," *SE* XXIII, p. 250.

(158,5) The English translation of 222d provides the following: "Well, we were not deceived; we've seen through your little satyr play."

(159,2) The French here (*il donne satisfaction à Alcibiade*) literally implies that Socrates gives Alcibiades satisfaction, and it can also mean that Socrates compensates or grants redress to Alcibiades, or rules in his favor. In bygone days, *donner satisfaction* meant to agree to fight a duel.

(159,5) *Leurre* means illusion, decoy, or deception. *Etre leurré* means to be deluded, deceived, or taken in.

(159,6) On the little schema of the spherical mirror, see *Écrits*, pp. 675ff, and Chapter 24 in this Seminar.

(160,9) *Himeros* and *enargés* can be found in Sophocles' *Antigone*, verses 795–6; compare *Phaedrus* 251c–e.

(161,3) The reference here is to Flaubert's Monsieur Homais in *Madame Bovary*.

(161,5) Lacan is referring here to Jean Giraudoux's 1929 play entitled *Amphitryon 38*.

(162,4) John the Scot is also known as John Scottus Eriugena. See, for example, Dermot Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena: A Study of Idealism in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). In French, see Maieul Cappuyns' *Jean Scot Erigène: Sa vie, son oeuvre, sa pensée* (Louvain, 1933).

(163,7) Lacan here provides a play on words in Greek: ἡμέρα (*heméra*) means day; ἥμερα (*hémera*) means gentle or tame; and ἵμερος (*himeros*) means longing, desire, or love. Cf. Plato's *Cratylus*, 418c–d.

Chapter XII – Transference in the Present

(169,2) On the Graph of Desire, see "Subversion of the Subject," *Écrits*, p. 817.

(169,4) *L'au-delà* (the beyond) can sometimes be translated instead as the "hereafter."

(173,8) "The Action of Suggestion in Psychotherapy" – first published in 1910 in *The Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, vol. 5 – is Chapter 12 of the fourth edition of Jones' *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, pp. 241–82; the paper was not included in the fifth edition.

(174,5) See Daniel Lagache, "Le problème du transfert" ["The Problem of Transference"] (Paper given at the 14th Conference of French-speaking Psychoanalysts on November 1, 1951), *RFP* XVI/1–2 (1952): 5–115.

(174,6) The Zeigarnik effect is the psychological tendency to remember an uncompleted task rather than a completed one. See Bluma Zeigarnik, "Das Behalten erledigter und unerledigter Handlungen," *Psychologische Forschung* IX (1927): 1–85. In English, see "On Finished and Unfinished Tasks," in W. D. Ellis, ed., *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology* (New York: Harcourt-Brace, 1938).

(176,6) On *Aidós*, see "Signification of the Phallus," *Écrits*, p. 692. "Its aim is the fall of the Other, A, into the other, *a*" – that is, its aim is to get the partner to fall from the position of Other to that of *a*, to fall off a certain kind of pedestal.

(179,6) Here it is quite clear that desire is a question. The "analysand's constitutive desire" is the question, "What does the analyst want?"

Chapter XIII – A Critique of Countertransference

(180,5) "For it is not necessary to know the floor plan of a house to bang one's head against its walls: indeed, one can do so very well without it" (*Écrits*, p. 608). See Georges Courteline, "Théodore cherche des allumettes" [Theodor searches for matches], *Théâtre complet* (Paris: Flammarion, 1961), pp. 287–97. Virtually the entire play takes place in the dark.

(182,3) "Reserve unconscious" (*inconscient-réserve*) implies there is some leftover unconscious material (or stock) that can serve as a sort of backup.

(186,4) On the death drive, see *Beyond the Pleasure Principle, SE* XVIII, pp. 38–9.

(186,6) *Un mort* means both a dead person and a dummy in the game of bridge. See *Écrits*, p. 589.

(187,2) In this passage, Lacan is presumably pointing to a schema he has put up on the board, which is related to the L Schema (*Écrits*, p. 53; see also Seminar II, p. 134/109). There seems to be little agreement about how to read the passage and what the schema on the board might have looked like; see J.-A. Miller's proposed reconstruction from notes taken by Paul Lemoine in his "Editor's Notes" at the end of this volume.

(188,2) Paula Heimann, "On Counter-transference," *IJP* XXXI (1950): 81–4.

(189,2) Money-Kryle never actually says "a demanding superego" in this article. He mentions "the severity of [the analyst's] superego [. . .] which a demanding patient may sometimes come to represent" (p. 361).

(190,2) Lacan seems to confuse some general comments Money-Kryle makes with the details of his interactions with this one specific patient (see pp. 362–3).

(190,3) The dream in question was not actually recounted during the session that day; Money-Kryle merely recalled that the patient had had a certain dream on what Money-Kryle thought was a similar occasion (p. 362).

(191,2) "The analyst effectively becomes the patient" – "patient" to be understood here in the sense of a person who suffers.

(191,6) Heimann says that the analyst "must use his emotional response as a key to the patient's unconscious. [. . .] This, however, is his private affair, and I do not consider it right for the analyst to communicate his feelings to his patient" (p. 83).

(192,1) According to Money-Kryle, the patient's reaction was as follows: "For the first time in two days, he became quiet and thoughtful. He then said this explained why he had been so angry with me yesterday: he had felt that all my interpretations referred to my illness and not to his" (p. 363).

(192,3) "Analytic setting" is more common in contemporary English than "analytic situation," but *situation analytique* could be construed to be a direct translation of Richard Sterba's term "analytic situation" – a term also found in Freud's work (*SE* XII, p. 161, and *SE* XIX, p. 274) – in "The Fate of the Ego in Analytic Therapy," *IJP* XV/2–3 (1934): 117, or a reference to Melanie Klein's use of the word in the expression "total situation" in her "The Origins of Transference," *IJP* XXXIII (1952): 433–8.

(194,4) It is Money-Kryle who, in the same article Lacan discussed earlier, presents these two drives.

Chapter XIV – Demand and Desire in the Oral and Anal Stages

(197,8) One could potentially read *conscient* (conscious) instead of *concret* (concrete).

(198,3) *Défilés* (defiles) should probably be understood in the sense of a narrow, difficult path. Since the French also means procession or succession, however, it could perhaps imply consequence or aftermath. Cf. Freud's "defile of consciousness" in *SE* II, p. 291.

(198,7) *Automatismes de répétition* (repetition automatisms): Lacan rarely employs the more usual French translation of Freud's *Wiederholungszwang* (generally translated into English as "repetition compulsion"), which is *compulsion de répétition.*

(199,4) The *Standard Edition* reads as follows: "As a rule the physician cannot spare the patient this phase of the treatment; he must necessarily make him re-experience a certain portion of his past life, and must see to it that he remains to some degree above it all so that he remains cognizant at every turn that what appears to be reality is in truth the refracted image of a forgotten past" (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, *SE* XVIII, pp. 18–19).

(200,2) Lacan quotes here from Samuel Jankélévitch's French translation of the work known in English as *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (Paris: Payot, 1920), which was purportedly read over by Freud prior to its publication.

(200,5) *L'Autre-on* might literally be translated as "the one-Other" or (in a more Heideggerian vein as) "the they-Other," but this would eliminate Lacan's attempt to make it sound like neutron, proton, electron, and so on.

(200,6) Reading *Autre* (Other) instead of *autre* (other) at the end of the first sentence of the paragraph.

(201,3) Or one "cannot admit to the most primordial Other . . ." The French here, *tué le désir*, could just as easily (and perhaps more grammatically) be transcribed as *tuez le désir* or *tuer le désir*, meaning "kill desire" or "kill what I desire."

(203,3) *Excédent sexuel* (surplus sexuality) is a French translation for a term found in Freud's early work on trauma: *sexual über.* According to Freud, a child experiences excessive sexuality, a surplus or overload of sexual feeling or pleasure, and is revolted by it (in hysteria) or later comes to feel guilty about it (in obsession). *Sexual über* is translated in *The Origins of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Basic Books, 1954) as "surplus of sexuality" (pp. 163–4, letter dated May 30, 1896); the French translate it as *excédent de sexualité* or *excédent sexuel*, that is, excess of sexuality or sexual excess; see *La Naissance de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956), p. 145.

(203,4) *Débordements* (excesses) might also be understood here as "accidents."

(203,6) *Vertige* (giddiness) literally means "vertigo," but might also be rendered here as "whirlwind."

(204,2) The wording Lacan uses here, "*Le désir, littéralement, s'en va aux chiottes*" (Desire, literally, goes down the tubes), plays on the French expression "*aux chiottes!*" (go to hell, to hell with it, or screw it) and on the slang meaning of *chiottes*, which is shithouse, latrine, crapper, or can.

(204,6) *Une compréhension à la limite* (a liminal understanding) is somewhat vague and perhaps could alternatively be rendered by "a possible understanding," "a quasi-understanding," "an understanding at the fringes," or "a being on the verge of understanding."

(205,1) "Must appear as an existence offered up to this gap" – that implies, I think, that the imaginary other (or semblable) is someone who is offered up to the devouring Other in the subject's stead.

(206,1) Lacan is likely referring to the famous phrase in *Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel* (1921, to which Jean Cocteau contributed), "*Puisque ces mystères nous dépassent, feignons d'en être l'organisateur.*"

(206,2) Reading *à l'organe qui est* (to the organ that is) instead of *à ce qui est* (to what is).

(206,5) Reading *métathèse* (metathesis) instead of *métastase* (metastasis).

(207,2) *Toute compréhension de la demande, en effet, l'implique si profondément que nous devons y regarder à deux fois avant d'aller à sa rencontre* (Every understanding of his demand, in effect, implicates him so profoundly that we must look twice before broaching it) is quite ambiguous: (1) some versions include *formulation* instead of *compréhension* and *sa demande* instead of *la demande*, (2) the *l'* could refer to the other, his demand, or even anality, and (3) *aller à sa rencontre* could also imply going out and looking for the understanding or formulation, broaching it, or joining with or agreeing to it.

(208,1) Some versions give *marge de l'incompréhensible* (space occupied by what is incomprehensible) instead of *marge de l'incompréhension.*

(208,2) The book one can feed on is a reference to the phrase in Revelation 10:9–10, "eat the book," discussed in Seminar VII, pp. 340/294 and 371/322.

(208,4) Reading *qui s'incarna* (that became incarnate) instead of *qui s'incarne* (that becomes incarnate or that is incarnated). One could potentially read *Poros endormi* (sleeping Poros) instead of *parole endormie* (sleeping speech).

Chapter XV – Oral, Anal, and Genital

(209,5) *Passe à s'articuler* (gets articulated) could also be understood here as "manages to get articulated" or "is conveyed because it gets articulated."

(210,1) In the singular, *Lust* is used by Freud in the sense of pleasure, but in the plural in the sense of desires, appetites, or cravings. See Freud's (1905) comment on the term in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, in *SE* VII, p. 212 n.1; there he indicates that *Lust* has two meanings, being "used to describe the sensation of sexual tension ('*Ich habe Lust*' = 'I should like to,' 'I feel an impulse to') as well as the feeling of satisfaction." See also *SE* VII, p. 135 n. 2. *La déviation quant au but se faire en sens inverse de l'objet d'un besoin* (a deviation in aim occurring in a way that does not happen when it comes to the object of need) is rather elliptical, but seems to me to imply that whereas need can suffer no deviation in object or aim, sublimation can.

(210,2) Reading *seulement après coup* (only after the fact) instead of *non seulement après coup* (not only after the fact).

(210,5) Henri Ey's work on animal perversions was eventually published in book form as *Psychiatrie animale* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1964).

(211,2) *Subjectiviser* (subjectivize) can be understood here in the sense of to make a human subject of something or to anthropomorphize.

(211,3) *Elle* (this jouissance) could alternatively refer to the praying mantis, as could *elle* (it) in the next sentence.

(211,5) Reading *effets* (effects) instead of *efforts* (efforts). See *Écrits*, p. 95. On

the sexual maturation of pigeons, see L. Harrison Matthews, "Visual Stimulation and Ovulation in Pigeons" in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, Series B, 126 (1939): 557–60. On the development of the migratory locust, see R. Chauvin's work in *Annales de la Société entomologique de France* (1941, third quarter): 133, 272. These and other references are provided in Lacan's paper "Some Reflections on the Ego," *IJP* XXXIV, 1 (1953): 11–17, and in "Remarks on Psychical Causality" in *Écrits*, pp. 189 and 190–1.

(213,1) Some versions provide *le partenaire* (the male partner) instead of *la partenaire* (the female partner).

(213,2) *Son anatomie* (her anatomy) could alternatively be rendered as "his anatomy."

(213,6) Reading *l'homme* (man) instead of *le sacré* (the sacred). Caillois' first book was entitled *Le mythe et l'homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1938); his second book was entitled *L'homme et le sacré* (Paris: Gallimard, 1939).

(214,1) Lacan may be referring here to *koine* Greek (also known as Alexandrian dialect, common Attic, or Hellenistic Greek), which was the widespread form of spoken and written Greek during Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity. It spread following Alexander the Great's conquests in the fourth century B.C., and served as the common *lingua franca* for much of the Mediterranean region during the following centuries. *Koine* Greek is also known as "Biblical," "New Testament," or "patristic Greek." Certain versions provide *telos* instead of *Gelüst*.

(214,5) The church, Santa Maria degli Angeli, is located on the island of Murano in the Venetian Lagoon. Carpaccio's *Saint George and the Dragon* is currently housed in the Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni of Venice; Lacan could possibly be referring to a different canvas: *The Triumph of Saint George*. It is not clear to me what *morceaux de pavillon d'anatomie* (panoply of anatomical morsels) actually means. See Jacques Cazotte, *Le Diable amoureux et la Patte du chat* (Geneva: Editions de Crémille, 1968).

(216,3) Freud uses the term "hominization" in *SE* XXIII, pp. 75 and 153; it refers there to the process of becoming human. Lacan is probably referring here to the theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955); cf. *Écrits*, pp. 88 and 684. The Scandinavian (Danish) name is referred to again in Seminar XIII, *The Object of Psychoanalysis* (class given on December 8, 1965).

(216,5) Jones used the Greek term *aphanisis* to refer to the "total, and of course permanent, extinction of the capacity (including opportunity) for sexual enjoyment"; see "Early Development of Female Sexuality" (1927), in *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, 5th edition (Boston: Beacon, 1961), p. 440. According to Jones, the fear of *aphanisis* is more fundamental than that of castration in both sexes, castration being only a "special case" of *aphanisis* in boys. Cf. Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 687, and Seminar XI, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Some versions do not include the term *aphanisis* in this passage; hence: "the starting point of desire." *Laisse faire quelque chose* (be allowed to do something); one could possibly read *fasse* (be made) instead of *laisse* (be allowed).

(217,7) The someone here is Marie-Antoinette. She said this at her trial on October 14, 1793, when she was accused of having incestuous relations with her son.

(218,3) See *Écrits*, pp. 627 and 730.

(218,4) *Traite sur l'avenir* (promissory note) literally implies betting or taking a gamble on the future; it relates to a document (like an IOU) concerning a possible exchange to take place in the future, and can, in some contexts, be rendered by having "a lien against" something.

(218,5) Reading *habeo* (I have) instead of *habeum* (we have).

(219,1) *Ce qui manque à l'Autre pour être l'A noétique* (what the Other is missing because it is the noetic A) could alternatively be understood, perhaps, as "what the Other is missing [and would have to have] in order to be the noetic A."

(219,2) *Manque de réponse* (lack of response) could perhaps also be rendered in this context as "failure to respond" or "lack of answers." Lacan seems to be saying here that *phi* is at the root of barred A – that is, "the Other as designated by the lack of a signifier."

Chapter XVI – Psyche and the Castration Complex

(224,3) Reading *se terminerait là si* (would end there were) instead of *veut donc dire que* (thus means that).

(225,1) Lacan is alluding here to Hegel's *unglückliches Bewusstsein*, sometimes rendered in English as "troubled conscience" (more literally as "unhappy consciousness"). See Jean Wahl, *Le Malheur de la conscience dans la philosophie de Hegel* (Paris: PUF, 1951). Cf. *Écrits*, p. 589.

(226,1) Other versions suggest we read: "turns out to illustrate what I can designate today only as the point at which two registers converge," the two being the instinctual dynamic and the castration complex. Keep in mind that "the signifier" is very often shorthand in Lacan's work for "the system of signifiers" or "the signifying system."

(227,3) *Instances du savoir* (knowledge's entreaties) could be alternatively understood as "agencies (or authorities) of knowledge." Lacan might have been thinking here of Freud's *Wissentrieb* (the child's drive for knowledge of sexual matters). In *SE* VII, p. 194, *Wissentrieb* is translated as "instinct for knowledge," and in *SE* X, p. 245, as "epistemophilic instinct."

(228,2) See René de Monchy, "Oral Components of the Castration Complex," *IJP* XXXIII (1952): 450–3.

(228,5) Reading "congenital reaction schemes" (as in Monchy's article, p. 450) instead of "releaser mechanisms." Lacan may have mentioned Lorenz and von Uexküll here as those who first named them in German (as *angeborene Reactionsschema*). I have modified a number of terms in this discussion based on Monchy's article. Note that Monchy never actually mentions the "biting reflex" in his own name, quoting only the term "biting" from Susan Isaacs.

(229,2) All of Lefèvre-Pontalis' summaries can be found in the 2011 issue of *Bulletin de psychologie* LXIV, 516 (6): 503–57; the one referred to here is "Le désir et son interprétation" (pp. 541–57), originally published in *Bulletin de psychologie* XIII, 172 (6), dated January 20, 1960. Lacan himself reviewed and approved these summaries. On Ella Sharpe's patient, see Seminar VI, Chapters 8–12. The dream can be found in Ella

Sharpe's *Dream Analysis* (London: Karnac, 1988 [originally published in 1937]).

(230,1) See, for example, Matthew 22:30.

(230,7) "Double symbolization" is perhaps a reference to Lévi-Strauss.

(231,6) See "Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation: 'Psychoanalysis and Personality Structure,'" in *Écrits*, pp. 647–84; Lacan had initially discussed this in Seminar I, Chapter 7 (February 24, 1954).

(232,1) The quotes in this passage are from Pontalis' summary of Seminar VI (the class given on February 11, 1959) found in *Bulletin de psychologie* XIII, 172 (6): 334. Cf. Seminar VI, p. 258.

(233,1) Lacan quotes here from Rabelais' *Pantagruel*, Book 8; cf. *Écrits*, p. 632. *Conscience* can mean both conscience and consciousness, and *science sans conscience* is usually translated as "science without conscience."

Chapter XVII – The Symbol Φ

(234,6) Other versions read: "The idea is not that one mustn't say everything, but that to speak accurately we cannot say all that we could formulate."

(235,3) *Se produit le manque de signifiant* (the lack of a signifier occurs) might also be understood as "a lack in the signifying system appears."

(239,4) See Seminar VII, pp. 33–4/24–5.

(240,1) The first intersection is likely at A and the second at *s*(A) in Graph 2 in *Écrits*, p. 808.

(240,2) Regarding the ideal ego, see the point labeled *i(a)* on Graph 2, *Écrits*, p. 808.

(240,3) Regarding the ego-ideal, see the point labeled I(A) in Graph 2 in *Écrits*, p. 808.

(241,2) "What do you want?" is a likely reference to "*Che vuoi*?" in Graph 3, *Écrits*, p. 815.

(241,3) "*Qu'est-ce que ça veut là-dedans?*" ("What does the old coconut want?") is a highly colloquial way of speaking that avoids any mention of "you" (as in "what do you want?"), using *ça* (it, or in psychoanalytic parlance, id) instead. *Là-dedans* refers to the head, in particular: the noggin, nut, coconut, bean, lemon, melon, or skull, as you like.

(245,4) The French here (*elle préfère que son désir soit insatisfait à ceci, que l'Autre garde la clé de son mystère*) is quite ambiguous, and could possibly be rendered as "she prefers having her own desire go unsatisfied to having the Other hold the key to her mystery." Other versions propose: *elle préfère que son désir soit insatisfait afin* (or: *et*) *que l'Autre garde la clé de son mystère*: "she prefers to let her own desire go unsatisfied in order to (or: and) let the Other keep the key to her [his?] mystery."

(246,7) On "phallophany," see Seminar VI, p. 419. In English, see Lacan, "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in *Hamlet*," trans. J. Hulbert. *Yale French Studies* 55/56 (1977): 11–52.

Chapter XVIII – Real Presence

(249,3) The following quotes are from *Gulliver's Travels*, Part III, Chapter VI.

(249,6) *Substantifique moëlle* (heart of the matter) is from Rabelais and means

something like the very substance, "the real stuff"; more literally, the marrow or quick.

(250,2) The "news" most likely concerned Algeria. The newspaper *Le Figaro* apparently announced on April 26 that Salan had committed suicide, only to indicate later that Challe, Salan, and Jouhaud had left Algiers. I have been unable to find *reflet de la beauté* (reflection of beauty) in Seminar VII; one does, however, find *effet de la beauté* (effect of beauty), a close homonym in French, in the class given on May 25, 1960 (p. 291/249).

(250,6) Reading φ in the formula for the obsessive's fantasy, as in the 1991 edition of the Seminar (p. 295), instead of Φ; note, however, that other versions read Φ. (The discussion further on in this section suggests to me that the formula should contain φ, not Φ.). In the published edition, the formula for the obsessive's fantasy is not included in the prior class.

(253,4) Other versions read: "other who observes him" instead of "Other who observes him."

(254,2) Note that *défaut* can mean fault, defect, absence, or lack.

(255,4) *Prise au ventre* (public displays) might alternatively be understood as "grabbing around the middle"; Lacan's meaning strikes me as quite unclear here.

(256,1) *Est tout phallicisme* (is all about phallicism) could alternatively be rendered as "to be all phallic." On "isolation," see *SE* XX, pp. 120–2.

(256,4) *Se dégonfler* (deflating) also means backing down (when one has supposedly decided to do something courageous, for example) or caving (giving into someone else's demands).

(257,3) See Bouvet's "Incidences thérapeutiques de la prise de conscience de l'envie de pénis dans des cas de névrose obsessionnelle féminine," *RFP*, XIV, 2 (1950): 215–43.

(258,7) Other versions propose: "insofar as the object in question would be objectivity itself."

(260,5) *Prégnant(e)*: full of implicit meaning, full of consequences. In psychology: something that imposes itself or forces itself upon the mind. In linguistics: a term or construction whose meaning is not entirely enunciated. Lacan earlier suggested that Psyche's slim stature, for example, allowed one to see her as representing or standing in for the (erect form of the) phallus. The "profound choice" is perhaps that of girl=phallus, or of the phallus as the sign of desire.

Chapter XIX – Sygne's No

(266,1) *Partialité* (is only partial) is often translated as "bias," but it is also related to *partial*, which is an alternate spelling of *partiel* (meaning partial as opposed to whole).

(266,4) The French expression *y couper* means skip out on, avoid, or shirk (a responsibility).

(267,6) Claudel glosses the distinction between habit and *habitus* in his letter to Gide dated September 1, 1910. See *Correspondance: Claudel–Gide, 1899–1926* (Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française/Gallimard, 1949). In English, see *The Correspondence (1899–1926) between Paul Claudel and André Gide*, trans. J. Russell (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952), p. 138.

(268,4) Cf. *Écrits*, p. 814. According to the *Trésor de la langue française*, "The distinction between a subjective genitive and an objective genitive is based

on the transposition of a verb phrase into a noun phrase such that, in the first case it is the subject function that is transposed and in the second it is the object function that is transposed." For example, in English, the phrase "the love of a child," as a subjective genitive, means the love a child has or feels for something or someone; as an objective genitive, it means the love something or someone has for the child. Other versions of the second sentence of this paragraph read differently, but are not any clearer.

(269,2) *Ça* (that) also means "id." *Il* (it) in this passage should perhaps be rendered instead by "he" (i.e., the patient).

(270,1) On "mediocre" analysts, see *Écrits*, pp. 484 and 491. The author is Maurice Benassy.

(270,4) *S'en serait payé* could also be rendered as "made up for lost time." See M. Benassy, "Les fantasmes [Fantasies]," *Bulletin de Psychologie* XIV, 192 (1960–1): 12.

(271,7) This typography problem is discussed in Claudel's letters dated November 22, 1910 (p. 143), and February 25, 1911 (p. 151), and in Gide's letters dated February 22, 1911 (p. 149), and [February 1911] (p. 152).

(272,3) Claudel refers to *The Hostage* as likely to be viewed as reactionary in his letter to Gide dated June 2, 1910 (p. 125 in the English edition). In the letter dated June 17, 1910, he proposes to put just his initials P.C. on the play in order to get around the rule that all publications be authorized. In his letter dated September 16, 1910, he calls it overly "royalist, feudal, and reactionary," adding that "No government official could sign it" and proposing to sign it "Paul C" (pp. 140–1 in the English edition).

(272,5) Napoleon I (Napoleon Bonaparte) was Emperor of the French from 1804 to 1815. Sygne is said to be under 30 on p. 34/24; in my notes (and in the text in brackets) I give first the page number in the French Folio edition, *L'otage suivi de Le pain dur et de Le père humilié* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), and then, after a slash, the page number of the English translation: *Three Plays: The Hostage, Crusts, The Humiliation of the Father*, trans. J. Heard (Boston: John W. Luce, 1945).

(274,1) Printed in May 1911, the play finally came to the stage in 1913 in London. Henri Charles Ferdinand Marie Dieudonné d'Artois (September 29, 1820–August 24, 1883) was the Duke of Bordeaux and the Count of Chambord.

(274,7) Reading *son cousin* (her cousin [male]) instead of *sa cousine* (her cousin [female]).

(275,4) The "second death" is literally mentioned in Claudel's *The Hostage* (p. 97/58).

(276,1) Reading *le beau* (beauty) for *le bien* (the good); see Seminar VII, pp. 278ff/237ff. Regarding the Greek, see Seminar VII, p. 311/267–8.

(277,5) Reading Haemon instead of Creon.

(277,6) A second, alternative ending is provided by Claudel in the French edition (pp. 149–53), but the English edition does not include it.

(277,7) Epinal images were popular prints that told a story, and were often designed for people who could not read. They provided a traditional, naïve vision of things, showing only the positive side of things. Figuratively, the term means "cliché."

(279,3) In Seminar VII, Lacan provides the following translation of the passage: "a means by which to bring about, through pity and fear, the catharsis of

passions like this one" (p. 286/244); he glosses it again a few pages later: "by means of pity and fear, we are purged of . . . the imaginary" (p. 290/247–8). See Aristotle, *Poetics* 1453b12–14; see also *Rhetoric* III, 16; 1417a13.

Chapter XX – Turelure's Abjection

(280,4) Other versions suggest that Merleau-Ponty himself wanted Lacan to occupy this podium, even though Lacan was reluctant to do so.

(281,3) See Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Section 734 or Chapter 7, Section B, subsection c: "The spiritual work of art" (p. 738); *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (p. 445); and Jean Hyppolite's French translation (p. 248). *Versöhnung* is also sometimes rendered by "appeasement." Other versions read *tout Bien* (every Good) instead of *tout lien* (all bonds).

(282,1) The someone here is Ernest Jones; see his book entitled *Hamlet and Oedipus* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1976 [original work published 1919]), p. 25.

(282,4) Lacan is referring here to his discussion in Seminar VI (classes given on March 4 and May 27, 1959); see *Ornicar?* 24 (1981): 7–31, and *Le Séminaire, Livre VI, Le désir et son interpretation* (Paris: La Martinière, 2013), pp. 286 and 479 (on p. 479 one finds *jardin*, not *verger*; in other versions, one finds both). In English, see "Desire and the interpretation of desire in *Hamlet*" (J. Hulbert, trans.). *Yale French Studies* 55/56 (1977): 11–52.

(283,4) In a more modern vein, we might refer to cartoon images that ask, "Where's Waldo?"

(284,1) I follow the English translation in the longer passages (for example, in Chapter 21 below), but try to provide English renderings that fit better with Lacan's commentary elsewhere. The little monk tends bees and used to tend sheep (pp. 354–5/183).

(285,3) See Paul Reboux and Charles Muller, *À la manière de . . .* (Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 2003 [shorter edition in 1914]). *Il n'y a pas de petites économies* (a penny saved is a penny earned) is an expression akin to "every little bit helps" in English, and literally means "there's no such thing as small savings." The French expression is often completed by the following: *Il n'y a que de grandes pertes* ("There are only big losses"). Cf. *Écrits*, p. 477.

(286,2) *Avoir la peau de quelqu'un* also means "to fix him good."

(286,3) The English translation here reads as follows: "He's as unbusinesslike as he is stingy, and, at that, he isn't as stingy as he is crooked" (p. 90).

(287,3) There is perhaps a play on words here, as *carrée* can mean bedroom and "adult" matters.

(288,4) On games with four players, see Lacan's discussion of bridge in *Écrits*, p. 551.

(290,2) *Le Sapeur Camember* is a cartoon series by Marie-Louis-Georges Colomb, known as Christophe. The French here reads as follows: "*Regarde, dit-il, c'te lettre elle n'est pas chargée . . . ce n'est pas que le général n'en ait pas les moyens, mais elle n'est pas chargée, eh bien ça n'va pas l'empêcher de partir tout de même !*" See Christophe, *Les facéties du sapeur Camember* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1965).

(291,5) Boniface de la Mole was decapitated on April 30, 1574, and it is said that Marguerite de Navarre, Queen of France, asked the executioner if she could have his head, he having been her lover.

(293,1) Other versions would have us read: "saying that they aspire to put an end

to it and that they pursue the sharing by all of the only thing that is real, which is jouissance."

(295,4) *Point mort* means neutral, as in a car's gearbox.

Chapter XXI – Pensée's Desire

(300,1) *Le désir de Pensée de Coûfontaine* (Pensée de Coûfontaine's desire) could also be rendered as "desire for Pensée de Coûfontaine."

(300,3) *Surimposition* (superimposing) could alternatively be rendered as "overtaxing."

(300,7) The noun *Versagung* is often rendered as denial or privation (or deprivation), but in the *Standard Edition* of Freud's work is often translated as "frustration." What Lacan says in this passage (evoking the English verb "to renege") might apply better to the transitive verb *versagen* (to deny somebody or oneself something, refuse somebody or oneself something) than to the noun *Versagung*.

(301,2) One could possibly read, "it is refusal regarding perdition," instead of just "perdition."

(301,3) On the words *me phunai* in *Oedipus at Colonus*, see Seminar VII, pp. 292/257 and 353/305–6. On the so-called pleonastic or expletive *ne*, see Seminar VII, pp. 79 and 353/64 and 305–6. See also B. Fink, *The Lacanian Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 38–41.

(301,4) On debt, see *Écrits*, p. 278; there Lacan refers to Rabelais' Panurge, who says that he has always believed debts to be "a sort of connecting-link between Heaven and earth, a unique interrelationship of the human race – I mean without which all humans would soon perish – peradventure to be that great soul of the universe, which, according to the Academics, gives life to all things"; if we imagine a world without debts, "There, among the stars, there will be no regular course whatever. All will be in disarray. Jupiter, not thinking himself a debtor to Saturn, will dispossess him of his sphere . . . The moon will remain bloody and dark: on what ground will the sun impart his light to her? He was in no way bound to. The sun will not shine on their earth, the stars will exert no good influence there, for the earth was desisting from lending them nourishment by vapors and exhalations, by which [. . .] the stars were fed." See *The Complete Works of François Rabelais*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 267–73 (*Tiers livre*, Chapters 3 and 4).

(302,2) The French *reprochée* (reproached) includes *proche* (proximate). Other versions add *d'y céder* (for giving into it) after "debt" in the last sentence of this paragraph.

(303,8) The passage Lacan is referring to (p. 381 in the French) is not included in the English edition (p. 196).

(304,1) The passage Lacan is referring to (p. 381 in the French) is not included in the English edition (p. 196).

(305,2) Lacan is referring here to Victor Hugo's poem entitled "Booz endormi." In French and English, see *The Penguin Book of French Verse*, 3 (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1957), pp. 69–73. See Lacan's commentary on the poem in *Écrits*, pp. 506–8.

(306,3) "Homodarmes" might be heard to include *homme d'armes* (man-at-arms)

and *homme aux dames*, which reminds us of *homme à femmes* (womanizer), among other things. Sir Thomas Pollock Nageoire appears in Claudel's play entitled *L'échange* ("The Exchange"). *Nageoire* means fin, as in a fish's fin. See André Breton's 1924 "Introduction au discours sur le peu de réalité" in *Point du Jour* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970); in English, see "Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality" in *Break of Day*, trans. M. Polizzotti and M. A. Caws (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), pp. 3–20.

(306,6) Lacan is likely referring to the end of Seminar VI (pp. 492–504), where he discussed exhibitionism and voyeurism on June 3 and 10, 1959.

(307,1) One could possibly translate, "that it is thus the very desire that sustains its function in fantasy that veils from the subject her role in the activity," instead of, "that it is thus the very desire that sustains its function in fantasy that veils from the subject his role in the exhibitionistic or voyeuristic activity."

(307,2) In ancient myth, Actaeon, coming upon Diana during her bath, is turned by her into a stag which is then chased and killed by Actaeon's own dogs. Cf. *Écrits*, p. 412.

(307,5) The French here, *on ne s'entend pas là où l'on s'entend*, is very ambiguous, and could be understood in several other ways: we do not hear ourselves where others hear us, we do not hear ourselves where we are heard, or we do not hear our own thoughts being heard.

(307,6) See Lacan's discussion of Psyche in Chapter 16 of this Seminar (class given on April 12, 1961).

(308,1) The figure of the Synagogue is apparently found in the south transept (not the portico) of the cathedrals in both Reims and Strasbourg.

(308,4) "Second *temps-pire*" is a play on "Second Empire" and literally "worse time." Other versions suggest a different reading: *second en pire*, a pun attributed to Victor Hugo regarding Napoleon III that plays on "Second Empire" and the "second that is worse."

(309,4) See Claudel, *Two Dramas: Break of Noon & The Tidings Brought to Mary*, trans. W. Fowlie (Washington, D.C.: Henry Regnery Company, 1960).

(309,6) On anamorphosis, see Seminar VII, pp. 161–3/135–6, 169–70/140–2, and elsewhere; see also Seminar XI.

(309,8) The allusions to crucifixion are not included in the English edition; they should appear on pages 157 and 223. Doña Prouhèze appears in *Le soulier de satin*; in English, see *The Satin Slipper; or, The Worst Is Not the Surest*, trans. J. O'Connor, in collaboration with Paul Claudel (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1945).

(310,1) In English, see *Tête d'Or: A Play in Three Acts by Paul Claudel*, trans. J. S. Newberry (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1919).

(310,2) The passage on page 439 in the French is not included in the English edition (p. 223). Lacan seems to conflate two scenes here, one at the very beginning and one at the very end of Act IV (pp. 415 and 439).

(310,4) The poet Lacan has in mind here may be Goethe.

(310,5) The "four terms" here are those of the L Schema; the L Schema is found in *Écrits* (pp. 53 and 548) and in Seminar II, p. 284/243.

(311,6) Some versions read *lacune* (lacuna) instead of *blessure* (wound).

(311,7) *Points d'écartèlement* (quartering points) is somewhat obscure, but may refer to the four corners of the L Schema (*a*, *a'*, S, and A) mentioned half a page earlier. It might more figuratively be rendered as "points of fracture."

(311,8) The someone in question is André Gide. The usual French expression, *les extrêmes se touchent* (the extremes meet up or come together), is a much older one and may be the one intended by Lacan here. It is attributed to M. de Marivetz, author of *La physique du monde*.

Chapter XXII – Structural Decomposition

(313,5) The author whose work Lacan is most averse to here is Sacha Nacht; Lacan paraphrases his article, "La thérapeutique psychanalytique," which is included in *La Psychanalyse d'aujourd'hui* ["Contemporary Psychoanalysis"] (Paris: PUF, 1956). He also comments on it in *Écrits*, p. 587. The actual passage reads as follows: "Thus I sometimes maintain that what is of prime importance in an analysis is not so much what the analyst says or does as what he is. What he says or does is informed by the education he has received. But how he makes use of this education depends in large part on his personality" (p. 135).

(317,1) See Lacan's paper, originally published in French in 1953, "Le mythe individuel du névrosé ou poésie et vérité dans la névrose," *Ornicar?* 17/18 (1979): 289–307. In English, see "The Neurotic's Individual Myth," trans. M. N. Evans, *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* XLVIII, 3 (1979): 405–25.

(318,4) See Sigmund Freud, *The Origins of Psychoanalysis: Letters to Wilhelm Fliess* (New York: Basic Books, 1954), and *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887–1904* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

(319,5) See E. Jones, (1931). "The Concept of a Normal Mind," in *Papers on Psychoanalysis*, fifth edition (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1948), pp. 201–16.

(319,6) Other versions provide *ratiocinations* instead of *vaticinations*.

(320,4) Recall that "the signifier" is often a shorthand in Lacan's work for "the signifying system as a whole."

(322,2) *Se refuser* could be rendered as "deny himself something" or "deprive himself of something" and *refus* as "self-denial," "self-deprivation," or "self-refusal."

(322,3) *Préjudicielle* (prerequisite) is a legal term, describing questions and costs associated with a legal judgment that must be handed down *prior* to the principal suit. It could also be translated as "preliminary" or "prior."

(323,3) The second half of the passage quoted here (p. 325/167) is not included in either the French or English editions referred to here.

(325,2) The French here, *juste le temps qu'il ne soit plus qu'un soldat du Pape, mais froid* (for just as long as he is no longer anything but one of the Pope's defenders, albeit a cold [or tepid?] one) strikes me as quite obscure.

Chapter XXIII – Slippage in the Meaning of the Ideal

(330,3) See Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, 3 vols. (New York: Basic Books, 1953, 1955, 1957).

(330,4) See Freud's letters to Eitingon dated October 22 and November 23, 1919,

as cited in Jones' *Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 2, p. 154. Cf. *Écrits*, p. 486, footnotes 11, 12, and 13.

(331,2) See L. Jekels and E. Bergler, "Übertragung und Liebe," *Imago* XX, 1 (1934); in English, "Transference and Love," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* XVIII (1949): 325–50.

(331,3) See Seminar I, pp. 127–42.

(331,5) See "Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation: 'Psychoanalysis and Personality Structure'" in *Écrits*.

(332,2) The example is found in the case that Lacan discusses at the end of this class. One could alternatively understand *accrochage* (get started) here as "sticking point": hence "this perhaps becomes the true sticking point of certain analyses."

(332,3) Words are missing in the stenography here, as indicated by [. . .].

(334,1) This may be a reference to Freud's 1910 paper, "The Future Prospects of Psycho-analytic Therapy," *SE* XI, pp. 141–51.

(334,5) Reading *points stables et ondes fixes* (stable points and fixed waves) instead of the virtually homonymous *besoins stables et zones fixes* (stable needs and fixed zones). See H. Nunberg, "The Synthetic Function of the Ego" (1930), in *Practice and Theory of Psychoanalysis* (New York: International Universities Press, 1960).

(334,6) Other versions suggest *artefacts* (artifacts) instead of "acting out" here.

(335,6) Lacan is likely referring here to "The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of Its Power," the first of two papers he presented at the Royaumont International Colloquium held July 10–13, 1958, at the invitation of the Société Française de Psychanalyse. It was published in *La Psychanalyse* VI (1961): 149–206, and was republished in *Écrits*.

(337,3) See Jekels and Bergler, "Transference and Love," pp. 335–7.

(337,4) Other versions read *gênant* (bothersome or annoying) instead of *nanan* (simplistic).

(338,4) See Jekels and Bergler, p. 325.

(341,3) Other versions propose "brings together well-meaning authority and all that is narcissistically beneficial" instead of just "brings together all that is narcissistically beneficial."

(342,2) See "Observations on Transference-Love," *SE* XII, pp. 166–7, where Freud refers to certain women who seem unable to "preserve the erotic transference for the purposes of analytic work without satisfying it," "who refuse to accept the psychical in the place of the material, [and] who, in the poet's words, are accessible only to 'the logic of soup, with dumplings for argument.'" The poet here is Heinrich Heine, and the poem is entitled *Die Wanderratten* ("The Roving Rats"), which includes the term *Knödelgrunden* (dumpling grounds or reasons). More idiomatically put, "a morality based on dumplings" might be rendered as "a meat-and-potatoes morality."

Chapter XXIV – Identification via "*ein einziger Zug*"

(345,2) Note that the published French edition provides the complete version of the optical schema, as it is found in *Écrits* (p. 675), whereas other versions provide several different schemas, each corresponding to a specific section of Lacan's commentary here.

(345,3) Lacan had already discussed this optical schema in Seminar I, Chapter 11, and Seminar VI, *Desire and Its Interpretation.*

(346,1) This passage likely refers to a schema without the vertical mirror A and the virtual image it allows for (shown in the right half of the complete schema). The eye, then, would be situated at the extreme right of the schema, not at the left.

(347,5) Cf. Jekels and Bergler's term "neutral zone" in "Transference and Love," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* XVIII (1949): 328 and 330.

(348,1) One could possibly translate "a distinct libidinal energy" instead of "an energy that is distinct from the libido."

(348,2) See Freud's 1915 paper entitled "Instincts [or Drives] and their Vicissitudes," *SE* XIV, pp. 117–40. The French tend to translate *Schicksal* as *sort*, meaning "destiny" or "fate."

(350,2) See Jekels and Bergler, pp. 334, 336, 337, and 339; cf. *Écrits*, p. 853.

(350,5) Reading schema here (or possibly montage) instead of description.

(351,1) The model referred to here may be that introduced by Jekels and Bergler, or even by Freud.

(353,5) Other versions add, after "that is effectively desired or not desired," the words, "by the person toward whom the child turns"; *à* (to) might instead be rendered here by "in."

(354,1) Other versions read *das echte Ich* instead of the *authent-Ich.*

(354,4) Cf. *Écrits*, p. 339, where Lacan translates *Einfühlung* as "connivance."

(354,6) In Strachey's translation of *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, the German Lacan cites is rendered as "typically masculine" (*SE* XVIII, p. 105).

(355,4) On Dora, see Freud's "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" (1905), *SE* VII, pp. 7–122. See Lacan's extensive discussion of the Dora case in "Presentation on Transference," *Écrits*, pp. 215–26.

(357,5) *Grisélidis* is an opera by Jules Massenet, based on the medieval tale – taken up by many authors, including Chaucer, Boccaccio, and Petrarch, for example – of "patient Grissil" (also known as Grizzel or Griselda).

(357,7) The French here is quite ambiguous and could potentially be understood as follows: "rich people act temperately at home or, to be more exact, give themselves a thousand excuses for avoiding their party-giving function."

(357,8) A possible reference to Matthew 19:23–4.

(358,2) *La femme pauvre* was first published in 1897.

Chapter XXV – The Relationship between Anxiety and Desire

(360,4) Certain authors prefer to render *angoisse* in English with "angst" or "anguish"; note that French also has the word *anxiété*, which is generally translated into English as "anxiety." Lacan never uses the latter in this Seminar. Cf. *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety, SE* XX, p. 92, where Freud raises the question: "Where does the energy come from which is employed for giving the signal of unpleasure?"

(360,5) Lacan is referring here to Freud's *Gesammelte Werke*, XIV (S. Fisher Verlag, 1948: London: Imago Publishing Co.). In *SE* XX, pp. 92–3, Strachey renders this as follows: "The ego withdraws its (preconscious) cathexis from the instinctual representative that is to be repressed and uses that cathexis for the purpose of releasing unpleasure (anxiety)."

(361,2) The perhaps unfamiliar ring to Descartes' phrase (often rendered "I think, therefore I am") is due to the English translation of Descartes' *Philosophical Writings* by J. Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

(361,4) Or "could grab hold of himself" (instead of "could grasp himself").

(362,3) As Freud puts it, "the ego is the actual seat of anxiety" (*SE* XX, p. 93).

(362,6) See, for example, *SE* XVI, p. 398, where we find "expectant anxiety" and "anxious expectation"; *SE* XVIII, the beginning of Chapter 2; and *SE* XX, pp. 164–8. See also *GW* XIV, pp. 197–200, and Seminar VI, p. 502.

(363,4) See "Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty: A New Sophism" in *Écrits*.

(364,1) See, however, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, where it seems that Freud says exactly the same thing: "Here we may be assisted by the idea that a defence against an unwelcome *internal* process will be modelled upon the defence adopted against an *external* stimulus, that the ego wards off internal and external dangers alike along identical lines" (*SE* XX, p. 92).

(364,3) *Mitleid* also means "compassion" or "sympathy."

(364,5) Lacan seems here to be trying to bring his audience to grasp the difference between *a* as the imaginary, specular other, and *a* as object *a*, the cause of desire, in fantasy.

(365,1) This is a likely reference to the complete Graph of Desire, *Écrits*, p. 817.

(365,6) Reading *losigkeit* (an ending meaning something like "lessness," as in senselessness) – though perhaps we should read *Hilflosigkeit* (helplessness or distress) – instead of *Löslichkeit* (solubility). Lacan seems to be referring to *GW* XIV, pp. 197–200, where we find the following: "*Es haftet ihr ein Charakter von Unbestimmtheit und Objektlosigkeit* [objectlessness] *an* [. . .]"; Strachey translates this as "It [anxiety] has a quality of indefiniteness and lack of object" (*SE* XX, p. 165). The same pairing of terms is found again in *GW* XIV, p. 199: "Its [anxiety's] connection with expectation [*Erwartung*] belongs to the danger-situation, whereas its indefiniteness and lack of object [*Unbestimmtheit und Objektlosigkeit*] belong to the situation of helplessness [*Hilflosigkeit*]" (*SE* XX, p. 166).

(366,1) On "unsatisfied desire," see, above all, "Direction of the Treatment" in *Écrits*.

(366,3) Other versions provide here the following formula:

$$\frac{a}{(-\varphi)} \Diamond \mathrm{A}$$

Herr K. seems to be associated here with the other with a lowercase *o* and Frau K. with the Other with a capital *O*.

(366,5) *Carence* also means "lack" or "deficiency."

(366,6) Reading *à la loupe* (with a magnifying glass) instead of *à la louche* (with a ladle, literally; in abundance, figuratively).

(368,1) Other versions read *relation* (relationship) instead of *action* (action).

(368,6) Reading *de l'analyste* (the analyst's) instead of *de l'analyse* (psychoanalysis').

(369,1) Other versions add "*erastés* or *erón*" at the end of this sentence.

(369,3) Reading *Socrate affirme ne rien connaître qu'aux choses de l'amour* (Socrates asserts that he knows nothing except about matters of love) rather than *Socrate affirme ne rien connaître aux choses de l'amour* (Socrates asserts that he knows nothing about matters of love). Perhaps we should read "confession" in this paragraph instead of "aggression."

(369,5) *Orant* also means "praying figure," as in statuary.

(370,2) See *The Iliad*, Chapter 24, where Priam says, "Think of your father, O Achilles like unto the gods, who is such even as I am, on the sad threshold of old age. It may be that those who dwell near him harass him, and there is none to keep war and ruin from him. Yet when he hears of you being still alive, he is glad, and his days are full of hope that he shall see his dear son come home to him from Troy; but I, wretched man that I am, had the bravest in all Troy for my sons, and there is not one of them left."

(370,3) *La syncope du langage est impuissante à dire* seems rather ambiguous to me: it may suggest that even a breaking off of speech, or skipping certain letters or syllables as one speaks (a linguistic syncope), is powerless to say or convey anything. Other versions would have us read: "Any attempt to explain oneself leads to nothing but a breaking off of speech and an inability to speak, because . . ." *Quémandeur* implies that he is a beggar, not a desirer, someone who begs for something, not someone who desires.

(371,4) The fuller passage reads as follows: "Creatures of a day! What is someone? What is no one? A dream of a shadow is man," verses 95–6, p. 337, in Pindar, *Pindar I: Olympian Odes, Pythian Odes*, ed. and trans. W. H. Race (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997 [Loeb Classical Library]).

Chapter XXVI – "A Dream of a Shadow Is Man"

(372,6) C. Stein, "L'identification primaire [Primal identification]," *RFP* XXVI (1962): 257–65. Lacan had apparently mentioned it in the initial part of the class that is missing. See J.-A. Miller's summary notes of that missing section in his Editor's Notes at the end of this Seminar.

(373,5) It is not entirely clear whether we should read $ instead of S here and on the next pages as well.

(374,2) The subject referred to here, if he is indeed $ and not S, is no more than a gaze (the eye in the optical schema); in the vertical mirror (A) this subject does not see himself, but rather the (virtual image of the) vase with the flowers in it.

(374,3) There seems to be a problem with the transcription here, because in his paper on psychical causality, Lacan writes, "a dull mirror shows him a surface in which nothing is reflected" (*Écrits*, p. 188), whereas the text of the Seminar reads a "mirror without a surface in which nothing is reflected."

(374,4) Lacan is likely pointing to the different parts of the schema in Chapter 24 in the course of this discussion; *i(a)* corresponds to the bouquet to the left where the real image of the vase containing the flowers would be produced if the eye were located at I, all the way to the right, instead of at $, all the way to the left, and the vertical mirror (A) were removed (see *Écrits*, p. 680, Figure 3).

(375,1) There may be a problem here with the transcription of the Seminar, for the passage by Freud reads: "*Der Schatten des Objekts . . . das verlassene Objekt*," in *GW* X, p. 435. "*Das verlassene Objekt*" is rendered by Strachey as "the forsaken object"; *verlassene* could also be translated as "abandoned" or "deserted." But *verlorene* is used by Freud elsewhere in the German edition (pp. 199 and 209). Other versions add "via the Other" at the end of this paragraph.

(375,4) It is not clear whether the *écarts* (deviations) in question are those of the object that moves or those of the eyes that follow it.

(377,2) "Primal identification" is a likely reference to the first type of identification mentioned by Freud at the beginning of Chapter 7 of *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*: identification with the father.

(377,6) Narcissistic identification, involving the ideal ego, is enveloping or all-encompassing; non-narcissistic (or symbolic) identification, involving the ego-ideal, is not enveloping or all-encompassing, relying as it does on a single trait.

(378,1) See Karl Abraham's *Versuch einer Entwicklungsgeschichte der Libido* (Leipzig, Vienna, and Zurich: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1924). In English, see "A Short Study of the Development of the Libido, Viewed in the Light of Mental Disorders," in his *Selected Papers on Psycho-Analysis* (London: Hogarth Press, 1927). Page numbers included in brackets in the text refer to the English edition.

(379,4) This may be a reference to the formula Lacan provided for obsession in Chapter 18:

$$\not{A} \Diamond \varphi\,(a, a', a'', a''', \ldots)$$

(379,5) Here is the passage and footnote that Lacan is referring to: "Freud pointed out that hysterics reject the normal, genital sexual aim, and put in its place other, 'perverse' aims. We shall remain in agreement with his view in proposing to set up a stage of object-love with the exclusion of the genitals." Abraham then adds a footnote: "Such a stage of object-love with genital exclusion seems to coincide in time with Freud's 'phallic stage' in the psychosexual development of the individual, and moreover to have close internal relations with it. We may look upon hysterical symptoms as the obverse of those libidinal impulses which belong to object-love with genital exclusion and to the phallic organization" (p. 495).

(380,1) This may be a reference to the formula Lacan provided for hysteria in Chapter 18:

$$\frac{a}{(-\varphi)} \Diamond \mathrm{A}$$

The left-hand side can be read, at least at one level, as "the object minus the genitals."

(380,2) In physics, *réluctance* (struggle) is a measure of the opposition to magnetic flux, which is analogous to electrical resistance; it is the resistance to magnetic flux offered by a magnetic circuit, determined by the permeability and arrangement of the materials of the circuit. Its use here seems somewhat curious, even if it is actually an Anglicism. In *Selected Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, the German is rendered as follows: "We must not forget, too, that the genitals are more intensely cathected by narcissistic love than any other part of the subject's own body" (p. 495).

(380,3) Other versions give *notification* instead of *modification*.

(380,4) In the left-hand schema, the summit may represent the maximum cathexis of a specific part of the subject's own body: the genitalia.

(381,5) *Déversement* (deflection) could alternatively be rendered as "spilling over."

(381,6) Lacan is perhaps alluding here to the idiomatic expression, "*C'est bon pour les chiens*," suggesting that something is rotten or spoiled now and only good enough for dogs to eat, cats being presumably above that or pickier eaters. He might, however, be alluding to "*Ce n'est pas fait pour les chiens*" (it's meant to be used by humans) or "*C'est de la bouillie pour les chats*" (said of a text that is confused and unintelligible).

(382,2) Note Abraham's use of the words "stuck out" in his comment about the other "hysterical patient" he describes, patient Y: she had "a desire to bite off everything that 'stuck out'" (p. 485).

(382,4) In English, see Gyp's *Petit Bob* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 1887/2008); in French, see *Petit Bob* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1929), p. 177. *Complaisance* (indulgence) could, instead, be rendered by "smugness."

(382,6) Note that French does not have a very commonly used word for "nipple" (hence Lacan's use here of the English word); the circumlocution often used in French is "*bout de* (or *du*) *sein*," tip of the breast; *mamelon* is a somewhat scientific term, more often used in anatomy than in everyday speech.

(383,3) On a "post-ambivalent" object love, see Abraham's terms "*ambivalenzfrei (nach-ambivalent)*" in the German (Laplanche and Pontalis' *Language of Psycho-analysis* gives the wrong German terms in its entry concerning "ambivalence, pre-ambivalence, post-ambivalence"), "free from ambivalence, or post-ambivalent" (p. 481 in the English; see also p. 452).

(383,5) Jean Rostand was a well-known French biologist. Archilochus' epodes can be found in *Greek Lyric Poetry*, trans. M. L. West (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). This is the edition cited in the text (p. 5).

Chapter XXVII – Mourning the Loss of the Analyst

(385,1) The title of this chapter, *L'analyste et son deuil*, is ambiguous and could instead be rendered as "The Analyst and His Mourning." The same ambiguity is found at the end of the chapter, it being unclear whether it is the analyst who mourns or the analysand who mourns the loss of the analyst.

(385,3) Few if any published English translations of the *Critias* mention "tone" at the beginning (106a–b), mentioning instead striking the right or wrong note or being in or out of tune. "Tone" is, however, explicitly mentioned in the French translation included in the Pléiade collection: *Platon, Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1950).

(385,4) See, above, Chapter 3, section 2. Lacan is thus presumably referring to himself!

(385,5) The French, *parler dans le désert* ("a voice crying in the wilderness") literally means "speaking in the desert," and more figuratively, "talking to a brick wall."

(387,4) The German term *Besetzung* can take on the meanings of filling, casting, stocking, team, side, and occupation.

(388,1) *Triebregungen* (drive movements, stirrings, or flickerings) strikes me as odd in this context, where Lacan seems to be providing a German term for the French *attraits* (attractions or charms). One might possibly read instead *Anziehungen*.

(388,2) Again, one might possibly read *Anziehung* instead of *Triebregung*. As

indicated in a translator's note to Chapter 11, *himeros* (meaning want or desire) can be found in Sophocles' *Antigone*, verses 795–6; compare *Phaedrus* 251c–e. Recall Lacan's final words in Chapter 11: "I will conclude my talk today with these words, καλήμερα (*kalémera*), good day [*bonjour*], καλήμερος (*kalémeros*), good day and beautiful desire."

(389,1) The French *à bas bruit* (invisibly) is a medical term meaning that nothing (of a viral condition, for example) shows on the outside or even during an examination. It might, alternatively, be rendered figuratively as "at a low boil."

(389,2) As J.-A. Miller indicates in his editor's notes, the MRP (*Mouvement républicain populaire*) was the Christian Democratic Party during the Fourth Republic.

(390,1) Lacan may be referring here to Luchino Visconti's production of John Ford's play entitled *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (*Dommage qu'elle soit une p. . .*) at the Théâtre de Paris in 1961; the word "white" appears in numerous contexts in the play. He might, alternatively, be referring to Visconti's 1961 film *Rocco and His Brothers*. Pierrot, a figure from the Commedia dell'Arte, is always dressed in white (as a sign of innocence?) and his face is usually whitened (to indicate the pallor of death?).

(390,2) Other versions suggest that a shift (*bascule*) occurs here, not a chain reaction (*cascade*).

(390,3) Other versions add, after "little Corsica," the words "on the sheets," thereby suggesting the outline on the child's sheets of a little pool or trace of urine (likened here to the shape of Corsica on a map). On "I am what I am," see Seminar VII, p. 98/81.

(390,8) See Chapters 14 and 15 earlier on.

(391,6) See Rabelais' *Tiers Livre*, Chapter 8, where we find the following:

> *Celle qui veid son mary tout armé,*
> *Fors la braguette aller à l'escarmouche,*
> *Luy dist. Amy, de paour qu'on ne vous touche,*
> *Armez cela, qui est le plus aymé.*
> *Quoy? tel conseil doibt il estre blasmé?*
> *Ie diz que non: Car sa paour la plus grande*
> *De perdre estoit, le voyant animé,*
> *Le bon morceau, dont elle estoit friande.*

(392,1) See Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*. One could understand *cela* (such effusion) as referring to "handkerchiefs" instead.

(392,2) *Humides* (crybabies) might, alternatively, be rendered as "tearjerkers" in this context.

(392,3) Other versions read: "the barred signifier S" – in other words, $\mathbb{S}$.

(392,5) Lacan is possibly referring here to his discussion of fantasy in *Écrits*, p. 825.

(393,3) *Forcer un être* (to force a being) could also be rendered as "to coerce a being" or "to flush a being out."

(393,4) See *The Marquis de Sade: Three Complete Novels: Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, Eugénie de Franval and Other Writings* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), pp. 741–2.

(394,3) Reading here and in the next paragraph *rivetage* (riveting, in the sense of joining things together with rivets) instead of the near homonym *rivage*

(shore). "Shore" could make sense if we think of it as the limit of the image (an island or object).

(394,4) Other versions read *avant de vous avoir tué* (before having killed you) instead of *avant de l'avoir tué* (before having killed it), which may or may not have been a slip of the tongue on Lacan's part. The usual French expression is *vendre la peau de l'ours avant de l'avoir tué* (literally, to sell the bearskin before you have killed the bear; figuratively, to count one's chickens before they're hatched). *Défend* (defends) also means "prohibits."

(395,1) See Seminar VI, Chapters 8 and following (starting on p. 112), and Ella Sharpe, *Dream Analysis*, Chapter 5, entitled "Analysis of a Single Dream" (London: Hogarth, 1937), pp. 125–48.

(395,2) For example, in a room where his brother was with his girlfriend (p. 131).

(396,4) "An object of desire" – that is, not simply a love object.

(398,3) I have assumed that *potiche* here refers back to *pot* (pot) earlier on. *Potiche* also means "puppet"; *la conservation de la potiche* might potentially be rendered instead as "to preserve appearances."

(398,5) This might be understood to imply that, assuming the analysis goes far enough, the analyst as an object (for the patient) is eventually destroyed by the patient's desire.

Editor's Notes

(434,4) Assuming this should be spelled Sapho and not Sappho (the Greek poetess), there are several possible references:

- Madeleine de Scudéry, who sometimes published work under the pen name Sapho.
- Renée Vivien, a British poet who wrote in French.
- The novel by Alphonse Daudet entitled *Sapho*.

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Editor's Notes

The article that is mentioned on page 345 as soon to be published was included in *Écrits*; it was entitled "Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation: 'Psychoanalysis and Personality Structure.'"

I indicated on page 360 that the beginning of Class XXV is missing. Here is the text of some notes that were taken at the time by my friend Dr. Paul Lemoine, who was one of the most attentive participants at the Seminar and is now sorely missed. His notes allow us to partially fill this gap:

> Conrad Stein gave a very fine presentation on primal identification. What I will talk about today will show him that his work was well oriented. We are going to try to make headway now. I intended to read Sapho to find things in it that could enlighten us.[1] This will lead us to the heart of the function of identification. As we are still concerned with locating the analyst's function, I thought it would not be a bad idea to reexamine certain things. Freud wrote *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* [*Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*] in 1926. It was the third stage of his thought, the first two being constituted by the *Traumdeutung* [*The Interpretation of Dreams*] and the second topography.

I would like to thank Prof. Jacques Body, who was kind enough to search for the fox in Giraudoux's work that is mentioned on pages 383–4. This fox was not found. Should you locate it, please
468 write me care of the publisher, Editions du Seuil; the same goes for any possible corrections. Note that I have not been able to locate the otter and the weasel mentioned on page 9.

Editions du Seuil assigned the preparation of the manuscript to Paul Chemla, who paid particularly close attention to the material

quoted, and Evelyne Cazade-Havas worked alongside him – my hearty thanks to both of them.

I have asked Judith Miller to henceforth direct with me the collection entitled "Le Champ freudien" that was founded by Jacques Lacan.

J.-A. M.

Notes to the Second Edition

Paul Lemoine's notes taken at the Seminar have allowed me to improve in certain places the text that I established some ten years ago. A few points should be highlighted here:

1 The term invented by Aragon that is quoted on page 66 is found in his *Traité du style*.
2 The film by Renoir that is mentioned on page 134 is *La Grande Illusion*.
3 The schema that is discussed on page 187 can be reconstituted on the basis of the notes as follows:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & \text{A } i(a)^2 & \\ i(a) & & \text{S} \\ & \$ & \end{array}$$

4 The book by Roger Caillois that is mentioned on page 213 is *Le Mythe et l'homme*.
5 The church mentioned on page 214 is the Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni.
6 The simplified [version of the complete] schema that is provided here on page 345 showed, according to Lemoine's notes, to the left of the [vertical flat] mirror, the real image of the vase, $i(a)$, surrounding the flowers, a. 469
7 On page 389 the abbreviation MRP designates the Christian Democratic Party during the Fourth Republic, known as the *Mouvement républicain populaire* [Popular Republican Movement]; *apparentement* (political maneuvering) was a procedure that was authorized at the time that allowed for a partial alliance between different electoral lists, which isolated the extremists in order to benefit the centrists.

I am grateful to Gennie Lemoine, who was kind enough to allow me to consult Paul Lemoine's notes. I would also like to thank Evelyne Cazade, who once again worked alongside me on this project.

J.-A. M.

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THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN

BOOK IX

IDENTIFICATION

1961 – 1962

Translated by Cormac Gallagher from unedited French typescripts

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Seminar 1: Wednesday 15 November 1961

Identification - this is my title and my subject for this year. It is a good title but not an easy subject. I am sure you do not think that it is an operation or a process that is very easy to conceptualize. If it is easy to recognise, it would perhaps nevertheless be preferable, in order to recognise it correctly, for us to make a little effort in order to conceptualize it. It is certain that we have encountered enough of its effects even if we remain at something rather summary, I mean at things which are tangible, even to our internal experience, for you to have a certain feeling about what it is. This effort of conceptualization will appear to you, at least this year, namely a year which is not the first of our teaching, to be without any doubt justified retrospectively because of the places, the problems to which this effort will lead us.

Today we are going to take a very first little step in this direction. I apologise to you, this is perhaps going to lead us to make efforts which are properly speaking called efforts of thinking: this will not often happen to us, to us any more than to others.

If we take identification as the title, as the theme of our remarks, it would be well for us to speak about it otherwise than in what could be called the mythical form on which I left it last year. There was something of this order, of the order of identification in particular, involved, you remember, in this point at which I left my remarks last year, namely where - as I might say - the humid layer with which you represent for yourselves the narcisstic effects which circumscribe this rock, what was left emerging from the water in my schema, this autoerotic rock whose emergence the phallus symbolises: an island in short battered by the waves of Aphrodite, a false island since moreover like the one in which Claudel's Proteus figures, it is an island without moorings, an island that is drifting away. You know what Claudel's *Protée* is. It is the attempt to complete *The Orestia* by the ridiculous farce which in Greek tragedy is obliged to complete it and of which there remains in the whole of literature only two pieces of jetsam by Sophocles and a *Hercules* by Euripedes, if I remember correctly.

It is not unintentionally that I am evoking this reference in connection with the fashion in which last year my discourse on transference ended on this image of identification. Try as I might I could not find a beautiful way to mark the barrier at which transference finds its limit and its pivoting point. No doubt, this was not the beauty which I told you was the limit of the tragic, the point at which the ungraspable thing pours its euthanasia over us. I am embellishing nothing, whatever may be imagined from the rumours one sometimes hears about what I am teaching: I am not overdoing things for you. This is known to those who formerly listened to my seminar on Ethics, the one in which I exactly approached the function of this barrier of beauty under the form of the agony which the thing (*la chose*) requires of us for us to join it.

Here then is where 'Transference' ended last year. I indicated to you, to all of those who attended the *Journées provinciales* in October, I highlighted for you, without being able to say any more, that what we had here was a reference hidden in something comic which is the point beyond which I could not push any further what I was aiming at in a certain experience, an indication as I may say which is to be rediscovered in the hidden meaning of

what one could call the cryptogrammes of this seminar, and after all I do not give up hope that a commentary will one day separate it out and highlight it, because moreover I happen to have heard a certain testimony which, in this regard is a sign of hope: it is that the seminar of the year before last, the one on ethics had effectively been taken up again - and according to those who have been able to read the work in a completely successful way - by someone who went to the trouble of rereading it in order to summarise the elements of it, I am talking about M. Safouan, and I hope that perhaps these things may be able to be put at your disposal fairly rapidly so that there can be linked onto them what I am going to bring you this year. Jumping from one year onto the second next one after it may seem to give rise to a question for you, or even to constitute a regrettable delay; this however is not altogether justified, as you will see if you take up this sequence of my seminars since 1953: the first on the technical writings, the one which followed on the ego: technique and Freudian psychoanalytic theory, the third on the Freudian structures of psychosis, the fourth on object relations, the fifth on the formations of the unconscious, the sixth on desire and its interpretation, then ethics, transference, identification at which we are arriving: that is nine, you can easily find in them an alternation, a pulsation, you will see that in every second one there dominates the thematic of the subject and that of the signifier, which, given that it was with the signifier, with the elaboration of the function of the symbolic that we began, makes us land this year also on the signifier because we are at an odd number, even though what is in question in identification ought to be properly the relationship of the subject to the signifier.

This identification then, which we propose to attempt to give an adequate notion of this year, has no doubt been rendered rather trivial for us by analysis; as someone who is rather close to me and understands me very well said to me, "so this year you are doing identification", and this with a pout: "the all-purpose explanation", allowing there to pierce through at the same time some disappointment about the fact in short that something rather different was expected from me. Let this person be under no illusions. His expectation, in effect, of seeing me avoid the topic, as I might say, will be disappointed, because I hope indeed to treat it and I hope also that the fatigue which this topic suggests to him in advance will be dissolved. I will indeed speak about identification itself. In order to specify what I understand by that, I would say that when one speaks about identification what one thinks about first is the other to whom one is identified, and that the door is easily opened for me to put the accent, to insist on this difference between the other and the Other, between the small other and the big Other, which is a theme with which I may indeed say that you are already familiar.

It is not however from this angle that I intend to begin. I will put the accent rather on that which, in identification, poses itself immediately as identical, as founded on the notion of the same, and even of the same to the same, with all the difficulties that this gives rise to.

You surely know and can even rather quickly spot what difficulties have always been presented for thinking by the following: A = A. Why separate it from itself in order to replace it there so quickly? What we have here is not purely and simply a jeu d'esprit. You can be sure, for example, that, along the line of a movement of conceptual elaboration, which is called logical-positivism, where one or other person strives to aim at a certain goal which would be, for example, that of not posing a logical problem unless it has a meaning that can be located as such in some crucial experiment, it would be decided to reject any logical

problem whatsoever which could not in some way offer this final guarantee by saying that it is as such a meaningless problem.

It nevertheless remains that if Russell can give a value to these mathematical principles, to the equation, to the equivalence of A = A, someone else, Wittgenstein, opposes it because precisely of the impasses which seem to him to result from it in the name of the principles he starts with and that this refusal will even be set forth algebraically, such an equality requiring then a change of notation in order to find what can serve as an equivalent of the recognition of the identity A is A.

For our part, we are going, having posed the fact that it is not at all the path of logical-positivism which appears to us, in logical matters, to be in any way the one which is justified, to question ourselves, I mean at the level of an experience of words, the one in which we put our trust despite its equivocations, even its ambiguities, about what we can tackle under this term of identification.

You are not unaware of the fact that one observes, in all tongues, certain rather general, even universal historical turning points so that one can speak about modern syntaxes opposing to them in a global way syntaxes which are not archaic, but simply ancient, by which I mean the tongues of what one can call Antiquity. These sorts of general turning points, as I told you, are those of syntax. It is not the same with the lexicon where things are much more changeable; in a way each tongue contributes, as compared to the general history of language, vacillations which are proper to its own genius and which render one or other of them more propitious for highlighting the history of a meaning. Thus it is that we can pause at what is the term, or the substantival notion of the term, of identity (in identity, identification, there is the Latin term *idem*), and this will go to show you that some significant experience is supported in the common French term, which is the support of the same signifying function, that of the *même*. It seems, in effect, that it is the em, the suffix of i in *idem*, in which we find operating the function, I would say of the radical in the evolution of Indo-European at the level of a certain number of italic tongues; this em is here redoubled, an ancient consonant which is rediscovered then as the residue, the remainder, the return to a primitive thematic, but not without having collected in passing the intermediate phase of etymology, positively of the birth of this theme which is a commonplace Latin *met ipsum*, and even a *metipsissimum* from the expressive low Latin, pushes us then to recognise in what direction here experience suggests we should search for the meaning of all identity, at the heart of what is designated by a sort of redoubling of *moi-même*, this myself being, as you see, already this *metipsissimum*, a sort of *au jour* of *aujourd'hui* which we do not notice and which is indeed there in the *moi-même*.

It is then in a *metipsissimum* that there are afterwards engulfed the me, the thou, the he, the she, the them, the we, the you and even oneself *meme*, which happens then in French to be a *soi-même*. Thus we see there, in short in our tongue a sort of identification through the operation of a special significant tendency, that you will allow me to qualify as "mihilisme" in so far as to this act, this experience of the ego is referred.

Naturally, this would only have an incidental interest if we were not to rediscover in it another feature in which there is revealed this fact, this difference which is clear and easy to locate if we think that in Greek, the *auton* of the self is the one which serves to designate also the same, just as in German and in English the *selbst* or the self will come into play to

designate identity. Therefore I do not believe that it is for nothing that we pick up here and that we interrogate this kind of permanent metaphor in the French expression. We will allow it to be glimpsed that it is perhaps not unrelated to what happened at a quite different level: that it should have been in French, I mean in Descartes, that being was able to be thought of as inherent in the subject, in a mode in short which we will describe as captivating enough to ensure that ever since the formula was proposed to thought, one might say that a good share of the efforts of philosophy consists in trying to extricate oneself from it, and in our own day in a more and more open fashion, there being, as I might say, no thematic of philosophy which does not begin, with some rare exceptions, by trying to master this famous: "I think therefore I am".

I believe that for us it is not a bad point of entry for this "I think therefore I am" to mark the first step of our research. It is understood that this "I think therefore I am" is on the path taken by Descartes. I thought of indicating it to you in passing, but I will tell you right away: it is not a commentary on Descartes that I can try to tackle today in any way whatsoever, and I have no intention of doing it. The "I think therefore I am", naturally if you referred to Descartes' text is, both in the *Discourse* and in the *Meditations*, infinitely more fluid, more slippery, more vacillating than this kind of lapidary expression with which it is marked, both in your memory and in the passive or surely inadequate idea that you may have of the Cartesian process. (How would it not be inadequate because moreover there is not a single commentator who agrees with another one as regards its exact sinuosity.)

It is therefore arbitrary to some extent, and nevertheless there are reasons enough for it, the fact is that this formula which has a meaning for you and has a weight which certainly goes beyond the attention that you may have granted it up to now, I am going today to dwell on it in order to show a kind of introduction that we can rediscover in it. It is a question for us, at the point of the elaboration that we have arrived at, of trying to articulate in a more precise fashion something that we have already advanced more than once as a thesis: that nothing supports the traditional philosophical idea of a subject, except the existence of the signifier and its effects.

Such a thesis, which as you will see will be essential for every incarnation that we will subsequently be able to give to the effects of identification, requires that we should try to articulate in a more precise fashion how effectively we conceive of this dependence of the formation of the subject on the existence of the effects of the signifier as such. We will even go further by saying that if we give to the word thinking a technical meaning: the thinking of those whose trade is thinking, one can, by looking closely at it, and in a way retrospectively, perceive that nothing of what is called thinking ever did anything other than to position itself somewhere within this problem.

From this, we will state that we cannot say that, at the very least, we contemplate thinking only, in a certain fashion, whether we wish it or not, whether you knew it or not, every research into, every experience of the unconscious, which we have on this occasion about what this experience is, is something which is placed at this level of thinking where, in so far as we are no doubt going there together, but not all the same without me leading you there, the tangible relationship which is the most present, the most immediate, the most incarnated of this effort, is the question that you can pose yourselves in this effort about the "who am 1?".

What we have here is not an abstract philosophical game: for, on the subject of "who am I?" what I am trying to initiate you into, you doubtless know - at least some of you - that I mean it in every possible sense. Those who know it may be, naturally, those from whom I hear it, and I am not going to embarrass anyone by publishing here what I hear of it. Moreover, why would I do it since I am going to grant you that the question is a legitimate one? I can lead very far along this track without there being guaranteed for you for a single instant the truth of what I am telling you, even though in what I am telling you there is never a question of anything but of the truth and, in what I hear of it, why not say after all that this carries over into the dreams of those who address themselves to me. I remember one of the them - one can quote a dream -: "Why?" dreamt one of my analysands, "does he not tell the truth about the truth?"

I was the one in question in this dream. This dream ended up nevertheless with my subject in a fully awake state complaining to me about this discourse in which, according to him, the last word was always missing. It does not resolve the question to say: you are children who are always wanting to believe that I am telling you the real truth (*la vraie verité*): because this term, the real truth, has a meaning, and I would further say: it is on this meaning that the whole credit of psychoanalyis has been built. Psychoanalyis presented itself at first to the world as being that which brought the real truth. Naturally, one falls quickly into all sorts of metaphors which allow the thing to escape. This real truth is what is concealed. There will always be one, even in the most rigorous philosophical discourse: it is on this that there is founded our credit in the world and the stupefying thing is that this credit still persists even though, for a good while now, not the least effort has been made to give even the slightest start to something which would respond to it. Under these circumstances I feel myself quite honoured to be questioned on this theme: "where is the real truth of your discourse?" And I can even, after all, find that it is precisely indeed in so far as I am not taken for a philosopher, but for a psychoanalyst, that I am posed this question. Because one of the most remarkable things in philosophical literature, is the degree to which among philosophers, I mean in so far as they are philosophising, when all is said and done the same question is never posed to philosophers, unless it is to admit with a disconcerting facility that the greatest of them have never thought a word of what they have communicated to us in black and white and allowed themselves to think in connection with Descartes, for example, that he had only the most uncertain faith in God because this suits one or other of his commentators unless it is the opposite that suits him.

There is one thing, in any case, which has never seemed to shake for anyone the credit of philosophers, which is that it has been possible to speak, with respect to each of them, and even the greatest, about a double truth. That then I who, entering into psychoanalysis, put my feet in the platter by posing this question about truth, should suddenly feel the aforesaid platter getting warm under the soles of my feet, is something about which after all I can rejoice, since, if you reflect on it, I am all the same the one who turned on the gas. But, let us leave this now, let us enter into the identity-relationships of the subject, and let us enter into it through the Cartesian formula and you are going to see how I intend to tackle it today.

It is quite clear that there is absolutely no question of pretending to go beyond Descartes, but rather indeed to draw the maximum effect from the utilisation of the impasses whose foundation he connotes for us. If you follow me then in a critique which is not at all a textual commentary, you should clearly remember what I intend to take from it for the good

of my own discourse. "I think therefore I am" appears to me under this form to go against common usages to the point of becoming this worn down money without a figure that Mallarmé makes an allusion to somewhere. If we hold onto it for a moment, and try to polish up its sign function, if we try to reanimate its function for our purposes, I would like to remark the following: the fact is that this formula, which I repeat is only found in its concentrated form in Descartes at certain points of the *Discours de la méthode*, it is not at all in this way in this dense form that it is expressed. This "I think therefore I am", encounters this objection - and I believe that it has never been made - which is that "I think" is not a thought. Descartes, of course, proposes these formulae at the end of a long process of thinking, and it is quite certain that the thinking involved is the thinking of a thinker. I would go even further: this characteristic, it is a thinking of a thinker, is not required for us to talk about thought. A thought, in a word, in no way requires that one thinks about the thought.

For us in particular, thinking begins with the unconscious. One cannot but be astonished at the timidity which makes us have recourse to the formula of psychologists when we are trying to say something about thinking, the formula of saying that it is an action at the state of being outlined, at a reduced state, the small economic model of action. You will tell me that you can find that somewhere in Freud, but of course, one can find everything in Freud: in some paragraph or other he may have made use of this psychological definition of thinking. But after all, it is extremely difficult to eliminate the fact that it is in Freud that we also discover that thinking is a perfectly efficacious mode, and in a way one that is sufficient to itself, of masturbatory satisfaction? This to say that, as regards what is in question concerning the meaning of thinking, we have perhaps a slightly broader span than other workers. This does not exclude that in questioning the formula we are dealing with: "I think therefore I am", we could say that, as regards the use that is made of it, it cannot but pose us a problem: because we have to question this word "I think", however large may be the field that we have reserved for thinking, to see the characteristics of thinking being satisfied, to see being satisfied the characteristics of what we can call a thinking. It could be that this word proved itself quite insufficient to sustain in any way, anything whatsoever that we may at the end discover of this presence: "I am".

This is precisely what I am claiming. To clarify my account, I would point out the fact that "I think" taken simply in this form, is logically no more sustainable, no more supportable than the "I am lying", which has already created problems for a certain number of logicians, this "I am lying" which can only be sustained because of the no doubt empty but sustainable logical vacillation which this apparent meaning unfolds, quite sufficient moreover to find its place in formal logic. "I am lying", if I say it, it is true, therefore I am not lying, but nevertheless I am indeed lying because in saying "I am lying" I affirm the contrary. It is very easy to dismantle this so-called logical difficulty and to show that the so-called difficulty on which this judgment reposes depends on the following: the judgement that it involves cannot refer to its own enunciation, it is a collapsing: it is on the absence of distinction between two planes, because of the fact that the accent is put on the "I am lying" itself without making a distinction in it, that this pseudo-difficulty comes about; this in order to tell you, that without this distinction, we are not dealing with a real proposition.

These little paradoxes, of which the logicians make a great deal, in order moreover to reduce them immediately to their proper measure, may seem to be simple amusements: they have all the same their interest: they should be retained in order to pinpoint in short the true

position of all formal logic, up to and including this famous logical-positivism of which I spoke earlier. By that I mean that in my opinion not enough use precisely has been made of the famous aporia of Epimenides - which is only a more developed form of what I have just presented to you in connection with the "I am lying" - that "All Cretans are liars". Thus speaks Epimenides the Cretan, and you immediately see the little whirligig that is engendered. Not enough use has been made of it to demonstrate the vanity of what is called the famous universal affirmative proposition A. Because in effect, one notices it in this connection, it is indeed here, as we will see, the most interesting form for resolving the difficulty. Because, observe carefully what happens, if one poses the following which is possible, which has been posed in the criticism of the famous universal affirmative A of which some people have claimed, not without foundation, that its substance has never been other than that of a universal negative proposition "there is no Cretan who is not capable of lying", from then on there is no longer any problem. Epimenides can say it, for the reason that expressed in this way he does not say at all that there is someone, even a Cretan who is able to lie in a continuous stream, especially when one notices that tenaciously lying implies a sustained memory which ensures that it ends up by orienting the discourse in the sense of being the equivalent of an admission, so that, even if "all Cretans are liars" means that there is no Cretan who does not wish to lie in a continuous stream, the truth indeed will finish up by escaping him and, in the precise measure of the rigour of this will; the most plausible meaning of the avowal by the Cretan Epimenides that all Cretans are liars, this meaning can only be the following, which is that:

1) he glories in it

2) he wants by that to unsettle you by really warning you about his method; but this has no other intention, this has the same success as this other procedure which consists in announcing that one is oneself a plain blunt man, that one is absolutely frank. This is the type who suggests to you that you should endorse all his bluffing.

What I mean, is that every universal affirmative, in the formal sense of the category, has the same oblique goals, and it is very interesting to see these goals manifesting themselves in the classical examples. That it should be Aristotle who takes the trouble to reveal that Socrates is mortal should all the same inspire some interest in us, which means offer an opening for what we can call among ourselves an interpretation, in the sense that this term claims to go a little further than the function which is found precisely in the very title of one of the books of Aristotle's *Logic*. Because if obviously it is qua human animal that he whom Athens names Socrates is assured of death, it is all the same well and truly in so far as he is named Socrates that he escapes from it, and this obviously not alone because his renown still endures for as long as there lives the fabulous transference operation operated by Plato, but again more specifically because it is only as having succeeded in constituting himself, beginning from his social identity, as this atopical being which characterises him, that the person called Socrates, the one so named in Athens - and that is why he could not go into exile - was able to sustain himself in the desire of his own death even to the extent of making of his life an acting out of it. There is also to be added this final touch of settling up for Asclepius' famous cock of which there would be question if the recommendation had to be made of not doing any harm to the chestnut-seller at the corner.

There is therefore here, in Aristotle, something which we can interpret as some sort of attempt precisely to exorcise a transference which he believed to be an obstacle to the development of knowledge. It was moreover an error on his part since its failure is obvious. It would have been surely necessary to go a bit further than Plato in the denaturing of desire for things to have ended up otherwise. Modern science is born in a hyper-Platonism and not at all in the Aristotelian return to, in short, of the function of knowledge according to the status of the concept. It required, in fact, something which we can call the second death of the gods, namely their ghostly re-emergence at the time of the Renaissance, for the word to show us its real truth, the one which dissipates, not the illusions, but the obscurities of meaning from which modern science emerged. Therefore - as we have said - this sentence of: "I think" has the interest of showing us - it is the least that we can deduce from it - the voluntary dimension of judgement. We have no need to say that much about it: the two lines that we distinguish as enunciating and enunciation are sufficient to allow us to affirm that it is in the measure that these two lines are mixed up and confused that we find ourselves before a paradox which culminates in this impasse of the "I am lying" on which I made you pause for an instant; and the proof that this is really what is in question, is the fact that I can at the same time lie and say in the same voice that I am lying; if I distinguish these voices it is quite admissable. If I say: he says I am lying, that is easily admitted, there is no objection to it, anymore than if I said: he is lying, but I can even say I say I am lying.

There is all the same something here which ought to retain us, it is that if I say "I know that I am lying", this has again something quite convincing which ought to retain our attention as analysts since, precisely as analysts, we know that what is original, living and gripping in our intervention is the fact that we can say that we are there to speak, to displace ourselves in the exactly opposite but strictly correlative dimension which is to say: "but no, you do not know that you are telling the truth", which immediately goes much further. What is more: "you only tell it so well in the measure that you think you are lying and when you do not want to lie it is to protect yourself from that truth". It seems that one cannot reach this truth except through these glimmers, the truth is a girl in this - you recall our terms - that like any other girl it can be nothing but a stray, well, it is the same for the "I think". It appears indeed that if it has such an easy run among those who spell it out or who re-broadcast its message, namely the professors, that can only be by not dwelling too much on it. If we have for the "I think" the same exigencies as for the "I am lying", either indeed this means: "I think that I am thinking", which is then absolutely to speak of nothing other than the "I think" of opinion or imagination, the "I think" in the way you say it when you say "I think she loves me" which means that trouble is on the way.

Following Descartes, even in the text of the *Meditations*, one is surprised at the number of incidences in which this "I think" is nothing other than this properly imaginary dimension on which no so-called radical proof can be founded. Or indeed then this means: "I am a thinking being" - which is, of course, to upset in advance the whole process for what is aiming precisely at making emerge from the "I think" an unprejudiced status, not infatuated as it were by my own existence. If I begin by saying: "I am a being", that means: I am of course a being essential to being, there is no need to throw out anything else, one can preserve one's thinking for one's personal use.

This having been highlighted, we find ourselves encountering something which is important: we find ourselves encountering this level, this third term that we raised in

connection with the I am lying, namely that one could say: "I know that I am lying", and this is something which should retain you. In effect, this indeed is the support of everything that a certain phenomenology has developed concerning the subject, and here I putting forward a formula which is one on which we will be led to begin again on the next occasions, which is the following: what we are dealing with, and how this is given us since we are psychoanalysts, is to radically subvert, to render impossible this most radical prejudice, and therefore it is the prejudice which is the true support of this whole development of philosophy, which one can say is the limit beyond which our experience has gone, the limit beyond which there commences the possibility of the unconscious.

The fact is that there has never been, in the philosophical lineage which has developed from what are called the Cartesian investigations into the cogito, that there has never been but a single subject which I would pinpoint, to terminate, under this form: the subject who is supposed to know (*le sujet supposé savoir*). You should here provide this formula with the special resonance which, in a way, carries with it its irony, its question, and notice that by referring it to phenomenology and specifically to Hegelian phenomenology, the function of the subject who is supposed to know takes on its value by being appreciated in terms of the synchronic function which is deployed in this connection: its presence always there, from the beginning of phenomenological questioning, at a certain point, at a certain knot of the structure, will allow us to extricate ourselves from the diachronic unfolding which is suppose to lead us to absolute knowledge.

This absolute knowledge itself - as we will see in the light of this question - takes on a singularly refutable value, but today only in this: let us stop ourselves from posing the motion of distrust at attributing this supposed knowledge to anyone whatsoever, or of supposing (*subjicere*) any subject of the knowledge. Knowledge is intersubjective, which does not mean that it is the knowledge of all, nor that it is the knowledge of the Other - with a capital 0 - and the Other we have posed. It is essential to maintain it as such: the Other is not a subject, it is a locus to which one strives, says Arisle, to transfer the knowledge of the subject.

Naturally, of these efforts there remains what Hegel unfolded as the history of the subject; but this does absolutely not mean that the subject knows a whit more about what he is returning from. He is only stirred, as I might say, in function of an unfounded supposition, namely that the Other knows that there is an absolute knowledge, but the Other knows even less about it than he, for the good reason precisely that it is not a subject. The Other is the refuse dump of the representative representations of this supposition of knowledge, and this is what we call the unconscious in so far as the subject has lost himself in this supposition of knowledge. He drags it (*ça*) along without his being aware of it, it is the debris that comes back to him from what his reality undergoes in this thing, a more or less unrecognisable debris. He sees it coming back, he can say or not say: it is indeed that or indeed it is not at all that: all the same it is altogether it.

The function of the subject in Descartes, it is here that we will take up our discourse the next time, with the resonances of it that we find in analysis. We will try, the next time, to map out the references to the phenomenology of obsessional neurosis in a signifying scansion in which the subject finds himself immanent in every articulation.

Seminar 2: Wednesday 22 November 1961

You have been able to see, to your satisfaction, that I was able to introduce you the last time to the remarks we are going to make this year by means of a reflection which, in appearance, might have seemed to be a rather philosophical one because it dealt precisely with a philosophical reflection, that of Descartes, without it giving rise on your part, it seems to me, to too many negative reactions. Far from it, it seems that I have been trusted as regards the legitimacy of what might follow from it. I am delighted at this feeling of confidence which I would like to be able to translate as saying that you at least sensed where I wanted to lead you by that.

Nevertheless, so that you may not develop, from the fact that I am going to continue today on the same theme, the feeling that I am delaying, I would like to pose that such indeed is our goal, in this mode that we are tackling, to engage ourselves on this path. Let us say it right away, in a formula which all our future development will subsequently clarify: what I mean is that, for us analysts what we understand by identification - because this is what we encounter in identification, in what is concrete in our experience concerning identification - is a signifier-identification (*une identification de signifiant*).

Reread in the *Course in Linguistics* one of the numerous passages where de Saussure tries to get closer to, as he continuously tries to do by circumscribing it, the function of the signifier, and you will see (I am saying this in parenthesis) that all his efforts did not finally avoid leaving the door open to what I would call less differences of interpretation than veritable divergences in the possible exploitation of what he opened up with this distinction which is so essential of signifier and signified. Perhaps I could touch on it in passing for you so that you can at least note the existence, the difference there is between one school and another: that of Prague, to which Jakobson, to whom I so often refer, belongs and that of Copenhagen to which Hjemslev gave its orientation under a title which I have never yet evoked before you, that of *Glossematics*.

You will see: it is almost bound to happen that I will be led to come back to it because we cannot take a step without trying to deepen this function of the signifier, and consequently its relationship to the sign.

You ought all the same to know already - I think that even those among you who might have believed, even to the extent of reproaching me for it, that I was repeating Jakobson - that in fact, the position which I take up here is in advance of, ahead of that of Jakobson as regards the primacy which I give to the function of the signifier in every realisation, let us say, of the subject. The passage of de Saussure, to which I alluded earlier - I am only privileging it here because of its value as an image - is the one in which he tries to show what sort of identity that of the signifier is by taking the example of the 10.15 Express. The 10.15 Express, he says, is something perfectly defined in its identity: it is the 10.15 Express despite the fact that obviously the different 10.15 expresses, which succeed one another in an always identical way every day, have absolutely nothing either in their material, indeed even in the composition of the train, but indeed a different real structure and components.

Of course, what is true in such an affirmation supposes precisely, in the constitution of a being like the 10.15 Express, a fantastic interlinking of signifying organisation entering into the real through the mediation of spoken beings. It remains that this has in a way an exemplary value, in order to well define what I mean when I put forward first what I am going to try to articulate for you: these are the laws of identification qua signifier identification. Let us even highlight, as a reminder, that to remain with an oppostion which is a sufficient support for you, what is opposed to it, what it is distinguished from, what makes it necessary that we should elaborate its function, is that the identification that it thus distances itself from is that of the imaginary, the one whose extreme form I tried to show you a long time ago in the background of the mirror stage in what I would call the organic effect of the image of our fellows, the effect of assimilation that we grasp at one or other point of natural history, and the example which I was happy to show in vitro under the form of this little animal, which is called the migratory locust, and of whom you know that the evolution, the growth, the apparition of what is called the totality of the phaneres, of the way in which we can see it - depends in its form in some way on an encounter which happens at one or other moment of its development, of the stages, of the phases of the larval transformation or according to whether there have appeared to it or not a certain number of traits of the image of its fellow, it will evolve or not, in different cases, according to the form which is called solitary or the form which is called gregarious.

We do not know everything, we even know rather little about the stages of this organic circuit which bring with them such effects. What we do know is that it is experimentally certain. Let us classify it under the general rubric of the effects of the image of which we will find all sorts of forms at very different levels of the physical and even the inanimate world, as you know, if we define the image as any physical arrangement which has as a result the constitution between two systems of a bi-univocal concordance, at whatever level it may be.

It is a very conceivable formula, and one which can be applied just as much to the effect that I have just mentioned, for example, as to that of the formation of an image, even a virtual one, in nature through the mediation of a plane surface, whether it be that of a mirror or of the one that I have for a long time evoked, of the surface of the lake which reflects the mountain.

Does that mean that, as is the tendency and a tendency which is expanding under the influence of a kind, I would say, of intoxication, which recently took hold of scientific thinking from the fact of the irruption of what is only at bottom the discovery of the dimension of the signifying chain as such but which, in all sorts of ways, is going to be reduced by this thinking to more simple terms - and very precisely this is what is expressed in what are called information theories - does this mean that it is correct, without any other connotation, for us to resolve to characterize the liaison between the two systems, one of which is an image with respect to the other, by this idea of information, which is very general, implying certain paths taken by this something which carries the bi-univocal concordance?

This indeed is where there exists a very great ambiguity, I mean the one which can only end up by making us forget the proper levels of what information should involve if we want to give it a value other than the vague one which would only end up when all is said and

done by giving a sort of re-interpretation, a false consistency to what had up to then been subsumed, and this from Antiquity up to our own day, under the notion of the form, something which captures, envelopes, determines the elements, gives them a certain type of finality which is the one that in the whole ascension from the elementary towards the complex, from the inanimate towards the animate, is something which has no doubt its enigma and its own value, its order of reality, but which is distinct.

If this is what I intend to articulate here with all the force of the new things that are brought to us, in the new scientific perspective, by the highlighting, the separating out of what is contributed by the experience of language and of what the signifier relationship allows us to introduce as an original dimension that it is a matter of radically distinguishing from the real in the form of the symbolic dimension, it is not, as you see, in this way that I am tackling the problem of what is going to allow us to split up this ambiguity.

Already all the same I have said enough about it for you to know, for you to have sensed, apprehended, in these elements of signifying information, the originality that is contributed by the trait, let us say, of seriality, that they involve, the trait also of discreteness, I mean of cutting, something which Saussure in no way better articulated than by saying that what characterizes them with regard to one another, is to be what the others are not.

Diachrony and synchrony are the terms to which I pointed out you should refer, even though all of this is not fully articulated, the distinction having to be drawn with this *de facto* diachrony: too often it is simply what is aimed at in the articulation of the laws of the signifier. There is a rightful diachrony through which we rejoin the structure; in the same way for synchrony, one is not saying everything about it, far from it, by implying in it the virtual simultaneity of the code in each supposed subject, because that is to rediscover here something which I showed you the last time is for us an entity which is untenable. I mean that we cannot be satisfied in any way with having recourse to it, because it is only one of the forms of what I denounced at the end of my discourse the last time under the name of the subject who is supposed to know. Here is why this year I am beginning my introduction to the question of identification in this way, the fact is that it is a question of starting from the very difficulty, from the one which is proposed to us by the very fact of our experience, from what it begins with, from that which as a starting point we must articulate it, theorise it; the fact is that we cannot, even in terms of our aims, of a future promise, in any way refer ourselves, as Hegel did, to any possible termination, precisely because we have no right to pose it as possible for the subject in some sort of absolute knowledge or other.

We must learn at every moment to dispense with this subject who is supposed to know. We cannot at any moment have recourse to it, this is excluded: through an experience which we already have since the seminar on desire and on interpretation (the first trimester which was published) it is very precisely what seemed to me in any case could not be omitted from this publication, because this is the term of a whole phase of this teaching that we gave: the fact is that this subject of ours, this subject which I would like today to interrogate for you in connection with the Cartesian way forward, is the same one that in this first trimester I told you we could not approach any closer than is done in this exemplary dream which is entirely articulated around the sentence: "he did not know that he had died".

To be absolutely rigorous, it is indeed there, contrary to the opinion of Politzer that we can designate the subject of enunciating, but in the third person. This is not to say, of

course, that we could not approach it in the first person, but this would be precisely to know that in doing so, and in the most pathetically accessible experience, it slips away, because by translating it into this first person, it is precisely at this sentence that we will end up: by saying what we can say precisely, in the practical measure that we can confront ourselves with time's chariot, as John Donne [*sic*] says "hurrying near": it is at our heels, and in this pause in which we can foresee the ultimate moment, the one precisely at which already everything will leave us, to say to ourselves: "I did not know that I was living as a mortal being, (*je ne savais pas que je vivais d'être mortel*)".

It is quite clear that it is in the measure that we can say to ourselves that we have forgotten it at almost every instant that we will be placed in this uncertainty, for which there is no name, either tragic, or comic, of being able to say to ourselves, at the moment of leaving our lives that we have always been in a certain measure strangers to our own lives. This indeed is what is at the bottom of the most modern philosophical interrogation, that through which, even for those who as I might say are only very little fettered by it, even those very people who proclaim their feelings about this obscurity, all the same something is happening, whatever may be said about it, something different is happening than the popularity of a fashion in the formula of Heidegger recalling us to the existential foundation of being for death. Whatever its causes may be, whatever its correlations, or even its impact - one can say - what one can call the profanation of the great phantasies forged for desire by the style of religious thinking is not a contingent phenomenon, this mode of thinking is here what will leave us uncovered, disarmed, giving rise to this hollow, this void, to which this modern philosophical meditation strives to respond, and to which our experience has also something to contribute, because this is its place, at the instant that I am designating sufficiently for you the same place at which this subject constitutes himself as not being able to know precisely why there is a question for him here of the All.

This is the value of what Descartes brings us, and that is why it was good to start with him. That is why I am coming back to it today, because it is appropriate to go over it again in order to measure again what is involved in what you were able to hear me designating for you as an impasse, namely the impossibleness (*l'impossible*) of the "I think therefore I am".

It is precisely this impossibleness which gives its price and its value to this subject which Descartes proposes to us, even if it is only the subject around which the age-old cogitations turned before, turn since, it is clear that our objections in our last discourse take their weight, the very weight implied in the etymology of the French verb *penser* which means nothing other than *peser* (to weigh). What can be based on the "I think", if we know, we analysts, that this "what I am thinking about" which we may grasp, refers back to a "from which and from where I think" which necessarily slips away; and this is indeed why Descartes' formula questions us to know whether there is not at least this privileged point of the pure "I think" on which we might base ourselves, and this is why it was at the very least important that I should make you pause for an instant. This formula seems to imply that it would be necessary for the subject to be careful to think at every instant in order to assure himself of being. Is it sufficient for him to think that he is for him to touch this thinking being? For it is indeed on that that Descartes, in this incredible magic of the discourse of the two first meditations, suspends us. He manages to make stand up, I mean in his text, not that once the professor of philosophy has picked out its signifier and shown too easily the artifice which results from formulating that in thinking thus I can say that I am a thing which thinks -

it is too easy to refute - but which takes nothing from the force of the progress of the text, except for the fact that we must interrogate this thinking being, ask ourselves if it is not the participle of an *être-penser* (to be written in the infinitive and in a single word): *j'êtrepense*, as one says *j'outrecuide* (I overween), as our analytic habits make us say "I compensate (*je compense*), even I decompensate, I overcompensate". It is the same term and just as legitimate in its composition. From then on, the "*je pense-être*" which is proposed to us to introduce us to it, may appear, in this prospective, an artifice that is hard to tolerate because moreover to formulate things in this way, the being already determines the register in which I inaugurate my whole progress; this "*je pensêtre*" - as I told you the last time - cannot even in Descartes' text, be connoted except with traits of lure and appearance. "*Je pensêtre*" does not bring with it any greater consistency than that of dreams at which effectively Descartes at several moments of his progress has left us suspended. The "*je pensêtre*" can for its part also be conjugated like a verb, but it does not go very far: "*je pensêtre, tu pensêtres*, with I's if you wish at the end, that may still be allowable, even "*il pensêtre*". All that we can say is that if we make of it the tenses of the verb with a sort of infinitive of "*pensêtrer*", we can only connote it with what is written in dictionaries that all the other forms, except the third person singular of the present, are not used in French. If we want to be humourous we will add that they are supplemented ordinarily by the same form of the verb complementary to *pensêtr*er: the verb *s'empêtre*r (to become entangled). What does that mean? The fact is that the act of *êtrepense*r - because this is what is in question - only ends up for whoever is thinking with a "*peut-être je*, perhaps I", and moreover I am not the first nor the only one to have always remarked the contraband trait of the introduction of this "I" into the conclusion "I think therefore I am". It is quite clear that this "I" remains problematic and that until Descartes' next step - and we are going to see which one - there is no reason why it should be preserved from the total putting into question that Descartes carries out of the whole process by profiling at the foundations of this process the function of the deceitful God - you know that he goes further: the deceitful God is still a good God: in order to be there, to swamp me with illusions, he goes so far as to be an evil demon, a radical liar, the one who leads me astray in order to lead me astray: this is what has been called hyperbolic doubt. It can in no way be seen how this doubt has spared this "I" and leaves it therefore properly speaking in a fundamental vacillation.

There are two ways of articulating this vacillation: the classical articulation, the one which is already found - I rediscovered it with pleasure - in Brentano's psychology, the one which Brentano refers quite rightly to Saint Thomas Aquinas, namely that being cannot be grasped as thought except in an alternating fashion. It is in a succession of alternating moments that he thinks, that his memory appropriates its thinking reality without this thinking being at any moment able to join up with itself in its own certainty.

The other method, which is the one that brings us closer to the Cartesian approach, is for us to perceive precisely the properly speaking vanishing character of this "I", to make us see that the real meaning of the first Cartesian approach is to articulate itself as an "I think and I am not". Of course, one can delay at the approaches of this assumption and perceive that I spend all the being I may have in thinking. Let it be clear that in the final analysis it is by stopping thinking that I can glimpse that I quite simply am; these are only approaches. The "I think and I am not" introduces for us a whole series of remarks, precisely some of those which I spoke to you about the last time concerning French morphology, first of all that about this "I", so much more dependent in our tongue in its form on the first person than in

English or in German, for example or Latin where to the question "who did it?" you can reply: *I*, *Ich*, *ego*, but not *je* in French, but "*c'est moi*" or "*pas moi*". But *je* is something different, this *je* so easily elided in speech thanks to what are called the muted properties of its vocalisation, this *je* which can be a *ch'sais pas* (don't know), namely that the e disappears, but "*ch'sais pas*" is something different - you can really sense it because you are among those who have an original experience of French - to the "*je ne sais*" the *ne* of the "*je ne sais*" is brought to bear not on the *sais* (know) but on the *je*. That is also why that, contrary to what happens in these neighbouring tongues to which, without going any further, I allude for the moment, it is before the verb that there is brought to bear this decomposed part - let us call it that for the moment - of the negation which is the *ne* in French. Of course, the *ne* is neither proper to French, nor unique: the Latin *ne* presents itself for us with all the same problematic, which moreover I am here only introducing and to which we will return.

As you know, I already alluded to what Pichon in connection with negation in French contributed to it by way of indications. I do not think - and this is not new either, I indicated it to you at the same time - that Pichon's formulations about the forclosive or the discordant can resolve the question, even though they introduce it in an admirable way.

But the closeness, the natural linkage in the French sentence of the *je* with the first part of the negation, "*je ne sais*" is something which enters into the register of a whole series of concordant facts, around which I signal to you the interest of the particularly significant emergence in a certain linguistic usage of problems which refer to the subject as such in his relationships to the signifier.

What I want to get to then is the following: it is that if we find ourselves more easily than others put on our guard against this mirage of absolute knowing, one which can already be sufficiently refuted by translating it into the satiated repose of a sort of colossal seventh day on this Sunday of life where the human animal will finally be able to feed his face with grass, the great machine being finally regulated down to the last carat of this materialised nothingness which the conception of knowledge is. Naturally, the human being will finally have found his share and his reservation in his henceforth definitively cradled stupidity, and it is supposed that at the same time there will be torn away with this thinking excrescence its peduncle, namely worry.

But this, at the rate there are going things which are constructed, despite their charm, to evoke that there is there something rather close to what we are dealing with I must say much more fantasy and humour: these are the various playthings of what is commonly called science fiction, which show in connection with this theme that all sorts of variations are possible.

In this respect, naturally, Descartes does not appear in such a bad light. If one may perhaps deplore that he did not know much more about these perspectives on knowledge it is in this respect alone that if he had known more about them, his morality would not have fallen so short. But apart from this trait which we leave here provisionally to one side for the value of his initial approach very far from that, there results something quite different.

The professors, in connection with Cartesian doubt, spend a lot of time underlining that it is methodical. They attach enormous importance to it: methodical, that means doubt that is cold. Naturally, even in a certain context, cold meals were consumed; but, in truth, I do

not believe that this is the correct way to consider matters, not that I want in any way to encourage you to consider Descartes as a psychological case, however exciting it may appear to rediscover in his biography in the conditions of his kin, indeed of his descendants, some of these traits which, collected together, may make up a figure, by means of which we rediscover the general characteristics of psychasthenia, even to swallow up in this demonstration the celebrated passage about human coat hangers, these sorts of marionnettes around which it seems possible to restore a presence which, thanks to the whole detour of his thought, one sees precisely at this very moment in the process of being unfolded, I do not see any great interest in it. What is important for me is that after having tried to make you sense that the Cartesian thematic is logically unjustifiable, I can reaffirm that it is not for all that irrational, it is no more irrational than desire is irrational because it is not articulatable simply because it is an articulated fact, as I believe is the whole meaning of what I have been demonstrating to you for a year to show you how it is.

Descartes' doubt, it has been underlined, nor am I the first to do it, is of course a doubt which is very different to sceptical doubt. Compared to Descartes' doubt, sceptical doubt entirely unfolds at the level of the question of the real. Contrary to what is believed he is far from putting it in question, he brings back, he reassembles his world in it, and some sceptic or other whose whole discourse reduces us to no longer holding anything to be valid except sensation, does not make it disappear for all that, he tells us that it has more weight, that it is more real than anything that we can construct in connection with it. This sceptical doubt has its place, as you know, in Hegel's Phenomenolgy of Spirit: it is a moment of this research, of this quest in which knowing is engaged with respect to itself, this knowing which is only an not-yet-knowing, therefore, which because of this fact is an already-knowing. This is not at all what Descartes attacks. Descartes has no place in the *Phenomenolgy of Spirit*, he puts the subject himself in question and, even though he does not know it, it is the subject who is supposed to know that he is dealing with; it is not a matter for us of recognising ourselves in what the spirit is capable of, it is the subject himself as an inaugural act that is in question. This is, I believe, what gives its prestige, what gives its fascinating value, what constitutes the turning-point effect that this senseless approach of Descartes effectively had in history, it is that it has all the characteristics of what we call in our vocabulary an impulsive action (*un passage á l'acte*). The first phase of Cartesian meditation has the mark of an impulsive act. It situates itself at this necessarily inadequate, and at the same time necessarily primordial stage, the whole attempt having the most radical, the most original relationship to desire, and the proof is indeed what he is led to in the step on God which immediately follows. What immediately follows, the step of the deceitful God, what is it?

It is the appeal to something that, to contrast it with the previous proofs, which naturally are not to be cancelled out, of the existence of God, I would allow myself to oppose as the verissimum to the entissimum. For St. Anselm, God is the most being of beings. The God we are dealing with here, the one whom Descartes brings in at this point of his thematic, is the God who must guarantee the truth of everything which is articulated as such. He is the truest of the true, the guarantor that the truth exists and all the more the guarantor in that this truth as such could be different, Descartes tells us, it could be if this God wanted it, it could be properly speaking error. What does that mean if not that we find ourselves there in everything that one can call the battery of the signifier confronted with this single trait, with this *einziger Zug* which we already know, so that if really necessary it could be substituted

for all the elements of what constitutes the signifying chain, supports this chain, all by itself and simply by being always the same.

What we find at the limit of the Cartesian experience as such of the vanishing subject, is the necessity of this guarantor, of the most simple structural trait, of the unique trait, absolutely depersonalised, may I say, not alone of all subjective content, but even of all variation which goes beyond this single trait, of this trait which is one by being the single trait.

The foundation of the one which this trait constitutes is grasped nowhere other than in its unicity: as such one can say nothing else about it except that it is what all signifiers have in common by being above all constituted as a trait, by having this trait as a support.

Are we going to be able, to encounter ourselves around this in our concrete experience? I mean that what you already see highlighted, namely the substitution which already gave so much trouble to philosophical thought, namely this almost necessarily idealistic slope that every articulation about the subject has in the classical tradition, of substituting for it this function of idealisation in so far as on it there reposes this structural necessity, which is the same as the one which I already articulated before you under the form of the ego-ideal, in so far as it is starting from this not at all mythical but perfectly concrete point of inaugural identification of the subject to the radical signifier, not at all of the Plotinian one, but of the single trait as such that the whole perspective of the subject as not knowing can be unfolded in a rigourous fashion. It is this that after having made you pass today no doubt along paths, about which I wish to reassure you by telling you that it is certainly the most difficult peak of the difficulty to which I have to make you pass, which has been gone through today, it is this that I think I will be able before you, in a more satisfying fashion, more designed to help us rediscover our practical horizons, to begin to formulate.

Seminar 3: *Wednesday 29 November 1961*

I led you then the last time to this signifier that the subject must in some way be in order for it to be true that the subject is signifying (*signifiant*).

It is a matter very precisely of the 1 *qua* single trait; we could be very subtle about the fact that the primary teacher writes the 1 like that with a rising stroke which indicates in a way where it emerges from. Moreover it would not be a pure refinement because after all it is precisely what we also are going to do: try to see where it comes from. But that is not where we are at. So, as a way of accommodating your mental vision which is very confused by the effects of a certain cultural fashion, very precisely the one which leaves a gaping interval between primary teaching and the other which is called secondary, you should know that I am not in the process of directing you towards the one of Parmenides, nor the one of Plotinus, nor the one of any totality in our field of work of which such a great fuss has been made for some time. It is indeed a question of the 1 which I called earlier that of the primary teacher, the one of "pupil X, write out a hundred lines of l's for me", namely strokes: "pupil Y, you will get 1 in French". The teacher in his notebook, traces out the *einziger Zug*, the single trait of the sign which has always been sufficient for minimal notation. This is what is in question, the relationship of this with what we are dealing with in identification. If I establish a relationship, it should perhaps begin to appear to your mind as a dawning, that identification is not immediately collapsed. It is not altogether simply this 1, in any case not as we envisage it: as we envisage it, it can only be - you see already the path that I am leading you along - at a pinch the instrument of this identification and you are going to see, if we look closely at it, that this is not so simple.

Because if what thinks, the thinking being we are considering, remains at the level of the real in its opacity, it does not immediately follow that he emerges from some being where he is not identified, I mean: not even from some being where it is in short thrown on the paving of some extension which first of all required thinking in order to clear it away and to make it void. Not even that: this is not where we are at. At the level of the real, what we can glimpse, is to glimpse him among so many beings also, in one word, so many beings of a *êtr'êtant* where he is hanging on to some breast, in short, at the very most capable of outlining this sort of palpitation of being which makes laugh so much the enchanter at the bottom of the tomb where the cunning of the lady of the lake has imprisoned him.

Remember - it is a few years ago, the year of the seminar on President Schreber - the image that I evoked during the last seminar of the year, the poetic one of the monster Chapalu after he had satiated himself on the bodies of the sphinxs mutilated by their suicidal leap, this remark about which the rotting enchanter who is the monster Chapalu laughs for a long time "someone who eats is no longer alone". Of course, in order for being to come to birth, there is the perspective of the enchanter; it is indeed it which at bottom regulates everything. Of course, the veritable ambiguity of this coming to birth of the truth is what constitutes the horizon of our whole practice. But it is not at all possible for us to start from this perspective which the myth indicates well enough to be beyond the mortal limit: the enchanter rotting in his tomb. So is not this also a point of view which is always completely abstract when it is thought about, at an epoch when the ragged fingers of Daphne's tree, if they are profiled

against the field charred by the giant mushroom of our omnipotence which is always present today at the horizon of our imagination, are there to recall for us the beyond from which there can be posed the point of view of the truth. But it is not contingency which brings it about that I have to speak here before you about the conditions of the truthful. It is a much tinier incident the one which summoned me to take care of you in so far as you are a handful of psychoanalysts and I remind you that you certainly do not have the truth in great quantities, but that all the same this is your stock and trade, this is what you sell.

It is clear that in coming to you people are chasing the truth, as I said the time before last it is the truth about the true that is being sought. It is precisely for this reason that it is legitimate that, to deal with identification, I should have started from a text whose rather unique character in the history of philosophy I tried to make you sense in that the question of the truth being posed in it in a specially radical fashion, in so far as it puts in question, not at all the truth that is found in the real, but the status of the subject in so far as he is charged to bring this truth into the real, I found myself, at the end of my last discourse, the one I gave last time, ending up with what I indicated to you as recognizable in the figure already mapped out for us of the single trait of the *einziger Zug* in so far as it is on it that there is concentrated for us the function of indicating the place where there is suspended in the signifier, where there is hooked on, as regards the signifier, the question of its guarantee, of its function, of what use this is, this signifier in the advent of the truth. This is why I do not know how far I will be able to push my discourse today, but it will be entirely turning around the goal of ensuring in your minds this function of the single trait, this function of the one.

Of course, this is at the same time to put in question, this is at the same time to make advance - and I expect to encounter because of this fact in you a type of approbation, from the heart to the belly - our knowledge of what this signifier is.

I will begin, because that is what I feel like doing, by making you play truant. I made an allusion the other day to a kind remark, however ironical it may have been, concerning the choice of my subject for this year as if it were not at all absolutely necessary. This is an opportunity to focus on the fact, and this is surely connected in some way to the reproach, that it implied that identification is somehow or other a master key which would avoid having to refer oneself to an imaginary relationship which alone supports the experience of it, namely the relationship to the body.

All of this is consistent with the same reproach which may be addressed to me about the paths that I pursue, of always keeping you too much at the level of the articulations of language the one which precisely I strive to distinguish from all others. From that to the idea that I overlook what is called the preverbal, that I overlook the animal, that I believe that man in all this has some privilege or other, there is only a step which is all the more quickly taken because one does not have any sense of taking it. It was in thinking again about it, at the moment when more than ever this year I am going to make everything that I am going to explain to you turn around the structure of language, that I went back to an experience of mine which is close, immediate, near at hand, tangible and appealing and which perhaps will clarify the fact that I also have my notion of the preverbal which is articulated within the relationship of the subject to the word in a fashion which has not been apparent perhaps to all of you.

Close by me, in the midst of the *Mitseinden* environment in which I live as *Dasein*, I have a dog whom I named Justine as a homage to Sade, without you can be sure my exercising any particular cruelty towards her. My dog, in my sense and without ambiguity, speaks. My dog has without any doubt the gift of speech. This is important, because it does not mean that she possesses language totally. The measure in which she has speech without having the human relationship to language is a question from which it is worthwhile envisaging the problem of the preverbal. What does my dog do when she speaks, in my sense? Why do I say that she speaks? She does not speak all the time, she speaks contrary to many humans only at moments when she needs to speak. She has a need to speak at moments of emotional intensity and of relationships to the other, to myself, and some other people. This manifests itself by sorts of little guttural whimpers. It is not limited to that. It is particularly striking and pathetic since it manifests itself in a quasi-human way which is what brought it about that I had today the idea of speaking to you about it: she is a boxer bitch, and you see there appearing on this quasi-human facies, rather Neanderthal when all is said and done, a certain trembling of the lip especially the upper one under this muffle, a little high for a human, but after all there are types like that: I had a caretaker who looked terribly like her, and this trembling of the lip when the caretaker had to communicate with me at one or other high point of intentionality was not at all sensibly different. The effects of breathing on the animal's cheeks evoke no less sensibly a whole set of mechanisms of a properly phonatory type which, for example, would be completely suitable for the celebrated experiments of Abbé Rousselot, the founder of phonetics. You know that they are fundamental and consist essentially in filling the diverse cavities in which there are produced phonatory vibrations with little drums, horns, vibrating instruments which allow there to be controlled at what levels and at what moments there come to be superimposed the diverse elements which constitute the emission of a syllable, and more precisely everything that we call a phoneme, because these phonetic experiments are the natural antecedents of what was afterwards defined as phonematics.

My dog has speech, and it is uncontestable, indisputable, not only from the fact that the modulations which result from these properly articulated decomposable efforts inscribable *in loco*, but also from the correlations between the moments at which these phonemes are produced, namely when she is in a room where experience has taught the animal that the human group gathered around a table should be there for a good while, that some spin- off from what is happening at that moment, namely the festivities, should accrue to her: it must not be believed that all of this is centred on need. There is no doubt a certain relationship with this element of consumption, but the communing element of the fact that she is eating with the others is present in it.

What is it that distinguishes this usage, which is in short very sufficiently successful as regards the results that it is a question of obtaining for my dog, of speech, from human speech? I am not in the process of giving you words which claim to cover all the results of the question, I am only giving responses which are orientated towards what should be for all of us what it is a question of mapping out, namely: the relationship to identification. What distinguishes this speaking animal from what happens because of the fact that man speaks is the following, which is quite striking as regards my dog, a dog who could well be yours, a dog who has nothing extraordinary about her, is that, contrary to what happens in the case of man in so far as he speaks, she never takes me for another. This is very clear: this shapely boxer bitch who, if one is to believe those who observe her has feelings of love for me, gives

herself over to fits of passion towards me in which she takes on a quite terrifying aspect for the more timorous souls who exist for example at one or other level of my offspring: it appears that people are afraid that, at the moments that she begins to jump on top of me with her ears flattened and growling in a certain fashion, the fact that she takes my wrists between her teeth might appear to be a threat. This is nevertheless not at all the case. Very quickly, and this is why it is said that she loves me, a few words from me bring her to order, even if I have to repeat myself a few times, and stop the game. The fact is that she knows very well that it is I who am there, she never takes me for another, contrary to what in all your experience is there to testify about what happens in the measure that, in the analytic experience, you put yourself in the conditions of having a "*pur-parlant*" subject, if I may express myself in that way as one speaks about a pure pork paté. The purely-speaking subject as such, it is the very birth of our experience, is led, because he remains purely-speaking, to take you always for another. If there is some element of progress in the paths on which I am trying to lead you, it is to make you that by taking you for another, the subject puts you at the level of the Other with a big 0.

It is precisely this which is lacking to my dog: for her there is only the small other. As regards the big Other, it does not seem that her relationship to language gives her access to it. Why, since she speaks, does she not manage to constitute at all as we do these articulations in such a fashion that the locus of this Other where the signifying chain is situated is developed for her as for us?

Let us rid ourselves of the problem by saying that it is her sense of smell which prevents it for her, and here we are only rediscovering a classical indication, namely that the organic regression of the sense of smell in the case of man has a lot to do with his access to this Other dimension.

I am very sorry to appear, with this reference, to be re-establishing the cut between the canine species and the human species. I am saying this to signify to you that you would be completely wrong to believe that the privilege I give to language is some sort of pride which hides this sort of prejudice which would make of man precisely some sort of summit of being. I would temper this cut by telling you that if my dog lacks this sort of possibility which was not separated out as autonomous before the existence of analysis which is called the capacity for transference, that does not at all mean that this reduces for her partner, I mean for myself, the emotionally expressive field of that which in the current sense of the term I call precisely human relations. It is manifest, in the behaviour of my dog, concerning precisely the reflux onto her own being of the effects of comfort, of positions of prestige, that a large part, let us say it, if not the totality of the register of what constitutes the pleasure of my own relationship, for example, with a woman of the world, is there completely fulfilled. I mean that, when she occupies a privileged place like the one which consists in climbing onto what I call my cot, in other words the marriage bed, the sort of look with which she fixes me on such occasions, suspended between the glory of occupying a place whose privileged signification she situates perfectly well and the fear of the imminent gesture which is going to dislodge her from it, is not at all of a different dimension to what can be seen in the look of what I called, in a purely demagogical way, a woman of the world; because if she does not have, in what concerns what can be called the pleasure of conversation, a special privilege, she has just the same look, when having taken off in a dithyramb about some film or other which appears to her to be the latest thing in technical achievement, she feels suspended over

her a declaration from me that I was bored to the teeth with it, which from the point of view of *nihil mirari*, which is the law of good society, already gives rise in her to the suspicion that she would have done better to let me speak first.

This by tempering, or more exactly by re-establishing the sense of the question that I am posing concerning the relationships of speech to language, is designed to introduce what I am going to try to separate out for you concerning what specifies a language as such; the tongue as it is called, in so far as, if it is the privilege of man, it is not immediately completely clear why it should be limited to him. I assure you that it is worthwhile spelling this out. I spoke about a tongue: for example, it is not indifferent to note - at least for those who have not heard about Rousselot here for the first time, it is all the same very necessary that you should at least know how Rousselot's reflexes are constituted - I allow myself to see right away the importance of something, which was absent from my earlier explanation about my dog, that I am speaking about something pharyngeal, something glottal, and then about something which was trembling all around here and there and therefore which is recordable in terms of pressure, of tension. But I did not speak at all about the effects of the tongue: there is nothing here which produces a click for example, and still less which produces an occlusion; there is undulation, sighing, breathing, there are all sorts of things which are close to it, but there is no occlusion.

I do not want to go on about this too much today, this is going to push into the background things about the 1; too bad, one has to take the time to explain things. If I underline it in passing, you can be sure that it is not for the pleasure of it, it is because we will rediscover - and this we can only do retrospectively - its meaning. It is perhaps not an essential pillar of our explanation but this phase of occlusion will in any case take on its meaning at a particular moment; and the sketches of Rousselot, which perhaps you for your part will have consulted in the interval, since this will allow me to abbreviate my explanation, will perhaps be particularly expressive at that time.

In order to properly image for you for now what the solution is, I am going to give you an example of it; the phonetician encounters in the same step - and it is not without reason as you are going to see - the phoneme PA and the phoneme AP, which allows him to pose the principles of the opposition between the implosion AP and the explosion PA and to show us that the consonance of P is, as in the case of your daughter, to be mute. The meaning of P is between this implosion and this explosion. The P is heard precisely because it is not heard and this silent time in the middle, hold onto the formula, is something which, at the very phonetic level of the word, is what might be called a sort of announcement of a certain point to which, as you will see, I will lead you after some detours. I am taking advantage simply of the passage through my dog, to indicate it to you in passing and to make you notice at the same time that this absence of occlusives in the speech of my dog, is precisely what it has in common with a spoken activity which you know well and which is called singing.

If it often happens that you do not understand what the singer is saying, it is precisely because one cannot sing occlusives and I also hope that you will be happy to land on your feet again by thinking that everything is in order because in short my dog sings, which reinserts her into the concert of the animals. There are many others who sing and the question is not still demonstrated whether for all that they have a language.

People have always spoken about this, the Shaman whose representation I have on a very beautiful little grey bird fabricated by the Kwakiutl of British Columbia carries on his back a sort of human image who communicates in a tongue which links him with a frog: the frog is supposed to be communicating to him the language of animals. It is not worth the trouble to do all this ethnography because, as you know St. Francis spoke to the animals: he is not a mythical personage, he lived at a epoch incredibly illuminated already in his time by the full light of history. There are people who have made very pretty little paintings in order to show him to us on a rock, and one sees out at the very edge of the horizon the mouths of fish emerging from the sea in order to hear him which is the all the same, you have to admit, quite something.

One might in this connection ask oneself in what tongue he spoke to them. This always has a meaning at the level of modern linguistics, and at the level of psychoanalytic experience. We have learned to define perfectly the function in certain beginnings of the tongue of what is called baby-talk, this thing which gets on the nerves of some people, me for example, this type of "gilly, gilly, what a lovely little baby". This has a role which goes well beyond these manifestations which are noted for their inane dimension, the inaneness consisting on this occasion in the feeling of superiority of the adult. There is nevertheless no essential distinction between what is called baby-talk and, for example, a sort of tongue like that which is called pidgin namely these sorts of tongues constituted when two types of language articulation enter into relationship, the users of one considering it to be both necessary and their right to use certain signifying elements which belong to the other region, and this with the aim of using them in order to make penetrate into the other region a certain number of communications which are proper to their own region, with this sort of prejudice which is in question in this operation of getting across to them, of transmitting to them categories of a higher order. These sorts of integration between one language region and another are one of the fields of study of linguistics, deserving then as such to be taken up as a quite objective value thanks to the fact that there exist precisely, with respect to language, two different worlds in that of the child and in that of the adult. We can all the less avoid taking it into account, we can all the less neglect it in that it is in this reference that we find the origin of certain rather paradoxical traits of the constitution of signifying batteries, I mean the very particular prevalence of certain phonemes in the designation of certain relationships which are called kinship, the not universal but overwhelming majority of phonemes PA and MA to designate, to furnish at least one of the modes of designation of the father and of the mother; this irruption of something which is only justified because of developmental elements in the acquisition of a language, namely pure speech events, this is only explicable precisely starting from the perspective of a relationship between two distinct spheres of language. And you see there being outlined here something which is again the outline of a frontier. I do not think that I am innovating here because you know what Ferenczi tried to begin to highlight under the title of "The confusion of tongues ….." very specifically at this level of the verbal relationship between the child and the adult.

I know that this long detour will not allow me to tackle today the function of the One, it will perhaps allow me to add to it, because when all is said and done all that is in question here is to clear the way, namely that you should not believe that where I am leading you is a field which is exterior with regard to your experience, it is on the contrary the most internal field because this experience, the one for example which I evoked earlier specifically in the concrete distinction here between the other and the Other, all we can do is go through this

experience. Identification, namely that which is able very precisely and also as intensely as possible, to imagine there being put under some sort of being of your relationships the substance of another, is something which can be illustrated to infinity in an "ethnographical" text because precisely it is on this that there has been constructed, with Lévy-Brühl, a whole series of theoretical conceptions which are expressed under the term: pre-logical mentality, indeed later on mystical participation, when he was led to focus more especially on the function of identification the interest of what seemed to him to be the path to the objectification of the field he had taken as his own. I think that here you know within what brackets, under what express reserve there can only be accepted relationships put under such a rubric. It is from something infinitely more common which has nothing to do with anything whatsoever which puts in question logic, or rationality, that one must start from in order to situate these facts (whether they are archaic or not) of identification as such. It is a fact which has always been known and can still be established for us when we address ourselves to subjects taken in certain contexts which remain to be defined, that these sorts of event - I am going to call them by terms which upset the barriers, which take things in a crude way in order to make it clearly understood that I do not intend here to stop at any dividing walls which are destined to obscure the primacy of certain phenomena - these phenomena of false recognition, let us say on the one hand of bi-location let us say of the other, flourish at the level of such experience, in the reports, in testimonies one hears. It is a matter of knowing why it is to the human being that these things happen; contrary to my dog, the human being recognizes, in the emergence of such and such an animal the personage he has just lost, whether it is a question of his family or of an eminent personage of his tribe, the chief or someone else, the president of one or other society of young people or somebody else; he is this bison, that is him, or in a particular Celtic legend which by pure chance comes to me here because I would have to speak for all eternity to tell you all things that arise in my memory in connection with this central experience... I take a Celtic legend which is not at all a legend, which is a piece of folklore taken from the testimony of someone who was a servant on a farm. On the death of the master of the place, of the lord, he sees appearing a little mouse, he follows it, the little mouse goes all around the field, she comes back, she goes into the shed where the agricultural implements are, she walks on these implements: on the plough, the hoe, the spade and the others, then she disappears. After that the servant, who already knew what was involved as regards the mouse, has a confirmation for it in the apparition of the ghost of his master who says to him, in effect: I was in that little mouse, I made a tour of the property to say goodbye to it, I had to see the agricultural implements because these are the essential objects to which one remains attached longer than to any other, and it is only after having made this tour that I could free myself from them etc... with an infinite number of considerations concerning in this regard a conception of the relationships of the dead person and certain instruments, linked to certain conditions of work, properly rural conditions, or more especially agrarian, agricultural conditions. I am taking this example to centre the gaze on an identification of being concerning two individual apparitions as obviously and as strongly to be distinguished from the one which would concern the being who, with respect to the narrating subject, had occupied the eminent position of master with this contingent little animal going one knows not where, going nowhere. There is something which, all by itself, deserves to be taken not simply to be explained as a consequence, but as a possibility which deserves as such to be highlighted.

Does that mean that such a reference can engender anything other than the most complete opacity.

It would be a poor recognition of the type of elaboration, the order of effort that I am demanding from you in my teaching, to think that I could in any way content myself, even if one were to obliterate its limits, with a reference to folklore in order to consider as natural the phenomenon of identification: because once we have recognized this as the basis of the experience, we know absolutely no more about it, precisely in the measure that this can only happen to those I am speaking to in the most exceptional cases. It is always necessary to make a little reservation: you can be sure that this may perfectly well happen in one or other country area. That this cannot happen to you, you to whom I am speaking, is what settles the question: from the moment that this can no longer happen to you, you can understand nothing about it and, not being able to understand anything about it, do not believe that it is enough for you to connote the event under some chapter heading, which you may call with M Lévy-Brühl mystical participation, or whether with the same man you make it enter under the great whole of the pre-logical mentality, for you to have said anything that is of the slightest interest.

It remains that what you can draw from it, make more familiar with the help of more attenuated phenomena, will not be for all that any more valuable because you will have started from an opaque foundation. You discover again here a reference of Apollinaire: "*Mange tes pied à la Sainte Ménehould*", says the hero of the heroine of *Mamelles de Tirésias* somewhere to her husband. It is a matter for us of grasping the relationship between this possibility which is called identification, in the sense that from it there arises something that exists only in language, and thanks to language, a truth to which this is an identification which is not at all distinguished for the farm labourer who comes to tell you the experience that I spoke to you about earlier; and for us who found the truth on A is A: this is the same thing because what will be the starting point of my discourse the next time, will be this: why is it that A is A is an absurdity?

The strict analysis of the function of the signifier, in so far as it is through it that I intend to introduce for you the question of signification, starts with this: it is that if A is A, has constituted, as I might say, the condition of a whole era of thought of which the Cartesian exploration with which I began is the term - what one could call the theological era - it is no less true that linguistic analysis is correlative to the advent of another era, marked by precise technical correlations among which is the mathematical advent, I mean the extended use of the signifier in mathematics. We can glimpse that if the A is A does not work, I would take further the problem of identification. I indicate to you here and now that I will make my demonstration turn around the function of the one; and in order not to leave you completely in suspense and in order that perhaps each one of you would envisage beginning to formulate something on the path of what I will say to you about it, I would ask you to refer to the chapter in de Saussure's *Course in Linguistics* which ends on page 175. This chapter ends with a paragraph which begins on page 174 and I will read the following paragraph of it:

> Applied to units, the principle of differentiation can be stated in this way: the characteristics of the unit blend with the unit itself. In a tongue, as in any semiological system, [this would deserve a discussion] whatever distinguishes one sign from the others constitutes it. Difference makes character just as it makes value and the unit.

In other words, unlike the sign - and you will see it confirmed provided you read this chapter - what distinguishes the signifier, is simply being what the others are not; that which,

in the signifier, implies this function of the unit, is precisely to be simply difference. It is *qua* pure difference that the unit, in its signifying function, structures itself, constitutes itself. This is not a single trait. In a way, it constitutes a unilateral abstraction concerning the synchronic relationship for example of the signifier. As you will see the next time, nothing is properly speaking thinkable, nothing in the function is properly speaking thinkable, unless it starts from the following which I formulate as: the one as such is the Other. It is starting from here, from this fundamental structure of the one as difference that we can see appearing this origin from which one can see the signifier constituting itself, as I might say: it is in the Other (*l'Autre*) that the A of "A is A", the big 0, as one says the great word, is released. From the processes of this language of the signifier, from here alone can there begin an exploration which is fundamental and radical of how identification is constituted. Identification has nothing to do with unification. It is only by distinguishing it from it that one can give it, not only its essential accent, but its functions and its varieties.

Seminar 4: *Wednesday 6 December 1961*

Let us take up again our idea, namely what I announced to you the last time that I intended to make pivot around the notion of the 1 our problem, that of identification, it being already announced that identification is not just simply to make 1, I think that this will not be difficult to admit.

We are starting, as is normal concerning identification, from the most common mode of access of subjective experience: that expressed by what appears to be the essentially communicable experience, in the formula which, at first sight, does not appear to give rise to objections that A is A. I said: at first sight because it is clear that, whatever may be the degree of belief involved in this formula, I am not the first to raise objections to it; you have only to open the smallest treatise on logic in order to encounter what difficulties the *distinguo* of this formula, in appearance the most simple, gives rise to of itself. You could even see that the greater part of the difficulties which are to be resolved in many domains - but it is particularly striking that it should be in logic more than elsewhere - come out of all the possible confusions which may arise from this formula which lends itself in an eminent way to confusion. If you have, for example, some difficulties, even some fatigue, in reading a text as exciting as Plato's *Parmenides*, it is in as much as on this point of "A is A" let us say that you lack a little reflection, and in as much precisely that if I said above that the "A is A" is a belief, you must indeed understand it in the way I told you: it is a belief which has certainly not always reigned over our species, in as much as after all, the A indeed began somewhere - I am speaking about A, the letter A - and that it must not have been so easy to gain access to this kernel of apparent certainty that there is in "A is A", when man did not have the A at his disposition.

I will tell you a little later the path onto which this reflection may lead us; it would be well all the same to be aware of the new thing that arrives with the A; for the moment let us content ourselves with something that our language here allows us to articulate well: it is that "A is A" appears to mean something: it makes a "signified" (*cela fait "signifé"*).

I pose, very sure that I will not encounter on this point any opposition from anybody, and on this theme in a position of competence which I put to the test through the testimonies of what can be read about the matter, as well as by challenging one or other mathematician who is sufficiently familiar with his science to know where we are at at the present time for example, and then many others in all sorts of domains, that I will encounter no opposition in putting forward under certain conditions of explanation which are precisely those to which I am going to submit myself before you, that "A is A" signifies nothing. It is precisely this nothing (*rien*) that is going to be in question, because this nothing has a positive value because it says what that signifies. We have in our experience, indeed in our analytic folklore, something, the image never sufficiently explored, exploited, which is the game of the little child so shrewdly picked out by Freud, perceived in such a perspicacious fashion in the *Fort-Da*. Let us take it up on our own account since, from an object taken up and rejected - the child in question is his grandson - Freud was able to glimpse the inaugural gesture in the game. Let us remake this gesture, let us take this little object: a ping-pong ball, I take it, I hide it, I show it to him again; the ping-pong ball is the ping-pong ball, but it is not a

signifier, it is an object, it is an approach to say: this little o is a little o; there is between these two moments, which I indisputably identify in a legitimate fashion, the disappearance of the ball; without that there is no means for me to show it, there is nothing formed on the plane of the image. Therefore, the ball is always there and I can fall into a cataleptic state looking at it.

What relationship is there between the "is" which unites the two apparitions of the ball and this intervening disappearance?

On the imaginary plane, you sense that at least the question is posed of the relationship of this "is" with what seems indeed to cause it, namely the disappearance, and there you are close to one of the secrets of the identification which is the one to which I tried to get you to refer in the folklore of identification: this spontaneous assumption by the subject of the identity of two appearances which are nevertheless quite different. Remember the story of the dead farm owner whom his servant rediscovers in the body of the mouse. The relationship of this "it is him" with the "it is him again", this is what for us gives its model and its register to the most simple experience of identification. Him, then him again, there is here the being-perspective of the question; in "him again", it is the same being who appears. As regards the other, in short, it is all right like that, it is satisfactory; for my dog whom I took the other day as a term of reference, as I told you, it is all right; this reference to being, is sufficiently, its seems, supported by her sense of smell; in the imaginary field the support of being is easily conceivable: it is a matter of knowing if it is effectively this simple relationship that we are dealing with in our experience of identification. When we speak about our experience of being, it is not at all for nothing that a whole effort of a thought which is our own contemporary one, is going to formulate something whose centrepiece I never shift without a certain smile, this *Dasein*, this fundamental mode of our experience in which there must be designated the centrepiece giving every access to this term of being, as a primary reference.

It is here indeed that something else forces us to question ourselves about the fact that the punctuation in which this presence to the world manifests itself is not simply imaginary, namely that already it is not at all to the other that we refer ourselves here, but to this most intimate part of ourselves which we try to make the anchoring point, the root, the foundation of what we are as subjects. For, if we can articulate, as we have done, on the imaginary plane, that my dog recognises me as the same, we have not on the contrary any indication about the fashion in which she identifies herself; in whatever way we may re-engage her within herself, we know nothing at all, we have no proof, no testimony about the mode under which she approaches this identification. It is indeed here that there appears the function, the value of the signifier same (*même*) as such; and it is in the very measure that we are dealing with the subject that we have to question ourselves about the relationship of this identification of the subject with what is a different dimension to everything that is the order of appearance and disappearance; namely the status of the signifier. That our experience shows us that the different modes, the different angles under which we are led to identify ourselves as subjects, at least for some of us, supposes the signifier to articulate it, even most often under an ambiguous, improper, difficult-to-handle form subject to all sorts of reservations and of distinctions which the "A is A" is, this is what I want to draw your attention to and first of all without dallying any longer show you that if we have the good fortune to take a further step in this direction, it is by trying to articulate this status of the signifier as such. I am indicating it right away: the signifier is not at all the sign. It is with giving to this distinction its precise

formula that we are going to busy ourselves; I mean that it is to show where this difference lies that we can see arising from the fact already given by our experience that it is from the effect of the signifier that the subject as such emerges. Metonymical effect, metaphorical effect, we do not yet know and perhaps there is something already articulatable before these effects which allows us to see dawning, being formed in a relationship, in a link, the dependence of the subject as such with respect to the signifier. This is what we are going to see by putting it to the test. To anticipate what I am trying here to make you grasp, to anticipate it in a short image to which it is only a matter of giving again a sort of value as a support, as a apologue, you should measure the difference between the following which is going at first perhaps to appear to you as a play on words - but precisely it is one - there is the footprint (*la trace d'un pas*). Already I led you along this trail, strongly tainted with myth, precisely correlative to the time where there begins to be articulated in thinking the function of the subject as such: Robinson Crusoe in front of the footprint which shows him that on the island he is not alone. The distance which separates this *pas* from what the *pas* as instrument of negation has become phonetically, these are two extremes of the chain that here I ask you to hold onto before showing you effectively what constitutes it and that it is between the two extremities of the chain that the subject can emerge and nowhere else.

By grasping it, we will manage to relativise something in such a way that you can consider this formula "A is A" itself as a sort of stigma, I mean in its character of belief as the affirmation of what I would call an epoch: epoch, moment, parenthesis, historical term after all whose field we can glimpse - as you will see - as limited.

What I called the other day an indication, which will remain still only an indication of the identity of this false coherence of the "A is A" with what I called a theological era, will allow me, I believe, to take a step in what is at stake concerning the problem of identification, in so far as analysis requires that it should be posed, with respect to a certain accession to the identical, as the transcendent A [*l'Autre*?].

This fecundity, this sort of determination which is suspended from this signified of "A is A" could not repose on its truth, because this affirmation is not true. What it is a question of reaching in what I am striving to formulate before you, is that this fecundity reposes precisely on the objective fact - I employ objective there in the sense that it has for example in Descartes' text: "when one goes a little further, one sees the distinction arising as regards the ideas between their actual reality and their objective reality", and naturally professors produce very learned volumes for us such as a Scholastico-Cartesian index in order to tell us something that seems here for the rest of us, since God knows we are very smart, a little confused, that this is a legacy of Scholasticism by means of which it is believed that everything is explained. I mean that one has spared oneself what is really involved, namely: why Descartes the anti-Scholastic, was led for his part to make use again of these old props. It seems that it does not come so easily to the mind of even the better historians that the only interesting thing is what made it necessary for him to wheel them out again. It is quite clear that it is not in order to remake anew the argument of St Anselm that he drags all of this out again into the forefront of the stage. The objective fact that "A" cannot be "A", this is what I would first of all like to highlight for you; precisely in order to make you understand that it is with something which has a relationship with this objective fact that we are dealing and this up to the false signified- effect which is only a shadow here and, as a consequence, which leaves us attached to this spontaneity that there is in the "A is A".

That the signifier has a fecundity because it is never in any case identical to itself, understand clearly here what I mean: it is quite clear that I am not in the process, even though it would be worth the trouble in passing to distinguish it from it, of pointing out to you that there is no tautology in the fact of saying that "war is war". Everyone knows that: when one says "war is war", one is saying something, one does not know exactly what moreover, but one can seek it, one can find it and one finds it very easily within hand's reach; that means: that which begins at a certain moment: we are in a state of war. This involves conditions of things which are a little bit different, this is what Péguy called that "the little pegs no longer fitted into the little holes". It is a Péguy-type definition, namely that it is not at all certain: one could even sustain the contrary, namely that it is precisely in order to put the little pegs back in their real little holes that war begins, or on the contrary it is to make new little holes for the old little pegs, and so on. Moreover this has strictly no interest for us, except that this pursuit whatever it may be is accomplished with a remarkable efficacity by means of the most profound imbecility, something which ought equally make us reflect on the function of the subject with respect to the effects of the signifier. But let us take something simple, and let us finish with it quickly. If I say "my grandfather is my grandfather" you should all the same fully grasp here that there is no tautology: that my grandfather, the first term is an index usage of the term "my grandfather", which is not tangibly different from his proper name, for example Emile Lacan, nor of the "C'" either of the "*C'est*" when I point him out when he enters a room: "*C'est mon grand'père*". This does not mean that his proper name is the same thing as this "C'", of "this is my grandfather". One is stupefied that a logician like Russell was able to say that the proper name belongs to the same category, to the same signifying class as the 'this', 'that' or 'it', under the pretext that they are susceptible to the same functional usage in certain cases. This is a parenthesis, but like all my parentheses, a parenthesis designed to be rediscovered further on in connection with the status of the proper name of which we will not speak today.

In any case, what is in question in "my grandfather is my grandfather" means that the execrable *petit bourgeois* that this gentleman was, this horrible personage thanks to whom I acceded at an early age to this function of cursing God, this personage is exactly the same as the one who is posted on the civil register as being demonstrated by the bonds of marriage to be the father of my father, in as much as it is precisely the birth of the latter that is at stake in the act in question. You see therefore the degree to which "my grandfather is my grandfather" is not at all a tautology. This applies to all tautologies and this does not at all give their univocal formula, because here it is a question of a relationship of the real to the symbolic; in other cases there will be a relationship of the imaginary to the symbolic, and you would have to go through the whole sequence of permutations in order to see which are valid. I cannot engage myself along this path because if I talk to you about this which is in a way a method of excluding false tautologies which are simply the permanent current usage of the language, it is in order to tell you that this is not what I mean. If I pose that there is no tautology possible, it is not in so far as the first A and the second A mean different things that I say that there is no tautology, it is in the very status of A that there is inscribed that A cannot be A, and it was on this that I ended my discourse the last time by designating for you in Saussure the point where it is said that A as signifier cannot in any way be defined except by not being what the other signifiers are.

From this fact, that it cannot be defined except precisely by not being all the other signifiers, on this there depends this dimension that it is equally true that it cannot be itself. It

is not enough to put it forward in this way in this opaque fashion precisely because it surprises, it upsets, this belief suspended on the fact that this is the real support of identity: you must be got to sense it.

What then is a signifier?

If everybody, and not alone the logicians speak about A when it is a question of "A is A", it is not after all by chance. It is because in order to support what one desires, a letter is necessary. You will grant me this, I think, but moreover I do not hold this leap to be decisive except for the fact that my discourse cross-checks with it, demonstrates it in a sufficiently superabundant fashion for you to be convinced of it; and you will be all the more convinced because I am going to try to show you in the letter precisely this essence of the signifier through which it is distinguished from the sign.

I did something for you last Saturday in my house in the country where I have hanging on the wall what is called a Chinese calligraph. If it were not Chinese, I would not have hung it on my wall for the reason that it is only in China that the calligraph has taken on a value as an *object d'art*: it is the same thing as having a painting, it has the same price. There are the same differences and perhaps even more between one writing and another in our culture as in Chinese culture, but we do not attach the same price to it. On the other hand, I will have occasion to show you what can mask from us the value of the letter which, because of the particular status of the Chinese character, is particularly well highlighted in this character. What I am going to show you only takes on its full and most exact position from a certain reflection about what the Chinese character is: I already all the same made allusion enough on occasions to the Chinese character and to its status for you to know that to call it ideographic is not at all sufficient. I will show it to you perhaps in greater detail, this moreover is what it has in common with everything that is called ideographic, there is properly speaking nothing which merits this term in the sense in which one imagines it habitually, I would say almost specifically in the sense that de Saussure's little schema, with *arbor* and the tree drawn underneath, still sustains it through a kind of imprudence which is what misunderstandings and confusions attach themselves to.

What I want to show you here, I made two examples of. I was brought at the same time a new little instrument that certain painters make a lot of, which is a sort of thick brush where the ink comes from inside which allows the traits to be traced out with a worthwhile thickness and consistency. The result is that I copied much more easily than I would normally have done the form that the characters on my calligraph have: in the left hand column here is the calligraphy of this sentence which means "the shadow of my hat dances and trembles on the flowers of Hai Tang"; on the other side, you see the same sentence written in the usual characters, those which are the most legitimate, those that the stumbling student makes when he makes his characters correctly: these two series are perfectly identifiable and at the same time they do not resemble one another at all. Notice that it is in the clearest fashion in so far as they do not resemble one another at all that there are quite obviously from top to bottom on the right and on the left, the same seven characters, even for someone who has no idea not alone about Chinese characters, but no idea up to now that there were things which were called Chinese characters. If someone discovers that for the first time drawn somewhere in a desert, he will see that on the right and on the left it is the same characters that are in question and the same series of characters on the right and on the left.

This to introduce you to what constitutes the essence of the signifier and which it is not for nothing that I will illustrate best in its simplest form which is what we have been designating for some time as the *einziger Zug*. The *einziger Zug* which is what gives to this function its value, its act and its mainspring, this is what makes it necessary, in order to dissipate the confusion that may remain here, for me to introduce in order to express it in the best and closest possible way this term which is not at all a neologism, which is used in what is called set theory: the word unary (*unaire*) instead of the word single (*unique*). At the very least it is useful for me to make use of it today in order to make you properly sense this core that is in question in the distinction of the status of the signifier. This unary trait, therefore, whether it is vertical like here - we call that drawing strokes - or whether it is, as the Chinese do it, horizontal, it might seem that its exemplary function is linked to the extreme reduction, precisely with regard to it, of all the opportunités for qualitative difference. I mean that from the moment when I must simply make a trait, there are not, it seems, many varieties nor many variations. This is what gives it its privileged value for us, disabuse yourselves: just as it was not a matter earlier in order to discover what was in question in the formula: "there is no tautology" of pursuing tautology there precisely where it did not exist, so now it is not a matter here of discerning what I called the perfectly graspable character of the status of the signifier whatever it may be, A or another one, in the fact that something in its structure might eliminate these differences. I call them qualitative because it is this term that the logicians use when it is a question of defining identity by the elimination of qualitative differences by reducing them as one might say to a simplified schema: this is supposed to be the mainspring of this recognition characteristic of our apprehension of what is the support of the signifier, the letter.

That is not it at all, this is not what is in question. Because if I make a line of strokes, it is quite clear that, however well I may apply myself, there will not be a single one like any other and I would say more: they are all the more convincing as a line of strokes in that precisely I have not applied myself so much to make them rigorously alike.

Since I have been trying to formulate for you what I am in the process of formulating at the moment, I have questioned myself with the means at my disposal, namely those which are given to everyone, about something which after all is not immediately obvious: at what moment does one see appearing a line of strokes? I was in a really extraordinary place whose emptiness perhaps after all through my remarks I am going to draw people to animate, I mean that some of you are going to rush over there, I mean the museum of Saint-Germain. It is fascinating, it is exciting and it will be all the more so if you try all the same to find someone who was already there before you because there is no catalogue, no plan and it is completely impossible to know where and who and what, and to find out where one is in this series of rooms. There is a room which is called La Salle Piette, from the name of the justice of the peace who was a genius and who made the most fantastic discoveries about pre-history, I mean from some tiny objects, in general of a very small size, which are the most fascinating things that you could see. And to hold in one's hand the little head of a woman which is certainly about 30,000 years old has all the same its value, besides the fact that this head is full of questions. But you can see in a glass case - it is very easy to see, because thanks to the testamentary dispositions of this remarkable man they are absolutely obliged to leave everything in the greatest possible disorder with completely out-of-date showcards on the objects, they have succeeded all the same in putting on a piece of plastic something which allows to be distinguished the value of certain of these objects. How can I tell you the

emotion that I felt when bending over one of these glass cases I saw on a thin rib-bone, obviously the rib of a mammal - I do not really know which one, and I do not know whether anyone would know better than I, a type of Cervide deer - a series of little strokes: first two, then a little interval and afterwards five, and then it recommences. There, I said to myself addressing myself by my secret or my public name, this is why in short Jacques Lacan your daughter is not mute, this is why your daughter is your daughter, because if we were mute she would not be your daughter. Obviously, there is some advantage in this, even living in a world very like that of a universal asylum of madmen, a no less certain consequence of the existence of signifiers, as you are going to see.

These strokes which only appear much later, several thousand years after men knew how to make objects of a realistic exactitude, when at the Aurignacian epoch bisons were made which are beyond anything from the point of view of the art of the painter that we have yet been able to achieve! But what is more, at the same epoch people made in bone on a very small scale, a reproduction of something that it might not seem one should have taken so much trouble over because it is a reproduction of something else in bone but which is much bigger: a horse's skull. Why redo in bone on a small scale, when really one imagines that at that epoch they had other things to be doing, this matchless reproduction? I mean that, in le Cuvier which I have at my country house, I have extremely remarkable engravings of fossilized skeletons which are made by consummate artists, these are no better than this small reduction of a horse's skull sculptured in bone which is of such an anatomical exactitude that not only is it convincing: it is rigorous.

Well then it is only much later that we find the trace of something which belongs unambiguously to the signifier.

And this signifier is all alone, because I do not intend giving, for want of information, a special meaning to this little increased gap that there is some place in this line of strokes; it is possible, but I can say nothing about it. What I mean, on the contrary, is that here we see arising something which I am not saying is the first appearance, but in any case a certain appearance of something which you see is altogether distinguished from what can be designated as a qualitative difference: each one of these traits is not at all identical to its neighbour, but it is not because they are different that they function as different, but because the signifying difference is distinct from anything that refers to qualitative difference, as I have just shown you with the little things that I have just circulated before you.

Qualitative difference can even on occasion underline the signifying sameness. This sameness is constituted precisely by the fact that the signifier as such serves to connote difference in the pure state, and the proof is that at its first appearance the one manifestly designates multiplicity as such. In other words, I am a hunter because now we have been carried to the level of Magdalenian 4. God knows that catching an animal was not any more simple at that epoch than it is in our own day for those who are called Bushmen, and it was quite an adventure! It seems indeed that after having wounded the beast it was necessary to track it for a long time in order to see it succumb to what was the effect of the poison. I kill one of them, it is an adventure, I kill another of them, it is a second adventure which I can distinguish by certain traits from the first, but which resembles it essentially by being marked with the same general line. At the fourth, there may be some confusion: what distinguishes it

from the second, for example. At the twentieth, how will I know where I am, or will I even know that I have had twenty of them?

The Marquis de Sade at the rue Paradis in Marseille, locked up with his little valet, proceeded in the same way for the ejaculations (*coups*), even though varied in different ways, that he got off in the company of this partner, even with some confederates who themselves were varied in different ways. This exemplary man, whose relationships to desire must surely have been marked by some unusual ardour, whatever one might think, marked on the head of his bed, it is said, by little traits each one of the ejaculations - to give them their name - that he managed to achieve in this sort of singular probationary retreat. Undoubtedly one must oneself be well engaged in the adventure of desire, at least according to everything that ordinary things teach us about the most ordinary experience of people, in order to have such a need to locate oneself in the sequence of one's sexual accomplishments: it is nevertheless not unthinkable that at certain favourable epochs of life something can become hazy about the exact point that one is at in terms of decimal enumeration.

What is in question in the notch, in the notched trait, is something of which we cannot help seeing that here there arises something new with respect to what one could call the immanence of any essential action whatsoever. This being whom we can imagine to be still lacking this method of location, what will he do, after a time which is rather short and limited by intuition, in order not to sense himself simply solidary with a present which is always easily renewable where nothing allows him any longer to discern what exists as difference in the real. It is not at all sufficient to say - this is already quite obvious - that this difference is in the living experience of the subject just as it is not at all sufficient to say: "But all the same such and such a person is not me". It is not simply because Laplanche has hair like that and that I have hair like this and that his eyes are a certain way and that he has not got quite the same smile as me, that he is different.

You will say: "Laplanche is Laplanche and Lacan is Lacan". But it is precisely there that the whole question lies, since precisely in analysis the question is posed whether Laplanche is not the thought of Lacan and if Lacan is not the being of Laplanche or inversely. The question is not sufficiently resolved in the real. It is the signifier which settles it, it is it that introduces difference as such into the real, and precisely in the measure in that what is involved are not at all qualitative differences.

But then if the signifier, in its function of difference, is something which presents itself thus in the mode of the paradox of being precisely different because of this difference which would be based or not on similarity, of being something other which is distinct and as regards which - I repeat - we can very well suppose, because we have them within our reach, that there are beings who are alive and tolerate Very well completely ignoring this sort of difference which certainly, for example, is not at all accessible to my dog, and I will not show you immediately - because I will show it to you in greater detail and in a more articulated fashion - that it is indeed for that reason that apparently the only thing that she does not know, is that she herself is. And that she herself is, we ought to search for the mode under which this is appended to this sort of distinction which is particularly manifest in the unary trait in so far as what distinguishes it is not at all an identity of resemblance, it is something else.

What is this other thing?

It is this: it is that the signifier is not at all a sign. A sign, we are told, is to represent something for someone: the someone is there as a support for the sign. The first definition that one can give of a someone is: someone who is accessible to a sign. It is the most elementary form, if one can express oneself in that way of subjectivity; there is no object at all here yet, there is something different: the sign, which represents this something for someone. A signifier is distinguished from a sign first of all in this which is what I tried to get you to sense: the fact is that signifiers only manifest at first the presence of difference as such and nothing else. The first thing therefore that it implies is that the relationship of the sign to the thing should be effaced:

$$\frac{\text{sign}}{\text{someone}}$$

something S, these ones of the Magdalenian bone, it would be a very clever man could tell you what they were the sign of. And someone we, thank God, are advanced enough since Magdalenian 4 for you to perceive the following - which for you has the same sort no doubt of naive obviousness, allow me to tell you that "A is A", namely that, as you were taught in school, you cannot add up oranges and apples, pears with carrots and so on, is a complete error; this only begins to be true when one starts from a definition of addition which supposes, I assure you, a number of axioms which would be enough to cover this whole section of the blackboard.

At the level at which things are taken in our own day in mathematical reflection, specifically to call it by its name in set theory, it is not possible in the most fundamental operations, such as, for example, a union or an intersection, there would be no question of posing such exorbitant conditions for the validity of operations. You can very well add up what you want at the level of a certain register for the simple reason that what is involved in a set, is, as was well expressed by one of the theoreticians speculating on one of these so-called paradoxes: it is not a matter of objects, or of things, it is a question of 1 very exactly in what one calls the element of sets. This is not sufficiently remarked on in the text to which I allude for a celebrated reason: it is because precisely this reflection on what a 1 is is not well elaborated even by those who in the most modern mathematical theory nevertheless make of it the clearest, the most manifest usage.

This 1 as such, in so far as it marks pure difference, it is to it that we are going to refer to put to the test, at our next meeting the relationship of the subject to the signifier. It will first of all be necessary for us to distinguish the signifier from the sign and for us to show in what sense the step taken is that of the effaced thing: the different "effaçons" if you will allow me to use this formula, in which the signifier comes to birth, will give us precisely the major modes of the manifestation of the subject. Already, to indicate to you, to remind you of the formulae under which I noted for you for example the function of metonymy, the big S function in so far as it is in a chain which is continued by **S', S'', S''',** etc... this is what ought to give us the effect that:

$$f \quad S \quad S' \quad S'' \quad S''' \quad \ldots.\text{etc}$$

$$f \quad (S, \quad S', \quad S''...) \quad = \quad S(\,-\,)\,s$$

I called that of the *peu-de-sens*, in so far as the minus sign designates, connotes a certain mode of appearance of the signified as it results from the putting into function of S the signifier in a signifying chain. S(-) s

We will put it to the test of a substitution for these S and S' of 1 in so far as precisely this operation is quite legitimate, and you know it better than anybody, you for whom repetition is the basis of your experience: what constitutes the core of repetition, of the automatism of repetition for your experience is not that it is always the same thing which is interesting, it is why there is repeated something of which precisely the subject from the point of view of his biological comfort has not - as you know - really any strict need as regards the repetitions that we have to deal with, namely the stickiest, the most annoying, the most symptomogenic repetitions. This is where your attention should be directed in order to uncover in it as such the incidence of the function of the signifier.

How can it happen, this typical relationship to the subject constituted by the existence of the signifier as such, the only possible support of what is for us originally the experience of repetition?

Will I stop there or will I already indicate to you how the formula of the sign must be modified in order to grasp, to understand what is in question in the advent of the signifier. The signifier, as opposed to the sign, is not what represents something for someone, it is what represents precisely the subject for another signifier; my dog is on the lookout for signs and then she speaks, in the way you know, why is her speech not a language; because precisely I am for her something which can give her signs, but who cannot give her any signifier.

The distinction between speech (*la parole*), as it can exist at the preverbal level and language consists precisely in this emergence of the function of the signifier.

Seminar 5: Wednesday 13 December 1961

> Monas esti kathen hekaston ton outon Arithmos de to ek monadon synkeimenon plethos
>
> Euclid - Elements 4 VII.

This sentence is a sentence borrowed from the beginning of the seventh book of Euclid's *Elements* and appeared to me, taking everything into consideration, the best one I found to express, on the mathematical plane, this function to which I wished to draw your attention the last time, of the 1 in our problem. It is not that I had to search for it, that I had trouble finding among the mathematicians something which referred to it: the mathematicians, at least some of them, those who at every epoch have been in the forefront of the exploitation of their field, have concerned themselves a lot with the status of the unit (*1'unité*), but they are far from all having arrived at equally satisfying formulae; it even seems that, for some of them, in their definitions it went right in the opposite direction to the appropriate one.

In any case, I am not unhappy to think that someone like Euclid who all the same in the matter of mathematics cannot be considered otherwise than as from the right stock, should give this formula, which is precisely all the more remarkable because it is articulated by a geometer, that what the unit is - because this is the meaning of the word *monas*: it is the unit in the precise sense in which I tried to designate it for you the last time under the designation of what I called, I will come back again on the reason why I called it that: the unary trait; the unary trait in so far as it is the support as such of difference, this indeed is the meaning that monas has here. It cannot have a different one, as the rest of the text is going to show you.

Monas, namely this unit in the sense of the unary trait which I indicate here to you as cross-checking with, as highlighting in its function what we managed last year in the field of our experience to locate in the very text of Freud as the *einziger Zug*, that through which every being is said to be a One, with the ambiguity that is brought by this *en*, the neuter of *eis* which means One in Greek, being precisely what can be employed in Greek as in French to designate the function of unity in so far as it is this factor of consistency through which something is distinguished from what surrounds it, makes a whole, a One in the unitary sense of the function; therefore it is through themediation of unity that each one of these beings comes to be called One. The advent, in the statement, of this unity as characteristic of each of the beings is here designated: it comes from the usage of the *monas* which is nothing other than the unary trait.

It was worthwhile picking up this thing precisely from the pen of a geometer namely of someone who situates himself in mathematics in such a fashion apparently that for him at least, we must say that intuition conserves all its original value. It is true that he is not just any old geometer, because in short we can single him out in the history of geometry as the one who was the first to introduce, as having absolutely to dominate it, the exigency for proof over what could be called experience, the familiarity with space.

I will finish the translation of the quotation: "that number for its part is nothing other than this sort of multiplicity which arises precisely from the introduction of units", monads in the sense that this is understood in Euclid's text.

If I identify this function of the unary trait, if I make of it the unveiled face of this *einziger Zug* of identification, to which we were led by our path last year, let us highlight here, before going any further and so that you may know that contact is never lost with what is the most direct field of our technical and theoretical reference to Freud, let us highlight that it is a question here of the second kind of identification, p.117, volume 13 of the *Gesammelte Werke* of Freud. It is indeed as a conclusion to the definition of the second kind of identification which he calls regressive, in so far as it linked to a certain abandoning of the object that he defines as the beloved object. This beloved object goes from women to rare books.

It is always in some measure linked to the abandoning or the loss of this object that there is produced, Freud tells us, this sort of regressive state from which there arises this identification which he underlines (with something which is for us a source of admiration, as each time the discoverer designates a trait derived from his experience which it might seem at first approach is not required by anything, that it has a contingent character, moreover he does not justify it, except by his experience) that in this sort of identification where the ego sometimes copies the situation of the unloved object, sometimes that of the beloved object, but that in both cases this identification is partial: *"höchst beschrankt*" extremely limited - but which is accentuated in the sense of narrowness, of restrictedness by the fact that it is "*nur ein einziger Zug*", only a single trait of the objectified person, which is like the place borrowed from the German word.

It may therefore seem to you that to approach identification through this second type, is also to "*beschränken*" myself, limit myself, restrict the import of my approach; because there is the other, the identification of the first kind, the singularly ambivalent one which is constructed on the basis of the image of assimilating devouring; and what relationship has it with the third, the one which begins immediately after this point which I am designating for you in Freud's paragraph: the identification to the other through the instrumentality of desire, the identification that we know well, which is hysterical, but precisely which I taught you cannot be properly distinguished - I think you ought to be sufficiently aware of it - except when there has been structured - and I do not see anyone who has done it anywhere other than here and before it was done here - desire as presupposing in its underlay exactly as a minimum the whole articulation that we have given of the relationships of the subject specifically to the signifying chain, in so far as this relationship profoundly modifies the structure of every relationship of the subject with each one of his needs. This partiality of the approach, this way in, as I might say, into a corner of the problem, I have the feeling that at the same time as I designate it for you, I should legitimate it today, and I hope to do it quickly enough to allow myself to be understood without too many detours by recalling to you something that is a methodological principle for us: that, given our place, our function, what we have to do as we break new ground, we should be mistrustful, let us say - and take this as far as you wish - of genus and even of class.

It may appear strange to you that someone who accentuates for you the pregnancy, in our articulation of the phenomena with which we have to deal, of the function of language,

marks himself off here from a mode of relationship which is really fundamental in the field of logic. How can one indicate, speak, about a logic which ought, at the very moment it begins, to mark the completely original distrust that I intend to pose about the notion of class? It is indeed precisely what makes original, distinguishes the field that we are trying to articulate here, it is not any prejudice in principle which leads me here; it is the very necessity of our own object which pushes us so that there is developed in the course of the years, segment by segment, a logical articulation which does more than suggest, which gets closer and closer, specifically this year, I hope, to disengaging the algorithms which allow me to describe as logical this chapter which we will have to add on to the functions exercised by language in a certain field of the real, the one of which we, as speaking beings, are the conductors.

Let us distrust therefore in the most extreme way any *Koinonia* to use a Platonic term, everything that marks a community in any genus (*genre*) and especially in those which are most original for us. The three identifications probably do not form a class, even though they may nevertheless bear the same name which brings a shadow of the concept to it; it will be also no doubt up to us to account for it; if we work correctly, this does not seem to be beyond our strength. In fact, we know already that it is at the level of the particular that there always arises what is for us a universal function, and we have no reason to be too astonished by this in the field in which we move about because, as regards the function of identification, we know already - we have worked enough together to know it - the meaning of this formula: what happens, happens essentially at the level of structure; and structure, do I need to remind you, and precisely I believe that today, before taking another step I must recall it - is what we have introduced specifically as a specification in the register of the symbolic. If we distinguish this register of the symbolic from the imaginary and the real - I believe I should also highlight all the hesitations that there may have arisen from this neglect of something that I have never seen anyone worry himself about openly, another reason for dissipating any ambiguity on it - it is not a matter of an ontological definition, it is not fields of being that I am separating out here. If from a certain moment on, and precisely that of the birth of these seminars, I believed I had to bring into play this triad of the symbolic, the imaginary and the real it is in so far as this third element which was not at all up to then sufficiently discerned as such in our experience, is exactly to my eyes what is exactly constituted by this fact of the revelation of a field of experience. And, to remove any ambiguity from this term, it is a matter of the Freudian experience, I would say of a field of experimentation. I mean that we are not dealing with Erlebnis, we are dealing with a field constituted in a certain fashion up to a certain degree by some artifice, the one inaugurated by the analytic technique as such, the complementary aspect of the Freudian discovery, complementary as the front is to the back, really stuck together.

What is first of all revealed in this field, as you of course know is the function of the symbol and at the same time of the symbolic. From the beginning these terms had the fascinating, seductive, captivating effect which you know about, in the whole field of culture, this shock effect from which as you know scarcely any thinker, and even the most hostile, could stand aside from. It must also be said that it is a fact of experience that we have lost from this time of revelation, and of its correlation with the function of the symbol, we have lost its freshness, as one might say, this freshness which is correlative to what I called the effect of shock, of surprise, properly defined by Freud himself as characteristic of this emergence of the relationships of the unconscious, these sorts of flashes lighting up the image which were characteristic of this epoch by means of which, as one might say, there

appeared to us to be included in a new way, imaginary beings, by means of which suddenly something guided their meaning properly speaking, became clear by means of a grasp which we cannot better qualify than by designating them by the term *Begriff*, a clinging grasp, where planes stick together, the function of fixation, of some *Haftung* or other which is so characteristic of our relationship in this imaginary field, at the same time evoking a dimension of genesis where things are drawn out rather than evolving: a certain ambiguity which allowed the evolutionary schema to be left present, naturally implicated I would say in the field of our discoveries.

How in all this can we say that when all is said and done what characterises this dead time, highlighted by all sorts of theoreticians and practitioners in the evolution of the doctrine under different headings and titles, could have happened? How did there come about this kind of slow burn which imposes on us, what is properly speaking our object here, the one in which I am attempting to guide you, of taking up again our whole dialectic on surer principles? It would be well for us to be able to designate somewhere the source of the going astray which means that in short we can say that after a certain time these glimpses only remain alive for us if we refer back to the time of their emergence, and this all the more so on the plane of the efficacity of our technique, in the effect of our interpretations, in what makes them efficacious. Why have the imagos discovered by us been in a way banalized?

Is it only through a sort of effect of familiarity? We have learned to live with these ghosts, we are shoulder to shoulder with the vampire, the octopus, we live and breathe in the space of the maternal womb at least metaphorically. The *comics* for their part also with a certain style, the funny drawing, make these images live for us in a way that was never seen in other ages, carrying with them even the most primordial images of analytic revelation and making of them a day-to-day object of amusement: on the horizon the spineless display and the function of the Great Masturbator preserved in the images of Dali.

Is it because of that alone that our mastery seems to weaken in the instrumental use of these images as revelatory? It is surely not that alone, for projected - as I might say - here into the creations of art, they still preserve what I would call not only their striking but their critical force, they preserve something of their character of derision or alarm but this is not what is in question in our relationship to the person who designates them for us in the actuality of the treatment.

Here the only plan of action that remains to us is the duty of doing good, making people laugh being a very occasional and limited way of using it. And here what we have seen happening, is nothing other than an effect of what one could call a collapse or a degradation, the fact is that we have seen these images returning quite simply to what has been designated very well as a type of archetype, namely old rope from the store of accessories in use. It is a tradition which is very well known under the name of alchemy or of gnosis, but which was linked precisely to a very ancient confusion and which was the one that the field of human thought remained entangled in for centuries.)It might seem that I am marking myself off from or that I am putting you on your guard against a mode of understanding our reference points which is that of *Gestalt*. It’s not quite that.

I am far from underestimating what was contributed, at a moment in the history of thought, by the function of the *Gestalt*; but in order to express myself quickly and because here I am carrying out this kind of clearance of our horizon that I have to carry out again

from time to time in order to avoid precisely the same confusions always re-emerging, I would introduce in order to make myself understood this distinction: what constitutes the core of some of the productions of this mode of exploring the field of the *Gestalt*, what I would call crystallographic *Gestalt*, the one which puts the stress on these points of junction, of kinship, between natural formations and structural organisations, in so far as they arise and are definable only from the signifying combinatory, is what gives the subjective force, the efficacy of this point which, for its part, is ontological in which there is delivered to us something of which we in effect have a real need which is to know whether there is a relationship which justifies this introduction as a sort of ploughshare of the effect of the signifier in the real.

But this does not concern us. Because it is not the field that we have to deal with; we are not here to judge the degree of naturalness in modern physics, even though it may interest us - this is what I do from time to time before you sometimes - to show that historically it is precisely in the measure that it completely neglected the naturalness of things that physics began to enter into the real.

The *Gestalt* against which I put you on your guard, is a *Gestalt* which, you will observe, in opposition to what the initiators of the *Gestalt* theory were attached to, gives a purely confusing reference to the function of the *Gestalt* which is the one that I am calling the anthropomorphic *Gestalt*, the one which in any way whatsoever confuses what our experience contributes with the old analogical reference of the macrocosm and the microcosm, of the universal man, rather abbreviated registers when all is said and done and which analysis in so far as it believed it could be at home in them only shows once again its relative infecundity. That does not mean that the images, which I humorously evoked above, do not carry a certain weight, nor that they are not there for us still to make use of them. For ourselves the fashion in which for some time we have preferred to leave them hidden, in the shade, ought to be indicative; they are scarcely spoken about any more, except from a certain distance; they are there, to use a Freudian metaphor like one of these shades which are ready to rise up from hell. We have not really known how to reanimate them, we have no doubt not given them enough blood to drink. But after all so much the better, we are not necromancers.

It is precisely here that there is inserted this reminder which is characteristic of what I am teaching you, which is there to completely change the appearance of things, namely to show that the living core of what the Freudian discovery contributed did not consist in this return of old ghosts, but in another relationship. Suddenly this morning, I rediscovered, from the year 1946, one of these little *Propos sur la causalité psychique* with which I made my re-entry into the psychiatric circle immediately after the War and there appears in this little text here (a text which appeared in connection with the Bonneval conversations), as a sort of apposition or incidence at the beginning of the same concluding paragraph, five lines before finishing what I had to say about the imago: "More inaccessible to our eyes made for the signs of the changer" which leads to what follows: "than that of which the hunter in the desert", I say - which I only evoke because we came across him the last time, if I remember correctly - "knows how to see the imperceptible trace: the footprint of the gazelle on the rock, one day the aspects of the imago will be revealed".

The accent is to be put for the moment on the beginning of the paragraph "more inaccessible to our eyes..." What are these signs of the changer? What signs and what change or what changer?

These signs are precisely what I have summoned you to articulate as signifiers, namely these signs in so far as they operate properly in virtue of their associativeness in the chain, of their commutativity, of the function of permutation taken as such. And here is where the function of the changer is: the introduction into the real of a change which is not at all one of movement nor of birth nor of corruption and of all the categories of change which a tradition which we call Aristotelian sketches out, that of knowledge as such, but of another dimension where the change that is in question is defined as such in the topological combinatory which it allows us to define as the emergence of this fact, of the fact of structure, as degradation on occasion, namely the collapse in this field of the structure and the return to the capture of the natural image.

In short, there is sketched out as such something which is only after all the functional framework of thinking, you are going to say. And why not? Let us not forget that this word thinking is present, accentuated from the beginning by Freud, as no doubt not being able to be other than it is, to designate what is happening in the unconscious. Because it was certainly not the need to preserve the privilege of thinking as such, of some primacy or other of the spirit which could have guided Freud here. Far from it: if he had been able to avoid this term, he would have done it. And what does that mean at this level? And why is it that this year I thought I should start, not even from Plato without mentioning the others, but moreover not from Kant, not from Hegel, but from Descartes? It is precisely to designate what is in question, where the problem of the unconscious is for us, it is about the autonomy of the subject in so far as it is not alone preserved, as it is accentuated as it never was in our field and precisely about this paradox that these pathways that we discover in it are in no way conceivable if properly speaking it is not the subject who is their guide and that in a fashion which is all the more sure because it is without knowing it, without being an accomplice to it, as I might say: *conscius*, because he cannot progress towards anything nor in any way except only by locating it retrospectively, because there is nothing that is not engendered by him except precisely in the measure that he fails to recognise it at first.

This is what distinguishes the field of the unconscious, as it is revealed to us by Freud. It is itself impossible to formalise, to formulate if we do not see that at every instant it is only conceivable by seeing in it, and in the most obvious and tangible fashion, this autonomy of the subject preserved, I mean that by which the subject cannot in any circumstances be reduced to a dream of the world. I show you the reference and not the presence of this permanence of the subject. Because this presence cannot be circumscribed except in function of this reference: I demonstrated, designated it for you the last time in this unary trait, in this function of the stroke as figure of the one in so far as it is only the distinctive trait, the trait precisely all the more distinctive in so far as there is effaced from it almost everything which distinguishes it, except the fact of being a trait by accentuating this fact that the more alike it is, the more it functions, I am not saying as a sign, but as a support for difference, and this only being an introduction to the throwing into relief of this dimension that I am trying to punctuate before you. Because in truth there is no longer any folds (*plis*): there is no ideal of similitude, of the ideal of the effacing of traits. This effacing of qualitative distinctions is only there to allow us to grasp the paradox of radical otherness

designated by the trait, and it is after all of little importance that each of these traits resembles one another. It is elsewhere that there resides what I called just now this function of otherness. In ending my discourse the last time I highlighted what its function was, the one which assures to repetition precisely the following that by this function, by it alone, this repetition escapes from the identity of its eternal return under the figure of the hunter notching the number of what? Of traits that he wounded his prey, or of the divine Marquis who shows us, that even at the summit of his desire, he takes good care to count these ejaculations, and that this is an essential dimension, in so far as it never abandons the necessity that it implies in almost any of our functions.

In counting these events, the trait which counts, what is it? Are you still following me properly here?

Grasp carefully what I intend to designate, it is the following whose source is easily forgotten: it is that what we are dealing with in the automatism of repetition is the following: a cycle in however amputated, deformed, abraded way we may define it: once it is a cycle and once it involves a return to a terminal point, we can conceive of it on the model of need, of satisfaction. This cycle is repeated; it does not matter whether it is altogether the same or whether it presents tiny differences, these tiny differences will manifestly only be constructed in order to conserve it in its function of cycle as referring to something definable as a certain type through which precisely all the cycles which preceded it are identified in the very instant as being, in so far as they are reproduced, properly speaking the same. Let us take to depict what I am in the process of telling you the cycle of digestion: every time we go through one, we repeat digestion. Is this what we are referring to when we speak, in analysis, of the automatism of repetition? Is it in virtue of an automatism of repetition that we go through digestions which are tangibly always the same digestion?

I will not leave you the opening of saying that up to this it is a sophism. There can be naturally incidents in this digestion which are due to the reminders of old digestions which were disturbed: effects of disgust, of nausea, linked to one another contingent linking of such a food with such a circumstance.

This will not for all that help us to make a step further in the distance to be covered between this return of the cycle and the function of the automatism of repetition. Because what the automatism of repetition means in so far as we have to deal with it, is the following: the fact is that if a determined cycle which was only that very one - it is here that there is outlined the shadow of the "trauma" which I am putting here only in inverted commas, because it is not its traumatic effect that I hold onto but only its uniquity - this one therefore which is designated by a certain signifier which can only be supported by what we will subsequently learn to define as a letter, the agency of the letter in the unconscious this big A, the initial A in so far as it is numberable, that this cycle here, and not another is equivalent to a certain signifier, it is in this sense that the behaviour repeats itself in order to make re-emerge this signifier that it is as such, this number that it grounds.

If for us symptomatic repetition has a meaning towards which I am redirecting you, reflect on the import of your own thinking. When you speak about repetitive incidence in symptomatic formation, it is in so far as that which is repeated is there, not even just to fulfil the natural function of the sign which is to represent something which is supposed to be actualised here, but to presentify as such the signifier that this action has become.

I am saying that it is in so far as what is repressed is a signifier that this cycle of real behaviour is presented in its place. It is here, since I have imposed on myself to give a precise and convenient time limit for a certain number of you to what I should present before you, that I will stop. As for the confirmation and the commentaries that all of this requires, you can count on me to give them to you in what follows in the most appropriately articulated fashion, however astonishing their abruptness may have appeared to you, when I exposed them to you just now.

Seminar 6: Wednesday 20 December 1961

The last time I left you on a remark designed to give you the sense that my discourse is not losing its moorings, namely that the importance, for us, of this research this year depends on the fact that the paradox of the automatism of repetition is that you see arising a cycle of behaviour inscribable as such in terms of a resolution of tension, therefore of the need-satisfaction couple, and that nevertheless whatever may be the function involved in this cycle, however carnal you may suppose it to be, it nevertheless remains that what it means *qua* automatism of repetition is that it is there in order to make emerge, to recall, to make insist something which is nothing other in its essence than a signifier which can be designated by its function, and especially under this aspect that it introduces into the cycle of its repetitions - always the same in their essence and therefore concerning something which is always the same thing - difference, distinctiveness, unicity, and that it is because something happened at the origin which is the whole system of the trauma, namely that at one time there was produced something which took on from that time the form A, that in the repetition the behaviour however complex, engaged you may suppose it to be in the animal individuality, is only there in order to make re-emerge this sign A. Let us say that the behaviour from then on is expressible as behaviour number such and such; it is this behaviour number such and such, let us say it, the hysterical access for example: one of the forms in the case of a particular subject are his hysterical accesses, and it is this which emerges as behaviour number such and such. Only the number is lost for the subject. It is precisely in so far as the number is lost that there emerges this behaviour masked in this function of giving rise to the number behind what will be called the psychology of his access, behind the apparent motivations; and you know that in this regard no one will find it difficult to find an apparent reason for it: it is proper to psychology always to make a shadow of motivation appear.

It is therefore with this structural sticking together of something radically inserted into this vital individuality with this signifying function, that we are in analytic experience (*Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*): this is what is repressed, it is the lost number of behaviour such and such.

Where is the subject in all of that?

It is in the radical, real individuality, in the pure sufferer of this capture, in the organism which henceforward is sucked in by the effects of the "it speaks" (*ça parle*) by the fact that one living being among the others was summoned to become what Mr Heidegger calls the shepherd of being, having been caught up in the mechanisms of the signifier. Is it at the other extreme identifiable to the very operation of the signifier? And is not the subject only the subject of discourse who is in some way torn away from his vital immanence, condemned to fly on high, to live in this sort of mirage which flows from this redoubling which ensures that he not only speaks everything he lives, but that he experiences living being by speaking it and that already what he is living is inscribed in an *epos*, a Saga woven right throughout his very act.

Our effort this year if it has a meaning, is precisely to show how the function of the subject is articulated elsewhere than in one or other of these poles, that it operates between

the two. It is after all - I for my part imagine - what your cogitation - at least I like to think so - after these few years of seminars may give you, even if only implicitly, as a reference point at every instant. Is it enough to know that the function of the subject is in the between-the-two, between the idealising effects of the signifying function and this vital immanence which you may too readily confuse, I still think, despite all my warnings, with the function of the drive? It is precisely what we are engaged in and what we are trying to push further, and the reason why also I thought I should begin with the Cartesian *cogito* in order to make tangible the field in which we are going to try to give more precise articulations about identification.

I spoke to you, a few years ago, about little Hans; there is in the story of little Hans - I think that you have kept the memory of it somewhere - the story of the dream which one can pinpoint with title of the crumpled (*verwurzelte*) giraffe. This verb *verwurzeln* which has been translated by to crumple, is not a very common verb in the usual German lexicon. Though *wurzeln* is found there, *verwurzeln* is not. *Verwurzeln* means: to make a ball. It is indicated in the text of the dream of the crumpled giraffe that it is a giraffe which is there next to the big living giraffe, a paper giraffe and that as such one can make a ball of it. You know the whole symbolism which is unfolded right through this observation, of the relationship between the big giraffe and the little giraffe, the crumpled giraffe under one of its aspects, conceivable under the other as the reduced giraffe, as the second giraffe, as the giraffe which can symbolise many things. If the big giraffe symbolises the mother, the other giraffe symbolises the daughter; and the relationship of little Hans to the giraffe, at the point that we are at at that moment of his analysis, will tend to be incarnated rather readily in the living interplay of family rivalries.

I remember the astonishment - it would no longer be appropiate today - that I provoked at that time by designating at that very moment in the case of little Hans as such, the dimension of the symbolic in act in the psychical productions of the young subject in connection with this crumpled giraffe. What could be more indicative of the radical difference of the symbolic as such, than to see appearing in the production, certainly not suggested on this point - because there is no trace at that moment of any such articulation concerning the indirect function of the symbol - than to see in the observation something which really incarnates for us and images the advent of the symbolic as such in the psychical dialectic. "Really, where did you find it" one of you kindly said to me after that session? The surprising thing is not that I saw it because it would be difficult to have it indicated more crudely in the material itself, it is that at that place one could say that Freud himself does not dwell on it, I mean does not give at all the stress that would be appropriate to this phenomenon, to what materialises it, as one might say, to our eyes. This indeed is what proves the essential character of these structural delineations, it is by not making them, by not highlighting them, by not articulating them with all the energy of which we are capable, it is a certain aspect, a certain dimension of the phenomena themselves that we condemn ourselves in a way to overlook.

I am not going to go over again for you on this occasion the articulation of what was involved, of what was at stake in the case of little Hans. These things have been published enough and well enough for you to be able to refer to them. But the function as such at this critical moment - the one determined by his radical suspension on the desire of the mother, in a fashion which, as one might say, has nothing to off-set it, is irretrievable, inescapable - is the function of artifice which I showed you to be that of the phobia in so far as it introduces a

key signifying mainspring which allows the subject to preserve what is in question for him, namely the minimal anchoring, centering of his being, which allows him not to sense himself as a being who is completely adrift at the whim of his mother. This is what is at stake, but what I want to highlight at this level is the following: it is that in a production which can scarcely be considered unreliable on this occasion - I say it all the more because everything towards which little Hans had previously been directed (because God knows he was directed as I showed you - nothing of all of this is of a nature to put him into the field of this type of elaboration; little Hans shows us here in a figure which is certainly obscure, but exemplary, the leap, the passage, the tension between what I defined first of all as the two extremes of the subject: the animal subject which represents the mother, but also with its long neck, no one has any doubt about it, the mother in so far as she is this immense phallus of desire ending again in the browsing mouth of this voracious animal, and then on the other something on a paper surface. We will return to this dimension of surface, something which is not without a subjective accent; because one sees well the whole import of what is involved: the big giraffe, when she sees him playing with the small crumpled one, cries out very loudly until finally she grows weary, her cries are exhausted, and little Hans, sanctioning in a way the taking possession, the *Besitzung* of what is involved, the mysterious import of the affair, by sitting on top of it (*darauf gesetzt*).

This lovely mechanism ought to make us sense what is involved, since indeed it concerns his fundamental identification, the defence of himself against this original capture within the world of the mother, as no one of course doubts, at the point that we are at in elucidating phobia. Here already we see exemplified this function of signifier. It is indeed here that I want to pause again today on the point of departure of what we have to say about identification. The function of the signifier in so far as it is the mooring point of something from which the subject constitutes himself, here is something which is going to make me dwell for a moment today on something which, it seems to me, should come quite naturally to mind, not just for reasons of general logic, but also because of something that you should touch on in your experience: I mean the function of the name (*nom*), not the noun (*nom*), the noun defined grammatically, what we call the substantive in our schools, but the name in the way that in English - and what is more, in German - the two functions are distinguished. I would like to say a little more about it here, but you well understand the difference: the name, is the proper name. You know as analysts, the importance that the proper name of the subject has in every analysis. You should always pay attention to what your patient is called. It is never indifferent. And if you ask for names in analysis, it is indeed something much more important than the excuse that you may give for it to the patient, namely that all sorts of things may hide themselves behind this sort of dissimulation or effacing of a name, concerning the relations that it may bring into play with some other subject.

It goes much further than that; you should sense it even if you do not know it.

What is a proper name?

Here we should have a lot to say. The fact is that in effect we could bring a lot of material to the name. This material, we analysts, even in supervision, we would have a thousand opportunities to illustrate its importance. I do not believe that we could here precisely give it all its import - this is a further occasion to put your finger on a methodological necessity - without referring to what the linguist has to say in this respect, not

necessarily to submit ourselves to it, but because as regards the function, the definition of this signifier which has its own originality, we should at least find in it a control, if not a complement to what we can say.

In fact, this indeed is what is going to happen. In 1954 there appeared a little factum by Sir Allan H. Gardiner. There are all sorts of works by him and in particular a very good Egyptian grammar - I mean one of antique Egypt - he is therefore an Egyptologist, but he is also and above all a linguist. Gardiner produced - it was at that time that I acquired it during a short trip to London - a very small little book called *The Theory of Proper Names*. He produced it in a rather contingent fashion.

He calls it himself a "controversial essay", *un essai controversiel*. One could even say that this is a *litotes*: a polemical essay. He wrote it because of the extreme exasperation he had felt at a certain number of enunciatings of a philosopher whom I am not indicating to you for the first time: Bertrand Russell whose enormous role in the elaboration of what one could call in our days mathematicised logic or logicised mathematics you know about. In the *Principia mathematica* with Whitehead, he gave us a general symbolism of logical and mathematical operations which one cannot fail to take into account, once one enters into this field. Russell then, in one of his works, gives a certain definition which is quite paradoxical - the paradox moreover is a dimension in which he is far from reluctant to move about in, on the contrary: he makes use of it more often than it deserves - Mr Russell put forward then certain remarks about the proper name which literally put Mr Gardiner beside himself. The quarrel is in itself significant enough for me to think that today I should introduce you to it and in this connection hook onto it remarks that I think are important.

What end are we going to start with, with Gardiner or with Russell?

Let us begin with Russell.

Russell finds himself in the position of the logician; the logician has a position which does not date from yesterday. He brings into operation a certain apparatus to which he gives different titles: reasoning, thinking. He discovers in it a certain number of implicit laws. In a first phase he separates out these laws: they are the ones without which nothing which belongs to the order of reason would be possible. It is in the course of this quite original research into the thinking which governs us, by reflection, that we grasp for example the importance of the principle of contradiction. This principle of contradiction having been discovered, it is around the principle of contradiction that something unfolds and is organised, which undoubtedly shows that if contradiction and its principle were not something tautological, tautology would be singularly fruitful; because Aristotelian logic cannot be unfolded in a few pages.

With time, nevertheless, the historical fact is that even though the development of logic is directed towards an ontology, a radical reference to being which is supposed to be aimed at in these most general laws of the mode of understanding necessary for truth, it orients itself towards a formalism, namely that that to which the leader of a school of thought as important, as decisive in the orientation that it has given to a whole mode of thinking in our epoch as Bertrand Russell, should have managed to put everything that concerns the critique of the operations brought into play in the field of logic and of mathematics, into a general formalisation that is as strict, as economical as possible.

In short, the correlative effort of Russell, the thrust of Russell's effort in the same direction, in mathematics, culminates at the formation of what is called set theory, whose general import one can characterise in the fact that an effort is made in it to reduce the whole field of mathematical experience accumulated throughout centuries of development, and I believe that a better definition of it cannot be given than to reduce it to an interplay of letters (*jeu de lettres*). We should take this into account then as a given in the progress of thinking; let us say, at our epoch, this epoch being defined as a certain moment of the discourse of science.

What is it then that Bertrand Russell finds himself led to give in these conditions, when he comes to interest himself in it, as a definition of a proper name?

It is something which in itself is worthwhile dwelling on, because it is what is going to allow us to grasp - it could be grasped elsewhere, and you will see that I will show you that it is grasped elsewhere - let us say the degree of miscognition (*méconnaissance*) implied in a certain position which is found to be effectively the corner into which there is pushed the whole age-old effort of the elaboration of logic. This miscognition is properly speaking something which no doubt I put before you in a way from the beginning of what I have to pose here because of the requirements of my exposition: this is precisely the miscognition of the thinking subject's most radical relationship to the letter. Bertrand Russell sees everything, except this: the function of the letter. This is what I hope to be able to make you sense and to show you. Have confidence and follow me. You are going to see now how we are going to advance. What does he give as a definition of the proper name? A proper name is, he says, "word for particular" a word to designate particular things as such. Now, in every description there are two ways of approaching things: to describe them by their quality, their reference-points, their co-ordinates from the point of view of the mathematician, I mean to designate them as such. This point, for example, let us say that here I can tell you: it is on the right of the blackboard, at such a height more or less, it is white and so on and so on. That is a description, Mr Russell tells us. These are the ways of designating it, outside of any description, as particular: that is what I am going to call proper name.

The first proper name for Mr Russell - I already aluded to it in my preceding seminars - is the "this", *celui-ci* (this is the question). Here the demonstrative has passed to the rank of proper name. It is no less paradoxical that Mr Russell cooly envisages the possibility of calling this same point John. It must be recognised that we have all the same here a sign that perhaps there is something which goes beyond experience; because the fact is that it is rare for one to call a geometrical point John. Nevertheless Russell has never retreated from the most extreme expressions of his thought. It is all the same here that the linguist becomes alarmed, becomes all the more alarmed because between these two extremes of Russell's definition "word for particular", there is this altogether paradoxical consequence that, being logical with himself, Russell tells us that Socrates has no right to be considered by us as a proper name, it being given that for a long time now Socrates is no longer a particular. I am abbreviating what Russell says, I am even adding a touch of humour to it, but it is indeed the spirit of what he tells us, namely that Socrates was for us Plato's master, the man who drank the hemlock, etc... It is an abbreviated description; it is therefore no longer as such what he calls a word to designate the particular in its particularity.

It is quite certain that we see here that we are completely losing any of the advantages that a linguistic consciousness gives us, namely that, if we have to eliminate everything that in proper names is inserted into a community of the notion, we arrive at a sort of impasse which is indeed that against which Gardiner tries to oppose properly linguistic perspectives as such.

What is remarkable, is that a linguist who does not lack merit or experience or skill, because of an experience of the signifier that is all the more profound in that it is not for nothing that I pointed out to you that he is someone whose work in part unfolded in an especially suggestive and rich angle of experience which is that of hieroglyphics since he is an Egyptologist, is going, for his part, to be led to counter-formulate for us what appears to him to be characteristic of the function of the proper name.

He is going to elaborate this characteristic of the function of the proper name for us by referring himself to John Stuart Mill and to a Greek grammarian of the second century before Christ, called Dionysius Thrax.

Curiously, he is going to encounter in them something which, without ending up in the same paradox as Bertrand Russell, takes into account formulae which at first sight could appear as homonymie as one might say. The proper name, "*idion choluon*", moreover is only the translation of what the Greeks and specifically this Dionysius contributed on this point, *idion* as opposed to *choluon*. Is *idion* here to be confused with the particular, in Russell's sense of the term? Certainly not, because this is not what Mr Gardiner would have taken as a support, if what he were to find there was an agreement with his adversary. Unfortunately, he does not manage to specify the difference here between the term of ownership (*propriété*) as implied in what distinguishes the original Greek point of view, and the paradoxical consequences that a certain formalism arrives at. But under the shelter of the progress that the reference to the Greeks, then to Mill who is closer to him, fundamentally allows him, he highlights the following which is what is involved, namely what it is that functions in the proper name which allows us immediately to distinguish it, to spot it as such, as a proper name. With a good deal of pertinence. Mill, in approaching the problem puts the accent on the following: the fact is that the way a proper name is distinguished from a common noun, is from the angle of something which is at the level of meaning; the common noun appears to concern the object in so far as it brings a meaning with it. If something is a proper name, it is in so far as it is not the meaning of the object that it brings with it, but something which is of the order of a brand applied in a way to the object, superimposed on it, and which by this fact will be all the more in close solidarity if it is less open, because of the absence of meaning, to any participation in a dimension by which this object goes beyond itself, communicates with other objects. Mill here makes intervene moreover, brings into play a sort of little apologue linked to a story: the coming into play of an fantasy-image. It is the story of the role of the fairy Morgiana who wants to preserve some of her *protégés* from some plague or other that is destined for them because of the fact that in the town a chalk mark had been put on their doors. Morgiana helps them avoid succumbing to the effect of the exterminating plague by putting the same mark on all the other houses of the same town.

Here Sir Allan Gardiner has no trouble in demonstrating the miscognition that is implied in this apologue itself; it is that if Mill had had a more complete notion of what was involved in the incidence of the proper name, he should not only have taken into account the

identificatory character of the mark when it was being forged, but also its distinctive character, and as such the apologue would be more suitable if one were to say that the fairy Morgiana had also to mark the other houses with a sign in chalk, but one different from the first so that the person who comes into the town to fulfill his mission, searching for the house where he must bring to bear his fatal incidence, no longer knows how to find the sign that is in question, for want of knowing in advance precisely what sign among others is to be searched for.

This leads Gardiner to an articulation which is the following: in an obvious reference to this distinction of the signifier and the signified, which is fundamental for every linguist even if he does not put it forward as such in his discourse, Gardiner remarks - not unjustifiably - that it is not so much the absence of meaning that is involved in the usage of the proper name. Because moreover everything tells us that the opposite is the case: very often proper names have a meaning. Even M Durand, that has a meaning; Mr Smith means a smith and it is quite clear that it is not because Mr Smith may be perchance a smith that his name will be any the less a proper name. What constitutes the usage of the proper name, on this occasion of the word smith, Mr Gardiner tells us, is that the accent in its usage is put, not on the meaning, but on the sound *qua* distinctive. There is here obviously a very great advance of dimensions, which in most cases will allow us to perceive in practice that something functions more especially as a proper name. Nevertheless, it is all the same rather paradoxical precisely to see a linguist whose first definition of his material, the phonemes, is that they are precisely sounds which are distinguished from one another, giving as a particular trait to the function of the proper name that it is precisely because of the fact that the proper name is composed of distinctive sounds that we can characterise it as a proper name. Because of course, from a certain angle it is obvious that every use of language is precisely based on this: the fact is that a language is composed of a material which is that of distinctive sounds. Naturally this objection does not fail to appear to the author himself of this elaboration. It is here that he introduces the subjective notion - in the psychological sense of the term - of the attention accorded to the signifying dimension which is here the sonant material. Observe carefully that what I am highlighting here, is that the linguist who ought to strive to put to one side - I am not saying to totally eliminate from his field - anything which is a properly psychological reference, is all the same led here as such to take into account a psychological dimension as such, I mean that because of the fact that the subject, as he says, invests, pays special attention to what is the body of his interest when it is a question of a proper name. It is in so far as it carries a certain sonant difference that it is taken as a proper name, remarking that on the contrary in common discourse, what I am in the process of communicating for example to you at the moment, I am paying absolutely no attention to the sonant material of what I am telling you. If I paid too much attention to it I would soon see my discourse being killed off and drying up, I am trying first of all to communicate something to you. It is because I believe that I know how to speak French that the material which is effectively distinctive in its essence, comes to me; it is there as a vehicle to which I pay no attention; I am thinking of the goal that I am going to, which is to get across to you certain qualities of thinking that I am communicating to you.

Is it as true as all that that each time that we pronounce a proper name we are psychologically aware of the accent put on the sonant material as such? It is absolutely not true. I no longer think about the sonant material, Sir Allan Gardiner, when I am speaking to you about it any more than when I am speaking to you about *verwurtzeln* or anything else

whatsoever. Already my examples here are badly chosen because these are already words which I highlight as words by writing them on the blackboard. It is certain that whatever may be the value of the claim of the linguist here, it fails very specifically, in so far as it believes it has no other reference to bring into play except the psychological one. And it comes to grief on what?

Precisely in articulating something which is perhaps indeed the function of the subject, but of the subject defined completely differently than by anything whatsoever which is of the order of concrete psychology, of the subject in so far as we could, as we must, as we will define it properly speaking by its reference to the signifier. There is a subject which is not confused with the signifier as such, but which is unfolded in this reference to the signifier with traits, characters which are perfectly articulatable and formalisable and which ought to permit us to grasp, to discern as such the idiotic character - if I take up the Greek reference, it is because I am far from confusing it with the use of the word "particular" in Russell's definition - the "idiotic character" as such of the proper name. Let us try now to indicate in what sense I intend to make you grasp it.

In the sense in which for a long time I have been bringing into play at the level of the definition of the unconscious, the function of the letter. I brought this function of the letter into play for you first of all in a sort of poetic fashion; the seminar on the "purloined letter", in our very first years of elaboration, was there to indicate for you that something was to be taken well and truly in the literal sense of the term letter because it involved a missive, something that we could consider as being determining right into the psychical structure of the subject: a fable no doubt but one which rejoined the most profound truth in its structure as fiction. When I spoke about "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious" a few years later, I gave by means of metaphors and metonymies a more precise accent to it. We are arriving now, with this beginning we have made about the function of the unary trait, at something which is going to allow us to go further: I am posing that there cannot be a definition of the proper name except in the measure that we are aware of the relationship between the naming utterance and something which in its radical nature is of the order of the letter. You are going to say to me: here then there is a great difficulty, because there are many people who do not know how to read and who make use of proper names; and then proper names with the identification they determine existed before the appearance of writing. It is under this heading, under this register, "man before writing" that there has appeared a very good book which gives us the very last word on what is currently known about human evolution before history. And then how will we define ethnography about which certain people thought it plausible to advance that it was a matter properly speaking of everything that in the order of culture and of tradition is unfolded outside any possibility of documentation using the tool of writing.

Is it as true as all that?

There is a book which I can ask all of those who are interested by this - and already some people have anticipated my indication - to consult: it is the book by James Février on the history of writing. If you have the time during the holidays, I would ask you to refer to it. You will see there clearly being laid out there something whose general principle I indicate to you because in a way it is not fully separated out and it is everywhere present: it is that prehistorically speaking, if I can express myself in this way, I mean in the whole measure that

the stratographic layers of what we find bear witness to a technical and material evolution of human accessories, prehistorically everything that we can see about what happens in the advent of writing and therefore in the relationship of writing to language, everything happens in the following fashion whose result is here posed, articulated very precisely before you, everything happens in the following fashion: without any doubt we can admit that man, ever since he has been man, as a speaker has had vocal utterance. On the other hand, there is something which is of the order of these traits in connection with which I told you of the emotion of admiration that I experienced in rediscovering them marked in a little row on what seemed to be the rib of an antelope. There is in the prehistorical material an infinity of manifestations of traces which have no other character than that of being, like this trait, signifiers and nothing more. People speak about ideograms or about idéographies, what does that mean?

What we always see every time that one can bring into play this label of ideogram, is something which presents itself as being in effect very close to an image, but which becomes an ideogram in the measure that it loses, that it effaces more and more this character of image. Such is the birth of cuneiform writing: it is for example a bouquetin[1]s limb or head, in so far as after a certain moment this takes on an aspect for example like the following for the arm:

namely nothing about its origin is recognisable anymore. That transitions exist here, has no importance other than to strengthen us in our position, namely that what is created, at some level where we see writing emerging, is a baggage, a battery of something which one has no right to call abstract, in the sense that we employ it in our own day when we speak about abstract painting. For they are in effect traits which emerge from something which in its essence is figurative; and that is the reason why it is believed that it is an ideogram. But it is something figurative that is effaced, let us say the word which necessarily comes here to our minds: repressed, even rejected. What remains is something of the order of this unary trait in so far as it functions as distinctive, that it can on occasions play the role of brand. You are not unaware - or you are unaware, it does not matter - that at the Mas d'Azil, another site dug by Piette of whom I spoke to you the other day, pebbles and stones were found on which you see things like the following for example:

This would be in red, for example, on rather polished type of stones which have taken on a greenish colour. On another one you will even plainly see this which is all the more polished in that this sign, is what is used in set theory to designate the belonging of an element; and there is another one of them: when you look at it from a distance it is a dice; one sees five points, from the other you see two points, when you look from the other side it is again two points, it is not a dice like the ones we have and if you ask the curator, if you have the glass case opened for you, you see that on the other side of the five there is a bar, a 1. It is

therefore not altogether a dice, but it has an impressive appearance at first sight so that you might have thought that it was a dice. And when all is said and done you would not be wrong, because it is clear that a collection of moveable characters - as we can describe them - of this kind is something which in any case has a signifying function. You will never know what that was used for, if it was for drawing lots, if they were objects of exchange, tesserae properly speaking, objects of recognition or whether that was used for anything whatsoever that you can lucubrate on in terms of mystical themes. That changes nothing in the fact that what you have here are signifiers.

That the aforesaid Piette should have subsequently drawn Salomon Reinach into deliberating the tiniest little bit about the extremely archaic and primordial character of occidental civilisation because supposedly this is already an alphabet, is another affair: but this is to be judged as a symptom, but also to be criticized for its real import. That nothing of course allows us to speak about an extremely archaic writing in the sense that these moveable characters would have been used to make a sort of cave printing press, this is not what is in question. What is in question is the following in so far as one or other ideogram means something: to take the little cuneiform character that I drew for you earlier, this at the level of a very primitive stage of Accadian writing designates the heavens, there results from this that it is articulated "an"; the subject who looks at this ideogram names it "an" in so far as it represents the heavens. But what is going to result from it is that the position is reversed, that from a certain moment on this ideogram of the heavens is going to be used in a writing of a syllabic type, to support the syllable "an" which will at that time no longer have any relationship with the heavens. All ideographic or so-called ideographic writings without exception, carry the trace of the simultaneity of this use which is called ideographic with what is called the phonetic usage of the same material.

But what is not articulated, what is not highlighted, what it seems nobody has dwelt on up to now is the following: it is that everything happens as if the signifiers of writing having first of all been produced as distinctive marks, and we have historical attestations of this, because someone called Sir Flanders Petrie showed that well before the birth of these hieroglyphic characters, on the pottery which remains to us from what is called predynastic industry, we find as a brand on the pottery more or less all the forms which are found to be used subsequently, namely after a long historical evolution in the Greek, Etruscan, Latin, Phoenician alphabets everything that interests us to the highest degree as being characteristics of writing. You see what I am trying to get to. Even though in the final analysis what the Phoenicians at first, then the Greeks did most admirably, namely this something which allows a notation apparently as strict as possible of the functions of the phoneme with the help of writing, it is from a completely contrary perspective that we should see what is in question. Writing as material, as baggage, was waiting there - following on a certain process to which I will return: that of the formation, let us say of the brand, which today incarnates the signifier that I am speaking to you about: writing was waiting to be phoneticised and it is in the measure that it is vocalised, phoneticised like other objects, that writing learns, as I might say, to function as writing. If you read this work on the history of writing you will find at every instant the confirmation of what I am giving you here as a schema. Because every time there is a progress in writing it is in so far as a population tried to symbolise its own language, its own phonematic articulation with the help of a writing material borrowed from another population, and which was only in appearance well adapted to another language - because it was not better adapted, it is never well adapted of course, because what

relationship is there between this modulated and complex thing and a spoken articulation - but which was adapted by the very fact of the interaction that there is between a certain material and the usage that is given to it in another form of language, of phonematic, of syntax, whatever you wish, namely that it was in appearance the least appropriate instrument at the beginning for what one had to make of it.

In this way there takes place the transmission of what is first of all forged by the Sumerians, namely before it arrives at the point that we are at here; and when it is picked up by the Accadians all the difficulties come from the fact that this material fits in very badly with the phonematics that it has to enter into, but on the contrary once it has entered into it, it influences it as far as we can see and I will have to come back on this. In other words, what the advent of writing represents is the following: that something which is already writing if we consider that the characteristic is the isolation of the signifying trait, when it is named, manages to be able to serve as a support for this famous sound on which Mr Gardiner puts the whole accent concerning proper names.

What results from this?

There results from it that we should find, if my hypothesis is correct, something which proves its validity. It has been thought of more than once, there are swarms of them; but the most accessible, the most obvious, is the one that I am going to give you right away, namely that one of the characteristics of the proper name - I will of course have to come back on it and in a thousand forms, you will see a thousand demonstrations of it - is that the characteristic of the proper name is always more or less linked to this trait of its liaison not to the sound, but to the writing; and one of the proofs, the one that today I want to put in the forefront before you, is the following: it is that when we have writings which are undeciphered because we do not know the language that they incarnate, we are very embarrassed, because we have to wait to have a bilingual inscription, and this does still not take us very far if we know nothing at all about the nature of its language, namely about its phonetics.

What are we waiting for when we are cryptographers and linguists; it is to discern in this undeciphered text something which could indeed be a proper name because there is this dimension to which I am astonished Mr Gardiner did not have recourse, he who all the same has Champollion as the chief, the inaugural leader of his science, and that he does not remember that it is in connection with Cleopatra and Ptolemy that the whole deciphering of the Egyptian hieroglyphs began because in every language, Cleopatra is Cleopatra, and Ptolemy is Ptolemy. What distinguishes a proper name despite little appearances of borrowings - Cologne is called Köln - is that from one tongue to another its structure is preserved, its sonant structure no doubt; but this sonant structure is distinguished by the fact that precisely we should respect it above all others, and this by reason precisely of the affinity of the proper name with the brand, with the direct designation of the signifier as object, and here apparently we fall again and even in the most brutal fashion on the "word for particular". Does that mean that for all that I think Mr Bertrand Russell is correct here? Certainly not as you know. Because in the interval is the whole question precisely of the birth of the signifier starting from that of which it is the sign. What does that mean? It is here that there is inserted as such a function which is that of the subject, not of the subject in the psychological sense but of the subject in the structural sense.

How can we, under what algorithms can we, because it is a question of formalisation, place this subject? Is it in the order of the signifier that we have the means to represent that which concerns the genesis, the birth, the emergence of the signifier itself? It is towards this that my discourse is directed and I will take it up next year.

Seminar 7: Wednesday 10 January 1962

Let us evoke again what I said the last time: I spoke to you about the proper name in so far as we had encountered it on our path towards the identification of the subject, the second, regressive, type of identification to the unary trait of the Other. In connection with this proper name, we have encountered the attention that it has already attracted from a particular linguist and mathematician as they were philosophising.

What is the proper name?

It seems that it is not something which betrays itself at the first approach, but, in trying to resolve this question, we had the surprise of rediscovering the function of the signifier probably in the pure state; it was indeed along this path that the linguist himself directed us when he told us: a proper name is something that takes its value from the distinctive function of its sonant material, in saying which of course, he was only repeating the first fruit of the Saussurian analysis of language: namely that it is the distinctive trait, it is the phoneme as coupled to the totality of a certain battery, in so far uniquely that it is not what the others are, that we find it here as having to designate as what was the special trait of the usage of a subject-function in language: that of naming by one's own name.

It is certain that we could not content ourselves with this definition as such, but that we were for all that put on the track of something, and this something, we were able at least to approach, to circumscribe, by designating the fact that it is, as one might say, in a form latent to language itself, the function of writing, the function of the sign in so far as it itself is read as an object; it is a fact that the letters have names; we have too great a tendency to confuse them with the simplified names that they have in our alphabet which seem to become confused with the phonematic utterance to which the letter has been reduced: an a seems to mean the utterance a, a b is not properly speaking a b, it is only a b in so far as for the consonant b to make itself heard it has to be supported by a vocalic utterance. Let us look at things more closely, we will see for example, in Greek, *alpha*, *beta*, *gamma*, and what follows are well and truly names and, a more surprising thing, names which have no meaning in the Greek tongue in which they are formulated; in order to understand them, it must be realized that they reproduce the names corresponding to the letters of the Phoenician alphabet, of a proto-Semitic alphabet, an alphabet such as we can reconstitute it from a certain number of stages, of strata; from inscriptions we find the signifying forms of it: these names have a meaning either in textual Phoenician, or such as we can reconstitute it, this proto-Semitic tongue from which there are supposed to be derived a certain number - I am not insisting on their detail - of languages to the evolution of which is closely linked the first appearance of writing. Here, it is a fact that it is important at least that there should come into the foreground the fact that the very name *aleph* is related to the cow, whose head the first form of *aleph* supposedly reproduces in a schematised fashion in different positions: something of it still remains: we can still see in our capital A the shape of a cow's skull upside down with the horns which prolong it. Likewise, everyone knows that *beth* is the name for house. Naturally, the discussion becomes complicated, even obscure when one attempts to make a register, a catalogue of what the name of the other succeeding letters designates: when we arrive at *guimel*, we are only too tempted to rediscover in it the Arabic

name for camel, but unfortunately, there is a time obstacle: it is in the second millenium more or less before our era that these proto-Semitic alphabets might have been in a position to connote this name: the third letter of the alphabet, the camel, unfortunately for our comfort, had not yet made his appearance in the cultural usages of transport in these regions of the Near East.

A series of discussions begins therefore about what this name *guimel* might represent (here there is a development about the consonantal tertiarity of Semitic tongues and about the permanence of this form at the basis of every verbal form in Hebrew). It is one of the traces by which we can see that what is involved as regards one of the roots of the structure in which language is constituted, is this something which is called at first a reading of signs, in so far as already they appear before any use of writing.

I pointed out for you in ending the last time the usage in a surprising fashion, in a fashion which seems to anticipate - if the thing is to be admitted - by approximately a millenium, of the same signs in the most current alphabets, the alphabets which are the direct ancestors of our own: the Latin, Etruscan alphabets etc...:

which are found by the most extraordinary mimicry of history in an identical form in marks on the predynastic pottery of antique Egypt; they are the same signs, even though it is completely out of the question that they could at that moment have been used in any way for alphabetical purposes, alphabetic writing being at that moment far from being born.

You know that, earlier again, I made an allusion to these famous pebbles of the Mas d'Azil which are not the least important of the discoveries made at that place, to the point that at the end of the Paleolithic era a stage is designated by the term Azilian because it refers to the fact that we can define the point of technical evolution at the end of this Paleolithic era in the not properly speaking transitional, but pre-transitional period of the Paleolithic to the Neolithic.

On these pebbles of the Mas d'Azil, we find analogous signs, whose striking strangeness, resembling so closely the signs of our alphabet was able to lead astray, as you know, minds which were not especially mediocre, into all sorts of speculations which could only lead to confusion, even to ridicule.

It nevertheless remains that the presence of these elements is there to allow us to put our finger on something which is proposed as radical in what we could call the attachment of language to the real, a problem, of course, which is only posed in so far as we have first been able to see the necessity, in order to understand language, to order it through what we could call a reference to itself, to its own structure as such, which first of all posed for us what we could almost call its system, as something which is in no way satisfied by a purely utilitarian, instrumental, practical genesis, by a psychological genesis, which shows us language as an order, a register, a function whose problematic is always for us that we have to see it as capable of functioning outside any consciousness on the part of the subject and whose field as such we are led to define as characterised by structural values which are proper to it. From then on, it is necessary, for us, to establish the junction between its functioning and this

something which carries, in the real, its mark: is it centrifugal or centripetal? It is here around this problem that we are for the moment not brought to a halt, but pausing.

It is therefore in so far as the subject, in connection with something which is mark, which is sign, already reads before there is question of the signs of writing, that he perceives that signs can carry on occasions differently reduced, cut-off fragments of his speaking modulation, and that, reversing its function, it can subsequently be admitted to being as such its phonetic support, as they say, if you know that it is in this way that phonetic writing is born, that there is no writing to my knowledge, more exactly, that everything that is of the order properly speaking of writing, and not simply a drawing, is something which begins always with the combined usage of these simplified drawings, of these abbreviated drawings, of these effaced drawings that are in different ways incorrectly called ideograms in particular. The combination of these drawings with a phonetic usage of the same signs which appear to represent something, the combination of the two appears, for example obvious in the Egyptian hieroglyphs. Moreover, we might, just by looking at a hieroglyphic inscription, believe that the Egyptians had no other objects of interest than the quite limited baggage of a certain number of animals, of a great number of them, of a really surprising number of birds because of the incidence with which effectively birds intervene in inscriptions which need to be commemorated, of a plentiful number no doubt of instrumentalforms agrarian and others, of some signs also, which for all time, have been no doubt useful in their simplified form: the unary trait first of all, the bar, the cross of multiplication, which do not designate moreover the operations which were subsequently attached to these signs, but after all on the whole, it is quite evident at first glance that the baggage of drawings that we are dealing with has no proportion, congruence, with the effective diversity of objects which could be validly evoked in lasting inscriptions.

Moreover what you see, what I am trying to designate for you and what is important to designate in passing to dissipate confusions for those who have not the time to go and look

more closely at things, is for example, the figure of a horned owl, to take a form of night bird particularly well drawn, locatable in the classic inscriptions on stone, we see it coming back extremely often, and why? It is certainly not the case that this animal itself is ever involved; the fact is that the common name of this animal in antique Egyptian language can act as a support for the labial utterance m and that every time you see this animal figure, it is a matter of an m, and nothing else, which m moreover far from being represented simply in its literal value, every time you encounter this figure of the aforesaid horned owl, is susceptible to something which is made more or less like this (see the figure above).

The m will signify more than one thing, and in particular what we cannot, any more in this letter than in the Hebrew tongue when we have not the adjunction of vowel points, when we are not very fixed as regards the vocalic supports, we will not know exactly how this m is

completed, but in any case we know enough broadly speaking from what we can reconstruct of the syntax to know that this m can moreover represent a certain function, which is more or less an introductory function of the type: "Look!", a function for fixing the attention, as one might say, a *voici*: or again in other cases where very probably it must be distinguished by its vocalic support, representing one of the forces, not of negation, but of something which must be specified as a stronger accent of the negative verb, of something which isolates negation in a verbal form, in a conjugatable form, in a form not simply of *ne*, but of something of which it is said that it is not. In short, it is a particular tense of a verb which we know which is certainly negative, or even more exactly a particular form in two negative verbs: the verb *immi* on the one hand, which seems to mean not to be and the verb *gehom* on the other hand which would seem to indicate more especially effective non-existence.

This is to tell you in this connection, and introducing in this connection in an anticipatory fashion the function that it is not by chance that what we find ourselves confronted with as we go along this path, is the relationship which is here incarnated, immediately manifested of the most primitive coalescence of the signifier with something which immediately poses the question of what is negation, of what it is closest to. Is negation simply a connotation which then nevertheless is proposed as the question of the moment when with respect to the existence, to the exercise, to the constitution of a signifying chain there is introduced a sort of additional index, a siglum of virtual words as it is put, which ought therefore always to be conceived of as a sort of secondary invention required by the necessities of the utilisation of something which is situated at different levels: at the level of the response, what is put in question by the signifying interrogation, it is not there (*cela n'y est pas*); is it at the level of the response that this "is it not" *(n'est-ce*) seems indeed to be manifested in language as the possibility of the pure utterance of the negation no, is it on the other hand in the mark of relationships that negation is imposed, is suggested by the necessity of disjunction: such a thing is not if another one is, one cannot be with the other? In short, the instrument of negation - we know it certainly, no less than the others - but then as regards the genesis of language, one is reduced to making of the signifier something which ought to be more or less elaborated starting from signs of emotion: the problem of negation is something which is posed as one properly speaking of a jump, indeed of an *impasse*.

If, in making a signifier, something quite different, something whose genesis is problematic, carries us to a level of interrogation about a certain existential relationship, the one which as such is already situated in a negativity-reference, the mode in which negation appears, in which the signifier of an effective negativity is experienced, can emerge, is something which takes on a quite different interest, and which is not then by chance, without being of a nature to illuminate us when we see that from its first problematics the structuring of language is identified, as one might say, by the location of the first conjugation of a vocal utterance with a sign as such, namely with something which already is referred to a first manipulation of the object; we had called it simplificatory when it was a matter of defining the genesis of the trait what is more destroyed, more effaced than an object. If it is from the object that the trait emerges, it is something of the object that the trait retains: precisely its unicity. The effacing, the absolute destruction of all the other emergences, of all these other prolongations, of all these other appendices, of all the other ramified palpitating things there may be, well, this relationship of the object to the birth of something which is here called the sign, in so far as it interests us in the birth of the signifier, this indeed is what we have dwelt on and about which it is not unpromising for us to have made, as one might say, a discovery,

because I believe that it is one. This indication that there is, let us say, at a time, a locatable time, one historically defined, a moment at which something is there to be read, read with language when there is still no writing, it is by the reversal of this relationship, and this relationship of reading to the sign, that writing can subsequently be born in so far as it can serve to connote phonematicisation.

But it appears at this level, that precisely the proper name in so far as it specifies as such the rooting of the subject, is more specially linked than any other, not to the phonematicisation as such, to the structure of the language, but to what already in the language is ready, as one might say, to receive this informing by the trait. If the proper name still carries even for us and in our usage, the trace under this form that it is not translated from one language to another, because it is simply transformed, it is transferred, and this indeed is its characteristic: I am called Lacan in every tongue, and you also, everyone by your name. This is not a contingent fact, a fact of limitation, of impotence, a senseless fact, because on the contrary, it is here that there lies, that there resides the very particular property of the proper name in signification.

Is this not designed to make us question ourselves about what is at stake at this radical, archaic point that we must necessarily suppose to be at the origin of the unconscious, namely of this thing through which, in so far as the subject speaks, all he can do is to advance further along the chain, in the unfolding of enunciations, but that, directing himself towards the enunciations, by this very fact in the enunciating, he elides something which is properly speaking what he cannot know, namely the name of what he is *qua* enunciating subject.

In the act of enunciating, there is this latent nomination which can be conceived of as the primary kernel as signifier of what is subsequently going to be organised as a turning chain, such as I have always represented it for you from this centre, this speaking heart of the subject which we call "the unconscious".

Here, before we advance any further, I think I should indicate something which is only the convergence, the point of a thematic which we have tackled already on several occasions in this seminar, on several occasions by taking it up at the different levels at which Freud was led to approach, to represent, to represent the system, the first psychical system as it was necessary for him to represent it in some way to give a sense of what was in question: the system which is articulated as unconscious, preconscious, conscious.

On several occasions, I had to describe on this blackboard, in differently elaborated forms, the paradoxes with which the formulations of Freud, at the level of the *Entwurf*, for example, confront us.

Today, I will limit myself to a topologisation as simple as the one that he gives at the end of the *Traumdeutung*, namely that of the layers across which there can occur breakthroughs, thresholds, eruptions from one level into another, such as the one which interests us to the highest degree: the passage from the unconscious into the preconscious for example, which is in effect a problem, which is a problem moreover - I note it with satisfaction in passing, it is certainly not the least effect that I might expect from the effort of rigour into which I am drawing you, that I am imposing on myself for you here, that those who listen to me, who understand me, should raise themselves to a degree that is liable even on occasion to go further - well then, in their very remarkable text published in *Les Temps*

modernes on the subject of the unconscious, Laplanche and Leclaire - I am not distinguishing for the moment the share each of them has in this work - question themselves about what ambiguity remains in the Freudian enunciating concerning what happens when we can speak about the passage of something which was in the unconscious and passes into the preconscious. Does that mean that it is only a matter of a change of cathexis, as they pose very correctly the question, or indeed is there a double inscription? The authors do not conceal their preference for the double inscription, they indicate it to us in their text.

This however is a problem that the text leaves open, and which after all what we are dealing with, will allow us this year, to contribute perhaps some responses to or at the very least some precise details.

I would like, in an introductory fashion, to suggest the following to you: it is that if we ought to consider that the unconscious is the locus of the subject where it speaks (*ça parle*) we come now to approach this point where we can say that something, without the subject knowing it, is profoundly altered by the retroactive effects of the signifier implied in the word. It is in so far as and for the least of his words, the subject speaks, that he cannot avoid always, once more, naming himself without knowing it, without knowing with what name. Can we not see that, in order to situate the relationships between the unconscious and the preconscious, the border for us is not to situated first of all somewhere inside, as they say, a subject who is simply supposed to be simply the equivalent of what is called in the broad sense, the psychical?

The subject that we are dealing with, and especially if we try to articulate it as the unconscious subject, requires a different way of establishing of the frontier. What the preconscious is in so far as what interests us in the preconscious is language, the language here that effectively we not alone see, hear being spoken, but that punctuates, articulates our thoughts. Everyone knows that the thoughts involved at the level of the unconscious, even if I say that they are of course structured like a language, it is in so far as they are structured in the final analysis and at a certain level like a language that they interest us, but the first thing to be recognised, is that it is not easy to express those we are speaking about in common language. What is involved, is to see that the articulated language of common discourse, with respect to the subject of the unconscious in so far as it interests us, is outside, an "outside" which connects to it what we call our intimate thoughts, and this language which flows to the outside not in an immaterial fashion, because we know well, because all sorts of things are there to represent it to us, we know what perhaps was not known by cultures where everything happened in the breath of the word, we who have before us kilos of language, and who know, what is more, how to inscribe the most fleeting word on discs.

We know well that what is spoken, the effective discourse, the preconscious discourse is entirely homogenisable as something which takes place outside: language as a substance is everywhere and here, there is effectively an inscription on a magnetic tape if necessary. The problem of what happens when the unconscious comes to make itself heard is where we see the problem of the border between this unconscious and this preconscious.

How should this border be seen?

It is the problem that, for the moment, I am going to leave open, but what we can, on this occasion, indicate, is that in passing from the unconscious into the preconscious, what is

constituted in the unconscious encounters an already existing discourse, as one might say, an interplay of liberated signs, not only interfering with the things of the real, but one might say closely woven like a mycelium into their gaps. Moreover, is this not the true reason for what one could call the idealist fascination, entanglement.

In philosophical experience, if man perceives or believes he perceives that he never has anything but ideas of things, namely, that in the final analysis he only knows ideas of things, it is precisely because already in the world of things, this parcelling into a universe of discourse, is something which can absolutely not be disentangled. The preconscious, in a word, is already in the real, and if the status of the unconscious for its part poses a problem, it is in so far as it is constituted at a completely different level, at a more radical level of the emergence of the act of enunciating. In principle there is no objection to the passage of something from the unconscious into the preconscious, what tends to manifest itself, the contradictory character of which Laplanche and Lecaire note so well. The unconscious has as such its status as something which by position and by structure is not able to penetrate to the level where it is susceptible to a preconscious reorganisation, and nevertheless, we are told, this unconscious, at every moment, makes the effort, pushes in the direction of making itself recognised; undoubtedly, and with good reason, it is because it is at home as one might say in a universe structured by discourse.

Here, the passage from the unconscious towards the preconscious is only, one might say, a sort of normal irradiation effect of what is turning around in the constitution of the unconscious as such, of what maintains present in the unconscious the primary and radical functioning of the articulation of the subject *qua* speaking subject.

What must be seen, is that the order which is supposed to be that of the unconscious, the preconscious, arriving then at the conscious, is not to be accepted without being revised, and one can say that in a certain fashion, in so far as we must admit what is preconscious as defined, as being in the circulation of the world, in the real circulation, we must conceive that what happens at the level of the preconscious is something which we have to read in the same fashion, in the same structure, as the one I tried to get you to sense at this root-point where something comes to contribute to language what one could call its final sanction: this reading of signs, at the actual level of the life of the constituted subject, of a subject elaborated through a long history of culture, what happens, is that for the subject a reading outside of what is all-encompassing because of the presence of language in the real and at the level of the conscious, that level which, for Freud, always seemed to be a problem he never stopped indicating that it was certainly the object of future specification, of more precise articulation as regards its economic function at the level that he describes it for us at the beginning, at the moment when he is separating ou1 his thought let us remember how he describes for us this protective layer that he designates by the term , it is above all something which, for him, is to be compared with the surface film of sensory organs, namely essentially with something which filters, which blocks out, which only retains this index *oi* quality whose function we can show is homologous with this inde: of reality which just allows us to appreciate the state that we are in, enough to be sure that we are not dreaming, if it is a matter of something analogous, it is really what is visible thai we are seeing. In the same way, consciousness, compared to whal constitutes preconsciousness and constructs for us this world closely woven by our thoughts, consciousness is the surface through which this something which is

the heart of the subject, receives, as one might say, from the outside his own thoughts, his own discourse.

Consciousness is there in order that the unconscious, as one might say, may much rather refuse what comes to it from the preconscious or choose in it in the most precise fashion what it needs for its own purposes; and what is that?

It is indeed there that we encounter this paradox which is the one that I called the intersection of systemic functions at this first level so essential to recognise in Freud's articulation: the unconscious is represented for you by him as a flux, as a world, as a chain of thoughts. No doubt consciousness also is made up of the consistency of perceptions. Reality testing is the articulation of perceptions between themselves in a world.

Inversely, what we find in the unconscious, is this significant repetition which leads us from something which are called thoughts, *Gedänken*, which are very well formed, Freud says, to a concatenation of thoughts, which escapes from us.

Now, what is Freud himself going to tell us? That what the subject seeks at the level of both one and the other of these systems, that at the level of the preconscious, what we seek is properly speaking the thought-identity, this was what was elaborated by this whole chapter of philosophy; the effort of our organisation of the world, the logical effort, is properly speaking to reduce the different to the identical, it is to identify thought to thought, proposition to proposition in differently articulated relationships which form the very texture of what is called formal logic, which poses for someone who considers in an extremely ideal fashion the edifice of science as being able to be or as having even virtually been already achieved, which poses the problem of knowing whether effectively, every science of knowledge, every grasp of the world in an ordered and articulated way must not end up in tautology.

It is not for nothing that you have heard me on several occasions evoke the problem of tautology and there is no way that we will be able to terminate our discourse this year without forming a definitive judgement on it.

The world therefore, this world whose reality-function is linked to the perceptual-function is all the same that about which we make no progress in our knowledge except by way of thought identity. This is in no way a paradox for us, but what is paradoxical, is to read in the text of Freud that what the unconscious seeks, what it wants, as one might say, what is the root of its functioning, of its being brought into play, is perceptual-identity, namely that this would have literally no meaning if what was involved, was only the following: that the relationship of the unconscious to what it seeks in its own mode of return, is precisely what in the once perceived is identically identical, as one might say, is what was perceived at that time, is this ring that he put on his finger with the stamp of that time, and it is precisely this that will always be lacking: the fact is that in every other kind of reappearance of what corresponds to the original signifier, at the point where there is the mark that the subject has

received from anything whatsoever at the origin of the *Urverdrängt*, there will always be lacking in anything whatsoever that comes to represent it, this mark which is the unique mark of the original appearance of an original signifier which once presented itself at the moment when the point, the something of the *Urverdrängt* in question passed to an unconscious existence, to the insistence in this internal order which the unconscious is, between, on the one hand what it receives from the outside world and where there are things to be bound: from the fact that by binding them in a signifying form, it can only receive them in their difference, and this indeed is the reason why he cannot in any way be satisfied by this seeking of perceptual-identity as such if it itself is what specifies it as unconscious.

This gives us the triad: conscious, unconscious, preconscious, in a slightly modified order and in a certain fashion, which justifies the formula which I already tried to give you once of the unconscious, in telling you that it was between perception and consciousness, as one says between the skin and the flesh (*entre cuir et chair*). This indeed is something which, once we have posed it indicates that we should refer ourselves to this point from which I started in formulating things beginning with the philosophical experience of the subject's search, as it exists in Descartes in so far as it is strictly different from anything that was able to be done at any other moment of philosophical reflection, in so far as it is indeed the subject who is himself questioned, who tries as such to be so: the subject in so far as he goes at it in very truth, that what is questioned here, is not the real and the apparent, the relationship between what exists and what does not exist, of what remains and what disappears, but to know whether one can trust the Other, whether as such what the subject receives from outside is a reliable sign. The "I think, therefore I am" which I sufficiently triturated before you for you to be able to see now more or less how the problem of it is posed. This "I think" about which we have said that it is properly speaking meaningless - and this is what gives it its value - it has not, of course, any more meaning than the "I lie", but he can do nothing starting from its articulation but realize himself that "therefore I am" is not the consequence that he draws from it, but the fact is that he cannot help thinking from the moment when truly he begins to think, namely that it is in so far as this impossible "I think" changes to something which is of the order of the preconscious that it implies as signified, and not as consequence, as ontological determination, that it implies as signified that "I think" refers back to an "I am" which henceforth is no more than the x of this subject which we are seeking, namely of what there is at the beginning in order that there should be produced the identification of this "I think". Notice that this continues. And so on. If "I think that I think that I am" - I am no longer being ironical: if "I think that I can do no other than be a *pense-à-être* or a thinking being: the "I think" which is here the denominator sees very easily being produced the same duplicity, namely that I can do nothing other than to perceive that thinking that I think, this "I think" which is at the end of my thinking, over my thinking, is itself an "I think" which reproduces the "I think, therefore I am". Does this go on *ad infinitum*?

Certainly not: it is also one of the most usual modes of philosophical exercise when people began to establish such a formula to apply that what one was able to retain from it in terms of effective experience is in a way indefinitely multipliable like in a game of mirrors: I think - I am

I am - <u>I think</u>

I am - <u>I think</u>

I am - I think.

There is a little exercise which is the one that I devoted myself to at one time - my little personal sophism - that of the assertion of anticipated certainty in connection with the game of disks where it is from noting what the two others do that a subject has to deduce the even or odd mark on his own back, namely something very close to what is involved here.

It is easy to see in the articulation of this game that far from the hesitation which it is, in effect, quite possible to see being produced, because if I see the others deciding too quickly about the same decision that I want to take, namely that I am like them marked with a disk of the same colour, if I see them drawing their conclusions too quickly, I will draw from it precisely the conclusion, I can in this case see some hesitation arising for myself, namely that if they have seen so quickly who they were, it must be that I myself am distinct enough from them to locate myself, because if one is logical, they must be thinking the same thing: we see them oscillating also and saying to themselves: let's have a second look at it; namely that the three subjects we are dealing with will have the same hesitation together, and one can easily show that it is effectively only after three hesitating oscillations that they can really have and will certainly have and in a way fully, figured out through the scansion of their hesitation, the limitations of all the contradictory possibilities.

There is something analogous here: one cannot indefinitely include all the "I think, therefore I am"'s in an "I think"; where is the limit? This is what we cannot immediately say and know so easily here. But the question that I am posing, or more exactly the one that I am asking you to follow, because, of course, you are perhaps going to be surprised, but it is subsequently that you are going to see coming here being joined on what can modify, I mean subsequently render operational, what seemed to me at first sight only a sort of game, even what is called a mathematical recreation. If we see that something in the Cartesian understanding, which certainly terminates in its enunciating at different levels, because moreover there is something which cannot go any further than what is inscribed here, and it is necessary that he should make intervene something which comes, not from the pure elaboration, "on what can I base myself?". What is viable? He is indeed going to be led like everybody else to try to manage with what is experienced but in the identification which is the one which is made to the unary trait, is there not enough to support this unthinkable and impossible point of the "I think" at least under the form of its radical difference?

If it is through *one* that we depict it, this "I think" I repeat in so far as it only interests us in the measure that it is related to what is happening at the origin of nomination in so far as it is what concerns the birth of the subject, the subject is what names itself. If naming is first of all something which has to deal with a reading of the trait *one* designating absolute difference, we can ask ourselves how I might depict the sort of "I think" which here is constituted in a way retroactively simply by the reprojection of what is constituted as the signified of the "I think", namely the same thing, the unknown of what is at the origin under the form of the subject. If the 1 that I am indicating here in the definitive form that I am going to leave to it is something which, here, is supposed in a total problematic, namely that it is just as much true as it is not because it is only thinking about thinking, is nevertheless

$$i - \cfrac{1}{i-\cfrac{1}{i-\cfrac{1}{i-1}}}$$

correlative, indispensable, and this is what gives its force to the Cartesian argument about every apprehension of a thought once it is linked up - the path is opened to him towards a *cogitatum* of something which is articulated as "*cogito ergo sum*".

I will skip over for you today the intermediary steps because you will see subsequently where they come from, and because after all, at the point that I have got to, I had to pass through them. There is something which I will say is at once paradoxical - why not say amusing - but I will repeat it for you: if this has an interest, it is in so far as it is operational: a formula like this in mathematics, is what is called a series (see the schema): I will pass over here something which may immediately, for anyone who is used to mathematics, be posed as a question: if it is a series, is it a convergent series? What does that mean? That means that if instead of having i you had l's everywhere, an effort at putting it into form would allow you immediately to see that this series is convergent namely if I remember rightly, it is equal to something like: $\frac{-1+\sqrt{5}}{2}$

The important thing, is that this means that if you carry out the operations in question:

$1 + 1 = 2$
$1 + \frac{1}{2} = 1\frac{1}{2}$
$= 5/3$ etc.....

you have therefore the values which, if you carry them forward, will take more or less this form here until they come to converge on a perfectly constant value which is called a limit:

$$i + \cfrac{1}{i+\cfrac{1}{i+\cfrac{1}{i+1}}}$$

Finding a convergent formula in the preceding formula would be all the less interesting for us in so far as the subject is a function which tends towards a perfect stability, but what is interesting - and this is where I am skipping something, because - to make my position clear - I do not see any other way except that of beginning to project the task and come back afterwards to clarify things - take i, trusting me for the value that it has exactly in the theory of numbers where it is called imaginary - this is not a homonymy which, simply by itself, appears to me to justify here this methodical extrapolation, this little moment of a leap and of trust which I am asking you to make - this imaginary value is the following: $\sqrt{}$ You know enough elementary arithmetic all the same to know that the square root of minus 1 is not any real number: there is no negative number for example which could in any way, fulfill the function of being the root of some number or other of which the root of minus one would be the factor.

Why?

Because in order to be the square root of a negative number, that means that raised to the power of two, that would give a negative number. Now, no number, raised to the power of two, can give a negative number, because every negative number that is raised to the power of two becomes positive. That is why the root of minus 1 is nothing but algorithm, but it comes in handy.

If you define as a complex number any number composed of a real number to which there is joined an imaginary number, namely a number which cannot in any way be added to it, because it is not a real number, made up of the product of the root of minus 1 with b,

$$i = \sqrt{-1}\, b$$

if you define this complex number, you can perform with this complex number, and with the same success, all the operations that you can perform with real numbers and when you have started off on this path you will not only have the satisfaction of seeing that this works, but that it allows you to make discoveries, namely to see that numbers constituted in this way have a value which allows you specifically to operate in a purely numerical fashion with what are called vectors, namely with magnitudes which, for their part, will be not only provided with a value representable in a different way by a length but what is more, that thanks to the complex numbers you can implicate in your connotation, not alone the aforesaid magnitude, but its direction, and especially the angle that it makes with another magnitude, in such a way that , which is not a real number, proves from the operational point view to have a singularly more astounding power, as I might , than anything that you had at your disposition up to then by limiting yourself to the series of real numbers.

This in order to introduce you to what this little i is. And then if one supposes that what we are trying to connote here in a numerical fashion is something we can operate on by giving it this conventional value: what does that mean?

That just as we have applied ourselves to elaborating the function of unity as a function of the radical difference in the determination of this ideal centre of the subject which is called the ego-ideal, in the same way subsequently - and for a good reason, the fact is that we will identify it to what we have introduced up to now in the connotation which is personal to ourselves as namely the imaginary function of the phallus - we are going to occupy ourselves with extracting from this connotation, all the ways it can be of use to us in an operational fashion; but, meanwhile, the utility of its introduction at this level is illustrated by the following: it is that if you seek out what it does, this function of the root of minus one plus one over the root of minus one plus, etc... in other words, it is which is there everywhere that you have seen i, you see appearing a function which is not at all a convergent function, which is a periodic function: which is easily calculable; it is a value which is renewed as one might say every third time in the series.

$$\sqrt{-1} + \frac{1}{\sqrt{-1}} + \frac{1}{\sqrt{-1+1}}$$

The series is defined as follows: $i+1$ first term of the series $i+\frac{1}{i+1}$ second term of the series and third term.

You rediscover periodically, namely every third time in the series this same value, the same three values which I am going to give you:

The first is $i+1$, namely the enigma-point that we are at in order to ask ourselves what value we can indeed give to i in order to connote the subject *qua* subject before any nomination, a problem which interests us.

The second value you find, namely $i+\frac{1}{i+1}$ is strictly equal to $\frac{i+1}{2}$ and this is rather interesting; because the first thing that wf encounter is the following: it is that the essential relationship of this something that we are seeking as being the subject before it is named, to the use that he can make of his name quite simply as being the signifier of what there is to be signified, namely of the question of the signified precisely of this addition of himself to his own name, it is immediatelv to divide it in two, $\frac{i+1}{2}$ to bring it about that there remains only a half of literally of what there was present. As you can see, my words are not prepared, but they are all the same carefully calculated and these things are all the same the fruit of an elaboration which I have tried to find my way into in dozens of different ways while assuring myself of a certain number of controls, having subsequently a certain number of switching points in the times that are going to follow.

The third value, namely, when you stop the term of the series there will be quite simply 1, something which in several ways, can have for us the value of a sort of confirmation as a buckle, I mean that it is to know whether it is at the third moment, a curious thing, a moment towards which no philosophical meditation has pushed us in any special way to dwell on, namely at the moment of the "I think" in so far as it is even an object of thinking and that it takes itself as an object, it is at that moment that we seem to manage to reach this famous unity whose satisfying character for defining anything whatsoever is assuredly in no doubt, but about which we can ask ourselves whether it is indeed the same unity that is involved as the one that was involved at the beginning, namely in the primordial initiating identification. In any case I have to leave this question open for today.

Seminar 8: *Wednesday 17 January 1962*

I do not think that however paradoxical the symbolisation on which I ended my discourse the last time may appear at first approach, making the subject be supported by the mathematical symbol of the root of - 1, I do not think that everything in this could have been only pure surprise for you. I mean that in recalling the Cartesian approach itself, one cannot forget what this approach leads its author to. Here he is setting off with a good stride towards the truth, and what is more: this truth is in no way, for him as for us, placed in the parenthesis of a dimension which distinguishes it from reality, this truth towards which Descartes advances with a conquering stride is indeed that of the thing, and this leads us to what? To emptying the world to the extent of no longer leaving anything of it except this void which is called extension. How is this possible?

As you know, he is going to choose as an example: melt a block of wax. Is is by chance that he chooses this material or is he drawn to it because it is the ideal material for receiving the divine seal, signature. Nevertheless, after this quasi-alchemical operation that he carries out before us, he is going to make it vanish, be reduced to being nothing more than pure extension, no longer anything on which an impression can be made. If precisely in his approach, there is no longer any relationship between the signifier and any natural trace, if I can express myself in this way, and very specifically the natural trace *par excellence* which the imaginary of the body constitutes, this is not to say precisely that this imaginary can be radically rejected. But it is separated off from the operation of the signifier. It is what it is: an effect of the body, and as such impugned as witness to any truth; there is nothing to be done with it except to live with it, with this imaginary theory of the passions, but certainly not to think with it: man thinks with a discourse reduced to the facts of what one could call natural light, namely a logistical group which, consequently, could have been different if God had willed it (the theory of the passions).

What Descartes is still not able to see, is that we can will it in his place, it is that some 150 years after his death set theory was born - he would have loved it - in which even the figures one and zero are only the object of a literal definition, of a purely formal axiomatic definition, a neutral element. He could have done without the truthful God, the deceiving God not being able to be other than the one who might cheat in the solution of the equations themselves. But nobody has ever seen that: there is no miracle in the combinatory, if not the meaning that we give it; every time we give it a meaning it is already suspect. That is why the Word exists, but not Descartes' God. For Descartes' God to exist, it would be necessary for us to have some beginnings of a proof of his own creative will in the domain of mathematics. But, it is not he who invented the transfinite, the quantum, it is we. This indeed is why history bears witness to us that the great mathematicians who opened up this beyond of divine logic, Euler in the first place, were very frightened; they knew what they were doing, they encountered, not the empty extension of Descartes' approach, which finally, despite Pascal, no longer frightens anyone because people are encouraged more and more to go and live in it, but the void of the Other, a much more terrifying place because someone is necessary there. This is why, in circumscribing in the closest possible way the question of the meaning of the subject as it is evoked in Cartesian meditation, I think I am doing nothing more here - even if

I am trespassing on a domain which has been gone over so often that it ends up by appearing to become reserved to particular people - I do not believe I am doing something which can fail to be of interest, this even in so far as the question is a current one, more current that any other, and still more current - I think I will be able to show it to you - in psychoanalysis than elsewhere.

What I am therefore going to lead you towards today, is a consideration, not about the origin, but about the position of the subject, in so far as at the root of the act of the word there is something, a moment at which he is inserted into the structure of language, and this structure of language, in so far as it is characterized at this original point, I am trying to circumscribe, to define, in terms of a thematic which, in a vivid way, is incarnated, is included in the idea of an original contemporaneity of writing and of language, and that writing is signifying connotation, that the word does not create it so much as bind it, that the genesis of the signifier at a certain level of the real which is one of its axes or roots, is no doubt for us the principle way of connoting the coming to light of effects, called effects of meaning.

In this first relationship of the subject, in what he projects before him, *nachträglich* by the simple fact of engaging himself by his word, first of all in a stammering way, then in a playful, indeed confusing way in the common discourse, what he projects of his act backwards, there is produced this something which we have the courage to go towards in order to interrogate it in the name of the formula: "*Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*", which we would tend to push towards a very slightly differently accentuated formula in the sense of a being having been, of a *Gewesen* which subsists in as much as the subject advancing towards it cannot ignore that a work of profound reversing of his position is necessary for him to grasp himself there. Already there, something directs us towards something which is very controversial, suggests to us the remark that all by itself, in its existence, negation has not failed always to conceal a question. What does it suppose? Does it suppose the affirmation on which it is based? No doubt. But is this affirmation for its part simply the affirmation of something of the real which has been simply removed? It is not without surprise, it is not either without malice that we can find from the pen of Bergson some lines in which he rises up against every idea of nothingness, a position quite in conformity with a thinking fundamentally attached to a sort of naive realism.

There is more, and not at all less, in the idea of an object conceived of as not existing, than in the idea of the same object conceived of as existing, because the idea of the object not existing is necessarily the idea of the object existing with, in addition, the representation of an exclusion of this object by the present reality taken as a whole.

Can we be satisfied with situating it in this way? For a moment, let us direct our attention towards negation itself. This is the way in which we are going to be able to satisfy ourselves, to situate its effects in a simple experience of its use, of its employment.

To lead you to this place along all the paths of a linguistic enquiry is something that we cannot refuse ourselves. Besides, already, we have advanced along this direction, and if you remember, allusion has been made here for a long time to the certainly very suggestive, even illuminating, remarks of Pichon or of Damourette, in their collaboration on a grammar which is very rich and very fruitful to consider, a grammar especially of the French tongue in which their remarks come to highlight that there is not, they say, properly speaking any

negation in French. What they mean is that what to their eyes is this simplified form of radical ablation, as it is expressed at the end of certain German sentences, I mean at the end because it is indeed the term *nicht* which by coming in a surprising fashion at the conclusion of a sentence carried on in a register that allowed the listener to remain up to its end in the most complete indétermination and fundamentally in a position of belief; by this *nicht* which erases it, the whole signification of the sentence finds itself excluded, excluded from what? From the field of the admissibility of the truth. Pichon remarks, not without relevance, that the most ordinary division, split, of negation in French between a ne on the one hand, and an auxiliary word, the *pas*, the *personne*, the *rien*, the *point*, the *mie*, the *goutte*, which occupy a position in the enunciative sentence which remains to be specified with respect to an ne named at first, that this suggests to you specifically, by looking closely at the separate usage that can be made of it, to attribute to one of these functions a signification called discordant, and to the other an exclusive signification.

It is precisely the exclusion from the real which would be the responsibility of the *pas*, the *point*, while the ne would express this dissonance sometimes so subtle that it is only a shadow, and specifically in this famous ne of which you know that I made a great fuss in order for the first time precisely to show in it something like the trace of the subject of the unconscious, this *ne* which is called expletive. The ne of this "*je crains qu'il ne vienne*" (I am afraid that he will come) you immediately put your finger on the fact that it means nothing other than "I was hoping that he would come", it expresses the discordance of your own feelings with respect to this person, that it carries in a way its trace which is all the more suggestive because it is incarnated in its signifier because in psychoanalysis we call it ambivalence: "*je crains qu'il ne vienne*", does not express so much the ambiguity of our feelings as by this overloading show how much, in certain types of relationships, there is able to arise, to emerge, to be reproduced, to be marked in a gap, this distinction between the subject of the act of enunciating as such, with respect to the subject of the enunciation, even if he is not present at the level of the enunciation in a fashion which designates him. "*Je crains qu'il ne vienne*" is a third; it would be if what was said was "*je crains que je ne fasse*" (I am afraid that I will make) - which is hardly ever said, even though it is conceivable - which would be at the level of the enunciation; nevertheless, it is of little importance that he can be designated - you see moreover that I can bring him into it - at the level of the enunciation; and a subject, masked or not at the level of enunciating, represented or not, leads us to pose the question of the function of the subject, of its form, of what it supports, and not to deceive ourselves, not to believe that it is simply the I which, in the formulation of the enunciation, designates him as the one who in the instant which defines the present, carries the word. The enunciating subject has perhaps always another support. What I articulated, is that, much more, this little ne, graspable here in its expletive form, is where we should recognise the support properly speaking in an exemplary case, and moreover this is not to say of course, that we should recognise its exclusive support in this exceptional phenomenon.

Usage of the tongue is going to allow me to accentuate before you in a very banal fashion, not so much Pichon's distinction - in fact, I do not believe it is sustainable up to its descriptive term; phenomenologically it reposes on the idea, inadmissible for us, that one can in some way fragment the movements of thinking. Nevertheless, you have this linguistic consciousness which allows you to appreciate immediately the originality of the case where you have simply, or you can in the present usage of the tongue - it was not always this way: in archaic times the form that I am now going to formulate before you was the more

common one; in every tongue an evolution is marked by a sliding of the forms of negation that linguists try to characterise. The direction in which this sliding takes place - later I will perhaps give its general line, it is expressed in what the specialists write, but for the moment let us take the simple example of what is quite simply available to us all - in the distinction between two equally admissible, equally acceptable, equally expressive, equally common formulae: that of "*je ne sais*" (I do not know) and "*j'sais pas*" (don't know). You see, I think immediately what the difference between them is, the difference of accent. This "*je ne sais*" is not without some mannerism, it is literary, it is better all the same than "*jeunes nations*" (young nations) but it is of the same order. They are both Marivaux, if not rivals (*rivaux*).

What this *je ne sais* expresses is essentially something quite different to the other code of expression to the one of *j'sais pas*: it expresses oscillation, hesitation, even doubt. If I evoked Marivaux, it is not for nothing: it is the ordinary form in which veiled avowals can be made on the stage. As regards this "*je ne sais*", one would have to amuse oneself by writing, with the ambiguity given by my play on words, the *j'sais pas* by the assimilation that it undergoes because of the nearness of the inaugural s of the verb, the j of je which becomes the aspirative *che* which becomes by this the silent sibilant. The *ne* which is swallowed here disappears: the whole sentence comes to repose on the heavy *pas* of the occlusive which determines it.

The expression would only take on its slightly derisory, even folksy accentuation in this case precisely from its discourse and what was being expressed at the time. The "*j'sais pas*" marks, as I might say, even the impact of something in which on the contrary the subject has collapsed or is grovelling. "How did you manage that", authority demands of the person responsible, after some unfortunate misadventure: "*j'sais pas*". It is a hole, a gap which opens up at the bottom of which what disappears, is engulfed, is the subject himself, but here he no longer appears in his oscillatory movement, in the support which is given to him in his original movement, but on the contrary, in the form of a recognition of his ignorance properly speaking expressed, assumed, rather projected, affirmed, it is something which presents itself as a not being there, projected onto a surface, onto a plane where it is as such recognisable.

And what we approach along this path in these remarks which are verifiable in a thousand ways, by all sorts of other examples, is something the idea of whose double aspect we should at the very least retain. Is this double aspect really one of opposition, as Pichon seems to suggest - as regards the apparatus itself, would a more serious examination allow us to resolve it?

Let us remark first of all that the ne of these two terms seems to undergo the attraction of what one could call the leading group of the sentence, in so far as it is grasped, supported by the pronominal form: this leading group in French is remarkable in the formulae which gather it together such as "*je ne le*" and "*je le lui*", this grouped before the verb certainly does not fail to suggest a profound structural necessity: that the ne should come to aggregate itself to it, is not I would say what appears most remarkable to us. What appears most remarkable to us is the following: it is that by coming to aggregate itself to it, it accentuates what I would call its subjective signification.

Notice in effect, that it is not by chance that it is at the level of a "*je ne sais*", of a "*je ne puis*", of a certain category which is that of verbs that there is situated, inscribed the subjective position itself as such, that I found my example of the isolated use of the ne. There

is in effect a whole register of verbs whose usage is liable to make us remark that their function changes profoundly by being employed in the first or the second or the third person. If I say "*je crois qu'il va pleuvoir*" (I think it is going to rain) this is not distinguished from my enunciating that it is going to rain, an act of belief; I believe it is going to rain simply connotes the *contingent* character of my forecast. Observe that things are modified if I pass onto other persons: "*tu crois qu'il va pleuvoir*" (you think it is going to rain) makes much more of an appeal to something: the one to whom I am addressing myself, I am appealing to his testimony. "*II croit qu'il va pleuvoir*" (he thinks it is going to rain) gives more and more weight to the subject's adherence to his belief. The introduction of the ne will always be easy when it comes to join itself to these three pronominal supports of this verb which has here a varied function: from the beginning of the enunciative nuance up to the enunciation of a position of the subject; the weight of the ne will always be to bring it back towards the enunciative nuance.

"*Je ne crois pas qu'il va pleuvoir*", is even more linked to the character of dispositional suggestion which is mine. This may have absolutely nothing to do with a non-belief, but simply with my good mood. "I do not think that it is going to rain", "I do not think that it should rain", means that to me things do not appear to present themselves too badly.

In the same way, by joining it to two other formulations, which moreover is going to distinguish two other persons, the ne will tend to *je-iser* what is involved in the other formulae. "You do not think that it is going to rain", "he does not think that it should rain". It is indeed in so far as, it is indeed towards the je that they will be drawn because of the fact that it is with the addition of this little negative particle that they are here introduced into the first member of the sentence.

Does this mean that over against this we should make of the *pas* something which, quite brutally, connotes the pure and simple fact of privation? This would certainly be the tendency of Pichon's analysis, in so far as he finds in effect that grouping the examples gives every appearance of it. In fact, I do not think so for reasons which belong first of all to the very origin of the signifier we are dealing with. No doubt, we have the historical genesis of their form of introduction into usage. Originally, "*je n'y vais pas*" (I am not going there) can be accentuated by a comma, "*je n'y vais, pas un seul pas*" (I am not going there at all), as I might say ; "*je n'y vois point,même pas d'un point*" (I do not see at all): not even with a point; "*je n'y trouve goutte*" (I do not find anything in it), "*il n'en reste mie*" (nothing at all of it remains). It is indeed a matter of something which, far from being at its origin the connotation of the hole of absence well expresses on the contrary reduction, disappearance no doubt, but not completed, leaving behind it the furrow of the tiniest, the most fleeting trait.

In fact these words, easy to restore to their positive value, to the point that they are currently employed with this value, receive indeed their negative charge from the sliding which is produced towards them of the function of the ne, and even if the *ne* is elided, it is indeed a matter of its charge on them in the function that it exercises. Something as one might say, of the reciprocity, let us say, of this *pas* and of this ne will be brought home to us by what happens when we invert their order in the enunciation of the sentence.

We say - an example from logic - "*pas un homme qui ne mente*" (there is no man who does not lie) in this case it is indeed the *pas* which opens fire. What I intend to designate here, make you grasp, is that the *pas* even though it opens the sentence in no way plays the

same function which would be attributable to it, according to Pichon, if this were what is expressed in the following formulae: I arrive and I note: "*il n'y a ici pas un chat*" (there isn't a cat here). Between ourselves, allow me to point out to you in passing the illuminating, privileged, even redoubling value of the very usage of such a word: not a cat. If we had to draw up the catalogue of the means of expressing negation, I would propose that we should put under this heading these type of words which become a support for negation, they do not at all fail to constitute a special category. What does a cat have to do with the question? But let us leave that for the moment.

"*Pas un homme qui ne mente*" shows its difference from this concert of lack, something which is at an altogether different level and which is sufficiently indicated by the usage of the subjunctive.

The "*pas un homme qui ne mente*" is at the same level as what motivates, what defines all the most discordant forms, to use Pichon's term, that we could attribute to the *ne* from the "*je crains qu'il ne vienne*" to the "*avant qu'il ne yienne*" (before he comes), to the "*plus petit que je ne le croyais*" (smaller than I thought he was) or again, "*il y a longtemps que je ne l'ai vu*" (it is a long time since I have seen him), which pose - I am saying it to you in passing - all sorts of questions which I am, for the moment, forced to leave to one side. I point out to you in passing what supports a formula like "it is a long time since I have seen him", you cannot say it in connection with someone who is dead nor with someone who has gone missing; "it is a long time since I have seen him" supposes that the next encounter is always possible.

You see the prudence with which the examination, the investigation of these terms ought to be handled and this is why, at the moment of trying to expose, not the dichotomy, a general table of the different levels of negation, in which our experience brings us matrice entries which are much richer than anything that was done at the level of philosophers from Aristotle to Kant, and you know what they are called, these matrice entries: privation, frustration, castration, it is these that we are going to try to take up again in order to confront them with the signifying support of negation as we can try to identify it.

"There is no man who does not lie", what does it suggest to us this formula, "*homo mendax*", this judgement, this proposition which I present to you under the typical form of universal affirmation, to which you know perhaps I already made an allusion in my first seminar of this year, in connection with the classical usage of the syllogism "all men are mortal", Socrates etc... with what I connoted in passing about its transferential function.

I believe that we can get something to approach this function of negation at the level of its original, radical usage by the consideration of the formal system of propositions as Aristotle classified them in the categories described as: AEIO

universal affirmative (A) and negative (N) and also of
the particular also called negative (I) and affirmative (O).

Let us say it right away: this subject described as the opposition of propositions, the origin in Aristotle of his whole analysis, of the whole mechanism of the syllogism, does not fail despite appearances to present the most numerous difficulties: to say that the developments of the most modern logistics have clarified these difficulties would certainly be

to say something which the whole of history is against. On the contrary, the only thing that it can make seem astonishing, is the appearance of uniformity in the approval that these so-called Aristotelian formulae encountered up to Kant, because Kant preserved the illusion that this was an unattackable edifice.

Undoubtedly, it is not nothing to be able for example, to point out that the accentuation of their affirmative and negative function is not articulated as such in Aristotle himself and that it is much later, with Averroes probably, that there origin should be put. This is to show you moreover that things are not so simple when you try to form a judgement on them. For those who need to be reminded of the function of these propositions, I am going to recall them briefly.

"*Homo mendax*", since it is what I have chosen to introduce this reminder. Let us take it then: *homo*, and even *omnis homo*: "*Omnis homo mendax*" = every man is a liar. What is the negative formula? According to a form which is valid in many tongues: "*omnis homo non mendax*" may be enough. I mean that "*omnis homo non mendax*" means that as regards every man, it is true that he is not a liar. Nevertheless, for clarity, it is the term *nullus* that we use: "*nullus homo non mendax*".

A : *omnis homo mendax* universal affirmative

E : *nullus homo non mendax* universal negative.

Here is what is usually connoted by the letters A and E respectively of the universal affirmative and the universal negative.

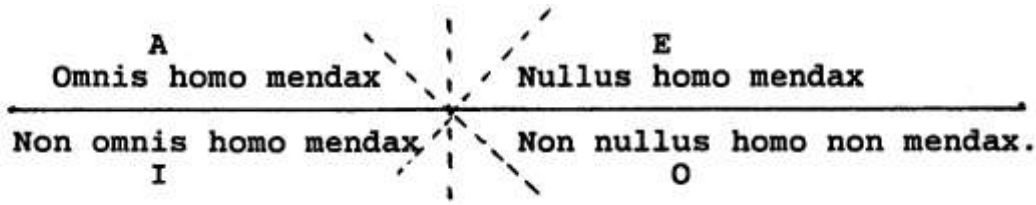
What is going to happen at the level of particular affirmatives?

Because we are interested in the negative, it is in a negative form that we are going to be able to introduce them here: "*non omnis homo mendax*" not every man is a liar, in other words, I choose and I note that there are men who are not liars.

In short, this does not mean that someone, *aliquis*, may not be a liar, *aliquis homo mendax*. This is the particular affirmative habitually designated in the classical notation by the letter I.

Here, the particular negative will be the "*non omnis*" being here resumed by "*nullus*",: "*non nullus homo non mendax*" = there is no man who is not a liar. In other words, in the whole measure that we have chosen to say that not all men were not liars (first case), this expresses in another fashion, namely that there is no one who is a non-liar.

The terms organised in this way are distinguished in the classical theory by the following formulae, which put them reciprocally in what is called the position of control or of sub- control, namely that the universal propositions are opposed at their own level as not being allowed to be and not being able to be true at the same time. It cannot at the same time be true that every man can be a liar and that no man can be a liar, while all the other combinations are possible.



It cannot at the same time be false that there are men who are liars and men who are not liars.

The so-called contradictory opposition is that through which the propositions situated in each one of these quadrants are diagonally opposed in the fact that each one excludes, if it is true, the truth of the one which is opposed to it as contradictory, and being false excludes the falseness of the one which is opposed to it as contradictory.

If there are men who are liars, this is not compatible with the fact that no man is a liar. Inversely, the relationship is the same between the negative particular and the universal affirmative.

What am I going to propose to you in order to make you sense what, at the level of the Aristotelian text, always presents itself as what has developed in history in terms of confusion around the definition of the universal as such?

Observe first of all that if here I have introduced for you the *non omnis homo mendax*: the not all, the term not being brought to bear on the notion of the all as defining the particular, this is not because this is legitimate, because precisely Aristotle opposes it in a fashion which is contrary to all the development that was subsequently made by speculation about formal logic, namely a development, an explanation in extension making the symbolisable framework intervene by a circle, by a zone within which the objects constituting its support are assembled: Aristotle, very precisely, before the *Prior Analytics*, at least in the work which preceded it in the grouping of his works, but which apparently antecedes it logically, if not chronologically, which is called *De Interpretatione*, remarks - and not without having provoked the astonishment of historians - that it is not on the qualification of universality that negation should be brought to bear. It is therefore indeed some man or other that is in question and some man or other that we ought to interrogate as such, as a liar.

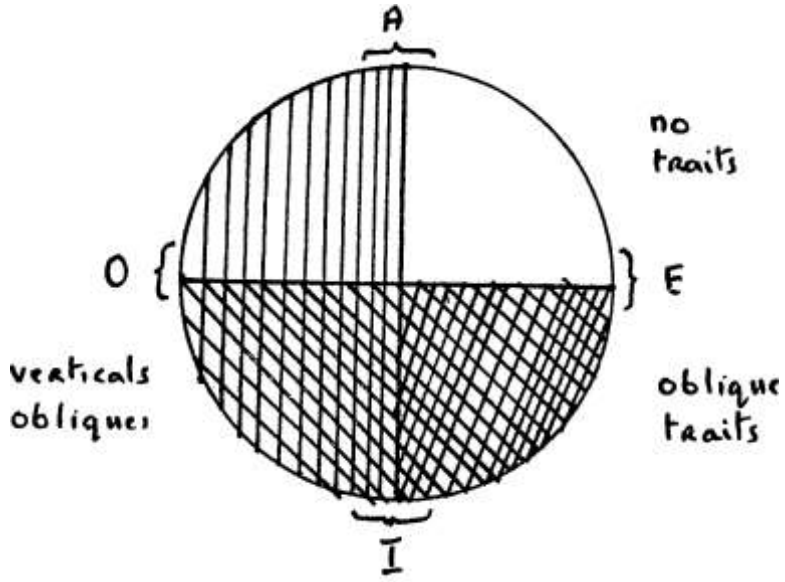
The qualification therefore of *omnis*, of allness, of the parity of the universal category is here what is in question. Is it something that is at the same level, at the same level of existence as what can support, or not support the affirmation or the negation, is there a homogeneity between the two levels? In other words, is it something that simply supposes as realised the collection involved in the difference between the universal and the particular?

Overturning the import of what I am in the process of trying to explain to you, I am going to propose something to you, something which is designed in a way to respond to what? To the question which precisely links the definition of the subject as such to that of the order of affirmation or of negation in which it enters in the operation of this propositional division.

In the classical teaching of formal logic, it is said - and if you investigate what that goes back to, I am going to tell you, it is not without a certain piquancy - it is said that the subject is taken from the angle of quality and that the attribute that you see here incarnated by the term *mendax* is taken from the angle of quantity. In other words, in the one, they are all, they are several, indeed there is one of them. This is what Kant still preserves at the level of *The Critique of Pure Reason* in the third division. This does not fail to give rise to considerable objections on the part of linguists.

When one looks at things historically, one perceives that this quality/quantity distinction has an origin: it appears for the first time paradoxically in a little treatise about the doctrines of Plato, and this - it is on the contrary the Aristotelian enunciation of formal logic which is reproduced, in an abbreviated fashion but not without a didactic emphasis, and the author is none other than Apuleius, the author of a treatise on Plato - is found to have here a singular historical function, it is namely to have introduced a categorisation, that of quantity and of quality, of which the least one can say is that it was because it had been introduced and had remained for such a long time in the analysis of logical forms that it was introduced there.

Here in effect is the model around which I am proposing to you for today to centre your reflection. Here is a dial in which we are going to put vertical traits (subject). The trait function is going to fulfil here that of the subject and the vertical function, which is moreover chosen simply as support, that of attribute. I might well have said that I was taking the unary term as attribute but for the representative and imaginable aspect of what I have to show you, I am making them vertical.



Here, we have a segment of the dial where there are vertical traits, but also oblique traits, here there are no traits. What this is designed to illustrate, is that the universal/particular distinction, in so far as it forms a couple distinct from the affirmative/negative opposition is to be considered as a completely different register from the one that with more or less skill commentators from Apuleius on, thought that they should direct in the very ambiguous sliding and confusing formulae which are called respectively quality and quantity, and to oppose it in these terms. We will call the universal/particular

opposition an opposition of the order of *lexis*, which is for us *legein*; I read and moreover I choose, very exactly linked to this function of the extraction, the choice of the signifier which is for the moment, the terrain, the footbridge on which we are in the process of advancing. This to distinguish it from the *phasis*, namely from something which here is proposed as a word through which I engage myself as regards the existence of this something which is put in question by the first *lexis*. And in effect, as you are going to see, about what am I going to be able to say that everything that is vertical is true? [or: All traits are vertical.]

Naturally, about the first sector of the dial 1, but you should note also about the empty sector 2: if I say, all traits are vertical, that means that when there is no vertical, there are no traits? In any case, it is illustrated by the empty sector of the dial: not only does the empty sector not contradict, is not contrary to the affirmation: "all traits are vertical", it illustrates it. There is no vertical trait in this sector of the dial.

Here the universal affirmative is illustrated then by the two first sectors. The universal negative is going to be illustrated by the two sectors on the right, but what is in question there will be formulated by the following articulation: no trait is vertical, there are not in these two sectors any traits. What is to be remarked, is the common sector 2 which includes these two propositions, which according to the formula, the classical doctrine, apparently cannot be true at the same time.

What are we going to find following our gyratory movement, which has thus begun very well here as a formula like this, to designate the two other possible 2 by 2 groupings of the dials. Here, we are going to see the truth of these two dials in an affirmative form. There are - I am saying it in a phasic (*phasis*) fashion: I note the existence of vertical traits - there are vertical traits, there are some vertical traits, that I can find either here, or here?

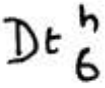
Here, if we try to define the distinction between the universal and the particular, we see which are the two sectors which correspond to the particular enunciating. Here there are non- vertical traits "*non nullus, etc.*...

Just as earlier, we were suspended for an instant at the ambiguity of this repetition of negation, *not not* is very far from being necessarily the equivalent of *yes* and this is something to which we will have to return subsequently.

What does that mean? What interest is there for us in making use of such an apparatus? Why am I trying to detach for you this plane of the *lexis* from the plane of the *phasis*? I am going towards it immediately and not in a roundabout way. And I am going to illustrate it.

What can we say, we analysts, what does Freud teach us since the meaning of what is called a universal proposition has been completely lost, ever since precisely a formulation whose chapter-heading one can put at the Eulerian formulation which manages to represent all the functions of the syllogism for us by a series of little circles, either excluding one another, overlapping, intersecting one another in other words, and properly speaking in extension, to which there is opposed the comprehension which would be distinguished simply by some inevitable manner or other of understanding, of understanding what? That the horse is white, what is there to understand?

What we contribute to renew the question is the following: I am saying that Freud promulgates, puts forward the following formula: the father is God or every father is God. There results, if we maintain this proposition at the universal level, the one of there is no other father but God, which on the other hand as regards existence is in Freudian reflection rather *aufgehoben*, rather put in suspension, indeed in radical doubt. What is involved, is that the order of function that we are introducing with the name of the father is this something which, at the same time, has its universal value, but which leaves up to you, to the other, the task of determining whether there is or not a father of this stature. If none exists, it is still true that the father is God, simply the formula is only confirmed by the empty sector of the dial, thanks to which at the level of the *phasis* we have: there are fathers who fulfill more or less the symbolic function that we ought to denounce as such, as being that of the name of the father, there are those who, and there are those who are not. But that there are those who are not, who are not in all cases, which is supported here by this sector 4, is exactly the same thing which gives us a basis and support for the universal function of the name of the father:



for grouped with the sector in which there is nothing 2, it is precisely these two sectors taken at the level of the *lexis* which are found because of this, because of this supported sector which complements the other sector, which gives its full import to what we can enounce as universal affirmation.

I am going to illustrate it differently, because moreover, up to a certain point the question was able to be posed of its value, I mean with respect to a traditional teaching which ought to be the one that I contributed the last time concerning the small i. Here the professors are in dispute: what are we going to say? The professor, the one who teaches, should teach what? What others have taught before him, namely that he bases himself on what? On what has already undergone a certain *lexis*. What results from every *lexis*, is precisely what is important for us on this occasion, and at the level of what I am trying to sustain for you today: the letter. The professor is literate in his universal character, he is the one who bases himself on the letter at the level of a particular enunciation, we can now say that he can be half-and-half, he cannot be entirely literate. There will result from it that all the same one cannot say that any professor is illiterate, there will always be in his case a few letters.

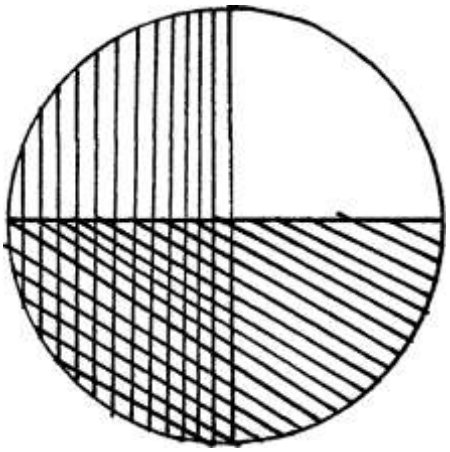
It nevertheless remains that if, by chance, there was an angle from which we could say that there are some eventually from a certain angle who are characterised as giving rise to a certain ignorance of the letter, this would not prevent us for all that from looping the loop and from seeing that the return and the foundation, as one might say, of the universal definition of professor is very strictly in the following, it is that the identity of the formula that the professor is the one who is identified to the letter imposes, requires even the commentary that there can be illiterate (*analphabètes*) professors. The negative space 2 as essential correlative for the definition of universality is something that is profoundly hidden at the level of the primitive *lexis*.

This means something: in the ambiguity about the particular support that we can give in the engagement of our word to the name of the father as such, it nevertheless remains that we cannot bring it about that anything which drawn up into the human atmosphere, if I can express myself in this way, is able, as one might say, to consider itself as completely

disengaged from the name of the father, that even here (void) where there are only fathers for whom the function of father is, if I may express myself in this way, one of pure loss, the father who is not the father, the lost cause, on which I ended my seminar of last year, it is nevertheless in function of this collapse, with respect to a first *lexis* which is that of the name of the father, that this particular category is judged.

Man can only ensure that his affirmation or his negation with everything that it engages: this person here is my father, or that one is his father, is not entirely suspended from a primitive *lexis* of which, of course, it is not the common meaning, the signified of the father that is in question, but something to which we are here provoked to give its true support and which is legitimate even in the eyes of professors, who, as you see, would be in great danger of being always left in some suspense as regards their real function even in the eyes of professors, ought to justify me trying to give, even at their level of professors, an algorithmic support to their subject-existence as such.

A	N
All traits are vertical (=when there is no vertical there is no trait) All fathers are God (there is no other father but God) The professor bases himself on the letter.	There is neither trait, nor vertical name of the father illiterate professor Father not father Lost cause



There are some vertical traits (A.P) There are some fathers who fulfill + or - the symbolic function of the name of the father. The professor only partially bases himself on the letter	No trait is vertical Some of them do not exist No professor bases himself on the lexis
LEXIS	PHASIS

Seminar 9: Wednesday 24 January 1962

The important thing as far as we are concerned for the continuation of our seminar, is that what I said last evening obviously concerns the function of the object, of the little o in the identification of the subject, namely something which is not immediately within hand's reach, which is not going to be resolved immediately, of which last evening I gave, as I might say, an anticipatory indication by making use of the theme of the three caskets. This theme of the three caskets clarifies my teaching a good deal, because if you open what is bizarrely called *Essais de psychologie appliquée* and you read the article on the three caskets you will see that when all is said and done it will not fully satisfy you; you do not know very well what our father Freud is getting at. I believe that with what I told you last evening which identifies the three caskets to the demand, a theme to which, I believe, you have become accustomed for a long time, which says that in each one of these three caskets - without this there would be no riddle, there would be no problem - there is the little o, the object which in so far as it interests us analysts, but not at all necessarily - is the object which corresponds to demand. Not at all necessarily, nor the contrary either, because without that there would be no difficulties. This object, is the object of desire, and where is desire? It is outside; and where it truly is, the decisive point, is you, the analyst, in so far as your desire should not be deceived about the object of the subject's desire. If this were not the way things were, there would be no merit in being an analyst.

There is a something which I tell you also in passing, which is that I already put the accent before an audience which was supposed not to know on something into which I have not perhaps sufficiently put my big heavy boots here, namely that the system of the unconscious, the psi-system, is a partial system. Once again, I repudiated, obviously with more energy than motives, given that I had to go quickly, the reference to totality, which does not prevent one speaking about the partial. I insisted in this system on its extra-flat character, on its surface character which Freud insists on with all his might all the time. One cannot but be astonished that this should have engendered the metaphor of depth-psychology. It is quite by chance that a little earlier before coming here I found a note that I had taken from *The Ego and the Id*: "The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity but is itself the projection of a surface." [*SE XIX* 26] It is a nothing: when one reads Freud, one always reads him in a certain fashion that I would describe as deaf.

Let us now take up again our pilgrim's staff, let us take up again where we are, where I left you the last time, namely on the idea that negation, if it is indeed somewhere at the heart of our problem which is that of the subject, is not already, immediately, even if one looks at its phenomenology, the simplest thing to handle. It is in many places, and then it happens all the time that it slips through your fingers. You saw an example of it the last time, for a moment in connection with the "*non nullus homo non mendax*", you saw me putting in this *non*, taking it out and putting it back again; you see this every day. It was pointed out to me in the interval that in the discourses of the one that someone, in a note, my poor dear friend Merleau-Ponty, called the Great Man who governs us, in a discourse that the aforesaid great man pronounced one hears "*on ne peut pas ne pas croire que les choses se passeront sans mal* (one cannot not think that things will happen without harm). The exegesis on this: what does he mean? The interesting thing, is not so much what he means, it is that obviously

we understand very well precisely what he means and that if we analyse it logically we see that he is saying the opposite.

This is a very pretty formula which you ceaselessly slip into when you say to someone "*vous n'êtes pas sans ignorer*" (you cannot fail to be ignorant of [to realise]). It is not you who are wrong, it is the relationship of the subject to the signifier which emerges from time to time. It is not simply tiny paradoxes, slips, that I am pinpointing here in passing. We will rediscover these formulae at the appropriate bend in the road. And I think I am giving you the key to why "you cannot fail to realise", only means what you mean. In order that you may find your bearings here, I can tell you that it is indeed by exploring it that we will find the proper weight, the proper incline of this balance on which I place before you the relationship of the neurotic to the phallic object when I tell you in order to catch this relationship, one must say: "*il n'est pas sans l'avoir*" (he is not without having it). This obviously does not mean that he has it. If he had it, the question would not arise. In order to get there, let us begin from a little reminder about the phenomenology of our neurotic concerning the point that we are at in it: his relationship to the signifier. For the last number of times I have begun to make you grasp the sort of writing, of original writing there is in the business of the signifier. It must really have all the same occurred to you that it is with this that the obsessed subject is dealing all the time: *ungeschen machen*, to undo something. What does that mean, what does that involve?

Obviously, it can be seen in his behaviour: what he wants to abolish is what the annalist writes throughout his history, the annalist - with two n's - that he has in himself. It is the annals of the affair that he would like to efface, to scratch out, to abolish. From what angle does Lady Macbeth's discourse reach us when she tells us that all the waters of the sea would not wash away this little spot if not through some echo which guides us to the heart of our subject? Only the point is, in washing away the signifier, since it is clear that this is what is involved - in his way of behaving, in his way of effacing, in his way of scratching out what is written, what is much less clear to us, because we know a little bit more about it than the others, is what he is trying to obtain by doing that. This is why it is instructive to continue along the road that we are on, where I am leading you as regards how a signifier as such comes about. If this has such a relationship with the foundations of the subject, if no other subject is thinkable than this natural something, x, in as much as it is marked by the signifier, there must all the same be some source or other for that. We are not going to content ourselves with this sort of blindfolded truth. It is quite clear that we must find the subject at the origin of the signifier itself; "in order to pull a rabbit out of a hat", this is how I began to spread scandal in my properly analytic remarks: the poor dear man who is now dead and who was so touching in his fragility, was literally exasperated by this reminder which I so persistently gave - because at that time it was a useful formula - that "in order to pull a rabbit out of a hat you must have put it in beforehand".

It must be the same for the signifier, and this is what justifies the definition of the signifier that I give you, its distinction from the sign: the fact is that if the sign represents something for someone, the signifier is articulated otherwise, it represents the subject for another signifier. This you will see sufficiently confirmed at every step provided you do not let go of the solid hand-rail. And if it represents the subject in this way, how is it done?

Let us come back to our starting point, to our sign, to the elective point at which we can grasp it as representing something for someone in a trace. Let us start from the track in order to track down our little affair.

A footprint, a track, Friday's footprint on Robinson's island: emotion, the heart racing before this trace. All this teaches us nothing, even if from this racing heart there results a whole lot of stamping around this trace; this could happen on coming across any animal tracks but if coming on it unexpectedly I find the trace of something whose trace someone has tried to efface, or if even I no longer find the trace of this effort, if I have come back because I know - I am not any more proud of it because of that - that I left the trace, that I find that, without any correlative which allows this effacing to be attached to a general effacing of the traits of the configuration, one has well and truly effaced the trace as such, then I am sure that I am dealing with a real subject. Notice that, in this disappearance of the trace, what the subject is trying to make disappear is his own passage as a subject. The disappearance is redoubled by the disappearance that is aimed at which is that of the act itself of making disappear.

This is not a bad trait for us to recognise in it the passage of the subject when it is a question of his relationship to the signifier, in the measure that you already know that everything that I am teaching you about the structure of the subject, as we are trying to articulate it starting from this relationship to the signifier, converges towards the emergence of these moments of *fading* linked properly speaking to this eclipse-like pulsation of what only appears in order to disappear and reappears in order to disappear anew, which is the mark of the subject as such.

Having said this, if the trace is effaced, the subject surrounds its place with a ring (*cerne*) something which thenceforward concerns him; the mapping out of the place where he found the trace, well then, here you have the birth of the signifier. This implies a whole process involving the return of the last phase onto the first, that there cannot be any articulation of a signifier without these three phases. Once the signifier is constituted, there are necessarily two others before. A signifier is a mark, a trace, a writing, but it cannot be read alone. Two signifiers is a bloomer, a cock-and-bull story. Three signifiers is the return of what is involved, namely of the first. It is when the *pas* (step) marked in the trace is transformed in the vocalisation of whoever is reading it into *pas* (not) that this *pas*, on condition that one forgets that it means the step, can serve at first in what is called the phonetics of writing, to represent *pas*, and at the same time to transform the trace of *pas* eventually into the *pas* of the trace.

I think that you can hear in passing the same ambiguity that I made use of when I spoke to you, in connection with the witticism, of the *pas de sens*, playing on the ambiguity of the word *sens* (meaning) with this leap, this breakthrough which takes hold of us us when we start to have fun when we do not know why a word makes us laugh, this subtle transformation, this rejected stone which being taken up again becomes the cornerstone (*pierre d'angle*), and I would be quite happy to make a play on words with the of the formula of the circle because moreover it is in it - I announced it to you the other day in introducing the minus 1 - that we will see that there is measured, as I might say, the vectorial angle of the subject with respect to the thread of the signifying chain.

It is here that we are suspended and it is here that we should habituate ourselves a little to displacing ourselves, on a substitution through which that which has a meaning is transformed into an equivocation and finds its meaning again. It is in the very syncopes of this ceaselessly turning articulation of the play of language that we have to locate the subject in its diverse functions. My illustrations are never a bad way of adapting a mental eye in which the imaginary plays a great part. It is for this reason that, even if it is a detour,

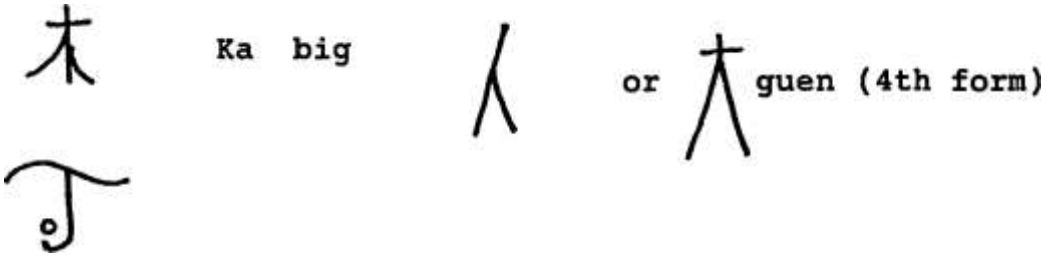
I do not think its a bad thing to rapidly sketch out for you a little remark simply because I find it at this point in my notes.

I have spoken to you more than once, in connection with the signifier, about the Chinese character, and I am very keen to dispel for you the idea that its original is an imitative figure. There is an example of it which I only took because it is the one which was of most use to me, I took the first of those which are articulated in these examples, these archaic forms in the work of Karlgren which is called *Grammata Serica*, which means exactly "Chinese signifiers".

The first one that he makes use of in its modern form is the following, it is the character Kho which means power. In the *Tch'ouen* which is an erudite work, precious for us both because its relatively ancient character and the fact that it is already very erudite, that is to say well furnished with interpretations which we may have to come back to. It seems that we would have good reason to trust the root that the commentator gives of it which is a very nice one, namely that it is a question of a schematisation of the shock of the column of air

which it has just expelled in the guttural occlusive against the obstacle which the back of the tongue against the palate opposes to it. This is all the more seductive in that, if you open a book on phonetics, you will find an image which is more or less that in order to express for you the functioning of the occlusive:

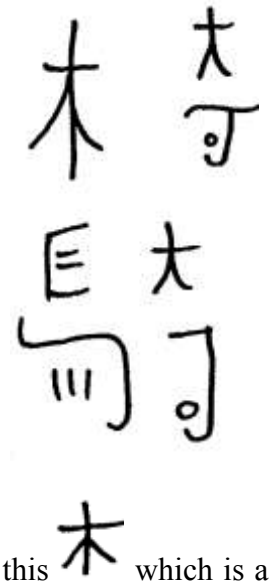
And you must admit that it is not a bad thing that it should be that which was chosen in order to depict the word to see the possibility, the axial function introduced into the world by the advent of the subject right in the middle of the real. The ambiguity is complete. For a very great number of words are articulated as *kho* in Chinese, in which this would act for us as a phonetic, except for the fact that the complete outfit (*les complètes*) presentifying the subject with its signifying framework, and this without any ambiguity and in all the characters, is the representation of the mouth:



Put this sign on top, it is the sign Ka which means big. It has obviously some relationship with the small human form, generally deprived of arms. Here, since it is a big person that is in question, there are arms. This has nothing to do with what happens when you have added this sign ta to the preceding signifier. Henceforth this is read as i, but this preserves the trace of an ancient pronunciation of which we have attestations thanks to the usage of this term in rhymes in the ancient poems, specifically those of Che King who is one of the most extraordinary examples of literary misadventure because destiny made him become the support of all sorts of moralising lucubrations, to be the foundation of a whole very twisted teaching of the mandarins on the duties of the sovereign, of the people and of everybody and anybody, even though what we have are obviously lovesongs which have a peasant origin. A little experience of Chinese literature - I am not trying to make you believe that mine is very great, I am not confusing myself with …… who, when he makes an allusion to his experience of China, gives us a paragraph that you can find in the books of Père Wieger which are available to everybody.

In any case, others besides myself have lit up this path, specifically Marcel Granet, whose beautiful book on the dances and legends and the ancient feasts of China you will lose nothing by opening. With a little effort you will be able to familiarise yourself with this really extraordinary dimension which appears of what one can do with something which reposes on the most elementary forms of signifying articulation. By chance, in this tongue, words are monosyllabic: they are superb, invariable, cubic, you cannot make a mistake in them. They are identified to the signifier it has to be said. You have groups of four verses, each one composed of four syllables, the situation is simple. If you see them and think that from that one can extract everything even a metaphysical doctrine which has no relationship with the original signification, it will begin, for those who have not got there yet to open your spirit. That is nevertheless the way it is: for centuries the teaching of morality and of politics was carried out on the basis of jingles which signify on the whole "I would really like to have sex with you", I am not exaggerating at all, go and see.

This means i, which is given the commentary: great power, enormous. This of course has absolutely no relationship with this conjunction, i does not mean great power any more than this little word for which in French there is really nothing which satisfies us: I am forced to translate it by *impair* in the sense that the word *impair* can take on of sliding, of fault, of failure, of something which is wrong, which is not working, so nicely illustrated in English by the word odd. And as I told you earlier, this is what started me off on the Che King. Because of the Che King, we know that it was very close to *kho*, at least in this: the fact is that there was a guttural in the ancient tongue which gives the other implantation of the usage of this signifier to designate the phoneme i.



If you add in front of it this which is a determinant, that of the tree, and which designates everything that is wooden, you will have once things have got that far a sign which designates the chair, that is called i, and so on. It continues like that, there is no reason for it to stop. If you put here, at the place of the sign of the tree, the sign of the horse, that means to sit astride.

This little detour, I consider, because of its usefulness for helping you to see that the relationship of the letter to language is not something which should be considered along evolutionary lines. One does not begin from a dense, tangible origin in order to disengage from it an abstract form. There is nothing which resembles anything at all that can be conceived of as parallel to what is called the process of even only the concept of generalisation. One has a succession of alternations where the signifier comes back to strike, as I might say the flowing stream with the flails of its mill, its wheel raising up each time something streaming, in order to fall back again, to enrich itself, to complicate itself, without us ever being able at any moment to grasp what dominates in terms of the concrete starting point or of equivocation.

Here is what is going to lead you to the point where today the step that I have to get you to take, a great part of the illusions which bring us to a sharp halt, imaginary adhesions, of which we can say that it does not matter that everybody remains with their feet stuck in them like flies, but not analysts, is very precisely linked to what I would call the illusions of formal logic. Formal logic is a very useful science, in terms of the idea of it that I tried to highlight for you the last time, on condition that you perceive that it perverts you in the sense that because it is formal logic it should prevent you at every moment from giving the least meaning to it. That of course is what with time people came to. But I can assure you that this gives the very serious, courageous, honest men of symbolic logic who have been known for fifty years all sorts of trouble because it is not easy to construct a logic as it ought to be if it really answers to its title of formal logic, by basing oneself strictly on nothing but the signifier, by forbidding oneself every relationship and therefore every intuitive support upon what may arise from the signified - in the case that we make mistakes in general it is on this that we take our bearings. I reason wrongly because in this case, something or other would result: my grandmother with her head upside down. What does that matter to us? In general we are not guided by this because we are very intuitive; if one does formal logic, one cannot but be.

Now the amusing thing is that the basic book of a symbolic logic, encompassing all the needs of mathematical creation, the *Principia Mathematica* of Bertrand Russell almost gets to this goal: they stop considering as a contradiction which would put in question the whole of mathematical logic, this paradox which is called that of Bertrand Russell the bias of which strikes at the value of what is called set theory. How is a set to be distinguished from a definition of class, the matter remains ambiguous because, what I am going to tell you and what is admitted by every mathematician, is namely that what distinguishes a set from a class, is nothing other than that the set will be defined by formulae which are called axioms, which will be posed on the blackboard in symbols reduced to letters to which there are joined some supplementary signifiers indicating relationships.

There is absolutely no other specification of this logic which is called symbolic compared to traditional logic, except this reduction to these letters, I guarantee that you can believe me, without my going any further into examples. What then is the virtue, which must necessarily be somewhere, that it should be because of this single difference that there were able to be developed a pile of consequences whose incidence I assure you in the development of something which is called mathematics is not slight compared to the apparatus which was at peoples' disposal for centuries and the compliment paid to it of not having budged between Aristotle and Kant is turned against it. It is a good thing, if all the same things have begun to scoot along as they have done - because the *Principia Mathematica* comprises two big volumes and they are only of very slight interest - but after all if the compliment is turned against itself, it is indeed because the previous apparatus for whatever reason it may be was found to be singularly stagnant.

So then, starting from there, how do the authors come to be astonished at what is called Russell's paradox?

Here is Russell's paradox: people speak about the set of all the sets which do not include themselves. I must clarify a little this story which may appear dry to you at a first approach. I indicate it to you right away. If I interest you in it, at least I hope, it is with this aim that it has the closest relationship - and not simply a homonymic one, precisely because it is a matter of a signifier and that consequently it is a matter of not understanding - with the position of the analytic subject, in so far as he also, in another sense of the word understand and if I tell you not to understand it is in order that you may understand in all the ways that he also does not include [*comprendre* = to include or to understand] himself.

To go through this is not useless, as you are going to see, because by taking this route we are going to be able to criticize the function of our object. But let us pause for a moment at these sets which do not include themselves. It is necessary obviously to conceive of what is in question to begin with, because in communication we cannot all the same not concede intuitive references to ourselves, because you already have the intuitive references. They must then be upset in order to put others in their place. Since you have the idea that there is a class and that there is a mammal class, it is necessary all the same that I should try to indicate to you that it is necessary to refer oneself to something else. When one enters into the category of sets, it is necessary to refer oneself to the library classification which some people are so fond of, a classification composed of decimals or something else; but when one has something written, it has to be put somewhere, one must know automatically how to find it. So then, let us take a set which includes itself, let us take for example the study of

humanities in a library classification. It is clear that it will have to be put within the works of humanists about the humanities; the set of the study of humanities ought to include all the works concerning the study of humanities as such.

But considering now the sets which do not include themselves; this is no less conceivable, it is even the most ordinary case. And since we are set theorists and since there are already a class of sets which include themselves, there is really no objection to us making the opposite class - I am using class here because it is indeed here that the ambiguity is going to reside: the class of sets which do not include themselves, the set of all the sets which do not include themselves. And it is here that the logicians begin to rack their brains, namely that they say to themselves: this set of all the sets which do not include themselves, does it include itself or does it not include itself? In one case or the other it is going to collapse into contradiction. Because if, as it might appear, it includes itself, we find ourselves in contradiction with the start which said that it was a question of sets which did not include themselves. On the other hand, if it does not include itself, how can we except it precisely from what is given by this definition, namely that it does not include itself?

This may seem rather naive to you, but the fact that this strikes, to the extent that it brings them to a halt, logicians who are precisely not the kind of people to pause at a stupid difficulty, and if they sense there something that they can call a contradiction putting their whole edifice in question, it is indeed because there is something that ought to be resolved and which concerns, if you will listen carefully to me, nothing other than the following, which concerns the only thing that the logicians in question do not exactly have in view, namely that the letter that they make use of is something which has in itself powers, a mainspring, to which they do not seem to be at all completely accustomed. Because if we illustrate this as an application of our statement that it is a matter of nothing other than the systematic usage of a letter, to reduce, to reserve for the letter its signifying function in order to make there repose on it, and on it alone, the whole logical edifice, we arrive at this very simple thing that it is altogether and quite simply, that this comes back to what happens when we charge the letter a, for example, if we set about speculating on the alphabet, with representing as letter a all the other letters of the alphabet.

It must be one thing or the other: either we enumerate the other letters of the alphabet from b to z, which means that the letter a will represent them unambiguously without for all that being included itself; but it is clear that on the other hand, representing these letters of the alphabet *qua* letter, it comes quite naturally I would not even say to enrich but to complete at the place from which we have withdrawn, excluded it, the series of letters, and simply by the fact that, if we begin from the fact that a - this is our starting point as regards identification - fundamentally is not at all a, there is no difficulty here, the letter a, inside the parenthesis in which there are oriented all the letters that it has symbolically subsumed, is not the same a and is at the same time the same.

There is no difficulty of any kind here, there should all the less be any since those who see one are precisely those who invented the notion of set in order to face up to the deficiencies of the notion of class and as a consequence suspect that there must be something else in the function of the set than there is in the function of the class.

But this interests us because what does that mean?

As I indicated to you last evening, the metonymical object of desire, the one which in every object represents this elective little o, in which the subject loses himself, when this object comes to metaphorical birth, when we come to substitute it for the subject who, in the demand has a syncope, has fainted, no trace: S, we reveal the signifier of this subject, we give it its name: the good object. The mother's breast, the *mamma*, here is the metaphor in which, let us say, there are caught up all the articulated identifications of the subject's demand; his demand is oral, it is the mother's breast which takes them up into its parenthesis it is the A which gives their value to all these unities which are going to be added together in the signifying chain: A (+ I + I + I).

The question that we have to pose, is to establish the difference between this usage that we are making of the *mamma* and the function that it takes on by the definition, for example, of the mammal class. The mammal is recognised by the fact that it has *mammae*. Between ourselves it is rather strange that we are so little informed about what in fact is effectively done with them in each species. The ethology of mammals is still very much behind because we are, on this subject as in formal logic, more or less no further than the level of Aristotle (the excellent work *Historia Animalium*). But for us, what does it mean for us to say the signifier *mamma* in so far as it is the object around which we substantify the subject in a certain type of relations described as pregenital?

It is quite clear that we make a completely different use of it, much closer to the manipulation of the letter E in our set paradox, and in order to show it to you, I am going to show you the following: A (+ 1 + 1 + 1) the fact is that among these ones of the demand whose concrete significance we have revealed, is there or is there not the breast itself? In other words, when we speak about oral fixation, the latent breast, the present one, the one after which your subject goes ah, ah, ah, is it mammary? It is quite obvious that it is not because your oral types who adore breasts, adore breasts because breasts are a phallus. And it is even because of that that it is possible for the breast to be also a phallus, for Melanie Klein to make it immediately appear, just as quickly as the breast, from the beginning, telling us that after all it is a little breast that is more convenient, more portable, nicer.

You see clearly that to pose these structural distinctions can lead us somewhere, in the measure that the repressed breast re-emerges, appears again in the symptom, or even simply in something that we have not qualified otherwise: the function on the ladder of perversity of producing this something else which is the evocation of the obiect phallus.

This is written as follows:

What is the o? Let us put in its place the little ping-pong ball, namely nothing, anything at all, any support whatsoever of the alternating operation of the subject in the *Fort-Da*. There you see that it is strictly speaking a question of nothing other than the passage of the phallus from o+ to o- and that in this way we see in the identification relationship, because we know that in what the subiect assimilates it is him in his frustration, we know that

the relationship of $ to this $\frac{1}{A}$, he the 1 *qua* assuming the signification of the Other as such, has the closest relationship to the realisation of alternation. $(o \times -o)$

This product of o by - o, which formally gives a minus o squared: $-o^2$, we will get closer to why negation is irreducible: when there is affirmation and negation, the affirmation of the negation gives a negation, the negation of the affirmation also - we see there being highlighted here in this very formula of $-o^2$ we rediscover the necessity of the bringing into play at the root of this product of the root of -1,

What is involved is not simply the presence or the absence of small o, but the conjunction of the two, the cut. It is the disjunction between the o and the - o that is involved, and it is here that the subject comes to take up his dwelling as such, that identification has to be made with this something which is the object of desire. It is for this reason that the point to which, as you will see, I led you today is an articulation which will be of use to you in what follows.

Next seminar 21/2/62.

Seminar 10: Wednesday 21 February 1962

I left you the last time with the apprehension of a paradox concerning the modes of appearance of the object. This thematic starting from the object *qua* metonymical was questioning itself about what we are doing when we make this metonymical object appear as a common factor of this line.

$$\frac{Sr}{Sd}$$

This line, which is called that of the signifier, whose place I designated by that of the numerator in the great Saussurian fraction: signifier over signified, this is what we were doing when we made it appear as a signifier, when we designated this object as the object of the oral drive, for example. As this new type designated the genus of the object, in order to make you grasp it, I showed you the new element contributed to logic by the mode in which the signifier is used in mathematics, in set theory, a mode which is precisely unthinkable if we do not put in the forefront of it as constitutive this famous paradox called Russell's paradox. In order to make you put your finger on what I have started from, namely the signifier as such is not alone not subject to what is called the law of contradiction, but is even properly speaking its support, namely that the a is usable as a signifier in so far as $\underline{a}$ is not $\underline{a}$; from which it resulted that the object of the oral drive in so far as we consider it as the primordial breast, in connection with this generic *mamma* of analytic objectalisation, the question could be posed: in these condition! is the real breast mammary? I told you no, as is quite obvious, since in the whole measure that the breast is found to be eroticised in oral eroticism, it is in so far as it is something completely different to a breast, as you know well, and someone after a class, came up to me saying: in that case is the phallus phallic?

What has to be said, is that it is in so far the signifier phallus is what comes at a certain stage as a factor revealing the meaning of the signifying function, it is in so far as the phallus comes to the same place in the symbolic function where the breast was and in so far as the subject is constituted as phallic that the penis, which for its part is the inside of the parenthesis of the set of objects which for the subject have arrived at the phallic stage, that the penis, one can say, not alone is not any more phallic than the breast is mammary, [but] that things are posed much more seriously, namely that the penis-part of the real body, falls under the influence of this threat which is called castration.

It is because of the signifying function of the phallus as such that the real penis falls under the influence of what was first understood in analytic experience as a threat namely the threat of castration.

Here therefore is the path on which I am leading you. I am showing you here its goal and its aims. It is now a question of going along it step by step, in other words of rejoining what since our beginning this year, I am preparing and approaching little by little, namely the privileged function of the phallus in the identification of the subject.

Let us understand carefully that in all this, namely the fact that this year we are talking about identification, it is namely because of the fact that from a certain moment of the

Freudian work, the question of identification comes into the foreground, comes to dominate, comes to remodel the whole Freudian theory. It is in so far - one blushes almost to have to say it - that from a certain moment, for us after Freud, for Freud before us, the question of the subject is posed as such, namely who, who is there, who is functioning, who is speaking, who is a lot of other things as well and it is in so far as it might well have been expected in a technique which is a technique generally speaking of communication, of speaking to one another, and in a word of relating: it was all the same necessary to know who is speaking to whom.

It is indeed for this reason that this year we are doing logic. I cannot do anything about it: it is not a question of knowing whether this pleases me or whether it displeases me. It does not displease me, it may not please others. But what is certain is that it is inevitable. It is a question of knowing what logic this draws us into. You were well able to see that already I have shown you - I strive to take as many shortcuts as possible, I assure you that I am not playing truant - where we situate ourselves with respect to formal logic and undoubtedly it is not that we do not have our own word to say about it.

I remind you of the little dial which I constructed for your use and to which we will perhaps have occasion to return on more than one occasion unless, because of the speed that we are forced to go in order to arrive at our goal this year, it is to remain for some months or some years yet a proposition left hanging for the ingenuity of those who take the trouble to go back on what I am teaching you.

But surely it is not only formal logic that is involved. Is it a matter - and this is what is called ever since Kant, I mean in a well constituted fashion since Kant a transcendental logic, in other words the logic of the concept? Surely not that either. It is even rather striking to see the degree to which the notion of concept is apparently absent from the functioning of our categories.

What we are doing, it is not worth the effort of giving ourselves a lot of trouble for the moment in order to pinpoint it more precisely, is a logic of which at first some said that I tried to construct a sort of elastic logic. But after all, this is not enough to constitute something very reassuring for the spirit. We are constructing a logic of the functioning of the signifier, for without this reference constituted as primary, fundamental, of the relationship of the subject to the signifier, and what I am putting forward is that it is properly speaking unthinkable even for one to situate the error in which the whole of analysis progressively became engaged and which is caused precisely by the fact that it did not carry out this critique of transcendental logic that is strictly required by the new facts that it brings forward.

This - I am going to tell you its secret which has not in itself any historical importance but I think I can all the same communicate it to you as a stimulus - this led me, for a long or a short time according to whether I was separated from you and from our weekly encounters, led me to put my nose again, not at all as I did two years ago into the *Critique of Practical Reason* but into the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Since it happened by chance that I had through forgetfulness only brought my German copy, I did not reread it completely, but only the chapter called "The Introduction to the Transcendental Analytic", and while deploring that the ten or so years during which I have been addressing myself to you have not had, I believe, much effect as regards the propagation among you of the study of German, which never fails to astonish me, which is one of these little facts which makes me sometimes reflect my own

image to myself as being like that of the personage in a well known Surrealist film called *Un chien andalou*, the image of a man who with the help of two ropes, drags behind him a piano on which there repose (no allusion meant) two dead donkeys. That aside, let those at least who already know German not hesitate to re-open the chapter that I am designating for them of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. This will certainly help them to centre correctly the kind of reversal that I am trying to articulate for you this year.

I think I can very simply recall to you that its essence depends on the radically other, excentric fashion in which I am trying to make you understand a notion which is the one that dominates the whole structuring of the categories in Kant. This is why he is only putting the purified full-stop, the completed story, the final full-stop to what dominated philosophical thought until here in some sort of way he completes it: the function of *Einheit*, which is the foundation of every synthesis, of the *a priori* synthesis, as he puts it, and which seems in effect to impose itself from the time of its progression in Platonic mythology as the necessary path: the One, the big 1 which dominates all thinking from Plato to Kant, the One which for Kant, *qua* synthetic function, is the very model of what in every *a priori* category brings with it, he says, the function of a norm, to be understood as a universal rule. Well then, let us say, to add its tangible point to what, since the beginning of this year, I have been articulating for you that if it is true that the function of the One in identification, as the analysis of Freudian experience structures and decomposes it, is that, not of *Einheit*, but what I tried to make you sense concretely since the beginning of the year, as the original accent of what I called for you the unary trait, namely something completely different to the circle which gathers together, at which in short there ends up at a summary level of imaginary intuition all logical formalisation, not the circle, but something completely different: namely what I called for you a 1: this trait, this unsituatable thing, this aporia of thinking which consists in the fact that precisely it is all the more purified, simplified, reduced to anything whatsoever with a sufficient abatement of its appendices, can end up by reducing itself to that: a 1; what is essential in it, what constitutes the originality of this, of the existence of this unary trait and of its function and how it is introduced is precisely what I am leaving in suspense, because it is not so clear that it is through man, it is possible from a certain angle, in any case put in question by us that it is from there that man emerged.

Therefore, the paradox of this One is precisely the following: it is that the more it resembles, I mean the more everything which belongs to the diversity of appearances is effaced from it, the more it supports, the more it incarnates I would say, if you will allow me this word, difference as such.

The reversal of the position around the One means that from the Kantian *Einheit*, we consider that we pass to *Einzigkeit* to unicity expressed as such. If it is through this, as I might say, that I am trying, to borrow an expression from a title that I hope is celebrated for you, from a literary improvisation by Picasso if it is through this that I chose this year to try to do what I believe I am trying to get you to do, namely to catch desire by the tail, if it is in this way, namely not by the first form of identification defined by Freud, which is not easy to handle, that of the *Einverleibung*, that of the consumption of the enemy, of the adversary, of the father, if I started from the second form of identification, namely from this function of the unary trait, it is obviously with this goal in mind; but you see where the reversal is, it is that this function, (I believe that it is the best term for us to take because it is the most abstract, it is the most supple, it is properly speaking the most signifying, it is simply a big F) if the

function that we are giving to the One is no longer that of *Einheit* but that of *Einzigkeit*, it is because we have passed - this is something that all the same we would do well not to forget, which is the novelty of analysis - from the virtues of the norm to the virtues of the exception. Something which you have remembered all the same a little bit and with good reason: the tension of the thinking which accommodates itself to it by saying: "the exception confirms the rule". Like a lot of idiocies it is a profound idiocy. It is enough simply to know how to tease it out. If I had done nothing other than to take up again this quite luminous idiocy like one of these little search-lights that one sees on top of police cars it would already be a little gain on the plane of logic.

But obviously it is a lateral benefit. You will see this, especially if some of you, perhaps some of you might go so far as to devote themselves, even to the point of giving in my place someday a little resume of the way in which the Kantian analytic would have to be repunctuated. You may well imagine that there are the beginnings of all that: when Kant distinguishes universal judgement and particular judgement and when he isolates singular judgement by showing in it the profound affinities with universal judgement - I can say what everybody had perceived before him - but in showing that it is not enough to gather them together in so far as the singular judgement has indeed its independence, there is here something like a toothing stone, the beginnings of this reversal that I am speaking to you about.

This is only an example.

There are many other things which initiate this reversal in Kant. What is curious, is that it had not been done even earlier. It is obvious that what I was alluding to in passing, the time before last, namely the aspect which scandalised so much Mr Jespersen the linguist - which proves that the linguists are not at all provided with any infallibility - namely that there is some paradox in the fact that Kant put negation under the rubric of categories designating qualities, namely as a second moment as one might say, of the categories of quality, the first being reality, the second being negation and the third being limitation.

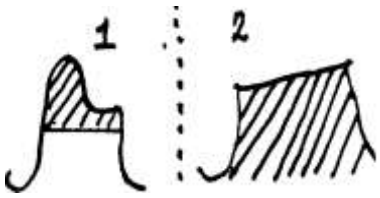
This thing which surprises and which it surprises us that it should surprise so much this linguist, namely Mr Jespersen, in this very long work on negation that he published in the annals of the Danish Academy. One is all the more surprised that this long article on negation is precisely written, in short, from one end to the other, to show us that linguistically negation is something which can only be sustained by - as I might say - a perpetual overbidding. It is therefore not such a simple thing to put it under the rubric of quantity where it might be confused purely and simply with what it is in quantity, namely zero.

But precisely I have already given you enough indications about this; I give the reference to those who are interested by this: the big work of Jespersen is really something considerable, but if you open the dictionary of Latin etymology by Ernout and Meillet and consult simply the article ne you will understand the historical complexity of the problem of the functioning of negation, namely this profound ambiguity which brings it about that after having been this primitive function of discordance on which I have insisted as well as on its original nature, it is always necessary that it should support itself on something which is precisely this nature of the One in the way that we are trying to get closer to it here that linguistically negation is never a zero, but a *not one* to the point that the Latin *sed non* for example, to illustrate what you can find in this work published by the Danish Academy

during the war of 1914 - and for that reason very difficult to find - the Latin *non* itself which seems to be the simplest form of negation in the world is already an *ne oinon*, *oinon*, in the form of *unum*. It is already a not one and after a certain time, one forgets that it is a not one and a one is put after it again, and the whole history of negation is the history of this consumption by something which is where? It is precisely what we are trying to get close to: the function of the subject as such.

It is for this reason that Pichon's remarks are very interesting because they show us that in French, one sees the two elements of negation operating so well, the relationship of the ne with the *pas*, that one could say that French in effect has this privilege, not unique moreover among other tongues, of showing that there is no veritable negation in French. What is curious moreover, is that they do not see that if this is the way things are, it should go a little bit further than the field of the French domain, if one can express oneself in that way. It is, in effect, very easy in all sorts of forms to understand that it is necessarily the same everywhere given that the function of the subject is not suspended at its root on the diversity of tongues. It is very easy to see that the not at a certain moment of the evolution of the English language is something like naught.

Let us go back in order that I may reassure you that we are not losing our goal. Let us begin again from last year from Socrates, from Alcibiades and from the whole clique who, I hope, provided a little diversion for you at that stage. It is a matter of connecting this logical reversal about the function of 1 with something with which we have been dealing with for a long time, namely desire; since because of the time that I have not spoken to you about it it is possible that things have become a little bit vague, I am going to give a little reminder which I believe it is just the moment to give in this presentation, this year. As regards the following - as you remember, it is a discursive fact, that it was in this way that I introduced the question of identification last year, it was properly speaking, when I tackled what ought to be constituted for us about the narcissistic relationship as a consequence of the equivalence put forward by Freud between narcissistic libido and object libido. You know how I symbolised it at the time: a little intuitive schema, I mean something which is represented, a schema, not a schema in the Kantian sense. Kant is a very good reference. In French it is dull. M M …… have accomplished all the same quite a feat by turning the reading of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, which it is absolutely not unthinkable to say that from a certain angle can be read as an erotic book, into something absolutely monotonous and dusty. Perhaps thanks to my commentaries, you will manage, even in French, to restore to it this sort of spice that it is not exaggerated to say it involves. In any case, I had always allowed myself to be persuaded that it was badly written in German, because first of all the Germans, with certain exceptions have the reputation of writing badly, it is not true: *The Critique of Pure Reason* is written as well as Freud's books - and that is no small thing.

The schema is the following: subject 

It concerned what Freud speaks to us about at this level of the "Introduction to Narcissism" namely that we love the other from the same humid substance as the one of

which we are the reservoir, which is called libido, and that it is in so far as it is here that it can be there (see the schema) namely surrounding, swamping, wetting the object in front.

The referring of love to humidity does not come from me, it is in the *Symposium* which we gave a commentary on last year.

The moral is: this metaphysics of love - because this is what is involved - the fundamental element of *Liebesbedingung*, of the condition of love, the moral is: in a certain sense I only love - what is called loving, what we call here loving, there is also the matter of what exists as a remainder beyond love, therefore what is called loving in a certain fashion - I only love my body, even when I transfer this love onto the body of the other. Of course a good amount of it still remains on my own. It is even indispensable, up to a certain point, even if only in the extreme case of what must of course function autoerotically, namely my penis, to take for simplicity the androcentric point of view. There is no problem about this simplification, as you will see, because this is not what interests us.

What interests us is the phallus. Now, I proposed to you implicitly, if not explicitly in the sense that it is even more explicit now than last year, I proposed to you to define with respect to what I love in the other who for his part is subject to this hydraulic condition of the equivalence of the libido, namely that when it increases on one side, it increases also on the other, what I desire, what is different in what I experience, is what in the form of pure reflection of what remains invested of me whatever the circumstances is precisely what is lacking to the body of the other in so far as it is constituted from the point of view of desire by this impregnation of the humidity of love, at the level of desire, this body of the other, at least however little I love it, only takes on a value precisely from what it lacks, and it is very precisely for that reason that I was going to say that heterosexuality is possible, because we have to understand one another.

If it is true, as analysis teaches us, that it is the fact that the woman is effectively castrated from the penile point of view which frightens some people, if what we say there is not at all nonsensical - and it is not at all nonsensical because it is obvious, one meets it at every turn in neurotics - I insist: I am saying that it is well and truly there that we have discovered it, I mean that we are sure because it is there that the mechanisms operate with such subtlety that there is no other hypothesis possible to explain the way in which the the neurotic establishes, constitutes his hysterical or obsessional desire.

Which will lead me this year to articulate completely for you the meaning of the desire of the hysteric as well as that of the obsessional, and very quickly, because I would say that up to a certain point, it is urgent. If this is how things are, it is even more conscious in the homosexual than in the neurotic: the homosexual tells you himself because it has all the same a very painful effect on him to be confronted with this being without a penis. It is precisely because of this that we cannot trust it all that much and moreover, we are right. It is for this reason that I take my reference from the neurotic.

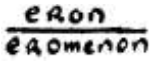
All this having been said, it remains indeed that there are still all the same quite a few people whom that does not frighten and that, as a consequence, it is not crazy - let us say simply, I am forced to tackle the thing like that, since after all, nobody has said it like that, when I will have said it two or three times to you, I think that this will end up by becoming quite obvious to you - it is not crazy to think that in the case of the beings who cannot have a

normal, satisfying relationship I mean of desire with the partner of the opposite sex: not alone does it not frighten him, but it is precisely this which is interesting namely that it is not because the penis is not there that the phallus is not there. I would even say on the contrary. Which allows there to be rediscovered at a number of crossroads this in particular that what desire seeks is less the desirable in the other than the desiring, namely what is lacking in him, and there again I would ask you to recall that it is the first aporia, the first abc of the question, as it begins to be articulated when you open this famous *Symposium* which seems to have traversed the centuries only for the theology that can be constructed around it. I am trying to make something else of it, namely to make you grasp that on every line, what is spoken of effectively is what is in question, namely Eros.

I desire the other as desiring and when I say as desiring, I did not even say, I deliberately did not say as desiring me: because it is I who desire, and desiring desire, this desire could only be desire for me if I rediscover myself at this turning point where of course I am, namely if I love myself in the other, in other words if it is myself that I love.

But then, I am abandoning desire. What I am in the process of accentuating, is this limit, this frontier which separates desire from love: which does not mean, of course, that they do not condition it in all sorts of ways - this is even the whole drama here - as I think ought to be the first remark that you should make to yourselves about your experience as an analyst, it being well understood that it happens as it does to many other subjects at this level of human reality and that it is often the common man who is closest to what I would call on this occasion the bone. What is to be desired is obviously always what is lacking, and it is indeed for that reason that in French desire is called *desidorium* which means regrets.

And this also connects up with what I accentuated last year as being the point always aimed at by the ethics of the passions, which is to bring about, I am not saying this synthesis, but this conjunction regarding which it is a question of knowing whether precisely it is not structurally impossible, if it does not remain an ideal point outside the limits of the working drawing, which I called the metaphor of true love, which is the famous equation:



the *eron* substituting himself, the desirer substituting himself for the desired at this point, and through this metaphor equivalent to the perfection of the lover as it is also articulated in the *Symposium*, namely this reversal of this whole property of what one could call: the naturally loveable, the heartbreak in love which puts everything that can be desirable in itself outside the range of lovingness, as I might say, this *noli me amare*, which is the true secret, the true final word of the ideal passion of this courtly love whose term, which has so little to do with the present, I placed for very good reasons, I mean however confusing it has become, at the horizon of what I articulated last year, preferring to substitute for it as more present, more exemplary this order of experience, for its part not at all ideal, but perfectly accessible, which is our own under the name of transference and which I illustrated for you, already showed, illustrated in the *Symposium* under this quite paradoxical form of a properly speaking analytic interpretation by Socrates after the long mad exhibitionistic declaration, indeed, the analytic rule applied at full tilt to the discourse of Alcibiades.

No doubt, you have been able to retain the irony implicitly contained in something which is not hidden in the text, which is that the one whom Socrates desires at the time for the beauty of the demonstration is Agathon, in other words, the *deconograph*, the pure spirit, the one who speaks about love in the way in which one ought no doubt speak about it by comparing it to peace on the waves, in a frankly comic tone, but without doing it deliberately, and even without noticing it.

In other words what does Socrates mean?

Why would Socrates not love Agathon if precisely stupidity, like M Teste, is precisely what he is lacking. Stupidity is not my strong point, it is a teaching, because that means - and this then is articulated literally - to Alcibiades: "my dear friend, talk on, because it is him that you also love". It is for Agathon this whole long discourse. Only, the difference, is that you for your part do not know what is in question: your strength, your mastery, your riches lead you astray, and in effect, we know enough about the life of Alcibiades to know that few things were lacking to him in the most extreme order of what one can have.

In his own way very different to that of Socrates, he also was nowhere. Received moreover with open arms wherever he went, people always too happy to make such an acquisition. A certain *atopia* was his lot. He himself was too much of a burden. When he came to Sparta, he found simply that he was doing a great honour to the King of Sparta - this is reported in Plutarch, clearly articulated - by having a child with his wife for example, this to give you the style of the man, this is the least of it, there are some really hard men around.

But for Socrates, the important thing is not there. The important thing is to say: "Alcibiades, pay a bit more attention to your soul", which, believe me, I am well convinced of it, has not at all the same meaning in Socrates that it took on after the Platonic development of the notion of the one. If Socrates responds to him "I know nothing, except, perhaps about the nature of Eros", it is indeed because the outstanding function of Socrates was to have been the first to have conceived what the true nature of desire was. And it is exactly for that reason that beginning from this revelation up to Freud, desire as such in its function, desire *qua* the very essence of man as Spinoza says - and everyone knows what that means, man in Spinoza, is the subject, is the essence of the subject - that desire remained throughout this respectable number of centuries a function that is half, three quarters, four fifths hidden in the history of knowledge.

The subject involved, the one whose track we are following is the subject of desire and not the subject of love for the simple reason that one is not the subject of love: one is ordinarily, one is normally its victim, it is completely different.

In other words, love is a natural force, this is what justifies what is called Freud's zoological point of view. Love, is a reality, it is for this reason moreover that I tell you "the gods are real". Love is Aphrodite who strikes. It was very well known in antiquity. This astonished nobody.

You will allow me a very nice play on words. It is one of my most divine obsessionals who produced for me a few days ago: "*l'affreux doute de 1'Hermaphrodite*" (the awful doubt of the Hermaphrodite). I mean that I can do nothing less than think about it since obviously things have happened which have made us slide from Aphrodite to awful doubt. I mean: there

is much to be said in favour of Christianity, I could not support it too much and especially as regards the disengaging of desire as such.

I do not want to deflower the subject too much, but I am determined on this point to put all sorts of considerations before you. That all the same to obtain this most praiseworthy of ends, this poor love should have been put in the position of becoming a commandment, is all the same to have dearly paid for the inauguration of this research, which is that of desire.

We of course, all the same, as analysts, should know how to summarise a little bit the question about the subject, that what we have well and truly advanced about love, is that it is the source of all evil. That makes you laugh. The least conversation is there to demonstrate to you that the love of the mother is the cause of everything. I am not saying that one is always right, but it is all the same on this path that we do our roundabout every day. It is what results from our daily experience.

Therefore, it is well posed that as regards the research into what the subject is in analysis, namely what one should identify him to, even if it were only in an alternating fashion, it could not be other than one of desire.

It is here that I will leave you today, not without pointing out to you that even though, of course, we are in a position to do it much better than it was done by the thinker that I am going to name, we are not so much in *no-man's-land*.

I mean that immediately after Kant, there is someone who noticed it who was called Hegel whose whole *Phenomenology of Spirit* starts from this, from *Begierde*. He made only one mistake, which is to have had no knowledge, even though one could designate its place, of what the mirror stage was.

Hence this irreducible confusion which puts everything under the angle of the relationship of the master and the slave and which makes this approach inoperative and makes it necessary to take up everything from there.

Let us hope, as regards ourselves, that encouraged by the genius of our master, we can complete in a more satisfactory fashion the question of the subject of desire.

Seminar 11: Wednesday 28 February 1962

People may find that I am busying myself here a little bit too much with what are called – God's curse on the name - the great philosophers. The fact is that perhaps not they alone, but they in an eminent way, articulate what one may well call a pathetic research because it always returns, if one knows how to consider it throughout all its detours, its more or less sublime objects, to this radical knot that I am trying to undo for you namely desire; it is to this that I hope, by enquiring into it if you are willing to follow me, to restore decisively its property as an unsurpassable point, unsurpassable in the very sense that I mean when I tell you that each one of those who can be described by this name of great philosopher cannot be surpassed on a certain point.

I believe that I have the right to confront myself, with your assistance, with such a task in so far as desire is our business as psychoanalysts. I believe that I am also required to stick to it and to ask you to do so with me because it is only by rectifying our perspective on desire that we can maintain analytic technique in its primary function, the word primary needing to be understood in the sense of what appeared first historically - there was no doubt about it at the beginning -: a truth function. Naturally, this is what encourages us to interrogate this function at a more radical level; this is the one that I am trying to show you by articulating for you the following, which is at the basis of analytic experience, that we are enslaved as men, I mean as desiring beings, whether we know it or not, whether we think we want it or not to this truth function. Because, do I have to remind you that the conflicts, the impasses, which are the raw material of our press, can only be objectified by making intervene in their operation the place of the subject as such, *qua* bound as subject into the structure of the experience. This is the meaning of identification in so far as it is defined as such by Freud.

Nothing is more precise, nothing is more demanding than the calculation of the subjective conjuncture when one has found what I can call in the proper sense of the term, the sense in which it is employed in Kant, its practical reason. I prefer to call it that than to say the operational bias, because of what the term operational implies for some time now: a sort of avoidance of what is fundamental. Remember on this point what I taught you two years ago about this practical reason in so far as it involves desire. Sade is closer than Kant, even though Sade, almost mad, as one might say, about his vision, cannot be understood except by being on this occasion referred to Kant's measure in the way I tried to do it.

Remember what I told you about it, about the striking analogy between the total exigency of the liberty of *jouissance* in Sade, with the universal Kantian rule of behaviour. The function on which desire is founded in our experience makes manifest that it has nothing to do with what Kant distinguishes as the *Wohl*, by opposing it to the *Gut* and to the good, let us say with well being, with the useful. This leads us to realise that this goes much further than this function of desire. It has nothing to do, I would say, in general with what Kant calls, in order to relegate it to a second rank in the rules of behaviour, the pathological.

Therefore, for those who do not remember very well the sense in which Kant employs this term, whom this lead into a misinterpretation, I will try to translate it by saying the

protopathic, or again more generally what is too human in human experience, limits linked to convenience, to comfort, to dietary concessions. This goes further, it goes as far as to imply tissue thirst itself. Let us not forget the role, the function that I give to anorexia nervosa, as being that in whose first effects we can sense this function of desire and the role that I gave it by way of example in order to illustrate the distinction between desire and need.

Therefore however far convenience, comfort, concession may be from it will you not tell me that there is no doubt no compromise because we speak about it all the time. But the compromises that this function of desire has to pass through are of a different order to those linked for example to the existence of a community founded on biological association, because it is in this form that we have most conveniently to evoke, to recognise, to explain the function of compromise. You know well that at the point that we are at, if we follow Freudian thinking to the end, these compromises involve the relationship of a death instinct to a life instinct, which are one and the other no less strange to consider in their dialectical relationships than in their definition.

To begin again, as I always do, at some point of every discourse that I address to you weekly, I remind you that this death instinct is not a gnawing worm, a parasite, a wound, not even a principal of contrariety, something like a sort of Ying opposed to the Yang, the alternating element. It is clearly articulated for Freud: a principle which envelopes all the detours of life, which life, which detours only find their meaning by rejoining it. To be honest, it is because they are scandalised that some people distance themselves from it; because here indeed we have no doubt returned, come back, despite all the positivist principles, it is true, to the most absurd properly speaking metaphysical extrapolation, in contempt of all the acquired rules of prudence. The death instinct in Freud is presented to us as that which for us, I am thinking in his place, is situated from the *sequellae* of what we are here calling the signifier of life, because what Freud tells us about it is that the essence of life, reinscribed in the frame of death instinct is nothing other than the design, required by the law of pleasure, of realising, of always repeating the same detour in order to come back to the inanimate.

The definition of the life instinct in Freud - it is not vain to come back to it, to reaccentuate it - is no less strange because of the fact that it is appropriate always to re-underline that it is reduced to Eros, to the libido. Notice carefully what that signifies. I will accentuate it through a comparison with the earlier Kantian position; but already you see here the point of contact to which we are reduced as regards the relationship to the body. It is a matter of a choice, and of one so obvious that in the theory this is materialised in these figures which it must not be in any way forgotten are new and also what difficulties, what aporias, indeed what impasses they oppose to our efforts to justify them, even to situate them, to define them exactly. I think that the function of the phallus, since it is that around which there comes to be articulated this Eros, this libido, sufficiently designates what I intend to highlight here. On the whole all the figures, to take up again the term that I have just employed, that we have to handle concerning this Eros, what have they to do with, what have they in common for example in order to make you sense the distance from the preoccupations of an embryologist about whom one cannot all the same say that he has nothing to do with it, with the life instinct, when he questions himself about what an organiser is in growth, in the mechanism of cellular division, the segmentation of skin layers, morphological differentiation? One is astonished to find it written somewhere or other by Freud that analysis

might lead to some biological discovery or other. This is to be found on occasions, as far as I remember, in the *Abriss*. What got into him at that time? I ask myself what biological discovery has been made in the light of analysis? But moreover, since it is a question of highlighting here the limitation, the elective point of our contact with the body, in so far, of course, as it is the support, the presence of this life, is it not striking that, in order to reintegrate into our calculations the function of the preservation of this body, it was necessary for us to pass through the ambiguity of the notion of narcissism which has been sufficiently designated. I am thinking, in order not to have to articulate it otherwise, about the very structure itself of the narcissistic concept, and the equivalence that is placed on it there with the liaison to the object, sufficiently designated, I am saying, by the accent put ever since "An introduction to narcissism" on the function of pain, and the first article in so far - reread this excellently translated article - as pain is not a signal of damage but an autoerotic phenomenon as I recalled not too long ago in a casual conversation, and in connection with a personal experience, to someone who is listening to me, the experience of one pain effaces that of another, I mean that in the present it is difficult to suffer two pains at the same time: one takes over, makes one forget the other as if the libidinal cathexis, even onto one's own body, showed itself in this case to be subject to the same law which I would call that of partiality which motivates the relation to the world of the objects of desire.

Pain is not simply, as the technicians say, exquisite by nature; it is privileged, it can be a fetish. This in order to lead us to this point which I already, during a recent lecture, not here, articulated that it is of contemporary interest in our account to put in question what is meant by the subjective organisation that is designated by the primary process, what it means as regards what is and what is not its relationship to the body. It is here that, as I might say, the reference to, the analogy with the Kantian investigation is going to be of use to us.

I apologise with all the required humility, to those who have an experience of the Kantian texts which gives them a right to some marginal observations when I go a little quickly in my reference to the essential of what the Kantian exploration brings us. We could also perhaps delay here on these meanderings around certain points at the expense of rigour, but is it not also the case that in following them too much we might lose something in terms of its massive reliefs on certain points, I am speaking about the Kantian critique and specifically about the one called that of pure reason.

In that case, have I not got the right to limit myself for a moment to the following which, for someone who has simply read once or twice with an intelligent attention the aforesaid *Critique of Pure Reason*, something moreover which is not contested by any commentator, that the categories described as those of pure reason undoubtedly require to function as such the foundation of what is called pure intuition, which is presented as the normative, I will go further, obligatory form of all sensible understandings. I am saying of all, whatever they may be. This is the way in which this intuition, which is ordered in categories of space and of time, finds itself designated by Kant as being excluded from what one can call the originality of sensible experience, of *Sinnlichkeit*, from which alone there can emerge, there can arise any affirmation whatsoever about palpable reality, these affirmations of reality remaining no less in their articulation subject to the categories of the aforesaid pure reason, without which they would not be able to be, not alone enounced, but even glimpsed. In that case, everything is dependent on this principle of the so-called synthetic function, which means nothing other than unifying, which is, if one may also say it, the common term

of all the categorical functions, the common term which is ordered and is decomposed in the very suggestive articulated table that Kant gives of it or rather in the two tables that he gives of it: the forms of the categories and the forms of judgement, which grasps that by right, in so far as it marks the spontaneity of the subject in the relationship to reality, this pure intuition is absolutely required.

One could manage to reduce the Kantian schema to *Beharrlichkeit*, to permanence, to the holding, which I would describe as empty, but the possible holding of anything whatsoever in time. This intuition which is pure by right is absolutely required by Kant for the functioning of the categories, but after all that the existence of a body, in so far as it is the foundation of sensoriality - *Sinnlichkeit* - is not required at all, no doubt, for what one can validly articulate as a relationship to reality, this will take us no further since, as Kant underlines, the use of these categories of understanding will only concern what he is going to call empty concepts; but when we say that this will take us no further, it is because we are philosophers, and even Kantians, but once we no longer are that, which is the most common case, everyone knows precisely that on the contrary this goes very far because the whole effort of philosophy consists in countering a whole series of illusions, of *Schwärmereien* as it is expressed in *philogophique* and particularly Kantian language; bad dreams - at the same epoch Goya tells us: "the sleep of reason engenders monsters" - whose theologising effects indeed show us quite the contrary, namely that this goes very far, since through the mediation of a thousand fanaticisms this leads quite simply to bloody violence, which continues moreover quite tranquilly, despite the presence of philosophers to constitute, it has to be said, an important part of the texture of human history.

It is for that reason that it is not at all indifferent to show where there passes in effect the frontier of what is effective in experience despite all the theoretical purifications and the moral rectifications. It is quite clear in any case that there is no way of admitting Kant's "Transcendental Aesthetic" as tenable despite what I called the unsurpassable character of the service that he renders us in his critique, and I hope to make you sense it precisely from what I am going to show you it would be well to substitute for it. Because precisely if it would be well to substitute something for it and if this functions while preserving something of the structure that he articulated, this is what proves that he at least glimpsed, that he profoundly glimpsed this very thing. Thus it is that the Kantian aesthetic is absolutely not tenable, for the simple reason that for him it is fundamentally supported by a mathematical argumentation which belongs to what one could call the geometrizing epoch of mathematics. It is in so far as Euclidian geometry is uncontested at the time Kant was pursuing his meditation, that it is sustainable for him that there are in the spatio-temporal order certain intuitive facts. One has only to bend down, to open his text, to collect examples of what may appear now immediately refutable to a student averagely advanced in a mathematical initiation, when he gives us as an example of a fact which does not even need to be demonstrated, that only one straight line can pass between two points. Everyone knows, in so far as the mind has in sum adapted itself rather easily to the imagination, to the pure intuition of a curved space through the metaphor of this sphere, that through two points, there can pass many more than one straight line, and even an infinity of straight lines. When he gives us in this table of *nichts*, of nothings, as example of the *leere Gegenstand ohne Begriff*: of the empty object without a concept, the following example which is rather extraordinary: the illustration of a rectilinear figure which would only have two sides, here is something which might seem to Kant - and no doubt not to everyone at his epoch - as the very example of the inexistent object and what

is more the unthinkable one; but the least usage I would say even of the quite elementary experience of a geometer, the investigation of the trace described by a point linked to the circumference of a circle, what is called a Pascalian cycloid, will show you that a rectilinear figure, in so far as it properly puts in question the permanence of the contact between two lines and two sides is something which is truly primordial, essential to any kind of geometrical comprehension, that there is well and truly here a conceptual articulation and even a quite definable object.

Moreover, even with this affirmation that nothing except the synthetic judgement is fruitful, it may still, after the whole effort of logicising mathematics, be considered as subject to reason. The so-called unfruitfulness of the *a priori* analytic judgement, namely of what we will call quite simply the purely combinatory usage of elements extracted from the primary position of a certain number of definitions, that this combinatory usage has in itself its own fecundity, this is what the most recent, the most advanced critique of the foundations of arithmetic, for example, can certainly demonstrate. That there is in the final analysis, in the field of mathematical creation, a necessarily undemonstrable residue, this is what no doubt the same logicising exploration seems to have led us to (Gödel's theorem) with a rigour unrefuted up to now, but it remains nonetheless that it is by way of formal demonstration that this certainty can be acquired and, when I say formal, I mean by the most expressly formalist procedures of logicising combination.

What does that mean? Is it that for all that this pure intuition, as for Kant at the end of a critical progress concerning the required forms of science, that this pure intuition teaches us nothing? It undoubtedly teaches us to discern its consistency with and also its possible disjunction from precisely the synthetic exercise of the unifying function of the term of unity *qua* constitutive in every categorical formation and, once the ambiguities of this function of unity have been shown, of showing us to what choice, to what reversal we are led under the influence of diverse experiences.

Here obviously it is only our own which is important. But is it not more significant than anecdotes, accidents, even exploits, to the precise point that one can point out the slenderness of the point of conjunction between the functioning of the categories and sensible experience in Kant, the strangling point as I might say, at which there can be raised the question of whether the existence of a body, altogether required of course, could not in fact be put in question in the Kantian perspective. As regards the fact that it is required by right, is there something which has not at all been done?

In order to presentify for you this question in the situation of this lost child that the cosmonaut of our epoch in his capsule is in when he is in a state of weightlessness, I will not put any weight on this remark that the tolerance of it, it seems, has of course not yet been put to the test for very long. But all the same the surprising tolerance of the organism of the weightless state is all the same likely to make us pose a question, since after all dreamers question themselves about the origin of life - and among them there are those who say that this suddenly began to fructify on our globe, but others say that it must have come through a germ which came from the astral spaces. I cannot tell you how indifferent this sort of speculation leaves me. All the same, from the moment that an organism, whether it is human, whether it is that of a cat or of the least lord of the living kingdom, seems so happy in the state of weightlessness, is it not precisely essential for life let us simply say that it should be

in an equipollent position with respect to any possible effect of the field of gravity? Of course, the cosmonaut is always subject to the effects of gravity; simply it is a gravity which does not weigh on him. Well then, there where he is in his weightless state, locked in as you know in his capsule and what is more again sustained, *moltonne* from all sides by the folds of this capsule, what does he transport with him in terms of an intuition which is pure or not, but phenomenologically definable, of space and of time? The question is all the more interesting because you know that since Kant we have all the same gone back on that. I mean that the exploration qualified precisely as phenomenological has all the same brought our attention back to the fact that what one can call the naive dimensions of specifically spatial intuition, are not all the same an intuition, however purified one may think it, that is so easily reducible and that the top, the bottom, indeed the left preserve all their importance not alone in fact, but even by right for the most critical thinking.

What happened to Gagarin or to Titov or to Glenn, in terms of their intuition of space and of time in the moments when certainly they had, as one says, other things on their minds? It would not perhaps be altogether uninteresting to have a little phenomenological dialogue with one of them while he is up there. In these experiments, naturally it was considered that this was not the most urgent thing to do. Besides, there is time to return to it. What I am affirming, is that, whatever may be the case about these points on which we all the same are rather eager to have answers from *Erfahrung*, from experience, this in any case did not prevent him from being quite capable of what I would call pressing the buttons, because it is clear, at least for the last one, that the business was commanded at one or other moment and even decided from inside. He remained therefore in full possession of the means of an effective combination. No doubt his pure reason was powerfully equipped with a whole complex arrangement which undoubtedly gave its final efficacity to the experiment. It nevertheless remains that, as regards everything that we can suppose, and as far as we can suppose, to be the effect of the combinatory construction in the apparatus, and even in the learning experiences, in the repeated tasks in the exhausting formation imposed on the pilot himself, to the extent that we could suppose him to be integrated to what one could call the already constructed automatism of the machine, it is enough that he should have to push a button in the right direction while knowing why, for it to become extraordinarily significant that such an exercise of combining reason is possible in conditions which perhaps are far from still being the extremes reached of the constraint and paradox we can suppose imposed on the conditions of natural motor functions, and that correlatively, things only function in so far as the aforesaid motor subject is literally imprisoned by the carapace which alone guarantees the containment, at least at one or other moment of the flight, of the organism in what one could call its elementary solidarity. Here therefore this body has become as I might say a sort of mollusc, but torn away from its vegetative implantation. This carapace becomes such a dominant guarantee of the maintenance of this solidarity, of this unity, that one is not far from grasping that it is in it in the final analysis that it consists, that one sees there in a sort of exteriorized relationship of the function of this unity as a veritable container of what one can call the living pulp. The contrast between this corporal position and this pure function of reasoning machine, this pure reason which remains the only efficacious thing and everything from which we await some efficaciousness or other within, is indeed here something exemplary which gives all its importance to the question that I posed earlier about the preservation or not of spatio-temporal intuition, in the sense that I sufficiently supported it by what I would call the false geometry of Kant's time. Is this intuition still there? I have a strong tendency to think that it is still there.

This false geometry is still there, just as stupid and just as idiotic, because it is effectively produced as a sort of reflection of the combining activity, but a reflection which is no less refutable. Because as the experience of the meditation of mathematicians has proved, on this earth, we are no less liberated from weight than in the place above where we follow our cosmonaut. In other words that this so called pure intuition has come from the illusion of the lures attached to the combinatory function, itself quite possible to dissipate even if it proves to be more or less tenacious, it is no more, as I might say, than the shadow of a shadow.

But of course, to be able to affirm that, it is necessary to have based number itself elsewhere than in this intuition. Besides, if we suppose that our cosmonaut does not preserve this Euclidean intuition of space, and the still much more questionable one of time which is appended to it in Kant, namely something which can be projected onto a line, what would that prove? That would simply prove that he is all the same capable of correctly pushing the buttons without having recourse to their schematism, this would simply prove that what is already refutable here is refuted up there in intuition itself, which, you will tell me, reduces perhaps a little the import of the question that we have to pose to him.

And this indeed is the reason why there are other more important questions to pose to him, which are precisely ours, and particularly this one: what becomes in the weightless state of a sexual drive which is used to manifesting itself by appearing to go against, and whether the fact that he is entirely stuck inside a machine - I mean in the material sense of the word - which incarnates, manifests in such an obvious fashion the phallic phantasy, does not particularly alienate him from its relationship to the functions of weightlessness natural to male desire. Here is another question that we have quite legitimately I believe to stick our nose into.

To come back to number, which it may astonish you that I make into an element so obviously detached from pure intuition, from sense experience I am not going to give you a seminar here on the *Foundations of Arithmetic* the English title of Frege to which I would ask you to refer because it is a book as fascinating as the Martian chronicles and you will see that it is in any case obvious that there is no empirical deduction possible of the function of number, but as regards which, since I have no intention of giving you a lecture on this subject, I will content myself, because it is part of our account, with pointing out to you that for example the five points arranged in this way that

you can see on the face of a dice, is indeed a figure which can symbolise the number five but that you would be completely wrong to believe that the number five is given to you in any way by this figure. As I do not want to weary you by making an infinite number of detours, I think that the quickest way is to make you imagine a behavioural experiment that you might be in the process of carrying out on an animal.

It is rather frequent, in order to experiment with this faculty of discernment that the animal has, in one or other situation made up of goals to be reached, for you to give him different shapes. Suppose that alongside this arrangement, something which constitutes a figure, you would not expect in any case and from any animal that he should react in the same fashion to the following figure, which is nevertheless also a five, or to this one which is no less one, namely the form of a pentagon (schema):

If an animal were ever to react in the same fashion to these three figures, well you would be stupified, and very precisely for the reason that you would then be absolutely convinced that the animal knows how to count. But, you know that he does not know how to count. This is not a proof of the non-empirical origin of the function of number. I tell you again: this merits a detailed discussion regarding which after all the only true, sensible, serious reason that I have to strongly advise you to interest yourselves in it, is that it is surprising to see the degree to which few mathematicians, even though it is not only mathematicians who have treated it properly, really interest themselves in it. It will therefore be on your part, if you interest yourselves in it, a work of mercy: to visit the sick, to interest oneself in uninteresting questions, is this not also in some way our function? You will see in it that in any case unity and zero, so important for every rational constitution of number, are what are the most resistant, of course, to every attempt at an experimental genesis of number, and most especially if one intends to give a homogenous definition of number as such, reducing to nothing all the geneses that one may try to give of number starting from a collection and from the abstraction of difference starting from diversity. Here the fact that I was led, directly along the line of the Freudian approach, to articulate in a fashion which appeared necessary to me the function of the unary trait takes on its value, in so far as it makes the genesis of difference appear in an operation that one can say is situated along the line of an ever increasing simplification, that it is in a perspective which is the one which culminates at the line of strokes, namely with the repetition of the apparently identical that there is created, separated out, what I call, not the symbol, but the entry into the real as inscribed signifier - and this is what the term of primacy means - of writing. The entry into the real, is the form of this trait repeated by the primitive hunter of absolute difference in so far as it is there. Moreover you will have no trouble - you will find them in reading Frege, even though Frege does not take that path, for want of an adequate theory of the signifier - in finding in Frege's text that the best mathematical analysts of the function of unity, specifically Givon and Schroder, put the accent in the same way as I am doing it, on the function of the unary trait.

This is what makes me say that what we have to articulate here, is that by reversing, as I might say, the polarity of this function of unity, by abandoning the unifying unity, the *Einheit*, for the distinctive unity, the *Einzigkeit*, I am leading you to the point of posing the question, of defining, of articulating step by step the solidarity of the status of the subject *qua* bound to this unary trait with the fact that the subject is constituted in his structure where the sexual drive has its privileged function among all the afferents of the body. To the first fact,

the liaison of the subject to this unary trait, I am going today to put the final point, considering the path to be sufficiently articulated by reminding you that this fact so important in our experience, put in the forefront by Freud, of what he calls the narcissism of small differences, is the same thing as what I am calling the function of the unary trait; because it is nothing other than the fact that it is starting from a small difference - and to say small difference means nothing other than this absolute difference of which I speak to you, this difference detached from all possible comparison - it is starting from this small difference, in so far as it is the same thing as the big I, the ego-ideal, that every narcissistic perspective can be accommodated; the subject constituted or not as bearer of this unary trait, is what allows us to take today our first step into what will constitute the object of our next lecture, namely the taking up again of the functions of privation, frustration, castration.

It is first of all by taking them up again that we will be able to glimpse where and how there is posed the question of the relationship between the world of the signifier and what we call the sexual drive, namely the privilege, the prevalence of the erotic function of the body in the constitution of the subject. Let us tackle it a little bit, let us nibble at it, this question, starting from privation, because it is the most simple. Something of minus o exists in the world, there is an object which is not in its place, which is indeed the most absurd conception of the world if one gives its meaning to the word Real. What could be lacking in the Real?

Moreover it is because of the difficulty of this question that you still see, in Kant, remaining, as I might say, well beyond therefore pure intuition, all these old remainders which shackle him with theology, and under the name of a cosmological conception, "*In mundo non est casus*", he reminds us: there is nothing casual, occasional. "*In mundo non est fatum*": there is no fatality which goes beyond a rational necessity; "*In mundo non est fatum*": there are no leaps: "*In mundo non est hiatus*", and the great refutor of metaphysical imprudences makes his own these four denegations, about which I ask you, whether in our perspective, they can appear to be anything other than the very inverted status of what we always have to deal with in cases, in the proper sense of the term, with a *fatum* properly speaking, because our unconscious is an oracle, with as many hiatuses as there are distinct signifiers, as many jumps as there are metonymies produced. It is because there is a subject who is himself marked or not by a unary trait who is one or minus one, that there can be a minus o, that the subject can identify himself with the little ball of Freud's grandson and especially in the connotation of its lack: there is not, *ens privativum*. Of course, there is a void and it is from there that the subject is going to start: *leere Gegenstand ohne Begriff*.

Of the four definitions of nothing that Kant gives and that we will take up the next time, it is the only one that holds up rigorously: here there is a nothing. Observe that in the table that I gave you in three terms, castration, frustration, privation, the counterpart, the possible agent, the properly speaking imaginary subject from whom privation the enunciating of privation can flow, is the subject of imaginary omnipotence, namely of the inverted image of impotence. *Ens rationis*: *leere Begriff ohne Gegenstand*, pure concept of possibility. Here is the framework in which there is situated and there appears the *ens privativum*. Kant of course does not fail to ironise about the purely formal usage of the formula which seems to be self-evident: everything real is possible. Who will contradict that? Obviously. And he takes the further step by pointing out to us that: therefore some real is possible, but that can also mean that some possible thing is not real, that there is something possible which is not real; no less of course the philosophical abuse which can be made of it is here enounced by

Kant. What is important for us is to grasp that the possible involved is not the possible of the subject. The subject alone can be this negatived real of a possible which is not real. We thus see the minus 1 constitutive of the *ens privativum* linked to the most primitive structure of our experience of the unconscious, in so far as it is not that of prohibition, nor of saying not, but of the unsaid (*du non-dit*), of the point where the subject is no longer there to say whether he is no longer master of this identification to the 1, or of this sudden absence of the 1 which, you will remark, here finds its force and its root; the possibility of *fatum*, *casus*, *saltus*, is precisely the way in which I hope beginning from the next session to show you what other form of pure and even spatial erudition is especially involved in the function of surface. In so far as I believe it to be capital, primordial, essential, for any articulation of the subject that we can formulate.

Seminar 12: Wednesday 7 March 1962

In regrouping the difficult thoughts to which we are led, on which I left you the last time, in beginning to tackle by way of privation what concerns the most central point of the structure of the identification of the subject, in regrouping these thoughts I found myself starting again from some introductory remarks.

It is not my custom to take up the interrupted thread again absolutely *ex abrupto*; these remarks echoed some of these strange personages of whom I spoke to you the last time, who are called philosophers, great or small, this remark was more or less the following, as far as we are concerned, the fact that the subject is mistaken (*se trompe*), is undoubtedly for us, analysts just as much as philosophers, the inaugural experience.

But the fact that it interests us, is manifestly and I would say exclusively because he can express himself (*il peut se dire*), and this expression shows itself to be infinitely fruitful and more especially fruitful in analysis than elsewhere, at least one likes to think so.

But, let us not forget that the remark has been made by eminent thinkers that if what is involved in the affair is the real, the way described as that of the rectification of the means of knowing could well - it is the least that one might say - distance us indefinitely from what it is a question of reaching, namely something of the absolute. Because it is a matter of the real, full stop, that is what is involved. It is a matter of reaching what is aimed at as independent of all our moorings; in the search for what is aimed at this is what is called absolute: in the end to cast off everything. All overloading therefore, it is always a more overloaded way that the criteria of science tends to establish, in the philosophical perspective that I am talking about. I am not speaking here about these learned men, who for their part, contrary to what is believed, have no doubts.

It is in this measure that we are more sure that at least they approach the real.

In the philosophical perspective of the critique of science, we ought, for our part, to make some remarks; and specifically the term that we should most distrust in order to advance in this critique, is the term appearance, because appearance is far from being our enemy, I am talking about when it is a matter of the real. I am not the one who incarnated what I am telling you in this simple little image:

It is indeed in the appearance of this figure that there is given to me the reality of the cube, that it stands out for me as a reality.

To reduce this image to the function of an optical illusion, would simply divert me from the cube, namely from the reality that this artifice is meant to show you. It is the same for a relationship with a woman, for example. Every scientific investigation of this relationship will tend when all is said and done towards formulae like the celebrated one that

you surely know of Colonel Bramble, which reduces the object involved, the woman in question, to what she simply is from the scientific point of view: an agglomeration of albumins, which obviously does not agree very well with the world of feelings which are attached to the aforesaid object.

It is all the same quite clear that what I would call, if you will permit it, the dizziness about the object in desire, this kind of idol, of adoration which can prostrate us or at least weaken us before a hand as such. Let us even say, in order to make ourselves better understood about the subject given us in experience, that it is not because it is her hand because in a less terminal place, a little higher up, a little down on the forearm can suddenly take on for us this unique savour which makes us in some way tremble before this pure apprehension of her existence.

It is quite obvious that this has a greater relationship to the reality of the woman than any elucidation whatsoever of what is called sexual attraction, in so far of course as elucidating sexual attraction poses in principle that it is a matter of putting in question its lure, while this lure is its very reality.

Therefore, if the subject is mistaken, he may well be right from the point of view of the absolute. It nevertheless remains, and even for us who busy ourselves with desire, that the word error keeps its meaning.

Here allow me to tell you how I for my part conclude, namely to give you as completed the fruit of a reflection on this matter whose continuation is precisely what I am going to advance today. I am going to try to show you its well-foundedness, the fact is that it is not possible to give a meaning to this term of error, in any domain and not just in ours - this is a daring affirmation, but this supposes that I consider that, to use an expression to which I will have to return in the course of my lecture today, I have gone into this question thoroughly - there can be no question, if the word error has a meaning for the subject, of anything but an error in his count.

In other words, for any subject who does not count, there can be no error. This is not obvious. It is necessary to have explored a certain number of directions in order to perceive and to believe - this is where I am at and I would ask you to follow me - that this is the only thing that opens up the impasses, the blind alleys into which people have gone about this question.

This means of course that this activity of counting begins early for the subject. I carried out a full rereading of someone for whom everyone knows I do not have very refined leanings despite the great esteem and respect that his work merits and in addition his uncontestable charm as a person, I am speaking about M Piaget; this is not to discourage anyone from reading him!

I carried out then a re-reading of *The Genesis of Number in the Child*. It is disconcerting that someone can believe themselves able to detect the moment that there appears in the subject the function of number by posing him questions which in a way imply their response, even if these questions are posed through the mediation of a material which one imagines perhaps excludes the biased character of the question. One thing can be said: that when all is said and done it is rather a lure that is involved in this way of proceeding. It is

not at all sure that what the infant appears to miscognise does not depend at all on the very conditions of the experiment; but the strength of this terrain is such that one cannot say that there is not a lot to be learned, not so much in the little bit which is finally collected about the so-called stages of the acquisition of number in the child, but from the fundamental reflections that M Piaget who is certainly a much better logician than psychologist, concerning the relationships of psychology and of logic; and specifically this is what makes a work which unfortunately is unfindable, published by Vrin in 1942 which is called: *Classe, relation et nombres*, a very instructive work because here there are highlighted the structural, logical relationships between class, relation and numbers, namely everything that one claims subsequently or previously to rediscover in the child which manifestly is already constructed *a priori*: and very correctly, the experiment only shows us there what one had organised it to find in the first place.

*This is a parenthes*is confirming the following: the fact is that the subject counts well before applying his talents to any collection whatsoever, even though of course, to establish collections is one of the first concrete, psychological activities. But he is implicated as subject in what is called the relationship of computation, in a fashion much more radically constituting than people want to imagine, starting from the functioning of his sensorium and his motor functions.

Once again here the genius of Freud surpasses what I might call the deafness of those to whom he is addressing himself in the exact measure of the warnings that he gives them, which go in one ear and out the other, this justifying no doubt the appeal to the mystical third ear of Mr Theodore Reik who was not very well inspired that day, because what use is a third ear if one hears nothing with the two one has already!

Of what use is the sensorium involved, according to what Freud teaches us? Does this not tell us that its only use is this, to show us that what is already there in the calculation of the subject is quite real, really exists; in any case this is what Freud says: it is with it that the judgement of existence begins, this is used to audit the accounts, which is all the same a funny position for someone whom people attach to this straight line of the positivism of the 19th century. So, let us take things up where we left them, because it is a matter of calculation, and of the basis and foundation of calculation for the subject: because of course if the unary trait begins the function of counting so early, let us not go too quickly as regards what a subject may know about a higher number. It is difficult to imagine that two and three do not come rather quickly. But when we are told that certain so-called primitive tribes along the mouth of the Amazon were only recently able to discover the virtue of the number four and raised altars to it, it is not the picturesque aspect of this story about savages which strikes me: this seems to me to be self-evident, because if the unary trait is what I am telling you, namely the difference and the difference, which not alone supports, but which supposes the subsistence alongside it of one plus one and one again, the plus being only meant there to mark well the radical subsistence of this difference, where the problem begins is precisely that one can add them together, in other words that two, that three have a meaning. Taken from that angle this causes a lot of trouble; but one must not be astonished at it. If you take things in the opposite direction, namely if you begin from three, as John Stuart Mill did, you will never manage to rediscover one, the difficulty is the same.

For us here - I point it out to you in passing - with our way of interrogating the facts of language in terms of the effects of the signifier, in so far as we are used to recognising this effect of the signifier at the level of metonymy, it would be simpler for us than for a mathematician to ask our pupil to recognise in every signification of number an effect of metonymy which has arisen virtually from nothing more and, as its elective point, from the succession of an equal number of signifiers. It is in so far as something is happening which makes sense of the simple sequence of extension x of a certain number of unary traits, that the number three for example can make sense, namely that it makes sense - whether it has any or not - to write the word end in English: here again perhaps is the best way we have of showing the emergence of the number three because there are three letters.

As for us we have no need to demand so much of our unary trait; because we know that at the level of the Freudian series, if you will allow me this formula, the unary trait designates something which is radical for this originating experience: it is the uniquity as such of the circuit (*tour*) in repetition.

I think I have sufficiently stressed for you that the notion of the function of repetition in the unconscious is absolutely distinguished from any natural cycle, in the sense that what is accentuated is not its return, it is that what is sought by the subject is its signifying uniquity and in so far as one of the circuits of the repetition, as one might say, has marked the subject who begins to repeat what of course he will only be able to repeat because this will never be anything but a repetition, but with the goal, the plan, of making the original unary re-emerge from one of its circuits.

With what I have just told you, I have no need to put the accent on the following: the fact is that this operates already before the subject knows how to count properly. In any case, nothing implies that he has a need to count the circuits of what he is repeating very far because he repeats it without knowing it. It is no less true that the fact of repetition is rooted in this original unary, which unary as such is tightly coupled to and co-extensive with the very structure of the subject in so far as it is thought of as repeating in the Freudian sense.

What I am going to show you today, through an example, and with a model that I am going to introduce, what I am going to show you today, is the following: it is that there is no need for him to know how to count for one to be able to say and demonstrate the constituting necessity of his function as subject that he should make an error in the count. There is no need for him to know nor even to try to count for this error of counting to be constitutive of him as subject: as such it is error.

If things are as I am telling you, you can be sure that this error may last a long time on such a basis, and this is quite true. It is so true that it is not alone on the individual that it brings its effect to bear. It brings its effect to bear on the most radical characters of what is called Thinking.

Let us take for a moment the theme of Thinking, about which it would be proper all the same to use some prudence; you know that on this point I do not lack it, it is not all that sure that one can validly refer to it in a fashion which may be considered as a properly speaking generic dimension. Let us take it nevertheless as such: the thinking of the human species.

It is quite clear that it is not for nothing that I have advanced more than once, in an inevitable fashion, towards putting in question here, since the beginning of my discourse this year, the function of class and its relationship with the universal, to the point even that it is in a way the reverse and the opposite of all this discourse that I am trying to bring to a conclusion before you.

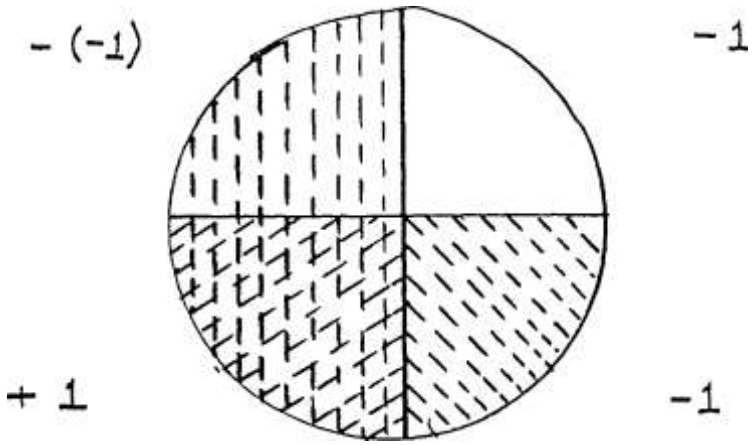
In this connection, simply remember what I was trying to show you in connection with the little exemplary dial on which I tried to re-articulate before you the relationship of the universal to the particular and of affirmative and negative propositions respectively. Unity and totality appear here in the tradition as solidary, and it is not by chance that I always come back to it in order to shatter the fundamental category: unity and totality at once solidary, linked to the other in this relationship that one could call a relationship of inclusion, totality being totality with respect to units, but unity being what founds totality as such by drawing unity towards another meaning, opposed to the one that I distinguish of it, of being the unity of a whole. It is around this that there is pursued this misunderstanding in what is called the logic of classes, this age-old misunderstanding of extension and intension which it seems tradition effectively has always made more of, even if it is true, taking things in the perspective for example of the middle of the XlXth century, in the writings of a Hamilton, even if it is true that it has only been clearly articulated from Descartes on and that the logic of Port-Royal, as you know, is modelled on the teaching of Descartes. What is more this is not true; because this opposition between extension and comprehension is there for a long time, since Aristotle himself. What one can say, is that it causes for us, as regards the handling of classes, difficulties which are always more unresolved, hence all the efforts that logic has made to transport the core of the problem elsewhere: into propositional quantification for example.

But why not see that in the structure of class itself as such a new beginning is presented to us, if, for the relationship of inclusion, we substitute a relationship of exclusion as the radical support? In other words, if we consider as logically original as regards the subject something that I am not discovering, which is within the range of an average logician, the fact is that the true foundation of class is neither its extension nor its intension, that class always supposes classification. In other words: mammals, for example to throw some light immediately on what I mean are what are excluded from vertebrates by the unary trait "*mamma*".

What does that mean? That means that the primal fact is that the unary trait can be lacking, that there is first of all the absence of the *mamma* and that one says: it cannot be that the *mamma* is missing, here is what constitutes the mammal class.

Look carefully at things when you really push them, namely open the treatises and go through these thousand little aporias that formal logic puts before you and you will see that it is the only possible definition of a class, if you really want to guarantee it its universal status in so far as it constitutes also from one side the possibility of its possible inexistence with this class. For you can just as validly, lacking from the universal, define the class which includes no individual, this will be nonetheless a class universally constituted with the conciliation I am saying, of this extreme possibility with the normative value of every universal judgement in so far as it cannot but transcend every inductive inference namely drawn from experience.

This is the meaning of the little dial that I represented for you in connection with the class to be constituted among the others, namely the vertical trait.



The subject at first constitutes the absence of such traits, as such he is himself the top quarter on the right. The zoologist if you will allow me to go this far, does not carve out the mammal class in the assumed totality of the maternal *mamma*; it is because he detaches the *mamma* that he can identify the absence of *mamma*. The subject as such is minus one. It is starting from there, from the unary trait *qua* excluded that he decrees that there is a class in which universally there cannot be the absence of the *mamma*: minus minus one: -(-1). And it is starting from there that everything is specifically ordered in particular cases: in anything whatsoever (*le tout venant*), there is one or there is not one (2 - 3) . A contradictory opposition is established diagonally, and this is the only true contradiction which subsists at the level of the establishment of the universal/affirmative, particular/negative dialectic, by the unary trait.

Everything is ordered therefore in anything whatsoever at the lower level, there is some of it or there is none of it, and this cannot exist except in so far as there is constituted, by the exclusion of the trait, the stage of anything whatsoever or of what is valid like everything at the upper level.

It is therefore the subject, as one might have expected, who introduces privation and this by the act of enunciating which is essentially formulated as follows: "could it be that there is no *mamma*?" (*qu'il n'y ait*), *ne* which is not negative, *ne* which is strictly of the same nature as what one can call the expletive in French grammar - "could it be that there is no *mamma*? Not possible, nothing maybe". Here we have the beginning of every enunciating of the subject concerning the real.

In the first blank of the circle it is a question of preserving the rights of the nothing, on top, because it is what creates below the perhaps, namely the possibility. Far from being able to say as an axiom - and this is the stupefying error of the whole abstract deduction of the transcendental - far from being able to say that anything real is possible, it is only starting from the not possible that the real takes its place.

What the subject is looking for is this real *qua* precisely not possible; it is the exception and this real exists of course. What one can say, is that there is precisely not only the not possible at the origin of any enunciating. But this can be seen from the fact that it is from the enunciation of the nothing that it begins. This in a word is already guaranteed,

clarified, in my triple enumeration: privation, frustration, castration as I announced we would be developing it the other day, and some people are upset because I am not providing a place for the *Verwerfung*: it is there beforehand, but it is impossible to start from it in a deducible fashion. To say that the subject is first of all established as minus one, is indeed something in which you can see that effectively, as one might expect, it is as *Verworfen* that we are going to rediscover him, but in order to grasp that this is true, we are going to have to make an enormous circuit. This is what I am going to try to initiate now.

In order to do it, I must unveil the battery I announced - and you may well imagine that I tremble a little at this - and that I bring out for you one of my turns which has of course been prepared for a long time. I mean that if you look in the Rome report you will already find its place highlighted somewhere. I speak about the structure of the subject as that of a ring. Later on, I mean last year and in connection with Plato - and (8) still as you see it is not unrelated to what I am debating for the moment, namely the inclusive class - you have seen all the reservations that I believed I had to introduce in connection with the different myths of the *Symposium*, so intimately linked to Platonic thinking concerning the function of the sphere.

The sphere, this obtuse object, as I might say: you only have to look at it to see it. It is perhaps a good shape, but it really is stupid! It is cosmological of course. Nature is supposed to show us a lot of it, not so much as all that when one looks closely at it; and the ones that it shows us, we hold onto. For example: the moon which nevertheless would be much better used, if we were to take it as an example of a unary object. But let us leave this to one side.

This nostalgia for this sphere which with a *phonuscule* makes us drag on in biology itself this metaphor of the *Innen* and *Umwelt*, this is what is supposed to constitute the organism.

Is it altogether satisfying to think that in order to define the organism we have to satisfy ourselves about the correspondence, about the fitting together of this *innen* and this urn? No doubt there is here a profound view; because it is indeed here in effect that the problems lies, and already simply at the level at which we are, which is not that of the biologist but of the analyst of the subject.

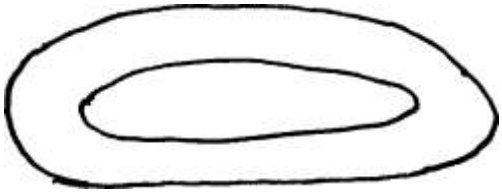
What is the *Welt* doing here? This is what I am asking. In any case, because it is necessary that here in passing we should acquit ourselves of some homage or other to the biologists, I would ask why, if it is true that the spherical image is to be considered as radical, it should then be asked why this blastula is not satisfied until it has been gastrulated and having been gastrulated it is not content until it has redoubled its stomach orifice with another, namely a hole in the backside. And why also at a certain stage of the nervous system it presents itself as a tube, open at both ends to the outside; no doubt this closes itself off, it is even very well closed off but this, as you are going to see, should not discourage us at all, because I am going to abandon right away this path which is described as that of *Naturwissenschaft*.

This is not what interests me now and I am quite determined to transport the question elsewhere, even if by that I may appear to you to be putting myself, one may as well say it, in the wrong (*dans mon tore*)!

Because the torus is what I am going to speak to you about today. From today on, as you will see, I am deliberately opening up the era of presentiments. For a certain time I would like to envisage things under the double aspect of rightly and wrongly (*a tort et a raison*), and many others again which are offered to you.

Let us try now to clarify what I am going to tell you.

A torus - I think that you know what it is - I am going to make a rough figure of it for you; it is something that one plays with when it is made of rubber, it is handy, a torus can be deformed, it is round, it is full, for the geometer it is a figure of revolution engendered by revolving a circumference around an axis situated on its plane; the circumference turns; at the end you are surrounded by the torus, I even believe that that is called a 'hula hoop'.



What I would like to underline is that here this torus, I am speaking in the strict geometrical sense of the term, namely that according to the geometrical definition it is a surface of revolution, it is the surface of revolution of this circle around an axis and what is generated is a closed surface.

This is important because this rejoins something that I announced to you in a special lecture outside the series that I am giving you here but to which I have referred since, namely the accent that I intend to put on the surface in the function of the subject.

In our time, it is fashionable to envisage a whole lot of spaces with a multitude of dimensions. I ought to tell you that, from the point of view of mathematical reflection, this demands that one should not unreservedly believe in it.

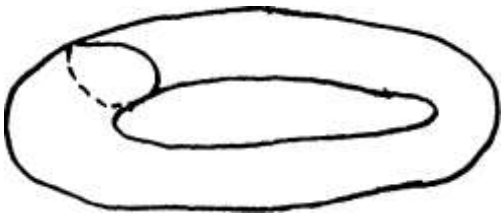
Philosophers, the good ones, those who leave behind them a good smell of chalk like M Alain, will tell you that even the third dimension, well then, it is quite clear that from the point of view that I was putting forward earlier about the real, is quite suspect. In any case for the subject two are enough, believe me.

This explains for you my reservations about the term "depth psychology" and will not prevent us from giving a meaning to this term.

In any case for the subject as I am going to define it for you, you can be sure that this infinitely flat being which gave, I am sure, such joy to your mathematics classes when you were in philosophy: "The infinitely flat subjet said the professor, since the class was rowdy and since I was too, one did not hear everything; it is here, then, it is here that we are going to advance into this infinitely flat subject in the way that we conceive of it, if we wish to give its true value to the fact of identification as Freud promotes it for us. And as you will see, this again will have a lot of advantages.

Because, after all, if it is expressly to the surface that I here ask you to refer yourselves, it is for the topological properties that it is going to be able to demonstrate to you.

It is a good surface, as you see, because it preserves, I would say necessarily, it could not be the surface it is if it did not have an inside. As a result, reassure yourselves, I am not taking you away from volume, nor from what is solid, nor from this complement of space of which you surely have need in order to breathe. Simply I am asking you to notice that if you do not prohibit yourself from entering into this inside, if you do not consider that my model is designed to be of service only at the level of the properties of the surface, you are going, as I might say, to lose all its savour, because the advantage of this surface depends entirely on what I am going to show you about its topology, because of the original thing that it contributes from a topological point of view compared for example to the sphere or the plane; and if you start weaving things on the inside, by drawing lines from one side to the other of this surface, I mean even though it has the appearance of being opposed to itself you are going to lose all its topological properties.



You are going to see the core, the spice, the savour of these topological properties. They consist essentially in a support- word that I allowed myself to introduce in the form of a riddle at the lecture of which I spoke earlier; and this word which could not have appeared to you at that time with its real meaning, is the loop (*lacs*).

You see that in the measure that advances are made I reign over my words for some time. I deafened your ears for a while with lacuna, now lacuna is reduced to *lacs*.

The torus has this considerable advantage over a surface, which is nevertheless a good one to savour which is called the sphere or quite simply the plane, of not being at all *Umwelt* with respect to the loops whatever they may be - *lacs* is *lacis* - that you may trace on its surface.

In other words, on a torus as on any other surface you can make a little ring; and then as they say, by progressive shrinkages you reduce it to nothing, to a point. Observe that whatever may be the loop that you situate in this way on a plane or on the surface of a sphere it will always be possible to reduce it to a point; and if it is the case, as Kant tells us, that there is a transcendental aesthetic, I believe in it: simply I believe that his is not the right one because precisely it is the transcendental aesthetic of a space which first of all is not one, and in the second place where everything depends on the possibility of the reduction of anything whatsoever that is traced on the surface which characterises this aesthetic so that it can be reduced to a point, so that the totality of inclusion which defines a circle can be reduced to the vanishing unity of any point whatsoever around which it gathers itself, of a world whose aesthetic is such that everything can be folded back on everything, one always believes that one can have the all in the hollow of one's hand; in other words that whatever one draws on it, one is able to produce in it this sort of collapse which when significance is involved will be called tautology. Everything entering into everything, consequently the problem is posed: how it can happen that with purely analytic constructions one can manage to develop an edifice which rivals the real as well as mathematics?

I am proposing that one should admit in a fashion which no doubt involves a concealment, something hidden which is going to have to be carried forward, rediscovered where it is, one should pose that there is a topological structure regarding which it is going to be a question of showing how it is necessarily that of the subject, which means that there are certain of its loops which cannot be reduced. This is the whole interest of the model of my torus.

The fact is, as you can see, just by looking at it, there are a certain number of circles traceable on this torus; this one, in so far as it closes on itself I would call, it is simply a question of a name, a full circle. No hypothesis about its inside, it is a simple tag which I believe, by God, no worse than any other, taking everything into consideration. I wavered for a long time in speaking about it with my son - why not name him. One might call it the engendering circle, but God knows where that would lead us!

But let us suppose therefore that any enunciating of the methods which are called synthetic - because one is surprised especially by this: even though one can enounce them *a priori*, they seem, one does not know where, one does not know what, to contain something, and this is what is called intuition, and one seeks out its aesthetic, transcendental foundation - let us suppose therefore that every synthetic enunciating - there are a certain number of them at the origin of the subject, and to constitute it - well then, unfolds according to one of these circles, called the full circle and this is what images best for us what in the completion of this enunciating is an irreducible series.

I am not going to limit myself to this simple little banter, because I could have been content to take an infinite cylinder because if it depended on that this would not take us very far. An intuitive, geometrical metaphor let us say. Everyone knows the importance that every battle between mathematicians has, it is only around elements like this that it rages. Poincaré and others maintain that there is an irreducible intuitive element and the whole school of axiomaticists claim that we can entirely formalize, starting from axioms of definition and from elements, the whole development of mathematics, namely tear it away from any topological intuition. Luckily M Poincaré understands very well that it is indeed in topology that one finds the essence of the intuitive element, and that one cannot resolve it and that I would even say further: without intuition one cannot do this science which is called topology, one cannot begin to articulate it because it is a great science.

There are big primary truths attached around this construction of the torus and I am going to make you put your finger on something: on a sphere or on a plane, you know that one can draw what is called any geographical map whatsoever however complicated it may be and that in order to colour its domains in a way which does not allow any one of them to be confused with its neighbour four colours are enough.

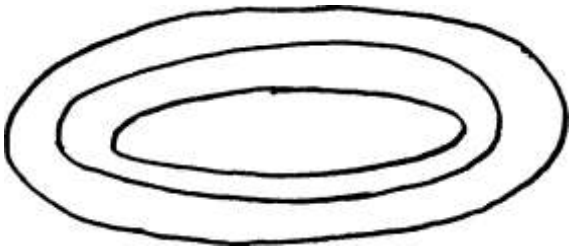
If you find a very good demonstration of this really primary truth, you can bring it to the right quarter because you will be awarded a prize, since up to now the proof has not yet been found.

On this torus, you will not see it experimentally, but it can be proved: in order to resolve the same problem, seven colours are necessary, in other words on the torus with the tip of a pencil you can define up to seven domains but not one more, these domains being defined each one as having a common frontier with the others. This to tell you that if you

have a bit of imagination, in order to see them altogether clearly, you will draw hexagonal domains.

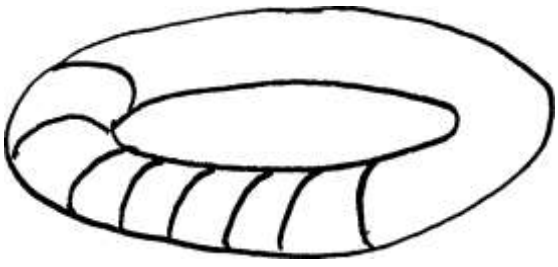
It is very easy to show that you can draw seven hexagons on the torus and not one more, each one having with all the others a common frontier. This, I apologise for it, to give a little consistency to my object. This torus is not a bubble, it is not a puff of air; you see how one can speak about it, even though entirely, as one says in classical philosophy, as a construction of the spirit it has all the resistance of something real. Seven domains? For most of you: it is not possible. As long as I have not shown it to you you have a right to oppose this "not possible" to me; why not six, why not eight?

Now let us continue. This ring here is not the only thing that interests us as irreducible; there are others that you can draw on the surface of the torus of which the smallest is what we can call the most internal of the circles, which we will call empty circles.



They make a circuit around this hole. One can make a lot of things of them. What is certain, is that it is apparently essential; now that it is there you can deflate your torus like a bladder and put it in your pocket, because it is not part of the nature of this torus to be always completely round, completely even; what is important is this holed structure. You can reinflate it every time you need it, but it can like the little giraffe in little Hans who made a knot of his neck....

There is something that I want to show you right away. If it is true that the synthetic enunciating in so far as it is maintained in one of these circuits, in the repetition of this one, does it not seem to you that this is going to be easy to depict. I have only to continue what I drew for you at first fully, then in dots, this will give a bobbin:



Here then are the series of circuits that they carry out in the unary repetition of what returns and what characterises the primary subject in his signifying, automatism of repetition relationship. Why not push the bobbining to the end, until this little bobbin snake bites its own tail. It is not an image to be studied as an analyst which exists in the writings of Mr Jones.

What happens at the end of this circuit? It closes itself off; we find here moreover the possibility of reconciling what is supposed, implicated and the final return to meaning of *Naturwissenschaft* with what I underline concerning the necessarily unary function of the circuit.

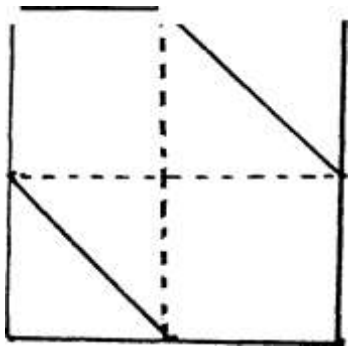
This does not appear to you here in the way I am representing it for you. But already there at the beginning and in so far as the subject goes through the sequence of circuits he has necessarily made a mistake of one in his count and we see reappearing here the unconscious minus one in its constitutive function. This for the simple reason that the circuit that he cannot count is the one that he made in making a circuit of the torus and I am going to illustrate it for you in an important fashion, because it is of a nature to introduce you to the function that we are going to give to two types of irreducible act, those which are full circles and those which are empty circles, regarding which you will guess that the second must have some relationships with the function of desire. Since, as compared to these circles which succeed one another, the succession of full circles, you ought to notice that the empty circles, which are in a way caught in the rings of these buckles and which unify all the circles of demand among themselves, there must be something which is related to the little object of metonymy in so far as it is this object. I did not say that it is desire that is symbolised by these circles, but the object as such which is opposed to desire.

This in order to show you the direction in which we will subsequently advance. It is only a very small beginning, the point on which I want to conclude so that you may really sense that there is no artifice in this kind of skipped circuit that I seem to be trying to get over to you by sleight of hand.

I want to show it to you before leaving you. I want to show it to you in connection with a single circuit on the the full circle. I could show it to you by making a drawing on the board. I can trace a circle which is of such a kind that it is ready to go around the whole torus. It is going to travel on the outside of the central hole then come back from the other side.

A better way to get you to sense it: you take the torus and a pair of scissors, you cut it in terms of the full circles, here it is unfolded like a black pudding open at both ends, you take the scissors again and you cut it length-ways, it can open completely and be spread out, it is a surface which is equivalent to that of the torus; for this it is enough that we should have so defined it that each one of its opposite edges has an equivalence implying continuity with a point of the opposite edge.

What I have drawn for you on the unfolded torus is projected as follows:



Here is how something which is nothing other than a single loop is going to be presented on the torus which has been properly cut by these two cuts of the scissors: and this oblique trait defines what we can call a third type of circle, but which is precisely the circle which interests us as regards this sort of possible property that I am trying to articulate as structural of the subject; even though it only made one circuit it nevertheless well and truly made two, namely the circuit of the full circle of the torus and at the same time the circuit of an empty circle, and that as such this circuit which is missing in the count is precisely what the subject includes in the necessities of his own surface to be infinitely flat that subjectivity can only grasp by a detour: the detour of the Other, this to show you how one can imagine in a particularly exemplary fashion thanks to this topological edifice to which, have no doubt about it, I accord a little more weight than simply that of an artifice. Likewise - and for the same reason - because it is the same thing that replying to a question that was recently posed to me concerning the root of minus one as I introduced it into the function of the subject: "By articulating things in this manner", I was asked, "do you intend to make manifest something other than a pure and simple symbolisation replaceable by anything else whatsoever or something which belongs more radically to the very essence of the subject?" "Yes," I said. "It is in this sense that you should understand what I articulated before you and this is what I am proposing to continue to develop with the shape of the torus". -

I am saying: on the total surface -, if this is no longer possible at the level of the central, fragmented, surface divided by the signifier of the double ring (*boucle*), the fact is that very precisely something of that is preserved at the level of the point.

Except for the fact that precisely in order that this point should function as this point, it has this privilege of being precisely unsupersedable, unless, as one might say, by making the whole structure of the surface vanish.

As you see, I was not able yet to give its full development to what I have just said on this point. If you reflect on it, you can, between now and the next time, find it yourselves.

It is getting late, and it is here indeed that I am forced to leave you. I apologise for the aridity of what I was led to produce before you today, because of the complexity itself, even though it is not an extraordinarily punctual complexity, it must be said. This is where I will take things up the next time.

I come back therefore to what I said at the beginning: the fact that I have only been able to get to this point of my exposition means that next Wednesday's seminar - tell the people who have received the next announcement - will take place in order not to leave too much space, too much of an interval between these two seminars, because this space could be harmful for the continuation of our explanations.

Seminar 13: *Wednesday 14 March 1962*

In the dialogue with you that I am pursuing, there are necessarily hiatuses, jumps, cases, occasions, to say nothing of *fatum*. In other words, it is interrupted by different things; for example last evening, at the scientific meeting of the Society, we heard the interesting and important paper by Lagache on sublimation. This morning, I wanted to begin from it, but on the other hand, on Sunday I had started from elsewhere, I mean from a sort of remark on the character of what is being pursued here as research. It is obviously a research conditioned by what? For the moment by a certain aim which I would call the aim of an erotic. I consider this to be legitimate, not at all because we are essentially destined by nature to carry it out when we are on the road where it is required, I mean that we are on this road a little in the way that, through the centuries, those who meditated on the conditions of science were on the road to what science effectively is successful at. Hence my reference to the cosmonaut which has indeed its meaning, in so far as what it was successful at was certainly not necessarily what it was expecting up to a certain point, even though the phases of its research may be abolished, refuted by its success.

It is certain that there is among the peoples - I am using this term in the most general sense, unless I am using it in a slightly narrower sense, that of the gentiles - which would obviously leave open the curious question of gentiles defined with respect to X (you know where this definition of gentiles comes from) which would leave open the curious question of how it happens that the gentiles represent, as I might say, a secondary class in the sense that I meant it the last time of something founded on a certain previous acceptance. Despite everything this would not be a bad thing; because in this perspective the gentiles is Christianity, and everyone knows that Christianity as such is in a well-known relationship with the difficulties of the erotic, namely that the dealings of the Christian with Venus are all the same something that it is rather difficult to overlook, even though people pretend to take things, as I might say, in a relaxed manner.

In fact, if the essence of Christianity is to be found in the Pauline revelation, namely in a certain essential step taken in relation to the father, if the relationship of love to the father is its essential step, if it really represents the breaking through of everything great that the Semitic tradition inaugurated about this fundamental relationship to the father of this original *baraka*, to which it is all the same difficult to overlook that Freud[1]s thinking is attached more in a contradictory, maledictory fashion - we cannot doubt it - because if the reference to Oedipus may leave the question open, the fact that he ended his discourse on Moses and the way he did it, leaves no doubt that the foundation of Christian revelation is indeed therefore in this grace relationship which Paul makes succeed to the law.

The difficulty is the following: it is that the Christian does not maintain himself, and with good reason, at the height of this revelation and that nevertheless he lives it in a society of such a kind that one can say that even reduced to the most lay forms its principles of law issue directly all the same from a catechism which is not unrelated to this Pauline revelation. Simply, since the meditation on the Mystical Body is not within everyone's reach, a gap remains open which means that practically the Christian finds himself reduced to something which is not all that normal or fundamental, of really no longer having any other access to

jouissance as such except by making love. This is what I call his troublesome dealings with Venus. Because of course, with the way he is situated in this order, things arrange themselves after all on the whole rather badly.

What I am saying is very tangible, for example when one goes outside the boundaries of Christianity, once one goes into areas dominated by Christian acculturation, I mean not areas which have been converted to Christianity, but which have undergone the effects of Christian society. I shall long remember a long conversation pursued one night in 1947 with someon0e who was my guide during a trip to Egypt. He was what is called an Arab. He was, of course, through his functions and also because of the area he lived in, an excellent example of someone who falls into our category. This sort of effect of the promotion of the erotic question was very clear in his discourse. He was certainly prepared by all sorts of very antique resonances of his own sphere to put in the foreground the question of the justification of the existence of his *jouissance*; but the fashion in which he incarnated this *jouissance* in the woman had all the impasse characteristics of everything that one can imagine the most open to view in our own society - the requirement in particular of a renewal of an infinite succession - what is in its nature the essentially non-satisfying character of the object, this was indeed what constituted the essential, not alone of his discourse, but of his practical life. A personage, one would have said in another vocabulary essentially torn away from the norms of his tradition.

When it is a question of the erotic, what should we think of these norms? In other words, are we charged for example with justifying the practical subsistence of marriage as an institution throughout even our most revolutionary transformations?

I believe that there is no need for all the effort of a Westermarck to justify through all sorts of arguments, from nature and from tradition, the institution of marriage, because simply it justifies itself because of its persistence which we have seen before our eyes, and in form very clearly marked by lower middle class traits, throughout a society which at the beginning believed it could go further in the putting in question of fundamental relationships, I mean in Communist society. It seems very certain that the necessity of marriage was not even touched by the effects of this revolution. Is this properly speaking the domain into which we are led to bring some light? I absolutely do not believe it: the necessities of marriage prove themselves to be, for us, a properly social trait of our conditioning; they leave completely open the problem of the dissatisfactions which result from it namely the permanent conflict in which the human subject finds himself, just because he is human, with the effects, the repercussions of this law (of marriage).

What evidence do we have for that? Quite simply the existence of what we note, in so far as we busy ourselves with desire, I mean that there exists in societies, whether they are well organised or not, whether one makes in them in a greater or lesser abundance the constructions necessary for the environment of individuals, we note the existence of neurosis; and it is not in the places where the most satisfactory conditions of life are guaranteed, nor where tradition is most guaranteed that neurosis is more rare. Far from it.

What does neurosis mean? What is for us the authority, as I might say, of neurosis? It is not quite simply linked to its pure and simple existence. The position of those who in this case attribute its effects to a sort of displacement of human weakness is too facile, I mean that what proves effectively to be weak, in social organisation as such, is visited on the neurotic

whom one describes as maladjusted. What a proof! It seems to me that the right, the authority which flows from what we have to learn about the neurotic, is the structure that he reveals to us and what at bottom it reveals to us, from the moment that we understand that his desire is indeed the same as our own, and with good reason. What comes little by little to be revealed to our study, what gives the neurotic his dignity, is that he wants to know. And in a way it is he who introduces psychoanalysis. The inventor of psychoanalysis is not Freud, but Anna 0 as everyone knows, and of course behind her many others: all of us.

What does the neurotic want to know? Here I am slowing down my delivery so that you can hear properly, because every word has its importance. He wants to know what real there is in that of which he is the passion, namely what real there is in the effect of the signifier, this of course supposing that we have got far enough to know that what is called desire in the human being is unthinkable except in this relationship to the signifier and the effects that are inscribed in it.

This signifier, that he himself is by his position, namely as a living neurosis, is if you refer to my definition of the signifier - it is moreover inversely what justifies it, the fact is that it is applicable - that through which this cryptogram that a neurosis is, what makes the neurotic as such a signifier and nothing more - because the subject that he serves precisely is elsewhere - this is what we call his unconscious. And this is why he is *qua* neurosis a signifier, according to the definition that I give you of it, it is because he represents a hidden subject, but .for what? For nothing other than for another signifier.

That what justifies the neurotic as such, the neurotic in so far as analysis - I am slipping in this term borrowed from the discourse of my friend Lagache yesterday - "valorises" him, is the extent to which his neurosis manages to contribute to the advent of this discourse required by a finally constituted erotic. He, of course, knows nothing about it and is not looking for it. And we moreover, we do not have to search for it except in so far as you are here, namely that I am clarifying for you the signification of psychoanalysis in relation to this required advent of an erotic, by which you should understand that through which it is thinkable that the human being might make in this domain also - and why not - the same breakthrough and which moreover culminates in this bizarre moment of the cosmonaut in his carapace. Which allows you to think that I am not even trying to glimpse what a future erotic might give rise to.

What is certain, is that the only people who have dreamt about it in a suitable way, namely the poets, have always ended up with rather strange constructions. And if, whatever préfiguration of it may be found in something on which I spent a lot of time, the outlines of it which may be given precisely in certain paradoxical points of the Christian tradition, courtly love for example, this was in order to underline for you the quite bizarre singularities - let the people who were my listeners remember - of certain sonnets by Arnaut Daniel for example which open up to us very curious perspectives on what the relationships between the lover and his lady effectively represented. This is not at all unworthy of comparison with what I am trying to situate as an extreme point about aspects of the cosmonaut. Of course, the attempt may appear to have a certain amount of mystification about, and besides it came to a sudden end. But it is altogether illuminating in order to situate for us, for example, what must be understood by sublimation. I recalled last evening that sublimation, in Freud's discourse, is inseparable from a contradiction, namely that *jouissance*, the aim of *jouissance*, subsists and

is in a certain sense realised in every activity of sublimation, that there is no repression, that there is no effacing, that there is not even a compromise with *jouissance*, that there is a paradox, that there is a detour, that it is by ways which in appearance are contrary to *jouissance* that *jouissance* is obtained.

This is not properly speaking thinkable except precisely in so far as in *jouissance* the medium that intervenes, the medium through which access is given to its essence which can only be - as I showed you - the thing, that this medium also can be nothing but a signifier. Hence this strange aspect that the lady in courtly love takes on for our eyes. We cannot come to believe in it because we can no longer identify to this degree a living subject with a signifier, a person called Beatrice with wisdom and with what was for Dante the whole, the totality of knowledge.

It is not at all excluded by the nature of things that effectively Dante could have slept with Beatrice. This changes absolutely nothing in the problem. People believe they know it is not so, it is not fundamental in the relationship.

These remarks having been posed, what defines the neurotic?

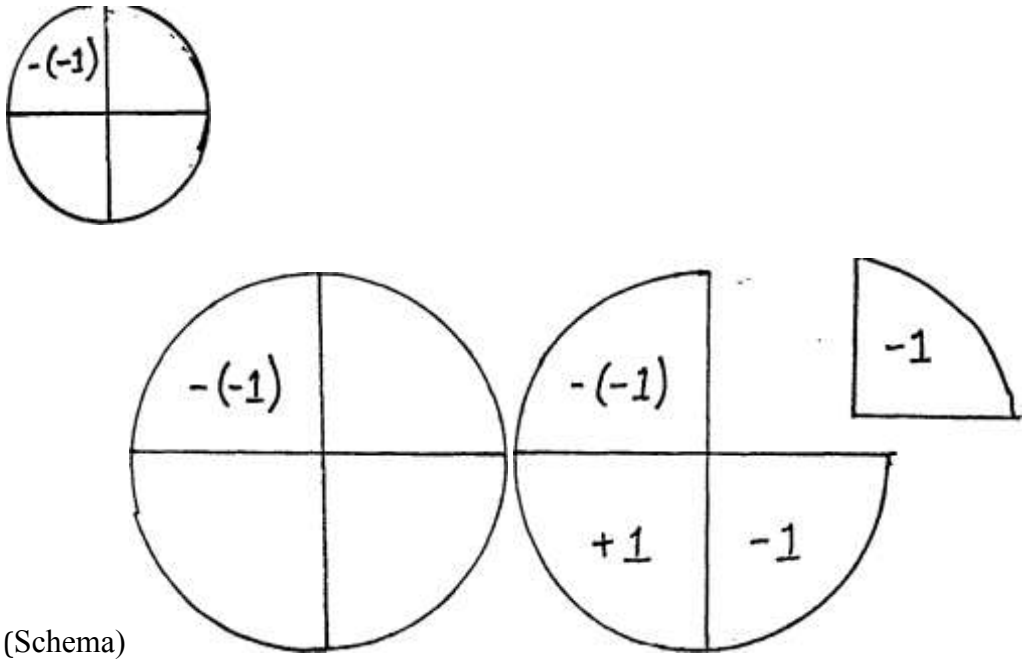
The neurotic devotes himself to a curious retransformation of that whose effect he is undergoing. The neurotic, in fine, is an innocent: *he wants to know*. In order to know he goes off in the most natural direction, and it is naturally at the same time by this that he is deceived. The neurotic wants to retranfonn the signifier into what it is the sign of. The neurotic does not know, and with good reason, that it is *qua* subject that he has fomented the following: the advent of the signifier in so far as the signifier is the principal effacing of the thing, that it is he, the subject who by effacing all the traits of the thing, makes the signifier. The neurotic wants to efface this effacing, he wants to bring it about that this has not happened. This is the most profound meaning of the summary, exemplary behavior of the obsessional. What he always comes back to, without ever of course being able to abolish its effect - because everyone of his efforts to abolish it only reinforces it - is to bring it about that this advent of the function of the signifier has not been produced, that one can rediscover the real that was there at the origin, namely what all this is the sign of. This, I leave here indicated, initiated in order to come back to it in a more generalised and at the same time a more diversified fashion, namely according to the three kinds of neurosis: phobia, hysteria and obsession, after I have completed the circuit to which this preamble is destined to bring me back to in my discourse.

This detour therefore is well designed to situate, and at the same time to justify, the double aims of our research, in so far as it is what we are pursuing this year on the terrain of identification.

However extremely metapsychological our research may appear to some by not pursuing it exactly on the edge that we are pursuing it, in so far as analysis can only be conceived of in this most escathological of aims, if I can express myself in this way, of an erotic, but impossible also without maintaining at least at a certain level the consciousness of the meaning of these aims in order to carry out appropriately in practice what you have to do, namely of course not to preach an erotic, but to deal with this fact that, even in the case of the most normal people and with a full and entire application of good will, of norms, well, it does not work (that not alone, as M de la Rochefoucauld said, there are good marriages but no

delicious ones, we can add that things have deteriorated a little more since then because there are no longer even good ones, I mean from the point of view of desire) it would be all the same a little unbelievable that such remarks could not be put in the foreground in a gathering of analysts. This does not make you for all that the propagandists of a new erotic. What situates you, what you have to do in each particular case: you have to do exactly what everyone has to do for himself and for which he has more or less need of your help, namely, while we wait for the cosmonaut of an erotic future, small scale solutions.

Let us take things up again where we left them the last time, namely at the level of privation. I hope that I made myself understood about this subject in so far as I symbolised it by this (-1), the necessarily not counted circuit, counted as minus in the best hypothesis, namely when it has made the circuit of the circuit, the circuit of the torus. The fact that I immediately gave an indication which refers the function of this -1 to the logical foundation of any possibility of a universal affirmation, namely the possibility of founding the exception - and it is this moreover that the rule requires: the exception does not prove the rule, as it is so nicely put, it requires it; it is its true principle - in short, that in drawing my little dial for you, namely in showing you that the only veritable guarantee of the universal affirmation is the exclusion of a negative trait: "there is no man who is not mortal", I may have given rise to a confusion which I intend to rectify now in order that you may know the terrain of principle on which I am making you advance. I gave you this reference, but it is clear that it must not be taken as a deduction of the whole process starting from the symbolic.



(Schema)

The empty part where there is nothing in my dial, must still be considered at this level as detached. The (-1) that the subject is at this level in himself is in no way subjectivated, in no way is there yet a question either of knowing, or of not knowing. For something of this order to happen, it is necessary that a whole cycle should be completed of which privation is therefore only the first step. The privation involved is real privation for which with the support of intuition which you will concede I have a right to, all I am doing here is following the very traces of tradition, and the purest one; Kant is granted the essential of his procedure and I am seeking a better foundation for this schematism in order to try to make it tangible,

intuitive for you - I forged the mainspring of this real privation. It is therefore only after a long detour that there can come to the subject this knowledge of his original rejection. But meanwhile, I tell you this right away, enough things have happened in order that when it comes to light, the subject knows not alone that this knowledge rejects him, but that this knowledge is itself to be rejected in so far as it will prove to be always either beyond, or on this side of what must be reached for the realisation of desire.

In other words that if ever the subject, and this is his goal since the time of Parmenides, arrives at the identification, at the affirmation that *noein kai einai*, to think and to be, are the same thing, *to auto*, at that moment he will find himself irremediably divided between his desire and his ideal. This, as I might say, is designed to demonstrate what I could call the objective structure of the torus in question. But why should I be refused this usage of the word objective since it is classic in the domain of ideas and is still used up to Descartes? At the point therefore that we are at and in order not to come back to it any more, what is involved of the real is perfectly touchable, and that is all that is in question. What led us to the construction of the torus at the point that we are at, is the necessity to define each one of the circuits as an irreducibly different one. For this to be real, namely for this symbolic truth, since it presupposes computation, counting, to be grounded, be introduced into the world, it is necessary and sufficient that the something called the unary trait should have appeared in the real. It will be understood that before this 1, which is what gives all its reality to the ideal - the ideal is the only real that is in the symbolic and it is enough - it will be understood that at the origins of thinking, as people say, at the time of Plato and in the case of Plato not to go back any further, this gave rise to adoration, prostration: the 1 was the good, the beautiful, the true, the supreme being.

The reversal that we are encouraged to face up to on this occasion consists in grasping that however legitimate this adoration may be from the point of view of an affective elation, it nevertheless remains that this 1 is nothing other than the reality of a rather stupid little stroke. That is all. The first hunter, as I told you, who made a notch on an antelope's rib in order to remember simply that he had hunted ten, twelve or thirteen times, did not know how to count, you should note, and it is even for that reason that it was necessary to put these traits, in order that the ten, twelve or thirteen all the times should not be confused as they deserved nevertheless to be one with another.

Therefore, at the level of the privation that is involved, in so far as the subject is at first objectively this privation in the thing, this privation which he does not know is that of the uncounted circuit, it is from this that we begin again in order to understand what is happening. We have other elements of information so that from there he comes to constitute himself as desire and knows the relationship there is between this constitution and this origin in so far as it may allow us to begin to articulate some symbolic relationship more adequate than those promoted up to now concerning what his structure of desire is for the subject. This does not for all that oblige us to make assumptions about what will be maintained about the notion of the function of the subject when we have put him into the situation of desire; this is what we are obliged indeed to go through with him according to a method which is only in short the one of experience; this is the subtitle of Hegel's phenomenology *Wissenschaft der Erfahrung*: science of experience. We are following an analogous path with different data which are the ones which present themselves to us.

The next step is centred - I could just as well not put in a chapter heading here, I am doing it for didactic purposes - it is that of frustration. It is at the level of frustration that there is introduced with the Other the possibility for the subject of a essential new step. The 1 of the unique all, the 1 which distinguishes each repetition in its absolute difference, does not come to the subject, even if its support is nothing other than that of the real stroke, does not come from any heaven, it comes from an experience constituted for the subject with whom we have to deal, by the existence, before he was born, of the universe of discourse, by the necessity that this experience supposes the locus of the Other with a big 0 as I have previously defined it.

It is here that the subject is going to conquer the essential, what I called this second dimension, in so far as it is a radical function of his own location in its structure if it is the case that metaphorically, but not without claiming in this metaphor to reach the very structure of the thing, we call this second dimension a torus structure in so far as among all the others it constitutes the existence of loops irreducible to a point, of non-vanishing loops. It is in the Other that there comes necessarily to be incarnated this irreducibility of the two dimensions in so far as, if it is tangible somewhere, it can only be, because up to the present the subject is only for us the subject in so far as he speaks, in the domain of the symbolic. It is in the experience of the symbolic that the subject must encounter the limitation of his displacements which makes him enter at first into the experience of the high point, as I might say, the irreducible angle of this duplicity of the two dimensions.

This is how the schema of the torus is going to be of the greatest use to me - as you are going to see - by starting from the experience so highly valued by psychoanalysis and the observation that it gives rise to. The subject can attempt to speak the object of his desire. He does nothing but that. It is more than an act of enunciating, it is an act of imagining. This gives rise in him to a manoeuvre of the imaginary function and this function necessarily reveals itself to be present once frustration appears. You know the importance, the accent that I in the wake of others, specifically St Augustin, put on the moment of the awakening of jealous passion in the constitution of this type of object which is the very one that we have constructed as underlying each of our satisfactions: the little child a prey to jealous passion before his brother who for him makes arise in an image the possession of this object, specifically the breast, which up to then was only the underlying object elided, masked for him behind this return of a presence linked to each of his satisfactions, which was in this rhythm where there is inscribed, where there is sensed the necessity of his first dependency, only the metonymical object of each one of its returns; here it is suddenly produced for him in the light with effects signaled for us by his mortal pallor, the light of the something new which is desire: the desire of the object as such in so far as it resonates to the very foundation of the subject, that it shakes him well beyond his constitution as satisfied or not, as suddenly menaced in his innermost being, as revealing his fundamental lack, and this in the form of the Other as bringing to light both metonymy and the loss it conditions.

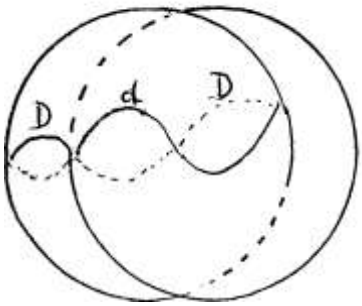
This dimension of loss essential to metonymy, the loss of the thing in the object, is the true sense of this thematic of the object *qua* lost and never refound, the same one which is at the basis of the Freudian discourse and is ceaselessly repeated. One further step, if we push metonymy further, as you know, it is the loss of something essential in the image, in this metonymy, which is called the ego, at this point of the birth of desire, at this point of pallor at which St Augustin pauses before the infant at the breast as Freud did before his grandson

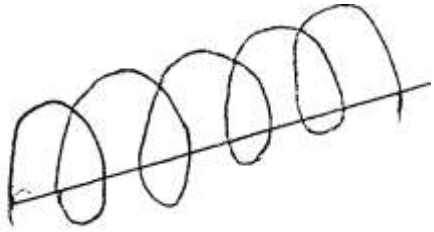
eighteen centuries later. It is false to say that the being of which I am jealous, the brother, is my fellow (*semblable*): he is my image in the sense that the image involved is the founding image of my desire. Here is the imaginary revelation, and it is the meaning and the function of frustration. All of this is already known. I am only recalling it as the second source of the experience.

After real privation, imaginary frustration. But, just as I tried today to situate for you the use of real privation at the term which interests us, namely in the founding of the symbolic, in the same way, we have to see here how this fundamental revelatory image of desire is going to be placed in the symbolic. This placing is difficult. It would of course be quite impossible if the symbolic were not there, if - as I have reminded you, always hammered out for a long enough time for this to have got into your head - if the Other and the discourse in which the subject has to place himself were not always waiting for him before his birth and that he is spoken to, at least through the mediation of his mother, of his nurse. The mainspring involved, the one which is both the abc, the infancy of our experience, but which for some time people do not know how to go beyond for want precisely of knowing how to formalise it as abc, is the following, namely the intersection, the naive exchange which is produced somewhere in the dimension of the Other between desire and demand.

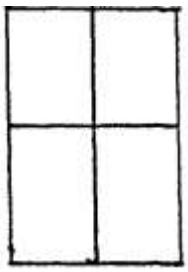
There is, as you know, something which as one might say the neurotic allows himself to be caught by from the start, it is this trap; and he will try to make what is the object of his desire pass into the demand, to obtain from the Other, not the satisfaction of his need, for which the demand is made, but the satisfaction of his desire, namely to have its object, namely precisely what cannot be demanded - and this is at the origin of what is called dependency in the relationships of the subject to the Other - just as he will try more paradoxically still to give satisfaction by conforming his desire to the demand of the Other; and there is no other meaning, of correctly articulated meaning I mean, to what is the discovery of analysis and of Freud, to the existence of the super-ego as such. There is no other correct definition, I mean no other one which allows us to escape from confusing slippages.

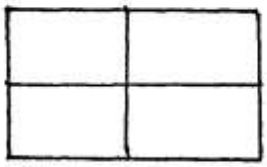
I think without going any further, that the practical, day-to-day concrete resonances, namely the impasse of the neurotic, is at first and above all the problem of the impasses of his desire, this impasse which is tangible at every moment, massively tangible, and against which you always see him stumbling. This is what I would summarily express by saying that for his desire he has to have the sanction of a demand. What do you refuse him, if not what he is waiting for you to demand of him - to desire appropriately? Without going into what he expects from his spouse, from his parents, from his offspring and from all the conformities which surround him. What does this allow us to construct and to perceive?





If it is the case that demand is renewed in accordance with the circuits that have been made, in accordance with the full circles all around and the successive returns which the return of need, but encompassed by the loops of demand, necessitates, if it is a fact that, as I gave you to understand through each of these returns, which allows us to say that the elided circle, the circle which I simply called the empty circle in order that you should see what I mean with respect to the torus, comes here to materialise the metonymyical object beneath all these demands. A topological construction is imaginable of another torus which has the property of allowing us to imagine the application of the object of desire, the internal empty circle of the first torus, onto the full circle of the second which establishes a buckle, one of these irreducible loops. Inversely the circle of a demand on the first torus is here superimposed on the other torus. The torus here a support of the Other, the imaginary Other of frustration, is superimposed on the empty circle of this torus, namely fulfils the function of showing this inversion: desire in one, demand in the other, demand of the one, desire of the other, which is the knot in which there is trapped the whole dialectic of frustration. This possible dependency of two topologies, that of one torus on that of the other, expresses in short nothing other than what is the goal of our schema in so far as we support it by the torus. The fact is that if the space of Kantian intuition ought, I might say, thanks to the new schema that we are introducing here, be put in parenthesis, cancelled out, *aufgehoben*, as illusory because the topological extension of the torus allows us to consider only the properties of the surface, we are sure of the permanence, of the solidity, as I might say, of the volume of the system without having to have recourse to the intuition of depth. What this images, as you see, is that by maintaining ourselves, in the whole measure that our intuitive habits allow us, within these limits, what results is that since all that is involved between these two surfaces is a substitution by a bi-univocal application, even though it is inverted, namely that once it is cut out this will be in this direction on one of the surfaces and in this other direction on the other.





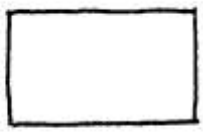
(Schema)

It remains nonetheless that what this makes tangible, is that from the point of view of the required space, these two spaces: the inside and the outside, from the moment that we refuse to give them any substance other than a topological one, are the same. This is what you will see expressed in the sentence that the already indicate, in the Rome report, the use that I counted on making of it for you, namely that

the property of the ring in so far as it symbolises the function of the subject in his relationships to the Other depends on the fact that his inside space and his outside space are the same: starting from there the subject constructs his outside space on the model of the irreducibility of his inside space.

But what this schema shows clearly, is the lack of ideal harmony which might be required between the object and the demand, between the demand and the object, an illusion which is sufficiently demonstrated by experience, I think, for us to have experienced the need to construct this necessary model of their necessary discordance. We know the source of this, and of course, if I seem to be advancing only slowly believe me: no stagnation is too much, if we want to assure ourselves of the next steps. What we already know, and what is intuitively represented here, is that the object itself as such, *qua* object of desire, is the effect of the impossibility of the Other to respond to demand. This is what is seen here manifestly in this sense that, whatever may be his desire, the Other cannot suffice for the aforesaid demand, that he necessarily leaves open the greater part of the structure, in other words that the subject is not enveloped, as is believed, in the all, that at the level at least of, the subject who speaks the *Umwelt* does not envelop his *Innenwelt*; that if there was something to be done to imagine the subject in relation to the ideal sphere, always the intuitive and mental model of the structure of a cosmos, it would be rather that the subject would be, if I may allow myself to push it, to exploit for you - but you see that there is more than one way of doing it - my intuitive image, it would be to represent the subject by the existence of a hole in the aforesaid sphere and his supplement by two sutures.

(Schema)



Let us suppose the subject to be constituted on a cosmic sphere. The surface of an infinite sphere is a plane: the plane of the blackboard prolonged indefinitely.

Here is the subject, a quadrangular hole, like the general configuration of my skin earlier, but this time in the negative. I stitch one edge to the other, but with this condition that

they are the two opposite edges, that I leave the two other edges free. From this there results the following figure:

namely, with the void filled in here, two holes which remain in the sphere of infinite surface. You have only to pull on each of these edges of these two holes to constitute the subject on the .infinite surface as constituted in short by what is always a torus even if it has a paunch of infinite radius, namely a handle emerging at the surface of a plane.

This is what, at its maximum, the relationship of the subject to the great All means at its maximum. We will see the applications that we can make of it.

What is important to grasp here, is that for this overlapping between the object and the demand if the imaginary Other thus constituted in the inversion of the functions of the circle of desire with that of demand, the Other as regards the satisfaction of the desire of the subject must be defined as *without* power (*sans pouvoir*). I insist on this "without", because with it there emerges a new form of negation in which there is indicated properly speaking the effects of frustration. Without is a negation, but not an indifferent one: it is a liaison-negation which is well materialised in the English tongue, by the conformist homology of two relationships of the two signifiers: *within* and *without*. It is a bound exclusion which already in itself alone indicates its reversal.

Let us take a further step, it is that of the "not without" (*pas sans*). The Other is introduced of course into the naive perspective of desire as without power, but essentially what links him to the structure of desire is the "not without". He is not either without power; this is why this Other whom we have introduced *qua* metaphor in short of the unary trait, namely of what we find at his level and what he replaces in an infinite regression because it is the locus where there succeed one another these l's which are all different from one another, of which the subject is only the metonymy, this Other as one - and the play on words is part of the formula that I am employing here to define the mode in which I introduced it - is rediscovered once there is completed (*bouclée*) the necessity of the effects of imaginary frustration as having this unique value, because it alone is not without, not without power: it is posed as condition at the possible origin of desire, even if this condition remains in suspense. For this it is like not one (*comme pas un*); it gives to the (-1) of the subject another function which is incarnated at first in this dimension, that this "like" situates well enough for you as being that of metaphor. It is at its level, the level of the "like not one" and of everything which is going to remain suspended from it subsequently, as what I have called the absolute conditionality of desire, that we will have to deal the next time, namely the level of the third term, of the introduction of the act of desire as such, of its relationships to the subject on the one hand at the root of this power, at the rearticulation of the moments of this power, in so far as - as you see - I shall have to go back over the not possible (*pas possible*) to mark the path that has been completed by the introduction of the terms power and without power. It is in so far as we will have to pursue this dialectic the next time that I stop here today.

Seminar 14: *Wednesday 21 March 1962*

(Schema I)

I left you the last time with this symbolic embrace of two toruses in which there is imaginarily incarnated the relationship of inversion, as one might say, experienced by the neurotic in which we see tangibly, clinically that apparently at least it is on a dependency on the demand of the Other that he tries to found, to establish his desire. Of course, there is something well grounded in this structure that we describe as the structure of the subject in so far as he speaks, which is the one for which I am fomenting for you this topology of the torus that I believe to be very fundamental. It has the function of what one calls moreover in topology the fundamental group, and after all this will be the question to which it will be necessary for us to indicate a response. I hope that this response, at the moment when it is necessary to give it, will already truly be superabundantly sketched out.

Why, if this is the fundamental structure, was it so profoundly miscognised for such a long time thoughout the ages by philosophical thought, why if things are this way was it the other topology, that of the sphere, which traditionally appears to dominate every elaboration of thinking concerning its relationship to the thing.

Let us take up things where we left them the last time and where I was indicating for you what is implied in our very experience: there is in this knot with the Other, in so far as it is presented to us as a first tangible approximation, perhaps one that is too easy - we will see that it certainly is - there is in this knot with the Other, as it is imaged here, a relationship of lure. Let us return here to the present, to what is articulated about this relationship to the Other. We know it. How would we not know it when we are every day the very support of its pressure in analysis and when the neurotic subject, with whom we have to deal fundamentally, presents himself before us as requiring from us the response, even if we teach him the value there is in suspending this response.

The response about what? This indeed is what justifies our schema, in so far as it shows us desire and demand being substituted for one another; it is precisely because the response is about his desire and about its satisfaction. What no doubt today I will be almost certainly limited by the time that I am accorded, is to properly articulating the co-ordinates on which there are suspended this demand made on the Other, this demand for a response, which specifies the true explanation, the final explanation, with respect to which every approximation is insufficient, of what in Freud is pinpointed as *Versagen*, *Versagung*: the retraction, or again the deceiving word, the breaking of a promise, at the limit the *Vanitas* at the limit of the bad word and the ambiguity - I recall it for you here - which unites the term blasphemy to what it has given rise to through all sorts of transformations, in themselves moreover very interesting to follow: blame. I will not go any further along this path.

The essential relationship to the word of the frustration that we are dealing with to the word is always the radical point to sustain, to maintain, otherwise our concept of frustration becomes degraded: it degenerates until it is reduced to the lack of gratification with regard to what in the final analysis can no longer be conceived of as anything but need. Now, it is

impossible not to recall what the genius of Freud establishes for us as original in what concerns the function of desire, what he began with in his first steps - let us leave to one side the letters to Fliess, let us begin with *The Interpretation of Dreams* and let us not forget that *Totem and Taboo* was his favourite book - the aforesaid genius of Freud establishes for us the fact that desire is fundamentally, radically structured by this knot which is called the Oedipus complex, and is something from which it is impossible to eliminate this internal knot that I am trying to sustain before you by these figures, this internal knot which is called the Oedipus complex in so far as it is essentially what? It is essentially the following: a relationship between a demand which takes on such a privileged value that it becomes the absolute commandment, the law, and a desire, which is the desire of the Other, the Other involved in the Oedipus complex. This demand is articulated as follows: Thou shalt not desire her who has been my desire. Now it is this which founds in its structure the essential, the beginning of the Freudian truth.

And it is here, it is starting from here that any possible desire is in a way obliged to take this sort of irreducible detour, this something similar to the impossibility in the torus of the reduction of the loops on certain circles which means that desire must include in itself this void, this internal hole specified in this relationship to the original law. Let us not forget that the steps to found this first relationship around which - we forget it all too easily - are articulatable for Freud - and only in this way - all the *Liebesbedingungen*, all the determinants of love, let us not forget the steps that this requires in the Freudian dialectic that it is in this relationship to the other, the father who has been killed, beyond this death of the original murder that there is constituted this supreme form of love. It is a paradox not at all dissimulated even if it is elided by this veil over the eyes which always seems to accompany here the reading of Freud: this moment cannot be eliminated that after the murder of the father there arises for him - even if this is not sufficiently explained for us, it is well enough so for us to retain the moment as essential in what one can call the mythical structure of the Oedipus complex - this supreme love for the father, which makes precisely of this death of the original murder the condition of his henceforth absolute presence. Death in short playing this role manifested itself as alone being able to fix him in this sort of reality, no doubt the only absolutely durable one, of being as absent; there is no other source to the absoluteness of the original commandment.

Here is where there is established the common field in which the object of desire is set up in the position that we know already of course to be necessary for it even at the imaginary level, namely a third position: the simple dialectic of the relationship to the other *qua* transitive in the imaginary relationship of the mirror stage, has already taught you that it established the object of human interest as linked to his fellow, the object o here with respect to this image which includes it, which is the image of the other at the level of the mirror stage: i of o. But this interest in a way is only a form, it is the object of this neutral interest around which even the dialectic of M Piaget's enquiry could be ordered, by putting in the foreground this relationship that he describes as one of reciprocity that he believes that he can join up to a radical formula of the logical relationship. It is from this equivalence, from this identification to the other as imaginary, that the ternarity of the emergence of the object is established; it is only a partial, insufficient structure and therefore one that we should find, finally, as deductive of the setting up of the object of desire at the level where I am articulating it for you here today. The relationship to the Other is not at all this imaginary relationship founded on the specificity of the generic form, because this relationship to the

Other is specified by the demand in so far as it makes emerge from this Other, which is the Other with a big 0, its "essentialness", as I might say, in the establishment of the subject, or, to take up again the form that is always given to the verb *inter-esser* its "inter-essentialness" to the subject. The field in question cannot therefore in any way be reduced to the field of need and of the object which because of the rivalry of his fellows may at the limit be imposed - because this would be the slope down which we would find our recourse for the final rivalry - be imposed as object of subsistence for the organism. This other field, which we are defining and for which our image of the torus is made, is another field, a field of the signifier, a field of the connotation of presence and absence and where the object is no longer the object of the subsistence, but of the ex-sistence of the subject. In order to demonstrate it, it is indeed a matter in the final analysis of a certain place of ex-sistence necessary for the subject and that this is the function to which there is raised, brought the small o of the first rivalry.

We have before us the path which we still have to take of this mountain peak to which I led you the last time of the dominance of the other in the setting up of the frustrating relationship; the second part of the path should lead us from frustration to this still to be defined relationship which as such constitutes the subject in desire, and you know that is it only there that we can properly articulate castration. We will not know therefore in the final analysis what this place of ex-sistence means until this path has been completed. From now, we can, we ought even to recall, but recall here to the philosopher who has no introduction to our experience, this point which it is peculiar to see so often shied away from in his own discourse, which is that there is indeed a question, namely why it is necessary that the subject should be represented - and I mean in the Freudian sense represented by an ideational representative - as excluded from the very field in which he has to act in what we could call Lewinian relationships with others as individuals, that it is necessary that at the level of structure we should manage to account for why it is necessary that he should be represented somewhere as excluded from this field in order to intervene in this field itself. Because, after all, all the reasonings into which the psycho-sociologist draws us in his definition of what I have just called a Lewinian field are never presented without a complete elision of this necessity that the subject should be, let us say, in two topologically defined places, namely in this field but also essentially excluded from this field, and that he manages to articulate something and something which holds up. Everything that in a thinking about the behaviour of man as observable comes to be defined as learning and at the limit the objectification of learning, namely *montage*, forms a discourse which holds up and which up to a certain point takes into account a whole lot of things, except for the fact that effectively the subject functions, not with this simple use as I might say but in a double use, which is all the same worth dwelling on and which, however fleetingly it is presented to us, is tangible in so many ways that it is enough, as I might say, to bend down to gather up proofs of it. It is nothing other that I am trying to get you to sense every time for example that I bring in incidentally the traps of the double negation and that the "I do not know whether I want to" is not understood in the same way I think as the "I know that I do not want to".

Reflect on these never to be exhausted little problems - because the logicians of language work at them and their stammerings in this regard are more than instructive - that as long as there are words which flow and even writers who allow things to flow from the tip of their pen in the way they talk, you will say to someone - I already insisted on it, but one cannot come back too much on it - "You cannot fail to know (*vous n'êtes pas sans ignorer*)" in order to tell him: "You know well all the same". The double plane on which this operates

is something that is self-evident. That someone may write like that and that it has happened was recalled to me recently in one of these texts of Prévert which astonished Gide: "Was he trying to mock himself or does he really know what he is writing?" He did not want to mock himself: it flowed from his pen and all the critique of logicians will not help us to realize, if we are engaged in a veritable dialogue with someone, that it is a matter in some way or other of a certain essential condition in our relationships with him - which is the one to which I hope to get a little later - that it is essential that something should be set up between us as ignorance, that I will slip into saying to him, however learned and however purest I may be, "You cannot fail to know".

The same day that I was talking to you here, I avoided quoting what I had just read in *Le Canard Enchainé* at the end of one of these purple passages which are carried under the signature of André Ribaud entitled *La Cour*: "*il ne faut pas se décombattre*" (in a pseudo-Saint-Simon style, just as Balzac wrote a XVIth century tongue entirely invented by himself) "*de quelque défiance des rois*".

You understand perfectly what that means. Try to analyse it logically and you see that it means exactly the opposite of what you understand; and you are naturally quite within your rights to understand what you understand because it is in the structure of the subject: the fact that the two negations which are superimposed here, not alone do not cancel one another out, but sustain one another quite effectively depends on the existence of a topological duplicity which means that "*il ne faut pas se décombattre*" is not said on the same plane, as I might say, where there is set up the "*quelque défiance des rois*": the enunciating and the enunciation, as always, are perfectly separable but here the gap between them explodes.

If the torus as such can be of use to us, you will see, as a bridge, already proves to be enough to show us what the ambiguity of the subject consists in once it has passed into this world of redoubling, would it not be well moreover in this place, to pause at something which this topology obviously involves, and first of all in our most simple experience, I mean that of the subject. When we speak about commitment, is there any need for big detours for the ones that here I make you take because of what is required by our cause, do we need big detours for the least initiated people to evoke the fact that to commit oneself implies already in oneself the image of a corridor, the image of the entrance and of the exit and up to a certain point the image of the way out behind oneself being closed, and that it is indeed in this relationship to this "no exit" that the final term of the image of commitment is revealed.

Is much more necessary, and a whole literature which culminates in the work of Kafka allows us to grasp that it is enough to reverse what, it appears, the last time I did not sufficiently image in showing you this particular form of the torus in the form of a handle standing out from a plane, the plane only presenting here the particular case of an infinite sphere enlarging one side of the torus. It is enough to upturn this image, to present it belly up and like the earthly field where we sport and play to show us the very reason why man presents himself to us as what he was and perhaps what he remains: a burrow animal, a torus animal. All his architectures are not all the same without something which ought to strike us because of their affinity with something which must go much further than the simple satisfaction of a need, because of an analogy which is obviously irreducible, impossible to exclude between anything which is called by him inside and outside and that both one and the other flow into one another and determine what I called a little earlier the corridor, the

gallery, the underground: *Notes from the Underground*, Dostoievski entitled this extreme point where he punctuates the palpitation of his final question. Is this something which is exhausted in the notion of a socially useful instrument? Of course, like our two toruses, the function of the social agglomerate and its relationship to pathways in so far as their anastomosis simulates something which exists in the innermost part of the organism is for us a prefigured object of interrogation, it is not our privilege: the ant and the termite know it, but the badger in his set that Kafka speaks to us about is not precisely for his part a social animal.

What does this reminder mean for us, at the point that we have to bring ourselves to, if not that if this structural relationship is so natural that provided we think about it we find it everywhere and its roots very deeply plunged into the structure of things, the fact that when it is a matter of thinking organising itself, it fails so abundantly throughout the ages to recognise the relationship of the subject to the world, poses precisely the question of why repression, or at least we could say miscognition, has gone so far here.

This brings us back to our starting point which is that of the relationship to the Other, in so far as I described it as founded on some lure which it is now a question of articulating elsewhere than this natural relationship because moreover we see clearly the degree to which it can be hidden from thinking, how much thinking refuses it. It is from elsewhere that we will have to begin and from the position of the question to the Other, of the question about his desire and its satisfaction. If there is a lure, it must depend in some way on what I called earlier the radical duplicity of the position of the subject; and it is this that I would like to make you sense at the proper level then of the signifier in so far as it is specified by the duplicity of the subjective position, and ask you to follow me for a moment onto something which is called in the final analysis the difference for which the graph which I kept you to for a certain time of my discourse is properly speaking forged: this difference is called the difference between the message and the question.

This graph which could be so well inscribed here: (schema II) in the very gap through which the subject is doubly linked up to the universal plane of discourse, I am going today to inscribe on it the four meeting points which are the ones that you know: 0; s(0) the signification of the message in so far as it is the return coming from the Other, of the signifier which resides in him; here: $ ◊ D the relationship of the subject to the demand, in so far as there is specified here the drive; here: the S(0), the signifier of the Other in so far as the Other himself in the final analysis can only be formalised, be made significant as himself marked by the signifier, in other words in so far as it imposes on us the renunciation of any metalanguage. The gap that it is a matter of articulating here is entirely suspended on the form in which in the final term this demand to the Other to respond, alternates, oscillates in a succession of returns between the "nothing maybe" and the "maybe nothing" (*le rien peut-être et le peut-être rien*). Here it is a message (schema III). It opens out onto what has appeared to us as the opening established by the entry of a subject into the real. We are here in accord with the most certain elaboration of the term possibility: *Möglichkeit*. It is not on the side of the thing that the possible is, but on the side of the subject. The message opens itself out onto the term of the eventuality constituted by an expectation in the constituting situation of desire, as we are trying to get close to it here. "Maybe": the possibility is anterior to this nominative "nothing" which at the extreme point, takes on the value of a substitute for positiveness. It is a point and only a point. The place of the unary trait is reserved there in the

void which can respond to the expectation of desire. It is a completely different thing to the question in so far as it is articulated: (schema IV) "nothing maybe"?

That the maybe at the level of the demand that is put in question: "What do I want?" speaking to the Other, that the maybe comes here in a position homological to that which at the level of the message constituted the eventual response "maybe nothing", is the first formulation of the message. "Maybe nothing", this may be a response, but is it the response to the question "nothing maybe?" Precisely not. Here the enunciative "nothing" as posing the possibility of the failure to conclude at first as anterior to the mark of existence, to the power of being, this enunciative at the level of the question takes on all its value from a substantifying of the nothingness of the question itself. The sentence "nothing maybe" opens up, for its part, onto the probability that nothing determines it as question, that nothing at all is determined, that it remains possible that nothing is sure, that it is possible that one cannot conclude except by having recourse to the infinite anteriority of Kafka's *The Trial*, that there is a pure subsistence of the question with an impossibility of concluding.

Only the eventuality of the real allows something to be determined and the nomination of the nothingness of the pure subsistence of the question is what we have to deal with, at the level of the question itself. "Maybe nothing" could have been a response at the level of the message, but the message was precisely not a question. "Nothing maybe?" at the level of the question only gives a metaphor, namely the power of being is from the beyond, any eventuality has already disappeared from it and any subjectivity also. There is only an effect of meaning, an infinite referring on of meaning to meaning, except that, for us analysts, we are accustomed by experience to structure this referring on on two planes and that this is what changes everything, namely that the metaphor for us is condensation, which means two chains and that the metaphor makes its appearance in an unexpected fashion right in the middle of the message, that it also becomes message in the middle of the question, that the question "family" begins to be articulated and that there emerges right in the middle the million of the millionaire, that the irruption of the question in the message occurs in that it is revealed to us that the message manifests itself right in the middle of the question, that it comes to light on the path where we are called to the truth, and it is through our question about the truth - I mean the question itself and not the response to the question - that the message comes to light.

It is therefore on this precise point, which is precious for the articulation of the difference between enunciating and enunciation, that we had to pause for a moment. If this possibility of the nothing is not preserved, it prevents us from seeing, despite this omnipresence which is at the source of every possible properly subjective articulation, this gap which is equally very precisely incarnated in the passage from the sign to the signifier in which we see appearing that this is what distinguishes the subject in this difference: is he, for his part, sign when all is said and done, or signifier.

Sign, sign of what? He is precisely the sign of nothing. If the signifier is defined as representing the subject for another signifier - indefinite referring on of meanings - and if this signifies something, it is because the signifier signifies for the other signifier this privileged thing that the subject is *qua* nothing. It is here that our experience allows us to throw into relief the necessity of the path by means of which there is supported any reality identifiable in the structure in so far as it is the one which allows us to pursue our experience.

The Other does not give any response therefore except that nothing is sure, but this has only one meaning: the fact is that there is something that he wants to know nothing about and it is very precisely this question. At this level the impotence of the Other is rooted in an impossible which indeed is the same one on whose path we have already conducted the question of the subject. "Not possible" was this void in which the unary trait with its dividing value came to emerge. Here we see this impossible embodying itself and joining up with what we have seen earlier was defined by Freud about the constitution of desire in the original prohibition. The impotence of the Other to respond is due to an impasse and this impasse - as we know - is called the limitation of his knowledge. "He did not know that he had died", that he has come to this absoluteness of the Other only by a death not accepted but undergone, and undergone because of the desire of the subject; this the subject knows, as I might say: that the Other must not to know it, that the Other demands not to know it, this is the privileged part in these two not-to-be-confused demands: that of the subject and that of the Other. The fact is that precisely desire is defined as the intersection of that which in the two demands is to be not said. It is only starting from there that there are liberated the demands formulatable everywhere else except in the field of desire.

Thus desire is established at first from its nature of being that which is hidden from the Other by structure; it is precisely the impossible to the Other that becomes the desire of the subject. Desire is established as the part of the demand which is hidden from the Other. It is here that this Other who guarantees precisely nothing *qua* Other, *qua* locus of the word, takes on his constructive incidence. He becomes the veil, the covering, the source of the occultation of the very place of desire and it is here that the object is going to put itself under cover, that if there is an existence which is constituted at first it is that and that it substitutes itself for the existence of the subject himself because the subject *qua* suspended on the Other remains equally suspended on the fact that on the side of the Other nothing is sure except precisely that he is hiding, he is covering something which is this object, this object which is still maybe nothing in so far as it is going to become the object of desire.

The object of desire exists as this very nothing which the Other cannot know to be all it consists in; this nothing takes on consistency *qua* hidden from the Other, it becomes the envelope of every object before which the very question of the subject comes to a halt in so far as the subject then does not become more than imaginary. The demand is liberated from the demand of the Other in the measure that the subject excludes this not-knowing of the Other. But there are two possible forms of exclusion: "I wash my hands of what you know or what you do not know, and I act", "you cannot fail to know" means how much I could not be bothered whether you know or whether you do not know. But there is also the other way; "it is absolutely necessary that you should know", and this is the path that the neurotic chooses, and it is for that reason that he is, as I might say, designated in advance as a victim. The right way for the neurotic to resolve the problem of this field of desire *qua* constituted by this central field of demands which precisely intersect and for that reason must be excluded, is that for his part he finds that the right way is that you should know. If it were not so, he would not be doing a psychoanalysis.

What was the Ratman doing getting up at night like Theodore? He shuffles along in his slippers towards the corridor to open the door to the ghost of his dead father in order to show him what? That he has a hard-on. Is this not the revelation of a fundamental behaviour? If he is not able, since it is obvious to him that the Other is not able to do anything, the

neurotic wants him at least to know. I spoke to you a little earlier about commitment: the neurotic, contrary to what is believed is someone who commits himself as subject. He shuts himself off from the double outcome of the message and the question; he puts himself in the balance to decide between the "nothing maybe" and the "maybe nothing", he poses himself as a real in face of the Other, namely as impossible. Of course this will be clearer to you if you know how it happens. It is not for nothing that today I brought forward this image of the Freudian Theodore in his nocturnal and phantastical exhibition, the fact is that there is indeed some medium, and to put it better, some instrument for this unbelievable transmutation between the object of desire and the existence of the subject and which is precisely the phallus. But this is reserved for our next remarks. Today I am noting simply that phallus or not the neurotic comes on the scene as something of the real which specifies itself as impossible. This is not exhaustive; because we cannot apply this definition to phobia. We can only do it the next time, but we can apply it very well to obsessional. You will understand nothing about an obsessional if you do not remember this dimension that he the obsessional incarnates because of the fact that he is too much - it is his form of the impossible - and that once he tries to come out of his ambush position as a hidden object, he has to be a nowhere object. Hence this kind of almost ferocious avidity in the obsessional to be the one who is everywhere in order precisely to be nowhere.

The obsessional's taste for ubiquity is well known, and if you do not spot it you will understand nothing about most of his behaviour. The least thing, because he cannot be everywhere, is in any case to be in several places at once, namely that in any case he can nowhere be laid hold of.

The hysteric has another mode which is of course the same, because it is the root of this one, even though less easy, less immediate to understand. The hysteric also can pose herself as real *qua* impossible. Her trick then is that this impossible will subsist, if the Other admits her as sign. The hysteric poses herself as the sign of something in which the Other could believe; but even though she constitutes this sign she is quite real and it is necessary at all costs that this sign impose itself and mark the Other.

Here therefore is where there ends up this structure, this fundamental dialectic which entirely reposes on the ultimate weakness of the Other as a guarantee of what is sure. The reality of desire is established there and takes its place there through the medium of something whose paradox we can never stress too much, the dimension of the hidden, namely the dimension which is indeed the most contradictory one that the spirit can construct once it is a question of the truth. What is more natural than the introduction of this field of truth if not the position of a omniscient Other, to the point that the sharpest, the keenest philosopher cannot sustain the very dimension of the truth, except by supposing that it is this science of the one who knows everything which allows him to sustain it.

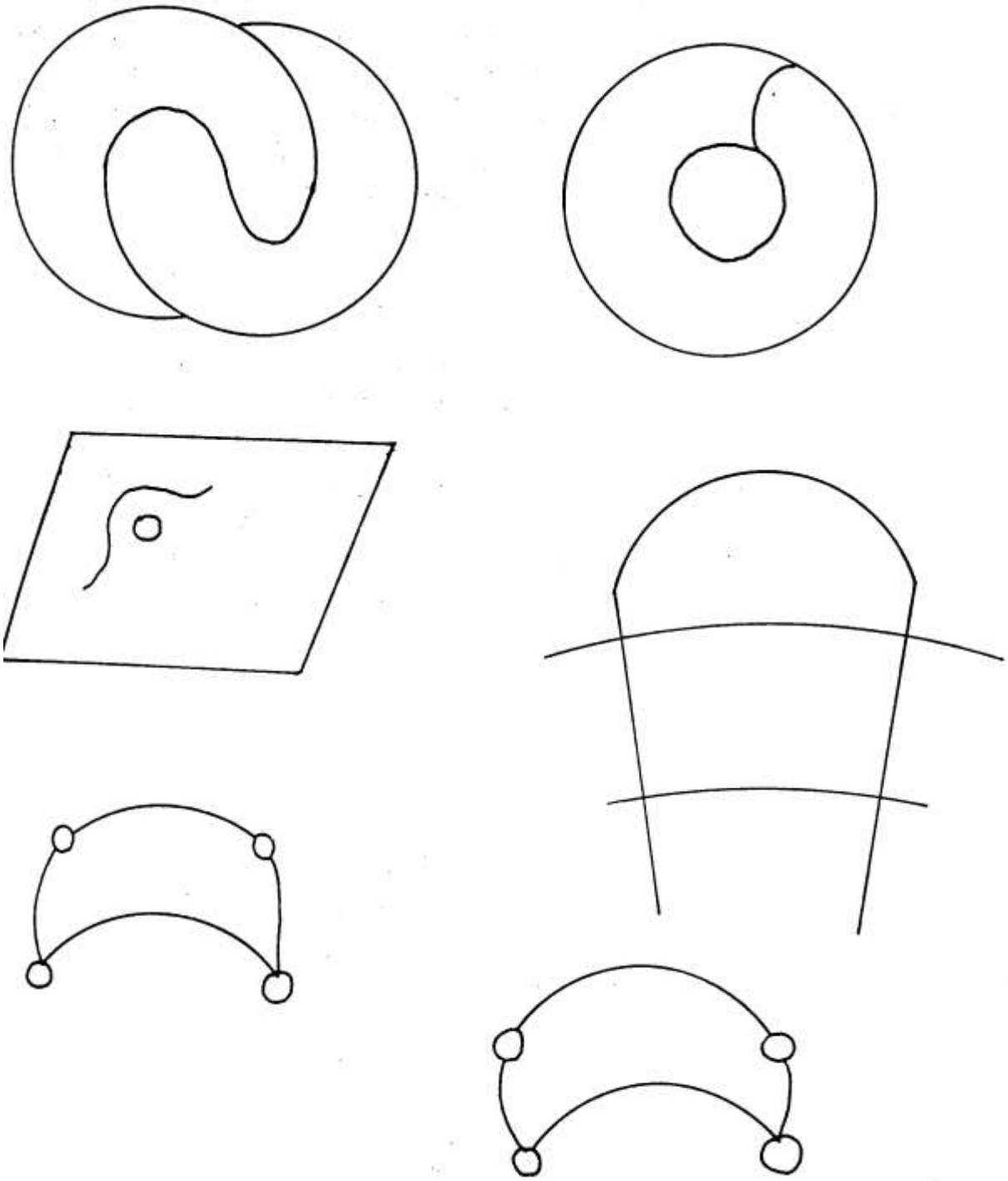
And nevertheless nothing of the reality of man, nothing of what he seeks for nor of what he follows can be sustained except by this dimension of the hidden, in so far as it is the guarantee that there is indeed an existing object that infers and gives by reflection this dimension of the hidden; when all is said and done it is what gives its only coherence to this other problematic. The source of all faith and eminently of faith in God is indeed the fact that we move about in the very dimension of the fact that even though the miracle of the fact that he must know everything gives him in short his whole subsistence, we act as if he always

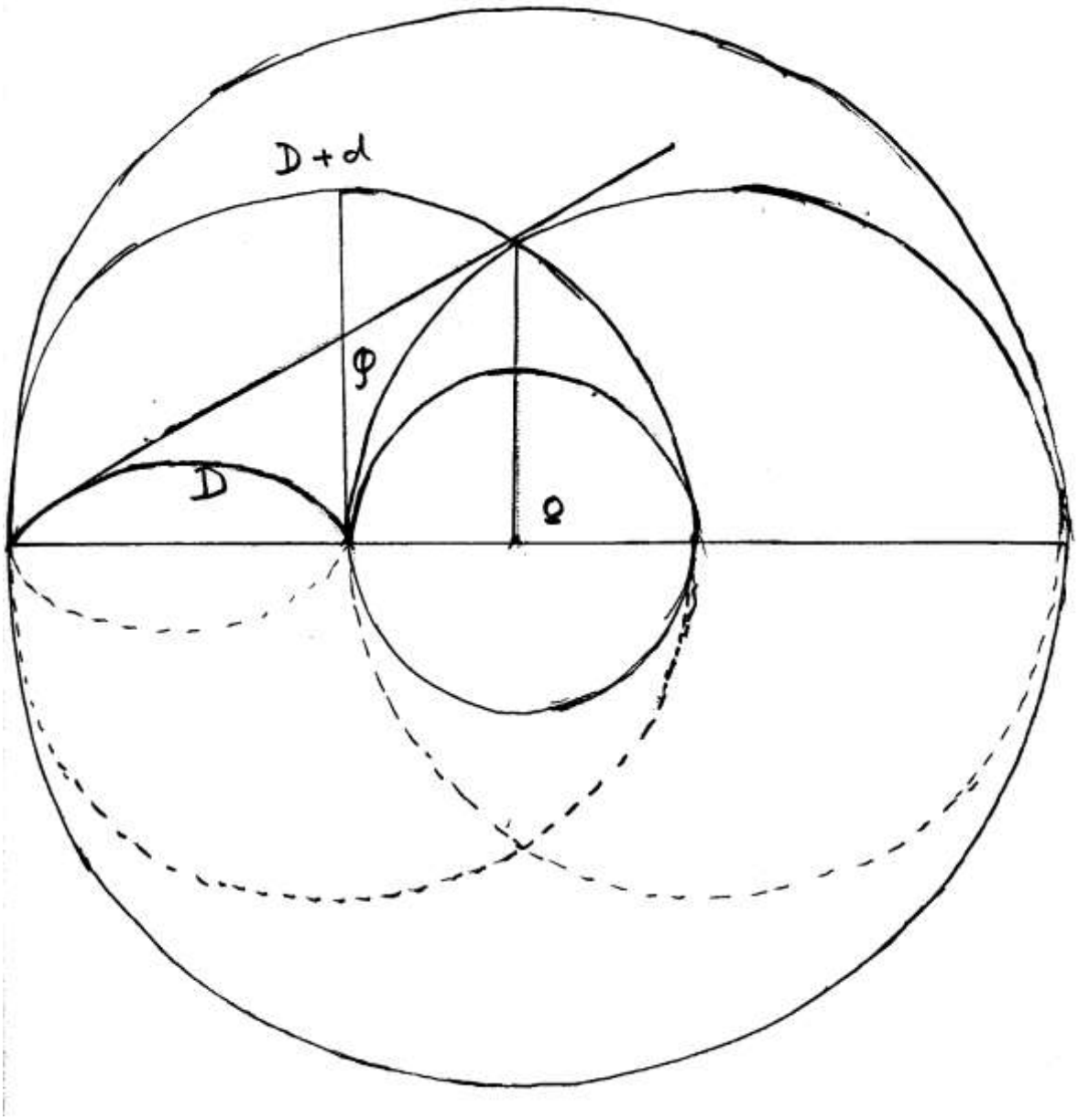
knew nothing about nine tenths of our intentions. "Not a word to the Queen Mother", this is the principle upon which every subjective constitution is unfolded and is carried out.

Is it not possible that a behaviour might be conceived which measures up to this true status of desire and is it even possible for us not to see that despite appearances, despite the age-old chit-chat of the moralist, nothing, not a step of our ethical behaviour can be sustained without an exact mapping out of the function of desire? Is it possible for us to content ourselves with examples like the one Kant gives, when to reveal for us the irreducible dimension of practical reason, he gives as example that the honest man, even at the height of his happiness, cannot fail at least for a moment to consider whether he might not renounce this happiness in order not to bear false witness against an innocent man for the benefit of the tyrant. An absurd example because in our own day, but just as much in the time of Kant, is the question not altogether elsewhere? Because the just man is going to weigh up, yes, whether if in order to preserve his family he should or should not bear false witness. But what does that mean? Does that mean that, if he is giving a handle in this way to the hatred of the tyrant against the innocent man, he could bear true witness, denounce his little pal as a Jew when he really is one.

Is it not here that there begins the moral dimension which is not to know what duty we should fulfill or not vis-a-vis the truth, nor whether our behaviour falls under the universal rule, but whether we should or not satisfy the desire of the tyrant? Here is the ethical balance properly speaking; and it is at this level that without making intervene any dramatics from outside - we have no need for it - we also have to deal with what, at the end of the analysis, remains suspended on the Other. It is in so far as the measure of unconscious desire at the end of analysis still remains implicated in this locus of the Other that we incarnate as analysts, that Freud at the end of his work can mark as irreducible the castration complex as unassignable by the subject.

This I will articulate the next time, committing myself to allow you to glimpse at least that a correct definition of the function of phantasy and of its assumption by the subject allows us maybe to go further in the reduction of what has appeared up to now in experience as a final frustration.

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Seminar 15: *Wednesday 28 March 1962*

Of what use to us is the topology of this surface, of this surface called the torus, in so far as its constituting inflection which makes necessary its turns and returns is what can best suggest to us the law to which the subject is submitted in the processes of identification? This of course will only finally appear to us when we have effectively gone through everything that it represents and how well suited it is to the dialectic proper to the subject in so far as it is a dialectic of identification.

By way of reference therefore and in order that when I highlight one or other point, when I accentuate one or other relief, you may record, as I might say at every moment the degree of orientation, the degree of relevance, of what I am putting forward at that moment with respect to a certain goal that is to be attained , I will tell you that at the limit what can be inscribed on this torus, in so far as it can be of use to us, is going to be symbolised more or less in such a way, that this shape, these circles that are drawn, these letters next to each of these circles, are going to designate it immediately for us. The torus no doubt appears to have a privileged value. Do not think that it is the only form of non-spherical surface that is capable of interesting us; I could not encourage too much those who have some leanings, some gifts for this, to refer to what is called algebraic topology and to the shapes that it proposes to you in something which, if you wish, as compared to classical geometry, the one that you keep written on the seat of your pants because of your passage through secondary education, presents itself exactly as an analogy for what I am trying to do for you on the symbolic plane, what I called an elastic logic, a supple logic. This is still more manifest for the geometry involved. Because the geometry involved in algebraic topology is presented as the geometry of figures which are made of rubber. It is possible that the authors bring into play this *caoutchouc*, this *rubber* as they say in English, in order to get across to the listener what is involved; it is a matter of figures which can be deformed and which through all the deformations remain in a constant relationship. This torus is not required to present itself here in its filled-out shape. Do not think that among the surfaces which are defined, which must be defined, the ones that essentially interest us, closed surfaces, in the measure that in any case the subject presents himself as something closed, closed surfaces, however ingenious you may be, you see that there is a whole field open to the most outrageous inventions. Do not think moreover that imagination lends itself all that willingly to the forging of these supple, complex shapes, which coil around one another and get themselves into knots. You have only to try to accustom yourself to the theory of knots in order to see how difficult it is already to represent for oneself the most simple combinations; this will still not take you far. Because it can be proved that however complicated it may be, you will always be able to reduce any closed surface by means of appropriate procedures to something which cannot go any further than a sphere provided with some appendices, among which precisely those which from the torus are represented here as a handle annexed to, a handle added onto a sphere, as I recently drew it on the blackboard for you, a handle sufficing to transform the sphere and the handle into a torus from the point of view of its topological value.

Therefore, everything can be reduced to the adjunction to the shape of a sphere with a certain number of handles plus a certain number of other eventual shapes.

I hope that in the session before the holidays I will be able to initiate you into this shape which is very amusing - but when I think that the majority of you here do not even suspect its existence! - it is what is called in English a *cross-cap* or what one can designate by the French word *mitre*. So, imagine a torus which would have as a property the inversion of its surface at some part of its circuit, I mean that at a place which is put here between two points A and B the outside surface goes through, the surface which is in front goes through the surface which is behind, the surfaces intersect one another. I can only indicate it to you here. This has very curious properties and perhaps even for us rather exemplary ones, in so far as in any case it is a surface which has this property that the outside surface for its part, if you wish, is found to be continuous with the inside face in passing to the inside of the object and therefore can return in one single circuit from the other side of the surface from which it started. It is something very easy to produce in the simplest fashion when you do something with a strip of paper which consists in taking it and twisting it in such a way that its edge is stuck on to the extreme edge after being reversed. You will see that it is a surface which has effectively only a single face, in this sense that something travelling on it never encounters in a certain sense any limit, passes from one side to the other without your being able to grasp at any instant where the conjuring trick has taken place.

Therefore there is here the possibility on the surface of any sphere whatsoever of coming to produce, to simplify any surface however complicated it may be. Let us add here the possibility of holes; you cannot go beyond that, namely that however complicated the surface you imagine may be, I mean for example however complicated the surface you have to make may be, you can never find anything more complicated than that. So that there is a certain naturalness in the reference to the torus as being intuitively the most simple, the most accessible shape.

This can teach us something. In this regard I told you the signification that we could give by convention, by artifice, to two types of circular axis, in so far as they are privileged here. The one which makes the circuit of what one could call the generating circle of the torus, since it is a torus of revolution in so far as it is open to being indefinitely repeated, in some way the same and always different, is well designed to represent for us signifying insistence and especially the insistence of repetitive demand. On the other hand what is implied in this succession of circuits, namely a circularity that is accomplished while at the same time being unnoticed by the subject which is found to offer us an obvious, passive, and in a way maximum symbolisation for intuitive sensibility of what is implied in the very terms of unconscious desire, in so far as the subject follows its highways and byways without knowing it. Throughout all these demands, this unconscious desire is in a way by itself the metonymy of all these demands, and you see here the living incarnation of these references to which I have accustomed you, habituated you throughout my discourse, specifically to those of metaphor and metonymy.

Here, metonymy finds in a way its most tangible application as being manifested by desire in so far as desire is what we articulate as presupposed in the succession of all the demands in so far as they are repetitive. We find ourselves before something where you see that the circle described here merits that we should attach to it the symbol D, *qua* symbol of Demand. This something involving the inside circle must indeed have something to do with what I will call metonymical desire. Well then, there is among these circles, the test that we can make of it, a privileged circle which is easy to describe: it is the circle which starting

from outside the torus finds the means of completing itself, not simply by passing through the central hole, but by enveloping the central hole without for all that passing by the central hole. This circle has the privilege of doing both things at once. It passes through and it envelopes it. It is therefore made up of the addition of these two circles, namely it represents D + d. The addition of demand and desire, allows us to symbolise in a way demand with its underlay of desire.

Why is this of interest? The interest of this is that if we end up at an elementary dialectic, namely that of the opposition between two demands, if it is inside this same torus that I symbolise by another analogous circle the demand of the Other with what that will involve for us of "either..., or....", "either what I demand", "or what you demand", we see this everyday in daily life; this to recall that in the privileged conditions at the level we are going to look for it, to interrogate it, in analysis, it is necessary that we should remember this, namely the ambiguity that there always is in the very usage of the term "either..., or...", this term of disjunction symbolised in logis as: a v b.

There are two usages of this "either..., or...". It is not for nothing that logic will mark all its efforts and, as I might say, that the "either..., or..." concerning for example these two circles can mean two things: the choice between one or other of these two circles. But does that mean that simply as regards the position of the "either..., or..." there is exclusion? No, what you see is that in the circle into which I am going to introduce this "either..., or..." there is involved what I can call the intersection symbolised in logic by the relationship of desire to a certain intersection involving certain laws is not simply called on to put on a matter of fact terrain what one could call the contract, the agreement between demands; given the profound heterogeneity that exists between this field and that one, this is sufficiently symbolised by the following: here we are dealing with the closing of the surface and there properly speaking with its internal void. This puts before us a model which shows us that it involves something other than grasping the part the demands have in common. In other words, it will be a matter for us of knowing in what measure this shape can allow us to symbolise as such the constituent parts of desire, in so far as desire for the subject is this something that he has to constitute along the path of the demand. I am indicating to you already that there are two points, two dimensions that we can privilege in this circle which is particularly significant in the topology of the torus: on the one hand the distance which connects the centre of the central void to this point which is found to be, which can be defined as, a sort of tangency thanks to which a plane intersecting the torus is going to allow us to separate out this privileged circle in the simplest way. This is what will give us the definition, the measure of small o *qua* object of desire.

On the other hand this, in so far as it is only itself locatable, definable, with respect to the very diameter of this exceptional circle, it is in the radius, in the half if you wish of this diameter, that we see what is the mainspring, the final measure of the relationship of the subject to desire, namely the small *qua* symbol of the phallus. This is what we are heading towards and what will take on its meaning, its applicability and its import from the path that we will have taken beforehand, in order to allow us to succeed in making this image itself more manageable, tangible for you and up to a certain point suggestive of a truly structural intensity.

This having been said, it is of course understood that the subject, in what we have to deal with in our partner who summons us, in what we have before us in the form of this summons, and what comes to speak before us, only what one can define and punctuate as the subject identifies itself. It is worth recalling that because, after all, it is easy for thinking to drift. Why, if one does not dot the i's, should one not say that the drive identifies itself and that an image identifies itself?

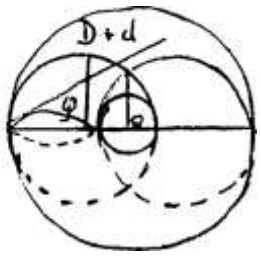
Nothing can correctly be said to identify itself, the term identification is only introduced into Freud's thinking from the moment that one can to some degree, even if this is not articulated in Freud, consider this identification as the dimension of the subject - and that does not mean that this does not take us much further than the subject.

The proof here also - I am reminding you of something about which one cannot know whether it is in the antecedents, the first steps or in the future of my discourse that I highlight it - is that the first form of identification and the one which is referred to with such frivolity, such pitiful parroting is this identification which, we are told, incorporates, or again - adding a confusion to the imprecision of the first formula - introjects. Let us be content with incorporates which is the best. How can one even begin with this first form of identification when not even the slightest indication, not the slightest reference point except a vaguely metaphorical one, is given to you in such a formula about what it can even mean? Or indeed if one speaks about incorporation, it is indeed because something must be happening at the level of the body. I do not know if I can push things far enough this year, I hope so all the same, we have time enough before us to get there, returning to where we began, to give its full meaning and its true meaning to this incorporation of the first identification.

As you will see, there is no other means of bringing it into play except by rejoining it through a thematic which has already been elaborated from the time of the most antique, mythical, indeed religious traditions under the term of "mystical body". Impossible not to take things in a span which goes from the primitive Semitic conception: there is between the age-old father and all those who descend from him a bodily identity, but at the other extreme you know that there is the notion which I have just called by its name, that of the mystical body, in so far as it is from a body that a church is constituted: and it is not for nothing that Freud, to define for us the identity of the ego in its relationships with what he calls on that occasion *Massenpsychologie* refers to the corporality of the Church. But how can I make you begin from there without giving rise to all the confusions and make you believe that, as the term mystical sufficiently indicates, it is on quite different paths to those along which our experience would wish to draw us, it is only retroactively, in a way, returning to the necessary conditions of our experience, that we can introduce ourselves to the antecedence suggested by every attempt to tackle in its fullness the reality of identification. Therefore the approach that I chose in the second form of identification is not by chance; it is because this identification is graspable by approaching it by way of the pure signifier, because we can grasp in a clear and rational fashion an angle from which to enter into what is meant by the identification of the subject in so far as the subject brings to birth the unary trait, rather that the unary trait once it has been detached makes the subject appear as one who counts - in the double sense of the term.

The scope for ambiguity that you can give to this formula - the one who actively counts no doubt, but also the one who counts quite simply in reality, the one who really

counts, obviously is going to take some time to find where he is in his count, exactly the time that we will take to go through everything that I have just designated for you here - will have for you its full meaning (schema): Shackleton and his companions in the Antartic several



hundred kilometres from the coast, explorers submitted to the greatest frustration, one which resulted not only from the lacks which were more or less elucidated at the time - because it is a text which is already about fifty years old - from the more or less elucidated lacks in a special food which was still being tested at that time, but who one might say were disoriented in what I might call a still virgin landscape, not yet inhabited by human imagination, tell us in notes which are very peculiar to read, that they always counted themselves as one more than they were, that they could not make it out: "We were always asking ourselves where the missing person had gone", the missing person who was not missing except because of the fact that their whole effort of counting always suggested to them that there was one more, and therefore one less.

You put your finger here on the appearance in its naked state of the subject who is nothing more than that, than the possibility of one more signifier, of an additional 1 thanks to which he himself notes there is a one who is missing.

If I remind you of this it is simply to highlight in a dialectic which includes the most extreme terms where we situate our path and where you may believe and sometimes even ask yourselves if we are not forgetting certain reference points. You may for example even ask yourselves what relationship there is between the path that I have made you travel and these two terms with which we have had to deal, we have constantly to deal with but at different moments, of the Other and the thing.

Of course, the subject himself in the final analysis is destined for the thing, but his law, more exactly his *faturn* is this path that he can only describe by passing through the Other in so far as the Other is marked by the signifier, and it is on this side (*en deça*) of this necessary passage through the signifier that desire and its object are constituted as such. The appearance of this dimension of the Other and the emergence of the subject, I cannot remind you too much of it in order to give you properly the meaning of what is involved and whose paradox, I think, ought to be sufficiently articulated for you in the fact that desire - you should understand it in the most natural sense - can and must constitute itself only in the tension created by this relationship to the Other, which takes its origin from the fact of the advent of the unary trait in so far as at first and since it begins with the thing it always effaces this something which is quite a different thing to this one which has always been irreplaceable; and we find there from the first step - I point this out to you in passing - the formula, here is where Freud's formula ends: there where the thing was I must come. It should be replaced at the origin by: "*Wo Es war, da durch den Ein*", rather by "*durch den*

Eins" there by the one *qua* one, the unary trait, "*werde Ich*", the "I" will come: the whole path is completely traced out at every point of the path.

It is here indeed that I tried to suspend you the last time by showing you the progress necessary at this moment in so far as it can only be established by the effective dialectic which is accomplished in the relationship with the Other.

I am astonished at the kind of dullness into which it seemed to me there fell my nevertheless carefully worked out articulation of "nothing maybe" and "maybe nothing". What must be done then to make you sensitive to it? Perhaps precisely my text at this point and the specification of their distinction as message in question, then as response, but not at the level of the question, as suspension of the question at the level of the question, was too complex to be simply heard by those who did not note its detours in order to come back to it. However disappointed I may be it is necessarily I who am wrong, that is why I am coming back to it in order to make myself understood. Will I not suggest to you today for example the necessity at least of coming back to it; and when all is said and done it is simply by asking you: do you think that "nothing sure, *rien de sûr*", as an enunciating seems to you to give rise to the slightest sliding, to the slightest ambiguity with "surely nothing, *sûrement rien*"? It is all the same similar. There is the same difference between the "nothing maybe", and the "maybe nothing". I would even say that there is in the first one, the "nothing sure", the same undermining quality of the question at the origin as in the "nothing maybe". And even in the "surely nothing", there is the same power of eventual response no doubt, but always anticipated with respect to the question, as it is easy to put your finger on, it seems to me, if I remind you that it is always before any question and for reasons of security, as I might say, that one learns to say, in life when one is small, surely nothing. That means surely nothing other than what is already expected, namely what one can in advance consider as reducible to zero, like the loops. The non-anxiety-provoking quality of *Erwartung*, here is what Freud was able to articulate for us on occasion, nothing that we did not know already: when one is like that one is calm, but one is not always so. So therefore what we see, is that the subject in order to find the thing sets out at first in the opposite direction, that there is no means of articulating these first steps of the subject, except by a nothing which it is important to make you sense in this dimension, at once metaphorical and metonymical, of the first signifying game because every time that we analysts have to deal with this relationship of the subject to the nothing, we slip regularly between two slopes: the common slope which tends towards a nothing of destruction, the shameful interpretation of aggressivity considered as purely reducible to the biological force of aggression, which is in no way sufficient, except in a degraded way, to support the tendency to nothing as it arises at a certain necessary stage of Freudian thinking in the death instinct just before he introduces identification.

The other, is the nihilisation which could be assimilated to Hegelian negativity. The nothing that I am trying to get to hold together for you at this initial moment in the establishment of the subject is something else. The subject introduces the nothing as such and this nothing is to be distinguished from any *ens rationis* which is that of classical negativity, from any imaginary being which is that of a being whose existence is impossible, the famous centaur which brings the logicians, all the logicians, indeed the metaphysicians to a halt at the beginning of their path towards science, which is not either the *ens privativum*, which is properly speaking what Kant admirably in the definition of his four nothings which he turns to such little account, called the *nihil negativum*, namely to use his own terms: *leere*

Gegenstand ohne Begriff, an empty object, but let us add without concept, without any grasp on it being possible. It is for that reason, to introduce it, that I had to put before you again the network of the whole graph, namely the constitutive network of the relationship to the Other with all its reverberations.

I would like, in order to lead you onto this path, to pave your way with flowers. I am going to try it today, I mean to mark my intentions when I tell you that it is starting from the problematic of the beyond of the demand that the object is constituted as object of desire; I mean that it is because the Other does not answer, except with "nothing maybe", that the worst is not always sure, that the subject is going to find in an object the very virtues of his initial demand. You should understand that it is in order to pave your way with flowers that I am recalling these truths of common experience whose signification is not sufficiently recognised, and try to make you sense that it is not by chance, analogy, comparison, nor just flowers but profound affinities which will make me indicate to you at the end the affinity of the object with this Other - with a big 0 - in so far for example as it manifests itself in love, that the famous speech of Eliante in *Le Misanthrope* is taken from the *De natura rerum* of Lucretius:

> The palefaced lady's lily white, perforce;
> The swarthy one's a sweet brunette of course;
> The spindly lady has a slender grace;
> The fat one has a most majestic pace;
> The plain one, with her dress in disarray,
> They classify as *beaute negligee*..."

It is nothing other than the impossible-to-efface sign of this fact that the object of desire is only constituted in the relationship to the Other in so far as it takes its origin itself from the value of the unary trait. There is no privilege in the object except in this absurd value given to each trait of being a privilege.

What else is still necessary to convince you of the structural dependency of this constitution of the object (object of desire) on the initial dialectic of the signifier, in so far as it runs aground on the non-response of the Other, if not the path we have already taken of Sadian research which I showed you at length - and if it is lost, you should know at least that I have committed myself to going back on it in a preface that I promised for an edition of Sade - we cannot overlook with what I am calling here the structuring affinity of this journey towards the Other in so far as it determines any setting up of the object of desire; that we see in Sade at every moment mingled, woven together with one another, invective - I mean invective against the Supreme Being, his negation being only a form of invective even if it is the most authentic negation - absolutely interwoven with what I would call, in order to approach it, to tackle it a little, not so much the destruction of the object as what we could take first of all for its simulacrum because you know the exceptional resistances of the victims of the Sadian myth to all the trials which the romantic text puts them through. And then what, what is meant by this sort of transference onto the mother incarnated in nature of a certain and fundamental abomination of all her acts? Should this dissimulate from us what is involved and what we are told nevertheless is involved in imitating her in his acts of

destruction and by pushing them to the final term by a will applied to forcing her to recreate something else, which means what? Giving his place back to the creator.

When all is said and done in the final analysis, Sade said it without knowing it, he articulates this by his enunciating: I am giving you your abominable reality, you the father, by substituting myself for you in this violent action against the mother. Of course, the mythical returning of the object to nothing is not simply aimed at the privileged victim, who is when all is said and done adored as object of desire, but the very million-fold multitude of everything that there is. Remember the anti-social plots of Sade's heros. This returning of the object to nothing essentially simulates the annihilation of signifying power. This is the other contradictory term of this fundamental relationship to the Other as it is established in Sadian desire, and it is sufficiently indicated in the final testamentary wish of Sade in so far as it is aimed precisely at this term which I specified for you of the second death, the death of being itself in so far as Sade in his will specifies that of his tomb and intentionally of his memory despite the fact that he is a writer there should literally remain no trace and a thicket ought to be regrown over the place where he is inhumed, that of him essentially as subject it is the no traces which indicates where he wants to affirm himself: very precisely as what I called the annihilation of the signifying power.

If there is something else that I have to remind you of here to sufficiently punctuate the legitimacy of the necessary inclusion of the object of desire in this relationship to the Other in so far as it implies the mark of the signifier as such, I will designate it for you less in Sade than in one of the most sensitive recent, contemporary, commentaries of him, indeed the most illustrious of them. This text which appeared immediately after the war in an issue of *Les Temps modernes*, recently re-edited through the efforts of our friend Jean-Jacques Pauvert in the new edition of the first version of *Justine*, is the preface by Paulhan. We cannot be indifferent to such a text, in so far as you follow here the detours of my discourse; because it is striking that it is by the simple paths of rhetorical rigour - you will see that there is no other guide to the discourse of Paulhan, the author of *Fleurs de Tarbes* - I mean that the ever so subtle separating out by him in this way of everything that had been articulated up to the present on the subject of the signification of Sadianism, namely what he calls the "complicitousness of the Sadian imagination with its object", namely the view from the outside, I mean through the approach that can be made of it by a literal analysis, the surest view, the strictest one that one can give to the essence of masochism, of which precisely he says nothing except that he makes us sense very clearly that it is along this path, that this is the last word on Sade's approach, and not to judge it clinically and in a way from outside where nevertheless the result is manifest. It is difficult to better offer oneself to all the mistreatment of society than Sade did at every instant, but this is not the essential thing, the essential thing being suspended in this text of Paulhan, which I would ask you to read, which proceeds by way of a rhetorical analysis of the Sadian text to make us sense, only behind a veil, the point of convergence in so far as it situates itself in this quite obvious reversal founded on the most profound complicity with that of which the victim here is when all is said and done only the symbol marked by a sort of substance absent from the ideal of Sadian victims. It is as object that the Sadian subject cancels himself out, by means of which effectively he rejoins what appears to us phenomenologically then in the texts of Masoch, namely that the end, that the high point of masochistic *jouissance* is not so much in the fact that it offers itself to support or not one or other bodily pain, but in this extreme particularity that namely in the books you will always find in the small or big texts of the masochistic

phantasmagoria, this cancelling out properly speaking of the subject in so far as he makes himself pure object. There is no end to this except the moment when any masochistic novel whatsoever, arrives at this point which from the outside may appear so superfluous, indeed a *de luxe* embellishment, which is properly speaking that this masochistic subject forges himself as being the object of a bargaining or very exactly of a sale between the two others between whom he is passed like a property, a venal property - and you should note not a fetish - because the final term is indicated in the fact that he is a vile piece of cheaply sold stuff that there would be no reason even to preserve as an antique slave who at least constituted himself, imposed respect for himself, by his market value. All this, these detours, this path paved with the flowers of Tarbes precisely or literary flowers, in order to mark clearly for you what I mean when I talk about what I have accentuated for you: namely the profound perturbation of *jouissance*, in so far as *jouissance* is defined with respect to the thing, by the dimension of the Other as such in so far as this dimension of the Other is defined by the introduction of the signifier.

Just three more little steps forward and then I will put off to the next time the rest of this discourse lest you may become too aware of the fluey fatigue that is hanging over me today.

Jones is a curious personage in the history of analysis: as regards the history of analysis what he impresses on my mind, I will tell you immediately to continue this path of flowers today, is what diabolical wish to dissimulate there must have been in Freud for him to have entrusted the task of writing his own biography to this cunning and therefore short-sighted Welshman, so that he would not go too far in the work that was entrusted to him. It is there in the article on symbolism which I devoted to the work of Jones, which does not simply signify the desire to close my article with something clever, what that on which I concluded signifies, namely the comparison between the activity of the wily Welshman and the work of a chimney sweep. In effect he swept all the tubes very well and I can be accorded this credit that in the aforesaid article I followed him through all the detours of the day's work until I emerged with him completely black through the door that opens out onto the salon, as you remember maybe. Something which earned me from the part of another eminent member of the analytic Society, one of those whom I best appreciate and love, another Welshman, the assurance in a letter that he really did not understand in any way the utility that I apparently believed was to be found in this scrupulous approach.

Jones never did any more in his biography to mark all the same a little his distance than to bring a little light from outside, namely the points where the Freudian construction is found to be in disaccord with, in contradiction with the Darwinian gospel, which is quite simply on his part a really grotesque manifestation of chauvinistic superiority.

Jones therefore, in the course of a work whose progress is fascinating by reason of its very miscognitions, especially in connection with the phallic stage and his exceptionally plentiful experience of female homosexuals, Jones encounters the paradox of the castration complex which constitutes undoubtedly the best of all the things to which he adhered - and did well to adhere to - to articulate his experience in which literally this was the only thing he ever penetrated. The proof is the introduction of this term, which is certainly handy provided one knows what to make of it, namely that one knows how to spot in it what must not be done in order to understand castration: the term *aphanisis*. To define the meaning of what I

can call here without forcing anything the Oedipal effect, Jones tells us something which could not be better situated in our discourse: here he finds himself, whether he wants to or not, sharing the notion that the Other, as I articulated for you the last time, prohibits the object or the desire. My "or" is or seems to be exclusive. Not altogether: "either you desire what I desired, I the dead God, and there is no other proof - but it is enough - of my existence than this commandment which prohibits its object to you"; it constitutes it precisely in the dimension of the lost: "You can no longer, whatever you do, do anything but find another, never that one". It is the most intelligent interpretation that I can give to this step that Jones takes so lightly - and I assure you with drums playing - when it is a matter of marking the entrance of these homosexuals into the sulphurous domain which from then on will be their habitat: either the object or the desire, I assure you that there is no delay about it.

If I dwell on it, it is in order to give to this choice: "vel... vel...", the best interpretation, namely that I add to it, I am allowing my interlocutor to speak in the best way possible. "Either you renounce desire", Jones tells us. When one says it quickly it may seem to be self-evident, in the measure that previously our soul and at the same time our understanding had been given an opportunity to relax by translating castration for us as *aphanisis*. But what does it mean to renounce desire? Is it all that tenable, this *aphanisis* of desire, if we give it this function that it has in Jones, of being a subject of fear.

Is it even conceivable first of all in the experiential fact, at the point that Freud brings it into play - and I grant it to him - in one of the possible exemplary outcomes of the Freudian conflict, that of the female homosexual? Let us look closely at it. This desire which disappears, which you as subject renounce, does our experience not teach us that this means that henceforth your desire is going to be so well hidden that it can appear to be absent for a while? Let us even say that like our cross-cap or mitre surface, it is inverted in the demand. The demand here, once again, receives its own message in an inverted form. But in the final analysis, what does this hidden desire mean if not what we call and discover in experience as repressed desire? There is only one thing in any case that we know very well we will never find in the subject: it is the fear of repression as such, at the very moment that it is operating, when its happening. If in *aphanisis* something which concerns desire is involved, it is arbitrary given the way that our experience teaches us to see it concealing itself.

It is unthinkable that an analyst should articulate that there can be formed in consciousness something which is supposed to be the fear of the disappearance of desire. Where desire disappears, namely in repression, the subject is completely included in, not detached from this disappearance. And we know it: anxiety, if it is produced, is never about the disappearance of desire, but of the object that it dissimulates, of the truth of desire, or if you wish again of what we do not know about the desire of the Other. Every questioning by consciousness about desire as being able to lose strength can only be complicituous. *Conscius* moreover means accomplice, which is something here in which etymology takes on its freshness again from experience and it is indeed for that reason that I reminded you earlier in my path paved with flowers about the relationship between the Sadian ethics and its object. This is what we call ambivalence, ambiguity, the reversibility of certain instinctual (*pulsionnels*) couples, but all we see by simply saying that about this equivalent, is this turning back on itself, the subject becoming object and the object subject. We do not grasp the true mainspring of it which always implies this reference to the big Other where all of this takes on its meaning.

Therefore *aphanisis* explained as source of the anxiety in the castration complex is properly speaking an exclusion of the problem; because the only question that an analytical theorist has to pose here - and one understands very well that he has in effect to pose a question, because the castration complex remains up to the present a reality which is not completely elucidated - the only question that he has to pose himself is the one that begins from the fortunate fact that thanks to Freud who bequeathed his discovery to him at a much more advanced stage than the point to which he, the analytical theorist, can get to, the question is to know why the instrument of desire, the phallus, takes on such a decisive value, why it is it and not desire which is implicated in anxiety, in a fear about which it is all the same not vain that we have testified, as regards the term *aphanisis*, in order not to forget that every anxiety is an anxiety about nothing, in so far as it is from the "nothing maybe" that the subject has to barricade himself, which means that for a time, it is the best hypothesis for him: nothing maybe to fear. Why is it here that the function of the phallus emerges, here where in effect without it everything would be so easy to understand, unfortunately in a fashion altogether outside experience? Why the phallus thing, why does the phallus come as a measure at the moment when it is a question of what? Of the void included at the heart of the demand, namely of the beyond of the pleasure principle, of that which makes of the demand its eternal repetition, namely of what constitutes the drive. Once more we are brought back to this point which I will not go beyond today that desire is constructed on the path of a question which menaces it and which belongs to the domain of not being (*n'être*), which you will allow me to introduce here with this play on words. A final reflection was suggested to me lately with the every day presentation of the way in which it would be appropriate to articulate honestly, and not simply by sniggering, the eternal principles of the Church and the vacillating detours of different national laws about *birth control*, namely that the first *raison d'être*, which no legislator has up to the present taken into account for the birth of a child, is that one desires it and that we who know well the role of this - whether it was or was not desired - on the whole development of the subsequent subject, it does not seem that we have felt the need to recall it, to introduce it, to make it understood throughout this drunken discussion which oscillates between obvious utilitarian necessities of demographic policy and the anxiety provoking fear - let us not forget it - of the abominations that eugenics eventually promise us.

It is a first step, a tiny little step, but an essential step - and you will see how much it needs to be tested - deciding between such a possibility of choosing, to point out the constitutive effective relationship in any future destiny to be respected as it were as the essential mystery of the being who is to come that he should have been desired and why.

Remember that it often happens that the basis of the desire of a child is simply the fact that nobody says: that he should be a not one, that he should be my curse on the world.

Seminar 16: *Wednesday 4 April 1962*

Those who for diverse reasons, personal or other, distinguished themselves by their absence from what we call the *provinciale* meeting of the Society are going to have to put up with a little aside; because for the moment, it is to the others that I am going to address myself, in so far as I owe them a debt, an agreeable sort of debt. Perhaps they may have suspected it, because I said something at this little congress. This was to defend the position they had taken up and I must admit that on my part this masked a certain dissatisfaction with them.

One must all the same philosophize a bit about the nature of what is called a congress. In principle, it is one of these sorts of meetings at which people speak, but at which everyone knows that something he is saying has some element of bad taste about it, so that it is quite natural that nothing is said there except pompous nothings, each one ordinarily remaining locked in the role he has to protect.

This is not altogether what happens at what we more modestly call our *Journées.* But for some time everyone is very modest. They are called conferences, meetings. This changes nothing.... at bottom they always remain congresses.

There is the question of *rapports* [reports, relationships]. It seems to me that it is worth while dwelling on this term because after all it is rather amusing when one looks closely at it: *rapport* to what, about what, *rapport* between what, even indeed *rapport* against what, as when one talks about an informer (*rapporteur*). Is this really what is meant? We would have to see. In any case if the word *rapport* is clear when one says: "The report of Mr So-and-so on the financial situation", one cannot all the same say that one is completely at ease in giving what should be an analogous meaning to a term like a "report on anxiety" for example. You must admit that it is rather curious to be giving a report on anxiety, or on poetry for that matter, or on a certain number of terms of this type. I hope all the same that the strangeness of the thing is obvious to you, and that it specifies not simply congresses of psychoanalysts, but a certain number of other congresses, let us say, of philosophers in general.

The term report, I must say, makes one hesitate; moreover at one time, I myself did not hesitate to describe as a discourse what I had to say about analogous terms: "Discourse on psychic causality", for example. That looks a bit precious. I came back to report like everyone else.

All the same this term and its usage are there to make you pose the question precisely about the degree of appropriateness against which these strange *rapports* with their alien objects are measured. It is quite certain that there is a certain proportion between these aforesaid reports and a certain constitutive type of the question to which it refers: the void at the centre of my torus for example is very tangible when we are dealing with anxiety or desire. Which should allow us to believe, to understand, that the best signifying echo that we could have of the term scientific *rapport* on this occasion, might be with what is also called

rapport when we are dealing with sexual relationships; both one and the other are not without a *rapport* to the question we are dealing with, but only just.

It is here indeed that we rediscover this dimension of the "not without", (*pas sans*), as grounding the very point at which we are introduced into desire and in so far as access to desire requires that the subject should not be without having it. Having what? That is the whole question. In other words, that access to desire resides in a fact, in the fact that the covetousness of the being who is called human must be inaugurally depressed in order to be restored to the echelons of a power of which there is question as regards what it is, but above all, towards what this power is exerting itself. Now obviously, tangibly, it seems that what it is exerting itself towards throughout all the metamorphoses of human desire, is something always more tangible, more specified which is grasped by us as this central hole, this thing which it is ever more necessary to turn around in dealing with this desire that we know, this human desire in so far as it is more and more unformed. This is what makes it legitimate therefore up to a certain point that their reports, that of the report on anxiety in particular the other day, could only accede to the question by being not without a *rapport* to the question. This does not mean all the same that the "without", as I might say, should get too far ahead of the "not", in other words that one may believe a little bit too easily that one can respond to the constitutive void at the centre of a subject by an excessive poverty in the means of approaching it; and here you will allow me to evoke the myth of the foolish virgin which, in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, corresponds so nicely to that of Penia, of extreme poverty, in Plato's *Symposium*. Penia succeeds in her efforts because she knows about Venus; but it is not necessarily so: the improvidence that the aforesaid foolish virgin symbolises may very well make her miss becoming pregnant.

Now, where is the unforgiveable limit in this affair - because after all this indeed is what is involved: it is the style of what can be communicated in a certain mode of communication that we are trying to define, the one which forces me to come back to anxiety here not in order to admonish nor to lecture those who spoke, not without some faltering - the limit obviously being sought, from which one can reproach congresses in general about their results, where is it to be sought? Because we are speaking about something which allows us to grasp its void when it is a matter for example of speaking about desire; are we going to look for it in this sort of sin in desire against some fire or other of passion, of the passion for truth for example, which is the mode onto which we could very well pin for example a certain manner, a certain style: the university manner for example? This would be altogether too convenient, it would be much too easy. I am certainly not going to parody here the famous roar of the vomiting of the Eternal Being before a mediocre lukewarmess, a certain kind of heat ends just as well - as we know - with sterility. And in truth, our morality, a morality which already holds up very well, Christian morality, says that there is only one sin: the sin against the spirit. Well then, we for our part are saying that there is no sin against desire, any more than there is a fear of *aphanisis*, in the sense that Mr Jones understands it. We cannot say in any case that we can reproach ourselves for not desiring well enough. There is only one thing - and this we can do nothing about - there is only one thing to be dreaded: it is an obtuseness in recognising the curve proper to the progress of this infinitely flat being whose necessary propulsion I demonstrate for you on this closed object which I am here calling the torus, which is in truth only the most innocent shape that the aforesaid curve can take on since in another different shape which is no less possible nor less widespread, it is in the very structure of these shapes to which I introduced you a little the last time, that the

subject in displacing himself finds himself with his left placed on the right and this without knowing how it could have happened, how it came about.

In this respect, all those who are listening to me here are not privileged in this respect about this; nor am I, I would say, up to a certain point; that can happen to me just as it happens to others.

The only difference between them and me up to the present, it seems to me, lies in the work that I put into it in so far as I give a little bit more to it than they do.

I may say that in a certain number of things which were advanced on a subject that no doubt I have not tackled at all: anxiety this is not what decided me to announce to you that it will be the subject of my seminar next year, if the times we live in will allow there to be one - on this subject of anxiety I heard many strange things, risky things, not all erroneous, that I would not have to reprove, addressing myself specifically to one or other of them, one at a time. It seemed to me nevertheless that what was revealed there in terms of a certain weakness was indeed that of a without (sans) and not at all of a nature to encompass what I call the void of the centre. All the same some remarks from my last seminar should have put you on your guard about the most pertinent points; and it is for this reason that it appears to me just as legitimate to tackle the question from this angle today because this links on exactly to last week's discourse. It is therefore all the same not for nothing that in it I put the accent on, recalled, the distance that separates in our fundamental coordinates, those into which there must be inserted our theorems about identification this year, the distance that separates the Other from the thing, nor indeed that in explicit terms I believed I had to highlight for you the relationship between anxiety and the desire of the Other.

For want really of starting from there, of hanging on to this as a sort of firm handle and for having only circled around it because of some shame or other - because really at certain moments, I would say almost all the time and even in these reports of which I spoke - for some reason or other which comes from this sort of lack which is not the right one, even in these reports all the same you can connote in the margin this something or other which was always the convergence imposing itself with the kind of orientation of a compass needle, that the only term which could give a unity to this sort of oscillating movement around which the question hesitated, was this term: the relationship of anxiety to the desire of the Other; and this is what I wanted, because it would be false, vain, but not without risk not to mark here something in passing which might be like a germ to prevent all the interesting things that no doubt were said throughout the hours of this little meeting at which more and more accentuated things came to be enounced, in order that this should not be dissipated, in order that this should be linked up with our work, allow me to try here very massively, in the margin as it were and almost in advance but also not without a relevance to exact points, at the point that we had arrived at to punctuate a certain number of primary guiding points, without the reference, which should never be lacking to you at any moment.

If the fact that a fundamental access to *jouissance qua jouissance* of the thing is prohibited, if this is what I told you throughout the whole year of the seminar on *Ethics*, if it is in this suspension, in the fact that this *jouissance* is *aufgehoben*, suspended properly speaking that there lies the supporting plane on which desire is going to be constituted as such and be sustained - because it is really the most distant approximation from anything that the world may say - do you not see that we can formulate that the Other, this Other in so far

as it at once poses itself as being and is not, that it is to be, when we advance towards desire we clearly see that the Other here in as much as its support is the pure signifier, the signifier of the law, that the Other is presented here as a metaphor of this prohibition. To say that the Other is the law or that it is *jouissance qua* prohibited, is the same thing. So then, an alert to the person - who moreover is not here today - who made of anxiety the support and the sign and the spasm of the *jouissance* of a self identified, identified exactly as if he were not a pupil of mine with this ineffable foundation of the drive as if it were the heart, the centre of being where precisely there is nothing. Now everything that I teach you about the drive is precisely that it is not to be confused with this mythical self, that it has nothing to do with what has been made of it from a Jungian perspective. Obviously, it is not common to say that anxiety is the *jouissance* of what one could call the final foundation of one's own unconscious. This was what this discourse depended on. It is not common and it is not because it is not common that it is true. It is an extreme to which one can be brought when one is in a certain error which entirely reposes on the elision of this relationship of the Other to the thing as antinomical; the Other is to be, therefore it is not, it has all the same some reality, without that I could not even define it as the locus where the signifying chain is unfolded, the only real Other because there is no Other of the Other, nothing which guarantees the truth of the law, the only real Other being what one can enjoy without the law. This virtuality defines the Other as locus: the thing in short elided, reduced to its place, this is what the Other with a big 0 is. And I am going right away very quickly to what I have to say about anxiety: this passes, as I announced to you, through the desire of the Other. So then this is where we are at with our torus, it is here that we have to define it step by step. It is here that I will carry out a first examination a little too quickly: this is never a bad thing because one can come back on it.

First approach: are we going to say that this relationship that I am articulating in saying that the desire of man is the desire of the Other, something which of course means something, but now what is in question, what that already introduces is that obviously I am saying something completely different. I am saying that the desire x of the ego subject is the relationship to the desire of the Other, is supposed to be with respect to the desire of the Other in a relationship of *beschränkung*, of limitation, is supposed to become configured in a simple field of vital space or not, conceived as homogeneous, is supposed to come to limit itself by their colliding with one another. A fundamental image of all sorts of thoughts when one is speculating on the effects of a psycho-sociological conjunction. The relationship of desire to the subject, of the subject to the desire of the Other has nothing to do with anything whatsoever that can be intuitively supported from this register.

A first step would be to advance that if measure means a measure of size, there is no common measure between them and simply by saying that, we rejoin experience. Who has ever found a common measure between his desire and anyone whom he has had to deal with as desire? If one does not put that first in any science of experience, when one has Hegel's title, the real title of the *Phenomenolgy of Spirit*, one can permit oneself anything, including the delirious sermonising about the benefits of genitality. It is this and nothing other which is meant by my introduction of the symbol , it is something designed to suggest to you that multiplied by , the product of my desire by the desire of the Other only gives and can only give a lack: -1, the want of the subject at this precise point:
= -1. Result: the product of one desire by the other one can only be this lack, and it is from that that one must start in order to hold onto something. This means that there cannot be any

agreement, any contract on the plane of desire, that what is involved in this identification of the desire of man to the desire of the Other, this is what I will show you in an open operation by making the puppets of the phantasy operate for you in so far as they are the support, the only possible support for what can be in the proper sense a realisation of desire. Well then, when we have arrived there - you can already all the same see indicated in a thousand references: the references to Sade to take those which are closest, the phantasy: "A child is being beaten", to take one of the first angles with which I began to introduce this operation - what I will show is that the realisation of desire signifies, in the very act of this realisation, can only signify being the instrument, serving the desire of the Other who is not the object that you have before you in the act but another who is behind.

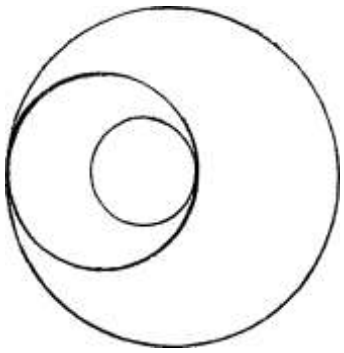
It is a matter here of the possible term in the realisation of the phantasy, it is only a possible term and before making yourselves the instrument of this Other in a hyper-space, you have well and truly to deal with desires, with real desires. Desire exists, is constituted, makes its way through the world and exercises its ravages before any attempt of your erotic or other imaginings to realise it; and it is even not excluded that you might encounter the desire of the Other as such, of the real Other as I defined it earlier.

It is at this point that anxiety is born; anxiety is as stupid as a cabbage. It is unbelievable that at no time did I even see the outline of something so simple in what seemed at certain moments, as they say, to be a game of hide-and-seek. People went looking for anxiety, and more exactly what is more original than anxiety: pre-anxiety, traumatic anxiety. No one spoke about this: anxiety is the sensation of the desire of the Other. Except that, as of course every time someone advances a new formula, I do not know what happens, the preceding ones find their way to the bottom of your pockets and never come out again. It is necessary all the same for me to image this - I apologise for it - and that in a gross way to get across what I mean, allowing you after that to try to make use of it, and this can be of use wherever there is anxiety.

A little apologue which is perhaps not the best one. The truth is that I made it up this morning, telling myself that I would have to try to make myself understood. Usually I make myself understood inexactly, which is not such a bad thing; this avoids you making mistakes in the right place. I am going to try to make myself understood in the right place and avoid you making an error: imagine me in an enclosed area alone with a praying mantis three metres high - it is the proper proportion for me to be the same size as the aforesaid male, and furthermore I am dressed in a skin the size of the aforesaid male which is lm 75cm high, more or less my own. I look at myself, I look at my image decked out in this way in the faceted eye of the aforesaid praying mantis. Is this anxiety?

It is very close to it. Nevertheless in telling you that it is the sensation of the desire of the Other, this definition shows itself for what it is, namely purely introductory. You must obviously refer to my structure of the subject, namely know all the preceding discourse in order to understand that if it is the Other with a big 0 that is involved, I cannot be satisfied with not going any further by only representing in the affair this little image of myself as a male mantis in the faceted eye of the Other. It is properly speaking the pure apprehension of the desire of the Other as such that is involved if precisely I fail to recognise what? My insignia: namely that I am decked out in the skin of the male. I do not know what I am as object for the Other. Anxiety, it is said, is an affect without object but we have to know

where this lack of object is: it is on my side. The affect of anxiety is in effect connoted by a want of object, but not by a want of reality. If I no longer know myself as eventual object of this desire of the Other, this Other who is before me, its figure is entirely mysterious to me in the measure especially that this shape as such which I have before me cannot in effect be constituted for me either as object, but where all the same I can sense sensations of a type which make up the whole substance of what is called anxiety, of this unspeakable oppression through which we arrive at the very dimension of the locus of the Other in so far as desire can appear there.



That is what anxiety is. It is only starting from there that you can understand the different angles the neurotic takes to manage in this relationship with the desire of the Other. Now, at the point that we are at, I showed you the last time this desire as necessarily included in the demand of the Other. Here moreover what do you rediscover as a primary truth if not a commonplace of daily experience? What is anxiety-provoking for someone, not just for small children, but for the small children that we all are, is what can indeed be hidden in any demand in terms of this x, of this impenetrable and anxiety-provoking x *par excellence* of the "what can he want in this situation?" You can clearly see what the configuration here demands, you can clearly see: it is a middle term between demand and desire. This middle term has a name, it is called the phallus. The phallic function has absolutely no other meaning than to be what gives the measure of this field to be defined within the demand as the field of desire, and moreover, if you wish, that everything that analytic theory, Freudian doctrine, tells us about this consists precisely in telling us that it is through this when all is said and done that everything is arranged.

I do not know the desire of the Other: anxiety, but I know its instrument: the phallus, and whoever I am, I am requested to pass this way and not to make a fuss; which is called in everyday language continuing on daddy's principles; and since everyone knows that for some time now daddy no longer has any principles, this is where all the trouble begins; but as long as daddy is there in so far as he is the centre around which there is organised the transference of what is in this matter the unit of exchange, namely: I mean the unit which is established, which becomes the basis and the principle of every support, of every foundation, of every articulation of desire, well then, things can carry on, they will be exactly stretched between the *mephunai*, "would that he had never begotten me!" at the limit and what is called the *baraka* in the Semitic and even properly speaking biblical tradition, namely the contrary, what makes me the living, active prolongation of the law of the father, of the father as origin of what is going to be transmitted as desire.

You are going to see here that castration anxiety therefore has two meanings and two levels; because if the phallus is this element of mediation which gives its support to desire,

well then the woman is not the worst off in this affair because after all for her it is quite simple: because she does not have it, she only has to desire it; and indeed in the most successful cases, it is in effect a situation to which she adapts very well. The whole dialectic of the castration complex in so far as for her it introduces the Oedipus complex, as Freud tells us, means nothing other than that. Thanks to the very structure of human desire, the path for her requires fewer detours - the normal path - than for the man. Because for the man, in order that his phallus may serve as this foundation of the field of desire, is it going to be necessary for him to demand it in order to have it? It is indeed something like that that is involved at the level of the castration complex, a transitional passage from what in him is the natural, become semi-alien, vacillating support of desire through this habilitation by the law, by means of which this piece, this pound of flesh is going to become the pledge, the something through which he is going to designate himself at the place where he has to manifest himself as desire within the circle of demand. This necessary preservation of the field of demand which through the law humanises the mode of relationship of desire to its object is what is involved at this point and is what means that the danger for the subject is not, as is said in all these deviations that we have been making for years to try to contradict analysis, that the danger for the subject is not in any abandonment on the part of the Other, but in his abandonment as subject to the demand. Because in as much as he lives, as he closely develops the constitution of his relationship to the phallus in the field of the demand, it is here that this demand does not properly speaking have any term: because again even though it is necessary, as you know, for this phallus to be demanded in order to introduce, to establish this field of desire, it is not properly speaking in the power of the Other to make a gift of it on the plane of demand. It is in the measure that therapeutics does not at all manage to resolve better than it has done the ending of analysis, does not manage to make it emerge from the proper circle of demand, that it comes up against, that it finally ends up in this demanding form, in this unsatisfiable, *unendliche* form that Freud in his final article, "Analysis terminable and interminable", designates as unresolved anxiety about castration in the case of the man, as *Penisneid* in the woman. But an exact positioning, a correct positioning of the function of demand in analytic efficacy and the fashion of directing it might perhaps allow us, if we were not so backward about it, a backwardness already sufficiently designated by the fact that obviously it is only in the rarest cases that we come up against this term marked by Freud as the end point of his own experience. Would to heavens we could arrive at this point even if it is only an impasse! This would at least prove how far we could go, while what is involved, is to know effectively if going that far leads us to an impasse or whether one can go further.

Before leaving you must I indicate to you some of the little points which will give you satisfaction because they show you that we are in the right place by referring ourselves to something which exists in our experience of the neurotic? What for example does the hysteric or the obsessional neurotic do in the register that we have been trying to construct, what do both one and the other do with regard to the desire of the Other as such?

Before we fell into their snare by encouraging them to play out the whole game on the plane of demand, by imagining to ourselves - which moreover is not an absurd thing to imagine - that we will manage at the limit to define the phallic field as the intersection of two frustrations, what do they do spontaneously? For the hysteric it is quite simple; for the 165obsessional also, but it is less obvious. The hysteric does not need to have attended our seminar in order to know that man's desire is the desire of the Other and that as a

consequence, the Other can perfectly well, in this function of desire, supply for her the hysteric. The hysteric lives her relationship to the object by fomenting the desire of the Other with a big 0 for this object. Consult Dora's case. I think that I have already sufficiently articulated this *per longum et latum* not to even need to recall it here. I appeal simply to the experience of each one of you and to what are called the operations of subtle plotting that you can see being developed in the whole behaviour of the hysteric which consists in sustaining in her immediate environment the love of one or other person for somebody else who is her friend and the true final object of her desire, the profound ambiguity always remaining of course of knowing whether the situation ought not to be understood in the reverse direction.

Why? This is what of course you will be able to see in the continuation of our remarks as perfectly calculable from the simple fact of the function of the phallus which here can always pass from one to the other of the hysteric's two partners.

But we will come to this in detail. And what does the obsessional really do concerning, I am speaking directly, his business with the desire of the Other? It is more astute because moreover this field of desire is constituted by the paternal demand in so far as it is what preserves, what defines the field of desire as such by prohibiting it. Well then, let him sort it out for himself therefore, the one who is charged with sustaining desire with respect to the object in obsessional neurosis: the dead person. The subject has the phallus, he may even exhibit it on occasion, but it is the dead person who is asked to make use of it. It is not for nothing that I highlighted the story in the Ratman, the nocturnal hour when having contemplated his erection at length in the mirror he goes to the entrance door to open it to his father's ghost, to ask him to recognise that everything is ready for this supreme narcissistic act that this desire is for the obsessional.

Except for this do not be surprised that with such means anxiety only appears from time to time, that it is not there all the time, that it is even much more and much better set aside in the hysteric than in the obsessional, the complacency of the Other all the same being much greater than that of a dead person whom it is always difficult all the same to maintain present as one might say. This is why the obsessional from time to time, every time there cannot be repeated to satiety the whole arrangement which allows him to manage the desire of the Other, sees re-emerging of course in a more or less overwhelming fashion the affect of anxiety. From this simply by returning backwards, you can understand that the phobic business marks a first step in this attempt which is properly speaking the neurotic mode of resolving the problem of the desire of the Other, a first step, I am saying, of the way in which this can be resolved. It is a step as everyone knows, for its part, which is of course far from arriving at this relative solution of the anxiety relationship.

Quite the contrary, it is only in an altogether precarious fashion that this anxiety is mastered, as you know, through the mediation of this object whose ambiguity between the small o function and the small function is already sufficiently underlined for us. The common factor which the small constitutes in every small o of desire is here in a way extracted and revealed. It is on this that I will put the accent the next time by beginning again from phobia, in order to specify what exactly this function of the phallus consists in.

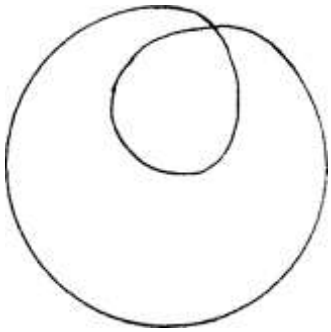
Today in general what do you see? It is that when all is said and done the solution that we perceive to the problem of the relationship of the subject to desire at its radical foundation, is proposed as follows: because it is a question of demand and it is a question of

defining desire, well then let us say roughly: the subject demands the phallus and the phallus desires. It is as stupid as that. It is from that at least that one must begin as a radical formula to see effectively what is to be made of it in experience. This model is modulated around this relationship of the subject to the phallus in so far as, as you see, it is essentially of an identificatory nature and that if there is something which effectively can provoke this arousal of anxiety linked to the fear of a loss, it is the phallus. Why not desire? There is no fear of *aphanisis*, there is the fear of losing the phallus because only the phallus can give its proper field to desire.

But now let no one speak to us either about defence against anxiety. One does not defend oneself against anxiety, any more than there is a fear of *aphanisis*. Anxiety is at the source of defences, but one does not defend oneself against anxiety. Of course, if I tell you that I am going to consecrate a whole year to this subject of anxiety, this means that I am not claiming today to have dealt with every aspect of it, that it does not pose a problem. If anxiety - it is always at this level that my little apologue has defined for you in an almost caricatural way that anxiety is situated - if anxiety can become a sign, it is of course because transformed into a sign, it is perhaps not quite the same thing as it was where I tried to pose it for you at first at its essential point.

There is also a simulacrum of anxiety. At this level, of course, one can be tempted to minimise its import, in so far as it is really tangible that if the subject sends himself signs of anxiety it is obviously in order that things should be more cheerful. But it is all the same not from there that we can begin in order to define the function of anxiety; and then finally to say, as I have simply claimed to do today, massive things, let us open ourselves to this thought that if Freud told us that anxiety is a signal which happens at the level of the ego, it is all the same necessary to know that it is a signal for whom? Not for the ego, because it is at the level of the ego that it is produced. And I greatly regretted also, that at our last meeting no one dreamt of making this simple remark.

Seminar 17: Wednesday 11 April 1962



I had proposed that I would continue today about the phallus. Well I shall not be speaking to you about it or indeed I will only speak to you about it in the shape of this inverted eight which is not all that reassuring.

It is not a new signifier that is involved. You are going to see that it is still the same as the one that I have been speaking about in short from the beginning of this year; only the reason why I bring it forward as being essential, is to bring about a renewal with the topological base that is involved: namely what is meant by the introduction this year of the torus.

It is not so much of course that what I said about anxiety was all that well understood. Someone who is very nice and who reads - because it is someone from a *milieu* where people work, I must admit that I am choosing this example because it is rather encouraging - remarked to me in a very timely way that what I said about anxiety as desire of the Other overlapped with what is found in Kierkegaard. At a first reading - because it is quite true - you can well imagine that I remembered that Kierkegaard, in order to speak about anxiety, evoked the young girl at the moment when for the first time she realises that she is desired. Only if Kierkegaard said it, the difference with what I am saying is, as I might say to use a Kierkegaardian term, that I am repeating it. If there is someone who has pointed out that it is never without reason that one says "I say and I repeat", it is precisely Kierkegaard. If one feels the need to underline that one is repeating it after having said it, it is because probably it is not at all the same thing to repeat it as to say it; it is absolutely certain that, if what I said the last time has a meaning, it is precisely because the case raised by Kierkegaard is something quite particular and as such obscures rather than clarifies the true meaning of the formula that anxiety is the desire of the Other - with a big 0.

It can happen that this other is incarnated for the young girl at a moment of her existence in some ne'er-do-well. This has nothing to do with the question that I raised the last time and with the introduction of the desire of the other as such in order to say that it is anxiety, more exactly that anxiety is the sensation of this desire.

Today I am going to come back therefore to my path for this year and that all the more rigorously because I had to make a digression the last time. And that is why, more rigorously than ever, we are going to do topology, and it is necessary to do it because you cannot but do it at every instant, I mean, whether you are logicians or not, whether you know the meaning of the word topology or not. You make use for example of the conjunction or.

Now, it is rather remarkable but undoubtedly true that the usage of this conjunction was not properly articulated, properly specified, properly highlighted in the field of technical logic, of the logic of logicians until recent times, much too recent for its effects in short to have really reached you; and that is why it is enough to read the smallest current analytic text for example to see that at every instant thinking stumbles once it is a question, not only of the term identification, but even of the simple practice of identifying anything whatsoever in the field of our experience.

It is necessary to begin again from schemas unshaken in spite of everything, let us admit, in your thinking, unshaken for two reasons: first of all because they emerge from what I would call a certain peculiar incapacity properly speaking for intuitive thinking or more simply for intuition, which means at the very foundations an experience marked by the organisation of what is called the sense of vision. You will very easily grasp this intuitive impotence, if I have the good fortune that after this little conversation you set yourself to pose simple problems of representation about what I am going to show you can happen at the surface of a torus. You will see the difficulty you will have not to become confused. Nevertheless a torus is quite simple: a ring. You will become confused, but then I become confused like you: I needed practice in order to find my bearings a little in it and even to grasp what that was suggesting and what that allowed to ground practically.

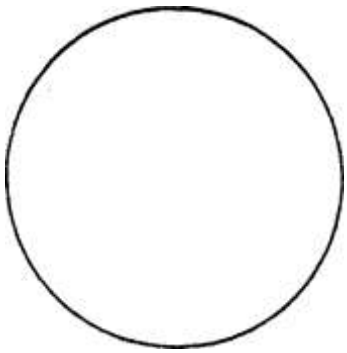
The other term is linked to what is called education, namely that everything is done to encourage this sort of intuitive impotence, to establish it, to give it an absolute character, that of course with the best of intentions. This is what happened for example when in 1741 Mr Euler, a very great name in the history of mathematics, introduced his famous circles which, whether you know it or not, did a lot in short to encourage the teaching of classical logic in a certain direction which far from opening it out could only tend unfortunately to render more evident the idea that simple schoolboys might have of it.

This happened because Euler had got it into his head, God knows why, to teach a princess, the princess of Anhalt Dessau. Throughout a whole period people were very preoccupied with princesses, people are still preoccupied with them and that is unfortunate. You know that Descartes had his own one, the famous Christina. This is a historical tale of a different kind, he died of it. It is not altogether subjective, there is a kind of very particular stench which emerges from everything that surrounds the entity princess or *Prinzessin*. Throughout a period of about three centuries, we have something which is dominated by letters addressed to princesses, the memoirs of princesses, and this holds a certain place in the culture. It is a kind of substitute for this flaw [or *dame*] whose function, so difficult to understand, so difficult to approach, I tried to explain to you in the structure of courtly sublimation whose real import I am not at all sure after all of having made you really understand. I was really only able to give you kinds of projections of it in the way that one tries to depict four dimensional figures that cannot be had in another space.

I learned with pleasure that something about it reached ears which are close to me, and that people are beginning to interest themselves, not here but elsewhere, in what courtly love might be. It is already a result.

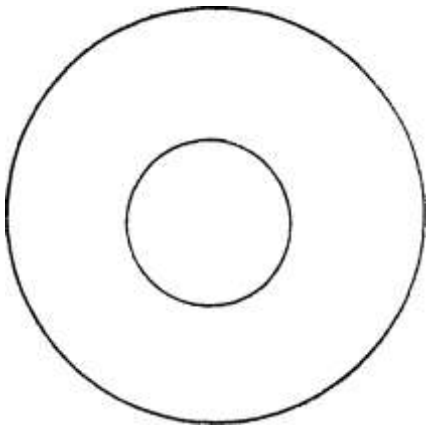
Let us leave the princess and the troubles that she gave Euler. He wrote 254 letters to her, not simply to make her understand Eulerian circles. Published in 1775 in London, they constitute a sort of *corpus* of the scientific thinking at that date. The only thing that survived

from it effectively are these little circles, these Eulerian circles which are circles like any other circles it is simply a matter of seeing the use that he made of them. It was to explain the rules of the syllogism and in the final analysis exclusion, inclusion and then what can be called the intersection of two what? Of two fields applicable to what? Well, my heavens, applicable to many things, applicable for example to the field where a certain proposition is true, applicable to the field where a certain relationship exists, applicable quite simply to the field where an object exists.



You see that the usage of the Eulerian circle, if you are used to the multiplicity of logics as they were elaborated in an immense effort, the greater part of which belongs to propositional logic and the logic of classes, was distinguished in the most useful fashion. I cannot even dream of entering of course into the details that would be required to make the distinction between these elaborations. What I simply want to have recognised here, is that you surely remember one or other moment of your existence where there has come to you, under this form of a support, some logical proof or other, some object as a logical object, whether it involved a proposition, a class relationship, or even simply an object of existence.

Let us take an example at the level of the logic of classes and let us represent this example by a small circle inside a big one, mammals with respect to the class of vertebrates;

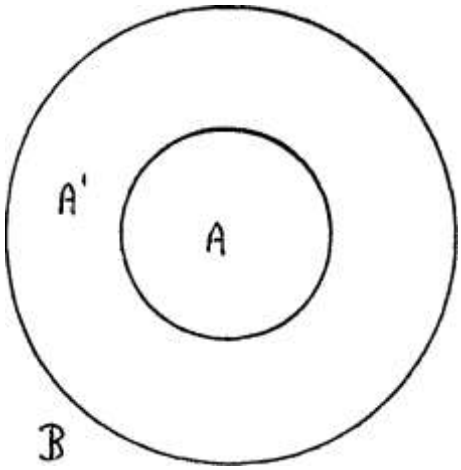


this works quite easily and all the more simply because the logic of classes is certainly what at the beginning opened up in the easiest way the paths to this formal elaboration and you should consult here something already incarnated in a signifying elaboration, quite simply that of zoological classification which really gives it its model. But the universe of discourse, as it is quite correctly expressed, is not a zoological universe; and, by wanting to extend the properties of the universe of zoological classification to the whole universe of discourse, one

easily slips into a certain number of traps which help you to avoid mistakes and allow there to be heard rather quickly the alarm signal of an significant impasse.

One of these drawbacks is for example an ill-considered use of negation. It is precisely in recent times that this use was opened up as possible, namely just at the time when the remark was made that this exterior Eulerian circle of inclusion ought to play an essential role in the use of negation, namely that it is absolutely the same thing to speak without any precision for example of that which is not-man or of that which is not-man within the animal world. In other words that in order that negation should have a more or less assured, usable meaning in logic, it is necessary to know in relation to what set something is denied. In other words if A^1 is not A, it is necessary to know within what it is not A, namely here in B.

A' = A.



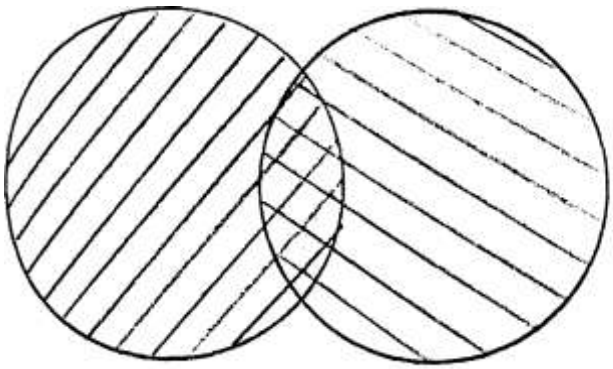
If you open Aristotle on this occasion, you will see negation dragged into all sorts of difficulties. It nevertheless remains incontestable that these remarks were not at all expected nor was the slightest use made of this formal support - I mean that it is not normal to make use of it in order to make use of negation - namely that the subject in his discourse frequently makes use of negation in cases where there is not the slightest chance in the world of guaranteeing it on this formal basis; hence the utility of remarks that I am making to you about negation in distinguishing negation at the level of enunciating or as constitutive of negation at the level of the enunciation. That means that precisely at the point that the laws of negation are not guaranteed by this quite decisive introduction which dates from the recent distinction between the logic of relationships and the logic of classes, that it is in short for us quite elsewhere than where It found its established position that we have to define the status of negation. It is a reminder, a reminder designed to clarify for you retrospectively the importance of what from the beginning of my discourse of this year I have been suggesting to you about the primordial originality of the function of negation compared to this distinction.

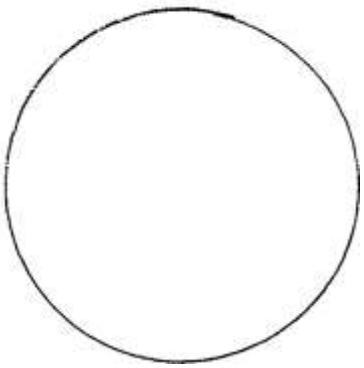
You see then that it was not Euler who used these Eulerian circles for this purpose; it was necessary in the meantime for there to be introduced the work of Boole, then that of De Morgan in order that this should be fully articulated.

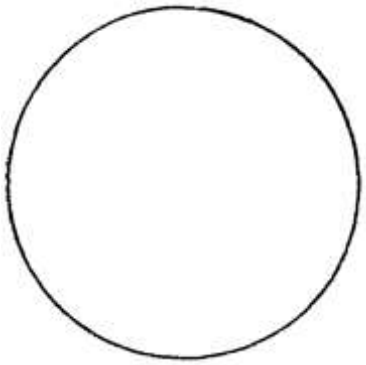
If I come back to these Eulerian circles then, it is not because he himself made good use of them, but because it was with his material, with the use of these circles that there could

be made the progress which followed of which I will give you at the same time an example which is not the least important nor the least notorious, in any case particularly gripping and immediate to see.

Between Euler and De Morgan the use of these circles allowed a symbolisation which is useful also in that it appears to you moreover implicitly fundamental, which reposes on the position of these circles which are structured as follows: this is what we will call two circles which intersect, which are especially important for their intuitive appearance which will appear incontestable to everyone if I point out to you that it is around these circles that there can be first of all be articulated two relationships which it would be well to accentuate strongly, which are first of all that of union: involving anything whatsoever that I enumerated earlier, their union, it is the fact that after the operation of union, what is united are these two fields.







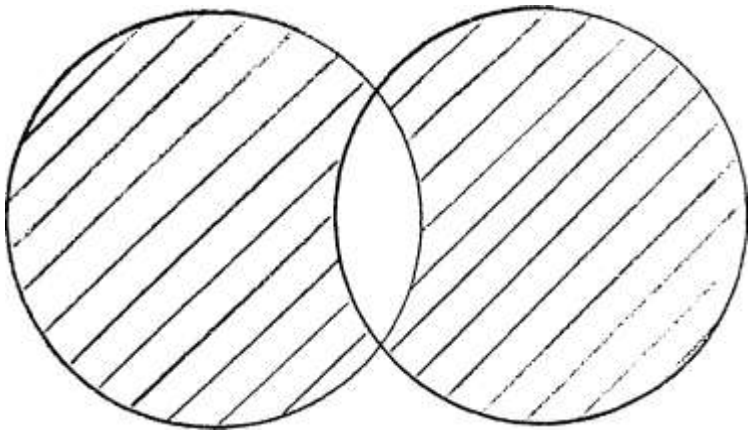
The operation described as union which is ordinarily symbolised as follows: - it is precisely what introduced this symbol - is, as you see, something which is not altogether like addition, the advantage of these circles is to make you sense that. It is not the same thing for example to add two separate circles or to unite them in this position.

There is another relationship illustrated by these overlapping circles: it is that of intersection, symbolised by this sign whose signification is completely different. The field of intersection is included in the field of union.

union	∪	+
intersection	∩	x

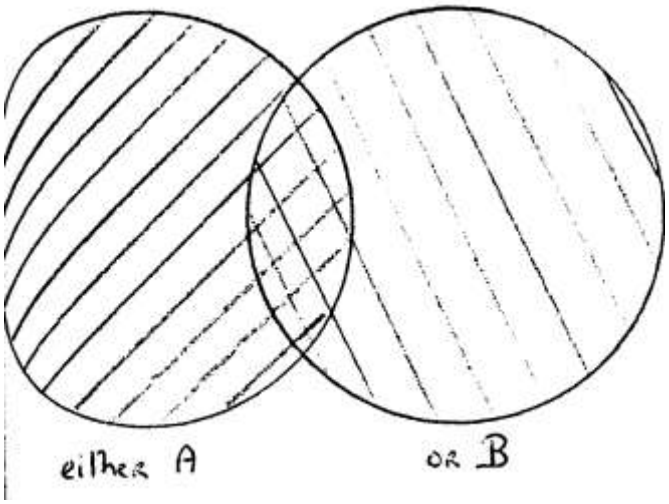
In what is called Boolean algebra, it is shown that, up to a certain point at least, this operation of union is analogous enough to addition for it to be able to be symbolised by the sign of addition (+). It is also shown that intersection is structurally analogous enough to multiplication for it to be symbolised by the sign of multiplication (X).

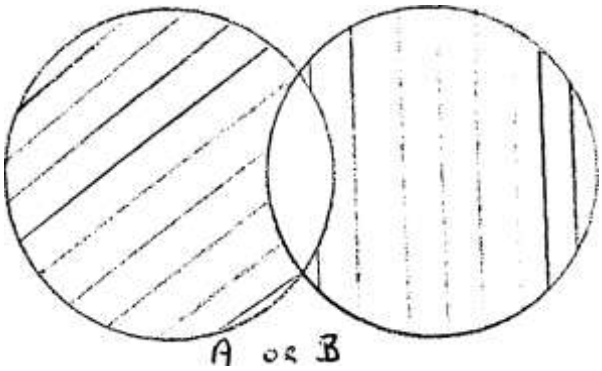
I assure you that I am giving here an ultra-rapid extract designed to lead you where I have to lead you and I apologise of course to those for whom these things present themselves in all their complexity for the elisions that all of this involves. Because we must go further and on the precise point that I have to introduce, what interests us, is something which up to De Morgan - and one can only be astonished at such an omission - had not been properly speaking highlighted as precisely one of these functions which flow from, which ought to flow from an altogether rigorous usage of logic, it is precisely this field constituted by the extraction, in the relationship between these two circles of the zone of intersection.



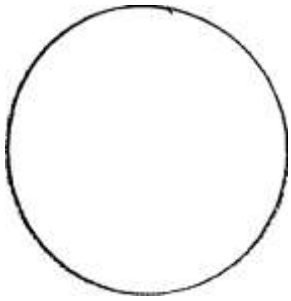
And to consider what the product is, when two circles cut, at the level of a field described in this way, namely the union minus the intersection. This is what is called the symmetric difference.

This symmetric difference is what is going to retain our attention, what for us - you will see why - is of the greatest interest. The term symmetric difference is here an appellation that I would simply ask you to take for its additional usage. This was what it was called. Do not try therefore to give a grammatically analysable meaning to this so-called symmetry. The symmetric difference, this is what that means, that means: these fields, in the two Eulerian circles, in so far as they define as such an exclusive "or". With respect to two different fields, the symmetric difference marks the field as it is constructed if you give to the "or", not the alternative sense, but one which implies the possibility of a local identity between the two terms; and the usual usage of the term "or" means that in fact the term "or" applies here very well to the field of union. If a thing is A or B, this is how the field of its extension can be drawn, namely in the first form that these two fields are discovered. If on the contrary A or B is exclusive this is how we can symbolise it, namely that the field of intersection is excluded.



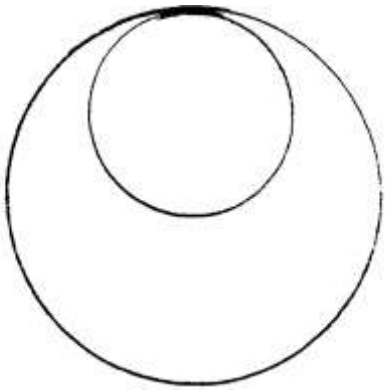


This should lead us back to a reflection about what is intuitively supposed by the usage of a circle as a basis, as a support for what is formalised in function of a limit. This is very sufficiently defined in the fact that on a commonly used plane, which does not mean a natural plane, a plane that can be fabricated, a plane which has completely entered into our universe of implements, namely a sheet of paper, we live much more in the company of sheets of paper than in the company of tori. There must be reasons for that but after all reasons which are not evident. Why after all does man not fabricate more tori? Moreover for centuries, what we nowadays have in the form of sheets were rolls which must have been more familiar with the notion of volume in epochs other than our own. Finally there is certainly a reason why this plane surface is something which suffices for us and more exactly that we satisfy ourselves with it. These reasons must be somewhere. And - I indicated it earlier - one cannot give too much importance to the fact that, contrary to all the efforts of physicists and philosophers to persuade us of the contrary, the field of vision whatever is said about it is essentially two-dimensional: on a sheet of paper, on a practically simple surface, a circle that is drawn delimits in the clearest fashion an inside and an outside. Here is the whole



secret, the whole mystery, the simple mainspring of the usage that is made of it in the Eulerian illustration of logic. I pose the following question to you: what happens if Euler, instead of drawing this circle, draws my inverted eight the one that today I have to talk to you about?

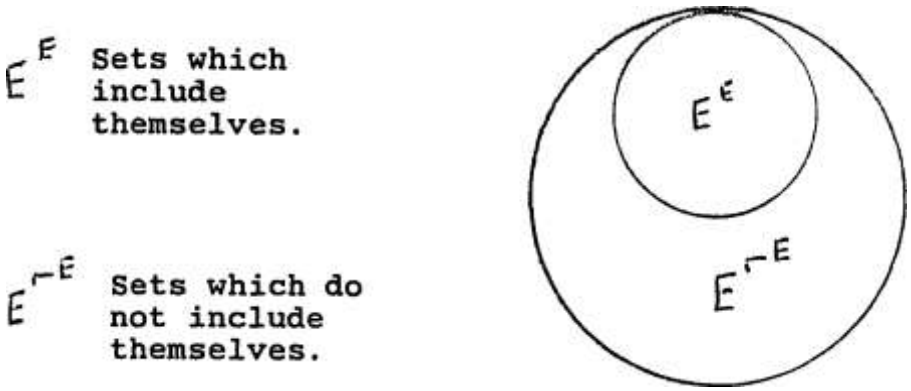
In appearance it is only a particular case of the circle with the inside field that it defines and the possibility of having another circle within. Simply the inside circle touches – here is what at first sight some people may say to me – the inside circle touches on the limit



constituted by the outside circle. Only it is all the same not quite that, in this sense that it is quite clear, in the way I draw it, that the line here of the outside circle continues into the line of the inside circle and finds itself here.

And so in order simply immediately to mark the interest, the import of this very simple shape, I will suggest to you that the remarks that I introduced at a certain point of my seminar when I introduced the function of the signifier consisted in the following: reminding you of the paradox or the supposed one introduced by the classification of sets - you remember - which do not include themselves.

I remind you of the difficulty they introduce: should one or should one not include these sets which do not include themselves in the set of sets which do not include themselves? You see the difficulty here. If yes, then they include themselves in this set of sets which do not include themselves. If not, we find ourselves confronted with an analogous impasse.



This is easily resolved on this simple condition that one grasps at least the following - it is the solution that moreover the formalists, the logicians have given - that one cannot

speak, let us say in the same way, about sets which include themselves and sets which do not include themselves. In other words that one excludes them as such from the simple definition of sets, that one poses when all is said and done that the sets which include themselves cannot be posed as sets. I mean that far from this inside zone of objects as important in the construction of modern logic as sets, far from an inside zone defined by this image of the inverted eight by the overlapping or the redoubling in this overlapping of a class, of a relation, of some proposition or other by itself, by being raised to a second power, far from this leaving as a well-known case the class, the proposition, the relationship in a general fashion, the category inside itself in a fashion that is in a way more weighty more accentuated, this has the effect of reducing it to homogeneity with what is outside.

How is this conceivable? For indeed one must all the same clearly say that, if this is the way that the question is presented, namely among all the sets, there is no *a priori* reason not to make of a set which includes itself a set like the others. You define as a set for example all the works that refer to the humanities, namely to the arts, to the sciences, to ethnography. You make a list of them; the works produced on the question of what one should class as humanities will form part of the same catalogue, namely that what I have even defined just now in articulating the title: works about the humanities, forms part of what is to be catalogued.

How can we conceive that something which is thus posed as redoubling itself in the dignity of a certain category can find itself practically leading us to an antinomy, to a logical impasse such that we are on the contrary constrained to reject it? Here is something which is not as unimportant as you might think because one has practically seen the best logicians see in it a sort of failure, a stumbling block, a vacillating point of the whole formalist edifice, and not without reason. Here is something which nevertheless puts to intuition a sort of major objection, inscribed, tangible, visible of itself in the very form of these two circles which are presented, in the Eulerian perspective, as included one in the other.

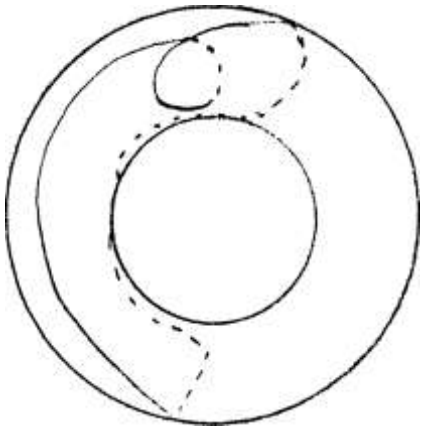
It is precisely on this point that we are going to see that the use of the intuition of the representation of the torus is quite usable. And given that you clearly sense, I imagine, what is involved, namely a certain relationship of the signifier to itself, as I told you, it is in the measure that the definition of a set has got closer and closer to a purely signifying articulation that it leads us to this impasse, it is the whole question of the fact that it is a matter for us of putting in the foreground that a signifier cannot signify itself. In fact it is something excessively stupid and simple, this very essential point that the signifier in so far as it can be used to signify itself has to be posed as different to itself. This is what it is a matter of symbolising in the first place because it is also this that we are going to rediscover, up to a certain point of extension which it is a matter of determining, in the whole subjective structure up to and including desire.

When one of my obsessionals, quite recently again after having developed all the subtlety of the science of his exercises with respect to feminine objects to whom, as is common among other obsessionals, he remains attached, as I might say, by what one can call a constant infidelity: at once the impossibility of leaving any of these objects and the extreme difficulty of maintaining them all together, and that he adds that it is quite clear that in this relationship, in this so complicated relationship which requires this high degree of technical subtlety, as I might say, in the maintaining of relationships which in principle must remain

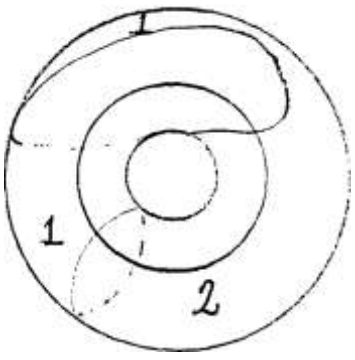
outside one another, impermeable as one might say to one another and nevertheless linked, that, if all of this, he tells me, has no other purpose than to leave him intact for a satisfaction which he himself here comes to grief on, it must therefore be found elsewhere, not just simply in a future that is always put off, but manifestly in another space since as regards this intactness and its purpose he is incapable when all is said and done of saying at what this could end up in terms of satisfaction.

We have all the same here in a tangible way, something which can pose for us the question of the structure of desire in the most day-to-day fashion.

Let us come back to our torus and let us inscribe on it our Eulerian circles. This is going to necessitate - I apologise for it - a tiny little twist which is not, even though it might appear so to someone who comes into my seminar today for the first time, a geometrical twist - it will be that perhaps right at the end but very incidentally - which is properly speaking topological. There is no need for this torus to be a regular torus nor a torus on which we could make measurements. It is a surface constituted according to certain fundamental relationships that I am going to be led to remind you of, but because I do not want to appear to go too far from what is the field of our interest I am going to limit myself to things that I have already initiated and which are very simple.



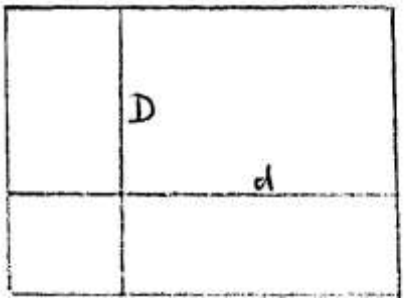
As I pointed out to you: on a surface like this, we can describe this type of circle which is the one that I have already connoted for you as reducible; one which if it is represented by a little string which passes at the end through a buckle, I can by pulling on the string reduce to a point, in other words to zero. I pointed out to you that there are two other kinds of circle or loop whatever size they may be because for example this one here could just as well have that shape there: (1).



That means a circle which goes through the hole whatever may be its more or less tight more or less loose shape. This is what defines it: it goes through the hole it passes to the other side of the hole. It is represented here in dots while the 2 is represented in full. This is what that symbolises: this circle is not reducible, which means that if you suppose it to be realised by a string still passing through this little arch which would allow us to tighten it we cannot reduce it to something like a point; whatever its circumference may be, there will always remain at the centre, the circumference of what one could call here the thickness of the torus. If from the point of view which interested us earlier, namely the definition of an inside and an outside, this irreducible circle shows from one side a particular resistance, something which with respect to other circles confers on it an eminent dignity, on this other point here suddenly it is going to appear singularly deprived of the properties of the preceding one; because if you materialise this circle that I am talking to you about for example by a cut with a pair of scissors, what will you obtain? Absolutely not, as in the other case, a little piece which disappears and then the remainder of the torus. The torus will remain entirely intact in the form of a pipe or of a sleeve if you wish.

If you take on the other hand another type of circle, the one that I already spoke to you about, the one which does not go through the hole, but goes around it, this one finds itself in the same situation as the preceding one as regards irreducibility. It also finds itself in the same situation as the preceding one as regards the fact that it is not sufficient to define an inside or an outside. In other words that if you follow this circle and if you open the torus with the help of a pair of scissors, you will finally get what? Well, the same thing as in the preceding case: this has the shape of a torus but it is a shape which presents only an intuitive difference, which is altogether essentially the same from the point of view of structure. You always have after this operation, as in the first case, a sleeve, simply it is a very short and a very wide sleeve, you have a belt if you wish but there is no essential difference between a belt and a sleeve from the topological point of view, again you can call it a strip if you wish.

Here we are then in the presence of two types of circle which from this point of view moreover are the same, which do not define an inside and an outside. I would point out to you incidentally that, if you cut the torus successively following one and the other, you will still not manage for all that to make what it is a matter of making and what you nevertheless obtain immediately with the other type of circle 1, the first one that I drew for you, namely two pieces. On the contrary the torus not only remains well and truly entire, but it was, the first time that I spoke to you about it, a flattening out that resulted from it which allows you to symbolise the torus eventually in a particularly convenient fashion as a rectangle which you can, by pulling a little, spread out like a skin pinned down at the four corners, to define the properties of correspondence of these edges one to the other, of correspondence also of its vertices, the four vertices which unite at a point and to have in this way, in a fashion much more accessible to your ordinary faculties of intuition, the means of studying what happens geometrically on the torus, namely that there will be one of these types of circle which will



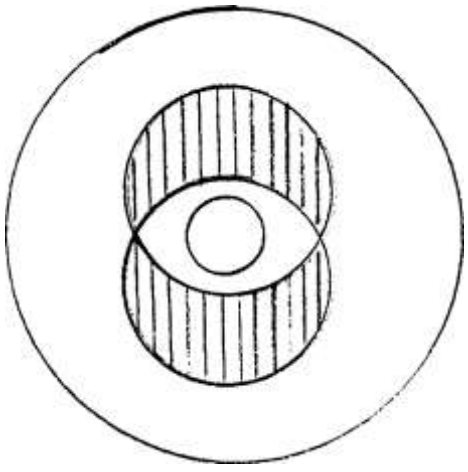
be represented by a line like this one another type of circle by lines like this representing two points posed, defined in a preliminary fashion as being equivalent on what are called the edges of the spread-out flattened surface, as I might say, even though of course it is not a real flattening out, a flattening-out as such being impossible because we are not dealing with a surface which is metrically identifiable to a plane surface, I repeat purely metrically, not topologically.

Where does all this lead us?

The fact that two sections of this kind are possible, with moreover the necessity of the one or the other being regrouped without fragmenting the surface in any way, leaving it whole and entire, leaving it in one piece, as I might say, this is enough to define a certain type of surface. Not all surfaces are of this type; if you carry out in particular a section like that on a sphere, you will always only have two pieces whatever the circle may be.

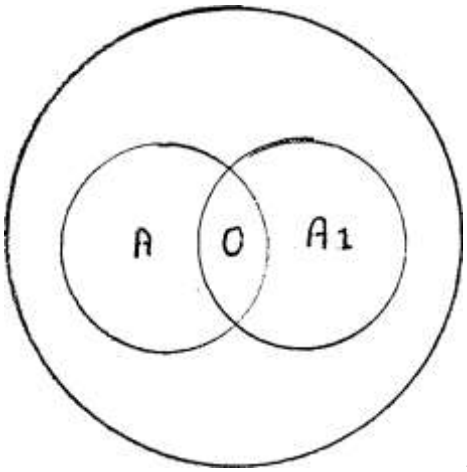
This in order to lead us to what?

Let us make no longer a single section but two sections on the single base of the torus. What do we see appearing? We see appearing something which undoubtedly is going to astonish us immediately, namely that if the two circles are regrouped, what is called the field of the symmetric difference well and truly exists. Can we say, for all that, that the field of intersection exists? I think that this figure, as it is constructed, is sufficiently accessible to your intuition for you to clearly understand immediately and right away that there is no question of it.

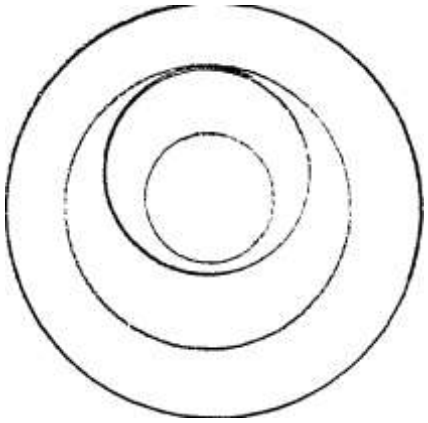


Namely that this something which might be the intersection, but which is not one and which, I am saying, for the eye because of course there is no question for a single instant of

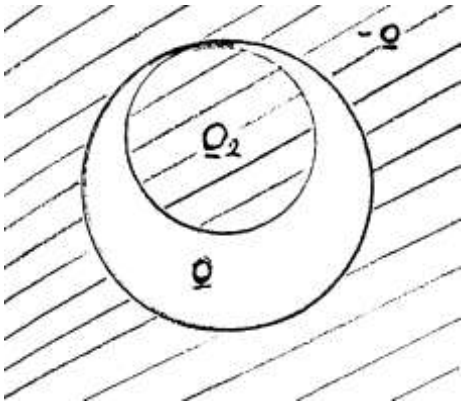
this intersection existing, but which for the eye is, as I have presented it to you in this way on this figure as it is drawn, would be found perhaps somewhere here (see the schema) of this field perfectly continuous in a single block, in a single piece with this field here which could analogically, in the crudest fashion for an intuition precisely accustomed to base itself on things which happen uniquely on the plane, to correspond to this external field where we could define, with respect to two Eulerian circles cutting one another, the field of their negation, namely if here we have the circle A and here the circle B, here we have A' as a negation of A and we have here B' as a negation of B, and there is something to be formulated concerning their intersection at these eventual external fields.



Here we see illustrated then in the simplest fashion by the structure of the torus the fact that something is possible, something which can be articulated as follows: two fields cutting one another being as such able to define their difference *qua* symmetric difference, but which are nonetheless two fields about which one can say that they cannot unite and that neither can they overlap one another, in other words that they cannot serve either as a function of "either..., or...", of union, nor as a function of multiplication (intersection) by itself. They can literally not be raised to a higher power, they cannot be reflected one by the other and one in the other; they have no intersection, their intersection is exclusion from themselves. The field where one would expect intersection is the field where you leave behind what concerns them, where you are in the non-field. This is all the more interesting in that for the representation of these two circles we can substitute our inverted eight of a little while ago.



We find ourselves then before a shape which for us is still more suggestive. For let us try to remind ourselves of what I thought of immediately in comparing these circles which make the circuit of the hole of the torus to something which, I told you, is related to the metonymical object, to the object of desire as such. What does this inverted eight, this circle which continues itself inside itself, what is it, if not a circle which at the limit redoubles itself and grasps itself again, which allows there to be symbolised - because it is a question of intuitive evidence and the Eulerian circles appear particularly appropriate for a certain symbolisation of the limit - which allows this limit to be symbolised in so far as it takes itself up again, as it identifies itself to itself. Reduce more and more the distance which separates the first loop, let us say, from the second and you have the circle in so far as it grasps itself. Are there objects which for us have this nature, namely, that they uniquely subsist in this grasp of their self-difference? Because it is either one thing or the other: either they grasp it, or they do not grasp it... But there is one thing in any case that everything which happens at this level of the grasp implies and requires, it is that this something excludes any reflection of this object onto itself. I mean that suppose that it is small o that is involved, since I already indicated to you that this was what these circles were going to be used for by $\underline{o}$ or $-\underline{o}$. Is $\underline{o}2 = -\underline{o}$ that $\underline{o}2$, the field thus defined, is the same field as what is there, namely not :

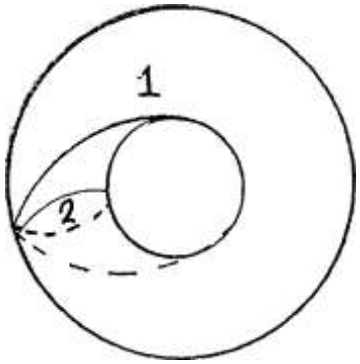


Suppose for an instant, I did not say that it has been proved, I am telling you that I am providing you today with a model, an intuitive support for something which is precisely what we need concerning the constitution of desire. Perhaps it will appear to you more accessible, more immediately within your reach to make of it the symbol of the self-difference of desire to itself and the fact that it is precisely by its redoubling onto itself that you are going to see what it encompasses slipping away and escaping towards what surrounds it. You will say: stop, hold on here, because it is not really desire that I intend to symbolise by the double loop of the inverted eight but something which applies much better to the conjunction of small o, of the object of desire as such with itself. In order that desire should be effectively, intelligently supported in this intuitive reference to the surface of the torus, it would be well of course to bring into it the dimension of demand. I told you on the other hand that the circles encompassing the thickness of the torus as such could very intelligibly serve to represent this dimension of demand and that something moreover which is in part contingent, I mean linked to a completely exterior, visual perception, itself too marked by common intuition not to be refutable, as you will see, but after all because of the way you are forced to represent the torus for yourself, namely something like this ring, you quickly see how easily what happens in the succession of these circles capable of continuing in a way in a helix and by to a repetition which is like that of a thread around a spool, how easily the demand in its

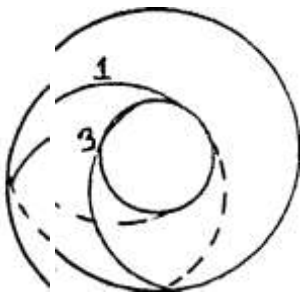
repetition, its identity and its necessary distinction, its unfolding and its return onto itself, is something which easily finds something to support it in the structure of the torus.

It is not this that I intend today to repeat once again. Moreover, if I were only to repeat it here, it would be quite insufficient; it is on the contrary something to which I would like to draw your attention, namely this privileged circle which is constituted by the fact that it is not only a circle which makes a circuit around the central hole, but it is also a circle which goes through it. In other words that it is constituted by a topological property which merges, which adds together the loop (*boucle*) constituted around the thickness of the torus to the one which would be made by a circuit made for example around the inside hole.

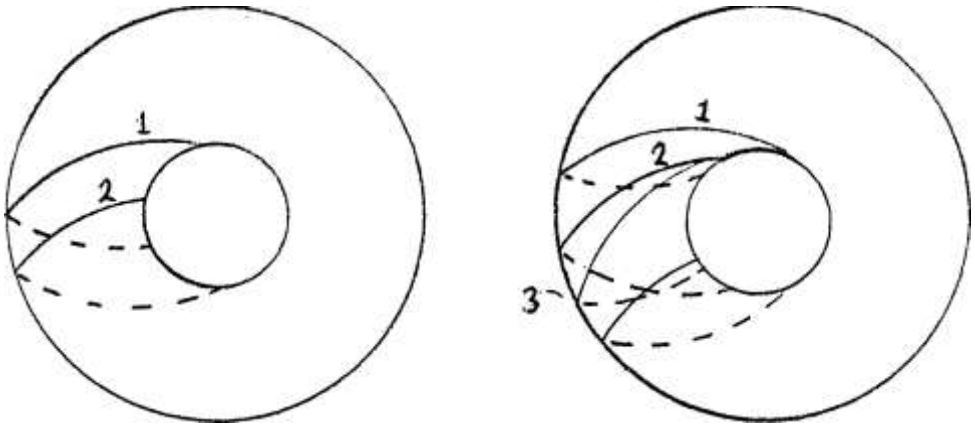
This sort of loop has an altogether privileged interest for us; because it is what is going to allow us to support, to depict, the relationships of demand and desire as structural.



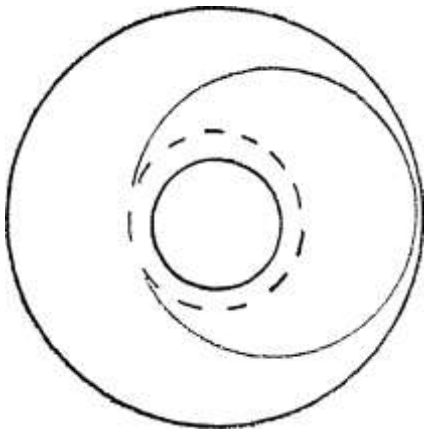
Let us see in effect what emerges about such loops: observe that some can be so constituted , that another next to it is completed, comes back on itself, without in any way cutting the first. As you see, given what I tried here to clearly articulate, to clearly draw, namely the fashion in which this passes to the other side of this object which we suppose to be a solid mass because that is the way you intuit so easily and which obviously is not; the line of circle 1 passes here, the other line 3 passes a little further on. There is no kind of intersection between these two circles.



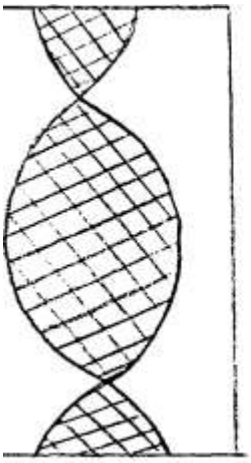
Here are two demands which while implying the central circle with what it symbolises - on this occasion, the object, and in what measure it is effectively integrated to demand, this is what our subsequent developments allow us to articulate - these two demands do not involve any kind of overlapping, any kind of intersection and even any kind of

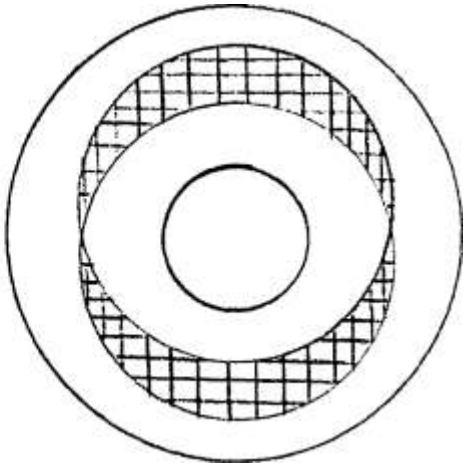


articulatable difference between them even though they have the same object included in their perimeter. On the contrary there is another phase of the circuit, the one which effectively passes to the other side of the torus, but far from connecting up with itself at the point from which it started begins here another curve in order to come back a second time to pass by here and come back to its point of departure.



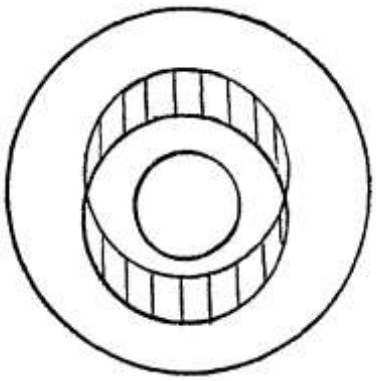
I think that you have grasped what is involved; it is a matter of nothing less than something absolutely equivalent to the famous curve of the inverted eight which I spoke to you about earlier. Here the two loops represent the reiteration, the reduplication of demand and so involve this field of difference to itself, of self-difference which is the one on which we put the accent earlier, namely that here we find the means of symbolising in a tangible fashion, at the level of demand itself, a condition for it to suggest, in all its ambiguity and in a fashion strictly analogous to the fashion in which it is suggested in the reduplication earlier of the object of desire itself, the central dimension constituted by the void of desire. I am bringing all of this to you only as a sort of proposal for exercises, for mental exercises, exercises with which you have familiarise yourself, if you subsequently want to be able to find in the torus the metaphorical value that I shall give it when I shall in every case, whether it is a matter of the obsessional, of the hysteric, of the pervert, even of the schizophrenic, have to articulate the relationship between desire and demand. That is why it is in other shapes, in the shape of the unfolded, flattened out torus of earlier on, that I am going to try to clearly mark for you what the different cases that I have evoked up to now correspond to, namely the two first circles for example which were the circles which made the circuit of the central hole and which cut one another by constituting properly speaking the same figure of symmetric difference as that of the Eulerian circles.





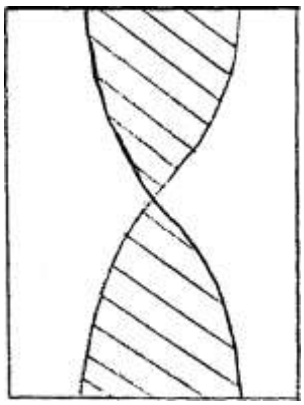
Here is what that gives on the spread-out torus, certainly in this more satisfyingly illustrated fashion than the one you saw earlier because you can put your finger on the fact that there is no symmetry, let us say between the four fields, two by two, as they are defined by the cutting of the two circles.

You could have said to yourself earlier, and certainly in a fashion which would have been the sign of a lack of attention, that by drawing the things in this way, and by giving a privileged value to what I am calling here symmetric difference, that all I am doing here is

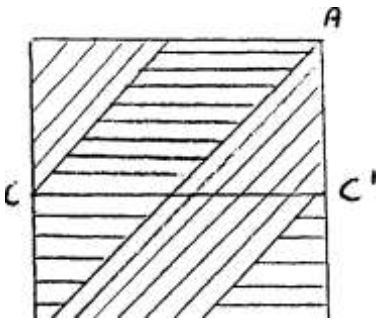


something rather arbitrary since the two other fields which I pointed out to you were merged, occupied perhaps with respect to these two here a symmetrical place. You see that it is nothing of the kind, namely that the fields defined by these two sectors, however you join them up - and you can do it - are in no way identifiable to the first field.

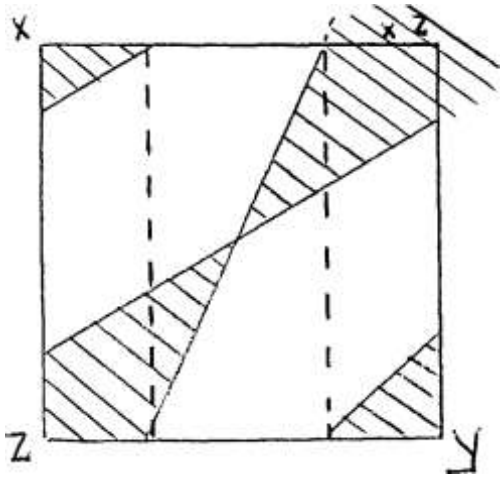
The other figure, namely that of the inverted eight presents itself as follows:



The non-symmetry of the two fields is still more obvious: the two circles which I subsequently drew successively on the periphery of the torus as defining two circles of demand in so far as they do not cut one another are now symbolised here. There is one that we can identify purely - I am speaking about the two circles of demand as I have just defined them in so far as they included in addition the central hole - one can be very easily defined, be situated on the spread-out torus as an oblique line diagonally linking a vertix to the same point which it really is on the opposite edge; to the vertex opposite its position, AB. The second loop that I drew earlier would be symbolised as follows: beginning with some point or other here, we have here A', here B', a point C which is the same as this point C' and ending up at B' A' B' CB'.



There is here no possibility of distinguishing between the field which is in A and A'. It has no privileges with respect to this field. It is not the same if on the contrary it is the inside eight that we symbolise, because in that case it presents itself as follows:

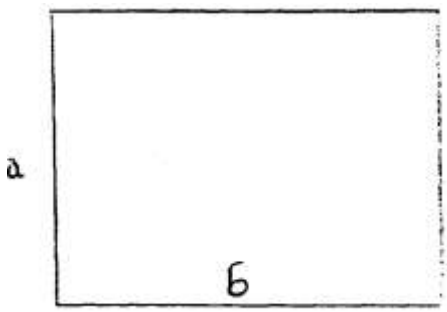


Here is one of these fields: it is defined by the shaded parts here. It is obviously not symmetrical with what remains of the other field, however you try to recompose it. It is quite obvious that you can try to recompose it in the following fashion, that this element there - let us say the x - coming here, this y coming there and this z coming here you would have the shape defined by the self-difference drawn by the inside eight.

This business, whose utilisation we will subsequently see, may appear to you a little bit fastidious, even superfluous as I try to articulate it for you. Nevertheless I would like to point out to you what it is used for. You see clearly: the whole accent that I put on the definition of these fields is designed to mark for you how these fields of symmetric difference and of what I call self-difference can be used, how they can be used for a certain end and how they are sustained as existing with respect to another field that they exclude.

In other words if I go to so much trouble to establish their asymmetrical function it is because there is a reason. The reason is the following: the fact is that in the case of the torus, as it is structured purely and simply as surface, it is very difficult to symbolise in a valid fashion what I would call its asymmetry. In other words when you see it spread out namely in the shape of this rectangle which would involve, in order to reconstitute the torus, that you should imagine in the first place that I fold it and make a tube, and in the second place that I take one end of the tube and make a closed tube. It remains nonetheless that what I did in one direction I could have done in the other one.

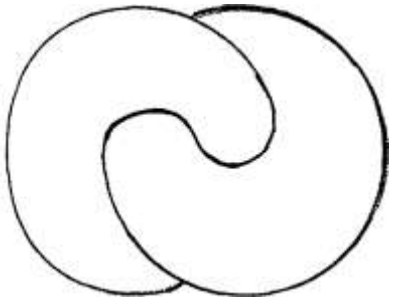
Because it is a question of topology and not of metrical properties, the question of the greater length of one side with respect to the other has no significance. That it is not this which interests us, because it is the reciprocal function of these circles that it is a matter of utilising. Now precisely in this reciprocity they appear to be able to have strictly equivalent functions. Moreover this possibility is at the basis of what I had first allowed to emerge, to appear from the beginning for you in the utilisation of this function of the torus as a possibility of a tangible image in its connection, the fact is that in the case of certain subjects, certain neurotics for example, we see in a way in a tangible fashion the projection, if I can put it this way, of the very circles of desire in the whole measure that it is a matter for them, as I might say, of finding a way out of it in the demands required of the Other. And this is what I have symbolised by showing you this: it is that if you draw a torus you can simply imagine another one which encompasses as one might say the first one in this way; it is necessary to see clearly that each one of the circles around the hole can have by simple rotation their correspondence in circles which go through the hole of the other torus, that a torus in a way is always transformable in all its points into an opposite torus.



What it is a matter of seeing therefore is what gives its originality to one of these circular functions, that of full circles for example compared to what we have called at another moment empty circles. This difference very obviously exists, one could for example symbolise it, formalise it by indicating through a little sign on the surface of the torus spread out as a rectangle, if you wish, the priority according to which the folding is to be done, and if we called this side small a and this side small b, to note for example small a under small b, or inversely. This would be a notation that nobody in topology has ever dreamt of and which would have something quite artificial about it because it is hard to see why a torus should in any way be an object which might have a temporal dimension.

From that moment on, it is quite difficult to symbolise it otherwise, even though one can see clearly that there is here something irreducible and which gives properly speaking all its exemplary virtue to the toric object.

There would be another way to try to tackle it. It is quite clear that it is in so far as we only consider the torus as a surface taking its co-ordinates from its own structure alone that we are faced with this impasse, which has serious consequences for us because obviously if



these circles which you see I tend to make use of to fix the demand in them in its relationships of course with other circles which have a relationship with desire, if they are strictly reversible, is this something that we want to have for our model? Certainly not. It is on the contrary an essential privilege of the central hole that is involved; and as a consequence the topological status that we are seeking as utilisable in our model, is going to flee from us and escape us. It is precisely because it is going to flee and escape that it is going to reveal itself as fruitful for us.

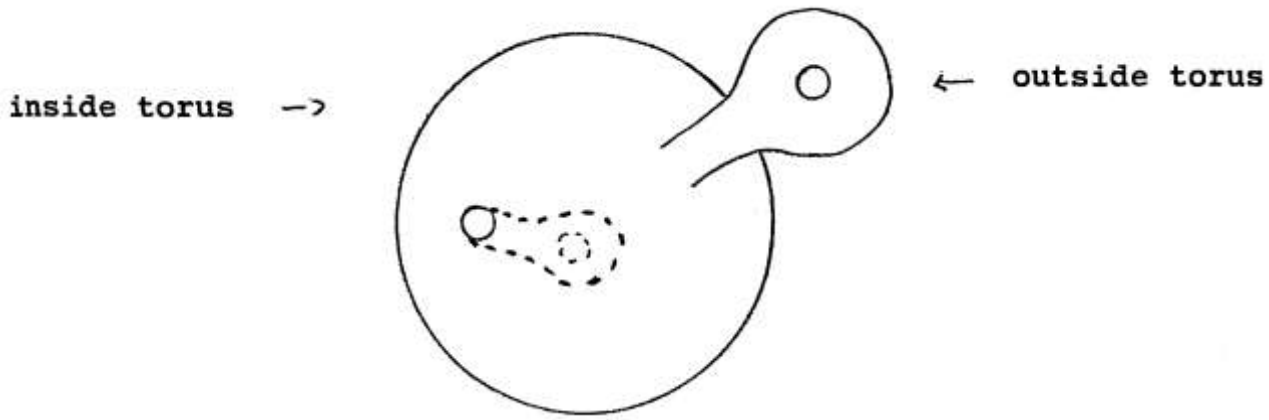
Let us try another method to mark something that the mathematicians, the topologists do perfectly well without in the definition, the use, that they make of this structure of the torus in topology: they themselves, in the general theory of surfaces, have highlighted the function of the torus as an irreducible element in any reduction of surfaces to what one calls a normal form. When I say that it is an irreducible element, I mean that one cannot reduce the torus to something else. You can imagine surface shapes as complex as you wish but it is always necessary to take into account the function of the torus in all planification, if I can express myself in this way, in all triangulation in the theory of surfaces. The torus does not suffice, other terms are necessary, specifically the sphere is necessary, there is necessary in it something that I was not even able to make an allusion to today, to introduce the possibility of what is called the cross-cap and the possibility of holes.

When you have the sphere, the torus, the cross-cap and the hole, you can represent any of what are called the compact surfaces, in other words a surface which is decomposable in pieces. There are other surfaces which are not decomposable, but we leave them aside.

Let us come now to our torus and to the possibility of its orientation. Are we going to be able to do it with respect to the ideal sphere onto which it is hooked? We are always able to introduce this sphere, namely if you blow enough, any torus whatsoever can come to be represented as a simple handle at the surface of a sphere which is a sufficiently inflated part of itself. Are we going to be able through the mediation of the sphere, as I might say, to replunge the torus into what - you sense it clearly - we are seeking for the moment, namely this third term which allows us to introduce the asymmetry we need between the two types of circles?

This asymmetry which is nevertheless so obvious, so intuitively tangible, so irreducible even and which is nevertheless of such a kind that it manifests itself in this connection as being this something which we always observe in every mathematical development: the necessity, for it to get started, of forgetting something at the beginning, this you will find in every kind of formal progress, this something forgotten and which literally escapes us, flees us in the formalism - are we going to be able to grasp it for example in the reference to something which is called the tube of the sphere?

In effect, look carefully at what happens and are we told that in reduction every formalisable surface can give us the normal shape? We are told that this will always come back to a sphere, with what? With tori inserted on it and which we can validly symbolise as follows. I will spare you the theory, experience proves that it is strictly accurate. That in addition we will have what are called cross-caps. These cross-caps, I am not going to speak to you about them today, I will have to speak to you about them because they will be of the greatest use to us. Let us be satisfied with considering the torus. We might get the idea that a handle like this one, which is not outside the sphere, but inside with a hole in order get into

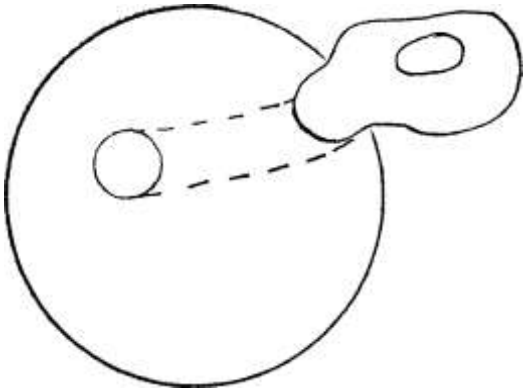


it, is something irreducible, uneliminateable and that it would be necessary in a way to distinguish outside tori from inside tori.

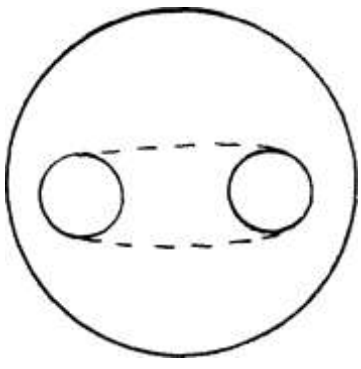
What is the interest of this for us? Very precisely in connection with a mental form which is necessary for our whole intuition of our object. In effect in the Platonic, Aristotelian, Eulerian perspective of an *Umwelt* and of a *Innenwelt*, of a dominance placed from the beginning on the division between inside and outside, will we not place everything that we

experience, and specifically in analysis, within the dimension of what I called the other day the underground, namely the corridor which goes down into the depths, in other words, to the maximum degree, I mean in its most developed form according to this shape.

It is extremely exemplary to make you sense in this connection the absolute non-independence of this shape; because I repeat to you in so far as one arrives at reduced shapes which are the shapes inscribed, vaguely sketched on the blackboard with the aim of giving a support to what I am saying, it is absolutely impossible to sustain as different for even an instant, the eventual originality of the inside handle compared to the outside handle, to employ the technical terms. It is enough for you, I think, to have a little imagination to see that if it is a question here of something that we materialise in rubber it is enough to introduce your finger here (see the schema) and to hook onto the central ring of this handle as it is here



constituted from the inside in order to extract it to the outside exactly according to a shape which would be the following, namely a torus that is exactly the same, without any kind of tearing, nor even properly speaking inversion. There is no inversion: what was inside, namely the journeying in this way from the inside of the corridor, becomes the outside because it always was. If that surprises you, I can illustrate it again in a more simple fashion which is exactly the same because there is no difference between this and what I am going to show you now and what I showed you from the first day, hoping to make you sense what was involved. Imagine that it is in the middle of its journey, which is exactly the same thing from the topological point of view, that the torus is caught in the sphere; you have here a little corridor which travels from one hole to another hole. Here I think that it is sufficiently tangible that it is not difficult, simply by making bulge a little what you can grasp through the corridor with your finger, to make appear a figure which would be more or less the following: something which is here a handle and whose two holes communicating with the inside are here in dots.



We arrive then at a further failure, I mean at the impossibility, by a reference to the third dimension here represented by the sphere, of symbolizing this something which puts the torus, as one might say, in its place, with respect to its own asymmetry. What we see once again being manifested, is this something which is introduced by this very simple signifier which I first brought to you of the interior eight, namely the possibility of an inside field as being still homogeneous with the outside field.

This is such an essential category, so essential to mark, to imprint in your spirit that I believed I had today, at the risk of wearying you, even of wearing you out, to insist throughout one of our lectures. You will see, I hope, its utilisation in what follows.

Seminar 18: *Wednesday 2 May 1962*

It is not necessarily with the idea of making things easier either for you or for anyone else, that I thought today for this session where we are starting again, at a moment when we have a two month run before us to finish dealing with this difficult subject, that I thought of making of this restart a sort of relay. I mean that for a long time I would have liked, not simply to give one of you a opportunity to speak, but even precisely to give it to Mme Aulagnier. I have been thinking about it for a very long time because it was the day after she read a paper at one of our scientific sessions.

I do not know why some of you who unfortunately are not here, because of a sort of myopia characteristic of certain positions that I would describe moreover as mandarin-like because this term has had a success, thought they saw in this paper some return or other to the letter of Freud while to my ears it seemed that Mme Aulagnier handled with a particular pertinence and acuteness the distinction already long-matured at that time between demand and desire.

There is all the same some chance that one may oneself better recognise one's own posterity than others do. Moreover there was someone who was in agreement with me on this point: it was Mme Aulagnier herself. I regret therefore having taken so long to allow her to speak, perhaps the feeling, an excessive one moreover, of something which is always at our heels putting pressure on us to advance. Precisely today we are for a moment going to make this sort of loop (*boucle*) which consists in making our way through what in the mind of one of you may respond in a fruitful way to the path that we have taken together. A good while has passed already since the moment that I am evoking, and it is very especially at this intersection, this crossroads constituted in the mind of Mme Aulagnier [with what] I recently said about anxiety, that she came to propose to me some sessions ago that she should intervene here.

It is therefore because of an timeliness which is worth as much as any other one, the feeling of having something to communicate to you and something quite to the point about anxiety, and this in the closest relationship with what she like you has heard about what I am teaching this year about identification, that she is going to bring you something that she has prepared carefully enough to have a full text of it.

She was good enough to share this text with me, I mean that I looked at it with her yesterday and I thought, I must say, that I ought to encourage her to present it to you. I am sure that it represents an excellent middle term (*medium*) and I mean by that not something which is an average of what, I believe, the most sensitive, the best ears among you can understand, and of the way in which things can be taken up again; resonating with her ear, I will say therefore after she has conceived this text what use I intend to put it to subsequently.

Mme. Aulagnier*: Anxiety and Identification:* During the recent *Journées provinciales* (a type of congress) a certain number of interventions centred on the question of knowing if one can define different types of anxiety. But the question was raised as to whether one ought for example to accord a particular status to psychotic anxiety. I will say at the outset that I take a

slightly different view: it seems to me that anxiety whether it appears in a normal, neurotic or psychotic subject is a response to a specific and always identical situation of the ego and that this is one of its essential characteristics.

As for what may be called the position of the subject vis a vis anxiety, in psychosis for example, we have seen that unless the relation between affect and verbalisation is more clearly defined a kind of paradox appears, whereby on the one hand the psychotic is seen as someone particularly subject to anxiety; indeed one of the major difficulties in treatment is the mirroring of this anxiety in the analyst, and on the other hand we are told that the psychotic is incapable of recognising his anxiety, that he has alienated himself from it and keeps it at a distance.

The position thus stated is not sustainable unless one tries to go a little further: what in fact does it mean to recognise anxiety? It does not wait to be named and has no need to be named in order to submerge the ego. I do not know what is meant by saying that the subject is anxious without knowing it. We might ask if the property of anxiety is not precisely not to name itself: a diagnosis; a name can only come from the other the one before whom it appears. He the subject he is the affect anxiety, he is totally it, living it, and it is this impregnation, this capturing of his ego which is dissolved there which debars him from the mediation of the word.

At this level we could draw a first parallel between two states which however different seem to me to present two extreme positions of the ego which are as opposed to each other as they are complementary; I mean orgasm. At the moment of orgasm there is the same profound incompatibility between the possibility of living it and that of distancing oneself sufficiently to recognise and define it in the here and now of its occurrence. To say that one is anxious in itself indicates a certain distance from the lived experience and shows that the ego has already acquired a degree of mastery and objectivity vis-a-vis an affect which perhaps from this moment on no longers deserves the name anxiety.

I do not here a need to emphasize the mediating metaphoric role of the word, nor the gaps which exist between an affective experience and its translation into words.

From the moment man puts his affects into words, he makes them into something else; through the word he transforms them into a means of communication causing them to enter into the field of relationship and of intention-ality. The word renders communicable what was lived at the level of the body, which in itself, in the last analysis remains non-verbal. We all know that to say one loves someone has only a slight connection to what is meant by this love as experienced bodily. Lacan reminds us that to tell someone you desire him is to include him in your fundamental phantasy. It is also undoubtedly to bear witness to this fact, the witness of ones own signifier. Whatever may be said on this topic everything indicates a gap which exists between affect as interiorized bodily emotion, as something which has its own profound source, in that which by definition cannot be expressed in words, I speak of phantasy, and the word which thus appears in its function as metaphor.

If the word is the magic and indispensable key which alone grants us access to the world of symbolisation, it seems to me that anxiety occurs precisely at the moment when this key no longer opens any door, when the ego (the me) must come face to face with that which is behind or before all symbolisation, when that which appears is that which is without a

name, "this mysterious figure", this place from which a desire arises which one can no longer apprehend, where for the subject a kind of telescoping occurs between phantasy and reality. The symbolic fades giving way to phantasy as such, the ego dissolves and it is this dissolution which we call anxiety.

Certainly the psychotic does not have to wait for the analytic experience in order to know anxiety: it is true that for every subject the analytic situation is a privileged domain in this regard. There is nothing surprising in the statement that anxiety is very closely related to identification. If identification always involves something at the level of desire, - the desire of the subject as it relates to the desire of the Other, - it becomes obvious that a major source of anxiety in analysis is caused by what is in fact the essence of the analytic situation: the fact that the Other in this case is the one whose most fundamental desire is to not desire, someone who by means of this, in allowing every conceivable projection, can unmask their phantasmatic and subjective base, and can cause the subject from time to time to pose the question of the analyst's desire, a desire always presumed never known and for this reason always potentially the place from which anxiety can arise for the analysand.

But before attempting to define the parameters of the anxiogenic situation, parameters which can only be sketched from the baseline of the problem proper to identification, an initial question concerning description can be asked: what do we mean when we speak of oral anxiety, of castration anxiety, of death anxiety?

To attempt to differentiate these in terms of a type of quantative grading is impossible. There is no such thing as an anxiety meter. One is not more or less anxious. One either is or is not anxious. The only possibility of sketching an answer at this level lies in taking up ones proper position which is that of the one who alone can define the anxiety of the subject, beginning with whatever it is that this anxiety signals. If it is true as Lacan points out, but it is extremely difficult to speak of anxiety in so far as it is a signal at the level of the subject, it seems certain to me that its appearance designates, signals the Other, as source, as the place from which it surges up, and it is perhaps not unimportant to point out in this connection that there is no affect which we experience as less bearable in others, no other affect is more contagious. Sadism or aggravity for example can arouse opposite feelings in a partner such as masochism or passivity: anxiety can only provoke either flight or an answering anxiety. There is a reciprocity of response here, which raises certain questions.

Lacan rebels against the attempt carried out by several people to find "the content of anxiety": which reminds me of his dictum about something else altogether: in order to pull a rabbit out of a hat one must first put him in. I wonder then if anxiety appears not only when the rabbit comes out but when he has gone off to browse in the grass, when the hat now only represents something which looks like a forus, which surrounds a black hole from which all nameable content has disappeared, faced with which the ego no longer has any point of reference, because the first thing one can say about anxiety is that its appearance is the sign of the momentary collapse of all possible identificatory terms of reference. It is only by starting from here that one can perhaps answer the question I posed earlier concerning the different names given to anxiety, oral etc and not at the level of defining its content, since the property of the anxious subject is to have lost his or her content so to speak.

In other words it seems to me that it is not possible to speak of anxiety as such, to do so seems to me as inaccurate as to try to define an obsessional symptom while remaining at

the level of the automatic movement which can represent it. We can learn something about anxiety only if we consider it as the consequence, the result of an impasse of the ego, the sign for us of an obstacle which has occurred between these two fundamental and parallel lines, the convergence of which forms the coping stone of the entire human structure - identification and castration. It is the relation between these two structuring and pivocal lines in different subjects that I will try to sketch out here in order to attempt to define anxiety since in each case it is to this relation that anxiety bears witness.

In the Seminar of April 4th to which I refer Lacan tells us that:

> Castration can be conceived as a transitional passage from what in him is the natural, become half alien, vacillating support of desire through this habilitation by the law, by means of which this piece, this pound of flesh is going to become the pledge, the something through which he is going to be designated at the place where he has to manifest himself as desire within the circle of demand.

This transitional passage is what allows us to approach a kind of equivalence penis phallus, in other words that which as "natural support" is the place where desire manifests itself as affect, as bodily feeling, must become, must yield its place to a signifier, because it is only in relation to a subject and not in relation to a partial object penis or otherwise, that the word desire can take on any meaning. The subject demands and the phallus desires says Lacan, the phallus but never the penis. The penis is only the instrument at the service of the signifier itself. If it can be a very indocile instrument it is precisely because as phallus it is the subject whom it designates and for this to happen the Other must recognise it as such, must choose it, not in its role as this natural support but rather in so far as it is as subject the signifier which the Other recognises from his or her own place as signifier.

That which differentiates the masturbatory act from coitus on the plane of Jouissance (they are clearly different but this difference is difficult to explain physiologically) is that coitus in so far as both partners have been able to assume their castration, at the moment of orgasm the subject finds again, not as some would have it a kind of primitive fusion - there is no reason after all why the deepest experience of joy (Jouissance) of which man is capable should be necessarily linked to such a total regression but on the contrary this privileged moment where for an instant he attains his identification, ever elusive but always longed for, where he the subject is recognised by the Other as object of his deepest desire, but also at the same moment because of the Jouissance of the other, where he can recognise him or her as the one who constitutes him as phallic signifier; at this unique instant demand and desire can fleetingly coincide, and it is this which gives to the ego this blossoming of identificatory joy from which Jouissance springs.

It must not be forgotten however that even though demand and desire coincide in this moment, Jouissance carries within itself the source of the most profound dissatisfaction; because if desire is above all desire for continuity Jouissance is by definition something instantaneous and it is this which immediately re-establishes the gap between desire and demand, and the lack of satisfaction which ensures the ceaselessness of demand.

But if there are imitations of anxiety there are even more frequent imitations of Jouissance. This identificatory situation, source of true Jouissance cannot occur if one or both partners has remained fixated to the partial object, locked in a dual situation in which they as

subjects have no place: since what is demonstrated by everything linked to castration is that it expresses not so much the fear that the penis will be cut off, even if this is how the subject verbalises it, as the fear that it will be left to him and that everything else will be cut off; that this penis, this partial object source of pleasure is resented, he will be denied and not accorded recognition as subject. This is why anxiety is closely related to Jouissance, and why one of the most anxiety provoking of situations is the subjects confrontation with the Other at this level.

If we look at the problems encountered by the subject at this level we see that they represent nothing less than the sources of all anxiety. In order to discuss these we must refer to the pre genital modes of relating to objects, to this all important moment in the subject's life where the mediation between the subject and the Other between demand and desire takes place around this very ambiguously defined object which is called the partial object. The relation of the subject to this partial object is nothing other than the relation of the subject to his own body. This primary relationship which is fundamental for every human being is the point of departure and the mould for everything that can be included in the term object relation. Whether the oral, anal or phallic phase is discussed the same coordinates will be encountered. If I choose the oral phase it is because for the psychotic who will be discussed further on this appears to be the fruitful moment for what I have elsewhere called the moment of the inauguration of the psychosis.

How shall we define it? By a demand which from the start is a demand for something else. And by a response which is not only and obviously a response to something else but is, and this seems to me a very important point, that which constitutes a cry, a call perhaps, as demand and as desire. When the mother responds to the baby's crying she recognises it, constituting it as demand, but more importantly she interprets it on the plane of desire: the child's desire to have her near, to take something from her, to attack her or whatever. What is certain is that by her response the Other confers the dimension of desire on the cry of need and that this desire with which the child is invested is always at the beginning the result of a subjective interpretation, a function of maternal desire only, of maternal phantasy. In this way through the unconscious of the Other, the subject enters the world of desire; he will have to constitute his own desire first of all as response; as either acceptance or refusal of the place designated for him in the unconscious of the Other.

It seems to me that the first moment of this key mechanism of the oral relation which is projective identification has its origin in the mother. There is a first projection on the plane of desire which comes from her. The child will have to identify with this or to fight it, to refuse an identification which he may experience as determinant. And this first state of human evolution can also carry with it the revelation for the subject of what it is that his demand conceals. From this moment Jouissance which doesn't wait for phallic organisation to appear can enter the picture carrying with it the revelatory dimension it will always conserve: if frustration reveals the gap between need and desire, Jouissance on the contrary by responding to that which has not been formulated reveals that which is beyond the demand, in other words desire. What do we see in the oral relation? That demand and response are articulated for both partners around a partial relation - mouth breast. The response at the level of the oral cavity provokes an activity of absorption, a source of pleasure; an external object, the milk will become part of one's own bodily substance. This is what gives it meaning and its importance to this absorption. Starting from this first response

the seeking out of this activity of absorption, this source of pleasure will become the object of demand. As for desire it must be sought elsewhere, although it is from this same baseline, this same response, this same experience of the appeasement of need that it will constitute itself.

If the mouth breast relation and the activity of absorbing food represent the numerator of the equation representing the oral relation, there is also a denominator, that which invokes the mother child relationship, and it is here that desire must be situated. No-where else may one more fully appreciate the truth of the proverb: the manner in which one gives is more important than that which one gives. Thanks to or because of this manner of giving, in view of what it reveals of maternal desire, the child will learn the difference between the gift of food and the gift of love. Along with the absorption of food, an introjection occurs, a phantasmatic relationship in which the child and the Other are represented by their unconscious desires. If the numerator can carry a plus sign the denominator can at the same moment carry a minus sign; it is this difference of sign between demand and desire, this place from which frustration arises, that is the origin of every signifier.

From here one can trace the different phases of the evolution of the subject - normal, neurotic, perverse or psychotic. I will try to schematise them here, simplifying them perhaps in a slightly caricatural fashion in order to show the relationship which exists in each case between identification and anxiety.

In the first and most Utopian situation the child finds in the gift of food the gift of love which he desires. The breast and the maternal response can then become symbols of something else. The child enters the symbolic world and can accept the unfolding of the signifying chain. The oral relation as absorption can then be abandoned and the subject evolves in the direction of normal growth.

For this to happen the mother must have taken on board her own castration. A third term, the father must be present for the mother. Only then what she seeks in the child will not be some kind of erotogenic satisfaction which makes of the child the equivalent of the phallus, but a relation in which as mother she is also the wife of the father.

The gift of food will be a symbol of the gift of love for her and because this gift of love will precisely not be the phallic gift which the subject desires the child will be able to maintain his relation to demand. He will have to seek the phallus elsewhere. He will enter into the castration complex which alone will permit him to identify himself with something other that S. Baird.

If the mother has not taken her own castration on board every object which can be the source of pleasure or the object of demand for the Other risks becoming for her the phallic equivalent she desires. But in so far as the breast has a privileged existence only for the child to whom it is indispensable we see this child - phallus equivalent happening which is centre to the origin of most neurotic structures.

The subject as he develops will be faced with the dilemma of either being or having whatever the bodily object - breast or penis - which has become the phallic support. Either he will identify with the one who has it, but not having acceded to the symbolic, having it will always be having castrated the other. Or else he will renounce having it, he will identify with

the phallus as the object of desire of the Other but must also then renounce being himself the subject of desire.

This identificatory conflict between being the agent of castration or the subject who undergoes it is what defines this continual ???? this question which is always present at the level of question at the level of identification which is clinically referred to as neurosis.

The third case is what we encounter in perversion. If this latter has been defined as the negative of neurosis, we find the structural opposition also at the level of identification. The pervert is he who has eliminated all identificatory conflict: on the oral plane we could say that in perversion the subject constitutes himself as if the activity of absorption had no other goal than to make of him an object which provides phallic Jouissance for the Other. The pervert neither has nor is the phallus: he is this ambiguous object which serves a desire which is not his: his Jouissance is in this strange situation where the only identification possible to him is as an object which procures the Jouissance of a phallus, but he doesn't know to whom this phallus belongs. One could say that the desire of the pervert is to respond to the demand of the phallus. To take a banal example I would say that in order for the Jouissance of the sadist to appear, another is pleasured by the fact that he the pervert makes himself into a whip. If I speak of phallic demand which is a kind of play on words it is because for the pervert the other exists only as the almost anonymous support of a phallus for whom the pervert performs his sacrificial rights.

The perverse response is always a negation of the Other as subject. The perverse identification is always to this object which is the source of the Jouissance for a phallus which is as powerful as it is phantasmatic. Perversion needs to be seen in a context which is wider than the merely sexual. Perversion refers to Jouissance what ever the bodily part involved. If I share Lacan's distrust for what is called genitality it is because anatomical analysis is dangerous. The most normal seeming intercourse can be as neurotic or as perverse as that which is called a pregenital drive. Normality neurosis or perversion can only be recognised by examining the relation between the ego and the identification which does or does not permit Jouissance.

If one reserves the diagnosis of perversion to sexual perversion only, not only will this get us nowhere since a purely symptomatic diagnosis means nothing, but we will also be forced to recognise that there are very few neurotics who will escape this diagnosis. And it is not only at the level that the solution is to be found of the guilt from which the pervert is said to be exempt - no human being is free from guilt. The only way to approach perversion is to try to define it at the level where it exists, at the level behavour in relationship.

The obsessional can also be sadistic - for him it means the ongoing presence of an anal relation, a relation where it is a question of possessing or being possessed, a relation where the love which one feels and of which one is the object can only be signified to the subject in terms of a possession which can go so far as the destruction of the object. The obsessional is the one who punishes well because he loves well, he for whom the father's beating has remained the privileged sign of his love and who is always seeking someone to whom he can give or from whom he can receive this beating. But having giving or received it, having assured himself that he is loved he will seek Jouissance in a different type of relation to the same object and whether this relation is oral, anal or vaginal it will not be perverse in the sense I mean, which seems to me to be the only one by which one can avoid

extending this label perverse to a large number of neurotics and a large number of our fellow men.

Sadism becomes a perversion when the beating is no longer sought or given as a sign of love but when it is perceived by the subject as the only possibility of procuring *Jouissance* for a phallus: and the sight of this Jouissance becomes the only possibility offered to the pervert for his own Jouissance.

A lot has been said about the aggivity of exhibitionism. Flashing is a way of attacking the other undoubtedly, but the exhibitionist is convinced that this aggression is source of Jouissance for the Other. The obsessional when he is exhibitionistic tries to bait the other; he shows what he thinks the other doesn't have but wants to have. The intention is aggressive. Think of the ratman: the father is Jouissance is the father's least of his worries: he shows to the dead father what he thinks the dead father would like to take away from him. This is an aggressive act from which the obsessional draws Jouissance. Whereas the pervert seeks his own Jouissance via that of another. This is what perversion is: this zig-zag journey, this detour by which the ego is always at the service of an anonymous phallic power. He does not care who is his object, it is enough for him that it should be capable of Jouissance that he can make of it a support of this phallus to which he is identified, that it can serve as an object presumed to be capable of procuring *Jouissance* for this phallus. This is why, contrary to what one finds in neurosis, perverse identification like its particular type of object relation is something which is striking in its stability, its unity.

We now reach our fourth category which is the one most difficult to grasp: psychosis.

The psychotic is a subject whose demand has never been symbolised by the Other, for whom the real and the symbolic, phantasy and reality have never been demarcated because he has never acceded to the imaginary, the third dimension which alone allows a differentiation between these two different levels. In order to simplify things let us situate ourselves at the very first moment of the history of the subject, before the oral relation at the moment of conception.

The first amputation undergone by the psychotic happens before his birth: for his mother he is a part of her own metabolism; all paternal participation is denied by her, is unacceptable. Throughout the pregnancy the child is the partial object which will fill up the phantasmatic lack on a bodily plane. From birth the role assigned to him will be to be the witness of her negation of castration.

The child contrary to what is often said is not the mother's phallus: he is the proof (witness) that the breast is the phallus, which is not the same thing. So that the breast may be the phallus and an all powerful one, the response it brings to the child must be perfect and total. The demand of the child cannot be recognised as anything that is not demand for food, the dimension of desire at the level of the subject must be denied; what characterizes the mother of the psychotic is a total interdiction which blocks the child from becoming subject to any desire.

One can see from this moment how the psychotic's particular relation to the word will develop. From the beginning it will be impossible for him to maintain his relation to the demand: if he is responded to only as a mouth to be fed, only as a partial object, every

demand, even as it is being formulated will carry within it the death of desire. Since he has not been symbolised by the Other he will be drawn himself to make the symbolic and the real coincide in the response. Since no matter what he demands, it is food which is given to him, it will be food as such which will become for him the master signifier. From that moment the symbolic will erupt into the real: instead of the gift of food finding its symbolised equivalent in the gift of love, for him every gift of love can only be signified by oral absorption. To love or to be loved will be translated by him into oral terms: to absorb or to be absorbed. For him there will always be a fundamental contradiction between demand and desire: either he maintains his demand and his demand destroys him as subject of desire: he must alienate himself as subject in order to make himself a mouth, an object to be fed: or else he will try one way or another to constitute himself as subject and to do this he will find himself obliged to alienate that body part which is the source of pleasure and the origin of his response of himself which is for him incompatible with any attempt at autonomy.

The psychotic always finds himself forced to alienate either his body as support of the ego or a body part as support of the possibility of a Jouissance. If I do not use the term identification here it is precisely because I do not think it is applicable in the case of psychosis. In my view identification implies the possibility of a relation to the object where the desire of the subject and the desire of the Other are in a conflictual situation but exist as the two constitutive poles of the relation (to the object). In psychosis the Other and his desire have to be defined at the level of a phantasmatic relation of the subject to his own body. I will not go into to this since it will take us too far from the subject of our discussion which is anxiety. Contrary to what may be believed it is of anxiety that I have been speaking all along. As I said at the beginning it is not possible to address the subject of anxiety without taking into account the parameters of identification.

What has been seen in all the cases discussed, whether normal neurotic or perverse, identification can only happen in relation to what the subject imagines rightly or wrongly to be the desire of the Other. In the normal, neurotic or perverse subject it is always a matter of identifying oneself in accordance with or in opposition to what one thinks is the desire of the Other. As long as this desire can be imagined, phantasized, the subject will find there the necessary reference points in order to define himself, either as the object of the desire of the Other or as an object refusing to be the desire of the Other. In either case he will be able to locate himself, to define himself.

But from the moment when the desire becomes something mysterious, undefinable, the subject discovers that it is precisely this desire of the Other which constitutes him as subject; what he will encounter faced with this void is his fundamental phantasy. To be the object of the desire of the Other is only bearable in so far as we can name this desire, can shape it in terms of our own desire. To become the object of a desire we can no longer name, is to become oneself an object without a name having lost all possible identity: to become an object whose insignia no longer means anything since they have become undecipherable for the Other. This precise moment when the ego is reflected in a mirror which gives back an image which has no identifiable meaning - this is anxiety. In calling it oral, anal or phallic we are simply trying to define which insignia the ego has donned in order to be recognised. If anxiety is the affect which most easily provokes a reciprocal response it is because from this moment we become for the Other the one whose insignia are equally mysterious, equally inhuman. In anxiety it is not just the ego which is dissolved, the other also dissolves as

support of identification. Jouissance and anxiety are the two extreme positions in which the ego can situate itself: in the first the ego and the Other for an instant exchange insignia, recognise each other as two signifiers whose shared Jouissance assures a momentary identity of desire: in anxiety the ego and the Other are dissolved, annulled in a situation where desire disappears because it cannot be named.

In psychosis things are a little different. Here too anxiety is nothing other than the signal of the loss of all possible reference points for the ego. But the source from which this anxiety arises is indigenous: it is the place from which the desire of the subject can appear - it is his desire which is the privileged source of all anxiety for the psychotic.

If it is true that it is the Other who constitutes us by recognising us as object of desire, if the response of the Other makes us realise the gap which exists between demand and desire and if it is through this gap that we enter into the world of signifiers, then for the psychotic the Other is the one who has never signified anything other than a hole, a void at the very centre of his being. The interdiction regarding desire which he has experienced means that his response has caused him to register not a gap but a fundamental antimony between demand and desire. From this gap which is not just a gap but a gaping pit what appears is not the signifier but the phantasy, that which causes the telescoping of the symbolic and the real which we call psychosis.

For the psychotic - if I can put it simply - the Other is introjected at the level of his own body, at the level of everything which surrounds the primordial absence which is the only thing which designates him as subject.

For him anxiety is linked to specific moments where out of this hole something appears which can be called desire: because in order to assume this desire the subject must situate himself in the only place from which he can say "I" - in other words must identify with this hole which because of the interdiction of the Other is the only place where he can be recognised as subject. Every desire can only throw him back on either a negation of himself or a negation of the Other.

But in so far as the Other is introjected at the level of his own body it is this introjection alone which allows him to live. All negation of the Other would be for him a self mutilation which can only throw him back onto his own fundamental drama.

If our silence helps to reveal the sources of anxiety in the neurotic, our presence, our word does so with the psychotic. Everything which causes him to lose awareness of our existence as separate from him, as autonomous subjects who can recognise him as subject, releases his anxiety. So long as he talks, he repeats a monologue which situates us at the level of this introjected Other which constitutes him, but if he should begin to talk to us in so far as we as object may become the place where he must recognise his desire, his anxiety will be released: because to desire means to constitute oneself as subject and for him the only place where he can do that is the place which refers him back to this gaping hole.

Here too one can see that anxiety appears at the moment when desire makes of the subject something which is a lack of being, a failure to name oneself.

I have not spoken of phantasy which is intimately related to both identification and to anxiety. I could have said that anxiety appears at the moment when the real object can only be grasped in its phantasmatic meaning, that it is from this moment, since all possible identification of the ego has dissolved that anxiety appears.

I will end with a short case history in order to give you a clinical example of the sources of anxiety in the psychotic. I will not go into detail except to say that this is a schizophrenic suffering from delusions who has been frequently hospitalized. The first sessions were given over to an account of his delusions, a fairly classic one which he called the problem of the robot man. Then in one session where by chance communication with others and the word were being discussed he explained that what he cannot bear is "the form of the demand", that “the handshake is an improvement on civilizations which use verbal salutations, because the word falsifies things, blocks understanding. The word is like a turning wheel - everyone sees a different part at different moments so communication is always false; there is always a dialogue.”

In this same session at the moment when he broaches the problem of the woman's word he suddenly says: "what disquiets me is what they say about amputees, that they can feel things with the limb they no longer have:" at this moment this man whose speech even in his delusion is extremely precise, begins to fumble, to search for words and finally comes out with this: "a ghost would be a man without limbs and without a body who by his intelligence alone could recognise a false sensation in a body he doesn't have. This makes me very uneasy."

"Would recognise a false sensation in a body he doesn't have". This phrase took on its meaning in the following session when he announced that he wanted to stop, that the treatment was unhealthy and dangerous. What was unhealthy and dangerous was "that I realised you wanted to seduce me and that you could succeed". What he realised from these false sensations in a body he doesn't have was that he might desire. Then he would have to recognise, to assume this lack which is his body. He would have to look at what is unbearable for man if it has not been symbolised - castration as such.

In this same session he himself expressed better than I could the source of his anxiety: "you are afraid to look at yourself in a mirror, you don't really know what you will see there. It is better if you buy a gilded mirror."

One has the impression that he wants to be sure that the changes are caused by the mirror.

As you see anxiety appears at the moment when he fears I may become an object of desire; from that moment the arousal of his own desire would imply for him the necessity of taking on board the fundamental lack which constitutes him.

From the moment anxiety appears, his position of ghost, as robot is no longer possible. He risks being no longer able to deny the false sensations of a body he cannot acknowledge. What causes his anxiety is the precise moment when faced with the eruption of his desire he wonders what image of himself the mirror will reflect back to him; he knows it may be a void, an unnameable# something, something which will render impossible any neutral recognition, and which we the involuntary spectators of this drama call anxiety.

Lacan:

Before trying to examine the place of this discourse I would like some of the people whom I saw with different interrogative, expectant expressions, expressions which became more precise at one or other turning point of Mme Aulagnier's discourse, to simply indicate the suggestions, the thoughts produced in them at one or other detour of this discourse as a sign that this discourse has been heard. I only regret one thing: it was read. This will provide me with supports on which I will be able to accentuate my commentary more precisely.

M Audouard

What struck me by way of association, is really the clinical example that you brought in at the end of your presentation, it is this sentence of the patient about the word which he compares to a wheel which different people never see the same part of. This seems to me to illuminate everything that you said and to open up - I really don't know why - a whole broadening of the themes that you have presented.

I think I have more or less understood the meaning of the presentation; I am not used to schizophrenics, but as regards neurotics and perverts anxiety in so far as it cannot be the object of symbolisation because it is precisely the mark that symbolisation has not been able to take place and to symbolise oneself is really to disappear into a sort of non-symbolisation from which the summons of anxiety comes at every instant. It is obviously something extremely rich but which perhaps on a certain logical plane would demand some clarifications. How in fact is it possible that this fundamental experience which is in a way the negativism of the word should come to be symbolised and what happens then in order that from this central hole there should spring forth something that we have to understand. Indeed how is the word born? What is the origin of the signifier in this precise case of anxiety in so far as it cannot express itself. For anxiety in so far as it expresses itself? There is perhaps there a movement which is not unrelated with this wheel which turns, which would perhaps need to be made a little clearer and more precise.

M Vergotte

I was wondering if there were not two sorts of anxiety: Mme Aulagnier spoke of castration-anxiety: the subject is afraid that it's going to be taken away from him and that he will be forgotten as a subject, here is the disappearance of the subject as such; but I was wondering if there were not an anxiety where the subject refuses to be subject, if for example in certain phantasies he wants on the contrary to hide the hole or the lack. In Mme Aulagnier's clinical example the subject refuses his body because the body reminds him of his desire and his lack; in the example of castration anxiety you said rather: the subject is afraid that he will be misrecognised as subject. An anxiety has therefore the two possible meanings: or he refuses to be subject. There is also the other anxiety where he has, for example in claustrophobia, that there he is no longer a subject, that on the contrary he is closed in, that he is in a closed world where desire does not exist; he can be in a state of anxiety before his desire and also before the absence of desire.

Aulagnier

Do you not think that when one refuses to be a subject it is precisely because one has the impression that for the Other one cannot be subject except by paying for it with ones castration, I do not believe that the refusal to be subject is to be really a subject.

Lacan

We are right at the heart of the problem. You see immediately here the point at which one becomes confused. I find that this discourse is excellent in so far as the handling of certain of the notions that we find here has allowed Mme Aulagnier to highlight, in a fashion which would not have been possible for her otherwise, several dimensions of her experience. I am going to take up again something that appeared remarkable to me in what she produced. I say right away that this discourse seemed to me to remain at a half-way point. It is indeed a sort of conversion, you should have no doubt about it, that I am trying to obtain from you through my teaching, which is not, God knows, after all such a unique pretention in history that for it to be seen as exorbitant. But it is certain that a whole part of Mme Aulagnier's discourse and very precisely the passage at which, with an eye to intelligibility, her own as well as that of those to whom she was speaking, to whom she believed she was speaking, she goes back to formulae which are the ones against which I warn you, I direct you, I put you on your guard, and not simply because in my case it is a sort of tic or aversion, but because their coherence with something which must be radically abandoned always shows itself every time they are used, even knowingly.

The idea, for example, of any kind of antinomy whatsoever between word and affect, even though it may be empirically verified in experience, is nevertheless not something on which we can articulate a dialectic, if what I am trying to do before you has a value, namely allows you to develop as far as possible all the consequences of the effect that man is an animal condemned to dwell in language. Hence, we cannot in any way hold affect to be anything whatsoever without ending up in some sort of primariness (*primarité*). No significant affect, none of those we have to deal with from anxiety to anger and all the others, can even begin to be understood except within a reference in which the relationship of x to the signifier is primary. Before emphasizing the distortions, I mean that with respect to certain breakthroughs which would be the next stage, I want of course to mark the positive aspect of what was already permitted to her by the simple usage of these terms in the forefront of which are those which she made use of with correctness and skill: desire and demand. It is not enough to have heard about this which - if one makes use of them in a certain fashion, but they are not all the same such esoteric words that anyone feels that they cannot use them - it is not enough to use these terms: desire and demand, in order to apply them correctly. Certain people have tried it recently and I am not sure that the result was in any way either brilliant - which after all would only be of secondary importance - or even had the slightest relationship with the function that we give to these terms.

This is not the case for Mme Aulagnier, but something that allowed her to attain at certain moments a tone which manifested a sort of conquest, even if only in the form of the question posed. The handling of these terms allows us to designate the first very impressive opening that she gave us. I would point out to you what she said about orgasm or more exactly about loving *jouissance*.

If I may be allowed to address myself to her as Socrates might address himself to some …… I would say to her that she proves that she knows what she is talking about. That

she does it as a woman, this is what traditionally seems to be self-evident. I am less sure about it: rare are the women, I would say, whatever about knowing, who are able to talk while knowing what they are saying about the things of love. Socrates said that undoubtedly he could bear witness to that himself, that he knew. The women are therefore rare, but you should clearly understand what I mean by that: the men are even more so.

As Mme Aulagnier told us, in connection with what loving *jouissance* is, in rejecting once and for all this famous reference to fusion which should alert us who have given a quite archaic sense to this term fusion, you cannot at the same time require that it is at the end of a process that one arrives at a moment that is qualified as unique, and at the same time suppose that it is by a return to some primitive differentiation or other. In short, I will not reread her text because I do not have the time, but on the whole I do not think it would be unprofitable for this text, to which I am certainly far from giving a mark of 100 percent, I mean of considering as a perfect discourse, to be considered rather as a discourse defining a rung starting from which we could situate the progress to which we could refer ourselves, to something which was touched on or in any case perfectly grasped, caught, circumscribed, understood by Mme Aulagnier.

Of course, I am not saying that she is giving us her last word here, I would even say more: on several occasions she indicates the points where it would seem necessary to her to advance to complete what she is saying and of course a great part of my satisfaction comes from the points that she indicates. They are precisely the very ones which could be turned round, as I might She designates these two points in connection with the relationship of the psychotic to his own body on the one hand - she said that she had many things to say, she indicated a little bit of it to us - and on the other hand in connection with the phantasy where the obscurity in which she left it would appear to me sufficiently indicative of the fact that this darkness is rather general in groups. This is one point.

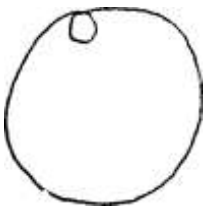
The second point that I find very remarkable in what she contributed to us, is what she contributed when she spoke to us about the perverse relationship. Not of course that I subscribe at every point to what she said on this subject, which is really of an unbelievable daring. It is to congratulate her highly for having been in a position, even if it is a step to be rectified, to do it all the same; to describe this step as I should, I would say that it is the first time, not simply in my circle - and I am delighted that someone has preceded me in this - that something has come to the fore, a certain fashion, a certain tone in speaking about the perverse relationship which suggests to us the idea which is properly speaking the one that has prevented me from speaking about it up to now because I do not want to appear to be the one who says: everything that has been done up to the present isn't worth buttons. But Mme Aulagnier, who has not the same reasons for modesty as I have, and moreover who says it in all innocence, I mean who has seen perverts and who has interested herself in them in a truly analytic fashion, begins to articulate something which, from the very fact of being able to present under this general form, I repeat, an unbelievably audacious one that the pervert is someone who makes himself object for the *jouissance* of a phallus whose ownership (*appartenance*) he does not suspect: he is the instrument of the *jouissance* of a god. That means when all is said and done, that this deserves some sharpening, some rectification by directive maneouvres and, in a word, that this poses the question of reintegrating what we call the phallus, that this poses the urgency of the definition of phallus - there is no doubt about it - since that surely has the effect of telling us that if a diagnosis of perverse structure

ought, for us analysts, to have a meaning, we must begin by throwing out the window everything that was written from Kraft-Ebing to Havelock Ellis and everything that has been written in any supposedly clinical catalogue whatsoever of the perversions. In short, there is to be overcome On the plane of the perversions, in short, we have to overcome this sort of distance taken under the word clinical, which in reality is only a way of failing to recognize what is absolutely radical, absolutely open in this structure to whoever knows how to take this step which is precisely the one I require of you, this step of conversion which allows us to be at the point of view of perceiving where we know the absolutely universal thing meant by this perverse structure.

If I evoked gods it is not for nothing, because I could just as well have evoked the theme of metamorphoses and the whole mystical relationship, a certain pagan relationship to the world which is the one in which the perverse dimension has I would say its classical value.

It is the first time that I have heard someone speaking in a certain tone which is really decisive, which is the opening into this field where precisely we need it at the moment that I am going to explain to you what the phallus is.

The third thing, is what she told us in connection with her experience of psychotics. I do not need to underline the effect that this may have. I mean that Audouard undoubtedly bore witness to it. There again what appeared outstanding to me, is precisely the way in which this also opens up this psychotic structure as being something in which we ought to feel ourselves at home. If we are not capable of grasping that there is a certain degree, not an archaic one to be situated somewhere around birth, but a structural one, at the level of which desires are properly speaking mad, if for us the subject does not include in its definition, in its primary articulation, the possibility of psychotic structure, we will never be anything but alienists. But how can one not sense living, as happens all the time to those who come to hear what is said here at this seminar, how can we not grasp that everything that I began to articulate this year in connection with the surface structure of the -system and the enigma about the way in which the subject can gain access to his own body is that this does not happen just by itself, which is something everyone throughout the ages is perfectly aware of because this famous and eternal distinction of disunity or unity of body and soul is always after all the aporia point on which all the philosophical articulations have been shipwrecked. And why should it not be possible for us analysts, precisely, to find the passage? Only this requires a certain discipline and in the first place what you must know in order to be able to speak about the subject is the following which you can never get into your heads enough in the brutal form in which I am going to announce it, it is that the subject is nothing other than the following, than the consequence of the fact that there is signifier and that the birth of the subject depends on the fact that he cannot but think of himself as excluded from the signifier which determines him. This is the value of the little cycle that I introduced to you the last



time and which we have not finished hearing being spoken about because, in truth I will all the same have to unfold it more than once before you in order for you to see where exactly it leads us. If the subject is only that: this part excluded from a field entirely defined by the signifier, if it is only starting from that that everything can come to birth, one must still know at what level one makes this term subject intervene. And despite herself, because it is to us that she is speaking and because it is to her and because there is still something not yet learned, assumed all the same when she speaks of this choice for example that there is between being a subject or an object in connection with the relationship to desire, well then, despite herself, Mme Aulagnier allows herself to slip into re-introducing into the subject the person with all the subsequent dignity that you know we give it in our enlightened times: personology, personalism, personality and all that follows from it, a convenient approach which everyone knows we live in the middle of. Never has there been so much talk about the person. But after all as our work is not a work which ought to interest itself much in what is happening in the public square, we have to interest ourselves in the subject in a different way. Here then Mme Aulagnier called to her aid the term, parameters of anxiety. Well then, here all the same in connection with person and personology, you see a rather considerable work which took me some months, a work of observations on the discourse of our friend Daniel Lagache. I would ask you to consult it, I would ask you to consult it to see the importance in the articulation that she gives us about the function of anxiety and this kind of stifling that it is supposed to constitute at the level of the word, the importance that should normally have been taken in her presentation by the function i(o), in other words the specular image which is certainly not at all absent from her presentation because when all is said and done she ended up by dragging her psychotic in front of his mirror for us, and this is why, it is because this psychotic came there all by himself, it is here therefore that she quite correctly made her rendezvous with him. And to give you something to smile about I would inscribe in the margin of the remarks which she admired so much in what she quoted, these four little verses inscribed at the bottom of a plate I have at home:

A Mina son miroir fidèle
Montre, hélas, des traits allongés
Ah ciel, oh Dieu, s'écrit-elle
Comme les miroirs sont changés

(To Mina, alas, her faithful mirror shows a long face
Oh heavens, oh goodness, she cries, how mirrors have changed)

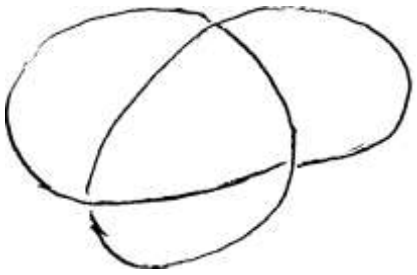
This effectively is what your psychotic says, showing here the importance of the function, not of the ego-ideal, but of the ideal ego as the place where there come to be formed properly ego-type identifications, this as the place where anxiety is produced, anxiety which I qualified for you as a sensation of the desire of the Other. To bring this sensation of the desire of the Other back to the dialectic of the subject's own desire confronted with the desire of the Other, here is the whole distance between what I initiated and the already very efficacious level at which there is sustained the whole development of Mme Aulagnier.

But, as she says, this sort of conflictual level which is that of the reference of two already constituted desires in the subject, can in no way suffice for us to situate the difference, the distinction that exists between the relationships of desire for example at the level of the four kinds or types which she defined for us under the terms of: normal, perverse, neurotic, psychotic. That the word, in effect, is lacking something in connection with anxiety, lies in the fact, which we cannot fail to recognise as one of the absolutely essential

parameters, that it cannot designate who is speaking, that it cannot refer to this point i(o) the I of the discourse itself, the I which in the discourse designates itself as the one who is actually speaking and associates him with this image of mastery which finds itself vacillating at that moment. And she could have been reminded of this because I noted in what she took as a point of departure in connection with the seminar of 4 April, remember the vacillating image that I tried to set before you of my obscure confrontation with the praying mantis and the fact that, if I spoke at first about the image which was reflected in this eye, it was to say that anxiety begins from this essential moment when this image is lacking. No doubt the small o which I am for the phantasy of the other is essential, but where there is lacking - Mme Aulagnier does not fail to recognize it, because she reinstates it in other passages of her discourse - the mediation of the imaginary - this is what she means, but it is not yet sufficiently articulated - it is the i of o which is lacking and which is functioning there.

I do not want to go any further because you are well aware that it is a matter of nothing less than taking up again the discourse of the seminar, but it is here that you ought to sense the importance of what we are introducing. It is a matter of what is going to make the link in the signifying economy of the constitution of the subject at the place of his desire. And you should here glimpse, tolerate, resign yourself to something which requires from us something which appears just as far from our ordinary preoccupations, indeed from anything that one could with decency demand of honourable specialists like you who do not come here all the same to do elementary geometry. Reassure yourselves, it is not geometry, because it is not metric, it is something about which geometers have not had the slightest idea up to the present: the dimensions of space. I would go as far as to tell you that M Descartes had no idea about the dimensions of space.

The dimensions of space, it is something of a different aspect which was decided, valorized by a certain number of jests made about this term as the fourth or the fifth dimension and other things which have a quite precise and mathematical meaning, but which it is always amusing to hear spoken about by incompetents, so that when one speaks about it one always has the feeling that one is engaging in what is called science fiction and this has all the same a rather bad reputation. But all the same you will see that we have our word to say about it. I began to articulate it in this sense that psychically I told you we only have access to two dimensions; for the remainder there is only an outline, a beyond. As regards what comes from experience, in any case as a research hypothesis which can be of use to us for something, to be willing to admit that there is nothing well established beyond - and it is already sufficiently rich and complicated - the experience of the surface. But this does not mean that we cannot find in the experience of the surface alone the testimony that it, the surface, is plunged in a space which is not at all the one that you imagine with your visual experience of the specular image. And in a word, this little object which is nothing then the



most elementary knot, not the one which I only made because I could not have woven for myself a piece of string which would close on itself, simply this (schema) the most elementary knot, the one which is traced out like that, suffices to carry with itself a certain number of questions that I am introducing in telling you that the third dimension is absolutely not sufficient to account for the possibility of that. Nevertheless a knot all the same, is something which is within everybody's range, it is not within everybody's range to know what he is doing in making a knot, but after all this has taken on a metaphorical value: the knots of marriage, the knots of love. Knots sacred or not, why do people speak about them?

They are quite simple, elementary modes, of putting within your reach the habitual (usual) character if you wish to apply yourself to it, and once it becomes habitual, the possible support of a conversion which, if it is realised will clearly show all the same retrospectively that perhaps these terms must have something to do with these references to structure that we need to distinguish what happens for example at the steps that Mme Aulagnier has divided in going from the normal to the psychotic. At this point of junction where the subject constitutes for himself the image of the knot, the fundamental image, the image which allows the mediation between the subject and his desire, can we not introduce very simple distinctions, and, you will see, ones which are quite utilisable in practice, which allow us to represent for ourselves in a simpler fashion and one which is less a source of antinomy, of aporia, of confusion, of labyrinth finally, that what we have here at our disposal, namely this summary notion for example of an inside and an outside which in effect appears to be self-evident starting from the specular image and which is not at all necessarily the one which we are given in experience.

Seminar 19: *Wednesday 9 May 1962*

The last time, we heard Mme Aulagnier speaking to us about anxiety. I paid her discourse the homage it deserved, as the fruit of work and reflection that are well oriented. I marked at the same time the degree to which a certain obstacle, which I situated at the level of the paper itself, is always the same: the one which arises every time we have to speak about language.

Undoubtedly the sensitive points, the points which deserve to be rectified in what she told us, are precisely those where putting the accent on what exists: the unsayable (*1'indicible*), she made of it the index of a heterogeneity of what precisely she is aiming at as the "not being able to be said", even though what is involved in the business when anxiety is produced is precisely to grasp its link with the fact that there is a said (*du dire*) and an able to be said. This is why she is unable to give its full value to the formula that the desire of man is the desire of the Other. It is so not with reference to a supposedly renascent third, the more central subject, the subject identical to itself, the Hegelian self-consciousness which would be there to bring about the mediation between two desires which it is supposed in a way to be confronted with: his own proper one as an object, and the desire of the Other, and even if it were to give primacy to this desire of the Other it would have to situate, to define its own desire in a sort of reference, of relationship or non-dependence on this desire of the Other.

Of course on a certain level at which we could always remain, there is something of this order, but this something is precisely that thanks to which we avoid what is at the heart of our experience and what must be grasped. And that is why, it is for that reason that I am trying to forge for you a model of what must be grasped. What must be grasped, is that the subject which interests us is desire. Of course this only takes on a meaning when we have begun to articulate, to situate at what distance, through what mediation, which is not that of an intermediary screen but of constitution, of determination, we can situate desire.

It is not that demand separates us from desire as if it were only a matter of setting demand aside to find it. Its signifying articulation determines me, conditions me as desire. This is the long path that I have already made you take. If I have made it so long, it is because it is necessary that it should be so in order that the dimension that this presupposes should make you gothrough in a way the mental experience of apprehending it. But this desire thus transported, put off to a distance, articulated as such not beyond language as if it were due to the impotence of this language, but structured as desire through that very potency itself, this is what it is now a matter of rejoining in order that I may manage to make you conceive of, grasp - and there is in the grasp, in the *Begriff*, something tangible - something of a transcendental aesthetic which ought not to be the one accepted up to now because it is precisely from the one accepted up to now that the place of desire up to the present has been hidden.

But this is what explains for you my attempt, which I hope is successful, to lead you along paths which are also those of the aesthetic in so far as they try to catch hold of something which has not been seen at all in all its relief, in all its fecundity at the level not so much of spatial as topological intuitions, because it must be that our intuition of space does

not exhaust everything which is of a certain order because moreover those who are best qualified to occupy themselves with it, the mathematicians, try from every angle and succeed in going beyond intuition.

I am leading you along this path when all is said and done to say things with words which are slogans (*des mots d'ordre*): it is a question of escaping from the pre-eminence of the intuition of the sphere in so far as it in a way dominates our logic in a very intimate way, even when we do not think about it. Because of course if there is an aesthetic called transcendental which interests us, it is because it is what dominates logic. It is for this reason that to those who say to me: "Could you not really tell us things, make us understand what is happening in a neurotic or in a pervert and how it is different, without going through your little tori and other detours?", I would respond that it is nevertheless indispensable, just as indispensable and for the same reason because it is the same thing, as doing logic, because the logic in question is not something empty. Logicians, like grammarians, dispute among themselves and in so far as of course in going into the field of these disputes we can only evoke them with discretion in order not to lose ourselves in them, but all the confidence that you have in me reposes on the following: it is that you credit me with having made some effort not to take the first path that came to me and to have eliminated a certain number.

But all the same, to reassure you, there comes to me the idea of pointing out to you that it is not a matter of indifference to put in the forefront in logic the function of the hypothesis for example or the function of assertion. In what is called an adaptation Ivan Karamazov is made to say in the theatre:

"If God does not exist, then everything is permitted".

You refer to the text. You read - and moreover if I remember properly, it is Aliocha who says that as it happens -:

"Since God does not exist, then everything is permitted".

Between these two terms there is the difference between the "if, *si*" and the "since, *puisque*", namely between a hypothetical logic and an assertive logic, and you will say to me: a logician's distinction, what is the interest of that to us?

It interests us to such a degree that it is by presenting things in the first fashion that at the final term, the Kantian term, the existence of God is maintained for us. Since in short it is all there: since it is clear that everything is not permitted, therefore in the hypothetical formula it is imposed as necessary that God exists. And this is why your daughter is mute and why in the teaching articulation of free thinking there is maintained at the heart of the articulation of all valid thinking about the existence of God, as a term without which there would not even be a means of advancing something in which there is grasped the shadow of a certainty, and you know - something I thought I should remind you a little about on this subject - that Descartes' approach cannot pass along any other paths.

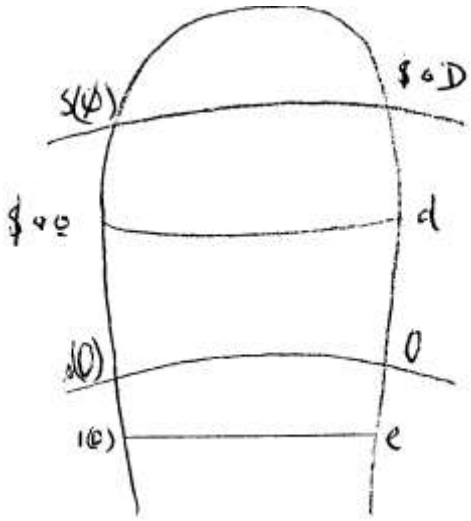
It remains that it is not necessarily by pinning the term atheistic on it that one will best define our project, which is perhaps to try to make pass through something else the consequences involved for us in this fact of experience, that some things are permitted (*qu'il y ait du permis*). Some things are permitted because there are prohibitions, you will tell me,

quite satisfied to rediscover here the opposition of a and non-a, of white and black. Yes, but this is not enough, because far from the permitted and the prohibited exhausting the field, what it is a matter of structuring, of organising is how it is true that they determine one another very closely, while at the same time leaving open a field which not alone is not excluded by them but makes them rejoin one another, and in this movement of torsion, as one might say, gives its shape properly speaking to what sustains the whole, namely the shape of desire. In a word that desire is set up in transgression is something everyone feels, everyone clearly sees, everyone has the experience of that, which does not mean, could not even mean that all that is involved here is a matter of a frontier, of a limit traced out. It is beyond the frontier that has been broken through that desire begins.

Of course, this often appears to be the shortest way, but it is a hopeless way. It is elsewhere that the path of passage is taken. Even though the frontier, that of prohibition, does not signify either making it descend from heaven and from the existence of the signifier. When I speak to you about the law, I speak to you about it like Freud, namely that, if one day it arose, no doubt it was necessary that the signifier should immediately emit its mark, its stamp, its form, but it is all the same from something which is an original desire that the knot was able to be formed in order that there should be founded together the law as limit and desire in its shape.

It is this that we are trying to depict in order to enter into detail, to retrace again this path which is always the same, but which we tighten around a knot that is more and more central whose umbilical aspect I do not despair of showing to you. We are taking the same path and we are not forgetting what is least situated for us in terms of reference which are supposed to be either legalist, or formalist, or naturalist, it is the notion of the small o in so far as it is not the imaginary other that it designates in so far as we identify ourselves to him in our ego-style miscognition. This is i of small o, i(o), and there also we find the same internal knot. Which means that it seems to be quite simple: that the Other is given to us in a imaginary form, is not so because it is precisely this Other that is involved when we speak about the object. It must not to be said at all that this object is quite simply a real object, that it is precisely no doubt the original object of desire as such but that we cannot say that until after we have grasped, understood, apprehended what it means that the subject in so far as he is constituted as dependence on the signifier, as beyond the demand, is desire.

Now, it is this point of the loop (*boucle*) which is not yet at all secure and that is where we are advancing and it is for this reason that we recall the usage that we have made up to now of small o. Where have we seen it, where are we first going to designate it? In the phantasy where quite clearly it has a function which has some relationship with the imaginary: let us call it the imaginary value in the phantasy. It is quite other than simply projectable in a intuitive fashion into the function of the lure as it is given to us in biological experience for example. It is something different and this is what you are reminded of by the formalisation of phantasy as being established in its relationship by the ensemble: S desire of o, S o and the situation of this formula in the graph which shows homologically, by its position at the upper level which makes it the homologue, of the i of o of the lower level in so far as it is the support of the ego, little e here, just as S desire of o is the support of desire.



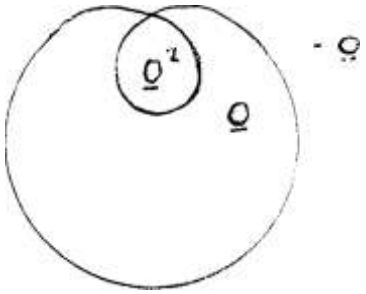
What does that mean? It is that the phantasy is there where the subject grasps himself in what I highlighted for you as being in question at the second level of the graph in the form taken up at the level of the Other, in the field of the Other, at this point here of the graph of the question: "What does it (*ça*) want?" which is moreover the one which will take on the form: "What does he want?" if someone has been able to take the place projected by the structure of the locus of the Other, namely of this locus which is that of the master and the guarantor. This means that in the field and the the phantasy has a homologous trajectory of this question, function to that of i of o, of the ideal ego, the imaginary ego on which I repose, that this function has a dimension, highlighted no doubt on some occasion, and even more than once, which I must here remind you anticipates the function of the ideal-ego which is marked for you in the graph by the fact that it is a sort of return which all the same allows a short-circuiting with respect to the intentional manoeuvres of the discourse considered as constitutive at this first level of the subject, that here before signified and signifier recross one another he has constructed his sentence, the imaginary subject anticipates the one he designates as ego. It is the very one no doubt that the I of the discourse supports in its function as shifter. The litteral I in the discourse is no doubt nothing other than the very subject who is speaking, but the one whom the subject designates here as his ideal support is in advance, in a future perfect, the one that he imagines will have spoken: "he will have spoken", at the very basis of the phantasy there is even a "he will have wanted".

I will not push any further. So this opening or this remark can only be located because at the beginning of our path in the graph I held a dimension of temporality to be implicated. The graph is made to show already this type of knot that we are for the moment in the process of seeking at the level of identification. The two curves intersect one another in the contrary direction, showing that synchronicity is not simultaneity, already indicating in the temporal order what we are in the process of trying to knot together in the topological field. In short, the movement of succession, the signifying kinetics, this is what supports the graph. I recall it to you here to show you the import of something that I did not take into account so much in a doctrinal way, this temporal dimension, which contemporary phenomenology feathers its nest with.

Because in truth, I believe that there is nothing more mystifying than to speak without rhyme or reason about time. But it is already here that I make a note to indicate to you here

that we will have to come back on it to constitute no longer a kinetics but a temporal dynamics, which is something we cannot do until we have overcome what it is a matter of doing for the moment, namely the spatialising topological mapping out of the identificatory function. That means that you would be wrong to stop at anything whatsoever that I have already formulated, that I thought it well to formulate also in a anticipatory fashion on the subject of anxiety with the complement that Mme Aulagnier was kind enough to add to it the other day as long as there is not effectively restored, referred back, brought back into the field of this function something I have already always pointed out, I mean ever since the article on the mirror stage which distinguishes the anxiety relationship from the aggressive relationship, namely temporal tension.

Let us come back to our phantasy and to small o to grasp what is involved in this "imaginification" which properly has its place in the phantasy. It is quite sure that we cannot isolate it in its correlation to $ because of the fact that the emergence of the function of the object of desire as small o in the phantasy is correlative to this sort of vanishing, *fading* of the symbolic which is the very one that I articulated the last time - I believe, in replying to Mme Aulagnier, if I remember correctly - as the exclusion determined by the very dependence of the subject on the usage of the signifier. That is why it is in so far as the signifier has to redouble its effect by wanting to designate itself that the subject arises as exclusion from the very field that it determines, being then neither the one who is designated, nor the one who designates, but more or less the following, which is the essential point that this is only produced in relation to the operation of an object at first as alternation between a presence and an absence. What is first of all formally meant by the conjunction $ and small o is that in the phantasy, the subject in his

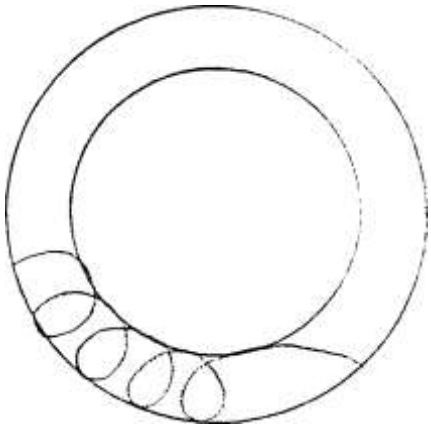


purely formal aspect and radically, becomes (-o), the absence of o, and nothing but that in front of the small o at the level if you wish of what I called identification to the unary trait, identification is only introduced, only operates purely and simply in this product of -o by the small o, and that it is not difficult to see how, not simply as it were by a mental operation, but because we are brought back to it by something which is, for us, our mode of something which there legitimately receives its formula, the $(-o^2-) = 1$ which results from it introduces us to what is carnal, implied in this mathematical symbol of the root of 0-1:

Of course, we would not dwell on such an operation if we were not brought back to it from more than one angle in a converging fashion.

For the moment, let us set out again to try to designate what determines for us in the drawing of the structure, the necessity of giving an account of the shape to which desire leads us. Let us not forget that unconscious desire, as we have to account for it, is found in the repetition of demand; and after all, from the origin of what Freud modulates for us, it is what motivates it. I see someone saying to me: "Yes indeed, of course that is never spoken about" except that for us

desire is not justified simply by being a tendency, it is something else. If you understand, if you follow what I intend to signify for you by desire, it is that we do not content ourselves with an opaque reference to an automatism of repetition, in so far as we have perfectly identified this automatism of repetition: it is a matter of the search, which is at once necessary and condemned, for one unique time, qualified, pinpointed as such by this unary trait, the very one which cannot repeat itself, except always by being another one.



And from then on, in this movement, this dimension appears to us through which desire is what supports the no doubt circular movement of the always repeated demand, but of which a certain number of repetitions can be conceived - this is the use of the topology of the torus - as achieving something. The bobbining movement of the repetition of demand closes somewhere even virtually, defining another loop which is completed by this very repetition and which sketches out what? The object of desire, which it is necessary for us to formulate in this way in so far as equally at the start what we are setting up as the very basis of our whole apprehension of analytic signification is essentially the fact that no doubt we speak about oral, anal objects etc. but that this object has an import for us: this object structures what for us is fundamental in the relationship of the subject to the world by something that we always forget: it is that this object does not remain an object of need; it is from the fact of being caught up in the repetitive movement of demand, in the automatism of repetition, that they become object of desire.

This is what I wanted to show you the day when for example taking the breast as signifier of the oral demand, I showed you that precisely it is because of this that eventually - this was the simplest thing I had to make you put your finger on it - it is precisely at that moment that the real breast becomes not an feeding object, but an erotic object, showing us once again that the function of the signifier excludes the signifier being able to signify itself. It is precisely because the object becomes recognisable as signifier of a latent demand that it takes on the value of a desire which is of another register.

The libidinal dimension, which began to be entered into in analysis as marking all human desire, only means, can only mean that. This does not mean that it is not necessary to recall it. It is the factor of transmutation that it is a matter of grasping, the factor of this transmutation is the function of the phallus, and there is no way of defining otherwise the function of the phallus, small phi, this is what we are going to try to give its topological support. The true shape of the phallus, which is not necessarily that of a tail, even though it is very like one, is something that I do not despair of drawing for you on the blackboard; if you were able, without succumbing to vertigo, to contemplate with some persistence the

aforesaid tail of which I am speaking, you would be able to perceive that with its foreskin it is really constructed in a funny way. This will help you perhaps to realise that topology is not just the scrap of paper thing that you imagine as you will certainly have occasion to take into account.

This having been said, it is not for nothing no doubt that throughout the centuries of the history of art there are only really such lamentably gross representations of what I am calling the tail.

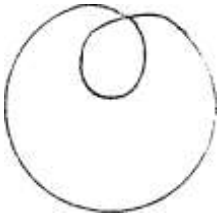
Still let us begin by recalling this all the same because one should not go too quickly: it is never so much there, this phallus - it is from this one must begin - as when it is absent, which is already a good sign for presuming that it is the pivot, the turning point of the constitution of every object of desire. It would be tiresome for me to have to recall more than one indication of the fact that it is never so much there than when it is absent, let it be enough for me to evoke the equivalence of girl=phallus to say everything that the omnipresent silhouette of Lolita may make you sense. I do not need Lolita all that much; there are people who know very well simply how to sense what the appearance of a bud on a little branch of a tree is. It is obviously not the phallus - because after all, the phallus is the phallus - it is all the same its presence precisely where it is not. This even goes very far. Mme Simone de Beauvoir wrote a whole book in order to recognise Lolita in Brigitte Bardot. The distance there is between the complete development of feminine charm and what is properly speaking the mainspring, the erotic activity of Lolita seems to me to constitute a total gap, the easiest thing in the world to distinguish.

When did we begin here to concern ourselves with the phallus in a fashion which is a little structuring and fruitful? It was obviously in connection with problems of feminine sexuality, and the first introduction of the difference in structure between demand and desire, do not forget, was about facts discovered in all their original relief by Freud when he tackled this subject, namely when he articulated in a fashion that is very close to this formula that it is because the phallus has to be demanded where it was not, namely in the mother, from the mother, through the mother, for the mother that it is along there that there passes the normal path through which it can come to be desired by the woman.

If it is a fact that it happens that it can be constituted as an object of desire for her, analytic experience puts the accent on the fact that it is necessary that the process should pass by way of a primitive demand, with everything that it involves on this occasion of the absolutely phantastical, unreal, unnatural, a demand structured as such and a demand which continues to carry its marks to the point that it appears inexhaustible and that the whole accent of what Freud said does not mean that it is enough for Mr Jones himself to understand it. That means that it is in the measure that the phallus can continue to remain indefinitely an object of demand to the one who cannot give it on this plane, that there arises precisely the whole difficulty in that it even reaches what might even seem - if really God made them man and woman, as the atheist Jones says: in order that they should be for one another like a thread is for a needle - what would seem nevertheless to be natural: that the phallus was at first object of desire.

This is the way in, the difficult way in, and the way in which twists the whole relationship that this phallus brings with it at a point where it seems to be the most natural object, in the function of object.

The topological schema that I am going to shape for you and which consists with respect to what first of all is presented for you in the shape of the inverted eight, is designed to warn you about the problematic of any limiting usage of the signifier, in so far as by it a



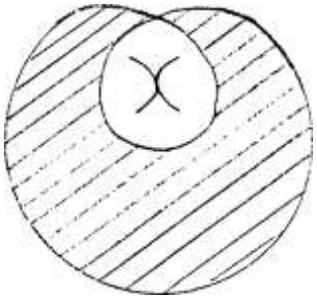
limited field cannot be identified to the pure and simple one of a circle. The field marked inside is not as simple as the one here, as the one which a certain outside signifier marked. There is necessarily produced somewhere, from the fact that the signifier redoubles itself, is summoned to the function of signifying itself, a field which is one of exclusion and through which the subject is rejected into the outside field. I anticipate and I propose that the phallus in its radical function is simply signifier, but even though it can signify itself, it is unnameable as such. If it is in the order of the signifier - because it is a signifier and nothing else - it can be posed without being different to itself. How can it be conceived intuitively? Let us say that it is the only name which abolishes all other nominations and that it is for that reason that it is unsayable. It is not unsayable because we call it the phallus but one cannot at the same time say the phallus and continue to name other things.

The final reference point: in our indications at the beginning of one of our scientific years someone tried to articulate in a certain fashion the most radical transferential function occupied by the analyst as such. It is certainly an approach which is not at all to be neglected that he managed to articulate quite crudely; and indeed what can it mean that one might feel that it is rather brazen for the analyst in his function to have the place of the phallus?

The fact is that the phallus of the Other is very precisely what incarnates, not the desirable, the *eromenos*, even though its function is that of the postman through whom any object whatsoever may be introduced to the function of object of desire, but that of desirer, of the *eron*. It is in so far as the analyst is the presence which supports an entirely veiled desire that he is the incarnated "*Che vuoi*?"

I will recall later that one can say that the Φ factor of the phallic value constitutive of the very object of desire is supported and incarnated by him. But it is a function of subjectivity so redoubtable, so problematic, so projected into such a radical otherness, and it is indeed for that reason that I led you and brought you to this crossroads last year as being the essential mainspring of the whole question of transference: what should this desire of the analyst be?

For the moment what is proposed to us, is to find a topological model, a transcendental aesthetic model which would allow us to account at once for all these functions of the phallus. Is there something which resembles that, which like that is what one calls in topology a closed surface, a notion which takes on its function, to which we have the



right to give a homologous value, an equivalent value to the function of significance because we can define it by the function of the cut. I already referred to it on several occasions. The cut, I mean with a pair of scissors, a rubber ball, in order to prevent through habits that one could qualify as age-old in many cases a crowd of problems that are posed from immediately striking us.

When I thought I was telling you very simple things in connection with the interior eight on the surface of the torus, and when subsequently I unrolled my torus believing that it was self- evident, that I had a long time ago explained to you that there was a way of opening the torus by cutting it with a scissors and when you open the torus crossways you have an open belt, the torus is reduced to that (see the schema) and it is enough at that moment to try to project onto this surface the rectangle which we would have done better to call the quadrilateral, to apply onto it what we have designated previously in this form of the inverted eight in order to see what happens and to what something is effectively limited, something can be chosen, distinguished between a field limited by this cut and, if you wish, what is outside, something which is not so obvious, does not immediately strike us.

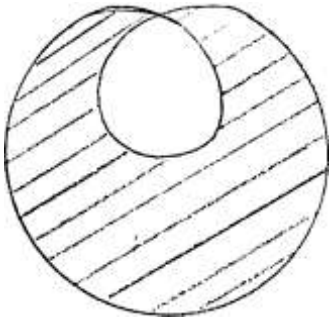
Nevertheless, this little image that I represented for you seems in the first shock to have created problems for certain people. It must be therefore that it is not so easy.

The next time I will not only have to return to it, but to show you something which I have no reason to make a mystery of beforehand, because after all if some of you want to prepare yourselves for it, I am indicating to them that I will speak about another type of surface defined as such and purely in terms of surface, whose name I already pronounced and which will be very useful for us. This is called in English, where the works are the most numerous, a cross-cap, something which means something like a *bonnet croisé*. It has been translated into French on certain occasions by the term *mitre*, with which effectively it may have a rough resemblance.

This form of topologically defined surface involves in itself certainly a purely speculative and mental attraction which, I hope will not be lost on you. I will take care to give you figurative representations of it which I have done in great quantity, and especially from the angles which are not the ones of course from which it interests mathematicians or in which you will find them represented in some works about topology. My figures will preserve all their original function, while accepting that I do not give them the same usage and that it is not the same things that I was looking for.

You should know however that what it is a matter of forming in a tangible, sensitive fashion, is designed to involve as a support a certain number of reflections and others which are subsequently expected, your own on this occasion, to involve what I might call a mutative

value, which will allow you to think out the logical things with which I began in a different fashion which does not keep them moored for you to the famous Eulerian circles.



Far from this interior field of the eight being obligatorily and forever an excluded field, at least in a topological shape, a very tangible fact and one of the most representable and the most amusing of cross-caps in question, in so far as far from this field being a field to exclude, it is on the contrary to be completely kept.

Of course we should not allow this to go to our heads. There would be a quite simple way of imagining it in a way that should be held onto. It is not very difficult. You only have to take something which has a more or less appropriate shape: a slack circle and, twisting it in a certain fashion and folding it, to have in front a little tongue whose bottom would be in continuity with the rest of the edges. Only there is all the same the following: namely that this is never anything but an artifice, namely that this edge is effectively always the same edge.

This indeed is what is in question: it is a question of knowing very differently whether this surface makes a case for us which finds itself intuitively, aesthetically symbolised. Another possible import of the signifying limit of the field marked out is realisable in a way that is different and in a way immediately obtainable through the simple application of the properties of a surface which you are not used to up to the present. This is what we will see the next time.

Seminar 20: Wednesday 16 May 1962

(Edited from notes)

I am justifying the necessity of these lucubrations about the surface. It is obvious that what I am telling you about it is the result of a reflection. You have not forgotten that the notion of surface in topology is not a self-evident one and it is not given as an intuition. The surface is not something self-evident.

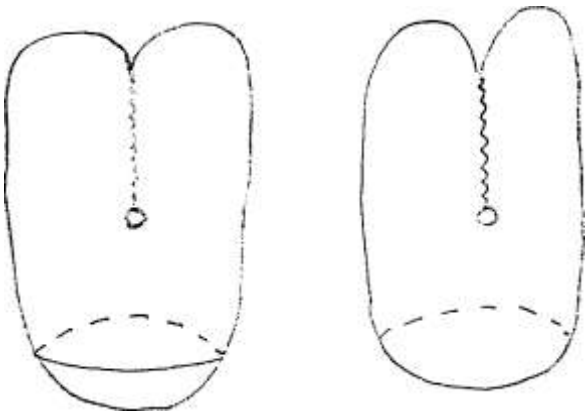
How can it be tackled? Starting from what introduces it into the real, namely what would show that space is not this open and contemptible extension that Bergson thought it was, space is not as empty as he thought, it conceals many mysteries.

Let us pose certain terms at the beginning.

It is certain that a first essential thing in the notion of surface is that of face: there are two faces or two sides in it. This is obvious if we plunge this surface into space. But to appropriate to ourselves what the notion of surface can take on for us, it is necessary that we should know what it presents us with from its dimensions alone, indeed what it can give us *qua* surface dividing space by its dimensions alone, suggests to us that we should reconstruct space in a different way to the intuition we believe we have of it. In other words, I propose to you to consider it as more obvious (imaginary capture), much more certain (linked to action), more structural to start from the surface to define space - which I hold we have few guarantees about - let us say rather to define the locus (*lieu*), than to start from the locus to define the surface - cf the locus in philosophy. The locus of the Other already has its place in our seminar. To define the face of a surface, it is not enough to say that it is on one side and on the other, all the more so because that has nothing satisfying about it, and if something (2) gives us a Pascalian vertigo, it is indeed these two regions into which an infinite plane is supposed to divide the whole of space.

How define this notion of face? It is the field on which a line, a path can be extended without having to meet an edge. But there are surfaces without edges: the plane to infinity, the sphere, the torus and several others which are surfaces without edge being reduced practically to a single one: the cross-cap or *mitre* or bonnet pictured here (1).

In learned books this is what the cross-cap is: cut in order to be inserted onto another surface (2).

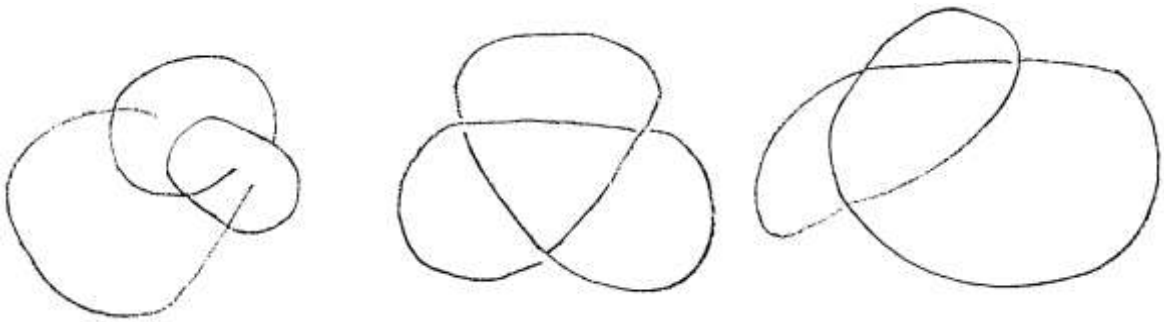


These three surfaces, sphere, torus, cross-cap are elementary closed surfaces to the composition of which all the other closed surfaces can be reduced.

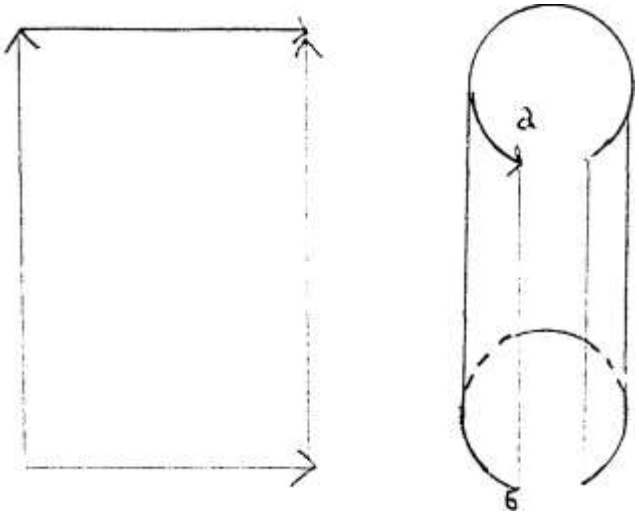
I will nevertheless call figure 1 the cross-cap. Its real name is the projective plane of Riemann's theory of surfaces whose plane is the base. It brings into play at least the fourth dimension.

Already, for us depth psychologists, the third dimension creates problem enough for us to consider it as not very assured. Nevertheless in this simple figure, the cross-cap, the fourth is already necessarily implied.

The elementary knot made the other day with a piece of string already presentifies the fourth dimension. There is no valid topological theory unless we make intervene something which will lead us to the fourth dimension.



If you want to try to reproduce this knot using the torus by following the circuits and the detours that you can make on the surface of a torus, you could after several circuits return to a line which closes on itself like the knot above. You cannot do it unless the line cuts itself; since [on] the surface of the torus you will not be able to mark that the line passes above or below, there is no means of making this knot on the torus. It is on the contrary perfectly makeable on the cross-cap. If this surface implies the presence of the fourth dimension, it is a beginning of the proofs that the most simple knot implies the fourth dimension. I am going to tell you how you can imagine this surface, the cross-cap. It will not impose its necessity by that even, for us, its manoeuvre. It is not unrelated to the torus, it even has the most profound relationship to the torus. The simplest fashion to show you this relationship is to recall to you how a torus is constructed when it is decomposed in a polyhedric shape, namely by bringing it back to its fundamental polygon. Here, this fundamental polygon, is a quadrilateral. If you fold this quadrilateral onto itself, you will get a tube by joining the edges.

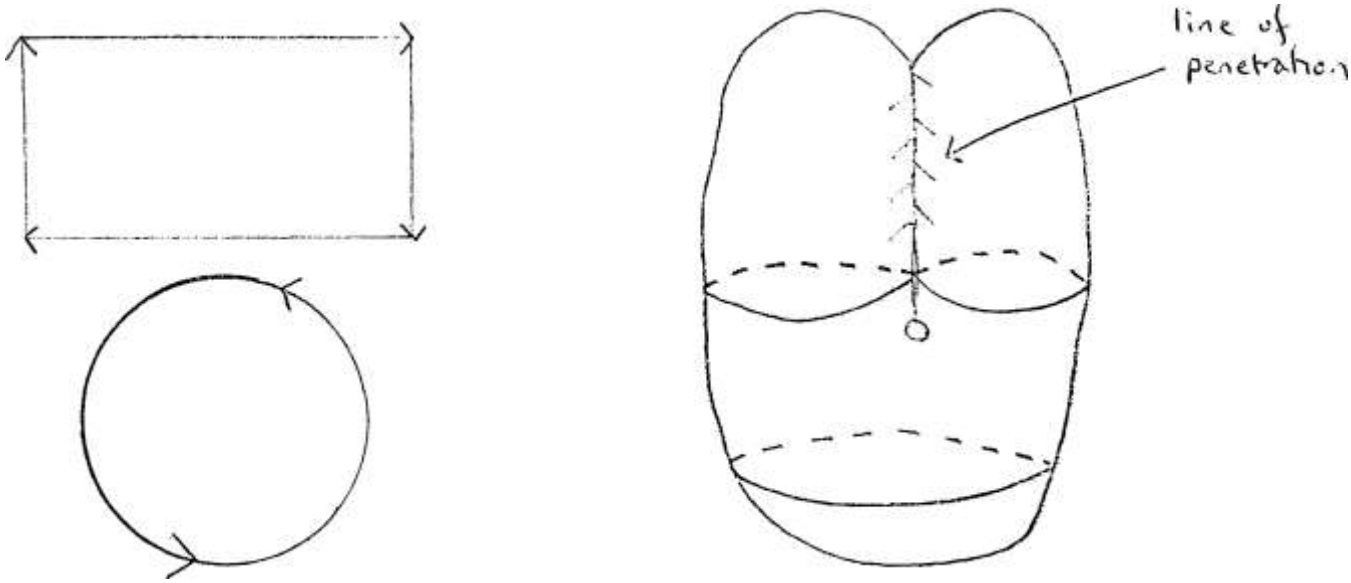


If you vectorize these edges by agreeing that only the vectors which go in the same direction can be stuck to one another, the beginning of one vector being applied to the point where the other vector terminates, from then on you have all the coordinates for defining the structure of the torus.

If you make a surface whose fundamental polygon is thus defined by vectors all going in the same direction on the basic quadrilateral, if you start from a polygon defined in this way, that will give you two edges or even a single one, you get what I am materializing for you as the cross-cap.

I will come back to its function of symbolising something and it will be clearer when this name serves as a support.

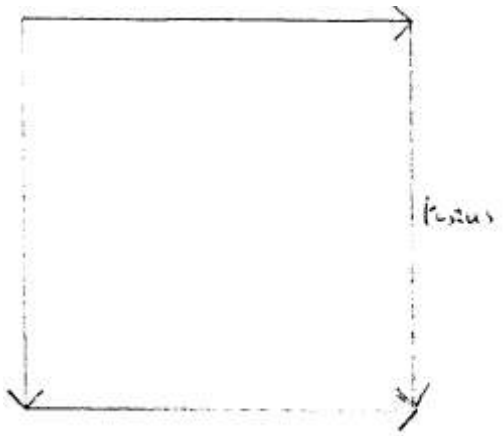
In section with its jawbone, it is not what you think, this is a line of penetration thanks to which, what is in front, underneath, is a h alf sphere, above the front wall passes by penetration into the opposite wall and comes back infront.



Why this shape more than any other? Its fundamental polygon is distinct from that of the torus. A polygon, whose edges are marked by vectors in the same direction, and distinct

from that of the torus, which starts from one point to go to the opposite point, what sort of surface does that give?

From now on the problematic points of these surfaces become separated out. I introduced you to surfaces without edges in connection with the face. If there is no edge how can you define the face?



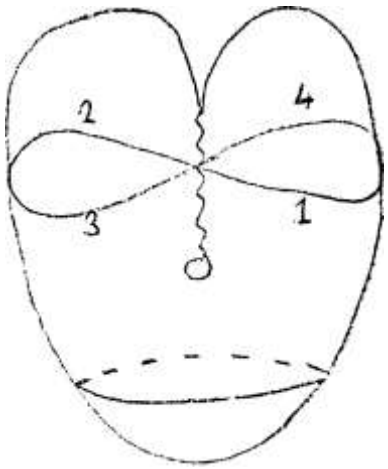
And if we prohibit ourselves as far as possible from plunging our model too quickly into the third dimension, where there is no edge we will be assured that there is an inside and an outside. This is what is suggested by this surface without edges *par excellence* which is the sphere. I want to detach you from this vague intuition: there is what is within and what is without.

Nevertheless for the other surfaces, this notion of inside and outside disappears. For the infinite plane, it would not suffice. For the torus, intuition apparently fits sufficiently because there is an inside of a bicycle tube and an outside. Nevertheless what happens in the field through which this outside space traverses the torus, namely the central hole, is the topological kernel of what gave its interest to the torus and where the relationship of inside to outside is illustrated by something which may touch us.

Notice that up to Freud, traditional anatomy, ever so little a *Wissenschaft* in the case of Paracelsus and Aristotle, always took account, among the orifices of the body, of the sense organs as authentic orifices.

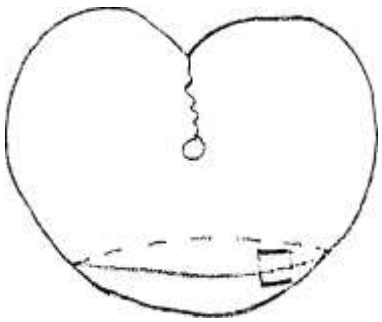
Analytic theory, in so far as it is structured by the function of the libido, made a very narrow choice among the orifices and does not speak to us about sensory orifices as orifices, except to refer them back to the signifier of the orifices first chosen. When one makes of scoptophilia a scoptophagia, as Fenichel does, one is saying that scoptophilic identification is an oral identification.

The privilege of the oral, anal and genital orifices is of interest to us in that they are not really orifices which end up on the inside of the body: the digestive tube is only a passage, it is open to the outside. The true inside is the mesodermic interior and the orifices which lead into it exist in the form of the eyes or of the ear which analytic theory never mentions as such except on the cover of the review *La Psychanalyse*. This is the real import given to the central hole of the torus; even though it is not a real inside, but that it suggests to us something of the order of a passage from the inside to the outside.



This gives us an idea which comes from inspecting this closed surface, the cross-cap. Imagine something infinitely flat which moves about on this surface passing from the outside 1 of the closed surface to the inside 2 and continues further to the inside 3 of the line of penetration where it re-emerges at the outside 4 (at the back).

This shows the difficulty of defining the inside-outside distinction, even when a closed surface, a surface without edges is involved. I have only opened up the question in order to show you that the important thing in this figure is that this line of penetration should be held by you to be null and void. One cannot materialize it on the blackboard without bringing this line of penetration into play, because ordinary spatial intuition requires it to be shown, but speculation takes no account of it. One can make this line of penetration slide indefinitely. There is nothing of the order of a seam. There is no passage possible. Because of this, the problem of the inside and the outside arises in all its confusion.



There are two orders of consideration as regards a surface: metrical and topological. All metrical considerations must be put aside: in effect starting from this square, I could give the whole surface. From a topological point of view, that has no meaning. Topologically the nature of the structural relationships which constitute the surface is present at every point: the inside face is merged with the outside face for each one of its points and its properties.

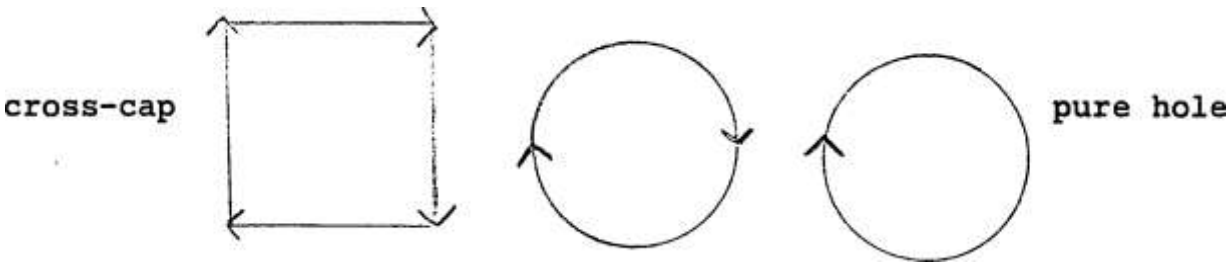
To mark the interest of this, we are going to evoke a question never yet posed which concerns the signifier: does a signifier not always have a surface as a locus? This may appear a bizarre question. But it has at least the interest, if it is posed, of suggesting a dimension. At first approach a graph (*graphique*) as such requires a surface. If it is a fact that the objection can be raised that a raised stone, a Greek column is a signifier and that it has a volume, do not be so sure of it, so sure of being able to introduce the notion of volume before being well assured about the notion of surface. Especially if, in putting things to the test, the notion of

volume cannot be grasped otherwise than starting from what envelopes it. No raised stone has interested us for anything else, I would not say but for its envelope - this would be going towards a sophism - but for what it envelopes.

Before being about volumes, architecture came about by mobilising, by arranging surfaces around a void. Raised stones are used to make alignments or tables, to make something which is of use because of the hole around it.

Because this is the remainder that we have to deal with. If, in grasping the nature of face, I started from a surface with edges in order to point out to you that the criterion failed us in surfaces without edges, if it is possible to show you a fundamental surface without edges, where the definition of the face is not necessary, because the surface without edges is not suitable for resolving the problem of inside and outside, we ought to take into account the distinction between a surface without and a surface with: it has the closest possible relationship with what interests us, namely the *hole* which is to be made enter positively as such into the theory of surfaces.

This is not a verbal artifice. In the combinatory theory of general topology, every triangulatable surface, namely one composable of little triangular pieces that you could stick onto one another, torus or cross-cap, can be reduced by means of the fundamental polygon to a composition of the sphere to which there would be added more or less toric elements, cross-cap elements and the indispensible elements of pure holes represented by this vector looping back on itself.



Cannot a signifier, in its most radical essence, be envisaged simply as a cut > < in a surface, these two signs "greater: >" and "smaller: <" only impose themselves by their cut-structure inscribed on something where there is always marked, not simply the continuity of a plane on which what follows will be inscribed, but also the vectorial direction where this will always be rediscovered? Why has the signifier in its corporal that is to say vocal incarnation always been presented to us as essentially discontinuous? We had therefore no need of surface: discontinuity constitutes it. The interruption in the successive forms part of its structure.

This temporal dimension of the functioning of the signifying chain which I at first articulated as succession, has as a consequence that the scansion introduces an additional element than the division of the modulatory interruption: it introduces haste which I inserted *qua* haste in logic. It is an old work: "*Le Temps logique*".

The step that I am trying to get you to take has already begun to be traced, it is the one in which discontinuity is bound to what is the essence of the signifier, namely difference. If that on which we have made pivot, have ceaselessly brought back this function of the

signifier, is to draw your attention to the fact that, even by repeating the same, the same by being repeated is inscribed as distinct. Where is the interpolation of a difference? Does it reside only in the cut - it is here that the introduction of the topological dimension beyond the temporal scansion interests us - or in something else which we will call the simple possibility of being different, the existence of the differential battery which constitutes the signifier and through which we cannot confuse synchrony with simultaneity at the root of the phenomenon, synchrony which makes the same reappear?

It is as distinct from what it repeats that the signifier reappears, and what can be considered as distinguishable is the interpolation of difference in so far as we can pose the identity of "a and a" as fundamental in the signifying function, namely that difference is in the cut, or in the synchronic possibility which constitutes the signifying difference. In any case, what we repeat is only different because it can be inscribed.

It remains nonetheless that the function of the cut is of the greatest importance for us in what can be written. And it is here that the notion of the topological surface ought to be introduced into our mental functioning because it is only here that the function of the cut takes its interest.

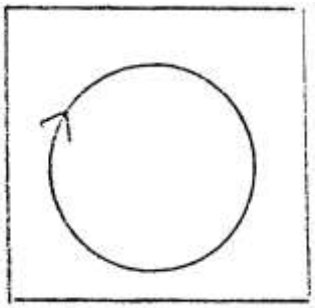
Inscription bringing us back to memory is an objection to be refuted. The memory which interests us analysts, is to be distinguished from an organic memory, the one which would respond to the same suction of the real in the same way for the organism to defend itself from it, as well as the one which maintains homeostasis, because the organism does not recognise the same which is renewed *qua* different. Organic memory memorises (*même-orise*).

Our memory is something different: it intervenes in function of the unary trait marking the unique time and has as a support inscription. Between the stimulus and the response, the inscription, the printing, ought to be recalled in terms of Gutenberg's printing press. The first rough outline of psychophysical theory against which we rebel is always atomist; it is always in the imprinting of surface schemas that this psychophysics takes its first foundation. It is not enough to say that it is insufficient before one has found something different.

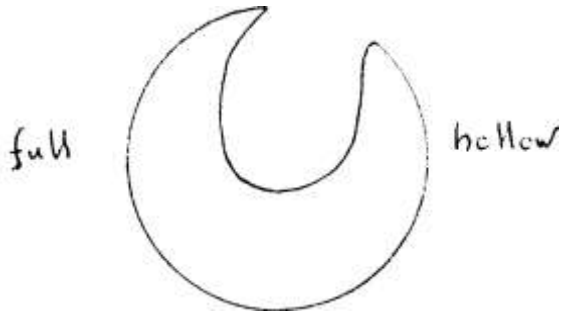
Because if it is of great interest to see that the first theory of relational life is inscribed in interesting terms which express only without knowing it the very structure of the signifier under the masked forms of distinct effects of contiguity and continuity (*associationism*) it is good to show what was recognised and miscognised as signifying dimension was the effects of the signifier in the structure of the idealist world from which this psychophysics never detached itself.

Inversely what was introduced by the *Gestalt* is not enough to account for what happens at the level of vital phenomena, because of a fundamental ignorance which is expressed by the rapidity with which one holds as certain coordinates which everything contradicts. The so-called good form of the circumference that the organism is supposed to strive on every plane - subjective or objective - to try to reproduce is contrary to every observation of organic forms. I would say to the Gestaltists that a donkey's ear resembles a cornet, an arum, a Möbius surface. A Möbius surface is the most simple illustration of the cross-cap: it is constructed with a strip of paper, the two ends of which one sticks together

after having twisted it, so that the infinitely flat being which goes along it can follow it without ever crossing an edge. This shows the ambiguity of the notion of face. Because it is not enough to say that it is a unilateral surface, with a single face, as certain mathematicians formulate it. A formal definition is a different thing, it nevertheless remains that there is a coalescence for each point of the two faces and this is what interests us. For us who are not satisfied to say unilateral under the pretext that these two faces are always present, it nevertheless remains that we can manifest at every point the scandal for our intuition of this relationship of the two faces.



If in effect on a plane we trace a circle in a clockwork direction, from the other side, by transparency, the same arrow turns in the opposite direction. The infinitely flat being, the little personage on the Möbius surface, if he carries with him a circle turning around him in the clockwise direction, this circle will turn always in the same direction, so that from the other side of its point of departure what will be inscribed will turn in the horary direction, namely in a sense opposite to what would happen on a normal strip on the plane: it is not inverted.



This is why these surfaces are defined as non-orientable and nevertheless are no less oriented. Even though desire is not articulatable we cannot say for all that that it is not articulated. Because these little ears in the Möbius strip, however non-orientable they may be, are more oriented than a normal strip. Make a conical belt for yourself. Turn it over: what was open below is now so on top. But turn over the Möbius strip: it will always have the same shape. Even when you turn over the object, it will always have the sunken hump on the left, the swollen hump on the right: a non-orientable surface is therefore much more oriented than an orientable surface.

Something which goes still further and surprises the mathematicians who with a smile refer the reader to experience, is that, if in this Möbius strip using a scissors you make a cut at an equal distance from the most accessible points of the edges (it has only a single edge), if you make a circle, the cut closes on itself, you produce a circle, a loop, a closed Jordan curve.

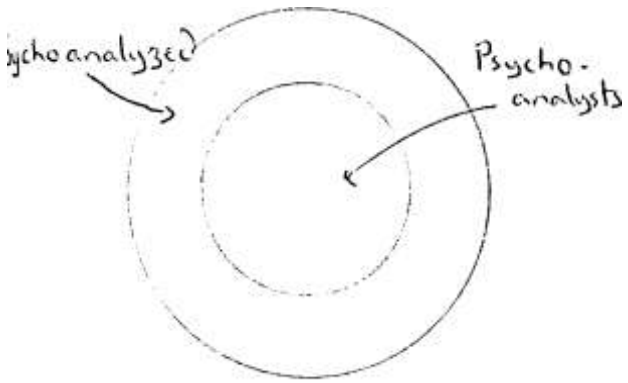
Now this cut, not alone leaves the surface entire, but transforms the non-orientable surface into an orientable surface, namely into a strip which, if you colour one of the sides, a whole side will remain blank, contrary to what would have happened earlier on the entire Möbius surface: everything would have been coloured without the paintbrush changing face. The simple intervention of cut has changed the omnipresent structure of all the points of the surface, as I told you. And if I ask you to tell me the difference between the object before the cut and this one, there is no way of doing it, this to introduce the interest of the function of the cut.

The quadrilateral polygon originates the torus and the cross-cap. If I never introduced the true verbalisation of this shape ◊, stamp, desire, uniting the $ to the o in the $ ◊ o, this little quadrilateral should be read: the subject *qua* marked by the signifier is properly in the phantasy, the cut of o.

Next time, you will see how this will give you a functioning support to articulate the question: how what we can define, isolate starting from demand as field of desire, in its ungraspable aspect, can, by some torsion or other, knot itself to what taken from another angle is defined as the field of the object o, how can desire be equal to o. This is what I introduced and what will give you a model useful even in your practice.

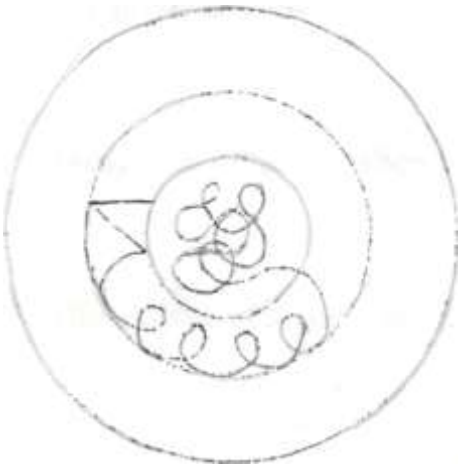
Seminar 21: Wednesday 23 May 1962

Why is a signifier grasped by (*saisi de*) the slightest thing? Can it grasp the slightest thing? Here is the question, a question which perhaps it is not excessive to say has not yet been posed because of the form that logic classically took on. In effect the principle of predication which the universal proposition is implies only one thing: that what one grasps are nullifiable beings: the dictum of *omni et nullo*. For those for whom these terms are not familiar and who consequently do not understand very well, I recall that this is what I have been in the process of explaining to you for a number of occasions now, namely taking the support of the Eulerian circle all the more legitimately in that what it is a question of substituting is something different, the Eulerian circle like what I might call any naive circle, the circle in connection with which the question does not arise of knowing whether it rings a fragment, a piece. The proper of the circle, whether or not it detaches a piece of this implied hypothetical surface, is that it can be progressively reduced to nothing. The possibility of the universal, is nullity. All professors, I told you one day - because I chose this example in order not to fall always into the same problems - all professors are literate; well then, if by chance somewhere no professor merits to be qualified as literate, this does not mean that we will have professors who are *nuls*. Notice carefully that this is not the same thing as saying that there are no professors. The proof is that we do have stupid (*nuls*) professors on occasion. When I say "to have", take this to have in the strong sense, in the sense that is involved. It is not a slippery word that lets the soap fall. When I say "we have them", that means that we are used to having them. In the same way we have a load of things like that: we have the republic, as the countryman with whom I spoke not long ago said: this year, we had hail, and then afterwards the boy scouts. Whatever may be the definitional precariousness for the countryman of these meteors, the verb "to have" has therefore here indeed its meaning.



We also have for example psychoanalysts; and it is obviously much more complicated because psychoanalysts begin to make us enter into the order of existential definition. We enter into it by way of the condition. We say for example: there is not, no one can call himself a psychoanalyst if he has not been psychoanalysed. Well now, there is a great danger of believing that this relationship is homogeneous with what we evoked previously in the sense that, to make use of the Eulerian circles, there would be the circle of those psychoanalysed; but, as everyone knows, all psychoanalysts having to be psychoanalysed, the circle of psychoanalysts could therefore be traced as included in the circle of the

psychoanalysed. I do not need to say that if our experience with psychoanalysts was not able to be analysed, it is probably because things are not so simple, namely that after all if it is not obvious at the level of the professor that the very fact of functioning as professor can draw into the professor's breast, like a siphon, something which empties him of all contact with the effects of the letter, it is on the contrary quite obvious for the psychoanalyst that this is the whole problem. It is not enough to refer the question on to: what does being psychoanalysed mean? Because of course what one believes one is doing there, and of course naturally, would divert nobody from putting in the forefront the question of what it is to be psychoanalysed. But in the relationship to the psychoanalyst, this is not what must be grasped, if we wish to lay hold of the conception of the psychoanalyst: it is to know what it means to the psychoanalyst to be psychoanalysed, this *qua* psychoanalyst and not as part of the psychoanalysed. I do not know whether I am making myself understood, but I am going to bring you back once again to the abc, to elementary things. If all the same in listening to the oldest example in logic, the first step that was made to push Socrates into a hole, namely: "all men are mortal", ever since then we have been deafened with this formula, I do not know whether you have had the time to become hardened to it, but for anyone who is a little fresh, the very fact of promoting this example at the heart of logic cannot but be the source of some unease, of some feeling of fraudulence. Because what interest has such a formula for us, if it is man that we are trying to grasp? Unless what is involved - and it is precisely what the concentric circles of Eulerian inclusion dodge - is not to know that there is a circle of mortals



and inside it the circle of man, which has strictly no interest, it is to know how the fact that he is mortal concerns man, to catch hold of the whirlwind which is produced somewhere at the centre of the notion of man because of the fact of his conjunction to the predicate mortal, and that this indeed is why we are chasing after something; when we speak about man, it is precisely about this whirlwind, this hole which is made there in the middle somewhere that we touch.

Recently, I opened an excellent book by an American author whose work one can say augments the patrimony of thinking and of logical elucidation. I am not going to mention his name because you are going to try to find out who it is. And why do I not do it? Because I, for my part, had the surprise of finding in the pages where he works over so well such a lively sense of the actuality of the progress of logic, where precisely my interior eight intervenes.

He does not make the same use of it at all as I do. Nevertheless I was led to the thought that some mandarins among my listeners would come to tell me one day that it was there that I found it. As regards the originality of the passage I rely in effect on M Jakobson for my strongest reference. I have to say that in this case I believe I began to push forward metaphor and metonymy in our theory sometime around the discourse of Rome which has been published - it was in speaking with Jakobson that he said to me: "Of course, this business of metaphor and metonymy, we worked that out together, you remember, on July 14 1950". As for the logician in question, he has been dead for a long time, and his little interior eight incontestably precedes its promotion here. But when he enters boldly into his examination of the universal affirmative, he makes use of an example which has the merit of not being found everywhere. He says: "All saints are men, all men are passionate, therefore all saints are passionate." He gathers this together because you should clearly sense, in such an example, that the problem is indeed that of knowing where is this most exterior predicative passion, from this universal syllogism to know what sort of passion is appropriate to a heart in order to produce sanctity. I thought this morning about all that, I mean to say it to you like that in order to make you sense what is involved as regards what I called a certain whirlwind movement. What are we trying to get close to in our apparatus concerning surfaces, surfaces in the sense that we intend giving them here a usage which, to reassure my listeners, uneasy perhaps about my not altogether classical excursions, is all the same something which is nothing other than to renew, to re-interrogate the Kantian function of the schema. I think that the radical illogicality in experience involved in the inclusion of the relationship of extension to understanding, to Euler's circles - this whole direction was begun with "*Le Temps logique*" - is it not in its very deviations the recalling of what was, at its beginning, forgotten, what was at the beginning the object involved - even if it were the purest one: is it or will it be, whatever one does, the object of desire - and that if it is a matter of circumscribing it in order to lay hold of it logically, namely with language, it is because first of all it is a matter of grasping it as object of our desire, having grasped it to keep it, which means to enclose it and that this return of inclusion to the forefront of logical formation, finds its root in this need to possess in which there is grounded our relationship to the object as such of desire.

Begriff evokes grasping because it is from running after the grasp of an object of our desire that we have formed the *Begriff*. And everyone knows that everything that we want to possess for desire, and not for the satisfaction of a need, flees us and slips away from us. What moral preaching does not evoke it! At the end we possess nothing! All this must be left behind, said the celebrated cardinal, how sad it is! We possess nothing, says moralistic preaching, because there is death.

What is promised us at the level of the fact of real death is not what is in question; it is not for nothing that for one long year I made you travel in this space that my listeners described as between-two-deaths. The suppression of real death would settle nothing in this affair of the flight of the object of desire because it was the other death that was involved, the one which brings it about that even if we were not mortal, even if we had the promise of eternal life, the question still remains open whether this "eternal life", I mean from which there would be excluded any promise of an end, is not conceivable as a form of eternally dying.

It undoubtedly is, because it is our day-to-day condition, and we should take it into account in our logic as analysts because this is the way it is, if psychoanalysis has a meaning and if Freud was not mad. Because this is what designates this point called the death instinct.

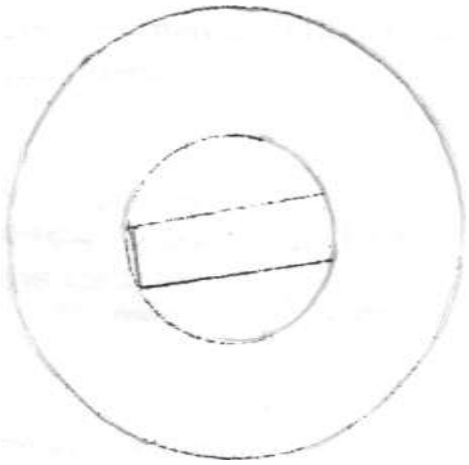
Already the physiologist who was the greatest genius, one might say, of all those who have the sense of this angle of the biological approach, Bichat, said: "Life is the totality of the forces which resist death." If something of our experience can be reflected, may one day take on a stable meaning in this very difficult plane, it is this precession produced by Freud of this formula of the whirlwind of death to the flanks of which life clings in order to avoid falling into it. Because the only thing to be added to render this function quite clear to anyone, is that it is enough not to confuse death with the inanimate, when in inanimate nature it is enough to bend down in order to pick up the trace of what is a dead form, a fossil, in order to grasp that the presence of death in nature is something other than the inanimate.

Is it so sure that these shells and rubbish are a life-function? This is to resolve the problem a little easily when it is a matter of knowing why life twists itself like that. As we take up again the question of the signifier already tackled by way of the trace, the ironic idea came to me, suddenly emerging from the Platonic dialogues, of thinking that this ever so slightly scandalous imprint that Plato takes note of in thinking of the mark left in the sand of the stadium by the bare backsides of the beloveds, expressions towards which the adoration of their lovers precipitated and which their propriety consisted in effacing, they would have done better to leave it in place. If the lovers had been less clouded by the object of their desire, they would have been capable of taking advantage of it and of seeing in it the outline of this curious line that I am proposing to you today, such is the image of the blindness that every desire from being too lively carries with it.

Let us begin again therefore from our line which must indeed be taken in the shape that it is given to us: closed and nullifiable, the line of the original zero of the effective history of logic. If we learn in it, already coming back to it, that *null* is the root of all, at least the experience will not have been made in vain.

This line, for us, we call the cut (*la coupure*), a line - this is our starting point - that we must hold *a priori* to be closed. This is the essence of its signifying nature. Nothing can ever prove to us, since it is in the nature of each one of these circuits to ground itself as different, nothing in experience can allow us to ground it as being the same line. It is precisely this that allows us to apprehend the real. It is in the fact that its return being structurally different, always another time, if it resembles it, then there is a suggestion, a probability that the resemblance comes from the real. There is no other way of introducing in a correct fashion the function of the similar (*du semblable*). But this is only an indication that I am giving you. To go further, I think I repeated to you on several occasions if only not to have to come back to it again, that, all the same in recalling it, I refer you to this work by a precocious genius and like all precocious geniuses one who died too soon, Jean Nicaud, "*La Géométrie du monde sensible*", in which the passage concerning the axiomatic line - perhaps some of you who are genuinely interested in our progress might consult it - shows clearly that it is chimerical to dodge the function of the signifying circle in this analysis of sensible experience, leading the author, despite the incontestable interest of what he puts forward to the paralogism which you will not fail to find in it. At the beginning we take this line whose deceptive proof that the inside of the line was something univocal was first upset for you by

the existence of the function of defined topological surfaces, because it is enough that the line should be drawn on a surface defined in a certain fashion, the torus for example for it to be apparent that, while retaining its function of cut, it is not able in any way to fulfill here the same function as on the surface that you will allow me without further ado to call here fundamental, that of the sphere, namely to define a piece as nullifiable for example. For those who come here for the first time, this means a closed line drawn here or again this one which can in no way be reduced to zero, namely that the function of the cut that they introduce into the surface is something which every time gives rise to a problem. I think that what is involved as regards the signifier, is this reciprocal liaison which ensures that if on the one hand, as I made tangible for you the last time in connection with the Möbius surface, this nice distorted little ear of which I gave you a few examples, the median cut with respect to its field transforms it into a different surface which is no longer this Möbius surface. If it is a fact that the Möbius surface is - I have more than one reservation about this - can be said to have only one face, undoubtedly the one which results from the cut had two faces. What is involved for us, taking this angle to interrogate the effects of desire by approaching it through the signifier, is to perceive how the field of the cut, the gap of the cut, by organising itself into a surface gives rise for us to all the different shapes in which there can be ordered the moments of our experience of desire.

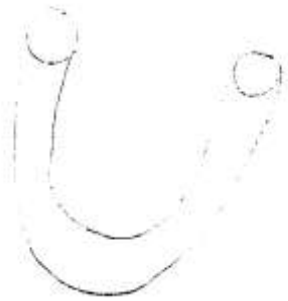


When I tell you that it is starting from the cut that there are organised the shapes of the surface involved for us in our experience, since they are able to bring about the effect of the signifier, I illustrate it - it is not the first time I have illustrated it -: here is the sphere, here is our central cut taken from an inverse angle to that of the Eulerian circle. What interests us, is not the piece which is necessarily detached on the sphere by the closed line, it is the cut thus produced and, if you wish, already here and now the hole. It is quite clear that everything that we are going to find at the end must already be given, in other words that here already a hole has all its meaning, a meaning made particularly obvious by the fact of our having recourse to the sphere. A hole here makes the inside and the outside communicate with one another. There is only one little piece of bad luck: it is that once the hole is made, there is no longer either an inside or an outside, as is only too obvious from the fact that it is the easiest thing in the world to turn this sphere with a hole in it inside out. We are dealing with the universal, primordial, creation - that of the eternal potter. There is nothing easier than to turn a bowl, that is to say a skullcap. The hole would then not have any great meaning for us, if there were not this other thing to support this fundamental intuition - I think that this is familiar to you today - namely that avatars happen to a hole, a cut, and the first possible

one is that two points of the edge are coupled: one of the first possibilities for a hole is that of becoming two holes.

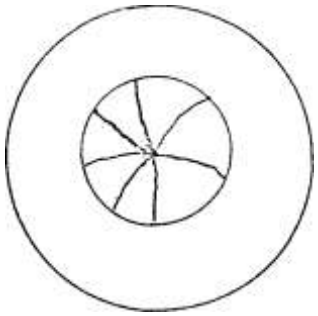
Certain people have said to me: why do you not refer your images to embryology? Believe me they are never very far from it. This is what I am explaining before you, but it would only be an alibi because for me to refer to embryology here is to give myself over to the mysterious power of life which for some unknown reason it really believes can only be introduced into the world from the angle of, through the mediation of this globule, of this sphere which is multiplied, is depressed, is invaginated, is swallowed by itself, then peculiarly at least up to the level of the betrachia, the blastopore, namely this something which is not a hole in the sphere, but a piece of the sphere which has entered into the other.

There are enough doctors here who have done a little bit of elementary embryology to remember this something which begins to divide itself in two to initiate this curious organ that is called the neuroenteric canal which is completely unjustifiable by any function, this communication from the inside of the neural tube to the digestive tube being rather to be considered as a baroque peculiarity of evolution which moreover is promptly reabsorbed: in subsequent evolution nothing more is said about it.

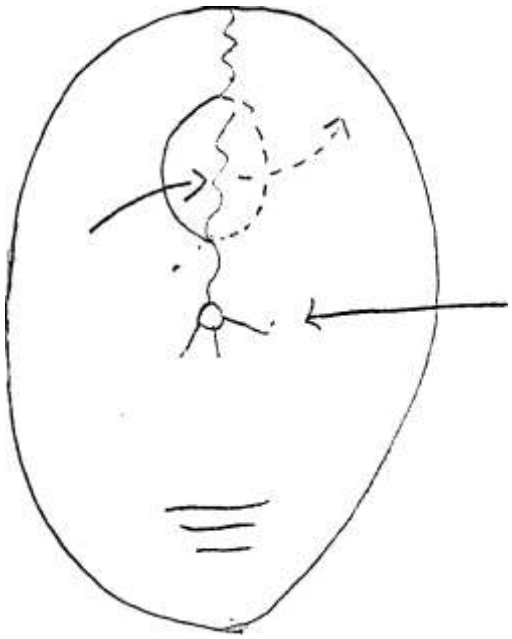


But perhaps matters would take a new turn if they were taken as a metabolism, a metamorphosis guided by elements of structure whose presence and homogeneity with the plane on which we are moving about in the guise of a signifier are the term of what is a sort of pre-vital isolation of the trace of something which could perhaps lead us to formalisations which even on the plane of the organisation of biological experience might prove fruitful. In any case, it is these two isolated holes at the surface of the sphere, which connected to one another and then very extended then connected, gave us the torus. This is not new. Simply I would like to clearly articulate the result for you; the result first of all, is that there is something which for us supports the intuition of the torus, it is that: a macaroni which connects up with itself, which bites its own tail this is what is what is most exemplary in the function of the hole. There is one in the middle of macaroni and there is a draught, which means that in passing through the hoop that it forms there is a hole which makes the outside communicate with the inside, and then there is another still more formidable one which puts a hole at the heart of the surface which is here a hole while at the same time being completely outside. The image of boring is introduced; because what we are calling hole, is that: it is this

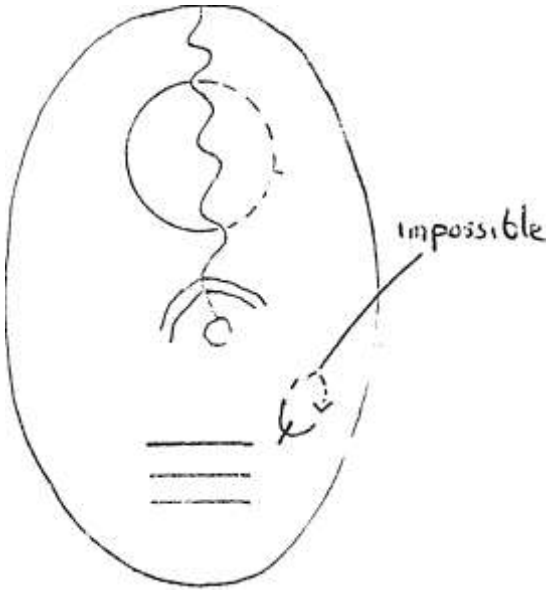
corridor drilled into a thickness, a fundamental image which as regards the geometry of the sensible world has never been sufficiently distinguished. And then the other hole which is the central hole of the surface, namely the hole that I would call the hole that causes a draught. What I am claiming to advance to pose our problems, is that this irreducible draught-hole, if we ring it with a cut, is properly where there belongs, in the effects of the signifying function, o, the object as such. This means that the object is missed, because in no case could there anything here but the contour of the object, with all the meanings that you can give to the word contour. Another possibility opens out again which for us vivifies, gives its interest to the structuring and structural comparison of these surfaces, it is that the cut can be articulated



differently on a surface. We can enounce, formulate, wish that each point of the hole drawn here on the surface should be connected to its antipodal point, that without any division of the gap, the gap organises itself into a surface in a way which outlines it completely without the medium of this intermediary division. I showed you the last time and I will show you again: this can give us the surface described as the *bonnet* or cross-cap, namely something about which it would be well for you not to forget that the image which I gave you is only properly speaking a distorted image because what appears to each and everyone who has reflected on it for the first time, what creates an obstacle in it, is the question of this famous line of apparent penetration of the surface through itself which is necessary to represent it in our space. What I am designating here in a wavering line, I am doing to indicate that it must be considered as vacillating, not as fixed. In other words we never have to take into account everything which is paraded here on one side at the outside of the surface, which cannot pass to the outside of the other side because there is no real meeting of faces, but on the contrary could only pass from the other side to the inside therefore of the other face, I mean the other with respect to the observer placed here.



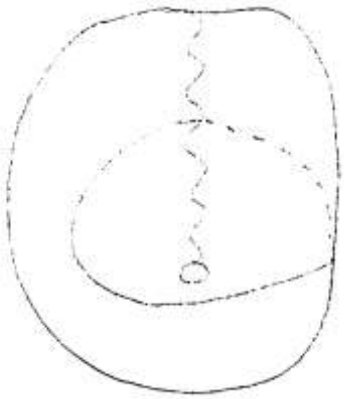
Therefore representing things in this way as regards this shape of surface depends only on a certain incapacity of intuitive shapes of space in three dimensions to allow the support of an image which really takes into account the continuity obtained under the name of this new surface called the cross-cap, the *bonnet*, in question. In other words what does this surface sustain? We will call it - since these are theses that I am advancing at first, and we will allow ourselves subsequently to give its meaning to the usage that I will propose to you to make of these different shapes - we call this surface, not the hole - because as you see, there is at least one that it avoids, whose shape completely disappears - but the place of the hole. This surface structured in this way is particularly suitable to make function before us this most ungraspable element which is called desire as such, in other words lack.



It remains nevertheless that this surface which fills the gap despite the belongingness which makes of all these points which we will call, if you wish, antipodal, equivalent points, they can nevertheless not function in this antipodal equivalence if there are not two privileged points. These are represented here by this little ring about which the perspicacity of one of

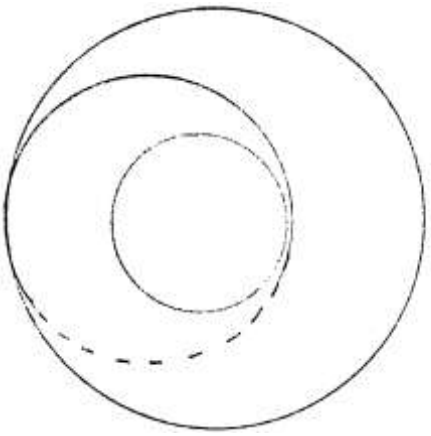
my listeners has already questioned me: "what in effect are you trying to represent with this little ring?" Of course it is not in any way something equivalent to the central hole of the torus because everything that, at whatever level you place yourself even from this privileged point, everything that is exchanged between one side and the other of the figure, passes here through this false decussation or crossing point which makes up the structure. Nevertheless what is indicated in this way by this form thus encircled is nothing other than the possibility underneath, if one can express oneself in this way, of this point passing from one outside surface to the other.

It is also the necessity of indicating that a non- privileged circle on this surface, a reducible circle, if you make it slide, if you extract it from its appearance of semi-occultation beyond the limit apparently here of re- crossing and of penetration to make it spread itself out, develop in this way towards the lower half of the figure, and therefore isolate itself here in a form outside the figure, it must always here turn around something which does not

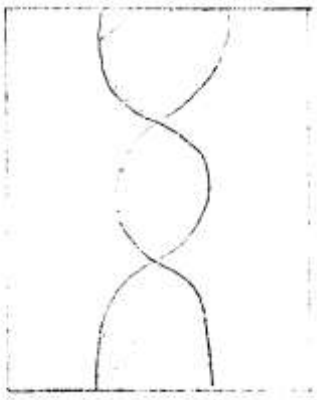


allow it in anyway to transform itself into what would be its other shape, the privileged form of a circle in so far as it does the circuit of the privileged point and must then to be depicted on the surface in question: this in effect cannot be equivalent to it in any way, since this shape is something which passes around the privileged point, the structural point around which is supported the whole structure of the surface thus defined. This double point and single point around which at once there is supported the very possibility of the criss-crossed structure of the *bonnet* or of the cross-cap, it is by this point that we symbolise what can introduce any object o whatsoever to the place of the hole. We know the functions and the nature of this privileged point: it is the phallus; the phallus in so far as it is through it as

operator that an object o can be put at the same place where in another structure (the torus) we only grasp its contour. This is the exemplary value of the structure of the cross-cap that



I am trying to articulate before you: the place of the hole, is in principle this point of a special structure in so far as it is a question of distinguishing it from other forms of point, the one for example defined by the overlapping of a cut on itself, the first possible form to be given to our interior eight. We cut something on a sheet of paper for example and a point will be defined by the fact that the cut retraverses a place that is already cut. We know well that this is in no way necessary for the cut to have a completely definable action on the surface and introduce into it this change which it is a matter for us of taking as a support to depict certain effects of the signifier. If we take the torus and cut it in this way, this gives this form that we have drawn here, passing to the other side of the torus, you see clearly that at no moment does this cut rejoin itself. Try the experiment on an old bicycle tube, you will see



what that gives: this will give a continuous organised surface of such a kind that it folds back twice on itself before rejoining itself. If it only were folded back once it would be a Möbius surface. Since it folds back twice, it gives a surface with two faces which is not identical to the one that I showed you the other day after the section - the Möbius surface - because that one folds back twice and once again in a different way - a Jordan ring.

The interest for us is to see what exactly this privileged point is in so far as it intervenes as such, specifies the piece where it remains irredducibly, giving to it the particular accent which allows it to designate for us at once the function according to which an object which has always been there, is even before the introduction of the reflections, the appearances that we have in the form of images, the object of desire. It only takes on this

effect from the effects of the function of the signifier and one only rediscovers in it its eternal destination as object, it is the only absolutely autonomous, primordial object with respect to the subject, decisive with respect to it to the point that my relationship to this object is in a way to be inverted.

That if in the phantasy the subject through a mirage parallel at every point to the one of the imaginings of the mirror stage, although of a different order, is imagined through the effect of what constitutes it as subject, namely the effect of the signifier, to support the object which comes through it to fill the lack, the hole of the Other - and this is the phantasy - inversely one can say that the whole cut of the subject, that which in the world constitutes it as separate, as rejected, is imposed on it by a determination that is no longer subjective going from the subject towards the object, but objective from the object towards the subject, is imposed on it by the object o, but in so far as at the heart of this object o there is this central point, this whirlwind point through which the object emerges from a beyond of the imaginary knot, the idealist subject-object which brought about from the beginning of time up to now the impasse in thinking, this central point which from this beyond promotes the object as object of desire. This is what we will pursue the next time.

Seminar 22: Wednesday 30 May 1962

The teaching in which I am leading you is determined by the paths of our experience. It may appear excessive, indeed troublesome, that these paths give rise in my teaching to detours that we might call unusual, and which, because of this, may appear to be really outrageous. I spare you them as much as I can. I mean that, through examples that are tied into, are as close as possible to our experience, I outline a sort of reduction, as one might say of these necessary paths.

You should not however be surprised that there are implicated in our explanation fields, domains such as the one for example this year of topology, if in fact the paths we have to take are those which, putting into question an order as fundamental as the most radical constitution of the subject as such, involve because of this what one could really call a sort of revision of science. For example this radical supposition of ours, which places the subject in his constitution in a dependency, in a secondary position with respect to the signifier, which makes of the subject as such an effect of the signifier, cannot fail to emerge from our experience however incarnated it may be in domains of thinking which are apparently the most abstract. And I do not believe I am forcing anything in saying that what we are elaborating here could be of the greatest interest to a mathematician. For example, as was recently stated, by looking at it closely enough in a theory which, for the mathematician, at one time at least, posed great problems, a theory like that of transfiniteness whose impasses undoubtedly long antidate our highlighting of the function of the unary trait, in so far as what grounds this theory of the transfinite is a return to, a grasp of, the origin of counting before number, I mean of what precedes all counting and includes it and supports it, namely bi-univocal correspondence, the trait for trait.

Of course these detours could be for me a way of confirming the breadth, the infinity and the fruitfulness of what it is absolutely necessary for us to construct, for our part, starting from our experience. I am sparing you them.

If it is true that this is how things are, that analytic experience is the one which conducts us through the incarnated effects of what exists, of course, from all ages - but as regards which the fact that we are aware of them is the only new thing - the incarnated effects of the fact of the primacy of the signifier on the subject, it cannot but be that every kind of attempt at reducing the dimensions of our experience to the already constituted point of view of what is called psychological science, in this sense that nobody can deny, can fail to recognise that it was established on premises which neglected, and with reason because it was avoided, this fundamental articulation on which we put the accent, this year simply in a still more explicit, tighter, more tightly knotted way, it cannot but be, I am saying, that any reduction to the point of view of psychological science as it has already been established by preserving as a hypothesis a certain number of opaque points, of avoided points, of points of major unreality, culminates necessarily at objectively lying - I am not saying mistaken, I am saying lying - falsified formulations which determine something which always manifests itself in the communication of what one can call an incarnate lie.

The signifier determines the subject, I tell you, in so far as necessarily this is what psychoanalytic experience means. But let us follow the consequences of these necessary premisses. This signifier determines the subject. The subject takes on a structure from it; it is the one that I already tried to demonstrate for you this year in connection with identification, namely with this something which focusses our experience on the very structure of the subject. I am trying to make you follow more closely this link of the signifier to the subjective structure.

What I am leading you to in these topological formulae which you have already sensed are not purely and simply this intuitive reference to which the practice of geometry has habituated you, is to consider that these surfaces are structures and I had to tell you that they are all structurally present at each one of their points, if indeed we must employ this word point without reserving what I am going to contribute to it today.

I led you, through what I previously enounced, to the fact that it is now a matter now of setting up in its unity, that the signifier is cut and it is a matter of making this subject and its structure depend on that - this is possible by means of what I am asking you to admit and to follow me in at least for a while - that the subject has the structure of a surface at least topologically defined. It is a matter of grasping therefore - and this is not difficult - how the cut engenders the surface. This was what I began to exemplify for you in launching towards you, like so many little kites for some game or other, my Möbius surfaces, I also showed you that if you cut these surfaces in a certain way, they also become different surfaces, I mean topologically defined and materially graspable as changed because they are no longer Möbius surfaces from the very fact of this median cut that you have carried out, but a strip twisted a little about itself, but well and truly a strip, what is called a strip, like this belt that I have around my waist. It is to give you the idea of the possibility of the conception of this engendering which is in a way inverted compared to what first appears evident. It is the surface, you would think, which allows the cut, and I am telling you: it is the cut that we can conceive of, by taking the topological perspective, as engendering the surface. And it is very important. Because when all is said and done it is here perhaps that we are going to be able to grasp the point of entrance, of insertion of the signifier into the real, confirm in human praxis that it is because the real presents to us what I might call natural surfaces that the signifier can enter it.

Of course, one can amuse oneself by bringing about this origin with concrete actions as they are called, in order to recall that man cuts and that God knows our experience is indeed one in which there has been highlighted the importance of this possibility of cutting with a pair of scissors. One of the fundamental images of the first analytic metaphors - the two little thumbs which are cut off with a snip of the scissor - is of course there to urge us not to neglect what is concrete, practical in it: the fact that man is an animal who prolongs himself with instruments, and in the foreground a pair of scissors. One could amuse oneself by redoing a natural history: what is the result for the few animals who have a pair of scissors in the natural state?

This is not what I am leading you to, and with good reason. What the formula "man cuts" (*l'homme coupe*) leads us to, is much more rather to its semantic echoes that he contradicts himself (*il se coupe*), as they say, that he tries to cut things short (*y couper*). All of

this is to be gathered together in a different way around the fundamental formula: "it will be cut off you" (*on t'la coupe*)!

An effect of the signifier, the cut was first of all for us, in the phonematic analysis of language, this temporal, or more precisely sequential line of signifiers which I accustomed you to ccall up to the now the signifying chain. But what is going to happen if now I encourage you to consider the line itself as original cut? These interruptions, these individualisations, these segments of the line which are called, if you wish, on occasion phonemes, which are supposed therefore to be separated from the one which precedes and from the one which follows, to make a chain at least punctually interrupted; this "geometry of the sensible world" to which, the last time, I encouraged you to refer by reading Jean Nicaud and the work of that name, you will see in a central chapter the importance that this analysis of the line has in so far as it can be, I may say, defined by its intrinsic properties and how much easier it would have been for him to have put in the foreground, radically, the function of the cut for the theoretical elaboration that he has to erect with the greatest difficulty and with contradictions which are nothing other than the neglect of this radical function. If the line itself is cut, each one of its elements will then be a section of cut, and this is what in short is introduced by this lively [empty?] element, as I might say, of the signifier which I called the interior eight, namely precisely the loop (*la boucle*). The line recuts itself: what is the interest of this remark?

The cut brought to bear on the real manifests here, in the real, what its characteristic and its function is, and what it introduces into our dialectic, contrary to the usage which is made of it that the real is the diverse: I have always made use of this original function, the real, to tell you that the real is what introduces the same, or more exactly the real is what returns always to the same place. What does that mean, if not that the section of the cut, in other words the signifier being what we have said: always radically different to itself - A is not identical to A - there is no way of making the same appear, except on the side of the real. In other words, the cut, if I can express myself in this way, at the level of a pure subject of cutting, the cut can only know it is closed, that it repasses through itself, because the real, as distinct from the signifier, is the same. In other words, only the real closes it. A closed curve is the real revealed but as you see more radically it is necessary that the cut should recut itself if something has not already interrupted it. Immediately after the trait, the signifier takes this form which is properly speaking the cut; the cut is a trait which recuts itself, it is only after it is closed on the basis that, cutting itself, it has encountered the real, which alone permits to connote as the same, respectively what is found under the first, then the second loop.

We find here the knot which provides us with a recourse with respect to what constituted the uncertainty, the wavering of the whole identificatory construction. You will grasp it very well in the articulation of Jean Nicaud; it consists in the following: is it necessary to wait for the same in order that the signifier should consist, as it was always believed without dwelling sufficiently on the fundamental fact that the signifier, in order to engender the difference between what it signified originally, namely at once that particular time which, I assure you, cannot be repeated, but which always obliges the subject to rediscover it, this particular time requires therefore, in order to achieve its signifying form, the signifier to be repeated at least once and this repetition is nothing other that the most radical form of the experience of demand.

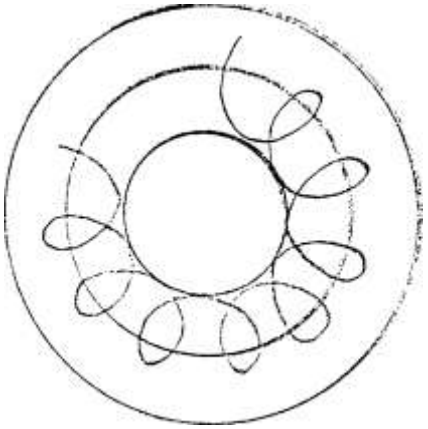
What the signifier incarnates are all the times that the demand is repeated. And if precisely the demand were not repeated in vain, there would be no signifier, because there would be no demand. If you had what the demand encloses in the loop (*boucle*), there would be no need for demand. There is no need for demand if need is satisfied.

A humorist cried one day: "Gentlemen, long live Poland, because if there were no Poland there would be no Poles". The demand is the Poland of the signifier. That is why I would be rather tempted today, parodying this accident of the theory of abstract spaces which brings it about that one of these spaces - and there are now more and more of them that I do not believe I am obliged to interest you in - is called Polish . Today let us call the signifier a Polish signifier and this will avoid you calling it the loop (*lac*), which would seem to me a dangerous encouragement to the use that one of my fervent supporters thought he could make of term lacanism! I hope that at least while I am alive that this obviously tempting term will be spared me after my second death!

Therefore what my Polish signifier is designed to illustrate, is the relationship of the signifier to itself, namely to lead us to the relationship of the signifier to the subject, if indeed the subject can be conceived of as its effect.

I already remarked that there is apparently only signifier, every surface where it is inscribed being supposed to it. But this fact is in a way imaged by the whole system of the *Beaux-Arts* which illuminates something which introduces you to questioning the architecture, for example on this ticket which makes it appear to you why the perspective is so reducibly *trompe-l'oeil*. And it is not for nothing that I also put the accent in a year whose preoccupations seemed to me to be very distant from properly aesthetic pre-occupations, on the anamorphose, that is to say for those who have not been here before - the use of the flight of a surface to make appear an image which is unrecognisable when unfolded, but which, from a certain point of view is gathered together and imposes itself.

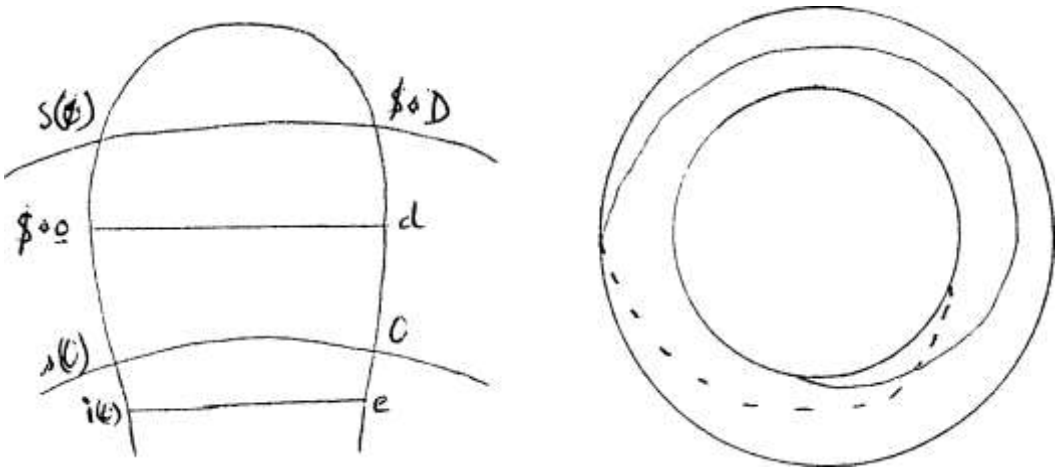
This singular ambiguity of an art about what appears in its nature to be able to attach itself to depths and to volumes, to some completeness or other which, in fact, is always revealed as essentially subject to the interplay of planes and of surfaces is something just as important, interesting, as to see also what is absent from it. Namely all sorts of things that the concrete usage of extension offers us: for example knots, quite concretely imaginable as realisable in an architecture of undergrounds as perhaps the evolution of time will show us. But it is clear that never has any architecture dreamt of composing itself around an arrangement of elements, of rooms and communications, even of corridors, as something which would make knots inside itself. And nevertheless why not? This indeed is why our remark that there is no signifier unless a surface is supposed for it, is overturned in our synthesis which is going to look for its most radical knot in the fact that the cut, in fact, determines, engenders the surface, that it is what gives it its constituting reason as well as its varieties.



This indeed is the way that we can grasp, homologate this first relationship of demand to the constitution of the subject in so far as these repetitions, these returns in the shape of the torus these loops (*boucles*) which are renewed in describing what is presented for us, in the imagined space of the torus, as its contour, this return to its origin allows us to structure, to exemplify in a major fashion a certain type of relationship of the signifier to the subject which allows us to situate in its opposition the function D of demand and the o of the object; o, object of desire, D, the scansion of the demand.

You will have noticed that in the graph you have the following symbols s(0); at the upper level S(Ø), $ cut of D; at the two intermediary stages: i(o), e, and on the other side, $ cut of o, the phantasy... Nowhere will you see D and o connected. What does that express? What does that reflect? What does that support? It supports first of all the following: it is that what you find on the contrary is $ cut of D and that these elements of the signifying treasury at the stage of enunciating, I am teaching you to recognise them, are what is called the *Trieb*, the drive. This is how the first modification of the real in the subject under the effect of the demand formalises it for you, it is the drive. And if in the drive, there were not already this effect of demand, this effect of the signifier, it could not be able to be articulated in such a manifestly grammatical schema. I am expressly making an allusion to what I suppose everyone here is accustomed to from my previous analyses; as regards the others I referred them to the article "*Trieb und Triebschicksale*" which has been bizarrely translated here by "*Avatars des pulsions*" no doubt through a sort of confused reference to the effects that the reading of such a text produces on the first obtuseness (*obtusion*) of the psychological reference …….

You see here the application of the signifier - which today, to amuse ourselves, we are calling the "Polish signifier" - to the surface of the torus:



It is the simplest form of what can be produced in an infinitely enriched fashion by a succession of twists around a spool, the spool properly speaking of the dynamo, in so far as in the course of this repetition the circuit is already made around the central hole. But in this most simple form that you see it drawn here, this circuit is also made, I underline - this cut is not the simple cut - in such a way that it does not recut itself. To image things: in real space, the one that you can visualise, you see it up to now in this surface presented to you, this face of the torus towards you, it subsequently disappears onto the other face - that it why it is in a dotted line - in order to come back from this side.

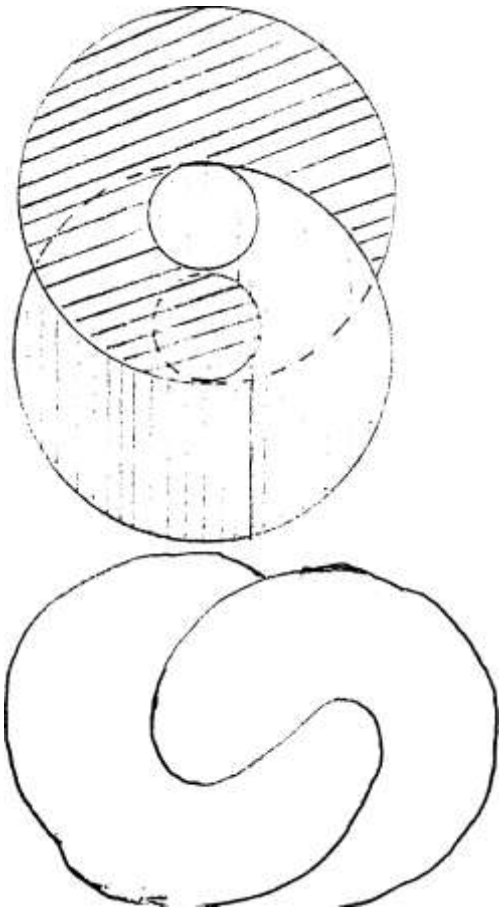
Such a cut, as I might say, grasps absolutely nothing. Try it out on a bicycle tube, you will see at the end the tube opened out in a certain fashion, transformed into a surface twisted twice onto itself, but not at all cut in two. It renders, as I might say, graspable in a signifying and preconceptual fashion, but which is not at all without characterising a sort of grasp of its own kind of this radical thing of the flight, as one might say, the absence of any way of laying hold of its object at the level of demand. For if we have defined demand in the fact that it repeats itself and that it only repeats itself in function of an inside void that it rings, this void which sustains it and constitutes it, this void which does not involve - I point out to you in passing - any operation of an ethical or pleasantly pessimistic kind - as if there were something worse (*un pire*) going beyond what is ordinary for the subject, it is simply a necessity of a logical abc as I might say - every graspable satisfaction, whether one situates itself on the side of the subject or on the side of the object, is missed by demand. Simply in order that the demand should be demand, namely that it should be repeated as signifier it is necessary that it should be disappointed; if it were not, there would be no support for demand.

But this void is different from what is in question as regards o, the object of desire. The advent constituted by repetition, the metonymical advent, the one which slides, is evoked by the very sliding of the repetition of demand; o, the object of desire, can in no way be evoked in this void ringed here by the loop (*boucle*) of the demand. It is to be situated in this hole that we will call the fundamental nothing to distinguish it from the void of demand, the nothing from which the object of desire is called to become. What it is a matter for us of formalising with the elements that I am bringing you, is what allows there to be situated in the phantasy the relationship of the subject as , the subject informed by the demand, to this o. While at this level of the signifying structure that I am demonstrating for you in the torus, in so far as the cut creates it in this form, this relationship is an opposite relationship. The void

which sustains the demand is not the nothing of the object that it rings as object of desire, it is this that the reference to the torus is designed to illustrate for you.

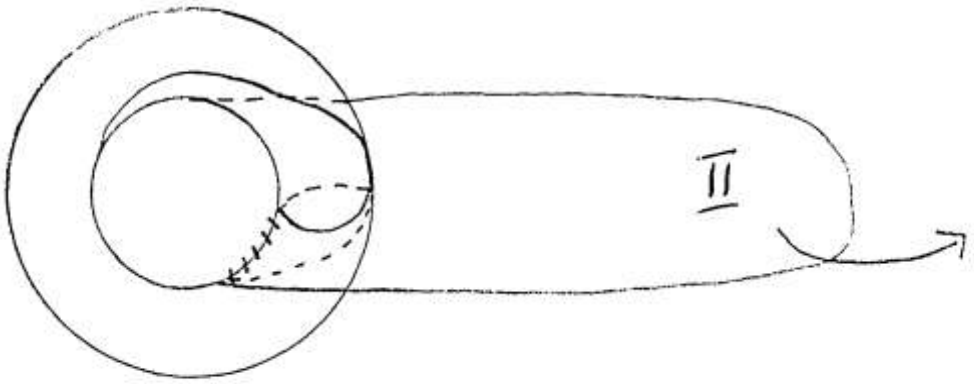
If this were all that you were able to get from it, it would be a lot of effort for a small result. But, as you are going to see, there are many other things to be got from it. In effect to go quickly and without of course making you go through the different steps of the topological deduction which show you the internal necessity which determines the construction that I am going to present to you now; I am going to show you that the torus allows something which undoubtedly you can see the cross-cap for its part does not allow.

I think that the most unimaginative people can see, through these topological windings, what is involved. Metaphorically at least, the term chain which implies concatenation has already sufficiently entered into the language for us not to have to dwell on it. The torus, through its topological structure, implies what we can call a complement, another torus which can come to concatenate with it.

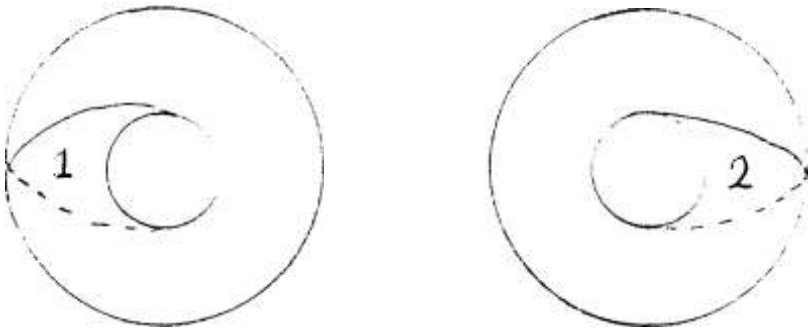


Let us suppose that they are in complete conformity with what I asked you to conceptualise in the usage of these surfaces, namely that they are not metric, that they are not rigid, let us say they are capsule-like. If you take one of these rings with which one plays the game of that name, you will be able to see that if you take hold of one in a firm and fixed fashion, by its circumference and if you make turn back on itself the body of what has remained free, you will obtain very easily and in the same fashion as if you were using a curved reed, by twisting it in this way onto itself, you will make it come back to its first position without the torsion being in a way inscribed in its substance. Simply it will have

come back to its primitive point. You can imagine that by a torsion which would therefore be like this, one of these tori onto the other, we would proceed to what could be called a transfer (*décalque*) of anything whatsoever inscribed already on the first one that we will call 1, and let us suppose that what is involved is what I ask you to refer simply to the first torus: this curve, in so far as it does not simply englobe the thickness of the torus and that, it not alone englobes the space of the hole but it goes through it, which is the condition which can allow it to englobe at the same time the two voids, the nothings, both what is here in the thickness of the torus and what is here at the centre of the knot.

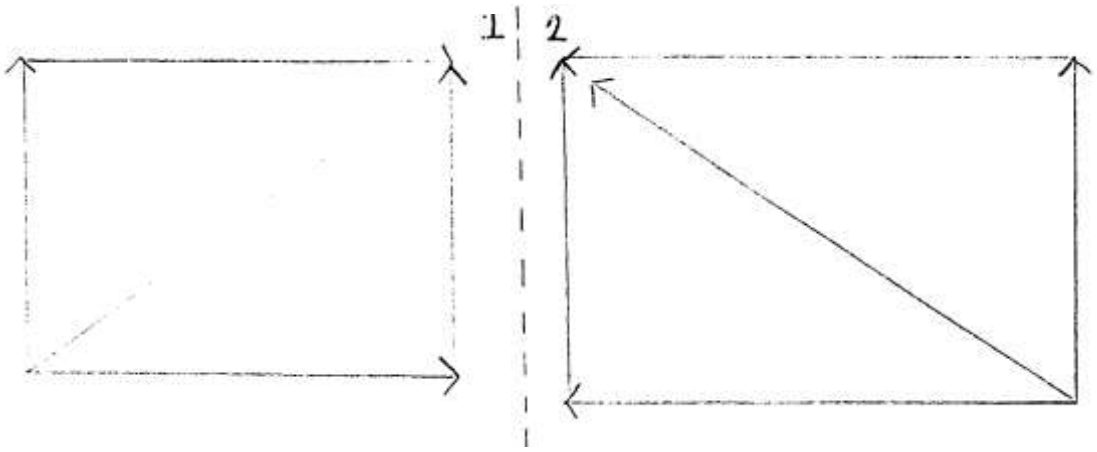


It can be proved - but I spare you the proof which would be long and would demand an effort from you - that in proceeding in this way what will come onto the second torus will be a curve superimposable on the first if one superimposes the two tori. What does that mean? First of all that they may not be superimposable. Here are two curves:

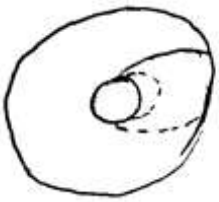


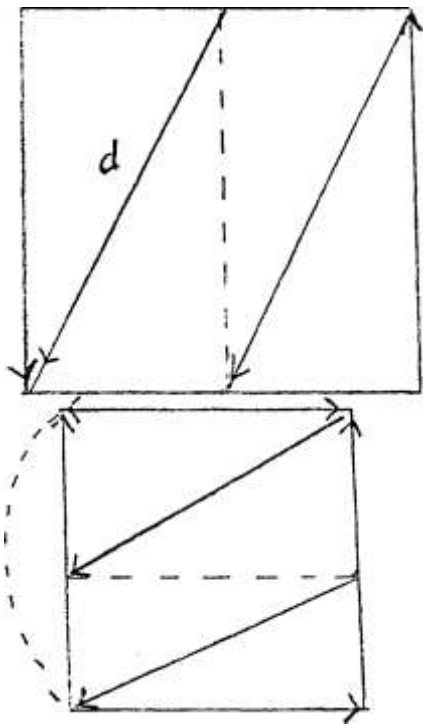
They appear to be made in the same way: they are nevertheless irreducibly not superimposable. This implies that the torus, despite its symmetrical appearance, involves possibilities of highlighting, through the cut, one of these effects of torsion which allows what I would call the radical asymmetry, whose presence as you know in nature is a problem for any formalisation, one which means that snails have in principle a direction of rotation which makes a great exception of those who have the opposite direction. There are a many phenomena of that order, up to and including chemical phenomena, which express themselves in what are called polarising effects. There are therefore structurally, surfaces whose asymmetry is elective and which involve the importance of the dextrogyral or laevogyral gyration. You will later see the importance of what that signifies. You should only know that the phenomenon of the relationship by transfer (*décalque*) of what is produced as composing, englobing the loop of the demand with the loop of the central object, this relationship on the surface of the other torus, which you sense is going to allow us to symbolise the relationship

of the subject to the big Other, will give two lines which, are superimposable with respect to the structure of the torus.



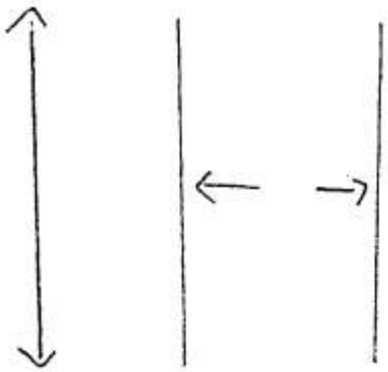
I apologise for making you follow a path which may appear arid to you, it is indispensable that I get you to sense the steps in order to show you what we can draw from it.





What is the reason for that? It is very clearly seen at the level of what are called fundamental polygons. The polygon being thus described, you imagine in front of it its transfer which is inscribed as follows. The line involved on the polygon is projected here, as an oblique, and will be prolonged inverted on the other side on the transfer. But you ought to grasp that in making this fundamental polygon swing through 90 degrees you will reproduce exactly, including the direction of the arrows, the figure of this and that the oblique line will be in the same direction, this swing representing exactly the complementary composition of one of the tori with the other.

Now put onto the torus, no longer this simple line, but the repeated curve whose function I taught you earlier. Is it the same? I will spare your hesitations. After transfer and swing, what you will have here is symbolised as follows:



What does that mean? That means, in our signified transposition, in our experience, that the demand of the subject in so far as here it repeats itself twice, inverts its relationships: D and o, demand and object at the level of the Other, that the demand of the subject corresponds to the object o of the Other, that the object o of the subject becomes the demand of the Other.

This relationship of inversion is essentially the most radical form that we can give of what happens in the case of the neurotic: what the neurotic aims at as object, is the demand of the Other; what the neurotic demands, when he demands to grasp o, the ungraspable object of his desire, is o, the object of the Other.

The accent is put differently according to the two aspects of neurosis. For the obsessional the accent is put on the demand of the Other, taken as object of his desire; for the hysteric the accent is put on the object of the Other, taken as support for his demand.

We would have to go into detail about what this implies in so far as what is in question for us is nothing other here than the access to the nature of this o. We will only grasp the nature of o when we have elucidated structurally in the same way the relationship of S to o, namely the topological support that we can give to the phantasy. Let us say, to begin to illuminate this path, that o, the object of the phantasy, o, the object of desire has no image and that the impasse of the neurotic's phantasy is that in his search for o, the object of desire, he encounters i of o. Such is the origin from which there starts the whole dialectic to which, from the beginning of my teaching, I have been introducing you, namely that the specular image, the understanding of the specular image depends on the fact, and I am astonished that nobody has thought of commenting on the function that I give it, the specular image is an error, it is

not simply an illusion, a lure of the captivating *Gestalt* whose aggressivity has marked the accent. It is fundamentally an error in so far as the subject miscognises himself in it (*s'y me-connait*) if you will allow me the expression, in so far as the origin of the ego and its fundamental miscognition are here reassembled in the spelling; and in so far as the subject is mistaken he believes that he has his own image in front of him; if he knew how to see himself, if he knew, what is the simple truth, that there are only the most deformed relationships in any identifiable fashion between his left-hand side and his right-hand side, he would not dream of identifying himself with the image in the mirror. When, thanks to the effects of the atomic bomb, we will have subjects with a right ear as big as an elephant's ear and, in place of the left ear, a donkey's ear, perhaps the relationships to the specular image will be better authenticated. In fact, many other more accessible and also more interesting conditions would be within our reach. Let us suppose another animal, the crane, with an eye on each side of her skull. It seems to be a mountainous task to know how there can be composed with one another the planes of vision of two eyes in an animal whose eyes are arranged in that way. One does not see why this opens up greater difficulties than for us. Simply, for the crane to have sight of her images, she has to be given two mirrors, and she will run no risk of confusing her left-hand image from her right-hand image.

This function of the specular image in so far as it is referred to the miscognition of what I called above the most radical asymmetry is the one which explains the function of the ego in the neurotic. It is not because he has a more or less twisted ego that the neurotic is subjectively in the critical position which is his, he is in this critical position because of a radically structuring possibility of identifying his demand with the object of the desire of the Other or of identifying his object with the demand of the Other, for its part a properly alluring form of the effect of the signifier on the subject, even though a way out of it is possible precisely when, the next time, I will show you how in another reference of the cut, the subject *qua* structured by the signifier can become the cut o itself. But it is precisely what the phantasy of the neurotic does not accede to because he searches for its ways and its paths along an erroneous passage. Not at all that the neurotic does not know very well how to distinguish, like any subject worthy of this name, i(o) from o, because they do not have at all the same value, but what the neurotic seeks, and not without foundation, is to arrive at o through i(o). The path along which the neurotic persists - and this is very tangible in analysing his phantasy - is to get to o by destroying i(o) or by fixing it.

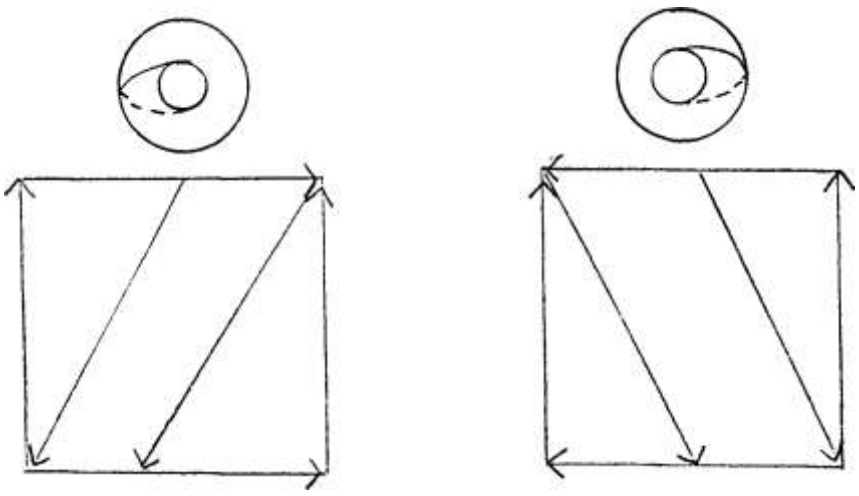
I said first of all "by destroying", because it is the most exemplary. It is the most exemplary; it is the phantasy of the obsessional in so far as it takes on the form of the sadistic phantasy and is not one. The sadistic phantasy as the phenomenological commentators do not fail to support it with all the excessive overflowings which allow them to fix it forever in ridicule, the sadistic phantasy is supposedly the destruction of the Other. And as the phenomenologists are not - let us say "lucky for them!" - authentic sadists but simply have the most common access to the perspectives of neurosis, they find in effect all the appearances necessary to sustain such an explanation. It is enough to take up a sadistic or a Sadian text for this to be refuted: not alone is the object of the sadistic phantasy not destroyed, but it is literally resistant to every trial as I frequently underline for you.

You should clearly understand that I do not even intend getting into here again what is involved in the meaning of the properly Sadian phantasy, as I may probably be able to do it next time. What I want to punctuate here is that what one could call the impotence of the

sadistic phantasy of the neurotic reposes entirely on the following: it is that in effect there is indeed a destructive aim in the phantasy of the obsessional, but this destructive aim, as I have just analysed it, has the meaning not at all of the destruction of the other, object of desire but the destruction of the image of the other in the sense that I am situating it for you here, namely that precisely, it is not the image of the other because the other, o, object of desire, as I will show you the next time, has no specular image. There is indeed here a proposition, I agree, which is a little excessive...

I believe it to be not only entirely demonstrable but essential to understand what happens in what I would call the deviations in the neurotic of the function of phantasy. Because whether or not he destroys in a symbolic or imaginary fashion this image, i(o), it is never this that will ever make him authenticate by any subjective cut the object of his desire for the good reason that what he is aiming either to destroy or to support - i(o) - has no relationship for the simple reason of the fundamental asymmetry between i(o), the support, and o, which does not tolerate it. What the neurotic moreover effectively ends up at is the destruction of the desire of the Other. It is indeed why he has gone irremediably astray in the realisation of his own.

But what explains it is the following, namely what makes the neurotic as one might say symbolise something along this path of his of aiming in phantasy at the specular image, is explained by what I am materialising for you here: the asymmetry which has appeared in the relationship of the demand and the object in the subject compared to the demand and the object at the level of the Other, this asymmetry which only appears from the moment where there is properly speaking demand namely already two circuits, if I can express myself in this way, of the signifier and appears to express an asymmetry of the same nature as the one which is supported by the specular image; they have a nature which, as you see, is sufficiently illustrated topologically because here the asymmetry which would be the one that we would call specular would be this with this:



It is from this confusion through which two different asymmetries are found, for the subject, to serve as a support for what is the essential aim of the subject in his being, namely the cut of o, the veritable object of desire where the subject himself is realised, it is in this aim led astray, captured by a structural element which depends on the effect of the signifier itself on the subject that there resides not alone the secret of the effects of neurosis, namely that the relationship of what is called narcissism, the relationship inscribed in the function of the ego

is not the true support of the neurosis; but in order that the subject should realise the false analogy, the important thing - even though getting close to, discovering this internal knot is capital in order to orientate us in the neurotic effects - is that it is also the only reference which allows us radically to differentiate the structure of the neurotic from neighbouring structures, namely from those which are called perverse and from those which are psychotic.

Seminar 23: Wednesday 6 June 1962

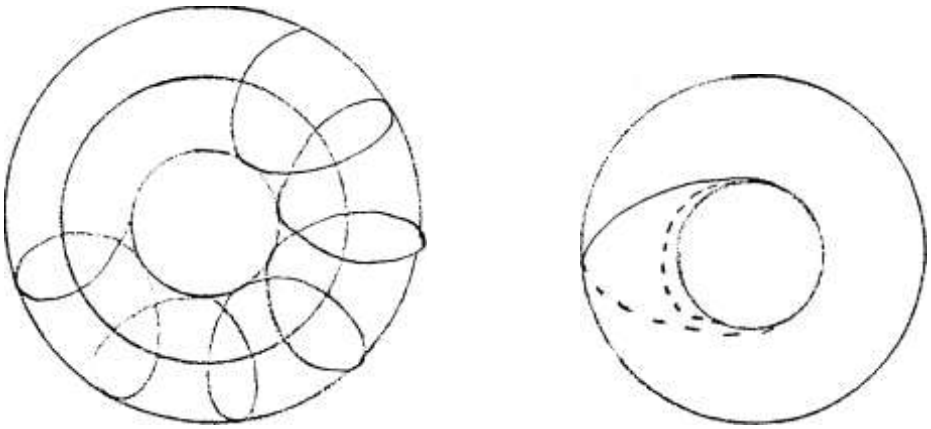
We are going to continue today to elaborate the function of what one can call the signifier of the cut, or again the interior eight, or again the loop, or again what I called the last time the Polish signifier. I would like to be able to give it a still less significant name in order to try to approach what is purely signifying in it.

We have advanced onto this terrain as it presented itself, namely with remarkable ambiguity, since as pure line nothing indicates that it recuts itself, as the shape in which I drew it there reminds you, but at the same time leaves open the possibility of this recutting. In short, this signifier does not prejudge in any way the space in which it is situated. Nevertheless in order to make something of it, we pose that it is around this signifier of the cut that there is organised what we are calling the surface, in the sense that we understand it here.

The last time, I reminded you - because it was not the first time that I showed it to you - how the surface of the torus can be constructed around, and only around, a cut, a cut arranged, manipulated in this quadrilateral fashion that the formula expressed by the sequence of an A, of a B, then of an A' and of a B', our witnesses respectively in so far as they can be referred to, coupled with the two preceding ones, in an arrangement that we can qualify, in general, by two terms oriented on the one hand, crossed on the other.

I showed you the relationship, what one might call at first sight the exemplary metaphorical relationship, regarding which precisely it is a question of knowing whether this metaphor goes beyond, as one might say, the pure plane of metaphor, the metaphorical relationship, I am saying, that it can take on, of the relationship of the subject to the Other, on condition that in exploring the surface of the torus we perceive that we can put two tori *qua* linked to one another, into a style of correspondence such that to a particular privileged circle on one of the two, which we have made correspond for analogical reasons to the function of demand, namely this sort of turning circle in the familiar form of the spool which appears to us particularly suitable to symbolise the repetition of demand in so far as it involves this sort of necessity of completing itself, if it is ruled out that it recuts itself, after numerous repetitions, multiplied as we can imagine *ad libitum*, by completing this buckling, to have described the circuit, the contour of a void other than the one that it rings, the one which we first distinguished as defining this place of the nothing, the circuit of which, drawn for itself, serves to symbolise for us - in the shape of the other circle topologically defined in the structure of the torus - the object of desire.

For those then who were not there (I know that there are some in this gathering) I illustrate what I have just said by this very simple shape, while repeating that this spool-buckle of demand, which is found around the constitutive void of the torus, if found to depict

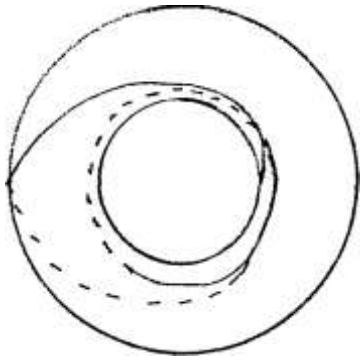


what serves us to symbolise the circle of the object of desire, namely all the circles which go around the central hole of the ring.

There are therefore two sorts of privileged circles on the torus:

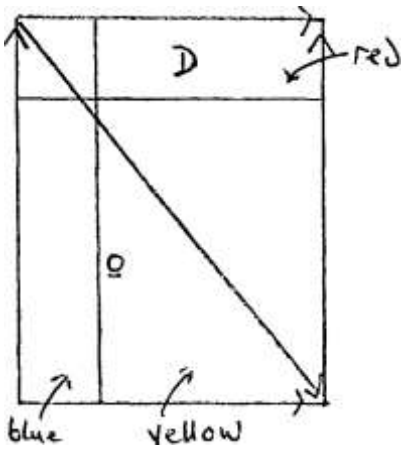
- Those which are drawn around the central hole,
- and those which go through it.

A circle can have both properties at once. It is precisely what happens with this circle drawn as follows:



I put it in dots when it goes over to the other side.

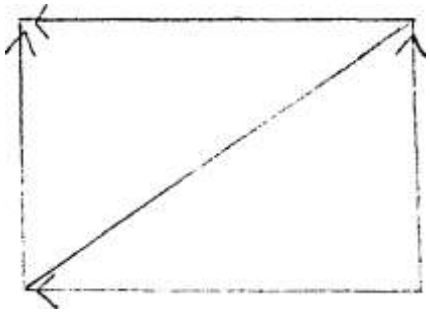
On the quadrilateral surface of the fundamental polygon which serves to show in a clear and univocal fashion the structure of the torus, I symbolise here, to use the same colours



Transfer ↓

from here to here, a circle called the circle of demand, from here to here, a circle called circle o, symbolising the object of desire. And it is this circle here that you see on the first figure, which is here drawn in yellow, representing the oblique circle, which could at the limit serve to symbolise for us, as cut of the subject, desire itself.

The expressive, symbolic value of the torus on this occasion, is precisely to make us see the difficulty, in so far as we are dealing with the surface of a torus and not another one, of arrangement this yellow circle of desire here, with this blue circle here of the object of desire.



Their relationship is all the less univocal in that the object is not here fixed, determined by anything other than by the place of a nothing which, as one might say, prefigures its eventual place, but in no way allows it to be situated.

Such is the exemplary value of the torus.

You heard the last time that this exemplary value is completed by the fact that by supposing it enchained, concatenated with another torus in so far as it would symbolise the Other, we see that undoubtedly this - as I told you - can be proved - I left you the job of finding this proof for yourselves in order not to delay - we see that undoubtedly by transferring (*à décalquer*) in this way the circle of desire projected onto the first torus, onto the torus which is fitted into it, symbolising the locus of the Other, we find a circle oriented in the same fashion.

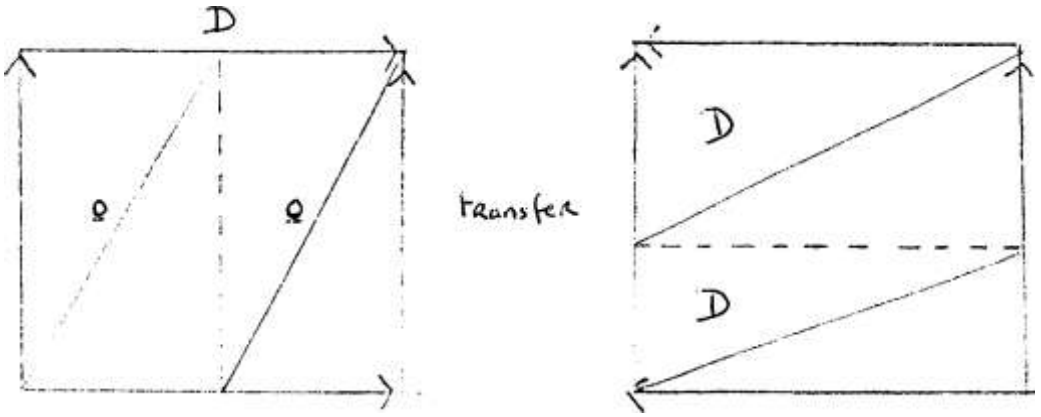
Remember. You have, represented in front of this figure that I will begin again here if it does not appear too fastidious to you, the transfer which is a symmetrical image. We will

have then an oblique line, oriented from north to south, which we can call inverted, specular properly speaking.

But the ninety degree swing, corresponding to the interlocking at ninety degrees of the two tori will restore the same obliqueness. In other words, after having effectively taken - these are experiments which are very easy to carry out which have all the value of an experiment - these two tori and having effectively made, by the method of the rotation of one torus inside the other which I designated for you the last time, this transfer, having picked up as I might say the trace of these two circles arbitrarily drawn on the one and determined from then on on the other, you can see, by subsequently comparing them, that they are exactly, down to the circle which sections them, superimposable on one another.

This image then proves itself to be appropriate for representing the formula that the desire of the subject is the desire of the Other.

Nevertheless, I told you, if we suppose, not this simple circle drawn with this property, with this particular topological definition of at once encircling the hole and going through it, but make it go through the hole twice, and circle it once, namely on the fundamental polygon to present it as follows (drawing), these two points here being equivalent, we have therefore something which, on the transfer, at the level of the Other, is presented according to the following formula:



If you wish, let us say that the completion of two times the circuit, which corresponds to the function of the object and to the transferring (*transfert*) twice onto the transfer (*décalque*) on the other torus, of the demand according to the formula of equivalence which is precious for us on this occasion, is to symbolise the fact that in a certain form of subjective structure, the demand of the subject consists in the object of the Other, the object of the subject consists in the demand of the Other. Recutting: then the superimposition of two terms, after the swing, is no longer possible.

After the ninety degree swing (drawing) the cut is this one, which is not superimposed on the preceding shape.

We have recognised in it a correspondence which is already familiar to us, in so far as what we can express about the relationship of the neurotic to the Other in as much as it conditions his structure down to its final term, is precisely this crossed equivalence of the demand of the subject to the object of the other, of the object of the subject to the demand of

the other. One senses here in a sort of impasse or at least ambiguity the realisation of the identity of two desires.

This is obviously as abridged as possible as a formula and of course supposes already a familiarity acquired with these references, which presuppose our whole previous discourse.

The question then remaining open, the one that we are going to tackle today, about a structure which allows us to formalise in an exemplary fashion, rich in resources, in suggestions, which gives us a support for what precisely our research points towards, namely the function of the phantasy, it is to this end that we can make use of the particular structure called the cross-cap or the projective plane, in so far as I also gave you already enough pointers for this object to be, if not altogether familiar to you, at least that already you have tried to explore what it represents in terms of exemplary properties.

I apologise therefore for entering, from now on, into an explanation which, for an instant, is going to remain very closely linked to this object of a particular geometry described as topological, not a metric geometry but a topological geometry, with respect to which I already pointed out to you in passing as much as I could the idea you should have of it, so that eventually, after having taken the trouble to follow me in what I am now going to explain to you, you will subsequently be recompensed by what it will allow us to support as a formula concerning the subjective organisation which is the one which interests us, through what it will allow us to exemplify as being the authentic structure of desire in what one could call its central organising function.

Of course, I am not without some reluctance, once again, to be drawing you onto terrains which may not fail to tire you. This is why I will refer for a moment to two terms which happen to be close in my experience and which will give me the occasion - first of all a first reference - to announce to you the imminent appearance of a translation by an eminent person who today does us the honour of his visit, namely M De Waehlens. M De Waehlens has just completed the translation - which one cannot but be very astonished was not done earlier - of *Being and Time*, *Sein und Zeit*, at least has brought to its point of completion the first part of a volume which has appeared and you know that it is only the first part of a project whose second part has never come to birth. Therefore in this first part, there are two sections; and the first section has already been already translated by M De Waehlens who did me the great honour, the favour, of sending it to me, which allowed me to get to know for myself this first part - still only the half of it - and I must say, with infinite pleasure, a pleasure that is going to allow me to offer myself another one: namely finally, in this place, something that has weighed on my heart for a long time and that I always spared myself from making a public profession of, because in truth, given the reputation of this work which I do not believe many people here have read, it might have looked like a provocation.

It is the following: it is that there are few texts more clear, indeed of a concrete and direct clarity and simplicity - I do not know what qualification I must invent to add a supplementary dimension to what is obvious - than the texts of Heidegger. It is not because what M Sartre has made of it is effectively rather difficult to read that this takes anything from the fact that this text here of Heidegger - I am not saying: all the others - is a text which carries in itself this sort of superabundance of clarity which renders it really accessible, without any difficulty, to any intelligence not intoxicated by a previous philosophical teaching.

I can tell you this now, because you will very soon have the opportunity of seeing it thanks to M De Waehlens' translation: you will see the degree to which it is so.

The second remark is this one, which you can confirm at the same time: assertions are made, in the bizarre hack writings of a professional gossip that my teaching is neo-Heideggerian. This was said with injurious intent. The person probably put in a "neo" out of a certain prudence; as she knew neither what Heigeggerian meant nor what my teaching meant either, this protected her from a certain number of refutations that this teaching of mine has really nothing neo nor Heideggerian about it, despite the great reverence I have for the teaching of Heidegger.

The third remark is linked to a second reference, namely that something is going to come out - you are going to be spoiled in a little while - which is at least as important - indeed importance is not measured in different domains by centimetres - which is very important also let us say: it is the volume - which is not yet in the bookshops, I have been told, by Claude Lévi-Strauss, called *La Pensée sauvage*.

It has appeared, you tell me. I hope that you have already begun to amuse yourselves. Because of the preoccupations that our seminar imposes on me, I have not got very far in it, but I read the magisterial inaugural pages, where Claude Lévi-Strauss enters into the interpretation of what he calls savage thinking, which must be understood - as, I think, his interview in *Le Figaro* has already informed you - not as the thinking of savages but as one might say the savage state of thinking, let us say: thinking in so far as it functions well, effectively, with all the characteristics of thought, without having taken on the form of scientific thought, of modern scientific thought with its status. And Claude Lévi-Strauss shows us that it is quite impossible to make here such a radical cut because the thinking which has not yet conquered its scientific status is already quite appropriate for carrying certain scientific effects.

Such, at least, is his apparent aim at the beginning, and singularly he takes as an example to illustrate what he means to say about it, about savage thinking, something where no doubt he intends to connect this something common there is between the thinking let us say as, he underlines it, as it has borne fundamental fruit starting from the moment itself which one cannot qualify as absolutely ahistorical since he specifies it: thinking starting from the neolithic era which gives, he tells us again, all its foundations to our sense of place in the world. To illustrate, as I might say, still functioning within our range, he finds nothing other and nothing better than to exemplify in a form which is no doubt not unique, but privileged by his demonstration under the form of what he calls *bricolage*.

This passage has all the brilliance that we know him to be capable of, the originality proper to this sort of abruptness, of novelty, of something which tips over and upsets banally accepted perspectives, and it is a piece which undoubtedly is very suggestive.

But it appeared precisely particularly suggestive for me, after the re-reading that I had just carried out, thanks to M De Waehlens, of Heideggerian themes, precisely in so far as he takes as an example in his research for the status, as one might say, of knowledge in so far as it can be established in an approach which to establish itself claims to make its way from the interrogation about what he calls "being there", namely at once the most veiled and the most immediate form of a certain type of being, the fact of being which is the one peculiar to the

human being, one cannot fail to be struck, even though probably the remark would revolt both one and the other of these authors, by the surprising identity of the way both of them advance.

I mean that what Heidegger encounters first of all in this research, is a certain relationship of this being there to a being which is defined as utensil, as tool, as this something that one has at hand to use the term that he uses, as *Zuhandenheit* for what is to hand.

Such is the first form of the link, not to the world, but to being, that Heidegger outlines for us. And it is only starting from there, namely as one might say, in the implications, the possibility of such a relationship, that he is going, he says, to give its proper status to what constitutes the first great pivot of his analysis: the function of being in its relationship to time, namely the *Weltlichkeit* which M De Waehlens has translated by "*les mondanités*", namely the constitution in a way of the preliminary world, preliminary at this level of the being there which is not yet detached inside the being, these sorts of being that we could consider as purely and simply subsisting by themselves.

The world is something other than the totality, the englobing of all these beings which exist, subsist through themselves with which we have to deal at the level of this conception of the world which appears to us so immediately natural - and with good reason - because it is what we call nature. The anteriority of the constitution of this worldliness with respect to the moment that we can consider it as nature, this is the interval that Heidegger preserves by his analysis.

This primitive utensil-like relationship prefiguring the *Umwelt* still anterior to the environment which is only constituted, with respect to it, secondarily, this is the approach of Heidegger and it is exactly the same - I do not believe that I am saying anything here which might be taken as a critique which certainly, after everything that I know about the thinking and the statements of Claude Lévi-Strauss, might appear to us indeed to be the approach most opposed to his own in so far as the status he gives to ethnographic research is supposed to be produced only in a position of aversion with respect to the metaphysical or even the ultra-metaphysical research of Heidegger - nevertheless it is indeed the same that we find in the first step by which Claude Lévi-Strauss wants to introduce us to savage thinking in the form of this *bricolage* which is nothing other than the same analysis, simply in different terms, a barely modified illumination, a name which is no doubt distinct from this same utensil-like relationship as being what both of them consider as anterior, as primordial with respect to this sort of structured access which is ours with respect to the field of scientific investigation, in so far as it allows it to be distinguished as founded on an articulation of the objectiveness (*l'objectité*) which is supposed to be in a way autonomous, independent of what is properly speaking our existence and that we no longer keep with it anything but this so-called subject-object relationship which is this point at which there is resumed today everything that we can articulate about epistemology.

Well then let us say, to fix it once and for all, how our enterprise here in so far as it is based on analytic experience is distinct as compared to both one and the other of these investigations whose parallel character I have just shown you here. The fact is that we also are searching here for this status, as one might say, which is anterior to the classical access of the status of the object, entirely concentrated in the subject-object opposition. And we search

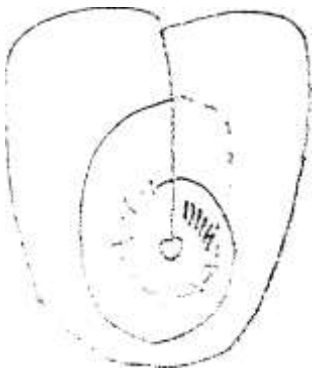
for it where? In this something which, whatever may be the obvious character of approach, of attraction in the thinking of a Heidegger or of a Claude Lévi-Strauss, is well and truly distinct from it because neither one nor the other names as such this object as object of desire.

The primordial status of the object for let us say in any case analytic thinking cannot be and could not be anything other than the object of desire. All the confusions with which analytic theory has been embarrassed up to now are the consequences of the following: of an attempt, of more than one attempt, of all the possible modes of attempt to reduce what is imposed on us, namely this search for the status of the object of desire, to reduce it to already known references of which the simplest and the most common is that of the status of the object of science in so far as a philosophising epistemolgy organises it in the final and radical opposition of subject-object in so far as an interpretation more or less weakened by the nuances of phenomenological research may at the limit speak about it as the object of desire.

This status of the object of desire as such still remains eluded in all the forms of analytic theory articulated up to now; and what we are looking for here is precisely to give it its proper status. It is along this line that there is situated the perspective that I am pursuing before you for the moment.

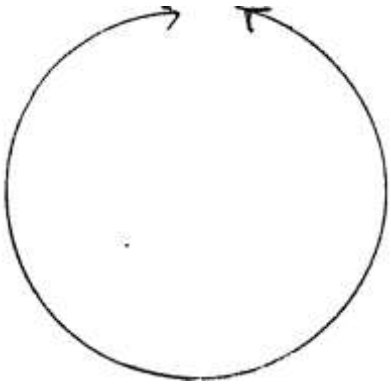
Here are the figures in which today I am going to try to make you notice what interests us in this surface structure whose privileged properties are designed to retain us as a structuring support of this relationship of the subject to the object of desire, in so far as it is situated as supporting everything that we can articulate at whatever level it may be of analytical experience, in other words as this structure that we call the fundamental phantasy.

For those who were not at the last seminar, I recall this shape here (sketch) drawn in white: this is what we call the cross-cap, or to be more precise – since as I have told you, a



certain ambiguity remains on the usage of this term cross-cap -: the projective plane. As its drawing here in white chalk is not enough, for those who have not yet grasped it, to represent for you what it is, I am going to try to make you imagine it by describing it to you as if this surface was constituted here as a bladder.

To be still more clear, I am going to start at the base. Imagine that you have two hoops like those of a wolf-trap (sketch) this is what is going to serve to represent the cut for

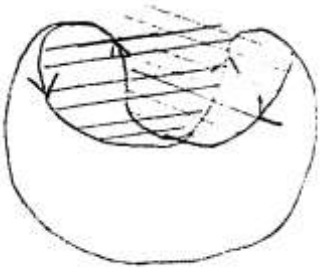


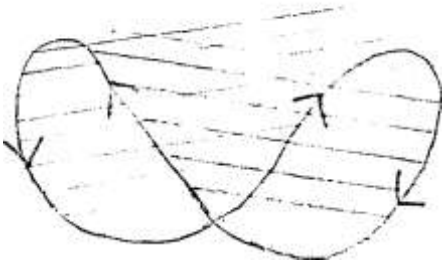
us. If we orientate the two circles of the wolf-trap in the same direction, this means that we are simply going to close them onto one another. If you have a bladder, precisely if you blow into it and if you close the wolf trap, it is all the same within the reach of elementary imaginings to see that you are going to make a sphere.

If blowing does not seem to you to be enough, fill it with water until you have obtained this shape here, close the two half- circles of the wolf-trap, and you have a half-full or a half- empty sphere.

I already explained to you how instead of doing that one can make a torus. This is what a torus is: you put the two corners of the handkerchief connected in the air like that and the two others underneath like that, and that is enough to make a torus. The essential of the torus is there, because you have here the central hole and here the circular void around which turns the circuit of the demand. This is what the fundamental polygon of the torus already illustrated for you. A torus is not at all like a sphere. Naturally a cross-cap is not at all like a sphere either.

Here you have the cross-cap (sketch). You ought to imagine it as being, as regards this lower half, realised like half of what you did earlier when you filled it with water or





with your breath; in the upper part what is anterior here will come to traverse everything that is continuous, what is here posterior. The two faces cross one another, give the appearance of penetrating one another; because the conventions concerning surfaces are free - because do not forget that we are only considering them as surfaces, that we can say that no doubt the properties of space as we imagine it force us, in the representation, to represent them as penetrating one another - but it is enough that we should take no account of this line of intersection at any of the moments of our treatment of this surface, in order for everything to happen as if we held it to be nothing. It is not a hindrance. It is nothing but something that we are forced to represent for ourselves because we want to represent this surface here as a line of penetration. But this line, as one might say, has no privilege in the establishment of the surface. You will say to me: "What does what you are saying mean?" X in the audience: "Does it mean that you are admitting, with Kant's transcendental aesthetics the fundamental constitution of space in three dimensions, since you tell us that to present things here you are forced to pass by way of something which in the representation is in some way awkward?" Of course, in a certain way, yes. Everyone who articulates anything about the topology of surfaces as such starts - it is the abc of the question - from this distinction between what one can call the intrinsic properties of the surface and the extrinsic properties. They will tell us that everything they are going to articulate, determine, concerning the functioning of surfaces thus defined, is to be distinguished from what happens - as they literally express it - when one plunges the aforesaid surface into space, specifically in the present case in three dimensions.

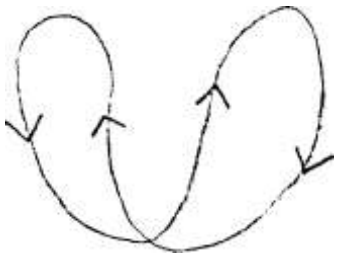
This is the fundamental distinction that I too have reminded you of incessantly in order to tell you that we should not consider the ring, the torus as a solid and, that when I speak about the void which is central, about the circumference of the ring, as well as of the hole which is as we might say axial to it, these are terms that must be taken within the context that we do not have to make them function in so far as we are aiming purely and simply at the surface.

It nevertheless remains true that it is in so far, as the topologists put it, as we plunge into a space that we can leave at the state of x - we are not obliged to prejudge the number of dimensions that structure it - that we can highlight one or other of the intrinsic properties that are involved in a surface.

And the proof is precisely the following: it is that we will have no difficulty in representing the torus in the three dimensional space which is intuitively familiar to us, while for this one we will all the same have a certain amount of trouble because we will have to add on to it the little note of all sorts of reservations concerning what we have to read when we try to represent this surface in this space.

This is what will allow us to pose precisely the question of the structure of a space in so far as it admits or it does not admit our surfaces as we have previously constituted them.

With these reservations, I would ask you now to pursue and to consider what I have to teach you about this surface precisely in so far as it is in connection with its representation in space that I am going to try to highlight for you certain of its characteristics, which are no less intrinsic for all that.



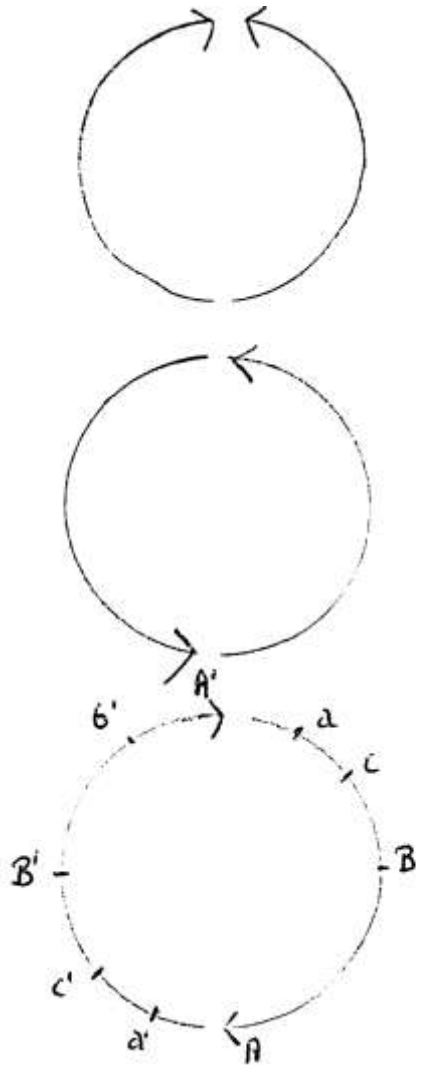
Because if I have already eliminated the value that we can give to this line, the line of penetration, whose detail you see illustrated here - this is how we can represent it (see the sketch) - you see that simply by the way in which I, for my part already drew it on the blackboard, there is here something which poses a question.

Is the value of the point which is here a value that we can in a way efface like the value of this line? Is this point also for its part something which only depends on the necessity of representation in three-dimensional space? I am telling you this right away to clarify my account a little in advance: this point, as regards its function, cannot be eliminated, at least at a certain level of speculation about the surface, a level which is not simply defined by the existence of three-dimensional space.

In effect, what does the construction of this surface called the cross-cap signify radically, in so far as it is organised starting from the cut that I represented for you earlier as a wolf-trap that closes?

Nothing more simple than to see that this wolf-trap must be bi-partite, when the sphere is involved, because it is necessary that it should fold back on itself somewhere, that its two halves are orientated in the same direction: the *terminus a quo* will be distinguished therefore from the *terminus ad quod* in as much as they must overlap lengthways.

We can say that here (sketch) we have the way in which there function with respect to one another the two halves of the edge that must be connected in order to constitute a



projective plane. Here (sketch) they are oriented in a contrary direction, which means that a point situated at this place, point a for example, will correspond, will be identical, equivalent, to a point situated at this place in a' diametrically opposite, that another point b situated here for example will refer to another point b' situated diametrically.

Does this not encourage us to think that given this antipodal relationship of the points oriented on this circuit in a continuous fashion always in the same direction, no point will be privileged and that, whatever may be our difficulty in intuiting what is involved, we have simply to think about this circular antipodal relationship as a sort of radiating intercrossing as one might say, concentrating the exchange of one point with the opposite point of the single edge of this hole, and in concentrating it, as one might say, around a vast central interlacing which escapes our thinking and which does not allow us in any way therefore to give a satisfactory representation of it.

Nevertheless what justifies things being represented in this way, is that there is something that should not be forgotten: it is that it is not a question of metric figures, namely that it is not the distance between a and A, and from a' to A' which regulates the point by point correspondence which allows us to construct the surface by organising the cut in this way, but it is uniquely the relative position of points, in other words in a set of three points

which are situated on the half - admit the usage of the term half that I make use of on this occasion, which is already represented by the analogical reference that I made here of two halves of an edge - it is in so far as on this edge, on this line, as on every line, a point can be defined as being between two others that a point c for example is going to be able to find its correspondent in the point c' of the other side...

But, if we do not have a point of origin, an *archen* point, "*tèn archèn ö ti kài laò úmin*" Saint John VIII 25, as it is expressed in the Gospel something which lends itself to so many difficulties in translation that a thinker from Franche-Comté could say to me: "That's just like you: the only passage in the Gospel on which nobody can agree is the one you took as an epigraph for a section of your Rome report". *Archèn*, therefore the beginning, if there are not these starting points somewhere, it is impossible to define a point as being between two others, because c and c' are moreover between these two others a and B if there is no AA' to locate in a univocal fashion what is happening in each segment.

It is therefore reasons other than the possibility of representing them in space that make it necessary for us to define a point of origin for this intersecting exchange which constitutes the surface of a projective plane between an edge which it is necessary for us, despite the fact that it turns always in the same direction, to divide in two.

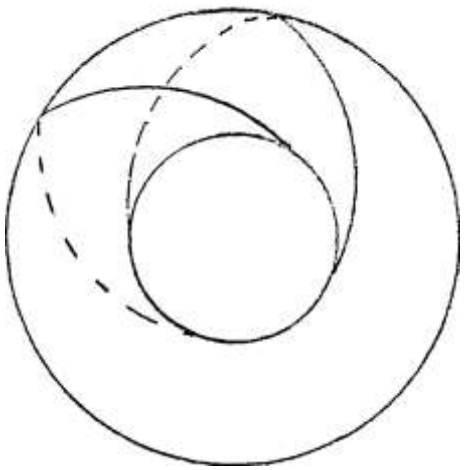
This may appear extremely tiresome for you, but you are going to see that it is going to take on a greater and greater interest.

I announce to you right away what I intend to say.

I intend to say that this *archèn* point of the origin has an altogether privileged structure, that it is it, it is its presence, which guarantees for the interior loop of our Polish signifier, a status which is altogether special to it.

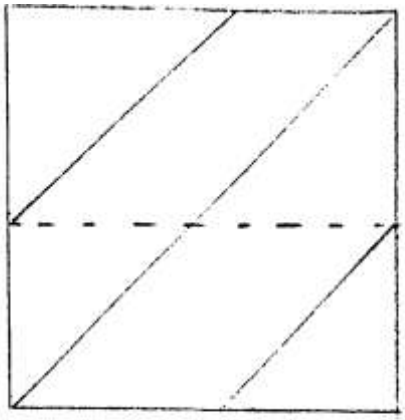
In effect, so as not to make you wait any longer, I apply this signifier, called the interior eight, onto the surface of the cross-cap. We will see afterwards what that means. Observe all the same that to apply it in this way means that this line that our interior eight outlines finds itself here turning twice around this privileged point (sketch).

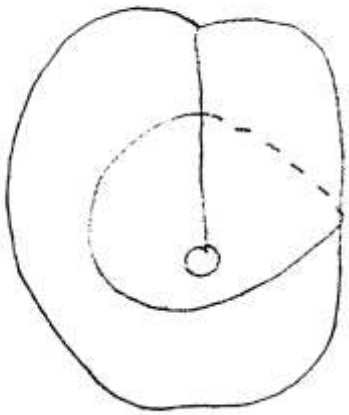
Here, make an effort of imagination. I am quite happy to illustrate it for you by something; look at what comes out of this (sketch).



You have here, if you wish, the bulge of the lower half, the bulge of the left pincer of the lobster's foot, the bulge of the right pincer. Here this goes into the other one, it goes to the other side. What does that mean? That means that you have something like a plane which rolls up like that on itself, then which at a moment traverses itself. So that it behaves like two kinds of shutter or flapping wings superimposed here which find themselves in short isolated by the cut from the lower swelling, and at the upper level these two wings cross one another. It is not too unimaginable.

If you had interested yourselves as long as I have in this object, obviously there would be little surprising in this. Because in fact the privilege this double cut has is very interesting. It is very interesting in the sense that, as regards the torus, I already showed you, if you make a cut, it is transformed into a strip; if you make a second one, which traverses the first, this does not for all that fragment it, this is what allows you to spread it out like a fine square. If you make two cuts which do not intersect, on the torus - try to imagine that - then you would necessarily make two parts of it.





open the surface, you do not
parts of it.

Here, on the cross-cap, with a a simple cut like the one which can be drawn here thus (sketch) will open up this surface. Amuse yourself by making a drawing of it, it will be a very good intellectual exercise to know what happens at that moment. You **open the surface, you do not** cut it in two, you do not make two **parts of it**.

If you make any other cut whatsoever which intersects itself or does not intersect itself, you divide it.

What is paradoxical and interesting, is that in short it is always only a question of a single cut here and that nevertheless, by simply making it turn twice around the privileged point, you divide the surface.

It is not the same at all on a torus. On a torus, if you turn around the central hole as often as you wish, you will never obtain anything but a lengthening in a way of the strip, but you will not divide it for all that.

This, in order to make you notice that we are touching here, no doubt, something interesting about the function of this surface.

There is moreover something which is no less interesting: it is that this double circuit, with this result, is something that you can only repeat one more time; if you make a triple circuit, you will be led to draw on the surface something which will indefinitely repeat itself like the loops that you draw on the torus, when you engage in this spooling operation about which I spoke to you at the beginning, except for the fact that here the line will never connect up with itself, will never bite its own tail.

The privileged value of this double circuit is therefore sufficiently guaranteed by these two properties.

Let us consider now the surface that this double circuit isolates on the projective plane. I am going to point out certain properties of it for you.

First of all, it is what we can call a surface - let us call it that, for rapidity, between ourselves, as one might say, because I am going to remind you what that means -; it is a left-handed surface, like a left-handed body, like anything at all that we may define like that in space. I am not using it to oppose it to the right, I am using it to define the following, which you ought to know well: it is that if you want to define the rolling up of a snail who, as you know, is privileged dextrogyre or levogyre, it does not matter, it depends how you define one or other of them - you will find this winding is the same whether you look at the snail from the side of his head or whether you turn him around to look at it from the side of the place where there is a hollow.

In other words, it is by turning over the cross-cap here in order to see it from the other side, if we define here the rotation from left to right by distancing ourselves from the central point, you will see that it always turns in the same direction on the other side, figure B.

This is the property of all bodies which are asymmetrical. It is therefore an asymmetry which is fundamental to the shape of this surface that is involved.

As proof, the fact is that you have underneath something which is the image of this surface defined in this way on our double loop, in the mirror. Here it is. We should expect that, as in any asymmetrical body, the image in the mirror is not superimposable on it, just as our image in the mirror, with regard to us who are not symmetrical despite what we think, is

not superimposed at all on our proper support. If we have a beauty spot on the right cheek, this beauty spot will be on the left cheek of the image in the mirror.

Nevertheless, the property of this surface is such that, as you see, it is enough to raise this loop here a little - which is legitimate - to make it pass over the other one, since the two planes do not really traverse one another, in order that you should have an image (3) absolutely identical to and therefore superimposable on the first one, the one with which we started (1). Figure C.

You see what is happening: lift this very gently, progressively up to here, and see what is going to happen, namely that the occultation of this little part in dots situated here is the identical realisation of what is in the primary image.

This serves to illustrate for us this property which I told you was that of o *qua* object of desire, of being this something which is at once orientable and undoubtedly very oriented, but which is not, if I can express myself in this way specularisable.

At this radical level which constitutes the subject in his dependence with respect to the object of desire, the function i of o, the specular function, loses its hold as one might say.

And all of this is determined by what?

By something which is precisely this point (central point) in so far as it belongs to this surface. To clarify immediately what I mean, I will tell you that it is in articulating the function of this point that we will be able to find all sorts of auspicious formulae which allow us to conceive the function of the phallus at the centre of the constitution of the object of desire. It is for this reason that it is worth our trouble to continue to interest ourselves in the structure of this point.

I must pause for a moment to show you what is the true function of this point, in so far as it is the key to the structure, of the surface defined in this way, cut out by our cut on the projective plane. This is something that is going to demand from you of course, a little more patience.

What is the function of this point?

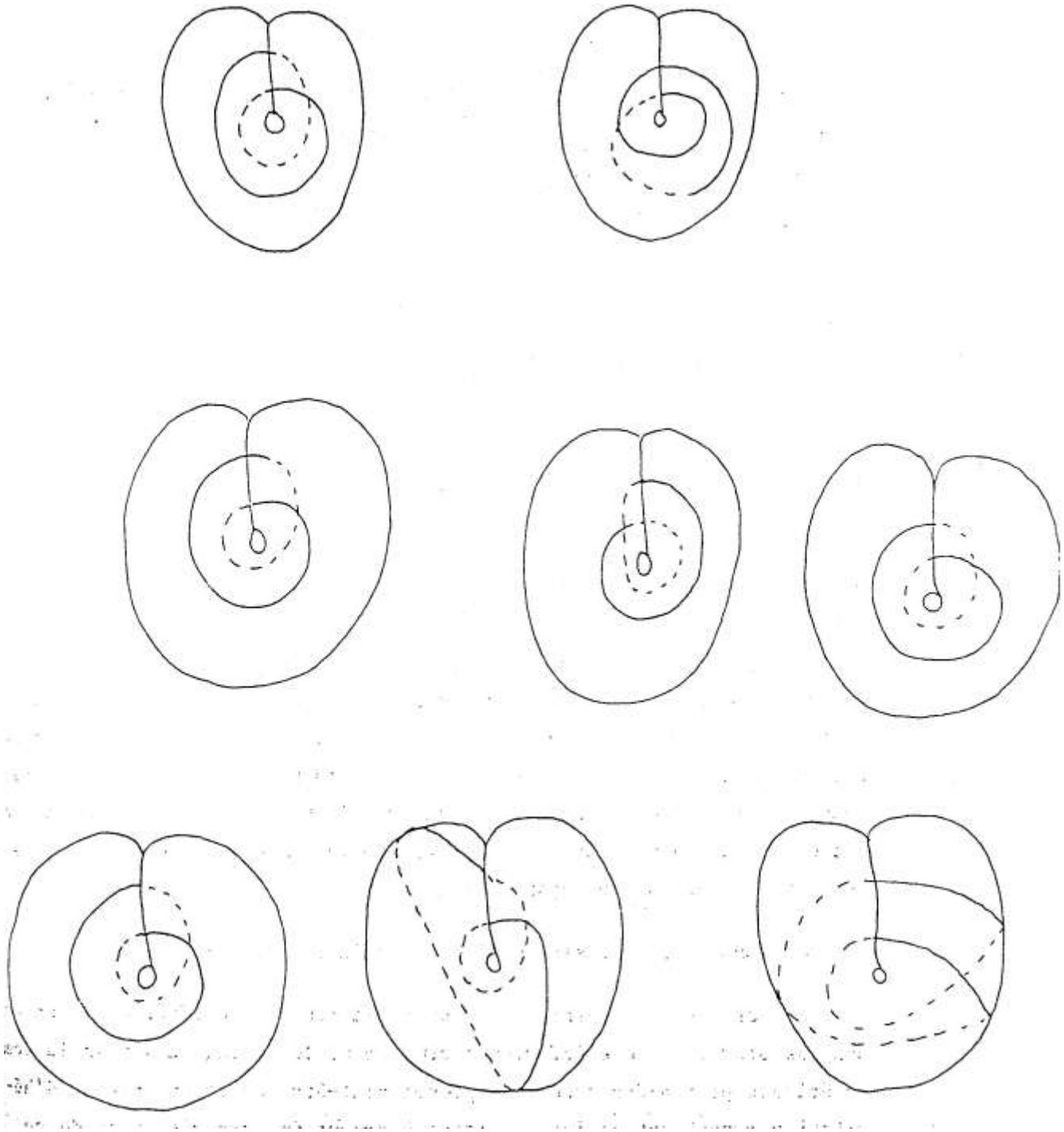
What is there, at this moment at which we pause, is manifest, is that it is in one of the two parts by which the projective plane is divided by the double cut. It belongs to this part which is detached, it does not belong to the part which remains. (Figure D).

Since it seems that you were capable earlier - I must all the same infer this from the fact that no murmur of protestation was raised - of conceiving how this figure can pass to this one by a simple legitimate displacement at the level of the cut, you are going, I think, to be just as capable of making the mental effort of seeing what happens if, on the one hand, we are going to make this cut break through the horizon of the lower *cul de sac* of the surface by making it pass over therefore to the other side, as my yellow arrow indicates and if we also make breakthrough to the upper part of the loop the horizon of what is on top of the cross-cap. (Figure D).

This leads us without difficulty to the following figure.

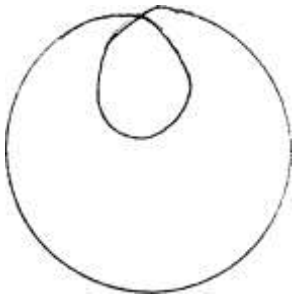
The passage to the last one is a little bit more difficult to conceive of, not for the lower loop as you see, but for the upper loop in so far as you may perhaps have a moment of hesitation about what happens at the moment of breaking through what is presented here as the extremity of the line of penetration.

If you reflect on it a little, you will see that if it is from the other side that the cut is brought to break through this line of penetration, obviously it will present itself like that, namely, as it is on the other side, it will be dotted on this side, and it will be unbroken because according to our convention what is dotted is seen by transparence.



Nothing in the structure of the surface allows us to distinguish the value of these cuts 1 and 2, therefore of those at which we culminate here. For the eye, they present themselves as both entering on the same side of the line of penetration.

Is it very simple for the eye? Surely not. Because this difference that there is between, for the cut to enter from two different sides (1) or to enter by the same side (3), is something which ought all the same to be signaled in the result, on the figure. And moreover this is quite tangible. If you reflect on what it is, you will easily recognise what from now on is cut out on



this surface: first of all, it is the same thing as our signifier; what is more in the way in which it cuts out a surface, it cuts out a surface which you sense very well - you only have to look at the figure - is a strip, a strip which has no edge. I already showed you what it is: it is a Möbius surface.

Now, the properties of a Möbius surface are properties completely different to those of this little rotating surface whose properties I showed you earlier by turning it, by aiming at it, by transforming it and by telling you finally that this is what interests us.

This little conjuring trick has obviously a reason which is not hard to find. Its interest is simply to show you that this cut always divides the surface into the two parts, one of which preserves the point involved on its inside, and the other which no longer has it.

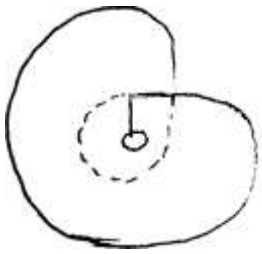
This other part which is just as present there (1) as in the terminal figure (3), is a Möbius surface. The double cut always divides the surface called the cross-cap in two: this something that we are interesting ourselves in and which I am going to make the support for you of the explanation of the relationship of £ with o in the phantasy, and, on the other side a Möbius surface.

What is the first thing that I made you put your finger on when I made you a present of these five or six little Möbius surfaces which I launched through the audience?

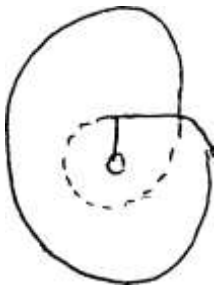
It is that the Möbius surface, for its part, in the sense that I understood it earlier, is irreducibly left-handed. Whatever modification you may make it undergo, you can never superimpose on it its image in the mirror.

Here therefore is the function of this cut and what it shows to be exemplary. It is such that, dividing a certain surface in a privileged fashion, a surface whose nature and function are completely enigmatic to us, because we can scarcely situate it in space, it makes appear privileged functions on the one hand, which are those which I called above being specularisable, namely involving its irreducibility to the specular image, and, on the other hand, a surface which, while presenting all the privileges of a surface for its part oriented, is

not specularised. Because notice carefully that one cannot say of this surface, as one can about a Möbius surface, that an infinitely flat being moving along it finds itself all of a sudden on this surface on its own reverse side: each face is well and truly separated from the



other in this: this property, of course, is something which leaves open an enigma; because it is not so simple, all the less simple that the total surface - it is quite obvious, is only reconstitutable, and immediately reconstitutable, if we start from this:



It is necessary therefore that the most fundamental properties of the surface be preserved somewhere, despite its more rational appearance than that of the other, in the surface.

It is quite clear that they are preserved at the level of the point. If the passage which in the total figure always makes it possible for an infinitely flat traveller to find himself by an excessively short path at a point which is its own proper reverse - I am saying: on the total surface - if it is no longer possible at the level of the central surface, fragmented, divided by the signifier of the double loop, it is because very precisely something of this is preserved at the level of the point.

Except that precisely for this point to function as this point, it has this privilege of being precisely unsurmountable, you make vanish, as one might say, the whole structure of the surface.

As you see, I have not been able yet to give its full development to what I have just said about this point. If you reflect on it, you will be able, before the next time to find it yourselves.

Time is passing, and it is indeed here that I am forced to leave you. I apologise for the aridity of what I was led to produce before you today, because of the very complexity, even though it is only an extraordinarily punctual complexity, it must be admitted. This is what I will take up the next time.

I come back therefore to what I said at the beginning: the fact that I could only get to this point of my account means that next Wednesday's seminar - tell those who have received

the next announcement - will be held in order not to leave too much space, too much of an interval between these two seminars, because this space could be harmful for the continuation of our explanation.

Seminar 24: *Wednesday 13 June 1962*

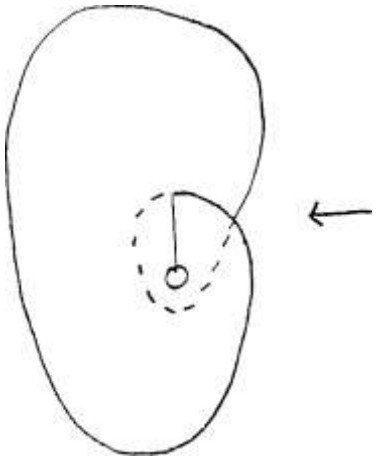
Here are three figures. Figure 1 corresponds to the simple cut in as far as the projective plane cannot tolerate more than one without being divided. This one here is not divided, it opens out. This opening is interesting to show in this form, because it allows you to visualise, to materialise the function of the point.

Figure 2 will help you to understand the other one. It is a matter of knowing what happens when the cut designated here has opened out the surface. Of course, here it is a matter of a description of the surface linked to what are called its extrinsic relationships, namely the surface in so far as we are trying to insert it into a three-dimensional space. But I told you that this distinction between the intrinsic properties of the surface and its extrinsic properties was not as radical as people with an eye for formalism sometimes insist, because it is precisely in connection with its being plunged into space, as it is put, that certain intrinsic properties of the surface appear with all their consequences. I am only pointing out the problem to you. Hence what I am going to tell you in effect about the projective plane, the privileged place that will be occupied in it by the point, what we will call the point, which is here depicted in this cross-cap, here the terminal point of the line, the pseudo-penetration of the surface onto itself. You see the function of this point in this open shape of the same object described in figure 1. If you open it along the cut, what you are going to see appearing is a bottom which is below, that of the half-sphere. Above, it is the plane of this anterior wall in so far as it continues into a posterior wall, after having penetrated the plane which for its part is, as one might say, symmetrical in the composition of this object. Why do you see it stripped bare in this way up to the top? Because once the cut has been made, since these two planes which cross one another, like this, at the level of the line of penetration, do not really cross one another, it is not a real penetration that is involved, but a penetration which is required by the projection into space of the surface we are dealing with. We can, at our whim, once a cut has dissolved the continuity of the surface, lift up one of these planes across the other since moreover not only is it not important to know at what level they traverse one another, what points correspond in the traversing, but on the contrary it is good not to take into account deliberately this coincidence of levels of points in so far as the penetration may render them, at certain moments of reasoning, superimposable. On the contrary, it would be well to remark that they are not. The anterior plane of figure 1, which passes from the other side found itself lowered towards the point that we now call from now on quite simply the point, while above we see the following being produced: a line which goes to the top of the object and which, behind, passes to the other side. When we carry out a crossing (*traversée*) on this figure, we obtain something which presents itself as an open hollow towards the front. The trait in dots is going to pass behind this sort of ear and finds an exit on the other side, namely the cut between this edge here and that which, from the other side, is symmetrical to this sort of basket, but behind. It must be considered that behind there is a way out.

Here is figure 3 which is an intermediate figure. Here you see again the interlacing on the upper part of the anterior plane, which becomes posterior and subsequently returns. And as I already pointed out to you, you can lift that up indefinitely. This indeed is what is produced at the extreme level. It is the same thing as this edge here that you find described in figure 1. This part which I designate in figure 1 we are going to call A. This is what is

IVmaintained at this place in the figure. The continuity of this edge is made with the one which, behind the sort of oblique surface thus separated out, folds itself back once you have begun to let the whole lot go. So that if one stuck them together again this would rejoin itself like in figure 3. This is why I indicated it in blue on my drawing. The blue is, in short, all that the cut itself perpetuates.

What results from it? The fact is that you have a hollow, a pocket into which you can introduce something. If you pass your hand though it, it passes behind this ear which is in continuity from the front with the surface: what you encounter behind is a surface which correponds to the bottom of the basket but separated from what remains on the right, namely this surface which comes forward here, and which folds itself back to figure 2. In following a path like that one you have an unbroken arrow, then one in dots because it passes behind the ear which corresponds to A. It comes out here because it is the part of the cut which is behind. It is the part that I can designate here by B. The ear which is outlined here by the limits of this dotted line in figure 2 could be on the other side. This possibility of two ears, is



what you will discover when you have realised the double cut and when you isolate in the cross-cap something which is fabricated here. What you see in this central piece of figure 4 isolated in this way, is in short a plane such that you now efface the rest of the object, so that you will no longer have to put in the dots here nor even the traversal: there remains only the central piece.

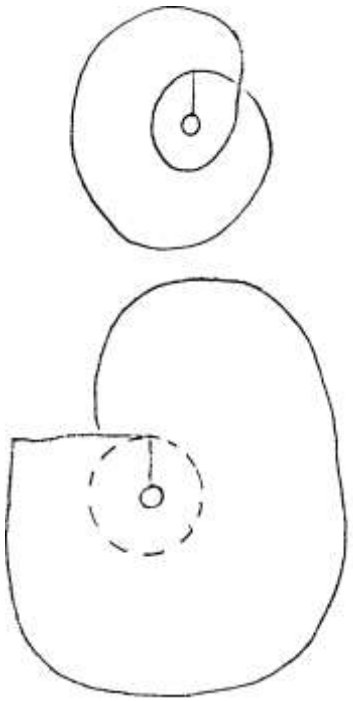
What do you have then? You can easily imagine for yourselves with a sort of plane which by going out of true comes, at a moment, to recut itself by means of a line which then passes behind. You have therefore, here also, two ears, a lamella in front, a lamella behind. And the plane traverses itself according to a line strictly limited by a point. It could be that this point was placed just at the extremity of the posterior ear, this would be, for the plane, a way of recutting itself which would be just as interesting from certain points of view since it is what I realised in figure 5 to show you earlier the proper way to consider the structure of this point.

I am aware personally that you have already become disturbed about the function of this point because one day you posed me the question in private of why I and the other authors always represent it in this form, indicating at the centre a sort of little hole. It is quite certain that this little hole gives rise to reflections. And it is precisely on it that we are going

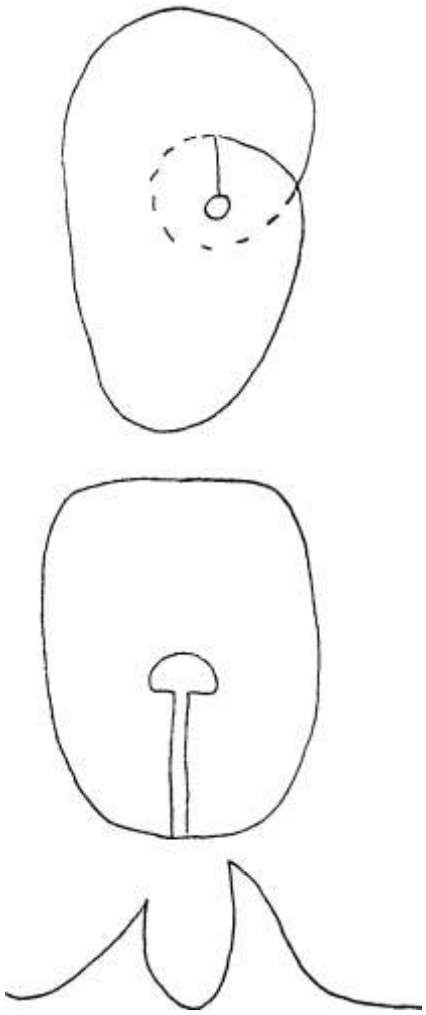
to insist, because it gives the quite particular structure of this point which is not a point like the others. This is what I am going to be led to explain now.

Its rather oblique, distorted shape is amusing, because the analogy between the helix, the antelix and even the lobule, and the shape of this cut projective plane is striking, if one considers that one can rediscover this shape which fundamentally is drawn towards the shape of the Möbius strip.

It is found much more simplified in what I once called the arum or again the donkey's ear. This is done only to draw your attention to the obvious fact that nature seems in a certain way drawn by its structures, and in particularly significant organs, those of the orifices of the body which are in a way left to one side, distinct from the analytic dialectic. To these orifices of the body, when they show this sort of resemblance, could be linked a sort of consideration about the attachment of this point to *Naturwissenschaft*, which ought indeed to relate to it, to be reflected in it if it has effectively some value.



The striking analogy between many of these drawings that I have made with the figures that you find on every page of books on embryology also deserves to retain our attention. When you consider what happens, scarcely has the stage of the germinative plaque been gone through in serpents' or fishes' eggs - in so far as it is what is closest, according to an examination which is not absolutely complete in the present state of science, to the development of the human egg - you find something striking, it is the appearance on this germinative plaque, at a given moment, of what is called the primitive line which also terminates at a point, Hensen's node, which is a quite significant and really problematic point in its formation in so far as it is linked by a sort of correlation to the formation of the neural

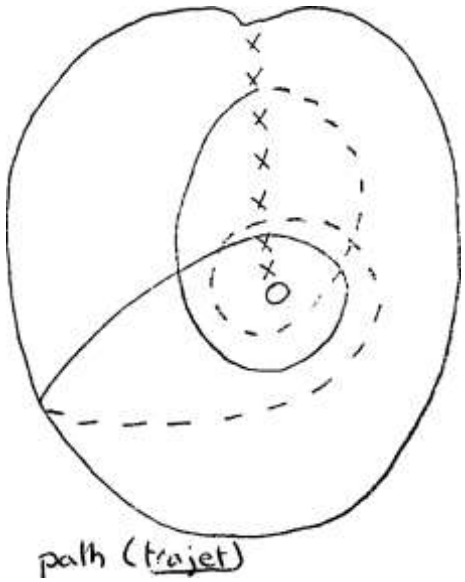


tube. It comes in a way to meet it by a refolding process of the ectoderm: it is, as you cannot fail to know, something which gives a good idea of the formation of a torus, since at a certain stage this neural tube remains open like a trumpet on two sides. On the contrary the formation of the cordal canal which is produced at the level of this Hensen's node, with a way of propagating itself laterally, gives the idea that there is produced here a process of interlacing, whose morphological aspect cannot fail to recall the structure of the projective plane, especially if one thinks that the process which is realised of this point called the Hensen node, is in a way a regressive process, according as development advances, it is in a line, in a posterior withdrawal of Hensen's node that there is completed this function of the primitive line, and that here there is produced this opening towards the front, towards the endoblast, of this canal which in sauropsidians presents itself as homologous, without being altogether identifiable to the neuro-enteric canal that is found in the batrachia, namely what puts the terminal part of the digestive tube and the terminal part of the neural tube into communication, in short this point which is so highly significant because it joins the cloacal orifice, which is so important in analytic theory, to something which is found in front of the lowest part of the caudal formation to be what specifies the vertebrated and the prevertebrated more strongly than any other characteristic, namely the existence of the cord of which this primitive line and Hensen's node are the point of departure. There is here certainly a whole series of directions of research which, I believe, would deserve to retain our attention. In any case, if I have not in any way insisted on it, it is because it is certainly not in

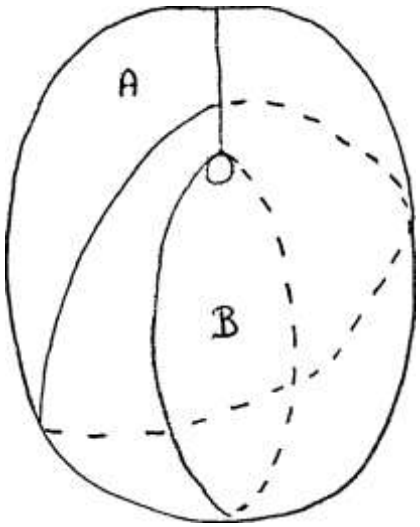
this direction that I want to engage myself. If I am speaking about it for the moment, it is both to awaken in you a little more interest about these structures which are so captivating in themselves and also to authenticate a remark which was made to me about the fact that embryology would have its word to say here, at least by way of illustration.

This will immediately allow us to go further, on the function of this point.

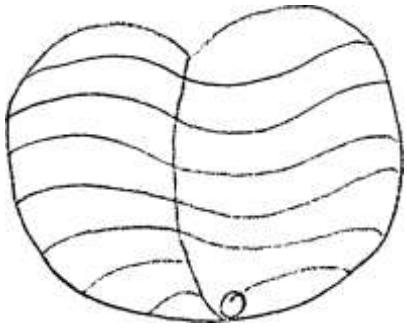
A very close discussion on the plane of the formalism of these topological constructions would only go on forever and would perhaps weary you. If the line that I trace here in the form of a sort of interlacing of fibres, is something whose function you already know in the cross-cap, what I want to point out to you is that the point which terminates it, of course, is a mathematical point, an abstract point. We cannot give it any dimension. Nevertheless we cannot think about it except as a cut to which we must give paradoxical properties, first of all from the fact that we can conceive it as punctiform. On the other hand it is irreducible. In other words, to be even able to conceive of the surface we cannot consider it as filled. It is a hole-point, as one might say. What is more, if we consider it as a hole-point,



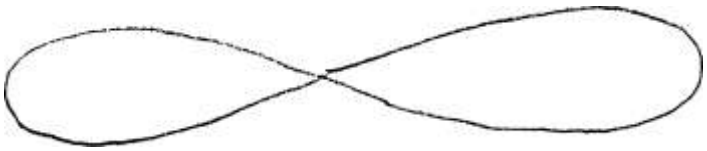
namely made up of the coupling of two edges, it would be in a way indivisible in the direction that traverses it and one could in effect illustrate it by this type of single cut that one can make on the cross-cap; there are those which are made normally to explain the functioning of the surface in technical books which are consecrated to it - if there is a cut which passes through this point, how ought we to conceive of it? Is it in a way homologous and uniquely homologous to what happens when you make one of the lines above pass, traversing the structural line of false penetration, namely in a way if something exists that we can call a hole-point so that the cut, even when it approaches it to the degree of being merged with this point, makes a circuit around this hole? This in effect is what we must conceive because when we trace such a cut, here is what we end up with: take if you wish, figure .., transform it into figure 3 and consider what is involved between the two ears which remain there at the level of A, and of 6 which would be behind. It is something which can again be put aside indefinitely to the point that the whole apparatus takes on this aspect, figure 5, these two parts of the figure representing the anterior and posterior folds that I drew on figure 4. Here at the centre, this surface which I drew in figure 4 appears here also in figure 5. It is here in effect, behind.



It remains that at this point something must be maintained which is in a way the initial stage of the mental fabrication of the surface, namely with respect to this cut which is the one around which it is really constructed. Because it would be appropriate to conceive of this surface that you want to show, as a certain way of organising a hole, this hole whose edges are figured here. The initial stage is the point from which it is appropriate to start so that there can be made in a fashion which effectively constructs the surface in question, the edge-to-edge connections which are drawn here, namely that this edge here, after of course all the necessary modifications at its descent through the other surface, and this edge here comes to connect itself with the one that we have brought into this part of figure 4: a with a'. The other edge, on the contrary, must come to be connected, according to the general direction of the green arrow, with this edge there: d with d' is a connection which is only conceivable starting from the initial stage of something which signifies itself as the overlapping, as punctual as you would wish it to be, of this surface by itself at a point, namely of something which is here at a small point where it is split and where it has overlapped itself. It is around this that the process of construction takes place. If you do not have that, if you consider that the cut B that you have made here traverses the hole-point not by going around it as the other cuts with a circuit, but on the contrary by coming to cut it here in the way in which, in a torus, we can consider that a cut is produced thus:

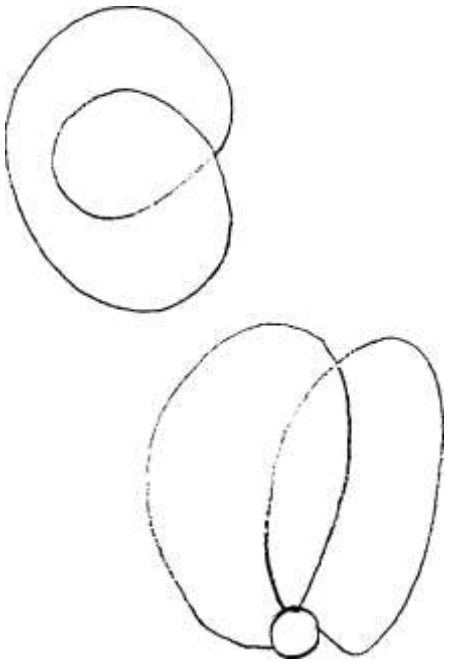


What does this figure become? It takes on another and quite different aspect. Here is what it becomes.



It becomes purely and simply the most simplified form of the folding back in front and behind of the surface figure 4, namely that what you have seen figure 4 organising according to a shape which comes to intersect itself edge by edge according to four segments, the segment a coming onto the segment a^1: this is a segment which would carry the number 1 with respect to another which would carry the number 3 with respect to the continuity of the cut drawn in this way; then a number 2 with segment number 4.

Here, the final figure, you have only two segments. They must be conceived of as being coupled to one another by a complete inversion of one with respect to the other. It is very difficult to visualise. But the fact that what is on one side in one direction must be connected to what on the other side is in the opposite direction shows us here the pure structure, even though it is not visualisable, of the Möbius strip. The difference between what is produced when you carry out this simple cut on the projective plane and the projective plane itself, is that you lose one of the elements of its structure: you only make a pure and simple Möbius strip out of it, except that you see nowhere appearing what is essential in the structure of the Möbius strip: an edge. Now this edge is quite essential in the Möbius strip. In effect in the theory of surfaces - I cannot develop it in an entirely satisfying fashion - in order to determine properties such as the type, the number of connections, the characteristic, everything that is of interest in this topology, you ought to take into account that the Möbius strip has an edge and has only one, that it is constructed on a hole. It is not for the pleasure of the paradox that I say that surfaces are organisations of the hole. Here therefore, if it is a question of a Möbius strip this signifies that, even though there is no way of representing it anywhere, it is necessary that the hole should remain. For it to be a Möbius strip you will put a hole here then, however small it may be. However punctual it may be, it will fulfill topologically exactly the same functions as that of the complete edge in this something that you can draw when you draw a Möbius strip, namely more or less something like the following:



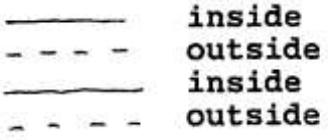
As I pointed out to you a Möbius strip is as simple as that. A Möbius strip has only one edge. If you follow its edge you have gone right around everything that is edge on this strip and in fact it is only a hole, a thing which may appear as purely circular; by underlining the two sides, by inverting one with respect to the other coupling one, it will remain that it will be necessary in order for there to be question of a Möbius strip that we should preserve in as reduced a form as possible the existence of a hole. This indeed effectively is what indicates to us the irreducible character of the function of this point. And if we try to articulate it, to show its function we are led, by designating it as origin-point of the organisation of the surface on the projective plane, to rediscover in it properties which are not completely those of the edge of the Möbius surface, but which are all the same something which is so much a hole that if one tries to suppress it by this operation of section by the cut passing through this point, it is in any case a hole that one makes appear in the most incontestable fashion.

What does that mean again? In order that this surface should function with its complete properties, and particularly that of being unilateral like the Möbius strip, namely that an infinitely flat subject walking about on it, starting from some point or other, outside the surface, to return by an extremely short path and without having to pass through any edge to the reverse point of the surface from which he has started, in order that this can be produced, it is necessary that in the construction of the apparatus that we have called the projective plane there should be somewhere, however reduced you may suppose it to be, this sort of bottom which is represented here, this backside of the apparatus, there must remain a little piece however small it may be of the part which is not structured by interlacing otherwise the surface becomes something else and specifically no longer presents this property of functioning as unilateral.

Another way of highlighting the function of this point: the cross-cap cannot be drawn purely and simply as something which could be divided in two by a line where the two surfaces are supposed to intersect. It is necessary that there should remain here something which beyond the point surrounds it, something like a circumference, however reduced it

may be, a surface that allows there to be put into communication the two upper lobes, as one might say, of the surface structured in this way. It is this that shows us the paradoxical and organising function of the point.

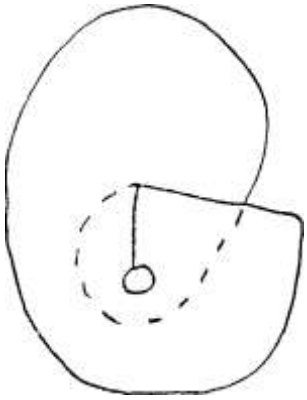
But what this allows us to articulate now, is that this point is made by the coupling of two edges of a cut, a cut which cannot itself be retraversed in any way, be divided, a cut which you see here in the way that I have imaged it for you, as deduced from the structure of the surface and which is such that one can say that if we were to define arbitrarily something as inside and as outside - by putting for example in blue on the drawing what is inside and in red what is outside - at one of the edges of this point the other would present itself in this way since it is made from a cut, however minimal you may suppose it to be, of the surface which has been superimposed on the other. In this privileged cut what will be confronted without being connected will be an outside with an inside, an inside with an outside.



Such are the properties that I present to you - one could express this in a more learned, more formalist, more dialectical way - in a form which appears to me not alone sufficient, but necessary in order to be able subsequently to image the function that I intend to give it for our use.

I pointed out to you that the double cut is the first form of cut which introduces into the surface defined as the cross-cap of the projective plane the first cut, the minimal cut which obtains the division of this surface. I indicated to you the last time what this division culminated in and what it signifies. I showed you in these very precise figures all of which I hope you have noted, and which consisted in proving to you that this division has precisely as a result to divide the surface in 1, a Möbius surface namely a unilateral surface of the type of the figure here: [Missing in text]

This preserves, as one might say, in itself only a part of the properties of the surface called the cross-cap, and, precisely this particularly interesting and expressive part which consists in the unilateral property; and in the one which I always highlighted for you when I had circulated among you these little Möbius ribbons that I made, namely that it is a question of a left surface, which is, we will say in our language, specularisable, that its image in the mirror cannot be superimposed on it, that it is structured by a fundamental asymmetry. And the whole interest of this structure that I am showing you is that, on the contrary, the central part, what we will call the central piece, isolated by the double cut, while being manifestly the one which carries with it the veritable structure of the whole apparatus called the cross-cap, it is enough to look at it, I would say to see it, it is enough to imagine that, in some fashion or other the edges here are joined to one another in the points of correspondence that they present visually in order that there should be immmediately reconstituted the general shape of this projective plane or cross-cap.



But what appears with this cut is a surface which has this aspect that you can, I think, now consider as something which, for you, has gained enough familiarity for you to project it into space, this surface which traverses itself according to a certain line which stops at a point. It is this line and it is above all this point which gives to the double circuit shape of this cut its privileged signification from the schematic point of view because it is this that we going to trust to give ourselves a schematic schema of representation of the relationship $ cut of o, which we will not manage to grasp at the level of the structure of the torus namely of something which allows us to articulate schematically the structure of desire, the structure of desire in so far as we have already inscribed it formally in this something which we are saying allows us to conceive of thestructure of the phantasy $ cut of o. S o.

We will not exhaust this subject today, but I will try to introduce today for you the fact that this figure, in its schematic function, is rather exemplary in order to allow us to find the relationship of $ cut of o, the formalisation of the phantasy in its relationship with something which is inscribed in what is the remainder of the surface called the projective plane or cross-cap when the central piece is in a way enucleated. It is a question of a specularisable, fundamentally asymmetrical structure which is going to allow us to localise the field of this asymmetry of the subject with respect to the Other, especially concerning the essential function that the specular image plays in it.

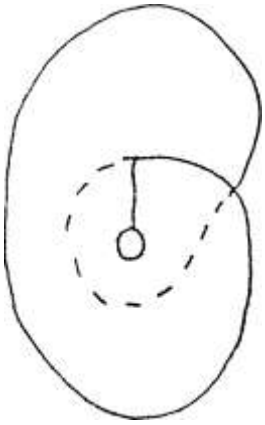
Here in fact is what is in question: the true imaginary function, as one might say, in so far as it intervenes at the level of desire, is a privileged relationship with o, object of desire, term of the phantasy. I say term because there are two of them, $ and o, linked by the function of the cut. The function of the object of the phantasy, in so far as it is the term of the function of desire, this function is hidden.

What is most efficient, most efficacious in the relationship to the object, as we understand it, is marked by a maximal veiling in the vocabulary currently accepted in psychoanalysis. One could say that the libidinal structure, in so far as it is marked by the narcissistic function, is what covers and masks the relationship to the object for us. It is in so far as the narcissistic, secondarily narcissistic, relationship, the relationship to the image of the body as such is linked by something structural to this relationship to the object which is that of the fundamental phantasy, that it takes on all its weight, but this something structural of which I speak is a complementary relationship, it is in so far as the relationship of the subject marked by the unary trait finds a certain support which is a lure, which is an error, in the image of the body as constitutive of specular identification that it has its indirect relationship with what is hidden behind it, namely the relationship to the object, the

relationship to the fundamental phantasy. There are therefore two imaginarles, the true and the false; and the false is only sustained in this sort of subsistence to which there remain attached all the mirages of the *mé-connaitre* (miscognition) - I already introduced this play on words, *mé-connaissance*: the subject miscognises himself in the mirror relationship. This mirror relationship in order to be understood as such, ought to be situated on a basis of this relationship to the Other which is the foundation of the subject, as long as our subject is the subject of discourse, the subject of language. It is by situating what $ cut of o is with respect to the fundamental deficiency of the Other as locus of the word, with respect to what is the only definitive response at the level of enunciating, the signifier of of the universal witness in so far as it is lacking and that at a given moment it only has the function of a false witness, it is by situating the function of o at this point of failure, by showing the support that the subject finds in this o which is what we aim at in analysis as an object which has nothing in common with the object of classical idealism, which has nothing in common with the object of the Hegelian subject.

It is by articulating in the most precise fashion this o at the point of lack of the Other, which is also the point where the subject receives from this Other, as locus of the word, its major mark, that of the unary trait, the one which distinguishes our subject from the knowing transparency of classical thinking as a subject entirely attached to the signifier in so far as this signifier is the turning point of his rejection, for him the subject, of the whole signifying realisation ... it is in showing, starting from the formula o as structure of the phantasy, the relationship between this object and the lack of the Other that we see how at a moment everything retreats, everything is effaced in the signifying function in face of the rise, the eruption of this object. It is towards this that we can advance even though it is the most veiled, the most difficult zone to articulate in our experience. Because precisely we have a check for it in the fact that by the ways which are those of our experience, paths that we take, most usually those of the neurotic, we have a structure which it is not at all a matter of loading onto scapegoats. At this level, the neurotic like the pervert, like the psychotic himself, are only faces of the normal structure. I am often told after these lectures: when you speak about the neurotic and about his object which is the demand of the Other, unless his demand is the object of the Other, why do you not speak to us about normal desire! But precisely, I am talking about it all the time. The neurotic, is the normal in so far as, for him, the Other with a big 0, is all-important. The pervert, is the normal in so far as for him the Phallus - the big that we are going to identify with this *point* which gives to the central piece of the projective plane all its consistency - the Phallus is all-important. For the psychotic his own body, which is to be distinguished in its place, in this structuring of desire, his own body is all-important.

And these are only faces where something is manifested about this element of paradox which is the one which I am going to try to articulate before you at the level of desire.



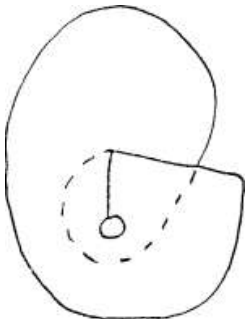
Already, the last time, I gave you a foretaste of it by snowing you what can be distinct in the function, in so far as it emerges, of the phantasy, namely of something that the subject foments, tries to produce at the blind place, at the masked place which is the one this central piece gives the schema of. Already in connection with the neurotic and precisely the obsessional, I indicated to you how it can be conceived that the search for the object might be the true aim, in the obsessional phantasy, of this always renewed and always impotent attempt at destroying the specular image in so far as it is what the obsessional aims at, that he senses as an obstacle for the realisation of his fundamental phantasy. I showed you that this clarifies very well what happens at the level not of the sadistic phantasy but the Sadian one, namely the one that I had occasion to spell out previously, for you, with you, in the seminar on ethics, in so far as, being the realisation of an inner experience that one cannot entirely reduce to the contingencies of the knowable framework of an effort of thinking concerning the relationship of the subject to nature, it is by insulting nature that Sade tries to define the essence of human desire. And it is through this indeed that, today already, I can introduce for you the dialectic involved. If somewhere we can still preserve the notion of knowledge, it is undoubtedly outside the human field. There is no obstacle to us thinking, we positivists, Marxists, anything you wish, that nature knows herself. She undoubtedly has her preferences. She does not take, for her part, just any materials whatsoever. This indeed is what has left the field open to us for some time, to find a whole load of other funny ones that she had funnily left to one side!

However she may know herself, we do not see anything to prevent it. It is quite certain that the whole development of science, in all its branches, is constructed for us in a fashion which renders more and more clear the notion of knowledge. Connaturality with whatever means there may be in the natural field, is what is most foreign, always more foreign to the development of this science. Is it not this that makes it so contemporary for us to advance into the structure of desire as our experience precisely, effectively makes us sense it everyday? The kernel of unconscious desire and what one might call its orienting, attracting, relationship, is absolutely central with respect to all the paradoxes of human miscognition. And does its foundation not depend on the fact that human desire is an acosmic function?

That is why, when I try to foment these plastics for you, you might think you are seeing an updating of ancient imaginary techniques which are the ones that I taught you to read in the form of Plato's sphere. You might say that to yourselves. This little double point, this stamp shows us that here is the field where there is ringed what is the veritable mainspring of the relationship between the possible and the real. What gives to classical logic

all its charm, all its long-pursued seduction, the real point of interest of formal logic - I mean that of Aristotle - is what it supposes and what it excludes and what is really its pivotal point, namely the point of the impossible in so far as it is that of desire. And I will come back to it. Therefore you can say that everything that I am in the process of explaining to you here is the continuation of the preceding discourse. They are - let me use this formula - Theo-type contraptions. Because when all is said and done, it is as well to give a name to this God with whom we gargle a little bit too romantically our throats in this proclamation that we have done very well in saying that God is dead. There is god and god. I already told you that some of them are quite real. We would be wrong to overlook the reality. The God who is involved, the problem of whom we cannot elude since it is a problem which is our business, a problem in which we have to take part, this one, in order to distinguish terms, echoing Beckett who one day called him Godot, why not have called him by his true name, the supreme Being? If I remember rightly moreover, the good friend of Robespierre had this name as a proper name, I believe that she was called Catherine Théot. It is quite certain that a whole part of analytic elucidation and, in a word, the whole story of the father in Freud, is our essential contribution to the function of Theo in a certain field, very precisely in this field which finds its limits at the edge of the double cut in so far as it is what determines the structuring characteristics, the fundamental kernel of phantasy in theory as in practice. If something can be articulated which puts in the balance the domains of Theo, which prove not to be so totally reduced, nor reducible since we busy ourselves with them just as much, except for the fact that, for some time, we are losing, as I might say, their soul, their sap and their essence. One no longer knows very well what to say. This father seems to be reabsorbed in a cloud that is more and more withdrawn and at the same time leaves the import of our practice singularly in suspense. It is not at all superfluous for us to evoke that there is here in effect some historical correlative when it is a matter of defining what we have to deal with in our domain. I believe it is time. It is time because, already in a thousand concretised, articulated, clinical and practical forms a certain sector is being separated out in the evolution of our practice, which is distinct from the relationship to the Other, 0, as fundamental, as structuring the whole experience whose foundations we have found in the unconcious. But its other pole has all the value that I earlier called complementary, the one without which we wander, I mean without which we return, as a retreat, an abdication, to this something which was the ethics of the theological era, the one whose origins I made you sense as certainly conserving their whole price, all their value in this original freshness that Plato's dialogues preserves them in. What do we see after Plato, if not the promotion of something which is now perpetuated in the dust-covered shape of this distinction regarding which it is really scandalous that one can still find it written by an analyst, between ego-subject and ego-object! Speak to me about the rider and the horse, of the dialogue between the soul and desire, but precisely it is a matter of this soul and of this desire, of the referring back of desire to the soul at the moment precisely when only desire was in question, in short, everything that I showed you last year in *Transference*. It is a matter of seeing this more essential clarity that we for our part can contribute to it: the fact is that desire is not on one side. If it appears to be this unmanageable thing that Plato describes in such a pathetic, moving fashion and that the superior soul is destined to dominate, to captivate, of course, it is because there is a relationship, but the relationship is internal, and to divide it, is precisely to surrender oneself to a lure, to a lure which depends on the fact that this image of the soul which is nothing other than the central image of secondary narcissism as I defined it for you earlier and to which I will return, only functions as a way of access, a deceptive access path, but an access path oriented as such to desire. It is certain that Plato was not ignorant of it. And what renders his enterprise all the

more strangely perverse, it is that he masks it from us. Because I will speak to you about the phallus in its double function, the one which allows us to see it as the common point of eversion as I might say, of evergence, if I may put forward this word constructed as the reverse of convergence; if I think I can articulate for you on the one hand the function of this

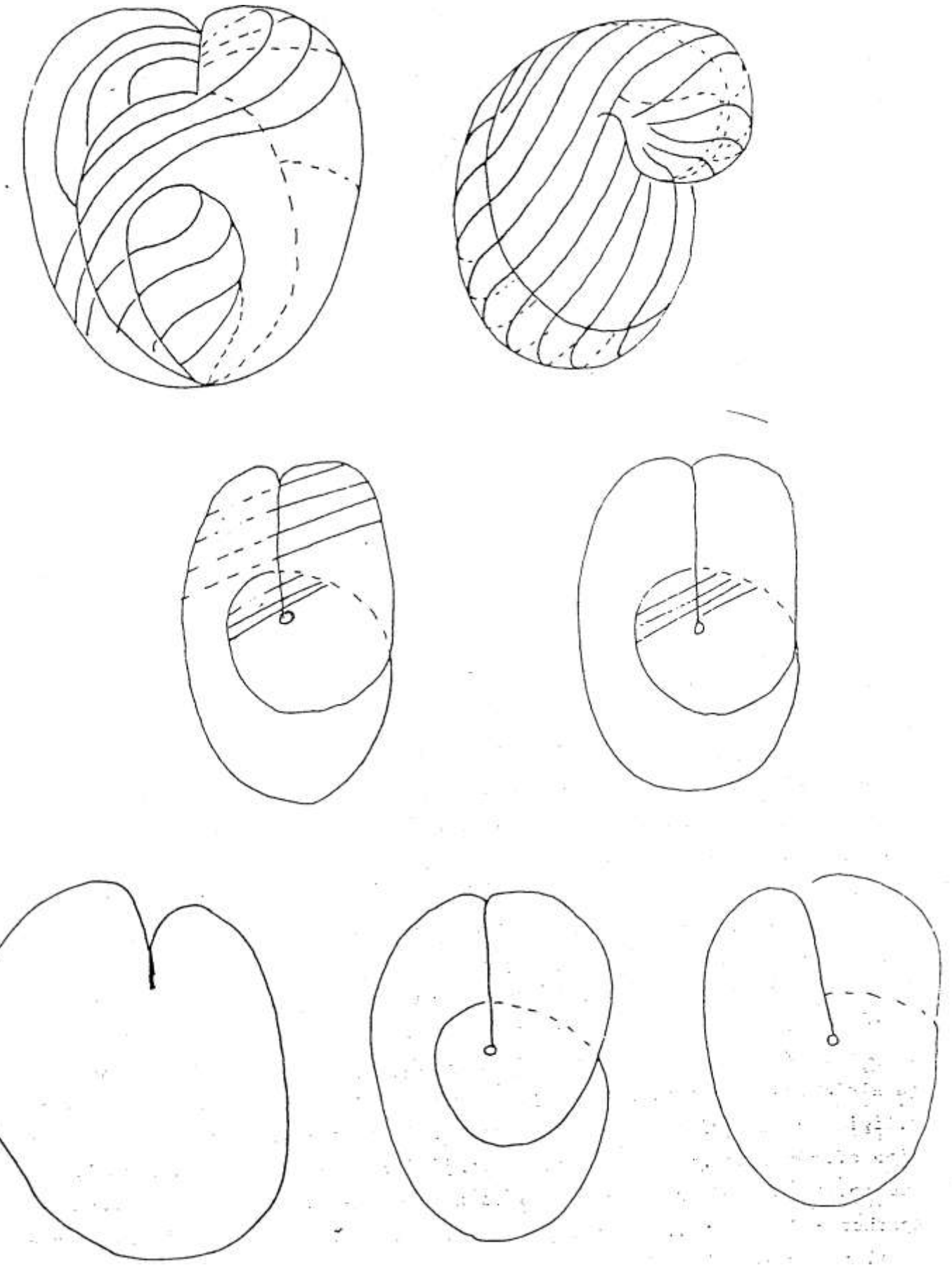


phallus at the level of the $ of the phantasy and at the level of o that it authenticates for desire. From today I will indicate to you the kinship of paradoxes with this very image that this schema of the figure 4 gives because here nothing other than this point guarantees for this surface cut in this way its /character as a unilateral surface, but entirely guarantees it to it, making truly of $ the cut of o.

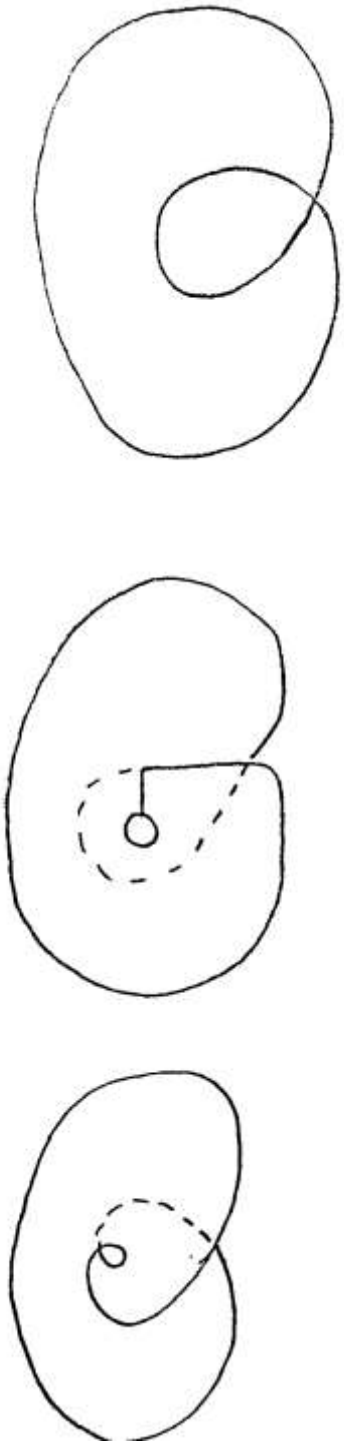
But let us not go too quickly, o, for its part, undoubtedly is the cut of $. The sort of reality that we are aiming at in this objectality or this objectiveness that we alone define, is truly for us what unifies the subject.

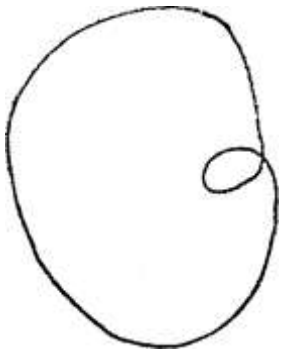
And what have we seen in the dialogue between Socrates and Alcibiades? And what is this comparison between this man carried to the pinnacle of passionate homage and a box: this marvellous box, as always, has always existed wherever man has known how to construct for himself objects, figures of what for him is the central object, that of the fundamental phantasy, it contains what, Alcibiades says to Socrates? The *agalma*. Let us begin to see what this *agalma* is: something which should have not just a tiny relationship with this central point which gives its accent, its dignity to the object o. But things, in fact are to be inverted at the level of the object. This phallus, if it is established so paradoxically that it is always necessary to pay great attention to what is its enveloping function and its enveloped function, I believe that it is rather at the heart of the *agalma* that Alcibiades seeks what he is appealing to, at this moment when the *Symposium* ends, in this something which we alone are able to read, even though it is obvious, because what he is looking for, what he prostrates himself before, what he makes this impudent appeal to is what? Socrates as desiring, whose avowal he wants. At the heart of the *agalma* what he is searching for in the object manifests itself as being the pure *eron*, because what he wants is not to tell us that Socrates is lovable, it is to tell us that what he desired most in the world was to see Socrates desiring. This most radical subjective implication at the heart of the object itself of desire where I think that all the same you find your bearings a little, simply because you could put it back into the old drawer of the desire of man and the desire of the Other. It is something that we are going to be able to highlight more precisely. We see that what organises it is the punctual, central function of the phallus. And there, we have our old enchanter rotting or not, but certainly an enchanter, the one who knows something about desire, who sends off our Alcibiades on his way telling him what? To look after his soul, his ego, to become what he is not: a neurotic for the centuries to come, a child of Theo.

And why? What is this reply of Socrates to a being as admirable as Alcibiades? In that it is manifestly he who is it, the *agalma*, as I think I have manifested before you, it is purely and manifestly only Alcibiades who is the phallus. Only nobody can know whose phallus he is. To be phallus in that state, one must be made of the right stuff. Undoubtedly he has what it takes and the charms of Socrates have without any doubt no hold on Alcibiades. He passes in the centuries of ethical theology which followed towards this enigmatic and closed form, but that the *Symposium* nevertheless indicates for us the starting point with all the necessary complements, namely that Alcibiades, manifesting his appeal for a desirer at the heart of the privileged object, does nothing other than appear in a position of frantic seduction with respect to the one whom I called the fundamental idiot, whom as the supreme irony Plato connoted by the proper name of goodness itself: Agathon - the supreme good has no other name in his dialectic. Is there not here something which sufficiently shows that there is nothing new in our research? It returns to the beginning, in order this time to understand what has happened since.



Seminar 25: Wednesday 20 June 1962





The time for the end of this year is approaching. My discourse on identification has not of course been able to exhaust its field. Moreover I do not think I should experience any feeling of having failed you on that account.

This field in effect, someone at the beginning was a bit uneasy, not without reason, that I should have chosen a thematic which seemed to him would allow it to be the instrument for us of "everything is in everything"; I tried on the contrary to show you the structural rigour attached to it.

I did this starting from the second mode of identification distinguished by Freud, the one that I believe without false modesty to have henceforth rendered unthinkable for you except under the mode of the functioning of the unary trait. The field I have been on since I introduced the signifier of the interior eight is the one of the third mode of identification, this identification where the subject is constituted as desire and in which all our previous discourse prevented us from overlooking that the field of desire is only conceivable for man starting from the function of the big Other: the desire of man is situated at the locus of the Other and is constituted precisely as this mode of original identification that Freud teaches us to separate out empirically - which does not mean that his thinking on this point is empirical - in the form of what is given in our clinical experience, most especially in connection with this so manifest form of the constitution of desire which is that of the hysteric.

To be content to say: there is the ideal identification and then there is the identification of desire to desire can suffice of course for a first clarification of things. As you can see clearly, Freud's text does not leave things there, and does not leave things there in so far as already within the major works of his third topography, he shows us the relationship of the object, which here can only be the object of desire, to the constitution of the ideal itself. He shows it on the plane of collective identification, of what is in short a sort of confluence of experience, through which the unarity of the trait, as I might say, my unary trait - this is what I wanted to say - is reflected in the unicity of the model taken as the one which functions in the constitution of this order of collective reality that is, as one might say, the crowd with a head, the leader.

This problem, however local it may be, is indeed no doubt the one which offered to Freud himself the best terrain to grasp, at the point that he was elaborating these things at the level of the third topography, something which for him, not in a structural fashion, but in a way linked to a sort of concrete point of confluence, collected together the three forms of identification. Since moreover, the first form, the one which will remain in short at the edge, at the end of our development this year, the one which is put as the first, the most mysterious also, even though apparently the first brought to light in analytic dialectic, the identification

to the father, is here in this model of identification to the leader, to the crowd, and is here in a way implicated without being completely implicated, without being at all included in its total dimension, in its entire dimension.

The identification to the father brings into question in effect something of which one can say that linked to the tradition of a properly historical adventure to the point that we can probably identify it to history itself, opens up a field which we have not even dreamt this year of bringing into our field of interest, for fear of being really completely absorbed in it.

To take at first as object the first form of identification would have been to engage our whole discourse on identification in the problems of *Totem and Taboo*, the work which for Freud was, one could well say, what one could call *die Sache selbst*, the thing itself, and of which one can also say that it will remain so in the Hegelian sense, namely in so far as for Hegel *die Sache selbst*, the work, is in short everything which justifies, everything by which there merits to subsist this subject who never existed, who never lived, who never suffered, what matter, simply this essential exteriorisation of a work, with a path traced by him. This indeed, in effect, is what one looks at and what it simply wants to remain, a phenomenon of consciousness in movement, and from that angle, one could say in effect that we are right, that we would be wrong, not to identify the legacy of Freud, if it had to be limited to his writings, to *Totem and Taboo*.

Because the discourse on identification that I pursued this year, with what it constituted as an operational apparatus - I am sure that you are only at the point of beginning to put it to use - you cannot yet before testing it appreciate its importance which cannot but be altogether decisive as regards everything that calls at the present time for an urgent formulation, in the first place phantasy.

I wanted to mark that it was the essential preliminary step, demanding absolutely a properly didactic preliminary history in order that there could be appropriately articulated the weakness, the fault, the loss that we are at to be able to refer with the slightest appropriateness to what is involved concerning the paternal function.

I am very precisely alluding to something which we could qualify as the soul of the year 1962, during which there appeared two books by Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le Totémisme* and *La Pensée sauvage*. I believe that not a single analyst read them without at once feeling himself - for those who follow the teaching here - fortified, reassured, and without finding in them the complement - because of course he had the leisure to explore fields that I can only bring in here by allusion, to show you the radical character of the signifying constitution in everything that belongs, let us say, to culture, even though, of course he underlines it, this is not to demarcate a domain whose frontier is absolute. But at the same time, within his very pertinent exhaustions of the classificatory mode, of which one could say that *La Pensée sauvage* is less the instrument than in a way the effect, the function of *Totem and Taboo* appears entirely reduced to these signifying oppositions.

Now it is clear that this could not be resolved except in an impenetrable fashion, if we analysts are not capable of introducing here something which is at the same level as this discourse, namely, like this discourse, a logic.

It is this logic of desire, this logic of the object of desire whose instrument I have given you this year, by designating the apparatus through which we can grasp something which, to be worthwhile, cannot but have been for all time the veritable animating force of logic, I mean there where, in history in the history of its progress, it made itself felt as something which opened out to thinking. It nevertheless remains that this secret mainspring remained masked perhaps, because logic for its part did not involve, did not imply the movement of this world which is not nothing: it is called the world of thought, in a certain direction which, even though it was centrifugal, was nonetheless all the same determined by something which referred itself to a certain type of object which is the one that we are interested in for the moment.

What I defined the last time as the point, the point in a certain new way of delimiting the circle of connotation of the object, is what puts us on the threshold, before parting this year, of having to pose the function of this ambiguous -point, as I told you, not just simply in the mediation but in the constitution inherent to one and the other, not simply as the reverse which would be worth as much as the front (*l'envers ... l'endroit*) but as a reverse, I told you, which would be the same thing as the front, of the $ barred and of the point o in the phantasy, in recognising what the object of human desire is, starting from desire, in recognising the reason why in desire the subject is nothing other than the cut of this object.

And how individual history - this discoursing subject in which this individual is only included - is orientated, pivoting, polarised by this secret and perhaps in the final analysis, never accessible point, if there must be admitted with Freud for a time at least in the irreducibility of a *Urverdrangung* the existence of this navel of desire in the dream of which he speaks in the *Traumdeutung*, it is this whose function we cannot omit in any appreciation of the terms into which we decompose the faces of this nuclear phenomenon.

That is why, before rejoining clinical experience, always too easy to put us back into the rut of truths to which we accommodate ourselves very well in a veiled state, namely: what is the object of desire for the neurotic, or again for the pervert, or again for the psychotic? It is not that, this sampling, this diversity of suits which will never do anything except make us lose the interesting cards. "Become what you are", says the formula of classical tradition. It is possible. A pious wish. What is guaranteed, is that you become what you miscognise (*méconnaitre*). The way in which the subject miscognises the terms, the elements and the functions between which are played out the fate of desire, in so far precisely as there appears to him somewhere in an unveiled form one of these terms, is the way that each one of those whom we have named neurotic, perverse and psychotic is *normal*. The psychotic is normal in his psychosis, and moreover because the psychotic in desire has to deal with the body; the pervert is normal in his perversion because he has to deal with the phallus in its variety and the neurotic because he has to deal with the Other, the big Other as such. They are normal because these are the three normal terms of the constitution of desire.

These three terms are of course always present. For the moment, it is not a matter of their being in any one of the these subjects, but here in the theory. This is why I cannot advance in a straight line. It is because there comes to me at every step the need to make the point with you again, not so much because I am so worried that you should understand me "Are you all that keen to be understood?", I am asked from time to time, these are the kind

remarks that I hear in my analyses. Obviously, yes. But what creates the difficulty, is the necessity of making you see that you are included in this discourse; it is starting from there that it can be deceiving, because you are included in it in any case; and errors can arise uniquely from the way in which you conceive that you are included in it.

I was very struck to read, yesterday morning, before the electricity strike started, the work of one of my students on phantasy. Not bad, by God. Of course, it is not yet the putting into action of the apparatuses of which I spoke, but the simple collation of passages in Freud where he speaks about phantasy in an absolutely inspired fashion. When one asks oneself what relevance, in the absence of everything that can be said, these initiatives have conditioned since, how the first formulation was able to find this relevance and remain in a way marked now by the very stamp which is the one that I am trying to isolate from things. This drive which makes itself felt from within the body, these schemas entirely structured from these topological prevalencies, it is only on this that there is agreement.

How define what functions from the arrival of the outside and from the arrival of the inside?

What incredible vocation to platitude was required in what one could call the mentality of the analytic community to believe that this is a reference to what is called "the biological agency"! Not that I am in the process of saying that a body, a living body, - I am not joking - is not a biological reality, only to make it function in the Freudian topology as topology and to see in it some biologism or other which is supposed to be radical, inaugural, co-extensive with the function of drive, is what gives here the whole breadth, the whole gap of what is called a misinterpretation, a misinterpretation absolutely manifest in the facts, namely that as there is no need to point out, until we hear differently, namely the revision that we await in biology, there has not been the trace of a biological or even physiological, nor even esthesiological discovery made through analysis (esthesiological means a sensorial discovery, something new that one might have been discovered in the way of sensing things); what constitutes the misinterpretation, can be defined very clearly, it is that the relationship of the drive to the body is everywhere marked in Freud; topologically, this does not have the same reference value, the idea of a direction, as a discovery in biological research. It is quite certain that this "what is a body", as you know, was not even an idea outlined in the consensus of the philosophising world at the time that Freud outlined his first topography; the whole later notion of *Dasein* is constructed to give us as I might say the primitive idea that one could have of what a body is, as a constituting there, as certain dimensions of presence - and I am not going to re-do Heidegger for you, because if I speak to you about him, it is because you are soon going to have this text which I told you was easy, you will have his own words. In any case the facility with which we read him now proves well that what he has launched into the current of things is well and truly in circulation; these dimensions of presence however they are described, the *Mitsein*, this being there and allthe rest, *in der Welt sein*, all the so different and so distinct mundanities; because it is a matter precisely of distinguishing them from space: *latum, longum et profundum*, which has no trouble showing us that this is only the abstraction of the object and because moreover this is proposed as such in this Descartes whom I put this year at the beginning of our account: the abstraction of the object as subsisting, namely already ordered in a world which is not simply a world of coherence, of consistency, but enucleated of the object of desire as such.

Yes, in Heidegger, all of this makes admirable irruptions into our mental world. Let me tell you that if there are people who should not in any way be satisfied with it, it is psychoanalysts, it is I. This no doubt suggestive reference to what I will call - you should not see in it any kind of attempt to belittle what is involved - an artisanal praxis, the foundation of the tool-object, as discovering undoubtedly at the highest level these first so subtly picked out dimensions of presence which are proximity, distancing, as constituting the first lineaments of this world; Heidegger owes a lot - he told me so himself - to the fact that his father was a cooper.

All this reveals to us something with which presence is concerned in a pre-eminent way and to which we would hold onto much more passionately by posing the question of what every instrument has in common: the primitive spoon, the first way of digging, of taking something out of the current of things, what does this have to do with the instrument of the signifier? But when all is said and done is everything not decentred for us from the beginning? If what Freud contributed has a meaning, namely that at the heart of the constitution of every object there is the libido, if this has a meaning, this means that the libido is not simply the surplus of our praxic presence in the world, which is the age-old thematic and the one that Heidegger re-introduces: because if *Sorge* is care, occupation is what characterises this presence of man in the world, that means that when care relaxes a little people start fucking. Which, as you know, is the teaching for example of someone whom I choose here really, without any scruple and in a polemical spirit, because he is a friend: Mr Alexander. Mr Alexander has moreover his very honourable place in this simply cacophonous chorus that one can call theoretical discussion in the American Psychoanalytic Society, he has his place by full right, because it is obvious that it would be a little extreme to allow themselves, in a society as large and officially established as this American association, to reject what really coincides moreover with the ideals, with the practices, of what is called a particular cultural space.

But it is clear that even to outline a theory of libidinal functioning as being constituted by the surplus part of a certain energy however we may categorise it - survival energy or other - is actually to deny the whole value, not simply the poetic one, but the *raison d'être* of our function as therapists, as we define its terms and its goals.

That on the whole practically we adjust ourselves very well, we do our business (*affaire*) by bringing people back to theirs - affairs of course - only what is certain is that all the same when we pinpoint this result under the form of therapeutic success, we know at least this: it is either one thing or the other: either we have achieved it outside any kind of properly analytic path, and in that case what was amiss at the heart of the affair - because this is what is in question - is still amiss, or indeed if we have got to that, it is precisely in the whole measure - which is only the a-b-c of what we are taught - that we have not tried in any way to settle the affair, but we have been elsewhere, around what was amiss, what was happening at the centre, the libidinal knot.

It is for this reason that results that can be sanctioned in the sense of adaptation - I apologise, I am making a little detour here through banalities, but there are banalities that must all the same be recalled, especially because after all, recalled in a certain fashion banalities may sometimes appear to have little banal about them - any therapeutic success, namely to lead people to the well-being of their *Sorge*, of their "little affairs" is always for us

more or less, at bottom we know it, this is why we have no reason to boast about it - a last resort, an alibi, a misappropriation of funds, if I can express myself thus.

In fact, what is still much more serious, is that we prohibit ourselves from doing better, knowing full well that this action of ours of which we may boast from time to time as if it were a success, is carried out along paths which do not concern the result. Thanks to these paths, we bring about some modifications in a complementary place which is of no concern to them except by reverberation; it is the most that one can say. When do we manage to replace a subject in his desire? It is a question that I pose to those who here have some experience as analysts, obviously not to the others.

Is it conceivable that an analysis should result in making a subject enter into desire, as one speaks about entering into a trance, into rut or into religion? It is indeed for this reason that I allow myself to pose the question at a local point; the only one when all is said and done which is decisive, because we are not apostles, is whether this question does not deserve to be preserved when analysts are involved; because for the others, the problem posed is: what is desire for it to be able to subsist, to persist in this paradoxical position. Because after all it is quite clear that I am not in any way expressing a wish by this that the effect of analysis should go to rejoin the one filled from all ages by mystical sects whose famous, no doubt deceiving, often doubtful operations in any case most of the time, are not what I would especially ask you to interest yourselves in, except all the same in order to situate them as occupying this global place of leading the subject onto a field which is none other than the field of his desire.

And in a word, spending my last weekend in a series of rebounds, trying to see the meaning of some words of Muslim mystical technique I opened some things that I worked on at one time, like everybody else. Who has not looked a little at these indigestible and deadening books on Hinduism, on philosophy, about some ascesis or other, which are presented to us in a dust-laden and in general misunderstood terminology, I would say all the better understood when the transcriber is more stupid, this is why the English works are the best; above all I would ask you not to read the German works, they are so intelligent that it is immediately transformed into Schopenhauer. And then, there is René Guénon, of whom I speak because he is a curious geometrical place. I see from the number of smiles, the proportion of sinners! ... I swear that at any moment, at the beginning of this century of which I am a part - I do not know if it is still going on, but I see that this name is not unknown, so it must still be going on - the whole of French diplomacy found in René Guénon, this imbecile, its *maître à penser*. You see the result! It is impossible to open one of his works without really finding nothing to do with it because what he says the whole time, is that he ought to shut up.... This has a probably unextinguishable charm; because the result is that thanks to this all sorts of people who probably did not have a lot to do - as Briand said: "You know that we have no foreign policy, because a diplomat must be in an atmosphere that is a little unbreathable....!" - well, this has helped them to remain in their little carapace.

In short, all this is not intended to direct you towards Hinduism, but all the same, because I find myself I cannot say "rereading", because I never read them, Hindu texts, and as I tell you, it is always very disappointing from the beginning, but I have seen retranscribed, reassembled much more accessible things about Muslim mystical technique, by someone marvellously intelligent, although presenting all the appearances of madness, who is

called M Louis Massignon - I say "the appearances" - and referring himself to *boudhi*; in connection with the elucidation of these terms, the point that he highlights about the term function - I mean that it is the second-last threshold to be crossed before the liberation sought for, before Hindu ascesis - the function that he gives to the *boudhi*, as the object - because that is what this means, which of course is nowhere written down, except in this text of Massignon, where he finds its equivalent in the Mansur of Shiite mysticism - the function of the object as being the indispensable turning point of this concentration in order to come to the metaphorical terms of the subjective realisation that is in question, which when all is said and done is only the access to this field of desire that we can call 'simply the desirer'. And what is this desirer?

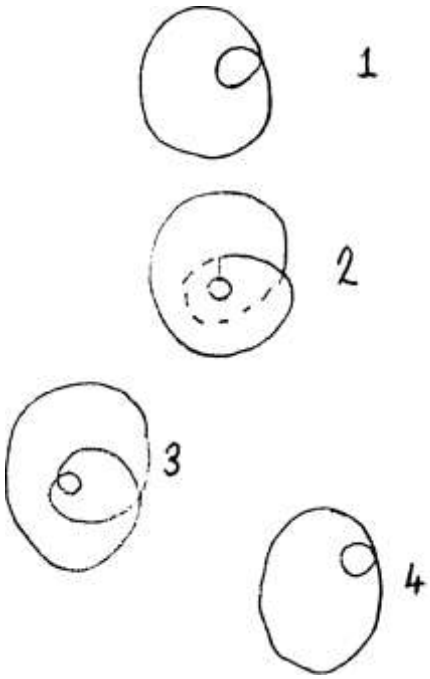
It is quite sure that those who have not gone there at all know nothing about it and this indeed is what annoys those who officiate in the already well-constituted domain which I called the last time that of Theo, quite naturally suspicion, exclusion, the smell of sulphur with which mystical ascesis is surrounded in all religions.

In any case, the relationship articulated at this stage, at the stage that one can describe as the completion of the involution, of the assumption of the subject into an object chosen moreover by mystical techniques in a very arbitrary order - it can be a woman - it can be a cork in a bottle - appeared to me to coincide perfectly with the formula: $ o ◇ cut of

as I formulate it for you as given, as the most simple formulisation that we are allowed to reach in contact with the different forms of clinical work, namely that it is necessary to presume that the structure of this central point as we are able to construct it - the term is from Freud - and as we ought necessarily to construct it to account for the ambiguities of its effects.

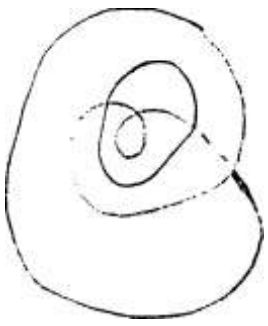
The work to which I alluded earlier, that I read yesterday morning, applied itself to taking up again - it is necessary for things to be digested - a field that I had treated a long time ago, namely the structure of the Wolfman, especially in the light of the structure of the phantasy; the thing is very well circumscribed in this work. Nevertheless, compared to the first formulations, those I constructed before bringing you the recent instruments, it does not mark much of an advance, but it designates for me the point at which after all you follow what I may show you here as a locus to be superseded.

Let us take it up therefore simply to highlight it - it is not a critique - this work, there would be many others to do and you should know what should be broadcast, what I would find suitable - the logical definition of the object that I will allow myself to call Lacanian on this occasion because it is not the same thing as speaking about the execrated lacanism of the



object of desire; the logical function of this object does not depend - this is what is designated by the novelty of the little circle which I teach you to circumscibe by telling you that it is essentially constituted by the presence of this point which is here, either in its central field, or at the limit of this field, namely here, because these three cases 2 - 3 - 4 , are the same as the final reduction of the field - its logical function does not depend either on its extension or on its comprehension; for its extension, if one can designate something by this term, depends on the structuring function of the point. The more this field is as I might say, punctual , the more effects there are and these effects are, as one might say, ones of inversion. In the light of this principle, there is no problem about what Freud provided us with as a reproduction of the Wolfman's phantasy.

You know this tree, this big tree and the wolves which are absolutely not wolves, there are five of them perched on this tree whereas elsewhere there is talk of seven of them.



If we had need of an exemplary image of what little o is here, at the limit of field when its phallic radicality is manifested by a sort of singularity as accessible there where alone it can appear to us, namely when it approaches or when it may approach the outside field, the field of what can be reflected, the field of that in which asymmetry may allow the specular error, we have it here. Because it is clear at the same time that it is not of course the specular image of the Wolfman which is there before him, and that nevertheless - we have marked it moreover for a long enough time for this not to be a novelty - for the author of the

work I am speaking about, it is the very image of that moment that the subject experiences as the primal scene. I mean that it is the very structure of the subject in front of this scene. I mean that before this scene, the subject makes himself into a wolf looking and makes himself into five wolves looking. What opens out suddenly to him from that night on, is the return of what he essentially is in the fundamental phantasy.

No doubt the scene itself that is involved is veiled. We will return later to this veil. Of what he sees there only emerges this V, like a butterfly's wings, of the open legs of his mother or the Roman V of the time on the clock, this five o'clock of the hot summer when the encounter appears to have taken place. But the important thing, is what he sees in his phantasy, it is S barred itself in so far as it is cut of little o: the little o, are the wolves. And if I go through it today it is because alongside the difficult, abstract discourse that I do not despair of being able to carry, within the limits that we have, to its final details, this object of desire is illustrated here in a way that allows me to accede immediately to concrete elements of structure that I would have more didactic ways of exposing to you. But I do not have the time, and I pass here by way of this non-specular object which is the object of desire, this object which can be found at this frontier zone in function of the images of the subject - let us say to go quickly how many risks of confusion I have here - in the mirror which the big Other constitutes, let us say the space developed by the big Other; because it is necessary to take away this mirror to make of it this sort of mirror which is called, no doubt, not by chance, a witch's mirror. I mean mirrors with a certain concavity which involve in their inside a certain number of concentric ones in which you see your own image reflected as many times as there are mirrors in the big one. The fact is that this is what indeed happens. You have present in the phantasy something which is only definable, accessible along the paths of our experience or perhaps - I know nothing about it, and what is more I do not care about it - along the paths of experiences to which I allude arlier. What belongs to the nature of the object of desire and this is interesting because it is a logical reference the object connoted, circumscribed by the Eulerian circles - and I will show you the close structural relationship between the object of this function which is called class and the function of privation, I mean the first of the three terms that I articulated, as privation, frustration and castration. Only, what completely veils the veritable function of privation, even though one can approach it - it is from there that I started to give you the schema of universal and particular propositions. Remember, when I told you: "Every professor is literate" this does not mean that there is only a single professor. The thing is still true for all that. The mainspring of privation, of privation as unary trait, as constituting the function of class is here sufficiently indicated.

But such is the function of dialectical reason - with all due respects to M Lévi-Strauss who believes that it is only a particular case of analytic reason - it is precisely that it does not allow his savage stages to be grasped except by starting with elaborated stages. Now this is not to say that the logic of classes is the savage state of the logic of the object of desire. If it has been possible to establish a logic of classes - I would ask you to consecrate our next meeting to this object - it is because there was the access that was refused to a logic of the object of desire; in other words, it is in the light of castration that one can understand the fruitfulness of the privative theme.

What I only wanted to indicate to you today, is this function which I mapped out for you a long time ago, to show it as exemplary of the most decisive, the cruelest incidences of the signifier in human life, when I told you: jealousy, sexual jealousy requires that the subject

knows how to count. The lionesses of the little leonine group that I depicted for you in some zoo or other were manifestly not jealous of one another, because they did not know how to count. We put our finger here on something: it is that it is rather probable that the object as it is constituted at the level of desire, namely the object in function not of privation but of castration, is the only object that can really be numerical. I am not sure that this suffices to affirm that it is enumerateable, but when I say that it is numerical I mean that it *carries number with it* as a quality.

One cannot be sure which one: here there are five in the schema and seven in the text; but what does it matter, there are surely not twelve! When I adventure into such indications, what allows me to do so? Here I tread softly; as in a hazardous interpretation: I await the response. I mean that in indicating this correlation to you, I am proposing to you to notice everything you may be letting pass in terms of the confirmation or of the eventual non-validation in what is presented, what is proposed to you. Of course you can trust me, I pushed a little bit farther the status of this relationship of the category of the object he object of desire with numeration.

But what makes me tread softly here, is that I can give myself time, content myself with telling you that we will see this subsequently, without it remaining for all that any less legitimate to indicate to you here a reference point which if you take it up may clarify certain facts. In any case in Freud's writings what we see at this level, is an image, the libido, he tells us, of the subject, has emerged from the experience shattered, *zersplittert*, *zerstört*.

My dear friend Leclaire does not read German, he did not put the German term in brackets and I did not have time to go and re-verify it. It is the same thing as the term *splitting*, *refendu*; the object manifested here in the phantasy carries the mark of what we have called on many occasions the splitting of the subject.

What we find, is undoubtedly here the same topological space which defines the object of desire, it is probable that this number being inherent is only the mark of the inaugural temporality which constitutes this field.

What characterises the double, is what one might call radical repetition; there is in its structure the fact of twice the circuit and the knot here constituted in this twofold circuit is at once this element of the temporal, temporal since in short the question remains open about the way in which developed time which forms part of our discourse is inserted into it; but it is also the essential term through which the logic constituted here is differentiated in an altogether veritable fashion from formal logic as it had subsisted intact in its prestige up to Kant. And this is the problem: where did this prestige come from, given its apparently absolutely dead character for us? The prestige of this logic was entirely in what we have reduced it to ourselves, namely the usage of letters.

The little a's and the little b's of the subject and of the predicate and of their reciprocal inclusion: it is all there. It never contributed anything to anybody; it never brought about the slightest progress in thinking, it remained fascinating throughout the centuries as one of the rare examples which were given us of the power of thinking. Why? It is of no use, but it could serve for something. It would be enough - which is what we are doing - to re-establish the following which is a constitutive miscognition for it: a = a is the principle of identity, this is its principle; we will not say 0 the signifier except to say that it is not the same big 0, the

signifier is essentially different to itself, namely that nothing of the subject can be identified to it without excluding itself from it.

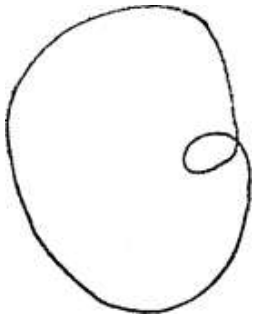
A very simple, almost obvious truth, which is enough just by itself to open up the logical possibility of the constitution of the object at the place of this *splitting*, at the very place even of this difference of the signifier to itself in its subjective effect.

How this object constitutive of the human world - because what it is a question of showing you, is that far from having the slightest aversion to this obvious psychological fact that the human being is likely to take, as one says, his desires for realities, it is here that we ought to follow him. Because since he is right at the beginning, it is only in the furrow opened by his desire that he can constitute any reality whatsoever which falls or not into the field of logic.

It is here that I will take things up the next time. (Applause)

Seminar 26: Wednesday 27 June 1962

Today in the context of the theoretical teaching that we have succeeded this year in going through together, I am indicating to you that I have to choose my axis, as I might say, and I will put the accent on the support-formula of the third type of identification which I noted for you a long time ago, since the time of the graph, under the form of $ which you now know how to read as cut of big $ ◊ o [or: cut of big 0]. Not what is implicit, nodal in at namely the Φ, the point thanks to which the eversion from one into the other can take place, thanks to which the two terms present themselves as identical, like the back and the front, not just any back whatsoever and not just any front. Otherwise I would not have needed to show you at the appropriate place what it is when it represents the double cut on this particular surface whose topology I tried to show you in the cross-cap.



This point designated here is the point Φ thanks to which the circle indicated by this little cut can be for us the mental schema of an original identification; this point - I believe I have sufficiently indicated its structural function in my last discourses - can, up to a certain point harbour for you too many satisfying properties; here is this phallus with this magical function which is indeed the one that our discourse for a long time now implies in it. It would be a little too easy to find our final resting point here.

This is why today I want to put the accent on this point, namely on the function of o, the small o in so far as it is at the same time properly speaking what can allow there to be conceived the function of the object in analytic theory, namely this object which in psychical dynamics is what structures for us the whole progressive-regressive process, what we have to deal with in our relationships of the subject to his psychical reality, but is also our object, the object of analytic science.

And what I want to put in the foreground, in what I am going to say to you about it today, is that if we want to qualify this object in a properly logical perspective, I stress: logical (*logicisante*), we have nothing better to say about it except the fact that it is the object of castration. I mean by this, I specify, compared to the other functions of the object defined up to now. Because if one can say that the object in the world, in so far as it is discerned there, is the object of a privation, one can also say that the object is the object of frustration. And I am going to try to show you precisely how this object of ours is distinguished from it.

It is quite clear that if this object is an object of logic it cannot have been up to now completely absent, undisclosed in all the attempts made to articulate as such what is called logic.

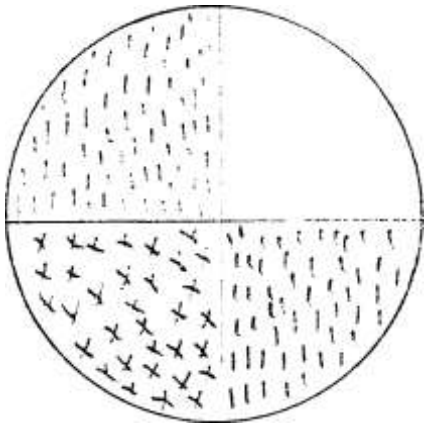
Logic has not always existed in the same form. The one which perfectly satisfied, fulfilled us up to Kant, who was still indulgent towards it, this formal logic, born one day from the pen of Aristotle exercised this captivation, this fascination until people devoted themselves, in the last century, to what could be revised in it in detail. It was noticed for example that many things were missing in it as regards quantification. It is certainly not what was added to it which is interesting, but the way it held us. And many of the things that people thought should be added to it only go in a singularly sterile direction.

In fact, it is in the reflection that analysis imposes on us as regards these powers of Aristotelian logic which were so insistent for such a long time, that there can be presented for us the interest of logic. The gaze of someone who strips formal Aristotelian logic of all its so fascinating details must - I repeat to you - abstract itself from the decisive things it has contributed in terms of a cut in the mental world in order even to understand truly what preceded it, for example the possibility of the whole Platonic dialectic which is always read as if formal logic were already there, which completely distorts our reading of it. But let us leave this.

The Aristotelian object - because this indeed is what it must be called - has precisely, as I might say, the property of being able to have properties which belong to it alone: its attributes. And it is these that define classes.

Now this is a construction which he only owes to a confusion of what I would call - for want of anything better - the categories of being and having. This would deserve long developments and, in order to get you to take this step I am obliged to have recourse to an example which will serve as a support.

I already showed you this decisive function of the attribute in the dial: it is the introduction of the unary trait which distinguishes the phasic part where it will be said for example that every trait is vertical, which does not imply in itself the existence of any trait,



from the lexical part where there can be vertical traits, but in which there may not be any. To say that every trait is vertical must be the original structure, the function of universality, of universalisation proper to a logic founded on the trait of privation.

Pan is the whole, it evokes some echo or other of the God Pan; we have here one of these mental coalescences that I would ask you to make an effort to strike out of your papers. The name of the God Pan has absolutely nothing to do with the whole, and the panic effects at which he plays in the evening among the simple minds of the countryside have nothing to do with some mystical or other effusion.

The violent alcoholic impulse (*raptus*), described as panophobic by the old authors, is well named in the sense that something is also hunting him down, is disturbing him, and he jumps out the window. There is nothing to be put into it, it is an error of minds which are too Hellenic to bring to it this retouching with which one of my old masters, whom I nevertheless was very fond of, brought us this rectification: "one ought to speak of pantophobic impulsive action (*raptus*)". Absolutely not, *pan* is indeed in effect the whole and, if this refers to something, it is to *pagaodai*, to possession. And perhaps I will find myself reproved if I link this step to the *pos* of *possidero* and of *possum*; but I have no hesitation at all in doing it.

The possession or not of the unary trait, of the characteristic trait, here is what the establishment of a new explicit classificatory logic of the sources of the Aristotelian object will revolve around. I am using this term "*classificatoire*" intentionally because it is thanks to Claude Lévi-Strauss that you have henceforth the corpus, the dogmatic articulation of the classificatory function at what he calls himself - I will leave the humorous responsibility of it to him - "the savage state", much closer to Platonic dialectic than to Aristotelian, the progressive division of the world into a series of halves, couples of antipodal terms which circumscribe it in types. Therefore, on this subject read *La Pensée sauvage*, you will see that the essential depends on the following: what is not a hedgehog, but what you think should be a shrew or a marmot, is something else.

What characterises the structure of the Aristotelian object, is that what is not a hedgehog is a non-hedgehog. That is why I say that it is the logic of the object of privation.

This can take us much further, to this sort of evasion through which the problem is always posed sharply in this logic of the veritable function of the excluded middle which you know causes problems at the heart of the most elaborated logic, of mathematical logic.

But we are dealing with a beginning, with a more simple kernel, which I would like to depict for you, as I told you, by an example. And I will not go looking for it very far, but in a proverb which presents in the French tongue a particularity which nevertheless does not spring to the eye, at least for French speakers, the proverb is the following: "All that glitters is not gold, *tout ce qui brille n'est pas or*".

In colloquial German for example, you must not believe that you can be satisfied with crudely transcribing it: "*alles was glänzt ist keine Gold*". This would not be a good translation. I see Melle Uberfreit nodding approval as she listens to me; she approves of what I am saying: "*nicht alles was glänzt ist Gold*". This may give greater satisfaction as regards its apparent meaning, putting the accent on the *alles*, thanks to an anticipation of the *nicht* which is not at all usual, which forces the genius of the tongue and which, if you reflect on it, misses the sense, because this is not the distinction that is involved.

I could use the Eulerian circles, the same ones that we used the other day in connection with the relationship of the subject to some case or other: all men are liars. Is it simply this that that signifies? The fact is, to recover myself here, a part of what glitters is in the circle of gold and another part is not there. Is that the meaning?

You must not believe that I am the first among the logicians to have paused at this structure and in truth, more than one author who has occupied himself with negation has paused in effect at this problem, not at all so much from the point of view of formal logic, which, as you see, scarcely pauses at it except in order to miscognise it from the point of view of grammatical form, insisting on the fact that the circuits are ordered in such a fashion that there is precisely put in question the "goldness", if I may express myself in this way, the golden quality of what glitters. The authenticity of the gold goes then in the direction of a radical putting into question; gold here is symbolic of what makes glitter, and if I can put it this way in order to make myself understood, I stress, what gives an object the fascinating colour of desire.

What is important in a formula like this, if I can express myself in this way - forgive me the play on words - is the *point d'ORage* [the eye of the storm, the golden point] around which there turns the question of what makes something glitter, and in a word, the question of how much truth there is in this glittering.

And, starting from there, of course no gold is going to be true enough to guarantee this point around which there subsists the function of desire.

Such is the radical characteristic of this sort of object that I call small o: it is the object put into question, in so far as one can say that it is what interests us, us analysts, as what interests someone listening to any teaching. It is not for nothing that I saw nostalgia arising on the lips of the person who wanted to say: "Why does he not say", as someone put it, "the truth about the truth?" It is truly a great tribute to a discourse which takes place every week in this senseless position of being here behind a table in front of you articulating this sort of account which one is quite content normally to see always avoiding such a question.

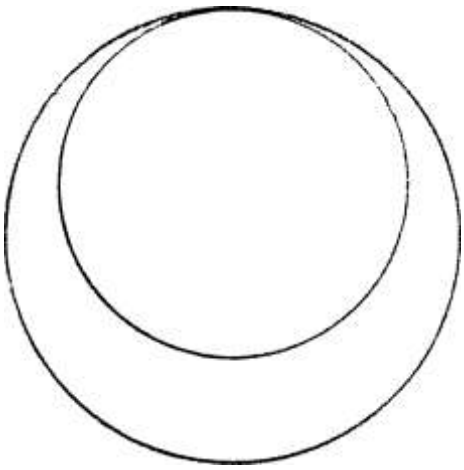
If it were not a matter of the analytic object, namely the object of desire, raising such a question would never even be dreamt of, except on the lips of a Huron who might imagine

that when one comes to the University it is in order to know "the truth about the truth". Now this is what is involved in analysis. One could say that it is the mirage of this that we are, often in spite of ourselves, embarrassed to polish up in the spirit of those to whom we address ourselves. We find ourselves, I am really saying, embarrassed, like the poison of the proverbial apple; and nevertheless it is really what is there, this is what we are dealing with, it is on it, in so far as it is at the heart of the structure, it is on it that there is brought to bear what we call castration.

It is precisely in so far as there is a hard, suggestive structure which turns around a kind of cut - the one which I represented for you in this way - that there is at the heart of phantastical identification this organizing object, this inducing object. And it could not be otherwise as regards the whole world of anxiety with which we have to deal, which is the object defined as object of castration.

Here I want to remind you about the surface from which there is borrowed this part which I described for you the last time as enucleated, which gives the very image of the circle in terms of which this object can be defined. I want to image for you what the property of this circle with the double circuit is. Magnify progressively the two lobes of this cut so that they both pass, as I might say, behind the anterior surface. There is nothing new about that, it is the way I already demonstrated to you of displacing this cut. One has only in effect to displace it and one makes it appear very easily that the complementary part of the surface, with respect to what is isolated around what one can call the two central leaves, or the two petals, to make them connect up with one another - the inaugural metaphor of the cover of Claude Lévi-Strauss' book, with this very image - what remains is an apparent lotus-surface.

It is the same figure that you rediscover here. What is found in effect between the two poles displaced in this way from the two loops (*boucles*) of the cut, at the moment that these two edges come close together, is a lotus-surface. But what I want to show you here, is that in order that this double cut should connect up, close on itself, which is what seems to be indicated in its very structure, you should spread little by little the interior loop of the interior eight. This indeed is what you hope for from it, it is that it will be satisfied by its own overlapping of itself, that it fits into some sort of norm, that one knows what one is dealing with, what is outside and what is inside, which this state of the figure shows you, because you clearly see how it must be seen.



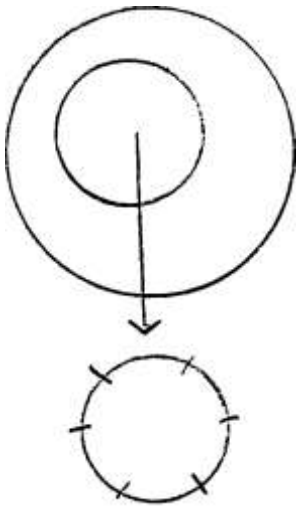
This lobe has been extended from the other side, it has spread onto the other face 2; it visibly shows us that the outside loop is going, on this surface, to rejoin the inside loop on condition that it passes by the outside. The surface of projective planes is completed, closed, finished. The object defined as our object, the object which forms the world of desire only rejoins its intimacy by a centrifugal path.

What does that mean? What do we find there? I am taking things from further back. The function of this object is linked to the relationship through which the subject is constituted in his relationship to the locus of the Other, big 0, which is the locus where there is ordered the reality of the signifier. It is at the point where every significance is missing, is abolished, at the nodal point called that of the desire of the Other, at the phallic point, in so far as it signifies the abolition as such of all significance, that the object little o, the object of castration, comes to takes its place.

There is therefore a relationship to the signifier, and that is why here again I must remind you of the definition from which I began this year concerning the signifier: the signifier is not the sign: and the ambiguity of the Aristotelian attribute, is precisely to want to naturalise it, or to make the sign natural: "every tricoloured cat is female". The signifier, as I told you, is, contrary to the sign which represents something for someone, what represents the subject for another signifier. And there is no better example than the seal.

What is a seal? The day after the day when I gave you this formula, it happened that a friend of mine who is an antique dealer put into my hands a little Egyptian seal, which, in an unusual way but one which is not rare either, was in the shape of a sole with, on the top, the toes and the back drawn in. The seal, as you will have understood, I found in the texts, it is indeed that: a trace as one might say - and it is true that nature abounds in them - but this can only become a signifier if you go around this trace with a pair of scissors and cut it out. If you extract the trace afterwards, it can become a seal. And I think that the example already sufficiently illuminates things for you: a seal represents the subject, the sender - not necessarily for the addressee: a letter can always remain sealed; but the seal is there: for the letter, it is a signifier.

Well then, the object little o, the object of castration participates in the nature thus exemplified of this signifier. It is an object structured like that. In fact, you will notice that at the end of what the centuries have been able to dream up about the function of knowledge, that is all we have in our hand. In nature, there is something of the thing (*de la chose*), if I can express myself in that way, which is presented with an edge. Everything that we can conquer in it, which simulates a knowledge is never anything more than detaching this edge and not to



make use of it, but to forget it in order to see the remainder which, a curious thing, finds itself completely transformed by this extraction, exactly as the cross-cap images it for you, namely, do not forget what a cross-cap is. It is a sphere. I already told you; it is necessary, one cannot do without the bottom of this sphere. It is a sphere with a hole, which you organise in a certain way, and you can very well imagine that it is by pulling on one of the edges that you make appear, more or less by holding onto it, this something which is going to block the hole provided you realise that each of these points is joined to the opposite point, which naturally creates considerable intuitive difficulties and ones which even obliged us to carry out the whole construction that I detailed before you, in the shape of the cross-cap imaged in space.

So what? What is the important thing? It is that, by this operation which is produced at the level of the hole, the remainder of the sphere is transformed into a Möbius surface by the enucleation of the object of castration. The entire world is ordered in a certain fashion, which gives us, as I might say, the illusion of being a world. And I would even say that, in a certain fashion, to make an intermediary state between this Aristotelian object where this reality is in a way masked and our object that I am trying here to put forward for you, I would introduce into the middle this object which inspires in us at the same time the greatest mistrust because of the inherited prejudices of an epistemological education, but which is of course our great temptation - those of us in analysis, if we had not had the existence of Jung to exorcise it we would perhaps not even notice the degree to which we still believe in it - it is the object of *Naturwissenschaft*, it is the Goethean object, as I might say, the object which in nature reads, ceaselessly like an open book all the figures of an intention that would have to be called quasi-divine if the term God had not been so well preserved from another side.

This, let us say it, demonic rather than divine Goethean intuition which made him moreover read in the skull found on the Lido the completely imaginary shape of Werther or forge the theory of colours, in short leaves for us the traces of an activity of which the least one can say is that it is cosmogenic, engendering the oldest illusions of the micro-macroscopic analogy and nevertheless still captivating for a spirit so close to us.

What does that depend on? To what do we attribute the exceptional fascination that the personal drama of Goethe exercises on us if not to the flowering as central to that drama, in his case, of desire. "*Warum Goethe liebst Friederike?*" wrote, as you know, in an article, one of the survivors of the first generation, Theodor Reik.

The specificity and the fascinating character of Goethe's personality is that in it we read in all its presence the identification of the object of desire to what must be renounced in order that the world as world should be delivered to us.

I very sufficiently recalled the structure of this case by showing in it the analogy with the one developed by Freud in the story of the Ratman, in "The Individual Myth of the Neurotic". Or rather it was published somewhere without my consent, because I neither revised nor corrected this text, which makes it almost unreadable; nevertheless it has been hanging around here and there and one can find the broad lines of it

In this complementary relationship of o, the object of a constitutive castration where our object as such is situated, with this remainder and where we cannot read everything, and especially our figure i(o), it is this that I tried to illustrate this year for you at the high point of my discourse.

In the specular illusion, in the fundamental miscognition with which we always have to deal, does o take on the function of specular image under the form of i of o even though, as I might say it has no similarity with it. It could not in any way read its image in it for the good reason that, if this $ barred is something, it is not the complement of small i factor of small o, it could just as well be the cause of it, we will say - and I am employing this term intentionally, because for some time precisely, ever since the categories of logic have been shaken a little, cause - good or bad - has not in any case had a good press and people prefer to avoid speaking about it.

And in effect there is scarcely anybody but we who can find our way in this function whose ancient shade in short one cannot approach after the mental progress that has taken place, except by seeing in it some sort of identical of everything that is manifested as effects, but when they are still veiled. And of course this has nothing satisfying about it, except perhaps if precisely it is not by being at the place of something, by cutting all its effects, that the cause sustains its drama. If there is as well moreover a cause which is worth our while becoming attached to, at least by our attention, it is not always and in advance a lost cause.

Therefore we can articulate that if there is something on which we ought to put the accent rather than avoiding it, it is that the function of the partial object could not in any way be reduced for us, if what we call partial object is what designates the point of repression because of its loss.

And it is starting from there that there takes root the illusion of the cosmicity of the world. This acosmic point of desire in so far as it is designated by the object of castration, is what we ought to preserve as the pivotal point, the centre of every elaboration of what we have to accumulate as facts concerning the constitution of the objectal world. But this object o that we see arising at the point of the failure of the Other, at the point of the loss of the signifier because this loss is the loss of this object itself, of the never rediscovered member of the dismembered Horus, how can we not give this object what I will call by way of parody its reflexive property, as I might say, because it is from it that it starts, that it is in as much as the subject is first of all and uniquely essentially cutting of this object that something can be born which is this interval between the flesh and the hide between *Wahrnehmung* and *Bewusstsein*, between perception and consciousness which is *Selbstbewusstsein*. It is here that it is worth

stating its place in an ontology founded on our experience. You will see that it rejoins here a formula commented on at length by Heidegger, in its pre-Socratic origin.

The relationship of this object to the image of the world which orders it, constitutes what Plato called properly speaking the dyad provided we notice that in this dyad the subject $ barred and the o are at the same side: *to auto einai kai noiig*. This formula which for a long time was used to confuse what is not sustainable, being and knowledge, means nothing other than that.

Compared to the correlative little o, to what remains when the constitutive object of the phantasy has separated itself, being and thinking are on the same side, on the side of o. Small o is being in so far as it is essentially missing in the text of the world. And that is why around little o there can slide everything that is called the return of the repressed, namely that here there is betrayed the true truth which interests us and which is always the object of desire, in so far as the whole of humanity, the whole of humanism is constructed to make us miss it.

We know from our experience that nothing has any veritable weight in the world except something which makes an allusion to this object of which the Other, big 0 takes the place to give it a meaning.

Every metaphor, including that of the symptom tries to make this object emerge in its signification, but all the pullulation of meanings that it may engender never manages to staunch what is involved in this hole in terms of a central loss.

Here is what regulates the relationships of the subject with the Other, 0, what regulates secretly but in a fashion which is surely not less efficacious than this relationship of small o to the imaginary reflection which covers and surmounts it. In other words that on the road, the only one that is open to us to rediscover the incidence of this little o, we encounter first of all the mark of the occultation of the Other, under the same desire.

Such in effect is the way: o can be approached along this way which is that the Other, with a big 0, desires in the failing subject, in the phantasy, the $ barred. This is why I taught you that the fear of desire is experienced as equivalent to anxiety, that anxiety is the fear of what the Other in himself desires of the subject, this "in himself" founded precisely on the ignorance of what is desired at the level of the Other. It is from the side of the Other that the little o comes to light, not so much as lack but as to be.

This is why we come here to pose the question of its relationship to the thing, not the sacred one, but what I described to you as *das Ding*. You know that in leading you to this limit I did nothing other than indicate to you that here the perspective is inverted, this small i of small o which envelopes this access to the object of castration is here the very image which creates an obstacle in the mirror, or rather, in the way it happens in obscure mirrors - one must always think of this obscurity every time that in the ancient authors you see intervening a reference to the mirror - something can appear beyond the image that the clear mirror gives. It is to the image of the clear mirror that there is hooked on this barrier which I called at the time that of beauty. Moreover the revelation of little o beyond this image, even if it appears under the most horrible form, will always preserve its reflection.

And it is here that I would like to share with you the happiness that I had in encountering these thoughts in the writings of someone whom I consider to be quite simply the poet of our literature, who has certainly gone further than anyone in the present or the past along the path of the realisation of the phantasy. I am talking about Maurice Blanchot whose deat sentence was for me for a long time the surest confirmation of what I was saying for a whole year in the seminar on *Ethics* about the second death.

I had not read the second version of his first work *Thomas 1'Obscur*. I think that none of you, after what I am going to read you of it, will fail to test yourselves against such a small volume. Something is encountered there which incarnates the image of this object o, in connection with which I spoke about horror; it is the term that Freud uses when he is dealing with the Ratman. Here it is something about rats that is involved.

Georges Bataille wrote a long essay which turns around the well- known central phantasy of Marcel Proust, which also concerns a rat: *Histoire de rat*. But do I need to tell you that if Apollo riddles the Greek army with the arrows of the plague, it is because, as M Grégoire very well noted, if Aesclepius, as I taught you a long time ago is a mole - not so long ago I discovered the plan of a molehill in a *tolos* (?), a further one that I visited recently - if then Aesclepius is a mole, Apollo is a rat.

Here it is. I am anticipating, or more exactly I am taking *Thomas 1'Obscur* a little earlier on - it is not by chance that he is called that -:

> And in his room, those who entered, seeing his book always open at the same pages, thought he was pretending to read. He read with an unsurpassable minuteness and attention. He was aware of every sign of the situation that the male finds himself in when the praying mantis is going to devour him. They were looking at one another. The words, issuing from a book took on there a mortal power, exercised on the look which touched them a soft and peaceful attraction. Each one of them, like a half-closed eye, allowed there to enter a too lively gaze that in other circumstances it would not have tolerated.
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> Thomas slipped along then towards these corridors which he approached without defence until the moment he was glimpsed by the intimacy of the word. It was not yet terrifying, it was on the contrary an almost agreeable moment that he would have liked to prolong. The reader joyously considered this little spark of life which he did not doubt he had awoken. He saw himself with pleasure in this eye which saw him; his pleasure itself became very great, it became so great, so pitiless that he underwent it with a sort of terror and that having raised himself up, an intolerable moment, without receiving from his interlocutor a sign of complicity, he perceived the whole strangeness that there was in being observed by a word as if by a living being. And not alone by a word, but by all those which accompanied it and which in their turn contained in themselves other words, like a succession of angels opening out to infinity even to the very eye of the absolute.

I will pass over the steps which go by way of this "while perched on his shoulders the word it and the word I began their carnage", to the confrontation that I was aiming at in evoking this passage for you:

> His hands tried to touch an impalpable and unreal body. It was such a horrible effort that this thing which drew away from him and in drawing away tried to attract him, appeared to him the same as the one that got unspeakably closer. He fell to the ground. He had the feeling of being covered with impurities, each part of his body underwent an agony, his face was forced

> to touch evil, his lungs to breathe it. He was there on the floor, twisting himself, then entering into himself, then emerging. He crawled heavily scarcely different from the serpent that he would have wished to become in order to believe in the venom that he felt in his mouth. It was in this state that he felt himself bitten or struck, he could not know which, by what seemed to him to be a word but which resembled rather a gigantic rat, with piercing eyes, with pure teeth, an all-powerful beast. Seeing it a few inches from his face he could not escape from the desire to devour it, to draw it into the most profound intimacy with himself; he threw himself on it and digging his nails into its entrails, he tried to make it his own. The end of the night came. The light which shone through the shutters was extinguished. But the struggle with the terrible beast, which had finally revealed itself to be of an incomprehensible dignity and magnificence lasted for an immeasurable time. This struggle was horrible for the being lying on the floor grinding his teeth, furrowing his face, tearing out his eyes in order to get the animal to enter, and who would have looked like a demon if he had not resembled a man. It was almost too beautiful for this sort of black angel, covered with red hairs, with sparkling eyes.
>
> Sometimes one believed he had triumphed and he saw descending into himself with an ungovernable nausea, the word innocence defiling him; sometimes the other devoured him in his turn, dragged him back through the hole through which it had come, then rejected him like a hard and empty body.
>
> On every occasion, Thomas was repulsed to the very foundations of his being by the very words which had haunted him and which he had pursued like his nightmare and like the explanation of his nightmare. He discovered himself still more empty and more heavy, he no longer stirred except with an infinite fatigue. His body, after such a struggle became entirely opaque and to those who regarded it, he gave the restful impression of sleep even though he had been ceaselessly awake.

You can read the rest yourselves.

And the path of what Maurice Blanchot uncovers for us does not stop there. If I took the trouble here to indicate this passage to you, it is because as the time comes for me to leave you this year I want to tell you that I am often aware of doing nothing here other than allowing you to advance with me to the point that all around us many of the best people have already got to.

Other people have noted the parallel between some of the researchs that are being carried on at present and the ones that we are elaborating here together. I would have no trouble reminding you that on other paths, the works and then the reflections on the works by himself of Pierre Klossowski converge with this path of research into phantasy as we have elaborated it this year.

Small i of small o and small <u>o</u>, their difference, their complementarity and the mask that one constitutes for the other, this is where I have led you this year. Small i of small o, its image, is therefore not its image, it does not represent it, this object of castration. It is not in any way this representative of the drive on which repression is brought to bear electively. And for a double reason: the fact is that it is not, this image, either the *Vorstellung* because it is itself an object, a real image - consult what I wrote on this subject in my observations on the report of Daniel Lagache, - nor an object which is not the same as small <u>o</u>, which is not its representative either. i(o) and <u>o</u>.

Desire, you must not forget, is situated where in the graph? It aims at the phantasy $ barred cut of little o, in a mode analogous to that of e where the ego refers itself to the specular image. What does that mean, if not that there is some relationship of this phantasy to the desirer himself. $ ◊ o

But can we make of this desirer purely and simply the agent of desire? Let us not forget that at the second stage of the graph d, desire is a "who" who responds to a question, which is not aimed at a "who", but a "*Che vuoi?*" To the question: "*Che vuoi?*" the desirer is the response, the response which is not designated by the who of "who wants?", but the response of the object. What I want in the phantasy determines the object from which the desirer that it contains must avow himself as desirer.

Look for him always, this desirer, at the core of any object of desire, and do not put up necrophilic perversion as an objection because precisely this is the example where it is proved that on this side of (*en-deça*) the second death physical death still leaves something to be desired and that the body allows itself be grasped there as entirely caught up in the function of the signifier, separated from itself and a witness to what the necrophilic embraces: an ungraspable truth.

This relationship of the object to the signifier, before leaving you, let us come back to the point that these reflections are based on, namely to what Freud himself marked about the identification of desire (in parentheses in the case of the hysteric) to the desire of the Other. The hysteric shows us clearly in effect the distance between this object and the signifier, this distance which I defined by the lack of the signifier but implying its relation to the signifier. In effect, it is to this that the hysteric identifies herself when, Freud tells us, it is the desire of the Other with regard to which she orientates herself and which started her hunting.

And, it is on this that the affects, he tells us, the emotions considered here in his writing as entangled, if I may express myself in this way, with the signifier, and taken up as such. It is in this connection that he tells us that all the confirmed emotions, what I might call the conventional forms of emotion are nothing other than ontogenetic inscriptions of what he compares, of what he reveals as expressly equivalent to hysterical attacks, which is to come back to the relationship to the signifier.

The emotions are in a way the leavings (*caduques*) of behaviour, the fallen parts taken up as signifying. And what is most tangible, everything that we can see about them, is found in antique forms of fighting. Let those who have seen the film *Rashomon* remember the strange interludes which suddenly suspend the combatants who carry out each one separately three little circuits around themselves, make a paradoxical genuflection to some unknown part or other of space. This forms part of the fight, just as in the sexual parade Freud teaches us to recognise this type of interruptive paradox of incomprehensible scansions.

If something about emotions is shown to us in the case of the hysteric, it is precisely when she is on the track of desire, it is this clearly mimicked characteristic which is described as being out of place, which deceives you and from which you draw an impression of falseness. What does it mean, if not that the hysteric of course can do nothing other than seek the desire of the Other where it is, where it leaves its trace in the other, in Utopia, or indeed in atopia, distress, even fiction; in short it is along the path of display as one might expect, that all the symptomatic aspects are shown. And if these symptoms find this path already

opened out, it is in liaison with this relationship that Freud designates to the desire of the Other.

I had something else to point out to you about frustration. Of course, what I brought you this year about the relationship to the body, what is only outlined in the way in which I gave you in a mathematical corpus the beginnings of all sorts of paradoxes concerning the idea that we can have of the body, finds its applications undoubtedly well designed to modify profoundly the idea that we may have of frustration as a sort of lack which concerns a gratification referred to what is supposed to be a so-called primitive totality as people would like to see it designated in the relationships of the mother and the child.

It is strange that analytic thinking has never encountered on this path except as always in corners of Freud's observations - and here I am designating the word *Schleier* - this caul with which the child is born and which hangs around analytical literature without it being ever dreamt that we had here the beginning of a very fruitful path: the stigmata.

If there is something which allows some primary narcissism or other to be conceived of as involving a totality - and here I can only regret that someone who posed me the question has absented himself - it is undoubtedly the reference of the subject, not so much to the body of the host mother, but to these lost envelopes where there is so well read this continuity between the inside and the outside, which is the one to which my model of this year introduced you, to which we will have to return.

Simply I want to indicate to you, because we will rediscover it subsequently, that if there is something in which there ought to be accentuated the relationship to the body, to incorporation, to *Einverleibung*, it is on the side of the father who is entirely left to one side that you should look.

I left him entirely to one side because I would have had to introduce you - but when will I do it - to a whole tradition which is called mystical and which undoubtedly, by its presence in the Semitic tradition, dominates the whole personal adventure of Freud.

But if there is something that one demands of the mother, does it not appear to you to be striking that it should be the only thing that she does not have, namely the phallus? The whole dialectic of these last years, up to and including the Kleinian dialectic, which nevertheless gets closest to it, remains falsified because the accent is not put on this essential divergence. The fact is moreover that it is impossible to correct it, impossible also to understand anything about what constitutes the impasse of the analytic relationship, and very especially in the transmission of analytic truth as didactic analysis carries it out. The fact is that it is impossible to introduce into it the relationship to the father, that one is not the father of one's analysand. I have said enough and done enough to ensure that no-one would dare any longer, at least in any entourage that is close to mine, risk advancing that one can be his mother. This nevertheless is what is involved.

The function of analysis as it is inserted where Freud left it to us with its open future, its gaping trace, is situated where the pen fell from his hand in connection with the article on the splitting of the ego at the ambiguous point which brings the following; the object of castration is this term which is ambiguous enough for it to happen that at the very moment

that the subject has busied himself with repressing it he establishes it more firmly than ever in an Other.

So long as we have not recognised that this object of castration is the very object through which we situate ourselves in the field of science, I mean that it is the object of our science as number or quantity may be the object of mathematics, the dialectic of analysis, not only its dialectic but its practice, its relationship even and even the structure of its community will remain in suspense.

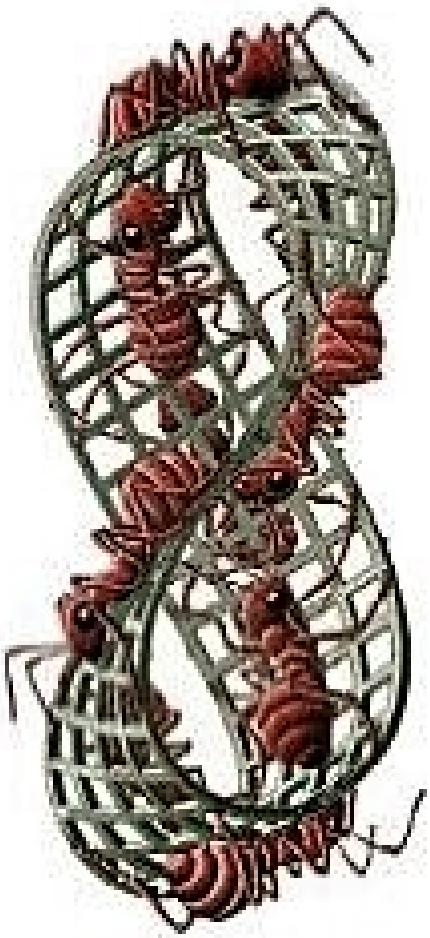
Next year, I will deal for you, pursuing strictly the point at which I left you today, with anxiety.

JACQUES LACAN

Anxiety

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan | Book X

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller



Anxiety

Jacques Lacan

Anxiety

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan
Book X

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller

Translated by A. R. Price

polity

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Book X

Anxiety

1962–1963

INTRODUCTION TO THE STRUCTURE OF ANXIETY

I

ANXIETY IN THE NET OF SIGNIFIERS

The desire of the Other
Towards an orography of anxiety
Seriousness, care, expectation
Inhibition, impediment, embarrassment
Inhibition, emotion, turmoil

This year, I'm going to be speaking to you about anxiety.

Someone who's not at all remote from me in our circle nevertheless let slip the other day some surprise at my having chosen this subject, which didn't strike him as having much on offer. I must say that I won't have any trouble proving to him the contrary. Amidst the mass of what is proposed to us on this subject in the form of questions, I shall have to choose and drastically so. This is why I shall be trying, as of today, to fling you into the thick of it.

But this surprise already seemed to me to harbour the trace of some unstemmed naivety, which consists in believing that each year I pick a subject just like that, a subject I would deem fit for teasing out some malarkey. Not so. Anxiety is very precisely the meeting point where everything from my previous disquisition is lying in wait for you. You're going to see how a certain number of terms, which until now may not have appeared adequately linked to one another, can now be connected up. You're going to see, I think, how in being knotted together more tightly on the ground of anxiety each one will fall into place even better.

I say *even better*, since it appeared to me, in what was said during our Society's recent meeting outside Paris, that something had effectively fallen into place in your minds concerning the structure which is so essential and which is called *the fantasy*. You'll see that the structure of anxiety is not far from it, for the reason that it's well and truly the same.

1

I've put a few brief signifiers here on the blackboard to serve as reference points or to jog your memory. It's not such a big blackboard and it might not include all those I'd have liked it to, but it's also better not to overdo it when simplification is at issue.

They form two groups. On the left, this one, which I'm going to be completing.

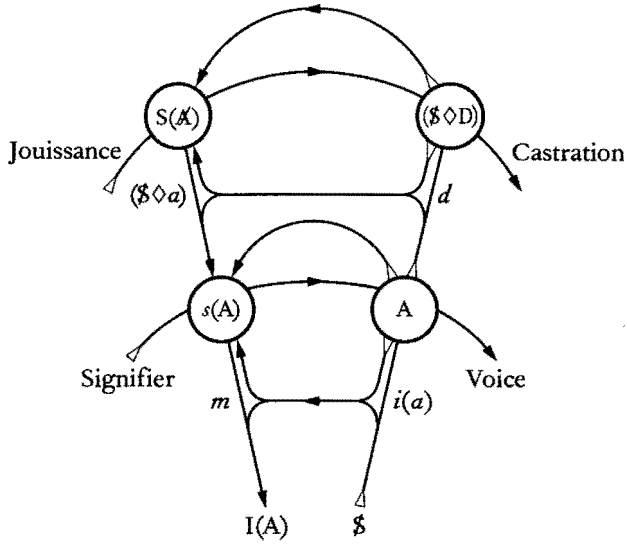
Que me veut-Il ?

Care *Seriousness* *Inhibition*

Symptom

Expectation *Anxiety*

On the right, this graph which I apologize for having pestered you with for such a long time, but which is all the same necessary, since its reference-value will appear to you, I think, ever more effective.



Likewise, might not its form ever have struck you as being akin to the shape of a *poire d'angoisse*, a choke pear? Perhaps it's not a chance evocation.

On the other hand, whilst the little topological surface to which I devoted so much of last year, that of the cross-cap, might have suggested to some of you the folding forms of the embryological germ

layers, even the layers of the cortex, no one, in spite of the at once bilateral and woven arrangement of oriented intercommunications proper to the graph, has ever mentioned in this regard the solar plexus. Of course, I'm not claiming to be delivering up its secrets here, but this curious little similarity is perhaps not as far-fetched as might be thought and deserves to be brought up at the beginning of a disquisition on anxiety.

As the reflection with which I introduced my disquisition confirms to a certain degree, the reflection from one of my close associates here in our Society, anxiety doesn't seem to be the thing that stifles you, as psychoanalysts, I mean. And yet, it would not be going too far to say that it ought to. Indeed, it's part of the logic of things, that is to say, the logic of the relationship you have with your patient. Sensing what the subject can bear of anxiety puts you to the test at every moment. It has to be supposed therefore, at least for those of you who've been trained in technique, that the thing has finished up slipping into your way of regulating things, quite unperceived, it has to be said. But for the analyst starting out in his practice, it's not ruled out, thank goodness, much as he might show great aptitude for being an analyst, that he may feel some anxiety from his first dealings with the patient on the couch.

In this regard, the question of the communication of anxiety still needs to be touched on. Is the anxiety that you know, it seems, how to regulate and buffer so well in yourselves that it guides you, the same as the patient's? Why not? I'll leave the question open for the time being, perhaps not for very long. It's worthwhile raising it at the outset, even if we shall have to turn to our essential articulations to give it a valid answer and therefore wait until we've trodden for a while the first winding paths I'm about to propose.

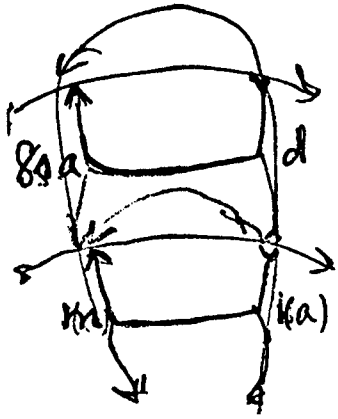
These paths are not entirely beyond expectations for those who are regular members of my audience. Indeed, if you remember, during another series of our Society's so-called Provincial Study Days, which were far from giving me that much satisfaction, I thought it necessary, by way of an aside in my disquisition from last year, to launch, in advance, a formula indicating the essential relationship between anxiety and the desire of the Other.

For those who weren't there, I'll recall the fable, the apologue, the amusing image I briefly set out before you. Myself donning the animal mask with which the sorcerer in the Cave of the Three Brothers is covered, I pictured myself faced with another animal, a real one this time, taken to be gigantic for the sake of the story, a praying mantis. Since I didn't know which mask I was wearing, you can easily imagine that I had some reason not to feel reassured in the event that, by chance, this mask might have been just what it took to

lead my partner into some error as to my identity. The whole thing was well underscored by the fact that, as I confessed, I couldn't see my own image in the enigmatic mirror of the insect's ocular globe.

This metaphor preserves its full worth today. It justifies my having placed at the centre of the signifiers on the board the question I introduced long ago as the hinge between the two storeys on the graph, inasmuch as they structure the subject's relationship with the signifier, which strikes me as having to be the key to what Freudian doctrine introduced regarding subjectivity, *Che vuoi?*, *Que veux-tu?*, *What wouldst thou?* Push the functioning, the insertion of the key, a little further and you have, *Que me veut-Il?* with the ambiguity that the French permits with respect to the *me* between the direct or indirect object. It's not simply, *What does the Other want with me?* but also a suspended questioning that directly concerns the ego, not *How does He want me?* but, *What does He want concerning this place of the ego?*

The question is held in abeyance between the two storeys and precisely between the two return routes that designate in each of them their characteristic effect. The distance between them, which it is so essential to construct and which will be at the root of everything we are going to be moving into, renders the relationship to desire at once homologous with and distinct from narcissistic identification.



We're going to see the function of anxiety being introduced into the play of the dialectic that knots these two levels so tightly together. Not that this function is in itself the mainspring thereof, but it's what allows us to orient ourselves here in keeping with the moments at which it appears. So it is, therefore, that the question I've posed, as to your relation as analysts to anxiety, leaves this other question in abeyance – who are you sparing? The other party, no doubt, but also yourself. Sparing yourself and sparing the other,

though they overlap, mustn't be confused. We even find here one of the aims that will be proposed to you at the end of this year's disquisition.

For the time being, I'll content myself with introducing an indication pertaining to method for the lessons we're going to have to draw from our research on anxiety. Seeing at what privileged points it emerges will allow us to shape a true orography of anxiety, which will lead us directly onto a terrain that is none other than that of the term-to-term relationships constituted by the particularly condensed structural attempt from which I believed I should fashion for you the guide of our disquisition, in the form of this graph.

If, therefore, you know how to manage with regard to anxiety, trying to see how will enable us to make some headway. And likewise, I couldn't produce anxiety myself without managing it in some way. Maybe that's a pitfall. I oughtn't to manage it too quickly. Nor does this mean, in any way, that, through some psychodramatic game, my goal should be to *vous jeter*, to cast you into anxiety – with the pun I've already made on the *je* in *jeter*.

Everyone knows that projecting the *I* onto the inroad to anxiety has for some time been the ambition of a philosophy that is termed *existentialist*. There's no shortage of references, from Kierkegaard to Gabriel Marcel, Shestov, Berdyaev and a few others. Not all of them have the same place, nor can they be used in the same way. But I insist on saying at the start of this disquisition that this philosophy – in so far as, from its patron saint, named first off, down to those whose names I've listed after him, it incontestably shows some decline – is marked, I feel, with some haste and even some disarray, I'd say, in relation to the reference in which, in the same era, the movement of thought has put its trust, namely, the reference to history. In relation to this reference, existentialist thought is born of and precipitated by a disarray, in the etymological sense of the term.

The horse of thought, I will say, to borrow the object of his phobia from Little Hans, that imagines itself for a while to be the one that pulls the stagecoach of history, all of a sudden rears up, runs wild, then falls down and gives itself over to that great *Krawallmachen* wherein Little Hans finds one of the images of the fear he holds dear. It's what I call a movement of haste, in the negative sense of the term, that of disarray. And it's precisely for this reason that this is far from being what interests us most in the line of thought I singled out just now, as does everyone else for that matter, with the term existentialism.

Also, it may be remarked that the last one to come along and not perhaps the lesser of them, Monsieur Sartre, expressly applies himself not only to putting this horse back on its hooves, but back

between the shafts that pull the said coach of history. It's precisely on this account that Monsieur Sartre has been much occupied with the function of seriousness and has wondered about it a great deal.

There is also someone else whom I didn't put in the series and of whom I will say, since I'm simply venturing into some background details by touching on this at the beginning, that it's in reference to him that the philosophers who observe us, at the point we're coming to in this, can ask themselves – *will the analysts measure up to what we make of anxiety?* There stands Heidegger. With my play on the word *jeter*, it was precisely to him and his originative dereliction that I was closest.

Being-unto-death, to call it by its name, which is the inroad by which Heidegger, in his well-versed disquisition, leads us to his enigmatic examination of an entity's Being, doesn't really go via anxiety. The reference of Heidegger's question is a *lived* reference. He named it, it is fundamental, and it's to do with everyone, with *one*,[1] with the omnitude of everyday human life, it is *care*. Of course, in this capacity, this reference cannot, any more than care itself, be in the least bit foreign to us.

Since I've called on two witnesses here, Sartre and Heidegger, I won't hesitate to call on a third, in so far as I don't think him unworthy of representing those who are here, observing what he too is going to say, and that's me.

I'm going by some accounts I've received, once again in the last hours, concerning what I shall call expectation. But on this occasion I'm not only speaking about yours. It was in just such a way that a piece of work came to me yesterday evening which I'd told one of you I'd be waiting for before beginning my disquisition here today. I'd asked him whether I might have a copy of this text and even whether he might orient me with regard to a question he'd posed me. Even though I haven't yet been able to go through it, the fact that it was brought to me on time met my expectation, just as, after all, I've come here on time to meet yours. Is this an action of such a nature as to give rise in itself to anxiety? Without having questioned the fellow concerned, I don't think so. As for me, upon my word, I can answer that this expectation, albeit just what it takes to bring a certain weight down upon me, is not, I believe I can speak from experience, a dimension that in and of itself gives rise to anxiety. I would even say, quite the contrary.

I have insisted on making this last reference, which is so close to home that it might strike you as problematic, so as to indicate how I mean to put you to the question that has been mine from the start – at what distance is anxiety to be poised so as to speak to you

about it without immediately shutting it away in a cupboard and without leaving it in a vague state either? Well, my goodness, at the right distance. I mean one that doesn't put us too close to anyone, at this familiar distance that I've evoked for you in picking up these recent references, the distance from my interlocutor who brings me his paper at the last minute, and the distance from myself who must take a risk here with my disquisition on anxiety.

We're going to try to take this anxiety under our wing. That won't make it any more conspicuous. Believe me, it's really going to leave us at the opaque distance that separates us from those who are closest to us.

So, between this care, this seriousness, and this expectation, are you going to think that this is how I wanted to encircle anxiety, to pin it down? Well, don't believe it. It isn't to be sought in the middle. If I've drawn a little circle in the midst of these three terms, with these splayed arrows,[2] it's to tell you that, if you're searching there, you will quickly see that, if ever there it was, the bird has taken flight.

2

Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety, so runs the title, the slogan, under which the last word of what Freud articulated on the subject of anxiety is held in an analyst's memory and leaves its mark.

I won't be going into this text today, for the reason that I'm determined, as you've seen from the beginning, to go without a safety net, and because there's no topic for which the net of Freudian disquisition is more likely to give us a false sense of security. When we do go into this text, you shall see very well what there is to be seen as regards anxiety, namely, that there isn't any safety net. When anxiety is at issue, each piece of the mesh, so to speak, only carries any meaning in so far as it leaves empty the space where anxiety lies.

In the disquisition of *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, everything is spoken about, thank goodness, except anxiety. Does this mean that it may not be spoken about? Going without a safety net evokes the tightrope walker. My only rope is the title, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*. It leaps, if I may say so, to one's understanding that these three terms do not sit at the same level. This makes for something heteroclite, which is why I've written them on three staggered lines. In order for it to work, in order for them to be understood as a series, they really need to be seen as I've put them here, on a diagonal, which implies filling in the blanks.

I'm not going to take the time right now to demonstrate for you what's obvious, namely, the difference between the structure of these three terms, each of which absolutely does not have, if we want to situate them, the same terms as their context or surrounding.

So it is that inhibition lies within the dimension of movement, in the widest sense of the term. I won't go into the text, but you remember enough of it to see that Freud, with respect to inhibition, cannot help but speak solely of locomotion. Movement exists, at least metaphorically, in every function, even if it isn't a locomotive one.

In inhibition, it's the halting of movement that's involved. Does this mean that the word *inhibition* is designed only to suggest a halting? You would easily object with the notion of a keeping in check. Why not? I would grant you as much.

So, a matrix needs to be constructed which will allow us to distinguish the dimensions involved in a notion that is very familiar to us. I don't see why we shouldn't put the notion of difficulty on the horizontal axis and that of movement on the vertical axis of coordinates. This is what's going to allow us to see more clearly, because it's also what's going to allow us to come back down to earth, the earth of what isn't veiled over by the learned word, the notion, or even the concept, that people make do with.

Why not use the word *impede*? This is precisely what's at issue. Our subjects are inhibited when they speak to us about their inhibition and we ourselves are when we speak about inhibition at scientific congresses, but every day they are very much impeded. To be impeded is a symptom. To be inhibited is a symptom tucked away in a museum.

Looking up the etymology doesn't imply any superstition. I help myself to it when it's helpful to me. *Impedicare* means *to be ensnared* and it's an extremely precious notion all the same. Indeed, it implies the relationship between one dimension and something that comes to interfere with it and which, in what interests us, impedes not the function, a term of reference, not movement, which is rendered difficult, but truly and verily the subject. Here then is what brings us closer to what we're searching for, namely, what happens in what goes by the name of anxiety. Therefore, I'm putting *impediment* in the same column as *symptom*.

I'll tell you straight off that the snare in question is narcissistic capture. Following this we're going to be led to link up a great deal more to that, but with this point you're already no longer at the elementary stage, if you care to remember what I linked to the last term concerning the very precise limit that narcissistic capture introduces

with regard to what can be invested in the object, in so far as the phallus, for its part, remains auto-erotically invested. The fracture that results from this in the specular image comes to be what specifically gives its support and its material to the signifying articulation that, on the other plane, the symbolic plane, is called castration. The impediment that arises is linked to this circle that makes for the fact that, with the same movement by which the subject advances towards jouissance, that is to say, towards what is furthest from him, he encounters this intimate fracture, right up close, by letting himself be caught, along the way, by his own image, the specular image. That's the snare.

Here, we're still at the level of the symptom. Let's try to go further. If we push forward the examination of the meaning of the word *inhibition*, which term is to be put in the third column? After *inhibition* and *impediment*, the third term I propose, still for the sake of leading you to the bottom of lived experience, to the derisory seriousness of the question, is the fine term *embarrassment*.[3]

It's going to be all the more precious to us given that today etymology is satisfying me to the full, the wind is clearly blowing my way. Embarrassment is quite precisely the subject S decked out with the bar, $, since *imbaricare* makes the most direct allusion to the bar, *bara*, as such. We've really got the most direct image of the lived experience of embarrassment here. When you don't know what to do with yourself any more, you look for something behind which to shield yourself. The experience of the bar is precisely what's at issue. If I've been well informed, this bar assumes more than one form in the numerous patois. But there's no need to resort to patois. There aren't any Spaniards here, are there? Too bad, because I've been told that in Spanish, the *embarazada*, *she who is embarrassed*, designates a pregnant woman, which is another form, a very significant one, of the bar in its place.

There you go then for the dimension of difficulty. The first horizontal row, which begins with inhibition and continues with impediment, ends up at this slight form of anxiety called embarrassment.

In the other dimension, that of movement, what terms are we going to see drawn up vertically after the term *inhibition*?

First off, there's *emotion*.

You'll forgive me if I continue to trust in an etymology that has so far been propitious. Emotion refers etymologically to movement, except that here we'll give a little nudge by putting forward Goldstein's sense of throwing off, *ex*, out of the line of movement – it's movement that disintegrates, it's the reaction that one calls catastrophic. My pointing out to you where to put that was useful,

since, after all, some people told us that anxiety was just that, a catastrophic reaction. It's not unrelated, of course, but what wouldn't be related to anxiety? It's precisely a question of knowing where anxiety itself really lies. The fact that, for example, the same reference to the catastrophic reaction has been used, and without any misgivings, to designate hysterical fits, or even, in other cases, anger, proves well enough all the same that this isn't sufficient for distinguishing anxiety, nor for pointing out where it is.

Let's take the next step. We're still maintaining a respectful distance from anxiety, since here we're two squares away from it. In the dimension of movement, is there something that corresponds more precisely to the level of anxiety? I'm going to call it by a name that for a long time I've set aside with you in mind, as a delicacy. Maybe I made a fleeting allusion to it, but only those particularly prehensile ears will have retained it. It's the word *turmoil*.[4]

Etymology is favouring me here in the most fabulous way. It's delightful. This is why I'm not going to hesitate to take further advantage of it, once I've told you first of all everything it's furnished me with. I'm going to indicate to you expressly to refer to the entry in Messrs Bloch and von Wartburg, with apologies if it's surplus to requirement with regard to what I'm about to say to you now, all the more so given that what I'm going to say to you is a direct quote from the text. I borrow things wherever I find them, whether that upsets anyone or not.

These fellows tell me then that *linguistic sentiment*, as they express themselves, has moved this term closer to the word *émouvoir, to move emotionally*. Now, don't be fooled, it has nothing to do with that. Etymologically, as indeed for anyone who knows how to use words, *émoi* has nothing to do with *émotion*. At any rate, let me tell you that the term *esmayer* is already attested in the thirteenth century – that before it, *esmais* and even *esmoi-esmais*, should you care to know, only triumphed, to express myself as the authors do, in the sixteenth century – that *esmayer* has the sense of *to trouble, to frighten* and also *to become flustered* – that *esmayer* is indeed still commonly used in the various patois and leads us to the vulgar Latin *exmagare*, which means *to cause to lose one's might, one's strength* – and that this vulgar Latin is linked to a graft from a Western Germanic root which, when reconstructed, gives *magan*. Besides, there's no need to reconstruct it because it exists in this same form in High German and in Gothic. However much German you speak, you can look up the German *mögen*. In English, there is *may*.[5] Does *smagare* exist in Italian?

Not really. Going by Bloch and von Wartburg, it means *to become discouraged*. So, some doubt remains. As there aren't any

Portuguese here, I won't make any objection to accepting what, not I, but Bloch and von Wartburg advance by including *esmagar*, which purportedly means *to crush*, which, until further notice, I'm going to hold onto as having great interest for the next part. I'll spare you the Provençal variations.

Be that as it may, it's certain that the translation, which has been accepted, of *Triebregung* as *émoi pulsionnel* is absolutely incorrect and precisely because of all the distance that stands between *émotion* and *émoi*. *Émoi*, *turmoil*, is trouble, the fall of might, *Regung* is stimulation, a call to disorder, even to *émeute*, to riot. I shall also fortify myself with this etymological enquiry to tell you that, up to a certain era, more or less the same one that saw what is called in Bloch and von Wartburg the *triumph* of *émoi*, *émeute* itself carried precisely the meaning of emotion and only took on the meaning of collective public action from the seventeenth century onwards.

All this ought to make you feel that the linguistic nuances, the linguistic versions even, being evoked here, are being made to guide us into defining, with *turmoil*, the third place in the direction of what *inhibition* means on the axis of movement, just as, on the axis of difficulty, we singled out the corresponding reference as *embarrassment*. *Turmoil* is trouble, *to become troubled* as such, to be as deeply troubled as one can be in the dimension of movement. *Embarrassment* implies reaching the maximum level of difficulty.

Does this mean that we've reached anxiety? The boxes of this little table are there to show you that this is not what we are claiming.

	Difficulty →		
Movement ↓	*Inhibition*	*Impediment*	*Embarrassment*
	Emotion	*Symptom*	*X*
	Turmoil	*X*	*Anxiety*

We have filled in the two boxes in the vertical direction with *emotion* and *turmoil*, and the two in the horizontal direction with *impediment* and *embarrassment*. This box marked with an *X* is still empty, as is this one here.

How can they be filled in? It's a subject of the greatest interest with regard to the handling of anxiety.

I'm going to leave it for you a while as a conundrum.

3

Having set out this little preamble in keeping with the Freudian triad of inhibition, symptom and anxiety, the ground has now been cleared, to speak of it in a doctrinal fashion.

After having brought it back, by way of these evocations, to the level of experience itself, let's try to situate it in a conceptual framework.

What is anxiety? We've ruled out the idea that it might be an emotion. To introduce it, I will say that it's an affect.

Those who follow the movements of affinity or aversion in my disquisition, often allowing themselves to be caught out by appearances, no doubt think that I'm less interested in affects than anything else. That's absurd. I've tried, on occasion, to say what affect is not. It is not Being given in its immediacy, nor is it the subject in a raw form either. It is in no respect protopathic. My occasional remarks on affect amount to nothing but that. And this is even the reason why it has a close structural relationship to what a subject is, even traditionally speaking. I hope to articulate this for you in an indelible fashion next time.

On the other hand, what I said about affect is that it isn't repressed. Freud says it just as I do. It's unfastened, it drifts about. It can be found displaced, maddened, inverted, or metabolized, but it isn't repressed. What are repressed are the signifiers that moor it.

The relationship between affect and the signifier would necessitate a whole year on the theory of affects. I've already hinted at how I understand it. I did so with regard to anger.

Anger, I told you, is what happens in subjects when the little pegs won't fit into the little holes. What does that mean? When at the level of the Other, of the signifier, that is to say, always, more or less, at the level of faith, of *bona fides*, the game isn't being played. Well, that's what sparks off anger.

To leave you with something that preoccupies you, I'll make a simple remark. Where does Aristotle deal best with the passions? I think that there are all the same a certain number of you who know. It's in the second book of his *Rhetoric.*

The best there is on the passions is caught in the net, the network, of rhetoric. This is not by chance. The signifiers on the blackboard are just that, the net. This is precisely why I spoke to you about a net in connection with the first linguistic bearings I tried to give you.

I haven't taken the dogmatic path of prefacing what I have to say to you about anxiety with a comprehensive theory of affects. Why not? Because we aren't psychologists here, we're psychoanalysts.

I'm not developing a *psycho-logy* for you, a disquisition on the

unreal reality that is called the psyche, but a disquisition on a praxis that warrants a name, *erotology*. It's a question of desire. And the affect by which we are perhaps prompted to bring out everything that this disquisition entails as a consequence, not a general consequence but a universal one, on the theory of affects, is anxiety.

It's upon the cutting edge of anxiety that we have to hold fast and it's upon this edge that I hope to be able to lead you further next time.

14 November 1962

II

ANXIETY, SIGN OF DESIRE

An ideal of straightforwardness
Hegel and Lacan
The desire of the Other in five formulae
Division and its remainder
I desire you, even if I know it not

At this stage of going a little more deeply into my disquisition on anxiety, I may legitimately pose the question as to what a teaching is here.

Since in this room we are, in principle, let's say, for the most part, analysts, and since the analytic experience is taken to be my essential reference when I address this audience that you comprise, the notion we may have of teaching must all the same be affected by the fact that the analyst is, we cannot forget this, if I may say so, an *interprétant*.

Indeed, the analyst plays on the tense, such an essential tense, that I've already accentuated for you on several occasions, using the various subjects of the verb – *he didn't know, I didn't know*. We shall leave this subject indeterminate then, by rounding it up under an *it wasn't known*.

Regarding this *it wasn't known*, the analyst is reckoned to know something. Why not even admit that he does know a thing or two? But can he teach what he knows? This isn't really the question, or at least, it would be premature. Up to a certain point, the sheer existence of somewhere like this and the role I've been playing here for a certain while is a way of settling this question – well or poorly – but of settling it.

No, the question is – what is it to teach what he knows?

1

What is it to teach, when what is to be taught has precisely to be taught not only to one who doesn't know, but to one who *can't* know? And it has to be admitted that up to a certain point all of us here are in this same boat, given what's at stake.

Watch carefully where, if I may say so, what is off-kilter is off to.

Were it not for what lies off-kilter, an analytic teaching, and this Seminar itself, could be conceived of as an extension of what takes place in supervision, for example, where you bring along what you might know and where I would only enter the fray to impart the analogue of interpretation, namely, that addition by means of which something appears, which gives some meaning to what you believe you know and makes that which it's possible to grasp beyond the limits of knowledge appear in a flash.

It's nevertheless to the extent that a piece of knowledge is constituted in a work of elaboration which we shall call communitarian rather than collective, a work of analysis, among those who have experience of it, the analysts, that a work of rounding up of knowledge is conceivable, which justifies the place that a teaching such as the one being put forward here can take up. If you will, it's because there's a whole literature, fostered by the analytic experience, called analytic theory, that I'm forced, often very much against my will, to give it so much consideration. And yet, this same analytic theory is what necessitates me doing something that has to move beyond this rounding-up, that has to move, by way of this rounding-up of analytic theory, in the direction of bringing us closer to what constitutes its wellspring, namely, the experience.

An ambiguity arises at this point, which isn't due simply to the fact that a few non-analysts mix with us here. There's nothing particularly inconvenient about that since even the analysts also roll up here with positions, stances and expectations that aren't necessarily analytic. They've already been conditioned quite well enough by the fact that all manner of references get introduced in the theory produced in analysis and in far greater number than would seem on first glance, references that may be qualified as extra-analytic, as psychologizing references, for example.

The simple fact that I deal with this material – my audience's material, the material of my object of teaching – means that I shall be led to refer to this common experience, thanks to which any teaching communication gets established. This means that I can't stay in the pure position that just now I called *interprétante*, but that I shall have to pass over to a broader communicative position and move onto the ground of *making-things-understood*, to appeal

therefore to an experience in you that goes far beyond the strict analytic experience.

It's important to recall this because making-things-understood is and always has been the real stumbling block in psychology, in the widest sense. It's not so much that the emphasis has to be put on the theme which at one time appeared as the great originality of a work like Blondel's on pathological consciousness, *La Conscience morbide*, namely, that there are limits to understanding. For example, let's not imagine that we understand the real or authentic lived experience of the ill. But the question of this limit is not what's important for us. At this moment of speaking to you about anxiety, this is one of those questions we're putting on hold.

Indeed, the question is rather one of explaining how we can speak about anxiety when we subsume under this same category experiences as diverse as – the anxiety we can fall into following some such meditation guided by Kierkegaard – para-normal anxiety, or even frankly pathological anxiety, which can seize hold of us at such moments, we being ourselves subjects of an experience that is more or less psychopathologically locatable – the anxiety we're faced with in our neurotics, the everyday material of our experience – and also the anxiety we can describe and localize at the level of the principle of an experience that is more on the fringes for us, that of the pervert, for example, indeed that of the psychotic.

Although this apparent homogeneity finds itself justified by a structural kinship, this can only be at the expense of the original comprehension, which nevertheless will necessarily increase along with the danger of making us forget that this comprehension isn't the understanding of a lived experience but the comprehension of a mainspring. It also presumes too much about what we may assume of the experiences this comprehension refers to, specifically those of the pervert and the psychotic.

From this perspective, it is preferable to warn people that they aren't to believe too much of what they may comprehend.

It's precisely here that the signifying elements I'm introducing for you take on their importance. As bare of comprehensible content as I'm endeavouring to make them, through their notation in a structural relationship, they are the means by which I'm trying to keep up the level necessary for an understanding that will not be misleading, whilst leaving the variously significant terms through which we're moving out where they can be spotted. This is very much to be underlined at the point where affect is at issue, since I haven't denied myself this classificatory element. Anxiety is an affect.

From the teacher's point of view, the approach to this theme presents itself in keeping with three different paths that can be

defined summarily, that is, by summing them up, under three headings.

First of all, there's the path of the catalogue. As concerns affect, this consists in exhausting not only what it means, but also what was meant in constituting this category. This path puts us in the position of teaching on the subject of teaching, in its widest sense, and would allow us to link up what's taught within analysis with what's brought to us from without. Why ever not? It's come down to us from quite considerable contributions and I'm a long way from stopping myself, as I told you, from putting anxiety in the catalogue of affects, as in the various theories that have been produced on affect.

To take things up in a kind of separating interpunct, there are in Saint Thomas Aquinas, to mention him by name, some very, very fine things concerning a division of affect, a division he didn't invent, into the *concupiscent* and the *irascible*. The long discussion, which proceeds in accordance with the format of scholastic debate, proposition–objection–reply, whereby he weighs up the question as to which of the two categories is first with respect to the other, and how he decides, and why, that, in spite of certain appearances and certain references, the irascible always gets inserted somewhere into the chain of the concupiscent, this concupiscent thus standing first in relation to it – all this won't fail to aid us, for, in truth, this theory would be quite admissible for us were it not, at its utmost term, hanging entirely upon the supposition of a Sovereign Good against which, as you know, we already have great objections to make. We're going to see what we can hold onto in this theory, what it clarifies for us. I ask you to consult it. I'll give you the references in due course. We can certainly find plenty of material there to feed our own reflections – much more, paradoxically, than in the modern developments, recent developments, let's call a spade a spade, nineteenth-century developments from a psychology that claimed to be experimental and was no doubt not entirely entitled to do so.

Nevertheless, this path has the drawback of pushing us in the direction of the classification of affects. Now, experience proves to us that in going too far in this direction, one merely winds up in obvious dead ends, even if one puts the emphasis firmly on that part of our experience that just now I distinguished as theory. This is borne out very nicely, for example, in an article by David Rapaport which you'll find in volume 34 of the *International Journal*, the third section from 1953. This text, which attempts a psychoanalytic theory of affect, is truly exemplary for the quite dismaying outcome it arrives at, without moreover the author's hand dreaming of concealing it. Announcing an article with the title *On a Psychoanalytic*

Theory of Affect could make us hope, after all, that something new, something original, might come out of it, concerning what the analyst may think about affect. The astonishing result is that the author limits himself to cataloguing the accepted uses of the term, staying strictly within analytic theory, only to realize at the end of it that these uses are irreducible to one another.

The first of these accepted uses is affect conceived of as constituting, substantially, drive discharge. The second professedly goes farther than the Freudian text, to turn affect into what connotes a tension across its different, ordinarily conflicting, phases – the variation of tension. In the third instance, affect is defined within the properly topographical reference of Freudian theory as a signal at the level of the ego of a danger coming from elsewhere. The important thing is that the author notices that among the most recent authors to contribute to the analytic discussion, divergent claims still remain concerning the primacy to be accorded each of these three meanings, such that nothing of it is resolved. That the author in question is unable to say any more about it is at any rate the sign that here the method known as cataloguing can ultimately only bear the mark of a profound aporia, in that it winds up in dead ends, even in a very particular lack of fecundity.

There is another method. I apologize for going on at such length today about the question of method, but it holds great interest as a preamble, with regard to the timeliness of what we're doing here, and I'm not introducing it just for the sake of it, as you shall see, in connection with anxiety. I'm going to call it, to form a consonance with the previous term, the method of the analogue.

This would lead us to distinguish some levels. One piece of work, which I won't cite otherwise today, presents an attempt at this kind of rounding-up, where in separate chapters one can see anxiety being conceived of biologically, then sociologically, then *culturally* as they say, the work being in the English language – as if all it takes, to do something other than isolate, not a classification this time, but a sort of type, is to reveal analogical positions at levels purported to be independent of one another.

We know what such a method ends up with. It ends up with what is known as an anthropology. Of all the paths we might go down, anthropology is in our eyes the one that entails the greatest number of the most hazardous presuppositions. Whatever eclecticism it may be characterized by, such a method always ends up, and necessarily so, with a central kernel that is Jungianism, or at least what we term thus in our habitual vocabulary, without making it the sign of someone who occupied such an eminent position. On the subject of anxiousness, this thematic lies very far from what is at issue in experience.

On the other hand, experience leads us to the third path, which I'll put under the heading of the function of the key. The key is a thing which unlocks and which, in unlocking, functions. The key is the form according to which the signifying function as such operates or not.

My announcing it, distinguishing it and daring to introduce it as what we may trust ourselves to, has nothing that should here be stamped with presumption.

What legitimizes it and that will, I think, be a sufficiently convincing reference, especially for those here who are teachers by profession, is that the dimension of the key is utterly connatural to any teaching, analytic or not.

Indeed, I will say that – regardless of the shock that may arise in some people as a result of me saying it, for my part, concerning what I teach – there is no teaching which does not refer to what I shall call an ideal of straightforwardness.

2

In taking the path of turning to the texts on affect, we saw earlier that neither head nor tail can be made of what we think, we analysts.

There is something deeply unsatisfying about this and it constitutes a weighty objection. Indeed it is to be expected, whatever capacity we're in, that we should satisfy a certain ideal of straightforward reduction.

What does this mean? Why so? Why, for all the time that we've been practising science – for this reflection bears on something very different from, as well as fields that are vaster than, the field of our experience – has the greatest possible straightforwardness been demanded? Why would the real be straightforward? What can lead us even for one minute to suppose that it is?

Well, nothing – nothing other than the subjective *initium* I emphasized during the whole of the first part of my teaching last year, namely, that there's no conceivable advent of a subject as such except on the basis of the prior introduction of a signifier, and the most straightforward of signifiers, known as the unary trait.

The unary trait precedes the subject. *In the beginning was the word* means *In the beginning stands the unary trait.* Everything that is teachable has to preserve the stigmata of this ultra-simple *initium.* It's the only thing that can justify in our eyes the ideal of straightforwardness.

Simplex, singularity of the trait, this is what we cause to enter the real, whether the real likes it or not. One thing is certain, it does

enter and it has already entered before us. It's along this path that all those subjects who've been dialoguing for a few centuries now have already had to get by as best they can with the condition that, precisely, betwixt them and the real lies the field of the signifier, for it was already with the operation of the unary trait that they were constituted as subjects. Why should we be surprised to meet its stamp in our field, if our field is that of the subject?

In analysis, there is something that stands prior to everything we can elaborate or understand. I shall call this the presence of the Other, *l'Autre* with a capital A. There is no auto-analysis, even when one imagines there is. The Other is there. It's on this path and with the same intention that we meet the indication I've already given you concerning something that goes much farther still, namely, anxiety.

In this regard, I started to indicate a certain relationship for you, which so far I've merely embellished with an image. I recalled this image for you last time, with a second mention of the sketch of my rather modest and discomfited presence in the presence of the giant praying mantis. I've already said more about it, however, in specifying that this bore a relation to the desire of the Other.

First off, before knowing what my relation to its desire means when I'm in a state of anxiety, I put this Other here, capital A. To bring us closer to its desire, I'm going to take the paths I've already cleared.

As I told you, man's desire is the desire of the Other.

Excuse me for not being able to go back over what I spelt out on this subject during the recent Provincial Study Days, and this is why I'm so adamant that the transcript of that should reach me intact, so that it may be circulated. It concerned the grammatical analysis of what the desire of the Other means, including the objective meaning of this genitive. Those who have attended my Seminar up to now possess enough elements to situate it, however.

I alluded last time, at the start, to a short study that had been handed me that same morning. This article concerns the suspension of what may be called dialectical reason, on the structuralist level at which Lévi-Strauss is poised. In order to unravel this debate, to enter into its twists and turns, to sort out the tangles from the analytic point of view, its author makes reference, of course, to what I said about the fantasy as a support of desire. For my liking, however, he doesn't make enough of what I say when I speak about man's desire as desire of the Other. What proves it is that he thinks he can make do with reminding us that it's Hegel's formula.

Certainly, if there's someone who doesn't do any wrong to what the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* has brought us, that someone is me.

If, however, there's one point at which it's important to mark the progress, to employ this term – I'd much rather say the leap – that is ours with regard to Hegel, it's precisely concerning the function of desire.

In view of the field that I have to cover this year, I'm not in a position to go over Hegel's text with you step by step, as this article does, an article which I hope will be published because it displays a thoroughly sensitive familiarity with what Hegel says on this score. I won't even take up the passage, a quite original passage, that the author did well to recall on this occasion. But given the idea that the common run of my audience has already had the chance to get to grips with the Hegelian reference, I'll say right off, to make you feel what's at issue, that in Hegel, concerning the dependence of my desire with respect to the desirer who is the Other, I'm dealing in the most certain and articulated way with the Other as consciousness. The Other is the one who sees me.

You can already glimpse well enough in what way this concerns my desire, but I'll be coming back to it in a little while. For the moment, I'm setting out some broad oppositions.

In Hegel, the Other is the one who sees me and this is what, all by itself, kicks off the struggle, according to the foundations wherewith Hegel marks the start of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, on the plane of what he calls pure prestige, and it's on this plane that my desire is concerned. For Lacan, because Lacan is an analyst, the Other is there as an un-consciousness that is constituted as such. The Other concerns my desire to the extent of what he lacks and to the extent that he doesn't know. It's at the level of what he lacks, and at the level of him not knowing, that I'm concerned in the most prominent way, because there's no other path for me to find what I lack as object of my desire. This is why for me there is no, not simply access to my desire, but not even any possible means of sustaining my desire that would have any reference to any object whatsoever if not through coupling it, through tying it in, with this, the $, which designates the subject's necessary dependence on the Other as such.

This Other is of course the same one that I think over the years I've accustomed you to distinguishing at each step from the other, my *semblable*. It's the Other as locus of the signifier. It is my *semblable* amongst other things, but only in so far as it's also the locus at which the Other as such of the singular difference I was telling you about at the beginning is instituted.

Shall I now introduce the formulae I've written up? I'm not claiming, far from it, that the bag of tricks will spill right open. I ask you, today like last time, to jot them down. That's why this year I'm

noting things up on the blackboard. You'll be seeing how they function afterwards.

First Formula
$d(a) : d(\mathrm{A}) < a$

In the Hegelian sense, *desire for desire* is the desire for a desire to respond to the subject's appeal. It's the desire for a desirer. Why does the subject need this desirer who is the Other? It's plainly spelt out in Hegel that he needs the Other so that the Other may acknowledge him, so that he may receive the Other's acknowledgement. What does that mean? It means that the Other will institute something, designated by *a*, which is what is involved at the level of what desires. The whole impasse lies here. In demanding to be acknowledged, right where I get acknowledged, I only get acknowledged as an object. I get what I desire, I'm an object, and I can't stand myself as an object, since this object that I am is of its essence a consciousness, a *Selbstbewusstsein*. I can't stand myself acknowledged in the only type of acknowledgement I can obtain. Therefore it has to be settled at any cost between our two consciousnesses. There's no longer any mediation but that of violence. Such is desire's lot in Hegel.

Second Formula
$d(a) < i(a) : d(\not{\mathrm{A}})$

In the Lacanian, or analytic, sense *desire for desire* is desire of the Other in a way that is, in its principle, far more open to a kind of mediation. At least, so it seems on first approach.

Notice that the formula I've put up on the blackboard goes a long way to wrong-foot what you might expect. I have in fact written the relation to the desire of the Other, $d(\not{\mathrm{A}})$, with the image-support of this desire that I unhesitatingly write $i(a)$, precisely because of the ambiguity that this creates with the notation $i(m)$ with which I usually designate the specular image.

We don't yet know when, how or why this $i(a)$ can be the specular image, but it most certainly is an image. It's not the specular image, though it belongs to the realm of the image. Here, it's the fantasy which I don't hesitate on occasion to overlap with the notation of the specular image. I'm saying therefore that this desire is desire inasmuch as its image-support is equivalent to the desire of the Other. This is why the colon that was here is now here. This Other is connoted by a barred A because it's the Other at the point where it's characterized as lack.

There are two other formulae. Only two, since those that are bracketed together are just two ways of writing the same thing, in one direction, then in the palindromic direction. I don't know whether I'll have time today to get to their translation.

Third Formula
$d(x) : d(\mathrm{A}) < x$

Fourth Formula
$d(0) < 0 : d(\not\mathrm{A})$
$d(a) : 0 > d(0)$

I'd like you to know already, however, that the first is designed to highlight the fact that anxiety is what imparts truth to the Hegelian formula. The Hegelian formula is in fact partial and a little out, and even out of kilter. I've indicated for you on many occasions the perversion that results – and which is very far-reaching, as far as the political domain – from the whole of the beginning of *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, which is too tightly focused on the imaginary. It's very nice to say that the slave's servitude is brimming with the whole future right up to absolute knowledge, but politically this means that till the end of time the slave will remain a slave. One does have to tell it like it is once in a while.

Kierkegaard is the one who imparts the truth of the Hegelian formula. Next time, I think, I'll comment on what the third formula means.

The formula labelled fourth – hold on, while I think of it, that's not the letter *O* you should read there, but zero – is not Hegel's truth, but the truth of anxiety which, for its part, can only be grasped with reference to the second formula, which concerns desire at the psychoanalytic level.

3

Before I leave you today, I'd simply like to make a few remarks.

There is something that you can see appearing in like fashion in both Hegel's formula and mine. As paradoxical as it may seem, their first term is an object *a*. It's an object *a* that desires.

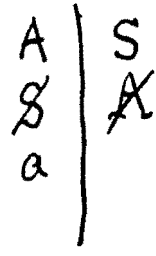
If the Hegelian concept of desire and the one I'm promoting to you here have something in common, it's this. At a moment which is precisely the unacceptable point of impasse in the process of the *Selbstbewusstsein* as Hegel would have it, the subject, being this object, is irremediably stamped with finitude. This object affected by

desire which I'm putting forward here does indeed have something in common in this respect with Hegel's theory, except that our analytic level doesn't require the transparency of the *Selbstbewusstsein*. This is a difficulty, of course, but it's not of the sort that would lead us to retrace our steps, nor to commit ourselves to the struggle to the death with the Other.

Because of the existence of the unconscious, we can be this object affected by desire. Indeed, it is even in so far as we, subject of the unconscious, are stamped in this way by finitude that our own lack can be desire, finite desire. It looks to be indefinite, because lack, entailing as it does some emptiness, can be filled in several ways, though we know very well, because we're analysts, that we don't fill it in umpteen different ways. We're going to see why, and what these ways are.

From this perspective, the classic, moralistic, though not really theological, dimension of the infinity of desire has absolutely to be cut down to size. In fact, this pseudo-infinity is due to one thing alone, which a certain part of the theory of the signifier fortunately allows us to picture – and this is none other than the whole number. This false infinity is linked to the kind of metonymy that, concerning the definition of the whole number, is called recursion. It's the law we accentuated forcefully last year with regard to the recursive One. But what our experience demonstrates to us, and what I'll be articulating for you in the various fields offered to our experience, namely, and distinctly, the neurotic, the pervert, indeed the psychotic, is that this One, to which at the end of the day the succession of signifying elements, in so far as they are distinct, are reduced, does not exhaust the function of the Other.

This is what I've represented here in the form of these two columns, which are those under which the operation of division can be written. First off, you find A, the originative Other as locus of the signifier, and S, the subject as yet inexistent, who has to situate himself as determined by the signifier.



First table of division

With regard to the Other, the subject dependant upon this Other is inscribed as a quotient. He's stamped with the unary trait of the signifier in the field of the Other. It's not necessarily the case, if I may say so, that he slices the Other up. There is, in the sense of division, a remainder, a leftover. This remainder, this ultimate Other, this irrational entity, this proof and sole guarantee, when all is said and done, of the Other's otherness, is the *a*.

This is why the two terms, $ and *a*, the subject stamped with the bar of the signifier and the object *a*, the residue of the readying, if I can put it like that, of the Other, stand on the same side, the objective side, of the bar. Both of them stand on the side of the Other, because the fantasy, support of my desire, is in its totality on the side of the Other. What now stands on my side is what constitutes me as unconscious, namely Ⱥ, the Other in so far as I don't reach it.

Shall I take you further? No, time's too short. But I don't want to leave you on such a closed point as concerns the next part of the dialectic that's going to be inserted here.

What is the next step necessitated by this dialectic? You'll see that I'm going to have to explain to you what I'm bringing into this business, namely, into the subsistence of the fantasy. I'll give you a picture right now of the thrust of what I shall have to put forth, with a reminder that will be of some use to you regarding what, good gracious, concerns you most – I'm not the one who said so, it was Freud – to wit, the experience of love.

The point we're at in the theory of desire in its relationship to the Other actually delivers up the key to the following. Contrary to the hope that the Hegelian perspective might give you, the way by which the other party is conquered is not the way – too frequently adopted, alas, by one of the partners – of *I love you, even if you don't want me to*.

Don't believe that Hegel hadn't noticed this consequence of his doctrine. There's a very precious little note where he indicates that he could've made his whole dialectic pass through there. He also says that, if he didn't take this path, it's because it didn't seem serious enough. How right he was. Go ahead and try this formula out, you can let me know if you have any success.

There is, however, another formula, which doesn't demonstrate its efficacy any better, but perhaps this is so simply to the extent that it's not articulable. This doesn't mean, however, that it's not articulated. It is, *I desire you, even if I know it not*. Whenever it manages, as inarticulable as it is, to make itself heard, this one, I assure you, is irresistible.

And why so? I won't leave it as a conundrum.

Let's imagine it can be uttered. What would I be saying thereby?

I'm telling the other party that, desiring him or her, undoubtedly without knowing it, still without knowing it, I take him or her for the unknown object, unknown to me, of my desire. This means that, in our conception of desire, I identify you, thee to whom I'm speaking, with the object that you lack. In going via this circuit, which is obligatory if I am to attain the object of my desire, I accomplish for the other party precisely what he's seeking. If, innocently or not, I take this detour, the other as such, here object – observe – of my love, will necessarily fall into my toils.

I'll leave you with this recipe. Till next time.

21 November 1962

III

FROM THE COSMOS TO THE *UNHEIMLICHE*

The specular and the signifier
From the world to the world's stage
Hamlet and the stage on the stage
Lévi-Strauss's serenity
Anything whatsoever in the blank of the phallus

You'll have noted that I'm always pleased to latch onto some current affair in our dialogue.

All in all, there is only that which is current. That's precisely why it's so difficult to live in the world of, let's say, reflection. Because, truth be told, not much goes on there.

It can happen, just like that, that I take the trouble to see whether, somewhere, a little tip of a question mark might be rearing its head. I'm rarely rewarded. This is precisely why when it does so happen that someone poses me questions, and serious ones too, you won't hold it against me if I take advantage of this.

1

I'm continuing my dialogue with the person I've alluded to twice already, in my previous lessons.

With regard to the way that last time I punctuated the difference in conception that lies between the Hegelian articulation of desire and my own, I'm being urged.

I'm being urged to say more about what's being designated in so many words as a step further to be accomplished in my own disquisition. He would like a more precise articulation between the mirror stage – that is, as the Rome Report puts it, the specular image – and the signifier. It seems that a certain hiatus remains here, not without my interlocutor perceiving that the employment of words such as

hiatus, cut, or scission, is perhaps none other than the response he's waiting for.

Nevertheless, in this form, the response could seem to be but an elusion, or an elision. This is why I'm going to try to reply to him today.

I shall do so all the more willingly given that here we find ourselves strictly on the path of what I have to describe this year. Indeed, anxiety is going to allow us to go back over the articulation that is hereby being required of me. I say *go back over*, because those who've been following me these last years and even those who, without necessarily having been assiduous in every respect, have read what I write, already possess more than a few elements to fill out this hiatus and make this cut function, as you shall see from the reminders with which I'm going to begin.

I don't believe there have ever been two phases to what I've taught, one phase that would supposedly be focused on the mirror stage and the imaginary, and then afterwards, at that moment of our history that is marked by the Rome Report, my supposedly sudden discovery of the signifier. I ask those interested in the question that's been put to me to consult a text that is no longer so easy to get hold of, but which can be found in all the good psychiatric libraries. This text, published in *L'Évolution psychiatrique* and entitled *Presentation on Psychical Causality*, is a disquisition that takes us back to 1946, if memory serves, just after the war. There they will see things that will prove to them that I've been intimately weaving the interplay between the two registers for a long while now.

If this text was followed, let's say, by a somewhat long silence on my part, you needn't be too astonished. A great deal of ground was covered thereafter, in order to open up a certain number of ears to this disquisition. Don't believe that at the time I gave this presentation on psychical causality ears were all that quick to hear it. Since the presentation was given in Bonneval and since a more recent meeting at the same location has signalled for some the ground covered, I can tell you that the reactions to those first remarks were somewhat astonishing.

At best, the term that would describe them is the discreet term of ambivalence, which we use in the analytic world, but this would be to say too little. As I'm sure to be queried on this subject and as I'm being taken back to that era which a certain number of you were already sufficiently trained to remember, the post-war period animated by whatever movement of regeneration could be hoped of it, I suddenly can't avoid recalling that those who certainly weren't, individually, the least inclined to hearing a disquisition that was very new at the time, people situated on the side that in politics is

called the hard left, communists, to call a spade a spade, on that occasion made a quite special show of reactions whose style I must absolutely single out with a term that is of everyday use, though a moment's pause is necessary before endorsing its use, because it's a term that has become quite unjust for those it originally invoked, a term that has ended up taking on a depreciative meaning, but I'm using it in the courteous sense – the term *pharisaism*.

On that occasion, in the little teacup that our psychiatric milieu is, communist pharisaism really served to the full in the very thing to which we saw it apply itself, at least for our generation, in present-day France, that is, to wit, assuring the persistence of that sum of habits, good or bad, wherein a certain established order finds its comfort and security.

In short, I can't avoid testifying that it's to the utterly particular reservations of the communists that I owe the fact of having understood that my disquisition would take a long while to make itself heard. Hence the silence in question and the care I took to devote myself simply to making this disquisition enter the milieu whose experience rendered it the most apt to hear it, to wit, the analytic milieu. I'll spare you the subsequent adventures.

But if this can get you to reread the *Presentation on Psychical Causality*, you'll see, especially after what I'll have told you today, that the framework into which each of these two perspectives are inscribed, perspectives that my interlocutor quite rightly sets apart, already existed. These perspectives are here punctuated by these two coloured lines, the vertical one in blue, marked with the sign I for imaginary, the horizontal one in red, with S for symbolic.

In what I'm demonstrating for you, the connection between the subject and the little other and the connection between the subject and the big Other don't live separate lives. There'd be more than one way of reminding you of this, but I'm going to remind you of it by going over a certain number of moments that have already been punctuated as essential in my disquisition.

What you see jotted up there on the blackboard and onto which we'll be placing the elements involved is none other than a diagram already published in my *Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation*. In this drawing, some terms have been linked up which have the strictest relationship with our subject, that is, the function of dependency. I'm taking them from the text of these *Remarks* . . ., but also from a previous disquisition which I delivered here back in the second year of my Seminar, concerning what at the time I called respectively the ideal ego and the Ego Ideal.

Let's recall, then, how the specular relation is found to take its place and how it is found to be dependent on the fact that the subject

is constituted in the locus of the Other, constituted by its mark, in the relation to the signifier.

Already, just in the exemplary little image with which the demonstration of the mirror stage begins, the moment that is said to be *jubilatory* when the child, grasping himself in the inaugural experience of recognition in the mirror, comes to terms with himself as a totality functioning as such in his specular image, haven't I always insisted on the movement that the infant makes? This movement is so frequent, constant I'd say, that each and every one of you may have some recollection of it. Namely, he turns round, I noted, to the one supporting him who's there behind him. If we force ourselves to assume the content of the infant's experience and to reconstruct the sense of this movement, we shall say that, with this nutating movement of the head, which turns towards the adult as if to call upon his assent, and then back to the image, he seems to be asking the one supporting him, and who here represents the big Other, to ratify the value of this image.

This is nothing, of course, but an indication concerning the inaugural nexus between this relation to the big Other and the advent of the function of the specular image, noted by *i(a)*.

But need we stick at this level?

I asked my interlocutor for a written text concerning some doubts he had with regard to what Claude Lévi-Strauss has put forward in his book, *The Savage Mind*, which is in the spotlight at the moment and whose close relationship with what we have to say this year you're going to see.

If we do indeed have to broach here what's in question in this book, it's so as to mark out the type of progress the use of psychoanalytic reason constitutes, in so far as it comes precisely to respond to the gap in the face of which more than one of you have for the moment come to a standstill, the gap that Claude Lévi-Strauss indicates throughout his development in the opposition between what he calls analytic reason and dialectical reason.

It's in reference to this opposition that I'd like to put the following remark to you by way of an introduction on the path I'm treading today.

Recall if you will what I extracted from the inaugural step in Freud's thought that *The Interpretation of Dreams* constitutes, when I laid the emphasis on the fact that Freud initially introduces the unconscious as a locus that he calls *ein anderer Schauplatz*, an other scene. From the beginning, from the moment the function of the unconscious comes into the picture in reference to the dream, this term is introduced as essential. Well, I think that here we have a mode that is constitutive of what is, let's say, our reason.

We are searching for the path by which to discern the structures of this reason. I shall say that the first phase is as follows – there is *the world.* I'm saying it with no frills, to make you hear what I have to say to you, but we'll have to come back to this, for we don't know what it means yet.

This world as it stands is what analytic reason is concerned with, the same reason to which Claude Lévi-Strauss's disquisition tends to give primacy. With this primacy, the said reason also grants it an ultimately peculiar homogeneity, which is precisely what strikes and troubles the most lucid of you. And you cannot fail to discern the return this entails to what could be called primary materialism, in so far as, at the limit of this disquisition, the play of structure, the play of the combinatory that is so powerfully articulated in Claude Lévi-Strauss's disquisition, would merely join up with the structure of the brain itself, for example, indeed the structure of matter, and represent, in keeping with the form called *materialist* in the eighteenth-century sense, not even its *doublure*, its lining, but its doublet. I know very well that here we merely have a perspective that stands at the limit, but it is worthwhile grasping it since it is expressly articulated.

Now, the dimension of the stage, in its separation from the locus, worldly or otherwise, cosmic or otherwise, where the spectator is, exists precisely to picture in our eyes the radical distinction between the world and the locus where things, if only the things of the world, come to be voiced. All the things of the world come to be staged in keeping with the laws of the signifier, laws that we could never fancy in any way to be consistent with the laws of the world at the outset.

It is only too clear that the existence of the discourse in which we are implicated as subjects stands well prior to the advent of science. As admirably instructive as Claude Lévi-Strauss's effort is to homogenize the discourse he calls *magic* with the discourse of science, he cannot for one instant push this as far as the illusion of believing that there's no difference here, nor even a cut, and in a little while I'll be accentuating what we have to say about it. The effort in question is, in truth, marvellous in its hopelessness.

So, first phase, *the world.* Second phase, *the stage* that we make this world climb up onto. The stage is the dimension of history.

History has always had a character of staging. Claude Lévi-Strauss shows this well, notably in the chapter in which he replies to Jean-Paul Sartre and in which he critiques his latest development which was set down to perform the operation I last time called *putting history back between the shafts that pull its coach.* Lévi-Strauss recalls that the teasing-out of history has a limited span, that the time of history is distinct from cosmic time, and that

dates themselves all of a sudden take on a different value within the dimension of history, whether they are called *le Deux-Décembre* or *le 18 Brumaire*. It's not the same calendar as the one you tear a page off each day. The proof of this is that these dates have a different meaning for you. They can be mentioned again on any other day of the calendar to signify that they impart it their stamp, their characteristic, their style of difference or recurrence.

Once the stage has come to the fore, what happens is that the whole world is put upon it, and with Descartes one can say, *Onto the world's stage go I,* as befits, *larvatus, masked.*

From this point on, the question may be posed as to what the world, what at the start we quite innocently called the world, owes to what has come back down to it from this stage. Everything that throughout the course of history we have called *the world* has left behind superimposed residues that accumulate without the faintest care for contradiction. What culture transports to us in the guise of the world is a stack, a shop crammed full of the flotsam and jetsam of worlds that have followed one after the other, and which, for all their incompatibility, don't get on any the worse with each other within every single one of us.

The particular field of our experience allows us to gauge the predominance of this structure. We know its depth, especially in the experience of the obsessional neurotic in whom Freud himself noticed a long time ago the extent to which these cosmic worlds could co-exist in a fashion which apparently doesn't raise the least objection, all the while displaying the most perfect heterogeneity from the very first examination onward. In short, as soon as we start making reference to the stage, nothing is more legitimate than to call into question what the world of cosmism is in the real. Isn't that which we believe ourselves to be dealing with as the world quite simply the accumulated remains of what came from the stage when, if I may say so, it was doing the rounds?

This reminder will lead us into a third phase, one which I already pointed out for you a long while ago without having enough time back then to accentuate it.

2

Since we're speaking about the stage, we know what function the theatre holds in the functioning of the myths that have given us, we analysts, such food for thought.

I'm going to take you back to *Hamlet* and to a crucial point that's already posed a question for a number of authors. Otto Rank in

particular produced an article on this subject that is admirable in every respect, given the early period in which it was written, and particularly for the attention he draws to the function of the stage on the stage.

In *Hamlet*, what does Hamlet, the stage character, bring onto the stage with the players? Undoubtedly, it's the *Mouse-trap* with which, so he tells us, he'll *catch the conscience of the king*. But some very strange things come to pass besides, in particular the following, which at the time I spoke to you at such great length about *Hamlet* I didn't want to introduce, because it would have steered you towards a literature that is ultimately more Hamletic than psychoanalytic, and as you know, there's already plenty enough to paper the walls with.

When the scene is mimed by way of a prologue, before the players begin their speeches, it doesn't seem to stir the king all that much, even though the presumed gestures of his crime are being played out before him. On the other hand, if there is one thing that's really quite odd, then it's the veritable flood, the fit of agitation, that seizes Hamlet at the crucial moment when the character called Lucianus, or Luciano, arrives on stage and carries out his crime, as much against the character that represents the king – the play-acting king even though he affirms in his speech that he is the king within a certain dimension – as against the character representing his spouse.

All the authors who have paused on this scene have remarked that the garb in which the said Luciano is clad isn't that of the king whom it's a question of catching, but precisely that of Hamlet himself. Likewise, it's indicated that this character is not the brother of the play-acting king. He does not therefore stand in a relation to the play-acting king that would be equivalent to the usurper's relation to Hamlet's father in the tragedy, the usurper who, once the murder is carried out, is in possession of Queen Gertrude. Luciano is the nephew of the play-acting king, a position equivalent to Hamlet's own position with regard to the usurper.

What Hamlet has represented on the stage is, therefore, in the end, himself carrying out the crime in question. This character whose desire can't be roused to accomplish the will of the ghost, the ghost of his father – for reasons that I tried to spell out for you – attempts to give shape to something, which goes by way of the specular image, his image put into the situation, not of accomplishing his revenge, but of assuming first of all the crime that stands to be avenged.

Now, what do we see? We see that it's insufficient. Much as Hamlet is seized, after this kind of magic-lantern effect, by what may truly be qualified – in view of his remarks, their style, even the

quite ordinary way in which the players bring this moment to life – as a veritable little fit of manic agitation when, just afterwards, he finds himself with his enemy within reach, he only manages to articulate what any listener can only feel to be evasion. He shirks away behind an excuse, namely, that he would be seizing his enemy at a moment that is too holy – the king is praying – for him to bring himself to send him straight to heaven by striking there and then.

I'm not going to spend time translating what all of this means, because I have to go further here. Alongside this failure, I showed you all the scope of one of Hamlet's identifications whose nature is altogether different. It's what I called the identification with Ophelia. In point of fact, in the second phase, Hamlet is seized by the furious soul we can legitimately infer to be that of the victim, the suicide victim, manifestly offered in sacrifice to the paternal manes, since it's right after the killing of her father that she falters and succumbs.

This refers back to long-held beliefs pertaining to the aftermath of certain types of demise, when the funeral ceremonies can't be fully carried out. Nothing is appeased of the vengeance Ophelia is calling out for.

At the moment of the revelation of what this neglected and misrecognized object was for him, we can see being played out in Shakespeare in all its nakedness the same identification with the object that Freud designated for us as the mainspring of the function of mourning. This is the implacable definition that Freud rightly gave to mourning, the sort of nether side he designated with the tears dedicated to the deceased, the background of reproach entailed by the fact that, of the reality of the one who's been lost, we only want to remember the regrets he's left behind.

What astonishing cruelty, and just what it takes to remind us of the legitimacy of those more primitive types of celebration that still live on today thanks to certain collective practices. Why shouldn't one rejoice at the fact that the deceased existed? The country folk we reckon to be drowning out some harmful insensitivity in their feasts are actually doing something quite different, they are celebrating the accession of *he that was* to the sort of simple glory that he deserves for having simply been a living being in our midst. Identification with the bereaved object was designated by Freud in its negative patterns, but let's not forget that it also has its positive phase.

It's the entry into Hamlet of what I've called *the fury of the female soul* that gives him the strength to become this sleepwalker who accepts everything, up to and including – I've marked this sufficiently – to become the one who in the combat fights for his enemy, the king himself, against his specular image, who is Laertes.

From that point on, things sort themselves out on their own and without him doing, all in all, anything other than exactly what he shouldn't, until he does what he has to. Namely, he will himself be mortally wounded by the time he kills the king.

Here we are able to measure all the distance that lies between two kinds of imaginary identification. There is the identification with *i(a)*, the specular image such as it is offered to us with the stage on the stage, and there is the more mysterious identification – whose enigma starts to be developed here – with the object of desire as such, *a*, designated as such in the Shakespearean articulation without any ambiguity whatsoever, since it's precisely as object of desire that Hamlet has been neglected up until a certain moment, and that he is reintegrated onto the stage via the path of identification.

It is to the extent that, as object, he comes to vanish, that the retroactive dimension imposes itself which is that of the imperfect tense in the ambiguous form in which it is employed in French, and which lends its force to the way in which I've been repeating before you *Il ne savait pas, He didn't know*. This means both *At the last instant, he didn't know* and *A little more, and he was going to know*. It's not for nothing that *désir* in French comes from *desiderium*. There is a retroactive recognition of *the object that used to be there*. It's down this path that Hamlet's return passes into the culmination of his destiny, of his Hamlet function, if I may put it like that, his Hamletic finish.

It's here that what I called the third phase, namely, the stage on the stage, shows us where our questioning ought to be directed.

This questioning – you've known this much for a long time because it's the same that I'm always repeating from multiple angles – concerns the status of the object as object of desire. Everything that Claude Lévi-Strauss says about the function of magic and the function of myth has its value, on the condition that we know that it's a matter of the relationship with this object that holds the status of the object of desire. This status, I admit, hasn't been established yet and this is very much what has to be pushed forward this year on the inroad to anxiety.

At any rate, this object of desire oughtn't to be confused with the object defined by epistemology. The advent of the object of our science is very specifically defined by a particular discovery of the efficacy of the signifying operation as such. This means that what is specific to our science, I'm saying to the science that has been in existence at our side for two centuries now, leaves open the question of what earlier I called the cosmism of the object. Whether or not there is a cosmos is uncertain, and our science advances precisely to the extent that it's given up maintaining any cosmic or cosmizing presuppositions.

This reference point remains nevertheless so essential that one can't fail to be astonished that in restoring in *The Savage Mind*, in a modern form, the permanence, the perpetuity, the eternity of the cosmism of the object's reality, Claude Lévi-Strauss doesn't bring everybody the security, the serenity, the Epicurean relief that ought to ensue. The question arises as to whether the psychoanalysts are the only ones who aren't happy, or whether it's everybody. Now, I claim, regardless of the fact that I don't yet have the proof, that it must be everybody. It's a matter of reasoning it out.

Why is it that people aren't happy about seeing totemism all of a sudden emptied of its content? A content I shall call, to make myself understood, emotive. Why is it that people aren't happy about the world being so in order, ever since the Neolithic period – because we can't go back any further – that everything should merely amount to insignificant wavelets on the surface of this order? In other words, why do we want so much to preserve the dimension of anxiety? There must be a reason for this.

Between returning to an assured cosmism and maintaining an historical pathos by which we don't set all that much store either, even though it does have its function, there is a way, a passageway. This passageway is precisely to be cleared by studying the function of anxiety.

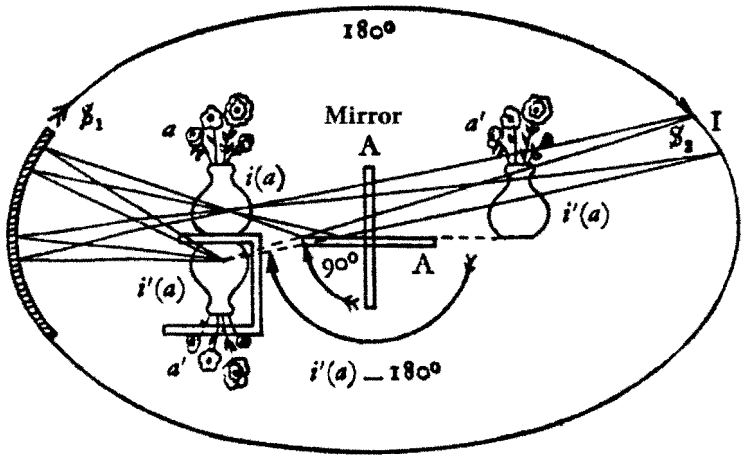
3

Here then is the reason why I've been led to remind you precisely how the specular relation is tied into the relation to the big Other.

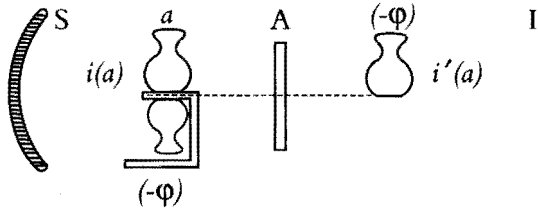
The apparatus I put together in the article to which I'm asking you to refer, because I'm not going to go through it all again here, is designed to remind us of this, which I accentuated at the end of my Seminar on desire, namely, that the function of specular investment is situated within the dialectic of narcissism such as Freud introduced it.

Investment in the specular image is a fundamental phase of the imaginary relation. It's fundamental inasmuch as there's a limit. Not all of the libidinal investment passes by way of the specular image. There's a remainder. I hope I succeeded in making you see why this remainder is the lynchpin of this whole dialectic. This is where I'll be taking up again next time, to show you, more than I've been able to as yet, how this function is privileged in the mode of the phallus.

This means that in everything that concerns taking one's bearings in the imaginary, the phallus will henceforth step in, in the form of



Complete diagram



Simplified diagram

a lack. To the full extent that here, in *i(a)*, what I've called the *real image* comes to be realized – the body image functioning in the subject's material as specifically imaginary, that is to say, libidinalized – the phallus appears as a minus, as a blank. Despite the phallus undoubtedly being an operative reserve, not only is it not represented at the level of the imaginary, but it is circumscribed and, in a word, cut out of the specular image.

To add something to peg this dialectic together, I tried last year to articulate this for you with a figure borrowed from the ambiguous domain of topology, which planes the imaginary data right down and teases out a kind of trans-space, everything of which leads us to think in the end that it's fashioned from a pure signifying articulation, whilst still leaving a few intuitive elements within reach. For instance, those that support the quirky yet altogether expressive image of the cross-cap.

I manipulated this surface in front of you for over a month in order to bring you to form an idea of how the cut can establish two

different pieces here, one which can have a specular image and the other which, quite literally, doesn't have one. It was a question of the relationship between minus-*phi* and the constitution of the little *a*. On one hand, there is the reserve that can't be grasped in the imaginary, even though it is linked to an organ, which, thank goodness, is still perfectly graspable, this instrument which will all the same have to go into action from time to time for the satisfaction of desire, the phallus. On the other hand, there is the *a*, which is this remainder, this residue, this object whose status escapes the status of the object derived from the specular image, that is, the laws of transcendental aesthetics. All the confusion has swept into analytic theory because its status is so hard to spell out.

This object *a* whose constituent characteristics we've merely touched on and which today we're putting on the agenda, is what is in question whenever Freud speaks about the object in connection with anxiety. The ambiguity is due to the fact that we can't do otherwise than to imagine it in the specular register. It's precisely a matter of establishing another type of imaginarization here, if I may express myself in this way, whereby this object may be defined. This is what we will manage to do if you will kindly follow me, that is to say, step by step.

In the article I've been speaking to you about, where do I place the starting point of the dialectic? At an S, the subject as possible, the subject because needs must speak about one if speaking there is, and whose model is given us by the classical conception of the subject, on the sole condition that we limit the subject to the fact that he speaks. As soon as he starts to speak, the unary trait comes into play. The fact of being able to say 1 and 1 and another 1 and another, constitutes the primary identification. You always have to start with 1. As the diagram from the article in question shows, it's on this basis that the very possibility of recognizing the unit called *i(a)* is established.

This *i(a)* is given in the specular experience, but, as I told you, it is authenticated by the Other. Without going back over all the elements of the amusing little physics experiment that served me in picturing it for you, I shall simply tell you that, at the level of *i'(a)* which is the *virtual image* of a *real image*, nothing appears. I've written (– φ) at the top, because we'll have to put it there next time. This minus-*phi* is no more visible, no more tangible, no more presentifiable up there than down here, under *i(a)*, because it hasn't entered the imaginary.

In its principle, the lot, the inaugural moment of desire, which you'll have to wait till next time for me to articulate, takes hold in the relation I've given you as that of the fantasy, ($ ◊ *a*), which is

read – barred S, diamond, with its meaning which we shall soon know how to read differently, little *a*.

If the subject could really, and not through the intermediary of the Other, be at the place labelled I, he would have a relation with what it's a question of plucking from the neck of the vase in the original specular image, *i(a)*, namely, the object of his desire, *a*. These two pillars, *i(a)* and *a*, are the support of the function of desire. If desire exists and sustains mankind in its existence as mankind, it's to the extent that the relation ($ ◊ *a*) is accessible via some detour, where artifices give us access to the imaginary relation constituted by the fantasy. But this isn't in the least bit possible in an effective way. What man has in front of him is only ever the *virtual image*, *i'(a)*, of what I was representing in my diagram with this vase. What the spherical mirror's illusion produces on the left in the real state, in the form of a *real image*, he has only the *virtual image* of, on the right, with nothing in the neck of the vase. The *a*, desire's support in the fantasy, isn't visible in what constitutes for man the image of his desire.

Elsewhere, on this side of this image, on the left, there is the presence of the *a*, which is too close to him to be seen, but which is the *initium* of desire. This is where the image *i'(a)* gets its prestige from. But the more man approaches, encircles and caresses what he believes to be the object of his desire, the more he is in fact diverted and distracted from it. Everything he does on this path to move closer to it gives ever more body to what, in the object of this desire, represents the specular image. The further he goes, the more he wants, in the object of his desire, to preserve, maintain and protect the face of this primordial vase that is intact – the specular image. The further he goes down this path that is often improperly called the way to the perfection of the object relation, the more he is taken in.

Here we are, then, in a position to reply now to the question – when does anxiety emerge? Anxiety emerges when a mechanism makes something appear in the place of what I'm going to call, to make myself understood, a natural place, namely, the place of (– φ), which corresponds, on the right-hand side, to the place that is occupied, on the left-hand side, by the *a* of the object of desire. I say *something* – you should understand *anything whatsoever*.

Before next time, I would ask you to take the trouble to reread – with this introduction I'm giving you here – Freud's article on the *Unheimliche*. It's an article that I've never heard anyone comment on and no one seems to have noticed that it's indispensable for broaching the question of anxiety. Just as I broached the unconscious with the *Witz*, this year I'm going to be broaching anxiety with the *Unheimliche*.

The *Unheimliche* is what appears at the place where the minus-*phi* should be. Indeed, everything starts with imaginary castration, because there is no image of lack, and with good reason. When something does appear there, it is, therefore, if I may put it this way, because lack happens to be lacking.

This is perhaps going to seem to you to be a touch, a *concetto*, not at all out of place in my style which has a certain *Gongorismo* about it, as everyone knows. Well, I don't give a damn. I'll simply point out to you that a good many things may arise in the sense of anomalies, but that's not what provokes anxiety in us. But should all the norms, that is, that which makes for anomaly just as much as that which makes for lack, happen all of a sudden not to be lacking, that's when the anxiety starts. Try applying that to a whole number of things.

I authorize you now to resume reading what Freud says in his last major article on anxiety, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*. The key I'm providing you with will enable you to see the true meaning to be given to the term he there sets down in writing – *object-loss*.

That's where I'll be taking up next time, when I hope I'll be able to impart to our research for this year its true meaning.

28 November 1962

IV

BEYOND CASTRATION ANXIETY

The object as a spare part
The Hoffmannian object
The object *a* postiche
The object-demand
The object that is not missing

I've put up on the blackboard for you the diagram that I started to go into with you last time in the articulation of what constitutes our theme.

With anxiety, with its phenomenon, but also with the place that I'm going to teach you to designate as specific to it, it's a matter of going deeper into the function of the object in the analytic experience.

I want briefly to mention that the text I've taken the trouble to write up of a paper I gave, over two years ago now, on 21 September 1960, at a Hegelian meeting in Royaumont, will soon be coming out. I chose to treat the following topic – *The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious*. I'm mentioning it to those who've already familiarized themselves with my teaching because there they will find, I think to their satisfaction, the phases of construction and the functioning of what together we have called *the graph*. This text will thus soon be seeing the light of day in a volume, which contains the other papers too, not all of which are psychoanalytic, published by a centre at 173, boulevard Saint-Germain, which is seeing to the publication of all the work from the Royaumont meeting.

This announcement isn't out of place today in so far as the subversion of the subject as dialectic of desire frames the functioning of the object that we're going to have to go into more deeply.

In those that have been coming here as novices, I don't think I've encountered the reaction, a most unpleasant reaction I must say,

that greeted this piece of work at Royaumont, a work designed to put the function of the object very much into question, namely, the function of the object of desire. To my astonishment, this reaction was shown by philosophers whom I believed more inured to the unusual. Their impression, which I can't qualify any differently than they themselves did, was one of a kind of nightmare, a flight of fancy even, peppered with a certain diabolism. However, oughtn't everything in the experience that I shall call modern – with the profound modifications in the perception of the object that are brought to it by the era that I'm not the first to qualify as the technological era – to suggest the idea that a disquisition on the object inevitably has to go via complex relations that only afford us access to it through wide chicanes?

Take, for instance, this unit of the object that is called *the spare part* and which is so very characteristic of what is given to us in experience, the outermost experience, not analytic experience. Isn't this something that deserves to be paused on, something that introduces a new dimension to any noetic examination pertaining to our relation to the object? For in the end, what is a spare part? How does it subsist beyond its possible use in relation to a certain model? Today the model is functional, but tomorrow it could just as well become obsolete, it might just as easily not be updated, as they say – following which, what does the spare part become? What sense does it have?

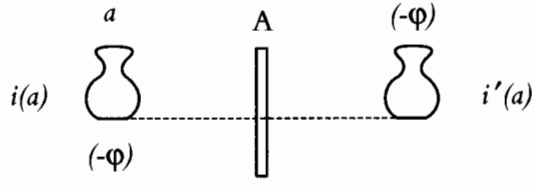
Why shouldn't this profile of a certain enigmatic relation to the object serve us today by way of introduction so as to take up this diagram once again?

1

This diagram is not some pointless complication. There's nothing for us to be astonished at and no reason to stiffen up.

At this place, $i'(a)$, in the Other, in the locus of the Other, an image emerges that is merely the reflection of ourselves. It's authenticated by the Other, but it's already problematic, fallacious even.

This image is characterized by a lack, that is, by the fact that



Simplified diagram

what is called upon there is unable to appear there. It orients and polarizes desire and it has a function of inveiglement for this desire. There, desire isn't simply veiled, but essentially brought into relation with an absence.

This absence is also the possibility of an appearance, which is controlled by a presence that lies elsewhere. This presence controls it very closely, but it does so from a site that is ungraspable for the subject. As I've indicated to you, the presence in question is that of the *a*, the object in the function that it fulfils in the fantasy.

At this place of lack where something can appear, last time I put, in brackets, the sign (– φ). This indicates for you that there emerges here a relationship with the libidinal reserve, namely, with that something that doesn't get projected, doesn't get invested in, at the level of the specular image, which is irreducible, for the reason that it remains profoundly invested at the level of one's body, the level of primary narcissism, of what is called autoerotism, an autistic jouissance. All in all, it is a nutrient that stays there to animate if need be what will come into play as an instrument in the relation to the other, the other constituted on the basis of the image of my *semblable*, the other that will sketch its form and its norms – the image of the body in its seductive function – onto the one who is the sexual partner.

It is anxiety that, I told you last time, can come to be signalled at the place here designated by (– φ), castration anxiety, in its relation to the Other. Here then is the question we shall be advancing into today. As you can see, I'm going straight to the nodal point.

By what path have we come to learn everything we know that is altogether new and original about the structure of the subject and the dialectic of desire that we analysts have to articulate? Well, by the path of the neurotic's experience. Now, what does Freud say on this score? He says that the final term he reached in developing this experience, its point of arrival, the point at which it runs aground, the term that for him is unsurpassable, is castration anxiety.

What does this mean? Is this term unsurpassable? What is meant by this halting of the analytic dialectic upon castration anxiety? Can't you see already, just from the way I've been making use of the diagrams, the path along which I mean to lead you being sketched out? It starts off from a better articulation of this fact of experience which Freud designated in the neurotic's running aground on castration anxiety. The opening I'm offering you, the dialectic I'm demonstrating for you here, permits of spelling out the fact that it really isn't castration anxiety that in and of itself constitutes the neurotic's ultimate impasse.

Indeed, the form of castration, that is, castration in its imaginary structure, is already produced here, at (– φ), at the level of the

fracture that occurs when the libidinalized image of the *semblable* is approached, at the phase of a certain imaginary drama. Hence the importance of the mishaps of the *scene* which for this reason is called *traumatic*. The imaginary fracture presents all sorts of variations and possible anomalies, which already indicates in and of itself that something in the material is useable for another function that gives its full meaning to the term *castration*.

What the neurotic shrinks back from is not castration, but from turning his castration into what the Other lacks. He shrinks back from turning his castration into something positive, namely, the guarantee of the function of the Other, this Other that steals away in the indeterminate echo of significations, this Other in which the subject no longer sees himself except as fate, but fate that has no end, fate that gets lost in the ocean of histories. Now, what are these histories, if not an immense fiction? What might ensure a relationship between the subject and this universe of significations, if not the fact that somewhere there is jouissance? This he can only ensure for himself by means of a signifier and this signifier is necessarily missing. The subject is summoned to this missing place to tender the exact change in the shape of a sign, the sign of his own castration.

Dedicating his castration to guaranteeing the Other is that before which the neurotic comes to a standstill. He comes to a standstill there for a reason that is in some sense internal to analysis and has to do with the fact that it's analysis that brings him to this appointment. At the end of the day, castration is none other than the moment of interpreting castration.

I might have been going faster with my disquisition this morning than I intended. Either way, you can see here an indication that there might be a possible way through, but we can only explore this possibility by retracing our steps, back to that place where imaginary castration functions to constitute what is properly speaking called, and quite rightly, the castration complex.

It's at the level of a reappraisal of castration that our concrete exploration of anxiety is going to allow us to study the possible way through – all the more possible for having already been got through on many an occasion. The study of the phenomenology of anxiety is going to enable us to say how and why.

2

Let's take anxiety in its *a minima* definition as a signal. Despite having been imparted by Freud at the end of the progress of his thought, this definition is not what people think it is.

It results neither from a relinquishment of his initial positions, which saw it as the result of a metabolism of energy, nor from a new conquest, because back when Freud saw anxiety as the transformation of libido he was already indicating that it could function as a signal. It would be easy for me to show you this in passing by referring to the text, but I've got too much to bring up with you this year to dwell too long at the level of textual explanations.

Anxiety, I've told you, is linked to anything that might appear at the place (– φ). What assures us of this is a phenomenon for which the too scant attention that's been paid to it has meant that nobody has arrived at a formulation that would be satisfactory and unified for the functions of anxiety in their entirety in the field of our experience. This phenomenon is the *Unheimliche*.

I asked you last time to go to Freud's text yourselves, because I don't have time to spell it out to. Many of you, I know, did so right away, for which I thank you. Even from a superficial reading, the first thing that leaps to your attention is the importance Freud attaches to linguistic analysis. Were this not so striking wherever you care to look, this text would be enough on its own to justify the prevalence I give to the functions of the signifier in my commentary on Freud.

The second thing that will leap to your attention when you read the dictionary exploration with which Freud introduces his study, is that the *Unheimliche* is defined as *Heimliche*. The *Unheim* is poised in the *Heim*.

Freud doesn't trouble himself with explaining why. That's how it is. Since it's very clear from simply reading the dictionaries that that's how it is, he doesn't dwell on it any longer. He's like me today, he has to press on. Well, for the sake of staying within our conventions and for the sake of the clarity of our language for what is about to come next, we shall call the place designated last time as the minus-*phi* by its name – this is what is called the *Heim*.

Let's say that, if this word has a meaning in human experience, we have here man's home, his house. You may give this word all the overtones you like, including its astrological ones. Man finds his home at a point located in the Other that lies beyond the image from which we are fashioned.

This place represents the absence where we stand. Supposing that, which does indeed happen, it shows itself for what it is – namely, the presence that lies elsewhere, which means that this place is tantamount to an absence – then it becomes the queen of the game, it makes off with the image that underpins it, and the specular image becomes the image of the double, with all the radical uncanniness it brings. To employ terms that take on their signification in their

opposition to the Hegelian terms, it makes us appear as an object, revealing the non-autonomy of the subject.

Hoffmann's texts, as everything that Freud has pinpointed within them by way of example shows, get to the heart of such an experience.

In the horrifying story of *The Sandman*, we can see how the subject goes from one inveiglement to the next, faced with this form of image that strictly speaking materializes the highly reduced diagram of it that I'm giving you here. The doll that the hero of the tale spies through the window of the sorcerer, who is conjuring up some magical operation or other, is strictly speaking this image, $i'(a)$, being finished off with what is absolutely singled out in the very form of the tale, to wit, the eye. The eye in question can only be that of the protagonist, the theme of someone wanting to rob him of this eye providing the thread that explains the whole tale.

It's indicative of goodness knows what awkwardness, no doubt linked to the fact that this was the first time the ploughshare was entering into the furrow of the discovery of subjective structure, that Freud throws in this reference for us as it comes to him. He says something along the lines of – *read* The Devil's Elixir, *I can't begin to tell you how complete it is, how it contains all the possible forms of the mechanism, how all the occasions when the reaction of the* unheimlich *may occur are clarified here.* It's plain to see that he doesn't go into it, as if overwhelmed by the luxuriance that this short novel does indeed present.

It's not easy to get hold of a copy, but through the kindness of one person present here, I find myself furnished with one, which is here on the lectern and for which I thank him. It's very useful to have more than one copy at one's disposal.

At this point *Heim,* what shows itself isn't simply what you've always known, that desire reveals itself as desire of the Other, here desire *in* the Other, but also that my desire, I shall say, enters the lair where it has been awaited for all eternity in the shape of *the object that I am* in so far as it exiles me from my subjectivity, by deciding on its own all the signifiers to which this subjectivity is attached.

Of course, this doesn't happen every day, and perhaps indeed it only ever happens in Hoffmann's tales. In *The Devil's Elixir*, it's utterly clear. At every turn in this long and so torturous truth, the accuracy of the footnote given by Freud to the effect that one gets a little lost in it is borne out. Indeed, *getting lost in it* itself goes to make up part of the function of the labyrinth, which has to be brought to life. In following each of these twists and turns, however, it's clear that the subject only gets to his desire by always substituting himself for one of his doubles.

Freud doesn't insist just for the sake of it on the quintessential dimension that the field of fiction imparts to our experience of the *Unheimliche*. In reality, this experience is too fleeting. Fiction demonstrates it far better and even produces it as an effect in a more stable way because it's better articulated. It's a kind of ideal point, but how precious it is for us, since this effect allows us to see the function of the fantasy.

This major effect of fiction, spelt out over and over in a work like *The Devil's Elixir*, but evident in so many others too, is that which, in the actual flux of existence, remains in the fantasy state. If we take it up like this, what is the fantasy if not something that we rather suspected, *ein Wunsch*, a wish, and even, like all wishes, a somewhat naïve one? To put it light-heartedly, I'd say that the formula of the fantasy, $ desire of *a*, can be translated into the following perspective – that the Other faints, swoons, faced with this object that I am, a deduction I reach on account of being able to behold myself.

So as to put you in the picture, and to put it in an apodictic way, before I show you how it functions, I'll tell you right away that the two phases whose relations of $ to *a* I've written up here, situating this last term differently in relation to the reflexive function of the A as a mirror, correspond exactly to the distribution of the terms of the fantasy for the pervert and the neurotic.

The pervert's fantasy The neurotic's fantasy

For the pervert, things are, if I may say so, in their right place. The *a* is right where the subject can't see it and the capital S is in its place. This is why one can say that the perverse subject, whilst remaining oblivious to the way this functions, offers himself loyally to the Other's jouissance.

Only, we'd never have known anything about it had it not been for the neurotics, for whom the fantasy doesn't possess at all the same functioning. The neurotic is the one who reveals the fantasy in its structure because of what he makes of it, but also, at the same time, through what he makes of it, he cons you, like he cons everyone.

Indeed, as I'm about to explain, the neurotic makes use of his fantasy for particular ends. What one reckoned one could make out, beneath the neurosis, to be perversion, and which I've spoken to you about on other occasions, is simply this, which I'm in the process of explaining to you, namely, that the neurotic's fantasy

is entirely situated in the locus of the Other. The support the neurotic finds in the fantasy is what, when it's met, presents itself as perversion.

Neurotics have perverse fantasies and analysts have been racking their brains for a good while wondering what this means. At any rate, one can very well see that it's not the same thing as perversion, that it doesn't function in the same way, and a whole mix-up is produced, and questions mount up, and people wonder for example whether a perversion is really a perversion, in other words whether perchance it might not be functioning as does the fantasy for the neurotic. This question merely duplicates the first one – of what use is the perverse fantasy to the neurotic?

Based on what I've just laid out for you concerning the function of the fantasy, we need to begin by saying that there is indeed something of the order of *a* that appears at the place above the image *i'(a)* that I'm designating for you on the blackboard, the place of the *Heim* which is the locus of the appearance of anxiety. It's striking that the fantasy the neurotic makes use of, which he organizes at the very moment he uses it, is precisely what serves him best in defending himself against anxiety, in keeping a lid on it.

Naturally, this can only be conceived of starting off from presuppositions that I had to put forward initially in their extreme form. As with any new discourse, you'll have to judge it as it takes shape, by appreciating whether it tallies with the functioning of experience. I don't think you'll have any doubt about it.

This object *a* that the neurotic makes himself into in his fantasy becomes him much like gaiters do a rabbit. That's why the neurotic never makes much of his fantasy. It succeeds in defending him against anxiety precisely to the extent that it's a postiche *a*. I illustrated this function for you a long while ago with the dream dreamt by the butcher's beautiful wife.

The butcher's beautiful wife is fond of caviar, of course, only she doesn't want any, because it may well give too much pleasure to her big brute of a husband who's capable of gobbling it up along with the rest. Even that won't bring him to a stop. Now, what interests the butcher's beautiful wife is not in the slightest, of course, feeding her husband caviar, because, as I told you, he'll add on a whole menu. He's got a big appetite, this butcher. The only thing that interests the butcher's beautiful wife is her husband fancying the little negligible amount, the *nothing*, that she keeps in reserve.

This formula, which is utterly clear as far as hysterics are concerned, trust me on this one, is applicable to all neurotics. The object *a* functioning in their fantasy, which serves them as a defence against their anxiety, is also, contrary to all appearances, the bait

with which they hold onto the Other. And, praise be, this is what we owe psychoanalysis to.

There was a certain Anna O. who knew a thing or two about the manoeuvre of the hysteric's game. She presented all of her little story, all her fantasies, to Herren Breuer and Freud, who leapt on them like little fish into water. Freud, on page 271 of *Studien über Hysterie*, marvels at the fact that, really, she didn't betray the faintest defence. She handed over the whole thing, just like that. No need to do any delving to get the whole caboodle. Clearly, Freud found himself before a generous form of hysterical functioning and this is why, as you know, Breuer jolly well took it full on, since, along with the wonderful bait, he swallowed the little *nothing* too, and it took him a certain while to regurgitate it. He didn't go there again.

Fortunately, Freud was neurotic and since he was both intelligent and courageous, he knew how to make use of his anxiety faced with his desire, which lay at the heart of the principle of his ridiculous attachment to that impossible woman who moreover buried him and who went by the name of Frau Freud. He knew how to make use of it so as to project the case onto the radiographic screen of his fidelity to this fantasmatic object and he was able to recognize there, without for one second batting an eyelid, what all that was for, to the point of well and truly admitting that Anna O. had him quite perfectly, Freud himself, in her sights. But he was clearly a bit harder to take in than the other fellow, Breuer. It's very much to this that we owe the fact of having gained access via the fantasy to the mechanism of analysis and a rational use of transference.

It's also perhaps what will enable us to take the next step and recognize what constitutes the limit point between the neurotic and the others.

3

There's another jump to be made now, which I ask you to note, since, as with the others, we're going to have to justify it afterwards.

What is actually functioning in the neurotic at the level, a level that is displaced in him, of the object *a*? What reality lies behind the fallacious use of the object in the neurotic's fantasy? This is sufficiently explained by the fact that he's been able to transport the function of the *a* into the Other. This reality has a very simple name – *demand.*

The true object sought out by the neurotic is a demand that he wants to be asked of him. He wants to be begged. The only thing he doesn't want is to pay the price.

This is a basic experience, from which analysts – no doubt not sufficiently enlightened by Freud's explanations of this not to have thought themselves duty-bound to get back onto the slippery slope of morality – have deduced a fantasy that lingers on in the oldest moralistic religious preaching, that of oblativity. As he doesn't want to give anything – this clearly bearing a certain relation to the fact that his difficulty belongs to the realm of receiving – then, if only he should care to give something, everything would be all right.

Only, what they don't perceive, these smooth talkers who tell us that genital maturity is the locus of the gift, is that what you've got to teach the neurotic to give is this thing he doesn't imagine, it's nothing – it's precisely his anxiety.

This is what brings us back to our point of departure today, designating the point at which one runs aground on castration anxiety.

The neurotic won't give up his anxiety. You're going to see that we're going to find out a bit more about this. We're going to find out why. It's so true, it's so very much this that's involved, that the whole process, the whole chain of analysis, consists in him at least giving over its equivalent, because he begins by giving over his symptom a little. This is why an analysis, as Freud said, begins with a shaping of symptoms. We endeavour to snare him, my goodness, in his own trap. We can never do otherwise with anyone. He makes you an offer, a fallacious offer when all is said and done – and, well, we accept it. By virtue of this, we enter a game by way of which he makes an appeal to demand. He wants you to ask something of him. As you don't ask anything, he starts modulating his own, his own demands, which come to the place *Heim*. That's what the first entry into analysis consists of.

I'll tell you in passing, further to what is articulated almost of its own accord in the diagram, that I don't really see how people have up until now been able to justify the frustration/aggression/regression dialectic, unless it's with a false and crude comprehensibility. What happens when you leave demand without a reply? The aggression you're being told about, where have you ever seen it arise if not outside analysis, in practices known as group psychotherapy, which we've been hearing about? No aggression arises in analysis. On the other hand, the dimension of aggressiveness comes into play to call into question what it aims at by its very nature, namely, the relation to the specular image. As the subject exhausts his rages against this image, the succession of demands is produced that leads back to an ever more original demand, historically speaking, and regression as such comes to be modulated.

We're now coming to another point that until now has never been satisfactorily explained. How come it is by the regressive path

that the subject is led back to a time that we're very much forced to situate historically as progressive?

There are some who, faced with this paradox of knowing that it's in going back to the oral phase that the phallic relation is uncovered, have tried to have us believe that after regression it's necessary to go back up the path in the opposite direction, which is absolutely contrary to experience. No one's ever heard of an analysis, however successful it's reckoned to have been in the process of regression, going back through the opposite stages, as would be necessary were it a question of genetic reconstruction. On the contrary, it's to the extent that every form of demand is exhausted to its full term, to the bottom of the barrel, up to and including the D_0 of demand, that in the end we see the castration relation appear.

Castration is found inscribed as a relation at the far limit of demand's regressive cycle. It appears there as soon as, and in so far as, the register of demand is exhausted.

This has to be understood topologically. But not being able to push things much farther today, I'll finish with a remark that, converging as it does with the remark on which I finished my last talk, will focus your reflection on a direction that may facilitate the next step, such as I've just signposted it. Once again, I won't go round the houses, I'm going to take things up right in the middle of the pool.

In *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, Freud tells us, or sounds like he's telling us, that anxiety is the reaction-signal to the loss of an object. He lists – loss of the intrauterine environment that occurs in one fell swoop at birth – eventual loss of the mother, considered as an object – loss of the penis – loss of love from the object – and loss of the superego's love. Now, what was it I told you last time so as to put you on a certain track that it's so essential to grasp? I told you that anxiety isn't the signal of a lack, but of something that has to be conceived of at a duplicated level, as the failing of the support that lack provides. Well, with this indication, go back to Freud's list, which I snatched in full flight, as it were.

Don't you know that it's not longing for the maternal breast that provokes anxiety, but its imminence? What provokes anxiety is everything that announces to us, that lets us glimpse, that we're going to be taken back onto the lap. It is not, contrary to what is said, the rhythm of the mother's alternating presence and absence. The proof of this is that the infant revels in repeating this game of presence and absence. The security of presence is the possibility of absence. The most anguishing thing for the infant is precisely the moment when the relationship upon which he's established himself, of the lack that turns him into desire, is disrupted, and this relationship is most disrupted when there's no possibility of any lack, when

the mother is on his back all the while, and especially when she's wiping his backside. This is one model of demand, of the demand that will never let up.

At a higher level, in the next temporal phase, that of the so-called loss of the penis, what's at stake? What can we see at the start of Little Hans's phobia? The stress gets laid, not very squarely, on anxiety being linked, so they say, to the mother forbidding masturbatory practices, which is perceived by the child as the presence of the mother's desire being exerted upon him. But what does experience teach us here about anxiety in its relation to the object of desire, if not simply that prohibition is temptation? Anxiety isn't about the loss of the object, but its presence. The objects aren't missing.

Let's move up to the next level, that of the superego's love, with everything that this is deemed to entail on what is said to be the path to failure. What does that mean, if not that what is feared is success? Once more, *there's no lack*.

I'll leave you today on this point, which is designed to clear away a mix-up and turn it round, a mix-up that is entirely due to the difficulty of identifying the object of desire. Just because it's difficult to identify, this doesn't mean it's not there. It *is* there, and its function is decisive.

As regards anxiety, consider that what I've told you about it today is merely a preliminary way in. The precise way of locating it, which we shall be entering as of next time, is to be situated amid the three themes that you've seen being sketched out in my disquisition today.

One is the Other's jouissance. The second is the Other's demand. The third, which only the sharpest ears would have picked out, is that sort of desire that is evinced in interpretation, and of which the analyst's incidence in the treatment is the most exemplary and the most enigmatic form.

It's the one that's been leading me for a long while now to pose for you the question – in the economy of desire, what is represented by this privileged sort of desire that I call the analyst's desire?

5 December 1962

V

THAT WHICH DECEIVES

Pavlov, Goldstein and the Other's demand
Jones and the Other's jouissance
The traces of the subject
The cuts of the drive
Pascal and the vacuum experiment

It's been seen, it's been read, it will be seen, and it will be read again that one segment of psychoanalysis, the one that's being pursued here, has a more philosophical character than any of the others, that it supposedly tries to match up with an experience that is more concrete, more scientific, more experimental, it doesn't much matter which word you use.

It's not my fault, as one says, that psychoanalysis puts into question, on the theoretical plane, *le désir de connaître*, the desire to take cognizance, and that, in its discourse, it places itself of its own accord further upstream, at a spot that precedes the moment of cognizance. This would justify in and of itself the questioning that lends a certain philosophical hue to our discourse.

Besides, I was preceded in this by the inventor of analysis, who stood very much, as far as I know, at the level of a direct experience, that of the mentally ill, especially those who are called, with greater rigour following Freud, neurotics.

This wouldn't be a reason to stay any longer than necessary at the level of an epistemological reappraisal, if the place of desire, the way in which desire hollows itself out, were not presentified for us at each moment in our therapeutic position by a problem, the most concrete problem of all, that of not allowing ourselves to be taken down a false track, of not responding to it falsely or beside the point, at least as regards a certain goal we are pursuing and which is not all that clear.

I remember causing the indignation of one of those kinds of

colleagues who know how to shield themselves on occasion behind a swell of good intentions designed to reassure someone or other, when I said that, in analysis, cure is an additional bonus. This was seen as some kind of disdain for the person we have charge of, and who is suffering, when in fact I was speaking from a methodological point of view. It's quite certain that our justification, like our duty, is to improve the subject's position. But I claim that nothing is shakier, in the field we're in, than the concept of cure.

Is an analysis that finishes with the patient, male or female, joining the Third Order a cure, even if the subject finds himself better off as far as his symptoms are concerned now that, fortified by a certain faith, by a certain order that he's recovered, he voices the most express reservations about the paths, which now he sees as perverse, along which we made him pass in order to have him enter heaven's kingdom? This can happen.

This is why I don't think for one second that I'm moving away from our experience when my disquisition calls to mind how, in this experience, every question may be asked, and we have to conserve the possibility of a certain thread that can guarantee at the very least that we don't cheat with the very thing that constitutes our instrument, that is, the plane of truth.

This necessitates an exploration that has to be not only serious, but even to a certain degree, not exhaustive – who could be? – but encyclopaedic. On a subject like anxiety, it certainly isn't easy to gather together, in a disquisition like mine, everything that has to be functional for analysts. What shouldn't be forgotten for a single instant is that the place which we've designated on this little diagram as the place of anxiety, and which is currently being occupied by the $(-\varphi)$, constitutes a certain void. Everything that may show itself in this place throws us off route, as it were, as regards the structuring function of this void.

This topology will only have value if you can find the clues it gives you confirmed by whatever approach might have been taken to the phenomenon of anxiety, by any serious study, whatever its presuppositions may be. Even if these presuppositions seem to us to be too narrow for our purposes and have to be situated afresh within the radical experience that is ours, something has still been grasped at a certain level. Even if the phenomenon of anxiety appears thereby limited, contorted, and insufficient with regard to our experience, one ought at least to know why this is so. And it isn't always so.

We have to take our pickings, at whatever level this may be, right where the examination on the topic of anxiety has up to now been formulated.

My purpose today is to give an indication of it, for want of being

able to go over the sum total of what's been put forward on this score, which would necessitate a whole year's Seminar.

1

There's a certain type of examination that's called, rightly or wrongly, the objective or experimental approach to the problem of anxiety.

We wouldn't know anything but how to get lost in it had I not given you at the start the lines of sight, the points of support, which we simply cannot let go of and which enable us to guarantee and narrow down our object, and to see what conditions it in the most radical fashion. Last time my talk ended by circumscribing them, as it were, with three reference points that I did no more than introduce, three points in which the dimension of the Other remains dominant.

These are, to wit, the Other's demand, the Other's jouissance, and in a modalized form, which moreover stayed at the level of a question mark, the desire of the Other, inasmuch as this is the desire that corresponds to the analyst in so far as he intervenes as a term in the experience.

We shan't do what we reproach all the others with doing, namely, to elide the analyst from the text of the experience we're examining. The anxiety unto which we have to bring a formula here is an anxiety that corresponds to us, an anxiety that we provoke, an anxiety with which we have on occasion a decisive relationship.

In this dimension of the Other we find our place, our efficient place, inasmuch as we know how not to shrink it down. This grounds the question I'm posing, namely, to what extent our desire oughtn't to make this dimension of the Other shrink. I should like to make you feel this. This dimension is by no means absent from any of the ways in which people have tried, up to this day, to circumscribe the phenomenon of anxiety.

At the level of mental exercise to which I've trained you, accustomed you, perhaps indeed you now find the emphasis but futile, the success but vain, the triumph but groundless, which some take from the fact that, for instance, supposedly to the contrary of how analytic thought would have it – and how exactly would it be the contrary? – neuroses are produced in animals, in the lab, on the laboratory table.

What do these neuroses, which Pavlov and those who followed him have on occasion accentuated, show us? We are told in what way an animal reflex is conditioned. A reaction said to be natural is

associated with a stimulus that belongs to a register that is presumed to be completely different from the one involved in the reaction. Then, these conditioned reactions are made to converge in a certain fashion by obtaining effects of contrariety. What we've obtained, conditioned, broken in, in the organism's responses, allows us to put the organism in a position where it may respond in two contrary ways at the same time, thereby generating, as it were, a sort of organic perplexity.

To go further, we shall even say that we have the idea that in certain cases we obtain an exhaustion of the possibilities of response, a more fundamental disarray generated by diverting them, which concerns in a more radical fashion the ordinary field of the reactions involved, an objective translation of what may be interpreted in a more general perspective as defined by certain patterns of reaction that will be called instinctive. More recently, in other cultural spheres, they've theorized something they've qualified with the term *stress*. We've got to the point where the demand made upon the function leads to a deficit that overwhelms the function itself, going so far as to involve the system in a way that modifies it beyond the register of the functional response, verging in the end, in the lasting traces it engenders, on a lesional deficit.

In this overview of experimental examination, it would no doubt be important to point out where something shows itself that is reminiscent of what is called the anxious form that we sometimes come across in neurotic reactions. There's something, however, that always seems to be sidelined in this way of posing the problem of experiments. It's doubtless impossible to criticize he who reports one of these experiments for this, since this sidelining is constitutive of the experiment itself, but whoever might care to compare this experience with ours – our experience which occurs with a speaking subject – really shouldn't fail to mention the following. However primitive the animal organism under examination may be in comparison with a speaking subject – and in Pavlov's experiments this organism is very far from being primitive, since they are performed on dogs – the dimension of the Other is present in the experiment.

This isn't the first time I've noted this. When speaking at one of our scientific meetings on some phenomena that were being reported to us concerning the creation of experimental neurosis, I remarked to the one who was relating this research that his own presence, as a human figure, handling a certain number of things around the animal, had to be counted at any one moment as part of the experiment. When you know how a dog behaves vis-à-vis the one who calls himself, or doesn't, his master, you know that in every case the dimension of the Other counts for a dog. But even were it

not a dog, were it a grasshopper or a leech, the very fact that there is an array of apparatuses means that the dimension of the Other is present.

You'll tell me that a grasshopper or a leech, the object organism of the experiment, doesn't know anything about this dimension of the Other. I agree entirely. This is precisely why my whole effort was for a certain while to demonstrate to you the scale of a comparable level in us, the subject. In this subject that we are, the subject that we learn to handle and determine, there is also a whole field in which we know nothing of what constitutes us.

The *Selbstbewusstsein*, which I've taught you to name *subject supposed to know*, is a deceptive supposition. The *Selbstbewusstsein*, considered to be constitutive of the cognizing subject, is an illusion, a source of error, because the dimension of the subject deemed to be transparent in his act of taking cognizance of some entity only begins with the coming into play of a specified object, which is the one that the mirror stage attempts to circumscribe, namely, the image of one's body, in so far as, faced with this image, the subject has the feeling of jubilation on account of being indeed faced with an object that renders him transparent to himself. The extension of this illusion of consciousness to all types of cognizance is prompted by the object of cognizance being constructed and modelled in the image of the relation to the specular image. It's precisely in this respect that this object of cognizance is insufficient.

Were there no psychoanalysis, we would still know this from the fact that there are moments when the object appears that cast us into a completely different dimension, which is given in experience, and deserves to be set apart as primary in experience. This is the dimension of the uncanny.

This dimension may in no way be grasped as leaving the subject who is faced with it transparent to his cognizance. In contending with this new entity, the subject quite literally falters, and everything of the so-called primordial relation of the subject to any effect of cognizance is brought into question.

This sudden appearance, within the field of the object, of an unknown entity that is experienced as such, of an irreducible structuration, doesn't only pose a question for analysts, for this is already given in experience. All the same, one ought to try to explain why children are afraid of the dark. At the same time, it can be seen that they aren't always afraid of the dark. So, people do a little psychology. The so-called experimenters embark on theories of the inherited, ancestral, primordial reaction of a thinking – since thinking there is, it seems that the term ought still to be kept up – that would be structured differently from logical, rational thinking. And

they construct, they invent. That's where a little philosophy gets done. Here we stand in wait for those with whom we have to pursue this dialogue when the opportunity arises, on the very ground upon which this dialogue must be judged. Let's see if we can account for the experience in a less hypothetical way.

Here's one conceivable reply, I offer it up to you. It is articulated based on the constitution of the object that is correlative to a first pattern of approach, that of the recognition of our own form. It says that this recognition is in itself limited, for it allows something to escape of that primordial investment in our Being that is given by the fact of existing as a body. Isn't this a reply that's not only reasonable but verifiable, to say that it's this remainder, this un-imaged residue of the body, that comes along, by a certain detour that we know how to designate, to make itself felt in the place laid out for lack, and in a way that, not being specular, cannot thereafter be marked out? This failing of certain markings is indeed one dimension of anxiety.

We won't be in disagreement here with the way that a certain Kurt Goldstein broaches this phenomenon. When he speaks to us of anxiety, he does so with great pertinence. How's this whole phenomenology of lesional phenomena, in which he's hot on the trail of this experience that interests us, articulated? It is articulated on the basis of the precondition that the organism functions as a totality in all its relational effects. There's not a single muscle that's not involved in just one tilt of the head. Any reaction to any given situation implies the totality of the organismal response. If we follow him, we can see two terms appear that are tightly woven together, *catastrophic reaction*, and, within its phenomenal field, the marking-out of *anxiety phenomena* as such.

I ask you to look up Goldstein's texts, very accessible texts since they've been translated into French, to see both how close these formulations are to our own, and how much they'd gain in clarity by referring to ours more expressly. This you shall see if you follow the text with the key I'm handing you.

Take, for example, the difference that lies between the reaction of disorder and the reaction of anxiety.

Through the reaction of disorder, the subject responds to his inoperativeness, to the fact of being faced with a situation that's insurmountable, undoubtedly because of his deficit. This is a way of reacting that's not at all foreign to a non-deficient subject contending with a situation of *Hilflosigkeit*, of insurmountable danger.

For the reaction of anxiety to occur, two conditions, which are present in the concrete cases mentioned, always have to be met. The first is for the deficiencies to be fairly limited so that the subject can

make them out in the test he's undergoing, and so that, owing to this limit, the lacuna can appear as such in the objective field. This sudden emergence of lack in a positive form is the source of anxiety – only, second condition, here again it mustn't be omitted that the subject has Goldstein in front of him, or some such person from his laboratory, who's subjecting him to an organized test. Thus, the field of *lack* is produced under the effect of a *question*.

When you know where and when to look for these terms, you find them without fail, if need be.

To skip to an altogether different realm, I'll just mention the experience that is the heaviest, which is never reconstituted, an ancestral experience, flung back into a darkness of ancient times from which we're supposed to have escaped, but which bears out a necessity that unites us to these times, an experience that's still current, and which, most curiously, we don't speak about any more except very rarely – the experience of the nightmare.

One wonders why analysts, for some time now, have taken so little interest in it. I'm introducing it here because all the same we really must spend some time on it this year. I'll tell you why, and where to find the material, for a literature has already been put together on the subject, and it's one of the most remarkable, and to which you ought to refer. I'm thinking, as forgotten as it is, of Jones's work *On the Nightmare*, a book of incomparable richness.

I'll remind you of its fundamental phenomenology. I wouldn't dream for an instant of eluding its principal dimension – the nightmare's anxiety is felt, properly speaking, as that of the Other's jouissance.

The correlative of the nightmare is the incubus or the succubus, the creature that bears down on your chest with all its opaque weight of foreign jouissance, which crushes you beneath its jouissance. The first thing that appears in the myth, but also in the nightmare such as it is experienced, is that this creature that weighs down with its jouissance is also a questioning being, and even reveals itself in the developed dimension of the question known as the riddle. The Sphinx, don't forget, who in the myth arrives on the scene prior to all of Oedipus' drama, is both a nightmarish figure and a questioning figure.

This question furnishes the most primordial form of what I called the dimension of demand, whereas what we usually call demand, in the sense of a requirement that's claimed to be instinctual, is only a reduced form of it.

So, here we're led once more to examine the relationship between an experience that may be called pre-subjective, in the usual sense of the term *subject*, and the question in its most closed form, in the

form of a signifier that is put forward as opaque, which is the stance of the riddle.

This allows you to call my bluff, by citing the definitions I've already offered you, so that I have to put them to the test of using them.

2

The signifier, so I told you at one turn in the path, is a trace, but an effaced trace. The signifier, so I told you at another such turn, is distinguished from the sign by the fact that the sign is what represents something for someone, whereas the signifier is what represents a subject for another signifier.

We're going to put this to the test in connection with what's at stake.

What's at stake is our anxious relation to some lost object, but which certainly isn't lost for everyone. I'm going to show you where it can be found, since it's not enough to forget something for it not to go on being there, only we no longer know how to recognize it. To find it again, we must go back over the subject of the trace.

To liven up the interest of this research for you, I'll give you right away two newsflashes on our most common experience.

The correlation is clear between what I'm trying to sketch out for you and the phenomenology of the hysteric symptom, in the widest sense, for don't forget that there aren't just the little hysterias, there are the big ones too, there are anaesthesias, paralyses, scotomata, there are restrictions of the visual field. Anxiety doesn't appear in hysteria to the exact extent that these lacks are misrecognized.

There's something that's not often noticed, that you hardly ever let into the picture, which nevertheless explains a whole part of the obsessional's behaviour. In his very particular way of treating the signifier, namely, of casting doubt on it, of giving it a good rub, of effacing it, of pummelling it, of smashing it to smithereens, of behaving towards it like Lady Macbeth and the damned spot of blood, the obsessional, by a dead-end path, but whose aim is not to be doubted, operates precisely in the direction of finding the sign beneath the signifier. *Ungeschehenmachen, making unhappened* the inscription of history.[1] It came to pass like that, but it's not sure. It's not sure, because they're just signifiers, it's just history, and so it's a doodad. The obsessional is right, he's grasped something, he wants to get to the origin, to the previous level, to the level of the sign.

Now I'll try to lead you along the path in the opposite direction. I didn't begin today with our laboratory animals just for the sake of

it. After all, we could try unlocking the doors for them to see what they do with the trace.

Effacing traces, operating with traces, isn't just one of mankind's properties. We see animals effacing their traces. We even see complex behaviour that consists in burying a certain number of traces, dejecta for example – this is well known in cats.

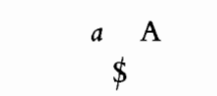
One part of animal behaviour consists in structuring a certain field of its *Umwelt*, its surroundings, by way of traces that punctuate this field and define its limits for the animal. This is what is called the constitution of territory. Hippopotami do that with their dejecta and also with a product from certain glands that are, if memory serves, peri-anal. The stag will rub his antlers against the bark of certain trees, and will also do so where the traces can be made out. I don't want to go into the infinite variety of what a developed zoology can teach you on this score. What's important to me is what I have to say to you concerning the effacement of traces.

Animals, I tell you, efface their traces and lay false traces. Do they for all that make signifiers? There's one thing that animals don't do – they don't lay false traces to make us believe that they are false, that is, traces that will be taken for false. Laying falsely false traces is a behaviour that is, I won't say quintessentially human, but quintessentially signifying. That's where the limit is. That's where a subject presentifies himself. When a trace has been made to be taken for a false trace, though in fact they are the traces of my true passage, we know that there's a speaking subject, we know that there's a subject as cause.

The very notion of cause has no other support but this. Afterwards we try to extend it to the universe, but the original cause is the cause of a trace that presents itself as empty, that wants to be taken for a false trace. What does this mean? It means, indissolubly, that the subject, when he arises, addresses what I shall for the time being call the most radical form of the Other's rationality. Indeed, this behaviour has nothing else within its range but to take up ranks in the locus of the Other in a chain of signifiers, signifiers that do or don't have the same origin, but which constitute the only possible term of reference for the trace that has become a signifying trace.

This happens in such a way that you can grasp here that what feeds the emergence of the signifier at the origin is the aim that the Other, the real Other, should not know. The *he didn't know* takes root in a *he mustn't know*. The signifier does undoubtedly reveal the subject, but by effacing his trace.

Thus, first of all there is an *a*, the object of the hunt, and an A, in whose interval the subject S appears with the birth of the signifier, but as barred, as unknown. All the subsequent mapping-out



Schema of the effaced trace

of the subject leans on the necessity of a reconquest of this original unknown dimension. You can see here appearing already, in connection with the Being that stands to be won back, the subject's Being, the truly radical relationship that there is between the *a* and the first apparition of the subject as unknown, which means, unconscious, *unbewusst*. The word is justified by the philosophical tradition, which makes the *Bewusste* of consciousness coincide with absolute knowledge. This won't do for us, in so far as we know that this knowledge and consciousness don't coincide.

Freud leaves open the question as to where the existence of the field defined as that of consciousness might stem from. I can claim that the mirror stage, articulated as it is, provides the beginning of a solution to this, much as I know in what dissatisfaction it can leave such minds as have been trained in Cartesian meditation. I think we can take a step further this year, which should lead you to grasp where the real origin, the original object, of the system called consciousness is, for we shall only be satisfied that the perspectives of consciousness really have been refuted when we finally realize that it attaches itself to an isolable object that is specified in the structure.

Earlier I indicated the neurotic's position in this dialectic. If you've managed to grasp the sinews of what's involved concerning the emergence of the signifier, you'll soon understand what slippery slope we're presented with concerning what happens in neurosis. All the traps into which analytic dialectic has fallen are due to the intrinsic part of falsity that lies in the neurotic's demand having been misrecognized.

The existence of anxiety is linked to the fact that any demand, even the most archaic, always has something illusory about it with respect to what preserves the place of desire. This is also what explains the anguishing side of anything that gives a response to this false demand in such a way as to fill it in.

I saw this arise, not so long ago, in what one of my patients said, a patient whose mother had never left him so much as an inch, up to a certain age – could it be put any better? She only ever gave a false response to his demand, a response that really fell wide of the mark, because, if demand is actually structured by the signifier, then it's not to be taken literally. What the child asks of his mother is designed to structure the presence/absence relation for him, as

is demonstrated by the originative *Fort-Da* game which is a first exercise of mastery. A certain void is always to be preserved, which has nothing to do with the content, neither positive nor negative, of demand. The disruption wherein anxiety is evinced arises when this void is totally filled in.

Our algebra furnishes us with a ready-made instrument with which we may clearly see the consequences of this. Demand comes unduly to the place of what is spirited away, *a*, the object.

3

What is an algebraic equation? It's something very straightforward that's designed to make something very complicated manageable, to make it pass into a mechanical state, without you having to understand it. It's a lot better like that. As has been seen in mathematics from the start, the equation just has to be correctly put together.

I've taught you to write the drive ($ ◊ D), to be read – barred S, cut of capital D, demand. We're going to come back to this cut – all the same, you started to get a little idea of it just now, what has to be cut off is the hunter's momentum – but already the way I've taught you to write the drive explains to you why it was that the drives were described in neurotics – it's to the extent that the fantasy ($ ◊ *a*) is presented in a privileged way in the neurotic as ($ ◊ D).

In other words, it was an illusion of the neurotic's fantasmatic structure that allowed this first step called the drive to be taken. Freud designated it, always and perfectly, without the slightest wavering, as *Trieb*. This word has a history in German philosophical thought, and it's absolutely impossible to mix it up with the word *instinct*. In view of which, even in the *Standard Edition*, I recently came across, and, if memory serves, in the text *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, translated as *instinctual need*, something which in the German text is called *Bedürfnis*. Simply replacing *Bedürfnis* with *need*, if one so wished, would be a good translation from German to English. Why add this *instinctual* which is absolutely not in the text, and which is enough to falsify the entire meaning of the sentence? A drive has nothing to do with an instinct.

I've no objection to the definition of what may be called instinct, nor even to the customary use of the word, as for example calling the needs that living beings have to feed themselves *instincts*. But the oral drive is something else. It pertains to the mouth's erotogeneity, which brings us straight to the problem of why only the mouth is involved? Why doesn't it also involve gastric secretion, since we were speaking earlier about Pavlov's dogs? And even, if we look

closely, why more particularly does it only involve the lips and, from a certain age onwards, what Homer called the *fence of teeth*?

In fact, from the very first analytic approach to instinct, we come across this fault line which is crucial to the dialectic established by the reference to the other in the mirror.

I thought I'd brought along for you today, though I haven't found it in my papers, Hegel's phrase from the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, which I'll give you next time, where it's categorically said that language is work, and that it's through this that the subject makes his inside pass outside. The sentence is such that it's very clear that what's involved is an *inside out*, as is said in English. It really is the metaphor of the glove turned inside out. But to this reference I've added the idea of a loss, in so far as something doesn't undergo this inversion. At each stage, a residue remains which can't be turned inside out and isn't signifiable in the articulated register.

We shan't be surprised that these forms of the object appear in the form that's called partial. This fact struck us strongly enough to name them thus, in their divided-off form. For example, when we're led to bring in the object that is correlative to the oral drive, we speak of the maternal nipple. All the same, we oughtn't to omit its initial phenomenology, that of a dummy, I mean something that presents itself with an artificial character. This is precisely what allows it to be replaced by any old feeding bottle, which functions in exactly the same way in the economy of the oral drive.

Biological references, references to need, are of course essential, they're not to be sniffed at, but only as a way of seeing the utterly primitive structural difference that introduces here, de facto, both ruptures and cuts, along with, without further ado, the signifying dialectic. Is there something here that might be impenetrable for a conception that I shall call *all that's most natural*?

The dimension of the signifier is nothing, if you will, but the very thing an animal finds itself caught up in while pursuing its object, in such a way that the pursuit of this object leads it into another field of traces, where the pursuit itself thenceforth assumes a merely introductive value. The fantasy, the $\$$ in relation to a, here takes on the signifying value of the subject's entry into this dimension that will lead him to that indefinite chain of significations called destiny. Its ultimate mainspring may elude him indefinitely, but precisely what has to be found is the point of departure – how did the subject get into this business of the signifier?

So it's quite clear that it's worthwhile recognizing the structure I gave you for the drive in the first objects that were singled out by analysis. Already we have the one that earlier I called the cut-off breast. Later, demand addressed *to* the mother swings round into

demand *from* the mother, and we have the object called the scybalum. One can't really see what this object's privilege could be if one can't see that it too has a relation to a zone that's called erogenous. It should be seen that, once again, the zone in question is separated by a limit from the entire functional system that it affects, and which is a good deal larger. Among the different excretory functions, why single out the anus, if not for its decisive sphincter function which contributes to cutting an object? This cut is what gives its value, its accent, to the anal object, with everything that it can come to represent, not simply, as they say, on the side of the gift, but on the side of identity.

The function that may be given to it in analytic theory in what goes by the name of *object relations* – I'm not talking about a theory that's brand new, but it's pretty recent all the same – finds itself justified by what I've just been saying, with nevertheless one slight difference, which is that everything about it gets falsified when one sees in it a model of the patient's world, wherein a process of maturation would allow for the progressive restoration of a reaction that is presumed to be total and authentic. No, it's just a question of a piece of waste that designates the only thing that's important, namely, the place of a void.

I'm going to show you that other, so much more interesting, objects will take up position here. Moreover, you're already familiar with them, but you don't know how to place them. For today, consider the place of this void to have been reserved.

Since, likewise, something in our project shall not fail to evoke the existential theory of anxiety, and even the *existentialist* theory of anxiety, you can tell yourselves that it's not by chance that the one who may be considered to be one of the fathers, at least in the modern era, of the existential perspective didn't fail to take an interest in the void.

I'm talking about Pascal, who is fascinating for us, though we don't really know why, when going by the theoreticians of the sciences he screwed up on everything. At least, he screwed up on infinitesimal calculus, which he was apparently a whisker away from discovering. I think that he rather didn't give a hoot, because he had something that interested him more, and that's why he touches us still, even those of us who are complete unbelievers. Being the good Jansenist he was, Pascal was interested in desire, and that's why, I'm telling you in confidence, he carried out the Puy de Dôme experiments on the vacuum.

The vacuum doesn't interest us at all from the theoretical point of view. It's almost meaningless for us now. We know that in a vacuum there can be hollows, plenums, masses of waves and anything else

you like. But for Pascal, whether or not nature abhors a vacuum was essential, because this signified the abhorrence that all the learned men of his day had for desire. Until then, if not nature, at least all thought had abhorred the possibility that somewhere there might be a void.

So there we have what's being offered to our attention. It remains to be seen whether from time to time we too don't succumb to this abhorrence.

12 December 1962

VI

THAT WHICH DECEIVES NOT

One of Ferenczi's precious points
Anxiety is framed
Anxiety is not without object
From anxiety to action
On the demands of the God of the Jews

So, what I've been conjuring up for you here isn't metaphysics. It's more of a brainwashing.

I let myself use this term a few years back, before it started cropping up here, there and everywhere in the news. What I mean to do is to teach you to recognize, in the right place, by means of a method, what presents itself in your experience. Of course, the efficacy of what I'm claiming to do can only be tested out in experience.

The presence at my teaching of certain people who are in analysis with me has sometimes been objected to. All in all, the legitimacy of the co-existence of these two relationships with me – one where they hear me and one where they get heard by me – can only be judged from within. Can what I teach you here effectively make – for one and all, and thus equally for those who work with me – the way in to recognizing one's own pathway any easier? At this locus, there is of course a limit where any external monitoring stops, but seeing that those who partake of these two positions at least learn to read better isn't a bad sign.

Brainwashing, I said. Showing you I know how to recognize in the comments of those I analyse something other than what's written in the books is tantamount to offering myself up to this monitoring. Conversely, for them, they show that they know how to recognize in the books what is effectively in the books.

This is why I can only applaud myself for a little sign like the one, a recent one, imparted to me from the mouth of someone I have in analysis.

Indeed, the scope of a point that may be clutched in passing in one of Ferenczi's books didn't escape his notice, a book that recently appeared in translation, but how late.

1

The original title of the work is *Versuch einer Genitaltheorie*, that is, quite precisely, *Research on a Theory of Genitality*, and not *Origins of Sexual Life* as it has been lost in the translation.

This book is disturbing in some respects. For those who know how to hear, I pointed out a long time ago what therein can, on occasion, partake of delusion. But since it brings with it great experience, it does all the same, in its twists and turns, allow more than one point that will be precious for us to be set down.

I'm sure that the author himself doesn't give the point all the accentuation it deserves, given that his intention in his research is to arrive at an altogether too harmonizing, too totalizing notion of his object, namely, genital realization.

Here are the terms in which he expresses himself in passing. *The development of genital sexuality, whose broad outlines we have just sketched out for man* – he's talking about males – *undergoes in woman* what is translated as *a rather unexpected interruption,* a quite improper translation since in German it's, *eine ziemlich unvermittelte Unterbrechung*, which means *an interruption that in most cases is pretty much unmediated.* This means that it isn't part of what Ferenczi qualifies as amphimixis, and which when all is said and done is merely one of the naturalized forms of what we call thesis/antithesis/synthesis, that is, dialectical progression, if I may say, a term which despite doubtless not being valorized in Ferenczi's mind doesn't animate his whole construction any the less effectively. If the interruption is said to be *unvermittelte*, it's because it runs parallel to this process, and let's not forget that here it's a question of finding the synthesis of genital harmony. It needs to be understood, therefore, that this interruption lies rather in a cul-de-sac, that is to say, beyond the progress of mediation.

This interruption, says Ferenczi, *is characterized by the displacement from the erogeneity of the clitoris, the female penis, to the vaginal cavity*. Here, he's merely accentuating what Freud tells us. *Analytic experience inclines us to suppose, however, that for the woman, not only the vagina, but also other parts of the body can be genitalized, as is likewise borne out by hysteria, in particular the nipple and its surrounding area.*

As you know, in hysteria, a good many other zones are concerned

besides that one. Moreover, the translation, in failing to follow effectively what's precious in what's being brought to us here by way of material, again shows itself to be vague, and slightly blurry. In German, there's no *likewise borne out*, but simply *nach Art der Hysterie*, that is, *in the manner of* or *in keeping with the pattern of.*

What does that mean, for someone who's learnt, be it here or elsewhere, how to hear, if not that the vagina comes to function in the genital relation through a mechanism that is strictly equivalent to all the other hysterical mechanisms?

And why should we be surprised? Our diagram for the place of the empty locus in the function of desire allows you at least to locate the paradox at stake, and which is defined as follows.

The locus, the house of jouissance, is ordinarily found, since it's naturally found, placed in an organ that is, as experience and anatomo-physiological investigation teach you in the most certain fashion, non-sensitive, in the sense that it can't even be stimulated when it's being irritated. The ultimate locus of genital jouissance is a place – this is no mystery – where you can pour torrents of boiling water, brought to a temperature that no other mucous membrane could withstand, without provoking any immediate sensory reactions.

There is every reason to pinpoint correlations such as these before entering the diachronic myth of a so-called maturation, which would turn the port of arrival, namely, the accomplishment of the sexual function in the genital function, into something other than a process of maturation, something other than a locus of convergence, of synthesis, of everything that up to that point had presented itself in terms of partial aims. Recognizing the necessity of the empty place in a functional point of desire, and noticing that this is right where nature itself, right where physiology, has found its most favourable functional point, frees us of the weight of paradoxes that would lead us to devise so many mythical constructions around so-called vaginal jouissance, and also thereby puts us in a clearer position, though not of course without something being able to be indicated beyond this.

Those of you who attended our Amsterdam Congress on female sexuality may remember that many things, praiseworthy things, were said there without being effectively linked up and mapped out, for want of that structural register I'd indicated in my opening to the proceedings, and whose articulations I'm trying to give you here. And yet, how precious it is for us to know what's here on the blackboard, when one is acquainted with all the paradoxes one is beset with concerning the place to be ascribed to hysteria on what could be called the scale of neuroses.

Due to the obvious analogies with the hysteric mechanism, whose centrepiece I've pointed out to you, people consider hysteria to be the most advanced neurosis because it stands nearest to genital achievement. According to this diachronic conception, we have to put it at the end point of infantile maturation, but also at its beginning, since the clinic shows us that we really have to consider it to be the most primary neurosis on the neurotic scale, because it's upon hysteria that the constructions of obsessional neurosis are built. Moreover, hysteria's relationships to psychosis, to schizophrenia, are obvious and have been highlighted.

The only thing that might allow us to avoid constantly flitting back and forth as the needs of the case to be presented dictate, to avoid placing hysteria sometimes at the end, sometimes at the beginning, of what are deemed to be progressive phases, is first and foremost to bring it back to what is prevalent, namely, structure, the structure that's both synchronic and constitutive of desire as such, wherein what I'm designating as the place of the blank, the place of the void, always plays an essential function. The fact that this function comes to the fore in the final structure of the genital relation is both the confirmation of our method's validity and the point at which a more clear-cut, more orderly view of the phenomena specific to the genital dimension gets under way.

Doubtless there's some obstacle that stops us seeing it directly, since to reach it we have to pass via a somewhat winding path, the path of anxiety. That's why we're here.

2

This moment at which a first phase of our disquisition is coming to a close, along with the year itself, is the right moment for me to underscore the fact that there is a structure of anxiety.

I broached this for you with the aid of the tachygraphic form that's been up on the blackboard since the start of my disquisition, and with the keenly traced lines and edges it brings, which is to be taken on in all its specified character. There's one point, however, that I've not yet sufficiently stressed.

This feature is the mirror that is seen from one edge. Now, a mirror doesn't stretch out to infinity. It has limits. If you refer to the article from which this diagram has been extracted, you'll see that I make a point of mentioning the limits of the mirror. This mirror allows the subject to see something from a point located somewhere within the space of the mirror, a point that isn't directly perceivable for him. In other words, I don't necessarily see my eye in the

mirror, even if the mirror is helping me to perceive something that I wouldn't see otherwise. What I mean by this is that the first thing to be put forward concerning the structure of anxiety – and which you always neglect in the observations because you're fascinated by the content of the mirror and you forget its limits – is that anxiety is framed.

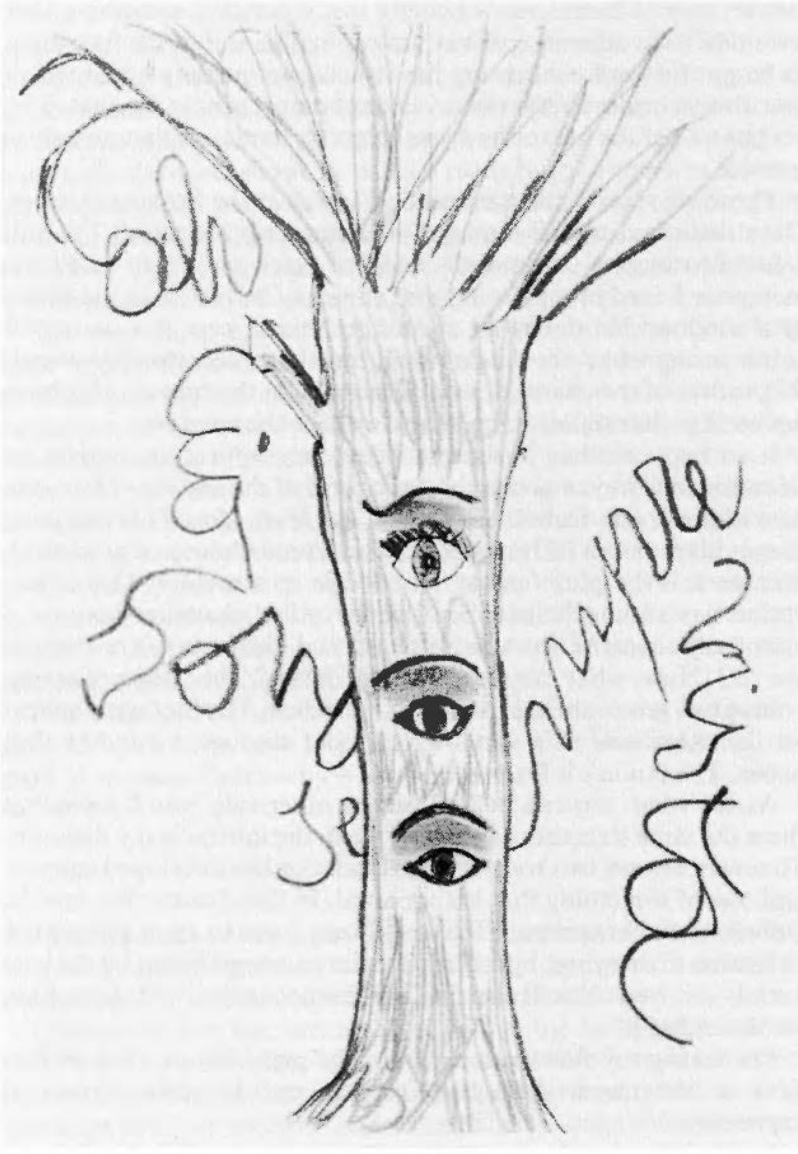
Those who heard the presentation I gave at the Provincial Study Days dedicated to the fantasy – the transcript of which I'm still waiting to receive two months and one week on – may recall the metaphor I used of a painting that comes to be placed in the frame of a window. No doubt an absurd technique were it a matter of better seeing what's in the painting, but that's not what it's about. Regardless of the charm of what's painted on the canvas, it's about not seeing what stands to be beheld outside the window.

It so happens that in dreams people see appearing, and in an unambiguous way, a pure, schematic form of the fantasy. This is the case in the dream from the study on *The Wolf Man*. This recurring dream takes on all its importance, and Freud chooses it as central, because it is the pure fantasy unveiled in its structure. This observation has an unexhausted and inexhaustible character because it essentially concerns, from beginning to end, the fantasy's relation to the real. Now, what can we see in this dream? The sudden opening – these two terms are indicated – of a window. The fantasy is beheld on the other side of a windowpane, and through a window that opens. The fantasy is framed.

As for what you can behold on the other side, you'll recognize there the same structure as you can see in the mirror in my diagram. There are always two rods, one of a more or less developed support and one of something that is supported. In this dream, they are the wolves on the branches of the tree. I only have to open up any old collection of drawings by schizophrenics to scoop this up by the basketful, as it were. You'll also find a tree on occasion, with something on the end of it.

I'm taking my first example from the presentation Jean Bobon gave at the recent Antwerp Congress on the phenomenon of expression.

Look at this drawing by a schizophrenic woman. What is there on the tip of the branches? For the subject in question, the role that the wolves play for the Wolf Man is fulfilled by signifiers. Beyond the tree's branches she's written out the formula of her secret, *Io sono sempre vista*. It's what she'd never been able to say until then. *I'm always in view*. I still have to pause to make you see that in Italian, as in French, *vista* is ambiguous. It's not only a past participle, it's also *view*, with its two meanings, subjective and objective, the function



Io sono sempre vista – drawing by Isabella
(observation by Jean Bobon, Liège)

of viewing, of sight, and the fact of being a view, as one says *a countryside view*, the view that's taken as an object on a postcard.

What I simply want to accentuate today is that *the dreadful*, *the shady*, *the disturbing*, everything by which we translate, as best we

can in French, the magisterial German *Unheimliche*, presents itself through little windows. The field of anxiety is situated as something framed. Thus, you're coming back to what I introduced the discussion with, namely, the relationship between the stage and the world.

Suddenly, all at once, you'll always find this term the moment the phenomenon of the *Unheimliche* enters. You'll always find the stage that presents itself in its own specific dimension and which allows for the emergence in the world of that which *may not* be said.

What do we always expect at curtain up, if not this brief moment of anxiety, which quickly passes, but which is never lacking in the dimension where, in going to the theatre, we do more than just come along to settle our behinds into a seat that has cost us perhaps dear, perhaps less – the moment when the three knocks are sounded and the curtain rises? Without this introductive moment of anxiety, which quickly dies away, nothing would be able to take on its value of what will be determined thereafter as tragic or comic.

I said – *that which may not*. Once again, not every language furnishes you with the same resources. It's not about *können* – of course, a good many things *can* be said, materially speaking – but *dürfen*, a *may* that is poorly translated as *allowed* or *not allowed* when in fact the word refers to a more original dimension. It's even because *man darf nicht*, it may not, that *man kann*, one can all the same. Here, the forcing takes effect, the dimension of unwinding, which constitutes the dramatic action properly speaking.

No matter how much time we spend on the nuances of this framing of anxiety, it will never be too long. Will you say that I'm seeking out this anxiety in the sense of reducing it to expectation, to preparation, to a state of alertness, to a response that is already a defensive response faced with what's about to happen? This, indeed, is the *Erwartung*, the constitution of the hostile as such, the first line of recourse beyond *Hilflosigkeit*. Although expectation can indeed serve, amongst other means, to frame anxiety, it isn't indispensable. There's no need for any expectation, the framing is still there. But anxiety is something else.

Anxiety is the appearance, within this framing, of what was already there, at much closer quarters, at home, *Heim*. It's the occupant, you'll say. In a certain sense, yes indeed, of course, this unknown occupant that appears in an unexpected way is absolutely related to what's encountered in the *Unheimliche*, but it's too little to designate it like that because, as the term indicates very well for you in French, this *hôte*, in its ordinary meaning, is already someone well wrought through with expectation.

This *hôte* is what had already slipped into the *hostile* with which I began this talk on expectation. This occupant, in the ordinary sense,

isn't the *Heimliche*, it's not the inhabitant of the house, it's the softened up, appeased and admitted hostile. That which is *Heim*, that which belongs to the realm of *Geheimnis*, has never passed through the twists and turns, the networks, the sieve of recognition. It has stayed *unheimlich*, not so much inhabituable as in-habiting, not so much in-habitual as in-habituated.

The phenomenon of anxiety is the sudden appearance of the *Heimliche* within the frame, and this is why it's wrong to say that anxiety is without object.

Anxiety has a different sort of object from the object whose perception is prepared and structured. By what? By the model of the cut, of the furrow, of the unary trait, of the *there it is*, which in operating always remain tight-lipped – the tight lip or lips of the cut – which become a closed book on the subject, unopened letters sending him off again under closed seal to further traces.

Signifiers turn the world into a network of traces in which the transition from one cycle to another is thenceforth possible. This means that the signifier begets a world, the world of the subject who speaks, whose essential characteristic is that therein it's possible to deceive.

Anxiety is this cut – this clean cut without which the presence of the signifier, its functioning, its furrow in the real, is unthinkable – it's the cut that opens up, affording a view of what now you can hear better, the unexpected, the visit, the piece of news, that which is so well expressed in the term *pressentiment*, which isn't simply to be heard as the premonition of something, but also as the pre-feeling, the *pré-sentiment*, that which stands prior to the first appearance of a feeling.

Things can branch off in every possible direction starting off from anxiety. What we were waiting for, when all's said and done, and which is the true substance of anxiety, is *that which deceives not*, that which is entirely free of doubt.

Don't let yourselves be taken in by appearances. Just because anxiety's link to doubt, to hesitation, to the obsessional's so-called ambivalent game, may strike you as clinically tangible, this doesn't mean that they are the same thing. Anxiety is not doubt, anxiety is the cause of doubt.

This isn't the first time, and it won't be the last, that I shall have to point out here how the function of causality has been kept up after two centuries of critical misgivings precisely because it lies somewhere other than where they've been gainsaying it. If there is one dimension wherein we have to search for the true function, the true weight, the sense behind keeping up the function of cause, then it lies in the direction of the opening that anxiety affords.

The effort that doubt expends is exerted merely to combat anxiety, and precisely through lures, to the extent that what it strives to avoid is what holds firm in anxiety with dreadful certainty.

3

I think that you'll stop me here to remind me that more than once have I stated, aphoristically, that all human activity opens out onto certainty, or else it generates certainty, or, more generally, that certainty's reference point is essentially action.

Well, yes, of course. And it's precisely what allows me now to introduce how it may well be from anxiety that action borrows its certainty.

To act is to snatch from anxiety its certainty. To act is to bring about a transfer of anxiety.

And since we're now at the end of the term, I'll let myself put forward the following, a little rapidly, in order to fill in, or almost fill in, the blank spaces I'd left in the chart from my first lesson of this year's Seminar, the chart organized on the basis of the Freudian terms, *inhibition*, *symptom* and *anxiety*, completed with *impediment*, *embarrassment*, *emotion* and *turmoil*. What's in the empty spaces? There are the *passage à l'acte* and *acting-out*.

Inhibition	Impediment	Embarrassment
Emotion	**Symptom**	*Passage à l'acte*
Turmoil	Acting-Out	**Anxiety**

The anxiety chart

I don't have time today to tell you why. This is why I said that I would merely be *almost* completing the chart. All the same, I'm going to help you to move forward a little on this path by stating for you, in the closest possible relationship to our theme from this morning, the opposition that was already implied, and even expressed, in my first introduction of these terms, between what there's too much of in embarrassment, and what there's too little of in turmoil, *esmayer*. Turmoil is essentially, so I told you, the evocation of the power that fails you, the experience of what you lack in need.

Linking up these two terms is essential for our topic because it highlights its ambiguity. If what we're dealing with is too much, then you're not lacking it. If it so happens that we're lacking it, why then say that elsewhere it's embarrassing us?

Let's be careful not to give in to the most gratifying of illusions here.

In tackling anxiety ourselves, let's acknowledge what all those who've spoken about it from a scientific point of view say. Heavens! This is where what I had to put forward at the start as necessary to the constitution of a world, the signifier as the possibility of deception, shows itself not to have been in vain. This can be seen better precisely when anxiety is what's at issue. And what exactly can be seen? Well, you see that approaching it scientifically always boils down to showing it to be one great big deception.

People don't realize that everything over which the conquest of our discourse extends always boils down to showing it to be a great big deception. Mastering the phenomenon by thought always amounts to showing how it can be redone in a deceitful way, it amounts to being able to reproduce it, that is, to being able to turn it into a signifier. A signifier of what? The subject, in reproducing it, can tamper with the books, which shouldn't surprise us, if it's true that, as I've taught you, the signifier is the subject's trace in the course of the world. Only, if we believe we can keep up this game for anxiety, well, we're sure to fail, for anxiety precisely escapes this game.

Therefore, this is what we have to be on guard against at the moment of grasping what is meant by embarrassment's relation to too much of the signifier and lack's relation to too little of the signifier. I'll give an illustration of this. I'd like you to know that, were it not for analysis, I wouldn't be able to speak about it. But analysis encountered it at the first bend, the phallus for instance.

Little Hans, who is as much of a logician as Aristotle, postulates the equation *All animate beings have a phallus*. I assume I'm addressing people who followed my commentary on the analysis of Little Hans, and who also remember what I took care to accentuate last year concerning the proposition known as the universal affirmative, namely, that the universal affirmative is only meaningful in defining the real on the basis of the impossible. It's impossible for an animate being not to have a phallus. As you can see, logic is now poised in this essentially precarious function of condemning the real to stumble over endlessly into the impossible. We don't have any other means of apprehending it but to go stumbling on and on.

An example. There are living beings, Mum, for instance, who don't have a phallus. So, this means that there are no living beings – anxiety.

The next step is to be taken. The most convenient thing is to say that even those who don't have one have one. That's why by and large we stick to this solution. The living beings who don't have

any phallus shall have one, in spite of everything. Since they shall have a phallus – which we others, psychologists, will call unreal, and which will simply be the phallus signifier – they shall be living. Thus, going from stumble to stumble, there's a progression, I daren't say in knowledge, but certainly in understanding.

By the by, I can't resist the pleasure of sharing a discovery with you, a find, that chance, good chance, what is called chance but which is hardly that at all, brought within my reach for you no later than this last weekend, in a dictionary of English slang.

My God, it might've taken me a while to get to it, but what a beautiful language the English language is! Who here knows then that, already since the fifteenth century, slang has found this marvel of replacing on occasion *I understand you perfectly* by *I understumble you perfectly*? I'm writing it up, since my pronunciation has perhaps made you miss the nuance. This *understumble*, untranslatable in French, incorporates *stumble* into *understand*. Understanding always amounts to struggling forward into misunderstanding.

Classical psychology teaches that the stuff of experience is composed of the real and the unreal, and that men are tormented by the unreal in the real. Were this the case, hoping to rid themselves of it would be utterly futile, for the good reason that the Freudian conquest teaches us that the disturbing thing is that, in the unreal, it's the real that torments them.

One's *care*, *Sorge*, the philosopher Heidegger tells us. Of course, but we've come a long way now. If, before getting a move on, before speaking, before getting down to work, care has been presupposed, does that make the term *care* an ultimate term? What does it mean? Can't we see that here we're already at the level of an art of care? Man is clearly a major producer of something that, with regard to him, is called care. But then, I prefer learning this from a holy book, which is at the same time the most sacrilegious book there is, and which is called Ecclesiastes.

This title is the Greek translation, by the Septuagint, of the term *Qoheleth*, which is a hapax, a unique term employed on this sole occasion, and comes from *Qahâl*, assembly. *Qoheleth* is both an abstract and feminine form of it, and is strictly speaking the assembling virtue, the one that gathers together, the ἐκκλησία, as it were, rather than the ἐκκλησιαστής.

What does this book, which I've called a sacred book and the most profane, teach us? The philosopher doesn't fail to stumble here, reading as he does some Epicurean echo or other. That's what I read. The Epicurean with regard to Ecclesiastes, well, let's see about that! I know very well that Epicurus stopped calming us down a long time ago, as was, you know, his intention, but to say

that Ecclesiastes had so much as a moment's chance of producing the same effect on us is really to have never even taken a peep at it.

God asks me to jouir, *to enjoy* – it's in the text. The Bible is, after all, the word of God. And even if it's not the word of God for you, I think you've already noticed the absolute difference that lies between the God of the Jews and Plato's God. Even though Christian history believed, a propos the God of the Jews, that it had to find its little psychotic evasion with Plato's God, it's nevertheless high time to recall the difference that lies between Aristotle's universal mover God, the God of sovereign good, Plato's delusional conception, and the God of the Jews, who's a God one speaks to, a God who asks something of you, and who, in Ecclesiastes, gives you the order *Jouis* – which really crowns it all.

To *jouir* on order is all the same something about which each of us can sense that, if there's a wellspring, an origin, of anxiety, then it must be found somewhere there. To the imperative *Jouis*, I can only reply one thing, and that is *J'ouïs*, *I hear*, but naturally I don't *jouir* so easily for all that. This is the order of presence within which the God who speaks is activated for us, the one who tells us expressly that He is what He is.

So that I may move forward, while it's within reach, into the field of His demands, I shall introduce, because it's very close to our subject, because it's the moment – you know very well that my remarking on this is nothing new – when, amongst God's demands to His chosen people, His privileged people, there are some that are very precise, and it seems that, in order to specify their terms, this God didn't require the prescience of my Seminar – and notably, there's one that's called circumcision. He orders us to *jouir*, and what's more, He goes into the instructions. He specifies the request, He isolates the object.

It's in this respect, I think, that the extraordinary muddle, the bungling, that there is in referring circumcision to castration surely appeared to you just as it did to me a long time ago.

Of course it's got an analogical relationship, because it's related to the object of anxiety. But saying that castration is either the cause or the representative, the analogue, of what we call castration and its complex amounts to a basic error. It amounts to not going beyond the symptom, namely, what in any circumcised subject can establish some confusion between its mark and what may be at stake in his neurosis relative to the castration complex.

Nothing is less castrating than circumcision. When it's done well, we can't deny that the result is rather elegant, especially when compared with all those male organs from Magna Graecia which the antique dealers, under the pretext that I'm an analyst, bring to

my door by the caseload, and which my secretary hands back to them, and I see them go off again into the courtyard laden with a suitcase of these organs, whose phimosis is always accentuated in a fashion that is, I must say, particularly distasteful. There is all the same something salubrious in the practice of circumcision from the aesthetic point of view.

Moreover, most of those who go on repeating the confusion on this matter that can be found knocking around in analytic texts nevertheless grasped a long time ago that it was also a question of significantly reducing the ambiguity of what is known as the bisexual type. *I am the cut and the knife*, Baudelaire says somewhere. Well, why consider it normal to be both the spear and the scabbard? The ritual practice of circumcision can clearly generate something of a salubrious repartition as regards the division of roles.

These remarks, as you can sense very well, are not digressional. Already, circumcision can no longer strike you as being some ritualistic whim, because it conforms to what I've been teaching you to consider in demand, namely, the circumscription of the object and with it the function of the cut. What God demands as an offering in this delimited zone isolates the object once it's been circumscribed. Whether afterwards those who recognize each other by this traditional sign see their relation to anxiety being scaled down, far from it perhaps, is where the question begins.

One of those being alluded to here, and it really isn't anyone in my audience, one day called me, in a private message, *the last of the Christian cabalists*. Rest assured, whilst it can happen that some of my investigations play, strictly speaking, on the calculus of signifiers, my gematria isn't about to get lost in its computus. I daresay it shall never take my bladder for the lantern of knowledge.[1] Much rather, should this lantern turn out to be a dark lantern, it will lead me instead, if need be, to recognize it as my bladder.

But, more directly than did Freud because I'm coming after him, I ask his God – *Che vuoi?* What wouldst thou with me? In other words, what is desire's relation to law? A question always elided by philosophic tradition, but to which Freud gives a reply, and you depend on it, even if, like everyone else, you haven't yet realized. The reply – it's the same thing.

What I teach you, what you're led to by what I teach you, and which is already in the text, masked beneath the myth of Oedipus, is that the terms that seem to stand in a relation of antithesis – desire and law – are but one and the same barrier to bar our access to the Thing. *Nolens, volens*, desiring, I go down the path of the law. This is why Freud refers the origin of the law back to the ungraspable desire of the father. But what his discovery leads you back to, as

does the entire analytic enquiry, is not to lose sight of what is true behind this lure.

Whether or not one normalizes my objects, so long as I desire, I know nothing of what I desire. And then, from time to time, an object appears amongst the others, and I really don't know why it's there.

On one hand, there's the one from which I've learnt that it covers over my anxiety, the object of my phobia, though I don't deny that it had to be explained to me because until then I knew only what I had in my head, and all I could say was that I had it, and I was afraid of it. On the other hand, there's the one for which I really can't find any justification as to why this is the one I desire – and why, not being one who detests girls, I'm even fonder of a little shoe.

On one side there's the wolf, on the other the shepherdess.

This is where I'm going to leave you at the end of these first talks on anxiety.

There's more to be heard besides God's anxiety-provoking order, there's Diana's hunt, which, at the time I chose, that of Freud's centenary, I said was the way of the Freudian quest. For the coming term, I'm making you an appointment with the slaying of the wolf.

19 December 1962

REVISION OF THE STATUS OF THE OBJECT

VII

NOT WITHOUT HAVING IT

Physics
Linguistics
Sociology
Physiology
Topology

In the thirty-second of his introductory lessons on psychoanalysis which you'll find in the series called *Nouvelles Conférences sur la psychanalyse*, this being how the title has been retranslated in French, Freud specifies that what is involved is to introduce something that has in no way whatsoever, so he says, the character of sheer speculation.

It's been translated for us in a French whose unintelligibility you'll be able to judge. *Mais il ne peut vraiment être question que de conceptions. But it can truly only be a question of conceptions.* Full stop. *En effet, il s'agit de trouver les idées abstraites, justes, qui, appliquées à la matière brute de l'observation, y apporteront ordre et clarté. Indeed, what is involved is to find the right abstract ideas which, when applied to the raw material of observation, will bring order and clarity to it.* Clearly, it's always unfortunate to entrust such a precious thing as the translation of Freud to Women of the Bedchamber.

There's no full stop in the German text where I pointed that one out to you and there's no riddle in the sentence. *Sondern es handelt sich wirklich um Auffassungen*, it's a matter *wirklich*, really, effectively – and not *truly* – of conceptions, that is, by that I mean that the accurate abstract representations, *Vorstellung*, it's a matter of *einzuführen*, of bringing them to light, and of applying them to the *Rohstoff der Beobachtung*, the raw stuff of observation, which will allow one to get *Ordnung und Durchsichtigkeit* out of it, order and transparency.

This effort, this programme, is indeed the same to which we've been applying ourselves here for some years now.

1

On our path to anxiety, we find ourselves having to specify the status of what I designated at the outset with the letter *a*.

You can see it reigning over the outline of the vase that symbolizes for us libido's narcissistic container. This can be brought into relation with the image of one's body, *i'(a)*, through the intermediary of the mirror of the Other, A. Betwixt the two of them, a communicating oscillation is played out which Freud designates as the reversibility of the libido of one's own body into object libido. In relation to the economic oscillation of this libido that pours from *i(a)* into *i'(a)*, there's something that doesn't so much escape from it as step in as an incidence whose pattern of disruption is precisely what we're studying this year. The most striking manifestation of this object *a*, the signal that it is intervening, is anxiety.

That doesn't mean that this object is merely the nether side of anxiety, but it only steps in, it only functions, in correlation with anxiety.

Anxiety, Freud taught us, plays the role of a signal function in relation to something. I say that it's a signal in relation to what occurs in connection with the subject's relation to the object *a* in all its generality. The subject is only ever able to enter this relation within the vacillation of a certain fading, the same that the notation barred S designates. Anxiety is the signal of certain moments of this relation. This is what I'll be endeavouring to show you more fully today, by specifying what I mean by this object *a*.

We designate this object with a letter. This algebraic notation has its function. It's like a thread designed to enable us to recognize the identity of the object behind the various incidences in which it appears to us. The algebraic notation has precisely the purpose of giving us a pure identity marker, we having stated already that marking something out with a word is only ever metaphorical, that is to say, it can only leave the function of the signifier itself outside of any signification that is induced by introducing it. The word *good*, if it gives rise to the signification of good, isn't good in and of itself, far from it, because by the same token it gives rise to the bad.

Likewise, designating this little *a* with the term *object* is merely a metaphorical use of this word, since it's borrowed from the subject–object relation, from which the term *object* is constituted. It's no doubt suitable for designating the general function of objectivity, but the object we have to speak about under the term *a* is precisely an object that is external to any possible definition of objectivity.

I'm not going to speak here about what happens by way of objectivity in the field of science, I'm speaking about our science in

general. You know that since Kant some misfortunes have befallen this object, which are all due to the overly large share that people wanted to give to certain evident elements and especially to those that come from the field of transcendental aesthetics. In holding that the separation of the dimensions of space from the dimension of time was evident, the development of the scientific object found itself running into what is very improperly translated as a crisis of scientific reason. A big effort had to be made to realize that, at a certain level of physics, the two registers, spatial and temporal, couldn't go on being held to be independent variables, which, and this is a surprising fact, seems to have posed some insoluble problems to a few minds. They don't, however, seem worthy of our attention when we notice that it's precisely to the status of the object that one ought to turn to give the symbolic the exact place that falls to it in the constitution and translation of experience, without making any risky extrapolation from the imaginary into the symbolic.

In truth, the time that's involved, at the level at which it is irrealized in a fourth dimension, has got nothing to do with the time that, in intuition, seems very much to present itself as a kind of insurmountable clash with the real. Worrying about the fact that what appears to all of us by way of time, and which is held to be something self-evident, can only be translated into the symbolic by an independent variable is simply to commit an error of categorization at the start. The same difficulty arises, you know this, at a certain limit of physics, with the body.

We're on our home turf here. On what has to be done at the start to give experience its rightful status, we have our word to say. Indeed, our experience posits and establishes that no intuition, no transparency, no *Durchsichtigkeit*, as Freud's term has it, that is founded purely and simply upon the intuition of consciousness can be held to be originative, or valid, and thus it cannot constitute the starting point of any transcendental aesthetics. This is for the simple reason that the subject cannot be situated in any exhaustive way in consciousness since he is first of all, primordially, unconscious, due to the following – we have to maintain the incidence of the signifier as standing prior to his constitution.

The problem is one of the signifier's entry into the real and of seeing how the subject is born from this. Does this mean that we find ourselves before some kind of descent of the spirit, a kind of apparition of winged signifiers, that they would start making their holes in the real all by themselves and that, out of the midst of them, one hole would appear which would be the subject? I think that, when I introduce the division between the real, the

imaginary, and the symbolic, no one attributes such a design to me. Today the point is to know precisely what allows this signifier to be incarnated.

What allows it to be incarnated is first and foremost what we've got here by which to presentify ourselves to one another, our body. Except that this body isn't to be taken up in the pure and simple categories of transcendental aesthetics either. This body can't be constituted in the same way that Descartes establishes it in the field of extension. Nor is it given to us in a pure and simple way in the mirror.

Even in the experience of the mirror, a moment can come about when the image we believe we abide by undergoes modification. If this specular image we have facing us, which is our stature, our face, our two eyes, allows the dimension of our gaze to emerge, the value of the image starts to change – above all if there's a moment when this gaze that appears in the mirror starts not to look at us any more. There's an *initium*, an aura, a dawning sense of uncanniness which leaves the door open to anxiety.

This passage from the specular image to the double that escapes me is the point at which something occurs whose generality, whose presence within the entire phenomenal field, can be shown through the articulation we have been giving to the function of the *a*. This function goes far beyond what appears in this odd moment, which I simply wanted to mark out for its character of being at once the most commonly known and the most discreet in its intensity.

How does this transformation of the object come about, one which from an object that can be located, pinpointed, and exchanged, forms this kind of private, incommunicable and yet dominant object that is our correlative in the fantasy? Where exactly is the moment of this metamorphosis, this transformation, this revelation, to be placed? Certain paths, certain approaches I prepared for you over the course of the previous years, enable us to designate this place and, better still, to explain what's going on. The little diagram I've put up on the blackboard for you gives you something of these *richtigen Vorstellungen*, these accurate representations, that enable us to turn the appeal to intuition and experience, an appeal that's always more or less opaque and obscure, into something *durchsichtig*, transparent – in other words, to reconstitute for ourselves the transcendental aesthetics that fits our experience.

It's generally accepted that anxiety is without an object. This, which is not extracted from Freud's disquisition but a part of his disquisition, is specifically what I've been rectifying through my disquisition. You can therefore take it as read that, since I've gone to the lengths of writing it up on the blackboard for you in the style

of a little memento – why not this one amongst others? – *it is not without an object*.

This is the exact formula in which anxiety's relation to an object must be suspended.

This object is not properly speaking the object of anxiety. I've already made use of this *not without* in the formula I gave you concerning the subject's relation to the phallus, *he is not without having it*.

This relation of being *not without having* doesn't mean that one knows which object is involved. When I say, *He's not without resources*, *He's not without cunning*, it means, at least for me, that his resources are obscure, his cunning isn't run of the mill.

Likewise, at the linguistic level, the term *sans*, in Latin *sine*, is deeply correlative to the apposition *haud*. One says *non haud sine*, *non pas sans*. It's a certain type of conditional liaison, which links *being* to *having* in a kind of alternation. There, he is not without having it, but elsewhere, right where he is, it's not to be seen.

Isn't this what the sociological function of the phallus demonstrates to us, on the condition that we take it at the upper-case level, Φ, where it incarnates the most alienating function of the subject in exchange? Even in social exchange, the male subject roams around reduced to being the bearer of the phallus. That's what makes castration necessary for a socialized sexuality, where doubtless there are prohibitions, but also and above all preferences, as Claude Lévi-Strauss has remarked. The true secret, the truth of everything that Freud makes revolve around the exchange of women in the structure, is that, underneath the exchange of women, the phalli will fill them out. The phallus mustn't be seen to be involved. If it gets seen, then there's anxiety.

I could branch off on more than one line here. It's clear that, with this reference, we've got to the castration complex straightaway. Well then, my goodness, why not go down this route?

2

As I've repeated in front of you on numerous occasions, the castration of the complex is not a castration. Everyone knows this, everyone suspects as much, and, strangely enough, no one pauses on it. It does, however, hold great interest.

Where are we to situate this image, this fantasy? In the imaginary or in the symbolic? What's going on here? Is it the emasculation that we know well from the savage practices of war? It's certainly closer to that than to making eunuchs. Of course, there's the maiming of

the penis evoked by the fantasmatic threats issued by mother or father, depending on the psychoanalytic era you're in. *Do that and we'll snip it off.* This accent of cutting needs to bear its full import for the practice of circumcision to be considered as castration, the circumcision to which you saw me make some, if I may say, prophylactic references last time.

The mental impact of circumcision is far from ambiguous. I'm not the only one to have noticed that. One of the most recent works dedicated to this subject, Nunberg's quite remarkable book on *Problems of Bisexuality as Reflected in Circumcision*, is there to remind us what numerous authors had introduced before him, namely, that circumcision has just as much the aim of reinforcing the term of masculinity in men by isolating it as to provoke the said effects of the castration complex, at least in their anxiety-provoking impact. It's precisely this common denominator of the cut that allows us to bring into the field of castration the circumcisory operation, the *Beschneidung* of the foreskin, the *'ârêl* in Hebrew.

Is there not, in this term *cut*, something that enables a further step to be taken in the function of castration anxiety? *I'll snip it off*, says the mum who gets qualified as a castrating mother. Yes, and afterwards, where will it be? Where will the *Wiwimacher*, as Little Hans calls it, be? Well, if we imagine that this threat which has always been presentified in our experience were actually to be followed through, it would be in the operational field of the common, exchangeable object, it would be there in the hands of the mother who has cut it off, and this is precisely what would be uncanny about the situation.

It often happens that our subjects dream they've got the object in hand, either some gangrene has detached it, or some partner in the dream has taken it upon himself to perform the slicing operation, or else there's been some mishap or other. These dreams, which are variously nuanced with uncanniness and anxiety, possess a character that is especially unsettling. The way that the object suddenly passes over into what could be called its *Zuhandenheit*, as Heidegger would say, its handiness in the sense of commonplace objects and utensils, comes to be designated in the observation on Little Hans by a dream, the dream of the tap fitter who will unscrew it, screw it back on again, and make the *eingewurzelt*, which either was or wasn't well-rooted in the body, pass over into the register of the detachable. This phenomenological turnaround allows us to designate something that contrasts two types of object.

When I began to set out the fundamental function of the mirror stage in the general institution of the field of the object, I moved through several phases. First of all, there is the plane of the first

identification with the specular image, the original misrecognition of the subject in his totality. Next, there is the transitivist reference that is established in his relation with the imaginary other, his *semblable*. This means that his identity is always poorly disentangled from the other party's identity. Hence the introduction of mediation by means of a common object, an object of competition, whose status will be derived from the notion of belonging – it's yours or its mine.

There are two kinds of object in the field of belongings – those that can be shared and those that can't. I can still see those objects that can't be shared circulating in the domain of sharing, alongside the other objects, whose status leans squarely on competition, an ambiguous function that is at once rivalry and agreement. A price can be set on these objects, they are objects of exchange. But there are others.

I've been foregrounding the phallus because it's the most illustrious one, due to the fact of castration, but there also exist the equivalents of this phallus, among which you are familiar with those that precede it, the scybalum and the nipple. There are perhaps some that you are less familiar with, though they are perfectly legible in the analytic literature, and we are going to try to designate them. When these objects freely enter this field which they have nothing to do with, the field of sharing, when they show up there and become recognizable, anxiety signals to us the particularity of their status. Indeed, they are objects from before the constitution of the status of the common, communicable, socialized object. This is what is involved in the *a*.

We shall name these objects and we shall draw up a catalogue that perhaps will be exhaustive, let's hope so. I've already named three of them. There are only two missing. As a whole, they correspond to the five forms of loss, of *Verlust*, that Freud designated in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* as the major moments when the signal appears.

Before getting any deeper into this, I'd like to switch back to another track that you saw me in the process of choosing earlier on, in order to make a remark whose sidelines will carry some illuminating aspects for you.

I already designated one shortcoming in analytic research by saying that we hadn't led anyone to take a step forward into the physiological question of women's sexuality. We can accuse ourselves of the same failing with regard to male impotence.

After all, in the process of the male part of copulation, which can be clearly ascertained in its normative phases, we are still referring to what can be found in any old physiology textbook concerning first the process of erection, then of orgasm. We content ourselves

with a reference to the stimulus–response circuit, as though the homology between orgasmic discharge and the motor part of this circuit were acceptable in any process of action. Of course, we're not at that level, far from it, even in Freud. He raised the problem as to why in sexual pleasure the circuit is not, as it is elsewhere, the shortest one by which to return to the level of minimum excitation, but instead entails a *Vorlust*, a *preliminary pleasure* as it is translated, that consists precisely in raising this minimal level to the highest possible pitch. And why does orgasm intervene the moment that – when? – the rising level that is normally linked to foreplay is broken off?

Have we not even come close to providing an outline of what intervenes? If one wants to give a physiological representation of it, have we distinguished, singled out, and designated the mechanism of the circuit of innervation – Freud would say *Abfuhrinnervationen* – that brings discharge into play as its underpinning? It really needs to be considered as distinct from what was functioning beforehand, because what was functioning beforehand was precisely a process that was not leading up to discharge. It was an execution of the function of pleasure that tended to be confined to its own limit, that is, it tends to stop before arriving at a certain level in the mounting stimulus, before pain arises.

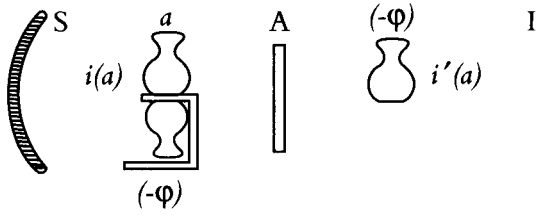
So, where does the feedback come from? Nobody has so much as dreamt of telling us. Well, be that as it may, it is certain that, either way, the function of the Other must be intervening here.

I'm not the one who should be saying so, but rather those for whom that which constitutes a normal genital function is linked to oblativity. By the by, I'm still waiting for them to intimate how the function of the gift steps in as such, *hic et nunc*, when we're fucking.

You know that a large part of analytic experience lies in the disruptions of love life and that a large part of our speculation concerns what is termed the choice of love object. In this field, the reference to the primordial object, the mother, is held to be crucial and its impact wide-ranging. For some the result is that they can only function for orgasm with prostitutes, whilst for others it will be with partners chosen in a different register. As we know from our analyses, the relationship with the prostitute is almost directly engrained in the reference to the mother, whilst in other cases the degradations of *Liebesleben* are linked to a choice made in opposition to the maternal term, which bears on woman in so far as she becomes a support, in so far as she is the equivalent, of the phallic object.

Well, how does all that come about? The diagram that I reproduced once on the board allows us to provide a reply.

The attraction that decks out the object of glamour, of desirable



The choice of object

brilliance, of preferential colour – that's how sexuality is designated in Chinese – means that the object becomes stimulating at the level of excitation. This preferential colour is situated on the side of *i'(a)* at the same signalling level that can also be that of anxiety. How so? This happens by connecting onto the original erogenous investment that is here in *a*, both present and concealed.

Or else what functions as a sorting element in the choice of love object is produced here, in the ego, on the other side of the mirror, at the level of the framing of the object by an *Einschränkung*, a narrowing that Freud refers directly to a mechanism of the ego, a limitation of the field of libidinal interest which excludes a certain type of object precisely due to the relation it bears to the mother.

These two mechanisms stand at either end of the chain that starts at inhibition and finishes with anxiety, whose diagonal line I marked out in the chart I gave you at the start of the year. Between inhibition and anxiety, one ought to distinguish between the two mechanisms and conceive of how both one and the other can enter the fray right across sexual manifestation from top to bottom.

When I say *from top to bottom*, I include what in our experience is called transference.

Recently I heard an allusion to the fact that we in our Society are people who know a thing or two about transference. Now, since one work on transference, which moreover was written before our Society was founded, I only know of one other devoted to it and that is the work I did here with you two years ago. I said a good many things here, in a form that was certainly most appropriate to it, that is, a partially veiled form. It is quite certain that the other piece of work brought you a great distinction that contrasts *need of repetition* with *repetition of need*, proof that having recourse to wordplay to designate things, which moreover is not without interest, is not my privilege alone.

I believe that the reference to transference, when limited solely to effects of reproduction and repetition, is too narrow and would deserve to be expanded. In insisting on the historical element, or on the repetition of lived experience, one runs the risk of sweeping

aside a whole dimension that is no less important, the synchronic dimension, the dimension of what is precisely included, latent, in the position of the analyst and where lies, in the space that determines this position, the function of the partial object.

If you remember, this is what, in speaking to you about transference, I designated by way of a metaphor, which seems fairly clear to me, of a hand reaching over to a log. Just as the hand is about to reach the log, the log catches light, and in the flame another hand appears, reaching back to the first. This is what I also designated, when studying Plato's *Symposium*, using the function that is termed ἄγαλμα in the speech by Alcibiades. I think that the insufficiency of the reference made to the synchronic dimension of the function of the partial object in the analytic relation of transference explains the neglect of a domain that I am not surprised to see being left in the dark, namely, the field of what might be called the post-analytic result, across which a certain number of examples of hitches in the sexual function are distributed.

The function of analysis as a space or field of the partial object is precisely what Freud made us pause in front of in his article on *Analysis Terminable and Interminable*. If one sets off from the idea that Freud's limit, which we meet throughout his observations, is due to his not having grasped what stood to be analysed in the synchronic relationship between the analysed party and the analyst concerning the function of the partial object, one can see that this is the very mainspring of the failure of his intervention with Dora and with the young woman from the case of female homosexuality. And this is why Freud designates for us what he calls the limit of analysis in castration anxiety. He remained for his patient the locus of this partial object.

Freud tells us that analysis leaves both man and woman wanting, one of them in the field of the castration complex, the other in *Penisneid*. But this is not an absolute limit. It is the limit at which finite analysis ends with Freud, in so far as it continues to follow the indefinitely approached parallelism that characterizes the asymptote. There you have the principle of analysis that Freud calls *unendliche*, indefinite, boundless, and not *infinie* as it has been translated in French. This limit is instituted to the extent that something has been, not unanalysed, but revealed in a way that is only partial and I may at least pose the question as to how it is analysable.

Don't think I'm contributing something that should be considered as standing completely beyond the bounds of the pared-down forms already sketched out by our experience. To make reference to more recent work, familiar in the French field, one analyst, over many years, those that comprised the time during which his life's work

came together, made his analyses of obsessional neurosis in particular revolve around penis envy. How many times did I comment on them with what we had to hand back then, to criticize them and show where they trip up, which I shall formulate now more precisely.

On reading his observations in detail, we can see the author covering the field that I designate as the field of the interpretation to be given of the phallic function at the level of the big Other, with the fantasy of fellatio, concerning the analyst's penis in particular. This is a very clear indication. The problem had indeed been spotted and let me tell you that it was not by chance, I mean in connection with what I'm developing for you here. Only, this is just one angle on it and one that is insufficient. Centring an analysis on this fantasy could never exhaust what is really involved, because in reality it only links up with a symptomatic fantasy of obsessionals.

To designate what I mean, I shall go to an exemplary reference in the literature, namely, the Rat Man's famous nocturnal conduct when, having obtained by himself an erection in the looking-glass, he goes to open the hallway door to the imagined phantom of his dead father, in order to present, to the eyes of this spectre, the state of his member. Were one only to advise analysing what is involved at the level of the analyst fellatio fantasy – which is so strongly linked by the author to what is involved in what he called the technique of *getting closer*, where distance is considered to be a fundamental factor of obsessional structure, notably in its relations with psychosis – what would happen? I believe one would merely allow the subject, even encourage him, to take up in this fantasmatic relation the role of the Other in the type of presence that is here constituted by death, this Other, I would say by pushing things a little, who watches the fellatio fantasmatically.

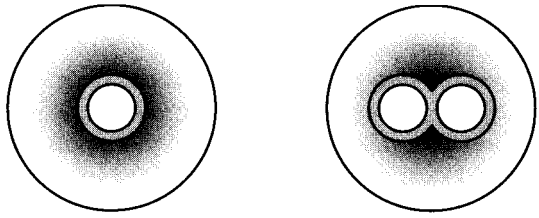
This last point is only addressed to those whose practice allows these remarks to be put in their right place.

3

I'm going to end with these two images which I've put up on the board.

The first represents a vase and its neck. I've made it so that you're looking down the hole of the vase as a way of stressing that what matters to me is the rim. The second is the transformation that can be brought about in connection with this rim.

Starting off from this, it will appear to you just how opportune last year's long insistence on these topological considerations was, concerning the function of identification at the level of desire,



The doubling of the rim

namely, the third type designated by Freud in his article on identification, the one which finds its major example in hysteria.

Here then is the impact and the scope of these topological considerations.

I told you that I spent such a long time with you on the cross-cap so as to afford you the possibility of intuitively forming a conception of the distinction between the object *a* and the object constructed on the basis of the specular relation, the common object.

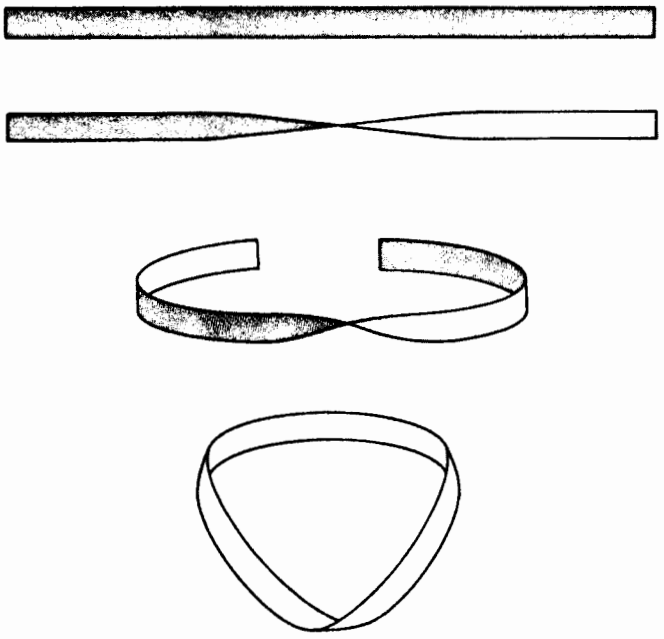
To go quickly, what is it that makes a specular image distinct from what it represents? It's that right becomes left and vice versa. Let's put our confidence in the idea that we normally find our reward in trusting in what Freud says, even in his more aphoristic moments. The ego is not only a surface but, so he says, the projection of a surface. Thus the problem has to be posed in the topological terms of pure surface. In relation to what it duplicates, the specular image is exactly a right glove becoming a left glove, which one can obtain on a single surface by turning the rim inside out.

Don't forget that I've been speaking to you about the glove and the hood for a while now. The dream in one of Ella Sharpe's cases that I commented on for you not so long ago revolves for the most part around this model.

Let's see for ourselves now with what I've taught you to find in the Möbius strip. In taking this band – having opened it – and joining it back to itself by giving it a half twist on the way, you get with the greatest of ease a Möbius strip.

An ant walking along one of the apparent faces will pass over to the other face without needing to go over the edge. In other words, the Möbius strip is a surface that has just one face and a surface with just one face cannot be turned inside out. If you turn it over, it will still be identical to itself. This is what I call *not having a specular image.*

Furthermore, I told you that, in the cross-cap, when you single out one part of it through a section, a slice, which has no other condition than that of joining up with itself after having included the point on the surface where the hole lies, it is still a Möbius strip.



The band/The Möbius strip

This is the residual part, here. I've constructed it for you and I'll pass it around. It does hold a little interest because, let me tell you, this is the *a*. I give it to you much as one might administer the Host, because you'll make use of it afterwards. The *a* is put together like that.

It's put together like that when the slice has been made, whatever it may be, the slice of the umbilical cord, the slice of circumcision, and a few others besides that we are going to have to designate. After the slice, there remains something comparable to the Möbius strip, which has no specular image.

Now see what I mean to tell you by returning to the vase.

Phase one. The vase has its specular image, which is the ideal ego, constitutive of the entire world of the common object.

Add *a* in the form of a cross-cap. Then separate off, in this cross-cap, the small *a* object I've put in your hands. It remains, attached to *i(a)*, a surface that joins up as does a Möbius strip. From then on, the whole vase becomes a Möbius strip because an ant walking on the outside comes onto the inside without any difficulty at all.

The specular image becomes the uncanny and invasive image of the double. This is what happens little by little at the end of Maupassant's life, when he starts failing to see himself in the mirror,

Figure i
This closed surface bearing a line of auto-intersection is considered to be topologically equivalent to the projective plane.

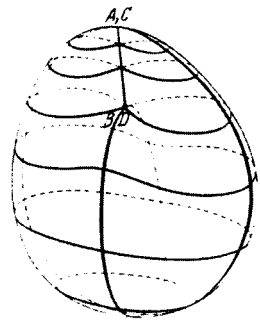


Figure ii
The surface obtained by removing the lower portion of the previous surface is a cross-cap.

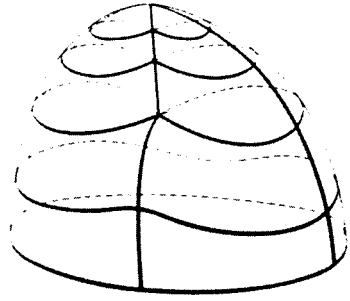


Figure iii
If one slices into the cross-cap along its line of auto-intersection, the resulting surface can be given the shape of a circular disc with a circular hole at its centre whose diametrically opposing points are identified in pairs.

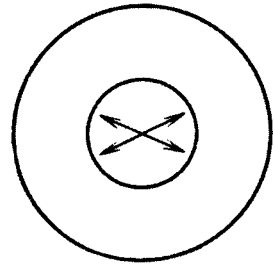
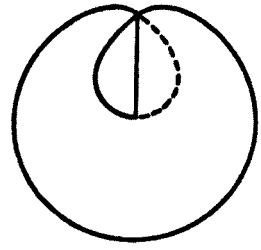


Figure iv
This residual surface can be materialized in the shape that is known as an inner eight.



The cross-cap and its transformations

or when he glimpses something in a room, a phantom that turns its back on him, whereupon he knows it to be something that bears a certain relation to himself, and when the phantom turns round, he sees that it is he.

There you have what is involved when *a* enters the world of the real, to which in fact it is simply returning.

It might seem odd to you as a hypothesis that something should resemble this. Observe, however, the following. Let's step outside of the visual field. Close your eyes for a moment, and feel along the rim of this transformed vessel. *But it's a vase just like the other one*, you'll say, *there's only one hole because there's only one rim*. Looking at it, however, it does look like it's got two, as the drawing from earlier shows you, the drawing of the transformed rim.

Those of you who have read a bit know that this ambiguity between one and two is a common ambiguity with regard to the appearance of the phallus in the field of the oneiric apparition, and not only oneiric, of the sexual member. Right where apparently there is no real phallus, its ordinary pattern of apparition is to appear in the form of two phalli.

That's enough for today.

9 January 1963

VIII

THE CAUSE OF DESIRE

The object behind desire
The sadist's identification with the fetish object
The masochist's identification with the common object
The presence of real love in transference
The young homosexual woman, dropped

I should like to manage today to tell you a certain number of things about what I've taught you to designate as the object *a*, to which the aphorism I put forward last time concerning anxiety steers you, namely, that *it is not without object*.

This year, the object *a* is taking centre stage in our topic. It has been set into the framework of a Seminar that I've titled *Anxiety* because it is essentially from this angle that it's possible to speak about it, which means moreover that anxiety is the sole subjective translation of this object.

The *a* that arises here was, however, introduced a long while ago. It was announced in the formula of the fantasy as support of desire, ($\$ \lozenge a$), $\$$ desire of *a*.

1

My first point will be to add a further detail which those who have been listening to me should be able to master for themselves, though underlining it today does not strike me as needless.

What stands to be specified concerns the mirage that stems from a perspective that may be termed subjectivist inasmuch as, in the constitution of our experience, it lays the entire accent on the structure of the subject.

This line of elaboration, which the modern philosophical tradition carried to its most extreme point in the circles around Husserl

by bringing out the function of intentionality, holds us prisoner to a misunderstanding concerning what is commonly called the object of desire. Indeed, we are taught that there is no noesis, no thought, that is not turned towards something. This would seem to be the only point that would enable idealism to find its way back towards the real. But can the object of desire be conceived of in this way? Is this how things stand for desire?

With respect to the level of our listening ear which exists in each of us and which calls for intuition, I will ask – does the object of desire lie out in front of it? This is the mirage at stake here. It sterilized everything that, in analysis, meant to move in the direction known as object relations and I've already taken a good number of different routes to rectify that. What I'm about to put forward now is a new way of accentuating this rectification.

No doubt I won't be making it as developed as it should be, setting aside this formulation for another piece of work of mine that will come to you via another path. I think that for most of you it will be enough to hear the broad formulas with which I think I can accentuate for you today the point I've just introduced.

You know to what extent, in the progress of epistemology, isolating the notion of cause has produced problems. This notion of cause has not been maintained in the development of our physics without a stream of reductions that ultimately lead it back to one of the most tenuous and equivocal functions.

Furthermore, it is clear that, whatever reduction is forced upon it, the mental function, as it were, of this notion cannot be eliminated or cut down to a kind of metaphysical shadow. It may well be made to subsist by resorting to intuition, but this says too little. I claim that it is on the basis of the reassessment we can make of the function of cause in starting off from the analytic experience that any critique of pure reason brought up to date with our science may be carried out.

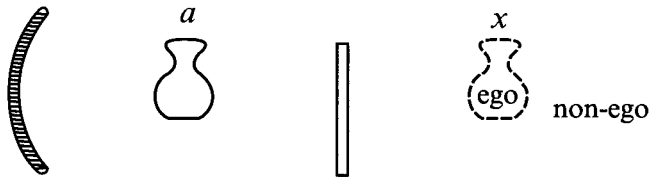
To set our target, I shall say that the object *a* – which is not to be situated in anything analogous to the intentionality of a noesis, which is not the intentionality of desire – is to be conceived of as the cause of desire. To take up my earlier metaphor, the object lies *behind* desire.

From this object *a* emerges the dimension whose elusion in the theory of the subject has produced the insufficiency of the whole coordination whose centre comes to the fore as a theory of cognizance, a gnoseology. Likewise, the structural, topological novelty that is required by this function of the object is perfectly tangible in Freud's formulations, especially those regarding the drive.

If you want to check this up against a text, I would send you to the

thirty-second lesson of the New Series of *Vorlesungen* on the introduction to psychoanalysis that I cited last time. The distinction you can find there between *Ziel*, the goal of the drive, and its *Objekt* is very different from what initially presents itself to thought, namely, that this goal and this object would be in the same place. Freud employs very striking terms, the first of which is *eingeschoben* – the object slides in, passes through somewhere. It's the same word that serves *Verschiebung*, displacement. The object as something that, in its essential function, steals away at the level of our grasp is being pointed out there as such.

On the other hand, there is at this level an express contrast between two terms – *äußeres*, external, outside, and *inneres*, internal. It is specified that the object is to be situated *äußeres*, on the outside, and, on the other hand, that the satisfaction of the aim is only brought about in so far as it meets up with something that is to be considered as standing *inneres*, inside the body, where it finds its *Befriedigung*, its satisfaction.



The ego and the non-ego

The topological function that I have presented you with allows for a plain formulation of what needs to be introduced to clear up this enigma, namely, it is the notion of an outside that stands prior to a certain internalization, which is located in *a*, before the subject, in the locus of the Other, grasps himself in specular form, in *x*, which will introduce for him the distinction between ego and non-ego.

The notion of cause belongs to this outside, the locus of the object, prior to any internalization. I shall illustrate this straightaway in the most direct way of getting it through your ears, because I'm also going to refrain from doing any metaphysics today. To give an image of it, it isn't by chance that I am going to use the fetish as such, because this is where the veil is drawn back on the dimension of the object as cause of desire.

What is desired? It's not the little item of footwear, nor the breast, nor anything else with which you can embody the fetish. The fetish causes desire. Desire goes off to hook on wherever it can. It is not absolutely necessary for her to be wearing the little shoe, it just has to be in the vicinity. It's not even necessary for her to be the one that

bears the breast, the breast can be in one's head. But all and sundry know that for the fetishist the fetish has to be there. The fetish is the condition by which his desire sustains itself.

I shall indicate in passing the following term, which I believe to be seldom used in German – the vague translations that we have in French let it slip through entirely – it is the relation that Freud indicates, when anxiety is involved, using the word *Libidohaushalt*. Here we are dealing with a word that lies between *Aushaltung*, which would indicate something along the lines of interruption or lifting, and *Inhalt*, which would be the content. It's neither one nor the other. It is the sustaining of libido. To spell it out, this relation to the object that I've been discussing with you today allows for a synthesis between anxiety's signal function and its relation with something that we may call an interruption in the sustaining of libido.

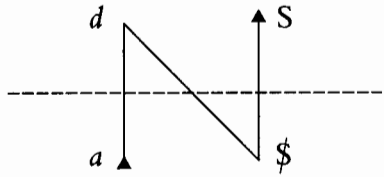
Assuming that, with the reference to the fetish, I've made myself understood well enough on the enormous difference that lies between the two possible perspectives on the object as object of desire and on the reasons that lead me to place the *a* in an essential precession, I would like to make you understand where our research is going to lead us.

2

In the very locus where your mental wont tells you to seek out the subject, right where, despite yourself, the subject emerges when, for example, Freud indicates the source of the aim, right where, in discourse, there stands that which you articulate as being you – in a word, right where you say *I* – that is where, at the level of the unconscious, the *a* properly speaking is located.

At this level, you are *a*, the object, and everyone knows that this is what is intolerable and not only to discourse itself, which, after all, betrays this. I'm going to illustrate this right away with a remark that is designed to shift, even to shake up, the ruts in which you are accustomed to leaving the functions known as sadism and masochism, as if what were involved were merely a register of a kind of immanent aggression and its reversibility. As we go into their subjective structure, the features that set them apart will appear to you. I'm going to designate the crux of this difference right now.

Here is a figure in which you meet the distinctions that organize the graph into an abridged four-point formula. On the right we have the side of the Other, on the left the side of the S, which is the side of the still-to-be-constituted *I*, the subject which stands to be reviewed in our experience and which we know cannot coincide with



The sadist's desire

the traditional formula for the subject, namely, its exhaustive aspect in any relationship with the object.

The sadist's desire, with everything it entails by way of enigma, can only be formulated on the basis of the split, the dissociation, that he aims to introduce in the subject, the other party, by imposing upon him, up to a certain limit, what he is unable to tolerate – up to the precise limit at which a division appears in this subject, a gap, between his existence as a subject and what he is undergoing, what he may be suffering from, in his body.

It is not so much the other party's suffering that is being sought in the sadistic intention as his anxiety. I noted this with the little sign, $ 0. In the formulae from my second lesson of this year I taught you to read it as a zero, and not the letter *O*.

The anxiety of the other party, his essential existence as a subject in relation to this anxiety, is precisely the string that sadistic desire means to pluck and this is why I didn't hesitate in one of my previous Seminars to relate its structure to what is specifically homologous in what Kant spelt out as the condition for practising a pure practical reason, a moral will properly speaking, where he locates the sole point at which a relation with a pure moral good can emerge. I apologize for the brevity of this reminder. Those who attended the Seminar will remember this. The rest of you will be seeing in the not too distant future what I took from this in a preface I have written to *La Philosophie dans le boudoir*, the text around which I organized this comparison.

The new feature I mean to put forward today is the following, which is characteristic of the sadist's desire. In carrying through his act, his rite – because it has specifically to do with this kind of human action in which we find all the structures of rite – what the agent of sadistic desire doesn't know is what he is seeking, and what he is seeking is to make himself appear – to whom? because in any case this revelation can only ever be obtuse to himself – as a pure object, as a black fetish. At its final term, the manifestation of sadistic desire boils down to this, in so far as he who is its agent moves towards a realization.

Likewise, if you recall the figure of Sade, you will see that it's not

by chance that what remains of him after a kind of transubstantiation accomplished down through the ages, after the imaginary elaboration of his figure across generations, is precisely the form with which Man Ray found it apt to furnish him the day he set about making his *Imaginary Portrait*, to wit, a petrified form.

This could not be more different from the masochist's position, for whom this embodiment of himself as object is the declared goal – whether he becomes a dog under the table or a piece of merchandise, an item dealt with by contract, sold amongst other objects put on the market. In sum, what he seeks is his identification with the common object, the object of exchange. It remains impossible for him to grasp himself for what he is, inasmuch as, like all of us, he is an *a*.

As to finding out why this interests him so much, this acknowledgement that nevertheless remains impossible, this is what his analysis can reveal. Before he can even comprehend its particular conditions, however, there are certain structural conjunctions that need to be established here.

Mark my words, I didn't say, without further comment, that the masochist attains his object identification. As with the sadist, this identification only appears on a stage. Except that, even on this stage, the sadist cannot behold himself, he can only behold the remainder. There is also something that the masochist cannot behold and we shall see what later.

This allows me to introduce some formulas, the first of which is that to recognize oneself as the object of one's desire, in the sense I have been spelling it out, is always masochistic.

This formula carries the interest of making you sensitive to how difficult this is. It's very convenient to make use of our little Punch puppet and say, for example, that if masochism is involved then it's because the superego is a real meanie. Of course, we are aware of all the necessary distinctions to be drawn within masochism – erogenous masochism, women's masochism and moral masochism. But simply setting out this classification is a little bit like saying – there's this glass, there's Christian faith and then there's Wall Street turning bearish. It leaves us wanting rather. If the term *masochism* is to have a meaning, a formula needs to be found for it that is valid across the board. If we were to say that the superego is the cause of masochism, we wouldn't get far beyond this satisfying intuition, except that we still need to take into account what I have taught you today about the cause. Let's say that the superego is part of the functioning of this object as its cause, such as I have introduced it today. I could even bring it into the series of objects that I will be calling upon for you.

They can be listed, but I'm avoiding setting out this catalogue at the outset so that you won't get dizzy, so that you won't think that the things to be found here are the same as those you've always found yourself with in connection with analysis, because it's not true. Though you might believe you know the function of the maternal breast or that of the scybalum, you know very well what obscurity still lingers in your minds regarding the phallus. And when it comes to the object that follows in the series – I'll give it to you nevertheless, as a way of giving your curiosity something to feed on, it's the eye, as such – well, there, you really don't know any more. This is why this should only be approached with care and for good reason, because if this is the object without which there would be no anxiety, then it's a dangerous object indeed. Let's be careful then, because it bites.

For the time being, this care will provide me with the opportunity to show what I meant, two lessons back, in saying the following, which caught the ear of one of my listeners, that desire and law are one and the same thing.

Desire and law are the same thing in the sense that their object is common to both of them. It is not enough to comfort oneself with the notion that they stand in the same relation as do the two sides of a wall, or the topside and the lining of a garment. This passes the difficulty off lightly. The central myth that enabled psychoanalysis to get under way has no other worth than to make you sense this.

The Oedipus myth means nothing but the following – at the origin, desire, as the father's desire, and the law are one and the same thing. The relationship between the law and desire is so tight that only the function of the law traces out the path of desire. Desire, as desire for the mother, is identical to the function of the law. It is inasmuch as she is forbidden by the law that the law imposes this desire for the mother, because, after all, in and of herself the mother is not the most desirable object there is. If everything is organized around the desire for the mother, if one must prefer woman to be other than the mother, what can this mean but that a commandment is introduced into the very structure of desire? To spell it right out, one desires with a commandment. The Oedipus myth means that the father's desire is what laid down the law.

From this perspective, what is the value of masochism? This is its only value for the masochist. When desire and the law find themselves together again, what the masochist means to show – and I'll add, on his little stage, because this dimension should never be lost sight of – is that the desire of the Other lays down the law.

We can see one of its effects straightaway. The masochist himself appears in the function that I would call the function of the ejectum.

It's our object *a*, but in the appearance of a cast-off, thrown to the dog, in the rubbish, in the bin, on the scrapheap of common objects, for want of being able to put it anywhere else.

This is one of the aspects that the *a* can take on such as it is illustrated in perversion. Mapped out thus at the level of masochism, this in no way exhausts what we can only discern by moving around it, namely, the function of the *a*.

The central effect of this identity that conjugates the father's desire with the law is the castration complex. The law is born from the mysterious metamorphosis or mutation of the father's desire once he has been killed, and the consequence of this in the history of analytic thought, as well as in everything that we have been able to conceive of as the most certain nexus, is the castration complex. This is why you have already seen the notation $(-\varphi)$ appearing in my diagrams at the very place where *a* is missing.

Therefore, point one, I spoke to you about the object as cause of desire. Point two, I told you that to recognize oneself as the object of one's desire is always masochistic. In this connection I indicated what emerges under a certain influence of the superego and I underlined a particularity of what happens in the place of this object *a* in the form of $(-\varphi)$.

And so we come to our third point, which concerns the structural possibilities of the manifestation of the object *a* as a lack. The mirror diagram has been presentified for you for a while now to provide a conception of this.

What is the object *a* at the level of what subsists as a body and which hides from us, so to speak, its will? This object *a* is the rock that Freud speaks of, the final irreducible reserve of libido, whose contours we can see being literally punctuated with such pathos in his texts each time he meets it, and I won't end today's lesson without telling you where you ought to go to refresh this conviction.

In what place does the *a* stand? At what level could it be recognized, if indeed this were possible? I told you earlier that to recognize oneself as the object of one's desire is always masochistic, but the masochist only does so on the stage and you're going to see what operates when he can't stay on the stage any longer. We aren't always on the stage, even though the stage stretches out far and wide, right up to the domain of our dreams. When we aren't on the stage, when we stay just shy of it, and when we strive to read in the Other what it revolves around, we only find there, at *x*, lack.

Indeed, the object is bound to its necessary lack right where the subject is constituted in the locus of the Other, that is, as far away as possible, even beyond what can appear in the return of the repressed. The *Urverdrängung*, the irreducible *incognito*, we cannot

say *unknowable* because we speak about it, this is where, in our analysis of transference, what I put forward with the term ἄγαλμα is structured and located.

To the extent that this empty place is targeted as such, the dimension of transference, which always gets neglected and for good reason, is established. This place, inasmuch as it is circumscribed by something that is materialized in the image, a rim, an opening, a gap, where the constitution of the specular image shows its limit, is the elective locus of anxiety.

You can find this rim phenomenon, for example, on privileged occasions in the opening window that marks the limit, the illusory aspect of the world of recognition, the one I have been calling *the stage*. This edge, this frame, this gap, is illustrated at least twice over in this diagram – in the mirror's edge and also in the little sign, ◊. This is the locus of anxiety and this is what you must always bear in mind as the signal of what is standing there to be sought out in the midst of it.

Freud's text on Dora, to which I ask you to refer, is ever more astounding to read for the double face it presents. On one hand there are the weaknesses and inadequacies that strike novices as the first items to be pointed up, but on the other hand there is the depth reached by everything Freud comes up against, revealing to what extent he was right there, turning around the very field we are trying to map out.

To those who heard my disquisition on *The Symposium*, the Dora text – of course, you have to be familiar with it first – may recall the dimension that is always eluded when transference is at issue, namely, that transference isn't simply that which reproduces and repeats a situation, an action, an attitude or an old trauma. There is always another coordinate, which I stressed in connection with Socrates' analytic intervention, to wit, in the case I'm mentioning here, *a love present in the real.* We cannot understand anything about transference if we do not know that it is also the consequence of this love, this present love, and analysts must keep this in mind in the course of analysis. This love is present in different ways, but they should at least remember this when it is visibly there. Contingent on this, let's say, real love, the central question of transference is established, the question the subject asks himself concerning the ἄγαλμα, namely, what he lacks, because he loves with this lack.

It is not for nothing that I'm always drumming it into you that to love is to give what one hasn't got. This is even the principle behind the castration complex. To have the phallus, to be able to make use of it, needs must not *be* it.

When one goes back to the conditions in which one does turn out

to *be* it – because one *is* it both for a man, there's no doubt about it, and for a woman, we shall say again by what incidence she is led to *be* it – well, it's always very dangerous.

3

Before I take leave of you, suffice it to ask that you reread attentively the text Freud devotes entirely to his dealings with his patient known as the young homosexual woman.

I remind you that the analysis shows that it was essentially at the time of an enigmatic disappointment concerning the birth of a little brother in her family that she steered towards homosexuality in the form of a demonstrative love for a woman of doubtful reputation, in relation to whom she conducts herself, says Freud, in an essentially virile fashion.

We are so used to speaking about it without knowing, that we don't realize that here he means to stress what I tried to presentify for you in the function of courtly love. He does it with a touch, a science of analogy, that is utterly admirable. She behaves like the knight who suffers everything for his Lady, who contents himself with the most lifeless and least substantial favours, who even prefers to have these and nothing more. The more the object of his love moves in the opposite direction to what might be termed reward, the more he overestimates this object of eminent dignity.

When open hearsay cannot fail to impress upon her the fact that her beloved's conduct is indeed highly suspect, the loving exaltation finds itself reinforced by the supplementary aim of saving her. All of this is admirably underlined by Freud.

You know how the young woman in question was brought to his consultation. This affair was carried out for the whole town to see, with a style of defiance which Freud spotted right away as constituting a provocation aimed at someone in her family, and very quickly it turned out that this someone was her father. The affair ends with an encounter. The young woman, in the company of her beloved, runs into her father on his way to his office. He casts her an irritated glance. The scene unfolds very rapidly. The loved one, for whom this adventure is doubtless but a somewhat lowly entertainment, who clearly starts to get a bit fed up with all this and doesn't want to expose herself to any great difficulties, says to the young woman that this has gone on long enough, that they are going to leave it at that, and for her to stop lavishly sending her flowers every day and following her around on her heels. With that, the young woman flings herself straight off a bridge.

Once upon a time I pored over the maps of Vienna in great detail to give the case of Little Hans its full meaning, but today I won't be going so far as to tell you the exact place. It's very probably something comparable to what you can still see up on boulevard Pereire, namely, a little cutting with a railway track at the bottom for a small line that is now disused. That's where the woman flings herself, *niederkommt*, lets herself drop.

Simply recalling the analogy with giving birth is not sufficient to exhaust the meaning of this word. The *niederkommen* is essential to any sudden moment at which the subject is brought into relation with what he is as *a*. It is not for nothing that the melancholic subject has such a propensity to fling himself out of the window, which he always does at such disconcerting speed, in a shot. Indeed, inasmuch as it calls to mind the limit between the stage and the world, the window indicates for us what is meant by this act – in some way, the subject comes back to the state of fundamental exclusion he feels himself to be in. The leap is taken at the very moment that, in the absolute of a subject that only we analysts can form an idea of, the conjunction of desire and the law is brought about. This is specifically what happens at the moment when the couple formed by the knightly lass of Lesbos and her Anna Karenina object, if I may say so, meet the father.

To understand how the *passage à l'acte* occurred, it is not enough to say that the father cast an irritated glance. There is something here that touches on the very foundation of the relationship, its structure as such. What is at issue? Let's be brief and to the point, I think you've been sufficiently primed to hear this.

The young woman, whose disappointment with her father because of the birth of her younger brother was the turning point in her life, had therefore set about making of her womanly castration what the knight does with his Lady, namely, to offer her precisely the sacrifice of his virile prerogatives, which, through the inversion of this sacrifice, made her the support of what lacks in the field of the Other, namely, the supreme guarantee of the following, that the law is truly and verily the father's desire, that one can be sure of this, that there is a glory of the father, an absolute phallus, Φ.

Without doubt, resentment and revenge are decisive in the young woman's relationship with her father. Her resentment and her revenge are this law, this supreme phallus. This is where I place the capital Φ. *Because I have been disappointed in my attachment to you, Father, and I can be neither your submissive woman nor your object, She will be my Lady, and I shall be the one who sustains, who creates, the idealized relationship with that part of me that has been spurned, with that part of my womanly Being that is inadequate.* Indeed, let's

not forget that she gave up cultivating her narcissism, she lost interest in her appearance and her coquetry, her beauty, to become the Lady's devoted knight.

All of this, this entire scene, is what meets the father's eye in the simple encounter on the bridge. And this scene, which had gained the subject's full approval, nevertheless loses all its value with the disapproval felt in this look. It is to this extent that there next occurs what we might call, in referring to the first chart I gave you of anxiety's coordinates, supreme *embarrassment*.

Then comes *emotion*. Go back to the chart. You will see its precise coordinates. Emotion comes to her through the sudden impossibility of facing up to the scene her beloved is making.

Here, I'm addressing someone who asked me to anticipate a little what I might have to say on the distinction between acting-out and *passage à l'acte*. We shall have to come back to this, but we can already reveal that the two essential conditions of what is known, properly speaking, as *passage à l'acte* are realized here.

What occurs then is the subject's absolute identification with the *a* to which she is reduced. Here, it is a matter of the confrontation between the father's desire, upon which her entire conduct is built, and the law that is presentified in the father's gaze. This is what leads her to feel definitively identified with *a* and, by the same token, rejected, evacuated, from the stage. And only the *being dropped*, the *letting oneself drop*, can realize this.

I don't have enough time today to indicate to you in what direction this is heading. Let's say, however, that Freud's famous note on mourning, about the identification with the object as that upon which bears what he expressed as a vengeance on the part of the griever, is not sufficient. We mourn and we feel its effects of devaluation inasmuch as the object we are mourning was, without us knowing, the one that had become, the one that we had made, the support of our castration. When this comes back at us, we see ourselves for what we are, in so far as we have essentially gone back to this position of castration.

You can see time is getting on and I can only give you an indication here. Two things designate very well to what extent this is what is involved.

First of all the way Freud senses that, regardless of the spectacular advance the subject might be making in her analysis, it passes over her, so to speak, like water off a duck's back. He perfectly designates, through all the possible coordinates, the place specific to *a* in the mirror of the Other. Of course he hasn't got the elements of my topology at his disposal, but you can't put it more clearly than that. I'm coming to a standstill, I'm coming up against something,

so he says, akin to what happens in hypnosis. Now, what happens in hypnosis? The subject, in the mirror of the Other, is capable of reading everything that stands at the level of the little vase traced out in a dotted line, that is, he goes straight for everything that can be made specular. It's not for nothing that the mirror, the carafe stopper, even the hypnotizer's gaze, are the instruments of hypnosis. The only thing one doesn't see in hypnosis is precisely the stopper itself, or the hypnotizer's gaze, namely, the cause behind the hypnosis. The cause of hypnosis does not deliver itself up in the consequences of hypnosis.

The other reference is the obsessional's doubt. And what does this radical doubt bear on, this being also what makes the analyses of obsessionals go on for ages and ages, and very nicely so? The obsessional's treatment is always a veritable honeymoon between analyst and patient, in so far as it is centred right where Freud designates very well what kind of discourse the obsessional holds, namely – *he's really very fine this man, he tells me the most beautiful things in the world, the trouble is, I don't altogether believe in it.* If it's central, it's because it's right here, in x.

In the case of the young homosexual woman, what's at stake is a certain promotion of the phallus, as such, in the place of a. This is precisely what should enlighten us as to the outcome of the treatment.

I hesitate to broach it here because it's such a marvellously illuminating text that I don't need to give you its other properties. I beg you at least not to take the closing remarks of this text for one of those ritornellos to which we have since become accustomed. Here he gives us what he was in the course of uncovering, namely, the distinction between inborn constitutional elements and acquired historical elements, small matter which, in the determination of homosexuality. By setting apart the *Objektwahl* as such, the choice of object, by showing that it entails originative mechanisms, he singles out the object as such, as the field specific to analysis. Effectively, everything turns around the subject's relation to a.

The paradox of this analysis borders on what I indicated for you last time as the point at which Freud bequeaths us the question of how to operate at the level of the castration complex. This paradox is designated by something that is part and parcel of the observation and I'm surprised that this is not the most common object of surprise among analysts, namely, that this analysis comes to an end with Freud dropping her.

We are now better able to articulate what happened with Dora, and I'll be coming back to this. All of that was very far from being just some mere tactlessness and we can say that, though Dora was

not analysed right up to the end, Freud saw clearly right up to the end. But with the young homosexual woman – which is a case where the function of the *a* is in a way so prevalent that it even went to the point of passing over into the real, a *passage à l'acte*, whose symbolic relation he nonetheless comprehends so well – Freud gives in. *I won't manage anything*, he tells himself, and he passes her on to a female colleague. He is the one who takes the initiative of *dropping* her.

I'll leave you with this term as an offering to your reflection.

You can sense that my concern is to target an essential reference in the analytic handling of transference.

16 January 1963

IX

PASSAGE À L'ACTE AND ACTING-OUT

Letting oneself drop and *getting up on the stage*

Egoization
The natal cut
The jouissance of the symptom
The lies of the unconscious
Freud's passion

Today we are going to continue to speak about what I have been designating for you as the *a*.

I'll begin by calling to mind the relation it bears to the subject, so as to maintain our axis and not to let you drift off course through my explanation. What we have to accentuate today, however, is the relation it bears to the big Other.

The *a* is isolated by the Other and it is constituted as a remainder in the subject's relation to the Other. This is why I have reproduced this table, which is homologous with the apparatus of division.

A	S
$	Ⱥ
a	0

Second table of division

At the top right stands the subject, inasmuch as, through our dialectic, it finds its point of departure in the function of the signifier. This is the hypothetical subject at the origin of this dialectic. The barred subject, the only subject to which our experience has access, is constituted in the locus of the Other as marked by the signifier. Conversely, the Other's entire existence hangs upon a guarantee that is missing, hence the barred Other.

But there is a remainder after this operation and this is the *a*.

1

Last time, starting off from the case of homosexuality in a woman, which was not a unique example because the Dora case was looming behind it, I brought out for you a structural characteristic of the subject's relation to *a*.

This essential possibility, this relation which may be called universal because you always find it across all the levels pertaining to the *a* – and this is its most characteristic connotation precisely because it is linked to the function of the remainder – I called, using a term borrowed from Freud's vocabulary regarding the *passage à l'acte* that brings his case of female homosexuality to him, *being dropped*, *niederkommen lassen*.

Now, no doubt you remember that I ended with the remark that, strangely enough, a same *being dropped* marked the response from Freud himself to an exemplary difficulty in this case. In everything of which Freud has given us an account with regard to his action, his conduct, and his experience, this *being dropped* is unique and at the same time is so evident in his text, almost provocative, that for some it becomes practically invisible when reading it.

This *being dropped* is the essential correlate of the *passage à l'acte*. But which side this *being dropped* is seen from still needs to be specified. If you would care to refer to the formula of the fantasy, the *passage à l'acte* is on the side of the subject inasmuch as he appears effaced by the bar to the greatest extent. The moment of the *passage à l'acte* is the moment of the subject's greatest *embarrassment*, with the behavioural addition of *emotion* as a disorder of movement. It is then that, from where he is – namely, the locus of the stage where alone, as a fundamentally historicized subject, he is able to maintain himself in his status of subject – he rushes and topples off the stage, out of the scene.

This is the very structure of the *passage à l'acte*.

The woman in the observation on female homosexuality leaps over a little barrier that separates her from the channel where the partially underground tram passes by. Dora's *passage à l'acte* happens at the moment of embarrassment she is put in by the trapline, Herr K.'s tactless trap, *My wife means nothing to me*. The slap she gives him can only express the following perfect ambiguity – does she love Herr K. or Frau K.? The slap certainly won't tell us which. But such a slap is one of those signs, one of those crucial, fateful moments, that we can see rebounding from generation to generation, with its value as a junction where one's destiny switches from one track to another.

The subject moves in the direction of an escape from the scene.

This is what allows us to recognize the *passage à l'acte* in its specific value and to distinguish it from something quite different, as you shall see, to wit, acting-out.

Shall I tell you about another example, of the most glaring variety? Who would dream of contesting the application of this label to what is known as a fugue? What is it that we call a fugue in subjects who have always more or less been put into the infantile position, who cast themselves into it, if not this stage exit, roving off into the pure world where the subject sets off in search of something that's been rejected and refused everywhere? *Il se fait mousse*, as one says, he goes off to become a ship's lad and, of course, he comes back, which can be his opportunity to *se faire mousser*, to sing his own praises. The departure is precisely the passage from the stage to the world.

This is precisely why it was so useful to set out in the first phases of this disquisition on anxiety the essential distinction between these two registers – on one hand, the *world*, the place where the real bears down, and, on the other hand, the *stage* of the Other where man as subject has to be constituted, to take up his place as he who bears speech, but only ever in a structure that, as truthful as it sets itself out to be, has the structure of fiction.

Before I delve any further into the function of anxiety, let me inform you that later on I'll be speaking to you about acting-out, even though initially it looks more like something along the lines of an avoidance of anxiety. Furthermore, dwelling on this subject right now doubtless strikes you as yet another detour – and one more detour would surely be one detour too many. Observe if you will, however, that here you're simply meeting up with a line of questioning that my disquisition had already punctuated at the outset as something essential. It is the question as to whether anxiety, between the subject and the Other, is not such an absolute mode of communication that one may wonder whether it is not, properly speaking, common to both of them.

In this regard, I note that we have to take into account the fact of anxiety in certain animals. This is one of the features which gives us great difficulty, but which we have to preserve and which no disquisition on anxiety ought to misrecognize. I am placing here, in order to find it again later, a little marker, a little white pebble. How can we be so sure about a feeling in an animal? Now, anxiety is indeed the only feeling we can have no doubt about when we meet it in an animal. We find there, in an outer form, the character that I have already noted as included in anxiety – *that which does not deceive.*

2

So, having drawn up the diagram for what I hope to cover today, I'll begin with a few reminders.

Freud's ultimate thinking points out that anxiety is a signal in the ego.

If this signal is in the ego, it must be somewhere in the locus of the ideal ego. I think I've gone far enough into this for you to know that it must be at *x* on the diagram.

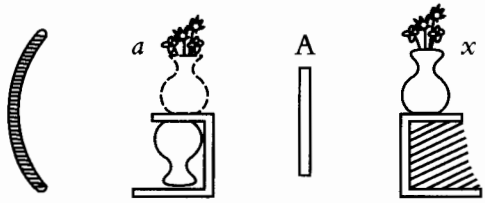
This signal is a rim phenomenon in the imaginary field of the ego. The term *rim* derives its legitimacy from the affirmation by Freud himself that the ego is a surface and even, he adds, a surface projection, as I reminded you in its time. Let's say, therefore, that it's a colour, a term whose metaphorical use I'll be justifying on a later occasion. This colour is produced on the rim of the specular surface, *i'(a)*, itself a mirroring, being specular, of the real surface *i(a)*.

The ideal ego is the function whereby the ego is constituted through the series of its identifications with certain objects, with respect to which Freud underlines, in *Das Ich und das Es*, a problem that leaves him baffled, the ambiguity between identification and love. We won't be surprised, therefore, that we can only approach it ourselves with the help of the formulas that test out the very status of our specific subjectivity in discourse – to be understood as learned discourse, the disquisition of the teacher. The ambiguity at issue here designates the relationship I've been stressing for a long time now, the relationship between *being* and *having*.

To emphasize this with a reference point taken from the salient points of Freud's oeuvre itself, it is the identification that lies essentially at the root of mourning, for example. How is it that *a*, the object of identification, is also *a*, the object of love? Well, it is to the extent that it metaphorically wrenches the *lover*, to use the medieval and traditional term, from the status in which he presents himself, the status of the loveable one, ἐρώμενος, to make him ἐρῶν, a subject of lack, whereby he constitutes himself properly in love. This is what gives him, so to speak, the instrument of love inasmuch as – we fall back into this – one loves, when one is a lover, with what one hasn't got.

The *a* is called *a* in our discourse not merely for the algebraic function of the letter that we were promoting the other day, but, if I may say so, light-heartedly, because it's what *on n'a plus*, what we *a*in't got no more. This is why this *a* that in love we *a*in't got no more can be found again along the regressive path in identification in the form of the identification with *being* it. This is why Freud qualifies the passage from love to identification using precisely the term

regression, but, in this regression, *a* remains what it is, an instrument. It is *with* what one is that one can have or have not, as it were.



The real image encloses the objects *a*

It is *with* the real image, constituted, when it emerges, as *i(a)*, that one clasps or not the multiplicity of objects *a*, here represented by the real flowers, in the neck of the vase, and this is thanks to the concave mirror at the far end, a symbol of something that must stand to be found in the structure of the cortex, the foundation of a certain relationship that man has with the image of his body, and with the different objects that can be constituted from this body, with the fragments of the original body grasped or not at the moment when *i(a)* has the opportunity of being constituted.

Prior to the mirror stage, that which will be *i(a)* lies in the disorder of the objects *a* in the plural and it is not yet a question of having them or not. This is the true meaning, the deepest meaning, to be given to the term *autoeroticism* – one lacks any self, as it were, completely and utterly. It is not the outside

world that one lacks, as it is quite wrongly expressed, it is oneself.

This is where the possibility of the fragmented-body fantasy that some of you have met in schizophrenics lies. This does not enable us, however, to decide upon the determinism of this fantasy and this is why I pointed out the worth of a recent piece of research concerning the coordinates of this determinism. This research did not claim to exhaust it in the least, but it connoted one of its features by observing strictly, and without further ado, what the schizophrenic's mother voices regarding what her child had been for her when he was in her belly – nothing more than a body that was conversely convenient or cumbersome, namely, the subjectification of *a* as sheer real.

Let's stay for a while with this state that stands prior to the emergence of the image *i(a)* – prior to the distinction between all the objects *a* and the real image in relation to which they will be the remainder that one has or has not – in order to make the following remark.

Freud tells us that anxiety is a rim phenomenon, a signal that is produced at the ego's limit when it is threatened by something that must not appear. This is the *a*, the remainder, which is abhorred by the Other. How is it that the movement of reflection, like the guide rails of experience, led the analysts, first Rank and then Freud, to the following point in this connection – to find the origin of anxiety at the pre-specular and pre-autoerotic level of birth, where no one in the analytic circle has ever dreamt of speaking about the constitution of an ego? This really is the proof that, though it is indeed possible to define anxiety as a signal, a rim phenomenon, within the ego when the ego has been constituted, this is surely not exhaustive.

We find this quite clearly in some of the most well-known phenomena that accompany anxiety, those that are designated as phenomena of depersonalization. These are precisely the most contrary phenomena to the structure of the ego as such. This raises a question that we cannot avoid, that of locating depersonalization authentically, all the more so given that under this heading, when we see the points of divergence among the different authors, the phenomena are grouped together in a way that is certainly ambiguous from the analytic point of view.

We know about the place depersonalization has taken in the specific way it has been marked out by one or several authors from the French school whom I've already had occasion to reference. You will easily recognize the relationships between this way of marking things out and what I've been developing here, and it is even to be presumed that the outlines I gave previously are not foreign to it. The notion of distance is indeed almost palpable in this diagram,

where I have always marked the distance that had to be kept from the mirror in order to afford the subject this distancing from himself that the specular dimension is designed to offer him. We cannot conclude from this, however, that any *getting closer* could provide us with the solution to any of the difficulties that are generated by the necessity of this distance.

In other words, what should be said is not that the objects are invasive in psychosis. What is it that constitutes their danger as far as the ego is concerned? Well, the very structure of these objects makes them unsuitable for egoization.

This is what I tried to get you to grasp with the help of what you might call, if you like, topological metaphors – but I think it takes things further – in so far as they introduce the possibility of a non-specularizable form in the structure of certain of these objects.

Phenomenologically speaking, it seems to go without saying that depersonalization begins with the non-recognition of the specular image. We all know just how tangible this fact is in the clinic and with what frequency the subject starts to be gripped by a depersonalizing vacillation whenever he cannot find himself in the mirror, or anything else analogous to one in a situation of this kind. But this formula, which does set out the fact, is no less inadequate. If what is seen in the mirror is anguishing, it is in so far as it cannot be proposed to the Other's acknowledgement.

It's enough just to refer to the moment I marked out as characteristic of the experience of the mirror and paradigmatic of the constitution of the ideal ego in the space of the Other – the moment the child turns his head, with that familiar movement I've described for you, towards this Other, this witness, this adult who stands behind him, to communicate to him by way of a smile the manifestations of his jubilation, let's say, the manifestations of something that makes him communicate it through the specular image. Should the relationship that is struck up with the specular image be such that the subject is too captive to the image for this movement to be possible, it's because the purely dyadic relationship dispossesses him of his relation to the big Other.

Moreover, this sense of dispossession has been well observed by clinicians in psychosis. There, specularization is strange, *odd* as the English say, unpaired, devoid of symmetry. It is Maupassant's *Horla*, the *hors-l'espace*, outside space, inasmuch as space is the dimension of the superposable.

At the point we've reached, let's pause on what is meant by the separation linked to birth anxiety. Some imprecision lingers here, which gives rise to all kinds of confusion. I won't have time to do any more than indicate it and I will be coming back to it, but you

should know, however, that some major reservations ought to be voiced pertaining to the structuring of the phenomenon of anxiety at the place of birth.

You just have to go and look at Freud's text. He says that at the level of birth anxiety a whole constellation of movements are constituted, principally vasomotor and respiratory ones, a real constellation that will be carried over to anxiety in its function of signal in the same way as the hysterical access point is constituted, which is itself a reproduction of inherited movements for the expression of certain emotional moments. This is assuredly altogether inconceivable. It is impossible to locate such a complex relationship between anxiety and the ego right back at the start. Although, thereafter, it will be able to serve as the ego's signal, this is only through the intermediary of the relationship between $i(a)$ and a, and precisely the intermediary of what we have to seek out here in terms of a structural operator, namely, the cut.

But then, the initial typical separation, the one that enables us to approach and form an idea of this relationship, is not the separation from the mother. The cut in question is not the one that cleaves child from mother.

The way the child dwells within the mother at the origin poses the whole problem of the character of the egg's relation to the mother's body in mammals. You know that there's a whole side on which it is, in relation to the mother's body, a foreign body, a parasitic body, a body lodged by the arteriovenous stems of its chorion in the specific organ that houses it, the uterus, along with the mucous membrane with which it interrelates in a certain fashion. The cut that interests us, the cut that leaves its stamp on a certain number of clinically recognizable phenomena and for which we cannot elude it, is a cut that, thank goodness, for our idea of it, is much more satisfying than the cut of the child who is born when he falls into the world.

A cut from what? From the embryonic envelopes.

I need only send you off to any old textbook on embryology from the last hundred years for you to grasp that, to have a complete notion of this pre-specular bundle that the a is, you have to consider the envelopes as an element of the child's body. The envelopes are differentiated starting off from the egg and you will see in what forms they are, most curiously, distinguished – I trust you quite far now after last year's work on the cross-cap. In the diagrams illustrating the envelopes you can see all the varieties of the inside/outside relationship appearing, the outer coelom in which the foetus floats, enveloped in its amnion, the amniotic cavity itself being enveloped by an ectodermal lamina, presenting on the outside a face that is in continuity with the endoblast.

In sum, you will see just how tangible is the analogy between what is detached from these envelopes with the cut of the embryo and the separation, on the cross-cap, of a certain enigmatic *a* that I insisted on. Should we come across this analogy again later on, I think I've indicated it enough for you today to facilitate it for us.

Therefore, what's left to be done today is what I announced concerning what acting-out indicates about the essential relationship between the small *a* and the big A.

3

Everything that amounts to acting-out stands in contrast to the *passage à l'acte*. It presents itself with certain characteristics that are going to allow us to single it out.

The profound and necessary relationship between acting-out and the *a* is what I wish to lead you into, by the hand in some sense, without letting you slip over.

Observe if you will to what extent, in what you have ascertained in the clinic, taking someone by the hand so that they won't slip over is utterly essential to a certain type of relation that the subject can have. When you meet it you can be quite certain that it's an *a* for the subject. This makes for a kind of union that is very widespread, but which is not for all that any more convenient to manage because the *a* that is involved for the subject may well be the most inconvenient superego.

There exists a type of mother that we call a phallic woman, a term which is not unsuitable but which we use without entirely knowing what we mean. I advise prudence before you apply this label, but if you are dealing with someone who tells you that, as very precious as an object is for her, inexplicably, she will be dreadfully tempted not to hold onto it in a fall, expecting goodness knows what miraculous outcome to such a catastrophe, and that the most beloved child is precisely the one that one day she inexplicably dropped, well then, there you can identify her as what may conveniently be called on this occasion a phallic mother. There are without doubt other modalities. We shall say that this one here strikes us as the least deceptive. In Greek tragedy, and this did not escape Giraudoux's perspicacity, Electra's deepest grievance against Clytemnestra is that one day she let her slip from her arms.

Let's move now into acting-out.

In the *Case of Homosexuality in a Woman*, whilst the suicide attempt is a *passage à l'acte*, the whole affair with the lady of doubtful reputation who is elevated to the function of a supreme object

amounts to acting-out. Whilst Dora's slap is a *passage à l'acte*, all her paradoxical behaviour in the K. household, which Freud uncovers right away with such perspicacity, amounts to acting-out.

Acting-out is essentially something in the subject's conduct that is on show. The demonstrative aspect of any acting-out, its orientation towards the Other, must be noted.

In the case of the young homosexual woman, Freud insists on this. Her conduct is on display to the eyes of all and sundry. The more scandalous this display becomes, the more her conduct is accentuated. And what is on show is essentially on show as something other than what it is. What it is, nobody knows, but nobody doubts that it is something else.

What it is, Freud says so himself, is that she would have liked a child from her father. But should you content yourselves with that, then you're really not hard to please because this child has nothing to do with a maternal need. This is why I insisted at least on indicating that, contrary to the whole direction that analytic thinking has slid off in, the child's relation to the mother ought to be placed in a position that is in some sense lateral in relation to the main current of the elucidation of unconscious desire.

In what we can at least grasp of this from its economic impact, there is in the mother's ordinary relation to her child something fullish, roundish, closed off, something just as complete as during the pregnancy phase, to the extent that it takes some very special care to make it enter our conception and to see how its impact is applied to the cut relationship between *i(a)* and *a*. After all, our experience of the transference is enough to see at what moment in the analysis our female patients fall pregnant and how it serves them – it's always the bulwark of a return to the deepest narcissism. But let's leave that aside.

She did indeed want that child as something else and this something else doesn't escape Freud's notice either, thank goodness. She wanted the child as a phallus, that is, as it is spelt out in doctrine in the most developed fashion in Freud, as a substitute, as ersatz, as something that here falls squarely into our dialectic of cut and lack, of the *a* as an offcut, as something missing.

This is what allows her, having failed in the realization of her desire, to realize it both differently and in the same way, as ἐρῶν. She turns herself into a *lover*. In other words, she poises herself in what she hasn't got, the phallus, and to make a good show of having it, she gives it. It is indeed an utterly demonstrative way. Freud tells us that she behaves towards the Lady as a devoted knight, as a man, as one who can sacrifice for her what he has, his phallus.

So, let's combine these two terms, showing, or displaying, and

desire, so as to single out a desire whose essence is to show oneself as other, and yet, in showing oneself as other, thereby to designate oneself. In acting-out, we shall say therefore that desire, to assert itself as truth, sets out on a path that doubtless it only manages to take in a way we would call peculiar if we didn't already know, from our work here, that truth is not in desire's nature. If we call to mind the formula that desire cannot be articulable even though it is articulated, we will be less astonished by the phenomenon with which we are faced. I even gave you a further link in the chain – it is articulated objectively, articulated to the object that last time I called cause of desire.

Acting-out is essentially *monstration*, showing, which is doubtless veiled, but not veiled in and of itself. It is only veiled for us, as the subject of acting-out, inasmuch as it speaks, inasmuch as it could be truthful. Otherwise, on the contrary, it is as visible as can be and this is precisely why it is invisible in another register, showing its cause. The crux of what is on show is this remainder, this offcut, which falls away in the affair.

Betwixt the subject $, here Othered, so to speak, in his structure of fiction, and the Other, Ⱥ, which cannot be authenticated, never fully authenticated, what emerges is the remainder, *a*, the pound of flesh. This means that you can borrow as much as you like to fill the holes of desire, like those of melancholia, and there you have the Jew who knows a thing or two about balancing the books and who in the end asks for the pound of flesh – I think you know whom I'm quoting. This is the trait you always meet up with in what amounts to acting-out.

Remember what I had occasion to write in my report on *The Direction of the Treatment* about Ernst Kris's observation with respect to the case of plagiarism. Being on a certain path that perhaps we shall have to name, Kris seeks to silence his patient by means of the truth. He shows him in the most irrefutable way that he is not a plagiarist, he has read his book and it is well and truly original. On the contrary, the others are the ones who've been copying him. The subject cannot dispute this. Only, he doesn't give a damn. And when he leaves, what does he go and do? As you know – I think there are nonetheless a few people, a majority of you, who read what I write now and then – he goes and gobbles down a plate of fresh brains.

I'm not in the process of calling to mind the mechanism of the case. I'm teaching you to recognize acting-out and what it means, namely, what I'm designating for you as the *a* or the pound of flesh.

With the fresh brains, the patient simply gives a sign to Ernst Kris. *Everything you say is true, only it leaves the question unscathed.*

There are still the fresh brains. To make a point of it, I'm going to eat some right afterwards so that I can tell you about it in the next session.

I insist, on matters such as these it's impossible to move too slowly. You will ask me – well, I'm doing the asking and the answering, you might tell me if I haven't stressed this enough – *What is original about this acting-out and this demonstration of an unknown desire? The symptom is the same. Acting-out is a symptom. The symptom shows itself as something else too. The proof is that it has to be interpreted.* – Well, let's dot the *i*'s then. You know that the symptom is not to be interpreted directly, that it takes transference, that is, the introduction of the Other.

Perhaps you're still not quite grasping this and you'll be telling me – *Well, yes, that's what you're telling us about acting-out.* – No, it's not. It is not in the essential nature of the symptom to have to be interpreted. It doesn't call upon interpretation in the way that acting-out does, contrary to what you might think.

Besides, it does need to be said, acting-out does call upon interpretation, but the question is one of knowing whether the interpretation is possible. I am going to show you that, yes, it is, but it's hanging in the balance, in analytic practice and analytic theory alike.

Regarding the symptom, interpretation is clearly possible, but only given a certain additional condition, namely, that transference should have been established. In its nature, the symptom is not like acting-out, which calls upon interpretation, because, and this is too often forgotten, what analysis uncovers in the symptom is that the symptom is not an appeal to the Other, it is not what shows itself to the Other. The symptom, in its nature, is jouissance, don't forget this, a jouissance under wraps no doubt, *unterbliebene Befriedigung*, it has no need of you, unlike acting-out, it is sufficient unto itself. It belongs to the realm of what I taught you to distinguish from desire as jouissance, that is, it steers towards the Thing, having crossed the barrier of the good – this is a reference to my Seminar on ethics – that is, the barrier of the pleasure principle, and this is why this jouissance can be translated as an *Unlust* – for those who haven't heard it yet, this German term signifies *displeasure*.

I'm not the one who invented all that and I'm not even the one to voice it, I've put it in Freud's own specific terms.

Let's come back to acting-out.

Unlike the symptom, acting-out is an inroad into transference. It's wild transference. There doesn't have to be analysis for there to be transference, and you suspected as much, but transference without analysis is acting-out. Acting-out without analysis is transference. The result of this is that one of the questions that arises concerning

the organization of transference, by this I mean its *Handlung*, is that of knowing how wild transference may be domesticated, how the wild elephant is to be got into the enclosure, how the horse is to be made to walk the lunge ring, to trot round the pen.

This is one of the ways of setting out the problem of transference. It would be very useful to set it out from this angle because this is the only way of knowing how to take action with regard to acting-out.

To those of you who are soon going to be looking at acting-out, I'll tell you that there exists, in the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, the article by Phyllis Greenacre, *General Problems of Acting Out*. It's in the fourth issue of volume XIX, 1950, so it's not impossible to find. It's a very interesting article in many respects, but for me it also conjures up a memory.

It was at a time, already some ten years ago, when a few investigators were paying us a visit. Phyllis Greenacre, who was among them, gave me occasion to observe a fine acting-out, namely, the frantic masturbation, which she gave herself over to before my very eyes, of a little female clam digger, a Japanese netsuke that was in my possession, and still bears the traces of this, the object I mean. I must also say that her visit was the occasion of a very agreeable conversation, much better than the one I had with Mrs Lampl De Groot, which was punctuated by various *passages à l'acte*, including leaps and bounds that nearly took her up to the ceiling, low as it admittedly is, of my consulting room.

So, in the article *General Problems of Acting Out*, one finds some very pertinent remarks, albeit that – as you'll see, those of you who read it – they stand to gain from being clarified by the original outlines I'm sketching out for you here. The question is one of knowing how to take action with regard to acting-out. There are three ways, she says. To interpret it, to prohibit it, or to strengthen the ego.

When it comes to interpreting it, she doesn't labour under any illusion. Phyllis Greenacre is a very fine woman. Interpreting it, given what I've just been saying, is not destined to have much effect, if only for the fact that acting-out is made for that. When you look closely, more often than not you notice that the subject knows very well what he's doing in acting-out. It is to offer himself to your interpretation. Only there you have it, it is not the meaning of what you interpret that counts, whatever it may be, it's the remainder. So, this path, at least without adding anything, is a dead end.

It's very interesting to take the time to punctuate these hypotheses.

Prohibiting it, naturally, raises a smile, even from the author herself, who says – *well, one can do all kinds of things, but telling the subject that there'll be no acting-out is rather hard to do*. Anyway, no one dreams of doing that. All the same, one can observe in this

regard the interlocutory prohibitions that are always to be found in analysis. Indeed, much more forbidding goes on than is thought. A good many things are done, clearly, to avoid any acting-out in the session. And then, patients are also told not to take any essential life decisions during analysis. It is a fact that, wherever one is applying one's grip, there is a certain relationship to what may be called danger, either for the subject or for the analyst.

Why does one do all that?

Essentially – I shall say, to illustrate my point – both because we are doctors and because we are good people. As it was put by I no longer recall whom, we don't want the patient who comes to confide in us to get hurt. And the most astonishing thing is that we manage this. The fact that we notice acting-out is all the same the sign that we prevent a great deal of it. Is that what Mrs Greenacre is speaking about when she says that a true transference has to be allowed to establish itself more solidly?

I should like to point out here one aspect of analysis that people don't see. Its accident insurance aspect, its health insurance aspect. It's very funny, though – at least once an analyst has got what is known as experience under his belt, that is, everything that, in his own specific attitude, he is most often unaware of – just how rare short-term illnesses are during analyses, just how much, in an analysis which goes on a bit, colds, bouts of flu and suchlike, vanish, and even where long-term illnesses are concerned, if there were more analyses in society, we'd all be faring much better. I think national insurance and life insurance too should take into account the proportion of analyses in the population to alter their rates.

Conversely, when accidents do occur, I'm not only speaking about acting-out, it is very frequently ascribed, by the patient and those around him, to the analysis. It is in a way ascribed to the analysis by its very nature. They are right, it's acting-out, so it's addressed to the Other, and if one is in analysis, then it's addressed to the analyst. If he has taken up this place, then too bad for him. He still has the responsibility that comes with this place that he has agreed to occupy.

These questions are perhaps designed to clarify for you what I mean when I speak about the analyst's desire and when I pose the question of this desire.

I won't be stopping, however, to examine what shifted the question of the way in which we domesticate the transference in the direction of strengthening the ego – the third of the hypotheses – because as you've heard me say, it's not straightforward. Nor will I be stopping to affirm what I've always stood in opposition to, because, as is admitted by those who have been walking this path

for well over a decade, and more precisely for so many decades that people are starting to speak about it much less now, this is a matter of leading the subject to identification. An entire literature admits as much.

It is not about identifying with an image as the reflection of the ideal ego in the Other, but with the analyst's ego, resulting in what Balint speaks of, the veritable manic fit that he describes as standing at the end of an analysis thus characterized.

What exactly does this fit represent? It represents the insurrection of the *a* that remains entirely untouched.

4

Let's come back to Freud and to the observation on the case of homosexuality in a woman, in which we find all kinds of altogether admirable remarks.

Even though he tells us that there is nothing to indicate that anything called transference is occurring here, he says at the same time that it would be out of the question to give any time to the hypothesis that there is no transference. A kind of blind spot in his position is being indicated here, because this misrecognizes entirely what the transference relation is about and we even find it expressly worded in the disquisition of Freud himself on this case.

This patient – this is spelt out as such – was lying to him in her dreams. For Freud this is the characteristic feature of the case. The precious ἄγαλμα of this disquisition on homosexuality in a woman lies in the fact that Freud comes to a halt, gobsmacked, faced with the following – he too does the asking and the answering – *What! The unconscious can lie!*

Indeed, this patient's dreams mark, day by day, great strides towards the sex to which she is destined, but Freud doesn't believe in it for one minute, and quite rightly, because the same sufferer who reports these dreams to him also says to him – *But yes, of course, that will allow me to marry and, at the same time, the best part, to occupy myself with women.*

Therefore, she tells him herself that she is lying. And besides, Freud doesn't doubt it. This is precisely what gives the appearance of an absence of any relationship of transference. He comes to a halt on the following – *But then, this unconscious that we are accustomed to considering as the most profound, the true truth, can therefore deceive us.* And his whole debate revolves around the *Zutrauen*, the confidence to be put in the unconscious – *Can we keep up this confidence in the unconscious?* he asks.

He affirms this in a sentence that is very characteristic because it is so elliptical and concentrated that it almost has the character of tripping up in one's speech that I speak about in my Rome Report. I will read you the sentence, I haven't brought it with me today, I'll bring it next time, it is very fine, it concerns a snag with regard to the unconscious. The unconscious always merits our confidence, he says, and the discourse of the dream is something other than the unconscious, it is forged from a desire stemming from the unconscious – but he admits at the same time, without going so far as to formulate it, that therefore she does indeed desire something and, stemming from the unconscious, this desire is what is being expressed through these lies.

She tells him as much herself, her dreams lie. Freud comes to a halt faced with the problem of any symptomatic lie – look what lies are for children – it's the problem of what the subject means when lying. And the odd thing is that Freud lets everything drop when all the parts seize up. He's not interested in what's jamming them, namely, the waste object, the little remainder, which brings everything to a stop and which nevertheless is what is in question here.

Without seeing what he is being encumbered by here, he is moved, as he most certainly shows, faced with this threat to the fidelity of the unconscious. And then, he follows through on his impulse, he commits a *passage à l'acte*.

This is the point at which Freud refuses to see, in truth – which is his passion – the structure of fiction that stands at its origin.

This is the point at which he has not sufficiently pondered over something on which, in speaking of the fantasy, I laid the accent for you in a recent talk, namely, the Epimenides paradox. The *I am lying* is perfectly admissible in so far as what is lying is desire, at the moment when, affirming itself as desire, it delivers the subject to this logical cancelling-out on which the philosopher comes to a standstill when he sees the contradiction of the *I am lying*.

But after all, what Freud lacks here is, as we know, what lacks in his disquisition. It is something that always remained for him in the state of a question – *what does a woman want?* This is where Freud's thinking trips up over something that we may call, provisionally, femininity.

Don't make out that I'm saying that woman per se is mendacious when I say that femininity is evasive and that there's something of an angle here, to employ the terms of the *I Ching*, of *pliant gentleness*,[1] something over which Freud nearly choked to death when he found out, shortly after the fact, about the night-time stroll his fiancée had taken, on the very day they exchanged their final vows, with some cousin or other without telling him. I'm saying

some cousin or other, I don't remember very well whom, I haven't checked in the biography, never mind whom, one of those swains with an assured future, as some say, which means that they don't really have any future at all.

That's where the blind spot is. Freud wants the woman to tell him everything. Well, so she did – with the talking cure and the chimney sweeping. Ah, they gave her chimney a fine old sweeping!

For a while, they do all right for themselves in all that, the important thing was to be together, up the same chimney. Only, when they climb back out again, a question arises – you're familiar with this, I recalled it at the end of one of my articles, it's borrowed from the *Talmud* – when they come out of a chimney together, which of the two is going to dust himself off?

Yes, I advise you to reread that article and not only that one but also the one I wrote on *The Freudian Thing*. You can see the Freudian Thing designated there, I daresay with some accentuation.

Diana is the one I designate as showing where we are to give chase in this ongoing hunt.

The Freudian Thing is what Freud dropped – but it goes on after his death, and it is still what leads the stalk, in the shape of the hunting party we form.

We shall continue this pursuit next time.

23 January 1963

X

ON A LACK THAT IS IRREDUCIBLE TO THE SIGNIFIER

Differential topology of holes
A lack for which the symbol cannot compensate
The object in transference
Margaret Little and her capital R
Cut-interpretation

We've always been taught that anxiety is a fear without an object.

Claptrap! we may already say here, where another discourse has been voiced. Claptrap that, as scientific as it is, resembles the song with which a child reassures himself. For the truth I'm setting out for you I formulate as follows – *anxiety is not without an object.*

This doesn't mean that this object is accessible by the same path as all the rest. I've already emphasized that to say that a discourse that is homologous or similar to any other part of scientific discourse can symbolize this object, can put us alongside it in this relationship of symbol to which we shall be coming back later, would be yet another way of getting rid of anxiety. Although anxiety sustains this relationship of not being without an object, it is on the condition that we are not committed to saying, as one would of another object, which object is involved – nor even to being able to say which.

In other words, anxiety introduces us, with the accent of utmost communicability, to a function that is, for our field, radical – the function of lack.

1

The relation to lack is so intrinsic to the constitution of any logic that it may be said that the history of logic is the story of its successes in masking this, in which it resembles an enormous bungled action, if we give this term its positive meaning.

This is indeed why you can always see me wending my way back to these paradoxes of logic that are designed to suggest the paths, the gates of entry through which is impressed upon us, by which is fixed, that certain style that allows us to bring off this bungled action, that is, not to bungle lack.

This is also why I thought I would once more introduce my talk today by means of an apologue.

It is but that and you cannot base yourselves on any analogy to find anything in it that might lend support to a situating of this lack. But this apologue is, however, useful when it comes to reopening the dimension – whose rut any discourse, any discourse from the analytic literature itself, necessarily leads you back into, in the intervals, I would say, between my talks for your catching up week in week out – the dimension of something which can be sealed off in our experience, and which any gap whereby it would designate this lack would still be something that any such discourse could fill.

So, a little apologue, the first that came to me, there could be others, I simply want to go quickly.

I once said to you that, in sum, there is no lack in the real, that lack is only graspable through the intermediary of the symbolic. At the level of the library, one can say – *Volume* x *is missing from its place*. This place is a place that is designated by the prior introduction of the symbolic in the real. By virtue of this, the lack I'm speaking about is easily filled by the symbol. It designates place, it designates absence, and it presentifies what is not there.

But now take a look at the volume I acquired this week and which inspired this little apologue.

On the first page it carries the note – *The four prints from page* y *to page* z *are missing*.

Would this mean, though, that the function of double negation comes into play? Would this mean that, if the volume happens to be missing from its place, the lack of the four prints would be undone and they would be back in the volume?

It's blindingly obvious that it wouldn't.

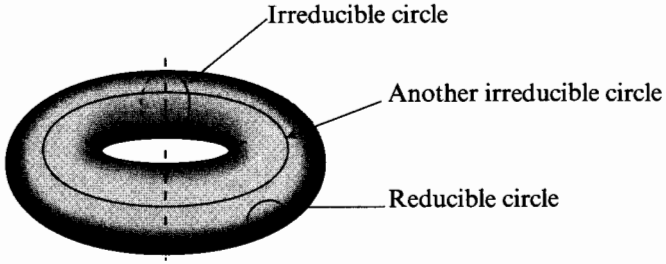
This apologue might strike you as somewhat foolish. This is, however, the whole question of logic when one transposes into intuitive terms what the Eulerian diagram imparts to the inclusion of lack. What position does the family have in the genus? The individual in the species? Within a circle inscribed on a plane, what is the hole?

If I made you do so much topology last year, it was precisely to suggest that the function of the hole is not univocal.

Something always introduces itself onto the path of thought, something to which we give various different forms, metaphori-

cal forms – the *plan*-ning, the im-*ply*-cation of the *plane* pure and simple – but which does indeed always refer to something, namely, a plane as necessarily constituting the natural, intuitive support of the surface. Now, the relation to the surface is infinitely more complex, as I showed you simply by introducing you to the ring or the torus. This surface has the appearance of being one of the most readily imaginable, but if one develops it in order to be able to refer to it, and on the condition that you consider it to be precisely what it is, a surface, you will have noticed that one can see the function of the hole varying rather oddly.

I'll point out to you once more how this has to be understood.



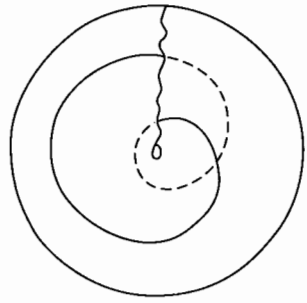
The two types of hole on the torus

It's a matter of knowing how a hole can be filled, how it can close up. It can be represented as a shrinking circle. Even though any old circle drawn on the plane can shrink down to nothing more than a point, a vanishing limit point, and then disappear altogether, this is not the case on the surface of the torus. There are circles on the surface of the torus on which we can operate in this way, but we only have to draw our circle in a different way to see that it cannot shrink down to zero. Structures exist that do not entail the hole being filled in.

I'm drawing so as not to express myself otherwise.

The essence of the cross-cap, such as I showed it to you last year, is that it doesn't furnish us with the diversity of the two kinds of circle. Whatever cut you trace onto the surface, you will never get a circle that can be reduced to a point.

Whether we draw it in a way that is homologous with the cut that on the torus partakes of the two kinds of circle, or whether we go via the privileged point γ to which I drew your attention last year, at the level of the cross-cap you will always get something that, in its appearance, can be reduced to the minimal surface, but not without there remaining at the end, regardless of how the cut may vary, something that is symbolized, not as a concentric reduction, but in an irreducible form – that one there or this one here, which is the



The minimal surface of the cross-cap

same, the one known as the inner eight – which one must distinguish from the concentric ponctification.

This is how the cross-cap came to be another way for us to approach the possibility of an irreducible type of lack.

Lack is radical, radical in the very constitution of subjectivity such as it appears to us on the path of analytic experience. I should like to set it out in the following formula – as soon as it becomes known, as soon as something comes to knowledge, something is lost and the surest way of approaching this lost something is to conceive of it as a bodily fragment.

There you have, in a broad and opaque form, and in its irreducible character, the truth which the analytic experience affords us and which it introduces into any possible subsequent reflection on any conceivable form of our condition.

It really needs to be said that this point entails an aspect that is sufficiently unbearable for us to strive endlessly to circumvent it. The fact doubtless has two faces, namely that, in the very effort of circumventing it, we only trace out its contour all the more, and that, even as we approach it, we are always tempted to forget it, in conformity with the structure that this lack represents. From which there results another truth, namely, that every twist and turn in our experience is down to the fact that the relation to the Other, wherein any possibility of symbolization and of the locus of discourse are situated, meets up again with a structural fault.

The step further that is to be taken is that of noticing that here we're touching on the very thing that makes the relation to the Other possible, that is, on that whence emerges the fact that there is such a thing as a signifier.

This site whence emerges the fact that there is such a thing as the signifier is, in one sense, the site that cannot be signified. It is what I call the site of the lack-of-signifier.

2

I recently heard someone, someone who understands me quite well, ask me whether this doesn't amount to making reference simply to what is in some sense the imaginary material of any signifier, the shape of the word or the form of the Chinese character, if you like, that is, the irreducible aspect that lies in the fact that the signifier needs to have an intuitive support, like the others, like all the rest. Well, no, it doesn't.

Of course, this is what is on offer, this is the temptation, but it's not what's involved where lack is concerned. To give you a sense of this, I'm going to refer to definitions I've already given you and which ought to serve us well.

I told you that nothing lacks that is not part of the symbolic order. But as for privation, that is something real.

What we are speaking about here, for example, is something real. That which my disquisition turns around when I try to re-presentify for you this decisive site that nevertheless we always forget, not only in our theory but in our practice of the analytic experience as well, is a privation, which shows itself as much in theory as in practice. This privation is real and as such it cannot be scaled down. To flush it out, is it enough to designate it? If indeed we are to manage to circumscribe it scientifically, which is perfectly conceivable, we only need to work at the analytic literature. I'll be giving you a sample of this in a little while.

To begin with, I took the first issue of the *International Journal* that came to hand and at just about any point therein we meet the problems involved, whether one is speaking about anxiousness, acting-out or *R* – I'm not the only one who uses letters – *The Analyst's Total Response* in the analytic situation. The author of the article that bears this title is someone we're meeting again, because I've already spoken about Margaret Little. It was back in the second year of my Seminar.[1] We meet up again with the problem, which is very tightly focused in her article, of knowing where privation is to be located, because clearly it slides away the more the author means to close in on the problem that a certain type of patient poses her.

It is not, however, the reduction of privation, its symbolization, and its articulation, that will for all that remove the lack. This is what we have to get into our heads first of all, if only so as to understand what is signified by this mode through which lack appears in the analytic experience, a mode that is called castration. Privation is something real whereas lack is symbolic. It is clear that a woman hasn't got a penis, but, if you don't symbolize the penis as

the essential element that one either has or has not, she shall know nothing of this privation.

Castration, I've told you, is symbolic. This means that it refers to a certain phenomenon of lack. Castration appears in an analysis inasmuch as the relation to the Other, which moreover didn't have to wait for the analysis before being constituted, is fundamental here. At the level of this symbolization – that is, in the relation to the Other in so far as the subject has to constitute himself in analytic discourse – one of the possible forms in which lack appears is the (– φ), the imaginary support of castration. But this is just one of the possible translations of the original lack, of the structural fault inscribed into the specific being-in-the-world of the subject we are dealing with. In these conditions, isn't it normal to ask oneself why the analytic experience could be brought to this point but not beyond? The term that Freud gives us as the final term, the castration complex in men and *Penisneid* in women, may be called into question. It is not necessary for this to be the final term.

This is precisely why conceiving of the function of lack in its originative structure is an essential inroad into our experience and this has to be gone over several times so as not to miss it. So, another tale.

If the insect that wanders along the surface of the Möbius strip forms a representation of the fact that it is a surface, he can believe from one moment to the next that there is another face that he hasn't explored, the face that is always on the back of the face along which he is walking. He can believe in this other side, even though there isn't one, as you know. Without knowing it, he is exploring the only face there is, and yet, from one moment to the next, it does indeed have a back.

What he is lacking in order to realize that he has gone over to the other side is the little piece that I made concrete for you at the start of the year by constructing it and putting it in your hands, the one that sketches out for you this way of slicing through the cross-cap. This little missing portion is a kind of short-circuiting that brings him back by the shortest possible route to the other side of the point he was at just before.

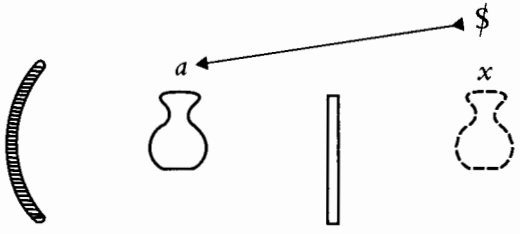
Is the matter settled because we are describing this little missing piece, the *a* on this occasion, with this paradigmatic shape? Absolutely not, because the very fact that it is missing is what forms the reality of the world the insect is walking about in. The little interior eight is well and truly irreducible. In other words, it is a lack for which the symbol cannot compensate. This is not an absence that the symbol can counter.

This isn't a cancelling-out either, nor is it a denegation. Cancelling-

out and denegation are forms constituted by the relation that the symbol allows to be introduced into the real, namely absence. To cancel out and to negate is to attempt to undo that which in the signifier draws us away from the origin and the original structural fault, that is, to attempt to meet up in the signifier with its function of sign, this being what the obsessional forces himself to do and wears himself out doing. Cancelling-out and denegation target, therefore, this point of lack, but they don't for all that get there because as Freud explains they merely duplicate the function of the signifier by applying this function to itself. Now, the more I say that it's not there, the more it is there.

The bloodstain, whether it's the one that Lady Macbeth tires herself out with or the one that Lautréamont designates with the term *intellectual*, is impossible to remove because the nature of the signifier is precisely to strive to wipe away a trace. And the more one seeks to wipe out the signifier, to find the trace again, the more the trace insists as a signifier. From which it results that, concerning the relationship with that whereby the *a* manifests itself as the cause of desire, we're always dealing with an ambiguous problematic.

Indeed, when this is written into our diagram, which is always to be renewed, there are two ways in which the *a* can appear in the relation to the Other. If we can make them join up, then it is precisely through the function of anxiety inasmuch as anxiety, wherever it is produced, is the signal thereof – at least to the extent that there is no other way to interpret what we are told about it in the analytic literature.



Simplified diagram

The analytic discourse is divided over anxiety and presents two faces. Observe if you will how strange it is to compare them.

On one hand, anxiety is referred to the real and we are told that it is the major and most radical defence, the response to the most primary danger, to the insurmountable *Hilflosigkeit*, to the absolute distress at entering the world. On the other hand, one maintains that it is thereafter taken up by the ego as a signal of infinitely slighter dangers, with respect to which the analytic discourse is often carried

to grandiloquence, bringing up what it calls the threats of the *Id*, the *Es*. On this point, Jones shows a tactfulness and a moderation that our colleagues lack, speaking simply in one text of a *buried desire* in order to ask – *after all, is the return of a buried desire really as dangerous as all that?* Does it merit the deployment of a signal as major as anxiety purportedly is, if to explain it we are forced to resort to the most absolute vital danger?

This paradox can be found again a bit further down, because there is no analytic discourse that, having made anxiety the ultimate entity of each and every defence, does not speak to us about defence against anxiety. Thus, the instrument that is so useful in warning us of danger is the very thing against which we are supposed to be defending ourselves. And this is how, by means of this defence against anxiety, all kinds of reactions, constructions and formations in the psychopathological field get explained. Is there not something of a paradox here, one that would require us to formulate things differently? Namely, that the defence is not against anxiety but against that of which anxiety is a signal.

In reality, what is involved is not defence against anxiety, but against this certain lack, with the proviso that we know that there are different structures of this lack, which are definable as such. The lack of a single rim, the lack of relation with the narcissistic image, is not the same as the lack of the duplicated rim, which relates to the slice that is pushed further on the cross-cap and concerns the *a* as such in so far as it is what we must be dealing with at a certain level of the handling of the transference.

Here it will appear, so it seems to me, better than elsewhere, that the lack of handling is not the handling of lack.

Each time a disquisition is pushed fairly far with regard to the relationship that we, as Other, have with the one who is in analysis with us, the question arises as to what our relationship to this *a* ought to be. It needs to be made out, and you will always find it. Once again, there is a glaring gap between the two sides of the analytic discourse.

On one hand, the analytic experience is spoken of as a deep and permanent calling into question that always sends the subject back to something else with respect to what he shows us, whatever its nature may be. As one of my patients said to me not so long ago – *If I were sure that it was just transference*. The function of the *ne que* in *ce n'est que du transfert* is the other side of its function in *il n'a qu'à faire ainsi, there's nothing to be done but to . . .* This form of the verb can be conjugated, but not as you think, as *il n'a qu'avait* – a form you can sometimes hear spring up when people talk spontaneously.

On the other side, they explain to us that it is incumbent upon the

analyst-hero, it is his responsibility, to have to internalize this *a*, to take it inside himself, as an object good or bad, but in any case as an internal object, and it is from here that all the creativity emerges by which he must restore to the subject his access to the world.

Both are true, although they cannot be made to join up. But in not joining them up, people mix them up, and in mixing them up, nothing gets said with any clarity on the topic of the handling of the transferential relationship, the relationship that revolves around the *a*.

But this is explained well enough in the remark I made on what distinguishes, in the clinic, the subject's position in relation to *a* from the very constitution of his desire.

To put it crudely, if it has to do with a pervert or a psychotic, the fantasy relation ($\$ \lozenge a$) is established in such a way that *a* is in its place on the side of $i'(a)$. In this case, to handle the transferential relation, we do indeed have to take within us the *a* at issue, like a foreign body, like an incorporation of which we are the patient, because the object in so far as it is the cause of his lack is utterly foreign to the subject who is speaking to us.

In the case of neurosis, the position is different, inasmuch as something of his fantasy appears on the side of the image $i'(a)$. In *x*, something appears which is an *a* and which only seems to be – because the *a* cannot be made specular and can only appear in person, as it were. This one is only a substitute. Only here can the deep questioning of any authenticity in the classical analysis of transference be applied.

But this is not to say that the cause of transference lies here. We are still dealing with the little *a*, which is not up on the stage, but which is constantly asking to get up there to introduce its discourse into the one who still holds his place on the stage, even if it means to wreak havoc, to cause mayhem, by saying *That's enough tragedy!* or equally *That's enough comedy!*, though it's a bit better like that.

Why does Ajax get so worked up, as they say, when at the end of the day, all he's done is kill some sheep, and that's much better, much less serious than if he really had killed all those Greeks. Since he hasn't killed the Greeks, he is all the less dishonoured, and though he gave himself over to that ridiculous display, everyone knows that it was because Minerva had cast a spell on him. In short, it's no big deal.

Comedy isn't so easy to exorcize. As everyone knows, it's more light-hearted, and even if one does exorcize it, what's happening on stage can very well carry on. It starts over, like in a goat-hoof song, the same old story that was there right from the start, at the origin of desire. This is precisely why the very name τραγῳδία refers to the

billy-goat and the satyr, who moreover always had a place set aside for them at the end of a trilogy.

The goat that leaps onto the stage is the acting-out. The acting-out I'm speaking about is the movement that goes in the opposite direction to what modern theatre aspires to, where the actors step down into the stalls. Here the spectators get up on stage and say what they have to say.

This is why I'm summoning, as it were, Margaret Little, selected from amongst others, as I told you, just as one might slip on a blindfold and push the point of a knife blade between the pages of a book for divinatory purposes.

3

In her article on *'R' – The Analyst's Total Response to his Patient's Needs*, May–August 1957, parts III to IV of Volume XXXVIII, Margaret Little pursues the disquisition I paused on for a while in my Seminar, before this article was published.

Those of you who were there will remember the remarks I made regarding a certain anxiety-ridden discourse of hers and her attempts to master this anxiety by speaking about countertransference. I didn't dwell on the first appearance of the problem, namely, the effects of an imprecise interpretation.

One day, an analyst sees one of his patients who has just made a radio broadcast on a subject that interests the analyst himself – we can see something of the kind of milieu in which this occurred. He tells him – *You spoke very well yesterday, but I see you thoroughly depressed today. It's surely because you're afraid of having wounded me by encroaching on my territory.*

It takes two more years for the subject to realize, in connection with an anniversary that has come around, that what had produced his sadness was due to the fact that the broadcast had brought back the sense of bereavement he had felt with the recent passing away of his mother. A mother who, so he says, had not been able to see the success that being promoted to a momentary position in the limelight represented for her son.

Margaret Little, who took over the patient from this previous analyst, is struck by the fact that the analyst, in his interpretation, had merely interpreted what was going on in his own unconscious, the analyst's unconscious, namely, that he had effectively been very upset by his patient's success.

What is at issue, however, lies elsewhere. To wit, it is not enough to speak about bereavement, nor even the repetition of the bereave-

ment the subject was in, back then, for the man he made his analyst two years hence. Rather, one has to see what is at issue in the function of bereavement itself and, therefore, by the same token, to push a little further what Freud said about mourning as an identification with the lost object. This is not an adequate definition of mourning.

We mourn but for he of whom we can say *I was his lack*. We mourn people that we have treated either well or badly, but with respect to whom we don't know that we fulfilled the function of being in the place of their lack. What we give in love is essentially what we haven't got and when this *not having* comes back at us there is most certainly regression and at the same time a revelation of the way in which we left him wanting, so as to represent this lack. But here, given the irreducible character of the misrecognition of this lack, this misrecognition simply switches round, namely, we believe we can translate our function of being his lack into us having left him wanting – even though it was in this respect that we were precious and indispensable for him.

This is what I ask you to ascertain, if you would care to go to it, in Margaret Little's new article which constitutes a later phase in her reflection, which has been considerably deepened, though not enhanced, because, indeed, enhanced it is not.

The author doesn't venture to provide any definition of countertransference, which is always such a problematic question, and up to a certain point we may be grateful because though she did indeed venture into it, it was, mathematically, in error. She only wants to consider the analyst's total response, which means everything, as much the fact that the analyst is there as analyst and that things from his own unconscious may escape his notice as the fact that, like any living being, he experiences feelings during the analysis and that, in the end – she doesn't put it like this, but this is what's involved – being Other, she is in a position of complete responsibility. Therefore, it is with this immense *Total* of her position as analyst that she means to set out frankly her conception of the analyst's response.

The result is that she will go so far as to take up positions that couldn't be further from the classical positions, which does not mean that they are false positions. Far from staying outside the field of play, the analyst has to suppose herself, in principle, engaged right to the hilt, to consider herself effectively responsible and, for example, not to discount bearing witness should she be called before a court of law to answer for what has been occurring in the analysis.

I'm not saying that this isn't a tenable attitude. I'm saying that placing the function of the analyst at the heart of this perspective betrays an originality that exposes itself to a snag. The analyst may,

on any occasion, be required to justify any one of his feelings not only at the analyst's own tribunal, which anyone will admit, but even to the subject. The weight of all the feelings that the analyst can experience with regard to any given subject engaged with him in the analytic enterprise may have to be not only mentioned, but set forth in something that will not be an interpretation but an admission. With this, a path opens up whose first introduction into analysis by Ferenczi was the object of the most extreme reservation on the part of the classical analysts.

Our author shares out the patients she sees into three groups. As she seems to agree to take on the widest caseload, we have, in the first group, psychosis. There, she has to agree to delegate a part of her responsibilities to other supports, if only, every now and then, for necessary hospitalizations. In the group of neuroses, she tells us that the larger share of responsibilities we delegate are put on the patients' shoulders, which evinces remarkable lucidity on her part. Between these two groups, she defines a third class, that of neurotic character disorders or *personnalités réactionnelles*, what Alexander designates as neurotic characters. In short, a good many problematic attempts at classification are developed around this, when in reality it's not about a sort of subject but a relational zone in which what I have been defining here as acting-out is prevalent.

Indeed, this is very much what is involved in the case she develops for us. It is the case of a female subject who came into analysis because she commits acts that may be classed in the frame of kleptomania. For a whole year she doesn't make the slightest allusion to these thefts. For a long period of the analysis, she finds herself under the unremitting fire of repeated interpretations on the current state of the transference in the sense it is currently considered. On the path that has been taken, they consider that the transference must, from a certain point on, be slaked and absorbed, without let-up, throughout the course of the analysis. Not one of these interpretations, as subtle and varied as the analyst makes them, so much as grazes her subject's defence.

If one of you would be kind enough to do me the favour, on a date we shall set, of going into the case in detail, which I cannot do for you here because I have other things to tell you, you will see the pertinence of the remarks I've been making show through.

The analysis only gets moving, she tells us, when one day the patient arrives with her face swollen from the tears she has shed over the death – in a country she left long ago with her parents, namely, the Germany of back then, Nazi Germany – of a person who only differed from any of the others who had watched over her during her childhood for having been, not simply a friend of her parents, but

a woman with whom she had very different relations than she had with her parents. It is a fact that she has never grieved so sorely over anyone else.

Faced with this surprising, stirred reaction, what is the reaction from our analyst? Her reaction is to interpret, as she always does. Once again, she varies her interpretations, just to see which one might work. They are classical interpretations, to the effect that this mourning is a need to retaliate against the object, that this mourning might be addressed to the analyst, a way of bringing back to her, the analyst, all the reproaches that she has to level at her through the screen of the person she is mourning. None of this works. A little something starts to kick in when the analyst admits to the subject that she can make neither head nor tail of it and that seeing her in this state saddens her. And straightaway our analyst deduces from this that it was the positive, real, living aspect of a feeling that gave the analysis its movement back. The author chooses both the style and the order of her development so that we can say that what gets through to the subject and allows her to transfer, properly speaking, into the relationship with the analyst the reaction that was involved in the mourning, is owing to the appearance of the fact that there was someone for whom she could be a lack.

The intervention showed the patient that the analyst was harbouring what is known as anxiety. Here we are standing at the limit of something that designates the place of lack in the analysis. This insertion, this graft, this marcotting, opens up a dimension that allows this female subject to grasp herself as a lack, when she was absolutely unable to do so in her relationship with her parents.

The interpretation did not hit home as a positive feeling, if we can qualify what is described for us in the observation as an interpretation. The fact remains that the subject does open her arms and let slip that this interpretation has indeed hit home. This is because what is in question has been introduced, unwittingly, as it must always come into question in analysis at some point, even at its end, namely, the function of the cut.

What will enable you to spot this are the changes of direction that ensue and which were to be decisive for the analysis. There are two moments.

The first moment is when the analyst, summoning up her courage, in the name of ideology, in the name of life, in the name of the real, in the name of whatever you like, all the same intercedes in a way that is most peculiar in relation to a perspective that I shall call sentimental. One fine day, as the subject is turning over all her money issues with her mother, the analyst says, word for word – *Listen, that's enough of that, I won't hear another word, you're sending me to*

sleep. I'm not giving you this as a model for technique, I'm asking you to read an observation and to follow the problems that can arise for an analyst like this who has considerable experience and burns with authenticity.

The second moment concerns the slight modifications the analyst has made to what she calls the decor of her consulting room – going by what we usually see in our colleagues' offices, this must be a nice one. Margaret Little has already been badgered by a whole day's worth of remarks from her patients – *That's great, that's horrible, that brown is disgusting, that green is really very fine* – and then along comes our patient at the end of the day and puts it in slightly more aggressive terms than all the others. The analyst tells her in so many words – *Listen, I really don't care what you think about it*. Just like the first time, the patient is shocked, gobsmacked, whereupon she comes out of her silence with gasps of enthusiasm – *What you've done there is really wonderful*, and so on.

I'll spare you the further progress of this analysis. What I should simply like to designate here in connection with a case chosen from a portion of the field that is particularly open to this problematic, is that the decisive factor in the progress of the treatment is down to having introduced the function of the cut. The first interpretation consisted in saying to her – *You're having the same effect on me as a hypnotist's crystal stopper, you're sending me to sleep*. The second time she literally puts her back in her place – *Think what you like about the decor of my office, I couldn't care less*. And this is when something is decisively mobilized in the transferential relationship at issue here.

This allows her to point out that one of her problems was that this subject had never been able to feel the slightest hint of a sense of bereavement for her father, whom she admired. But the stories that are reported show us above all else that she was unable to represent in any shape or form anything that her father might have lacked. There is one very significant scene – during a short stroll with him, she is holding a little wooden stick, very symbolic of the penis, and the patient herself stresses this. Quite innocently, so it seems to her, the father tosses the little switch into the water without the slightest comment. We're a long way from *Sundays and Cybele*.

As for her mother, whose influence lies at much closer quarters in the determinism behind the thefts, she was never able to turn her child into anything other than an extension of herself, a piece of furniture, or even an instrument, occasionally an instrument of threat and blackmail, but never, ever, something that might have stood in a causal relation to the desire of this subject. This is precisely to designate the following, namely, that her desire – she doesn't know

which, of course – could indeed be taken into consideration. Each time her mother moves closer and enters into the field of induction in which she can have some effect, the subject very regularly gives herself over to a theft, which, like all kleptomaniacs' thefts, has no signification of any particular interest, it simply means – *I'm showing you an object I've stolen, by hook or by crook, because somewhere else there is another object, mine, the* a, *which deserves to be considered, to be allowed to emerge for a moment.* This function of isolating, of being-alone, is in some way the pole that is correlative to the function of anxiety. *Life*, says someone somewhere, who is not an analyst, Étienne Gilson, *existence is an unbroken power of active separations.*

I think that after today's talk you won't confuse this remark with the one that is usually made with regard to frustrations.[2] This is something quite different. This is about the limit point at which the place of lack is established.

An ongoing and varied reflection on the diverse metonymic forms that the focal points of this lack assume in the clinic will make up the next part of our disquisition. But we cannot avoid a reappraisal of the goals of analysis as well. The positions taken up in this regard are so instructive, so rich in lessons, that I would like, at the point we've reached, for the article by a certain Szasz to be taken up, *On the Theory of Psychoanalytic Treatment*, in which he puts forward that the goals of analysis are given in its rule and that, by the same token, the final end of any analysis, didactic or otherwise, can only be defined as the patient's initiation into a scientific point of view on his movements.

This is an extreme position, most certainly a very peculiar and specialized one. I'm not asking – *Is this a definition we can accept?* I'm asking – *What can this definition teach us?* You have heard, right here, enough to know that if there's one thing I've put in question time and time again, then it's the scientific point of view, inasmuch as its aim is always to consider lack as something that can be filled, in stark contrast to the problematic of an experience that includes within it the taking into account of lack as such.

The fact remains no less that it is useful to mark out a viewpoint such as this, above all if one brings it to bear on an older article by another woman analyst, Barbara Low, on what she calls *Entschädigungen*, the compensations of the analyst's position. There you will see a reference to the analyst's position that is diametrically opposed, a reference not to the scientist but to the position of the artist. What is involved in analysis, she tells us, is something entirely comparable – this is not an analyst who is any the less remarkable for the firmness of her conceptions – to the sublimation that governs

artistic creation. The article is in German in the twentieth year of the *Internationale Zeitschrift*. In spite of its rarity, I'll make sure it's available to whoever might care to go into it.

On 20 February, the day I come back, because I'm going away for a while, could the two people present here whom I asked earlier take charge of the three articles I've just been speaking about by sharing out the roles as they see fit and adding on a third person for the third article, and might they not also see to it that this rostrum doesn't stay unoccupied for too long and occupy it in my stead if I'm not there, or with me in the audience if I do come back?

I believe I have their consent – I'm referring respectively to Granoff and Perrier. So, the next appointment, to hear them, will be on 20 February, that is, exactly three weeks from now. *(In the event, Lacan returned on 27 February.)*

30 January 1963

XI

PUNCTUATIONS ON DESIRE

From countertransference to the analyst's desire
Desire as a will to jouissance
Desire, from conflict to love

Well, here I am back from my winter holidays.

As usual, the bulk of my reflections were turned towards your service, though not exclusively so.

Aside from having done me good this year, which isn't always the case, the winter-sports resort struck me as somehow harbouring something that in the end appeared to me and led me back to a problem of which these resorts seem to be a glaring incarnation, a very vivid materialization – the contemporary problem of the function of the concentration camp.

Winter-sports resorts are a kind of concentration camp for the elderly well-to-do, which as everyone knows is going to pose an ever greater problem as our civilization advances, given the increase of the average age over time.

This reminded me that the problem of the concentration camp and its function at this time in our history has thus far truly been entirely missed. It was completely masked over by the immediate post-war era of cretinous moralization and the absurd idea that we would be able to do away with all that just as quickly – I'm still talking about the concentration camps. I won't go on any longer about the various travelling salesmen who've become specialists in hushing up the affair, including in the front line one who walked off with the Nobel Prize. We saw to what extent he measured up to his heroism of the absurd when it was a matter of seriously taking sides on one particular burning question.

In parallel with these reflections, I reread, still in your service, my Seminar on ethics from a few years back, with an eye to refreshing the validity of the most essential part of what I believe I articulated

there following our master, Freud, and which I believe I accentuated in a way that is worthy of the truth involved, namely, that any morality is to be sought out, in its principle and in its origin, on the side of the real. We still need to know what is meant by that.

The fact that morality is to be sought out on the side of the real and more specifically in politics is not, however, an incitement to seek it out on the side of the Common Market.

Now I'm going to hand over not only the floor but also the chairmanship to the one who held it last time, Granoff. Since he made a general introduction to the three parts, he can at least give a quick word of reply to Mme Aulagnier, who today is going to bring to a close what she started last time on the Margaret Little article.

[*Mme Aulagnier's paper and Granoff's commentary*]

The Barbara Low article is certainly by far the most extraordinary and the most remarkable of the three. I caught sight of a slight sign of avoidance in the fact that Granoff referred us to a more modern form of intervention, in the shape of the article by Lucia Tower. On the other hand, I am quite grateful to him because now that this article has been introduced, which I wouldn't have done this year, we can no longer avoid it. I'm also very grateful to Perrier for having sent me yesterday a short summary of what he contributed. I'm going to give myself some time, and perhaps await some harder information, and turn now to some points of detail that I will have to bring up.

Therefore, the authors of these papers won't lose anything in waiting a bit.

1

I think that, for the most part, you know enough about what I mean to bring up in referring to these articles, which are each centred on countertransference, a subject I don't claim to be able to specify right now in the way it deserves. I only mentioned it within the perspective of what I've got to say to you about anxiety, more precisely the function that the reference to anxiety has to fulfil in the overall continuation of my teaching.

The topic of anxiety can no longer be kept at a distance from a more precise approach to what has been coming up in my disquisition for a while now in an ever more insistent way, namely, the problem of the analyst's desire.

At the end of the day, even the stoniest ears cannot fail to hear that, in the difficulty these authors have in approaching counter-

transference, the problem of the analyst's desire is what creates the obstacle. Taken as a whole, without the support of any elaboration comparable to the one we've undertaken here, any intervention of this order, as surprising as this may seem after sixty years of analytic elaboration, seems to smack of a fundamental impudence.

None of the authors involved – whether Szasz, whether Barbara Low herself, or even Margaret Little, and in a little while I'll be telling you in what way the thing has been pushed forward in what Lucia Tower, the most recent author to date, prodigiously confides in the very profound avowal of her experience that she gives – can avoid placing things on the plane of desire.

The term *countertransference* broadly aims at the analyst's participation. But what is more essential than the analyst's engagement – regarding which you can see the most extreme wavering occurring in these texts, going from *one hundred percent* responsibility to entirely taking a back seat – the most recent article, the one by Lucia Tower, points out, not for the first time, though it's the first time in an articulate way, what is most evocative in this realm, namely, what she calls a *minor change* that can arise on the side of the analyst. She tells us that countertransference is everything the psychoanalyst represses of what he receives in the analysis as a signifier.

This is not about giving a strict definition of countertransference, which could be given quite straightforwardly. This comment completely relieves what is at issue of its impact. Besides, the question of countertransference is not really the question because it derives its signification from the state of confusion in which it is brought to us. The only signification from which none of the authors can escape is precisely the analyst's desire.

If the question of this desire stands not only unresolved, but hasn't even begun to be resolved, it's simply for the following reason, that until now in analytic theory there has never been, apart from this Seminar, any exact positioning of what desire is.

Doubtless this is because doing so is no small matter. Likewise, you may notice that I've never claimed to do so in just one step. I started by teaching you to locate desire in how it is distinct from demand. Then, namely at the start of this year, I introduced something new, initially suggesting to you – to see your response, your reactions as they say, which indeed were forthcoming – the identity between desire and law.

It is somewhat curious that something as obvious as this, which is written into the first steps of analytic doctrine, has only been able to be introduced, or reintroduced, with such precautions. This is why I'm coming back to this plane today to show you some of its different aspects and even its implications.

2

So, desire is law.

This isn't true only in analytic doctrine, where it's the central body of structure. It's clear that what makes for the substance of the law is desire for the mother and that conversely what makes desire itself normative, what situates it as desire, is the law known as the prohibition of incest.

Let's take things from the angle defined by a word that carries meaning, a meaning that is being presentifed in our times, eroticism.

As we know, its Oedipal manifestation, even its Sadean one, is the most exemplary. Desire presents itself as a will to jouissance, whichever angle it appears from, whether from the Sadean angle, I didn't say sadistic, or from the side of what is known as masochism.

Even in perversion, where desire is given as what lays down the law, that is, as a subversion of the law, it is in fact truly and verily the support of a law. If we know something now about the pervert, it is that what appears from the outside to be an unbounded satisfaction is actually a defence and an implementation of a law inasmuch as it curbs, suspends, and halts the subject on the path to jouissance. For the perverts, the will to jouissance is, as for anyone else, a will that fails, that encounters its own limit, its own reining-in, in the very exercise of desire. As has been very well underlined by one of the people who took the floor earlier at my behest, the pervert doesn't know what jouissance he is serving in exercising his activity. It is not, in any case, in the service of his own jouissance.

This is what allows us to situate what is involved at the level of the neurotic. The neurotic has been the exemplary path for leading us to the discovery, which is a decisive step in morality, of the true nature of desire. This decisive step was only taken when attention was directed, right here, to what I am in the process of expressly articulating for you. The neurotic shows us that he does indeed need to go via the institution of the law itself in order to sustain his desire. More than any other subject, the neurotic highlights the exemplary fact that he can only desire in accordance with the law. He can only give his desire its status as unsatisfied or as impossible.

The fact remains that I'm sitting pretty by only speaking to you about the hysteric and the obsessional, because that leaves outside the field what is still confusing us, namely anxiety neurosis, on which I hope to bring you to take the necessary step with what I'm getting under way here this year. Let's not forget that this was where Freud set off from and that if his death deprived us of something, then it's that it didn't leave him the time to come back to this.

As paradoxical as this may seem, the subject of anxiety thus

brings us back to the critical plane that I shall call the myth of moral law, namely, that any sound position of the moral law is purportedly to be sought out in the direction of an autonomy of the subject.

The ever greater accentuation, over the course of the history of ethical theories, of the notion of autonomy shows well enough what is involved, namely, a defence. What has to be swallowed is this first truth, this obvious truth, that moral law is heteronomous.

This is why I'm insisting on the following – that it stems from what I call the real inasmuch as it intervenes, when it intervenes, just as Freud tells us it does, namely, by eliding the subject therefrom and by determining, through its very intervention, repression. What is known as repression only takes on its full meaning on the basis of the function of the synchronic function I spelt out for you in speaking about what, in a first approximation, is called quite simply *effacing the traces.*

Clearly, this is just a first approximation because everyone knows that the traces cannot be effaced and that this is what makes for the aporia of the affair. This aporia is not one for you, because the notion of the signifier has been developed here in front of you precisely so as to resolve it. It is not a matter of effacing the traces, but of the signifier's return to the state of a trace. The abolishing of the passage from trace to signifier is what I tried to give you an inkling of by putting the trace in parentheses, an underlining, a barricading, a mark of the trace. The signifier is what is missed out when the real intervenes. The real sends the subject back to the trace and, by the same token, abolishes the subject too, because there is only a subject by virtue of the signifier, by virtue of the passage to the signifier. A signifier is what represents the subject for another signifier.

The mainspring of what's involved here is not to be grasped from the perspective of history and memory, which is always overly facile. Forgetting seems to be something too material, too natural, for us not to think that it goes without saying, when in fact it's the most mysterious thing in the world as soon as memory is posited as existing. This is why I'm trying to introduce you to a transverse dimension, the synchronic one.

Let's take the masochist, the *maso* as people are apparently saying now in French.

He is the most enigmatic one that can be singled out in the field of perversion. You'll tell me that he knows very well that the Other is the one who enjoys. This would therefore be the pervert stepping into the light of his truth. He would be the exception to everything I said earlier, that is, that the pervert doesn't know who's enjoying. Of course, it's always the Other and the *maso* ostensibly knows this. Well, what escapes the notice of the masochist and puts him

in the same position as the rest of the perverts is that he believes, of course, that what he is seeking is the Other's jouissance, but precisely because he believes this, this is not what he is seeking. What escapes his notice, even though this is a tangible truth, lying around all over the place in everybody's reach, though never seen at its true functional level, is the fact that he is seeking the Other's anxiety.

This doesn't mean that he seeks to bother him. For want of any understanding of what it means to seek out the Other's anxiety, this is the crude level, even the daft level, that things are brought down to by a kind of common sense. For want of being able to see the truth that lies behind it, people abandon this shell which houses something deeper, which is formulated in the way I've just told you.

This is why it is necessary for us to come back to the theory of anxiety.

3

What is new in the dimension introduced in Lacan's teaching on anxiety?

Freud, at the end of his elaboration, speaks of an anxiety-signal occurring in the ego and concerning an internal danger. It is a sign, representing something for someone, to wit, the internal danger for the ego.

The essential transition that permits of using this structure, thereby giving it its full sense, is to suppress this notion of internal danger. As I told you – paradoxically for distracted ears – when I went back over the topology of the *Entwurf* when giving my Seminar on ethics, there is no internal danger for the reason that this envelope that the neurological apparatus is has no interior, because it's a single surface, and because the Ψ system, as *Aufbau*, as structure, as that which is interposed between perception and consciousness, is located in another dimension, as Other qua locus of the signifier. Since last year, I have been introducing anxiety as the specific manifestation of the desire of the Other.

What does the desire of the Other represent when it arises from this angle? This is where the signal assumes its value. If it occurs in a place that topologically speaking one may call the ego, then it concerns someone else. If the ego is the locus of the signal, then the signal isn't given for the ego. This is quite clear. If it lights up at the level of the ego, then it's so that the subject may be warned of something, namely a desire, that is, a demand that doesn't pertain to any need, which pertains to nothing other than my very Being, that is, which puts it in question. Let's say that it cancels it out. In

principle, it doesn't address me as someone here in the present, it addresses me, if you like, as expected and far more still as lost. It solicits my loss, so that the Other can find itself there again. That's what anxiety is.

The desire of the Other doesn't acknowledge me as Hegel believes it does, and which makes the question altogether easy, because if the Other acknowledges me, as it will never acknowledge me sufficiently, I just need to use violence. In truth, the Other neither acknowledges me nor misrecognizes me. It would be too easy, I could always come out of it through conflict and violence. The Other puts me in question, it interrogates me at the very root of my desire as *a*, as cause of this desire and not as object. And because this is what the Other targets, in a temporal relation of antecedence, I can do nothing to break this hold, except to engage with it.

This temporal dimension is anxiety and this temporal dimension is the dimension of analysis. I am taken up in the efficacy of the analysis because the analyst's desire creates in me the dimension of expectation. I really would like him to see me like this or like that, for him to turn me into an object. The Hegelian relationship with the other is very convenient in this respect, because then I do indeed possess all manner of resistances against it, whereas a good part of the resistance slips off when deployed against the other dimension. Only, needs must find out what desire is. Its function doesn't only lie on the plane of the conflict, but right where Hegel, and for good reason, didn't want to go looking for it – on the plane of love.

The more I think about it and the more I speak about it the more indispensable I find it to illustrate the things I'm speaking about. If you read the article by Lucia Tower you will see two blokes and their love stories – to speak in a way one used to speak after the war when in certain social classes they would refer to women as *bonnes femmes*. In one case, the subject has put her on the plane of love. In the other case, he hasn't managed to, and she says why. I'm indicating this so as to lead us to a few reflections on the fact that, if there are a few people who've said something sensible about so-called countertransference, they are all women.

You'll tell me – Michael Balint. Only he wrote his article with Alice. Ella Sharpe, Margaret Little, Barbara Low, Lucia Tower. Why are the vast majority of those who have dared to speak about this, and who have said interesting things, women? The question will be thoroughly clarified if we take it from the angle I'm speaking about, namely, the function of desire in love. You're ready to hear this, which moreover is a truth that's always been well known, but which has never been given it's rightful place – inasmuch as desire

enters the fray of love and is one of its major stakes, desire doesn't pertain to the loved object.

So long as you rank this first truth, which only a valid dialectic of love can orbit, as a mishap, an *Erniedrigung* of love life, an Oedipus that trips over its feet, well, you won't understand anything about the way the problem ought to be posed concerning what the analyst's desire might be. You have to start off from the experience of love, as I did in the year of my Seminar on transference, to situate the topology into which this transference can be inscribed.

As I'm going to end now, my disquisition will no doubt assume a broken-off aspect. What I've put forward in the utmost term as a formula might only be taken for a pause, a chapter heading, or a conclusion, as you will. After all, you have the liberty to take it as a rock of offence or, if you prefer, as a banality.

This is where I mean us to take up the next part of this disquisition, next time, to situate exactly the function that is indicative of anxiety and the way in which it will thereafter allow us to gain access to it.

27 February 1963

ANXIETY BETWEEN JOUISSANCE AND DESIRE

XII

ANXIETY, SIGNAL OF THE REAL

Chekhov's panic fears
Agatha and Lucy
Perversion and the Other's anxiety
The mamma and the deciduous object
From detumescence to castration

So, we're going to be making some more inroads into anxiety, the anxiety I've been getting you to understand as itself being something of an inroad.

You've already been sufficiently forewarned by what I've come up with here to know that anxiety is not what some unthinkingly maintain.

Nevertheless, reading back through the main texts on the question of anxiety afterwards, you will be able to see that what I will have taught you is far from being absent from them, only it is simultaneously unveiled and masked over by formulas that are perhaps overly cautious, under the cover of their carapace, so to speak.

The best authors allow what I've accentuated to show through, namely, that anxiety is not *objektlos*, it is not without object.

1

In *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst*, addendum B, *Ergänzung zur Angst*, the *Supplementary Remarks on Anxiety*, you can read the sentence in which, following tradition here, Freud brings up the indeterminacy, the *Objektlosigkeit*, of anxiety. I will only need to remind you of the main body of the article to say that this characteristic of being without an object cannot be upheld. But look at the preceding sentence. Freud himself says that anxiety is essentially *Angst vor etwas*, anxiety faced with something.

Can we content ourselves with this formula? Of course we can't. We have to go further and say more about this structure. This structure stands in contrast to the structure I introduced by placing the cause of desire behind desire. How has it moved in front? This is perhaps one of the mainsprings of the problem.

Be that as it may, let's be sure to emphasize that here we find ourselves faced with an almost literary theme, a commonplace – fear and anxiety. All the authors who refer to the semantic formation of the words pit them against each other, at least at the start, even if some bring them closer together thereafter, or reduce them to each other, which is not the case among the best of these authors. They tend to accentuate the contrast between fear and anxiety by drawing a distinction between their positions with regard to the object, and it is significative of the error that is thereby committed that they are led to accentuate that fear, for one, has an object.

There is objective danger, *Gefahr*, *dangéité*, fraught with danger, *Gefährdung*, a danger-situation, an endangering of the subject. This deserves to be paused over. What is a danger? It will be said that fear, of its nature, is adequate to, corresponds to, *entsprechend*, the object from which the danger stems.

The Goldstein article on the problem of anxiety, on which we will be making a stop later on, is very significative in this regard of a pen that lets itself get carried away in an author who otherwise knew how to broach the most precious characteristics of our subject. He insists on the oriented character of fear, as if it were completely formed with the marking-out of the object, with an organization of the response, with the opposition, the *Entgegenstehen*, between what is *Umwelt* and everything that has to face up to it within the subject.

I think I've already underlined for you what is to be found in this connection in what amounts to not even a short story, but a note, an impression, by Chekhov, which has been translated under the title *Panic Fears*. I've tried to have the Russian title explained to me, but in vain because, inexplicably, though perfectly marked out with its year of publication in the French translation, none of my listeners who speak Russian have been able to find the text in the editions of Chekhov, despite them being set out chronologically. This is quite baffling and I can't say I'm not disappointed.

It's about the panic fears that he, Chekhov, experienced. One day, with a young boy who is driving his trolley, his *droschka*, he rides onto a plain and, at sundown, as the sun has already set on the horizon, he spies a belfry in the distance, which nonetheless appears near enough for him to make out the details. He sees flickering through a tiny window, high up in the top turret which, because he's familiar with the place, he knows to be quite inaccessible, a mysteri-

ous, inexplicable flame, which nothing allows him to attribute to any reflection. He makes a brief reckoning of what might have been behind this phenomenon and, having ruled out any known cause, is suddenly overcome by something which, when you read the text, can in no way be called anxiety and which has been translated by the term *terror*. What is involved here is not anxiety, but fear. What he is afraid of is not anything that threatens him, but something that has the character of being referred to the unknown aspect of what is making itself felt.

Second example. One day he sees a kind of goods truck come into his field of vision, giving him the impression of a phantom wagon, nothing being able to explain its movement. It darts past at great speed, following the curve of the rails just in front of him. Where does it come from? Where is it going? This apparition, apparently torn free from any determinant he can make out, once again casts him, for an instant, into the disarray of a real panic, which well and truly belongs to the realm of fear. Nor is there any threat here either. The characteristic of anxiety is missing in the sense that the subject is neither seized, nor concerned, nor implicated in his inmost depths.

The third example is the pedigree dog he comes across in a forest, whose presence at that hour and that place he cannot explain. He starts to foment the mystery of Faust's poodle. Here, fear takes shape truly and verily on the side of the unknown. He doesn't know in which form the devil is approaching him. It is not an object that makes him afraid, it's not the dog, it's something else, something that lies behind the dog.

People insist that the effects of fear have in principle a character of appropriateness, namely, they trigger flight. This thesis is sufficiently contradicted by the fact that, in a good many cases, fear paralyses, it is evinced in inhibiting actions, even fully disorganizing ones, or it casts the subject into a turmoil that is least adapted to the response. Therefore, the reference by which anxiety is distinguished needs to be sought out elsewhere.

You do realize that it's not simply out of some desire to play around with a switcheroo, a paradox, that I affirm here before you that anxiety is not without object. Of course, the term *object*, which I've been preparing for a long while, here carries an accent that is distinct from the one it carries in the authors who speak about the object of fear. This formula sketches out a subjectified relationship. It marks a stage from which I want to venture further today.

It is easy to give Freud's *vor etwas* its support straightaway, because he articulates it in all manner of ways in his article. It is what he calls danger, *Gefahr* or *Gefährdung*, internal danger, danger that comes from within. As I told you, however, we cannot make do

with this notion of danger. I already pointed out for you earlier its problematic character when it's a matter of external danger. What warns the subject that it is a danger if not fear itself, if not anxiety? The meaning that the term *internal danger* can carry is linked to the function of a structure to be conserved. It belongs to the realm of what we call defence. In the very term *defence*, the function of danger is itself implied, but it is not for all that clarified.

Let's try, therefore, to follow the structure in a more step-by-step manner and designate precisely where we mean to mark out the signal feature on which Freud came to a halt as the feature that is most apt to indicate to us, we analysts, the use we can make of the function of anxiety.

Only the notion of the real, in the opaque function which is the function I set off from in order to contrast it with the function of the signifier, enables us to orient ourselves. We can already say that this *etwas*, faced with which anxiety operates as a signal, belongs to the realm of the real's irreducibility. It is in this sense that I dared to formulate for you that anxiety, of all signals, is the one that does not deceive.

Therefore, the real, an irreducible pattern by which this real presents itself in experience, is what anxiety signals. This is the guiding thread I ask you to hold onto in order to see where it leads us.

2

The place of this real can be inscribed, with the support of the sign of the bar, in the operation that we term, arithmetically, division.

A	S
a	A
$	

Third table of division

I've already taught you to locate the process of subjectification, inasmuch as the subject has to be constituted in the locus of the Other, and primarily so in the shape of the signifier. The subject is constituted in the locus of the Other upon what is given by the treasure of the signifier, which is already constituted in the Other and which is just as essential to any advent of human life as everything we can conceive of with respect to the natural *Umwelt*. The treasure of the signifier in which he has to situate himself already awaits the subject who, at this mythical level, doesn't yet exist. He will only

exist on the basis of the signifier that precedes him and which bears a constituent relation to him.

Let's say that the subject performs a first interrogative operation in A – how many times? The operation being a supposed one, there then appears a difference between the response-A, marked by interrogation, and the given A, something which is the remainder, the irreducible aspect of the subject. This is the *a*. The *a* is what remains of the irreducible in the complete operation of the subject's advent in the locus of the Other and it is from this that it will derive its function.

The *a*'s relation to the S, the *a* inasmuch as it is precisely what represents the S in its irreducible real, this *a* over S is what brings the operation of division to a close, because, indeed, A has no common denominator, it lies outside the common denominator between the *a* and the S. If we want to bring the operation to a close nevertheless, in a conventional way, what do we do? We put the remainder in the place of the numerator and the divisor in the place of the denominator. The $ is equivalent to *a* over S.

$$\$ = \frac{a}{S}$$

Inasmuch as it is the cast-off, as it were, of the subjective operation, we recognize in this remainder, through a computational analogy, the lost object. This is what we are dealing with, on one hand in desire, on the other in anxiety. In anxiety, we are dealing with it at a moment that logically precedes the moment at which we deal with it in desire.

A	S	*x*
a	Ⱥ	*anxiety*
$		*desire*

Anxiety between *x* and desire

To connote the three stages of the operation of division, we shall say that here at the start there is an *x* that we can only name retroactively, which is properly speaking the inroad to the Other, the essential target at which the subject has to place himself. Here we have the level of anxiety, constitutive of the appearance of the *a* function. And it is with the third term that the $ appears as subject of desire.

To bring to life the doubtless extreme abstraction I've just outlined, I'm going to take you back to the fact of the image, which

is all the more reasonable given that the image is what's involved, given that this irreducible aspect of the *a* belongs to the realm of the image.

The one who possessed the object of desire and of law, the one who found jouissance with his mother, Oedipus, to give him his name, takes one step further, he sees what he has done. You know what happens then. How can one express what belongs to the realm of the inexpressible and whose image I want nevertheless to make emerge? He sees what he has done, which brings with it the consequence that he *sees* – this is the word I'm coming up against – a moment after, his own eyes, their vitreous humour swollen, lying on the ground in a sorry heap of waste. Having torn them from their sockets, he has clearly lost his sight, and yet, he is *not without seeing* them, seeing them as such, finally unveiled as object-cause of the last, the ultimate, not guilty but uncurbed, concupiscence, that of having wanted to know.

Tradition has it that it was from then on that he became truly a seer. At Colonus, he sees as far as one can see, as far ahead as the future destiny of Athens.

What is the moment of anxiety? Is it the *possibility* of that action whereby Oedipus tears out his eyes, sacrifices them, offers them at the price of the blinding that fulfils his destiny? Is that what anxiety is? Is it man's possibility of maiming himself? No, it isn't. It is what I'm trying to designate through this image, it is the impossible sight that threatens you, of your own eyes lying on the ground.

This is the surest key to what you can always find in the phenomenon of anxiety, by whichever line of approach it presents itself to you.

As expressive, as provocative, so to speak, as the narrowness of this place is that I'm designating for you as what is delimited by anxiety, you must see that it's not through some preciosity in my selection that this image finds itself there as though it stood beyond the limits. This is not an eccentric selection. It is commonly met.

Go to the first exhibition you come across, for example, the one that is showing now at the Museum of Decorative Arts, where you can see two Zurbaráns, one from Montpellier, the other from elsewhere, which present you one with Lucy, the other with Agatha, one with her eyes, the other her pair of breasts, on a platter. Both are martyrs, which means witnesses.

It's not the *possible*, that is, the fact that these eyes have been enucleated, that those breasts have been torn off, that makes for anxiety. It should be remarked that these Christian images are not especially hard to bear, even though some people, for what are not always the best reasons, like to pull a face. Speaking of the Santo

Stefano Rotondo in Rome, Stendhal finds the images on the walls distasteful, and certainly they are sufficiently artless as to introduce us a little more vividly to their signification, but the beguiling characters that Zurbarán brings us, presenting us these objects on a platter, present us nothing other that what can on occasion, and we don't deprive ourselves of this, constitute the objects of our desire. These images do not in any way introduce us, for what is common to us all, to the realm of anxiety.

For that to occur, the subject would have to be concerned more personally, he would have to be a sadist or a masochist, for example. I'm not speaking about someone who can have fantasies that we might mark out as sadistic or masochistic, but a bona fide masochist, a bona fide sadist, whose essential condition, whose fundamental situation, we can map out, coordinate, and construct through successive eliminations, by the necessity of teasing out the map of his position further than what is given to us by others as *Erlebnis* – a term more homogeneous to the neurotic – but which is merely the image of something beyond, which forms the specificity of the perverse position, which the neurotic takes reference from and leans on for all kinds of ends that we shall be coming back to. Let's try, therefore, to say what we can presume the sadistic or the masochistic position to be. The key to what Zurbarán's images of Lucy and Agatha might truly concern is indeed anxiety. But it has to be hunted out.

As I said last time, what is the masochist's position? What is masked over for him by his fantasy of being the object of a jouissance of the Other – which is his own will to jouissance, because after all, the masochist does not necessarily meet his partner, as a light-hearted apologue once quoted here bears out? What does this position of object mask over, if it is not the fact of meeting up with himself again, of positing himself in the function of a human wreck, the poor bodily scrap that is laid out for us on these canvases? This is why I'm saying that targeting the Other's jouissance is a fantasmatic target. What is sought out is the response in the Other to the subject's essential downfall into his final misery, and this response is anxiety.

Where is the Other at issue here? This is precisely why the third term in this range has been given, which is always present in perverse jouissance. We are meeting again the profound ambiguity in which an apparently dyadic relation is located. Indeed, we might say – and the thing is borne out well enough by all kinds of features in history – that this anxiety, which is the masochist's blind aim because his fantasy masks it from him, is scarcely less, in real terms, what we might call God's anxiety.

Need I call upon the most fundamental Christian myth to flesh out what I'm advancing? The entire Christian venture is set afoot by a fundamental attempt incarnated by a man whose every word still needs to be heard afresh, on account of him being the one who pushed things right up to the utmost term of an anxiety that truly comes full circle only at the level of He for whom the sacrifice has been established, that is, the Father.

God is soulless. That is quite evident, not a single theologian has ever dreamt of attributing Him with a soul. The radical change of perspective in the relation to God began, however, with a drama, a passion, in which someone made himself God's soul. The place of the soul is to be situated at the level of the residue, *a*, the fallen object. There is no vivid conception of the soul, with the whole dramatic procession through which this notion appears and functions in our cultural sphere, unless it is accompanied in the most essential fashion by the image of the fall. Everything that Kierkegaard articulates is but a reference to these major structural markers.

Observe if you will that I started with the masochist. It was the most difficult one, but also the one that avoided any confusion, because starting from there one can better understand what the sadist is, and the trap that lies there of merely making him the inverse, the nether side, the back-to-front position of the masochist, which is what one habitually does, unless one proceeds in this opposite direction.

In the sadist, anxiety is less concealed. It is even so barely concealed as to come right to the fore in the fantasy, which makes the victim's anxiety a required condition. Only, this is the very thing that ought to make us wary.

What does the sadist seek out in the Other? It is very clear that, for him, the Other exists, and just because he takes him for an object, this doesn't mean we should say that we have some kind of immature or even pre-genital relation here. The Other is absolutely essential and this is precisely what I wanted to spell out when I gave my Seminar on ethics by bringing Sade and Kant together and showing you that Sade's essential act of putting the Other to the question goes so far as to simulate, and this is not by chance, the exigencies of moral law, which are there to show us that the reference to the Other as such is part and parcel of his aim.

What does he seek? This is where the texts, those that leave some leeway for a sufficient critique, have their value, signalled by the oddity of those moments, those detours that stand out, that are out of place with respect to the thread that is being followed. I leave it to you to look up in *Juliette*, even in *The 120 Days*. . ., the few passages in which the protagonists, entirely absorbed as they are in satisfying

their avidity for torments on their chosen victims, enter the strange, peculiar and curious trance that is expressed in these odd words, which I really do have to voice here – *I triumph* – exclaims the tormentor – *cunt-skin!*

This is not a feature that slips of its own accord into the furrow of the imaginable. Its privileged character, the moment of enthusiasm that connotes it, its status as a supreme trophy brandished at the height of the chapter, is sufficiently indicative of the following, that it is in some respect the subject's nether side that is being sought out, which takes on its signification from the characteristic of the glove turned inside out underlined by the victim's womanly essence. That which is most concealed passes over to the outside. Observe too that the text itself indicates in some way that this moment is totally unfathomed by the subject and leaves the characteristic of his own anxiety masked to him.

To say it all, if there is something that is evoked as much by the scant light shed on the authentically sadistic relation as by the form of the explanatory texts in which its fantasy is deployed, if there is something that they suggest, then it is the instrumental character to which the function of agent is reduced. What robs him, except in a fleeting moment, of the aim of his action is the belaboured character of his operation.

He too has a relation with God. This is splashed out here, there and everywhere in Sade's text. Sade cannot take a single step forward in Supremely-Evil-Being without it turning out – and it's just as plain for him as for the one who speaks – that God is the one involved. He gives himself a dickens of a time, a considerable and exhausting devil of a time to the point of missing his goal, trying to realize – which, thank the Lord and make no mistake about it, Sade spares us having to reconstruct because he spells it out as such, namely – to realize God's jouissance.

I think I've shown you here the play of occultation by which, in the sadist and in the masochist, anxiety and object are brought to the fore, one term at the expense of the other.

In these structures, anxiety's radical link to the object is exposed as failing. Its essential function is to be the subject's leftover, the subject as real.

Certainly, this incites us to lay greater accent on the real status of these objects.

3

Moving on to the next chapter, I cannot fail to remark the extent to which the real status of the objects, which has already been mapped out for us, has been left to one side or poorly defined by people who nevertheless like to think they possess biological markers.

This is the opportunity to take note of a certain number of outstanding features that I'd like to introduce you to as best I can, putting my cart before my horse, because in the end, we've got them right here, for example, on Saint Agatha's platter. Isn't this an opportunity to reflect on what people have been saying for a long while, namely, that anxiety appears in separation? Indeed, we can see very well that these are separable objects. They are not separable by chance, like the leg of a grasshopper, they are separable because they already have a certain anatomical character of having been stuck on, of having been fastened on.

This very particular character that certain anatomical parts possess specifies one sector of the animal scale, the one that is called mammalian. It is rather curious that the signifying character, properly speaking, of this feature has not been noticed before. It seems that there are more structural things besides the mamma to designate this animal group, which presents a good many other features of homogeneity by which it may be designated. No doubt they weren't wrong to choose this feature, but this is very much one of those cases in which one can see that the spirit of objectification is not free of influence from the psychological salience of certain significations in which we are engaged to the utmost.

The division between the viviparous and the oviparous is really a befuddling one. All animals are viviparous because they generate eggs in which there is a living being and all of them are oviparous because there are no viviparous beings that have not vivipared inside an egg.

But why not give its full importance to the following fact, which is truly analogous with what I said about the breast, namely that, for those eggs that have a certain period of intrauterine life, there is an element that is irreducible to the division of the egg and this is known as the placenta. There too, this is somewhat stuck on. To spell it right out, what milks the mother is not so much the child as the breast itself and so too it is the placenta that gives the child's position inside the mother's body its character of parasitic nidation, which is sometimes evident on the plane of pathology. You can see that I mean to lay the accent on the privilege of elements that we may qualify as amboceptors.

On what side does the breast stand? On the side of what sucks

or on the side of what is sucked? There is an ambiguity here which analytic theory has sometimes been led to speak about in connection with the breast and the mother, by emphasizing of course that they aren't the same thing. Does qualifying the breast as a partial object say it all? When I say *amboceptor*, I'm emphasizing that it is just as necessary to spell out the maternal subject's relation to the breast as the nursling's relation to the breast. The cut does not pass through the same spot for one as it does for the other.

There are two cuts, which are so far apart that they leave different off-cuts. For the child, the cutting of the cord leaves the envelopes apart. These envelopes are consistent with him, continuous with his ectoderm and his endoderm. For the mother, the cut lies at the level of the placenta as it falls away. This is even why it is called the decidua. The deciduous character of the object *a*, which shapes its function, lies there. The falling-away, the *niederfallen*, is typical when approaching an *a* that is nonetheless more essential to the subject than any other part of himself.

This hurried brush-up of the lines of separation along which this falling-away occurs is not meant to lead you right away into any imprudent revisions, but to enable you to navigate straight onto the level to which this examination carries over, that of castration.

There too, we are dealing with an organ. Might we not search out, by analogy with the image I've put forward for you today, whether we don't already possess the indication that anxiety is to be placed elsewhere than in the threat of what I called the *possible* action of castration?

People always revel in biology with an incredible shallowness in the way they approach the phenomenon. A penis is not limited to the field of mammals. There are loads of insects, repugnant in different ways, from the black-beetle to the cockroach, which have darts. That goes a long way in animals, the dart. I wouldn't want to give you a lesson in comparative anatomy today, I beg you to refer to the authors, if necessary I'll tell you whom, but in many cases the dart is an instrument that is used as a hook.

We know nothing of the amorous jouissance of the cockroach or the black-beetle. Nothing indicates, however, that they are deprived of any. Don't jouissance and sexual conjunction always bear the closest relation? It's fairly likely, but never mind. We can presume that our experience, we men, is that of the mammals who most resemble us, conjoining the locus of jouissance with the instrument, the dart. Moreover, we take it as read, everything indicates this, that when the copulatory instrument is a dart, a claw, a hooking object, in any case an object that is neither tumescent nor detumescent, jouissance is tied to the function of the object.

The fact that for us, to stay at our level, the jouissance of orgasm coincides with the instrument's sidelining, *hors de combat*, out of the game, on account of detumescence, warrants not being taken for a feature that belongs to the *Wesenheit*, the essentiality of the organism, this being Goldstein's term. When you think about it, this coincidence has nothing rigorous about it and it is not, if I may say so, in the *nature* of men's stuff.

In fact, Freud's first intuition leads him to locate a particular source of anxiety in *coitus interruptus* where, through the very nature of the operations under way, the instrument is brought to light in its function, which is suddenly stripped away, of being an accompaniment to orgasm in so far as orgasm is supposed to signify a common satisfaction. There are questions here that I'm going to leave on hold and I'll simply say that anxiety is promoted by Freud in its quintessential function right where the accompaniment to orgasmic build-up is precisely uncoupled from the engagement of the instrument. The subject may well be reaching ejaculation, but it's an ejaculation on the outside and anxiety is provoked by the sidelining of the instrument in jouissance. Subjectivity is focalized in the falling-away of the phallus.

This falling-away does exist in normally accomplished orgasm as well. Detumescence in copulation deserves to hold our attention as a way of highlighting one of the dimensions of castration. The fact that the phallus is more significant in human experience through its possibility of being a fallen object than through its presence is what distinguishes the possibility of the place of castration in the history of desire. It is crucial to foreground this, because so long as desire has not been structurally distinguished from the dimension of jouissance and so long as the question hasn't been posed as to whether for each partner there is a relation, and which, between desire, namely the desire of the Other, and jouissance, the whole affair is doomed to obscurity.

Thanks to Freud, we have this cleaving point in our grasp. This in itself is miraculous. Thanks to Freud's very early perception of its essential character, we have in our grasp the function of castration. It is closely linked to the characteristics of the deciduous object. Its deciduous character is essential. It is only on the basis of this deciduous object that we can see what it means to have spoken about the partial object. In point of fact, I'll tell you right away, the partial object is an invention of the neurotic. It's a fantasy. The neurotic is the one who turns it into a partial object.

As for orgasm, it bears an essential relation to the function we define as the falling-away of what is most real in the subject. Those of you who have an analyst's experience, surely you have had at

Francisco de Zurbarán, *Saint Lucy of Syracuse*, oil on canvas (1636), Musée des Beaux-Arts, Chartres; © Photo RMN/Lagiewski

Francisco de Zurbarán, *Saint Agatha of Catania*, oil on canvas (1630–3), Musée Fabre, Montpellier; © Photo Lauros/Giraudon/Bridgeman

least once a testimony to this. How many times have you been told that a subject had, I'm not saying his first, but one of his first orgasms, when he had to hand in hurriedly an end-of-term exam paper or some drawing he had to rush off quickly? And then, what gets scooped up? His work, the thing that was essentially expected of him. Something is wrenched from him. It's time to gather up the papers, and right then and there, he ejaculates. He ejaculates at the height of his anxiety.

We are told of the famous eroticization of anxiety. Isn't it necessary first of all to find out what relations anxiety has with Eros?

We'll try to make some headway next time on the study of the respective faces of anxiety, on the side of jouissance and on the side of desire.

6 March 1963

XIII

APHORISMS ON LOVE

Negation in Russian
Desire and the professor
The subject of jouissance
The *a* is not a signifier
Man and woman

страхи.
ч страха глаза велики.
я боюсь чтоб он не пришёл.
небось боюсь, что он не придёт. ·····——··

Several people were kind enough to respond to my complaint from last time, about not having been able to acquaint myself with the Russian term that corresponds to the Chekhov morsel Pierre Kaufmann brought to my attention. Even though he doesn't speak Russian, he was the one who brought me the precise term, which I then asked Smirnoff, who is a Russian speaker, to give a brief commentary on.

I hardly dare utter these words for which I do not possess the phonology. The word in the title is страхи, which is the plural of страх. This word, like all words that have to do with fear, fright, anxiety, terror and torment, poses us some very difficult problems of translation. I was just thinking that it's rather like colours whose overtones vary from one language to another. Be that as it may, I believe I'm right in understanding, from the debates amongst the Russian speakers present here, that what I put forward last time was correct, namely, that Chekhov didn't mean to speak of anxiety.

With that, I'm coming back to what I wanted to convey to Pierre Kaufmann. I used this example last time to shed a little side light on the reversal I wanted to bring about, namely, to assert, as moreover

I did once before, that anxiety is not without an object. Introducing this object by saying that it would be just as legitimate to maintain that fear has no object held a certain interest for me. But it's clear that this does not exhaust the question of the nature of the frights, panic fears, or terrors designated in the examples from Chekhov. This is the right moment to point out for you in this regard that in an upcoming piece of work Kaufmann takes the trouble to give a precise articulation focused on these Chekhovian dreads.

Before I begin, I'm going to let you profit from another little discovery, once again due to Kaufmann.

He found the most frequent term used to say *I fear* and that is боюсь. With that, he amused himself hunting out in Russian the function of negation known as the expletive, on which I have laid such a strong emphasis. You can find it in French in the sentence, *je crains qu'il ne vienne*, when you're saying that what you fear is him coming. It is not enough to qualify the *ne* as *discordantiel*, because it marks the discordance that lies between my fear, because I fear he may come, and my hope, since I hope he won't. For my part, I see it as nothing less than the signifying trace of what I call the subject of the enunciation, distinct from the subject of the statement.

Well, going by the Russian, it seems that we see how it has to be accorded even greater specificity and this goes altogether in the direction of the value I ascribe to the expletive *ne*, namely, that it really does represent the subject of the enunciation as such and not simply his sentiment. If I understood Smirnoff rightly, in Russian the discordance is indicated by a special nuance. The чтоб is already in itself a *ne que*, but one that is also marked by a further nuance, inasmuch as the *que* that distinguishes this чтоб from the simple что that is in the second sentence,[1] nuances the verb with a sort of conditional aspect, in such a way that the discordance is already marked at the level of the letter б. The negation is therefore even more expletive in Russian from the simple standpoint of the signified.

This doesn't prevent it from working in exactly the same way in Russian as it does in French, thus leaving the question of its interpretation open. I've just said how I parse it.

So, now, how am I going to proceed?

1

This morning, remarkably enough, as I was thinking about what I'd be coming out with here, I suddenly conjured up the time when one of my most intelligent patients – this species does still exist – asked me pointedly *What on earth is it that drives you to such lengths to tell*

them that? This was back in the barren years when linguistics and even probability calculus had some place here.

I said to myself that reminding you that there is such a thing as a teacher's desire wasn't such a bad angle from which to introduce the analyst's desire.

I won't give you the word right now, and for good reason, but when I feel the stirrings of guilt at the level of what might be called human tenderness, when it so happens that I think of the calm I'm upsetting, it is quite striking how I willingly put forward the excuse that, for example, I wouldn't be teaching were it not for the 1953 scission. It's not true. Well, clearly I would have liked to devote myself to more limited works, even more intermittent work, but deep down that doesn't change anything.

That one may pose someone the question of the teacher's desire is, to state the obvious, the sign that the question exists. It is also the sign that there is a teaching. And, at the end of the day, this introduces us to the curious observation that, right where the question doesn't get asked, there stands the professor. The professor comes into existence each time the response to this question is, as it were, already written out, written into his manner or his behaviour, into the kind of conditioning that may be situated at the level of what we call the pre-conscious, that is to say, at the level of something that, wherever it comes from, from institutions or even from what one calls one's penchants, one is able to come out with.

It is useful to take a look at how the professor is defined as he who teaches on teachings. In other words, he snips into teachings, he does something analogous to collage. Were this truth better known, it would allow professors to go about it with more consummate art, whose path is shown precisely by collage such as it has taken on its own meaning through artworks. Were they to make their collage in a way that was less concerned with the join, less tempered, they would stand a chance of achieving the same result that collage aims at, namely, to evoke the lack that makes for the entire worth of the figurative work itself, when it is an accomplished one, of course. And along this path, they would thereby manage to meet up with the effect that is specific to what, precisely, teaching is.

So, that's been said as a way of situating, even of lauding, those who are good enough to take the trouble to see, through their presence, what gets taught here, and of thanking them too.

With that, since I can also see listeners who only come along intermittently, I am going to become for a moment the professor of my own teaching and remind you of the major point in what I brought along last time.

Starting off from the distinction between anxiety and fear, I

strove, at least as a first step, to overturn the opposition that is currently accepted by everyone at the point at which the final elaboration of this distinction has come to a standstill.

The movement certainly doesn't lie in the direction of a transition from one to the other. Though traces of this remain in Freud, to attribute him with the idea of reducing one to the other would only be an error. Despite the term *objektlos* cropping up in one sentence, he says quite clearly that anxiety is *Angst vor etwas*, anxiety faced with something. He certainly doesn't do this just to reduce it to another form of fear because he underlines the essential distinction between the points of origin of what provokes the one and the other. What I said in passing about fear has to be borne in mind on the side of the refusal of any accentuation that might isolate the fear of *entgegenstehen*, what is placed to the fore, from fear as a response, *entgegen*.

In anxiety, on the other hand, the subject is seized, concerned and implicated in his inmost depths. We already find a first hint of this on the phenomenological plane. In this respect, I called to mind the tight relationship between anxiety and the apparatus of what we call defence, and then, along this same path, I pointed out again how it is on the side of the real, in a first approximation, that we have to seek out what in anxiety does not deceive.

This does not mean that the real exhausts the notion of what anxiety targets. What anxiety targets in the real, in relation to which it presents itself as a signal, is what I've tried to show you by means of the table of the subject's signifying division, as it were. It includes the x of a primordial subject moving towards his advent as subject, in accordance with the figure of a division of the subject S in relation to the A of the Other, since the subject has to realize himself on the path to the Other.

$$\frac{A}{S}$$

I left this subject, in its first position, indeterminate with regard to its denomination, but the end of my talk allowed you to recognize how it could be denoted at this mythical level, prior to the operation being played out in its entirety. It is the subject of jouissance, in so far as this term has a meaning, but precisely, for reasons we shall be going back over later, it can in no way be isolated as a subject, unless mythically.

Last time, I wrote up the three levels that correspond to the three phases of this operation. They are, respectively, jouissance, anxiety and desire. I'm going to move through this layering today to show

A	S	Jouissance
a	A	Anxiety
$		Desire

Anxiety between jouissance and desire

you, not the *mediating* function of anxiety between jouissance and desire, but its *median* function.

How else might we comment on this important phase of our account, except to say the following, whose various terms I ask you to take up by providing them with their fullest meaning – jouissance shall know nothing of the Other except by this remainder, *a*.

What arrives on the bottom level, what comes about at the end of the operation, is the barred subject, namely, the subject as it is implied in the fantasy where it is one of the two terms that constitute desire's support. The fantasy is $ standing in a certain relation of opposition to *a*, a relation whose polyvalence is sufficiently defined by the composite character of the rhomb, which represents disjunction, ∨, just as much as conjunction, ∧, which is as much *greater than* > as *lesser than* <. $ is the term of this operation in the form of division, since *a* is irreducible, it is a remainder, and there is no way of operating with it. With this way of embellishing it with an image through mathematical forms, this can only stand as a reminder that, were the division to come about, what would be concerned in $ is the relation of *a* to S.

What does this mean? To sketch out the translation of what I am designating, I might suggest that *a* comes to assume the function of the metaphor of the subject of jouissance. This would only be right if *a* were deemed equivalent to a signifier. Now, the *a* is precisely what resists any assimilation to the function of a signifier and this indeed is why it symbolizes that which, in the sphere of the signifier, always presents itself as lost, as what gets lost in signifierization. Now, it is precisely this waste product, this scrap, which resists signifierization, that comes to find itself constituting the foundation of the desiring subject as such – not the subject of jouissance now, but the subject on the path of his search, which is not a search for his jouissance. In wanting to bring this jouissance into the locus of the Other as locus of the signifier, however, the subject precipitates himself, anticipating himself as a desiring subject. If there is precipitation and anticipation here, it is not in the sense that this step might skip over or move more quickly than its own stages, it is in the sense that it broaches, just shy of its realiza-

tion, the gap between desire and jouissance. This is where anxiety is situated.

This is so definite that the anxiety phase will not be absent from the constitution of desire, even if this phase is elided and cannot be concretely ascertained. Those to whom I need to suggest an authority for them to trust in my not being mistaken will remember in this respect Freud's first analysis of the fantasy in the analysis of *Ein Kind wird geschlagen*, which is not only a structural analysis but a dynamic one too. Freud too speaks precisely of a second phase which is always elided in the constitution of the fantasy and to such an extent that even analysis can only reconstruct it. This doesn't mean that this anxiety phase is always this inaccessible. On a good many levels, it can be ascertained phenomenologically.

Anxiety is thus an intermediary term between jouissance and desire in so far as desire is constituted and founded upon the anxiety phase, once anxiety has been got through.

2

The next part of my talk was designed to illustrate something we first caught sight of a long while ago, but which we don't know how to turn fully to our advantage when it comes to understanding what the castration complex corresponds to, which takes on a quite different value in the discourse of the analysts we are.

I tell you that at the heart of the experience of desire lies what remains when desire has been, let's say, satisfied, what remains at the end of desire, an end that is always a false end, an end that is always the result of having got it wrong. I spelt out well enough last time, with regard to detumescence, the value that the phallus assumes in its worn-out state. This synchronic element, as simple as a cabbage[2] and even alike to a cabbage stem as Petronius had it, stands to remind us that essentially the object falls away from the subject in his relation to desire.

The fact that the object lies in this falling-away is a dimension that deserves to be accentuated in order to take a small step further to the place I should like to bring you today and which, given a little attention, might already have emerged for you in what I said last time when I tried to show you the form in which the object *a* of the fantasy, the support of desire, is embodied.

When I used Zurbarán to tell you about breasts and eyes, using his Lucy and Agatha, were you not struck by the fact that these objects *a* present themselves in a positive form? Those breasts and those eyes that I showed you on the platter that these two dignified

saints use to bear them, even on the bitter earth that carries the footsteps of Oedipus, appear with a sign that is different from what I next showed you with respect to the phallus, which is specified by the fact that at a certain level of an animal realm jouissance coincides with detumescence, without there being any necessity to it nor anything that would be linked to the organism's *Wesenheit* in Goldstein's sense. Since the phallus functions in human copulation not only as an instrument of desire but also as its negative, it presents itself in the *a* function with a minus sign.

It is essential to distinguish between castration anxiety and what is maintained in the subject at the end of an analysis, and which Freud designates as the threat of castration. This point is surmountable. It is not altogether necessary for the subject to remain suspended, when he is male, from the threat of castration, nor, when she is of the other sex, from *Penisneid*. To know how we might cross this limit point we need to know why analysis, when it is led in a certain direction, winds up in this dead end whereby the negative that stamps the physiological function of copulation in the human being finds itself promoted to the level of the subject in the form of an irreducible lack. This will be met up with further down the line as a question and I think it is important to have marked it out already.

Next I showed the articulation between two points pertaining to sadism and masochism, and I shall summarize for you now its essential part, the part that it is crucial to uphold inasmuch as it allows you to give full meaning to the most developed elements of what has been said on this score from where we currently stand. To my surprise and also to my delight, on reading one author recently I saw that he has taken things very far concerning masochism, as close as can be to the point to which I am going to try to lead you this year from our angle of approach. The fact remains that even this article, whose title I'm going to give you, is still, like all the others, strictly incomprehensible for the reason that the proof of what I am about to set out has been elided from it.

We have come to free ourselves of laying the accent on what at first approach clashes most strongly with our finalism, namely, the fact that the function of pain comes into the picture in masochism. We have come to understand that this is not the essential point. In the analytic experience, we have come to perceive, thank goodness, that the Other is being targeted, that the masochistic manoeuvres in the transference are situated at a level that bears a relation to the Other. Many authors stop there, sinking into an *insight* whose superficiality is blindingly obvious, even though certain cases have turned out to be manageable by getting to this level and no further. One cannot say that the function of narcissism, for example, which

has been accentuated by one author who betrays some talent for exposition, Ludwig Eidelberg, will suffice us.

Without leading you into the structure of masochistic functioning, I wanted last time to accentuate for you, because this will shed an entirely different light on the details in the table, what is not seen in the masochist's aim. It is said that the masochist aims at the Other's jouissance. I showed you that what is concealed by this idea is that he aims in fact, as the ultimate term, at the Other's anxiety. This is what allows the manoeuvre to be outmanoeuvred. And now an analogous remark on the side of sadism – analogous in the sense that the first term is likewise elided. It is patent that the sadist seeks the Other's anxiety. What is thereby masked is the Other's jouissance.

Therefore we find ourselves, betwixt sadism and masochism, in the presence of what presents itself as an alternation. That which, at the second level, is veiled and concealed in each of these two subjects appears in the other party at the level of what is targeted. There is an occultation of anxiety in the first case, of the object *a* in the other. This is not, however, a process in reverse, a switch-around. Sadism is not masochism back to front. This is not a reversible couple. The structure is more complex. Though I'm only singling out two terms today, you may presume, in reference to several of my main schemas, that it has to do with a fourfold function, a foursquare function. One passes from one to the other by rotating it 90 degrees, and not through any symmetry or inversion.

Last time I indicated that what lies concealed behind the search for the Other's anxiety in sadism is the search for the object *a*. I qualified it using an expressive term taken from the text of Sadean fantasies, which I won't remind you of now.

I'm going to end with a brief reminder that will go back over what I said about the *a*, this object, by stressing one of the evident characteristics it possesses, which we are very familiar with, even though we don't notice its importance. I mean to speak about anatomy, of which Freud was wrong to say without further qualification that it is destiny.

The limitation to which the destiny of desire is submitted in man has the conjunction with a certain anatomy as its mainspring, the same conjunction that I tried to qualify last time between the existence of what I called decidua, deciduous appendages that only exist at the mammalian level of organisms, and what is effectively destiny, namely ἀνάγκη, through which jouissance has to contend with the signifier. Desire is destined to meet the object in a certain function that is localized and precipitated at the level of deciduous adnexa or anything that may serve as a deciduous appendage. This term will

enable us better to explore the cut-off points where anxiety may be expected, to confirm that this is precisely where it emerges, and to draw up an exhaustive catalogue of these frontiers.

I ended with one of the better-known clinical examples illustrating the tight connection, which is much less fortuitous than is thought, between orgasm and anxiety in so far as both may be defined through an exemplary situation, that of the Other's expectation. The exam paper, blank or otherwise, that the examinee has to hand in is a gripping example of what, for a short instant, the *a* can be for a subject.

3

After all these reminders, we're going to try to move on a bit. I shall do so on a path that might not, as I said, be quite the one I'd have settled on myself. You'll see what I mean by that.

With regard to countertransference, I mentioned how women seemed to navigate it with greater ease. If they navigate it with greater ease in their theoretical writings, it is, I presume, because they navigate it fairly well in their practice too, even if they don't see – or rather don't articulate, because why shouldn't they be credited with a little mental restriction? – its mainspring in a way that's entirely clear.

Here it's a matter of tackling something of desire's relation to jouissance. When we refer to pieces of work like this, it seems that women have a very fine understanding of what the analyst's desire is. How is that so?

To grasp this, we have to take things up where I left them in this table, by telling you that anxiety forms the middle register between desire and jouissance. I'm going to bring in a few formulas, which I'll leave each of you to find your own way in, through your experience, because they're aphoristic, and it's easy to understand why.

On a subject as delicate as the relations between man and woman, spelling out everything that makes the persistence of a necessary misunderstanding both licit and justified can only have the reductive effect of letting each of my listeners drown out his own personal difficulties, which fall far short of what I'm aiming at, in the certainty that this misunderstanding is structural. If you know how to hear me, however, speaking about misunderstanding is in no way equivalent to speaking about necessary failure. If the real is always implied, then I don't see why the most efficient jouissance shouldn't be reached along the paths of misunderstanding themselves.

The only thing that sets aphorism apart from doctrinal develop-

ment is that it foregoes any preconceived order. I'm going to put forward a few different forms of these aphorisms. To begin with, I'll choose the following, which might touch you in a way that's less likely to have you falling about laughing – *Only love allows jouissance to condescend to desire.*

We shall be putting forward a few more of them, which can be deduced from our little table on which it is shown that the *a*, as such, and nothing else, is the port of access, not to jouissance, but to the Other. It is all that's left of it when the subject wants to make his entrance into this Other.

At the end of the day, this is suitable for clearing away the ghost of oblativity which has been exerting its poisonous influence since 1927, invented by the grammarian Pichon. Goodness knows I acknowledge his worth in grammar, but it can only be regretted that an analysis that was, as it were, absent, should have delivered him up entirely, in his exposé of psychoanalytic theory, to the mercy of ideas he held prior to that time and which were none other than Maurrassian ideas.

When S re-emerges from this access to the Other, it is the unconscious, that is, the barred Other. As I told you earlier, all he has left to do is to turn A into something for which it is less the metaphorical function that matters than the relation of falling-away he will find himself in with regard to this *a*. Therefore, to desire the Other, big A, is only ever to desire *a*.

To deal with love, just as one deals with sublimation, one has to recall what the pre-Freudian moralists – I mean those from the fine tradition, notably those from the French tradition, which passes over into the man of pleasure whose scansion I have already called to your minds – spelt out in full, and whose acquired knowledge we ought not to take for old-hat, namely, that love is the sublimation of desire.

The result is that we really cannot use love as either the first or the last term, however primordial it looks to be in our theorization. Love is a cultural fact. It is not only *How many are they who might never have loved but for hearing talk of love*, as La Rochefoucauld put it so well, it is that love would be out of the question were it not for culture. This should prompt us to set down elsewhere the arcs of what we have to say on the conjunction between man and woman, namely, at the very point that Freud himself indicates, underlining that this detour could have been otherwise produced.

I'll continue down my aphoristic path. *To put myself forward as the one who desires, ἐρῶν, is to put myself forward as the want of* a, *and it is by this path that I open the door to the jouissance of my Being.*

The aporic character of this position cannot fail to emerge for

you, but there are still a few more steps to be taken. I think you have already grasped, because I've been telling you for a long while now, that if I am standing at the level of the ἐρῶν, opening the door to the jouissance of my Being, it is clear that the nearest slope that offers itself to this enterprise is for me to be appreciated as ἐρώμενος, loveable. This is what does not fail to come about, and without any conceit, but where already the fact that something has gone amiss in the affair can be read.

This is not an aphorism, but already a commentary. I believed it necessary for two reasons, firstly because I made a kind of double negative slip, which ought to warn me of something, and secondly because I believed I could see the miracle of incomprehension shining across a few faces.

I continue. *Any requirement of* a *on the path of this enterprise to encounter woman* – since I've taken the androcentric perspective – *can only trigger the Other's anxiety, precisely because I don't make any more of the Other than* a, *because my desire* ays *the Other, as it were*. This is precisely why sublimation-love allows jouissance to condescend to desire. Here, my little circuit of aphorisms chases its tail.

What noble words are these. You see, I don't fear ridicule. All this might sound a bit preachy and each time one advances on this ground one always runs this risk. But still, you seem to be taking your time before laughing at it. I can only thank you and be off again.

I shall only start off again for a short while today, but allow me to take a few more small steps forward. This same path that I've just trodden in a tone that strikes you as somewhat heroic can be taken in the opposite direction and there we shall see something emerge that may sound less triumphant, which once again will confirm the non-reversibility of these routes.

On the path that condescends to my desire, what the Other wants, what he wants even if he doesn't know in the slightest what he wants, is nevertheless, necessarily, my anxiety. It is not enough to say that woman overcomes hers through love. That remains to be seen.

Moving along the path I've chosen today, I'm leaving to one side, for another time, how the partners are defined at the outset. The way things stand, such as we are moving through them, always entails picking things up en route and even sometimes at the port of arrival, because we can't pick them up at the start.

Be that as it may, it is in so far as she wants my jouissance, that is, to enjoy me, that woman generates anxiety in me. This is for the very simple reason, which for a long time now has been part of our theory, that no desire can be fulfilled without entailing castration.

To the extent that jouissance is involved, that is, that she has my Being in her sights, woman can only reach it by castrating me.

May this not lead the male portion of my audience into any resignation with regard to the ever palpable effects of this basic truth in what is called, using a classificatory term, conjugal life. Defining a basic ἀνάγκη has absolutely nothing to do with its incidental points of impact. Nonetheless, a good many things are clarified when it is properly spelt out.

Now, spelling it out properly as I have just done, even though it overlaps with the most palpable experience, risks the danger of you seeing here what is commonly called inevitability, which means that it's already written out. Just because I'm saying it, this doesn't mean you should think it is already written. Moreover, were I to write it, I would add more shape to it. This shape consists precisely in going into the details, that is, in going into the whys and wherefores.

With reference to what makes for the key to the function of the object of desire, what is blindingly obvious is that woman lacks nothing. We would be quite wrong to consider *Penisneid* to be an ultimate term. I've already announced that herein lies the originality of what I'm trying to pursue for you this year.

The fact is that on this point she has nothing wanting. Perhaps I'll try to spell out why anatomically. The clitoris/penis analogy is far from being a well-founded one. A clitoris is not simply a smaller penis, it is a part of the penis that corresponds to the corpus cavernosa. To the best of my knowledge, except in hypospadias, a penis is not limited to the corpus cavernosa. This is an aside.

The fact of having nothing wanting on the road to jouissance does not resolve the question of desire for her in the slightest, precisely in so far as the function of the *a* plays its full role for her as for us. But all the same, this simplifies the question of desire a great deal for her – though not for us in the presence of her desire. But in the end, taking an interest in the object as an object of our desire entails far fewer complications for women.

Time is getting on. I'll leave things at the point to which I've steered them today. This point is tempting enough for many of my listeners to want to know what comes next.

To give you a few first fruits, I'll tell you that, if a title can be given to what I'm going to be speaking about next time, it would be something along the lines of – *On the Relationships of Woman, as Psychoanalyst, to the Position of Don Juan.*

13 March 1963

XIV

WOMAN, TRUER AND MORE REAL

Tiresias struck blind
The hole, the void, and the pot
Woman lacks nothing
Don Juan, a woman's dream
Lucia Tower and her desire

To situate anxiety for you, I announced that I would have to come back to the central field already sketched out in the Seminar on ethics as the field of jouissance.

Today we'll be moving forward by trying to spell out why this is so.

1

A certain number of inroads, notably those I made in the year of the said Seminar, have already taught you that, as mythical as the point at which we must locate it is, we have to conceive of jouissance as being profoundly independent of the articulation of desire.

Indeed, desire is constituted upstream of the zone which separates out jouissance and desire, and which is the fault-line where anxiety is produced. This does not mean that desire doesn't concern the Other involved in jouissance, which is the real Other. I will say that it is normative for desire, for the law that constitutes desire as desire, not to manage to concern this Other in its centre. It only concerns it elliptically and off to one side – small *a*, substitute for big A. This means that all the *Erniedrigungen*, the debasements in the sphere of love that come pointed out and punctuated by Freud, are the effects of this fundamental structure, which is irreducible. Here lies the gap that we do not mean to mask over, if, moreover, we think that the castration complex and *Penisneid*, which

thrive here, are not themselves the final terms that designate this structure.

Woman turns out to be superior in the domain of jouissance, on account of her bond with the knot of desire being much looser. Lack, the *minus* sign that stamps the phallic function for man and means that his nexus with the object has to pass via the negativizing of the phallus and the castration complex, the status of the $(-\varphi)$ at the centre of man's desire, all of that does not form a necessary knot for woman.

This does not mean that she is without any relation to the desire of the Other. On the contrary, the desire of the Other as such is precisely what she has to contend with, and all the more so given that, in this confrontation, the phallic object only comes in second place for her, and in so far as it plays a role in the desire of the Other. This is a considerable simplification.

This simplified relationship with the desire of the Other is what allows women, when they apply themselves to our noble profession, to be with respect to this desire in a relationship that we can feel to be much freer, notwithstanding each particularity that they may represent in a relationship that is, if I may say, *essential*. This is shown each time they broach the field confusingly labelled the field of countertransference. She possesses this greater freedom because she doesn't clasp onto this relation to the Other as *essentially*, in such a *wesentlich* manner, as men do, in particular in anything to do with jouissance.

With that, having incarnated for you the other day the *a* in the falling eyes of Oedipus, I cannot fail to call to your minds Tiresias struck blind.

Tiresias, the one who ought to be the patron saint of psychoanalysts, Tiresias the seer, the soothsayer, was blinded by the supreme goddess Juno, the jealous one, who thereby took vengeance for his offence to her in circumstances that Ovid explains to us very well in the third book of the *Metamorphoses*, line 316 to line 338. I ask you to refer to this text whose *great anthropological interest* is underlined by T. S. Eliot in an endnote to *The Waste Land*.

One day, engaging this one time in somewhat mellow intercourse with his wife, Jupiter teases her over the fact that *most certainly the voluptuousness you women experience* – that's him speaking – *is much greater than the pleasure men feel*. With that, off they go to consult Tiresias, just like that, for a lark – the gods don't always measure the consequences of their acts. *But, by the by*, he says, *how did it slip my mind? Tiresias was seven years a woman*.

The baker's wife / every seven years switched her skin, chanted Guillaume Apollinaire, and Tiresias changed sex, not from

straightforward periodicity, but by mishap. Having been careless enough to disturb two coupling snakes, those of our caduceus, he became a woman. Then, repeating the deed, he came back to his initial position. Whatever the meaning might be behind these snakes that one can only disentangle at great peril, he is called to bear witness before Jupiter and Juno on the question of jouissance for having spent the full seven-year interval as a woman. And so, what does he say? Out with the truth, regardless of the consequences. *I corroborate*, he says, *what Jupiter has told. Women's jouissance is greater than men's.*

By a quarter or a tenth? There are also more precise versions, but the ratio matters little. It depends only, in sum, on the limitation that man's relation to desire imposes on him, which inscribes the object into the negative column. This is what I designate as $(-\varphi)$. Whereas the prophet of absolute knowledge teaches this man that he makes his hole in the real, which in Hegel is called negativity, I say something else, namely, that the hole begins at the base of his abdomen, at the very least if we want to go right back to the source of what forms the status of desire in him.

On this score, Sartre, being post-Hegelian, doesn't fail to slip in an image you know well, with his wonderful talent for sidetracking – the image of the infant, which naturally he makes a born-bourgeois, just to spice things up a bit, who sticking his finger into the sand mimes, in his eyes, and to our attention, the act that is supposed to be the fundamental act.

Some thoroughly warranted scorn could be poured on what here amounts to a new form of the little-man-within-the-man that we are incarnating in the character of this child without realizing that it warrants all the philosophical objections that have been levelled at the said little-man. But in the end, scorn is not enough. The figure Sartre presents us with hits home, it makes something resonate in the unconscious. What exactly? Well, my goodness, none other than the desired engulfing of one's entire body into the bosom of Mother Earth, whose meaning Freud exposes, as it deserves to be, when he says, in so many words, at the end of one of the chapters of *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst*, that the return to the mother's womb is a fantasy of impotent men. This is precisely why the ward that Sartre applies himself to incubating in this man, and whom he invites throughout his oeuvre to share the only glue of existence, will let himself be the phallus. The accent here is on *being*.

You may see the phallus that is involved by portraying it with an image that is within easy reach of your research, the one to be found harboured in the valves of those little animals called razor shells. They will on occasion stick their tongues out at you, from the

tureen in which you have gathered your pickings. You pry them up in much the same way as you crop asparagus, with a long-bladed pocketknife and a simple piece of wire that you hook down into the sand. I don't know if you've ever seen these tongues poking out of the razor shell in a state of opisthotonus, but if you haven't, it's a unique experience you really have to treat yourselves to and one which strikes me as bearing a clear relation to the fantasy Sartre insists on in *Nausea*, that of seeing tongues suddenly darting out from a wall or some other surface, which fits into the thematic of the image of the world being rejected into an unfathomable artificiality.

So what? you may wonder. Since, when all is said and done, he's exorcizing the cosmos, after having undermined the fundamental terms of theology, cosmology here being deemed to partake of the same nature, I will say that this curious use of tongues doesn't seem to be on the right track. But much rather than believing it, just as earlier I doubled up *essentially* and *wesentlich* – and I would have liked to have been able to voice the word in many other languages besides – I find myself here faced with a certain Babelism, which you will wind up making, if you nettle me, one of the key points of what I have to forbid.

Be that as it may, this reference indicates why my own experience is not the same, my experience of what one can see, when one is young, on the beach, that is, where one cannot make a hole without water welling up in it. Well, to come out with it, this is an annoyance which also wells up in me faced with the crab's sideways walk, ever ready to hide its intention to pinch your fingers. They're very dexterous things, crabs. You can give one a pack to shuffle, which is nowhere near as hard as opening a mussel, something it does every day – well, even were there no more than two cards, it would still try to scramble them.

So it goes that one says, for example, that the real is always full. That produces an effect, it's got a ring to it that lends credence to the thing, a little ring of tasteful Lacanianism. Who else but me can speak of the real like that? The rub is, I never said that. The real is teeming with hollows and you can even create a vacuum in it. What I say is altogether different. It is that the real doesn't lack anything.

I added that, if you make a few pots, even if they are all alike, it's a sure thing that these pots are different. All the same, it's incredible that, in the name of the Principle of Individuation, this should give classical thought so much cotton to spin with. Look where we're at, even now. We're at the Bertrand Russell level, mobilizing all time and space just to uphold the distinction between individuals. You have to admit it's a laugh.

My pot story continues. The next phase is that their identity, that

is, what can be substituted between the pots, is the void around which the pot is formed. And the third phase is that human action has begun when this void is barred, in order to be filled with what will constitute the void of the pot beside it, when, for a pot, being half-full is the same thing as being half-empty. This presupposes that a pot is something that doesn't leak all over the place.

In all cultures you can be sure that a civilization is already complete and in place when you can find its first ceramics. Sometimes I contemplate a really very fine collection of vases I have in my country house. Evidently, for those people, in their time, as many other cultures show, it was their main asset. Even if we are unable to read what is wonderfully and lavishly painted on their sides, even if we are unable to translate them into an articulated language of rites and myths, one thing we do know – in this vase, there is everything. The vase is enough, man's relation to the object and to desire is there in its entirety, tangible and enduring.

This is indeed what legitimizes the famous mustard pot that once set my colleagues' teeth on edge for a year or so, to the point that, kind as I am, I ended up putting it back up on the shelf with the pots of glue. I did still make use of it, though. It served as an example of how striking it is that on the dinner table the mustard pot is always empty, as you know from experience.

The only time there is any mustard is when it gets up your nose, as we say in French. You start to see red.

Contrary to what people think, I am not in the least bit fussy about how pots are used. I'm saying this because a problem of this order was recently set out for us. Piera Aulagnier, who is a steadfast spirit as women can be, and this is even what will do her a disservice, knows very well that it is permissible to put the *Redcurrant Jam* label on the pot that contains the rhubarb. You just have to know whom you want to purge by this means and then wait, so as to gather up what you wanted from the subject.

All the same, when I bring along a full array of carefully finished pots, don't imagine that there wasn't a whole load of them that got chucked on the scrapheap. I too, in my time, gave entire talks in which the action, the thought and the words spun on their wheel in such a way that things went all wonky. Well, that went in the bin.

When I put *impediment* at the top of the column that includes *acting-out* and *embarrassment* at the top of the one next to it, which includes *passage à l'acte*, if, Piera, you want to single out the case of acting-out that you observed, and very finely so, if you want to distinguish it as what you call *acted-out transference* – which, of course, is a distinct idea, which is your idea and which is worthwhile

discussing – it is still the case that you are referring to my chart because in your text you invoke the *embarrassment* your subject found himself in. Not really being used anywhere else but here, this is where you took note of the term.

It was evident in your observation that the patient had been impeded by the obstetrician from seeing his offspring come out of the maternal gates and that his turmoil at being powerless to overcome a fresh impediment of this sort drove him to throw the peacekeepers into a state of anxiety with the written assertion of his father's right to what I will call hylophagia, to specify the notion represented by the image of the devouring Saturn. Indeed, this fellow presents himself at the police station to say that nothing in the law prevents him from eating his baby, who has just died. On the contrary, it's evidently the embarrassment into which he is plunged by the calmness of the superintendent on this occasion, who didn't come down in the last shower, and the shock of the turmoil he wanted to provoke that leads to his *passage à l'acte*, that makes him carry out the kind of acts that get him put inside.

So, not to acknowledge, when clearly you're right on it, that I couldn't find a finer observation to explain what you know, that you're really right on it, that you've put your finger on it, is to betray yourself a bit.

This, which of course couldn't be reproached of anyone when it's a matter of handling things like this, fresh out the mould, authorizes me all the same to recall that my work, mine, is only of any interest if one uses it in the right way, that is to say, not as people have generally got into the habit of doing, the bad habit of doing, in the teaching – this is not directed at you, Piera – of notions that are grouped together in a sort of rounding up, just for the sake of padding things out.

Having given this reminder to indicate to you what gives you some right to be watchful of what I bring you and have chosen for you with such care, I'll resume my topic.

2

What I intend to say now on woman's relation to jouissance and to desire, I shall try, I too, to give you some inkling of through one of my observations.

One day a woman tells me that her husband, whose insistences are, if I may, part and parcel of the foundation of the marriage, leaves her alone a little too long for her not to notice. Given the way that she always feels what she gets from him to be more or less

clumsy, she finds this something of a relief. This is when she comes out with a sentence that I'm nevertheless going to extract from her monologue, counting on you not to jump straightaway at the chance of savouring an irony that it would be quite unwarranted to attribute to me. She expresses herself as follows – *Small matter whether he desires me, provided he doesn't desire others.*

I won't go so far as to say that this is a commonplace or regular position. It can only assume its value from the ensuing part of the constellation such as it was to unfold in the associations that make up her monologue.

So here she is now, speaking about her state. She speaks about it, for a change, with peculiar precision, which brings out the fact that tumescence is not a man's privilege. This woman, whose sexuality is quite normal, bears witness to what occurs for her if, when she is driving, for example, an alert flashes up for a moving entity that makes her say to herself something along the lines of *God, a car!* Well, inexplicably, she notices the existence of a vaginal swelling. This is what strikes her that day and she notes that, during some periods, the phenomenon will occur when just any old object comes into her visual field, to all appearances utterly foreign to anything of a sexual nature. This state, which she says is not disagreeable, which is rather of an awkward nature, stops of its own accord.

With that, and *it bothers me to follow on with what I'm about to tell you*, she says, *this bears no relation*, of course, she tells me that each of her initiatives are dedicated to me, her analyst. *I can't say devoted*, she adds, *that would mean it was done with a certain aim, but no, any old object forces me to evoke you as a witness, not even to have your approval of what I see, no, simply your gaze, and in saying that, I'm going slightly too far, let's say that this gaze helps me to make each thing assume meaning.*

With that, she wryly mentions coming across, at an early date in her life, the well-known title of Steve Passeur's play, *Je vivrai un grand amour*. Has she come across this reference at other moments in her life? This question takes her back to the start of her married life, then further back, to speak about what was indeed her first love, the love one never forgets. He was a student from whom she soon parted, but with whom she remained in correspondence, in the full sense of the term. And everything she wrote to him, she says, was truly, I quote her, *a web of lies. Stitch by stitch, I created a character, what I wanted to be in his eyes, which I in no way was. I'm afraid it was a purely fictional enterprise, which I pursued most doggedly, enveloping myself,* she says, *in a kind of cocoon.* She adds, very gently – *You know, he had a tough time getting over it.*

With that, she comes back to what she does with me. *What I*

strive to be here with you is quite the opposite. I strive always to be truthful with you. I'm not writing a novel when I'm with you. I write it when I'm not with you. She comes back to the threading, still stitch by stitch, of this dedicating of each gesture, which is not necessarily a gesture supposed to please me, nor one that would necessarily be in conformity with my thinking. You can't say she was forcing her talent. After all, what she wanted was not so much for me to look at her as for my gaze to replace hers. *I appeal to the assistance of your person. The gaze, my gaze, is insufficient when it comes to capturing everything that stands to be absorbed from the outside. It's not about watching me do something, it's about doing it for me.*

I'll bring this reading to an end, though I've still got a full page left. I just want to extract the only word of poor taste that comes out – *I am*, she says, *remote-controlled.* This does not express any metaphor and there is no *sentiment d'influence*, believe me, no feeling of being influenced. I'm only isolating this formula because you may have read it in the papers in connection with that left-wing politician who, after getting embroiled in a staged shooting, thought he ought to give us the immortal example of how, in politics, the left is always effectively remote-controlled by the right. Moreover, that's precisely how a tight relation of equal representation can be set up between the two sides.

So, where's all this leading us? To the vessel. Is the female vessel empty or full? It matters not, because it is sufficient unto itself, even if it is *to be consummated stupidly*, as my patient puts it. Nothing is lacking. The presence of the object is, so to say, an extra. Why? Because this presence is not linked to the lack of the object cause of desire, to the $(-\varphi)$ to which it is bound in men.

Men's anxiety is linked to the possibility of *not being able.* Hence the myth, a very male one, that makes the woman the equivalent of one of his ribs. One of his ribs was removed, we don't know which, and besides, he's not missing any, but it's clear that in this myth of the rib the lost object is what's involved. For man, woman is an object fashioned therefrom.

Anxiety exists in women too. Kierkegaard, who must have had something of the Tiresias about him, probably more than I because I prize my peepers, even says that women are more susceptible to anxiety than men. Should we believe it? In truth, what matters to us is to grasp the woman's bond to the infinite possibilities or rather indeterminate possibilities of desire in the field that stretches out around her.

She tempts herself by tempting the Other, in which myth will serve us here too. As the complement to the earlier myth shows, that of the famous story of the apple, you can tempt him with just about

any old object, even one that is dispensable for her, because, after all, what was she going to do with that apple? Nothing more than a fish would.[1] But it so happens that this apple was already good enough, little fish that it was, to hook the angler. The desire of the Other is what interests her.

To accentuate this slightly better, I would say that desire is a mercantile thing, that there is a pricing of desire that one pushes up and down culturally and that the pattern and the level of love depend from one minute to the next on the price one sets on desire in the marketplace. Love, in so far as it is itself a *value*, as the philosophers say very well, is made from the idealization of desire. I say idealization, because our patient from earlier on didn't speak about her husband's desire as a sick desire. Her prizing it, that's what love is. She's not really so keen on him evincing it, that's not essential, but that's the way it is.

With respect to woman's jouissance, which fully warrants all kinds of care from the partner being focused upon her, and she knows very well how to obtain this, experience teaches us that the partner's impotence can be very well accepted, along with his technical offences, because the thing also rears its head on the occasion of the fiasco, as Stendhal remarked. In cases where this impotence is lasting, although one occasionally sees her enlisting after a certain while some aid that is reputed to be more efficient, it seems that this is more out of a kind of delicacy, so that it won't be said that anyone is being refused, for any reason that may be evoked.

If you call to mind my formulas on masochism from last time, which are designed, you will see, to restore to masochism, be it the pervert's masochism, moral masochism, or women's masochism, its otherwise ungraspable unity, if you call to mind what I emphasized about the occultation, by the Other's jouissance, or by the jouissance that looks to be alleged of the Other, of an anxiety that it's incontestably a matter of awakening, you will see that women's masochism takes on a completely different meaning, a fairly ironic meaning, and a completely different scope.

It can only be caught hold of when one has really grasped that one has to assert, in principle, that women's masochism is a male fantasy.

Second point. In this fantasy, it is by proxy and in relation to the masochistic structure that is imagined in woman that man sustains his jouissance through something that is his own anxiety. This is what the object covers over. In men, the object is the condition of desire. Jouissance depends on this question. Now, desire is merely covering over anxiety. You can see the margin he still has to cover to be in range of jouissance.

For women, the desire of the Other is the means by which her jouissance will have an object that is, as it were, suitable. Her anxiety is only anxiety faced with the desire of the Other and, at the end of the day, she doesn't really know what it covers over. To go further into my formulas, I will say that in man's realm there is always the presence of some imposture. In the woman's, if something corresponds to this, then it's the masquerade, as we already said in its time in reference to Joan Riviere's article, but that's something altogether different.

By and large, woman is much more real and much truer than man, in that she knows the worth of the yardstick of what she is dealing with in desire, in that she takes this route with the greatest peace of mind and in that she has, if I may, a certain disdain for its being mis-deigned, which is a satisfaction man cannot give himself. He cannot disdain the mis-deigning of desire, because it is his very nature to deign.

Letting his desire for a woman be seen can clearly be anguishing on occasion. Why so? In passing, I would ask you to note the distinction between the dimension of *letting something be seen* and the voyeurism/exhibitionism couple. There isn't only showing and seeing, there is also *letting something be seen*. For women, whose danger at the very most comes from the masquerade, the something that is there to be let seen is *what there is*. Of course, if there's not very much, it's anxiety provoking, but it's still *what there is*, whereas for men, letting their desire be seen essentially amounts to letting *what there is not* be seen.

So, you see, don't believe that this situation, whose demonstration might strike you as fairly complex, is for all that to be taken as something especially desperate. Though it most certainly doesn't represent it as something easy, can you fail to spot the access to jouissance that it opens for the man?

The fact no less remains that all of this is very easy to handle if all you expect from it is happiness.

This remark is a conclusive one, so now we shall move into the example I find myself, all told, poised to make you benefit from, on account of the favour that we all owe to Granoff for having introduced it here.

3

To understand what Lucia Tower tells us in her article on the two men she had in her charge, I don't think I can find a better preamble, as I told you, than the image of Don Juan.

I've gone back over the question a great deal lately. I can't make you go back through the maze. Read the dreadful book by Rank called *Die Don-Juan-Gestalt*. A cat couldn't find her kittens, it's such a mess. But if you have the thread I'm about to give you, it will seem much clearer. Don Juan is a woman's dream.

Sometimes it takes a man who would still be his same old self, as woman can in a certain way pride herself on being in relation to man. Don Juan is a man who would lack nothing. This is perfectly tangible in the term I'm going to have to come back to in connection with the general structure of masochism. This almost sounds like some jape, but Don Juan's relation to the image of the father qua un-castrated is a pure feminine image. This relation is perfectly legible in what you can uncover in Rank's labyrinthine twists and turns. If we manage to link him back to a certain state of myth and rite, Don Juan would represent, so he tells us, and there his intuition guides him, he who in times now passed was capable of putting a bit of soul into things without losing his soul. The notorious practice of the *Jus primae noctis*, just like the practice, a mythical one as you know, of the deflowering priest on the *Prima noctes*, are purportedly founded on this. But *Don Juan* is a fine story, which functions and produces its effect for those who are not acquainted with all these acts of kindness. Certainly they are not absent from Mozart's song, to be found more on the side of *Le nozze di Figaro* than *Don Giovanni*.

The palpable trace of what I'm putting forward concerning Don Juan is that for him man's complex relation to his object is effaced, but at the price of accepting his radical imposture. Don Juan's prestige is linked to his acceptance of this imposture. He is always in the stead of someone else. He is, if I may, the absolute object.

Notice that it's not said that he inspires desire in the least. Though he slips into women's beds, no one knows how he got there. One might even say that he doesn't have any desire either. He stands in relation to something with respect to which he fulfils a certain function. You may call this something the *odor di femmina* and that takes us a long way. But desire plays such a paltry role in the affair that, when the *odor di femmina* does pass by, he is quite capable of failing to notice that it's Donna Elvira – to wit, the one he's had it up to here with – who's just crossed the stage.

It really needs to be said that he is not an anxiety-provoking character for women. When it happens that a woman really feels she is the object at the centre of a desire, well, believe me, that's when she really takes flight.

We're going to move now, if we can, into Lucia Tower's story.

She has two men, in analysis I mean. As she says, she always

has very satisfying relations with them on the human level. Don't make out that I'm saying that this is a straightforward business, nor that they don't go on for quite a while. They are both cases of anxiety neurosis. At least that is the diagnosis she settles on, having examined every angle. Both men have had, as is fitting, a few difficulties with their mothers and their *female siblings*, that is, sisters, but put on the same level as brothers. They are both hitched up with women that they've chosen, so we are told, so as to be able to give vent to a certain number of aggressive tendencies, and others besides, and thereby protect themselves by means of an inclination, which, my goodness, is analytically incontestable, towards the other sex. *With both men*, she tells us, *I was quite aware of the contributions which they themselves made to the difficulties with their wives, namely,* she says, *that both were too submissive, too hostile, in a sense too devoted, and both wives,* she tells us, because she fixes her spy-glass on the situation with the greatest of ease to make her assessment, *both wives were frustrated for lack of sufficient uninhibited masculine assertiveness from their husbands.* In other words, these chaps don't affect enough semblance. There we enter the thick of things. She has her own idea about the affair.

As for her, of course, without knowing what might ensnare her in all that, she goes through *phases of protectiveness*, she is a bit *too protective*, albeit differently in each case. In the case of the first man, she protects his wife a bit too much. In the case of the second, the man himself, a bit too much. What reassures her is that she is much more favourably inclined towards the second man, because the first *presented some not too attractive psychosexual problems.* We really need to read things in their innocence and freshness. But the first man presents himself in a way that is not really so distinct from the other.

Both of them irritate her with their *mumbling, halting speech, circumstantiality* – which means they say it all and then some – *repetitiveness, minutiae.* Well, all the same, she's an analyst and what she notices in the first man is his tendency to destroy her *power as an analyst.* For the second, rather than destroy her as a frustrating object, it's a matter of acquiring an object from her. In this regard, she remarks that it might be because the second is more narcissistic. In truth, as those of you who are a little cultivated may notice, this doesn't really sit well with the other references we might have on narcissism. On the other hand, it's not really narcissism that is at stake here in his regard, but what is known as the anaclitic side, as she is about to see in what comes next.

As long and fastidious as the path trodden with one and the other

is, without anything evincing any efficacy in analysing the transference, it is still nonetheless the case that something endures in her that is not fundamentally unpleasant and the countertransference responses she perceives in herself are, she says, *of a reasonably normal character*, they are a long way from crossing the limit to what could be stirred up *in any female analyst who might*, with fellows such as these, *be somewhat off guard*. She is *consistently and reasonably well on guard.*

Especially so where her first patient is concerned. She is attentive to what is going on with his wife. A bit more precisely, perhaps, she watches over her. When she learns that his wife has had a little psychosomatic mishap, she tells herself that it might not be so bad, she had feared that the woman was drifting off a bit towards psychosis, but now her anxiety is well bound.

And then, she thinks no more of it and the same situation goes on. Analyse as she might everything that occurs in the transference, right up to the use that the patient, this first one, makes in the analysis of his conflicts with his wife so as to obtain from his analyst even more attention and compensations that he never got from his mother, things still won't move on.

What is it that was to trigger the movement and make things advance? A dream, she tells us, that she, the analyst, has. Through this dream she realizes that it's perhaps not so sure that things are really going so badly with his wife.

In the dream, this woman welcomes her into her home most hospitably and shows her in every which way that she has no intention of sabotaging her husband's analysis, which until then had been one of the presuppositions of the affair, and that she is therefore quite ready to stand alongside the analyst in a position that we shall call, to translate the atmosphere of the dream, cooperative. This sets the wheels in motion for our analyst. She understands that something needs to be completely revised in her conception of her patient, that this fellow really is seeking in his couple to do what has to be done to put his wife at ease, in other words, that this bloke's desire is not nearly as adrift as all that, that the chap nevertheless takes himself seriously, that there is a way of attending to him. In other terms, he's capable of going along with it, of being a man, the dignity of which had until then been denied him.

Once she's made this discovery, once she's realigned the axis of her relation to her patient's desire, once she's realized that she had misrecognized how things stood, she can really undertake with him a review of everything that up until then had been played out illusively, the transference claims turn out to have been an imposture, and from that moment on, she tells us, everything changes.

But how does it change, and in what direction?

You have to read her to understand that from that moment on the analysis becomes particularly hard for her to bear. Everything happens, she says, in the midst of a storm of *profound depressive feelings and naked rage*, as if he were putting her to the test *cell by cell.* If a moment's inattention, she tells us, should lead her to make *even one slightest false move*, should any gesture or word ring hollow, she feels *he would fall apart.* Though she can't see everything, she nevertheless knows how to name what's involved. It is, she says, *phallic sadism couched in oral language.*

What holds our attention here? Two things.

Firstly, the very terms that are employed here confirm what I designated for you as being in the nature of sadism, namely, that the sadistic quest aims at the object and, within the object, the little piece that's missing. Once the truth of his desire has been recognized, what's really involved in the way the patient behaves, whose anomalies described as *not too attractive* are certainly of a sadistic order, is a search for the object.

Secondly, putting oneself on the line through which the sadistic object-search passes in no way amounts to being a masochist. Our Lucia Tower accuses herself of nothing of the sort and we have no need to impute it to her. Simply, she kicks up a storm and it comes down on her from a character to whom she only really started to relate in the transference once her desire was implicated, as she emphasizes with particular courage, and in the function where she herself is in the posture of a third-party rival to characters from her own history. Therefore, she bears the consequences of this desire, to the point that she feels what analysts include under the label *carry over*, which designates the phenomenon in which the effects of countertransference are most evident. It's when you carry on thinking about one patient when you're with another one.

And yet, she tells us, though she was *feeling at a very low ebb*, all this *was dispelled suddenly and amusingly.* Setting off on vacation during one of her annual breaks, she realizes that she's not carrying anything of this business with her. It doesn't concern her one bit. She is truly in the mythical position of the superlatively free and ethereal Don Juan as he exits the bedchamber where he was up to his usual tricks.

Once this scission, this un-sticking, has been accomplished, she finds once more her efficacy, her adaptation to the case, and, if I may say so, the implacable nakedness of her gaze. She had to take stock of her relation to her desire and realize that, as complex as one can suppose it to be – because she indicates that she's got her own

problems as well – it is only ever something that at the end of the day she can keep a distance from.

That's where I'm going to pick up from next time.

20 March 1963

XV

MEN'S BUSINESS

Lucia Tower and the Oedipal comedy
What lacks, men's business
What is ridiculously termed perversion
A vessel with neither inside nor outside
Circumcision, an institution

So, we're getting straight back to the point.

I'm going to ask you a collective question. Would those who think they won't be able to make our appointment next Wednesday due to the school holidays please raise their hands?

OK. Well, there won't be any Seminar next Wednesday, nor the following one, in the week known as Palm Week, nor the one after that, in the week known as Easter Week. So we'll resume on the Wednesday of the week known as Quasimodo Week, that is, 24 April.

1

I'm taking up the items set down by Lucia Tower, whom I find myself having taken as an example, from a certain angle of what I shall call the easiness of women's position with respect to the relation to desire.

The term *easiness* has an ambiguous scope here. Let's say that a lesser implication in the difficulties of desire allowed her to reason within the psychoanalytic position if not more soundly then at least more freely, in her article, the said article on countertransference.

Through the effect of what there she calls, quite soundly, her countertransference, and which I will call her inner auto-critic, she realized she'd neglected something of what might be called the fitting appreciation or axiation of her patient's desire. She doesn't

give us specifically what she said at that moment, she only tells us that she reviewed the patient's transferential requirements, this time setting things straight for him.

Now, while doing this, she was only able to give him the impression that she was sensitive to what she herself had just discovered – namely, that he takes much greater care with his wife, he arranges much more of what goes on in the marital situation, than she'd suspected. And the patient was only able to translate this rectification, so it seems, in the following terms – his desire is much less lacking in sway over his analyst than he thought, and it is not ruled out that this woman, who is his analyst, might be made, up to a certain point, *to bend* to his desire – *to stoop* in English, to bend. *She Stoops to Conquer*, the title of a comedy by Sheridan.[1] This at least is what Lucia Tower brings us in these terms. We can but trust her.

She also underlines for us that it's out of the question for such a thing to occur. In this respect she's *well on guard*, she's *aware* of it. She's no baby, and anyway, when is a woman a baby? But that's not where the question lies. Through this rectification, which appears to him as a concession, an opening that is made for him, the patient's desire is truly put back in its place. Now, the whole question is that he was never able to find this place. That's what his anxiety neurosis is.

What she encounters at that moment, as we said last time, is an outburst from her patient. It might not be a bad idea for me to go back over this a bit.

This outburst puts pressure on her. She is subjected to scrutiny, *scrutinized* as one says in English, which makes her feel like she can't make the *slightest false move*. She says that she's being put to the test, *cell by cell*, and, *if I were to fail to meet this test, he would fall apart*.

What does that mean? Precisely that, having sought out the man's desire, what she encounters from him by way of response is not a search for her desire but the search for *a*, for the object, the true object, for what's at stake in desire, which isn't the Other, but this leftover, the *a*. She sustains this search. This is what she refers to as developing a greater *amount of masochism* than she thought she had.

I'm telling you this because that's what she wrote. But hear this – she's mistaken. She's not at all cut out for going into the masochistic dialogue. Her relationship with the Other, the patient-Other, the male Other – whom she misses so entirely, as you'll see – demonstrates this quite well enough.

She copes extremely well, in spite of how exhausting it is. As the holidays approach, she's *feeling at a very low ebb*. Fortunately, vaca-

tion time arrives and *suddenly and amusingly* she realizes that, after all, none of that is going on any longer now that the sessions have come to a stop. She shakes herself off and thinks about other things.

Why? Because she knows quite well that search as he might, he will never find anything. That's precisely the point, for him to realize that there's nothing to be found, because that which for the man, for male desire, forms the object of his search concerns no one, as it were, but him.

This is the object of today's lesson. What he's looking for is $(-\varphi)$, what she lacks – but that's men's business.

Let me tell you this, and don't get all worked up – she knows very well that she doesn't lack anything. Or rather, that the mode by which lack plays a role in feminine development is not to be situated at the level at which the man's desire is seeking it out, when what's really involved is the sadistic search I stressed at the start of the year, which consists in making emerge what must be in the partner at the supposed place of lack.

That is what he has to grieve for. In the text she states very clearly that what they're doing together is a work of mourning. He has to mourn ever being able to find in his partner – in so far as she has positioned herself as a female partner, without really knowing what she was doing – his own lack, $(-\varphi)$, primary castration, man's fundamental castration as I designated it for you at the level of its biological root, of the particularities of the instrument of copulation at this level of the animal scale.

Once he'd mourned it, everything went well, Lucia Tower tells us. What does that mean? Precisely that with this fellow, who's never got to this level before, we'll be able to move into what you'll permit me to call for this occasion the Oedipal comedy. We'll be able to start having a laugh – *Dad's the one who did all that.*

That's the point. We've known it for a long while, don't forget Jones and the *moralisches Entgegenkommen*, the readiness to oblige moral prohibition. If he's castrated, it's because of the law. The comedy of the law is going to be played out. We are very much at ease here, this is well known and it's been set down. In a word, here we have this chap's desire taking the paths traced out by law, demonstrating once again that the norm of desire and the law are one and the same thing.

Have I made that sufficiently audible to take the next step?

Ah, not quite, because I haven't told you the difference between what was there beforehand and what's been surmounted thanks to this mourning.

Well now, what was there before was, properly speaking, his fault. He was buckling under the weight of his burden, under the

weight of his (– φ). He was *exceedingly sinful* – remember the use I made of that passage from Saint Paul back when.

So I'm taking the next step.

2

Women have no trouble and up to a certain point run no risk in seeking out what's at stake in men's desire.

I can do no less on this occasion than remind you of the famous passage I cited a long time ago from the text attributed to Solomon. I'll give you it in Latin, which brings out its full flavour – *Tria sunt difficilia mihi*, says the wise king, *et quartum penitus ignoro*, there are four things I can say nothing of, because no trace is left behind, *viam aquilae in caelo*, the trace of the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent upon a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, *et viam viri in adulescentula*, and the trace of a man on a maid. No trace.

It is desire that is involved here and not what comes about when the object as such comes to the fore. That leaves to one side the effects on the *adulescentula* of a good many things, starting with exhibitionism and, behind that, the primal scene. Something else is involved.

So, how are things to be tackled if we want to get an idea of what's going on in the woman regarding this thing we have an inkling of, namely, her having a port of entry towards lack?

People keep harping on about this business of *Penisneid*. This is where I think it necessary to stress the difference.

Of course there is a constitution of the object *a* of desire for her as well. It so happens that women speak. Some might regret it, but it's a fact. Therefore she too wants the object, and even one object in so far as she doesn't have it. That indeed is what Freud explains to us, her demand for the penis will remain to the end bound to the relationship with her mother, that is, with demand. It is in the dependence on demand that the object *a* is constituted for a woman. She knows very well that, in the Oedipus complex, it's not about being stronger and more desirable than her mother – because she notices quite quickly that time's on her side – but having the object. The fundamental dissatisfaction that's involved in the structure of desire is, if I may say so, pre-castrative. If it comes about that she takes an interest in castration as such, (– φ), it's to the extent that she will venture into men's problems. It's secondary. It's deutero-phallic, as Jones quite rightly put it.

This then is what the whole obscurity of the debate revolves around, a debate that ultimately has never been unravelled, on the

famous phallicism of women, a debate in which every author is just as right as the next, for want of ever having found out where the genuine articulation lies. I won't make out that you're going to keep it present and right away marked out in your minds, but I mean to lead you right around it, along enough paths for you to end up knowing where it is and where a skip is made when people theorize.

For the woman, it is what initially she doesn't *have* that constitutes the object of her desire at the start, whereas, for the man, it is what he *is* not, and that's where he falters.

This is why I made you move along the path of the Don Juan fantasy. The Don Juan fantasy is a woman's fantasy because it corresponds to a woman's wish for an image that would fulfil its function, a fantasmatic function, that there be one of them, one of these men, who has it – which, from experience, is clearly a misrecognition of reality – better still, that he always has it, that he can't lose it. Precisely what is implied by the position of Don Juan in the fantasy is that no woman may take it from him, and that's the crux of it. That's what he has in common with women, whom one cannot take it from, of course, because they don't have it.

What women see in the homage of men's desire is that this object – let's be careful with our terminology – becomes her belonging. This means nothing more than what I just put forward, that it can't be lost. The lost member of Osiris, that is the object of a woman's search and attention. The fundamental myth of the sexual dialectic between man and woman has been sufficiently accentuated by a whole tradition. And likewise women's psychological experience, in the sense this word carries in Paul Bourget's writings, tells us that a woman doesn't always think that a man goes astray with another woman. Don Juan assures her that there is one man who never gets lost.

Clearly, there are other privileged and typical ways of solving the difficult problem of woman's relationship with *a*. There is, if you will, another fantasy, but it's not the first that springs to mind, she's not the one who came up with it, she finds it ready-made. To take an interest in it, she's got to have the stomach for it.

I have in mind, in a normal register, the kind of tough fucker of which Saint Teresa of Ávila gives us the noblest example. A point of access is also given to us by the example of the lover of priests, though for her it is a more imaginary one. Move up a notch and you've got an erotomaniac. The difference depends on the level at which the man's desire collaborates with what he represents, more or less imaginarily, as wholly merging with the *a*.

I've alluded to Saint Teresa of Ávila. I could've spoken of the blessed Marguerite Marie Alacoque, who has the advantage of

letting us see the very shape of the *a* in the Sacred Heart. For the lover of priests we aren't able to say starkly, and crudely, that institutionalized castration is enough to establish it, but at any rate this is the sense in which we're going to state that the *a* as such, having been singled out perfectly, is brought to the fore and offered her as the object elect of her desire. For the erotomaniac, there's no need for the work to be prepared for her, she does it herself.

So we find ourselves brought back to the previous problem, namely, the problem of what we can articulate of the relationship between the man and these various *a* objects such as they are proposed, or imposed, and which one has more or less at one's disposal, as furnishing the object of desire with its ultimate status in its relation to castration.

I ask you to think back for a moment to my mirror stage.

A while ago now, a film was shown that had been shot in a special school in England, in an effort to make what could be provided through the observation of children tie in to psychoanalytic genetics. The worth of the document was all that much greater for having been filmed without the faintest preconceived idea. The whole field of what can be observed in the infant's confrontation with the mirror was covered, which moreover fully confirmed the initial and final dates I set down.

I remember that this film was one of the last things presented in the Société psychanalytique de Paris before we went our separate ways. The separation was quite close at hand and maybe the film was only watched somewhat distractedly. But for my part I had my wits about me and I still recall the gripping image of the little girl before the mirror. If there is something that concretizes this reference to the non-specularizable dimension that I pointed up last year, then it's this little girl's gesture, her hand quickly passing over the gamma of the junction where her belly meets her thighs, like a moment of giddiness faced with what she sees.

As for the little boy, the poor mug, he looks down at the problematic little tap. He vaguely suspects that something's odd down there. Then, he has to learn, and to his cost, that what he's got there doesn't exist, I mean, up against what dad's got, what the big brothers have got, and so on. You're familiar with the whole initial dialectic of comparison. Next, he will learn that not only does it not exist, but that it doesn't want to know anything, or more precisely that it does as it pleases. To spell it out, he will have to learn step by step, through his individual experience, to strike it off the map of his narcissism, precisely so that it can start to be useful.

I'm not saying that it's as easy as all that and it would be nonsense to attribute me with such a thing because, naturally, there's also the

fact that the more you push it down, the more it bobs back up to the surface. At the end of the day this game is the principle of homosexual attachment, namely – *I play loser takes all.*

I'm just giving you an indication here, but one that will meet up with what you've been indicated regarding the fundamental structure of what is ridiculously called perversion. At each moment of homosexual attachment, castration is what's at issue. This castration is what assures the homosexual that the $(-\varphi)$ is the object of the game, and it is inasmuch as he loses that he wins.

I'm coming round to illustrating what posed a problem last time, much to my surprise, in my reminder about the mustard pot.

One of my listeners, a particularly attentive one, told me – *That was going well, that mustard pot, at least there were a number of us who didn't find it too off-putting, but now you're reintroducing the question of its content, you're filling it halfway, and with what?*

Let's go then.

The $(-\varphi)$ is the emptiness of the vessel, the same vase that defines *Homo faber*. If women, so we are told, are primordially weavers, men are surely potters. This is even the sole angle that, in the human species, provides a footing for the tedious refrain that runs, *the thread is to the needle as girl is to boy*. A reference that makes itself out to be natural. It's not as natural as all that. Of course, women do present themselves with the appearance of the vase, the vessel, and that's clearly what tricks her partner, the *Homo faber* in question, the potter. He imagines that this vessel might contain the object of his desire.

Only, look where this leads us. It's inscribed in our experience, it's been spelt out step by step, which removes any appearance of deduction or reconstruction from what I'm telling you. It was spotted without starting off from the right place in the premises, but spotted it was, long before any understanding of what it meant. The fantasmatic presence of the phallus at the bottom of the vessel, I mean the phallus of another man, is an everyday object of our analytic experience. I don't need to go back to Solomon again to tell you that this presence is entirely fantasmatic.

Of course, there are things that can be found in this vessel and they're very interesting as far as desire is concerned, the egg, for instance. But in the end, that comes from the inside and proves for us that, if vessel there is, it complicates this scheme ever so slightly. The egg can benefit from the encounters that are in the offing for it thanks to this fundamental misunderstanding, I mean that it doesn't encounter the spermatozoon in vain, but, after all, parthenogenesis is not ruled out in the future. In the meantime, insemination can take on quite different forms. Moreover, it's back shop that the

really interesting vessel is to be found, the uterus. It's objectively interesting and it's psychically interesting too, as interesting as can be – I mean that, as soon as there is maternity, it's largely enough to invest the woman's interest as a whole. At the time of pregnancy, as everyone knows, all that fuss about men's desire becomes slightly superfluous.

So, let's get to our pot from the other day, our decent little pot among the very first ceramics, and match it to $(-\varphi)$. It's the pot of castration.

Just for a moment, for the sake of demonstration, allow me to put into a neighbouring pot what for men can form the *a*, the object of desire.

These two pots are here for an apologue that is designed to stress that *a*, the object of desire, only has any meaning for men when it has been poured back into the emptiness of primordial castration.

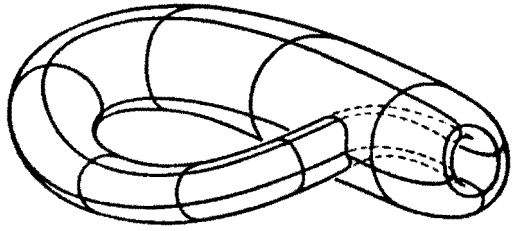
The first tying-in between male desire and castration can only be produced on the basis of secondary narcissism, that is, when *a* becomes detached, when it falls away from *i(a)*, from the narcissistic image. There is a phenomenon here which is the constitutive phenomenon of what may be termed the *rim*. As I told you last year with regard to my topological analysis, nothing has a greater structuring function than the shape of the vessel, than the shape of its rim, than the cut whereby it is singled out as a vessel.

A long while back, the possibility of a genuine logic forged in accordance with the psychoanalytic field was just starting to take shape. This is still to be done, though I've given you more than just a taste – of Greater and Lesser Logic – I'm saying logic and not dialectics. One Imre Hermann started to devote himself to it, admittedly in a very confused way for want of any dialectical articulation, but in the end he sketched out the phenomenon he qualified as *Randbevorzugung*, the predeliction, the preference in the analytic phenomenal field for rim phenomena.

The rim of the pot of castration is a good round rim, a perfectly decent rim that has none of those sophisticated complications I introduced you to with the Möbius strip. It's very easy, however, to introduce them. All we have to do is make two opposite points on the rim of the vessel join up by turning the surfaces inside out as we go along, so that they join up as they do on the Möbius band, and we're looking at a vessel that allows us to pass with the greatest of ease from the inner face to the outer face without ever having to go over the rim.

This is what happens at the level of the other little pots, the *a* pots, and this is where anxiety starts.

A metaphor like this would never be enough, of course, to repro-



Structure of the *a* pots (the Klein bottle)

duce what has to be explained, namely, that the little originative pot has the closest relationship to what's at stake in sexual potency, with the intermittent surging of its force. A whole series of images – Chinese, Japanese and others – which it's quite easy to get a look at, of an eroto-propaedeutics, or even an erotics properly speaking, make this quite accessible. It wouldn't be hard to find a stack of images of this kind in our culture either.

This is not what provokes anxiety. The decanting allows us to grasp how the *a* takes on its value by coming over into the minus-*phi* pot and there being minus-*a*. The vessel is henceforth half-empty at the same time as it is half-full. But, as I told you last time, the phenomenon of decanting is not what's essential. What's essential is the phenomenon of the transfiguration of the vessel. If then this vessel becomes more anguishing, it's inasmuch as the *a* comes to half fill the already constituted hollow of originative castration.

We still need to add that this *a* comes from elsewhere and that it's only constituted by the intermediary of the desire of the Other. This is where we meet up with anxiety again and the ambiguous shape of the edge of the other vessel which, built in this way, allows neither inside nor outside to be distinguished.

Anxiety thus comes to be constituted and to take up its place in a relationship that is instituted beyond the emptiness of a first phase, if I may say so, of castration. This is why the subject has but one desire when it comes to this first castration and that is to get back to it.

After the coming break, I'm going to be speaking to you at length about masochism. Looking at it today is out of the question. If you want to get ready to hear what I have to say about it, I'll give you right now – it's a slip on my part not to have done it sooner – a reference to a precious article that draws on the most substantial experience and whose author is someone I'm really very sad circumstances have forbidden me from collaborating with. The article in question is by Grunberger, *Esquisse d'une théorie psycho-dynamique du masochisme*, in the April–June 1954 issue of the *Revue française*

de psychanalyse, number two of volume XVIII.[2] I know not whether this work has been given the attention it deserves, even though it was published in London, thanks to the wealth of the Foundation of the Institute of Psychoanalysis. To what is this oversight due? I'm not about to settle the matter.

In this article, you will find noted – I'm only mentioning it here briefly to show you the value of the material that can be got from it – how recourse to the imaginary dimension of castration, to an *I'd like them to be snipped off*, can be a soothing, welcome way out of the masochist's anxiety.

I find here merely an indication of the first phase of castration inasmuch as the subject comes back to it, in so far as it becomes a point that he targets. This is certainly not a phenomenon that provides in the slightest the last word on this complex structure and, moreover, I've already got things under way in such a fashion that you now know that when it comes to the links between anxiety and masochism, I'm aiming at a point that is quite different from the subject's momentary turmoil.

This brings us back to what I stressed once before, at the end of one of my recent lessons, with regard to circumcision.

3

Stein, I don't know where you've got to in your ongoing commentary on *Totem and Taboo*, but this might also lead you to approach *Moses and Monotheism*.

I think you cannot do otherwise than go to it and then you will be struck by the complete evasion of the problem – which is nevertheless a structuring problem if ever there was – of knowing whether something at the level of the Mosaic institution reflects the inaugural cultural complex and what the function of the institution of circumcision might have been in this regard.

In any case, you cannot fail to compare the excision of the foreskin with the odd little twisting object I put in your hands at the start of the year, materialized, so that you could see how it is structured when fashioned in the form of a little piece of card. It had to do with what results from the central cut of the cross-cap, in so far as it isolates something that is defined as embodying what is nonspecularizable. This can be linked in with the constitution of the autonomy of the small *a* of the object of desire.

Circumcision embodies, in the proper sense of the word, the fact that something akin to an order may be brought into this hole, into this constitutive failing of primordial castration. All the coordinates

of circumcision, the ritualistic, even mythical configuration of the primordial access points of initiation where it is operative, show that it has the clearest possible relation to the normativation of the object of desire.

The circumcised man is consecrated – consecrated less to a law than to a certain relation to the Other, and this is why it has to do with the *a*. The fact remains that we've now reached the point to which I mean to bring the fire of sunlight, namely, the level at which we can find in the configuration of history something that is supported by an A, which here is pretty much the God of Judeo-Christian tradition. What circumcision signifies remains to be seen.

It is absolutely astonishing that, in a setting as Judaic as psychoanalysis is, there has been no further examination of the texts that were gone over a hundred thousand times from the Church Fathers to the fathers of the Reformation, as it were, and on up to the eighteenth century, I mean the fertile period of the Reformation.

What we are told in Chapter XVII of Genesis concerns the fundamental character of the law of circumcision inasmuch as it is part of the Covenant imparted by Yahweh out of the midst of the bush. This chapter dates the institution of circumcision back to Abraham. Without doubt, in the eyes of exegetic criticism this passage seems to be a sacerdotal addition, very appreciably later than the Jehovist and Elohist traditions, that is, the two primordial texts that make up the books of the Law.

In Chapter XXXIV, however, we have the famous episode, which is not lacking in humour, concerning the abduction of Dinah, sister of Simeon and Levi, daughter of Jacob. For Shechem, the man who has taken her, it is a matter of obtaining her from her brothers. Simeon and Levi demand that he be circumcised – *We cannot give our sister to one that is uncircumcised, we would be dishonoured.* There has clearly been a superposition of the two texts here. Indeed, we don't know if it's just one man who is to be circumcised, or all the Shechemites as one. Of course, this alliance could not be struck in the name of two families alone, but in the name of the two races. All the Shechemites get circumcised, which leaves them sore for three days and which the others take advantage of to slay them.

This is one of the beguiling episodes that was a bit beyond Monsieur Voltaire's *comprenoire*, leading him to speak so unfavourably of this book, a book which is quite admirable when it comes to the revelation of what is called the signifier as such.

All the same, this is designed to make us think that the law of circumcision doesn't date back only to Moses. I'm merely highlighting here the problems that have already been raised on this score.

Since this has to do with Moses and since Moses has ostensibly

been acknowledged in our sphere as having been Egyptian, it would not be entirely misplaced to ask ourselves about the relationships between Judaic circumcision and the circumcision of the Egyptians. This will excuse me for drawing out what I have to say to you today for another five minutes or thereabouts, so that what I've written up on the blackboard doesn't get lost.

A certain number of writers from antiquity speak of the Egyptians' circumcision. Notably, the aged Herodotus, who certainly witters on in some parts but who is often very precious, doesn't leave any room for doubt that in his time, when Egypt was well into the Late Period, all Egyptians practised circumcision. So widespread is it in his report that he states that all the Semites of Syria and Palestine owe this custom to the Egyptians. Some have passed censure on this, and at length, and, after all, no one's forcing us to believe him. Oddly enough, he says the same for the Colchians, claiming them to be an Egyptian colony, but let's leave that be.

Being Greek and being of his time, no doubt he can't understand this to be anything other than a cleanliness measure. He underlines for us how the Egyptians always prefer being clean, καθαροί, over looking good. By which Herodotus, in being Greek, doesn't hide the fact that in his eyes to be circumcised is always to be somewhat disfigured.

Fortunately, we have more direct accounts of the circumcision of the Egyptians. We have two accounts that I shall call iconographic – and you will tell me that's not much.

One is from the Old Kingdom. It is in Saqqara, in the tomb of the physician Ankhmahor. They say that he was a physician because the tomb walls are covered with scenes of operations. One of these walls shows us two scenes of circumcision, the left-hand one I've reproduced here. I don't know if I've managed to make my drawing legible, it just accentuates the lines that are visible. Here is the boy who is being circumcised. Here is his organ. Another boy behind him is holding onto his hands, because that's what it takes. A character who is a priest, this being a qualification I won't dwell on today, is here. He is holding the organ in his left hand and in the other this oblong object which is a cutter made of stone.

We meet this cutter again in another text that until now has remained completely enigmatic, a biblical text. It tells how, after the episode of the burning bush, Moses is informed that all those in Egypt who remembered his murder of an Egyptian have now passed away and so he may return. He does return, but when he stops on the road back – it is translated in the old way as an inn, but let's leave that – Yahweh attacks him, seeking to kill him. That is all we are told. Zipporah, his wife, then circumcises her son, who

is an infant, and, touching Moses with the foreskin, through this operation, this contact, mysteriously protects Moses, who is not circumcised, from Yahweh's attack. Yahweh then backs off.

It is written that Zipporah circumcises her son with a sharp stone. We find this cutter forty-odd years later because there is also the episode of the ordeals imposed on the Egyptians, the Ten Plagues, when, as he is about to enter the land of Canaan, Joshua receives the order – *Take thee flint knives and circumcise all who are here, all who will enter the land of Canaan.* This refers to all those who were born during the desert years, when they could not be circumcised. Yahweh adds – *This day I have rolled away from off you* – which is translated as lifted, suspended – *the reproach of Egypt.*

I'm reminding you of these texts not because I intend to make use of all of them, but because at least they may stimulate your desire or need to go and look them up.

For the time being, I shall stick with the flint cutter. At the very least, it indicates that the ceremony of circumcision has a very ancient origin. This is confirmed by the discovery – by Elliot Smith, near Luxor if memory serves, probably at Naga ed-Deir – of two corpses bearing the trace of circumcision. They are from the prehistoric period, in other words they were not mummified in accordance with the forms that would allow them to be dated in history. The simple fact of the flint cutter assigns to this ceremony an origin that stretches back at least to the Neolithic Age.

As for the rest, to lay any doubt to rest, three Egyptian letters, these three here, which are respectively an S, a B and a T, *SeBeTh*, expressly indicate that circumcision is involved. The sign marked out here is an hapax. It has only been found here. It would seem that this is a *forme fruste* of the determinative for the phallus that we can find much more sharply chiselled in other inscriptions.

Another way of designating circumcision features on this line and reads *FaHeT*. F is the horned viper. The aspirated H, which is also this sign here, is the placenta. The T, here, is the same sign you can see here. Here, a determinative which is the determinative for linen – I ask you to take note of this today because I'll be coming back to it – is unvoiced.

Here, there is another F, which designates *He*. And here there is *TaM*, which means foreskin. With the *iM*, which is the preposition *from*, *FaHeT iM TaM* means *to be separated from one's foreskin.* This also carries its full importance because circumcision is not to be taken solely as a totalitarian operation, as it were, as a sign. The *to be separated from something* is being articulated, properly speaking, right there in an Egyptian inscription.

Given the value, the weight, that is given in these inscriptions,

so to speak, to the slightest word, maintaining the foreskin as the object of the operation just as much as he who is undergoing it, is something whose accentuation I ask you to heed. We are going to meet it again in the text of Jeremiah, which is just as enigmatic and to this day just as bereft of interpretation as the one I've just been alluding to, namely, the one of Zipporah's circumcision of her son.

I think I've gone far enough into the functioning of circumcision – not only into its coordinates of festivity, of initiation, and of introduction to a special consecration, but into its structure as a reference to castration as far as its relationships with the structuring of the object of desire are concerned – to be able to go further with you on the day I've set you for our next meeting.

27 March 1963

THE FIVE FORMS OF THE OBJECT *a*

XVI

BUDDHA'S EYELIDS

The cause, a syncope of the object
The certainty of anxiety
The Jews and the function of the remnant
Christian masochism
Man or woman?

I left you with a comment that called into question the function of circumcision in the economy of desire, in the economy of the object in the sense that analysis grounds it as an object of desire.

The lesson ended on a passage from Jeremiah, verses 24 and 25 of Chapter IX, which has posed a few problems for translators down through the ages because the Hebrew text would give – *I will smite all them which are circumcised in their prepuce.* A paradoxical term that the translators have tried to get around, even one of the most recent and one of the best, Édouard Dhorme, with the wording – *Je sévirai contre tout circoncis à la façon de l'incirconcis, I will mete out punishment to all them which are circumcised in the way of the uncircumcised.*

I'm only calling this point to mind to indicate that what's really involved here is some permanent relation to a lost object as such. This object *a* as something cut off presentifies a quintessential relation to separation as such. The passage I've quoted is not unique in the Bible, but through its extreme paradox it sheds light on what's involved each time the terms *circumcised* and *uncircumcised* are used there. What's involved is in no way localized, far from it, in that little piece of flesh that forms the object of the rite. *Of uncircumcised lips, uncircumcised hearts,* all these expressions which throughout the numerous texts are almost standard and commonplace, emphasize how the essential separation from a particular part of the body, a particular appendage, comes to symbolize for the now alienated subject a fundamental relationship with his body.

Today I'm going to be taking things up from a wider angle, a broader angle, from farther off.

As some of you know, I've just got back from a trip that afforded me a few different experiences – in any case this crucial experience of a close-up, a view, an encounter with some of these works without which the most attentive study of the texts, the letter and the doctrine, in this instance Buddhist doctrine, can only be something dry, incomplete and bereft of invigoration.

I'm going to give you some feedback on what this close-up meant to me and we shall see how it can be inserted into what forms our fundamental question this year, as the dialectic on anxiety shifts over towards the question of desire.

1

Desire is indeed the essential base, the goal, the aim, and the practice too, of everything that is being announced here, in this teaching, on the Freudian message. Something new and utterly essential passes through this message and right here lies the path along which this message wends its way. Who among you – there will be someone, or a few, I hope – will be able to pick it up?

At the point we've reached, that is to say, gaining momentum again after a long break, we really must prompt afresh what this year is all about, namely, the subtle locus, this locus that we are trying to circumscribe and define, this locus that has never before been mapped out in anything of what we might call its ultra-subjective radiance, this pivotal locus of the pure function of desire, so to speak, this locus is the one in which I want to demonstrate for you how the *a* takes shape – *a*, the object of objects.

Our vocabulary has endorsed for this object the term *objectality*, in so far as it stands in contrast to the term *objectivity*. To encapsulate this contrast in some brief formulas, we shall say that objectivity is the ultimate term in Western scientific thought, the correlate to a pure reason which, at the end of the day, is translated into – is summed up by, is spelt out in – a logical formalism. If you've been following my teaching over the last five or six years, you know that objectality is something else. To bring it out in its vital point and forge a formula that balances up with the previous one, I will say that objectality is the correlate to a pathos of the cut. But, paradoxically, this is where the same formalism, in Kant's sense of the term, meets up with its effect. This effect, misrecognized in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, nevertheless accounts for this formalism.

Even Kant, especially Kant, I will say, remains steeped in causal-

ity, remains suspended from the justification – that so far no a priori has ever managed to reduce – of this function, which is essential to the whole mechanism of the lived experience of our mental life, the function of cause. Across the board, the cause proves to be irrefutable, irreducible and almost ungraspable to critique.

What is this function? How can we justify its staying power in the face of every attempt to scale it down? One can almost say that this attempt constitutes the sustained movement of the entire critical progress in Western philosophy – a movement that has never succeeded.

Well, if this cause proves to be so irreducible, it's in so far as it is superposed, it is identical in its function to what I've been teaching you here this year to circumscribe and handle as this part of ourselves, this portion of our flesh, which necessarily remains snagged in the formal machine, without which logical formalism would amount to absolutely nothing for us.

This formalism doesn't only summon us and furnish us with the frameworks of our thinking and our transcendental aesthetics, it seizes hold of us at a particular place. We give it not only the matter, not only our Being of thought, but the corporeal morsel that is torn from us as such. This morsel is what circulates in logical formalism such as it has been constituted through our work on the use of the signifier. This portion of ourselves is what is caught in the machine, and it can never be retrieved. As a lost object, at the different levels of the bodily experience where its cut occurs, it is the underpinning, the authentic substrate, of any function of cause.

This bodily portion of ourselves is, essentially and functionally, partial. It should be remembered that this portion is a body and that we are objectal, which means that we are only objects of desire as bodies. This is a crucial point to bear in mind because calling upon something else, calling upon some substitute or other, is one of the fields that creates denegation. Desire always remains in the last instance the desire of the body, desire for the Other's body, and nothing but desire for his body.

Admittedly, people say – *I want your heart and nothing more.* By that, they mean to designate goodness knows what spiritual something or other, the essence of your Being, or even your love. But, here as always, language betrays the truth. This heart can only be a metaphor so long as we don't forget that there is nothing in metaphor that justifies the common grammar-book practice of pitting literal meaning against figurative meaning. This heart might mean a good many things, metaphorizing different things depending on different cultures and languages. For the Semites, for instance, the heart is the organ of intelligence. But I'm not trying to draw your

eye to these nuances. In the formula, *I want your heart . . .*, as in any metaphor of an organ, the heart is to be taken to the letter. It functions as a part of the body, as, if I may say, part of the innards. Why has this metaphor lasted so long? We know about those places where it remains very much alive, notably in the shape of the cult of the Sacred Heart.

A little book by Édouard Dhorme reminds us just how fundamental is the metaphorical use of the names of body parts for any understanding of the living Hebraic and Akkadian literatures, though not without, most curiously, one peculiar lack. I recommend this book. You can find it because it's just been reprinted by Gallimard. Although all the different parts of the body are there with their metaphorical functions, the sexual organ, and especially the male sexual organ – even though the texts I mentioned earlier on circumcision stood to be mentioned – the male sexual organ and the foreskin have strangely been omitted and don't even feature in the list of contents.

How can we explain the metaphorical use of this part of the body, a use that is still extant, to express what in desire goes beyond appearances, if not by the fact that its cause is already housed in your innards and figured in lack? There is a dread of the causal innards.

Likewise, the whole mythical discussion about the functions of causality always refers to a bodily experience – from the most classically minded positions to those that are more or less modernized, Maine de Biran's position, for example.

Biran tries to make us feel through the sense of effort the subtle balance around which is played out the position of *that which is determined* and *that which is free*. What shall I use to make you feel what is involved in the realm of cause? I'll take my arm – my arm in so far as I isolate it, considering it as such to be the intermediary between my will and my act. If I dwell on its function, it's in so far as it has been isolated for a moment and it wants me to retrieve it in some way, whatever the cost, whereupon I have to modify the fact that, if it is an instrument, it is not, however, free. I have to protect myself, so to speak, against, not immediately the fact of its amputation, but the fact of its non-control – against the fact that someone else might seize possession of it, that I might become someone's right-hand man, or his left – or simply against the fact that I might leave it behind in the metro, like an ordinary umbrella, or those corset belts that apparently – you can still find them – used to get left there in abundance some years ago.

We analysts know what that means. The experience of the hysteric is significant enough to know that this comparison, which

affords a glimpse of the fact that an arm can be forgotten, neither more nor less than a mechanical arm, is no forced metaphor. This is why I take reassurance from the function of determinism that this arm does belong to me. Even when I forget its functioning, I hold firm to the knowledge that it functions in an automatic way and I'm adamant that a lower level – with all kinds of tonic or voluntary reflexes, all manner of conditioning – should let me rest quite assured that it won't come away, even were there to be a momentary lapse of attention on my part.

Therefore, the cause always comes to the surface in correlation with the fact that something is omitted in cognition's consideration. Now, desire is precisely what animates the function of cognizance. Each time the cause is brought up, and in its most traditional register, the cause is the shadow, or the counterpart, of what stands as a blind spot in the function of cognizance. We didn't wait for Freud to bring that up. Need I mention Nietzsche, and others besides, who have called into question the desire that lies beneath the function of taking cognisance? Others still have examined Plato's slant, which makes him believe in the pivotal, originative, creative function of the Sovereign Good – Aristotle's slant, which makes him believe in the peculiar Prime Mover that takes the place of the Anaxagorian νοῦς, which can only, however, be for him a mover that is deaf and blind to what it sustains, namely, the whole cosmos. These examinations always call into question what cognizance believes itself compelled to forge as a final cause.

What does this kind of critique end up in? In a sentimental examination of what appears to be most bereft of sentiment, namely, the cognizance that is elaborated and purified in its final consequences. It veers off towards creating a myth of psychological origin. These are aspirations, instincts, needs – add the adjective *religious*, you will only take one step further and we shall be responsible for all the distractions of reason, for Kantian *Schwärmerei*, with all its inherent outlets onto fanaticism.

Is this a critique we can content ourselves with? Can't we push what's involved here a bit further, spell it out in a bolder fashion, beyond the psychological aspect that is part and parcel of the structure? There's hardly any need to say that this is exactly what we're doing.

It's not about a sentiment that requires satisfaction, but a structural necessity. The subject's relation to the signifier necessitates the structuring of desire in the fantasy and the functioning of desire implies a syncope of the function of the *a* which can be defined temporally and which necessarily fades and vanishes at such and such a phase of the fantasmatic functioning. This ἀφάνισις of the *a*, the

vanishing of the object inasmuch as it structures a certain level of the fantasy, is what we have a reflection of in the function of the cause. Whenever we find ourselves faced with this final functioning of the cause, irreducible to critique, we have to seek out its foundation and its root in this hidden object, this object in syncope.

A hidden object lies behind the faith put in Aristotle's Prime Mover, which earlier I depicted for you as deaf and blind to what causes it. If the certainty that is attached to what I shall call essentialist proof – the one that is not only in Saint Anselm because you find it again in Descartes too, the one that is founded on the objective perfection of the idea in order to found there the existence of this certainty, this certainty that is so contestable and always linked to scorn, both precarious and derisory – is maintained despite all the criticism, if we are always led back to it by some means or other, it's because it is but the shadow of another certainty, and this certainty I have already named here, by its name, it is the certainty of anxiety.

I told you that anxiety has to be defined as *that which deceives not*, precisely in so far as every object eludes it. The certainty of anxiety is a grounded certainty. It is unambiguous. The certainty linked to the recourse to the first cause is merely the shadow of this fundamental certainty. Its shadowy character is what imparts it its essentially precarious aspect. This aspect is only ever genuinely overcome through the affirmative articulation that characterizes what I called the essentialist argument, but it's not a convincing argument, because this certainty, when sought out in its genuine grounding, shows itself for what it is – a displacement, a certainty that is secondary in relation to the certainty of anxiety.

What does that imply? It most certainly implies a more radical challenging of the function of cognizance than has ever been articulated in our Western philosophy.

This critique can only start to be undertaken in the most radical way if we notice that there is already cognizance in the fantasy.

2

What is the nature of this cognizance that is already there in the fantasy?

It is none other than the following – the man who speaks, the subject, once he starts to speak, is already implicated by this speech in his body. The root of cognizance is this engagement of his body.

It is not, however, about that sort of engagement that contemporary phenomenology has tried to emphasize in a fertile and evocative way by reminding us that the totality of the corporeal function and

presence – Goldstein's structure of the organism, Merleau-Ponty's structure of behaviour – is engaged in any particular perception. This path, which is rich with a whole cornucopia of facts, affords us something that for a long time has struck us as very desirable, namely, the solution of mind/body dualism. It sees the body, taken at the functional level, as a kind of double, the lining, of all the functions of the mind. We should not be satisfied with this, however, because there is still some sleight of hand going on.

The philosophical reactions, of a fideist nature, that contemporary phenomenology has produced in those who serve the materialist cause are surely not groundless in so far as the body, such as it is articulated, even excluded from experience in the exploration inaugurated by contemporary phenomenology, becomes something that is irreducible to material mechanisms. After long centuries gave us a spiritualized body in the soul, contemporary phenomenology has made the body a corporealized soul.

What interests us in the question, and this is what the dialectic of the cause needs to be brought back to, is in no way the body participating in its totality. It's not about noticing how seeing necessitates more than just our eyes, but rather how our reactions are different depending on whether or not our skin is bathed in a certain atmosphere of colour, as was remarked by Goldstein who presented it by means of perfectly valid experiments. It is not this factual realm that is concerned in this reminder of the body's function, but rather the engagement of the man who speaks in the chain of the signifier, with all its consequences – with the knock-on effect, thereafter fundamental, that elective site of an ultra-subjective radiance, the foundation of desire, to spell it right out. It is not that the body would allow us to explain everything by a kind of sketching-out of a non-dualism of *Umwelt* and *Innenwelt*. It is that in the body there is always, by virtue of this engagement in the signifying dialectic, something that is separated off, something that is sacrificed, something inert, and this something is the pound of flesh.

At this stop on the way we can only marvel once again at the incredible genius that guided he whom we call Shakespeare, focusing as he did the thematic of the pound of flesh in the figure of the merchant of Venice. This thematic is just what it takes to remind us that the law of debt and donation – this *total social fact*, as Marcel Mauss has since expressed it, though this certainly wasn't a dimension that was lost sight of at the dawn of the seventeenth century – doesn't assume its weight from any element that we could consider to be a third party, in the sense of an external third party such as the exchange of women or the exchange of goods, as Lévi-Strauss calls to mind in his *Elementary Structures*. . . . Rather, what is at stake in

the pact *can only be* and *is only* the pound of flesh, to be *cut off*, as the text of *The Merchant* . . . has it, *nearest the heart*.

It is most certainly not for nothing that, having animated one of his most blazing plays with this thematic – driven by a kind of divination that is nothing but the reflection of something that is always being touched on without ever being tackled in its ultimate depth – Shakespeare attributes it to the merchant, Shylock, a Jew. Indeed, no written history, no sacred book, no bible, to say the word, manages like the Hebraic Bible to bring to life for us the sacred zone in which the hour of truth is evoked, which sounds the bell of the encounter with the ruthless side of the relationship with God, with this divine malice by which the debt always has to be settled in the flesh.

This domain, which I've barely touched on for you, needs to be called by its name. The name that designates it and which for us sets the value of the different biblical texts that I've mentioned for you is correlative to what is known as anti-Semitic feeling, which so many analysts have thought themselves bound to examine, sometimes not without success, with an eye to determining its sources. They are to be found precisely in this sacred zone, which I would say is almost a forbidden zone, which is better articulated there than anywhere else, not only articulated but vivid, forever carried in the life of this people inasmuch as it endures on its own in the function that, in connection with the *a*, I have already spelt out with a noun – the noun *remainder*.

What is the remainder? It is what survives the ordeal of the division of the field of the Other through the presence of the subject. In one biblical passage, this remainder is categorically metaphorized in the image of the *stem*, of the cut rod, from which, in its living function, the new rod emerges, and in the name of Isaiah's second son, Shear-Jashub, *a remnant shall return* in the *sh'eriyth* we also find in another passage in Isaiah. The function of the remainder, the irreducible function that survives every ordeal of the encounter with the pure signifier, is the point to which I already led you at the end of my last lecture, with the passage from Jeremiah on circumcision.

I also indicated to you what the Christian solution was, I ought to say the Christian mitigation, given to this irreducible relationship to the object of the cut. It is none other than the mirage that is attached to the masochistic outcome, inasmuch as the Christian has learnt, through the dialectic of Redemption, to identify ideally with he who made himself identical with this same object, the waste object left behind out of divine retribution.

It is in so far as this solution has been lived out, orchestrated, embellished and poeticized, that I was able once again, no later than

a mere forty-eight hours ago, to make the acquaintance, and how comical it was, of the-Westerner-just-back-from-the-Orient, who finds that, over there, they're hard-hearted, they're crafty, hypocritical, bargaining, even swindling – my goodness, they're in on all kinds of little schemes.

This Westerner who spoke to me was an altogether average exemplification of a man, though in his eyes he saw himself as a slightly brighter star than the rest. He thought that he had been hospitably welcomed in Japan because over there, in the host family, they derived some benefit from demonstrating that they have dealings with someone who almost won the Goncourt Prize. *Now there's something*, he told me, *that of course would never happen in my* – here, I'm censoring the name of his province, let's say, the Camargue of his birth – *because everyone knows we wear our hearts on our sleeves, we are much straighter with people, there's none of this skewed manoeuvring.*

This is the illusion of the Christian who always thinks he puts more heart into things than anyone else. And, good Lord, why ever does he think that? Without doubt, this business looks clearer when you notice that the crux of masochism, which is an attempt to provoke the Other's anxiety, here become God's anxiety, has become second nature in the Christian. The ever ludic and ambiguous part of this hypocrisy is something that we can sense in the analytic experience with respect to the perverse position.

Is this hypocrisy worth more or less than what this chap feels as Oriental hypocrisy? He's right to feel that they're not the same. The Oriental man has not been Christianized and this is precisely what we're going to try to go into now.

3

I'm not going to do a Keyserling number and explain Oriental psychology to you.

First of all, there is no Oriental psychology. These days, thank goodness, one goes straight to Japan via the North Pole, which has the advantage of making us feel that it could easily be thought of as a European peninsula. And indeed it is, I assure you, and one day you'll see, I predict, some kind of Japanese Robert Musil who will be showing you where we've got to and to what extent this relationship between the Christian and the heart is still alive, or fossilized if that turns out to be the case.

This is not the direction in which I mean to lead you today. I want to take an angle, to use an experience, to portray an encounter I

had, in order to broach something of the field of what still survives of Buddhist practices, notably the Zen practices.

You can well imagine that such a brief in-and-out wouldn't allow me to bring you very much. Maybe I'll tell you, at the end of what we're about to go through now, a sentence I heard from the abbot of one of the Kamakura monasteries that I was allowed to visit. Without any solicitation on my part, I was delivered a sentence that doesn't strike me as off limits in connection with what we're trying to define here, with respect to the subject's relation to the signifier. But this is rather a field to be set aside for the future. The encounters I spoke about earlier were more modest, more accessible, easier to fit into these rapid trips to which the life we lead reduces us. I'm speaking about encounters with works of art.

It might strike you as surprising that I should qualify in this way statues that have a religious function, statues that were not in principle made with an eye to representing works of art. This, however, is incontestably what they are in their intention and their origin. They have always been received and felt to be such, independently of this function. It is not therefore irrelevant for us to take this inroad in order to get something from them that leads us, I won't say to their message, but to what they can represent of a certain relationship between the human subject and desire.

I've hastily put together a little set of three photos of the same statue, with the aim of preserving an integrity about which I'm quite adamant, a statue that is one of the most handsome that can be viewed in this zone that has no shortage of them, and which date from the tenth century. It can be found in the women's monastery, the Chūgū-ji nunnery in Nara, which was the seat of imperial power for several centuries, until the tenth century. Please handle them carefully because I'd like to get these three photos back at the end.

We are moving into Buddhism. You already know that its aim, the principles of dogmatic recourse as well as the ascetic practice that can refer to it, can be summed up with this formula that interests us most keenly – *desire is illusion*. What does that mean? Here, illusion can only be a reference to the register of truth. The truth in question can only be a final truth. Alongside illusion, the function of Being still stands to be specified. To say that desire is illusion is to say that it doesn't have any support, it doesn't have any outlet, or even any aim, on anything. Now, you've heard enough about Nirvana, even if only in Freud, to know that it cannot be identified with a sheer reduction to nothingness. The use of negation, which is common in Zen, for example, through recourse to the sign *mu*,

can only point us in the right direction. A very particular negation is involved, a *not having*, which, in and of itself, suffices to put us on guard.

What is involved, at least in the median step of the relation to Nirvana, is always articulated, in a way that is spread throughout each and every formulation of Buddhist truth, in the sense of a non-dualism. If there be an object of thy desire, it's nothing but thine own self. This, however, is not the original characteristic of Buddhism. *Tat tvam asi*, the *that which thou dost recognize in the other is thyself*, is already set down in the Vedānta.

I can't in any way give you a history and a criticism of Buddhism, I'm just calling it to mind in order to move, by taking the shortest routes, towards that wherewith the experience – which you're going to see is a very particular one – that I had in connection with this statue can be used by us.

Such as it tends to be established, in stages, progressively, for he who experiences it, who walks its paths in a specifically ascetic way, and this is undoubtedly rare, the Buddhist experience presupposes an eminent reference to the function of the mirror. Indeed, the metaphor is commonly employed therein. A long while ago, owing to what I knew of it, I alluded in one of my texts to this mirror without surface *in which nothing is reflected.* That was the term, the stage if you will, the phase to which I wanted to refer for the precise goal I was aiming at back then. You'll find it in my article on psychical causality. This mirror relation with the object is such a common and easily accessible reference for any gnoseology that it is just as easy to fall into the error of projection. We know how easy it is for things on the outside to take on the colouration of our soul, and even its shape, and even for them to move towards us in the form of a double.

But if we introduce the object *a* as something essential in the relationship to desire, this business of dualism and non-dualism takes on a quite different relief. If what is most me lies on the outside, not because I projected it there but because it was cut from me, the paths I shall take to retrieve it afford an altogether different variety.

To give to the mirror's function in this dialectic of recognition a meaning that does not belong to the realm of the sleight of hand, of trickery, of magic, a few remarks need to be made, the first of which, and this is not to be taken in the idealist sense, is that the eye is already a mirror.

I shall say that the eye organizes the world into space. It reflects what, in the mirror, is reflection. To the most piercing eye, however, the reflection of what it carries of the world is visible in the eye that it

sees in the mirror. To spell it right out, it has no need of two mirrors standing opposite one another for the infinite reflections of a mirror palace to be created. As soon as there is an eye and a mirror, the infinite recursion of inter-reflected images is produced.

This remark is not here simply for its ingenuity, but to bring us back to the privileged point that stands at the origin and which is the very point at which the originative difficulty of arithmetic takes shape, the foundation of the One and the zero.

The one image that is formed in the eye, the image you are able to see in the pupil, requires at the outset a correlate that is in no way an image. If the surface of the mirror is in no way there to support the world, it is not because nothing reflects this world, it is not because the world fades away with the absence of the subject, it's specifically because *nothing is reflected.* This means that before space there is a One that contains multiplicity as such, that stands prior to the deployment of space as such – space which is never anything but a chosen space in which only juxtaposed things can stand, so long as there is room for them. Should this room be indefinite or infinite, that doesn't change anything.

To make you hear what I want to say about this One, which is not πᾶν but πολύ, *all* in the plural, I'm simply going to show you what you can see from this same Kamakura period. It is by the hand of a sculptor whose name is very well known, the Kamakura period dates from the end of the twelfth century, and it is a Buddha represented materially in one statue some three meters high, and materially represented by a thousand others.

That makes quite an impression, all the more so given that you file past them down a fairly narrow aisle. A thousand statues take up quite a bit of room, especially when they are lifesize, perfectly executed and individualized. This work took the sculptor and his school a hundred years. You're going to be able to have a look at it, on the one hand when seen face on, and then here's what it gives from an oblique view when you move down the aisle.

The monotheism/polytheism opposition might not be such a clear-cut thing as you habitually imagine it to be, because the thousand and one statues standing there are all identically the same Buddha. Moreover, each of you is, *de jure*, a Buddha – *de jure* because, for particular reasons, you might have been cast into this world with some handicap that will create a more or less insurmountable obstacle to this point of access.

The fact no less remains that the subjective One in its infinite multiplicity and variability is here shown to be identical with the ultimate One, having successfully gained access to non-dualism, to the beyond of any variation in pathos and any shift in the cosmos.

We ought less to take an interest in it as a phenomenon than in what it allows us to broach with regard to the relations it demonstrates, through the consequences it has had, historically and structurally, in men's thoughts.

I have to bring you a few details.

The first is that these thousand and one supports, thanks to the effects of multiplication inscribed into the multiplicity of arms, of insignia, and of a few heads that crown the central head, there are in reality thirty-three thousand, three hundred and thirty-three same essential beings. That's just one detail.

The second is that this is not, in absolute terms, the god Buddha. It's a Bodhisattva, that is, to put it rapidly, a near-Buddha. He would be completely and utterly a Buddha were he not there, but he is there, in this manifold form that took a great deal of trouble. These statues are merely the image of the trouble he takes to be there, there for you. He is a Buddha that has not yet managed to lose interest in humanity's salvation, no doubt owing to one of those obstacles to which I was just alluding. This is why, if you are Buddhist, you prostrate yourself before this opulent array. You are duty-bound to acknowledge the unity that has taken the trouble in such great number to remain in arm's reach with a view to bringing you aid. The iconography lists the different cases in which they are able to aid you.

The Bodhisattva at issue is in Sanskrit called *Avalokiteśvara*. Its name is inordinately widespread, especially these days, in the social sphere that practises yoga.

The first image of the statue that I passed round is an historical avatar of this figure. Before I took an interest in Japanese, I was fated to travel by the right paths and I analysed with my good mentor Demiéville, in those years when psychoanalysis left me more spare time, the book called *The Lotus of the True Law*, which was written into Chinese by Kumārajīva to translate a Sanskrit text. This text is more or less the historical turning point at which occurred the peculiar metamorphosis I'm going to ask you to keep in mind, namely, when Avalokiteśvara, *he who hears the world's laments*, transforms – from the time of Kumārajīva, who seems to have been somewhat responsible for it – into a female divinity.

She is called – I think you are at least slightly on the same wavelength – Guanyin, or Guanshiyin. This name is linked to the same meaning as the name Avalokiteśvara carries, it is – *she who is considerate, who goes, who accords*. Here, is *Guan*.

観

Here is the *world* I mentioned just now.

世

And this is its tears or its laments.

音

The *shi* can sometimes be effaced.

The Guanyin is a female divinity. In China, it's unambiguous, it always appears in a feminine form and this transformation is what I'm asking you to pause on for a moment. In Japan, these same words are read *Kan'on* or *Kanzeon*, depending on whether or not the *world* character is inserted.

Not all forms of Kannon are female. I would even say that the majority aren't. Since you have before your eyes the picture of the statues from the Sanjūsangen-dō, from this temple – where the same holiness or divinity – a term that has to be left up in the air – is represented in a multiple form, you can see that the figures have been given little moustaches and faintly sketched goatees. Therefore they are depicted there in a male form, which does indeed correspond to the canonical structure of what these statues represent, with the correct number of heads and arms.

This is exactly the same being as the one in the first statue whose pictures I passed round to you earlier. This statue corresponds to the form specified as a *Nyo-i-rin*, a *Kan'on* or a *Kanzeon*. *Nyo-i-rin* means, as does its Sanskrit counterpart – *like the wheel of desires.*

This then is what we are being shown.

We meet, attested in the most superlative fashion, the pre-Buddhist divinities absorbed into the different stages of the hierarchy that are thereafter articulated as levels, steps, forms of access to the ultimate realization of *Bodhi*, that is, the final awakening to the radically illusory character of all desire. Nevertheless, at the very interior of this multiplicity that converges towards a centre which is, in essence, a centre of nowhere, you can see re-emerging, in a superlatively incarnate fashion, what could be most alive, most real, most animated, most human and most pathetic in it, in a first relation with the divine world, a relation that was essentially nourished and seemingly punctuated by a whole variation of desire. Holiness with a capital H, practically the most fundamental element in the access point to Bodhi, finds itself embodied in a female form of divinity that has even been identified at the origin with nothing more nor less than the reappearance of the Indian Shakti, the feminine principle of the world, the soul of the world.

This is something that should give us a moment's pause.

I don't know if this statue I've given you in these photographs has succeeded in establishing in you this quivering, this communication that I assure you one can be quite sensitive to in its presence.

Not only was I sensitive to it, but chance had it that, accompanied by my guide – one of those Japanese folks for whom neither Maupassant nor Mérimée hold any secret, nor anything else from our literature, I'll leave out Valéry because you can get your Valéry ticket in the first railway station you come across, we hear nothing else but Valéry the whole world over, and the success of this Mallarmé to the *nouveaux riches* is one of the most disconcerting things to be met in our times, but let's keep calm – I walked into the little hall where this statue is and saw there, on bended knee, a man of thirty or thirty-five years of age, a simple tradesman type, perhaps a craftsman, already very worn by his existence. He was kneeling before this statue and clearly he was praying, which is not something we are tempted to join in. But, after praying, he went right up to the statue – because nothing stops you from touching it – to the right, to the left, and underneath, he watched it, like that, for I couldn't say how long. I didn't see the end, because truth be told this moment corresponded to my own viewing time. It was clearly an effusive gaze, of a character that was all the more extraordinary given that this was not a common man, because a man who conducts himself thus could never be that, but someone whom nothing would seem to have predestined to this kind of artistic communion, given the evident burden of his labours bearing down on his shoulders.

I'm going to give the other part of what I perceived in a different form.

You've looked at the statue, its face, you've seen the absolutely stunning expression of which it is impossible to know whether it's entirely for you or entirely inward. I didn't know then that it was a Nyo-i-rin, a Kanzeon, but I first heard about the Guanyin a long time ago. I asked, in connection with these statues and others besides – *So, is it a man or a woman?*

I'll spare you the debates, the twists and turns that opened out around this question, which carries great meaning in Japan, I repeat, given that the Kanzeon are not all univocally feminine. And that was where what I took in possesses a slight character of research, well, at the Kinsey Report level – I became certain that for this cultivated young man, steeped in Maupassant and Mérimée, as well as for a large number of his workmates that I asked, the question of whether a statue of this ilk is male or female has never arisen for them.

I believe that here lies a fact that is decisive in a different way

when it comes to broaching what we might call the variety of solutions to the problem of the object. With everything I've just told you, about my first approach to this object, I think I've shown you sufficiently to what extent it is an object for desire.

If you need still more details, you may notice that there is no opening for the eyes on this statue. Now, the Buddhist statues always have eyes that one cannot call shut, but half-shut, because it's a way of poising the eyes that is only arrived at through learning, namely, a lowered eyelid that only lets show a line of the white and an edge of the pupil. All of the statues of Buddha are made like that. This statue, however, has nothing of the like. It simply has, at the level of the eyes, a kind of pronounced ridge, which means that with the reflection off the wood one always seems to be able to make out an eye. But there's nothing there in the wood. I examined the wood at length, and I made enquiries, and the solution I was offered – without being able to settle the matter of what share has to be accorded to faith, it was provided by someone who is very serious and a great specialist, Professor Kando to give him his name – is that the slit of the eye on this statue has disappeared over the centuries due to the more or less daily kneading it endures from the hands of the nuns of the convent, where it is the most precious treasure, when they think to dry the tears of this figure of archetypal divine recourse.

Moreover, the monastics handle the whole statue in the same way as they do the rim of the eyes. Its polish is something quite incredible. The photo only gives you a vague reflection of it – a reflection of what, upon this statue, is the inverse radiance to what one cannot fail to recognize as a long desire, borne throughout the centuries by these recluses unto this divinity of psychologically indeterminate sex.

It's already quite late, too late to carry my talk any further. What I've said today will allow us to shed light on the point of passage at which we've now arrived.

At the oral stage there is a certain relationship between demand and the mother's veiled desire. At the anal stage, the mother's demand comes into the picture for desire. At the stage of phallic castration, there is the minus-phallus, the entry of negativity with regard to the instrument of desire when sexual desire as such emerges in the field of the Other. But the process doesn't stop with these three stages, because at its limit we have to meet up with the structure of the *a* as something separated off.

I didn't speak to you today about a mirror just for the sake of it, not the mirror of the mirror stage, of narcissistic experience, of the

image of the body in its totality, but rather the mirror inasmuch as it is the field of the Other in which there must appear for the first time, if not the *a* itself, then at least its place – in short, the radical mainspring that makes one go from the level of castration to the mirage of the object of desire.

What is the function of castration in this object, this statue, of a type that is so moving for being at once our own image and something else – when, in the context of a particular culture, it appears as bearing no relation to sex? This is the strange and typical fact to which I've led you today.

8 May 1963

XVII

THE MOUTH AND THE EYE

The lips, the teeth, and the tongue
The nursling, parasite
The anxiety-point and the point of desire
Anxiety and orgasm
The scopic cancelling-out of castration

The list of objects in Freudian theory, the oral object, the anal object, the phallic object – you know that I'm doubtful about the genital object being consistent with them – needs to be completed.

Indeed, the object defined in its function by its place as *a*, the object functioning as the leftover of the subject's dialectic with the Other, still stands to be defined at other levels in the field of desire. Everything indicates this in what I've already got under way in my teaching and more especially my teaching from this year.

For example, I've already indicated enough for you to have some inkling, even a crude inkling, that the desire attached to the image is a function of a cut that arises in the field of the eye. Or something else besides and which goes further than what we are already acquainted with, which has so far appeared enigmatically in the shape of a certain imperative said to be categorical in which we meet the character of fundamental certainty already marked out by traditional philosophy and spelt out by Kant in the form of moral conscience. Approaching it from the angle of the *a* will enable us to situate it in its place.

This year I have chosen to proceed starting off from anxiety because this path reinvigorates the whole dialectic of desire and it is the only path that allows us to introduce fresh clarity with regard to the function of the object in relation to desire.

My last lesson sought to presentify for you how a whole field of human experience that puts itself forward as constituting a kind of

salvation, the Buddhist experience, posited, as its grounding principle, that *desire is illusion.*

What does that mean? It is easy to smirk at the briskness of the assertion *all is nothing.* Likewise, I said that this is not what is involved in Buddhism. If, however, the assertion that desire is but illusion can carry a meaning for our experience, we need to know through which point this meaning can be introduced and, to say it all, where lies the lure.

I've been teaching you to bind desire to the function of the cut and to bring it into a certain relationship with the function of the remainder. This remainder sustains and drives desire, as we have learnt to ascertain in the analytic function of the partial object. The lack to which satisfaction is linked, however, is something else.

The gulf between lack and the function of desire in action, structured by the fantasy and by the subject's vacillation in his relation to the partial object, indicates the non-concurrence that creates anxiety, and anxiety is the only thing to target the truth of this lack. This is why, at each stage in the structuring of desire, if we want to understand what is involved in the function of desire, we must ascertain what I shall call the anxiety-point.

This is going to pull us backwards – with a movement dictated by all our experience, since everything happens as though, with Freud run aground on the dead end of the castration complex, analytic theory felt something like an ebb tide, an undertow leading it back to search out the most radical functioning of the drive at the oral level. Now, I declare this dead end to be merely an apparent one and one which has never been got through until now.

What I have to tell you today shall perhaps enable us to conclude with some affirmations concerning what was meant by Freud's running aground on the castration complex.

1

It is peculiar that psychoanalysis, which perceived in its inaugural moment the nodal function of what is specifically sexual in the shaping of desire, should have been led, through the course of its historical evolution, to seek out increasingly in the oral drive the origin of all the mishaps, anomalies and disparities that can occur at the level of the structuring of desire.

Saying that the oral drive is chronologically originative isn't the end of the story, its being structurally originative still needs to be justified. It is to this oral drive that the etiology behind all the stumbling blocks we face is to be brought back.

Likewise, I have already broached what must open up for us once again the question of this reduction to the oral drive. Such as it currently functions it is merely a metaphorical way of approaching what happens at the level of the phallic object by eluding the impasse created by the fact that Freud never resolved to the last term the functioning behind the castration complex. The oral reduction veils over this and allows people to speak about it without facing up to the impasse. Although the metaphor is correct, however, we ought to uncover at the very level of the oral drive a hint of why it is no more than metaphor here.

This is why I've already tried once to take up the function of the cut of the object relative to the level of the oral drive, along with the disjunction between the locus of satisfaction and the locus of anxiety. Now the next step has to be taken, to which I led you last time, that is, to situate the join between the *a* functioning as $(-\varphi)$, that is, the castration complex, and the level we shall call visual or spatial, depending on which side we care to picture it from, a level from which we are best able to see what the lure of desire means.

To get to this, which is today's goal, we first have to trace back our footsteps and look again at the analysis of the oral drive with a view to specifying precisely where at this level the cut lies.

The nursling and the breast. This is what all the storm clouds of analytic dramaturgy have amassed around – the origin of the first aggressive drives, of their reflection, even their retention, the source of the most fundamental hitches in the subject's development. In resuming this thematic, it oughtn't to be forgotten that it is founded upon an originative act that is essential to the subject's biological sustenance in the realm of mammals, namely sucking.

What functions in sucking? The lips, apparently.

Here we meet up with the functioning of what struck us as crucial in the structure of erogeneity, the function of a rim. The fact that the lip presents the very image of the rim, that it is the very embodiment, so to speak, of a cut, is just what it takes to make us feel that we're on steady ground.

Let's not forget that at an altogether different level, the level of the signifying articulation, at the level of the most fundamental phonemes, those most firmly bound to the cut, the consonantal elements of the phoneme, are, as regards their most basal stock, essentially modulated at the level of the lips. I might come back, if we have time, to what I have already indicated several times regarding the fundamental words and their apparent specificity. *Mama* and *papa* are labial articulations, even though we may have doubts as to whether they are distributed specifically, widely, or even universally.

On the other hand, the fact that at the level of initiatory rites

the lip is always something that can be symbolically pierced or stretched, altered in countless different ways, also furnishes us with the marker that proves we are indeed in a living field that has long been acknowledged in human praxes.

Is that all? There is still behind the lip what Homer calls the *fence of teeth*, and the bite.

The existence of a dentition that is known as lacteal, the implied virtual bite that we bring into the aggressive thematic of the oral drive with the fantasmatic isolation of the tip of the breast, is what we've made the very possibility of the fantasy of the nipple's isolation revolve around. The nipple already presents itself not only as something partial but as something separate. The first fantasies of the function of fragmentation as an inaugural function stem from this. Until now we've contented ourselves with them. Is this to say that we are to maintain this position?

Already, in the lesson I gave on 6 March, I accentuated how the whole dialectic of what is called weaning, the separation from the breast, had to be taken up in accordance with its natural resonances, its natural points of impact, with everything that, in our experience, has enabled us to broaden it, up to and including the primordial separation, that of birth. We have acknowledged, with good reason, that there is an analogy in our experience between oral weaning and the severance at birth. If we embrace a little more physiology, this experience is just what we need for clarity's sake.

I told you that at birth the cut lies somewhere other than where we've been putting it. It is not conditioned by the aggression brought to bear on the mother's body. It lies within the primordial, individual unit such as it presents itself at the level of birth. The cut is made between what is going to become the individual who will be cast into the outside world and his envelopes, which are parts of himself, inasmuch as they are elements of the egg, consistent with what has been produced in the ovular development, direct extensions of his ectoderm and his endoderm alike. The separation occurs within this unity, the unit of the egg.

The emphasis I mean to give here abides by the specificity, within the organismal structure, of the organization called mammalian.

What specifies the development of the egg for nearly all mammals is the existence of the placenta and even a placenta that is utterly special, called the chorioallantois, whereby for one entire part of its development the egg in its intrauterine position presents itself in a semi-parasitic relation to the organism of the mother.

For us, it is evocative that within the class of mammals two orders can be singled out, the monotremes and the marsupials. They are the most primitive orders in the mammalian set. In the marsupials, there

is another kind of placenta, not chorioallantoic but choriovitelline, though we shan't be dwelling on this nuance. I think that, from your childhoods, you've retained at least the image of these monotremes in the shape of those animals that in *Le Petit Larousse* swarm in a puddle as if they were pushing at the gate of a new Noah's ark, which means they go *two and two*, though sometimes even just one by one per species. You've got the image of the platypus and also the one that's called the echidna breed. These monotremes are mammals, but in them the egg, even though it is housed in a uterus, has no placental relation with the maternal organism. Nevertheless, the mamma is already there.

At this level we can better see what the originative function of the mamma is. It presents itself as something in between the offspring and its mother. So, we need to conceive of the cut as lying between the mamma and the maternal organism itself.

Here, before the placenta shows us that the feeding relation, at a certain level of the living organism, is extended beyond the egg's function – which, laden with all the baggage that allows for its development, will only make the child join up with his progenitors in a common experience of the search for nourishment – we clearly have a relation that I called parasitic, an ambiguous function in which the amboceptive organ of the mamma steps in.

In other words, the child's relation to the mamma is more primal than the appearance of the placenta, which allows us to say that it is homologous with his relation to the placenta. In the same way that the placenta forms a unit with the child, there stand, together, child and mamma. The mamma is in some way stuck on, implanted on the mother. This is what allows it to function structurally at the level of the *a*, which is defined as something from which the child is separated in a way that is internal to the sphere of his existence.

You're going to see the consequence that results from the binding of the oral drive to this amboceptive object.

What is the object of the oral drive? It is what we habitually call the mother's breast. At this level, where does what earlier I called the anxiety-point lie? It lies precisely beyond this sphere that unites the child and the mamma. The anxiety-point lies at the level of the mother. In the child, the anxiety of the mother's lack is the anxiety of the breast drying up. The locus of the anxiety-point does not merge with the locus at which the relation to the object of desire is established.

This is peculiarly pictured by those animals I conjured up in the shape of representatives from the monotreme order. Everything occurs as though this biological organization had been put together by some foresighted creator with a view to showing us

the true oral relation with this privileged object that the mamma is.

Indeed, whether you know this or not, the echidna's puggle dwells outside the cloaca for a while after its birth, in a pouch located on the mother's belly known as the incubatorium. The puggle is still, at that point, in the envelopes of a kind of hard egg, from which it emerges by using an egg tooth, a *ruptor ovi*, along with something at the level of its upper lip that is called an *os caruncle*. These organs, which allow the foetus to get out of the egg, are not unique to the echidna. They exist, prior to the appearance of mammals, in reptiles. Snakes just have the egg tooth whilst other varieties – turtles and crocodiles – just have the caruncle.

The important thing is this. It seems that, for its function to be activated, the mamma on the mother echidna needs to be nuzzled by the reinforced pike that the puggle's snout presents. For about eight days, the puggle gives itself over to this activation, which apparently owes much more to its presence and activity than to any autonomous functioning of the mother's organism. Furthermore, it curiously gives us the image of a relation that is in some sense inverted in relation to mammiferous protuberance. The echidna's mammae are concave. The puggle's beak is inserted into these hollows. I'll draw for you the glandular elements, the milk-producing lobules, and this reinforced snout that lodges there – it is not yet hardened in the form of a beak as it will be later.

Therefore, in the mammalian organization, there are two originative points that need to be distinguished. On one hand, there is the mamma as such. The relation to the mamma will remain a structuring factor in the sustenance and subsistence of the relation to desire. Later on, the mamma will become the fantasmatic object. On the other hand, elsewhere, there is the anxiety-point, where the subject stands in relation to his lack. This point does not overlap with the mamma. He is in some sense carried off into the Other, because, at the level of the mother, he is suspended from the existence of her organism.

S	A
a	Anxiety

The anxiety-point

This, then, is what we are permitted to structure in a more articulated fashion simply by taking physiology into account. It shows us that the *a* is an object separated not from the mother's organism

but from the child's organism. The relation to the mother is distinct from the organismal totality from which the *a*, misrecognized as such, is separated and isolated. The relation to the mother, the relation of lack to the mother, is located beyond the locus in which the distinction of the partial object has been played out as functioning in the relation of desire.

Of course, the relation is more complex still and we need to take into account the existence, in the function of sucking, alongside the lips, of the enigmatic organ of the tongue. It has long been marked out as such – remember if you will Aesop's fable.

The tongue allows us to bring in, from the oral level onwards, that which in the subtext of our analysis stands to feed a double homology with the phallic function and its peculiar dissymmetry. On one hand, in sucking, the tongue plays the essential role of functioning by suction, as the support of a void whose drawing power enables the function to be effective. On the other hand, it can provide us with the image, in a first form, of the secret of sucking as it emerges from its most intimate secrecy, which will remain in the state of a fantasy at the base of everything we can articulate around the phallic function – namely, the glove turning inside out, the possibility of an eversion of what lies deepest in inner secrecy.

The fact that the anxiety-point lies beyond the locus in which the fantasy is secured in its relation to the partial object is what appears in the extension of this fantasy that forms an image and remains forever more or less inherent to the credence we give to a certain pattern of oral relation – the fantasy that is expressed in the image of vampirism.

Whilst it is true that within this pattern of his relation to the mother the child is a little vampire and his organism is for a while suspended in the parasitic position, the fact remains no less that he is not this vampire either, to wit, at no moment whatsoever will he go at his mother with his teeth to search out the warm and vital source of his nourishment. As mythical as it is, however, the vampire image reveals to us through the aura of anxiety that surrounds it the truth of the oral relation to the mother. Beyond the reality of the organismal functioning, a dimension takes shape and stands out that gives to the message its most profound accentuation, that of a possibility of lack, a possibility that is realized beyond what anxiety harbours by way of virtual fears over the drying-up of the breast. It calls the mother's function into question. The relation to the mother, inasmuch as it stands out in the image of vampirism, is what allows us to distinguish between the anxiety-point and the point of desire. At the level of the oral drive, the anxiety-point lies at the level of the Other. That's where we feel it.

Freud tells us – *anatomy is destiny*. You know that at certain moments I've taken a stand against this formula over its incomplete-

ness. It becomes true if we give the term *anatomy* its strict and, if I may, etymological meaning that emphasizes *ana-tomy*, the function of the cut. Indeed, everything we know about anatomy is linked to dissection. Destiny, that is to say, man's relation to the function called desire, only assumes its full vitality inasmuch as the fragmentation of one's own body, the cut that lies at the locus of select moments of its functioning, is conceivable.

The fundamental *separtition* – not separation but partition on the inside – is what finds itself inscribed right back at the origin, and right back at the level of the oral drive, in what will go on to be the structuring of desire.

Can we really be surprised, then, that we've gone to the oral level to find some more accessible image for what has always remained a paradox for us – and why? – in the functioning linked to copulation, namely that, there too, the image of a cut, of a separation, is prevalent?

2

We call this cut *castration* quite incorrectly, because what functions here is an image of emasculation.

It is undoubtedly not by chance, nor ill-advisedly, that we went off to hunt out in more ancient fantasies a justification for what we didn't know very well how to justify at the level of the phallic phase. It needs to be impressed, however, that at the oral level something happens that will allow us to find our bearings in the whole ensuing dialectic.

Indeed, I've just affirmed for you the topological division between desire and anxiety. The anxiety-point lies at the level of the Other, at the level of the mother's body. The functioning of desire – that is, the fantasy, the vacillation that binds the subject tightly to the *a*, whereby the subject finds himself suspended, identified with this *a* – remains forever elided and hidden, underlying any relation the subject may have with any object whatsoever, and we have to detect it there.

You can see this here on the blackboard. Here is the level S of the subject, who, in our diagram of the vase reflected in the mirror of the Other, is found just shy of this mirror. This is where the relations at the level of the oral drive are to be found. As I told you, the cut is an essential term in the field of the subject. Desire functions within a world that, albeit fragmented, bears the trace of its first closing off within what remains, at an imaginary or virtual level, of the envelope of the egg. Here we are meeting up with the Freudian notion of autoeroticism.

What will become of it at the level where the castration complex arises? There, we can see a veritable reversal of the point of desire and the locus of anxiety.

If something has been promoted by the mode, no doubt still imperfect, but laden with the full depth of a painful conquest that has been made step by step since the origin of the Freudian discovery, then it is the narrow relationship of castration, namely the fact that the relation to the object in the phallic relation implicitly contains the privation of the organ. The Other is evidently implicated at this level. Were it not for the Other – and it matters little here whether we call it the castrating mother or the father of the original prohibition – there wouldn't be any castration.

The essential relation between castration and the copulatory function has already prompted us to try – after all, following the indication of Freud, who tells us that at this level, without him justifying it any way, however, we are touching on some biological bedrock – to articulate it as lying within a particularity of the function of the copulatory organ at the human biological level.

As I remarked for you, at other levels, in other animal branches, the copulatory organ, which can be called in the most summarily analogical way the male organ, is a hook, an organ that fastens. It is crucial not to believe that an accident in the particular functioning of this copulatory organ at the level of those animal organisations that are called superior, namely, the mechanism of tumescence and detumescence, is in itself essential to orgasm.

We are certainly not going to attempt to form any idea of what the orgasm might be in copulatory relations that are structured in a different way. There are, however, plenty of impressive natural spectacles to be witnessed. You just have to take an evening's stroll along a lakeside to see the flight of tightly entwined dragonflies and this spectacle can tell you quite enough about what we might conceive of as a *long-orgasm*, if you will allow me to forge a word by adding a hyphen. Likewise, I haven't brought up the fantasmatic image of the vampire just for the sake of it. The vampire is not dreamt of in human imagination in any other way than as a mode of fusing or initial subtraction at the very life source where the assailing subject can find the wellhead of his jouissance. The very existence of the mechanism of detumescence in the copulation of those organisms that are most analogous to the human organism most certainly suffices to mark out all by itself the link between orgasm and what presents itself truly and verily as the first image, the first hint, of the cut, the separation, the bowing-out, the ἀφάνιζις, the vanishing of the function of the organ.

If we take things up from this angle, we will acknowledge that in

this punctuation the anxiety-point is found in a position that is the strict inverse of the position at which it was found at the level of the oral drive. The homologue of the oral anxiety-point is orgasm itself as a subjective experience.

This is what allows us to justify what the clinic shows us very frequently, namely the fundamental equivalence between orgasm and at least certain forms of anxiety, the possibility of an orgasm occurring at the height of an anguishing situation, the possible eroticization, so we are told all over the place, of an anguishing situation that is sought out as such.

This is also what justifies something to which we have universal human testimony, brought up to date by Freud's testament. It is after all worth taking the trouble to note that someone of Freud's stature dares to attest that, when all is said and done, there is no greater satisfaction for human beings than orgasm. If this satisfaction outstrips everything that mankind may be given to experience on account of its functioning with primacy and precedence, if the function of orgasm can obtain this eminence, is it not because at the base of the achieved orgasm there lies what I called the certainty that is bound to anxiety, inasmuch as orgasm is the very realization of what anxiety indicates as the direction in which lies the locus of certainty? Of all the kinds of anxiety, orgasm is the only one that is actually concluded.

Likewise, this is why orgasm is not all that commonly reached. Although we are permitted to indicate its possible function in the sex[1] where there is only any phallic reality in the form of a shadow, it is also in this same sex that orgasm remains most enigmatic for us, most closed off, never authentically situated perhaps until now in its ultimate essence.

What does this parallel, this symmetry, this reversion established between the anxiety-point and the point of desire, indicate for us if not that in neither of the two cases does it match? And this is doubtless where we have to see the source of the enigma that has been left us by the Freudian experience.

To the extent that the location of desire – which is implied in virtual terms in our experience and which, if I may say so, weaves it entirely – is not, however, truly articulated in Freud, the end of analysis runs aground on the sign implied in the phallic relation, the (φ), inasmuch as it functions structurally as ($-\varphi$), which makes it take this form as the essential correlate of satisfaction.

If, at the end of Freudian analysis, the patient, male or female, demands of us the phallus we owe him or her, it's because of this insufficiency, whereby desire's relation to the object is not clearly distinguished at each level as the lack that constitutes satisfaction.

Desire is illusory. Why? Because it always addresses an elsewhere, a remainder, a remnant constituted by this relation that the subject has with the Other that comes to replace it. But this leaves open the question as to where certainty is to be found. No permanent phallus, no almighty phallus, is ever likely to seal off in any conciliatory fashion the dialectic of the subject's relation to the Other, and to the real. If we are touching here on the structuring function of the lure, does this mean that we must dig in here, admit our powerlessness, our limit, and the point at which the distinction between finite analysis and indefinite analysis breaks down? I believe nothing of the sort.

This is where something comes into the picture that is harboured in the most secret mettle of what I put forward long ago in the shape of the mirror stage and which compels us to organize, within the same relation, desire, the object, and the anxiety-point – namely, the new object *a* to which the previous lesson was an introduction, the eye.

3

Of course, this partial object is not new in analysis.

I only need mention the article by the most classically minded author, the most widely admitted in analysis, Herr Fenichel, on the relations between the scoptophilic function and identification, and the homologies that he went on to uncover between this function and the oral relation. Nevertheless, everything that has been said on this subject can sound, quite rightly, inadequate.

The origin of the eye does not refer us simply to the mammals, nor even to the vertebrates, nor even to the chordates. The eye appears on the animal ladder right down at the level of organisms that have nothing in common with us. As I've already had occasion to point out, it exists at the level of the praying mantis but equally at the level of the octopus. It appears there in an extraordinarily distinct way, with an anatomical appearance that is essentially similar to that of the eye we bear.

The eye presents itself with a particularity we need to mention at the outset, to wit, it is an organ that is always twain. It functions in general through a dependency on a chiasmus, that is, it is bound to an interlaced nexus that links two symmetrical parts of the body. The eye's relation to a symmetry that is at least apparent, because no organism is fully symmetrical, must be fully taken into our consideration.

Last time's reflections pointed out the radical function of mirage,

which is included in the eye's very first functioning. The fact that the eye is a mirror already implies its structure in some way. The transcendental aesthetic foundation, as it were, of a constituted space has to make way for another in its stead. When we speak about the transcendental structure of space as an irreducible given in the aesthetic perception of the world, this structure excludes just one thing – the eye itself, what it is, its function. It's a matter of finding the traces of this excluded function. It is already indicated well enough in the phenomenology of vision as a homologue of the *a* function.

Here we can only proceed with punctuations, indications and remarks.

All those who have attached themselves to what I might call the realism of desire, namely the mystics, and for whom any attempt at reaching the essential has to overcome something that tends to bog us down in an appearance that is only ever conceived of as a visual appearance, have already put us on the trail of something which all sorts of natural phenomena also bear out, namely, appearances that are called mimetic, which can be seen on the animal ladder at the very point at which the eye appears. At the level of insects – at which we may be surprised, why not, that they should have a pair of eyes akin to ours – you can see appearing the existence of a double stain that has a fascinating effect on the other party, whether predator or otherwise. And the physiologists, regardless of whether or not they are evolutionary physiologists, rack their brains over what it might be that could be conditioning this appearance.

This element that fascinates in the function of the gaze, where all subjective subsistence seems to get lost, to be absorbed, and to leave the world behind, is in itself enigmatic. We have here, however, the point of irradiation that allows us to examine what the field of vision reveals in the function of desire.

Likewise, it is striking that in all the attempts to grasp, reason out and logicize the eye's mystery with a view to elucidating this major form of the capture of human desire, the fantasy of the third eye appears. I needn't tell you that, in the pictures of the Buddha I showed you last time, the third eye is always indicated in some way.

This third eye is promulgated, promoted, and articulated in the most ancient magical religious tradition. It made its way down to Descartes, who, oddly enough, would only find its substrate in a regressive, rudimentary organ – the epiphysis. People might say that at one point on the animal ladder something appears and is realized that bears the trace of an ancient emergence of the apparatus called the third eye, but this is mere fancy, because we have nothing that attests to it, fossil or otherwise.

In this new field of the relation to desire, what appears as

correlative to the *a* of the fantasy is something that we may call a zero point, whose spread over the entire field of vision is for us the wellspring of a kind of appeasement that the term *contemplation* has conveyed since time immemorial. Here, there is a suspension of the wrenching of desire – certainly a very fragile suspension, as fragile as a curtain ever about to be used once again to unmask the mystery it hides. The Buddha's image seems to carry us towards this zero point to the very extent that its lowered eyelids protect us from the fascination of the gaze while at the same time indicating it to us. This figure is, within the visible, entirely turned towards the invisible, but it spares us this invisible. To spell it right out, this figure assumes the anxiety-point fully unto itself and suspends, apparently cancelling out, the mystery of castration. This is what I wanted to indicate to you last time with my remarks and the brief enquiry I made on the apparent psychological ambiguity of those figures.

Does this mean that there might be, in any way whatsoever, some possibility of entrusting oneself to an Apollonian, noetic field of contemplation in which desire could be sustained by cancelling out its central point punctiformally, by identifying *a* with the zero-point? Most certainly not, precisely because there still remains the zero point between the two eyes, which is the sole locus of disquiet that remains in our relation to the world when this world is a spatial one. This is what prevents us from finding in the desire/illusion formula the ultimate term of experience.

Here, the point of desire and the anxiety-point coincide, but they do not merge, and they leave open this *however* to which the dialectic of our perception of the world eternally comes bouncing back, this *however* that we are always seeing emerge in our patients, this *however* that I've started looking up in Hebrew. That will amuse you.

The point of desire and the anxiety-point coincide here. *However*, desire, which here boils down to the nullification of its central object, is not without this other object that anxiety summons up. It is not without object. It is not for nothing that in this *not without* I have given you the formula of the articulation of the identification with desire.

It is beyond this *it is not without object* that the question arises for us as to where the dead end, the impasse, of the castration complex can be got through.

We're going to be broaching that next time.

15 May 1963

XVIII

THE VOICE OF YAHWEH

Reik and the use of the symbol
The sound of the shofar
May God remember
The function of the beauty spot
What regards us

Broadly speaking, to give a cursory orientation to anybody who might by chance be arriving midway through this disquisition, I would say that we've come to the point of completing the range of object relations.

Indeed, based on the experience of anxiety, we've found ourselves having to add to the oral object, the anal object and the phallic object, inasmuch as each one generates and is correlative to a type of anxiety, two further stages of the object, thus bringing them to five.

For our last two meetings, I was at the level of the eye. I'm going to take my bearings there again today, so as to lead you to the stage that needs to be broached now, that of the ear.

As I told you, this is a broad presentation of things. It would be preposterous to believe that this is how things stand, except in an esoteric or obfuscating manner. Indeed, it is a matter of ascertaining what the function of desire is at each of these levels, and none of them can be separated from the repercussions they have on each of the others. A tight solidarity unites them, which is expressed in the subject's grounding in the Other along the path of the signifier and in the advent of a remainder around which the drama of desire revolves, a drama that would remain opaque for us were anxiety not there to enable us to reveal its meaning.

This often leads us to erudite jaunts in which some see goodness knows what charm that is proved or reproved in my teaching. Please believe that I don't advance in it without reticence. One day, the method by which I proceed in the teaching I impart to you will

be studied. It's surely not up to me to spell out its rigour for you. The day they seek out its principle in the texts that might survive, that might be transmittable, that might still be understood, of what I'm giving you here, they will notice that in sum and substance this method is not distinct from the object that is being approached.

This method is born of a necessity. The truth of psychoanalysis, at the very least in part, is only accessible to a psychoanalyst's experience. The very principle of a public teaching sets off from the idea that this experience can nevertheless be communicated elsewhere. Having posited that, nothing is resolved, since psychoanalytic experience must itself be oriented, failing which it errs. It errs when it is partialized and, as we have unflaggingly pointed out since the start of this teaching, it has been partialized at various points along the way of the analytic movement, notably in what, far from being a consolidation of or a complement to the indications of Freud's late doctrine in the exploration of the ego's mainsprings and status, far from being a continuation of his work, is strictly speaking a deviation, a reduction, a veritable aberration of the field of experience, doubtless dictated by a kind of build-up that occurred in the field of the first analytic exploration, the exploration that was characterized by a style of illumination, a kind of brilliance that remains attached to the early decades of the dissemination of the Freudian teaching and the shape that the research of the first generation took.

Today I'm going to bring in one of them, who is still alive today, I believe, Theodor Reik, and precisely, among his numerous and immense technical and clinical contributions – some of his work has been qualified quite wrongly as applied psychoanalysis – his writings on the ritual.

Here it is specifically the article published in *Imago*, the eighth year or thereabouts – I didn't bring it along today because it slipped my mind – and which is devoted to something whose name you can see written on the board in Hebraic letters, the *shofar* – שופר.

1

This study by Reik has a sparkle, a brilliance, a fecundity of which it may be said that the style, the promise and the characteristics of the era of which it was part found themselves snuffed out in one fell swoop.

Nothing equivalent to what was produced in that period has been kept up and the reasons for this break deserve to be examined.

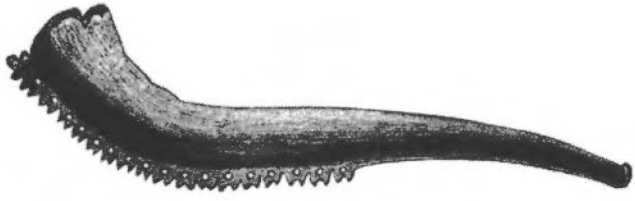
Nevertheless, if you read this article, you will see appear to the utmost, in spite of the praise I might shower on its penetration and

high signification, a source of confusion, a deep lack of grounding, the most tangible form of which lies in what I shall call a purely analogical use of the symbol.

First of all, I need to shed some light on what this shofar is, as unsure as I am that all of you know what it designates. It is an object, and one which is going to be serving me as a fulcrum to give substance to what I understand of the *a* function at this level, the final level, at which we are permitted to reveal the sustentation function that binds desire to anxiety in its ultimate tying-in. You will understand why, rather than naming straightaway what the *a* is at this level – it exceeds the level of the occultation of anxiety in the desire linked to the Other – I'm approaching it through the handling of an object, a ritual object.

What is the shofar? It's a horn. It's a horn one blows into to make a sound. Those of you who've never heard it, I can only tell to go to the synagogue during the ritual of the Jewish festivities that follow the Jewish New Year, which is called *Rosh Hashanah* and which end on the Day of Great Atonement, the *Yom Kippur*, to treat themselves to the sound, thrice repeated, of the shofar.

This horn is generally, though not always, a ram's horn, in German *Widderhorn*, in Hebrew *Qeren hayyôbēl*. Three examples are reproduced in Reik's article, particularly precious and famed examples belonging to the London and Amsterdam synagogues. They share much the same general profile. Classically speaking, they look like this.



This one gives a pretty good idea of what it is.

The Jewish authors who have turned their attention to this object have drawn up a catalogue of its various forms, noting that there is one made from the horn of a wild goat. Certainly, an object that looks like this must far more probably be a result of some processing, alteration, reduction – who knows? it's an object of considerable length, larger than the one I've put on the blackboard for you – some utilization of ram horn.

Those who've treated themselves to this experience, or who are going to, will bear witness, I think – let's say, to remain within confines that are not overly lyrical – to the deeply moving, stirring

character of these sounds. Independently of the atmosphere of reverence, of faith, even of repentance, in which these sounds blast out and resound, an unusual emotion emerges along the mysterious paths of a specifically auricular affect that cannot fail to touch, to a truly uncommon degree, all those who come within earshot of them.

When you read this study, you can only be struck by the pertinence, subtlety, and depth that were characteristic of the era to which it belongs and the reflections it is teeming with. It is not simply dotted with such reflections, it really gives the impression that they have been called forth from goodness knows what centre of intuition and flair. I know not what endless iteration, and worn-out method too, have since blunted us to what comes to the surface in these early pieces of work. But compared to everything that was being done at the time by way of erudite work – I can bear witness to this, trust me, you know that everything I bring you here is fed by enquiries on my part that often verge on what looks to be superfluous – Reik's specific way of examining the biblical texts, those in which the shofar is named as correlative to the major circumstances of the revelation made to Israel, was of an altogether different scope. Whilst Reik sets off from a position that, at the very least in principle, repudiates any traditional attachment, or even takes on the poise of an almost radical stance of critique, not to mention scepticism, one can only be struck by how much deeper he goes than any of the other apparently more respectful, more reverent commentators, those keener to preserve the crux of a message. He goes straight to what seems to be the truth of the historical advent reported by these biblical passages that I've been evoking and on which they focus.

It is no less striking to see how far he lapses in the end into an inextricable muddle, certainly for want of any of those theoretical touchstones that allow a pattern of study to lay down its own limits. Presenting the shofar and the voice that it supports as analogies of the phallic function is not adequate for us. And why not, indeed? But how, and at what level? This is where the question begins. This is also where people stop. At a certain limit, this intuitive and analogical handling of the symbol leaves the interpreter bereft of any criteria, and then everything overlaps, you lapse into an unspeakable mix-up. I'll just mention a few points, to give you some idea.

The ram's horn is certainly indicative of the correlation, and why not also say the conflict, with the entire totemic social structure into the midst of which the whole historical venture of Israel has been plunged. But how can it be that no barrier comes to halt Reik in his analysis, to stop him in the end from identifying Yahweh himself with the Golden Calf?

Making his way back down from Sinai, radiating the sublimity of the Father's love, Moses has already killed Him, the proof being that he becomes the out-and-out furious creature who will destroy the Golden Calf and powder it up for the Hebrews to consume. You will recognize here the dimension of the totemic meal. The oddest thing is that, the necessities of the demonstration only being able to go via Yahweh's identification, not with a calf, but with a bull, the calf in question will therefore necessarily be the representative of a son-divinity alongside a father-divinity. The calf has only been spoken about for the sake of throwing us off the scent, leaving us ignorant of the fact that there was a bull there too. Therefore, since Moses is the Father's murderous son, what does Moses destroy in the calf? Through the string of all these displacements pursued in a way that leaves us without any compass by which to take our bearings, he destroys his own emblem. Everything is consumed in a full-scale self-destruction.

I'm just giving you a certain number of points here, which show you the extremity that a certain form of analysis can reach in its immoderation. As for us, we're going to see what seems to deserve to be retrieved from this, in accordance with what we are seeking.

Our research compels us not to give up on the principles that feature in a certain text that is none other than the founding text of a psychoanalytic *Société*, the one to which I belong, the one that is the reason why I'm here, poised to deliver this teaching. This text stipulates that psychoanalysis can only be correctly situated among the sciences by submitting its technique to the examination of what it supposes and carries out in truth.

I have every right to recall how I had to defend this text and impose it when some folk who let themselves get drawn into this *Société* perhaps saw nothing but empty words therein. This text strikes me as fundamental, because what this technique supposes and carries out in truth is our touchstone, and any ruling, even a structural one, on what we have to deploy must be centred upon it. If we fail to acknowledge that what is involved in our technique is a handling, an interference, even bordering on a rectification, of desire, but which leaves the notion of desire entirely open and in abeyance and necessitates its perpetual re-examination, we can only wander off into the infinite network of the signifier, or else fall onto the most ordinary paths of traditional psychology.

This is how it is for Reik in what he uncovers in the course of this study and which he cannot turn to good account for want of knowing where to put the result of his discovery.

To go back over his analysis of the biblical texts, I'll just list those that claim to refer back to a revealing historical event. First there is

Exodus, Chapters 19 and 20, respectively verses 16 to 19 for Chapter 19, and verse 18 for Chapter 20.

First reference. The sound of the shofar is mentioned in the thunderous dialogue between Moses and the Lord, very enigmatically followed by a sort of enormous uproar, a veritable storm of noise.

One part of these verses also indicates that, even though it is strictly forbidden, not only to all men but to any living beast, to go up to the circle bounded with thunders and lightnings where this dialogue takes place, the people shall come up there when they hear the voice of the shofar. This point is so contradictory and enigmatic that in the translation they bend the meaning and say that *some* may go up. Who might that be? The business remains cloaked in obscurity.

The shofar is expressly mentioned once more in the ensuing dialogue, because it is said that the people who are supposed to have gathered around this major event hear the sound of the shofar.

To justify his analysis, Reik finds nothing else with which to qualify it than to say that an analytic exploration consists in looking for the truth in the details. This characteristic is neither false nor beside the point, but it is merely an external criterion, the assurance of a style, and not the guarantee of critical discernment which consists in knowing which detail is to be held onto. Most certainly, we have always known that the detail that guides us is the very one that seems to escape the author's design and remains opaque, shut off, with respect to the intention it preaches, but it is no less necessary to find, amidst the details, a criterion if not of hierarchy then at least of order and precedence. Be that as it may, we can only feel that his demonstration does touch on something legitimate.

Let's go back to the biblical texts. To the passages from Exodus are added those from Samuel, Chapter 6 of the second book, and those from the first book of Chronicles, Chapter 13, which make mention of the function of the shofar each time it is a matter of renewing the covenant with God in some fresh start, whether it be recurring or historical.

These texts also mention other occasions when the instrument is employed. There are first of all the uses that are carried on in the yearly celebrations, inasmuch as they refer to the recurrence and remembrance of the Covenant. Then there are those exceptional occasions like the ceremony of excommunication, under which, on 27 July 1656, as you know, Spinoza fell. He was excluded from the Hebraic community in every shape and form, which included, along with the words of malediction spoken by the high priest, the sounding of the shofar.

In this light, which is supplemented by the comparison of various

occasions on which it is indicated and effectively made to function, it appears that this shofar is truly and verily, Reik tells us, the voice of Yahweh, the voice of God himself.

2

On a quick reading, this formula doubtless seems none too likely to be exploitable for analysis, but in fact it assumes importance for us in the perspective I'm training you in here.

Indeed, introducing a criterion that is more or less well marked out is something quite different from constituting, for these criteria, in their novelty and the efficiency they entail, what is called *une formation*, a training, and which is first and foremost *une reformation* of the mind in its power.

As far as we are concerned, such a formula can only hold our attention inasmuch as it makes us see what completes the subject's relation to the signifier in what might be called, in a first assimilation, his *passage à l'acte*.

There is someone here, on the far left-hand side of the audience, who cannot fail to be interested in this reference, and that is our friend Conrad Stein. I shall take this opportunity to say what satisfaction I felt on seeing that his analysis of *Totem and Taboo* led him to speak about what he calls primordial signifiers, which he cannot unfasten from what he too calls an act, namely, from what happens when the signifier is not only articulated, which merely presupposes its nexus, its coherence in a chain with others, but is uttered and voiced. For my part, I have some reservations over the term *act* being introduced here without further commentary. I want simply for the time being to pause over the fact that this brings us into a certain form, not of the act, but of the object *a*.

That which underlies the *a* needs to be fully unfastened from phonemization. Linguistics has accustomed us to noticing that it is nothing other than a system of oppositions, along with what that introduces by way of possibilities of substitution and displacement, metaphors and metonymies. This system is supported by any matter that is capable of organizing itself into oppositions that are distinctive for one and all. When something from this system passes into an utterance, a new dimension is involved, an isolated dimension, a dimension unto itself, the specifically vocal dimension.

In bodily terms, into what does the possibility of this utterable dimension plunge? You will understand, if you haven't already guessed, that introducing this exemplary object that on this occasion I've taken up in the shofar assumes its full value here – you can

well imagine that this is not the only example I might have made use of – because it's within your reach, because it stands, if it actually is what we say it is, at a source-point from which our tradition gets rolling, because one of our forerunners in analytic enunciation has already dealt with it and highlighted it. But there are also the tuba, the trumpet, and other instruments besides, because it doesn't have to be a wind instrument, though it can't be just any old instrument. In the Abyssinian tradition, it's the drum. Had I gone on relating my trip to Japan, I would have reported on the place a certain type of drumming holds in Japanese theatre, in its most typical form, that of Noh, inasmuch as through its form and style this drumming has a very particular function of hastening on the main node of interest and linking it up. I might equally have gone about calling to mind, by referring to the ethnographic field, as does Reik, the function of the bullroarer, an instrument that is very close to a spinning top, though they are put together quite differently, which in the ceremonies of certain Australian tribes sound out a kind of bellowing that the instrument's name likens to nothing less than the roaring low of a bull. Reik's study compares it to the sound of the shofar because it is also put on the same level as what other passages of biblical text call *the roar of God.*

The exceptional interest of this object lies in how it presents the voice to us in an exemplary form where it stands, in a certain sense potentially, in a separated form. This is what will allow us to air a certain number of questions that are barely ever raised. What voice is at issue here? Let's not be too hasty. We're going to see its meaning and its locus by taking our bearings from the topography of the relation to the big Other.

The function of the shofar comes into action at certain periodic moments that initially present themselves as renewals of the pact of the Covenant. The shofar does not articulate its fundamental principles, the Commandments, and yet it is very clearly presented as having the function of harking back to this pact, right down to the dogmatic articulation made in this respect. This function – *Zachor*, remembrance, זָכוֹר – is even inscribed into the common name for the moment at which it comes into play – a medial moment in the three solemn blasts of the shofar at the end of the fast days of Rosh Hashanah – which is called *Zikkaron*, whilst the kind of quaver specific to a certain way of sounding the shofar is called *Zikhron Teruah*. Let's say that the sound of the shofar, the *Zichronot*, is the part of remembrance tied to this sound. Without doubt this remembrance is a remembrance of what has been meditated over in the moments that precede it, the *Akedah*, which is the precise moment in Abraham's sacrifice when God halts Abraham's willing hand so as

to substitute, in the stead of the victim Isaac, the ram that you know about, or you think you know about.

Does this mean, however, that the very moment of the pact is fully included in the sound of the shofar? Is it the memory of the sound of the shofar, or the sound of the shofar as support to the memory? Who has to remember? Why would we think that it is the worshippers, because they've just spent a certain moment of reverence focused on this memory?

The question is of very great importance because it leads us onto ground where, in Freud's mind, in its most searing form, the function of repetition was traced out. Is the function of repetition simply automatic and linked to the return, the necessary carrying-over, of the battery of the signifier, or does it have another dimension? Meeting this other dimension in our experience, if this has a meaning, strikes me as inevitable. This dimension is what gives the interrogation borne by the locus of the Other its meaning. To spell it right out, isn't the one whose memory is to be awakened, the one who is to be made to remember, God himself?

This is the point to which we are brought, I won't say by this very simple instrument – because, truth be told, we can only feel at the very least a deep sense of quandary faced with the existence of such a piece of apparatus – but by its having crossed our path.

What we need to know now is where this separated object is inserted, to which domain it is to be attached – not within the inside/outside contrast, whose inadequacy you get a clear inkling of here, but within the reference to the Other and the stages of the emergence and progressive establishment for the subject of this field of riddles that the subject's Other is. At what moment can this kind of object come into the picture, with its face finally unveiled in its separable form?

What object is at issue here? This object is the one that is called the voice.

We are well acquainted with it, we think we are well acquainted with it, on the pretext that we are acquainted with its waste scraps, its dead leaves, in the form of the straying voices of psychosis, and its parasitic character in the form of the broken off imperatives of the superego.

This is where we have to mark out the place of this new object that, rightly or wrongly, with my intention of laying it out, I thought I should first present to you in a form that is not unwieldy and is even, indeed, exemplary.

To find our bearings, we have to locate what is new in what it introduces with respect to the previously articulated level, which had to do with the function of the eye in the structure of desire.

Everything that is revealed in this new dimension initially seems to be masked over at the previous level, which we need to come back to for a moment, the better to bring out what is new in the level at which there appears the form of the *a* known as the voice.

3

Let's come back to the level of the eye, which is also the level of space.

The space involved here is not the space that we can examine in the form of a category of transcendental aesthetics – even though the reference to Kant's contribution on this terrain is, if not very useful, at the very least extremely convenient for us – but space in what it presents as typical in its relation to desire.

The base of the function of desire is, in a style and a form that have to be specified each and every time, this pivotal object *a* inasmuch as it stands, not only separated, but always eluded, somewhere other than where it sustains desire, and yet in a profound relation to it. This character of elusion is nowhere more tangible than at the level of the function of the eye. It is in this respect that the most satisfying support of the function of desire, namely, the fantasy, is always marked by a kinship with the visual models in which it commonly functions, so to speak, and which set the tone of our desiring life.

In space, however – and the whole scope of this remark lies in this *however* – nothing in appearance is separated. Space is homogeneous. When we think in terms of space, even this body we have, our body, has a function. This is not idealism. It is not because space is a function of the mind that it might justify any Berkeleyism. Space is not an idea. It bears a certain relation, not to the mind, but to the eye.

The body's function is to be appended. As soon as we think about space, we have in some way to neutralize the body by localizing it. Think of the way in which, on the blackboard, the physicist makes mention of the function of a body in space. A body is anything and nothing – it's a point. But it's all the same something that is localized in space by something foreign to the dimensions of space, without producing those insoluble questions of the problem of individuation over which you have already heard me express my scorn on more than one occasion.

A body in space is at the very least something that presents itself as impenetrable. A certain realism of space is untenable. I'm not going to go back over the antinomies here, but the very use of the

function of space suggests the undividable and punctiform unit, both necessary and untenable, that is known as an atom – which, of course, is not what this term refers to in physics and which has nothing atomic about it in the sense that it is in no way undividable.

Space only holds any interest given the presupposition of this ultimate resistance to the section, since it only possesses any real use if it is discontinuous, that is, if the unit at issue there cannot be at two different points at once. What does this mean for us? It means that this spatial unit, the point, can only be recognized as inalienable. It means that it can in no way be the *a*.

What is meant by what I'm telling you? I'm hurrying to make you fall back into the nets of what has already been understood. It means that through the form *i(a)*, my image, my presence in the Other has no remainder. I cannot see what I lose there. This is the meaning of the mirror stage.

The diagram on the blackboard is designed to ground the function of the ideal ego and the Ego Ideal, and to show you how the subject's relation to the Other functions when the specular relation is dominant there, a relation that on this occasion is being called the mirror of the big Other.

The image in its form *i(a)*, the specular image, is the object that typifies the mirror stage. It has more than one means of seduction, linked not only to the structure of each subject, but also to the function of cognition. This image is one of closure, it is gestaltian, that is, marked by the predominance of a *Prägnanz*, which should warn us against what this Gestalt function, in so far as it is founded on the experience characteristic of this field, that of *Prägnanz*, contains by way of pitfalls.

To reveal what is mere appearance in the satisfying character of form as such, even in the idea in so far as it is rooted in the visual εἶδος, to see what is mere illusion being torn away, all it takes is for a stain to be brought into the visual field and you can see where the point of desire is truly tethered. If you will allow me to employ the equivocal use of a common term, so as to lend support to what I want to make you hear, I shall say that a stain is all it takes to function as a beauty spot.

Beauty's grain and middlings – you'll permit me to pursue the equivocation[1] – show the place of the *a*, here reduced to the zero-point whose function I mentioned last time. Over and above the form it stains, the beauty spot regards me.[2] It attracts me so paradoxically because it's gazing at me, sometimes more deservedly than my partner's gaze, because this gaze reflects me and, inasmuch as it reflects me, it is but my reflection, an imaginary blur. The crystalline lens doesn't need to be thickened by a cataract to make vision

blind – at least blind to castration which is always elided at the level of desire when it is projected into the image.

What gazes at us? The white glaze of the blind man's eyes, for example. Or, to take another image, one you will remember, I hope, even though it harks back to another year – think of the *gaudenti* in *La Dolce Vita*, at the film's final ghostly moment, when they make their way forward, skipping from shadow to shadow out from the pines and onto the beach, and see the dead-still eye of the marine creature the fishermen are hauling ashore. This is what regards us over and above anything else, and shows how anxiety emerges in vision at the locus of the desire that the *a* controls.

This is also the virtue of tattoos. I needn't remind you of the admirable passage in Lévi-Strauss when he evokes the flood of desire in thirsty colonists as they arrive in one zone of Paraná State to find women covered from head to toe with a shimmering of interwoven designs in the widest variety of colours and shapes.

At the other end of the scale, I might mention the occurrence of the visual apparatus itself – for me, the reference to the emergence of forms is stamped with a style that is more creationist than evolutionist – which, at the level of the fringe cells of the lamellibranchia begins with a pigmented patch, the first appearance of a distinct organ in the sense of a sensitivity that is already specifically visual. And, of course, nothing is more blind than a patch. To the silk *mouche* from earlier, shall I add the *Muscae volitantes* that, when one reaches one's fifties, or thereabouts, give a first warning of organic dangers?

It is through zero of *a* that visual desire masks over the anxiety of what desire essentially lacks. It is what condemns you never to be able to grasp any living being in the pure field of the visual signal except as what ethology calls a *dummy*, a puppet, an appearance.

The object *a* is what lacks, it is non-specular, it cannot be grasped in the image. I pointed out the blind man's white-eye as the image, at once revealed and irretrievably concealed, of scoptophillic desire. The eye of the voyeur himself appears to the Other for what it is – impotent. This is precisely what allows our civilization to take what it sustains and shut it away in a box, in various forms that are perfectly consistent with the bank reserves and dividends it controls.

The reciprocal relationship between desire and anxiety presents itself at this specific level in a radically masked form, linked to the superlatively luring functions of the structure of desire. Now we have to pit this against the opening made for it by the distinct function that today I have introduced with the accessory of the shofar, which is not, however, an accidental accessory.

Our most elementary tradition, the one that sets off from Freud's

first steps, compels us to single out this other dimension. Once again, I shall pay homage to our friend Stein for having spelt it out so well in his disquisition. *If desire*, he says – and I subscribe to this formula, because I find it to be more than brilliant – *were primordial, if the mother's desire were what brought the original crime onto the stage, we would be in the realms of vaudeville.*

Freud tells us in the most categorical way that the origin – forget this and the whole chain comes undone, and it's on account of not having secured this first link in the chain that analysis, in theory and practice alike, seems to undergo a kind of dispersion wherewith one may sometimes wonder what is likely to go on holding it together – is the murder of the father and everything it dictates.

According to what one dares hope is only a metaphor in Reik's mouth, it is his *bellowing of a bull*, a felled bull, that is to be heard in the sound of the shofar. Let's say more simply that it's the originative fact written into the myth of the father's murder that sets rolling what we now have to grasp in its function within the economy of desire, namely, that what constitutes originative desire, in its most fundamental form, is forbidden, as impossible to transgress. It is, however, secondary in relation to a dimension that we have to tackle here, the relation to this essential object that acts as *a*, the voice, and what its function brings by way of new dimensions in the relationship between desire and anxiety.

This is the bend in the road where the functions of desire, the object, and anxiety, will be assuming their value once more, across all the stages right down to the original one.

So as not to fail to pre-empt your questions, and perhaps to tell those who've been asking themselves such questions that I'm not overlooking the furrows I have dug into this field in the interests of completeness, I shall note, as you may have noticed, that I haven't reported, at least since the resumption of our discussions this year, on either the anal object or the anal stage.

This is because it is also strictly speaking unthinkable, unless it is taken up completely from scratch in the function of desire, starting from this point which, for having been announced here as the final one, is the most originative, the object of the voice.

I'll be taking it up next time.

22 May 1963

XIX

THE EVANESCENT PHALLUS

From castration anxiety to orgasm

The pedagogy of castration
Jouissance in the fantasy
The Wolf Man's defecation
Always too soon
The dead ends of desire

Reading latterly a few recently published works on the relations between language and thought, I was led to re-presentify for myself what, after all, I might well from one moment to the next call into question for myself, namely, the place and the nature of the angle from which I've been trying to get to grips with something here – something which, either way, can only be an inevitable and necessary limit to your understanding.

Otherwise, what would I have to say to you?

1

The obstacle at issue doesn't present any particular difficulty at its objective core, the entire progress of a science bearing as much and more on the phasic revision of its concepts as on the extension of its hold. But that which does nevertheless constitute an obstacle here, I mean in the psychoanalytic field, warrants particular reflection.

This cannot be resolved as easily as the obstacles that arise when going from one conceptual system to another, for instance from the Copernican system to the Einsteinian system, a passage that for sufficiently developed minds, minds sufficiently open to mathematics, didn't prove difficult for long. It imposed itself fairly rapidly given that Einstein's equations abide by, include, those that went before.

They situate them as particular cases and therefore resolve them entirely. This doesn't mean that there shan't be a moment's resistance, as history has borne out, but it's short-lived.

In analysis, in analytic technique in so far as we are implicated in it – to a greater or lesser extent, you're already somewhat implicated in it when you start to take a bit of interest in analysis – we ought to meet in the development of the concepts the same obstacle that has been recognized as constituting the limits of analytic experience – namely, castration anxiety.

Lending an ear to my voice as it comes back at me from various distances – and not always necessarily in answer to what I've said, but certainly in response, a response coming from a particular zone – everything happens as though at certain moments certain technical positions were hardening up, positions that are strictly correlative in this matter of analysis to what I may call the limitations of understanding. Likewise, everything happens as though, in order to overcome these limits, I had chosen the path defined by a pedagogical school that ostensibly had its own way of posing the problem of school education with respect to the maturation of the child's thinking, and as though I subscribed to this.

I do indeed subscribe to a pedagogical style of procedure, which I am now going to spell out and define. When you take a close look at the pedagogical debate, the schools of thought are a long way from being in agreement on this score, as those of you who have been required more than the rest to turn your attention to pedagogical procedures will be able to note.

For one school – let's designate one, for example, in William Stern's theories, even though a fair number of you have never opened the works of this nonetheless widely renowned psychologist – everything is determined by an autonomous maturing of intelligence, one simply follows the school age. For another school, let's take Piaget's one, there is a gap, a rift, between what children's thinking is capable of forming and what can be brought to them by the scientific path. If you take a closer look, in both cases this amounts to reducing the efficacy of teaching to zero.

Now, teaching does exist.

Although many minds in the scientific sphere may fail to acknowledge this, what belongs strictly to the realm of teaching – in the sense I'm about to specify – can be taken to be something that can be elided once one has gained access to the scientific field. When one has got through a certain stage of mathematical understanding, once that's been done, it's done for good and there's no need to go on seeking out its paths. One can access it without the slightest trouble so long as one belongs to the generation that benefited from

being taught in this form, in this primary formalization. Concepts that might once have seemed extremely complicated at a previous stage of mathematics are now immediately accessible to very young minds. No intermediary is required.

It is certain that at school age this is not so. The whole point of schooling lies in grasping this vital fact and in anticipating what one may call the child's mental capacities with problems that lie just slightly beyond them. In helping the child to tackle these problems, I'm only saying *helping*, one does something that doesn't only have a pre-maturing effect, a hastening effect on mental maturation, but which, at certain periods that are termed *sensitive* – those of you who know a thing or two on this topic can perfectly well follow me where I'm heading, because the important thing is my disquisition and not my references, which you might not be acquainted with – enables one to obtain true opening effects, even unleashing effects. In some domains, certain activities that are designed to afford a grasp of something have effects of fecundity that are really very special.

It seems to me that this is exactly what can be obtained in the domain we are moving into here. Given the specificity of the field concerned, something is involved that one day the pedagogues would do well to map out.

There are already hints of it in work from authors whose testimony it is all the more interesting to keep in mind on account of their having no notion of what we are able to do with their experiments. I'm speaking of those experimenters who are unfamiliar with analysis and have no wish to familiarize themselves with it. The fact that one pedagogue of this ilk should have formulated that there is only any true access to concepts from the age of puberty onwards warrants us casting an eye over it, having a sniff around. There are hundreds of tangible traces of the fact that the moment at which the functioning of the concept truly begins, and which the authors on this occasion name, exploiting a homonymy of sheer encounter with the term *complex* that we make use of, the *complexual limit-moment*, could be furnished with a very different mapping, contingent upon a link to be established in reference to the maturation of the object *a*, such as I define it, at the said age of puberty.

2

The position of the *a* at the moment of its passage through what I symbolize with the formula $(-\varphi)$ is one of the goals of our explanation this year.

The moment qualified by the notation (– φ), which is castration anxiety, can only be transmitted to you in a valuable way, your ears can only take it on board, by an approach that here can only be a roundabout path.

It was because this anxiety cannot be presentified as such, but only ascertained by a concentric path, that last time you saw me oscillating between the oral stage and something which is the voice, which I supported through its evocation in a separated form, materialized in an object, the shofar. You'll permit me to lay this object aside for a short while in order to come back to the pivotal point I've been evoking by speaking of castration.

What actually is anxiety's relation to castration? Knowing that it is experienced as such in some phase, said to be terminal – or non-terminal – of analysis is not enough for us actually to know what it is.

To set things out straightaway as they will be articulated at the next step, I shall say that the function of the phallus as imaginary functions everywhere, across all the levels that I qualified as a certain relationship between the subject and the *a*. The phallus functions across the board, in a mediating function, except where we expect it to, namely, at the phallic stage. It is this shortcoming of the phallus, which moreover is present and ascertainable everywhere, often to our great astonishment, it is this fading of the phallic function at the level where the phallus is expected to function, that lies behind the principle of castration anxiety. Hence the notation (– φ) which denotes this, so to speak, positive shortcoming. Never having been formulated in this form, it has not given rise to any of its lessons being learnt.

To make the truth of this formula more appreciable for you, I'm going to be taking various paths in a roundabout way. And since I reminded you last time of the structure that is specific to the visual field, the simultaneous sustentation and occultation of the object *a* in this field, I can do no less than come back to it, when this is the field in which the phallic presence is first approached, and in a way we know to be traumatic. This is what is known as the primal scene.

Everyone knows, in spite of the phallus being present and visible here in the form of the functioning of the penis, that what is striking in the evocation of the reality of the fantasized form of the primal scene is always some ambiguity with respect to this presence. How often can one read precisely that it is not to be seen in its place? Sometimes even the nub of the scene's traumatic effect is due to the forms beneath which it disappears, beneath which it makes itself scarce. Moreover, I will only need to bring up the mode of

apparition of this primal scene in its exemplary form, along with the anxiety that comes with it, in the Wolf Man's story.

We heard somewhere that there was apparently something obsessional in the way we keep coming back to the original examples of the Freudian discovery. These examples are more than supports, even more than metaphors, they bring us to put our finger on the very substance of what we are dealing with.

In the revelation of what appears to the Wolf Man through the gap and the frame – pre-figuring what I turned into a function – of the open window, and which can be identified in its form with the function of the fantasy in its most anxiety-provoking mode, where lies the crux? Clearly it doesn't lie in the fact of knowing where the phallus is. It is, as it were, everywhere – identical to what I could call the catatonia of the image of the tree and the perched wolves that – see if you will the echo of what I spelt out last time – hold the subject in their gaze. There's no need to go looking for it in the five furry tails of the five animals. It is there in the very reflection of the image, which it supports with a catatonia that is nothing but the subject's own, the child turned to stone by what he sees, paralysed by this fascination to the point that one may conceive of what gazes back at him in the scene, and which is invisible on account of being everywhere, as nothing but the transposition of the arrested state of his own body, here transformed into a tree, *L'arbre couvert de loups*, we might say, to echo a famous book title.

That something is at issue here that echoes the lived pole we have defined as the pole of jouissance strikes me as incontestable. This jouissance – akin to what Freud elsewhere called the Rat Man's horror at a jouissance of which he was ignorant, a jouissance that exceeds any possible marking-out by the subject – is here presentified in this erect form. The subject is no more than an erection in this grip that makes him a phallus, that freezes him from head to toe, that arborifies him.

Something then occurs at the level of the symptomatic development of the scene's effects. Freud tells us that this element has only been reconstructed, but it is so essential that the analysis Freud gives would not hold together were we not to accept it. This element remains the only one, right to the very end, that the subject doesn't integrate and it presentifies for us on this occasion what Freud would later articulate concerning reconstruction per se. This element is that the subject responds to the primal scene by defecating.

The first time, or thereabouts, at least the first time Freud reports on the appearance of the excremental object at a critical moment, he articulates it in a function to which we can give no other word but the one that we thought we would be having to give as typifying the

genital stage, namely, the function of oblativity. We are told that it's a gift. Everyone knows that Freud underlined at an early stage of his work the character of an offering that marks those occasions when the infant produces an untimely release of his intestinal content. In passing, and without further commentary on such occasions, if you remember the bearings I've laid out, you will permit me to call them occasions of *passage à l'acte*.

In the text of *The Wolf Man*, things go even further, restoring its true meaning which we've been drowning out under a sneaking moralizing supposition by talking about oblativity. Freud speaks of sacrifice in this connection. Given that he was well-read, that, for example, he had read Robertson Smith, when he spoke about sacrifice he wasn't sprouting idle words with some vague moral analogy. If Freud speaks of sacrifice in connection with the appearance of the excremental object in this field, it must all the same actually mean something.

This is where we're going to take things up at the level, if you will, of the normal act, which gets qualified, rightly or wrongly, as mature.

3

In my penultimate lesson, I articulated orgasm in its equivalence to anxiety.

I situated it in the subject's inner field, whilst provisionally leaving castration with just this one mark ($-\varphi$). It is quite clear that its sign cannot be detached from the Other's intervention, this characteristic having always been assigned to the Other, from the start, in the guise of castration threats.

I remarked in this regard that in making orgasm and anxiety equivalent I was joining up with what I'd previously said about anxiety as a reference point, a signal, of the sole relation that does not deceive, and that here we could find the reason behind the satisfying aspect of orgasm. We can understand the function of orgasm, and more specifically the satisfaction it brings, on the basis of something that occurs in the aim that gives confirmation of the fact that anxiety is not without object.

I thought I could say that and no more and be understood, but echoes have come back to me, let's say to put it mildly, of some bafflement, the terms of which were exchanged between two people whom I believe I've trained particularly well and whose discussion over what I meant by satisfaction on that occasion is all the more astonishing. Is it a matter, they wondered, of jouissance? Would

this amount to a return to that cockeyed absolute that some seek to place in what is claimed to be a genital fusing? And then, the anxiety-point was at issue – place in this point all the ambiguity you will. Now, there is no more anxiety if orgasm comes to cover it back over. As for the point of desire, which is marked by the absence of the object *a* in the form (– φ), what about this relation in women?

Here's the reply. In no way did I say that the satisfaction of orgasm was to be identified with what I defined, in the Seminar on ethics, with regard to the locus of jouissance. It even seems wry to underline the trifling satisfaction, albeit sufficient, that is brought by orgasm. Why would it be the same and why would it occur at the same point as this other trifle that is offered to women in copulation, even successful copulation? This is what needs to be spelt out in the most precise fashion.

Saying vaguely that the satisfaction of orgasm is comparable to what I called, on the oral plane, the crushing of demand under the satisfaction of need, is not enough. At the oral level, distinguishing need from demand is easily sustainable, but elsewhere is not so in the least, without posing us the problem of where the drive is located. Although, through some wile or other, people might mince their words over what there is that is originative in demand's footing in the drive at the oral level, we have no right to do so at the genital level. Precisely there, where it would seem that we are dealing with the most primal instinct, the sexual instinct, we mustn't fail to refer, more than elsewhere, to the structure of the drive as supported by the formula ($ ◊ D), that is, by the relationship between desire and demand.

What is asked at the genital level, and of whom?

That inter-human copulation should be something transcendental in relation to individual existence is such a common fact of experience that, faced with the evidence, people end up no longer noticing the depth it carries. We had to take a detour via a biology that is already fairly advanced in order to notice the strict correlation between the appearance of bisexuality – the appearance of two sexes – and the emergence of the function of individual death. But in the end, it had always been sensed, right from the start – in this act, to which what we ought to call *the survival of the species* ties in closely, something is conjoined that cannot fail to concern, if the words have a meaning, what we marked out as an ultimate term with *the death drive*.

After all, why refuse to see what is immediately tangible in facts which we are altogether familiar with and which are signified in the most common uses of a language? What we ask – of whom, I haven't said yet, but in the end, since we have to ask it of someone,

it happens to be our partner, is it sure that the partner is the one? That remains to be seen in a second phase – what do we ask exactly? We ask for the satisfaction of a demand that bears a certain relation to death. It doesn't go very far. What we ask for – it's *la petite mort* – but in the end it's clear that this is what we ask and that the drive is tightly entwined with the demand of lovemaking, to *faire l'amour* – if you will, *faire l'àmourir*, to do it to death, it's even *à mourir de rire*, to die laughing – I'm not accentuating the side of love that partakes of what I call a comical mood just for the sake of it. In any case, this is precisely where the restful side of post-orgasm resides. If this demand for death is what gets satisfied, well, good gracious, it's lightly satisfied, because one gets off lightly.

The advantage of this conception is that it accounts for what is involved in the appearance of anxiety in a certain number of ways of reaching orgasm. Anxiety appears – Freud had a first grasp of it in *coitus interruptus* – to the extent that orgasm is uncoupled from the field of what is asked of the Other. It appears, if I may say so, in the leeway of a loss of signification, but as such it continues to designate what is targeted in a certain relation to the Other.

I'm not telling you that castration anxiety is death anxiety. It's an anxiety that refers back to the field in which death ties in closely with the renewal of life. That analysis should have located it in this point of castration really allows us to understand how it may equally be interpreted as the reason why it is given to us in Freud's late conception as the signal of a threat to the status of the defended *I*. Castration anxiety refers back to the beyond of this defended *I*, to this foretoken of a jouissance that exceeds our limits, in so far as the Other here is strictly speaking called forth in the register of the real whereby a certain form of life is transmitted and sustained.

Call it what you will, God or some such demigod – I think I've already indicated sufficiently in my talks that this doesn't lead us towards any metaphysical heights. An aspect of the real is at issue here, something that maintains what Freud articulated at the level of his Nirvana principle as life's property of having to pass, in order to get to death, by way of forms that reproduce those that gave individual form the opportunity of occurring through the conjunction of two sexual cells.

What does that mean? What does that mean with regard to what happens at the level of the object, if not that, all in all, this result, or what I just called a lightly won result, is only carried through in such a satisfying way in the course of a certain automatic cycle, which remains to be defined, and precisely because of the fact that the organ is never likely to hold up very far on the road along which jouissance does its bidding? With regard to this aim of jouissance

and with regard to reaching the final point, which would be tragic, targeted in the Other's bidding, the amboceptive organ can be said to yield, each and every time, prematurely. When the time comes at which it could be the sacrificial object, so to speak, well, let's say that, in the ordinary case, it had ducked out a long while before. It's no more than a scrap, it is no longer there for the partner save as a keepsake, a souvenir of tenderness.

This is what the castration complex is all about. In other words, it only becomes a drama in so far as the calling into question of desire is stirred and nudged in a certain direction, the direction that puts every confidence in genital consummation.

If we let go of this ideal of genital fulfilment by taking note of what is structurally and happily gulling about it, there is no reason for the anxiety bound to castration not to appear to us in a far more flexible correlation with its symbolic object and therefore in a very different opening with objects from another level. Furthermore, this was implied from the start by the premises of Freudian theory which places desire, as far as its structuring is concerned, in a completely different relation from a purely and simply natural one with the partner who is said to be natural.

To give a better sense of what's at issue, I'd like all the same to call to mind what's involved in those, as it were, initially uncouth dealings between man and woman. After all, in conformity with what I put forward on the relation between anxiety and the desire of the Other, a woman doesn't know who she's dealing with, she doesn't stand before a man without a certain uneasiness as to how far the path of desire is going to lead her. Once the man, my goodness, has made love like everyone else does and lies uncocked, if it so happens that the woman has not derived any, I'll say, tangible profit from it, which, as you know, is quite conceivable, she has at any rate gained the following – she can now be quite easy in her mind as to her partner's intentions.

In the same section of *The Waste Land* in which T. S. Eliot gives voice to Tiresias, to whom I thought one day back in March I should refer so as to compare our experience with the age-old theory of women's superiority on the plane of jouissance, we find these lines of verse whose irony has always struck me as something that should one day find its place in our disquisition.[1] When the *young man carbuncular*, the dandyish *small house agent's clerk*, has had his way with the typist, whose surroundings are depicted at length, Eliot expresses himself thus –

When lovely woman stoops to folly and
Paces about her room again, alone,

She smoothes her hair with automatic hand,
And puts a record on the gramophone.

When lovely woman stoops to folly, that's untranslatable. It's a song from *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Let's say, *Quand une jolie femme s'abandonne à la folie – stoops* is not even *s'abandonne*, it's *s'abaisse – pour enfin se trouver seule, elle arpente la chambre en lissant ses cheveux d'une main automatique, et change de disque*. This comes by way of reply to the question my pupils were asking each other as to what is involved in a woman's desire.

Woman's desire is determined by the question, for her too, of her jouissance. Analytic theory has been telling us from the start that she is not only far closer to jouissance than men are, but also doubly determined. That the locus of this jouissance is not linked to the enigmatic, unplaceable character of her orgasm, is what our analyses have pushed quite far enough for us to be able to say that this locus is a point that is archaic enough to precede the present partitioning of the cloaca. This was perfectly marked out, from a certain analytic perspective, by an analyst, and one of the feminine sex. That desire, which is not jouissance, should in woman be naturally right where it ought to be according to nature, that is, tubal, is perfectly designated by those women known as hysterics. The fact that we have to classify these subjects as hysterics doesn't change anything of the fact that desire placed in this way lies in the realm of the true, the organically true.

Since man will never bring the leading edge of his desire this far, one is able to say that man's jouissance and woman's jouissance will never conjoin organically. To the extent that man's desire miscarries, woman is led, if I may say, normally, to the idea of having the man's organ, inasmuch as it would be a genuine amboceptor, and this is what is called the phallus. It's because the phallus doesn't achieve any matching of the desires, save in its evanescence, that it becomes the common-place of anxiety.

What woman asks of the analyst at the end of an analysis conducted in accordance with Freud's indications, is without doubt a penis, *Penisneid*, but so that she might do better than the man. There is something, there are a good many things, there are hundreds of things, that confirm all this. Without analysis, how might woman overcome her *Penisneid*, if we deem it to be always inherent? We are very familiar with how. It's the most ordinary pattern of seduction between the sexes – it is to offer man's desire the object behind the phallic claims, the non-detumescent object to sustain his desire, namely, to make her feminine attributes the signs of man's almightiness.

This is what I thought it necessary to develop a long while back – I ask you to refer to my former Seminars – by underlining, after Joan Riviere, the specific function of what she calls the womanly masquerade. Simply put, woman has to take her jouissance down a peg. If we leave her in some way on this path, we endorse the renewal of these phallic claims, which become, I wouldn't say the compensation, but something like the price to be paid for what is asked of her, all in all, for being saddled with the Other's miscarriage.

These are the paths along which genital realization presents itself, inasmuch as it would supposedly put an end to what we might call the dead ends of desire, were it not for the opening of anxiety.

Starting off from the point to which I've brought you today, next time we'll be seeing how all analytic experience shows us that the phallus, to the extent that it is summoned as an object of propitiation in a dead-end conjunction, and turns out to be missing, constitutes castration itself as a point that it is impossible to circumvent in the subject's relation to the Other, and as a resoluble point as far as its function of anxiety is concerned.

29 May 1963

XX

WHAT COMES IN THROUGH THE EAR

Deceptive phallic might
The infant's monologue
Isakower's prawn
The incorporation of the voice
The Gods ensnared in desire

What I told you last time concluded, significantly I believe, in the silence that greeted my comments, nobody it seems having maintained the composure to crown it with a little applause.

Either I'm mistaken, or else it wouldn't be overmuch to see in this the result of what I expressly announced when opening the topic, that is, that it wasn't possible to approach castration anxiety head on without provoking a few ripples.

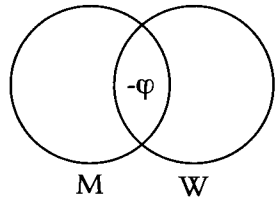
After all, this is not an excessive claim since what I said to you is, all in all, something that might be qualified as not very heartening as regards the union between man and woman, a problem that at any rate has always been present, and rightly so, in the preoccupations of psychoanalysts. I hope it still enters into them.

Jones circled for a long while around this problem, embodied by what is reckoned to be implied by the phallocentric perspective, namely, the primordial ignorance, not just the man's but woman's too, concerning the locus of conjunction, namely, the vagina. The roundabout paths, in part fruitful, albeit inconclusive, that Jones took on this route show their design in the invocation to which he turns, the famous *male and female created He them*, which is moreover so ambiguous.

After all, Jones didn't do his pondering over verse 27 of the first chapter of Genesis in reference to the Hebrew text.

1

Be that as it may, let's try to lend support to what I said last time with my little diagram which has been put together on the model of the Eulerian circle.



The lack of mediation

The field covered by man and by woman in what might be called, in the biblical sense, their knowledge of one another, only intersects in that the zone to which their desires lead them with an eye to reaching each other, and in which they would effectively be able to overlap, is qualified by the lack of what would otherwise constitute their medium. The phallus is what, for everybody, when it is reached, precisely alienates one from the other.

Woman can most certainly be the man's symbol in his desire for phallic almightiness, but precisely inasmuch as she is no longer woman. As for her, it is quite clear from everything we have uncovered under the term *Penisneid* that she can only take the phallus for what it isn't – either as *a*, the object, or as her own over-small *phi*, which only gives her an approximate jouissance in relation to what she imagines of the Other's jouissance, in which doubtless she can share through a kind of mental fantasy, but only by straying from her own specific jouissance. In other words, she can only enjoy (φ) because it's not in its place, in the place of her jouissance, in the place where her jouissance might be realized.

I'm going to give you a little illustration of this, rather a hot one, not in the least run of the mill, but topical.

In an audience such as this, how many times have we seen, to the extent that it's becoming a constant in our practice, women wanting to be analysed like their husbands, and often by the same psychoanalyst? What does this mean if not that they aspire to share in the supposedly rewarded desire of their husbands? The minus minus-phi, – (– φ), the re-positivizing of the *phi* they reckon to be operating in the psychoanalytic field, is what they aspire to gain access to.

The fact that the phallus is not to be found where it's expected, where it's demanded, namely, on the plane of genital mediation,

is what explains how anxiety is the truth of sexuality, that is, what appears each time its ebb tide washes back and lets show the sand beneath. Castration is the price of this structure, it comes in the stead of this truth. But in actual fact, this is an illusory game. There is no castration because, at the locus at which it occurs, there is no object to castrate. The phallus would have to have been there for that. Now, it is only there so that there won't be any anxiety. The phallus, where it is expected as something sexual, only ever appears as a lack, and this is its link with anxiety.

All this means that the phallus is called upon to function as an instrument of might.[1] When we speak of might in analysis, we do so in a way that wavers because we are forever referring to almightiness, though this is not actually what's involved. Almightiness is already a slide, a sidestep, with respect to the point at which all might falters. We don't ask might to be everywhere, we ask it to be where it is present, precisely because when it falters where it is expected, we start to foment almightiness. In other words, the phallus is present, it is present *wherever it is not* on the spur of the moment.

This is the facet that allows us to pierce through the illusion that lies behind the claims generated by castration inasmuch as it covers over the anxiety presentified by each actualization of jouissance. This illusion is owing to a confusion between jouissance and the instruments of might. With the progress of institutions, human inability finds itself better off than its fundamental state of misery. It forms a profession. I mean profession in every sense of the word, from the profession of faith through to the professional ideal. Everything that shelters behind the dignity of a profession always boils down to this central lack that inability is. Inability dooms man not to be able to enjoy save in his relation to the support of (+ φ), that is, a deceptive might.

I'm reminding you that this structure only comes along as the ensuing part of what I articulated last time so that now I can bring you to a few remarkable facts that govern the structure thus articulated.

The homosexuality that is placed at the root of social adhesion in our theory, Freudian theory, is the male's privilege. We may observe that Freud always marked it out thus and never cast the slightest doubt on it. This libidinal adhesion of the social bond, in so far as it only occurs in the community of males, is linked to the side of sexual miscarriage that is especially allotted to the male due to the fact of castration.

On the other hand, what is called female homosexuality might hold great cultural importance, but it has no value as a social

function because it pertains to the field specific to sexual rivalry, that is, right where it would appear to have the least chance of success, were the subjects who carry the advantage in this field not precisely those who haven't got the phallus. Almightiness, the greatest vivacity of desire, occurs at the level of the love that is called Uranian and whose very radical affinity with female homosexuality I believe I've marked out in its place.

Idealistic love presentifies mediation by the phallus as $(-\varphi)$. In both sexes, the (φ) is what I desire, but also what I can only have as $(-\varphi)$. This minus turns out to be the universal medium in the field of sexual conjunction.

This minus, dear Reboul, is not in the least bit Hegelian, not in the least bit reciprocal. It constitutes the field of the Other as a lack and I only gain access to it in so far as I take this very path, and I become attached to the fact that the play of the minus leads me to disappear. I only find myself again in what Hegel did see, of course, but whose grounding he specifies without including this interval, namely, in a generalized *a*, in the idea of the minus inasmuch as it is everywhere, that is, it is nowhere.

Desire's support is not cut out for sexual union because, being all-pervasive, it no longer specifies me as man *or* woman, but as one *and* the other. The function of the field described on the diagram as the field of sexual union sets out for each of the two sexes the alternative – either the Other, or the phallus, in the sense of exclusion. This field here is empty. But if I make this field positive, the *or* takes on a different meaning and then means that one can be replaced by the other at any moment.

This was why I introduced the field of the eye that lies hidden behind all spatial universe, employing a reference to those image-beings which, when met, enable a certain pathway of salvation to be teased out, namely, the Buddhist path. The more Guanyin, or Avalokiteśvara, in his complete sexual ambiguity, presentifies himself as male, the more he takes on female aspects. If that amuses you, I'll show you some other day a few images of Tibetan statues or paintings, they are aplenty, where the feature I'm designating glares out at you.

Today, it's a matter of grasping how the alternative between desire and jouissance can find its point of passage.

The difference that lies between dialectical thought and our experience lies in the fact that we do not believe in synthesis. If there exists a point of passage where the antinomy closes, then it's because it was already there before the antinomy was formed.

2

For the object *a*, which embodies the dead end of desire's access to the Thing, to reveal the point of passage, we have to go back to its beginning.

Were nothing to have readied this passage prior to the capture of desire in specular space, there wouldn't be any way out.

Indeed, let's not overlook the fact that the possibility of this dead end is itself linked to a moment that anticipates and conditions what comes to be marked in sexual miscarriage for man. This is the moment, such an early moment, at which the field of insight is so very profoundly eroticized when specular tension comes into play.

We know, since Köhler and Yerkes, what starts to take shape in anthropoids as the guiding characteristic of this field now that the observation of apes has shown us that they are not devoid of intelligence inasmuch as they can do many things, but on the condition that they are able to see what is to be reached. Yesterday evening I alluded to the fact that everything is laid out there, not that primates are any more incapable than we are of speaking, but because they can't bring their speech into this operative field.

This is not the only difference. There is another, which has to do with the fact that animals don't have a mirror stage, therefore there isn't any narcissism, in so far as this term indicates a certain omnipresent subtraction of libido and its injection into the field of insight, whose form is given by specularized vision. But this form hides from us the phenomenon of the occultation of the eye, which thereafter will gaze on us from everywhere, will place us under the universality of seeing.

We know that this can occur. This is what is called *unheimlich*, but it requires very particular circumstances. Usually, what is satisfying in specular form is precisely that it masks over the possibility of this apparition. In other words, the eye institutes the fundamental relationship of the *desirable* inasmuch as it always tends, in the relation to the Other, to lead one to misrecognize how beneath the *desirable* there is a *desirer*.

Reflect if you will on the scope of this formula, which I'm giving as the most comprehensive formula for the emergence of the *Unheimliche*. Imagine that you're dealing with the most restful *desirable*, in its most soothing form, a divine statue that is just divine – what could be more *unheimlich* than to see it come to life, that is, to show itself as a *desirer*?

Now, the structuring hypothesis that we posit at the genesis of the *a* is that it is born elsewhere and prior to the capture that conceals it.

This hypothesis is founded on our practice and it is from there that I'm introducing it.

Either our praxis is inaccurate, I mean inaccurate with respect to itself, or it presupposes our field, the field of desire, to be generated by the relation of S to A. We can but meet up with this relation in our praxis, in so far as we reproduce its terms. Our praxis generates this universe, symbolized in the ultimate terms provided by the famous division that has been guiding us for a while now through the three phases in which the S, a still unknown subject, has to be constituted in the Other, where the *a* appears as the remainder of the operation.

In passing, I'll tell you that the alternative *either our praxis is inaccurate or it presupposes the above*, is not an exclusive one. Our practice can allow itself to be partially inaccurate with respect to itself and for there to be a residue, since this is precisely what is foreseen. We may therefore presume – it's a big presumption – that we risk very little in committing ourselves to a formalization that goes on to establish itself as something necessary. But it needs to be said that the relation of S to A far outstrips in its complexity – which is, however, so straightforward and inaugural – what those who've bequeathed us the definition of the signifier believe they are duty-bound to posit at the root of the interplay they marshal, namely, the notion of communication.

Communication as such is not what is primordial, because at the origin, S has got nothing to communicate for the reason that all the instruments of communication lie on the other side, in the field of the Other, and it is from the Other that S stands to receive them. As I've been saying from the start, the result of this is that at root the subject receives his own message from the Other. The first emergence, the one that is set down in the table, is simply an unconscious, since it is unformulable, *What am I?*, to which corresponds, before it is actually formulated, a *Thou art*. In other words, the subject first receives his own message in an inverted form.

I've been saying this for a long time. Today, I'm adding, if you care to lend an ear, that he first receives it in an initially broken-off form. First of all he hears a *Thou art* without any attributive. As broken-off as this message is, however, and therefore insufficient, it is never unformed, because language exists in the real, it is afoot, in circulation, and many things with respect to this S, in its presumed primordial questioning, have already been settled in this language.

Now, to take up my sentence from earlier, if I define the relation between S and A as I do, it's not only by hypothesis, because it's a hypothesis that I said was founded in our praxis, because I identified it with this praxis, up to and including its limits. What's more,

the observable fact – and why is it so poorly observed? – confirms the autonomous play of speech such as it is supposed in this table. I think there are enough mothers unafflicted with deafness here to know that young toddlers, at an age when the mirror phase is far from having brought its work to a close, monologue before falling asleep as soon as they possess a few words. Time will prevent me from reading you today a long page where one such monologue has been transcribed. I can promise you some satisfaction when I do manage to do so.

Good fortune had it that, after my friend Roman Jakobson had for ten years enjoined all his expecting pupils to put an audio tape recorder in the nursery, two or three years ago this was eventually done, thanks to which we finally have the publication of one of these primordial monologues. I'm making you wait a bit because this is the right moment to show a fair number of other things besides what I have to delineate today.

My having to bring in like this references from far afield, without really knowing what you might already be familiar with, shows in and of itself to what extent we're fated to shift over into a sphere in which your being educated is nothing less than guaranteed, regardless of what people may think and regardless of what might have been spent on lessons and lectures.

Either way, some of you might remember what Piaget calls egocentric language and what is involved in this denomination, which may perhaps be tenable but is conducive to all kinds of misunderstandings. Indeed, this expression designates those sorts of monologue that a child engages in aloud when placed alongside a few playmates in a common task. Such monologues, which are very clearly turned in upon the child himself, can only occur, however, in a certain community. This is not an objection to this being qualified as egocentric, so long as its meaning is specified. Moreover, since we're speaking of egocentrism, it can seem striking that the subject of the statement is so often elided.

I'm calling this reference to mind to encourage you perhaps to renew contact with this phenomenon in Piaget's texts, for whatever purpose it may serve as a future reference, but above all to have you note that the problem arises of where to situate in relation to this display the hypnopompic monologue recorded by Jakobson's student, which emerges at a much earlier stage.

I shall say right away that the famous graph that's been badgering you so much over the years shows its worth in connection with these problems of genesis and development. Be that as it may, the toddler's monologue I'm talking about never occurs when someone else is there. The presence of a younger sibling, another babe in the

bedroom, is all it takes for it not to happen. A fair number of other factors indicate that what is going on at this level, and which is such an astonishing revelation of just how early on these tensions in the unconscious that are called primordial are produced, is in every respect analogous to the function of the dream. Everything is happening on the Other stage, with the stress I've given to this term.

Oughtn't we to be guided here by the little door – it's never a bad way in – through which I've been introducing you to the problem, namely, the constitution of the *a* as a remainder? In every case, if its conditions really are those I've been telling you, we've only got this phenomenon in the state of a remainder, that is, on the tape reel. Otherwise, at the very most we have merely the far-off murmur which might break off at any moment should we appear. Doesn't this introduce us to the consideration that a path is being offered us here, by which to grasp that, for the subject in the making, we really ought to seek out the remainder on the side of a voice unfastened from its support.

Be very careful here. We really mustn't move too fast.

3

The ordinary experience is that everything the subject receives from the Other in terms of language is received in a vocal form. The experience of cases that are not so rare, though people always bring up striking cases like that of Helen Keller, show that there are other pathways besides the vocal path by which to receive language. Language is not vocalization. Take a look at the deaf.

I think, however, that we can venture to say that a relation that is more than just a random one binds language to sonority. And we shall perhaps even venture down the right path by trying to spell things out carefully in qualifying this sonority as instrumental, for instance. There's no doubt about it that physiology is what's opening up the path for us here.

We don't know everything about how our ears function, but all the same we know that the cochlea is a resonator. It's a complex resonator or, if you like, a composite one. Well, in the end, a resonator, even a composite one, breaks down into a composition of elementary resonators. This leads us onto a path that tells us that what is specific to resonance is the dominance of the apparatus. The apparatus is what resonates and it doesn't resonate at just anything. If you will, not to overcomplicate matters, it only resonates at its own note, its own frequency.

In the organization of the sensorial apparatus in question – our

ear – we are dealing, concretely, with a resonator that isn't put together any old how, but a tubular resonator. The return path of the vibration, which is always brought in through the round window and along the scala tympani to the scala vestibuli, seems to be strictly linked to the length of the space travelled in a closed pipe that works in the way of a tube, any kind of tube, be it flute or organ. Clearly it's a complicated thing, this apparatus doesn't look like any other musical instrument whatsoever. It's a tube that would be, so to speak, a pipe with keys, in the sense that, so it seems, the cells which are poised in the position of strings, but which don't function as strings, are implicated at the site where the sound wave makes its return, and they see to connoting each resonance involved.

I apologize all the more for this detour because it's quite certain that this is not the direction in which we're going to find the last word on this score. But this reminder is designed to actualize the fact that something in the organic form strikes us as bearing a certain resemblance to those primary, trans-spatial, topological givens that led us to take an interest in the most elementary shape of the formation – which is both created and creative – of a void, the one that we embodied with an apologue in the story of the pot, because a pot is also a tube, and it can resonate.

We said that ten pots utterly alike will prove to be individually different, but that the question can arise as to whether, when you put one in the place of the other, the void that is put successively in the heart of each of them is always the same. Now, the void at the heart of the acoustic tube imposes a command on anything of this reality that might come to resonate therein – a reality that opens onto a subsequent step on our path and which is not so straightforwardly defined, namely, what is known as a breath. Thus, a flute titillated at the level of one of its openings imposes the same vibration on any possible suspiration. Although this command is not a law in our eyes, it is nevertheless indicated here that the *a* in question is functioning in a real function of mediation.

Well, let's not give in to this illusion. All this only holds any interest as a metaphor. If the voice in the sense we understand it holds some importance, it's not on account of resonating in any spatial void. The simplest intrusion of the voice in what in linguistic terms is called its phatic function – which is thought to lie at the level of simply making contact, when actually something very different is involved – resonates in a void that is the void of the Other as such, properly speaking *ex-nihilo*. The voice responds to what is said, but it cannot answer for it. In other words, for it to respond, we must incorporate the voice as the otherness of what is said.

It is precisely for this reason and no other that, detached from

us, our voice appears to us with a foreign sound. It is proper to the structure of the Other to constitute a certain void, the void of its lack of guarantee. Truth comes into the world with the signifier, prior to any control. This truth is felt, it is reflected back only by echoes in the real. Now, the voice resonates in this void as a voice that is distinct from sonorities. It is not a modulated voice, but an articulated one. The voice at issue here is the voice as an imperative, a voice that demands obedience or conviction. It is not situated in relation to music, but in relation to speech.

With regard to the well-known misrecognition of the recorded voice, it would be interesting to see the distance that might lie between the singer's experience and the orator's. I propose to those who might like to volunteer as interviewers to go ahead and do so, because I haven't had time to do this myself.

I believe that this is where we put our finger on the form of identification that I wasn't able to broach last year and whose first model at least is provided by the identification of the voice. Indeed, in certain cases, we are not speaking about the same identification as in other cases, we are speaking about *Einverleibung*, incorporation. The psychoanalysts of *la bonne génération* noticed this and a certain Mr Isakower wrote, in the twentieth year of the *International Journal*, a quite remarkable article which, in my opinion, is only interesting for the need that impressed itself upon him to provide a striking image of what is distinct in this type of identification.

He searches out this image in something that stands peculiarly far away from the identificatory phenomenon at issue. Indeed, he turns his attention to tiny animals called – if memory serves, because I haven't had chance to check – daphnia.[1] They're not prawns, but picture them if you will as bearing a palpable resemblance to prawns. Be that as it may, at one moment in their metamorphoses, these animals, which live in saline waters, have the curious habit of filling up with minute grains of sand that they introduce into a thing they have, a small apparatus termed statoacoustic, in other words its utriculus, which doesn't benefit from our prodigious cochlea. Once these bits of sand have been introduced from the outside, because the prawn doesn't produce them itself in any shape or form, the utriculus closes up again and the animal will possess the little bells that are necessary for its balance and which it has had to fetch in from outside.

You have to admit that this relation is a long way from the constitution of the superego. Nevertheless, what interests me is that Isakower didn't think it necessary to look any further for a better comparison than to refer to the following operation, which all the same you must have thought of if you heard any echoes of physiol-

ogy stirring within you. This operation, which was carried out by some mischievous experimenters, consists in replacing the grains of sand with iron dust, as a way of having a little fun with the daphnia and a magnet.

A voice, therefore, is not assimilated, but incorporated. This is what can give it a function of modelling our void. We're meeting up with my instrument from the other day, the shofar of the synagogue, and its music. But is this basic fifth, this interval of the fifth that is specific to it, actually music? Isn't it rather what gives its meaning to the moment's possibility that it might be a substitute for speech, wrenching our ear powerfully away from all its customary harmonies? It models the locus of our anxiety, but observe if you will that this only happens after the desire of the Other has taken the form of a command. This is why it can play its eminent function of bringing anxiety its point of resolution, which gets called guilt or atonement, by introducing a different order.

Desire is lack and we shall say that this flaw lies at the root of desire, in the sense of something that is missing. Change the sense of this flaw by giving it content in articulation – of what? let's leave that in abeyance – and you've got the explanation for the dawning of guilt and its relation to anxiety.

To know what can be done with it, I have to lead you onto a field that is not this year's field, but which I do have to bite into a bit. I said that I didn't know what, in the shofar – let's say, in the clamour of guilt – is articulated, on account of the Other that covers over anxiety. If our formula is right, something like the desire of the Other must be concerned here.

I'll give myself another three minutes to introduce something that readies the paths that will enable us to take our next step.

What stands most favourably ready to light the way and, similarly, to be lit up, is the notion of sacrifice.

A fair number of others besides myself have had a go at tackling what is at issue in sacrifice. I'll quickly tell you that the sacrifice is not at all intended to be an offering, nor a gift, both of which are propagated in a quite different dimension, but the capture of the Other in the web of desire.

The thing would already be perceptible if we looked at what it boils down to for us on the ethical plane. Common experience shows that we don't live our lives, whoever we are, without tirelessly offering to goodness knows what unknown divinity the sacrifice of some little mutilation, whether valid or not, that we impose upon ourselves in the field of our desires.

Not all the underpinnings of the operation are visible. There can be no doubt that this involves something that refers back to the *a* as

the pole of our desire. But you'll have to wait till next time for me to show you that it takes something more and notably that this *a* is a thing that is already consecrated, which cannot be conceived of save by taking up in its original form what is at issue in the sacrifice. I do hope that for this appointment I shall have a good friary of obsessionals.

Doubtless we have lost our gods in the great civilizing bedlam, but a fairly lengthy period that stands at the origin of all peoples shows that they used to have brushes with them just as with real persons. They were not almighty gods, but mighty gods there where they stood. The whole question was one of knowing whether these mighty gods desired something. Sacrifice consisted in carrying on as though they desired in the same way as we do, and if they desire as we do, then the *a* possesses the same structure. This doesn't mean that they're going to gobble down what we sacrifice, nor even that it might be of any use to them, the important thing is that they desire it and, I shall say further, that it doesn't cause them anxiety.

There is one feature whose problem has never been resolved by anyone in a satisfying way – the victims always had to be spotless.

Now, remember what I told you about the stain at the level of the visual field. With the stain there appears, or there is prepared, the possibility of the resurgence, within the field of desire, of what lies behind, overshadowed, on this occasion the eye whose relation to this field must necessarily be elided so that desire can remain there, with this ubiquitous, even roaming possibility that allows it to evade anxiety.

When the gods are being tamed in the snare of desire, it is crucial not to awaken their anxiety.

Given the time, I'll have to end here. You're going to see that, as lyrical as this last jaunt may seem, it will serve us as a guide through the far more day-to-day realities of our experience.

5 June 1963

XXI

PIAGET'S TAP

The category of cause
Forming the symptom
A matter of understanding
Water and desires
The five levels in the constitution of the *a*

Anxiety resides in the subject's fundamental relationship with what thus far I've been calling the desire of the Other.

Analysis has always had, and maintains, as its object the uncovering of a desire. It is, you will admit, for a structural reason that I've been led this year to articulate this along a path that is, let's say, algebraic, an articulation in which the function appears in a kind of gap, a kind of residue, of the signifying function. But I've also done it by edging carefully forward, employing examples. This is the path I'm going to be taking today.

In any advent of the *a* as such, anxiety appears in accordance with its relation to the desire of the Other, but what is its relation to the subject's desire? It can be situated with the formula I put forward in its time, when I told you that the *a* is not the object of desire that we seek to reveal in analysis, it is its cause.

This feature is essential. If anxiety marks the dependency of any constitution of the subject with regard to A, the subject's desire finds itself appended to this relation by the intermediary of the prior constitution of *a*. Hence the interest in reminding you how the presence of the *a* as cause of desire was being heralded right back in the first analytic research data. It is heralded, in a more or less covert fashion, in the function of cause.

This function can be spotted in the first data from the field to which the research was committed, namely, the field of the symptom. In every symptom, inasmuch as an element that goes by

this name interests us, this dimension is evident. I'm going to try to tease this out for you today.

1

To give you a sense of this, I'll be starting off from a symptom that possesses an exemplary function, and not for nothing – you'll be able to see this afterwards – to wit, the obsessional's symptom.

I'll indicate right off the bat that I'm putting this forward because it allows us to move into the mapping of the *a* function in so far as it is unveiled as functioning, with the very first data on the symptom, in the dimension of cause.

What does the obsessional present us with in the pathognomonic form of his position? Well, an obsession, or a compulsion, articulated or not as a motivation in his inner language – *Go do this or that, Go check the door's locked,* or *the tap's turned off.* We might be taking a look at this tap later. What happens if he doesn't act on it? Not acting on it awakens anxiety. Thus, the very phenomenon of the symptom indicates to us that we're at the most favourable level to link the position of the *a* as much to relations of anxiety as to relations of desire.

Anxiety appears prior to desire. Historically speaking, before the Freudian research, as before the analysis in our praxis, desire is hidden and we know the trouble it takes to unmask it, if ever we do.

One given of our experience deserves to be highlighted here, which appears in Freud's very first observations and which, even if it hasn't been spotted as such, constitutes perhaps the most essential step in our advance with respect to obsessional neurosis. What Freud recognized, what we can recognize every day, is that the analytic approach does not start off from the symptom's statement such as I have just described it, that is, in conformity with its most classically minded wording as it has always been defined since the start, compulsion together with the anxious struggle that accompanies it, but rather from the recognition that *that's how it works.*

The subject has to realize that *that's how it works.* This recognition is not an effect that stands apart from the functioning of the symptom, it's not epiphenomenal. The symptom is only constituted when the subject notices it, because we know from experience that there are forms of obsessional behaviour in which it's not simply the case that the subject hasn't ascertained his obsessions, it's that he hasn't constituted them as such. In such a case, the first step of the analysis – the passages in Freud on this topic are quite famous – is for the symptom to be constituted in its classic form, failing which

there's really no way through, not simply because there's no way to speak about it, but because there's no way of grabbing the symptom by the ears. What is the ear in question? It's what we might call the unassimilated side of the symptom, unassimilated by the subject.

For the symptom to leave behind its state of an unspoken riddle, the step that has to be taken is not to formulate it, but for something in the subject to be sketched out in such a way that he has some inkling that *there's a cause behind this.*

This is the original dimension. It is being taken up here in the form of the phenomenon. I'll be showing you where else it can be found. Only here can the subject's implication in his conduct be broken off and this break is the necessary complementation for us to tackle the symptom. This sign doesn't constitute a step in what I might call the intelligence of the situation, it is something more, there's a reason why this step is essential in the treatment of obsessionals.

It is impossible to articulate this if we don't bring out the radical relation of the *a* function, the cause of desire, with regard to the mental dimension of cause. I've already indicated this as an aside to my disquisition and I wrote it up in a point that you can find in the article *Kant with Sade* that came out in the April issue of *Critique.* It's from this article that I want to tease out the main part of my disquisition today.

You can already see the point of giving a plausible account of how the dimension of cause is alone in indicating the emergence, in what is laid out at the start in the analysis of obsessionals, of the *a* around which any analysis of the transference must revolve so as not to be compelled to turn round in circles. Certainly, a circle is not a negligible thing, because the circuit is travelled. But there's a problem of the end of analysis – I'm not the one who stated that – which has to do with the irreducible transference neurosis. Is the transference neurosis in analysis the same or not as the one that could be detected at the start? Sometimes it appears to us to be a dead-end transference neurosis, sometimes it ends up in a total stagnation of the patient's dealings with the analyst, but by and large, its only difference in relation to what might have been evinced in an analogous way at the start is that it is fully together, fully present.

One enters analysis through an enigmatic door, because transference neurosis is there in every single one of us, even in a creature as free as Alcibiades. Agathon is the one he loves. That's where the transference is, the obvious transference, what we too often call lateral transference – though this love is indeed a real love. What's surprising is that one enters analysis in spite of everything that holds us in the transference that is functioning as real.

But the true subject of surprise in connection with the circuit of

analysis is how, entering it in spite of transference neurosis, one can obtain transference neurosis itself on the way out. Doubtless this is because there are a few misunderstandings over the analysis of transference. Otherwise, we wouldn't see any evidence of a satisfaction I've sometimes heard being expressed, that, having given shape to the transference neurosis, *it might not be perfect, but all the same it's a result*. It's true. All the same, it's a result, a fairly bewildering one at that.

When I state that the path passes via *a*, which is the sole object that can be proposed to the analysis of transference, this doesn't mean that all the problems are thereby resolved. It leaves open another problem, as you're going to see. It is precisely in this subtraction that the essential dimension may emerge of a question that has always been posed, but certainly not resolved, because the insufficiency of the answers is glaring to any eye each time you pose it – the question of the analyst's desire.

Now that I've said this so as to show you the point of what's at stake here, with this brief reminder over, let's come back to the *a*.

The *a* is the cause, the cause of desire. I indicated that coming back to the riddle offered us by the functioning of the category of cause is not a bad way of understanding it, because it's quite clear that whatever critique, whatever effort of cutting down to size that we apply to it, phenomenological or otherwise, this category does function and not as a merely archaic stage in our development. I mean to transfer this category from the domain that I shall call, with Kant, transcendental aesthetics, over to what I shall call, if you care to endorse this, my transcendental ethics.

Here I'm moving onto ground whose sidelines I'm forced simply to sweep over with a searchlight, without being able to insist. I will say that philosophers ought to do their work and dare to formulate something that would allow you truly to locate in its stead the operation I'm indicating to you in saying that I extract the function of cause from the field of transcendental aesthetics, Kant's transcendental aesthetics. Others ought to be able to indicate to you that this is but an entirely pedagogical extraction, because there are a fair number of other things that still ought to be extracted from this transcendental aesthetics.

Here I need at least to indicate what I managed to evade last time with a sleight of hand when I was speaking to you about the scopic field of desire. I can't get out of it, I really need to explain, right now as I'm about to go further, what was implied in what I was saying to you in connection with space, namely, that it is not at all an a priori category of sensible intuition.

It's very surprising that at the point we've reached in the advance

of science, nobody has yet set about directly formulating the fact to which everything draws us, namely, that space is not a feature of our subjective constitution beyond which the thing-in-itself would find, so to speak, a free field – but rather that space is part of the real.

In the topological shapes I drew up for you here last year, some of you could already sense this touch. The topological dimension, whose symbolic handling transcends space, evoked for many of you a fair number of shapes that are presentified for us by the diagrams of the embryo's development. These shapes are peculiar due to the common and singular Gestalt that is specific to them and which takes us far, far away from *Prägnanz*. With an impressionistic observation, I shall say that this shape which is reproduced everywhere is tangible in the kind of twisting to which the organization of life seems to be compelled in order to lodge itself in real space.

The thing is present across the board in what I explained to you last year, and this year too. Indeed, it's precisely at these twisting points that the breaking points are also produced whose incidence I've been trying to show you in more than one case in our topology, that of the S, the A, and the small *a*, in a way that would be more efficient, truer, and in greater conformity with the play of functions than is any of what is ascertained in Freud's doctrine, whose wavering is already in itself indicative of the necessity of what I'm doing here. I'm speaking of the wavering that is linked for example to his ambiguity over the relations between ego and non-ego, container and contained, the ego and the outer world. It's glaringly obvious that these divisions do not overlap each other, and why don't they? To answer this, one needs to have grasped what is involved in topology and to have found other markers in the subjective topology we've been exploring.

I'm coming to the end of this observation, whose import some of you I know are well aware of now that you've lent me an ear. It's crucial to grasp the nature of the reality of space as a three-dimensional space if we are to define the form that the presence of desire takes on at the scopic level, namely, as a fantasy. The function of the frame, the window frame I mean, which I tried to define in the structure of the fantasy, is not a metaphor. If the frame exists, it's because space is real.

With regard to the cause, let's try to get a sense of what stands as the common undergrowth of these forms of knowledge, bequeathed us by a certain hubbub of discussions, by passing via a class that goes by the name of philosophy.

A clue as to the origin of the function of cause is very clearly provided by the history of the criticism of this function. This criticism consists in noting that the cause is ungraspable, that the *propter hoc*

is always necessarily at least a *post hoc* – and what else would it have to be to be equal to this incomprehensible *propter hoc*? – without which we can't even begin to articulate anything. This doesn't prevent this criticism from having its own fecundity, as can be seen in history. The more the cause was criticized, the more the requirements of what might be called determinism were imposed on thought. The less the cause is graspable, the more everything seems *caused* – right up to the final term, the one called *the meaning of history*.

We can say nothing else about it than that *everything is caused*, save that everything that happens in it always stems at the start from a *sufficiently caused*, in whose name a beginning is reproduced in history that I wouldn't dare call absolute, but which was certainly unexpected and which has traditionally cut out so much work for those *nachträglich* prophets whom we meet in the professional *interpreters* of *the meaning of history*.

So, let's say without further ado how we envisage this function of cause.

I shall say first of all, to make myself understood, that we envisage this function, which is present everywhere in our thought, as the shadow cast, or better still, the metaphor of the primordial cause – the substance of this function of cause – that the *a* is inasmuch as it precedes any phenomenology, the *a* that we've defined as the remainder left over from the constitution of the subject in the locus of the Other in so far as the subject has to be constituted as a barred subject.

If the symptom is what we say it is, that is, fully implicated in the process of the constitution of the subject in so far as he has to build himself in the locus of the Other, the implication of the cause is a legitimate part of the symptomatic advent I spoke of earlier. This means that the cause implicated in the question of the symptom is literally, if you will, a question, but whereof the symptom is not the effect. It is the result thereof. The effect is desire. But it's a unique effect and an utterly strange one inasmuch as it is going to explain to us, or at the very least make us hear, all the difficulties that lie in linking up the common relation, which forces itself on the mind, between cause and effect. The primordial effect of this cause, *a*, this effect called desire, is an effect that has nothing effectuated about it.

From this perspective, desire is indeed located as a lack of effect. Thus, if cause is constituted as presupposing effects, then it is based on the fact that primordially its effect is missing. You will meet this in any phenomenology of cause. The gap between cause and effect, to the extent that it gets filled in – and this is precisely what is called, from a certain perspective, the progress of science – makes the function of cause fade away, I mean, wherever the gap gets filled in.

Likewise, the explanation of just about anything winds up, to the extent that it does draw to a close, only leaving behind signifying connections, making what animated it at root, and which drove you to seek out what you didn't understand, vanish into thin air, namely, the effective gap. There is no such thing as a cause that does not imply this gap.

All this might strike you as quite superfluous. It's nonetheless what allows us to grasp what I shall call the naivety of certain research projects carried out by psychologists, notably Piaget's.

2

The paths along which I've been leading you this year have taken in a certain evocation of what Piaget calls egocentric language. As he acknowledges himself, his idea of the egocentrism of a certain discourse that children engage in starts off from the supposition that they don't understand each other, that they speak for themselves. He thinks he has demonstrated this.

I won't say that the world of suppositions that lies beneath this is unfathomable, because the bulk of it can be specified. That speech is made for communicating is an excessively widespread supposition. It's not true. Piaget is unable to grasp the gap that he nevertheless designates and the entire interest of his labours lies there.

I beseech you to get hold of *The Language and Thought of the Child*, which is an admirable book, all told. It illustrates from one instant to the next that what Piaget gathers up by way of facts in this approach, which is aberrant in its principle, is demonstrative of something utterly different from what he thinks. Naturally, since he's far from being a simple-minded fellow, it so happens that his own remarks go down this road.

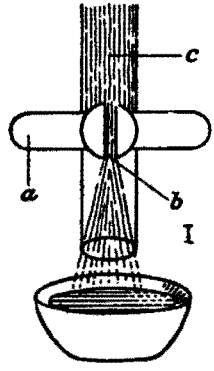
Let's take for instance the problem of why the subject's language, which is essentially made for himself, is never produced in a group. I ask you to read these pages, because I can't go through them with you. You will see how, from one instant to the next, his thinking slides and adheres to a poising of the question that is precisely the one that veils over the phenomenon, which is otherwise palpable in the most traditional way. The nub of the error is to believe that the essential effect of speech is to communicate, when in fact the effect of the signifier is to call forth in the subject the dimension of the signified. I'll come back to this again, if necessary.

In the name of the socialization of language, the relation to the other party is depicted as the key to the turning point between

egocentric language and language carried through to its function. This turning point is not a point of effect, of effective impact, it can be named as the desire to communicate. Moreover, it's precisely because this desire doesn't live up to expectations that Piaget's entire pedagogy comes to set up its apparatuses and phantoms. All in all, as tight-lipped as children are in his eyes, only half-understanding him, he adds that they don't even understand each other. But is that really the question?

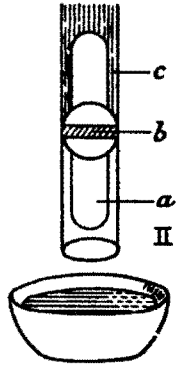
One can see very well in his text that the question doesn't lie there. One can see it from the way he articulates what he calls *understanding between children.*

This is how he proceeds. He begins by taking an image that will be the support of his explanations – the diagram of a tap. It gives something more or less like this.



With that, the child is told, as many times as it takes – *You see the little pipe here, it's blocked, which means that the water here can't pass through to run out here,* &c. He explains.

Here's the diagram, if you want to check. Moreover, he thought it necessary to finish it off with the presence of a basin, which in the



seven points of explanation given to the child never once comes in. He was struck by the fact that the child repeats all the different terms to him very well. It goes without saying that for him, Piaget, this means that the child has understood. I'm not saying he's wrong, I'm saying he doesn't even ask himself the question.

Next, he goes on to use this first child as an explainer for another child, whom he will call, rather oddly, the *reproducer*. Now, he is forced to note, not without some astonishment, that what the child has so accurately repeated to him, Piaget, in the test he's carried out, is in no way identical to what this first child will then explain to the second child. There, Piaget makes the very fair remark that the child elides in his explanations what he has understood – without realizing what this remark would imply, namely, that in giving these explanations, the child doesn't actually explain anything whatsoever, if it's true that he has really understood everything as Piaget maintains. Of course, it's not true that he's understood everything, no more than it would be for anyone.

Alongside these examples, which fall under the heading of what Piaget calls *the field of explanations*, there is the field that he calls *the field of stories*.

For the stories, things function differently. But what does Piaget call stories? He has a way of transcribing the story of Niobe that is perfectly scandalous, because it doesn't seem to occur to him that there's a myth here, that there might be a dimension that is specific to myth, which is evinced whenever one puts forward the proper name Niobe, and that by transforming it into insipid dishwater – I ask you to refer to the text, which is quite simply incredible – one might be offering the child something that's not simply within his reach, but also something that signals a profound deficit on the side of the experimenter, Piaget himself, with regard to the functions of language. If a myth is really going to be set out, then let it be one, and not this muzzy little story – *Once upon a time there was a lady who was called Niobe, and who had twelve sons and twelve daughters. Then she met a fairy who had only one son and no daughter. Then the lady laughed at the fairy because the fairy only had one boy. Then the fairy was very angry and fastened the lady to a rock. The lady cried for ten years. In the end she turned into a rock, and her tears made a stream which still runs today.*

The only thing remotely like that are the two other stories that Piaget offers, the story of the *little nigger boy* who breaks his shortbread on the way and lets the pat of butter melt on the way back, and the other one, worse still, of children changed into swans, who spend their whole lives separated from their parents by this evil spell, but who, when they do come back, not only find their parents

dead but, changing back into their original forms, have nevertheless got older. I don't know whether there exists a single myth that lets the ageing run on during the transformation. To say it all, the stories invented by Piaget have one thing in common with those of Binet, which is that they reflect the deep malice of any pedagogical position.

Please pardon me for having allowed myself to stray off into this parenthesis. At least you will have acquired the dimension, noted by Piaget, of the entropy of understanding, an understanding which necessarily dissipates by dint of the verbal necessity of explanation. Piaget himself observes, to his great surprise, that there is an enormous contrast between the explanations and the 'stories', a term I'm putting in inverted commas. It is very likely that if the stories confirm his theory of the entropy of understanding, it's precisely because they are not stories, and if they were stories, genuine myths, there probably wouldn't be any of this dissipation.

In any case, I'm going to put forward a little sign. When one of these children has to repeat the story of Niobe, at the point when Piaget tells us that the lady has been attached, *attachée*, to a rock – never, in any shape or form, has the myth of Niobe detailed such a moment – the child calls forth the dimension of a rock that bears a stain, *une tache*, restoring the characteristic I brought out in a previous lesson as essential to the victim of the sacrifice, the characteristic of being spotless. *Of course*, I hear you say, *it's easy, you're exploiting a mishearing, some play of words*. All right, but why that one? Let's leave it aside. It's not proof, of course, but merely suggestion.

I'll come back to my own explanations and to Piaget's remark that, in spite of the fact that the explainer explains poorly, the one to whom he is explaining understands far better than the explainer has. The insufficiency of his explanations bears this out. Of course, here we're told – *he's redoing the work himself*. Because how does Piaget define the level of understanding among the children?

$$\frac{\text{what the reproducer has understood}}{\text{what the explainer had understood}}$$

I don't know whether you've noticed that there is one thing that never gets spoken about, and that is – what Piaget has understood. This is crucial, however, because we're not leaving the children to spontaneous language, that is, to see what they understand when one of them does something instead of another.

Now, what Piaget doesn't seem to have seen is that his explanation, from the point of view of anyone, any third party, cannot be understood at all. If the little pipe, which here is blocked, is then

adjusted, thanks to something to which Piaget attaches all its importance, through the operation of the fingers that turn the tap in such a way that the water can run through, does that mean that it does indeed run through? Piaget doesn't give the slightest detail on this. Of course, he knows that if there isn't any pressure, the tap won't let out anything when you turn it, but he thinks he can omit this because he's poising himself at the level of the so-called mind of the child.

Let me continue. All this sounds quite daft, but you're going to see. The meaning of the whole venture does not spring up from my speculations, but from the experiment. It comes out of this remark that I'm putting to you, and which I don't claim to have exhaustively understood.

One thing is certain and this is that, regarding the tap as cause, when you just say that a tap is sometimes on and sometimes off, the explanation hasn't been well delivered. A tap is designed to be turned off. It only takes one occasion, when the water has been cut off and you don't know when the pressure will be back on, for you to know that if you happen to have left the tap open then that entails a few snags, and so therefore a tap should be turned off, even when there's no pressure.

Now, what is marked in what occurs in the transmission from the explainer to the reproducer? Something that Piaget bemoans. It's that the child who is supposedly in the role of reproducer no longer takes the faintest interest in what's involved with respect to the two branches, the turning operation, and everything that ensues. Piaget observes, however, that the first child has nevertheless transmitted a part of it. The dissipation in understanding strikes him as considerable. But I assure you that if you read the explanations of this young third party, this little reproducer, young Riv in the text in question, you will see that he stresses two things – the effect of the tap as something that turns off and the result, namely that, thanks to a tap, you can fill up a basin without it overflowing. In a word, the tap's dimension as cause emerges here.

Why does Piaget miss so entirely the phenomenon that is produced? Because he completely misrecognizes that what is interesting for a child in a tap as cause are the desires that the tap arouses in him, namely that, for instance, it makes him want to wee, like whenever one is in the presence of water, whenever one is a communicating vessel in relation to this water. I didn't select this metaphor to speak about libido and what happens between the subject and his specular image just for the sake of it. If people did have any tendency to forget that in the presence of water they are like communicating vessels, there exists in most people's childhoods the enema bag to jog their memory.

In a child of the age of those that Piaget designates, an irresistible kind of acting-out occurs in the presence of a tap which consists in doing something that stands every chance of taking the thing apart. In view of which, the tap finds itself once again in its place of cause, this time at the level of the phallic relation. Indeed, as the story of Hans shows, the little tap is necessarily introduced as something that pertains in some way to the plumber, something that one can unscrew, take to pieces, replace, and so forth. In short, the $(-\varphi)$.

What I mean to underline is that Piaget omits these elements of experience, and likewise, being very well informed of things analytic – he is not unaware of them – that he doesn't see the relationship between those dealings we call complexual and the whole originative constitution of this function of cause that he claims to be examining.

We'll be going back over the language of the child.

Last time I indicated that original pieces of work, which we may be surprised not to have seen before now, are allowing us truly to grasp *in statu nascendi* the first play of the signifier in the hypnopompic monologues of really very young children, around two years of age, and to grasp in a fascinating form the Oedipus complex itself, already articulated, thereby furnishing the experiential proof for the idea that I've been putting forward here since the beginning, namely, that the unconscious is essentially the effect of the signifier.

To come to an end on the psychologists' position, I'll tell you that the crucial piece of work to which I'm alluding is foreworded by a psychologist, on first approach a very nice one, in the sense that he admits that it has never before occurred that a psychologist should truly take an interest in these functions, due to the supposition, he tells us, in an avowal from the psychologist, that nothing is noteworthy about language coming into play in the subject, except at the level of education.

Indeed, language is something you learn. But it took a suggestion from a linguist, Jakobson, for people to start taking an interest in what language does outside the field of learning.

We might believe the psychologist to be laying down his arms here, because he certainly points out this deficit in psychological research with some humour. Well, he isn't at all. At the end of his foreword, he makes two remarks that show to what extent his psychologist's attitude is truly dyed-in-the-wool.

Since this volume is some three hundred pages long and weighs heavy, since it has gathered a month's worth of these monologues, since a complete chronological list of them has been made, at this rate, what a lot of time and effort it would take to investigate. That's his first remark.

His second is stronger still. *It's very interesting to note down everything the child voices, but it seems to me,* says this psychologist who goes by the name of George Miller, *that the only interesting thing would be to find out what the child knows about the language he speaks.*

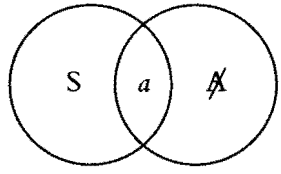
Now, precisely, the question is that he doesn't know what he's saying, and it's very important to note that he says it all the same. He's already saying what he will or won't know later, namely the elements of the Oedipus complex.

3

It's ten past two. I'd like nonetheless to give you a little diagram of what I'm going to be advancing into with respect to the obsessional. In five minutes, here's how the question presents itself, in a few provisional formulas.

There are five levels, if I can put it like that, in the constitution of the *a* in the relation between S and A. They can be defined in the way I'm about to tell you, which makes itself felt well enough based on what I put forward step by step in the previous lessons.

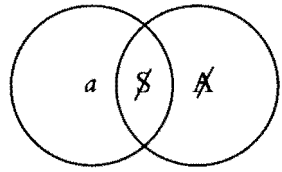
Its first operation can be seen here.



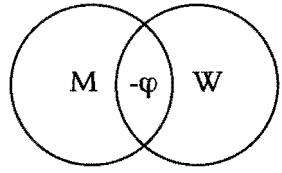
The second phase of the operation is not entirely beyond the realms of your understanding, starting off from the division that I've already added on as the Other's division. This division is still remote from the transformation of the subject S into $ when it passes from the left portion of the first diagram to the shared portion of the second. Clearly, the function of the Euler circle still stands in need of some clarification.

At the level of the relation to the oral object, let's say today, to be clear, there is, not need *of* the other – this ambiguity is rich and we certainly don't shy away from making use of it – but need *in* the Other, at the level of the Other. It's in accordance with the dependence on the maternal being that the disjunction between subject and *a*, the breast, is produced, whose true scope you can only glimpse if you see that the breast is part of the subject's inner world and not part of the mother's body.

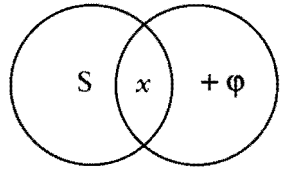
At the second level, the level of the anal object, you've got *demand*



in the Other. This is educative demand par excellence, in so far as it refers back to the anal object. There's no way of grasping the function of this anal object if you don't have some inkling that it is the remainder in the Other's demand, which here I'm calling, to make myself clearly understood, *demand in the Other*.



The third level is the phallus. Here you will find the entire dialectic I taught you to recognize in the function of the (– φ), a unique function in relation to all the other functions of the *a* inasmuch as it is defined by a lack, the lack of an object. This lack is evinced here as such, it is pivotal in this relationship, and this is what justifies all axiation of the analysis on sexuality. Here we'll call it *jouissance in the Other*. The relationship of this *jouissance in the Other* to the missing instrument that (– φ) designates is an inverted relationship. This is what I spelt out in my last two lessons and this is what makes for the base, the solid axis, of any fairly efficient situating of what we call castration anxiety.



At the scopic level, which is strictly the level of the fantasy, we are dealing with *might in the Other*, which is the mirage of human desire. In what amounts to the major form of any contemplative possession, the subject is doomed to misrecognize how this is merely a mirage of might.

You see, I'm going very fast. We'll flesh it out afterwards. What stands at the fifth and final level?

We'll say provisionally that this is where the *desire of the Other* has to emerge, in a pure form. What signals it for us in the example

we started off from, namely the obsessional, is the apparent dominance of anxiety in the phenomenology. The structural fact that we alone catch sight of is that, up to a certain moment of analysis, whatever he does, whatever nicety his fantasies and practices wind up at through being constructed, what the obsessional grasps from this is always the *desire in the Other*. Check if you will the scope of this formula. To the degree that this desire returns in the Other, inasmuch as for the obsessional it is essentially repressed, everything is determined in his symptomatology and notably in the symptoms where the dimension of cause is glimpsed as *Angst*.

This solution is familiar to us in the phenomenon too. To cover over the *desire of the Other*, the obsessional has one path, and that is his recourse to demand. Observe an obsessional in his biographical conduct, in what I called earlier his attempts at passing through at the place of desire. These attempts at meeting their goal, in all their audacity, complication, refinement, luxuriance, and perversity, are always stamped with an originative condemnation. He always has to get someone to authorize him in these attempts. The Other has to ask him.

This is the mainspring of what occurs at a certain turning point in any analysis of an obsessional. To the full extent to which analysis sustains a dimension that is the analogue of the dimension of demand, something endures up to a very advanced point – can it be surpassed? – in the obsessional's way of dodging. In so far as the obsessional's shunning functions as a cover on the *desire of the Other* by means of *demand in the Other*, we see that *a*, the object of his cause, comes to be situated right where demand dominates, that is, at the anal level, where *a* is not pure and simple excrement, but excrement in so far as it is asked for.

Now, nothing has ever been analysed of the relation to the anal object in these coordinates, which are genuine coordinates, as a way of understanding the source of what may be called anal anxiety, the anxiety that emerges from the analysis of an obsessional pursued this far, which almost never happens. In a point that has to be situated as a final term, anxiety appears with a certain character of dominance, as an irreducible kernel, and it is almost uncontrollable in certain cases.

This is what we are going to have to mark out next time and which entailed spelling out what results from the relation between the anal object and the demand that asks for it, a demand that has nothing to do with the mode of desire that is determined by this cause.

12 June 1963

XXII

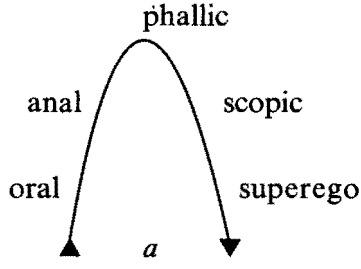
FROM ANAL TO IDEAL

The object's circular constitution
The origin of the cause
Jones and the Immaculate Conception
To love beyond the phallus
The desire of the gods

The definition of the function of the object *a* that I've been pursuing before you this year tends, as someone remarked to me after my last talk, to contrast with the Abrahamic conception – I'm referring to Abraham the psychoanalyst – which binds the object and its variations to stages.

Indeed, this definition puts forward, as it were, a circular constitution of the object.

Across all the levels of this constitution, the object clasps to itself as object *a*. In the various forms in which it is evinced, the same function is always involved, and it's a matter of knowing how it's linked to the constitution of the subject in the locus of the Other and how it represents him.



The forms of the object in stages

At the level of the phallic stage, which is pivotal in relation to the various stages of the object, and which by convention we call the

third level, the *a* function is represented by a lack, namely, the missing phallus that constitutes the disjunction that joins desire to jouissance.

This stage is poised at one extreme. The fourth and fifth stages are in a return position that brings them back into correlation with the first and second stages respectively.

Everyone knows, and this little diagram is simply designed to remind you, about the links between the oral stage and its object and the primary manifestations of the superego. In calling to mind its obvious connection with this form of the object *a* that the voice is, I indicated that there cannot be any valid analytic conception of the superego that loses sight of the fact that, in its deepest phase, it is one of the forms of the object *a*. On the other hand, the connection between the anal stage and scoptophilia has long been indicated.

Despite the first and second stages being fully conjoined with the fourth and fifth, the fact no less remains that as a whole they are oriented in accordance with this arrow that rises then falls. This arrow expresses what dictates, in each analytic phase of the reconstitution of the data of repressed desire, that in a regression there is a progressive side. It also expresses that, in any progressive accessing of the stage that is posited as lying higher up on the diagram on the board here, there is a regressive side.

Now that these indications have been recalled so that they will be present in your minds throughout today's talk, I'll move on.

1

As I said last time, it's a matter of explaining the function, in the constitution of anal desire, of a certain object that is, if you will, the turd, to call a spade a spade.

After all, it is the privilege of analysis in the history of thought to have brought out the decisive function of this unpleasant object in the economy of desire.

Last time I remarked that, with respect to desire, the object *a* always presents itself in the function of cause and that it is possibly for us, if you follow me, the root-point at which the very function of cause is elaborated in the subject. The primordial form of the cause is the cause of a desire.

To endure in its mental function, the cause always necessitates the existence of a gap between itself and its effect. This gap is so necessary that, for us to be able to go on thinking about cause right where it runs the risk of being filled in, we need to keep the veil drawn over the strict determinism, the connections, through which the cause

acts. This is what I illustrated last time with the example of the tap.

Who was it that allowed us to see the essence of the tap's cause-function being revealed, that is, as a concept of the tap? It was the child who flagged at the level of what Piaget calls understanding, or who dispensed with it, and who we were told neglected, on that occasion, on account of not having understood, the narrow mechanism that was drawn out for him in the shape of a cross-section of a tap.

The necessity that binds the endurance of the cause to a gap has its origin in the fact that the cause in its initial form is the cause of desire, that is, the cause of something that is essentially non-effectuated. This is precisely why we absolutely cannot mix up anal desire with what mothers, as much as the proponents of cleansing, would on this occasion call an effect, in the sense of, *has it had an effect?* Excrement doesn't play the role of the effect of what we are situating as anal desire, it is the cause of this desire.

If we are going to pause over this peculiar object, it's undoubtedly because of the importance of its function, which is always recalled to our attention and especially so, as you know, in the analysis of the obsessional, though truth be told, it's just as much down to the fact that this object once more illustrates for us how we really should conceive of the object *a* as enduring in various modes.

Indeed, on first approach, the anal stands slightly apart from the other modes.

All those anatomical facts, the mammalian constitution, the phallic functioning of the copulatory organ, the plasticity of the human larynx to the phonematic imprint, and others besides, from the anticipatory value of the specular image to the neonatal pre-maturation of the nervous system, which latterly I've been calling to your minds, one after the next, is to show you in what way they conjoin with the *a* function, and just listing them lets you see how far their place is distributed across the tree of organismal determinations – well, in mankind they only take on their value as destiny, as Freud says, so that a key place can be occupied on a chess board whose squares are structured by the subjectifying constitution, such as it results from the dominance of the subject who speaks over the subject who understands, that is, the subject of insight.

We are familiar with the limits of this subject in the form of the chimpanzee. Regardless of the presumed superiority of man's capacities over the chimpanzee's, the fact that he goes further in praxis is linked to the dominance in mankind of the subject who speaks. By virtue of speaking, he believes he can reach the concept, that is, he believes he can grasp the real by way of a signifier that controls this real in accordance with his inner causation.

The field of intersubjective relations, which doesn't seem to pose much of a problem for psychologists, does to some extent for us. Although we claim to account for the way the function of the signifier works its way into this relation at the outset, the difficulties are such that they lead us to a fresh critique of reason, and it would be stupidity, very much a schoolboy stupidity, to see in this any recession of the conquering movement of the said reason. Indeed, this critique leans towards ascertaining how this reason is already woven at the level of the subject's most opaque dynamism, right where what he feels as need is modified into the forms of desire, forms that are always more or less paradoxical with regard to their presumed naturality.

Thus the fresh critique of reason I've been speaking about rears its head in what I showed you to be the cause of desire. Are we paying too dearly in having to conjoin to this revelation the notion that the cause reveals its point of origin here? Does this amount to psychologism, with all the absurd consequences this entails concerning the legitimacy of reason? No, that's not what we're doing, because the subjectification involved here is neither psychological nor developmental. To those accidents of development that I just listed, to those anatomical particularities involved in humankind, there is always conjoined the effect of a signifier whose transcendence is thereafter evident with regard to the said development.

I said *transcendence*. And then what? There's no need for alarm. This transcendence is no more nor less marked at this level than is any other incidence of the real, the real that is called *Umwelt* in biology, as a way of taming it. But, precisely, the existence of anxiety in animals perfectly repudiates the spiritualist imputations that can in no way rear their heads in my purview on the pretext that I'm positing the location of the signifier to be a transcendental location. Indeed, in animal anxiety it's very much a question of something beyond the said *Umwelt*. It's the fact that when something comes and shakes this *Umwelt* to its foundations, animals show themselves to be forewarned, when they get into a flap, of an earthquake for example, or some other meteoric mishap.

Once again, this confirms that anxiety is *that which doesn't deceive*. The proof is that when you see animals becoming agitated in this way, in those parts of the world where such incidents can occur, you would do well to take this into account as a way of being forewarned of what is in the offing. For them like us, this is a manifestation of a locus of the Other. An Other thing is evinced as such.

This doesn't mean, and with good reason, that there's nowhere for this Other to be housed outside of real space, as I reiterated last time.

2

Now we're going to move into the particularity of the case that dictates how excrement can come to function at this point, this point that is determined by the subject's necessity of constituting himself first and foremost in the signifier.

The question is important because here, perhaps more than elsewhere, a shadow of confusion prevails.

In dealing with the anal, people think they're getting closer to the matter, quite literally, to the concrete underpinnings. They think they are demonstrating that we know how to take into account even life's more disagreeable aspects. They compliment themselves on having sought out the domain of causes here and not in the empyrean realm. This whole thematic can be very amusingly grasped in Jones's introductory remarks to an article from the collection of his *Selected Papers*. I cannot recommend you too strongly to read this text, it is worth a thousand others.

The title of the article is *The Madonna's Conception Through the Ear*. The Protestant mischief of this Welshman absolutely cannot be ruled out as underlying his readiness to treat this subject. The text was written in 1914, when Jones was just emerging from his first perceptions, which were really very enlightening for him, of the prevalence of the anal function in the first few severe obsessionals who came into his hands, just like that, a few years after Freud came into contact with his. I looked up Jones's observations in the original text, published in the two issues of the *Jahrbuch* that precede the original publication of the article on the Madonna. These are clearly sensational cases, though we have indeed seen more of the like since then.

In the article on the Madonna, Jones tackles the subject right away by telling us that the fertilizing breath is a very lovely thing, that we find its trace across myth, legend and poetry, that nothing could be more beautiful than the awakening of Being with the *Ruach*, the passing breath of the Eternal, but that he, Jones, knows a bit more about it. It's true that his science is still young, but in the end, he's very enthusiastic about it. He's going to tell us what sort of wind is involved here. It's anal wind.

As Jones tells us, experience proves the interest – this interest is presumed to be a lively interest, a biological interest – that the subject, such as he discovers himself in analysis, shows in his excrement, in the shit he produces, and that this interest is infinitely more present, more evident, more dominant, than any preoccupation the subject would have every reason to have with his breathing, which seems, going by what Jones says, not to interest him. And why not? Because breathing is automatic.

This argument is a feeble one. The argument is feeble in a discipline which didn't fail thereafter to note the importance of suffocation and respiratory difficulties in the original establishing of the function of anxiety. Saying that the living subject, even the human subject, is not aware of the importance of this function is a surprising opening argument, all the more so given that at the time they'd already discovered something that was quite apt to highlight the possible relation between the respiratory function and the productive moment in sexual intercourse. Breathing, in the form of the mother or the father's panting, was very much part of the first phenomenology of the traumatic scene, to the point of entering quite legitimately the sphere of what could emerge from it for the child as a sexual theory.

I'm not saying that what Jones goes on to unfold is to be gainsaid, because it's a fact that the road he is taking here finds hundreds of correlates that remind us how opportune it is, across a mass of anthropological domains, across all manner of references from mythological literature. He notes, for example, the function of down-breathing in the *Upanishads* where it will be specified, using the term *Apana*, that Brahma created mankind with the downward breathings of his back part. In truth, if you consult this article, you will see that the very extension of references on this particular subject goes as far as diffluence, which shows well enough at the end that he is not entirely convincing, far from it.

For us, however, this is only further stimulation to make us ask ourselves why the function of excrement can play this privileged role in the mode of subjective constitution that we qualify as anal desire. This question can only be settled by bringing in, in a more structural fashion, in keeping with the spirit of our research, the why and wherefore behind the place of the *a* that excrement can occupy.

With respect to the different accidents I mentioned earlier, from the anatomical place of the mammary gland to the plasticity of the human larynx, with, in between, the specular image of castration, linked to the particular physical structure of the copulatory organ at a fairly high level on the animal ladder, excrement is there from the start, even prior to the differentiation between mouth and anus. We can already see it functioning at the level of the blastopore.

According to the biological idea that we have of the living being's relationships with its surroundings, however, an idea which admittedly is always insufficient, it seems all the same that excrement is typified as a waste product and that consequently it is put in the flow of everything the living being tends not to be interested in. What interests the living being is what goes in. As for what comes out, the structure seems to imply that it would tend not to hold

onto it. It seems therefore to be indicated, based on these biological considerations, that one should ask oneself exactly by what paths excrement comes to take on its subjectified importance at the level of the human being.

At the level of what might be called living economy, it can of course be seen that excrement continues to have its importance in the surroundings. Sometimes, given certain conditions, there comes to be a glut of it in the surroundings, to the point of making them incompatible with life. At other times, for other organisms, it assumes the function of a support in the outer surroundings. There is a whole economy of the function of excrement, an intra-living and inter-living economy.

Nor is this absent from the human field. I searched in vain in my library to show you here, to put you on the path – it's been lost, like excrement – an admirable little book, like many others by my friend Aldous Huxley, called *Adonis & The Alphabet*. In the collection that bears this promising title you will find a superb article on a sewage treatment plant, at the level of urban planning, in a city on the west coast of the US.

This only has value as an example, because the like occurs in many other places besides industrial America. You can't imagine the cornucopia that can be assembled from the mere excrement of a mass of humanity.

Moreover, it's not off limits to call to mind in this connection what a certain progress in inter-human dealings, in human relations – which have been so much in vogue since the last war – did during the said war regarding the reduction of entire masses of humanity to the function of excrement. Transforming countless individuals from a people selected precisely as a chosen people amongst others, by means of a crematorium furnace, into the state of something that was ultimately distributed, so it would seem, across *Mitteleuropa* in the form of little cakes of soap, is also something that shows us that, in the inter-human economic circuit, targeting man as a thing that can be reduced to excrement is by no means absent.

But we analysts stick to the question of subjectification.

3

By what path does excrement enter subjectification?

Well, it enters by the intermediary of the Other's demand, represented on this occasion by the mother. This is altogether clear in the analytic references, or at least seems so on first approach.

When we've figured that out, we're quite content, we've fallen

in line with the observational data, the educational data, of what is called potty training, which instructs the child to hold in. That doesn't go without saying. We're acquainted with the familiar scenes, fundamental, ordinary scenes, there's no need to criticize, nor to curb, and especially not, heavens above, to make so many educative recommendations. Educating the parents, which is always being put on the agenda, only wreaks havoc across all these domains.

The child is asked to hold in. He is made to hold in too long, to start to introduce excrement into the realm of what belongs to his body, and he starts to make it a part of his body, which is considered, at least for a while, as something not to be lost. Then, after that, he is told to let it out, again on demand. Demand has a decisive role here. This part, which all the same the subject has some apprehension over losing, now finds a moment's acknowledgment. It is raised to a very special worth. It is at least given the value of providing the Other's demand with its satisfaction, in addition to being accompanied by all the care and attention with which we are familiar. Not only does the Other approve and pay attention, but it tacks on all these additional dimensions I needn't mention – in other realms, this makes for funny physics – the sniffing, the approval, even the wiping, whose erogenous effects everyone knows to be incontestable. They become that much more evident when it so happens that a mother goes on wiping her son's bottom into his twelfth year. Such things can be seen day in day out.

All this seems to indicate that my initial question is not so important and that we can see very well how poo easily assumes the function of what I have called, my goodness, ἄγαλμα. That this ἄγαλμα should have passed over into the register of the foul-smelling is merely the effect of discipline of which it is an integral part. Nevertheless, none of this allows you to ascertain satisfactorily the scale of the effects that are attached to the mother's agalmatic relationship to her child's excrement if we don't bring these facts into connection with the other forms of the *a*. The ἄγαλμα is only conceivable in its relation to the phallus, to its absence, and to phallic anxiety as such.

In other terms, the excremental *a* has come within the scope of our attention inasmuch as it symbolizes castration.

I profess that we can't understand anything about the phenomenology of obsession, which is so fundamental for all our speculation, if we don't grasp in a far more intimate, grounded and regular way than we are used to, excrement's link not only with the (– φ) of the phallus but with the other forms of the *a* noted on the blackboard in the classification of what we are calling their stages.

Let's take things up regressively, with the proviso I made at the

outset that this regressive vector necessarily possesses a progressive side.

At the level of the oral stage, where the object *a* is the breast, the nipple, what you will, the nub of what's at issue is as follows. The subject, constituting himself at the origin as well as completing himself in the commandment of the voice, doesn't know and cannot know to what extent he himself is this being that is stuck onto the mother's chest in the shape of the mammary gland, after having also been the parasite that plunged its villi into the uterine mucous membrane in the form of the placenta. He doesn't know, he cannot know, that the breast, the placenta, is the reality of himself, *a*, with respect to the Other. He believes that *a* is the Other and that in dealing with the *a* he is dealing with the Other, the big Other, the mother.

On the other hand, at the anal level he has the first opportunity of recognizing himself in an object. But let's not move too quickly here.

Something in this object switches. The mother's demand is involved. This demand switches – *Keep it in / Give it out – And if I give it out, where does it go?* For those of you here who have the slightest analytic experience I don't need to call to mind the decisive importance of the two phases of demand. As for the rest of you, my goodness, who only read about it, you'll see what it's all about if you open what I've called elsewhere the *psycho-analytical dunghill*, namely the analytic literature. A dunghill is a little pile of shit.

What makes these two phases important? The little pile of shit in question is obtained on demand and it is admired – *What a fine poo!* But the second phase of this demand implies that it is, as it were, foresworn, because all the same the child is taught not to get too close to this fine poo, except by the well-trodden path that analysis has also mapped out, of sublimatory satisfactions. If he smears it over himself – everyone knows that this is what it's done with – one prefers all the same to tell him that it would be better to do it with something else, with the little plastic gloves and aprons used by child analysts, or with nice colours that don't smell so bad. In this first relation with the Other's demand, we thus find ourselves at the level of an ambiguous recognition. What is there is both him and not him, and even further, it doesn't come from him.

We're progressing, the satisfactions are taking shape, and we could see this as the origin of obsessional ambivalence. We could inscribe it in a formula, ($a \lozenge \$$), where *a* is the cause of this ambivalence, of this yea-and-nay. *This symptom comes from me, but nevertheless it doesn't come from me. I point out to you the negative thoughts I have about you, my analyst, but in the end, it's not really true that I think of you as a piece of shit.* In short, we can see a whole order of causality taking shape.

All the same, we can't ratify it straightaway as the causality of desire, but in the end it's a result, as I said last time when speaking about the symptom in a general way. At this level, a structure is taking shape that seems immediately to be giving us the structure of the symptom in its function as a result. Only, I would remark that this structure founded on demand leaves out of the loop what ought to interest us if the theory I'm outlining is correct, namely the link to desire. One might, therefore, think that introducing a different, external, foreign dimension, the dimension of desire, and notably sexual desire, would push to the rear, would sweep away, what we've got here regarding a certain relationship in which the subject is constituted as divided and ambivalent with respect to the Other's demand. As a matter of fact, it wouldn't.

We already know why sexual desire doesn't sweep it away, why it does something very different. Through its very duplicity, the object comes to be able to symbolize wonderfully, at least in one of its phases, what is going to be involved at the advent of the phallic stage. The phallus qua its vanishing, its ἀφάνισις, to employ Jones's term, which he applies to desire and which only applies to the phallus, is in mankind the medium of the relations between the sexes. The evacuation of the result of the anal function, inasmuch as it is done on command, will take on its full import at the phallic level as providing an image for the loss of the phallus.

Of course, all of this is only valid within the confines of what I said before. Thinking simply that some of you might have been away and not heard me, I feel I ought to remind you once more what the crux of the (– φ) phase is. It holds a central place on the following chart.

5	voice	*a*	desire of the Other
4	image	the Other's might	
3	desire	anxiety (– φ)	the Other's jouissance
2	trace	the Other's demand	
1	anxiety	*a*	desire *x* of the Other

The (– φ) chart

I ask you to make a note of these formulas.

Due to the (– φ), the moment of the advance of the Other's jouissance, which is also the move towards the Other's jouissance,

entails the constitution of castration as the surety of their meeting.

In other words, the fact that male desire meets its downfall *before* entering the jouissance of the female partner, and even the fact that the woman's jouissance is crushed, to take up a term borrowed from the phenomenology of breast and nursling, crushed under phallic longing, implies that woman is thenceforth required, and I would almost say condemned, to love the male Other only at a point situated beyond what halts her, her too, as desire, and which is the phallus.

This beyond is targeted in love. It is, let's put it as well as we can, either transverberated by castration or transfigured in terms of potency. The male Other is not the Other qua the Other with whom it would be a matter of uniting. The woman's jouissance is within her. She doesn't conjoin it to the Other.

You can call this pivotal function an obstacle if you like, but it is no way an obstacle, it is the locus of anxiety, anxiety over the organ's caducity, its deciduosity, inasmuch as it accounts, in a different way on each side, for what one might call the insatiability of desire.

Only through this reminder can we see the necessity behind the symbolizations that appear in this respect on the hysterical side or the obsessional side. Today we're on the second of these two sides.

By dint of the structure I've outlined here, man is only in woman through the delegation of his presence, in the form of this deciduous organ, this organ of which he is fundamentally castrated *in* sexual intercourse and *by* sexual intercourse.

To speak of gift here is mere metaphor. It is only too obvious that the male doesn't give anything. Nor does the woman. And yet, the symbol of the gift is essential to the relationship with the Other. The gift is the supreme social act, so it's been said, and even the *total social act*.

A long while ago, our experience led us to put our finger on the fact that the metaphor of the gift was borrowed from the anal realm. It has long since been spotted that the scybalum, to start using more polite language, is for the child the essential gift, the gift of love. A good many other things were spotted here too, up to and including what is called, when the burglar has passed by, the *signature*, which every police force and forensic medicine textbook are well acquainted with, namely, the bizarre fact that the fellow who comes wielding a jemmy to open your cupboards invariably has a sudden bowel movement right then and there.

From this angle, we quickly find ourselves at the level of mammalian conditionings.

It's at the level of mammals that we note, at least from what we know of animal ethology, the function of the faecal trace, more precisely faeces as a trace. And here too the trace is deeply bound to the place that the organismal subject assures for himself, a place of possession in the world, of territory, and simultaneously of safety for sexual union. A few publications have now given ample space to the phenomenon that makes the hippopotamus, certainly, or even, because this extends beyond the mammals, the robin redbreast, feel invincible within the limits of their territory, but once outside it there is a sudden about-turn and they become curiously timid. The relationship between this limit-point and the faecal trace was spotted way back in mammals and we cannot fail to see here what pre-figures in these biological underpinnings the function that the object *a* holds as a representative of the subject, in so far as it is *le fruit anal*, the anal fruit.

Are we going to make do with that? Is this all we can draw from the questions we are levelling at the *a* function in its relation to a certain kind of desire, the obsessional's desire?

So far, we've grounded nothing but the subject set in, or not, within his limits, and who, within these limits, is more or less divided.

With these limits, the subject finds himself at the level of sexual union, and these limits are peculiarly repressed in mankind. But even the access they afford him to the symbolic function doesn't tell us anything else about what's involved, and which we are demanding, which is to know in what way this concealing of the object comes to ground the function of desire. Experience is what furnishes us with the trace of this.

This is where we have to take the next step, which is also the crucial step.

4

So far, nothing has explained the obsessional's very particular dealings with his desire.

Precisely because up to this level everything has been symbolized, the divided subject and the impossible union alike, it appears all the more striking that one thing has not, and that is desire itself.

The subject's necessity of concluding his position as desire is precisely what will lead him to conclude it in the category of *might*, that is, at the level of the fourth storey. The relationship between the specular reflection, the narcissistic underpinning of self-mastery, and the locus of the Other, is where the link lies.

You're already acquainted with it and to explain it again would mean retreading a path that's already been cleared. This is why I want now to point out the originality of what the facts reveal to us. To set off from the thick of it, let's take a case, the second case that Jones draws on, in the fifth volume of the aforementioned *Jahrbuch*, for his phenomenology of the anal function in the obsessional. I could cite hundreds of other examples in the literature.

This case illustrates the following, which I've called to mind a thousand times. Although ordinarily the fantasies of the obsessional subject, whatever level of luxuriance they may reach, are never executed, it does happen all the same that, through all sorts of conditions that postpone their enactment more or less indefinitely, he realizes his desire. Better still, it does sometimes happen that others may clear the obstacle out of the way for him. It can happen that a subject who develops, and very early on, as a magnificent obsessional belongs to a family of quite dissolute folk. This case is one of those.

All the sisters – and there are a number of them, not to mention the mother, the aunt, the mother's different lovers, and even, I believe, Lord forgive me, the grandmother – had their way with this little kid when he was about five years of age. He's no less of an obsessional for it, a sound obsessional, with desires in the only mode in which they can be constituted in the register of might, namely, impossible desires, in the sense that, whatever he may do to realize them, he doesn't get there. In this register, the obsessional never gets to the bottom of his search for satisfaction.

The question I'm asking you, which is as vivid and brilliant in this observation as it is in a good many others, can be recognized in this article in the form, which is likewise vivid and brilliant, of the image that is mentioned of a little fish. This Ichthys – ἰχθύς – which I find here in arm's reach, as it were, and for good reason, you will meet at every turn in the field of the obsessional, if he's from our cultural sphere, and we don't really know any others – it's Jesus Christ himself. One could speculate a great deal over the kind of blasphemous necessity – which until now, I must say, has never been justified as such – which makes such a subject, like many other obsessionals, unable to give himself over to one or other of his more or less atypical acts in which his sexual research is exerted without immediately fantasizing Christ in association with them. Even though the fact has been present in our eyes for a long time, I think the last word has yet to be said.

If this fantasy is blasphemous, it's because clearly on this occasion Christ is a god. In truth, he's a god for many people and even for so many people that it's rather difficult to chase him out of this place,

even with all the various operations of historical criticism, and then of psychologism. But in the end, he's not just any god. Permit me to cast some doubt over whether obsessionals in the time of Theophrastus, the Theophrastus of *The Characters*, amused themselves by having Apollo participate mentally in their turpitudes.

The faint outline of an explanation that I set out in passing a while back takes on its importance here – the gods are an element of the real, whether we like it or not, even if we no longer have anything more to do with them. This implies that, if they're still there, it's quite clear that they go about incognito. But one thing is quite sure, and this is that a god's relation to the object of desire is different from ours.

I've just mentioned Apollo. Neither before nor after is Apollo castrated. Afterwards, something else happens to him. We are told that Daphne is the one who is transformed into a tree. Something's being concealed from you there. It's concealed from you – this is very surprising – because it's not concealed from you. After the transformation, the laurel is not Daphne but Apollo. What's specific to a god is that, once satisfied, he transforms himself into the object of his desire, even if he must thereby be petrified therein. In other terms, a god, if he is real, furnishes, in his relation to the object of his desire, the image of his might. His might is right where he is.

This is true of all gods, even of Elohim, even of Yahweh, who is one of them, though his place is a very particular one. Only, something has stepped in here that had a different origin. For this occasion, let's call this something – it's true historically, but doubtless the historical truth goes a tad further – by the name of Plato.

Plato only told us things that remain very easy to handle within the ethics of jouissance because they have allowed us to trace out the barrier that the Beautiful constitutes at the place of the supreme Good. Except that, once mixed in with the emerging Christianity, this produced something that people believe has always been there, and has always been there in the Bible, but this is moot and no doubt we're going to have to come back to this next year, if all of us are still here. This thing is the fantasy of an almighty God, which means a mighty God everywhere at the same time, and a mighty God for everything, as a whole, because this is precisely what we're bound to come back to. If the world is as it is, it's because of the might of God, which is exerted in all directions at once.

Now, the correlation between this almightiness and, as it were, omnivoyance, signals for us well enough what is involved. It's a matter of what takes shape in a field beyond the mirage of might. It's a matter of the projection of the subject into the field of the ideal, which is split into two strands, on one hand, the specular alter ego,

the ideal ego, and on the other hand, which lies beyond, the Ego Ideal.

At the level at which anxiety is covered over, the Ego Ideal takes the form of the Almighty. This is where the obsessional seeks and finds the complement of what is necessary for him when it comes to constituting himself in desire, namely, the fantasy of ubiquity, which is also the support upon which the multiplicity of his desires, which are always being pushed farther off, skit back and forth.

Within what I might call the heated circles of analysis, those in which the impulse of one first inspiration still lives on, a question has been raised as to whether the analyst ought to be an atheist or not, and whether the subject, at the end of analysis, can consider his analysis over if he still believes in God. This is a question that I won't be settling today, but on the path of a question such as this, I'll tell you that, regardless of what an obsessional bears out in his words, if he hasn't been divested of his obsessional structure, you can be sure that, as an obsessional, he believes in God. I mean that he believes in the God that everyone, or nearly everyone, in our cultural sphere abides by, this means the God in whom everyone believes without believing, namely, the universal eye that watches down on all our actions.

This dimension is there, as firmly in its frame as the window of the fantasy I was speaking about the other day. Simply, part of its necessity, I mean, even for the strongest believers, is also not to believe. Firstly, because if they did believe, it would be visible. If they did believe as strongly as all that, the consequences of that belief wouldn't go unnoticed, when in actual fact this belief remains strictly invisible.

This is the true dimension of atheism. The atheist would be he who has succeeded in doing away with the fantasy of the Almighty.

Well, one gentleman by the name of Voltaire, who all the same knew something about the anti-religious revolt, held steadfast to his deism, which means the existence of the Almighty. Diderot thought him incoherent and for that Voltaire thought that Diderot was mad. It's not so certain that Diderot was really an atheist and his life's work seems to me, this is my take on it, to vouch for this, given the way he teases out the inter-subject at the level of the Other in his principal dialogues, *Le Neveu de Rameau* and *Jacques le fataliste*. He can only do so, however, in the style of derision.

The existence of an atheist, in the true sense, can only indeed be conceived of at the limit of an asceticism, which strikes us as only being able to be a psychoanalytic asceticism. I'm speaking of atheism conceived of as the negation of the dimension of a presence of almightiness at the base of the world.

This doesn't mean that the existence of the atheist doesn't have its historical guarantor, but this guarantor is of an altogether different nature. Its affirmation is directed precisely to the side of the existence of the gods as real. It doesn't deny it, nor does it affirm it, it is directed towards this. The atheist of *The Atheists Tragedie* – I'm alluding to the Elizabethan[1] tragedy of this title – the atheist as a combatant and as a revolutionary is not one who denies God in his function of almightiness, he is one who affirms himself as not serving any god. And that is the essential dramatic worth that has always lent its passion to the question of atheism.

I apologize for this short digression, which as you can well imagine is just a preparatory one.

You can see where today's circuit has brought us. It has brought us to the fundamental link between these two stages, the second and the fourth, framing the fundamental impossibility, the impossibility that divides desire and jouissance at the sexual level.

The obsessional's way of circling both tightly and widely at a tangent, the impossible seat he gives to his desire, has allowed us, in the course of our analysis today, to see a first outline of how the subject's relation to a lost object of the most distasteful sort shows a necessary nexus with the highest idealistic production.

This circuit is not yet complete, however. We can clearly see how desire appends to the structure of the object – we still have to indicate what the middle part of the chart, which I hope you've all copied down, indicates as the next field of our disquisition – the relationship between the obsessional's fantasy, posited as the structure of his desire, and the anxiety that determines it.

19 June 1963

XXIII

ON A CIRCLE THAT IS IRREDUCIBLE TO A POINT

On the yieldable object
On defence-desire
On the act and deeds
On the phallic hole and its stand-ins
Love and desire in the obsessional

So as to try to move forward today in our topic I'm going to resume with the constitution of desire in the obsessional and its relation to anxiety. To do so, I shall first be coming back to the double-entry chart, the matrix I gave you in the very first lesson of this year's Seminar and which I completed later on. Its form has been copied up here, framed by a white line and written out in pink.

This chart corresponded to my intention back then to offset and stagger the three terms Freud arrived at, inhibition, symptom and anxiety, and which he set into the title of his article. Around these three terms I punctuated a number of moments that can be defined in the terms you can see here. By referring each term to its column heading at the top and to its row heading on the left, one finds a correlation which can be offered up to examination and which can prove, when put to the test, to be open to confirmation or disconfirmation in its structural function.

Still, these terms were given to you at the time in a certain incompleteness and included a few enigmatic suspensions. For example, in spite of the etymological references I gave, the distinction between *emotion* and *émoi*, *turmoil*, might all the same have been matter for an examination that it wasn't entirely possible for you to resolve with your own means.

What I shall be bringing you today seems to me to be fit to afford some precision that I have little doubt will be fresh and even unexpected for most if not all of you.

1

To begin with, let's take a look at this *émoi*, whose origin is quite distinct from the origin of *emotion*.

It's not an outward motion, it's not a movement out of the adapted field of motor action, which is what *emotion* certainly indicates etymologically, and I'm not saying that the etymology is something we can put our full trust in here. The etymology of *émoi* is to be sought out somewhere quite different, in an *esmayer*, the *mayer* referring to an altogether primal Germanic root, *mögen*, *magan*. It's a matter of something that is poised outside. Outside what? Outside the principle of power. There is, therefore, an enigma around a term that is not unrelated to might.

Considering the form this word has taken in French, I would even say that this is perhaps something which belongs to the realm of the *hors de moi*, the *beside myself* or *beside oneself*. Here one almost has to refer to the pun, *et moi*, an approach which is of no less importance.

To go straight to the heart of the matter, I can tell you quite plainly, bluntly, at the point we've reached – and also because the phenomenology of the obsessional immediately illustrates this in a very tangible fashion – that the *émoi* involved, the *turmoil*, is none other than the *a* itself, at least in the correlations we're trying to explore, to specify, and to tie in today, namely, the relations between desire and anxiety.

Throughout this year's disquisition I've taught you to get a much firmer grip on the conjuncture between anxiety and its uncanny ambiguity. This elaboration allows us to formulate what is striking in its phenomenology, what we can get from it, and what other authors have slid over and mistaken – anxiety is without cause, but not without object.

This is the distinction I'm introducing and upon which I'm grounding my efforts in order to situate anxiety. Not only is it not without object, but it very likely designates the most, as it were, profound object, the ultimate object, the Thing. It's in this sense, as I've taught you to say, that anxiety is that which doesn't deceive. As for the characteristic of being without cause, which is so evident in its phenomenon, this is better clarified from the angle from which I tried to situate where the notion of cause begins.

Thereafter, although it's linked to *turmoil*, anxiety doesn't depend on it. On the contrary, it determines it. Anxiety is to be found suspended between, on the one hand, the pre-existent form, so to speak, of the relation to the cause – the *What is there?* which will go on to be formulated as cause, namely *embarrassment* – and, on the

other hand, the *turmoil* that cannot get a hold on this cause because, primordially, anxiety literally produced it.

Something illustrates this in an abject way, and which is all the more striking for it, something that I placed at the origin of my explanation of the obsessional in the Wolf Man's anguished confrontation with his major recurring dream, something that appears as a monstration of his ultimate reality. This is something that occurs but which never comes into his consciousness, to such an extent that it can only be reconstructed as a link in the chain of the entire subsequent determination. To call it by its name and its product, it is anal turmoil.

This is the first form in which the emergence of the object *a* comes into the picture for the obsessional, and which lies at the origin of everything that will uncoil from this in the mode of effect. Here, the object *a* is found to be given in an originative moment in which it plays a certain function that we're going to be pausing over now so as to specify its value, its scope, and its first coordinates, those that stand prior to the rest that are added on later. It is because the *a* is this, in its originative production, that it can subsequently function in a dialectic of desire that is the specific dialectic of the obsessional.

Turmoil is thus coordinated with the moment at which the *a* appears, a moment of traumatic unveiling whereby anxiety reveals itself for what it is – *that which deceives not* – a moment at which the field of the Other, as it were, splits open and exposes its rock bottom. What is this *a*? What is its function with respect to the subject?

If we are able to grasp it here, in some sense in a pure way, it is precisely in so far as, in his radical, traumatic confrontation, the subject yields to the situation. But what does it mean, at this level, at this moment, to *yield*? How is this to be understood?

It's not that the subject wavers, or that he flags. Think if you will of the attitude set out by the subject's fascination faced with the open window looking onto the wolf-covered tree. In a situation whose fixity puts right before our very eyes its primitively inexpressible character, and by which he will remain marked forever, what occurred is something that gives its true meaning to the subject's *yield* – it's literally a cession.

The object's yieldable character is such an important characteristic of the *a* that I'll ask you now to follow me through a brief inspection to see whether this characteristic marks all the forms of the *a* that we've listed. Here it appears that the libido's points of fixation are always poised around one of the moments that nature offers to the potential structure of subjective cession.

The first moment of anxiety, the one towards which analytic experience progressively edged at the level of birth trauma, thereafter

allowed us, along the inroad afforded by this remark, to accentuate and articulate it better than what was first roughly broached in the form of frustration. The most decisive moment in the anxiety at issue, the anxiety of weaning, is not so much when the breast falls short of the subject's need, it's rather that the infant yields the breast to which he is appended as a portion of himself. Let's not forget what I depicted for you and which I'm not the only one to have noticed – I'm referring here specifically to Bergler – namely, during breastfeeding the breast is part of the individual who is being fed. It is merely *stuck onto* the mother, as I put it in a colourful expression.

The most primordial moment of surprise occurs in the fact that he can either hold onto or leave go of this breast, and this can sometimes be grasped in the newborn's expression, in which, for the first time, there passes the reflection – in relation to the abandonment of this organ that is much more than an object, which is the subject himself – of something that furnishes the support, the root, for what in another register has been called dereliction.

Thence, do we have any other plain means of monitoring this besides the accent that I'm laying, as for all the objects *a*, on the possibility of replacing the natural object? The natural object can be replaced by a mechanical object, if I can express myself thus to designate the possible replacement of this object by any other object one may meet. It might be another partner, the wetnurse, which was such a big question for the first advocate of natural upbringing – see Rousseau's theme of nursing by the mother. Beyond that we have something else, good gracious, which hasn't always existed and which we owe to the progress of culture – the feeding bottle. With respect to this *a*, this sets the possibility of having it in store, in stock, of retail circulation, and also of its being sealed away in sterilized tubes.

What I'm calling the cession of the object *a* is therefore translated by the appearance, in the chain of human manufacture, of yieldable objects that can be the equivalents of natural objects. This reminder is not beside the point here because from this angle I mean to make a direct link with the function on which I've long been laying the accent, the function of the transitional object, to use the term, whether it is proper or not, but now accepted, pinned to it by its creator, the one who caught sight of it, namely, Winnicott.

One can clearly see what constitutes the object he calls transitional in the object function that I'm calling the yieldable object. It's a little piece torn off something, more often than not a swathe, and one can clearly see the support the subject finds in it. He doesn't dissolve into it, he takes comfort from it. He takes comfort from it in his utterly originative function of a subject in a position of falling

away with respect to the signifying confrontation. This is not an investment in the *a*, this is, so to speak, investiture.

Here the *a* stands in for the subject – it's a stand-in in the position of precedent. The primordial, mythical subject, posited at the outset as having to be constituted in the signifying confrontation, can never be grasped by us, and for good reason, because the *a* preceded it and it has to re-emerge secondarily, beyond its vanishing, marked by this initial substitution.

The function of the yieldable object as a piece that can be primordially separated off conveys something of the body's identity, antecedent to the body itself with respect to the constitution of the subject.

Since I've been speaking about events in the history of human production that for us can hold the value of confirmation or revelation, I won't possibly be able to avoid a moment's mention, as the term that lies at the furthest extremity of these events, of the problems that are going to be posed for us, right up to the subject's most radical essentiality, by the imminent, likely extension, which is already under way – more than common consciousness and even more than the consciousness of practitioners such as ourselves might be aware of – of organ transplants. They are developing at a galloping rate, which is certainly surprising and which is just what it takes to suspend thinking on I know not what question of how far we shall or should consent to them.

The mine, the resource, of these astonishing possibilities could soon be allowing for certain subjects to be artificially maintained in a state that we would no longer know how to qualify as life or death. As you know, Ångström's methods allow a subject's tissues to be kept alive when everything indicates that his central nervous system cannot be brought back – brain waves flatlining, mydriasis, zero reflex response beyond the point of no return. What are we doing when we take an organ from a subject in this state? Surely you can sense something emerging in the real that is likely to stir up, in terms that are utterly new, the question of the person's essentiality and what it is attached to. On all of this, which does occasionally give rise to legalism, the doctrinal authorities will surely be solicited in order to appreciate just how far, this time in practice, the question of knowing whether the subject is a body or a soul can stretch.

I won't go any farther down this road today because these doctrinal authorities seem to have already given some highly singular replies, which ought to be studied closely to appreciate their coherence with respect to certain positions that have been taken for a long while now. For instance, identifying the person with something immortal known as the soul is radically distinct, on the very plane of

relation, from a doctrine that spells out in its practices what is most contrary to the Platonic tradition, namely, that there cannot be any other resurrection besides that of the body.

Likewise, the domain being evoked here is not so tightly linked to the industrial advance in such peculiar possibilities as not to have been evoked by visionary fantasizing since way back. I need only send you back to the *unheimlich* function of the eyes that are handled, to fetch them from a living being to his automaton, by the character – incarnated by Hoffmann and whom Freud placed at the centre of his article on the *Unheimliche* – of Coppelius. He scoops out the sockets to seek out in their root, somewhere, the object that it is crucial, essential to endue himself with as the beyond, and the most anguishing beyond, of the desire that constitutes it, namely, the eye itself.

I've said enough in passing about the same function in the voice and how to us it appears – and how to us it will doubtless appear ever more so, given the many technological improvements – to be capable of belonging to the realm of yieldable objects, those objects that can be lined up on the shelves of a library in the form of gramophone records or reels of tape. It is not indispensable to mention such an episode here, old or new, to know what peculiar relation this can occasionally have with the emergence of anxiety in such a conjunction.

Let's simply add what is connoted – when it emerges for the first time in cultural spheres that we have no reason to call primitive – by the possibility of detaching the image from the body, the specular image, I say, the image of the body, and of reducing it to a yieldable state in the shape of photographs or even drawings – namely, the conflict, the revulsion, even the horror that such objects can provoke in the sensibility of those who see them emerging quite suddenly in a form that is both indefinitely reproducible and capable of being spread all over the place – with the refusal to let this image be taken, when God knows, make no mistake, where it might end up next.

The anal object comes into play in the function of desire with this function of a yieldable object. This function is by and large the most natural one, but this naturalness cannot be explained away as its having taken on this function. We've still got to grasp precisely in what way the object comes into play at this level.

Let's not forget to put to the test here the guide rope furnished by our formula that the object *a* is not the end, the goal, of desire, but its cause. It is the cause of desire inasmuch as desire is itself something non-effective, a kind of effect founded and constituted upon the function of lack, which only appears as an effect at the exact spot

where the notion of cause is located, that is, only at the level of the signifying chain, to which desire lends that coherence whereby the subject is essentially constituted as metonymy.

How are we to qualify this desire at the anal level, where we grasp its incidence in the constitution of the subject? It's doubtless the desire to hold back, but is it the contingent fact, the forced fact of toilet training, that lends it the function of holding back? No, it isn't, this is not what gives anal desire its fundamental structure.

A more general form is involved in the desire to hold back and this is what we have to grasp.

2

In its polar relation to anxiety, desire is to be located where I've put it, matched up with the foregoing matrix, namely, at the level of *inhibition*. This is why desire can assume the function of what is called a defence.

Let's go step by step to see how this might happen.

What is inhibition for us in our experience? It is not enough to have had this experience or to have dealt with it as such to spell out its function correctly. What is inhibition if not the introduction into a function – in his article Freud takes the example of the motor function, but it can't be just any function – of another desire besides the one that the function satisfies naturally?

After all, we know this, and I'm not claiming to be uncovering anything new here, but I think that in spelling it out like this I'm introducing a new formulation, without which the deductions that stem from it would elude us.

The correlations that this matrix indicates invite us to acknowledge the locus of inhibition as the locus at which, strictly speaking, desire is exerted and at which we grasp one of the roots of what analysis designates as *Urverdrängung*. The structural concealment of desire behind inhibition is what makes us say together that, if Mr So-and-So has got writer's cramp, it's because he eroticizes the function of his hand. I think everyone can find their feet here. This is what prompts us to bring into the picture at the same locus the following three terms, the first two I've already named – *inhibition* and *desire*, the third being the *act*.

When it comes to defining what the act is, this being the sole pole that is correlative to the locus of anxiety, we can only do so by situating it where it stands in this matrix, at the locus of *inhibition*.

Neither for us nor for anyone else can the act be defined as something that only happens, as it were, in the field of the real, in the

sense that motivity defines it, the motor response. Without doubt, there always remains some involvement of a motor effect in the field of the real, but it translates into it in such a way that another field makes its impact felt. It's not only the field of sensory stimulation, for example, as it is articulated by simply considering the reflex arc, and this is not to be articulated as the field of the realization of the subject either.

Articulating the act in the field of subjective realization whilst evading the precedence of the *a* is a personalist myth. The *a* opens the field of the subject's realization and conserves thereafter its privilege therein in a way that the subject as such can only be realized in the objects that belong to the same series as the *a*, to the same locus in this matrix. They are always yieldable objects and they are what for a long time have been called *deeds*, with all the meaning that this term carries, up to and including in the field of moral theology.

So, what happens in the other field I'm speaking about and whose incidence, whose insistence, whose persistence in the real connotes an action as an act? How are we to define the act? Is it simply by its polar relation to anxiety, by what happens in terms of a surmounting of anxiety, if I may put it like that?

Let's say, using formulas that can merely approach what an act is, that we're speaking about an act when an action has the character of a signifying manifestation where what may be called the gap of desire is written into it. An act is an action in that the very desire that would have been designed to inhibit it makes itself felt therein. Only in this grounding of the notion of act in its relation to inhibition can a justification be found for calling things *acts* that in principle look so little like what may be called an act in the full, ethical sense of the word – the sexual act on one hand, or the testamentary act on the other.

Well, with regard to the relationship between the *a* and the constitution of a desire, and with regard to what it reveals to us about desire's relationship to the natural function, the obsessional has the most exemplary value for us. We're forever putting our finger on the characteristic, whose enigmatic aspect can only be effaced for us by habit, that in him desires are always evinced in a dimension that just now I went so far as to call the function of defence.

I said it in a slightly anticipatory way, because why does the incidence of desire in inhibition warrant being called defence? Well, it is solely in so far as the effect of desire thus signalled by inhibition can be introduced into an action that is already caught in the induction of another desire.

This is also a fact of common experience for us. But without going into the fact that we're always dealing with something of this order,

let's observe, to stick with our obsessional, that this is already the position of anal desire, defined by the desire to hold back, inasmuch as it is focused on a primordial object to which it will impart its value. The desire to hold back only carries meaning for us in the economy of libido, that is, in its nexus with sexual desire.

This is where Saint Augustine's *inter urinas et faeces nascimur* deserves to be called to mind. What is important here is not so much that we are born betwixt urine and faeces, but, at least for us analysts, that betwixt urine and faeces is where we make love. We piss beforehand and we shit afterwards, or vice versa.

This is yet another correlation to which we pay too little heed in the phenomenology we allow to come into analysis. We saw it in connection with that element in the Wolf Man's story that is so barely perceived as to go unmentioned – his little primordial gift. This is why one really has to listen out and ascertain, in those cases in which it rears its head, the relation that binds the sexual act to something that, of course, doesn't sound like it carries great importance, but which becomes important as something indicative of the relation I'm speaking about, namely, the usual fomentation of the little turd, whose successive evacuation doubtless doesn't carry the same signification in all subjects, depending on whether they stand on the obsessional side or another one.

3

Let's take up our path at the spot where I left you.

What about the point I'm directing you towards now concerning the desire underlying desire? And how are we to form a conception of what, on this path, leads us towards the elucidation of its meaning – leads us, I mean, not simply in the fact of it, but in its necessity?

We have interpreted desire as defence and we have said that it defends against another desire. Now we are going to be able to conceive of how we are led to this, if I may say so, quite naturally by what leads the obsessional to commit himself in a recursive movement of the process of desire, a movement wherein he tends to take up its steps afresh. This movement is generated by the implicit effort of subjectification that is already in his symptoms, to the extent that he does have symptoms.

What is meant by the double correlation, which I've written into the matrix, with *impediment* and *emotion*? This is what is designated for us by the titles I've put hereunder.

desire	*not being able*	cause
not knowing		
a		anxiety

Reformulation of the anxiety chart

I've just explained why *desire* is in the stead of *inhibition* here.

In the stead of *impediment* there is *not being able*. Indeed, impediment – a term had to be chosen – which comes from *impedicare*, ensnaring, is not the duplication of inhibition here. What is it? The subject is very much impeded from abiding by his desire to hold back and this is what emerges in the obsessional as compulsion. He cannot hold himself back.

In the stead of *emotion* there is *not knowing*. The word *emotion* is borrowed from an adaptational psychology of the catastrophic reaction, which is not ours. This word also comes into play here in an altogether different way from its traditional and usual definition. The emotion at issue here is the emotion highlighted by experiences that are grounded in the confrontation with a task, when the subject doesn't know how to go about responding. This merges with our own *not knowing*.

He didn't know it was that, and this is why, at the level of the point at which *he can't impede himself*, he lets things go, namely, the to and fro of the signifier that posits and effaces by turns. But these movements all travel the same path, which is likewise unknown, the path towards re-finding the primal trace. What the obsessional subject seeks in what I called its recursion – and you can see why that word was chosen – in the process of desire is well and truly to re-find the authentic cause of the whole process. And since this cause is nothing but the ultimate object, the abject and paltry object, he keeps seeking out the object, with its phases of abeyance, its wrong turns, its false trails, its sidelong drifting, which make the search turn endlessly around and around. All of this, which emerges at the level of acting-out, also emerges in the fundamental symptom of doubt which, for this subject, strikes at the value of all the objects of substitution.

Here, *not being able* is not being able to what? To impede oneself. Here, compulsion is the compulsion to doubt. It pertains to these doubtful objects by dint of which the moment when the ultimate object would be accessed is driven back, the object that would be the *end* in the full sense of the word, namely, the subject's loss on the road onto which he is always capable of falling via the path of

embarrassment – the embarrassment where the question of the *cause* as such is introduced, which is where he enters the transference.

Have we clasped, or even so much as broached, the question of how the incidence of another desire steps in, which would play the role of defence with respect to the first? Clearly we haven't, not yet. I've only traced out the road back to the first object, with its correlation of anxiety, because this is indeed the reason for the escalating emergence of anxiety.

To the extent that the analysis of an obsessional is pushed farther on towards its terminal point – when the analysis is only directed along this road – the question remains open, if it's not a question of what I meant, because I think you've been able to glimpse it, but rather a question of the incidence of desire as defence, defence against a first desire. It's an active defence, whose action extends very far so as to drive back the deadline that I've just sketched out as the due date of the return to the object. How is that possible? We can only form a conception of this by giving, as I did earlier, a pivotal position to sexual desire, which is called genital desire.

In mankind, this desire, in accordance with its specific structuring around the intermediary of an object, is posited as harbouring anxiety at its core, which separates desire from jouissance. At the level of genital desire the function of the *a* is symbolized analogically, analogically to its predominance, its ascendancy, in the economy of desire, by the $(-\varphi)$ which appears as a subjective residue at the level of copulation. The copula is everywhere, but it only unites precisely by being missing right where it would be specifically copulatory. This central hole gives its privileged value to castration anxiety, the only level at which anxiety is produced at the very locus of the lack of the object.

It is precisely because of this that another desire comes into play in the obsessional. This other desire gives its seat to the outlying position I've just been trying to describe for you of the obsessional's desire with respect to genital desire.

Indeed, the obsessional's desire cannot be conceived of in its insistence or its mechanism unless through the fact that it is situated as a stand-in for what it is impossible to stand in for elsewhere, that is, at its locus. To spell it right out, the obsessional, like any neurotic, has already gained access to the phallic stage, but given his impossibility of satisfying at the level of this stage, his own object comes along, the excremental *a*, the *a* cause of the desire to hold back. If I really wanted to conjoin its function with everything I said about desire's relations with inhibition, I would much rather label this *a* as a stopper.

It is in relation to this function that this object will go on to

assume its values, which I could call developed values. And this is where we pierce through to the origin of what I could call the analytic fantasy of oblativity.

I've already reiterated how oblativity is an obsessional's fantasy. Of course, everyone would like genital union to be a gift – *I give myself, you give yourself, we give ourselves.* Unfortunately, there's no trace of a gift in a genital, copulatory act, however successful one might imagine it to be. There is only any gift precisely right where it's always been perfectly well spotted, at the anal level. At the anal level, something stands out, something looms up, which arrests the subject upon the realization of the gap, the central hole, which at the genital level stops him from grasping anything that could function as an object of the gift, an object designed to satisfy.

Since I've spoken about the stopper, you can recognize here the most primitive form of the tap, which we introduced in the discussion on the function of the cause. Well, how might we illustrate the function of the stopper-object or the tap, along with its consequence, the desire to turn it off? How might the different elements of our matrix be situated here?

What is the relation to the cause? What can one do with a tap? Observing the child's experience indicates that this is truly and verily the initial point at which the attraction of this fundamental sort of object comes into the picture, contrary to what happens for any other little animal. *Not being able* to do anything with it, along with *not knowing*, are signposted well enough here, and in their distinction.

What is a symptom? It's a leaking tap.

The *passage à l'acte* is to turn it on, but to turn it on without knowing what one is doing. Something happens where a cause is liberated by one of these means that have nothing to do with this cause, because, as I told you, the tap only fulfils its function of cause inasmuch as everything that can come out of it comes from elsewhere. That which can occur at the level of the anal comes into play and assumes its meaning by dint of being drawn into the phallic hole at the centre of the genital dimension.

As for acting-out, if we want to situate it in relation to the tap metaphor, it's not the fact of turning on the tap, it's simply the presence, or not, of the spurt of water. Acting-out is the spurt, that is, what always happens owing to a fact that comes from somewhere other than the cause on which one has just acted. Our experience indicates this. Acting-out is not provoked by us when we intervene, by an inexact interpretation on the anal plane, for instance, rather it's that, when the interpretation is brought to bear on one spot, it makes way for something that comes from elsewhere. In

other words, the cause of desire is not to be bothered without due consideration.

Here, therefore, on this ground – on which the fate of the obsessional's desire is played out, the fate of his symptoms and his sublimations – the possibility is introduced of something else coming in to function that will take on its meaning as what circumvents the central gap of phallic desire. This is what happens at the scopic level. Everything we've just said about the function of the *a* as the object of an analogous gift designed to hold the subject back on the edge of the hole of castration can be transposed to the image. The specular image comes into function analogically because it stands in a correlative position with respect to the phallic stage.

And this is precisely where, in the obsessional subject, the ambiguity of the function of love steps in, as is underlined in all the different observations.

What is this idealized love that we find in the Rat Man as well as the Wolf Man, and in any observation on an obsessional that has been pushed fairly far? What is the word for this enigma, an enigma of the function given to the Other, the woman on this occasion, who is the exalted object that no one waited for us, neither you nor me, nor the teaching imparted here, to know what it furtively represents by way of the negation of his desire? In any case, women make no mistake about it.

What would distinguish this type of love from an erotomaniacal love, were it not for what the obsessional engages of himself in love and which we have to seek out? If it really is, as I've told you, the last object that his analysis can reveal along a certain road of recursion, namely, the object of excrement, isn't this the divinatory wellspring whence the obsessional finds himself to be the loveable object?

I'm asking you to take out your flashlights to try to shed some light on what's involved in the obsessional's position in this regard.

Doubt is not what dominates here, it's rather that the subject prefers not even to look into it. You will always meet this prudence in the obsessional. And still, love assumes for him the forms of an exalted bond. What he expects to be loved is a certain image of himself. He gives this image to the other. He gives it so entirely that he imagines the other party would no longer know what to do should this image of him go missing. This is the fundament behind what elsewhere I've called the altruistic dimension of this mythical love, which is founded on a mythical oblativity.

Maintaining this image of himself is what chains the obsessional to maintaining a remote distance from himself, which is precisely what it is so hard to reduce in the analysis. Of course this is where one person, who had much experience with such patients, but not

the apparatus with which to formulate it, for reasons that remain to be fathomed, got the illusory idea of laying the entire accent on the notion of distance. But the distance involved is the distance between the subject and himself whereby everything he does is only ever, for him, when he is without analysis and left to his solitude, something he perceives in the end as a game, which when all is said and done will only have benefited the other I'm speaking about, the image of himself.

This relation to the image is commonly highlighted as the narcissistic dimension in which everything is developed that, in the obsessional, is not central, i.e., symptomatic, but behavioural or lived. But what he has to do, and this will furnish him with his true seat, is to realize at the very least the first phase of the fact that his desire is never allowed to appear in an act. His desire is sustained by doing the rounds of all the possibilities that determine the impossible at the phallic and genital level. When I say that the obsessional sustains his desire as impossible, I mean that he sustains his desire at the level of the impossibilities of desire.

If the image of the hole impresses itself here and if I've long insisted on this reference, it's because the circle of the obsessional's desire is precisely one of those circles that can never be reduced to a point owing to their topological place on the torus. It's because, from the oral to the anal, from the anal to the phallic, from the phallic to the scopic, and from the scopic to the vociferated, it never loops back upon itself, except by going back via its point of departure.

This example is sufficiently demonstrative to be elaborated as such and it can be transposed into other structures, notably the hysteric.

Next time, in reference to these structures, I'll be giving the conclusive formulation to what will allow us to situate, in the ultimate term, the position and the function of anxiety.

26 June 1963

XXIV

FROM THE *a* TO THE NAMES-OF-THE-FATHER

The scopic masking of the object *a*
Birth as an intrusion of the Other
To separate and to hold back
Mourning, mania, and melancholia
The voice, the father, the name, and love

Today, I'm going to be concluding with what I'd intended to tell you this year about anxiety.

I'm going to be marking out its limit and its function, thereby indicating where I intend certain positions to be upheld, positions that allow us, will allow us if possible, to reach a conclusion on what is involved in our role as analysts.

1

At the end of his life's work Freud designated anxiety as a signal. He designated it as a signal that is distinct from the effect of the traumatic situation, a signal linked to what he calls danger, a term that for him refers back to the notion of vital danger, which it has to be said is not clarified.

What is original in what I will have articulated for you this year is a detail regarding what danger is. In conformity with the Freudian notion, but more precisely articulated, I say that the danger in question is bound to the characteristic of cession specific to the constitutive moment of the object *a*.

In what way, at this point in our elaboration, must anxiety now be considered to be a signal? Once again, we are going to link up in a different way from Freud the moment at which the function of anxiety is brought into play.

I situate this moment as standing prior to the cession of the

object, just as the necessity of Freud's articulation forces him to situate something else, something more primal than the danger-situation. Indeed, experience forbids us from not doing so.

As I announced back in the Seminar of two years hence, anxiety makes itself tangibly felt as referring back in a complex way to the desire of the Other. Back in this first approach, I indicated that the anguishing function of the desire of the Other was linked to the fact that I don't know which object *a* I am for this desire.

What I will be accentuating today is the following. Only at the level that I designated on the blackboard as the fourth level – amongst the five that can be defined as characteristic of the subject's constitution in his relation to the Other, in so far as we can articulate it as being centred around the function of anxiety – is this specific form fully articulated, does it take on an exemplary form, which is fully fleshed out, this specific form whereby human desire is the function of the desire of the Other.

I told you that anxiety is bound to the fact that I don't know which object *a* I am for the desire of the Other, but at the end of the day this is only valid at the scopic level. It's at this level that I can give you the exemplary fable in which the Other would be radically an Other, the praying mantis with its voracious desire, to which I am linked by no common factor whatsoever. Quite contrary to this, I am linked to the human Other by something which is my quality of being his *semblable* and the result is that what remains of the anguishing *I don't know what object I am*, is, fundamentally, *misrecognition*. There is a misrecognition of what the *a* is in the economy of my human desire and this is why the aforesaid fourth level, the level of scopic desire, is the level at which the structure of desire is the most fully developed in its fundamental alienation. It is also, paradoxically, the level at which the object *a* is most fully masked and at which, by virtue of this fact, the subject is most assured in relation to anxiety.

This is precisely what makes it necessary for us to look elsewhere for the trace of the *a* with respect to the moment of its constitution.

Indeed, whilst it is true that in sum and substance the Other is always there in its full reality, and therefore, in so far as it takes on a subjective presence, this reality is always likely to make itself felt through one of its prominent edges, it's nonetheless clear that development doesn't afford even access to the Other's reality.

At the first level, the Other's reality is presentified by need, as is very clear-cut in the original powerlessness of the nursling. It's only at the second level, with the incidence of the Other's demand, that something is detached properly speaking, which allows us to articulate in a more complete fashion the constitution of the *a* with

respect to the function of the Other as the locus of the signifying chain.

Today, however, I don't want to move away from the first level, the level we term the oral level, without first carefully pointing out that anxiety already appears there, prior to any articulation of the Other's demand as such. Oddly enough, this manifestation of anxiety coincides with the very emergence in the world of he who is going to be the subject. This manifestation is his cry.

Now, I have long situated the function of the cry as a relation, not an originative one but a terminal one, to what we must consider to be the very heart of this Other inasmuch as it is completed for us at a certain moment in the form of our neighbour. I ask you to pause a short while over the paradox that here conjoins the point of departure of this first effect of cession, which is the anxiety effect, with what at the end will be something like its point of arrival. The difference is that the nursling can't do anything about the cry that slips out of him. He has yielded something and nothing will ever conjoin him to it again.

Am I the first to accentuate this originative anxiety? All the authors have done so. They have accentuated its character in a certain dramatic relation that the organism, the human organism on this occasion, has with the world in which it is going to live. What can we get from the many confused notions they give us about this emergence, and which can only possess certain contradictory features? Can we, for example, endorse Ferenczi's indication as a valuable one, namely, that there is an emergence, for ontogenesis itself, from out of goodness knows what primitive aqueous environment that would be homologous with the marine environment? Would amniotic liquid bear a relation to this primitive water?

For the living animal in an environment such as this, exchanging the inside for the outside happens at the level of the gill, whereas certainly, never, at any moment of the embryo's development, does the human gill function. Not everything that is indicated to us, however, in this psychoanalytic speculation, which is often a confused speculation, should be considered meaningless, and it should even be considered as potentially lying on the path of something significant. It skips past it, it lags behind it, but sometimes this speculation illuminates it. Moreover, since they make a point of mentioning phylogeny here, I would ask you to remember the following.

In the most basal scheme of the vital exchange between an organism and its environment, the organism possesses a limit across which a certain number of choice points of exchange are distributed. This wall ensures the osmosis between the outer environment and the

inner environment, between which there is thus a common factor. Stop and consider, then, this incredible fact – the strangeness of the leap by which living beings left behind their primitive environment and moved over into air.

An organ is necessary for this – I ask you to consult the books on embryology – and one cannot fail to be struck by its, as it were, arbitrary neo-formative character in development. It intrudes inside the organism and mobilizes the entire adaptation of the nervous system, which takes a fair while to get used to this apparatus before it can function as a good pump. One might say that there is as much strangeness in the leap that the appearance of this organ constitutes as there is in the fact that at a certain moment in human history we saw humans breathing in an iron lung, or even going off into what is improperly called the cosmos with something around them that is essentially no different from what I'm evoking here as a stock of air for their vital function.

Freud indicates that anxiety was in some sense chosen to be the signal of something. Shouldn't we recognize here in this *something* the essential feature, in this radical intrusion, of something that is as Other to the living human being as the fact of passing over into the atmosphere? By emerging into this world where he must breathe, first and foremost he is literally choked, suffocated. This is what has been called trauma – there is no other – the trauma of birth, which is not separation from the mother but the inhalation, into oneself, of a fundamentally Other environment.

Of course, the link between this moment and what one can call the separation of weaning doesn't appear clearly. I ask you, however, to gather up the elements of your experience, your experience as analysts and as observers of children, unhesitatingly, to reconstruct everything that proves to be necessary when it comes to giving meaning to the term *weaning*. Let's say that the relationship between weaning and this first moment isn't a straightforward relationship, it's not a relationship of phenomena that overlap, but rather a relationship of contemporaneity.

In the main, it's not true that the child is weaned. He weans *himself*. He detaches himself from the breast, he plays. After the first experience of cession, whose already subjectified character makes itself tangibly felt with the first signs that flash across his face as he starts, nothing more, to form the expression of surprise, he plays at detaching himself from the breast and taking it up again. If there weren't already present something active enough for us to be able to articulate it in the sense of a desire for weaning, how could we even conceive of the very primitive facts, which are quite primordial in their appearance, of the refusal of the breast, the first forms of

anorexia whose correlations at the level of the Other our experience teaches us to seek out right away?

To function authentically as what it is said to be in the classical theory, namely, the object involved in the breaking of the bond with the Other, this first object that we call the breast stands short of a full bond with the Other. This is why I've been strongly accentuating how this bond lies closer to the neo-natal subject. The breast doesn't belong to the Other, it is not the bond that has to be broken with the Other, at the very most it is the first sign of this bond. This is why it bears a relation to anxiety, but this is also why it is the first form of the transitional object in Winnicott's sense, the form that makes its function possible. Likewise, it is not, at this level defined by the *a*, the only object that is on offer to fulfil this function.

If, later on, another object, the anal object, is going to come and fulfil this function in a more clear-cut fashion when the Other itself elaborates its own function in the form of demand, one may recall the wisdom of those women who watch over the human animal's entry into the world, the midwives, who have always come to a halt faced with the peculiar little object that accompanies the child's appearance – the meconium.

Since I spent a long while on it last time, I won't be going over the articulation today, a much more typical articulation, of the function of the object *a* that the anal object allows us to make, inasmuch as it is found to be the first underpinning of subjectification in the relation to the Other, I mean that wherein, or whereby, the subject is first required by the Other to show himself as a subject, a fully fledged subject.

At this level, the subject already has to give *what he is* – in so far as *what he is* cannot enter the world except as a remainder, as something irreducible with respect to what is imposed upon him as a symbolic imprint. That which is going to identify desire, primordially, with the desire to hold back is appended to this object as a causal object. The first progressive form of desire is, therefore, as such, akin to the realm of inhibition. When desire appears for the first time as formed – at the second level – it stands in opposition to the very act by which its origination of desire was introduced at the previous stage. The second form of desire, the form that clarifies the function of cause that I give to the object, makes itself felt in turning against the pre-existing function that introduces the object *a* as such.

Indeed, it's clear that the first form of desire really is appended to the object, the form that we've elaborated as the desire for separation. As I reminded you earlier, the object is there, of course. It has already been laid out, produced, primordially produced. It is

already there as a product of anxiety. So, as something pre-existent, it is made available to the function that is determined by the introduction of demand.

Therefore, what is at stake here is neither the object in itself nor the subject who would make himself autonomous in some vague and confused priority of totality. From the very first approach, it has to do with an object that has been chosen for its quality of being especially yieldable, of being originally a ceded object, and it has to do with a subject who is to be constituted in his function of being represented by *a*, a function that shall remain essential to the end.

Here we find the level by which we must abide if we truly want to consider what is at stake in our technical function.

2

Now it's a matter of realizing that the respective positions of anxiety and what amounts to *a* are interchangeable. On one side, there is the primordial point at which desire is inserted, constituted by the conjunction that includes *a* and the capital D of demand in the same brackets, and, on the other side, anxiety.

So, here we have anxiety.

We have long known it to be staved off, hidden, in what we call the obsessional's ambivalent relationship, the relationship that we simplify, that we abbreviate, that we evade when we confine it to the relationship of aggressiveness when it's actually a matter of something else. The object that the subject cannot impede himself from holding back as the asset that gets him noticed is thus merely his ejecta, his evacuations. These are the two faces by which the object determines the subject himself as compulsion and doubt.

Upon this oscillation between these two extreme points depends the subject's possible, momentary passage through this zero-point where he ultimately finds himself entirely at the mercy of the other, here in the dyadic sense of the little other.

This is why, back in my second lesson, I pointed out that the structure of desire's relation to the desire of the Other, in the sense I've been teaching it to you, stands in opposition to the structure wherein it is articulated, defined, even algebraized, in Hegelian dialectic.

I told you that the point at which these two desires partially overlap is the very same point that allows us to define this relationship as a relationship of aggressiveness. I've already written out the formula that defines this relation at the point we equate the *moment* of this desire – I mean *moment* in the sense that this word carries in physics – with zero. It is the formula $d(a)$: $0 > d(0)$, which is to

be read – desire of *a*, in other words, desire as determined by the first characteristically yieldable object. In this point, one may say that the subject effectively finds himself faced with what Hegelian phenomenology translates as the impossibility of coexistent self-consciousnesses, and which is but the subject's impossibility of finding his cause within himself at the level of desire.

You should be able to see that what coordinates the causal function of the notion of *causa sui* is already taking shape here, a fantasy where thinking is confronted with the existence, somewhere, of a being to whom his cause would not be foreign, to which human speculation is in some way forced to come back as a compensation, as an arbitrary surmounting of a fact of our condition, the fact that the human being is first submitted to producing the cause of his desire in a danger of which he is unaware.

To this is linked the supreme and magisterial tone that resounds and goes on resounding at the heart of sacred Scripture, in spite of its blasphemous aspect, the *heh'bel* or *hab-ale*, the *all is vanity* from the text called Ecclesiastes. What we translate as *vanity* is this in the Hebrew text, whose three radical letters I've written up here, הֶבֶל, and which means wind, or even breath, if you like, vapour, a thing that fades away – which brings us back to an ambiguity that I think it's more legitimate to mention here, in connection with what can be most abject about breath, than all of what Jones thought he had to elaborate with respect to the Madonna's conception through the ear. This thematic of vanity is precisely the one that furnishes its abiding resonance and scope to the Hegelian definition of the original fruitful struggle from which the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* starts off, the struggle to death called the *struggle for pure prestige*, which really does carry the overtone of meaning the struggle for nothing.

To make the obsessional's treatment revolve around aggressiveness is to introduce into its principle – in a patent fashion and, if I may say so, an affirmed fashion, even if it hasn't been deliberated – the subduction of the subject's desire to the analyst's desire. Like any desire, this desire, although it has a reference that is internal to *a*, is articulated elsewhere. Here, it is identified with the ideal of the position that the analyst has obtained or believes he has obtained at the place of reality, the ideal to which the patient's desire will be obliged to stoop.

Now, the *a* at issue, marked out as the cause of desire, is neither this vanity nor this piece of waste. Although in its function it really is what I've been spelling out, namely, the object defined as a remainder that is irreducible to the symbolization that occurs at the locus of the Other, it nevertheless depends on this Other because how else would it be constituted?

Although the *a* is the sole remainder of existence to the extent that existence makes itself known, it is not, therefore, contrary to what has been said, existence as a forced fact. Indeed, this forced fact could only be situated through its reference to a professed mythical and noetic necessity, itself posited as a first reference. But there is no forced fact in the remainder *a* because the desire that will succeed, more or less, in culminating in existence takes root here.

The more or less thorough severity of its reduction, namely, what makes it irreducible, and in which everyone can recognize the exact level to which it has risen in the locus of the Other, is what gets defined in the dialogue that is played out on a stage. The principle of this desire is that, after having got up there, the object will have to fall back down again through the ordeal of what it will have left upon it in a relation of tragedy, or more often than not of comedy.

It is played out there, of course, as a role, but the role is not what matters. We all know this from inner experience and certitude. What matters is the remainder beyond the role. It's undoubtedly a precarious and exposed remainder because, as everyone knows these days, I am forever this yieldable object, this object of exchange, and this object is the principle that makes me desire, that makes me desirous of a lack – a lack which is not the subject's lack, but a failing that strikes the jouissance situated at the level of the Other.

It is in this respect that each function of the *a* simply refers to the central gap that separates, at the sexual level, desire from the locus of jouissance and condemns us to the necessity which means that for us jouissance is not inherently destined to desire. Desire can only set out to meet it and, in order to meet it, it must not only comprehend but overcome the very fantasy that supports and constructs it.

We discovered this at the point of running aground that we call castration anxiety, but why not call it castration desire because a desire is also suspended from the central lack that disjoins desire from jouissance? Its threat for each and every subject is only fashioned from having recognized it in the desire of the Other. In the end, the Other, whoever it is, appears in the fantasy as the castrator, the agent of castration.

Certainly the positions are different in men and in women. For women, the position is more comfortable because what's done is done. This is also what makes for her much more special bond with the desire of the Other. Kierkegaard's peculiar remark, that women are more anxious than men, is, I believe, profoundly correct. How would this be possible if, at the pivotal, phallic level, anxiety were not fashioned precisely from the relation to the desire of the Other?

Desire, inasmuch as at its core it is desire for desire, that is, temptation, leads us back to this anxiety in its most originative function. At the level of castration, anxiety represents the Other, if the encounter with the bowing-out of the apparatus here gives us the object in the form of a shortcoming.

Need I call to mind what, in the analytic tradition, confirms what I'm spelling out here? Who is it that gives us the first example of the castration that is beckoned, assumed, and desired as such, if not Oedipus?

Oedipus is not first and foremost the father. This is what I've meant for a long time by wryly pointing out that Oedipus couldn't have had an Oedipus complex. Oedipus is he who wants to pass authentically, and mythically too, to the fourth level, which I really have to broach via its exemplary path – he who wants to violate the prohibition on the conjunction between the *a*, here $(-\varphi)$, and anxiety – he who wants to see what lies beyond the satisfaction of his desire, a satisfaction that has been met. The sin of Oedipus is *cupido sciendi.* He wants to know, and this is paid for by the horror I described – what in the end he sees are his own eyes, *a*, cast to the ground.

Does this mean that this is the structure of the fourth level and that this bloody rite of blinding always has to be present somewhere? No, it doesn't. They have been given eyes *that they should not see*. They don't need to tear them out.

This is precisely why the human drama is not tragedy, but comedy.

Anxiety is sufficiently staved off and misrecognized in the mere capture of the specular image, *i(a)*. The best one may wish for is for it to be reflected in the eyes of the Other – but there's no need for this since we have the mirror.

3

Let's see now what the fourth-level articulation is by using our inhibition-symptom-anxiety reference chart.

Here is how I shall describe this articulation.

I	desire not to see	powerlessness	concept of anxiety
S	misrecognition	almightiness	suicide
A	ideal	mourning	anxiety

The scopic level

In the stead of *inhibition* stands the *desire not to see*. Given the arrangement of the phenomena, it scarcely needs to be argued out, everything accommodates it.

Misrecognition, being structural at the level of *not wanting to know*, stands there in the second row.

In the third row, as *turmoil*, stands the *ideal*. It's the Ego Ideal, that is, that part of the Other that it is most convenient to introject, as they say. The term introjection is being brought in with good reason, but I would nonetheless ask you to take it on board reservedly because the ambiguity that remains between introjection and projection indicates well enough that another level will have to be brought in here to give the term introjection its full meaning.

At the heart of the fourth level, at the central place of the *symptom* such as it is incarnated specifically at the level of the obsessional, I've already designated the obsessional's fantasy of *almightiness*. This fantasy is correlative to the fundamental *powerlessness* to sustain the *desire not to see*.

What we are going to place at the level of *acting-out* is the function of *mourning* in so far as in a moment I'll be asking you to recognize here what in a previous year I taught you to see in terms of a fundamental structure of the constitution of desire.

At the level of the *passage à l'acte* stands the fantasy of *suicide*, whose character and authenticity stand to be reappraised in an essential way within this dialectic.

At the bottom right still stands *anxiety*, here masked.

At the level of *embarrassment* stands what we shall legitimately call the *concept of anxiety*. I don't know if Kierkegaard's audacity in bringing in this term has really been taken account of. What can it mean other than that there is *either* the function of the concept as Hegel would have it, that is, the symbolic hold over the real, *or* the hold that we have, the one anxiety gives us, the sole final perception and as such the perception of all reality – and that between the two, one has to choose?

The concept of anxiety only emerges as such at the limit and from a meditation that everything suggests runs aground fairly quickly. But what matters to us is simply that we're meeting fresh confirmation of the truths that we've already tackled from another angle.

Now, as announced, I'm going to go back over the function of mourning.

At the end of his speculation on anxiety, Freud wonders in what way everything he has put forward on the relationships between anxiety and object-loss is distinct from mourning. The entire addenda, the entire appendix to *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* marks the most extreme awkwardness when it comes to defining

the way in which one can understand how the two functions for which he provides the same reference give rise to such divergent manifestations.

I think I need to call to mind here what led us to our examination when we looked at the eminent dramatic character Hamlet, who marks the emergence of a new relation of the subject to his desire at the dawn of modern ethics.

I pointed out that it's strictly speaking his mother's absence of mourning that makes any possible impetus of a desire in him fade away, recede, and crumble in the extreme, even though this being is also presented to us in a way that allowed a certain Salvador de Madariaga, for instance, to recognize in him the specific style of the heroes of the Renaissance. Hamlet is a character of whom the least one can say – need I remind you? – is that he doesn't draw back when faced with something and he's not easily fazed. The only thing he can't do is precisely the act he's cut out for and that is because the desire is wanting.

The desire is wanting because the Ideal has crumbled. Indeed, Hamlet mentions his father's past reverence for a creature before whom, to our astonishment, this supreme king, Old Hamlet, literally bowed down to pay homage, stooped in his loving allegiance. What could be more doubtful than the kind of idolatrous relationship Hamlet's words sketch out? Do we not have here the signs of an overly forced, overly exalted sentiment, which even belong to the realm of a unique, mythical love, akin to the style of courtly love? Now, when courtly love appears outside the field of strictly cultural and ritualistic references, where clearly it is addressed to something other than the Lady, it is on the contrary the sign of some shortcoming, some shirking, faced with the difficult paths that gaining access to a true love implies.

Patently, to his father's overvaluation of the conjugal Gertrude, such as this attitude is presented in Hamlet's memories, there corresponds dialectically his own animalistic evasion of the maternal Gertrude. When the Ideal is contradicted, when it crumbles, we can see that the result is that Hamlet's power of desire vanishes. As I showed you, this power will only be restored with the vision, on the outside, of a bereavement, a true one, whose fray he enters, that of Laertes for his sister, whom for Hamlet is the loved object from which he was suddenly separated due to the shortcoming of his desire.

Doesn't this unlock the door for us, doesn't it furnish us with the key that enables us to articulate, better than Freud does but following the same line of his examination, what a bereavement signifies?

Freud tells us that the bereaved subject is faced with a task of

consummating for a second time the loss of the beloved object that has been occasioned by the fateful mishap. And goodness knows how much he insists, and rightly so, on the piecemeal, painstaking aspect of the remembrance of everything that was lived out in the bond with the beloved object.

As for us, the work of mourning strikes us, in a light that is at once identical and contrary, as a labour that is carried out to maintain and sustain all these painstaking links with the aim of restoring the bond with the true object of relation, the masked object, the object *a* – for which thereafter a substitute can be given that will ultimately have no more scope than the one that initially occupied this place. As one of our circle told me, light-heartedly, in connection with the fling depicted for us in the film *Hiroshima mon amour*, it's a story that shows us very well how any old *irreplaceable German* can immediately find a perfectly valid substitute in the first Japanese man she comes across.

The problem of mourning is the problem of maintaining, at the scopic level, the bonds whereby desire is suspended, not from the object *a*, but from *i(a)*, by which all love is narcissistically structured in so far as the term love implies the idealized dimension I spoke about. This is what makes for the difference between what occurs in mourning and what occurs in melancholia and mania.

Unless we distinguish between the object *a* and the *i(a)*, we cannot form a conception of the radical difference that lies between melancholia and mourning, which Freud recalls and articulates powerfully in the note I've just cited, as well as in the well-known article on *Mourning and Melancholia*. Do I need to read you the passage to jog your memory? After having gone into the notion of the reversion of the professed object libido onto the subject's own ego, Freud affirms – he's the one who says this – that, in melancholia, this process clearly doesn't come to a conclusion because the object takes the helm. The object triumphs.

Something other than the mechanism of libido's return in mourning is involved in melancholia and, by dint of this, the whole dialectic is built up differently. Freud tells us that the subject – I won't be trying to see why today – has to have it out with the object. But the fact that it's an object *a* and that at the fourth level this object is usually masked beneath the *i(a)* of narcissism and misrecognized in its essence, means that the melancholiac necessarily passes through, as it were, his own image. Initially he attacks this image so as to reach, within it, the object *a* that transcends him, whose control escapes him – and whose collapse will drag him into the suicide-rush, with the automatism, the mechanism, the necessary and fundamentally alienated character with which, as you

know, these suicides of melancholiacs are committed. And they are committed in not just any setting. That this occurs so often at the window, or even *through* the window, is not by chance. It marks a recourse to a structure that is none other than the fantasy.

We can only grasp that which distinguishes what belongs to the cycle of mania/melancholia from everything that belongs to the ideal cycle related to mourning and desire by accentuating the functional difference between, on one hand, the relationship between *a* and *i(a)* in mourning, and, on the other, in the other cycle, the radical reference to the *a*, which roots the subject more than does any other relation, but which is also fundamentally misrecognized and alienated in the narcissistic relation.

Let's specify right away that what is at issue in mania is the nonfunction of *a* and not simply its misrecognition. No *a* comes to ballast the subject and this delivers him, in a way without any possibility of freedom, to the sheer infinite and ludic metonymy of the signifying chain.

Doubtless I've missed out a fair few things here, but this is going to allow us to conclude at the level at which I wanted to leave you this year.

4

Desire in its most alienated character, its most fundamentally fantasmatic character, is what characterizes the fourth level. I went a little way into the structure of the fifth level and indicated sufficiently that at this level the *a* is recast, openly alienated this time, as the support of the desire of the Other that, this time, can be named – you might note that this is also to tell you why this year I'll be stopping on this term.

Indeed, the entire dialectic of what happens at the fifth level implies a much more fastidious articulation than has ever been given with what I designated earlier as introjection – which as such implies the auditory dimension, and which implies the paternal function too.

If everything happens next year in a way that will allow me to pursue my Seminar in accordance with the path foreseen, I'll be making you an appointment with not only the Name, but the Names-of-the-Father. And this is not for nothing.

In the Freudian myth, the father intervenes in the most evidently mythical fashion as the one whose desire submerges, crushes, forces itself upon all the others. Isn't there a plain contradiction here with the fact clearly afforded by the experience that, on his path, some-

thing very different is operating, namely, the normalization of desire on the pathways of the law?

Is that all? Doesn't the very necessity of keeping up this myth alongside what is traced out for us here and made tangible by experience, right down to facts that we have weighed up time and again regarding the shortcoming of the father function, draw our attention to the fact that when his desire is evinced, the father knows to what *a* this desire refers?

Contrary to what religious myth states, the father is not a *causa sui*, but a subject who has gone far enough into the realization of his desire to be able to integrate it back into its cause, whatever that may be, back into what is irreducible in the function of the *a*. This is what allows us to link in with the very principle of our research, without eluding it in any way, the fact that there is no human subject who does not have to posit himself as an object, a finite object, to which his finite desires are appended, desires which only look like they are infinite inasmuch as, in each getting farther away from their centre, they carry the subject farther away from any authentic realization.

Now, the misrecognition of the *a* leaves one door unlocked. We have always known this, there wasn't even any need of analysis to show it because I believe I've been able to show it you in one of Plato's dialogues, *The Symposium*. The sole path on which desire can furnish us with that wherein we shall have to recognize ourselves as object *a* – in so far as, at the end-point, an end-point that is doubtless never reached, it is our most radical existence – only opens up by situating the *a* as such in the field of the Other. And not only is it to be situated there, but it gets situated there by every single one of us. This is none other than the possibility of transference.

The interpretation we give always bears on the greater or lesser dependence of desires in relation to one another, but this does not mean that anxiety is being contended with. Anxiety is only ever surmounted when the Other has been named. There is only ever any love when there is a name, as everyone knows from experience. The moment the name of he or she to whom we address our love is uttered, we know very well that this is a threshold of the utmost importance.

This is just a trace, a trace of that something that stretches from the existence of the *a* to its passage into history. What makes a psychoanalysis a unique adventure is the search for the ἄγαλμα in the field of the Other.

I have questioned you on several occasions about what the analyst's desire ought to be for the work to be possible, right where we are trying to push things, beyond the limit of anxiety.

The analyst certainly ought to be the one who, however little, from some angle, from some line of approach, has merged his desire back into this irreducible *a* sufficiently to offer the question of the concept of anxiety a real guarantee.

3 July 1963

Note to the Text

Establishing the text of this Seminar has benefited from the existence of an exceptional typescript. Lacan sent each lesson to his daughter Judith, who at the time was absent from Paris, and added to the typescript his handwritten annotations, which I have used.

*

The reader will have noticed that in the first chapter Lacan calls out to his audience to confirm whether the word *smagare* exists in Italian and the reply he receives leads him to conclude that some doubt remains. On the typescript copy addressed to his daughter, bearing a dedication dated 16 November 1962, thus two days after the first lesson, the following detail features in the margin: 'Here, I called out to Piera – who suggested this doubt to me – but since then I've checked things out and *smagare* does indeed carry the meaning that B. & W. give it.'

An annotation in the margin identifies the author of the article Lacan had been expecting: 'This refers to a piece of work by Green on *The Savage Mind*'. André Green's review of Lévi-Strauss's book subsequently appeared in the journal *Critique*.

J.-A. M.

Notes

All notes below have been provided by the translator.

Chapter I Anxiety in the Net of Signifiers

1 The personal pronoun *on*, and not the *Un*.
2 The French edition of the *Seminar* reproduces Lacan's hand-drawn illustration, from which these arrows are missing.
3 The French *embarras* carries a far wider range of signification than the English 'embarrassment', encompassing discomfiture, nuisance, confusion and situations of annoyance and quandary. The idioms 'to be in a bind', or 'to be in a pickle' convey to some extent this range of meaning.
4 The English word 'turmoil', of uncertain origin, is by no means a completely satisfying rendering of the French *émoi*, although one etymological hypothesis, that 'turmoil' is the condensation of 'turn + moil', parallels to some extent Lacan's discussion below. The English word 'commotion' is another candidate (in the French language, *commotion* refers rather to the condition of concussion). Dennis Porter opts for 'excitement' in his translation of *Seminar VII*, p. 249. 'Dismay', while inviting interesting points of etymological contrast, is too far removed semantically.
5 Bloch and von Wartburg erroneously set down the modal auxiliary as an infinitive. Lacan reproduces their error in his *Seminar*, which we have permitted ourselves to correct here.

Chapter V That Which Deceives

1 'Making unhappened' is the literal rendering proposed by Strachey in the footnote on page 274 of his translation, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, in *Penguin Freud Library, Vol. X, On Psychopathology*, 1993.

Chapter VI That Which Deceives Not

1 *Prendre des vessies pour des lanternes* is a French idiom, dating back at least to the fourteenth century, used to denote someone's credulity. A common English language equivalent is, 'to think the moon is made of green cheese'.

Chapter IX *Passage à l'acte* and Acting-out

1 Cary F. Baynes gives 'gentleness that is adaptable', in his translation of Richard Wilhelm's *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, Princeton University Press, 1950, p. 205.

Chapter X On a Lack that is Irreducible to the Signifier

1 It was in fact in the first year of the Seminar.
2 *La vie est faite de frustrations* is a common phrase in French.

Chapter XIII Aphorisms on Love

1 The second sentence that Kaufmann brings corresponds to the fourth line of Russian text on the first page of this chapter (p. 170).
2 *Bête comme chou* is an idiomatic French expression to mean 'easy as pie' or 'simplicity itself'. It is left un-Englished here given the ensuing reference to the *Satyricon*.

Chapter XIV Woman, Truer and More Real

1 An allusion to Proust's expression in *Swann's Way* which has passed into common French usage: *S'en soucier comme un poisson d'une pomme*, 'to care as little for something as a fish does for an apple'.

Chapter XV Men's Business

1 The author of *She Stoops to Conquer* is in fact Sheridan's contemporary, Goldsmith.
2 In English translation as 'Outline of a Psychodynamic Theory of Masochism', in *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 25: 193–214.

Chapter XVII The Mouth and the Eye

1 *Le sexe* could also be understood as 'the sexual organ' here.

Chapter XVIII The Voice of Yahweh

1 *Grains et issues*, as in the title of Tzara's collection of poems, is the French term that groups together, on one hand, freshly milled grain, or flour, with, on the other, the 'tail of the mill': the wheat bran particles that are its by-product. A beauty spot is *un grain de beauté*. An *issue* is also a solution or an outcome.
2 *Ça me regarde*, is quite literally 'it regards me': both 'it's looking at me' and 'it concerns me', 'it's my business'.

Chapter XIX The Evanescent Phallus

1 Extract from 'The Fire Sermon' taken from The Waste Land © Estate of T. S. Eliot and reprinted by permission of Faber and Faber Ltd.

Chapter XX What Comes in Through the Ear

1 The trio *puissance*, *toute-puissance* and *impuissance*, we have rendered here and hereafter as 'might', 'almightiness' and 'powerlessness'. The reader may, however, entertain the alternative trio: 'potency', 'omnipotence' and 'impotence'.
2 The genus in question in Kreidl's experiment was in fact a different member of the Crustacea subspecies, the brackish-water palaemonetes, and not the freshwater daphnia.

Chapter XXII From Anal to Ideal

1 Cyril Tourneur's play is actually slightly later, first published in 1611.

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THE FOUR FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

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JACQUES LACAN
Book XI

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Jacques-Alain Miller

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Alan Sheridan

By Jacques Lacan

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JACQUES LACAN

Edited by
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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE EDITION

When the space of a lapsus no longer carries any meaning (or interpretation), then only is one sure that one is in the unconscious. *One knows.*

But one has only to be aware of the fact to find oneself outside it. There is no friendship there, in that space that supports this unconscious.

All I can do is tell the truth. No, that isn't so—I have missed it. There is no truth that, in passing through awareness, does not lie.

But one runs after it all the same.

There is a way of sorting out this muddle that is satisfactory for other than formal reasons (symmetry, for example). Like satisfaction, it is acquired only with use, with the use of an individual—who, in psycho-analysis (psych = fiction of), is called an analysand. And, as a matter of simple fact, there is no shortage of analysands in our lands. That is a fact of human reality—what man calls reality.

It should be noted that psycho-analysis has, since it has ex-sisted, changed. Invented by a solitary, an incontestable theoretician of the unconscious (which is not what one imagines it to be—the unconscious, I would say, is real), it is now practised in couples. To be fair, the solitary was the first to set the example. Not without abusing his disciples (for they were disciples only because he knew not what he did).

This conveys the idea he had of psycho-analysis—a plague—except that it proved to be anodyne in the land where he brought it; the public adopted/adapted it quite painlessly.

Now, a little late in the day, I add my pinch of salt: a fact of hystory, or hysteria: that of my colleagues, as it happens, a case of no importance, but one in which I happened to find myself implicated for concerning myself with someone who introduced me to them as having imposed on myself Freud, the Beloved of Mathesis.

I would have preferred to forget that: but one does not forget what the public constantly reminds you of.

So one must take account of the analyst in psycho-analytic treatment. He would have no social standing, I imagine, if Freud had not opened up the way for him—Freud, I say, to call him by his name. For no one can call anyone an analyst and Freud did not do so. Handing out rings to initiates is not to call by a name. Hence my proposition that the analyst hystorizes only from himself: a patent fact. Even if he is confirmed in doing so by a hierarchy.

What hierarchy could confirm him as an analyst, give him the rubber-stamp? A certificate tells me that I was born. I repudiate this certificate: I am not a poet, but a poem. A poem that is being written, even if it looks like a subject.

There remains the question of what could drive anyone, especially after an analysis, to hystorize from himself.

It cannot come from himself, for he knows something about the analyst, now that he has liquidated, as they say, his positive transference. How could he contemplate taking up the same function?

In other words, are there cases in which you are impelled by some other reason than the wish to set yourself up, that is, to earn money, to keep those who are in your care, above all yourself, according to Jewish morality (to which Freud remained attached in this respect).

One must admit that the question (the question of another reason) is necessary to support the status of a profession newly arrived in hystory. A hystory that I do not call eternal, because its *aetas* is serious only in relation to real number, that is to say, to the serial of limit.

Why, then, should we not put this profession to the test of that truth of which the so-called unconscious function dreams, with which it dabbles? The mirage of truth, from which only lies can be expected (this is what, in polite language, we call 'resistance'), has no other term than the satisfaction that marks the end of the analysis.

Since the main aim of analysis is to give this urgently needed satisfaction, let us ask ourselves how someone can devote himself to satisfying these urgent cases.

This is an odd aspect of that love of one's neighbour upheld by the Judaic tradition. But to interpret it in Christian terms, that is to say, as Hellenic *jean-f..trerie*, what is presented to the analyst is something other than the neighbour: it is the unsorted material of a demand that has nothing to do with the meeting (of a person from Samaria fit to dictate Christic duty). The offer is prior to an urgent request that one is not sure of satisfying, unless one has weighed it.

I have therefore designated as a 'pass' that putting of the hystorization of the analysis to the test, while refraining from imposing this pass on all, because it is not a question, as it happens, of all, but of scattered, ill-assorted individuals. I have left it at the disposal of those who are prepared to run the risk of attesting at best to the lying truth.

I have done so by virtue of having produced the only conceivable idea of the object, that of the object as cause of desire, of that which is lacking.

The lack of the lack makes the real, which emerges only there, as a cork. This cork is supported by the term of the impossible —and the little we know about the real shows its antinomy to all verisimilitude.

I shall speak of Joyce, who has preoccupied me much this year, only to say that he is the simplest consequence of a refusal —such a mental refusal!—of a psycho-analysis, which, as a result, his work illustrates. But I have done no more than touch on this, in view of my embarrassment where art—an element in which Freud did not bathe without mishap—is concerned.

I would mention that, as always, I was entangled in urgent cases as I wrote this.

I write, however, in so far as I feel I must, in order to be on a level (*au pair*) with these cases, to make a pair with them.

Paris 17.5.76 J. L.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

My intention here was to be as unobtrusive as possible and to obtain from Jacques Lacan's spoken work an authentic version that would stand, in the future, for the original, which does not exist.

For the short-hand transcription, riddled as it is with inaccuracies, and lacking the speaker's gesture and intonation, cannot be regarded as the original. Nevertheless, it is the version *sine qua non*, which I have examined, word by word, and, where necessary, rectified—the expunged material amounting to less than three pages.

The most difficult matter is the invention of a system of punctuation, since all punctuation—comma, full-stop, dash, paragraph—determines meaning. But this was the price to be paid if a readable text was to be produced, and the texts of all the seminars will follow the same principles.

J.-A. M.

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The Seminar of

JACQUES LACAN

Book XI

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I

EXCOMMUNICATION

Am I qualified? · The essence of comedy · What is a praxis? · Between science and religion · The hysteric and Freud's own desire

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this series of lectures, which I have been invited to give by the École pratique des Hautes Études, I shall be talking to you about the fundamentals of psycho-analysis.

Today I should like simply to point out to you the meaning I intend to give to this title and the way I hope to justify it.

And yet, I must first introduce myself to you—despite the fact that most, though not all of you, know me already—because the circumstances are such that before dealing with this subject it might be appropriate to ask a preliminary question, namely: *am I qualified to do so?*

My qualification for speaking to you on this subject amounts to this: for ten years, I held what was called a seminar, addressed to psycho-analysts. As some of you may know, I withdrew from this role (to which I had in fact devoted my life) as a result of events occurring within what is called a psycho-analytic association, and, more specifically, within the association that had conferred this role upon me.

It might be said that my qualification to undertake the same role elsewhere is not, by that token, impugned as such. However that may be, I consider the problem deferred for the time being. And if today I am in a position to be able, let us simply say, to *further* this teaching of mine, I feel it incumbent upon me, before embarking on what for me is a new phase, to express my thanks to M. Fernand Braudel, the chairman of the section of the Hautes Études that appointed me to appear before you here. M. Braudel has informed me of his regret at being unable to be present: I would like to pay tribute to what I can only call his nobility in providing me with a means of continuing my

teaching, whose style and reputation alone were known to him. Nobility is surely the right word for his welcome to someone in my position—that of a refugee otherwise reduced to silence. M. Braudel extended this welcome to me as soon as he had been alerted by the vigilance of my friend Claude Lévi-Strauss, whom I am delighted to see here today and who knows how precious for me this evidence of his interest in my work is—in work that has developed in parallel with his own.

I wish also to thank all those who on this occasion demonstrated their sympathy to such effect that M. Robert Flacelière, Director of the Ecole Normale Supérieure, was generous enough to put this auditorium at the disposal of the École des Hautes Études—and without which I should have been at a loss to welcome you in such numbers—for which I wish to express my most heartfelt thanks.

All this concerns the *base*, in the topographical and even the military sense of the word—the base for my teaching. I shall now turn to what it is about—the fundamentals of psycho-analysis.

I

As far as the fundamentals of psycho-analysis are concerned, my seminar was, from the beginning, *implicated*, so to speak. It was an element of those fundamentals, because it was a contribution, *in concreto*, to them—because it was an internal part of psycho-analytic praxis itself—because it was aimed at what is an essential of that praxis, namely, the training of psycho-analysts.

There was a time when, ironically—temporarily, perhaps, and for lack of anything better in the situation I was in—I was led to define a criterion of what psycho-analysis is, namely, the treatment handed out by psycho-analysts. Henry Ey, who is here today, will remember the article in question as it was published in a volume of the encyclopaedia he edits. And, since he is present, it is all the easier for me to recall the fury that the article aroused and the pressure exerted to get the said article withdrawn from the said encyclopaedia. As a result, M. Ey, whose sympathy for my cause is well known, was powerless to resist an operation masterminded by an editorial committee on which there were, precisely, some psycho-analysts. The

article concerned will be included in a collection of a number of my essays that I am trying to put together, and you will, I think, be able to judge for yourselves whether it has lost any of its relevance. For me, this seems all the less likely given that the questions I raise in it are the very same as those that I shall be grappling with here, and which are resuscitated by the fact that here I am, in the present circumstances, still asking that very same question—*what is psycho-analysis?*

No doubt there are certain ambiguities in all this, and the question—as I pointed out in the article—still has a certain bat-like quality. To examine it in broad daylight is what I proposed to do then and, whatever position I am in, it is what I propose to do today.

The position I refer to has changed, in fact; it is not wholly inside, but whether it is outside is not known.

In reminding you of all this, I am not indulging in personal reminiscence. I think you will agree that I am having recourse neither to gossip nor to any kind of polemic if I point out here what is simply *a fact*, namely, that my teaching—specifically designated as such—has been the object of censure by a body calling itself the Executive Committee of an organization calling itself the International Psycho-analytical Association. Such censorship is of no ordinary kind, since what it amounts to is no less than a ban on this teaching—which is to be regarded as nul and void as far as any qualification to the title of psycho-analyst is concerned. And the acceptance of this ban is to be a condition of the international affiliation of the Psycho-analytical Association to which I belong.

But this is not all. It is expressly spelt out that this affiliation is to be accepted only if a guarantee is given that my teaching may *never again* be sanctioned by the Association as far as the training of analysts is concerned.

So, what it amounts to is something strictly comparable to what is elsewhere called major excommunication—although there the term is never pronounced without any possibility of repeal. The latter exists only in a religious community designated by the significant symbolic term *synagogue*, and it was precisely that which Spinoza was condemned to. On 27 July 1656—a singular bi-centenary, for it corresponds to that of Freud—Spinoza was made the object of the *kherem*, an

excommunication that corresponds to major excommunication, since he had to wait some time before becoming the object of the *chammata*, which consists of appending the clause of no return.

Please do not imagine that here—any more than elsewhere—I am indulging in some metaphorical game—that would be too puerile in view of the long and, God knows, serious enough terrain we have to cover. I believe—you will be able to judge for yourselves—that not only by virtue of the echoes it evokes, but by the structure it implies, this fact introduces something that is essential to our investigation of psychoanalytic praxis.

I am not saying—though it would not be inconceivable—that the psycho-analytic community is a Church. Yet the question indubitably does arise—what is it in that community that is so reminiscent of religious practice? Nor would I have stressed this point—though it is sufficiently significant to carry the musty odour of scandal—were it not that like everything I have to say today, it will be useful in what follows.

I do not mean that I am indifferent to what happens to me in such circumstances. Do not imagine that for me—any more, I suppose, than for the intercessor whose precedent I have not hesitated to evoke—this is material for comedy. It is no laughing matter. Nevertheless, I should like to let you know *en passant* that something of the order of a vast comic dimension in all this has not wholly escaped me. What I am referring to here is not at the level of what I have called excommunication. It has to do with the situation I was in for two years, that of knowing that I was—at the hands of precisely those who, in relation to me, were colleagues or even pupils—the object of what is called *a deal*.

For what was at stake was the extent to which the concessions made with respect to the validity of my teaching could be traded off with the other side of the deal, namely, the international affiliation of the Association. I do not wish to forgo this opportunity—we shall return to it later—of indicating that the situation can be experienced at the level of the comic dimension proper.

This can be fully appreciated, I think, only by a psychoanalyst.

No doubt, being the object of a deal is not a rare situation for an individual—contrary to all the verbiage about human dignity, not to mention the Rights of Man. Each of us at any moment and at any level may be traded off—without the notion of exchange we can have no serious insight into the social structure. The kind of exchange involved here is the exchange of individuals, that is, of those social supports which, in a different context, are known as 'subjects', with all their supposed sacred rights to autonomy. It is a well known fact that politics is a matter of trading—wholesale, in lots, in this context—the same subjects, who are now called citizens, in hundreds of thousands. There was nothing particularly exceptional, then, about my situation, except that being traded by those whom I referred to just now as colleagues, and even pupils, is sometimes, if seen from the outside, called by a different name.

But if the truth of the subject, even when he is in the position of master, does not reside in himself, but, as analysis shows, in an object that is, of its nature, concealed, to bring this object out into the light of day is really and truly the essence of comedy.

This dimension of the situation is worth pointing out, I think, especially in the position from which I can testify to it, because, after all, on such an occasion, it might be treated, with undue restraint, a sort of false modesty, as someone who had experienced it from the outside might do. From the inside, I can tell you that this dimension is quite legitimate, that it may be experienced from the analytic point of view, and even, from the moment it is perceived, in a way that overcomes it —namely, from the point of view of humour, which, here, is simply the recognition of the comic.

This remark is not without relevance to my subject—the fundamentals of psycho-analysis—for *fundamentum* has more than one meaning, and I do not need to remind you that in the Kabbala it designates one of the modes of divine manifestation, which, in this register, is strictly identified with the *pudendum*. All the same, it would be extraordinary if, in an analytic discourse, we were to stop at the *pudendum*. In this context, no doubt, the fundamentals would take the form of the *bottom* parts, were it not that those parts were already to some extent exposed.

Some people, on the outside, may be surprised that certain of my analysands, some of whom were still under analysis, should have taken part, a very active part, in this deal. And they may ask themselves how such a thing is possible were it not that, at the level of the relation between your analysands and yourselves, there is some discord that puts in question the very value of analysis. Well, it is precisely by setting out from something that may provide grounds for scandal that we will be able to grasp in a more precise way what is called the *training analysis*—that praxis, or that stage of praxis, which has been completely ignored in all published work on psycho-analysis—and throw some light on its aims, its limits and its effects.

This is no longer a question of *pudendum*. It is a question of knowing what may, what must, be expected of psycho-analysis, and the extent to which it may prove a hindrance, or even a failure.

That is why I thought I was under an obligation to spare you no details, but to present you with a *fact*, as an object, whose outlines, and whose possible manipulation, I hope you will see more clearly, to present it at the very outset of what I now have to say when, before you, I ask the question—*What are the fundamentals*, in the broad sense of the term, *of psycho-analysis?* Which amounts to saying—What grounds it as praxis?

2

What is a praxis? I doubt whether this term may be regarded as inappropriate to psycho-analysis. It is the broadest term to designate a concerted human action, whatever it may be, which places man in a position to treat the real by the symbolic. The fact that in doing so he encounters the imaginary to a greater or lesser degree is only of secondary importance here.

This definition of praxis, then, is very extensive. We are not going to set out in search of our psycho-analysis, like Diogenes in search of man, in the various, very diversified fields of praxis. Rather we shall take our psycho-analysis with us, and it will direct us at once towards some fairly well located, specifiable points of praxis.

Without even introducing by any kind of transition the two

terms between which I wish to hold the question—and not at all in an ironic way—I posit first that, if I am here, in such a large auditorium, in such a place, and with such an audience, it is to ask myself *whether psycho-analysis is a science*, and to examine the question with you.

The other reference, the religious one, I already mentioned a little while ago, specifying that I am speaking of religion in the true sense of the term—not of a desiccated, methodologized religion, pushed back into the distant past of a primitive form of thought, but of religion as we see it practised in a still living, very vital way. Psycho-analysis, whether or not it is worthy of being included in one of these two registers, may even enlighten us as to what we should understand by science, and even by religion.

I would like at once to avoid a misunderstanding. In any case, someone will say, psycho-analysis is a form of research. Well, allow me to say quite clearly—in particular to the public authorities for whom this search has seemed, for some time now, to serve as a shibboleth for any number of things—that I am a bit suspicious of this term research. Personally, I have never regarded myself as a researcher. As Picasso once said, to the shocked surprise of those around him—*I do not seek, I find.*

Indeed, there are in the field of so-called scientific research two domains that can quite easily be recognized, that in which one seeks, and that in which one finds.

Curiously enough, this corresponds to a fairly well defined frontier between what may and may not qualify as science. Furthermore, there is no doubt some affinity between the research that seeks and the religious register. In the religious register, the phrase is often used—*You would not seek me if you had not already found me.* The *already found* is already behind, but stricken by something like oblivion. Is it not, then, a complaisant, endless search that is then opened up?

If the search concerns us here, it is by virtue of those elements of this debate that are established at the level of what we nowadays call the human sciences. Indeed, in these human sciences, one sees emerging, as it were, beneath the feet of whoever finds, what I will call the *hermeneutic demand*, which is precisely that which seeks—which seeks the ever new and the never

exhausted signification, but one threatened with being trampled under foot by him who finds.

Now, we analysts are interested in this hermeneutics, because the way of developing signification offered by hermeneutics is confused, in many minds, with what analysis calls *interpretation*. It so happens that, although this interpretation cannot in any way be conceived in the same way as the aforementioned hermeneutics, hermeneutics, on the other hand, makes ready use of interpretation. In this respect, we see, at least, a corridor of communication between psycho-analysis and the religious register. We shall come back to this in due course.

Before allowing psycho-analysis to call itself a science, therefore, we shall require a little more.

What specifies a science is having an object. It is possible to maintain that a science is specified by a definite object, at least by a certain reproducible level of operation known as *experiment*. But we must be very prudent, because this object changes, and in a very strange way, as a science develops. We cannot say that the object of modern physics is the same now as at its birth, which I would date in the seventeenth century. And is the object of modern chemistry the same as at the moment of its birth, which I would date from the time of Lavoisier?

It is possible that these remarks will force us into an at least tactical retreat, and to start again from the praxis, to ask ourselves, knowing that praxis delimits a field, whether it is at the level of this field that the modern scientist, who is not a man who knows a lot about everything, is to be specified.

I do not accept Duhem's demand that every science should refer to a unitary, or world, system—a reference that is always in fact more or less idealist, since it is a reference to the need of identification. I would even go so far as to say that we can dispense with the implicit transcendent element in the position of the positivist, which always refers to some ultimate unity of all the fields.

We will extricate ourselves from it all the more easily in view of the fact that, after all, it is disputable, and may even be regarded as false. It is in no way necessary that the tree of science should have a single trunk. I do not think that there are many of them. There are perhaps, as in the first chapter of *Genesis*, two different trunks—not that I attach in any way an ex-

ceptional importance to this myth, which is tinged to a greater or lesser degree with obscurantism, but why shouldn't we expect psycho-analysis to throw some light on it?

If we hold to the notion of experience, in the sense of the field of a praxis, we see very well that it is not enough to define a science. Indeed, this definition might be applied very well, for example, to the mystical experience. It is even by this door that it is regarded once again as scientific, and that we almost arrive at the stage of thinking that we can have a scientific apprehension of this experience. There is a sort of ambiguity here—to subject an experience to a scientific examination always implies that the experience has of itself a scientific subsistance. But it is obvious that we cannot re-introduce the mystical experience into science.

One further remark. Might this definition of science, based on the field determined by a praxis, be applied to alchemy to give it the status of a science? I was recently rereading a little book that is not even included in Diderot's *Complete Works*, but which certainly seems to be by him. Although chemistry was born with Lavoisier, Diderot speaks throughout this little book, with all the subtlety of mind we expect of him, not of chemistry, but of alchemy. What is it that makes us say at once that, despite the dazzling character of the stories he recounts from ages past, alchemy, when all is said and done, is not a science? Something, in my view, is decisive, namely, that the purity of soul of the operator was, as such, and in a specific way, an essential element in the matter.

This remark is not beside the point, as you may realize, since we may be about to raise something similar concerning the presence of the analyst in the analytic Great Work, and to maintain that it is perhaps what our training analysis seeks. I may even seem to have been saying the same thing myself in my teaching recently, when I point straight out, all veils torn aside, and in a quite overt way, towards that central point that I put in question, namely—*what is the analyst's desire?*

3

What must there be in the analyst's desire for it to operate in a correct way? Can this question be left outside the limits of our field, as it is in effect in the sciences—the modern sciences

of the most assured type—where no one questions himself as to what there must be in the desire, for example, of the physicist?

There really must be a series of crises for an Oppenheimer to question us all as to what there is in the desire that lies at the basis of modern physics. No one pays any attention to him anyway. It is thought to be a political incident. Is this desire something of the same order as that which is required of the adept of alchemy?

In any case, the analyst's desire can in no way be left outside our question, for the simple reason that the problem of the training of the analyst poses it. And the training analysis has no other purpose than to bring the analyst to the point I designate in my algebra as the analyst's desire.

Here, again, I must for the moment leave the question open. You may feel that I am leading you, little by little, to some such question as—Is agriculture a science? Some people will say yes, some people no. I offer this example only to suggest to you that you should make some distinction between agriculture defined by an object and agriculture defined, if you'll forgive me, by a field—between agriculture and agronomy. This enables me to bring out one definite dimension—we are at the abc stage, but, after all, we can't help it—that of *formula making.*

Is that enough to define the conditions of a science? I don't think so. A false science, just like a true science, may be expressed in formulae. The question is not so simple, then, when psycho-analysis, as a supposed science, appears to have such problematic features.

What are the formulae in psycho-analysis concerned with? What motivates and modulates this 'sliding-away' (*glissement*) of the object? Are there psycho-analytic concepts that we are now in possession of? How are we to understand the almost religious maintenance of the terms proposed by Freud to structure the analytic experience? Was Freud really the first, and did he really remain the only theoretician of this supposed science to have introduced fundamental concepts? Were this so, it would be very unusual in the history of the sciences. Without this trunk, this mast, this pile, where can our practice be moored? Can we even say that what we are dealing with are concepts in the strict sense? Are they concepts in the process

of formation? Are they concepts in the process of development, in movement, to be revised at a later date?

I think this is a question in which we can maintain that some progress has already been made, in a direction that can only be one of work, of conquest, with a view to resolving the question as to *whether psycho-analysis is a science*. In fact, the maintenance of Freud's concepts at the centre of all theoretical discussion in that dull, tedious, forbidding chain—which is read by nobody but psycho-analysts—known as the psycho-analytic literature, does not alter the fact that analysts in general have not yet caught up with these concepts, that in this literature most of the concepts are distorted, debased, fragmented, and that those that are too difficult are quite simply ignored—that, for example, everything that has been developed around the concept of frustration is, in relation to Freud's concepts, from which it derives, clearly retrograde and pre-conceptual.

Similarly, no one is any longer concerned, with certain rare exceptions to be found among my pupils, with the ternary structure of the Oedipus complex or with the castration complex.

It is certainly no contribution to the theoretical status of psycho-analysis for a writer like Fenichel to reduce, by an enumeration of the 'main sewer' type, the accumulated material of the psycho-analytic experience to the level of platitude. Of course, a certain quantity of facts have been gathered together, and there is some point in seeing them grouped into a few chapters, but one cannot avoid the impression that, in a whole field, everything is explained in advance. Analysis is not a matter of discovering in a particular case the differential feature of the theory, and in doing so believe that one is explaining why your daughter is silent—for the point at issue is to *get her to speak*, and this effect proceeds from a type of intervention that has nothing to do with a differential feature.

Analysis consists precisely in getting her to speak. It might be said, therefore, that in the last resort, it amounts to overcoming the barrier of silence, and this is what, at one time, was called the analysis of the resistances.

The symptom is first of all the silence in the supposed speaking subject. If he speaks, he is cured of his silence, obviously. But this does not tell us anything about why he began to speak.

It merely designates for us a differential feature which, in the case of the silent girl, is, as was only to be expected, that of the hysteric.

Now, the differential feature of the hysteric is precisely this —it is in the very movement of speaking that the hysteric constitutes her desire. So it is hardly surprising that it should be through this door that Freud entered what was, in reality, the relations of desire to language and discovered the mechanisms of the unconscious.

That this relation of desire to language as such did not remain concealed from him is a feature of his genius, but this is not to say that the relation was fully elucidated—far from it—by the massive notion of the transference.

The fact that, in order to cure the hysteric of all her symptoms, the best way is to satisfy her hysteric's desire—which is for her to posit her desire in relation to us as an unsatisfied desire —leaves entirely to one side the specific question of *why* she can sustain her desire only as an unsatisfied desire. So hysteria places us, I would say, on the track of some kind of original sin in analysis. There has to be one. The truth is perhaps simply one thing, namely, the desire of Freud himself, the fact that something, in Freud, was never analysed.

I had reached precisely this point when, by a strange coincidence, I was put into the position of having to give up my seminar.

What I had to say on the Names-of-the-Father had no other purpose, in fact, than to put in question the origin, to discover by what privilege Freud's desire was able to find the entrance into the field of experience he designates as the unconscious.

It is absolutely essential that we should go back to this origin if we wish to put analysis on its feet.

In any case, such a mode of questioning the field of experience will be guided, in our next meeting, by the following reference—what conceptual status must we give to four of the terms introduced by Freud as fundamental concepts, namely, *the unconscious*, *repetition*, *the transference* and *the drive*?

We will reach our next step, at our next meeting, by considering the way in which, in my past teaching, I have situated these concepts in relation to the more general function that embraces them, and which makes it possible to show their

operational value in this field, namely, the subjacent, implicit function of the signifier as such.

This year, I promised myself to break off at twenty-past two, so as to leave time for those who do not have to go on at once to other pursuits to ask questions arising from my lecture.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

M. TORT: *When you relate psycho-analysis to Freud's desire and to the desire of the hysteric, might you not be accused of psychologism?*

LACAN: The reference to Freud's desire is not a psychological reference—and reference to the hysteric's desire is not a psychological reference.

I posed the following question: the functioning of 'Primitive Thinking' (*la Pensée sauvage*), which Lévi-Strauss places at the basis of the statutes of society, is *one* unconscious, but is it enough to accommodate the unconscious as such? And if it is able to do so, does it accommodate the Freudian unconscious?

It was through the hysterics that Freud learnt the way of the strictly Freudian unconscious. It was here that I brought the desire of the hysteric into play, while indicating at the same time that Freud did not stop there.

Freud's desire, however, I have placed at a higher level. I have said that the Freudian field of analytic practice remained dependent on a certain original desire, which always plays an ambiguous, but dominant role in the transmission of psycho-analysis. The problem of this desire is not psychological, any more than is the unsolved problem of Socrates' desire. There is an entire thematic area concerning the status of the subject when Socrates declares that he does not place desire in a position of original subjectivity, but in the position of an object. Well! Freud, too, is concerned with desire as an object.

15 January 1964

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The Unconscious and Repetition

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2

THE FREUDIAN UNCONSCIOUS AND OURS

Pensée sauvage · *There is cause only in something that doesn't work* · *Gap, obstacle, discovery, loss* · *Discontinuity* · *Signorelli*

Because I am beginning on time today, I will start by reading a poem which, in actual fact, has no relation to what I am about to say, but which is related to what I said last year, in my seminar, about the mysterious object, the most concealed object, that of the scopic drive.

It is a short poem to be found on page 73 of *Fou d'Elsa*, which Aragon entitles '*Contre-chant*'.

Vainement ton image arrive à ma rencontre
Et ne m'entre où je suis qui seulement la montre
Toi te tournant vers moi tu ne saurais trouver
Au mur de mon regard que ton ombre rêvée

Je suis ce malheureux comparable aux miroirs
Qui peuvent réfléchir mais ne peuvent pas voir
Comme eux mon œil est vide et comme eux habité
De l'absence de toi qui fait sa cécité

In vain your image comes to meet me
And does not enter me where I am who only shows it
Turning towards me you can find
On the wall of my gaze only your dreamt-of shadow.

I am that wretch comparable with mirrors
That can reflect but cannot see
Like them my eye is empty and like them inhabited
By your absence which makes them blind.

I dedicate this poem to the nostalgia that some of you may feel for that interrupted seminar in which I developed the theme of anxiety and the function of the *objet petit a*.

They will appreciate, I think, those who were with me last year—I apologize for being so allusive—they will appreciate the fact that Aragon—in this admirable work in which I am proud to find an echo of the tastes of our generation, so much so that I am forced to turn to friends of my own age if I am to make myself understood about this poem—follows his poem with this enigmatic line—*Thus said An-Nadjī once, as he was invited to a circumcision.*

This is the point at which those who heard my seminar last year will find a correspondence between the various forms of the *objet a* and the central symbolic function of the *minus-phi* [$(-\phi)$]—evoked here by the strange reference, which is certainly no accident, that Aragon confers on the historical connotation, if I may put it this way, of the propagation by his character, the mad poet, of this 'counter-song'.

I

There are some of you here, I know, who are being introduced to my teaching for the first time. They are being introduced to it through writings that are already dated. I would like them to know that one of the indispensable co-ordinates in appreciating the meaning of this first teaching must be found in the fact that they cannot, from their present position, imagine to what degree of contempt for, or simply *méconnaissance* of, the instrument of their work the practitioners of psycho-analysis can attain. They should know that for some years all my effort has been required in a struggle to bring to the attention of these practitioners the true value of this instrument, *speech*—to give it back its dignity, so that it does not always represent for them those words, devalued in advance, that force them to fix their gaze elsewhere, in order to find their guarantor.

Thus, for a time at least, I was thought to be obsessed with some kind of philosophy of language, even a Heideggerian one, whereas only a *propaedeutic* reference was involved. The fact that I am speaking here will not make me speak more philosophically.

But let me turn to something else, which indeed I will find easier to specify here. I am referring to something that I can only call the refusal of the concept. That is why, as I announced at the end of my first seminar, I will try to introduce you today

to the major Freudian concepts—I have isolated four that seem to come within this category.

The few words on the blackboard under the heading Freudian concepts are the first two—the unconscious and repetition. The transference—I hope to approach it next time—will introduce us directly to the algorithms that I thought necessary to set out in practice, especially with a view to the implementation of the analytic technique as such. Lastly, the drive is still so difficult to approach—so neglected, one should say—that I do not think I can do more this year than touch upon it after we have dealt with the transference.

We shall see, therefore, only the essence of analysis—especially that which is profoundly problematic, though at the same time crucial, about it, namely, the function of the training analysis. It is only by going through this exposition that we may, at the end of the year—without wishing myself in any way to minimize the shifting, not to say scabrous, side of the approach to this concept—begin our examination of the drive. In this respect, our approach will provide a contrast with those who boldly venture into this terrain with incomplete and flimsy references.

The two small arrows that you see indicated on the blackboard after *The unconscious* and *Repetition* point towards the question-mark that follows. This question-mark indicates that our conception of the concept implies that the concept is always established in an approach that is not unrelated to that which is imposed on us, as a form, by infinitesimal calculus. Indeed, if the concept is modelled on an approach to the reality that the concept has been created to apprehend, it is only by a leap, a passage to the limit, that it manages to realize itself. We are then required to say in what respect—under what form of finite quantity, I would say—the conceptual elaboration known as the unconscious may be carried out. The same goes for repetition.

It is in relation to the other two terms written on the blackboard at the end of the line, *The subject* and *The real* that we will be led to give form to the question posed last time—can psychoanalysis, with all its paradoxical, odd, aporic qualities, be regarded, among us, as constituting a science, a potential science?

I shall take first the concept of the unconscious.

2

Most of you will have some idea of what I mean when I say — *the unconscious is structured like a language.* This statement refers to a field that is much more accessible to us today than at the time of Freud. I will illustrate it by something that is materialized, at what is certainly a scientific level, by the field that is explored, structured, elaborated by Claude Lévi-Strauss, and which he has pinpointed in the title of his book, *La Pensée Sauvage.*

Before any experience, before any individual deduction, even before those collective experiences that may be related only to social needs are inscribed in it, something organizes this field, inscribes its initial lines of force. This is the function that Claude Lévi-Strauss shows us to be the truth of the totemic function, and which reduces its appearance—the primary classificatory function.

Before strictly human relations are established, certain relations have already been determined. They are taken from whatever nature may offer as supports, supports that are arranged in themes of opposition. Nature provides—I must use the word—signifiers, and these signifiers organize human relations in a creative way, providing them with structures and shaping them.

The important thing, for us, is that we are seeking here —before any formation of the subject, of a subject who thinks, who situates himself in it—the level at which there is counting, things are counted, and in this counting he who counts is already included. It is only later that the subject has to recognize himself as such, recognize himself as he who counts. Remember the naïve failure of the simpleton's delighted attempt to grasp the little fellow who declares—*I have three brothers, Paul, Ernest and me.* But it is quite natural—first the three brothers, Paul, Ernest and I are counted, and then there is I at the level at which I am to reflect the first I, that is to say, the I who counts.

In our time, in the historical period that has seen the formation of a science that may be termed human, but which must be distinguished from any kind of psycho-sociology, namely, linguistics, whose model is the combinatory operation, functioning spontaneously, of itself, in a presubjective way

—it is this linguistic structure that gives its status to the unconscious. It is this structure, in any case, that assures us that there is, beneath the term unconscious, something definable, accessible and objectifiable. But when I urge psycho-analysts not to ignore this field, which provides them with a solid support for their labours, does this mean that I hope to include the concepts introduced historically by Freud under the term unconscious? No, I don't think so. The unconscious, the Freudian concept, is something different, which I would like to try to get you to grasp today.

It is certainly not enough to say that the unconscious is a dynamic concept, since this would be to substitute the most common kind of mystery for a particular mystery—in general, force is used to designate a locus of opacity. It is to the function of cause that I will refer today.

I am well aware that I am entering here on a terrain which, from the point of view of philosophical criticism, suggests a whole world of references, so many, in fact, as to make me hesitate among them—but let's take our pick. Some of you at least will remain unsatisfied if I simply point out that, in his *An attempt to introduce the concept of negative quantities into philosophy*, we can see how closely Kant comes to understanding the gap that the function of cause has always presented to any conceptual apprehension. In that essay, it is more or less stated that cause is a concept that, in the last resort, is unanalysable —impossible to understand by reason—if indeed the rule of reason, the *Vernunftsregel*, is always some *Vergleichung*, or equivalent—and that there remains essentially in the function of cause a certain *gap*, a term used by Kant in the *Prolegomena*.

I will not go so far as to remark that the problem of cause has always been an embarrassment to philosophers, and that it is not as simple as might be thought when, in Aristotle, one sees the four causes balancing one another—for I am not philosophizing here, and would not claim to carry out so heavy an undertaking with so few references. However, these references are enough to bring out the meaning of what I am insisting on. For me, cause—any modality, even if Kant inscribes it in the categories of pure reason—to be more precise, he inscribes it in the table of relations, between inherence and community —cause is not any the more rationalized for this.

Cause is to be distinguished from that which is determinate in a chain, in other words the *law*. By way of example, think of what is pictured in the law of action and reaction. There is here, one might say, a single principle. One does not go without the other. The mass of a body that is crushed on the ground is not the cause of that which it receives in return for its vital force—its mass is integrated in this force that comes back to it in order to dissolve its coherence by a return effect. There is no gap here, except perhaps at the end.

Whenever we speak of cause, on the other hand, there is always something anti-conceptual, something indefinite. The phases of the moon are the cause of tides—we know this from experience, we know that the word cause is correctly used here. Or again, miasmas are the cause of fever—that doesn't mean anything either, there is a hole, and something that oscillates in the interval. In short, there is cause only in something that doesn't work.

Well! It is at this point that I am trying to make you see by approximation that the Freudian unconscious is situated at that point, where, between cause and that which it affects, there is always something wrong. The important thing is not that the unconscious determines neurosis—of that one Freud can quite happily, like Pontius Pilot, wash his hands. Sooner or later, something would have been found, humoral determinates, for example—for Freud, it would be quite immaterial. For what the unconscious does is to show us the gap through which neurosis recreates a harmony with a real—a real that may well not be determined.

In this gap, something happens. Once this gap has been filled, is the neurosis cured? After all, the question remains open. But the neurosis becomes something else, sometimes a mere illness, a *scar*, as Freud said—the scar, not of the neurosis, but of the unconscious. I am not handling this topology very skilfully, because I do not have time—I have simply jumped into the deep end—but I think you will be able to feel guided by the terms that I have introduced when you come to read Freud's own works. Observe the point from which he sets out —*The Aetiology of the Neuroses*—and what does he find in the hole, in the split, in the gap so characteristic of cause? Something of the order of the *non-realized*.

One uses the term refusal. This is rather hasty—indeed, for some time now, one has no longer been sure what the term refusal means. At first, the unconscious is manifested to us as something that holds itself in suspense in the area, I would say, of the *unborn*. That repression should discharge something into this area is not surprising. It is the abortionist's relation to limbo.

Certainly, this dimension should be evoked in a register that has nothing unreal, or dereistic, about it, but is rather unrealized. It is always dangerous to disturb anything in that zone of shades, and perhaps it is part of the analyst's role, if the analyst is performing it properly, to be besieged—I mean *really*—by those in whom he has invoked this world of shades, without always being able to bring them up to the light of day. One can never be sure that what one says on this matter will have no harmful effect—even what I have been able to say about it over the last ten years owes some of its impact to this fact. It is not without effect that, even in a public speech, one directs one's attention at subjects, touching them at what Freud calls the navel—*the navel of the dreams*, he writes, to designate their ultimately unknown centre—which is simply, like the same anatomical navel that represents it, that gap of which I have already spoken.

There is a danger in public discourse, precisely in so far as it is addressed to those nearest—Nietzsche knew this, a certain type of discourse can be addressed only to those furthest away.

In actual fact, this dimension of the unconscious that I am evoking *had been forgotten*, as Freud had quite clearly foreseen. The unconscious had closed itself up against his message thanks to those active practitioners of orthopaedics that the analysts of the second and third generation became, busying themselves, by psychologizing analytic theory, in stitching up this gap.

Believe me, I myself never re-open it without great care.

3

Now, of course, at this stage in my life, I am in a position to introduce into the domain of cause the law of the signifier, in the locus in which this gap is produced. Nevertheless, we must, if we are to understand what it means in psycho-analysis, go back and trace the concept of the unconscious through the

various stages of the process in which Freud elaborated it —since we can complete that process only by carrying it to its limits.

The Freudian unconscious has nothing to do with the so-called forms of the unconscious that preceded it, not to say accompanied it, and which still surround it today. To understand what I mean, open the Lalande dictionary. Or read the delightful list provided by Dwelshauvers in a book published some forty years ago. In it he lists ten or so forms of the unconscious that will tell nobody anything that he did not already know, and which simply designate the non-conscious, the more or less conscious, etc.—in the ever-expanding field of psychology, one finds hundreds of additional varieties.

Freud's unconscious is not at all the romantic unconscious of imaginative creation. It is not the locus of the divinities of night. This locus is no doubt not entirely unrelated to the locus towards which Freud turns his gaze—but the fact that Jung, who provides a link with the terms of the romantic unconscious, should have been repudiated by Freud, is sufficient indication that psycho-analysis is introducing something other. Similarly, we can say that the hold-all, heteroclite unconscious that Edward von Hartmann spent his life elaborating is not Freud's unconscious, but we should not be over-hasty, for Freud, in the seventh chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, himself referred to it in a footnote—that is to say, we must look more closely at it if we are to discover in what way Freud's unconscious is to be distinguished from it.

To all these forms of unconscious, ever more or less linked to some obscure will regarded as primordial, to something preconscious, what Freud opposes is the revelation that at the level of the unconscious there is something at all points homologous with what occurs at the level of the subject—this thing speaks and functions in a way quite as elaborate as at the level of the conscious, which thus loses what seemed to be its privilege. I am well aware of the resistances that this simple remark can still provoke, though it is evident in everything that Freud wrote. Read, for example, the paragraph of that seventh chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, called 'Forgetting in Dreams', concerning which Freud merely refers to the play of the signifier.

I will not content myself with this portentous reference. I have spelt out to you point by point the functioning of what was first produced for us by Freud as the phenomenon of the unconscious. In the dream, in parapraxis, in the flash of wit —what is it that strikes one first? It is the sense of impediment to be found in all of them.

Impediment, failure, split. In a spoken or written sentence something stumbles. Freud is attracted by these phenomena, and it is there that he seeks the unconscious. There, something other demands to be realized—which appears as intentional, of course, but of a strange temporality. What occurs, what is *produced*, in this gap, is presented as *the discovery*. It is in this way that the Freudian exploration first encounters what occurs in the unconscious.

This discovery is, at the same time, a solution—not necessarily a complete one, but, however incomplete it may be, it has that indefinable something that touches us, that peculiar accent that Theodor Reik has brought out so admirably—only brought out, for Freud certainly noted it before him—namely, *surprise*, that by which the subject feels himself overcome, by which he finds both more and less than he expected—but, in any case, it is, in relation to what he expected, of exceptional value.

Now, as soon as it is presented, this discovery becomes a rediscovery and, furthermore, it is always ready to steal away again, thus establishing the dimension of loss.

To resort to a metaphor, drawn from mythology, we have, in Eurydice twice lost, the most potent image we can find of the relation between Orpheus the analyst and the unconscious.

In this respect, if you will allow me to add a touch of irony, the unconscious finds itself, strictly speaking, on the opposite side to love, which, as everyone knows, is always unique; the expression 'one lost, ten to be found again' finds its best application here.

Discontinuity, then, is the essential form in which the unconscious first appears to us as a phenomenon—discontinuity, in which something is manifested as a vacillation. Now, if this discontinuity has this absolute, inaugural character, in the development of Freud's discovery, must we place it—as was later the tendency with analysts—against the background of a totality?

Is the *one* anterior to discontinuity? I do not think so, and everything that I have taught in recent years has tended to exclude this need for a closed *one*—a mirage to which is attached the reference to the enveloping psyche, a sort of double of the organism in which this false unity is thought to reside. You will grant me that the *one* that is introduced by the experience of the unconscious is the *one* of the split, of the stroke, of rupture.

At this point, there springs up a misunderstood form of the *un*, the *Un* of the *Unbewusste*. Let us say that the limit of the *Unbewusste* is the *Unbegriff*—not the non-concept, but the concept of lack.[1]

Where is the background? Is it absent? No. Rupture, split, the stroke of the opening makes absence emerge—just as the cry does not stand out against a background of silence, but on the contrary makes the silence emerge as silence.

If you keep hold of this initial structure, you will avoid giving yourself up to some partial aspect of the question of the unconscious—as, for example, that it is the subject, *qua* alienated in his history, at the level at which the syncope of discourse is joined with his desire. You will see that, more radically, it is in the dimension of a synchrony that you must situate the unconscious—at the level of a being, but in the sense that it can spread over everything, that is to say, at the level of the subject of the enunciation, in so far as, according to the sentences, according to the modes, it loses itself as much as it finds itself again, and in the sense that, in an interjection, in an imperative, in an invocation, even in a hesitation, it is always the unconscious that presents you with its enigma, and speaks—in short, at the level at which everything that blossoms in the unconscious spreads, like mycelium, as Freud says about the dream, around a central point. It is always a question of the subject *qua* indeterminate.

Oblivium is *lēvis* with the long *e*—smooth. *Oblivium* is that which effaces—effaces what? The signifier as such. Here we find again the basic structure that makes it possible, in an operatory way, for something to take on the function of barring,

[1] Lacan is playing on the French *un* (one) and the German negative prefix *un*, moving from 'oneness' to 'negation'. The *Unbewusste* is Freud's 'unconscious'. Lacan's gloss, on *Unbegriff* shifts the notion of 'negation' into one of 'lack' [Translator's note].

striking out another thing. This is a more primordial level, structurally speaking, than repression, of which we shall speak later. Well, this operatory element of effacement is what Freud designates, from the outset, in the function of the censor.

It is the censorship by scissors, the Russian censorship, or again the German censorship, see Heinrich Heine, at the beginning of the *Book of Germany. Herr and Frau Such-and-such have pleasure in announcing the birth of a child as beautiful as liberty*—and Dr Hoffmann, the censor, strikes out the word *liberty*. Certainly one may ask oneself what effect this word can have as a result of this strictly material censorship, but that is another problem. But it is certainly here that the dynamism of the unconscious operates in the most efficient way.

Let us turn again to an example that has never been sufficiently exploited, the first used by Freud to demonstrate his theory, namely, his forgetting, his inability to remember the word *Signorelli* after his visit to the paintings at Orvieto. Is it possible not to see emerging from the text itself, and establishing itself, not metaphor, but the reality of the disappearance, of the suppression, of the *Unterdrückung*, the passing underneath? The term *Signor*, *Herr*, passes underneath—the absolute master, I once said, which is in fact death, has disappeared there. Furthermore, do we not see, behind this, the emergence of that which forced Freud to find in the myths of the death of the father the regulation of his desire? After all, it is to be found in Nietzsche, who declares, in his own myth, that God is dead. And it is perhaps against the background of the same reasons. For the myth of the *God is dead*—which, personally, I feel much less sure about, as a myth of course, than most contemporary intellectuals, which is in no sense a declaration of theism, nor of faith in the resurrection—perhaps this myth is simply a shelter against the threat of castration.

If you know how to read them, you will see this threat in the apocalyptic frescos of Orvieto cathedral. If not, read Freud's conversation in the train—where only the end of sexual potency is referred to. Freud's interlocutor, a doctor—the same interlocutor in fact before whom he is unable to remember the name *Signorelli*—is describing to Freud the dramatic character that a loss of potency usually has for his patients.

Thus the unconscious is always manifested as that which vacillates in a split in the subject, from which emerges a discovery that Freud compares with desire—a desire that we will temporarily situate in the denuded metonymy of the discourse in question, where the subject surprises himself in some unexpected way.

As far as Freud and his relation to the father are concerned, let us not forget that, despite all his efforts to understand, he was forced to admit, to a woman of his acquaintance, that, for him, the question—*What does a woman want?*—remained unanswered. He never resolved this question, as we can see from what was in fact his relations with women, his uxorious character, as Jones rather delicately puts it. I would say that Freud would certainly have made a perfect impassioned idealist had he not devoted himself to the other, in the form of the hysteric.

I have decided to stop my seminar always at a particular time, at twenty-to-two. As you see, I have not managed today to deal fully with the function of the unconscious.

(*Questions and answers are missing.*)

22 January 1964

3

OF THE SUBJECT OF CERTAINTY

Neither being, nor non-being · Finitude of desire · The elusive · The status of the unconscious is ethical · That all theory has to be revised · Freud, Cartesian · The desire of the hysteric

Last week, my introduction of the unconscious through the structure of a gap provided an opportunity for one of my listeners, Jacques-Alain Miller, to give an excellent outline of what he recognized, in my previous writings, as the structuring function of a lack, and by an audacious arch he linked this up with what, speaking of the function of desire, I have designated as *manque-à-être*, a 'want-to-be'.

Having made this synopsis, which has certainly not been without its uses, at least for those who already had some idea of my teaching, he questioned me as to my ontology.

I was able to answer him only within the limits imposed on dialogue by the time-table, and I ought to have obtained from him to begin with a more specific definition of what he means by the term ontology. Nevertheless, I hope he did not think that I found the question at all inappropriate. I would go further. It came at a particularly good point, in that when speaking of this gap one is dealing with an ontological function, by which I thought I had to introduce, it being the most essential, the function of the unconscious.

I

The gap of the unconscious may be said to be *pre-ontological*. I have stressed that all too often forgotten characteristic—forgotten in a way that is not without significance—of the first emergence of the unconscious, namely, that it does not lend itself to ontology. Indeed, what became apparent at first to Freud, to the discoverers, to those who made the first steps,

and what still becomes apparent to anyone in analysis who spends some time observing what truly belongs to the order to the unconscious, is that it is neither being, nor non-being, but the unrealized.

I mentioned the function of limbo. I might also have spoken of what, in the constructions of the Gnostics, are called the intermediary beings—sylphs, gnomes, and even higher forms of these ambiguous mediators. Furthermore, let us not forget that when Freud began to disturb this world, he gave voice to the line *Flectere si nequeo superos Acheronta movebo.* It seemed heavy with disturbing apprehensions when he pronounced it, but remarkably enough, its threat is completely forgotten after sixty years of experience. It is remarkable that what was thought to be an infernal opening should later have been so remarkably asepticized.

But it is also revealing that what seemed so evidently to be an opening on to a lower world, did not, with a few rare exceptions, form any serious alliance with that whole world—then so prevalent, and still so today, but to a lesser degree than in the period of Freudian discovery—of meta-psychical research, as one used to say, even of spiritist, invocatory, necromantic practice, as did the Gothic psychology of Myers, which strove to follow up the fact of telepathy.

Of course, in passing, Freud does touch on these facts, in so far as they were borne in upon him by experience. But it is clear that his theorization was moving towards a rationalist, elegant reduction. One may regard as exceptional, not to say aberrant, any concern in the analytic circle of today with what have been called—significantly enough, in order to sterilize them—the *psi* (ψ) phenomena. I am referring to such research as that of Servadio, for example.

Certainly, it is not in this direction that our experience has led us. The result of our research into the unconscious moves, on the contrary, in the direction of a certain desiccation, a reduction to a herbarium, whose sampling is limited to a register that has become a *catalogue raisonné*, a classification that would certainly like to be thought a natural one. If, in the register of a traditional psychology, stress is laid on the uncontrollable, infinite character of human desire—seeing in it the mark of some divine slipper that has left its imprint on it—

what analytic experience enables us to declare is rather the limited function of desire. Desire, more than any other point in the range of human possibility, meets its limit somewhere.

We shall come back to all this, but I would point out that I said *desire*, not *pleasure*. Pleasure limits the scope of human possibility—the pleasure principle is a principle of homeostasis. Desire, on the other hand, finds its boundary, its strict relation, its limit, and it is in the relation to this limit that it is sustained as such, crossing the threshold imposed by the pleasure principle.

This repudiation, into the field of religious sentimentality, of what he called the oceanic aspiration does not stem from a personal prejudice of Freud himself. Our experience is there to reduce this aspiration to a phantasy, to provide us with firm foundations elsewhere and to relegate it to the place occupied by what Freud called, on the subject of religion, illusion.

What is ontic in the function of the unconscious is the split through which that something, whose adventure in our field seems so short, is for a moment brought into the light of day—a moment because the second stage, which is one of closing up, gives this apprehension a vanishing aspect. I will come back to this—it may be even the step that I will be able to cross now, not having been able to so far, for reasons of context.

The context is an urgent one, you know. Our technical habits have become—for reasons that will have to be analysed—so touchy about the functions of time, that in wishing to introduce distinctions so essential that they are emerging everywhere except in our discipline, it seemed that I was under an obligation to embark on a more or less defensive discussion.

It is apparent that the very level of the definition of the unconscious—to refer only to what Freud says about it, in a necessarily approximate way, being able at first to use it only in hesitant touches here and there, when discussing the primary process—that what happens there is inaccessible to contradiction, to spatio-temporal location and also to the function of time.

Now, although desire merely conveys what it maintains of an image of the past towards an ever short and limited future, Freud declares that it is nevertheless *indestructible*. Notice that in the term indestructible, it is precisely the most inconsistent

reality of all that is affirmed. If indestructible desire escapes from time, to what register does it belong in the order of things? For what is a thing, if not that which endures, in an identical state, for a certain time? Is not this the place to distinguish in addition to duration, the substance of things, another mode of time—a logical time? You know that I have already touched on this theme in one of my essays.

We find here once again the rhythmic structure of this pulsation of the slit whose function I referred to last time. The appearance/disappearance takes place between two points, the initial and the terminal of this logical time—between the instant of seeing, when something of the intuition itself is always elided, not to say lost, and that elusive moment when the apprehension of the unconscious is not, in fact, concluded, when it is always a question of an 'absorption' fraught with false trails (*une récupération leurrée*).

Ontically, then, the unconscious is the elusive—but we are beginning to circumscribe it in a structure, a temporal structure, which, it can be said, has never yet been articulated as such.

2

Since Freud himself, the development of the analytic experience has shown nothing but disdain for what appears in the gap. We have not—according to the comparison that Freud uses at a particular turning-point of *The Interpretation of Dreams—fed with blood* the shades that have emerged from it.

We have concerned ourselves with other things, and I am here to show you this year in what way these displacements of interest have always been more in the direction of uncovering structures, which are badly described in analysis, and of which one speaks almost as a prophet. Too often, when reading the best theoretical work that analysts bring from their experience, one has the feeling that it has to be interpreted. I shall demonstrate this for you in due course when dealing with something that is of the most vital importance in our experience, namely, the transference, from which we see co-existing the most fragmentary and the most illuminating evidence, in total confusion.

This explains why I can proceed only step by step, for others

will speak to you of what I am dealing with here—the unconscious, repetition—at the level of the transference, and say that it is all a question of that. It is quite common, for example, to hear it said that the transference is a form of repetition. I am not saying that this is untrue, or that there is not an element of repetition in the transference. I am not saying that it is not on the basis of his experience of the transference that Freud approached repetition. What I am saying is that the concept of repetition has nothing to do with the concept of the transference. Because of this confusion, I am obliged to go through this explanation at the outset, to lay down the necessary logical steps. For to follow chronology would be to encourage the ambiguities of the concept of repetition that derive from the fact that its discovery took place in the course of the first hesitant steps necessitated by the experience of the transference.

I would now like to make clear, astonishing as the formula may seem to you, that its status of being, which is so elusive, so unsubstantial, is given to the unconscious by the procedure of its discoverer.

The status of the unconscious, which, as I have shown, is so fragile on the ontic plane, is ethical. In his thirst for truth, Freud says, *Whatever it is, I must go there,* because, somewhere, this unconscious reveals itself. And he says this on the basis of his experience of what was, up to that time, for the physician, the most rejected, the most concealed, the most contained, reality, that of the hysteric, in so far as it is—in a sense, from its origin—marked by the sign of deception.

Of course, this led us to many other things in the field in which we were taken by this initial approach, by the discontinuity constituted by the fact that one man, a discoverer, Freud, said, *There is the country where I shall take my people.* For a long time, what was situated in this field appeared marked with the characteristics of its original discovery—the desire of the hysteric. But soon, as the discovery proceeded, something quite different made itself felt, something that was always formulated somewhat belatedly. This was because the theory had been forged only for the discoveries that preceded it. As a result, everything has to be revised, including the question of the desire of the hysteric. This imposes on us a sort of retroactive leap if we wish to mark here the essence of Freud's

position concerning that which occurs in the field of the unconscious.

I am not being impressionistic when I say that Freud's approach here is ethical—I am not thinking of the legendary courage of the scientist who recoils before nothing. This image, like all the others, requires some modification. If I am formulating here that the status of the unconscious is ethical, and not ontic, it is precisely because Freud himself does not stress it when he gives the unconscious its status. And what I have said about the thirst for truth that animated him is a mere indication of the approaches that will enable us to ask ourselves where Freud's passion lay.

Freud shows that he is very well aware how fragile are the veils of the unconscious where this register is concerned, when he opens the last chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams* with the dream which, of all those that are analysed in the book, is in a category of its own—a dream suspended around the most anguishing mystery, that which links a father to the corpse of his son close by, of his dead son. As he is falling asleep, the father sees rise up before him the image of the son, who says to him, *Father, can't you see I'm burning?* In fact, the son really is burning, in the next room.

What is the point, then, of sustaining the theory according to which the dream is the image of a desire with an example in which, in a sort of flamboyant reflection, it is precisely a reality which, incompletely transferred, seems here to be shaking the dreamer from his sleep? Why, if not to suggest a mystery that is simply the world of the beyond, and some secret or other shared by the father and the son who says to him, *Father, can't you see I'm burning?* What is he burning with, if not with that which we see emerging at other points designated by the Freudian topology, namely, the weight of the sins of the father, borne by the ghost in the myth of Hamlet, which Freud couples with the myth of Oedipus? The father, the Name-of-the-father, sustains the structure of desire with the structure of the law—but the inheritance of the father is that which Kierkegaard designates for us, namely, his sin.

Where does Hamlet's ghost emerge from, if not from the place from which he denounces his brother for surprising him and cutting him off in the full flower of his sins? And far from

providing Hamlet with the prohibitions of the Law that would allow his desire to survive, this too ideal father is constantly being doubted.

Everything is within reach, emerging, in this example that Freud places here in order to indicate in some way that he does not exploit it, that he appreciates it, that he weighs it, savours it. It is from this most fascinating point that he deflects our attention, and embarks on a discussion concerning the forgetting of the dream, and the value of its transmission by the subject. This discussion centres entirely around a certain number of terms that need to be stressed.

The major term, in fact, is not truth. It is *Gewissheit*, certainty. Freud's method is Cartesian—in the sense that he sets out from the basis of the subject of certainty. The question is—of what can one be certain? With this aim, the first thing to be done is to overcome that which connotes anything to do with the content of the unconscious—especially when it is a question of extracting it from the experience of the dream—to overcome that which floats everywhere, that which marks, stains, spots, the text of any dream communication—*I am not sure, I doubt.*

And who would not have doubts about the transmission of the dream when, in effect, there is such an obvious gap between what was experienced and what is recounted?

Now—and it is here that Freud lays all his stress—doubt is the support of his certainty.

He goes on to explain why—this is precisely the sign, he says, that there is something to preserve. Doubt, then, is a sign of resistance.

Yet the function he gives to doubt remains ambiguous, for this something that is to be preserved may also be the something that has to be shown—since, in any case, what is shown, shows itself only under a *Verkleidung*, a disguise, and an ill-fitting one it often is. But, nevertheless, I must insist on the fact that there is a point at which the two approaches of Descartes and Freud come together, converge.

Descartes tells us—*By virtue of the fact that I doubt, I am sure that I think*, and—I would say, to stick to a formula that is no more prudent than his, but which will save us from getting caught up in the *cogito*, the *I think—by virtue of thinking, I am.*

Note in passing that in avoiding the *I think*, I avoid the discussion that results from the fact that this *I think*, for us, certainly cannot be detached from the fact that he can formulate it only by *saying* it to us, implicitly—a fact that he forgets. I will return to this later.

In a precisely similar way, Freud, when he doubts—for they are *his* dreams, and it is he who, at the outset, doubts—is assured that a thought is there, which is unconscious, which means that it reveals itself as absent. As soon as he comes to deal with others, it is to this place that he summons the *I think* through which the subject will reveal himself. In short, he is sure that this thought is there alone with all his *I am*, if I may put it like this, provided, and this is the leap, someone thinks in his place.

It is here that the dissymmetry between Freud and Descartes is revealed. It is not in the initial method of certainty grounded on the subject. It stems from the fact that the subject is 'at home' in this field of the unconscious. It is because Freud declares the certainty of the unconscious that the progress by which he changed the world for us was made.

For Descartes, in the initial *cogito*—the Cartesians will grant me this point, but I will develop it in the discussion—what the *I think* is directed towards, in so far as it lurches into the *I am*, is a real. But the true remains so much outside that Descartes then has to re-assure himself—of what, if not of an Other that is not deceptive, and which shall, into the bargain, guarantee by its very existence the bases of truth, guarantee him that there are in his own objective reason the necessary foundations for the very real, about whose existence he has just re-assured himself, to find the dimension of truth. I can do no more than suggest the extraordinary consequences that have stemmed from this handing back of truth into the hands of the Other, in this instance the perfect God, whose truth is the nub of the matter, since, whatever he might have meant, would always be *the* truth—even if he had said that two and two make five, it would have been true.

What does this imply, if not that we will be able to begin playing with the small algebraic letters that transform geometry into analysis, that the door is open to set theory, that we can permit ourselves everything as a hypothesis of truth?

But let us leave this—it is not our business, except in so far as we know that what begins at the level of the subject is never without consequence, on condition that we know what the term *subject* means.

Descartes did not know, except that it involved the subject of a certainty and the rejection of all previous knowledge—but we know, thanks to Freud, that the subject of the unconscious manifests itself, that it thinks before it attains certainty.

This is what we're left with. It's certainly our problem. But in any case, it is now a field to which we cannot refuse ourselves entry—at least as far as the question it poses is concerned.

3

I would now like to stress that the correlative of the subject is henceforth no longer the deceiving Other, but the deceived Other. And this is something that we are aware of in the most concrete way as soon as we enter the experience of analysis. What the subject fears most is to mislead us (*nous tromper*), to put us on a wrong track, or more simply, that we will make a mistake (*nous nous trompions*), for, after all, it is obvious, just to look at us, that we are people who could make a mistake like anybody else.

Now, this does not bother Freud because—it is precisely this that one must understand, especially when one reads the first paragraph of the chapter on forgetting in dreams—the signs intersect, one must take everything into account, one must free oneself, he says, *frei machen* oneself of the whole scale of the evaluation that is sought there, *Preisschätzung*, the evaluation of what is sure and what is not sure. The slightest indication that something is entering the field should make us regard it as of equal value as a trace in relation to the subject.

Later, in the famous case of a female homosexual, he pokes fun at those who, on the subject of his patient's dreams can say to him: *But where is this unconscious that is supposed to bring us to the truth, to a divine truth?* they ask sarcastically. *Your patient is just laughing at you, since, in analysis, she has dreams on purpose to convince you that she was returning to what was asked of her, a liking for men.* Freud sees no objection to this. *The unconscious*, he tells us, *is not the dream*. What he means is that the unconscious may operate in the direction of deception, and that this does not in any way

count as an objection for him. Indeed, how could there not be truth about lying—that truth which makes it perfectly possible, contrary to the supposed paradox, to declare, *I am lying*?

It is simply that Freud, on this occasion, failed to formulate correctly what was the object both of the hysteric's desire and of the female homosexual's desire. This is why—in each case, in the case of Dora as well as in the famous case of the female homosexual—he allowed himself to be overwhelmed, and the treatment was broken off. With regard to his interpretation, he is himself still hesitant—a little too early, a little too late. Freud could not yet see—for lack of those structural reference-points that I hope to bring out for you—that the hysteric's desire—which is legible in the most obvious way in the case—is to sustain the desire of the father—and, in the case of Dora, to sustain it by procuring.

Dora's obvious complaisance in the father's adventure with the woman who is the wife of Herr K., whose attentions to herself she accepts, is precisely the game by which she must sustain the man's desire. Furthermore, the *passage à l'acte*—breaking off the relationship by striking him, as soon as Herr K. says to her not, *I am not interested in you*, but, *I am not interested in my wife*—shows that it was necessary for her that the link should be preserved with that third element that enabled her to see the desire, which in any case was unsatisfied, subsisting—both the desire of the father whom she favoured *qua* impotent and her own desire of being unable to realize herself *qua* desire of the Other.

Similarly, and this once again justifies the formula I have given, the formula that originated in the experience of the hysteric, as a means of situating it at its correct level—*man's desire is the desire of the Other*—it is in the desire of the father that the female homosexual finds another solution, that is, to defy the desire of the father. If you re-read the case, you will see the obviously provocative character of the whole behaviour of this girl who, dogging the footsteps of some *demi-mondaine* whom she had found in the town, constantly made show of the chivalrous attentions she paid the girl until one day, meeting her father—what she meets in the father's gaze is unconcern, disregard, contempt for what is happening in front of him—she immediately throws herself over the railing of a local rail-

way bridge. Literally, she can no longer conceive, other than by destroying herself, of the function she had, that of showing the father how one is, oneself, an abstract, heroic, unique phallus, devoted to the service of a lady.

What the female homosexual does in her dream, in deceiving Freud, is still an act of defiance in relation to the father's desire: *You want me to love men, you will have as many dreams about love of men as you wish.* It is defiance in the form of derision.

I have developed this introduction in such detail so that you may distinguish the exact position of the Freudian approach to the subject—in so far as it is the subject that is concerned in the field of the unconscious. In this way, I have distinguished the function of the subject of certainty from the search for the truth.

Next time, we shall approach the concept of repetition, by asking ourselves how it should be conceived. We shall see how by means of repetition, as repetition of deception, Freud co-ordinates experience, *qua* deceiving, with a real that will henceforth be situated in the field of science, situated as that which the subject is condemned to miss, but even this miss is revelatory.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

X: *Are not logical time and time-substance identical?*

LACAN: Logical time is constituted by three stages. First, *the moment of seeing*—which is not without mystery, although correctly enough defined in the psychological experience of the intellectual operation that is called *insight*. Secondly, *the stage of understanding*. Thirdly, *the moment to conclude*. This is merely a reminder.

In order to understand logical time, one must set out with the presupposition that from the outset the signifying battery is given. On this basis, two terms are to be introduced, necessitated, as we shall see, by the function of repetition—*Willkür*, chance, and *Zufall*, the arbitrary.

In this way, Freud considers, with a view to the interpretation of dreams, the consequences of the chance of transcription, and the arbitrary nature of the links made—why link this with that, rather than with something else? Freud certainly brings us here to the heart of the question posed by the modern

development of the sciences, in so far as they demonstrate what we can ground on chance.

Nothing, in effect, can be grounded on chance—the calculation of chances, strategies—that does not involve at the outset a limited structuring of the situation, in terms of signifiers. When modern games theory elaborates the strategy of the two partners, each meets the other with the maximum chances of winning on condition that each reasons in the same way as the other. What is the value of an operation of this kind, if not that one's bearings are already laid down, the signifying reference-points of the problem are already marked in it and the solution will never go beyond them?

Well! As far as the unconscious is concerned, Freud reduces everything that comes within reach of his hearing to the function of pure signifiers. It is on the basis of this reduction that it operates, and that a moment to conclude may appear, says Freud—a moment when he feels he has the courage to judge and to conclude. This is part of what I have called his ethical witness.

Experience later shows that where the subject is concerned, he encounters limits, which are non-conviction, resistance, non-cure. Remembering always involves a limit. And, no doubt, it can be obtained more completely by other ways than analysis, but they are inoperant as far as cure is concerned.

It is here that we must distinguish the scope of these two directions, remembering and repetition. From the one to the other, there is no more temporal orientation than there is reversibility. It is simply that they are not commutative—to begin by remembering in order to deal with the resistances of repetition is not the same thing as to begin by repetition in order to tackle remembering.

It is this that shows us that the time-function is of a logical order here, and bound up with a signifying shaping of the real. Non-commutativity, in effect, is a category that belongs only to the register of the signifier.

This enables us to grasp by what means the order of the unconscious appears. To what does Freud refer it? What is its surety? It is what he succeeds, in a second stage, in resolving by elaborating the function of repetition. We will see later how we can formulate it by referring to Aristotle's *Physics*.

P. KAUFMANN: *Last year, you declared that anxiety is that which does not deceive. Can you link this statement with ontology and certainty?*

LACAN: For analysis, anxiety is a crucial term of reference, because in effect anxiety is that which does not deceive. But anxiety may be lacking.

In experience, it is necessary to canalize it and, if I may say so, to take it in small doses, so that one is not overcome by it. This is a difficulty similar to that of bringing the subject into contact with the real—a term that I shall try to define next time in order to dissipate the ambiguity that still persists about it in the minds of many of my pupils.

What, for the analyst, can confirm in the subject what occurs in the unconscious? In order to locate the truth—I have shown you this in studying the formations of the unconscious—Freud relies on a certain signifying scansion. What justifies this trust is a reference to the real. But to say the least, the real does not come to him easily. Take the example of the *Wolf Man*. The exceptional importance of this case in Freud's work is to show that it is in relation to the real that the level of phantasy functions. The real supports the phantasy, the phantasy protects the real. Next time, by way of elucidating this relation for you, I shall take Spinoza's cogitation, but I shall bring into play another term to replace the attribute.

29 January 1964

4

OF THE NETWORK OF SIGNIFIERS

Thoughts of the unconscious · The colophon of doubt · Subversion of the subject · Introduction to repetition · The real is that which always comes back to the same place

It has been my habit to absent myself for the period of two of my seminars in order to go to that mode of ritual rest, spent in accordance with our customs, that we call winter sports. I am pleased to announce that this will not be the case this year, the lack of snow having given me an excuse to give up this obligation.

Chance so has it that, by virtue of this fact, I can also announce another event that I am happy to bring to the knowledge of a wider public. It so happens that just as I was declining the opportunity of leaving my deposit with the travel agency, I was warmly thanked, for they had received a booking from eight members of the *French Psycho-analytic Association.*

I must say that it gives me all the more pleasure to bring this event to your notice as it is what is called a truly good act, an action of the kind to which one may well apply the words of the Gospel, *The left hand must not know what the right hand is doing.*

Eight of the most eminent members of the teaching section of the *Association* are now in London to discuss ways of warding off the effects of my teaching. This is a very praiseworthy concern and the said *Association* is willing to make any sacrifice for the well-being of its members, unless, perhaps, by reciprocity, the British *Association* has defrayed the expenses of this journey, as it is our custom to defray the travelling expenses of its members when they come and concern themselves very closely in the functioning of our Association.

I thought I had to make this announcement so that the paeons of gratitude might hide the few signs of nervousness that have probably appeared in connection with this expedition.

I

Last time, I spoke to you about the concept of the unconscious, whose true function is precisely that of being in profound, initial, inaugural, relation with the function of the concept of the *Unbegriff*—or *Begriff* of the original *Un*, namely, the cut.

I saw a profound link between this cut and the function as such of the subject, of the subject in its constituent relation to the signifier itself.

It seems something of a new departure—and it is—that I should have referred to the subject when speaking of the unconscious. I thought I had succeeded in making you feel that all this happens in the same place, in the place of the subject, which—from the Cartesian experience reducing to a single point the ground of inaugural certainty—has taken on an Archimedic value, if indeed that really was the point of application that made possible the quite different direction that science has taken, namely, that initiated by Newton.

I have constantly stressed in my preceding statements the *pulsative* function, as it were, of the unconscious, the need to disappear that seems to be in some sense inherent in it—everything that, for a moment, appears in its slit seems to be destined, by a sort of pre-emption, to close up again upon itself, as Freud himself used this metaphor, to vanish, to disappear. At the same time, I have formulated the hope that through this may be renewed the trenchant, decisive crystallization that has already been produced in the physical sciences, but this time in a different direction that we shall call *the conjectural science of the subject*. This is less paradoxical than might at first appear.

When Freud realized that it was in the field of the dream that he had to find confirmation of what he had learnt from his experience of the hysteric, he began to move forward with truly unprecedented boldness. What does he now tell us about the unconscious? He declares that it is constituted essentially, not by what the consciousness may evoke, extend, locate, bring out of the subliminal, but by that which is, essentially, refused. And what does Freud call this? He calls it by the same term by

which Descartes designates what I just called his point of application—*Gedanken*, thoughts.

There are thoughts in this field of the beyond of consciousness, and it is impossible to represent these thoughts other than in the same homology of determination in which the subject of the *I think* finds himself in relation to the articulation of the *I doubt*.

Descartes apprehends his *I think* in the enunciation of the *I doubt*, not in its statement, which still bears all of this knowledge to be put in doubt. Shall I say that Freud makes one more step—which designates for us sufficiently the legitimacy of our association—when he invites us to integrate in the text of the dream what I shall call the *colophon of doubt*—the colophon, in an old text, is that small pointing hand that used to be printed, in the days when we still had a typography, in the margin. The colophon of doubt is part of the text. This indicates that Freud places his certainty, his *Gewissheit*, only in the constellation of the signifiers as they result from the recounting, the commentary, the association, even if they are later retracted. Everything provides signifying material, which is what he depends on to establish his own *Gewissheit*—for I stress that experience begins only with his method. That is why I compare it to the Cartesian method.

I am not saying that Freud introduces the subject into the world—the subject as distinct from psychical function, which is a myth, a confused nebulosity—since it was Descartes who did this. But I am saying that Freud addresses the subject in order to say to him the following, which is new—*Here, in the field of the dream, you are at home. Wo es war, soll Ich werden.*

This does not mean, as some execrable translation would have it, *Le moi doit déloger le ça* (the ego must dislodge the id). See how Freud—and in a formula worthy in resonance of the pre-Socratics—is translated in French. It is not a question of the ego in this *soll Ich werden;* the fact is that throughout Freud's work—one must, of course, recognize its proper place—the *Ich* is the complete, total locus of the network of signifiers, that is to say, the subject, *where it was*, where it has always been, the dream. The ancients recognized all kinds of things in dreams, including, on occasion, messages from the gods—and why not? The ancients made something of these messages from the gods. And, anyway—perhaps you will glimpse this in what I shall

say later—who knows, the gods may still speak through dreams. Personally, I don't mind either way. What concerns us is the tissue that envelops these messages, the network in which, on occasion, something is caught. Perhaps the voice of the gods makes itself heard, but it is a long time since men lent their ears to them in their original state—it is well known that the ears are made not to hear with.

But the subject is there to rediscover *where it was*—I anticipate—the real. I will justify what I have just said in a little while, but those who have been listening to me for some time know that I use, quite intentionally, the formula—*The gods belong to the field of the real.*

Where it was, the *Ich*—the subject, not psychology—the subject, must come into existence. And there is only one method of knowing that one is there, namely, to map the network. And how is a network mapped? One goes back and forth over one's ground, one crosses one's path, one cross-checks it always in the same way, and in this seventh chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams* there is no other confirmation for one's *Gewissheit*, one's certainty, than this—*Speak of chance, gentlemen, if you like. In my experience I have observed nothing arbitrary in this field, for it is cross-checked in such a way that it escapes chance.*

I would remind those who have already attended my lectures on this subject of letter fifty-two to Fliess, which comments on the schema that later, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, is called optical. This model represents a number of layers, permeable to something analogous to light whose refraction changes from layer to layer. This is the locus where the affair of the subject of the unconscious is played out. And it is not, says Freud, a spatial, anatomical locus, otherwise how could one conceive it in the way it is presented to us? That is, as an immense display, a special spectre, situated between perception and consciousness. You know that these two elements will later, when Freud establishes his second topography, form the perception–consciousness system, the *Wahrnehmung–Bewusstsein*, but one should not then forget the interval that separates them, in which the place of the Other is situated, in which the subject is constituted.

Well, to return to the letter to Fliess, how do the *Wahrnehmungszeichen*, the traces of perception, function? Freud deduces

from his experience the need to make an absolute separation between perception and consciousness—in order for these traces of perception to pass into memory, they must first be effaced in perception, and reciprocally. He then designates a time when these *Wahrnehmungszeichen* must be constituted in simultaneity. What is this time, if not signifying synchrony? And, of course, Freud says this all the more in that he does not know that he is saying it fifty years before the linguists. But we can immediately give to these *Wahrnehmungszeichen* their true name of *signifiers*. And our reading makes it quite clear that Freud, when he comes back to this locus in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, designates still other layers, in which the traces are constituted this time by analogy. What we have here are those functions of contrast and similitude so essential in the constitution of metaphor, which is introduced by a diachrony.

I won't elaborate this point too much, because we must move on today. But I would like to say that we find in Freud's articulations a quite unambiguous indication that what is involved in this synchrony is not only a network formed by random and contiguous associations. The signifiers were able to constitute themselves in simultaneity only by virtue of a very defined structure of constituent diachrony. The diachrony is orientated by the structure. Freud shows clearly that, for us, at the level of the last layer of the unconscious, where the diaphragm functions, where the pre-relations between the primary process and that part of it that will be used at the level of the pre-conscious are established, there can be no such thing as a miracle. *It must*, he says, *have a relation with causality.*

All these indications cross-check one another and these cross-checkings assure us too that we are rediscovering Freud—though we do not know whether it is here that we shall find our Ariadne's thread, because, of course, we read it before formulating our theory of the signifier, but without being able, for the moment, to understand it. It is no doubt through the particular necessities of our experience that we have set at the heart of the structure of the unconscious the causal gap, but the fact that we have found an enigmatic, unexplained indication of it in Freud's text is for us a sign that we are progressing in the way of *his* certainty. For the subject of certainty is divided here—it is Freud who has certainty.

2

This brings us to the heart of the problem that I am raising. Is psycho-analysis, here and now, a science? What distinguishes modern science from science in its infancy, which is discussed in the *Theaetetus*, is that, when science arises, a master is always present. Freud is certainly a master. But if everything that is written as analytic literature is not mere buffoonery, it always functions as such—which poses the question as to whether this pedicle might, one day, be reduced.

Opposite his certainty, there is the subject, who, as I said just now, has been waiting there since Descartes. I dare to state as a truth that the Freudian field was possible only a certain time after the emergence of the Cartesian subject, in so far as modern science began only after Descartes made his inaugural step.

It is on this step that depends the fact that one can call upon the subject to re-enter himself in the unconscious—for, after all, it is important to know *who* one is calling. It is not the soul, either mortal or immortal, which has been with us for so long, nor some shade, some double, some phantom, nor even some supposed psycho-spherical shell, the locus of the defences and other such simplified notions. It is the subject who is called—there is only he, therefore, who can be chosen. There may be, as in the parable, many called and few chosen, but there will certainly not be any others except those who are called.

In order to understand the Freudian concepts, one must set out on the basis that it is the subject who is called—the subject of Cartesian origin. This basis gives its true function to what, in analysis, is called recollection or remembering. Recollection is not Platonic reminiscence—it is not the return of a form, an imprint, a *eidos* of beauty and good, a supreme truth, coming to us from the beyond. It is something that comes to us from the structural necessities, something humble, born at the level of the lowest encounters and of all the talking crowd that precedes us, at the level of the structure of the signifier, of the languages spoken in a stuttering, stumbling way, but which cannot elude constraints whose echoes, model, style can be found, curiously enough, in contemporary mathematics.

As you saw with the notion of cross-checking, the function of

return, *Wiederkehr*, is essential. It is not only *Wiederkehr* in the sense of that which has been repressed—the very constitution of the field of the unconscious is based on the *Wiederkehr*. It is there that Freud bases his certainty. But it is quite obvious that it is not from there that it comes to him. It comes to him from the fact that he recognizes the law of his own desire. He would not have been able to advance with this bet of certainty if he had not been guided in it, as his writings show, by his self-analysis.

And what is his self-analysis, if not the brilliant mapping of the law of desire suspended in the Name-of-the-father. Freud advances, sustained by a certain relation to his desire, and by his own achievement, namely, the constitution of psychoanalysis.

I shall not elaborate much more, though I always hesitate to leave this terrain. If I have insisted on it, it is to show you that the notion of hallucination, in Freud, as a process of regressive investment on perception necessarily implies that the subject must be completely subverted in it—which he is, in effect, only in extremely fleeting moments.

No doubt this leaves entirely open the question of hallucination proper, in which the subject does not believe, and in which he does not recognize himself as implicated. No doubt this is merely a mythical pin-pointing—for it is not certain that one can speak of the delusion of hallucinatory psychosis of a confusional origin, as Freud does, rather too rapidly, seeing in it the manifestation of the perceptual regression of arrested desire. But the fact that there is a mode in which Freud can conceive as possible the subversion of the subject shows clearly enough to what extent he identifies the subject with that which is originally subverted by the system of the signifier.

So let us leave this time of the unconscious and move towards the question of what repetition is. It will need more than one of our sessions.

3

What I now have to say to you is so new—though obviously supported by what I have said about the signifier—that I thought I ought to formulate for you today, without keeping any of my cards up my sleeve, what I understand by the function of repetition.

In any case, this function has nothing to do with the open or closed character of the circuits that I have just called *Wiederkehr.*

I am not saying that Freud introduced this function, but he articulated it for the first time, in the article of 1914, *Erinnern, Wiederholen und Durcharbeiten* ('Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through')—which, of all psycho-analytic texts is certainly the one that has inspired the greatest amount of stupidity—and which culminates in chapter five of *Jenseits des Lustprinzips.*

Try to read this chapter five, line by line, in some language other than French. Those who do not know German should read it in the English translation. You will find this translation—I say this in passing—quite entertaining. You will see, for example, that the translation of *instinct* for *Trieb*, and *instinctual* for *triebhaft* has so many drawbacks for the translator that, although it is maintained throughout quite uniformly—thus basing the whole edition on a complete misunderstanding, since *Trieb* and *instinct* have nothing in common—the discord becomes so impossible at one point that the implications of a sentence cannot be carried through by translating *Triebhaft* by *instinctual.* A footnote becomes necessary—*At the beginning of the next paragraph the word Trieb . . . is much more revealing of urgency than the word instinctual. Trieb* gives you a kick in the arse, my friends—quite different from so-called *instinct.* That's how psycho-analytic teaching is passed on!

Let us take a look, then, at how *Wiederholen* (repeating) is introduced. *Wiederholen* is related to *Erinnerung* (remembering). The subject in himself, the recalling of his biography, all this goes only to a certain limit, which is known as the real. If I wished to make a Spinozian formula concerning what is at issue, I would say—*cogitatio adaequata semper vitat eandem rem.* An adequate thought, *qua* thought, at the level at which we are, always avoids—if only to find itself again later in everything—the same thing. Here, the real is that which always comes back to the same place—to the place where the subject in so far as he thinks, where the *res cogitans,* does not meet it.

The whole history of Freud's discovery of repetition as function becomes clear only by pointing out in this way the relation between thought and the real. This was fine at the beginning, because one was dealing with hysterics. How convincing the

process of remembering was with the first hysterics! But what is at issue in this remembering could not be known at the outset —one did not know that the desire of the hysteric was the desire of the father, to be sustained in his status. It was hardly surprising that, for the benefit of him who takes the place of the father, one remembered things right down to the dregs.

I will take this opportunity to point out to you that in Freud's texts repetition is not reproduction. There is never any ambiguity on this point: *Wiederholen* is not *Reproduzieren*.

To reproduce is what one thought one could do in the optimistic days of catharsis. One had the primal scene in reproduction as today one has pictures of the great masters for 9 francs 50. But what Freud showed when he made his next steps—and it did not take him long—was that nothing can be grasped, destroyed, or burnt, except in a symbolic way, as one says, *in effigie*, *in absentia*.

Repetition first appears in a form that is not clear, that is not self-evident, like a reproduction, or a making present, *in act*. That is why I have placed *The Act* with a large question-mark at the bottom of the blackboard so as to indicate that, as long as we speak of the relations of repetition with the real, this act will remain on our horizon.

It is curious enough that neither Freud, nor any of his epigones, ever attempted to remember what is nevertheless within the grasp of everybody concerning the act—let us say, *human act*, if you like, since to our knowledge there is no other act but the human one. Why is an act not mere behaviour? Let us concentrate, for example, on an act that is unambiguous, the act of cutting open one's belly in certain conditions—incidentally, it's not called *hara-kiri*, but *seppuku*. Why do people do that? Because they think it annoys others, because, in the structure, it is an act that is done in honour of something. But wait. Let us not be precipitate until we know, and let us take note of this, that an act, a true act, always has an element of structure, by the fact of concerning a real that is not self-evidently caught up in it.

Wiederholen. Nothing has been more enigmatic—especially on the subject of that bipartition, of such structural importance to the whole of Freudian psychology, of the pleasure principle and the reality principle—nothing has been more enigmatic

than this *Wiederholen*, which is very close, so the most prudent etymologists tell us, to the verb 'to haul' (*haler*)—hauling as on a towpath—very close to a *hauling* of the subject, who always drags his thing into a certain path that he cannot get out of.

And why, at first, did repetition appear at the level of what is called traumatic neurosis?

Contrary to all the neurophysiologists, pathologists and others, Freud made it quite clear that, although it was difficult for the subject to reproduce in dream the memory of the heavy bombing-raid, for example, from which his neurosis derives—it does not seem, when he is awake, to bother him either way. What, then, is this function of traumatic repetition if nothing—quite the reverse—seems to justify it from the point of view of the pleasure principle? To master the painful event, someone may say—but who masters, where is the master here, to be mastered? Why speak so hastily when we do not know precisely where to situate the agency that would undertake this operation of mastery?

At the end of the series of writings of which I have given you the two essentials, Freud shows that we can conceive here of what occurs in the dreams of traumatic neurosis only at the level of the most primitive functioning—that in which it is a question of obtaining the binding of energy. So let us not presume in advance that it is a question here of some gap, some division of function such as we might find at some first infinitely more elaborate level of the real. On the contrary, we see here a point that the subject can approach only by dividing himself into a certain number of agencies. One might say what is said of the divided kingdom, that any conception of the unity of the psyche, of the supposed totalizing, synthesizing psyche, ascending towards consciousness, perishes there.

Lastly—in these first stages of the experience in which remembering is gradually substituted for itself and approaches ever nearer to a sort of focus, or centre, in which every event seems to be under an obligation to yield itself—precisely at this moment, we see manifest itself what I will also call—in inverted commas, for one must also change the meaning of the three words that I am going to say, one must change it completely in order to give it its full scope—the *resistance of the subject*, which becomes at that moment repetition in act.

What I will articulate next time will show you how to appropriate to this statement the admirable fourth and fifth chapters of Aristotle's *Physics*. Aristotle turns and manipulates two terms that are absolutely resistant to his theory, which is nevertheless the most elaborate that has ever been made on the function of cause—two terms that are incorrectly translated as *chance* and *fortune*. It is a question, then, of revising the relation that Aristotle establishes between the *automaton*—and we know, at the present stage of modern mathematics, that it is the network of signifiers—and what he designates as the *tuché*—which is for us the encounter with the real.

Questions and Answers are missing.

5 February 1964

5

TUCHÉ AND AUTOMATON

Psycho-analysis is not an idealism · The real as trauma · Theory of the dream and of waking · Consciousness and representation · God is unconscious · The objet petit a *in the* fort-da

Today I shall continue the examination of the concept of repetition, as it is presented by Freud and the experience of psycho-analysis.

I wish to stress here that, at first sight, psycho-analysis seems to lead in the direction of idealism.

God knows that it has been reproached enough for this—it reduces the experience, some say, that urges us to find in the hard supports of conflict, struggle, even of the exploitation of man by man, the reasons for our deficiencies—it leads to an ontology of the tendencies, which it regards as primitive, internal, already given by the condition of the subject.

We have only to consider the course of this experience from its first steps to see, on the contrary, that it in no way allows us to accept some such aphorism as *life is a dream*. No praxis is more orientated towards that which, at the heart of experience, is the kernel of the real than psycho-analysis.

I

Where do we meet this real? For what we have in the discovery of psycho-analysis is an encounter, an essential encounter—an appointment to which we are always called with a real that eludes us. That is why I have put on the blackboard a few words that are for us, today, a reference-point of what we wish to propose.

First, the *tuché*, which we have borrowed, as I told you last time, from Aristotle, who uses it in his search for cause. We have translated it as *the encounter with the real*. The real is beyond the *automaton*, the return, the coming-back, the insistence of the

signs, by which we see ourselves governed by the pleasure principle. The real is that which always lies behind the automaton, and it is quite obvious, throughout Freud's research, that it is this that is the object of his concern.

If you wish to understand what is Freud's true preoccupation as the function of phantasy is revealed to him, remember the development, which is so central for us, of the *Wolf Man*. He applies himself, in a way that can almost be described as anguish, to the question—what is the first encounter, the real, that lies behind the phantasy? We feel that throughout this analysis, this real brings with it the subject, almost by force, so directing the research that, after all, we can today ask ourselves whether this fever, this presence, this desire of Freud is not that which, in his patient, might have conditioned the belated accident of his psychosis.

So there is no question of confusing with repetition either the return of the signs, or reproduction, or the modulation by the act of a sort of acted-out remembering. Repetition is something which, of its true nature, is always veiled in analysis, because of the identification of repetition with the transference in the conceptualization of analysts. Now, this really is the point at which a distinction should be made.

The relation to the real that is to be found in the transference was expressed by Freud when he declared that nothing can be apprehended *in effigie, in absentia*—and yet is not the transference given to us as effigy and as relation to absence? We can succeed in unravelling this ambiguity of the reality involved in the transference only on the basis of the function of the real in repetition.

What is repeated, in fact, is always something that occurs —the expression tells us quite a lot about its relation to the *tuché—as if by chance*. This is something that we analysts never allow ourselves to be taken in by, on principle. At least, we always point out that we must not be taken in when the subject tells us that something happened to him that day that prevented him from realizing his wish to come to the session. Things must not be taken at the level at which the subject puts them—in as much as what we are dealing with is precisely this obstacle, this hitch, that we find at every moment. It is this mode of apprehension above all that governs the new decipher-

ing that we have given of the subject's relations to that which makes his condition.

The function of the *tuché*, of the real as encounter—the encounter in so far as it may be missed, in so far as it is essentially the missed encounter—first presented itself in the history of psycho-analysis in a form that was in itself already enough to arouse our attention, that of the trauma.

Is it not remarkable that, at the origin of the analytic experience, the real should have presented itself in the form of that which is *unassimilable* in it—in the form of the trauma, determining all that follows, and imposing on it an apparently accidental origin? We are now at the heart of what may enable us to understand the radical character of the conflictual notion introduced by the opposition of the pleasure principle and the reality principle—which is why we cannot conceive the reality principle as having, by virtue of its ascendancy, the last word.

In effect, the trauma is conceived as having necessarily been marked by the subjectifying homeostasis that orientates the whole functioning defined by the pleasure principle. Our experience then presents us with a problem, which derives from the fact that, at the very heart of the primary processes, we see preserved the insistence of the trauma in making us aware of its existence. The trauma reappears, in effect, frequently unveiled. How can the dream, the bearer of the subject's desire, produce that which makes the trauma emerge repeatedly—if not its very face, at least the screen that shows us that it is still there behind?

Let us conclude that the reality system, however far it is developed, leaves an essential part of what belongs to the real a prisoner in the toils of the pleasure principle.

It is this that we have to investigate, this reality, one might say, whose presence is supposed to be required by us, if the motive force of development, as it is represented for us by someone like Melanie Klein, for example, is not reducible to a formula like the one I used earlier, namely, *life is a dream.*

To this requirement correspond those radical points in the real that I call encounters, and which enable us to conceive reality as *unterlegt, untertragen,* which, with the superb ambiguity of the French language, appear to be translated by the same

word—*souffrance*.[1] Reality is in abeyance there, awaiting attention. And *Zwang*, constraint, which Freud defines by *Wiederholung*, governs the very diversions of the primary process.

The primary process—which is simply what I have tried to define for you in my last few lectures in the form of the unconscious—must, once again, be apprehended in its experience of rupture, between perception and consciousness, in that non-temporal locus, I said, which forces us to posit what Freud calls, in homage to Fechner, *die Idee einer anderer Lokalität*, the idea of another locality, another space, another scene, *the between perception and consciousness*.

2

We can, at any moment, apprehend this primary process.

The other day, I was awoken from a short nap by knocking at my door just before I actually awoke. With this impatient knocking I had already formed a dream, a dream that manifested to me something other than this knocking. And when I awake, it is in so far as I reconstitute my entire representation around this knocking—this perception—that I am aware of it. I know that I am there, at what time I went to sleep, and why I went to sleep. When the knocking occurs, not in my perception, but in my consciousness, it is because my consciousness reconstitutes itself around this representation—that I know that I am waking up, that I am *knocked up*.

But here I must question myself as to what I am at that moment—at the moment, so immediately before and so separate, which is that in which I began to dream under the effect of the knocking which is, to all appearances, what woke me.[2]

[1] In French, the phrase '*en souffrance*' means 'in suspense', 'in abeyance', 'awaiting attention', 'pending'. It is this sense that translates the German word. '*Souffrance*' also means 'pain', of course. Hence the ambiguity referred to by Lacan. [Tr.].

[2] There follows a passage in which Lacan comments on the use in French of the 'pleonastic *ne*', that is, the '*ne*' used without the usually accompanying '*pas*', '*que*' or '*jamais*', etc. Since the passage includes examples of this use in French, it is strictly untranslatable. I therefore give it below in the original:

'Je suis, que je sache, *avant que je ne me réveille*—ce *ne* dit explétif, déjà dans tel de mes écrits désigné, est le mode même de présence de ce *je suis* d'avant le réveil. Il n'est point explétif, il est plutôt l'expression de mon impléance,

Observe what I am directing you towards—towards the symmetry of that structure that makes me, after the awakening knock, able to sustain myself, apparently only in a relation with my representation, which, apparently, makes of me only consciousness. A sort of involuted reflection—in my consciousness, it is only my representation that I recover possession of.

Is that all? Freud has told us often enough that he would have to go back to the function of consciousness, but he never did. Perhaps we shall see better what is at issue, by apprehending what is there that motivates the emergence of the represented reality, namely the phenomenon, distance, the gap itself that constitutes awakening.

To make things quite clear, let us return to the dream —which is also made up entirely of noise—that I left you time to look up in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. You will remember the unfortunate father who went to rest in the room next to the one in which his dead child lay—leaving the child in the care, we are told, of another old man—and who is awoken by something. By what? It is not only the reality, the shock, the knocking, a noise made to recall him to the real, but this expresses, in his dream, the quasi-identity of what is happening, the very reality of an overturned candle setting light to the bed in which his child lies.

Such an example hardly seems to confirm Freud's thesis in the *Traumdeutung*—that the dream is the realization of a desire.

What we see emerging here, almost for the first time, in the *Traumdeutung*, is a function of the dream of an apparently secondary kind—in this case, the dream satisfies only the need to prolong sleep. What, then, does Freud mean by placing, at this point, this particular dream, stressing that it is in itself full confirmation of his thesis regarding dreams?

If the function of the dream is to prolong sleep, if the dream, after all, may come so near to the reality that causes it, can we not say that it might correspond to this reality without emerging

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chaque fois qu'elle a à se manifester. La langue, la langue française le définit bien dans l'acte de son emploi. *Aurez-vous fini avant qu'il ne vienne?* — cela m'importe que vous ayez fini, à Dieu ne plaise qu'il vînt avant. *Passerez-vous, avant qu'il vienne?* — car, déjà, quand il viendra, vous ne serez plus là.'

from sleep? After all, there is such a thing as somnambulistic activity. The question that arises, and which indeed all Freud's previous indications allow us here to produce, is—*What is it that wakes the sleeper?* Is it not, *in* the dream, another reality? —the reality that Freud describes thus—*Dass das Kind an seinem Bette steht*, that the child is near his bed, *ihn am Arme fasst*, takes him by the arm and whispers to him reproachfully, *und ihm vorwurfsvoll zuraunt: Vater, siehst du denn nicht*, Father, can't you see, *dass ich verbrenne*, that I am burning?

Is there not more reality in this message than in the noise by which the father also identifies the strange reality of what is happening in the room next door. Is not the missed reality that caused the death of the child expressed in these words? Freud himself does not tell us that we must recognize in this sentence what perpetuates for the father those words forever separated from the dead child that were said to him, perhaps, Freud supposes, because of the fever—but who knows, perhaps these words perpetuate the remorse felt by the father that the man he has put at his son's bedside to watch over him may not be up to his task: *die Besorgnis dass der greise Wächter seiner Aufgabe nicht gewachsen sein dürfte*, he may not be up to his job, in fact, he has gone to sleep.

Does not this sentence, said in relation to fever, suggest to you what, in one of my recent lectures, I called the cause of fever? And is not the action, apparently so urgent, of preventing what is happening in the next room also perhaps felt as being in any case too late now, in relation to what is at issue, in the psychical reality manifested in the words spoken? Is not the dream essentially, one might say, an act of homage to the missed reality—the reality that can no longer produce itself except by repeating itself endlessly, in some never attained awakening? What encounter can there be henceforth with that forever inert being—even now being devoured by the flames—if not the encounter that occurs precisely at the moment when, by accident, as if by chance, the flames come to meet him? Where is the reality in this accident, if not that it repeats something actually more fatal *by means of* reality, a reality in which the person who was supposed to be watching over the body still remains asleep, even when the father re-emerges after having woken up?

Thus the encounter, forever missed, has occurred between dream and awakening, between the person who is still asleep and whose dream we will not know and the person who has dreamt merely in order not to wake up.

If Freud, amazed, sees in this the confirmation of his theory of desire, it is certainly a sign that the dream is not a phantasy fulfilling a wish.

For it is not that, in the dream, he persuades himself that the son is still alive. But the terrible vision of the dead son taking the father by the arm designates a beyond that makes itself heard in the dream. Desire manifests itself in the dream by the loss expressed in an image at the most cruel point of the object. It is only in the dream that this truly unique encounter can occur. Only a rite, an endlessly repeated act, can commemorate this not very memorable encounter—for no one can say what the death of a child is, except the father *qua* father, that is to say, no conscious being.

For the true formula of atheism is not *God is dead*—even by basing the origin of the function of the father upon his murder, Freud protects the father—the true formula of atheism is *God is unconscious*.

The awakening shows us the waking state of the subject's consciousness in the representation of what has happened —the unfortunate accident in reality, against which one can do no more than take steps! But what, then, was this accident? When everybody is asleep, including the person who wished to take a little rest, the person who was unable to maintain his vigil and the person of whom some well intentioned individual, standing at his bedside, must have said, *He looks just as if he is asleep*, when we know only one thing about him, and that is that, in this entirely sleeping world, only the voice is heard, *Father, can't you see I'm burning?* This sentence is itself a firebrand—of itself it brings fire where it falls—and one cannot see what is burning, for the flames blind us to the fact that the fire bears on the *Unterlegt*, on the *Untertragen*, on the real.

This is certainly what brings us to recognizing in this detached sentence from the dream of the grief-stricken father the counterpart of what will be, once he is awake, his consciousness, and to ask ourselves what is the correlative, in the dream, of the representation. This question is all the more striking in that,

here, we see the dream really as the counterpart of the representation; it is the imagery of the dream and it is an opportunity for us to stress what Freud, when he speaks of the unconscious, designates as that which essentially determines it, the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*. This means not, as it has been mistranslated, the representative representative (*le représentant représentatif*), but that which takes the place of the representation (*le tenant-lieu de la représentation*). We shall see its function later.

I hope I have helped you to grasp what is nodal in the encounter, *qua* encounter forever missed, and which really sustains, in Freud's text, what seems to him, in his dream, absolutely exemplary.

The place of the real, which stretches from the trauma to the phantasy—in so far as the phantasy is never anything more than the screen that conceals something quite primary, something determinant in the function of repetition—this is what we must now examine. This, indeed, is what, for us, explains both the ambiguity of the function of awakening and of the function of the real in this awakening. The real may be represented by the accident, the noise, the small element of reality, which is evidence that we are not dreaming. But, on the other hand, this reality is not so small, for what wakes us is the other reality hidden behind the lack of that which takes the place of representation—this, says Freud is the *Trieb*.

But be careful! We have not yet said what this *Trieb* is —and if, for lack of representation, it is not there, what is this *Trieb*? We may have to consider it as being only *Trieb* to come.

How can we fail to see that awakening works in two directions—and that the awakening that re-situates us in a constituted and represented reality carries out two tasks? The real has to be sought beyond the dream—in what the dream has enveloped, hidden from us, behind the lack of representation of which there is only one representative. This is the real that governs our activities more than any other and it is psychoanalysis that designates it for us.

3

Thus Freud finds himself providing the solution to the problem which, for the most acute of the questioners of the

soul before him—Kierkegaard—had already been centred on repetition.

I would ask you to re-read Kierkegaard's essay on *Repetition*, so dazzling in its lightness and ironic play, so truly Mozartian in the way, so reminiscent of *Don Giovanni*, it abolishes the mirages of love. With great acuteness, and in a quite unanswerable way, Kierkegaard stresses the feature that, in his love, the young man—whose portrait Kierkegaard paints for us with a mixture of emotion and derision—addresses only to himself through the medium of memory. Really, is there not something here more profound than La Rochefoucauld's remark that few would experience love if they had not had its ways and means explained to them? Yes, but who began it? And does not everything essentially begin by deceiving the first to whom the enchantment of love was addressed—who has passed off this enchantment as the exaltation of the other, by making himself the prisoner of this exaltation, of this breathlessness which, with the other, has created the most false of demands, that of narcissistic satisfaction, the ego ideal whether it is or the ego that regards itself as the ideal?

Freud is not dealing with any repetition residing in the natural, no return of need, any more than is Kierkegaard. The return of need is directed towards consumption placed at the service of appetite. Repetition demands the new. It is turned towards the ludic, which finds its dimension in this new —Freud also tells us this in the chapter I referred to last time.

Whatever, in repetition, is varied, modulated, is merely alienation of its meaning. The adult, and even the more advanced child, demands something new in his activities, in his games. But this 'sliding-away' (*glissement*) conceals what is the true secret of the ludic, namely, the most radical diversity constituted by repetition in itself. It can be seen in the child, in his first movement, at the moment when he is formed as a human being, manifesting himself as an insistence that the story should always be the same, that its recounted realization should be ritualized, that is to say, textually the same. This requirement of a distinct consistency in the details of its telling signifies that the realization of the signifier will never be able to be careful enough in its memorization to succeed in designating the primacy of the significance as such. To develop it by

varying the significations is, therefore, it would seem, to elude it. This variation makes one forget the aim of the significance by transforming its act into a game, and giving it certain outlets that go some way to satisfying the pleasure principle.

When Freud grasps the repetition involved in the game played by his grandson, in the reiterated *fort-da*, he may indeed point out that the child makes up for the effect of his mother's disappearance by making himself the agent of it—but, this phenomenon is of secondary importance. Wallon stresses that the child does not immediately watch the door through which his mother has disappeared, thus indicating that he expects to see her return through it, but that his vigilance was aroused earlier, at the very point she left him, at the point she moved away from him. The ever-open gap introduced by the absence indicated remains the cause of a centrifugal tracing in which that which falls is not the other *qua* face in which the subject is projected, but that cotton-reel linked to itself by the thread that it holds—in which is expressed that which, of itself, detaches itself in this trial, self-mutilation on the basis of which the order of significance will be put in perspective. For the game of the cotton-reel is the subject's answer to what the mother's absence has created on the frontier of his domain—the edge of his cradle—namely, a *ditch*, around which one can only play at jumping.

This reel is not the mother reduced to a little ball by some magical game worthy of the Jivaros—it is a small part of the subject that detaches itself from him while still remaining his, still retained. This is the place to say, in imitation of Aristotle, that man thinks with his object. It is with his object that the child leaps the frontiers of his domain, transformed into a well, and begins the incantation. If it is true that the signifier is the first mark of the subject, how can we fail to recognize here —from the very fact that this game is accompanied by one of the first oppositions to appear—that it is in the object to which the opposition is applied in act, the reel, that we must designate the subject. To this object we will later give the name it bears in the Lacanian algebra—the *petit a*.

The activity as a whole symbolizes repetition, but not at all that of some need that might demand the return of the mother, and which would be expressed quite simply in a cry. It is the

repetition of the mother's departure as cause of a *Spaltung* in the subject—overcome by the alternating game, *fort-da*, which is a *here or there*, and whose aim, in its alternation, is simply that of being the *fort* of a *da*, and the *da* of a *fort*. It is aimed at what, essentially, is not there, *qua* represented—for it is the game itself that is the *Repräsentanz* of the *Vorstellung*. What will become of the *Vorstellung* when, once again, this *Repräsentanz* of the mother—in her outline made up of the brush-strokes and gouaches of desire—will be lacking?

I, too, have seen with my own eyes, opened by maternal divination, the child, traumatized by the fact that I was going away despite the appeal, precociously adumbrated in his voice, and henceforth more renewed for months at a time—long after, having picked up this child—I have seen it let his head fall on my shoulder and drop off to sleep, sleep alone being capable of giving him access to the living signifier that I had become since the date of the trauma.

You will see that this sketch that I have given you today of the function of the *tuché* will be essential for us in rectifying what is the duty of the analyst in the interpretation of the transference.

Let me just stress today that it is not in vain that analysis posits itself as modulating in a more radical way this relation of man to the world that has always been regarded as knowledge.

If knowledge is so often, in theoretical writings, related to something similar to the relation between ontogenesis and phylogenesis—it is as the result of a confusion, and we shall show next time that the very originality of psycho-analysis lies in the fact that it does not centre psychological ontogenesis on supposed *stages*—which have literally no discoverable foundation in development observable in biological terms. If development is entirely animated by accident, by the obstacle of the *tuché*, it is in so far as the *tuché* brings us back to the same point at which pre-Socratic philosophy sought to motivate the world itself.

It required a *clinamen*, an inclination, at some point. When Democritus tried to designate it, presenting himself as already the adversary of a pure function of negativity in order to introduce thought into it, he says, *It is not the μηδέν that is*

essential, and adds—thus showing you that from what one of my pupils called the archaic stage of philosophy, the manipulation of words was used just as in the time of Heidegger —*it is not an μηδέν, but a δεν*, which, in Greek, is a coined word. He did not say *ἕν*, let alone *ὄν*. What, then, did he say? He said, answering the question I asked today, that of idealism, *Nothing, perhaps?*—not *perhaps nothing*, but *not nothing*.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

F. DOLTO: *I don't see how, in describing the formation of intelligence up to the age of three or four, one can do without stages. I think that as far as the defence phantasies and the phantasies of the castration veil are concerned, and also the threats of mutilation, one needs to refer to the stages.*

LACAN: The description of the stages, *which go to form the libido*, must not be referred to some natural process of pseudo-maturation, which always remains opaque. The stages are organized around the fear of castration. The copulatory fact of the introduction of sexuality is traumatizing—this is a snag of some size—and it has an organizing function for development.

The fear of castration is like a thread that perforates all the stages of development. It orientates the relations that are anterior to its actual appearance—weaning, toilet training, etc. It crystallizes each of these moments in a dialectic that has as its centre a bad encounter. If the stages are consistent, it is in accordance with their possible registration in terms of bad encounters.

The central bad encounter is at the level of the sexual. This does not mean that the stages assume a sexual taint that is diffused on the basis of the fear of castration. On the contrary, it is because this empathy is not produced that one speaks of trauma and primal scene.

12 February 1964

OF THE GAZE AS *Objet Petit a*

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6

THE SPLIT BETWEEN THE EYE AND THE GAZE

The split of the subject · The facticity of the trauma · Maurice Merleau-Ponty · The philosophical tradition · Mimicry · The all-seer · In the dream, it shows

To continue.

Wiederholung—let me remind you once again of the etymological reference that I gave you, *holen* (to haul), of its connotation of something tiring, exhausting.

To haul, to draw. To draw what? Perhaps, playing on the ambiguity of the word in French, to draw lots (*tirer au sort*). This *Zwang*, this compulsion, would then direct us towards the obligatory card—if there is only one card in the pack, I can't draw another.

The character of a set, in the mathematical sense of the term, possessed by the play of signifiers, and which opposes it for example to the indefiniteness of the whole number, enables us to conceive a schema in which the function of the obligatory card is immediately applicable. If the subject is the subject of the signifier—determined by it—one may imagine the synchronic network as it appears in the diachrony of preferential effects. This is not a question, you understand, of unpredictable statistical effects—it is the very structure of the network that implies the returns. Through the elucidation of what we call strategies, this is the figure that Aristotle's *automaton* assumes for us. Furthermore, it is by *automatisme* that we sometimes translate into French the *Zwang* of the *Wiederholungszwang*, the compulsion to repeat.

I

Later, I shall give you the facts that suggest that at certain moments of that infantile monologue, imprudently termed

egocentric, there are strictly syntactical games to be observed. These games belong to the field that we call pre-conscious, but make, one might say, the bed of the unconscious reserve—to be understood in the sense of an Indian reserve—within the social network.

Syntax, of course, is pre-conscious. But what eludes the subject is the fact that his syntax is in relation with the unconscious reserve. When the subject tells his story, something acts, in a latent way, that governs this syntax and makes it more and more condensed. Condensed in relation to what? In relation to what Freud, at the beginning of his description of psychical resistance, calls a nucleus.

To say that this nucleus refers to something traumatic is no more than an approximation. We must distinguish between the resistance of the subject and that first resistance of discourse, when the discourse proceeds towards the condensation around the nucleus. For the expression *resistance of the subject* too much implies the existence of a supposed ego and it is not certain whether—at the approach of this nucleus—it is something that we can justifiably call an ego.

The nucleus must be designated as belonging to the real—the real in so far as the identity of perception is its rule. At most, it is grounded on what Freud indicates as a sort of deduction, which assures us that we are in perception by means of the sense of reality that authenticates it. What does this mean, if not that, as far as the subject is concerned, this is called awakening?

Although, last time, it was around the dream in chapter seven of *The Interpretation of Dreams* that I approached the whole question of repetition, it was because the choice of this dream —so enclosed, so doubly and triply enclosed as it is, since it is not analysed—is very revealing here, occurring as it does at the moment when Freud is dealing with the process of the dream in its last resort. Is the reality that determines the awakening the slight noise against which the empire of the dream and of desire is maintained? Is it not rather something else? Is it not that which is expressed in the depths of the anxiety of this dream—namely, the most intimate aspects of the relation between the father and the son, which emerges, not so much in that death as in the fact that it is beyond, in the sense of destiny?

Between what occurs as if by chance, when everybody is asleep—the candle that overturns and the sheets that catch fire, the meaningless event, the accident, the piece of bad luck—and the element of poignancy, however veiled, in the words *Father, can't you see I'm burning*—there is the same relation to what we were dealing with in repetition. It is what, for us, is represented in the term neurosis of destiny or neurosis of failure. What is missed is not adaptation, but *tuché*, the encounter.

Aristotle's formula—that the *tuché* is defined by being able to come to us only from a being capable of choice, *proairesis*, that the *tuché*, good or bad fortune, cannot come to us from an inanimate object, a child or an animal—is controverted here. The very accident of this exemplary dream depicts this. Certainly, Aristotle marks the extreme limit of that point that stops it on the edge of the extravagant forms of sexual behaviour, which he can only describe as *teriotes*, monstrosities.

The enclosed aspect of the relation between the accident, which is repeated, and the veiled meaning, which is the true reality and leads us towards the drive—confirms for us that the demystification of that artefact of treatment known as the transference does not consist in reducing it to what is called the actuality of the situation. The direction indicated in this reduction to the actuality of the session, or the series of sessions, is not even of propedeutic value. The correct concept of repetition must be obtained in another direction, which we cannot confuse with the effects of the transference taken as a whole. Our next problem, when we approach the function of the transference, will be to grasp how the transference may lead us to the heart of repetition.

That is why it is necessary to ground this repetition first of all in the very split that occurs in the subject in relation to the encounter. This split constitutes the characteristic dimension of analytic discovery and experience; it enables us to apprehend the real, in its dialectical effects, as originally unwelcome. It is precisely through this that the real finds itself, in the subject, to a very great degree the accomplice of the drive—which we shall come to last, because only by following this way will we be able to conceive from what it returns.

For, after all, why is the primal scene so traumatic? Why is it always too early or too late? Why does the subject take

either too much pleasure in it—at least, this is how at first we conceived the traumatizing causality of the obsessional neurotic —or too little, as in the case of the hysteric? Why doesn't it arouse the subject immediately, if it is true that he is so profoundly libidinal? Why is the fact here *dustuchia*? Why is the supposed maturation of the pseudo-instincts shot through, transfixed with the *tychic*, I would say—from the word *tuché*?

For the moment, it is our horizon that seems factitious in the fundamental relation to sexuality. In analytic experience, it is a question of setting out from the fact that the primal scene is traumatic; it is not sexual empathy that sustains the modulations of the analysable, but a factitious fact. A factitious fact, like that which appears in the scene so fiercely tracked down in the experience of the Wolf Man—the strangeness of the disappearance and reappearance of the penis.

Last time, I wanted to point out where the split in the subject lay. This split, after awakening, persists—between the return to the real, the representation of the world that has at last fallen back on its feet, arms raised, *what a terrible thing, what has happened, how horrible, how stupid, what an idiot he was to fall asleep* —and the consciousness re-weaving itself, which knows it is living through all this as through a nightmare, but which, all the same, keeps a grip on itself, *it is I who am living through all this, I have no need to pinch myself to known that I am not dreaming.* The fact remains that this split is still there only as representing the more profound split, which is situated between that which refers to the subject in the machinery of the dream, the image of the approaching child, his face full of reproach and, on the other hand, that which causes it and into which he sinks, the invocation, the voice of the child, the solicitation of the gaze —*Father can't you see . . .*

2

It is there that—free as I am to pursue, in the path in which I am leading you, the way that seems best to me—threading my curved needle through the tapestry, I jump on to the side on which is posed the question that offers itself as a crossroads, between us and all those who try to conceive of the way of the subject.

In so far as it is a search for truth, is this way to be forged in

our style of adventure, with its trauma seen as a reflection of facticity? Or is it to be located where tradition has always placed it, at the level of the dialectic of truth and appearance, grasped at the outset of perception in its fundamentally ideic, in a way aesthetic, and accentuated character as visual centring?

It is not mere chance—belonging to the order of the pure *tychic*—if this very week I have received a copy of the newly published, posthumous work of my friend Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Le Visible et l'invisible.*

Here is expressed, embodied, what made the alternation of our dialogue, and I remember so clearly the Congrès de Bonneval where his intervention revealed the nature of his path, a path that had broken off at one point of the *oeuvre*, which left it nevertheless in a state of completion, prefigured in the work of piety that we owe to Claude Lefort, to whom I would like to pay homage here for the kind of perfection which, in a long and difficult transcription, he seems to me to have achieved.

This work, *Le Visible et l'invisible*, may indicate for us the moment of arrival of the philosophical tradition—the tradition that begins with Plato with the promulgation of the idea, of which one may say that, setting out from an aesthetic world, it is determined by an end given to being as sovereign good, thus attaining a beauty that is also its limit. And it is not by chance that Maurice Merleau-Ponty recognized its guide in the eye.

In this work, which is both an end and a beginning, you will find both a recapitulation and a step forward in the path of what had first been formulated in Merleau-Ponty's *La Phénoménologie de la perception.* In this work, one finds a recapitulation of the regulatory function of form, invoked in opposition to that which, as philosophical thinking progressed, had been taken to that extreme of vertigo expressed in the term idealism—how could the 'lining' that representation then became be joined to that which it is supposed to cover? *La Phénoménologie* brings us back, then, to the regulation of form, which is governed, not only by the subject's eye, but by his expectations, his movement, his grip, his muscular and visceral emotion—in short, his constitutive presence, directed in what is called his total intentionality.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty now makes the next step by forcing

the limits of this very phenomenology. You will see that the ways through which he will lead you are not only of the order of visual phenomenology, since they set out to rediscover—this is the essential point—the dependence of the visible on that which places us under the eye of the seer. But this is going too far, for that eye is only the metaphor of something that I would prefer to call the seer's 'shoot' (*pousse*)—something prior to his eye. What we have to circumscribe, by means of the path he indicates for us, is the pre-existence of a gaze—I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides.

It is no doubt this *seeing*, to which I am subjected in an original way, that must lead us to the aims of this work, to that ontological turning back, the bases of which are no doubt to be found in a more primitive institution of form.

Precisely this gives me an opportunity to reply to someone that, of course, I have my ontology—why not?—like everyone else, however naïve or elaborate it may be. But, certainly, what I try to outline in my discourse—which, although it reinterprets that of Freud, is nevertheless centred essentially on the particularity of the experience it describes—makes no claim to cover the entire field of experience. Even this between-the-two that opens up for us the apprehension of the unconscious is of concern to us only in as much as it is designated for us, through the instructions Freud left us, as that of which the subject has to take possession. I will only add that the maintenance of this aspect of Freudianism, which is often described as naturalism, seems to be indispensable, for it is one of the few attempts, if not the only one, to embody psychical reality without substantifying it.

In the field offered us by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, more or less polarized indeed by the threads of our experience, the scopic field, the ontological status, is presented by its most factitious, not to say most outworn, effects. But it is not between the invisible and the visible that we have to pass. The split that concerns us is not the distance that derives from the fact that there are forms imposed by the world towards which the intentionality of phenomenological experience directs us—hence the limits that we encounter in the experience of the visible. The gaze is presented to us only in the form of a strange contingency, symbolic of what we find on the horizon, as the thrust

of our experience, namely, the lack that constitutes castration anxiety.

The eye and the gaze—this is for us the split in which the drive is manifested at the level of the scopic field.

3

In our relation to things, in so far as this relation is constituted by the way of vision, and ordered in the figures of representation, something slips, passes, is transmitted, from stage to stage, and is always to some degree eluded in it—that is what we call the gaze.

You can be made aware of this in more than one way. Let me describe it, at its extreme point, by one of the enigmas that the reference to nature presents us with. It is a question of nothing less than the phenomenon known as mimicry.

A lot has been said about this subject and a great deal that is absurd—for example, that the phenomenon of mimicry can be explained in terms of adaptation. I do not think this is the case. I need only refer you, among others, to a short work that many of you may already know, Roger Caillois' *Méduse et compagnie*, in which the reference to adaptation is criticized in a particularly perspicacious way. On the one hand, in order to be effective, the determining mutation of mimicry, in the insect, for example, may take place only at once and at the outset. On the other hand, its supposed selective effects are annihilated by the observation that one finds in the stomach of birds, predators in particular, as many insects supposedly protected by mimicry as insects that are not.

But, in any case, the problem does not lie there. The most radical problem of mimicry is to know whether we must attribute it to some formative power of the very organism that shows us its manifestations. For this to be legitimate, we would have to be able to conceive by what circuits this force might find itself in a position to control, not only the very form of the imitated body, but its relation to the environment, from which is has to be distinguished or, on the contrary, in which it has to merge. In short, as Caillois reminds us very pertinently, on the subject of such mimetic manifestations, and especially of the manifestation that may remind us of the function of the eyes, that is, the *ocelli*, it is a question of understanding whether they

impress—it is a fact that they have this effect on the predator or on the supposed victim that looks at them—whether they impress by their resemblance to eyes, or whether, on the contrary, the eyes are fascinating only by virtue of their relation to the form of the *ocelli*. In other words, must we not distinguish between the function of the eye and that of the gaze?

This distinctive example, chosen as such—for its location, for its facticity, for its exceptional character—is for us simply a small manifestation of the function to be isolated, the function, let us say the word, of *the stain*. This example is valuable in marking the pre-existence to the seen of a given-to-be-seen.

There is no need for us to refer to some supposition of the existence of a universal seer. If the function of the stain is recognized in its autonomy and identified with that of the gaze, we can seek its track, its thread, its trace, at every stage of the constitution of the world, in the scopic field. We will then realize that the function of the stain and of the gaze is both that which governs the gaze most secretly and that which always escapes from the grasp of that form of vision that is satisfied with itself in imagining itself as consciousness.

That in which the consciousness may turn back upon itself —grasp itself, like Valéry's Young Parque, *as seeing oneself seeing oneself*—represents mere sleight of hand. An avoidance of the function of the gaze is at work there.

This much we can map of this topology, which last time we worked out for ourselves on the basis of that which appears from the position of the subject when he accedes to the imaginary forms offered him by the dream, as opposed to those of the waking state.

Similarly, in that order, which is particularly satisfying for the subject, connoted in psycho-analytic experience by the term narcissism—in which I have striven to reintroduce the essential structure it derives from its reference to the specular image—in the satisfaction, not to say self-satisfaction, that diffuses from it, which gives the subject a pretext for such a profound *méconnaissance*—and does its empire not extend as far as this reference of the philosophical tradition represented by plenitude encountered by the subject in the mode of contemplation—can we not also grasp that which has been eluded, namely, the function of the gaze? I mean, and Maurice

Merleau-Ponty points this out, that we are beings who are looked at, in the spectacle of the world. That which makes us consciousness institutes us by the same token as *speculum mundi*. Is there no satisfaction in being under that gaze of which, following Merleau-Ponty, I spoke just now, that gaze that circumscribes us, and which in the first instance makes us beings who are looked at, but without showing this?

The spectacle of the world, in this sense, appears to us as all-seeing. This is the phantasy to be found in the Platonic perspective of an absolute being to whom is transferred the quality of being all-seeing. At the very level of the phenomenal experience of contemplation, this all-seeing aspect is to be found in the satisfaction of a woman who knows that she is being looked at, on condition that one does not show her that one knows that she knows.

The world is all-seeing, but it is not exhibitionistic—it does not provoke our gaze. When it begins to provoke it, the feeling of strangeness begins too.

What does this mean, if not that, in the so-called waking state, there is an elision of the gaze, and an elision of the fact that not only does it look, *it* also *shows*. In the field of the dream, on the other hand, what characterizes the images is that *it shows*.

It shows—but here, too, some form of 'sliding away' of the subject is apparent. Look up some description of a dream, any one—not only the one I referred to last time, in which, after all, what I am going to say may remain enigmatic, but any dream—place it in its co-ordinates, and you will see that this *it shows* is well to the fore. So much is it to the fore, with the characteristics in which it is co-ordinated—namely, the absence of horizon, the enclosure, of that which is contemplated in the waking state, and, also, the character of emergence, of contrast, of stain, of its images, the intensification of their colours—that, in the final resort, our position in the dream is profoundly that of someone who does not see. The subject does not see where it is leading, he follows. He may even on occasion detach himself, tell himself that it is a dream, but in no case will he be able to apprehend himself in the dream in the way in which, in the Cartesian *cogito*, he apprehends himself as thought. He may say to himself, *It's only a dream*. But he does

not apprehend himself as someone who says to himself—*After all, I am the consciousness of this dream.*

In a dream, he is a butterfly. What does this mean? It means that he sees the butterfly in his reality as gaze. What are so many figures, so many shapes, so many colours, if not this gratuitous *showing*, in which is marked for us the primal nature of the essence of the gaze. Good heavens, it is a butterfly that is not very different from the one that terrorized the Wolf Man —and Maurice Merleau-Ponty is well aware of the importance of it and refers us to it in a footnote to his text. When Choang-tsu wakes up, he may ask himself whether it is not the butterfly who dreams that he is Choang-tsu. Indeed, he is right, and doubly so, first because it proves he is not mad, he does not regard himself as absolutely identical with Choang-tsu and, secondly, because he does not fully understand how right he is. In fact, it is when he was the butterfly that he apprehended one of the roots of his identity—that he was, and is, in his essence, that butterfly who paints himself with his own colours —and it is because of this that, in the last resort, he is Choang-tsu.

This is proved by the fact that, when he is the butterfly, the idea does not occur to him to wonder whether, when he is Choang-tsu awake, he is not the butterfly that he is dreaming of being. This is because, when dreaming of being the butterfly, he will no doubt have to bear witness later that he represented himself as a butterfly. But this does not mean that he is captivated by the butterfly—he is a captive butterfly, but captured by nothing, for, in the dream, he is a butterfly for nobody. It is when he is awake that he is Choang-tsu for others, and is caught in their butterfly net.

This is why the butterfly may—if the subject is not Choang-tsu, but the Wolf Man—inspire in him the phobic terror of recognizing that the beating of little wings is not so very far from the beating of causation, of the primal stripe marking his being for the first time with the grid of desire.

Next time, I propose to introduce you to the essence of scopic satisfaction. The gaze may contain in itself the *objet a* of the Lacanian algebra where the subject falls, and what specifies the scopic field and engenders the satisfaction proper to it is the fact that, for structural reasons, the fall of the subject always

remains unperceived, for it is reduced to zero. In so far as the gaze, *qua objet a*, may come to symbolize this central lack expressed in the phenomenon of castration, and in so far as it is an *objet a* reduced, of its nature, to a punctiform, evanescent function, it leaves the subject in ignorance as to what there is beyond the appearance, an ignorance so characteristic of all progress in thought that occurs in the way constituted by philosophical research.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

X. AUDOUARD: *To what extent is it necessary, in analysis, to let the subject know that one is looking at him, that is to say, that one is situated as the person who is observing in the subject the process of looking at oneself?*

LACAN: I shall take up again what I have said above, adding that my discourse here has two aims, one of concern to analysts, the other to those who have come here in order to discover whether psycho-analysis is a science.

Psycho-analysis is neither a *Weltanschauung*, nor a philosophy that claims to provide the key to the universe. It is governed by a particular aim, which is historically defined by the elaboration of the notion of the subject. It poses this notion in a new way, by leading the subject back to his signifying dependence.

To go from perception to science is a perspective that seems to be self-evident, in so far as the subject has no better testing ground for the apprehension of being. This way is the same one that Aristotle follows, taking as his starting-point the pre-Socratics. But it is a way that analytic experience must rectify, because it avoids the abyss of castration. We see this, for example, in the fact that the *tuché* does not enter, except in a punctiform way, into theogony and genesis.

I am trying here to grasp how the *tuché* is represented in visual apprehension. I shall show that it is at the level that I call the stain that the *tychic* point in the scopic function is found. This means that the level of reciprocity between the gaze and the gazed at is, for the subject, more open than any other to alibi. That is why we should try to avoid, by our interventions in the session, allowing the subject to establish himself on this level. On the contrary, we should cut him off from this point of ultimate gaze, which is illusory.

The obstacle you point out is certainly there to illustrate the fact that we take a great deal of care. We do not say to the patient, at every end and turn, *Now, now! What a face you're making!*, or, *The top button of your waistcoat is undone.* It is not, after all, for nothing that analysis is not carried out face to face. The split between gaze and vision will enable us, you will see, to add the scopic drive to the list of the drives. If we know how to read it, we shall see that Freud already places this drive to the fore in *Triebe und Triebschicksale* ('Instincts and their Vicissitudes'), and shows that it is not homologous with the others. Indeed, it is this drive that most completely eludes the term castration.

19 February 1964

7

ANAMORPHOSIS

Of the foundation of consciousness · The privilege of the gaze as objet a · *The optics of the blind · The phallus in the picture*

Vainement ton image arrive à ma rencontre
Et ne m'entre où je suis qui seulement la montre
Toi te tournant vers moi tu ne saurais trouver
Au mur de mon regard que ton ombre rêvée

Je suis ce malheureux comparable aux miroirs
Qui peuvent réfléchir mais ne peuvent pas voir
Comme eux mon oeil est vide et comme eux habité
De l'absence de toi qui fait sa cécité[1]

You may remember that, in one of my earlier lectures, I began by quoting the poem, *Contrechant*, from Aragon's *Le Fou d'Elsa*. I did not realize at the time that I would be developing the subject of the gaze to such an extent. I was diverted into doing so by the way in which I presented the concept of repetition in Freud.

We cannot deny that it is within the explanation of repetition that this digression on the scopic function is situated — no doubt by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's recently published work, *Le Visible et l'invisible*. Moreover, it seemed to me that, if an encounter were to be found there, it was a happy one, one destined to stress, as I shall try to do today, how, in the perspective of the unconscious, we can situate consciousness.

You know that some shadow, or, to use another term, some 'resist' — in the sense one speaks of 'resist' in the dying of material — marks the fact of consciousness in Freud's very discourse.

But, before taking things up again at the point we left them last time, I must first clear up a misunderstanding that appears

[1] For a translation of the poem, see page 17.

to have arisen in the minds of certain members of the audience concerning a term I used last time. Some of you seem to have been perplexed by a word that is simple enough, and which I commented on, namely, the *tychic*. Apparently, it sounded to some of you like a sneeze. Yet I made it quite clear that it was the adjective formed from *tuché* just as *psychique* (psychical) is the adjective corresponding to *psuché* (psyche). I used this analogy at the heart of the experience of repetition quite intentionally, because for any conception of the psychical development as elucidated by psycho-analysis, the fact of the tychic is central. It is in relation to the eye, in relation to the *eutuchia* or the *dustuchia*, the happy encounter and the unhappy encounter, that my lecture today will be ordered.

I

I saw myself seeing myself, young Parque says somewhere. Certainly, this statement has rich and complex implications in relation to the theme developed in *La Jeune Parque*, that of femininity—but we haven't got there yet. We are dealing with the philosopher, who apprehends something that is one of the essential correlates of consciousness in its relation to representation, and which is designated as *I see myself seeing myself*. What evidence can we really attach to this formula? How is it that it remains, in fact, correlative with that fundamental mode to which we referred in the Cartesian *cogito*, by which the subject apprehends himself as thought?

What isolates this apprehension of thought by itself is a sort of doubt, which has been called methodological doubt, which concerns whatever might give support to thought in representation. How is it, then, that the *I see myself seeing myself* remains its envelope and base, and, perhaps more than one thinks, grounds its certainty? For, *I warm myself by warming myself* is a reference to the body as body—I feel that sensation of warmth which, from some point inside me, is diffused and locates me as body. Whereas in the *I see myself seeing myself*, there is no such sensation of being absorbed by vision.

Furthermore, the phenomenologists have succeeded in articulating with precision, and in the most disconcerting way, that it is quite clear that I see *outside*, that perception is not in me, that it is on the objects that it apprehends. And yet I

apprehend the world in a perception that seems to concern the immanence of the *I see myself seeing myself*. The privilege of the subject seems to be established here from that bipolar reflexive relation by which, as soon as I perceive, my representations belong to me.

This is how the world is struck with a presumption of idealization, of the suspicion of yielding me only my representations. Serious practice does not really weigh very heavy, but, on the other hand, the philosopher, the idealist, is placed there, as much in confrontation with himself as in confrontation with those who are listening to him, in an embarrassing position. How can one deny that nothing of the world appears to me except in my representations? This is the irreducible method of Bishop Berkeley, about whose subjective position much might be said—including something that may have eluded you in passing, namely, this *belong to me* aspect of representations, so reminiscent of property. When carried to the limit, the process of this meditation, of this reflecting reflection, goes so far as to reduce the subject apprehended by the Cartesian meditation to a power of annihilation.

The mode of my presence in the world is the subject in so far as by reducing itself solely to this certainty of being a subject, it becomes active annihilation. In fact, the process of the philosophical meditation throws the subject towards the transforming historical action, and, around this point, orders the configured modes of active self-consciousness through its metamorphoses in history. As for the meditation on being that reaches its culmination in the thought of Heidegger, it restores to being itself that power of annihilation—or at least poses the question of how it may be related to it.

This is also the point to which Maurice Merleau-Ponty leads us. But, if you refer to his text, you will see that it is at this point that he chooses to withdraw, in order to propose a return to the sources of intuition concerning the visible and the invisible, to come back to that which is prior to all reflection, thetic or non-thetic, in order to locate the emergence of vision itself. For him, it is a question of restoring—for, he tells us, it can only be a question of a reconstruction or a restoration, not of a path traversed in the opposite direction—of reconstituting the way by which, not from the body, but from something

that he calls the flesh of the world, the original point of vision was able to emerge. It would seem that in this way one sees, in this unfinished work, the emergence of something like the search for an unnamed substance from which I, the seer, extract myself. From the toils (*rets*), or rays (*rais*), if you prefer, of an iridescence of which I am at first a part, I emerge as eye, assuming, in a way, emergence from what I would like to call the function of *seeingness* (*voyure*).

A wild odour emanates from it, providing a glimpse on the horizon of the hunt of Artemis—whose touch seems to be associated at this moment of tragic failure in which we lost him who speaks.

Yet is this really the way he wished to take? The traces that remain of the part to come from his meditation permits us to doubt it. The reference-points that are provided in it, more particularly for the strictly psycho-analytic unconscious, allow us to perceive that he may have been directed towards some search, original in relation to the philosophical tradition, towards that new dimension of meditation on the subject that analysis enables us to trace.

Personally, I cannot but be struck by certain of these notes, which are for me less enigmatic than they may seem to other readers, because they correspond very exactly to the schemata —with one of them, in particular—that I shall be dealing with here. Read, for example, the note concerning what he calls the turning inside-out of the finger of a glove, in as much as it seems to appear there—note the way in which the leather envelops the fur in a winter glove—that consciousness, in its illusion of *seeing itself seeing itself*, finds its basis in the inside-out structure of the gaze.

2

But what is the gaze?

I shall set out from this first point of annihilation in which is marked, in the field of the reduction of the subject, a break—which warns us of the need to introduce another reference, that which analysis assumes in reducing the privileges of the consciousness.

Psycho-analysis regards the consciousness as irremediably limited, and institutes it as a principle, not only of idealization,

but of *méconnaissance*, as—using a term that takes on new value by being referred to a visible domain—*scotoma*. The term was introduced into the psycho-analytic vocabulary by the French School. Is it simply a metaphor? We find here once again the ambiguity that affects anything that is inscribed in the register of the scopic drive.

For us, consciousness matters only in its relation to what, for propaedeutic reasons, I have tried to show you in the fiction of the incomplete text—on the basis of which it is a question of recentring the subject as speaking in the very lacunae of that in which, at first sight, it presents itself as speaking. But I am stating here only the relation of the pre-conscious to the unconscious. The dynamic that is attached to the consciousness as such, the attention the subject brings to his own text, remains up to this point, as Freud has stressed, outside theory and, strictly speaking, not yet articulated.

It is here that I propose that the interest the subject takes in his own split is bound up with that which determines it —namely, a privileged object, which has emerged from some primal separation, from some self-mutilation induced by the very approach of the real, whose name, in our algebra, is the *objet a*.

In the scopic relation, the object on which depends the phantasy from which the subject is suspended in an essential vacillation is the gaze. Its privilege—and also that by which the subject for so long has been misunderstood as being in its dependence—derives from its very structure.

Let us schematize at once what we mean. From the moment that this gaze appears, the subject tries to adapt himself to it, he becomes that punctiform object, that point of vanishing being with which the subject confuses his own failure. Furthermore, of all the objects in which the subject may recognize his dependence in the register of desire, the gaze is specified as unapprehensible. That is why it is, more than any other object, misunderstood (*méconnu*), and it is perhaps for this reason, too, that the subject manages, fortunately, to symbolize his own vanishing and punctiform bar (*trait*) in the illusion of the consciousness of *seeing oneself see oneself*, in which the gaze is elided.

If, then, the gaze is that underside of consciousness, how shall we try to imagine it?

The expression is not inapt, for we can give body to the gaze. Sartre, in one of the most brilliant passages of *L'Être et le Néant*, brings it into function in the dimension of the existence of others. Others would remain suspended in the same, partially de-realizing, conditions that are, in Sartre's definition, those of objectivity, were it not for the gaze. The gaze, as conceived by Sartre, is the gaze by which I am surprised—surprised in so far as it changes all the perspectives, the lines of force, of my world, orders it, from the point of nothingness where I am, in a sort of radiated reticulation of the organisms. As the locus of the relation between me, the annihilating subject, and that which surrounds me, the gaze seems to possess such a privilege that it goes so far as to have me scotomized, I who look, the eye of him who sees me as object. In so far as I am under the gaze, Sartre writes, I no longer see the eye that looks at me and, if I see the eye, the gaze disappears.

Is this a correct phenomenological analysis? No. It is not true that, when I am under the gaze, when I solicit a gaze, when I obtain it, I do not see it as a gaze. Painters, above all, have grasped this gaze as such in the mask and I have only to remind you of Goya, for example, for you to realize this.

The gaze sees itself—to be precise, the gaze of which Sartre speaks, the gaze that surprises me and reduces me to shame, since this is the feeling he regards as the most dominant. The gaze I encounter—you can find this in Sartre's own writing—is, not a seen gaze, but a gaze imagined by me in the field of the Other.

If you turn to Sartre's own text, you will see that, far from speaking of the emergence of this gaze as of something that concerns the organ of sight, he refers to the sound of rustling leaves, suddenly heard while out hunting, to a footstep heard in a corridor. And when are these sounds heard? At the moment when he has presented himself in the action of looking through a keyhole. A gaze surprises him in the function of voyeur, disturbs him, overwhelms him and reduces him to a feeling of shame. The gaze in question is certainly the presence of others as such. But does this mean that originally it is in the relation of subject to subject, in the function of the existence of others as looking at me, that we apprehend what the gaze really is? Is it not clear that the gaze intervenes here only in as much as it is

not the annihilating subject, correlative of the world of objectivity, who feels himself surprised, but the subject sustaining himself in a function of desire?

Is it not precisely because desire is established here in the domain of seeing that we can make it vanish?

3

We can apprehend this privilege of the gaze in the function of desire, by pouring ourselves, as it were, along the veins through which the domain of vision has been integrated into the field of desire.

It is not for nothing that it was at the very period when the Cartesian meditation inaugurated in all its purity the function of the subject that the dimension of optics that I shall distinguish here by calling 'geometral' or 'flat' (as opposed to perspective) optics was developed.

I shall illustrate for you, by one object among others, what seems to me exemplary in a function that so curiously attracted so much reflection at the time.

One reference, for those who would like to carry further what I tried to convey to you today, is Baltrusaïtis' book, *Anamorphoses*.

In my seminar, I have made great use of the function of anamorphosis, in so far as it is an exemplary structure. What does a simple, non-cylindrical anamorphosis consist of? Suppose there is a portrait on this flat piece of paper that I am holding. By chance, you see the blackboard, in an oblique position in relation to the piece of paper. Suppose that, by means of a series of ideal threads or lines, I reproduce on the oblique surface each point of the image drawn on my sheet of paper. You can easily imagine what the result would be—you would obtain a figure enlarged and distorted according to the lines of what may be called a perspective. One supposes that —if I take away that which has helped in the construction, namely, the image placed in my own visual field—the impression I will retain, while remaining in that place, will be more or less the same. At least, I will recognize the general outlines of the image—at best, I will have an identical impression.

I will now pass around something that dates from a hundred years earlier, from 1533, a reproduction of a painting that, I

think, you all know—Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors*. It will serve to refresh the memories of those who know the picture well. Those who do not should examine it attentively. I shall come back to it shortly.

Vision is ordered according to a mode that may generally be called the function of images. This function is defined by a point-by-point correspondence of two unities in space. Whatever optical intermediaries may be used to establish their relation, whether their image is virtual, or real, the point-by-point correspondence is essential. That which is of the mode of the image in the field of vision is therefore reducible to the simple schema that enables us to establish anamorphosis, that is to say, to the relation of an image, in so far as it is linked to a surface, with a certain point that we shall call the 'geometral' point. Anything that is determined by this method, in which the straight line plays its role of being the path of light, can be called an image.

Art is mingled with science here. Leonardo da Vinci is both a scientist, on account of his dioptric constructions, and an artist. Vitruvius's treatise on architecture is not far away. It is in Vignola and in Alberti that we find the progressive interrogation of the geometral laws of perspective, and it is around research on perspective that is centred a privileged interest for the domain of vision—whose relation with the institution of the Cartesian subject, which is itself a sort of geometral point, a point of perspective, we cannot fail to see. And, around the geometral perspective, the picture—this is a very important function to which we shall return—is organized in a way that is quite new in the history of painting.

I should now like to refer you to Diderot. The *Lettre sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient* (Letter on the Blind for the use of those who see) will show you that this construction allows that which concerns vision to escape totally. For the geometral space of vision—even if we include those imaginary parts in the virtual space of the mirror, of which, as you know, I have spoken at length—is perfectly reconstructible, imaginable, by a blind man.

What is at issue in geometral perspective is simply the mapping of space, not sight. The blind man may perfectly well conceive that the field of space that he knows, and which he

knows as real, may be perceived at a distance, and as a simultaneous act. For him, it is a question of apprehending a temporal function, instantaneity. In Descartes, dioptrics, the action of the eyes, is represented as the conjugated action of two sticks. The geometral dimension of vision does not exhaust, therefore, far from it, what the field of vision as such offers us as the original subjectifying relation.

This is why it is so important to acknowledge the inverted use of perspective in the structure of anamorphosis.

It was Dürer himself who invented the apparatus to establish perspective. Dürer's 'lucinda' is comparable to what, a little while ago, I placed between that blackboard and myself, namely, a certain image, or more exactly a canvas, a treliss that will be traversed by straight lines—which are not necessarily rays, but also threads—which will link each point that I have to see in the world to a point at which the canvas will, by this line, be traversed.

It was to establish a correct perspective image, therefore, that the *lucinda* was introduced. If I reverse its use, I will have the pleasure of obtaining not the restoration of the world that lies at the end, but the distortion, on another surface, of the image that I would have obtained on the first, and I will dwell, as on some delicious game, on this method that makes anything appear at will in a particular stretching.

I would ask you to believe that such an enchantment took place in its time. Baltrusaïtis' book will tell you of the furious polemics that these practices gave rise to, and which culminated in works of considerable length. The convent of the Minims, now destroyed, which once stood near the rue des Tournelles, carried on the very long wall of one of its galleries and representing as if by chance St John at Patmos a picture that had to be looked at through a hole, so that its distorting value could be appreciated to its full extent.

Distortion may lend itself—this was not the case for this particular fresco—to all the paranoiac ambiguities, and every possible use has been made of it, from Arcimboldi to Salvador Dali. I will go so far as to say that this fascination complements what geometral researches into perspective allow to escape from vision.

How is it that nobody has ever thought of connecting this

with . . . the effect of an erection? Imagine a tattoo traced on the sexual organ *ad hoc* in the state of repose and assuming its, if I may say so, developed form in another state.

How can we not see here, immanent in the geometral dimension—a partial dimension in the field of the gaze, a dimension that has nothing to do with vision as such—something symbolic of the function of the lack, of the appearance of the phallic ghost?

Now, in *The Ambassadors*—I hope everyone has had time now to look at the reproduction—what do you see? What is this strange, suspended, oblique object in the foreground in front of these two figures?

The two figures are frozen, stiffened in their showy adornments. Between them is a series of objects that represent in the painting of the period the symbols of *vanitas*. At the same period, Cornelius Agrippa wrote his *De Vanitate scientiarum*, aimed as much at the arts as the sciences, and these objects are all symbolic of the sciences and arts as they were grouped at the time in the *trivium* and *quadrivium*. What, then, before this display of the domain of appearance in all its most fascinating forms, is this object, which from some angles appears to be flying through the air, at others to be tilted? You cannot know—for you turn away, thus escaping the fascination of the picture.

Begin by walking out of the room in which no doubt it has long held your attention. It is then that, turning round as you leave—as the author of the *Anamorphoses* describes it—you apprehend in this form . . . What? A skull.

This is not how it is presented at first—that figure, which the author compares to a cuttlebone and which for me suggests rather that loaf composed of two books which Dali was once pleased to place on the head of an old woman, chosen deliberately for her wretched, filthy appearance and, indeed, because she seems to be unaware of the fact, or, again, Dali's soft watches, whose signification is obviously less phallic than that of the object depicted in a flying position in the foreground of this picture.

All this shows that at the very heart of the period in which the subject emerged and geometral optics was an object of research, Holbein makes visible for us here something that is simply the subject as annihilated—annihilated in the form

that is, strictly speaking, the imaged embodiment of the *minus-phi* [$(-\phi)$] of castration, which for us, centres the whole organization of the desires through the framework of the fundamental drives.

But it is further still that we must seek the function of vision. We shall then see emerging on the basis of vision, not the phallic symbol, the anamorphic ghost, but the gaze as such, in its pulsatile, dazzling and spread out function, as it is in this picture.

This picture is simply what any picture is, a trap for the gaze. In any picture, it is precisely in seeking the gaze in each of its points that you will see it disappear. I shall try to develop this further next time.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

F. WAHL: *You have explained that the original apprehension of the gaze in the gaze of others, as described by Sartre, was not the fundamental experience of the gaze. I would like you to explain in greater detail what you have already sketched for us, the apprehension of the gaze in the direction of desire.*

LACAN: If one does not stress the dialectic of desire one does not understand why the gaze of others should disorganize the field of perception. It is because the subject in question is not that of the reflexive consciousness, but that of desire. One thinks it is a question of the geometral eye-point, whereas it is a question of a quite different eye—that which flies in the foreground of *The Ambassadors*.

WAHL: *But I don't understand how others will reappear in your discourse . . .*

LACAN: Look, the main thing is that I don't come a cropper!

WAHL: *I would also like to say that, when you speak of the subject and of the real, one is tempted, on first hearing, to consider the terms in themselves. But gradually one realizes that they are to be understood in their relation to one another, and that they have a topological definition —subject and real are to be situated on either side of the split, in the resistance of the phantasy. The real is, in a way, an experience of resistance.*

LACAN: My discourse proceeds, in the following way: each term is sustained only in its topological relation with the others, and the subject of the *cogito* is treated in exactly the same way.

WAHL: *Is topology for you a method of discovery or of exposition?*

LACAN: It is the mapping of the topology proper to our experience as analysts, which may later be taken in a metaphysical perspective. I think Merleau-Ponty was moving in this direction—see the second part of the book, his reference to the *Wolf Man* and to the finger of a glove.

P. KAUFMANN: *You have provided us with a typical structure of the gaze, but you have said nothing of the dilation of light.*

LACAN: I said that the gaze was not the eye, except in that flying form in which Holbein has the cheek to show me my own soft watch . . . Next time, I will talk about embodied light.

26 February 1964

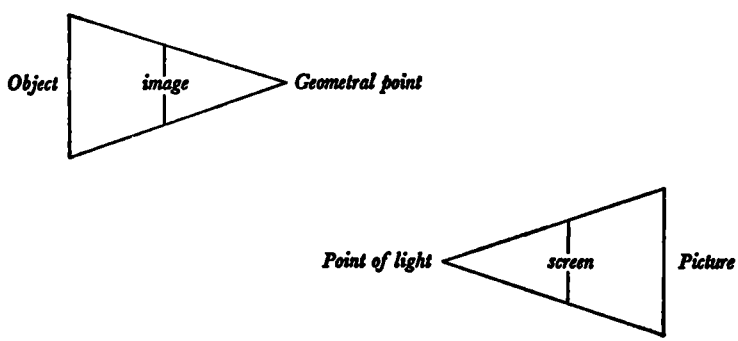
8

THE LINE AND LIGHT

Desire and the picture · The story of a sardine can · The screen · Mimicry · The organ · You never look at me from the place I see you

The function of the eye may lead someone who is trying to enlighten you to distant explorations. When, for example, did the function of the organ and, to begin with, its very presence, appear in the evolution of living beings?

The relation of the subject with the organ is at the heart of our experience. Among all the organs with which we deal, the



breast, the faeces, etc., there is the eye, and it is striking to see that it goes back as far as the species that represent the appearance of life. You no doubt eat oysters, innocently enough, without knowing that at this level in the animal kingdom the eye has already appeared. Such discoveries teach us, it should be said, all manner of things. Yet we must choose from among these things those that are most relative to our search.

Last time, I think I said enough to enable you to grasp the interest of this small, very simple triangular schema that I have reproduced at the top of the blackboard.

It is there simply to remind you in three terms of the optics

used in this operational montage that bears witness to the inverted use of perspective, which came to dominate the technique of painting, in particular, between the end of the fifteenth and the end of the seventeenth centuries. Anamorphosis shows us that it is not a question in painting of a realistic reproduction of the things of space—a term about which one could have many reservations.

The little schema also allows me to remark that certain optics allow that which concerns vision to escape. Such optics are within the grasp of the blind. I have already referred you to Diderot's *Lettre*, which shows to what extent the blind man is capable of taking account of, reconstructing, imagining, speaking about everything that vision yields to us of space. No doubt, on this possibility, Diderot constructs a permanent equivocation with metaphysical implications, but this ambiguity animates his text and gives it its mordant character.

For us, the geometral dimension enables us to glimpse how the subject who concerns us is caught, manipulated, captured, in the field of vision.

In Holbein's picture I showed you at once—without hiding any more than usual—the singular object floating in the foreground, which is there to be looked at, in order to catch, I would almost say, *to catch in its trap*, the observer, that is to say, us. It is, in short, an obvious way, no doubt an exceptional one, and one due to some moment of reflection on the part of the painter, of showing us that, as subjects, we are literally called into the picture, and represented here as caught. For the secret of this picture, whose implications I have pointed out to you, the kinships with the *vanitas*, the way this fascinating picture presents, between the two splendidly dressed and immobile figures, everything that recalls, in the perspective of the period, the vanity of the arts and sciences—the secret of this picture is given at the moment when, moving slightly away, little by little, to the left, then turning around, we see what the magical floating object signifies. It reflects our own nothingness, in the figure of the death's head. It is a use, therefore, of the geometral dimension of vision in order to capture the subject, an obvious relation with desire which, nevertheless, remains enigmatic.

What is the desire which is caught, fixed in the picture, but

which also urges the artist to put something into operation? And what is that something? This is the path along which we shall try to move today.

I

In this matter of the visible, everything is a trap, and in a strange way—as is very well shown by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in the title of one of the chapters of *Le Visible et l'invisible*—*entrelacs* (interlacing, intertwining). There is not a single one of the divisions, a single one of the double sides that the function of vision presents, that is not manifested to us as a labyrinth. As we begin to distinguish its various fields, we always perceive more and more the extent to which they intersect.

In the domain that I have called that of the geometral, it seems at first that it is light that gives us, as it were, the thread. In effect, you saw this thread last time linking us to each point of the object and, in the place where it crosses the network in the form of a screen on which we are going to map the image, functioning quite definitely as a thread. Now, the light is propagated, as one says, in a straight line, this much is certain. It would seem, then, that it is light that gives us the thread.

Yet, reflect that this thread has no need of light—all that is needed is a stretched thread. This is why the blind man would be able to follow all our demonstrations, providing we took some trouble in their presentation. We would get him, for example, to finger an object of a certain height, then follow the stretched thread. We would teach him to distinguish, by the sense of touch in his finger-ends, on a surface, a certain configuration that reproduces the mapping of the images—in the same way that we imagine, in pure optics, the variously proportioned and fundamentally homological relations, the correspondences from one point to another in space, which always, in the end, amounts to situating two points on a single thread. This construction does not, therefore, particularly enable us to apprehend what is provided by light.

How can we try to apprehend that which seems to elude us in this way in the optical structuring of space? It is always on this question that the traditional argument bears. Philosophers, going back from Alain, the last to have concerned himself with it, and quite brilliantly, to Kant, and even to Plato, all expatiate

on the supposed deceptiveness of perception—and, at the same time, they all find themselves once again masters of the exercise, by stressing the fact that perception finds the object where it is, and that the appearance of the cube as a parallelogram is precisely, owing to the rupture of space that underlies our very perception, what makes us perceive it as a cube. The whole trick, the hey presto!, of the classic dialectic around perception, derives from the fact that it deals with geometral vision, that is to say, with vision in so far as it is situated in a space that is not in its essence the visual.

The essence of the relation between appearance and being, which the philosopher, conquering the field of vision, so easily masters, lies elsewhere. It is not in the straight line, but in the point of light—the point of irradiation, the play of light, fire, the source from which reflections pour forth. Light may travel in a straight line, but it is refracted, diffused, it floods, it fills—the eye is a sort of bowl—it flows over, too, it necessitates, around the ocular bowl, a whole series of organs, mechanisms, defences. The iris reacts not only to distance, but also to light, and it has to protect what takes place at the bottom of the bowl, which might, in certain circumstances, be damaged by it. The eyelid, too, when confronted with too bright a light, first blinks, that is, it screws itself up in a well-known grimace.

Furthermore, it is not that the eye has to be photo-sensitive—we know this. The whole surface of the tegument—no doubt for various reasons that are not visual—may be photo-sensitive, and this dimension can in no way be reduced to the functioning of vision. There is a certain adumbration of photo-sensitive organs in the pigmentary spots. In the eye, the pigment functions fully, in a way, of course, that the phenomenon shows to be infinitely complex. It functions within the cones, for example, in the form of a rhodopsin. It also functions inside the various layers of the retina. This pigment comes and goes in functions that are not all, nor always immediately discoverable and clear, but which suggest the depth, the complexity and, at the same time, the unity of the mechanisms concerned with light.

The relation of the subject with that which is strictly concerned with light seems, then, to be already somewhat ambiguous. Indeed, you see this on the schema of the two triangles,

which are inverted at the same time as they must be placed one upon the other. What you have here is the first example of this functioning of interlacing, intersection, chiasma, which I pointed out above, and which structures the whole of this domain.

In order to give you some idea of the question posed by this relation between the subject and light, in order to show you that its place is something other than the place of the geometral point defined by geometric optics, I will now tell you a little story.

It's a true story. I was in my early twenties or thereabouts—and at that time, of course, being a young intellectual, I wanted desperately to get away, see something different, throw myself into something practical, something physical, in the country say, or at the sea. One day, I was on a small boat, with a few people from a family of fishermen in a small port. At that time, Brittany was not industrialized as it is now. There were no trawlers. The fisherman went out in his frail craft at his own risk. It was this risk, this danger, that I loved to share. But it wasn't all danger and excitement—there were also fine days. One day, then, as we were waiting for the moment to pull in the nets, an individual known as Petit-Jean, that's what we called him—like all his family, he died very young from tuberculosis, which at that time was a constant threat to the whole of that social class—this Petit-Jean pointed out to me something floating on the surface of the waves. It was a small can, a sardine can. It floated there in the sun, a witness to the canning industry, which we, in fact, were supposed to supply. It glittered in the sun. And Petit-Jean said to me—*You see that can? Do you see it? Well, it doesn't see you!*

He found this incident highly amusing—I less so. I thought about it. Why did I find it less amusing than he? It's an interesting question.

To begin with, if what Petit-Jean said to me, namely, that the can did not see me, had any meaning, it was because in a sense, it was looking at me, all the same. It was looking at me at the level of the point of light, the point at which everything that looks at me is situated—and I am not speaking metaphorically.

The point of this little story, as it had occurred to my partner,

the fact that he found it so funny and I less so, derives from the fact that, if I am told a story like that one, it is because I, at that moment—as I appeared to those fellows who were earning their livings with great difficulty, in the struggle with what for them was a pitiless nature—looked like nothing on earth. In short, I was rather out of place in the picture. And it was because I felt this that I was not terribly amused at hearing myself addressed in this humorous, ironical way.

I am taking the structure at the level of the subject here, and it reflects something that is already to be found in the natural relation that the eye inscribes with regard to light. I am not simply that punctiform being located at the geometral point from which the perspective is grasped. No doubt, in the depths of my eye, the picture is painted. The picture, certainly, is in my eye. But I am not in the picture.

That which is light looks at me, and by means of that light in the depths of my eye, something is painted—something that is not simply a constructed relation, the object on which the philosopher lingers—but something that is an impression, the shimmering of a surface that is not, in advance, situated for me in its distance. This is something that introduces what was elided in the geometral relation—the depth of field, with all its ambiguity and variability, which is in no way mastered by me. It is rather it that grasps me, solicits me at every moment, and makes of the landscape something other than a landscape, something other than what I have called the picture.

The correlative of the picture, to be situated in the same place as it, that is to say, outside, is the point of gaze, while that which forms the mediation from the one to the other, that which is between the two, is something of another nature than geometral, optical space, something that plays an exactly reverse role, which operates, not because it can be traversed, but on the contrary because it is opaque—I mean the screen.

In what is presented to me as space of light, that which is gaze is always a play of light and opacity. It is always that gleam of light—it lay at the heart of my little story—it is always this which prevents me, at each point, from being a screen, from making the light appear as an iridescence that overflows it. In short, the point of gaze always participates in the ambiguity of the jewel.

And if I am anything in the picture, it is always in the form of the screen, which I earlier called the stain, the spot.

2

This is the relation of the subject with the domain of vision. The word subject must not be understood here in the usual sense of the word, in the subjective sense—this relation is not an idealist relation. This overview, which I call the subject, and which I regard as giving consistency to the picture, is not simply a representative overview.

There are many ways of being wrong about this function of the subject in the domain of the spectacle.

Certainly, there are plenty of examples in *La Phénoménologie de la perception* of what happens behind the retina. Merleau-Ponty cleverly extracts from a mass of writing some very remarkable facts, showing, for example, that simply the fact of masking, by means of a screen, part of a field functioning as a source of composite colours—produced, for example, by two wheels, two screens, which, one revolving behind the other, must compose a certain tone of light—that this intervention alone reveals in a quite different way the composition in question. Indeed, here we grasp the purely subjective function, in the ordinary sense of the word, the note of central mechanism that intervenes, for the play of light arranged in the experiment, all the elements of which we know, is distinct from what is perceived by the subject.

Perceiving the effects of reflection of a field or a colour is quite different—it does have a subjective side to it, but one arranged quite differently. Let us, for example, place a yellow field beside a blue field—by receiving the light reflected on the yellow field, the blue field will undergo some change. But, certainly, everything that is colour is merely subjective—there is no objective correlative in the spectrum to enable us to attach the quality of colour to the wavelength, or to the relevant frequency at this level of light vibration. There is something objective here, but it is situated differently.

Is that all there is to it? Is that what I am talking about when I speak of the relation between the subject and what I have called the picture? Certainly not.

The relation between the subject and the picture has been

approached by certain philosophers, but they have, if I may say so, missed the point. Read the book by Raymond Ruyer called *Néo-finalisme*, and see how, in order to situate perception in a teleological perspective, he is forced to situate the subject in an absolute overview. There is no need, except in the most abstract way, to posit the subject in absolute overview, when, in the example he gives, it is merely a question of getting us to grasp what the perception of a draught-board is—a draught-board belongs essentially to that geometral optics that I was careful to distinguish at the outset. We are here in space *partes extra partes*, which always provides such an objection to the apprehension to the object. In this direction, the thing is irreducible.

Yet there is a phenomenal domain—infinitely more extended than the privileged points at which it appears—that enables us to apprehend, in its true nature, the subject in absolute overview. Even if we cannot give it being, it is nonetheless necessary. There are facts that can be articulated only in the phenomenal dimension of the overview by which I situate myself in the picture as stain—these are the facts of mimicry.

This is not the place to go into all the more or less complex problems posed by the question of mimicry. I would refer you to the specialized works on the subject—they are not only fascinating in themselves, but they provide ample material for reflexion. I shall content myself with stressing what has not, perhaps, been sufficiently brought out. To begin with, I shall ask a question—how important is the function of adaptation in mimicry?

In certain phenomena of mimicry one may speak perhaps of an adaptive or adapted coloration and realize, for example—as Cuénot has shown, probably with some relevance in certain cases—that coloration, in so far as it is adapted completely, is simply a way of defending oneself against light. In an environment in which, because of what is immediately around, the colour green predominates, as at the bottom of a pool containing green plants, an animalcule—there are innumerable ones that might serve as examples—becomes green for as long as the light may do it harm. It becomes green, therefore, in order to reflect the light *qua* green, thus protecting itself, by adaptation, from its effects.

But, in mimicry, we are dealing with something quite different. Let us take an example chosen almost at random—it is not a privileged case—that of the small crustacean known as *caprella*, to which is added the adjective *acanthifera*. When such a crustacean settles in the midst of those animals, scarcely animals, known as briozoaires, what does it imitate? It imitates what, in that quasi-plant animal known as the briozoaires, is a stain—at a particular phase of the briozoaires, an intestinal loop forms a stain, at another phase, there functions something like a coloured centre. It is to this stain shape that the crustacean adapts itself. It becomes a stain, it becomes a picture, it is inscribed in the picture. This, strictly speaking, is the origin of mimicry. And, on this basis, the fundamental dimensions of the inscription of the subject in the picture appear infinitely more justified than a more hesitant guess might suggest at first sight.

I have already referred to what Caillois says about this in his little book *Méduse et compagnie*, with that unquestionable penetration that is sometimes found in the non-specialist—his very distance may enable him to grasp certain implications in what the specialist has merely stated.

Certain scientists claim to see in the register of coloration merely more or less successful facts of adaptation. But the facts show that practically nothing that can be called adaptation—in the sense in which the term is usually understood, that is to say, as behaviour bound up with the needs of survival—practically nothing of this is to be found in mimicry, which, in most cases, proves to be inoperant, or operating strictly in the opposite direction from that which the adaptive result might be presumed to demand. On the other hand, Caillois brings out the three headings that are in effect the major dimensions in which the mimetic activity is deployed—travesty, camouflage, intimidation.

Indeed, it is in this domain that the dimension by which the subject is to be inserted in the picture is presented. Mimicry reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an *itself* that is behind. The effect of mimicry is camouflage, in the strictly technical sense. It is not a question of harmonizing with the background but, against a mottled background, of becoming mottled—exactly like the technique of camouflage practised in human warfare.

In the case of travesty, a certain sexual finality is intended. Nature shows us that this sexual aim is produced by all kinds of effects that are essentially disguise, masquerade. A level is constituted here quite distinct from the sexual aim itself, which is found to play an essential role in it, and which must not be distinguished too hastily as being that of deception. The function of the lure, in this instance, is something else, something before which we should suspend judgement before we have properly measured its effects.

Finally, the phenomenon known as intimidation also involves this over-valuation that the subject always tries to attain in his appearance. Here too, we should not be too hasty in introducing some kind of inter-subjectivity. Whenever we are dealing with imitation, we should be very careful not to think too quickly of the other who is being imitated. To imitate is no doubt to reproduce an image. But at bottom, it is, for the subject, to be inserted in a function whose exercise grasps it. It is here that we should pause for a moment.

Let us now see what the unconscious function as such tells us, in so far as it is the field which, for us, offers itself to the conquest of the subject.

3

In this direction, a remark of Caillois' should guide us. Caillois assures us that the facts of mimicry are similar, at the animal level, to what, in the human being is manifested as art, or painting. The only objection one might make to this is that it seems to indicate, for René Caillois, that the notion of painting is itself so clear that one can refer to it in order to explain something else.

What is painting? It is obviously not for nothing that we have referred to as picture the function in which the subject has to map himself as such. But when a human subject is engaged in making a picture of himself, in putting into operation that something that has as its centre the gaze, what is taking place? In the picture, the artist, we are told by some, wishes to be a subject, and the art of painting is to be distinguished from all others in that, in the work, it is as subject, as gaze, that the artist intends to impose himself on us. To this, others reply by stressing the object-like side of the art product. In both

these directions, something more or less appropriate is manifested, which certainly does not exhaust the question.

I shall advance the following thesis—certainly, in the picture, something of the gaze is always manifested. The painter knows this very well—his morality, his search, his quest, his practice is that he should sustain and vary the selection of a certain kind of gaze. Looking at pictures, even those most lacking in what is usually called the gaze, and which is constituted by a pair of eyes, pictures in which any representation of the human figure is absent, like a landscape by a Dutch or a Flemish painter, you will see in the end, as in filigree, something so specific to each of the painters that you will feel the presence of the gaze. But this is merely an object of research, and perhaps merely illusion.

The function of the picture—in relation to the person to whom the painter, literally, offers his picture to be seen—has a relation with the gaze. This relation is not, as it might at first seem, that of being a trap for the gaze. It might be thought that, like the actor, the painter wishes to be looked at. I do not think so. I think there is a relation with the gaze of the spectator, but that it is more complex. The painter gives something to the person who must stand in front of his painting which, in part, at least, of the painting, might be summed up thus—*You want to see? Well, take a look at this!* He gives something for the eye to feed on, but he invites the person to whom this picture is presented to lay down his gaze there as one lays down one's weapons. This is the pacifying, Apollonian effect of painting. Something is given not so much to the gaze as to the eye, something that involves the abandonment, the *laying down*, of the gaze.

The problem is that a whole side of painting—expressionism—is separated from this field. Expressionist painting, and this is its distinguishing feature, provides something by way of a certain satisfaction—in the sense in which Freud uses the term in relation to the drive—of a certain satisfaction of what is demanded by the gaze.

In other words, we must now pose the question as to the exact status of the eye as organ. The function, it is said, creates the organ. This is quite absurd—function does not even explain the organ. Whatever appears in the organism as an

organ is always presented with a large multiplicity of functions. In the eye, it is clear that various functions come together. The discriminatory function is isolated to the maximum degree at the level of the *fovea*, the chosen point of distinct vision. Something quite different occurs over the rest of the surface of the retina, incorrectly distinguished by specialists as the locus of the scotopic function. But here, too, chiasma is to be found, since it is this last field, supposedly created to perceive things in diminished lighting, which provides the maximum possibility of perceiving the effects of light. If you wish to see a star of the fifth or six size, do not look straight at it—this is known as the Arago phenomenon. You will be able to see it only if you fix your eye to one side.

These functions of the eye do not exhaust the character of the organ in so far as it emerges on the couch, and in so far as the eye determines there what every organ determines, namely, duties. What is wrong about the reference to instinct, a reference that is so confused, is that one does not realize that instinct is the way in which an organism has of extricating itself in the best possible way from an organ. There are many examples, in the animal kingdom, of cases in which the organism succumbs to an excess, a hyper-development of an organ. The supposed function of instinct in the relation between organism and organ certainly seems to have been defined as a kind of morality. We are astonished by the so-called pre-adaptations of instinct. The extraordinary thing is that the organism can do anything with its organ at all.

In my reference to the unconscious, I am dealing with the relation to the organ. It is not a question of the relation to sexuality, or even to the sex, if it is possible to give any specific reference to this term. It is a question rather of the relation to the phallus, in as much as it is lacking in the real that might be attained in the sexual goal.

It is in as much as, at the heart of the experience of the unconscious, we are dealing with that organ—determined in the subject by the inadequacy organized in the castration complex —that we can grasp to what extent the eye is caught up in a similar dialectic.

From the outset, we see, in the dialectic of the eye and the gaze, that there is no coincidence, but, on the contrary, a lure.

When, in love, I solicit a look, what is profoundly unsatisfying and always missing is that—*You never look at me from the place from which I see you.*

Conversely, *what I look at is never what I wish to see.* And the relation that I mentioned earlier, between the painter and the spectator, is a play, a play of *trompe-l'œil*, whatever one says. There is no reference here to what is incorrectly called figurative, if by this you mean some reference or other to a subjacent reality.

In the classical tale of Zeuxis and Parrhasios, Zeuxis has the advantage of having made grapes that attracted the birds. The stress is placed not on the fact that these grapes were in any way perfect grapes, but on the fact that even the eye of the birds was taken in by them. This is proved by the fact that his friend Parrhasios triumphs over him for having painted on the wall a veil, a veil so lifelike that Zeuxis, turning towards him said, *Well, and now show us what you have painted behind it.* By this he showed that what was at issue was certainly deceiving the eye (*tromper l'œil*). A triumph of the gaze over the eye.

Next time, we shall return to this function of the eye and the gaze.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

M. SAFOUAN: *In the contemplation of the picture, if I have understood you correctly, the eye seeks relaxation from the gaze?*

LACAN: I shall take up here the dialectic of appearance and its beyond, in saying that, if beyond appearance there is nothing in itself, there is the gaze. It is in this relation that the eye as organ is situated.

SAFOUAN: *Beyond the appearance, is there a lack, or the gaze?*

LACAN: At the level of the scopic dimension, in so far as the drive operates there, is to be found the same function of the *objet a* as can be mapped in all the other dimensions.

The *objet a* is something from which the subject, in order to constitute itself, has separated itself off as organ. This serves as a symbol of the lack, that is to say, of the phallus, not as such, but in so far as it is lacking. It must, therefore, be an object that is, firstly, separable and, secondly, that has some relation to the lack. I'll explain at once what I mean.

At the oral level, it is the nothing, in so far as that from which

the subject was weaned is no longer anything for him. In anorexia nervosa, what the child eats is the nothing. This will enable you to grasp obliquely how the object of weaning may come to function at the level of castration, as privation.

The anal level is the locus of metaphor—one object for another, give the faeces in place of the phallus. This shows you why the anal drive is the domain of oblativity, of the gift. Where one is caught short, where one cannot, as a result of the lack, give what is to be given, one can always give something else. That is why, in his morality, man is inscribed at the anal level. And this is especially true of the materialist.

At the scopic level, we are no longer at the level of demand, but of desire, of the desire of the Other. It is the same at the level of the invocatory drive, which is the closest to the experience of the unconscious.

Generally speaking, the relation between the gaze and what one wishes to see involves a lure. The subject is presented as other than he is, and what one shows him is not what he wishes to see. It is in this way that the eye may function as *objet a*, that is to say, at the level of the lack $(-\phi)$.

4 March 1964

9

WHAT IS A PICTURE?

Being and its semblance · *The lure of the screen* · Dompte-regard *and* trompe-l'œil[1] · *The backward glance* · *Gesture and touch* · Le donner-à-voir *and* invidia[2]

Today, then, I must keep to the wager to which I committed myself in choosing the terrain in which the *objet a* is most evanescent in its function of symbolizing the central lack of desire, which I have always indicated in a univocal way by the algorithm $(-\phi)$.

I don't know whether you can see the blackboard, but as usual I have marked out a few reference-points. *The* objet a *in the field of the visible is the gaze.* After which, enclosed in a chain bracket, I have written:

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{in nature} \\ \textit{as} = (-\phi) \end{array} \right.$$

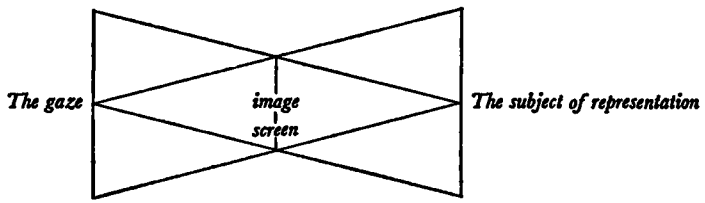
We can grasp in effect something which, already in nature, appropriates the gaze to the function to which it may be put in the symbolic relation in man.

Below this, I have drawn the two triangular systems that I have already introduced—the first is that which, in the geometral field, puts in our place the subject of the representation, and the second is that which turns *me* into a picture. On the right-hand line is situated, then, the apex of the first triangle, the point of the geometral subject, and it is on that line that I,

[1] The sense of the verb *dompter* is 'to tame', 'to subdue'. The reference, then, is to a situation in which the gaze is tamed by some object, such as a picture. Lacan has invented the phrase *dompte-regard* as a counterpart to the notion of *trompe-l'œil*, which has of course passed into the English language [Tr.].

[2] *Donner-à-voir* means literally 'to give to be seen' and, therefore, 'to offer to the view'. The Latin *invidia*, translated as 'envy', derives, as Lacan points out, from *videre*, to see.

too, turn myself into a picture under the gaze, which is inscribed at the apex of the second triangle. The two triangles are here superimposed, as in fact they are in the functioning of the scopic register.



I

I must, to begin with, insist on the following: in the scopic field, the gaze is outside, I am looked at, that is to say, I am a picture.

This is the function that is found at the heart of the institution of the subject in the visible. What determines me, at the most profound level, in the visible, is the gaze that is outside. It is through the gaze that I enter light and it is from the gaze that I receive its effects. Hence it comes about that the gaze is the instrument through which light is embodied and through which—if you will allow me to use a word, as I often do, in a fragmented form—I am *photo-graphed.*

What is at issue here is not the philosophical problem of representation. From that point of view, when I am presented with a representation, I assure myself that I know quite a lot about it, I assure myself as a consciousness that knows that it is only representation, and that there is, beyond, the thing, the thing itself. Behind the phenomenon, there is the noumenon, for example. I may not be able to do anything about it, because my *transcendental categories,* as Kant would say, do just as they please and force me to take the thing in their way. But, then, that's all right, really—everything works out for the best.

In my opinion, it is not in this dialectic between the surface and that which is beyond that things are suspended. For my part, I set out from the fact that there is something that establishes a fracture, a bi-partition, a splitting of the being to which the being accommodates itself, even in the natural world.

This fact is observable in the variously modulated scale of what may be included, ultimately, under the general heading of mimicry. It is this that comes into play, quite obviously, both in sexual union and in the struggle to the death. In both situations, the being breaks up, in an extraordinary way, between its being and its semblance, between itself and that paper tiger it shows to the other. In the case of display, usually on the part of the male animal, or in the case of grimacing swelling by which the animal enters the play of combat in the form of intimidation, the being gives of himself, or receives from the other, something that is like a mask, a double, an envelope, a thrown-off skin, thrown off in order to cover the frame of a shield. It is through this separated form of himself that the being comes into play in his effects of life and death, and it might be said that it is with the help of this doubling of the other, or of oneself, that is realized the conjunction from which proceeds the renewal of beings in reproduction.

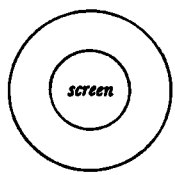
The lure plays an essential function therefore. It is not something else that seizes us at the very level of clinical experience, when, in relation to what one might imagine of the attraction to the other pole as conjoining masculine and feminine, we apprehend the prevalence of that which is presented as *travesty*. It is no doubt through the mediation of masks that the masculine and the feminine meet in the most acute, most intense way.

Only the subject—the human subject, the subject of the desire that is the essence of man—is not, unlike the animal, entirely caught up in this imaginary capture. He maps himself in it. How? In so far as he isolates the function of the screen and plays with it. Man, in effect, knows how to play with the mask as that beyond which there is the gaze. The screen is here the locus of mediation.

Last time, I alluded to the reference given by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in *La Phénoménologie de la perception* in which, from well-chosen examples based on the experiments of Gelb and Goldstein, one can already see, simply at the perceptual level, how the screen re-establishes things, in their status as real. If, by being isolated, an effect of lighting dominates us, if, for example, a beam of light directing our gaze so captivates us that it appears as a milky cone and prevents us from seeing

what it illuminates, the mere fact of introducing into this field a small screen, which cuts into that which is illuminated without being seen, makes the milky light retreat, as it were, into the shadow, and allows the object it concealed to emerge.

At the perceptual level, this is the phenomenon of a relation that is to be taken in a more essential function, namely, that in its relation to desire, reality appears only as marginal.



reality is marginal

This is certainly one of the features that scarcely seems to have been noticed in pictorial creation. Yet rediscovering in the picture what is, strictly speaking, composition, the lines dividing the surfaces created by the painter, vanishing traces, lines of force, frames (*bâtis*) in which the image finds its status is a fascinating game—but I am astonished that in one very remarkable book they are called *frameworks* (*charpentes*). For this term eliminates their principal effect. By a sort of irony, on the back of this book, there nevertheless figures, as being more exemplary than any other, a picture by Rouault on which is traced a circular line to enable us to grasp the main point.

Indeed, there is something whose absence can always be observed in a picture—which is not the case in perception. This is the central field, where the separating power of the eye is exercised to the maximum in vision. In every picture, this central field cannot but be absent, and replaced by a hole—a reflection, in short, of the pupil behind which is situated the gaze. Consequently, and in as much as the picture enters into a relation to desire, the place of a central screen is always marked, which is precisely that by which, in front of the picture, I am elided as subject of the geometral plane.

This is why the picture does not come into play in the field of representation. Its end and effect are elsewhere.

2

In the scopic field, everything is articulated between two terms that act in an antinomic way—on the side of things, there is the gaze, that is to say, things look at me, and yet I see them. This is how one should understand those words, so strongly stressed, in the Gospel, *They have eyes that they might not see.* That they might not see what? Precisely, that things are looking at them.

This is why I have introduced painting into our field of exploration by the narrow door offered by us by Roger Caillois —everyone noticed last time that I made a slip of the tongue in calling him René, heaven knows why—in observing that mimicry is no doubt the equivalent of the function which, in man, is exercised in painting.

This is not the occasion to begin a psycho-analysis of the painter, which is always such a tricky matter, and which always produces a shocked reaction on the part of the listener. Nor is it a question of art criticism, and yet someone who is close to me, and whose views count for a great deal with me, told me that he was very troubled when I embarked on something very like art criticism. Of course, that is the danger, and I shall try to avoid any such confusion.

If one considers all the modulations imposed on painting by the variations of the subjectifying structure that have occurred in history, it is clear that no formula can possibly embrace those aims, those ruses, those infinitely varied tricks. Indeed, you saw clearly enough last time that after declaring that there is in painting a certain *dompte-regard*, a taming of the gaze, that is to say, that he who looks is always led by the painting to lay down his gaze, I immediately introduced the corrective that it is nevertheless in a quite direct appeal to the gaze that expressionism is situated. For those who remain unconvinced, I will explain what I mean. I am thinking of the work of such painters as Munch, James Ensor, Kubin, or even of that painting which, curiously enough, one might situate in a geographical way as laying siege to that which in our time is concentrated in painting in Paris. When will we see the limits of this siege lifted? That, if I am to believe the painter André Masson, with whom I was talking recently, is the most immediate question. Well!

To point out references like these, is not to enter into the shifting, historical game of criticism, which tries to grasp what is the function of painting at a particular moment, for a particular author at a particular time. For me, it is at the radical principle of the function of this fine art that I am trying to place myself.

To begin with, I would stress that it is in setting out from painting that Maurice Merleau-Ponty was particularly led to overthrow the relation, which has always been made by thought, between the eye and the mind. What he has shown in a quite admirable way, beginning with what he calls, with Cézanne himself, *those little blues, those little browns, those little whites*, those touches that fall like rain from the painter's brush, is that the function of the painter is something quite different from the organization of the field of representation in which the philosopher held us in our status as subjects.

And what is that? Where does that get us? It already gives form and embodiment to the field in which the psycho-analyst has advanced since Freud, with what, in Freud, is crazy daring, and what, in those who follow him, soon becomes imprudence.

Freud always stressed with infinite respect that he did not intend to settle the question of what it was in artistic creation that gave it its true value. When he is dealing with painters and poets, there is a point at which his appreciation stops. He cannot say, he does not know, what, for everybody, for those who look or hear, is the value of artistic creation. Nevertheless, when he studies Leonardo, let us say, roughly speaking, that he tries to find the function that the artist's original phantasy played in his creation—his relation to those two mothers Freud sees represented in the painting in the Louvre or in the cartoon in London, by that double body, branching at the level of the waist, which seems to blossom from the entwined legs at the base. Is it in this direction that we must look?

Or should we see the principle of artistic creation in the fact that it seems to extract—remember how I translated *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*—that something that stands for representation? Was it to this that I was leading you when I made a distinction between the picture and representation?

Certainly not—except in very rare works, except in a painting that sometimes emerges, a dream painting, so rare that it

can scarcely be situated in the function of painting. Indeed, perhaps this is the limit at which we would have to designate what is called psychopathological art.

That which is the creation of the painter is structured in a quite different way. Precisely to the extent that we restore the point of view of structure in the libidinal relation, perhaps the time has come when we may question to advantage—because our new algorithms allow us to articulate the answer better—what is involved in artistic creation. For me, it is a question of creation as Freud designated it, that is to say, as sublimation, and of the value it assumes in a social field.

In a way that is at once vague and precise, and which concerns only the success of the work, Freud declares that if a creation of desire, which is pure at the level of the painter, takes on commercial value—a gratification that may, all the same, be termed secondary—it is because its effect has something profitable for society, for that part of society that comes under its influence. Broadly speaking, one can say that the work calms people, comforts them, by showing them that at least some of them can live from the exploitation of their desire. But for this to satisfy them so much, there must also be that other effect, namely, that *their* desire to contemplate finds some satisfaction in it. It elevates the mind, as one says, that is to say, it encourages renunciation. Don't you see that there is something here that indicates the function I called *dompte-regard*?

As I said last time, *dompte-regard* is also presented in the form of *trompe-l'œil*. In this sense, I appear to be moving in the opposite direction from tradition, which situates its function as being very distinct from that of painting. Yet I did not hesitate to end my last talk by observing, in the opposition of the works of Zeuxis and Parrhasios, the ambiguity of two levels, that of the natural function of the lure and that of *trompe-l'œil*.

If the birds rushed to the surface on which Zeuxis had deposited his dabs of colour, taking the picture for edible grapes, let us observe that the success of such an undertaking does not imply in the least that the grapes were admirably reproduced, like those we can see in the basket held by Caravaggio's *Bacchus* in the Uffizi. If the grapes had been painted in this way, it is not very likely that the birds would have been deceived, for why should the birds see grapes portrayed with

such extraordinary verisimilitude? There would have to be something more reduced, something closer to the sign, in something representing grapes for the birds. But the opposite example of Parrhasios makes it clear that if one wishes to deceive a man, what one presents to him is the painting of a veil, that is to say, something that incites him to ask what is behind it.

It is here that this little story becomes useful in showing us why Plato protests against the illusion of painting. The point is not that painting gives an illusory equivalence to the object, even if Plato seems to be saying this. The point is that the *trompe-l'œil* of painting pretends to be something other than what it is.

What is it that attracts and satisfies us in *trompe-l'œil*? When is it that it captures our attention and delights us? At the moment when, by a mere shift of our gaze, we are able to realize that the representation does not move with the gaze and that it is merely a *trompe-l'œil*. For it appears at that moment as something other than it seemed, or rather it now seems to be that something else. The picture does not compete with appearance, it competes with what Plato designates for us beyond appearance as being the Idea. It is because the picture is the appearance that says it is that which gives the appearance that Plato attacks painting, as if it were an activity competing with his own.

This other thing is the *petit a*, around which there revolves a combat of which *trompe-l'œil* is the soul.

If one tries to represent the position of the painter concretely in history, one realizes that he is the source of something that may pass into the real and on which, at all times, one might say, one takes a lease. The painter, it is said, no longer depends on aristocratic patrons. But the situation is not fundamentally changed with the advent of the picture dealer. He, too, is a patron, and a patron of the same stamp. Before the aristocratic patron, it was the religious institution, with the holy image, that gave artists a living. The artist always has some financial body behind him and it is always a question of the *objet a*, or rather a question of reducing it—which may, at a certain level, strike you as being rather mythical—to an *a* with which—this is true in the last resort—it is the painter as creator who sets up a dialogue.

But it is much more instructive to see how the *a* functions in its social repercussions.

Icons—the Christ in triumph in the vault at Daphnis or the admirable Byzantine mosaics—undoubtedly have the effect of holding us under their gaze. We might stop there, but were we to do so we would not really grasp the motive that made the painter set about making this icon, or the motive it satisfies in being presented to us. It is something to do with the gaze, of of course, but there is more to it than that. What makes the value of the icon is that the god it represents is also looking at it. It is intended to please God. At this level, the artist is operating on the sacrificial plane—he is playing with those things, in this case images, that may arouse the desire of God.

Indeed, God is the creator of certain images—we see this in *Genesis*, with the *Zelem Elohim*. And iconoclastic thought itself still preserves this when it declares there is a god that does not care for this. He is certainly alone in this. But I do not want to go too far today in a direction that would take us right to the heart of one of the most essential elements of the province of the Names-of-the-Father: a certain pact may be signed beyond every image. Where we are, the image remains a go-between with the divinity—if Javeh forbids the Jews to make idols, it is because they give pleasure to the other gods. In a certain register it is not God who is not anthropomorphic, it is man who is begged not to be so. But that's enough of that.

Let us pass now to the next stage, which I shall call *communal*. Let us go to the great hall of the Doges' Palace in which are painted all kinds of battles, such as the battle of Lepanto, etc. The social function, which was already emerging at the religious level, is now becoming clear. Who comes here? Those who form what Retz calls '*les peuples*', the audiences. And what do the audiences see in these vast compositions. They see the gaze of those persons who, when the audience are not there, deliberate in this hall. Behind the picture, it is their gaze that is there.

You see, one can say that there are always lots of gazes behind. Nothing new is introduced in this respect by the epoch that André Malraux distinguishes as the modern, that which comes to be dominated by what he calls '*the incomparable monster*', namely, the gaze of the painter, which claims to impose itself as being the only gaze. There always was a gaze behind. But

—this is the most subtle point—where does this gaze come from?

3

We now come back to the *little blues, little whites, little browns* of Cézanne, or again to the delightful example that Maurice Merleau-Ponty gives in passing in his *Signes*, namely, that strange slow-motion film in which one sees Matisse painting. The important point is that Matisse himself was overwhelmed by the film. Maurice Merleau-Ponty draws attention to the paradox of this gesture which, enlarged by the distension of time, enables us to imagine the most perfect deliberation in each of these brush strokes. This is an illusion, he says. What occurs as these strokes, which go to make up the miracle of the picture, fall like rain from the painter's brush is not choice, but something else. Can we not try to formulate what this something else is?

Should not the question be brought closer to what I called the rain of the brush? If a bird were to paint would it not be by letting fall its feathers, a snake by casting off its scales, a tree by letting fall its leaves? What it amounts to is the first act in the laying down of the gaze. A sovereign act, no doubt, since it passes into something that is materialized and which, from this sovereignty, will render obsolete, excluded, inoperant, whatever, coming from elsewhere, will be presented before this product.

Let us not forget that the painter's brushstroke is something in which a movement is terminated. We are faced here with something that gives a new and different meaning to the term regression—we are faced with the element of motive in the sense of response, in so far as it produces, behind it, its own stimulus.

There, that by which the original temporality in which the relation to the other is situated as distinct is here, in the scopic dimension, that of the terminal moment. That which in the identificatory dialectic of the signifier and the spoken will be projected forward as haste, is here, on the contrary, the end, that which, at the outset of any new intelligence, will be called the moment of seeing.

This terminal moment is that which enables us to distinguish between a gesture and an act. It is by means of the gesture that

the brushstroke is applied to the canvas. And so true is it that the gesture is always present there that there can be no doubt that the picture is first felt by us, as the terms *impression* or *impressionism* imply, as having more affinity with the gesture than with any other type of movement. All action represented in a picture appears to us as a battle scene, that is to say, as something theatrical, necessarily created for the gesture. And, again, it is this insertion in the gesture that means that one cannot turn it upside down—whether or not it is figurative. If you turn a transparency around, you realize at once if it is being shown to you with the left in the place of the right. The direction of the gesture of the hand indicates sufficiently this lateral symmetry.

What we see here, then, is that the gaze operates in a certain descent, a descent of desire, no doubt. But how can we express this? The subject is not completely aware of it—he operates by remote control. Modifying the formula I have of desire as unconscious—*man's desire is the desire of the Other*—I would say that it is a question of a sort of desire *on the part of* the Other, at the end of which is the *showing* (*le donner-à-voir*).

How could this *showing* satisfy something, if there is not some appetite of the eye on the part of the person looking? This appetite of the eye that must be fed produces the hypnotic value of painting. For me, this value is to be sought on a much less elevated plane than might be supposed, namely, in that which is the true function of the organ of the eye, the eye filled with voracity, the evil eye.

It is striking, when one thinks of the universality of the function of the evil eye, that there is no trace anywhere of a good eye, of an eye that blesses. What can this mean, except that the eye carries with it the fatal function of being in itself endowed—if you will allow me to play on several registers at once—with a power to separate. But this power to separate goes much further than distinct vision. The powers that are attributed to it, of drying up the milk of an animal on which it falls—a belief as widespread in our time as in any other, and in the most civilized countries—of bringing with it disease or misfortune—where can we better picture this power than in *invidia*?

Invidia comes from *videre*. The most exemplary *invidia*, for us

analysts, is the one I found long ago in Augustine, in which he sums up his entire fate, namely, that of the little child seeing his brother at his mother's breast, looking at him *amare conspectu*, with a bitter look, which seems to tear him to pieces and has on himself the effect of a poison.

In order to understand what *invidia* is in its function as gaze it must not be confused with jealousy. What the small child, or whoever, *envies* is not at all necessarily what he might want —*avoir envie*, as one improperly puts it. Who can say that the child who looks at his younger brother still needs to be at the breast? Everyone knows that envy is usually aroused by the possession of goods which would be of no use to the person who is envious of them, and about the true nature of which he does not have the least idea.

Such is true envy—the envy that makes the subject pale before the image of a completeness closed upon itself, before the idea that the *petit a*, the separated *a* from which he is hanging, may be for another the possession that gives satisfaction, *Befriedigung*.

It is to this register of the eye as made desperate by the gaze that we must go if we are to grasp the taming, civilizing and fascinating power of the function of the picture. The profound relation between the *a* and desire will serve as an example when I introduce the subject of the transference.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

M. TORT: *Could you say more about the relation you posited between gesture and the moment of seeing?*

LACAN: What is a gesture? A threatening gesture, for example? It is not a blow that is interrupted. It is certainly something that is done in order to be arrested and suspended.

I may carry it to its logical conclusion later, but, as a threatening gesture it is inscribed behind.

It is this very special temporality, which I have defined by the term arrest and which creates its signification behind it, that makes the distinction between the gesture and the act.

What is very remarkable in the Peking Opera—I don't know whether you saw them on their recent visit—is the way fighting is depicted. One fights as one has always fought since time immemorial, much more with gestures than with blows.

Of course, the spectacle itself is content with an absolute dominance of gestures. In these ballets, no two people ever touch one another, they move in different spaces in which are spread out whole series of gestures, which, in traditional combat, nevertheless have the value of weapons, in the sense that they may well be effective as instruments of intimidation. Everyone knows that primitive peoples go into battle with grimacing, horrible masks and terrifying gestures. You mustn't imagine that this is over and done with! When fighting the Japanese, the American marines were taught to make as many grimaces as they. Our more recent weapons might also be regarded as gestures. Let us hope that they will remain such!

The authenticity of what emerges in painting is diminished in us human beings by the fact that we have to get our colours where they're to be found, that is to say, in the shit. If I referred to birds who might let fall their feathers, it is because *we* do not have these feathers. The creator will never participate in anything other than the creation of a small dirty deposit, a succession of small dirty deposits juxtaposed. It is through this dimension that we are in scopic creation—the gesture as displayed movement.

Does this explanation satisfy you? Was that the question you asked me?

TORT: *No, I wanted you to say more about that temporality to which you already referred once, and which presupposes, it seems to me, references that you have made elsewhere to logical time.*

LACAN: Look, what I noticed there was the suture, the pseudo-identification, that exists between what I called the time of terminal arrest of the gesture and what, in another dialectic that I called the dialectic of identificatory haste, I put as the first time, namely, the moment of seeing. The two overlap, but they are certainly not identical, since one is initial and the other is terminal.

I would like to say more about something for which I was not able, for lack of time, to give you the necessary indications.

This terminal time of the gaze, which completes the gesture, I place strictly in relation to what I later say about the evil eye. The gaze in itself not only terminates the movement, it freezes it. Take those dances I mentioned—they are always punctuated by a series of times of arrest in which the actors pause in a

frozen attitude. What is that thrust, that time of arrest of the movement? It is simply the fascinatory effect, in that it is a question of dispossessing the evil eye of the gaze, in order to ward it off. The evil eye is the *fascinum*, it is that which has the effect of arresting movement and, literally, of killing life. At the moment the subject stops, suspending his gesture, he is mortified. The anti-life, anti-movement function of this terminal point is the *fascinum*, and it is precisely one of the dimensions in which the power of the gaze is exercised directly. The moment of seeing can intervene here only as a suture, a conjunction of the imaginary and the symbolic, and it is taken up again in a dialectic, that sort of temporal progress that is called haste, thrust, forward movement, which is concluded in the *fascinum*.

What I wish to emphasize is the total distinction between the scopic register and the invocatory, vocatory, vocational field. In the scopic field, the subject is not essentially indeterminate. The subject is strictly speaking determined by the very separation that determines the break of the *a*, that is to say, the fascinatory element introduced by the gaze. Does that satisfy you more? Completely?

TORT: *Almost.*

F. WAHL: *You have left to one side a phenomenon that is situated, like the evil eye, in the Mediterranean civilizations, and which is the prophylactic eye. It has a protective function that lasts for the duration of a journey, and which is linked, not to an arrest, but to a movement.*

LACAN: What is prophylactic about such things is, one might say, allopathic, whether it is a question of a horn, whether or not made of coral, or innumerable other things whose appearance is clearer, like the *turpicula res*, described by Varro, I think, which is quite simply a phallus. For it is in so far as all human desire is based on castration that the eye assumes its virulent, aggressive function, and not simply its luring function as in nature. One can find among these amulets forms in which a counter-eye emerges—this is homeopathic. Thus, obliquely, the so-called prophylactic function is introduced.

I was thinking that in the Bible, for example, there must be passages in which the eye confers the *baraka* or blessing. There are a few small places where I hesitated—but no. The eye may

be prophylactic, but it cannot be beneficent—it is maleficent. In the Bible and even in the New Testament, there is no good eye, but there are evil eyes all over the place.

J.-A. MILLER: *On several occasions recently, you have explained that the subject cannot be located in the dimension of quantity or measure, in a Cartesian space. On the other hand, you have said that Merleau-Ponty's research converged with your own. You have even maintained that he laid down the reference-points of the unconscious . . .*

LACAN: I did not say that. I suggested that the few whiffs of the unconscious to be detected in his notes might have led him to pass, let us say, into my field. I'm not at all sure.

MILLER: *To continue. Now, if Merleau-Ponty is seeking to subvert Cartesian space, is it in order to open up the transcendental space of the relation to the Other? No, it is in order to accede either to the so-called dimension of inter-subjectivity, or to that so-called pre-objective, savage, primordial world. This leads me to ask you if* Le Visible et l'invisible *has led you to change anything in the article that you published on Merleau-Ponty in a number of* Les Temps Modernes?

LACAN: Absolutely nothing.

11 March 1964

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The Transference and the Drive

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10

PRESENCE OF THE ANALYST

Problems of the transference · Obscurantism in analysis · Ablata causa *· The Other, already there · The unconscious is outside · An article in* The International Journal

So that I would not always have to be looking for a box of matches, someone gave me a very large box, as you can see. On it is written the following motto: *the art of listening is almost as important as that of saying the right thing.* This apportions our tasks. Let us hope that we will measure up to them.

Today I shall be dealing with the transference, or rather I shall approach the question, in the hope of giving you some idea of the concept, as I promised I would do in my second talk.

I

The transference is usually represented as an affect. A rather vague distinction is then made between a positive and a negative transference. It is generally assumed, not without some foundation, that the positive transference is love—though it must be said that, in the way it is used here, this term is employed in a very approximate way.

At a very early stage, Freud posed the question of the authenticity of love as it occurs in the transference. To come to the point, it is usually maintained that in these circumstances it is a sort of false love, a shadow of love. But Freud himself did not weigh down the scales in this direction—far from it. Not least among the consequences of the experience of the transference was that it led Freud to take the question of what is called true love, *eine echte Liebe*, further perhaps than it had ever been taken.

In the case of the negative transference, commentators are more prudent, more restrained, in the way they refer to it, and

it is never identified with hate. They usually employ the term ambivalence, a term which, even more than the first, conceals things very well, confused things that are not always handled in a satisfactory way.

It would be truer to say that the positive transference is when you have a soft spot for the individual concerned, the analyst in this instance, and the negative transference is when you have to keep your eye on him.

There is another use of the term transference that is worth pointing out, as when one says that it structures all the particular relations with that other who is the analyst, and that the value of all the thoughts that gravitate around this relation must be connoted by a sign of particular reserve. Hence the expression—which is always added as a kind of after-thought or parenthesis, as if to convey some kind of suspicion, when used about the behaviour of a subject—*he is in full transference*. This presupposes that his entire mode of apperception has been restructured around the dominant centre of the transference.

I will not go any further because this double semantic mapping seems to me to be adequate for the moment.

We cannot, of course, remain satisfied with this, since our aim is to approach the concept of the transference.

This concept is determined by the function it has in a particular praxis. This concept directs the way in which patients are treated. Conversely, the way in which they are treated governs the concept.

It might seem to settle the question at the outset if we could decide whether or not the transference is bound up with analytic practice, whether it is a product, not to say an artefact, of analytic practice. Ida Macalpine, one of the many authors who have been led to express their opinions on the transference, has carried as far as possible the attempt to articulate the transference in this direction. Whatever her merits—she is a very stubborn person—let me say at once that I cannot, in any sense, accept this extreme position.

In any case, approaching the question in this way does not settle it. Even if we must regard the transference as a product of the analytic situation, we may say that this situation cannot create the phenomenon in its entirety, and that, in order to produce it, there must be, outside the analytic situation,

possibilities already present to which it will give their perhaps unique composition.

This in no way excludes the possibility, where no analyst is in view, that there may be, properly speaking, transference effects that may be structured exactly like the gamut of transference phenomena in analysis. It is simply that, in discovering these effects, analysis will make it possible to give them an experimental model that need not necessarily be at all different from the model I shall call the natural one. So to bring out the transference in analysis, where it acquires its structural foundations, may very well be the only way of introducing the universality of the application of this concept. It should be enough, then, to open up this package in the sphere of analysis and, more especially, of the *doxa* that goes with it.

This, after all, is a truism. Nevertheless, it is a rough indication worth making as a start.

2

The aim of this introduction is to remind you that if we are to approach the fundamentals of psycho-analysis we must introduce a certain coherence into the major concepts on which it is based. Such a coherence is already to be found in the way I have approached the concept of the unconscious—which, you will remember, I was unable to separate from the presence of the analyst.

Presence of the analyst—a fine phrase that should not be reduced to the tear-jerking sermonizing, the serous inflation, the rather sticky caress to be found in a book that has appeared under this title.

The presence of the analyst is itself a manifestation of the unconscious, so that when it is manifested nowadays in certain encounters, as a refusal of the unconscious—this is a tendency, readily admitted, in some people's thinking—this very fact must be integrated into the concept of the unconscious. You have rapid access here to the formulation, which I have placed in the forefront, of a movement of the subject that opens up only to close again in a certain temporal pulsation—a pulsation I regard as being more radical than the insertion in the signifier that no doubt motivates it, but is not primary to it at the level of essence, since I have been driven to speak of essence.

I have shown, in a maieutic, eristic way, that one should see in the unconscious the effects of speech on the subject—in so far as these effects are so radically primary that they are properly what determine the status of the subject as subject. This proposition was intended to restore the Freudian unconscious to its true place. Certainly, the unconscious has always been present, it existed and acted before Freud, but it is important to stress that all the acceptations given, before Freud, to this function of the unconscious have absolutely nothing to do with the Freudian unconscious.

The primal unconscious, the unconscious as archaic function, the unconscious as veiled presence of a thought to be placed at the level of being before it is revealed, the metaphysical unconscious of Edward von Hartmann—whatever reference Freud makes to it in an *ad hominem* argument—above all the unconscious as instinct—all this has nothing to do with the Freudian unconscious, nothing at all, whatever its analytic vocabulary, its inflections, its deviations may be—nothing at all to do with our experience. I will ask analysts a straight question: *have you ever, for a single moment, the feeling that you are handling the clay of instinct?*

In my Rome report,[1] I proceeded to a new alliance with the meaning of the Freudian discovery. The unconscious is the sum of the effects of speech on a subject, at the level at which the subject constitutes himself out of the effects of the signifier. This makes it clear that, in the term *subject*—this is why I referred it back to its origin—I am not designating the living substratum needed by this phenomenon of the subject, nor any sort of substance, nor any being possessing knowledge in his *pathos*, his suffering, whether primal or secondary, nor even some incarnated logos, but the Cartesian subject, who appears at the moment when doubt is recognized as certainty—except that, through my approach, the bases of this subject prove to be wider, but, at the same time much more amenable to the certainty that eludes it. This is what the unconscious is.

There is a link between this field and the moment, Freud's

[1] 'Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage en psychanalyse', *Écrits*, Paris, Ed. du Seuil, 1966; 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psycho-Analysis', *Écrits: a selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan, London, Tavistock Publications, 1977.

moment, when it is revealed. It is this link I express when I compare it with the approach of a Newton, an Einstein, a Planck, an a-cosmological approach, in the sense that all these fields are characterized by tracing in the real a new furrow in relation to the knowledge that might from all eternity be attributed to God.

Paradoxically, the difference which will most surely guarantee the survival of Freud's field, is that the Freudian field is a field which, of its nature, is lost. It is here that the presence of the psycho-analyst as witness of this loss, is irreducible.

At this level, we can get nothing more out of it—for it is a dead loss, with no gain to show, except perhaps its resumption in the function of pulsation. The loss is necessarily produced in a shaded area—which is designated by the oblique stroke with which I divide the formulae which unfold, in linear form, opposite each of the terms, unconscious, repetition, transference. This area of loss even involves, as far as these facts of analytic practice are concerned, a certain deepening of obscurantism, very characteristic of the condition of man in our times of supposed information—obscurantism which, without really knowing why, I can well believe will be regarded as incredible in the future. What I mean by obscurantism is, in particular, the function assumed by psycho-analysis in the propagation of a style that calls itself the *American way of life*, in so far as it is characterized by the revival of notions long since refuted in the field of psycho-analysis, such as the predominance of the functions of the ego.

In this sense, then, the presence of the psycho-analyst, seen in the very same perspective in which the vanity of his discourse appears, must be included in the concept of the unconscious. Psycho-analysts of today, we must take account of this slag in our operations, as we must of the *caput mortuum* of the discovery of the unconscious. It justifies the maintenance, within analysis, of a conflict situation, necessary to the very existence of analysis.

If it is true that psycho-analysis rests on a fundamental conflict, on an initial, radical drama as far as everything that might be included under the heading psychical is concerned, the innovation to which I refer, and which is called *recall of the field and function of speech and language in psychoanalytic experience*,

does not claim to exhaust the possibilities of the unconscious, since it is, itself, an intervention in the conflict. This recall has an immediate implication in that it has itself a transferential effect. In any case, this is recognized by the fact that my seminar has been criticized precisely for playing, in relation to my audience, a function regarded by the orthodoxy of the psycho-analytic association as dangerous, for intervening in the transference. Now, far from denying it, I would regard this effect as radical, as constituting, indeed, this renewal of the alliance with Freud's discovery. This indicates that the cause of the unconscious—and you see that the word cause is to be taken here in its ambiguity, a cause to be sustained, but also a function of the cause at the level of the unconscious—this cause must be conceived as, fundamentally, a lost cause. And it is the only chance one has of winning it.

That is why, in the misunderstood concept of repetition, I stress the importance of the ever avoided encounter, of the missed opportunity. The function of missing lies at the centre of analytic repetition. The appointment is always missed—this is what constitutes, in comparison with *tuché*, the vanity of repetition, its constitutive occultation.

The concept of repetition brings me to the following dilemma —either I assume quite simply my implication as analyst in the eristic character of the discord of any description of my experience, or I polish up the concept at the level of something that would be impossible to objectify, if not at the level of a transcendental analysis of cause.

Cause might be formulated on the basis of the classical formula of the *ablata causa tollitur effectus*—I would have only to stress the singular of the protasis, *ablata causa*, by putting the terms of the apodosis in the plural *tolluntur effectus*—which would mean that *the effects are successful only in the absence of cause.* All the effects are subjected to the pressure of a transfactual, causal order which demands to join in their dance, but, if they held their hands tightly, as in the song, they would prevent the cause intruding in their round.

At this point, I should define unconscious cause, neither as an existent, nor as a *οὐκ ὄν*, a non-existent—as, I believe Henri Ey does, a non-existent of possibility. It is a *μὴ ὄν* of the prohibition that brings to being an existent in spite of its non-

advent, it is a function of the impossible on which a certainty is based.

3

This brings us to the function of the transference. For this indeterminate of pure being that has no point of access to determination, this primary position of the unconscious that is articulated as constituted by the indetermination of the subject—it is to this that the transference gives us access, in an enigmatic way. It is a Gordian knot that leads us to the following conclusion—the subject is looking for his certainty. And the certainty of the analyst himself concerning the unconscious cannot be derived from the concept of the transference.

It is striking, therefore, to observe the multiplicity, the plurality, the plurivalence even, of the conceptions of the transference that have been formulated in analysis. I do not claim to be able to provide you with an exhaustive account of them. I shall simply try to guide you through the paths of a chosen exploration.

At its emergence in the writings and teachings of Freud, a sliding-away (*glissement*), which we cannot impute to him, lies in wait for us—this consists in seeing in the concept of the transference no more than the concept of repetition itself. Let us not forget that when Freud presents it to us, he says—*what cannot be remembered is repeated in behaviour.* This behaviour, in order to reveal what it repeats, is handed over to the analyst's reconstruction.

One may go so far as to believe that the opacity of the trauma—as it was then maintained in its initial function by Freud's thought, that is to say, in my terms, its resistance to signification—is then specifically held responsible for the limits of remembering. And, after all, it is hardly surprising, given my own theorization, that I should see this as a highly significant moment in the transfer of powers from the subject to the Other, what I call the capital Other (*le grand Autre*), the locus of speech and, potentially, the locus of truth.

Is this the point at which the concept of the transference appears? It would seem so, and one often goes no further. But let us look at it more closely. In Freud, this moment is not simply the moment-limit that seems to correspond to what I

designated as the moment of the closing up of the unconscious, a temporal pulsation that makes it disappear at a certain point of its statement (*énoncé*). When Freud introduces the function of the transference, he is careful to mark this moment as the cause of what we call the transference. The Other, latent or not, is, even beforehand, present in the subjective revelation. It is already there, when something has begun to yield itself from the unconscious.

The analyst's interpretation merely reflects the fact that the unconscious, if it is what I say it is, namely, a play of the signifier, has already in its formations—dreams, slips of tongue or pen, witticisms or symptoms—proceeded by interpretation. The Other, the capital Other, is already there in every opening, however fleeting it may be, of the unconscious.

What Freud shows us, from the outset, is that the transference is essentially resistant, *Übertragungswiderstand*. The transference is the means by which the communication of the unconscious is interrupted, by which the unconscious closes up again. Far from being the handing over of powers to the unconscious, the transference is, on the contrary, its closing up.

This is essential in noting the paradox that is expressed quite commonly in the fact—which may even be found in Freud's writings—that the analyst must await the transference before beginning to give his interpretation.

I want to stress this question because it is the dividing line between the correct and incorrect conception of the transference.

In analytic practice, there are many ways of conceiving the transference. They are not necessarily mutually exclusive. They may be defined at different levels. For example, although the conceptions of the relation of the subject to one or other of those agencies which, in the second stage of his *Topography*, Freud was able to define as the ego-ideal or the super-ego, are partial, this is often simply to give a lateralized view of what is essentially the relation with the capital Other.

But there are other divergences that are irreducible. There is a conception which, wherever it is formulated, can only contaminate practice—I am referring to the conception which would have the analysis of the transference proceed on the basis of an alliance with the healthy part of the subject's ego, and consists in appealing to his common sense, by way of

pointing out to him the illusory character of certain of his actions in his relation with the analyst. This is a thesis that subverts what it is all about, namely the bringing to awareness of this split in the subject, realized here, in fact, in presence. To appeal to some healthy part of the subject thought to be there in the real, capable of judging with the analyst what is happening in the transference, is to misunderstand that it is precisely this part that is concerned in the transference, that it is this part that closes the door, or the window, or the shutters, or whatever—and that the beauty with whom one wishes to speak is there, behind, only too willing to open the shutters again. That is why it is at this moment that interpretation becomes decisive, for it is to the beauty one must speak.

I can do no more than suggest here the reversion involved in this schema in relation to the model one has of it in one's head. I say somewhere that *the unconscious is the discourse of the Other.* Now, the discourse of the Other that is to be realized, that of the unconscious, is not beyond the closure, it is *outside.* It is this discourse, which, through the mouth of the analyst, calls for the reopening of the shutter.

Nevertheless, there is a paradox in designating this movement of closure as the initial moment when the interpretation may assume its full force. And here is revealed the permanent conceptual crisis that exists in analysis concerning the way in which the function of the transference should be conceived.

The contradiction of its function, which causes it to be apprehended as the point of impact of the force of the interpretation by the very fact that, in relation to the unconscious, it is a moment of closure—this is why we must treat it as what it is, namely, a knot. Whether or not we treat it as a Gordian knot remains to be seen. It is a knot, and it prompts us to account for it—as I have been doing for several years—by considerations of topology. It will not be thought unnecessary, I hope, to remind you of these.

4

There is a crisis in analysis and, to show that there is nothing biased in this, I would support my view by citing a recent article that demonstrates this in the most striking way—and it is the work of no mediocre mind. It is a closely argued, very

engaging article by Thomas S. Szasz—who hails from Syracuse, which fact, unfortunately, does not make him any more closely related to Archimedes, for this Syracuse is in New York State—which appeared in the latest number of *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis.*

The author was inspired to write this article by an idea in keeping with the line of investigation that inspired his earlier articles, a truly moving search for the authenticity of the analytic way.

It is quite striking that an author, who is indeed one of the most highly regarded in his circle, which is specifically that of American psycho-analysis, should regard the transference as nothing more than a defence on the part of the psycho-analyst, and should arrive at the following conclusion—*the transference is the pivot on which the entire structure of psycho-analytic treatment rests.* This is a concept that he calls *inspired*—I am always suspicious of *faux amis* in English vocabulary, so I have tried to tread warily when translating it. This *inspired*, it seemed to me, did not mean *inspiré*, but something like *officieux. It is an inspired and indispensable concept*—I quote—*yet it harbours the seeds, not only of its own destruction, but of the destruction of psycho-analysis itself.* Why? *Because it tends to place the person of the analyst beyond the reality testing of patients, colleagues, and self. This hazard must be frankly recognized. Neither professionalization, nor the 'raising of standards', nor coerced training analyses can protect us from this danger.* And here the confusion arises—*only the integrity of the analyst and of the analytic situation can safeguard from extinction the unique dialogue between analysand and analyst.*

This blind alley that Szasz has created for himself is, for him, necessitated by the very fact that he can conceive of the analysis of the transference only in terms of an assent obtained from the healthy part of the ego, that part which is capable of judging reality and of separating it from illusion.

His article begins thus, quite logically—*Transference is similar to such concepts as delusion, illusion, and phantasy.* Once the presence of the transference has been established, it is a question of agreement between the analysand and the analyst, except that here the analyst is a judge against whom there is neither appeal nor recourse, we are led to call any analysis of the transference a field of pure, uncontrolled hazard.

I have taken this article only as an extreme case, but a very revealing one, so as to encourage us to restore here a determination that should bring into play another order—that of truth. Truth is based only on the fact that speech, even when it consists of lies, appeals to it and gives rise to it. This dimension is always absent from the logical positivism that happens to dominate Szasz's analysis of the concept of transference.

My own conception of the dynamics of the unconscious has been called an intellectualization—on the grounds that I based the function of the signifier in the forefront. Is it not apparent that it is in this operational mode—in which everything makes light of the confrontation between a reality and a connotation of illusion attributed to the phenomenon of the transference—that this supposed intellectualization really resides?

Far from us having to consider two subjects, in a dual position, to discuss an objectivity that appears to have been posited there as the gravitational effect of a compression in behaviour, we must bring out the domain of possible deception. When I introduced you to the subject of Cartesian certainty as the necessary starting-point of all our speculations as to what the unconscious reveals, I pointed out the role of essential balancer played in Descartes by the Other which, it is said, must on no account be deceptive. In analysis, the danger is that this Other will be deceived. This is not the only dimension to be apprehended in the transference. But one has to admit that if there is one domain in which, in discourse, deception has some chance of success, it is certainly love that provides its model. What better way of assuring oneself, on the point on which one is mistaken, than to persuade the other of the truth of what one says! Is not this a fundamental structure of the dimension of love that the transference gives us the opportunity of depicting? In persuading the other that he has that which may complement us, we assure ourselves of being able to continue to misunderstand precisely what we lack. The circle of deception, in so far as it highlights the dimension of love at the point named—this will serve us as an exemplary door to demonstrate the trick next time.

But this is not all I have to show you, for it is not what radically causes the closure involved in the transference. What causes it, and this will be the other side of our examination of

the concepts of the transference, is—to come back to the question mark inscribed in the left part, the shaded, reserved part—what I have designated by the *objet a*.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

F. WAHL: *To what theory of knowledge, in the system of existing theories, might what you said in the first half of the lecture be related?*

LACAN: Since I am saying that it is the novelty of the Freudian field to provide us in experience with something that is fundamentally apprehended like that, it is hardly surprising if you cannot find a model for it in Plotinus.

Having said this, I know that, despite my refusal to follow Miller's first question on the subject of an ontology of the unconscious, I nevertheless gave you a little rope with some very precise references. I spoke of the *ὄν*, of the *οὐκ*. With the *ὄν*, I was referring specifically to the formulation of it given by Henri Ey, of whom it cannot be said that he is the best qualified person to speak of the unconscious—he manages to situate the unconscious somewhere in his theory of consciousness. I spoke of the *μὴὄν*, of the prohibition, of the says-no. This does not go very far as a strictly metaphysical indication, and I do not think that here I am transgressing the boundaries that I have laid down for myself. All the same, it does structure in a perfectly transmissible way the points on which your question bears. In the unconscious there is a corpus of knowledge (*un savoir*), which must in no way be conceived as knowledge to be completed, to be closed.

ὄν, *οὐκ ὄν*, *μὴὄν*—to use these terms is still to over-substantify the unconscious. This is why I have carefully avoided them. What there is beyond, what a little while ago I called the beauty behind the shutters, this is what is in question and which I have not touched on today. It is a question of mapping out how something of the subject is, behind the screen, magnetized, magnetized to the profound degree of dissociation, of split. This is the key-point at which we must see the Gordian knot.

P. KAUFMANN: *What relation is there between what you have designated as slag and what you earlier spoke of as remainder?*

LACAN: In human destiny, the remainder is always fruitful. The slag is the extinguished remainder. Here, the term slag is used in an entirely negative way. It refers to that true regression

that may occur on the plane of the theory of psychological knowledge, in so far as the analyst finds himself placed in a field in which he has no other course but to flee. He then seeks for assurances in theories that operate in the direction of an orthopaedic, conformist therapeutics, providing access for the subject to the most mythical conception of *happiness* [English in the original—Tr.]. Together with an uncritical manipulation of evolutionism, this is what sets the tone of our era. By slag, I mean here the analysts themselves, nothing more—whilst the discovery of the unconscious is still young, and it is an unprecedented opportunity for subversion.

15 April 1964

II

ANALYSIS AND TRUTH OR THE CLOSURE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

Telling the truth, lying, being wrong · The I lie *and the* I think · *Homunculus or $ · The validity of psychology · Illusion and its rectification · The transference is the enaction of the reality of the unconscious*

Last time, I introduced the concept of the transference. I did so in a rather problematic way, from the standpoint of the difficulties it presented to the analyst. I took the opportunity offered me by an article published in a recent number of the most official organ of psycho-analysis, *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, which went so far as to question the use in analysis of the notion of transference. I now intend to return to this article.

I

According to the author, the analyst is supposed to point out to the patient the effects of more or less manifest discordances that occur with regard to the reality of the analytic situation, namely, the two real subjects who are present in it.

First, there are the cases in which the effect of discordance is very obvious. It is illustrated, in a humourous way, by Spitz, one of the old guard, and no fool, by way of amusing his public. He takes as an example one of his patients, who, in a dream that is called a transference dream—that is to say, a dream involving the realization of erotic desires with one's analyst, with Spitz himself, as it happens—sees him sporting a head of luxuriant blond hair—which, for anyone who has seen the bald pate of the character in question, and it is well enough known to be regarded as famous, would seem to be a case in which the analyst could quite easily show the subject just how far the effects of the unconscious can give rise to distortion.

But when it is a question of qualifying a patient's behaviour

as uncomplimentary to the analyst, You have the choice of two things, says Szasz—*the analyst's view is correct and is considered 'reality'; the patient's view is incorrect, and is considered 'transference'*. This brings us back to that at once mythical and idealizing pole that Szasz calls *the integrity of the analyst*. What can this mean, if it is not a recall to the dimension of truth?

I can only situate this article, then, in the perspective in which its author himself places it, considering him as operating not in a heuristic, but in an eristic way, manifesting, in the impasse into which his reflection has led him, the presence of a true crisis of conscience in the function of the analyst. This crisis of conscience concerns us only in an incidental way, since I have shown that a certain one-sided way of theorizing the practice of the analysis of the transference would necessarily lead to it. It is a slippery slope that I myself have been denouncing for a long time.

To bring us back to the almost phenomenological data that enable us to resituate the problem where it actually is, I showed you last time that in the relation of the one with the other that is set up in analysis, one dimension is eluded.

It is clear that this relation is established on a plane that is not reciprocal, not symmetrical. This much Szasz observes, only, quite wrongly, to deplore it—in this relation of the one with the other, there is established a search for truth in which the one is supposed to know, or at least to know more than the other. From the latter, the thought immediately arises that not only must he not make a mistake (*se trompe*), but also that he can be misled (*on pent le tromper*). The *making a mistake* (*se tromper*) is, by the same token, thrown back upon the subject. It is not simply that the subject is, in a static way, lacking, in error. It is that, in a moving way, in his discourse, he is essentially situated in the dimension of the *making a mistake* (*se tromper*).

I have found a description of this from yet another analyst. I am referring to Nunberg, who, in the *International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, published, in 1926, an article entitled *The Will of Recovery*. By *recovery*, he means not so much *guérison* (cure), as *restauration* (restoration), *retour* (return). The word is very well chosen and poses a question well worth our attention. What, in the last resort, can drive the patient to have recourse to the analyst, to ask him for something he calls health, when his

symptom—so the theory says—is created in order to bring him certain satisfactions?

With a great many examples, many of them humorous, Nunberg has no difficulty in showing that one doesn't have to have gone very far in analysis to see, sometimes with great clarity, that what motivated the patient in his search for health, for balance, is precisely his unconscious aim, in its most immediate implications. What shelter, for example, does recourse to analysis have to offer him, in order to re-establish peace in his home, when some hitch has occurred in his sexual function, or some extra-marital desire! From the outset, the patient admits to a desire, in the form of a temporary suspension of his presence at home, the opposite of what he came to propose as the first aim of his analysis—not the restoration of his marriage, but a break with it.

We now find ourselves at last—in the very act of the commitment to analysis and certainly, therefore, in its first stages —in maximum contact with the profound ambiguity of any assertion on the part of the patient, and the fact that it is, of itself, double-sided. In the first instance, it is as establishing itself in, and even by, a certain lie, that we see set up the dimension of truth, in which respect it is not, strictly speaking, shaken, since the lie as such is itself posited in this dimension of truth.

2

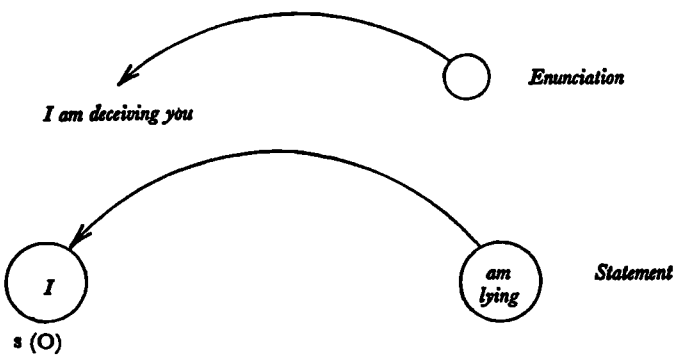
You will see why the relation of the subject to the signifier is the reference-point that I wished to place at the forefront of a general rectification of analytic theory, for it is as primary and constitutive in the establishment of analytic experience as it is primary and constitutive in the radical function of the unconscious.

It is, no doubt, one of the effects of my teaching to limit the unconscious to what might be called its narrowest platform. But it is in relation to this point of division that I cannot err on the side of any substantification.

I will centre things on the four-cornered schema of my graph, which purposely distinguishes the level of the enunciation (*énonciation*) from the level of the statement (*énoncé*). Its use can be illustrated from the fact that a too formal logical

thinking introduces absurdities, even an antinomy of reason in the statement *I am lying*, whereas everyone knows that there is no such thing.

It is quite wrong to reply to this *I am lying*—If you say, *I am lying*, you are telling the truth, and therefore you are not lying, and so on. It is quite clear that the *I am lying*, despite its paradox, is perfectly valid. Indeed, the *I* of the enunciation is not the same as the *I* of the statement, that is to say, the shifter which, in the statement, designates him. So, from the point at which I state, it is quite possible for me to formulate in a valid way that the *I*—the *I* who, at that moment, formulates the



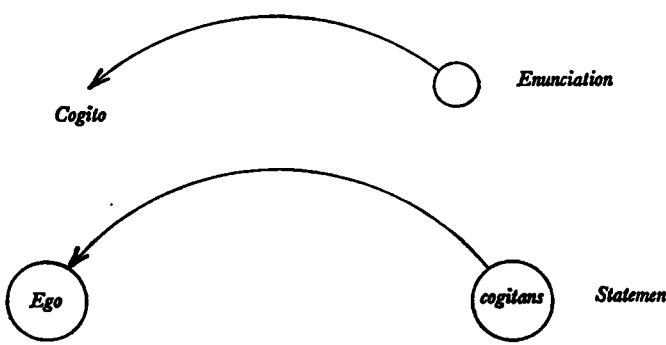
statement—is lying, that he lied a little before, that he is lying afterwards, or even, that in saying *I am lying*, he declares that he has the intention of deceiving. One does not have to go very far to illustrate this with an example—take the Jewish joke in which one Jew tells another that he is catching the train for Lemberg. *Why are you telling me you are going to Lemberg*, the other replies, *since you really are going there, and that, if you are telling me this, it is so that I shall think that you are going to Cracow?*

This division between the statement and the enunciation means that, in effect, from the *I am lying* which is at the level of the chain of the statement—the *am lying* is a signifier, forming part, in the Other, of the treasury of vocabulary in which the *I*, determined retroactively, becomes a signification, engendered at the level of the statement, of what it produces at the level of the enunciation—what results is an *I am deceiving you.* The *I am deceiving you* arises from the point at which the analyst awaits

the subject, and sends back to him, according to the formula, his own message in its true signification, that is to say, in an inverted form. He says to him—*in this* I am deceiving you, *what you are sending as message is what* I *express to you, and in doing so you are telling the truth.*

In the way of deception in which the subject is venturing, the analyst is in a position to formulate this *you are telling the truth,* and my interpretation has meaning only in this dimension.

I would like to show you how this schema can help us in grasping Freud's fundamental approach, which became possible with the discovery of the unconscious—which, of



course, has always been there, at the time of Thales and at the level of the most primitive inter-human modes of relations.

Let us bring to this schema the Cartesian *I think.* Certainly, the distinction between the enunciation and the statement is what makes their sliding away (*glissement*) always possible, and their possible stumbling block. In effect, if anything is established by the *cogito,* it is the register of thought, in so far as it is extracted from an opposition to extension—a fragile status, but a sufficient status in the order of the signifying constitution. Let us say that it is by taking its place at the level of the enunciation that the *cogito* acquires its certainty. But the status of the *I think* is as reduced, as minimal, as punctual—and might be just as affected by the connotation of the *that is meaningless*—as that of the *I am lying* referred to earlier.

Perhaps the *I think,* reduced to this punctuality of being certain only of the absolute doubt concerning all signification,

its own included, has a still more fragile status than that in which we were able to attack the *I am lying*.

I will now dare to define the Cartesian *I think* as participating, in its striving towards certainty, in a sort of abortion. The difference of status given to the subject by the discovered dimension of the Freudian unconscious derives from desire, which must be situated at the level of the *cogito*. Whatever animates, that which any enunciation speaks of, belongs to desire. I would remark in passing that desire, as I formulate it, in relation to what Freud contributes here, goes further.

I will pinpoint the function of the Cartesian *cogito* by the term monster or homunculus. This function is illustrated by the curve, which has not failed to occur in the history of what is called thought, which consists in taking this *I* of the *cogito* for the homunculus who has long been represented whenever one has wished to practise psychology—whenever one has wished to account for inanity or psychological discordance by the presence, inside man, of the celebrated little fellow who governs him, who is the driver, the point of synthesis, as we now say. The function of this little fellow was already denounced by pre-Socratic thought.

In my own vocabulary, on the other hand, I symbolize the subject by the barred S [$], in so far as it is constituted as secondary in relation to the signifier. In order to illustrate this, I will remind you that the thing may be presented in the simplest possible way by the single stroke. The first signifier is the notch by which it is indicated, for example, that the subject has killed *one* animal, by means of which he will not become confused in his memory when he has killed ten others. He will not have to remember which is which, and it is by means of this single stroke that he will count them.

The subject himself is marked off by the single stroke, and first he marks himself as a tatoo, the first of the signifiers. When this signifier, this *one*, is established—the reckoning is *one* one. It is at the level, not of the one, but of the *one* one, at the level of the reckoning, that the subject has to situate himself as such. In this respect, the two ones are already distinguished. Thus is marked the first split that makes the subject as such distinguish himself from the sign in relation to which, at first, he has been able to constitute himself as subject. I would now warn you

against confusing the function of the $ with the image of the *objet a*, in so far as it is thus that the subject sees himself duplicated—sees himself as constituted by the reflected, momentary, precarious image of mastery, imagines himself to be a man merely by virtue of the fact that he imagines himself.

In analytic practice, mapping the subject in relation to reality, such as it is supposed to constitute us, and not in relation to the signifier, amounts to falling already into the degradation of the psychological constitution of the subject.

3

Any departure taken from the relation of the subject to a real context may have its *raison d'être* in this or that psychologist's experience. It may produce results, have effects, make possible the drawing up of tables. Of course, this will always be in contexts in which it is we who make reality—for example, when we arrange for the subject to take tests, tests which have been organized by us. It is the domain of validity of what is called psychology, which has nothing to do with the level at which we sustain the psycho-analytic experience, and which, if I may say so, reinforces to an incredible degree the denudation of the subject.

What I have called the psychological *isolate* is not the old, or ever young, monad traditionally set up as the centre of knowledge, for the Leibnizian monad, for example, is not isolated, it is the centre of knowledge; it is not separable from a cosmology, it is, in the cosmos, the centre from which, according to the inflections, what is contemplation or harmony takes place. The psychological isolate comes up again in the concept of the ego, which—by a deviation which, I think, is merely a detour—is confused, in psycho-analytic thinking, with the subject in distress in the relation to reality.

I would first like to stress that this way of theorizing the operation is in flagrant contradiction, totally at variance, with what in other respects experience leads me to stress, and which we cannot eliminate from the analytic text, namely, the function of the internal object.

The terms introjection or projection are always used rather recklessly. But, certainly, even in this context of unsatisfactory theorization, something is given to us that comes into the

foreground on all sides, namely, the function of the internal object. In the end, this function is polarized into the extremes of that good or bad object, around which, for some, revolves everything in a subject's behaviour that represents distortion, inflection, paradoxical fear, foreign body. It is thus the operating point on which, in conditions of urgency—those, for example, involving the selection of subjects for various responsible jobs, in cybernetics or management, for example, or when it is a question of training air-line pilots or train-drivers —some have pointed out that it was a question of concentrating the focusing of a rapid analysis, even of a lightning-analysis, even of the use of certain so called personality tests.

We cannot avoid posing the question of the status of this internal object. Is it an object of perception? From what angle do we approach it? Where does it come from? Following this rectification, in what would the analysis of the transference consist?

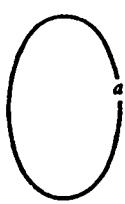
I will present you with a model, which will have to be improved a great deal later, so take it as a problematic model. The schemata centred on the function of rectifying illusion have such adhesive power that I will never be able to launch anything too prematurely that, at the very least, acts as an obstacle to them.

If the unconscious is what closes up again as soon as it has opened, in accordance with a temporal pulsation, if furthermore repetition is not simply a stereotype of behaviour, but repetition in relation to something always missed, you see here and now that the transference—as it is represented to us, as a mode of access to what is hidden in the unconscious—could only be of itself a precarious way. If the transference is only repetition, it will always be repetition of the same missed encounter. If the transference is supposed through this repetition, to restore the continuity of a history, it will do so only by reviving a relation that is, of its nature, syncopated. We see, then, that the transference, as operating mode, cannot be satisfied with being confused with the efficacity of repetition, with the restoration of what is concealed in the unconscious, even with the catharsis of the unconscious elements.

When I speak to you of the unconscious as of that which appears in the temporal pulsation, you may picture it to

yourselves as a *hoop net* (*nasse*) which opens slightly at the neck and at the bottom of which the catch of fish will be found. Whereas according to the image of the *double sack* (*besace*), the unconscious is something kept in reserve, closed up inside, in which *we* have to penetrate from the outside. I therefore reverse the topology of the traditional imagery by presenting to you the following schema.

You will have to superimpose it upon the optical model I gave in my article *Remarque sur le rapport de Daniel Lagache*,[1] concerning the ideal ego and the ego ideal. You will then see that it is in the Other that the subject is constituted as ideal, that he has to regulate the completion of what comes as ego, or ideal ego—which is not the ego ideal—that is to say, to constitute himself in his imaginary reality. This schema makes



Schema of the hoop net

clear—I stress it in relation to the latest elements I have introduced around the scopic drive—that where the subject sees himself, namely, where that real, inverted image of his own body that is given in the schema of the ego is forged, it is not from there that he looks at himself.

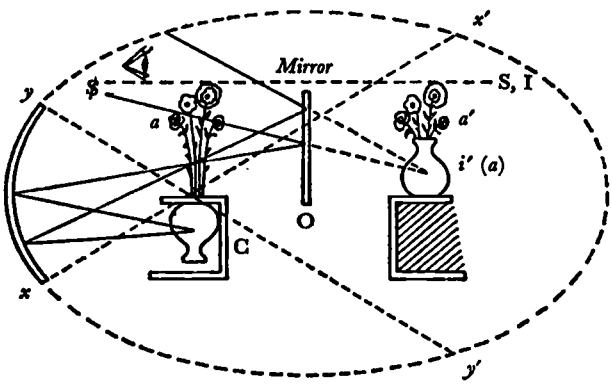
But, certainly, it is in the space of the Other that he sees himself and the point from which he looks at himself is also in that space. Now, this is also the point from which he speaks, since in so far as he speaks, it is in the locus of the Other that he begins to constitute that truthful lie by which is initiated that which participates in desire at the level of the unconscious.

So we must consider the subject, in terms of the hoop net —especially in relation to its orifice, which constitutes its essential structure—as being inside. What matters is not what goes in there, as the Gospel has it, but what comes out.

We can conceive of the closing of the unconscious through the effect of something that plays the role of obturator—the

[1] *Écrits*, p. 647.

objet a, sucked, breathed, into the orifice of the net. You can draw an image like those great balls in which the number to be drawn in a lottery are enclosed. What is concocted in this great roulette out of the first statements of free association emerges from it in the interval in which the object is not blocking the orifice. This brutal, elementary image enables you to restore the constitutive function of the symbolic in its reciprocal contraposition. It is the subject's game of odds and evens constituted by his renewed meetings with that which in the



effective action of the analytic manœuvre is made present in the subject.

This schema is quite inadequate, but it is a bulldozer-schema which renders congruent the notion that the transference is both an obstacle to remembering, and a making present of the closure of the unconscious, which is the act of missing the right meeting just at the right moment.

I could illustrate all this from the variety and divergence of the definitions that analysts have given of the function of the transference. What is certain is that the transference is one thing, the therapeutic end another. Nor is the transference to be confused with a mere means. The two extremes of what has been formulated in analytic literature are situated here. How often will you read formulas that associate, for example, the transference with identification, whereas identification is merely a pause, a false termination of the analysis which is very frequently confused with its normal termination. Its relation with the transference is close, but precisely in that by which the

transference has not been analysed. On the other hand, you will see the function of the transference formulated as a means of rectification from the standpoint of reality, to which everything I am saying today is opposed.

It is impossible to situate the transference correctly in any of these references. Since it is a question of reality, it is on this plane that I wish to bring my criticism to bear. Today I will leave you with an aphorism by way of introduction to what I will say next time—the transference is not the enactment (*mise en acte*) of the illusion that seems to drive us to this alienating identification that any conformity constitutes, even when it is with an ideal model, of which the analyst, in any case, cannot be the support—the transference is the enactment of the reality of the unconscious.

I have left this in suspense in the concept of the unconscious —oddly enough, it is the very thing that is more and more forgotten that I have not recalled until now. I hope, later, to be able to explain why this is so. In discussing the unconscious, I have been concerned so far to remind you of the effects of the constitutive act of the subject, because this is my primary concern here. But let us not omit what is especially stressed by Freud as being strictly consubstantial with the dimension of the unconscious, namely, sexuality. Because it has increasingly forgotten what this relation of the unconscious to the sexual means, analysis has inherited a conception of reality that no longer has anything to do with reality as situated by Freud at the level of the secondary process.

So it is by positing the transference as the enactment of the reality of the unconscious that I shall begin next time.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

DR ROSOLATO: *I would like to say what thoughts have occurred to me during your seminar. First an analogy —your schema is remarkably similar to an eye. To what extent does the* petit a *play the role of a crystalline lens? To what extent does this lens play the role of a cataract? I would also like you to say more about the ego ideal and the ideal ego specifically in relation to this schema. Lastly, what do you understand by* enactment *?*

LACAN: *Enactment* is a promissory term. To define the

transference as enactment is necessary if it is not to be the locus of alibis, inadequate modes of operation, taken by indirect and roundabout ways that are not for that reason necessarily inoperant, and which take into account the limits of the analytic intervention. Today I have specifically pointed out false definitions that may be given of its termination, like that of Balint when he speaks of identification with the analyst. If you do not take the transference at the correct level, which, I must say, has not yet been illustrated today, but which will be the subject of the next seminar, you can never do more than grasp some of its partial effects.

As for your other remarks, well it's funny. In everything concerning topology one must always be very careful to avoid attributing it with any kind of *Gestalt* function. This does not mean that certain living forms do not give us, sometimes, the sensation of being a kind of effort of the biological to forge something that resembles the portions of those fundamental topological objects that I developed for you in my seminar on *Identification*—for example, the mitre, you will remember, is a self-intersecting surface projected into three-dimensional space. I could very easily designate for you a particular point or plane of the anatomical configuration that seems to exemplify life's touching strivings after, topological configurations.

It is certain that it is only these considerations that can provide us with the appropriate image when it is a question of something inside that is also outside. This is why such considerations are particularly necessary when it is a question of the unconscious, which I represent to you as that which is inside the subject, but which can be realized only outside, that is to say, in that locus of the Other in which alone it may assume its status. I cannot take for granted all that has been said in my previous seminars, for the good reason that part of my audience is new. So I have used the simple schema of the net, and I have simply introduced the notion of the obturator. The object is an obturator: we still do not know how. It is not that passive obturator, that cork which, by way of launching your thought on a certain scent, I wished to picture. I will give a more complete representation of it in which you may recognize certain affinities with the structure of the eye.

It is certainly very odd that the structure of the eye presents

us with a general form that so easily springs to mind whenever we try to figure chronologically the relations of the subject with the world. This is probably no accident. But we should not jump at it too precipitously and apply it in too narrow a way.

However, since you have made this remark, I will take the opportunity of pointing out to you the difference between my schema and that in which Freud represents the ego as the lens through which the perception–consciousness operates on the amorphous mass of the *Unbewusstsein*. Whatever the value of Freud's schema, it is as limited in its scope as mine, in a way. But nevertheless you can see the difference—if I had wanted to put the ego somewhere, I would have written $i(a)$. Whereas for me, here, it is the a that is in question.

22 April 1964

12

SEXUALITY IN THE DEFILES OF THE SIGNIFIER

The reality of the unconscious is sexual · Of Chinese astronomy · Against Jung and against hermeneutics · Desexualization of reality · The entrance into the unconscious · Anna O. and Freud's desire

Last time, I ended with a formula which, I later realized, was well received, which I can attribute only to the fact that it contains promises, since, in its aphoristic form, it was not yet developed.

I said that we would be dealing with the following proposition—*the transference is the enactment of the reality of the unconscious*. What is implied here is precisely what one tends most to avoid in the analysis of the transference.

I

In advancing this proposition, I find myself in a problematic position—for what have I taught about the unconscious? The unconscious is constituted by the effects of speech on the subject, it is the dimension in which the subject is determined in the development of the effects of speech, consequently the unconscious is structured like a language. Such a direction seems well fitted to snatch any apprehension of the unconscious from an orientation to reality, other than that of the constitution of the subject. And yet this teaching has had, in its approach, an end that I have called transferential. In order to recentre those of my listeners with whom I was most concerned—the psychoanalysts—in a direction conforming with analytic experience, the very handling of the concept must, depending on the level at which the teacher's speech is placed, take into account the effects of the formulation on the listener. We are all such that we, the teacher included, are in a relation to the reality of the unconscious, which my intervention not only elucidates, but, to a certain point engenders.

Let us look at the facts. The reality of the unconscious is sexual reality—an untenable truth. At every opportunity, Freud defended his formula, if I may say so, with tooth and nail. Why is it an untenable reality?

On the question of sex, we have, since the time when Freud articulated his discovery of the unconscious, that is to say, the 1900s, or the last years of the nineteenth century, made some scientific progress. However integrated it may be in our mental imagery, it must not be thought that the knowledge we have obtained of sex since then has always been there. We now know a little more about sex. We know that sexual division, in so far as it reigns over most living beings, is that which ensures the survival of a species.

Whether, with Plato, we place the species among the Ideas, or whether we say, with Aristotle, that it is to be found nowhere but in the individuals that support it, hardly matters here. Let us say that the species survives in the form of its individuals. Nevertheless, the survival of the horse as a species has a meaning —each horse is transitory and dies. So you see, the link between sex and death, sex and the death of the individual, is fundamental.

Existence, thanks to sexual division, rests upon copulation, accentuated in two poles that time-honoured tradition has tried to characterize as the male pole and the female pole. This is because the mainspring of reproduction is to be found there. Around this fundamental reality, there have always been grouped, harmonized, other characteristics, more or less bound up with the finality of reproduction. I can do no more than point out here, what, in the biological register, is associated with sexual differentiation, in the form of secondary sexual characteristics and functions. We know today how, in society, a whole distribution of functions in a play of alternation is grounded on this terrain. It is modern structuralism that has brought this out best, by showing that it is at the level of matrimonial alliance, as opposed to natural generation, to biological lineal descent—at the level therefore of the signifier—that the fundamental exchanges take place and it is there that we find once again that the most elementary structures of social functioning are inscribed in the terms of a combinatory.

The integration of this combinatory into sexual reality raises

the question of whether it is not in this way that the signifier came into the world, into the world of man.

What would make it legitimate to maintain that it is through sexual reality that the signifier came into the world—that man learnt to think—is the recent field of discoveries that begins by a more accurate study of mitosis. There are then revealed the modes according to which the maturation of sexual cells operates, namely, the double process of reduction. What is involved, in this reduction, is the loss of a certain number of visible elements, chromosomes. This, of course, brings us to genetics. And what emerges from this genetics if not the dominant function, in the determination of certain elements of the living organism, of a combinatory that operates at certain of its stages by the expulsion of remainders?

I am not rushing into analogical speculation by referring here to the function of the *petit a*—I am simply pointing out an affinity between the enigmas of sexuality and the play of the signifier.

The only thing that I am bringing to the light of day at this point is the remark that, in fact, in history, primitive science has taken root in a mode of thinking which, playing on a combinatory, on such oppositions as those of Yin and Yang, water and fire, hot and cold, make them lead the dance—the word is chosen for its more than metaphorical implications, for their dance is based on dance ritual profoundly motivated by the sexual divisions in society.

This is not the place to embark on a lecture, even a short one, on Chinese astronomy. Amuse yourselves by opening the book by Léopold de Saussure—geniuses tend to pop up from time to time in that family. You will see there that Chinese astronomy is based on the play of the signifiers that reverberate from top to bottom in politics, the social structure, ethics, the regulation of the slightest acts, and that it is, nevertheless, a very fine astronomical science. It is true that, up to a certain point, all the reality of the heavens may be inscribed in nothing more than a vast constellation of signifiers.

To carry the thing to its limit, one might say that primitive science is a sort of sexual technique. It is not possible to say where the limit occurs, for it is certainly a science. Their perfectly valid observations show us that the Chinese had a

perfectly efficient system for predicting diurnal and nocturnal variations, for example, at a very early period—which because of their signifying plotting we can date, because it is far enough away for the precession of the equinoxes to be marked in it on the figure of the heavens, and because the pole star does not appear in it in the same place as in our time. This is not a line of demarcation between experimental collation which remains valid for all and the principles that have guided it. Any more, Claude Lévi-Strauss emphasizes, than one can say that everything in primitive magic is phantasy and mystification, since an enormous collation of quite usuable experiences is contained in it.

But, nevertheless, there comes a moment, with the sexual initiation of the mechanism, when the moorings are broken. Paradoxical as it may seem, the break occurs all the later as the function of the signifier is more implicit, less mapped in this mechanism.

I will illustrate what I mean. Well after the Cartesian revolution and the Newtonian revolution, we still see, at the heart of positivist doctrine, a religious theory of the earth as a great fetish, perfectly coherent with a statement to be found in Comte, namely, that we shall never know anything about the chemical composition of the stars, that the stars will continue to be stuck to their places, that is to say—if we can see it from another perspective—purely as signifiers. Tough luck! At almost that very moment, the analysis of light enabled us to see in the stars many things at once, including their chemical composition. The break was then consummated between astronomy and astrology—which does not mean that astrology is not alive for a great many people.

2

Where is all this leading? It is leading us to the question as to whether we must regard the unconscious as a remanence of that archaic junction between thought and sexual reality. If sexuality is the reality of the unconscious—just think what this involves—the thing is so difficult of access that we may be able to elucidate it only by a consideration of history.

The solution, which, in history, has taken form in the thought of Jung, where the relation between the psychical world of the

subject and reality are embodied under the term archetype, is to restore the level at which man's thought follows those aspects of the sexual experience that have been reduced by the invasion of science.

Now, Jungianism—in so far as it makes of the primitive modes of articulating the world something that survives, the kernel, he says, of the psyche itself—is necessarily accompanied by a repudiation of the term *libido*, by the neutralization of this function by recourse to a notion of psychical energy, a much more generalized notion of interest.

What we have here is not some scholastic quibble, some small difference of opinion. For what Freud intends to make present in the function of this libido is not some archaic relation, some primitive mode of access of thoughts, some world that is there like some shade of an ancient world surviving in ours. The libido is the effective presence, as such, of desire. It is what now remains to indicate desire—which is not substance, but which is there at the level of the primary process, and which governs the very mode of our approach.

I was recently rereading, in the context of an address I gave to a congress that took place in 1960, what someone else said about the unconscious. This person—it was M. Ricœur in fact—was trying to remove himself as far as possible from his own position in order to conceptualize our domain. He had certainly gone a long way to reach what, for a philosopher, is the area most difficult of access, namely, the reality of the unconscious—that the unconscious is not an ambiguity of acts, future knowledge that is already known not to be known, but lacuna, cut, rupture inscribed in a certain lack. M. Ricœur concedes that there is something of this dimension to be retained. But, philosopher that he is, he monopolizes it for himself. He calls it hermeneutics.

A lot of fuss is made nowadays of what is called hermeneutics. Hermeneutics not only objects to what I have called our analytic adventure, it objects to structuralism, as it appears in the works of Lévi-Strauss. Now, what is hermeneutics, if it is not to read, in the succession of man's mutations, the progress of the signs according to which he constitutes his history, the progress of his history—a history that may also, at the fringes, extend into less definite times? And so M. Ricœur casts into

the limbo of pure contingency what the analysts at every stage are dealing with. One has to admit that, from the outside, the corporation of analysts does not give him the impression of an agreement so fundamental as to impress him. But this is no reason to leave the field to him.

I maintain that it is at the level of analysis—if we can take a few more steps forward—that the nodal point by which the pulsation of the unconscious is linked to sexual reality must be revealed. This nodal point is called desire, and the theoretical elaboration that I have pursued in recent years will show you, through each stage of clinical experience, how desire is situated in dependence on demand—which, by being articulated in signifiers, leaves a metonymic remainder that runs under it, an element that is not indeterminate, which is a condition both, absolute and unapprehensible, an element necessarily lacking, unsatisfied, impossible, misconstrued (*méconnu*), an element that is called desire. It is this that makes the junction with the field defined by Freud as that of the sexual agency at the level of the primary process.

The function of desire is a last residuum of the effect of the signifier in the subject. *Desidero* is the Freudian *cogito*. It is necessarily there that the essential of the primary process is established. Note well what Freud says of this field, in which the impulse is satisfied essentially by hallucination.

No mechanism-schema will ever be able to do justice to what is given as a regression on the reflex arc. What enters by the *sensorium* must leave by the *motorium*, and if the *motorium* does not work, it goes back. But if it goes back, how can we conceive that this constitutes a perception—if not by the image of something which, from an arrested current, makes the energy flow back in the form of a lamp which lights up, but for whom? The dimension of the third party is essential in this supposed regression. It can only be conceived in a form strictly analogical with what, the other day, I drew on the blackboard in the form of the duplicity between the subject of the statement and the subject of the enunciation. Only the presence of the desiring and sexually desiring, subject, brings us that dimension of natural metaphor from which the supposed identity of perception is decided.

Freud maintains the libido as the essential element of the

primary process. This means—contrary to how it may seem in the texts in which he tries to illustrate his theory—that in hallucination, the simplest hallucination of the simplest of needs, the hallucination of food, as it occurred in the dream of little Anna when she speaks of *tart*, *strawberries*, *eggs*, and other delicacies, there is not purely and simply a making present of the objects of a need. It is only on account of the sexualization of these objects that the hallucination of the dream is possible —for, as you will notice, little Anna only hallucinates forbidden objects. One can argue over each case, but it is absolutely essential to map the dimension of signification in every hallucination if we are to grasp what the pleasure principle means. It is from the point at which the subject desires that the connotation of reality is given in the hallucination. And if Freud contrasts the reality principle with the pleasure principle, it is precisely in so far as reality is defined as desexualized.

A lot is said in the most recent analytic theories about desexualized functions. It is said, for example, that the ego ideal rests on the investment of a desexualized libido. It seems to me very difficult to speak of a desexualized libido. But the notion that the approach of reality involves a desexualization lies at the very principle of Freud's definition of the *Zwei Prinzipien des psychischen Geschehens*, of the two principles into which psychical 'eventiality' is divided.

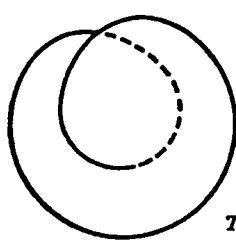
What does this mean? It means that in the transference we must see established the weight of sexual reality. Largely unknown and, up to a point, masked, it runs beneath what happens at the level of the analytic discourse, which is well and truly, as it takes form, that of demand—it is not for nothing that all experience leads us to throw it on to the side of the terms frustration and gratification.

I tried to draw on the blackboard the topology of the subject according to a sign that I once called the *interior 8*. This is certainly reminiscent of Euler's famous circles, except, as you will see, that Euler was concerned with a surface that could actually be made. The edge is continuous, except that at one point it does not proceed without being concealed by the surface that has previously unfolded itself. This drawing, seen from a certain perspective, may seem to represent two intersecting fields.

I have placed the libido at the point at which the lobe defined

as field of the development of the unconscious covers and conceals the other lobe, that of sexual reality. The libido, then, would be that which belongs to both—the point of intersection, as one says in logic. But this is precisely what it does not mean. For this sector at which the fields appear to overlap is, if you see the true profile of the surface, a void.

This surface belongs to another whose topology I have described to my pupils at various times, and which is called the cross-cap, in order words, the mitre. I have not drawn it here, but I would simply ask you to note what is its most obvious characteristic. You can obtain it from the interior 8. Bring the edges together two by two as they are presented here, by a complementary surface, and close it. In a way, it plays the same role as complement in relation to the initial 8 as a sphere



The interior 8

in relation to a circle, a sphere that would close what the circle would already offer itself as ready to contain. Well! This surface is a Mœbius surface, and its outside continues its inside. There is a second necessity that emerges from this figure, that is, that it must, in order to close its curve, traverse at some point the preceding surface, at that point, according to the line that I have just reproduced here on the second model.

This image enables us to figure desire as a locus of junction between the field of demand, in which the syncopes of the unconscious are made present, and sexual reality. All this depends on a line that I will call the line of desire, linked to demand, and by which the effects of sexuality are made present in experience.

What is this desire? Do you think it is there that I designate the agency of the transference? Yes and no. You will see that the thing is not so simple, if I tell you that the desire we are concerned with here is the desire of the analyst.

3

In order not to leave you thunderstruck by an affirmation that might seem to you somewhat risky, I shall do no more than remind you how Freud sees the entrance into the unconscious.

Anna O.—let us drop this story of O. and call her by her real name, Bertha Pappenheim, one of the great names in the world of social welfare in Germany—not long ago one of my pupils brought me a small German postage stamp bearing her face, so you see she left some mark in history. It was in the case of Anna O. that the transference was discovered. Breuer was quite delighted with the smooth way the operation was going. At that time, no one would have challenged the signifier, if it had been possible to restore this word to life from the Stoic vocabulary. The more Anna provided signifiers, the more she chattered on, the better it went. It was a case of the chimney-sweeping treatment. There was no trace, in all this, of the least embarrassing thing. Look again. No sexuality, either under the microscope or in the distance.

Yet sexuality was nevertheless introduced by Breuer. Something even began to come back to him, it came back to him from himself— *You are rather preoccupied by it.* Thereupon, the dear man, somewhat alarmed, good husband that he was, decided that things had gone quite far enough—in response to which, as you know, O. displayed the magnificent and dramatic manifestations of what, in scientific language, is called *pseudo-cyesis* or, more familiarly, she blew up with what is called a nervous pregnancy.

What did she show by this? One may speculate, but one must refrain from resorting too precipitously to the language of the body. Let us say simply that the domain of sexuality shows a natural functioning of signs. At this level, they are not signifiers, for the nervous pregnancy is a symptom, and, according to the definition of the sign, something intended for someone. The signifier, being something quite different, represents a subject for another signifier.

There is a great difference to be articulated here, for, and not without cause, there is a tendency to say quite simply that it was Bertha's fault. But I would beg you to suspend your thoughts on this matter for a moment—why is it that we do

not consider Bertha's pregnancy rather, according to my formula *man's desire is the desire of the Other*, as the manifestation of Breuer's desire? Why do you not go as far as to think that it was Breuer who had a desire for a child? I will give you the beginning of a proof; namely that Breuer, setting off for Italy with his wife, lost no time in giving her a child, as Ernest Jones reminds his interlocutor—a child which, from being born in these conditions, says the imperturbable Welshman, had just, at the moment when Jones was speaking, committed suicide.

Let us leave to one side what we might in fact think of a desire to which even this outcome is not indifferent. But let us observe what Freud says to Breuer—*What! The transference is the spontaneity of the said Bertha's unconscious. It's not yours, not your desire, it's the desire of the Other.* I think Freud treats Breuer as a hysteric here, since he says to him: *Your desire is the desire of the Other.* The curious thing is, he does not make him feel less guilty, but he certainly makes him feel less anxious—those who know the difference that I am making between these two levels may take this as an instance of it.

This brings us to the question of what Freud's desire decided, in diverting the whole apprehension of the transference in a direction that has now reached its final term of absurdity, to the point at which an analyst may say that the whole theory of the transference is merely a defence of the analyst.

I swing this extreme term in another direction. Indeed, I show precisely the opposite side when I say that it is the desire of the analyst. You must follow my thinking here. It's not simply a matter of turning things upside-down. With this key, read some general account of the question of the transference, written by anybody—anyone who could write a *Que sais-je?*[1] on psycho-analysis can just as easily give you a general account of the transference. So read his general account of the transference, which I designate here adequately enough, and draw your own conclusions with this in mind.

Is not the contribution that each individual, Freud apart, brings to the subject of the transference something in which his desire is perfectly legible? I could do an analysis of Abraham for you simply on the basis of his theory of part-objects. It is

[1] A popular series of cheap books that sets out to provide an introduction to a wide range of subjects.

not only a question of what the analyst wants to do with his patient in the matter. It is also a question of what his patient wants to do with him. Abraham, we might say, wanted to be a complete mother.

Then I might also amuse myself by punctuating the fringes of Ferenczi's theory with a famous song by Georgius *Je suis fils-père* ('I am son-father').

Nunberg, too, has his own intentions, and in his truly remarkable article on *Love and Transference*, he shows himself to be in the position of arbiter between the powers of life and death, in which one cannot fail to see an aspiration to the divine position.

All this may be no more than a kind of game. But it is in the course of some such story that one can isolate functions like those that I wished to reproduce here on the blackboard.

In order to conjugate the schema of the net with those I have made in response to a psychologizing theory of the psychoanalytic personality, you have only to turn the obturator I referred to earlier into a camera shutter, except that it would be a mirror. It is in this little mirror, which shuts out what is on the other side, that the subject sees emerge the game by means of which he may—according to the illusion of what is obtained in the experiment of the inverted bunch of flowers, that is to say, a real image—accommodate his own image around what appears, the *petit a*. It is in the sum of these accommodations of images that the subject must find the opportunity for an essential integration. What do we know of all this?—if it is only at the mercy of fluctuations in the history of analysis, of the commitment of the desire of each analyst, we manage to add some small detail, some corroborating observation, some incidental addition or refinement, which enables us to define the presence, at the level of desire, of each of the analysts. This was the band, as Freud put it, that he left behind to follow him.

After all, the people who followed Christ were not so brilliant. Freud was not Christ, but he was perhaps something like Viridiana.[2] The characters who are photographed, so ironically

[2] The allusion is to a film by Bunuel of the same name in which a group of peasants pose to be 'photographed' at a dinner-table. The characters are so arranged as to reproduce Leonardo's painting of the Last Supper.

in that film, with a small apparatus, sometimes remind me irresistibly of the group, also photographed innumerable times, of those who were Freud's apostles and epigones. Does this diminish them in any way? No more than the apostles. It is precisely at this level that they could bear the best witness. It is by virtue of a certain naivety, a certain poverty, a certain innocence that they have most instructed us. It is true that those around Socrates were more brilliant and that they teach us no less about the transference—those who remember my seminar on this subject will bear me out.

I will take this up again next time, when I will try to articulate for you the significance of the function of the analyst's desire.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

J.-A. MILLER: *The question arises of the specific relation between these two discourses, the scientific discourse and the discourse of the Other, that is, the unconscious. Unlike the discourses that preceded its arrival, science is not based on the unconscious combinatory. It sets out to establish with the unconscious a relation of non-relation. It is disconnected. Yet the unconscious does not disappear, and its effects continue to be felt. Perhaps to reflect on the scientificity of analysis, which you postulate, would lead to writing a new history of scientific thought. I would like to know what you have to say about this.*

LACAN: You see the emergence of a double questioning. If we can couple psycho-analysis to the train of modern science, despite the essential effect of the analyst's desire, we have a right to ask the question of the desire that lies behind modern science. There is certainly a disconnection between scientific discourse and the conditions of the discourse of the unconscious. We see this in set theory. At a time when the combinatory is coupled to the capture of sexuality, set theory cannot emerge. How is this disconnection possible? It is at the level of desire that we will be able to find the answer.

29 April 1964

The 'photograph' is taken by one of the girls raising her skirt at the assembly—hence the reference to the 'small apparatus' [Tr.].

13

THE DECONSTRUCTION OF THE DRIVE

I ended my last talk by pointing out the place where I had taken you with the topological schematization of a certain division, and of a perimeter involuted upon itself, which is that constituted by what is usually called, quite incorrectly, the analytic situation.

This topology is intended to give you some notion of the location of the point of disjuncture and conjuncture, of union and frontier, that can be occupied only by the desire of the analyst.

To go further, to show you how this mapping is necessitated by all the deviations, of concept and of practice, that a long experience of analysis and of its doctrinal statements enables one to accumulate, I must—for those who have not been able, for purely practical reasons, to follow my earlier seminars—put forward the fourth concept that I have proposed as essential to the analytic experience—that of drive.

I

I can only write this introduction—this *Einführung*, to use Freud's term—in the wake of Freud, in so far as this notion is absolutely new in Freud.

The term *Trieb* certainly has a long history, not only in psychology or in physiology, but in physics itself and, of course, it is no accident that Freud chose this term. But he gave to *Trieb* so specific a use, and *Trieb* is so integrated into analytic practice itself, that its past is truly concealed. Just as the past of the term unconscious weights on the use of the term in analytic theory—so, as far as *Trieb* is concerned, everyone uses it as a designation of a sort of radical given of our experience.

Sometimes, people even go so far as to invoke it against my doctrine of the unconscious, which they see as some kind of

intellectualization—if they knew what I think of intelligence, they would certainly retract this criticism—as if I were ignoring what any analyst knows from experience, namely the domain of the drive. We will meet in experience something that has an irrepressible character even through repressions—indeed, if repression there must be, it is because there is something beyond that is pressing in. There is no need to go further in an adult analysis; one has only to be a child therapist to know the element that constitutes the clinical weight of each of the cases we have to deal with, namely, the drive. There seems to be here, therefore, a reference to some ultimate given, something archaic, primal. Such a recourse, which my teaching invites you to renounce if you are to understand the unconscious, seems inevitable here.

Now, is what we are dealing with in the drive essentially organic? Is it thus that we should interpret what Freud says in a text belonging to *Jenseits des Lustprinzips*—that the drive, *Trieb*, represents the *Äusserung der Trägheit*, some manifestation of inertia in the organic life? Is it a simple notion, which might be completed with reference to some storing away of this inertia, namely, to fixation, *Fixierung*?

Not only do I not think so, but I think that a serious examination of Freud's elaboration of the notion of drive runs counter to it.

Drive (*pulsion*) is not thrust (*poussée*). *Trieb* is not *Drang*, if only for the following reason. In an article written in 1915—that is, a year after the *Einführung zum Narzissmus*, you will see the importance of this reminder soon—entitled *Trieb und Triebschicksale*—one should avoid translating it by *avatar*, *Triebwandlungen* would be avatar, *Schicksal* is adventure, vicissitude—in this article, then, Freud says that it is important to distinguish four terms in the drive: *Drang*, thrust; *Quelle*, the source; *Objekt*, the object; *Ziel*, the aim. Of course, such a list may seem a quite natural one. My purpose is to prove to you that the whole text was written to show us that it is not as natural as that.

First of all, it is essential to remember that Freud himself tells us at the beginning of this article that the drive is a *Grundbegriff*, a fundamental concept. He adds, and in doing so shows himself to be a good epistemologist, that, from the moment

when he, Freud, introduced the drive into science, one was faced with a choice between two possibilities—either this concept would be preserved, or it would be rejected. It would be preserved if it functioned, as one would now say—I would say if it traced its way in the real that it set out to penetrate. This is the case with all the other *Grundbegriffe* in the scientific domain.

What we see emerging here in Freud's mind are the fundamental concepts of physics. His masters in physiology are those who strive to bring to realization, for example, the integration of physiology with the fundamental concepts of modern physics, especially those connected with energy. How often, in the course of history, have the notions of energy and force been taken up and used again upon an increasingly totalized reality!

This is certainly what Freud foresaw. *The progress of knowledge*, he said, *can bear no* Starrheit, *no fascination with definitions*. Somewhere else, he says that the drive belongs to our myths. For my part, I will ignore this term myth—indeed, in the same text, in the first paragraph, Freud uses the word *Konvention*, convention, which is much closer to what we are talking about and to which I would apply the Benthamite term, *fiction*, which I have mapped for my followers. This term, I should say in passing, is much more preferable than that of *model*, which has been all too much abused. In any case, model is never a *Grundbegriff*, for, in a certain field, several models may function correlatively. This is not the case for a *Grundbegriff*, for a fundamental concept, nor for a fundamental fiction.

2

Now let us ask ourselves what appears first when we look more closely at the four terms laid down by Freud in relation to the drive. Let us say that these four terms cannot but appear disjointed.

First, *thrust* will be identified with a mere tendency to discharge. This tendency is what is produced by the fact of a stimulus, namely, the transmission of the accepted portion, at the level of the stimulus, of the additional energy, the celebrated Qn quantity of the *Entwurf*. But, on this matter, Freud makes, at the outset, a remark that has very far-reaching implications. Here, too, no doubt, there is stimulation, excitation, to use the term Freud uses at this level, *Reiz*, excitation. But the *Reiz* that

is used when speaking of drive is different from any stimulation coming from the outside world, it is an internal *Reiz*. What does this mean?

In order to explicitate it, we have the notion of need, as it is manifested in the organism at several levels and first of all at the level of hunger and thirst. This is what Freud seems to mean when he distinguishes internal excitement from external excitement. Well! It has to be said that, at the very outset, Freud posits, quite categorically, that there is absolutely no question in *Trieb* of the pressure of a need such as *Hunger* or *Durst*, thirst.

What exactly does Freud mean by *Trieb*? Is he referring to something whose agency is exercised at the level of the organism in its totality? Does the real *qua* totality irrupt here? Are we concerned here with the living organism? No. It is always a question quite specifically of the Freudian field itself, in the most undifferentiated form that Freud gave it at the outset, which at this level, in the terms of the *Sketch* referred to above, that of the *Ich*, of the *Real-Ich*. The *Real-Ich* is conceived as supported, not by the organism as a whole, but by the nervous system. It has the character of a planned, objectified subject. I am stressing the surface characteristics of this field by treating it topologically, and in trying to show you how taking it in the form of a surface responds to all the needs of its handling.

This point is essential for, when we examine it more closely, we shall see that the *Triebreiz* is that by which certain elements of this field are, says Freud, *triebbesetzt*, invested as drive. This investment places us on the terrain of an energy—and not any energy—a potential energy, for—Freud articulated it in the most pressing way—the characteristic of the drive is to be a *konstante Kraft*, a constant force. He cannot conceive of it as a *momentane Stosskraft*.

What is meant by *momentane Stosskraft*? About this word *Moment*, we already have the example of a historical misunderstanding. During the siege of Paris in 1870, the Parisians made fun of Bismarck's *psychologische Moment*. This phrase struck them as being absurdly funny, for, until fairly recently, when they have had to get used to everything, the French have always been rather particular about the correct use of words. This quite new psychological moment struck them as being very funny indeed. All it meant was the psychological *factor*. But

this *momentane Stosskraft* is not perhaps to be taken quite in the sense of factor, but rather in the sense of moment as used in the cinema. I think that this *Stosskraft*, or shock force, is simply a reference to the life force, to kinetic energy. In the drive, there is no question of kinetic energy; it is not a question of something that will be regulated with movement. The discharge in question is of a quite different nature, and is on a quite different plane.

The constancy of the thrust forbids any assimilation of the drive to a biological function, which always has a rhythm. The first thing Freud says about the drive is, if I may put it this way, that it has no day or night, no spring or autumn, no rise and fall. It is a constant force. All the same, one must take account of the texts, and also of experience.

3

At the other end of the chain, Freud refers to *Befriedigung*, satisfaction, which he writes out in full, but in inverted commas. What does he mean by satisfaction of the drive? *Well, that's simple enough*, you'll say. *The satisfaction of the drive is reaching one's* Ziel, *one's aim*. The wild animal emerges from its hole *querens quem devoret*, and when he has found what he has to eat, he is satisfied, he digests it. The very fact that a similar image may be invoked shows that one allows it to resonate in harmony with mythology, with, strictly speaking, the drive.

One objection immediately springs to mind—it is rather odd that nobody should have noticed it, all the time it has been there, an enigma, which, like all Freud's enigmas, was sustained as a wager to the end of his life without Freud deigning to offer any further explanation—he probably left the work to those who could do it. You will remember that the third of the four fundamental vicissitudes of the drive that Freud posits at the outset—it is curious that there are *four* vicissitudes as there are *four* elements of the drive—is sublimation. Well, in this article, Freud tells us repeatedly that sublimation is also satisfaction of the drive, whereas it is *zielgehemmt*, inhibited as to its aim—it does not attain it. Sublimation is nonetheless satisfaction of the drive, without repression.

In other words—for the moment, I am not fucking, I am talking to you. Well! I can have exactly the same satisfaction

as if I were fucking. That's what it means. Indeed, it raises the question of whether in fact I am not fucking at this moment. Between these two terms—drive and satisfaction—there is set up an extreme antinomy that reminds us that the use of the function of the drive has for me no other purpose than to put in question what is meant by satisfaction.

All those here who are psycho-analysts must now feel to what extent I am introducing here the most essential level of accommodation. It is clear that those with whom we deal, the patients, are not satisfied, as one says, with what they are. And yet, we know that everything they are, everything they experience, even their symptoms, involves satisfaction. They satisfy something that no doubt runs counter to that with which they might be satisfied, or rather, perhaps, they give satisfaction *to* something. They are not content with their state, but all the same, being in a state that gives so little content, they are content. The whole question boils down to the following—*what* is contented here?

On the whole, and as a first approximation, I would say that to which they give satisfaction by the ways of displeasure is nevertheless—and this is commonly accepted—the law of pleasure. Let us say that, for this sort of satisfaction, they give themselves too much trouble. Up to a point, it is this *too much trouble* that is the sole justification of our intervention.

One cannot say, then, that the aim is not attained where satisfaction is concerned. It is. This is not a definitive ethical position. But, at a certain level, this is how we analysts approach the problem—though we know a little more than others about what is normal and abnormal. We know that the forms of arrangement that exist between what works well and what works badly constitute a continuous series. What we have before us in analysis is a system in which everything turns out all right, and which attains its own sort of satisfaction. If we interfere in this, it is in so far as we think that there are other ways, shorter ones for example. In any case, if I refer to the drive, it is in so far as it is at the level of the drive that the state of satisfaction is to be rectified.

This satisfaction is paradoxical. When we look at it more closely, we see that something new comes into play—the category of the impossible. In the foundations of the Freudian

conceptions, this category is an absolutely radical one. The path of the subject—to use the term in relation to which, alone, satisfaction may be situated—the path of the subject passes between the two walls of the impossible.

This function of the impossible is not to be approached without prudence, like any function that is presented in a negative form. I would simply like to suggest to you that the best way of approaching these notions is not to take them by negation. This method would bring us here to the question of the possible, and the impossible is not necessarily the contrary of the possible, or, since the opposite of the possible is certainly the real, we would be lead to define the real as the impossible.

Personally, I see nothing against this, especially as, in Freud, it is in this form that the real, namely, the obstacle to the pleasure principle, appears. The real is the impact with the obstacle; it is the fact that things do not turn out all right straight away, as the hand that is held out to external objects wishes. But I think this is a quite illusory and limited view of Freud's thought on this point. The real is distinguished, as I said last time, by its separation from the field of the pleasure principle, by its desexualization, by the fact that its economy, later, admits something new, which is precisely the impossible.

But the impossible is also present in the other field, as an essential element. The pleasure principle is even characterized by the fact that the impossible is so present in it that it is never recognized in it as such. The idea that the function of the pleasure principle is to satisfy itself by hallucination is there to illustrate this—it is only an illustration. By snatching at its object, the drive learns in a sense that this is precisely not the way it will be satisfied. For if one distinguishes, at the outset of the dialectic of the drive, *Not* from *Bedürfnis*, need from the pressure of the drive—it is precisely because no object of any *Not*, need, can satisfy the drive.

Even when you stuff the mouth—the mouth that opens in the register of the drive—it is not the food that satisfies it, it is, as one says, the pleasure of the mouth. That is why, in analytic experience, the oral drive is encountered at the final term, in a situation in which it does no more than order the menu. This is done no doubt with the mouth, which is fundamental to the satisfaction—what goes out from the mouth comes back to

the mouth, and is exhausted in that pleasure that I have just called, by reference to the usual terms, the pleasure of the mouth.

This is what Freud tells us. Let us look at what he says—*As far as the object in the drive is concerned, let it be clear that it is, strictly speaking, of no importance. It is a matter of total indifference.* One must never read Freud without one's ears cocked. When one reads such things, one really ought to prick up one's ears.

How should one conceive of the object of the drive, so that one can say that, in the drive, whatever it may be, it is indifferent? As far as the oral drive is concerned, for example, it is obvious that it is not a question of food, nor of the memory of food, nor the echo of food, nor the mother's care, but of something that is called the breast, and which seems to go of its own accord because it belongs to the same series. If Freud makes a remark to the effect that the object in the drive is of no importance, it is probably because the breast, in its function as object, is to be revised in its entirety.

To this breast in its function as object, *objet a* cause of desire, in the sense that I understand the term—we must give a function that will explain its place in the satisfaction of the drive. The best formula seems to me to be the following—that *la pulsion en fait le tour.*[1] I shall find other opportunities of applying it to other objects. *Tour* is to be understood here with the ambiguity it possesses in French, both *turn*, the limit around which one turns, and *trick*.

4

I have left the question of the source till last. If we wished at all costs to introduce vital regulation into the function of the drive, one would certainly say that examining the source is the right way to go about it.

Why? Why are the so-called erogenous zones recognized

[1] As Lacan explains, he is playing on the double meaning, in French, of the word *tour*—so the formula is strictly untranslatable. In terms of idiomatic usage, the pun is rather forced, since the expression '*faire le tour de quelque chose*' can only mean 'to walk, to drive, etc., round something', though outside this expression '*tour*' has also, of course, the sense of 'trick'. What the formula means, then, is a combination of (1) 'the drive moves around the object' and (2) 'the drive tricks the object' [Tr.].

only in those points that are differentiated for us by their rim-like structure? Why does one speak of the mouth and not of the oesophagus, or the stomach? They participate just as much in the oral function. But at the erogenous level we speak of the mouth, of the lips and the teeth, of what Homer calls the enclosure of the teeth.

The same goes for the anal drive. It is not enough to say that a certain vital function is integrated in a function of exchange with the world—excrement. There are other excremental functions, and there are other elements that participate in them other than the rim of the anus, which is however, specifically what, for us too, is defined as the source and departure of a certain drive.

Let me say that if there is anything resembling a drive it is a *montage*.

It is not a *montage* conceived in a perspective referring to finality. This perspective is the one that is established in modern theories of instinct, in which the presentation of an image derived from *montage* is quite striking. Such a *montage*, for example, is the specific form that will make the hen in the farmyard run to ground if you place within a few yards of her the cardboard outline of a falcon, that is to say, something that sets off a more or less appropriate reaction, and where the trick is to show us that it is not necessarily an appropriate one. I am not speaking of this sort of *montage*.

The *montage* of the drive is a *montage* which, first, is presented as having neither head nor tail—in the sense in which one speaks of *montage* in a surrealist collage. If we bring together the paradoxes that we just defined at the level of *Drang*, at that of the object, at that of the aim of the drive, I think that the resulting image would show the working of a dynamo connected up to a gas-tap, a peacock's feather emerges, and tickles the belly of a pretty woman, who is just lying there looking beautiful. Indeed, the thing begins to become interesting from this very fact, that the drive defines, according to Freud, all the forms of which one may reverse such a mechanism. This does not mean that one turns the dynamo upside-down—one unrolls its wires, it is they that become the peacock's feather, the gas-tap goes into the lady's mouth, and the bird's rump emerges in the middle.

This is what he shows as a developed example. Read this text of Freud's between now and next time, and you will see that it constantly jumps, without transition, between the most heterogeneous images. All this occurs only by means of grammatical references, the artifice of which you will find easy to grasp next time.

Incidentally, how can one say, just like that, as Freud goes on to do, that exhibitionism is the contrary of voyeurism, or that masochism is the contrary of sadism? He posits this simply for grammatical reasons, for reasons concerning the inversion of the subject and the object, as if the grammatical object and subject were real functions. It is easy to show that this is not the case, and we have only to refer to our structure of language for this deduction to become impossible. But what, by means of this game, he conveys to us about the essence of the drive is what, next time, I will define for you as the trace of the act.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

DR GREEN: *One point you have raised obviously seems quite crucial. This is the fact that the other qualities that specify the drive must be conceived as discontinuous elements. My question concerns the element of thrust that you have rather pushed to one side, in the course of your talk today, because, I think, it seemed to you one of the easiest ways of getting misled. But if, as you show, the drive is ultimately destined to the combinatory of the fact of discontinuity, it posits for itself the problem of the contradiction inherent in the energy of the system, which is conceived as a force that is both constant and subject to variation. It is this question that I would like you to develop in more detail if you can, in so far as it introduces the point of view that remains for me very important, and which I do not see very clearly in your teaching, namely, the economic point of view.*

LACAN: Yes, we shall come to it, and you will see from what angle. Indeed, it is easy to see how if you read my article. There is a reference that may put us on the right track, and which I did not wish to use, either because I did not have time, or because it eliminates itself—most of the time I play it by ear, in contact with the audience. It is a reference to a certain chapter in energetics.

In a limited system, there is a certain way of inscribing each defined point, as characterized in terms of potential energy

between the closest points—one speaks of scale notation or index. One can now define each point by a certain derivation —you know that in infinitesimal calculus it is one of the ways of dimensioning infinitely small variations. For each point, then, there will be a derivation in relation to the slope immediately next to it, and this derivation will be noted for each point of the field. This derivation may be inscribed in the form of a vector and we can compose the set of vectors. There is, then, a law that seems odd at first sight, but which is certainly regarded as fundamental—that which, from a particular vector—which realizes the composition of these derivations connoted by each point of the field from the point of view of potential energy —that which, therefore, from a particular vector, crosses a certain surface—which is simply what I call the gap (*béance*), from the fact that it is defined by a rim-like structure—is, for the same surface, a constant. The variations of the system being what they may be, what is potential at the level of the integration, what is called the flux, is therefore constant.

What we seem to be dealing with, therefore, in the *Drang* of the drive is something that is, and is only, connotable in the relation to the *Quelle*, in so far as the *Quelle* inscribes in the economy of the drive this rim-like structure.

Physiological variations, deep variations, those that are inscribed in the totality of the organism, are subjected to all the rhythms, even to the very discharges that may occur as a result of the drive. On the other hand, what characterizes the *Drang*, the thrust of the drive, is the maintained constancy which, to take a fairly useful image, measures up to an opening that is, up to a certain individualized point, variable. That is to say, people have big mouths to a greater or lesser degree. Sometimes it might even be useful to take this into account, in the selection of analysts. But, anyway, that's something I shall be concerned with in another context.

This has not exhausted the question you asked, but it provides the beginning of a rational solution to the antinomy that you raise, and which is precisely what I left in suspense. For I stressed what Freud stresses—that, when the system functions in contact with the *Umwelt*, it is a question of discharge, and when it is a question of *Triebreiz*, there is a barrier. This is a point that does not receive enough attention. But what can that

mean? There is no barrier, unless the investment is in the field itself. So, in fact, what we have to designate is this—in so far as the field itself involves this investment, there can be no question of the functioning of a barrier.

Dr MATHIS: *One question concerning the rim-like structure. When it is a question of the mouth and the anal rim, do you locate the eroticization at both extremities? Where do you place what may occur at the level of the oesophagus, at the gastric level, in sniffing, in vomiting, at the level of the trachea? Is there something profoundly different there from what you have articulated at the level of the lips?*

LACAN: I confined myself to the two rims concerned in the digestive track. I could also have told you that the rheumy rim of our eyelids, our ears, our navels, are also rims, and that all this is part of this function of eroticism. In the analytic tradition, we always refer to the strictly focused image of zones reduced to their function as rim. This does not in the least mean that, in our symptomatology, other zones do not come into play. But we consider that they come into play in that fall-out zone that I call desexualization and function of reality.

Let us take an example. It is in the function in which the sexual object moves towards the side of reality and presents itself as a parcel of meat that there emerges that form of desexualization that is so obvious that it is called in the case of the hysteric a reaction of disgust. This does not mean that we say that pleasure is located in these erogenous zones. Desire is concerned—thank God, we know only too well—with something quite different, and even with something quite different from the organism, while involving the organism at various levels. But what satisfaction is the central function of the drive intended to produce? It is precisely to the extent that adjoining, connected zones are excluded that others take on their erogenous function and become specific sources for the drive. You follow me?

Of course, other zones than these erogenous zones are concerned in the economy of desire. But note well what happens whenever they emerge. It was no accident that I chose the function of disgust. There are really two major aspects of desire as it may emerge in the fall of sexualization—on the one hand, disgust produced by the reduction of the sexual partner to a function of reality, whatever it may be, and, on the other hand,

what I have called, in relation to the scopic function, *invidia*, envy. Envy is not the same thing as the scopic drive, nor is disgust the same thing as the oral drive.

6 May 1964

14

THE PARTIAL DRIVE AND ITS CIRCUIT

Die ganze Sexualstrebung · Every drive is partial · Drive, sex and death · The supposed stages · Schaulust · Sado-masochism

τῷ τὸξῳ ὄνομα βίος ἔργον δέ Θάνατς
Heraclitus. B 48.

When I read in the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* an article like the one by Mr Edward Glover, entitled *Freudian or Neo-Freudian*, directed entirely against the constructions of Mr Alexander, I sense a sordid smell of stuffiness, at the sight of a construction like that of Mr Alexander being counter-attacked in the name of obsolete criteria. Good Heavens, I did not hesitate to attack it myself in the most categorical way fourteen years ago, at the 1950 Congress of Psychiatry, but, it is the construction of a man of great talent and when I see at what level this construction is discussed, I can pay myself the complement that through all the misadventures that my discourse encounters, here and certainly elsewhere, one can say that this discourse provides an obstacle to the experience of analysis being served up to you in a completely cretinous way.

At this point, I will resume my discourse on the drive. I was led to approach it after positing that the transference is what manifests in experience the enacting of the reality of the unconscious, in so far as that reality is sexuality. I find that I must pause here and ask myself what this very affirmation involves.

If we are sure that sexuality is present in action in the transference, it is in so far as at certain moments it is manifested in the open in the form of love. That is what it is about. Does love represent the summit, the culminating point, the indisputable factor, that makes sexuality present for us in the here and now of the transference?

Freud's text, not, certainly, any specific text, but the central

import of those writings that deal with the drives and their vicissitudes, rejects such a view in the clearest possible way.

It was this text that I began to approach last time, when I was trying to make you feel in what a problematic form, bristling with questions, the introduction of the drive presents itself. I hope that many of you will have been able to refer to this text in the meantime, whether you are able to read it in German, which seems to me eminently desirable, or whether, as second best, you will be able to read it, always more or less improperly translated, in the two other languages of culture, English or French—I certainly give the worst marks to the French translation, but I will not waste time pointing out the veritable falsifications with which it swarms.

Even on a first reading, you would have been able to see that this article falls entirely into two parts—*first*, the deconstruction of the drive; *secondly*, the examination of *das Lieben*, the act of love. We shall now approach this second point.

I

Freud says quite specifically that love can in no way be regarded as the representative of what he puts in question in the term *die ganze Sexualstrebung*, that is to say, the tendency, the forms, the convergence of the striving of the sexual, in so far as it culminates in *Ganze*, in an apprehensible whole, that would sum up its essence and function.

Kommt aber auf damit nicht zuher, that's not at all how it happens, he cries, when answering this far-reaching suggestion. We analysts have rendered it by all sorts of misleading formulae. The whole point of the article is to show us that with regard to the biological finality of sexuality, namely, reproduction, the drives, as they present themselves in the process of psychical reality, are partial drives.

In their structure, in the tension they establish, the drives are linked to an economic factor. This economic factor depends on the conditions in which the function of the pleasure principle is exercised at a level that I will take up again, at the right time, in the term *Real-Ich*. Let me say at once that we can conceptualize the *Real-Ich* as the central nervous system in so far as it functions, not as a system of relations, but as a system intended to ensure a certain homeostasis of the internal tensions.

It is because of the reality of the homeostatic system that sexuality comes into play only in the form of partial drives. The drive is precisely that *montage* by which sexuality participates in the psychical life, in a way that must conform to the gap-like structure that is the structure of the unconscious.

Let us place ourselves at the two extremes of the analytic experience. The primal repressed is a signifier, and we can always regard what is built on this as constituting the symptom *qua* a scaffolding of signifiers. Repressed and symptom are homogeneous, and reducible to the functions of signifiers. Although their structure is built up step by step like any edifice, it is nevertheless, in the end, inscribable in synchronic terms.

At the other extreme, there is interpretation. Interpretation concerns the factor of a special temporal structure that I have tried to define in the term metonymy. As it draws to its end, interpretation is directed towards desire, with which, in a certain sense, it is identical. Desire, in fact, is interpretation itself.

In between, there is sexuality. If sexuality, in the form of the partial drives, had not manifested itself as dominating the whole economy of this interval, our experience would be reduced to a mantic, to which the neutral term psychical energy would then have been appropriate, but in which it would miss what constitutes in it the presence, the *Dasein*, of sexuality.

The legibility of sex in the interpretation of the unconscious mechanisms is always retroactive. It would merely be of the nature of interpretation if, at each moment of the history, we could be certain only that the partial drives intervened effectively in time and place. And not, as one tended to believe at the beginning of the analytic experience, in an erratic form. That infantile sexuality is not a wandering block of ice snatched from the great ice-bank of adult sexuality, intervening as an attraction over an immature subject—this was proved at once in analysis and with what, later, might seem a surprising significance.

In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud was able to posit sexuality as essentially polymorphous, aberrant. The spell of a supposed infantile innocence was broken. Because it was imposed so early, I would almost say too early, this sexuality made us pass too quickly over an examination of what it essentially represents. That is to say that, with regard to the agency

of sexuality, all subjects are equal, from the child to the adult —that they deal only with that part of sexuality that passes into the networks of the constitution of the subject, into the networks of the signifier—that sexuality is realized only through the operation of the drives in so far as they are partial drives, partial with regard to the biological finality of sexuality.

The integration of sexuality into the dialectic of desire passes through the bringing into play of what, in the body, deserves to be designated by the term apparatus—if you understand by this that with which the body, with regard to sexuality, may fit itself up (*s'appareiller*) as opposed to that with which bodies may be paired off (*s'apparier*).

If all is confusion in the discussion of the sexual drives it is because one does not see that the drive represents no doubt, but *merely* represents, and partially at that, the curve of fulfilment of sexuality in the living being. Is it surprising that its final term should be death, when the presence of sex in the living being is bound up with death?

Today I have copied out on the blackboard a fragment of Heraclitus, which I found in the monumental work in which Diels has gathered together for us the scattered remains of the pre-Socratic period. *To the bow* (*Biós*), he writes, and this emerges for us as one of his lessons in wisdom which, before all the circuit of scientific elaboration, went straight to the target, *to the bow is given the name of life* (*Bíos*, the accent being this time on the first syllable) *and its work is death.*

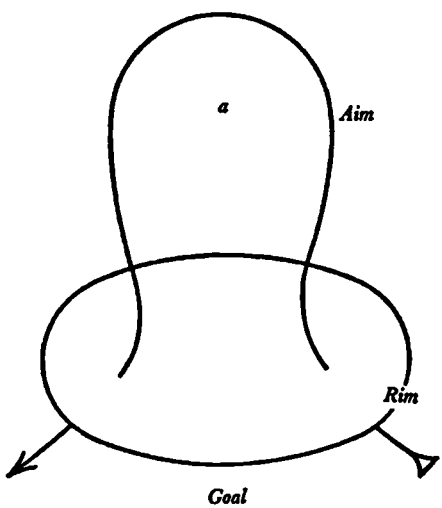
What the drive integrates at the outset in its very existence is a dialectic of the bow, I would even say of archery. In this way we can situate its place in the psychical economy.

2

Freud now introduces us to the drive by one of the most traditional ways, using at every moment the resources of the language, and not hesitating to base himself on something that belongs only to certain linguistic systems, the three voices, active, passive and reflexive. But this is merely an envelope. We must see that this signifying reversion is something other, something other than what it dresses in. What is fundamental at the level of each drive is the movement outwards and back in which it is structured.

It is remarkable that Freud can designate these two poles simply by using something that is the verb. *Beschauen und beschaut werden*, to see and to be seen, *quälen* and *gequält werden*, to torment and to be tormented. This is because, from the outset, Freud takes it as understood that no part of this distance covered can be separated from its outwards-and-back movement, from its fundamental reversion, from the circular character of the path of the drive.

Similarly, it is remarkable that, in order to illustrate the



dimension of this *Verkehrung*, he should choose *Schaulust*, the pleasure of seeing, and what he cannot designate other than by the combination of two terms in *sado-masochism*. When he speaks of these two drives, and especially of masochism, he is careful to observe that there are not two stages in these drives, but three. One must distinguish the return into the circuit of the drive of that which appears—but *also does not appear*—in a third stage. Namely, the appearance of *ein neues Subjekt*, to be understood as follows—not in the sense that there is already one, namely the subject of the drive, but in that what is new is the appearance of a subject. This subject, which is properly the other, appears in so far as the drive has been able to show its circular course. It is only with its appearance at the level of the

other that what there is of the function of the drive may be realized.

It is to this that I would now like to draw your attention. You see here, on the blackboard, a circuit formed by the curve of this rising and redescending arrow that crosses, *Drang* as it is in its origin, the surface constituted by what I defined last time as the rim, which is regarded in the theory as the source, the *Quelle*, that is to say, the so-called erogenous zone in the drive. The tension is always loop-shaped and cannot be separated from its return to the erogenous zone.

Here we can clear up the mystery of the *zielgehemmt*, of that form that the drive may assume, in attaining its satisfaction without attaining its aim—in so far as it would be defined by a biological function, by the realization of reproductive coupling. For the partial drive does not lie there. What is it?

Let us still suspend the answer, but let us concentrate on this term *but*, and on the two meanings it may present. In order to differentiate them, I have chosen to notate them here in a language in which they are particularly expressive, English. When you entrust someone with a mission, the *aim* is not what he brings back, but the itinerary he must take. The *aim* is the way taken. The French word *but* may be translated by another word in English, *goal*. In archery, the *goal* is not the *but* either, it is not the bird you shoot, it is having scored a hit and thereby attained your *but*.

If the drive may be satisfied without attaining what, from the point of view of a biological totalization of function, would be the satisfaction of its end of reproduction, it is because it is a partial drive, and its aim is simply this return into circuit.

This theory is present in Freud. He tells us somewhere that the ideal model for auto-eroticism would be a single mouth kissing itself—a brilliant, even dazzling metaphor, in this respect so typical of everything he writes, and which requires only to be completed by a question. In the drive, is not this mouth what might be called a mouth in the form of an arrow?—a mouth sewn up, in which, in analysis, we see indicating as clearly as possible, in certain silences, the pure agency of the oral drive, closing upon its own satisfaction.

In any case, what makes us distinguish this satisfaction from the mere auto-eroticism of the erogenous zone is the object that

we confuse all too often with that upon which the drive closes —this object, which is in fact simply the presence of a hollow, a void, which can be occupied, Freud tells us, by any object, and whose agency we know only in the form of the lost object, the *petit a*. The *objet petit a* is not the origin of the oral drive. It is not introduced as the original food, it is introduced from the fact that no food will ever satisfy the oral drive, except by circumventing the eternally lacking object.

The question now confronting us is this—where is this circuit plugged in and, to begin with, is it spiral in form, that is to say, is the circuit of the oral drive continued by the anal drive, which would then be the following stage? Is it a case of dialectical progress being produced out of opposition? Even for people who are used to us, it is already to carry the question rather far, in the name of some kind of mystery of development, to regard the thing as already acquired, inscribed in the organism.

This conception seems to be sustained by the fact that as far as the emergence of sexuality in a so-called completed form is concerned, we are certainly dealing with an organic process. But there is no reason to extend this fact to the relation between the other partial drives. There is no relation of production between one of the partial drives and the next.

The passage from the oral drive to the anal drive can be produced not by a process of maturation, but by the intervention of something that does not belong to the field of the drive—by the intervention, the overthrow, of the demand of the Other. If we introduce the other drives with which the series may be formed, and the number of which is fairly short, it is quite clear that you would find it very difficult indeed to situate in relation to the drives that I have just named, in a historical succession, the *Schaulust*, or scopic drive, or even what I will later distinguish as the invocatory drive (*la pulsion invocante*), and to establish between them the slightest relation of deduction or genesis.

There is no natural metamorphosis of the oral drive into the anal drive. Whatever appearances may emerge to the contrary from the play of the symbol constituted, in other contexts, by the supposed anal object, namely, the faeces, in relation to the phallus in its negative effect, we can in no sense—experience

shows us—consider that there is a continuity between the anal phase and the phallic phase, that there is a relation of natural metamorphosis.

We must consider the drive under the heading of the *konstante Kraft* that sustains it as a stationary tension. Let us take a look at the metaphors that Freud gives us to express these outlets. Take *Schub*, for example, which he immediately translates by the image that it bears in his mind, that of a spindle of lava, a material emission from the deflagration of energy that has occurred there in various successive stages, which complete, one after another, that form of return journey. Do we not see in the Freudian metaphor the embodiment of this fundamental structure—something that emerges from a rim, which redoubles its enclosed structure, following a course that returns, and of which nothing else ensures the consistency except the object, as something that must be circumvented.

This articulation leads us to make of the manifestation of the drive the mode of a headless subject, for everything is articulated in it in terms of tension, and has no relation to the subject other than one of topological community. I have been able to articulate the unconscious for you as being situated in the gaps that the distribution of the signifying investments sets up in the subject, and which figure in the algorithm in the form of a losange [◇], which I place at the centre of any relation of the unconscious between reality and the subject. Well! It is in so far as something in the apparatus of the body is structured in the same way, it is because of the topological unity of the gaps in play, that the drive assumes its role in the functioning of the unconscious.

3

Let us now follow Freud when he talks to us about *Schaulust*, seeing, being seen. Is it the same thing? How can it even be sustained that it can be that, except by inscribing it in terms of signifiers? Or is there, then, some other mystery? There is a quite different one, and, in order to introduce you to it, I have only to point out that *Schaulust* is manifested in perversion. I stress that the drive is not perversion. What constitutes the enigmatic character of Freud's presentation derives precisely from the fact that he wishes to give us a radical structure—in

which the subject is not yet placed. On the contrary, what defines perversion is precisely the way in which the subject is placed in it.

We must read Freud's text very attentively here. The value of Freud's texts on this matter, in which he is breaking new ground, is that like a good archaeologist, he leaves the work of the dig in place—so that, even if it is incomplete, we are able to discover what the excavated objects mean. When Mr Fenichel passes by the same ground, he does as one used to do, he gathers everything up, puts it in his pockets and in glass cases, without any kind of order, or at least in a completely arbitrary order, so that nothing can be found again.

What occurs in voyeurism? At the moment of the act of the voyeur, where is the subject, where is the object? I have told you that the subject is not there in the sense of seeing, at the level of the scopic drive. He is there as pervert and he is situated only at the culmination of the loop. As for the object—this is what my topology on the blackboard cannot show you, but can allow you to admit—the loop turns around itself, it is a missile, and it is with it, in perversion, that the target is reached.

The object, here, is the gaze—the gaze that is the subject, which attains it, which hits the bull's eye in target-shooting. I have only to remind you what I said of Sartre's analysis. Although this analysis brings out the agency of the gaze, it is not at the level of the other whose gaze surprises the subject looking through the keyhole. It is that the other surprises him, the subject, as entirely hidden gaze.

You grasp here the ambiguity of what is at issue when we speak of the scopic drive. The gaze is this object lost and suddenly refound in the conflagration of shame, by the introduction of the other. Up to that point, what is the subject trying to see? What he is trying to see, make no mistake, is the object as absence. What the voyeur is looking for and finds is merely a shadow, a shadow behind the curtain. There he will phantasize any magic of presence, the most graceful of girls, for example, even if on the other side there is only a hairy athlete. What he is looking for is not, as one says, the phallus—but precisely its absence, hence the pre-eminence of certain forms as objects of his search.

What one looks at is what cannot be seen. If, thanks to the

introduction of the other, the structure of the drive appears, it is really completed only in its reversed form, in its return form, which is the true active drive. In exhibitionism what is intended by the subject is what is realized in the other. The true aim of desire is the other, as constrained, beyond his involvement in the scene. It is not only the victim who is concerned in exhibitionism, it is the victim as referred to some other who is looking at him.

Thus in this text, we have the key, the nodus, of what has been so much an obstacle to the understanding of masochism. Freud articulated in the most categorical way that at the outset of the sado-masochistic drive, pain has nothing to do with it. It is a question of a *Herrschaft*, of *Bewältigung*, violence done to what?—to something that is so unspeakable that Freud arrives at the conclusion, and at the same time recoils from it, that its first model, in accordance with everything I have told you, is to be found in a violence that the subject commits, with a view to mastery, upon himself.

He recoils from it. And with good reason. The ascetic who flagellates himself does it for a third party. Now, this is not what he is trying to convey. He wishes only to designate the return, the insertion on one's own body, of the departure and the end of the drive.

At what moment, says Freud, *do we see the possibility of pain introduced into the sado-masochistic drive?*—the possibility of pain undergone by him who has become, at that moment, the subject of the drive. It is, he tells us, at the moment when the loop is closed, when it is from one pole to the other that there has been a reversal, when the other has come into play, when the subject has taken himself as the end, the terminus of the drive. At this moment, pain comes into play in so far as the subject experiences it from the other. He will become, will be able to become, in his theoretical deduction, a sadistic subject, in so far as the completed loop of the drive will have brought into play the action of the other. What is at issue in the drive is finally revealed here—the course of the drive is the only form of transgression that is permitted to the subject in relation to the pleasure principle.

The subject will realize that his desire is merely a vain detour with the aim of catching the *jouissance* of the other—in so far

as the other intervenes, he will realize that there is a *jouissance* beyond the pleasure principle.

The forcing of the pleasure principle by the effect of the partial drive—it is by this that we may conceive that the partial, ambiguous drives are installed at the limit of an *Erhaltungstrieb*, of the maintenance of a homeostasis, of its capture by the veiled face that is that of sexuality.

It is in so far as the drive is evidence of the forcing of the pleasure principle that it provides us with evidence that beyond the *Real-Ich*, another reality intervenes, and we shall see by what return it is this other reality, in the last resort, that has given to this *Real-Ich* its structure and diversification.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

J.-A. MILLER: *The question concerns the relation between the drive and the real, and the differences between the object of the drive, that of phantasy and that of desire.*

LACAN: The object of the drive is to be situated at the level of what I have metaphorically called a headless subjectification, a subjectification without subject, a bone, a structure, an outline, which represents one side of the topology. The other side is that which is responsible for the fact that a subject, through his relations with the signifier, is a subject-with-holes (*sujet troué*). These holes came from somewhere.

In his first constructions, his first networks of signifying crossroads to become stabilized, Freud was reaching towards something that, in the subject, is intended to maintain to the greatest possible degree what I have called homeostasis. This does not simply mean the crossing of a certain threshold of excitement, but also a distribution of ways. Freud even uses metaphors that assign a diameter to these ways, which permit the maintenance, the ever equal dispersal, of a certain investment.

Somewhere Freud says quite categorically that it is the pressure of what, in sexuality, has to be repressed in order to maintain the pleasure principle—namely, the libido—that has made possible the progress of the mental apparatus itself, as such and, for example, the establishment in the mental apparatus of that possibility of investment that we call *Aufmerksamkeit*, the possibility of attention. The determination of the functioning

of the *Real-Ich*, which both satisfies the pleasure principle and, at the same time, is invested without defence by the upsurge of sexuality—this is what is responsible for its structure.

At this level, we are not even forced to take into account any subjectification of the subject. The subject is an apparatus. This apparatus is something lacunary, and it is in the lacuna that the subject establishes the function of a certain object, *qua* lost object. It is the status of the *objet a* in so far as it is present in the drive.

In the phantasy, the subject is frequently unperceived, but he is always there, whether in the dream or in any of the more or less developed forms of day-dreaming. The subject situates himself as determined by the phantasy.

The phantasy is the support of desire; it is not the object that is the support of desire. The subject sustains himself as desiring in relation to an ever more complex signifying ensemble. This is apparent enough in the form of the scenario it assumes, in which the subject, more or less recognizable, is somewhere, split, divided, generally double, in his relation to the object, which usually does not show its true face either.

Next time, I shall come back to what I have called the structure of perversion. Strictly speaking, it is an inverted effect of the phantasy. It is the subject who determines himself as object, in his encounter with the division of subjectivity.

I will show you—I must stop here today because of the time, I am very sorry to say—that the subject assuming this role of the object is precisely what sustains the reality of the situation of what is called the sado-masochistic drive, and which is only a single point, in the masochistic situation itself. It is in so far as the subject makes himself the object of another will that the sado-masochistic drive not only closes up, but constitutes itself.

It is only in a second stage, as Freud shows us in this text, that the sadistic desire is possible in relation to a phantasy. The sadistic desire exists in a crowd of configurations, and also in the neuroses, but it is not yet sadism in the strict sense.

I will ask you to look at my article *Kant avec Sade*, where you will see that the sadist himself occupies the place of the object, but without knowing it, to the benefit of another, for whose *jouissance* he exercises his action as sadistic pervert.

You see, then, several possibilities here for the function of the

objet a, which is never found in the position of being the aim of desire. It is either pre-subjective, or the foundation of an identification of the subject, or the foundation of an identification disavowed by the subject. In this sense, sadism is merely the disavowal of masochism. This formula will make it possible to illuminate many things concerning the true nature of sadism.

But the object of desire, in the usual sense, is either a phantasy that is in reality the *support* of desire, or a lure.

On this subject of the lure, which poses at the same time all the previous quesions that you put forward just now concerning the relation of the subject to the real, the analysis that Freud gives of love enables us to make some progress.

The need Freud feels to refer to the relation of the *Ich* to the real in order to introduce the dialectic of love—whereas, strictly speaking, the neutral real is the desexualized real—is not introduced at the level of the drive. It is there that is to be found what, for us, will prove most valuable concerning how we should conceive of the function of love—namely, its fundamentally narcissistic structure.

There can be absolutely no doubt that there is a real. That the subject has a constructive relation with this real only within the narrow confines of the pleasure principle, of the pleasure principle unforced by the drive, this is—as we shall see next time—the point of emergence of the love object. The whole question is to discover how this love object may come to fulfill a role analogous with the object of desire—upon what equivocations does the possibility for the love object of becoming an object of desire rest?

Have I thrown some light on your question?

J.-A. MILLER: *Some light and some shadow.*

13 May 1964

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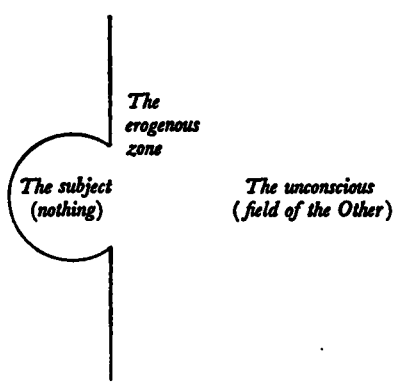
FROM LOVE TO THE LIBIDO

The subject and the Other · The narcissistic field · Sexual difference · The field of the drive: making oneself . . . seen, heard, sucked, shitted · The myth of the lamella

Today I intend—this does not mean that I will have the time to do so—to take you from love, at the threshold of which I left things last time, to the libido.

I will say at the outset what will be the burden of this elucidation by saying that the libido is not something fleeting or fluid, it cannot be divided up, or accumulated, like magnetism, in the centres of focusing offered it by the subject. The



libido is to be conceived as an organ, in both senses of the term, as organ-part of the organism and as organ-instrument.

I apologize if, as someone remarked last time, there are some obscurities along the way I take you. I believe that obscurity is characteristic of our field. Let us not forget that it is usual to represent the unconscious as a cellar, even as a cave, by way of allusion to Plato's cave. But it is not a good comparison. The unconscious is much more like the bladder, and this bladder

can be seen only if one places a little light inside it. Why should one be surprised if it sometimes takes a little time for the light to come on?

In the subject who, alternately, reveals himself and conceals himself by means of the pulsation of the unconscious, we apprehend only partial drives. The *ganze Sexualstrebung*, the representation of the totality of the sexual drive, is not to be found there, Freud tells us. Following Freud, I will lead you along the path of this conclusion, and I would state quite clearly that everything I have learnt from my experience accords with it. I cannot expect everybody here to agree with it fully, since some of you do not have this experience, but your presence here is evidence of a certain trust in what we shall call—in the role in which I am in relation to you, that of the Other—good faith. This good faith is no doubt always a precarious assumption—for where, in the end, does this relation of the subject to the Other end?

What I, Lacan, following the traces of the Freudian excavation, am telling you is that the subject as such is uncertain because he is divided by the effects of language. Through the effects of speech, the subject always realizes himself more in the Other, but he is already pursuing there more than half of himself. He will simply find his desire ever more divided, pulverized, in the circumscribable metonymy of speech. The effects of language are always mixed with the fact, which is the basis of the analytic experience, that the subject is subject only from being subjected to the field of the Other, the subject proceeds from his synchronic subjection in the field of the Other. That is why he must get out, get himself out, and in the *getting-himself-out*, in the end, he will know that the real Other has, just as much as himself, to get himself out, to pull himself free. It is here that the need for good faith becomes imperative, a good faith based on the certainty that the same implication of difficulty in relation to the ways of desire is also in the Other.

The truth, in this sense, is that which runs after truth—and that is where I am running, where I am taking you, like Actaeon's hounds, after me. When I find the goddess's hiding place, I will no doubt be changed into a stag, and you can devour me, but we still have a little way to go yet.

FROM LOVE TO THE LIBIDO

I

Did I perhaps represent Freud to you last time as some such figure as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? In his *Le Salut pour les juifs*, Léon Bloy depicts them as three equally old men who are there, according to one of the forms of Israel's vocation, squatting around some piece of canvas on the ground, engrossed in that eternal occupation of dealing in second-hand goods. They are sorting out the various objects on the canvas. Some things they put on one side, others on the other. On one side, Freud puts the partial drives and on the other love. He says—*They're not the same.*

The drives necessitate us in the sexual order—they come from the heart. To our great surprise, he tells us that love, on the other hand, comes from the belly, from the world of yum-yum.

It may come as a surprise, but it elucidates for us something fundamental to analytic experience, namely, that the genital drive, if it exists, is not at all articulated like the other drives —in spite of the love–hate ambivalence. In his premises, and in his own texts, Freud completely contradicts himself when he tells us that ambivalence may be regarded as one of the characteristics of the reversal of the *Verkehrung* of the drive. But when he examines it, he tells us quite clearly that ambivalence and reversion are not at all the same thing.

If, therefore, the genital drive does not exist, then it can get f . . . formed somewhere else, on the other side from the one in which the drive is to be found, on the left of my schema on the blackboard. You will have noticed already that it is on the right, in the field of the Other, that the genital drive has to find its form.

Well! This is precisely borne out by what we learn in the analytic experience, namely, that the genital drive is subjected to the circulation of the Oedipus complex, to the elementary and other structures of kinship. This is what is designated as the field of culture—somewhat inadequately, because this field is supposed to be based on a *no man's land* in which genitality as such subsists, whereas it is in fact dissolved, not re-assembled, for the *ganze Sexualstrebung* is nowhere apprehensible in the subject.

Yet because it is nowhere, it is nevertheless diffused, and it is this that Freud is trying to convey to us in this article.

Everything he says about love tends to emphasise the fact that, in order to conceive of love, we must necessarily refer to another sort of structure than that of the drive. He divides this structure into three, three levels—the level of the real, the level of the economic and the level of the biological.

To these levels correspond three oppositions. To the level of the real corresponds the that-which-interests/that-which-is-indifferent opposition. To the level of the economic, that-which-gives-pleasure/that-which-displeases. It is only at the level of the biological that the activity/passivity opposition presents itself, in its own form, the only valid one in its grammatical sense, the loving/being loved position.

We are invited by Freud to consider that love, in its essence, can be judged only as a sexual passion of the *gesamt Ich*. Now, in Freud, *gesamt Ich* is a *hapax*, which is to be understood in the sense suggested in his account of the pleasure principle. The *gesamt Ich* is the field that I have invited you to regard as a surface and a fairly limited surface so that the blackboard is able to represent it, and so that everything may be included in it on paper. I am referring to the network that is represented by arcs, lines linking points of convergence, of which the closed circle marks whatever is to be preserved in tensional homeostasis, in lower tension, in necessary diversion, in diffusion of excitement into innumerable channels—whenever it might be too intense in any one of them.

The filtering from stimulation to discharge is the apparatus, the dome, to be circumscribed on a sphere, in which is defined at first what he calls the stage of the *Real-Ich*. And it is to this that, later in his discourse, he attributes the qualification *autoerotisch*.

Analysts have concluded from this that—as it must be situated somewhere in what is called development, and since what Freud says is gospel—the infant must regard everything around him as indifferent. One wonders how things can go on, in a field of observers for whom articles of faith have such overwhelming value in relation to observation. For, after all, if there is one thing that cannot be said about the infant it is that he shows no interest in what enters his field of perception.

There can be no doubt that there are objects deriving from the earliest period of the neo-natal phase. *Autoerotisch* can in no

way mean a lack of interest in them. If you read Freud on this, you will see that the second stage, the economic stage, consists precisely in that the second *Ich*—the second in a *de jure* sense, the second in logical sequence—is the *Lust-Ich*, which he calls *purifiziert*, the purified *Lust-Ich*, which is established in the field exterior to the dome in which I designate the first *Real-Ich* of Freud's explanation.

The *autoerotisch* consists in the fact—and Freud himself stresses this—that there would be no emergence of objects if there were no objects of use to me. This is the criterion of the emergence and distribution of objects.

Here, then, is constituted the *Lust-Ich*, and also the field of the *Unlust*, of the object as remainder, as alien. The object that one needs to know, and with good reason, is that which is defined in the field of *Unlust*, whereas the objects of the field of the *Lust-Ich* are lovable. The *hassen*, with its profound link with knowledge, is the other field.

At this level, there is no trace of drive functions, except those that are not true drives, and which Freud calls in his text the *Ichtriebe*. The level of the *Ich* is not that of the drive, and it is there—I would ask you to read the text very attentively—that Freud grounds love. Everything that is defined in this way at the level of the *Ich* assumes sexual value, passes from the *Erhaltungstrieb*, from preservation, to the *Sexualtrieb*, only in terms of the appropriation of each of these fields, its seizure, by one of the partial drives. Freud says quite clearly that *Vorhangung des Wesentlichen*, to bring out the essential here, it is in a purely passive, non-drive, way that the subject records the *äusseren Reize*, that which comes from the external world. Its activity comes only *durch seine eigene Triebe*, from its own drives. It is a question here of the diversity of the partial drives. In this way, we are brought to the third level that he introduces, that of activity/passivity.

Before noting the consequences of this, I would simply like to draw your attention to the classic character of this conception of love. Is there any need to stress that *se vouloir son bien*, to wish oneself one's own well being, is exactly the equivalent of what is traditionally called the physical theory of love, St Thomas's *velle bonum alicui*, which, for us, on account of the function of narcissism has exactly the same value. I have long stressed the

specious character of this supposed altruism, which is pleased to preserve whose well being?—of him who, precisely, is necessary to us.

2

It is there, then, that Freud intends to set up the bases of love. It is only with activity/passivity that the sexual relation really comes into play.

Now, is the activity/passivity relation identical with the sexual relation? I would ask you to refer to a passage in the *Wolf-Man*, for example, or to various others scattered throughout the *Five Psycho-analyses*. There Freud explains in short that the polar reference activity/passivity is there in order to name, to cover, to metaphorize that which remains unfathomable in sexual difference. Nowhere does he ever say that, psychologically, the masculine/feminine relation is apprehensible otherwise than by the representative of the activity/passivity opposition. As such, the masculine/feminine opposition is never attained. This is sufficient indication of the importance of what is repeated here, in the form of a verb particularly appropriate in expressing what is at issue—this passivity/activity opposition is poured, moulded, injected. It is an arteriography, and even the masculine/feminine relations do no exhaust it.

Of course, it is well known that the activity/passivity opposition may account for many things in the domain of love. But what we are dealing with here is precisely this injection, one might say, of sado-masochism, which is not at all to be understood, as far as its properly sexual realization is concerned, as ready money.

Certainly, all the intervals of desire come into play in the sexual relation. *What value has my desire for you?* the eternal question that is posed in the dialogue of lovers. But the supposed value, for example, of *feminine masochism*, as it is called, should be subjected, parenthetically, to serious scrutiny. It belongs to a dialogue that may be defined, in many respects, as a masculine phantasy. There is every reason to believe that to sustain this phantasy would be an act of complicity on our part. In order not to deliver ourselves up completely to the results of Anglo-Saxon research, which is not worth very much on this subject, even if there is a certain amount of consent on the

part of women in it, which means nothing—we analysts will confine ourselves, more legitimately, to the women in our own group. It is quite striking to see that the representatives of this sex in the analytic circle are particularly disposed to maintain the fundamental belief in feminine masochism. It may be that there is a veil here, concerning the interests of the sex, that should not be lifted too quickly. In any case, this is an excursion from our subject, but an excursion profoundly linked to it, as you will see, for we shall have to come back to a consideration of this link.

However, at this level, we can learn nothing from the field of love, that is to say, from the framework of narcissism, which, as Freud shows quite clearly in this article, is made up of the insertion of the *autoerotisch* in the organized interests of the ego.

Within this framework, there may well be a representation of the objects of the external world, choice and discernment, the possibility of knowledge, in short the whole field with which classical psychology concerned itself is included in it. But nothing—and that is why all psychology of the affections has, up to Freud, failed—nothing represents in it the Other, the radical Other, the Other as such.

This representation of the Other is lacking, specifically, between the two opposed worlds that sexuality designates for us in the masculine and the feminine. Carrying things as far as they will go, one might even say that the masculine ideal and the feminine ideal are represented in the psyche by something other than this activity/passivity opposition of which I spoke earlier. Strictly speaking, they spring from a term that I have not introduced, but of which one female psycho-analyst has pin-pointed the feminine sexual attitude—the term *masquerade*.

Masquerade is not that which comes into play in the display necessary, at the level of the animals, to coupling, and in any case display is usually to be seen on the side of the male. Masquerade has another meaning in the human domain, and that is precisely to play not at the imaginary, but at the symbolic, level.

It is on this basis that it now remains to us to show that sexuality as such comes into play, exercises its proper activity, through the mediation—paradoxical as that may seem—of the partial drives.

3

Everything Freud spells out about the partial drives shows us the movement that I outlined for you on the blackboard last time, that circular movement of the thrust that emerges through the erogenous rim only to return to it as its target, after having encircled something I call the *objet a*. I suggest —and a punctilious examination of this whole text is a test of the truth of what I propose—that it is in this way that the subject attains what is, strictly speaking, the dimension of the capital Other.

I suggest that there is a radical distinction between *loving oneself through the other*—which, in the narcissistic field of the object, allows no transcendence to the object included—and the circularity of the drive, in which the heterogeneity of the movement out and back shows a gap in its interval.

What have seeing and being seen in common? Let us take the *Schaulust*, the scopic drive. Freud certainly makes a distinction between *beschauen*, to look at an alien object, an object in the strict sense, and *beschaut werden*, being looked at by an alien person.

This is because an object and a person are not the same. At the end of the circle, let us say that they lose touch—or that the dotted line eludes us to some extent. Indeed, in order to link them together, it is at the base—where origin and point converge—that Freud must bring them together and try to forge a union between them—precisely at the point of return. He brings them together by saying that the root of the scopic drive is to be found entirely in the subject, in the fact that the subject sees himself.

But, because he is Freud, he does not fall into error here. It is not seeing oneself in the mirror, it is *Selbst ein Sexualglied beschauen—he looks at himself*, I would say, *in his sexual member*.

But, be careful! That's not right either. Because this statement is identified with its opposite—which is curious enough, and I am surprised that nobody has noticed the humorous side of it. This gives—*Sexualglied von eigener Person beschaut werden*. In a way, just as the number two delights at being odd, the sex, or widdler, delights at being looked at. Who has ever

really grasped the truly subject-making (*subjectivable*) character of such a sentiment?

In fact, the articulation of the loop formed by the outward and return movement of the drive is obtained very well by changing only one of the terms in Freud's statement. I do not change *eigenes Objekt*, the object in the strict sense, which is in fact what the subject is reduced to and I do not change *von fremder Person*, the other, of course, nor *beschaut*, but in place of *werden* I put *machen*—what is involved in the drive is *making oneself seen* (*se faire voir*). The activity of the drive is concentrated in this *making oneself* (*se faire*), and it is by relating it to the *field* of the other drives that we may be able to throw some light upon it.

Unfortunately, I must move fairly quickly, and not only am I cutting short, but I am filling in the gaps that Freud, surprisingly, left in his enumeration of the drives.

After *making oneself seen*, I will introduce another, *making oneself heard*, of which Freud says nothing.

I must, very quickly, point out to you the difference between *making oneself heard* and *making oneself seen*. In the field of the unconscious the ears are the only orifice that cannot be closed. Whereas *making oneself seen* is indicated by an arrow that really comes back towards the subject, *making oneself heard* goes towards the other. The reason for this is a structural one—it was important that I should mention it in passing.

Let us turn to the oral drive. What is it? One speaks of phantasies of devouring, *of being gobbled up*. Indeed, everyone knows that this, verging on all the resonances of masochism, is the altrified term of the oral drive. But why do we not get a definite answer? Since we refer to the infant and the breast, and since suckling is sucking, let us say that the oral drive is getting sucked, it is the vampire.

Indeed, this throws some light on that singular object—which I am trying to unstick in your minds from the food metaphor—the breast. The breast is also something superimposed, who sucks what?—the organism of the mother. Thus we see clearly enough, at this level, the nature of the subject's claim to something that is separated from him, but belongs to him and which he needs to complete himself.

At the level of the anal drive—you can now relax a bit—

things don't seem to work out like that at all. And yet, *se faire chier* has a meaning! When one says *here, on se fait rudement chier*, one has the *emmerdeur éternel* in mind.[1] It is quite wrong simply to identify the celebrated scybala with the function given it in the metabolism of obsessional neurosis. It is quite wrong to separate it from what it represents, a gift, as it happens, and from the relation it has with soiling, purification, catharsis. It is wrong not to see that it is from here that the function of oblativity emerges. In short, the object, here, is not very far from the domain that is called that of the soul.

What does this brief survey tell us? Does it not seem that the drive, in this turning inside out represented by its pocket, invaginating through the erogenous zone, is given the task of seeking something that, each time, responds in the Other? I will not go over the series again. Let us say that at the level of the *Schaulust*, it is the gaze. I point this out only to deal later with the effects on the Other of this movement of appeal.

4

I wish to note here the relation between the polarity of the drive cycle and something that is always at the centre. It is an organ, in the sense of an instrument, of the drive—in another sense, therefore, than that attributed to it earlier in the sphere of the induction of the *Ich*. We must now turn our attention to this ungraspable organ, this object that we can only circumvent, in short, this false organ.

The organ of the drive is situated in relation to the true organ. In order to make this clear to you and in order to show that this is the only pole that, in the domain of sexuality, is within our grasp, capable of being apprehended, I will take the liberty of setting a myth before you—and in doing so I shall take as my starting-point what is put into the mouth of Aristophanes on the subject of love in Plato's *Symposium*.

This usage presupposes of course that we give ourselves permission to use, in this judo with truth, the apparatus that I have always avoided using before my audiences.

[1] This sentence is strictly untranslatable on account of the play on words. *Se faire chier* means literally 'to get oneself shitted'. '*Tu me fais chier*' has the sense of 'you make me sick'. '*On se fait rudement chier*' means 'we were bored to death'. An '*emmerdeur*' (literally, a 'shitter') is a 'bore' [Tr.].

I have given my listeners ancient models, particularly those drawn from Plato, but I have merely given them the machinery to dig this field. I am not one of those who say—*Children, there is treasure buried here*—and leave them to get on with their digging. I have given them the plough share and the plough, namely, that the unconscious was made out of language, and at one point in time, approximately three and a half years ago, and three very good pieces of work have resulted from it. But we must now say— *You can only find the treasure in the way I tell you.*

There is something comical about this way. This is absolutely essential in understanding any of Plato's dialogues, and especially when one is dealing with the *Symposium.* This dialogue is even, one might say, a practical joke. The starting-point, on course, is Aristophanes' fable. This fable is a defiance to the centuries, for it traverses them without anyone trying to do better. I shall try.

In an attempt to establish what was said at the Congrès de Bonneval I managed to come up with something like the following—*I am going to talk to you about the lamella.*

If you want to stress its joky side, you can call it *l'hommelette.* This *hommelette,* as you will see, is easier to animate than primal man, in whose head one always had to place a homunculous to get it working.

Whenever the membranes of the egg in which the foetus emerges on its way to becoming a new-born are broken, imagine for a moment that something flies off, and that one can do it with an egg as easily as with a man, namely the *hommelette,* or the lamella.

The lamella is something extra-flat, which moves like the amoeba. It is just a little more complicated. But it goes everywhere. And as it is something—I will tell you shortly why —that is related to what the sexed being loses in sexuality, it is, like the amoeba in relation to sexed beings, immortal—because it survives any division, any scissiparous intervention. And it can run around.

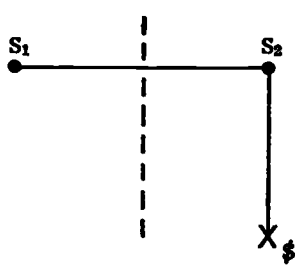
Well! This is not very reassuring. But suppose it comes and envelopes your face while you are quietly asleep . . .

I can't see how we would not join battle with a being capable of these properties. But it would not be a very convenient battle. This lamella, this organ, whose characteristic is not to

exist, but which is nevertheless an organ—I can give you more details as to its zoological place—is the libido.

It is the libido, *qua* pure life instinct, that is to say, immortal life, or irrepressible life, life that has need of no organ, simplified, indestructible life. It is precisely what is subtracted from the living being by virtue of the fact that it is subject to the cycle of sexed reproduction. And it is of this that all the forms of the *objet a* that can be enumerated are the representatives, the equivalents. The *objets a* are merely its representatives, its figures. The breast—as equivocal, as an element characteristic of the mammiferous organization, the placenta for example —certainly represents that part of himself that the individual loses at birth, and which may serve to symbolize the most profound lost object. I could make the same kind of reference for all the other objects.

The relation between the subject and the field of the Other becomes clearer. Take a look at what I have drawn in the lower part of the table. I will explain.



In the world of the *Real-Ich*, of the ego, of knowledge, everything may exist as now, including you and consciousness, without there being any need, whatever may be thought to the contrary, for anything in the way of a subject. If the subject is what I say it is, namely the subject determined by language and speech, it follows that the subject, *in initio*, begins in the locus of the Other, in so far as it is there that the first signifier emerges.

Now, what is a signifier? I have been drumming it into you long enough not to have to articulate it once again here. A signifier is that which represents a subject. For whom?—not for another subject, but for another signifier. In order to

illustrate this axiom, suppose that in the desert you find a stone covered with hieroglyphics. You do not doubt for a moment that, behind them, there was a subject who wrote them. But it is an error to believe that each signifier is addressed to you—this is proved by the fact that you cannot understand any of it. On the other hand you define them as signifiers, by the fact that you are sure that each of these signifiers is related to each of the others. And it is this that is at issue with the relation between the subject and the field of the Other.

The subject is born in so far as the signifier emerges in the field of the Other. But, by this very fact, this subject—which, was previously nothing if not a subject coming into being —solidifies into a signifier.

The relation to the Other is precisely that which, for us, brings out what is represented by the lamella—not sexed polarity, the relation between masculine and feminine, but the relation between the living subject and that which he loses by having to pass, for his reproduction, through the sexual cycle.

In this way I explain the essential affinity of every drive with the zone of death, and reconcile the two sides of the drive —which, at one and the same time, makes present sexuality in the unconscious and represents, in its essence, death.

You will also understand that, if I have spoken to you of the unconscious as of something that opens and closes, it is because its essence is to mark that time by which, from the fact of being born with the signifier, the subject is born divided. The subject is this emergence which, just before, as subject, was nothing, but which, having scarcely appeared, solidifies into a signifier.

On this conjunction between the subject in the field of the drive and the subject as he appears in the field of the Other, on this effort to join oneself together, depends the fact that there is a support for the *ganze Sexualstrebung*. There is no other. Only there is the relation of the sexes represented at the level of the unconscious.

As for the rest, the sexual relation is handed over to the hazards of the field of the Other. It is handed over to the explanations that are given of it. It is handed over to the old woman of whom—it is not a pointless fable—Daphnis must learn what one must do to make love.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

F. WAHL: *The question concerns the loss that the sexed living being is subjected to, then the activity/passivity articulation.*

LACAN: In fact, you have stressed one of the things lacking in what I have said. The lamella has a rim, it inserts itself into the erogenous zone, that is to say, in one of the orifices of the body, in so far as these orifices—all our experience shows this—are linked to the opening/closing of the gap of the unconscious.

The erogenous zones are linked to the unconscious because it is there that the presence of the living being becomes fixed. We have discovered that it is precisely the organ of the libido, the lamella, which links to the unconscious the so-called oral and anal drives, to which I would add the scopic drive and what one ought almost to call the invocatory drive, which has, as I told you in passing—nothing of what I say is mere joking—the privilege of not being able to close.

As to the relation between the drive and activity/passivity, I think I will be well enough understood if I say that at the level of the drive it is purely grammatical. It is support, artifice, which Freud uses in order to enable us to understand the outward-return movement of the drive. But I have repeated four or five times that we cannot reduce it purely and simply to a reciprocity. Today I have shown in the most articulated way possible that each of the three stages, *a*, *b*, *c*, with which Freud articulates each drive, must be replaced by the formula of *making oneself seen, heard* and the rest of the list I have given. This implies fundamentally activity, in which respect I come close to what Freud himself articulates when he distinguishes between the two fields, the field of the drives on the one hand, and the narcissistic field of love on the other, and stresses that at the level of love, there is a reciprocity of *loving* and *being loved*, and that, in the other field, it is a question of a pure activity *durch seine eigene Triebe*, for the subject. Do you follow me? In fact, it is obvious that, even in their supposedly passive phase, the exercise of a drive, a masochistic drive, for example, requires that the masochist give himself, if I may be permitted to put it in this way, a devil of a job.

29 May 1964

The Field of the Other and back to the Transference

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16

THE SUBJECT AND THE OTHER: ALIENATION

Sexual dynamics · Aphanisis · *The Piagetic error* · Vel · *Your money or your life!* · *The* why?

If psycho-analysis is to be constituted as the science of the unconscious, one must set out from the notion that the unconscious is structured like a language.

From this I have deduced a topology intended to account for the constitution of the subject.

At a time that I hope we have now put behind us, it was objected that in giving dominance to structure I was neglecting the dynamics so evident in our experience. It was even said that I went so far as to ignore the principle affirmed in Freudian doctrine that this dynamics is, in its essence, through and through, sexual.

I hope my seminar for this year, especially at the point at which it reached its culmen last time, has shown you that this dynamics is far from being ignored in my thinking.

I

I would remind you, for the benefit of those who were absent last time, that I added a quite new element to this dynamics, the use of which will become apparent later.

First, I stressed the division that I make by opposing, in relation to the entrance of the unconscious, the two fields of the subject and the Other. The Other is the locus in which is situated the chain of the signifier that governs whatever may be made present of the subject—it is the field of that living being in which the subject has to appear. And I said that it was on the side of this living being, called to subjectivity, that the drive is essentially manifested.

Every drive being, by its essence as drive, a partial drive, no

drive represents—a notion that Freud raises for a moment when he asks himself whether it is love that realizes it—the totality of the *Sexualstrebung*, of the sexual tendency, as it might be conceived as making present in the psyche the function of *Fortpflanzung*, of reproduction, if this function entered the psyche at all.

Who would not accept this function on the biological plane? What I am saying, following Freud, who provides abundant evidence of it, is that this function is not represented as such in the psyche. In the psyche, there is nothing by which the subject may situate himself as a male or female being.

In his psyche, the subject situates only equivalents of the function of reproduction—activity and passivity, which by no means represent it in an exhaustive way. Freud even adds a touch of irony to this by stressing that this representation is not as constricting or as exhaustive as that—*durchgreifend ausschlieblich*—the polarity of the male and the female being is represented only by the polarity of activity, which is manifested through the *Triebe*, and of passivity, which is passivity only in relation to the exterior, *gegen die äusseren Reize*.

Only this division—and it is here that I left off last time—makes necessary what was first revealed by analytic experience, namely, that the ways of what one must do as man or as woman are entirely abandoned to the drama, to the scenario, which is placed in the field of the Other—which, strictly speaking, is the Oedipus complex.

I stressed this last time, when I told you that the human being has always to learn from scratch from the Other what he has to do, as man or as woman. I referred to the old woman in the story of Daphnis and Chloe, which shows us that there is an ultimate field, the field of sexual fulfilment, in which, in the last resort, the innocent does not know the way.

Whether it is the drive, the partial drive, that orientates him to it, or whether the partial drive alone is the representative in the psyche of the consequences of sexuality, this is a sign that sexuality is represented in the psyche by a relation of the subject that is deduced from something other than sexuality itself. Sexuality is established in the field of the subject by a way that is that of lack.

Two lacks overlaps here. The first emerges from the central

defect around which the dialectic of the advent of the subject to his own being in the relation to the Other turns—by the fact that the subject depends on the signifier and that the signifier is first of all in the field of the Other. This lack takes up the other lack, which is the real, earlier lack, to be situated at the advent of the living being, that is to say, at sexed reproduction. The real lack is what the living being loses, that part of himself *qua* living being, in reproducing himself through the way of sex. This lack is real because it relates to something real, namely, that the living being, by being subject to sex, has fallen under the blow of individual death.

Aristophanes' myth pictures the pursuit of the complement for us in a moving, and misleading, way, by articulating that it is the other, one's sexual other half, that the living being seeks in love. To this mythical representation of the mystery of love, analytic experience substitutes the search by the subject, not of the sexual complement, but of the part of himself, lost forever, that is constituted by the fact that he is only a sexed living being, and that he is no longer immortal.

You will now understand that—for the same reason that it is through the lure that the sexed living being is induced into his sexual realization—the drive, the partial drive, is profoundly a death drive and represents in itself the portion of death in the sexed living being.

Thus defying, perhaps for the first time in history, a myth that has acquired so much prestige, and which last time I placed under the same heading as Plato places that of Aristophanes, I substituted the myth intended to embody the missing part, which I called the myth of the lamella.

This is new and it is important because it designates the libido not as a field of forces, but as an organ.

The libido is the essential organ in understanding the nature of the drive. This organ is unreal. Unreal is not imaginary. The unreal is defined by articulating itself on the real in a way that eludes us, and it is precisely this that requires that its representation should be mythical, as I have made it. But the fact that it is unreal does not prevent an organ from embodying itself.

I will give you its materialization at once. One of the most ancient forms in which this unreal organ is incarnated in the

body, is tattooing, scarification. The tattoo certainly has the function of being for the Other, of situating the subject in it, marking his place in the field of the group's relations, between each individual and all the others. And, at the same time, it obviously has an erotic function, which all those who have approached it in reality have perceived.

I have also shown that, in the profound relation of the drive, what is essential is that the movement by which the arrow that sets out towards the target fulfills its function only by really re-emerging from it, and returning on to the subject. In this sense, the pervert is he who, in short circuit, more directly than any other, succeeds in his aim, by integrating in the most profound way his function as subject with his existence as desire. Here the reversal of the drive is something quite different from the variation of ambivalence that makes the object oscillate from the field of hate to that of love and vice versa, depending on whether or not it benefits the well-being of the subject. It is not when the object in one's sights is not good that one becomes a masochist. It is not because her father disappointed her that Freud's female patient (known as 'the homosexual') becomes homosexual—she could have taken a lover. Whenever we are in the dialectic of the drive, something else takes charge. The dialectic of the drive is profoundly different both from that which belongs to the order of love and from that which belongs to the well-being of the subject.

That is why today I wish to stress the operation of the realization of the subject in his signifying dependence in the locus of the Other.

2

Everything emerges from the structure of the signifier. This structure is based on what I first called the function of the cut and which is now articulated, in the development of my discourse, as the topological function of the rim.

The relation of the subject to the Other is entirely produced in a process of gap. Without this, anything could be there. The relations between beings in the real, including all of you animated beings out there, might be produced in terms of inversely reciprocal relations. This is what psychology, and a whole area of sociology, is trying to do, and may succeed in

doing as far as the mere animal kingdom is concerned, for the capture of the imaginary is enough to motivate all sorts of behaviour in the living being. Psycho-analysis reminds us that human psychology belongs to another dimension.

To maintain this dimension, philosophical analysis might have sufficed, but it has proved itself to be inadequate, for lack of any adequate definition of the unconscious. Psycho-analysis, then, reminds us that the facts of human psychology cannot be conceived in the absence of the function of the subject defined as the effect of the signifier.

Here the processes are to be articulated, of course, as circular between the subject and the Other—from the subject called to the Other, to the subject of that which he has himself seen appear in the field of the Other, from the Other coming back. This process is circular, but, of its nature, without reciprocity. Because it is circular, it is disymmetrical.

You will realize that today I am taking you on to the terrain of a logic whose essential importance I hope to stress.

The whole ambiguity of the sign derives from the fact that it represents something for someone. This someone may be many things, it may be the entire universe, in as much as we have known for some time that information circulates in it, as a negative of entropy. Any node in which signs are concentrated, in so far as they represent something, may be taken for a someone. What must be stressed at the outset is that a signifier is that which represents a subject for another signifier.

The signifier, producing itself in the field of the Other, makes manifest the subject of its signification. But it functions as a signifier only to reduce the subject in question to being no more than a signifier, to petrify the subject in the same movement in which it calls the subject to function, to speak, as subject. There, strictly speaking, is the temporal pulsation in which is established that which is the characteristic of the departure of the unconscious as such—the closing.

One analyst felt this at another level and tried to signify it in a term that was new, and which has never been exploited since in the field of analysis—*aphanisis*, disappearance. Ernest Jones, who invented it, mistook it for something rather absurd, the fear of seeing desire disappear. Now, *aphanisis* is to be situated in a more radical way at the level at which the subject

manifests himself in this movement of disappearance that I have described as lethal. In a quite different way, I have called this movement the *fading* of the subject.

I wish to dwell on this for a moment in order to convey to you to what extent it is always possible to find oneself again in concrete experience, and even in observation, on condition that this key is used to lift the veil of blindness. I will show you this by means of an example.

The Piagetic error—for those who might think that this is a neologism, I would stress that I am referring to Monsieur Piaget—is an error that lies in the notion of what is called the *egocentric* discourse of the child, defined as he stage at which he lacks what this Alpine psychology calls reciprocity. Reciprocity is very far from the horizon of what we mean at that particular moment, and the notion of egocentric discourse is a misunderstanding. The child, in this discourse, which may be tape-recorded, does not speak for himself, as one says. No doubt, he does not address the other, if one uses here the theoretical distinction derived from the function of the *I* and the *you*. But there must be others there—it is while all these little fellows are there, indulging all together, for example, in little games of operations, as they are provided with in certain methods of so-called active education, it is there that they speak—they don't speak to a particular person, they just speak, if you'll pardon the expression, *à la can*tonade.[1]

This egocentric discourse is a case of *hail to the good listener*!

What we find once again here is the constitution of the subject in the field of the Other, as I have designated it for you in this little arrow on the blackboard. If he is apprehended at his birth in the field of the Other, the characteristic of the subject of the unconscious is that of being, beneath the signifier that develops its networks, its chains and its history, at an indeterminate place.

More than one dream element, indeed almost all, may be the point at which we will variously situate him in interpretation. If one thinks that one may make him say whatever one wishes, one has understood nothing—but one must admit that psycho-

[1] To speak 'à la cantonade' is to speak to nobody in particular, to the company at large. By stressing the first letters of the phrase, Lacan is punning on his own name [Tr.].

analysts do not explain themselves very well. Interpretation cannot be bent to any meaning. It designates only a single series of signifiers. But the subject may in effect occupy various places, depending on whether one places him under one or other of these signifiers.

I now come to the two operations that I intend to articulate today in the relation between the subject and the Other.

3

The rim process, the circular process, the relation in question is to be supported by the small losange that I used as algorithm in my graph precisely because it is necessary in integrating some of the finished products of this dialectic.

It is impossible not to integrate it, for example, in phantasy itself—it is $ ◇*a* [*barred S, punch, petit a*]. It is impossible not to integrate it also in that radical node in which are conjoined demand and drive, designated by the $◇D [*barred S, punch, capital D*], which might be called the cry.

Let us keep with this little losange. It is a rim, a functioning rim. One has only to provide it with a vectorial direction, here anti-clockwise—this is governed by the fact that, at least in our writing, you read things from left to right.

Be careful! They are supports for your thought that are not without artifice, but there is no topology that does not have to be supported by some artifice—it is precisely the result of the fact that the subject depends on the signifier, in other words, on a certain impotence in your thinking.

The small V of the lower half of the losange, let us say here that it is the *vel* constituted by the first operation, where I wish to leave you for a moment.

Indeed, you may find that these things are all rather silly. But logic always is a bit silly. If one does not go to the root of the childish, one is inevitably precipitated into stupidity, as can be shown by innumerable examples, such as the supposed

antinomies of reason, for example, the catalogue of all the catalogues that do not include themselves, and one arrives at an impasse, which, I can't think why, gives logicians vertigo. Yet the solution is very simple, it is that the signifier with which one designates the same signifier is evidently not the same signifier as the one with which one designates the other—this is obvious enough. The word *obsolete*, in so far as it may signify that the word *obsolete* is itself an *obsolete* word, is not the same word *obsolete* in each case. This ought to encourage us to develop this *vel* that I have introduced to you.

The subject is grounded in the *vel* of the first essential operation. To be sure, it is not at all without interest to develop it here, before so vast an audience, since it is a question of nothing less than that operation that we call *alienation*.

One has to admit that there is a lot of this alienation about nowadays. Whatever one does, one is always a bit more alienated, whether in economics, politics, psycho-pathology, aesthetics, and so on. It may be no bad thing to see what the root of this celebrated alienation really is.

Does it mean, as I seem to be saying, that the subject is condemned to seeing himself emerge, *in initio*, only in the field of the Other? Could it be that? Well, it isn't. Not at all—not at all—not at all.

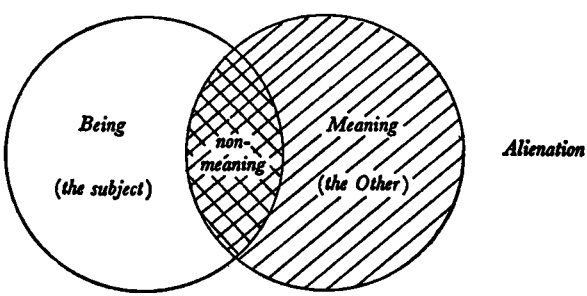
Alienation consists in this *vel*, which—if you do not object to the word *condemned*, I will use it—condemns the subject to appearing only in that division which, it seems to me, I have just articulated sufficiently by saying that, if it appears on one side as meaning, produced by the signifier, it appears on the other as *aphanisis*.

There is a *vel* that is worth illustrating, in order to differentiate it from the other uses of the *vel*, of the *or*. There are two of them. You know, from your earliest lessons in logic, that there is the exclusive *vel*—I go *either* there *or* there—if I go there, I do not go there, I have to choose. There is another way of using *vel*—I go to one side or the other, I don't care, one's as good as the other. These two *vels* are not alike. Well, there is a third, and in order not to mislead you, I will tell you straight away what it is intended for.

Symbolic logic, which is very useful in bringing a little light into so tricky a domain, teaches us to distinguish the impli-

cations of the operation that we call joining. To speak as one speaks when it is a question of sets, adding two collections together is not identical to joining them. If in this circle, that on the left, there are five objects, and if, in the other, there are also five—adding them together makes ten. But some of them may belong to both circles. If there are two that belong to each of the two circles, joining them together will in this instance consist not in doubling their number—there will be in all only eight objects. I apologize if I am being naive in reminding you of this, but it is in order to give you the notion that this *vel* that I will try to articulate for you is supported only on the logical form of joining.

The *vel* of alienation is defined by a choice whose properties

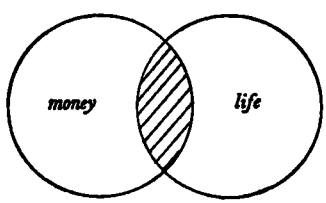


depend on this, that there is, in the joining, one element that, whatever the choice operating may be, has as its consequence a *neither one, nor the other*. The choice, then, is a matter of knowing whether one wishes to preserve one of the parts, the other disappearing in any case.

Let us illustrate this with what we are dealing with here, namely, the being of the subject, that which is there beneath the meaning. If we choose being, the subject disappears, it eludes us, it falls into non-meaning. If we choose meaning, the meaning survives only deprived of that part of non-meaning that is, strictly speaking, that which constitutes in the realization of the subject, the unconscious. In other words, it is of the nature of this meaning, as it emerges in the field of the Other, to be in a large part of its field, eclipsed by the disappearance of being, induced by the very function of the signifier.

This, as I have said, has a quite direct implication that passes all too often unperceived—when I tell you what it is, you will see that it is obvious, but for all that it is not usually noticed. One of the consequences is that interpretation is not limited to providing us with the significations of the way taken by the psyche that we have before us. This implication is no more than a prelude. Interpretation is directed not so much at the meaning as towards reducing the non-meaning of the signifiers, so that we may rediscover the determinants of the subject's entire behaviour.

I would ask you to refer to what my pupil Leclaire contributed, at the Congrès de Bonneval, by way of an application of my theses. You will see in his contribution that he isolated the sequence of the unicorn, not, as was thought in the discussion,



in its significatory dependence, but precisely in its irreducible and senseless character *qua* chain of signifiers.

One cannot emphasise too strongly the importance of some such thing as I have just described for you here. This alienating *or* is not an arbitrary invention, nor is it a matter of *how one sees things*. It is a part of language itself. This *or* exists. It is so much a part of language that one should distinguish it when one is dealing with linguistics. I will give you an example at once.

Your money or your life! If I choose the money, I lose both. If I choose life, I have life without the money, namely, a life deprived of something. I think I have made myself clear.

It is in Hegel that I have found a legitimate justification for the term alienating *vel*. What does Hegel mean by it? To cut a long story short, it concerns the production of the primary alienation, that by which man enters into the way of slavery. *Your freedom or your life!* If he chooses freedom, he loses both immediately—if he chooses life, he has life deprived of freedom.

There must be something special about this. This something

special we shall call the *lethal factor*. This factor is present in certain divisions shown us by the play of signifiers that we sometimes see at play at the heart of life itself—these are called chromosomes, and it sometimes happens that there is one among them that has a lethal function. We shall find a parallel to this function in a rather peculiar statement, by introducing death itself into one of these fields.

For example, *freedom or death!* There, because death comes into play, there occurs an effect with a rather different structure. This is because, in both cases, I will have both. Freedom, after all, as you know, is like the celebrated freedom to work, for which the French Revolution, it seems, was fought. It can also be the freedom to die of hunger—in fact, that's what it amounted to throughout the nineteenth century, which is why, since then, certain principles have had to be revised. You choose freedom. Well! You've got freedom to die. Curiously enough, in the conditions in which someone says to you, *freedom or death!*, the only proof of freedom that you can have in the conditions laid out before you is precisely to choose death, for there, you show that you have freedom of choice.

At this moment, which is also a Hegelian moment, for it is what is called the Terror, this quite different division is intended to make clear for you what is, in this field, the essence of the alienating *vel*, the lethal factor.

4

Given the time, I can do no more here than introduce the second operation. It completes the circularity of the relation of the subject to the Other, but an essential twist is revealed in it.

Whereas the first phase is based on the sub-structure of joining, the second is based on the sub-structure that is called intersection or product. It is situated precisely in that same lunula in which you find the form of the gap, the rim.

The intersection of two sets is constituted by the elements that belong to the two sets. It is here that the second operation in which the subject is led by this dialectic takes place. It is as essential to define the second operation as the first, because it is there that we shall see the emergence of the field of the transference. I shall call it—introducing my second new term here —*separation*.

Separare, to separate—I would point out at once the equivocation of the *se parare*, of the *se parer*, in all the fluctuating meanings it has in French. It means not only to dress oneself, but also to defend oneself, to provide oneself with what one needs to be on one's guard, and I will go further still, and Latinists will bear me out, to the *se parere*, the *s'engendrer*, the *to be engendered*, which is involved here. How, at this level, has the subject to procure himself? For that is the origin of the word that designates in Latin *to engender*. It is juridical, as indeed, curiously enough, are all the words in Indo-European that designate *to put into the world*. The word *parturition* itself originates in a word which, in its root, simply means to procure a child from the husband—a juridical and, it should be said, social operation.

Next time, I shall try to show how, like the function of the alienating *vel*, so different from the other *vels* defined so far, use is to be made of this notion of intersection. We shall see how it emerges from the superimposition of two lacks.

A lack is encountered by the subject in the Other, in the very intimation that the Other makes to him by his discourse. In the intervals of the discourse of the Other, there emerges in the experience of the child something that is radically mappable, namely, *He is saying this to me, but what does he want?*

In this interval intersecting the signifiers, which forms part of the very structure of the signifier, is the locus of what, in other registers of my exposition, I have called metonymy. It is there that what we call desire crawls, slips, escapes, like the ferret. The desire of the Other is apprehended by the subject in that which does not work, in the lacks of the discourse of the Other, and all the child's *whys* reveal not so much an avidity for the reason of things, as a testing of the adult, a *Why are you telling me this?* ever-resuscitated from its base, which is the enigma of the adult's desire.

Now, to reply to this hold, the subject, like Gribouille, brings the answer of the previous lack, of his own disappearance, which he situates here at the point of lack perceived in the Other. The first object he proposes for this parental desire whose object is unknown is his own loss—*Can he lose me?* The phantasy of one's death, of one's disappearance, is the first object that the subject has to bring into play in this dialectic, and he does indeed bring it into play—as we know from innumerable cases,

such as in anorexia nervosa. We also know that the phantasy of one's death is usually manipulated by the child in his love relations with his parents.

One lack is superimposed upon the other. The dialectic of the objects of desire, in so far as it creates the link between the desire of the subject and the desire of the Other—I have been telling you for a long time now that it is one and the same—this dialectic now passes through the fact that the desire is not replied to directly. It is a lack engendered from the previous time that serves to reply to the lack raised by the following time.

I think I have sufficiently stressed the two elements that I have tried to present today, in this new and fundamental logical argument—non-reciprocity and the twist in the return.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

J.-A. MILLER: *Do you not wish to show, all the same, that the alienation of a subject who has received the definition of being born in, constituted by, and ordered in a field that is exterior to him, is to be distinguished radically from the alienation of a consciousness-of-self? In short, are we to understand—Lacan* against *Hegel?*

LACAN: What you have just said is very good, it's exactly the opposite of what Green just said to me—he came up to me, shook my paw, at least morally, and said, *The death of structuralism, you are the son of Hegel.* I don't agree. I think that in saying Lacan *against* Hegel, you are much closer to the truth, though of course it is not at all a philosophical debate.

DR GREEN: *The sons kill the fathers!*

27 May 1964

17

THE SUBJECT AND THE OTHER: APHANISIS

The question of the Vorstellungsrepräsentanz · *Freedom* · *Representation and the Hegelian lure* · *Descartes' desire* · *Scepticism, certainty and the subject who is supposed to know* · *Small letters* · *The value of the Pavlovian experiment*

When I said, at the beginning of these talks—*I do not seek, I find,* I meant that, in Freud's field, one has only to bend down and pick up what is to be found. The real implication of the *nachträglich,* for example, has been ignored, though it was there all the time and had only to be picked up. I also remember the surprise of someone who was on the same track as I, seeing one day what could be done with the *einziger Zug,* the single stroke.

Today I would like to show you the importance, already designated by my schema last time, of what Freud calls, at the level of repression, the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz.*

I

Vorstellung invoves a sort of defect that leads the German language to put unwarranted *ss,* which cannot be attached to the normal declension of the determinate, but which are necessary to it when forming composite words. There are therefore two terms—*Vorstellung, Repräsentanz.*

I spoke to you last time about the form of alienation, which I illustrated with several examples, and which I told you could be articulated in a *vel* of a very special nature. Today we might try to articulate it in some other ways. For example—*not* something . . . *without* something else. The dialectic of the slave is obviously *no freedom without life,* but there will be no life for him without freedom. From one to the other there is a necessary condition. This necessary condition becomes precisely the adequate reasons that, causes the loss of the original requirement.

Perhaps this is something like what also happens among some of my followers. There is no way of following me without passing through my signifiers, but to pass through my signifiers involves this feeling of alienation that incites them to seek, according to Freud's formula the small difference. Unfortunately, this small difference makes them lose the full significance of the direction I pointed out to them. Heavens, I am not so touchy, I leave everyone to go his own way in the direction that I point out —but I could have done without having to take note of what seemed to a particular individual so worthy of rectification in the translation that I had first given of this *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*.

I had noted that Freud stresses the fact that repression bears on something that is of the order of representation that he calls the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*.

As soon as I introduced this remark several years ago— which was also a way of reading what Freud writes under the heading of *Verdrängung*, the article that follows the one on the unconscious in the series of texts collected together under the term *metapsychological*—I insisted on the fact that Freud emphasizes that it is not the affect that is repressed. The affect —and we shall see what this means in our theory—goes off somewhere else, as best it can. There will always be enough professors of psychology to justify with the patient that its meaning is to be found precisely where it is no longer in its place. So I inisited on the fact that what is repressed is not the represented of desire, the signification, but *the representative* (*le représentant*)—I translated literally—*of the representation* (*de la représentation*).

Here the function of alienation intervenes for this or that individual, who, more or less animated by a care for the privileges of university authority, and anxious to enter the lists, claims to correct the translation that I have given. The *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* is the *representative representative* (*le représentant représentatif*), let us say.

This doesn't seem to amount to very much. But in a little book on psycho-somatics that has just appeared, one finds a whole passage arguing that there is some misunderstanding in something that must be called my theory of desire and, in a small note referring to some inaccessible passage taken from the text offered by two of my pupils, it is stressed that, following me,

they make desire the representative representative of need. I'm not questioning whether in fact my pupils wrote that—we have been unable to find the passage in question—the important thing is that the only pertinent remark in this extremely slight book is as follows—*we would say rather that desire is the non-representative representative.*

Now, that is precisely what I mean, and say—for what I mean, I say—in translating *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* by representative of the representation.

We can locate this *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* in our schema of the original mechanisms of alienation in that first signifying coupling that enables us to conceive that the subject appears first in the Other, in so far as the first signifier, the unary signifier, emerges in the field of the Other and represents the subject for another signifier, which other signifier has as its effect the *aphanisis* of the subject. Hence the division of the subject—when the subject appears somewhere as meaning, he is manifested elsewhere as 'fading', as disappearance. There is, then, one might say, a matter of life and death between the unary signifier and the subject, *qua* binary signifier, cause of his disappearance. The *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* is the binary signifier.

This signifier constitutes the central point of the *Urverdrängung*—of what, from having passed into the unconscious, will be, as Freud indicates in his theory, the point of *Anziehung*, the point of attraction, through which all the other repressions will be possible, all the other similar passages in the locus of the *Unterdrückt*, of what has passed underneath as signifier. This is what is involved in the term *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*.

That by which the subject finds the return way of the *vel* of alienation is the operation I called, the other day, separation. By separation, the subject finds, one might say, the weak point of the primal dyad of the signifying articulation, in so far as it is alienating in essence. It is in the interval between these two signifiers that resides the desire offered to the mapping of the subject in the experience of the discourse of the Other, of the first Other he has to deal with, let us say, by way of illustration, the mother. It is in so far as his desire is beyond or falls short of what she says, of what she hints at, of what she brings out as meaning, it is in so far as his desire is unknown, it is in this

point of lack, that the desire of the subject is constituted. The subject—by a process that is not without deception, which is not without presenting that fundamental twist by which what the subject rediscovers is not that which animates his movement of rediscovery—comes back, then, to the initial point, which is that of his lack as such, of the lack of his *aphanisis*.

We will come back in greater detail to the consequences that flow from it for the analytic treatment itself, and we shall see that this twist effect is essential in integrating the emergence phase of the transference. For the moment, I would like to dwell on what is essential in the function of desire, namely, that it is in as much as the subject plays his part in separation that the binary signifier, the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*, is *unterdrückt*, sunk underneath.

The thing is essential if we are to articulate properly—it immediately throws some light on very different regions—what is the sign of interpretation.

It might be useful in passing to bring out—however metaphysical it may seem, but in any case our technique often makes use, as if it were self-evident, of the expression *to free something*—it might be useful to remark that it is there that the whole business of this term freedom, which certainly merits the description of phantom, is played out. What the subject has to free himself of is the aphanisic effect of the binary signifier and, if we look at it more closely, we shall see that in fact it is a question of nothing else in the function of freedom.

It is not for nothing that having had to justify the term *vel* of alienation at the level of our experience, the two most obvious supports to occur to us were those two choices which, by their formula, structure, firstly, the position of the slave and, secondly, the position of the master. When the slave is confronted with the choice of his freedom or his life, he decides, *no freedom without life*—life remains forever deprived of freedom. And, when we stand back to look at things, we will see that the alienation of the master is structured in exactly the same way. For if Hegel shows us that the status of the master is established in the struggle to the death of pure prestige, it is because it is to bring his choice through death that the master also constitutes his fundamental alienation.

Certainly, one can say that the master is no more spared by

death than is his slave, that he will always die in the end, and that this is the limit of his freedom. But to say this is insufficient for this death is not the death that constitutes the alienating choice of the master, the death of the struggle to the death of pure prestige. The revelation of the essence of the master is manifested at the moment of terror, when it is to him that one says *freedom or death*, and then he has obviously only death to choose in order to have freedom. The supreme image of the master is that character in Claudelian tragedy, Sygne de Coûfontaine, of whom I have spoken at length in one of my seminars. It is she who wished to abandon nothing of her register, the register of the master, and the values to which she sacrifices bring her, over and above her sacrifice, no more than the need to renounce, in all its depths, her very being. It is in so far as, through the sacrifice of these values, she is forced to renounce her essence, her very being, her most intimate being, that she illustrates, in the end, how much radical alienation of freedom there is in the master himself.

2

Do I need to stress that we must understand *Repräsentanz* here in the sense in which things happens at the real level, where communication takes place in every human domain.

We mean by representatives what we understand when we use the phrase, for example, the representative of France. What do diplomats do when they address one another? They simply exercise, in relation to one another, that function of being pure representatives and, above all, their own signification must not intervene. When diplomats are addressing one another, they are supposed to represent something whose signification, while constantly changing, is, beyond their own persons, France, Britain, etc. In the very exchange of views, each must record only what the other transmits in his pure function as signifier, he must not take into account what the other is, *qua* presence, as a man who is likable to a greater or lesser degree. Interpsychology is an impurity in this exchange.

The term *Repräsentanz* is to be taken in this sense. The signifier has to be understood in this way, it is at the opposite pole from signification. Signification, on the other hand, comes into play in the *Vorstellung*.

It is with the *Vorstellung* that we are dealing in psychology, when the objects of the world are taken in charge, in some way, under the parenthesis of a subject in which a whole series of a, a′, a″, etc., unfolds. Here is situated the subjectivity on which the theory of knowledge is suspended. Of course, every representation requires a subject, but this subject is never a pure subject. If one believes that each subject is sustained in the world with his original—in both senses of the word (*originale ou originelle*)—*Weltanschauung*, then the path of truth passes—as a backward psychology or psycho-sociology is still showing us—through the inquiry, the totalization, the statistics of different *Weltanschauung*. And things might be thus, were there in the world subjects, each entrusted with the task of representing certain conceptions of the world.

Indeed, this is the essential flaw in philosophical idealism which, in any case, cannot be sustained and has never been radically sustained. There is no subject without, somewhere, *aphanisis* of the subject, and it is in this alienation, in this fundamental division, that the dialectic of the subject is established.

In order to answer the question I was asked last time concerning my adhesion to the Hegelian dialectic, is it not enough that I should answer that, because of the *vel*, the sensitive point, point of balance, there is an emergence of the subject at the level of meaning only from its *aphanisis* in the Other locus, which is that of the unconscious? Furthermore, this involves no mediation, and I promise, if I am provoked into doing so, to show that the effective experience that has been established in the perspective of an absolute knowledge never leads us to anything that may, in any way, illustrate the Hegelian vision of successive syntheses, nothing that provides even so much as a hint of the moment that Hegel in some obscure way links to this stage, and which someone has been pleased to illustrate by the title of *Dimanche de la vie*—when no opening remains in the heart of the subject.

I should indicate here where the Hegelian lure proceeds from. It is included in the approach of the Cartesian *I think*, in which I designated the inaugural point that introduces, in history, in our experience, in our necessity, the *vel* of alienation, which prevents us for ever from misunderstanding it. It is in the Cartesian approach that the *vel* was taken for the first time

as the constituent of the dialectic of the subject, which now cannot be eliminated in his radical foundation.

This reference will be useful to me in characterizing the experience of the transference, so I shall be returning to it later in order to articulate certain of its features.

3

What distinguishes the Cartesian approach from the ancient search of the *episteme*, what distinguishes it from the scepticism that has been one of its terms, is what we shall try to articulate on the basis of the double function of alienation and separation.

What is Descartes looking for? He is looking for certainty. *I have*, he says, *an extreme desire to learn to distinguish the true from the false*—note the word *desire—in order to see clearly*—in what?—*in my actions, and to walk with assurance in this life.*

Is not this something quite different from the aim of knowledge? This approach is not that of a dialectician or a professor, still less that of a cavalier. It has been stressed that Descartes' biography is marked above all by his wanderings in the world, his encounters and, after all, his secret ambition—*Larvatus prodeo*. If I point this out, although I am one of those who regard concern for biography as secondary to the meaning of a work, it is because Descartes himself stresses that his biography, his approach, is essential to the communication of his method, of the way he has found to truth.

He makes it quite clear that what he has given is not—as Bacon tried to do some years earlier—the general means of conducting one's reason correctly, without abdicating it, for example, to experience. It is his own method, in so far as he set out in this direction with the desire to learn to distinguish the true from the false in order to see clearly—in what?—*in my actions*. This example, then, is a particular one, and Descartes goes so far as to add that if what was for me, at a particular moment, my way, does not seem right for others, that is their affair, that they should gather from my experience what they think is worth gathering. This forms part of the introduction by Descartes of his own way to science.

Does this mean that no knowledge is aimed at? Does it mean that knowledge weighs lightly in Descartes? Not at all, it is with this that he begins—there's enough knowledge around

and to spare, there always has been, there still is. It is not I who have imposed this allusion here, but Descartes' own text. He was trained by the best teachers, he was a pupil of the Jesuits at the Collège de La Flèche and there was no lack of knowledge, or of sapience, there.

Shall I go so far as to say that it is not for nothing, that it is precisely a result of his Jesuit education, that he acquired his acute feeling of the superabundance of knowledge? Is there not at the heart of what is transmitted through a certain humanist wisdom something like a hidden *perinde ac cadaver*, which is not where it is usually placed, namely, in the supposed death that the rule of St Ignatius seems to require? Personally, I don't feel very close to it, and these Jesuits, as I myself see them, from the outside, always seem to me to be very much there, not to say full of life—they make their presence felt, and with a diversity that is far from suggesting that of death. No, the death referred to here is that which is hidden behind the very notion of humanism, at the heart of any humanist consideration. And even when an attempt is made to animate the term as in the phrase *the human sciences*, there is something that we shall call a skeleton in the cupboard.

It is here that Descartes finds a new way. His aim is not to refute uncertain knowledge. He is happy to let such knowledge run around quite freely, and with it all the rules of social life. Indeed, like everyone at this historical moment at the beginning of the seventeenth century, in that inaugural moment of the emergence of the subject, he has present all around him a profusion of libertines who serve as the other term of the *vel* of alienation. They are in reality Pyrrhonians, sceptics, and Pascal calls them by their name, except that he does not stress in a sufficiently free way its meaning and implications.

Scepticism does not mean the successive doubting, item by item, of all opinions or of all the pathways that accede to knowledge. It is holding the subjective position that *one can know nothing*. There is something here that deserves to be illustrated by the range, the substance, of those who have been its historical embodiments. I would show you that Montaigne is truly the one who has centred himself, not around scepticism but around the living moment of the *aphanisis* of the subject. And it is in this that he is fruitful, that he is an eternal guide, who goes

beyond whatever may be represented of the moment to be defined as a historical turning-point. But this is not scepticism. Scepticism is something that we no longer know. Scepticism is an ethic. Scepticism is a mode of sustaining man in life, which implies a position so difficult, so heroic, that we can no longer even imagine it—precisely perhaps because of this passage found by Descartes, which led the search for the path of certainty to this very point of the *vel* of alienation, to which there is only one exit—the way of desire.

This desire for certainty led Descartes only to doubt—the choice of this way led him to operate a rather strange separation. I would simply like to touch on a few points, which will serve as reference points in grasping an essential function, masked though it may be, which is still vital, present and directive in our method of investigating the unconscious.

4

Certainty, for Descartes, is not a moment that one may regard as acquired, once it has been crossed. Each time and by each person it has to be repeated. It is an ascesis. It is a point of orientation that is particularly difficult to sustain in the incisiveness that makes its value. It is, strictly speaking, the establishment of something separate.

When Descartes introduces the concept of a certainty that holds entirely in the *I think* of cogitation, marked by this point of non-exit that exists between the annihilation of knowledge and scepticism, which are not the same thing—one might say that his mistake is to believe that this is knowledge. To say that he knows something of this certainty. Not to make of the *I think* a mere point of fading. But it is because he has done something quite different, which concerns the field, which he does not name, in which all this knowledge wanders about—all this knowledge which he had said should be placed in a radical suspension. He puts the field of this knowledge at the level of this vaster subject, the subject who is supposed to know, God. You know that Descartes could not help reintroducing the presence of God. But in what a strange way!

It is here that the question of the eternal verities arises. In order to assure himself that he is not confronted by a deceiving God, he has to pass through the medium of a God—indeed, in

his register, it is a question not so much of a perfect, as of an infinite being. Does Descartes, then, remain caught, as everyone up to him did, on the need to guarantee all scientific research on the fact that actual science exists somewhere, in an existing being, called God?—that is to say, on the fact that God is supposed to know?

It may seem that I am taking you a long way from the field of our experience, and yet—I would remind you, both by way of an apology and in order to maintain your attention at the level of our experience—the subject who is supposed to know, in analysis, is the analyst.

Next time, we shall discuss, in terms of the function of the transference, how it is that we have no need of the idea of a perfect, infinite being—who would dream of attributing these qualities to his analyst?—to introduce the function of the subject who is supposed to know.

Let us go back to our Descartes, and to his subject who is supposed to know. How does he get rid of it? Well, as you know, by his voluntarism, by the primacy given to the will of God. This is certainly one of the most extraordinary sleights of hand that has ever been carried off in the history of the mind—the eternal verities are eternal because God wishes them to be.

I think you will appreciate the elegance of such a solution, which leaves a whole portion of the truths, in particular the eternal truths, in God's charge. Let us be quite clear about this, what Descartes means, and says, is that if two and two make four it is, quite simply, because God wishes it so. It is his business.

Now, it is true that it is his business and that two and two make four is not something that can be taken for granted without his presence.

I'm going to try to illustrate what I mean here. When Descartes speaks to us of his process, of his method, of clear ideas and confused ideas, simple ideas and complex ideas, he places the order to be followed between these two terms of his method. It is very possible after all that one plus one plus one plus one do not make four and I must tell you that what I am articulating the *vel* of alienation on is a good example of it. For, in the cardinal order, this would give more or less something like the following:

$$1 + (1 + (1 + (1 + (\ldots)))).$$

Whenever a new term is introduced, one always runs the risk of letting one or several of the others slip between one's fingers. In order to reach four, what matters is not the cardinal but the ordinal. There is a first mental operation to be carried out and then a second, then a third, then a fourth. If you do not do them in the right order, you fail. To know whether, in the last resort, it makes three, or four, or two, is of secondary importance. That's God's business.

What Descartes now introduces, and which is illustrated at once, for, at the same time as his discourse on method he introduces his geometry and his dioptrics, is this—he substitutes the small letters, *a*, *b*, *c*, etc., of his algebra for the capital letters. The capital letters, if you will, are the letters of the Hebrew alphabet with which God created the world and to each of which, as you know, there corresponds a number. The difference between Descartes' small letters and the capital letters is that Descartes' small letters do not have a number—they are interchangeable and only the order of the commutations will define their process.

To show you that the presence of the Other is already implied in number, I need only point out to you that the series of numbers can only be figured by introducing the zero, in a more or less masked way. Now, the zero is the presence of the subject who, at this level, totalizes. We cannot extract it from the dialectic of the subject and the Other. The apparent neutrality of this field conceals the presence of desire as such. I will illustrate this simply by a return effect. However, we should take a few more steps forward in the function of desire.

In effect, Descartes inaugurates the initial bases of a science in which God has nothing to do. For the characteristic of our science, and its difference with the ancient sciences, is that nobody even dares, without incurring ridicule, to wonder whether God knows anything about it, whether God leafs through modern treatises on mathematics to keep up to date.

I have gone far enough today, and I apologize for not going further. I will leave you at this point, and do no more than indicate for you the last aim of my discourse for this year—namely, to pose the question of the position of psycho-analysis in science. Can psycho-analysis be situated in our science, in

so far as this science is considered as that in which God has nothing to do?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

DR GREEN: *Is there not a way of articulating the question of the* Vorstellungsrepräsentanz *in what you said later—in particular, on the basis of the relation between the subject and the mirror, in so far as this relation refers the subject to the subject who is supposed to know, who is in the mirror?*

LACAN: Mmm . . . Well . . . I cannot follow you in this direction—because I think it's a short circuit.

The point at which the plug of the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* is connected—and this is of great importance to what I have said today—is the point that I told you was the virtual point of the function of freedom, in as much as the choice, the *vel*, is manifested there between the signifier and the subject. I illustrated it with an opening on what might be called the avatars of this freedom, which, in the final resort, is never, of course, discovered by any serious individual. I then passed on to Descartes, who is scarcely concerned with it at all, except in act. His own particular freedom takes the form of action, of the way in which he finds his certainty. This does not mean that he leaves it to us like a bank account.

Next time, I must return again to the locus of the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*, before I introduce, at the level of the transference, the terms that I was forced to introduce today concerning the function of the Other. They seem to be things very far removed from our domain. I am referring to the psychosomatic.

The psycho-somatic is something that is not a signifier, but which, nevertheless, is conceivable in so far as the signifying induction at the level of the subject has occurred in a way that does not bring into play the *aphanisis* of the subject.

In the small work I referred to earlier, and you can sample for yourselves how much useless chatter it contains, is to be found nevertheless an important little remark—though it claims to refute, not me, I, thank God, am not involved, but those who speak in my name—to the effect that desire is not representative of need. In this place, the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* will considerably limit the play of our interpretation for the

reason that the subject, *qua aphanisis*, is not concerned in it. It is in so far as a need will come to be concerned in the function of desire that the psycho-somatic may be conceived as something other than the mere chatter that consists in saying that there is a psychical lining to whatever happens in the somatic field. We have known this for a long time now. If we speak of the psycho-somatic, it is in so far as desire must intervene in it. It is in so far as the link known as desire is preserved here, even if we can no longer take account of the *aphanisis* function of the subject.

I would like to convey to you, since I am on this terrain, what is in question in the conditioned reflex. It is not sufficiently stressed that the Pavlovian experiment is possible only in as much as the exercise of a biological function, that is to say, that to which we can attach the unifying, totalizing function of need, can be broken down. It can be broken down because more than one organ is involved in it. Once you have made your dog salivate at the sight of a piece of meat, your next job is to interrupt the process at the point of secretion, and to show that this point is articulable with something that functions as a signifier, since it is made by the experimenter. In other words, the Other is there.

But this proves absolutely nothing about the supposed psyche of the unfortunate animal. Even the supposed effects of neurosis that are obtained are not effects of neurosis, for one simple reason—they cannot be analysed by speech. The major interest of these conditioned reflexes is to show us what the animal may perceive. We use the signifier—which is not a signifier for the animal, but which, in order to see what possible differential there is at the level of its *perceptum*, which, however, does not at all mean that it will be the *percipiens* of that signifier in the subjective sense of the word. The main interest of these experiments is to show us that differential range of the animal at the level of a perception that cannot in any sense be a representation, for there is no other subject here than the subject of the experimenter. And this goes much further still. In fact, we interrogate the animal about our own perception. This way of limiting the scope of the Pavlovian experiments restores to them, at the same time, it can be seen, their very great importance.

Its effective, scientific benefits are those I have described, and they have no other practical use.

Ultimately, their interest may be to reveal the question that is posed to us by the fact that we discover in the animal that signifiers—which are ours, since it is we, the experimenters, who order them in perception—express among themselves a sort of equivalence.

I am not saying that I have resolved this question by formulating it.

Indeed, this sort of equivalence enables us to indicate the problem of the realism of number, in a form that is certainly not that referred to earlier, when I showed you what question is implied in all use of number, which means that arithmetic is a science that has been literally barred by the intrusion of algebrism. Here number intervenes as pure frequency, in what we can call, by putting things back in place, the Pavlovian signal. That is to say, an animal conditioned to a hundred visual stimuli a second reacts to a hundred auditory stimuli a second. A new question in thus introduced into experimentation. It is not yet a question, perhaps, of something to which we might give the full status of signifier, except for those of us who are counting the frequencies. But, all the same, the fact that the animal, without training, passes from a hundred frequencies in one register to a hundred frequencies in another, allows us perhaps to go a little further concerning the strictly perceptual structure.

I have taken advantage of the question asked to say things that I wanted to say and hadn't done so. Let's leave it at that.

3 June 1964

18

OF THE SUBJECT WHO IS SUPPOSED TO KNOW, OF THE FIRST DYAD, AND OF THE GOOD

The trust placed in the analyst · Science itself · *As soon as there is a subject who is supposed to know, there is transference · Belief · Alienation apprehended in the* fort-da · *Alienation in pleasure*

The aim of my teaching has been and still is the training of analysts.

The training of analysts is a subject that is well to the forefront of analytic research. Nevertheless—I have already given you evidence of this—in the analytic literature, its principles are lost sight of.

It is clear, in the experience of all those who have passed through this training, that in the absence of adequate criteria, something that is of the order of ceremony is put in their place and—since for the psycho-analyst there is no beyond, no substantial beyond, by which to justify his conviction that he is qualified to exercise his function—the substitution, in this instance, can be interpreted in only one way—as simulation.

Yet what he obtains is of incalculable value—the trust of a subject as such, and the results that this involves by virtue of a certain technique. Now, he does not present himself as a god, he is not God for his patient. So what does this trust signify? Around what does it turn?

For him who places the trust, and who receives its reward, the question can no doubt be ignored. It cannot be for the psycho-analyst. The training of the psycho-analyst requires that he should know, in the process through which he guides his patient, what it is around which the movement turns. *He* must know, to him must be transmitted, through actual experience,

what it is all *about*. This pivotal point is what I designate—in a way, which, I think, will seem to you sufficiently justified, but which, I hope, as we progress, will appear more and more clear to you, more and more necessary—it is what I designate under the term *the desire of the psycho-analyst.*

Last time, I showed you the point of application of the Cartesian approach, which, in its origin and in its end, is directed essentially not towards science, but towards its own certainty. It is at the heart of something that is not science in the sense in which, since Plato and before him, it has been the object of the meditation of philosophers, but Science *itself.*[1] The science in which we are caught up, which forms the context of the action of all of us in the time in which we are living, and which the psycho-analyst himself cannot escape, because it forms part of his conditions too, is Science *itself.*

It is in relation to this second science, Science *itself*, that we must situate psycho-analysis. We can do so only by articulating upon the phenomenon of the unconscious the revision that we have made of the foundation of the Cartesian subject. First, today, I shall say something about the phenomenology of the transference.

I

The transference is a phenomenon in which subject and psycho-analyst are both included. To divide it in terms of transference and counter-transference—however bold, however confident what is said on this theme may be—is never more than a way of avoiding the essence of the matter.

The transference is an essential phenomenon, bound up with desire as the nodal phenomenon of the human being—and it was discovered long before Freud. It was perfectly articulated—I took up a large part of a year devoted to the transference to showing this—with the most extreme rigour, in a text in which the subject of love is discussed, namely, Plato's *Symposium.*

It is possible that this text was written for the character of Socrates, who, nevertheless, is depicted in it in a particularly

[1] Lacan distinguishes between '*science*' and 'La *science*', in which the stress is placed on the article. I have translated 'La *science*' by 'Science *itself*' [Tr].

discreet way. The essential, initial moment that is of particular relevance to the question we must ask ourselves about the action of the analyst, is that in which it is said that Socrates never claimed to know anything, except on the subject of *Eros*, that is to say, desire. By this fact alone, and because, in the *Symposium*, he goes further than anywhere else in showing us the signification of comedy in his dialogues, carrying it even to the point of farce, Plato could not fail to show us, in the most precise way, the place of the transference.

As soon as the subject who is supposed to know exists somewhere—I have abbreviated it for you today at the top of the blackboard as *S.s.S.* (*sujet supposé savoir*) there is transference.

What does an organization of psycho-analysts mean when it confers certificates of ability, if not that it indicates to whom one may apply to represent this subject who is supposed to know?

Now, it is quite certain, as everyone knows, that no psychoanalyst can claim to represent, in however slight a way, a corpus of absolute knowledge. That is why, in a sense, it can be said that if there is someone to whom one can apply there can be only one such person. This *one* was Freud, while he was alive. The fact that Freud, on the subject of the unconscious, was legitimately the subject that one could presume to know, sets aside anything that had to do with the analytic relation, when it was initiated, by his patients, with him.

He was not only the subject who was supposed to know. He did know, and he gave us this knowledge in terms that may be said to be indestructible, in as much as, since they were first communicated, they support an interrogation which, up to the present day, has never been exhausted. No progress has been made, however small, that has not deviated whenever one of the terms around which Freud ordered the ways that he traced, and the paths of the unconscious, has been neglected. This shows us clearly enough what the function of the subject who is supposed to know is all about.

The function, and by the same token, the consequence, the prestige, I would say, of Freud are on the horizon of every position of the analyst. They constitute the drama of the social, communal organization of psycho-analysts.

Who can feel himself fully invested by this subject who is

supposed to know? This is not the question. The question is first, for each subject, where he takes his bearings from when applying to the subject who is supposed to know. Whenever this function may be, for the subject, embodied in some individual, whether or not an analyst, the transference, according to the definition I have given you of it, is established.

If things reach the point that this is already, on the part of the patient, determined for someone nameable, for a figure accessible to him, there will result from this, for whoever assumes responsibility for him in analysis, a quite special difficulty, concerning the enacting of the transference. And it can happen that even the most stupid analyst—I don't know whether this extreme term exists, it is a function that I designate here only in the way one designates that sort of mythical number in logic which is, for example, the greatest number that may be expressed in so many words—even the most stupid analyst realizes it, recognizes it and directs the analysis towards what remains for him the subject who is supposed to know. This is a mere detail, and almost an anecdote. Let us now begin the examination of what is really at issue.

The analyst, I said, occupies this place in as much as he is the object of the transference. Experience shows us that when the subject enters analysis, he is far from giving the analyst this place.

For the moment let us leave the Cartesian hypothesis that the psycho-analyst is a deceiver. This hypothesis is not to be excluded absolutely from the phenomenological context of certain entries into analysis. But psycho-analysis shows us that what, above all in the initial phase, most limits the confidence of the patient, his abandonment to the analytic rule, is the threat that the psycho-analyst may be deceived by him.

How often in our experience does it happen that we discover only very late some important biographical detail? Suppose, for example, that at a particular moment in his life, the subject contracted a venereal disease. *But why didn't you tell me earlier?* one might ask, if one is still naive enough. *Because,* the analysand may reply, *if I had told you earlier, you might have regarded it as responsible, in part at least, perhaps even wholly, for my disorders and I am not here for you to find an organic cause for them.*

This is an example that is unlimited in its implications, and

which may be understood in a number of different ways—from the angle of social prejudice, of scientific discussion, of the confusion that remains around the very principle of analysis. I quote it here only as an illustration of the fact that the patient may think that the analyst may be misled if he gives him certain facts. He holds back certain facts so that the analyst may not go too quickly. I could give you other, better examples of this. Should not he who may be misled (*être trompé*) be *a fortiori* under suspicion of being capable, quite simply, of being mistaken (*se tromper*)?

Now, that certainly is the limit. It is around this *being mistaken* (*ce se tromper*) that the balance lies of that subtle, infinitesimal point that I wish to mark.

Given that analysis may, on the part of certain subjects, be put in question at its very outset, and suspected of being a lure —how is it that around this *being mistaken* something stops? Even the psycho-analyst put in question is credited at some point with a certain infallibility, which means that certain intentions, betrayed, perhaps, by some chance gesture, will sometimes be attributed even to the analyst put in question, *You did that to test me!*

The Socratic discussion introduced the following theme —that the recognition of the conditions for the good in itself would have something irresistible for man. This is the paradox of the teaching, if not of Socrates himself—what do we know about him other than through the Platonic comedy?—I will not even say Plato's comedy—for Plato develops in the terrain of the comic dialogue and leaves all the questions open—but of a certain exploitation of Platonism, which may be said to perpetuate itself in general derision. For, as we all know, the most perfect recognition of the conditions of the good will never prevent anyone from dashing into its opposite. So what is it all about, this trust placed in the analyst? How are we to know that he wishes this good, let alone for another? Let me explain.

Who does not know from experience that it is possible not to want to ejaculate? Who does not know from experience, knowing the recoil imposed on everyone, in so far as it involves terrible promises, by the approach of *jouissance* as such? Who does not know that one may not wish to think?—the entire universal college of professors is there as evidence.

But what does *not wanting to desire* mean? The whole of analytic experience—which merely gives form to what is for each individual at the very root of his experience—shows us that not to want to desire and to desire are the same thing.

To desire involves a defensive phase that makes it identical with not wanting to desire. Not wanting to desire is wanting not to desire. This discipline which, in order to find a way out of the impasse of the Socratic interrogation, was practised by people who were not only specifically philosophers, but, in their own way, some kind of practitioners of religion—the Stoics and the Epicureans. The subject knows that not to want to desire has in itself something as irrefutable as that Moebius strip that has no underside, that is to say, that in following it, one will come back mathematically to the surface that is supposed to be its other side.

It is at this point of meeting that the analyst is awaited. In so far as the analyst is supposed to know, he is also supposed to set out in search of unconscious desire. This is why I say—I will illustrate it for you next time with a small topological drawing that has already been on the blackboard—that desire is the axis, the pivot, the handle, the hammer, by which is applied the force-element, the inertia, that lies behind what is formulated at first, in the discourse of the patient, as demand, namely, the transference. The axis, the common point of this two-edged axe, is the desire of the analyst, which I designate here as an essential function. And let no one tell me that I do not name this desire, for it is precisely this point that can be articulated only in the relation of desire to desire.

This relation is internal. Man's desire is the desire of the Other.

Is there not, reproduced here, the element of alienation that I designated for you in the foundation of the subject as such? If it is merely at the level of the desire of the Other that man can recognize his desire, as desire of the Other, is there not something here that must appear to him to be an obstacle to his fading, which is a point at which his desire can never be recognized? This obstacle is never lifted, nor ever to be lifted, for analytic experience shows us that it is in seeing a whole chain come into play at the level of the desire of the Other that the subject's desire is constituted.

In the relation of desire to desire, something of alienation is preserved, not with the same elements—not with the S_1 and S_2 of the first dyad of signifiers, from which I deduced the formula of the alienation of the subject in my last but one lecture—but with, on the one hand, what has been constituted on the basis of primal repression, of the fall, of the *Unterdrückung*, of the binary signifier, and, on the other hand, what appears first as lack in what is signified by the dyad of signifiers, in the interval that links them, namely, the desire of the Other.

2

I will now re-articulate a number of formulae to be preserved as link points, without which thought will stumble and slip. Alienation is linked in an essential way to the function of the dyad of signifiers. It is, indeed, essentially different, whether there are two or three of them.

If we wish to grasp where the function of the subject resides in this signifying articulation, we must operate with two, because it is only with two that he can be cornered in alienation. As soon as there are three, the sliding becomes circular. When passed from the second to the third, it comes back to the first —but not from the second. The effect of *aphanisis* that is produced under one of the two signifiers is linked to the definition—let us say, to use the language of modern mathematics—of a set of signifiers. It is a set of elements such that, if there exist—as one says in the theory, with a capital E inverted for notation—only two, the phenomenon of alienation is produced, in other words, the signifier is that which represents the subject for the other signifier. Hence there results that, at the level of the other signifier, the subject fades away.

This is also why I pointed out to you the mistake that occurs in a certain translation of this *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*, which is, as I told you, the signifying S_2 of the dyad.

I must articulate here what is involved and what, in the text of one of my pupils of whom I have spoken, was sensed, but expressed in a way that misses the point, and which may lead to error, because it specifically omits the fundamental character of the function of the subject. There is constant reference to the relation of the signifier and the signified, which has to do with what I will call the a,b,c, of the question. Of course, it had to

happen that one day I would put on the blackboard something that had already been formulated at the roots of the Saussurian development, in order to show my starting point. But I immediately showed that it was effective and manageable only to include in it the function of the subject at the original stage. It is not a question of reducing the function of the subject to nomination, namely, to a label stuck on something. This would be to miss the whole essence of language. I must say that this text, which I described last time as providing proof of infatuation, also provides proof of crass ignorance, in letting it be understood that this is what is involved at the level of the Pavlovian experiment.

If there is something that is situated at the level of the experiment of the conditioned reflex, it is certainly not the association of a sign with a thing.

Whether or not Pavlov recognizes this, the characteristic of every experimental condition is strictly to *associate a signifier*, in so far as the experiment is instituted with the cut that may be made in the organic organization of a need—which is designated by a manifestation at the level of a cycle of interrupted needs, and which we find here again, at the level of the Pavlovian experiment, as being the cut of desire. And—rather as one says, *that's why your daughter is dumb*—that is why the animal will never learn to speak. At least in this way. Because, obviously, the animal is one step behind. The experiment may cause in him all sorts of disorders, all sorts of disturbances, but, not yet being a speaking creature, he is not called to put in question the desire of the experimenter, who, indeed, if one interrogated him, would be hard put to reply.

Nevertheless, when articulated in this way, this experiment is interesting, indeed is essential, in enabling us to situate our conception of the psycho-somatic effect. I will go so far as to formulate that, when there is no interval between S_1 and S_2, when the first dyad of signifiers become solidified, holophrased, we have the model for a whole series of cases—even though, in each case, the subject does not occupy the same place.

In as much, for example, as the child, the mentally-deficient child, takes the place, on the blackboard, at the bottom right, of this S, with regard to this something to which the mother reduces him, in being no more than the support of her desire

in an obscure term, which is introduced into the education of the mentally-deficient child by the psychotic dimension. It is precisely what our colleague Maud Mannoni, in a book that has just come out and which I would recommend you to read, tries to indicate to those who, in one way or another, may be entrusted with the task of releasing its hold.[1]

It is certainly something of the same order that is involved in psychosis. This solidity, this mass seizure of the primitive signifying chain, is what forbids the dialectical opening that is manifested in the phenomenon of belief.

At the basis of paranoia itself, which nevertheless seems to us to be animated by belief, there reigns the phenomenon of

$$\mathrm{X} \qquad \Diamond \qquad \mathrm{S}_1$$

$$\mathrm{O.\ s, s', s'', s''',\ldots} \qquad\qquad \mathrm{S}\ (i\ (\mathrm{a, a', a'', a''',\ldots}))$$

$$\mathrm{S}_2$$

$\mathrm{O.\ s, s', s'', s''',\ldots}$: *series of meanings.*

$i(\mathrm{a, a', a'', a''',\ldots})$: *series of identifications.*

the *Unglauben.* This is not the *not believing in it,* but the absence of one of the terms of belief, of the term in which is designated the division of the subject. If, indeed, there is no belief that is full and entire, it is because there is no belief that does not presuppose in its basis that the ultimate dimension that it has to reveal is strictly correlative with the moment when its meaning is about to fade away.

There are all kinds of experiences that bear this out. One of them, concerning one of Casanova's misadventures, was told me in a very humourous way by Mannoni, who is with us today, and whose commentary on it is most amusing and revealing. At the end of a practical joke that succeeded to the point of moving the celestial forces and unleashing around him a storm which, in actual fact, terrified him, Casanova—who had been pursuing a cynical adventure with some silly goose

[1] *L'enfant arriéré et sa mère,* Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1964; *The Retarded Child and the Mother,* trans. Alan Sheridan; London, Tavistock, 1973; New York, Pantheon Books, 1973.

of a girl, who was the object of the prank, which gathered round him a whole circle of idiots—Casanova, seeing his practical joke begin to work, become real, was so deeply affected—in a surprisingly comic way for a Casanova who defied earth and heaven at the level of his desire—that he was struck with impotence, as if he had really been stopped at the sight of God's face.

Take another look at the text I was talking about earlier. In this text, for example, the *fort-da* is presented as something rather old hat—it is almost as if this individual were apologizing for mentioning once again this *fort-da*, which everyone had wiped his feet on. It is treated as an example of primal symbolization, while apologizing for mentioning it as if it were something that had now passed into the public domain. Well! This is just as big a mistake, for it is not from a simple opposition of the *fort* and the *da* that it derives the inaugural force that its repetitive essence explains. To say that it is simply a question for the subject of instituting himself in a function of mastery is idiotic. In the two phonemes are embodied the very mechanisms of alienation—which are expressed, paradoxical as it may seem, at the level of the *fort*.

There can be no *fort* without *da* and, one might say, without *Dasein*. But, contrary to the whole tendency of the phenomenology of *Daseinanalyse*, there is no *Dasein* with the *fort*. That is to say, there is no choice. If the young subject can practise this game of *fort-da*, it is precisely because he does not practise it at all, for no subject can grasp this radical articulation. He practises it with the help of a small bobbin, that is to say, with the *objet a*. The function of the exercise with this object refers to an alienation, and not to some supposed mastery, which is difficult to imagine being increased in an endless repetition, whereas the endless repetition that is in question reveals the radical vacillation of the subject.

3

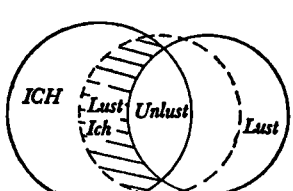
As usual, I must break off a train of thought in order to keep things within certain limits. However, I wish to say something, however briefly, about what I hope to discuss next time. I have illustrated the essential difference on the blackboard, in the form of two schemata.

In his text on the *Triebe* and the *Triebschicksale*, the drives and the vicissitudes of the drive, Freud places love at once at the level of the real, at the level of narcissism, at the level of the pleasure principle in its correlation with the reality principle, and deduces from this that the function of ambivalence is absolutely different from what occurs in the *Verkehrung*, in the circular movement. At the level at which love is in question, we have a schema, which, Freud tells us, is spread over two stages.

First there is an *Ich*, an *Ich* defined objectively by the combined functioning of the apparatus of the central nervous system and the condition of homeostasis, to preserve the tensions at the lowest possible level.

We can conceive that what there is outside this, if one can speak of an *outside*, is merely indifference. And, at this level, since it is a question of tension, indifference simply means non-existence. Freud tells us however that the rule of autoeroticism is not the non-existence of objects, but the functioning of objects solely in relation to pleasure. In the zone of indifference a distinction is made between that which brings *Lust* and that which brings *Unlust*, pleasure or displeasure. In any case, did not the ambiguity of the term *Lustprinzip* become obvious to everyone long ago?—since some people also write it *Unlustprinzip*.

The next problem, then, is how this stage is to be represented—how are homeostasis and pleasure to be articulated? For, the fact that something brings pleasure is still too much for the equilibrium. What is the closest and most accurate schema that can be given of this hypothetical *Ich*, in which is motivated the first construction of an apparatus functioning as a psyche? I propose the following.



The proof by the objet a

You see, indicated by the capital letters ICH, the *Ich* as apparatus tending to a certain homeostasis—which cannot be the lowest because that would be death and, indeed, this was envisaged by Freud in a second stage. As for *Lust*, this is not a field strictly speaking, it is always an object, an object of pleasure, which, as such, is mirrored in the ego. This mirror-image, this bi-univocal correlate of the object, is here the purified *Lust-Ich* of which Freud speaks, namely, that which, in the *Ich*, is satisfied with the object *qua Lust*.

Unlust, on the other hand, is what remains unassimilable, irreducible to the pleasure principle. It is out of this, Freud tells us, that the non-ego will be constituted. It is situated—note well—within the circle of the original ego, it bites into it, without the homeostatic functioning ever managing to re-absorb it. You see here the origin of what we shall find again later in the so-called functioning of the bad object.

You will notice especially that what structures the level of pleasure already gives the beginning of a possible articulation of alienation.

In the external zone, *Lust* says to itself, more or less—*Ah! the* Ich *is really something I must concern myself with*. And as soon as it does concern itself with it, the perfect tranquillity of the *Ich* disappears. The *Lust-Ich* stands out and, by the same token, *Unlust*, the foundation of the non-ego, falls back. This does not imply the disappearance of the apparatus, quite the contrary. You simply see being produced at a primitive level that breaking-off, that splitting-off, which I indicated in the dialectic of the subject with the Other, but here in the opposite direction.

This is expressed in the expression, *No good without evil, no good without pain*, which preserves in this good and in this evil a character of alternation, of a possible calibration, in which the articulation that I gave earlier of a dyad of signifiers will be reduced, and incorrectly. For, to return things at the level of good and evil, everyone knows that hedonism is unable to explain the mechanism of desire. This is because in passing over to the other register, to the alienating articulation, it is expressed quite differently. I almost blush to repeat here such catch-phrases as *beyond good and evil*, which idiots have been playing around with for so long without knowing exactly what they

were doing. Nevertheless, we must articulate what occurs at the level of the alienating articulation thus—no evil without there resulting some good from it, and when the good is there, there is no good that holds with evil.

That is why, by situating itself purely and simply in the register of pleasure, ethics fails and why, quite legitimately, Kant objects to it that the sovereign good can in no way be conceived as some small good carried to infinity. For there is no possible law to be given of what might be the good in objects.

The sovereign good, if this confusing term must be retained, can be found again only at the level of the law, and in *Kant avec Sade*[1] I showed that this means that, at the level of desire, passivity, narcissism and ambivalence are the characteristics that govern the dialectic of pleasure at the level of the table on the left. Its term is, strictly speaking, what is called identification.

It is the recognition of the drive that enables us to construct, with the greatest certainty, the functioning that I call the functioning of the division of the subject, or alienation. And how has the drive itself been recognized? It has been recognized in this that, far from the dialectic of what occurs in the subject's unconscious being able to be limited to the reference to the field of *Lust*, to the images of beneficent, favourable objects, we have found a certain type of objects which, in the final resort, can serve no function. These are the *objets a*—the breasts, the faeces, the gaze, the voice. It is in this new term that resides the point that introduces the dialectic of the subject *qua* subject of the unconscious.

Next time, I shall continue to develop the theme of the subject of the transference.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

M. SAFOUAN: *I always find it difficult to understand the difference between the object in the drive and the object in desire. Now we are asked to see the difference between the id and the object in drive—I'm lost.*

LACAN: Look, it's simply a question of terminology. It is very kind of you to ask a question, even if it springs from a certain confusion, because this may help everybody else.

There are a lot of very pleasant things that we think we

[1] *Écrits*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1966, pp. 765–90.

desire, in as much as we are healthy, but all we can say about them is this—we think we desire them. These things are on a quite transmissible level, it seems to me, but this is nothing to do with psycho-analytic theory.

The objects that are in the field of *Lust* have so fundamentally narcissistic a relation with the subject that in the last resort the mystery of the supposed regression of love in identification has its reason in the symmetry of these two fields, which I have designated as *Lust* and *Lust-Ich*. What one cannot keep outside, one always keeps an image of inside. Identification with the object of love is as silly as that. And I do not see why that should create so many difficulties, even to Freud himself. That, *mon cher*, is the object of love.

And, indeed, you see this very clearly when you speak of objects that do not have the individual value that attaches to the object of the drive. You then say, as Freud observed, *I love mutton stew*. It's precisely the same thing when you say, *I love Mrs X*, except that you say it to her, which makes all the difference. You say it to her for reasons that I will explain to you next time.

You love mutton stew. You're not sure you desiré it. Take the experience of the beautiful butcher's wife. She loves caviar, but she doesn't want any. That's why she desires it. You see, the object of desire is the cause of the desire, and this object that is the cause of desire is the object of the drive—that is to say, the object around which the drive turns. Since I am here in a dialogue with someone who has worked on my texts, I may express myself in some rather concentrated formulae. It is not that desire clings to the object of the drive—desire moves around it, in so far as it is agitated in the drive. But all desire is not necessarily agitated in the drive. There are empty desires or mad desires that are based on nothing more than the fact that the thing in question has been forbidden you. By virtue of the very fact that it has been forbidden you, you cannot do otherwise, for a time, than think about it. That, too, is desire. But whenever you are dealing with a good object, we designate it —it's a question of terminology, but a justified terminology —as an object of love. Next time, I will justify this by articulating the relation between love, the transference and desire.

10 June 1964

19

FROM INTERPRETATION TO THE TRANSFERENCE

Field of the ego and field of the Other · Metaphor · Interpretation is not open to all meanings · Indetermination and determination of the subject · Love, transference, desire · The slave · The ego ideal and the petit a

As far as vocabulary is concerned, what I am going to introduce today will, unfortunately, not be very familiar to you.

We shall be dealing with the most ordinary terms, such as identification, idealization, projection, introjection. These are not easy terms to handle and it is not made any easier by the fact that they already have meanings.

What could be more ordinary than to identify? It even seems like the essential operation of thought. To idealize, that too might prove useful when the psychologistic position becomes more experimental. To project and to introject are seen by some people as reciprocal terms. Yet I pointed out long ago —perhaps this fact should be realized—that one of these terms refers to a field in which the symbolic is dominant, the other to a field in which the imaginary is dominant, which must mean that, in a certain dimension at least, they never meet.

The intuitive use of these terms, on the basis of the feeling that one has of understanding them, and of understanding them in an isolated way as revealing their dimension in the common understanding, is obviously at the source of all the misapprehensions and confusions. It is the common fate of anything to do with discourse. In common discourse, he who speaks, at least in his native language, expresses himself with such ease, with such evident familiarity, that it is to the most common user of a language, to the uneducated man, that one has recourse if one wishes to know the correct usage of a term.

As soon as he wishes to speak, man is orientated in the fundamental topology of language, which is very different from the

simplistic realism in which he who thinks that he is at ease in the domain of science all too often confines himself. The natural use of such expressions—let us select some at random —as *in one's own heart* (*à part soi*), *for good or ill* (*bon gré mal gré*), *a business* (*une affaire*), which is different from *a thing to be done* (*une chose à faire*), implies the enveloping topology in which the subject recognizes himself when he speaks spontaneously.

If I can speak to psycho-analysts and try to locate to which implicit topology they are referring when using each of the terms I have just listed, it is obviously because, on the whole —however incapable they may often be, for lack of teaching, of articulating them—they frequently make adequate use of them, with the same spontaneity as the ordinary man uses ordinary speech. Of course, if they are determined to force the results of a case, and to understand where they do not understand, they will inevitably make a forced use of these results. In such instances, there will be few people to develop them.

Today, then, I'm referring to this tact in the psycho-analytic use of certain words, in order to be able to harmonize them with the evidence of a topology that I have already introduced here and which is, for example, embodied on the blackboard in the schema which shows you the field of the original *Ich*, the objectifiable *Ich*, in the last resort, in the nervous system, the *Ich* of the homeostatic field, in relation to which the field of *Lust*, of pleasure, is distinguished from the field of *Unlust*.

I have already pointed out that Freud distinguishes clearly between the level of the *Ich*, for example in the article on the *Triebe*, when stressing both that it is manifested as organized, which is a narcissistic sign, and that it is precisely to this extent that it is strictly articulated in the field of the real. In the real, it distinguishes, it privileges only that which is reflected in its field by an effect of *Lust*, as return to homeostasis.

But that which does not favour homeostasis and is maintained at all costs as *Unlust* bites still more into its field. Thus, what is of the order of *Unlust* is inscribed in the ego as non-ego, negation, splitting-off of the ego. The non-ego is not to be confused with what surrounds it, the vastness of the real. Non-ego is distinguised as a foreign body, *fremde Objekt*. It is there, situated in the lunula constituted by the two small Euler-type circles. Look at the blackboard. In the register of pleasure, then, we

can make for ourselves an objectifiable foundation, just as the scientist is foreign to the object whose functioning he observes.

But we are not simply that, and even if we were, we would also have to be the subject who thinks. And in so far as we are the subject who thinks, we are implicated in a quite different way, in as much as we depend on the field of the Other, which was there long before we came into the world, and whose circulating structures determine us as subjects.

It is a question, then, of knowing in what field the different things with which we deal in the field of analysis occur. Some occur at the level of the first field, of the *Ich*, and others—which should be distinguished from the first, because if one confuses them, one is lost—in the other field, the field of the Other. I have already shown you the essential articulations of this other field in the two functions that I have defined and articulated as alienation and separation.

The rest of my discourse today presupposes that you have thought about these two functions since I introduced them to you—in other words, that you have tried to make them function at different levels, to put them to the test.

I have already tried to embody certain consequences of the very particular *vel* that constitutes alienation—the placing in suspense of the subject, its vacillation, the collapse of meaning—in such familiar forms as *your money or your life*, or *freedom or death*, which are reproduced from a *being or meaning*—terms that I do not propose without some reluctance. I would ask you not to be too hasty in overloading them with meanings, for if you do you will only succeed in sinking them. So I feel that it is incumbent upon me to warn you of this at the outset.

Nevertheless, I am introducing here what my discourse will try to articulate, if possible, next year. It is a question of something that ought to be entitled *the subjective positions*. For all this preparation, concerning the fundamentals of analysis, should normally serve to show—since nothing can be properly centred except the position of the subject—what the articulation of analysis, on the basis of desire, makes it possible to illustrate about these fundamentals.

Subjective positions, then, of what? If I relied on what is available, I would say—*the subjective positions of existence*, with all the advantages that this term may possess from being already

much in the air. Unfortunately, this term would allow us a rigorous application only at the level of the neurotic—which, indeed, would be no small matter. That is why I will say *the subjective positions of being*. I am not committing myself in advance to my title, I may find a better one, but, in any case, that's what it's about.

I

Let us move on. In an article, to which I have already referred in order to correct what seemed to me its dangers, an attempt has been made, in an effort that is not without merit, to give form to certain notions I have introduced concerning the structure of language inherent in the unconscious. What emerged was a formula that consists, in short, in translating the formula that I gave of the metaphor. This formula was essential and usable, since it manifests the dimension in which the unconscious appears, in as much as the operation of signifying condensation is fundamental to it.

Of course, signifying condensation, with its metaphorical effect, can be observed quite openly in any poetic metaphor. That is why I took my example from *Booz endormi*. Go back to my article, *L'Instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient*, published in *La Psychanalyse*.[1] Of all poems, I have taken the one that, in French, may be said to echo in more people's memories than any other. Who did not learn when a child to recite *Booz endormi*! It isn't a bad example to be used by analysts, especially at the point I introduced it, that is to say, when introducing at the same time the paternal metaphor.

I won't go over again what I said, but my reason for introducing it now is obviously to show you what is contributed to the creation of meaning by the fact of designating the character who is in question, Booz—in that position both of divine father and instrument of God—by the metaphor—*Sa gerbe n'était pas avare ni haineuse* ('His sheaf was neither miserly nor spiteful'). The dimension of meaning opened up by this metaphor is nothing less than what appears to us in the final image, that of the golden sickle carelessly thrown into the field of

[1] And republished in *Écrits*, *op. cit.* A selection of the *Écrits*, including this article, appears in *Écrits: a selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan; London, Tavistock Publications; New York, Norton; 1977.

stars. It is the very dimension hidden in this poem. More hidden than you think, because it is not enough to refer to the sickle which Jupiter used to flood the world with the blood of Chronos. The dimension of castration that is involved here is, in the Biblical perspective, of a quite different order, and is at work there, present with all the echoes of history, including Booz's invocations to the Lord—*Comment surgira-t-il de moi, vieil homme, une descendance?* (How will there ever be offspring for such an old man as I.)

I don't know whether you have noticed—you would have been much more capable of doing so if this year I had done the seminar I intended doing on the Names-of-the-Father—but the Lord with the unpronounceable name is precisely he who sends children to barren women and old men. The fundamentally transbiological character of paternity, introduced by

$$F\left(\frac{S'}{S}\right)S \cong S(+)s \qquad \frac{S'}{S} \times \frac{S}{s} \rightarrow \frac{\frac{S'}{s}}{\frac{S}{S}}$$

Formula of the metaphor *Transformed formula in the article in question*

the tradition of the destiny of the chosen people, has something that is originally repressed there, and which always re-emerges in the ambiguity of lameness, the impediment and the symptom, of non-encounter, *dustuchia*, with the meaning that remains hidden.

This is a dimension that we find again and again and which, if we wish to formalize it, as the author I referred to just now tried to do, deserves to be handled with more prudence than is in fact the case—relying, in a way, on the formalism of fraction that results from marking the link that exists between the signifier and the signified by an intermediary bar. It is not absolutely illegitimate to consider that, at certain moments, this bar marks, in the relation of the signifier to the signified, the indication of a value that is strictly what is expressed in its use as fraction in the mathematical sense of the term. But, of course, it is not the only use. There is between the signifier and the signified, another relation which is that of the effect of meaning. Precisely at the point at which it is a question, in

metaphor, of marking the effect of meaning, one can absolutely not, therefore, without taking certain precautions, and in as bold a way as has been done, manipulate this bar in a fractional transformation—which one could do if it were a question of a relation of proportion.

When it is a question of fractions, one may transform the product

$$\frac{A}{B} \times \frac{C}{D}$$ into a four-storeyed formula, as in the following: $$\frac{\frac{A}{B}}{\frac{D}{C}}.$$

It was thought to be very clever to do this with metaphor, arguing from the following—to that which carries the weight, in the unconscious, of an articulation of the last signifier to embody the metaphor with the new meaning created by its use, should correspond some kind of pinning out, from one to the other, of two signifiers in the unconscious.

Such a formula is quite definitely unsatisfactory. First, because one ought to know that there can be no relations between the signifier and itself, the peculiarity of the signifier being the fact that it is unable to signify itself, without producing some error in logic.

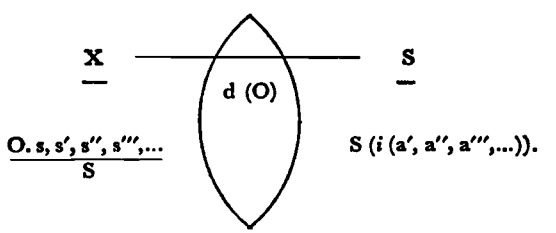
To be convinced of this, one has only to refer to the antinomies that have intervened as soon as an attempt has been made to produce an exhaustive logical formulation of mathematics. The catalogue of catalogues that do not contain themselves is obviously not the same catalogue that does not contain itself—when it is the one that is introduced in the definition and when it is the one that will be inscribed in the catalogue.

It is so much easier to realize that what is happening is that a substitutive signifier has been put in the place of another signifier to constitute the effect of metaphor. It refers the signifier that it has usurped elsewhere. If, in fact, one wished to preserve the possibility of a handling of a fractional type, one would place the signifier that has disappeared, the repressed signifier, below the principal bar, in the denominator, *unterdrückt*.

Consequently, it is false to say, as has been said, that interpretation is open to all meanings under the pretext that it is a

question only of the connection of a signifier to a signifier, and consequently of an uncontrollable connection. Interpretation is not open to any meaning. This would be to concede to those who rise up against the character of uncertainty in analytic interpretation that, in effect, all interpretations are possible, which is patently absurd. The fact that I have said that the effect of interpretation is to isolate in the subject a kernel, a *kern*, to use Freud's own term, of *non-sense*, does not mean that interpretation is in itself nonsense.

Interpretation is a signification that is not just any signification. It comes here in the place of the *s* and reverses the relation by which the signifier has the effect, in language, of the signified. It has the effect of bringing out an irreducible signifier. One must interpret at the level of the *s*, which is not open to all



meanings, which cannot be just anything, which is a signification, though no doubt only an approximate one. What is there is rich and complex, when it is a question of the unconscious of the subject, and intended to bring out irreducible, *non-sensical*—composed of non-meanings—signifying elements. In this same article, Leclaire's work illustrates particularly well the crossing of significant interpretation towards signifying non-sense, when he proposes, on the subject of his obsessional neurotic patient, the so-called *Poordjeli* formula, which links the two syllables of the word *licorne* (unicorn), thus enabling him to introduce into his sequence a whole chain in which his desire is animated. Indeed, you will see in what he will publish later that things go much further still.

Interpretation is not open to all meanings. It is not just any interpretation. It is a significant interpretation, one that must not be missed. This does not mean that it is not this signification that is essential to the advent of the subject. What is essential is

that he should see, beyond this signification, to what signifier —to what irreducible, traumatic, non-meaning—he is, as a subject, subjected.

This enables us to conceive what is materialized in the experience. I would ask you to take up one of Freud's great psycho-analytic cases, the greatest of all, the most sensational —because one sees in it, more clearly than anywhere else, where the problem of the conversion of phantasy and reality converge, namely, in something irreducible, *non-sensical*, that functions as an originally repressed signifier—I mean the case of the Wolf Man. In *The Wolf Man*, I would say, to give you the thread that will guide you through your reading, that the sudden appearance of the wolves in the window in the dream plays the function of the *s*, as representative of the loss of the subject.

It is not only that the subject is fascinated by the sight of these wolves, which number seven, and which, in fact, in his drawing of them perched on the tree number only five. It is that their fascinated gaze is the subject himself.

What does the whole case show? It shows that at each stage in the life of the subject, something always arrived to reshape the value of the determining index represented by this original signifier. Thus the dialectic of the subject's desire as constituting itself from the desire of the Other is correctly grasped. Remember the adventure of the father, the sister, the mother and the servant-woman Groucha. So many different stages that enrich the unconscious desire of the subject with something that is to be put, as signification constituted in the relation to the desire of the Other, in the numerator.

Note what happens then. I would ask you to consider the logical necessity of that moment in which the subject as X can be constituted only from the *Urverdrängung*, from the necessary fall of this first signifier. He is constituted around the *Urverdrängung*, but he cannot substitute anything for it as such —since this would require the representation of one signifier for another, whereas here there is only one, the first. In this X, we must consider two sides—that constituent moment that sees the collapse of significance, which we articulate in a place in its function at the level of the unconscious, but also the return effect, which operates from this relation that may be

conceived on the basis of the fraction. It must be introduced only with prudence, but it is well indicated for us by the effects of language.

Everyone knows that if zero appears in the denominator, the value of the fraction no longer has meaning, but assumes by convention what mathematicians call an infinite value. In a way, this is one of the stages in the constitution of the subject. In so far as the primary signifier is pure non-sense, it becomes the bearer of the infinitization of the value of the subject, not open to all meanings, but abolishing them all, which is different. This explains why I have been unable to deal with the relation of alienation without introducing the word freedom. What, in effect, grounds, in the meaning and radical non-meaning of the subject, the function of freedom, is strictly speaking this signifier that kills all meanings.

This is why it is untrue to say that the signifier in the unconscious is open to all meanings. It constitutes the subject in his freedom in relation to all meanings, but this does not mean that it is not determined in it. For, in the numerator, in the place of the zero, the things that are inscribed are significations, dialectized significations in the relation of the desire of the Other, and they give a particular value to the relation of the subject to the unconscious.

It will be important, in what will follow in my seminar next year, to show how the experience of analysis forces us to seek a kind of formalization such that the mediation of this infinity of the subject with the finiteness of desire may occur only through the intervention of what Kant, on his entry into the gravitation of what is called philosophical thinking, introduced with so much freshness in the term *negative quantities*.

The freshness is important here, of course, because there is a difference between forcing philosophers to reflect on the fact that minus one (-1) is not zero and the fact that people soon lose interest in such talk and cease to listen. Nevertheless—and this is the only use of the reference to philosophical articulation—men survive only by being at each moment so forgetful of all their conquests, I am speaking of their subjective conquests. Of course, from the moment they forget them, they are nevertheless conquered, but it is rather they who are conquered by the effects of these conquests. And the fact of being con-

quered by something that one does not know sometimes has formidable consequences, the first of which is confusion.

Negative quantity, then, is the term that we shall find to designate one of the supports of what is called the castration complex, namely, the negative effect in which the phallus object enters into it.

This is no more than a foretaste, but I thought it worth saying.

2

However, we must move on to what is our main topic, namely, the transference. How can we take up the thread again? The transference is unthinkable unless one sets out from the subject who is supposed to know.

You will now have a better idea of what he is supposed to know. He is supposed to know that from which no one can escape, as soon as he formulates it—quite simply, signification.

Signification implies, of course—and that is why I first brought out the dimension of his desire—that he cannot refuse it.

This privileged point is the only one by which we can recognize the character of an absolute point with no knowledge. It is absolute precisely by virtue of being in no way knowledge, but the point of attachment that links his very desire to the resolution of that which is to be revealed.

The subject comes into play on the basis of this fundamental support—the subject is supposed to know, simply by virtue of being a subject of desire. Now what actually happens? What happens is what is called in its most common appearance the *transference effect.* This effect is love. It is clear that, like all love, it can be mapped, as Freud shows, only in the field of narcissism. To love is, essentially, to wish to be loved.

What emerges in the transference effect is opposed to revelation. Love intervenes in its function, revealed here as essential, in its function as deception. Love, no doubt, is a transference effect, but it is its resistance side. We are linked together in awaiting this transference effect in order to be able to interpret, and at the same time, we know that it closes the subject off from the effect of our interpretation. The alienation effect, in which is articulated, in the relation of the subject to the Other, the effect that we are, is here absolutely manifest.

We should point out here, then, something that is always avoided, which Freud articulates, and which is not an excuse, but the reason of the transference, namely, that nothing can be attained *in absentia, in effigie.* This means that the transference is not, of its nature, the shadow of something that was once alive. On the contrary, the subject, in so far as he is subjected to the desire of the analyst, desires to betray him for this subjection, by making the analyst love him, by offering of himself that essential duplicity that is love. The transference effect is that effect of deception in so far as it is repeated in the present here and now.

It is repetition of that which passed for such only because it possesses the same form. It is not ectopia. It is not a shadow of the former deceptions of love. It is isolation in the actuality of its pure functioning as deception.

That is why we can say that what is there, behind the love known as transference, is the affirmation of the link between the desire of the analyst and the desire of the patient. This is what Freud expressed in a kind of rapid sleight of hand when he said—*after all, it is only the desire of the patient*—this should reassure one's colleagues. It is the patient's desire, yes, but in its meeting with the analyst's desire.

I will not say that I have not yet named the analyst's desire, for how can one name a desire? One circumscribes a desire. There are many things in history that provide us with tracks and traces here.

Is it not strange, that echo that we found—though, of course, we are not going to stick our noses into this for long—between the ethic of analysis and the Stoic ethic? What does the Stoic ethic really amount to other than the recognition of the absolute authority of the desire of the Other, that *Thy will be done!* that is taken up again in the Christian register? But will I ever have the time to show you this?

We are solicited by a more radical articulation. The problem may be posed of the relation between the master's desire and the slave. Hegel declares it to be solved—this is not so at all.

Since I am ready to take my leave of you for this year—next time will be my last lecture—may I throw out a few points that may give you some idea of the direction in which we will travel later.

If it is true that the master situates himself only in an original relation to the assumption of death, I think that it is very difficult to attribute to him an apprehensible relation to desire. I'm speaking of the master in Hegel, not of the master of antiquity, of which we have one portrait, for example, in that of Alcibiades, whose relation to desire is visible enough. He asks Socrates for something, without knowing what it is, but which he calls *agalma*. Some of you will know the use that I made of this term some time ago. I will go back to this *agalma*, this mystery, which, in the mist that clouds Alcibiades' vision, represents something beyond all good.

How can one see anything other than a first adumbration of the technique of the mapping of the transference in the fact that Socrates replies to him, not what he said to him when he was young, *Look to your soul*, but something more suited to the florid, hardened man he now is, *Look to your desire, look to your onions*. As it happens, it is the height of irony on Plato's part to have embodied these *onions* in a man who is so futile and absurd, almost a buffoon. I think I was the first to remark that the lines Plato puts in his mouth concerning the nature of love are an indication of just such futility, verging on buffoonery, which makes of Agathon perhaps the least likely object to attract the desire of a master. Furthermore, the fact that he is called Agathon, that is to say, the name to which Plato gave the supreme value, adds an extra, perhaps involuntary, but incontestable, note of irony.

Thus, as soon as it comes into play in the story, the desire of the master seems, of its very nature, to be the most inappropriate term. On the other hand, when Socrates wishes to obtain his own answer, it is to the slave, who has no right to declare his own desire, that he turns. He can always be sure of obtaining the right reply from *him*. *The voice of reason is low*, Freud says somewhere, *but it always says the same thing*. I don't wish to draw a false parallel to the effect that Freud says exactly the same thing about unconscious desire. Its voice, too, is low, but its insistence is indestructible. Perhaps there is a relation between the two. It is in the direction of some kind of kinship that we should turn our eyes to the slave, when it is a question of mapping what the analyst's desire is.

3

But I would not like to leave you today without introducing, for next time, two remarks, two remarks that are grounded in the mapping that Freud made of the function of identification.

There are enigmas in identification, even for Freud himself. He seems to be surprised that the regression of love should take place so easily in terms of identification—even when, in texts written about the same time, he demonstrates that love and identification have an equivalence in a certain register and that narcissism and over-estimation of the object, *Verliebtheit*, is exactly the same thing in love.

At this point, Freud pauses—I would ask you to find for yourselves in the text the various *clues*, as the English say, the traces, the marks left on the trail. I think this is because he had not sufficiently distinguished something.

In the chapter of *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse* devoted to identification, I stressed the second form of identification, in order to map in it, and to detach from it, the *einziger Zug*, the single stroke, the foundation, the kernel of the ego ideal. What is this single stroke? Is it a privileged object in the field of *Lust*? No.

The single stroke is not in the first field of narcissistic identification, to which Freud relates the first form of identification —which, very curiously indeed, he embodies in a sort of function, a sort of primal model which the father assumes, anterior even to the libidinous investment on the mother —a mythical stage, certainly. The single stroke, in so far as the subject clings to it, is in the field of desire, which cannot in any sense be constituted other than in the reign of the signifier, other than at the level in which there is a relation of the subject to the Other. It is the field of the Other that determines the function of the single stroke, in so far as it is from it that a major stage of identification is established in the topography then developed by Freud—namely, idealization, the ego ideal. I showed you the traces of this first signifier on the primitive bone on which the hunter makes a notch and counts the number of times he gets his target.

It is in the intersection by which the single signifier functions here in the field of *Lust*, that is to say, in the field of primary

narcissistic identification, that is to be found the essential mainspring of the effects of the ego ideal. I have described elsewhere the sight in the mirror of the ego ideal, of that being that he first saw appearing in the form of the parent holding him up before the mirror. By clinging to the reference-point of him who looks at him in a mirror, the subject sees appearing, not his ego ideal, but his ideal ego, that point at which he desires to gratify himself in himself.

This is the function, the mainspring, the effective instrument constituted by the ego ideal. Not so long ago, a little girl said to me sweetly that it was about time somebody began to look after her so that she might seem lovable to herself. In saying this, she provided the innocent admission of the mainspring that comes into play in the first stage of the transference. The subject has a relation with his analyst the centre of which is at the level of the privileged signifier known as the ego ideal, in so far as from there he will feel himself both satisfactory and loved.

But there is another function, which institutes an identification of a strangely different kind, and which is introduced by the process of separation.

It is a question of this privileged object, discovered by analysis, of that object whose very reality is purely topological, of that object around which the drive moves, of that object that rises in a bump, like the wooden darning egg in the material which, in analysis, you are darning—the *objet a.*

This object supports that which, in the drive, is defined and specified by the fact that the coming into play of the signifier in the life of man enables him to bring out the meaning of sex. Namely, that for man, because he knows the signifiers, sex and its significations are always capable of making present the presence of death.

The distinction between the life drive and the death drive is true in as much as it manifests two aspects of the drive. But this is so only on condition that one sees all the sexual drives as articulated at the level of significations in the unconscious, in as much as what they bring out is death—death as signifier and nothing but signifier, for can it be said that there is a being-for-death? In what conditions, in what determinism, can death, the signifier, spring fully armed into treatment? This can be understood only by our way of articulating the relations.

Through the function of the *objet a*, the subject separates himself off, ceases to be linked to the vacillation of being, in the sense that it forms the essence of alienation. This function has been sufficiently indicated to us, for long enough, by enough traces. I have shown at one time or another that it is impossible to conceive of the phenomenology of verbal hallucination if we do not understand what the very term that we use to designate it means—that is to say, voices.

It is in so far as the object of the voice is present in it that the *percipiens* is present in it. Verbal hallucination is not a false *perceptum*, it is a deviated *percipiens*. The subject is immanent in his verbal hallucination. This possibility is there, which should make us ask the question as to what we are trying to achieve in analysis, concerning the accommodation of the *percipiens*.

Up till the advent of psycho-analysis, the path of knowledge was always traced in that of a purification of the subject, of the *percipiens*. Well! We would now say that we base the assurance of the subject in his encounter with the filth that may support him, with the *petit a* of which it would not be untrue to say that its presence is necessary.

Take Socrates. The inflexible purity of Socrates and his *atopia* are correlative. Intervening, at every moment, there is the demonic voice.

Could one maintain that the voice that guides Socrates is not Socrates himself? The relation between Socrates and his voice is no doubt an enigma, which indeed, tempted psychographers on several occasions in the early nineteenth century, and it is already a great merit on their part that they dared to broach the matter since nowadays one daren't touch it with a barge-pole.

It is a new trace to be interrogated in order to know what we mean when we speak of the subject of perception. Don't make me out to say what I'm not saying—the analyst must not hear voices. All the same, read a book by an analyst of good vintage, a Theodor Reik, a direct pupil and familiar of Freud, *Listening with the Third-Ear*—in actual fact, I do not approve of the formula, as if two were not enough to be deaf with. But he maintains that this third ear helps him to hear some voice or other that speaks to him in order to warn him of deceptions—he belongs to the good old days, the heroic days, when one

was able to hear what was being said behind the deception of the patient.

Certainly, we have learnt a lot since then, because we know how to recognize in these circumventions, these cleavages, the *objet a*, which certainly has still scarcely emerged.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

P. KAUFMANN: *Is there not some kind of connection between what you have said again, on the subject of Booz and Theodore Reik, and what you have said, elsewhere, concerning the father at the beginning of chapter seven of* The Interpretation of Dreams*?*

LACAN: It's quite clear, he is asleep—that's all there is to it. He is asleep so that we should sleep too, that is to say, so that we should understand only what there is to be understood.

I wanted to bring in the Jewish tradition, in order to take things up where Freud left them, because after all it is not for nothing that the pen fell from Freud's hands when he had reached the division of the subject, and that just previously he had written, in *Moses and Monotheism*, one of the most radical critiques of the Jewish tradition. However historically contestable his evidence or even his approach may be, the fact remains that to introduce into the heart of Jewish history the absolutely obvious radical distinction of the prophetic tradition in relation to another message, was certainly—as he seemed to be aware, or in any case as he wrote it—to make of the *collusion with truth* a function essential to our operation as analysts. And we can rely on truth, devote ourselves to it only in so far as we dethrone ourselves from a collusion with truth.

Since we are, in a sense, among friends here, and since, after all, there is more than one person here who is not completely out of touch with what is happening inside the psycho-analytic community, I can tell you something amusing. This morning I was listening to someone telling me about his life, of his disappointments, of all the inconveniences to be found in a normal scientific career, of being a director of studies, or in charge of a research group, or laboratory boss of a senior researcher whose ideas you must take account of if you wish to advance in your career. Such a situation, of course, is particularly detrimental from the point of view of the development of scientific thought. Well! I was thinking about what this person was saying and

came to the conclusion that there is one field, that of psycho-analysis, in which, in fact—if anywhere—the subject is there only to seek his qualification for free search governed by a demand for truth, and may be regarded as authorized in this search only from the moment that he operates freely in it. Well! By a sort of strange effect of vertigo, it is in this very area of psycho-analysis that they are trying to reconstruct, to the maximum degree possible, the hierarchy of posts and titles to be found in the university, and to make their qualification to practise dependent on someone who is already qualified. This even goes further. When they have found their way, their mode of thinking, their very way of moving in the analytic field, on the basis of the teaching of a certain individual, it is through others, whom they regard as fools, that they will try to find the authorization, the express qualification that they are actually capable of practising analysis. I find that this is one more illustration of the difference and conjunctions, of the ambiguities, between the analytic field and the university field. If it is said that the analysts themselves form part of the problem of the unconscious, does it not strike you that we have here a fine illustration of it, and a good opportunity to analyse?

17 June 1964

To Conclude

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20

IN YOU MORE THAN YOU

I love you, but, because inexplicably I love in you something more than you—the objet petit a*—I mutilate you*

It now remains for me to conclude, for this year, the series of seminars that I was forced to hold here owing to certain circumstances that have introduced into the course of my teaching something which, after all, is accounted for by one of the fundamental notions that I have been examining here—that of *dustuchia*, misfortune.

So I had to postpone dealing with a subject that I was preparing to embark on with those who were following my course on the Names-of-the-father, and to return here, before a rather different audience, to the question that has been at issue from the outset of this teaching, my teaching, namely, *what is the order of truth that our praxis engenders?*

What makes us certain of our practice is something whose basic concepts I think I have outlined for you here, under the four headings of the unconscious, repetition, the transference and the drive—a sketch of which, as you have seen, I was led to include in my exploration of the transference.

Has that which our praxis engenders the right to map out for itself necessities, even contradictory ones, from the standpoint of truth? This question may be transposed in the esoteric formula: *how can we be sure that we are not imposters?*

I

It would not be too much to say that, in the putting in question of analysis, in so far as it is always in suspense, not only in the popular mind, but still more in the most private feelings of each psycho-analyst, imposture looms overhead—as a contained, excluded, ambiguous presence against which the psycho-analyst barricades himself with a number of ceremonies, forms and rituals.

If I am stressing the term imposture in my talk today, it is because it is certainly the first step by which one might approach the relation of psycho-analysis with religion and, through this, with science.

I would draw your attention here to a formula that had considerable historical value in the eighteenth century, when enlightenment man, who was also the man of pleasure, put in question religion as a fundamental imposture. I do not need to point out to you the road we have travelled since then. Who, nowadays, would dream of reducing the concerns of religion to such simplistic terms? It can be said that, throughout the world, and even where the struggle against it may be at its sharpest, religion nowadays enjoys universal respect.

This question also involves that of belief, which is presented by us in terms that are no doubt less simplistic. We have the practice of the fundamental alienation in which all belief is sustained, in that double subjective term by which, at the very moment when the signification of belief seems most profoundly to vanish, the being of the subject is revealed from what was strictly speaking the reality of that belief. It is not enough to overcome superstition, as one says, for its effects in the human being to be attenuated.

It is certainly this that makes it difficult for us to recognize what, in the sixteenth century, could have been the status of what was, strictly speaking, disbelief. In this sphere, we know that we are, in our time, incomparably and paradoxically disarmed. Our bulwark, the only one we have, and the religious have felt this in a quite admirable way, is, as Lamennais remarked on the subject of religion, that indifference that takes as its status precisely the position of science.

It is in as much as science elides, eludes, divides up a field determined in the dialectic of the alienation of the subject, it is in as much as science is situated at the precise point that I have defined as the point of separation, that it may also sustain the mode of existence of the scientist, of the man of science. This man of science could be approached in his style, his morals, his mode of discourse, in the way in which, through a series of precautions, he protects himself from a number of questions concerning the very status of the science of which he is the servant. This is one of the most important problems from the

social point of view—less important, however, than that of the status to be given to the corpus of acquired scientific knowledge.

We will not appreciate the full implication of this corpus of science if we do not recognize that it is, in the subjective relation, the equivalent of what I have called here the *objet petit a.*

The ambiguity that persists in the question as to what in psycho-analysis is or is not reducible to science can be explained if we realize to what extent analysis implies, in effect, a beyond of science—in the modern sense of Science *itself,* whose status in the Cartesian departure I have tried to demonstrate. If measured against science understood in this sense, psycho-analysis might be reduced to the rank of something with whose forms and history it so often suggests an analogy—namely, a church and, therefore, a religion.

The only way to approach this problem is on the basis of the following—that, among the modes at man's disposal for posing the question of his existence in the world, and beyond, religion, as a mode of subsistence of the subject who interrogates himself, is to be distinguished by a dimension that is proper to it, and which is struck by a kind of oblivion. In every religion that deserves the name, there is in fact an essential dimension reserved for something operational, known as a sacrament.

Ask the faithful, or even the priests, what differentiates confirmation from baptism—for, indeed, if it is a sacrament, if it operates, it operates on something. Where it washes away sins, where it renews a certain pact—I would put a question-mark here—Is it a pact? Is it something else? What passes through this dimension?—in all the answers we get, we will always find this mark, by which is invoked the beyond of religion, operational and magical. We cannot evoke this operational dimension without realizing that within religion, and for strictly defined reasons—the separation and impotence of our reason, our finitude—it is this that is marked with oblivion.

It is in as much as psycho-analysis, in relation to the foundation of its status, finds itself in some way struck by a similar oblivion, that it manages to rediscover itself, marked, in ceremony, with what I will call the same empty face.

But psycho-analysis is not a religion. It proceeds from the same status as Science *itself.* It is engaged in the central lack in which the subject experiences himself as desire. It even has

a medial, chance status, in the gap opened up at the centre of the dialectic of the subject and the Other. It has nothing to forget, for it implies no recognition of any substance on which it claims to operate, even that of sexuality.

On sexuality, in fact, it operates very little. It teaches us nothing new about the operation of sex. Not even a tiny piece of erotological technique has emerged from it, and there is more of this kind of thing to be found in any of the books that are constantly being reprinted, and which come to us from the depths of an Arab, Hindu, or Chinese tradition, even sometimes from our own. Psycho-analysis touches on sexuality only in as much as, in the form of the drive, it manifests itself in the defile of the signifier, in which is constituted the dialectic of the subject in the double stage of alienation and separation. Analysis has not kept, on the field of sexuality, what one might, mistakenly, have expected of it by way of promises—it has not kept such promises because it does not have to keep them. This is not its terrain.

On the other hand, in its own terrain, it is distinguished by such an extraordinary capacity for inconsequence and confusion that, sometime in the not too distant future, its entire literature will, I assure you, be classified among the works of what are known as the *fous littéraires*.

Certainly, one cannot but be struck by the extent to which an analyst may err in the correct interpretation of the very facts he advances—and recently I was struck once again on reading a book like *Basic Neurosis*, a book that is nevertheless so winning in the smart way it gathers together a number of very different observations that can certainly be borne out in practice. The particular fact that Bergler contributes concerning the function of the breast is truly wasted in a pointless discussion, of a rather fashionable kind, concerning the superiority of man over woman, and of woman over man, that is to say, concerning things which, by arousing the greatest possible emotion, are also, as far as the main question is concerned, what is of least interest.

Today, I must stress what, in the psycho-analytic movement, is to be referred to the function of what I isolate as the *objet a* —and it is not for nothing that I referred here to Bergler's book, which, because it lacks an adequate mapping of the

proper function of the part-object, and of what is signified, for example, by the breast, which he deals with at length, is doomed although interesting in itself, to an aimless development that leads nowhere.

2

The *objet a* is that object which, in actual experience, in the operation and process sustained by the transference, is signalled to us by a special status.

One constantly has on one's lips, without quite knowing what one means, the term *the liquidation* of the transference. What, in fact, does the term mean? Exactly what assets are being liquidated? Or is it a question of some kind of operation in an alembic? Is it a question of— *It must go somewhere and empty itself somewhere*? If the transference is the enaction of the unconscious, does one mean that the transference might be a means of liquidating the unconscious? Do we no longer have any unconscious after an analysis? Or is it, to take up what I said before, the subject who is supposed to know who must be liquidated as such?

It would be odd all the same if this subject who is supposed to know, supposed to know something about you, and who, in fact, knows nothing, should be regarded as liquidated, at the very moment when, at the end of the analysis, he begins at last, about you at least, to know something. It is therefore at the moment what he takes on most substance, that the subject who is supposed to know ought to be supposed to have been vaporized. It can only be a question, then, if the term liquidation has any meaning, of the permanent liquidation of that deception by which the transference tends to be exercised in the direction of the closing up of the unconscious. I have already explained to you how it works, by referring to it the narcissistic relation by which the subject becomes an object worthy of love. From his reference to him who must love him, he tries to induce the Other into a mirage relation in which he convinces him of being worthy of love.

Freud designates for us its natural culmination in the function known as identification. The identification in question is not —and Freud articulates it with great subtlety, I would ask you to go back and read the two chapters in *Group Psychology and the*

Analysis of the Ego that I referred to last time, the first is called *Identification* and the second *Hypnosis and the State of being in Love* —the identification in question is not specular, immediate identification. It is its support. It supports the perspective chosen by the subject in the field of the Other, from which specular identification may be seen in a satisfactory light. The point of the ego ideal is that from which the subject will see himself, as one says, *as others see him*—which will enable him to support himself in a dual situation that is satisfactory for him from the point of view of love.

As a specular mirage, love is essentially deception. It is situated in the field established at the level of the pleasure reference, of that sole signifier necessary to introduce a perspective centred on the Ideal point, capital I, placed somewhere in the Other, from which the Other sees me, in the form I like to be seen.

Now, in this very convergence to which analysis is called by the element of deception that there is in the transference, something is encountered that is paradoxical— the discovery of the analyst. This discovery is understandable only at the other level, the level at which we have situated the relation of alienation.

This paradoxical, unique, specified object we call the *objet a*. I have no wish to rehash the whole thing again, but I will present it for you in a more syncopated way, stressing that the analysand says to his partner, to the analyst, what amounts to this—*I love you, but, because inexplicably I love in you something more than you—the* objet petit a—*I mutilate you.*

This is the meaning of that breast-complex, that *mammal-complex*, whose relation to the oral drive Bergler saw so clearly, except that the orality in question has nothing to do with food, and that the whole stress is placed on this effect of mutilation.

I give myself to you, the patient says again, *but this gift of my person*—as they say—*Oh, mystery! is changed inexplicably into a gift of shit*—a term that is also essential to our experience.

When this swerve is achieved, at the conclusion of the interpretative elucidation, we are able to understand retroactively that vertigo, for example, of the white page, which, for a particular character, who is gifted but stuck at the limits of the psychotic, is like the centre of the symptomatic barrage which blocks off for him every access to the Other. If, quite literally,

he cannot touch this white page at which his ineffable intellectual effusions come to a stop, it is because he apprehends it only as a piece of lavatory paper.

How shall I describe for you the effect of this presence of the *objet a*, rediscovered always and everywhere, in the movement of the transference? I do not have much time today, but I will make use, by way of illustration, of a short fable, an apologue, which I happened to embark on the other day, with a smaller group of listeners. I will provide an end for it, so that if I apologize to them for repeating myself, they will see that what follows at least is new.

What happens when the subject begins to speak to the analyst?—to the analyst, that is to say, to the subject who is supposed to know, but of whom it is certain that he still knows nothing. It is to him that is offered something that will first, necessarily, take the form of demand. Everyone knows that it is this that has orientated all thinking on analysis in the direction of a recognition of the function of frustration. But what does the subject demand? That is the whole question, for the subject knows very well that, whatever his appetites may be, whatever his needs may be, none of them will find satisfaction in analysis, and that the most he can expect of it is to organize his menu.

In the fable I read, when I was a child, in these early forms of strip cartoon, the poor beggar at the restaurant door feasted himself on the smell of the roasting meat. On this occasion, the smell is the menu, that is to say, signifiers, since we are concerned with speech only. Well! There is this complication—and this is my fable—that the menu is written in Chinese, so the first step is to order a translation from the *patronne*. She translates—imperial pâté, spring rolls, etc. etc. It may well be, if it is the first time that you have come to a Chinese restaurant, that the translation does not tell you much more than the original, and in the end you say to the *patronne—Recommend something*. This means: *You should know what I desire in all this.*

But is so paradoxical a situation supposed, in the final resort, to end there? At this point, when you abdicate your choice to some divination of the *patronne*, whose importance you have exaggerated out of all proportion, would it not be more appropriate, if you felt like it, and if the opportunity presented itself,

to tickle her tits a bit? For one goes to a Chinese restaurant not only to eat, but to eat in the dimensions of the exotic. If my fable means anything, it is in as much as alimentary desire has another meaning than alimentation. It is here the support and symbol of the sexual dimension, which is the only one to be rejected by the psyche. The drive in its relation to the part-object is subjacent here.

Well! Paradoxical, not to say free and easy, as this little apologue may seem, it is nevertheless precisely what is at issue in the reality of analysis. It is not enough that the analyst should support the function of Tiresias. He must also, as Apollinaire tells us, have breasts. I mean that the operation and manipulation of the transference are to be regulated in a way that maintains a distance between the point at which the subject sees himself as lovable—and that other point where the subject sees himself caused as a lack by *a*, and where *a* fills the gap constituted by the inaugural division of the subject.

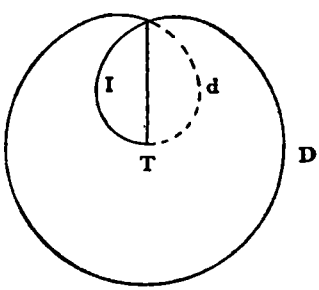
The *petit a* never crosses this gap. Recollect what we learned about the gaze, the most characteristic term for apprehending the proper function of the *objet a*. This *a* is presented precisely, in the field of the mirage of the narcissistic function of desire, as the object that cannot be swallowed, as it were, which remains stuck in the gullet of the signifier. It is at this point of lack that the subject has to recognize himself.

It is for this reason that the function of the transference may be topologized in the form that I have already produced in my seminar on *Identification*—namely, the form that I have called on occasion the *internal eight*, that double curve that you see on the blackboard folding back upon itself, and whose essential property is that each of its halves, following one another, comes back to back at each point with the preceding half. Just suppose that a particular half of the curve is unfolded, then you will see it cover up the other.

That is not all. As it is a question here of a plane defined by the cut, you need only take a sheet of paper to get, with the help of a few small collages, an exact idea of the way in which what I am going to tell you may be conceived. It is very easy to imagine that, in short, the lobe constituted by this surface at its point of return covers another lobe, the two constituting themselves by a form of rim. Note that this in no way implies any

contradiction, even in the most ordinary space—except that, in order to grasp its extent, one must abstract oneself from three-dimensional space, since it is a question here only of a topological reality that is limited to the function of a surface. You can thus conceive quite easily in the three dimensions that one of the parts of the plane, at the moment at which the other, by its rim, returns upon it, determines there a sort of intersection.

This intersection has a meaning outside our space. It is structurally definable, without reference to the three dimensions, by a certain relation of the surface to itself, in so far as, returning upon itself, it crosses itself at a point no doubt to be



D: *line of demand.*

I: *line of 'identification' intersection.*

T: *point of the transference.*

d: *desire.*

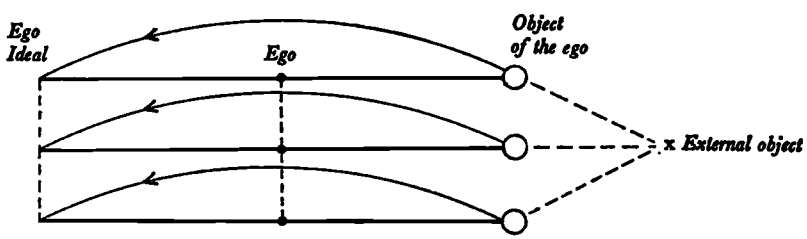
determined. Well! This line of intersection is for us what may symbolize the function of identification.

In effect, by the very work that leads the subject, while telling himself in analysis, to orientate what he says in the direction of the resistance of the transference, of deception, deception of love as well as of aggression—something like closing up occurs and its value is marked in the very form of this spiral developing towards a centre. What I have depicted here by means of the rim comes back on to the plane constituted by the locus of the Other, from the place where the subject, realizing himself in his speech, is instituted at the level of the subject who is supposed to know. Any conception of analysis that is articulated —innocently or not, God only knows—to defining the end of the analysis as identification with the analyst, by that very fact makes an admission of its limits. Any analysis that one teaches as having to be terminated by identification with the analyst reveals, by the same token, that its true motive force is elided. There is a beyond to this identification, and this beyond is

defined by the relation and the distance of the *objet petit a* to the idealizing capital I of identification.

I cannot enter into the details of what such an affirmation implies in the structure of practice. I will refer here to Freud's chapter on *Hypnosis and the State of being in Love*, which I mentioned earlier. In this chapter Freud makes an excellent distinction between hypnosis and the state of being in love, even in its most extreme forms, what he calls *Verliebtheit*. Here he provides the clearest doctrinal account to be read anywhere, if only one knows how to read it.

There is an essential difference between the object defined as narcissistic, the *i* (*a*), and the function of the *a*. Things are such that the only view of the schema that Freud gives of hypnosis,



Freud's Schema

gives by the same token the formula of collective fascination, which was an increasing reality at the time when he wrote that article. He draws this schema exactly as I have represented it for you on the blackboard.

In it he designates what he calls the object—in which you must recognize what I call the *a*—the ego and the ego ideal. As for the curves, they are made to mark the conjunction of the *a* with the ego ideal. In this way Freud gives its status to hypnosis by superposing at the same place the *objet a* as such and this signifying mapping that is called the ego ideal.

I have given you the elements in order to understand it, adding that the *objet a* may be identical with the gaze. Well, Freud precisely indicates the nodal point of hypnosis when he formulates that the object is certainly an element that is difficult to grasp in it, but an incontestable one, namely, the gaze

of the hypnotizer. Remember what I articulated for you about the function of the gaze, of its fundamental relations to the ink-blot, of the fact that there is already in the world something that looks before there is a view for it to see, that the ocellus of animal mimicry is indispensible as a presupposition to the fact that a subject may see and be fascinated, that the fascination of the ink-blot is anterior to the view that discovers it. You apprehend by the same token the function of the gaze in hypnosis, which may be fulfilled in fact by a crystal stopper, or anything, so long as it shines.

To define hypnosis as the confusion, at one point, of the ideal signifier in which the subject is mapped with the *a*, is the most assured structural definition that has been advanced.

Now, as everyone knows, it was by distinguishing itself from hypnosis that analysis became established. For the fundamental mainspring of the analytic operation is the maintenance of the distance between the I—identification—and the *a*.

In order to give you formulae-reference points, I will say—if the transference is that which separates demand from the drive, the analyst's desire is that which brings it back. And in this way, it isolates the *a*, places it at the greatest possible distance from the I that he, the analyst, is called upon by the subject to embody. It is from this idealization that the analyst has to fall in order to be the support of the separating *a*, in so far as his desire allows him, in an upside-down hypnosis, to embody the hypnotized patient.

This crossing of the plane of identification is possible. Anyone who has lived through the analytic experience with me to the end of the training analysis knows that what I am saying is true.

It is beyond the function of the *a* that the curve closes back upon itself, at a point where nothing is ever said as to the outcome of the analysis, that is, after the mapping of the subject in relation to the *a*, the experience of the fundamental phantasy becomes the drive. What, then, does he who has passed through the experience of this opaque relation to the origin, to the drive, become? How can a subject who has traversed the radical phantasy experience the drive? This is the beyond of analysis, and has never been approached. Up to now, it has been approachable only at the level of the analyst, in as much as

it would be required of him to have specifically traversed the cycle of the analytic experience in its totality.

There is only one kind of psycho-analysis, the training analysis—which means a psycho-analysis that has looped this loop to its end. The loop must be run through several times. There is in effect no other way of accounting for the term *durcharbeiten*, of the necessity of elaboration, except to conceive how the loop must be run through more than once. I will not deal with this here because it introduces new difficulties, and because I cannot say everything, since I am dealing here only with the fundamentals of psycho-analysis.

The schema that I leave you, as a guide both to experience and to reading, shows you that the transference operates in the direction of bringing demand back to identification. It is in as much as the analyst's desire, which remains an *x*, tends in a direction that is the exact opposite of identification, that the crossing of the plane of identification is possible, through the mediation of the separation of the subject in experience. The experience of the subject is thus brought back to the plane at which, from the reality of the unconscious, the drive may be made present.

3

I have already indicated the interest to be found in situating, at the level of the subjective status determined as that of the *objet a*, what, for the past three hundred years, man has defined in science.

Perhaps the features that appear in our time so strikingly in the form of what are more or less correctly called the *mass media*, perhaps our very relation to the science that ever increasingly invades our field, perhaps all this is illuminated by the reference to those two objects, whose place I have indicated for you in a fundamental tetrad, namely, the voice—partly planeterized, even stratospherized, by our machinery—and the gaze, whose ever-encroaching character is no less suggestive, for, by so many spectacles, so many phantasies, it is not so much our vision that is solicited, as our gaze that is aroused. But I will leave these features to one side and stress something else that seems to me quite essential.

There is something profoundly masked in the critique of the

history that we have experienced. This, re-enacting the most monstrous and supposedly superseded forms of the holocaust, is the drama of Nazism.

I would hold that no meaning given to history, based on Hegeliano–Marxist premises, is capable of accounting for this resurgence—which only goes to show that the offering to obscure gods of an object of sacrifice is something to which few subjects can resist succumbing, as if under some monstrous spell.

Ignorance, indifference, an averting of the eyes may explain beneath what veil this mystery still remains hidden. But for whoever is capable of turning a courageous gaze towards this phenomenon—and, once again, there are certainly few who do not succumb to the fascination of the sacrifice in itself—the sacrifice signifies that, in the object of our desires, we try to find evidence for the presence of the desire of this Other that I call here *the dark God.*

It is the eternal meaning of the sacrifice, to which no one can resist, unless animated by that faith, so difficult to sustain, which, perhaps, one man alone has been able to formulate in a plausible way—namely, Spinoza, with his *Amor intellectualis Dei.*

What, quite wrongly, has been thought of in Spinoza as pantheism is simply the reduction of the field of God to the universality of the signifier, which produces a serene, exceptional detachment from human desire. In so far as Spinoza says—*desire is the essence of man,* and in so far as he institutes this desire in the radical dependence of the universality of the divine attributes, which is possible only through the function of the signifier, in so far as he does this, he obtains that unique position by which the philosopher—and it is no accident that it is a Jew detached from his tradition who embodies it—may be confused with a transcendent love.

This position is not tenable for us. Experience shows us that Kant is more true, and I have proved that his theory of consciousness, when he writes of practical reason, is sustained only by giving a specification of the moral law which, looked at more closely, is simply desire in its pure state, that very desire that culminates in the sacrifice, strictly speaking, of everything that is the object of love in one's human tenderness—I would say,

not only in the rejection of the pathological object, but also in its sacrifice and murder. That is why I wrote *Kant avec Sade.*

This is the prime example of the eye-opening effect (*désillement*) that analysis makes possible in relation to the many efforts, even the most noble ones, of traditional ethics.

This is an extreme position, but one that enables us to grasp that man can adumbrate his situation in a field made up of rediscovered knowledge only if he has previously experienced the limit within which, like desire, he is bound. Love, which, it seems to some, I have down-graded, can be posited only in that beyond, where, at first, it renounces its object. This also enables us to understand that any shelter in which may be established a viable, temperate relation of one sex to the other necessitates the intervention—this is what psycho-analysis teaches us—of that medium known as the paternal metaphor.

The analyst's desire is not a pure desire. It is a desire to obtain absolute difference, a desire which intervenes when, confronted with the primary signifier, the subject is, for the first time, in a position to subject himself to it. There only may the signification of a limitless love emerge, because it is outside the limits of the law, where alone it may live.

24 June 1964

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

This book is a translation of the first volume to be published of a series that will contain all Lacan's 'séminaires' since 1953, each volume representing the seminar for one academic year. *Les Quatre Concepts Fondamentaux de la Psychanalyse* is Book XI of that series, first delivered in 1964.

In his editor's note Jacques-Alain Miller alludes to the role of punctuation in the transcription of spoken language. In an attempt to render the inflexions of Lacan's speech, he has confined himself to the use of the comma, the full-stop, the dash and the paragraph. He is particularly anxious that this practice be maintained in the translation.

I am indebted to George Gross for suggestions made in the course of reading the translation in manuscript.

The short glossary below is not intended to provide adequate definitions of concepts. To do so would be quite alien to the nature of Lacan's work, which is peculiarly resistant to interpretation of a static, defining kind. Though rooted in Freudian psycho-analysis, Lacan's concepts have evolved over the years to meet the requirements of a constant reformulation of psycho-analytic theory. They are best understood, therefore, operationally, at work in a number of different contexts. However, some of the terms do call for comment, if only by way of introduction. This, with the assistance of Jacques-Alain Miller, I have attempted to provide. In certain cases, however, Lacan has preferred that a term be left entirely unglossed, on the grounds that any comment would prejudice its effective operation.

The first italicized word in brackets in each entry is Lacan's French word, the second, where necessary, Freud's German. It is assumed that the reader is familiar with the terminology of 'classical' Freudian psycho-analysis.

AGENCY (*instance, Instanz*). Lacan's use of the term '*instance*' goes well beyond Freud's '*Instanz*'. It represents, one might say, an exploitation of the linguistic possibilities of the French equivalent of Freud's German term. In the absence of any exact equivalent of Lacan's French term, one is thrown back

to the term used by Freud's English translators, 'agency'. In Freud, the reference is most often to the three 'agencies' of the id, ego and superego. In Lacan, one must bear in mind the idea of an 'acting upon', even 'insistence', as in the title of the essay, 'L'instance de la lettre'.

COUNTERPART (*le semblable*). This notion of the 'specular ego' was first developed in the essay, 'The Mirror Stage'.

DEMAND (*demande*). See DESIRE.

DESIRE (*désir; Wunsch, Begierde, Lust*). The *Standard Edition* translates Freud's '*Wunsch*' as 'wish', which corresponds closely to the German word. Freud's French translators, however, have always used '*désir*', rather than '*voeu*', which corresponds to '*Wunsch*' and 'wish', but which is less widely used in current French. The crucial distinction between '*Wunsch*' and 'wish', on the one hand, and '*désir*', on the other, is that the German and English words are limited to individual, isolated acts of wishing, while the French has the much stronger implication of a continuous force. It is this implication that Lacan has elaborated and placed at the centre of his psycho-analytic theory, which is why I have rendered '*désir*' by 'desire'. Furthermore, Lacan has linked the concept of 'desire' with 'need' (*besoin*) and 'demand' (*demande*) in the following way.

The human individual sets out with a particular organism, with certain biological needs, which are satisfied by certain objects. What effect does the acquisition of language have on these needs? All speech is demand; it presupposes the Other to whom it is addressed, whose very signifiers it takes over in its formulation. By the same token, that which comes from the Other is treated not so much as a particular satisfaction of a need, but rather as a response to an appeal, a gift, a token of love. There is no adequation between the need and the demand that conveys it; indeed, it is the gap between them that constitutes desire, at once particular like the first and absolute like the second. Desire (fundamentally in the singular) is a perpetual effect of symbolic articulation. It is not an appetite: it is essentially excentric and insatiable. That is why Lacan co-ordinates it not with the object that

would seem to satisfy it, but with the object that causes it (one is reminded of fetishism).

DRIVE (*pulsion, Trieb*). Lacan reinstates a distinction, already clear in Freud, between the wholly psychical *pulsion* (*Trieb*) and *instinct* (*Instink*), with its 'biological' connotations. As Lacan has pointed out, Freud's English translators blur this distinction by translating both terms as 'instinct'.

ENUNCIATION (*énonciation*). The distinction between '*énoncé*' and '*énonciation*' is a common one in contemporary French thinking. '*Énoncé*', which I translate as 'statement', refers to the actual words uttered, '*énonciation*' to the act of uttering them.

IMAGINARY, SYMBOLIC, REAL (*imaginaire, symbolique, réel*). Of these three terms, the 'imaginary' was the first to appear, well before the Rome Report of 1953. At the time, Lacan regarded the 'imago' as the proper study of psychology and identification as the fundamental psychical process. The imaginary was then the world, the register, the dimension of images, conscious or unconscious, perceived or imagined. In this respect, 'imaginary' is not simply the opposite of 'real': the image certainly belongs to reality and Lacan sought in animal ethology facts that brought out formative effects comparable to that described in 'the mirror stage'.

The notion of the 'symbolic' came to the forefront in the Rome Report. The symbols referred to here are not icons, stylized figurations, but signifiers, in the sense developed by Saussure and Jakobson, extended into a generalized definition: differential elements, in themselves without meaning, which acquire value only in their mutual relations, and forming a closed order—the question is whether this order is or is not complete. Henceforth it is the symbolic, not the imaginary, that is seen to be the determining order of the subject, and its effects are radical: the subject, in Lacan's sense, is himself an effect of the symbolic. Lévi-Strauss's formalization of the elementary structures of kinship and its use of Jakobson's binarism provided the basis for Lacan's conception of the symbolic—a conception, however, that goes well beyond its origins. According to Lacan, a distinction must be drawn

between what belongs in experience to the order of the symbolic and what belongs to the imaginary. In particular, the relation between the subject, on the one hand, and the signifiers, speech, language, on the other, is frequently contrasted with the imaginary relation, that between the ego and its images. In each case, many problems derive from the relations between these two dimensions.

The 'real' emerges as a third term, linked to the symbolic and the imaginary: it stands for what is neither symbolic nor imaginary, and remains foreclosed from the analytic experience, which is an experience of speech. What is prior to the assumption of the symbolic, the real in its 'raw' state (in the case of the subject, for instance, the organism and its biological needs), may only be supposed, it is an algebraic *x*. This Lacanian concept of the 'real' is not to be confused with reality, which is perfectly knowable: the subject of desire knows no more than that, since for it reality is entirely phantasmatic.

The term 'real', which was at first of only minor importance, acting as a kind of safety rail, has gradually been developed, and its signification has been considerably altered. It began, naturally enough, by presenting, in relation to symbolic substitutions and imaginary variations, a function of constancy: 'the real is that which always returns to the same place'. It then became that before which the imaginary faltered, that over which the symbolic stumbles, that which is refractory, resistant. Hence the formula: 'the real is the impossible'. It is in this sense that the term begins to appear regularly, as an adjective, to describe that which is lacking in the symbolic order, the ineliminable residue of all articulation, the foreclosed element, which may be approached, but never grasped: the umbilical cord of the symbolic.

As distinguished by Lacan, these three dimensions are, as we say, profoundly heterogeneous. Yet the fact that the three terms have been linked together in a series raises the question as to what they have in common, a question to which Lacan has addressed himself in his most recent thinking on the subject of the Borromean knot (*Séminaire* 1974–75, entitled 'R.S.I.').

JOUISSANCE (*jouissance*). There is no adequate translation in English of this word. 'Enjoyment' conveys the sense, contained in *jouissance*, of enjoyment of rights, of property, etc. Unfortunately, in modern English, the word has lost the sexual connotations it still retains in French. (*Jouir* is slang for 'to come'.) 'Pleasure', on the other hand, is pre-empted by '*plaisir*'—and Lacan uses the two terms quite differently. 'Pleasure' obeys the law of homeostasis that Freud evokes in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, whereby, through discharge, the psyche seeks the lowest possible level of tension. '*Jouissance*' transgresses this law and, in that respect, it is *beyond* the pleasure principle.

KNOWLEDGE (*savoir, connaissance*). Where 'knowledge' renders '*connaissance*', I have added the French word in brackets. Most European languages make a distinction (e.g. Hegel's *Wissen* and *Kenntnis*) that is lost in English. In modern French thinking, different writers use the distinction in different ways. In Lacan, *connaissance* (with its inevitable concomitant, '*méconnaissance*') belongs to the imaginary register, while *savoir* belongs to the symbolic register.

LACK (*manque*). '*Manque*' is translated here as 'lack', except in the expression, created by Lacan, '*manque-à-être*', for which Lacan himself has proposed the English neologism 'want-to-be'.

LURE (*leurre*). The French word translates variously 'lure' (for hawks, fish), 'decoy' (for birds), bait (for fish) and the notion of 'allurement' and 'enticement'. In Lacan, the notion is related to '*méconnaissance*'.

MÉCONNAISSANCE. I have decided to retain the French word. The sense is of a 'failure to recognize', or 'misconstruction'. The concept is central to Lacan's thinking, since, for him, knowledge (*connaissance*) is inextricably bound up with *méconnaissance*.

NAME-OF-THE-FATHER (*nom-du-père*). This concept derives, in a sense, from the mythical, symbolic father of Freud's *Totem and Taboo*. In terms of Lacan's three orders, it refers not to the real father, nor to the imaginary father (the paternal

imago), but to the symbolic father. Freud, says Lacan, was led irresistibly 'to link the appearance of the signifier of the Father, as the author of the Law, to death, even to the murder of the Father, thus showing that although this murder is the fruitful moment of the debt through which the subject binds himself for life to the Law, the symbolic Father, in so far as he signifies this Law, is certainly the dead Father' (*Écrits*, 'Of a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis').

NEED (*besoin*). See DESIRE.

OBJET PETIT a. The '*a*' in question stands for '*autre*' (other), the concept having been developed out of the Freudian 'object' and Lacan's own exploitation of 'otherness'. The '*petit a*' (small 'a') differentiates the object from (while relating it to) the '*Autre*' or '*grand Autre*' (the capitalized 'Other'). However, Lacan refuses to comment on either term here, leaving the reader to develop an appreciation of the concepts in the course of their use. Furthermore, Lacan insists that '*objet petit* a' should remain untranslated, thus acquiring, as it were, the status of an algebraic sign.

OTHER (*Autre, grand Autre*). See OBJET PETIT a.

PLEASURE (*plaisir*). See JOUISSANCE.

REAL (*réel*). See IMAGINARY.

STATEMENT (*énoncé*). See ENUNCIATION.

SYMBOLIC (*symbolique*). See IMAGINARY.

WANT-TO-BE (*manque-à-être*). See LACK.

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Seminar 1: Wednesday 2 December 1964

Colourless green ideas sleep furiously
furiously sleep ideas green colourless

Songe, songe, Céphise, à cette nuit cruelle
Qui fut pour tout un peuple une nuit éternelle
[Dream, dream, Cephise, of that cruel night,
Which was for a whole people an eternal night]

Colourless green ideas sleep furiously.

If I were not in front of a French-speaking audience, I could say right away: "that's what talking is about". But since it happens that I must presume that despite the obvious necessity for bilingualism in our culture, there are some people here who are in no way burdened by English, I will give a word-for-word translation of it. The first word means without colour, the second word green, the third word ideas (in the plural), the fourth word means sleep (*sommeil*), can also mean to go to sleep (*dormir*), provided you put *to* before it, and can mean sleep (*dorment*) in the third person plural of the present indicative. You will see why this is the sense (*sens)* that we will pause at.

The nature of the indefinite article in English, which is not expressed, allows us therefore to translate up to this word-for-word: "D'incolores vertes idées dorment" - to which there is added what is very obviously an adverb because of its ending - "furieusement."

I said: "that's what talking is about". Is that really talking? How can we know? It (2) is precisely in order to know that this signifying chain - I scarcely dare to say sentence - was forged.

It was forged by a linguist called Noam Chomsky. This example is quoted, introduced in a little book called *Syntactic structures* published by Mouton in the Hague. What is it about? About structuralism, you can take my word for it, about syntactic structure, syntax.

This would immediately deserve a more precise commentary. I am only going to indicate it.

Syntax, in a structuralist perspective, is to be situated at a precise level that we will call formalisation on the one hand, and on the other hand, as regards the syntagm - the syntagm is the signifying chain considered from the point of view of what concerns the linking of its elements - *Syntactic Structures* consists in formalising these linkages.

Are all the linkages between these elements equivalent? In other words, can any signifier whatsoever be immediately contiguous to any other signifier. It is

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obvious that the reply will tend towards the negative, at least as regards what concerns a certain usage of this signifying chain, its usage, let us say, in discourse.

This example is found at the beginning of the work in question. It introduces something which is to be distinguished from the end of this work, namely, the (3) constitution or the initiation, the outline of a reasoning about syntactic structure, it introduces a notion which must be distinguished from it, that of grammar.

He introduced his subject matter, *Syntactic structures*, by specifying it as having a goal: how can we establish the formalisation, the algebraic signs, let us say, in order to illustrate immediately for you what is involved, which will allow there to be produced in the English language something grammatical, and to prevent there being produced a chain which is not so.

I cannot go on here to judge what the author of this enterprise achieves. What I can indicate, is that, in the particular conditions that are offered to him by this positive tongue that the English tongue is, I mean the tongue as it is spoken, it is not a matter of extracting the logic of the English tongue, it is a matter in a way of something which could be set up, in our day at least, in an electronic machine, so that from it there could emerge only grammatically correct sentences, and, a greater ambition, all the possible forms that his tongue offers to the Englishman, I mean to the speaking subject.

This book is a very seductive one to read because it gives the idea that by pursuing this kind of work a certain rigour emerges, the imposition of a certain real in the (4) usage of the tongue, and a very ingenious, very seductive, very captivating possibility which is demonstrated to us, of managing to mould oneself according to formulae like those, for example, of the most complex connections of auxiliaries, with certain forms which are proper to English, how to generate without error the transformation from the active to the passive, connected to a certain form which is that of the present in its actuality, which in order to say *lire* distinguishes "I read", from "I am reading" and which generates, in a quite mechanical fashion "I have been reading", for example, by a series of transformations, not of the conjunction of these words but of their composition. There is here something very seductive, but this is not at all what I shall engage myself with.

For what interests me is the reason why this example was forged. It was forged to distinguish the grammatical from another term that the author introduces here of the order of *signification*. In English that is called meaning.

The author thinks that in constructing this sentence he has produced a sentence which is without meaning, on the pretext that colourless contradicts green, that ideas cannot sleep and that it appears rather problematic for one to sleep furiously.

What strikes him is that he can, on the contrary, obtain from a subject, a subject that he questions, or that he pretends to question but undoubtedly who is his (5) recourse, that this meaningless sentence is a grammatical sentence.

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I take this historical example because it is in the history, in the work, on the present-day path of linguistics. I am a little embarrassed because it is not in French, but in fact this ambiguity forms part of our position, as you are going to see. For those who do not know English, I would ask you to make the effort of picturing to yourselves that the reverse order of the words *furiously sleep ideas green colourless* is not grammatical.

"*Y restez cieux aux êtes qui Père Notre*" {there remain heavens art in who Father Our} this is what this corresponds to, the reversed sentence of the rather well known sentence of Jacques Prévert: *"Notre Père qui êtes aux cieux restez-y*" {Our Father who art in heaven, remain there}.

It is clear that being grammatical here does not depend, at least entirely, on what may appear in these few inflected words, namely, the *s* of *ideas* which acts as a comfort for the absence of *s* at the end of *sleep*, namely a certain formal harmony recognisable by the English speaker and also the *ly* ending which indicates to us that it is an adverb. Because these characteristics remain in the second sentence; it is nevertheless, for an English person, of a completely different degree as regards the experience of the word, from the first. It is ungrammatical. It will not offer, we might say, any more sense than the ironic, even blasphemous prayer of Prévert (6) - but believe me, in time, it will be baptised: "What respect in this, remain there" - than this sentence once it has been reversed.

This indicates that you should underline in passing, in what I have just articulated, the word sense. We will see the use we can put it to today. We will see what I am introducing here by this means.

In fact Chomsky's undertaking is subjected, understandably, to the discussion of other linguists. It is noted, and quite rightly, that there is some abuse, or in any case that the discussion can begin around this connotation of *meaningless*, of *sans signification*.

Undoubtedly meaning is completely extinguished where there is no grammar, but where there is grammar, I mean a grammatical construction, sensed, presumed by the subject, the subject who is being questioned, who here is called on as judge, at the place, at the locus of the Other, to reintroduce the term inscribed in my presentation last year as a reference, where there is a grammatical construction, can one say, that there is no meaning ? And it is easy, basing myself always on documents, to refer you to a particular article by Jakobson in the translation Nicolas Ruwet has made of it, for you to find in a particular article in the grammar part, in these articles entitled *Essai de linguistique générale*, on page 205, the discussion of this example.

(7) It would be easy for me to put forward all sorts of attestations in English usage, in Marvell, for example, "G*reen thoughts in a green shade",* which he immediately translates in parenthesis or rather that the translator translates "*une verte pensée dans une ombre verte*", or indeed particular Russian expressions completely analogous to the supposed contradiction inscribed here in the sentence. There is no need to go any further. It is enough to remark that to say a *round square*, in English, another example taken by the same author, is not at all a

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contradiction in reality, given that a *square* is very often used to designate a *place* and that a *place ronde* can then very easily be called a *round square*.

What nevertheless are we going to engage with? You see in the equivalents, and to say the word, if I try to show that this sentence can have a meaning, I will certainly be entering on more subtle paths. It is from grammar itself that I will begin. I will observe that whether this phrase is grammatical or not is, for example, because what apparently emerges in this sentence as an adjective, namely *colourless green*, comes before the substantive, and that here we find ourselves, in English as in French, confronted with a certain number of effects which remain to be described. Provisionally, I continue to call them effects of sense, namely that in (8) relationship of the adjective to the substantive, the adjective, in Greek we call it *epithete,* usage in English, in French and in every tongue, shows us that even though this usage varies with tongues, this question of the place is important to qualify the effect of sense created by the joining of the adjective to the substantive. In French, for example, an adjective which, as I might say, is identified to the substance is placed before the substantive, *une belle femme* is different to *une femme belle*. Epicatathetic usage, one could say, that of the adjective which comes before, is to be distinguished from the epanathetic, from the one which comes after, and that the reference of the woman to beauty in the case of the epanathetic, that is from the adjective which comes after, is something distinguished, while a *belle femme* is already, that it is within her substance that she is found to be beautiful, and that there is still a third phase to be distinguished, the epamphitetic usage, or that of ambiance, which will indicate that this woman appeared beautiful in particular circumstances, that in other words it is not the same thing to say: "*furious Hermione - Hermione furious - furious, Hermione*" etc, and so on.

In English, the real epamphitetic is where it is permitted to put the adjective after the noun. Epanathetic, like epicatathetic, is always placed in front, but the epicatathetic is always closer to the substantive.

(9) One says: *Un / de belle apparence / et pourvu d'une belle barbe, vieil homme*" (An old man of handsome appearance with a beautiful beard). It is because the v*ieil* is closer to *homme* rather than the fact that he has a beautiful beard and a radiant appearance.

Henceforth we are, simply along grammatical paths, in a position to distinguish two planes and as a consequence not to have them meeting in the contradiction, *green colourless*. In addition some memories of Sheridan that I had noted for you, of a dialogue between Lady Teazle and her husband Sir Peter - naturally it is the notes that one takes that one never finds at the right time - sufficiently teaches us that for example, if Lady Teazle protests at the fact of being tortured about these *elegant expenses*, about these *dépenses élégantes,* this is in order to point out to us that the relationship of the adjective to the substantive in spoken usage, when it is a matter precisely of the epicatathete is perhaps not to be taken in English the way it is in French and that you cannot translate *elegant expenses* by *depenses elegantes* by strictly inverting the relationship and by saying *des* é*légances coûteuses*. Even in Tennyson I also found for you a certain *glimmering strangeness* which comes from the speaker, emerging from his dream, obviously must be translated by *lueurs étranges* and not by é*trangetés lumineuses*. So that

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here, it is perhaps indeed this (10) idea of greenness, of ideal greenness that is involved, as compared to what, *colourless* and more decayed, it is something like the shades of ideas which slip away there, losing their colour and in a word, bloodless. They are moving about there, not because they are sleeping, and I would have no trouble, spare me the end of this stylistic exercise, in proving to you that it is perfectly conceivable, that if we grant to sleep, *dorment,* something of the metaphorical, there is a sleep accompanied by some fury. Besides is it not what we experience every day and in a word, if indeed you excuse me from this vain tail-end of discourse, I leave you with the task of fabricating it. I cannot find, in questioning things in the sense of the link of grammar to meaning, I cannot find in this sentence the evocation properly speaking of the unconscious where it is.

What is the unconscious, if not precisely ideas, thoughts, *Gedanken*, thoughts whose faded greenness, does not Freud tell us somewhere, that like the shades summoned from hell and returning to the sunlight, want to drink blood, to recover their colours. Is it the thoughts of the unconscious that are involved, that here sleep furiously?

Well, all of that would have been a very pretty exercise but I did not pursue it, I (11) would not say to the end, because I am cutting it short only to suggest that it is quite simply completely idiotic.

The unconscious has nothing to do with these metaphorical meanings, however far we may push them. And to search for meaning in a signifying, grammatical chain is an undertaking of extraordinary futility.

For if, because of the fact that I am before this audience, I was able to give it that meaning, I could just as well have given it a completely different one, and for a simple reason, which is that any signifying chain whatsoever, provided it is grammatical, always generates a meaning, and I would go further, any one whatsoever.

Because I commit myself, in varying, and one can vary to infinity, the surrounding conditions, the situation, but what is more, the situations of dialogue, I can make this sentence mean whatever I want, including for example in a particular case that I am mocking you.

Pay attention! Does there not intervene here at this extreme point something other than a meaning? That I am able, in a particular context, to make any meaning emerge from it, is one thing, but is it really meaning that is involved. Because why did I say that nothing guaranteed the meaning I gave earlier? It is in the very measure that I had given it one with respect to what? With respect to an object, a (12) referent, something that I have brought out there for the needs of the case, namely the unconscious.

In speaking about context, in speaking about dialogue, I allow to disappear, to vanish, to vacillate what is involved, namely, the function of sense. What it is a question here of circumscribing more closely is the distinction between the two. In the final analysis, how does it come about that its very author who chose this sentence, drew comfort so easily from something that is so doubtful, namely that it does not make sense.

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How could a linguist, who does not need to take the extreme examples, the round square, which I spoke to you about earlier, to grasp that the things that are most easily accepted, allow there to be completely avoided, the remark of a certain contradiction. Does one not say with common assent, *une jeune morte*, (a dead young person). Which could be a correct way of saying that she died young (*elle est morte jeune)* but to describe her as a *jeune morte* with what the adjective placed before means, the adjective in French, must leave us curiously perplexed! Is it as dead that she is young?

I asked myself what gave this sentence its distinctive character. We cannot believe in such naivety on the part of the person who produced it as a paradigm. And why did he take such an obviously forged paradigm? And nevertheless while I was (13) asking myself what effectively gave this sentence its paradigmatic value I had myself taught how to pronounce it properly. My English phonetics are not especially exemplary, and this exercise had a use for me which was not to torture the ears of those for whom these phonetics are familiar. And in this exercise I noticed something, that between each word, I had to take a little breath.

Colourless, **g**reen, **i**deas, **s**leep, **f**uriously. Why did I have to take a breath? Have you noticed that this becomes grgr, ideas, sleep, one s linking up with another s and after that **fff**uriously.

So then I began to interest myself in the consonants. There is one thing that can be said in any case, it is that this text is struck by "amusie", however you understand it, music or the muses, as Queneau says "*avec les arts on s'amuse: on muse avec les lézards"* (with the arts one amuses oneself: one muses with the lizards*)*. In noticing, in counting these consonants, the two l's and the c of colourless, the g of green, the n, a third l, a fourth l, there came to my mind those verses which I hope you adore as much as I do, the ones written at the bottom of the blackboard and which make use very precisely of the consonantal battery of the made-up sentence :

Songe, songe, Céphise, à cette nuit cruelle
Qui fut pour tout un peuple une nuit éternelle
(Dream, dream, Céphise, of that cruel night
Which was for a whole people an eternal night.)

(14) I can easily do the opposite of the work I did earlier to show you that it is no less strange to speak about a cruel night, than of a round square. That an eternal night is undoubtedly a contradiction in terms, but on the contrary that the moving value of these two lines, is essentially in the repercussion first of all of these four sibilant *s*'s which are underlined on the blackboard, of the repercussion of *Céphise* in *fut* on the second line, in the repercussion of the *t* four times, of the *n* of *nuit* twice, of the primitive labile *f* promised by its attenuated form *fut* and of *Céphise*, in this *pour tout un peuple* which harmonises, which makes vibrate in a certain fashion something which undoubtedly in these two lines, is the whole sense, the poetic sense, and this is of a nature to force us, to draw us intimately closer to the function of the signifier.

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If undoubtedly the two verses in question do not claim in any degree to give the meaning of the formula of the linguist, they force us to question ourselves, whether we are not in this way much closer to what constitutes its sense, to what was for its author above all the true point at which he felt assured of its non-sense. For at a certain level, the requirements of sense are perhaps different to what appears to us at first, namely that at this level of sense, music is a radical objection.

(15) Here is how I decided to introduce, this year, as a way of giving you the tone of it, what I am calling *Crucial problems **for** psychoanalysis*.

I spoke last year about the foundations ***of*** psychoanalysis. I spoke about the concepts which seemed to me to be essential to structure its experience, and you could see, that at none of these levels, were they true concepts, that I could not make them hold up, except in the measure that I made them rigorous with respect to no referent. That always in some way the subject who carries these concepts is implicated in his very discourse, that I cannot speak about the opening and the closing of the unconscious, without being implicated in my very discourse by this opening and this closing, that I cannot speak about the encounter, as constituting by its very lack the principal of repetition, without rendering ungraspable the very point where this repetition is qualified.

Dante, after some people but before still more, introduced in *De vulgari eloquentia*, which we will have to speak about this year, the most profound question of linguistics. He says that every science, and for him it is science that is involved, must be able to declare what must be translated as its object, and we all agree except that object, to have its value, in the Latin Dante uses is called here *subjectum*.

(16) In analysis it is in effect the subject that is involved. Here no displacement is possible to permit him to make an object of it.

That it is the same in linguistics no more escapes any linguist than it escaped Dante and his reader, but the linguist can try to resolve the problem differently from us analysts.

It is precisely for that reason that linguistics is engaged ever further along the path highlighted earlier by the work of our author, along the path of formalisation. It is because, along the path of formalisation, what we are trying to exclude is the subject. Only we analysts should have an exactly contrary aim because this is the pivot of our praxis.

Only you know that on this point I do not retreat before the difficulty, since in short, I posit, I did it last year and in a sufficiently articulated way, that the subject can only be in the final analysis nothing other than that which thinks: *Therefore I am.* Which means that the supporting point, the navel, as Freud would say of this term subject is properly only the moment at which it vanishes beneath sense, where sense is what makes it disappear as being, for this *Therefore I am* is only a sense. Is it not there that the discussion on being can find its support?

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(17) The relationship of sense to the signifier is what I have always believed to be essential to maintain at the heart of our experience so that our whole discourse does not become debased.

At the centre of this effort of mine, oriented towards a praxis, I placed the notion of signifier. How does it happen, that again quite recently, at one of the meetings of my pupils, I was able to hear one of them, I do not remember who, saying, and after all I know he was not the only one to say it, that the notion of signifier, for Lacan, still left him with some uncertainty in his mind.

If that is how things are, while after all an article like *The agency of the letter in the unconscious,* which I ask you to re-read, it is a fact that my texts become clearer as the years pass.

There are murmurs, people are asking themselves why? I am saying that it is a fact to which more than one if not all testify, this text is admirably clear and the man-woman example that I evoke, as evoking by its signifying coupling the meaning of a urinal, not by the opposition between the sexes, but as inserting itself, because of the masking of this sense, for two small children who come into a station in a train, a henceforth irremedial division about the spot that they have just passed, one (18) holding that he has passed by man, and the other holding that she has passed by woman. This seems to me all the same a story that is designed to open peoples' ears.

Moreover formulations that are less like apologues, which are that the sign, however it is composed and includes in itself the signifier/signified division, the sign is what represents something for someone, namely at the level of the sign we are at the level of anything at all, of the psychological, of knowledge, that you can refine. There is the authentic sign, the smoke which indicates the fire, that there is the index, and that to see the trace left by the hoof of the gazelle on the sand or on the rock, and that the signifier is something different, and that the fact that the signifier represents the subject for another signifier, a sufficiently firm formulation, that is simply forcing you to locate yourself in it, has certain consequences.

Why then does this discourse on the signifier retain some obscurity? Is it because for a certain time I, for example, wanted it? Yes. And who then is this I?

It is perhaps internal to this knot of language which is produced when language has to give an account of its own essence. Perhaps it is necessary that at this conjunction there is necessarily produced some loss. It is exactly connected to (19) this question of the loss, the loss that is produced every time that language tries to give an account of itself in a discourse, that there is situated the point from which I wish to begin to mark the sense of what I call the relationship of the signifier to the subject.

I describe as philosophical everything that tends to mask the radical character and the originating function of this loss. Every dialectic, and specifically the Hegelian one, which tends to mask, which in any case points towards a recuperation of the effects of this loss is a philosophy.

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There are other ways than the pretention of dealing with this loss. There is for example looking elsewhere and specifically turning one's gaze towards meaning, and to make of the subject, this entity that is called the human spirit, to put it before discourse.

It is an old error whose final incarnation is called developmental psychology, or if you wish to illustrate it, Piagetism. It is a matter of knowing whether we can approach a critique of it on its own terrain. An example of the contribution that I hope to make this year to something for psychoanalysis, which shows that the discourse that we are pursuing for it necessitates choices, and specifically the (20) exclusion of a certain number of positions, positions concerning the real. That these positions are false, and that it is not without reason that they are false, that the position we take up is perhaps the only one which allows there to be grounded, at its most radical foundation, the notion of ideology.

I will not allow you to leave today - even though it may be a superfluous talisman - without a formula that can be written on the blackboard because after all I put myself into it, which is the following, that it is true that the relation of the signifier is essentially to the signifier, that the signifier as such, in so far as it is distinguished from the sign, only signifies for another signifier and never signifies anything other than the subject. There must be superabundant proofs of this.

On the very plane of the criticism of Piaget, that I think I will approach the next time, and specifically the function of ego-centric language, I think I will be able to give you at that time proofs as a kind of graph, of simplified graph, indicating the path that we are going to travel and the formula of S/s, signifier over signified, is and always has been in an unambiguous fashion to be interpreted as follows, that there is an order of reference of the signifier which is to, what I called last year, another signifier. This is what defines it essentially.

What then is the signified? The signified is not at all to be conceived of only in relation to the subject.

(21) The relation of the signifier to the subject, in so far as it involves the function of meaning, passes through a referent. The referent, that means the real, and the real is not simply a raw and opaque mass. The real is apparently structured. We have moreover absolutely no knowledge of how as long as we do not have the signifier. I do not mean for all that, that if we do not know it, we have no relations to this structure. At different levels of animality these structures are called tendency, need and even necessarily what is called rightly or wrongly, but in fact in animal psychology, intelligence, one has to pass through this structure.

Intelligence, I do not know why a mistake has been made about this, intelligence is indeed for me, as for everybody else, non-verbal. What I will try to show you the next time, to criticise Piaget, is that it is absolutely indispensable in order not to make the error of thinking that the evolution of the child consists, in accordance with a pre-determined will of the Eternal, from all time, of rendering him more and more able to dialogue with Mr Piaget. This poses the question, even if it does not resolve it, of how intelligence as pre-verbal comes to link itself with language as pre-intellectual. For the moment, I note that in order to conceive anything (22) whatsoever about meaning, you must first take, which does not exhaust

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anything, and does not force a scaffolding on us, and to preserve the same thing indefinitely, notice that there are two usages of the signifier with respect to the referent, the usage of denotation, comparable to a correspondence which claims to be bi-univocal, let us say a brand, an iron brand on the referent, and a connotation, namely, how it is on this - you will see it the next time - there is going to turn our example of the criticism of Piaget, how a signifier can serve to introduce into the relationship to the referent, something which has a name, which is called the concept. And that is a relationship of connotation.

It is then through the mediation of the relationship of the signifier to the referent that we see the signifier emerge. There are no valid instances of meaning which do not make a circuit, a detour, by way of some referent.

The bar, therefore, is not as has been said, in commenting on me, the simple existence, fallen from heaven in a way, of the obstacle, here entified. It is first of all a question mark about the return circuit. But it is not simply that. It is this other effect of the signifier by means of which the signifier only represents the subject, and a little earlier I wanted to incarnate the subject in what I called sense, where he vanishes as subject.

(23) Well that's it. At the level of the bar an effect of sense is produced, and what I started from today in my example, is there to show you how much the effect of the signified can be bent to every sense, if we do not have the referent at the beginning, but that the effect of sense is something different.

It is so different that the face it presents on the side of the signified, is properly what is not "unmeaning", *non-signifiant*, but "meaningless", that it is properly speaking, what is translated, because we are in English, by the expression "non-sense", and that it is not possible to properly punctuate what is involved in our analytic experience, except by seeing that what is explored is not the ocean, the infinite sea of meanings, it is what happens in the very measure that it reveals to us this barrier of "non-sense". Which does not mean without meaning, which is the face of refusal that sense presents on the side of the signifier. That is why, when we have passed through this survey of psychological experimentation, we will try to show the degree to which it lacks the facts, by overlooking the true relationship of language to intelligence, we will throw light on it from a different angle, which is that while starting from an experience which no doubt is also, just as must as psychology, different to that of psychoanalysis, a literary experience specifically, by (24) trying to give its proper status, for it is not we who have invented it, it exists, to what is called non-sense, by questioning *Alice In Wonderland* or some good author of this register, we will see how this enables us to illuminate the status of the signifier.

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Seminar 2: Wednesday 9 December 1964

I want to thank my listeners for showing themselves to be so attentive as I take up these lectures again. I saw the last time how numerous they were .

I begin there because, in truth, for me this is a part of a problem that I am going to try, I will not simply say to pose today, with regard to which I would like to define something which could be described as: how are we going to work this year?

I say "are we going to", since I do not imagine that my discourse is deployed in a professorial abstraction, where after all it does not matter who profits from it, for better or for worse, or in what way.

I learned from echoes, which precisely because of the specificity of my position always reach me without delay, that the last time I was didactic: indeed that on this point I was considered to have made progress.

It is certainly not the case, however, it seems to me, that I spared you, as I might say, because to introduce the problem which is going to occupy us from the beginning this year, that of the relationship of the subject to language, as I did it by (2) this non-sense, and to remain with it, to sustain a commentary, a question about it long enough to make you travel along paths, through defiles that I was subsequently able to cancel with a turn of the hand, let us be clear, as regards the results and not as regards the value of the test, in order, at the end, to make you admit and, I would almost say, from my point of view, to get across the "Hey presto!" of a distinct relationship, the one to sense supported, as I showed, by the two sentences which were still there on the blackboard a little earlier, I can only congratulate myself that something of such a discourse reached its goal.

If it is true that there is the gap, whose formulation I began the last time, between something we do not grasp at the very level where the signifier functions as such and as I define it - the signifier is that which represents the subject for another signifier - if it is true that this representation of the subject, that the way in which the signifier is his representative is what is made present in the effect of sense, that there is between that and everything that is constructed as meaning, this sort of neutral field, of gap, of danger point, what has been encountered is not at all articulated in a necessary fashion, namely, what returns as meaning from a certain (3) relationship, I articulated it the last time, which remains to be defined, of the signifier to the referent, to this something articulated or not in the real, on which it is by managing, let us say, to rebound off, to say no more at this time, that the signifier generated the system of meanings.

There is here no doubt, for those you have followed my past discourse, a new emphasis on something whose place you can no doubt find in my preceding schemata, and even see in it that what was involved in the effect of the signified, where I had to lead you to indicate its place, at the moment when last year I was giving the schema of alienation, that this referent existed but at a different place,

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that this referent was desire in so far as it may have to be situated in the formation, in the establishment of the subject somewhere, hollowing out there, in the interval between the two signifiers essentially evoked in the definition of the signifier itself, that here, not the subject, collapsing into this formulation of what one can call the primordial cell of its constitution, but already in a first metaphor this signified, because of the very position of the subject on the way to collapse, had to be relayed by the function of desire.

An illuminating formula, no doubt, to designate all sorts of developmental effects in our analytic experience, but a relatively obscure formula if we have to map out (4) what is involved, when all is said and done, essentially, in the validity of this formula, and, in a word, about the relationship of development taken in its widest sense, of the relationship of the position of the subject taken in its most radical sense, to the function of language.

If these formulae, produced in a fashion that is more aphoristic than dogmatic, given as a supporting point, starting from which there can be judged, or at least sequenced, the range of different formulations which are given of it at every level at which this questioning tries, attempts, to pursue in a contemporary fashion whether it is the linguist, the psycholinguist, the psychologist, the strategist, the games' theorist, etc.

The terms that I am putting forward, and in the first place that of the signifier representing the subject for another signifier, has in itself something exclusive about it, which recalls what another path attempted to trace out, as regards the status to be given at one or other conceived level of the signifier, something which more or less cancels, crosses a certain gap, is undoubtedly risky, and before letting oneself be taken in by it, one should perhaps look at it more than once. Again there is here, I would say, a quasi-imperative position which, of course, can only be sustained by attempting a reference, which not only finds its recourse in an (5) adequate development of theories and of facts, but which also finds its foundation in some more radical structure and, moreover, all of those who for some years have been able to follow what I have developed before them, know that three years ago in a seminar on identification, it is not unrelated to what I am bringing you now, I was led to the necessity of a certain topology which appeared to me to impose itself, to arise from that very experience which is the most particular, sometimes, often, always perhaps, the most confused, the one that we have to deal with in analysis, namely identification.

Undoubtedly this topology is essential to the structure of language. In speaking about structure one cannot but evoke it. The first remark, I would even say the primary one, that however much we ought to conceive of discourse as unfolding over time, if there is something that structural analysis, as it has been operated in linguistics, is designed to reveal to us, it is that this linear structure is not at all sufficient to account for the chain of concrete discourse, of the signifying chain, that we can only order it, harmonise it in the shape of what is called in musical notation a stave, that this is the least that we have to say and that henceforth, the (6) question of how we are to conceive the function of this second dimension, and whether this is something which obliges us to take surface into consideration and in what form? The one formulated up to this in the intuition of space as, for example, it can be inscribed in an exemplary fashion in transcendental aesthetics,

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or whether it is something different, whether it is this surface as it is theorised precisely at the level of what are called in mathematical theory, surfaces, taken strictly from the angle of topology, whether this is sufficient for us, in short if this stave, this stave upon which every unit, every significance or sentence should be inscribed - undoubtedly at its cuts - how, at the two extremities of the sequence of these measures, how does this cut come to circumscribe, striate, section the stave. Let us say that there is here, in this regard, more than one way of questioning oneself, that there are horses for courses.

It is undoubtedly not too soon, faced with this structure, to pose again the question whether indeed effectively, as has seemed self-evident up to the present in a certain natural schema, time is to be reduced to a single dimension.

But let us leave that for the moment. And to stay with this curious uncertainty at about what this surface might be, you see that I require as always indispensable for all our ordinates, the two dimensions of the blackboard. Again it is visible that (7) each line does not at all have a function that is homogenous to the others. And simply to approach it, to shake the intuitive character of this function of space in so far as it interests us, I would go as far here as to point out to you that in this first approach that I evoked from previous years, a certain topology that is very structuring as regards what happens to the subject in our experience, I recall that what I was led to make use of is something which does not at all form part of a space which seems to be so integrated into all our experience, and of which one could well say, that alongside this other it deserves in fact the name of familiar, but also particular space: that there is a space, let us say, less or even unimaginable, in any case with which it is important to familiarise oneself, for the paradox that one easily encounters in it, for the lack of predictability involved when you are introduced to it for the first time.

Forgive me for bringing here, in the form of a kind of toy, something whose shape we will perhaps rediscover subsequently - believe me, I have thought about it. These topological elements, to speak of those that I emphasised, the hole, the torus, the cross-cap, respectively, are really separated by a sort of distinctive world from what we could call the shapes that are called Gestaltist, which, it must be (8) said, have dominated the development of part of a whole geometry, but also of a whole significance - I do not need to refer you to well-known and very meritorious researches, let us cite here simply in passing the *Metamorphoses du cercle* by Georges Poulet, but there are many others to remind us that throughout the centuries, the significance of the sphere, with all the exclusiveness that it involves, is what dominated a whole way of thinking, perhaps a whole art of thinking, and it is not at all simply by seeing it culminate in one or other great poem, Dante's poem for example, that we can plumb or measure the importance of the sphere, and even what we can link to it as being, as I might say, “belonging to its world”, the cone implying everything that had been ratified in geometry as a conic section, this is a world from which there differs the one introduced by the references to which I alluded earlier.

I am going to show you an example of it, questioning you naturally, I will not take any of the topological structures that I enumerated earlier, because they are, in a way, too complicated for our object for the moment, the little shock that I am trying to obtain, and on the other hand, the most familiar shape, the one that

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everyone ends up hearing pass on his auditory horizon, that of the Moebius strip, (9) do I need to remind you what it is. You see apparently, you will see later what that means, do not bother about the multiplicity of thicknesses, but simply about the shape which ensures that something which might be, if you wish, at the beginning, like a segment of a cylinder, because of the fact that, at the same time, one can go round it on the inner wall, I am expressing myself in terms expressly referred to the material, the object, the inversion that is produced, culminates in the existence of a surface whose most remarkable point is that it has only one face, namely, that wherever one begins from, one can end up along the remaining path, on the face from which one set out, at whatever point it may be of what might make you believe to be one face and the other. There is only one of them. It is also true that there is only one edge.

This of course presumes the putting forward of all sorts of definitions, the definition of an edge, for example, which is essential and which can, for us, be of the greatest use.

What I want to point out to you, and this at first will only be, I would say, for extreme novices to consider, this same object, are you able, I would say, to foresee, if you do not know already, what happens, when this surface is constituted, what happens, if one cuts it, remaining always very exactly at an equal distance from its edges, that is to say that if one cuts it in two, longitudinally?

(10) All of those, of course, who have already opened a few books on the subject know what is involved. This gives the following result: namely, not a divided surface, but a continuous strip, which has moreover the property of being able to reproduce exactly the shape of the first surface, in overlapping itself. It is, in short, a surface that one cannot divide, at least with the first cut of the scissors. Another thing, which is more interesting and which you will not, I believe, because I have never found it there, find in the books. It is the following problem: when the surface has been constituted, can it be duplicated, overlapped by another which is applied exactly onto its shape?

It is very easy to see, to carry out the experiment, that in duplicating, with a surface exactly equal to the first, the one that we are going to apply onto it, we will reach the result that the ending of the second strip that we have introduced into the operation, this ending will stop because it has, at the other ending of the same strip, since we have said by definition that these surfaces are equal, but that these two endings will be separated by the first strip, in other words, that they cannot connect up, except by crossing the first surface.

This is not obvious and is discovered by experimentation. It is closely linked, (11) moreover, with the better known first result that I evoked for you. You must admit that this necessary crossing of the surface by the surface which duplicates it, is something which can appear very useful to us for signifying the relationship of the signifier to the subject. I mean: the first fact, always to be recalled, that in no case can the signifier signify itself, except by reduplicating itself, a point that is very frequently if not always forgotten, and of course forgotten with a lot of disadvantages. It will be all the more necessary to remember it here.

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On the other hand, it is perhaps linked to this topological property that we must seek, the something unexpected, fruitful, as I might say, in experience that we can recognise as being at every point comparable to an effect of sense.

I am pushing this business still further, and perhaps you will later see its much more tangible implications; undoubtedly, if we continued the covering of our first surface, the Moebius strip, by a surface which is this time, not equivalent to its length but doubles it, we will manage in effect, in so far as these words have a sense, to envelop it inside and outside. This is what is effectively realised here. You should understand that in the middle there is a Moebius surface, and all around a surface of the type of the reduplicated surface, when a little earlier I cut it with (12) a scissors in the middle, which overlaps it, I repeat, if these words have a sense: inside and outside. In that case you see that these two surfaces are knotted.

In other words, and this in a fashion which is just as necessary, as unexpected for simple intuition, which is there to give us the idea that the signifying chain, since quite often metaphors reach a goal only as a preliminary, they only try to target things in an approximate fashion, that the signifying chain has perhaps a much fuller meaning, in the sense that it implies a link, and another link, which interlock, that we presuppose this at first.

I feel perhaps something like a hesitation before the rather distant character of what I have brought here with respect to our problems.

Nevertheless, the division of the field that this structure can contribute: if we compare the Moebius surface to the surface which completes it in the cross-cap, and which is a plane provided with special properties, it is not simply skewed, it is something, of which one can moreover only say the following, which is that it involves, it involves its eventual connection by a Moebius surface.

Imagine the internal eight, as I called it, where again it is a matter of filling it with an imaginary surface, imagine this simply as a circle, to imagine it for yourselves, (13) simply imagine first of all this heart-shape, and that this part here on the right, has little by little encroached, as you finally see it doing, on the left. It is clear that the edges are continuous, that the homology, the parallelism, if you wish, into which these edges enter with respect to their opposite, this is what will allow you to lodge more easily in it, a surface like the Moebius strip, following the surface that you generate, following thus the space between the opposite edges, you will effectively have this sort of turning back of this surface, which was what I pointed out to you earlier, towards the very definition of the strip.

But here, what happens if we complete this surface by the other one? The fact is that the Moebius strip necessarily cuts the aforesaid portion at another point, therefore in a line whose localisation does not matter but which, for intuition, reveals itself here as the most obvious one.

What does that mean? It means that if we set ourselves, eventually, to make such a cut function in that way, but instead of what the logic of classes taken in extension uses, of what are called the Euler circles, we can highlight certain essential relationships. My discourse does not allow me to push them to the end

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here, but you should know as regards a syllogism, for example, as problematic as the following:
(14)

All men are mortal
Socrates is a man
Therefore Socrates is mortal

A syllogism as regards which I hope there are here a certain number of ears, if they are willing to admit to the debate something other than meaning, what I called the other day sense, that this syllogism has something which retains us, and that moreover philosophy did not put it forward immediately, or in a pure context; it is nowhere to be found in the *Analytics* of Aristotle who, I imagine, was careful to avoid it. Not at all certainly, that it would be simply the feeling of reverence or of respect that would have prevented him from putting into play with the rest of men the one from whom there emerged a whole body of thought; but that he did not know that the term Socrates, in this context, can be introduced without care.

And thus we are carried - here I am anticipating - into the very heart of a question of the same order precisely as the one that interests us. It is strange that at a time when linguistics is flourishing, the discussion about what is the proper name, is entirely suspended. I mean that if it appears correct, and you know I think that a certain number, all sorts of remarkable works, all sorts of outstanding viewpoints on the function of the proper name with respect to what seems to be self-evident, (15) the first function of the signifier, denomination, undoubtedly, in order simply to introduce what I mean, the thing that is striking, is that on introducing oneself into one of the different, very categorised developments which have emerged on this theme, what I might call a genuinely fascinating value on all who notice it, it appears with a very great regularity in reading each author that everything that the others say is complete absurdity.

Here is something that is well designed to retain us and, I would say, to introduce this little corner, this little angle into the question of the proper name, something which would begin by this quite simple thing: Socrates - and I really believe that in the end there is no way of avoiding this first apprehension, this first principle - Socrates is the name of the one who is called Socrates. Which does not all mean the same thing, because there is the chap himself, Socrates with his pals, there is Socrates as a designator, I am speaking here about the function of the proper name, it is impossible to integrate it, without asking the question of what is announced at the level of the proper name.

That the proper name has a designatory function, yourself as had been said, which is not true of the individual as such, for by taking this path you will see that we arrive at absurdities, the fact that it has this use does absolutely not exhaust the (15) question of what is announced in the proper name. You will tell me, well say it, but precisely in fact this requires some detour.

But undoubtedly the objection that we have to make to the “Socrates is mortal” of the conclusion is indeed here. Because what is announced in Socrates is undoubtedly in an altogether privileged relationship to death, because if there is something of which we are sure about this man of whom we know nothing, it is

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that he asked for death, and in these terms: “Take me Socrates as I am, atopic, or else kill me”. This, assured, univocal, and without ambiguity.

And I think that only the use of our little Euler circle - not Eulerian but corrected - allows us by writing right around the circumference in a devouring parallelism

All men,	Socrates
are mortal	is mortal

consider that the junction of these formulae, major and conclusion is what is going to allow us to divide up two fields of sense: undoubtedly a field of meaning where it appears quite natural that Socrates is there in parallel to “all men” and is inserted there; a field of sense also which intersects the first and through which the question is posed for us whether we ought to give to “is a man”, which does not (17) come within it, and much more for us than for anyone else in a problematic fashion, the sense of being in the prolongation of this intersection of sense and meaning, namely, whether to be a man requires death, yes or no, namely to see entering, by that means, this simple problem of logic, and by not bringing into play anything but considerations of signifiers, the bringing into play of what Freud introduced as death drive.

I will come back to this example. I spoke earlier about Dante and his topology that is finally illustrated in his great poem. I asked myself the question. I think that if Dante came back, he would have found himself, at least in past years, at ease in my seminar.

I mean, that it is not because for him everything about substance and being pivots around what is called the point, what is at the same time the point of expansion and of vanishing of this sphere, that he would not have found the greatest interest in the way in which we questioned language, because, before his *Divine Comedy*, he had written *De vulgari eloquentia*, he had also written *Vita Nuova*, he had written *Vita Nuova* about the problem of desire, and in truth the *Divine Comedy* cannot be understood without this preamble. But undoubtedly in *De vulgari eloquentia,* he (18) manifests no doubt, with impasses no doubt, with exemplary points of arrival where we know that it is not at all the way to go, it is for that reason that we are trying to reform the topology of questions, he showed the most lively sense of the primary and primitive character of language, of maternal language, he says, in opposing it to everything that in his time was the attachment, the obstinate recourse to a learned language, and in a word the preemption of language by logic.

All the problems of the junction between language and what is called thought, and God knows with what an "accent", when it involves one or other of these in the child, following Mr Piaget for example, everything depends on the false path, in the going astray of research that is otherwise illuminating as regards the meritorious facts, as regards thoughtful groupings, in the accumulation, all of this going astray depends on the miscognition of the order which exists between language and logic.

Everyone knows, everyone reproaches the first logics which emerged,and specifically Aristotle’s, with being too grammatical, with suffering too much from

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the stamp of grammar. Oh how true it is! Is it not precisely this that indicates it to us: that it is from this that they begin. I am speaking even of the most refined forms, the most purified ones that we have managed to give to logic, I am speaking about logics that are called symbolic, mathematical logic, and everything that is (19) most refined in what we have contributed in the order of axiomatising, of logistics, the question for us is not at all to set up this order of thinking, this pure and more and more circumscribed game that, not without the intervention of our progress in the sciences, we are succeeding in perfecting, it is not to substitute it for language, I mean to believe that language is, in a way, the instrument that is involved, because everything proves and in the forefront, precisely, our analytic experience, that the order of language and of grammatical language, for recourse to the maternal tongue, to the first tongue, the one that the suckling and the common man speaks spontaneously, is not an objection for Dante, contrary to the grammarians of his time, to see the exactly correlative importance of the *lingua grammatica,* it is that grammar which matters to him and it is here that he is sure of finding the pure tongue.
It is the whole space, the whole difference there is between Piaget's mode of approach and that for example of someone like Vygotsky - I hope that this name does not sound strange to all my listeners - he was a psychologist, an experimentalist, who lived immediately after the revolution of 1917 in Russia, and who pursued his work up to the time he died, prematurely, alas, in 1934.

(20) This book should be read, or indeed - since I pose the question: “How are we going to work?” - someone, and I will say later under what conditions, must take responsibility for this work or some other one, in order, as I might say, to illuminate it in the light of the major lines of reference whose status we are trying to establish here, in order to see in it, on the one hand what it contributes, as I might say, to this water, to this mill, and also the way in which it only responds in a more or less naive fashion to it, it is obviously in a case like this the only way to proceed, for if this book, and the method that Vygotsky introduces, are distinguished by a very severe separation, besides so obvious in the facts that one is astonished that in the last article which has appeared by Mr Piaget, one that has appeared in a collection on psycho-linguistics, he maintains unyieldingly, and he could have replied in a little pamphlet that was added to the book quite explicitly in the evolution of his thinking, having regard to the function of language, that he more than ever holds that language ..... no doubt helps the development in the child of concepts which, he thinks that, I am not saying subsequent concepts ..... but the concepts in the child as he encounters a limit in grasping them, (21) that these concepts which are always closely linked to a reference to action, that language is only there as a help, as an instrument, but secondary, and all he wants to highlight in questioning the child is inappropriate usage.

Now, all experience shows, on the contrary, that if anything is striking in the language of the child who is beginning to speak, it is not its inappropriateness, it is the anticipation, it is the paradoxical precession of certain elements of the language, which ought to appear later, as I might say, the concrete elements of insertion, as they say, are sufficiently ....., it is the precession of particles, of little formulae, of "perhaps not", of "but still", which arise very precociously in the child’s language, showing even that provided one looks at it with a bit of freshness, of naivety from a certain point of view, which would allow it to be said,

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and after all, if necessary I will bring in documents, that grammatical structure is absolutely correlative to all the first appearances of language.

What does that mean, if not that what is important, is not at all to see that what is happening in the mind is undoubtedly something which, with time, is realised because he becomes the adult that we believe we are, it is that if at a certain stage, (22) at certain levels, there are to be highlighted in his adequation to the concept, and there we will be struck that someone like Vygotsky, I am saying it simply in passing, without making any more of it, has precisely posed his interrogation in terms that I am going to tell you, namely, completely different ones to those of Piaget, perceives that even a rigorous handling of concepts, he denotes it by certain signs, can be in a way fallacious, and that the real handling of a concept is acquired, he says, singularly and unfortunately without drawing the consequences of this, only at puberty.

But let us leave that. The important thing would be to study as Vygotsky did, and which is moreover for him the source of an extremely rich apperception, even though it has not been exploited since then in the same circle, what the child does spontaneously with what, with words, without which undoubtedly every one agrees there is no concept. What then does he do with these words, with these words that, as they say, he uses badly, badly compared to what, compared to the concept of the adult who questions him, but which serve him all the same for a very precise usage, a usage of the signifier. What does he make of them, what corresponds in him to the dependency on the word, on the signifier, at the same level where there is going to be introduced, retroactively, through his participation (23) in the culture that we call adult, let us say by the retroactivity of concepts that we will call scientific, if it is a fact that it is these in the end which win out, what does he do with the words which resemble a concept?

I am not here today to give you a summary of Vygotsky, since I hope someone else is going to look after it. What I want to say to you, is the following: it is that we see reappearing the door, in all its freshness, of what Darwin with his genius discovered one day, and which is well known: the case of the child who begins, right at the beginning of his language, to call something, let us say, in French that would be *coin coin* (quack, quack): in phonetic form, we are talking about an American child, in phonetic form it is quack, that this quack which is the signifier which isolates it, I would say, taken at its original source, because it is the cry of the duck, the duck that he begins by calling quack, he is going to transfer from the duck to the water in which it splashes about, from the water to everything which splashes about in it, this without prejudice to the preservation of the flying form, because this quack also designates all birds, and it ends up by designating what? I will give you a thousand guesses: a monetary unit which is marked with the sign of the eagle, with which it was at that time stamped, I do not know whether it still is, in the United States.

(24) One can say that in many matters, the first observation, the one that strikes, the one that makes its way in the literature, and is sometimes charged with a kind of blessing, it is two extremes of the signifier, which are the cry by which this living being, the duck, makes himself heard and which begins to function as what? Who knows? Is it a concept? Is it his name? Most probably his name because there is a way of questioning the function of denomination which is to take the

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signifier as something which either sticks onto, or is detached from the individual that it is made to designate, and which culminates at this other thing, which believe me I do not believe is chance or the lucky find of an individual, that it is not for nothing that it involves some participation, very probably no one who ..... the conscience of the child, that it should be to a coin that this finally attaches itself, I see no psychological confirmation in this, let us say that I see in it, as I might say, the augury of what always guides discovery when it does not allow itself to be hindered on its path by prejudice. Here, Darwin, by simply collecting this example from the mouth of a little child, shows us the two terms, the two extreme terms around which there are situated, there are knotted and are inserted, one as problematic as the other, the cry on the one hand and on the other something (25) which perhaps you would be astonished to hear me telling you, that we will have to question in connection with language: the function of money.

A forgotten term in the works of linguists, but as regards which it is clear that before them and among those who have studied money in their text, one sees emerging as they write, in a way necessarily, the reference to language. Language, the signifier as guarantee of something which goes infinitely far beyond the problem of the objective, and which is not either this ideal point where we can place ourselves, of reference to the truth.

It is from this last point, the discrimination, the sieve, the screen to isolate the true proposition, it is from there as you know, it is the principle of the whole axiomatic of Mr Bertrand Russell, and this has produced three enormous volumes which are called *Principia Mathematica,* which are absolutely fascinating to read, if you are able to maintain yourself through so many pages at the level of pure algebra, and in that regard it seems that, with respect to the progress of mathematics itself, the advantage is not absolutely decisive. This is not our business.

Our business is the following: it is the analysis that Mr Bertrand Russell gives of language. There is more than one of his works to which one could refer, I indicate one that you can find everywhere today, you can buy it, it is the book called *Signification et vérité* published by Flammarion.

(26) You will see there that by questioning things from the angle of this pure logic, Bertrand Russell conceives of language as a superimposition, a scaffolding, an indeterminate number of a succession of metalanguages.

Each propositional level, being subordinated to the control, to the correction of the proposition on a higher scale, where it is put in question as a first proposition. I am, of course, schematising to an extreme degree what you can see the illustration of in this work. I think that this work, like any other work by Bertrand Russell, is exemplary, in the fact that taking to its final term what I would call the very possibility of a metalanguage, he shows its absurdity precisely in the following: that the fundamental affirmation from which we begin here, and without which there would not be, in effect, any problem about the relationships between language and thought, between language and the subject, is the fact there is no metalanguage.

Every kind of approach, up to and including the structural approach in linguistics, is itself included, is itself dependent, is itself secondary, is itself at a loss

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compared to the first and pure use of language. Every logical development, whatever it may be, presumes at the origin the language from which it is detached. If we do not hold firmly to this point of view, every question that we pose, here, the whole (27) topology that we are trying to develop is completely vain and futile, and Mr Piaget and Mr Russell - or whoever - are right: the only problem is that not a single one of them manages to agree with any of the others.

What am I doing here, and why am I pursuing this discourse? I am doing so because I am engaged in an experience which absolutely requires it. But how can I pursue it? Since, by the very premisses that I have just reaffirmed here, I cannot sustain this discourse except from an exceptionally precarious place, namely, that I assume this enormous audacity where each time, you may well believe me, I have the feeling of risking everything, this properly speaking untenable place, which is that of the subject.

There is nothing here that is comparable to any position that might be described as that of a professor. I mean that the position of the professor, in so far as it puts between the audience and oneself a certain framed, guaranteed, grounded *summa,* forming in the communication a sort of intermediary, barrier and rampart, and precisely something that habituates, favours the thing that launches the mind on paths which are the ones that, too briefly, I was earlier able to denounce as being those of Mr Piaget.

There is a problem about psychoanalysts, as you know. Things happen among (28) psychoanalysts, and even things, as I recalled at the beginning of my seminar last year, that are rather comical, I would even say farcical, as there happened to me for three years, to have in the front row of the seminar that I was giving at St Anne, a *brochette* of people who never missed one, nor a single one of the articulations that I was putting forward, while at the same time actively working to ensure that I was excluded from their community. This is an extreme position, which, in truth, I can only explain by having recourse to a very precise dimension which I described as farce and I will situate it at another time. Another context would have been needed for me to say with Abelard: "*Odium mundi me fecit logica*." [The hatred of the world made me a logician(?)]

That may perhaps start here. But then that was not what was in question. It was a question of the following: of a rather crude incident, among others, of things that happen all the time in what are called analytic societies. Why did this happen? In the final analysis, because if the formula that I am giving is true, the relationships of the subject to sense, if the psychoanalyst is there in analysis, as everyone knows he is, except that one forgets what that means, to represent sense up to and in the measure that he will represent it effectively, and it happens that, well or badly formed, with time the psychoanalyst more and more fits in with this position.

(29) In that very measure, I mean then, at the level of the best. You can form a judgement about what is involved for the others. Psychoanalysts, in normal conditions, do not communicate with one another. I mean that if sense - this is my radical reference - is what I already approached in fact in connection with the *Witz* of Freud, which is to be characterised in an order which is certainly communicable, but not codifiable in the currently accepted modes of identical communication and which I called, which I evoked, which I highlighted the last

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time under the term of *non-sense*, as being the icy face, the sheer one, where there is marked this limit between the effect of the signifier and what returns to it by reflection of signified facts, if in other words, there is somewhere a *pas de sens* - it is the term I used in connection with the *Witz,* playing on the ambiguity of the word *pas,* negation, and the word *pas,* crossing - nothing prepares the psychoanalyst effectively to discuss his experience with his neighbour. This is the difficulty - I am not saying it is insurmountable because I am here trying to trace the paths - here is the difficulty moreover that leaps to the eyes, simply you have to know how to formulate it, the difficulty of establishing a psychoanalytic science.

This impasse, which obviously must be resolved by indirect means, this impasse is (30) compensated for by all sorts of artifices, and this indeed is the drama of the communication between analysts.

Of course there is the solution of master-words (*maître-mots*). And from time to time some of them appear. Not often. From time to time some appear. And our friend Klein introduced a certain number of them. And then, in a certain way, one could say that for myself the signifier is perhaps the master word. No, precisely not. But let us leave this.

The solution of master words is not a solution, even though it is the one with which, in large measure, people are satisfied. If I put forward, if I put forward, the solution of master-words, it is because on the track that we are on today, it is not only analysts who have the need to find it. Mr Bertrand Russell, to compose his language, made up of the scaffolding, of the Babel-like edifice of metalanguages, one on top the other, there must be a foundation, therefore he invented object-language. There must be a level, unfortunately nobody is able to grasp it, where language is in itself pure object. I defy you to put forward a single conjunction of signifiers which could have that function.

Others of course will search for master words at another end of the chain. And when I speak of master words in analytic theory, it is words like those. It is quite (31) clear that whatever meaning is given to this term, it is not sustainable in any sense. The maintaining of nonsense as signifier of the presence of the subject, the Socratic atopia, is essential for this very search.

Nevertheless, by pursuing it, in so far as its path has not been traced, the role of the one who assumes, not at all that of the subject who is presumed to know but of risking himself at the place where he is lacking, is a privileged place and one which has the right to certain rules of the game, specifically, that for all of those who come to hear him, something should not be made of the use of the words that he puts forward, what might be called counterfeit money. I mean that an imperceptible weakening of the use of one or other of the terms that I put forward in the course of the years, signalled long ago and in advance, who would be the people who would follow me in my work, and who would fall by the wayside.

And it is for this reason that I do not want to leave you today without telling you what is the object of my concern about the audience that I am so happy to have gathered together here.

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Undoubtedly, one can pursue this research for psychoanalysis, which I spoke about this year, by maintaining oneself in this region which is not at all a frontier one, because analogously to this surface about which I spoke earlier, its inside is the same as its outside.

(32) One can pursue this research concerning the point X, the hole of language. One can pursue it publicly, but it is important that there is a place where I have the response that what has been theoretically preserved in my teaching about the notion of sign, which finally only remained perhaps in the word, the word meant something, but that this takes on a locus and a place, precisely in the measure that my audience has been enlarged.

I have made the following arrangement: the fourth, and when they occur the fifth, Wednesdays, the days that I have the honour of speaking with you here, the fourth and the fifth will be closed sessions. Closed does not mean that anybody in particular is excluded. But that one is admitted on demand. In other words, given that this will not begin this month because there is no fourth Wednesday, I will only speak to you the next time and not the 23rd, the fourth Wednesday of January, anyone who comes here, and who knows, there is no reason why you should not be just as numerous, but it is not sure that all the people who are here will ask me. The relationship S D which is situated somewhere on the right of the graph, which at least some of you know the existence of, has in a discourse such as (33) the one that I am pursuing here, and whose function I have I think sufficiently outlined as analogous, even though inverted, to the analytic relationship, posits as a healthy and normal structure, that the people who have formulated a request to me should participate in a certain order of work. I will be, I give you notice, very open to these demands, provided I am free, on my side, to summon the person to get a sense of their quality and their measure, but it is armed with a card sanctioning the fact that I agreed to their request, that the fourth Wednesdays and the fifth, up to the end of this year, which makes - I worked it out - eight of these sessions, people will come here to work according to a mode in which, I indicate already, I will have for some people, and I would like to meet those who are willing to help me on this point, I would like to allow some people to take the floor instead of me.

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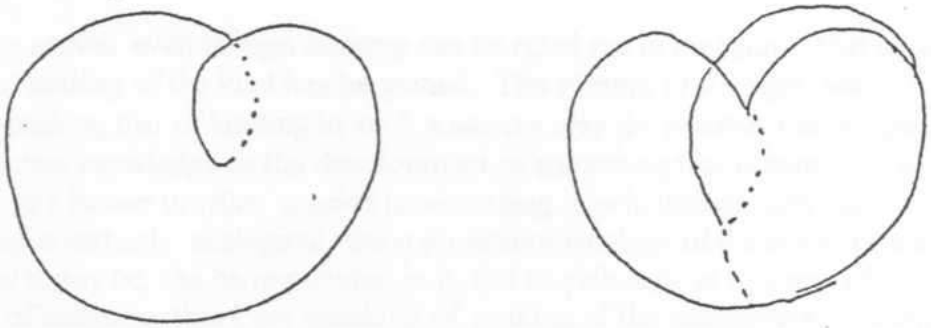

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Seminar 3 : Wednesday 16 December 1964

If psychology, whatever its object may be, but this object itself, as it is vainly sustained, being able to be defined as unique, in some way being able to lead us, along whatever path, to knowledge, in other words, if the soul existed, if knowledge was connected to the soul, professors of psychology, teachers of psychology ought to be recruited by the same methods by which they apprehend their object and, to illustrate what I mean, they should realise what happens in some sections of the museum - let us name one at random, the most representative one, conchology, the science of shells - and ought in short to realise at one stroke, the totality of teaching personnel and the collection itself. The summary of their university titles serving well enough in this metaphor as an image for the label of provenance stuck onto the aforesaid samples.

Experience proves, even though nothing can be ruled out in the future, that up to the present nothing of the kind has happened. The attempt of a Piaget, which is properly speaking that of limiting in such a narrow way the process, the progress (2) of effective knowledge to the development of something that is supposed to be immanent to a human or other species is something which, undoubtedly, in a fashion that is certainly analogical, since no phenomenology of the spirit, however elementary it may be, can be implicated in it, has to culminate at this sort of selection, of sampling, that I am speaking of, making of the intelligence quotient, in a way, the only possible standard of someone who has to respond to a certain functioning, to a certain integration of the functioning of intelligence.

The object of psychology is so little a unitary one, moreover, that this translation of the word soul to the level at which it serves as a theory of intellectual development is completely insufficient to fulfil its use, and everyone knows that in other registers, we would arrive at the same paradox: that those who have in some way or other to recognise, indeed to administer the field of the soul, ought also to realise in themselves some types, some prototypes or some elective moments of that which, when all is said and done, must be called the beautiful soul.

Luckily, no one dreams of it any longer, the most profound distrust having been cast on this category of the beautiful soul, as you know, by Hegel; the relationship of the beautiful soul to the disorders of the world was once and for all and definitively stigmatised by the undoubtedly penetrating remark which introduces us (3) from every angle to the dialectic applied here, that the beautiful soul has no other support than that disorder itself.

It is clear however that, in the recruitment procedures that psychoanalysts impose on themselves, there is in this whole field, which I was not able to sweep completely with the beam of the searchlight, there is a place which is distinguished by something which comes close in a very remarkable fashion to this paradoxical hypothesis, and that the idea that someone who has to teach, to account for what analytic praxis effectively is, for what it claims to conquer in the real, this someone, in a certain fashion, is himself the one who chooses himself as

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being a particularly well sorted-out sample of this progress. You will sense, moreover, that what is involved here is something other than something typical, than something static, it is a matter of a certain test, but then it is all the more important to specify the import of this test, and without any doubt the term identification, which is introduced here, for example, by presenting it as the end of the analytic experience, cannot fail at the same time to introduce a quite acute point of this problematic: at what level does this identification occur? At the level of an experience that is itself particular. Is the analysand someone who transmits a certain mode of the experiences of the one who analysed him, as he himself has received it, how can these experiences be (4) oriented with respect to one another, does the preceding one always have something which, in a way, goes beyond and includes the one which emerges from it; on the contrary does it leave the way open for going beyond it ? This, undoubtedly, is the most difficult level at which to pose the problem, it is certainly also the one at which it must be resolved. How can it even be envisaged if we do not grasp the structure of this experience?

For in no way, in analytic theory, can anything that is found at the level of this identification as substantial, in no way can this serve as a module and a measure, and psychoanalysts themselves, even those most entrenched in one or other traditional process, which God knows must not be studied too closely, would laugh if they were told that what it is a matter of transmitting is a function of the ego-ideal type. The identification involved can only be defined, grasped elsewhere.

We cannot of course be content with something which might evoke having been exercised at one time according to a certain dynamic. How could one find there anything whatsoever that would not resolve itself into a sort of endogeny, the awareness of a certain number of displacements grasped from within, but what graspable, what transmissible, what organisable, what in a word scientific thing, (5) can be based on something which would only amount, in that case, to being at the level of a certain type of massage, if you wish, of a type of breathing exercise, even of some kind of relaxation, something as primitively close to the innermost sphere of a test that, in the final analysis, is corporal.

That is why it is so important to attempt to grasp what is involved in an experience which puts itself forward as being, in the fullest sense, which no doubt does not fail to identify itself entirely to something as absolute, as radical, as speaking about the truth, [and] can nevertheless not refuse, I mean at the level of its experience, at the level of its results, this dimension of veracity, of something which, having been conquered, is revealed not simply as liberating but more authentic than that which was included in the knot from which one had to liberate oneself.

Moreover, it is not for nothing that there occur in my discourse elements of metaphor which are so singular, so unnoticed perhaps but also so striking, if we retain them, as those of knot, which bring us back to what already the last time I brought in here, in this little model that I brought to you in the shape of the Moebius strip, by reminding you of the importance of something which is of the order of topology.

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(6) And its use is, in a way, immediately suggested by the simple remark that we ought to make, even though it is beginning from a test, from a test which is in a way naive as regards this realism, like that of Piaget, which is undoubtedly that it is not difficult at one or other turning point of the text to highlight the flaw by which he claims that by simply taking language as an instrument of intelligence and by failing to recognise in the most profound fashion that far from it being the instrument of intelligence, he demonstrates at the same time, and along the same path of the same discourse, how is it then that he underlines in the same discourse that this instrument is so inappropriate, that language is precisely what creates difficulties for intelligence. What perhaps should also be brought up for intelligence are the problems posed by language. It is difficult for it to guide an appropriate behaviour at the level of the pure and simple obstacle, of the pure and simple and immediate reality, the one that you come up against by knocking your head against it.

To refer this inappropriateness of language to some primitive state or other of what is called, on this occasion, thinking, is really here only to reject the problem without resolving it in any way, for if, effectively, language was at first some crystallisation which was imposed on the exercise of intelligence as an apparatus, (7) why is it not obvious that intelligence would have made language as appropriate as it made, after all, its primitive instruments which we know to be among all instruments often the most marvellously clever, the most striking for us, to the point that we are scarcely able to restore the perfection of their equilibrium, made with the minimum of material and at the same time the best chosen material, ... hence the instruments that we may have, these primitive ones, are in a way the most precious from the point of view of the quality of the object, why would language not have been something analogous in its own way, if effectively it was the creation, the secretion, the prolongation of an intelligent act ?

Quite the contrary, if there is something that, in a first approach, we could try to define as being the field of thinking, well then, why not provisionally, if it is absolutely necessary to start from intelligence, would I not say that thinking, and God knows it is a formula which would apply well at different levels, at least in a descriptive fashion, since it appears, at least at first sight, from an approach that thinking is intelligence trying to find its feet in the difficulties that the function of language imposes on it.

(8) Far from us being able in any way, of course - this is the first door that linguistics opens - to content ourselves with this first crude schema, which would make of language the apparatus, the instrument of some bi-univocal correspondence, whatever it may be, is it not clear that this very pursuit which is carried out of reducing it under the critical form of meaning, of logical-positivism and its myth of arriving at an exhaustion of the meaning of meaning, to carry out completely in every use of the signifier the exhaustion of different meanings which once supposedly, we are told, connoted will allow us to have a conversation, a dialogue which will be unambiguous, because we will always know in what sense, in what usage, in what acceptation such a word is brought in, who does not know, who does not see that everything that language contributes in terms of fruitfulness, indeed even in pure and simple functioning, always consists, not at all in operating upon this sort of preformed conjunction, apparatus, which, after which, we would no longer have anything to do except to collect, except to

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read there the solution of a problem, who does not see that it is precisely this operation which itself constitutes the solution of the problem, that this operation of the function and what I may make bold to call for the moment ideally bi-univocal is precisely what it is a matter of obtaining at the end of every research.

(9) This being posited as being of the order of the simplest introduction of any preface for tackling the difficulty of the problem, we see that if the linguistic approach, which is far from dating properly speaking from our epoch - I was recently questioned about this use of the signifier and the signified, which as I was replying seemed to me now to be really the words that are in vogue, that one begins to hear at every street corner, and which are used, put forward, in the most common replies at meetings - these terms were not invented today or yesterday and the Stoics alone can claim to have introduced them technically in the shape of the s*ignans* and the *signatum*. What is more one can show their roots much further back, and that it is enough to approach the function of language for there to be introduced a certain type of division which is not unambiguous, which is something that is completely radical, and by the situation of the fact that in this radical we are so implicated that we are only subjects, I am saying, by being implicated at this radical level and in a fashion nevertheless which allows us to see what we are implicated in, and that it is nothing other than what is called structure.

The ambiguity that we grasp, and whose trace I am going to make you follow in one or other field more favourable to show it, between sense and meaning, for (10) example, which alone are capable - it is not always pure pleasure to play with the shimmering of what appears final to us because it cannot even be referred to the higher category of being a shimmering of sense, since it is already a division within sense that is involved - it is because it is uniquely at this level that there is resolved, as you will see when it is a question of a certain type of usage of the word, that there are resolved patent contradictions, patent simply by revealing themselves when in connection with the same words, for example with what is called the proper name, you will see some people seeing there what is most indicative, and others what is most arbitrary, therefore what seems to be the least indicative: the one sees in it what is most concrete, the other what seems to go in the opposite direction, what is most empty; the one what is most charged with sense, the other what is most stripped of it, so that taking things, as you will see, in a certain debate, in a certain register, from a certain angle, this function of the proper name, it is clear in the most transparent fashion, is properly speaking for what it is and for what his name indicates, and what is not at all simply the proper name, it is, as Mr Russell says, *a word for the particular*, *un mot pour le particulier*, certainly not, certainly not as you will see.

But let us continue .

(11) I would like right away to illustrate the function of tautology for you with something: I spoke earlier about realism, about naive realism, I will oppose to it, I will oppose to it a mode under which the materialism which commonly enters our discourse as, God knows, a very little explored reference, materialism consists of only as admitting as existent material signs. Is that a circle? Certainly not. This suggests a sense. Materiality is certainly not explained but who in our day would feel himself comfortable in explaining it as an essence, as a final substance, but that this term is here expressly referred to signs, to signs at the moment that, on

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the other hand, where, as a radical reference, I said that signs are what represent something for someone, here is something that at the same time give us the model of what a certain type of apparently tautological reference, for I only said one thing, which is that materialism is what posits as existent only what we have the material signs of, has certainly not touched the sense of the word material, and nevertheless however tautological it is, it bring us a sense and shows us in a way in an exemplary, paradigmatic figure the usefulness of this little knot whose outline I drew for you the other day, this original double point which, by drawing it as being (12) the introductory circle to any possible approach to the function, whether of signifier or of sign, and here already in order to show you that we cannot make use of it as something which can in any way be reduced to the term of a punctual reference, if the circle is favourable to the mythical apprehension of its contraction to some zero point, there always remains something irreducible in a structure which cannot abolish itself by tightening in on itself; and here, after all, encouraged by the fact that there did not at all fall into a void - I was able to take note of that- what I contributed the last time about the Moebius strip, whose implication I will now point out to you in order to illustrate, provide the illumination which pushes, which begins to push to its highest point its exemplary value.

It is Saussure who, speaking about the signified, and everyone knows that he did not at all speak about it in a definitive fashion, if only because of the ambiguities which were swallowed up through the door of his theory, precisely on this point - the most efficacious thing he says about it, is undoubtedly the fact that with regard to the signifier, the signified presents itself in a back-to-front relationship, or if you wish in a front-to-back one. And of course there is something of this order which is suggested to us by the existence of the semantic sign, of the sign in language, (13) what is undoubtedly involved is that if one sticks in the closest possible fashion to phonematic analysis, it is impossible to speak about a sound element in the modern analysis of linguistics without considering it as being closely linked to what ? To what is called *meaning* and we rediscover here the ambiguity between meaning and sense.

If I began my discourse this year with this example taken from a book on grammar which is an example in which I showed you that whatever about its striving towards asemantics, from the very fact of being grammatical it did not fail to carry a sense, and undoubtedly in this connection I was able to make you feel the two paths upon which we could search for what is called here sense, and that the one was not the other, and that along the path of meaning where we saw there could be constructed in abundance and almost so super-abundantly that our only difficulty was choosing, it was in the measure that we were operating through something, along some path, and that it is not a matter of indifference to point out - this is why I chose an example in a foreign tongue - that it was easier for me, more natural to lead you along the path of translation. It was by translating it into French, that I managed to make emerge from it pretty well everything that I wished by a very simple operational procedure, and one quite like that of conjuring.

(14) But that something different was involved in the other direction which by making us end up no doubt at the impasse and the closed nature of what

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constitutes the point of surprise, the charm of a poetic text clearly indicated to us that it was another dimension that was involved.

No doubt what it left in vagueness, mist and cloud as regard this poetic direction is something that can in no way appear sufficient to us. But it is here that I bring you back to the property of this singular surface which, of course, has a front and a back at every point. The important thing is that one should be able, by a certain journey along its circumference to get from any point whatsoever - whether it is from this place, or a corresponding one on the other side is fine - when I tell you that the signifier is essentially structured on the model of the aforesaid Moebius surface, that is what that means, namely, that it is on the same face, constituting the back and the front that we can encounter the material, the material which here is found to be structured on a phonematic opposition and this something which is not translated but which passes, which passes from one signifier to another in its functioning, in the functioning that belongs to language, even the most random one, this is what this poetic experiment demonstrates, in a way, that something which gets across and that this is where the sense is according as the mode that it (15) gets across is differently locatable and differently highlighted. This is what we are going to try to do, this alone is what allows us an exact mapping out of an experience which, from the very fact of being entirely an experience not alone of words but of artificial words, of words structured by a certain number of conditions which inflect the import of the discourse, ought to be mapped out with respect to what I called earlier the usage of the language by something or someone, the subject, the agent, the patient who is caught up in it.

So then I am going to introduce today, introduce one of these shapes, one of these topological shapes, one of these shapes founded on the surface, whose example I gave you the last time, to introduce you, to introduce you into this function because I think that all the same you have heard tell of the Klein bottle.

Let us take up this bottle again. Let us appropriate it to ourselves. And in the Klein bottle, ... and off we go.

It is extremely interesting. It is going to be of great use to us and you are going to see why. I remind you that I introduced the last time this remark that space, three-dimensional space, is something that is not at all clear, and that before speaking (16) about it like bird-brains, we will have to see the different shapes under which we can apprehend it, precisely along the path of mathematics which is essentially combinatory; and that it is a completely different thing to consider matters resolved with the shapes that one can call the shapes of the revolution of a surface that gives us what ? After all nothing other than a volume, and it is not for nothing that it is called that. It is called that because it is constructed on the model, and it is not at all by chance, of something which is a rolled-up surface, a surface where one makes a roll, obviously. That takes up a particular little space. After that, you can take it in your hands and amuse yourself with it.

Turning a circle around an axis, is called a sphere. As I have said, turn this thing which I will call a triangle or simply an angle, according to whether I will limit it or not by a line which cuts the two sides, and you will have a cone, a conic section or an infinite cone according to the case.

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But there are things that do not behave at all like that, which do not for the moment need to see the space as constructed and which do extremely well.

As I told you, there are three fundamental shapes, the hole - we will come back to it - the torus, as I told you, the cross-cap.

(17) The torus does not seem to be very complicated. Take what ever you like, a ring of black pudding, a bicycle tube, simply, begin in your head to pose little problems. For example the following: make a cut like that in it, exactly like that; and if you have not already done so and if you have not already reflected on the torus, tell me how many pieces that will give, for example. Which proves to you that one can pose questions in this way with what are not, as I pointed out the last time, immediately intuited objects.

But we are not going to delay on these little toys, I simply want to point out to you how these figures are constructed in a simple and combinatory fashion. They are constructed in the following fashion: the most elementary shape of them that can be given is that of a four-sided figure whose sides are vectorialised.

What does this vectorialisation signify here? That signifies that we construct these figures by a suture, that we stitch what is called here an edge, I will spare you the intermediate definition of what edge means here, that it is in the sense of the vectorialisation, namely, that a point being here on the vector, the point (a) culminates at a point (a') which does not correspond to it in a metrical fashion but (18) which is its correspondent in an ordered way, in the sense that a point (b) which is more in the direction of the vector, will then be sewn, whatever it may be and whatever may be the metrically defined distance between (a') and (b'), sewn on to the point (b'). The same thing for the couple on the other side of the aforesaid construction.

It is obviously only strictly square here for the visual, Gestaltic intelligibility of the eye. I could just as well construct it as follows: I will put the same vectors and that would have exactly the same meaning. Why? Because it constructs a torus. How is a torus constructed? A torus is constructed, it is very easy to understand, and that is why I began with it, a torus is constructed by first of all suturing this side with the other, namely by making what for common intuition is a first cylinder, or if you wish, one can suppose that the space in the interval has some function or other - there are people like that, there is St. Thomas, there are people who always want to stuff their fingers into something. It is a human type.

They make black pudding all their lives. In any case if you want to fill it, you will then have a full roll and, starting from there, you can close this roll and you will obtain what is drawn here.

(19) What does that mean? It means that in a structure which is essentially of a spatial order, which has no history, you nevertheless introduce a temporal element.

In order for this to be fully determined you must connote one and one by the same number but by some number or some connotation which implies, only coming after the two operations. You cannot perform them at the same time. It does not matter which comes before the other; it will always have the same result, a torus,

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but it will not give the same torus, because in some instances that will give two tori, one crossing the other. It is even one of their more interesting functions.

So with that, it is a simple introductory exercise, what is a Klein bottle? A Klein bottle is a construction of exactly the same type, with the simple difference that, if the two vectorialised edges are vectorialised in the same direction, it is let us say in accordance with the torus mode, therefore that like the torus it is suitable for making a black pudding. The other opposite edges - as regards which it does not matter whether the operation of suturing is done before or after the other one, it will give the same result, but which ought to be done in a successive fashion - the two other edges are vectorialised in the opposite direction.

(20) I am going to show you right away on the blackboard what this involves, for those who have not yet heard tell of the Klein bottle. That involves something which, if you wish, in section, in section of course, not wanting to say anything in this register, since we are not introducing the third dimension of space; and in a way for common intuition, for the mapping out which is yours habitually in experience, and after all perhaps one can say customarily, because there is no objection to the dimensions of the topology of surfaces being more immediately accessible and familiar to you; it is enough for you to practice it a bit, this is even what is desirable; here is what this gives in section.

Good. What does that mean? That means that this, as I told you, is a section, namely, that there is here, let us say, a volume which is common, which has a conduit which passes through the centre; in other words this deserves to be called a bottle because, see here the body of the bottle and here is its neck, it is a neck which is supposed to be extended in such a way that, entering the body of the bottle, if you wish, to emphasise it better, I am going to show you the entrance here, it is going to be inserted, to be sutured, to the bottom of this bottle.

(21) So then, without even having recourse to my drawing, in words, in terms, you have a bottle, a Vittel bottle. You twist its neck, you make it go through the side wall of this bottle and you insert it onto the bottom of the bottle. At the same time this insertion opens and you can see that you have here something which is realised, with the characteristics of a completely closed surface, this surface is everywhere closed and nevertheless, one can get into its interior, as I might say, as into a mill.

Its inside communicates completely, integrally with its outside. Nevertheless this surface is completely closed.

This would only be a bit of physics-for-fun except of course for the fact that this bottle is capable of containing a liquid and even under ordinary conditions, as I am going to represent it for you, of not allowing it to be poured out, namely of containing it without one even needing to worry about a cork, this is something that the simplest reflection will allow you to conceive of. If you effectively stand this up, as I have drawn it, and you make it effectively function as a bottle, which is filled once it has its bottom in the air, but if you turn it upside down, put its bottom below, it is quite certain that the liquid will not pour out.

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(22) This, I repeat, is of strictly no interest. What is interesting is that the properties of this bottle are such that the surface in question, the surface which encloses it, the surface which composes it, has exactly the same properties as a Moebius strip, namely that there is only one face, as it is easy to verify and affirm.

So that, since this may also appear to be a bit of sleight-of-hand, and is not that at all despite the fact that it could pass for something analogous, an effect of sense, and that it is not at all in an analogical fashion that I intend to talk to you about it.

I am going to try to materialise it for you in a fashion that is completely clear: if we begin from the sphere, we could make of the sphere, a bottle; it is something that is not at all impossible. Supposing that this sphere is a rubber ball, you fold it back a bit like this, onto itself, it is not even necessary that here you have this little twist, it is clearer you can always make a cup out of it by pushing it into itself. I would even say that this is the way that the process of the formation of an animal body begins it is the blastula stage, after the morula stage.

(23) Here what do you have? You have an outside, an inside, an inside; the surface, an original series and an outside. You have, in realising something which can be a container, you have modified nothing of the function of the two faces of the surface with respect to the original sphere.

Something completely different happens, if first taking the sphere and making of it this strangled thing, you take one of the halves of the sphere and insert it into the other. In other words, I am schematising. (Drawing). Have you got it?

From the dumbbell of the double ball which I constructed here by strangulation, from this spherical surface I make, imagine that here is ball 1 ..... what I am going here ... the second ball has entered the interior; here you have the original outside, the inside, and what is brought face to face here is a surface of the first outside with the inside, no longer like in my blastula of above; the inside remaining always face to face. And the inside is here, from the second part of the surface. It that a Klein bottle?

No! To get to the Klein bottle something else is needed. But it is here that I am going to be able to explain something to you which is going to show you the interest of highlighting the aforesaid Klein bottle.

(24) The fact is that, suppose that there is some relationship, some structural relationship, as is all the same well indicated for a long time by the constancy, the permanence of the metaphor of the circle and of the sphere in all cosmological thinking, suppose that it is like this that one has to construct, to represent for oneself in a healthy fashion, that one has to construct what concerns precisely cosmological thinking. Cosmological thinking is founded essentially not on a bi-univocal correspondence but a structural one, the enveloping of the microcosm by the macrocosm; that this microcosm, call it whatever you wish subject, soul, *nous*, that this cosmos you can call whatever you wish reality, the universe, but suppose that one envelops the other and contains it, and that the one which is contained manifests itself as being, as it were, the result of this cosmos, that which corresponds to it member for member.

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It is impossible to extirpate this fundamental hypothesis, and it is from this that there dates a certain stage in thinking, which, if you follow what I said earlier, is about a certain use of language.

And this corresponds to it precisely in the measure, and uniquely in the measure, that in this register of thinking the microcosm, as is fitting, is not made up of a part of the world that is, in a way, turned inside-out in the way one turns a rabbit's skin inside-out.

(25) It is not earlier, like earlier, in my blastula as I drew it, the inside which is outside for the microcosm, it is well and truly also an outside that it has, and which is confronted with the inside of the cosmos. Such is the symbolic function of this stage where I am leading you to in the reconstruction of the Klein bottle.

We are going to see that this schema is, of course, essential for a certain mode of thinking and style, but to represent it for you, I will show you in detail and in the facts, a certain limitation, a certain unawakened implication in the use of language.

The moment of awakening, in so far, as I told you, I highlighted, as I located it historically in the *cogito* of Descartes, is something that is not at all immediately apparent, precisely in the measure that of this *cogito* one makes something that has a psychological value. But if one pinpoints exactly what is in question, if it is what I said, namely the making obvious of the function of the signifier, and is nothing other than the fact that the signifier represents the subject for another signifier, it is starting from this discovery that the supposedly pre-established pact of the signifier with some thing being broken, it is established, it is established in history, and since it is from there that science started, it is established that it is from this rupture, even (10) if immediately, and because simply it is taught only incompletely, and it is taught only incompletely because its final principle is not seen, that it is starting from there that a science can be inscribed, starting from the moment where there is broken this parallelism between the subject and the cosmos which envelopes it, and which makes of the subject, *psyche*, psychology, microcosm, it is starting from the moment that we introduce here a different suture, and one which I called elsewhere an essential buttoning point, which is the one that here opens up a hole, and thanks to which the structure of the Klein bottle is then, and only then, established, namely, that in the sewing which is done at the level of this hole, what is knotted is the surface to itself, in such a way that what we have up to the present taken as outside, is found connected to what we have located up to the present as inside, to what was located as inside, is sutured, knotted to the face that was located up to then as outside.

[Noises off] Is it visible, is it clear enough? Do you see from down there in the bad light? Here we have opened up an orifice crossing both what in my drawing symbolised the enveloping cosmos and what in my drawing symbolised the enveloped microcosm, and it is in this way that we rejoin the structure of the Klein bottle.

(27) Have you seen it enough? No? Well then I'll make it bigger. Otherwise we'll never understand anything. There it is now, completed.

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Are you beginning to see that? Are you beginning to see it? Have you grasped the essential of what I explained to you earlier, the structure of the Klein bottle? This blackboard must be really badly lit. Is there no light, since I see down there people craning their necks? It would all the same be important for you to see what I drew. I am leading you here along a difficult path, which given the time and the necessity for explanations will not lead you today directly to its relationship to language. So that, because we have no more than ten minutes, I will try to give you a little amusing explanation of it, whose general relationship with the field of analytical experience you will see.

There is more than one way of expressing this construction. I could give you for it the figure of Gagarin, the cosmonaut. Gagarin, the cosmonaut, apparently is well and truly enclosed - let us say, to simplify and to go quickly, we do not have much more time - like ancient man, in his wandering cosmos. From the biological point of view it is, moreover, between ourselves, allow me to point it out to you in (28) passing, something very curious and which could be punctuated with respect to the evolution of animal descendance. I remind you that it is very difficult to grasp, to grasp in any imaginable way, how an animal who regularly exchanged what he had need of, from the respiratory point of view, with the milieu in which he was plunged at the level of the bronchioles, to realise this absolutely fabulous thing, of being able to emerge out of the water, in the present case, by sending into his own interior, an important fraction of the atmosphere. From this evolutionary point of view, you can notice that Gagarin, in so far as he has the slightest responsibility in all of this, reduplicates the operation, he envelops himself in his own lung. Which requires him in the final analysis to piss inside his own lung, because after all it has to go somewhere. Hence the exemplary syllogism that I will have to develop for you in the future, following the famous syllogism: all men are mortal, Socrates is a man, therefore Socrates is mortal. I found useful for purposes that you will see better later on, but whose introduction is a caricature, a caricature of this famous syllogism on Socrates, that all cosmonauts are pissers, that Gagarin is a cosmonaut, therefore that Gagarin is a pisser.

(29) Which has about as much importance as the formula about Socrates! But let us leave that for the moment.

Far from Gagarin contenting himself with being a pisser, he is not a cosmonaut either. He is not a cosmonaut, because he is not wandering through the cosmos, whatever may be said about it; because the trajectory which carries him was, from the point of view of the cosmos, completely unexpected, and that one can say, in a certain sense, that any god who ever presided over the existence of a cosmos, never expected, never knew anything about the precise trajectory, the necessary trajectory in function of the laws of gravity, and which literally were not able to be discovered except by beginning from an absolute rejection of all cosmic facts. All the contemporaries of Newton rejected, indignantly, the possibility of the existence of an action a distance, of an action which is not propagated from neighbour to neighbour, because this was up to then, the law of the cosmos, the law of reciprocal interaction between its parts.

There is in Newton's law, in so far as it allows our little projectile which is called a Sputnik, to be something which is held in a perfectly stable way, at the level of a preconceived law; there is here something of an absolutely acosmic nature, as

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besides from this fact, from the very fact of this point of insertion, the whole development of modern science.

(30) And this is why that the opening that is involved here, namely, that the cosmos itself, that the little cosmos which allows Gagarin to subsist through the spaces, is something which depends on a construction of a profoundly acosmic nature.

It is with this, with the internal sphere, that we are dealing in analysis under the name of reality, an apparent reality which is that of the correspondence, in appearance, the modeling, one on the other, of something called the soul and something called reality. But compared to this apprehension, which remains the psychological apprehension of the world, psychoanalysis gives us two openings : The first, the one which from this forum, from this meeting place, where man believes himself to be the centre of the world, but it is not this notion of centre which is here the important thing in what is called, parrot-like, the Copernican revolution, under the pretext that the centre jumped from the earth to the sun, which is a clear disadvantage, namely, that from the moment that we believe that the centre is the sun, we also believe at the same time that there is an absolute centre, something that the ancients who saw the sun moving according to the seasons did not believe, they were much more relativist than we are. This is not what is important, it that is the psyche, the soul, the subject, in the sense that it is (31) employed in the theory of knowledge, is represented not as centre, but as the lining (*doublure*) of a reality which at the same time becomes cosmic reality.

What psychoanalysis uncovers for us is: this passage, this passage by which one comes to the between-the-two, on the other side of the lining, where this interval, this interval which appears to be what grounds the correspondence between the inside and the outside, where this interval - and this is the world of the dream, it is the other scene of action - is perceived.

Freud's *Heimlich*, and it is why it is at the same time *Unheimlich,* is that, it is that thing, this locus, this secret place where you walk the streets in this singular reality, streets that are so singular that it is on this that I will dwell the next time in order to begin again. Why is it necessary to give streets proper names?

You walk the streets then, and you go from street to street, from place to place, but one day it happens that without knowing why, you cross some limit or other that is invisible to yourself, and you come upon a place where you have never been, and which nevertheless you recognise as being that place where it reminds you of having always been there, and having returned a hundred times, you remember it now, it was there in your memory, like a sort of island apart, something not noticed which suddenly comes together for you.

(32) This place, which has no name, but which is distinguished by the strangeness of its setting, by what Freud highlights precisely so well, precisely the ambiguity which ensures that *Heimlich* or *Unheimlich* is one of those words where, in its own negation, we put our finger on the continuity, the identity between its front and its back. This place, which is properly speaking the other scene of action, because it is the one where you see reality, no doubt you know that it comes to birth as a set (*décor*), and you know that it is not what is at the other side of the set

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that is the truth, and that if you were there, in front of the stage, it is you who are at the other side of the set, and who are touching something that goes further in the relationship of reality to everything that envelops it.

At one time last year I appeared, or perhaps even something which might deserve it to be said that I spoke ill of love, when I said that its field, the field of *Verliebtheit*, is a field at once profoundly anchored in the real, in the regulation of pleasure, and at the same time fundamentally narcissistic.

Undoubtedly another dimension is given to us in this special conjunction; the way in which it happens along the most real paths, it is our companion when we come (33) to this special locus of experience, this is an indication that something, of a dimension that no one more than the romantic poet knew how to accentuate in a thrilling way. There are still other ways for us to make it heard, it is the path of non-sense, that of Alice, not in Wonderland, but precisely having carried out this crossing, this impossible crossing into the specular reflection, which is the passage to the other side of the mirror, it is that, *through the looking glass,* is presented as that which can have this singular encounter ....., it is this which in another dimension, I said, was explored by romantic experience, this is what is called, with a different accent, love.

But to come back from this place and to understand it, and for it to have been grasped, for it even to have been discovered, for it to exist in this structure which means that here, I encountered the structure of two opposed faces which allow this other scene of action to be constituted, it is necessary that elsewhere there has been realised the structure on which there depends the a-cosmicity of everything, namely that somewhere, what is called structure, the structure of language, is capable of responding to us, not at all of course, it is not a matter here in any way of something which prejudges the absolute adequation of language to the real, but of that which as language introduces into the real everything that is accessible to us in it in an operational fashion. Language enters the real and creates structure in it. We participate in this operation and by participating in it we are included, (34) implicated in a rigorous and coherent topology, so that every discovery, every decisive door pushed at a point of this structure, must be accompanied by the mapping out in a strict exploration, by the definite indication of the point where the other opening is. Here it would be easy for me to evoke the misunderstood passage of Virgil at the end of Chapter VI; the two gates of the dream, are exactly inscribed there; the gate of ivory, he tells us, and the gate of horn. The gate of horn which opens to us the field of what is true in the dream, and it is the field of the dream; and the ivory gate which is the one through which Anchises and Aeneas are sent back with the Sibyl towards the light, it is the one through which erroneous dreams pass, the ivory gate, the most captivating in the locus of the dream, the one most charged with error, is the locus where we believe ourselves to be a subsistent soul at the heart of reality.

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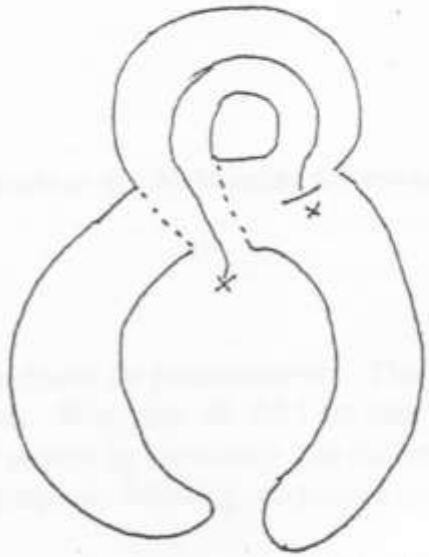

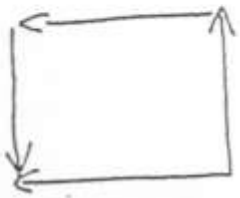

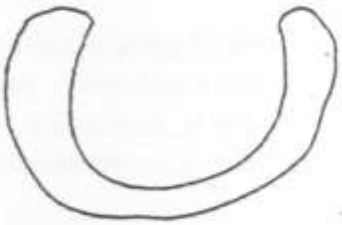

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Seminar 4: Wednesday 6 January 1965

Problems for psychoanalysis. This is how I agreed to situate my remarks for this year. Why, after all, did I not say: problems for psychoanalysts? The fact is that it is proved by experience that for psychoanalysts, as they say, there is no problem except the following: do people come to psychoanalysis or not?

If people come to their practice, they know that something is going to happen; this the firm position on which the psychoanalyst is anchored. They know that something is going to happen that might be qualified as miraculous, if one understands this term with reference to *mirare,* which at the extreme could mean to be astonished.

In truth, thank God, there still remains in the experience of the psychoanalyst, this margin that what happens is surprising for him. A psychoanalyst of the heroic epoch, Theodore Reik - it is a good sign, I have just remembered his first name, I had forgotten it this morning, while I was making my notes, and you will see that this has the closest relationship with my remarks today -Theodore Reik, then, entitled one of his books: *Der überraschte Psychologue*, the surprised
(2) psychologist. The fact is, in truth, that in the heroic period of psychoanalytic technique he belonged to, one had even more reasons than now to be astonished, for if I spoke earlier about a margin, it is because the psychoanalyst, step by step throughout the decades, has repressed this astonishment to his frontiers. It is perhaps that now also, this astonishment serves as a frontier for him; namely, to separate him from this world from which people come or do not come to psychoanalysis.

Within these frontiers, he know what is happening, or believes he knows. He believes he knows because he has traced out its paths. But if there is something that ought to remind him of his experience, it is precisely this share of illusion which threatens every knowledge which is too sure of itself. In Theodore Reik's time this author could give astonishment, *Überraschung,* as the signal, the illumination, the brilliance, which to the analyst designates that he apprehends the unconscious, that something has revealed itself which is of this order of subjective experience which happens all of a sudden, and moreover, not knowing how he did it, from the other side of the set (*décor*), that is the *Überraschung,* and it is on this path, along this way, on this trace that he know at least that he is on his own road.
(3) No doubt at the time Theodore Reik's experience began from, these paths were marked by darkness, and the surprise represented their sudden illumination. Lightning flashes, however brilliant they may be, are not enough to construct a world. And we are going to see that, where Freud saw there being opened the gates to this world, he did not yet know how to properly denominate either the frame or the hinges of these doors.

Is this enough to ensure that the analyst, in so far as he has been able since to map out the regular unfolding of a process, necessarily knows where he is, or even where he is going? Something can be mapped out without being thought and we

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have enough testimonies that many things about this process, and one could perhaps say almost all, in any case the ends, remain problematic for him.

The question of the ending of the analysis and of the sense of this ending is not at all resolved at the present time. I only evoke it here as a testimony of what I am putting forward concerning what I am calling the mapping out, which is not necessarily a reflected mapping out.

Undoubtedly there is something which remains assured in that experience, which is that it is associated with we will call effects of unknotting. The unknotting of things charged with sense which cannot be unknotted by other means, this is the (4) solid ground on which the analytic camp is established. If I use this term, it is precisely in order to designate what results from this closure from which I began my discourse today, breaking through or not the frontiers of the camp. The psychoanalyst has the right to affirm that certain things, symptoms, in the analytic sense of the term, which is not that of a sign but of a certain knot whose shape, tightening or thread have never been properly named, that a certain knot of signs to signs, and which is properly at the foundation of what one calls the analytic symptom, namely, something installed in the subjective, which cannot in any way be resolved by reasonable and logical dialogue.

Here the psychoanalyst affirms to the one who suffers from it, to the patient: “you will not be delivered from it, from this knot, except within the camp". But does that mean that there is here, for him, the analyst, more than an empirical truth in the measure that he only operates it, handles it, by reason of the experience that he has of the paths that are traced out in the artificial conditions of analytic experience? Does it mean that everything has been said at the level of what he can bear witness to from his practice, in terms of demands, transference, identification?

It is enough to note the stumbling, the inappropriateness, the insufficiency of the (5) references that are given to these terms of the experience, and to take only the first one, the major one, the turning-plate, transference, to note in the very text of analytic discourse, that properly speaking, at a certain level of this discourse, one can say that the person who carries it out has no idea of what he is doing. For the kind of irreducible residue which remains in all these discourses about transference, in so far as they have still not succeeded, any more than common, everyday language, any more than what has passed of it into the common representation of an affective relationship, as long as this has not been eliminated, since affective has precisely no other sense than that of irrational, one will see as regards one of these terms, transference, and I do not need to return to the others, darkness progressively deepening in the measure that one advances towards the other term of the series, identification, that nothing is grasped, that nothing is theorised about an experience, however sure may be the rules and the precepts accumulated up to now.

It is not enough to know how to do something - turn a vase or sculpt an object - to know what one is working on. Hence the ontological mythology about which the psychoanalyst has been attacked, quite correctly, when he is told: “these terms to which you refer, and which, in the final analysis point towards this confused ..... (6) locus of the tendency, and since it is to this that, in the common philosophy of

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psychoanalysis, the drive will finally and in an erroneous fashion be brought back; this then is what you are working on, you entify, you ontify, an immanent property into something substantial. Your man, the anthropology of the analyst, we already know for a long time, this old *ousia,* this soul, still as lively, intact, untouched as ever". But the analyst, though he does not name it exactly by its name, except with a little shame, it is all the same to it that he refers in his thinking, as a result of which he is quite rightly and quite justifiably completely exposed to the attacks, which as you know come at him from all sides where thinking is able, has a right, to claim that it is inadequate to speak about man as a given, of man in the numerous determinations which appear to him, internal as well as external, in other words, which present themselves to him as things, as fatalities, that man does not know that he is at the heart of these supposed things, of these supposed fatalities, that it is from a certain initial relationship, a relationship of production, of which he is the mainspring, that these things are determined, no doubt without his knowing it, nevertheless issuing from him.

It remains to be seen whether in rejoining by what I am teaching, those who correctly put in doubt the given, natural, status of the human being, it remains to be (7) seen whether by doing things in this way, I favour, as I was recently reproached for doing, and by someone very close to me, the resistance of those who have not yet crossed the frontier, who have not come to analysis, or whether the truth of what analysis contributes, can be, yes or no, a way into it. If in a certain fashion, to reject that a discourse may encompass analytic experience, and all the more legitimately because this experience is only possible because of a primordial determination of man by discourse, if by behaving in this way, by opening up the possibility of speaking about analysis outside the analytic field, I am or not favouring the resistance to analysis, and whether the resistance involved is not from within the resistance of the analyst to open his experience to something which might comprehend it.

Our starting point, our given, which is not at all a closed given, is the subject who speaks; what analysis contributes, is that the subject does not speak in order to tell his thoughts. There is no world, the intentional, significant reflection at whatever level it may be - this grotesque infatuated personage who is supposed to be at the centre of the world, predestined from all eternity to give it its sense and its reflection, do you see that this pure spirit, this consciousness announced from all time is supposed to be there as a mirror and to vaticinate - how can it happen then, let us always come back to it, that he may vaticinate in a language which of itself (8) creates an obstacle for him at every instant to manifesting what he experiences as surest in his experience, as is clearly manifested by the contradiction, always embraced by philosophers, between logic and grammar. Since they complain that it is grammar which contaminates their logic, how does it happen that people have always been so attached to speaking in a grammatical language with parts of discourse which ground like themselves, which reflect the pure mirrors, with parts of discourse which they affirm to be the parts that contaminate their logic, and that if they trust it, it is precisely at that moment that they will poke their fingers in their eyes.

We have an experience, an experience which is carried on every day in the office of every analyst - whether he knows it or whether he does not know it is of absolutely no importance - an experience which avoids us having to have recourse

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to this aspect of the philosophical critique, in so far as it bears witness to its own impasse, an experience in which we put our finger on the fact that because he is speaking, because the subject, the patient, speaks, namely, that he emits these raucous or sweet sounds that are called the material of language, which first determined the path of his thoughts, which determined him at first, to such a degree and in such an original fashion, that he carries the trace of it on his skin like a branded animal, that (9) he is identified at first by this something that may be widespread or restricted, but it is now perceived that it is much more restricted than believed, that a tongue can be contained on a sheet of paper of that size, with the list of its phonemes, and one may well try to continue to preserve the old splits and say that there are two levels in the tongue, the level which does not signify - these are the phonemes- and the others which signify, which are words. Well, I am here today to remind you, that the first apprehensions of the effects of the unconscious were realised by Freud in the years between 1890 and 1900. What gave him the model of it? The article of 1898 on the forgetting of a proper name, the forgetting of the name of Signorelli, as the painter of the celebrated frescoes at Orvieto. I would point out to you that the first manifest, structuring effect for him, for his thinking, and which opened the path was not produced, and he clearly highlighted it, he articulated it in such a well supported fashion in this article, which as you know was reproduced at the beginning of the book on the *Psychopathology of everyday life,* which would appear six years later. It was from there that he began again, because it was from there that his experience originated. What disappears in this forgetting - what is call forgetting - and from the first steps, you clearly see that what one must always pay attention to is the meaning, because of course, it is not a forgetting, Freudian (10) forgetting is a form of memory, it is even its most precise form; so that it would be better to distrust words like forgetting, *Vergessen.* Let us say a hole. What disappeared through the hole? Phonemes. What he is missing, is not Signorelli, in so far as Signorelli would remind him of things that would turn his stomach. There is nothing to be repressed precisely, as you are going to see, it is articulated in Freud; he does not repress anything, he know very well what is involved, and why Signorelli and the frescoes at Orvieto touched him profoundly, are linked to these things which most preoccupy him, the link between death and sexuality, nothing is repressed, but what disappears, are the first two syllables of the word Signorelli. And immediately, he says, he highlights: “this has the closest relationship with what we see with symptoms” - and at that time he still only knows the symptoms of the hysteric. It is at the level of signifying material that there are produced the substitutions, the slippages, the disappearing acts, the avoidances that one has to deal with when one is on the path, on the track of the determination of the symptom and of its unknotting.

Only, at that moment - even though his whole discourse is there to testify to us that he is so much at the quick of what is involved in the phenomenon and he (11) ceaselessly at every turn accentuates, as well as he can, what is involved - he says : “in this case it is an *ausserliche Bedingung*, an external condition”. Secondarily, when he comes back to it again, he will say : “one might object to me that there are” - which proves the point to which he senses clearly the difference between two types of phenomena which can be differentiated here - “there may be internally, in effect, some relations between the fact that what is in question is a stumbling on the name Signorelli, and the fact that Signorelli carries with it, given

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the frescoes at Orvieto, since that is what is involved, it carries with it many things which may interest me a bit more than I myself am aware of."

Nevertheless, he says : "one might object", because it is all he can say, because he knows well that this is not how things are, and we are going to try to see, to enter more deeply into the mechanism, and to demonstrate what in this original case, this model, the first to appear in Freud's thinking of something initial, crucial for us, we are going to see more in detail how it should be conceived, what systems are imposed on us in order to account exactly for what is involved, that we will find some help in this, from the fact that since that time there is something that we have learned to handle like an object, and which is of course called the system of the tongue, it is a help for us but all the more striking is the fact that the first testimony (12) of Freud, of his discourse when he approaches this field, leaves completely in reserve, absolutely outlined that there is absolutely nothing to add to his discourse, it is only necessary to add to it *signans* and *signatum*.

What we have here undoubtedly is the function of the proper name, as I announced to you I would be led to make use of it, take a certain interest in it. This notion of the proper name takes on an interest because of the privilege it has won in the discourse of linguists.

Rest easy! Those to whom I am speaking up to the present to a major extent, in the most *ad hominem* way, the analysts: rest easy! It is not only you who have problems with discourse. You are even precisely the ones who are best protected from it. I would like to tell you that the linguists do not manage too easily with the proper name. A considerable quantity of books have been published on this subject, which are for us, which ought to be for us very interesting to scrutinise in the proper sense of the term, to take bit by bit with notes. As I cannot do everything, I would really like, for example, someone to take responsibility for it in what are called the closed sessions that I am reserving this year in this course in trying to reintroduce into it the function of the seminar. A book, for example by Mr Bigo Brundal on : *Les parties du discours,* an excellent book published in Copenhagen by Munsgard. Another very attractive one by a Miss Sorensen which (13) is called : *The meaning of proper names,* also published in Copenhagen. There are places in the world where one can be occupied with interesting things, and not devote oneself entirely to creating atom bombs. And then there is *The story of proper names* by Sir Allen H Gardiner, a well known Egyptologist, published by Oxford University Press, this one is particularly interesting and I would say "extraordinary". It is really a *summa*, a sort of concentrated point on the subject of proper names, of everything that one could describe as consummate, obvious, apparent, displayed error.

This error like many others, has its origin on the paths of truth, namely, that it begins from a little remark which had some sense on the paths of the *Aufklärung*. He remarks that John Stuart Mill, setting up a fundamental difference between the function of the noun in general - nobody up to the present has said what a noun is, but they talk about it - of the noun in general, it has two functions, to denote or to connote. There are nouns which carry in themselves possibilities of development, this sort of riches which is called definition, and which in the dictionary refer you on indefinitely from noun to noun. That, that connotes. And then there are others which are made in order to denote. I call by his name someone who was present

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here in the first row or in the last one, apparently that only concerns them. I am (14) only denominating him. And starting from there, we will define the proper name as something which only intervenes in the nomination of an object, by reason of the proper virtues of its sonority, it does not have, outside this denotation effect, any kind of significant import. This is what Mr Gardiner teaches us.

Of course this has only some very small disadvantages: for example to force him, at least in a first phase, to eliminate all the proper names - they are numerous - which carry a sense in themselves. Oxford, you can cut it in two and that gives something. That refers to something which has a relationship to an ox and so on ..... I am taking his own examples. Villeneuve, Villefranche, these are proper names, but at the same time they have a meaning. That of itself should make us prick up our ears. But, of course, it is said, it is independently of this meaning that it has, that this serves as a proper name. Unfortunately, it is obvious that if a proper name had no meaning whatsoever, when I introduce someone to someone else, absolutely nothing would happen. While it is clear that if I present myself to you as Jacques Lacan, I am saying something which, right away, involves a certain number of signifying effects for you. First of all because I introduce myself to you (15) in a certain context, if I am in a society, it is because I am not an unknown in this society, on the other hand from the moment that I introduce myself to you as Jacques Lacan, that already rules out that I am a Rockefeller, for example, or the Comte de Paris. There are already a certain number of references which come immediately with a proper name. It may also happen that you have already heard my name somewhere. Then of course it is enriched. To say that a proper name, in a word, is without meaning, is something grossly erroneous. On the contrary it carries with itself much more than meanings, a whole sum of notices.

One cannot in any case designate as its distinctive feature, this arbitrary or conventional character, because that is by definition the property of any kind of signifier, as people have sufficiently insisted, rather awkwardly moreover, on this aspect of language, by emphasising that it is arbitrary and conventional. In reality, it is something different that is aimed at, it is something else that is involved.

It is here that we see the value of this little model that in different shapes, but in reality always the same ones, I am discussing before you, I am speaking about those who have been my listeners in this place since my course of this year and that the others know well for a long time, my Moebius strip, my Klein bottle from the (16) last time, this is what is involved. This is what it returns from, from a model, from a support which it is absolutely not proper to consider as being addressed only to the imagination, because first of all I wanted to make you, as it were, touch with your little comprehender something here, there, behind the forehead, which is characterised precisely by the fact that it does not comprehend, and it is there that Freud in his first attempts placed his hands on the head of the patient whose resistance he wished precisely to lift. It was one of the primitive forms of this operation.

It is not so easy to operate, here, with these topological models. It is no easier for me than for you. It sometimes happens that when I am completely alone I get mixed up. Naturally, when I come before you, I have done my exercises.

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So then, to take up my schema from the last time, this kind of little jelly fish, this little floating nautilus; under which I have been left all sorts of figures which ought to clarify the situation for you a good deal. Are you able to see?

If I schematised this Klein bottle for you in this way the last time, namely, in the way that the mathematicians, who are not a bad crowd, tried to blow up, as I might say, this Klein bottle, to amuse the public, if I represent it for you in this way, (17) exactly as the mathematicians have done, for there is a whole aspect of mathematics which happily is introduced from the angle of recreation. A Klein bottle is not complicated. You can have one made. Someone even proposed that we should have a little shop on the way in here where everyone could get his little Klein bottle. It would be a sign of recognition. A Klein bottle does not cost very much, especially if you order a run of them.

As I explained to you, it is a bottle, it is this one here, a bottle whose neck has entered the interior and has, as I have explained to you, inserted itself onto the bottom of the bottle. And if, in addition, you blow up a little this neck that has gone in, then you have this very pretty schema of a double sphere with one comprehending the other, and, as I think you understood the last time, this is a particular happy way to make you put your finger, in the most original way, on the advantage of this model which man discovered very early, in this double and conjugated image of the microcosm and the macrocosm, namely that it would be for me a game that unfortunately I have not the time to devote myself to, I am sketching it out for you, to show you, for example, the first Chinese astronomy, which is a work of genius, I assure you, the first Chinese astronomy, which is (18) called *ka inh tien,* was composed of an earth formulated in this way, of a heavens which overlapped it like a bowl on top of a bowl and ..... the roots of the heavens being supposed to plunge into something which one tended rather to consider as aqueous and which was borne up as an upturned bowl would be borne up on the water.

This allowed, much more than the very exact mapping out of a certain number of geographical and astronomical coordinates, a whole conception of the world. Order, the order of thoughts as of things and the order of society, being entirely inscribed in a more or less analogical, homological fashion with respect to what such a schema allowed to be marked out about the relationships of what one could call the vertical coordinates, the coordinates to the azimuth, to the equatorial co-ordinates. When you are in China, of course, the North Pole was placed more or less like that, like a bonnet inclined at an angle, and then the ecliptic pole - people knew perfectly well that it was different - was marked out to one side, that could lend itself to all sorts of differentiations, analogies, as I told you, of classificatory inter-knottings, of correspondences in which everyone could find his place more easily than elsewhere.

This fundamental schema - I am bringing in Chinese astronomy for you, it is an example - you will always find this fundamental schema at every level of metamorphosis in a culture, more or less enriched but obviously the same, more or (19) less dented but with the same outcomes, I mean the necessary outcomes that are more or less camouflaged, because, obviously, here one does not know what is happening, but just as at the basis of analytical experience, one can also dispense with knowing what is happening, namely where the point of suture is, the point of

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the suture between what I could call the outer skin of the interior, and what I could call the inner skin of the exterior.

No doubt analysis, as I told you, has taught us a certain way into the between-the-two, a certain fashion that the subject may have, in a way, of exiling himself with respect to his situation within the two spheres, the internal sphere and the external sphere, he may manage to put himself in the between-the-two, a strange place, the place of the dream and of *Unheimlichkeit*.

In short, if you will allow me to cut to the quick, I would say that the question is the following: "When you have once held between your hands, and this would be perhaps a reason to expand in effect the model of this botttle, this Klein bottle, you can pour water into it through the only orifice that it presents to you who are holding it like an object. It will pass here then, along this little swan's neck, and will come to lodge itself here in this between-the-two, thus realising a certain level. By the inverse operation, you can get a few mouthfuls to come out of it, you can (20) even drink from this bottle, but you will see that it is malicious, because once the water has been introduced into the inside it is not all that easy to get it all out."

Here we pass onto the plane of metaphor. What does it mean, in short, to explore the field of the dream or of the uncanny in analysis? It is to try to see what is stuck, as one might say, between the two spheres of a meaning, of a signified, which at first, of which at first the mixture there was made up. One puts some signified into circulation. It is a matter of knowing to what purpose. If we trust the ..... that I am expecting from this little image, it ought to be to evacuate it purely and simply, it is not to put it back again in the inside. It is not in order for us to reconstruct a soul with this soul, which already encumbered us sufficiently, of this slack (*ballant*) which resisted like, we do not know exactly either the mode or the equilibrium or the constrictions of this emptiness, played on like an absolutely unmasterable ballast, because it is enough to complicate this figure a little bit - I leave this to your fantasy and to your imagination - for you to see that with this single condition, of inscribing some little chambers in it, one can make an instrument of particular stability, an instrument for example that it is enough to incline a tiny little bit for it to precipitate itself immediately and tip over onto the ground, the (21) objective goal of the evacuation of meaning is all the same the first aspect suggested by the aims of our experiment. Up to certain degree, how does it happen that it does not occur more easily. It is because of the deceptive properties of the figure. I will try to explain myself and make you understand what I mean on this occasion.

The figure, the Klein bottle, is drawn here precisely in a deceptive way because it is the way in which effectively the structure deceives us, it is the way in which it seems that our consciousness, that our thinking, that our power to signify, reduplicates like an internal lining what seems to envelope it, which means that all you have to do is to turn the object inside out and you will create this idea of the subject of knowledge, who for his part inversely envelops the object of the world that he proposes.

Only when I said earlier that this does not mean advancing something which is of an intuitive order, that what we have here is not at all even an outline of a new

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transcendental aesthetics, that I invited you to distrust the imaginative properties of what I wrongly called the model, it is because a true Klein bottle - if I may express myself in this way introducing for the first time here the word truth and at the appropriate level - a true Klein bottle does not have this shape, this shape in which (22) I draw it for you roughly, namely for clarity, in the form of a transversal section, and that, you naturally imagine, as I might say in its volume, I mean, in its roundness. You make each one of its parts revolve around itself, cylindrify itself, which allows you to see [it].

But note that a topological surface is something which requires the distinction between two kinds of these properties, the properties inherent to the surface, and the properties that it takes on from the fact that you put this surface into what is, for its part, real three-dimensional space.

In the same way, everything that can be imaged here about the fundamental meaning of the microcosm/macrocosm relationship, has sense only to the degree that the inherent subjective properties of this topology are immersed in the space of common representation, of what is usually called intersubjectivity, a word that for years I heard a certain number of people, supposedly working with me, gargling at the back of their throats, believing that they held in this word intersubjectivity the equivalent of my teaching. That it is the fact that a subject understands another subject, that a viscount encounters another viscount, that a policeman encounters another policeman, which constitutes the foundations of the mystery and the essence of psychoanalytic experience.

(23) The dimension of intersubjectivity has absolutely nothing to do with the question that we are in the process of elucidating. We can try to approach the true shape, always for your convenience, by putting it into our three-dimensional space. But you are going to see what it is going to suggest to you, about the impasses that are involved in our experience along any other path.

In its essence, what is this Klein bottle? It is quite simply something that is very close to a torus. I mean of a cylinder that you bend back so that it rejoins itself by the suture of two circular cuts which terminate, since this is a truncated cylinder, by which means you will make what is called a ring.

Instead of that, suppose that in this truncated cylinder that you are in the process of transforming into a torus, you leave the circular cut open here, but that this, the other circular cut that it is a question of suturing, you bring, as this little drawing images it for you, in such a way as to leave it open or in such a way that the suture or the stitching - you may evoke your household tasks - where the stitching is done, as one might say, from the inside, in such a way, if you wish, take the example f a sock, here the outside of the sock is going to be joined, be continuous with the inside of the other part of the sock, and the same here on the other side. You will then be able to do what? If you do not plunge it back into the three-(24) dimensional space of common intersubjectivity, you will have something which is open and closed at the same time, because these surfaces only cross one another in the measure that you are in three-dimensional space. As regards their internal property as surfaces, there is no need to suppose that they cross one another to culminate at this stage of suture.

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It is exactly the same schema as the one that I reminded you of when, representing for you the fundamental shape of a Moebius surface, which is this sort of lamina as you may picture it by taking a simple strip and tying it to itself after a simple half-turn, you could only close it by a surface which cuts itself, and if this surface does not cut itself, the Moebius surface will cross it. This is a necessity implied by the plunge into three-dimensional space, but in no way defines in itself the properties of the surface. You will tell me, we are in this three-dimensional space. Well then, in effect, let's go.

Even in three-dimensional space, it remains that this structure has a privileged quality which distinguishes it from any other and which is the following. That which comes to occupy in my schema, the circumference of this entrance, of this hole, of this orifice which specifies it and which makes of it this surface where things are not orientable because they can always go from the front to the back, the (25) place of this opening is essential, structuring, for the properties of the surface. It can be occupied by any point whatsoever of the surface, as a little bit of imagination will be enough to show you, that contrary to a ring, to a torus, which can only in a way turn upon itself, you can make it remain at the same place, but it turns in its whole fabric in a completely contrary way here, since at every place in the fabric there can be produced by a subtle slippage this ring of lack which gives it its structure.

This is not properly speaking what we are trying to consider today concerning the phenomena which, from forgetting to the proper name, the thesis is the following: everything that the theoreticians, and specifically the linguists, have tried to say about the proper name, always stumbles against the fact that, undoubtedly, it is more specially indicative, denotative, than an other, but that people are incapable of saying why. That on the other hand, it has precisely, compared to the others, this property that while being in appearance the most proper name for something particular, it is precisely what is displaced, what travels, what one bequeaths, and in a word, if I were an entomologist, what would I most desire in the world, if not one day to see a tarantula called by my name? What does that mean? Why is it that the proper name, while being supposedly this part of discourse which has the (26) characteristics which absolutely specify it, why precisely is it what one can employ, contrary to what is said on occasion - for one cannot imagine the kind of slippages of the pen such a subject has given rise to among linguists - it can be used perfectly well in the plural as everyone knows, one says the Durands, the Pommodores, anything and everything, the Brosse-à-rebours, in Courteline, you remember the Brosses-à-rebours man: the honour of the Brosse-à-rebours. One can use a name verbally, in function of verbs, in function of adjectives, indeed of adverbs as perhaps I will one day let you put your finger on.

What is this proper name in the ambiguity of this indicative function, which seems to find the compensation of the fact that its referential properties are still not specifically that they belong to the field of signification, become the properties of displacement, of a jump.

Must we say at this level, which is I believe what Claude Lévi-Strauss ends up with in his thinking, and in what he articulates at the level of the chapter on universalisation and particularisation, of the chapter on the individual as a species, in *La pensée sauvage*, he tries to integrate, to show, that the proper name attaches

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nothing more specific than the consciously classificatory usage that he gives to the categories in their opposition, so that, in thinking, in its relationship with language, (27) it determines a certain number of fundamental oppositions, of successive cross-checkings, of splits which, in a way, allow savage thinking to rediscover exactly the same method as the one that Plato gives as being the fundamental one for the creation of the concept.

And our proper name would only be, when all is said and done, inserted as the final term of this classificatory process, the one which circumscribes things closely enough to finally reach the individual as a precisely particular point of the species.

It is clear - I would ask you to refer to these chapters - that in the very movement of elucidation for which he strives, Lévi-Strauss encounters the obstacle, and that he designates it, he designates it, he designates it properly speaking in the fact that he encounters, that he encounters the function of the giver of the name. The proper name is the name that is given. By the godfather, you will say, and this in fact may be enough for you if you are resolved to make of the godfather, the someone other. Only it is not only the godfather, there are also all sorts of rules, there are phases, there is a whole configuration which is a configuration of exchange and of social structure, and it is here that Claude Lévi-Strauss will stop to say, quite correctly, that the problem of the proper name cannot be treated without introducing a reference that is foreign to the properly linguistic field, that it (28) cannot be isolated as a part of discourse outside of the function, of the usage which undoes it.

It is very precisely against this, that here I would raise an objection from another register. It is just as false to say that the proper name is here, the circumscribing, the reduction to the level of a unique example, the same mechanism by which one has preceded from the genus to the species, and through which one has advanced the classification, is just as false to do it, and just as dangerous, and just as heavy with consequences as to confuse, in the mathematical theory of sets, what is called a subset, which comprehends only a single object, with this object itself.

And it is here that those who are mistaken, who are committing errors, that those who plunge very deeply and persevere in their error, end up by becoming for us an object of proof. Bertrand Russell has identified the proper name to such an extent with the denotative and the indicative, that he finished up by saying that the demonstrative, the demonstrative "that", as he says in his tongue, is the proper name *par excellence*. One has to ask why he does not call this point x on the blackboard which is familiar to me, why he does not call it Anthony, for example, and this piece of chalk Honorine.

Why does this sort of result appear to us immediately to be absurd? There are many ways of leading you along the path where I want to lead you and first of all, (29) for example, the following which may immediately strike you as obvious, nobody in his right mind would think of this, because by definition, if I put this point on the board here in a mathematical demonstration, it is precisely in the measure that this point is essentially replaceable, and that is also why I would never call this piece of chalk Honorine.

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On the contrary I could call by this name what Diderot called “my old dressing gown” . This is only a *hint* which introduces the function of the replaceable and at the same time, instead of, and for today, given the time, to make right away the leap which will allow us to articulate better, to link up the next time, I would say that it is not as an example, circumscribed as unique through a certain number of particularities, however exemplary they may seem to be, that the particular is denominated with a proper name, it is in the fact that it is irreplaceable, namely that it can be lacking, that it suggests at the level of lack, the level of the hole, and that it is it not *qua* individual that I am called Jacques Lacan, but *qua* something which may be lacking, which means that this name will be for what? To cover over another lack. The proper name, as one might say, is a movable function, and one can say that there is a share of the personnel, of the personnel of the tongue, on the occasions when it is movable (*volante*).

(30) It is designed to fill the holes, to be a shutter, to close it down, to give it a false appearance of suture. That is the reason, I apologise, it is too late for me to speak for very long more today, but perhaps this is only an opportunity for you, and God knows, one that is easy to take, to consult the texts, to consult the texts which concern this forgetting of the proper name.

What will you see there? You will see there something which can be much better imagined if you begin from the notion that the subject is inherent in a certain number of privileged points of the signifying structure which are in effect - this is the part of Gardiner's discourse that is true - to be put at the level of the phoneme. This means that one should highlight the following, that if Freud did not evoke the name Signorelli, he says, it is because of circumstances which are apparently quite external, quite contingent, he was with a gentleman in a carriage which was taking him to Ragusa, towards a place where he was to take the train again. What are they talking about? They are talking about a certain number of things. And then there are the things that are not said. And why are they not said? This is what we are going to see. They are certainly not said because they are repressed, far from it.

(31) He is speaking then with this man, whose name has been preserved for us by the curiosity of the biographers, it is a Mr Freyhau, a legist, a man of law from Vienna, and they are talking about one thing and another; and in particular Freud evoking, evoking what a friend has told him recently, Freud evoking it, speaks about the people of this country, which they are not properly speaking in the process of crossing, because they are in Dalmatia, but which is not far, it is Bosnia, it is Bosnia still preserving all the traces of a Muslim population - it was not long since Bosnia had been wrenched from the Ottoman empire - Freud remarks the degree to which these peasants are what? Respectful, deferential, excellent as regards the one who takes care of their health, in short the person who is working among them as a doctor, and evoking what his friend had told him, and we also have his name, thanks to Freud this time, in the notes of the article of 1898 which I spoke to you about a little earlier, that these people, when one is led to tell them that undoubtedly their relation who is there on his stretcher is going to die - “Herr!”, says the peasant, the Bosnian peasant, “Sir”, but with a note of reverence that, in a country with an archaic social structure, the note of reverence that this name involves, an accent which could easily mean Lord, *Herr*, "we know well that if you could have done something, undoubtedly it would have been done,

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he would have been cured. But since you cannot, since things are happening as God wishes (32) them to happen, it is in short, it is the will of Allah."

This is what Freud recounts. And what does he not recount? He does not tell things, God knows, that one does not tell just like that to just anyone, and very especially not to someone before whom, precisely, one has just elevated medical dignity, however little, one does not tell him that your same friend, a doctor in the Bosnian region, told you that for these people the value of life is so linked, is linked essentially to sexuality that, from the moment that as regards that there is nothing more, well, one may as well lose one's life also.

Now, no doubt, this is a term which is not at all indifferent to Freud from whatever angle it is taken, at this stage of his life, one can certainly not say in any case that it is a knot, a link which is in any way rejected by him, since it is precisely in the measure that this interests him from two points of view, first of all his practice, remember the text, for those at least who still have it fresh in their memories, remember the function that brings into play another proper name, the name of a little village, of a little village which is at the bottom of the col of Stalvio, which is called Trafoi, where he had received the news, precisely, of the death of one of his patients who had not been able to tolerate a decline in his potency and who had killed himself; he had received the news when he was at Trafoi.

(33) On the other hand everyone knows well that at this precise moment, it was on the fundamental, psychical, structuring, importance of the functions of sex, and of the attachment of the subject to everything that arises from it, that his thinking is directed. It is precisely in this measure that he will not put forward, that he will not put forward, what he could report about what he has heard, in a way, as another characteristic of his particular clientele as a doctor.

What does that mean? What does it mean that something which is not repressed, which is re-evoked, a discourse, a discourse perfectly formulated for him, and that he does not even need to make an effort to re-evoke, he re-evokes it immediately when he notices what is happening, what does that mean that the effect, not at all of a repression but of a discourse that has been withdrawn, *unterdrückt,* to use the same word that we have within our reach in Freud's vocabulary, to interest oneself about the subject of the articulation, of the distinction, of the definition between *unterdrückt* and *verdrängt,* has never been properly articulated. Here is a *Rede*, a discourse, a discourse that knitted on the silk stocking this bizarre way ,a discourse which goes outside, it is *ausdrückt,* if you give to *aus* not the sense that it has in to express, but to go outside, *hinaus*.

(34) So what then? How does that happen? Why does it happen? And what is happening so that something is disturbed at that particular moment, and it is here, it is on this that Freud puts the accent, something is disturbed which has as a result that from Signorelli, what emerges? The fact is, that in this singular phenomenon, which we are calling forgetting here, and which I told you earlier was just as much a mechanism of memory, before the hole that it produces and that everyone knows by his experience, everyone knows what happens when we are searching precisely the proper name that we cannot manage to find. Well then, things happen. A metaphor occurs, substitutions are produced, but it is a very singular metaphor, for

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this metaphor is completely the inverse of the one whose function, whose creative function of sense, of meaning, of sounds, of pure sounds, I articulated for you, which come, and why bizarrely this *Bo* of Botticelli, a term so close to Signorelli, so close that there is even more to it than Freud said, that it is not only the *elli* that remains afloat it is even the *o* of Signor. Boltraffio, no doubt here the other part is furnished by Trafoi, but again this *bo* and this *bo* is found by Freud immediately, he know very well where it comes from, it comes from another couple of proper names, which are properly speaking Bosnia and Herzegovina. And the *Her* of Herzegovina, is what?

(35) This *Herr* of the story, this *Herr* around which there turns then something. Is it not here -I leave the text, Freud's text - for what I want to show you is that if everything happens as if from the fact of the accommodation of the subject to the *Herr*, powerfully illuminated by the conversation, put at the high point of the emphasis in what one of the subjects had confided to the other which make of both one and the other of the subjects the confidants, it is as if the *bo* came here to place itself, somewhere, at a marginal point.

And what does it designate if not the place where the *Herr*, says Freud, what Freud does not say in this first feeling his way, because he cannot yet see it, articulate it, because the notion has not even come to the light of day, has not even fully emerged in analytic theory, what he does not see is that the disturbance that is involved here is essentially linked to identification. This *Herr* that is involved, and this *Herr* which on this occasion has kept all its weight and all its vigour, which does not want to let itself go with this simple legal chap, to go a bit far in medical confidences, the fact is that it is the doctor, the *Herr*, becomes Freud for once identified with his medical personage which takes every precaution with the other.

But what does he lose there? He loses his shadow, his doubt, which is not perhaps so much, as the text says, the Signor, this is perhaps to go too far as one always (36) goes in translating, in the sense of making sense.

I would be more inclined, for my part, to see that the *o* of Signor is not lost at all, and is even reduplicated in this Boltraffio, that Botticelli has proved that it is the sign, the sign which is just as much the *signans* as the Sigmund Freud. It is the place of his desire properly speaking, in so far as it is the true place of his identification which here finds itself placed at the point of scotoma, at what is in a way the blind point of the eye, and because all of this is so closely related to what last year I evoked with you concerning the function of the look in identification that - do not omit the following which is in the text and just as powerfully articulated and left without a solution - which is that Freud notes that in several of the cases that he has thus highlighted, there is produced something quite singular at the very moment that he fails to find the name of this Signorelli whom he admires so much, what is it that ceaselessly - allow me to anticipate my own discourse - what is it that ceaselessly looks at him?

I say I am anticipating because it is not what Freud tells us. He tells us that at this moment, during the whole time that he was looking for the name Signorelli - and he finished by finding it, someone gave him this name, he did not rediscover it himself - during all this time, the figure of Signorelli, which is in the frescoe at

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(37) Orvieto, somewhere on the bottom left, with his hands joined, the figure of Signorelli never ceased to be present to him, endowed with a particular brilliance.

Here I return the ball to someone who, attentive to my remarks, recently posed me the question: “What do you mean exactly, what is it that remains written in the text of your seminar when you said: where the subject sees himself from, is not the place from which he looks at himself.”

And remember also what I told you a picture was, a true picture. It is look. That it is the picture which looks at the person who falls within its field and in its capture, that the painter is the one who makes the look of the other fall before him.

Signorelli here, and in the very measure that there gleams in this false identification, in this fallacious overlapping of the surface to which Freud limits himself, to which he holds and refuses to give his whole discourse, what he loses there of this circumscribed identity, of this hole of the lost name and of this sign, of this sign incarnated to the very end by a sort of extraordinary chance of destiny which is here truly written, written in a signifier, of what emerges there; but the figure, the figure projected before him, of the one who no longer knows from where he sees himself, the point from which he looks on himself, because this S of the schema in which I showed you that there is constituted the primordial identification, the identification of the unary trait, the identification of the I, from (38) which somewhere, for the subject everything takes its bearings, this S of course, for its part, has no point, it is the reason why it is outside, that the point of birth, the point of emergence of some creation which can be of the order of reflection, of the order of what is organised, as a secret, of what is located, of what is established as intersubjectivity, this sudden illumination which is given to the very image of the one whose name is lost, of the one who make himself present here as lack, it is truly, and Freud leaves the matter suspended for us, leaves us in a way in suspense , leaves us unable to answer the riddle, as one says on this subject, it is the apparition of the point of emergence in the world, of the point of sudden appearance, through which that which in language can only be expressed by the lack, comes to be.

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Seminar 5: Wednesday 13 January 1965

You should know that I ask myself whether I satisfy, as well as I am able, the duties of my discourse. It is not enough for me to receive compliments, that for example the last time the *faena* was very successful. What it may involve in terms of eloquence is a kindness towards my listeners, and not, as people in more than one place pretend to assure themselves, a source of satisfaction for me. And these sort of compliments, especially when they come to me from the place to which I am addressing a precise message, leave me still more disappointed.

But moreover, if there are points in this gathering where I know very well who I am addressing, there is a whole section, a whole section of these faces that I see and see again to the point that in the end I can finally pick them out, recognise them, regarding whom I have questioned myself as to what motivated there presence here. And this is one of the reasons for which I wished to establish the closed Wednesday of my seminar. Properly speaking, it is what will give again a sense to this word seminar, in so far as I hope that certain people will contribute to it.

(2) It is on this occasion, that having requested people to ask me for the right to admission, which is not designed to refuse anyone but quite the contrary, I also had the opportunity, which was precious for me, not just simply to see, I am capable from all kinds of echoes of imagining what may be gathered by so many ears straining to follow my discourse, but to gather from their lips the testimony of what each one of that part of my audience seems effectively to be seeking in what they come to listen to here.

There are those who tell me quite bluntly that they do not comprehend everything, but who afterwards, quite inconsiderately, sometimes come to bear witness to me that they reproach themselves for having done so, and that at times they found themselves to be stupid. Let them reassure themselves; they are not the only ones and they have the advantage over the others that they are aware of it.

What is meant by the fact that they do not comprehend everything? That they do not comprehend, and with good reason, because I cannot here provide them with a whole context, which is that of the supporting points on which I am trying to establish for you what seems to me can be concluded from an experience, the analytic experience, which I have necesarily taken further than they have - I am speaking about the part of my audience to whom I just now alluded. This context I cannot, I mean what allows me here to highlight for one or other more experienced section of my audience, what precise correspondences can be found to (3) the formulae which, issuing from my experience, are not entirely legible for all, in a certain style of research: precisely for example, the last time, those researches into the proper name where the vacillation, indeed the weakness, the striking paradox of the formula of one particular thinker, gave us the means of verifying, which assures us of being - when we tackle a point of consistency, of internal consistency, of a coherence that I could say is global for all our

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experience, like the one I put forward the last time under the rubric of identification - which bears witness to us that in connection with the proper name, not alone the linguists but the logicians even, let us say the word, it is not unworthy to be pronounced when Bertrand Russell is involved, thinkers, hesitate, go into a skid, indeed make a mistake, when they approach this point of identification, in connection with the privileged usage the proper name is supposed to have as designating the chosen means of indicating the location of the particular, taken as such.

Undoubtedly here, we analysts are responsible, I mean that we cannot be dispensed from making our contribution, if our experience allows us to bear witness to a function of oscillation, of vacillation, of particularly indicative dynamic through which the function of the proper name finds itself taken up into something which is (4) indeed our field, the field of psychoanalytic experience, it deserves to be designated as I do it, in a certain more integrating, more specific fashion than any other, since it involves the subject. That is why it is not at all necessary that all those who are here should yet have present, at the level of their knowledge, of their culture, let us say, these terms of reference, that there can remain in this regard many points to hold on to, suspended hooks, points where they will be able later, further on, to find their feet again in the furrow of the lines to which they will undoubtedly have to refer. They will have nothing to lose in their progress by remembering here the guiding thread they may have found in it and in many this feeling of the guiding thread, of the *Leitfaden,* is given to me in a way which is not ambiguous and which assures me that language does not need to be charged with explicit erudition, with references, which the field I have to cover prevents me from being able to give you a list of every time, that they do not need all of that in order to sense that in one or other of their particular works, my discourse serves them as this guiding thread. That is why the door of this seminar is open as of right to all of those who contribute in a fashion that I believe I understand, and whose testimony I think I can be sure of, even if they do not intend, for reasons which in (5) certain cases are quite legitimate, to be in too much of a hurry to contribute to it. Each and every one, to whom I sense that this radical discourse which our experience, the analytic experience is, contributes in a close or a distant way such help, it is the presence of all of these that I wish to have and they can be sure that I will not refuse it to them.

The demand that I have made is not therefore an exigency designed, as I might say to perform an act of allegiance, to bow one's head under some archway or other at the entrance. It is a desire to know to whom I am speaking and to what degree I may have to respond more precisely to their question. It should be noted moreover, that apart from certain eminent and remarkable exceptions, I was surprised, I am pointing it out to you, it is not a lack for me, I am waiting, I was surprised perhaps by the lack of eagerness, of those who, having a greater right to come here or precisely to make a contribution, did not think, for one reason or another, perhaps because they felt that they had already acquired in advance their right of entry, did not expressly specify what I was expecting from them in terms of something more articulated, namely, in what measure they will be disposed to bring, here then, to this circle, this more restricted circle, the contribution of their work.

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I think then that I have sufficiently specified, repeated, repeated in time since we (6) are only a fortnight away from what will be the first Wednesday that I have described - you have heard in what sense - a closed Wednesday. I am forced to return to the formula even though you sensed that it is not at all to be taken in any way, in an exclusive sense; this closed Wednesday means that there will only enter those who will at that date, be provided with the card that expressly invites them.

Let us come back to our remarks; the one on which I left you the last time. What is meant, what was indicated by the moment at which we had arrived? Where will I take up today, what is the meaning of this tiny apparatus regarding which some people have remarked on what I would call, or what they have called, the tenderness with which I modulated for you the shape of this Klein bottle? What is this fantasy? Must one understand here any thing more than a parable? And as very often, for some people the question seems to be new, what am I getting at with these models?

I think that I have sufficiently designated the point for which I introduced this special model, among others, because it forms part of a family - it is not at all alone - it is associated with what I called on occasion, evoking them more or less for your usage, the torus and the cross-cap, with this fundamental introduction of what can distinguish one and the other in so far as there intervenes or not this particular surface that is knotted in a specific fashion to itself, which gives it, if it is drawn, or (7) if it is isolated in a strip, the singular property of only having one face, only one edge, the Moebius surface as I called it.

My discourse focused on the fact that in the Klein bottle, where there is imaged in a striking fashion, which gives a manageable support to the imagination in its schema, that the Klein bottle illustrates something which is called, in a surface which is proper to retain us because it allows there in a way to be grasped, since like the torus, it presents itself from one point of view like a handle, by offering us the image of what results from this retrogressive point (*point de rebroussement*) which occurs in it along its own detour, by means of which that which comes from one side, finds itself in inner continuity with the outside of the other side, and that from the other side, in the same way the inside with the outside.

It is not at all, in short, so easy to imagine, but after all it is not so simple to give a schema of it that is so favourable to retain us, if on the other hand in discourse, in the Hegelian discourse for example, and this admirable prologue to *The phenomenology,* that Heidegger isolates in the *Holzwege* to give a long commentary of it, but which just by itself in two, three really admirable, unbelievable, sensational pages which just by themselves would be enough to give us the essence of the sense of *The phenomenology*, we see there being designated (8) somewhere this point of return of consciousness as the only necessary point where the loop can be completed and nowhere better than in this text is there demonstrated the character of loop that the notion of absolute knowledge constitutes, permitting, by pushing with the little finger, by pushing by one notch the sense of this “subject supposed to know”, of which I often speak to you here and which you understand correctly as the “subject supposed to know” for the patient - he who expects, he who puts into the other, into the other whose nature he does not yet know, because he does not know that there are two acceptations of the other, who puts this “subject supposed to know”, who as I told you is already

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the whole of the transference - at the level of Hegel's discourse, by taking this term of subject identified to the loop of knowledge; and better than this metaphor, which after all is approximate and whose absolutely radical nature nothing evokes particularly to the imagination, this metaphor of the moment of the turning back of consciousness. It is not I believe vainly, or without a fundamental reason, or without us touching there what I would call, a simple formula, without our touching there what I would call, "things as they are".

After all it is quite praiseworthy for us to make a philosophical usage - I mean to lead you along a certain path - and if the most common and in appearance the least attractive formulae, indicate by their import that we intend also to keep at a (9) distance from a premature discourse on being *qua* being, still more distant from a discourse that has no doubt been besmirched, not without reason, by all the ambiguities that have been allowed to get mixed up in the usage of the term existence.

"As they are", what does that mean? That means that, to approach things more gently, we should not be too astonished to have to speak about the subject as a surface. And no doubt this is not at all the reason, but if I had to introduce to someone who is completely unused to our discourse the justification for this procedure, I would say: it is no surprise that if what is to be tackled - it might be, I suppose, someone who might come to us from science, who might claim to monopolise the title of objective because of being a laboratory science - I would say, it is not surprising that we should be accustomed here to speak about what is involved here as a surface, in short about what? About the functioning of the system that you know well as the nervous system and the nervous system, without needing to go any further into it but it is also the door through which Freud entered at the very moment of the certain discovery of internal neural connections, of the fundamental function of the network represented by the central nervous system - everything that presents itself as a network is reducible to a surface, anything that is a network can be inscribed on a sheet of paper.

(10) [Various noises] You see that we are in a police state!

I hope then that this ridiculous interlude has not made you lose the thread to the extent that you have not heard that it is proper to a network structure to manifest itself in its totality as something essentially reducible to a surface, namely, which does not, of its nature, in any way appeal to this ambiguous unresolved function, which appears to be obvious to us from our experience of real space, which is called volume.

In truth, I do not have to enter here into a preliminary critique of the third dimension, but you can take it as assured that this preliminary critique, at the point that we are at in philosophical experience, seems to me not to have been gone into at all as thoroughly as it deserves, I would say, *nachträglich,* from what appears in it in terms of asymmetries, of gaps, of the non-homology of what is found as compared to the system of two dimensions, when one passes to that of three dimensions. And in fact, there is here something of which one could say that, like an exercise in scales, these scales are so badly constructed that if it were only for that, to begin with these scales, I would say that to approach what is involved in the subjective structure, it would already be a sufficient justification

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and a (11) methodological prudence for us to remain with the surface, namely something which is so satisfactory at the level of subjective experience, which sticks so well, in the closest possible way, to what is required of us to apprehend at this level.

It is not at all by chance that the board - I mean the blackboard on the stand on which I drew so much last year to show you what was involved in the structure of the scopic drive - it is not at all by chance that it is content to be on a plane, and to anyone who would object that architecture is something else, I would respond with an architect especially, and with others with whom I have since been able to speak, that architecture is defined rather as a void that planes and surfaces surround and that this is, at least on the plane of what it poses for us as problems in terms of subjective realisation, its essence and its essential structure.

The instant of seeing is always a board, and if I affirm that I am satisfied as a constructive stage, as a step in our progress with this handling of what is properly spatial in our experience of the subject, and if you wish of the *res extensa* as it can be reduced for us, I mean in so far as we are forced to carry out its purification, its extraction along different paths to those Descartes, not at all by taking this piece of wax, already so much taken as what is malleable, unformed and the most accessible (12) to the reduction of all qualities, but as regards which we may come to doubt, if we are less sure than he was about the absence of a common fabric between the *res cogitans* and the *res extensa,* if we think that the *res cogitans* for us only gives us a divided subject because it is formed under the effects of language, whether already in this *schize,* in this division, we are not called on to bring into play a schema which is not at all extended but which is akin to it properly speaking, the topological schema.

On the other hand, if there is something our experience requires us to introduce, and precisely in the measure also that for us it closely binds to the foundations of the subject the locus which is proper to it, if in effect it is in the relationship to language that it determines its structure, if it is the locus of the Other, the field of the Other, which is going to determine the structure, the field of the Other, for its part, I am announcing it here to initiate what I am going to have to open up this year, this field of the Other is inscribed in what I will call Cartesian coordinates, a sort of space that for its part is three dimensional, except that it is not space, it is time.

For in the experience which is the creative experience of the subject at the locus of the Other, we well and truly, whatever has been said in previous formulations, have (13) to take into account a time that cannot in any way be reduced to the linear property - past, present, future - in which it is inscribed in discourse, in the indicative, to what again one can call the transcendental aesthetic commonly accepted in every attempt to inscribe, let us say, in the most general terms, the totality of the world, of the universe, in terms of events.

These three dimensions of what I called in its place, in an article which I agree is difficult to find - but which I hope will be once again be put within the reach of those who wish to read what I described as its character of fundamental sophistry - logical time, where the assertion of anticipated certainty comes here to bind

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closely its agency to what is involved, namely, this privileged point of identification.

In any identification, there is what I called the instant of seeing, the time to comprehend and the moment to conclude. We find there the three dimensions of time which are, even for the first, far from being identical to what offers itself to receive them. The instant of seeing, is only perhaps an instant, nevertheless it is not at all entirely identifiable with what I earlier called the structural foundation of the surface, of the board. It is something else in that it is inaugural, it inserts itself into this dimension that language establishes, that the analysis of language establishes as synchrony, which is not at all to be confused with simultaneity.

Diachrony is the second moment, in which there is inscribed what I called the time (14) to comprehend which is not at all a psychological function but which, if the structure of the subject represents this curve, this apparent solidity, this irreducible character which is possessed by a shape like the one that I am putting forward before you under the rubric of the Klein bottle, the term to comprehend is to be apprehended by us in the very gesture which is called apprehension, and in so far as there remains irreducible to this substantial shape of the surface under this aspect of envelope in which it presents itself, the fact that it can be grasped in one's hand, and that this is the most adequate form of apprehension, that it is not enough to believe that it is there crudely imaginary, or in any way reducible to the tangible, certainly not, for if it is there that the notion of *Begriff,* even of concept, can be posed in the most adequate fashion - as I hope on occasion, by one of these side-long illuminations made in passing, as it happens, that I must be satisfied with here for one or other aspect of experience - you will see that here we have undoubtedly an infinitely more subtle mode of approach than the one which poses an opposition between the terms of extension and comprehension.

The third moment, or the third dimension, of time where it would be well for us to see where we have to locate, to give, the co-ordinates of our experience, is the one that I call the moment to conclude, which is logical time as haste, and which (15) expressly designates something which is incarnated in the way of entering into his existence, the one proposed to every man around this ambiguous term since he has in no way exhausted the sense of it, and that more than ever at this historical turning point sees its sense vacillating: “I am a man”. Who is not able, and more at the level of our analytic experience than any other, to see in this identification, where no doubt its initial growth from the counterpart, the experiment which is carried out along paths turned back upon themselves, cycles that are accomplished by being pursued completely around this toric shape of which the Klein bottle is a privileged shape, this phase of circumscribing the turns and the returns and the ambiguity and the alienation and the unknown of the demand, after this time for comprehending, there is all the same a moment, moreover the only decisive one, the moment that there is pronounced the following: “I am a man “, and I say it right away for fear that the others, having said it before me, might leave me alone behind them.

Such is this function of identification through which the Klein bottle appears to us most suitable for designating the following, if once more I draw for you what it is, of course, quite incorrect to call its contours, because, in truth, these contours contain nothing of what I have already presented to you in two ways whose aspect

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of one to the other being frankly foreign even in the utilisation that one can make of one or other of its recesses.

(16) Following the formula, the simplest shape is not an contour, but that which has this craft, this very particular shape where you find here, coming to insert itself upon the circular orifice, through which also there is marked the possible entry into each of these two enclosed spaces that this surface defines in so far as we are situated precisely in space, and that one should distinguish this relationship to space from its internal properties.

Now on this surface we are going, not because it is a game, but because it is a support, which will be essential for us to map out the major moments of the experience, we are going to mark and define that if this shape is one of those in which we can give the most adequate support to what is at the point where I have always articulated things in order to make it understood without lending to misunderstanding, about what is beneath the structure of language, not substance, not *upokeimenon,* but the "beneath" in so far as I say that the subject is what the signifier as such represents for another signifier, what is beneath the fabric of the signifier and in so far as we ought to consider any signifier system as constituting a coherent battery and implicitly which ought to be enough (and, as I have told you, there is no need for much more, which ought to be enough to make use of everything that there may be to say) ..... the subject so defined, as that which, from the signifier is represented within the system of the signifier; this is what we (17) understand by subject - the subject has a shape such that this one or two, or at the most three others, through the system of links with itself, of the stitching to itself of the surface, is extremely limited.

This being taken as the example which allows us the most accessible approach at least for the present time of my presentation, and it is here that there will be represented the effective exercise of this signifier, namely, of what is called statements or words, it will be the outline of something that we can conceive of, according to our needs, as line or as cut, it will be the outline of something which is inscribed on this surface.

Let us take for example the following, which the very shape of this toric part of the bottle seems to suggest, the curve and the returns and the succession and the circuit of something which only submits itself on the single condition of not intersecting itself. This leads us to a progression that is at once circular and necessarily progressive until it turns backwards, it cannot intersect itself, it is excluded by the definition that we have given here of a certain type of cut, we arrive at the fact that the demand as such, if what I am calling demand is this circular movement which tends to be parallel to itself and always repeated, that the demand in so far as it is in no way essentially to be reduced to the demand for the (18) satisfaction of a need, from which an empirical psychology tends to make it begin, but where it is essentially the way in which discourse is inscribed in the locus of the Other, everything that is said in so far as it is said at the locus of the Other is a demand, even if for the conciousness of the subject it is hidden from itself. And this aspect of demand and what depends on it, namely, essentially, here and now, the *schize* caused by the demand in the subject, depends the function of what I wrote in the right-hand corner of my graph in the formula S D,

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to which we will perhaps, between now and the end of my discourse today, have the opportunity to return.

But for the moment, let us agree that the demand is defined as the discourse which expressly comes to be inscribed at the locus of the Other; I would say the demand from where it begins, necessarily progresses - you can make it start from the other side, you get exactly the same result - the demand progresses towards a point which is the one I designated the last time as the identification point.

This indeed in effect is what analytic experience testifies to us, and what unknown - or not to the speakers, the theoreticians - I mean whether they know or not its import has been located by them and affirmed by them. The whole doctrine of analytic experience which places its whole register on these three conjugated terms of demand, transference and identification, effectively can only be conceived, can (19) only be apprehended, can only be justified, up to a certain point, even if here I am adding on, even if here I am coming to introduce the fact that another dimension is necessary without which this one, as it is defined and described for us, is and will remain obligatorily locked into this shape which, indefinitely turning on itself, can nowhere locate the certitude of a point of arrest.

I indicated last year the sense in which, with respect to what we can call the totality of the figure, there was essentially inscribed the function of the transference and of the "subject supposed to know." We are going to have to evoke it again now but what I want simply to make present to your gaze, is this precise point where what I drew as the loop of the demand engages itself at the level of the point of returning, of retrogression of the surface, and in order to make you sense in a more simple fashion what could be enunciated much more rigorously, much more correctly from the point of view of topological theory, by the use of vectors to schematise the Klein bottle in the same way you can schematise a torus, namely, a square skin whose first cylindrical rolling up is followed by a fitting together which makes of it a circular ring, the difference to the Klein bottle is that if the first cylindrical rolling up is carried out in this way, what will be produced will be a knotting together of the two circular extremities of the cylinder, but in such a way that one is inverted with respect to the other.

(20) By the very fact of this inversion, when the demand has become engaged here, as one might say, if I can allow myself to speak in such rough terms, from the topological point of view, has become engaged - here we have the language of a mid-wife in this connection - in the forcing of the point of returning of the surface, we have a different aspect, a completely different one which is presented by the loop through which each one of the turns, which up to the present bound themselves to one another, here, if we go in this direction, what are we going to find?

Let us say that here things get to there. What happens? The fact is that the loop turns back and is reflected on the edge that we will call the circle of retrogression. Here it passes what we can call the second segment of the false torus, which the Klein bottle is, then once again, approaching the edge of this circle, it passes into that sort of half-tube which is constituted at this level by each of the parts of this torus when they are integrated in this so special fashion, in which case it is easy to demonstrate that the number of these return points can only be even, the way that

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it will get out of it, is that the demand from the other side will turn in an inverse direction, namely, that if here it is in a direction like this, that is, if you wish, for you in the direction, looking at things from above, anti-clockwise, to turn the (21) demand onto the other side, it would be in the proper clockwise direction or inversely.

Because it is important to grasp that even at this radical level, the simplest possible one of the function of language, we are dealing with an orientable reality. Because if, undoubtedly, the aspects that this figure presents have only an external or contingent character with respect to the surface, because they can only be mapped out when they are plunged in space, nowhere, inside the surface, does this point of retrogression manifest itself for the surface itself in a tangible fashion.

Inversely, the surface, I would say, or whatever dwells on it, can be perceived, if enough attention is paid to what kind of surface it is, precisely because of this phenomenon, that the circuits that are carried out in it can be located as non-orientable, in other words can be located as being able, at any point whatsoever, to find themselves inverted. I repeat, if one only considers the internal properties of the surface, there is a movement to the right and a movement to the left, there is a right and a left of an outline of a pure outline of discourse; and it can be spotted that something is dextrorotatory or laevorotatory independently of spatial images, independently of the phenomena of the mirror. The surface in itself, as I said, is not reflected. And without being reflected it has this possibility that either it is (22) possible that things that turn in one direction always turn in the same direction, or if it is a different kind of surface, it can happen that something that at one moment turns in one direction, comes after taking a certain path, to turn in the exactly contrary direction.

This is something absolutely essential to define because it is this that is going to allow us to tackle this something around which there revolves the whole difficulty and the present obstacles, I mean the obstacles in psychoanalytic theory which have come with its progress, which consist essentially in the following: if things are the way I am describing them, namely, if we cannot see any development, any progress of the unconscious in so far as it is graspable in the final analysis in something which is in the nature of the trace of discourse, of the cut, in this singularly topologised veil that we are trying to give of the subject as being the subject of the word, the subject in so far as he is determined by language.

Well then, we have there the only valid support and one which does not find itself at the mercy of the crudest images which are the ones which were given in Freud's second topology - I am talking especially about the images of the ego-ideal, even of the superego. It is in so far as we can manage to grasp, to circumscribe, the problems, to circumscribe the nodal points in particular, and the one I am aiming at today, namely that of identification, it is in so far as such a schema allows us to do (23) it, that we can try to tackle in all its generality, and in a different fashion to the fashion in which it is formulated for the moment in analytic theory, namely in an extremely unsatisfying fashion for any reader who has a bit of an ear and a sense of tone, in an extremely different fashion, I am saying, which relates to what I would call the structural unconscious. For it is undoubtedly everything that justifies so many lucubrations around formulae like that of the distortion of the ego, indeed of the atypical, abnormal, overwhelming forms of the superego, for it

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is in effect the research, necessitated, encountered in our experience, our experience which is made up of what? Of what have been called obstacles, the analysable points of what is incorrectly called the analysis of the material. What did I do the last time? I tried to suggest to you the following: the fact is, for one part, for example, of this analysis of material, namely what Freud called *The psychopathology of everyday life,* but in which all the same it is rather striking that this talks about nothing, when all is said and done, from the first page to the last, but the business of words. For there is not a single page, whatever the diversity of titles given to the chapters in this volume, there is not a single page where we are not confronted in the most direct and in the most radical fashion, with the fact that it is a matter of something (24) where there comes into play what, in the sense that I understand it, are called, properly speaking, signifiers; namely words and written signs, things which have the value of signifier, and with respect to which all of this is situated, without which no exchange, no substitution, no metaphor, metabolism of tendency, is ever grasped, at least in this volume, is ever grasped, made accessible, graspable, comprehensible in the sense that I understand it.

Because, of course, here we grasp the divergence, the ambiguity, the two parts which are put forward because of this and which are underlined, as much by Freud as by the authors that he integrated into his text over the years. Namely, that in certain cases there dominates what can be called the effects of meaning, but that in other cases, I must say to their surprise because that is what surprises them most, especially at a time when they had no other recourse but to see in this the contingency of mnemic traces, there are cases that operate essentially not on the *meaning,* not on *signification*, but on something I am provisionally calling other, and which I can be content with telling you that it is other, and about which I have said enough before you, so that in calling it non-sense, this does not mean absurd or senseless, I think that I have already made you glimpse it sufficiently, non-sense in what is most precisely, what is most positive, most unitary, most nodal, in the (25) effect of sense, namely in something which is incarnated to the highest degree in the effects of forgetting proper names, which are so rich, so illuminating at the level of Freud's text and the text of those who were the first people to have heard him. It is there then that we find the field, from the first analytic discovery. What does it mean that something other was necessary, if not precisely that in a no doubt obscure, awkward and misleading way what is discovered there, behind, is the structure of the support; it is all of this that is helped, compensated for by this singular topography, which so often and so crudely falls into the paths of the most erroneous psychology.

It is here too that we have to constitute something, I would not say more manageable, but something purely and simply more true if we give to this term true here the orientation which means simply, which is not the same thing as the usage that I make of it in other registers when I say: "the word is what introduces the truth into the world", the word true here, as I am employing it, just as earlier, I am trying here to say "things as they are", the word true means real.

For either this is something in its style which is to be understood, properly speaking, as the real - even if only of this real that we are already to admit as being a dimension, the proper and essential dimension perhaps of the real, namely the impossible - this is the real where everything that I am telling you, has no place to (26) be. Now, if we start from there, from where I will illustrate the next time, by

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showing you not simply how much this allows us to advance into what is at stake, namely the coherence of the tangible points of analytic experience, but which also permits us to advance in the setting up of a logic and allows us to surmount what I must call the extravagant impasses where we see proliferating in modern times these systems which are so self-satisfied, so infatuated with logistics or with symbolic logic, which do not seem to see that in criticising Aristotle, they plunge further and further into paths that have no way out, no way out in this sense, that they cannot in any way be proposed as this something that is called meta-language, as this something which would claim to surmount, to cap, to master, to determine the essence of language, while on the contrary, they are only extracted from it.

It is truly derisory, and this is a point upon which precisely I would like those who will collaborate with our work on the fourth Wednesday, I would like - since I cannot all the same in the position that I am in, I mean with all that I have to cover on my path this year, engage myself in what I would call, for example, the critique of the book by Bertrand Russell called *Meaning and truth* - I would like someone (27) to stick his nose into it. It is a fascinating book and, moreover, it is one of you who brought me the text which is difficult to find nowadays, at least the French text, this fascinating text where you will see the whole edifice of language, the entirely arbitrary even though extraordinarily seductive construction, because of all that it allows us to perceive in the impasses that it pushes us into, that this construction of language as composed, in a way, from a superimposition, from an edifice in an indeterminate number of successive meta-languages including and capping one another, which requires at the base a language which is supposed to be in some way primary and that he comes to call object-language, which I would defy anyone to give a single example of, all of this being supported by a note, which in texts like these is no less important than the text and is perhaps more so, which says that this conception of language as being necessarily determined by the theory which is called the theory of types, namely of the level of the affirmation of the truth, first language, object-language, second level, that which speaks about what has been said at the level of the object-language, namely, for example, “I said that this is green”, meta-language which begins at that moment, “but I should not have said it”, it was first necessary for the second proposition to have started, negation therefore supposes a third level of language. This construction of which one can say that apart from the pleasure of a logician, it would in absolutely no (28) way be able to grasp what is involved in the constitution of the subject, namely, what puts man in the position of having a relationship to everything that can be said or exist, that this which is, literally, a struggle in a desperate flight from what is properly speaking the problems of language, all of this reposes, Mr Bertrand Russell tells us, on the simple necessity of avoiding paradoxes, namely this crude paradox which I think I have said enough to you about how it should be resolved, this paradox described as that of the liar, of the supposed logistical impasse of the “I am lying”, regarding which, truly, in every case, for us analysts, it is absolutely easy to see that the objection, the logical antinomy does not hold up for a single instant, and has no need to be referred to the hermeneutics of Mr Bertrand Russell in order to be overcome, any more of course, than the supposed paradox of the catalogue of catalogues which do not contain themselves, with the sequel that you know.

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For today, simply, I am telling you the path along which I am leading you and the path on which my next lecture hopes to lead you to a term so that at the next one again, our next meeting, namely the closed seminar, we will be able to discuss points of detail, so that I can receive there whatever contribution, or whatever objection that may appear worthwhile to one or other persons.
(29) What is involved is something that is outlined in the clearest fashion through ..... I would ask you the refer to it, after all why should I give here, after having done it for years, a pure and simple commentated reading on the text of Freud? The point is the following: the first apprehension which results from a reading of the Psy*chopathology of everyday life,* consists in the following: the effect of meaning. If something does not work, it is becausethat is what you desire. Something which signifies something, to kill your father for example.

Now, this is in no way sufficient because it is not one or other desire which can be more or less easily discerned in a stumbling of behaviour which is not, as I told you, an indifferent one, but a stumbling which always concerns, at least in this volume, my relationship to language, what is important is precisely that language, and at a point that does not concern this desire, is involved in it, involved, not at all in its organ, nor simply as the *Imitation* says, which moreover in saying that does not simply say what I desire to put to one side, and what Freud puts to one side from the very beginning, because it is the very condition of his debate, a tripping over of a word in the sense that it might be a paraphasis in the purely motor sense of this term, where it is a tripping over words, where it is a tripping up on language, it is in function of a phonematic substitution which is itself a trace, an (30) essential trace, and the only one that is able to lead us to the true source of what is involved, it is in this sense that desire intervenes, and from the desire to kill my father I am referred on to the name of the father, for it is around the name and not at all in a diffused fashion, in the case of any stumbling on words whatsoever, it is always at the level of the name, of the properly nominal evocation, that there takes place, at least in the whole field of our experience, the Freudian mapping out.

Now, this name of the father, if we consider the structure of the Freudian experience, if we consider the theory and the thought of Freud, this name of the father is where the mystery is, since it is by reason of this name of the father that my desire is led not only to this painful, crucial, repressed point, which is the desire to kill my father on this occasion, but many others also since even this desire to sleep with my mother which is the path along which my heterosexual normalisation is accomplished, is also dependent on an effect of the signifier, the one which I designated to abbreviate it here, under the term of the Name-of- the-Father.

Now it is the trace of this that must be followed very carefully in every statement of Freud's, and even to see there the solution of what remains open, namely of that which in an awkward fashion he calls the contagious character of the forgetting of names, and in a case, which is the one found at the end of the first chapter, he will (31) show us something which is a first approach; it is no doubt because all of those present at a certain dialogue between several people, at a certain conversation, find themselves caught up together in something common, which no doubt has to do with a desire - as you are going to see, not just any desire - that the same proper name that they all know very well because it is the title of a book,

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which I imagine is not very brilliant either as regards its content nor as regards theory, which is called *Ben Hur,* but what matter, we have a charming young woman who in this connection, wants to say, in order to impress the company, that she had found in it some essential ideas, something or other about the Essenes. This *Ben Hur* that the girl cannot remember, what does the author who brings us this example, who is I think Ferenczi, if I am not mistaken, anyway it does not matter, you can take any example whatsoever, you will always find the same structure. What is involved is what? It is perhaps something which has perhaps a certain relationship with a desire but which was, as I might say, or which passed, by this vocalisation, this emission of the voice, which might be formulated as *bin Hure*, I am a whore, and it is here in so far as it is a matter of what, you are going to say, what is most important, what is most decisive? Is it the fact that this declaration hides the ferret that runs through the gathering between this young girl and the young people around her, namely this something that would tend to make (32) the desires of each one emerge, where we might see the guarantee that these desires even have a common factor? But that in all of them something that involves the declaration of the proper name, in the measure that in this whole declaration the identification of the subject, and whatever may be the distance at which the relationship to the proper name is produced, the identification of the subject is involved, and it is here, it is at this level that we find the mainspring.

Now, the way that we have to define, topologically, what is involved in analysis which is quite obviously the picking out of desire, but not of one or other desire which is only the concealment, the metonomy, the metabolism indeed the defence, of which it is the most common figure, when what is involved is to pick out this desire where the analysis ought to find its term and especially its axis if, as we put forward at the end of last year, it is the desire of the analyst as such which is the axis of the analysis, we ought to know how to define this desire topologically in relationship with this pass, this phenomenon which for its part is undoubtedly linked in a certain way, which here we are only beginning to apprehend, to decipher, to approach, namely identification. This will be the sense of my discourse when I take it up again the next time.

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Seminar 6: Wednesday 20 January 1965

I must advance into the problem for psychoanalysis that is constituted by identification. Identification which represents in the experience, in the progress, in the step forward I am trying here to make you take in the theory, the screen which separates us from our aim because it is unresolved and which we highlighted last year as being the necessary moment without which there remains in suspense the qualification of psychoanalysis as a science; I said: ”the desire of the psychoanalyst”.

I tried to capture identification in a topology, in a sort of bundle, a collection of threads more simple than all of those whose twists and turns the labyrinth of modern logic bears witness to, in so far as between class, relations and numbers, it sees slipping away, like the lady in the three card trick, what has to be grasped as regards the enunciating of the identical.

So that, to facilitate your entry onto our path, I am going to begin today from the shape that has been most popularised for two centuries, to circumscribe, make no (2) mistake, this problem of identification, the image of Euler’s circle, so striking that there is no student who has even opened, who has approached a book on logic who is able, as I might say, to extricate himself from its simplicity. It is founded, in effect, on what is most structural, and if it is deceptive, it is precisely by fixing on what is called a particular point, a privileged point of topology, its false simplicity.

The circle which defined the class, the circle itself including, excluding, intersecting another circle or several, themselves considered to represent the attributes of the class to be identified. Do I need to reproduce on the blackboard what, I think, was already drawn when I tackled for the first time the syllogism whose conclusion is: “Socrates is mortal “. Socrates, men, mortals.
(Demonstration on the board)

This extraordinary booby-trap forged by Euler in the style of the epoch, it was a great and good century, it was the opposite of what is called moreover a century of genius, because it was fascinated, as innumerable works which were published on the subject in this century bear witness, because it was fascinated by the for them apparently unthinkable task involved in the education of women. It was for a woman, and what is more for a princess, that there were forged these Euler circles which now furnish your manuals.

(3) Such a tenacious preoccupation always conceals an underestimation of the subject that is aimed at and there are sufficient indications of this in all the works that are entitled as having this purpose, and moreover, I think, it is in the measure that Euler, who was no mediocre mind, thought that he was addressing himself to a cretin, in both senses of the word, that he put into circulation these captivating circles which, as I hope to show you, allow there to escape the whole essential of what they intend to circumscribe.

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So that it is not surprising that it was at a time when the figure was in a way integrated with the common mental image of this sphere, that one is able to deal with a circle - as people did in Roman times with the circle of Popilius - without worrying that it appears, on reflection, that this circle, depending on the surface on which it is traced, delimits fields of value which can be quite different, and as regards what is involved in the sphere, it delimits exactly the same thing, on the outside and on the inside: however tightly you draw the circle around me, I can say that what you are enclosing is all the rest of the earth (*la machine ronde)*.

Let us pay a little attention then, before handling the circle and, above all, let us not forget that its principle merit on this occasion is to give us, by its shape, a sort of substitute for what I called in the sense that I introduced to it, comprehension, in the double sense of the true, conceptual comprehension of *Begriff,* what the (4) *Begriff* closes in on, it is of this grasp that the circle gives the image in so far as - I introduced it the last time - it is here, a cross-section of this toric part of our surface with which our discourse today is, in part, going to deal and, on the other hand, only giving to this comprehension an image which is moreover the support of every lure, and in particular that extension and comprehension can be confused, that in the circle one imagines the numerical group of objects, without putting the emphasis on the conditions that are implied by the coming into play of number and which are radically different from classificatory characteristics, at least in what allows us to grasp it in function of meaning.

The numerical reference point is of a different order - this is a field upon which I will not engage myself today because it is properly the type of question that I wanted to reserve for the closed part of this course, which will take the name of seminar - I mean that the homology of the function which takes the name of number, the name of number in so far that it cannot be distinguished from the function of the whole number, the homology in the sense that it is still more striking, more necessary, than in the indications that I was already able to begin to give you of the function of name in so far as it covers something, that it covers (5) precisely a circle, but one of a very special nature, this privileged circle which is marked by the level of reversion of the surface of the Klein bottle in so far as it is a Moebius surface, the number, given its body, occupies here in an obvious fashion, obvious from the analysis of its structure, because of the problems it poses to the mathematician, you know that the mathematician with his modern impetus, cannot tolerate that any point of his language should be, should be constructed in such a way that it does not grasp several sorts of heterogeneous objects at the same time. The privileges, the resistances of the function of the "whole number", to this mathematical generalisation - I am putting the terms in inverted commas here so as not to introduce more technical references - this is what creates problems for the mathematician which have pushed him to make considerable efforts. The question is whether they have been successful, since they homogenise the function of number and that of class. This is what I hope will be treated here at our next meeting, a closed meeting, here at the level of the seminar.

Let it suffice here for me to indicate in connection with the figure of the circle, that one ends up, and precisely by following mathematical research, that one ends up with a schema that is strictly homologous to the one that I am advancing here

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by proposing the signifier to you as representing the subject for another signifier, the mathematical theory which represents at once the solution - this is what I am putting in question - and the stumbling block, perhaps it is truer to say, this attempt (6) to reduce, to resolve the function of the whole number in logical language ends up at the following schematised formula exactly in the same way that I show you how, in a way, the subject is transported from signifier to signifier, each signifier representing him for the one that follows: beneath the one, it is the zero that is involved for the series of ones that are going to follow.

In other words, the discovery conditioned by the most recent research in mathematical logic, the discovery of the necessity that the zero, the lack, is the final reason for the function of the whole number, that the one originally represents it, and that the genesis of the dyad is for us very distinct from the Platonic genesis, in that the dyad is already in the one, in so far as the one is what is going to represent the zero for another one.

A remarkable thing, the fact which ensures and which involves of itself, for each number n, the necessity of n + 1, precisely from this zero which is added to it, an extraordinary thing, it required long detours of mathematical analysis for something which is presented at the level of the experience of the child. It required the infatuation of pedagogues, to have placed, in terms of tests, as having the lesser mental value of insufficient development, the child who says: “I have three brothers, Paul, Ernest and me”, as if this were not precisely what was involved, (7) namely, that here, me must be in two places, in the place of the series of brothers and also in the place of the one who is enunciating. On this point the child knows more than we do, and trying recently to reproduce with my grandson, and in a way to put him to the test, honestly with a little girl of four and a half, the first stammerings, not at all in the enunciating of number but of its being put to use, I was surprised that nowhere does Piaget take into account - he who undoubtedly is far from lacking an adequate culture in the domain of logic - that nowhere does Piaget take into account something that one sees springing forth, and precisely at the level at which he claims to reduce the approach of the little child concerning the numbering of objects to a sensori-motor groping, precisely with a little girl of four and a half who probably, I say probably because one is never sure, who is able to count above ten, playing with her in accordance with the very formula of Piaget, namely with these famous implements, knives and plates that must be paired off precisely in accordance with the ways theoretically defined by the first formation of number, all the same, putting her to the test of counting in front of three glasses: the little girl says to me “four”. "Let's see: really?”. “Yes”, she says:"one, two, three, four” without the slightest hesitation. The four is her zero, in so far as it is starting from this zero that she counts, because even though she is four and a half years old, she is already the little circle, the hole of the subject.

(8) This circle, regarding which I searched this morning, or rather asked someone to search for me, the famous text of Pascal, which I did not wish to evoke here without asking you to refer to it, without having re-read it myself ..... thanks to the work of innumerable university people who have each charged themselves to give their personal reclassification of these *Pensées* which were given to us in a type of dossier which was disordered enough just by itself, in general you have to spent three-quarters of an hour to find the simplest quotation in any one of these

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editions. Someone spent the three-quarters of an hour in my stead which allows me to indicate to you that in the big Havet edition, it is on page 72 of the *Pensées* that you will see the reference to this famous "infinite sphere whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere".

This is important because God knows Pascal is our friend. And our friend, as I might say, in the manner of someone who guides our every step, neurotic that he was, that is not to diminish him, you know well that here we do not involve ourselves on the path of psychopathologising genius. It is enough to open the memoirs of his sister to see the point to which his anxiety and his abysses and all this horror that he was surrounded by, was able to take root in the aversion, to which he bears witness so precociously, and which it is so striking to see his sister bearing witness to, that she undoubtedly while bearing this witness - it is obviously the best condition for giving credit to the testimony - she has not the slightest (9) comprehension of what she is saying. The horror pushed to the extremes of panic, to a fit, a black fit, to the convulsions of Pascal every time he saw the loving parental couple approaching his bed, is all the same something which must be taken into account, on condition of course, of being in a position to pose oneself the question of what limits a neurosis imposes on the subject. It is not necessarily the limits of adaptation, as is said, but perhaps metaphysical detours, and that is why this same man, to whom we owe this example of prodigious daring, which is this famous wager about which people have said so many stupid things because they were speaking from the point of view of the theory of probability, but which it is enough to approach to see that it is precisely the despairing attempt to resolve the question that we are trying to raise here; that of desire as desire of the big Other.

This neither prevents this solution from being a failure, nor that Pascal, when he formulates for us his infinite sphere whose centre is everywhere does not demonstrate precisely that he has tripped up on the metaphysical plane. Anyone who is a metaphysician knows that it is the contrary and that if there is an infinite sphere, something that is not proved, undoubtedly in the surface that is involved, what is circumferencial is everywhere and the centre is nowhere.

(10) This is what I am hoping to convince you of, in the apprehension of this topology. In effect, to take up again what I indicated to you the last time, if it is the operation of this surface which determines what is happening at the level of the subject, if the subject is to be conceived of as guided by the envelopments but also the reversions, the reversion points of this surface, he does not know the reversion points of this surface any more than the surface itself, as I might say.

The fact is, that since he is implicated in this surface, he can know nothing about this circle of retrogression being himself in it; that the question is posed of from where we can grasp the function of this privileged circle, which as I told you is not at all to be conceived of in an intuitive fashion, it is not necessary that it should be a circle, it is possible to reach everything like a circle, by a cut, but notice if you carry out this cut, the surface no longer has anything of its specificity, everything is lost, the surface is presented as equal, similar in every way to a torus on which you might have performed the same cut.

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The question of what happens at the level of the circle of reversion, is what today I would like to try to make you approach, in so far as we can grasp in it - I pass over the term, I am putting it in inverted commas to make myself understood - the "model" of what is put in question for us by the function of identification.

(11) The last time I recalled that the whorls of a line drawn on the outside surface of a Klein bottle, which you see here represented as a whole on the left, represented only partially on the right, namely on the point which interests us in the approach to what I have just called a circle of reversion, or of retrogression as you like.

The whorls of the demand with their repetition on an ordinary torus, as I developed it at length at another time and precisely in relation to the structure of the neurotic, will end up by coming back onto themselves, intersecting or not intersecting, but even without needing to intersect, simply by continuing as it is easy to imagine, once the circumference of the torus has been completed, inserting themselves inside these preceding whorls, can be indefinitely continued without there ever appearing, in the counting of the turns, this succession of supplementary turns accomplished by going completely around the torus, and by making the circuit if you wish of its central hole.

Here in the Klein bottle what do we see happening? I already told you the last time and the schema that I have drawn for you today already shows it to you. Through a necessity that is internal to the curve, it is necessary that the circuits of the demand upon this circle of retrogression should be reflected from one edge to the other of this circle, in order to remain on the surface, of the point in the field of the (12) surface where it is woven. It will necessarily arrive, having crossed according to - here, as you see it, I showed you the minimal incidence of it - in accordance with, for your eyes, a half-circle having crossed this pass, always having to cross it in accordance with an uneven number of these semi-circles; it will re-appear from the other toric side of the Klein bottle, with a gyration in a opposite direction, what was on the right, since it was from there that we make begin, as the tips of the arrow which vectorialise this journey indicate to you; on the right, let us say that we are turning in the clock-wise direction; if we position ourselves properly, staying in the same place, it is in the anti-clockwise direction that the movement of the spiral comes into operation.

Now this, this is for us, in a way, due to the favour touched here that this topological figure presents to us. It gives us what I might call the intuitive knot, since I am representing it for you by a figure, but which has no need of this figure, I could simply, in a fashion that would be more obscure, more opaque, have it supported for you by an arrangement reduced to a few algebraic symbols by adding in vectors which it would be much more opaque for you to represent.

This figure, then, with its intuitive appeal, I intend it to allow you to grasp the coherence that there is at this point if we define it, determine it as circumscribing (13) the conditions, the favours, but also the ambiguities and thus the lures of identification, to make you grasp also the connection at this point, which is what gives it its true sense, with what we notice in our experience, which for us is the clinic, the analytic clinic, which for us is so forced that we had to model our language on it, namely, the essential reversibility of the demand and what ensures

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that in the dynamic, complexual operation there is never, for example, a phantasy of devouring that we do not hold as implying, necessitating at some moment, which outside of this theory remains obscure, its own inversion, I mean resulting in this inversion, and determining the passage to the phantasy of being devoured. This expresses the consistency with the focal point, with all the determinations that are going to allow us to tie down the localisation of this focal point, to grasp the consistency of this fact of experience with what we so confusedly call identification, at the same time, specifies what is involved in such and such an identification of this one and not of another, this is what we are advancing into and what determines our steps.

One thing is assured. I spoke to you about the spirals of the demand. You will allow me to give no further justification, because as a matter of fact it is something accessible; I mean not too difficult to grant me, simply by experiencing its (14) consequences; I cannot here pursue a discourse which is too astringent except by completely transforming the nature of what I am teaching you, about not making a logical leap; what we will call an enunciation in the sense that interests us, in the sense that there are incidences of identification, I mean here not analytic identification, but analytic and conceptual identification, this is something that in effect we would like to symbolise by a circle, except that our topology allows us to distinguish it strictly from the Euler circle, namely, that there is not to be raised against it the objection that we were able to raise earlier, namely that this circle, by failing to specify the surface on which it is drawn, may define two strictly equivalent fields on the inside and on the outside.

What is more, the Euler circle, since it is apparently drawn on a plane, I mean that in this respect nothing is specified, has all the same manifestly this import of having to be reduced to a point. A circle which, as in the whorls of our demand, turn around the toric part of the torus or of the bottle, is a circle which does not have this property in either one or other case; first of all it does not define two equivalent fields for the good reason that it only defines a single one, to open the bottle or to open the torus with the help of one of the circular cuts, simply makes a cylinder of it in both cases. Besides this circle is not at all reducible to a point. What interests us is how the circle thus defined can serve us. It is precisely this circle which is going to permit us to discern what interests us as regards the function of identification.

Let us say that, according to this circle, which as you see is a cut, it is no longer an edge, we are going to try to see what becomes of our propositions, the ones that interest us, the propositions about identification. As I already showed you once by putting it into practice, we are able to inscribe the predicative proposition - as one says to characterise it grammatically -since it is the simplest proposition, the one which in tradition is presented first, as regards identification, we can inscribe it on the circumference of this circle.

We can from this circle, written in this way, as it is here for example - do not bother yet about these letters nor about the function of the diametrical line - we can write, “all men are mortal”, the “are mortal” should have been written afterwards I ought also to have written it upside down but that would not have added anything. We can also write: “Socrates is mortal”; it is a matter of knowing what we are doing by articulating these enunciations that, according to the case,

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we will call predication, judgement or concept. It is here that there can be of use (16) to us the particular case in which this circle operates by having to be reflected on what I called earlier the circle of retrogression in the Klein bottle.

You see then, that by marking in blue this circle of retrogression, the other circle is made up of a line which comes to be reflected on its edge, to take up its outline again on the other part of the surface, on the one which separates the circle of retrogression from the first.

But if this is how things are, the first half of the circle, the one which was outside the first half of the surface as I have just defined it, continues on the contrary inside the same surface if we consider the inside, is that the inside of the Klein bottle, in short that the two halves of the circle at this level are in no way homogenous, that they are not in the same field - unless one wishes at all costs to blind oneself as is the function of the formal logician - that it is not in the same field from the point of view of identification, in the sense that it interests us, that there is posed the "all men", and the "are mortal", that there is posed the "Socrates", and the "is mortal", that it is not at all said in advance that the "Socrates" should not be distinguished, even in its logical function, from what is supposed to be the subject of a class (17) simply defined as predicative. And who does not sense that it is a matter of something completely different to say that a man, or all men, are mortal, that it is completely different than for example to define the class of white geese. There is a radical distinction that imposes itself here, that we support with philosophical vocabulary as best we can, from the distinction between qualities, for example, and from attributes that undoubtedly are not homogeneous; which moreover is not to say that the class of white geese does not pose us problems in so far as the usage of the metaphor will leave us with some work to do in calculating what is involved between the priority of gooseness or of whiteness.

And undoubtedly, the class of white geese can be reduced in a different way to the definition which makes us articulate that all men are mortal. In speaking of all men as mortal we are not speaking about a class which specifies, among the others, the mortal humans. There is a different relationship between man and being mortal, and it is precisely this which is in suspense in connection with the question of Socrates.

For we may become weary at evoking problems which may appear trite to us and to smell of the classroom about what is involved in the universal affirmative, namely: is there a universal of man, or does man on this occasion simply mean, as the logic of quantification strives to put it, any man whatsoever? The fact is that it (18) is not at all the same thing. But moreover, since people are still involved in scholastic debates about this theme, perhaps we, who are in a bit more of a hurry and who may perhaps suspect that there is a deviation somewhere, can re-pose the question at the level of the proper name, and ask whether it is all that obvious, even if it is admitted that all men are mortal is a truth which carries itself sufficiently for us not to have to debate about the sense of the formula, whether starting from that it is legitimate to say, to conclude, to deduce, that Socrates is mortal. For we have not said: "any man whatsoever who perhaps may be called Socrates, is mortal". We have said: "Socrates is mortal". The logician, no doubt, is going too quickly. Aristotle did not skip this step, because he knew what he

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was saying better perhaps than those who followed him, but very soon in the Sceptic, Stoic schools, the example became common and why was the jump so easily made of saying that Socrates is mortal.

I was not able here, because after all as in many other things I spare you, to mark for you that precisely a step was taken at the level of the Stoic school, around which there turned the sense granted as such to the term, proper name. The *onoma* as opposed to the *rhesis* namely as one of the two essential functions of language. The *onoma,* at the time of Plato and Aristotle, as well as that of Protagoras, and moreover in *Cratylus,* the *onoma* is called, when it is a question of the proper name, the *onoma kyrum*, which means the name par excellence. It is only with the Stoics that the *idion* takes on the aspect of the name which belongs to you, in particular takes the step, and it is indeed this which permits this fault in logic. Because in truth, if we preserve the originality of the function of nomination, understand by this where to the highest degree there is maximised this formation proper to the signifier, which is of not being able to be identified with itself, which undoubtedly culminates in the function of nomination, this Socrates who is at once a *soi-disant* and an *autre disant*, the one who declares himself to be Socrates and the one others do, the others who are the elements of his descendance, whether they are incarnated or not, that others are covered by the name of Socrates, this is not something that can be treated in a homogeneous fashion with anything whatsoever that may be included under the rubric of all men.

Let us try to look at this more closely. It is clear that the venom, I would say the aggression of this particular syllogism is completely in its conclusion, and moreover, it would not have been promoted to this value of classical example if it did not involve in itself this something which is satisfied with the pleasure of reduction that we always experience in connection with any avoidance (*escamotage*) whatsoever, because after all it is always the same thing that is involved and that it is a matter of avoiding, namely, the function of the subject who (20) speaks, and makes it necessary to say quite simply that Socrates is mortal because all men are so, is also to avoid the fact that there is more than one way for a subject to fall under the stroke of being mortal.

We know very few things about Socrates, however surprising this may appear, this man from whom has emerged the whole philosophical tradition since his time, the whole philosophical tradition that is called Western, our own in fact. Open, if you wish, the five hundred philosophical/psychological volumes where you see him tackled as a subject, the more or less five hundred others where you will see being appreciated the epoch he constitutes, the philosophical step forward that he contributed, and you will see not only not a single one of these appreciations, of these references, of these accounts coinciding, but you will even see them opposed point by point, term by term. It will be impossible for you to guarantee any certainty about this, there is no subject about which the experts, the scholiasts so radically diverge. And it is not because Plato gives of him a plentiful, multiplied and sometimes seductive image as a sketch of his time, indeed even a photograph, the multiplicity of these testimonies do not add a single shadow of consistency more to this figure, if we want in our turn to interrogate this great questioner.

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(21) What a mystery! There is nevertheless in this *soi-disant* par excellence, something - which thanks to those who followed him, and no doubt it is not by chance, this *soi-disant,* always *soi-disant* Socrates, which here means exactly the contrary, namely, that he does not speak about himself - there are all the same something, two things, which are irrefragable in a way, that do not lend themselves to interpretation as regards the sayings of Socrates.

The first, the first of these things is the voice, the voice which Socrates undoubtedly testifies to us was not at all a metaphor. The voice for which he stops speaking in order to hear what it is saying to him just like one of our hallucinating patients. And a curious thing, even in this great century of psychopathology, the nineteenth century, people remained very moderate in fact on this point of diagnosis. As long as one does not have a really adequate idea about what a voice is, what functions it enters into beyond its phenomenon, what it means in the subjective field, so long as one does not have what will allow us, in my discourse, to formulate it as this little object fallen from the Other - like other little objects of this kind, the **o**-object to call it by its name - then we do not have a sufficient apparatus to situate, without imprudence, the function of the voice in a case like that of Socrates, which is in effect a privileged one. And what we also know is that there is a relationship, a fundamental one, between this **o**-object, whatever it (22) may be, and desire. And then on the other hand, concerning what interests us here, very closely, namely that Socrates, it is legitimate to say, whether he is or is not mortal, we have the following, which could be said rapidly: that Socrates demanded death.

It is a way of expressing oneself briefly. There is also the demand to be fed at the Prytaneum in the same discourse, which is called the *Apology* of Socrates, and of course you will spare me, just as I asked you earlier to spare me other detours, from carrying out with you here a reading of the *Apology* of Socrates and of the *Phaedrus,* and perhaps also of this stupefying encounter with this priest which is called *Euthyphro* which he had precisely the night before, and naturally no one ever really emphasised what was meant by the fact that Plato makes him go through this encounter the night before, nor how it happens that Plato, who was all the same at that time one of his disciples, was not there either at the trial or at the moment of the last conversation, of the conversation before the death.

Perhaps the whole work of Plato is only constructed to cover this lack. The demand to be fed at the Prytaneum, will be considered an insolence. People quickly begin to construct a psychology, and I do not wish here to designate in any other way a discourse which greatly struck me at the time, an admirable discourse no doubt, in which I was able to hear in a very distinguished place, someone speaking in the last way which moved me about the trial of Socrates, something all (23) the same came to be said that, no doubt, Socrates could have, let us say the word, the nuance is perhaps a little bit too emphasised, defended himself better; one can always fight, struggle, by taking into account the thinking of the judges. There is here the animating idea of the secret of existential commitment, that something demands of us always to follow the interlocutor onto his terrain of situation, and you also see where this slope leads us, the slope of the analysis that I would call popular, the one on which my earlier declaration that Socrates demanded death constituted an ambiguity: we will soon be saying that Socrates

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fled it in a fearful aggression, or again, for the more adventurous, that Socrates desired death. Socrates desired death! Precisely not.

The third thing, the one that we do not know and the one that we are called on to accept or not, something that he himself told us, he told us that he knew nothing. He knew nothing about anything except about desire and that as regards desire, he knew something about it. Only look, this desire of Socrates, of which it is not too much to say that it is at the root of three-quarters of what in reality, or what we have called such, configures all of us who are here - this desire of Socrates, the one which affirms itself in *atopia,* the one which makes of Socrates, in his time, the one who interrogates the master - and it is one of the great illusions that were able to develop around the fact that the question of the desire of Socrates is never raised (24) and with good reason, it is one of the great philosophical derisions to identify the master to pure and simple desire. This vision of the master is the vision of the slave, which means that the slave for his part has a desire. The master too, of course but the master, stupid as he is, knows nothing about it.

The master is sustained, and this is precisely the sin in the Hegelian analysis ....., the question has often being raised: if the master in Hegel is what Hegel tells us, then how can we have a society of masters? Of course it is insoluble.

It is very soluble in fact, because the great support of the master is not at all his desire, but his identifications, the principal one being that to the name of the master, namely to the name that, he for his part, carries in well-specified, isolated, primordial way, in the function of the name, from the fact that he is an aristocrat.

Socrates interrogates the master about what he calls his soul. I suspect that the point at which he expects it, where he always finds it and even in the furious revolt of Thrasymachus, is at the point of his desire and precisely by making testify who? The Other par excellence, the Other that can easily be, in his society, represented by the radical Other, the one who does not form part of it, namely the slave, and it is here, from here that he makes emerge the valid word.

(25) Such are the manoeuvres which undoubtedly were bound to end, whatever may have been the admiration, the love that a personage like Socrates was able to draw to himself, to end up by provoking some impatience. One can have enough, all the same, of always listening to that fellow! Now, Socrates says the following: “there is no choice, either you leave me as I am, even if it is to put me on the mantlepiece like a clock, at the Prytaneum, or it is death, something which at my age", he adds - it is one of the rare touches of humour in the discourse of Socrates, because it is a very curious thing, Plato is a humorist, but nothing bears witness to us that Socrates was one, it is a very peculiar case, Socrates does not try in any way to be funny; he is not tragic, and again what is this unusual tragedy of the last moments of Socrates, let us leave this point in suspension, he is only tragic at the end; in any case something that he never said, is that he was a man. *“Homo sum, humanum nihil a me alienum puto*”, is a phrase from a comic poet because we no longer know very well what is involved in being a man; there is one thing certain that man is the comic.

So then, the articulation of two circles, all men are mortal, and Socrates is mortal. I cannot, because of the time push any further here what results from their

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interference, it is not my fault that the road is long and that I have to make you sense all its detours.

(26) For you see being highlighted indeed at the two terms between this enigmatic desire and the following, that if this is the way things are, what we have come to, we do not know very well how, is to speak about the death drive, and to either speak about it without knowing what we mean or on the contrary to reject it because it is too difficult, we see clearly that it is towards this, towards this meeting point that we are going, and what relationship and how spell out what there is between the demand for death of a great living being and this famous death drive that we are going to see implicated to such a degree in an "all men", of a different nature than the two logical terms which I already advanced, namely the "anyone whatsoever" or the universal "man", in any case man without a name, and all the more without a name that what we find behind is the unconscious of man, which is undoubtedly un-nominated, because it is undetermined.

How are we going to be able to cross this space hollowed out here between the conclusion of "Socrates is mortal" and "all men are mortal". I will only highlight my punctuation of today around a topological trait - in any case, and however these two circles are articulated, which undoubtedly do not overlap, disjointed as they are by the whole force of the topological reversion around which I make turn to-day the operation of my discourse - a punctuation I would mark by this virtual line which does not exist, which is not in the surface, which is essentially deceptive, (27) is the one which constitutes the articulation of the syllogism in the minor, namely, not "Socrates is a man" whose total fragility we have seen, but simply the introduction of the "is a man" here, diametrically in the proposition, whatever it may be. Either "all men are mortal" at the circumference, or intersecting with it if you wish, is obviously what is suggested, "Socrates is mortal", with as a common trait of intersection this diameter which, moreover from elsewhere, because what is involved is a topology and not a metric space, can be any cord whatsoever, this diameter on which we inscribe "is a man".

What is meant by this which, in the measure of the radical heterogeneity between the premise and the conclusion, is affirmed and is proposed to us as a lure? What is meant by this intersection of the plane between the planes which, precisely, are not so, because they are both holes, by nature holes, if you will allow me to express myself in this way? What is meant by this identification which allows this false step of the syllogism? What does it mean? What it means you see beginning in the letters with which I marked the three stages of the diametred circle which is on the bottom right. The relationship between the two halves of the circle which are, as I told you, heterogeneous - if one is identification, the other is demand and inversely (28) - the relationship between the two, in so far as it is a deceptive one, is precisely this diameter which sustains them and which nowhere exists. I put there the letter T because we rediscover here the function of transference, the function of transference in so far as it is essentially linked to the deceived Other or to the Other as deceiving, the function of transference in so far as it is the function of deception, it is around this that there will turn the dialectic of my lecture in February: the relationships between identification, transference and demand in so far as they are solidary with three terms, three terms that I think I have made familiar to you by my discourse of last year, the term of indetermination, subject of the unconscious, the term of certainty, as constituting

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the subject in the experience and the aims of psychoanalysis, the term of deception as being the path on which his very appeal to identification summons him.

If things are knotted together in this way between these terms where it seems we could not find an issue which is not a lure, it is because of the structure of these big loops of this big knot, which constructing themselves and conjoining themselves in the field where the game is played out puts us, concerning the desire whose support, whose conception can only be of this very loop represented by the toric handle, whose inside we will try to make speak the next time .....

(29) Do you not recognise in it, after my schemas of last year, this issue, this exit as spasmodic outside the palpitating gap of the unconscious which, at the major hole around which we have turned today, opens and closes, the very outwards and return trajectory of the drive, in so far as it surrounds something which we have left in suspense, we should say, in the void; this desire is what determines it, and it is not at all without a face even if at the level of Socrates today - and I deliberately chose my example - there is presented an enigma. Desire introduces the fourth category after the others of indetermination, deception, certainty, introduces us to the fourth which determines everything and which is our very position - the one clearly articulated, seen and announced by Freud - which is the very one of desire in so far as it determines in reality the category of the impossible. This impossible that we sometimes find the means of overcoming, by resolving what I called the game, the game constructed, constructed in such a way that it is assuredly lost in every case. How this game can be won is, it seems to me, the major problem, the crucial problem for psychoanalysis.

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Seminar 7: Wednesday 27 January 1965

In the relationship of the subject to the Other, in the relationship of one with others, we have learned to distinguish in its subtlety, in its mobility, an essential function of mirage; we have learned it doubly through the teaching of psychoanalysis, through the way in which, for twelve or thirteen years, I have been trying to articulate it.

We know that the failure, up to now, of all ethics, and secondarily of all subjective philosophy, to master this mirage, is due to a failure to recognise what it invisibly regulates itself around.

The function of the **o**-object in so far as it is, in its ambiguity between good and evil, is what really centres all these "I's". It is not enough to say that the **o**-object, in effect, runs and goes and comes and passes in this "I", like the lady in the three-card trick, of its nature it is lost and never found again.

Nevertheless, from time to time, it appears in the field with such dazzling clarity, that it is that very fact which ensures that it is not recognised. This **o**-object I have described, in what regards us, namely the rule of an action, as the cause of desire.

(2) It is a matter of knowing for what sort of action this recognition of a new factor in ethics or in subjective philosophy, for what sort of action it can serve. Undoubtedly, when I have desired from my public to know a little bit more about it and specifically, given the time I have at my disposal, from those who have asked me to come to this closed seminar, I was able to see something that I had already been able to get a few echoes of, which is that for some, for many and perhaps in a much greater measure, a much more varied and much more nuanced one than I supposed, this teaching takes on its value, which is that of any teaching, by sustaining, and this is not nothing for more that one person, this state of indetermination which we know has more than one trick up its sleeve, which is the one by which we are able to live, things being the way they are.

I intend that here, there will only remain those for whom this teaching has in some way a value as action. What does that mean? People here know, or do not know, here that elsewhere I have a school, a school of psychoanalysis which bears the name of Freud and the name of the city in which I have taken on the responsibility of directing it. A school is something different if it deserves its name, in the sense that this term has been employed since antiquity, it is something in which there ought to be formed a style of life. Here I demand that there should come those, who in some way or other take my teaching as the principle of an action which is (3) their own and of which they are able to render an account. The fourteen rows which are still almost full today prove that I do not want, through an arbitrary barrier, through a barrier of appraisal of whatever order it may be of experience, of quality or of presence, that I do not want to put up a barrier to anyone here.

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Nevertheless if I wanted people to ask me to come here, it is to put me also in the position of asking you here to prove yourselves as regards what is required from a certain more restricted circle for whom this teaching takes on a value. I want in some way or other, and rather promptly, to obtain from those who are here some testimony and, of course, it would be completely vain and moreover inefficient necessarily to expect this testimony in the form of a spoken intervention here. I would like it. I know from experience and also from the amount of time available that it is not possible and that it is not the best way.

This testimony involved then, which is the testimony of an action interested in this teaching, I thought that to obtain it, I should procede in the following way. There will be proposed to you here work, remarks, papers, statements having a sort of character of kernel, of key point which is manifested as particularly illuminated, renewed, highlighted, or on the contrary singularly connected up, in the thread of my discourse. Nothing will be done to make these kernels, in a way, more
(4) accessible, it is not the small change of my teaching which will be given to you here, unless you understand specifically by the term small change, precisely these solid, indeed closed, opaque and resistant moments which I moreover only produce, quite often, in order to do more than to communicate the presence to you, beneath what I am articulating for you.

It will be then, in the final analysis, if I get my way, the hardest, most opaque, most localised elements which will be proposed to you, to those for whom my teaching may have this more precise value, this is meant to provoke a response, a response which will be given to me, if it is not given to me here in a consistent and articulated way, which will be given to me in the interval between our meetings, in the shape, not I would say of a letter but of a small memoir, of requests, of suggestions, of questions which I should take into account for the choice of those who, subsequently, will be here the objects of which I am speaking, the object of provocation of the presenters.

Only in this dialogue, in this dialogue which, if you do not mind, you see clearly can only be carried on with those who in the final analysis will bring here a contribution, a contribution which there will be all the necessary time to elaborate in the interval between our meetings, it is in the nature of things that this only occurs with a small number.

(5) Many of those who are here, whom I allowed in today because, after all, there is no mystery about it, will come to realise, will come to realise, for a good number of you, that if they profit, and that is what I wish in every case, from what I teach on the other Wednesdays, in long continuous discourses, where things are taken up again, which is what I have been pursuing for twelve or thirteen years, it is conceivable, it is even essential that somewhere, in a circle, things should be put to the test of an action in which each one participates, that it should be from there that there should begin, that there should radiate out, what I will continue to pursue of my discourse in front of everyone,

It is normal that three-quarters of the people who are here today will come at a moment to recognise, that after all it is not the moment for them to come here to work, or simply that they will never have anything to do here, without for all that their forfeiting any merit. It is simply that what is happening here is not their

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business. I want here people who are interested in their action, in what is involved in this essential change of ethical and subjective motivation, which is what analysis introduces into our world.

I am not prejudging in any way who the people are who may take on the role which is the appropriate one for here. Let us say, that to find my bearings in it, I (6) will proceed as Josuah did at a certain detour which we are told about in his story, you will see the way they behave with their hands, when it is a matter for them of taking water to drink.

I give the floor to Leclaire.

[Leclaire's paper is missing. But cf the Laplanche/Leclaire article of 1960 translated in*Yale French Studies* 48: 118-76 for an earlier treatment of the same material.]

Dr Lacan: I want to preserve for this first meeting all its austerity. I am going to ask someone whom I expressly asked to be present at this first meeting, Conrad Stein, who at the time when Leclaire for the first time went into the example that he took up today in a completed and perfectly articulated fashion, I am going to ask Conrad Stein who had raised a certain number of objections, of questions, who had put in doubt the exact relevance of the articulation at this moment of the first chain which goes from *lit-la-corne,* gathers together in the *la licorne* [the unicorn] its character, properly speaking, of ideational representative of the unconscious, whether there remains in suspense for him, some question about the relevance of what he had put forward, what he has been able since then, because of these very questions,as he has said himself, to specify.

If Conrad Stein finds his question and his demand for precision renewed in any shape whatsoever - if he is in a position to formulate it immediately let him do so. We will put this question, as I might say , on the agenda, on the blackboard. Nothing more because I would like that today there should intervene those who have prepared different material, just as difficult, as you will see to understand like that, in passing, as Leclaire's paper.

(2) Here in effect, in practice, is what I propose: Leclaire’s paper and those which will follow, I have no doubt deserve in every respect, it is perfectly ready, it has been more than gone over, to be printed.

This printing will be carried out and will be put at your disposal within ten days, put at your disposal for a moderately onerous sum, and I think that the most convenient way is to go and get it at the Secretariat of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes in Madame Durand’s office on the second floor of 54 rue de Varenne, where all of those who want to have it will be able to get it.

Nevertheless, as much to see the size of this printing, which will be roneotyped, as for the security of what follows, I would ask to raise their hands those who do not simply want to have this paper as a pretty little article, but who in this connection commit themselves, and moreover their names will be taken when they get the text, commit themselves to respond to it by a text of a minimum of two pages concerning what it gives rise to for them in terms of a necessary questioning

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indeed of a response. They commit themselves to have it reach me before the next meeting of this closed seminar. Those who having procured this text do not bring along this contribution, place themselves at the same time, outside the commitment which I said at the beginning is the one that I intend to bind together here. Raise your hands, then, those who want to have this text in order to base something on it and send it to me. Raise your hands.

We will print then a run of this text that is more or less double the number that I see, namely, 35 or 40 copies.

To expedite matters, Stein, are you able to reply now or would you prefer to wait until another paper has been read to allow there to mature, for example, what I am asking from you in terms of a response?

Doctor Stein: I would prefer to say a few words right away for the good reason that a half an hour of maturing would not be enough. It is obviously not possible to take up the discussion with Leclaire at the point at which it remained 4 years ago. I would effectively need to read his text to give a detailed commentary of it. Here I would simply like to make a few remarks, and I will take things up, beginning with the end, with what is closest therefore. Poord'jeli, this phantasy, effectively, this expression, this quite fundamental reference to unconscious phantasy because the unconscious phantasy is by its very nature unsayable, Poord'jeli is obviously constructed like a dream. Leclaire has given us the different words, the different phrases, the different thoughts formulated in language of which Poord'jeli constitutes the expression and the means of condensation and of displacement.

(4) Now you know and in this connection I would like to ask those who want to intervene on the text of Leclaire to re-read the *Traumdeutung*, the interpretation of dreams, in the measure that they don't have it entirely present in their minds. Because I believe it is indispensable in this matter, I did not do it sufficiently four years ago in this discussion with Leclaire, to see the measure in which his analysis, his interpretation, is the faithful reflection of the method, of the Freudian technique as Freud presents it to us in this fundamental work, and what the original contribution of Leclaire is, namely, what is the part in his work, the part that constitutes a development, an elucidation of what creates a problem in the text of Freud. We must absolutely distinguish these two parts I believe.

Poord'jeli is constructed like a dream in the measure that thoughts formulated in language are the object of a displacement and are contracted in accordance with the procedure of condensation, namely, condensation-displacement, the primary process, namely, that we notice here something that is completely fundamental in the original exposition by Freud namely that the dream and the phantasy treat words as if the words were images. Later he will say treat the representatives of words like the representatives of things. Words are from this point of view (5) acoustic images and they undergo the same fate as visual images.

If I recall this, it is because the term "translation into a language", obviously creates a problem. I cannot say very much to you about it now. I believe moreover that I have myself recourse to this notion of translation into language, I am less certain now that images can be translated into language. The relationship

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that exists between images and language, I believe that if one looks a bit more closely, they will appear to us as being at a different level than that of translation.

This is a first remark. Second remark concerning the chain which begins from Lili and which culminates at corne: lili, plage, sable etc. Well then, Leclaire said something earlier which appears to me to be quite correct and very important to consider which is that this chain plays a privileged role *qua* key to the singularity of the personality, as I might put it, of Philip. Why? Or how? Well then Leclaire's whole argument starts from a dream, from the dream of the unicorn which he recalled for us at the beginning. Well then, this dream, as Freud says in the *Traumdeutung*, this dream is a rebus. The method for deciphering the rebus, the one which is important for Freud, namely the method which permits us, starting from this rebus which the dream constitutes, to culminate from what Freud called the *Traumgedanken*, the dream thoughts, the dream thoughts which are expressed (6) in the form of a wish, this method is free association. You know that free association, we could come back to the question, is precisely not possible. Nevertheless the fact is that this method is free association. Freud speaks in this text, where he says that the dream is a rebus, speaks about the signifying relationship, *Zeichenbeziehung* between the manifest content of the dream, of the narrative, of the dream that Leclaire gives us at the beginning, and the dream thoughts, the wishes that this dream realises, of which he did not give us an exhaustive representation but it would be very easy to do. We have what is necessary to do that.

This signifying relationship poses all sorts of problems that it is not possible to approach now but which will appear with clarity, the fact is that in the singularity which is that of the person of Philip, as Leclaire said, the chain which goes from Lili to corne, represents a privileged chain which gives us a sort of key to the rebus. You know moreover that a rebus does not have a key - if in fact, the only key that one could find for a rebus or for a series of rebuses, for a collection of rebuses, the only key would be linked to the singularity of the person who had composed this collection of rebuses. The rebus as such has no key, the dream as such has no key, there is a method - that is something else.

(7) Now, if the dream has a key a very general key, it is a key which depends on a sort of configuration which is that of the Oedipus complex but that is a complex that I do not want to develop now.

The fact remains that this chain has indeed here a privileged value and if you re-read the interpretation of dreams, what is called the *Science des rêves* in the French translation, by Freud, you will find in what concerns the dreams of Freud, all sorts of chains which he does not put forward explicitly as such but that you can reconstruct easily, its not difficult to do, completely analogously to this chain which begins with Lili and which culminates at la corne. And it is this chain that is privileged by Freud, which is easy to reconstruct, which allows him to give us the key of his dreams whose interpretation he gives in his work.

Therefore let us not confuse this chain with the dream thoughts, namely, with what belongs properly speaking according to Freud to the preconscious.

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Now a final point. A final point, which is important in connection with this dream that Leclaire has analysed for us, is that the patient was thirsty. He needed a drink. If we refer again to the original text of Freud we see there a whole problematic (8) which is quite central in the *Traumdeutung,* the problematic of need. There is a whole chapter consecrated to the satisfaction or rather let us say to the sating of the needs of the sleeper, and in chapter seven of the *Traumdeutung*, you will see that there is a passage which explicitly shows us, which explicitly refers to a change of register, namely that the dream cannot allow the dreamer to continue to sleep by sating his need, there is this change of register which is the passage to that of desire and what allows him to continue to sleep is precisely giving himself over to these phenomena of condensation and of development that the dream produces in accordance with condensation and displacement, namely along the paths of desire.

I simply wanted to indicate this as a particular point of this dream, allowing us to end up with a question of desire. I do not want to speak any longer and as I told you, anyway, the new thing that Leclaire contributed today to his interpretation of Phillips dream is much too important for me to comment on, without having reflected for a long time with the text in my hand.

Doctor Lacan: So then we conclude. Am I to understand that the method of approach which allows the strict application of the method, namely, the prevalence of the signifier over any metabolism of images, namely, that what you have called (9) the singularity of the subject is here at best highlighted precisely to allow us to map out three sorts of question that you have punctuated here, do you think that it is the best method of approach to put in place the questions you have posed concerning in a way the sanction to be given to the long *Umschreibung*, the long circumlocution that - I am using the same term as Freud, am I not - that the *Traumdeutung* represents. Is that what I am to understand in your intervention, namely, that you sanction the method as being precisely the one which can allow you to pose the question that you have posed.

Doctor Stein: I would answer yes to you and I would above all answer that we have no choice.

Doctor Lacan: Good then, I think that it is appropriate that on this subject you should give as a reply, more precision in fact to what Leclaire has done, namely that you reply to it by a work that is in accord with it.

I regret that your questions were not - that was why I was in a way leaving you some time - tighter.

We are not going to be able to-day to cover our whole program. I immediately invite Yves Duroux to speak.

Mr Y Duroux: I think that in the little time that remains it is very difficult for me to give my paper and for Jacques-Alain Miller to give his.

(10) Doctor Lacan: Well then, give yours.

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Mr Duroux: It is not possible in the measure that Jacques-Alain Miller has based himself on many of the points that I am giving, and I think that the benefit of the paper will be zero if we are not based upon one another in a single continuity.

Dr Lacan: No, not at all, that is not necessarily so. We will take things up the next time, it doesn't matter. You will give your work; people will remain in suspense, and that's it.

Mr Duroux: It will almost be necessary for me to begin again the next time.

Dr Lacan: Ah sure, why not! I had also brought along some things that were quite exemplary and I will delay them also.

Off you go!

PRESENTATION BY Mr YVES DUROUX

The subject of the presentation of which I am only responsible for the first part is entitled Number and Lack. It is based on the careful reading of a book by Frege which is called *Der Grundlagen der Arithmetik.*

The proper object of the investigation is what is called the natural sequence of whole numbers. One can study either the properties of number or study their nature. I understand by property what the mathematicians do in a domain which is delimited by the axioms of Peano. I am not going to state them. Miller perhaps may state them.

Starting from these axioms, kinds of properties are given to whole numbers but in order for these axioms to function it is necessary that there should be excluded from the field of these axioms a certain number of questions which are given as self-evident. These questions are three in number.

1 What is a number? Peano's axiom takes as a given that one knows what a number is.
2 What is zero?
3 What is the successor?

I think that it is around these three questions that the different answers can be given about what is the nature of a whole number.

(2) For my part I will interest myself in the way in which Frege, criticising a tradition, gives a reply. And the totality of this critique and of this response will

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constitute the stumbling block starting from which Jacques-Alain Miller will develop his presentation.

If the zero, posed as problematic, is not reflected outside, in a function different to that of other numbers, if it is not like a particular point starting from which a sequence is possible, namely that if one does not give to zero a prevalent function one reduces the questions that I enumerated to two others that can be announced as follows:

1 How pass from a collection of things to a number which is supposed to be the number of these things? And that precisely is the problem.
2 How pass from one number to another?

These two operations one of collecting, the other of adding, are treated by a whole empirical tradition as referable to the activity of a psychological subject.

Both of these operations use both, either to collect objects and name the collection thus formed or to add an object to another object. This whole tradition plays on the word - the word is untranslatable into French - *Einheit*, which in German means unit and it is starting from a play of words on this word that there becomes possible a series of ambiguities in connection with these functions of successor and (3) of number.

An *Einheit* is first of all an undifferentiated and indeterminate element in a collection whatever it may be. But an *Einheit* can also be, one can also take it as the noun one, number one.

When one says that a (*un*) horse is a horse or one horse; the *un* can indicate either a unit, namely an element in the collection in which there is posed one beside the other three horses. Then as long as one takes these units as an element and one collects them in a collection one can absolutely not infer that there is a result to which one attributes the number three, except by a *coup de force* which is arbitrary and which causes this collection to be numbered three.

For one to be able to say that one horse and one horse and one horse make three horses it is necessary to make two modifications. It is necessary

1 That the one is conceived as a number and
2 That the and is transformed into the plus sign.

But of course, once one has given oneself the second operation one will have explained nothing. Simply one will have posed the real problem which is namely how one plus one plus one make three because one no longer confuses it with the simple collection of three units.

That is why the return of the number as contributing a radically new signification, namely not a simple repetition of a unit. How can this return of the number as the (4) emergence of a new signification be thought of when one cannot resolve the problem of the differences, the equality of elements, simply posed one beside the

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others, and their difference which ensures that each number, added one after the other, has a different signification.

And a whole empirical tradition is satisfied to refer this function of the emergence of a new signification to a specific activity and a function of inertia of the psychological subject which is supposed to consist in adding along a temporal line of successions, adding and naming.

Frege quotes a large number of texts. All of them come back to this fundamental operation of collecting, adding, naming. In order to support these three functions which are the functions which mask the real problem, by supporting a psychological subject who announces and carries out these activities. If the problem is to discover what is specific in the plus sign and in the successor operation, for that it is necessary to separate out the concept of number from this psychological determination.

It is here that there begins the proper and original enterprise of Frege. This reduction of the psychological can take place in two phases:

(5) 1) By a separation that Frege carries out in the domain of what he calls like all of those who had been caught up in psychological concepts known for a very long time, the domain of the *Vorstellungen.* The domain of the V*orstellungen* where he puts to one side what he called the subjective psychological *Vorstellungen* and on the other side what he called the objective *Vorstellungen.*

This separation has as object literally to efface any reference to a subject and to treat these objective representations uniquely starting from laws that Frege calls logical.

What characterises these objective representations? These objective representations are themselves reduplicated in what Frege calls a concept, in what Frege calls an object. One has to pay careful attention that both the concept and the object cannot be separated and that the function that Frege assigns them is no different to the function assigned to a predicate with respect to a subject or, in the language of modern logic, is nothing other than a monadic relationship, namely what is called a relationship of an element which is the support of this relationship.

And it is starting from this distinction, that Frege carries out a second distinction which makes him refer a number, no longer to a subjective representation, like in (6) the empirical tradition, but refers the number to one or two objective representations and which is the concept.

The diversity of possible numerations never refers to, and in any case cannot be supported, by a diversity of objects. It is simply the index of a substitution of concepts in the sense that I began to speak about earlier on which number is brought to bear the number of which the number is the predicate.

Frege gives a rather paradoxical example. He takes a sentence which is : “Venus does not possess any moon”. Starting from this sentence what should "any" be attributed to? Frege says one does not attribute the “any” to the object moon and

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for good reason, because there is not one, and that nevertheless the numeration zero is a numeration; therefore what one attributes it to is not the object moon but to the concept moon of Venus. The concept moon of Venus is referred to an object which is the object moon and precisely in this relationship of the concept moon of Venus to the object moon, this relationship is such that there is no moon. Hence one attributes to the concept moon of Venus, the number zero.

It is starting from this double reduction that Frege obtains his first definition of number since the different definitions of number only have as object to ground this successor operation of which I spoke earlier. The first definition of number and the number belongs to a concept.

(7) But this definition “the number belongs to a concept” is still incapable of giving us what Frege calls an individual number namely a number possessed by a definite article: the one, the two, the three, which are unique as individual numbers; there are not several ones there is one one, and one two.

But how can one know, uniquely with what one has just up to now, whether it is the one or the two or the three which will be attributed to a concept and not, for example, Julius Caesar. We have nothing yet which allows us to determine whether what is attributed to a concept is this number which is the unique number preceded by the definite article.

To make understood the necessity of a different approach to arrive at this individual number which is strictly to be circumscribed, Frege takes the example, of planets and of their moon and this time it is: “Jupiter has four moons”.

“Jupiter has four moons” can be converted into this other sentence: “the number of the moons of Jupiter is four”. The "is" which links the number of the moons of Jupiter and four is absolutely not analogous to an "is" in the phrase: “the sky is blue”. It is not a copula. It is a much more precise function which is a function of equality namely that the number four is the number that must be circumscribed and posed as equal to the moons of Jupiter namely to the concept moons of Jupiter there is attributed a number.

(8) And this number is posed as equal in the “is four” which is the number whose property, whose nature one is trying to determine in its relationship to the other whole numbers.

This detour obliges Frege to carry out a primordial operation which allows him to refer the numbers to a pure logical relationship. This operation - I will not give all its details here - is an operation of equivalence, which is a logical relation which allows there to be ordered bi-univocally objects and concepts. The "or" of concepts ought not to disturb you in the measure that, for Frege each relationship of equality between concepts, orders equally the objects falling under the concepts according to the same relationship of equality.

Once there has been posed this relation of equivalence one can come to a second, the true definition of number obviously in the vocabulary of Frege which is a little peculiar but which is absolutely analogous, and a definition which is taken up in the whole formal logic tradition. The definition is the number which belongs to

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the concept "f" for example of which I spoke earlier, is the extension of the "concept" equivalent to the concept "f".

That is to say that one has posed a particular concept "f"; one has determined by the relationship of equivalence all the equivalents of this concept "f" and one defines the number as the extension of this concept equivalent to the concept "f" (9) namely all the equivalents of the concept "f". The extension of this concept is to be taken in the simplest sense, namely the number object that there is in a place.

If the definitions of number are obtained starting from this relationship of equivalence Frege thinks, having excluded the individual number, more exactly having delayed it in his investigation, and having in a way put at the end, as the crown of his whole system of equivalence, Frege is going to try, starting from this machine which can be organised in terms of two axes, a horizontal axis along which there operates the relationship of equivalence and a vertical axis which is the specific axis of the relation between the concept and the object namely between the concept and the object is continually ..... that is to say one can always, once one has a concept, transform it into the object of a new concept since the relationship of a concept to an object is a purely logical relationship of relation.

It is starting from these two axes which constitute his relational machine that Frege now claims to circumscribe the different numbers and we see that to circumscribe the different numbers comes back to simply replying to two of the three questions announced at the beginning: "what is zero?" and "what is a successor?". Given (10) that if one has a zero and that if one has the successor of zero the rest happens automatically.

It is starting from this definition of zero that one can highlight a little what is involved in Frege's definition. The first necessary definition is the definition of zero. The problem is to know whether one is going to be able to define the zero otherwise than by the tautological reference to the non-existent object falling under the concept. Earlier I was able to attribute the number zero to the moons of Venus because,

1) I posited that moon of Venus was a concept, namely objectively existing
2) I know that there is nothing which falls under it.

To give himself this number zero Frege forged the concept of non-identical to itself, which is defined by him as a contradictory concept and Frege declared that any contradictory concept, and he allowed there to appear the contradictory concepts accepted in traditional logic, the square circle or the mountain of gold; any concept under which no object falls; to this concept is attributed the name zero. In other words the zero is defined by logical contradiction which is the guarantee of non-existence of the object namely that there is - between the non-existence of the object which is noted, decreed because one says that there is no centaur and then the logical contradiction of the concept of centaur ..... is contradictory.

(11) **Dr. Lacan**: Or unicorn

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Mr. Doroux: Or unicorn.

You can understand very clearly if it is the concept contradictory with itself, the concept starting from which there can unfold the definition of number; there is a problem which is posed and which is not resolved by Frege - I am only going to indicate it because it is posed in mathematical logic - it is whether there are several classes.

Frege does not pose himself this problem. He thinks that in the measure in which he has defined in a general fashion the relationship of number and concept by the equivalence of all the concepts, that for the class zero there are also several. In any case he doesn't pose himself the problem. For example other mathematicians are obliged to posit a class zero and a set.

The second operation which will allow there to be generated a whole sequence of numbers is the successor operation. Frege gives simultaneously the definition of the one and the definition of the successor operation.

I say simultaneously because I believe one can say and show that they imply one another and that the definition he gives of the successor is not thinkable until he has defined the one starting from this successor operation.

(12) In other words for the successor operation I will only give the definition of Frege that he posits before the one, and then afterwards I will show that he can only give himself this successor operation because he gives himself this relationship between the one and the zero.

The successor operation is simply defined as follows. One says that a number naturally follows after another number if this number is attributed to a concept under which there falls an object (x), such that, there is another number, it is the number that the first number follows, such that, it is attributed to a concept under which there falls the preceding concept and which is not (x), namely the object fallen under the preceding concept.

That is a purely formal definition which simply shows that the number of the concept that follows as compared to the number which precedes it, the number which precedes has for object the preceding concept on condition that it is not the object which falls under the preceding concept.

This definition is purely formal and I say that Frege grounds it, gives it immediately after, after he passes to the definition of the one. He is going to say, how do I give a definition of one? The definition of one is fairly simple, it consists of giving one a concept equal to zero. What object falls under this concept? Under this concept there falls the concept zero.

(13) Afterwards Frege asks himself what is the concept under which there falls the object equal to zero and not equal to zero.

Equal to zero and not equal to zero; you remember that it is a contradictory definition that defines the number zero. In other words giving itself a first definition: the concept equal to zero. Under this concept there falls the object

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zero. Then giving oneself a second definition: the concept equal to zero and not equal to zero is the number zero. One know that because one has already defined it earlier.

Starting from these two propositions Frege can say: “one follows zero in the measure that one is attributed to the concept equal to zero”. Why does it follow zero? Because zero is the object which falls under the concept zero and which at the same time is not equal to zero. In other words contradictory.

Therefore the successor operation is generated by a double operation of contradiction in the passage from zero to one. One can say without going too far beyond the field of Frege, that the reduction of the successor operation is carried out by an operation of double contradiction. Zero being given as contradictory, the passage from zero to one is given by the contradictory contradiction. I mean to say that the motor which generates succession in Frege is purely a negation of negation. The whole apparatus which consisted in reducing the number, is an apparatus common to a whole part of mathematics. It is absolutely recognised that (14) it cannot create any difficulty. One can very easily admit it as included in the field of mathematical logic and not posing us questions. It functions very well all by itself. Is this apparatus capable of responding to the question: “how after zero is there a one?” How is this one a successor and how is it such a successor that the one which comes after it will be two.

Frege thinks he resolved it in the fashion that I have told you. This operation of double contradiction. I will not question myself about the legitimacy of this operation. I will leave it to Jacques-Alain Miller to do that.

I would simply like to say that among the empiricists, as in the case of Frege, the name of the number that Frege calls individual name is only obtained in the final recourse, as a sort of *coup de force*, as if you wish, like, as the ..... , abstains. And secondly in one case and the other, in Frege ..... the number is always captured by an operation which has as a function to create a fullness either by a collection or by this operation that Frege calls bi-univocal correspondence which has exactly the function of exhaustively collecting a whole field of object.

On the one hand it is the activity of a subject, on the other hand it is the operation which is called the logic of equivalence and which have the same function.

(15) I believe if you wish to answer the question which is posed at the beginning one can ask oneself how the return of the number as a different signification is possible, namely, if there are other principles which are capable of accounting for these different significations.

If you wish I gave in connection with these questions a Moebius strip, it must now be twisted. This is what Jacques-Alain Miller will do.

Dr Lacan: The requirements of a cut in time, then, leaves the discourse of Yves Duroux in suspense until Jacques-Alain Miller, at our next closed meating, will show you its relationship, its direct incidence with what preocupies us to the

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greatest degree, namely the relationship of the subject to the signifier, in so far as here you see it being simply outlined - I am speaking for those for whom questions may arise in their most confused form - being outlined in the relationship between the zero and the one.

Do not content yourselves, of course, with this summary analogy. If today, we have made the effort to make you take into account, with the greatest fidelity of a text which is fundamental in the history of mathematics, to which I believe a good share of you have not been introduced and still fewer are familiar with, if we have made this effort it is because it is necessary for you to know that these are questions that are so pregnant that even for the people - the mathematicians - who do not after all need this elaboration in order to make their system function, they are nevertheless posed and they nevertheless have their fecundity.

In effect, everything that has recently been produced in terms of mathematical (2) research, and rather fruitful mathematical research because it has absolutely transformed its every aspect, is founded on the avowal of the very people who made it happen, specifically for example Bertrand Russell, referred back to this work which is inaugural and was unknown until Russell himself partially discovered its mainspring, because the work remained for more than twenty- five years in the most profound obscurity.

I think that however disparate at first approach may appear the two presentations that you have heard today, and I underline it, those to whom this discord will oblige to make an effort of mental gymnastics which may appear too difficult for them, these people precisely, are those to whom I said that after all they are not obliged to submit to it. If such a relationship must be established for you, it is very certainly along thousands of threads of communication, of which I will only quote one to you for, after all, it has been agreed for a long time that when the philosopher tries to accord his thinking with the object of his grasp, he will tell you right away that the unicorn is something, as they say, which does not exist.

Nevertheless, does a unicorn exist and in what measure? Does a centaur exist and does it exist a little more once it is the centaur of someone like Nessus or Chiron?

(3) It is a question which has for us the greatest importance. Because it is indeed this that is involved in our practice, namely the incidence of nomination, at its conceptual state or at its pure state, on the proper name with which we have to deal, to the very *initium* of what determines the subject both in his history and in his structure and in his presence in the analytic operation.

This text of Duroux will likewise [be made available], because I consider he has rendered you a very great service, by giving you of Frege's work, *Grundlagen der Arithmetik,* a remarkably short summary, which is quite substantial and which is the rock, the point, the core, of the reference thanks to which this conjunction which will be carried out at our next meeting between [the way in which] the apparently purely technical questions that he raised harmonise with our practice.

All of those therefore who desire, under conditions which are broader than those which I mentioned earlier - Leclaire's text should only be taken at the risk and peril of the one who takes it not giving any response, the text of Leclaire, it is to

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those and to those alone who want to add something to it that it will be given. - For the others who are there in a way as auditors and who are still in a way in suspense, all of those who wish for the next time to have confronted, prepared what Jacques-Alain Miller will bring us are asked to raise a finger. Good, I estimate that we need to run off about eighty copies and it is in the same place and the same office, that in a fortnight Duroux, if this is agreeable to him, will have the time to look over the text which he has typed here, that you can find it at the same address, so that those, a great number, I think, who may have allowed there to escape some of the perfectly circumscribed and well modulated articulations, which were strictly equivalent to Frege's text, let them come then to our next meeting to hear what will follow.

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Seminar 8: Wednesday 3 February 1965

Before beginning my lecture, I would like to make an announcement, and I would be grateful if Melle Hocquet would recall it at the end of the lecture by writing it on the board, namely that there will be no lecture next week, nor will there be one in two weeks time. I am in effect going to absent myself for a period of a fortnight, or a little bit more.

I will take up our conversations here then on the 24th of February, which will fall on a fourth Wednesday of the month, a fourth Wednesday which, as you now know is reserved for this form of meeting that I call the closed seminar and which, as you know, is open to all of those who ask me, which charges them subsequently with comprehending, as I tried during the last of these closed seminars, with comprehending what they have to do in this seminar, namely to draw for themselves the consequences of choosing whether they ought to remain there or leave it.

For the many among you - which renders legitimate my public communication here - who were at the last closed seminar, I specify that they will be able to find very (2) shortly I hope, namely, I think between now and the end of the week which has now begun, one of the texts and, a little later, the other one of those that it was decided to make available in a roneotyped form for the people who wished to consult them for the subsequent seminars.

It will be available for them at 54 rue de Varenne, on the second floor at the back of the courtyard, they should address themselves to Madam Durand's porters. At the same time I point out to members of the *Ecole freudienne,* who obviously have complete access to the closed seminar - I think that the majority of them will go to 54 Rue de Verenne to obtain these texts, they can at the same time get their card from the approximate pile that I made of the entry cards that they can use at the closed seminar; I apologise to those who do not find themselves there. That simply means that they did not write their name on a blue card on the way in to this closed seminar.

This having been said, I would like today for us to continue to advance into what is the crucial problem. We are trying to propose a shape and, make no mistake, a topology essential for psychoanalytic praxis. It is with this in mind that I reproduced here in the shape of the Klein bottle, a shape, if you wish, that is not unique as you know well, since it is itself is a shape which may appear to you, (3) having regard to the most widespread, the most current, the most imaged shape in the most elementary books, may appear simplified to you; it is not at all simplified, it is exactly the same but it can be represented in many other ways for the simple reason that every representation is an incorrect, forced, representation of it because any representation that I can give you of it on a plane board, is obviously a representation which is a projection into three-dimensional space to which the surface of the Klein bottle does not belong. A certain immersion in space is therefore always involved.

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Nevertheless, there is a relationship which is all the same analogous between the structure, the essence of the surface, and this immersion. There is an analogous relationship, I am saying, between what the surface is designed to represent for us and the space in which it functions, the space in which it functions being precisely the space of the Other *qua* locus of the word.

I am not today going to try to pursue this analogy between a three-dimensional field and what I called "the space of the Other" and "the locus of the Other", which is not at all the same, let us say that a certain analogy with the three Cartesian dimensions of space could be introduced here but I will not do it today.

There are four schemas on the board; the one on the top left is limited, framed by a (4) right-angled bar to isolate it from the others. It has no relation to the others. For all of those who have had the leisure to open certain *Remarks* that I made, on the discourse of one of my former colleagues, remarks implying a correction, indeed a rectification of certain analogies introduced by him between the terms which serve to define the agencies in the second topography, more especially the terms ideal ego and ego-ideal, regarding which it remains moreover in suspense, whether Freud authentically distinguished them, and it is a long time ago that I articulated that he did, but the matter can remain in effect as a question.

In any case, the passage was crossed by the author to whom I am referring, if I remember correctly, in number four or five of the review *La Psychanalyse*; the step was taken since, in fact, ideal ego and ego-ideal have a sense in psychology, and because it is this sense that the author tried to harmonise with analytic experience.

He did it in terms which can be described as terms of the person, indeed of Personalism, and I tried in these *Remarks*, without properly speaking putting in question a phenomenology which retains its value, I tried to show what analysis allows us to articulate on this point. The few strokes of the drawing that I made on the left, refer then, are a simple allusion to the schema that I gave at that time, the details of which you can see in this article.

(5) It is perhaps not useless for me to recall what is involved. The value, the spice of this construction entirely reposes on an experiment in physics-for-fun that is called that of the inverted bouquet. Thanks to which, by the use of a spherical mirror - for the moment, leave this part of the schema to one side - thanks to the usage of a spherical mirror, one can make appear inside a vase, which is supposed to be real, which would be placed here, a false bouquet. Provided the bouquet is hidden from the view of the spectator by some suitable screen, the bouquet gives, by the effect of reversal that the spherical mirror produces, an image here which - as opposed to the image in the plane mirror, beyond the plane mirror - is an image described as real.

Namely, that it is effectively something which is sustained in space like an illusion; illusionists, in certain cases, and naturally in conditions of favourable lighting, in an environment protected by black screens, manage to make emerge these sorts of phantoms in a fashion that is quite sufficient at least to interest the eye.

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It was starting from there that, in a purely fictitious fashion, I took the liberty of imagining the following model, one which would give rise to an illusionary vase, around to a bouquet.

(6) It is quite clear that this illusion is only produced for an eye which is placed somewhere in the field in such a way that this can give rise to an image for it, namely, from a certain reflection of the rays from the spherical mirror, that having crossed again to constitute a real image, is going to expand into a cone at the bottom of the space in question. It is necessary of course that the eye which is able to receive, is supposed to receive the real image, should be in this cone. In other words, which is quite easy to comprehend, it is necessary that the spectator of this illusory spectacle should be within a certain rather limited field, for him not to escape purely and simply from the effects of the spherical mirror.

It is here that there lies the principle of the little supplementary complication that I add to it, namely, that this illusion of the real image, is a subject, this subject is quite mythical, it is for that reason that here the S is not barred, it is a subject who, on the contrary, is placed, as one can easily comprehend is required, on the side of the spherical mirror. This spherical mirror represents some mechanism internal to the body, which sees in a mirror the illusion that is produced here for the one who is supposed to be there.

This is not very difficult to comprehend. In effect the position of the S and of the I with respect to the plane of the mirror, even if it does not appear so in this figure, is strictly symmetrical.

(7) It is enough then that S finds his own eventual image beyond the mirror, somewhere in this cone constituted by the illusion of the spherical mirror within his range, for him to see in the mirror exactly what he would see if he were there, namely at the place marked I. It is exactly the relationship between S and the identification which is called ideal ego, namely this point of accommodation that the subject, I would say, from all time - this “from all time” is not what is covered by a history, namely the history of the child in his identification-relationship with the adult - it is then from a certain point of accommodation in the field of the Other, in so far as it is woven, not simply from the symbolic relationship, but from a certain imaginary plane, his relationships with the adults who oversee his formation.

It is in a way to fix there, to locate there, to accommodate to this point that he is going to have, right throughout that same development, in order to bring in here what he refers himself to in the genesis, that he is going to have, in the course of this development, to accommodate this illusion, which is the illusion of the inverted vase, namely, to bring into operation around something which is the bouquet - which we have here, for reasons of clarity, reduced to a single flower, indeed to this sign, this little circle or little stem - to accommodate around this something which has still not said its name, even though it is already written on the board, to accommodate around this something, here, the virtual image of the flower, to (8) accommodate, in short, this real image of the inverted vase. This real image of the inverted vase is the ideal ego, it is the succession of forms from which there will crystallise what is called, in a much too monolithic fashion, by a

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sort of extrapolation which produces a disturbance in the whole theory, the ego. The ego is formed from the successive histories of these ideal ego's; these include the whole experience of what one could call the taking in hand of the body image. It is there that there always lies what I emphasised under the title of the mirror stage, in other words, the core character with respect to the agency of the ego of the specular image.

You see the greater elaboration that is contributed by this schema. It is clear that if the mirror here has its *raison d'être* because it defines a certain relationship between the body, here taken *qua* hidden, and what is produced in terms of the mastery of its image by the subject, it introduces there in a visible fashion something that is quite clear in the experience of the mirror, namely, that prior to this experience there is the locus of the Other, the field of the Other, the support of the Other, the other, in a word, who holds the child in her arms in front of the mirror. It can happen, this is an essential dimension, that the first gesture of the child in this jubilant assumption, as I said, of his image in the mirror, which is very often co-ordinated with this turning of the head towards the other, the real other, (9) seen at the same time as him in the mirror and whose tertiary reference, seems to be inscribed in the experiment.

So what? What is involved in the reminder that I have given here of this little schema, is to show that the function and the relationship there is between this flower, as I called it earlier, here designated by **o,** and which is effectively what we call the **o-**object, this flower does not have in this experiment, and with respect to the mirror, does not have the same function, is not homogeneous with what comes to operate around it as a reference, namely the body image and the ego. I can even add for those who have already followed my developments on this during the seminar on *Identification*, that on the single condition of making intervene another register, that of topology, one could say, but obviously it is a metaphor, being there only a metaphore, more especially the metaphor of this little physics experiment, do not try then to bring into it in any way, despite the fact that Freud himself used schemas that were in fact quite similar, you cannot in any case bring into it more reality than we are doing here ourselves.

Nevertheless, do not forget, that besides, and with the help of a reference much (10) closer to the real, which is precisely the topological reference, I clearly underlined that if the body-image, the i(o), originates in the subject in the specular experience, the small **o** - you know the agency I give it in the economy of the subject and his identification - the small **o** has no specular image. It is not specularisable. And this indeed is the whole mystery. How, not being specularisable, can one sustain, maintain, because this is the fact of our experience, that it centres the whole effort of specularisation?

It is from there, I remind you, that there ought to begin every question, more exactly the putting in question, of what is involved in identification, and more especially in identification as it is pursued, as it is accomplished in the analytic experience.

You see there that the operation of identification, like the end of analysis, depends on an alternative between two terms which govern, which determine, the

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identifications of the ego, which are distinct without our being able to say that they are opposed, because they are not of the same order.

The ego ideal, locus of the function of the unary trait, point of departure of the attachment of the subject in the field of the Other, around which no doubt there is played out the fate of the identifications of the ego in their imaginary root, but also elsewhere, the "invisible" point of regulation, if you wish, but I put this “invisible” in inverted commas because, if it is not seen in the mirror, its relationship to the visible must be completely revised, and you know that last year, for those who (11) were here, I laid down the foundations, but here I leave the point in parenthesis

Around, let us say, the **o** hidden in the reference to the Other, around the **o,** just as much, and more, as around the ideal ego, there will be played out the identifications of the subject. And the question is whether we ought to consider that the end of analysis can be satisfied with a just one of the two dimensions which determine these two poles, namely, culminate in the rectification of the ego ideal, namely, end up at another identification of the same order, and specifically what has been called, and what can be designated, as the identification to the analyst.

If all the aporias, the difficulties, the impasses of which, effectively, the experience of analysts and the sayings of analysts bring us testimony if it is not around this something, insufficiently orientated and not referred to the level of the **o,** that there operate the impasses of that **o** and their solution.

It is a reminder on the path onto which we now have to advance, and propose for ourselves a formula which re-introduces here our apprehension of the Klein bottle and what is involved in this figure, I would say the key that we are trying to give with this topology, is what is involved when desire arms itself; desire is something that we have to deal with in the Freudian unconscious.

It is in the measure that it is something completely different to what was precisely (12) called, up to then, an unknown, mysterious animal tendency. If the unconscious is what it is, this opening which speaks, through which desire is to be formulated for us, somewhere in the cut characteristic of the scansion of this language, and this is what our topological reference tries to express.

I advance the following formula. Before commenting on it, we could say that desire is the cut through which a surface is revealed as a-cosmic.

This is the order in which you must have clearly sensed it for a good while, because already as regards this term acosmic, I already put forward, and under more than one horizon, the profoundly intuitive character which is not seen, and as I was told again quite recently when trying, with a mathematician, to bring into play on this famous little bottle some higher exercise, “these surfaces that are horrible to look at”. I mean that my mathematician, to resolve its problems which by common accord are at stake, rejects energetically and quite correctly, and even remarked effectively on the aspect of the horrible, here, of the bottle, this kind of curious double mouth, at the same time embraced, stuck to itself, but from the inside which means that one arrives at this edge from two sides at once.

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There are things that can be represented at the level of reflection on this edge and I who am not afraid to draw you into the horrible, I spoke to you about it as of a (13) certain retrogression, but in fact this circle of retrogression is nowhere. If we take the surface completely rigorously, this circle is nowhere because, simply to limit ourselves to the way it is represented here, it can slide everywhere.

I already one made the comparison with you of the peculiar stocking, of a kind of immaterial nylon retrogressing somewhere onto itself. Let us suppose that this nylon is able to traverse itself without damage, in a way that is easier than on the board, well then, you will see that this circle of retrogression can be placed at every point of its trajectory. The essence of the bottle is precisely constituted by its ubiquity.

That is why, of course, the questions that I pose to the mathematician horrify him. There are other methods to formulate the consequences of this ungraspable circle of retrogression, and what I represent for you here, because I think that it is all the same, however horrible to look at its construction may be, more graspable, not to your mental habits, for once you begin to try to manipulate this bottle a little, you will see what difficulties you are going to have. But all the same, that these mirages are much more striking than if I were to content myself with some symbol and with some calculation; you would not at all have the feeling that this makes sense, but it is clear that if I ask you by means of this to locate certain things that I (14) am not going to make you sense now. You can practice it by yourselves to verify its importance: the fact is that to go from a point (a) to a point (b), which are here represented on the circle of retrogression, if we take a certain type of path there and back, we cut the bottle in a certain fashion which leaves its characteristics intact, namely, that we cut it - if that amuses you - into two Moebius strips, that is to say two non-orientable surfaces like that.

If on the contrary, we procede in a fashion which seems to be only slightly different, if you wish, the first trait is the same, but the other trait happens in a different way, well then, we also cut the bottle, but we transform it into a sort of pure and simple cylinder, in other words something perfectly orientable, into something which has a front and a back, which is absurd, the front not being in a condition to pass, except by crossing an edge on the back side.

This only imaged, even though it is left in suspense here, we could enter into greater detail, see to what the divergence of these possibilities refers to and if we have enough time I will have the opportunity of showing what it serves to figure.

You will even see that there is here a good cut, one which reveals the surface in its true nature, which is that of a non-orientable surface, and a bad one which dodges it, and which reduces it to a different surface, and in any case one that is more banal, more common, more accessible to intuition, because moreover, you know (15) that historically, it is a curious thing, in a field like mathematics, where from all time recreation has served in many cases as a way into the true problems, it is in higher mathematics, in pure mathematical speculation that there appeared first of all these strange topological beings, and that if they descend to recreation now, it is secondary.

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This is a procedure strictly opposed to all our observations in the other fields of mathematics, if only to repeat that no one should enter here if he is not a topologist, as was formerly said at the door of certain schools of thought: “let no one enter here if he is not a geometer”.

Do we have here then the function of this famous desire of the analyst: to be the one who knows how to cut out some figures in this a-cosmic surface for nothing is unannounced in the field of thought and of history; is Carlyle’s work, *Sartor resartus*, the tailor re-tailored, only in a way the announcement and the prefiguring of what the subject is going to undergo with Marx and Freud?

Undoubtedly there is something of that, there is something which, in analysis, echoes what Carlyle's title alone carries: the philosophy of dress, and it is not for nothing that we begin to enter into the field of the analysis of desire with the term *Verkleidung,* which is so futile, with the presence in the word of the term dress, *Kleid*, which the term *déguisement* allows to escape in French.

(16) But *Verkleidung* is something else. It has to do with dress.

But then the phrase of a dead queen speaking about her son will serve us: “well cut, but must be sewn up again”. And also in the field of analysis, undoubtedly everything depends on the efficacity of the good cut, but also to be considered is the way that, this cut having been made, it allows us to have the garment, the garment behind which there is only ..... perhaps nothing, it is only the garment that is at stake, turning the garment it in a different way; the *Sartor resartus* in question, of which I want to speak to you today - I highlight the fact that it is not the patient, it is not the subject, it is the analyst.

Because what I want to try to bring to life for a moment, and to image for you, is a certain difficulty that the analyst has with his own theories. I will take this up in the text - I chose it because it is the last one that has come into my hands, it was not I think published in the last issue of the *International journal of psychoanalysis,* recording the Stockholm Congress where this paper was read.

It is the work, let us say, of a young woman, or one at the limit of the moment when this term young begins to take on a vaguer sense, she is not a young analyst either, she is all the same in a rather peculiar position in this curious *milieu* which is (17) the analytic community, let us say that in the English Society she represents a sort of baby for all of them. She is, faith, very active and very sharp, very intelligent, as you are going to see and after all, does not lack some daring, a daring of which the title of her paper carries the trace because, in short, she puts in question one of the terms that has passed, been woven, integrated in the most current fashion into psychoanalytic experience. She opens things out in a certain field that is properly educational, in short a really English style of psychoanalysis and of course, to speak about this style is not to decide about doctrinal orientations, for doctrinal orientations must oppose one another, even struggle with one another within this general proposition which all the same has a formative reference. The title is then: “The unconscious exploitation of the bad parent to maintain belief in infantile omnipotence”.

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It is a matter here of showing along what path a practitioner comes to put in doubt, something that everything that she has been taught as being the mainspring of analytic experience revolves around, because of the paths this teaching, this direction has led her onto. She becomes aware that everything that is ordinarily said about transference, namely, a mistake about the person, the reproduction, in the relation to the analyst, of experiences one had with parents, has led to putting the accent in a more and more prevalent way on the effects that were produced in (18) the development of the subject, by what can be called for example, as a characteristic sign, an inadequate emotional conditioning. Minds are led more and more towards this developmental aspect that the good parent is the one who takes care not to contribute, at every phase of the development of the child and of the needs which correspond to it, this something which is not going to produce what is called "emotional disturbance", in short to centre the business around an ideal of affective formation, where what is involved is something about a relationship between two living beings, one having needs, the other being there to satisfy them, and that, in a way, the outcome, the good formation depends on questions of harmony, of appropiateness, of the stages of care.

That an analyst raised in this environment ..... moreover there is no reason to be surprised because this aspect, this slope, is all the same only the bottom of a slope. Analysis has in no way come out of that, and what we have to deal with is not what its praxis, in a certain field, in a certain *milieu,* directs itself towards in a fascinated way. It is of course from a completely different experience that we begin, namely that this appears as the possible source of what is effectively involved, namely the ectopia of a response in the child to these so-called educational misdeeds, which is there ectopic, present, in the analytic field with respect to the analyst: this is what is called the transference.

(19) One must all the same know, of course, if one accords importance to my formula, whether they can be applied. Meaning what? Translated, and it is I myself who contributed a translation: transference is deception (*tromperie*) in its essence. Now then, if that is how things are, one ought to be able to give weight, vigour to the equivalence between transference neurosis and deception neurosis and why not? Let us try.

Whom is one deceiving? If transference is indeed this something by which the subject, within the range of his means, establishes his position at the locus of the Other - and there is no need for a lot of references to confirm this for us - it is a matter of knowing whether the transference interpretation which limits itself to noting that what is displayed and represented in the behaviour of the patient towards us comes from elsewhere, from further back, from a long time ago, from his relationships with his parents. If he interpreted it in this way, he perhaps favoured this deception. This at least is the question that of course I am raising, but for today, I put forward to you, as being precisely the question raised by our analytic hope, by this precious person, whose first name as it happens is Pearl.

After some salutations to the authorities of her *milieu*, she correctly poses the question: how can one discriminate, in the return of the “traumatic” experience in transference, in the analytic situation the exploitation, she says, she expresses herself very well, of these traumatic experiences for the maintenance, she says, of the omnipotence, or the all-powerfulness well known in common analytic

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references, as being those which belong to the child and, moreover, to the unconscious.

In other words, someone, an analyst, poses in the proclivity, the present slope, the aspect followed by analytic experience, poses the question as to whether, no doubt, this interpretation of transference which has from its import as a rectifying experience and as an operation, which is important, whether limiting oneself to this field does not mean for the analyst, in so far as he is the Other, the Other of the Cartesian subject, this God of whom I told you, that it is not so much a question of knowing whether he is not a deceiver, but what Descartes does not bring up, whether he is not deceived. And if Descartes does not bring it up, it is for a reason, it is because this non-deceiving God, to whom he remits so generously the arbitrariness of eternal truths, have people not always sensed that there is here some deception on the part of the great gambler, who here advances masked. For what does it matter to him to leave Him with His truths, if he, the subject of the *cogito,* removes from Him after all the only thing which counts for him, his certainty, of being the one who thinks, *res cogitans.* God may well be the master (21) of eternal truths, it is not even guaranteed in this remitting that He himself knows it.

Now then, this indeed is what is involved for the analyst, namely, to know up to what point that which is involved, namely the structure of a subject, is something that one can radically and purely refer to this double register of a certain normativity of needs, in the midst of which there intervene, in a more or less opportune fashion, these incidences that formerly were called traumatic, but that people tend more and more with time, to reduce to what is called cumulative traumatic effects, in other words to dissolve into something or other which gives the quite simple reason which is always necessary to account for the fact that your daughter is dumb, namely, that there was indeed something that, at some moment or other, did not go right, in other words, whether one does not follow, at least for a certain number of patients, a dangerous path, by allowing them to install themselves in a history which, when all is said and done, appears to organise itself from a lack of certain ideal requirements.

Of course all sorts of "insights", as they say, of points of view, of revealing apprehensions can be installed in this function and this register. Nor is it false to say that the ego can become supple to it, indeed re-organise itself around it, this indeed is what Figure 1, which I apologise for having stayed too long on at the beginning at this discourse today, illustrates for you: everything that is played out (22) around transference and the identifications, at once provisional and successfully refuted, that take their place there, will come to operate on the image i'(o), and allow the subject to gather together these variants.

But is that everything? If this ends up by neglecting the equally radical function, the function at the other pole of what belongs to the secret of what analysis has taught us to locate in the **o**-object.

I insist that if the **o**-object has the function that everyone knows about, it is clear that it does not impact on us in the same way with different patients. I mean that it is necessary in what is going to follow, that I should tell you what an **o**-object is in

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psychosis, in perversion, in neurosis, and there is every chance that it is not the same.

But today I want to tell you how the **o**-object appears to an analyst who is undoubtedly sensitive, as you are going to see, to her experience. So here then it matters little that the case with which she puts forward her reflections is a "borderline" case, as she says, with crises which have even been vaguely labelled *petit mal,* if not a crisis of depersonalisation, a subject who had up to the age of fourteen years, in the atmosphere of a couple between whom very numerous tensions, shocks, “rows” occurred up to the time the couple divorced when the (23) child was fourteen. A brother three years older and a sister older again. It does not matter to us for the moment that he is described as schizoid, that he suffers, like these subjects that we put on the edge of the psychotic field, from this kind of falseness experienced about his *self*, from this putting into suspense, indeed from this vacillation of all his identifications, all of this for the moment is secondary for us.

What is important is the following: that this patient is psychoanalysed by the analyst in question with a short interruption for ten years; that she had already given a paper on him in 1954 to the British Psychoanalytic Society. In 1954, that seems to be precisely ten years previously, but what is reported to us is from a prior time in which she herself, with regard to this patient, is able to distinguish, with what I would call her little Geiger counter, her little apparatus for radiation from the unconscious, two fields, two periods, two phases of experience possible with such a subject: those during which there is something happening - the subject, I would say, plays the game, in any case he makes astonishing progress and the psychoanalyst is satisfied, I mean that she herself knows well this whole veil effect, behind which there occurs this mysterious exchange, through which the analyst again, indeed in the fields which are closest to her, knows well that there is situated (24) her day-to-day experience of the analytic session. One knows what the discourse of the patient is addressing to you directly, and whether it is going well or not, how it is being played out and what sort of lure is at the same time presented to us, which is at the same time an opening out to the truth, and she knows well when that is happening.

But there are periods, she tells us, when I pick up, I sense something which I know well, she says, for it is far from being simply with patients specified in this way that for her this happens, I find myself in a way, she says, fixed by him.

Since she has to put her little Geiger counter somewhere, she places it there then, this is where it weighs on her, it gives her a slab on the stomach. And from there it does not budge. And what is imprisoned, it is her term, “imprisoned”, what is imprisoned inside is herself, the analyst. There you are.

Now then, she has put up with that in a ..... way, she has put up with that for ten years. I am not in the process, however much of an analyst I may be, of being ironic about analyses that last ten years, I am speaking about analysts who put up with such a situation for ten years. It is something different that they put up with the slab that is there.

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(25) What does that mean? That means that the results obtained gave the patient space, and that in the end, all sorts of things did not turn out too badly, including the fact that he stopped being a beatnik; he got married, things happened to him which are generally considered to be nice .

It must be said that already, on the occasion of a first return to a period of treatment, it was after one of his little “fits”, one of these crises which came on him, when, a curious thing, he was cutting down a tree. That very quickly brought back to him a certain panic. The second time, it was something analogous. The patient, faith, is on the point of having, because he can no longer articulate a word, of having profuse sweats and of being completely embarrassed because of this at his work.

It is rather striking that in these conditions an analyst who, as I told you, is very well acccepted in the field of the official *milieu*, should take on the role of doing, in short, what could be called, as she expresses it herself, a sort of case supervision: she sees the patient face to face. And then, at that point, there happen quite curious things. If at the level of her paper, she says that undoubtedly they had perhaps gone astray for ten years, by allowing the whole emphasis to be put on the side of the ravages caused by these bad parents, by the father on this occasion, the (26) matter is perhaps correctable. In the ordinary theory, let us say that the healthy part of the analyst's ego as it is expressed, which up to then had given the measure of things, was obliged to make way to an extra-healthy part.

When all is said and done, it might begin to be put in question whether the father is really at the origin of these ravages. What is striking is that, in the more and more subtle remarks that the analyst is going to make, and which in a way, a rather interesting thing, in her own report, comes to her, comes to her from a kind of a spoken word, a word from herself whose message she receives. She happens one day to cry out that no doubt the patient must all the same have a great need for the myth of the unsatisfactory father. She says it before thinking. It is she herself who notes it.

In short, before the declarations of this patient, declarations that one would not be surprised to see coming from a psychotic subject, that he has the feeling no doubt that when things are going well, everything is going well, no doubt, but that, nevertheless, it is not him, that he is elsewhere.

One can let that pass as a clinical feature. One can also ask oneself to what degree, and in what measure, the analyst had worked precisely in the direction of leaving intact, of reinforcing even, this falsified aspect of the fundamental identification of the patient.

(27) The analyst is aware of all of that. She notices, no doubt with some delay, that all that can be grasped about this deteriorated relationship with the father, when one is able to see its sign and its source, is that the patient has done everything to maintain it.

The role of the analyst, or rather the reversal in her aims that is produced, is to ask herself why the patient, in short, by a sort of turn-about which comes to her from a grip in which she had allowed herself to be stuck, englobed for ten years, why the

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patient, it is the least we might say, was so complicitous in the maintenance of this bad relationship.

It is here that we must say that even though the analyst perceives this possibility, the dissection that she makes of it along the path of this heart-rending revision is, as one might say, completely insufficient.

To make you aware of it, I must myself formulate, I mean not in a decisive, definitive fashion or in a radical one, but at the level of what is involved, namely of desire, there again, if one gives a sense to the formulae that I put forward, if one can admit that at a particular detour in my discourse I said that the desire of man was the desire of the Other (with a capital O), and if this is essentially what is at stake in analysis, where is this desire of the Other presented.

(28) The desire of the Other, in this radical field where the desire of the subject is irreducibly, not tied into him, but precisely constituted by this torsion that my bottle here tries to represent for you. This is untenable and requires an intermediary.

The major intermediary, the one with which there is no question, is the law, the law supported by something which is called the Name-of-the-Father. Namely, a quite precise and articulated register of identification whose major reference points I was at one time prevented from highlighting, with the consequence that I will not do so in the near future.

But at the level that we are at, what we have to see is that in the transference, what is involved is always to supply by some identification, for the fundamental problem: the liaison of desire with the desire of the Other.

The Other is not desired since it is the desire of the Other which is determining, it is in so far as the Other is desiring.

At one time I articulated this around the S*ymposium*. Alcibiades approaches Socrates and wants to seduce him, to ravish his desire. And he takes the metaphor of the little Silenic box - I mean in the form of a Silenus - in the centre of which there is a precious object. Socrates possesses nothing other than this: his desire.

Desire as Socrates himself articulates it in Plato, cannot be caught just like that, (29) either by the tail, as Picasso says, or otherwise, since desire, as it is underlined, is lack.

One dwells in language - I even said recently, which is amusing, that there is somewhere in Heidegger, something I had not noticed, a suggestion that there is here a solution to the housing problem - but one does not dwell in lack. Lack for its part on the contrary, may dwell somewhere. It dwells somewhere in effect, and the metaphor of the S*ymposium* takes on its value here. It dwells within the **o**-object. Not the Other, a space in which there are deployed the aspects of deception, but the desire of the Other is hidden here at the heart of the **o**-object.

The one who knows how to open the object in the right way with a pair of scissors, is the one who is the master of desire. And this is what Socrates does

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with Alcibiades in jig time, by saying to him: “do not look to what I desire, but to what you desire, and in showing it to you, I desire it with you, it is this imbecile Agathon”.

So then, when the patient during a session, which is analysed at length by our analyst, brings along the following symptom : “ things have got to such a stage for him that when he is having his breakfast, he cannot hold his fork without being aware that he wants to stick it in the toast and the butter at the same time”, which are evidently made to be put together but which, at this moment, are still on (30) separate plates. Well, what is instructive, is to see what our analyst, put at ease by the face-to-face position, replies to this short communication:

"The part of you that wants to get better," I am translating the English as best I can, "and which has formed an alliance with me, is fed up with the way that you are incapable of taking a step towards what you are missing. This is the *status quo* that you were speaking about, and it seems to me that the reason why you cannot go forward and grasp one of the objects that you desire, is that you have put your own famished baby 's mouth in both of them. So, since you believe unconsciously that there is only enough food for one mouth, namely, that you can only do one thing at a time, the other one is going to suffer hunger and probably die of it. This is a reason why you have been put on notice to preserve the *status quo*, that is, not to allow yourself to feel" - this is how the patient has expressed it - "that you might do, or might have done something, because this would mean that a part of you, or one of your selves, would have been abandonned for ever and would have died of hunger."

Here is an interpretation of which one can say,

1) That it is very circumlocutious
2) That she tries to connect very rapidly what was involved at the (31) beginning and that nevertheless the analyst even puts in question, namely, at all costs the demand; and not simply the demand but precisely what every analysis of demand necessarily converges towards, since the demand, in analysis, is made by the mouth, there is no need to be surprised that what offers itself in the end is the oral orifice, there is absolutely no other explanation for the supposedly regressive stopping point that is considered necessary, to the point of believing that it is obligatory, that it is inscribed in the nature of things, of every regression in the analytic field.

If you cease to take as your guide the demand, with its horizon of identification through transference, there is no reason for regression to culminate necessarily at the oral demand, given that the circle of drives is a continuous, circular circle and that the only question is to know in what direction one goes around it, but since it is circular one goes around it necessarily, obligatorily, from end to end and in the course of an analysis one even has the time to make several circuits.

What is striking all the same is that by a sort of feeling that she is palpating precisely what is involved, she distinguishes something which is exactly our structure, namely, that precisely because the oral demand is made through the same (32) orifice as the invoking demand, that the demand to eat is the same because it is the mouth which speaks, he has two mouths. All this is very ingenious but it completely misses the essential, namely, that in such a symptom,

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which is a symptom that has been pinpointed for a long time and which posed a riddle for philosophers, the symptom that I would describe as Buridan's, namely, that of the duplication of the object and not, as it is said, of the liberty of indifference, the allusion, the reference which is made to it by the subject at that moment is essential, the fact is that what is involved is something different to a demand, what is involved is the dimension of desire, and that she does not know how to cut it properly with her scissors.

It is late and I will have to come back to this case, since I must interrupt myself here. For what follows, I hope that the time will not be so long for you to loose the thread of it in your memory.

But what we are going to see as essential is the following, it is that at no time after having had this inspiration that what the subject had maintained throughout the whole of his history is a need to maintain his hold on the adult, his all-powerfulness, the darkness is so thick about the nature of infantile all powerfulness and its exigencies, that the analyst does not even glimpse what is nevertheless articulated in all sorts of ways in the field of observation, which is that in this case, and with respect to a father, a depressive father let us remember, namely, in whose (33) economy the partial object has a prevalent importance, the fact is that the patient, like every child, but more than others, precisely because of this structure of the father, the patient, I repeat as every child is to different degrees, the patient is himself this **o**-object.

The child's hold over the adult is all there is in children's myths, as the analyst expressed it earlier concerning his all-powerfulness, and it does not have its source where people say it is, in a kind of so-called magic that one also attributes to him, on condition of course that the patient is not capable of speaking about his own magic. Everyone is capable of speaking about this language, but that is not a reason to believe them.

There are, in this observation, very subtle moments where the analyst goes so far as to say : “these sorts of patients have a way of provoking in me a certain *mood*, a sentimental nuance which makes it irresistible for me to believe them”. And it is in this fact of believing them that there lies the fatal principle, because she is also very well aware that when she believes them, the patients are aware of it. When they deceive you, they feel themselves recompensed.

There is no other source of infantile all-powerfulness, and I would not say the illusions it generates from its reality, than the fact that the child is the sole, (33) authentic, living, real **o**-object, and that he immediately learns that in this capacity he holds, he contains, the desirer.

Well then, up to the end of this revision of the observation, of this correction which terminates, I will tell you why in what follows, in a kind of general satisfaction, of "happy ending", just as illusory as everything that happened before, the analyst still does not manage to become aware of what is really involved.

She believes that the weapon of the patient becomes the bad child, after having been the bad parent; it was to reduce his father to nothing, to reduce him for his part to being an object. While in fact it is nothing of the kind, that what is

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involved is not the effect that the child tried to obtain over the father, but the effect that he experienced from knowing that he was placed at this blind spot which is the **o-**object, and if the analyst had been able precisely to locate the function of his desire, she would have become aware that the patient was having the same effect on her, namely, that she for her part was transformed by him into an object. And the question is why she put up with ten years of a tension which was so intolerable to herself, without asking herself what *jouissance* she herself might have been finding in it. This is the true question and here there is highlighted what is more or less legitimately called counter-transference and which is, as is always the case in a transference neurosis, what is said to be at the source of interminable analyses.

It is true and it is not at all in vain that this word is homonymous and homologous to the term transference neurosis to designate analysable neuroses. And the transference neurosis is a neurosis of the analyst. The analyst escapes into transference strictly in the measure that he is not just right as regards the desire of the analyst.

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Seminar 9: Wednesday 24 February 1965

I greet you as someone who is happy to see you after a long absence. I am going to specify certain points because of some little uncertainities that have arisen. It is understood that you do not have to go looking for a card every time to come here, even if it only takes place every month. The people who have got their card under different titles and who have, in short, the last time, because of the way in which things are organised, put it in a box where it bears witness then that the attendance of these people is regular. Things will regularise themselves with time. The only people who can come here are those who have their card, and this card will be in a box that the person who controls the entrance to whom one must always refer to know whether the person who passes and says: "I have my card", really has it. You get your card once and for all. For the others, their demand is being (2) processed, some have a card of various colours, a provisional card which I intend to signal the fact that I have to get to know better the person who has been admitted in this way.

I apologise to you therefore for the misunderstandings that may have occurred. Some people put themselves out for nothing. I mark here that I am very sorry about that. I think moreover that it is not extraordinary that these little uncertainties occur at the beginning of an organisation that it is a delicate matter to get right.

Today, I would like to introduce what you are going to hear, with the desire of leaving the field free as quickly as possible. I want to introduce it with a few remarks that are designed to situate for the people who coming here with different prejudices, I mean with the idea that they have of what should be done in this closed seminar, may very easily not realise immediately why you are going to hear expressly what is to come; also, for the rare people who have been coming here for only a very short time.

Today you are going to hear about logic. I suppose that this will not surprise those who come, who have followed my teaching for long enough. For these people, it must have become clearer, with time, in a firmer and firmer fashion, that there are intimate, profound, essential relationships between psychoanalysis and logic.

(3) I do not suppose that all of you here, or even very many, are logicians, and that I can at this point assume that I am speaking to ears that are already alerted, but nevertheless, however little occasion you may have to refer yourselves, for example, to the introductory chapter of any treatise whatsoever on logic, you will see that logicians, in order to situate logic itself, to place it, which is really the minimum that a logician should feel himself obliged to do when he begins a treatise on logic, you will see, you will above all be struck - if I get you to prick up your ears in this respect - by the degree to which the order of difficulty that the logician encounters in placing his science in the hierarchy of the classification of sciences, is really analogous, corresponds, to the difficulties that the analysts may also have. This is only an indication.

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Psychoanalysis is a logic and, inversely, one can say that logic could be greatly illuminated by certain radical questions which are posed in psychoanalysis. To stick to the most summary phenomenology, what strikes, what strikes someone coming from outside, when he arrives and when he hears the psychoanalyst expressing himself about the value to be given, about the accent, about the translation of one or other manifestation of behaviour, of one or other symptom, is something in general which is manifested to this newcomer by the idea of a certain (4) absence of logic, or at the very least of a certain overturning, of a certain disorder in logic, and it is frequent to see the objection being advanced, that in psychoanalysis people draw the same conclusion from facts that one would improperly describe as contradictory, because facts can scarcely be contradictory, they can be opposed, operate in an opposite sense ....., one notices immediately the same conclusions.

Does that mean, does that mean that analytic interpretation, the structuring of the theory, holds logic cheap. Precisely not. This psychoanalytic use of logic is a further reason to question ourselves about what its effective rules are, because all the same it does not function without a rule. It is a precious suggestion for us, one that insists that we should devote ourselves more that ever to logic and even become aware that, as I said and as I indicated earlier, that the real question is to see whether there is not some profound relationship ..... with the question which the logicians pose, namely, on what in fact does logic have a hold. For it is not so simple. Logic does not give us the facts or, as they say, the premisses. Logic gives us what? The means to profit from them. On what miracle, on what is this effectiveness of logic brought to bear? Then, after all - the logicians (5) themselves remark on it - one observes logic, one has no need to think about it all that much to observe it, except for the fact that one becomes aware that, in observing it, one sometimes makes a *faux pas* in logic, and that this is what puts us on our guard. But after all, in principle, one is not thinking all the time, when one is reasoning, about following the rules of logic and in a word, one may very well say that to reason properly one does not need logic, namely, the rules of proper reasoning.

But when, like the analyst, one does more, people have the feeling, in any case one gives the impression, that one is going too far. It is there that there begins, perhaps, all the more, the necessity imposed on us that we cannot do without logic. One has this feeling of going too far, that what it has a hold on normally, becomes then a question that must be put in the foreground.

These are quite general truths. There is a second point, which is the one from which I started earlier, namely, the teaching that I was already able to give, to organise, to separate out for some years. In it I highlighted functions that I did not invent. They are not latent, they are patent. They were articulated within psychoanalysis, even among those, among the authors who do not express them with the same concepts, in accordance with the same functions as I do, they are (6) present, they are manifest, they are there from the beginning. One could describe a part at least, a whole slice, a whole aspect of what I articulated, as the attempt to situate, to establish, a logic of lack. But to say that is not enough. During my last discourse, the one at the beginning of February, for example, you were able to see, there being articulated, being posed, two horizons, in two poles,

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the functions of the ego-ideal and of the ideal ego, for example, a pivotal, determining function that the **o**-object, in its two opposed terms of identification, you saw, heard me, articulating it in a certain fashion which it seemed to me to be able, at least for those who were already sufficiently engaged in this path, for those at least, to give some satisfaction, which means it manifests itself, it is taken up at the level of the subject, and at the level of this privileged, singular object which is called the **o**-object, at the level of different forms, that are more or less alluring, of identification, at the level of the paths through which we put to the test this function of identification, what I called the paths of deception or of transference. We have here the planes that it is not enough to enumerate, or indeed to caress in passing, to believe that we possess the key to what has to be handled there. It is from the same level that these planes are articulated, and are articulated in a way which ought to be all the more precise in that it is newer, in that it is more unusual; (7) have no doubt about it, this new logic will become, it will find in a sufficient number of minds its articulation and its practice for the subject, its commonplaces, if I can express myself in that way, expanding and becoming the organising foundation of our research and from there, passing to the outside, filtering, osmosing to the outside in such a way that someone who in other domains encounters logical impasses, precisely recognises that there there is being forged an apparatus which is of a use, which as one might expect, of course, infinitely surpasses the order of simple practical rule to be used by the therapists who might be called psychoanalysts.

Among these essential, and truly enormous, pre-eminent, almost crushing problems, and not simply in our domain, the question of whether one is essentially a subjective construction is a primary question. This question of the one, in so far as I hammered it out at length, as I might say, for almost a whole year, three years ago in my seminar on identification, this question of the one of the unary trait, in so far as it is the key to the second type of identification distinguished by Freud, this question of one is essential, pivotal for this logic whose status it is a matter of establishing, and which will be what I intend to direct the remainder of my (8) discourse towards up to the end of this year.

If this one is constituted subjectively,does this eliminate the fact that this constitution may be real? Here is the problem, here is the problem to which there was destined to contribute a reflection, a meditation, which was extraordinarily ahead, very exactly twenty-five years ahead of anything that minds were able at that moment to receive, the meditation of Frege in the specific domain within which one has to take up its status, namely that of arithmetic.

It is for that reason that we have put forward the reference, the terminal point of our discourse this year and it is also so that this may not be a kind of simple sign made in the middle of some island, of some abandoned Philoctetes who has been crying out in vain for years, and all we would be doing for our part also is repeating this passage, this indifferent cruise; that obviously here something important was happening. I do not want to insist either that its essence passed elsewhere. No. This is never true. The essence of a research does not pass elsewhere. It is to the very locus of the discovery that we must return if we really wish to receive its imprint, its brand and also pick out its repercussions for us.

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This is why, the last time, I asked one of those here, who are for me a sign of the (9) truth that what, I believe, we have to say in psychoanalysis, goes way beyond its therapeutic application, that the status of the subject is essentially involved in it; it is in so far as I saw here, receiving this sort of response which effectively testifies to me that this is not a hope that is up in the air, that effectively there are interested, from a certain position, a certain number of minds on condition only, as I might say, that they are open, that they have what should remain at the basis of every layer of learning, namely a certain ignorance, a certain freshness, those for whom the usage of concepts is not something that they have always known, that ..... when one refers to the good practical wisdom of Mammy and Daddy, one can always allow to speak those who speculate, one can also allow there to pass in the distance the cries of indignation, which pass to the right or to the left between this or that disorder in the world.

Everyone knows that reality consists in not letting oneself be touched. What one calls reality is too often only, and it is with this that we have to deal in psychoanalysis, referring the function of reality, for us analysts especially, to a certain co-efficient of mental deafness. That is why the reference by psychoanalysis, which is too often put forward, the reference to reality, ought (11) always encourage us to a greater reserve, to some mistrust. Thank God, there has come to me a new class, a new generation of people who are not deaf, to respond to me. It is one of these that today I am inviting to speak, to respond to another, to one of those who the last time was kind enough to render us the service of introducing here the discourse and the question of Frege, to respond to him, to open up for you also the different ways in which we wish there should intervene anyone who has been admitted here, and the fact that this room is full, sufficiently proves that I am not putting any artificial barrier to it, that I allow anyone whomsoever to present himself, with the manifested desire of taking part in our dialogues, that I place no barrier to it, but because I make this welcome so broad, I would ask you to bring me, whatever the form of your answer may be, to bring me the testimony that this behaviour of mine is justified.

Leclaire, who the last time gave, before Duroux whose paper I am alluding to, Leclaire is not there today because he had a long-standing engagement. He had to speak in a foreign city, in Brussels specifically, so that what today may be contributed, referred to what Leclaire said here cannot take place today. Thanks to this I do not have to deplore too much something which is regrettable in itself, that after I had asked that all of those who had the advantage of (11) this roneotyped text, which was put at the disposal of one and all, that whoever wanted it should commit himself to contributing a short written remark. I did in fact receive a certain number. They do not go beyond six in number which is small given the fact that thirty-five of Leclaire's texts were taken from the place from where I said they could be found.

I make no further comment on the fact of this lack. I said, I warned clearly, that I would take appropriate action, namely, that it is certain that I cannot, it is not my aim to make of this gathering, described as a closed seminar, something to which there come too many people who, whatever benefit they may draw from it, put themselves in a position of withdrawal that I cannot but see, within this closed seminar, as equivalent to a certain position of refusal.

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It is obviously necessary that I should know the measure in which each person is disposed to contribute to what should be here essentially a working session.

This having been said, I had not expressly demanded remarks to be made to Duroux' report. Up to the present I have received none. I would like to receive some after you have heard the response which was planned for, which we were not able to find a place at the end of the last seminar, the response that is going to be given to it now by Jacques-Alain Miller to whom I give the floor.

Presentation by Jacques-Alain Miller

No one has a right to get involved in psychoanalysis who has not acquired from a personal analysis those precise notions which it alone is capable of giving.

"No one has the right". You are certainly, ladies and gentlemen, I imagine, very respectful of the rigour of this interdiction pronounced by Freud in his *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis.*

So that a question is posed for me in your regard in particular as a dilemma. If, transgressing the interdictions, I am going to speak about psychoanalysis without having the right to do so, what are you doing here listening to someone who is absolutely incapable of producing the title which would authorise your credit? Or again, if my subject does not belong to psychoanalysis, once again, you who return so faithfully to this hall where you expect to be regularly addressed about problems relative to the Freudian field, what are you doing here?

What are you doing here, you especially ladies and gentlemen who are psychoanalysts, you who have heard this warning, addressed particularly to all of you by Freud, not to put yourself in the hands of those who have not a direct experience of your science.

(2) As Freud says "all these so-called learned men, all these literary people who come to cook their soup on your fire without even showing themselves grateful for your hospitality".

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That if the fantasy of the one who is the head chef in your kitchen, may be amused at seeing a pot-boy making away with this cauldron, which is quite naturally after all very close to your hearts, because it is from it that you draw your subsistence. It is not sure and I admit that I have some doubts that you will be prepared to drink a little of the soup prepared in this way. And nevertheless you are there. Allow me to marvel for a moment at the fact of your attendance and of having for a moment the privilege of manipulating this most precious organ of all those you use, your ear.

It is then your presence here that I am going to try to justify to yourselves by reasons which at least are avowable. This justification depends on the fact which could not have escaped you after the developments which have enchanted you at this seminar from the beginning of the scholastic year, namely that the Freudian field is not representable as a closed surface.

The openness of psychoanalysis does not depend on liberalism, on fantasy, indeed on the blindness of the one who set himself up in the place of its guardian.

(3) This openness depends on the fact that, not being situated on its inside, one is not for all that rejected into its outside, if it is true that at a certain point, which escapes from a topology restricted to two dimensions, their convergence takes place.

That I may be occupying this point for a moment, is what will allow you to escape from the dilemma that I presented to you and allows you to find the justificatory argument necessary for you to be here as listeners in all good faith.

What is at stake then is for me to manage to occupy this point. You see by this, ladies and gentlemen, the degree to which you are interested in the enterprise that I determine, the degree to which you are implicated in its success or in its failure.

What I am aiming to restore here in gathering together scattered fragments in the discourse of Jacques Lacan, ought to be designated by the name of the logic of the signifier, a general logic in that its functioning is formal with respect to all the fields of knowledge which may specify it, including that of psychoanalysis, an elementary logic in so far as there will be given here only the minimal pieces indispensable to guarantee a progress reduced to its linear movement.

The simplicity of its economy should nevertheless not dissimulate from us that the conjunctions which are accomplished there between certain functions are essential (4) enough not to be neglected without unveiling properly analytical reasoning which I will try, by involving myself on a terrain that I know badly, what I will be trying to administer the proof of in effecting, according to purely formal criteria, a summary mapping-out of conceptual aberrations that constrain a presentation, whose merit besides one must recognise, published in Volume 8 of the review *La psychanalyse*, aberrations which can perhaps be deduced from the obvious neglect of this logic of the signifier.

Its relation with what we will call the logic of logicians proves to be singular, through the fact that it treats exactly of its emergence and that it has to make itself known as the logic about the origin of logic, namely, and the point is capital, that

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it does not follow its laws, that it falls outside the field of their jurisdiction because it has prescribed it.

Here, in what concerns us, we will reach this dimension of archaeology by a retroactive movement starting, from this field of logic where precisely there is accomplished the most radical miscognition in that it is identified with the possibility itself.

The guiding thread of it will be the discourse of Gottlob Frege in his *Grundlagen der Arithmetic* which is privileged because it questions the terms accepted as primary in the axiomatic sufficient to construct the theory of the natural axiomatic (5) numbers of Peano. These terms are accepted as primary in this axiomatic, they were enumerated for you in the last closed seminar, they involve the term of zero, that of number, and that of successor.

None of the deviations afterwards brought to this first vision of Frege will detain us. We will keep ourselves therefore on the hither side of the theorisation about the difference between sense and reference, as well as from the difference of the concept later introduced starting from predication which then makes it function, the concept in the dimension of non-saturation which is as it were the remainder of the difference between predication and identity. This to respond to someone who might reproach the previous presentation for neglecting the concept of saturation.

It is then quite clear that I am not speaking - it would be quite presumptuous - as a philosopher. Moreover of the philosopher I know only a single definition, that of Heinrich Heine, accepted by Freud, quoted by him, which says : “With his night-cap and bits of his dressing gown he stuffs the holes of the universal edifice”. The function of the philosopher, that of suturing, is not special to him. What here characterises the philosopher as such is the scale of his field, the scale which is that of the universal edifice. What it is important is that you should be persuaded that the linguists, like the logicians, suture at their own level.

(6) It will be therefore not philosophy but perhaps epistemology that I will be doing here, and perhaps more precisely what Georges Canguilhem who would be very surprised to be quoted here, calls a work on concepts. Here the concepts are the subject and the signifier.

The question in its most general form can be stated as follows : “What is it that functions in the sequence of whole natural numbers to which their progression must be referred?”. The question is therefore about what? The reply I give it, before reaching, it is that in the logical process of the constitution of this sequence, namely in the genesis of progression, the function of the unknown subject operates.

This proposition can scarcely fail to be taken as a paradox for anyone who is not unaware, and no doubt, you are now in the picture, that the logical discourse of Frege tries to exclude what, in a theory which is described as empirical, proves to be essential in making the collection of units pass to a unit of number.

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What allows you, in this empirical theory, to go from the collection of units to the unit of number, is the function of the subject named thus in an empirical theory.

The unity thus assured to the collection is only permanent in so far as the number functions in it as a name, the name of the collection, the name which had to come to it in order that its transformation into a unit should be accomplished.

(7) Nomination has then here the function of assuring identification. And in the empirical theories the subject guarantees this function of the name which is that of the gift of the name whose essential liaison to nomination is admitted without difficulty and as such, and one can add that [in] this gift of the name to which the function of the subject can let itself be reduced, there originates its definition as creator of the fiction.

Only this subject, specifically designated here, is a subject defined by his psychological attributes. The subject that Frege excludes at the beginning of his discourse is this subject, this subject defined as possessing a power, and essentially as possessing a memory, which allows him to circumscribe this collection and not allow there to be lost all these elements which are interchangeable.

The discourse of Frege then, setting itself up from the beginning against the psychological foundation of arithmetic, excludes the subject from the field where the concept of number has to appear.

What it is a question of showing, is that the subject is not reduced in its most essential function, to its psychological power.

You know that the discourse of Frege develops entirely from the fundamental system of three concepts: the concept of concept, the concept of object, the concept of number.

(8) And from two relations, the relation of the concept to the object, the relation which is described as that of subsumption; the second which is the relationship to the concept of number which we call assignation. The schema is therefore very simple. I reproduce it.

It is clear that this opening is the mark of the relation of subsumption as such. The definition of the concept as Frege gives it is not surprising, in that it situates itself in the line of the most classical thinking since its function is that of gathering together. But the unusual thing here, and what is specifically logical, is that the concept is defined only by the relationship that it has to the subsumed. The object which falls under the concept takes on its meaning from the difference to the thing, which is simply a body occupying a certain spatio-temporality in the world. For here the object is simply defined by its property of coming under a concept without having regard to the determinations that an investigation other than logical may discover in it. It is therefore essentially deprived of its empirical determinations.

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It appears then that the concept which will be operational in the system, will not be the concept formed starting from determinations but the concept of the identity to a concept.

It is by this reduplication that we enter into the logical dimension as such. It is essential to see that the entry into the logical dimension as such is produced by the appearance of identity.

(9) It is thus that, in the work of Frege, it is only apparently a question of the concept, for example: the moon of the earth. What is involved in fact is the concept identical to the concept moon of the earth. For since it is a question of the concept identical to the concept moon of the earth what comes under the concept is not the thing as such but only the thing in so far as it is one.

The assigning of number, the second relationship, is deduced from this subsumption as extension of the concept identical to the concept moon of the earth.

One seen then that what comes under the concept moon of the earth is the moon but that what comes under the concept identical to the concept moon of the earth is an object, it is the object :"moon of the earth", namely the unit. Hence Frege's formula: the number assigned to the concept F is the extension of the concept identical to the concept F.

This tripartition of Frege has then the effect of only leaving to the thing the simple support of its identity to itself; hence it is the object of this concept.

The foundation of Frege's system is then to highlight in the function of identity in so far as it is what accomplishes the transformation of everything into an object to leave to it only the determination of its unity.

(10) For example, if I try to collect what comes under the concept of "a child of Agamemnon" I would have these children whose names are: Chrysothemis, Electra, Iphigenia and Orestes. I cannot assign a number to this collection except by bringing into play the concept of the identity to the concept: child of Agamemnon.

Thanks to the fiction of this concept each child will intervene here in so far as there is applied to itself what will transform it into a unit, what will make it pass to the status of an object that is numberable as such. Logic here originates from the conjunction of the function of subsumption, that is to say of gathering together, with the function of identity through which the point is capital; we will see its incidence later, the subsumed being brought back to the identical. And the name of the subsumed collection is to be a child, to be able to become four.

The important thing here as you already grasp, is the unit that one can describe as unifying of the concept as an assignate of number, is subordinated to the function of the unit as distinctive. The number as name is no longer then the unifying name of a collection but the distinctive name of unit.

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The one, this one of the identical of the subsumed, this one is what every number has in common since it is above all constituted as a unit.

(11) At the point of development that we have reached, I think that you will sense the weight of the definition of the identical that I am going to put forward, in the fact that it is the function that assures identity which allows the things of the world to receive their status as signifier.

You understand, that in what concerns this definition of identity in so far as it is going to give its true meaning to the concept of name, it can be deduced that it ought to borrow nothing from it to this end in order to be able to generate the possibility of numeration.

This definition, which is pivotal in his system, Frege borrows from Leibnitz. It is contained in this short sentence: *eadam sunt quorum unum potes substitui alteri salva veritate,* things are identical when one can be substituted for the other without truth being lost.

What is accomplished in this formula, which might appear anodyne if Frege himself had not emphasised it, you can measure its importance, is the emergence of the dimension of truth as necessary for identity to function.

As a logician occupied by the genesis of number, Frege only uses this definition in so far as it allows the leisure of modifying it in a definition of identity to itself. And there we touch on a still more radical point than the one aimed at in the definition (12) of Leibnitz, since after all the definition of truth is much more threatened when identity to itself is concerned.

If one follows the sentence of Leibnitz, after all the failure of the truth, this loss of the truth in substitution of one thing for another, this loss whose possibility is opened up for a moment by the sentence of Leibnitz, this loss will be immediately followed by the establishment of the truth by a new relationship, for if I substitute for one thing a thing which is not identical to it, the truth is lost, but it is found again in that this new thing is identical to itself.

While if a thing is not identical to itself, it subverts from top to bottom the field of truth, ruins it and abolishes it down to its very roots. You understand the way in which the safeguard of the truth is involved in this identity to itself which guarantees the passage from the thing to the object. It is in the field of truth that the identity to itself emerges. And the identical is to be situated in the field of the truth in so far as it is essential to what can be safeguarded in this field.

Now let us make Frege's schema function a little, this so simple tripartition, namely to make it function; let us go through this regulated circuit that he prescribes for us: let there be a thing, X, in the world. Let there be a concept of this X. The concept which is going to intervene here is not the concept of X but the concept of identical to X. This is the object which comes under the concept identical to X, X (13) itself. In that the number, and this is the third term of the circuit, the number that one is going to assign to this thing which has become object by this translation, will be the number one.

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I took X, which means that the function of number is repetitive for all the objects of the world. This repetition which ensures that everything, by passing to the concept of identity to itself, then to the concept of the object produced, makes emerge the number one.

It is starting from his ternary system, in so far that it is supported by the function of identity, that Frege can accomplish the generation that he pursues of these sequence of whole natural numbers, in accordance with an order which is the following, first of all the generation of zero, then the generation of one, finally the generation of successor.

The generation of zero is admirable in its simplicity which is to produce it as follows: zero is the number assigned to a concept which is not identical to itself, in other words, a concept not identical to itself as the truth exists: the object zero and the number, then, which qualifies the extension of this concept, is the number zero.

In this generation of the zero, I highlighted that it is sustained by this proposition which is necessarily prior to it, that the truth exists and must be saved.

(14) If no object corresponds to the concept not identical to itself, it is because the truth must persist. If there are no things which are not identical to themselves, this is contradictory with the very dimension of truth.

It is in the decisive enunciation that the number assigned to the concept of non-identity to itself is zero that logical discourse is sutured. But here I am going to go decisively beyond Frege's statement. It is clear that to realise this primary suturing, it was necessary to evoke, at the level of the concept, this object which is not identical to itself which found itself subsequently rejected from the dimension of truth and which zero which is inscribed in the place of the number, treats as the mark of exclusion.

There is not, at the place of the subsumed object itself, in that place within the system, there is no writing possible and the zero which is inscribed there, which can be inscribed there is only the figuration of a plane.

One is now generated from the fact that zero as number, is able to become concept and object. If it is necessary to pass by way of zero to generate one, it is because what I said about the X was only a fiction. We are here in the logical domain and one does not have the right to give oneself an object of the world. That is why once you have generated the number zero you finally lay hold of a first object. That means that Frege counts as nothing this object (15) that he had to evoke and reject primordially.

Now then, how is one generated starting from this first object which is the number zero? Well, you give yourself the number identical to the concept of the number zero. At that moment, the object which falls under this concept identical to the concept of the number zero is the object number zero itself. And therefore the object which must be assigned to this concept; and thus one is produced.

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You see then that this system operates thanks to a translation of the elements defined at every place in the system. One has the concept of the number zero and the number zero becomes object in order finally to produce the number one.

I would like to put this formula clearly before you who are beginning to believe that this functioning is a little slow in happening. I would like to pose this formula clearly since it is through it that our whole development will give a consequence, whose value perhaps you are beginning to see, that the zero is counted as one.

This fundamental property of zero of being counted as one, while its conceptual assignate only subsumes under itself the absence of the object, a blank, this fundamental property is the general support of the sequence of numbers as Frege generates it. This is sufficiently characterised, in a less profound research than that (16) of Frege, by being called the successor, namely the successor of n obtained by the addition of one, while some people are satisfied with the simple presentation of the operation of the n + 1 gives n', the successor of n, 3; 3 + 1 gives four.

This operation then can be satisfied by this n + 1, Frege opens it up to discover how the passage from n to its successor is possible, in so far as it is guaranteed by this operation. The paradox of this generation you immediately grasp, you are going to grasp it immediately as soon as I produce the most general formula of the successor to which Frege comes. This formula is the following: the number assigned to the concept “member of the series of natural numbers ending in n”, follows in the series of natural numbers immediately after n.

In other words the definition of n + 1 is : the number assigned to the concept number of the series of natural numbers ending in n. Let us take a number: you are going to see how funny it is, how absolutely astonishing this conjuring trick is. There is the number three. An honest number that we all know especially here. Well then, this number three is going to serve me to constitute the concept “member of the series of natural numbers ending in three”. It happens that the number that one assigns to this concept is four. Here the one has arrived and where has this one come from?

A moment is necessary to grasp the subtlety of the matter. Here is the number (17) three. I skip the concept “member of the series of natural numbers ending in three”, namely, I make three function as a reserve; I no longer take it as a number, I take it this time, if you wish, as a concept. I am going to see what it is made of. So I decompose it. What has three in its belly? There is one, two, three, three objects as you would say. Except that we are in the element of number and in the element of number, you count the zero. In the series of natural numbers the zero counts as one. Namely, what is more, there is the zero and the zero counts as one, this is the fundamental formula for the generation of the sequence of numbers.

From this it arises that it is from the emergence of zero as one an emergence which is produced as the trajectory of the number within the cycle, which determines the appearance of the successor number where the one vanishes. One, n + 1; n'; the zero has risen; it has fixed itself as one to the following number which has disappeared.

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In such a way that it is enough to re-open this following number once again and to find in it once again this zero which counts as one. This one of n + 1 which is substitutable, you saw it earlier for all the members of the sequence of numbers, in so far as each one, because it is identical to itself necessarily evokes, if it is nothing (18) other than the count of zero, allows there to be given here this interpretation of the sign plus, from the fact that its function of addition appears superfluous, to produce the sequence.

Here then, if you wish, is the classical representation of generation and this is what one must come to: namely, that it is necessary to pass from the absolutely horizontal representation, marked here, to a vertical representation where one sees there being effected, by this so-called plus sign, the emergence of the zero which comes to be fixed here as one, and to produce the difference between n and n' which you have already recognised as a metonymical effect.

The one is therefore to be taken as the originating symbol of the emergence of zero in the field of the truth, as the sign of the transgression by which the zero comes to be represented by one, a representation necessary to produce as an effect of sense, the name of a number as successor.

You see then that in a logical representation, the schema is as it were squashed in on itself, and that the operation carried out here consists in unfolding it into a vertical dimension to give rise to the new number.

You see then that if the one constitutes the support of each of the numbers of the sequence it is in so far as it is for each one of them the support of zero. The restored schema presentifies for you the difference between the logic of the signifier and logicians' logic.

(19) It ought then allow you to isolate number as an effect of meaning. The function of metonymy as an effect of zero. You understand then that this proposition sutures the logic, this proposition formulated in the first of Peano's five axioms, a proposition that establishes the zero as a number. This proposition that zero is a number, is the proposition that, decidedly, allows ... to exist as such at the logical level.

This proposition that zero is a number is as such untenable. And its non-validity is sufficiently marked by the hesitation which is perpetuated about its localisation in the sequence of numbers by Bertrand Russell. But its singularity is sufficiently marked for us here, in the fact that this number, counted as an object, is assigned to a concept under which no object is subsumed.

So that in order to count it, it must again be supported by the minimum one in order to attribute to it the decisive one of progression. The repetition which develops in the sequence of numbers is sustained by the fact that zero passes, in accordance with a horizontal approach, crossing the field of truth in the form of its representative as one and in accordance with a vertical act in so far as its representation only takes place because of its absence.

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If you have understood this, why is there any obstacle then at least for us here, for (20) no doubt, it would be normal for the logicians to start screaming out loud, why is there an obstacle for us at least here in recognising in the zero, in so far as it is a function of excess, the very locus of the subject which is nothing other than that, the possibility of an additional signifier?

The relationship of the subject to the field of the Other, for now we will put our cards on the table, the relationship of the subject to the field of the Other, is nothing other than the matrix relationship of zero to the field of truth. This relationship in so far as it is matricial cannot be, I remind you, for this proposition was advanced by Jacques Lacan, it must be three years ago, if I can believe the notes on his seminar on identification, this matricial relationship cannot be integrated into a definition of objectivity.

You have, I hope, perhaps better understood it in any case, it was illustrated for you by the generation of zero starting from non-identity to itself, under the influence of which nothing in the world falls.

And this matricial relationship - and here we hold a conjunction that is essential for this logic of the signifier so often called ....., that the representation of the subject in the Other, in the form of the one of the unary trait, is correlative to its exclusion outside of this field.

You know well enough this relationship of the subject to the Other, to the big (21) Other, means that this subject must be represented as struck by this bar of the signifier, which makes it function outside the field of the Other, provided that if one is placed on the side of the subject, it is the big Other which is struck by this bar.

You see then in this exchange, a fundamental exchange, this logic of the signifier. The bar of the big O is nothing other than the relationship of exteriority of the subject to the Other, which constitutes this Other as unconscious in so far as the subject does not reach the Other.

Now if the subject is sustained by the sequence of numbers, there is nothing that can define, define him in the dimension of consciousness, at the level of constitution and progression.

The consciousness of the subject is to be situated at the level of the effects of meaning regulated to the degree that it can be said to be its reflections by signifying repetition, a repetition itself produced by the passage of the subject as lack.

I hope that it is clear that these formulae can, that they could in any case be deduced from a simple transgressive advance into the discourse of Frege. But if there is necessary, let us say, a piece of proof which will show you that this function of excess supported by the subject, at bottom, was always obvious, I will quote for you a passage of Dedekind cited by Cavaillès in his book *La philosophie (22) mathématique*, where moreover he notes that Dedekind here rediscovers Bolzano. It is a matter of giving to the theory of sets its existence theorem. It is a matter of explaining the existence, or the possibility of existence, of an numerable

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infinity. And what example does Dedekind give here? He says "once a proposition is true, I can always produce a second, namely that the first is true, and so on to infinity". It is here then, and quite nakedly, that the function of the subject is shown as the function of the excess which receives, in the language of Cavaillès the name of the function of thematisation.

When Dr Lacan substitutes for the definition, puts forward, over against the definition of the sign as that which represents something for someone, the definition of the signifier as that which represents the subject for another signifier, what is being realised here is the exclusion of any reference to conciousness as far as the signifying chain is concerned.

Into this signifying chain, it is in effect necessary to insert the subject, but this insertion inevitable rejects him outside of this chain, which means that the emergence of the subject, its insertion, as we say, or its representation is necessarily correlative to its vanishing. And we have here again a fundamental relationship of the logic of the signifier.

(23) Now we may try to represent such original generatings in time, as it would in fact be natural to do, and time, or at least its linear representation, you should clearly understand that they are here dependent on this chain. And thus that this time which would be necessary to represent this generation cannot be linear, since it is going on the contrary to produce the linearity of the sequence.

So then, if you wish, one could say, and Dr Lacan held these two propositions together: the first emphasis being put, I believe, in the seminar on identification on the point that the subject is at the origin of the signifier. It was put elsewhere, I think in the seminar on anxiety, on the contrary, that the origin of the subject depends on the fact that it is excluded from the signifier that determines it. In other words the subject is at the origin of the signifier; the birth of the subject must be referred to the priority of the signifier. There is no need to be astonished here, to see an effect of retroaction; retroaction is essentially the following: this moment of generation of a time which could indeed be linear and in which, perhaps, one could live.

By preserving simply these propositions, I found, of course here and there in the discourse of Jacque Lacan, the two propositions that must be kept together, firmly held, "the subject is the effect of the signifier, the signifier is the representative of the subject".

(24) So that it is here that circular time belongs. You see that starting from a simply logical discourse, one can rigorously deduce from it this structure of the subject in its relationship to the signifier, as, with the greatest simplicity, Dr Lacan has hammered it out, a structure in equilibrium.

Of what appears in order to disappear. The opening or closing of a number. One discovers a zero in the number, there is a one to be abolished in the number which closes itself. And there you understand why one always finds one more than what was said, and that this lack also is, that this extra one becomes, of course, when one passes into the real, a lack.

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This is the story that the doctor often told you, when he was in the mood for a joke, this story of the shipwrecked people counting themselves on an island, who always find an extra one.

Dr Lacan: It is Shackleton who reported that on an Antarctic exploration. They were living in very, very special conditions, a little isolated group. They always find themselves both with an extra one and at the same time with one missing.

Mr Miller: This plus sign, then, that we have transformed, we understand that it is not addition, that it is more essentially the summing up in this pseudo plus, and the subject who was summoned to appear in the field of the Other, and who never appears there in person. Here then is the fundamental dimension of a summons and a rejection, a summons and a rejection which structures the division of the subject, and it is there, as you know, since the end of last year, that alienation is situated.

I have scarcely the time, and in any case I have scarcely the competence to speak about this article, about this presentation which I wanted to speak about, and in connection with which I wanted to pose some questions in relation to the logic of the signifier. But after all I am going to try to do it very rapidly; in fact time here is on my side because it allows me not to have to advance too far onto a terrain that I know badly.

I am speaking about the article published in Volume VIII of *La Psychanalyse* under the title of "*Remarques sur la structure psychique: I, Ego spéculaire, corps fantasmé et objet partiel"* by Madame Pierra Aulagnier.

I will pick out then, very rapidly, these points, that alienation here appears to me to be constituted in a primordial reference to consciousness and that one touches perhaps there, I hope that Madam Aulagnier will not hold it against me, a certain Lagachian deviation from Lacanism since alienation, instead of being referred to division can only find its final reference in what is called here the reply of recognition, in fact conscious awareness.

(26) It seem to me subsequently that a sentence from this article, because it allows it to be believed that the Other is not essentially conceived there at first as a field. This sentence which says : "discourse, in this beginning that is alienating by definition, this original and initial misunderstanding, is what bears witness to the insertion of the one who is the locus of the word onto a signifying stage, a preliminary condition for any possibility for the subject to be able, in his turn, to insert himself into it".

This term insertion, then, seems to me too convenient in that it allows there to be neglected precisely the dimension of the vanishing of the subject because of the fact that he is, at a certain point, afflicted by the adjective bad, belongs much more to culturalist interpretations, this is what is called here entering into the defiles of the signifier. Finally, and here I can only indicate it, because, let us say, I have not worked over sufficiently what Madame Pierra Aulagnier tries to articulate about castration in so far as the big Other is supposed to be the agent of it, and the subject the locus, does not seem possible to me to develop in a reference to the unary trait, which is marked perhaps by this sentence, what must be added is that

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what is reflected in the mirror *qua* specular ego, closes off for ever to the psychotic any possibility and any path to identification.

The conclusion of this essential mechanism, as Madam Pierra Aulagnier, it seems to me, says very well, this foreclosure, how is it conceivable without this relationship to this - (minus phi) essentially correlative to the S, in so far as that what is diminished here is barred there.

Is it not the case that this phantasised body, this body that the psychotic sees in the mirror, definitively lacks this unification which alone would allow him to guarantee the distinction of the trait? Is not what is lacking here, then, the subordination that at the beginning we described as essential to the function of the unifying unit, to the function of the distinctive unit and thus the function of the unary trait as the heart, the root of this castration?

Once again I believe that I have done too little work to say any more about it since, effectively, I do not know any more. What on the contrary seems to me, and seemed to me quite compatible and articulated in accordance with the rules of the logic of the signifier, is the point here recalled by Dr Lacan at the beginning of this presentation, which is the **o-**object and it is well said in this article, that it has as a turning point of its constitution the phallus.

It is clear that the function of number can be referred to this function of the **o,** as an effect of metonymy, which abolishes the subject by blocking off its place, because the subject finds himself identified to it.

(28) Because finally, if I dared to say a few more words in relation to analysis, and again no doubt here from a formal point of view, I would say that what marks the metonymy of this **o-** object as the function of number, is that the infinity of desire is a pseudo-infinity, namely, that it is an infinity that can be numbered in so far as it is only a metonymy as it appears in the form of recurrence in the theory of the whole number.

Desire, and here you see the point to which the categories articulated in this logic can serve in analytic algebra, this infinity is to be conceived as the law of the passage from the zero, in so far as it abandons, as the one who is called the devil does, its trace.

By which you see that he is not so clever because one can follow his trace. Again one must put on the green glasses of the analysts to fall into step with him. The step from zero, is the one in its function of repetition.

I would like to have said a word about what this logic of the signifier can teach us in the discourse of Claude Lévi-Strauss which sometimes is apparently so connected up to Dr Lacan. I would say - it is perhaps a little elliptical and a little cavalier, I apologise for it - that it is wrong to discern in the articulation of the combinatory, and in the movement of its variations, the passage of zero, that there is expressed for him the necessity of a reference outside the combinatory such as (29) Lévi-Strauss finds it, by turning back to the most primitive materialisms of the eighteenth century in the structure of the brain. We are spared this return because of what we know about the implication of the subject in the structure and

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not about his position on the outside. From this implication of the subject in the structure, in so far as this implication functions there as intimation by the summation that the signifier makes there of the subject.

I am going to end with what I had at one time thought of beginning with, which was to tell you the relationship that this presentation expressly has exactly with what Dr Lacan explained at the beginning of this year. Somebody was astonished at one point that this year's seminar was not called: the subjective positions, as he had said last year. Now it is indeed in a certain fashion subjective positions that are being dealt with this year, that continue to be dealt with here and that, perhaps, no doubt will continue to be dealt with.

What Dr Lacan explained to us right at the beginning of this year, what he tried to do, was to situate in a unique topology the relationships that obtain in the space of language, the circumscriptions of the logical field, of the linguistic field and of the analytic field.

(30) He tried to give the principle of the divisions brought about, according to their particular relevance, by the three discourses of logic, linguistics and psychoanalysis in the space of language.

The relevance for each one of these three discourses - and one sees here how psychoanalysis can give the principle of a new classification - the relevance for each one of these discourses, the position, is the position in which the subject is sustained in relation to the represented that is produced establishes. Which can, which even ought to be said as follows : “the principle of the variation of relevance is the variation of the positions of the subject”.

The totality of what I have said here only has a value of fiction. It is precisely because this has only the value of fiction that one can imagine that one might export certain of its terms elsewhere, which is what a work essentially dealing with concepts consists of, by reducing this logic to

1) The action of the signifier as what the subject cannot reach except by being represented and
2) to the possibility nevertheless of the signifier.

This action of the signifier and this possibility of the signifier seem to us, I say in parenthesis, to characterise this inversion that Marx puts at the principle of ideology.

(31) Now it may happen that one does not simply accept that this is a fiction.

To those who do not except it, I would say better then, to satisfy them completely. I would say that what was involved here was a farce of which I was perhaps the marionette, but that those who might think it was a farce, should be well persuaded that they have been the turkeys.

Dr Lacan: After this extremely complete presentation, which I think the attention it was given sufficiently marks, I am going, alas, simply for form’s sake, given the

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late hour, to ask if anyone might not complement it by a question which might have suggested itself as being quite specially urgent.

Does Pierra Aulagnier, Pierra Aulagnier who of course was put on the spot in such a flattering fashion, I might say, think that we are not going to remain there and since we already have other texts by Pierra Aulagnier, which are published or not published, and one recently delivered in public, I will have occasion to refer to it in the whole measure that you will see that this radical presentation, this core presentation concerning the function of the zero and of the one, is the absolutely essential pivot by means of which we will be able to set out, to take up questions which I became aware in the course of this period, let us say the word, of isolation that I took recently, to take up again I say in their order, in which I became aware that they had been stated in an order which, undoubtedly, for all those who refer to the text of (2) my seminars of the past years, will appear quite rigorous, I must say, I must attribute to myself a good mark from the didactic point of view, to take up again in their order, all those things whose consequence I showed at the level respectively of the position of demand and of desire, first of all and from a quite fundamental distinction that I made, and in connection with which they were produced around me, and not alone in the article by Pierra Aulaigner, certain slippages which were almost necessary, but which it is still a question of correcting, concerning the distinction of functions which I described, posed as being respectively privation, frustration, castration, which are so essential to distinguish in order to put back in their place the whole theory that we give of treatment in its most concrete form.

I think that what you heard today, which will be roneotyped and put at your disposal in the same conditions, that is to say without any engagement, as one might say, on your part to intervene immediately about it in the same conditions as the discourse of Duroux the last time, I think that you could not expect a better starting base for the rest of what I am going to develop for you now during the month of March and to which then there will perhaps be contributed, first of all in a way that will allow us the time to do it, we will have two closed sessions at the end (3) of the month of March, and in a fashion that will be diversified by the diverse shoots that I will have the time to take up between now and the end.

I pose my question again then. Is there someone who wants to pose an urgent question?

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Seminar 10: Wednesday 3 March 1965

I apologise: the absence of white chalk probably does not facilitate the legibility of what I have written on the board. I would like to know, however, whether it is completely invisible from some parts of the room in order to be able, I do not know how to change the angle. You cannot see anything, as usual! What are we going to do?

I will speak to you, I will try to speak to you, today, in a way that represents a knot between the trajectory that we have pursued up to now and what is going to open up, I will try to speak to you about identification; I mean the way in which, presenting itself to us in analytic experience, it poses its problem as contributing an essential step in what has taken shape, in the course of a long tradition called more or less correctly a philosophical tradition, in what has taken shape around this theme.

Identification: I have tried to introduce the subject for you by a reflection on what establishes it at the centre of our experience, which is the analytic experience; the subject seems to have presented itself to us in the course of the last steps we have (2) taken; the subject, would be, if we are to believe the straight path onto which I tried to direct your gaze with the theory of numbers, the subject would be, in short, recognisable in what proves, for mathematical thinking, to be closely linked to the concept of lack, to this concept whose number is zero.

The analogy is striking between this concept and what I tried to formulate for you about the position of the subject as appearing and disappearing in an ever-repeated pulsation as an effect, an effect of the signifier, an effect that is always vanishing and re-appearing; there is a striking analogy between this metaphor and the concept that the reflection of an arithmetician-philosopher, Frege - someone asked me. since we have been talking about him here, how his name is spelt - Frege is necessarily led to give a place to the support, to the contribution to this concept whose assignation as number is zero, in order to make emerge from it this one, which is also inextinguishable, always disappearing so as, in its repetition, to be added to itself but in a unit of repetition of which one can also say that we touch in it, that never do we find, in the measure that it progresses, what it has lost, if not this proliferation which multiplies it without limit, which manifests itself as presentifying, in a serial fashion, a certain manifestation of infinity.

Thus the subject shows itself one, as originating in a privation, and, in a way, (3) through its mediation chained, riveted to this identity which, as has been said to you in a recent formulation, in an identity which is nothing other than a consequence of this primary requirement without which nothing could be true, but which leaves the subject in suspense, hanging on to what has been called, what Leibnitz - this Leibnitzian reference was admirably highlighted for you in a closed session - that identity is nothing other than that without which the truth could not be saved, no doubt, but for us, for us analysts, is the question of identification not posed in another fashion, that is, in a way, prior to the status of

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truth? How could we not have the testimony of it in this shifting foundation of our experience, which puts at its root what is at the same time, what presents itself to us in a moment which is profoundly the same, as transference in so far as it is referred by us to the double pole of what is involved in love for us as the most authentic and also what is manifested to us of it along the path of deception.

Let us posit that in taking this reference to number, we wanted to find the most radical point of reference, the one where we have to locate the subject in the language that is established, in a way, before the subject identifies himself in it, locates himself in it as the one who is already speaking, before the sentence has its "I", where the subject first of all poses himself in the form of a shifter as being the (4) one who is speaking. The impersonal sentence exists, there is a subject of the sentence. This subject is, first of all, at this root point of what happens, when he says, not that the subject is this or that, but that that something is happening: "it is raining". This is the fundamental sentence and, in language, is the root of the fact that things happen; it is in a second phase that the subject identifies himself in it as the one who speaks.

And, no doubt, this or that form of language is there in its difference, to remind us that there are more diverse modes of giving preeminence, precedence to this identification of the enunciating subject, to the one who effectively speaks it. The existence of the verb "to be" in Indo-European tongues is there, no doubt, to put in the forefront this *Ich* as being the support of the subject, but not every tongue is constructed like that; and one or other logical, or pseudo-logical problem which can be posed in the register of our Indo-European tongues, with different forms of linguistic status, this is why I wanted today, simply as an indication, as a fastening point, a reference point, to put on the board some Chinese characters, and you will see later what they mean and what use I will make of them.

If the logical problems of the subject are not formulated in the Chinese tradition with such an exigent, deep, fruitful development of logic it is not, as has been said, (5) because in Chinese there is no verb "to be". The most usual word in spoken Chinese for the verb "to be" is this *iche*, naturally, how could one do without it in spoken usage? But that it is fundamentally, and this is the second character of the three written on the board on the left, in the most legible form, the most recognisable one in print in which these characters are written, on the right, in the cursive form in which this formula that I am bringing you, I found it effectively in a monastic calligraphy, and you will see the meaning that it had.

The character in the centre of this formula which is pronounced *jou che*, like the body, this *che* is also a demonstrative "this", and that the demonstrative in Chinese is what serves to designate the verb "to be", is something which shows that the relationship of the subject to enunciating is different where it is situated(?).

But we are going to see, for us, for us analysts, the level at which we must now take up the problem, to draw, to situate our current progress, the one which was achieved before our separating, before this interruption of two or three weeks, to situate the importance of what I wanted to designate for you in this relationship between the zero and the one as giving to the inaugurating presence of the signifier, its fundamental articulation.

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(6) Here I must designate for you, if not commentate for you, for the commentary on it would be rather long, it is all very well for it to be no more than three pages long, in these pages that I designate for you in *Massen-Psychologie und Ich-Analyse,* translated as *Psychologie des masses*, what is involved is, effectively, a crowd, the reference is to be found in the work of Gustave Lebon*, und Ich-analyse* and *Analyse du moi* - chapter VII about identification.

I only point it out to you so that you will be able to see in it, concentrated in a way, all the enigmas before which Freud, with his honesty, which is so profound and so obvious at the same time, pauses, pointing with his finger to the place where there shifts, where there fails for him, what is satisfying in the reference that he is producing here, at the moment when he wants to give us the key, the soul, the heart of his topography.

Far from formulating for us at this level, I said in this chapter, the terms of identification in a form that is in a way happy, shifting, dialectical, re-emerging from itself, like in the approaches that he had read of it up to then in its developmental description, in short, the stages of the libido, as he had been able to sketch them out and specifically at the point where his thinking turns and where, from the register of the conscious-unconscious thematic he passes to the (7) topographical thematic, specifically in what is called *An introduction to narcissism*. Here the identification to the primary seems to open up easily, by a sort of progress in the structuring of the exterior, to these more precise identifications in which the subject, finding his bearings from the first closed field of this so-called autism, of which so many abuses have been made outside of analysis, found, with respect, with respect to the exterior world, by finding himself in it in his own image, a secondary identification and soon, with reference to what he was dealing with, found this perceptual multiplicity, this adaptation which would make of him an object in harmony with a realised knowledge.

There is nothing of the sort when it is a matter, for Freud, of tackling what is, for the thinking of analysts, a radical agency, identification.

There is nothing that it is less proper to keep distinct, as was always the central flaw of their psychology, to keep distinct this register of the mapping-out of knowledge, in what would be represented for us as purely and simply and blindly, in a way, the necessary high-point of the vital surge - I give it to you here as that which, God knows why, it has to be said, culminates in the function of a consciousness - there is nothing which distinguishes less this perspective of the relationship of the living subject with a world, which distinguishes it less, I am (8) saying, as the understanding of something of another register which is here irreducible, like a piece of waste, while this perspective is adopted as been essential for subjective progress, namely that which, from all time, in philosophical tradition, is called the will.

And what is more derisory after this opening, this profound alienation of the subject from himself, in two faculties was, once it was established, an experience that itself was partial; what is more derisory than to see the centuries continue to pose themselves the question, since these are two irreducible faculties: which then predominates in God?

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Is there anything more profoundly derisory than a theology which has not ceased, at least in the Western tradition, than a theology which has not ceased to revolve around this false problem, of this problem established on a defective psychology?

This God who must know everything, from which it results that he does know everything, must then submit to the fact that he knows that he is impotent or must have willed everything, from which it results then that he is evil.

The force of atheism, of the impasses in the notion of the divine, is not in atheistic arguments, which are often much more theist than the others. The lesson is all the (9) same to look for it among the theologians themselves. Let this not lead you astray, there is no digression here, no parenthesis, because moreover this correlative of divine alienation, is the term, and we see it in Descartes indicated at its place, not at all as is said simply transmitted, inherited from the scholastic tradition, but in a way necessitated by this position of the subject in so far as the false infinity of this always reproduced ego, of this repetition which generates this false infinity simply from an infinite recurrence, it is from this that there begins the necessity of the guarantee, of the fact that something here is grounded which is not a lure, and from the deduction of the fact that there is undoubtedly necessary the field in which there is reproduced this infinite multiplication of the unit in which the subject is lost, there should in a way be guaranteed, guaranteed by this Being where simply Descartes has the advantage of designating for us understanding, against will; here we have to choose and only the will in its most radical unthinkableness, the will in so far as it is from it alone that there is sustained the assurance of truth, and that God could have made the truths quite different, but that those that appear to us to be eternal truths, that this God alone is thinkable but we designate in this way the final impasse.

Now, it is around this that there turns an essential moment of Freud's thought for, (10) going much further than any atheistic thinking which preceded it, he does not simply designate for us the point of the divine impasse, he replaces it.

If he tells us that the paternal thematic is the support of a belief in an imaginary God, it is in order to give it undoubtedly a quite different structure, and the idea of the father is not the inheritance, is not the substitute for the father, for the fathers of the church.

But then this father, this original father, this father of whom people no longer speak in analysis, when all is said and done, because they do not know what to do with him, how and what is the status that we must give to this father as regards our own experience?

This is how and this is where there is situated the perspective which now comes into our interrogation about identification in analytic experience.

What are we going, in effect, in this text which I designate for you on page 115 of the *Gesammelte Werke* in German, in volume 18 of the *Standard Edition* for those who read English, on page 500, what is it that strikes us?

It is that having spoken to us about identification there first comes, and with a priority which we must indeed sense is an enigma, that he proposes to us here as

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primordial that the identification to the personage of the father is posited at first in (11) his deduction, that the very special, very special interest that the little boy shows for his father is here, put forward as a first moment for any possible explanation of what is involved in identification.

And at this moment, since the analyst could initiate, from his experience and the previous explanations, could be deceived about it, and think that in this first interest there is something that was located later as being what is called the passive position of the subject, the feminine attitude that Freud underlines; this first moment is properly speaking what constitutes an identification, he says, that is typically masculine. He goes further: exquisitely, "*typically"* is the English translation, it is "*exquisit mannlich*" in German.

This primordiality which will make him say that in a second moment, what is going to come into play, in terms of rivalry, he tells us, with the father concerning the primordial object, this first moment takes on its value by being articulated in its primitive character; from which there arises also in its relief the mythical dimension by being articulated at the same time as being linked to what, in this way, is produced as the first form of identification, namely *Einverleibung,* incorporation.

So that, at the moment when it is a matter of the most mythical primordial reference, and one could say, and one would not be wrong to say, of the most idealising one, since it is the one in which there is structured the function of the ego (12) ideal, the primordial reference is made in terms of the evocation of the body.

The things that we handle, these terms, this concept that we leave in a sort of haze without ever asking ourselves what it involves, deserves nevertheless to be interrogated. We know that, when it is a question of incorporation as referring to the first inaugural stage of the libidinal relationship, the question, it seems, is not so simple, that undoubtedly something is distinguished there from what we may yield to, namely, to make of it an affair of the representation of an image, the other side of what will later be the dissemination onto the world of our different affective projections; that is not at all what is involved, it is not even a question of the term of introjection which could be ambiguous. It is a matter of incorporation, and nothing indicates that anything whatsoever is to be attributed here to a subjectivity; incorporation, if this is the reference that Freud has put forward, it is precisely because of the fact that no one is there to know whether it has happened, that the opacity of this incorporation is essential, and moreover in this whole myth which serves, which serves for the articulation - ethnologically locatable - of the cannibalistic meal, which is here right at the inaugural point of the emergence of the unconscious structure. It is in so far as there is here a completely primordial mode in which, very far from the reference being, as it is said, idealistic in Freudian (13) theory, it has this form of radical materialism whose support is not, as has been said, the biological, but the body, the body in so far as we no longer know how to speak about it, since precisely the Cartesian reversal of the radical position of the subject has taught us not to think about it any longer, except in terms of extension.

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Descartes' passions of the soul are the passions of extension, and this extension, if we see it through some singular alchemy as more or less suspect after a while, and that we follow its magician-like operation around the piece of wax which, purified of all its qualities, and God knows, what are these stinking qualities that must be withdrawn in this way one after another, so that there no longer remains anything but some kind of shadows of shadows, of purified waste? Do we not grasp here something that is derived from having played one's game with the Other too well?

Descartes slides towards the loss of something essential which is recalled for us, recalled by Freud, in that the fundamental nature of the body has something to do with what introduces it, what he restores as libido. And what is the libido?

Since moreover this has a relationship to the existence of sexual reproduction but is not at all identical to it, since the first form of it is this oral drive through which (14) incorporation takes place, and what is this incorporation? And if the mythical, ethnographic reference is given to us in the fact that those who consume the primordial victim, the dismembered father, is something which is designated without being able to be named, or more exactly, which can only be named at the level of veiled terms like that of being, that it is the being of the other, the essence of a primordial power, which is here to be consumed, is assimilated; that the form under which there is presented the being of the body, this being, that which is nourished from what in the body is presented as the most ungraspable part of being, which always refers us to the absent essence of the body, which from this aspect of the existence of an animal species as bi-sexual in so far as this is linked to death, isolates for us as living in the body precisely what does not die, what ensures that the body, before being what dies and what passes through the toils of sexual reproduction, is something which subsists in a fundamental devouring which goes from being to being.

It is not in any way philosophy, or belief, that I am preaching here; it is the articulation, it is the forms of which I say that it must question us that Freud puts it at the origin of everything that is to be said about identification. And this, have no doubt about it, is rigorous, I mean that the very term life-instinct has no other (15) meaning than to establish in the real this sort of different, questing, transmutation, this transmutation of a libido that is immortal in itself. Which mean what? What should such a reference be for us? How conceive that it should be put first by Freud, in the forefront? Do we really have here an originally established necessity of what is involved in unconscious reality, in the function of desire, or is it a term, is it a stumbling block, is it something encountered by the experience that has been set up?

Let us pursue the reading for that; we see that it is in a second moment that there is established, with regard to this primary reference, that there is established the dialectic of demand and of frustration, namely what Freud poses for us as the second form of identification, the fact that, in, from the moment that there is introduced the love-object, the choice of object, he tells us, *Objectwahl,* this is where there is also introduced the possibility, through frustration, of identification to the love object itself.

Now, just as it was striking in the first formula that he gave us of identification, to see in it the enigmatic correlation, this is how I am underlining it for you, of the

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Einverleibung, incorporation, in the same way here also Freud pauses before an enigma; he tells us that we can undoubtedly find, easily, the kind of logical reference of what is involved in this alternation which goes from the object to (16) identification, from the object in so far as it becomes the object of frustration; that we have here nothing other than the alternation, he tells us, - it is in Freud's text and it is not I who brought these two terms into circulation - the alternation between being and having.

That from not having the object of choice the subject comes then, and the terms subject and object are here put in the balance, expressly articulated by Freud, but he also tells us that this is only a mystery for him, that we find ourselves here before something completely opaque; can this opacity in any way be lightened, be settled? Is it not along this path that there is pursued the progress towards which I am trying to lead you? We shall see.

The third term, Freud tells us, is that of a kind of direct identification, from desire to desire, the fundamental identification through which, he tells us, it is the hysteric who gives us the model of it; for him or for her, for this kind of patient not much is needed to locate in some sign, wherever it may be produced, a certain type of desire. The desire of the hysteric grounds all desire as hysterical desire, the shimmering of echoing, the infinite repercussion of desire on desire, the direct communication of the desire of the other is established here as a third term. It is not at all sufficient to say that the grouping of what Freud, nevertheless, in this (17) essential chapter, thinks he is bringing together, remains not alone dissociated, enigmatic, but completely heteroclite

Now it is there that I think I have introduced a series of structures, destined not alone to gather together, to allow to be situated as the foundation piles, the essential points of attachment that Freudian thought maintains, when it obliges us at least to cover the field, the square, of which it marks the limits, but also to integrate to it, to situate in it what our experience has since allowed us to experience, the paths and the pathways along which the development of this experience led us, allows us to perceive the well-foundedness of Freud initial apperceptions and, moreover, why not, where they were lacking.

You may well believe, that these lacks are precisely not at the conceptual level but perhaps, and we will see how, at the level of the experience.

I introduced at one time a tripartite division which has the merit of anticipating what someone in the course of a recent talk, recalled to you as being the title which I wanted at one time to give to this year's seminar, which it was said that perhaps I was connecting up with more than I had dared to promise myself: namely, the subjective positions. It is nothing else that is involved, in what I introduced five (18) years ago, or even more, by recalling how essential it is, the degree to which our experience obliges us, to confront, to distinguish the levels of of its structures, the terms of privation, frustration and castration.

All analytic experience since Freud, is inscribed at the level of an exploration, that is more and more advanced, and more and more investigative of frustration, which is properly speaking articulated as constituting the essential of the situation and of

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the progress of analysis, for example, and that the whole of analysis happens at this level.

In truth, this limitation of the conceptual horizon has as an effect, in the most manifest and clearest fashion, to render properly speaking more and more unthinkable what Freud designated for us in his experience as being the stumbling block and the end point - and here again people find this satisfactory - the end point of his experience, namely, what is picked out in his text as been the rock, which is in no way an explanation, namely castration.

Castration, in the terminal experience of an analysis of a neurotic, or a feminine analysis, is properly speaking unthinkable if the analytic operation is nothing other than this combined experience of demand and of transference, around which the subject has to experience the gap which separates him from the recognition of the (19) fact that he is living elsewhere than in reality and that this gap, this experience of the gap is all he has to integrate into analytic experience.

The articulation of castration to frustration, just by itself, requires us to question in a different way and in a more fundamental fashion the relations of the subject, than the way which can, as it were, be exhausted in the double relationship of transference and demand.

This mapping-out necessitates precisely, as a preamble, that the status of the subject as such should be posed and this is what constitutes the isolation, that I am not moreover the only one to have formulated, of the situation of privation. No doubt, in a confused fashion, but in an articulate fashion, someone like Jones who formed part, all the same, of a generation which had a greater horizon, someone like Jones gave to the function of privation - when it was a question for him precisely of questioning the enigma of the relationship of the feminine function to the phallus, that is, to the function of privation - its indispensable moment as backbone to the logical articulation of these three positions. This is what made it necessary for us to have first of all posited that the subject, the subject in its essential form, is introduced, as it were, into this sort of radical relationship, that it is unestablishable, that it is unthinkable outside of this pulsation, which is imaged (20) so well by this oscillation from the zero to the one, which proves to be necessary in every approach to number, for number to be thinkable. That there is a primary relationship between this position of the subject and the birth of the one, this is what had to be circumscribed for us around this attention given to the one, which made us see that there are two functions of one: a mirage, which is to confuse one with the individual, or if you wish, to translate this term, the indivisible; and on the other hand, the one of numeration which is something different, the one of numeration does not count individuals, and no doubt the slide into confusion is easy. The idea that this is nothing other than its function has something so easy and so simple about it, that it requires precisely the reflective meditation of someone who is a practitioner of numbers to perceive that the one of numeration is something different.

Difference and otherness are not the same and, no doubt, all of those who from the earliest times have had to meditate on the radical nature of difference, have clearly seen that what is involved in numeration is something other than the distinction of qualities, that the problem of the distinction of indiscernibles, and why, is not

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simply one; anything that groups around itself even the identity of qualities, anything that falls under the grasp of the same concept, proves the fundamental distinction there is between the fellow (*semblable*) and the same, or, if you wish, to (21) give it here the resonance of a familiar term, of the similar to the same; the register of the similar is something other than that of the same. The other is joined not to the similar but to the same, and the question of the reality of the other is distinct from any conceptual or cosmological discrimination, it should be pushed to the level of this repetition of one which establishes it in its essential heterogeneity.

What is involved is to interrogate what is at stake for us in this function of the other, how it presents itself to us, and it is this that I intend to introduce today, because undoubtedly the step has I think been taken, easily, facilitated by our last explorations, of what I always meant by introducing, precisely at the level of this question of the other, what is essential for us in order to know what identification means, by introducing the question which so horrified all those around me who preferred to find my message futile, indeed gone uselessly astray, the question described as that of the mustard pots.

The question of the mustard pots, posed first of all as the fact that the mustard pot is characterised by this experiential fact that there is never any mustard in it, that the mustard pot is by definition always empty, the question of the mustard pots poses this question, the question precisely of the distinction between what is indiscernible. It is easy to say that the mustard pot here, is distinguished from the (22) one there, as Aristotle tells us, because they are not made of the same matter.

Thus, the question is easily resolved, and if I chose mustard pots, it is precisely to avoid the difficulty. If it involved the body, as it did earlier, you would see that Aristotle would not have had such an easy answer, for the body, being what has the property, not only of assimilating to itself the matter that it absorbs but, as we have seen suggested by Freud, of assimilating something quite different with it, namely, its essence as body. There you would not have found it so easy to distinguish between the indiscernibles and you might, with the monk, I hesitate to say practising Zen, because you are soon going to spread it throughout Paris that I am teaching you Zen, and what might result from it, anyway, it is all the same a Zen formula and this monk is called Tchi Un. He tells you: “like this body” undoubtedly, at the level of the body, it is impossible to distinguish any body from all the other bodies, and it is not because there are two hundred and sixty of you here that this unit is less real, because moreover in the case of the Buddha, he was something like three hundred and three million, three hundred and thirty thousand, three hundred and three, and it was always the same Buddha. But we have not got that far. We take the mustard pots, the mustard pots are distinct but I think the question is, the hollow, the void that the mustard pot constitutes. Is it the same (23) void or are there different voids? Here the question is a little bit more thorny, and it is precisely rejoined by this genesis of one in zero, to which arithmetical thinking is constrained.

In a word, these voids in effect are so much a single void, that they only begin to be distinguished from the moment that one fills one of them and that the recurrence begins because there is one void the less. Such is the inaugural establishment of the subject.

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Someone, before you, in the closed part of my seminar, was able to make coincide, intersect, so rigorously the deduction which coexists between a certain form of my introduction of the subject, that it is not by chance, but the apologue that I give you here about the void and its filling and of the genesis of a distinction of lack as it is introduced at the level of the pint; the “One Tuborg, one" (*Une Tuborg, une*) - I would be the first to have substituted the *garçon de café* for God the creator - “One Tuborg, one” means, introduces the possibility, that afterwards I may ask for another, and nevertheless it is always Tuborg, always similar to itself.

The introduction of "one” is here the essential point at the level of lack. This other subsequently gives the measure or the cause of my thirst, that it also gives me the (24) opportunity to order it for another and, by bi-univocal correspondence, to establish as such this pure other, such is the level of operation where there is generated, where there is first introduced as presence the lack of the subject.

It is starting from there, and uniquely from there, that there can be conceived the perfect bi-polarity, the perfect ambivalence, of everything that will subsequently be produced at the level of demand, it is in so far as the subject is established, is supported, as zero, as this zero which lacks its filling up, that there can operate the symmetry, I would say, of what is established and what, for Freud, remains enigmatic between the object that he can have and the object that he can be.

It is precisely by remaining at this level that there can be pushed perhaps to its term, a quite particular conjuring farce, because it is not true that everything is exhausted for the subject in the dimension of the Other, that with respect to the Other, everything is a demand to have, into which there is transferred, there is established a semblance of being.

The coordinates of the space of the Other do not operate in this simple dyedre[?]; in other words, the zero point, the origin of the coordinates from which we might establish it, is not a true zero point.

What experience shows us, is that demand, demand in analytic experience, is not simply the interest that we might operate on it as the plane and register of (25) frustration, referring the subject back to this establishment, this fallacious setting up of a being, of a being to whom the comparison, the reference, the reduction to the being of the analyst would bring the path to salvation. Analytic experience shows us - after this no analyst can reject it even if he does not draw the consequences from it -that in the operation that is involved there is always a remainder, that no filling of the one, either at the level of the demand to have it, or at the level of the being of transference, totally reduces the division of the subject between the zero and the one; that the effect of the operation is never a pure and simple zero; that the subject, by deploying himself in the space of the Other, deploys a quite different system of coordinates than the Cartesian coordinates; that the zero point of origin does not exist; that the transparent, impalpable, Medusa-like form of the structure of the subject is the one, precisely, which is going to reveal to us from where there arises the quality of the one, which is not at all simply to be a sign, to be the primitive notch of the experience of the hunter, even if, for it is there it was born by chance, that the existence of one and of number, far

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from being everything to which it is applied, belongs to the locus where, far from been a consequence of it, it generates the individual, has no need of anything individual to establish that the veritable priority, specificity of number depends on the consequences of what is introduced into the shapes that I am trying to (26) presentify for you under the topological aspect, in the effect on these shapes of the cut.

There are shapes which right away are divided effectively in two by a single cut; there are others of which you can make two, without the shape disappearing, they remain part of a single block. This is what is called, in topology, the connectivity number. This is the usage and the privilege of what I am trying to bring into play before you, since it is for the practical purposes of representation in the form of images, and what I drew today on the blackboard which consists of: the Klein bottle to be a part of a cutting point, a cut, a single one - they might seem to be two because they pass twice through the same point - appear, through a certain feeling of vanity that, in this presentation of my drawings on such a badly lit blackboard, I did not make the image which might have been complementary and which is easy to imagine.

At the level of this mythical circle that I call the circle of retrogression, take two opposing points. Let the cut pass through the whole longitude of the Klein bottle, up to the opposing point, since you have the possibility of making the circle of retrogression return to the first point, in this way you will have, joining apparently two opposing points of the circumference, which I call the circle of retrogression, in this way, you will have a single cut.

(27) The property of this cut is not to divide the Klein bottle; simply to allow it to develop into a single Moebius strip. Bring these two points together so that they are only one, and you will perceive that something was masked from you in the preceding operation, because this conjunction “a”, as the figure that is presented here makes you apprehend it, has as a property, no doubt, to leave the Moebius strip intact. But by making appear in it a network of the residue, - the psychoanalysts know it well - this residue that there is beyond the demand, this residue which, moreover, is beyond transference, this essential residue through which there is incarnated the radically divided ..... of the S of the subject, it is what is called the **o**-object.

In the identification operation of primordial privation, there is as effect not simply the manifestation of a pure hollow, of an initial zero of the reality of the subject being incarnated in pure lack; there is always to this operation something especially manifest, arising especially from the frustrating experience which escapes its dialectic, a residue, something which manifests that at the logical level where the zero appears, subjective experience makes appear this something that we are calling the **o**-object and which through its simple presence, modifies, inclines, (28) inflects the whole possible economy of a libidinal relationship to the object, of any choice whatsoever which is qualified as objectal.

This, which is so manifest, is always present; this which gives to every relationship to the reality of the object of our choice its fundamental ambiguity; this something which means that in the chosen, elected, cherished, beloved object, the doubt which is essential for us is always there about what is involved and that

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we aim at elsewhere. It is this that analytic experience is designed to highlight, is designed also to make us question ourselves whether the goal of analysis is well and truly to be satisfied with the identification, as is said, of the subject to the analyst or whether, on the contrary, the irreducible otherness makes him reject him as other, and here indeed is the terminal pathos of the analytic experience. Should the question not be for us, on the contrary, the question around which for us there ought to turn, be elaborated everything that constitutes at present difficult problems in analysis, which are not simply the greater or lesser therapeutic result, but the essential legitimacy of what grounds us as analysts, and in the first place, the fact that precisely by not knowing, by not at least having highlighted where there is situated what I call the legitimate operation, it is impossible for the analyst to operate in any way in a manner which merits this title of being a legitimate operation. He is himself a blind plaything, caught up in deception (*fallace*); now this deception is precisely the question that is posed at the end of analysis.

What is there, at the level of castration, but this point, this point that in the tripartite schema, the double entry matrix in which I tried in a first approach to make you locate the way in which there interchange, at each of the three levels of the reciprocal distribution, the terms of symbolic, imaginary and real, to make you map things out in a first approach by speaking, not at that time about subjective positions but, to take simply a Freudian schema about a certain mode of action or state, of exercise, of *habitus,* as one would say in the Aristotelian tradition, and to divide up with respect to these three stages of privation, of frustration and of castration the things to the right and to the left, on the side of the agent and on the side of the object.

I would point out to you, if you consult the summary which was made at that time, that I left completely blank what was involved at the level of the place of the agent of castration. Now what is involved is precisely this final position, the status that should be given to this dimension of the Other at the locus of the word as such in analysis.

Here you sense clearly we are rejoining the whole question of the essence, why not say it in a Heideggerian formula, form of *Weg der Wahrheit,* of the status, if you wish, of the truth.

It is towards this goal that, no doubt, not directly but after some stages in which I will try to articulate better for you the next time the dialectic of demand and of transference in analysis, it is towards this final goal that we are directing ourselves this year.

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	A.	S.	O.	
Castration	r	s	i	i
Frustration	A	I	R	
Privation	I	R	S	

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Seminar 11: Wednesday 10 March 1965

We remained the last time at the threshold of the demand, of the demand which is important for us, the analytic demand, this demand in which there is inscribed the second stage of what, in the matrix that I recalled the last time on the board, of what in this matrix is inscribed as frustration, of what in modern analytic theory is effectively affirmed as central in a dialectic expressly taken under this term, frustration.

The vagueness in which there is sustained this dialectic, which originates from a doctrinal point of view in a reference to the need of the subject, a need whose inappropriateness (*l'inactualité*) is supposed to be what is to be rectified in the handling of transference - this is what pushes me, what has pushed me ever since I have been developing my teaching, to demonstrate its error-generating inadequacies.

To rectify this conception of the function of demand, which is necessary in effect, in a more accurate reference to what effectively is involved in the function of the transference, this is the reason why we are trying to articulate in a more precise fashion (2) what happens through the effect of demand, and how would this not be required if one perceives that in referring to this dialectic of frustration, everything that happens in therapy loses its moorings, is allowed to drift, is allowed in a way to become detached, at the level of a theoretical horizon, everything that constitutes the starting point, the foundation, the root of the Freudian message, namely the way in which it originates in desire and sexuality.

The way in which, for the "I think" of the subject of the *cogito,* it substitutes an "I desire" which can, in effect, only be conceived of as an unknown beyond, always not known to the subject of the demand, while sexuality, which is the foundation through which the subject, the subject in so far as he thinks, is situated, is supported by the function of desire through which this subject is the one who, at the origin of his status, is posed by Freud as the one who, strangely, the pleasure principle radically allows to hallucinate reality.

This status, this point of departure, of the subject as desiring in so far as he is a sexual subject, which is the way that, in the doctrine of Freud, reality is originally, fundamentally, radically hallucinated, it is this that must be harmonised, recalled, co-ordinated, represented, in the doctrine of what happens in analysis itself.

(3) We cannot do it by taking our bearings from the opacity of the sexual thing, from the *jouissance* which motivates in only the most obscure, the most mystagogical, fashion the thing that is involved and that I called somewhere the Freudian thing.

Here there is only offered to comprehension what precisely gives to this word its derisory sense, namely that one only begins to comprehend properly from the moment that one no longer comprehends anything.

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So then, how could a technique which is essentially a technique of the word become infatuated by introducing itself into this mystery if it did not itself contain the source of it. That is why it is indispensable to take as a reference, the reference that is in appearance the most opposed to this obscurity, which is falsely described as affective. That is why the starting point, the radical foundation of the function of the subject in so far as he is the one that language determines, is the only starting point which can give us the guiding thread which allows us at every instant to find our bearings in a field.

It may appear strange to some people that our references, this year, should have touched on what, more or less correctly, I hear from here and there in snatches, in a complaining, tone being described as higher mathematics. High or low, what matter. It is certain that it is not for being situated, as it is, at the level of an element, that it is (4) in effect easy. And you should have no doubt, that this misfortunate little bottle, called the Klein bottle that I am putting before you this year, it seems, it seems that for the mathematicians themselves who busy themselves in this domain, which is rather new, or not all that new, everything depends on the reference point that one takes in history, it seems that this little bottle has not in effect, if I am to believe them, the people that I discuss it with sometimes, that it has not yet delivered up all its mysteries.

What matter! It is not by chance that it is there that we have to search for our reference, since mathematics, mathematics in its eternal development, since its Euclidian origin, as you know, for mathematics is Greek in essence, and its whole history cannot deny that it bears the original trace of it, mathematics, throughout its whole history, and always in a more striking, more submerging way in the measure that we approach our own epoch, manifests something which interests us to the highest degree, which is that whatever may be the side that one or other family of spirits takes in mathematics, preserving or on the contrary tending to exclude, to reduce, to anathematise even the intuitive, this intuitive kernel which, undoubtedly, is irreducible (5) here and gives to our thinking this indispensable support, the dimensions of space, the inadequate phantasmagoria of linear time, the elements more or less well articulated by Kant in the *Transcendental aesthetics*, it remains that on this support where, as you see, I did not include number, even though this number, intuitive or not, offers us a so much more resistent kernel, with a consistency, an opacity, as you see, the whole effort that is involved in knowing whether it is successful for the mathematicians to perform this logical reduction of this number, that however successful it may appear for some, leaves us suspended nevertheless on something which the mathematicians testify remains irreducible, this something which makes these numbers be described by the predicate of natural numbers.

But it remains, and I underline it, testified in the most striking fashion, everything that has been constructed more recently and of whose dimension you should have an idea from the fabulous expansion that it represents for about a century, that one grasps there what is already graspable at the level of Euclid, which is, that it is along the path of logical requirements which ensure that, for whatever operation of mathematical construction it may be, everything must be said and in a way that resists contradiction.

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(6) And this "everything must be said", namely, that whatever may be the bridle, the extenuated support of intuition which remains in this something which, assuredly, is not the triangle drawn on the board or cut out on a piece of paper, and which nevertheless remains a visualisable support, the imagination of the relationship between two conjoined dimensions which suffice to subjectivate it, that nevertheless, we have to justify in words the slightest operation, that of a translation, of a superimposition, what legitimates this application of one side onto another side, and of such and such of the equalities on which we are going to establish the most elementary truths about this triangle, this "everything must be said" which carries us, now that we have learned, not alone to manipulate but to construct many other things of a much greater complication than the triangle, we know that this "everything must be said", that it is starting from there that there has been constructed, elaborated, erected, everything that in our day this mathematics allows us to conceive of, in this extraordinary liberty which can only be defined by what is called the body, namely, the totality of signs which are going to constitute this thing around which for a theory, around which we circumscribe this limit, by imposing it on ourselves to make use only of elements individualised by these letters, plus some signs which join them together. This is called the body of a theory; (7) you introduce into it any equality whatsoever from one of these equations borrowed from this body, with something new that is purely conventional, by means of which you give it its extension, and starting from that, it works, it is fruitful. You are, starting from there capable of conceiving of worlds, not alone of four dimensions, but of six, or seven.

I was reminded recently that the last prize awarded, the Nobel prize for mathematics, which is called Field's Medal, was to a gentlemen who showed that starting from the seventh dimension, the sphere which up to then remained completely homologous to the three-dimensional sphere, the sphere completely changed its properties.

Here there is no longer any intuitive support, we no longer have anything but the operation of pure symbol. Now this exhausting "everything is said", because in connection with the smallest theorem, this "everything must be said" leads us to write volumes, this fruitfulness of "everything to be said", about which I was recently speaking to a mathematician, it is from him there emerged the cry: " but after all, is there not something there which has a certain relationship with what you are doing in psychoanalysis?".

What do I answer him? "Precisely". From another angle, this "everything to be said", once it is done, no longer interests the mathematician, the mathematician and moreover those who imitate him on occasion, the best of the phenomenologists.

(8) As Husserl says somewhere, and precisely in this little book on the origin of geometry, there is, once it is done, this truly "everything said"; it is there once and for all, it only has to be ratified, to put its result somewhere, and start from that result.

This vanishing aspect of the "everything said" exhausted upon a point, of which it remains the construction of which it can be the homologue, or more exactly the

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difference when it is a matter of this "to say everything", if it is here also that we should look for the direction of our operational efficacity.

Undoubtedly, the difference appears here, for otherwise why would there be a need to recommence with each one the exploration of this relationship, which is nevertheless a relationship of saying, that psychoanalysis is.

This is why the radical interrogation about what is involved in language, reduced to its most opaque agency, the introduction of the signifier, brought us to this interval between zero and one, where we see something which goes further than a model, which is the locus in which we are doing more than sense, where we articulate, where there is established, in a vacillating way, the agency of the subject as such, first of all sufficiently designated by the ambiguities in which this zero and this one remain, in the very loci of the most extreme logistical formulation.

(9) I hesitate to make a too rapid reference, which may reach only some ears, to the fact that zero or one, appearing at the final term, are indeed effectively articulated. Why is it one or the other, according to the operations, it is one or the other which will represent what are called, in the formalisation of the aforesaid operations, neutral elements. Or again, that it is in the interval between zero and one that there is situated this something through which, in the set of rational numbers, there is differentiated two intervals between the zero and the one, we can demonstrate the existence of an un-numberable, which is not the case outside of these limits.

But what matter if, once it has been recalled, situated, and provided I can verify its foundations more radically with some people, we have this statute, which notes that whatever degree of logicality, of purification, of symbolic articulation we might arrive at in mathematics, there is no means of putting its development before you on a blackboard in a kind of dumb show. It would be impossible, if I were here in the process of giving you a lecture in mathematics, to make you follow and understand - this is recognised by every mathematician - in a dumb show, by simply putting on the board a sequence of signs.

There is always a discourse which must accompany this development, at certain of its (10) turning points, and this discourse is the same as the one that I am giving at the moment, namely, a common discourse in everybody's language.

And this signifies, the simple fact that this is the case, this signifies that there is no metalanguage, that the rigorous operation, the construction of symbols, is extracted from a language which is everybody's language, in its status as language.

That there is no other status of language than common language, which is moreover that of uncultivated people and children.

You can grasp what results about the status of the subject on the basis of this reminder, and attempt to deduce the function of the subject from this level of signifying articulation, from this level of language that we will call the excise (*l'excise*) by isolating it, by isolating it properly, and as such, from this very

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articulation, that here the subject situated somewhere between zero and one manifests what he is and that you will allow me for a moment to call, to give you an image, the shadow of the number. If we do not grasp the subject at this level in what he is, which is incarnated in the term privation, we cannot take the next step which is to apprehend what he becomes in the demand, in the *aphasis,* in so far as he addresses himself to the other, that we only grasp the most insubstantial shadow for the shock of what happens when the subject, does not use language, but arises from it.

(11) In the introduction of a sort of little apologue borrowed, not by chance, from a short story by this extraordinary spirit that Edgar Poe was, specifically *The purloined letter,* which by reason of a certain resistance that it offers to these sort of pseudo- analytic lucubrations, as regards which one can only think that there ought to be renewed in the domain of investigation, something equivalent to what you see on the walls, "dumping prohibited here", *The purloined letter,* unlike the other productions of Poe, seems to defend itself rather well, since in a certain two-volume book on Edgar Poe that many of you know, by a titled person, *The purloined letter* did not appear to be ready for the rubbish dump.

The purloined letter is, in effect, something different. This subtle passage, this sort of fatal destiny, of blindness, that a little piece of paper covered with the signs of a letter which must not be known, which means that even those who know it, namely, everybody must organise themselves in order not to have read it. In the introduction to this apologue, in effect, which is very suggestive for us, I put forward a sort of first attempt to show the autonomy of the determination of the signifying chain, from the simple fact that there is established the most simple succession by chance, as in a (12) binary alternation, what can be generated from it starting from congruent but not arbitrary groups, from this triple grouping which, entitled, in the articulation that I gave of it, in Greek letters, overlaps a different fashion in which I could have expressed them, which is to give to each of these letters the substitute of three signs, each one of which would have been a zero or a one.

Why three? What is the central sign? I will only concern myself with the two extreme signs. The consistency, the original determination which results from this pure combinatory, depends in the final analysis on the fact that it recalls radically, the minimal sufficiency that we can make for ourselves from the alternation of two signs: the zero and the one. What from these three terms, I told you, leaving the central term empty for the moment, goes from one to one, reminds us of the radical function of repetition in the status of the subject, and how the enunciating of truths is based on a fundamental untransparency.

The passage from one to zero, symbol of the subject, of zero to one, reminds us of the pulsation of this most radical vanishing which is that on which there reposes, when it is rigorously analysed, the fact of repression, and the fact that it includes in itself the possibility of the re-emergence of the sign in the opaque form of the return of the repressed. Here I said the sign.

Finally, this pulsation from zero to zero, which would be the fourth term of this (13) combinatory, reminds us as fundamental, the most radical form of the agency of the *Ich* in language, which is the one that at another point I tried to have

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supported by this little fleeting knot that one can do without in language, which is the one which is incarnated in the *"je crains qu'il ne vienne",* in the "*avant qu'il ne vienne*", in this fleeting immediacy of the subject who speaks himself by not speaking himself.

But this being posited simply to point you in the direction you should look to rediscover a reference point in my past discourse, I want also today to emphasise something different whose importance, perhaps, is not, when all is said and done, even though I always try to make its importance vivid enough, what relationship, what relationship there is between this subject of the cut and this image, and you are going to see this image at the limit of the image - for in fact it is not one - that I am trying here to make present, with certain mathematical references such as those that are called topological, and of which the simplest shape, I will content myself with it today, you know that it is fundamentally the same as that of the Klein bottle, besides I will recall it for you and it was written on the board earlier, is the Moebius strip.

I know that the beginning of this discourse today must have tired you - that is why we are going to try to do a little bit of physics-for-fun.

(14) Something that I already did. I am not going to surprise you. The Moebius strip, you know how it is made. For those of you who have not come here before, the Moebius strip consists of taking a strip and making it perform, before sticking it to itself, not a complete twist but a half-twist, one hundred and eighty degrees. By this means, I repeat for those who have not yet seen it, you have a surface such that it has neither a front nor a back, in other words, that without crossing its edge, a fly, or an infinitely flat being as Poincaré said, who travels along this strip arrives without mishap to the point on the other side of the one from which it began. This has no kind of sense for what happens on the strip since, for whoever is on the strip, there is neither front nor back. There is a front and a back only when the strip is plunged into this common space in which you live or at least believe you live.

There would then be no problem *vis-à-vis* whatever may be situated on this surface, no problem of front or back, and therefore nothing that allows it to be distinguished from a common strip, from the strip for example that might serve as a belt.

I would not have the malice to give this final twist. Nevertheless, there are in this strip properties that are not extrinsic but intrinsic, ... which allow the being that I (15) supposed to be limited here by his horizon, it has to be said, which allow him all the same to notice that he is on a Moebius strip, and not on the belt around my body.

It is the following, which is defined by the fact that the Moebius strip is not orientable. This means that if the supposed being who moves along this Moebius strip starts from a point, having picked out in a certain order its horizon a, b, c, e, f - put as many letters as you wish - if he makes a word, in a certain sense, it is the most rigorous way on this occasion of defining orientation, if he continues his path without meeting any edge, coming back to the same point for the first time,

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he will find the opposite orientation, the word will be read in a palindromic fashion in the exactly opposite sense.

This is what constitutes, for the one who subsists on it, the originality of the Moebius strip.

Good. These first truths having been recalled, I begin, as I already did before you, to cut the edge of the strip, and I remind you of what I already told you at one time, namely what comes out of it. There comes out of it these two rings, one of which remains the heart of what was primarily the Moebius strip, namely a Moebius strip, and the other of which, let us take out the Moebius strip, is not a Moebius strip, but a strip rolled twice around itself, an orientable strip on which there will never happen to the (16) being who subsists on it the misadventure of seeing his orientation reversed.

If I make what I take out larger and larger, I will manage to make a cut which passes, as they say, through the middle of the Moebius strip; this as you realise having strictly speaking no sense. By making the cut pass through the middle of the Moebius strip, what do I obtain?

I obtain what would have happened if I had reduced more and more the extraction of the edges, there is no longer anything in the middle, namely, that in withdrawing from my Moebius strip what I can find in it, as I wish, namely, everything that is orientable, I become aware that what constitutes the essence of the Moebius strip, namely, its non-orientability is strictly speaking nowhere if not in this central cut which brings it about that, by simply cutting this Moebius strip, I can make it into an orientable surface.

It is therefore not in any way the disposition of the parts of the Moebius strip which gives it its non-orientable character. Its property is nowhere other than precisely in the cut, which is the only thing that has the shape of the Moebius strip, namely, what required the turning over of my scissors at a given moment.

(17) Whether you see in the final operation, in a word, the analogy there is between this Moebius surface and everything that supports it, namely shapes that we can call, for your satisfaction and to go quickly, abstract shapes like those of which some are here represented on the board, what gives it its essence depends entirely on the function of the cut.

The subject, like the Moebius strip, is what disappears in the cut. It is the function of the cut in language, it is this shadow of privation which ensures that he is in the cancelling-out that the cut represents, that he is, in this form, this form of the negative trait, which is called the cut.

I hope that I have made myself sufficiently understood, and at the same time justified this introduction of the Klein bottle, in so far as, if you look closely at its structure, it is what I told you, namely the conjunction, the sticking together in a certain arrangement that you must now see as being purely ideal, or better abstract, the arrangement of the two Moebius strips as what I have inscribed on the board here represents it for you and would represent it still better, if, for the orientable character in opposite fashions of the two edges of the Moebius strip which are

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here, I substituted their duplication in the (18) following fashion; such is the schema of the Klein bottle.

This introduction of this shape of the Klein bottle is designed to support at the state of question for you, what is involved in this conjunction of S to O, within which there is going to be able to be situated for us the dialectic of demand. We suppose that O is the inverted image of what serves us as a support for conceptualising the function of the subject.

It is a question that we pose with the help of this image. Is O, the locus of the Other, the locus where there is inscribed the sequence of signifiers, is O this support which is situated, with respect to the one that we give to the subject, as his inverted image.

For in the Klein bottle, the two Moebius strips are conjoined in the measure that - you see it in a very simple fashion in the square shape that I have myself modified here on the board - are conjoined in the fact that the twist of a half-turn is made in the opposite direction. If one is levogyratory, the other is dextrogyratory.

This is a type of inversion that is completely different and much more radical than that of the specular relationship for which, with the progress of my discourse, it comes effectively, progressively, in time, to substitute itself .

If a Moebius strip can operate in this way with respect to another one, is there another (19) shape which is able to perform this complementary function, this function of closure?

Yes, as has been very obvious for a long time, since I produced it before you in different forms, this shape is the one that is called the interior eight.

In other words, this, which is a perfectly orientable surface, a little ring whose edge is simply twisted in an appropriate fashion. It is an orientable surface which has a front and a back and in which it is enough for you to make the cut favoured by this disposition of one edge to the other, to see that you create there, effectively, that you create with the help of this shape, a Moebius strip.

This shape, whose function I already introduced to you as demand to be substituted for the Euler circle, is supported for us by being an indispensable instrument.

You will see how. Let us say right away that it is what allows us to raise this other function, the one that I call that of the **o**-object and the *rapprochement* of these two complementary ..... ; the other Moebius strip in the Klein bottle and the **o** in this one, allows us to pose a second question: "What are the relationships between the **o**-object and O?" It is worthwhile all the same to pose the question.

If analytic theory leaves in suspense, indeed to the extent of letting it be believed that (20) to leave the door open to the fact that this **o**-object, which we identify to the partial object, is something which can be reduced to a biological relationship, to the relationship of the living subject with the breast, with the faeces or scybal,

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with one or other more or less incarnated shape of the **o**-object, the function of the phallus being here altogether present.

Whether the **o**-object depends or not on the relationship with O, with the Other, with the status we have to give to the Other, to the O with respect to the subject; this indeed is the question which deserves to be posed. And if it ought to be, in what measure does it depend on this specific relationship to the Other that we symbolise by the letter D, namely, that of demand.

Simply, in passing, let me note for you as regards the usages this shape of the interior eight can have for us, but not alone for us, also for logicians; observe here, observe here the degree to which it can be, for us in any case, of great service. For suppose that we have to define, and we do not fail to do so, and Freud himself, when he furnishes his text with one or other little schema which illustrates it, the fact, if we have to finish with a limited field, with a field of the type of the Euler circle, the field in which is valid, or there prevails the pleasure principle, we find ourselves from the doctrine as well as from facts, in an impasse.

(21) This impasse which leaves us to speak about a beyond of the pleasure principle, namely, how a doctrine which had made of the pleasure principle its foundation as establishing as such the whole subjective economy, can introduce into it what is obvious, namely, that the whole pulsation of desire goes against this homeostasis, this level of least tension which is the one that the primary process takes care to respect.

Observe how, on the contrary, and this perhaps is a different path to the one that is called purely dialectical to conceive of it, how on the contrary, it is not simply because a limited circle defines two fields which are opposed: good and bad, pleasure and unpleasure, the just and the unjust, that the liaison is established between one and the other, if we oblige ourselves, on the contrary, to consider that everything that is created in the field of language finds itself required to pass through these topological shapes which, for their part, are going to highlight, for example, the following, that if we define the field of the Moebius strip as being under of the reign, as being under the reign of the pleasure principle, this field will be necessarily traversed on its interior by the other residual field which is created by this line, that we will obligatorily, if we impose it on ourselves, have to define the opposing fields, not as is usually done, on a sphere, an infinite sphere if you wish, that of a plane, but on a sphere cutting out an interior field, an exterior field, we oblige ourselves to do it on this, where you recognise - I cannot today began the whole deduction of it - the image of what is called a cross-cap, which is exactly the one where we can create the division from a Moebius strip, examine it, you will see that this field is a Moebius strip, and this, this internal field, the field of the **o**-object of which I make the following logical usage here: field excluded from the subject, field of unpleasure, this field of unpleasure necessarily traverses the inside of the field of pleasure.

And it will remain for us, starting from this way of conceiving things, to think about pleasure as necessarily traversed by unpleasure and to distinguish in it what it is in this traversing line that separates out pure and simple unpleasure, that is desire, from what is called pain, with this power of investment which Freud distinguishes with such subtlety and for which the inside, the very inside of the

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surface that we have called **o,** that we could just as well call quite differently on this occasion, namely the part in ..... or whatever you wish, it is in the measure that this surface is capable of traversing itself in the prolongation of this necessary intersection, it is here that we will situate this case of narcissistic investment, the function of pain, otherwise, logically, (23) properly speaking unthinkable in the text of Freud, even though admirably elucidated.

Of course, this only overlaps things well known for a long time and I spared myself from giving you the first sentence of chapter two of the Tao-tse Ching because moreover I would have had to comment on each one of the characters, but these characters are so significant for anyone who gives himself the trouble of learning their reference, that one cannot believe that there is not something of the same logical vein in what is announced at this original point for a culture, just as much as Socratic thinking for us, about what was original as regards everything that is of the heavens and of the earth, that everyone, the term universal is well and truly isolated, posing the function of the universal affirmative so that everyone knows what is involved in the good, so then, it is from this that there is born the opposite; that everyone knows what is involved in the beautiful, so that it is from this that ugliness is born and it is not pure vanity to say that, of course, to define the good is at the same time to define the bad, it is not a question of frontiers, of a bi-coloured opposition, it is an internal knot; it is not a matter of knowing what is distinguished, in a way, as one would distinguish the upper waters and the lower waters in a confused reality, it is not about whether it is (24) true or not, whether things are good or bad. Things are. It is saying what is in the good that gives birth to the bad, makes it, not that this is, not that the order of language covers the diversity of the real, it is the introduction of language as such which makes there be not distinguished, noted, ratified but which above all constitutes the traversing of the bad into the field of the good, the traversing of the ugly into the field of the beautiful.

This is for us essential, capital in our progress. We are going to see it. For it is now a question of passing from this first articulation of the effects of the *lexis* isolated, in a way, in an artificial fashion, into the field of the Other and to know what this Other is.

This Other interests us in so far as we analysts have to occupy its place.

From where will we interrogate this place? Shall we begin, in order to advance, and because time is at our heels, shall we begin from the formula around which we have tried up to the present to centre the attachment, the approach of analytic activity, namely: the subject who is supposed to know, because of course the analyst cannot be conceived of as an empty locus, the locus of inscription, the locus - it is a little different and we will see what that means - of reverberation, of pure and simple resonance of the word of the subject.

(25) The subject comes with a demand; this demand, I told you that it is crude, it is summary, to speak about a demand purely and simply as originating in a need.

The need may happen to present itself, to be incarnated, by a process that we know, and which we call the process of regression, to present himself, to appear in

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the analytic relationship, it is clear that the subject at the beginning, has installed himself in a demand, but that we have to specify the status of this demand.

It is certain that to specify this status requires us to reject immediately the schema, which is in any case inadequate and summary, promoted by the theory of communication. The theory of communication, reducing language to a function of information, to the link between an emitter and a receptor, may on occasion be of service, a service moreover that is limited because as a matter of fact, in any case, their origin, since they are not detached from language will imply in their usage - I am speaking about the schemas of the doctrine of information - all sorts of confused elements; it is inadmissible to refer to any ordination or cardination - in function of a reduced horizon, the reciprocal function of the code and of the message - everything that is involved in communication. Language is not a code, precisely because in its least enunciation it carries with it the subject present in the enuntiating.

(26) All language, and still more the one that interests us, that of our patient, is inscribed, it is quite obvious, in a density that goes far beyond the linear, codified, one of information.

The dimension of commanding, the dimension of soliciting, the dimension of *to demand* in English, the *demand* is a stronger formula than in our tongue, demand in English is requirement, and one can only smile at the article of someone who, having specialised in the tact of analysis, made a great discovery, a marvellous discovery of the catastrophic effect that he had by approaching the interpretation of one or other of the detours of the discourse of his analysand, by telling her that she *demanded*, by employing *to demand* instead of *to need*.

Only a profound ignorance of the English tongue, as indeed was the case at that epoch, of this newcomer to America, can explain the brilliance of such a discovery.

Quémander, namely *to beg*, the opposite position, it is between this *to beg* and this *to demand*, this *commander* and this *quémander* which, between ourselves, I point out have absolutely not the same origin; it is not because words come to be assimilated to (27) the same fate and signification of the usage of the tongue that you can in any way refer *quémander* to some conjugation of *que* with *mandare*.

Quemander comes from *caiman,* which in the fourteenth century designated the name of a beggar.

This having being said in passing, it is in this dimension that we ought first of all to interrogate demand in the dimension of knowing whether, for lack of any way, of course, of being able to refer ourselves to any extra-flat theory about the transmission of what happens in language as something that is inscribed in terms of information, where are we going to search for its density? Is it in the direction of the expression of the person who expressing himself as follows, that after all every word is sincere because in any word whatsoever, what I express is indeed my state of mind as Aristotle says somewhere at the beginning of the *Peri psyche*.

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These people undoubtedly had noble souls and, moreover, there would be some bad faith in isolating what Aristotle wrote at this level from its context. What Aristotle wrote is never to be rejected so rapidly. In any case, to read him in a certain fashion is the source of many errors.

The thought that language, in any way, always expresses, as opposed to what is communicated, something which is supposed to be the basis of the subject comes from (28) a radically false thinking, and one to which an analyst especially cannot in any way abandon himself.

Do you imagine that when I am speaking to you I am speaking to you about the state of my soul? I am trying to situate what the consequences are of having precisely to situate oneself as dwelling in articulated language. And this could be pursued to the final limit, namely, to the most elementary, the most reduced form of what an enunciation is, an enunciation reduced to itself, an interjection, as the authors have said since Quintilian, concerning the parts of discourse, the interjection, this ultra-reduced sentence, this compression of sentences, this holophrase, as some would say, using one of the most questionable terms, the interjection is, in the thinking of ancient rhetoric, something which is to be isolated within the sentence, and very precisely something which gives rise to the image and the function of the cut. Is an interjection, in whatever way we may advance it, as one sees it too easily and frequently referred to as something which is supposed to be a pure and simple exclamation, something whose shadow is traced by this punctuation which is called the exclamation mark. Is it not the case, that looking at something as it happens beyond simulatory appearances, you (29) can see that there is not a single exclamation, however reduced you may suppose it to be in vocalised terms, which is - you sense here that there is a word that I still do not want to pronounce, it is the word scream (*cri*) - which is a scream. If I say “ah!” at any moment whatsoever, and even if I am waking up from a knock-out, I call you and I say “oh!” it is a sort of breathing space, it is an “oh!” that I am going to depose somewhere in the field of the Other so that it may be there as a germ, I other you or I ostrich you as you wish, and if I say “eh!”, it is, "eh! yes I spy you, yes".

There is always in the interjection this infinitely varied function. I took the crudest and the most summary terms, but there are of course other interjections. All of those who have considered the problem a little, and I have only to ask you to refer to the book by Brondal on the parts of discourse, where you will see that he finds the need to notice that, as regards interjections, there are those which should be qualified as situational, resultative, supputative. There is no interjection which is not situated exactly somewhere in the cut between S and O, between S and the locus of the Other, the locus of the Other where the Other is present.

Will I be able to get as far as the scream today or will I reserve its function for the next (30) time? I think I will adopt second position because, moreover, this is where the cut takes place fairly well. I will begin the next time by speaking to you about the scream because I cannot separate what I have to say to you about the scream from what I have to say to you about what supposedly well-intentioned persons, who are, it is true, in the process of valorising themselves elsewhere, in places where people speak very strangely about analytic relationships, what a well-intentioned person declared to have searched wholeheartedly for, with a

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magnifying glass, in my writings. Supposedly, there is nowhere a place for silence.

Well then if this person had better searched and located in my graph the formula, the schema, the articulation which conjoins the S with the D, joining them with a diamond, conjunction, disjunction, inclusion, exclusion, he would perhaps have perceived that if it is precisely in correlation with the demand that there appears there for the first time the S, it is perhaps not altogether unrelated to this function of silence, but in truth people prefer to speak about it in certain places in terms of emotion or of effusion. It is at this moment of silence that an analyst, whose profile after all I have no need to sketch out here, because I will have to come back to him as a typical example of a (31) certain fashion of assuming the analytic position, that it is at the moment that the solution of the transference neurosis, according to him, and a very large public came to hear such sureties, where the solution for the transference neurosis is to be found in the procedure described as that of airing, as he expresses it : “one opens the windows”, a solution indicated for the transference neurosis. It is true that according to a certain fashion of articulating the transference itself, it is hard to see in what order of reference one could find the indication of the solution. I shall speak to you then, to begin my discourse the next time, about silence, after I have spoken to you about the scream.

But to end today on something which, God knows, after such a testing session may distract you so that you may take away something amusing, I am going to tell you a story which you can see reproduced in the year 1873 of Dostoievsky’s *Journal.* It is an illustration which I picked out, as I might say, for you, as a way of making present, of imaging what I have just said about interjection, in other words about the ultra- reduced, even monosyllabic sentence, and you are going to see that an interjection, however one may see it as arising from some ultimate radicality or other, is something quite different to what we may thus think of it, that it is on the contrary essentially ..... (32) not simply at the limit of the subject and the Other but in the presentation of the world of the subject to the Other in the very establishment of his most radical foundations.

This having been said, prepare yourselves to see it illustrated in a humorous fashion. Dostoievsky tells that one evening, making his way through the streets of Moscow, he finds himself moving in harmony with some people who are well vodkad. These people, as one might expect, were involved in a very animated debate which involved nothing less than the most universal, cosmic references and what he depicts for us is the following. All of a sudden one of them concludes this debate in uttering, he tells us, it is in Russian, I cannot start playing vain games here with a tongue which I do not know, we will search for an equivalent, what is involved is a word he tells us that is in any case unpronounceable. This word he pronounces decisively as a kind of jet of universal contempt; all of that, all you are thinking, comes from that. This is said in the most convincing fashion, at which another younger person who is flying just as high, approaches and repeats the same still unpronounceable word in a questioning tone. Following which a third arises who shouts the same word like a roaring, a howling towards the sky almost breaking his voice, a sort of enthusiasm, after which the second person who had spoken comes up to the first and says: "Oh, well done! We were talking about serious things, we were at the level of philosophical debate, and you

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have just introduced ..... , he said, wearing out your voice." At which point the fourth, for you will have noticed that only three have intervened up to now in the four remarks that I have given up to now, the fourth then intervenes speaking to the fifth and reproduces the same word, this time in the manner of a revelation, of a eureka! The truth has dawned on him, it is this word which is the key to everything. At which point, another gloomier looking fellow, Dostoievsky tells us, repeats this word several times in a low voice as if to say, we must not lose our heads, which results in something more or less like: "Shit", "Shit?", "Shit" "Shit" "shit, shit, shit, shit."

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Seminar 12: Wednesday 17 March 1965

Perhaps I might have had a pretext for asking you for a little rest to-day. But how could I send away so many people, and on the other hand up to a certain point, I am pressed for time; it is almost insufficient for me to hold to the trajectory that I have assigned myself this year.

I would ask for your attention, especially in the measure that I may be led to go rather quickly along the line that I intend today to stretch from one point to another, and which responds to what I already announced, indeed began, the last time concerning what at the point that we are at, in terms of a correction, I would say, ... of the experience of analytic technique, starting from this affirmation that it is only thinkable, I would not say practicable, that it is only thinkable starting from a quite articulated notion of the subject, of the subject as such, of the subject at least as I have tried to focus it for you around a certain conception of what is involved in the experience of the Cartesian *cogito* and the novelty it introduces from the point of view of being, as regards the thought-out position of the one who is going to offer himself to something which is called psychoanalysis.

(2) It is not at all necessary, for all that, that the subject knows it, if the key formula giving us the place in the experience of the unconscious, is : "He did not know that .....". This is the status, as I introduced it for you last year, of this pulsation in which there appears this something of which one can say that however little it reveals itself, it betrays itself, and already as the screams (*cris*) lighten for us the formula of Heraclitus speaking about Ohanax: "About the prince, about the one to whom there belongs the place of divination, the one at Delphi, he does not say, he does not hide" - there is no other possible translation, it is not ..... that is used here, there is no other possible translation than this one, "he makes something signifiying".

He is the one who collects this signifier, who makes something of it and literally, what he wants.

Everyone knows that with respect to this : "what he wants", the analyst is not in a simple position, that from this : "what he wants", he separates himself by all sorts of walls, which come from experience, from principle, from doctrine.

But, when it is a question of approaching what I called the last time the second stage of the usage of the word in analysis, it is important for us, as regards this stage, which one can say was very well explored, very well developed, during the (3) Freudian and the post-Freudian years, it is a matter for us of situating what belongs to this second stage and also what constitutes its frontier and its limit.

As a reference, in this pioneering work which I am carrying out here, and as regards which you may well imagine that it is not by chance, if at the moment of taking up today my discourse, I indicate, designate for you, if it is a different

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gesture to the one that I evoked earlier, that it is from the position of the analyst that for me, and for you because you are waiting here, it is a matter of starting.

I recalled on the board, in a still simpler, I would almost say crude fashion, what in the first phase of this pioneering work, when, for the analysts, of whom it must be said that up to then, very often in language, for them the three kinds of forms of the dialectic of lack, which are entitled privation, frustration, castration were used in an almost interchangeable fashion, when I recalled that at the level of the reference to the symbolic, to the imaginary and to the real it was appropriate to see that there was something at these three levels which was radically different; that frustration, I would simply say to analyse it in a semantic fashion, is something which carries in itself, at its centre, its essence and as one might say its act, it is in vain, this thing which escapes, this fraud, this frustrating which makes of it, (4) incontestably from its status, from disappointment in its most imaginary aspect, and that this did not exclude that its objectal reference was something real, that on the other hand, what was its support and agent, the Other to call her by her name could only be situated for us in the most general form, from the locus of the symbolic, that there is only frustration, properly speaking, where something can be claimed and that moreover, it is the dimension that one cannot eliminate from its definition, that moreover this is the broadest frame in which, in the experience of psychoanalysts, there appeared to be situated the daily situation, the day-to-day of what an analytic experience can discover, in stages, when it is a matter of conjoining it in the *hic et nunc* of the relationship to the analyst.

Is this something with which we can in any way be content? When it is a matter of articulating this frustration, it cannot but be that everything that is enounced in the discourse of the analyst [analysand?] is inscribed in the double register of the demand which speaks, which is a question which is posed from the beginning, the first step in analysis; the subject comes here to demand analysis.

What does he come to demand in analysis? The whole psychoanalytic literature, when it is brought to bear on this experience, on, as some people say, this living experience of analytic stages, is employed in unveiling, in manifesting what through (5) something which is made up of mapping-out, but also of construction, and here the thinking of what the analyst lives out, has demonstrated, has conjoined, has justified the succession of what is presented at different stages of the analysis as demand.

Now the conjunction of this demand with some developmental conception or other cannot come into play without there being made of it, without there being presented, a certain margin of arbitrariness.

For in truth what is done, I mean effectively by the authors - it is not that this ought not to give us pause - is referred, dares to refer itself, to a function that is in a way, I would not say biological, for this would already be to make intervene a register of a high level which is certainly not in question, to this simple level that we will call that of a living relationship (*rapport vital*) quite simply, and even, let us go a little further, of a carnal relationship. The dependency, the physical, animal dependency in which the little child finds himself with respect to his mother, is invoked as being this something which defines, gives, gives as the main

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background of what the demand is going to develop upon, what we will call, with the majority of analytic authors, the anaclitic position.

That there is conjoined there besides to this conception, whose central term is taken from Freud's pen, that there is conjoined to it a notion like that of primordial (6) auto-erotism and again of primary narcissism, from this epoch, where at a quite initial stage of his coming into the world, the subject, in Freudian theory is conceived of constituting - as is very commonly explained in more than one place - only a single being, or a single individual, as you wish, with the being from whom he has just detached himself, with the being from whose belly he has emerged, this is something which is associated with this so-called anaclitic position which is revealed in the exercise by the subject, of the function of demand.

Now, there is incontestably here a leap because, after all, if it is not impossible that this anaclitic position which, all the same, if it is there present in the treatment, has nothing to do with the position of vital dependency of which I spoke to you earlier, of which I spoke to you just now, if this anaclitic position can be conceived, given doctrinal form exactly as being at the same level in the imaginary structure as the narcissistic position, does not mean that the question of the primary relation to the mother is settled, nevertheless, at least something will be required which justifies the connection and which assures us that it is not a matter, in this image often evoked in the course of an analytic treatment, of a support taken as fusional, of an aspiration to return, as it were, to origins conceived, as I was saying earlier, in their most carnal form, that it is not a matter here of a phantasy properly speaking, that (7) we can on this point find support in some continuity where there is expressed the imprint which for its part is supposed to be beyond language.

Now, up to the present, nothing guarantees for us that this domain of the demand having been explored, we can always justify the most paradoxical things that appear there without referring ourselves to their concrete origins, which are those which should be conceived, as fundamentally those of feeding, of feeding, if it is a fact that it appears essential in something which, here or there, can appear as constant or engraved in the history of the subject, it is not at all so much because it was so in fact and really, that in a function, that in a function that is different, which makes in particular of what serves in analysis as a symbol for this feeding, namely the maternal breast, is absolutely, exclusively given the metamorphoses under which we have to locate it and to see it translated, absolutely exclusive of a pure and simple concrete experience.

What is, at first appearance, this symbolic, metabolisable, metonymical, translatable character, and this very early on this is the interest of the Kleinian experience, its appearance very early on - why not say it? - in the disguised, *entstellt,* displaced form of the phallus, this is something which ought to attract our attention and (8) ensure that we do not content ourselves with some ....., whatever may be the weight, the convenience, of seeing the often fallacious intersections that we can find in direct observation which ought at least make us put in suspense the status of its origins.

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For this experience of demand, this analysis centred on the stage at which the subject incarnates his word, this is no longer the subject whose status we have marked at the most radical level of language, of the unary trait and of the status of privation where the subject installs himself in it.

How can one not sense that there is to be retained from the experience centred in this way, articulated in this way, that what has come in the course of years and by stages and providing material to argue in a way that is undoubtedly nuanced, subtle, because extremely divided, I would say from school to school, if it is a fact that this term allows there to be assured quite clear limits within analysis, that this something, of which this experience brings us the testimony, is the discovery, is the handling, is the perfecting, is the precise interrogation which has been centred from Abraham up to Melanie Klein and since, multiplied in multiple efforts to assure its avenues, the partial object, what in our discourse here, I articulate as being the **o**-object.

I apologise, I am a little tired. You really cannot hear properly? Thank you for letting me know.

(9) I think that the diversity, the variety of this **o**, in so far as the list that I gave you of it here does not surpass, but undoubtedly articulates in a different fashion, their range, without at all, for all that, going in the direction of not retaining the major reductions to which analytic experience subjects these **o**-objects.

The prevalence of the oral object, in so far as it is commonly called the breast, of this faecal object, on the other hand, if we put it on the same table or in the same circuit as the one in which there are situated all the objects articulated no doubt in analytic experience, but in an infinitely less assured way as regards their status than ours, namely the gaze and the voice, we have to question ourselves about how, that we have to question ourselves about the fact of how analytic experience can find in it the fundamental status of what it is dealing with in the demand of the subject.

Because after all, it is not self-evident that first of all this list should be so limited. And no doubt the privilege enjoyed by these objects is illuminated by each one of them being in a certain homology of position at this level of joining, that I evoked the last time, between the subject and the Other.

Nevertheless, it is not to be said, that what the subject demands in the demand to the Other is the breast. In the demand to the Other, the subject demands (10) everything that he may have to demand, in the first place, in analysis, for example, that the Other should speak.

There is something abusive, excessive, to immediately translate what is characteristic of the demand, namely, that it is true that there is demanded something that the analyst is supposed to have, but what is demanded as what he has, is in function of another thing that the analyst himself poses as the true aim of what the subject demands.

This is worth pausing on. This is worth pausing on, when this **o**-object is thus set up, less as the point of what is aimed at than as what arises in a certain gap which

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is the one created by the demand, and that I insisted upon the last time, throwing my beam of light in the direction of going to look for the demand and the sentence in the most compact form, the one that could pass for being at the level of pure and simple expression and that there, in the interjection, I insisted on showing you that what gives it its value and its price, its specificity that is all the more graspable in that it is here more compact, because it always comes to strike at the joining of the subject and the Other. That what the simplest-looking interjection imposes on the interlocutor is this common reference to a third who is the big Other, and it is something which always has, more or less, is an invitation to step back, to temper, to reconsider, to review, to reoppose, to redirect the gaze towards some previous (11) interlocutor, undoubtedly one can pose the question, glimpse whether it is not some more reduced, simpler, more efficacious incidence also of language.

The whole theory of Pierre Janet is constructed upon the theory of commandment; the order given, in so far as from the one who speaks, to the arm which acts, he establishes a sort of common, inaugural status in the agency of human conduct.

Everyone know that analysis cannot be content with this reconstruction which is only a reconstruction on the blackboard. And that as regards the governor on Egyptian boats, the one who with his baton gives rhythm to the beat of the oars, is not something which belongs to the status of the effective subject, that there is no order which is not a reference to a super-order.

Undoubtedly the question is posed of the cases where the order goes straight to its goal and effectively manifests itself in what is called suggestion. But what does analysis show us if not that, in this case, suggestion functions with respect to this third term which, in this case, is that of the unknown desire.

It is on the level of the repercussion, of the interest obtained from the unconscious desire, that the one who knows how to handle this sort of remote control, what is called suggestion, takes his point of support and if he does not have it, the suggestion is ineffective.

(12) That it can be caught by extremely primitive means, like that of the crystal ball, is simply there to show us the eminent function, for example, of a bright point at the level of the **o**-object.

There is then always this third reference in the effect of demand and nevertheless, is it not possible to discover somewhere, this something which would have the privilege of making us grasp that something of which we nevertheless have need, namely, what is the status, what are the limits of this field of the big Other, to which we have been led, led at the level of the experience which is that of the field, of the artificial field guaranteed to the word in psychoanalysis, it is here that I hope that the object which I had circulated among you earlier, namely, a reproduction of the celebrated painting by Edward Munch called *The scream* is something, a figure, which seemed to me suitable to articulate for you a major, fundamental point on which many slippages are possible, many abuses are committed, and which is called silence.

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It is striking, that to illustrate silence for you, I found nothing better in my opinion than this image which I think you have all seen now, and which is called *The scream*. In this singularly deserted landscape, denuded by means of concentric lines, outlining a sort of bipartition at the back which is that of a form of landscape, in its reflection, a lake also forming a hole there in the middle, and on the right diagonal edge, crossing, barring in a certain way the field of the painting, a road which disappears. At the back two passers-by, thin shadows who distance themselves in a sort of image of indifference, in the forefront this being, this being of whom, in the reproduction of the painting, you were able to see this strange appearance that cannot even be said to be sexed. It is perhaps more emphasised in the sense of a young individual and of a little girl in some of the repeats that Edward Munch made of it, but we have no further special reason to take it into account.

This being, this being here in the painting with a rather old-fashioned appearance, and also a human shape so reduced that for us it cannot fail to evoke that of the most summary, the most crudely treated images of the phallic being, this being covers his ears, opens his mouth wide, and screams.

What is this scream? Who will hear it, this scream that we do not hear? If not, precisely, that it imposes this reign of silence which seems to rise and fall into this space which is at once centred and open. It seems there that this silence is in a way the correlative which by its presence distinguishes this scream from any other imaginable modulation. And nevertheless, what is tangible, is that this silence is not the ground of the scream, there is no Gestalt relationship; here the scream (14) literally seems to provoke the silence and in abolishing itself in it, it is tangible that it causes it. It gives rise to it, it allows it to hold its note, it is the scream which sustains it and not the silence the scream, the scream in a way makes the silence curl up in the very impasse from which it springs, in order that the silence may escape from it. But it has already happened when we see Munch's image. The scream is traversed by the space of the silence without dwelling in it; they are not linked either by being together or by succeeding one another, the scream creates the abyss into which silence rushes.

This image in which the voice is distinguished from any modulating voice, for in the scream, what makes it different even from any of the most reduced forms of language, is the simplicity, the reduction of the apparatus that is involved. Here the larynx is no longer anything more than a pipe. The implosion, the explosion, the cut are lacking.

The scream here cannot give us the assurance of this something in which the subject no longer appears except as signified but in what way? Precisely in this open gap which here being anonymous, cosmic, all the same marked in a corner by two absent human presences, is manifested as the structure of the Other, and all the more decisively because the painter chose it as divided in the form of a reflection, clearly indicating to us, in this something, a fundamental shape which is the one we rediscover in the confrontation, the sticking together, the suture of everything that affirms itself in the world as organised.

(15) This is why in analysis when what is involved where the word has its place, and an approximate usage is made of silence, "*Silence and verbalisation"* an

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excellent article written by the son of Wilhelm Fliess, the companion of Freud's self-analysis, Robert Fliess; Robert Fliess, then, undoubtedly names in a correct fashion what is involved in silence, in what he explains to us. This silence is the very locus where there appears the fabric on which there is unfolded the message of the subject and the place where the nothing printed allows there to appear what is involved in this word, and what is involved is precisely, at this level, its equivalence with a certain function of the **o**-object.

It is in function of the object of excretion, of the urinary or faecal object, for example, of the relationship to the oral object, that Fliess teaches us to distinguish the value of a silence by the way in which the subject who enters it makes it last, sustains himself with it in a way, he teaches us the quality of this silence; it is clear that it is indistinguishable from the very function of verbalisation.

It is not at all in function of some defence, of some predominance of the ego apparatus that it is appreciated, it is at the level of the most fundamental quality which manifests the immediate presence in the operation of the word of what is indistinguishable from the drive.

This analyst of the old stock and of great class, no doubt, this work, this reference (16) is undoubtedly of great value showing how the paths of a certain apperception of what is involved in the erotic presence of the subject, is something upon which we have a right to depend and which is very illuminating.

Nevertheless, this silence, if, in a way, denoted in its musical function, however integrated into the text may be silence in all its varieties, and the musician knows how to make of the pause or of silence, a moment that is just as essential as that of a sustained note. Is this something that we can allow ourselves to apply simply to the fact of the arrest of the word?

Silence is not simply not saying something : *Sileo* is not *taceo,* Plautus said somewhere to his listeners, as is the ambition of anyone who can, or wants to, make himself heard : *Silete et tacete atque advertite animum*. Pay attention: "be silent" and "shut up" are two different things; the presence of silence in no way implies that there is not someone speaking, it is even in that case that silence takes on its quality to an eminent degree, and the fact that it happens that I obtain here something which resembles silence, does absolutely not exclude that perhaps, before this silence itself, one or other person may be busying himself in a corner in order to furnish it with more or less loudly spoken reflections.

(17) The reference of silence to "shutting up" is a complex reference. Silence forms a bond, a closed knot against something which is an understanding and something which, speaking very quietly, is the Other, is this closed knot which can reverberate when the scream traverses it and perhaps even digs into it.

Somewhere in Freud there is the perception of the primordial character of this hole, of this hole of the scream, when Freud himself in a letter to Fliess articulates it, it is at the level of the scream that there appears the *Nebenmensch,* this neighbour whom I showed should effectively be named in this way, this close neighbour because he is precisely this hollow, this uncrossable hollow marked within ourselves and which we ourselves can scarcely approach.

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Here we have perhaps the model, sketched out in this way, for silence, and you have sensed, confused by me with this space enclosed by the surface, and of itself, by itself unexplorable, which constitutes the original structure that I have tried to image for you at the level of the Klein bottle.

What must we distinguish then in the operations of the word and of the demand? At first appearance, in the first phase, this cut that the schema of the bottle allows us to image as being that of its division into two fields whose character, a Moebius surface, is there to picture for us the side closed in on itself, not a double-sided but (18) a single-sided surface, the side which in the signifier constitutes the prevalence, the unity of the effect of sense in the measure that it does not, of itself, involve the reverse side of a signified, in the measure that it closes in on itself and that it is above all this cut to which there could be reduced, as I have told you, everything that is essential in the structure of the surface since, carried out in an appropriate fashion, it makes disappear from it this essential function of being sense and pure sense; it makes appear there this duplicity, this front and back which for us picture the correspondence, the division of the signifier and the signified.

Now, what is meant by the fact that in the demand there is separated out, there appears then, something which is a different structure, which appears as one might say beyond the expectation of what is demanded; this is pictured for you by the relationship which I reproduced once more here on the board, between the peripheral Moebius strip and this reduced ring of this independent thing that can be detached from it, which is something that falls, which is the apparition of a residue, of a remainder in the operation of the demand, and which appears as the cause of something taken up again by the subject which is called phantasy, and which, at the horizon of the demand, makes there appear the structure of desire in its ambiguity, namely that desire, if it can detach itself, arise, appear as absolute condition, and (19) perfectly presentable as being this something which the subject who desires it, who takes it as such at the level of the Other, makes it simply subsist by sustaining it as unsatisfied - a hysterical mechanism whose essential value I have marked.

That this is the only point, the only term where there converges, in explaining it, the junction of demand and transference, that in the deception of transference, what is involved is something which, without the subject knowing it, turns around the capturing in some way which is imaginary, or which is acted out, of this **o**-object, that this is the term and the common measure around which function the whole level of what is called frustration. It is there that it is a matter of posing, in a fashion which allows there to be posed questions, starting from there, and only starting from there: of distinguishing what experience can allow us currently to ratify concerning what is the origin, through what door the function of this **o**-object has come.

It is here that there must be emphasised, always recalled, that all our knowledge as regards what is concerned in a development which is supposed to be psychoanalytically justifiable begins, and always originates, in experience and in the experience of the treatment.

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That is why it is not sufficient for us for the moment, here, simply to ground the status of the analyst, in a way, in an arbitrary fashion prefigured by our categories; (20) it is a matter of seeing whether our categories are not those which allow us precisely to construct the map, to understand what is involved in one or other theoretical tendency in the analytic milieu, in the community of analysts, with this position which in each analyst - and quite naturally not simply in an isolated fashion but in the measure of the experience that he has had of it, namely his formative experience - of what in each analyst can be located in terms of a desire that is an essential reference for him.

For here there results from what is affirmed and is picked out in the theories of the technique and in papers, that to put the emphasis, for example, on a technique which makes there appear, for the subject, in phantasy, at the level of the Other, the phallic image in the positive form where it is conceived and represented as the object of fellatio, that there is here something which already is distinguished by the fact that in the cut, it is onthe side of the O that this object falls, and that this object is charged at least in certain nosological registers, especially for example in the case of obsessional neurosis for the author and practitioner whom I am indicating, and whom many here may be able to spot. It is clear that to centre around the emergence of this phantasy, in so far as it appears at the level of the Other, namely (21) of the analyst, a mapping-out, an approach, a critique of the approach to reality which might seem, in this perspective, to be the key, the hinge, the door through which there may be resolved the harmonising of the subject with a particular object that is supposed to be real, this is something which is distinguished in any case from another way of thinking, from another theory, which holds there can be no analysis which could in any way be said to be completed, if it is not at the level of the subject himself that, at a phase which is precisely a phase which goes beyond this purely identificatory stage of mapping out, of highlighting, of the feeling of a certain real that a certain technique entrusts itself to, it is in the measure that the subject himself can come, beyond this identification, to live the effect of this cut as being himself this remainder, this waste even, if you wish, this extremely reduced thing from which he has effectively started, at an origin which it is a matter of conceiving, not so much as that of his history, but as that origin which remains inscribed in the synchrony, in the very status of his being, that something should at one time be experienced as if he himself was this object which is either demanded from the Other, or is demanded from him.

Breast, even waste, excrement properly speaking, in other cases in other registers, in other registers which are not those of neurosis, this function of the voice or of the look.

(22) Here the reference that I made at one time about transference is essential. At the point where in the history there appears the emergence, emerging in a primordial fashion that has since been veiled, but in a celebrated text by Plato which preserves this testimony for us, what is in question is the text of the *Symposium,* at the end of this series of discourses in which there is constituted the *symposion* of these discourses which are ..... praise or illumination, in any case praise and celebration of the function of love, there enters the procession of these revelers, who are certainly not inspired, real trouble-makers, the real

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people to come and upset here all the rules of this extraordinarily civilised celebration.

It is Alcibiades, it is Alcibiades who nevertheless finds himself in this way at the high point of the dialogue and even though the majority of translators in the French tradition, from Louis Leroi to Racine, and up to Monsieur Léon Robin, did not believe, of course, that they could in any way do without this essential complement, we know that certain translators in the past cut it there, retreated, as if this were not the last word, the secret of what is in question.

To understand what is at stake between the subject and the analyst, what better model than this Alcibiades, who all of a sudden comes to recount, to recount the adventure that happened to him with Socrates.

(23) This before Socrates and before the assembly of the other eminent and learned guests. He says then about this Socrates, first of all he praises him and in what terms, in these terms which picture him as related to a box, as something which envelops a precious object and which often on the outside is presented as a grotesque, caricatural, deformed figure.

The ancient figure of Socrates looking like a Silenus, if it is not true, it is not beautiful, comes from that, as you know, and at the origin of his *Grand livre,* Rabelais takes it up when he addresses himself to those who are made to hear him, the very precious drunkards and the syphilitics. From all time, an assemblage which chooses itself as being from the outside, is taken up with humour from the inside, as specified by some trait of caricature, it happened that those who constituted my audience for ten years, were not from the outside, although in other terms, described in the most favourable fashion.

Here we have Socrates. At first then, in this enigmatic, praised, chanted, exalted form; and what is Alcibiades going to testify to us? It is that in order to obtain what is in that box, what the secret of Socrates is about, as I might say, of what was he not capable? What does he tell us he was capable of, of nothing less than of lying, at least, he is the one who says it: because moreover everything that he depicts for us about his behaviour, about his declaration of love, of seduction with respect to Socrates, is something that he presents to us as being entirely directed towards obtaining, no doubt, for a moment from Socrates, what is at the bottom of him, in terms of this mysterious, enigmatic, profound science, of which nothing more assured is given to him than this extraordinary *atopia* of Socrates, this something which, in his behaviour leaves him on the outside, distinguishes him from everything around him, leaves him, let us say the word, without dependencies.

And if Alcibiades pushes things as far as to have the appearance of having had the occasion of giving a demonstration of the virtue of Socrates, since in the course of these assaults he is going to push him to sleep the night under the same cloak, the cloak of Socrates - and after all, God knows, it was probably something which was worth pointing out, since, if we are to believe the testimonies, Socrates sometimes washed, but not always. And here, if according to the declarations of this individual to whom moreover it is said that Socrates paid particular attention, and which was a loving attention, there is a fact, which is that Socrates sends him

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away and that the whole fable, I would say, for how are we to know if in telling it Alcibiades is lying or not, undoubtedly he testifies to it, I was devious, I lied, but how describe this lie when its goal was something which he himself could not give an account of, because what does he want? Is the truth so precious to Alcibiades (25) who is the one who is the very image of desire, who always goes straight ahead, breaks down every obstacle, wards off the flotsam of society up to the term where he arrives at the end of his journey and is slain?

What then is this *agalma* that is involved and which is here the centre of the captivation of Alcibiades by the figure of Socrates? And what does it mean, what is meant by what Socrates replies to him? "Everything that you have said, everything that you have just said, is here something that has no reason or purpose for you, except for the fact that you love Agathon".

Let us leave the figure of Agathon whose name might allow us to dream. Let us only indicate that I made the discovery that the remarks imputed to Agathon in the *Symposium* can only be qualified as caricatural, that the fashion in which he praised love is that of a *précieux* but which, in its effect, only articulated the most derisory lines, even the way in which they are alliterated underlines it, this excessive trait which makes of him what we could clearly pin-point, much more legitimately than Nietzsche did with Euripides, as being a tragic figure, undoubtedly going in the direction of comedy.

But what does it matter. Is what is involved here not to make appear for us the structure, the structure of deception that there is in the transference which accompanies this certain type of demand, that for the hidden *agalma.*

(26) That this very special transference, that we have the right, which is placed there at the *culmen* of what is involved in love, do we not see there being dismissed, though with contrary accents, two words of love, that of Alcibiades and that of Socrates which, as I said, with accents which are not the same, fall under the key of the same definition: love is to give what one does not have to someone who does not want it.

It is true that Alcibiades, who cannot give what he does not have, namely, the love that Socrates demands of him, the love which would send him back to his own mystery, and which in the dialogue of Alcibiades is unbelievably pictured in a way that seems to me to be so contemporary for our reflection here, because it is to this little image which appears at the back of the pupil, it is to this something which in vision is not vision but is inside the eye, it is at this place that we situate this foundational object which the look is, that, in the text of Plato, Alcibiades is referred to, and that Socrates does not blame him, this too is an essential articulation which demands to be retained. Why does he not blame him? Because, as a matter of a fact, everyone knows that Socrates is said not only to be attached to Alcibiades, but to the point of being jealous - it is the text and the tradition that tell us this. And what Socrates returns to Alcibiades is also something that he affirms that he does not have, since he does not have any knowledge which is not, he says, accessible to all.

(27) And the only thing that he knows, is the nature of desire; and that desire is lack.

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It is here that things remain suspended in Plato's text and that, after the merry-making of one part of the weary gathering, the passage through sleep of another part, things take up in the morning with a discussion on tragedy and comedy.

What is essential, is this suspension around the point where Alcibiades is sent away, towards what? What we would call the truth of his transference. And what does he try to get from Agathon, if not, properly speaking, what is defined in Freud as hysterical desire. What Alcibiades simulates is what had been previously defined in the *Symposium* as the highest merit of love, the fact that the desired and the desirable make themselves, pose themselves, devote themselves as desirers.

And it is here, and it is through this that he thinks he can fascinate the gaze of the one who, in any case, we have already seen as being a person of the type who is extraordinarily uncertain as regards the foundation of his word.

This is the path through which there is open to us, and since the time, as you see, of an antiquity which gives it all its titles of nobility, the dialectic of the transference as one might say, the entry into history of a properly speaking analytic question.

(28) I would propose to test this on a text that I have chosen, and that I already proposed to some people, and that I hope will be chosen and accepted by one or other person, to show you in connection with a text precisely chosen because of the fact that undoubtedly through choices, that were perhaps premature - it is an article in which the author in question entered battle for the first time - but the value of this article is to bring the testimony, to bring the proof of his first analytic experience, and of his first analytic experience with silence.

Whether it is correct or not that he calls this silence, is another question for, after all, it is perhaps not really a silence that is involved. But where he is led, quite consistently, and one cannot say, at first sight, under the influence of some doctrinal guidance, where he is led in his conception of the relation of the subject to the partial object and of the other, to this enigmatic total object whose fate and future it is believed can purely and simply be deposited into the hands of the analyst. Where he has been led, and the fashion in which he has to find his bearings with the different references that he has at his disposal, which are offered to him by more or less current doctrines with all their diversity, is something that undoubtedly I cannot pursue except in a smaller seminar than the one here, but which is, in the final analysis, the essential thing that we are aiming at. If these (29) categories, if their articulation, that of S and of O and of **o** have some meaning, it is not because they can be joined to some cultural baggage or other destined to be applied where it can be, more or less blindly.

These things are constructed around the analytic experience, and in terms of analytic experience, it is not the least precious thing to know how the analyst thinks about it, whether he wishes or does not wish to do it in terms of thinking.

That he says : "I am not one of those who philosophises", changes nothing about the question. The less one wants to do philosophy, the more of it one does and, moreover, it is absolutely necessary that in an experience like the analytic

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experience the subject allows there to be seen what we will call the bottom of his sack and that, in an analysis, the analyst is as much in question as the analysand.

And the sense and the perspective of that towards which I am directing you, and it is not for nothing that at the level of this experience of a prolonged silence with a patient, the author puts forward the bringing to light of what he calls, in fact incorrectly, his counter-transference - as I have often said, the term is incorrect - and everything that is involved in the position of the analyst, everything, including the totality and the baggage of its rules, of its indications, of its doctrine and of its theory, ought always to be taken into account in what we call transference; namely, that there is in no case, whatever it may be, that should not be suspected, suspended by the analyst as participating for him in some unwarranted identification.

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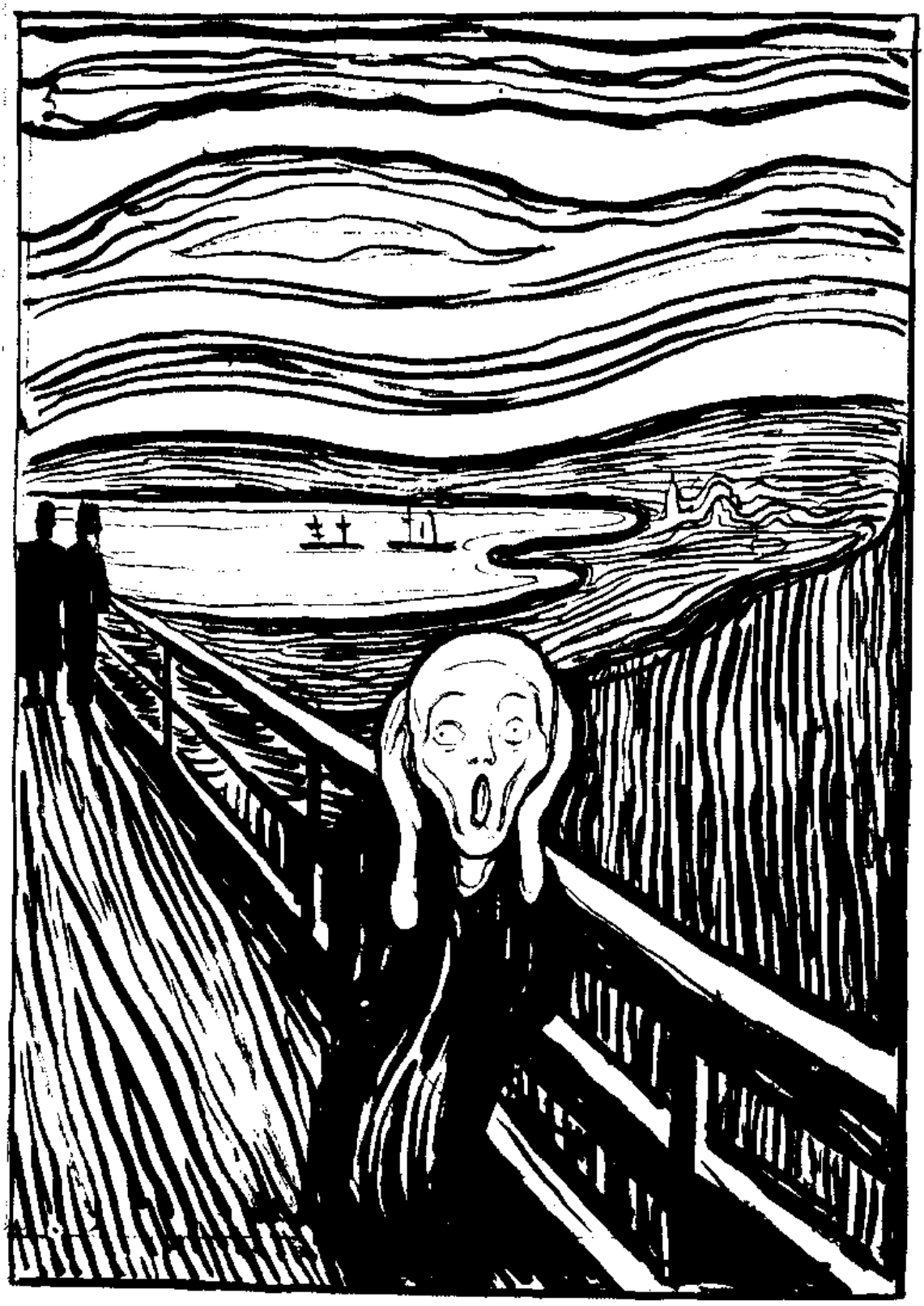

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Seminar 13: Wednesday 24 March 1965

Will we manage, before the end of this year, to find some rule, some style? The time is undoubtedly short. We have already had two closed seminars in the course of which you have heard papers (*communications*). Who does not agree? They were indeed papers; it is the name that what you have heard deserves. You were able to take notes and things were arranged, in principle, for you to be able to procure these texts. Those who were lucky enough, who came at the right moment, were in effect able to get them.

Since I was imprudent enough to say that for those who took Leclaire's text, that I was expecting from them a collaboration which, probably, in the minds of my listeners, implied that those who having taken the text did not bring any contribution would be, as one says at school, and it seems that we are still there, noted. The result is that I learned with astonishment that some people did not take Leclaire's text so that they would not subsequently incur the reproach of not having replied to it. One learns at every age! It must be that there remain corners (2) of naiveté among some people who believe themselves laden with experience. Happily I am not too naive about this.

So then, now, we find ourselves with the necessity of recalling that what we are doing here is something to which I gave this closed character, not that we could hope to give the line and the field for what ought to happen elsewhere, namely the analytic perfecting of the consequences of the research that I am carrying out before you this year and which, as it happens, this year, for example, could be entitled subjective ontology, the term subjective being taken here in the sense of a qualifier or of an objective predicate. This does not mean that it is the ontology which is subjective. The ontology of the subject and what the ontology of the subject is from the moment that there is an unconscious.

This, of course, I am trying to trace the line for you this year, this has consequences at the level of - not so much criticism as is said - but of the responsibility of the psycho- analyst. A term just as difficult to evoke in the context of a psychoanalytic society. What this involves in effect at this level, ought to be constructed, articulated elsewhere, and it is not easy to reunite a college where things can be posed at this level here, in the margin of what I am pursuing this year as teaching before you to give a certain sampling, there will always be (3) then a certain arbitrariness in the choice of what supports the line that we are trying to stick to here at its level of foundation necessary for what supports it, coming from different domains - you were able to see it illustrated by what we extracted from the theory of numbers.

A sampling also of what may interest the analyst in a work of concrete articulation in connection with a case, a work of articulation essentially animated by our line of research and which today is going to be put to the test of a number of responses whose relevance we are going to have to address.

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I will say no more about it today, but advancing then into the experiment, we are going to see what this will produce.

I would not like to leave you all the same without highlighting, at the right time, because, all the same, we cannot let slip this event, the value as image that this week's exploit ought to take on for us, the one which happened at some hundred and seventy five or more kilometres out in space, and which, as I said, in our eyes takes on the value of an image. I will not comment on it today because it would take us too far.

I would simply ask you to dream about the value that our major in space, the man called Leonov, may take with respect to what in this ontology of the subject, represents precisely the way in which man can be properly speaking this thing that is ejected and connected at the same time which is the **o**-object.

(4) In that case, today, I am a little awkward at drawing things but all the same it is not very difficult, here is our major and here is the **o**-object; the capsule would be the S and then where is desire if not at the level of the big Other, the USSR.

I am glad that that makes you laugh, because, this exploit, one of the most sensational all the same that can be attributed to man, this exploit is from a certain point of view a *gag* which depends profoundly on the fact that it is effectively the final structure of phantasy, as realised, one can find it of course in other registers, one can say that it is not unimportant either that we have it here in its most perfectly desexualised form.

You know that it is not in this connection that I introduced some reflections about the cosmonaut, because those who listen carefully to my lectures may remember that in connection with the classical syllogism about "Socrates is mortal", I tried to make another of a caricatural kind about Gagarin.

It was certainly not at the high point of the perspective of what is found here, not to articulate it, I will come back to it, but to outline it.

I do not believe that in saying it today, moreover, I am completely outside of our field, about what is involved in the subjective position, namely, whether it is (5) entirely reducible logically or whether we ought to direct the consideration of this subjective position, in so far as it involves the subject of the unconscious, towards the side of the remainder, namely, precisely, this **o**-object; it is indeed between these two terms that there is going to be suspended, if the matter is pursued rigorously, the question which can be posed in connection with the literal, almost graphic formula, the literal formula decanted by the extremely subtle operation of Leclaire.

I am now going to ask who are the people present among those on whom we are counting, I enumerate : Valabrega is there; Irigaray, Lemoine is there; I hope that Oury is there; Cotsonis Diamantis is there, thank you very much; Jennie Lemoine is there; Francine Markovitz is there; Melle Mondzain is there; and Major.

Dr Leclaire : I am going to propose that we begin the discussion about this text perhaps by considerations that I would arbitrarily describe as theoretical. As it

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happens, in fact, those of Oury and of Valabrega are directed precisely to the question of phantasy. So perhaps Oury could begin.

Presentation by Monsieur Oury

I am very annoyed to have only twelve minutes because I have a text which if I read it very quickly would take thirty minutes. So I am certainly going to have to skip a lot of things which might be important.

Anyway perhaps in the discussion they can be reintroduced.

Leclaire's presentation the last time certainly inspired me in a rather poetic way, I wrote a little exergue which can be developed afterwards.

Let us admit that Poord'jeli is a phonematic gestalt which is organised from the proper name of the subject, it is demonstrated in the text or more exactly around his first name and the name of the father, an exploded fragmented figure which is readjusted according to the laws of a primary process and utterance at the moment of evanescence of the subject, the crystallised cry of a primitive *jouissance* which is inscribed to indicate the almost inaccessible path. I take up, perhaps in a different formulation, what Leclaire said, a sort of ..... of the most intimate signifier, a sign of prohibition for the phenomenology of meaning, the entry into a domain of nonsense a forerunner of the unconscious, a vectorial dimension of a more or less mythical point of origin, this point of seeing outside the reflecting field, from which one can see arising the essence of the image.

(7) There where the *Wo Es war* concretises the history of the speaking subject.

Before formulating some criticisms about Leclaire's presentation, I would like to indicate by way of hypothesis, the possible function of this genesis of this phonematic gestalt, Poord'jeli.

Here is where I am going to be obliged to reduce things as far as possible because I carried out a very rapid and partial survey of the neurological literature to try to see what its factors were.

I note that I employ this expression of phonematic gestalt in a sense close to that given by Conrad, the neurologist, when he takes up the gestaltic study of aphasia, starting from Goldstein, etc., and I note that Conrad distinguished in the genesis of the gestalt, a *Vorgestalt* or pre-gestalt and a final gestalt.

I pass over all that and I think that this gestalt poord'jeli is close to another aspect of this pre-gestalt, whatever this pre-gestalt poord'jeli may be, it may evoke for us another conception which is the conception of Guillaume in connection with the period of the undifferentiated word sentence, a secret ejaculation accompanied by a sort of somersault, as Leclaire says, this poord'jeli is a sort of word-sentence containing in itself the origin of all subsequent syntactic developments.

(8) But let us pause again for a little moment to indicate that this phonematic pre - gestalt can be situated in a very marginal fashion that Luria and Ludowig describe under the name of syntactic language in the article on *Mutisme et les silences de*

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l'enfant. The authors commenting on the analysis of Luria's conceptions defining syntactic language as differentiating itself from real language by the fact that there does not emerge from it reality and action. It is confused with immediate activity, it is only a way of underlining the gesture, mimicry or action. They distinguish it from planning language and from informing language. I pass on.

Nevertheless even if we recall the possible articulation of these concepts with notions such as the motor schema or the theoretical developments of Silver, we could also quote what Ombredanne says, which is very interesting, on the subject of the genesis of the language of the child but all of that does not seem to us to circumscribe in a very precise fashion the problem and it seems much more important, much more urgent and much closer to our subject to refer to a study by André Thomas a very precise study. This study of which I will only indicate the reference is called - this study appeared in an article of the *Presse médicale* of February 1960. "The auditory caresses to the nursling, the first name and the pseudo-name".

From the first days of childhood the child is exquisitely sensitive to his name and (8) this specific sensitivity seems to be something very special and simply different to the phenomena described for example by ..... in connection with the first sounds to which the child responds, those which reproduce his own babbling, provoking, he says, the end of his prattling.

Finally let us recall here the fundamental data articulated by Jakobson in an old paper of September 1939 on the phonic laws of infantile language and their place in general phenomenology. He says that one cannot explain the sorting out of sounds during the passage from babbling to language in the proper sense of the word, except by the fact of this passage itself, namely the phonematic value that the sound acquires. Further on the phonetic richness of babbling gives place to a phonological restriction.

Thus, even before what I am calling here the phonological introduction that the organisation of the word inaugurates from the time of prattling, of babbling, before language is determined in a closed system, there is created a potential phonematic polyvalence, a phonetic super-abundance, in which the child individualises himself following a schema which is personal to him.

From this time on, and this is the hypothesis that I am formulating, is there not the putting into place of a sort of personal grid, a system of phonological sieve, in the (10) sense used by ..... whom I do not quote. These phonological sieves are the key, in the sense of a key of musical notation, which allows to be deciphered the articulation of the subject with the signifier and his fellows. Now is not this key close, precisely, to this phonematic gestalt which we previously spoke about.

This gestalt would function a little like a resonating system, cutting out in the surrounding language, forms of meaning in order to be organised into a message furnished by the personal sieve.

It is the problem analogous to the one that we are quoting about the relationship existing between foreign tongues and the maternal tongue, but also, on the

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pathological plane, one could relate these phenomena to that of verbal illusions or again to delusions of self-reference.

But it seems that it is also the mode of functioning of the preconscious system through which there are organised the *Fort-vorstellungen.* In this connection I think it would be interesting to recall very rapidly some quotations by Lacan in a seminar of January 1962. He says : "what interests us in the preconscious, is language as it effectively is when one hears it being spoken. It scans, articulates our thinking. In the unconscious structured like a language it is not easy to have it (11) express itself in a common language. The articulated language of common discourse is outside, with respect to the subject of the unconscious; an outside which conjoins in itself what we call our intimate thoughts. This language which carries on outside and not in an immaterial fashion, this discourse is entirely homogenisable as something which happens outside; language fills the street and there is effectively there an inscription; the problem of what happens in consciousness comes to make itself heard and there is the problem of the mimicry between the unconscious and the preconscious." And again : "if we should consider the unconscious as the locus of the subject where something is profoundly restructured without the subject knowing it by the retroactive effects of the signifier implied in the word, it is in so far as and for the least of these words, that the subject speaks, that he can do no more than always once more name himself without knowing it and without knowing by what name." And finally "the status of the unconscious is established at a more radical level, the emergence of the act of enunciating."

It is a simple reminder and we can suppose that this gestalt poord'jeli is very close to the point of emergence or of the birth of the subject, a subject, for example who emerges from a coma always responds to the summons of his name well before he can become aware of the noise of any sentence whatsoever. A supplementary argument to signify that this gestalt indicates the speaking subject.

It is here from this aspect, from this point, that the phantasy can be located and it is (12) here that I come to this criticism of Leclaire but this point of reference is not a phantasy. And this is a reproach that I would make to Leclaire that he has assimilated his poord'jeli to a phantasy.

Fundamentally, phantasy is much more scopic in its essence. Of course we can quote Freud who in the letter to Fliess of 25 May 1897 puts forward the hypothesis that phantasies are produced by an unconscious combination of things experienced or things heard, following certain tendencies.

But the problem still remains. The phenomenological grasp of phantasy poses the problem of the imagining of the phantasy. But this problem implies the equating of a certain symbolic framework. It seems to me that to be rigorous, this phonematic, sonorous gestalt, indicates the point from which one can see arising the privileged image of a fundamental phantasy which is very conjuratory and with an opening marking the bringing into play of the big Other. Posed in this way, it seems to me we can better articulate what Leclaire says, by avoiding the risk of getting involved in a specular jousting with the patient. And what can result from an obsessional-ascetic search for a fundamental key to the problem which is posed by the analytic relationship, it seem that there is here in effect the

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search for a guarantee which ought to be a beyond of anxiety towards the mythical locus of the *jouissance* of the Other, the big Other, with an avoidance, with a possible collapse towards a (13) possible alienation of the desire of the analysed subject into the desire of the analyst.

We can formulate that in a different way. What seems to be in question here is the problematic of the phallus in the analytic relationship; the path which leads towards the unity of the subject signified by the name of the father ..... which phenomenologically is the appearance of the phallus in the progress of making meaning.

Here I make a reference to a note by Lacan from the same seminar of January 1962 which, after a mathematical development of a periodic function, comments on the first thing that we encounter and this: it is the essential relationship of this something that we search for being the subject before he is named, to the usage that he can make of his name as being the signifier of what is signified about the question of the addition of himself to his own name, this is to split him, to divide him in two.

On the other hand, the phonematic gestalt by its essence from the order of the big O, from the big Other, is what is the point of ambiguity, namely for oneself and for the others, the coming to light in the analytic relationship on this point of ambiguity deserves in fact to be circumscribed in a particularly precise fashion, it has something to do with the point of reversion, the point of articulation between the imaginary and the symbolic.

(14) I tried to reduce my presentation as far as I could.

Dr Lacan: Thank you for having done so. The longer piece you have done, we will see what we can do with it.

Dr Leclaire: In the choice that I have of responding immediately in detail to every intervention on the one hand, or, on the other hand of underlining a point in it, while leaving it in suspense and leaving somebody else speak, I chose the second formula because I do not think that it is opportune that either I or Lacan should take things up to begin the speaking again. I think that it is appropriate that those who have expressed themselves in writing should do so today before you. The particular point that I would like to underline, and which poses a problem for me, is the prevalence of the scopic element that Oury advances as being constitutive of phantasy.

No doubt this is what is usually evoked when people speak about phantasy but I wonder whether, analytically speaking, we do not precisely have to distinguish the forms of phantasy according to the nature of the object, the object in the Lacanian sense, namely the **o**-object implied in the phantasy. In other words, if what is involved is an object from the scopic sphere, from the visual sphere, OK, but in the example I chose what is involved is an object of a different nature, which is precisely an object from the domain of the voice, from what we could call the vocal and acoustic sphere. I do not know if it is necessarily appropriate to reduce this object to a scopic dimension. I leave the question open because I think that

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one should make distinctions there. On the question of phantasy does Valabrega, who had a terminological question to specify, wish to speak?

Presentation by Monsieur Valabrega

What I had to say rejoins one of the points raised immediately by Oury. It was a very short remark to which I give only a terminological importance, which terminological remarks naturally may have, because I would like to tell Serge Leclaire that on the whole, I found his presentation extremely satisfying.

I come back as Oury did to the formula Poord'jeli of which Leclaire has made, as Oury has told us a phantasy, and even a fundamental phantasy, *Urphantasie.* It is also on this point that the remark I want to make will bear. Can a formula of this kind be considered to be a phantasy? I do not think so. I think that the formula contains basic elements or signifying elements of a fundamental phantasy. Only one cannot be reduced to the other.

On the scopic content, on the scopic form that has just been spoken about, I would not be fully in agreement what Oury said but I would rather align myself with the indication that Leclaire has just given.

(16) For my part I would say that what can create an agreement between those who hold with a copy, as I might say, and those who hold with the distinctions that are necessary to make at the level of drives in the constitution of the fundamental phantasy, I would define the phantasy as a story that one tells, or rather more exactly as a story which is told, which happens to be told, which implies nothing as regards who tells it and where it is told and by whom it is told.

The only thing is that a story that is told can refer to a scopic content or to different one; what I would see as essential in the phantasy that is described as fundamental, in the *Urphantasie,* is that for me, at least, it opens out necessarily onto a myth.

This is why, moreover, in psychoanalysis one cannot do otherwise than pass perpetually from the signified to the signifier through signification and in every sense of this passage. This definition of analysis is obviously applied to the discovery of the phantasy and of the fundamental phantasy.

I add a little point: what seemed to me interesting to ask Leclaire as a complement to his presentation is the following: what are, in his case, the clinical conditions for obtaining the aforesaid formula? On what I said about analysis which passes from the signified to the signifier by signification one can only say it, moreover, it is not (17) a critique, there is nothing of the sort in what I said there, it is what Leclaire did in his presentation which once more reduces the importance of my remark to a question of the distinction between terms.

Dr Leclaire: I would have great difficulty in responding in a few words to the question of the clinical conditions for obtaining this formula. It comes, it emerges, it is given. Moreover this formula is a typical example.

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But what I would like to pause on for a moment is the question of phantasy as Valabrega argues it.

He says that for him a phantasy is something like the impersonal argument of a story. I agree. The critique is directed perhaps at this formula but it is not directed completely at it. For this formula seems all the same to represent for the subject the outline, however slight it may be, of a history and not just of a history, of a sort of action.

When I evoked the gesture of somersaulting, even its somatic accomplishment which accompanies the formula, or which the formula realises, I think that there is produced something at the level of a summary accomplishment of the model of a story. I will come back perhaps in a more precise fashion on this later if I have the time. I would like now to ask Mme Irigaray to communicate her remarks for it seems to me that they refer to, that they can complete on the one hand the ones made by Oury on the question of the first name, or the question of sensitivity to the first name and perhaps also on the other hand because they take up again the problem of the body in the case of this observation.

Mme Irigaray: In connection with Leclaire's seminar I would like to make three remarks on rather different things. The first remark has to do with the difference that exists in my opinion between the first name and the surname, a difference which in my opinion was not sufficiently noted by Leclaire.

When Leclaire speaks about the proper name, he gives as example George Philip Eliany and when Lacan speaks about it, moreover, he gave as an example Jacques Lacan.

It seems to me that between Eliany and Lacan on the one hand, and Jacques and George Philip on the other, there exist important differences. Lacan and Eliany are not proper names. *Qua* Lacan or Eliany the subject is only the element of a group and one could invoke in this connection what a line of descendance requires of those who carry its name to the detriment of the singularity of each person.

George Philip, Jacques, are in a way, the sound image of the subject. They take into account the singularity of the subject, at least within the group Eliany or Lacan (19) but they take it into account above all at the imaginary level which does not already exclude, obviously, the presence of the symbolic.

One can note in this connection that the young child is always called by his first name, especially by his mother. Moreover if another person in the line of descendants, and particularly the father is called George Philip or Jacques there is proposed a crucial problem for the subject and the homonymy of the first name especially between father and son or mother and daughter is often, it seems to me, a handicap in the becoming of the subject.

Obviously when the subject emerges from the Eliany or Lacan group he can only signify himself as George Philip Eliany or Jacques Lacan because he encounters at that point other George Philip's or Jacques's. One can note that this is situated generally speaking when he goes to school, a key moment for the positing of the Oedipus complex and the access to the symbolic order. To this primordial and

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more imaginary George Philip or Jacques there is added at that point the Eliany or the Lacan which are going to situate the subject in the society which he then really enters, the family in the last resort being more another mother than a true society.

The proper name is therefore the conjunction of a sound image, of a symbolic brand. But there always remains, it seems to me, a difference, notably at the level of identification between the George Philip's or the Jacques's or the Elianys and Lacans.

(20) For example the subject does not react in the same way to the death of a George Philip and to the death of an Eliany.

A second remark then: When Leclaire speaks about the empty mask of the unconscious, I would really like him to explain what he means. Because in fact his text does not seem to consider the unconscious as empty. Moreover it seems to me if analysts consider the unconscious as empty, they are much closer to Claude Lévi-Strauss than they say.

If the unconscious is empty, it manifests itself only by chains of behaviour, this word being understood in a very broad sense, and not by imaged or phonematic contents.

The problem of a full or empty unconscious appears to be quite fundamental and if the analysts are able to speak about the unconscious with such difficulty, is it not precisely that it is above all a structure that can be located through its opposition or at least comparison with other unconscious's, a structure that is at once the same and different between one or other subject.

A third remark: If the unconscious is born from the encounter between the organic and the signifier, why does Leclaire invoke experiences of exquisite difference, of movements of somersault, of attitudes of reversal which are situated, it seems to (21) me, at a properly corporal level? Does Leclaire mean by this that the corporal behaviour of the nursling is already organised in a way that is parallel to that of the signifier? But is that not to suppress this problem of the insertion of the signifier into the organism, a drama from which the unconscious is going to be born.

It seem to me that the originality of the organic is not sufficiently preserved at least unless that what Leclaire is suggesting is that what is involved here is a kind of *fort-da* that the subject tries on himself to master precisely this primordial meeting between the organic and the signifier. But is he touching then the most archaic unconscious level since he has already mastered it?

Dr Leclaire: Several questions are posed. Three at least. To the first I can only allow its whole value to - I was going to say to the clinical arguments which are advanced about the privileged value of the first name. The question that I would pose at that level when Madame Irigaray says that first names take into account the singularity of each person but that they take him into account above all at the imaginary level, I think that a question is posed at a particularly tangible point because, of course, here there remains to be specified with greater rigour what one means precisely by this imaginary level and to what it is opposed. To the

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symbolic of course but how and in what way precisely in this case at the primary level?

(22) On the question of this expression of the empty mask and of the void in particular, I think that this gives rise to or that this activates the whole series of phantasies which are familiar to us and which, if I may say, refer to the opposition between the full and the empty.

The word that I chose is perhaps not a very fortunate one but it is this image of the mask which struck me for reasons that I will no doubt have to take up again. The term of empty there is employed in a precise sense, namely, where there is no sense close-by, where there is not a ready-made meaning, which is the contrary of a full or too full meaning, if empty has a meaning, in connection with the mask of the unconscious or the empty mask of the unconscious, it is in this direction that I would want it to be understood.

As regards the question of the involvement of the body, the question of the encounter between the organic and the signifier, I consider this to be a crucial question and if I have a little bit of time at the end of this discussion I think that I can take up again in a precise fashion what I have to say there, precisely in connection on what I underlined already earlier in what one could almost call the animating value on the muscular plane of this Poord'jeli formula, for it seems to me, I told you immediately, that would not have a lot of meaning for us, that that (23) formula is already in a certain way something like a mime of the signifier. I will come back on it later, as I was telling you, if we have the time.

Dr Lacan: I would like simply to make a little remark about this question of the first name. The next time I will put on the board an indication in German of a work on the psychology of the first name by somebody called Rose Katz, if I remember correctly.

I think that all the same on this subject, the essential was given by Luce Irigaray, the essential in the distinction between the first name and the family name is that the first name is given by the parents, while the family name is transmitted. It is much more important than the classificatory aspect which opposes the generic nature of the family name to the singularity of the first name. A first name in no way constitutes a singularity. At most, the essential is that it expresses something which accompanies the birth of a child and which clearly comes from parents. The child already has a determined chosen place in the universe of the language of the first name, illustrations that are at the same time very superficial .....

Dr Leclaire: Lemoine with whom we will end, as I might say, this first part very arbitrarily divided as what we can call theoretical remarks or commentaries of a theoretical nature.

(24) Mr Lemoine: I do not have the impression that what I am going to say is theoretical because what I said was suggested to me by reflections that I had after having heard the brilliant presentation that Leclaire made to us at the last closed seminar.

What I have to say concerns two points :

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- on the one hand the fact that Leclaire made no illusion to the last sentence of the dream which seems essential to me because precisely this sentence was an appeal to him, and made of this dream a transference dream.

In effect what does the last sentence say? "We were going, all three of us, towards a clearing that could be seen down below". Well then for me, the clearing (*clairière)* is clear *(claire*). What is involved precisely is Leclaire's name which is invoked in a way by the patient and then this is already an appeal to the name. There is a second appeal to the name and another name which is the name of the father and which is indicated by the unicorn because what is the unicorn? It is a fabulous animal which is only appeased - and Leclaire tells us this in his article of 1960 *Temps Modernes* - when he rests on the lap of a Virgin.

Now this is precisely the problem of the taboo of virginity and it must be remarked moreover that this Virgin is perhaps the mother but he makes no allusion to it (25) anywhere to it in this dream. This Virgin is Philip's mother. Now Philip's mother is the one who responds to the desire of the father. If the father had married a Virgin, a Virgin mother, Philip's name, Philip's identity is ..... from that moment on uncontested. But precisely Philip is an obsessional. And the desire of his mother is precisely what creates a question for him. That is the reason why Philip has the greatest doubts about himself and about his identity. And it is the reason why he entered analysis.

That is why this parallelism between the name of the analyst which is found for its part outside the circuit - and moreover I would ask Leclaire as I wrote to him whether there is not here a counter-transference indeed an excess of counter-transference if precisely he refused to implicate himself by not listening with such an attentive ear as he did to the beginning of the text of the dream to this last sentence which was addressed to him. In any case this last sentence is directed at the name of the analyst on the one hand on the other hand the name of the father.

And then at this point I would like to touch on what was called here earlier the body, namely the anxiety of the patient. I believe that this is essential if, in effect, the patient speaks about Lili and if everything has deviated in a way towards the Lili of Licorne and if everything that can be described as a horn (*corne*) is hidden and is gathered together in a way in this fabulous animal, it is because on the side (26) of Lili finally something equivalent to the relationship to the mother, but a displaced equivalent, that is to say one that is much less anxiety-provoking.

In the same way, the evocation of the name of the analyst is much less charged with anxiety than would be the evocation of the father. And that is why the father is masked in this dream or condensed if you wish in the image and why the analyst is on the contrary much more apparent because what is involved is a clearing.

This leads me to speak about the formula about Poord'jeli. It was said earlier, and I agree, that it is a reversal, there is a sort of symmetry in a way between the two elements of this formula. There is in effect on the one hand George and on the other hand Lili and in the middle the little d which is the arrow of desire which Lacan has taught us to use. I mean by that that this symmetry is a false symmetry and it is a false symmetry because George is found in the final analysis with Lili, namely that Lili, he finally, with Lili, he understood, he held in his grasp, he had

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signified in a way, experienced his desire. And it is this kind of traversal of desire which modifies the formula Poord'jeli, a reversal that we also find in the symmetry formula *Lili j'ai soif ; Philippe j'ai soif* (Lili I am thirsty; Philip I am thirsty).

(27) It seems that this sort of reversal, namely, this turning back on oneself and this way of finding oneself perpetually back on oneself is evidently the fundamental problem, the fundamental attitude of Philip.

So then what use is this formula? It serves to fill a lack in the signifying chain and it serves by its singularity and I believe that there is a difference between the image that one encounters very frequently and very easily in numerous analysis; whether is is for example a tower that looks at you with two eyes, or whether it is a siphon which suddenly turns towards the mouth of the patient, or whether it is a Punch also which suddenly becomes an erect penis, well one finds all of these images at an essential turning point of an analysis and each time there is an anxiety to be covered over. This formula Poord'jeli is a much older formula, this moreover has been said, and it is a formula which allowed perhaps to go further in the analysis of the subject and which allows the subject finally to do what? To recuperate himself when he finds himself, through anxiety, brought to a halt in the course of his associations and in the course of his life.

For what must be clearly said is that anxiety is experienced in the body and that this is the problem and that what constitutes analysis is nothing other precisely than to (28) put the signifying chain in motion and thus to modify what is incarnated in a certain way by the subject. And besides, is not analysis precisely and in the final analysis a reincarnation of the signifier. Does it not in the final analysis heal the subject by allowing him to reincarnate himself in his language?

Dr Leclaire: Lemoine was right and I apologise for having classified him in the first category. I must say, because we are already in the second series of arguments, namely, clinical arguments that on that point I will allow to each testimony its value as an association because I do not think, even though we are in what is called a closed seminar, that we can enter into the dimension of a discussion of a case or indeed of the analysis of a counter-transference.

Not that this is something to be excluded, but I believe that we will not have the leisure or the possibility to do so here. What comes as an echo to an analytic text is in itself sufficiently eloquent. I would like now to invite Mme Cotsanis-Diamantis to speak who I think, precisely, is going to present us a very short observation of something different.

Mme Cotsanis-Diamantis: In an article like the one Leclaire has proposed to us it seems to me that in connection with these groups of words he proposed to show us (29) how through a chain of signifiers the unconscious appeared to us.

I said, it seems to me, for if our own experience did not make us encounter such notions, we would be condemned to believe it on his word.

It seems to me, in effect, that at the level of a theorisation, of an explanation, of a reference to a third, the one who is neither the analyst nor the analysed, to

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someone like that these notions may appear as arbitrary. This means that if temporally we accept to believe it on his word it is only through the detour of our own experience that we will be led to convince ourselves more surely.

The analyst-analysand relationship being a relationship of two, the third, the one who listens, the hearer, has no access to it. I will record here an example of an exchange between the analyst and his patient where the dialogue is engaged between two unconscious's and where the reference to a third become difficult.

In the course of a child therapy I am suddenly asked : “where is the orange, where is the orange?” And since I was asking myself inwardly what might this orange mean I made a lapse which informed me, if not about this meaning, at least about (30) my own phantasies: I wrote: “where is the organ?”.

I would like now to report a history I heard being reported to me by people who know who is involved, a little while after Leclaire’s paper. This story I heard completely outside the analytic field. And if there was an analytic intention it was because of my listening for it. It is by that special opening that was brought by Leclaire’s paper and in particular by the teaching of Lacan in general to which the story that I heard brought me back and which I will call the story of Norbert.

The story is about a couple. The husband is twenty-five, he is a doctor with the promise of a brilliant future, and who is supposed to become gynaecologist. He has a two-year-old daughter. The mother, who has fixated herself on her own mother, is rather indifferent to the child. On the contrary the father experienced a real passion for his daughter. The father was doing an exam that he failed, because that day his daughter had swallowed a brooch and he was extremely upset. He gives up his studies and goes into the navy to do his military service. There, even though he is an excellent diver he kills himself by breaking his skull on a block of cement. The child is two years old at the time.

We rediscover the widow twenty years later with her daughter aged twenty-two at (31) the time. This widow has got married afterwards to a man that she does not love. Her daughter gets married immediately to a man she does not love either. This man has the same family name as her and what is more his first name is Bernard while his own father was called Norbert. The marriage goes badly. The young woman cannot tolerate her in-laws and persuades Bernard her husband to go to live on an island. There while Bernard is driving an accident takes place which disfigures the young woman. She does get back a more or less normal face but a different one after several surgical operations.

A little while afterwards they have a son whom they call Norbert. This child is the object of a great passion on the part of his mother. As regards the father he finds himself rejected by the mother-son couple. The mother is constantly afraid that Norbert is going to swallow the noxious products that the father, who is a farmer, makes use of, and in particular insecticides. One day the father brings his son out into a field where he had work to do. He pours the insecticide into a recipient and goes to work a little bit further on. And leaves the child to play. When he comes back he notices the level of the bowl has dropped; at least he suspects it, thinks about his son but does not dwell on. An hour later the child got sick and by the time father had brought him to hospital had died.

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(32) From the angle of this story I found myself coming back on what Leclaire spoke to us about, and it showed me here a little of what he showed in what concerns the appearance of relationships, in the phantasy, between the name of the subject and, a fortiori, in the story of Norbert, with the name of the father.

From what angle do we find it here? We have seen a young woman who loses her father when she is two years old, who grows up alone with her mother and who takes a husband and surely a phallus at the same time as she.

Her choice is the following : Mr X who has the same surname as the father of the young woman, therefore the same surname as the young woman. She marries Bernard and she lost Norbert. In fact Bernard, as a rather miserable farmer, is exactly the opposite of Norbert, a doctor with a promising or a brilliant future. The inversion of syllables between the two first names seems here to reveal to us the most unconscious and the most secret phantasy of this young woman. Perhaps Bernard is only the virtual inverted image of Norbert who is so much desired but is absent, or rather is so present.

How is this woman going to be able to accommodate this virtual image with respect to the real image of Norbert, her father? In fact everything happens as if Bernard had a mission to cancel out Norbert.

(33) Who gave him this mission? It is a reply to his wife, perhaps, but much more surely to Norbert himself insofar as he is manifested through the desire of the other.

What is Bernard for this woman? Is he not the antidote, the anti-poison, the one who will cancel out Norbert? The first patricide that the young woman is going to commit is getting married to Bernard. From then on it seems that it is Bernard himself who will take charge of it. First of all by destroying the brand, the imprint of Norbert on the face of his wife. Then by killing his son, the resurrected Norbert for two years, and with, one could hardly choose better, an insecticide.

There are other elements that would be worth while exploring here. For example the references to the *mère/mer* that we find constantly. Norbert who wanted to be a gynaecologist doing his military service in the navy, and killing himself at sea, the couple going to live on an island.

But neither the example, which is a story that was told, for which we have no analysis at our disposal, nor my present experience allows me to go any further than these few elements that I have just given.

Dr Leclaire: There is very little to be added to this extraordinary story. Have you started to write it up, this story of Norbert?

(34) Dr Lacan: I wanted people to remember this. It is worth the trouble. It is a story which was not analysed and which cannot be analysed. But the name Norbert was not heard. I wanted it to be written out.

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Dr Leclaire: I still have a lot of papers. Mme Lemoine. It is in connection of the dream of the unicorn.

Mme Lemoine: I am neither an analyst nor a doctor. Besides I think you will see this very soon. But I was invited to communicate to you my intuitive reflections, so here they are.

"One could go much further", Serge Leclaire said at the end of his presentation. In fact no, one cannot. It is all very well for him to propose a new variation on the theme of inverted gold and which would give rose like the scar, or like the inverted sex or the inverted rose of the woman, but neither the signifying chain nor the cypher of Poord'jeli nor above all the dream itself are themes but texts which are open to infinite variations. Therefore, in order to go further, we would have to be the analyst himself and to have before us the analysand, namely to continue the analysis. Finally, we would have to know the real name of the patient this name Eliany, son of the Lord in Hebrew, I believe, but I do not know Hebrew, was probably put forward for the needs of the case.

We would then see, if we knew this surname, operating in function of Leclaire, the (35) clearing of the dream. But we do not have the man or his name, so we can only dream in effect, or worse conclude. For example, to the castration complex.

But the analysis is, it seems, the opposite to a diagnosis, even if it was concurrently made by the patient himself. Simple conscious awareness is not very effective.

But Serge Leclaire also says and from the beginning that the proper name is linked to the most secret aspect of the unconscious phantasy and it is from this sentence that I would like to begin.

Let us take up a little of the history of the dream. Philip is thirsty. He succeeds in deceiving but obviously not in satisfying his thirst by appeasing other thirsts in a dream, a preconscious echo of a fundamental unconscious lack. The dream then is like an echo chamber.

In a day-to-day context on the contrary when Philip happens to say "Lilly I am thirsty", he expresses at least two desires: he needs to drink and he loves Lili. The most important one is not the one that is formulated, because any word is first of all the sign of a need of love, of an appeal. But he wants all the same something, to drink, at least in the first phase. Therefore things happen very differently in the dream and in reality at the level of language. In reality the thirst is expressed to (35a) obtain satisfaction, in the dream it is not expressed and far from being satisfied it awakens other thirsts which for their part are asleep during the day.

In Philip's case one can say then that the language of the night before shows certain splits. No doubt it is lacunary, like his night-time language, since it allows there to appear rather frequently a formula stripped of meaning like poord'jeli.

Why then in Philip's case does the original pressure, instead of being normally represented and occupying therefore from substitute to substitute the psychic life

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up to language, why has the displacement being cut short and culminated at this blind alley of poordj'eli.

No doubt because there is no anchoring point at the desired moment. No doubt because a brutal weaning dispensed the father from playing his separating role. This is what the remainder of the analysis would no doubt teach us. Perhaps also the father was completely missing in person, how can we know? There is a Jacques who is a brother of the father who seems to have operated sometimes in his place. Therefore the original metaphor did not operate. It did not come to separate what should have been separated establishing thus the subsequent oppositions, conditions of the discourse. The psychic life of Philip has remained like a marsh where one nenuphar displaces another nenuphar indefinitely.

(36) Underneath the original drive the death drive has remained gaping. In order to fix the circle of fallacious substitutions, Philip posed on his need a seal, a scar that he masks but which at the same time castrates him. The scar is on him but the rose is elsewhere, in the clearing perhaps.

It is not just anyone at all who can show him the path, the patient therefore appeals to the analyst so that he will help him to reconvert the scar into a dart.

This appeal of the analysand to the analyst, takes on from the beginning and at the end the form of two proper names. George-Philip, the son of the Lord with a question-mark, appeals to Serge Leclaire so that he will take up with him his history at the moment that his father was lacking, and so that he will allow in this way to be reknotted the signifying chain as closely as possible to the first symbolic link.

Philip will end up perhaps later in the clearing where he can perhaps become a man and pick the rose. Having become a man he will also be able to have himself called by his own name, which we do not know, and not the son of the lord. Until then he remains a child who is suckling his nurse to the great satisfaction of the nurse herself, but the patient has to liquidate his transference in order not to become the child of the analyst after having been the child of his nurse.

(37) It is only then that he will be authorised to bear his own name which will no longer be that of his father who is symbolically dead. He will also be able to speak in the first person and to allow to speak in him the second and third persons. That is the end of the dream of the unicorn carrying his sleeping dart.

Philip, finally, twice baptised, will have conquered his own identity. The transmission of the proper name is no doubt a sociological fact, but the proper name sticks to the person like the common name to the thing which we would not be able to distinguish if it were not named.

In that way, to bear a name has a meaning and an action on the person and one could perhaps speak about the conquest of the name.

It is a matter then for the analyst to authorise, however little, the unconscious after separation of the persons to found, to ground, the first. Literature in this perspective is a magnified analysis in and through the person of the author, while

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according to the expression of Jean Paulhan, it is an enlarged language where metaphor and metonymy appear as seen in a microscope.

But the dream is not a text with an author's name. It is only the reverse of a poem.

Dr Leclaire: We still have at least three texts: Melle Markovitz.

Presentation by Melle Markovitz (not in French typscript)

(48) **Dr Lacan**: Without prejudice to the others, we will see the decisions that we will have to take, we are going to have this really remarkable paper roneotyped.

Since you will only have the text of Jacques-Alain Miller next week you will be able to get this one probably a little later.

Dr Leclaire : I would wish for my part first of all of course that we should take up this text of Melle Markovitz, that people should also have before their eyes the sequence of tapestries of the lady with the unicorn, which is not so difficult, but I would wish perhaps, rather than replying, to add myself a commentary to this discussion to give the opportunity which will not be very long to two people who again wrote something, namely Melle Mondzain and Mr Major, the opportunity to communicate their reflections to you.

Melle Mondzain: After the papers that have been given I have the impression that the clinical reflections that Leclaire's text suggested to me are going to overlap things which have already been said and may appear a little bit like repetition.

Nevertheless I will give them as such since I have been asked to do so and by beginning perhaps with the end of what I wrote to Leclaire because the preceding (49) interventions put the emphasis on the term poordj'eli.

Leclaire told us in his text that it was extremely difficult in general for analysts to obtain the communication of such formulae whose unveiling, he told us, which is apparently so anodyne has something which resembles something extremely shameful or even at the limits sacriligious.

He put the accent especially on the question of sacrilege in showing us how the term of poordj'eli was linked to the name of the father, to the name of the patient, to the surname.

Madame Lemoine alluded earlier to the possible signification of this name Eliany, the son of the Lord. It is a question that I also posed myself, but I do not know Hebrew any more than she does. Besides I asked myself whether the name Eliany was the real name or whether it was a forged name. In any case the convergence is all the same rather striking.

It is a name which has a Semitic resonance and there is in the tables of the law a commandment which says :"you shall not pronounce the name of Jaweh, your God in vain." I have thought that someone who is called George-Philip Eliany, whether he is a Jew or even perhaps a Christian, could scarcely be ignorant of

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such a commandment and that the term of Poord'jeli might appear, in a certain measure, like a sort of swear (50) word and a sacrilege in the religious sense, a way of saying : "nom de Dieu", very cleverly and this form of disguise, which is proper sometimes to certain neurotic symptoms, to clinical features that we know well as analysts where the transgression unveils itself in a fashion that is all the more clear because it wants to appear camouflaged.

I was struck by another aspect of this phoneme poordj'eli as Oury and others have spoken about it on the phonematic plane. I have not sources that are as precise or as plentiful as those of Oury. I consulted books on child psychology, rather banal sources, because I had the feeling that that reminded me of something, that reminded me more of words or of terms that children easily invent and of the verbal games of children.

What I found disappointed me a little and satisfied me a little in the sense that all the observations are practically unanimous in noting that certain sounds appear before others and that for example a sound like "r" is one of the earliest and is particularly associated to agreeable physical experiences: so that it would be rather characteristic.

The letter "p" is supposed to be one of the first consonants to be pronounced and people frequently speak about babbling. This link between verbal games and agreeable physical experiences led me to pose the question of a possible link (51) between a phonetic expression of this order and the agreeable physical side, this physical pleasure which can be associated to it or has been associated to it and I asked myself, I posed the question to Leclaire as regards whether the difficulty that there was in finding such formulae, of collecting them as a general rule, could not be caused by an extremely early forgetting which is contemporaneous or of the same order, which might go in the same direction as the perhaps forgotten, the first agreeable physical experience, indeed the first masturbations which even children at the breast apparently carry out. This would rejoin a problem which Leclaire said he would speak to us about which is that of the unconscious and of the signifying chain with respect to the body and other bodily problems.

This question of the body and of Philip's body, I also posed at the level of the dream. It has already been remarked here how one could situate the place of Leclaire in the dream with respect to this clearing.

Leclaire spoke to us about this dream telling us that it was a thirst dream if one takes the term in the sense of a dream whose origin is thirst, which has a somatic (52) source. It does not correspond quite to what is classically known about such dreams in which one would expect for example that Philip would a least dream of a spring, that he would dream about water, that he would dream about some liquid or other to be consumed. There seems to have been a certain delay between the dream which ends up in a clearing which is not reached and the manifestation of the thirst. I would like to pose the question to Leclaire of whether the term of a thirst dream is not to be taken in the sense that it is a dream which made Philip thirsty because there is here fundamentally in the movement of the narrative that Philip makes to Leclaire, two phases, there is a moment of the dream in which Philip sleeps, Philip who is lying down, Philip who is dreaming about Leclaire, to Leclaire, as there is on the analyst's couch a Philip who speaks to Leclaire, and he

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posed in the discourse a Philip who emerges from the dream, who wakes up to have a drink and who at that moment is no longer the Philip linked to the desire of Leclaire but the Philip linked to the Philip-I'm- thirsty, to the very body of his childhood and who orients himself in the direction, at bottom, of another desire, Philip-I'm-thirsty, it is a Philip who is unique in the world, unique and distinguished from all other Philips of the world perhaps by his mother who perhaps fed him when he was a child or in his narrative at least, what appears is a different figure of (53) a woman, it is that of Lili who had nicknamed him Philip-I'm-thirsty and who had thus greeted him as such.

Dr Lacan: What Melle Mondzain has said is really very important. Does Israel, whom I asked to intervene, have something ready.

Dr Israel: It will keep.

Dr Lacan: So we will ask Major.

Dr Leclaire: I will leave to Major the responsibility of concluding by asking him to come right away, through a sort of analytic commentary that is extremely close it seems to the material that was brought up here and I would like to have the opportunity the next time to tell you what I would like to underline at the end of this discussion and what I would like to emphasise in this connection, namely, the quite particular nature of what is involved here, of the object of which there can be a question, in so far as it is a matter of a formula, of an ejaculation, of something which is said aloud or quietly and I wanted above all in this connection to remind you of another element of the analysis of Philip which is that of the dream of the sickle (*serpe*) to which moreover Major refers, in which we find in a still more precise fashion something that is of the order of an appeal.

(54) **Mr Major**: I would say that this could turn around the encounter of the desire of the analyst, and the becoming of the subject, on the track of the proper name.

I will go to the most central point.

It is indeed on the privileged terrain of the unconscious from which sense emerges from non-sense where in connection with the proper name and its relationship with the fundamental phantasy Serge Leclaire has led us to the edge of a transgression with the rigour of a non-logic of a primary type.

He has illustrated for us the fundamental mechanisms of the unconscious - metaphorical substitution and metonymical displacement.

To the unconscious text of the dream with the unicorn with Philip, Lili, beach, thirst, sand, skin, foot, horn elaborated in 1960 he added last January the phonematic transcription of the fundamental phantasy of George-Philip Eliany, Poord'jeli.

He has given us the criteria which led him to distinguish, retain, underline, one phonematic couple rather than another in his analytic progress. The criteria that he has retained take essentially as an axis three fundamental concepts in

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psychoanalysis, the repetition of significant elements, the irreducible drive whose (55) representatives undergo the effect of repression, of displacement, and of condensation and finally the constitutive absence of logical relationships and of contradiction at the primary level of the processes of the unconscious.

Unconscious, drive, repetition in their insoluble link summon nevertheless a fourth concept just as Jacque Lacan has insisted in his seminar on the fundamentals of psychoanalysis, transference, and it is indeed on transference that a number of the people who have spoken before me have come back to.

The temptation came to me given account of it by applying the very method that Serge Leclaire has used and in particular in his articulation with a proper name. But it is necessary for me in my turn, to raise myself, to the limits of a new transgression, that of lifting the veil on the analytic situation where as a real third person I am excluded, to interrogate the desire of the analyst. A difficult position if there ever was one where one risks surprising one's own gaze on the invisible.

It is starting from the two dreams of Philip that I will first try to uncover the traces of transference in the proper names in the dreams. Then I will take the risk of opening up a path into the locus, into the singular dialogue of analytic experience, of the becoming of the subject in place of the desire of the analyst through the (56) phonematic transcription of the fundamental phantasy of Philip.

Is it not from this conjunction that there is born in analysis what in another place Leclaire has called the incestuous encounter? This incestuous encounter that I try here to highlight in the articulation of the collusion of the proper names of the analyst and of the analysand. Of this encounter it would be necessary to speak more at length. Let it be enough for me on this occasion to say two more words.

In virtue of the assimilation of the barrier of repression that is constitutive of the unconscious to the barrier of incest, the aim of the analyst which appears as an unveiling of sense, indeed of the sense of origins, in attempting to modify the systemic equilibrium, makes conscious what is unconscious, becomes an incestuous adventure in potency, the only veritable transgression of incest, such as the one committed by Freud in an exemplary manner when producing his major work, the *Traumdeutung* he resolves the enigma posed to him, even down to his trip to *Roma* whose anagram is *amor* and accedes to a ..... that is hence forth symbolic.

Do we not have here in the renunciation of the fascination of desire in its incidences linked to the mother and to the origins, e.g. Oedipus, where its assumption in its indissoluble link to castration that there occurs the accession to (57) meaning, to self-consciousness, in opposition to universal consciousness which is an overlooking of desire and of castration.

Let us come back to Philip's two dreams of which I recall only the two final sentences
of the dream of the unicorn: "we were all three walking towards a clearing which could be spotted down below." (This element has already been underlined.)

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And the dream of the sickle the final sentence of which also seems to me to be linked to a transference : " he would thus have wounded himself against an object hidden (*caché)* in the hole. I look for him thinking about a rusty nail. It was more like a sickle *(serpe)* " (I underline sickle, a picturing of the analyst in his place).

Philip tries to satisfy his desire to drink in the unicorn's fountain, a patch of water in his memory to which there is associated the li of Lili and to which there becomes associated the day's residues, an evocation of his walk in the forest with his niece Anne. Already we recognise the phonemes that constitute his name : Eli an y.

Seeing the game, they had noticed towards the bottom of a valley where there flowed a stream, the clear water, the clearing of the dream, numerous traces of stags, of hinds indicating one of the points where the animals come to drink. The unicorn as we know is represented with the body of a horse and the head of a stag (*cerf*).

(58) Let us try to reconstitute the discourse by filling the lacuna like a rebus, by giving again to the phonemes of the unconscious chain the support of a preconscious discourse. "On the track, and at the head of a stag, I come to drink the clear water of the good word" Philip might have said, in a formula not without ambiguity which is an obsessional one. "Or being reflected in the fountain and only offering itself as an unattackable fortress the better to resist, this pretty body serves only me and is only for me" where there is rediscovered the unicorn and in the radical contraction of the second piece of the sentence, the first name of the analyst trimmed down to the ego, *je*, which served to name Philip.

Or again constituting himself as the phallus of the analyst and seeking his complicity in masking his lack of subject, according to the formula of Leclaire,"of the stag, I am the horn." But in fact who am I? Where can I situate myself and to what locus and place can I come?"

Taking his support on the "I" of the analyst in his name Serge and making of him in this way, for a time, his serf, he constitutes himself as a desiring subject: George, who desiring the phallus, the one that Lili desires, will carry in his head like in the onomatopoeia given by the analyst, a translation of the fundamental phantasy, Poord'je. Here there is found in its ineluctable inversion the apodictic operation of the Cartesian "I think".

(59) But let us continue in attributing to Philip, in connection with the second dream, the following discourse: "It is a sickle which inflicts on me this injury to my foot." And behold, the exquisite difference, mark of the unconscious element,comes to lodge itself in two phonemes, *pe* and *je*, the opposition of penis-phallus, and of the throat as the representative of the two poles of bi-sexuality of the *sapens* and of the *"je suis",* a commentary on the *Wo Es war* but above all of two phonemes starting from which the analyst had forged the name George Philip Eliany, while leaving in it the imprint of his own, from the *pe* of *serpe* there came Philip in 1960, a name completed in 1965 with the help of the *je* of Serge to give George and finally Eliany, where his becoming as a subject is situated between the fascination for the *lit* of Lili and the free (*libre*) knowledge of his analyst, like

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Freud doubly fascinated by his young, pretty mother and by the biblical knowledge of his father.

Three phonemes, pe, je, li that we rediscover in the transcription of the fundamental phantasy, poord'je li. If between the pe and the je of poord'jeli, there appears the or which in the reversal gives rise to the rose, in the poor of the unicorn, in an identical movement there arises the rock, that of the death drive, the stumbling block of desire and of castration, a death drive constitutive, in the words of Serge Leclaire, of the desiring subject, but again, the rock of the irreducible singularity of the subject.

(60) This injury, inflicted on the foot by the sickle, the analyst will try to raise, not without allowing it to stay at its proper place, to the head, the head of the stag with a single horn, where the *je* of George Philip will tighten around the proud symbol to constitute his phallic identity, *joli porc*.

Dr Leclaire: I will try to reply and to conclude next Wednesday.

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Seminar 14: Wednesday 31 March 1965

Dr Lacan: The intention is that, in a way, a part of what I am trying to develop before you this year will be put on the agenda of the closed seminar; it does not remain in this sort of academic suspense in which in the debates of scientific societies, which are given this title in psychoanalyse, things too often remain.

In a word, I prefer that we should have, at least at the beginning, the feeling of consecrating perhaps a little bit too much time to deepening the same subject, I prefer to fall into that mistake, into that disadvantage, than into the opposite disadvantage, namely, that one should have the feeling that one has got nothing out of it except questions that are still in suspense.

Perhaps on the subject of Leclaire's paper, which will thus be on the agenda again today, you could have the impression, when you part, of things still unspecified or of a dilemma that is unresolved or incomplete, I think that I will be able to take the responsibility subsequently of providing a closure to what will indeed have been posed as a question. I want, in a word, the question to develop and in a direction which is far from this thing that we encounter *en route*, originalities. No one (2) would have known otherwise the testimony that he is capable of giving of what people are able to understand here.

It is a matter of benefits which add up at different levels. The essential is the articulation of the question. Of course the people who expose themselves in this way contribute precious elements. Exactly, there are things that cannot be said with the required precision except in the measure that certain questions are elaborated here in reply.

I believe that the rest of the course that I am giving you this year can only be nourished by the way in which questions are opened up here at the level of the difficulties that they pose, let us say, not necessarily to everyone but to more than one. This can give rise to precisions at a much greater level than what I am able to do by my first intention.

I point out, that since everything is not running smoothly, or as perfectly as it should do, there are people who last Tuesday, namely, on going on the eve of the closed seminar found at rue de Varenne neither Leclaire's report nor that of Jacques Alain Miller. They are there since last Wednesday morning. You can still find them and acquire them.

Now, Leclaire, I think that you have something to say right away?

(3) Dr Leclaire: I think that the best thing to the continue discussion is still to give the floor to a certain number of people who manifested a desire to speak.

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I myself also want to speak, not precisely to reply but to participate in the discussion. We will see then, at the point that we have got to, whether other unprepared interventions arise.

So then, Safouan asked to make a few remarks. I give him the floor right away.

Dr Safouan: I asked Mr Lacan if I could speak because the last time we heard a lot of things that were correct but we also heard some propositions which were frankly false.

So that it would be useless to pursue this discussion if we do not bring the mistakes to light.

For example, we were told that the barrier which separates the conscious from the unconscious is the incest-barrier. I ask myself where that came from. There was a temptation perhaps to make a sort of generalised theory. Here we have psycho-analysis and anthropology which are ..... That is all very well provided one knows what one is doing.

But to begin, what does that mean? That means that the barrier which separates (4) the conscious system and the psychic system of the unconscious is the very one which is erected between the child and his mother to stop him sleeping with her.

I am forcing things perhaps. But I would like to hear another definition of incest.

I will be told that there is no need to really sleep with her and that it is enough to imagine it for incest to be involved.

That is all very well, but the categories of Mr Lacan are there to come to our help again and it must be asked if there is not here an abuse. Because, what happens in that case is that one is obliged to use it more than is said, it is imagined but invisibly.

This is correct on the whole. I say on the whole, because it also happens sometimes that the subject sees himself for example at the end of a corridor, in a blind alley, you know what is going to happen to him, what never fails to happen to him.

But if he sees himself invisibly and without knowing it, the question is only posed with still more insistence, namely, what is it that pushes the subject then to emerge from this retreat?

Still more. How can he come to suspect that he is there without knowing it?

(5) Even when he for his part has completely forgotten it. Here the psychoanalytic experience leaves no doubt about the conclusion, it is exactly in the measure that something of the incest barrier remains in place, namely, in the measure that the name of the father still has some meaning for the subject - and I said the name of the father because we know that in what concerns the father, the real one, namely of the father in his irreducible reference to the position of the child, this father has already been dead for a long time in accordance with the wish of the subject.

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It is therefore in the measure that the name of the father still has some meaning for the subject that something precisely ..... from the unconscious and makes its way towards consciousness.

If it was possible to sustain the contrary idea, the exactly opposite one as you see, it was because there was, perhaps, a play on a sentence like the following one: the law does not strike simply desire but also its truth. It is a sentence that was perhaps said, written somewhere, but I never heard Mr Lacan saying it like that. Even if he had said it, it would not be difficult to see what he means by the law here does surely not designate the condition of incest. Law here designates the censorship or more precisely the law of the Other, the law of the authority of the Other, this authority is, as Mr Lacan says, this obscure authority which confers on (6) the Other this first word and which gives to his words their value as oracle.

In short, far from being what strikes the truth of desire, the law, the morality of the father is precisely the only thing that determines the truth.

Another proposition which was not spoken here and on which it is just as important to take up a position, because it is necessary to clarify what is involved in the material that Leclaire brought us, and this all the more so in that it is Leclaire himself who is the author of this proposition, which is namely that psychoanalysis and the analytic experience ought to lead the subject towards the following: towards something which is supposed to be a transgression or is experienced as a transgression - I tell you in passing it is exactly the same thing, everything is there - towards an incestuous encounter.

On this point also, I think, there is no possible doubt about the conclusion that psycho-analytic experience imposes on us, namely: if the subject in the course of the psycho-analytic experience ought to be led to accomplish some transgression or other it is well and truly the transgression of the permanent temptation to transgression.

..... a transgressor precisely. We have not led the subject towards an (7) incestuous encounter for the simple reason when he comes to us, he arrives with that encounter already.

It must not be forgotten that wherever there is an analysis, we are dealing precisely with failed, unsuccessful Oedipus complexes.

We do not have to lead the subject towards a breaking of the limits or to imagine that he is breaking the limits because, what else is he doing in his imagination. We lead him precisely to the fact of putting his finger on the fact that there is a limit which may not in any case be crossed.

What ..... at the end of a psychoanalysis is the paternal figure, the paternal figure as he operates in the complex, namely the lack as it manifests itself in a subject of the male sex in the form of the threat of castration, and in a subject of the female sex, in the form of penis envy which has nothing to do with the demand for a penis.

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In other words the recognition by the one of the fact that he can only make use of his phallus when he submits it to a precise jurisdiction even when it is not written down, and the extraction from the other, I mean from the female analysand, of every identification to the mother as omnipotence.

Now, these obvious facts having been affirmed or reaffirmed, I can pass to the (8) material that Leclaire brought us, this poord'jeli. First of all this poord'jeli is not a phantasy. Here I agree with Oury, namely, that there is here something that is much closer to that from which the subject phantasies himself, than a phantasy itself. To be more precise, I would say that the phantasy is not in the poord'jeli, it is in the fact that the subject in stammering it, names himself.

Let us take another little step forward, he names himself against a background of a "he does not know". And it is precisely this "he does not know" that I would consider for my part as the fundamental phantasy of the subject, I mean that it is under the shelter of this "he does not know" that all the phantasies are nourished.

Now, in this phantasy, Melle Mondzain did not fail to pick out with a truly admirable perspicacity, the transgression rumbling underneath and what does that mean? That means that one cannot take one idea of Mr Lacan and leave the other one to one side. I mean by that, for example, Mr Lacan's theses about the proper name are verifiable at every turn of psychoanalytic experience. I mean that there is really no analysis where the subject finds himself lead to that radical point where his desire is seriously put in question without their appearing in the forefront of the (9) analysis, the proper name and more precisely, the relationship of the subject to the proper name, as a point where his desire can be still suspended for a time before this radical vacillation that analysis alone can provoke and effectively provoke.

Now what happens? What happens is that we hear sometimes remarks like the following, and I quote : "Basically, that is what the name is; it is the first name. The name is always the name of someone or of something else. It is the name of the father or of the family or again the name of the husband. But not really, it is my real name, that is where I really am."

And what is meant by such despairingly naive remarks even though they have the merit of coming straight from the source, namely, of coming to light as it were for the first time. That means that the lack from which the subject draws what one can call his unitariness (*unarité*), this lack is the one from which the subject guarantees, or believes that he can guarantee, himself on the basis of the fact which has always been recognised by serious psychoanalysts as the psychic reality of the unary, and which is called the hatred of the father.

And it is only once this limit has been crossed that we can begin to pose questions which are really interesting.

(10) For example, we call the ..... position, like the position called primordial castration, that we also qualify sometimes as imaginary, even though one forgets sometimes or tends to forget sometimes that, however imaginary, this castration may be it is well and truly operative, namely, that it dispossesses the subject, it takes from him nothing less than his flesh.

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But we say that this is a primordial castration, and we recognise that as long as he is riveted to this position, we cannot say that the subject has any desire whatsoever. What is it that grounds desire? We reply that it is the law, but that it grounds it in an indissoluble link to castration. About the question of what does that mean? Does the ..... position necessarily find itself in the relationships between the sexes?

To express myself in more precise terms which I borrow from Mr Lacan, what does it mean to become a creditor in the great book of debt after having been a debtor? More precisely still, what becomes of ( ) in this operation? What becomes of the desire of the analyst in the ruin of the supreme good? And if the desire of the analyst, as Mr Lacan has said, in a sure and certain way, is a desire for maximum difference, a difference between what and what?

(11) These are not just questions that I am posing, not from a speculative or theoretical interest, still less because I just feel interesting myself in it, like that, but for reasons that are well and truly ....., which takes nothing from their pressing character.

For example it can happen - it is an example among many others - we can happen to have to occupy ourselves, for example, with a patient who is stuck in a position described as that of a claim for masculinity, and it happens sometimes, with respect to such a patient in particular that we perceive that this person, that this patient organises her whole position by betting on the certainty that there is no man who can encounter a woman without feeling some anxiety about it. This is a certainty which undoubtedly has something to ground it, otherwise how would she have come to sustain it? It nevertheless remains that it is a well and truly mistaken certainty and it is important to know how it is mistaken and what it is grounded on, so that we can discover the strategy that is appropriate to adopt vis-à-vis this patient.

For the rest, it is self-evident that I am not launching these questions like so many challenges. These are not questions without a possible response, in truth, this seemed to me to be perfectly soluble and even already resolved. They are certainly (12) not either the most difficult or the most interesting ones.

All I meant to say by this, is that it is time, it is time if we want to get anything more than boredom out of this seminar, it is time for us to question the teaching of Lacan from a more advanced point than we have done up to now. That's all.

Dr Leclaire: I will allow myself to respond immediately to Safouan, on marginal points of course.

And I will take the same tone of liberty and perhaps incisiveness that he himself used. I would say to him that more serious, in my opinion, than the mistaken certainties that he evoked in connection with his patient are guaranteed certainties. It seems to me that in his whole discourse there is something like a passionate reference to a dimension which is that of orthodoxy. Lacanian orthodoxy you should understand. I am altogether in favour, of course, of questioning Lacan's teaching but this questioning does not presuppose at the outset any orthodoxy.

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Everything, moreover, in Safouan's discourse is marked by the fundamental problem of the relation to the law. And what seems to me above all to characterise it, is a way of situating oneself with respect to the law by right away putting one's (13) interlocutor in the wrong. Whatever he says, it is wrong, he says something stupid or indeed something asinine. This he situates right away in effect with respect to the law. So that when he questions or interrogates this proposition, we are quite close to Freudian formulations, namely, that the incest barrier is close to, is almost the equivalent of the barrier of repression, it is not sufficient, I think to invoke the law to reject that position as being false.

I know that this is one of the axes of the seminar that Stein has being giving for a long time and I would like, because as it happens Major has been put in question, that he should reply, if he is agreeable, in perhaps a more precise fashion, about this particular question of Safouan.

I was specifically put in question in connection with another subject which is also related to the question of transgression. I do not think that I introduced it into the paper that I communicated to you here but it is a question of something that was said elsewhere. I am caught red-handed in my mistake. It is not difficult of course, all the more so because Safouan bases himself on something he heard, he does not have my text. I did not say what he reported, namely, that analysis is experienced as a transgression or ought to be experienced as a transgression or that some (14) transgression ought to take place. What I did say is that the question was posed in analysis, and in connection with analysis, of the relationship between the analytic perspective, a certain analytic perspective, namely, the search for a particular point, of an irreducible point, of a point of origin, the forgotten memory, the focal point of the origin, that the question was posed of the relationship between this conception let us say of analysis or this phantasy about analysis, and on the other hand, the signification of incest and I specified clearly of incest, not in its dramatic context, but in its essential reality, namely the concrete putting in question of something which represents the point of origin.

It is the question of the relationship between this process of analysis and the reality of incest that I had posed. Perhaps the fact of posing it may be experienced in effect as transgression.

On the question of phantasy, I will come back to it in a moment, I said the last time that with respect, in effect, to an orthodoxy, it would be appropriate perhaps and it was perhaps usual to consider phantasy as being something different to this formula, but this would lead us I believe to take up the whole question of an orthodox definition of phantasy. After all, it would be better, I believe, at the point that we are at, to try to define and to examine other phantasies at the level of analytic practice.

(15) I know that I have not entirely responded to Safouan. Major have you got something to say?

Mr Major: What is involved is an assimilation of the incest barrier and the barrier of repression in so far as the barrier of repression ..... of the

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unconscious. What is involved here is an analogy of structure which is to be situated at a completely different level to the one that Safouan alluded to.

Dr Leclaire: I have no intention, for my part, of closing the discussion. Nevertheless I would like it to advance. I would therefore ask Mannoni to take the floor.

Dr Lacan: I would like to specify all the same that what Safouan said is that the incest barrier thanks to which there is produced the return of the repressed.

Mr Mannoni: I regret being introduced in this way because I am afraid I will not take the discussion any further. I think, on the contrary, that Safouan brought it to (16) a very high level and that now we are going to go downhill.

I would like to apologise because I naïvely believed, not having looked at my diary, I thought for a while that it was for the closed seminar of the month of April. So that what I have done is a little bit telescoped.

What I would like to examine is the passage, that I found a little bit rapid for me, in Leclaire's presentation where he exposes the non-sense of the fundamental phantasy in the sense of these translations into a tongue.

It is true that he does not exactly say sense. He speaks about a certain analytic comprehension which I believe in his mind is an incomprehension. It seems to me that there is here a knot of problems of the greatest importance which remains posed. Since he held to the strictest Freudian formulations about it, it must be granted to him that the primary processes are always at work behind the secondary processes.

But it seems difficult to deny, still in the Freudian topology, that poord'jeli is precisely a secondary production in which there is recognised the effect of primary processes. It is on this point, he tells us, that there were already directed the criticisms which were previously addressed to him and which, moreover, I do not know.

(17) But in my opinion, to reply to these criticisms is not necessarily to accept their demand, as one soon will be demanding of an astrologer to come back with a mineral sample from the moon. One cannot ask him to give us the element of the unconscious, just like that. We will never have of it anything except what we can read of it in secondary structures, in the measure precisely that this secondary is subjected to the effect of the primary.

It is in this secondary it seems to me, that sense and non-sense meet in a certain fashion as long as one holds to Freudian terminology, and I cannot see any other place where one can grasp either one or the other.

Only the passage where Leclaire deals with this question is more elusive than allusive. Discussing it would come back to opposing a way of looking at things, a different way to his way of looking at things which is not very interesting.

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I will therefore abstain, at least until my conclusion, when I will come back to the question, I will then abstain with the certain hope that this problem is going to be taken up again, it has already happened, moreover, in a less succinct manner and I am going to take a path that is quite different by turning very freely, too freely around the question of the proper name, a little bit at random with the idea of (18) encountering one or other remark which very indirectly may refer to what Leclaire presented to us.

I believe we have nothing to expect from sociology or from ethnology, except occasionally some convenient examples. The proper name, as it interests us is just as much Toto as Gaetan de Romorantin, what in our society is called the surname, it is not the name of the father, the father of Jean Dupont is not called Dupont he is called, for example, Paul Dupont, and there are countries like Madagascar, where at the birth of Lacoute, his father can change his name and call himself in future the father of Lacoute. It is then "father of Lacoute" which is the name of the father in the most simple fashion.

This systematic use of a name and a first name is a limited, recent, historical accident and I do not believe its study would lead us towards anything that is very interesting for us.

On what Leclaire has called the irreducibility of the proper name, I could contribute, perhaps, a sort of indirect illumination by telling of a personal experience which has the advantage of being entirely artificial and almost axiomatic.

(19) It is an experience that many people have had but not perhaps on such clear basis. For the characters of a book that I was writing and which appeared in 1951, I had to invent proper names. A proper name being only a succession of phonemes one could take a succession of syllables in any sense whatsoever. This book was written in 1949 at a time when the Lacanian theory of the signifier was not yet formulated.

The majority of the names in the book were constructed in that way. But not all because some of them came to me as it were spontaneously. For the others, I have completely forgotten today the unimportant sentences from which I drew them. This happened, it seems to me rather quickly, and perhaps there were more complications hidden in it than I was aware of, but about that I can say nothing.

But for one of these proper names, I remember very well the details of its construction. I took it from what I believe to be a line in this song about Marlborough, though in fact it is an inexact quotation. But for the use I wanted to make of it that was of no importance. And I had already used sentences that were probably more fanciful. This incorrect line is : "*ensuite venait son page*". One could take for example *te venait* and by adding th to it that gives a very pretty proper name. So pretty even that that makes one want to look up telephone (20) directories. Now between the Thévenins and the Thévenots one finds in it for Paris alone, 38 Thévenaits. Having discovered that, I had the impression that I was competing too much with the registry office, or rather that the registry office was competing too much with me and I immediately gave up this construction. I therefore took the following syllables which gave *venaison*. *Venaison* is also a

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pretty name and if one looks in the telephone directory there is no trace of a V*enaison.* Not even of a name which resembles it in the slightest way. It was therefore perfect. The name of Venaison was thus adopted.

I will not question myself about the reasons which escape me for which I choose Marlborough. I see clearly that Venaison is the only character whose death I spoke about and the only one of whom I could say in all strictness that he had a page. But in fact it is now that I notice it. Moreover I would have completely forgotten all of that by now if a few months later I had not gone through a little crisis which I am going to tell you about now. The manuscript was finished and I was going to take it to the publisher when I became suddenly aware of the existence of a critic whose intelligence and humour I was very fond of and who signed some of his articles with a *non-de-plume* which was terribly like Venaison.

(21) Since this pseudonym is very well known and because I am saying too much to hope to hide it now, I may as well say what the pseudonym is, it is in fact Gabriel Venaissin. When I made this discovery I was terrified; it seemed to me that if I had called my character Dubois, all the Dubois in the world would have nothing to say about it. But the close encounter of two names that are more than rare, singular, not in the directories, this appeared to me to be impossible to accept. The name Venaisson had to be changed.

I set about doing it using the same method and I remember nothing, naturally, about the numerous substitute names that I constructed. But, and this is the obscure fact that I can only note, I could not change the name of Venaisson. It seemed to me that he was called Venaisson and that I, for my part, could do nothing about it and that I was not involved in it. He defended his name like Sosie before Mercury. I knew well that it was I who had given him the name but he answered me to say, as it were, like Sosie that he always had it. I was obliged to leave it to him.

Since this experience has taken on the form of an anecdote I will add that Gabriel Venaissin published an extremely laudatory critique of my book but he did not sign it Venaissin. He signed it with his real name. At the time I was not surprised. (22) Venaissin was a pseudonym, an alias, which could not hold up before Venaisson because, in a way, Venaisson was the real name of my character. It is a funny story. I believe it to be instructive even though I cannot see very clearly what it is trying to instruct us about.

The name Venaisson has obviously no meaning by itself. Has it a signified? Undoubtedly, but on an identity card there is a photograph, fingerprints, and a description or the signature of the bearer which is just as physiognomical in its fashion, if not, the identity card would be a visiting card.

It also requires, and this is not negligible, a police stamp. Venaisson had nothing of all of that. I had constructed the simplest elements of a personality, a sequence of phonemes which were not sufficient of themselves and what was said about an imaginary person with this sequence of phonemes, was attributed by me. The fact is that this extremely simple construction was enough to make there appear in subjectivity, in this case, obviously in mine, a not to be neglected form of the powerful adherence of these elements if one wants something which resembles the

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irreducibility of the name. What is involved, I said, is what attaches the signifier to the signified. Such an attachment has absolutely nothing surprising about it. It (23) exists even for common names, and if it surprises me in the example above it is because I believed I was the master of nomination. In a sense I was not.

Here now is an example of the attachment of the signifier to the signified in the case of the common name. It is the case of an Iranian who arrived in France at the age of eight or nine years and who now as an adult, discovers quite suddenly retrospectively, the reasons why he refused when he arrived in France, the French *café au lait.* It was not the coffee he was refusing, it was the bowl. At the time he did not know. The word *bol* in Iranian has naturally a different meaning. It is not simply half of the word *bol-bol,* which designates the nightingale, it is also the monosyllabic word by which one designates the sexual organ of little boys.

For him with his arrival in France every word has changed with all the possibility of bilingual puns. But there was one which stuck much more than the others which was as one could say rooted.

It resisted, alone among all the others, in this rather simple situation of a change of tongue. I am sure, even though obviously I cannot prove it, that he would have accepted the bowl of coffee if he had been given a French name for his sexual organ. He found the translation too partial or too biased. In the change of tongue (24) he was losing something.

I do not know anything about what might have been involved in the George, Lili encounter marked in the fundamental phantasy, but the fact that it is a boy's name and a girl's name has perhaps something to do with its irreducibility.

Proper names change under certain conditions. For example, among the nobility, by the death of an ancestor, among women by marriage or indeed by going into religion, etc. These changes are institutionalised. Outside any institution hysterics sometimes give themselves first names which do not belong to them. ..... the spelling of the one they have.

Casanova who gave himself the name Stengal was questioned by the police authorities about the reason why he took on a name which was not his own; he replied with indignation that no name could more legitimately belong to him because he was the one who had invented it. A bad reason but one which makes him a little like Venaisson. What is interesting is to compare the police authorities and Casanova from the point of view of their spontaneous linguistic attitude. For the police, Stengal is an alias, which has as a signified Casanova. The argumentation is :

1) Stengal is Casanova,
2) Casanova is not Stengal.

(25) On both sides there is a mistake. For Casanova the formula is less clear but more simple. It is formulated as follows: Stengal is me. The signifier Casanova can disappear.

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One cannot imagine, without a sort of vertigo, what would happen precisely to the ego, the "It's me" if one gave the same first name to two identical twins who even their parents could neither call individually or recognise. Nevertheless homonymy of itself is tolerable. There can be, this happens, two Jean Duponts in the same family. It is a homonymy like many others which may cause mistakes and misunderstandings like the others.

After all we are much less troubled by meeting a homonym than by meeting a double. The speaking subject who knows he is such a person by his proper name, recognises himself also in another way. He has at his disposition to speak, the first person singular. His name draws him towards the third person. There are cases of telescoping between these two people. Is the slang signifier *bibilol*o a proper name or a personal pronoun? Try to put it in the vocative to see. This is perhaps of no interest, a purely grammatical problem *bibilolo* being a ..... which designates a subject but imposes a verb on the third person. I am, therefore *bibilolo* is but it (26) would be very remarkable if this was only a grammatical curiosity and that this manner of speaking did not have subjective implications.

I am skipping over a little of it because ...

So - this is a little bit improvised - the proper name is far from being established in a nuclear fashion in a subjectivity as if one was trying to point to a subject in the way in which Descartes situated himself.

It is certainly the name which marks the subject. It acts on him like a provocation. It makes him become ..... but at the same time it denounces him, objectivises him, transforms the speaking subject into an object which is spoken about and the "I am so- and-so" is confronted with the "I am me" and is distinguished from it. This "I am so- and-so" only brings to the "what am I?" a reply that is experienced as insufficient. Hence the obligation, as they say, to make one's name, an obligation for all and not simply for the ambitious. The obligation that everyone fulfils with the help of all, and even of the police, to assure themselves that their name has a signified something that is always more or less badly assured.

Like the young Iranian was not assured of the signified of bowl, which was like a partial proper name, and like Venaisson which became a name in the measure that I was speaking about him. I constituted him in that way, and only his proper name (27) could have the sort of signified for his very particular case as a literary character.

Again with the idea of contributing to the questions raised by Leclaire a distant and very indirect illumination, so indirect that we cannot easily be assured that we are speaking about the same thing, I would like to contribute very briefly a fragment of an observation which bears upon the operation of phonematic elements of proper names in an obsessional.

It is a rather serious case, in the style of the Ratman but more severe. A very intelligent and open subject who was obsessed at the beginning by the idea that he had for his wife an attraction of an incestuous character and this tormented him in a very painful way. At present his analysis is continuing. His life has become

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more easy but not without symptomatic accidents like the one that I am going to speak about.

He has for a long time a colleague, almost a friend, that we will call Lemarchand. Now one day when he was carelessly looking in the direction of this Lemarchand and thinking about something else, what he does not know, he suddenly notices that the maiden name of his wife was let us say Martineau, the two names have then the same syllable *mar* in common. I changed the name but not the syllable. He is for a number of seconds terrified by this, and there remains with him for a (28) fairly long time an obscure uneasiness.

I do not at present have a sure way of accounting for this symptom. It is obviously useless to question the syllable *mar*; it is, as we might say, on the non-sense of the matter. If his colleague had been called for example Artigues or Ostineau I am sure almost without being able to prove it that it is the syllable *ti* which would have sent him to Martineau.

The totality of his analysis leads me to think that in this symptom there is condensed and displaced his fear of homosexuality, the effects of his identification to a girl and his fear of castration; he might take his colleague as his wife, the syllable *mar* could become detached, etc.

But what is more sure and almost obvious is that this syllable plays the role of a revolving platform, and that it makes him pass from the circuit which contains the signifier which refers to his wife, to the circuit where there appears the signifier which refers to his colleague.

Obviously I do not know anything about these circuits as such. It clearly involved a symptomatic element, namely, something to which, from the point of view of technique, one should not give too direct an interest. But from the point of view of the theory it is another story.

(29) It seems to me that he teaches us at least that the phoneme *mar*, or any other phoneme playing the same role of revolving platform, does not need to be accorded some primary characteristic. What is primary there, is the pure possibility of the phonematic decomposition and recomposition, namely of metonymy and metaphor reduced to phonemes with their amputations, the forbidden contacts, the terrible confusions that they lead to through the intermediary of what one could call the primary circuit, with everything that this implies, in particular the field of unconscious desire.

Thus one could say that the primary mechanisms manifest themselves as non-sense in a symptom for which a meaning, after all, is required. The fact that it is a symptom and not a simple sequence of associations gives to the thing, as I might say, a seriously obscure character. The symptoms are, in analysis, even if in the treatment it is not good to attack them directly, something like what in theology are the witnesses who have themselves massacred, as absurd as they are authentic.

I cannot leave entirely open, without getting involved in it, the possibility of a comparison between the phantasticial poord'jeli and the symptomatic *mar*. I simply think that a discussion taken far enough on this point would allow us to see

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(30) more clearly. Either that it is necessary to bring the two formulae together or that it is necessary to oppose them radically.

Dr Leclaire: No doubt I was a little affirmative and a little decisive earlier in my response to Safouan and I did not underline sufficiently, as I might say, how much of the question remained open.

Mannoni said himself earlier that he had the feeling that his text, I ask myself why, was not posing the questions at such a high level. After all, I will let you be the judge of it.

What I am going to say, simply, is that I would wish that the questions thus posed should not fall into oblivion. No doubt we cannot here, however closed this seminar may be, it is all the same rather large, raise the discussions in as free a fashion as one could do effectively in a small group.

I retain, to come back to Safouan's intervention, the question which was posed, namely, that of the relationship between the law and the prohibition of incest, for his affirmation changes nothing about it, the question remains posed.

I believe that this is the one that is really posed, and that one can, from some angle or other tackle, to get to and even no doubt to the formulations that he himself gave.

(31) As regards the questions posed by Mannoni, happily they do not allow themselves, and that is why they are really open, questions, I think, that will remain very insistent, one cannot summarise them better than the way in which he presented them himself.

I will now take the floor to participate in the discussion. Because I am certainly happy that my work, written in fact essentially in 1963, has given rise to so many responses. I know of course the importance that must be given on this occasion to certain vigorous encouragements. But the fact is there: a dialogue seems to be opening up.

I would like to thank all of those who are willing or who will be willing or have already announced that they have something to say, all of those who were willing to manifest their interest here, it is because by coming forward in this way they allowed something to begin.

It is quite clear that my attempt, if it had not been sustained by your remarks, would have very quickly, like so many other exercises, become a dead letter. And in the same way no doubt certain words of truth that we have heard would have remained in the secret of a filing cabinet or in the limbo of the unformulated.

I would also like, and in fact for the same reasons, to thank all of those who have (32) shown their interest for this enterprise without for all that committing themselves, against their feeling, by participating here now immediately in this dialogue, because they know that often in analysis a word has to come in its own time.

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You will understand then that I have no intention here of playing at being a lecturer who, by his response, is supposed to put an end to the discussion or as is said, to close it. On the contrary. If I take the floor again before others take it, it is indeed to pursue the dialogue by contributing to it here, directly, another contribution, and no doubt because, I am tempted to say, some people may find in it an allusion, a taking up again or a reply to what they said.

I announced the other day that I would speak about the body and about the signifier. I am going to try to do so. Even the least clinical people among us know that a constant concern about a certain mastery is a common trait in obsessional neurotics. That Philip enters this category is, I think, a fact that has escaped no one. It is this passion for a certain mastery that, to begin with, I would like to question. The gesture of the two hands held together in a cup to drink, realises in an exemplary fashion what I want to underline here.

(33) Surely this bowl made of the palm of the hands, as a way of drinking responds, or summons by its hollowness the fullness of the breast. But to go more quickly, I would say that the gesture appears to me to be a way of mastering the problematic conjunction of two elements.

Problematic, it is tangible in the well known fact that this makeshift cup made by the hands is characterised in general by the leaks that run out of it. Philip's pleasure in this gesture seems to have been, just as much as drinking, that of producing a goblet which staunches a momentary grasp of what in fact flows, a mastery that he consecrates by drinking this water.

In a word, it seems to me that what is involved here is a mime or a ritual gesture which represents or actualises with the body or a part of the body the pure materiality of the signifier. I would even add something that appears to everyone, that this gesture gives rise precisely to the symbol in its primary sense, namely, in the fact that it tries to stick together the elements of what can also be the support of an appeal, indeed of a beggar's bowl.

When I speak about the pure materiality of the signifier I am designating here the opposed couple of two elements: no doubt to constitute a signifier it matters little whether these elements are acoustic, graphic or tactile.

(34) The essential is that the articulation of these two traits which are, at the extreme, pure materiality, totally stripped of signification, the essential I am saying is that this opposition should be a connotation of antinomy.

I believe that it is correct to say that the signifier is pure connotation of antinomy. And to sustain at the moment of grasping what you can try to grasp of this formula, I would add that this antinomy is fundamentally in our experience the one that is constitutive of the subject.

Antinomy or again, as Lacan says "radical heteronymy"; it is the dimension that the Freudian way and our experience as analysts necessarily imposes on us.

Finally I must add here that the object, in the Lacanian sense

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a) Is precisely that which escapes from signifying connotation and certainly in its nature what escapes antinomy.

In this perspective, namely, that the signifier is a pure connotation of antinomy, one will understand better perhaps what I mean to indicate in presenting this gesture of the two hands together in a cup as a certain attempt at mastering - a ritual gesture - of the very nature of the signifier.

(35) You should clearly understand that if I do not evoke here immediately the imaginary and death, the elective domain of the obsessional, it is only because constrained by time I am aiming rather at a linear precision of this outline, than the shimmering of the play of shadows.

I add simply that the other gesture, that of the two hands joined in a shell to make the appeal resonate seems to me to be able to inscribed along the same line of a certain attempt at mastering and I will come back to it by way of conclusion.

The next phase of my interrogation dealt with the term of mastery. How could we not evoke immediately, especially in connection with this gesture, the movement of grasping, to grasp with the hands, but in fact what can the hands grasp?

What kind of grasp is possible here? I will leave it to others the responsibility of speaking about *Begriff,* of the concept, so that I will only delay here for a moment on the problem of the body trying to grasp. But what precisely? Well then, precisely nothing. Or, still more precisely, the object in its nudity. I am going to try to explain myself briefly. Let it suffice for that for me to recall to you the pure difference or again, more modestly, the little difference that we irreducibly find as the pivot of our experience as analysts, of course, but also as living beings, that is of delusional patients.

(36) This pure difference interests us to the highest degree by designating it first of all at the level of the body, the body of evidence or the tangible body as they say, this is what I underlined about the term of exquisite difference.

This exquisite difference can certainly be illustrated secondarily as was the case for Philip by the punctual and annoying irritation of the grain of sand contrasting with the unity, the smoothness of the skin, but I would like here to give a purer example of it that I recently quoted as an irreducible term as one finds it in analyses that have been taken far enough, namely, the acid fringe of sweetness.

In its precision as a reminiscence and its in determination as a memory.

I think that I am using these words properly?

At this point there is posed, without any possibility of escape, the necessity of pure sense, namely, the pure taste of <u>one</u> on this occasion the taste which here underpins, connects and produces this pure difference and the acid, acid-like fringe.

To pass in this way from the field of sweetness to that of the acidulous is the vector of pure sense, the taste which issuing from this very gap of the body makes,

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as it were, an excursion, the circuit of another body before rejoining the other side of the dehiscence of which it was the issue.

(37) This other body which causes the vector of sense to be reflected, it is sufficient at the beginning that it is nothing or almost, a ball of red acidulous sugar on a little stick, a cherry, and which, moreover, ends up by effacing itself when it melts.

Nothing or almost and nevertheless, as I experienced the other day, it is for example the very full odour of a Williamine, a pear alcohol, that is so dense that before drinking it and experiencing it by taste I felt on my tongue with an hallucinatory precision the rather crude grains of this sort of pear that it is distilled from.

But if it happens, and it is artificially of course that I distinguished these two possibilities, that this other body in the image of the first, is also possibly the locus of a pure difference, then there appears finally, clearly, the dimension of desire.

In other words, if we substitute for the sugared cherry, the nipple of the breast, the pure sense of taste will complete its excursion just as if it were making the complete circuit of the mother, approaching at the same time, or tending to approach with his mouth, namely, from his own gap, a dehiscence of the maternal body, on this occasion the nipple, for his orifice. And simultaneously the maternal body, is easily represented, constructed by the voice, by the sense of touch at least, but also it must be hoped by other means, by other senses above all by the gaze (38) makes the round of the gaping body of the child. It is clear, already, in this figure, at least I think so, starting from an exquisite difference that by attempting to grasp the other body in its inevitable gap, to protect against one's own, the body is affirmed as desire, the body affirms itself as inextinguishable desire.

I will leave you, starting from this little sketch, which could be easily drawn on the blackboard by a double loop, to imagine the possible games in the variety of senses, between one and the other, and I leave you also to highlight, for a correct classification of the neuroses, the possible traps and impasses of all the circuits of the senses, of all the senses. In these games, the pure difference escapes, of course, from any grasp, but what best connotes it, this pure difference, is the signifier such as we have defined it earlier, as pure connotation of antinomy.

Undoubtedly Philip, in his neurosis, did not understand it that way, and if I already said how he strove to mime the signifier by the quasi-ritual gesture of the hands united in a cup, I would like at this point to underline a little better the way in which, in parallel, the jaculatory formula poord'jeli, seemed destined to master, while fixating it in death, the circuit of desire. The vocalisation of the secret formula contains in itself this acme where the reversion is accomplished.

(39) And above all, the movement of the body that it connotes, namely the somersault, develops the very figure of the loop around, no doubt, some nothings of the formula itself, or more precisely around another absent body.

This movement, best summarised by the sequence: nothing at all, something, underlines the apparition, like at the end of a conjuring trick, of this something

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which is supposed to be there, at the outcome of this exercise of miming the signifier and it seems that in this case, it is in fact an excremental remainder of an object.

It appears there as a remainder, as the point around which there is completed the loop, a present and derisory object whose opaqueness replaces the other absent body. Thus sustained by my example and leaving for today deliberately to one side the fascinating operations of the sense of sight, which habitually serve to illustrate the moments of reflection, of reciprocity and of lure, I will limit myself to this particular mode of trying to grasp which is the voice.

The voice seems to me, first of all, to have this privilege in so far as it is no longer a simple scream or that it is to be in principle grasped, mastered, as an echo of the discourse that the voice of the other supports. There is no mother who is not taken up again from the voice of the other and, because of that, the voice constitutes a sort of privileged model of this first relationship to the other. Then, (40) because the voice necessarily brings into play another organ, namely the ear, which pictures in a more singular way, the circuit of sense, from mouth to ear as people say. Finally, and all the same because the voice is all the same the privileged vector of the signifier which, because of this fact, becomes or is above all a verbal signifier. In Philip's story the siren call produced by blowing into the hands that are joined like a shell and offered to the echo of the forest is presented as an imitation, a reduplication, an empty reproduction of the appeal of the voice.

But it is also, in the obsessional style, a game of mastery. We must evoke here the dream of the sickle to say a little bit more about the voice, the scream and the call. In this dream, Philip produces a scene of a young boy whose leg has slipped into a hole. He is wounded by a sickle no doubt but one only sees a slight scratch on his heel. The boy screams out very loudly. It is an unusual howl, at once a scream of terror and an irresistible appeal which makes Philip evoke the scream that is in question in the Zen tradition and which is supposed to be capable of raising the dead. The scream reminds him above all of a memory of noisy panic. Philip is eight or nine. He is travelling with his parents and finds himself alone in the grounds of a hotel. A few older boys who are playing cops and robbers attack him.

(41) Seized with panic he runs away howling. But not just anything. He screams very loudly as in an appeal, the boys' names: Guy, Nicolas, Gilles in order to change things and to make his attackers believe that he too is a part of a larger gang.

He tries not to utter names that are too well known. Pierre, Paul or Jacques. The summons must seem to be precise. And he remembers precisely having invoked Serge in this way. At that time Serge was either Lifar or Stavisky.

Many of you have sensed that the theme of an appeal to Leclaire was undoubtedly an important mainspring of the treatment. But I am not going to dwell on this any more today.

This scream, this cry for help, completes and illuminates from another angle the appeal of Lili I'm thirsty, or the invocation of Poord'jeli.

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Of the Lili I'm thirsty, I would simply like to underline once more its ambiguous character as a model or echo with respect to the other sentence or phase of the circuit of the path, namely, Philip-I'm-thirsty articulated by the intermediary of Lili. But it is obviously to the level of the ejaculatory formula of Poord'jeli that I want to return to conclude.

I already showed that in itself this formula displayed, even gave rise to this (42) movement of reversal that is necessary to understand anything whatsoever about the reality of the drive and also, of course, that of desire. But what I would like to accentuate again here is that this other formula constitutes in this way a taking up again by Philip of the voice which called him by his name and more literally again, this could be the taking up again of the loving voice of his mother, caressing him at the same time as she articulates something like my dearest treasure (*trésor chéri*).

But if we have in this interpretation of: my dearest treasure one of the necessary poles of the analysis of the formula, I believe that we will fail to recognise its essential, all the same, if we do not come back to this limit of the sacred which is perceptible to us in this incantation.

Philip, as you suspected, is a Jew. And the theme of the incantatory formula as well as the almost sacred character of the treasure that he represented for his mother, leads him to remember some rudimentary elements of his religious formation.

Of the Hebrew that he learned to read he remembers almost nothing. Except for this essential prayer which is called the Shemah. It is, he had been told very early on, a prayer that must never be forgotten because it has to be recited at the hour of death. It is a viaticum but it is also, in his rather confused memory, something like a blessing.

(43) Concretely, in his memory, these blessings, incomprehensible mutterings which were accompanied precisely by the placing of hands on his head, a paternal and above all a grand-paternal gesture, tend nevertheless in this memory, to be confused with maternal fears. But this prayer is also, undoubtedly, on the one hand an invocation to God whose name one must not pronounce, but also, and in its very formulation, an appeal to the one who ought to say it. Here is more or less the text, or at least its beginning, this formula that at the moment of death one must be able to say : "Listen Israel, the Eternal One is our God, the Eternal is one". And we see here that this prayer to God is also an appeal to the one who says it. In the strictest sense, and this is how Philip thought, the articulation of the first word Shemah, as the prayer is called would be enough to serve as a viaticum.

At bottom, and this is where I wanted to get to, what does the voice say here? The voice says : "Listen, listen". And now as before this invitation, the speaker finally shutting up, can like the analyst setting himself up in his armchair, mark the moment of the end or of the beginning in saying : "I am listening to you".

(44) Which in truth you have already done and I have already done also.

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Many of the interventions will necessarily remain in suspense. There are some written and some not written and some announced. I say necessarily in suspense, for today.

Mr .....: I did not prepare a text to tell you what I thought of the presentation of Leclaire because I wanted to write it to him but he gives me the occasion today to say it to him without having prepared it and I would like to articulate something on the subject of the poord'jeli and in particular on the subject of what is happening at the level of the breathing of the one who falls asleep and who begins to hear his breathing no longer knowing too well whether it is his own breathing or whether it is an echo of something else. And it is at this level that one can find this kind of strangely inverted rhythm at a place even of this breath, which is a moment of inspiration that is perceived, a time of exploration that is also perceived and containing, in a way, this kind of reversal.

This kind of reversal is, in a way, not enough to explain the formula entirely, even if it is perceived in this way but it introduces, in a way, a possibility of phantasising about this basic sound and, when we question our patients about what is emitted from them by this kind of listening system inside themselves, one can find very (45) often sentences which have an enormous importance for them and with which they play. It is certain that subsequently all sorts of other terms may be brought out by this one and I totally rejoin your successive interpretations with which I find myself very much at ease, but I mean by that there is in a way a possibility of entering on a very profound path of listening to the other by sensitising him to his own respiratory rhythm which is moreover a way of bringing to the level of the voice what you have so admirably articulated.

Dr Lacan: Does Israel want to take the floor now. I had not foreseen, even though I had tried to be sure of it by calling him a week ago, I did not believe that Durand de Bousingen would be here today. I asked Leclaire earlier for the text that Durand de Bousingen sent me very early on, one of the first about Leclaire's intervention.

Dr Leclaire: Yes, I asked Durand de Bousingen precisely before beginning, if he wanted to begin by taking the floor, he told me that he preferred, since he had not reread it, to have the time to prepare a presentable and spoken form of it.

Dr Lacan: You can be there then at the closed seminar next month. That is one (46) point out of the way. Israel is going to tell us what he brought along today and I will conclude by giving an indication of some reading that I think is important.

Mr Israel: I suffer from an unfortunate atavism which means that when one of my god's calls me, I reply : "here I am" and always in accordance with the same atavism I act without reflecting. After having responded : "here I am" I unfortunately had more time than Abraham before acting which means that rather than sacrificing one of my sons - I do not know moreover if a ram will be found in time - I sacrifice a part of my text and interest myself strictly only in the theme of Poord'jeli, and come to this mouthful of a word and which comes in the place, perhaps, not of the desire to drink but of the object of desire, but in fact all that has been said.

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.....*Bedeutung* and that is why this word, which is made of bits and pieces, I ought to say this object more that this word so much does it evoke surrealistic objects, and if it were a portmanteau-word, I would be tempted to see in it a bloody trunk, a suitcase containing dismembered corpses.

Corpse, to drink, immortal fragments, the fragments of my ..... and here I am then off on a little game which was perhaps the only thing not spoken about - one (47) cannot know everything - the fragment of this surrealistic object evoked has another form of composition which is exactly the one that is called in Talmudic studies the *no taikon.* The *no taikon,* is the signifying assembling of pieces of names with which one constitutes a new term.

I am going to give you an example of it. In fact I am very encouraged to speak about the proper name and about my own since it has been invoked. I wrote my name. But this name, as everyone knows was given to my country, to Jacob but why? Is it simply to connote or to bring to mind a battle?

It was above all a question of closing a period which was the patriarchal period and this was what was summarised in this name. Namely, that we have the initials of all the patriarchs and their wives - there must be seven of them if I am not mistaken - and also this metonymical association becoming metaphorical by its effects could not correspond to some kind of phantasy, since it is a phantasy that is dear to me.

Naturally, what I have just said there is to infiltrate it too much with my personal imaginary, one could carry out a chronological research on this object; many others have done it, and in this poord'jeli one would see a series of openings in a chain, (48) the opening first of all of the lips, of the teeth, then of the tongue unsticking itself from the palate which would lead us to find at the limit of the object which, as Leclaire says, makes appear, appear concretely something where there was nothing, at the limit we would find perhaps no longer a meaning even but a pure ..... namely a rhythm so well manifested by this feeling of Philip of being rolled up and of being unfolded, this movement distinguished, this exquisite difference which is finally perhaps only a perception of variation.

A final remark : I asked myself after having heard Stein speaking immediately after your presentation, whether the rebus that he evoked in which the dream was utilisable in a single tongue or in several tongues, a rebus is written in a single tongue, it is the same for this phantastical object that you have produced, I asked myself if this was not an example of a term valid in every tongue. This phantasy would bring us back also to a period when the whole world had a single tongue and similar words - you recognise the quotation - but let us beware of this apparent simplicity because it is not enough to read the text; one single tongue and similar words, you must still ask yourself what were these words and the commentator, (49) Rachi in this case, explains that these words consisted in saying: God did not have the right to choose for himself the upper world, let us climb up to heaven and wage war on him.

This would be still too simple, there is another explanation: they said to themselves, once every 1,656 years the world undergoes a cataclysm like the

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flood, let us make a construction then to support the firmament. That is what I have been doing.

Dr Lacan: ..... to conclude ..... many particularly valid points, fruitful points in each one of these interventions. I raised earlier something which deserved to be retained in the very first place as the axis of what Safouan contributed in terms of the very important questioning of everything that he unfolded today.

I would like that Safouan's intervention, perhaps, because of its size, added to another one, should be put at the disposition of listeners so that it can be obtained.

In Mannoni's paper which he told us was at an early stage because he could not do any more, what he said to us, on terminating, about the symptom, seemed to me to be extremely important.

I will pass over what Leclaire said because it is with that that I am going to end.

(50) On what Israel contributed today what appears very important to me is this old phantasy: the single tongue renewed and renovated by the way in which he poses it, the question of which is respectively posed by the *Interpretation of dreams* and by analytic experience.

I told you that in leaving you today I would indicate some reading to you: I would like for the remainder of the time you spend listening to me, I would like all, all those who are here today and who are therefore are supposed to be interested in a closer way with what I am unfolding before you, I would like you to consider it extremely urgent to read this book by Michel Foucault which is called *The birth of the clinic*.

Michel Foucault who is for me one of those distant friends with whom I try, from experience, with whom I am in very close and very constant correspondence, despite the fact that I see very little of him because of our reciprocal occupations, Michel Foucault whom I saw last evening, I asked him a question in connection with this book, the question as to whether he had in some way been informed - it is not rare, there are many people who write in our field - about the thematic that I developed last year around vision and the gaze. He told me that nothing of the kind had happened.

(51) It is all the more remarkable that the work of Michel Foucault happens to have adopted, finds itself from the beginning infiltrated in a way by the first phase of my teaching in 1953, that the work of Michel Foucault, without any other reference since then which might converge towards this theory of the **o-**object which he knows nothing about, in speaking about *The birth of the clinic,* and very exactly what corresponds, at the level of medicine, to this point of interrogation that I brought before you as intimately linked at the beginning of my discourse this year, happens to correspond exactly to this questioning. Just as there is a moment at the beginning of the 17th century at which quite simply science is born, our science, in the same way at the level of medicine, there was produced at the beginning of the 19th century this mutation which radically changed the meaning of the term clinic.

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The fashion in which he resolves this problem is so intimately co-extensive with everything that I have developed before you on the function of the look, that I cannot but see in it at once the encouragement, a comfort, and the certainty that it is indeed something that is on the agenda for current thinking that is involved, here being realised at distinct, autonomous levels that are dependent and nevertheless really identical.

This you can see for yourselves in reading this book which is of a really original (52) interest for any doctor and it is also the symptom of the present condition of different professions, that French medicine, to which it is addressed, since it is written in French, has absolutely and totally ignored it.

Michel Foucault told me last evening that 475 copies of this unique book, of which there is no equivalent, that only 475 copies of this book were sold. I hope that there are enough people here to make that figure leap forward.

I repeat, that everything in this book is absolutely virgin, has never been said, and it is the only book that I know which, in short, allows doctors to situate exactly this kind of world and of medical productions which is that of everything that was done, all the same, before the beginning of the 19th century and access to which, outside of this book, is absolutely closed.

The operation which tried to pose the principle of historical exploration in a work, in a style like that which is indicated in the work of Lucien Fèvre, for example, concerning the problem of unbelief in the 16th century, this programme, sometimes we are led to question ourselves about the appropriate way of reading what was expressed at that epoch on the subject of unbelief and which is so distinct from the (53) way in which that problem is posed for us now, that it is only along this path that we can comprehend the degree to which the phenomena of unbelief were at once more radical even than they are for us, at that time, so much more advanced on certain points and also, on others, so much on this hither side of what is our position, this restoring of co-ordinates which allows its authentic sense to be given to what was produced at that time, here we have an absolutely extraordinary example of it, something which means that the history of medicine is only ever done at the level of little stories, at the level of Lenôtre, for example.

This is absolutely, radically transformed by the work of Michel Foucault, even though this aspect of the little story and the anecdote, the breaking up of texts, the choice of paragraphs which highlight something in someone who is so much of a researcher, so much of a ferret, I would say, as Michel Foucault, is present in the work, that you will find a thousand little snacks in it; this takes on its sense and its importance only because of the profoundly directive line which carries everything to the limit from one end to the other of a work of articulated erudition, the sense of what Michel Foucault has done which, in opposition to Lenôtre, I would say, is not placed at the level of the work of Marx to understand all previous history.

(54) In this regard, I will extract from this very rich text that Serge Leclaire gave us today, I will extract this really remarkable point which is the one by which he made the approach to the term of sensoriality in the genesis of the **o**-object.

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You will see, if you know how to read this book attentively, and to highlight its major passages you will see how this will allow you to map out what Leclaire has contributed, at the level of a certain gap, which is very precisely in the book the one which designated what separated the thinking of Cabanis from that of Pinel. Or, if you wish, more precisely, because that of Pinel, who is one of the authors most profoundly explored by Michel Foucault and because the position of Pinel remains ambiguous, of what separated Cabanis from Bichat.

I cannot develop this point today. I would like that when I come back it will on the basis on your part of a thorough knowledge of the text of Michel Foucault, *The birth of the clinic,* published by P.U.F.

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Seminar 15: Wednesday 7 April 1965

This Churchillian gesture is made to show those who for three weeks, having been here either at my open lectures or at my closed seminar, did not see that there had been wrapped up in a sort of doll, as it is put, these fingers, which after all I perhaps allowed to get caught in this door that I am trying to open for you.

I had the satisfaction of making it tangible at the closed seminar that some work is being done, and can be done, along what I am trying to outline for you as a path to be travelled.

This path, this year, we are following around the function of the signifier and of its effects, of its effects by which it determines the subject in a singular way by rejecting him, by rejecting him at every instant, from the very effects of the discourse.

Since I learned that a remark was made in a report last year on the aggregation lectures, namely, what was involved was a title, if I understood correctly, which was: "*On the true word and the lying word*". Namely, that the subject had not been invented by Lacan and by Claude Levi-Strauss, that Plato already, or Parmenides perhaps, had been interested in it.

This is a remark that, in truth, is excellent. Which will allow me to reply to those who having heard me in past years, are growing impatient at the fact that this discourse, in their eyes, is not reaching sufficiently rapid conclusions.

Why, people are saying, not without relevance and not without humour, since he is speaking to us about the truth, why does he not tell us the truth about the truth?

Some of these impatient people have changed camp, content after all to rally to those forms of teaching where people are satisfied to take as assured certain opaque reference points, which may give the feeling that in them one has a good hold of the final object. Is it so certain that people are right to be satisfied with this, and that this very opacity is not the sign that what we have there is a true illusion, as I might put it, namely, that people are satisfied too quickly, and that the true honesty is perhaps where one leaves always an opening in the path ..... the incomplete truth.

This is, in truth, what I found in following the indication of this report, I found of course, this was not the occasion on which I discovered it, but what I am referring you to, namely on the same subject as we are dealing with this year, is this book of Plato which is called *Cratylus,* where you will see being pursued between Hermogenes, Cratylus and Socrates, a very useful dialogue which terminates with nothing other than the highlighting of a complete impasse in the debate and with Socrates sending Cratylus off, ... incontestably, sends him off with the formula: “Then, my friend, at another time you shall give me a lesson when you come back, namely, when you have well reflected on everything that created such

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a problem for us today". To which the other replies: "Very good. I hope however that you will continue to think about these things yourself".

Such a dialogue, this one among others, in any case, if not all, is there to make us grasp that Plato's dialogues, far from saying the truth about the truth, are expressly constructed to leave it in suspense, really giving the feeling that he knows more (2) about it than he tells us, and this, undoubtedly, in an unequivocal fashion. If he knows more than he tells us about it, and if he does not say it, there is indeed some reason; that in truth, even if he told it to us, we would not be any more advanced, but that already in the traces of what he gives, there can be read, beyond, what constitutes our path after him and very precisely the place is marked, for example, of what the experience of the unconscious leads me to say to you.

Perhaps during the holidays you will have the opportunity of opening this book. I hope so, in the measure that you would be able to find there clearly marked what has constituted the kernel of the clear, perfectly legible tradition, of the *lekton* considering the status of the signifier, and you will find confirmed there what at the beginning I am going to try to summarise here, in a fashion which has nothing original about it, what is inscribed at the beginning of this tradition and which reposes on the opposition, as regards the function of the signifier, between these two great functions that Aristotle admirably distinguishes, posits, affirms in their simplicity, and from which it is appropriate to start to find one's bearings in everything that has been said since, and which undoubtedly does not date either from de Saussure or from Troubetskoi [?] or from Jakobson, this theory of the signifier which the Stoics, and specifically for example somebody like Chrysippus, for example, had pushed to an extreme point of perfection. *Signans et signatum* are in circulation already for some two thousand years. The opposition is that between a moment and a *rhesis.*

The function of nomination deserves to be reserved as original, as having a status opposed to that of the enunciation or of the sentence, whether it is propositional, definitional, relational, predicative, of the sentence in so far as it introduces us into the effective action of the symptom, culminates at this grasp whose *culmen* is the formation of the concept, is something which leaves in suspense, on the other hand, the function of nomination in so far as it introduces into the real this something which denominates, and which it is not enough to resolve around a fashion of sticking to something which is already given, a label which allows it to be recognised.

We have already sufficiently insisted on the fact that this label is not at all to be considered as something which is simply the duplication, the list, the list that is kept, purely and simply, of something which is supposed to be already in the store, as one might say, properly ordered like a set of accessories. The nomination, the label that is involved starts from the brand, starts from the trace, starts from something which, entering into things and modifying them, is at the beginning of their very status as things, and that is why this function of nomination involves a problematic, a problematic around which Hermogenes, Cratylus and Socrates turn; Hermogenes taking this aspect of the truth, by announcing about nomination what will subsequently develop, in the insistence on the conventionalism of nomination, on the arbitrary character of this choice of phoneme which, taken in its materiality, has something undetermined, fugitive, why call this that rather than something

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else, nothing obliges us to grasp what one could call a resemblance, a coming together of the word and the thing and nevertheless, and nevertheless Socrates, Socrates the (3) dialectician, Socrates the questioner, shows us his very clear leanings towards the enunciations of Cratylus who in a different radicalism insists on showing that there could not be an effective function of nomination if the name, in itself, did not involve this perfect fit with the thing that it designates.

It is in the often amusing, always paradoxical operation of an insouciance well designed to liberate us from all sorts of prejudices, from certain traditional habits concerning the genesis of meaning, and specifically everything that is called etymology, shows us by this ease, by this casualness, almost this game with which this questioning of the phonematic signifier is put to use before us, the way in which in the debate the words are cut up, solicited, by the way in which the game is carried out, around a supposed expressivity of the phoneme, undoubtedly shows us something other than what is taken to be naiveté.

For I believe that what Plato shows us in this exercise, in this way of seeking, as if he believed in it, the primary element in words thanks to which we can question them about the fashion in which they respond to what they are led to designate, in the way in which he plays with the word *skleros,* which means hard in Greek, and regarding which he points out that the labial and the *ro* of the *ros*, means flow in Greek, is little adapted to the hardness to be expressed by the word *skleros,* that what he shows us in truth is something, namely, this exercise which consists in showing us in everything that refers to this function of nomination, what is important, what he shows us in this game with words, is the way of cutting them up with a scissors.

It is also what is essential in the function and the existence of the name, it is not the cut, it is, as one might say, the contrary, namely the suture.

The proper name towards which, at the beginning of this discourse, I directed your attention, at the same time as on the other hand the function of number, the proper name, for a moment direct your attention to what is essential in it, the proper name already in its nomination, *onoma idiom,* involved this ambiguity which has allowed all the errors, of meaning on the one hand the name which is proper to someone or to some thing, to this or that object, which is the name specified in the pure function of denotation, to designate, but proper also means properly speaking. And is it not here that there is to be seen the essential of this function of the proper name, namely, that among all the names [nouns?], it is the one which shows us in the most proper fashion, the most proper to the function of name, what the name is.

Now if, with this empty formula, you set about looking - I am giving you this responsibility, the time, as well as the technical incident which delayed the start of my discourse today, the time being lacking for me to illustrate it for you in a great number of examples - you will see that of all names whatever they may be and whatever extension we may be able to give to the function of the word name, that of all the names that we have to interrogate under this aspect of nomination, the proper name is the one which presents in the most manifest fashion this feature which makes of every phonematic establishment of the name, of the founding act of the name in its designatory function, this something which has always in itself

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(4) this dimension, this property of being a collage. Into the very structure of the proper name there has slipped something more essential than this so-called particular name which is supposed to be given to the individual. With regard to which, the statement of Claude Lévi-Strauss in *La pensée sauvage,* when he makes of the proper name that which pushes to its final term, to the term of the designation of the individual, the high point, and in a way the completion, of the classificatory function, is too partial and too one-sided.

What I already advanced here, that the proper name is going to place itself always at the point where precisely the classificatory function, in the order of *rhesis,* stumbles, not before a too great particularity, but on the contrary before the tear, the lack, properly speaking, the hole of the subject, and, precisely, to suture it, to mask it, to stick it. Here certain of the things that were said at the closed seminar take on all their value, and specifically when someone came here to bring us his experience as a literary author and spoke to us about his difficulties with the proper name given to a vain character who nevertheless was invented. The proper name did not appear to him to be something that was so arbitrary that he could be given any other one whatsoever.

The fashion in which the sticking, in which the suture, destined to mask this hole, which is all the more evident because what was involved here was the hole represented by an invented character, is here the testimony of this experience which is, as a matter of a fact, marked in that of all those novelists, dramatists, of having the function to give rise to characters that are more true than living characters, designate them in a fashion which makes them tangible to us.

Will I on this point, echoing older periods of my teaching, have to remind you of the degree to which this takes on a relief in certain works and, specifically, in those of Claudel: Sygne de Coûfontaine, a strange and resonating designation for this character who shows us something quite singular in the work of Claudel.

Are we at the front or at the back of Christian revelation, when Claudel forges for us, in the character of a woman, this sort of singular Christ accumulating onto herself all the humiliations of the world, and who dies saying “no”.

Sygne de Coûfontaine who bears, masked in her name, this singular signifier, the first moreover ambiguous between the name of the bird with the curved neck, and the proper designation also of this sign, which is given to the world of something with a very singular actuality at the moment that this trilogy of Claudel emerges, and this strange Coûfontaine where we rediscover the echo of this shape of the swan, where there is designated for us that there is coming towards us the reopened, although inverted, spring of an ancient message [lie?]. This word which carries in itself again this care, this trace of the elementary signifier in this u (with a circumflex) which he insisted so much on that - I said it before, I recalled it in my seminar - it was necessary to forge a typographical sign which does not exist in the French tongue for capital letters, so that the circumflex with which the u of Coûfontaine is crowned could be printed.

(5) "Sir Thomas Bollock", what an invention! Since already with this extraordinary designation we do not know so much about the character of the exchange, as about everything that is going to unfold in the drama. This singular

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life of the proper name, you will rediscover it if you know how to listen, if you know how to hear, in all proper names, whether they are ancient, accepted, classified, or whether they are those which may be forged by a poet.

In truth, I believe that if we had to add something to this sort of residue, this scar around which the attention of the people at the closed seminar was recently called on to give an opinion, namely this poord'jeli of which Leclaire's analysis, as regards his part in this inaugural report on the unconscious, in which something had been promoted by him and by his co-author to the attention of a larger psychoanalytic audience, concerning the originality of what I had emphasised in the teaching of Freud about the unconscious, this something which I was able to read, not without satisfaction, from a writer who was certainly not friendly, that since Freud's time everyone knew that the fact of the enunciation that the unconscious is structured like a language, is since Freud a commonplace.

Undoubtedly this is indeed what I for my part think. Even for the person who only pretends to say it in order to contradict it, well then, God knows, something comes out of it, all the more so because the personage in question who makes of it an objection to what I announce, feels the need to connote it, to comment on it, with a series of remarks which, just by chance, are very exactly what I teach about the meaning of the formula.

There would be much to say starting from this notion, from this statement that every nomination in its usage ought always to be mentally referred by us to the fact that it is a memorial of the act of nomination. Now this act is not carried out at random. To emphasise its conventionalism, in so far as it tries to give its status to the signifier, is only one aspect of the problem. Conventional is the name of someone who accepts the tongue in its actual facticity, in its result, but the moment at which the name is given is where precisely we have the role, the function of the one who, very brilliantly and in a fashion that has never, when all is said and done, been taken up again, Cratylus designates as a necessary actor in this history, namely, what he called the *demiurges onomatom,* the worker in names. He does not do just anything whatsoever, nor what he wants, in order that the denomination of something may be accepted, and it is not enough to say that it is universal consent, for who will represent this universal consent in the field of language? This denomination operates somewhere. What makes it propagate itself? I spoke to you the other day about the collective exploit that is represented by the appearance in space of this extraordinary swimmer who, for a moment, I showed you could spark off for us in the imagination all sorts of singular ways of imaging, as I told you, the function of the **o**-object.

I did not insist. What matter! I will come back to it. But what a strange thing it is, after all, that no one up to now has thought of calling him by the name which seems undoubtedly the most prepared and the most suitable for him. How does it happen that no one answered the call, when people are so rash, so tranquil about designating as cosmonauts people who are propelled in a field that undoubtedly no cosmos, at the time that there was a cosmology, whose trajectory no one ever (6) forecast. Why should we not call this Leonov, because of the place that it occupies, as I might say, for a very long time, ever since the time that there are people who mark for us the messengers who arise somewhere in space, with this

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ridiculous plumage which makes their image really in all the paintings properly speaking unbearable. Why do we not call him an angel?

There you are then. You laugh. Well that is why he will not be called an angel. He will not be called an angel because, in any case, each one of you holds onto your own good angel. You believe in him up to a certain point, just as I do. For my part I believe in them because they cannot be eliminated from the scriptures. I remarked this one day to Père Teilhard de Chardin who almost broke into tears. It is also the difference between my teaching and what is called progressivism. I find that the weakness is on the side of the progressivism.

This little test has all the same a decisive aspect. Because you see clearly that you cannot call a novelty anything you please, even when it appears precisely to fill with a new wine an old wine skin. The wine skin angel is still there.

You see how this experiment concerning nomination also leads us straight towards the functions of dead languages. A dead language is not at all a language that one can do nothing with as experience proves. When Latin was a dead language it served very efficiently as a language of communication. It is even because of this that we were able to have throughout this whole period of the scholastics, extraordinarily good logicians. The *rhesis* functions admirably well and all the better perhaps precisely because it remains mistress of the terrain, the *rhesis* functions admirably in a dead language.

But not nomination. I had humourous echos of it. My momentary infirmity having prevented me from turning over as many pages as I have recently been in the habit of doing, I regret that I cannot extract for you, from the acts of the Vatican Council, the way in which people there expressed the designation of bus, for example, of bar, which it appears was functioning there in a corner that worked rather badly.

How can you make new nominations in a dead language? I mean new nominations which inscribe themselves on the language. On the contrary, the whole of the *De vulgari eloquentia,* to which I alluded in my lectures at the beginning of this year, I mean this purely admirable work by Dante in which there is defended the properly literary function, the *lingua grammatica,* that he intended to give to his Tuscan, chosen from among three others; read it, it is less easy to find than *Cratylus,* read it and you will see what Dante tends towards, a reality of which only a poet can speak, which is properly speaking that of this adequation, which only a poet can sense, of the phonematic shape that a word has taken, and this exchange between the signifier and the signified which is the whole history of the human spirit.

How a signifier imperceptibly passes into an aspect of the signified which has not yet appeared; how the signifier itself is profoundly changed by the evolution of meanings, this is something again that I must skip over, but at least I indicate a reference to you.

(7) The weight that the Latin *causa* took on from the day that Cicero translated by *causa* the Greek *leita,* this is the turning point which ensures that in the end, this cause which is still the juridical cause, first of all, the Latin *causa* is finally there

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to designate the *res,* the thing (*chose*), while the *res,* the thing, has become for us the word *rien.*

This history of language is something which, since it is not properly speaking the field in which the psychoanalyst has properly speaking to pursue his practice, shows him at every instant the paths and the models in which he ought to grasp its reality.

And in the presentation that Leclaire gave of the poord'jeli in connection with a paradigmatic example, people question themselves about what field it was in, preconscious, unconscious, is it a phantasy? I believe that the initial image to which we ought to fix ourselves to understand what is involved, is that what it is closest to, and here we rediscover psychoanalytic experience - who among the analysts has not put his finger on the function for each one of his analysands of some proper name, of his own or that of her husband or his wife, of his parents, indeed of the personage in his delusion, the proper name plays in so far as it can be fragmented, be decomposed, be rediscovered, infiltrated into the proper name of someone else. The poord'jeli of Leclaire is above all something which functions as a proper name.

And if I have to designate the point of the Klein bottle where this poord'jeli has to be inscribed, it is, as I might say, on the edge, the orifice of reversal through which, by taking something that is involved in this double entrance of the Klein bottle, it is always to the front of one that there corresponds the back of the other, and inversely, and if you want an image which will satisfy you still better, the action of the poord'jeli, or anything else that in the history of one of our patients might correspond to it, well then it is the proper function with respect to a pattern, in the sense that this word has for a dressmaker, the pattern which represents the piece of cloth ..... which will serve to split such and such a dotted line of the garment, or such and such a sleeve, ... with little letters designed to show what should be sewn onto what.

It is starting from there that there can be grasped, be understood this function of artificial suture, which ought to allow us with sufficient attention, with a method which is precisely the one which we are trying to create here, to suggest to you, at the very least will allow us to grasp, to differentiate even, in this image a sort of primitive support in connection with which there could be distinguished the fashion in which these sutures are made in one or other person, I mean by that, that this is not done to the same point nor with the same goal in the neurotic, the psychotic, nor in the pervert, the way in which these sutures are done in the subjective history is properly in the image, the paradigm of Leclaire, for there is something which gives it its value and which is not simply that of a pure and simple phonological curiosity, the fact is that this suture is closely linked to the grasp of what Leclaire designates as the exquisite difference, the sensory difference, and it is here that there is specified the obsessional trait: here is the new element which can be added to what is called, properly speaking, the clinic, in so far as psychoanalysis has something to add to this ancient word clinic.

In this very suture there is caught this exquisite point of the tangible, this scar-like, I would almost say colloidal aspect to use a metaphor, this elective point which

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designates in the obsessional something which remains caught in the suture which is properly speaking to be opened up.

Here is what allows us to situate the original point of what can serve on the other hand as a demonstration for the function of the signifier, but which also designates for us the particular function and what occupies it in the example thus isolated.

Undoubtedly all of this demands that we should give ourselves a little trouble to bring into circulation these notions which, in effect, are in no way new, which are already locatable in Freud and that it would be easy, I do not need, I think, for all (8) of those who have read him a little, to designate at what point we find its homologies, from the *aber, abwehr,* the *amen,* which is *samen* in the *Ratman* and many others, but moreover, if it is here that we ought to locate something whose secret and whose handling we are trying to rediscover, it is not of course by turning away, by sticking to what we were given, but by trying to pursue, according to Freud's formula, the construction in connection with the subject, that we ought to take advantage of it in an appropriate way.

This separation, this separation which leaves in each name this suture that it represents, if you know how to look for examples of it, you will find it in every one; Oedipus, I take it because after all I am attracted by the fact that he is indeed the first one who may come to mind, Oedipus, swollen foot, is that self-evident? What is there in the hole between the swelling and the foot? Precisely the pierced foot; and the pierced foot is not said. It is the swollen foot with its enigma which remains open in the middle, and perhaps more in relation with the hole ..... than appears at first.

And since someone amused himself by presenting my name in this debate, why not amuse ourselves a little since Jacques, on one side is Israel, of which one of our witnesses spoke in the closed seminar ..... that being Lacan in Hebrew, namely the name which preserves the three consonants which is written more or less like this, well then that means: "and nevertheless".

This fabric, this surface which is the one on which I am trying to draw for you the topology of the signifier, if I give it this year this shape from the history of mathematical thinking, then of logic, it is not by chance that this shape came so late, that Plato did not have it and, nevertheless, it is so simple, this Moebius strip which reduplicated gives the Klein bottle.

What is the enigma that lies there? What do I mean? Do I believe that it exists? It is clear that it evokes analogies, and in the properly speaking biological field. The last time, for those who were at the closed seminar, I indicated, I repeat it here because the slogan can be given again to my complete audience, I spoke about *The birth of the clinic* by Michel Foucault. I said that it was a work to be read because of its great originality and for the method by which it is inspired. It is very striking, very gripping, to see that the accent that he puts, as regards the change of direction of the anatomical agency in nosological thinking, on this incidence, I mean, of pathological anatomy, the change of look, the change of focus, which brings about a passage from the consideration of the organ to that of the tissue, namely of surfaces taken as such, with the model taken essentially from what distinguishes the epidermis from the dermis, the layers (*feuillets*) of the pleura

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from those of the peritoneum, in the total change of meaning that the term sympathy takes on from the moment that it is by following these leaves, these cleavages, rendered so tangible since by the whole evolution of embryology, in short that it is since the treatise on membranes by Bichat that anatomy changes direction and changes, at the same time, the meaning of everything that one can think about sickness.

The way in which these layers, specifically in the embryological field, envelop one another, tie into one another, twist around one another, arrive at this point of stricture like the closing of a sack, the closing of a purse, to isolate themselves in their adult form, is something which will also deserve to be mapped out almost, in a way, as a sort of aesthetic exercise but which would have on the biologist this effect of suggestion, which for the rest, I do not doubt, that very quickly, because it is already happening, and is highlighted in a certain order of reflection, that it is in an original structure of torsion of space, comparable to the style of this curve that the physician knows at a certain level of the phenomena, in a different form of torsion, of involution, as already the words seem quite prepared to welcome them, that there would reside the originality of the living function of the body as such.

(9) This is really only a suggestion in passing in order, at the point where I am leaving you before the holidays, to scan this something by which I would like to illustrate in a more living fashion what is contained by formulae like those to which I came back on several occasions and that I hold to be essential, telling you first of all that it is the key link to avoid slipping into some one of these errors of the right or of the left, too quick or too slow, to illustrate for you this formula that the signifier, as distinct from the sign, is something which represents a subject for another signifier. Perhaps there were here still more things before which, for want of being used to the formula, at which you pause and do not draw the consequences; I did not remain with that because last year, giving you the formula of alienation that is perhaps new in the eyes of some people, it represents, I said, a subject for another signifier but in so far as the signifier determines the subject, in determining it he bars it, and this bar means at once vacillation and division of the subject.

Undoubtedly there is here something which in its paradox, and I affirm to you, nevertheless, that I am not trying to make it any heavier, that the paradox did not have there the means for me to capture the attention, that the paradox forces my hand, as I might say, cannot be materially similar to a sign, a sign representing something for someone. The theory of the sign is pregnant, imposes itself so much on attention at this moment of science that we are living in,that I was able to hear a physicist with whom I had long discussions, hear a physicist say that, when all is said and done, the basis, the foundation of the whole theory of physics, in so far as it requires the maintenance of a principle of conservation, described as the conservation of energy, will only find this basis, this final certainty, when we have managed to formalise the whole discovery of modern physics in terms of an exchange of signs. The prodigious success of the cybernetic conception, which is now going towards this strange thing that is described as information, puts in the register of information every kind of long-distance transmutation, provided that at some moment it presents itself as cumulative. Here I am going a bit too quickly. Let those who know how to estimate in their way and as they wish what I am saying, the relevance of what I am saying.

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In biology, people talk about information, for example, to define what emanates from one of other glandular system, in the measure that this is going to reverberate further on in some part of the organism.

Does that mean that one must understand that there are here two poles, by calling them the emitter and receiver? Whatever one does, one subjectivises, which is properly speaking ridiculous.

Why, after all, along this path not consider as information the rays of the sun in so far as they accumulate somewhere in chlorophyll, or that quite simply in reheating the bud of the plant they determine and are accumulated in the effects of opening out, of development, in the living plant.

(10) The naivete with which, it seems, people adopt, in this formulation of the theme of information, the function of the emitter and of the receiver, without being aware of the point to which here, they are marking time on the grass borders of the old subject of knowledge, namely, that when all is said and done, to take this path where every point of the world would be judged by the fashion it knows more or less well all the other points, has something singular, paradoxical, in which a loss is manifested in the most tangible fashion, and whose model obviously cannot be given other than by the fact that we are now used to seeing the handling of objects that we can distance almost indefinitely from ourselves, which are machines, and with respect to which in the measure that we make them, precisely these machines, subjects, that we think about them like machines that think, that effectively they receive from us information thanks to which "they direct themselves". There is here a sort of evolution, indeed a slippage of thinking to which, after all, I see no objection in a certain domain, provided one defines it, it can render and render extremely important services. The equivalence information-..... seems to have some fruitfulness in physics but is this what we can content ourselves with concerning the status of the subject with respect to the *signum*, the sign. It may appear to you to be tenable in a way, if we understand it precisely in this fashion, for us to continue to say that it functions always for someone.

The reverse of this position, namely, that amongst the signs there are some which are signifiers, in so far as they represent the subject for another signifier; you see the measure in which, after all, it responds to this slope, to this succession of thinking, that this subject allows us to make of it something else, something else determinable, localisable and whose metabolism can be graspable with its consequences. And why?

I forged an example for you or rather I took one at random, I took it from an article by a linguist who, literally, even though advancing it to define what the linguistic sign is, fails completely at it, I must say.

And I take up the same example to try to make something of it for you: a young girl and her lover. They agree this sign to see one another. When the curtain - I am modifying the example a little bit - when the curtain is drawn across the window, that means I am alone. So many flower pots, so many hours; there is

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designated in that way, five flower pots "I will be alone at five o'clock" (*Je serai seule à cinq heures*).

In function of this, is it in words, in a language, that this convention was grounded. Is it in so far as there is a nomination, the founding act which makes of this curtain something different to what it is, but how is it that we can identify this purely and simply to a sign, to a combination of signs because there are two of them; in other words to a green light to which there is joined an index?

I say no. And since that cannot be seen immediately I am forced to use what I have to hand or, in other words,to question it with my formulae.

"Alone", we put "alone" in place of the curtain. I defined that the signifier is what represents a subject for another signifier. Whether the lover is there or not to receive what is involved changes nothing in the fact that "alone" has a meaning which goes much further than to say: "green light".

"Alone" what does that mean for a subject? Can the subject be alone while his constitution as subject is to be, as I might say, covered by objects. Alone means something else. It means that the subject fails in the measure that we do not have: that we can reduplicate the formula: in the measure that there he is not simply one.

Second element: five o'clock. With the addition of this second element there is established the elementary structure of the seduction. If you wish I will illustrate it for you as quickly as possible, I mean that one or the other can serve as subject or as predicate. Alone: predicate of five o'clock. Five o'clock: predicate of alone. That can mean just as much alone at five o'clock or only at five o'clock. This is quite secondary compared to what I have to show you which is, namely, that in this interval the only, which is in the denominator of the only one, which determines what it is, this alone, in its good function of **o**-object must emerge, namely, that between the two between alone and five o'clock, the lover is expressly summoned as being the only one who can fill this solitude.

In other words, what we see being produced, what ensures that this holds up and subsists as a signifying structure, is in the measure that the *lekton,* or what is legible of what is thus expressed, leaves open a gap where there is structured the function of desire.

The one to whom this *lekton* is addressed, whether he reads it or not, is summoned in this *lekton* to function in the gap, in the interval, which determines two directions: on the one hand, the "alone at five o'clock" is the direction of what the Stoics called, not without reason, *tukanonon*, the rendezvous, the elective meeting. In the opposite sense, what the subject divided in his statement of being alone, hides and dissimulates, and what is his phantasy, which is to be the only one. In the division of the subject, there is, as object, becomes: the only one functions here as desire, entirely in suspense with respect to the desire of the Other.

Only the desire of the Other gives its sanction to the functioning of this appeal. The desire phantasied by the subject who announces herself to be alone, in order to be the only one, this desire is the desire of the Other.

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The accent put here on the formula: “the signifier represents the subject for another signifier” consists, as you have remarked, in differentiating the signifier, not from the side of the receiver, as is always done and where it is confused with the sign, but from the side of the emitter. Because if I say that the signifier represents the subject for another signifier, it is in the measure that the subject in question is the one who emits it.

Now what do we mean when we speak about the unconscious? If the unconscious is what I teach you, because it is in Freud, there you ought to put the subject behind the signifier which is announced.

And you who receive this message from your unconscious, you are at the place of the other, of the idiot, and - to address myself to you in the same terms as the other day - "The most illustrious drinkers and most precious syphilitics", which in our day is translated, as it was expressed from behind a window, considering my large audience at Ste Anne to be a public of homosexuals and drug addicts, the public of others is always made up of homosexuals and drug addicts; all of you then, psychotics, neurotics and perverts who form part of my audience *qua* Other, what does it mean that you are before this message?

Well then this is an important point to specify because this is a trait of the clinic, I mean of an opening up of what questioning should be directed at.

If you are psychotic, that means that you are interested in the message essentially in the measure that she knows that you are reading it. This is always forgotten in the examination of the psychotic. He for his part does not know what the message means, but the subject generated in the signifier of the message, knows that he is reading it. This is a point on which - I will not say that it is not insisted enough on - it is a point that has never been seen.

If you are neurotic, you are interested in the rendezvous. And naturally in order to miss it, since in any case there is no rendezvous.

If you are perverse, you are interested in the dimension of desire. You are this desire of the Other. You are caught in the desire of the desire of the Other as such. You are the pure victim, the pure holocaust of the desire of the Other as such.

Because of the fact that I was delayed, I cannot show you today on the Klein bottle itself that these are the fields that this first step determines.

You should know that it is here that I will take up my discourse on the first Wednesday in May. I am saying this since the last time again I was asked if my seminar was going to take place, after I had expressly announced that the last Wednesday of this month of April will be a closed seminar.

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Seminar 16: Wednesday 28 April 1965

Missing to be corrected

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Seminar 17: Wednesday 5 May 1965

If to be a psychoanalyst is a responsible position, the most responsible of all because he is the one to whom there is entrusted the operation of a radical ethical conversion, the one that introduces the subject to the order of desire, which orders everything that is involved in my teaching as regards historical retrospection, trying to situate the traditional philosophical position, showing you that this order has remained in a way excluded from it. What must be known are the conditions required in order that someone may be able to say of himself: "I am a psychoanalyst".

If what I am demonstrating to you here seems to culminate in the fact that these conditions are so special that this: "I am a psychoanalyst", cannot in any case descend from an investiture, in no case can come to the candidate from some other place, there would appear to be, it seems, some contradiction to found that while listening to me or at least taking seriously what I am saying, which seems to be implied in coming to listen to me, people can in fact continue to find it sufficient to (2) receive this investiture let us say, it is the least that can be said, from places where what I am saying is a dead letter.

This undoubtedly forms part of the constitutive conditions of what I would call: the difficulty about being serious in our material.

I will come back to this prelude, since in fact my discourse today will only be an attempt at gathering together the logical conditions in which there is posed the question of what we can conceive to be involved in being an analyst, what we expect to get to know.

Everything that I have brought before you from the beginning of this year concerns this place that we can give to what we operate on, if it is the case that it is indeed the subject that is involved, that this subject is situated, is essentially characterised as being of the order of lack, this is what I tried to make you sense in showing you at the two levels of the proper name on the one hand, of numeration on the other, that the status of the proper name is only possible to articulate, not as a further additional connotation approaching what, in classificatory inclusion, would manage to be reduced to the individual, but on the contrary as the making good of this something of a different order, which is what, in classical logic, was opposed to the binary relationship of the universal to the particular, as something in a third place (3) that was irreducible to their functioning, namely, as the singular.

Those here who have a sufficient formation to understand this reminder that I am giving of the attempt to homogenise the singular to the universal, who also know the difficulties that this *rapprochement* opposed to classical logic, and the status of this singular can not only be given in a better fashion in the approximations of modern logic, but it seems to me, can only be completed in the formulation of this logic to which analytic truth and practice give us access, which is what I am trying

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to formulate before you here and which can be called, which could be called, if I succeed, this logic to formalise desire.

That is why I wanted these remarks about proper names to be completed by this modern logic of numeration, where it also appears that it is essentially in the function of lack, in the concept of zero itself that there takes root the possibility of this foundation of the numerical unit as such, and that it is only by this that it escapes from the irreducible difficulties which oppose to this functioning of the numerical unit the idea of giving it some empirical function or other in the function of the final term which is supposed to be individuality.

(4) Moreover, I thought that it is essential, precisely, to get to that point, to make you sense the distinction there is from any conception of the tendency *qua* scientific, in so far as it brings us to the order of the general; that the tendency is specific, and that the error of translating *Trieb* by instinct, consists precisely in the fact that it would make of the tendency some property, some status, which is supposed to be inserted into the living thing in so far as it is typical, that it falls under the order, under the sway, under the effect of the general; while it is along a singular path whose question it remains for us in short to invert as regards how it happens that we are able to lay hold of something of which we can speak scientifically. What is this something? You know it is the **o**-object, you know that it is along the opposite path, that of an incidence that is always singular and from the incidence of a lack, that there is introduced this result upon which, through an effect of remainder, we can operate and about which it remains to be known in what position we must be, we must maintain ourselves in, in order to operate correctly on it.

Thus it is that today, in order to arrive at the end of our discourse for this year, to give the formula of this status of our position, I will take up today this discourse, (5) by gathering it around two fundamental positions of what I am teaching you as regards our logic, the logic of our analytic practice, the logic implied by the existence of the unconscious.

1) The signifier, over against the sign which represents something for someone, the signifier is what represents a subject for another signifier.

2) What is meant in our field, in the field that psychoanalysis uncovers, what is meant by the formula: the subject who is supposed to know?

To link up with what I proposed to you as a model to clarify a certain tripartition of this field, during my lecture of the 7th April, I remind you of what is here reproduced for you on the right of this board, the signal at the window made by our hypothetical lover, to the one to whom she is offering a welcome: on the left the drawn curtains, “alone”, and the five little flower-pots, “at five o’clock”. Why are we going to say that here we are dealing with signifiers? I said the last time that it was signifiers that were involved, even though it only seems to involve semiological elements, because this has no import unless it can be translated into language, that it is a code no doubt, but that this code can be translated, this is tangible specifically at the level of the first term, of the “alone”(*seule*), it can be (6) translated into something whose not only fundamentally ambiguous but also sliding character I pointed out to you: what does it mean to be alone, if not to

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articulate this term which gives rise in the hollow which immediately follows it, to the ambiguity of what is going to be articulated under the desire to be the only one (*la seule),* for the rendezvous to whom the only one (*le seul*) is summoned, under the movement that there is created, in the two senses, of the direction that is indicated by the line where there is articulated this signifying couple, on the one hand the rendezvous for the meeting and on the other hand the desire which underlies it, which arises from the formulation itself.

That is not all: the status of what is articulated there is in a way independent of any fact whatsoever: it is offered at first as something signified, as this beyond which I called by the term in which the Stoics designated it: the *lekton*; just as it was from the Stoics that I borrowed the term of *tukanon* to designate what is produced in the direction towards the right in which there is constituted the summons to the only one for five o'clock.

This example, this model, which is rudimentary or summary, in a way, which can perhaps be given, allows you to grasp that the discussion may remain open about the status of what is involved in this framework of the window which is here what overlaps the real in its movement, in its multiplicity, which gives it shape, which makes of it the subject of the sentence.

(8) This sentence is a sentence, in so far as, at least tangibly in the first term, in this alone, something emerges which is of the order of the subject only, which does not have, in a way, any real correspondent; as I told you: what is it to be alone, in the real, what is alone.

This alone could at the limit evoke self-sufficiency, but it is precisely what it is there, not alone not to evoke it but to evoke the opposite, namely the lack.

Taken at this level of logic where there is shown the primordiality of desire with respect to any distribution, we see being inverted, in a way, what classical logic presents to us in the register of necessity: it is necessary and sufficient.

It is in the inverse order that there is presented the following, that what is apparently announced as being self-sufficient, essentially it is necessary, there is lacking something that is going to arise between the alone and the hour.

In other words, the level at which we have to grasp everything that is of the order of our field, is distinguished by a fundamental distribution that I am going to try again to underline by other examples.
In a reference that we will call, to simplify things by convention, that of the
(9) traditional knowledge of the function of the sign, and what is more, besides, in certain logics, and specifically, I would ask those who are tempted by this, to look at it in what is involved at the level of the Buddhist teaching on logic, the function of the sign is put in the forefront in an admirable way, the sign is essentially: there is no smoke without fire, as you know, as a matter of a fact, moreover, there is nothing better than smoke to hide the fire. The fire a real referent, the smoke, a sign which covers it, and there somewhere the subject, immobile, universal receptacle of what there is to be known behind the signs, the supposed real.

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How is the function of the signifier opposed to this and what results from it for the status of the subject?

It is not easy to get you to know about it by a sort of spelling out and, moreover, if it is possible, it will only be along a kind of maieutic process, where at every crossroads there will only be too many opportunities for you to escape from the chain. That is why, while asking you to note that I will not entirely make use of it today, I am giving you the complete function in which there is distinguished the relationship of the subject in the status of the signifier.

"It is necessary for us," says the formula that I advanced before you, " that the (10) signifier should be what represents a subject for another signifier ". What is suggested to us by this formula?

Well then, why not? The key and the lock. It is not what the lock is going to allow to be discovered when it is a matter of the bolt or the pin falling, it is its relationship to something that makes it function.

But what is the key? Between the key and the lock, there is still the number (*chiffre*): the key is deceptive here, which interests us in the following: a lock which is a signifying composition is the internalness of this composition, with the polyvalence, the choice, the riddle on occasion of the number which is going to allow it to function.

In a certain state of the lock, there is only one number that can operate it: the one which presupposes a subject reduced to this one of a combination. There is no play here. The subject is not the universal receiver. He has the number or he does not have it. And the role of the key is very suggestive, and very amusing, because it represents for us the following, that it is in effect a remainder, a little operational something, a piece of waste in the affair, but one which is no doubt indispensable, which, in the final analysis, represents the effective and real support where the subject will intervene, in other words, in the formula that you see here in the second place, which is substituted for the first in so far as the first designates for us (11) the S1 which represents for S2, the $ which is the subject; underneath you see the S, if you wish in the case of the number, representing for the S of the lock what is the one of the subject, in so far as it is reduced to being or not the key to be supplied.

This little presentation, preamble, is essential to pose what should be put in question : "What is, at this first level, in so far as it is the one at which we have to operate in analysis, what is, what ought to be, how is there presented, what we will call the status of knowledge?"

For after all we have said, and even if we had not said it it is clear, that the psychoanalyst is summoned, in the situation, as being the subject who is supposed to know.

What he has to know is not a classificatory knowledge, is not knowledge of the general, is not the knowledge of a zoologist. What he has to know is defined by this primordial level where there is a subject who is led, in our operation, to this moment of emergence, which is articulated: "I did not know".

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I did not know, or indeed that this signifier which is there, which I now recognise, it was there that I was as subject, or indeed that this signifier which is there and which you designate for me, that you articulate for me, it was to represent me to you that I was this or that.

This is what psychoanalysis uncovers, and here I am going to emphasise for you, (12) by taking, almost at random, some examples in the first articulations of Freud, the degree to which that it is in this way there ought to be expressed in an appropriate fashion what is called the structure of the symptom.

The aphonia of Dora is only recognised, is only recognisable as representing the subject Dora, in relation to this signifier which has no other status than that of signifier, if one targets correctly the functioning of the symptom, and which is articulated "alone with her ".

"Alone with her ", namely Mrs K. She can no longer speak in the very function that she is alone with her and the aphonia represents Dora, not at all to Mrs K, with whom she speaks and even too much in ordinary circumstances, but when she is "alone with her", when Mr K is travelling.

Dora's cough, Dora's cough, where does Freud locate it? Read the text. When he designates a symptom there, it is in function of this cough taking on the function of signifier, of warning, I would say, given by Dora of something that arises on this occasion and which would not have arisen otherwise, and you have to read Freud's text to follow the purely signifying journey of word play around the father who is a man of fortune, which means, Freud says, without fortune, in the sense that the word fortune also means, in German, sexual potency.

(13) Without, *Vermögen,* this is what is most purely signifying, this homonymic play on words, and what is more, the negative reversal of what it means, without which nothing in Dora's cough would have this sense that Freud gives it, which is also the one possessed by this symptom, which is that of the substitution that the couple of her father and Mrs K bring to this impotence, specifically what Freud articulates, moreover, without pushing things absolutely to the end, as an oral-genital relationship.
Take little Hans, the extravagant story about the departure for Gmunden with the governess riding on the horse pulling the sledge, how does Freud interpret it for us? It means: "I am well able to spin you yarns like that if you spin other ones to me. I ask you how children are born and you talk to me about the stork." The signifier has value for the other signifier, the only person who does not know it, until he is told, is the subject, is little Hans.

Moreover, it is not quite the same thing. For the signifying function here is that of a much bigger molecule. It is a great fable which little Hans indulges in.

And to take a third example and complete our hysteric and our phobic with an obsessional, remember in the *Ratman* what happens in the desperate attempts to (14) slim which the Ratman devotes himself to in function of what? In function of the fact that at the same time there is among his beloved's acquaintances someone called Dick: it is in order not to be *dick* that he wants to slim.

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His whole effort to slim, he forces himself to slim to the point of dying very precisely in order to signify himself with respect to the signifier Dick and nothing more.

But, but, but, something whose general features have never, to my knowledge, been picked out, it was indeed nevertheless the case, because we are still, there, more at ease in laying hold of it, is what results from a simply naive examination once the category has been set in motion, as I might say, the category of knowledge.

The fact is that it is here there lies what allows us radically to distinguish the function of the symptom if in fact we can give the symptom its status as defining the field of the analysable: the difference between a sign, a dullness for example, which allows us to know that there is hepatitis in a lobe, and a symptom in the sense that we ought to understand it as an analysable symptom, and precisely what defines and isolates as such the psychiatric field and what gives it its ontological status, is that there is always in the symptom the indication that there is a question of knowledge. There has never been sufficiently underlined the degree to which in (15) paranoia, it is not simply the signs of that the paranoiac receives, it is the sign that somewhere it is known what these signs mean, and that he does not know.

This ambiguous dimension of the fact that there is something to be known, and that it is indicated, can be extended to the whole field of psychiatric symptomatology in so far as analysis introduces into it this new dimension, which is precisely that its status is that of the signifier.

Look at the degree to which - of course I am not claiming to exhaust in these few words the infinite multiplicity, the shimmering brilliance, in a way, of the phenomena - the degree to which in neuroses it is implied, given, in the original symptom that the subject has not come to know, and that the status of perversion also is closely linked to something, here, that one knows, but that one is unable to make known.

The livid (*livide*) indication in the symptom itself of this dimension, of this reference to knowledge, is where I would like to start from, in a meeting that I announced at the end of the closed seminar and which will take place, not as I said on the 20th June but on the 27th June, by the invitation of a group that the people qualified will receive and that those who are not qualified have only to make themselves known to receive, that I would like to see there beginning a certain nosological revision properly speaking, that I would like to see it begin at the level (16) of this element of symptom, the highlighting of this dimension, of this agency and its variety. Its variability, its diversity which I manifested the last time as tripartite, I must say, simply by way of introduction, of engagement in this matter by saying that this knowledge that is in question, in so far as it is also lack, indeed failure, is diversified according to the three planes isolated here of the *lekton,* the *tukanon* and of desire, according to the three varieties: as regards psychoses, who knows that there is a signified, I would even say dwells there, it is a *lekton,* but which is not for all that sure of anything.

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The neurosis with its *tukanon.* When will it be encountered? When will I have, not the key but the cipher (*chiffre*), and that of the pervert for whom desire situates itself properly speaking in the dimension of a secret that is possessed, experienced as such and which as such develops the dimension of his *jouissance.*

But what is to be said again about this knowledge which first of all was inscribed in this subjectivity of the "I did not know" where it is the pursued I of the vibration of what is not pure and simple negation, but the "it is necessary that I do not know", the "before I know", "with the help of God I did not know ", which is the prolongation of the I itself, to which there must be left stuck, where this I has a completely different status to that of the shifter. It is not the same I who says: "I (17) am speaking to you", for the "I am speaking to you" is only a reminder of the actuality of an articulation which itself remains perfectly ambiguous as regards its very value, even if it always proposes itself as establishing a relationship.

This I of the "I did not know", where was it and what was it before knowing? This is indeed a propitious moment to evoke the dimension at which there culminates and tips over the whole classical tradition in so far as there is completed in it a certain status of the subject. All the same, there are many among you here who know where Hegel proposes the completion of history in this incredibly derisory myth of absolute knowledge.

What could be meant by this idea of a totalising discourse, totalising what? The sum of the forces of alienation through which a subject would have passed, moreover, you know well that it is ideal since, moreover, it is not conceivable that it should be realised as such by any individual.

What could be meant by this strange myth, and in truth is it not obvious that it would have been rejected a long time ago as the dream of a pedant, if it were not articulated precisely from a quite different dialectic than that of knowledge, and if we were not told that it is the being of desire who completes himself in it in so far as the paths along which this desire has passed are ruses of reason.

(18) But who is the wily one (*le rusé*)? It is the one who is completed in this Sunday of life, as a humorist has very well articulated it, of absolute knowledge since it is the one who will say "I'm still yapping" or the one who will say "from now on I fuck."

Where is the ruse? In desire or in reason? Analysis is there to teach us that the ruse is in reason because desire is determined by the play of the signifier. That desire is what emerges from the brand, from the brand of the signifier on the living being and that, henceforth, what we have to articulate is what is meant by the path that we trace out of the return of desire to its signifying origin?

What is meant by the fact that there are men who call themselves psychoanalysts and are interested in this operation?

It is quite obvious that in this register the psychoanalyst is first introduced, by introducing himself as a subject who is supposed to know, is himself, himself receives, himself supports the status of the symptom. A subject is a psychoanalyst, not as a scholar barricaded behind categories in the midst of which

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he tries his hardest to construct the drawers into which he will be able to put the symptoms that he registers in his patient, psychotic, neurotic or other, but in so far that he enters into the signifying operation, and this is why a clinical examination, a (19) case presentation can absolutely not be the same in the days of psychoanalysis as in the times that preceded it.

In preceding times, whatever might have been the genius that the clinician brought to it - God knows, I had recently to refresh my admiration for the dazzling style of Kraepelin when he describes these diverse forms of paranoia - there is a radical distinction between what, at least in theory, potentially, between what is required in terms of the relationship of the clinician to the patient even on the plane of the first presentation.

If the clinician, if the doctor who presents, knows only a half of the symptom, as I have just articulated it for you in reminding you of the examples of Freud, only half of the symptom, it is he who has the responsibility that there is not a case presentation but a dialogue between two people and that, without this second person there would be no complete and filled out symptom as is the case for most.

By allowing clinical psychiatry to stagnate on the path from which Freudian doctrine ought to have removed it, we have to define the symptom as something which signals itself as a knowledge that is already there, to a subject who knows that it concerns him, but who does not know what it is, in what measure can we (20) analysts say that we are equal to this task of being the ones who in every case know what it is. Already simply at that level there is put, there is posed, the question of the status of the psychoanalyst.

The question is facilitated by a long-term evolution. For a long time we were able to believe that the whole status of science depended on an examination that was put to the test of feeling, of perception, but what is meant by this opposition between the lure and the real?
If it is not the real that is involved, even in the most ancient science, it is the real of the scholar and what is not seen, is that this real of the scholar, namely, what a knowledge is, is well and truly a body of signifiers and absolutely nothing else.

If the notion of information has been able to take on this anonymous form which allows it to be quantified in terms of what is called a *bit*: it is in so far as the collecting, the storing, of elements of information is sufficient in itself in our eyes to constitute what is called a knowledge, except for the fact of course that this only begins to have a sense if you circulate somewhere, wherever it may be and you can in no way avoid the shadow of it, a no doubt infinitely mobile subject, if you want to inscribe in terms of information the internal functioning of a biological organism, for example, this means that even though you may have it, you have to put (21) somewhere, like Descartes, not necessarily in the pineal gland, but wherever you may put it, it will always be somewhere, in some other gland with internal secretions, a subject, a subject who slips away, a fleeting subject.

This knowledge is such that we have to give it its status, it is not at all an Aristotelian logic that corresponds to it. For, as you are going to see, it is enough to pose the question at the level of science, of a modern science, of a science

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which is our own to find ourselves before the very curious impasse of problems which are the very ones that brought Aristotle to a halt.

For him, it was in connection with the contingent. An event which will take place tomorrow, is it true now that it will take place or that it will not take place? If it is true now, it must be because it is now that it has taken place. Aristotle of course had too much common sense not to escape from such a constraint by pointing out to us that it is not always true that a proposition has to be either true or false.

Good or bad, this solution has been discussed. This is not what interests us. It is to become aware that we can pose the question of whether Newtonian doctrine was true before Newton formulated it.

(22) Well then, I would like to know how the audience is divided on this point? But for me, I will happily put my cards on the table by saying that it seems to me to be very unlikely to say that Newtonian knowledge was true before it was constituted by Newton for the good reason that now and in the first place it no longer is so. It is no longer completely so.

In the very necessity of knowledge, of signifying articulation, there is this contingency of being only a signifying articulation, an assembled lock.

We analysts do not even have to go so far, only this roofing is constructed so that we will not be so disoriented in having to deal with a quite different requirement.

What is this requirement? It is placed at the level at the original signifying incidence, the one where the subject finds himself at once emerging and at the same time being alienated because of this signifying incidence.

This signifier, of which it is required that to represent a subject, it should be addressed, signifying him, it should be the diplomatic representative of the subject to another signifier, is it going to be required of us that we should find it on every occasion?

What would be the paradox of a requirement and of a duty, which is not the one that the scholar like the sophist has always assumed, which is to have an answer to (23) everything. To everything that has been organised as discourse, to everything that has arisen as a signifying combination, to be always equal to the discourse; not of this absolutely original something which is what this unique and supporting signifier would be, this primordial *onoma,* where the subject is specified with respect to the whole world of the signifier.

The absurdity of this position is sufficiently shown, and this is the point of vertigo that the very idea of interpretation involves, is at the same time what allows us to escape from it, this is what relativises it, it is not at all with this that we have to deal, any more than our knowledge of psychoanalysis would culminate in this sort of fatalism of knowledge, that the answer is already in us and not because of the fact that from us, an answer is expected.

The chances of the encounter, which is what is involved in the appeal of desire, are in themselves more than improbable, and moreover the horizon of signs, of

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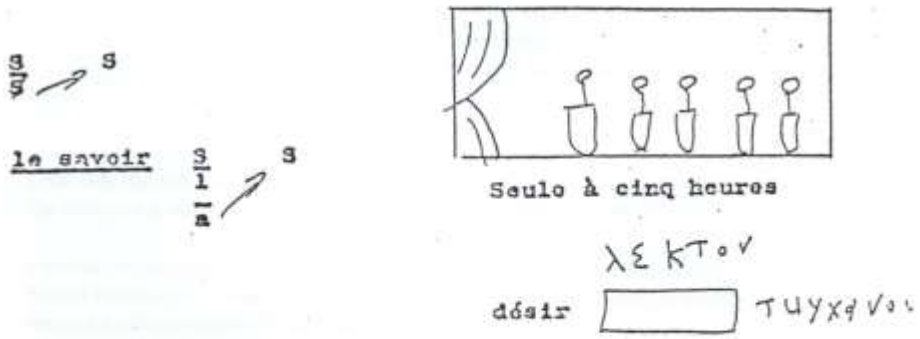

signifieds on which subjective experience is deployed is of its nature enigmatic, and announced as such at the level of the *lekton* as regards what is involved in desire, I will not put forward the term today, except to say it is the real of desire and its status that is involved in the analytic operation.

Let us simply say that in the first place and phenomenologically, it announces itself to us as being the field of the impossible.

There we are, well circumscribed. Might not the position of the analyst be summed up effectively in this something that we might call, not at all the fatalism of knowledge but fetishism, that the analyst would be something like the boundary mark or the joist of a knowledge that is impossible to sustain.

This is the point of impasse at which where I intend to conclude today in order to try to open it up the next time we meet.

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Seminar 18: Wednesday 12 May 1965

The signifier
The subject
Knowledge (*le Savoir*)

The subject supposed to know

The subject supposed to know
The signifier as singular
The missing signifier and the Dyad
Sex and Knowledge

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I left you the last time on the question posed about the status of the analyst: can the analyst be, quite simply, the subject who is supposed to know?

I ended on the image raised about what such a supposition would involve, what it would force us to sustain, in terms of a sort of fetish function of the analyst with respect to this position of knowledge.

In order that the analysis may be engaged in and sustained, the analyst assuredly **is** supposed to know. And, nevertheless, everything that the foundations of psychoanalysis involves, precisely in terms of knowledge, affirms to us that there cannot be this subject who is supposed to know for the reason that the discovery of Freud excludes the fundamental knowledge of psychoanalysis.

I will go no further today. Here I am tracing the limit from which my discourse ought to begin or to end. My discourse today will only be the development of this antinomy opening out perhaps, but only to some people, the fault, the gap through which we can conceive - because this fault, this gap is already traced out - that the position of the analyst effectively is sustained.

(2) Nevertheless, we already remained on this question about the analyst the last time, not at all of course about his capacity, it is too easy and mythical to imagine some virtue or other, an innate or acquired gift which would put him in the position of assuming what he has to do, it is his radical position as subject that is involved when we say that, at the foundations of analysis, he ought to be the subject who is supposed to know, and I began to say the last time how this could have a meaning; this can only, given the outlines of what Freud gave us about the analytic experience, represent nothing other than a certain availability that he provides and which defines him as such, so that he would be equivalent to a certain availability to be provided in the order of the signifier, and this of course is not without a reply, an echo, a preparation in the fashion that I define the signifier for you, and not without reason, as being what represents the subject for another signifier.

This indeed, moreover, is why the analytic conjuncture is the point from which there is dissolved this case of short-sightedness in the linguist, this distinction that he believes he is making or ought to make, as being essential, between two so-

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called linguistic levels, one involving the inherency of meaning, opposed to the other which excludes it, in other words, to go quickly, the opposition between the word and the phoneme.

(3) From our point of view, from our experience, which is that of lack, there is never given anything but the word of whatever it is and at whatever level it is, the phoneme being here strictly equal in experience as it abundantly proves in this field, one of those from which Freud began, the forgetting of names, the phoneme, its forgetting, is at the principle of the fact that this forgetting is not at all the forgetting of the word as meaning, which quite often subsists, but comes from the lack of a signifying articulation.

I remembered in this connection, in order to tell it to you, that, curiously, the very expression in French, *le mot me manque* (the word escapes me), can be dated, it was not used in French before a certain epoque; namely, that we have an attestation of it from someone from the circle of the *précieux,* at the beginning of the seventeenth century, who is able to note then, because he does it from day to day, collecting the well-made expressions that he sees arising in his milieu, that this expression, he collects it, he underlines it, *le mot me manque* was invented somewhere among these people who were dialoguing one opposite the other, seated on what are called *commodités de la conversation*, in other words, armchairs.

He goes as far as to say of this trait, this notation, that it is legitimate to affirm that before this dictum of the *précieux,* the expression *le mot me manque,* since it was (4) not in use in French, left in suspension an unthinkable part about this lack of the signifier, and that it is indeed there, always at the level of the signifying creation, that there is introduced something which opens up the path to what can later be grasped; *le mot me manque* does not imply the whole of Freud, but it is a way for me of introducing, of taking up on this occasion, the form of a question that I had introduced the last time of what is involved in a knowledge before this moment, however we may designate it, when it emerges, without our being able to say in virtue of what maturation, unless it is perhaps, the possibility of its signifying composition.

What was meant by *le mot me manque* before Freud? In any case it is clear that it did not have the same signifying value.

But it is not there that we ought to seek the source of the incidence of this signifying conjuncture which for us is what we are going to structure the notion of knowledge around. By way of proof I need only indicate the sterility, the lack of openness, that the other side involves, the one that is called logical-positivism which, searching for the *meaning of meaning* by assuring itself, by being on its guard, I would say, against the surprises of a signifying conjunction by dismembering, in a way, - how can it be done if not always in a retrospective fashion - the diversity of these significant refractions only ends up with this curious (5) skeleton which, in a particular work entitled *The meaning of meaning,* by Ogden and Richards, by Richards and Ogden, ends up for example in dealing with the beautiful, by laying out for us for whole columns, with brackets and parentheses, a whole section of the different acceptations in which this word can

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be taken, thus rendering it strictly impossible to understand why these diverse meanings find themselves united there.

Logical-positivism makes one think, I would say, by the very contrasting and bracketing of the two terms in which it affirms itself, of something like these monsters who peopled the mediaeval bestiaries, and so as not to be always coming back to our eternal unicorn or to some chimera, sufficiently worn out by the risky, doubtful usage made of it by logicians, for it it is well to be always prudent as regards the exact status of these monsters, I would compare it here to another one which you hear less spoken about, the mirmicoleon. It has the breast of a lion and the hindquarters of an ant. It is not surprising, as the scholarly authors of the aforesaid bestiaries affirm, that it can only die. The ant, even if it was raised by Prévert to the fabulous dimensions of the famous eighteen metres - and why not says Prévert - the ant, in any case, not being able to evacuate what the lion devours. Such is the positivist or logical-positivist fly-speck after an abundant (6) chewing-over of what it cannot grasp in the dialectical virtue of a term like the beautiful, of which one could say in this connection, when one gives a sigh of relief at seeing the end of the painful elaborations of the authors of *The meaning of meaning,* that the first idiot who might point out to us that *beau* rhymes with *peau* would tell us much more about it.

Le mot me manque, le mot me manque, before Freud, had its value as an unveiling. *Le mot me manque,* involved from its very composition as a precious artefact, the opening of a path of truth which was to find, with Freud, its completion in knowledge.

I understand the word truth here in its properly Heideggerian sense. The ambiguity of what is unveiled but still remains half-hidden.

A certain medical lack of reflection with which I am surrounded, may undoubtedly, when I say, when I said the last time that a question can be posed about the status of a knowledge, whether it is Newtonian or Freudian, before it effectively comes to light, may say to me: what are you saying there, you who are interested in us, who teach us such risky things? So the unconscious is an invention of Freud's, and why not? The subject represented by the signifier is something which only dates from your discourse. Now, what is at stake, is precisely the status of the subject with respect to a knowledge.

(7) This subject, as we first encounter it as affirmed, effectively supposed, in every knowledge which closes in on itself, where was it before? When a knowledge, like Newtonian knowledge is completed, let us observe what happens as regards the status of the subject,. It is worth our while delaying on the matter for a moment, even though I raised this problem before you a long time ago.

Newtonian knowledge realised, in the history of science, a sort of exemplary acme, that was at once paradoxical and really exemplary, paradigmatic, not to say pleonastic, an example then of what is really involved in the status of the subject. For in this formula which suddenly rooted the enigmatic phenomena in the heavens which had captivated the attention of calculators throughout the centuries, gathered them together, enclosed them in a formula which had nothing else for it than its exactitude, for it is so unthinkable in the name of any experienced

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property, in anything that man knows in his relationship to the world, that what it teaches him has no action to be transmitted and presupposes a medium which transmits it, which proposes to him this action at a distance which is properly speaking unthinkable, and makes there arise from the mouths of our contemporaries with a single cry, as it were, but how can such a body, as it were, such a mass isolated at some point in space, know the distance it is from another body, so that it is linked to it by this relationship?

(8) And of course, for Newton, there is in effect no doubt the fact that this presupposes in itself a subject who maintains the action of the law. Everything which is of the order of physics or appears here to relate to the action and the reaction of bodies following the properties of movement and of rest, but, the operation of gravity does not appear to him to be able to be supported except by this pure and supreme subject, this sort of acme of the ideal subject that the Newtonian God represents.

This indeed is the reason why our contemporaries have quite correctly made Newton equal to this God, for it is the same thing to create this law and to see it articulated it in all its rigour. But it is no less true that a too perfect subject like the subject of knowledge, which is the first true model of this absolute knowledge which haunted Hegel, that this subject leaves us completely indifferent and that belief in God gained no renewal from it.

That this subject is nothing, that he is the only one not to know it. And this indeed is precisely the sign that he is nothing. In other words, it is in the ambiguity of the relationship of a subject to knowledge, it is in the subject in so far as he still lacks knowledge that there resides for us the nerve, the activity of the existence of a subject. This indeed is why it is not as a supposed support of a harmonious group of signifiers in this system that the subject is grounded, but in so far as somewhere (9) there is a lack, which I articulate for you as being the lack of a signifier because it is this articulation which allows us to rejoin in the simplest fashion the Freudian articulation so that we can extract from it its essential principle.

Undoubtedly, so as not to leave for a moment this horizon of the starry heavens before which Kant still prostrated himself, note that if, from all time, it is there that man has done his scales, his exercises in signifiers, it is uniquely for the reason that he had always being looking for the supreme subject, never finding him there for that matter, but such is the force, the pregnance of the functioning of the signifier, that it is still there that he keeps his gaze turned when from all time he knows well that the Gods are among us. They are elsewhere than in the heavens. It is only their eponymous constellations that he is going to situate there.

The final taste, after this decisive expulsion from the heavens by Newton of any divine shadow, remains to us in the form of these signals that we are waiting for and which might come to us from somewhere, and paradoxically, as they say, from some life on another planet.

I ask, whether if there effectively came to us some sign or signal that we could qualify as signifying, in the name of what would this assure us of any life whatsoever, if not for the reason that in the least well grounded fashion we identify (10) the possibility of articulating the signifier with the fact of a life which

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might be its support. Is there not something other than life that can produce a signifier, and if we are so sure of it, in the name of what?

Undoubtedly the first criterion would be to know where we will define the limit, the definition of a natural pulsation, since the last I heard, it seems that we have received nothing other from some distant galaxy or from what might be properly speaking a signifier. How could we define it except in Lacanian terms?

I mean that we will only ratify as attesting for us somewhere the presence, not of a living being, but of a subject, a signifier that we could very precisely articulate as orientated with respect to another signifier. The first condition is alternation, but one which one would, in a special fashion, bear witness to one of its members, and thus some variation is needed and, in a word, the shape of which Morse gives us an indication, namely, the existence of dactyls or of spondees so that in the first phase we would clearly know that a signifier only has a value in this case for other signifiers, but that is still not sufficient.

It is necessary to have this element of oddity, of exception, of paradox, of appearance and disappearance founded as such, which would show us clearly that something is alternating, which is precisely the relationship of one of these (11) signifiers with a subject. In a word, oddity and alternation: we need to have the testimony that the signifying ordering of something in which the subject would show himself to be capable of assuring pure chance, namely, a succession of heads or tails grouped together under a signifying form.

In other words, the best proof that we could have of the existence of a subject in the starry heavens,would be if some message with a minimum of four terms was found to correspond to the syntax that, in the introductory chapter to Poe's *Purloined letter*, I tried to articulate as alpha, beta, gamma, delta which those who have read this little introduction know are composed from a sort of grouping of pure random selection, and that the fact of grouping them, of naming them in a certain unitary fashion, whatever it may be in fact, culminates at a syntax from which already one cannot escape. If an analogous syntax were discovered in a succession of signs, we would have the assurance that what is involved there is indeed a subject.

If you believe you have the right to justify why, at the same time, you could describe it as living, try to articulate why. This will lead us, perhaps, along the same paths on which I am now going to try to advance.

(12) Freud escapes from the objection that my unreflective interlocutor put to me earlier, as follows: the fact is, that replying to the question, where is the subject of the unconscious before Freud discovered it, the reply is precisely that what Freud defines for us as subject is the new, original relationship, unthinkable before his discovery, but affirmed, of a subject to a not-knowing.

Must I dot my i's? The unconscious means that the subject refuses a certain point of knowing. The fact is that the subject is designated by deliberately trying not to know, it is that the subject is established - this is the step where the Freudian articulation is enriched by what I outline in the margin concerning the relationship to the subject to the signifier - the fact is that the subject is established from a

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rejected, *verwerfen*, signifier, from a signifier about which one wants to know nothing.

What is this "one"? It is no more strange than the subject which disappears in total disinterest at the basis of an absolute system.

What Freud designates for us, is the subsistence of the subject of a not-knowing. The question for us is to elaborate a status for this subject such that we are not forced to give it a substance, namely, to believe like the Jungians that this subject is God.

This is where there should be of service the reminder that I give you that what (13) represents the outline of the whole dialectic which has culminated in our science, rests on a more and more articulated approach of the subject as designated by a relationship which overlaps this affirmed, concrete, experimental relationship with the missing signifier by Freud.

What the whole dialectic, the one which begins with Plato, has forged for us - and this is the sum of the major texts concerning the elaboration of a thinking about knowledge in our tradition which bears witness to this - I remind you from time to time about its essential articulating points, I will remind you or indicate to you, for my listeners who are here for the first time, of the really fundamental text which is Plato's *Sophist,* which I would ask you to consult; you will see there intervening in filigree the essential articulations that you will see overlapping with the greatest rigour, to the point of emerging in certain places as something which breaks through the canvas, the definition that the linguistic reference today allows us to give of a subject as that which corresponds to the position of the signifier - I mean the elementary signifier of the phoneme - in the system where the signifying battery, where there is established the concrete reality of every existing tongue.

It would be well here to recall two themes which are included in the fundamental aphorism of the signifier representing the subject for another signifier.

(14) Everything is in the status of this other. Everything that I will say about this other in what is going to follow, emerges, is already perfectly articulated at the end of this *Sophist* that I evoked for you just now and precisely under the rubric of the Other.

If the modern status of the subject is not given in Plato, it is in so far as there escapes there, that there is not articulated there, the tension that there is between this Other and the One, and which would allow us to ground this Other as what I call the One-more *(Un-en-plus),* it is One-more that you only see emerging in the theory of numbers at the level of Freud. In other words this conception of the singular as essentially lack.

Two relationships are outlined in this tertiary relationship that I articulate for you of the signifier representing something for another signifier and of the signifier representing the subject in a function of alternation, of *vel*, of either ..... or, either the signifier which represents or the subject and the signifier which vanishes.

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Such is the form of the essential singularity which is indeed the one that would be required of the analyst if he had, irreducibly, fundamentally, to reply to this phantastical domination which always appears on the horizon, and which you saw (15) being discussed recently at my closed seminar in connection with a certain example, with this specific, onomastic, formulation by which this lack is supposed to be filled by the formulation of a name.

The composition of the signifying dyad of the couple, whatever it may be, that every usage of the tongue and especially the poetic one knows well, the one which is expressed in the poetic formula that words make love, or again to quote another poet: "to every night its day, to every mountain its valley, to every day its night, to every tree its shade, to every being its no (*non*)" ..... as in Plato who speaks of nothing but this no and of the distinction between this no and non-being, "to every good its evil."

Which must be understood here, not as contraries in the real but as signifying oppositions. Now, it is around this that there revolves the whole Platonic development. This dyad, since it subsists in Plato's thinking, requires the introduction of the Other as such. In order that being and non-being should not also be contraries equally existing, and thus giving shelter to all the conjuring tricks of the sophist, it is necessary that the non-being should be established as other in order that the sophist can be rejected there.

The astonishing embrace between Plato and the sophist, which I would like one of you to give a commentary on at our next closed seminar, by showing us in it what (16) appears everywhere, the extraordinary similarity, the shimmering reflection which means that at every turn of the page we read in it the characteristics of the palpitation that is current and present in the history of the psychoanalyst himself.

The psychoanalyst is the presence of the sophist in our time, but with a different status from which the reason has emerged, that there has come to light the reason, why these sophists operated with so much force and also without knowing why. The moment of force is based on something that analysis teaches us: the fact is that at the root of every dyad there is the sexual dyad. The masculine and the feminine (*le masculin et le feminin),* I say it like that because there is a tiny little oscillation in the expression if I were to say, the male and the female *(le male et le femelle).*

The ambiguities in the tongue about the function of gender, of what someone like Pichon, who believed a little bit too much in thinking not to have singular variations in his way of analysing phenomena and words, had called the *sexuisemblance* - I agree, but I would prefer *sexuilatence* - because the fact that the armchair is called the (*le*) armchair, the chair, the (*la*) chair, does not have any *sexuisemblance* except for very imaginative people, but the presence of gender as simply correlative of the signifying opposition, is for us, by underlining for us precisely the destinction between gender and sex, is designed to remind us that in what grounds the dyadic opposition - and God knows that it gives Plato a lot of embarrassment because he has to invent the Other in order to make the individual (*l'etre*) subsist - the dyadic opposition has as a radical foundation only the opposition of sexes, of which we know nothing.

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Because Freud himself articulates in many texts that we give to the masculine-feminine opposition equivalents, metaphors, the parallels of active and passive or of seeing and being seen, of penetrating and of being penetrated, so favoured by a celebrated cuntesse; but we do not know what the masculine and the feminine are.

And Freud recognises it and affirms it. What is at stake so that knowledge, I mean the knowledge capable of giving an account of itself, the knowledge that knows how to articulate the subject - there is no other one to give its status to the unconscious, the unconscious means nothing else outside of this perspective - what is there in this knowledge which ensures that at the approach of this knowledge there functions, and in a unilateral fashion, namely, in the sense of the pure eclipsing, of the disappearance of the signifier, not simply the *verwerfen* which grounds the subject, but of the *verdrangt,* repression of everything which may approach it, even from a distance, and which bears witness to us of the presence of the subject in the unconscious, where the subject of the unconscious is the subject who avoids the knowledge of sex.

(18) You must admit that this is a state of affairs that is a little bit surprising which, moreover, in order to give you a rest for a moment, will allow us to throw a look backwards and to make the observation that perhaps some of you have made along this path that I try to elaborate for you in the hours that I reserve for it on my Sabbath day: all of a sudden I struck my head saying: “But there is no word in Greek to designate sex!”

Since I had only Greek-French dictionaries within reach, I was reduced to searching in the authors, in the treatise *On animals* by Aristotle - this made me do things which were not new discoveries, for I am very fond of this treatise *On animals* - I was able to confirm that Aristotle, in short, had said almost everything that is important in zoology, but has all the same on the subject of reproduction - not to mention sex - of reproduction ideas that are necessarily a little vague. Microscopy was missing and the common nature of the term *sperma,* this sort of liquid which spreads out and from which there begins the equal attribution of the *sperma* to the male and the female, the only difference being that the female spreads it in herself and that the male spreads it outside is a rather valid phenomenological distinction but perhaps one designed to give us the idea of the embarrassment people were in effect in for centuries about what is involved (19) essentially, simply in reproduction.

As regards sex, let us not mention it. And this may explain a lot of things to us.

With some scruples I telephoned someone who is here on my left and who never refuses to perform this service to me, to ask him how, in a French-Greek dictionary, sex in Greek was expressed.

He replied with some little things which meant that it was ..... gender, ... nature, and that it was on occasion ..... ,namely, the difference between the male and the female.

You see what a periphrasis this is. These things are very interesting and one cannot blame Plato too much for completely failing to recognise this dimension

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which, perhaps, would have been of service to him in his embarrassment, the aporias of the *Sophist.*

But he was not without some awareness of it because, as a matter of fact, the horror that he manifests for the category of ..... of the contrary, concerning the oppositions which are characterised by the yes and the no, is in fact the testimony that here there is being approached a mystery which is undoubtedly one to which a wide berth should be given.

(20) The Latins obviously have *sexus*. And here I will only allude in passing to the fact that this *sexus,* if we can designate an origin for it, it is on the side of [secus?]. You are approaching a little the Freudian truth. But indeed this still does not go very far.

There is something strange. It is that about sex we know, I mean know because of scientific investigation, we know much more. There is something that is striking simply from the examination of what happens at the level of animals that are called protistae or their near neighbours, something that every naturalist not only knows but can clearly articulate. I am not going to quote the authors for you but almost all of those who have studied the problems of sexuality have said it and have perceived ever since we have known a bit more about it thanks to the microscope. We know, but we do not draw the consequence of it, that sex is not at all something that is related to reproduction, first of all because there are organisms which reproduce in an a-sexual fashion and because among those which are intermediary between a-sexual reproduction and sexual reproduction, in other words depending on the stage of the shoot (*rejet*) of the line of descendance, reproduce themselves sometimes in an a-sexual fashion and sometimes do something which gives us the idea of a relationship with sexed reproduction, what (21) gives us the idea of it among elementary organisms - and I am not going to be so pedantic as to tell you their categories here because I do not want to overload my presentation - the fact is that what happened when I spoke about sexed reproduction, it is above all something whose essential is rather the reverse of fecundation than fecundation itself; namely, that a meiosis, that is to say a chromosomic reproduction, and after that there can be a conjunction, but it is not necessarily a reproduction; it can also be considered as a rejuvenation and this perhaps is what sexual conjunction essentially is.

In other words the relationship, the bond, between sexual differentiation and death is here manifest and tangible and in an ambiguous fashion. It is the relationship with death which undergoes here, something like the characteristics of a genuine relationship: this fundamental pulsation that sex is, at one and the same time, the sign of death, and that it is at the level of sex that there is waged the battle against death, as such, but not at the level of reproduction. Reproduction here is only a consequence, a usage on this occasion of cells that are more specialised than the others *qua* sexed, in other words at the moment when there appears the autonomy of the *germen* as compared to the .....

But of its nature nothing indicates that sex is in its origin a reproductional mechanism.

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(22) If we delay on this fundamental phenomenon of chromosomic reduction, in other words, what is called meiosis, and what results from it by way of expulsion, of what on the desks of the secondary school we were told were the little polar globules, in connection with the formation of the sexual cells, we see there, in the concrete, in the material, the expression of a different polarity, that of the support of the organism with something which is a remainder, something which is the complement of what is, precisely, lost, reduced, in the meiosis and which, perhaps, may be destined to illuminate us about what is involved in the phantastical function of the lost object, metaphorically incarnated by objects which do not always have, perhaps, only a quite external relationship with this form of residue expelled from the organism.

I am speculating, I am dreaming. *Schwärmerei*! But it is strange that these sorts of *Schwärmerei* were never, never, never, done in the psychoanalytic field. All the discoveries about sexuality and what is more, besides, they are abundant, they swarm, there are things added to it every day: chromosomes are fascinating, they are the object of feverish discussions for all those who are effectively occupied with this thing that is called the reproduction of living beings, whatever they may be.

(23) For psychoanalysts this is strictly a dead letter. I never saw any text whatsoever in an analytic or para-psychoanalytic review which interested itself in the slightest in this field of the discoveries of modern biology on sex nor the questions that it poses. There is here a phenomenon that we cannot but consider, considering what that involves in terms of indications, moreover, that are not necessarily illegitimate about what is really involved in the position of psychoanalysts concerning what? This something which takes on a more and more pregnant shape, namely, the subject who is supposed to know *qua* subject of the unconscious, namely, the subject who is supposed to know what must in no case be known.

This then is of a nature to show us the mistake, the paradox there would be in thinking of the psychoanalyst as being the one who has to furnish, who has to answer for the singular signifier because it is lacking in its relationship with the other signifier. For if this radical relationship involves the original covering over, the *Verborgenheit,* the fundamental exclusion of what through analytic doctrine itself constitutes its final link, namely, what is involved in the correspondence, whatever it may be, between the male and the female, it is quite clear that everything indicates that the position of the analyst finds itself no less excluded (24) than that of any established subject who preceded him. This indeed is why analysis remains completely in the tradition of the subject of knowledge on the single condition that we should carefully note that for a long time knowledge has been let go far from the subject and that the subject that is involved is only the subject in relation to the missing signifier.

On the contrary, what experience teaches us is, effectively, what arises in this field of experience: it is precisely this metaphor regarding which, all the same, it is not for nothing that a little earlier I evoked for you the correspondence that it has with respect to one of the most fundamental realities of sex, namely, the loss of this little something in which there is established the closest possible relationship of the subject of the unconscious with the world of phantasy.

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That it should be here that analytic experience has in fact taken the psychoanalyst, now allows us to open up the question of how he is solicited by this point, this point of lateral deviation, this indicated point of a relationship to sex which in any case would not be able to overlap a mythical image that we might construct of the male and female relationship, this is what emerges from the divine text: “man and woman he made them”. As Mr Ernest Jones armed with his Protestant tradition does not hesitate to take up again.

(25) Do we not grasp here that for other traditions of thought - by way of illustration, that of Taoism for example - which begin entirely from a signifying apprehension in which we do not have to look for the meaning it represents for them because, for us, it is quite secondary. Meanings always pullulate. You put two signifiers opposite one another and that gives little meanings. They are not necessarily all that pretty.

But that the beginning should be, as such, the opposition between the Ying and the Yang, the male and female, even if they do not know that this is what that means, this just by itself, involves at once this singular mirage that there is here something more adequate to some radical foundation or other, at the same time, moreover, as this may justify the total failure of any culmination on the side of a veritable knowledge, and that is why it would be a great mistake to believe that there is the slightest thing to be expected from the Freudian exploration of the unconscious that would in a way rejoin, echo, corroborate what has been produced by these traditions that we qualify, that we label - I detest the term - oriental, of something which is not from the tradition which has elaborated the function of the subject. To fail to recognise it is to risk all sorts of confusions, and if something on our part (26) can ever be won in the sense of an authentic integration of what for psychoanalysts knowledge ought to be, undoubtedly in a quite different direction. I will pursue this discourse about the position of the analyst the next time.

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Seminar 19: Wednesday 19 May 1965

Like in the game of love, of *amora,* where scissors, stone, and paper catch up on one another indefinitely in a round, stone breaking scissors, paper enveloping stone, scissors cutting paper, you can state in an analogy, which undoubtedly conceals something more complex, that the three terms of my last discourses, and very especially that of the last time, set out before you, under the rubric of the subject, the one that I devoted the greatest care to honing, for your understanding, of knowledge, which, moreover, was the second term to which I tried to give its whole weight, concerning what is involved under the name of unconscious.

The unconscious is a knowledge, whose subject remains undetermined, in the unconscious. What does it know? Well sex, and it is not by chance, nor from haste, if, having marked only the last time in all its relief, that the meaning of the Freudian doctrine is that sex is one of the stumbling points, around which turns this triple relationship, this economy, where each one of these terms is referred on from one to the other in accordance with a relationship which, at first approach, may seem to be the one through which I introduce you to it, a relationship of circular dominance, the (2) subject being undetermined in knowledge, which is brought to a halt before sex, which confers on the subject this new sort of certainty through which his place as subject being determined and only being able to be so from the experience of the *cogito,* with the discovery of the unconscious, of the radically, fundamentally, sexual nature of all human desire, the subject takes his new certainty, that of finding his lair in the pure default (*défaut*) of sex.

This relationship of rotating dominance is essential to ground what is involved in my discourse from its beginning, regarding what status of the subject is involved in what is regenerated for him by the analytic operation, and, moreover, since this analytic operation alone gives him his status, what will be involved today, after this introduction, is not to affirm as a given in the world this dominance which is rejected by each one of the three terms, but to reformulate it, to make its effects felt, in terms of this form under which it is exercised for us, which is properly speaking the form of a game.

I think that even those who might be coming here today to listen to me for the first time, know enough about Freud to recognise what an essential term the relationship between knowledge and sex constitutes in his teaching.

(3) Whether it is a matter of his approach, of his discovery of the psychoanalytic dynamic, it is in terms of what the subject knows more about it than he believes, says more about it than he wishes, and demonstrates, from his own resources, this form of ambiguous knowledge which, in a way, renounces itself at the very moment that it avows itself, that Freud introduces the dynamic of the unconscious, and when he theorises it, it is around this oscillating point of the question about sex, of the epistemological drive, of the need to know what is involved in sex, that there is introduced genetically into the history of the child everything that will

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subsequently expand in the shape of his person, of his character, of his symptoms, of all this material which is ours and which interests us.

But it is here that we have the incidence of what I wanted to articulate for you in its dialectical difference, when I spoke to you about truth in connection with knowledge; where that knowledge is, where it has its status, there where we have constituted it, there where not unconsciously but external to us, it is grounded in science. Where was the truth before the establishment of knowledge?

A question which, as I reminded you, does not date from yesterday. It is exactly contemporaneous with the first logical articulations: it is in Aristotle, it is the status of the contingency of truth before it is authenticated in knowledge, but what the Freudian (4) articulation shows us is a divergent relationship between this truth and knowledge.

If we must wait for knowledge, if the truth is in suspense as long as knowledge has not being constituted, it is quite clear that if someone had formulated three hundred years earlier the Newtonian formula itself, it would have meant nothing, because these truths would not have been able to be inserted into his knowledge.

It is the Freudian structure which reveals and lifts the seal of this mystery for us. The orientation of the truth, what is discovered, is not towards a knowledge, even one to come, which is always, with respect to a point X, in a fundamentally lateral position, what we have to bring to light as truth, as *alethia,* as Heidegerian revelation, is something which for us gives a fuller sense if not a purer one to this question about being, which is articulated in Heidegger and which is called for us, for our experience as analysts, sex.

Either our experience is in error or we are doing nothing right: and that is how this is formulated. This is how this ought to be formulated here.

The truth is to be said about sex, and it is because it is impossible - this is in Freud's text - because the position of the analyst is impossible, that is why, it is because it is (5) impossible to say it in its entirety, that there flows from it this sort of suspense, of weakness, of secular incoherence in knowledge, which is properly the one that Descartes denounces and articulates in order to detach from it his certainty about the subject, by which the subject is manifested as being precisely the signal, the test, the remainder of this lack of knowledge, through which he rejoins what bound him, what refuses itself to knowledge, in the sex on which the subject finds himself suspended in the pure form of this lack, namely, as desexualised entity.

A knowledge therefore, takes refuge somewhere, in this place that we could call and why not, for we are only rediscovering here ancient paths, in a place of original shame (*pudeur),* with respect to which all knowledge is established in an unsupersedable horror, with regard to this place where lies the secret of sex.

And this is why it is important to recall what everyone may know, but it is striking that it is forgotten, that we know the many cascading effects of what is involved in sex, even if it is only the multiplicity of existing beings, and that it is to veil the question, it is to dodge it, to make of sex the instrument whose effects would be

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justified by their teleology. Sex, in its essence as radical difference, remains untouched and sets its face against knowledge.

(6) The introduction of the unconscious totally changes the status of knowledge and that in a double way, the doubling having to be repeated at every level that we have to take up again in the three poles in which our subjective order is constituted.

The knowledge of the unconscious is unconscious in that, on the side of the subject, it is posited as the indetermination of the subject, we do not know at what point of the signifier there is lodged this subject who is supposed to know.

But from another side, this knowledge, even unconscious, is in a reference of fundamental interdiction with regard to this pole which determines it in its function as knowledge.

There is something that this subject, this knowledge must not know. It is the radical, not accidental, constitution - even though all the chains in which there are linked this subjective concatenation are never anything but singular - founded on this grasp, this first inclusion which constitutes its whole logic, a logic that we must ground, in order to grasp how it circulates, and where we are at when we, as analysts, claim to operate on it.

There is a question which has just been posed at a competitive examination, one of these examinations which in a *milieu* like this one is something which provides some illustration: one could indeed say that one question which was posed there is on the agenda. The question was posed to those who had to surmount this barrier, this (7) steeplechase of what is called *l'agregation*: "Can man represent for himself a world without men?".

I will say here, not at all the way in which I would have advised each candidate to treat this question, but the way I would have treated it myself.

That the world in question has never been graspable except as forming part of a knowledge: it is clear that from all time, it is easy for us to see that representation is only a term which serves as surety for the lure of this knowledge.

Man himself was fabricated, right throughout his traditions, in accordance with these lures. It is quite clear then, that he could not be excluded from this representation, if we continue to make of this representation the surety of this world.

But it is the subject that we are dealing with and for us the subject, precisely in the measure that he may be unconscious, is not a representation, he is the representative *(Representanz)* of the *Vorstellung.* He is there in place of the *Vorstellung* which is lacking: this is the meaning of the Freudian term of *Vorstellungsrepresentanz.*

It is not a matter of objecting to us the fact that from all time this man with which we have covered the world, this *macroanthropos* which the macrocosm was, was of course always made sexed, but precisely it is only too clear that for want of

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being able to say what sex he was, he had the two and that indeed is the whole question.

(8) The fact of saying that one finds a little touch of the one and the other, a mixture of characteristics among the higher vertebrates, adds nothing to this.

The subject from which we have to begin is the piece which is lacking to a knowledge that is conditioned by ignorance and what is involved in its regard, if it is through it that we have to find man, is always in a position of a scrap of waste (*déchet*) with respect to his representation.

And in this measure one can say that until psychoanalysis, the world was always represented without the true man, without taking account of the place where he is as subject, the place in which there would be no representation, very precisely because the representation would not have a representative in the world.

This is how I have marked on the board, with their characteristics, the very ones that I have just stated, these three poles of knowledge *qua* unconscious which knows everything, perhaps, except what motivates it, of the subject who is established in his certainty of being a lack of knowledge, and of this third term which is precisely sex in the measure that in this sphere, it is rejected from the beginning, in the measure that it emerges from the fact that one wants to know nothing about it.

(9) This is where I am going to ask you: "Today, do you want us to play?" I say no more about it. I am not saying to you : "Do you want to play with me?" Because after all, from where I am speaking, namely as analyst, to play with me does not say with whom one is playing. I am not saying to you either that something is being played out.

Even though we are analysts, we are in history, and if physics is founded on the terms of: "Nothing is lost, nothing is created"; I would ask whoever here has reflected on history, whether the foundation of this idea of history is not very properly, "nothing is being played out *(rien ne se joue)."*

For all of those who have had the time to experience something of what, in our day, appeared to be played out in what can be written about history, for those who have had the time to see collapsing some pure game in history, is it not obvious that the march of things shows the truth of what I have just stated in this form: "nothing is being played out".

If there is a truth of history, the Marxist truth for example, it is precisely what from a certain point of view we may be led to reproach it with: it is that everything is played out in advance if the subject of history is indeed there where we are told he is, in his economic foundations.
But this indeed is what is demonstrated at every turn. It is enough simply for us to put in its place what is involved, where it is believed the game is being directed from. It (10) nevertheless remains that this game has its status and that it is somewhere between the three terms that I have just outlined for you. It is into this that we are now going to enter and that I pursue my discourse for analysts, even if it proves to be only some game that I am playing for their sake, it is always

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where there is the least risk that they put the biggest amount, and the smallest where there is the greatest risk. But for this it is necessary to know what these terms mean, what the game itself means whatever the level at which we employ this category.

Game is a term with a very large extension, from childrens' games up to the game that one can describe as one of chance, and even as far as what has been called, in a confusing fashion, games' theory. I mean the one that appears to date from the book by Mr Von Neuman and his collaborator.

I will try today to tell you how from the point of view of analysis, which has all the characteristics of a game, we can approach what is involved in this register. The game is something which from its simplest forms up to its most elaborate ones, is presented as the substitution for the dialectic of these three terms, a simplification which, at first, establishes it in a closed system.

What is proper to the game is always, even when it is masked, a rule, a rule which (11) excludes as forbidden this point which is precisely the one that, at the level of sex, I designate for you as the impossible access point, in other words, the point where the real is defined as the impossible.

The game reduces this circle to the relationship of the subject to knowledge, this relationship has a sense and can only have a single one, it is that of waiting. The subject waits for his place in knowledge. The game is always about the relationship of a tension, of a distancing, through which the subject establishes himself at a distance from what already exists somewhere as knowledge.

If, at the time when I still believed that something was being played out, I made, for at least a trimester, the little flock whose crook I was then holding, exercise themselves at the game of odds or evens, it was in order to try to get this truth to pass into their veins. The person holding the marbles knows whether their number is odd or even. Besides, it does not matter whether he knows it or not, he has in his hand knowledge, and the passion for the game arises for the fact that, face to face with him, I establish myself as a subject who is going to know. Under whatever form it may be: of a stake or the marbles themselves, the reality which takes its place, loses what in this triangle, in this tripole, is the impossible to know but which, brought down to the level of a game, because excluded in this impossible, becomes the pure and simple reality of the stake (*l'enjeu*).

(12) The stake is in a way what masks the risk. Nothing, when all is said and done, is more contrary to risk than a game. The game caps the risk. And the proof is that the first steps in games' theory were taken not by Neuman but by Pascal, beginning with the theory of distribution, which means that at every moment of a game an equitable distribution of what is being played for is conceivable, a calculation of hopes is possible which means that to stop a game in the middle does not simply mean that each one of the players takes back his stake, which would be unjust, it is that the stake is distributed in function of what it is extraordinary to state, and which nevertheless gives the very structure of what is involved, in function of the calculation of the hopes of the players.

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I will not go into detail about what is involved, contenting myself here with referring you to the fundamental works by Pascal on the matter, which moreover, for very good reasons have been the law ever since.

What does that mean, if not that for us, whose paths are cleared by this games' theory where it is demonstrated that what is called strategy is something which shows us that what is perfectly calculable, what in a large enough number of cases for it to provide a start to the whole elaboration concerning the exercise of games in a large enough (13) number of cases, the connotation of possible attempts for a player with the totality of possible attempts for the other being known, there is a point, named the saddle point, as one talks about the saddle of a horse, where there intersects as being strictly (*tristement*) identical, what the two players should play in order to have together and in every case, the minimum loss, showing that the nature of the game is far from being purely and simply the opposition between the players, but from the beginning, in its very comprehensibility, the possibility, on the contrary, of agreement.

What the player is looking for in every game, the player as a person, is always something which involves this conjunction as such of two subjects, and what is really at stake in the affair, is this player, the divided subject, in so far as he intervenes in it himself as a stake under the title of this little object, of this residue that we know well, we analysts in the shape of this object to which I gave the name of a little letter, the first one.

If there is something which supports every game activity, it is this something which is produced from the encounter of the divided subject in so far as he is subject, with this something through which the player makes of himself the waste scrap of something which is played out elsewhere, the elsewhere which is full of risks, the elsewhere from which he has fallen from the desire of his parents, and there precisely the point from (14) which he turns away by going to seek, on the contrary, this relationship of a subject to a knowledge and to image for you in the most rudimentary form the well founded character of what I am indicating to you as being in the game, radically, the relationship of a subject to a knowledge, I will evoke for you an image that for me is particularly striking, that of a little girl who, around the age of three, had discovered this game, in an exercise in which it was not at all by chance that what was involved was to come and kiss her father, which consisted of going to the other end of the room, and in approaching with slow steps, and then more precipitous ones, punctuating this advance with these three words: "It will happen, it will happen, it will happen *(ça va arriver)*!".

Such is the fundamental image in which there is included everything that is called, in its diversity, ludic activity up to its most complex and the most organised forms, the isolation of a system by means of a rule in which there is determined the entry into and the emergence from the game, within the game itself, the subject in whatever real he possesses and of an impossible to obtain real, materialised, as I might say, in what is at stake. And this is why the game is propitious, exemplary, isolating an isolatable form of the specification of desire; desire being nothing other than the appearance of this stake, of this **o** which is the being of the player, in the interval of a subject divided between his lack and his knowledge.

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(15) Note that in this game, if reality is reduced to its form of waste scrap of sex, to its unsexual form, the other advantage of the game is that the truth relationship is there, because of the very suppression of this pole of reality as impossible, the relationship of truth is suppressed.

One could ask oneself in every sense what is involved in the truth of science before it is affirmed. One could ask oneself what is involved in the unconscious before I interpret it, and what is proper to a game, is that before one plays, no one knows what is going to come out of it.

This is the relationship of the game to phantasy. The game is a phantasy rendered inoffensive and preserved in its structure.

These remarks are essential to introduce what I want to articulate for you today, namely, what is involved in the game of analysis, if it is a fact, since it has all its characteristics, that analysis is a game because it is carried out within a rule, and regarding which it is a matter of knowing how the analyst has to direct this game, in order to know also what are the properties required of his position in order for him to direct it to this operation in a correct fashion.

Let us say first of all what use this schema is for us. To tell us, what we no doubt know but what we are far from articulating in every case, and this schema can even be explained, the fact is that in an analysis, there are apparently two players: these players (16) whose relationship I have tried to articulate for you as a relationship of misunderstanding, since, from the place that one of these players occupies, the other, who is the subject, is the subject who is supposed to know, while if you trust my schematic articulation, the subject, if we can speak about this pole in its pure constitution, the subject is only isolated by withdrawing himself from any suspicion of knowing.

The relationship of one of these poles to the pole of the subject is a fallacious relationship, and it is also in this that it comes close to being a game; the subject who is supposed to know constitutes the conjunction of this pole of the subject to the pole of knowledge, regarding which the subject has first of all to know that at the level of knowledge a subject should not be supposed since it is the unconscious.

What results from that? To keep ourselves to these two poles, it is that from the point of view of the game, that gives perhaps two players, in the sense that in the games' theory of Mr Von Neuman what is meant by players are simple agents, the which agents are distinguished from one another simply by an order of preference.

But the very fact that these agents, in the case that I evoked earlier, may be in agreement without even knowing one another, on the simple sheet of paper that Mr Von Neuman uses to show that each of the two has only one and the same attempt to (17) make, proves that they are perfectly compatible by indicating the same person.

And from a certain point of view and up to a certain limit, if the analyst in his pure, original position has no other one than that of the subject as I define it from a Cartesian point of view, putting the one who, in any case, affirms himself, even

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if he knows nothing, he is the one who thinks that he knows nothing and that this perfectly well suffices to assure his position opposite the other player, who no doubt knows but does not know that he knows. It is quite clear that these two poles can very validly constitute, up to a certain point, the same person if we define the person not by this reference but by the common interest and the common interest is what is called the cure. What does the cure mean? Exactly what happens at some possible point where Pascal stops the game and can carry out at that moment the distribution of the bets in a fashion that is satisfactory for the two. The cure has absolutely no other sense than this distribution of the bets at some point or other of the process if we start from the idea that, up to a certain point, the subject and knowledge are perfectly made to agree, is what every analyst from the school of today's psychoanalysis call, in this false language borrowed from psychology, the alliance with the healthy part of the ego.

(18) In other words let us deceive ourselves together.

If there is something that I am trying to reintroduce, which would allow the analyst to end up with something other than an identification of the indeterminate subject with the subject who is supposed to know, namely, with the subject of deception, it is in the measure that I recall what even those who have this theory know in practice, which is that there is a third player. And that the third player is called the reality of sexual difference.

It is because before this reality of sexual difference, the subject who knows, who is not the analyst but the analysand, has been for a long time established within his own game, the one which has lasted, commenced and culminated in analysis, necessary ....., of two subjects, of the divided subject, on one side subject and on the other side knowledge, but not together, and of this something which means he can only apprehend himself as fallen and dropped from the reality which he neither wants nor can know anything about, in what ensures that man always has to flee the impossible of reality into this something which is the ludic supplement of it and at the same time its defence, this something that we know in the shape of what is revealed in phantasy in so far as its cause is the bringing into play of the subject in the form of this object of object relations, brought into play between the two opposed subjective terms of the (19) subject and of unconscious knowledge, this substitution of the **o**, of the object of waste, of the object of the fall, for what is involved, the reality of the sexual relationship, this is what gives its law to this relationship of the analyst to the analysand in this sense that far from him having to be content with some equitable distribution of the stakes, he has to deal with something where he finds himself indeed in a position of opposition to his partner.

As in all the cases where there is not in the game an agreeable solution, he has to deal with a partner who is on the defensive but whose defensiveness is dangerous and prevalent in the fact that contrary to what many imagine, this defensiveness is not directed against him the analyst, which gives him his strength, the fact is that it is directed against the other pole, that of sexual reality.

It is unbeatable precisely in that having, because of this fact, no solution, the ruse of the leader of the game, if the analyst can deserve his name, can only be the

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following, to make there end up from, to separate out from this defensiveness, a form that is always more pure.

And this is what the desire of the analyst is in its operation. To lead the patient to his original phantasy, is not to teach him anything, it is to learn from him how to act. In a particular case, it is the patient who knows how to deal with the **o**-object and its relationship to the division of the subject.

(20) And we are at the place of the result in the measure that we favour him. Analysis is the locus where there is verified in a radical fashion, because it shows it, this strict superimposition that desire is the desire of the other, not because the desire of the analyst is dictated to the patient, but because the analyst makes of himself the desire of the patient.

This is what is expressed for you by the little triangle in red, which shows you in what virtual space on the side of the other, a locus occupied by the analyst, there is situated the point of desire, namely, at strictly opposite poles, at the locus where there lies the impossible of the reality of sex.

Now it is here that there is found the high point of the analytic ruse, and it is there only that it can be rejoined. It is only from this perspective and in the measure that the analyst is absolutely broken to it, that there can happen something of what properly speaking constitutes the only conceivable gain.

It is only at the point where there is taken to the maximum what makes knowledge be constituted as the guard, but understand it in the sense of serving, that this refusal of sexual reality, of this most intimate *aidos,* of this radical shame, it is precisely at this point that this shame may betray itself.

The fact is that this guard is brought to its most perfect point, which can let there (21) happen something of a lack of guard, for this reality of sex, for its part, is not supposed to know.

And it is there that I will leave oscillating the question of the final subjective positions.

Does this supreme shame know or not know? There are those who believe that it knows. But how can it be known what it knows, except at the level of the other, from which there is going to arise the shadow of this omnipotent signifier, of this supreme name, of the omniscient which has always been the trap, the elective locus of capture for those who need to believe, as everyone knows, to believe in it can mean, always means, the very people who believe affirm it and say it, it is the fideist theory, one can only believe what one is not sure about.

Those who are sure, well, precisely, they do not believe in it. They do not believe in the other; they are sure of the thing. These people are the psychotics. And that is why it is perfectly possible, contrary to what someone from this School has written in connection with the history of madness by Michel Foucault, to whom one can reproach only one thing which is not to have given to psychosis this formulation for want of having attended my seminar on President Schreber, there

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is a perfectly consistent discourse of madness, it is distinguished by the fact that it is sure that the thing .....

(22) I will leave you at this point - it is two o'clock - to which I led you today.

What ought to be, what can be this desire of the analyst, if it is to hold itself at the same time at this point of supreme complicity, open complicity, open to what? To surprise. The opposite of this waiting in which there is constituted the game in itself, the game as such, is the unexpected. The unexpected is not the risk. One prepares oneself for the unexpected. The unexpected even, if you will allow me for a moment to return to this outline of the para-Eulerian structuring that I tried to give you as necessary at least for certain concepts, namely the inverted eight, a little portion whose external field is this Moebius strip which must necessarily traverse it, you will see that the unexpected finds in the little portion its admirable application. For what is the unexpected if not what reveals itself as being already expected but only when it arrives.

The unexpected, in fact, traverses the field of the expected. Around this game of expectation, and confronting anxiety, as Freud himself in the fundamental texts on this theme formulated it, around this field of expectation we ought to describe the status of what is involved in the desire of the analyst.

This is where I will take things up again in a fortnight's time, since the next time we will have a closed seminar.

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Seminar 20: Wednesday 26 May 1965

Dr Lacan: In the first steps of my closed seminar it is of course to be expected that things will not immediately take on either their shape, or their style, or their method and that certain things remain in suspense.

Our friend Leclaire thought it was a pity that there had not been any response here, I mean a public one, to what Jacques-Alain Miller had written, the text of which had been put at everyone's disposal.

So then, I give the floor to Leclaire who is going to contribute in this connection some remarks which will not have simply the protocol interest of marking the importance of this text of Jacques-Alain Miller but of giving it a properly analytic response.

This intervention by Leclaire will be brief. Jacques-Alain Miller will reply to him if he thinks it is good and opportune to do so. This ought not to cut too much into the totality of our session today which, I remind you, is devoted to the attention that I asked should be given to the text of the *Sophist,* and on which there will intervene in two fleshed-out papers - we have therefore a very heavy program - Audouard first, then Kaufmann.

(2) **Dr Leclaire**: I am going to try to be brief and nevertheless to reply to Miller, namely, to announce my colours right away, to attempt to say how the position of the psychoanalyst is irreducible to any other one and, I will go even further, not only irreducible but perhaps, properly speaking, inconceivable.

I will do it by basing myself on Miller's text of 24th February and more precisely again, on what gives it its fascinating perfection.

In the passionate enterprise of interrogating the foundations of logic, of the logic that he describes as logical, and to gather together in the work of Lacan the elements of a logic of the signifier, Miller manages to present us with a very marvellous discourse and I will not hide from him the satisfaction that I had in reading it, because circumstances had not given me the opportunity to hear it.

Miller's essay has, I believe, the concern to be, like its object, a logical or even archaeological discourse, as he says, and above all a discourse open to comprehending the other discourse, the discourse which has issued from analytic experience.

Now to come to such a discourse, the one that Miller has tried to maintain, it is necessary, as I might say, to hold firmly to the point which, precisely, makes possible the articulation of a logical discourse, namely, this point which is presented to us by (3) himself as the weak point and at the same time the crucial point of every discourse, namely, the suturing point.

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It must be understood, Miller reminds us, that the function of suturing is not particular to the philosopher. It is important that you are convinced, he reminds us, he insists even, that the logician, like the linguist, at his level, sutures.

I am quite convinced of it. It is clear that Miller for his part, as a logician, or archaeologist, also sutures. But here precisely is where the difference is. The analyst, for his part, in any case, and even when he tries to talk about psychoanalysis, the analyst does not suture, or at least he ought to force himself, as I might say, to guard against this passion.

I could stop there. It would obviously be the briefest form. Nevertheless, I would like to take my argument a little bit further. It is easy to say suture. What precisely is involved? In what does there consist this suturing point that is being considered?

One of the propositions underlined in Miller's text which constitutes one of its axes, one of its pivots, is the following: it is in the decisive statement that the number assigned to the concept of non-identity to itself is zero that logical discourse is sutured.

(4) Far be it from me to contest the importance of this remark. On the contrary it is as useful to the analyst as to the logician. But I would like to go further and to question Miller's interest in the concept of non-identity to itself. In his text, the introduction of this concept of non-identity to itself follows on the one, which is no less fundamental, of the concept of identity to itself which is advanced in connection with Frege but in evoking the proposition of Leibnitz, namely: "those things are identical of which one can be substituted for the other without the truth being lost", and that it is starting from this that one arrives at these other proposition underlined in Miller's text, namely: "the truth is: everything is identical to itself ".

I took good care, in this text, to take up also the question of the thing. What is this thing which is identical to itself ? Miller does not pass over this in silence, on the contrary. He specifies for us, tries to specify for us, on pages 6 and 7, the relationships of the concept of the object and of the thing. The object - I am summarising perhaps - is the thing in so far as it is one, and the concept is what subsumes - if I understood correctly - the existence of the object.

Everything is identical to itself, which allows the object, the thing *qua* one, to fall under the concept.

(5) This is a proposition that he says is pivotal. Those things are identical of which one can be substituted for the other without the truth being lost. It is necessary for the thing to be identical to itself for the truth to be saved, and there we will discover, I think, what constitutes the emphasis, the most important concern of this text, namely, to save the truth.
There again this is not necessarily a concern which is radically foreign to the analyst. But I think that it is not an essential concern, and above all not his unique concern. I told you: the analyst, for his part, does not suture. He does not have the same concern. He is not necessarily concerned with saving the truth.

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In the proposition "the truth is: everything is identical to itself", the analyst would be happy to say, at least I would, "the truth is also ". But reality is also. And reality, for the analyst, is to envisage the thing in so far as it is not one, to envisage the possibility of the non-identical to itself.

I am not saying that Miller does not do it. But he does it, in blocking right away the non-identical to itself, the concept of the non-identical to itself, by the signifier, by the number zero. I am going to try to make myself understood in a slightly more lively fashion.

(6) If one renounces, for a moment, the saving of the Truth, of the Truth with a capital T, what appears? What appears is the radical difference, in other words, the sexual difference, the difference between the sexes.

We can find an extremely precise reference to it in Freud's work. At the moment when he is discussing the reality of the primal scene in connection with the observation on the *Wolfman,* he interests himself in the problematic of castration, in its relationships with anal eroticism, there comes to him this curious expression of an unconscious concept. He apologises for it, he does not know very well where that comes from. That comes to him from the unconscious; he proposes an unconscious concept. And what is involved in this unconscious concept?.

It certainly involves, a unit (*unité*), a unit which is the concept but a unit which overlaps things that are non-identical to themselves, which overlap, in his example, the faeces, the child or the penis; why not moreover the finger, the finger that is cut off and the little pimple on the nose, even the nose. We have the introduction of an unconscious concept, the notion of unconscious concept, and in the first example of Freud that comes to him, a little thing that can be separated from the body, but precisely a little thing, let us say, that is indifferent, which is not singular in itself.

(7) Do we have here the concept, or the reality, of a thing that is non-identical to itself, I would not go so far as to claim it, I would simply like, in returning this time to the experience of analysis, to give another example of one of these cases in which one might be embarrassed by these references of identity to itself, and non-identity to itself, as fundamental.

Thus, still in the experience of the Wolfman, there are many moments where his experience pivots, turns upside down, where something changes radically.

In the supplement to the history of an infantile neurosis, that Ruth Mack Brunswick has given us, she signals textually one of these moments where the world pivots on its axis, where the structure of the world, the order of the world seems to vanish. It is the moment when, uneasy about the presence of this pimple on his nose, the Wolfman having questioned the dermatologist, hears it being said that nothing can be done, the pimple will remain the same, it will not change, there is nothing to do, there is no need to treat it or to take it off.

You will tell me, this pimple is therefore precisely one of these things, like that, which is found to coincide with itself. Does that mean that it is identical, that it can be located as identical. I do not think so at all. The proof is that he goes to

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see another (8) dermatologist, has the pimple removed, experiences moreover an acute ecstasy at the moment that this pimple is removed. He is relieved about it for a while. The veil which separates him from the world is once again torn, and he is once again present to the world.

But, of course, this does not last. And what replaces the pimple is a hole. And of course his delusional preoccupation - in fact the delusion is not one that would frighten us - is going to be what is going to happen to this hole, this little scar, this little scratch, which cannot be seen, but he, at his mirror where he constantly looks at his nose sees this hole.

The decisive moment, another decisive moment, which this time decides him to begin a new slice of analysis, is when he is told that the scars will never disappear.

There again it is the same thing: whether what is involved is the pimple or the scar of the pimple; different things, they are nevertheless the same things. For him also, here the world pivots on its axis, he can no longer live like that, it is completely intolerable.

In the formulation that Miller proposes to us and which, I must say, made me reflect a good deal, I think that there is lacking, perhaps, a passage on the problematic of what we could call the identity of zero's.

(9) What is it that makes a zero resemble another zero when one takes into account, at least, that the concept of zero is precisely what most resembles and that it is here we find the essence of identity when something of the order of zero appears.

Why? Because, precisely, it presents us with this radical difference. When I say that the analyst does not suture, it is because it is necessary, in his experience, that even the zero does not serve to hide from him this truth of a radical difference, that is to say in the final analysis, or in the ultimate reality, of sexual reality.

For what does he see, if he does not suture? What can he see? He can see, precisely, this radical difference, the reality of sex underpinned by the fundamental castration.

He can envisage the riddle of generation. Not simply that of the generation of a sequence of numbers, but of the generation of men. And he can perhaps then glimpse the truth from an angle which is, very exactly, that of death.

In other words, I do not think that the analyst can, in any way, fundamentally situate himself with respect to truth.

(10) It is one of these differences, it is one of these dimensions. Just as important for him is the dimension of lure or of deception without for all that, moreover, him privileging what is called the illogical other, one could say that the domain of the analyst is rather a domain that is necessarily a-truthful, at least in its exercise.

I told you that the analyst refuses to suture. In fact he does not construct a discourse, even when he speaks. Fundamentally, and this is the reason why the

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position of the analyst is irreducible, the analyst listens. And everything that one says to the analyst, including the discourses that one hears, can illuminate him. He is listening for what? He is listening to the discourse of his patient, and what in the discourse of his patient interests him, is precisely how there is tied up for him this point of suture, how there is tied up for the patient, for the discourse of his patient, this particular suturing point where necessarily, in effect, a logical discourse is sutured.

In this sense, everything that Miller brings us is extremely precious. If Miller - and he said it to us in his very amusing introduction - situates himself, for his part, in order to speak to us, at a point of a topology of two dimensions, neither opened nor closed, thus neither outside nor inside, I agree, and what is more, that he occupies it, we grant (11) him that, let it be, but the analyst, for his part, even when he speaks or when he tries to speak, always listening to the discourse of the other, well then, he is rather like the subject of the Lacanian discourse, namely, he has no place and cannot have one. Whether he is on the side of the truth of death or on the side of the subject, namely, necessarily evanescent, without a place, without ever occupying, really, any place.

I can imagine that this position or this non-position of the analyst may give vertigo to the logician, to the one whose passion is for the truth. For he is in effect the witness, in his action, of this difference, which for its part is also radical between, let us say, a suturer, between a sutured desirer and one who refuses to suture, a non-suturer, a desirer-not-to-suture, I know well that in a certain way this position is intolerable. But I believe that, whatever we make of it, we are not finished with it, and you have not either Miller, you have not finished attempting, as they say, to put analysis in its place. In fact it is a good thing. For whether it puts itself there by itself - that happens, through weariness - or whether one tried to constrain it there, one single thing is sure. The day that the analyst is in his place, there will no longer be analysis.

Dr Lacan: I will not indicate here, I will not recall, that the things that I began in the last two lectures, are obviously of a nature to give certain indications already in advance about the questions that Leclaire poses here, in a very relevant fashion.

I did not have the time to get us all in tune, as I might say, before ..... this being linked to the work of each one of us. Miller has been very busy these last weeks. This means that I was not able to give all the importance it should have had to Leclaire's plan to speak.

Miller is therefore now free, because he had no prior communication, to respond to me now or to postpone his response. So that it will not be too long delayed, I am even on this occasion, ready to give him the floor at the beginning of our next meeting here, of the next lecture, which, quite simply, will take the place of our talk.

In other words, Miller, do you want to reply in a week's time or do you want a reply right away?
Mr J-A Miller: In a week's time would suit me much better.

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Dr Lacan: I imagine so. Well then, there is no reason that you should improvise on the propositions which have been advanced and which deserve a very serious examination. So then you shall speak first.

I give the floor right away to Audouard.

(13) Mr Audouard: "Yes
True
Certainly
I agree
Undoubtedly
Perfectly true
Obviously
You are speaking the truth
Go on
What do you say?
That is exactly my opinion."

These are the words of Theaetetus, this blessed young man, chosen in your circle, O Socrates, to echo the maieutic discourse of the Stranger. To offer his desire as a reply to the desire of the Stranger. He is a strange blessed young man, whose role I am constrained to adopt today before you caught as I am on the hook of the Master, before being so on that of the questioner. Do you not irresistibly think, in listening in this way to the mouth of Theaetetus opening and closing like a valve, of the sucking of air by the fish which is being asphyxiated at the hand of the fisherman.

A Stranger arrives in the circle with whom Socrates had made an appointment the day before. He comes from Elea, from among the disciples of Parmenides and Zeno. In (14) our day he would surely come to us from the USA. Perhaps he is among us today. Perhaps he is in us today, why not?.

This other might come into our circle to question us about the sophism which had dressed up the truth in beautiful clothes before it made it lose its very foundations by being referred to the truth. The beginning of Plato's dialogue administers the proof to us without telling us. No one can, in effect, know in this dialogue about the angler, who is the fish and who is the fisherman.

Theaetetus mouth opens and closes on the hook dangled by the Stranger, but the Stranger is much rather the fish, because the aim of his discourse is to escape from the net held out by the Sophist. But the Sophist himself, is he not the one who must be grasped and taken in the bow-net, by fishing him along the line of the dichotomies thanks to which one will finally reach his definition. Where has the fisherman gone then? According to the point of view that is adopted, Theaetetus, the fish, will retrospectively fish in the mouth of the Stranger the truth that he wants to grasp. Or the Stranger will fish, in the agreement of Theaetetus, the surrender of the Sophist. Or might it not rather be that the Sophist has caught with his bait the two who are speaking about him, because, when all is said and done, the Stranger and Theaetetus are going to be caught up in the operation of an enormous sophism which will consist (15) in using from the very start, as an essential base of their meeting, the very thing that they are trying to find in their

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meeting, that the participation, the community, the *koinonia* give, in this game of what is and of what is different, an acceptable status to the *fantasmata,* to the simulacrum, which the Sophist sustains as being purely and simply non-being.

But just as the fish is the real fisherman, as the fisherman becomes rather the fish of his fish, as the fisherman passes into the fish and the fish into the fisherman, in the same way, you are going to recognise the method thanks to which the Stranger is going to pursue the definition of the Sophist, and which is called dichotomy, makes pass what was first of all a predicate into a subject, posing first of all, by this fact, a subject with whom one no longer knows what to do, since he remains at the origin independent of the subjects and the predicates that he has generated.

This subject who is first of all the angler and who subsequently is going to become the Sophist. I illustrate for you by a reference to the text :

"Stranger: What is there which is well known and not great, and is yet as susceptible of definition as any larger thing? Shall I say an angler? He is familiar to all of us, and (16) not a very interesting or important person.
Theaetetus: He is not
Stranger: Yet I suspect that he will furnish us with the sort of definition and line of enquiry which we want.
Theaetetus (the blessed young man): Very good.
Stranger: Let us begin by asking whether he is a man having art or not having art, but some other power.
Theaetetus: He is clearly a man of art.
Stranger: And of arts there are two kinds?
Theaetetus: What are they?
Stranger: There is agriculture and the tending of mortal creatures, and the art of constructing or moulding vessels, and there is the art of imitation - all these may be appropriately called by a single name?
Theaetetus: What do you mean? And what is the name?
Stranger: He who brings into existence something that did not exist before is said to be a producer, and that which is brought into existence is said to be produced.
Theaetetus: True.
Stranger: And all the arts which were just now mentioned are characterised by this (17) power of producing?
Theaetetus: They are.
Stranger: Then let us sum them up under the name of productive or creative art.
Theaetetus: Very good.
Stranger: Next follows the whole class of learning and cognition; then comes trade, fighting, hunting. And since none of these produces anything, but is only engaged by conquering by word or deed, or in preventing others from conquering, things which exist and have already been produced - in each and all of these branches there appears to be an art which may be called acquisitive.
Theaetetus: Yes, that is the proper name.

Stranger: Seeing, then, that all arts are either acquisitive or creative, in which class shall we place the art of the angler?
Theaetetus: Clearly in the acquisitive class. (218d-219d)

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(I am not going to go through the whole dichotomic definition of the angler but to indicate to you the very style through which it is obtained and that the commentator summarises as being art of production or of acquisition, an art of acquisition whether it be by exchange or by capture, an art which is by capture or by fighting or by hunting, an art which by hunting is either of the animated or the inanimate type. This is the (18) dichotomy which has left as I told you, at the origin, the true subject. It is starting from him that one began to dichotomise. In the same way one can refer to the other series of dichotomies which is going to be the hunt for living things, the animated kind therefore, and those that remain in the water; and then it is the sort of fishing that is done using a dam or by striking the prey.

Now, when all is said and done, in this first approximation of the definition of the angler and further on of the Sophist in what light is it going to manifest itself?.

Oyez(?) rather: the schema will be the art sorting out the similar and the better by purification. The art of sorting the better, which will be done on corporal things, and spiritual things, rather spiritual. Good, or then the art of sorting the spiritual things and which will then belong to correction or teaching. Teaching which will be then the teaching of trades or education. Education which will be either admonishing or refuting.

But what is it, then, that the Stranger wants to reach in this way? He is already there, and as soon as he is there, already lost. Is this Sophist not ungraspable because he is posited as pure origin of the discourse that is going to be conducted about him? Is not every subject of a discourse hidden immediately that the discourse begins, because he is clothed by the discourse itself? Now, let us remark in passing, the Sophist is (19) precisely the one who hides behind his discourse, not being able to initial it and to make it true by recognition, covering the others with it and letting himself be covered by it.

But it is precisely against that that the Stranger protests by showing the character of unveiling, of purification, of catharsis of the one who believes that he is the true educator.

Again I cannot resist reading to you the passage where the Stranger tries to define this truthful and true educator. He speaks of the Sophist :

Stranger: The Sophist cross-examines a man's words when he thinks that he is saying something and is really saying nothing, and easily convicts him of inconsistencies in his opinion; these they then collect by the dialectic process, and placing them side by side, show that they contradict one another about the same things, in relation to the same things, and in the same respect. He, seeing this, is angry with himself, and grows gentle towards others, and thus is entirely delivered from great prejudice and harsh notions in a way which is most amusing to the hearer and produces the most lasting good effect on the person who is the subject of the operation. For as the physician (20) considers that the body will receive no benefit from taking food until the internal obstacles have been removed, so the purifier of the soul is conscious that his patient will receive no benefit from the application of knowledge until he is refuted, and from refutation learns modesty;

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he must be purged of his prejudices first and made to think that he knows only what he knows and no more. (230b-d)

"To think that he knows only what he knows and no more" Is this not the most striking expression of a tautology to which we will have to return. Here there is going to begin a logical journey to which I will ask you to give the whole of your attention and of which I do not want to give too heavy an illustration by referring ceaselessly to the text. I summarise it for you therefore :

1) To instruct the young about everything one must know everything.
2) Now to be omniscient is impossible; in the case of the Sophist therefore it is only make-believe.

"Well, a man who says he knows everything and could teach it to another for a small fee in a short time can hardly be taken in earnest." (234a)

(21) This game is the imitation which is going to replace the reality by imitations and illusions. Thus I quote:

"Well, we know this about the man who professes to be able, by a single form of skill, to produce all things, that when he creates with his pencil representations bearing the same name as real things he will be able to deceive the innocent minds of children, if he shows them his drawings at a distance, into thinking that he is capable of creating in full reality, anything he chooses to make. Then must we not expect to find a corresponding form of skill in the region of discourse, while we", continues the Stranger, "we are capable by experience of seeing through *fantasmata*, illusions.

I quote: "And is it not inevitable that after a long enough time, as these young hearers advance in age, and coming into closer touch with realities, are forced by experience to apprehend things clearly as they are, most of them should abandon these former beliefs, so that what seemed important will now appear trifling and what seemed easy difficult and all the illusions created in discourse will be completely overturned by the realities which encounter them in the actual conduct of life?
Theaetetus: Yes, so far as I can judge at my age, but I suppose I am one of those who are still at a distance.
Stranger: That is why all of us here must try, as we are in fact trying, to bring you as close as possible to the realities and spare you the experience" (234d-e).

(22) The simulacrum created in discourse will be completely overturned by the realities of life.

Do you not hear the psychoanalyst designating to his cured patient, the window through which he finally sees reality? And through which, if the patient has really finally understood, he will not fail to throw himself. In short, it is the Stranger straight from the USA, namely, one that we are used to.

Thus, in the light of our experience and of our wisdom and of our love of reality, we have understood that the Sophist, for his part, is a magician, an illusionist. And what does he fabricate? Simulacrums, *fantasmata.* And what then is a simulacrum? Well they are not copies, because over against these, they are

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constructions which include the angle of the observer in order that the illusion may be produced from the very point where the observer finds himself. I quote:

Stranger: The first art that I distinguish in imitation is the making of likeness. The perfect example of this consists in creating a copy that conforms to the proportions of the original in all three dimensions and giving moreover the proper colour to every part.
Theaetetus: Why, is not that what all imitators try to do?
(23) Stranger: Not those sculptors or painters whose works are of colossal size. If they were to reproduce the true proportions of a well made figure, as you know, the upper part would look too small and the lower too large because we see the one at a distance and the other close at hand.
Theaetetus: That is true
Stranger: The first kind of image, then, being like the original may fairly be called a likeness *(eikon)*.
Theaetetus: Yes
Stranger: And the corresponding subdivision of the art of imitation may be called by the name we used just now - likeness making.
Theaetetus: It may
Stranger: Now, what are we to call the kind which only appears to be a likeness of a well made figure because it is not seen from a satisfactory point of view, but to a spectator with eyes that could fully take in so large an object, would not be even like the original it professes to resemble? Since it seems to be a likeness, but is not really so, may we not call it a semblance *(fantasma)*?
Theaetetus: By all means" (235d-236b).

(24) The Sophist creates an illusion therefore but from the very point of view where his interlocutor is found. He creates the representatives of the representation, the copies of the simulacrum, the *Vorstellungsrepresentanz.* His art is the art of the phantasy.

It is here that there is going to be introduced the question which one might think to be the essential one of the dialogue: what status is to be given to non-being, to what lacks being in the simulacrum. And nevertheless, our manner of introducing it would tend rather to make us think that it is not in reality on the status of non-being that the emphasis is laid, but indeed on the little separation, the little warping of the real image of the copy which depends on the particular point of view observed, occupied for the observer, and which constitutes the possibility of constructing this simulacrum, the work of the Sophist. Non-being poses thus in truth and for us, the question of the subject, because if the *fantasma* is possible, that comes from the particular place the subject occupies with respect to the universal and all-seeing subject. We would be well founded in thinking that the dialogue about the status of non-being is transposable into a dialogue on the status of the subject.

"Mark now, tell me, we do not hesitate to utter the phrase 'that which has no sort of being'"? (237b)"
(25) And Theaetetus gives the subtle response: "Why not?"

But the Stranger follows his infallible logic, founded on a logic whose real flaw will only appear to us much later: non-being cannot be attributed to any being.

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Hence it follows that it is impossible to think it in any form whatsoever. But the "it" is too much since it already makes a unit of it and subsumes being under the concept of unity. The Sophist awaits, for his part, full of irony until "his patient" (the word is from Plato) gets bogged down in this rut.

Stranger: Accordingly, if we are going to say he possesses an art of creating simulacra, he will readily take advantage of our handling our arguments in this way to grapple with us and turn them against ourselves. When we call him a maker of images, he will ask what on earth we mean in speaking of an image at all. So we must consider, Theaetetus, how this truculent person's question is to be answered.
Theaetetus: Clearly we shall say we mean images in water or in mirrors and again images made by the draftsman or the sculptor and any other things of that sort.
Stranger: It is plain, Theaetetus, that you have never seen a Sophist.
Theaetetus: Why?
(26) Stranger: He will make as though his eyes are shut or he has no eyes at all.
Theaetetus: How so?
Stranger: When you offer him your answer in such terms, if you speak of something to be found in mirrors or in sculpture, he will laugh at your words, as implying that he can see. He will profess to know nothing about mirrors or water or even eyesight, and will confine his question to what can be gathered from discourse." (239c-240a).

This rut, therefore, is that giving to the Sophist the domain of the simulacrum and deception as his work, we will affirm that his art is an art of illusion, that we will then say that our soul forms false opinions through the effect of his art. Hence it will follow that in our soul there are things which are not and non-beings that are. We transfix ourselves in the contradiction if we say that the Sophist succeeds in his imposture, then we are saying at the same time that non-being can be because he succeeds at it and even manages to define it. If we want to make the non-being disappear, we have to make the Sophist himself and his art disappear. But if we make the Sophist and his art disappear, (well then, believe me, if you wish, this is what Plato introduces us to at this very place) then the essential is lost. Why ? Because we return in doing this to the father of our discourse, to Parmenides, whose oracle is always heard: "No, you will never bend non-beings to being by force: distance your thinking from this route of (27) research."

It is doing this that every path towards parricide will be closed off, that every simulacrum will be forbidden and that, when all is said and done, in order that the father should be, it is necessary that the place of non-being, namely, that of the subject, should be filled by this prohibiting word to which one should not even respond: the father being an unattackable monolith and man a virtual pebble which cannot be detached from it. He is a blessed Sophist who wants to make it possible for us to become rather "gods, tables or pots" thanks to his simulacra. But the Stranger becomes fearful:

"I have another still more pressing request."
Theaetetus: What is that?
Stranger: That you will not think I am turning into a sort of parricide." (241d)

But in fact if the Stranger is afraid what is he then but a simulacrum of a parricide.

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I want to make the remainder short, and summarise like a good scoliaste, the doctrine that is constituted throughout the dialogue and wants to suppress the Sophist by including him in a sort of *Aufhebung* which did not have to wait for Hegel, an *Aufhebung* which we are going to have to question ourselves about. I quote :

Stranger: On these grounds then it seems that only one course is open to the (28) philosopher who values knowledge and the rest above all else. He must refuse to accept from the champions either of the one or of the many forms the doctrine that all reality is changeless, and he must turn a deaf ear to the other party who represent reality as everywhere changing. Like a child begging for both, he must declare that reality or the sum of things is both at once - all that is unchangeable and all that is in change.
Theaetetus: Perfectly true. (249c-d)

Thus Plato attempts to reconcile Parmenides and Heraclitus, the *on* and the *genesis*, being and becoming, the true being reached by thought, by pure thought, and the becoming reached by sensation. He adopts an intermediary position between being and non-being, the becoming being not nothing. If it is true that being is, it is not strictly true that non-being is not. The genesis, the becoming is not being but it is not nothing. What is present is not being and non-being but being and the other which is not the non-being of this being, except by participating in being that it is not yet. There is thus constituted the category of *koinonia,* of participation, of community.

In effect if there is no *koinonia* between the genera, there is only pure identity prohibiting all thought. If, on the contrary, *koinonia* is universal, everything is in everything and movement is only rest.

(29) But if the *koinonia* is limited, nothing is related to anything. Just as certain groups of letters are unpronounceable, others are pronounceable, in virtue of certain letters that allow consonants. For thus appear multiple othernesses that the limitation of being by non-being grounds the possibility of the All.

Here in short we have the triumph of the Stranger.

“So it seems when a part of the nature of the different and a part of the nature of being are set in contrast to one another, the contrast is, if it is permissible to say so, as much a reality as the being itself. It does not mean what is contrary to being but only what is different to being.
Theaetetus: That is quite clear.
Stranger: What name are we to give it then?
Theaetetus: Obviously this is just that “what is not “ which we were seeking for the sake of the Sophist. (258b)

From this there is going to flow rapidly a new definition of the Sophist and one which is no longer an *aporia* but the possibility at last of catching him at the end of the line and precisely of bringing him to the light of judgement. By refusing non-being in (30) favour of the other the Stranger had wanted to, and believed he had shown that non-being was only a creation of the Sophist because the

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Sophist refuses to give it an ontological status, conducting his patient by trickery to an inadmissible contradiction. And it is on the very terrain of the Sophist that the battle must now be won in the domain of opinion and of discourse of truth and of falsity. For the Sophist there is no falsity. I quote again:

Theaetetus: I do not understand why we need an agreement about discourse at the present moment.
Stranger: I may be able to suggest a line of thought that will help you to understand.
Theaetetus: What is that ?
Stranger: We say that non-being is a single kind among the rest, dispersed over the whole field of realities.
Theaetetus: Yes
Stranger: We have next to consider whether it blends with thinking and discourse.
Theaetetus: Why that?
Stranger: If it does not blend with them, everything must be true but if it does, we shall have false thinking, and discourse for thinking or saying what is not comes, I (31) suppose, to the same thing as falsity in thought and speech
Theaetetus: Yes
Stranger: And, if falsity exists, deception is possible.
Theaetetus: Yes
Stranger: And once deception exists, images and likenesses and appearance will everywhere be rampant.
Theaetetus: Of course
Stranger: And the Sophist, we said, had taken refuge somewhere in that region but then he had denied the very existence of falsity; no one could either think or say what is not, because what is not never had any sort of being
Theaetetus: So he said (260b-d).

It is necessary therefore to establish the being of what is false. Are all the nots in accord? No. Those which are in accord, do they express a meaning? Those which are in accord express a sense, the others no. No pure sequence of nouns, no pure sequence of verbs expresses a sense but only the agreement between nouns and verbs.

I will not quote any more in order not to lengthen my text. Beyond this agreement it is also necessary for there to be accord between the sense which is spoken and the subject of which one speaks. Hence it will follow that the discourse will be true or false. The false discourse, then, says things that are but different in this respect from those that are. Thus an assemblage of verbs and of nouns which, with regard to a subject, states in fact to be other what is the same, is like being what does not exist, (32) here it seems in fact is the kind of assemblage which really and truly constitutes a false discourse. You have recognised the style of the Stranger, I hope. Now, discourse, imagination, opinion found this same qualification, producers of illusion, of images, of simulacrums, but the simulacrum, *fantasma,* will be in turn divided in two: the simulacrum is constructed by way of intrusions and the person who makes the simulacrum claims to be like an instrument; this is the imitation which makes the simulacrum of which you know but it is he who imitates. Others may not know and nevertheless imitate. You see this moreover every day. Here then, continues the

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Stranger, are two imitators that we must say are different. From one another I imagine. The one who does not know and the one who knows.

Let us translate: the one who has a sure reference, the other not having one but only a *doxa* [?], an opinion. Now the Sophist is one of those. He is not one of those who know, nor one of those who limit themselves to imitation. It is, following an neologism introduced here by Plato, a *doxomime.* This person in a private reunion cutting his discourse into two brief arguments, constrains his interlocutor to contradict himself. And nevertheless he is not a wise man for he knows nothing. It is time to (33) conclude as soon as possible, when I have told you why it is opportune to conclude.

The Platonic dialogue is cut here in effect but by intersecting itself. In effect the Stranger bases himself, in order to insert the Sophist into his definition, on the fact that the Sophist, as against the wise man, knows nothing. Knows nothing about what? What justice is, for example, having only a *doxa*, an opinion, but he nevertheless makes a discourse about it. This discourse is not based on any serious reference. What would such a reference be? The maieutic path along which the wise man for his part has succeeded in defining justice from dichotomy to dichotomy, going always towards the right if he is writing in Greek, this path gives him a sure reference about the nature of justice and allows him not to create a simulacrum of it. But what is involved? The idea of justice which grounds the research and is immediately dichotomised, or the idea of justice which contain *nachträglich, a posteriori,* all the dichotomies, all the cross- roads of the road by which one came. Who then knows? The one who begins or the one who arrives? The subject of which one speaks or the subject at which one arrives. What is the subject who is supposed to know if not the wise man himself. To know what? That he always knew precisely what was necessary to know. The Sophist, for his part, pretends that to know and not to know comes back to the same thing because there is no truth in the simulacrum, because the gap which creates the simulacrum, the (34) difference as much from the copy of reality as reality itself. That the simulacrum alone establishes the subject by incorporating him as this gap itself, that the subject is not and cannot be a reference, except by bringing to light at each incident of the dichotomic process that he is the new gap taken with respect to any reference, that never will this subject overfly as a subject of knowledge, the totality of the gaps where he has been established, that the subject to be known is a simulacrum, a phantasy, in fact. He cannot be known except from the particular point of view of the subject to whom he reveals himself. It is in the last analysis only the Sophist who prevents the dialogue about Sophistry from being an enormous Sophistry. Suppress him for a moment from your reading. Make of him a sceptic for example who does not dissolve the truth in discourse but suspends it before any discourse. You will see that he might receive exactly the same objections as the Sophist on the part of the Stranger. For the Sophist, as you know, man is the measure of everything, of everything there is and of everything there is not. The Sophist, for his part, establishes himself like the zero, from which numeration is going to begin, and as the zero who is going to sustain it so that it can finally be held by it. This is what permits for example all the enumerations of the Stranger, provided that the zero of the arrival is here considered by the Stranger as the one (*le un*) of knowledge.

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The sceptic, for his part, declares himself to be the zero like a one that can be designated at the beginning. It does not matter whether the Stranger shows him that he is wise because he knows what he is even though he simulates not knowing. For the Stranger, this is his Sophistry, has science instead of those who do not have it or who say they do not have it. He puts himself forward as the subject of all knowledge. What we have, for our part, is that he speaks to us and about us every day on our couches. That he speaks in us when we hear speaking those who are speaking. He is the obsessional soul who haunts every locus of analysis, and the Sophist, please God he exists, is nothing less having lost his references, in the gap that is constitutive of the simulacrum, than the analyst himself. His voice being nothing more than that of Theaetetus who replaces him here:

"Yes,
That is how it is.
Of course.
Keep talking."

****

Dr Lacan: I think that we ought to thank Audouard for his extremely precise and elegant discourse which seems to me to have first of all this advantage, which is to have, for those who have not yet at my summons opened the *Sophist,* constituted the best introduction to it.

I think that it is legitimate to procede as Audouard has done, namely, in the last analysis to credit Plato with what, nevertheless, is not retrospectively enounced, namely, this fundamental function of the gap (é*cart*) in what is incorrectly translated as the simulacrum and which is represented by the Greek term of *fantasma.*

Obviously, the important thing in this discourse, is that it allows there to be shown with what precociousness in philosophical reflection there was introduced, as I might say, the status of the phantasy. Nevertheless, I think it is correct to say that Plato did not establish it, any more than he was able to establish the status of imitation, or what he believed to be imitation, in the foundations of art.

This shows how moving is the subject into which we are advancing if we take a dialogue of Plato, because we ought all the same preserve some references to what it was, as one might say, historically, in function of Plato, however englobing this function always remains and even for us.

(36) I would not be unhappy if someone were to contribute an echo, indeed a reply to what Audouard put forward to day. And perhaps after all, who knows, the matter might tempt Jacques-Alain Miller at the same time as he replies to Leclaire the next time. I would not be unhappy to know what the discourse of Audouard inspired in him or may inspire in him between now and then, in a week's time, as he emerges from his personal work. I do not want to delay any longer giving the floor to Kaufmann who undoubtedly in the twenty minutes that remain to us will only be able to introduce things which are extremely fruitful and of a sort, of an aspect that is quite singular and different, of which he was good enough to give me a glimpse.

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Do you feel yourself in the mood, Kaufmann, to introduce it in twenty or twenty-five minutes?

Mr Kaufmann: Oh yes, especially as it can be interrupted. It concerns a few trifles principally by way of reference. It is probable that I will not have the time to develop it but since the texts are within everybody's reach, I will limit myself to giving a few references that emerged from an association of ideas which came to me in connection with the *Sophist.* At the end of the *Sophist,* you know that there is a question of number. As I was reading this passage I found myself thinking about the sheep of Polyphemus. This made me curious to look up Polyphemus and this reference seemed (38) to me to be useful enough for me to tell you in particular what was brought up by Polyphemus, which shows that this story of the angler is a very ancient story and it is moreover very difficult to disentangle all its knots. One see that the problem of the relationships between the question of phantasy on the one hand, and on the other hand the question of the relationship between the elements, namely, between fire, air, etc., all of that certainly circulated in Greek thought and I think that the dialogue of the *Sophist* is to be set in this context.

So then I will limit myself to giving you a few references which I consulted.

On Polyphemus we have a number of texts at our disposal. There is first of all of course the archetypal text in what concerns Sophistry, namely, *Outis*. The serious question - you know the passage: Who is there? No one. This in short proposes to us at the beginning the very problem that will be discussed in the *Sophist* but from a different point of view, namely, what are the consequences of the use of the *bouc.* Plato, precisely, will answer that correctly to interpret the misadventure of Polyphemus in the Odyssey, it is important to distinguish between *ouc,* namely the negation of ....., let us say, the negation grounded on the principle of identity and on the other hand, the *mais*, namely, a differential negation which places us, as you know, on the (39) path of signifying differentiation, namely, that in short the fatal error of Polyphemus was not, properly speaking, to remain at the principle of identity but, things being a little bit more complicated, to confuse simultaneously two planes, on the one hand the phonetic plane, and on the other hand the plane in which there ought to intervene this distinction between the *mais* and the *ouc*.

But this might not seem to have any great relationship with phantasy if, precisely, we did not see throughout the history of mythology, a progressive revelation of the myth. The texts at our disposal are, therefore, first of all the *Odyssey,* on the other hand the *Cyclops* of Euripides, thirdly an *Idylle* by Theocritus, and finally the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. The text of Plato then has to be situated between the interpretation of the myth by Euripides in the *Cyclops* on the one hand, and on the other hand the evolution that the myth underwent after him namely in Theocritus.

Now then, what is very interesting in this adventure, what is amusing, is that progressively there is revealed what was masked at the beginning in the adventure of Polyphemus, namely, that there appeared progressively the phantasy under the species of Galatea. You know that Galatea, in Theocritus, is the nymph whom Polyphemus (40) loves and the lovers who frequent the Luxembourg Gardens

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know that they can find at the Medici fountain a plastic representation of the discovery made by Polyphemus of the loves of Galatea, his nymph adored like a phantasy, and of Acis.

You know, on the other hand, that this did not bring much luck to Acis. Acis was crushed by a rock. This did not bring him luck if not for the fact that Acis has something to see from it, under the species of a river, namely that Acis was absorbed into a current which makes us think that his fate was not definitively so disastrous as it might first have seemed.

So then in the *Odyssey*, Polyphemus and Ulysses, in the *Cyclops* Polyphemus and Satyr but not yet Galatea. Polyphemus holds the satyrs prisoner. The satyrs long for their Galatea but there is no question of it. It is because we know that subsequently Galatea comes to establish a connection between the different phases of the myth.

On the contrary, in Theocritus and then in Ovid we see Galatea appearing in flesh and blood.

The final text to which we we have to refer is the poem by Gongora which belongs to the same cycle as regards the evolution of the myth and which gives us, as regards what concerns the birth of the Cyclops, an indication that we can, in a way, if not by (41) knowing here how things are constituted, in fact be a segment which gives us an interpretation of the *Cyclops*, namely, that things close in on themselves.

In the poem by Gongora we hear the song of Polyphemus, only it is a little late to read the verses: “Daughter of the sea whose ears to my wailing are like a rock in the wind, thou who in my sleep takes away from my complaints the purple trees of coral by the hundred or who to the dissonant rhythm of marine plants if not the agreeable instrument interlacing hearts with incense, listen today to my voice for its sweetness if not because of mine.”

And then, a little bit further on we see the birth of the Cyclops. This is what he says to us : “A maritime kingfisher crowned in his flight above his eggs an eminent rock, the day when as a mirror of sapphire there was shining from my person the blue bank, I looked and I saw shining a sun in front while in the heavens an eye appeared. Neuter ..... asked himself who should be believed, the human heavens or the terrestrial Cyclops.”

This obviously ought to be given a long commentary but initially poses us the problem (42) of what relationship there is between the eye of the Cyclops, Sophistry, phonetics and the development of the myth of Galatea.

In what concerns the eye of the Cyclops you know that it is no doubt the orifice of the crater surrounded by fire and, in short, one could say that the question which is posed for us in the Odyssey means that knowledge, what relationship is there between the belly rumbling with the sounds of the Cyclops, rumbling let us say with the verbal fury of the Cyclops inside the crater, and the relationship of this sound to the eye of the Cyclops, namely, to the orifice of the crater, the fact that

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this eye is unique and finally the fact that the unfortunate Polyphemus was deceived, as you know, by Ulysses.

In other words, why is it that this Cyclops was destined precisely not to understand that *Outis* was not a proper name or rather what could be at the same time a proper name and something else according to the point of view that one places oneself. *Outis*, no one, is a proper name in the measure that one interprets it phonetically. I can be called Outis, I can be called no one.

On the other hand one cannot say that Outis is not a proper name. It seems, even though Homer does not say so very certainly, his listeners understood that Outis meant not one among others, in other words, Outis is precisely a proper name in the measure (43) that one cannot order what is designated here by Outis in a series of general terms that can be assimilated to one another. Outis signifies that Ulysses is designated as not being one among others, in the sense that one could say for example that a chair, when one says a certain chair, well then, it is a chair among other chairs, ... that perhaps we might rejoin the relationship to arithmetic, that is latent in the *Odyssey* here, Outis designates himself as being not one among others. Only he is something other than that, and if he is something other than that, we have to introduce the category of otherness, namely, that we must in place of the *ouc* introduce the *mais* and it is on this precisely that the cleverness of Plato will be brought to bear.

Why, moreover, is the Cyclops destined precisely not to make this distinction. Well then, Plato will teach us, precisely, that someone who has only one eye cannot distinguish between a reflection and a representation, in other words, he is not capable of introducing within the general category of the imaginary the differentiations that we all, in so far as we have two eyes, can make. The commentary here might obviously be late, but we are only busying ourselves with the connection of ideas, the commentary ought to be looked for in the *Timaeus,* by Plato, where as you know, Plato links the (44) problem of inversion, the problem of right and left, to the problem of the mirror and the problem of the simulacrum.

This then being sufficient as regards the *Odyssey,* we can pass to the theme of the Cyclops in Euripides. One of the principle transformations that we see in Euripides, is that the Cyclops of Euripides is no longer simply the boiling of the roaring, Polyphemus, as his name indicates is precisely that. It is no longer simply the boiling, it is no longer simply fire, but we see there being introduced here a differentiation between the solid element and the liquid element, a differentiation which, precisely, will be at the heart of the version that Theocritus will give of the same myth. I will limit myself here to quoting some fragments from the *Cyclops* of Theocritus: “White Galatea, why do you reject the one who loves you?”, and a little further on, which gives us then a reference point as regards the angler, the situation of the angler: “what misfortune that my mother did not bring me into the world with gills! I would dive to rejoin you, I would kiss your hands, if I do not want your lips, I would bring you white lilies, tender poppies, etc.” And a little further on, moreover, the poet takes it up again, saying: “Cyclops, Cyclops where has your reason gone? If you were to weave (45) baskets and gather the young branches that you carry, you would have more sense. Take the ones that present themselves, why are you pursuing what flees from you.”

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You see here that in Theocritus the problem of the phantasy, namely, Galatea and the position of Galatea in the liquid element is very precisely linked to the problem of space and, as Plato does, precisely, to the question of the dimensions and the number of space. This gives us the phantasy as situating itself in a one-dimensional space which is divided between approaching and fleeing. And this again precisely would have to be put into relationship with the angler.

That the angler represents effectively a given underlying all these discussions of Sophistry, and of philosophy in its relations to Sophistry, is what indicates to us in a manner which cannot, it seems to me, be by chance, another register involving another one of Ulysses' enemies namely Palamedes.

I will not talk a lot here about Palamedes. It would all the same be rather easy because we possess few texts on Palamedes. You know who Palamedes is. Already to interest you in the story I will say that a text of Pausanias tells us, separating itself moreover from other versions, that Palamedes was massacred when he went fishing.

(46) Here, it is a simple passage where Pausanias reports on his visit to pictures representing precisely the enemies of Ulysses. Well then, this little feature invites us to become interested in Palamedes, and when one becomes interested in Palamedes one sees that Ulysses is found in a very significant way to be flanked on the one hand by Polyphemus, the roarer, on the one hand and by Palamedes who is none other, as you know, it is perhaps no harm to recall it, none other than the man of writing. Palamedes was the Dreyfus of the Greek army. A letter was circulated in the army in which he proposed to betray the Greeks. On the other hand, his pocket was stuffed with pieces of gold. Here, moreover, there is an undisguised reference to the relationships between linguistics and arithmetic. The misfortunate Palamedes was found thus to be convicted of treason and properly speaking stoned by the Greeks as a punishment for this crime.

It is Ulysses who is at the origin of this sad story because the trouble between Palamedes and Ulysses comes from the fact that Ulysses was not all that keen to go to war, and he had simulated madness, in circumstances upon which I will not insist and he had his plough drawn by a donkey, if I remember correctly, or another animal and he amused himself by scattering salt. In short, he said, you see that I am unfit for (47) armed service, as you see, I am completely nuts. Only Palamedes, in order to convict him, did something very simple, something analogous to a judgement of Solomon. He put the little Telemachus in front of the plough. So Ulysses stopped his plough and that was how Ulysses was unmasked, people saw in short that Ulysses was not delusional. Palamedes got the better then of the pretended delusion of Ulysses, precisely because Palamedes is the man of writing. What allows us to say that Palamedes was a man of writing? Not simply what I have just told you about the circumstances in which he was falsely accused, but also extremely diverse and confused traditions. There exists a tragedy *Palamedes,* by Sophocles, which unfortunately is lost but Palamedes is thought to be the inventor according to certain people of certain letters, but, in a much more interesting manner, of the alphabet, namely, the order of letters, which allows, in short, the word to be established in writing.
What allows us here to understand Palamedes, is that a writing confiscates the enunciating subject, in other words what is dissimulated behind all of that is a

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certain number of tricks which Plato's *Sophist* implicitly notes about the relationship of the enunciating subject to the subject of the enunciation, that is to say, in the *Sophist* the relationship between the noun and the verb and of what happens in this sliding of sense through which the potential noun is actualised in the verb.

Palamedes joins the themes which are dear to us here because, among all the services that he rendered for the good cause, we find one of having reassured the Greeks in the presence of an eclipse. Here, it is not for nothing that the eclipse intervenes.

Besides, he is also the inventor of the game of draughts. I did not have the time to research how exactly the Greeks played draughts nor how pawns were taken as we do today, if the Greeks took the pawns.

In what concerns, then, the relationship with arithmetic, I equally remind you that according to a certain tradition,Ulysses is not at all the son of the person you believe, namely Laertes but of Sisyphus who began over and over. You see that here we are on the path which will lead to the Platonic problem of the dyad and consequently this will allow us anew, within Sophistry, to articulate the problems of arithmetic with the problems of linguistics.

In short, it is a matter of understanding what becomes of the numbering unit within the number, and also, if we link this to the theme of Palamedes and of the order that is established.

[Some pages seem to be missing]

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Seminar 21: Wednesday 2 June 1965

In places where I scarcely ever set foot, people are talking about nothing else - it happens periodically - but the word dialogue. You make dialogue together people that one can quite properly say, in the strictest sense of the word, are from different extremes and you expect something or other from it.

As long as there is not a more reliable dialogue between men and women, I mean on the terrain where they are respectively man and woman, on the terrain of their sexual relationships, you will allow me to be sceptical about the virtues of dialogue.

This position is the analytic position. This is why psychoanalysis is not a dialogue. In the field that psychoanalysis is applied, people realised, because there it stuck out, that dialogue produces nothing.

This first truth, this open door that I am pushing, has always been known and it is not at all unrelated to the fact that what are called Plato's dialogues, I do not know if you have noticed it, but they are never dialogues, I mean that it is never the exchange of remarks between two characters one of whom would really be holding one of the (2) theses in question and the other the other. There is always one who represents one of the two theses, who, for some reason or other refuses to give an opinion, slips away, declares himself inadequate, and then you take a third person, who is going to consent to do something which at first sight appears to be to play the role of the idiot but who is no doubt a useful intermediary because it is in that way that an attempt is going to be made to get across something which is not always a dialogue but much more often a presentation.

The *Sophist* begins like that. It unfolds like that. It takes place between the stranger from Elea and the one in question, who began things, namely Socrates. But with great astuteness, it always ends up with another Socrates, a little wandering Socrates, Socrates the younger.

There is perhaps something of that also in the fact that this year I experienced the need at a moment to make the gesture of closing the seminar in order perhaps to be able speak a little bit more with people and also for them to be able speak to me. There is here a tertiary function but the proper of tertiary functions is that, all the same, they ought to come back into the circuit and that is the reason why today, even though it is one of the days reserved for my lectures, I think that it is not inopportune that something should come here that arises from a reply to something that had been produced at my closed seminar at which moreover it is a very large part of this (3) gathering that functions.

So then, at my last closed seminar something was stated which came from the lips of Serge Leclaire addressing himself to the work that Jacques-Alain Miller had done on the theory of number in Frege.

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Serge Leclaire had insisted a good deal that this should not remain, in a way, a dead letter or in suspense and he proposed a few observations to him. Jacques-Alain Miller is going to give today the reply to what Serge Leclaire said and, you will see, I think, that it is a reply which will have its place in what I will subsequently link up to it either today or the next time.

On the other hand you can see that our programme for this year led us, in short, aimed essentially at a grasp of the function of the psychoanalyst starting from what grounds his own logic. What are the means by which we are going to try to accede, along this path, to what it is our goal to define, the position of the analyst.

This is not, this cannot be only this ..... sort of misunderstanding by being simply defined, to define what is for the analyst his relationship to two terms, for example, like those of the truth and of knowledge. It is impossible even though here we have, as I might say, what is most tangible in the experience of the psychoanalyst.

(4) He can immediately, on that, specify, question himself, give replies which can be corrected if he gives them incorrectly. It is impossible to situate correctly the relationship of the effective analyst to these two terms, so essential to specify the position of the scholar, without referring him in a more radical fashion to what we can hold on to from a whole experience which is what preceded it: analysis.

The relationships between truth and knowledge, this is where we are carried onto the terrain of logic, and that this logic should be grasped where it is articulated at the final term in this author who is so important, more important perhaps than is generally accepted, namely Frege, but just as much at the origin, at the moment where there begins, there is articulated what it is perhaps too general to call dialectic, in one or other of Plato's articulations and precisely in what is called the Plato of the last period. Well then, from the first steps of this logic, before it is crystallised in the form which has been transported through the centuries wrapped up under the name of formal logic which is only moreover one of the more external characteristics in the *Sophist*. I pointed this out and at my seminar someone was willing to open up the first passages of the *Sophist* where the most burning questions are articulated around the two terms (5) of truth and knowledge.

That is why one of those who on this point best follow what I was able to begin to articulate this year will take the floor immediately after Jacques-Alain Miller to bring you some observations on the *Sophist* which I considered as indispensable to make this relay before giving on the two following Wednesdays the two lectures with which I hope this year to sufficiently round off what I began to tackle this year, if you remember, already at the opening of my first seminar around the question of sense and of nonsense, centring myself properly speaking on these signifying chains which are supposed to be without any kind of sense, but which I indicated to you, all the same, are bearers of sense, however opaque they might have been, for the simple reason that they were grammatical. Let those who were at this first lecture refer to it before I take up the rest of my course, namely, at the end of our meeting today and the next times.

I give the floor to Miller.

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PRESENTATION BY JACQUES-ALAIN MILLER

I apologise first of all for giving this elliptical discourse which is scarcely in shape. I apologise for it to you and especially to Serge Leclaire.

Some of you here, perhaps, may remember something like a letter inserted by me in the course of a speech dedicated to the fifth season of a logic of the signifier, specifically addressing an exceptionally praised lady analyst, something certainly like a letter demanding a response.

But this letter, I have to believe, got lost *en route,* and if it was lost it is because letters do not go where we want them to go but where they wish. Perhaps it was purloined; it is still the letter which wishes to be stolen in order to go where it wishes, and if it is into the hands of Serge Leclaire that it has come, it is because this was its final term.

Since the letter wished that it should be so, since also he wished to be it and I thank him for justifying in this way the unjustifiable fact that I speak before you here, then we have an opportunity for dating a correspondence of which I hope Dr Lacan does not mind being the relay, an exchange no doubt but certainly not a dialogue.

(7) Neither Serge Leclaire nor I want a dialogue. We are only speaking in order to reject that we are in reciprocal positions. We only listen in order to hear in the discourse the part that is secret to itself.

For Serge Leclaire's taste, what I am pronouncing as my discourse is necessarily in order that sexual reality should not appear sutured to us, while the analyst, for his part, by being an analyst in his word, for, says Leclaire "the analyst does not construct a discourse in speaking, the analyst does not suture."

The analyst refuses to suture, he told you. In fact he does not construct a discourse even when he speaks, fundamentally, and this is why the position is irreducible and everything that is said to the analyst on this point, including by me, the discourses that one hears can clarify it.

What is he listening for? The discourse of his patient, and in the discourse of his patient what interests him is precisely how there is entwined for him this suturing point "in this sense, everything that Miller brings us is extremely precious".

I hope that you appreciate, as I do, the delicacy with which Serge Leclaire introduces his remarks. My discourse is precious for him? Thank you very much. But precious like the word of an analysand on his couch? No thanks!

(8) And the right to say here this "No thanks!", is what I am going to defend and as I said too briefly and in an incomplete fashion, the misunderstanding produced by Serge Leclaire in the reading that he carried out of my text, a reading which he directed so exactly towards the pivotal concept of what I articulated, namely the concept of suture.

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In any case, I hope that my reply will not make vanish ..... whose unpublished character undoubtedly does not leave me indifferent, that he was able to make use of my discourse as an analyst.

I hope that it is open to another use, in my sense, than that of the word of an analysand ..... that he was not careful to distinguish the discourse which I dismantled from the logic of the logician, from Frege, and the discourse that I articulated starting from Jacques Lacan about the logic of the signifier.

He overlooked that it was starting from this logic of the signifier, assumed as my discourse, that the sequence of numbers engendered in the discourse of Frege could be said to be sutured, that this logic was general enough to be described correctly as that of the signifier.

I mean by that to show Serge Leclaire that the discourse that he sustains in the name of the analyst and which he opposes to mine which was already anticipated and even (9) accounted for beforehand, in fact we are not in a situation of reciprocity, but not in the way he thinks.

I am now going to read some quite quick notes and I hope you will excuse me for it.

It is obvious that the interest in my text only takes its origin from the opportunity of highlighting the difference between two positions. I summarise his analysis:

"While the logician sutures, the analyst does not suture because the latter defers the suturing that truth demands, while the logical concept takes into it ambit objects identical to themselves; the unconscious concept gathers things that are not identical to themselves."

Let us take the first point. What is the suture in Jacques Lacan? It is a non-thematic concept which emerges for him in the field of analysis.

What is supposed by the importation that I make of it? Importing its usage presupposes that the functioning of categories whose value is assured in the field of free speech remain adequate in the field of this constrained speech that we call a discourse. But importing the suture what do we import ? I say that we are importing the following: a structure which puts in place a scene, a chain where the subject is produced in the first person which is the chain or the scene of his speech in its relationship to the other scene, to the other chain where there is not, for the subject, any conceivable reflection in that he is only an element in it.

(10) I would say then that a sutured discourse is distributed between an apparent chain and a dissimulated chain which manifests itself at a point, a point whose crucial occultation, which is at once apathetic and thematic, is the condition for the opening of discourse.

But this implies that no suture is a suturing of sexual reality, namely, that the other scene must not be, and in any case this is the usage that I make of it, is not the only one.

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In this, which is formal for what is involved in the structure of the suture, what I wanted to articulate about a theory of discourse opens the possibility of a generalisation of the cause that is unconscious or absent outside the field of analysis.

What is involved for the analyst with respect to the suture? Consider the formulation of Leclaire.

"The analyst does not suture or, at least, he ought to try, how can we say, to guard himself from this passion". Take the field of analysis as field of free speech. The analysed subject sutures his lack of being, the metonymical effect of desire, the metaphorical cause.

The analyst for his part does not suture. It is true because he is the subject who is supposed to know and because he holds himself in this position and because he speaks from this position and if he becomes, and Leclaire is of course here, completely in agreement on this point, let us say a subject who supposes himself to know, namely, if (11) he stamps his position with the point of certainty in order to give a content to his knowledge, he makes himself, in that way, supposedly adequate to the real, the model for the identification of the analysand and by that he sutures, namely, he sutures the lack through which he is a desiring subject.

It is therefore the desire of the analyst which makes his word non-sutured.

And with this desire he covers the dimension of the ethics of the psychoanalyst which is stamped by the duty that Leclaire imposes on him of not suturing, but it seems certain to me that when he attempts to speak about analysis, the analyst is not in the position of the subject who is supposed to know.

For myself, suturing my desire, in order to speak about theory, is my theoretical discourse sutured? Suture here, necessitates then that my discourse, perhaps, related to the law of my desire in a way that it appears to be the rule according to an order which does not overlap the order that I give to it. I would say to Leclaire that this remains to be proved but is it not obvious, on the contrary, that Leclaire in a certain way wants, desires my discourse to be sutured. Perhaps he only desires to have before him the words of his patients?

And that is why he blinds himself to what I am articulating about the logic of the signifier or if necessary, he might recognise that it marks itself as being altogether necessary, namely, the logic of the non-identical to itself.

(12) I come then to the second point, in all of this I apologise for going so rapidly.

I quote Leclaire: "Reality for the analyst is to envisage the thing in so far as it is not one. I am not saying that Miller does not do it but he does so by blocking immediately the non-identical to itself with the number zero."

I wonder whether, now that I highlight this text before him, Serge Leclaire will not himself realise this striking lapse through which he imputes to me what I myself announced from Frege.

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Why is it necessary that at the place where the name of Frege is required it is mine which comes into position itself while my concern precisely was to manifest in Frege, the apparition of the non-identical to itself in which I said there consisted the suturing point of Frege's discourse.

Why this confusion and why does Serge Leclaire want the archeologician to be a logician, that my concern was to save the truth and not, in a certain fashion which is that of the analyst to undo also in a certain fashion, for my part, a suture.

Thus Leclaire explains to us what is involved in the unconscious concept which, very correctly, he opposes to the logical concept.

(13) "In the *Wolfman* Freud proposes to us an unconscious concept. It is certainly a matter of a unit which is the concept but which rejects things that are non-identical to themselves ... why not moreover the cut finger or the little pimple on the nose. We have the introduction of an unconscious concept. In the first example of Freud which comes to him, precisely a little indifferent thing which is not singular in itself."

What I find singular in this text is that I do not believe for a single moment that these little things are qualified as signifiers. Now they are signifiers in good Lacanian orthodoxy, as such they are the representatives of the subject and, as such, these signifiers are the signifier is identical to itself in so far as it is constituted at its root by the non-identical to itself which is the lack.

Thus we see in the rest of Leclaire's text, the Wolfman with this pimple on his nose, first of all preoccupied by this pimple on the nose and afterwards, once this pimple is removed, equally occupied by the hole which he alone sees in its place.

What does that mean if not that the signifier is constituted as a lack ..... is never anything but the representative of the barred phallus as such, the representative of the barred subject.

The signifier is identical to itself.

(14) It is that of the non-identical to itself which is named subject or lack.

Again once the signifier is identical to itself being uncuttable and irreducible; it is not identical to itself in so far as it is undefinable and one only has to refer to the Saussurian definition of the signifier which always defines it by what it is not, to manifest it.

It seems to me that Dr Lacan did it in a seminar on identification. Thus for the moment, I see dimly, or even not at all, what this logic of the signifier had in terms of a concern for saving the truth. I am still waiting to see on what it sutures in so far as it is not the word of an analysand.

It seem to me that the conclusion - it is not altogether one - would be to accept the reciprocal sovereignty and the paranomias between four fields: the field of the enounced, the logical field, the field of the message and the linguistic field.

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The field of free speech which is the psychoanalytic field, in fact the field of the word for which a theory of discourse is still to come.

I can even say that perhaps the most radical element still of a logic of the signifier would perhaps be a doctrine of the point.

(15) I am going to end, since this text is incomplete, in order to leave you something well finished, on a quotation which I think makes one think ..... in *Point, line, surface*: " the geometrical point is an invisible being. The point resembles a zero. In this zero, nevertheless, there are hidden many qualities which are human. As one separates out the point from the narrow circle of its habitual role, it becomes between silence and the word the ultimate and unique union and that is why it found its first material form in writing. It belongs to language and signifies silence."

Dr Jacques Lacan: I would ask that this text should be put, as it is or revised, as he wishes, but fairly rapidly at the disposition of listeners before I have finished my course this year.

I believe that very important things are said there on the function of the suture, a non- thematic function as Miller quite correctly said, in my teaching, in this sense that if it is always in question, it has not been designated expressly by me as such.

On the other hand, I indicate to Miller who, perhaps, was not there that day that as regards the point, I, as I might say, punctuated the point of passage in one of my seminars, in one of my lectures at the beginning of this year, very precisely under this name which I am not happy with because I am trying to highlight the functions of a different point which is not the reduction of a circle but of this little interior eight.

I do not want to go any further to day. Those who have well understood will put the question marks at the places which they think deserve them. And I hope that I will not leave, in what follows, any of these question marks in suspense.

I give the floor to Milner

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PRESENTATION BY MONSIEUR MILNER

[A modified version of Milner's paper was published in *Cahiers pour l'analyse*, no 3]

That there is between being and computation an inherited link, anecdote alone manifests. In his edition where he quotes Isocrates: "for one of the ancient sophists, there is an infinity of beings; for Empedocles four; for Ion, only three; for Parmenides, one; for Gorgias, absolutely none".

Inscribing himself in this register, Plato, moreover wanting to know what is involved in non-being, is led to enumerate, to make it emerge by a computation from which he begins. And for community see 254b:

"Among the genera some lend themselves to mutual community and others pervading everything find nothing which prevents them from entering into community with all"

This opposition between blending and non-blending, and what cannot do it, will serve as a distinctive trait allowing Plato to introduce a hierarchy among the genera. Subsequently Plato tells us that he takes from the number of genera the greatest ones, namely three: being, rest and motion.

(18) Rest and motion cannot blend with each other. Now here Plato's text ought to be rectified. It must be seen that what Plato reveals as a choice is in fact a necessity of the logical order. What is thus constituted is a minimal group that is proper to support the binary opposition between blending and non-blending.

One term is enough to support blending but one term is not enough to represent non- blending. Suppose that we only have movement. Consequently being is blended with movement ..... in its order would be abolished, it is necessary therefore to make non- blending appear to have two terms, rest and movement. The minimal couple obtained is thus there by right and Plato underlines the number in 254d: "Each one is different from the two others and thus we obtain five terms as a minimal chain."

This is what Plato says in 256d: " In order to articulate the binary positions of blending or non-blending there must be constituted a series of five terms corresponding to the binary of origin. The functions in effect reduplicate one another, being which is blended ..... ;it is the very element of its development since all the terms are of being but by this very expansion being makes manifest itself this trait which makes it the term of a binary opposition. In short, through the modality of its expansion, being becomes (19) a singular element of the series."

Now if being is posited by that very fact, it falls into the register of the other occupier by positing itself as an element in the series, it posits itself like the others, all the elements that it is not.

257a: "By the vacillation of being as expansion and of being as term, by the operation of being and of the other, non-being is generated and ought to be inscribed on the table of numbers."

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258c : "We have shown that the nature of the other has being and is parceled out over the whole field of existent things with reference to one another, and of every part of it that is set in contrast to that which is we have dared to say, that precisely that is really that which is not.

It is nevertheless remarked that Plato does not add things up and does not tell us that it is necessary to raise from five to six the minimal number ..... to support the binary opposition. Is not a new register posed here? In effect non-being does not appear in the sequence of genera like the others in the chain that must be paraded past. Non- being arises at the weakening.

It is thus necessary at the same time to say that the genera are the points where being is bound, namely, in fact where the discourse on the being of things is required to make its own computation pass, but they are also at the same time the points of its (20) disappearance. It is in this operation of passage that the other names, circumscribing being as a computable term. Non-being is therefore nothing other than being itself as a radical dimension in so far as without it nothing would be computable.

And the other simply names. This knot of being and non-being, how can we not read being here as a dimension of the signifier, a radical register of all computation, an element of computation, is it not the case therefore that non-being reappears every time that the discourse perpetuates itself, overcomes a downward turn from the arrival of non-being. It is the locus of the zero.

In this numerical generation where, nevertheless, no addition of a sum is operated, the dimension of the signifier thus disappears to the level of logic itself. This does not escape his reading. Through the excessive haste that one can employ in trying to grasp what is most central, it is in this way that the excellent reference which is made in Mr Audouard's text loses its cutting edge.

No doubt the phantasy takes the place of representation but above all it is a so-called representation. In effect let us read the text where Plato speaks to us about it (236b): (21) It is necessary thus at the point where the copy is a sign, namely, not the thing and not the being of the thing, gives rise to another register where the look reveals itself as essential.

If the *fantasma* is a pretentious discourse, a so-called discourse, a discourse that is so called in the warping, the deforming, it is indeed a signifier, it is the signifier, namely, that for the other, the one who seeing the proportion is capable of correcting them. It is therefore here its distortion, the signifier for the other, this signifier of a subject.

It is therefore permissible, without having recourse to what Mr Audouard ..... to read a same place, the subject, non-being. How does it happen that the locus of non- being is precisely the point of a weakening of the look if ..... it is precisely the name of a weakening in the computation of being; the relevance of the signifier we can find at different levels.

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The figure of the Sophist was perfectly linked to discourse but the reference ought here to be detailed. In effect if the Sophist is the one who is spoken about in the structure of the dialogue and opposite the "I" and the "you" namely the pronouns which reveal from the dialogue whether the tongue establishes the other dimension.

(22) It must be underlined the degree to which the Indo-European languages ought to be, in a way, analysed closely over against the "I" and the "you"; a unique reference, the one of whom one speaks being able to enter as a partner into the dialogue or being unable. Irrelevant at the linguistic level, the insertion into the game of the partners, the "he" of the partner is not another, it is that of the non-partner. Now this distinction Plato says that he has made it in 246e.

When he directs himself towards a refutation of two opposing philosophical schools he tells us, he asks Theaetetus: .....:...

This game of hermeneutics and this affirmed position of herald, of the one who lends his mouth to another voice, this is what signals for us .....

Now the Sophist for his part is excluded from this hermeneutic. No one lends his voice to him,31 for him. His only place is on the validated horizon of a chain.

He is nevertheless present at every articulation of the dialogue. The Stranger establishes him as a judge of the definition and at the end of the *Sophist* ..... the (23) Sophist is the one who is the source of discourse.

It appears then that in order to understand a figure of the Sophist our only mooring point is discourse and its forms.

What is in question in the whole dialogue is the *onoma* of the Sophist. Now when the *onoma* proper to the Sophist is inscribed, that the Sophist will be able to stop constructing sophisms, namely, escaping, this is possible for the Sophist is a technician of discourse.

The Sophist ho is, and in so far as he is, subject of and through his *onoma,* outlines the very figure a/ space of discourse and its law in 260b: .....

It is necessary to define the discourse, namely, here .....

To be clear, it is a matter of constructing the space of a vacillation in which the Sophist will take his place. This presupposes the establishment of non-being at the level of the statement; play the Sophist.

But more radically it is necessary to introduce non-being into discourse itself. Now here we find ourselves on the inverse itinerary and we have, through that very fact, a (24) confirmation. A weakening has to be developed. There must be posed in the heart of discourse, in its being, an otherness of being; thus non-being requires that it should be defined and that discourse should be defined as an assemblage in which there is manifested the dimension of the other.

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Plato is attached to the minimum. Otherness, because it is necessary, must support a blending.

One sees then that it would be absurd to look here for the teaching of Plato on the parts of discourse but he is very careful to deduct them.

In effect, if it is exemplary for linguistics, it is precisely in so far as it is computation, in so far as in this closed list a computation of the elements of discourse is possible which becomes the term, that is, in this case, a pronoun.

In Plato, we find ourselves at the origin of computation, but the discourse remains moored to a being of which he speaks.

One can say what it is not, but a statement must be made about what it is.

For if non-being arises discourse disappears. It is necessary then to drop non-being into the underground.

263c: The Stranger tells us .....

(25) Now, there is here revealed perhaps the true dimension of what could be, it seems, Plato's choice. What is curious is that all the discourses of Plato ..... but the name here is the proper name.

Thus there is outlined a situation of the proper name which is the very locus where non-being disappears; the series of the parts of discourse, as soon as they are posed, are revealed then as impossible. The noun is immediately absorbed into the proper name and precedes it as a logical function.

The subject has disappeared. Being reigns as a numerable series, as signifier.

The fact is that, perhaps, a discourse that could be called analytic, an analysis of discourse is possible..... One is sure of one's anchoring point here.

If Plato ignored the structure of the subject and even that of zero, Mr Audouard has perfectly grasped what is at stake in this wager.

It remains impossible nevertheless to welcome the concept of ..... for us in an analytic discourse.

It is first necessary to make it undergo a dissolution where it will show its theoretical (26) cutting edge. I chose as an element of dissolution ..... cannot fail to demonstrate its dissimulated phase in the reference perceptible to those who have an ear.

It is necessary to grasp here a radical difference. In effect it is impossible to unfold Plato's discourse and one can in a way cut across the folds.

Thus there arises a circle of the analysis of discourse whose hermeneutic circle is only an obscure illusion. If we must, in effect, construct the fictitious structure, it becomes then something that holds.

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It is no longer a matter of reading a suture but of inventing the suture to establish the discourse as a legitimate discourse.

To situate the point which renders the object living, it is necessary, Plato tells us, to place the candle in the right place.

I found that Plato himself articulated the laws of the locus of discourse ..... make it appear, call for a reading ..... whose order would depend on a unique point whose validity only revealed itself to be foreign to Plato on the hither side of a miscognition.

Dr Lacan: Does anyone here want to pose a question, and at the same time try to bear witness to the fact that something of this got through?

I hope all the same that this challenge will be accepted.

Dr Kaufmann: As regards Platonism where do you situate the good? There is the problem of the Sophist on the one hand and on the other hand the problem of Platonism.

Mr Milner: I foreclosed it from my discourse.

Dr Kaufmann: In connection with the *logos* how do you understand the relationship of the noun to the verb? When I took up this *Sophist* I was pre-occupied by the question of the relationship between the *onoma* and .....?

On the other hand, what you said as regards the common noun and the proper name, do you not think that that involves the relationship of the noun to the verb?

Mr Milner: It is necessary to note that the problem of the relationship of the noun to the verb does not involve a theory of the parts of discourse. You have to look for it elsewhere. In the *Letters*.

Dr Kaufmann: I have got a little idea in connection with the problem of the noun/ verb and the problem of phantasy. I attach great importance to a term which is found, I do not know where, in the text it is *parafein*. In connection with phantasy, the way to link up to what Audouard said, is a ..... That can be presented in a very simple manner in connection with the phantasy for the Stoics.

(28) You know how this happens among the Stoics? I advance, I stumble, it is Bergson's elevator. There is one in place and then, from the fact that I go too far there is a hollow that is formed. It is the hollow of the wave. Among the Stoics the phantasy emerges within this. One has only to replace ..... by *Trieb.* One is on a certain line.

At that point one would have the equivalent of the problem that Audouard posed. The difference to Plato is that among the Stoics it happens like that and the phantasy comes here. One goes too far and in the hollow there is the demon of the elevator which arises there in the fact .....

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Instead of it being linear, in Plato, it is *parafein*. It goes to one side namely that there is a sheaf of non-beings around this axis.

Do you agree?

Mr Milner: .....

Dr Kaufmann: Here I rejoin a remark of Dr Lacan. The *passage à l'acte* within the verb when I lack predication ..... and I obtain here the phantasy. That is why I believe that the Sophist contains more unity.

Dr Lacan: I believe that he said a lot about the *Sophist.* What Milner told us was all the same very marked by his specification as a grammarian. It is in a completely different register that there is posed the difference *onoma,* ..... in Plato. You are ... .

(29) I do not know if it is appropriate that I should, after this, do something which in any case can only mesh with it in a very superficial fashion, because it cannot be pushed far enough.

In order to prepare what follows of my discourse, shall I recall what I am at present centring it around

The three edges, the three terms of subject, knowledge and sex which are, of course, the tripolarity which is essentially extracted from our experience as analysts and as such can be questioned.

Of course, all of this is a stage, and a major stage, in something which, inaugurally, is based on my terminology opposing as primary categories the symbolic, the imaginary and the real.

Since the time I introduced them, I would say, a little like the terms of a really hammer-blow philosophy, I mean what it seemed to me we could be satisfied with at least within our position as analysts, in terms of a sort of irreducible residue concerning the horizons of our experience.

One might happily construct, therefore, a correspondence, a superimposition of three terms: knowledge, subject, and sex.

I do not need to point to these three terms, I think, in a bi-univocal fashion unless I am expressly asked to.

(30) It is certain that there is here, nevertheless, a path that has been travelled and even a very long path. And that one cannot in any way take up the posture of being the contents of the other, that the three edges of the second triad cannot in any way be the filling out of the three edges of the first.

In this connection, I would like to mark, because, moreover, it is in the very measure of the progress of the elaboration that this content establishes, which is not identifiable to either one or the other, that the real, for example, of which people said that for a long time I only made almost an excluded term. Why did I

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apparently make of it an excluded term, if not through this mirage effect which is properly speaking the fact that the psychoanalyst, by his position, and it is here that you see it rejoining what Milner so well outlined for us today in connection with the *Sophist,* the psychoanalyst, in a very singular fashion, is excluded from the real by his position.

He forbids himself by his very technique any means of approaching it. To be excluded is a relation and it is indeed this exclusion which gives him all his difficulty in holding his place, holding it just as much as a theoretician as holding it in practice.

The real, up to a certain point, can even, can even be considered for him as a danger, the fascination offered to his thinking and to which all too easily, in a too easy fashion he succumbs when he goes into this field of the real which is his major reference, (31) namely the real of sex, when he advances towards this place where he has this something which he refuses himself and from which he is excluded: he is going to construct a real which will necessarily be the real of the psychologist or of some others which have their validity in the not only ambiguous but bastard register which is called human science, and which is what, properly, he has to if he wants to remain an psychoanalyst, he has to preserve himself.

What then is this place of the real for the analyst, and what is meant by the fashion in which precisely we attempt, we indicate, the possibilities of the construction of his place along this paradoxical path which is to take the path of logic.

It is very striking to see that in the measure that, historically, logic progresses and to the point where it culminates in the theory which is called what distinguishes the sign from the *Bedeutung,* from meaning, in Frege, we arrive at this sort of extenuation of the reference which means that Frege formulates that if we must find for this something which is called a judgement, some reference or other, this can only be, in the final analysis, the double value of the false or the true, the value is properly speaking the referent, you should understand, that there is no other object of judgement at the highpoint of logical thinking, which is for us exemplary of what a certain path that is pursued generates as a paradox that there is not, in the final (32) analysis, any reference except it is the value where it is true, where it is false.

It is clear that this extenuation, for us, is literally to be taken like a sort of symptom and that what we are in the process of searching for, by following things along this path, on this track, is what indeed was able to condition the evolution of logical thinking, it is what was indeed lacking for the designation of the place of the real.

In this sense, it is tangible for us that what is thus circumscribed in the form of a lack is something which has some relationship with the fashion in which the real presents itself for us analysts.

It is very striking that it culminates for us, and in a tangible fashion, at the same distinction as the one Frege gets to. Along his path, the distinction between sign and sense, it is through this that I tried this year to make you sensitive to its distinction from meaning. Sense exists at the level of non-sense and with a weight

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that is just as manifest as in any other locus where there can develop what is called meaning, an apparent real.

The relationship between sense and, as one might say, this blind spot of the real, this stumbling point, this end point, this point of impact and of aporia in sexual reality, it is (33) this point which necessitates for us the organisation of a logic where the three distinct edges of knowledge, the subject, and sex allow us to situate in their relationship, at their place, this something which is going to make appear to us a certain paradox and principally the place of the sign of sense as such, in a relationship of knowledge to sex from which the subject is in a certain way extracted, to which, properly speaking, this double alienation of terms between which there is established the dimension of sense, is what itself opens out into this very singular division (*divinité*) which is placed here, in analytic experience, between the subject and sex, the dimension of *Bedeutung,* the dimension also of what is for us the question mark, the sensitive point of truth.

What is situated on the side of knowledge is properly speaking the most opaque, what I introduced at the beginning of my discourse this year, this something which is properly speaking gaping wide which we can incarnate in the notion of *Zwang.* It is on the side of knowledge that the subject is found to receive this mark of division which is inscribed in the symptom and that I symbolise in the term that I announce here, taken from Freud under the term of *Zwang*. We are rather late. I have given you a scaffolding for what will be the end of my discourse this year. I wanted to announce it to you so that you would be less surprised when I will have to articulate them more deeply.

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Seminar 22: Wednesday 9 June 1965.

We are pursuing our remarks about the high-point that I am bringing you, to close my discourse this year on "Crucial problems for psychoanalysis", this high-point which the triad that I introduced three or four lectures ago structures.

I hope that what I indicated the last time, by way of closing the contributions of elements of a certain dialogue where this term, supported by all the reserves with which precisely I introduced the session the last time, that what I contributed by way of conclusion, introducing in a certain fashion the pole of the real in so far as it is constitutive of a certain difficulty which is, properly speaking, that of the psychoanalyst.

I hope that you remember it, this is the introduction of a theme, of a theme which without any doubt I will not exhaust this year, but which, if fate decrees, will be pursued next year.

In this introduction, which was perhaps too rapid and perhaps even up to a certain (2) point catapulted, I signalled the place where we ought to conceive that with respect to these three terms, whose function I am going to re-articulate today, gathering together, in a way, the meaning of the whole of our discourse of this year, I placed the three terms that I inscribed there, in German, for reasons which are linked to the historical lucubrations of these three terms, in so far as two of them refer to the thinking, to the work of authors who wrote in German.

Sinn, is properly speaking a Fregian reference, it is in so far as Frege opposes *Sinn* to *Bedeutung* in his conceptual elaboration of what the being of number is for him; *Zwang,* that it is in so far as it is here that it is appropriate to situate this function which is properly speaking the Freudian discovery, which gives a new sense, a renewed sense to what is presented in phenomenology, to what had been elaborated right through the nineteenth century as clinic of the mind and which gives it a status, a status which I intend today to make you locate as being what justifies, properly speaking, the accent that we have put with our commentary on Descartes on the fundamental relationships of the subject - in the modern sense of the term - and knowledge.

If there is a *Zwang,* if there is something which manifests itself in an opaque fashion in the symptom, which literally constrains, at the same time as it divides the subject, it is there that it is important to use the word *Zwang,* because *Zwang* refers to *zwei* and that as you see on the little figure to one side whose enigma I still have not revealed to you, it is indeed an *Entzweiung,* it is this that Freud pursued, discovered, traced to the extent that his final writing culminates at it, in the idea of *Spaltung* of the subject, which is essentially an *Entzweiung.*

Here then is the justification for what you see written there on the board; the term *Wahrheit,* truth is also written in German quite simply to remain homogeneous with the two other terms.

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It is this, this third term, *Wahrheit,* the fashion in which *Wahrheit,* truth, presents itself in psychoanalytic experience or, more exactly, in the fundamental structure which permits this experience, it is from this that I intend to start again with you today.

Not without having drawn, from our common discourse the last time, a thread, a thread that we are going to rediscover later, which is that of the question posed by Kaufmann to Milner.

Milner gave us an extraordinarily well-structured account, an undoubtedly very rich, working text, commentary, in short at the same time summarised from the *Sophist,* to which, from today, I think I will be able, without abusing it, refer myself.

(3) On the whole, as far as I have been able to gather, this discourse did not fall on deaf ears and was recognised, at least for the dimension that it offers, this dimension not being moreover necessarily the one which, for every listener, is either the most familiar or the one which interests them most, a dimension which can cause someone who is used to medical thinking, certain moments of vagueness. I even believe that not enough has been done to allow us today the reference that I am going to speak to you about now.

Kaufmann, questioning Milner, said to him, posed him this question: " Well then, what do you make in all of that of the good, of the good in Plato, of the pure idea of the good?" I remind you that Milner had put the emphasis on this dialectic with which the *Sophist* culminates which essentially wants to demonstrate - this is the *culmen* of Platonic thought - Plato had right through his discourses through which he addresses himself to us, discourses which are always, when all is said and done, essentially enigmatic, enigmatic to the point of being on occasion upsetting, humorous; it is quite clear, you really have to be deaf not to see that at one or other detour he really goes so far as to mock us; Plato, after having distinguished the world of ideals, in so far as they are unchangeable, that they are not subject to the field of ..... like that which, in the tangible world, in a way, receives them but cannot be affected by them, cannot (5) reflect them except in an approximate way, Plato, in the *Sophist,* is led and leads us to the demonstration that, if the action of ideas, I might say, can only be conceived of in the mode of participation, this participation is not to be conceived of as an effect which is produced in thought, in that through which we raise ourselves by dialectic to the conception of the most original ideas, by our dialectic we make operate this weaving, this ..... through which we recognise what in the world, movement of change, is sustained by a participation in the idea. The fundamental ideas themselves are only sustained in so far as amongst them there takes place this movement of participation and Milner reminded you how we find participating in being both movement and rest, how nevertheless movement and rest differ and can only differ in so far also as they participate one with the other, how then there is necessitated this something which for three terms, chosen by Plato to show us this something that we have to admit, that we must conceive of as being exercised in a movement, in an action, in a passion, at the very level of ideas, how beyond these three terms, two others are necessary which are the same and the other and the term of a fiveness, a (6) primitive *fünfheit* which is here

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rather advanced. I do not remember what Milner replied to Kaufmann's question. I hope he replied that as regards the good, the good in Plato's sense, he had spoken about nothing other than that.

For what the good is for Plato, is, properly speaking, the interplay of number. This is not a commentary as I might say invented by me. I put it forward today with all the more ease, in that a certain good fortune in a research inspired, like that, by reflection on the *Sophist,* led me to come upon something that perhaps is far from being unknown, but whose historical confirmation I was happy to find, namely, that there is a lecture of Plato on the good conceived as the idea of the idea. It is Simplicius, a commentator of Aristotle, therefore not simply the third but the fourth generation, it is Simplicius who bears witness to it in what remains of what he has attested, who bears witness to us that Aristotle bequeathed to the generations the fact of having attended this lecture, and that Aristotle attended it, that Aristotle had taken a summary of it, notes, a roneotyped copy, and that what was surprising for those who attended this lecture was very precisely that Plato only spoke about number at it. Everyone was expecting a discussion about what was involved in the good, whether it was riches, or good health, or good mood, or good knowledge. A part of the audience even left in (7) the middle, very disappointed.

That in truth, it is in this way that we must situate what was for Plato this reference to what we can call, to play for him the role of absolute idea, of unshakeable foundation for all his reflection about the world, this is something which is precious for us, because, as you are going to see, this is what is going to allow us to monitor the sense of what, in the history of our thinking, is contributed by Freud and what, having been contributed by Freud, opens to us a view which co-ordinates in a way superior to everything that was able to be apprehended up to then, the reefs, the aporias, the difficulties encountered in fact by what I would call the definition of truth.

This for us psychoanalysts is something which is to be taken at the most crucial level of our experience.

In a work to which I have been devoting myself for several years, and whose title I will not tell you, I begin, in a first draft, that you will not see, in the following terms:

"The title chosen here - the one that I am not telling you - implies another which might be *Voies de la vraie psychanalyse* (Paths of true psychoanalysis). This indeed is what is involved. Along what paths does psychoanalysis proceed? The examination of these procedures will be our method to determine what psychoanalysis truly is. We will (8) grasp here that its being depends on the effects of the truth. To remain there would be to paint it as an island floating on its own. The mean of the golden mean would become the subtitle whose extreme-oriental stamp would parody, not without virtue the very success of such a proposal. But this Cythera is firmly nailed to the world and that is why the map that we will describe will be rather in the style of marine charts, the commented contour of the banks leaving the interior surface grey.

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Along what paths does one accede to psychoanalysis? Here is the anchor around which we intend to make profoundly revolve the interest of the reader, which means also the reader that we here hold to be interested.

The guide of the true psychoanalyst, such is the title of its aim. It is obviously addressed to doctors, and as a partner in dialogue who reduplicates him, as a witness in a public which expects him: the true psychoanalyst.

One will discern here the echo of a *cliché* illustrated by the literature of our cousins: *The compleat angler,* the true angler. This is a celebrated work of English literature which is evoked here for the same reason which made Plato begin his definition of the *Sophist* by the same reference. *The compleat angler* would only have led a small number of its readers to become accomplished fishermen. Only the will to select the (9) reader is declared in it. Besides, if this book were opened by someone who might want to find in it the paths of the perfect psychoanalysand, you can rest assured: he would find himself much less solicited by it than by other works, not only is there nothing here which will lull him with these implicit promises that a familiarly presented observation conveys, but he will be no less refused the opportunity of displacing his anxiety onto the new burden of a psychological norm. He will find neither the *carte du tendre* of psychoanalysis, nor material to track himself down in it. This will not even embarrass his first steps in psychoanalysis and this guide does not aim at guiding him, but his own eventual guides. In reading it he will only feel himself to be interested objectively or, at most, as the one whose interests are being defended, a participant no doubt but not judge, if he only wants to retain of it, nevertheless, that guarantees are necessary and that this book calls for them.

Or much more, rather, that this book calls those for whom it is written, away from existing guarantees to other surer ones. Such is in effect the third theme that we have emphasised in it.

Along what paths does psychoanalysis .....; here is what the author, in a teaching which has lasted almost a decade (I give here some references which give the date and they are already well past) will try to articulate. Is there any need in order to clarify (10) this distinction to enumerate all the sciences with which modern medicine supports its procedures, or to remark that by basing itself on their results, it credits each one with its own principles, stamping them, as one might say, as ready made products. Now this is what is in no way possible for the psychoanalytic method. And psychoanalysts, on this point, will certainly sing with one voice, and as you will see we will make a great deal of this accord, which goes further than being a certain fashion of making oneself heard, if it is not always a certain mode of harmony. But it is not in vain that we have played first of all on the metaphor of the island, the fact is that we must recognise moreover, that it is the deadly object that this insularity has generated in what one might call its reflected, external form, namely, the situation of scientific segregation in which the analytic community sustains itself.

The fact is that the path of psychoanalysis, for its part, is not maintained there. A fact that we will corroborate with a no less serene chorus of psychoanalysts that admits it, in order to explore its antinomy. The paradox that we highlight here, in effect, uncovers more of its basis than it hides, for if we do indeed intend to say

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that only a technical formalism still preserves among psychoanalysts the community of the experience, let it not be thought that the straying that we denounce in the discipline (11) takes place in an empyrean ideal. It touches on the very way in which the treatment ought to be sought if it is to be true.

True has first of all here the simple sense of an effective treatment but in so far as its effects correspond to its means, means which in their terms go beyond the most ordinary reference for the doctor, the one which makes him qualify as suggestion the effects which he has at his disposal on a common margin of psychic displacement offered to almost all his interventions, even if they are only a simulacrum.

And true takes on here a reduplicated sense from the fact that the means of psychoanalysis are the means of truth through which we return to our debate. Now the use of such means is always diluted, as history proves, by not being open, open to criticism, open to questioning, open to an ambiguity which takes on here a particular form. For no one who offers himself to the test of a psychoanalysis will hesitate on the point that the truth evoked in this way has the sense of the truth proper to this person.

But how establish the relationship between this truth of the subject and what the construction of science has taught us to recognise under this name? Let us not refer here our confraternel partner to the disappointing *Periplus* that at best his secondary schooling, since it was French, made him go through under the name of philosophy, or (12) even to the already dusty epistemology that he may have retained from it. And this simply because Freud introduced to our experience, under the name of unconscious, the order of facts which opens up an experimental path to the question thus posed.

This is where our case (*audience*) and our remarks take on substance, and we are going to say by whom we want to make it understood: by those very people with respect to whom the bearers of analytic experience were only able, up to now, to state its incommunicable character for those who had not shared it, except, most recently, to spread this mystery, on this mystery, the badly digested cream-tart of the function of communication, by joining to it some simpering about the doctor-patient relationship.

For our purpose is that psychoanalysis should be submitted to a research which is brought to bear on its procedures and even its errors, finds a way to articulate its limits, in other words, disengages from it what could be called its structure.

For the monitoring of such work we call on all those for whom the notion of structure has its use in their respective sciences. We expect, moreover, that with us they will deduce from this work the conditions of formation thanks to which an analyst will be fit to conduct an analysis. It is in this moment that our exemplary dialogue with the doctor finds its touching side.

(13) “Beware, if you have opened this book because you dream of becoming a psychoanalyst! Because the psychoanalysis will be worth only what <u>you</u> are worth when you become an analyst, it will go no further than what it can lead you to.” It is from this reference of psychoanalysis as science to what, effectively, can be

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realised from this certain relationship, linked to a certain place of the resurgence of the truth in the modern dialectic of knowledge, it is from this that there depends, contrary to Plato's idea, that there depends what is involved, effectively, what we can talk about under the name of psychoanalysis.

And it is very precisely in so far as psychoanalysis, as it is lived, is present and is exercised in our historical moment, has a certain resistance to a certain way of directing this enquiry about the basis of its truth, a resistance moreover ..... highlighted, designated in advance by Freud, it is indeed in so far as this is how things stand, that as regards my teaching, properly, not alone do I believe I have the right, but I am obliged, in the very measure of this resistance, to bend, to curve its sequel and not go beyond a certain limit of what is the exploration of a truth, which can only be defined by following the effectiveness of what it brings into play, *hic et nunc,* as it is practised, of what the totality of its procedures brings into play.

(14) That in this regard the truth enters into a sort of drama which is the one sufficiently indicated by the limit, by specifying that the very person who can at a certain point reveal this truth has a right to suspend it, even to refuse it, this is something which not only has nothing original about it, but which in psychoanalysis itself finds its greatest justification.

I am telling you the way in which, the fact, that in the course of the ages this position was effectively adopted by many thinkers, adopted as a bias, an admitted bias - written in black and white - when Descartes tells us that he will not give the solution to a certain problem, he gives as a pretext that no doubt he does not want to give the opportunity to one or other of his rivals who will pretend to have discovered it by themselves, that he wants simply to show that they have not, effectively, been able to reach it, this is only a pretext, just as it is a pretext when Gauss, having glimpsed before Riemann the modern mathematical formulation of space, permitting a trans-euclidian entry, that Gauss refuses, refuses to communicate it, having his reasons to articulate that no truth is able, in a way, to anticipate on what it is tolerable to know.

This dialectic, as I said, is justified, takes its form in so far as psychoanalysis is for the (15) first time what allows us to bring to light, to pose in their radicality, the relationships which exist between truth and knowledge.

One can pose the question in a sort of abstract fashion - it is easy to point out, I did it in passing - in the paradoxical and, of course, not serious, comic form, what would be involved in the truth of the knowledge that the Newtonian formula established if it had been put out by someone two hundred years before?

Would this formula, whose introduction into knowledge represents a structural moment - we are going to come back to it again - in the relationships of the truth and of knowledge, would this formula have anticipated? Has it or not some value as truth?

This is only a mind game, an artificial aporia, but much more radically there is posed this question of the truth and it is around this question that there is played out the Freudian experience.

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That is why it is not thinkable, it only takes on its sense starting from a status of the subject which is the status of the Cartesian subject. If I took so much care at the beginning of this year to take up again the dialectic of the *cogito* as being the fundamental one which ought to allow us to situate what is involved in the sense of Freudianism, it is because it is proper to the Cartesian *cogito* to mark the importance (16) of a certain defining moment as such in the relationships between the subject and knowledge.

This is perhaps something that is not totally clarified by all the commentaries which were made of this essential moment represented by the *cogito*. What Descartes was looking for and what he found in this perspective, in terms of an unshakeable foundation, of a *fundamentum in* ..... can we say that he obtains it with the *cogito*?

That this being, impossible to snatch from the apprehension of "I think" should be a being, grounded in being; it is in any case quite clear that the fashion in which, before you, in contempt if necessary of previous commentaries, but certainly not in contempt of Cartesian texts, I articulated it in a fashion which goes beyond that at which, at the moment when in the commentary one is forced to remain at the moment of the "*ergo sum*", the commentary must recognise only there, what Descartes at least when he is his own commentator bases himself on, the obviousness of the clear and simple idea.

But for us, at the point that we are at in the effectiveness of science, what is this obviousness of the clear and simple idea worth? This *simplex intuitus* which Descartes himself notes?

Undoubtedly it is subjected for us to the consequences of the whole development of science, of the one which has been produced since the Cartesian step forward, which is (17) designed to make us revise this prevalence of the simple idea of intuition.

And the fashion I had of articulating before you the " I think: therefore I am" (with two points to work on the inverted commas) from which it results that the complete formula is properly speaking "I am the one who thinks: 'therefore I am'"; and that what I call this division between the "I am" of sense and the "I am" of being is the introduction to this *Entzweiung* where there is going to be put for us, differently, the problem of truth.

And it is here that we see the value of the fact that the *ergo* of Descartes, which clearly indicates something which is of the order of necessity and that, nevertheless, Descartes emphasises, repudiates as not to be interpreted in any way by a necessity which might fall under the incidence of the logical process of necessity, the one which could be expressed: "everything that thinks is, but I think, therefore I am"; it is precisely what Descartes himself takes care to reject in one of his texts. The "therefore" is here an articulation which certainly marks the place of a causal reference, but of a causal reference which is that of the activation of something which is present and culminates at this disjunction, at this *Entzweiung,* of the operation of sense that Descartes, at another point, is going to articulate frankly, not even *cogito* but *dubito,* the sense vacillates, the doubt goes to the most

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radical point: *ergo sum;* the being that is (18) involved is separated even from the *dubito.*

What then would Descartes be if we remained with what is imposed in this analysis of his fundamental articulation? Nothing other than a consistent scepticism, a scepticism that would protect itself from what he always opposed, that at least the truth of scepticism is true.

Now this precisely is what is involved. The approach of Descartes is not a truth approach and what signals that and what has not either, it seems to me, been fully articulated as such, is what gives it its fecundity, it is precisely that he proposed a goal to himself, an end which is that of certainty but for what regards truth, he discharges it on the other, on the big Other, on God in a word. There is no necessity internal to the truth; even the truth of two and two make four is the truth because it has pleased God that it should be so.

It is the rejection of the truth outside the dialectic of the subject and of knowledge which is properly speaking the core of the fruitfulness of the Cartesian approach. For Descartes, the thinker, was still able to preserve for a time the carcass of the traditional guarantee of the eternal verities. They are that way because God wants it that way; but in that fashion, in fact, he gets rid of them. And along the path that is opened up there enters and progresses the science which establishes a knowledge which no longer (19) has to embarrass itself with its foundations in truth.

I repeat: no essential establishment of being is given in Descartes. A step, an act reaches certainty with a reference to what? That there is already a knowledge. Descartes' approach could not be not sustained for an instant if there were not already this enormous accumulation of the debates that followed knowledge, a knowledge always linked, still caught up until then, like a string on its paw, on the critical fact that the beginning of this knowledge is linked to the possibility of constituting the truth.

I would call this knowledge before Descartes a pre-accumulative state of knowledge. From Descartes on, knowledge, that of science, is constituted on the mode of the production of knowledge. Just as an essential stage of our structure which is called social, but which is in reality metaphysical and which is called capitalism, is the accumulation of capital, the relationship of the Cartesian subject to that being which is affirmed in it, is founded on the accumulation of knowledge. Knowledge from Descartes on, is what can serve to increase knowledge. And this is a completely different question to that of the truth.

The subject is what is lacking to knowledge. Knowledge in its presence, in its mass, in (20) its own growth regulated by the laws which are different to those of intuition, which are those of the symbolic operation and of a close copulation of number with a real which is above all the real of a knowledge, this is what it is a matter of analysing in order to give the status, the true status of what is meant by a subject at the historical moment of science.

Just as all modern psychology is constructed to explain how a human being can behave in the capitalist structure, in the same way the true core of the research

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about the identity of the subject is to know how a subject sustains himself before the accumulation of knowledge. It is precisely this state, this extreme state, that the discovery of Freud offers to you, a discovery which means and which says that there is an "I think" which is knowledge without knowing it. That the link is quartered (*écartelé*) but at the same time tips over from this relationship of "I think" to "I am". The one is *entzweiet* from the other, there where I think, I do not know everything that I know, and it is not where I am discoursing, where I am articulating, that there is produced this announcement which is that of my being as being, from which I am being. It is in the stumblings, in the intervals of this discourse that I find my status as subject. The truth is announced to me where I do not protect myself from what comes in my word.

The problem of the truth re-emerges. The truth returns in experience and along a (21) different path to that of my confrontation with knowledge, of the certainty that I may attempt to win in this very confrontation, precisely because I learn that this confrontation is ineffective, and that where I have a presentiment, where I avoid, where I divine one or other rock that I avoid, thanks to the extraordinarily rich and complex construction of a symptom, what I show as a symptom proves that I know what obstacle I am dealing with, alongside that, my thoughts, my phantasies construct, not alone as if I knew nothing about it, but as if I wished to know nothing about it. This is the E*ntzweiung*. The value of this image, the one that I put on the right, which is easy for you to reproduce because it is one of these constructions that one can make very simply by manipulating a strip of paper. It is still the Moebius strip but a Moebius strip that is in a way crushed and flattened.

I think that you will rediscover there the profile that I made familiar to you of the interval where in the interior eight there is knotted together the Moebius strip, namely, this strip which is stuck together again to itself after a simple half-turn and which has as a property, as I told you, this surface, of having neither a front nor a back, it is exactly the same. Here you see it in the shape in which it is most habitually reproduced when you make it with a simple strip, with a belt, namely, when it does not take on the flattened aspect it has here which is moreover very useful for us to show (22) certain things, in short, this Moebius strip is realised just as well by a strip of paper folded three times in a certain way.

What does the fashion of presenting it in this way show us? The fact is that, if you wish, on the upper right-hand side of this triangular structure, there is a symmetry. The two foldings of the paper are carried out in a way that is symmetrical with respect to the one which appears at the surface. In the same way here, in the following folding, it is in a symmetrical fashion that you will first of all see there being folded the first strip like this, then in the following loop; but from the way they are knotted, you see that here, on the third side of the upper side it is in a non-symmetrical fashion that the folding is produced.

In other words, if we imagine what is involved in the relationship to sense, in so far as at this level of unconscious knowledge what is established is the communication of a certain structure between signifying articulation and this enigmatic something which represents, which is the sexed individual (*être*); if we symbolise the following phase as being that of meanings through which there come, at the level of the subject this opaque kernel of the sexed individual, we have here two fields here that are, in a way, not alone autonomous but which can

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be situated, one with respect to the other, as they are effectively in this image, as the front and the back.
(23) But there is a point where what is the front comes to rejoin the back, where the junction cannot be produced, except in the shape in this *Entzweiung* where it is something different that appears from one edge to the other of the third edge, which is the one which links the subject to knowledge. And here, far from it being a relation to certainty, the one which is grounded only on the relationship of the vanishing of the subject with respect to knowledge, it is the reality called symptom, that of the conflict which results from what is announced from the side of the unconscious, in opposition, in a fashion heterogeneous to what is involved in, to what is constituted as the identity of the subject.

The division between the subject and the symptom is the incarnation of this level where truth regains its rights and in the shape of this unknown real, of this real that is impossible to exhaust, which is this real of sex, to which up to now we only accede through disguises, through deputies, through the transposition of the masculine/feminine opposition into the active-passive opposition, for example, or the seen/not seen, etc.

Namely, properly speaking, in this function which caused so much embarrassment to the founder of dialectic, namely, the function of the dyad.

It is very striking that they perfectly well realised this function of the dyad. They perceived it as what constitutes the obstacle and stumbling block to the establishment of being and the one by whatever path this problematic is tackled, whether it is in (24) *Parmenides,* in the *Sophist* itself - I sufficiently indicated it earlier - in the commentary of Aristotle which is given in Simplicius and which carries the reflection of what Aristotle had integrated about this famous Platonic lecture with which I began earlier, we find that the status of number, finally, at this summit of Aristotelian thinking which certainly carries the reflection of Plato's lecture, the number is the number two. It is a number for us; it is a number in so far as the Fregian dialectic allows us to make it emerge from the zero along the path of what we called earlier the subjective suture, but before there was constituted in any fashion this relationship of the subject to knowledge, there was no other means for such a deduction except to establish the beginning of number at the level of two, of the *zwei*.

Now this *zwei* is precisely the one that we rejoin in the distinction of sex, a distinction which was completely outside the range of the Platonic dialectic. It is along the path of this something which is all the same aimed at by this dialectic and which betrays itself, as one might say, or expresses itself, or is reflected in the forms that this dialectic gives to the deduction of the dyad, for of course, consult the text and you will see they (25) do not take the *zwei,* the sexual dyad as a given, precisely because they do not have the sexual reference, and that to take it as a given is not a solution.

But Aristotle attempts to make this dyad emerge from a dyadic relationship which is that of the one, of the big and the small. It is from a correct measure that the birth of the two will be conceivable, namely, when the exact difference between the big and the small comes to equal one.

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It is clear that this deduction is fragile because it presupposes proportion and measure. It is clear that it requires the same, the same proportion, let us vary it, to give rise to all the other numbers; it is clear that it betrays a fundamental asymmetry in the two units of the duality and that it is precisely this asymmetry that is involved in what is always involved in any true apprehension of the individual (*l'être*) *qua* sexed.

This same asymmetry, which is the one where there comes to be tied in the disparity of knowledge and the subject, in the fact that the subject is lacking, that the subject forces us, solicits us to construct a more radical imaginary than the one again which is given to us in analytic experience, as the one where there arises the image of the ego, that this imaginary, this absolute singularity of the subject as lack, is the reflection of the expression of what cannot be matched from the dual opposition of one sex to the other sex.

(26) The 2 relationship that there is in sex is an asymmetrical relationship; and everything that our experience gives rise to at the place where it is a matter of grasping this sexual difference, this something with a different structure which is the one by which I tackle and around which there is going to turn our whole critique of analytic experience at the point that it is at, *hic et nunc,* in real psychoanalysis, namely the **o**- object.

Everywhere the subject finds his truth - this is what our experience has come to. What he finds, he changes into the **o**-object like King Midas, who turned everything he touched into gold. What we encounter at the place from where there begins this incidence of being and of the sexed being, refused by knowledge and with respect to which the subject is this singular who only signals this asymmetry of difference. Every time the subject finds his truth, he changes what he finds into the **o**-object. This indeed is the drama which is absolutely without precedent into which the analytic experience pushes us. For there we perceive that it was not a slight or accessory question when Plato asked himself whether there also was an idea of mud, an idea of dirt. What analytic experience reveals is that it is into things quite different to gold that man, in analytic experience, finds changed what he reaches at his point of truth. The introduction of the scrap of waste as an essential term of one of the possibilities of support of the **o**-object is something which is what I call an unprecedented indication.

(27) This status of the **o**-object which is there at the place, at the place of the third term which is veiled and in part cannot be unveiled, is the fact of experience which brings us to the radical question of what there is beyond knowledge, what is involved with respect to the subject, in terms of a truth.

I will pursue and close what I have to say about it the next time which will also be my last lecture.

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Seminar 23: Wednesday 16 June 1965

Today, in principle, I am giving the last lecture of this year.

Nevertheless, it will not be quite our last meeting. On the contrary, the closed seminar which will take place in a week's time will give an opportunity to each and every one of you to put some questions to me about what may have remained in obscurity for him either in his text, or in his drawings, about what I presented to you this year.

I stopped the last time the reading of a text, preliminary to a writing in progress, at the following terms: "For psychoanalysis will only be worth," I said, "to the one who demands to be an analyst, what you are worth when you become a psychoanalyst, it will go no further than it is able to lead you. This is not to delude ourselves together with a high-flown summons about your responsibility in practice," I continued, addressing myself to the same. You know well that every exercise of power is not simply subject to error but to this high-point of misunderstanding of being well-meaning in its error.

How could we accept to be doctors if we did not acept this unbelievable effect of the human labyrinth. What I must tell you, is the risk for you of this marriage to the fate (2) of psychoanalysis. For what you bring into play here has nothing in common with what is involved in the outcome of an ordinary psychoanalysis. And the term of 'perfectly analysed' that people ask you to admire at the outcome of your analysis when it is described as a training one, is as deceitful as it is inadequate to define the ends of this analysis.

For it is not enough that you should be, according to the classical formula, perfectly clear about your relationships with your patients, it is also necessary for you to be able to tolerate your relations with psychoanalysis itself. For, if psychoanalysis teaches it, truth responds to a venial lack in its regard, in other words to a repression, by taking its ransom on the very body where your being dwells.

Do not believe that it is more merciful to the mortal sins that are always imminent in the action which claims to follow its trace without knowing its tracks. An action whose means is that the word stumbles in the lie and the truth picks up the bill, always with usury. Your position is indeed linked then to the fate of all of those who are called psychoanalysts for psychoanalysis is nowhere else. If you can expect nothing more of psychoanalysis than what you put into it, what I require is, namely, to penetrate what there is behind a certain resistance established in the very body of (3) psychoanalysts. This indeed is the essential question, ever since the time that my teaching posed itself, purely and simply as being opposed to a certain sordidness in the theorisation of the practice whose common denominator is given by psychologising, this psychologising which is strikingly denounced there, since it is admitted to be the goal of some of its promoters.

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To look for the real that psychoanalysis deals with in the psychological, is the principle of a radical deviation. Every reduction, every attempt to return, as they say, or of the exhaustion of psychoanalysis in some psychologism in whatever constituted fashion it may be forged, is the negation of psychoanalysis.

Ever since the time when I showed that psychologism is woven from false beliefs, let us call things by their name, of which the first is that of these intuitive identities that is called the ego, it seems to me that I have gone over the path sufficiently to show you where the path can be traced quite differently.

No one has ever, except in a certain form of ignorance that, as a humorous theme, I attribute quite gratuitously, even though no doubt not without reason, to dentists, no one has ever yet dared to impute to Descartes the origin of this intuitive error.

(4) What I reminded you about the last time concerning the established status of the *sum* in the *cogito,* I will not recall today. It is from there that I begin again. Let those who were not here the last time, I want all the same to mark what I put the accent on, it is that this foundation of the *sum* in the *cogito* is not a primary foundation. It must be remembered that this emergence of the *cogito* in this division where my analysis marks it between the "I am" of being to the "I am" of sense, of the "I am of the one who thinks: 'therefore I am'", that this approach cannot be conceived of without the mapping out of that with respect to which it is situated, it is situated no doubt as a methodical doubt and what is more a radical one, this something which is an already constituted knowledge and that this relationship of the subject to knowledge is so essential that, starting from there, at the beginning, we rediscover in the result this something that I repeat here in order to see in it the initiation of a reflection which can be taken up again and pursued, the fact is that the result of Descartes' approach is to render possible this something that I characterised after him as the accumulation of a knowledge. The foundation, the end, the brand, the style of knowledge of science, is above all to be a knowledge which can be accumulated, and everything that philosophy since then, I am speaking about the one that we can retain as the best, was nothing other than to define the conditions of the possibility of a subject in the face of this (5) knowledge in so far as it can be accumulated.

Now it is this which is the false position of philosophy which puts the philosopher in the same position of a valet, which means that the psychologist is there to give us the conditions of possibility of a subject in a society dominated by the accumulation of capital.

The subject, in so far as he must constitute himself in order to render possible this accumulation of knowledge, this is something in which we can highlight what the Kantian approach itself is, the healthiest one in this matter, but the origin of this something with respect to which we have to pose ourselves as seeing it as wrong. It is not the condition of the possibility of knowledge that interests us. It is precisely of that which Descartes, of that which with Descartes, the consummation is accomplished of what I would call the alienation of knowledge in the fact that he abandons the eternal truths to divine arbitrariness. Here is the mainspring which allowed this new departure, this new approach but where something is

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fundamentally unrecognised, whose return constitutes the essence of the Freudian discovery.

If Descares liberates the chariot of these eternal truths, which he off-loads onto divine (6) arbitrariness, they might be different.

I am, undoubtedly, highlighting the importance of the decisive character of this moment but it is appropriate to give it its consequence, that therefore nothing, even two and two make four is not necessary of itself, everything is possible. If everything is possible, nothing is. And from then on, this is the important thing in what is omitted in our perception, the philosophical perception of Descartes' starting point, henceforth, the real is the impossible. Everything is possible except that which, henceforth, is only founded on its impossibility.

It is impossible that two and two make four, simply because God wills it. And nevertheless that is the only reason. Take it or leave it; one must pass by way of the impossible. Newton has the path opened up with his impossible action at a distance, with the knot that has never yet been untied of the field of gravity, and Descartes can allow himself to be a backslider, a backslider on the side of the possible, with his theory of vortices.

Henceforth it is clear that for the philosophers, and those I would say those of the best Kantian descendance, the analysis of the conditions of the possibility of knowledge is a deviation. As if we had to wait for them for that. For it is precisely during everything which had gone before, when people were looking for the path along which knowledge (7) would be rendered possible, it had proved impossible to find that path.

All of a sudden, knowledge came, which was impossible to discover when people were searching at first in it what was true, I am speaking about science.

And now, behold, when people were no longer looking for it because it had been off-loaded onto God, well then, what people were looking so much to discover, imposed itself all by itself, but in a quite different fashion, which did not settle anything about truth.

This is why now philosophers are reduced to fishing out some trifles for hermeneutical commentaries, along a path which goes completely elsewhere. For what I am trying to constitute for you, is not the conditions of possibility of psychoanalysis, but the way in which its path is traced, from the foundation of what Freud himself from all time articulated as being its impossibility.

I articulate this term of impossible today, no doubt, in a fashion which may appear hasty to you, even biased, it would no doubt deserve our saying more about it, may I provisionally indicate to you, that in order for us to grasp the two angles as regards the real, which will allow us to apprehend this relationship to the possible which is so essential to mark clearly for our whole analytic approach, to recall to you that the contingent is part of the real, which can only be the necessary if we make the mistake (8) of grounding it in the real and not where it is grounded, namely in a symbolic relationship, the real is that which cannot not be, I beg your pardon, the necessary is that which cannot not be, if we see in it the foundation of

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the real, you have only, as I might say, to operate on these two formulae what cannot be and what can and carry out the subtraction, it is in the transformation of can into cannot, in the establishment of the impossible that there effectively arises the dimension of the real.

I had, I had announced to you last year that I would speak to you this year about the subjective positions of being and then, in a moment of prudence, besides I allowed myself to be advised, I contented myself with speaking in my title about crucial problems for psychoanalysis.

I was right, not at all of course that my first plan was abandoned for all that. The subjective positions of being are there on the blackboard for the past four of my lectures, five perhaps, under the three terms of subject, of knowledge and of sex. It is indeed the subjective positions of the being of the subject of the "I am" of Descartes, of the being of knowledge and of the sexed being that are involved in the psychoanalytic dialectic and nothing is conceivable without the conjugation of these three terms.

The relationship of these three terms is marked by a relationship which is the one that, (9) under the term written here in red, and which is in a way the title, on the board of *Entzweiung,* that I am trying to make you comprehend as establishing itself, rooting itself in the mode of relationship of what constitutes the status of the subject, the status of the subject in so far as we have for the whole year turned around the kind of particular trait which is the one that constitutes it, this "one" whose formula we went looking for in Frege, in so far as it is this "one" which established the mapping out of the lack, we must seek somewhere this something which puts this singular one in this relationship of *Zwang* or *Entzweiung* with respect to the body of knowledge and it is from the *Zwei* of the sexed being, in so far as it is forever insoluble for this "one" of the imaginary subject, it is this relationship of the "one" to the *Zwei* of sex whose agency we find at every level of the relationships between the three poles of this triad. For this *Zwang,* this *Entzweiung,* this something that the last time, I will not go back to it, or I will go back to it if necessary, I thought I ought to inscribe in the topological schema whose importance or timeliness I will have to come back to later, as being marked by the fact that the structure of this topology being that of a surface such that its front comes in a way, as one might say, to conjoin itself to what is after all its opposite, namely its back.

Of course, in our experience as analysts, it is in this very particular relationship of a (10) subject to his knowledge about himself that is called symptom, the subject apprehends himself in a certain experience which is not an experience where he is alone, but an experience, up to a certain point, educated and directed by a knowledge.

The symptom, even if it is apparently the one that is most characterised for our habits as clinicians, that of the obsessional for example, we have only too much experience that it is only completed, that it only takes on its full constitution in a certain relationship to the other which Freud clearly underlined can be qualified as a first phase of psychoanalysis.

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This division, this *Zwang,* this opposition between the subject and what comes to him from the side of a knowledge, is the relationship of the subject to his symptom, it is the first step of psychoanalysis.

I am only recalling this to justify the fact that it is there that I marked the division, the *Zwang*. But if it is there, and if this drawing is justified by the fact that the symbolic sheet of the topological relationship involved which is a relationship of a triad has its sense, its importance, and I will return to it later, it is clear that this Moebius strip which is thus, you have not perhaps sufficiently reflected on the reason why, is it by chance or is it not what is imaged in this way in this strip that is folded three times onto itself, this Moebius ribbon I mean its fundamental half-twist, constitutes its topological (11) property, what it conceals in terms of Entzweiung, precisely in the fact that there are not two surfaces, that the same surface coming to encounter itself as being its back, this is the principle of the *Entzweiung,* of course it is at all the points of the Moebius strip that it can manifest itself.

And this indeed is what we touch in experience when we see that the sign, namely what gives its power to the analytic experience, what it introduced into the world in terms of this essentially ambiguous something, in which we recognise that at the most opaque level of signifying chain, something, this something which makes sense, it is always more or less caught up in this still unresolved bipolarity that emanates from sex and what, in any case, makes sense there, but did I not also begin the year by showing you that this kind of sense is exactly that of the *pas-de-sens,* that further, what we can try to articulate, to form, to conjoin in terms of signifiers on the sole condition of respecting in it a minimum of grammatical structure, will give this *pas-de-sens* and will manifest all the more its relief and originality.

Sinn is fundamentally marked by the fissure of *Unsinn* and this is where it arises in its greatest purity. So then, where would we find what corresponds there to this magical, fleeting and ideal line which is everywhere and nowhere, this line of the *Entzweiung* in (12) the locus of the liaison of the subject to sex that we have called *Wahrheit.*

For this is what is involved in psychoanalysis. If *Sinn,* if what is sense is interpretable, belongs to the subject from the side of knowledge, in the difficulties of discourse, in the stumbling of the signifier, the signified which thus comes, comes from elsewhere; it comes here from underneath, not at all through a detour of knowledge, but through this direct relationship of the subject with the sexed being. Where then is the division here? Do I need speaking to psychoanalysts to call it by its name? What is the experience to which psychoanalysis leads us and which defines the relationship of the subject with sex, if not that whatever the sex of this subject may be, this relationship is expressed in this singular fashion which is the one that we call castration.

It is in the measure that there is negatived, precisely, the copula, the instrument of conjunction, that the subject, whatever he may be, is integrated into the truth of sex and is necessitated from the foundation of castration, this is what shows us here again the principle of this singular *Entzweiung,* playing on the impossible to

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resolve ambiguity of this "one" that is always vanished, always constrained to confront itself with two.

Now, as I told you, the idea of the idea, the root of every institution, the establishment of the symbolic in the real, Plato's good, to call it by its name, is nothing other than (13) number. And I indicated to you the last time my references in Simplicius and his testimony about a certain lecture by Plato. I would like if one of my listeners would take it as a matter, an opportunity and a pretext for a more developed research.

Observe that it is not because I felt like drawing this strip that I described as folded three times in a certain fashion which harmonises with my drawings, the ones that I underlined the last time, in returning, that here there was a symmetry in the fashion in which, for example, this roll inserted into the strip is opposed to this other one, placed at this level of the figure. There is a symmetry, I mean that they are both, for us who are here hidden by the strip, and can easily rejoin one another.

The same here at the level of the other side of the junction ..... but not in the third. A funny thing, a curiosity but as regards which I would ask you to observe, to notice, as you habituate yourself to it, to this sort of experiment, *experimentum mentis,* that it could not be otherwise, that there is no other means of arranging this strip in this triangular flattening out, without there appearing somewhere the structure that I have just underlined, which means, which is not distinguished from the fact, that it is necessarily a Moebius strip.

(14) There is only one other possibility, which is that the thing is produced in the same fashion at the level of the three sides, which is what happens in the case that one makes use of what is called the shape of a knot. Namely, that it is in the same way, inverting the three points, that the strip would be folded but that it will, nonetheless be a Moebius strip.

There is then no escape from this topology; the triad, and it is curious that people did not see this until a certain epoque, the triad implies this topology of the Moebius strip.

It may seem to you to be a distant detour, capriciousness, a taste for the singular, that I delay, that I should wish to delay so long on a structure as regards which, at the very least, you can sense that as a structure that is not familiar, since I am sure that for some, if not for the majority of those who are here, the remark that I have made that the fact of using a surface as being the most propitious support to represent a certain triad is posed here for us as properly speaking establishing the subjective position - I specify and I insist, I do indeed mean that I know what I am saying when I say the subjective positions of being as such - that this support carries in itself the necessity of a certain relationship imaged by the Moebius strip but of which I already pointed out to you the strip is only the image.

(15) May I recall that it is not because this surface is a surface, that it exists, in a word, which makes it a Moebius surface. You can take as many pieces out of it as you like, if the continuity remains it is still a Moebius surface, and, at the limit, it is nothing more than this median cut which, changing the surface into a surface

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that is well and truly unique, remember, a median cut does not cut the Moebius strip in two but transforms it into a strip which only gives what is called a loop.

But what is proper to this strip is that it can, I showed it to you once but I regret not being able to do it again today, I forgot my scissors and my glue and I was not able to find here something to supply for it at the secretariat, but remember that this strip can overlap itself in such a fashion that it takes on again the exact shape of a Moebius strip and that then, what will be the the double edge of this strip folded once again in a Moebius strip, would be an interval that you have here drawn on the board, which you can show also involves this half-twist which is a Moebius strip.

What does that mean? The fact is that if in accordance with topology we consider the surface as having always to be defined by an edge, there is no other topological definition of the surface, an edge vectorialised like this, here is the symbol of the (16) surface that we call spherical, a sphere, it is there that one can make a hole which is cancelled out, as they say edge to edge, namely the two edges of the hole stitching themselves together, let us say, in the same sense.

If you wish, in order not to confuse, in order not to lose you in these imaginings about volume which is in no way involved in the matter, call what I called for you this first surface a globe, and the topology of the globe is not defined otherwise than by the duplicity of this edge.

What is inside it and at the two edges of the edge, even if it is an infinite globe, even if because of that it is a globe, strictly equivalent.

I already told you, that what is outside the circle of Popilius is a circle, just like what is inside it. And the proper of a surface which is called globe is that it is from a closed cut that one separates a fragment.

This is not true of every surface as is easy to see on a torus or a ring if certain closed cuts can have the same effect, there are those which only simply open the bicycle tube of the torus and leave it well and truly in a single fragment.

It is also true that a double cut, provided they cross over one another, do not fragment a torus into two pieces, I said provided they cross one another. A little imagination (17) with the bicycle tube that I evoked is enough for you to grasp this.

I introduced this year the Klein bottle whose property is that there can be two cuts on it which do not cross one another and which are not for all that divided.

I indicate it here by a little schema: one cut here, the other opposite, also a closed cut. I give you the responsibility of seeing for yourselves what the result is. The result is a single strip which forms a double loop on itself, namely, something which resembles without being confused with it what happens when one cuts a Moebius strip in the middle.

This is not at all astonishing since the Klein bottle is made of two Moebius strips and that there is therefore a trait, a trait with a particular shape, the one which. as I

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might say, goes around twice in this way, a very bad way of expressing it, the central void, the one of which we do not even have to speak when we speculate on surfaces, I am saying this to go quickly, it appears immediately and easily to you that this surface is thus divided into two Moebius strips.

You are going to see why I am re-evoking here the Klein bottle.

(18) There is a fourth shape of surface that can be defined by its edge. The one that I called, also in order to go quickly, before you, the cross-cap because it is in this shape that there is marked and that one calls in strict rigour, theoretically, the projective plane.

I think that I do no have to re-evoke, at least for the majority of you ..... For the others, let them for a moment imagine that here, this line shows the crossing which is produced here of a globe whose edges we would previously have opened in the way that we did it earlier, and if, once the edges are open, we make them rejoin themselves by intersecting themselves, namely, in such a fashion that not every point is going to be sutured with the symmetrical point, let us say, with respect to a line which faces it, but symmetrical with respect to a point.

We then obtain, I repeat, figured in a fashion which gives an image, what constitutes what I called provisionally the cross-cap or the projective plane.

What is here the property of the closed cut, of a certain type of closed cut? There exists a closed cut which has the same effect as on the sphere, with this difference, there is a difference of kind between the one and the other piece. One, and this is (18) pictured, is represented in the form that is described as that of the interior eight, and again the little portion that I will call differently today, and which is of great importance.

The other is a Moebius strip, I apologise for this long development, this long development is made to pose and introduce the following: the fact is that this central element, let us take it as such with respect to what you see here pictured in the shape of a Moebius strip, this central element which completes it and which closes it, and which is, what I called just now the little portion, this completes topologically what we have to say about the subjective positions of being.

What of the Moebius strip in the Klein bottle is completed with a symmetrical Moebius strip which closes it in the form of this something which resembles a torus, has as equivalent here something else of a nature that is different to the Moebius strip. This other thing, is what corresponds topologically to the **o**-object.

This **o**-object is essential for the analytic dialectic. I have heard it said, it has come back to me, that someone among my listeners had expressed himself on the **o**-object in Thomistic terms. The **o**-object is supposed to be the *esse* by essence, the something in which being would find its completion. Of course, such a misunderstanding is possible.

Up to the time that this topological image is there to make you sense that what is involved is the closing of *Entzweiung,* the occultation of the impossibility, the consummation of indetermination, this indetermination of which I spoke to you

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earlier which is that of the place of the *Entzweiung* and of this false assurance of certainty which is established in the masking of division.

Such is the function of this object, I would say, which conforms so little to a good shape, for you can only imagine it as this little disc, whose badly connected, hanging and circular shape comes to overlap itself, as the figure on the bottom right shows. It is nevertheless not something different to an ordinary surface but this side, I repeat, that is antipathetic to the good shape, this side that I would call the rag, this rag is the shape, the shape in which there is presented in the four registers where there is mapped out in the agency the subjective positions of being, namely, what is called in analysis, the object, the breast, the faecal object or excrement, the look and the voice, it is in this shape, in this topological shape that the function of the **o**-object is conceived. And this is why the equivalence, the possible substitution of the **o**-object for the conjunction to the other characteristic to a certain world, a micromacrocosmic world which (21) prevailed up to a certain date of the world where man bends himself and joins himself to the reality of a preformed other, of the one that he made in his image, in the image that is similar and at the same time inverted.

The cut, the cut in the history and also in the status of the subject as such, is, at the moment when for this partner there is substituted the function of the **o**-object, it is in so far as I am **o** that my desire is the desire of the Other and it is for that reason that it is through this that there passes the whole dialectic of my relationship to the Other, the big O, the one which last year I defined for you by the relationship of alienation.

The **o** by substituting itself for it, allows us the other mode of the relationship, that of separation, something in which I establish myself as fallen, where I establish myself as reduced to the role of rag in what was this structure of the desire of the Other by which mine was determined.

It is through the fact that the suturing, that the soldering of my subjective relationship, of my subjective position as being can be found in the **o**-object that there passes the true nature of the dependence on the Other and especially on his desire. For phantasy is nothing other than this conjunction of the *Entzweiung* of the subject with the **o** thanks to which a fallacious completeness comes to overlap the impossible aspect of the real. The character of covering that the phantasy has with respect to the real cannot be, ought not to be articulated otherwise.

The analyst passes through the desire for this repositioning of the ego as subject in this **o** that I was for the desire of the Other and no disentangling is possible of the enigma of my desire without this re-passing through the **o**-object.

I heard, not too long ago, in one of my analyses, there being employed the term in connection with someone for whom analysis did not seem to have been a great success from the point of view of personal qualities. "There are then" said my analysand, making himself an objector for the occasion, "analytic miscarriages."

I rather like that formula. I would never have invented it ..... In effect there is a turning point of analysis where the subject remains dangerously

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suspended on this fact of encountering his truth in the **o**-object. He may remain there, and one sees that.

My course for next year I will give then on what is lacking to the x subjective positions of being, I will give it on the nature of the **o**-object. If I were speaking to you in English I would have said *the significance of the object small a,* and if I had done so in German I would have said *die Bedeutung des Objektes kleines a*. But since I speak to (23) you in a tongue closer to that tongue fresher that all the tongues, which is called Latin, I will inspire myself from the *De natura* something, *rerum* and I would say to you *De natura objecti a* and I would add perhaps *et de consequensi*.

I can only deplore on this occasion that mother church is abandoning this tongue which has the great privilege of rendering precisely absolutely hermetic the explanations about the ceremonies that must be given while they are happening. When they are given in Latin there is a chance that one will comprehend that it is the incomprehensible that is important.

Reassure yourselve, I will not give next year's course in Latin. Although you never know. I will perhaps give one just to teach you.

I would not like to leave you without all the same having illustrated a little bit what all of this means because there are perhaps some who believe that I am far from the clinic in telling you this story.

There are a certain number of subjective positions which are well and truly concrete with which we have to deal even if we do not see that in the symptom, it is always necessary to search out where the knowledge is, where the subject is but not to go too quickly as regards knowing what sex we are dealing with. But in analysis there is the Other and we perceive the fashion in which, with respect to the Other, to the big O there are posed the problems of desire.

(24) Today I will not return to the major repartition of the demand, of the *jouissance* of the Other and of the anxiety of the Other as corresponding to the three perspectives determining the respective aspects of neurosis, perversion and psychosis.

In neurosis, from which our experience began and which is just as fundamentally our daily experience, it is with respect to the demand of the Other that there is constituted the desire of the subject.

To say that it is with respect to the demand to the Other is not going against what I am saying: the desire of the subject, is the desire of the Other but his aim, because it is also the principle of his maintenance in the neurotic position, is the demand of the Other, what the Other demands, of course, is not what he desires. I insisted enough, I think, on this radical *Entzweiung* for me not to have to illustrate it in you here, besides, take up everything that I may have left as a commentary on one or other point of the *Traumdeutung* in order to pursue it even into the structure of feminine homosexuality, you will put your finger on this *Entzweiung* and the hysteric charges a third person to respond to the demand of the Other. For her part, she sustains herself in her desire as unsatisfied. And that is why it is to the

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symptomatology, to the evolution of the hysteric that we have the most rapid access but, at the same time, which veils it in part to the fact of castration.

(25) Castration is too instrumental, too much of a consideration in the hysteric and also too easy to reach because most of the time the hysteric is already the castrated object, for it not to hide it from us.

The obsessional like the neurotic is in the same situation. He operates differently with the demand of the Other. He put himself in his place and he offers him the spectacle, the spectacle of a challenge by showing him that the desire that this demand provokes in him is impossible.

In fruitful cases, because they exist, of obsessional neurosis he demonstrates to him that in its place that everything its possible. He multiples his exploits,. All of this has also a considerable relationship with castration and if he snubs, if he degrades, if he mocks in this way the desire of the Other, well then, it is, as we know, to protect his penis.

From the place of the Other, through all the calculated risks that he runs, he experiences himself as a safeguarded phallus. This is where oblativity is at work. He offers everything instead. There are no greater oblates than the true, than the major obsessionals. He offers all the more willingly in that everything that he offers is, as you know, shit.

So then, forcing his hand by interpreting the phantasy of fellatio, which may come up, (26) in effect, and which ordinarily comes up in the analysis of the obsessional, imagining that it is the avidity for the penis that directs him, by making it the object of communion, well then, it is in reality a miscognition in the analyst, the effect in him of the confusion between the lost phallus and the faecal object and which, by involving the subject in analysis in a dialectic of touching, of not touching, of contact or of no contact, testifies properly speaking to the truth of what I am saying because this dialectic for the treatment of the obsessional is properly, as I might say, not that of property but that of cleanliness.

The subject, in analysis, along such a path, with such a method, is invited to what I defined as being the function of the **o-**object, to find his truth in the **o-**object, under its faecal species, which is properly, of course, what in fact delights the obsessional, who asks for nothing but that.

You see that this theory has practical consequences, that it allows there to be articulated objections, structures objections against something which is presented as not being without clinical effect and even up to a certain point beneficial. Since the whole danger comes precisely from satisfying the demand that we see being manifested in the neurotic.

When I take up again this dialectic of the possible and the impossible I will show you (27) that after all it is nothing other than what Freud uncovers for us as being the opposition of the pleasure principle and the reality principle.

But I do not ask how it is possible for neurotic suffering to be a pleasure, even though it is very obviously demonstrated.

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I cannot demonstrate how it is possible except by doing him a bad turn but I can manifest it by putting myself at the place where I render impossible the satisfaction of the demand which is hidden under this suffering.

I will not go any further today about the clinical details because I must conclude.

I will not tell you how the phobic patient comes under the same rubric which is always the relationship to the demand of the Other. I spoke to you enough about the signifier that is lacking to close and terminate what I have to say to you today on this point where there really culminates the whole discernment that Freud has of the unconscious phenomenon when he speaks about the final desire that dwells in the dream, which is the true desire of the Other; the desire that we should sleep. That it is at the moment when a dream comes to this high point of fixing itself in this immobile figure where really for us there is incarnated in the deepest way the nature of phantasy and of its function as a covering of reality. Think of the dream of the Wolf man. If the phantasy wakens us, and in anxiety, it is so that reality will not appear.

(28) May you simply be sufficiently awake for the sense of the word future in my drawing to touch you from now on.

I will not strip the Other either of his knowledge nor of his truth. The end of analysis if it is what I inscribed in the symbol S, signifier of Ø, are these terms: the Other knows that he is nothing.

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Seminar 24: Wednesday 23 June 1965

Our last meeting for this year. I wanted it to be one of the seminars described as closed, namely, this moment or this place where I manifested, this year, the desire to hear, in short, a certain number of eventual responses to what I was led to put forward to you in my lectures.

It is an enterprise which has not revealed itself, this year, to be too risky. Nevertheless, we have almost, for this last meeting, not perhaps all that I was expecting from certain people who had expressly manifested the desire to be present by speaking at one of my seminars of this year, but found themselves, as happens to psychoanalysts, always very busy, and caught for time.

Good. With that, point I had a pleasant surprise. There was brought to me, at the last minute, a text on a book which, as you are going to see, seems to me to be very very important. You will see why it seems to me to be very important. It is not only because I could talk to you about it very relevantly as relating to certain reference (2) points that I think I very clearly elucidated before you, this year, concerning what is called desire.

And then, subsequently, you will have an intervention from someone you have already heard who forms part of this new stratum always ready to go into battle when perhaps older people take things more slowly.

So then, I am going to give the floor, without delaying any longer, to the person who is going to give you her commentary on this work whose name I will not take the freshness off before she speaks about it. It is Madame Montrelay who was kind enough to give me this pleasant surprise.

Madame Montrelay: On this eve of vacation, perhaps it is not too frivolous to suggest to those of you who have not already done so, to read Marguerite Duras' last novel, *The ravishing of Lol V Stein.* This book appeared last year, and was not always favourably welcomed by the critics. They reproached her for an excessively enigmatic subtlety. One finds there, in fact, the usual style of Marguerite Duras: a slow rhythm, an ambiguity of texture, a passionate understanding of words and also of the heart.
The ravishing of Lol V Stein goes in the same direction as the preceding narratives by (3) Marguerite Duras, in its search for a lost moment. This instant, which occurs completely by chance, fascinates the principal character of the narrative - remember the scenario of *Hiroshima mon amour* - it fascinates him because it is there that his certainty is inscribed.

This certainty is extremely tangible, moreover, in the style of Marguerite Duras which irritates a lot of people, which is quite comprehensible because it insists the more it slips away. It seems to coincide with memory or rather what Jacques Lacan calls a memory (*une mémoire*).

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If I evoke this last term it is not in order to note, purely and simply, that it constitutes the mainspring of the novel. This affirmation is just as true of the works of Proust, Butor, Simon and so many others. It is perhaps truer than about the works of Marguerite Duras where memory does not constitute so much the mainspring as the object of the narrative, which is curiously spoken by another. I mean that it appears here with a particular clarity that it is the desiring discourse of the other that we are living, with the subject Lol V Stein, the event which holds her prisoner.

It goes without saying that this novel is the nth narrative which has been made in the third person. What is surprising is that the unaccustomed relief of the first person who speaks about the third, this relief is in a third dimension in which the subject Lol emerges infinitely more present, more disturbing, than one can account for, by the unique use of the first person. These dimensions which Jacques Lacan has designated for us this year, to which I just alluded, particularly what was named by him last week, the dialectic of the relationship with the other *qua* relationship of alienation, these dimensions even structure Marguerite Duras' novel which it is time for me to summarise for you.

Lola Valerie Stein, nineteen years old, American, on the point of marrying, is suddenly separated at the end of a ball, not from her fiancé, Michael Richardson, but from the couple formed by her fiancé and Anne Marie Stretter, these two having, in the course of the ball, having recognised one another in a passion that is as sudden as it is definitive.

This, I think, is how things ought to be said. Lol, who has seen the couple beginning to fall in love by the simple - I borrow this term from Serge Leclaire - circuit of the look, looks on, for her part also she does not intend to stop looking.

We must underline right away the strangeness of Lol's character, indifferent, absent, here is the first presentation that is given of her by her friend. At college, she says, I was not the only one to think it, there was already something missing in Lol for her to (5) be "there", she says. "She gave the impression of of being in a state of passive boredom, putting up with a person she knew she was supposed to be butwhom she forgot at the slightest occasion. A miracle of sweetness but also of indifference." (3)

If Lol V Stein is so indifferent it is naturally because she does not clearly distinguish between herself and her surroundings. Anne-Marie Stretter, who appears on the contrary to be perfectly well defined, sure of herself, allows Lol, I imagine, to make the distinction, thanks to her, the distinction between a woman, this woman who is Lol V Stein and the desire of Michael Richardson.

This desire takes on for Lol, a significant value that was unsuspected up to then, even though she no longer loves her fiancé. Lol V Stein suffers the mark of this signifier in the shape of her forgetting. Lol's forgetting, its negation, are going to constitute her delight at being finally in the presence of the couple and her own presence or the present of presence, if I can invert in that way a formula that Heidegger gives for anxiety, in order to illustrate the opposite, namely,

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satisfaction, where the present of presence takes an absolute value which represents the dead time of the ball, walled in, it is written, in its nocturnal light.

But more again than what we are told about the multiple aspects of the ball, what holds Lol is its ending, more precisely again the moment when she has just perceived the dawn while they do not know it yet.

(6) At that moment, Lol senses in terror that something is going to happen, that "it is going to happen". And if I take up the terms recently quoted by Jacques Lacan, it is because they seem perfectly to express in their ambiguity the event that is sensed by Lol of her body as a waste scrap, or rather the becoming of her body as a waste scrap, a remainder, rejected more by the dawn than by the couple.

I take up this passage with more detail: "she knows," writes Marguerite Duras, and she adds a little bit further on "they do not yet", "at this precise moment, something ought to have been attempted which was not" (37). This was Lol's temptation: strengthened by the knowledge of which she possesses the privilege for a brief moment, she senses herself on the point of using it, first to circumscribe, to perpetuate, this common fascination, which would be still possible if we were to suppose that Lol discovers for herself a sudden incantatory power.

But this is not the essential. What Lol desires, in the possession of her brief and fragile knowledge, is to be able to say why, really, the couple flees. And this is absolutely impossible.

If the words existed, to circumscribe what is being manifested, played out, before her about the reality of sex, the couple would remain. Lol is sure of it and we also participate in this certainty. We are totally suspended on it for a brief instant. We are (7) nostalgic for it.

I cannot read here the two splendid pages which lead us to this moment. I will content myself with quoting this expression of regret, this mourning of Lol:

"I like to believe - since I love her - that if Lol is silent in her daily life, it is because she believed for a fleeting moment, that this word might exist. It would have been an absence-word, a hole-word whose centre would have been hollowed out into a hole, the kind of hole in which all the other words would have been buried." (38) Lol is very well aware that she is not able to articulate this word.

So Marguerite Duras continues in the same vein:

"It would have been impossible to utter it, but it would have been made to reverberate. Enormous, endless, an empty gong, it would have held back anyone who wanted to leave, it would have convinced them of the impossible, it would have made them deaf to any other word save that one, in one fell swoop it would have defined the future and the moment themselves." "What can convince us of the impossible, who can say the truth about reality, beginning with that of sex", Jacques Lacan asked a little while ago, "if not God. But God is absent."

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"Lol", continues Marguerite Duras, "is not yet God, nor anyone" (39) Issuing from the absence of a word, from the absence of God, there remains nothing more than the body of Lol, horrible, terrible to sustain, the **o-**object which it is going to be henceforth (8) necessary to abolish. How can one tackle that? By ensuring that the throw of the dice which was Lol's first forgetting is renewed but makes, as one might say, two blows from one stone. The forgetting of Lol by a real couple, must coincide with the abolition of her body experienced as **o**-object.

Then alone will this event be the arrival of the ravishing of Lol V Stein. And this in both senses of the term. The way in which Lol V Stein imposes on the reality of the beings who surround her the grid of her phantasy which is none other than the reconstitution on the rebound of the first chance, I will tell you later.

We will now make a few remarks, first of all in connection with this **o-**object as it appears in the course of the narrative. The first is that it constitutes in Marguerite Duras, as in Flaubert, Maupassant and also in the new novel, this tangible, palpable, material of the narrative which only properly speaking becomes an event through the intervention of the desire of the other.

In *The ravishing of Lol V Stein*, the object is the body, the look, but it is above all the missing word which, because it is lacking, does not exist any the less and in the most horrible fashion from the moment that its existence is raised, put in question. This word as hole, this hole of flesh, this "bloody incompleteness", I quote, "this dead dog on the beach"(38), how many times already has it resonated in your ears, this word is, Lol.

(9) Lola, such a feminine first name with its final little "a", and its sexed character. It harmonises in a curious fashion with the little bit of Valerie that remains, a "V", and the brief density of the surname.

Dr Lacan: Madame Montrelay, do you think you would have the courage to take the plunge. What you have so well picked out in this work and in this text, try to get it across with your notes of course to sustain you, which are not notes, but a text, but without reading this text, because I think all the same that, not that it is not getting across, but that it has less impact than if you were to say, improvise, tell us the same thing as you are absolutely capable of doing, because I believe that it is important .....

Madame Montrelay: I have not prepared an improvisation.

Dr Lacan: Do not improvise but say what you have to say. In short, it is a question of something which might be a hisstory, a psychological history, namely, that one could in effect go back to the childhood of Lol V Stein. The originality of this is diminished by the fact that you know the American usage of giving in the form of an initial, to represent the presence of a second fore name in the form of an initial.

(10) The first name is a shortened name, its Lola. This Lol V Stein is absolutely not psychology, I mean people speak about her in terms of what was already strange about her, but the important thing is what happens to her at a moment given as unique, upon which she remains, one could say from outside if we were

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doing psychology, she remains hooked. She remains hooked up to the fact that one fine evening, with her then fiancé, it happens that a third person, a charming woman enters, the fiancé looks at her, and the affair is settled, they will leave together at the end of the evening, and everything happens really in full sight not just of Lol, but of everyone.

Everything that happens in the rest of Lol V Stein's life and specifically what is reported to us, what is reported to us by a narrator whom we do not know. There is a moment when in the middle of the book, the distance is covered and the narrator unveils himself, the distance is covered, it is I. He is the one who is speaking and who rejoins his own entry into the life of Lol V Stein.

What is going to happen with this character, how this character is encountered, is something which manifests the state in which Lol V Stein has remained in connection with this traumatic scene. What she is, essentially, after that, is what Madame Montrelay is going to try to explain to you. What I was able to say this year about the (11) subject and his supports is here truly illustrated, illustrated in a fashion which does not for a single instant have structuralist or analytic pretensions, simply by stating things with the words that best illuminate it. It emerges that the very structure is written there. Earlier, Madame Montrelay read a text to you where there is this word hole for example. That is in the text. There are many other things in the text which is a text which seems, without our having done anything, Marguerite Duras and I, to meet, they are texts that are congruent with the very theme of what I put forward to you this year.

Take it up again, as you are able, and speak a little bit louder, with a little bit more rhythm. And if you can, leave your text. I would be very happy with that. Because you have certainly more than one thing to say. Or indeed read the pieces from Marguerite Duras when necessary: it is absolutely necessary that this should get across.

Madame Montrelay: The best way is perhaps is if I read first what I have here and afterwards we will see....

I was saying then that this object was a word, it was Lol. I was also saying that Lola had lost the a of Lola, that it had lost its sexed character and made her anonymous. But that, on the contrary, I believe that I have not yet said that with Lol V Stein, you have a mouthful.

(12) In fact we find in this verbal sequence, the characteristics, it seem to me, which were underlined by Serge Leclaire in connection with this secret formula of poord'jeli. These characteristics seem to me to be the following:

1) The brevity with which there arises the formula which renders well the apparition of a nothing-at-all-something that we have previously encountered,

2) The acme, figured in an inverted form in the V in the centre, a fork, an incomplete triangle,

3) The natural reversion as regards the word Lol where the front is the same as the back but precisely, then, can we speak about reversion? It is something different.

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4) The magical character of this formula, magical at least in the way it appears in the novel because it represents the master word that Lol should have said in order to close for ever the circuit of sense.

These are only suppositions. Nevertheless if, as Marguerite Duras underlines, Lol, when she pronounces a proper name, is incapable of naming - I can find the quotation later - it is quite possible that this present-absent word, far from sustaining here the symbolic order, only serves to want to justify the inexplicable, namely, the mystery of birth.

We will note, secondly, and very briefly, the ambiguity, the incoherence, with which (13) there is manifested in the narrative the femininity of Lol. It is tempting to think that Lol, counting for nothing, forgotten by the couple, apparently not desired by her parents, ceaselessly repeats this experience because this would allow her to articulate for someone else, but especially for herself, her enigmatic femininity.

One is struck in this novel by the absence of reference points, the rarity of phallic signifiers, it seems that Lol's sexuality is situated well on this hither side of an oedipal structure, in this relationship to the void that was evoked by Perrier and one of his collaborators in volume VII of *La psychanalyse* .

But before ending this presentation, it is perhaps necessary for us to give a glimpse of the rest of the novel. Lol V Stein, after the ball, after the crisis, the time of madness which follows it, gets married, has three children and lives in conformity to norms, in a small American town.

After ten years of marriage she returns to her native town and in the course of these afternoons where tirelessly she walks her body as one would walk a child, she encounters a couple, another one, made up of her old friend and a man whom she lays claim to, whom she decides to love in the most bizarre fashion.

(14) In fact, this man was to forget her as often, as absolutely as possible with a woman who is and who must above all be considered by him as possessing the fullness of femininity. That this woman had also attended the ball which is also her ball, is of course, for her, an essential condition for the charm of things.

The lover of Tatiana now tries to decipher, bit by bit, this immense phantasy conceived by Lol V Stein, for reasons that are now easy to locate. "I desperately want", he declares, "to be part of the word which emerges from the lips of Lol V Stein, I want to be part of this lie that she has forged. Let her bear me with her, let our affair take from this point forth, a different course, let her consume and crush me with the rest, I shall bend to her will, let my hope be crushed with the rest, to be bent to her will" (97).

This is what Jack Hold, the narrator, accepts to do. To meet Tatiana in a hotel near the town while Lol V Stein lying in a field of rye looks, looks. Looks at what? The lovers who at first pass sometimes near the window, and afterwards, naturally, nothing. At the window the forgetting of Lol V Stein that Jack Hold tries to bring about for the greater satisfaction of the trio. What secret plan has

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taken hold of Marguerite Duras which led her to construct a story that is so frightening, so mad, so logically illogical in its smallest details?

(15) It is here that we must make a third series of remarks in connection with the use of persons in the narrative, particularly the unaccustomed, unusual breadth which was given to the first person, that of Jack Hold.

There follows first of all:

First remark: In the measure that our unique knowledge is established in a desire, a desire itself caught up in the net of a phantasy, that this knowledge is never fixed, always relative, possibility, one story among others. This is the way I believe certain contemporary musical works present themselves, those of Stockhausen for example.
Second remark: The desire of the other conditions the space of the novel, in other words its structure, a space open to all the winds where the desire of the one, let us say outside, can intersect at every point that of the other, supposed to be inside. How can the desire of the one be sutured to the desire of the other. It is in function of the **o**-object but we are going to find that later.

Third remark: It would have been absolutely impossible to account for the subject Lol, to make her emerge in this quality of being, of truth, which sometimes leave you breathless, in other words it would have been impossible to grasp Lol at the zero point of her desire if it were not in the discourse of the desire of the other.

Fourth remark: This subject we grasp, well on the hither side of the *cogito*. Nothing (16) of it is ever formulated in the form of the one, of the unique. Here is what her lover says about it: "That was my initial discovery about her: to know nothing about Lol V Stein was already to know her. One could, it seemed to me, know even less about her, less and less about Lol V Stein" (72).

Let it be said in passing that this definition of love is not so bad, it seems to me. But what interests us here is that this cloudy, insipid subject, who has no ideas, who has not a single one, is the only subject of the novel who thinks she can manoeuvre her world, tracking, manipulating the couple of lovers into what kind of situations I will later say.

The fact is that the subject is to be grasped in a perpetual division between the desire of the other and the **o-**object. Here she is anew this object, more present than ever in the second part of the novel. These eyes fixed wide open, which devour, absorb, decide about everything, this immense look lost in the bristling of the straw in a field of rye, is this **o**-object which fascinates Jack Hold, which draws him into the phantasy, into her phantasy, or into the phantasy of the novel.

What Lacan told us, I believe, last week. I quote him textually: "It is in so far as I am the **o**-object that my desire is the desire of the other".

So then, in this narrative, the third person is made the first, the first is to be taken as (17) the third. An operation of syntax, of desire, that certain novels of the eighteen century depicted, I am thinking in particular of *Aux égarements du coeur*

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et de l'esprit by Crébillon the younger "For a while, the marquise was ejected, leaving at five o'clock".

The new novel, to be located since Flaubert operates between the one who speaks and the luxuriance, the proliferation of the object, an interval, a lack, a pause, a silence which is the subject. Let us make no mistake about it, Marguerite Duras, who knows how to make silence heard, also speaks in the third person.
Dr Lacan: You have just heard a very important and very interesting text. We will try to arrange for you to have it. Is there here, I know that already, among people close to me, there are several people who have not allowed this text of Marguerite Duras to escape them. If they want to give an opinion now on what they have heard, I would be satisfied.

Does someone have something to say about it now? To give you the tone of the novel, I am going to read for you a little piece of the central chapter that I have chosen. I think it will be clear enough, in so far as the voice of the person who has spoken here has reached you, to be clear enough as regards the texture, the texture of (18) the novel for this chapter to take on its value.

The young girl, the young woman in question married rather quickly a very altruistic type of chap, who had, in a way, taken her under his protection as a sort of waif.

After ten years this waif has survived rather well and has come back to her native place, to her hometown which is called South Tahla, of which one could have warned her as regards the dangers that it presented for her, specifically as regards what are called memories that it is necessary to avoid for people for who are suffering from a bereavement, lives again in this town and it is there that, wandering around one day, she is going to meet someone who had already announced himself at the horizon of her vision, one could not say in a meeting, he entered into the field of her window, it is the narrator, at the same time he is the entity, the typical lover, but he is also someone she follows, who is there, the one who is going to take the place of the hole, of this gap, around which, in short, her whole being as subject is organised.

Following him, having met him on the street, she waits for what he is waiting, namely, the woman with whom she has a presentiment, she presumes he has an appointment.

"She did in fact arrive, she descended from a bus crowded with people on their way home from work.

The moment she heads towards him, with that very slow, very gentle, circular movement of her hips which makes her at every step, the object of some secret, ceaseless, caressing sel-flattery, as soon as Lol sees the black mass of dry, mist-like (19) with the tiny, white, triangular face beneath, that face dominated completely by those very large, very bright eyes, gravely disturbed by their ineffable remorse at belonging to this adulterous body. Lol admits that she recognised Tatiana Karl", namely the woman who was the witness of the initial scene. Then and then only she believes the name that had been hovering on the edge of her consciousness for weeks was there: Tatiana Karl.

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She was discreetly dressed in a casual black suit. But her hair was done with gretat care, there was a gray flower in it , she had pinned it up with gold combs. She had taken great care to fix the fragile hair-do with a long, wide, black hair band which , where it passed close to her face, framed her bright eyes, made them look even larger, even more sorrowful, and this hair-do, which would havebeen destroyed by the lightest exposure to the wind, which in fact a mere look would undo, she must have - Lol is speculating now - she must have had to imprison in a dark hair net so that, at the proper moment, he would be the only one who could breach and destroy its admirable artificiality, one single movement of his hand would bathe her in its fallen tresses, that marvellous head of hair which, suddenly, Lol remembers and sees again, luminously juxtaposed to this one."

Then she sees them meeting one another : "They were walking a step apart and (20) scarcely spoke.

I think I can see what Lol V Stein must have seen:

There is between them an incredible contact which does not stem from any intimate knowledge but on the contrary from a disdain for such knowledge. They have the same expression of silent consternation, of fright, of profound indifference. They go more quickly as they approach their destination. Lol V Stein spies, watches, invents these lovers. Their way they look does not deceive her. They do not love one another. What is ther for her to say? Others will say it, she would say it differently. But she does not speak. Other bonds hold them in a grip which is not that of feeling nor of happiness, it is something else which gives neither pain nor joy. They are neither sad nor happy. Their union is constructed upon indifference, in a way which is general and which they apprehend moment by moment. All preference is banished from it. They are together, two trains which meet and pass. Around them the landscape, sensuous and lushly green is the same. They see it. They are not alone. One could deal with them. By opposite paths, they have arrived at the same result as Lol V Stein. They by doing, saying, trying, deceiving themselves, going away and coming back, lying, losing, winning, advancing, by coming back again, and Lol for her part by doing nothing" (49-52).

(21) This is where she follows them to this place which is the hotel, the hotel in the town where everyone is secure to conceal their clandestine loves. Lol knows this hotel because she went there in her youth with her lover who has abandoned her, Michael Richardson. She has no doubt come there sometimes during her walks. It is there that Michael Richardson had sworn his oath of love to her.

"The memory of the winter afternoon has become bogged down also in forgetfulness, in the slow daily glaciation of South Tahla" - this is the name of the town - "beneath her feet." It is she then, it is she who from there has gone on to the famous scene at the casino which tore from her the one who remained subsequently for her entire life this hole, this hole in the place of which there is no longer anything more than the trace of a lie. This is where they come to.

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"I see how she gets there: Very quickly she reaches the field of rye, lets herself slip into it, finds herself sitting, stretches out on it. Before her there is this lighted window but Lol is far from the light.

The idea of what she is doing does not cross her mind. I believe again that it is the first time, that she is there without the faintest idea of being there, if she were questioned, she would say that she was resting there from the fatigue of getting there. From the fatigue that will follow, returning from there. Living, dying she breaths deeply; that evening the air is like honey, cloyingly sweet. She does not ask herself the source of this marvellous weakness which made her lie down in this field; she lets it act on her, fill her up to suffocation, lull her gently until Lol V Stein is fast asleep.

The rye rustles beneathher loins. The young rye of early summer. With her eyes riveted to the lighted window a woman sees the void, knotting, devouring this existing, invisible spectacle, the light of a room where others are.

In the distance with fairy-like fingers the memory of a certain recollection flits past. It grazes Lol a little while after she has lain down in the field,and it shows her at this late hour of the evening a field of rye, this woman who looks at a little rectangular window, a narrow stage, circumscribed as a stone where no actor has yet appeared. And perhaps Lol is afraid - but ever so little - of the eventuality of a still greater separation from the others. She knows all the same that some would fight, they would go running home once a residue of reason madehem surprise themselves in this field. But it is the last fear that Lol has learned, the one that others will have in her place that evening. They would bravely destroy it in their breasts, but she quite the contrary, cherishes it, tames it, caresses it, with her hands on the rye.

The horizon on the other side of the hotel had lost all its colour. Night is falling. The shadow of a man crosses the rectangle of light, once and then a second time, in the opposite direction." (53-55)

(23) And it is there that she follows in the form of this shadow theatre all the goings on of the lovers.

The end, her return to her own house, her husband is in the street. He is waiting for her, alarmed.

"She lies, she is believed. The love that Lol had experienced for Michael Richardson was for her husband the surest guarantee of his wife's fidelity. She could not find a second time a man who had the measure of the one from Town Beach. Or she would have had to invent him. But she invented nothing, her husband believed." (57)

You see that the dimensions and the register around which Marguerite Duras operates do not lack some side-long humour.

As regards what here is demonstrated and what can be shown, it is precisely in so far as this being, Lol V Stein, around whom one could recall many of the themes of this year up to and including, as was done earlier, the function of the usage of

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the proper name which is articulated on several occasions and at several special points of this book with, apparently, God knows, a pertinence which might after all be the object of interrogation if we did not know, through our work this year, the profound consistency of this function of the proper name with everything that is involved in the (24) seat, in this central seat of the subject in so far as she is represented here in the most articulated way by the word hole, by the missing word, the hole-word: either the hole-word - and that it is in the measure that this being, this being designated by this proper name which is the title of the novel by Marguerite Duras, this being is only really specified, incarnated, personified in her novel in the measure that she exists in the form of this core object, this **o**-object of this something which exists as a look but which is a look, a look that has been set aside, an object-look, a look that we see on several occasions, of course, being renewed on this stage, punctuated, repeated on several occasions up to the end of the novel. Even when she has got to know this man, that she has approached, that she has literally hooked herself onto, as if she were rejoining here this subject divided from herself, the one who alone can support her, who is also in the novel the one who supports her, it is the narrative of this subject that makes her present, the only subject here is this object, this isolated object, this object by itself, in a way, exiled, proscribed, fallen at the horizon of the fundamental scene, which is this pure look that Lola Valerie Stein is, and it is nevertheless, in the novel, the only subject, the one around which there is sustained and turns and exists all the others and that is why the remark that was addressed to you earlier about this sort of sharp turn of the novel, from the old traditional novel, the one that was very prettily (25) illustrated for you by the theme extracted from Crébillon the younger, and also of the novel for the concierge, "the marquise went out at five o'clock," that from which a certain novel, at a certain moment excluded the rule and style in showing us that things should never be introduced, vivified except in the form of some monologue with which the ferret was passed from one to the other of the protagonists of the novel, it is here that one finds, in the form no doubt of a character who speaks in the third person, but who is the omnipresent character, the one who slips, who passes, who sees things in a way from the outside, contrary to the principle of Politzer, speaks and recounts the narrative in the third person. It is precisely in the measure that this is done that it allows there to be presentified somewhere the object in the form of an object, of a fallen object, of a detached object, of a waste scrap, to be that which is the essential being that we see that we see being incarnated with a degree of presence in a novel that to my eyes, to the eyes I think of those who have already read it, and to the eyes of those who have yet to read it, in the most intense form, what deserves to be called a subjectivity.

This is what, in short, you have been introduced to by what Madame Montrelay was good enough to prepare for you. If someone has a word to say on it, let him say it right away.

(26) **Dr Green**: Can you remind me of the name Jack Hold? How is it written?
Dr Lacan: H.O.L.D.
Dr Green: Good then, we have Lol V (alerie) Stein.
and then we have Michael Richardson and
then we have Tatiana Karl
Jack Hold.

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It is simply some remarks which came to me precisely on the function of the proper name and of the incidence here, all the same, of certain signifiers which are repeated here. The missing "a" here cannot all the same escape the exceptional reduplication of this "a" three times in the first name of Tatiana and precisely also in her family name, constituting the central vowel of that name.

This then is already a first element which it is worth while pinpointing. On the other hand, between Richardson and the Karl we have also something which creates a correspondence; these two fragments of two phonemes in the bonds that unite the two protagonists.

What is lacking here already can be located at the level of the first name, at the level of the "a" which is precisely the syllable amputated from the first name Lola. The "a" l is found again here, on the one hand at the level of this "a" we see that it corresponds in Karl with the name of Richardson, and one could obviously ask oneself the measure in (27) which this ending on a sound which obviously implies the birth of a link of filiation.

Finally, obviously, this central vowel of the name Hold being precisely what remains preserved of what is amputated at the level of Lola ought also to attract our attention.

These are some remarks which perhaps it seemed to me could be an object of an investigation for what was presented to us in the course precisely about subjectivity, in the course .....

Madame Montrelay: There is one thing that I did not say also in connection with Lol, which is that written in lower case letters that gives 1 0 1.

Dr Lacan: Good, so then Jacques-Alain, over to you old chap. You are entering the arena with a little delay. So off you go. In fact I think you are all going to read this little novel during the vacation. You can read it in two and a half hours but then you have to re-read it twenty times. Announce your subject because I did not announce it earlier.

Mr Miller: My only task is to present to you a text which appeared in *Diogenes,* under the title of *Psychoanalysis in America*, by Norman Zinberg, a text that Jacques Lacan wanted to be drawn to your attention. I was only made aware of it a few days ago. No one, it appears, among those whom he asked, wanted to do this work which is a little unrewarding.

(28) It is then a not very greatly esteemed text that I am going to simply summarise for you.

But it must not be thought that in these words, I am saying that I lack interest for what I am going to try to make you understand. By informing you about what is involved in psychoanalysis in America according to Mr Norman Zinberg I see this interest at least of giving the opportunity to me who is speaking to you and also to certain of you who are listening to remind you that on all sorts of fronts battles are to be waged, battles which are just as much political as theoretical, it is in the United States of America first of all that we are confronted.

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In denouncing the plague that the United States of America has brought to psychoanalysis I am only following the vigilance of which Jacques Lacan as far as I know has never ceased to affirm the imperative as regards what is elaborated starting from Freud in the United States, before whose ideological imperialism the university itself in this country all too often bends the knee.

Norman Zinberg's text takes its value from the fact that its author participates, obviously, in what he is denouncing about psychoanalysis in America. It is not some Lacanian excited by the words of the master who might come to sustain these (29) pretensions by a complicitious description geared to his own ends. This text in question testifies from two angles of the state of psychoanalysis in America:

1) By what it announces without prevarication about the plague that reigns there,

2) by the fact that it shows that the author himself, who knows that the plague is raging, is nevertheless affected by it.

By way of proof I only need this definition that he gives of the Freudian discipline as being the most comprehensive theory of general psychology because it considers the relationships of the individual with himself and with his milieu in terms of adaptation.

What is more that Mr Zinberg is not a brilliant intellectual, that in a word he is a little bit inadequate on the plane of the intellect, none of you will doubt when I read you this farcical epistemology of psychoanalysis:

"The two most important systems of thought in the first part of the twentieth century were the social Darwinism of Herbert Spencer and the economic determinism of Karl Marx. In broad lines and simplified to the extreme, Spencer's philosophy sees human essence in terms of battle and of competition, every man for himself, natural selection excluding mutual assistance.

(30) The Marxist theory of society where each person ought to help the others and renounce his individual aspirations for the benefit of more important goals of society is incorporated in the idea that the identity of each one is diffused in the state or even in the factory.

Psychoanalysis as a philosophy finds itself half ways between these two concepts. The first of these social theories appears to be rather close to the unbridled agressivity of primitive humanity while the second one, the Marxist, even though shining with optimism with regard to man, seems to fear a little bit too much personal aspirations.
Psychoanalysis which takes into account the conflict between the fundamental nature of man in his milieu and which, despite its pessimism with regard to the basis of nature, does not abandon hope of a solution, offers a compromise between the two."

This is sufficient to paint Mr Zinberg. But this gives all the more value to what he himself thinks of psychoanalysis in America. To say it in a few words, it is a

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catastrophe. Psychoanalysis is going to die, psychoanalysis is almost dead and the analysts also.

How can it be cured? There is little, very little chance of a second chance.

(30) What Mr Zinberg himself says ending his article by the announcement of a treatment which everything that precedes it makes evident will not succeed of course, except by a radical subversion of American society.

This sentence of Mr Zinberg is: "we ought to resist the promotion of our discipline. We have perhaps a second chance."

Of what then is psychoanalysis dying in America? Why was the first chance of psychoanalysis in America lost?

Mr Zinberg replies, borrowing from Erik Erikson one of his expressions: "It is dying from an ethical illness" What is an ethical illness? What is this illness, this ethical illness, of which psychoanalysis in America is dying.

One could simply say that it is dying of its success. But this we all know, that no sector of American life, that there is no sector of American life which is not touched by psychoanalysis.

But I will take up simply a passage of this article which bears witness to it: "The newspapers furnish a proof of the way in which the mass media have absorbed and spread psychoanalytic ideas. The great news agencies go so far as to give in the news (32) simple slips of the tongue, it being understood thus that the person that has spoken revealed a feeling the opposite of what he wished to express and, generally speaking, opposed to this. The best examples come from the political campaign of 1960, from the fact that Mr Nixon was subject to slips of the tongue. Speaking about his running mate Henry Cabot Lodge he calls him my distinguished adversary. The news analysts would no doubt be incapable of speaking about the world if they were deprived of this use constant use of ideas ..... of ideas which come originally from psychoanalysis and which it is no longer necessary to signal as of being properly psychoanalytic, there having been completely accepted and forming part of the language."

Dr Lacan: I would like to pinpoint just now, as you have spoken about it, the fact that Erik Erikson in *Young man Luther* did not speak about an ethical illness affecting psychoanalysis but said the following. : "At the very moment when we were trying" - it is an imperfect - "to invent with a completely scientific determinism, a therapy for a small number, we were led to propagate an ethical illness among the masses." Namely, that Erik Erikson, let us leave to one side where we have to situate Erik Erikson, is all the same much closer to the essential Freudian milieu than Sullivan who is rather a culturist, is that not so?

(33) Erik Erikson writes then that he considers the conclusion of analysis in American society as representing an ethical illness. This means of the body social.

Mr. Miller: As it happens, you are taking me up then on a very precise point which is that this quotation therefore is simply displaced by understanding that

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psychoanalysis itself was not an ethical illness. But is seem to me that it is precisely about that that I was talking, this ethical illness, one cannot say that it strikes the social body, if it strikes the social body it also strikes the psychoanalyst who effectively forms part of it and this ethical illness has struck him also. Thus effectively what Erik Erikson in this quotation means is: "psychoanalysis has spread an ethical illness". Now he finds that in expanding, it cannot expand it, because it is itself affected and that, in return, this extension of the plague affects it.

Psychoanalysis does not simply serve as a daily language,it also serves as a unifying language for practices which remained in a way fragmentary. For example for the social sciences. With the appearance of the book by Laswell around 1930 the sociologists, like the psychologists, the psycho-sociologists and the anthropologists begin to interest themselves in the individual and his personality in his relationships with the milieu. They utilise psychoanalysis more and more. When the social anthropologists join up with the foregoing there begins the straddling of functions and (34) of interests on a massive scale. What is more an attempt was made to separate out the polarities of thinking, a dichotomy between theory and empiricism, to go towards what Merton called a theory of the golden mean. In other words psychoanalysis here, or the social sciences, served as a necessary agent of liaison; this is what Zinberg says.

And now for a quite different domain, for cinema for example, Mr Zinberg recognises in it the same function: "the writers and the psychoanalysts found in a simplified asceptised psychoanalysis the large human themes that they were searching for."
Therefore just as much for social sciences as for the cinema, one sees psychoanalysis deformed in this way, serving as a unitary language to gather together fragmentary practices. But the success, the diffusion of psychoanalysis is still not the ethical illness.

What ethical illness of psychoanalysis was spread? What illness did it become? Psychoanalysis, but this we also know, has come to sustain the function of overlooking the class struggle in America. This failure to recognise the class struggle is today implied by American capitalist society. We know it, we have read the articles in *Les Temps Modernes,* the numerous ones who have denounced it. Here I am (35) simply going to quote the passage because it takes its whole value of still being by Mr Norman Zinberg who has the appearance, who is infested by this plague.

"People appeal to psychoanalysts and to psychoanalytic psychiatrists on the occasion of any organised effort to remedy," what Mr Zinberg calls, "social insufficiencies". He is asked to work in collaboration with childrens' courts, criminal courts, prisons, houses of correction. He is called in for consultation by the agents of ..... and educational institutions from the kindergarten up to the university. His assistance is more and more demanded by industry for the settling of questions of personnel, for the orientation of workers according to their strengths and their capacity. Sometimes people look for his help in connection with larger problems of national or international importance and he forms part today of numerous federal organisations."

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But this is still not the ethical illness of psychoanalysis. Perhaps to know what it is one has to be able to highlight this sentence: "Once it is admitted that it is appropriate to have oneself analysed, the fact of being able to offer oneself such a treatment was in itself a triumph." What does this mean if not what Mr Zinberg himself calls what (36) regulates the relationships of money in the United States. The attachment to money and to material goods and the desire to display them and to use them with ostentation was noted by all the indigenous and foreign observers ever since Tocqueville. Only if the analysand by going to have himself analysed wants to show ostentatiously that he has the money for it, the analyst himself, Mr Zinberg tells us, what he is trying to do is to sustain his scientific standing. In other words in this relationship in this analytic relationship is it not necessary to mark that it is psychoanalysis itself which has the status of an **o**-object.

And this might be collected perhaps in this sentence: "Analysis in the United States is analysis for display". Now one understands that the evil of psychoanalysis is in fact effectively its promotion, as Mr Zinberg says at the end of his article. "Stop promoting psychoanalysis, stop being ostentatious, forget about standing."

And what, for American society as a whole, is the function of this **o-**object which psychoanalysis has become? Here again we have to look for an apparently banal sentence, that of Mr Zinberg or one that is banal for him: "for the dynamic *nouveau riche* of the United States everything can be fixed". In effect to overlook the class struggle is only in fact the specification of this general suture which American society (37) gave itself as a goal to realise and which carries this name inscribed in the constitution, the pursuit of happiness. To pursue happiness, to pursue the adequation of man to his milieu, to pursue adaptation, this is perhaps utopia, it is in any case what is essentially demanded by the lure, this lure which is the function of the **o**-object, this lure which permits the fixing which permits fullness. It seems that it is psychoanalysis which has come to support it in America and this is what is admitted in this article.

So then you understand that the death of psychoanalysis only comes from its inversion. There is in America an inversion of psychoanalysis. If it is true that psychoanalysis is only possible when it is subject to the irreparable, if psychoanalysis is possible only if its term, if this word has a sense, that its term is the assumption of the irreparable which bears the name in Lacanian algebra of the lack of being.

How can one be surprised then at the disarray of the psychoanalyst as regards what? As regards his desire. This again is what can be read in Mr Norman Zinberg : "psychoanalysts have a sort of identity problem with respect to their work. Their principle goal is to try to ameliorate the state of health of humanity, however its conceptual signification may be worked out, should they on the contrary use a technique, a tool of research which allows there to be studied the mechanism of the (38) spirit, or should they construct, on the basis of their daily experience a broad psychological theory destined to explain at once health and illness? The question is: what does the psychoanalyst want, with this singular will which is that of desire? What is the desire of the analyst and we know for a long while that it is one and the same question as the following: what kind of science is psychoanalysis?

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After a picture of psychoanalysis in America, another one is lacking, but it would not be very well furnished, the one of psychoanalysis in the socialist world. So then I will not draw this picture for you because I know nothing about it. I will limit myself to quoting a sentence of Jacques Lacan extracted from a seminar of the year 1955/56 - I do not have a more precise reference - where Jacques Lacan said: "I find the prejudice that psychoanalysis encounters in the East, justified."

Yes, no doubt, Lacan was right, better no psychoanalysis than that psychoanalysis, this plague-ridden psychoanalysis. But you, the Lacanians, the Lacanian analysts you ought to know and no doubt you know that you are the guardians of the restored truth of Freud, guardians all the more precious because you are not numerous.

Mr Norman Zinberg promises all of you that the best years of psychoanalysis are still to come. He says at the beginning of his article: "certain signs indicate that the (39) influence of psychoanalysis in America has reached its apogee and perhaps even begun to decline while in Europe and in Japan its popularity is no doubt only beginning." He explains himself in saying : "a prosperous middle class in western Europe and in Japan, a prosperous middle class that will be inevitably materialistic, breaking with traditional society begins to interest itself in psychoanalysis."

Himself at the end of his article puts you on guard. "It is difficult to be patient" - he is addressing himself to Americans - "but perhaps by our example we will perhaps be able one day to help the growing psychoanalytic institutes of Europe and of Japan to avoid our errors and to spare their countries so many bad jokes."

This task, you know that it is yours, and that Jacques Lacan has destined you for this task. You see, with the announcement by Norman Zinberg that what could be called a civilisation of officials is being prepared in imperialist countries. In other words you ought to preserve the consciousness that you are a bastion, namely, that you are under siege. But if this can reassure you, do we not all know that the theories of Americans, like their bombs, are only after all paper tigers.

Dr Lacan: The things one hears! Good, that's fine. I cannot of course put myself forward even for an instant to temper these appeals, God knows, to those precisely whom I cannot foresee what they will make of what I brought them in the course of the years which are now already long and which begin seriously to stretch back into the past.

I would like you to get to know this article, as well as the little novel I was talking about earlier, this article in *Diogenes*. It really has a great documentary value simply because, whatever may be the limits, in effect, that one can discern in certain of the author's remarks, it is very well informed, and manifestly he is someone who is very very very close to the most consistent analytic milieu and specifically for example very close to the executive whose last representative, Mr Maxwell Kitleson, who is now dead, is quoted in this article and precisely for the fashion in which he held the rudder of this singularly committed ship in a certain adventure.

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I believe that the interest it has for you who have been willing, for different times, long or short, to follow my teaching and to trust my word, the interest is in an account (41) which is really very objective, enabling you to see how there is posed, for someone who sincerely tries to situate it, to draw up an account of it, how there is posed the question of what analysis really is. And I think that this has its interest even quite independently of one or other excesses which are denounced and which are always so much more tangible when one knows the area, a certain style.

I remember the way in which I came, more or less truly exasperated, not horrified, from people who had nothing else than the information that I had given them for their first visit over there, of what was being made of it, naturally in a current fashion, in an average, common fashion, as they say, to see all the same the following, I think that for my average listener I will limit myself to expecting from the reading of this article the fact that I am not asking that this should be granted to me as a point, a homage but to know that a certain way of posing the problems must for everyone, and specifically and specially for those here who are analysts, make the handling of their function or the fashion in which they think about it, literally, more breathable

Already if I only had this role and this function which I believe would not be negligible and that the fact of rendering possible a certain mental life which does not engage itself in a certain number of impasses or of false antinomies for example this biologism (42) opposed to a so-called culturalism, which you know precisely is one of the most debatable things in these developments - I am speaking about culturalism - in the developments of psychoanalysis in the United States, is something which is rendered completely tangible, very tangible by this article.

In what I have taught you, or that I continue to teach you, let us say that it is very necessary that I always push it a little bit further on, I mean that if, for example, I had given you something which might correspond to the work that I will end up giving you one day, if I had given it to you at the time of the Rome report, and I did not do so, very intentionally, you will see in it now many things, God knows, which, of which I cannot even say that I have to attribute them to what I have been able to propagate, even admitting that from the little circle to which I have always very specially devoted myself, waves came from elsewhere, that it is too easy to see in echoes, an echo is not always the echo of a noise that one makes, echoes come from elsewhere and in a word, if now even the offices of cultural painting with which the complexes of the bourgeoisie are seasoned since the end of the last war, these offices reverberate for some years in using in a more or less relevant fashion the term of signifier, I would not (44) go so far as to make it a merit of mine, simply that I allowed people, a milieu, which is the medical mileu which in scientific matters one cannot always say to be distinguished by the fact of being especially to the forefront, let us say that I warned it in time that there existed things elsewhere, around linguistics that they shouls at least take into account if they wanted to be up to date. All of this is the out of date side, as one might say, of what gives me, nevertheless, of course, no less trouble for all that.

If I maintained a milieu, let us say, in an adequate atmosphere from the point of view of what I called earlier and very intentionally the dimension of the

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breathable, it is of course because this is the most contingent aspect, the one which, God knows, with time will only interest people who are writing the minor history of the epoque. It is sure that what is important is the skeleton, the nerve of a certain construction which for its part has slowly come to light in the measure that I believed I was able to sustain it, with qualified examples, from a determined orientation of experience, from something which is not easy to make pass into the forefront of your preoccupations, the forefront of certain forums where things are discussed quite consciously and that what I was able to detach from this usage has obviously more difficult aspects and that (45) it is not easy either to diffuse precisely one or other thing that I can only designate by the letters of an algebra. This is the point, this is the efficacity of the work to which I convoke those who have ears to hear what I am saying, not as a pleasant music, designed to receive from near or far or elsewhere some echoes, which is something that demands a practical effort and the exercise of this practice of theory which is involved in my discourse.

Let no one be alarmed moreover about what may have been said here about elsewhere, uniquely supporting me from an American text itself, about what may have been said here about the chances, which are always so difficult to measure, the detours also that we may expect, as regards the future of what is happening in America.

For myself, who have not had up to now, God knows, the time or the leisure to go there and see on the spot how the operation is carried out even though one or other person I would say represents me there in a certain fashion and that I have had, God knows, also the surprise that one or other person that I did not expect is interested in what I write, I think for my part, that in truth everything can make itself heard in America and that from the moment that they give themselves the trouble, even the doctrine that you have the goodness, the kindness to call Lacanian may also one day (46) have some tiny effects there and that it is not condemned for all that to be subject there to the effects of a mysterious plague to which one not must not either fall into the mistake of according a too essential consistency.

It is the years to come that will give us an account of all this. You have, this year, been willing to sustain me with your zeal, with your presence and with your friendship; allow me, before wishing you a good vacation, to thank you for that.

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THE OBJECT OF PSYCHOANALYSIS 1965 - 1966

1 December 1965 (I) Science and truth

8 December 1965 (II) The subject and lack

15 December 1965 (III) Topology and the subject

22 December 1965 (IV) A Green on the o-object

5 January 1966 (V) The o-object

12 January 1966 (VI) Subject of science and of psychoanalysis

19 January 1966 (VII) Mirror stage and the Divine Comedy

26 January 1966 (VIII) Discussion on Conrad Stein's work

2 February 1966 (IX) Pascal's Wager I

9 February 1966 (X) Pascal's Wager II

25 February 1966 (XI) LACAN ABSENT

23 March 1966 (XII) Lacan on America

30 March 1966 (XIII) Topological discussions

20 April 1966 (XIV) Summary of Crucial Problems; Jouissance

27 April 1966 (XV) Jones' Female sexuality

4 May 1966 (XVI) Visual structure of the subject

11 May 1966 (XVII) Perspective: Las Meninas I

18 May 1966 (XVIII) Michel Foucault: Las Meninas II

25 May 1966 (XIX) Summary of Object of psychoanalysis; Las Meninas III

1 June 1966 (XX) Re-thinking Freud; Las Meninas IV

8 June 1966 (XXI) Jouissance and castration

15 June 1966 (XXII) o-objects; Safouan's case

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Seminar 2: Wednesday 8 December 1965

The last time you heard from me a sort of lecture which was not like the others because, as it happens, it was entirely written out. It was entirely written out so that it could be printed in roneotyped form as quickly as possible so that you could have it as a guide as regards my teaching.

Some people have expressed a certain regret, let us say, a disappointment. It is worth while pausing on this. In order to put a little humour into things, I would say that the way in which this disappointment was expressed was something like the following - I am forcing things a little - people preferred this sort of struggle, it appears, that is represented by being present - I scarcely dare to say it - at the birth of my thinking.

Do you really think that my thinking is coming to birth when I am here - in the process of wrestling with something which is far from being exactly that.

(2) Like everyone else it is with my speech (*parole*) of course that I explain things. Moreover you have perhaps heard that my *cogito,* which does not mean, moreover, that it is in any way in contradiction with the *cogito* of Descartes, might be perhaps rather: "I think, therefore I cease to be". So then, since I do not cease to be, as you can clearly see, that proves that I have less reason than others to believe in my thinking.

Nevertheless, it is quite certain that this is what we have to deal with. This is what does not make any easier relations with those to whom it is very particularly addressed, namely, the psychoanalysts.

And the fact that the earlier remarks came to me, I repeat, with a hint of humour, very specially from them, proves well, confirms, that it is also they who prefer what I would call the show-biz aspect of this display. This does not make relations any easier.

It is also indeed from this point of view that there should be understood the fact that I believed I should, on several occasions in my last presentation, allude to what constituted a certain moment in my relations with the psychoanalysts and for example that I spoke (3) about what I call the Freudian thing, or one or other analogous point.

It is not a question here of what I have heard qualified as useless recollections about the past, which is quite curious for analysts because, moreover, this past forms part properly speaking of a history in the sense that I tried the last time to specify what is involved for us in history, what we bring to it in terms of an essential contribution by showing what is involved in the fracture, the trauma, in something that is specified by the moments of the signifier, and it would really be to overlook completely the function that I give to the word, and what I very specially affirmed the last time, if I did not attempt, in some way or other, to include in what I am teaching about it, what I note and record about the effects of my word and very specially what happens to those to whom it is addressed.

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That is why, in the measure that we are advancing this year around a more radical point, this cannot fail to end up by highlighting something which must give the key to the passage or not of my teaching to where it ought to have its impact. There must be some very close relationship between what we could call these phases or these very difficulties, to call things by their name, and what precisely I was able to say and put forward (4) about the subject in so far as it is divided between truth and knowledge.

The last time, I did not, for all that, entitle this discourse: *A courteous debate between truth and knowledge*. I spoke about the subject of science and not that of knowledge. It is indeed here that there lies something of which I also said that there is something not quite right, in other words something that does not fit together in a way that is altogether adequate or comfortable.

This indeed is why, moreover, that the real title of this lecture, this presentation, is the subject of science but as he ought to be put on sale, the law of an object that can be sold is what the label covers, what I would call the merchandise and since it obviously involves, on the inside, science on the one hand and truth, on condition that you put the <u>and</u> in the brackets that it deserves, namely that it is a term which does not at all have a univocal sense, that it may well, moreover, include the asymmetry, the oddity that I spoke about earlier, *Science and truth* will be the title of this presentation. Or indeed if you wish, S*cience, truth*.

What there is in this presentation is just as important for what it leaves blank as for what it contains. In the enumeration of the different phases, of the different moments of the truth as cause, you will see that there are put forward in it the aspects described as efficient causes and final causes, I left in the discreet suspense of what is going to be called (5) henceforth the debate between psychoanalysis and science, the interplay of the relationships between material causes and formal causes. This is what we are going to approach today.

In what is obtained as an effect of what I teach, in the practice of those who receive it, I can note a certain tendency, a certain aspect which is the one, a curious consequence of the particularly strict form that I try to give to the term of subject, and which culminates in a singular laxity, properly speaking the one that could be qualified from the outside and according to the ordinary usage of these terms, as subjectivism. Namely, that each one in turn and, what is more, following some *up to date* style or other, which may be fashionable, for example, by being a little bit behind the fashion, people have successively used as a reference point for the position they take in psychoanalytic activity, being and having, desire and demand - I am not saying them in the order that I produced them - indeed even the final term, of knowledge and truth.

This is one of the ways of escaping, as I might say, - I hope that it is only mythical, approximate, that I am only designating and highlighting here a tendency - this is indeed one of the most radical ways of escaping from what I am trying to obtain, since what sense (6) would there be to the formulation that I give of the function of the subject as cut, leaving perhaps a certain indetermination in its choice at the origin, but is afterwards an absolutely determining fact, if it were not a question, precisely of obtaining a certain accommodation of the position of the analyst to this fundamental

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cut which is called the subject. Here, here alone, as identical to this cut, the position of the analyst is rigorous. Of course it is not tenable. I am not the one who first said this, it is Freud who had no doubt about it. This indeed is the reason why in holding their place, the analysts indeed do not hold it.

There is, properly speaking, no way of remedying this but there is knowledge which may be a way of getting round it. Here there is uncovered the difference between *Wirklichkeit,* namely, the possible realisation of my relationships with the psychoanalyst in so far as he leaves me at the place where I am and where I try to circumscribe a certain type of formula, and *Realität* which is beyond in so far as being impossible, it is what determines our common failure (*échec*).

This is why every failure is not as has been taught and as people continue to believe, namely, at the most rampant level of psychoanalytic thinking, every failure is not necessarily a negative sign. Failure can precisely be the sign of a break which marks the closest relationship with reality.

(7) This is what motivates and justifies, I am going to say it rapidly in two words, this is why, I have to close half of these Wednesdays. What does that mean? And why have I taken the responsibility this year to choose myself the persons who will be invited to participate in them, it is for this very simple reason that in the study of this *Wirklichkeit* there is an aspect traced out, an aspect of direct exchange, an aspect that involves the passing of the ball of the word which can only be realised in certain conditions of choice, of blending between the different types of participants, those who have to make an analytic usage of my word, and those who show me that one can very easily follow it in all its consistency and rigour wherever it goes, which of course is to be expected, if analytic praxis merits this name of praxis it is inserted into a structure which is valid even outside its current practice.

It is necessary therefore for there to be established a possibility of exchange at the level of which, for example, there can be studied these terms which clear the way, which facilitate at this level of common knowledge, the usage of certain terms essential for this part of our praxis which is called theory, and, for example, that something - I am not saying, I have no preconceived idea about what could be put on the agenda here - which for example, shows (8) us the way in which the Stoics may have already approached our truth since they happen, on the one hand, to have contributed to us at the level of logic, essential references, which have the interest for us of being a common branch for the most modern usage that is made of logic on the one hand, and on the other hand, as will appear in my lectures this year, and which is not a novelty for the analyst, except for the fact that this is not at all the way that he formulates it, what is implicated in terms of the corporeal in this logic.

For it is not enough to remember that we speak in analysis about the body image. What sort of image? An uncertain, bladder-like image, a ball that one catches or does not catch. Precisely, the body image only functions analytically in a partial fashion, namely, implicated, cut up, in the logical cut. So then it might be interesting to know that for the Stoics, God, ... the soul even, and what is more everything in the world, including the determinations of quality, everything was corporeal. Here we have logicians for whom everything is body. I am not telling you that this is a study to which one might not prefer another better one. One might also study why Aristotle

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completely bungled the question of the material cause. Why matter, when all is said and done, for him, is not a cause at all because it is a purely passive element.

(9) You can take things up where you wish. If one has a praxis like ours, one must always come up against the vital points. Only this choice, then, can only be done in common because it is a very special choice and because I do not want it to get around - which would not fail to happen given the taste for labels - that I am preaching a Stoical psychoanalysis to you.

We will try then to organise these things by a common choice in order to work effectively. I think that the best system is that a work should emerge from it which can be communicated to all, to all of those who here will do me the honour, I hope, of continuing their regular attendance on the first two Wednesdays.

Having finished these remarks, which moreover are not without interest for the points which may emerge in my discourse, this reminder of a certain question about the cause or about what must be understood by matter, I take up again the following, which is that if my teaching has a sense and if it is consistent with the structuralism that it highlights, if it was able to be pursued and be built up from year to year, it seems to me that it is rather normal to consider that it found favour in the fact that in order to ground the structuralism formulation - let those who can remember my first graph constructed during a whole year, (10) patiently, remember this first graph, this network relationship of the determining functions of the structure of language and of the field of the word - if this network structure for example has one advantage it is precisely that of belonging - almost to the first word, world but I use it quickly to make myself understood - to a topological world, which means that the connections are not lost because the shape is distortable, flexible, elastic. That is not new. Even the most rebellious people understood very well what was involved.

In such a way that this is what ensures that the edifice does not collapse, does not crumble, is not torn apart because of the modifications of proportion in the measuring of the whole when I contribute new terms, and that as I evoked it earlier, after being and having, I speak about desire and demand, it is a matter of seeing where the structure connects these four terms with one another. And it does not seem to me that it is, properly speaking, impossible.

There is here on the right the reminder of four of these structural networks, first of all under the name of the hole, which designates what I am going to speak about today.

You have the graph, the two storied graph and the function of the word in so far as there is differentiated in it the enunciating and the enunciated.

(11) To the right of this, something like a square piece of cloth, a field where those, who are not so rare, who read me, even though I never learn anything about it, were able to pick it out at the beginning of an article that is called: *A question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis*.

It is really very striking that ever since the time, it is already four years ago, that I wrote on the blackboard, for my audience, a psychoanalytic one precisely, the year of my seminar on *Identification*, that I wrote on the board, vectorialised, the topological

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schema of what is called the projective plane of what I introduced under the term of cross-cap at that moment of my teaching, that it never came into anybody's head to see that the Moebius strip, in so far, - we will come back to it later - as it is cutable in this projective plane with a remainder - we will say what one - that the Moebius strip is inscribed there that it was waiting for you for a long time, it has to be said, but after all, one cannot reproach anyone for not having guessed it, nevertheless the letters that I had written: (I), (M), (i), (m); it is not simply for the pleasure of making *mimi* that I put them there. They might perhaps make you suspect something, namely this application function that I give to the Moebius strip in order to make you grasp what is involved in the constituting cut of (12) the function of the subject.

There is, right at the bottom, I pointed out in passing for those who might like to copy it today, a new little graph which I am giving you as an object of reflection which is properly speaking useful in order to grasp the relationships of what I called and continue to make function as the signifier with what will be very especially useful for us to consider this year, its functioning in what is not simply language regarding which I told you the last time that there is no meta-language which implies that henceforth, whatever of course presents itself as such, logic - what is logic if not precisely an attempt at meta-language - that logic is only a shoot (*chute*), and that it can only be conceived, Bertrand Russell (*prend et recèle),* by being considered as such. That is why in the schema at the bottom, you have at the right-hand point, something that I have written as phon or phoneme, the properly phonematic element of the signifier. It is formed by something which appears at the two upper and lower poles as an indicative symbol that I can put forward now since last year I was able to show you what is involved, in its central function, for this indicative term. The typical example is the shifter. What is essentially indicated is always more or less the hole of the subject, of the enunciating subject.

(13) At the lower edge, the symbol - but perhaps the term is going to surprise you, and it is precisely because I can only introduce it in all its crudity at this point of elaboration, because then it does not dominate everything, it does not carry everything before it - the imitative symbol.

This is something which is in agreement with the phoneme, and the phoneme refers you on to the pole of logical combination which is to be grasped at the end of the horizontal line, on the right.

The relationship of this logical resultant to the index and the lexical terms regarding which I can henceforth very easily admit that they contain elements of imitation, their relationship is the whole business of logic in so far as a logic is constitutive of science. This changes nothing about the fact that there is no meta-language.

The little schema on top is to remind you that at the beginning of an article which is called *The purloined letter* you have a certain number of concatenations concerning the signifying chain which perhaps will become a little clearer, but which I cannot say for the moment are very illuminating, which will become a little bit clearer because of what we are going to advance into later.

So what? It is a matter of starting from the subject, from the subject of science as we (14) were able to highlight it in this experiment of Descartes, the sign of a fainting

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point, but also indeed in the logical effort of Frege by which he designates for us where the one must emerge if we want to give it a purely logical foundation, namely, properly at the level of the zero object.

Are not these two reminders from last year enough to make astonishing and significant the reaction I encountered that someone, one of the best, found himself surprised at the accent that I put, during my last presentation, on the subject of science.

These are not vain remarks to study what is involved in certain deafnesses, which are only momentary precisely because they are Freudian, we are absolutely not satisfied with the term of scotomisation, namely, that for us, the hole, and for the best of reasons, cannot be in the perception, this is properly speaking a stupidity on which, moreover, much has been constructed.

The whole of English psychiatry, for many years, has spoken about nothing but negative hallucinations. The fact that it is structured differently and that to realise this it is enough to read the article that Freud wrote quite intentionally to show it, which is called *Fetishism,* what is involved in the *Spaltung*, the division of reality itself in the subject who is described as perverse on this occasion. This indeed is the reason why it is interesting to (15) highlight such remarks, such accidents, in so far as I have the good luck, after all - this did not appear to be luck to my dear dead friend Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who rather indeed, at the thinking that I received on the very afternoon of the day that I expressed myself at that time in Sainte-Anne, I received the different forms of disarray from my own listeners .....

I see in this, for my part, on the contrary, for them and for me, many advantages.

So then, let us now begin again from the hole. It is a long time, a very long time since I have given to the hole the essential function as regards the functioning of the symbolic order. Do I need to recall a certain meeting, congress, gathering, whatever you want to call it, which happened at Royaumont and where, having given a report on the direction of the treatment and everything that follows from it, the principles of its power, I spoke to them about nothing, because I had to change the record because the discourse was already in print, I spoke to them about nothing, to the stupefaction of a journalist who had entered there by I do not know what door, I spoke to them about nothing but the mustard pot, starting from this fact of experience, which had once again been confirmed at lunch, that the mustard pot is always empty. There is never a case that one opens a mustard pot and finds mustard in it.

(16) This mustard pot is the symbolic creation *par excellence* and everyone has known this for a long time. If there were not a being who speaks, there would be perhaps hollows in the world, pools, depressions, things which retain, there would not be a vase.

One would be wrong to believe that it is of no consequence that this forms part, for us, of the first essential reliefs to be found of civilisation. Ceramics, then bronze vases, the prodigious quantity of these things that we find when nothing else remains, ought all the same make us prick up our ears a little, and many other things also. After all it is not enough to prick up your ears to make it understood, you have to believe.

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Obviously there were other things before. The first historical stratum, has a pretty Danish name but I am incapable of pronouncing it, it is the piles of rubbish, so then in that case we have the o-object.

And the vase is not an o-object. It has served for a very long time to express something. What? Is it a lecture on theology? You know: God, the great worker, "just as," we are told in the catechism, "one needs a potter to make a pot, in the same way ....."

Have we not better profited from it! For this does not at all say what it is trying to (17) convince us of. What does this say to us? "..... and what follows *ex nihilo*". What does that mean? That means that he makes the vase around the hole. That what is essential is the hole. And since it is essential that there should be a hole, the Jewish enunciation that God made the world from nothing is properly speaking, as Koyré thinking, taught and wrote, what opened up the path to the object of science. People have become bogged down, or remained stuck on all sorts of qualities, whatever they may be, from force, impulsion, colour, anything you wish, in short to perception, to the piece of chalk to which Socratic progeny remains stuck like flies on fly paper for two thousand years, namely Lagneaux and also Alain, have speculated on appearance. So then this appearance? Well then we must manage to see how it is also reality.

It is with this that philosophy and science have taken off at a tangent with respect to one another. So what? I think that I am in a position to tell you right away. The piece of chalk becomes an object of science at the moment and from the moment that you begin from this point which consists in considering it as lacking.

This is what I am going to try to make you sense right away.

(18) But for the moment, I do not want to lose the opportunity of adding in passing what is meant by the material cause, because if you are a philosopher, Aristotle, I will tell you that matter is the mustard, namely, what fills the void. Aristotle who was nevertheless so well orientated in his conception of space, is very far from this terribly slippery extension which is a veritable problem, always to be reposed, in the mathematical-physical sciences. He had very well seen that the locus (*le lieu*) was what allowed there to be given a conception of space which would not expand indefinitely, which would not put to us the question of this false infinity. Only then, after having begun so well by defining the locus as the final container, the last one being that which is *non ens*, well then, because he was a Greek and because he had not read the Bible, he was not able to admit that there was a void separating objects. So then, he filled the mustard pot and it is because of this that we remained there for a certain number of centuries.

Does that mean that the material cause is the pot, an incontestably divine creation like every creation of the word and to which there can be strictly reduced what is said in the text of Genesis.

Not at all. And this is the remark that I wanted to highlight in passing. We find piles of (19) pots, I told you earlier and in tombs, everywhere where there reign what are called primitive cultures. Well then, with a very particular intention, namely, so that

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future collectors would not be able to give them as flower pots to their girl friends, which would have meant that all the pots would have been destroyed long ago, with the simple intention of preserving these pots, the people who put them in the tombs made a hole in the centre. Which proves to you that it is indeed from the angle of the hole that you have to seek the material cause. Here is something which causes something, a hole in the vase. This is the model.

If you take the high point of scientific development, what in it is at once the keystone and the essential hinge, you obtain what? Energetics is not what it is believed to be by an author who opposes it, as a complement, to my structural theory of psychoanalysis. He imagines no doubt that energetics is what pushes. You see the level of culture among philosophers!

Energetics, if you refer for example to someone as authorised, all the same as Feynman whom I did not wait to open, you may well believe, until he won the Nobel prize, in a two volume treatise which is called *Lectures in physics* and which, for those who have the time, I could not recommend anything better to read because it is a two year course that is (20) absolutely exhaustive. It is altogether possible to cover the whole field of physics at its highest level in a certain number of lectures which, after all, do not weigh more than one and a half kilos.

In the third chapter, or the fourth, I do not know which, he gives the reader or the listener, I do not know which, a whiff of what is involved in energetics. I am not the one then who invented that to support my theses. I remember that I had read that when I had the book, that is to say a year and a half ago. I would ask you to consult the first paragraph of chapter four: *The conservation of energy*.

What is the best thing he finds to give an idea of it to listeners who are supposed to be relatively uninformed about what is involved in physics, since up to then they will only have been taught by incompetents.

He imagines a highly strung little individual whom he calls *Denis the menace*, Denis, a danger to the public. He is given twenty eight little blocks, but since he is a savage, they are in platinum, indestructible, uncutable, incapable of losing their shape. The question is to know what Mammy is going to do every time that, in a properly discreet way, namely, not an American Mammy, comes into her child's room and sometimes finds only twenty three blocks, sometimes twenty two.

(21) It is clear that these blocks will always be found, either in the garden, because they have been thrown out the window, or in the difference of weight that one may notice in a box which, of course, is not opened; or because the water in the bath has risen slightly, but since the water in the bath is too dirty for the bottom to be seen it is by means of this slight raising of the level that one comes to know where the blocks have gone. I am not going to read the passage for you. I do not have the time. It is sublime.

The author points out that one will always find the same constant number of blocks with the help of a series of operations which consists in adding together a certain number of elements, for example the height of the water divided by size of the bath, by adding this curious division to something else which might be, for example, the

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total number of blocks that remain. I hope you are following. Nobody is making faces. Namely, to do this thing, I tell you in passing, which is included in the least scientific formula which is that, not alone does one add but one subtracts, that one divides, that one operates in all sorts of ways with what? With numbers thanks to which one adds, and without which there would be no possible science, one adds all together the towels and the serviettes, the pears and the leeks, is that not so?
(22) And what does one teach children when they begin to enter - I hope this is no longer the way now but I am not so reassured - precisely in order to explain things to them, one tells them the opposite, namely, that one does not add together the towels and the serviettes, or the pears and the leeks which means, naturally, that they are definitively barred from mathematics.

Let us come back to our Feynman. This parenthesis will only lead you astray. Feynman concludes: "Here is the example. One number is always going to emerge as a constant: twenty eight blocks. Well now, he says, energetics is like that. Only there are no blocks."

This means that this constant number which guarantees the fundamental principle of the conservation of energy - I mean not simply fundamental but of which a simple shakiness at the base is enough to throw any physicist into an absolute panic, this principle must be preserved at any price, therefore it will necessarily be so since it will be at any price, it is the very condition of scientific thinking. But what does the constancy mean here, that one always finds the same number? Because that is the whole point. It is not simply a question of a number. That means that something which is lack as such - there is no block - is to be found elsewhere, in another kind of lack. The scientific object is passage, (23) response, metabolism (metonymy if you wish, but be careful) of the object as lack. And starting from there many things are clarified. We will refer to what last year we were able to highlight about the function of the one. Does it not seem to you that the first emergence of the one concerning the object, is that of the cave man, to please you, if these sorts of images still please you, who comes home where there is a little bit of food or a lot, why not, and who says: "there is one missing". This is the origin of the unary trait: a hole.

Of course one could take things much further and we will not fail to do so. Note that this proves that our cave man is already at the high point of mathematics. He knows set theory. He connotes: there is one missing. And his collection is already made. The truly interesting point is obviously the "one" which denotes. Here the referent is necessary. And the Stoics will be of service to us.

It is obvious that the denotation, here, is what? His word, namely the truth which for its part opens up for us the hole, namely, why "one"? For what this "one" designates is always the object as lacking. And what would then be the fecundity of what we are told is the characteristic of the object of science which is that it can always be quantified.

(24) Is it simply the fact, that from a prejudice which is really unbelievable, we choose among all the qualities of the object simply the following: its size, to which we subsequently apply measurement and people then ask where this comes from. From Heaven, of course. "Everyone knows that number," this at least was the way

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Krodeker [?] expressed it, if I remember correctly ..... “except for the whole number which is a gift of God.”

Mathematicians can allow themselves humorous opinions like that. But the question is not there. It is precisely by remaining stuck at this notion that quantity is a property of the object and that one measures it, that one loses the thread, that one loses the secret of what constitutes the scientific object. What is measured by the ell of something which is always something else, in the dimensions, and they can be multiple, of the object as lack.

And the thing is so little a simple one that what we have to see is that the true experience that one has, on this occasion, is the following: namely, that number in itself, is not at all a measuring apparatus and that the proof of this was given immediately after the Pythagorean inspirations; it was seen that number could not measure what it itself allowed (25) to be constructed, namely that it is not in a position to give a number, a number which is expressed in any kind of commensurable way, for the diagonal of a square which would not exist without number.

I am only evoking this here because what is interesting is that if number, for us, is to be conceived as a function of lack, this, this simple remark that I made about the incommensurable diagonal indicates to us what richness is offered to us starting from there.

For number furnishes us, as I might say, with several registers of lack. I specify, for those who are not particularly interested in this question: a number described as irrational, which is nevertheless, at least since Dedekind, to be considered as a real number is not a number which consists in something which can be indefinitely approached. It can only be plunged into the series of real numbers, precisely, by making intervene a function which, not by chance, is called the cut.

This has nothing to do with a goal which keeps retreating as when you write 0.3333....., which is for its part a perfectly commensurable number. It is a third of one. As regards the diagonal, it is known since the Greeks why it is strictly incommensurable, namely, that (26) not one of its numbers is predictable up to the very end.

The only interest of this is to allow you to envisage that, perhaps, numbers will furnish us with something very useful in order to try to structure what is involved for us, namely, the function of lack.

Here we are then before the following position: the subject can only function by being defined as a cut, the object as a lack. I am speaking about the object of science, in other words, a hole, things going so far that I think I have made you sense that only the hole, in the final analysis, can act as what, effectively is important for us, namely, the function of material cause. Here are the terms between which we are going to have to tie a certain knot.

Since I was not able, today, to advance my remarks as far as I had hoped because of the fact that things were not written out and since also, I cannot hope in a week, to

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make at my discretion the necessary choice, I will conduct on the third Wednesday of this month, exceptionally, the same open seminar to which you are all invited.

In order to punctuate, to highlight what is going to be involved I will make an opposition. What relationship can be conceived between this o-object in psychoanalysis and this object of science as I have been trying to present it to you?

(27) It is not enough to speak about the hole, even though all the same, of course, it seems to me, at least for the sharpest among you, that the solution ought already to be appearing to you, it has to be said, on our horizon. The function of lack - I did not say the idea, be careful, we know how this idea caught Plato by the ankle and that he never freed himself from it - we see the function of lack emerging, undergoing the necessary escape (*fuite*) through the fall of the o-object and this is what these drawings that I brought today, and that I will bring back again the next time, are designed to let you put your finger on. Such a structure is necessary for a cut to determine the field, on the one hand of the subject as it is necessitated as subject of science and on the other hand, the hole where there originates a certain style of the object, the only one to be retained, the one which is called the object of science and as such can be a sort of cause over which I left a question mark the last time, is such, as it appears only the form of laws. Or again, where can there be connected up this manifestly materialist aspect, through which science precisely can be designated. It is indeed in this knot of the function of lack that there lies and there is concealed here the turning point of what is in question. And what are we going to have at this point which is a point of gap?

(28) We saw it last year in connection with the Fregian genesis of the number one. It is in order to save the truth that it must function. Saving the truth, which means not wanting to know anything about it.

There is another position which is to enjoy (*jouir de*) the truth. Well then, that is the epistemological drive. Knowledge as *jouissance* with the opacity that it brings with it in the scientific approach to the object, this is the other term of the antinomy. It is between these two terms that we have to grasp what is involved in the subject of science. It is here that I intend to take it up again in order to take you further. By this you should understand, to speak about this radical function. I have made nothing emerge yet about what is involved in the o-object, but you ought to sense that the same schema, precisely, that I have not reproduced here, the schema with two circles at the time when I depicted for you the function of alienation as such, remember the example: " Your money or your life, liberty or death?" As I explained to you, the schema for alienation is a choice which is not really one in this sense that one always loses something in it. Either the whole, you enjoy the truth but who enjoys because you know nothing about it? Or you have, not knowledge but science and this intersection-object which is the o-object escapes you. That is where the hole is. You have this amputated knowledge. This is the point on which I will stop today.

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Seminar 3: Wednesday 15 December 1965

Today you are not being spared drawings and cuts. To be strict even, I was careful to put on the board on the top left-hand side the one which corresponds to the reminder that I gave the last time of what I had given at the end of my first year here as the schema for alienation.

Let us say that alienation consists in this choice which is not really one and which of two terms forces us to accept either the disappearance of the two or a single one mutilated.

To enjoy the truth, I said, is the true aim of the epistemophilic drive in which there escapes and vanishes all knowledge as well as the truth itself. To save the truth, and in order to do this not to want to know anything about it, is the fundamental position of science and that is why it is science, namely, a knowledge in the middle of which there is displayed the (2) following hole that the o-object, here marked by taking support from an Eulerian convention as representing the field of intersection of truth and of knowledge. It is clear that I raised more than one objection to these Euler circles on the plane of their strictly logical utilisation and that in fact, here, their usage is in a way metaphorical.

These are precautions that should be taken. You must not think that I think that there is a field of truth and a field of knowledge. The term field has a precise sense that we will perhaps have an opportunity of retouching today.

This use of the Euler circles is therefore to be taken with reserve. I note this because over against this reserve that I have just made, you are going to see me today taking support from, to say certain shapes does not really express what is involved, cut is closer; signifier, this is what is involved, writing, why not?

In advance then I ask you to note that their decisive importance is to be taken in a quite different sense to a sense of meaning, as what represents the circle in the Euler sense here which, in short, is designed to show us how there is included a certain extensive and comprehensive conceptualisation in what I am showing you in the centre of these figures that I brought along for you today, something which has been traced out by a Buddhist (3) monk who is called by the name that I put there on the board in its Japanese phonetics, since Jiu Oun was Japanese.

Jiu Oun, as one of my faithful friends here today was kind enough to tell me, Jiu Oun lived between 1714 and 1815. He entered a Buddhist “order” - as I might put it - at the age of fifteen years and you see that he remained there until an advanced age. His work is considerable, and I will not tell you about the original foundations which still carry his mark; in order to give you an idea, for example, of his activity, it would be enough to evoke, for example, that a Sanskrit study manual, considered today to be fundamental, comes from him, even if not entirely from his hand and that it contains no less than a thousand volumes. Which means that he was not a lazy man.

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But what you see here is typically the trace of this something which, I would say, is the high point of a meditation and is not unrelated at least in appearance to what is obtained from some of these exercises, or rather of these encounters, which are staged out on the path of what is called Zen.

I would have some scruples in advancing this name here, namely, before an audience a part of which I cannot be sure of as regards the way in which I may be understood, to (4) advance without any precaution a reference to something which is certainly not a secret, which is everywhere to be found and which one hears being spoken about everywhere. Zen does not represent something which can go so far as a betrayal of confidence in the true sense, I cannot advise you too much to distrust all the stupidities which are piled up under this heading. But after all no more than about cybernetics itself.

I am forced all the same to say that this, which is traced in a brush stroke of which no doubt it is not sure that we can appreciate the particular vigour which is, nevertheless, for an experienced eye rather striking, this brush stroke is what is going to be important for me, it is on it that I am going to fix your attention to support what I have to advance today along the path that we have opened up. There is no doubt that it is here in the proper position that I define as being that of the signifier. That it represents the subject, and for another signifier, is sufficiently assured by the content of the writing which is here aligned and read like the Chinese writing that it is, this is written in Chinese characters: I will pronounce it for you, not in Japanese but in Chinese: Chi yen che [?], which means: “In three thousand years how many men will know? “

(5) Will know what? Will know who has made this circle. Who was this man whose range I thought I ought first of all indicate to you between the most extreme, the most pyramidal of science and a mode of exercise which we cannot fail to take into account here as a background to what it allows us to describe here.

“In three thousand years, how many men will know” What is involved at the level of this traced-out circle. I allowed myself in my own calligraphy to respond: “In three thousand years, well before, men will know”..... Well before three thousand years, and after all it can begin today, men will know, they will remember, perhaps, that the sense of this drawing deserves to be inscribed in this way.

Despite the apparent difference, it is topologically the same thing. Imagine that this is round, that what I called a circle is a disc. What I traced out here by hand is also a disc even though it is in the shape of two lobes, one of which covers the other, the surface is all of a block, it is limited by an edge which, by continual distortion can be developed so that one of these edges overlaps the other, the topological homeomorphism is obvious. What is meant by the fact, then, that I traced it out in a different way and that it is to this that I now have to draw your attention?

(6) A drawing which I called a circle and not a disc leaves in suspense the question of what it limits. In order to see things where they are traced out on a plane, what it limits is perhaps what is inside, it is also perhaps what is outside.

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In truth, it is here that we have to consider what may be original in the function of writing. Let us leave for a moment what we have here before our eyes and which undoubtedly I propose rather as an *experimentum mentis,* as an exercise of the mind which has an intuitive adhesion. For if I lead you into the field of topology, it is in order to introduce you to a sort of flexibility *(mentis),* of mental exercise concerning figures which are not, no doubt, incapable of being grasped in some intuitive way but regarding which it will be sufficient, at least for someone who is less prepared to follow me, for, let us say the effects that I will try to demonstrate to you in it by tracing certain cuts. You will see immediately that you will have enough trouble with these extremely simple things here, this agent prepared for your use in what I have to tell you today, so that you will be able to grasp that it is, no doubt, not for nothing that these constructions which are called - I already introduced all of them and I have already even used and abused them sufficiently, but not without my needing today to gather together what concerns them - these figures called the (7) Klein bottle, the projective plane, the torus find themselves, as compared to what is the structure of our habitual co-ordinates of intuition, in such an upsetting position that it is really necessary to practice them, to apply oneself to them in order to find one's way around them easily.

This is why - I apologise to those mathematicians who may be in my audience for having to explain things by oppositions that are, in a way, gross and which allows there to escape a part of the rigour of what would be a present-day presentation of what is involved, for example, in the chapter where these figures appear in a modern book of topology, but after all, I do not have to apologise either, for if these difficulties that are described as intuitive difficulties concerning the field of topology have been, in a way, radically eliminated from the properly speaking mathematical presentation of these things, if they do not enter in even for a minute, given the very assured combinatorial formula in their premises, in their original axioms, in the laws which are advanced, it remains, nevertheless, that something retains its value in the very difficulty that these things present by being decanted, ending up by finding their mathematical-logical status, and that it is too easy to rid oneself of them by saying that they contain remainders of intuitionist impurities, that it (8) is all in the fact, for example, that people allowed themselves for too long a time be encumbered by a point of view which is, in a way, linked to the experience of a three-dimensional space, that it was necessary to come to be able to think it, to construct it, starting from this data of experience, by varying, by constructing, by building up a generalised combinatorial.

People are satisfied with this criticism and this reference. But I think that there is something missing in it. If the negative number, to keep to one of the historic aporias that are really now for us, which appear to us to be completely elementary - who torments himself today about the existence of the negative number? And this tranquillity that we have as regards the negative number, besides the fact that it does not cover over anything good, is all the same quite useful, as regards what is involved in not posing oneself useless questions, this tranquillity with respect to the negative number only dates from scarcely a century ago. I was speaking again recently to a very erudite mathematician who knows his history of mathematics extremely well. Even in Descartes' time the negative number, this magnitude below zero tormented them. They were not at ease about it. Numbers increase and also decrease. And when they go beyond the limit below the bottom of the bottom where do they go?

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(9) After all, it is legitimate enough for him to be tormented if he puts things forward in these terms.

I am only evoking this simple example: you can well imagine that it would be easy for me to evoke others; the irrational number, the number that is called imaginary, the famous root of minus one. Here again mathematicians forget a little easily what the imaginary number was for centuries, about five or six centuries, you know that it made its appearance in connection with a root outside the field of the conceivable, in terms of a very simple second degree equation, from that time up to the beginning of the nineteenth century the imaginary number caused lots of problems, people did not know what to make of it, what to make of it conceptually, and if now things are assured starting from the foundation of the complex number, the extension of numerical groups to which one has ended up by giving its status, it nevertheless remains that it is easy enough for mathematicians and too easy not to remark that, of course, the term imaginary remains attached to it but that it is just as good a number as any other, that this notion that I have just brought into play of numerical group is sufficient to cover it and that it is no more imaginary than any other one.

Well then, it is at this point that I will put forward an objection. For it seems to me that everything which has thus constituted a stopping point, a point of scansion, the (10) progressive mastery of the conquest of certain structures that I have evoked just now under the term of numerical sets, the obstacle, the obstacle is not to be put under the heading of intuition, of this veil, of this closing down which would result from the fact that it is not possible to visualise some support for what is involved in the combinatorial. I hold on the contrary that we are led to something more primitive which is nothing other than what we are trying to grasp as the structure, as the constitution of the subject by the signifier.

It is in so far as these diverse forms of numerical expression are reproduced at different moments of scansion, I am saying that in reproducing temporally we are not even sure that it is the same circuit that is involved in this reproduction: we will have to see. In other words, there are perhaps structural forms of this constitutive lack of the subject which differ from one another, and that perhaps it is not the same lack which is expressed in this negative number in connection with which one can indeed say that the introduction by Kant of this number into the field of philosophy is really, and when one returns to it, of a really heart-breaking character. Perhaps it is a great merit that Kant tried such an introduction. The result is an unbelievable mess.

(11) Thus it is perhaps not the same moment of the structural lack of the subject which is supported, I am not saying here is symbolised, here the symbol is identical to what it causes, namely the lack of the subject. I will come back to it. At the level of lack there has to be introduced the subjective dimension of lack and I am astonished that no one has remarked in the article by Freud on fetishism the use of the verb *vermessen* and one can see that in its three uses in this article he designates the lack in the subjective sense, in the sense that the subject misses out.

We are brought then to this function of lack in the sense that it is linked to this original thing which, being called the cut, is situated at a point where it is writing that determines the field of language.

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If I was careful, I mean, to write *Function and field of speech and language* it is because function refers to the word and field to language. A field has an altogether precise mathematical definition. The question was posed in the first part of an article which appeared this week, I believe, in any case it was this week that I received its delivery by someone who is very close to some of my listeners and who introduces with a vivacity, a crispness, a vitality which really gives it an inaugural importance this question of the (12) function of writing in language. He highlights in a fashion which I must say is definitive, irrefutable, that to make of writing an instrument of what is, of what lives in the word is absolutely to fail to recognise its true function.

That it must be recognised elsewhere is structural to language because of something that I indicated sufficiently myself, if only in the predominance given to the function of the unary trait in identification so that I do not have to underline my agreement on this point.

Those who attended my former seminars, if they still remember something about what I said, may remember the value given to something, something in appearance so out of date and uninterpretable as the discovery made by Sir Flinders Petrie about predynastic potsherds, namely, long before the foundation of the Phoenician alphabet, precisely of the signs of this alphabet which is supposed to be phonetic which were there obviously as a trade mark. And on this point I stressed the fact that we must at least admit, even when it is a question of writing that is supposed to be phonetic, that the signs came from somewhere, and certainly not from the need to signal, to code phonemes. Indeed everyone knows that even in a phonetic writing they code nothing at all.
(13) On the contrary, they express remarkably well the fundamental relationship that we put at the centre of phonematic opposition in so far as it is distinguished from phonetic opposition. These are crude things, which are really way behind when compared to the precision with which the question is posed in the article that I told you about.

It is always very dangerous moreover to give references. You have to know to whom. Naturally those who will read this will see put in question certain oppositions such as that between the signified and the signifier. It goes as far as that and they will see there perhaps some discordance where in fact there is none. On the other hand, who knows, it may encourage them to read one or other earlier or later article. There is always something very delicate in this always fundamental reference that a signifier refers on to another signifier.

To write and to publish is not the same thing. That I write even when I speak is not in doubt. So then why do you not publish more? Precisely because of what I have just said. One publishes somewhere. The fortuitous, unexpected conjunction of this something which is a writing and which has thus close relationships with the o-object gives to every disunited conjunction of writing, the appearance of a dust-bin. Believe me, at the early morning hour that I come home, I have a considerable experience of dust-bins and of those who busy themselves with them. There is nothing more fascinating than these nocturnal individuals who snitch something or other whose usefulness it is impossible to (14) understand. I have been asking myself for a long while why such an essential utensil had so easily kept the name of a prefect, to whom the name of a street had already been given and which would have been quite enough

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to commemorate him. I believe that if the word dust-bin *(poubelle)* has come to fit in so well with this utensil, it is precisely because of its relationship with publication (*poublication*)

To come back to our Chinese, you know, I do not know whether it is true but it is edifying, one never puts in the dust-bin a piece of paper on which a character has been written. Pious people, who are supposed to be cheerful because they have nothing else to do, collect them and burn them on a little *ad hoc* altar. It is true. *Si non e vero e bello*.

But altogether essential to delimit this sort of trap-door of exteriority that I am trying to define with regard to the function of the dust-bin in its relationships with writing.

This does not imply the exclusion of all hierarchy. Let us say that among the reviews that we are surrounded by, there are more or less distinguished dust-bins. But in looking carefully at things I have not seen any tangible advantages in the dust bins of the rue de Lille as compared to those of the surrounding area.

So then let us take up our hole again. Everyone known that a Zen exercise has something to do, even though people do not know very well what that means, with the subjective realisation of a void.

(15) And we are not forcing things in admitting that anyone, the average contemplative, will see this figure, will say to himself that there is something like a sort of high point which ought to have some relationship with the mental void that it is a matter of obtaining and that this singular high point will be obtained in an abruptness, succeeding a wait which is sometimes realised by a word, a sentence, an ejaculation, even a rudeness, a cocking of the snoot, a kick in the backside. It is quite certain that these kind of pantalooneries or clowning have no sense except with respect to a long subjective preparation.

But again. At the point that we have got to, if the circle, however empty it may be, is to be considered by us as defining its holing value, if finding favour in it to depict what we have approached by all sorts of convergences, about what is involved in the o-object; that the o-object is linked *qua* fall (*chute*) to the emergence, to the structuring of the subject as division is what represents, I must say, the whole point of the questioning. What is involved in the subject in our field is this hole, this fall, this *ptose,* to employ here a Stoic term the quite insoluble difficulty of which for the commentator when it is confronted with the simple *categoren* seems to me is this with respect to a *lecton,* another mysterious term, let us translate it *(produisons-le)* with all sorts of reservations and in the crudest fashion (16) which is certainly inexact by meaning, incomplete meaning, in other words a fragment of thought.

One of these possibilities, fragment of thought is ..... Commentators, of course, caught by the incoherence of the system do not so much miss the relationship by translating it as subject, logical subject, since it is a matter of logic at this level of Stoic doctrine, they are not wrong. But we can recognise in it the trace of this articulation of something which falls with the constitution of the subject. Here is something that I believe we would be wrong not to be comforted by.

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So then are we going to be content with this hole? A hole in the real, that's the subject. A little facile. We are still here at the level of metaphor. We might find here however, by pausing for a moment, a precious indication, notably something that is altogether indicated by our experience which could be called the inversion of the function of the Euler circle, we would still be in the field of the operation of attribution. We would rejoin here the necessary path to what Freud defined as the *Bejahung* first of all which alone makes the *Verneinung* conceivable, there is the *Bejahung,* and the *Bejahung* is a judgement of attribution. It does not prejudge anything about existence, it does not tell the truth about the truth. It gives a start to the truth, namely something that will develop ..... as for (17) example, the qualification, the quiddity which, moreover, is not quite the same thing.

We have an example of it in psychoanalytic experience. It is primary for our object today. It is the phallus. The phallus, at a certain level of experience, which is properly speaking the one analysed in the case of Little Hans, the phallus is the attribute of what Freud calls living beings. Let us leave this to one side, if we do not have a better designation. But note that if this is true, which means that everything that develops in the register of animism would have had as a beginning an attribute which only functions by being placed in the centre, by structuring the field at the outside and by beginning to be fruitful from the moment that it ..... ,namely, when it can no longer be true that the phallus is the attribute of all living beings.

I repeat, if I put forward this schema, I only did so in parenthesis. Let it be said in passing that if my discourse unfolds from the parenthesis, from suspense and from its closure, then from its often very embarrassed resumption, you should recognise there, once again, the structure of writing.

Is this then, do we have here then, one of these summary reminders to which there would (18) be limited the exhaustion of what we are trying to do. Certainly not. For it is not a matter for us of knowing at the point to which we take the question, how the signifier colours the real. That one can colour any map whatsoever on a plane with four colours and that this is enough, even though this theorem is up to the present still verified, even though it has not been proven.

This is not what interests us today. It is not a matter of the signifier as a hole in the real. It is a matter of the signifier as determining the division of the subject. What can give us the structure of it?

No void, no fall of the o-object that a primordial anxiety is able to account for, and I am going to try to make you sense it by topological considerations. If I proceed in this way, it is because there is a quite striking fact which is that, as long as scribblers have been around, and God knows that it is quite a while ago, even if one believes that writing is a recent invention, there is no example that everything that is of the order of the subject and of knowledge, at the same time, cannot always be written on a sheet of paper. I consider that this is a fact of experience that is more fundamental than the one that we have, that we might have, that we believe we have, of three dimensions. Because we have learned to make these three dimensions vacillate a little, it is enough for them to vacillate a little bit for them to vacillate a lot.

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(19) In the place where, perhaps, people still write on a sheet of paper and where there is no need to replace it by cubes, it has still not vacillated. There must then be something here as regards which I am not in the process of saying that it must be concluded that the real has only two dimensions. I undoubtedly think that the foundations of the transcendental aesthetic are to be taken up again, that the bringing into play, even if only for probative purposes, of a two dimensional topology for what concerns the subject, would in any case already have this reassuring advantage, if we continued to believe *mordicus* in our three dimensions which, in effect, we have many reasons for marking our attachment to, because this is where we breath. This would at least have the reassuring advantage of explaining to us the way in which what concerns the subject belongs to the category of the impossible. And that everything that comes to us through it, through the real, is inscribed first of all in the register of the impossible, of the realised impossible. The real, in which there is carved out the pattern of the subjective cut, is this real that we know well because we find it reversed in a way in our language every time that we really want to circumscribe what is involved in the real, the real is always the impossible.
Let us take up again then our sheet of paper.

(20) We do not know what our sheet of paper is. We know what the cut is and that the one who has traced out this cut is suspended on its effect. "In three thousand years, how many men will know?".

It would be necessary to know what condition a sheet of paper must fulfil, what is called in topology a surface, there where we have made holes, in order that this hole should be a cause, namely, has changed something.

Note that for what we are trying to grasp in what is involved about the hole, we are not going to suppose another one. This one is enough for us. If this hole has had as an effect to make fall a shoot, a fragment, well then it is necessary that what remains is not the same thing, because if it is the same thing, it is exactly what is called a hole or a sword-thrust in the water.

Well then if we trust the most accessible, the most familiar, the most fundamental intuitive support, which it is not a matter moreover of deprecating either in terms of its historical interest or its real importance, namely a sphere - I apologise here to the mathematicians - it is to intuition that I am appealing here because we only have a surface into which one cuts and that I do not have to appeal to something which is plunged, precisely into three dimensional space, namely, ...

(21) What I simply mean in asking you to evoke a sphere, is to think that what remains around the circle has no other edge. You can intuit this in the present state of things only in the shape of a sphere, a sphere with a hole. If you reflect on what a sphere with a hole is, it is exactly the same thing as the lid that you have just dropped. The sphere has the same structure.

The fall that is in question in this fundamental drawing has no other effect than to make re-emerge in the same place what has just been ablated. This does not allow us in any circumstance to imagine something which is structural with respect to the subject which interests us, is structural.

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Since I must advance, I will only make a rapid allusion to the fact that Mr Brouwer, a considerable personality in the modern development of mathematics, demonstrated this theorem topologically, which, topologically, is the only one to give us the true foundation of the notion of centre, a topological homology. There are two figures, whatever they may be, provided they have an edge, can, by a distortion of this edge be proved to be homeomorphic. In other words if you take a square, it is topologically the same thing as this circle because you have only to blow, if I can express myself in this way, inside the (22) square and it will swell up to be a circle. And, inversely, you give some hammer blows to this circle, to this two-dimensional circle, you give a two-dimensional blow of a hammer also and it will become a square. It has been proved that this transformation, however it may be carried out, leaves at least one fixed point. Where? A more astute thing that is less easy to see immediately - even though already the first thing is not so easy - or an odd number of fixed points. I shall not go any further into this.

I want simply to tell you that at this level of the structure of the surface, the surface is, as one might say concentric. Even if we go by the outside, I mean intuitively, to see what is connected up at the level of this edge, what is involved is a concentric structure.

I said a long time ago, I am still more inclined to say it, but nevertheless I will not say why, that Pascal was a very bad metaphysician. This *"world of two infinities"* , this literary fragment which has been giving us a headache almost since we were born, appears to me to be the most out of date thing that one could imagine. This other anti-Aristotelian *topos,* where the centre is everywhere and the circumference is nowhere, appears to me to be the most inexact thing possible, except for the fact that I will easily extract from it Pascal's whole theory of anxiety.

(23) I will do it all the more easily because, in truth, I believe …..... if I can believe the stylistic remarks which were brought to me by this great reader of mathematical material who asked me to consult the text of Desargues, who was a much greater stylist than Pascal, in order to see what we know very definitely from other sources, the importance that the references to Desargues may have had for Pascal, which would change the whole sense of his work.

In any case, it is clear that on this concentric, spherical structure, if the circle can be everywhere, undoubtedly the centre is nowhere. In other words, it is obvious to anyone that there is no centre for the surface of a sphere. This is the inconsistency of Pascal's intuition.

And now the problem is posed for us of whether there cannot be, in order to explain ourselves in terms not of images but perhaps of ideas, and which give you an idea of where I am guiding you from, if at the outside of what I very intentionally called the circle, and not the circumference, the circle means what you would ordinarily call in geometry circumference, what one usually calls circle I will call disc or flap (*lambeau*), like earlier. What must there be on the outside in order to structure the subject, in other words, in (24) order that the cut from which there results the fall of the o-object should make appear, on something which was completely closed up to then and where then, nothing could appear in order to make appear ..... in what we require for the constitution of the subject, the subject as fundamentally

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divided. It is easy to make this appear, for it is enough for you to look at the way in which this circle is arranged, the way that I have retraced it, in order to see that if you conceive of this outline as empty, as I taught you to read this one as empty, it becomes very simply, and this is obvious, I think all the same that I have spoken to you sufficiently up to now about the Moebius strip for you to recognise it, it is the mounting, the framework, what allows you to see sustained and immediately intuitable, a Moebius strip.

You see it here. Join, as I might say, with a thread, each of its edges. You will see it being reversed and see being stitched at the level of the back what was at first its front. The Moebius strip has numerous properties. There is one major, capital one that I have, I think, sufficiently represented in the preceding years, even to the extent of having a pair of scissors here myself, I demonstrated to you, namely, that a Moebius strip has no surface, (25) that it is a pure edge. Not only is there only a single edge to this surface of the Moebius strip, but if I split it in the middle there is no longer a Moebius strip, for it is the stroke of my cut, it is the property of division which establishes the Moebius strip. You can extract from the Moebius strip as many little fragments as you wish, there will always be a Moebius strip as long as some of the strip remains, but it will still not be the strip that you hold. The Moebius strip is a surface such that the cut which is traced in its centre is itself the Moebius strip.

The Moebius strip in its essence is the cut itself. This is how the Moebius strip can be for us the structural support of the constitution of the subject as divisible. I am going to put forward here something that is strictly speaking incorrect from the point of view of topology. Nevertheless, this is not going to worry us for I am caught between explaining something to you in an incorrect fashion or not explaining it to you at all; here we have a tangible example of one of these subjective impasses which are precisely what we base ourselves on.

Therefore I advance, having sufficiently warned you that in strict topological doctrine this in incorrect. You can remark that my Moebius strip - I am speaking about the one which is drawn on the mounting of this o-object, this mounting, as I told you, is exactly a (26) spherical flap which is in no way distinguished from what I demonstrated earlier in connection with the hole of Jiu Oun. For it to serve as a mounting for a Moebius strip, the fact is that a Moebius strip radically changes its nature as a flap or little portion by soldering itself to it.

What is involved is a text, tissue, coherence of a fabric, of something which is of such a kind that having made in it the trace of a certain cut, two distinct heterogeneous elements appear, one of which is a Moebius strip and the other is this flap equivalent to any other sphere. Let us foment this Moebius strip in our imagination, it will come in this line necessarily (if the thing is plunged into three dimensions, this is my incorrectness), but it is an incorrectness which is not enough to set aside the problem of this fact that something which is indicated in the three dimensions by a re-crossing, an intersection which finally gives to the total figure of what is commonly called a sphere topped by a crossed bonnet or a cross-cap which gives what is drawn in red here, namely, what you can always imagine, of course in an incorrect fashion, plunged into the third dimension, as having at the bottom, and at the level of this base, of this chiasma, of this intersection, having the same cut.

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(27) Every cut which goes to the level of what, schematically, is represented as this line of crossing over, every closed cut which passes by this crossing-over, is something which dissipates, as I might put it, instantly the whole structure of the cross-cap, the *chapeau croisé* or again, the projective plane - as against the sphere which does not lose its fundamental concentric structure as regards with any cut or closed edge that you may describe on its surface. Here the cut introduces an essential change, namely, the apparition of a Moebius strip and, on the other hand, this flap or little portion.

And, nevertheless, what I have just said to you is that the stroke drawn here in black, which is a simple stroke, a closed edge, of the same type as the one the drawing of Jiu Oun reduced, as I told you, entirely to this little portion. So then, what is the riddle? I think that you must remember still what I told you earlier, namely, that the cut itself is the Moebius strip. As you can see in this second outline that I made on the same figure, next to it, a figure which is schematised in something, a bladder in which I am trying to help you to intuit what is involved in the projective plane, if you separate the edges, as I might say, which result from the cut here traced in black, you obtain a gap which is constructed here like a Moebius strip.

(28) The cut itself has the structure of the surface called Moebius strip. Here you see it pictured by a double stroke of the scissors that you can also do, in which you would effectively cut the total figure of the projective plane, or of the cross-cap as I called it, in two parts: one Moebius strip on the one hand, here it is supposed to be cut, all on its own, and on the other hand a remainder which is what plays the same function of hole in its primitive shape, namely, of the hole that is obtained on a spherical surface.

This is fundamental to consider and you have to see in it another figure in the schematised shape, and one more properly topological which is the following one whose complement I have written on the blackboard where I think you can see it.

Now, the way in which the first hole, the spherical hole, the one that I called concentric, is sutured, topology reveals to us that nothing is less concentric than this form of centre contiguous with the function of the first flap. Because in order to close the hole on the sphere, it is enough to have a simple cut which connects the two pieces in the way, simply, in which a dressmaker would darn something for you. Having established the cut, if you take things in the inverse sense for the Moebius strip implies an order, and it is really here that we have our third dimension which is what justifies us having introduced earlier a (29) false third in order to make you sense the weight of these figures.

This dimension of order, in other words, representing a certain temporal base, implies that to realise this hole, this second hole whose topological properties I am explaining to you, there is an order necessary which is a diametrical order, diametrical, that is apparently spatial, founded in accordance with the median stroke, gives you the figured support in which properly speaking it can be read that this sort of cut is precisely the one that we were waiting for, namely, it can only be realised by having at the same time to be divided, in other words, if it is not in an intuitive and visual fashion but in a mental fashion that you try to realise what is involved starting from the moment that you think that the A, the point A on the circle is identical to the point A that is diametrically opposite it, which is the very definition which was introduced

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in a quite different context, in metrical geometry by Desargues, in other words, the projective plane, and God knows that Desargues, in writing it, himself underlined how paradoxical, bewildering, even crazy such a conception was which proves very well that the mathematicians are themselves well able to imagine the points of transgression, of going beyond the limit, in connection with the setting up of one or other structural category. If they did forget it, moreover, there would always be their colleagues to remind them by telling them that they understand nothing about what (30) they were saying, something which happens at every turn, and especially what happened to Desargues when the walls of Lyon were covered with posters in connection with things that as you see were very exciting. What a lovely time! What a marvellous epoch!

The A and the A are the same ..... what does that mean if not that,even if we consider this as the hole, the conjunction of the edges cannot be carried out except by dividing this hole, by managing to pass it in the movement,as one might say,of its conjunction.

We find here the model of what is involved in the subject in so far as it is determined by a cut. It ought necessarily to be presented as divided in the very structure.

I was not able, of course, to take any further today the point that I wanted you to arrive at. You should simply know that in referring ourselves to two other topological structures. which are respectively the Klein bottle, in so far as I already showed you that it is made up, composed, by the sewing together of two Moebius strips. As you will see, this is not at all enough to allow us to deduce its properties by simple addition.

On the other hand, the torus, which is still another structure. We can, starting from these primary definitions about the $ conceive of what use there could be to us these two other (31) structures of the Klein bottle and the torus in establishing fundamental relationships which will allow us to situate with a rigour which has never been obtained up to now in ordinary language, in so far as ordinary language ends up with an entification of the subject which is the veritable knot and key to the problem.

Every time that we speak about something which is called the subject we make a “one” of it. Now what it is a matter of conceiving, is precisely the following, it is that the name of the subject is the following. The one to designate it is missing. What replaces it? What comes to fulfil the function of this “one”? Several things, undoubtedly, but if you only see several very different things, the o-object on the one hand, for example, the proper name on the other fulfilling the same function, it is quite clear that you can understand nothing either about their distinction - for when you see that they fulfil the same function one believes that it is the same thing - or about the very fact that they fulfil the same function.

It is a matter of knowing where there is situated, where there is articulated this $, the divided subject as such. The torus on the one hand, a figure so exemplary that already in the year of my seminar on identification that, except for the fresh ears who came that year, nobody listened to what I was in the process of saying, because people had other worries.

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(32) In my seminar on identification, I showed the exemplary value that the torus has in linking, in a structurally dogmatisable way, the function of demand and that of desire properly speaking at the level of the Freudian discovery, namely, of the neurotic and of the unconscious. You will see its exemplary functioning.

..... what can be structured of the subject is entirely linked, structurally, to the possibility of the transformation, of the passage of the structure of the torus into that of the Moebius strip, not the true of the subject, but the Moebius strip in so far as it is divided, in so far as once it is cut through the middle it is no longer a Moebius strip. It is something which has two faces, a front and a back, which roll up upon themselves in a funny way, but which, as in the model that I brought you today to enable you to see it in a tangible fashion, becomes applicable onto this thing which is usually called a ring and which is a torus.

This structural connection allows there to be articulated in a particularly clear and obvious fashion certain relationships which ought to be fundamental for the definition of the relationship of the subject of demand and of desire. In the same way it is only at the level of the Klein bottle that there can be defined the original relationship that is established starting from the moment there enters into function in language the word and the (33) dimension of truth. The non-symmetrical conjunction of the subject and of the locus of the Other is what we can illustrate, thanks to the Klein bottle. With these simple indications, I will leave you and give you an appointment for the first Wednesday in January.

For the fourth Wednesday of this month, I would urgently ask anyone in this assembly who in whatever manner is interested in the progress of what I am trying to make advance here, to kindly, whatever may be the fate that I may reserve for the information sheet that he will have to fill up, namely, that whether I invite or do not invite him to the fourth Wednesday to consider that it is not because of his merits or his lack of merit that he is invited or not.

People are or are not invited for reasons which are the same as those that Plato defined for the functioning of politics, namely, which have nothing to do with politics but which are rather to be considered as those of the tapestry worker. If I have to have the threads of one colour and different threads of another colour to produce a certain weave on that day, let me choose the threads. That I should do that this year as an experiment on each of the fourth Wednesdays is something that the totality of my listeners and all the more so in that they are the most faithful and all the more so that they may be really interested in what I am saying, ought in a way to leave to my discretion.

(34) You will allow me then for the next fourth Wednesday to invite whomever I please in order that the subject, the given subject of discussion, of dialogue which will function on that day should be carried out in the best conditions, namely, among interlocutors expressly chosen by me. Those who are not part of these on that Wednesday should in no way take offence.

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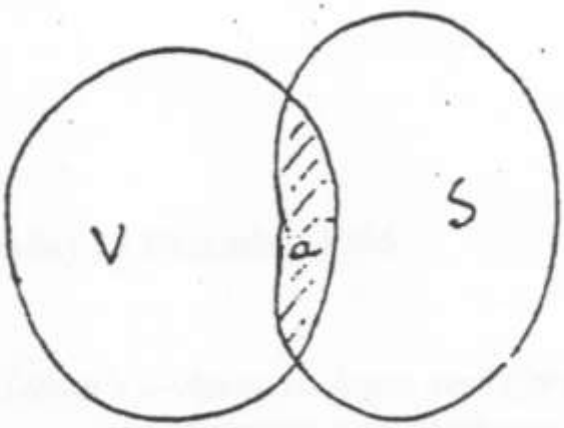

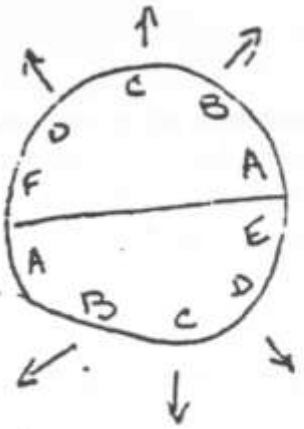

Jim Ouin

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Seminar 4: Wednesday 22 December 1965

J Lacan's o-object, its logic, and Freudian theory
(*convergences and interrogations*)
by
André Green

[When this translation was made I was unaware of the existence of another translation made for *Interpreting Lacan* edited by J Smith and W Kerrigan and published by Yale University Press. This translation is attached but my - unrevised - translation may still be of some interest. The remarks of Lacan, Conté and Melman are not contained in the Yale translation.]

To speak about the object of psychoanalysis immediately gives rise to a question. It leads us to question ourselves as to whether one is going to treat the object of psychoanalysis in the sense that one speaks about the object of a science - what the approach and the progress of the science is aiming at - or whether one is going to speak about the status of the object as psychoanalysis conceives of it. The surprising thing will be to show here that these two senses are closely linked and interdependent.

Littre points out that at the word "subject" the *Académie* says: natural bodies are the subject of physics. And at the word "object", it says again: natural bodies are the object of physics. Far be it from us to pick out here a contradictory reduplication or one too easily reducible. Nor will we join brandishing this example, to the chorus of those who denounce in the separation of the subject and the object the cause of all the theoretical impasses for which traditional thought is rendered responsible.

Encountering at the beginning the linked fate of the subject and the object is not to affirm either their confusion or their independence. It is to calculate that we are going to have to face up to the confrontations of identity and difference, of conjunction and disjunction, of suturing and cutting. We will then have to ask ourselves if the object of psychoanalysis - I am speaking now about what it is aiming at - can be content with this coupled limitation to which many contemporary disciplines, and indeed the most advanced, limit themselves.

I - JACQUES LACAN'S OBJECT: A RAPID REMINDER

To examine the role of the o-object in the theory of Jacques Lacan will help us kill two birds with the one stone. It will lead us - this at least is our project - to specify its content in the conceptual framework which is proper to him on the one hand, and on the other hand to mark the limits of agreement of this thinking - and no doubt of all psychoanalytic thinking - with modern structuralism.

A - The (o), mediation between the subject to the Other

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The (o) - I am not saying yet the o-object - is present in Lacan's oldest graph when he starts from the theorisation proposed in *The mirror stage* (1936-1949). (o) can be understood then in its relationship to o' (which will have the closest relationships with the future i(o) namely the specular image) as an element of the indispensable mediation which unites the subject to the Other. It is clear that this situation of the mirror stage - which is less important to date as a stage than to designate as a structuring situation - can only be understood if one specifies that it is not psychology that is in question here (whether we are talking about Preyer or Wallon) but psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis which gives to the child which has emerged from his mother a meaning which weighs on all his development: namely that he is the substitute for the penis of which the mother is deprived and only accedes to his status of subject by taking his place there where he is lacking to the mother on whom he depends. This substitute is the locus and the bond of exchange between the mother and the father who even though he has a penis cannot for all that create it (because he has it).

The relationship (o) to i(o) is going to reduplicate the relationship that we have just described.

B - The (o), mediation between the subject to the ego ideal

There then comes the quadrangle called the schema R. Here again there are opposed the couple of tensions between the systems of desires (iM) and the system of identifications (eI). The (o) is inscribed on the line (iM) which starting from the subject S and going towards the primordial object M (the mother) is constituted through the figures of the imaginary other. On the contrary the o'is inscribed on the line which goes from the subject S towards the primordial object M (the mother) by way of the figures of the imaginary other. On the other hand o' is inscribed on the line which goes from the subject to the ego ideal through the specular forms of the ego. It can be seen how the quadrangle derives from the Z by joining the points which in the first graph are only reached by a round-about journey. One might point out here that in the field of the imaginary the two directions of the subject go either towards the object, or towards the ideal. One also knows that in Freudian thought this orientation is closely dependent on narcissism. One notes then that the Other which has come to the locus of the Name of the Father, situated only in the field of the symbolic, at the opposite pole to the subject here identified to the phallus, can only be reached by the two paths that we have just described above, the object or the narcissistic, but never in a direct fashion.

The field of the real is comprised in the tension of two couples eIxiM whose meaning we have specified. But it is only in the symbolic field that there appears the third term which is indispensable for the structuring of the process.

[Foot note
1. It is not out of season to make two remarks here:
a - In French psychoanalytic work the notion of object relations has developed a good deal (Bouvet) imported from Anglo-Saxon authors (M Klein especially, after Abraham). Lacan is opposed to it underlining the absence of any references to elements of mediation in these conceptions. Especially - which amounts to the same thing perhaps - he will condemn this view-point in so far as it ends up at a Real-Imaginary opposition which crushes the Symbolic.

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c - The opposition between the ideal ego and the ego ideal (Nunberg-Lagache) serves as a platform for the theoretical developments of Lacan which are inserted in the perspective of the relationship to the Other.]

C - The o, object of desire

In effect, Lacan postulates the existence of an ideal ego as a precocious form of identification of the ego to certain objects which operate both as love objects and objects of identification, but in so far as they are extracted, cut out, taken from a series which makes the lack appear. I who am speaking identify you to the object which you yourself are lacking, says Lacan. The relationship between (o) and O is thereforee clearly shown. If O only reaches its full meaning by being sustained by the Name of the Father which is not, is it necessary to specify, either a name or a God, it passes as we have seen through the maternal defile and is only reached when the cut between the subject and maternal object irremedially separates him from the aforesaid object. Or again when there is revealed the lack which affects the primordial object, in the experience of castration. The series of castrations postulated by Freud: weaning, sphincter training, castration properly speaking, renders this experience in its repetition, in its recurrence, signifying and structuring.

The o-object will then be that which through these experiences, is going to fall, as Lacan says, from its position of being "exposed to the field of the Other" but in order to attain the status of object of desire. The tribute paid to this accession is to exclude the desiring subject from saying, from naming the object of desire.

Having being situated in the field of the Other now allows there to be conceived the function of mediation such an object plays less between the subject and the Other but in their relationship: my desire enters the Other where it is expected from all eternity in the form of the object that I am in so far as it exiles me from my subjectivity by resuming all the signifiers to which this subjectivity is attached.

We know that phantasy allows the establishment of this formula of relationship, in so far as it reveals here the subject in effacing his trace. The phantasy as a structure constitutive of the subject, where the latter is imprinted in the hollow, through which fascination operates, opens the relationship of the o-object to the ideal ego.

D - The (o) as fetish

This formulation indicates everything that separates the theorisation of Lacan from that of other authors. Let us say schematically that while the latter are above all going to mark the positive aspect of the qualities of the object Lacan valorises the negative approach. A clear example shows us this. Before the image of the phallic mother the post-Freudian authors will say that she is terrifying because she is phallic. Because the phallus can be a maleficent instrument, a destructive weapon, etc... . Freud said that the bewilderment produced by Medusa's head took place because the reptiles which took the place of hair for her denied, as many times as there were serpents, castration and by this reversal it was recalled in a multiplied way to the one who wanted to cancel it out. Lacan is happier to follow this path. The case of fetishism to which he gives a lot of attention is the apologue of this reflective mode. The object of the fetish will be the witness, the veil of the castrated sexual organ - of the lack in the field of the Other.

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E - The (o) object of lack, cause of desire

In connection with his seminar on the *Symposium* there appears with a particular force the metonymical and metaphorical structure of the o-object in the mapping out that Lacan gives in Plato's text about the particular position of the *agalmata,* in the discourse of Alcibiades where the latter depicts Socrates: "He is just like the silenuses that one sees in sculptors' lofts which the artist represent as holding a pipe or a flute; if you open the middle of them you see that within they contain little figurines of gods". We are dealing both with fragments of the body, with a part of the body and its symbolisation and this is to be taken literally, in the form of a divine figurine.

It is precisely in so far as this o-object is going to emerge as objective lack that it is going to be deployed in a double register which will be at once the revelation of the lack of the Other and also of the lack as it appears in the process of meaning. What is lacking to the Other is what cannot be conceived of. The (-phi) which is introduced here in the shape of what does not appear - it is the Nothing which cannot be pictured - in which there is ordered the encounter with castration as unthinkable, whose hiatus is filled with the processes of meaning, by the mirage of knowledge. I quote again: "(o) symbolises that which in the sphere of the signifier as lost is lost to meaning. What resists this loss is the subject designated once the processes of knowledge come into play, once that is known, there is something lost." It is this apparition in the shape of the object of lack which specifies what our presentation is going to revolve around, namely the non-specularisable nature of the (o). Everything happens as if the barred subject takes on the function of i(o) as Lacan puts it or again as if, short-circuiting the impossible specularisation of lack, the subject thus identifies himself to knowledge, coming to the locus and the place of the loss which stimulates its promotion, covering over this loss to the extent of forgetting its existence.

Starting from this appearance of lack, there is going to come into play the function of the remainder issuing from the desire of the other, the function of the remainder which is manifested as a residue left by the bar, which affects the big Other and whose homologue in the subject interests him in knowledge. Here again Lacan makes a distinction of a logical order where nullifying does not supress having, which precisely makes the remainder appear.

The function of the remainder is what is saved from the menace which weighs on the subject; "desire is constructed on the path of a question: not to be". The o-object is the cause of desire.

F - The (o), product of work

One might think, even though Lacan does not say it expressly, that the progression-regression dimension might constitute a plane that is correlative to those of conjunction- disjunction and of suture-cut. The developments generated on the plane of knowledge are to be taken in their negative perspective, referring back to the plane of miscognition where they are organised in the approach of the processes of meaning - which ceaselessly tend to cancel out or to nullify the loss of the object - to what was signified around this loss, by the traces left of this work, of which the o-object is the surest reference point, the index of truth pointed towards the subject. Freud insists, in

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his final works on the historical truth at which the construction of the analyst aims. The channel of demand constitutes the guiding thread of this access to the truth. Its function is not alone to serve as a guide, but to form the very outline of this itinerary of the paths of truth.

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This reminder in which we have only wanted to keep the indispensable minimum for the development which is going to follow is going to allow us to pose some problems.

a - Given the relationship of the o-object to representation it would be well to ask oneself what are the relationships between it and the signifying chain. Does the lack represent some relationship with the word as concatenation.
b - Must one accord - in turning towards Freud - the status of the signifier to the *Vorstellungrepräsentanz* alone? What about affect?
c - is there not in the work of Freud a point about representation which has not found an echo in Lacan: the distinction between different types of representation (of words and of things for example) which might lead us to differentiate still more, in order to underline the original character of the Freudian concatenation.
d - If knowledge is what comes in the place of truth, after the loss of the object, would it not be appropriate to link one to the other by the traces of this loss and the attempt to efface them.

These are questions which will allow the o-object to be considered less as a support of the partial object than as the pathway of a hand tracing, the inscription, the letter, o.

II -THE SUTURING OF THE SIGNIFIER, ITS REPRESENTATION AND THE o-OBJECT

I come now to what is going to constitute another axis of my presentation, namely the relationship between (o) and the cut and the suture, and I will refer to the presentation by J A Miller concerning the theorisation, starting from the work of Frege, of the logic of the signifier. This in order to situate correctly the position of the number zero in the measure in which it is going to have an impact on the destiny of (o).

In virtue of the principle according to which, in order that the truth may be saved, everything is identical to itself and zero is the number assigned to the concept “not identical to itself”, there is no object which falls under this concept.

But, says Miller, speaking about Frege, “it was necessary, in order to exclude any reference to the real, to evoke at the level of the concept an object that is non-identical to itself - subsequently rejected from the dimension of the truth”. The zero (O) which is inscribed at the place of the number consummates the exclusion of this object. As for this place designated by subsumption where the object is missing, nothing can be written and if it is necessary to trace a O, it is only to picture a blank in it, to make the lack visible”. There is here thereforee on the one hand the evocation and the exclusion of the object which is not identical to itself and on the other hand this blank, this hole in place of this subsumed object.

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The notion of unity is given by the concept of identity, the concept of the subsumed object. But the place of one, no longer *qua* unity but *qua* number one, remains problematic as regards its place as the first, as regards its primordiality, as I might say.

It is not legitimate, Miller remarks, to count the number zero as nothing, and logic demands then that one should confer on this number zero the role of first object.

The consequence of this is the identity to the concept of the number zero which subsumes the object number zero in so far as it is one object. The primordiality, in short, cannot be established under the sign of unity, but of number starting from which the one is possible, the number zero. Thus a double register overlaps a functioning which must be unfolded in order to understand the ambiguity of the number zero in so far as it includes :

- the register of the concept of not identical to itself
- the register of the object, matrix of the one, the object permitting the assignation of the number one.

Thus there is uncovered the double operation:

-The evocation and the elision of the non-identical to itself, with a blank at the level of the object subsumed permitting the number zero
- The introduction of zero as a number, that is as a signifying name and as an object.

This situation has an interest for us above all in so far as it specifies the structure of the concatenation. Not only does the subject exclude himself from the scene and from the signifying chain by the very fact that he constitutes it as subject in its structure of concatenation, but the first of these objects operates at once as a concept and as an object, not represented but named unary object and concept on the non-identical to itself, a concept that is a threat to the truth and this all the more so because it is out of play, or *hors-je* (out of I).

This concept of the threat to the truth is for us a concept which emerged from the encounter with the truth, in so far as it dissociates not alone the truth from its manifestation (identity to itself) but designates here its place, through the blank or the trace which negates it. It is insufficient to see in this, (it has to be said) only a simple relationship of absence. It is also necessary that there should be circumscribed here its relationship of lack of truth.

The interest taken by us in this confrontation with Frege read by Miller is to link the subject to the signifier. The subject is identified to the repetition which presides over each of the operations through which concatenation is knotted together, in the hold on each fragment by the one which precedes it and by the one which succeeds it: at the same time and in the same movement the subject sees itself so many times rejected outside the scene - and from my chain - which thus constitutes itself. Now if the operation excludes at every stage, the nullifying does not suppress the having which subsists for us, on condition of being able to recognise it under the form of (o).

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The effect of concatenation rejoins the definition by Lacan of the signifier: "the signifier is what represents a subject for another signifier". There is thus clarified what is involved in the relationships of the subject and of the o-object in their relationships of suture and of cut. "If the succession of numbers, metonymy of zero begins by its metaphor," says Miller, "if the number O of the sequence as number is only the suturing substitute for the absence (of absolute zero) which is carried underneath the chain following the alternative movement of a representation and of an exclusion - what creates an obstacle to recognising in the restored relationship of the zero to the sequence of numbers the most elementary articulation of the relationship that the subject has with the signifying chain?".

I leave here the question of the relationship of the subject to the big Other by the effect of the zero but I am going to raise two problems, that of the suture and that of representation.

A - The problem of the suture

Leclaire protested against this suturing inferred by Miller. The question remains: is there or is there not a suture? Is not what designates the position of the psychoanalyst with respect to the truth precisely the privilege that he does not have to suture? How can one deny that there is a suture if there is a concatenation?

I would take as proof this argument of Freud that is too often forgotten on the consequences of castration. If it is possible, if the threat has been executed, it does not simply deprive the subject of masturbatory pleasure, but it has, the henceforth definitive impossibility for the castrated subject of a union with the mother. That castration is seen here as the collapse of the whole system of the signifier by the rupture of any possibility of concatenation, explains why Freud compares it to a disaster whose costs are immeasurable. In any case the penis plays here the role of mediator of the cut and of the suture.

How can this be sutured? Jacques-Alain Miller, as I have just said, has shown the assenscion of the number zero its transgression of the bar under the form of one, its vanishing in the passage from n to n' which is n +1. But one would not be wrong either to highlight the fact that the logic of an unconscious concept has requirements that are internal to its formation. Here let us quote Freud (with Leclaire): "faeces", "child", "penis" thus form a unity, an unconscious concept (*sit venia verbo*). The concept specifically of a little thing which can be separated from one's own body.

To an opposition of a binary type, the one that linguistics offers us, that of phonology where relationships are always posed in terms of an antagonistic couple and the one that is put at the basis of all information, there is substituted here an operational process with three terms (n, +, n') with the vanishing of a term as soon as it is manifested . We find here a sort of paradigm which can give us the path of what may be involved in the cutting up of the signifier.

In effect the linguists show themselves to be extremely embarrassed when it is a matter of the cutting up of the signified while the cutting up of the signifier does not present us with any kind of difficulty it seems. If for example I can believe Martinet, I read: " As regards semantics, if it has acquired the sense which interests us, it is

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nonetheless derived from a root which evokes not at all a psychic reality but rather the processes of meaning which are implied by the combination of the signifier and of the signified". "A seme in any case can be nothing other than a two faced unit."

The embarrassment comes here from the fact that any direct reference to the signified would ruin the structuralist approach, since its accession by way of the signifier creates the necessary detour for an indirect, relative and correlative apprehension. Moreover, and above all, the tracing out of relevant traits leaves us here in perplexity.

Definitively, what lacks a consistent support here is the structure of the body. Does not the assurance of holding as firm the relevant traits in phonology repose definitively on the functioning of the vocal apparatus? No doubt it is under the command of the nervous system, which explains the fascination of linguists for cybernetics. The psychoanalyst is here the only one who tries to listen to the sense, at its level, namely to consider, while respecting the same requirement of indirect reference, that the cutting up passes to the level of the signified and that it is this cutting up itself which will imply a cutting up of the signifier which renders the signified intelligible. Here there is located the ambiguity that must be raised between the linguistic concept of the signifier and its psychoanalytic formulation as Lacan conceives of it. But is it the same thing?

You have no doubt recognised in this two-faced unity the theorisation of the Moebius strip by Lacan. But can one not consider that the cutting up of the signified in this metonymical series of different partial objects is represented by the phallus precisely in so far as it has appeared in the form of (-phi) in its different partial objects whose diachronic succession you know well: oral object, anal object, phallic object, etc. these terms only representing their mapping-out with respect to the erogenous zones, leaving a place for more complex forms.

This could reconcile a choice between a strict binary system which refers to options which do not allow us ternary mediation, and another system where causality is developed in a network, a type of reticular system which makes disappear any functioning of an oppositional type.

Finally it clearly appears that the minimal form of this reticular structure is the triangular structure where the third is vanishing. It is, I believe, the operation illuminated by Miller's commentary.

This may evoke for us diverse forms of relationships with which we have to deal in the Oedipus complex where an opposition, that of the difference between the sexes, in so far as it is supported by the phallus is in fact inserted into a triangular system which is never apprehended except in two by two relationships; where the phallus constitutes the standard of exchange, its cause.

Saussure had the merit of placing at the beginning of the tongue as system, value, outlining in this respect the comparison with political economy. But even though he separated it out here, he scarcely went any further and did not pose himself the question of what has value for the speaking subject. Thus the suture is accomplished by allowing value to be seen as a cause without telling us anything about it.

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This is where we encounter the function of cause developed by Jacques Lacan. If, with Frege, the identity to oneself has allowed the passage from the thing to the object, may we not think that what we have just shown may function as a relationship of the object to the cause? One might conclude that the object is the signifying relationship which can link the two terms of the thing and of the cause. We would here perhaps have one of the examples spoken about in this still contested article by Freud on the antithetical sense of primitive words since we know that *chose* (thing) and *cause* (cause) have a common root, the mediation here being found to pass through the object.

In short, we would be present at the passage from "the indeterminate" to "the state of what is or works", from "what is in fact" to "what is of the order of reason, of the subject, or of the motive" through the intermediary of the object in so far as its definition is: "what presents itself to sight or affects the senses" (Littré).

B - The problem of representation

Here there is posed then our second problem, namely that of representation. It seems to me that Miller paid little attention to all the references to representation used by Frege. Nevertheless he preserved in the passage quoted above the notion of an alternative movement of a representation and of an exclusion. The function of gathering together, of subsumption is solidary with the notion of a power which puts things together and which at the cost of a cut (that of the power of gathering together presented to the thing, represented). It is the cut which allows the representation. Now here the number zero figures as object under which there falls no representation. It is by the very operation of the cut that there comes, that there is accomplished the subject I would say on the back of, at the expense of the object. As if one could say: what does the cut (of the subject) matter since there remains the suture (of the o-object). This is what the sacrifice of the object by desire in a way realises. What matter the loss of the object if the desire survives and outlasts it. Something also which would be of the order of: the object is dead, long live the desire (of the Other). The demand becomes what assures the renewed resurrection of desire in the case where it might happen to be lacking; it is formulated through the o- object.

The demand which is sustained by no cause, a cause whose effect is the hole, through which the remainder is confused with the demand, is this not the way that the fool - the buffoon, Polonius - sees the fool - Hamlet in love with his daughter and an uncertain avenger of the dead Father - which will make another father perish, that of the object of his desire (Polonius) after a tragic mistake.

"That I have found
the very cause of Hamlet's lunacy
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad
mad call I it; for to define true madness
what is it but to be nothing else but mad."

And further on:

"That we find out the cause of this effect,

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or rather say the cause of this defect,
for this effect defective comes by cause
thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
Perpend".

Hamlet Act 2, Scene 2.

III - THE RELATION o TO i(o) AND THE PROBLEM OF REPRESENTATION AND SPECULARISATION.

Lacan insists forcibly on the fact that the o-object is not specularisable, the reference to the specular image is neither the image of the object nor that of representation, it is, says Lacan in his seminar on *Identification* (1962) another object which is not the same. It is caught up in the framework of a relationship where there comes into play the narcissistic dialectic whose limit is the phallus which operates there under the form of a lack.

Now we have just seen the non-depictable object represented by the number zero.

What does Freud have to say about it? By considering the problem uniquely from the angle of the narcissistic dialectic one short-circuits in my opinion the problem of representation which refers to the object of the drive. Freud designates it as eminently substitutable and interchangeable, which might perhaps appear to be a compensation for the impossibility of flight before internal stimuli, an intermediary procedure, I would say between a limited exchange and a generalised exchange.

It is necessary that there should participate in this exchange as an exchanged term an object of the drive, thereforee it is not any object whatsoever that is involved in the substitution.

Two problems here present themselves before us. The first is that of the distinction between the representative of the drive and affect, the second is that of the differential distribution of the mode of representation.

A -The problem of the distinction between the representative of the drive and affect

The distinction between the representative and the affect is conjectural in Freud's work as we know. Often the drive is confused with the representative and visa versa. But at the end of his work, we know that a further distinction that is more and more marked is established where - this is what I propose should be taken into consideration - the affect takes on the status of signifier. The proof of this is that from 1924 on, the use of *Verleugnung* which it has been proposed to translate by *déni* (denial) is more and more specific; it finds its most precise formulation in the article on fetishism (1927) to which Lacan refers so frequently, the article on the splitting of the ego (1938) and finally in chapter VIII of the *Outline of psychoanalysis* (1939). Freud's thesis then becomes that perception falls under the influence of *Verleugnung,* whilst affect falls under the influence of the *Verdrangung.*

The possibility in the alternative of acceptance-refusal of a global functioning or one impacting simply on one of the terms (perception and affect) is the condition for the differentiated suturing of certain conflictual organisations.

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It is here, it is starting from this distinction that Freud sees this splitting of the ego: the *Entzweiung* that Lacan highlights. Now if Freud creates a term equivalent to repression, denial, which has the same semantic value, it must probably be concluded that if only a signifier can undergo this destiny, the fact is that affect enters into this same category.

I even think that the definition of the signifier would gain perhaps by being completed in the light of what is being said: the signifier would then be that which, under pain of disappearing, must in order to subsist enter into a system of transformations where it represents a subject for another signifier falling under the effect of the bar of repression or denial which constrains it to a fall in its status as being in its relationship with the truth, a fall through which it exceeds or it comes to the rank of signifier in its resurrection.

There would be a certain interest in underlining the correlation of these two modes of signification, each one englobing the two mechanisms. The affect is only seen as a discharge, even though it is - Freud says it for anxiety - a signal (a signifier for us), the representative is only seen as a signifier while it is (in the Freudian theory) the generation of a certain mode of production, thereforee of discharge (engendered by the impossibility of this).

In the *Ego and the Id* Freud takes up the question already evoked, not without difficulty in his article on the unconscious, about the difference between the representative and the affect. What qualifies the affect is that it cannot enter into any combinatorial. It is repressed but its specificity *qua* signifier is to be expressed directly, and not pass through the connecting links of the preconscious.

In his seminar on anxiety, Lacan elucidated and demonstrated what unleashes anxiety, the fashion it operates when there is anxiety. But I would ask myself if he has really taken into account what anxiety is in the sense of the status that it has in the theory. I believe that there is an interest in considering affect as an original semantic form alongside the primary semantides - terms borrowed from the vocabulary of molecular biology - which are the representatives; it would function then in a secondary position which would allow it to acquire the status of a secondary semantide of a different nature to that of the representative and reduplicating the *Entzweiung* in this difference. There would be a reduplication of non-identity to itself through this disparity of the two registers of the signifier.
Contrary to received opinion, it is very curious to see that Freud makes of language what transforms internal processes into perception and not as might be imagined what detaches itself from the perceptive plane, and which would belong to the order of thought. With affect we are in the presence of an effect of the effacing of the perceived trace restored under the form of discharge.

What about the representative? Considerations of terminology are not useless here. It is not for nothing that it has long being discussed whether the *Vorstellungrepräsentanz,* the representative representating, the representative of representation, what takes the place of representation. We know that it enters into the combinatorial. This is where the ambiguity begins. It does not enter into it as a homogeneous unit identical to itself. The clairvoyance of Freud in his domain was to

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make from the start this exclusive distinction present to all your memories between perception and memory. Let us recall the role that he makes reminiscence play in so far as it is supposed to be, as one might say, memory in the locus of the Other but which preserves the trace before it not without losing its quality of memory if it comes to be lived out in actuality.

B - The problem of the differential distribution of the mode of representation

Another type of differentiation interests us here, that of representations of words and representations of things, a distinction which is not contingent. I am only recalling this, which is already known, in order to put forward that: if there is a theory of the signifier in Freud it cannot avoid passing through the perceived. This is tangible in the organisation of discourse. In the narrative of the analysand, the secondary elaboration of the dream, the present or revived phantasy, the image are renewed testimonies to it in the text of our sessions. The question is whether all of this is really of the order of the perceived.

This representative of representation shows that one cannot reduce its status to that of perception. Let us note once again that it is never a question of a presentation but of a representation. The perceived only represents the point of fascination, the centring effort of specularisation as Lacan would say. What allows a functioning at the level of zero, is of the order of the subject, but what is going to emerge and take the place of the one is here the o-object, on condition that one considers it in this differential distribution, where the non-identity to itself is manifested in this disparity.

The economic point of view is illustrated here not simply by being put in question when it is a matter of the quantitative evaluation of the processes, but because it can be identified in this differential distribution. It is the damming effect which weighs on discourse which compels not alone the combinatorial, but again the changes of register, of materials and of the modes of representation of the signifier. These mutations have as object the accentuation of non-identity to itself not alone in the resurgence of the signifier but in its metonymical metamorphoses. The metaphor is infiltrated even into the metonymical enchaining.

It is not for nothing that Freud opposes two systems: what functions at the level of the one is the identity of perceptions and in the other the identity of thoughts. It is in so far as both have a relationship with truth that they form part of our concepts. But the disturbing and fascinating point comes from the fact that perception can be seen as a field of identity while identity operates there in accordance with a register which is not that of the perceived.

It is this identity which abolishes difference as sustained by lack and which finds itself being materialised in the perceived, in the same way as the identity of thoughts in the order of thinking only become operational after the loss of the object.

Lacan did not seem to me to be quite right to have so severely criticised the works dealing with negative hallucinations. At the very most one can only deplore their imprecise reference points. If negative hallucination is this emergence of the zero in so far as it has absolutely nothing to do with representation, is of the order of the

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representative of representation. Its value is to give support to the notion of *aphanisis* which has played such an important role for Lacan after Jones.

One must also remember the alternative picked out by Lacan in Jones' work on feminine sexuality, whose importance is probably greater: either the object, or the desire. Negative hallucination would thus give the model of a subjective structure in so far as it implies the mourning of the object and the advent of a negated subject thus rendered apt for desire. Might one not recall here that the first modes of representation of the subject - the first i(o) - is precisely the product of a representation that is homologous with negative hallucination: the negative hand of the artist appearing in the contour of the painting which delimits its shape. One sees then how the phantasy is placed, since it is the function that Lacan assigns to it of rendering pleasure apt for desire. Here then there appears a form of emergence of a subject which escapes the annihilation of the signifying power in *aphanisis*, since the negative hallucination manages to be produced but as a specular lack. It seems to me to be the inaugural relationship of narcissistic identification in the sense conceived by Freud as a relationship to the mourning of the primordial object. It is the meeting point of the cut and of the suture.

It becomes clear that this process is the same as the one which grounds desire as the desire of the Other, since mourning is interposed in the relationship of the subject to the Other and of the subject to the object.

If the (o) operates between all these forms (one could say that it plays with the fascination of the perceived in running through these registers), it is indeed because it is, not as perceived, but as the trajectory of the subject, the circuit of discourse. I will give an example of it taken from *Othello*. In *Othello* it is the handkerchief which might appear as (o). In fact it is here that we are witnesses to the fascination effort of the perceived, the truth is that it is not so much the handkerchief which is important as the circuit that it goes through from the magician who gave it to Othello's mother or her father (both versions are in *Othello*) until it ends up on the bed of Bianca, the whore, in order finally to reveal Othello to his desire, "my mother is a whore". This must be demonstrated with the help of knowledge, for Othello like every jealous person wants an avowal more than the truth.

Is this not the way then that one must listen to his soliloquy, when he enters the nuptial chamber where he is going to kill Desdemona to make of her wedding night a night of mourning.

"It is the cause, it is the cause my soul
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars.
It is the cause."
(Act 5, Scene 2.)

The function of the cause is here what orders the indubitable perception of his mother's handkerchief in the hands of a whore.

Freud underlines in *An outline of psychoanalysis* that we live in the hope that with a refining of our instruments of perception we may finally accede to certainty about the sensible world. In fact he accentuates once more the affirmation that reality is

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unknowable and that we can only allow ourselves a deduction of the truth from the connections and the interdependencies existing between different orders of the perceived. This is obviously to affirm the pre-eminence of the symbolic, if it were needed.

But his originality was to introduce at the level of the perceived an order, an organisation, which allows him to get out of the dilemma of appearance and reality, in order to substitute for it that of the ideal *(Idealfunktion)* and the truth, this couple functioning moreover in the order of the perceived and of the thought. The confusion repeated more than once between the symbol and the symbolic ought to make us more attentive not to take one for the other.

What then becomes then of the o-object? It exists as a structure of transformation where the object of desire takes on a new mutation in which it is the desire that becomes the object. Through what operation is the cross-checking (*recoupement*) through the non-identity to themselves of these enumerated forms accomplished? I think that one can grasp them in accordance with the two major axes of synchrony and diachrony taking Freud's theorisation as a reference.

1 - In the axis of synchrony we have a series formed by thoughts in so far as they are thoughts of the unconscious (and where it is necessary to distinguish between representations of words and representations of things), affects (as secondary signifiers) and two other categories which it seems to me must come into consideration in so far as we observe them in the analytic situation and not outside it; I am thinking about states of one's own body - depersonalisation or hypochondria, etc...- and all the manifestations which relate to what the English authors call paraparaxes as expressions of the register of the act (acting-in and not acting-out).

2 - But we can also map out another series on the axis of diachrony which is the axis of the succession of oral anal phallic objects etc... I wonder whether the scopic object and the auditory object that Lacan brings into this register gain from being included in this series and whether they do not rather form part of the register of transmission between synchrony and diachrony that one can pick out in discourse in the diverse forms of the dream and its secondary elaboration, of phantasy, of memory, of reminiscence, in short of all the ways which make synchrony and diachrony function. It is upon this sampling that there operates the creation of the o-object in which desire becomes the object and accounts for subjective positions. This non-identity to oneself which the blank images is linked for me to the processes of the effacing of the trace. This is what compels this system to be transformed.

IV - IDENTITY AND NON-IDENTITYTO ONESELF: THE DEATH DRIVE

The signifier reveals the subject while effacing its trace, says Lacan. It is here, I believe, that there is situated the divorce with all non-psychoanalytic structuralist thinking: in the visible/invisible opposition, in the perceived/ known opposition, we bring into play the order of truth, but in so far as this truth always passes by way of the problem of the effacing of the trace.

Freud says in *Moses and monotheism* (1938): "In its consequences, the distortion of a text is like a murder, the difficulty is not to commit the act but to get rid of its traces".

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Now, it is this process which, starting from traces, makes it possible to go back to their cause in which we find the very process of paternity. In *Moses and monotheism*, again, taking up a remark already made at the time of the *Ratman*, he recalls that maternity is revealed by the senses while paternity is a conjecture based on deductions and hypotheses. The fact of having thus given priority to cogitative processes over sensorial perception "was heavy with consequences for humanity".

I point out here that if Freud established a very close link between the phallus and castration, between sexual curiosity and procreation, it seems curious to me that he never in an explicit fashion related the role of the phallus in procreation, in the child's desire for a child or in sexual curiosity.

What functions as cause in the subject (in the search for truth in so far as it is a question of origins, a relationship to the begetter) functions as Law at the socio-anthropological level. Here also the combinatorial only comes into action through the compulsion of a rule.

To the prohibition of incest, the interdiction to the sight and to the knowledge of all which removes the mother and the sister from choice in order to designate other objects in their place, there is added the funeral ritual which establishes the presence of the absent one, of the dead Father. A double process, let us note, of cutting and of suturing. Among the living, a cutting off of the mother and a suturing by her substitutes, among the dead a suturing of the disappearance of the father by the ritual or the totem which is consecrated to him, a cutting off from him through the inaccessible beyond where he henceforth holds himself.

We have here a striking example of the cut between Lévi-Strauss and Freud which is illustrated in an unexpected encounter.

In connection with the mask Lévi-Strauss insists on its function as being at once negative (of dissimulation) and positive (the accession to another world). But what seems to be involved for him is a homology, a correspondence such that in this two-faced reality nothing is in any way lost on the way. One might pose the question : "What is it that necessitates dissimulation, what is it that requires this two-planed structure?"

Lévi-Strauss speaks about a mask (Hamshamtses) among the Kwakiutl Indians made up of several articulated shutters which allows there to be unveiled, to be "unmasked" (*sic*) the human face of a God hidden under the outer form of a crow. We are in agreement with him in concluding "that one masks not in order to suggest, but finally in order to unveil", now when this mask is deployed it makes appear the human face in what could be taken to be the back of crow's throat. We do not have to force the facts very much to say that the figure presented here makes there appear the four semi-halves of the beak (two upper ones and two lower ones) as the four members of a character whose trunk is represented by the face of a God. The analogy between this representation and the one Freud notes in an extremely short text - *A mythological parallel to a visual obsession* - is striking. He describes in it an obsessional representation which haunts the patient under the name *Vater Arsch* in which there is imagined a character constituted by a trunk and the lower part of this, its four

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members, with the genital organs missing and the head, the face drawn on the stomach.

And Freud concludes to the link between the *Vater Arsch*, the father's arse, and the patriarch, this subject possessing of course a quite filial veneration for the author of his days, like any obsessional.

It seems to me that what Lévi-Strauss misses is this sacrifice of the head and of the genital organs represented by the Kwakiutal mask which goes beyond the relationship of what is shown to what is hidden but reveals a relationship of the unveiled to the effaced, to the barred, to the lack. The cause of desire is here.

The metonymy is highlighted by Freud in the representation of the substitutive body for the lack of one of its parts, the genitals. All of this takes on its value because it exposes to us the interest taken by Freud at the end of his life in Moses, not simply because of his quality as a Jew, but also because monotheism appears there to be closely linked to the interdiction of idolatry and to the total effacing of every sign of the presence of God otherwise then under the form of names of the father (Yahve, Elohim, Adonai). Let us note here again the duplication of the non-identity to oneself.

The work of the death drive which always operates in silence can be noted in this reduction - the word is to be taken in all its dimensions - which forces itself always to reach this point of absence where the subject rejoins its dependency on the Other, to identify itself to its own effacing. The mutation of the signifier, its epiphany in its polymorphous and distributed shapes, indicates the startled response that it intends to oppose - as in the dream - to this annihilation and the effort to which it perdures profoundly disguised and modified, as a witness.

Must one see again here a striking feature of Judaism in the silence that it maintains about the after-life? The two facts are perhaps linked. But in order to understand the logic of the effacing of the trace, perhaps it will be necessary to have recourse to other spatio-temporal categories than the ones that we know. Perhaps it will be necessary to find here the structures of a time and a space only the pre-Socratics were able to reveal to us, directly or through the analyses of Vernant and Beaufret, the two in a very different way, but where we are surprised to note that the analytic treatment furnishes us with a privileged access to this time and space, these places and this memory in the sense of the Greeks.

The (o) is revealed under the structures of nosography as an episemantic organisation and under the modes of the analysand's discourse in its semantophoric aspect. The analysts here have to pass through a narrow gate. The approach to a structural psychoanalytic technique appears to me to have to be based on the differentiation between representatives and affect and on the differential distribution of representatives.

One is extremely stuck in reading works on psychoanalytic technique to note the total absence about anything which concerns the modes of discourse of the analysand. Nevertheless we all know the considerable difficulty of treatments which do not conform to the model established by Freud of free association. What is most often lacking is this differential distribution of modes of representation which bear witness

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to the non-identity to itself of the signifier as a necessary condition of analysis. I am only noting this point as a possible field of research without being able to dwell on it any longer.

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The essential difficulty of psychoanalytic investigation comes from the fact that it is a constrained discourse : it is not simply a question of communicating but for the analysand to say everything. On the side of the analyst, it is a fleeting word - *verba volant* - that he is not able like the linguist or the ethnologist to lock up in a box. The analyst runs after the word of the analysand. If the death drive infiltrates the word of the analysand, in the silence towards which it always pushes him, the analyst has to deal with a living word; living in its refusal to be reduced to silence, living in its character which is refractory to all embalming where the text finally conditioned lends itself to all the treatments to which men of knowledge submit it.

We will know precisely what the (o) is when we have gone completely round the field of subjective positions. We will then have a vision which corresponds to that of the philosopher who thinks about history and culture through the modes of discovery of the movement of ideas, of art, of the science of his time but as a polymorphous, heterogeneous *milieu* where there are illustrated different forms of alienation. One should however not be deceived. The psychoanalyst here is not disposed to abandon his priority to anyone in the examination of these facts. Even though he may be taxed with imperialism, he will always remain arrested before this affirmation by Freud that the religions of humanity represent obsessional systems, just as the different philosophies represent paranoiac systems. The one and the other are valorised in so far as they allow the subject to feel better, says Freud, by having thus escaped desire and succeeding in installing something else in its place. And we would have here, in the order of the projections of the functioning of the psyche, the first elements of a conception or of a mimetic theory of the functioning of the subject. Psychoanalysis has not yet exhausted the resources of mimesis.

It is insufficient to attribute to the psychoanalyst the function of demystification which would allow there to be preserved a purged and purified *cogito*. It is in fact because Freud begins from what is slag, waste, mistake, that he discovers the structure of the subject as a relationship to the truth. This is perhaps less close to the image of Prometheus hunted for having stolen fire and than to that of Philoctetes abandoned by his own on a desert island because of his stinking wound.

Dr Lacan: I want to thank Green very warmly for the admirable presentation that he has just made to us on his position with respect to what I, as he recalled, patiently put forward, constructed, produced and what I have not finished producing concerning the o-object. He really showed very remarkably all the connections that this notion involves. I would even say that he even left in the margin something he could have taken further, I know, and specifically as regards the organisation of different types of treatment and what constitutes properly speaking the function of the o-object as regards the treatment.

I thank him for having given this clarification which is much more than a summary, which is a genuine animating, an excellent reminder of different stages, I repeat, in

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which one could specify my research or my discoveries. I will not answer him now because we have a programme. I think that he will be prepared to collaborate in the closest possible fashion with what has been put together in order that the text of what he gave to day and which marks a date and which can serve as a reference for what will be developed and I hope completed or increased this year, I think that it is an excellent work-base especially for those who will form part of this closed seminar.

(28) Thank you very much, Green. You have filled your hour with an exactness that I cannot compliment you on too much. So then. I give the floor to Conté who is going to propose a certain presentation about what is involved in the articles by Stein that are going to be questioned today. Nevertheless, I take advantage of the interval to let you know the following, which is that a study and work circle which is called the epistemology circle and which belongs to this school whose guests we are here, this epistemology circle has been constituted in the course of the *cartel:* theory of the discourse of the Ecole Freudienne and is going to publish *Cahiers pour l'analyse*. The very title of these *cahiers* requires no further commentary. But I will give you all the same its direction and what it is open to, what it may possibly welcome. These *cahiers* will be put at your disposal of course here at the entrance to the seminar but at the Ecole Normale in a permanent fashion and also at the Sorbonne in a place that I will designate for you later. I gave to these *cahiers,* which appear to me to be animated by the most fruitful spirit and this for a long time, I mean that the circle which is going to edit them appears to me to merit the attention of all of us, I gave my first lecture this year which as you saw was written out, so that it could be published in the first number. There will be other things. So you will see.

(29) Monsieur Conté:I am going to speak about two articles by Stein leaving to one side the third more recent one, his lecture on the judgement of psychoanalysts which seems to me to pose problems at a different level. So then here are two articles which follow one another and which are simultaneously consecrated to furnishing a certain mapping-out of the analytic situation and to elaborating a theory of the weight of the word of the analyst in the session.

The first article accentuates above all the reference to primary narcissism; the second introducing the opposition between narcissism and masochism is essential for the conception of transference.

I am first of all going to give a rapid account, too rapid surely, of what appeared to me to constitute the essential theoretical contribution of this work. I will be forgiven I hope for passing perhaps a little quickly over certain articulations and above all for depriving these writings of their references to precise clinical cases which give them their whole value as a reflection on psychoanalytic experience.

Stein will, I hope, at least correct me in case I have betrayed or badly expressed his thinking.

I will then make a certain number of critical remarks which have no other goal than to (30) grasp in his original development the points of divergence with the teaching of Lacan and in that way to open the debate.

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The first article is then: *"La situation analytique: remarques sur la regression vers le narcissisme primaire dans la séance et le poids de la parole dans l'analyse."* It appeared in the *Revue Francaise de psychanalyse,* 1964, No.2. Stein's remarks aim at elucidating the mode of action of interpretation but, I am quoting him here, in order to approach the question in a useful way, one must first ask oneself where the power of the word resides in the course of a session whatever may be the choice of the content of the interpretation, which opens out onto the problem of the power of the word in general.

Stein is going to tackle this problem starting from certain privileged moments of analysis. Such is in effect the consequence of the fundamental rule: asked to adopt the state of free- floating attention, the patient listens and speaks in one and the same movement. The perception and the emitting of the word are confused. He does not speak. It speaks. The analyst for his part also in the state of floating attention listens to the it that is speaking. He does not listen in person. It listens but the word and the listening are not two distinct things. The patient and the analyst both tend to be in a one in which everything is contained.

(31) The analytic situation, when ideally realised, is supposed to be quite like sleeping and the discourse which makes itself heard there is a dream. What is at stake in the analytic situation is therefore a topical regression involving the abolition of limits between the outside world and the inside world both from the side of the patient and that of the analyst. This topical regression is a regression towards primary narcissism expressing itself in a certain manner of well-being which would deserve, Stein tells us, to be called the feeling of narcissistic expansion or again in the illusion of having the object of desire, this is what he tells us in connection with a clinical example or in the syndrome of bliss accompanying the beginning of certain analyses.

Now such moments of analysis rarely fail to stimulate in the session the evocation of the past. Topical regression in the analytic situation is properly speaking the condition of temporal regression and it is in topical regression that there is actualised a conflict which appears to repeat the past. I quote him again: "what happens on the occasion of this actualisation is analogous to what is produced when at the moment of wakening the dreamer formulates the text of his dream." Here the patient emerges from his state of free association in order to address his word to the analyst. It no longer speaks. He speaks. He reflects on himself and correlatively addresses himself to the analyst as if to (32) the object of his discourse. It is at this precise point Stein tells us again that aggressivity emerges for aggressivity, as Freud tells us, is born with the object.

The rest of the article enriches this articulation with a certain number of specifications. There can be, in particular, in the course of a treatment a defence against narcissistic regression in so far as it may favour the reappearance of unconscious conflicts and of anxiety. To the easy speech characteristic of this state of free-floating attention or to silence of a fusionnal type there is thus opposed speaking without discontinuity or the wary silence which always expresses the defence against narcissistic regression, the word of the analyst being in such cases wished for as a protection against regression but at the same time dreaded in so far as it deprives the patient of a substitutive satisfaction for narcissistic expansion namely the exercise of omnipotence.

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The double incidence of the word of the analyst thus finds itself pin-pointed. Pronounced in person, it breaks the narcissistic expansion, while making itself heard as participating in the it speaks, it favours this regression. The intonation or the choice of the moment to speak may account for one or the other of these effects which are in fact habitually present simultaneously but in a variable proportion.

(33) I signalled that the first article introduced then a position of the analysand which, has the value of a compromise situation with respect to narcissism. Fearing regression the patient tries to reduce the analyst to silence, to escape from fluctuation by becoming the one who organises it, and to preserve a mastery over it and through that a substitutive *jouissance* of narcissistic regression.

The second article elaborates this position in opposing to narcissism this time the masochism of the patient in the treatment. It is a lecture entitled : *"Transfert et contretransfert ou le masochisme dans l'économie de la situation analytique"* given in October 1964 and I thank Stein for having been willing to put it at our disposal.

Narcissistic expansion in the course of a session is always threatened by the eventuality of the intervention of the analyst in so far as this implies two persons separated then by a cut between the patient and what is not him, a gap through which there is introduced a heterogeneous power namely something which is to be put in relation with the principle of reality. Now, at this level there is realised a false link that is constitutive of transference. In the analytic situation there is produced a phenomenon of confusion, of coalescence between the representation of the intervention of the analyst and the recognition of the reality of the fact that he can speak.

(34) The analyst appears as the origin of the reality of existence, as the origin of a failing power. The analyst appears as frustrating the patient of his pleasure by his own will while he is not at all the master of the frustration that the patient experiences in the cut with what is not him. This phenomenon, Stein tells us, is known to us under the name of transference.

The intervention of the analyst is seen then as an abuse of power. Transference has masochism as a correlate. But in conferring on his analyst such absolute power, the subject aims in fact at making himself the master of this power which is lacking for his narcissistic completion. Presenting himself as a fool, he makes of the psychoanalyst his king. He is going to suffer for pleasure namely try to deny the reality of existence while at the same time recognising it since narcissistic completion is deferred. More fundamentally he aims at lying to the analyst, at indefinitely maintaining his desire by not satisfying him. It is not a matter for him of being the missing object, the object whose completing images in short the completion of the narcissism which cannot be. Through this substitutive realisation he simulates the possibility that frustration may no longer exist.

This allows us then to accede to the following step which is the recognition of the sadistic goals implied in the masochism of the subject namely the appeal to counter-
(35) transference for the psychoanalyst who undergoes the common lot of not being able to escape from frustration, may at the limit allow himself to be deceived and

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believe himself in fact to be the master of frustration. Remaining frustrated in the reality of his existence, he would then be tempted to attribute the non-completing of his own narcissism to the lack of his patient who thus becomes the object who is lacking to him.

Thus it is that transference is established with the illusionary aim of restoring a narcissistic completion supposedly lost under the sign of uncertainty. The end of analysis, implies an access to a certain order of certainty in existence or of knowledge in frustration.

Starting from this very brief summary of Stein's two works, I am going to propose a certain number of critical remarks which are going to be ordered in three groups. The first group principally concerns the first article and the opposition or the alternation Stein introduces which is destined to account at this level for the dynamism of the treatment. I remind you that he situates on the one side the rule of free association which tends to induce in the patient a movement of regression towards primary narcissism characterised as fusion with the analyst and on the other hand the topical (36) regression towards narcissism conditions a temporal regression namely the re-emergence of old conflicts or the repetition of conflicts in which there consists properly speaking the transference.

The repetition compulsion appears as the negation of the compulsion to topical regression where, I quote again another formula "the whole of analysis is in this regression".

Here in this connection are all the questions that I would like to pose concerning the fusional situation, I recall two formulae. There is one unique it speaking and listening or again the patient and the analyst tend to be in a hand in which everything is contained.

Well then, the moments where there seem to be confused perception and the emitting of the word in an immediacy where there is supposed to be abolished every screen and every intermediary, may effectively evoke certain clinical situations but they also seem to be rather exceptional on the whole and pose therefore right away the problem of their meaning in the treatment and very especially with respect to transference.

Certainly this indeed is what Stein elaborates in his work but at the level, as one might say, of a global clinical experience, we would be tempted to ask him what led him to choose to privilege relatively rare situations in order to make of them one of the fundamental reference points of the treatment.

(37) Or again, to remain at this clinical level, we would like perhaps to know if he would tend to refer such facts to a particular neurotic structure for example or indeed how he would situate them with respect to the totality of the treatment and with respect to its different phases.

In a more theoretical register now the problem might be posed as to how Stein conceives of topical regression in the treatment and in what measure it seems to him to imply a situation of a fusional type when it might appear to have at first sight a

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relationship with something which would be on the contrary of the order of an unveiling of the big Other to refer here to the teaching of Lacan.

Or again, is there an argument for making converge the state of free association and the activity of the dream on the one hand, the re-emergence of the conflict and the narration of the dream conceived of as a reflection on the dream on the other hand. We know for example that a doubt about one of the elements of the dream when it is being narrated announced in the narrative ought to be considered to be a part of the text of the dream and that the subject remains implicated precisely in the text of the dream.

In a parallel way, in connection with this unique it speaking and listening, we would ask him what is involved for the analyst in the narcissistic moments of the treatment. Is (38) his mode of being to be closely linked to the activity of the dream? In other words is he also subjected to topical regression or is it rather a matter of a phantasy of fusion with the analysand?

In connection now with primary narcissism, it is presented essentially as a limiting situation referred to a primary fusional identification or to a state of hallucinatory satisfaction of desire which supposes a situation regulated by the pleasure principle. A note which refers to ..... puts the fusion in relationship to the putting in suspense of this separating word and this appears to imply a reference to an ante-verbal or pre-verbal state. Certainly it is underlined that the regression in the session never quite reaches primary narcissism, there is only a movement towards it. Nevertheless a certain number of passages of the text appear to propose narcissism as something which is supposed to be one of the primordial steps or a first phase of the development.

The second article on the contrary, introduces a different aspect. The patient, in order to picture the completion of the impossible narcissism is led to try to pose himself as the missing object, in the extreme case the object that would satisfy his analyst. He seems thus to be aiming at the restoration of the narcissism of the other and this narcissism is presented thus as the myth or the phantasy of the completing of the desire of the Other.

(39) We have been asking ourselves which of these two aspects seemed to Stein to be the most decisive, the most essential or again how he articulated the two of them. Since then, Stein, in his lecture on the judgement of the psychoanalyst has contributed to this subject a certain number of precise articulations and I think that it is along this direction that he will be led to respond to us. I maintain however this interrogation in the measure that the problem remained posed at the level of these two first articles.

In connection now more especially with the second article, I would like to interrogate Stein's text about the relationships of these theoretical reference points to certain Lacanians categories, in particular the big Other, the small other and the o-object. I must say in this connection that it is the category of the imaginary other which seemed to me to appear most often highlighted to the point that his work seemed to me to tend at different moments to present the analytic situation as a dual situation for example when he put the accent on the dialectic of the frustration in analysis.

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In the same way, in the first article, he tells us that at the moment of the re-actualisation of the conflict, aggressivity arising with the object, the patient emerges from fusion to address himself in person to the analyst who is also repersonalised as (40) object of his discourse. Is this not to situate the analyst essentially as an imaginary other of aggressive rivalry? Undoubtedly Stein also introduces the big Other which is also found certainly implied by what I have just said or also when the analyst finds himself designated as the master of frustration or source of the heterogeneous power but it seemed to me nevertheless difficult to differentiate in his text between the big Other and the other of the imaginary relationship.

Finally, Stein introduces something which might seem close to the category of the o-object in particular in the second article: the analysand trying to situate himself as the missing object of his analyst.

Without wanting to take up here again the contribution of Lacan concerning the o-object and the articulation of sadistic desire and of masochistic desire, I point out that Stein appears at this moment to be engaged in a description of the analytic situation in terms of desire. We rediscover then the question: how is this level articulated with that of narcissism? In particular do we have to situate the o-object as that whose possession, at the limit, would be the restoration of the lost completeness?

Or again, if narcissism is synonymous with the disappearance of limits between the ego and the non-ego, should it really be closely linked to what can emerge in the course of a treatment that is of the order of a phantastical evocation of the object which seems to (41) me to imply an articulated structure rather than a fusional lack of distinction.

Finally, the third group of remarks: I would like in finishing, to take up what constitutes the axis of Stein's work and gives it all its value for us namely the putting in place of the mapping-out of the choice of the word of the analyst as such or again of the power of the word.

What it seems should first be remarked is that Stein appears to have been led to having to orientate his research with respect to a series of positions with two terms. For example the alternation of narcissistic regression and the re-emergence of conflicts or the opposition of narcissism and masochism, this overlapping the Freudian dualities of the pleasure principle and the reality principle; primary process, secondary process. Do we have here a conceptual model which we ought to consider as necessarily implied as a frame for the analytic situation?

Stein sees of course the end of these remarks: it is in short an interrogation about the impression that his text gives which is finally essentially axed on the real-imaginary opposition and putting in the background the proper dimension of the symbolic. Undoubtedly my impression comes probably from the fact that Stein, in this text only exposes one of the levels of his articulation but at this level itself the question perhaps deserves nevertheless to be posed.

(42) For example in the first article, the word of the analyst takes its weight from the fact that it goes in the sense of regression or introduces on the contrary a rupture

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restoring then the duality of persons. The word is there in order to reinforce unity or underline duality.

This final eventuality appears more essential because Stein sustains his point of view by situating the word as that which intervenes in order to break down narcissism by separating the ego from these objects. The word is a cut. It is this cut which introduces the double polarity subject-object.

I must admit that I do not know here whether it would be wise to introduce essentially the word as cut generating a duality and not to grasp either exactly how this presentation accords with what is said about narcissistic moments of the treatment where the subject listens within and speaks in one and the same movement, where it speaks, the word seeming to espouse the psychic flux without a break or a cut.

In the second article, the word is opposed to narcissism as the reality principle to the pleasure principle; it is what obliges the patient to notice that there is a reality because of the impossibility of his narcissistic completion. There is here also a duality under the word supports and imposes the subject. The word is situated on the side of the real represented by the analyst as master of frustration.

(43) Is this to be attributed to the transferential error? It seems to me nevertheless that the articulation of the word and of the real as such would benefit from being made more specific. It is the same question which might be posed finally in connection with the end of the treatment as a knowledge about frustration. "It is not the analyst", Stein tells us, "who frustrates the subject of his omnipotence. But frustration is the very reality of existence. Must the psychoanalyst then operate as the representatives of reality in order to lead his patience to it?" I am forcing the text and it is only in order to interrogate Stein on the decisive role that he accords to frustration. It seems to me that the more radical category of lack may reveal itself to be more manageable at the different levels of structure by permitting for example castration to be situated with respect to frustration and allowing there to be articulated more precisely the symbolic with respect to the real and the imaginary.

I am closing here these remarks which were intended simply to introduce a discussion.

Dr Jacques Lacan: Without delaying on everything that I was responsible for Conté saying I think that, addressing myself to Stein, that he cannot but recognise that what we have here is the most strict, the most exact, the most articulated, the most honest and I would add the most sympathetic account that could be given of what we know at present about his thinking, in an effort which did not fail to hit out at it, in so far as undoubtedly there are avenues, as I might say, which have already served us at least in grand part and which were and that it was your goal to integrate to put the accent on what, God knows, they serve you for …..... an authentic experience.

This is not the time that I am going to highlight everything that appears to me in your position to preserve the mark of a sort of holding back, of tension, of a braking linked to other categories which are, I must say, more current in the common theory which is given today of analytic experience and whose two terms are very very well marked at the two poles in what you have presented, on the one hand, the notion, which is so

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questionable and which it is not for nothing that I have not discussed up to the present, namely, that of primary narcissism. I considered that at the point of my elaboration, it (45) was not up to the present, for any of those who follow me at least, ready to be tackled. You will see that with the last topological notations that I have given you, it is going to appear quite clear that the difference between what I have contributed as an articulation and what is precisely received in this order and showed at the same time, which is always necessary, how the confusion came to be produced, that there is here a knot, that before tackling it, one approaches it, this is not the time that I am going to mark it. Perhaps not even today, although I may, perhaps, at the end of the session give an indication of it.

On the other hand the very articulated and precise centring that you give to the schema of psychoanalysis as remaining on frustration, since, as you say, it is around frustration that there is situated and even, as you say, that here is what one calls, properly speaking transference, namely, that the analyst is at the beginning the representative for the subject of the power, of the omnipotence which is exercised on him in the form of frustration and that finally, the ending would end up at this knowledge of the fact that frustration is the divine essence of existence.

I think that here also what I have done and brought forward consists properly in saying that there is not only this axis and not in any case the definition that you give on page 3 and 4 of the article on transference and counter-transference, that what is involved (46) when you say that this is properly speaking the transference, is very precisely saying the contrary of how I introduced the transference by this key formula, to obtain this point of mental fixation for the direction that I indicate, namely, that the transference is essentially founded on the fact that for the one who enters into analysis, the analyst is the subject who is supposed to know. Which is strictly of a different order, as you see, to what I am developing at present.

This distinction between demand and transference which remains, at the beginning, in analysis around this *Entzweiung* of the analytic situation itself is why everything can be ordered in a correct fashion, namely, in a fashion which will make, in a way, the analysis come to a term, a finish properly speaking which is of a nature that is essentially different to this knowledge about frustration. That is not the end of the analysis.
I am saying this to give an axis in a way, I am not saying that with this I have closed the debate, on the contrary I am opening it. I am showing that the lines of perspective are completely different to what I will call, in an abbreviated way, your system which after all I have no reason to consider as closed. Perhaps you will open it up again. It is your system conceived, closed, with what we have up to now which represents already a certain body.

(47) I undoubtedly regret that Conté, with the purpose as one might say of being rigorous, seeing that he did not quite manage to see the sharp turn, the transformation which is produced in your third article, which also contains things that to my eyes, are extremely questionable, specifically the accent that you put on communication. It is still obviously about the sense that the word that the analyst has.

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I underline moreover, at the point that we have got in the progress of things, I do not consider that we are going to liquidate the whole of this debate today. The fourth Wednesday in January will perhaps allow us to give….....

At the point we are at with time do you for your part see things that you think would be good to say, or would you prefer, for example, to leave Melman who also has something to say, leave Melman to put forward what he has brought along?

Dr Stein: I think it would be better if I let the others speak first.

Dr Lacan: Yes of course because after all even if today you do not have all the time you would like to reply we are reduced to a limited number precisely for that, so that we can consider ..... in order that the recording of what has been received here may have time to mature. Others perhaps will want to intervene. I give the floor to Melman.

Dr Stein: I would like all the same before Melman speaks to say how much I appreciated Conté's presentation.

(48) Dr Melman: I will take things up at the very point where Conté began. Because of this work of Stein, one may well consider that they merit an attention that is all the more sympathetic and careful because they seem to constitute a sort of reflection on a general theory of psychoanalytic treatment, and that Stein begins in no uncertain terms, makes his reflections begin from the power of the word of the analyst, which, says Stein, opens out onto the problem of the power of the word in general and which culminates at the end of this first article which appeared in the *Revue Francaise de psychanalyse,* March - April 1964 in this formula: "to consider the content of the words pronounced, is never enough to account for the change produced by the word in the one who hears it. To envisage as I did here, contrary to custom, the analytic discourse otherwise than from the strict point of view of the content of the words pronounced appears to me to be a step following which the understanding of the content will find itself grounded on that of the word. For it is indeed in appearance on the understanding of the content that there is founded in its essentials the conscious action of the psychoanalyst in the progress of the clinic."

The little point that might be remarked is that to pass from the power of the word of (49) the analyst to the power of the word in general is an advance, is a step that in my eyes is altogether to be wished for, but which implies indeed nevertheless that we are dealing in analysis with language. And this second proposition, that it is a matter of considering the content of the words pronounced, appears to be a striking illustration of what it means, that one could go and seek its value, its weight, not alone at the level of its content but also of its container, in order to notice there for example that at the level of its container, certain terms are missing which are the very simple ones that I will allow myself to reintroduce here for the clarity of what I mean, which are the terms of course of signifier and signified and I think that their introduction puts better on the rails what Stein means.

In effect, what does the author say? I take up here a little point developed by Conté. It is that the word in the treatment has two faces; the one is that of the patient which is ordered by free association and which irresistibly orients the patient into a regression

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towards narcissistic expansion, primary narcissism whose extreme, ultimate, hypothetical well-being is linked to a feeling of fusion with the analyst, this so-called fusion being able to depict the rediscovery of the lost mythical first object of desire. The other face of the word is that of the analyst which he can make use of and which (50) he disposes of either to favour this regression towards this narcissistic expansion of the primary type or to introduce an inevitable cut, that of reality of which the patient wrongly will make him the agent. One can only mark here already the rather peculiar position accorded by Stein to the word of the analyst which it seems is still better illuminated in the last work done quite recently on Mondays by Pierra Aulagnier at St Anne, recent work which has as the title "The judgement of the psychoanalyst" and in which the author says the following : "The exceptional word of the analyst which comes to fulfil the expectation of the patient is effectively received with pleasure. It neutralises a tension in a feeling of adequation and of relief even if immediately afterwards it may give rise to anger, to opposition or to denial. Hence its frequent comparison with a substance, food, sperm or child which is supposed to fill up the belly of the patient to the degree that sometimes he is sick of it. Having received an interpretation towards the end of the session, a female patient replies: 'that makes me happy I would like to end with that', that at the next session she evokes the pleasure that she has when you speak to me, the unexpected aspect of your words and nevertheless it is like a miracle but this comparison does not please me for in the miracle, the patient adds, there is something passive and that the patient has great trouble explaining her .....: and nevertheless which is referred to the fear that the (51) pleasure will not last and to her impression of not being able to grasp everything that her psychoanalyst says to her. And this ends as follows: "and one will not be surprised to see in what follows that she received the interpretation like a child that her analyst had given her, a guilty satisfaction."

And it seems to me that it is at the level of a formulation that has here become quite clear that there is better specified no doubt what Stein meant when he said that the content did not exhaust the word of the analyst. And, in effect, this content as it is called here seems to evoke "no signified which summons by itself some signifying articulation" but seems essentially to evoke the place from which the word of the analyst might take on this so singular brilliance.

I do not believe that I am here forcing Stein's thinking in quoting for example theis sentence, still in his last work when he says: "the word of the analyst is always awaited like the repetition of a word already pronounced"; I would tend of course to say : "as the evocation of a place which has always been there". I continue with Stein: "a mythical word, a foundational word which establishes him both as (which establishes the patient as both) for these two effects are inseparable, *qua* objects of the desire of the Other and *qua* subject of an original fault."

(52) And it seems to me that, while always according to these elements their place which to my eyes appears very important in Stein's work and in the effects that he furnishes, I would say that to suppose that the word of the analyst is exercised at this place whose particular brilliance I tried to evoke earlier, supposes of course that the analyst accepts or ratifies, poses, quite simply that his word comes from this place and it seems to me that a certain number of articulations in the text could eventually be ordered around this supposed position of the word of the analyst in the treatment. For example, when it is said that through these free associations the analysand "in the

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perfect accomplishment of his gift" (it is a quotation) tries to realise his word towards that same place which is that aimed at by the analyst, one might think then that if through this gift the analysand tries to rejoin here what may seem to him to be the place or the word of the analyst; he is likely eventually to inscribe let us say a lived experience to simplify in terms of mythical fusion indeed even in something which may, at that moment, take on the term of this narcissistic extension which is so particular, he is likely to end up at these extreme effects, namely at that of a fusion with the analyst.

On this I have been a little, I have the impression that I have not said this altogether clearly but what I mean to say is that starting from the mapping-out of this place one (53) can ask oneself whether effectively starting from that moment the movement of the analysand in the treatment is not an attempt to rejoin a locus starting from which effectively a mythical fusion can, from all time, can be perhaps supposed and perhaps obviously in this movement to situate something which is this ineffable well-being inscribed under the term of primary narcissistic expansion.

One could also ask oneself whether situating the thing in this way, I mean the word of the analyst does not come to this place, this word which can either fulfil this narcissistic regression or introduce the cut, whether to see things in this way does not amount to recalling this frequent and current bi-valence which recalls a frequent speculation which has no doubt its value on the good and the bad object.

One could ask oneself also whether situating things in this way is not something which allows there to be understood, for to my eyes it appeared rather surprising, the fact that if the subject fails to observe the fundamental rule in the treatment he immediately senses himself to be guilty of masturbation. One could say there also, situating things in this way, or guilty of some original auto-erotic satisfaction.

(54) One could then ask oneself whether the refusal of the patient when he fails to observe the fundamental rule, to lose something, in obeying this rule imposed by the analyst whether this refusal of the patient is not something which eventually takes on this auto-erotic or masturbatary character because it can signify the fear or the refusal of the patient to lose himself in some object to be specified which is supposed to be for its part held precisely in the power and the hands of the analyst.

That, for example, in the dialogue of the treatment there may intervene elements which bring into play the body, the somatic, at the level of a malaise that the word of the analyst is able to remove. I must quote again here these few sentences which seem to me altogether clear and altogether interesting in the remarks, in the text of Stein. He says for example the following: "in lifting the uncertainty, this word of the analyst suppresses the malaise at the same time. But the patient had already partially removed this uncertainty by translating his malaise into a more or less determined affection of his body, a phenomenon that is very close to the one of somatic compliance that Freud studied in connection with Dora's hysteria. For a certain malaise that is waiting for the word of the analyst the patient had substituted a suffering which invited a rather precise representation of the substance or the physical agent necessary for its suppression. This at least allowed him to know what he was lacking. It was sufficient for him to model it on a suffering previously experienced because of the action, a

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natural factor and thus there is explained the fact that the word of the analyst can act as if it were a physical substance or agent ."

I would tend, moreover Stein says elsewhere, is it not perfectly clear that this word of the analyst is also the same that, indeed it is much better imaged when for example Stein compares it to food: this word which has as effect the bringing about of a corporal modification just as food calms hunger, or as the rays of the sun suppress the sensation of the cold. I already underlined, says Stein, that the word could on occasion make a toothache or a pain in the head disappear. It is not rare either for it to calm a sensation of hunger or for it to warm somebody up. Such an identity of facts might lead one to thing that it is the substitute for a substance or the agent of a physical action or that it is of the same nature.

Indeed I would have a tendency als to see in this position, in this particular place accorded to the word of the analyst, something which would bring it about perhaps that the logical approach of the author finds itself engaged in a completely binary (56) system, as Conté said a little earlier, a binary system sustained by a fundamental model and that I would tend to see as follows, not something that would be like that, for example, of being or not being, but something which is rather perhaps being this or being that.

Finally, I asked myself also if it were not starting from this place, from this locus accorded to the word of the analyst that there is necessarily posed the problem of the end of the treatment in this closed situation or effectively as Stein does, they can only be inscribed, they can only be expressed in terms of technical artifices.

I ought to say that, of course, Stein has not, in his remarks in the text that we have studied does not go beyond this introduction but in any case it is nevertheless how it is, I mean in terms of technical artifices that this end of the treatment is evoked and effectively, of course, one could ask oneself how in this dual, relatively immobile situation and situating in this place the word of the analyst things could be that much different.

Finally, to end, the author poses, of course, the problem of the truth. "How," Stein says, "can the analyst make of his word the guarantee of truth when the patient in transference attributes to him a power that he does not have". Which ends up, of (57) course, with formulae which make of the analyst a deceiver, quite simply deceived himself. And I would say that for my part this is eventually what I will be led to situate, I mean in such an articulation even though after all I cannot see effectively how it could here be otherwise if the analyst were not led perhaps was not led to contribute something else in place of the lure.

Stein also adds : "there would be no psychoanalysis if the psychoanalyst pretended to situate himself at every instant as a faithful servant of truth". I will read this sentence again: "there would be no psychoanalysis if the psychoanalyst pretended at every instant to situate himself as a faithful servant of the truth." I must say, for my part, that I do not at all agree, of course, with this conclusion, that I think, on the contrary, I am ending in an abrupt and rather rapid fashion - that analysis on the contrary has this fundamental relationship to the truth and that if the psychoanalyst was not able effectively to be constantly the guarantor one would risk finding oneself in these

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positions of lure, in these positions of deceived deceiver with the consequences that this would have on the carrying out of the treatment that I tried perhaps in a rather difficult way and one that was not always too clear to retrace in my remarks.

Dr Jacques Lacan: It is two minutes past two. I would ask you for another two minutes. I do not think that Stein will respond today. There is clearly not enough time and I think that things should be taken up again.

One part, one part only of the difficulty of Melman's text comes certainly from the fact that this article by Stein on psychoanalytic judgement was not adequately presented. I think that there will not escape Stein himself, something that I am going to clarify immediately that in short Melman committed himself to a reading of an article essentially founded on the preaching function (*fonction de prédication*) of the analyst.

It is in a way in so far as this preaching, you can be sure, is expected that you note at the level of four principles what are its effects. In order to explain these same effects Melman supposes a more central apprehension on your part of this function of the word of the analyst. In short he read it, he dares to read it beyond what you yourself see in it. Everyone was all the same able to follow this place that he designates and it is a question. This is not to take up a position. This indeed is why he did not specifically designate it, precisely in the final analysis as the place of the o-object. You (59) sensed right throughout Melman's presentation and this again poses problems since, moreover, it would be of a nature to reform the whole chain of your conception, if not mine, indeed mine for the past ten years, of the relationship of the patient to the word of the analyst which might go so far almost to being a position constituted not at all here, it is not a matter of masochism, we have left completely to one side today our conception of masochism because it poses to many problems. But a conception that is in a way hypochondriacal of the function of the word of the analyst.

Naturally, everything culminates, he made it culminate admirably at this difficulty that you raised: should the analyst be the faithful servant of the truth. This is what I brought up recently in saying that there is no truth about the truth. Would this not allow you to correct what is in a way this simple approximation, this notion, of course, that the psychoanalyst cannot be the faithful servant of the truth for the very good reason that it is not a matter of serving it.

In other words one cannot serve it. It serves itself all on its own. If the analyst has a position to define, it is quite elsewhere than in that of a *Bejahung* which is in effect never anything other than the repetition of a primitive *Bejahung.* It is much more (60) precisely than what was recently introduced during an internal debate in our Ecole to which Green, who had some echos of it, alluded earlier. If precisely the analyst is in a certain position, it is indeed rather in the one which is not at all, I would say that it has been spoken about but not yet elucidated, it is that precisely of the *Verneinung*. .

I am giving you that as a final suggestion. If you wish it is starting from there that we can take up on the fourth Wednesday of January this debate then which has simply begun.

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I think that all the same, as regards Stein, you had enough to satisfy you today. There is no need to add that what has been begun ….... and that I pose a final question: is there not a profound confusion in this kind of prevalent value, this value as an aspirating point that the oral drive has in all our theorising about analysis, does that not come precisely from a fundamental failure to recognise of how orienting, directive there can be in such a vanishing point, the fact that it is forgotten that the demand, whatever it may be is pronounced with the mouth.

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Seminar 5: Wednesday 5 January 1966

I wish you a happy New Year, and my very best wishes, wishes which, after all, in my mouth take on their importance from my being able at least on one point, however limited it may be in terms of your interest, to bring something of myself to it.

We are going to pursue what we have to say this year about the o-object. If you will allow me, taking advantage of this cut and these good wishes, to put the accent here on a certain solemnity, it must be said, we will say that this o-object, a waste object, you have already had enough approaches to it to sense the relevance of this term object, is from a certain perspective and in a certain sense rejected. Yes! Will we not say of it that, as it has been foretold, that the rejected stone must become the corner stone.

It is present everywhere in the practice of analysis. Again, when all is said and done, it can be said that nobody, let us say, knows how to see it. This is not surprising if it has the situation of properties that we give it, the articulation that we are going to try once more to take forward today.

(2) That nobody is able to see it, is linked, as we have already indicated, to the very structure of this world in so far as it appears to be coextensive to the world of vision. A fundamental illusion that from the beginning of our discourse we have tried to shake, to refute when all is said and done.

But that nobody has been able to see it, in the sense that to be able means cannot see it, is no excuse for the fact that no one up to this has been able to conceive of it.

When, as I told you, its apperception is constant in the practice of analysis, so much so and to such a degree and in such a way that, after all, people speak about this so-called re-genital object which people gargle in the backs of their throats, in order to try to typify in terms of it this unjust, imperfect apprehension of a reality, the grasp and the form of which is supposed to be linked to the simple effect of maturation whose pillars are undoubtedly firm in analysis, namely, the link that exists between this maturation and something which must be called by its name, a truth.

This truth is that this maturation is linked to sex even though all of this must appear to be swamped in a confusion between sex and a certain sexual morality which no doubt is not without a certain intimate link to sex since the morality emerges from it which, for want of being sufficiently well delineated, makes of this pre-genital object the function of a myth in which everything is lost, in which the essential of what it can and ought to bring us as regards the most radical function of the structure of the subject, as (3) it emerges from analysis and abolishes for ever a certain conception of knowledge.

People speak a lot about it then and not simply in the sense that, as I said, is quite excusable, namely, to see it, for we will see what the conditions are for a thing to be

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seen and without knowing even the sense of what is said about it, since this position, not to know what one is saying is properly speaking what must be turned around in analysis, what must be forced in analysis, what ensures that analysis opens up a new path to the progress of knowledge, one can say that the analyst fails in his mission by not progressing precisely to where the key point is on which his efforts should be brought to bear.

I have come a long way to come to grips with this central point and one of the useful things about the use of this algebra which means that I pinpoint this object by the letter (o), one of the functions of this use of algebraic notation is that it allows us to follow its thread, like a golden thread from the first steps of this approach that constitutes my discourse and that, striving from the first to come to grips with this key point, this dividing point of what is analysis and of what is not, having begun with the mirror stage and the function of narcissism, if from the beginning I called this alienating image around which there is grounded this fundamental miscognition which is called the ego. (4) I did not call it for example i(S) , the image of the "*self*", which would have been quite enough, it would only have been an image of it. What had to be demonstrated there, that it was only imaginary, had already been sufficiently indicated. From the beginning, I called it i(o) which is in short superfluous, a reduplication, the indication that there is in identification a fundamental alienation. We miscognise (*meconnaissons*) ourselves to be ego. (o) is in brackets, at the heart of this notation. To such an extent that already, it is here that it is indicated that there is something other, the (o), precisely at the heart of this capture and which is its true reason.

There is then a double error, the error of the mirage of identification and the miscognition of what is at the heart of this mirage and which really sustains it.

I am indicating it today for the first time I believe, you will see it returning today in what follows of my discourse, (o), a reference point, a simple indication, I am saying it, I am not here giving the reason for it, and you will see it emerging, (o) is of the order of the real.

I had the satisfaction, during my closed seminar, of seeing gathered together by someone, up to this very day and date, covering, I would say, almost the whole field of what I have articulated about the (o) and posing, covering the questions that this gathering together left open.

(5) I am indicating in passing, for all of those whom I cannot, for reasons of the relationship of mass, of the relationship between quantity and quality as it is put elsewhere, from the fact that the quality of an audience changes when it is too big and too dense. I apologise to those that I am not convening to these tasks which I hope will take on the tone of an exchange, of a team work. The one of which I am speaking, which is due to Mr. André Green, has undoubtedly not yet begun the dialogue, except with me, since it was a matter of saying what I had said up to now about the o-object in order to question me, and its relevance is sufficient here to impose on me the adequacy, otherwise why would he question me, the relevance of the questions and of the ones to which I hope to be able this year to give a satisfying response. Moreover let all of those who do not attend these seminars know that here the solution to the problem of communication is simple. It is sufficient for this sort of

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little report to be diffused in order for it in fact to serve everyone as a reference for what I may be able to insert into it in terms of replies in what follows. In other cases where the dialogue is a debate, articulations allowing there to be resumed in a protocol in the same way it will be simply a question of a lapse of time which will remain between what can be articulated as an outline, a grid obtained of this discussion which will be communicated in the same way. It is in no way a question therefore of (6) esoterics in what is called the closed seminar, of something which is not available to everybody.

I began, therefore, today from these two terms recalled in the discourse to which I am alluding, namely, that it is from the beginning of my critical furrow in the articulation of analysis that we see there being highlighted, there appearing, what now culminates at the articulation of the o-object.

The ego, a function of miscognition. It is important to see the degree to which, yielding, with respect to what is called, before Freud, let us never take as a reference point the function of the real, the important thing is to underline …..... constitutive of the world. Contrary to what is affirmed, the ego in Freud is not the function of the real even if it plays a role in the affirmation of the reality principle which is not at all the same thing.

The ego is the apparatus of perception-consciousness: *Warnehmungsbewusstsein*. Now, if from all time the problem of knowledge turns and twists around the critique of perception, can we not from our place as analysts precisely, glimpse something which is betrayed in philosophical discourse itself, for always, when all is said and done, there lie about in the discourse the keys of what it refutes, and the senseless discourse of analysts about the pre-genital object allows us also to bring out, from here and there, (7) the articulations which will allow us to situate it correctly.

It is this indeed which ought to allow us to predict this striking thing which ought to have been for a long time a part of our patrimony because it is at the disposition of all.

Who does not know how limited the intelligence of man is, and in the first place those who, guided precisely by the progress of the scientific context, set about studying intelligence where it ought to be grasped: at the level of animals.

That we are already rewarded when we know how to determine the level of intelligence by deviation behaviour (*conduite de détour*). I ask you, as regards intelligence, what further degree man attains. There is a further degree. There is what is found at the level of the first Thalesian articulation, from Thales, namely, that something, some measure, is determined with respect to something else as being, with respect to this other thing, in the same proportion as a third to a fourth. And this is strictly the limit of human intelligence. For it is the only one, the one that it grasps in its hands, all the rest of what we place in this domain of intelligence, and specifically what culminates in our science, is the effect of this relationship, of this grasp on something that I call the signifier whose import, whose function, whose combination surpasses in its results what the subject who handles it can predict because, contrary to (8) what is said, it is not experience that makes knowledge progress. It is the impasses in which the subject is put because of being determined I would say by the jaws of the signifier. If we grasp proportion, measure, to the point of thinking - and no doubt

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quite correctly - that this notion of measure and that it is man himself, man has made himself, says the pre-Socratic, the world is made in the measure of man. Of course, since man is already measure and is nothing but that.

The signifier - I tried to articulate it for you during these last lectures - is not measure, it is precisely this something which by entering into the real introduces into it the ell *(l'or[l'aune?])* of measure which some people have called and still call actual infinity.

But let us take things up again. What is signified by what I mean when I repeat, after having said it so often, that what falsifies perception as I might say is consciousness. What does this strange falsification depend on? If from all time I attached so much importance to grasping it in the psychological register, at the level of the mirror stage, it is because this is to look for it in its place, but this place goes a long way. The mirror is only defined, only exists because of this surface which divides, in order to renew it, a three dimensional space, a space that we hold to be real and which undoubtedly is so.

(9) I do not have to contest it here. I make my way like you, and I have not got the tiniest foot in the stirrup of the Taoist journey, straddling some dragon or other across the worlds. But precisely. What does that mean? Not that this specular image does not have this value of error and of miscognition when already, a symmetry which is described as bilateral, along a saggital plane, did not characterise in any case the being who is interested in it. One has a right and a left, which are obviously not the same but which behave as if they were the same, generally speaking, two ears, two eyes, a lock of hair no doubt a little crossways but in any case one can put the crease in the middle. One has two legs, one has organs for the most part in pairs, but not in every case, and when one looks at it a little more closely, namely, when one opens things up, inside, it is a little bit more twisted, but this is not seen from the outside.

Man, just like a dragon-fly, has a symmetrical appearance. It is an accident of this species, an accident of appearance, as the philosophers say, that something is due first of all to this capture which is described as that of the mirror stage.

Is there not, it is the question that we can pose ourselves here, a more profound reason for what appears to be this accident because of this capture? It is here, of course that a (10) more penetrating, more attentive look at forms might put us on the track for, first of all, not all living beings are marked by this bilateral symmetry. And what is more neither are we, for it is enough to open our bellies to be convinced of it.

What is more, we have interested ourselves in the forms that are taking shape, in embryology, and here the more we advance, the more do we remark what I called earlier, what I designated by the term of torsion, or again of disparity, or again - I wanted to use the excellent English word - *oddity*, always dominates in what constitutes the transformation, the passage from one stage to the other.

In the year when I traced out on the blackboard the first uses of these shapes (*formes*) to which I am now going to come in topology and in which I tried to inscribe for the edification of my listeners and to indicate to them what was to be extracted from them in terms of resonance, as an analogy, to introduce them to what I must now show them as being properly the structure of reality, and not some simply the figure. How often

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have they not being struck, when I showed them the bladder of some eviscerated torus or cross-cap, to see in a way emerging on the blackboard a figure which might pass at first sight for a cross-section of the brain, for example, with such striking involuted shapes, even in macroscopy, or, on the contrary, a stage of the embryo, after all, open (11) a book on embryology, the first one you come across, look at things at the level where an egg is already at a rather advanced stage of division and presents us with what could be called the primitive line, and then a little point which is called the Hensen knot, after all, it is all the same rather striking that this resembles very exactly what I have several times drawn for you under the abbreviated name of a *chapeau croisé*, of a cross-cap.

I am not going, even for an instant, to slip into this philosophy of nature. This is not what is involved. In any case, we can only find there an indication of something which indicates that in the shapes of life there is something like a kind of obligation to simulate a more fundamental structure.

But what this simply indicates to us and what ought to be retained, is that it is not legitimate to reduce the body, in the proper sense of this term, namely, what we are, and nothing else - we are bodies - to reduce the dimensions of the body to what in the final analysis of philosophical reflection Descartes called extension.

In the theory of knowledge, this extension is there from all time. It is there from Aristotle. It is there at the beginning of the thought that is called by the name - I hate these idiocies - of Western.

(12) It is that of a homogeneous, metrical, three-dimensional space and, at the beginning, what this implies is an unlimited sphere. No doubt, but constituted all the same by a sphere. Later, I hope, I am going to be able to specify what is meant by this correct apprehension of a homogeneous three-dimensional space and how it is identified to the sphere which is always limited even if it can be extended.

It is around this apprehension of extension that thinking about the real, that of being (*l'étant*) as Mr Heidegger says, was organised. This sphere was the supreme and the final being: the unmoved mover.

Nothing changed with Cartesian space. This extension was simply pushed by him to its final consequences, namely, that there belongs to it by right everything that is body and knowledge of the body. That is why the physics of the *Passions of the soul* fails in Descartes, because no passion can be an affection of extension, the affect of extension.

No doubt, there is here something which has always been very seductive. We are going to see that the structure of this spherical space is at the origin of this function of the mirror put at the source of the knowledge relationship. The one who is at the centre of the sphere, namely monstrously reflected in its inner lining, a microcosm responding to a macrocosm.

(13) Thus the conception of knowledge as *adequatio* of this mysterious central point which is the subject to this periphery of the object, is once and for all established as an immense deception about the sense of the problem. Descartes was not suspicious

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enough about the evil God. He thinks he can tame him at the level of the "I think". It is at the level of extension that he succumbs to him.

But, in fact, this deception is not necessarily a deception. It is just as much a limit, a limit imposed by God, precisely. In any case in *Genesis*, more or less in the fifth verse - I did not have the time to verify it before coming here - that of the *berechit bara heloim,* there is here from all time an explosive term which, naturally, did not escape rabinical commentaries.

It is the one that St Jerome translated by *firmamemtum,* which is not that bad. The firmament of the world. It is beyond this that God said: "You shall not pass". For do not forget that up to a recent epoch the celestial vault was the firmest thing that existed. That has not changed. It is not at all because people imagine that one can sail further and further into it that it is any less firm. It is a matter of a different kind of limit in thinking from the one which articulates this in Hebrew characters: *rakia. Rakia* separates the upper waters from the lower waters. It was understood that for the (14) upper waters access was forbidden. It is not just because we stroll around in space with - a point which, incidentally, I appreciate, I do not reduce it to nothing - that we stroll around space with charming satellites which is important, it is that with the help of this something which is the signifier and its combinatorial, we are in procession of possibilities which go beyond those of metric space. It is from the moment that we are capable of conceiving as possible, I am not saying as real, worlds of six, seven, eight, as many as you wish, dimensions, that we have broken through the *rakia*, the firmament. And do not think that these are jokes, namely, things into which one can put whatever one wishes on the pretext that it is unreal. People believe, like that, that they can extrapolate. People have studied the sphere in four, then in five, then in six dimensions. So you say to yourself that it is good. You discover a little law like that which appears to be consistent. So then you think that complexity is always going to be added, in a way, to itself and that you can treat this as you might treat a series. Not at all. When you get to the seventh dimension, God knows why it must be said, He is still the only one, no doubt, at the moment for the mathematicians do not know, there is a problem. The seven-dimensional sphere creates unbelievable difficulties.

These are not things that we will have the space to pause on here. But it is in order to (15) signal to you, in return, in retreat, the sense of what I am saying when I say: the real is the impossible. That means precisely what remains affirmed in the *firmamentum*, which means that speculating in the most valid, in the most real fashion, for your sphere in seven dimensions is real, it resists you, it does not do what you mathematicians wish. Just as in the first steps of Pythagorus the number which he did not have the *naiveté* to believe to be a product of the human spirit created a difficulty for him simply by doing the minimal thing, by beginning to make use of it to measure something, by making a square. Immediately number emerges from our first effect as irrational. In this way this is what the real denounces. It is the impossible. It is that one cannot make of it what one wishes. I drew as much teaching from this first experience as from that of the seven-dimensional sphere which is only there to amuse you and not to be a planet *(faire "planète*").

So then, the question is how we can give an account of the fact, which has always been within hand's reach, of something which is, all the same, also in the real but is

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not at all as the theory of knowledge depicts it, namely, this central point, this point of convergence, this point of reunion, of fusion, of harmony regarding which one might then ask oneself why there are so many peripetias, avatars, vicissitudes from the time (16) that it has been there, in receiving the macrocosm. This subject, regarding which the first thing that one sees, and we did not have to wait for Freud for that, is that it is, wherever it goes, or wherever it acts like a subject divided from itself, how can it be inscribed in a world of spherical topology.

Our only grace is to be at the moment when, perhaps, having broken through the *rakia*, the *firmamentum,* above all in the speculation of mathematicians, we are able to give to space, to the extension of the real a different structure than that of the three-dimensional sphere.

Of course, there was a time when I made you take, in a certain report, that of Rome, the first steps which consist in clearly marking the difference between this ego which believes itself to be me and what it requires from us, fascinated by this secret fainting point which is the true point of perspective beyond the specular image which fascinates the one who here recognises himself, looks at himself, the difference there is between this and the "I" of the word and of discourse, of the full word as I put it, the one which engages itself in this wish that I can scarcely repeat with a straight face, "I am your wife" or again "your husband" or indeed "your pupil". For my part, I never alluded to this dimension except in the form of the *tu* that, of course, any person who is not absolutely senseless, that one only receives this sort of message from the other and in (17) an inverted form, this is what I first of all insisted on. In my seminar on President Schreber I oscillated for a long time in connection with what I called the perforating power of the consecrating affirmation, I oscillated for a long time around the:
"tu es celui qui me suivra (s)" which, a benefit of the Gods' in French, benefits from the amphibology of the second and third person of the future, you do not know whether you should write *vras* or *vra.*

One can say that, but as regards the person who says:*"je suis celui qui te suivrait*". You poor idiot. How far will you follow me? Up to the point that you lose track of me or to the point that you will feel the urge to give me a belt of a *tabuse* on the head.

The fragility of this foundational word is one of those that humans make use of in order to try to exist. It is something about which we can only begin to speak with some seriousness because we know that this announcing "I" is the one which is really divided, namely, that in any discourse, the "I" which announces, the "I" which speaks, goes beyond what is said. The so-called full word, the first element in my initiation, is here only a derisory figure of the following: it is that beyond everything that is articulated something speaks that we have restored in all its truth.

(18) I, the truth, speak in your stumbling discourse, in your shaky commitments which see no further than the end of your nose, to the subject, the "I", does not know at all that he is. The subject of the "I" speaks, speaks somewhere that I called the locus of the Other and here is what always obliges us to take into account a figure, a structure, which is other than punctual and which organises the articulation of the subject. This is what leads us to consider as closely as possible what ought to be taken up again in terms of this trace, of this cut, of this something which our presence in the world

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introduces as a furrow, as a graph, as a writing, in the sense that it is more original than anything that is going to emerge, in the sense that a writing exists already before serving the writing of the word.

It is here that, in order to make our leap, we take a step backwards. We do not hope to break through the *rakia* in three dimensions. Perhaps by being satisfied with two, these two which always serve us, after all, and since, ever since the time that we have been struggling with this problem of what is meant by the fact that there should be a world of beings which believe that they are thinking, that it is on a parchment paper, of material or of toilet paper that we write it. What is it, what does it mean that there should be in the world beings who believe that they are thinking.

(19) So then, we are going to take a function already illustrated by a title given to one of his collections by one of the curious spirits of our time. Raymond Queneau, to give him his name, called one of his volumes: *Bord* [Edge].

Since it is a matter of frontiers, since it is a matter of limits, and it means nothing else, *bord*, means limit or border, let us try to grasp the frontier as being what is really the essence of our business.

In two dimensions, a sheet of paper is the simplest form of the edge. It is the one people have always made use of but to which no one really paid attention before a certain Henri Poincaré. Already someone named Popilius and many others also…

And if you do that? Is it an edge? Precisely not, but that does not mean that it is not something about the edge *(de bord)*. This, this stroke has two edges or more exactly, by convention, we will call the two points which link it its edge. It is precisely in the measure that what you see here, which is also called a closed cut does not have an edge, precisely, that it is an edge, an edge between what is here and what is there.

What is there, because we have limited ourselves to two dimensions, we are going to (20) call it what it is. We are going to call it a hole. A hole in what? In a two-dimensional surface. We are going to see what happens to a two-dimensional surface which starting from what we said earlier and which is there from all time, is a sphere - I did not say a globe, a sphere - what results in the surface from the establishment of this hole.

In order to see it, this hole for its part being stable from the beginning of the experiment, let us make other ones. It is easy to see that these other holes on which we give ourselves the liberty of movement, the liberty to experiment, what will happen to the other holes from the fact that there is a hole. All these other holes can be reduced to being this subject-point of which I spoke earlier.

All of them. Because suppose I do the following. It is the same thing. However large the sphere may be I can enlarge this hole infinitely so that it is going to be reduced to a simple point at the opposite pole. This means that on a surface determined by this edge that we call the edge of a disc, that this surface is in reality a sphere, all these holes that we may make are infinitely reducible to a point and, what is more, they are all concentric, I mean that, even this one that I am making outside the first cut, in appearance, can, by a regular translation, be brought to the position of this one here.

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(21) For this it is enough to pass through what I earlier called the opposite pole of the sphere.

And nevertheless, something has changed since we made the two holes. The fact is that from now on, if we continue to make holes, suppose that we make one like that, here, it is a reducible hole, one reducible to a point. But if we make one that is concentric to the first hole and concentric also to the second here, this hole here, has no chance of escaping which would allow it to be reduced to a point. It is irreducible. Whether one restricts it or one enlarges it, it meets up with the limit of the edge constituted by two holes. I repeat, I am saying edge in the singular in order to say that, at a subsequent stage of the experiment in the sphere, I defined two holes and this is what I call the edge. Which means what? The fact is that a surface which is drawn here, which is easy for you to recognise even if it appears to you - because you can call it a disc - holed, indeed something like a Chinese jade, you can see that it is exactly equivalent here to what is called a cylinder.

With the cylinder, we are already entering into a completely different type of surface, for I am presenting you here my sphere with two holes. I told you earlier that it was altogether equivalent whether these holes seemed or did not seem to be concentric, (22) as I might say, one on the other, it is exactly the same thing *(le même tabac),* moreover, as you see, this kind of stomach that I drew here is a cylinder, it is enough for me to fit the ends together, namely, a cylinder, with two holes to the two preceding holes which makes four of them, and it is enough for me to stitch them together to make emerge the figure of what is called quite simply in the language of young ladies, a ring. It is necessary of course to preserve the image of it as hollow to see what sort of surface we are dealing with.

For a long time I have made use of this torus to articulate many things, and you will rediscover the trace of it in the last section of the Rome report. This torus, all by itself, and I would almost say, intuitively, introduces something that is essential to allow us to emerge from the spherical image of space and of extension.

Because, of course, we do not imagine that we have drawn here the true three-dimensional torus. This two-dimensional torus for its part is, undoubtedly, an edge, namely, that in the measure that we have abolished the edges of the cylinder it is one without an edge and, as surface, it becomes the edge of something which is its interior and its exterior.
But it is a simple figure which ought not to give us the idea that, analogously to what can happen to space, to spherical space, if we suppose it in its breadth, in its spatial thickness, as I might say, to make myself understood to an audience that is not (23) necessarily accustomed to using mathematical formulae, that it is twisted onto itself in a toric fashion.

In any case, by taking it, which is enough for us, as a model in two dimensions we see that here, that there is concerning what we can draw in terms of an edge of one dimension, a cut, a difference of species of the clearest kind between the circles that can be reduced to being only a point and those that are going to find themselves in a way shackled, hampered by the fact of being a circle, for example, traced out like this

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right along the torus or even here, to buckle it in what we will call, if you wish, its thickness as a ring. These are irreducible.

I will show it to you, I will reproduce something that I already articulated the year of my seminar on *Identification*, that the torus gives us a particularly exemplary model to image the knot, the link, which exists between demand and desire. For this it is enough to declare, as a convention, but a convention whose profound motivation you will see when I have come back to the following figures, that the demand must, at the same time, loop its loop around the inside, the inside of the ring, of this ring which the torus is, and come to buckle onto itself without having crossed itself. Here is more or less the figure that you obtain. However you strip it down, it is a figure like the following: (24) the central void of the ring being here.

You can then easily remark that in drawing such a loop, you are obliged to make at least two loops, I would say, around the inner void of the ring, and in order that these two loops should join together to make a circuit around the other void, namely, at least two D's plus one d or inversely two d's plus a big D.

In other words, a desire always presupposes at least two demands and a demand always presupposes at least two desires. This is what I articulated at one time and what I will take up again, I am only recalling it here to highlight the element to which we are going to be able to return in a way that removes its opacity from this figure.

It is important to go further before I leave you. Namely, to show you what constitutes, properly speaking, the discovery of this topology which is absolutely essential to allow us to conceive of the link which exists between this furrow of the subject and everything operational that we can attach to it, and specifically the mirage that is constituted by this something which has remained on the seat of the trousers of psychoanalysis as a remainder of the old theory of knowledge and nothing else, the idea of autoerotic fusion, of the supposed primordial unity of the thinking being, since (25) to think, it is a matter in the unconscious, with the one who carries it as if it were not sufficient that embryology should show us that it is from the egg itself that there emerge these envelopes which are only one, which are contiguous with the tissues of the embryo which are made of the same original matter, as if, from the first outlines of Freud, the very ones which it seems we have never being able to go beyond, it was not obvious in the *Wolfman* remember, the Wolfman was born with a caul. Is this not of capital importance in the very special structure of the subject, this fact that he carries with him even after the steps have been taken, the final steps of Freud's analysis, this sort of debris which is the envelope, this clouding over, this veil, this something because of which he senses himself as separated from reality. Does not everything carry the trace that in the primitive situation of the individual that what is involved is indeed his enclosure, his envelopment, his being closed off within himself, even if he is found, with respect to another organism, in a position which the physiologists have absolutely not failed to recognise, which is not symbiosis but parasitism, that what is involved in the so-called primal fusion is, on the contrary, this something which is for the subject an ideal that is always sought of the recuperation of what constituted his (26) closedness and not his primitive openness. This is a first stage of the confusion but this does not mean, of course, that we ought to stop here and believe like Leibniz in the monad, for in effect, if this complement always remains to be sought by us as a reparation that is never reached, something we have effectively the traces of in the

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clinic, it nevertheless remains that the subject is open, and that what it is a matter of finding is precisely a limit, an edge, an edge of such a kind that it is not one, namely, an edge, which allows us to trace out on its surface something which is constituted as an edge but which itself is not an edge.

You can, you have already seen being traced out on the torus the inverted figure eight. It cuts the torus and opens it in a certain twisted fashion but which leaves it in a single piece. And this reconstituted torus is an edge. There is an inside and an outside. We can, then, draw a model and a teaching from a certain function of the edge which is inscribed on something which is an edge. We need an edge-function determining effects analogous to those that I have described on the surface in terms of a difference, of a differentiation between the edges which can subsequently be traced out. We need this on something which is not the true edge ..... ,namely, which does not determine the inside or the outside. It is precisely what is given to us by the figure that I earlier called …..... on a sheet, this sort of *bonnet croisé* or cross-cap.

This figure, I would say, is too advanced with respect to what we have to say. What I want to underline today, before leaving you, is the following, which is that one of the two surfaces which are produced when, on this surface which is falsely closed, falsely open, is what I have called the cross-cap, we trace out the same inverted eight edge that I earlier described.

We obtain two surfaces, but two surfaces which are distinct from one another: namely one is a disc and the other is a Moebius strip. Now, what this is going to allow us to obtain, subsequently, are the edges of a different structure.

Every edge which is traced on the Moebius strip will give qualities which are absolutely distinct from those which are traced on the disc. And, nevertheless, I will tell you which the next time. And, nevertheless, this disc is found to be the irreducible correlative, once we are dealing with the world of the real in three dimensions, of the world marked with the sign of the impossible with respect to our topological structures. This disc occupies a determining function with respect to what is the most (28) original, the Moebius strip.

In this figuration, what does the Moebius strip represent? This is what we are going to be able to illustrate the next time in showing what it is, namely, a pure and simple cut, namely, a necessary support for us to have an exact structuring of the function of the subject, of the subject in so far as this ausculatory power, this taking of the signifier into itself, which means that the subject is necessarily divided and which necessitates that any cross-checking within itself does nothing else, even when pushed to its most extreme, than reproduce its own structure, more and more hidden.

But existence is determined by its function in the third dimension or, more exactly, in the real in which it exists. The disc, I will show it to you, is found in a position of necessarily crossing, it as real, this figure which is that of the Moebius strip in so far as it makes the subject possible for us.

This crossing of the strip without a front or a back, allows us to give a sufficient figuation to the subject as divided, this crossing, is precisely the division of the subject from itself, at the centre, at the heart of the subject. There is this point which is not a

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point, which is not without leaving to the central object; underline this not without (*pas sans*) which is the same as the one that I made use of for the genesis of anxiety.

(29) This function of this object with respect to the world of objects, we will designate the next time. It has a name. It is called value *(la valeur).* Nothing in the world of objects could be retained as value if there were not this more original thing, which is that there is a certain object which is called the o-object whose value has a name: truth- value.

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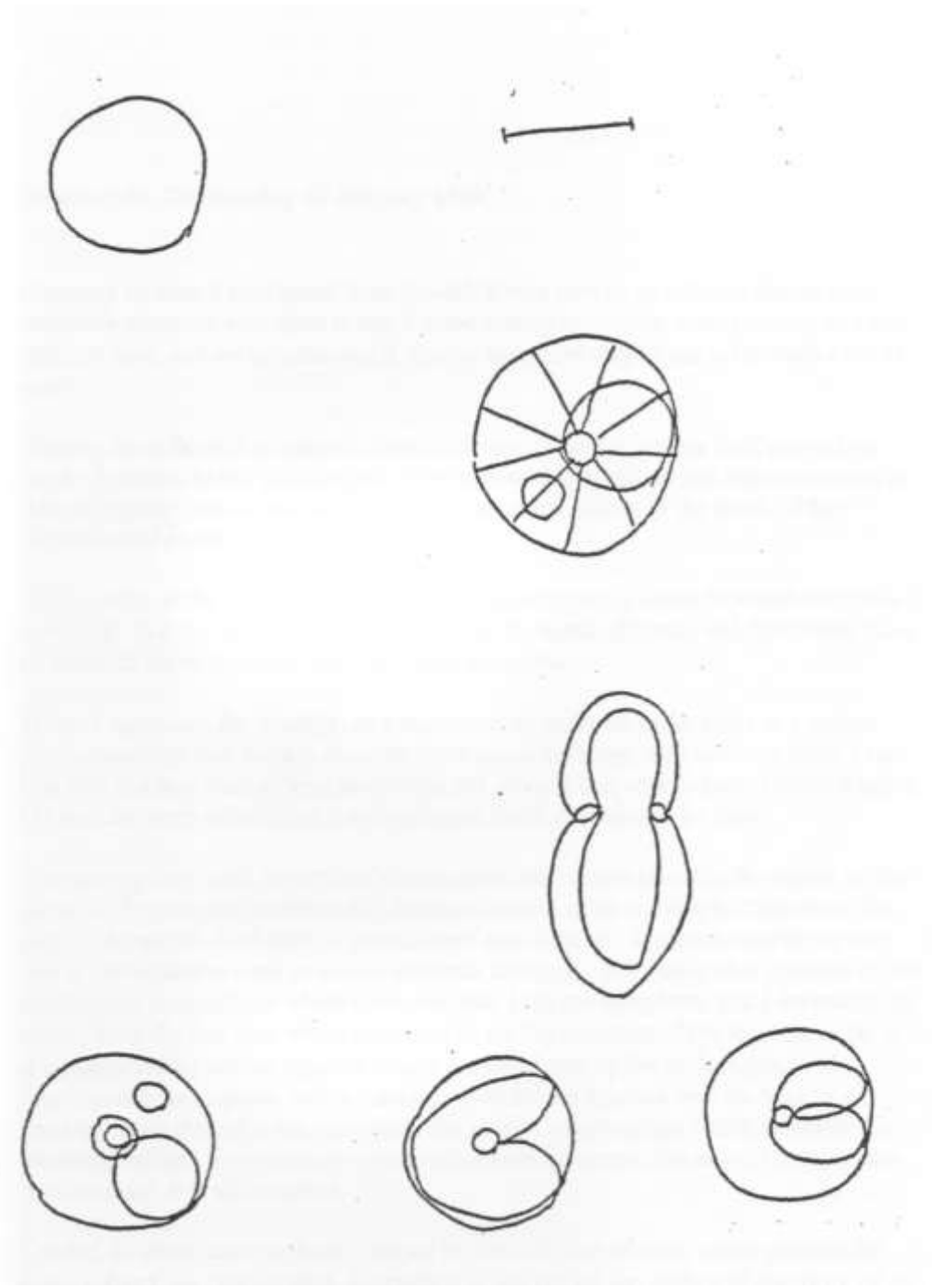

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Seminar 6: Wednesday 12 January 1966

Contrary to what I have heard, even though it was only as an echo, as having been stated by someone very close to me, I mean among my pupils, theory, theory as I am doing it here, as I am constructing it, theory can in no way be put in the same rank as myth.

Theory, in so far as it is scientific theory, claims to be and proves itself not to be a myth. It claims to be, in the mouth of the one who is speaking and who enunciates it, whose register one cannot but reintegrate into every theory of the word, of the dimension of enunciating beyond enunciation.

That is why, at the origin of theory, it is not superfluous to know in whose name one is speaking. It is not an accident that I speak in the name of Freud, and that others have to speak in the name of the one who bears my name.

When I denounce, for example, as a non-truth, to enounce in the name of a certain phenomenology that there is no other truth about suffering than suffering itself, I say that this is a non-truth as long as one has not proved that what is said in Freud's name, (2) that the truth of suffering is not suffering itself, is shown to be false.

This having been said, the birth of science does not remain eternally dependent on the name of the one who established it, because science does not simply claim not to be part of the structure of myth, it proves itself not to be so. It proves itself in the fact that it demonstrates itself to be of a different structure, and this is what is meant by the topological investigation which is the one that I am pursuing here, that I am taking up today, from the last time where I stopped it, on the structure of the torus, in so far as it is constructed by joining together where the two holes of the surface described topologically as a sphere, which I am sure you do not confuse with the bladder of children, even though it has, of course, the closest relationships with it, whether it is blown up or not. Even when it is reduced in your pocket to the state of being a little handkerchief, it is still a sphere.

I ended, in some haste no doubt, limited by the cut, that of time, which governs for every subject our relationships, I remained at the cut on the surface of the torus, of an edge, a closed edge, the one which establishes minimal repetition there. One circuit does not suffice to deliver up to us the essence of the structure of the torus, one circuit (3) makes there appear the gap between the two holes on which it is constructed, restores, with these two holes, the opening of what we have defined at the beginning as the cylindrical strip, namely, that which, I do not think I have to go back on it today, and that all of those who were here the last time, for the others, good God, too bad, let them inform themselves, I said that two holes, whatever they may be, on the sphere, are always concentric even if they appear, at first sight, to be what is described as exterior. They are always concentric and create what I am drawing here which is called the strip, that we will call by convention here in order to make use of it, the cylindrical strip. Topologically, that it is, I told you the last time, a flat and perforated

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jade, all this because it is a figure in which this strip may appear and effectively appears and not without reason in art, or in what is called art, because it is then at the same time this flat shape, perforated in the centre, or a cylinder. Topologically it is equivalent.

One circuit then on the torus, a cut made in this way, for example, or made like that, has simply as effect to refer it back to the structure of this cylindrical strip, and in no way reveals, let us say, its property.

Two are necessary. Very convenient, in order to support for us the necessity of (4) repetition, for what the torus is going to represent for us, but then, for this cut to close, it is necessary that there should be added to it, let us say, the circuit made around the second circuit, since, what defines the structure of the torus, I mean intuitively, I am uncomfortable myself at having to pursue this discourse in terms which appeal to your eye, to your intuition, about what this hollow ring, this torus is. But let us profit from this support of intuition and, after all, it corresponds to the foundation of the structure for the cut to close having made two circuits around the hole, that we will, if you like, call circular, it is necessary that this cut should also make a circuit around the hole, that we will call - the name is not perhaps the best, but it creates an image, a figure for you here - the central hole.

Conventionally, we are going to represent - I am saying “to represent” in the name of the term representative, whether this representative deserves to be called a representation we will see afterwards - representative has the advantage of saying here what takes the place of *(tenant lieu)* which means that nothing has been decided on the subject of the function of representation and that moreover, perhaps, what here is defined is cut out, is affirmed as cut, may well, until we think better, be taken literally as being really what is involved. That is why the term representative is enough for us for the moment.

Here then is what is going to be produced each time that the repetition, that this circuit (5) which by convention we are going to assimilate to the circuit of demand, 2D, cannot work unless, for the curve to close, the circuit of the central hole is also made, 2D cannot occur without d or, if you make the cut differently, which is also conceivable, I think - I have to do things a little bit more rigorously in order not to be completely ..... - which is also conceivable, 1D (one demand), for the cut to close, implies two circuits around the central circuit that we will call the equivalent of two d’s.

Demand and desire are what, in the course of our long-prepared construction, and when we introduced as being at the heart of analytic experience the terms function and field of speech and of language, what we are going to give the essential share of analytic experience to, not simply its medium, its instrument, its means, but undoubtedly, it must be taken into account that, in the final analysis, there is no other support for analytic experience than this word and this language.

To say, as I might say, that its substance is word and language, is the given upon which we have constructed this first restoration of the sense of Freud. But, of course, this does not say everything as far as we are concerned. What the topology of the torus, (6) finally, comes to support, is imaging for us, is allowing us to intuit this

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divergence produced between the enunciation of the demand and the structure which divides it and which is called desire, it is a way for us to support what is we are given by an experience whose subjective presuppositions need to be deepened.

Psychoanalytic experience, at the stage of structure that we are supporting here by the torus and which is, as I said, the first phase that I gave to my reconstruction of Freudian experience, in a sense, function and sense of the word and of language, is to ground it on the foundation of the pure symbolic.

And if the torus is not enough to account for the dialectic of psychoanalysis itself, if, after all, we may believe ourselves to be obliged to turn on the torus eternally in this cycle of two terms, one duplicated, the other masked, of demand and of desire, if it is necessary that we should make something, as I might put it, of this cut, and if we must see where it leads us, namely, how from this circle, from this edge which, according to the formula proper to every edge, is edgeless (*un sans bord*), namely, will turn always and endlessly around itself, what can one reconstruct by using the cut of the edge?

One moment, let us pause then before leaving it with this structure - you saw me (7) hesitating because I was going to say this shape (*forme*) and, in effect, in so far as we are going to leave it in order to go on to another structure, it is detached as a shape at the moment that it falls - let us pause there for a moment to envisage how it was even possible that we should have been retained, that we are necessarily retained, for it is not a useless detour but an obligatory passage in our construction of the theory if we had to begin again from the function and field of the word and of language as an initial point, this pure symbolic is inscribed in the conditions which bring it about that it is the neurotic, and I would say the modern neurotic, a mode of manifestation of the subject not mythically but historically dated, entered into the reality of history, surely at a certain date, even if it is not dateable, we are not going to go wandering about asking what obsessionels were in the time of the Stoics. For want of documents, we would be prudent to make, eventually, some structurally modified reconstruction of it.

This is not what is important to us. For this modern neurotic ..... is not without a correlation to the emergence of something, of a displacement of the mode of reason in the apprehension of certainty, which is what we have tried to circumscribe around the historical moment of the Cartesian *cogito*. This moment is also inseparable from this other emergence which is called the foundation of science and, at the same time, the intrusion of science into this domain that it completely upsets, that it takes by (8) force, I would say, which is a domain which has a perfectly articulated name which is called that of the relationship to truth. The limits, the links to the difficulties, as I might put it, of the function of the subject, in so far as it is introduced in this way, in this relationship to truth, have a status that I tried simply to sketch out for you in so far as it is useful for our purposes, for without it, it is impossible to conceive either of the existence as such and as structure of the modern neurotic which, even though he does not know it, is coextensive with this presence of the subject of science, not to mention the fact that in as much as its clinical and therapeutic status is given to it by psycho- analysis, however paradoxical that may appear to you, I affirm that it does not exist, however singular this may appear to you, that it only exists, I would say, in a completed form from the agency of the psychoanalytic clinic and therapeutics.

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To which you are going to reply legitimately, because I said "completed", that psychoanalytic praxis is literally the complement of the symptom. And why not? Since, moreover, it is because of the attention of a certain perspective and a certain fashion of questioning neurotic suffering that, effectively, symptomatology is completed in the treatment, as Freud quite correctly underlined. The fact that it can also be completed elsewhere, namely, even before Freud completed his experiment (*expérience*) there was a certain way for the neurotic to complete his symptoms with (9) Monsieur Janet, does not go against this. It is a matter precisely of what we can retain of the Janetian structure for the constitution of the neurotic as such.

But after all, I am telling you right away that, for all that, you must not vacillate. This kind, I would not say of idealism but of relativism of the patient with respect to his doctor, is something you would do well not to precipitate yourselves into, because this is not at all what I am saying, despite the fact that this is how I was heard because I introduced this function of the psychoanalytic clinic a little prematurely to the meetings of my School, where, of course, I instantly received this interpretation of the complementing of the neurotic by the clinician, and in truth I was hoping for better from those who were listening to me.

It is perhaps also for me a little excessive to expect so much because, moreover, I was forced, for the purposes of my presentation, to go by way of this term completing which, you will see, can be corrected when precisely I will have been able to progress to another structure. It is perhaps a complementing but it is not of a homogeneous order.

This is what the following structure is going to give us, I mean that I am here going to re-introduce the Moebius strip. In any case, let us note clearly already the fundamental disparity that exists. It is already what is tangible, inscribed, living, and which gave rise (10) to the enormous impact of psychoanalysis even in the imbecilic forms in which it was first presented.

When I said that the entry of the mode of the subject established by science overturns and forces the domain of the relationship to truth, you should note that, in giving the floor to the neurotic as such in psychoanalysis, what he represents, to employ my earlier term, is no doubt something which is called, which is manifested in the first place as a demand to know and in so far as this demand is addressed to science.

But what is decisively introduced with psychoanalysis on the side of the one who authorises and supports himself here as being the subject of science, whether he knows or not why, in so far as he engages himself as responsibility, it has to be said, he does not always seem to know it, even though he prides himself on it, but what is original is that the floor is given to the one that I called the neurotic as representative of the truth. The neurotic, in order that psychoanalysis should be established, should have what we will call in the broad sense that I use this term, a sense, that he is, and is nothing other, than the truth which speaks, what I called the truth when I made it say, speaking in its name: "I the truth speak". This is what we are asked to dwell on and in the closest possible manner, for the person that we are listening to represents it. Such is the new (11) dimension, its originality depends on the disparity that this absolutely senseless credit which is given to a manifestation of the word and of language, is given to science in so far precisely as science, in this fundamental displacement which

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establishes it, as such, excludes it for the subject of science for whom it is only a question of suturing the gaps, the openings, the holes through which, as such, there is going to be brought into play this ambiguous, ungraspable, domain clearly located from all time as being the domain of deception (*tromperie*) which is the one where, as such, the truth speaks.

It is to this junction, to this strange connecting up, that it is a question of giving its status. I repeat. Doubtless, I have too many opportunities to see how necessary it is to insist in order to make oneself understood.

The truth as such is prompted, is convoked, no longer has to be grasped as it were in the emergence of the status of science as problematic, but to come, to plead its cause itself at the bar, to pose the problem of its enigma itself in the domain of science, this relationship to truth cannot be eluded. It is not for nothing that we have a logic that is described as modern, a logic called propositional, outlined, one might even say and believe to such a degree that one must also credit, so few are the documents that we have, outlined, I am saying, by the Stoics. It reposes, this logic the manifestation of (12) whose importance you would be wrong to minimise, for even if it comes late in the construction of science, it has occupied in our present pre-occupations this extraordinary place which does nothing less than reveal a problematic which no doubt being resolved *ambulando* rejoins us, not by chance, at the rendezvous where we now find it.

Without even being able to say here anything whatsoever about it to remind those who know the complexity, the richness and the heart rendings, the antinomies that it sets up, I will simply recall as a reference point to what, as I might say, it reduces the function of truth. It is *alethia,* this ambiguous figure of what cannot be revealed without hiding itself, it is the *alethia* whose inaugural function a Heidgegger recalls for us in our thinking and reminds us to return to, not, I must say, without a strange awkwardness on the part of the philosopher, for at the point that we have got to, I would dare to say that we psychoanalysts have more to say about it, yes, more to say about it than Heidgegger says about *Sein* even barred in its relationship to *Wesen.*

Let us leave this to one side for a moment and let us say that *alethia,* that is why I reintroduced it, since the Stoics, is opposed to *alethes,* the true in the neutral, the attribute. What could be meant by the *alethes* of machines, of *alethia*.

(13) Naturally, I am all the same not the one who introduced this question for the first time. Let us say that the whole of logic, propositional, modern logic that you can, by opening any manual, whether it is called symbolic or not, you will see there being constituted the operation of what is called the logical operation, conjunction, for example, disjunction, implication, reciprocal implication, exclusion. Nowhere will you find there, I tell you this in passing, the logical function that I introduced last year, the year before last under the name of alienation.

I will come back to this.

These operations are grounded, are defined, in a fashion that is called purely formal starting from the possibility of qualifying a statement as *alethes*, true or false, in other

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words giving it a truth value. The most common logic, the one with a truth which has always lasted and which, perhaps, has a certain title for lasting, is is a bi-valent logic.

A statement is true or false. There are strong reasons for presuming that this way of tackling things is altogether inadequate as, moreover, it must be recognised, the modern logicians have perceived, hence their attempt to construct a multi-valent logic.

(14) Well, it is not easy, as you know. And, moreover, I would say provisionally that it does not interest us. The interesting thing is to know simply that one constructs a logic on the bi-valent foundation, *alethes,* true or not, and that one can construct something which is not at all limited to topology, the true is true, the false is false which can go on for pages and pages and which, of course, while being closely related to topology, nevertheless constructs something where some ground is gained. It is exactly the same problem as that which is, one might say, mathematics is a topology from a certain logician point of view but it remains nonetheless that it is a conquest, an edifice ..... which precisely is fruitful and whose exploits, whose apogees, whose developments, call them what you wish, are altogether substantial, existent. With regard to the premises, one has effectively constructed something: one has won some knowledge.

The reference to truth is, in other words, sutured here by the pure and simple reference to value. That people demand more of it when people ask what it is to be true, of course, the thinking described as positivist or neo-positivist will go so far as to have recourse to a referent (*référence*), but this recourse to a referent, in so far as it is supposed to be experience or anything whatsoever which is supposed to be of the order of an experiential objectality, will always be insufficient, as it is easy to demonstrate every time this path is taken.

(15) For one cannot, with this simple reference, explain either the source or the parts or the development or the crises of the whole scientific construction.

We have to remind ourselves that by simply having a sound logic we cannot completely eliminate the simple relationship to being in the Aristotelian sense which says that the truth is to say of what is, that it is, and that what is not, does not exist; that the false is to say that what is, is not, and that what is not, is.

People have tried for a way out ..... of this reference to being, and so we have Russell's way out, that to the event which is something quite different to an object. Russell's wager, whose sole reference is that of the event, namely, the spatio-temporal intersection, this something that we can call an encounter and, henceforth, one defines the true as the probability of a certain event, the false as the probability of an impossible event.

There is only one ..... to this theory, to this register, which is that there is, and it is here that we bring into play again, we analysts, a sort of encounter which is the one of which I spoke to you the first year that I spoke here immediately after repetition, it is precisely the encounter with the truth.

It is impossible then to eliminate this dimension which I describe as the locus of the (16) Other where everything that is articulated as word, is posed as true, even and

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including the lie, the dimension of the lie, contrary to that of the feint, being precisely to have the power of affirming itself as truth. In the dimension of the truth, namely the totality of what enters into our field as a symbolic event, the truth before being either true or false, according to criteria which as I indicated to you are not simple to define since they always bring in from one side, the question of being, and from the other, that of the encounter precisely with what is in question, with the truth.

And the truth comes into play, restores and articulates itself as a primal fiction around which there is going to have to emerge a certain order of coordinates which are there in order not to forget the structure before anything whatsoever can be pursued validly in terms of its dialectic, it is this that is in question.

It is here that what is pursued as a work, as an embrace, as a weaving together, on this point that I called the connecting point between truth and knowledge, becomes fascinating. If last year we spent so long and made so much of the themes of Frege, it is because he attempts a solution - one among others, but this one is especially revelatory for us because it goes in a radical direction - when we saw or glimpsed, (17) thanks to some of those who were willing to respond to me here, what we saw is that at the level of the conception of the concept, everything is drawn to the side where what is going to have to take on the value or not of truth, is marked by a certain solicitation, reduction, limitation which is properly that of the fact that he was able to extract his theory of number from it, and that if one looks closely at it, the Fregian concept entirely centred on that to which one can give a proper name. Which means for us, with the critique that we made of it last year, here I apologise to those who were not participants at it, by which there is revealed the specifically subjective character in the sense of the structure that we ourselves give to the term subject, of what, for a Frege, *qua* logician of science, is what characterises as such the object of science.

I know that here I am only approaching a point which would require a development. If there is to be a development it can only be around a question, if there can be a question about it, and this can be done at my closed seminar.

But I have indicated enough about it to connect up with what I ended on the last time, namely, that there is a problem about this Fregian function precisely of the *Bedeutungswert* which is *Warheitswert,* and that if there is a problem about this truth value it is here perhaps that you will see in fact that we can contribute something which gives to it, which designates in it, in a fashion renewed by our experience, the true (18) secret, it is of the order of the o-object.
It is at the level of the o-object *qua* object that there falls the apprehension of knowledge, that we are, as men of science, rejoined by the question of the truth.

This is hidden because the o-object is not even seen in the suture of the subject as it is constructed in modern logic, and that it is precisely this that our experience forces us to restore in it where theory, precisely, not alone claims but proves itself to be superior to myth and that it is only starting from there that there can be given its status, a status that can be accounted for and not simply noted, as the fact of being divided, its status precisely to the subject whose sense cannot escape from this division.

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It is here that there is introduced the structure of the projective plane in so far as this surface is different one and allows us to respond differently to what is cut out as object and as subject. I already showed you this Moebius strip in the course of the past years and already I gave you the indications which put you on the path of its use for us in the structure. I already, once upon a time, constructed the Moebius strip before you, you know how its made. You take a strip of the type of those that I call a cylindrical strip (19) and giving it a half-twist, stick it to itself, in this way one makes this Moebius strip which has only a single surface and which does not have a front or a back. And already, the first time that I introduced it, I alluded to the way in which this surface can be as it were the lining of a garment, how can it be or not be reduplicated? Well then, notice here something essential in the structure of the sphere. This structure of the sphere on which all thinking lives, at least that which emerged up to the coming into play of science, in other words cosmological thinking which, of course, continues to claim its rights even in science among those who do not know what they are talking about.

It is not enough to have revolutionary pretensions in social matters to escape certain impasses concerning precisely what is, nevertheless, at the root of the bringing into play of any revolution whatsoever, namely, the subject. But I will not evoke here a dialogue that, perhaps, I already evoked with one of my Soviet confreres. I was able to see and to confirm since, by information that I would ask you to believe is plentiful, that in the Union of Socialist Republics people are still Aristotelian, namely, that the cosmology there is no different, namely, that the world is a sphere, that the sphere can be reduplicated within by another sphere and so on, like onion skins.

(20) Every relationship of the subject to the object is the relationship of one of these little spheres to a sphere which surrounds it, and the necessity for a final sphere, even though it is not formulated, is all the same implicit in the whole style of thinking about reality.

Now, whatever one thinks of it, this is something which can indeed be painted in colours that are ridiculously called, I again heard there being used not long ago the term realist, to designate the myth, as it was said, of reality. In effect, it is indeed a mythical reality that is involved but to call that realist has something hallucinatory about it, since the history of philosophy demands that we describe as realist something quite different. It is an affair of the quarrel of universals.

As to whether or not Freud fell into the trap of taking reality as the last or the second last or any one of these skins, namely, that by believing there is a world whose final sphere, as I might say, is immobile, whether it is a mover (*motrice*) or not, I think that this is to put forward something that is completely unwarranted for, if this is how things were, Freud would not have opposed the pleasure principle and the reality principle. But it is still a fact whose consequences nobody has up to the present taken (21) cognisance of, namely, what this supposes as regards structure. I repeat that one sees the degree to which there is solidary at once with idealism and a certain false realism which is the realism, I will not say of common sense, for common sense is unplumbable, of the sense precisely of people who believe themselves to be an ego, an ego which knows, and who construct a theory of knowledge. The fact is that as long as the structure is made up of these spheres which envelope one another, whatever may be the order in which they are staggered, we find ourselves precisely before this

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figure between us, a subjective sphere, and every other sphere - there will always be a certain number of intermediary spheres, idea, the idea of an idea, representation, representation of representation, idea of representation, and that even beyond the final sphere, let us say it is the sphere of the phenomenon, we can perhaps admit the existence of a thing in itself, namely, of a beyond of the final sphere. It is around this that people have revolved from all time. And this is the impasse of the theory of knowledge.

The difference between this structure and the structure of the sphere and that of the Moebius strip that I am presenting to you, that if we set about making the lining (*doublure)* of this Moebius strip, which is the one that I am holding here in my right hand, when we have made a circuit, this is what I told you when I presented it to you, (22) we will be on the other side of the strip, it would seem then that it is necessary to cross it as I told you the first time in order to give it a lining like the lining of this coat or the lining of the sphere earlier, a lining which is closed in one circuit, but if you make two of them, you completely envelope it, namely, that you no longer need to make another one. The Moebius strip is completely duplicated by this element which, moreover, is linked onto it. Concatenation, an essential term to give not its metaphorical but concrete value to the signifying chain, only what duplicates this Moebius strip is a surface which does not at all have the same properties. It is a surface which, if I undo it, I believe for the moment we have nothing more to do with it, if I undo this Moebius strip which was buckled on to it, have as a property being able, as I might say, doubling itself, sticking one of its faces, let us call it the blue face in order not to be talking about the front and the back, it has no front and back, it has a front and a back once I have chosen it, the blue face is stuck to itself and the red face since I repeat, has a front and back, is entirely in what is seen on the outside.

(23) Here then is something, a surface which has as a property the primitive Moebius strip in which these two others were made, it is a Moebius strip that you take, construct, in the ordinary fashion, by turning it in this way, if you cut it in a way that is equidistant from its edge, if you make a cut in it, you will have two loops, you cut them in the centre, of another Moebius surface, the one that I showed you earlier and at the periphery a strip, a strip which it, for its part, is not a Moebius strip, it is a strip with two faces, it is not a cylindrical strip for, as you see, it has all the same a shape and a rather bizarre shape, I am showing you this shape, it is very easy to find, here it makes two circuits and in this case here it ..... one. Good. Verify it. This strip is a strip that is applicable to the surface of the torus. There you are, I am passing it around so that you can look at it.
So then, what have we got? We have a Moebius strip of such a kind that, being subjected to a cut, a typical cut in a regular fashion equidistant from its edge, one ends up with something which is the Moebius strip which still remains, something which envelopes it completely by making a double circuit. This something is not a Moebius strip, it is something which envelopes the Moebius strip, from which this something has (25) emerged in the measure that this strip results from a division of the Moebius strip. This strip, in so far as it is both linked onto the Moebius strip but, when being isolated from it, is applicable to the torus, this strip, is what for us, structurally, can be best applied to what I define for you as being the subject in so far as the subject is barred.

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The subject in so far as it is, on the one hand something which envelopes itself or again this something which can suffice to manifest itself in this simple reduplication, for there is no need even for the Moebius strip to remain isolated in the centre and to be linked onto this strip which is, as you have seen, from this strip simply by making it reduplicate itself, I can reconstruct the structure of a Moebius strip.

This is going to serve us as a support to define the function of the subject. Something which will have this essential property to define the conjunction of identity and difference. Here is what appears to us to be most appropriate to support for us structurally the function of the subject. You will only see details, refinements in it in the measure that I continue, namely, what you will be able to see in it in a more intimate fashion about this relationship of the function of the subject to that of the signifier. And the distance which separates in one case and the other this relationship to the conjunction of identity and of difference. And now I point out to you that if the Moebius strip is itself the effect of a cut in another kind of surface, which to facilitate things for you I did not introduce otherwise, and that I earlier called the projective plane, it is at the cost of leaving here the residue of a fall, a discal one, which I take as a support for the o-object in so far as it is on its fall that there depends the advent of the Moebius strip and that its reintegration modifies it in its nature as discal fall, namely, ensures that it has neither front nor back and it is here that we rediscover the definition of the o-object as non-specular.

It is in so far as, as you see, it is re-sutured, it is re-situated in its place with respect to the subject in the Moebius strip that it has the property of becoming the something different whose laws are radically different from those of any hole made in the sphere which moreover defines subject or object. It is a quite special object. And last night, I regret that the person who introduced this term has now left, given the time, we were told about *retournement* [turning inside-out, back-to-front, reversal]. No use of a term such as that can be held to be legitimate, except by being properly speaking spoilt, if it does not emerge from this structural reference, namely, that what can be qualified as reversal has a completely different import according to the structures. What good was it for me to have hammered out for years the difference between the real, the imaginary (27) and the symbolic which you have now seen incarnated, I think that you sense this, that earlier in my successive spheres, you have seen the way the imaginary finds its place there. The imaginary is always the intermediary sphere between one sphere and the other. Does the imaginary only have this sense or can it have a different one? How can one speak in a univocal fashion about reversal, how can one give a sense of it?

A glove, let us take the oldest way of presenting things, one which is already in Kant. A glove that is turned inside-out and a glove in the mirror are not the same thing. A glove that is turned inside-out is in the real, a glove in the mirror is in the imaginary in so far as you take the image of the glove in the mirror as the image of the glove which is inside. Starting from there you can clearly see, for our shapes, the ones that I can draw for you on the blackboard, it is the same thing because they have a front and a back and because they have an axis of symmetry.

But for the projective plane and for the Moebius strip, which do not have a front or a back or a plane of symmetry even though they are divided in two, what you have in the mirror is to be seriously questioned. As regards what you have in the real, try

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again to reverse a Moebius strip, you can reverse it as much as you wish, it will still have the (28) same twist for in effect this Moebius strip has a twist which is proper to it and it is in this way that one might believe that it is specular for it turns either to the right or to the left.

This is precisely why I do not say that the Moebius strip is not specular, we will define the status of its proper specularity, we will see that this will lead us to certain consequences.

What is important is this false complementarity which means that we have on the one hand a Moebius strip which, for us, is the support and structure of the subject in as far as we divide it, if we divide it in the middle we will no longer have this residue of the Moebius strip linked up as I showed you earlier, but we will still have it in the form precisely of this cut and what does it matter the essential will be obtained, namely, the strip that we will call toric applicable onto the torus and which it is capable of restoring, by applying onto itself the Moebius strip.

This, for us, structures $. Something which is conjoined to this $ that we call (o), which is the non-specular (o), in so far as it is knitted together, in so far as it is considered as the support of this $ of the subject, on the other hand, having fallen from it, it loses all privileges and literally leaves the subject alone, without the recourse of this support, this support is forgotten and has disappeared.

(29) This is where I wanted to lead you to today. I apologise for not having taken this presentation further but I have thought for a long time that by not literally chewing over every step, I was taking the risk of leaving the way open to a relapse into the psycho-cosmological thinking which is precisely what our experience is going to put an end to.

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Seminar 7: Wednesday 19 January 1966

Today is going to be spent on a sort of test whose plan I would first of all like to tell you about.

It is first of all a kind of sampling of a method. Someone is going to speak to you - not me, the person to whom I gave the responsibility - someone is going to speak to you about a clarification contributed to a particular point of Dante's *Divine Comedy* by someone who, obviously, was guided by the suggestions that he received from knowing about my mirror stage.

Of course this is not what gave him his knowledge of Dante. Monsieur Dragonetti, the author of the article which you are going to be given an account of, is an eminent Romance scholar whose very broad knowledge of Dante is, precisely, what gives its value to the mapping out that he conducts of the function of the mirror in such a style that it allows him to contribute on consciousness its fundamental function, notations, as one might say, that are completely unrelated to what was circulating in his time. This is what is going to be presented to you.

(2) What is the interest of it? It is to indicate the sense in which there could be carried out this sampling of structure, which would allow there to be given an order, a different order than one reposing on the pre-conceptions of linear evolution, of historical evolution, or more exactly of this introduction into history of this notion of evolution which completely falsifies it.

In short, this is a kind of first model, a model borrowed from what is effectively produced in reality, but which is, in a way, confined to the works of specialists, a model, as one might say, if you wish, of historical method as it can be guided by structuralist considerations which guide us here in so far as they are employed with psychoanalytic references. This will be an opportunity to recall them.

This will at the same time put me in a position of reminding you of certain acquisitions of my previous teaching in so far as I am going to have to put them very soon into communication with what I continue to develop for you in terms of fundamental topological structures in so far as they are for us guiding structures.

I will speak to you about something else which I will leave as a surprise but about which I indicate to you now that while being a structuralist analysis, from another point of view of the data of what has been culturally acquired - you will see later what I (3) chose - at some centuries distance from Dante, I will find myself lead here to one of these turning points of the introduction, of the highlighting, of the bringing out of a structural given which will be, especially for us analysts, of the greatest utility as a foundation, in order to try to order things that are completely confused because collapsed together, crushed, as I might say, by the different planes that it invokes on the subject of masochism.

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So then, I give the floor to Madame le Docteur Parisot, who is going to give you an account of this article on a particular point of the *Divine Comedy,* namely, this presence of specularity, of what Dante thinks about it.

Madame le Docteur Parisot

Dragonetti's work is a work that he published in the *Revue des Etudes Italiennes* number 102, September 1965. The title that he gave to his work was; *Dante et Narcisse ou les faux monnayeurs de l'image.*

In the *Divine Comedy* there are two allusions and only two to the myth of Narcissus. The first in Hell where the name of Narcissus is mentioned; the second in Paradise which is only treated in the form of a periphrasis.

The intention of Roger Dragonetti is, by means of a commentary on these two passages, to put forward that the substance of this myth is ceaselessly present in the *Divine Comedy* and that it was Dante's inner monster.

The first allusion, that in Hell, is found in Canto XXX; this allusion itself is around verse 128. It figures in the course of the episode about the counterfeiters *(faux monnayeurs).* Here is the episode: Dante sees someone with dropsy, with a protruding stomach and limbs out of proportion: it is Master Adam. The obsessive image of the streams of Casentino only increase the thirst that consumes him. Stuck to him there are two shades, one is the wife of Potiphar, and the other is Sinon the Greek of Troy.

(5) Master Adam and Sinon are exchanging blows in a quarrel that has been provoked by the former who had called the Greek a cheat. Here is the text, translated, naturally:

"The Greek said: 'May the thirst that cracks your tongue
Be torture to you, likewise the festering water
That makes your belly such a hedge around you".

To which the counterfeiter responds:

"So it is open wide,
Your mouth to speak ill as it used to do;
If I am thirsty and am bursting with fluid,
You have that burning and that pain in the head,
For you to lick the mirror of Narcissus,
You would not need much of an invitation"

The first point is the mirror of Narcissus. This mirror of Narcissus cannot be taken as a simple metaphor to designate fresh water. It is not fresh water designated in more beautiful language. Moreover, it would be altogether contrary to Dante's idea of poetry. Here then it is a metaphor but it is the metamorphosis of this water, the metamorphosis of this water into the mirror of Narcissus. Dante does not speak then only of water, but of a hardened reflecting surface which sends back the image of a Narcissus fascinated by his shadow. Thus the fresh water is effectively this water but

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a water transmuted into a mirror, a water changed into an image of water. Starting from there the reply of Master Adam takes on its sense. One could translate it as follows: "your fever makes you so thirsty that you would not need to be asked very often to (6) start licking an image of water."

The second point is the allegorical sense which agrees with the literal reading of this verse. It is necessary therefore to look for the symbolic sense of the sin of Master Adam and the symbolic sense of this deformity of dropsy.

Master Adam is then a counterfeiter whose sin appears of particular gravity given the place that he is in Hell.

What had he done? On the instigation of the Counts of Romena he fabricated florins. These florins had the right weight, but their alloy - they contained an alloy - the florin was in principle a coin of pure gold. These are not of pure gold. They include three carats of metal.

Before investigating the sense of this sin, it would be well to situate it in what one can call the moral order of Hell which is presented in Canto XI, presented through the mouth of Virgil. It is said that fraud on the one hand presupposes malice, and on the other hand it is said that fraud is an evil proper to man.

The first point: fraud, falsifying, presupposes malice. Malice is manifested in the deliberate choice of an evil that one pursues. It falsifies the very principle which grounds every virtue on the good, by dissimulating itself under the appearance of a (7) good. It strikes God in what is closest to his essence, namely reason. If reason renders man similar to God it is also through it that this similarity, in the analysis, is adulterated in its reflection, that of an absolute Other, a semblance of the absolute.

Reason, captive of its own image of the good, seduced by its reflection, makes itself like its reflection by choosing itself as such, the absolute sense of metamorphosis. In this sense, what draws into its hollow the being of everything, draws in a double that resembles it where nothing ever is presented or slips away, under the appearance of an absolute.

It is therefore by its latency that malice is formidable, and the proper of malice is that it never appears. This is no interpretation. It is in the text. In fact it is in Canto XI.

The second thing that is said in this Canto is that fraud is the evil proper to man. It is Virgil who expresses this in a quite striking short-cut and in a single verse, verse 52 of this Canto XI: "Fraud, by which every conscience is bitten."

In other words every conscience as such is bitten by fraud. There is in every man something fundamentally false of which conscience bears the marks. What is involved is the primal fault, the primal fault is separation, it is the bite. And in the fault of every conscience in remorse, there is this "*mor*" of the bite *(morsure).* It is Adam's bite which provoked this separation, this break-up, this break-up of reason.

Therefore every conscience is already ruptured, contaminated as it is by the original falsification. The counterfeiter is called Adam. Naturally, the name of this personage

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recalls that of the first man and preceding the text that I read at the beginning, the text about the allusion to Narcissus, all the themes of the original sin (*faute*) are present.

Now, by taking into account this symbolic *rapprochement,* and in the same register of interpretations, we are going to see in what sense counterfeit money is an image of the original sin. This florin as I told you was a florin of pure gold, nature still remaining at that time the referent. This florin of pure gold is recognised as pure money by name and by effigy, name and effigy which are the signs of truth. But this power of signifying naturally belongs to the one who has authority to authenticate the sign, namely the prince. The prince is guilty if he corrupts the sign. The golden florin is marked by the effigy of John the Baptist. This effigy as sign is then the reminder of a divine order that has to be safeguarded. When the coin is counterfeit, the authentic relationship of the sign and to the material is destroyed. The symbol, perverted into a (9) fiction, fears an image of integrity in which there can be imbedded all the abuses of fraud. Fraud falsifies therefore the truth of the coin and at the same time falsifies the coin of truth. The coin of truth is a holy thing. It adulterates, therefore, the divine order; it adulterates the relationship to God, the relationship to the source which founds the natural order of values.

As regards the symbolic sense, now from the deformity of Master Adam one can always prove it in the same register. The *res publica* has from all time been compared to a body, the body social that one employs even now, and the effects provoked on this body by the disproportionate swelling of the unwarranted riches of the prince leads to images of deformity. The prince is a member of this body. He becomes a sort of monster disproportionately swollen, swollen to the detriment of the rest of the body, namely of the community. There results a monstrous disproportion of this community. And the deformity of Master Adam, this dropsy, a dropsy which means that he has an enormous body, an enormous wound. This wound rises before his eyes and it creates a screen before his eyes, it blinds him, this wound is full of a water that is stagnant because of the riches of the prince. Because it is stagnant, it is corrupt. Because it is stagnant it can no longer circulate in the rest of the body of Master Adam and it leads then to this dryness in which the mouth and the lips are fixed. It involves this constant (10) thirst and also this thinness of the lower members which can no longer support Master Adam, this enormous blind wound.

Taking account of these remarks one might ask oneself what Master Adam represents, what Sinon represents and what is meant by this quarrel, namely, what is the relationship between Master Adam and Sinon which ends in this marvellous allusion.

First of all Master Adam. The scene unfolds then in the perspective of the latent malice from which there has emerged the fraudulent art of the first man. This evil proper to man is symbolised then by dropsy. It is a water illness, a perversion of man at the source, and it is a weighty illness which immobilises Adam in a grotesque position. Here is the brand of his radical impotence. The image of the streams of Casentino, Casentino is a place close to Romena, and Romena is the locus of the sin. It is there that Adam counterfeited his coin. This image and this source that has been destroyed torments Adam by its reflection, and the fact that, nevertheless, he is ready to sacrifice this image to see its instigators. He is ready to sacrifice this reflection to see the prince, namely, the one who is the cause of his spiritual destruction, namely,

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malice itself. And the desire to see the malice is equalled only by the radical impotence (11) Adam to see this shade, because he does not want to be moved.

If one remembers that what is proper to malice is its latency one can clearly understand that what Adam pursues, the principle of evil, which is preferable to the spring which quenches his thirst, slips away and that it is nothing other than the refusal to be, hence the radical slipping away.

And Master Adam bears it in himself. He bears it in himself as a void swollen into a dream of the absolute. And what his desire pursues is nothing other, when all is said and done, than Master Adam himself with respect to whom there forever escapes the principle of evil as the Other of the absolute.

In sacrificing the coin, a holy thing, sin has thus provoked the perversion of the sign, metamorphosed the symbol into a fiction, soiled the source of justice, falsified the link of love between men as God wishes it. There was therefore a choice. But this choice, nevertheless, is still love but a different love, it is the one that man brings back entirely onto himself through the detour of an image, an image which feigns love for the other. It is a doubling of the absolute which is missing by a fictitious absolute.

So much for Master Adam. Now what about Sinon? By falsifying the indication of the divine principle Master Adam engages the whole community in a sort of adventure between being and appearance. This is what emerges from the words of Sinon. Sinon (12) says the following: “and if I spoke falsely, well then you, you falsified the coin and I am here for a single crime, and you for more crimes than anyone else even if he were the demon”.

Sinon comes on the scene when the coin, the word of truth is already falsified. He makes use of the product of Master Adam. For the falsification of the word of truth, Sinon, for his part, is not responsible. He comes into play at the level of the effects of the act of Master Adam. The perverted word has brought about an unlimited falsification of language and it is language that Sinon abuses.

Sinon’s crime is to have pretended to be a deserter from the Greek camp and to have made the Trojans decide to bring the wooden horse into their city. In principle that is it. Which presents him, therefore, as a cheat and a cheat by tactics. But his crime is a double one. It is then cheating as a tactic, but he is also implicated, like in the crime of Judas, as a perjurer in a crime of universal notoriety. He is a pretender who feigns to be what he is not and a perjurer because the language that he abuses is an offence against the gods.

The relationship now between Master Adam and Sinon. Sinon occupies a very particular position in this scene. He is stuck in a very close way to the person with dropsy and he seems to be of one body with him. Master Adam cannot see him and (13) Master Adam does not know the origin of their close relationship. Everything happens as if, once it has been put into circulation, the false word, like false money, so much resembles the authentic that the true becomes unrecognisable and invisible. The sign which carries the guarantee, effaces, in its apparent legality, the traces of its suspect origin to such a degree and so well that the counterfeiter himself is not capable of identifying the product of his own artifice.

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And the quarrel breaks out at the moment that Sinon hears himself being presented by Master Adam with qualification of a cheat. Master Adam says: "the cheat, Sinon the Greek of Troy."

He hears himself, then, on the one hand being denounced in the eyes of the world and, on the other hand, he hears himself being denounced in the attitude of his latency. And in the extraordinarily rapid rhythm of the altercation, one after another the two simulators are placed in the position of accused and accuser and in no way recognise in the malice of the other their own simulation and even play the game of truth. The word truth returns three times in Adam's mouth.

All of this seems to symbolises two phases of the movement of self-fascination of the fraudulent conscience. On the one hand Master Adam, even though riveted to an image of water, an image which does not have for him an autonomous power because he prefers to this reflection the vision of the principle of evil and, on the other hand, (14) Sinon, who is not interested in the principle of evil since he does not feel himself responsible for this perversion. Sinon, for his part, has then nothing to prefer to an image of water. The spring, annihilated in the language that he has feigned, works so well on this fiction that it has acquired an autonomous power for Sinon. For Sinon the true spring has become this image of water with which dreaming consciousness is capable of slaking its thirst. Hence the reflection of Master Adam to Sinon that to get you to lick the mirror of Narcissus not many words would be needed.

Sinon represents in the movement of fraud, the culminating point, the radical perversion where malice encloses the falsifier in his image which has become for him the truth itself. The image of nothing. One could probably say that it is to the absoluteness of this image that the pervert is fixed.

As for the way Dante is involved in this story, Dante himself tells us. He is fascinated by the spectacle of the altercation; he is fascinated by the images of hell. And to break the attachment of his look to error, the intervention of the voice of Virgil is necessary. Virgil says: "now then, be on your guard". From these images Dante has to turn aside, not take these images for reality, and turn away from them, such is the sense that Virgil gives to the path that Dante travels with him. To be on your guard against this danger of capture, is to look to the truth.

(15) Dante in fact wakes up but he will need more than one warning to really awaken.

Here is the text in the translation of Madame Tenaasse-Mongené [here: C H Sisson, World's Classics, Oxford University Press] It is Dante who speaks :

"I turned towards him and was so ashamed
That I am so still when I think about it.
And as one who dreams of something harmful,
Wishes in his dream that he was dreaming,
And so desires what is, as if it were not,
So did I, for I was not able to speak;
I wanted to excuse myself, and was doing so
All the time, and did not think that I was"

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The voice of Virgil brings Dante to the truth, and this in shame. But the awakening is brief. Born to the truth in shame, Dante pauses. He pauses to reflect the shame by wishing to express it. Wishing to express it in order to excuse himself, Dante ceases to see the reality which speaks by itself in the silence of the shame. And his desire for expression means that he fails to recognise this truth even at the moment that it is accomplished. He falls once again into this broken reflection that he assimilates to sleep. This comparison fixes in a way the radical impotence of reason ever to recover the truth by itself. Dante the sleeper desires what is as if it were not. The real fact, namely, the truth speaking by itself through shame, is transmuted into the unreal, the impossibility of speaking. The reality is taken as unreal.

(16) Virgil intervenes at all speed at that moment and he says:

" A lesser shame would erase a greater fault
..... than you have been guilty of;
Therefore let fall any unhappiness".

It is sadness that is involved. And here Virgil puts the accent on what, beyond the shame, weighs on Dante a residue of heaviness, a residue of evil desire.

This second intervention seems to have more of the value of a warning than the first one. One could perhaps say that it is, could be assimilated to an intervention. In any case it appears from it that the conscience that is originally bitten is incapable, left to itself, to react against evil desire, base envy.

Dante closes this Canto XXX with these words of Virgil. He posits Virgil in a way as a memory of presence. Virgil says:
"And take account of the fact that I am here,
If it so happen that fortune should bring you
Where there are people in the like disputes:
To want to hear them is an inferior wish"

Perhaps one could link the place that Virgil occupies to that of the analyst.

The second allusion to the myth of Narcissus is that in *Paradise* in Canto III. The scene takes place in the moonlit heavens. Beatrice has just destroyed the erroneous opinion of Dante about lunar spots. Dante is disposed, at that moment to confess his (17) correction and his new conviction. Here is what Dante says:

"And I, to admit that I was put right
And convinced, as the case indeed required,
Raised my head to address some words to her;
But an apparition appeared, which held me
So closely to itself, to look at it,
That I did not remember my confession.
As through a glass which is transparent and polished,
Or through tranquil and translucent water
Which is not so deep that it is dark at the bottom
The outlines of our faces are reflected

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So faintly, that a pearl on a white forehead
Does not come less readily to our pupils;
So I saw many faces set to speak:
Which made me run into the opposite error
To that which made the man in love with the pool.
The moment I caught sight of them,
Thinking that they were reflected images
I turned my eyes to see whose they were;
And saw nothing and looked back again
Straight at the light which came from my sweet guide
Which, as she smiled, blazed from her holy eyes."

Dante was disposed to confess his being put right but nevertheless he did not speak. The gesture of bringing his face to the front changes intention before a vision which imposed itself with such force that Dante forgot his confession. Dante perceives several faces which like him are ready to speak.

(18) Thinking that he is seeing images in a mirror, he turns his head back in order to see where they are coming from and, seeing nothing, he turns his eyes to the front, straight into the gaze of Beatrice.

In Canto II which comes before, Beatrice had, then, explained to Dante what the lunar spots were and she had told Dante that what appeared to him on the moon as a shadow reveals itself in truth to be also light, but light which is differentiated from the properly luminous part of the moon by a degree of receptivity, or rather of transparency, I believe that the term transparency is more appropriate, a lesser degree of transparency. So then, shadow understood as light and always presented as light appearing against a luminous background, this background being the measure which makes tangible their difference and the possibility of their apparition.

The shades, the souls of Paradise are of course also understood as light, and it is in the divine light that they are lit up and allow the rays to pass through without stopping them.

Dante symbolises God by a mirror in which there are reflected the souls of Paradise. In any case this is Dragonetti's conviction. Not by a silvered mirror but a mirror whose depths remain entirely light. The shades, the transparent images, appear in the realm of light and here reflection is considered in a manner different to terrestrial (19) reflection. Reflection is considered as the action of the direct radiation of divine light through the transparency of celestial bodies and not as the reflection of rays produced by bodies whose opacity forms a screen to this light. Dante clearly specifies that the more or less specular surface on which his vision appears is like that of a crystal or that of waters whose bottom is not obscure, whose bottom is not hidden. The obscure bottom and the hidden bottom is the tain of the mirror of Narcissus. Here the bottom is light. It is not even that there is no bottom. The bottom is something and it is light. It is not a matter then of a mirror on the terrestrial model; it is a matter of pure transparency, of a mirror in the celestial style.

What is more, there are two sorts of images that have appeared: there are the figures that are prepared to speak; these are the admired figures. And these images play into

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one another in such a way as to give the impression that the admired figures, the faces of the spectators blend in with the faces that are prepared to speak.

Dante turns away to break the spell of the mirror and he reveals at the same moment, says Dragonetti, the degree to which he is conscious of the error which perverts such a relationship to images. Dante brought to bear on the vision a gaze captivated by its reflection so that he had changed the transparency into a spectacle. What Dante denounces as "the opposite error to that which made the man in love with the (20) pool" is in the rejection of reason onto itself for having made reality disappear in an image.

To the appeal of the vision, Dante replies by the spontaneous correction of his look in the direction of the eyes of Beatrice. For Dragonetti, Beatrice is the revealed truth who turns Dante away from his fascination with a reason too sure of its rightness. And at Dante's gaze on transparency, to make it become transparent by this gaze itself.

Dragonetti says that to see is to interiorise reason in faith. The danger that threatens Dante is that his reason confronted with transparency, is tempted to represent it instead of presenting itself to it. The reason which wishes to reduce faith to an image of terrestrial reflection would no longer deserve that name, because not only does it transform its object which is essentially light into shade, but that cut off from the true light this reason which ought to be transparent, then becomes itself a shadow projected onto things. Without this I think that Dragonetti sees a Dante whose monster submits to the myth of Narcissus.

But to this interpretation of Dragonetti there can perhaps be added the following, that at the heart of the transparency of Paradise there is no possibility of being a part of it. To remit to God the cause of one's desire is the only possible path. Perhaps this is Dante's phantasy, the transparency of his gaze before the light of God.

(21) After all in Paradise, there is God. All is light and the light comes from God. Light is God's look. And between God and Dante there is Beatrice, Beatrice who is not God, who is not either, I think, the revealed truth of Dragonetti but Beatrice who bears the mark of God. Then there is, still between God and Dante, the vision of Dante onto which he stuck the admired figures. It is from these admired figures whose spell he broke by turning away, it is not from the vision itself, the vision itself pre-existed these admired figures. This vision is not the vision of something indifferent, it is the vision of souls who by compulsion failed in their vows of chastity. It is the vision of God's creatures. Then there is Dante. Now, in Paradise reflection is conceived of as the action of the direct radiation of the divine light through the transparency of celestial bodies. Before God, in the field of God's look, the only presence which is not transparent is Dante, perhaps the earth, an obscure bottom. So then, rather than Dante's narcissism, is it not also a question of the narcissism of God?

Dr Lacan

You have heard a very faithful account of this article by Dragonetti. For those who perhaps got lost because of the very fidelity of these detours that are pursued on this

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occasion by Dragonetti, I am going to try to take things up again once again, and summarise what is involved. At the same time, as I announced, I will show the interest that such a reference has for us.

Our starting point this year was to render coherent what we have to affirm about the function of the o-object in the position of psychoanalysis, in so far as it originates from science and from science in its very particular relationship to truth, science being understood as the modern science born in the seventeenth century, in the century that has been called, because of this mutation in the position of knowledge, the century of genius.

You will see that we are going to come later to another aspect of this apparition of the scientific position in so far as it was eminently incarnated by someone other than Descartes. You will see later who, if you do not guess it already.

There is here then a profound transformation of something which is not eternal, which corresponds to another field, to another interval of history, namely, the relationship prior to the origin of science to what is inscribed in the form that I would (23) not qualify as more general and which I qualified as prior, of the relationships of knowledge and of truth. These relationships of knowledge and of truth are the whole tradition that we are going to call, for greater convenience, the philosophical one.

It is in this topological framework that there is situated the position of a Dante. Let us not go too quickly. I am not saying that Dante is a philosopher even though his relationship to philosophy is such that it was able to be followed, isolated, in a whole work for example by Monsieur Etienne Gilson which is entitled precisely, *Dante et la philosophie,* and which keeps its promise by showing us its insistence, punctuating the life and the work of Dante.

Our topology here, in the sense that I understand it, that I manipulate it, that I introduce you to it has no other function than to allow there to be mapped out these transformations of the relationships of knowledge and of truth. If Dante is chosen by us today to be presented to you, within his most outstanding poetic creation, that of *The divine comedy* it is for a reason which for us determines it, as I might say, in two phases:

1) He introduces here the presence of the Christian religious construction and the thesis that is latent, as one might say, in this choice, is the following: that at the origin of the Christian religious tradition there is this introduction into the (24) field of the relationships of knowledge and of truth of a certain God to whom we will come later in order to define him in his origin, in his Jewish origin, in so far as his presence is the crystallising point of this fundamental, inaugural axis for us which is the very one of the introduction of science, I am saying, I already sufficiently indicated, I am repeating it here with more force and I am going to justify it later, the introduction of this God of the Jews is the pivotal point which, even though He remained throughout the centuries enrobed in a certain philosophical framework of the relationship of truth and of knowledge, ends up by emerging, by coming to light, by the surprising consequence that the position of science is established from the very work that this function of the God of the Jews established within these relationships of truth and of knowledge.

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This would not have been enough to make us choose Dante because, in fact, any theologian of the medieval epoch would have been able to serve us in the same way as an example to situate what the philosophical tradition involves in terms of the relationships of knowledge and of truth. Dante is also a poet, and I am going to try to tell you how it is *qua* poet that he manifests in a fashion that is not only outstanding but choice, the emergence, the analytical point where, in what he articulates, there is manifested more than he realises, and where he testifies in a certain fashion that I am now going to situate, I mean give the reasons, why he is able to testify, where he (25) testifies in a fashion that is in a way anticipatory for us, to the presence in the relationships of knowledge and of truth of what, properly this year, is promoted by me as the function of the o-object. This is the interest, in effect, of these two passages in so far as they are chosen, signaled ..... criticised in Dragonetti, that they are signaled by the presence of the mirror which allows us, for our part, to pick out there the manifest designation as such of the o-object, whose name here is the look.

Let us take things up again. Dante of course, far from escaping, falls completely, as you know, even if you have hardly ever opened it, you know enough about *The divine comedy* to know that this work is inscribed in what I call the cosmological module, a cosmology of the beyond, it is, nonetheless, a cosmology and one which borrows its framework from the cosmology established, let us say, starting from the first Greek philosophers raised to its first model by Aristotle, and transmitted as a form, as a framework for the thinking of the physicists of the time, the Ptolemaic system for example, however limited it may be to the observation of the functioning of the real world as it is presented, namely, to account for the relationships of the movement of the stars and to establish it as consistent with the existence of this world which is that of the terrestrial world which is ordered as you know in function of this topology of (26) the sphere, of a series of spheres including one another which are the planetary spheres before arriving at the upper sphere, the fixed stars. It is a matter of accounting for their functioning, such is the start of ancient physics, and it is in this that we can, in short, qualify as an introduction to a science as such in human knowledge, it is in this that we can qualify the Ancients as having taken the first historically acceptable, transmissible, steps which served as primary matter for the revolution which was called the Copernican revolution, itself an introduction to the quite different Newtonian revolution.

This cosmological world which also includes coordinations of divers parts of the teaching, let us say, of the university (*universitas*) is the fundamental reference point, the framework in which there developed what was teaching up to a certain date, cosmology therefore with its psychological, ideological, even ontological coordinates, it is in this framework that Dante's thinking is situated.

What is it, if not a presentation to us of the first split between truth and knowledge. And it is thus indeed that all mediaeval thinking which, far from being a negligible thinking, rejected, in a way, however radical I present to you the cut established by the (27) birth of modern science is illuminating for us as regards this topology which we have to take into account in the situation which is re-established because of the question posed by analytic experience, this thematic of the opposition between truth and knowledge is inscribed throughout the whole development of medieval thinking in what is called the doctrine of the double truth. No thinker, no teacher of this epoch

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escaped the question of this double truth. It is the real foundation of this split which had necessarily to be made by the teachers of this epoch between the field of reason and that of revelation.

It is nothing other than the fact that there is a supposed field of constructive knowledge in the ideal, deductively, concerning the structure of the world and then something else which we only know from a supernatural source and from the word of this other who is God.

This distinction is so fundamental in the structure of everything that is articulated at this epoch that we ought to pay tribute to it, to the eminent rationality of the thinking of those that I call these noble teachers *(enseigneurs)* in order not to call them by this disparaging name of scholastics.

Let us admire the firmness of the reason of these people who, supposedly caught up in suggestions which are no longer anything but obscurantist for us, which come to us (28) from religion, did not prevent them from maintaining the rights of strict reason.

Do I need to recall that St Thomas, if I remember correctly, even after - I am not sure but it does not matter - with reference, this is the point of reference for us, the condemnation in 1277 emanating from the Sorbonne of Bishop Tempier which condemns him precisely for having supported, according to the ecclesiastical authorities, more than was proper for the Christian conscience, the distinction between these two domains, finds himself compared in the same condemnation to the followers of Averroes and to the teaching for example of a Siger de Brabant from whom, nevertheless, he is distinguished by all sort of modalities. Still, this did not prevent St Thomas from writing something whose title at least you know: *De aeternitate mundi contra murmerantes,* namely, against what had already provoked his condemnation, namely, to maintain that from the point of view of strict reason the world ought to be eternal and that only revelation indicates to us that it is nothing of the kind.

Is not this distinction between truth and knowledge there to remind us that already the whole organisation of knowledge, of knowledge in so far as it is supported by this body which up to the inauguration of the position of modern science imposes itself as what can be said about knowledge, namely the cosmological, theological, psychological, ontological body, that this body is posited as this ambiguous style of approach which is at the same time a fundamental distancing from what is involved in (29) the truth. I would almost say that for centuries knowledge is pursued as a defence against the truth.

The truth, if you wish, in order to make you sense it, being here to be mapped out, registered, as the question about the most essential relationship to the subject, namely, his relationship to birth and death in so far as everything that concerns him is in the interval between them.

This is the question of the truth in the sense that I define its truth as the one who says: "I the truth speak." It is about this, it is about our last ends that the truth has something to say to us.

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Observe here that the articulation of the very term of interval is even a poetic metaphor from a sombre quarter (*bord*), and is here to remind us of the very topological term, properly speaking the one that I designate as being the function of the edge (*bord*). Everything happens as if, to take our reference point, which is not a metaphor, from the opposition in modern logic between the open set and the closed set, namely, for centuries did not protect and protect so well the line of choosing uniquely the side of the open set. You know that a closed set is what is conceived as uniting the open set with its limit in so far as topologically it is distinguished from it.

(30) Limit, frontier, edge, these are the terms that are involved. The part of truth, is that of our limit between birth and death, a limit in so far as the subject, and everything that is involved in knowledge, is the open set which is comprised in the interval.

This is why the poet in any case, and even if he does not know it, henceforth reintroduces that what he knows and what he manipulates is the structure of language and not simply the word, reintroduces in any case this topology of the edge and the articulation of the structure.

It is through this that Dante, here, goes beyond what he borrows from the structure of knowledge of his time, and precisely in the measure of this ambiguity introduced because of the fact that he projects the cosmological forms of knowledge of his time into the field of what I call the final ends. It is having made of the cosmology of his time what he intends to sing about a beyond of knowledge, the proper field of truth, that he manages to bring out in two points chosen by a commentator, a commentator who is no doubt guided, enlightened,because he is situated in the modern epoch, allows us to pick out in two points, one of Hell, the other of Paradise, constellations that I would qualify as typical,which are properly speaking those of the relationship which links the word *qua* situated in the field of the Other as support of the truth and (31) the necessary, co-ordinated emergence of the o-object, that at the same point, a point whose depth I did not point out to you precisely enough earlier, even in deepest Hell, there are found joined together the one who made of the word the support of deception and the one who made counterfeit money.

What a strange conjunction, what a singular necessity, for which we have to invoke the poetic double view, the fact is that Dante as regards whom, undoubtedly, the simple reading of this poem, marked by so many strange things, imposes on us the idea that he knows what he is saying, however strange there appear to us at every moment these excesses with regard to our common sense.

It is not for nothing, it is not by chance that there are joined together to dialogue, in this sort of singular embrace the one who fundamentally has lied, and not in just any fashion whatsoever, has not simply lied, simply cheated, as you were told earlier but cheated in deceiving the trust of the other. This conjunction of the lie as an attack on faith with the fact of the reference of this something which is not truth but truth value, this thing whose reference it is so necessary to introduce when it is a matter of the truth, that when Heidegger proposes to us the *von Wesen der Wahrheit,* he also speaks about a coin.

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What is meant by a counterfeit coin? Is not this counterfeit coin also something which (32) is. It is what it is. It is not false. It is false only with respect to this function that conjoins truth to value. This indeed is why what is involved around this o-object is this function of the value of truth.

It is here that it is striking, singular, to see that Dante in this vulgar dispute set up between two of the damned, makes there emerge from the mouth of one, precisely of the counterfeiter who addresses himself to the traitor, that he would still be quite content to succumb to this sort of miscognition which would be to lick the mirror of Narcissus, namely, to believe himself to be at least himself, while what is involved is precisely, as was very well articulated for you earlier, that at the very essence of himself which is to be a liar, he has lost it and that he can no longer rediscover any form of his being except by desiring passionately to rediscover before him the one who led him into his fundamental lie.

In the same way, arriving in Paradise what Dante calls the error contrary to that of Narcissus is, apprehending oneself as something which is presented to him as an appearance, not to be able to do otherwise than turn around to see what he sees is the image of.

(33) So that, Dante himself reveals to us that this something which is produced at the limit at which he enters into the field of God, proposes to us objects which are properly speaking what I designate as o-objects. In the field of God, in so far as it is from him that there emanate the substances, nothing that is an object is presented except as a darkening relative, in a way, to a pure look, a transparency against a background of transparency, and that this apparition can only be recognised, for the thinking of reflection, as they say, by seeking, by turning back to behind oneself where the original being may well be.

I happened at one time to write these sentences: “When man, searching the void of thought, advances into the shadowless gleam of imaginary space, abstaining even from expecting what is going to emerge from it, a mirror without lustre shows him a surface in which nothing is reflected.”

The snare in this sentence which concludes one of the chapters of the discourse on psychic causality, is that it seems to appear to say that there is no image, while what it means is that the image reflects nothing, designating here already something that Dante’s text accentuates, and which is properly what I am telling you, that the (o) is not specular. In effect, when it appears against the transparent background of being, it is precisely at the same time to appear as an image and an image of nothing. This is what Dante accentuates in the second appearance of the reference to the mirror, (34) namely, that here where he believes there is a mirror-function, he comes to realise that when the (o) appears, if there is a mirror, there is nothing reflected in it.

Such are the structures that Dante’s poetic construction brings to light and if he is able to do it, it is because he is a poet and that, being a poet, what he rejoins is not so much our science as what we are in the process of constructing for the moment and what I call theory.

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The privilege of this poetic construction with respect to theory, psychoanalytic theory, if you wish, for us simply theory, depends on a privileged relationship which is constructed by means of a certain form of aceticism of the subject with respect to the other. This privileged structure, I defined the year that I gave my seminar on *Ethics*. It is that of courtly love in so far as we can locate in it in an outstanding fashion the terms (I) the ego ideal, (o) the o-object, i(o) the image of o, foundation of the ego, and $.

This privileged structure - I can only here refer to my seminar on ethics those who attended it - is linked to something which is courtly love and which is so important for us to reveal the structures of sublimation.

The centre of Dante's life and of his work is, as someone as well balanced as Monsieur (35) Etienne Gilson underlines strongly, his choice of Beatrice and the existence, the real existence of the person designated in his work by this name. It is in the measure that Dante, as the simple continuation of his work shows, and its origin in the *Vita nuova,* is a poet bound to the technique of courtly love that he finds, that he structures this elective place where there is designated a certain relationship to the other suspended as such on this limit of the field of *jouissance* which I have called the limit of brilliance or of beauty.

It is in so far as j*ouissance* - I am not saying pleasure - is withdrawn from the field of courtly love that a certain configuration is established there which allows a certain equilibrium between truth and knowledge. It is properly what has been called, knowing what he was doing, *le gai savoir*. And in a thousand terms of the field thus defined in which the erudite lose themselves for want of being able to bring to it the slightest philosophical orientation, and here we find a thousand terms which designate for us topological references. A very outstanding term, for example, is the one which is employed to refer to the function of the other and of the beloved other, that the chosen woman is the one - which appears paradoxical to us and it is in Guillaume IX d'Aquitain - the good neighbour. The good neighbour, for me, if I had the time I could insist on it, is here as close as possible to what in the most modern mathematical (36) theory is called the function of neighbourhood. This point is absolutely fundamental to establish this dimension that I introduced earlier of the open set and the closed set.

In the development that I shall have to pursue on the subject of structure, the one that I shall bring in again, after having introduced it last year in the shape that it has for the moment, it is a fact, that is what it is called, it is the Klein bottle, will allow there to be structured in a decisive fashion what I mean here about the relationship of the subject to the other.

It is in so far as Dante, the courtly poet rejoins it, that he can achieve the encounters that I have now, I think, it is too late in any case to know whether I reached them that year, for what follows will prove to me whether I sufficiently mapped out what is in question.

We are coming up to two o'clock and, consequently, what I was not able to do otherwise than announce to you earlier, and which I am now happy at not having said any more about, that way you will not have the feeling of being frustrated, what I

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wanted to talk to you about in a second moment today, I did not have the time to do it, I will do it therefore at my next seminar and because of this, the people who are invited to the third seminar are also then invited, this time, to the fourth seminar.

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Seminar 8: Wednesday 26 January 1966

Dr Lacan: My dear friends, the question is about the existence and the functioning of this closed seminar. What decided me to start it is that I intend that there should be produced at it what is called more or less correctly a dialogue.

This term is vague and is much abused. The dialogue as it may be produced in the framework that I am trying to establish in this closed seminar has nothing privileged about it as compared to any other dialogue.

Quite recently for example someone came to ask me for something, this something was in itself something so exorbitant and impossible to grant that I did not believe for a moment that this was what was being asked of me. The result is that, conceding something that I could quite easily grant, the person before me was convinced that I was granting him something that was in accordance with his desire and which, I repeat, was so much outside the limits of any possibility that I could not even think that this was what he was asking of me.

This is an example that it is easy to relate to many ..... [page 2 missing?].

(3) On the other hand, you have had a presentation by my pupil Conté, a certain number of questions posed by my pupil Melman. These three works, which were very carefully prepared, were sufficient to fill the fourth Wednesday to which I have alluded that of the month of December. It is along the line of things and of what has been promised, that you will hear today a response from Stein. I heard from him yesterday evening, with pleasure, that he was asking me to speak for more than a half an hour; let him speak as long as he wishes provided he leaves half the session for the responses that I hope will manifest themselves.

I apologise then to him if I commit myself, as I do, not to speak today myself. Since it appears that for some people it is the very presence of this word which puts them in a position of not wanting, I am summarising, it is much more complex, to expose themselves to some comparison or other whose reference on such an occasion seems to me to be absolutely at the limit of the analysable. I will succeed or I will not succeed, but it is not at all a question for me of the value of the work that I have done for you here, I will succeed or I will not succeed in getting people to intervene.

So I would ask you now to give your attention to what Stein is going to say to you and I give the floor to him immediately.

Dr Stein: I will take as a starting point for my replies the very precise and very relevant remarks that Conté made the last time and, at the same time, I will be led to respond to a certain number of questions by Melman in order subsequently to take up a problem which concerns very particularly Melman's presentation.

I believe that the centre of Conté's preoccupations in connection with two articles by me which he analysed is found in this notion of a fusional situation. This is what Conté picks out first and what he insists on from the beginning and he quotes two

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sentences of mine, two sentences which figure in the first article. One: "there is a unique it (*ça*) speaking and listening …" and the second : "the patient and the analyst both tend to be in one (*en un*), in which is everything." Starting from there Conté notes that such states are rare. He is thus led to ask me:

Whether I refer these states to a particular neurotic structure,
How I situate these states with respect to the totality of the treatment.
Let us pause then at this first question by Conté.

(5) The response that I hope to provide you with will serve in great measure as a key to all these other questions and to all the other objections which have been made to me. My response could be the following: it is true that I refer these states to a particular structure, to a particular neurotic structure but this particular structure concerns all patients, the totality of all the patients who are capable of transference. I would say again: yes, I refer all of these states to a common structure which is defined by this category that I am going to try to elucidate a little later on. I will reply no, if you have to take the structure as neurotic structure in the strict sense of the term, namely, what distinguishes one form of neurosis from another.

I do not think that these states are only encountered in one of the forms of neurosis that one can distinguish.

As regards the totality of the treatment I must say that the question is a little bit more difficult given that in these works, in the works that I have provided up to now, the totality of the treatment is not yet taken into consideration in terms of what differentiates it in its successive phases. This is not what I have dealt with up to the present. On the contrary what is indeed in question are things, phenomena, which are met from one end to the other of the treatment, namely, that in this first stage I took into consideration something which is common, which concerns not the treatment but (6) which concerns the analytic session whatever it may be, namely, that I try for my personal use in the first place moreover, to find reference points which are valid for the first session of a treatment just as much as for a final one.

The replies that I have thus just given to Conté are in contradiction with the notion that I privilege according to Conté, rare states. I could object to this:

either it does not matter whether these states are rare if they are exemplary
I could also object to this, that I for my part encounter them very frequently.

You will not fail to find that both one and the other response are too subjective to serve as a basis for a discussion and this subjective character of my reply would be still further increased if you recalled that it is a matter here of limit states which cannot be realised, what one can perceive are only the states that can be, this is what I have done, be described as tending more or less towards this limit.

To abandon this too subjective register we must realise that these limit cases in question, which cannot be realised, are by very definition imaginary.

We are thus led to define this imaginary state, which comes back more precisely to (7) defining the sense of the proposition: it speaks. It is in connection with the definition of the sense of this proposition that I am going to be led to present to you an

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argument which is perhaps a little new and which ought to serve us as a key for the principle question which have been raised. I am thus obliged to ask you for a particularly sustained attention for a few moments because I am obliged to state to you a certain number of propositions in a rather arid form.

It is a matter then of elucidating the sense of the proposition: "it speaks". Let us call predication any proposition which designates a subject by means of its predicate. This subject, let us call it the subject of the predicate. As regards the one who is at the origin or the one who is the agent of the predication, the one who really, pronounces the words and who is not habitually represented by one of the terms of the proposition, the one who could precede the proposition by an "I say", let us call him the predicating subject. It is not grammatical, it is a supposed subject. You will note that it is necessary always in the first person.

Now let us agree that in every proposition, the subject of the predicate is the term which designates a particular patient once and for all. In the analytic situation, it is a matter of someone that one habitually calls the patient and if one wished to examine (8) with this method the content of any dialogue whatsoever, the one of which Lacan spoke to you earlier, well then, the patient may be chosen arbitrarily but he ought always to remain the same. The patient must always remain the same whether he is being spoken about, whether he is being spoken to, or whether he speaks himself.

I give you an example to specify things clearly. The patient, let us say in the analytic situation, since in fact this is the only one we will be dealing with today, and I would not go so far as to extrapolate it into every dialogue, the patient says to his psychoanalyst: "you do not respond to my expectations".

The subject of the predicate, contrary to appearances, is contained in the "my". Which means that this sentence, to clarify things, could be transposed : "I am waiting in vain for your response". Here the subject of the predicate is indeed "I". I (predicate) await your response in vain.

To this you may object that the two sentences do not have the same sense. I would respond to you that this shows us that it is not indifferent that the subject of the predicate should figure in one manner or in another.

Our own proposition: "it speaks in the session", is a second degree predication. Let us not forget it. We do not have to study these second degree predications especially but (9) we do have to know clearly that when we speak, we are speaking about words which are spoken in the session. We must distinguish what we say about words which are spoken. That means nothing else. "It speaks in the session" is our discourse about the word which in the session was pronounced. We do not have to ask ourselves: "Who was speaking? Who is speaking?".

Quite obviously in the case under consideration, "it speaks in the session", it was the patient who spoke. Nevertheless we say clearly: "it speaks" and not "he speaks". Why? Because he does not speak, he does not speak to his psychoanalyst in the imaginary sense that we have to consider.

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To clarify things let us envisage first of all the case in which he might speak to his analyst, the case at the limit which is by far the most usual. In the case that he speaks to his analyst his word could be preceded by an "I say" which implies that there ought to be two people in the listening :

I speaking and listening which designates the patient of the same order, in so far as he is I, other than the I of the other, the psychoanalyst who is listening.

Can we consider another case where it is the patient who speaks, of whom we should say: "he speaks". The patient can pronounce words that he can suppose to be addressed to himself by his double or by a third party, for example, by his psychoanalyst.

(10) This supposition of his is that his word can still be preceded by a "I say", an I similar to the I of the one whose word is supposed. This is still not the imaginary case that we are considering.

Let us first of all make some remarks relating to this formal order which is the one of the: "he is speaking", that we are envisaging for the moment.

First remark
I, predicating subject, is always of the same order as another I, predicating subject.

Second remark
When it is the patient who speaks, the predicating subject is by definition the same as the subject of the predicate. I say I.

Third remark
When the predicating subject is the same as the subject of the predicate, the latter is always in the first person. Speaking about myself, I cannot designate myself otherwise than by "I". In order to speak about oneself, one says "I". But in the second case that we have considered to make another speak about oneself, one says to one's psychoanalyst: "you are telling me even though …" to make another speak about oneself, one does not say I, one says me. You are telling me. In connection with this reflective form of the first person, me, we ought to note, it is very important, that it (11) implies a reference to the predication of the second person. You tell me. Me contains the subject of the predicate. It nevertheless remains that the implied reference to the second person is that of you: "you say you to me".

There is therefore in the reflective form of the first person, me, a certain degree of contamination of the I, the first person properly speaking, by a reference to the second person, you.

If I point out to you this degree of contamination that exists in this reflected form, it is because it leads us easily, by a transition, to the imaginary case that we have to consider where there is no longer contamination of I by the reference to a you, I and you always designating the same subject, the subject of the predicate, but where there is a confusion between the two.

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What are we to say then about the imaginary case that we have now to consider, that in connection with our commentary is: “it speaks”. Well, we have seen that in the formal order in which one can say: “he speaks”, he designates the predicating subject which always supposes another I, a predicating subject. The imaginary order is that of the “it speaks”. It designates as emitter of the word, a unique person, there are always two I’s, there is only one it; a unique person and an unnamed person in the sense that he does not name himself.

(12) Moreover, when we say: “he speaks” we refer to the one who says I, and when we say: “it speaks” we have no name to designate what is at the origin of the word pronounced, we do not have a name to designate the predicating subject for the good reason that this predicating subject loses here the status of subject.

The imaginary case is precisely the one where, contrary to the law that I presented to you under the form of a remark earlier, where contrary to the law, the subject of the predicate is in the second person while the predicating subject is the same as the subject of the predicate. In other words, where the first and the second person are only one.

Example

How can one give an example of an imaginary case. One can only give it in a very approximate manner obviously, for example, the patient speaking through the mouth of his psychoanalyst. I mean, not in the figurative sense of the formula speaking through someone else mouth but the patient speaking through the mouth of his psychoanalyst, saying really, because there is nothing as real, in the sense that what we are dealing with in psychic reality, as the imaginary. The patient speaking through the mouth of his psychoanalyst is something, if one takes the term in its proper and not figurative sense, evidently impossible in any other domain than the one of psychic reality …..... (13) that Freud assigns to psychic reality. So then, what happens in this imaginary case? In his predicating, he will designate himself as the subject in the second person, saying you to himself. If such a word were preceded by an “I say”, this would give I and you being the same: “I am saying you are I”.

Now he cannot say you or I, this is why we say: “it says you are I.” The imaginary person which is at once the first and the second, we designate in our discourse about his discourse as being it. It is an imaginary person. It speaks and the discourse which makes itself heard, just like a predication, does not have its status by reason of the ubiquitous character of the subject which is designated there. (I told you earlier that it (*ça*) did not have the status of a subject).

Now it is perhaps a good thing to note that we have distinguished two registers of the word: the formal register from which he speaks and the imaginary register from which it speaks. We must add that these registers admit subdivisions, very numerous subdivisions but it is not our purpose today to examine all the possible subdivisions of these registers, it would moreover be a very interesting project to carry out. I would like simply to mention three registers which constitute subdivisions of the formal register: he speaks; three registers because they will be of immediate use to us.

(14) These registers are moreover the most simple.

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1) That of the designation of the subject of the predicate in the second person. The word in this case is obviously the creation of the other, the one who says you. This register, in very rough approximation, in a first approximation, the one which is privileged in the interpretation of the psychoanalyst who says to his patient, you.

2) The designation of the predicate in the reflected first person, a register that we have already encountered as example. Here it is indeed the patient who speaks about himself designating himself by means of the supposed statement of his psychoanalyst which constitutes the predicate. This register of the designation of the subject in the reflected first person, of the subject of the predicate, is that of the supposed interpretation of the psychoanalyst, it is the register, which in a still very approximate manner, and in a privileged manner, of transference.

Now you will say to me, there exists all the same an extremely simple register which we have already spoken about earlier and which must be taken into account, it is that of the designation of the subject of the predicate in the first person, in the case of psychoanalysis, the one in which the patient speaks saying I. What is involved in this register? Well then, I would ask you for a moment. We will come back to it later. For I would propose to specify all of this for you by replying to a certain number of (15) questions by Conté. Conté said that I presented the word as introducing a cut. He also said that I presented the word as exhausting the psychic flux without a gap or a cut. The expression is Conté's. There is here an apparent paradox which leads Conté to pose the question: "in my opinion what is primordial?"

Here is my reply: the primordial function of predication seems to me to reside in the register that I designated earlier as being that of the designation of the subject of the predicate in the second person, a register which in a privileged manner is that of the interpretation of the psychoanalyst. I would point out to you that all of this demands to be, of course, demands to be much more developed and that I did not do it in this first project. Here then is what is primordial.

I would add that the function of this predication has some relationship, I would not even say a very intimate relationship, with what we can designate as being the paternal function, that it is constitutive of the apparatus of the soul, as Freud calls it, or the psychic apparatus in its topical dimension just as much as in its structure, namely, in its reference to these three neo-grammatical persons who constitute what can be called in an improper term the second Freudian topography, consequently constitutive of the imaginary register of which we say: "it speaks".

(16) Constitutive in a very different way of what in habitual language one calls the "it", it is just as constitutive of the ego and of the super-ego.

Let us add now that in this imaginary register, "it speaks", the function of predication of the word is in a certain way alienated. Let us now note that there is an incompatibility between "it speaks" and predication, that *vis à vis* the narcissistic register "it speaks", predication has, either a cutting effect restoring the patient to one of the modes of the register in which he speaks or, again, has no effect whatsoever. In this case this function of predication, this predication, is in a way foreclosed, to take up Lacan's term in the exercise of its function and I think that this way of seeing

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things overlaps rather exactly what Lacan calls the foreclosure of the name of the father.

In other words, when it speaks and when in a way things are fixed in this register, that predication remains without effect, we ought to consider that there is no transference, that there is no transference simply in the sense that the intervention of predication, of the predication which designates the subject of the predicate in the second person in no way breaks up the it speaks and does not make the patient accede, in particular, to the register of the designation of the subject in the reflected first person.

(17) Namely, that in the case of foreclosure we are dealing in practice with patients for whom interpretation represents nothing as such and who do not accede to the register in which they designate themselves by means of the supposed interpretation of the psychoanalyst, this is what foreclosure is, this is what foreclosure of the name of the father is, as Lacan says, and here is very precisely the definition of narcissistic neurosis as Freud distinguished it.

You know that I am making an incident here that is designed to show you that all of this has also an interest for psychoanalysis. You know that ever since psychoanalysts have begun to deal with people who are mad, to deal with psychiatric patients, they have noticed that these people experience with respect to them very lively feelings which made them believe that madness did not exclude the possibility of transference. Well, this is an error. If one wishes to maintain the framework of narcissistic neurosis, which seems necessary to me, it is necessary to take transference in a more restrictive sense than that of a feeling relating to someone, in a strict sense which is the one that I propose to you, for example, for there are many other formulations possible, as being for example this capacity to designate oneself by means of the supposed interpretation of the psychoanalyst. Well now madness, in the measure that the patient is mad, for one is never entirely mad, and this is why one can all the same treat the mad, and in the (18) measure that the patient is mad, this possibility does not exist because of the foreclosure that we have just been dealing with.

Now, still in this incident since here I am no longer answering Conté's questions, it must be noted, we must come back to this register which I said nothing about to you earlier, the register of the designation of the subject in the first person, the patient speaking about himself and saying I.

Well then, at this other extreme, one could say, the function of predication of the word is not alienated, as in the imaginary register of "it speaks", but is supposedly entirely assumed.

This register could be defined as being that of secondary narcissism. With respect to this register, predication is either put in question in its effect or again it remains without effect. Here again there can be a foreclosure of this function, that Lacan designates as essential, of the name of the father. Here again there is no transference possible in the measure that things are really so. We are dealing here, not in practice with the mad, but on the contrary with people who are perfectly sane or apparently sane, these sane patients who do not do analysis, who appear in a way, irreducible and of whom one says in a language which appears to me to be rather inappropriate, rather (19) vague, all the more so because the terminology is multiple, that they present rigid

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narcissistic defences or irreducible character defences or whatever you wish. This then was an incident, a very summary indication to show you that my rather arid formulations, I do not think that it is necessary to see things as I see them and I do not think that it is necessary to be interested in this type of formulation, but to tell you that in the measure that one is interested in them this does not mean that one is not doing psychoanalysis.

Another question of Conté's: in the unique speaking and listening it, the psychoanalyst is for his part also subject to regression, to a topical regression. Or again is it rather a question of a fusion phantasy of the analysand?

Well now, I believe that what has gone before allows there to be formulated a very simple response, already implies the response. In the whole measure that we have precisely posed this convention that the patient remained always the same by convention, a particular person then, that when we speak the words which make themselves heard in the course of the analytic session we cannot all of a sudden take the psychoanalyst as the patient but one could reason as follows, the unique speaking and listening it, designates quite obviously the phantasy of the patient, a phantasy which betrays, from the phenomenological point of view, a certain effect, a certain (20) temporary random manner of being that I designated as being narcissistic expansion. I do not at all require that one should keep this terminology which does not have a fundamental importance.

What is important is to underline the irreducible unconscious character of the phantasy of the patient in articulating, rather than speaking about narcissistic expansion here we are constructing the theory in articulating this phantasy, in the following fashion: "it says you are I". You will notice that this formula, "you are I" is not specularisable and that there is always only one it, which responds I believe sufficiently to Conté's question.

Another question.

Conté says that for me primary narcissism appears, he does not assume it, appears as a primordial step, as an ante-verbal or pre-verbal step in development. Moreover the patient positing himself as the object lacking to his psychoanalyst, appears in my work to be aiming at the restoring of the narcissism of the other. And this restoring of the narcissism of the other is supposed to be presented as the myth or the phantasy of the completion of the desire of the other. So then Conté asks me: what is the decisive aspect and how are these two aspects articulated with one another? Well then my reply to the first point: I believe that I have sufficiently replied in order not to need to give specifications on the fact that it is quite obvious that I cannot consider primary (21) narcissism as something ante-verbal or pre-verbal, this results from what I tried to show you earlier. On the second point: I would say to Conté that I believe that it is necessary to distinguish the narcissistic phantasy and the narcissistic myth, that at least one can distinguish them.

The narcissistic phantasy is the phantasy of the patient, it is unconscious. The narcissistic myth, is a notion that is perhaps rather newer than the one that Conté introduces here, the narcissistic myth, for its part, is not unconscious but conscious or pre-conscious, liable to become conscious, this narcissistic myth is the one according

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to which the other can accomplish or fulfil his desire. The narcissistic myth might be for example the myth of the psychoanalyst as ordering destiny, the myth of the psychoanalyst erected into a function which is properly speaking that of an idol.

Conté and Melman also wanted to question themselves on the relationship between the reference point furnished by my two first texts and a certain number of the principle Lacanian categories. They found themselves troubled by the fact that primary narcissism, described in a first approximation as a limit state of fusion, may appear to have an aspect that is in a way amorphous. Perhaps the specifications that their remarks led me to formulate as regards the signification of the proposition, it speaks, (22) perhaps these remarks, this key that I tried to furnish in a first approximation, will contribute to better posing the elements of such a confrontation.

Nevertheless, it remains, let us not forget, my first article preserves and will preserve a character that is more descriptive than theoretical properly speaking and that the second article that Conté summarises is aimed at situating the word of the patient in a plane defined by two co-ordinates axes, that of the imaginary where it speaks and the formal one where he speaks, designating the first person by means of the attribution of his object. The asymptotic progression towards the first of these axes I described as the movement of topographical regression, and the asymptotic progression towards the second of these axes I described as the movement of repression. This fully justifies the impression of Conté and of Melman that what is at stake here, as they say, is a framing of the analytic situation in reference to the opposition I would no longer say so much of two terms, as they say, but rather of two axes.

Conté sensed very well, moreover, that in the whole measure that such a mapping-out led to an evocation of the sado-masochistic relationship in the transference as I did it in the second article, a third term is found to be necessarily implicated, a third term which will be introduced in the third of these articles that Melman commented on, that of the (23) function of predication of the word of the analyst. But it remains that in this third article the work is far from being completed. It is indeed this incompleteness which makes the confrontation a little uncertain.

The question of the situation of castration with respect to frustration on which Conté's commentary ends will be tackled correlatively to that of the constitution of the ego ideal ego *qua* inheritor of primary narcissism. This is something that I have not yet done but it is only then that I will be able to speak about the evolution and the termination of the treatment. (In connection with the ending of the treatment, it is perhaps now useless for me to say as Conté and Melman think perhaps, for me to say whether I can subordinate it to some artifice that is described as technique).

I think that I have re-evoked, if I have not responded to all the questions and remarks of Conté and to a great number of those of Melman. For Conté there remains only the question of the dream for which the response would, moreover, be a very instructive exercise but I do not have the time.

But as regards Melman there is a sort of remainder, and I ought to respond separately to him about what seems to constitute between him and me, what appeared to constitute, at least the other day, between him and me the principle misunderstanding. Here is what is at stake.

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(24) How, says Melman, can the analyst make of his word the guarantee of truth when the patient in the transference attributes to him a power that he does not have. This is what Melman says making me speak, what he attributes to me. Now I said nothing which could lend itself to such a paraphrase. I wrote, and here Melman quotes me correctly and even on two occasions, in an article which moreover does not deal with the word pronounced by the psychoanalyst, it is perhaps an artifice to write an article leaving for later the question of the word that is effectively pronounced by the psychoanalyst but this artifice was the one I practised. I wrote in this article: "there would be no psychoanalyis if the psychoanalyst claimed at every instant to pose himself as a faithful servant of the truth." This is what I wrote, and in a context which does not allow, I believe, any doubt as regards the sense of this sentence. In order to be still more explicit, let us replace the term servant, if you wish, by the term champion. Champion of the truth. That he does not claim to be its champion at every instant does not at all mean that he does not serve it and that sooner or later this truth may not explode. In a general manner, this signifies even that he keeps quiet and that he does not prevent the patient from speaking, that he does not set himself against the development of the transference in which the patient makes of him a deceived deceiver, this does not at all imply, on the contrary that he accepts or that he ratifies this position (25) when he in his turn comes to speak, namely, to interpret. The place from which the psychoanalyst speaks is not the same as the one from which, in the transference, he is supposed to speak. This is essential.

A remark that is a little incidental all the same. In this connection Melman speaks about the place from which the word of the analyst would take on this singular brilliance. It is a very beautiful expression. But when one speaks about this problem of the place of the analyst, of the place that the analyst occupies, I believe that there is often in the dialogue a certain confusion between a problem of right and a problem of fact. I do not think that we are there in the first place to say from what place the psychoanalyst ought to speak in order that his word should take on this singular brilliance, but I think that we are there to examine in the first place from what place the analyst is proved to speak from. I would sustain this consideration of a remark which might perhaps appear to be a little wicked but Melman will easily grant me that the word of one or other of his colleagues, for the intelligence of whom he has not the greatest esteem, I am mentioning nobody, it is an example, that he considers that this analyst does not understand very much about analysis and what he is doing, you will grant me all the same that even in this case, that provided he is in the situation of an analyst with his patient, it happens from time to time that his word takes on this brilliance.

(26) In fact, perhaps not for us who may have an account of the analysis, but for the patient. It is a matter then not so much of the question of right but of the question of fact.

Melman notes that the word considered independently of its content, he will grant me this, seems to evoke essentially the place from which the word of the analyst would take on, he says, this so singular brilliance. It is a matter, I say, indeed of the question of the place of the one who pronounces the word, in other words of the status of the predicating subject. The one who pronounces the interpretation designates the subject

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of the predicate in the second person. He does not have the same status as the one who, while he is in fact designated by himself in the first, in the reflective form, me.

The analyst who is thus supposed to speak occupies the place of the subject of the myth of narcissistic accomplishment. He is supposed to be at the origin of all things. The psychoanalyst giving the interpretation occupies the place of a subject himself designated in his turn in the second person by another. Contrary to the one who is supposed to be at the origin of all things, he is marked by his place in the succession of a genealogy. I will be very brief in ending but it remains for me to reply to the suggestion that Lacan made to us at the end of the last meeting, of the meeting in which this text was in question.

(27) He suggested to us to take up our debate today starting from the following idea: that if the analyst is in a certain position, it can only be that of the *Verneinung* and not that of the *Bejahung*. *Bejahung*, in French, is simply *affirmation*. Now everyone knows that predication can take an affirmative or a negative form. The category of predication cannot then be either that of affirmation or of negation. This refutes, I believe the argument of Monsieur Lacan according to which I am supposed to situate the psychoanalyst in a position of affirmation, of *Bejahung*.

And to attempt to situate what I tried to formulate today from the view-point of Lacan's suggestion I would say very quickly the following. The word of the psychoanalyst designating the subject in the second person is incompatible with the imaginary "you are I" of narcissism, I remind you. When the word of the psychoanalyst is heard, it can only be received as a cut, as the cut constitutive of desire, as a denial of narcissism, a repetition of the first mythical denial in which the phantasy "you are I" was constituted in the alienation of the function of predication or function of denial - for it is one and the same thing here - of the word. Where according to the terms of Freud this word cannot be received except as a denial of (28) infantile omnipotence, Freud's first formulation, or let us say as a denial of narcissistic omnipotence to refer to the later formulation of Freud. A denial which is consequently correlative to repression. This denial of omnipotence is best illustrated by the following word, by the word: "because of your wish", a word which the psychoanalyst adds to the text of the patients dream. He did not know that he had died thus giving rise to the denegation of the patient, this is not my wish. This is what I wanted to say to you.

(29) Doctor Lacan: Stein, thank you very much for what you have been willing to contribute in terms of a gathering together of the specifications of what you have presented to us elsewhere as being only the first three moments of something which is your project and which undoubtedly must involve at least one more, is that not so.

I must then thank you for two things, first of all for having succeeded in bringing out this first part, secondly for having been willing to situate them for us in the totality of your plan. I am not going to, as I announced earlier, in conformity with what I announced, I will not intervene today either on the foundations or the details of the articulation that you have brought to us, counting on the people in the audience who have heard you to contribute the first remarks.

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I can only say one thing which is that I am delighted beyond what was the immediate motivation for which I wanted a discussion to be brought to bear here in the framework of our seminar on certain of these articles as a group and more precisely in connection with the first one,. Undoubtedly in what you have put forward a certain misunderstanding was dispelled concerning the essence of what you meant.

(30) It remains nevertheless that this does not mean that I can be in agreement about the totality of your way of situating the problem because this is what is at stake. But it is undoubtedly something that is profoundly enough structured for it to designate for us very well the level at which there are placed certain essential problems. I think that, for the limits which you imply about the development of this analytic situation can be gone beyond, and there is precisely here a basis, a supporting point which can be extremely precious for me to map out the way in which what I am articulating this year allows me to criticise this position. I will undoubtedly do it all the more, and all the more easily, and in a way that is all the more relevant for all, to the degree that I see where one or other of my listeners are, with respect to the hearing that your presentation today imposes.

Nevertheless, I cannot avoid, right away making a correction. It is important. I am really very sorry that the text that I communicated to you and where in particular Melman had made his corrections had allowed there to get past in the last page something that was not on my part, even a staking-out, a cord launched from your side, I spoke for two and a half pages. There is in effect written in this text the word, whose incorrectness should perhaps have startled you, the word *Verneunung* which does not exist. You had translated it as *Verneinung* and I had said *Verleugnung*. This puts me a little bit in a false position without at all for all that diminishing the interest of what you have directly responded to me in finishing

Doctor Stein: I am much happier with *Verleugnung*.

Doctor Lacan: So then I ask first, as is natural, those who have been answered, namely specifically Conté and Melman, if they now wish to take the floor. Conté, you have taken notes. Would you prefer to have a moment of reflection or are you prepared right away to tackle what you have to say? Do not speak from where you are. Come up here.

So then since it is possible that things will happen rather well to suit me, in order that later people will start leaving in stages as it happens, namely, that some people are limited by time and have to go, I would like to announce to you, it is one of the reasons (32) why earlier I rejoiced that there should have taken place in the framework of my seminar this year, that this place was taken by a discourse like the one that we have just heard.

In effect, perhaps you will not grasp right away the relationship, but I believe that there is no better text to allow me to re-launch certain affirmations that I intend to discuss about what Stein has announced to us than this one, this text, the one that I had announced to you the last time before Madame Parisot spoke to you about Dragonetti's article on Dante.

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I cannot, of course, comment in any way today on the function that I intend to reserve for it. But after all in order not to tackle it as a complete surprise and so that nobody will be too shocked at its appearance, I announce to you in order that you may make whatever use you wish of it, namely, in order that you may be able to renew your knowledge of it, even that you might refer to the numerous and essential commentaries that this text provoked, the one from which I will begin the next time, that I will take up as a relay to what will follow topologically which, this year teaches you to situate the function of the o-object, is none other than Pascal's *The wager*. Those who wish to listen in an appropriate way to what is being said this year have therefore a week at least to refer to the different editions of it which have been produced. I insist, most of you I hope know it, on the fact that since the first edition of the Messieurs de Port-Royal , there have been a series of texts which are different, I mean that they get closer more or less, which tend to get closer and closer to the two little sheets of paper written in a really scribbling fashion, the two little sheets of paper back and front, on which what has been published in this register about the wager of Pascal happened to have been left to us. Therefore, I am not giving you a whole bibliography unless someone demands it of me at the end, you know also that numerous philosophers have attached themselves to demonstrating its value and its incidence. Here also those who may have something to ask me as regards some of the more substantial articles to which it would be well for them to refer, can come when appropriate to ask me myself for them unless there is some time left for me which will allow me to indicate them.

(34) Monsieur Conté: I intend to limit myself to a very few things and essentially to thank Stein for what he brought us today which in effect is a contribution which for a major part is new with respect to what I had read and which allows us to situate things in a different perspective.

Already certainly the third article on the judgement of the psychoanalyst with the introduction of the function of predication certainly allowed us to understand better his first article and in any case what he said this morning, which is more precise, more developed, leaves the majority of my remarks without an object. I mean that the difficulties which were raised are resolved at that level, the problem being referred now to another level of discussion.

I remain all the same a little bit unsatisfied about a certain number of points particularly on the relationships between the register of narcissism and the register of desire *qua* implicating the dimension of the o-object. I do not see very clearly yet how Stein articulates these two registers.

A second point: the second article, that on masochism in the treatment, insisted on the reference to the word pronounced by the psychoanalyst as real, this being opposed to the dimension of the imaginary and I wanted to ask Stein in this connection whether he (35) does not tend, in this text, to situate transference, to make transference tip over a little bit to the side of demand and whether there might not be a bias on his part at the level of this presentation.

In fact, I believe that the debate should now be brought to bear in effect on what is the function of predication and this is a reference that I am little prepared to intervene on. I would prefer to give some more mature reflection to this subject. And I ask simply

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at first hearing, at first listening, whether one has to situate the predication, this first foundational or original word as a predication founding the subject namely attributing a predicate to the subject, the subject becomes such, he is this or that, or whether predication is not to be referred rather to a judgement brought to bear on objects. I could eventually develop this point.

And with regard to the third article on the judgement of the psychoanalyst, there is something here also that for the moment I grasp badly in Stein's thinking, it is precisely the articulation of the level of desire and of that of the law or again of prohibition, namely, the moment that Stein passes from the lack, for example, of the analysand trying to posit himself as the object lacking to the analyst, where he passes then from this level to that of lack where it is a matter here of lacking (*manquement*) with respect to a law and where it would thus be a question of interdiction, namely, the very precise articulation that Stein makes between the first foundational judgement in so far as it establishes the subject on the one hand as object of desire and on the other hand as (36) subject of a past sin (*faute*). There is here an articulation that I have not grasped very well but no doubt it is because I have not reflected enough on it. That is all I wanted to say for today.

Doctor Melman: It seems to me that one of the great merits of your presentation is in any case to have made much more clear to the listeners than we were able to do with Conté, your positions and your opinion on the treatment which will of course allow us to engage more easily in a discussion.

What I would like to say to you all the same is that I read your text with great interest and certainly one all the greater that as I tried to say the last time everything that presents itself as an effort of general theorisation of the treatment or of what happens in analysis cannot fail of course to awaken our attention our interest and our sympathy, of course.

This having being said, I had the impression and the feeling, in reading precisely these three texts, the last three recent texts that it was possible to articulate the different terms that you put forward and which are those of primary narcissistic expansion, you told us today that after all that you did not hold too much to this text [term?]and that you would be willing to abandon it - that's fine.

Doctor Stein: I would like to specify that it is not a matter here, that this term does not refer to a theoretical concept. That is why I said that I considered it as descriptive, therefore as having effectively a secondary importance.

(38) Doctor Lacan: This is a very important specification given the essentially theoretical character given generally to the term primary narcissism.

Doctor Melman: Essentially theoretical and very difficult to situate, I mean fundamentally in your text. I mean that one sometimes has the impression, I mean that, for example, when you situate primary narcissism or at least the goal of primary narcissism as the rediscovery of this mythical lost object, it is quite certain that you are engaging there along a certain path, a certain way of approaching this term.

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But what I wanted to tell you is that I regrouped, in a way, your different propositions and your different terms around something which seemed to me to be a position. This position is the one which would make of the word of the analyst an o-object. It is around this that I tried to speak to you and it is also, I am saying, around this that it seemed to me that the different moments of this text could very well be articulated. When you say that the word of the analyst is liable to take on what I called, moreover, in a rather forced way, to take on this so singular brilliance I have no doubt,of course, absolutely not, the essential question appeared to me to be rather that of the position of the analyst with respect to his own word and in so far as it is liable to picture for the patient this particular object, this singular object.

(39) To take things perhaps a little bit from the beginning what seemed to me, I must say, to stymie in a way the development of these texts, in a certain way to reduce them constantly to this dual game between the patient and the analyst, with things oscillating like that from one to the other in a movement in which, as you say very clearly, one asks oneself how it can end up because, in fact, you say it all the same very clearly: you pose in any case the question in the clearest fashion and you are very frank, it seems to me that the reference to the other, I mean here of course the big Other, the lack of the references that you make here to the big Other is the point where precisely things start to agglutinate in the text, it gets clogged up and one finishes by asking oneself how they can be disentangled.

For example, I would have a tendency to interpret what you define by the term of fusional situation by which you began your presentation, I mean the realisation of this unique speaking and listening it, which Conté picked out, moreover, as a phenomenon that is of course possible but rare, I would have of course a tendency to try to evoke it in this dimension which might be perhaps eventually that in which the patient may have the feeling that his word risks rejoining the discourse, the discourse of the Other, and (40) where any separation, starting from this moment, any rupture, any hiatus or any distance would find itself abolished.

I ask myself also whether introducing this reference would not allow there to be situated in the measure in any case, I apologise if they were not here always sufficiently attentive in listening to you, but what you introduce on the subject of this distinction of different persons with regard to the subject of the you and of the he which are grammatical categories which, of course, are essential but of which I must say, I ask myself every time listening to you how you use them, I mean do you take them, do you pick them out as such in the subject of your patient, I mean, when the patient says I, for example, starting from there do you put that in one of the three categories that you have isolated, the designation of the subject of the predicate in the second person or to the first reflected person or again a designation of the subject of the predicate in the second person, is that not so.

In other words, everything that you introduce in an effort to make distinctions and to analyse the I and the you and the he, I ask myself whether it could be, I would say, situated outside this reference to a third locus from which the subject receives his own word *qua* subject.

As regards this little point that you put forward about the truth, the question of the (41) truth, allow me to quote you. When you say the following, in the text on

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masochism: "the psychoanalyst is called on to intervene, he is affected from two sides at once. In the transference the patient appeals to him at a place where he is not. He situates him at the supposed locus of power from the existence of which he experiences frustration, namely, this power of reality that the analyst is supposed to hold and which he can make use of as he wishes to interrupt the narcissistic expansion of the patient. In the name of truth, he is supposed to be called to pronounce on the transference, to denounce the illusion of the patient. Replying to the first appeal from a locus where he is not, he would deceive the patient by accepting to serve as a lure for him and arrogating to himself a power which is not his own. In the name of the truth he ought to abstain from responding to the appeal of the patient and intervene in order to declare himself incompetent to judge. But, as the analyst listens, the patient's appeal is constant. To tolerate the transference is already to deceive because it is the listening which gives rise to it. The analyst ought then constantly to intervene to denounce the false in the name of truth and not listen to the appeal of deception. His efficacity would then be that of the preacher and no longer that of the analyst."

And this is where you add: "there would be no psychoanalysis if the psychoanalyst pretended to posit himself at every instant as a faithful servant of the truth."
I believe that it is certain. I believe that you are completely right. But I do not see how in the articulation that you advance there, you manage what seems to be nevertheless essential for any possible development of the treatment unless it were to become, I cannot situate exactly how you manage to find a place in order nevertheless in this movement of existence of the dimension which is that of the truth.

Stein: There I reply immediately to you. It is that there is no truth at that point. As regards the term preacher, in this text it is quite evident that subsequent developments are going to lead me to supress it. Up to then I had simply taken it in the sense of someone who gives sermons. Therefore, so that there will be no confusion, that will be left out. That is obvious.

Melman: Good, that is agreed then. I will also take up then, perhaps, perhaps on my own account, perhaps in the very final place, what you say with regard to the predicating subject which takes on an important place in your last developments which I believe deserve much reflection, what is the eventual predicating function that you assign to the analyst here.

Doctor Lacan: Good. Stein has obviously, I only noticed it afterwards I was so charmed by his speech, Stein went well beyond his time, which does not allow us sufficient time to give to the discussion, the time that I would have expected today.

(43) Now there is still space for one person. Green, would you like to intervene?

Green: I am quite willing but I do not want to deprive others of the opportunity.

Lacan: Would Major like to intervene? Have you something to say Major? You have to leave. Good. So Audouard.

(44) Monsieur Audouard: It seems to me that this sort of grammatical universe in which Stein situated us earlier allows itself to be constituted at every moment as a remainder, and it is tangible from different aspects of his remarks for example when

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he says that even if the psychoanalyst's activity is contestable, or if he occupies a contestable position in our view, it nevertheless remains that there is a certain brilliance in his remarks. That even if the psychoanalyst is not the possessor of the truth it remains nevertheless that he is its faithful servant. That if it is true that predication is always either positive or negative, it nevertheless remains that the proper field of predication falls outside the positive as it does of the negative. And it is not perhaps for nothing that precisely *Verneinung* here was understood instead of *Verleugnung*. For *Verleugnung* precisely introduces this dimension of the lie which is nothing other than denegation. In this grammatical universe in which Stein seemed to me to situate the relationships of the analyst to the analysand, there is a sort of fidelity which appears at every moment where the effort of specularisation which takes place for example between the I and the you, between the first person reflecting himself where the you comes here to reflect the first person, there is in this effect of specularisation in which (45) Stein tries to introduce the relationship of the analysand to the analyst, there is something non-specularisable which appears at every incident. In short, one could say that this logical universe of a reflection of the you onto the I or of the I onto itself is perhaps already given the orientation of a dialectic and that, even if one introduced a more dialectical orientation, it would still remain that in this dialectic one would scarcely find a basis or a truth to ground it. It is linked, for example, with what Madam Parisot told us the other day, that one could put all of that, namely, that after all the specularised is not the specularisable. Far from being the specularisable, it is perhaps simply what makes us believe that there is a specularisable and that the specular as such is always traversed by a remainder which falls out of the field of reflection. In short that there is a sort of abyss between the predicating subject and the subject of the predicate indicates to us that there is here between the two something like a world, like a void, something which distances them, certainly not without being able to dialectise them but without permitting at any moment that this should aim at "you are I" without there being constituted as something different, as something forced which belongs neither to logic nor to grammar but to this particular forcing of desire. Predication does not appear to me to be at the beginning a logical act, as when the (46) child says that the dog goes miaow and the cat goes bow-bow, as Lacan said, it is not a matter of a predication which belongs to the order of logic but to an order of particular forcing which is desire.

In any case this is simply to indicate along what path there could to my sense be introduced a critique of an interpretation that in my sense is too satisfying because it is too grammatical.

Doctor Lacan: Green, say a word.

Doctor Green: I apologise. I would need a blackboard. I will try to be as brief as possible. I think that I would like just to say a few words about Lacan's formula : "I the truth speak" (*Moi la verité je parle*), with what Stein has just said.

So, we write:
$$\begin{matrix} & \text{the truth} & \\ \text{Me} & & \text{I} \\ & \text{speak} & \end{matrix}$$

We find a sentence which is in fact articulated along two axes: the Me - I axis and the axis of the truth - speak. I think that all of this has a relationship with what Stein told

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us about the relationships between the I and the me and the word. Audouard has just remarked that Stein constructs an equivalence between different pronouns, between the I, the you and eventually the he. By the very fact that the subject cannot say : "I say that you are I", from the very fact that the "I say that you are I" is replaced by "it says that you are I", by that very fact I believe that it is this equivalence between the different pronouns which seems to me to falsify things. Why? Because if at that moment in connoting in the form of an index "it says that you are I" one can say in a way that in the enunciating itself, in the succession of the enunciating, starting from the moment where the you reaches the I, the I finds itself as one might say transformed (48) and is no longer the same I as at the beginning and it is brought back to the primitive you. I believe that this point is very essential in order to conceive that there is here something which is a closed circularity and that the only way to get out of the circularity, the only way that this does not constitute a system which turns in a circle is in effect to conceive that there exists a difference between the you and the I, this difference being that of the big Other and that of the big Other barred in so far as precisely what liberates the bar is a remainder. It is necessary that there should be a remainder and in order that there should be a remainder it is necessary that there should not be an equivalence between the different pronominal values.

What do we fall on here? We fall precisely on the term of which I spoke at first: the truth, namely that Stein has spoken about the me, that he has spoken about the I, that he has spoken about the word, but precisely the question remains hanging for what concerns the truth. The analyst, is he or is he not the faithful servant of the truth?

Well then, I believe that it is here that we have all the same to return to a formula proposed by Lacan as specifying the transference, namely, that the transference is addressed to a subject who is supposed to know, supposed to know what? That is the whole question. What does the psychoanalyst know?

So then? What does he know?

(49) I think that the whole misunderstanding of the treatment, its whole *Verleugnung*, is that he is supposed to know everything except the truth, and that it is in the measure that this misunderstanding exists at the beginning that the treatment can be pursued in order to arrive finally at a situation where obviously it is understood that the subject who is supposed to know is no longer on the side of the analyst and that what is in question is indeed a truth which can only be that of the subject. I believe that we find a quite identical problematic to the one that I tried to analyse in what concerns the oracle among the Greeks.

Doctor Lacan: I will try to give still more precise formulae but this one seems to me to be really massive and to be quite fundamental. Would you like, Stein, to reply right away or indeed, which is quite conceivable, for I am telling you already now that I will give three seminars in February: two open seminars and then I will give a closed seminar, on the fourth, I will in principle be gone to the USA. It is quite conceivable that the fourth seminar of February could be spent in pursuing a discussion that has begun so well which will allow you leisure enough to delay giving your response to today's interventions the next time, unless you wish to say a few words right away.

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Doctor Stein: I do not think that it would be easy for me to give a substantial introduction the next time on the basis of the remarks that have been made today because it would lead nowhere.

Doctor Lacan: No, but the next time a number of people can give you their names, it would be more simple if a certain number of people who having allowed to mature what they have heard today would offer to come to discuss it with you on the fourth Wednesday.

Doctor Stein: Yes, but I cannot advance much further on …

Doctor Lacan: No, that is not what is in question. It is a matter of whether you say a word which you think is very important…

Doctor Stein: Yes there is a word that I would like to say. It is the following. In this whole discussion and this should not astonish us, one always arrives at the temptation to reduce this remainder that Audouard spoke about and that Green took up again.

In the argument of Green which I do not wish to reply to in its totality because it is very important, very interesting, I would like all the same simply to point out to him that by attributing to me the intention of establishing an equivalence between different pronouns, he reduces precisely what I had left in a way as a remainder for I did not designate an equivalence between the different pronouns but precisely a confusion between the different pronouns in the imaginary register, which is quite different.

And this leads me, to be very brief, to Audouard who, in my opinion admirably defined something which refers, which is in what I told you today, that one is making use of a (53) really excellent instrument. I would like all the same, like that, for the pleasure of the story to recall that a certain congress in Amsterdam which if I remember correctly was held in 1950, no, the first Amsterdam Congress was in?

Doctor Lacan: In 1948. In 1948 I gave the speech that I had prepared, at that time we were not yet at the beginning of any teaching whatsoever on my part, which was, which turned around, not at all simply some grammaticalisation or other but precisely that of the personal pronouns I and me, a speech in which I must have exhausted the interpreters because I was forced to say in ten minutes what I had prepared for twenty, since Madame Anna Freud thought she was entitled to go a long way over her time.

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I am concerned to know whether those psychoanalysts to whom I have taught something will correctly transmit what I have said. This is the sort of test that is set by the sessions devoted to a seminar to which I cannot admit so many people for the reason that this attendance itself would be an obstacle to this verification.

If it is true that the primary aspiration of the psychological subject is to present to the desire of the other this fallacious object which is his self-image, we cannot take too rigorous precautions in order never, in any form whatsoever, to see, in what is called analytic treatment, which is an experience that is properly speaking transcendent with regard to what was expressed up to then in the order of ethics, we will never be able to take too many precautions to define the paths through which this formula of the relationship of the subject to the desire of the other which I have just given first and which was never gone beyond in any philosophical doctrine, should effectively be gone beyond, broken through in a radical fashion.

This is why, since I am not able to be at the fourth Wednesday at which there will be (2) pursued the debates which were inaugurated on the last two Wednesdays on the subject of the formulations of Monsieur Stein who is present here in the front row of this gathering, I will question him so that the ball may be put into play again about what he understands by this so-called masochism imputed to the patient in the measure that he submits himself to a severe rule, why so quickly define as masochism something after all of which we have nothing to say at the beginning, except who wants it. It is all that we are able to say about it. He wants it *(il en veut)*. Not a vague but a minimal formula for desire. Is all desire then to be desire and in itself masochistic? Undoubtedly, if the question is worth posing, it is also worth not settling too soon, especially if we remember the formula that I gave in speaking about desire and its interpretation that, in a certain sense, given the conditions of the analytic experience, desire is its interpretation.
To expose oneself to this situation which is really fundamental that any demand can only be disappointed, this is no doubt what the patient has to affront and what he cannot at the beginning foresee, and, besides, what masochism in this case to offer oneself to disappointment, as another one of my interlocutors has very well formulated it. The analyst is in effect the subject who is supposed to know, supposed to know everything except what is involved in the truth of the patient.

(3) And much more than a situation being established on a given whose high point I am indicating to you here, does the patient who offers himself to analytic experience not say to us: “it is you who, if you demand the truth from me, will fall under this law that every demand can only be disappointed. You will not rejoice in my truth and that is why I suppose you to know. It is because this is what obliges you to be deceived. The epistemological drive is the truth which offers itself as *jouissance* and which knows that it is prohibited by that very fact, for who can enjoy the truth (jouir de la vérité)?”

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A drive then that is rather mythical (*plutôt mythique*), let me stick together these two terms in a single word and receive, psychoanalysts the investiture of what is imposed on you here: the adjective in a single word, the *plutôtmythique.*

What the patient does to us is that he makes us abandon our Pyrrhonian position. "You would like to know more about it. I am arousing your most reflective desire, that is the most unrecognisable one. The predicate with which you affect me, is your own downfall, if you qualify, you qualify yourself, I triumph."

No doubt there is here, as Stein perceived, the point and the birth of a guilt in the patient. But you, if you accept yourself as judge, are thereby rejected as subject henceforth in the ambiguity of having to judge yourself.

(4) Recognise in the harmonic slippage of the tongue, this subject which has to judge itself (*le sujet qui a à se juger*), one of the forms of which every tongue, in its fashion, offers us the indication. No doubt, here, at the same time, there is the warning not to go, of there being no need to go too far for, says the patient, of course you will make me into a masochist, namely, a lover of your anxiety that you take to be a *jouissance.* I have become the other for you, and if you are not on your guard, you cannot avoid getting everything wrong.

Because it is enough for me to identify myself to you for you to see clearly that it is not me that you will enjoy. The hey presto! has happened and that by taking your reality, *Wirklichkeit,* what I efface down to its very trace in the real, *Realität,* is precisely what I chose in you to sanction this effacement.

So then, the idea of a subsistent and graspable being, grounding subject to subject relations, is precisely the terrain of slippery traps to which, from the start, an inadequate theory is irremediably committed, but that is the reason why it is so important for us to elaborate the structure which allows us to conceive in a radical fashion, how progress is possible for the one who offers himself in the position of knowing subject and who must, nevertheless, initially, and in a Pyrrhonian fashion, renounce any access to the truth.

(5)"No more this than that" [Greek quotation], this nodal formula in which there is expressed the position of the Pyrrhonian or the Sceptic, Pyrrhon being the leader of one of these philosophical sects that I have also, on occasion, described as schools, in order clearly to recall that the practice of philosophy in a certain context was something different to the one in which there came to completion a certain socially defined order of the ancient world. Just imagine the discipline of those who precisely imposed it on themselves in the introduction of any predicate into any question whatsoever about the truth, not simply to reject by a "neither... nor" the members of an alternative, but always to forbid themselves the very introduction of the disjunction, the one most apparently imposing itself, the refusal precisely to break through the bar of its establishment and to reject entirely the demands of the disjunction.

The fundamental position, then, of a subject imposing on himself an arrest at the threshold of truth, is here something that would no doubt deserve a longer explanation, a return to the texts, which are no doubt sparse, insufficient, full of problems, but whose whole breadth is given us by a reading of Sextus Empiricus, a

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reading which is not limited simply to reading a summary of it in some some manual or other, but to following the detours of a text that must be taken page by page in order to grasp the weight, the reality, of the operation that is engaged in it.

(6) It is not for nothing that I am putting forward this reference that I am giving, and which is directed to the more studious, were it only to indicate to them that they will find in the excellent work by Victor Brochard, *Les sceptiques grecs,* the complement, the situation, the fruit of a real meditation in a modern spirit. It is not by chance that I am putting it here on the threshold of what I announced today as being my subject which, no doubt, is not a matter of indifference to the enormous attendance that I attract, namely, Pascal's *Wager.*

Pascal's *Wager,* I hope that there are none of you who have not heard something about it before today. I do not doubt that Pascal's *Wager* is something, I mean as a cultural object, infinitely more diffused than one might suppose, and if one marvels at the fact that there have been some texts of philosophers, after all, if I had here to give you the bibliography, I would manage, God knows, to exhaust it rather quickly, when I had reached fifty references on the side of those who write and who think it worth while to communicate their thinking to us, I would have seen the end of it and everything that has been said about it - I apologise for having to announce such a depressing formula, I regret it all the more since this concerns, as I might say, the reputation of a corporation described as philosophical - all this does not go very far.

I cannot but recommend to you one article which is to be commended for the excellent (7) procedure of starting at the level, I cannot say, of the text, of what is written on this little sheet or rather on these two little sheets of paper covered front and back which is what Pascal left us in what one could call his scribbling, and which from there, starting from there, for it is very necessary not to see there something which was done to be addressed to us but which, nevertheless, and perhaps all the more, deserves to be retained as giving us, in a way, a sort of substitute or real substance concerning this singular incorporeal reality which is properly the one which I am trying, with the resources of an elementary topology, to valorise for you as regards what we can take from it at the level of our articulations.
In this respect, the article by Monsieur Henri Gouhier which appeared in an Italian journal and whose reference, after all, I would like to leave you here, an Italian journal which is published as *Archivio di filosofia*, number 3, 1962, the organ of the institute of philosophical studies, *Di studii filosofici* in Rome, the article by Monsieur Henri Gouhier on Pascal's wager deserves your attention, if you can obtain the volume of this journal.

It is, as you see, one of the last to appear. In the past there were many others ranging from the astonishment of Voltaire, the specifications of Condorcet, the wanderings (8) of Laplace, the scandal of Victor Cousin which I will not develop here, not having the time to tell you what was the true function of what is called eclecticism, more recently the valuable remarks made by Lachelier which, undoubtedly, are worth reading. I would not say as much about something of which I will give you a sample later on, the article by Dugas and Riquier in the *Revue philosophique* of 1900.

Since then things have been taken up at the level of what we will call the wager considered at ground level. Should one wager? To wager, as Pascal indicates to us, if

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this indeed is what we are dealing with, what would certainly be the good of our life conceived at its most ordinary level, for the uncertainty of a promise, whose incommensurability with regard to what we might be abandonning the articulation of Pascal seems to be entirely directed to demonstrate to us, an introduction it is said, to invite us to the wager of belief, undoubtedly, discern now what is proposed in the putting forward of something, after all, which is not so far from the most common consciousness, this vague anxiety about the beyond, which is not necessarily a beyond of death, is it not necessary for it to exist in order for it to be supported in all sorts of references which, for the most exigent, take shape in these hopes to which people consecrate themselves and which are only in this perspective, with regard to religion, (9) something that we would at the very least qualify as analogical. In a short and substantial chapter, the author of *Dieu caché*, Monsieur Goldman does not seem, for his part, to be at all reluctant to make of Pascal's *Wager* the prelude to the faith that the Marxist commits himself to in the advent of the proletariat.

I would be far from reducing to this limit, of which the least one can say is that it is a little bit too apologetic, the import of a chapter whose value as a discussion is undoubtedly enriching enough, no doubt, for us to rate this part of the enterprise as more than *bricolage.*

But it seems to me that nowhere has anyone gone into the text of the *Wager* from this point of view, that it is not a "one" that it is a matter of convincing, that this wager is the wager of Pascal himself, of an "I", of a subject who reveals to us his structure, a structure that is perfectly verifiable and to be verified not at all from such and such an incident which confirms it in the biographical context, Pascal's deeds in a life in which it is only right to manifest the extremely complex steps, the gestures that are brought to completion with the approach of death in one or other wish which may appear exorbitant to us, the one to be brought to the incurables to end his existence there, this would mean pinpointing them very quickly and picking out in them the theme of (10) masochism. Whether a subject, whether a thinking which is able so admirably to distinguish, as you are going to see, in the strict formulation of essential positions, yields to us in a way its structure, is something which for us is only to be linked up to other points in which, also, the structure of the subject as such is manifested by him in a certain radical position, and if we have the honour of seeing there being affirmed, without for all that there being anything to say that there was here any message whatsoever, for after all we have these pieces of paper, almost after his death, death is perhaps not the limit of any beyond, it is undoubtedly one of the easiest limits to use when it is a question of pickpocketing. Pascal's pockets were picked. It has been done, let us take advantage of it.

Let us take advantage of it, if there is something that can allow us to articulate one of the most singular projects, one of the most exceptional sorts of enterprise that has ever been given to us, and which might appear to be one of the most banal as you are going to see.

"*Infinity -Nothing*", he begins. Uninterpretable. "Our soul is cast into the body where it finds number, time, dimensions; it reasons about these things and calls them natural or necessary and can believe nothing else". A reminder of the powers of the imagination.

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"Unity added to infinity does not increase it at all, any more than a foot added to an infinite measurement. The finite is annihilated in the presence of the infinite and becomes pure nothingness."

"So it is with our mind before God, with our justice before divine justice. There is not so great a disproportion between our justice and God's as between unity and infinity." - I cannot resist the pleasure of not cutting what follows - "God's justice must be as vast as his mercy. Now his justice towards the damned is less vast and ought to be less startling to us than his mercy towards the elect."

"We know that the infinite exists without knowing its nature, just as we know that it is untrue that numbers are finite. Thus it is true that there is an infinite number, but we do not know what it is. It is untrue that it is even, untrue that it is odd, for by adding a unit it does not change its nature. Yet it is a number, and every number is even or odd. (it is true that this applies to every finite number). Therefore, we may well know that God exists without knowing what he is."

Such is the introduction that is subsequently developed. I would ask you, starting from there, to refer to the text whose starting point is properly that Pascal, the thinker, and if you wish a religious, integrated thinker, at the thought that the damned like the (12) elect are entirely at the mercy of divine grace, posits nevertheless as an inaugural step that God can in no way be known in his being.

He even highlights properly speaking that one is not able through the power of reason to know that he exists. The important thing I am going, I hope, to show you and after all I do not think that I am contributing here for any of you something all that surprising, you have heard enough spoken about the problems of existence, even though they are suspended in thin air, for you not to be surprised if I point out, if I point out in passing for want today of being able to dwell any longer on it, that the important thing is not at all this suspense in so far as it is radical, but the division that it introduces between being and existence.
The "he [it?]exists" which gave so many difficulties to Aristotelian thinking in so far as, after all, the being that is posited is self-sufficient, he exists because he is being and, nevertheless, the intrusion of religious revelation, that of Judaism, poses, I mean among philosophers starting from Avicenna, the question of how to pigeon-hole this suspending of existence in so far as it is necessary for religious thinking to remit its decision to God.

(13) This impossibility of pigeon-holing in a categorisable fashion the function of existence with respect to being, even if it is the same as what is going to come back into question about God himself by keeping us on this question of whether it is enough to say about God that he is the supreme being. Have no doubt about it. For Pascal the question is settled. Another little piece of paper sewn more deeply than in a pocket, under a lining, "not the God of the philosophers but the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob" shows us the step that has been taken, and that what is at stake is not at all the supreme being.

So then, clear away, scour clean these preliminary questions which would undoubtedly render precarious any reference to a given as sufficiently constituting by itself a certainty. When Monsieur Dugas and Riquier at the end of their article - read

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it, I am not claiming that it should be judged entirely from the sample that I am going to give you of it - question themselves: "And now what should be thought of an experience which presents itself as follows: in order to enter into the state of mind of the believer, you strip bare your nature, you make a *tabula rasa* of your instincts, of your feelings, of your conceptions of happiness. By considering the wager only from the point of view of logic, the refusal to wager for," - this is called in the argument, I have not read enough of it for you to be up to speed with the vocabulary, to take the cross, that means odd or even, heads or tails, it is not a matter of the Christian cross - "but if we put ourselves before the real conditions of the wager, we have to say that on the contrary it would be madness to take heads (*la croix*), for faith is not as Pascal sometimes presents it. It is not simply superimposed on reason; it does not have as an effect to push back the limits of our mind without hampering its natural development and give it access, therefore, to a world which would naturally be closed to it. In reality it requires the abdication of our reason, the immolation of our feelings. Is not this annihilating of our personality the greatest danger that we can run as human beings. Pascal nevertheless looks on this danger with an indifferent eye. What do you have to lose, he asks us. Full of his theological ideas" - we are here in psychology - "he does not enter into the mind of man as purely man and 'his discourse' is exclusively addressed to the one who already admits if not original sin and the fall of man and the whole of this more pessimistic philosophy that he himself has drawn from Christian dogma. But any mind which has only reason as a guide and which believes in the natural dignity of man and the possibility of happiness cannot fail to consider the argumentation of the wager at once as a logical monstrosity and a moral outrage. The harshness of such a judgement would, if needs be, find its justification or its excuse in (15) Pascal's celebrated remark about the difference between men or the originality of spirits."

I will skip a few lines in order to arrive at this indulgent absolution: "his sincerity is obvious, his frankness is absolute and whatever may be the immorality of his theses and the weakness of his reasoning, one continues to respect his character and to admire his genius."

So that is settled. Poupoule give me my slippers. I have finished with him. Nevertheless, I would like if, appealing to all of this which, after all, gives a tone which is properly speaking never quite absent at least as a state from those who have pushed furthest the analysis of Pascal's wager, to whom I would not like, for fear of forgetting him afterwards, fail to join to those whom I already quoted earlier the chapter devoted by Monsieur Souriau to Pascal's wager in his book, *L'ombre de Dieu.* Here also you will see glimpses that are altogether suggestive and valid from our perspective with respect to the fashion in which we should handle this testimony.

A wager. Many things have been said about this wager and, in particular, that it is not one. We are going to see later what a wager is. What makes people afraid at the beginning is the stake (*l'enjeu*) and the way Pascal speaks about it. "Let us then examine this point, and let us say: 'either God is or he is not'. But to which view shall (16) we be inclined? Reason cannot decide this question. Infinite chaos separates us. At the far end of this infinite distance a coin is being spun" - pay attention to this phrase - "which will come down heads or tails." Never has this infinite distance, namely, what it means, been really taken into consideration.

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"How will you wager? Reason cannot make you choose either, reason cannot prove either wrong." It is Pascal who speaks. "Do not then condemn as wrong those who have made a choice, for you know nothing about it." "No", replies the interlocutor, who is also Pascal himself, "but I will condemn them not for having made this particular choice, but any choice, for although the one who calls heads and the other one are equally at fault, the fact is that they are both at fault: the right thing is not to wager at all".

"Yes, but you must wager. There is no choice, you are already committed. Which will you choose then? Let us see: since a choice must be made let us see which offers you the least interest. You have two things to lose". (No one seems to have noticed that it is a matter purely and simply of losing them) "the true and the good; and two things to stake: your reason and your will, your knowledge and your happiness."

When one commits something in a game, in a game played by two, there are two throws: your reason and your will is the first. Your knowledge and your happiness is (17) the second which is not at all wagered by the same partner. Later on we will discuss what is at stake, namely, that to wager that he is, without hesitating, since there is an equal chance of gain and loss, if you stood to win only two lives for one, you could still wager.

After which we are promised, in a formula whose text should not be misunderstood, an infinity of lives at first, which displaces, of course, the conditions of what is at stake. It is not at all two lives instead of one, one life on each side which are at stake, but a life on one hand and, on the other hand, what Pascal calls first of all an infinity of lives, then afterwards an infinity of infinitely happy lives. This is what we will have to take up in a moment when we study what such a wager signifies.

But first of all I would like to question the following which has never been retained, namely, what is meant by committing one's life and how is it brought into the reckoning? We see Pascal alluding to it at several stages of his reasoning.

that it cannot not be committed,
the way in which it must be judged if, at the end, the wager is lost.

"I reply," says Pascal "that you have lost your life" and here he articulates, "but in losing it you lose nothing". The singularity of this nothing. At first it is a matter of a (18) life at least for a time, in the average case, this choice is not made on one's death bed, even though again this is not unthinkable, a life that you could have lived.

This life is evoked at other moments as involving more than one pleasure, pleasures that he describes as foul, no doubt, but which are nevertheless there, providing a certain weight because they may create an obstacle to the one to whom this reasoning is addressed sensing its conviction. The ambiguity, then, of this life, between the fact that it is the heart of the resistance of the subject to become committed to the wager and that, on the other hand, compared to what is involved in the wager, it is a nothing, this is properly what ought to be remembered by us in order to make us question ourselves about what distinguishes this nothing.

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This nothing has all the same this property of being the stake, and we are going to see right away what it involves as regards a wager, this remark is precisely the something which is going to allow us to give its true place in the structure to this supposed nothing of the stake.

And if, when breaking through the term of "discourse" to put them as Messieurs Dugas and Riquier, about Pascal, Pascal, to the one who has consented to submit himself to the rules of the wager nevertheless says, you must not believe that the effects of my wager can be identified to my belief. Pascal's reply: "Become more (19) docile (*abêtissez-vous)",* which horrified Monsieur Victor Cousin, the first one to have extracted it with the writing of the scandal of the direct papers of Pascal to which he had direct access, this "become more docile" is nevertheless clear enough. This "become more docile" is exactly what we can designate by the renunciation of the traps and the envelopes, the clothing of narcissism, namely the stripping of this image, the only one that the beasts do not have, namely, self-image.

What falls, what collapses at the proposed goal of a certain asceticism, of a certain stripping away, is properly speaking what links up in its situation in the individual (*l'être*), at the level of what is affirmed of it as I am in the field of the other, of what, in the subject, comes from self-miscognition. Does that mean that we should take as being equal to nothingness (*néant*), the nothing (*rien*) which remains? How then could it play its role as a stake?

Could we not identify this nothing, I am introducing the question here, to this always fleeting, always hidden object, to what is after all hope or despair the essence of our desire, to this unnameable, ungraspable, unarticulatable object and, nevertheless, that Pascal's wager is going to allow us to affirm, according to the formula that Plato employs in *Phaedo,* concerning what is involved for being as something to which there corresponds an invincible discourse.

(20) The (o) as cause of desire and value which determines it, is what is involved in the Pascalian stake. What allows us to confirm this? Undoubtedly, I have just said it, the fact that it is engaged as a stake in the wager. For this it would be well to clarify the obscurities about what a wager is. A wager is an act that many people engage in. I say that it is an act; there is in effect no wager without something which does away with decision. This decision is remitted to a cause that I would call the ideal cause, and which is called chance.

Moreover, let us pay careful attention to avoid here the ambiguity which would consist in putting Pascal's wager in terms of the modern theory of probability which was not yet born at that epoch.

Probability is something that the development of our science encounters at the final term of a certain vein of investigation of the real. And to manifest the permanence of the presence of this ambiguity whose profile I only evoked earlier concerning the relationship to being, I can only recall here how, as Pascal would say, the difference of minds is marked which is not at all a psychological remark but a reference to the structure of the subject. The repugnance marked, for example, in a letter from Einstein to Max Born, for this final reality who would only be a thrower of dice, the (21) fundamental and proclamed attachment on the part of a spirit who commited the

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highest scientific authority of his time to the supposition of a being who is no doubt clever but who does not deceive, namely, a certain form, still perfectly subsistent at the centre of a scientific thinking, of a divine being, is something that deserves to be recalled at the threshold of what we are going to commit ourselves to and which is, properly, this can only be defined at the moment of this threshold, of this step, of this radical break-through by Pascal, namely, the term strictly opposed to a defined chance (*hasard*).

What is chance? Chance is attached essentially to the conception of the real *qua* impossible, I have said, an impossible which I would complete today as impossible to question, impossible to question because it answers at random (*au hasard*).

What does this say about this form of the real? We may consider, if only for an instant, and to situate the sense of what we articulate as the wall, the limit, the point that we are trying, in the final analysis by scientific exploration, to end up by getting to, the point where there is nothing more to be extracted from it but a random response. Science is not complete. But the progressive rise of a thinking that is quite improperly called indeterminist, in as much as the level of the real that we are questioning forces it (22) on us, may allow us at least to suggest this perspective in which there would be inscribed scientific knowledge if it is precisely what I am telling you, namely, the renunciation of knowing, and at the same time of being, is it not in the measure that what is involved is to construct, in the form of scientific instruments, what in the course of this goal of rejoining the real, the point of chance (*le point de hasard*), was recommended to us as an instrument which is capable of rejoining it.

What is a dice if not an instrument designed to give rise to pure chance. In the investigation of the real all our instruments might be conceived as only a scaffolding thanks to which, by ploughing on, we arrive at the term of absolute chance.

I am not at all saying that I am settling this matter. No doubt, they could not be sufficiently articulated except by entering in a more precise fashion into the elaborations that our link with physics obliges us to give to the principle of probability. But here we are at a much more elementary level. Before this theory of probability is born, does it not guarantee to this register, as I might say, its scientific seriousness? We ought not to question ourselves about what is meant by this first speculation about chance, that is always indispensable to put as an exergue to all speculation on probability.

(23) Open any book whatsoever: there are good ones and there are bad ones, there is a good one that I mention to you in passing: *Le hasard* by Monsieur Emile Borel simply because of the fact that he collects in passing for you a series of objections, of absurd questions, there is nothing more interesting for us than *stultae questiones.*

You will see there that, for those who begin to give shape, to give body to this question about chance, when I said earlier to give body, and evoking this edification of our science, there comes as an echo to me the formula which had in a way, when I was taking my notes, sprung from my pen, that in the mapping out on the wall of chance, our science, in its instruments, would give body to the truth.

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But what is it that haunts anyone limited to the most accessible and the most elementary level of this operation of chance. How long will it take monkeys working on a typewriter to produce with their machines a verse of Homer? What are the chances that a child who does not know the alphabet will right away put the letters in the correct order? What chance is there that a poem will emerge from a succession of throws of the dice? These questions are absurd. In all of these eventualities, there is no objection to them being realised on the first occasion. Simply the fact that we think of them when we introduce this function of chance, proves what the aim of this cause (24) signifies for us. It is aiming at the same time this real from which it has nothing to expect, what a poet in 1929 wrote in a little journal that can no longer be found: “the blind and deaf evil, the God deprived of sense”, and at the same time it is waiting for it to manifest itself as subject. But after all, where do we get to? Even if the stakes are equal, which is where one always starts to begin to appreciate what is at stake in a game of chance, that the chances, as they say, or again the mathematical expectancy, a very incorrect term, are equal to a half, it is beginning from here that it is worth the trouble to play. And, nevertheless, it is quite clear that if the chance is only a half, all you will do in an equal bet is recuperate your own, which means nothing.

The fact is, therefore, that in the risk something else is involved. What is involved, what is at the subjective horizon of the passion of the gambler is the fact that, at the end of the act, for it is necessary that there should be an act and an act of decision, at the end of this, whose conditions a certain signifying framework must first of all have defined, I have not yet tackled it up to now because this is what we are going to go into subsequently, a pure response gives the equivalent of what, in effect, is always committed as nothing since the bet is placed there to be lost, that it incarnates, in a word, what I called the object lost for the subject in every commitment to the signifier, (25) and that beyond another chain that is supposed to be signifying and of another order of subject, something which does not involve the lost object, which because of this fact restores it to us in a successful sequence.

Such is the pure principle of the passion of the gambler. The gambler refers himself, in a certain beyond which is the one which the framework of the game defines, refers himself to a different mode of relationship of the subject to the signifier which does not involve the loss of (o). This is why he is capable if he is a gambler, and why should you belittle him if you are not one, you have no doubt, going on the most important testimonies of the literature that there is here an existential mode and that if you are not one it is perhaps simply because you have not perceived the degree to which you also are, this is what I hope to show you soon, as Pascal does, who tells you that you are committed whether you wish it or not.

Here, we have to dwell for a moment on the way in which, before the wager, Pascal properly speaking tried to give substance, as I might say, to this reference which may appear bold to you, that I give you about the presence of the object which is found in a random sequence. I will explain to you - no doubt not today but the next time given the fact that I will be limited by the clock - why Pascal, in the wager, evokes only one (26) game and especially that one, and especially that one for, let us say quickly, it is late, a Jansenist, is played in several stages.

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But one thing, at the very time when he began to write the *Pensées* and when no one knows whether he had already written the little bits of paper on *The wager*, one thing had been well worked over by him of which he was very proud. It is essential to recall that in the triad which comes from his own pen and which summarises the three moments of the wager, of which I have only gone through two today, reserving for the next time the third, the Pyrrhonian one, no access to the truth, the geometer, geometry of chance. It is in these terms that Pascal addresses himself to the Parisian mathematical society before whom he is presenting some results of his arithmetical triangle. He himself describes as stupefying this capture, this halter of geometry that he has put on chance. He dialogues at length with Fermat, a great mind no doubt but whose position in the magistrature of Toulouse distracted him, no doubt, from the strict firmness necessary for mathematical speculation. For they are not at all in agreement on what will be called, you will see what it is subsequently, the value of parts, the fact is precisely that Fermat, too prematurely, intends to treat them in the name of probability, namely, of the series of events arranged according to the (27) succession of combinatorial results, between what they give let us say with Pascal, heads or tails. Pascal has a completely different procedure. This is what is called in Pascal the rule of parts. I am going to try to put it, all the same, within hand's reach. Naturally you will think that you understand. I would advise you nevertheless to read very seriously in the Boutroux ,Gazier, Brunschvicg edition in book three of volume three, to read what is involved not simply about the rule of parts but of the mathematical triangle. Because you will see, then, that this does not deliver itself up immediately even though it is, as I am going to tell you, the first time that Descartes presents it to Fermat or to Monsieur de Carcavie, I do not remember.

A game is played out in two throws (*coups*). This presupposes that the bets are already on. We say provisionally that they are equal. One plays one throw. I win. My partner wants to stop the game here. I underline this scansion which is abbreviated in Pascal. He speaks immediately of a common agreement. Now, as we will see, this common agreement deserves to be questioned. I agree. Are we going, since nobody has won, if the chance in question is for example that the coin gives heads twice in succession, which I would have bet on, let us suppose. I have not won and, nevertheless, Pascal says and affirms, in a development which gives its whole weight to (28) the articulation that is at stake, for there results from it a mathematical theory whose developments are very wide-ranging, and it is this extensiveness that I would ask you to refer to later while you are waiting to hear me again next week. Pascal says: "Thus ought to reason the winner in order to give his agreement. He ought to say: I won one game."

This is nothing compared to the wager because the wager is that I have won two and nevertheless this is worth something, for if we now play the second either I win the lot, the stake, or indeed if you win, we are at the same point as at the beginning, namely, that if we separate, I repeat, by common agreement, each one takes back his bet.

Thus for me, who am now winning, to agree to the interruption of the game, there are those who leave and what must be divided up: *partituri* ..... *partitura,* until I have either to take back my bet or I win everything, I ask you, as is legitimate, to take half of your bet. It is from there that Pascal begins to give his sense to what is meant by a game of chance. What is not highlighted, is that if it were I the winner who

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interrupted things, my adversary would be quite right to say: "Excuse me, but you have not won."

(29) And then, you have nothing to say about my bet. The substance, the incarnation that Pascal gives of the value of the very act of gaming, separated from the sequence of the game, is where there is designated that what Pascal sees in the game, are precisely one of these objects which are nothing and which can, all the same, be evaluated in function of the value of the bet, for, as he articulates very well, this object, definable in all correctness and in all justice in the rule of the game, he says, is to get the other person's money.

It is two o'clock, and the things that I am going into, as regards which you will see that at the final term, the wager is nowhere in what I told you today, because the wager is Pascal's wager on the existence of the other. That this wager holds to be sure, the two lines separated by a bar: God exists, God does not exist, namely, that not, as has been said, Pascal's wager remains suspended, because if God does not exist, there is no wager, because there is no other, nor any bet, far from it, the structure that Pascal's wager puts forward is the possibility that is not simply fundamental but I would say essential, structural, ubiquitous in every structure of the subject, that the field with respect to which there is established the claim of (o), the object of desire, is the field of the Other *qua* divided with respect to being itself, it is what is in my graph as S, signifier of Ø.

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Seminar 10: Wednesday 9 February 1966

Since it sometimes happens that at the beginning of one of my lectures I give some references to what is happening elsewhere in the sphere of my teaching, I will evoke today, at the beginning, something whose entire *(en pierre)* relevance, of course, will only be obvious to those who attended a session of our Freudian School last evening, but which, nevertheless, for all the others will represent an introduction to the focusing, in the photographic sense of the term, that my discourse today will constitute, with which I will complete, I hope, what I have to say about Pascal's *Wager,* as regards the essential it conditions.

Relationships engaged in in psychoanalysis, this then is what I will begin from as a preamble which is at the same time a parenthesis, it is a remark that is very brief, necessarily, concerning the phantasy that is called, and which is in question under the name of feminine masochism.

Let me be understood if I state that feminine masochism is, in the last resort, the profile of the *jouissance* reserved for the one who enters into the world of the Other, in so far as this Other is the feminine Other, namely: the Truth.

Now the woman, if one can speak about the woman, the woman that someone tried last evening to make depend on a typical essence which is supposed to be that of femininity, a fragile enterprise, the woman, let us say that in so far as Freud develops and articulates as having a start that is distinct from that of man in this game which is (2) engaged where what is in question is her desire, the woman is no more in this world than the man. No doubt it can happen that she represents it for him in the form of the o-object; but it has to be said, that this is what she energetically refuses to be, since her goal is to be i(o) like every human being, that the woman is narcissistic like every other human being; and that it is in this distance, this tearing apart that there is installed, between what she wishes to be, and what one puts into her, that there is established this dimension which is presented in the relationship of love as deception.

Let us add that this narcissism, is the impasse, the great impasse of the love described as courtly, that by putting her in the position of the I of the ego ideal in the field of the other as a point of reference, by organising this status of love, one only exalts this narcissism, namely accentuates the difference.

In these few terms there is located the impasse of trying to define femininity as a function that can be isolated.

Nothing, here, then can be located to say that in this term there is a feminine pole of the relationship, of the relationship to the thing and that the feminine is this term of truth. The feminine is radically deceiving under all the forms in which it is presented.

This will serve us as a start to map out the three distances in which there can be accommodated this field of research that the ambition of philosophers has always signalled as a search for truth.

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Is the danger that the analyst assumes in taking the place of guide on this path, the one that the myth of Acteon signals as the impossibility of surprising the domain where (3) our destiny is sketched out as the one which is commanded by the three Parcae, Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos, a Trinitarian form of the fundamental, archaic, ancestral God, the one from which the other revelation separates us, the one whose reference we will later have to take up, through Pascal's *Wager* which adapts onto the function of the father what holds us in a particular interdiction with respect to the final *jouissance.*

It is already the inaugural statement of Freud's thinking that signals for us the importance of its suspension, of the suspension of all his thinking around this interdiction of the father whose formula we will see appearing later in a different form.

If, in the preceding years, I taught you to dwell on the Cartesian *cogito* in order to represent to yourselves how there is sketched out the *squeeze*, the *Entzweiung,* the radical division in which the subject is constituted, to recognise in the formula of the "I think" itself, the point at which it emerges that the rupture between the being of the "I think" can only be affirmed from a point of doubt, it is to approach, in a surer fashion, this purer formulation, that the same function of the subject, this time radically in function of desire that is given to us by Pascal's *Wager.* For undoubtedly what is already in the Cartesian *cogito* is sufficient to ground the being of the subject in so far as the signifier determines it as being only able to grasp itself at the point that around the affirmation of "I think" it has been reduced to this point of doubt of being, it has no longer any sense except that by opening the inverted commas of the conclusion which (4) gives it all its substance, the "therefore I am" as content of the thinking in so far as it rejects into a retro-position the "je suis d'être" of the "I think", I am the one who thinks "therefore I am". Now, if we rediscover Freud's path by considering that in this doubt there is the whole substance of the central object which thus divides the being of the "I think" itself in so far as in this doubt, Freud in his praxis, makes us recognise the point of emergence of this fault (*faille*) of the subject which divides it and which is called consciousness.

The suturing point, the unnoticed closing point in the "I think therefore I am", is where we have to reconstruct the whole elided part of what is opened up, that we open again this gap (*béance*), which can only in any form of discourse which is a human discourse, appear in the form of a stumbling, of an interference, the breakdown of this discourse which wants to be coherent.

Nevertheless, what grounds this discourse is not at all grasped in this manner, a discourse of desire, we are told, but what is it that ensures that we can say that that by which we supply for it, is what takes the place of representation. You will clearly understand that this is to indicate here the place where there functions what sustains as divided everything of the subject that is realised in discourse, that this is the place where we have to search for the function of the o-object.

Pascal's doubt is still in this passage of a balancing operation, *tute dubo dubito,* it is habit, I busy myself in making the scales of this balance oscillate. It is around a testing of knowledge with respect to the truth, of what is involved or what is not involved in (5) true knowledge.

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Naturally, Heidegger has the easier role in representing that there is abandoned the irremediably repressed basis of the *Alethia,* the *Urverdrängung,* if this is not how he names it, this is how we can identify it.

But this reminder is a fragile one since it only represents a return to a domain with no way out, in conformity with the term employed at the origin of Greek thought it is *Lethos* that is involved, it is the *echt*, the authentic.

Descartes installs at the same time as he reveals, unknownst to himself, the division of the subject around the operation of putting to the test, a negative operation, it is impossible to recognise how the scales tilt around true knowledge. He gets nothing from it except the certainty of the test that he has tried and it is in this doubt of the subject that certainty is inserted. To take things up again and take a further step, he has to bring forward again the ancient argument, through which what impresses the idea of perfection onto the order of our thinking, ought to guarantee the path of our research. Undoubtedly, one can highlight and outline already here the distance taken with respect to the ontological argument whose form, nevertheless, you recognise here; and even though it has had its value in the exploration of the field of being, it no longer deserves, for us, to be recaptured in this form which appears certain here, to which his reflection will have sufficiently shown that the idea of perfection is only delineated and formed on the model of a competition between prize animals *(bête de concours)* and that its substance is nothing other than that of which the pig may dream (6) as regards the obesity of his castrator. I do not like vain blasphemy and you should know what I am aiming at in this way, is certainly not the aim of some people, of a certain deviation concerning a questioning about the divine being, but the one in which a certain philosophical detail seems determined to remain stuck.

So that it must be remarked that Descartes' approach allows the subject to get away scot-free with regard to a supposedly deceiving God and that by turning towards the other God in order to remit to him, to his arbitrariness, the entire charge of grounding the eternal truths, the question which is important for us is to know whether in this operation, since already he has got off scot-free, it is indeed the subject who doubts and that even the deceiving God would not for his part be able to withdraw this privilege from him. The one towards whom he turns is not in that case - even if he is perfect - and I am saying it strengthened by what Pascal thought before me, is not in that case a deceived God. This sensitive point is important for us and in our research, in so far as it is by the trap of the ideal form, as in a way preformed, placed beforehand in the path where we have to guide the research of the subject is properly such that the ideal of perfection has to be deceived. "(Greek quotation) ..... what is to be done concerning the act of the doctor," Plato well says, "is this image .... (Greek quotation) ..... that he the doctor has in his soul." Is this not to express the exact importance that there is, the representation that we have to make, that we have to make for ourselves, about the nature of what is at stake when we are dealing with the order of the relationship to the truth, which is only accessible and defined by the conditions (7) under which we put into practice the experience to which there is limited the thesis where the subject is formed in dependence on the signifier as such.

This opens up the structure of Pascal's *Wager.* Somewhere, in one of these numerous points where there is prefigured, in these dialogues of Plato which are very far of

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course from giving us a doctrine that is, in a way, unilateral, the relationship of everything that is, everything that is idea to this *aetheos* of which I spoke earlier, which is supposed to bring to birth everything that subsists in being, very far from that at every moment we will find references designed to orientate us and specifically the following: between the eternal being which does not exist, and what is born and dies but which is not.

The sign, the touchstone ought to be given to us in the fact that if the first subsists he must be supported by an invincible discourse, this indeed is what we are still searching for, except for the fact that this discourse is the one which ought to allow us to recognise in the field which is ours of an existence circumscribed between birth and death, what this discourse may contain that is of this invincible order.

And this is what Pascal's discourse introduces us to. It is no surprise that he does not begin from this reference to the beyond, of life and of death but it is not, I would not say, as it appears but well and truly as each and every one sees and is scandalised by, all these gentlemen with a spiritualist ideology rear up here and pout, how can one speak about something that is of such high dignity in terms of these gamblers who are the dregs of our society. In Victor Cousin's time only the bourgeois have the right to (8) devote themselves to the *agio;* and those to whom there is given in society the responsibility of thinking about what is happening, can warn the people of what is effectively at stake in what is called the mark of progress, are requested to enter into this order of decency to which I wanted to give earlier, in a scandalous form, its outrageous enseign, that of the castrated pig, in other words, to remain within the limits of decency of the thinking that is called eclecticism.

Have you not noticed that in this wager about the beyond, Pascal does not speak to us, no one has ever seen that, about eternal life. He speaks about an infinity of lives that are infinitely happy. That is an awful lot of lives! And in the final analysis by calling them that, he preserves for them their horizon of life and the proof is that he begins by saying: would you not wager simply in order that there should be another one? The person that I called earlier, I mean the last time, the good Lachelier, well he is very nice, he stops there; he says all the same, who would wager in order simply to have a second life? Find the passage, I was searching frantically for it earlier, you will easily find it - the fact is that I do not reproach him for this lack of imagination, but is it not true, simply, that by covering his little everyday man with the sifter of chance involved in the *Wager* he invites us, for our part, to really pose the question to ourselves.
What happens, effectively, and would it not be worth the trouble to commit oneself to a wager, only with some chances as regards this life between birth and death, this life (9) of ours, in order perhaps to have a second one?

Let us allow ourselves, let us allow ourselves to dwell for a moment on this game, perhaps a little bit better equipped than others, in order to grasp the irreducible difference, the breakthrough that is involved in being able to think in this way. For it is necessary that these two lives should each be between birth and death, but it is also necessary that it should be the same subject. Everything that will have been played out precisely in the first, we can as we know play differently in the second. But we will not know for all that what the stake is. This unknown object which divides us between knowledge and truth, how can we not hope that the second will give us a

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view of the first, that for a subject the signifier would not be what represents the subject to infinity for another signifier, but for the other subject that we would also be? How can we not hope for the privilege that this other subject will be the truth of the first one? In other words, do we not see here in this imagining, a phantasy of a phantasy, there being clarified what under the name of phantasy plays in secret with this life which indeed is such that we only have one and that up to the end the stake may be hidden from us.

This supposition implicit to the Parcae, as we read it, if we read it in the candlelight of the lack of reflection on which our whole fate is suspended, this supposition, that after death we will have the final word on it, namely, that the truth will be obvious whether yes or no the God of the promise will be there to keep it, who cannot see that this supposition implicit in the whole business, is what really keeps it in suspense. Why, (10) after death, if something perdures, should we not still wander about in the same perplexity?

The Pascalian game about this infinity of lives, multiplied by the infinity of happiness which must certainly have some relation to what is hidden in ours, cannot but have another sense which has nothing to do with the retribution of our blind efforts and this indeed is the reason why it is consistent that the man whose faith was completely suspended on this something about which we no longer even know how to speak, which is called grace, is in a consistent position when he unfolds his thinking about the stake, the stake which is that of happiness, namely, everything which causes what is perishable and failed in our desire, that this stake of happiness is of a nature to make us look for what is the basis of the wager.

This o-object that we have seen emerge in this imaginable beyond, already in a very proximate way by simply imagining a second life, is not something that religious thinking has not already plumbed.

It is called the communion of saints. None of those who live within a community of faith, which has some relationships with this foundation of happiness, is uninterested in the fact that somewhere this happiness has been conquered by others of whom we know nothing. This conception is consistent with the fact that each one of our lives, those of us common people, is nothing other than a test of endurance suspended on the merit of some unknown people and that what is traditionally expressed in this theme exploited by a whole theatre which goes further in dignity than you may first be able to measure, if you think that the theatre of Shakespeare himself takes up the one whose (11) theme is that life is a dream.

As compared to this perspective Pascal's *Wager* signifies an awakening. The very closeness of the relationship to the other concerns this doctrine of predestination and grace to which, from my Rome report on, I indicated that instead of a thousand other futile occupations, psychoanalysts should turn their gaze. Here there is already outlined the point of impact where we can, just as at the end of an article entitled "Remarks on a certain discourse" - which I would ask you to consult - marked the point to which I already wanted to direct you with respect to the function of this wager.

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Because now we can see what is meant by this *Wager,* which is unique in that the stake is the existence of the partner. If Pascal can put in the balance this something which is not the all, but the infinite which opens out, by simply being able to recognise it at this point where we learned last year to designate substantially the function of lack, namely, number where the indefinite is only the mask of the real infinity which is dissimulated in it and which is precisely the one opened up by the dimension of lack, to put it in the balance with what is designated in the field of the subject as object cause of desire, which signals itself by being apparently nothing, and from this very confrontation of the balancing carried beyond, into the field of the other, of this field where for us there is outlined the whole signifying putting into shape at which Pascal tells us: you cannot escape, you are already on board; this is what the signifier supports, everything that we (12) grasp as subject, we are in the wager and it is for the one to whom there belongs, as was given to Pascal, the power of recognising the purest forms of it, those closest to this function of lack, it is here, around this oscillation that affects the other and putting him between this question that I already formulated and that I allow myself to recall because some people here may remember it, this question of "nothing perhaps" and this message of "perhaps nothing". That the answers come, to the first; <u>not surely nothing</u>; to the second, in so far as the stake for a Pascal is precisely that of this nothing grounded in the effect on us of desire: <u>surely not nothing</u>.

I want to clearly illuminate the topology of what I am designating here. I found, there were many other ways to bring it out, but I would like to take the neutral path, a logician of grammar, what matter. There are excellent things, among others that are more mediocre, in a book by Willard Van Orman Quine which is called : *Word and Object.* You will find in it, in the chapter …..... referential …..... untranslatable, vagueness …..... some remarks. They begin from the fact that the Fregian position, to which our exercises of last year have accustomed us, about the difference between what is *Sinn* and what is *Bedeutung;* of what makes sense, of which I gave you an intimation in the example: "green colourless ideas", and of what concerns the referent.

At the moment of this parenthesis that Pascal's *Wager* constitutes in the progress of my topology, at the moment that having presented to you, in the cross-cap, the surface (13) in which we can discern there being joined together the two elements of the phantasy, those which only function from the moment that the cut ensures that one of the elements, the o-object finds itself in the position of being the cause of an invisible, ungraspable, indiscernible division of the other, the subject. A question, and one supported by us in this model of the wager, of conceiving not what this phantasy is but how we can represent it for ourselves. It is quite clear that it is unapproachable in its immanence and that it is a matter of explaining why analysis allows the little (o) in question to fall into our hands; it is in so far as another shape, the one that I have not brought forward this year, the one which, topologically, contingently - as I might say - delivers it to us from the Klein bottle. The function of the other in this possible *Erscheinung* which cannot be the representation of the o-object, this is what the final explanations, on which no doubt my discourse today will dwell, are going to try to illuminate.

Let us go right away to what is in question: namely, belief. When I spoke to you earlier about this second life, there might have appeared this reflection, display, disjunction of the phantasy; did you not at all reflect incidentally that this would give

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our existence a little elbow room that would allow it to relax its seriousness a bit? There is only one problem, which is that this second life, which does not exist, and that I tried for a moment, within the seriousness of Pascal's *Wager,* to bring alive for you, (14) well then, we believe in it. We do not wager, but precisely, if you look closely at it, you will see that you live as if you believed in it; this is called the lining which psychologists delight in so much and which is called on this occasion the level of aspiration, nobody understands as well as the psychologists how to give a status to all the dirt with which our fate is perverted; this is called our ideal life - the one precisely that we spend our time indolently dreaming about. Mr Willard Van Orman Quine quotes with some astuteness, in connection with a little example that I do not see at all why I should change, what happens in what are called propositional functions which have as a model the following: - I am leaving the names - Tom believes that Cicero denounced Catiline. The matter takes its interest, it is because of his limited information that Tom believes that the one who, in the tragedies of the sixteenth century, one would in fact have designated by a Frenchified name, not Tullius but Tulle, namely, that for us who of course are erudite people it is the same Cicero. Tom believes that Tulle is really incapable of having done such a thing. So then what about the reference to the signifier Cicero as regards the statement: "Tom believes that Cicero denounced Catiline", if he maintains that Tulle - he does not know that it is the same person - had nothing to do with it? It is around this suspension that a grammarian contributes very interesting specifications about the way it is appropriate to measure by the ell of logic one or other form of grammar. For it becomes interesting to remark that if in the same form you substitute for nomination an (15) indefinite form - which might appear then to see the reference being made more opaque, on the contrary, the "referential .....…", namely, the opacity that the propositional function: "Tom believes" introduces; here it cannot be a matter of saying that the reference becomes vague from the moment you say that: "Tom believes that someone denounced Catiline" Undoubtedly one can go further and note that it is not at all the same thing to believe that someone denounced Catiline, or to say that someone existed whom Tom believed denounced Catiline. But you see that we are beginning to enter here into a system of double doors which, perhaps, would take us a bit too far.

But to bring you back to the question of the existence of God, this will make you grasp the difference there is between saying: "he believes that God exists", especially if we were to find it in the text of someone who tells us that one can think out the nature of God. Now precisely Pascal tells us that he is properly speaking not alone unknowable but unthinkable and thus that there is a world between believing that God exists in the sense that contrary to what the representatives of the ontological argument think there is no referent of God, and that on the contrary to say, about the indeterminate that God becomes in "I wager that God exists", is to say something completely different for this implies beneath the bar that God does not exist.

In other words, to say: "I wager that God exists or" (the or must be added) is to introduce this referent in which there is constituted the Other, the big Other, as marked (16) by the bar, which reduces him to the alternative of existence or not, and to nothing else.

Now this indeed is what is recognisable in the original message through which there appears in History the one who changes both the relationships of man to the truth and

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of man to his destiny, if it is true - one could say that I have been dinning it into you for some time - that the advent of Science, of science with a capital S - and since I am not the only one to think what Koyré has so powerfully articulated - this advent of Science would be inconceivable without the message of the God of the Jews. A message that is perfectly legible in the following: given that when he who was still not properly disentangled from his functions as a magus in communication with the Truth; because they were in communication with the truth - there is no need to treat youself to the ten plagues of Egypt to know it; if you had your eyes open you would see that the least of these pieces of pottery which are inexplicably for us the legacy of ancient times, breath magic, this is indeed why ours do not resemble them.

If I put so much in the foreground some tiny apologues like those of the mustard pot, it is not for the simple pleasure of parodying the stories about the potter.

But when Moses asks the messenger in the burning bush to reveal to him this sacred name which must act in the field of truth, He only answers him the following: *Eyè asher eyè,* which as you know - at least those who have been listening to me for some time - is not without posing certain difficulties of translation, of which undoubtedly the worst of all because it is formally accentuated in the sense of ontology would be: "I am (17) who am"; *asher* has never meant anything of the sort; *asher* is "that which"; and if you want to translate it into Greek it is ….....

"I am that which I am"; which means you will know nothing about my truth between this: I am appointed and the one who is to come, opacity, the stroke of *that which* subsists which remains as such irremediably closed.

I mark on the big O this bar; which means that it is here, at the beginning that we have struck in order that there may fall from it what, henceforth, in Pascal's *Wager* cannot be conceived of as anything representable, but as the real transparently seen as compared to this subjective fog of what is outlined in a misty and incoherent fashion of a dream about the field of the other in what solicits us on awakening, namely, this small (o), it is true that it is real and not represented, that it is graspable in a way by transparency, according as we ourselves have been able to organise the field of the other with more or less signifying rigour.

This small (o) that we know well through what I shall have to explain to you, and only now, about its relationship to the super-ego. It is when it is beyond the wall of shadow represented by this other suspended around the pure interrogation about his existence, that awakening is here what permits to make it fall, what is more, subsequently but antecedently with respect to this opaque field of the dream and of belief, and that the relationship of the analyst to this other whose definition, at the end of last year, I already gave you, it is here that the position of the analyst is to be defined; the partner, the respondent, the one starting from whom there is inaugurated the possibility of there (18) entering into the world a golden order which is not submitted to the eternal lure of the false captures of being, and depends on the realisation of the fact that this other, that this partner, the one who is not the one whose place we are occupying but with whom we have to engage ourselves in a three-sided game with the analysand and even with a fourth, the Other knows that he is nothing.

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SEMINAR 11: Wednesday 23 February 1966

Lacan was not present at this seminar.

French manuscripts are available for those who are curious about what was discussed.

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Seminar 12: Wednesday 23 March 1966

I would like if we could open the window, because it is true, I am noticing for the first time that you cannot breath in here.

I will see you afterwards, Jean-Paul.

Good, well I do not know how broadly the news has spread of something that I let those who are in a position to transmit it know about, namely, that this seminar today is an open seminar. Perhaps the fact that you do not, for all that, fill the room is due as much to the strike as to the fact that the news was not spread.

I had in effect, God knows, a rather strong desire to make contact again with my whole udience after this interruption for which I apologise. It is a lack on my part, no doubt. But, after all, I had to choose and to do, for once, what I ought to have done a long time ago, namely, visit the USA. It seemed to me, and again just a moment ago, that you expected, at least that some of my listeners expected me to say something to you about it.

I will try then to satisfy this desire, at least in part, and in a fashion that is improvised.

(2) Before doing so, nevertheless, I want first to state the pleasant surprise, which is not a complete surprise, the final satisfaction that I had, let us say, of the pleasant surprise that I already had before my departure. To say what is involved, I will show you immediately the last number of *Temps Modernes*, the article by Mr Michel Tort, who is present here, which appeared in two parts, and is called *De l'interprétation ou la machine herméneutique.*

I did not speak to you about it before leaving you since I was waiting for the end of this article, which I may say brings me great satisfaction. It seems to me to be appropriate that someone who bears the name of Tort is the one who takes up the gauntlet so well on my behalf.

In effect, I would say that, to describe this article, which is really a work, I think that it is a great encouragement for me to see on the part of someone whose quality I will not specify yet, as such, on the part of someone, a correction, [of] something that I will call right away, that I will highlight in a fashion which might perhaps be better qualified, but after all I cannot find a better term than that of philosophical misappropriation, or again misappropriation of thought.

Someone in my immediate circle thought he ought to highlight - this required a certain courage - the elements that were borrowed, not necessarily recognised as such for a (3) long time by the author, the elements borrowed from my teaching. At which he drew on himself a singular response, whose incorrectness a certain number of you at least will be able to measure by reading a certain number of *Critique*.

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The term of plagiarism, which my pupil had not written, was put forward in this response and its juridical background was even discussed, undoubtedly, this is not the question. I have spoken about this question of plagiarism for a long time, and underlined that in my eyes there is no such thing as intellectual property.

Nevertheless, after having been for a very long time not simply an assiduous attender but even a confidant of the particular plan of my teaching with regard to psychoanalysis, after having made use of it, and this for a very long time, after having made use of it in lectures given in America which moreover had a great success, then in a work whose goals are properly speaking goals that are contrary to those which constitute the foundation of psychoanalysis, my teaching being a teaching which properly speaking, claims to re-establish this teaching of psychoanalysis on its true foundations, this is what I qualified just now as a misappropriation of thought. I can do so all the more in that the article by Mr Michel Tort is precisely the exact demonstration of this scandalous operation which reflects, moreover, the general tone which, in our times, is the one of what is called, more or less vaguely, philosophy. (4) That is the reason why I hesitated to describe Mr Michel Tort as a philosopher, since the operation that he devotes himself to has nothing in common with what is usual in this field.

The firm, the rigorous, implacable distinction that he makes between what is involved in psychoanalytic interpretation and this vague and flabby field that I already designated as being properly that of all the swindles of our epoch, which is called hermeneutics, once this distinction has been fixed, it is really the type of operation that I most wish for from those who come to listen to me and who listen to me in an appropriate fashion, I mean understanding the import of what I am saying. The work of Mr Michel Tort in this regard represents a milestone, an essential milestone upon which really one could ground oneself to qualify what I meant to say about what is involved in psychoanalytic interpretation.

In effect if you refer to what I put forward at the end of my seminar last year, about the situation created by the advent of science, and that this advent was possible in the measure in which a position was taken up which used the signifier, as I might say, while refusing to it any compromise in the problems of the truth.

(5) If one thinks that because of this, a situation is created by which the question is posed to science about the field of truth, by each of those who find themselves affected by this fundamental modification.

What about the truth? That it is properly in this field of truth, effectively, that religion responds. But what today cannot be eliminated from any philosophical position of beginning from this fact, of the distinction, of the radical opposition between religion and science, that it is impossible, that it is untenable to try, as Whitehead did, to apportion the domains of science and of religion as two distinct domains with an objectivity that could have anything whatsoever in common, that their difference lies very precisely in the two essentially, radically, different approaches to the position of the subject.

Henceforth, it proves, that if I say that psychoanalysis is properly speaking the interpretation of the signifying roots of what constitutes the truth of the destiny of

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man, it is clear that analysis places itself on the same terrain as religion and is absolutely incompatible with the responses given in this field by religion for the very appropriate reason that it brings a different interpretation to them. Psychoanalysis is in an essentially demystifying position with respect to religion.

(6) And the essence of analytic interpretation cannot in any way be mixed up at any level whatsoever with the religious interpretation of this same field of truth.
It is in this sense that I would say that Mr Michel Tort, in articulating this up to the point where this rejects into the same field by demystifying almost the totality of the philosophical tradition, including the Hegelian dialectic, has proved on this occasion that he is what I can only qualify in the final analysis by one word, because there is no other one within reach for the moment, a Freudian.

And those who deserve to be qualified by this term can, to my knowledge, properly speaking to be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Well then, after having done justice to Mr Tort, after having thanked him, after having offered him on this occasion everything that might be appropriate for him to adopt his work in any way possible that may come within my orbit, as a way of republishing it, after also having drawn it to the attention of all, and having asked everyone to consult it, and I would say line by line, well then, good God, I will try to say a little about what I have been told you are expecting, namely my impressions of this short visit to America, since I spent twenty-eight days there.

(7) To tackle this experience, especially like this, in a way that is a little impromptu, is not all that easy. First of all because there are practical consequences to this, and projects that I cannot give you an account of without having conferred with my closest collaborators, and which after all, I ought to confide only in them, it is, nevertheless, all the same in the field of what I encountered over there in terms of psychiatric, indeed university reality in its totality, that you expect from me, perhaps even, why not, you expect from me about ..... the memories of my travels.
To make contact with what is after all no longer a new world' except for me, since I waited until I was at an advanced age to set foot in it, may suggest to some people a certain curiosity. I am certainly not going to set about playing the Keyserling before you in connection with this encounter.

And, right away, I would say that prudence and, indeed, respect for the real require of me, after such a short journey, to abstain above from making judgements. I think, moreover, fundamentally, and not from today, that the benefit to be drawn from a journey is that, on returning, you see what is well known, familiar to you with a different eye. This is the real discovery of a journey. And it is in this sense that this journey is a great discovery because I do not yet know how far will go the fact that I (8) see things here with a different eye, but I am certain that, in that respect, this voyage will not be without consequences.

How can one try to say it? My first feeling about it? It is a matter of what I am going to tell you about my experience. You see clearly how I am situating it. It is not a matter of a judgement on the United States of America. It is simply a matter of what I, for my part, saw there, and which all of a sudden, allows me to foresee everything that I am going, for example, to drop from my discourse from now on.

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A tendency, an indication ….. it is not sure that I will go so far as I am going to say. The beginning of such an effect, I am going to try to summarise in a short sentence. It seemed to me that I encountered a past, an absolute, compact past, a past that could be cut with a knife, a pure past, a past that is all the more essential in that it never existed, either in the place that it is established for the moment nor where it is supposed to come from, namely, from us.

Obviously, this may come perhaps from too much tourism. The fact that in New York I encountered Gothic churches and even cathedrals at every street corner, I am saying at every street corner, there are people who have been there who can tell you that it is true, it has not been sufficiently underlined and that is how, nevertheless, the fact that the University of Chicago at which I thought I ought to end up, finishing there in fact the six lectures that I gave over there, I really wanted to do that because Chicago is an (9) elective place in my history. There were woven there very interesting things, things which were supposed in principle to be designed to withdraw from me, henceforth, any possibility of speaking. I was therefore not at all unhappy to carry the word there myself. In Chicago I saw an entire university, but a university over there, as you know, is very big, entirely constructed in Gothic. A hundred buildings of, I must say, perfect Gothic. I never saw a more beautiful Gothic, a purer Gothic, it is very well done. The false Gothic is well equal to the real I assure you.

We know that university methods in every country in the world remain dated from the Gothic epoch. The Sorbonne, for example, is still structured as it was at the time of its birth which was a Gothic epoch. It distinguished itself already by a violent, manifest opposition to anything new that might be created, as we know in connection with this condemnation, that I recalled for you recently, that it thought it should bring against St Thomas Aquinas who was an audacious little innovator.

When I speak about the Gothic quality of the university, I am not for all that saying that it always kept to the same principles: it has rather fallen away from them. At the Gothic epoch, precisely, people maintained very severely this principle of two truths that I spoke to you about earlier. When people did philosophy, it was not in order to defend religion; it was in order to separate itself from it. In our day we have gone into this mixing whose results of course are spreading. This is only a reminder of what I was saying earlier.

In any case, there is one thing certain, it is that the Sorbonne at the time that it was properly Gothic, was not constructed in Gothic, at least not in this perfect Gothic of the University of Chicago.

It is not so impressive. You have all the same the same feeling when you see piled up in a mass in these museums, these formidable and unimaginable collections of Impressionists which seem to be exiled, as it were, to be prisoners, torn from the atmosphere of this Parisian light of the end of the last century in which they blossomed, which are visited in a sort of ceremonial way by hordes of women and children who file past, I must say, at any hour of the day, at any day of the week that one comes, before this sort of incomparable and heart-rending brilliance that they take on from their very accumulation, as if here, in effect, were the place where there ought to end up the brilliant product, after all, of an art that we have, it has to be said, here,

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particularly disdained, I mean at the moment that it emerged and it is once again our past in a massive way which is found over there, I would say in a certain fashion which weighed, weighed very heavily on anything else which might seem, after all, to be called to be born in a society which has existed for a long enough time to have its own cultural masters.

Obviously, there are little shoots from time to time. I cannot hide from you the satisfaction I had to see an apartment entirely furnished with tiny samples of these little outpourings, like that, of creative fever which has described itself with the rubric of Pop Art. It was a chap who had made a fortune in the taxi business and who found himself effectively to be one of the first to finance, namely, to give here and there two hundred dollars to this group, up to then dispersed, of people who had launched themselves into a certain register, I do not want to describe to you either the principles, or the appearance, or the style or indeed what radiates from this Pop Art, what I mean is that this character who remained there, entirely furnished, adorned his apartment, his walls covered with the works, with the fruits of Pop Art gave me a long speech full of clap-trap to explain to me how he had spotted, helped, sustained this Pop Art. I find this extraordinarily appealing. Indeed something appeared to me in this Art in relation to the society that it sustains. Unfortunately, when I, without any particular sense of paradox, God knows, for I had taken a rather lively pleasure in this experience, I shared it with some very distinguished people that I met in New York, I sensed a (12) certain reserve. People looked at me a little strangely. I mean that people were asking themselves whether I was not pushing the joke a little bit too far, because Pop Art for the moment seems to have already gone underground, and even what has succeeded it, namely, Op Art.

In short, I have just illustrated for you what I called earlier the dominance of the past, I am improvising, I apologise for being so long, I have illustrated it for you in these fields which are not properly speaking those which interest us, but that is perhaps because I did not want to say too much about it, that I wanted to spare you what, after all, I only know imperfectly and necessarily from people who, for their part, aspired rather for some change in what we will call the method of teaching psychology, indeed of psychology in medicine, of what was the status, the style of life, the way of being of the psychiatrist.

After all it is extraordinary, I take the very terms of someone who spoke to me, the ease of life of a psychiatrist over there is extraordinary, one really has no need, I was told, to put oneself out in order to have a clientèle.

And, starting from there, I was quoted names which are not the least important, which are quite capable of being ones to whom I could pin remarks like the following: “Good God, why ask oneself questions, and especially if they are any bit metaphysical when (13) God knows, after all, everything is going so well, that you finish work at half-past five, you have a whiskey, you read a novel, usually a spy one and you settle down in front of television”. I do not see why one should reproach what constitutes a social class for having its comforts, simply that it is for us to see what this involves, of course, in terms of inertia, and of being too settled.

Well then, whatever about appearances, it must nevertheless not be believed that on this basis, that on this very particular basis which is perhaps, as I might say, the

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opposite of the sky-scrapers, of this monumental verticality, which is moreover, a singular thing, the exclusive privileges of banks. Alongside this, there is a whole horizontal world which is precisely the one inhabited by people of the class that I have just evoked, namely an infinite world, a sea of little two-storied houses, perfectly imitated from the English style, in which there live, with, God knows, what one might call all the amenities of existence, a considerable group of people which is precisely the one which interests us on this occasion, because it is the one in the midst of which I was called to move about as a pilgrim or as a pioneer, as you wish. Detroit where I spent some time, is a city of twenty-five kilometres wide and eighteen kilometres long, which means that when you are looking for a good restaurant it involves a considerable time, after all, in order to cross it in a motor car.

(14) Even though, again, the heart of this city is made up of a knot of motorways. Within this network of motorways, you have the streets that I am speaking to you about with innumerable little houses and all of those I entered, of course, given the class of people that I was seeing, were very well furnished and rather encumbered with *objets d'art* brought back from the peregrinations across the world of the people involved which are, as you know, numerous.

So much for the style and the complement of what I called earlier this sort of inertia of the past and of a singular past, I am coming back to it, for this suggested to me this form of questioning: that there is a dimension of the past which is to be defined as essentially, radically, different from the one which interests us under the rubric of repetition. The past into which there does not intervene to any extent, and it is a feeling of this sort that I had on encountering this extraordinary past, the fact is that it is a past without any underlay of repetition.

It is perhaps this singular, striking, impressive aspect, I assure you, which gave me, at least, which gave me the feeling of a dough that is absolutely impossible to stir. For this is not to say, for all that, that I did not encounter over there numerous occasions for dialogue. And I would say that of the six audiences that I had, specifically, at the (15) University of Columbia, on my arrival, at MIT (The Massachusetts Institute for Technology), at Harvard University, (Centre for Cognitive Studies), The University of Detroit where I spoke before the college of professors, after one of these ceremonies which consists in a lunch taken in a comfortable room which is distinguished by the absence of any wine, which is not the privilege of the United States, at the University of Ann Arbour some fifty-five kilometres from there, which is a city - when I spoke about the University of Chicago the word city was a metaphor, while for the University of Ann Arbour it is not one - the population of some thirty thousand students who live there in a city that is, as it were, specialised to receive them and finally at the University of Chicago, the audience was mixed differently in different places, more linguists and philosophers, very few doctors at Columbia but, on the contrary, an almost entirely medical audience at Chicago, this because of the fact that the parts of the University to which my friend Roman Jakobson, to whom I want now to render homage here for the whole enterprise of which he was at once the initiator and the organiser, well then, I must say that of the six audiences, I had, in reply to what I articulated before them which I will not perhaps have the time to give you an idea of, (16) in reply, God knows, the most relevant, the most interesting questions from professors of different specialities, with whom, thanks to their welcome and their charming hospitality, I subsequently had throughout the whole day, or on the occasion

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of meetings, dinners or other festivities, the opportunity of explaining myself, I had the feeling of a very great openness to the things that I was bringing them and which, to their ears, were nevertheless, undoubtedly, unheard of. I am speaking here about the university milieu. I except, here as elsewhere, what we will call the high-brow milieu, the intelligentsia, localised, for me at least, to those whom I met in New York. For at New York my teaching is unpublished, perhaps, but it probably will not always be so. It is far from being unknown. But as you have often been told no doubt, New York is not America. At New York they know perfectly well what is happening here and the small place that I hold in it is not unknown. But to return to my contacts with the American University, my feeling was confirmed moreover by my interlocutors, who told me what I ought to expect and what I should not expect, my feeling is that there is a very large field of places and of points where you could gain attention, establish links, elaborate contacts which would be followed up, recorded, published. I brought back some samples of journals that are properly speaking internal to the universities and which I even read *en route* with very great interest because there are excellent (17) articles of all sorts and of all kinds, and one could say that everything remains to be done. One could also say that nothing is to be done because undoubtedly with so much openness, welcome, even success, the feeling, at least the present general feeling, I mean among my interlocutors, I would not allow myself to have a feeling, is that in any case nothing will be changed in the equilibrium currently attained, which leaves plenty of liberty for everyone, that someone who can bring along a sufficient number of collaborators is certainly not prevented from working, and everything is thus installed in a juxtaposition of living co-existence which seems indeed for the moment to exclude, even if one aspired to it, a renewal of style and especially in what interests us, in what interests me, namely the status of the teaching of psychoanalysis, that one will not arrive at anything like a reversal of the current, at a reflux, a change of tide, at anything at all that may resemble a fundamental change. Nevertheless, between this everything to be done and nothing to be done, I believe that my tendency for the moment is undoubtedly, God knows, even if it were only as a way of taking up a challenge, and then there are other things in the world besides the North American United States, to do there all the same at least something in the form of a publication, and this is what I will reserve for my closest pupils as regards my project.

(18) Might I add, in two words, the complement, the following secret that, in the course of this little "*travel*" which is almost nothing but a little "*trip",* I reserved a week for myself at the end for my personal pleasure and that having planned first of all to spend it in the American West, I changed my project, suddenly not being able to resist the proximity of a country full of magic, I think, for some of you, which is called Mexico and I spent eight days there.

I will not speak to you about it at length now. I did not at all have there the life of a missionary. I had that of a tourist, it must be said, nothing more. In any case, the things that I saw touched me at two points.

The fact is that one cannot but be very impressed to see something, me in any case, something which is indeed, the ancient religion, since earlier we were talking about religion, of these peoples who are still there, absolutely unchanged, the face and I would dare to say the look of these Indians, still the same, whether it is those who serve you discreetly in the corridors of hotels or who inhabit cabins which are still

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thatched at the side of the road, these Indians who have the same figure, exactly, that we see fixed in basalt or in granite, these vague fragments that we collect of their ancient art, these Indians have there something or other, in terms of a relationship which persists, with the simple presence on the monuments of what are incorrectly (19) called pictogrammes, ideogrammes or other incorrect designations of what we can call hieroglyphs, and moreover not always deciphered but whose taking up again by contemporary painters or architects, because at Chicago there are on the walls of an ultra-modern library, for example, four entire facades decorated in what we could call the usage of the flotsam of these signifying forms. What is conveyed by this seems to me to be something that is at once enigmatic and, at the same time, so impressive because of this sort of invisible link across an irremediable break which subsists between the generations which are growing up and those of the students who populate the University of Mexico, which I would say is the most enormous of all of those that I have seen, with these signs, these signs with which something has forever been broken and which nevertheless are there, translating in a visible fashion what I could only call, because I am before this audience, a relationship preserved to what is so tangible in everything that we know about these ancient cults, this thing which was not at all understood, except as something horrible, by the first conquerors, and which is nothing but visible everywhere, everywhere present, everywhere attached in the form of charms, as it were, all the forms of the divinity which is nothing other than the o-object.

We will no doubt, perhaps, have to allude to it later and perhaps I will have the opportunity of giving it to you as indeed a simple marginal illustration, but one that (20) undoubtedly is not without its importance for what I will continue to say to you about it.
Well then, there is no point, in the middle of all of that, marking for you what I thought I saw being sketched out of it there as a consequence.

I have given myself an awful lot of trouble, through the numerous years of my teaching, to bring to a *milieu* which was not specially prepared to receive it, a certain amount of information, more especially about the field of linguistics. You have already sensed for a long time the slight nostalgias that I may have about this, the result is that after fifteen years of this teaching, I put, perhaps a little bit before the others, this little *milieu* which was the one that I was operating on, alerted them to something which now you can find everywhere at every cross-roads, at every street corner, indeed under the more or less appropriate name which will soon be absolutely, even impossible to clean up such is the degree to which it is going to be covered with these different encrustations of shells that cover a wreck, the word structuralism. It is here, rather, that it is going to be a matter of carrying out a very serious cleansing operation in order to be able to say all the same what structuralism is for us.

This effort that I also made to recall the conditions of the birth and the evolution of (21) science in terms of how decisive it may be for us, for us to conceive ourselves as determined by it. It must be said, I was surprised in the United States to find a large part of my programme, of what is in my seminar, spread out on walls about ten metres long in the form of little diagrams, which moreover no one even looked at, but which contained in an absolutely decisive fashion, the dates, the turning points, and perfectly well explained in every line of descendancy of the classification of sciences and which, if I ought to say it, I ought also to say if I had been teaching over there, would

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have saved me a lot of trouble. For when all is said and done, all of these things can be bought over there in a paperback.

This is the interest, the importance of what I might call from a certain angle, the evacuation of the past which is, at the same time, possible if we clearly see its proper dimension, this aspect of inertia, one can leave its manipulation to men with shovels. It must be said that this is not at all a perspective of "*despise",* of *mépris*. What on the contrary appears there to be most certain, is what it separates out as regards our own essence. Because from the very moment that the past, at the state of pure past, exists there block-like, in its perfect form, for as I demonstrated to you earlier, the portrayal of the University of Chicago exists more perfectly than it ever did exist. The (22) impressionist creation is there like a fly in amber, in a state of perfection that it never had here.

With respect to this past which is, in a way, what we are delivered from, there is all the same an aspect of ourselves which remains part of it, which is indeed ourselves as we are today and which is only a miscarriage of it. In order to see it raised to the level of caricature you have again, in Mexico, to go to the Hotel Del Prado and install yourself before a fresco, which is the height of the wall of our room here, by Diego Rivera and which is called *Un rêve de dimanche aprés-midi sur l'Alameda*. The Alameda is a sort of Tuileries of Chicago, and the figure that we cut in this panel, I am not going to describe it for you, you can get photographs of it, is very instructive.

Here then is what I believe we can learn by going to the United States and, moreover, on the entire soil of this noble America, there is the figure of everything that failed in the past, it is a kind of retroactive figure of an adherence to something which was never lived, and which, as such, cannot be, in any shape or form, if one lets oneself go a little to any movement whatsoever of hope, of vivacity, of creation, undoubtedly the only thing that remains for you from such a contact is a really crushing impression of (23) what is difficult to raise up in our world.

What did I speak to them about? It is quite certain that I did not properly speaking do a seminar with them. Even though my roots in a certain style are not so easy to break all of a sudden, it is to this *penchant,* this habit, even this need that I have acquired of a certain way of hooking my audience that I owe, to my astonishment I must say, the fact of not being able in any case to make up my mind to speak to them in French, and it is a curious thing, to really manage to speak to them in English.

The habit that I have of following on your faces the rather peculiar effect of this word, did not seem to me to be extremely different to what I experienced before these audiences, namely, that their captive, if not illuminated faces gave me the feeling that something in this English was of such a kind that they did not reject the impression of it being an articulated language.

There you are. So I spoke to them - I am going to tell you about what in two words because in a few moments we are going to have to separate - I centred things a little, because I had to make myself understood, on something which seemed to me to be striking. And then I, as you understand, for my part I am taken up with my o-object for the moment, I am trying to bring it to you like that, to slip it into a certain number (24) of stockings from which it will emerge in one way or another. We will see that,

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we will take it up the next time. I had to return to fundamentals. And after all, this allowed me to gather these fundamentals together. Not at all, of course, that I allow them like that to go with the stream. But after all why not? This allowed me perhaps to take up the module of a discourse that was more condensed, more simple also, more striking even though the hammer-blow is never absent from what I have to tell you.

Perhaps, after all, I will make a little collection of them which will perhaps not be all that badly adapted to American ears since I adjusted it to American ears.

Well then, I thought I should begin from something which is all the same a tangible feature, a feature that it is easy to make understood and which is not new, of course, for you, it is that of the distinction between demand and desire.

Obviously in English, I prided myself on making myself understood, it is obviously with a vocabulary and syntactic refinements that are more reduced that I was led to speak. It is quite easy to make understood to people who are listening to you, that when something is demanded of them they have to be careful, that it is not always what is demanded of you that is precisely what people desire you to give. It is enough to (25) have the slightest experience of it. It is enough to have a girl friend for this truth to be immediately perceptible, and after that you can go into structural considerations.

Yes. Because starting from that moment, of course, you can show that desire ought to be extracted from the demand and that there is this second phase, that the demand is articulated in the unconscious. It is enough here to refer to the truths that I have always reminded you of and which consist simply in opening the first books of Freud. When all is said and done, it is not impossible, even before an American audience, to introduce the inscription of the formula in the top right-hand corner of my graph, namely $ D (S barred in its relationship to demand), namely, that it is precisely to this that the division of the subject is attached.

Which is obviously to reintegrate this division of the subject onto the same plane, at the same level that Freud introduced the division between the unconscious and the pre-conscious, to eliminate the distance which separates this beginning of his work from the point that he ends up with, the *splitting* of what he calls the ego, namely, the *splitting* of the subject, and to show for example on this occasion that this remark that Freud makes that the principle of contradiction does not function in the (26) unconscious, is a remark which is only a first approach and is inadequate in a sense if it goes as far as to imply that there is no sign of negation in the unconscious because we all know, and from reading the texts of Freud himself, that negation has, I am not saying in the unconscious, that would mean nothing, but in the formations of the unconscious, representatives that are clear and well mapped out.

The so-called suspension of the principle of non-contradiction at the level of the unconscious, is simply this fundamental *splitting* of the subject. There is something else that I put in the foreground of my discourse and which follows, as one rosary bead follows the other, this approach through the difference between demand and desire, it is the designation of the point which is the same meeting point from which I began earlier, moreover, concerning the relationships of knowledge and truth, the fact

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is that what Freud contributed to us is the designation of the locus of incidence of a particular desire which is the point through which sexuality comes into play as fundamental in the domain that it is a matter of defining and that this point is called: the desire to know.

It is because sexuality first comes into play from the angle of the desire to know that the desire involved in the Freudian dynamic is sexual desire. It is because it comes into play under the species that had already been located, not without reason, by religious minds, it is because the *cupido sciendi* was situated where it should be by Freud that everything has changed in the dynamics of ethics.

(27) That the other desires, the desire for *jouissance* and the desire for domination, prove not to be on the same level. That one is found to be in a dependent position by being at the level of narcissism, that the other, the desire for *jouissance* is precisely there to manifest for us what I would call the duplicity of desire.

For, far from desire being desire for *jouissance,* it is precisely the barrier that keeps you at the distance that is more or less correctly calculated from this burning hearth, from what is precisely to be avoided by the thinking subject and which is called *jouissance.*

Will I go so far as to tell you that I began for them something that will be the next step of what I am going to have to present to you. Namely, taking into account the following of which, of course, I was only able to speak from the angle, namely, from the locus of the Other, the positioning point of the truth, as a locus where there is put in question the truth of the demand, as a locus also where there appears and emerges at the same time the dimension of desire, I was able to begin what, as I have just told you, is going to be the continuation of my discourse and which, consisting of specifying the fact that desire, this desire whose locus I articulated for you at first by saying that desire is first of all the desire of the other, topology is going to teach us to make function this sort of turning [inside-out, back-to-front] (*retournement*) which is (28) properly the one that I will try to display, at the level that I will show you, such as they are, as it can be done, as one turns a glove inside out, at the level of the structure of the torus, that if desire is to be located, to be measured in function of a demand of the other, the structure is going to allow us to see, the structure which is the structure of the torus, the fact is that there is a structural foundation that is perfectly - I am minimising in saying that it is illustrated by the structure of the torus, it is sustained by the structure of the torus, the torus is the substance, the *upokeimenon* of the structure in question concerning desire, the torus may appear, obviously, this is what I will show you with a piece of chalk the next time, that there is inscribed in it in the clearest fashion the relationship that there is of the sustaining of a desire, not at all by a demand but by a repeated demand or by a double demand.

And the fact that this figure which is properly the one that I am drawing for you here, the turning inside-out (*retournement)* of the structure of the torus can display, materialise before your eyes what can be obtained from it and we will see what turning inside-out signifies in function of what happens to turning inside-out when we are dealing with other topological structures, namely, the cross-cap and the Klein bottle.

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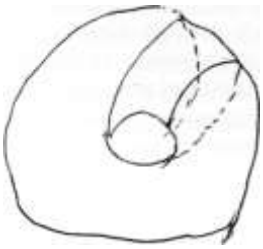

(29) This turning inside-out having been performed, we have two desires in relation to one demand. This duplicity of desire with respect to demand is at the root of everything that in the analytic field extends as far as to what is called confusedly ambivalence, which can find its reason only there. This is what I will have the opportunity of developing for you in a fuller fashion the next time. And you see already that what is involved is the function of a cut, that in the three shapes that I will have to take up from this angle, it is the same shape of cut, namely, what I called the S or the inverted eight, which gives us its key and its shape and that there are different functions. In short, to conclude and to say what I was trying above all to get across to the ears of my audience in America, that there is a domain that can be isolated in the field called psychological up to now which is the domain of what is determinable as the field of language and excels in this field which is the word, that this is definable. It is the function of the subject, the function of the subject which is not, as I saw written recently, a function of absence but on the contrary a function of the intense presence of something hidden, which is what brings us back to the Freudian foundation of the unconscious and it is on this that I will leave you today and give you a *rendezvous* for the open seminar next week.

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Seminar 13: Wednesday 30 March 1966

Seminar 13 is missing. This will be corrected shortly

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Seminar 14: Wednesday 20 April 1966

I am going, after this vacation which has separated us, I had to meet you again on a pre-arranged Wednesday to hold a closed seminar which, because of this fact, reduces you to a number of chosen pupils, which I do not find to be a bad way of our getting together again today, for the things that I am going to have to say to you.

In effect, contrary to what is the principle of these closed seminars, namely, that it ought to be, it can be in any case, someone else other than myself who, at first at least, poses the question; well then, I shall be the one who speaks to you today, even if only in order to compensate, to tie together again what was interrupted by my month's absence in the last trimester, and also, I hope, in order to begin for the next time, a collaboration which will give to this closed seminar the next time, its proper character as a seminar.

I will begin, because moreover this time of vacation brought me back to the problems, already present in my first remarks, of my relations with my audience, well then, I said to myself, because it was yesterday evening that I got it to be corrected, that I was going to see in that a sign, and that I was first of all going to read you something (2) which you see here is still a galley-proof which is meant for the year book of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes. Every year there appears, from each of those who collaborate in the teaching of the Hautes Etudes, a little summary of their course. This summary is not of course that of this year, it is that of last year; it is not ahead of time, as you can see. But after all, there is still enough time since, moreover, it is going to give me the opportunity of sharing it with you.

I am going to share it with you because, as you are going to see, in drafting it, I thought of you. Not of reading it to you, I had no way of knowing that this would happen. But as you are going to see, I thought of you.

With no further preamble then, I begin this reading. What is in question is what, last year was called: *Crucial problems for psychoanalysis*. "The problem placed at the centre," I say, in this little summary which you may well imagine is ultra-condensed, "the problem placed at the centre, can be described in these terms: the being of the subject." (I pre-suppose that I am addressing people who attended this seminar last year.) "Terms to which the high-point of our previous references brought us. That the being of the subject" - it is still relevant this year - "that the being of the subject is split, was something that Freud repeated, in all its forms, after having discovered that the unconscious can only be expressed in a knot of language, [and] has therefore the being of a subject. It is from the combinatorial of these knots that there is broken through the censorship, which is not a metaphor, brought to bear on the material of these knots of language." (As regards these two little paragraphs, even though a summary is not a didactic object, all the same I recall the very solid foundations that we start from, (3) which is precisely the fact that the unconscious has the structure of language. That censorship is not a metaphor, means that it cuts into something

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material and this is where we start from with Freud. I think I have summarised it here in five lines.)

"Right away, Freud" - this is for the use of people who might find my summary too obscure if it elided these primary truths - "right away Freud affirms", this is a complement, "that any conception of a ..... of consciousness towards the obscure, the potential, indeed automatism, is inadequate to account for its effects." (A reminder, then, that everything which tries to make of the unconscious a lesser, a virtual, an ante-, a pre-consciousness is not the unconscious.) Three lines again then. Which I specify: "This is only recalled to separate off any 'philosophy' from the use that we made this year" (this year that I am giving an account of) "of the *cogito* which is legitimate, we believe, since the *cogito* does not ground consciousness, but precisely this splitting of the subject."

"It is enough to write: 'I am thinking "therefore I am"' - I repeat: 'I am thinking "therefore I am"', this is what I think: "*I am thinking, therefore I am*", and to note that this enunciating obtained from an asceticism," (naturally it does not fall from the Heavens), "consists first of all in an arranging, in a great clearing-out of all the knowledge that was actualised in the time of Descartes who undertakes this asceticism, that this enunciating splits the individual (*l'être*), these two ends" (I am thinking therefore I am at the end) "only connect up by manifesting some torsion that it underwent in its knot", (its knot to enunciating.)

"Causation? Reversal? Negativity?" (with question marks) "it is the topology of this torsion that must be carried out."

(4) (I recall here, in the following paragraph, the angle from which I touched on Piaget and Vigotsky who, I say, illustrate between the first to the second, the advantage that is to be gained by rejecting any psychological hypothesis about the relationships of the subject to language, even when we are dealing with the child. For this hypothesis is only the mortgage *(hypothèque)* that a being of knowledge takes on the being of truth that the child has to incarnate, starting from the signifying battery that we present him with, which Vigotsky faithfully presents to him, as such, and which constitutes the law of the experiment.)

"But this is to anticipate on a structure which must be grasped in its synchrony, and an encounter which is not simply a chance one. This is what is provided for us by this meshing of the one with the zero which came to us from the point at which Frege set about founding arithmetic." (A summary therefore in three lines, of the function which our study of the foundations of arithmetic played in this last year. The one numbers the null class. The reference is to the lectures of Messrs Miller and Milner)

"From this, it is perceived that the being of the subject is the suturing of a lack, specifically of the lack which, hiding itself in number, sustains it by its recurrence - this is the idea on which there is founded the theory of number - of the successor, but in this only supports it by being, when all is said and done, what is lacking to the signifier to be the One of the subject, or in terms that we have called in another context, the unary trait, the mark of a primary identification which will function as ideal."

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"The subject experiences himself as being, at the same time, an effect of the mark and a support of its lack. Some reminders of the formalisation where this result is found would", I write, "be appropriate here. However short may be the space reserved for me, I have all the same room to recall, first of all, our axiom grounding the signifier as (5) 'what represents a subject not for another subject but for another signifier'. This axiom situates the lemma which has just been re-acquired along another path" - what we have just said before - "the subject is what responds to the mark by what it lacks, in which there is seen only the reversal of the formula" - that of the signifier that I have just given earlier as an axiom - "that the reversal of the formula only operates by introducing at one of its poles, the signifier, a negativity."

"The loop is closed without being reduced to a circle, the supposed, third term," call it what you wish," after the axiom and the lemma, that the signifier originates from the effacing of the trace."

"The power of mathematics, the frenetic pace of our science reposes on nothing other than the suture of the subject, from the thinness of this scar, and after all, in speaking about a scar of this suture, you must not believe that I am using a term that a mathematician would reject, it is Poincaré's term in his *analysis situs,* or better again of its gap. The aporias of mathematical logic bear witness to this thinness - Godel's theorem" - you remember the beginning of the sentence). "And always, of course, a great scandal for consciousness."

"People have no illusions about the fact" - I for my part have no illusions, nor I hope have you - "that a critique at this level will not be able to scour clean the wound of the lack of the subject everywhere except at the level where science maintains it sutured, by the sheer strength of arithmetic. One cannot scour clean the plague of excrement which the order of social exploitation, which takes its stand on this opening in the (6) subject, and therefore does not create, whatever may be thought about it, even in Marxism, alienation, in the order therefore of social exploitation," I say, "an attempt is made to cover the aforesaid wound, more or less consciously. There are many things which serve that purpose." A discipline of truth, we would say in general, but there has to be mentioned, (should I add, should I not add) the servile task, (I did not put it in the text, I put it in as an author's correction for the typist, but I do not know yet whether I will leave it) which is fulfilled there by philosophy, ever since the open crisis of the subject.

I said: since the open crisis of the subject. I am designating a date in the history of philosophy, philosophy, as they say, ever since it has been related to science. And that here it plays its role very badly ..... "It is on the other hand out of the question that any critique directed at society should supply for it" - for this critique, about which I said I have no illusions, as regards the power that we have to scour the wound of excrements, etc. - that no critique then, directed at society can supply for it - it is very important - "because this critique itself can only be a critique coming from society, namely, whatever it may be, implicated in the business of this sort of bandaging up, that we have just spoken about. That is why only the analysis of this object - the bandaging - can confront it in its reality ..... which is to be the object of psychoanalysis. Our project for the current year."

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"We will not be content however to suspend, which would be an admission of defeat, [in] our approach to the being of the subject, on the excuse of rediscovering, of course, its foundation of lack."

It is precisely for this reason that I am reading this to you. I would like to throw something like a seed into what I might call your fundamental attitude as a listener.

(7) "This is precisely the upsetting dimension," I did not hesitate to write, "of our teaching, that it puts to the test this foundation, demand, in so far as it is in our audience. For how could we back away from seeing that what we require from structure as regards the being of the subject, cannot be left out of account in the one who represents it in an outstanding way in our discourse, even in order to represent it as belonging or not to thought, just like the *cogito," (*just like the *cogito*, people have sneered (*gauté*) at it, you see that you never waste your time), "namely, the psychoanalyst. It is indeed what we find in the phenomenon notable in that year, of the advance made by another part of our audience, by giving us this success," I say, "of confirming the theory that we believe to be correct, of communication *in* language, which is not the whole of communication." But you know this formula for a long time. It must be the case that mine do not lose all that much by being endlessly repeated, because it is effectively necessary for me to repeat them and to announce them. We express it by saying that the message is only emitted here at the level of the one who receives it. "No doubt a place should be given here, since I make an allusion to another part of my audience, to the privilege that we receive from the place whose guests we are." This is in homage to the Ecole Normale Superieure. "But it must not be forgotten, that in the reserve that is inspired in some people by what appears to be too easily in this effect of seminar, the resistance that it allows, this reserve" (and I add) "which is justified. It is justified because commitments are part of being and not of thought, and the two aspects of the being of the subject are diversified here because of the divergence between truth and knowledge. The difficulty of the being of the analyst comes from the fact that he encounters, as being of the subject, namely the (8) symptom, that the symptom is a being of truth, everyone agrees with this in so far as they know what psychoanalysis means, even though it is constructed to confuse the matter." (I am sure I would obtain the agreement even of those who confuse it most, if I were to throw in their face right away, the fact that the essence of the symptom, our position in the symptom, is that it is a being of truth.)

Henceforth, one sees what it costs the being of knowledge, by recognising the fortunate forms of what he, for his part, only engages with under the sign of unhappiness, the unhappiness of his patient, that this being of knowledge - that of the psychoanalyst - must reduce himself to being only the complement of the symptom, this is horror-provoking, and that by eliding it, the being of knowledge in question is operating towards an indefinite adjournment of the status of psychoanalysis, I mean as scientific.

"That is why even the shock that I produced, by closing the year on this principle, was not able to avoid the short-circuit being repeated in its place." (And I make an allusion to the form in which this came back to me and which is very important.) "It came back to me with obvious good will, of course, and even adorned with a paradox, as it stated that it is the way in which the practitioner treats it that creates the symptom.

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"This appears to be the continuation of what I had put forward before. Nevertheless, there was good reason for me to be startled by it, for, of course, it is true from the experiments of psychologists through which we had introduced our few words (*le grelot*)" - a reference to the paragraph on Vigotsky and Piaget - "but it is also to remain a psychotherapist, and this exactly at the level of saying that," (to say that which in a certain sense is true, but it is not the truth that we, for our part, have to (9) speak, which is not the one that we have to confront, when I contribute on the subject of the clinic the following, namely, that we, as analysts, have to take part in the symptom.) "It is then to remain, as a psychotherapist, exactly at the level of what ensured that Pierre Janet never could understand why he was not Freud."

"The divine bottle," I concluded, "is the Klein bottle. Not everyone can make emerge from its neck what is in its lining. For this is how there is constructed the support of the being of the subject."

There you are. I only read this little piece for you to give you the opportunity of getting to know it because, in any case, you would never have gone looking for it in this year- book. Who reads year-books? But for ….....

Madame X: Can we get that text?

Dr Lacan: My dear, you can make some off-prints of it. Good. I for my part am going to give it to the year book. I am not going to make off-prints of it. Nobody does that. But after all, in effect, it may be of use to you because it is a tiny little text to which I gave enough care for it to be considered as having a little function as a hinge.

If I begin again, if I take things up again, if I link up, if I recall, starting from this text, to continue, in fact what I will most easily begin from is, of course, naturally, from the end, this will only make it easier to highlight for you something people do not often think about: it is the pride which is hidden behind the promotion, as it is ordinarily carried out, of every step towards relativism. I am proposing, I am indicating that the problem of the analyst is precisely his implication in the symptom which is put before him and questions him, for his part, as a being of knowledge, as a being of truth, I am (10) saying in short that the drama of the analyst, is that necessarily, his being of knowledge is inflected, is implicated in this confrontation, that Oedipus, whatever he does gives his hand, at least for a while, to the Sphinx, since this is what is in question. By having manifested himself, in the final analysis, as superior, as a being of knowledge, it is precisely this which makes a hero of him. Which we are not at every moment. Immediately, this thinking jumps very easily to this function of this presence of the observer in the observation which is also what the progress of our physics indicates to us, and which gives us the idea, as they say, that we are not uninvolved.

But it is the opposite. Even in the theory of relativity in physics, whether it is special or general, it does not at all mean that it is the observer who settles the affair. It means on the contrary that the affair has an eye on the observer.

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In other words, no relativist theory gives any kind, as it is habitually experienced, any kind of renewed energy whatsoever to the idea of the subject as subject of knowledge, to the idea of a bipolarity which might be complementary, whether you oppose them or not to the being ..... of the sign, which would in a way be reciprocal and of equal dignity. There is absolutely nothing of the sort.

Everything that is accentuated in this perspective, whether it is that of the progress of science or that of our own experience as analysts, is that it is impossible for us to get out of this illusion, except precisely [by] what we would call a little bit more than very (11) great precautions except for the radical, structural, absolutely total recasting of the topology of the question. And to introduce, into something which cannot in any way be called another kind of knowledge which would get around the difficulty, something which is not at all of the order of knowledge, something which is of the order of calculation, of the combinatorial, something which we no doubt make function but which for all that does not surrender itself to us, to the impulse in such a way that it would allow us to start again quite simply with a lighter step on the same path considered as enlarged and more perfect.

There are many things to be said, and in particular something to which I would like all the same to give a little bit of care to today, because it is at once to face up to objections that, faith, are not very efficacious, one can always allow it to be said, to get around, when all is said and done, that a fashion like mine of tackling psychoanalysis has something, as people say, that is too intellectual, or even verbal, and then, moreover, about the use that is made in analysis of the famous power of words. As usual, malevolent powers, and this one in particular, the power of the word which is still magical, as they say, with a magical all-powerfulness, whether it is a matter of thinking or of words it comes back to the same thing, it is always the other, of course, who falls into it.

Of course, that we have to deal, always, with this operation of demythification which consists in taking up terms which, traditionally, were grasped in certain words and put them in question.

(12) When Nietzsche, after all, to bring him in here, not that he did really excellent work but, in any case, it was a beginning and it struck a lot of people, when Nietzsche busies himself in rediscovering the trace of what, in the philosophical tradition, gave a consistency to one or other term, whichever you like, the soul for example, what do we have to do with it? Is this really the way? When we go as far as to say, even with our means, which only allow us an extrapolation of an elegance which goes beyond what he had access to, by designating some support for this soul, in the shadow of the body, the one which the character of Charmides left on the way, what more will we do? That to be still on exactly the same path from which the whole affair began, an affair which goes far beyond the particular prostration of the psychology that we have to deal with, namely the apologue, the fable, of the cave in Plato, in the VIth book if I remember correctly, of *la politea,* this shadow is none other than the one which plays on the wall which the captives in cave are facing, necessarily maintained in a whole sort of apparatus, without being able to turn, to see what is behind, and what these shadows on the wall are the projection of. But what does this fundamental fable imply? What it is a matter of knowing is whether one gets out of it or whether one does not get out of it. It implies something which, referring to the text, is designated

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as a fire, the fire which precisely, from its projected illumination, produces the phantasmagoria, in other words, the fire of fire, the central idea, the source that is well and truly figured elsewhere, in other texts of Plato by the sun itself, the inaugural point (13) where there is indicated the identity of the being of the real and of the being of knowledge. By means of which everything is structured according to this form of envelopes enveloping one another, the topology of the sphere, capable of reduplicating itself as identical from simply what is called in topology, mapping, namely, to overlap like a lining, which goes as far as the terminal point of the envelope of all the envelopes, on which there is presented, as opposed to the identity of two beings, the content of knowledge.

Only there is a remark which, just by itself, may put the conditions of simply accepting to let fall again into darkness, all of these things that are in suspense, by pointing out to you that if, undoubtedly, the shadow disappears, if there is no longer any sun, the body, for its part, is still there.

One can feel around it in the darkness and recommence the experiment on a new footing. Now this is what is at stake. It is not a matter of knowing what imaginary lure words give a consistency to, by giving them their *cachet.* It is not the lures that deceive. It is the words. But this precisely is their force. And this is what it is a matter of explaining. If the soul, in order to take things up at the key point where we think the affair has been cleaned up, is an entity which has some consistency, it is not, we are saying this year, in so far as we are studying the object of psychoanalysis, it is not because the soul is something which is either the shadow of the body, or its idea, or its form, which is properly speaking what falls away from it, forms a waste scrap, a fall, it is what, from the body, falls under the blade of this something which is produced as an effect of the signifier.

(14) And it is in the measure that the signifier makes its mark on this incarnated subject, that something corporeal, effective, material is produced, which is what is in question. It is not therefore a sanction through the language of some imaginary mirage, which is produced, but an effect of language, which by being hidden under these mirages, gives them their weight.

This is what constitutes the novelty of the psychoanalytic approach, founded on this fact that the effect of language goes beyond, because it precedes it, any subjective apprehension which may authorise itself as being a conscious apprehension.

And every critique of the power of words, as it is put, which attacks it as such, what perdures under the academic label of psychology is never anything other than this voice, it is by beginning from the verbal status, incontestably because it is traditional, of a certain function of the soul, and by putting it in question as word, and by questioning, starting from there, what is real in it, which leaves standing perfectly well the framework of the power of words, while what it is a matter of questioning, is what has language produced as an inaugural effect on which there reposes the whole *montage,* which gives the setting of the state of the subject.

This is not tackled simply by looking at it head-on. That is why the relationship of the being of knowledge to the being of truth is founded on what, to speak here of the very one who is speaking to you, means precisely that my discourse is not sustained by any

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re-organisation of vocabulary. If I say that there is no metalanguage, I emphasise it by the fact that I am not attempting to introduce one, a new one, which would always be (15) subject to the fact of being, like every metalanguage, made up of language.

The first condition to grasp that it is indeed a matter of the relationship to a being of truth, is that, in discourse, it is articulated as an enigma, and I greatly regret if this, at all times and to Freud himself who admitted it and recognised it as such when he wrote the *Interpretation of dreams, Umschreibung,* he said, enraged at not being able to reproduce the style of his previous little scientific reports, *Umschreibung,* which means: mannerism.

Throughout the historical cases of the crisis of the subject, the literary and aesthetic explosions in general of what is called mannerism always corresponds to a reorganisation of the question about the being of truth. Yes. It is a matter of finding a short circuit to rediscover our o-object, since, moreover, an idea of it comes to me: it was furnished me, refurbished, refreshed not too long ago by Guilbaud with whom I have been having weekly conversations for some time now, he reminded me that it was Franckel, I believe, who played this trick on his listeners: 1,2,3,4,5, what is the smallest whole number that is not written on the board? Good, listen, on you go. The smallest whole number written on the board. You naturally believe that someone wants to trick you. But it is not complicated, it is 6. Are you sure that zero is a whole number, that (16) could be debated… (written on the board: the smallest whole number that is not written on the board). So then what is it now? The smallest whole number which is not written on the board? None obviously. What? What are you going to say? Whatever you say I will tell you: it is written on the board. That astounds you? Well then, that it is precisely what is in question, that this should surprise you. This reinstates, this shows you, that reintroduces you since this is what is at stake, it is in the question of language, founded, as you see on writing, the o-object. That knocks you? You have absolutely no voice to raise on this occasion? What?

: … : … on the board.....

Lacan: Yes, it is very relevant that it is by writing [or not written] of course. One could start from there and make a lot of it. Good.

Does that mean, with that, it knocks you out, if we have here everything that is involved, about castration. I say no. It is only a matter of things at the level of the o-object. In order that something written should in fact hold up, you have to pay your dues, namely, that if I only put down written things, for example, my scientific discourse from the start of set theory until nothing stops me up to the end, I will exhaust the whole trajectory of modern physics, this will in no way hold up unless I accompany it with a discourse which presents it to you. There is no means of presenting a discourse, even the most formalised one that you may imagine, there is no means of presenting if you like, Bourbaki without preface or text. This is what is in question.

(17) And therefore the relationships of language which, incontestably, in effect, are cut and writing, with what presents itself as discourse, ordinary language and which requires this support of the voice, except, of course, that you should not take the voice

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as simply sonority, which would make it dependent on the fact that we are on a planet where there is air which carries sound. It has absolutely nothing to do with that.

When I think that in the phenomenology of psychosis, we are still at the stage of questioning ourselves about the sensorial texture of the voice, when simply with the six or eight pages of a prelude that I gave in my article on "*A question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis*", I designated the quite precise approach from which there can be in our day, at the point that we are at, there can be questioned the phenomenon of the voice. You only have to take Schreber's text and see distinguished in it, as I did, what I called the message of the code and the code of the message, to see that there is here a means of grasping, in a fashion that is not abstract but already perfectly phenomenologised, the function of the voice as such. By means of which one can begin to detach oneself from this really unbelievable position which consists in putting in question the objectivity of the voices of the hallucinator. You objectify the hallucinator. Why should his voices be less objective; why should his voices, on the pretext that they are not sensorial, belong to the unreal, to the unreal. In the name of what? It is a prejudice which dates from some extremely archaic stage of the critique (18) of so-called knowledge. Is the voice unreal, are we going to affirm, are we going to say from the fact that we submit it to the conditions of scientific communication, namely, that he cannot make this voice that he hears recognised. So what about pain, then? Can he make that recognised? And nevertheless. Are people going to start discussing whether pain is real? The status of the voice is properly speaking still to be established, but not alone is it to be established, it has to be brought into the mental categories of the clinician of whom we were speaking, precisely, earlier, who very certainly even when he succeeds, I noted it in the same text, in doing something as fortunate as to perceive things which probably had been seen a long time ago with the naked eye, but that no one ever picked out, namely, that there are these voice phenomena which are accompanied by laryngeal and muscular movements around the phonetic apparatus and that this, of course, has its importance, this certainly does not exhaust the question but, in any case, gives a method of approach to it. This did not advance the status of the voice by a single step, for all that.

Here, I would like all the same to remark that it is a great ingratitude for anyone who has, a little bit, the clear sense of what Nietzsche called, precisely, the genealogy of morality or of something else, it would be complete madness to overlook what the status of science, precisely, I am speaking about ours, owes to Socrates who, precisely, consulted his voice. It is not enough to claim to be rid of it ..... to satisfy oneself or to believe that one has satisfied a phenomenon like that by the fact that Socrates said expressly that he consulted his voice, in order to say, either yes or no, (19) that there was therefore a little corner, something or other which was out of synch. When it is Socrates who is in question, it seems to me difficult not to grasp the consistency of the totality of his system, given especially that this system functioned all the time in the open. We may have the idea, precisely, that in fact, the question of the subject as I am posing it, is perfectly and totally open at the level of Socrates whatever we may think about the fashion in which there were transmitted to us these conversations which were the basis of his teaching, however they have been arranged, modified, enriched as we may suppose by one or other person and by Plato especially, it nevertheless remains that their schema is clear, that there is a perfect decantation between the being of knowledge and the being of truth.

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You have to re-read the whole of Plato with this guiding thread which can be held, something that, of course, I previously taught you to decipher much more fully, by calling things by their name and by saying what was involved in the desire to know, namely, the *agalma.* But let us leave to one side for a moment that what Socrates responds to is the following: what is the being of truth of this desire to know. What does he mean when this supposedly culminates in the Platonic transcription: "take care of your soul"? We will leave it for later. But it is not for nothing that I am evoking Socrates here, that I recall moreover only this key: the being of knowledge and the being of truth.

I will also leave to one side today a remark that I could make about this use of the term key even though I said earlier that my teaching did not contain key words.

(20) It is perhaps precisely because the property of the keys in question is to have no lock. And, in effect, the whole question is there. I want simply to make a remark which is one that, of course, anyone here could bring up. So then, why did Socrates not discover, articulate, the unconscious? The response, of course, is already implied in an earlier part of my discourse: because our established science did not exist. If I underlined the degree to which psychoanalysis depends on an assured, sutured, status of the being of knowledge, I think that this might already be seen as a sufficient response if, precisely, the question did not refer back simply to why there was not in Socrates' time, as a starting point, a science having the status of our science, of the one that I defined in a certain fashion? Precisely the suture on the side of the truth. I will not go very far, given the time today, in this direction, but since it is on the path of something which is very important for us to bring us back to what is involved, namely, the position of the psychoanalyst, namely, what I would want someone here to make some contribution to the next time, let us take one of the best, one of the greatest, and on the point to which he contributed to things their greatest relief, I would ask someone to take up again here my article on the theory of symbolism which was written as a commentary on Jones' article and then connect up with it what is also implied, simply indicated in my article, namely, the way in which Jones had to sort himself out on the problem of female sexuality in so far as it involves the status of the (21) phallic function. Start from the manifest inconsistencies into which his discourse ceaselessly slips, or from the way the very symptom he is dealing with corrects him and in a way reintegrates, and does more than suggest, imposes, in a way, clearly written and contrary to his intention the same topological formula as ours, I would like if someone were to devote himself to this little manoeuvre and not force me once again to get involved in it myself.

What an extraordinary text is the one that I attacked in this article of which I speak, this article on symbolism. It consists in short of telling us - you will see it in the text - of saying, in conformity, when all is said and done, with things that I managed to say after him, that it is not a metaphor to say that symbolism is constructed like a metaphor, that it is a true metaphor, that here, the metaphor, instead of distancing itself, as he expresses it, from the concrete, approaches it under full sail. What, when all is said and done, is truer than this direction? Except that in the end it is false all the same because it is not a metaphor, it is a metonymy.

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For the phallus, with the woman and with what effectively introduces it in an extraordinary relief as regards the determination, the function, even the sense of female homosexuality, one can say that everything is in this text except the author comprehending what he is saying.

(22) Is there not here something in which there is precisely inscribed this relationship to the symptom of which I speak, which is necessitated, that one can from the other aspect consider that he was only able to accede so profoundly to the sense of the symptom because he was missing a theory of it. So we can ask ourselves why it is that science, Greek science, which already knew how to construct such admirable automata, did not take on its status as science. The fact is that there is another voice which plays its role in the Socratic questioning. I think that you can evoke it with what I am designating here. It is the one that he calls on to give evidence from time to time, in a rather exemplary, rather scandalous fashion perhaps, we will never know anything about it, for contemporary ears, it is the voice of the slave. How does it happen that the slave then always responds so correctly, responds always so well and goes straight to the truth, to the quality of the irrational number which corresponds to the diagonal of the square. Do we not grasp here what is at stake and that it is precisely nothing other than the status of desire.

If neither Freud nor Socrates did not, however dissolving their product might have been, did not go so far as a social critique, for, after all, as far as I know, Socrates did not introduce historical materialism, even though he made the statues of the Gods tremble a little on their pedestals. It is quite clear that it was not for nothing that Alcibiades cut his dog's tail, that it was not simply to make people talk because it resembled a little bit too much a certain affair involving the mutilation of Hermes, which for its part had caused some stir, but so that people might comprehend that this was not quite without some relationship with the dialectic about the being of truth.

(23) And this is not social criticism. Let us call that direct action. It is anarchy, something which, as you know, is no longer our style. Socrates did not engage in social criticism nor did Freud. It is no doubt because both one and the other had the idea from where there was situated an extraordinarily important economic problem, that of the relationships of desire and of *jouissance.* If there was no ancient science, it is because it was necessary, in order that there should be science, that there should be modern industry. And for there to be modern industry, it was necessary that slaves should not be private property. One looks after private properties, one does not make them work so bloody hard as in regimes of liberty. Which means, that the problem of *jouissance* in the ancient world was resolved and in a way that I think you see clearly, the beings devoted to *jouissance,* to pure and simple *jouissance,* were the slaves as, moreover, everything indicates. To the respect, contrary to what is said, that they received, one did not mistreat a slave like that, especially since he was capital, to the fact that it is enough to open Terence, not to mention others, Euripides, to notice that everything that was involved in terms of refined relationships, of courtly relationships, of love relationships, indeed, I do not know if you .....… to beings who are in a servile condition. And that the *nihil humanum me alienum* of Terence, designates that, has no other sense. Why would one utter such an idiocy, if it were not a question of saying: I am going to where there is humanity, to the slaves.

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(24) The *jouissance* of the ancient world is the slave. And this reserved park of *jouissance,* as I might say, was the factor of inertia which ensured that neither science nor at the same time the being of the subject were able to emerge. No doubt the problem of *jouissance* is posed for us in different terms. And certainly, because of capitalism, in terms that are a little more complicated, it nevertheless remains that in a certain place, Freud pointed his finger at it, and in connection with *Civilisation and its discontents,* we will have to take that path again, in order to take up our thread.

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Seminar 15: Wednesday 27 April 1966

Good. *Inter,* as they say, *inter* in Latin. It is Saint Augustine who begins like that, a sort of statement which has finished by becoming eroded, by doing the rounds so much, *inter urinas et faeces nascimur.*

He was a delicate person. This remark which, of itself might not seem to involve infinite consequences, since moreover, since you are born from this perineum, it must all the same be said that you chase after it.

It is certain that if Saint Augustine had reason to remember it, it was for other reasons, for reasons other than the ones that interest all of us, in this sense, that it is not *qua* living being, body, that we are born *inter urinas et faeces,* but *qua* subject.

This is why it is not limited to being a bad memory, but is something which solicits us, at least those of us who are here, at present this year, to interest ourselves vitally in the o-object, since it happens that at least one of them is found to be connected to its surroundings.

At least one of them, and even two, the second, namely the penis, having being found to occupy in this determining of the subject, an altogether fundamental place.

(2) The way in which Freud articulates this knot introduces a great novelty as regards the nature of the subject. It is particularly opportune to remind oneself of it when the necessity of the becoming of this subject made us have it come from a completely different direction, namely, from the "I think". And you ought really to sense that if I take so much trouble to articulate it for you starting from the "I think", it is, of course, to bring you back to the Freudian terrain which will allow you to conceive of why it is the subject that we grasp in its purity at the level of the "I think", has this close connection with two o-objects which are so incongruously situated.

It must be said moreover that we, who do not have a set purpose, we do not have the special aim of humiliating man, we will notice that there are two other o-objects, a curious thing, which remained, even in Freudian theory, half in the shadow, even though they play their role in it, with an active agency, namely, the look and the voice.

I think that the next time I will come back to the look. I gave two or even three celebrated seminars, as they say, in the first year of my lectures here, in which I tried to make you sense the dimension in which there is inscribed this object that is called the look.
Some of you surely remember this. Those who have been coming for a long time to my seminar could not have failed to notice their importance. And since I will have the opportunity, I think, the next time, to put the whole emphasis on it, I would like, from today, for those who represent the sacred battalion of my audience, namely yourselves, (3) to recommend between now and then, because this will render much more intelligible the references that I will make to it, what has appeared in the very brilliant

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book that our friend Michel Foucault has just published, what appeared in the first chapter of this book under the title: *Las Meninas* (*les suivantes*), Chapter I of Michel Foucault's book entitled for those who are hard of hearing today, en-ti-tl-ed *Les mots et les choses* [The order of things]. It is a beautiful title. In any case, this book will not disappoint you and in recommending you to read the first chapter, I am, in any case quite sure of not doing him a disservice, for it will be enough for you to read this first chapter, for you to throw yourselves voraciously into all the others.

Nevertheless, I would like a certain number of you at least to have read this first chapter between now and the next time, because it is difficult not to see inscribed there, in an extraordinarily elegant description, something which is precisely this double dimension which, if you remember, I had represented formerly by two opposing triangles, that of vision, with here this ideal object that is called the eye and which is supposed to constitute the vertex of the plane of vision, and what is inscribed in the opposite sense in the form of the look. When you have read this chapter, you will be able, you will be much more at ease in understanding what I will contribute as a continuation to it the next time.

Another little read, to distract you, to read in the shower, as they say, there is an (4) excellent little book which has just appeared with the title of: *Paradoxes de la conscience,* written by someone whom we all esteem, I imagine, because we have all, at some moment or other, opened one of his books, which are nourished by great scientific erudition, who is called Monsieur Ruyer. It is pronounced Ruyer, it appears. Raymond Ruyer, a professor at the faculty of letters in Nancy, Monsieur Ruyer who, in this provincial retreat, has pursued for long years a work of development that is extraordinarily important from the epistemological point of view, gives you here a sort of collection of anecdotes, which, I would say, in my eyes, have a quite extraordinary cathartic value, that of reducing, in effect, what one could call the paradoxes of consciousness, to the form of a sort of *almanach Vermot,* which is all the same rather interesting, I mean, puts them in their place, in their place, in short, as good stories. It seems that for a good while the paradoxes which attract us must be something other than paradoxes of consciousness.

In short, under this rubric, you will see there being summarised all sorts of paradoxes, some of which are extremely important, precisely because they are not paradoxes of consciousness, but when one reduces them to the level of consciousness, they become nothing more than trifles. This is an extremely invigorating read, and it seems that a good part of the philosophy programme ought to be put definitively outside the field of teaching after this book which shows the exact import of a certain number of problems which are not such.

(5) What else can I recommend to you? There is in the last two numbers of *Esprit* a commentary by someone whom I am told is a reverend Dominican father and which is signed by Jacques M Pohier, and which is devoted to the examination of a book which has been much spoken of here and to which Monsieur Tort has given his definitive sanction.

It nevertheless remains, that there is the other point of view to tackle it from, and that the religious point of view is not at all to be neglected, and I would ask you to read

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this article. You will see in it the way in which my teaching can be used on occasion in a religious perspective, when it is done honestly.

It is in happy contrast with the use that was made of it, precisely, in the other book that I am only designating for you here in an indirect fashion.

What else to advise you? Well, good God, I believe I have exhausted my few resources. All the same, you are going to see that today we are going to put on the agenda the examination of an article by Jones, for the interest of these closed seminars is that we should devote ourselves to the work of study and of commentary in so far as they may furnish materials, references, and also sometimes an initiation into the method of our research, and this article by Jones that we are going to see today which is called "The early development of female sexuality" and which appeared in 1927. I point this out to you, I point it out to you, because Jones wrote two other articles just as important as this one, and because the second like the first, not the third but, after all, (6) one can dispense with it, were translated, I was reminded in a happy enough way, because I had completely forgotten it, were translated in number seven of *La psychanalyse,* consecrated to female sexuality, numbers which are not perhaps out of print, so that, God knows, for those of you who are not too familiar with the English tongue, this will make it easier for you, retrospectively, I think, for those who have not yet read this first article, to grasp clearly what we will manage to say today about this article, and in reading the other one, to find in it the beginning of future works that I hope, since I hope that I will obtain just as much good will for the next closed seminars as I obtained for this one, while going at it in a rather short term fashion which deserves to be underlined here, to introduce the people who were willing to devote themselves to it, at my request.

You will find also in this number on female sexuality under the title of *Womanliness as masquerade,* which is exactly the translation of the English title, an excellent article, from an excellent psychoanalyst, called Madame Joan Riviere, who always took up the most relevant positions on all the subjects of psychoanalysis and, very especially, I mention it to you in passing, on the subject of child psychoanalysis.

You see that you will not be short of things to work on, the most urgent being to read Michel Foucault for the next time.

(7) So then, since I am very keen on this collaboration *from the floor* as they say, in the closed seminar, I am going to give the floor right away to Mademoiselle Muriel Grazien who was kind enough to make this sort of presentation, introduction, for your use, of this article by Jones which is called precocious development or early development, as you wish, of female sexuality.
You are going to see first of all what it comes down to, and I hope that I will manage to show you the use that I intend to make of it.

Mademoiselle Grazien

(On the board: *unseen man, unseeing man*)

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"Unseen man" is a term that is present in the original text of Jones, and which is translated very correctly in French, but which, necessarily, lacks a little bit of … spice.

What is there in women which corresponds to the fear of castration in men? What differentiates the development of the homosexual woman from that of the heterosexual woman? These are two questions that Ernest Jones asks himself, and that his article "The early development of female sexuality", which appeared in the *International journal of psychoanalysis* in 1927, aims at elucidating.

Very quickly, by circumscribing the first question, Jones centres the problem around the concept of castration, and it is at this point that he pauses in order to try to elaborate a more concrete and more satisfying concept for the unfolding of a certain guiding thread of this article which is announced from the first paragraph. It is here that Jones evokes the notions of mystification and prejudice among the authors writing on the subject of female sexuality, that analysts diminished the importance of the female genital organ and had therefore adopted a phallo-centric position, as he says, in (9) connection with these questions. That these guiding threads are for Jones the opportunity to put in question again the whole concept of castration, by bringing out the points at which he is himself dissatisfied about the formulation given at that time to the concept, will not prevent Jones himself taking up this thread, at the different moments when he speaks about biological reality as fundamental.

When he underlines the primordial role of the male sexual organ, "the all important part normally played in male sexuality by the genital organs", when he speaks about the partial threat represented by castration, "castration is only a *partial* threat, however important a one, against sexual capacity and enjoyment as a whole", when he points out that the woman is closely dependent on the man for what concerns her gratification: "for obvious physiological reasons the female is much more dependent on her partner for her gratification than is the male on his. Venus had much more trouble with Adonis, for example, than Pluto with Persephone." Finally, when he specifies what is for him the very condition of normal sexuality: "In both cases," (in speaking about inversion), "the situation of prime difficulty is the simple but fundamental one of union between penis and vagina."

This unconscious bias, as Karen Horney called it, has contributed, Jones tells us, to considering questions touching on sexuality far too much from the masculine point of view, and has thus thrown into an unknown position what he calls the fundamental conflicts.

"In atttempting to answer this question - *ie*, to account for the fact that women suffer from dread at least as much as men - I came to the conclusion that the concept 'castration', has in some respects hindered our appreciation of the fundamental conflicts." (557) The undoubtedly more general and abstract concept, at which Jones ends up, is that of *aphanisis*. This *aphanisis* is the total, irrevocable, disappearance of all capacity for the sexual act or for the pleasure of this act. It would thus be the fear (*dread,* which in English is even more…), the fear of this situation, which is common to both sexes.

In connection with *aphanisis,* I have been thinking that this term could correspond, at the clinical level, to nothing other than the disappearance of desire, as we understand

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it. In that case, the fear of *aphanisis* would be expressed by a fear of the total disappearance of desire, which appears to us to be the other side of one of these coins, either the desire not to lose desire, or else the desire not to desire.

In any case, Jones will not go much further in the development of this concept that he applies to this useful end and we can suppose that it did not seem to be sufficient, either for himself, or for a more rigorous formulation of what is represented by female castration.

We will now follow Jones in the second question which he approaches through a glimpse of the normal development of the girl, the oral stage, the anal stage, the identification to the mother at the mouth-anus-vagina stage; soon followed, as he says by penis envy.
(11) In specifying the distinction between the pre- and post-oedipal, or auto- and allo-erotic penis envy, Jones recalls the function in regression of defence against a privation at this final stage, a privation of never being able to share the penis in coitus with her father, which will send the little girl back to her first penis envy, namely, to have her own penis for herself.

This is the moment at which the little girl has to choose, it is a point of bifurcation between her incestuous attachment to the father and her own femininity. She must renounce either her object or her sex, Jones underlines. It is impossible for her to keep both. I believe that it is worthwhile at this point to read for you the paragraph where he specifies it.

"There are only two possible ways in which the libido can flow in this situation, though both may, of course, be attempted. The girl must choose, broadly speaking, between sacrificing her erotic attachment to her father and sacrificing her femininity - *ie*, her anal identification with the mother. Either the object must be exchanged for another one or the wish must be; it is impossible to retain both. Either the father or the vagina (including pregenital vaginas) must be renounced. In the first case feminine wishes are developed on the adult plane *ie*, diffuse erotic charm (narcissism), positive vaginal attitude towards coitus, culminating in pregnancy and child-birth - and are transferred to more accessible objects. In the second case the bond with the father is retained, but (12) the object-relation is converted into an identification, *ie*, a penis complex is developed."

Girls who renounce the object pursue a normal development, while in the second case in which the subject abandons her sex, the non-abandonment of objects is transformed into identification and this is the case of the homosexual.

"The divergence there mentioned - which, it need hardly be said is always a matter of degree - between those who surrender the position of their object-libido (father) and those who surrender the position of their subject-libido (sex), can be followed into the field of homosexuality itself."

Jones then makes a division within the homosexual group. "One can distinguish two broad groups here: (1) The women who retain their interest in men, but who set their hearts on being accepted by men as one of themselves. To this group belongs the familiar type of woman who ceaselessly complain of the unfairness of women's lot

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and their unjust ill-treatment by men. (2) Those who have very little or no interest in men, but whose libido centres on women. Analysis shews that this interest in woman is a vicarious way of enjoying femininity; they merely employ other women to exhibit it for them."

It is we who are now underlining that by this first division that Jones makes, there are (13) in the two homosexual sub-groups, all the woman who have chosen to keep their object, the father and to renounce their sex. It is here that it is necessary to follow attentively Jones' presentation to see what is happening.

It is easy to see that the first group so described, covers the specific mode of subjects who had preferred to abandon their sex; while the second group corresponds to the subjects who have abandoned the father object and substitute themselves for him by identification.

So then, I repeat: while the second group corresponds to the subject who has abandoned the object, the father.

The women belonging to the second group also identify with their love object, but this object then loses all interest for them. Their external object-relations to other women is very imperfect for they represent, henceforth, only their own femininity through identification, and their goal is to obtain from it, by substitution, gratification at the hands of a man who remains invisible to them, the father incorporated in themselves. And this is the man who remains invisible to them: *unseen man*.

After these descriptions one can only remark that this interest in women, which is fleeting in a way, seems to be brought to bear on an attribute, without there being any real object relationship. What can be understand about it if we have here a double identification, on the one hand to the father, on the other hand to the lover (*l'amante*)? (14) I am proposing that what is at stake in this example here is a symbolic operation.

That the lover is the symbol of lost femininity rather than the femininity which the subject has renounced,
This man who is invisible to her, the *unseen man* which does not mean the *unseeing man,* the father, or rather what it is, in him, that sees, that which in him is *seeing,* the eye, a symbol already evoked by Jones in his theory of symbolism and specified by him there as phallic, is the true object, for its presence is necessary, indeed indispensable, for the accomplishment of the ritual designed to render to the father what he did not give.

In order to leave you with a very gripping image of this type of relationship, I would like to read for you an episode which is seen by the narrator, Marcel, in *Swann's way,* at a moment when he, by chance, if you wish is also moreover *unseen,* namely, he has hidden himself, he is hidden by the circumstances and the scene unfolds before him without it being known that he is there. Obviously the whole scene is important. I am giving you simply a few lines:

"In the v-shaped opening of her crepe bodice Mademoiselle Vinteuil felt the sting of her friends sudden kiss; she gave a little scream and broke away; and then they began to chase one another around the room scrambling over the furniture their wide sleeves

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fluttering like wings, clucking and squealing like a pair of amorous fowl. At last Mademoiselle Vinteuil collapsed onto the sofa with her friend lying on top of her, the (15) latter now had her back turned to the little table on which the old music master's portrait had been arranged."

Dr Lacan: It is her father.

Mademoiselle Grazien: "Mademoiselle Vinteuil realised that her friend would not see it unless her attention were drawn to it and so exclaimed as if she had just noticed it for the first time: 'Oh! There is my father's picture looking at us; I can't think who can have put it there; I'm sure I've told them a dozen times that it isn't the proper place for it.'

I remembered the words that M Vinteuil had used to my parents in apologising for an obtrusive sheet of music. This photograph was evidently in regular use for ritual profanations, for the friend replied in words which were clearly a liturgical response: 'Let him stay there. He can't bother us any longer. Do you think he would start whining and wanting to put your overcoat on for you if he saw you now with the window open, the ugly old monkey?' To which Mademoiselle Vinteuil replied in words of gentle reproach - 'Come, come!"

And further on: "She could not resist the attraction of being treated with tenderness by a woman who had shown herself so implacable towards the defenceless dead, and, springing onto her friend's lap she held out a chaste brow to be kissed precisely as a daughter would have done with the exquisite sensation that they would thus between them inflict the last turn of the screw of cruelty by robbing M. Vinteuil, as though they (16) were actually rifling his tomb, of the sacred rights of fatherhood."

And further on, it is the narrator who is speaking: "I knew now what was the reward that M. Vinteuil, in return for all the suffering that he had endured in his lifetime on account of his daughter, had received from her after his death."

Dr Lacan

Merçi, Mademoiselle.

Good. Mademoiselle Grazien, in short, has given you an introduction, indeed a very rapid introduction. It is not, and, after all, we have no reproach to make to her because it is an introduction. She highlighted two very important things about this article which, even though it is short, includes, for example, certain detours that she thought she should elide, on, for example, the idea of privation and that of frustration which follows, the relationships between privation and castration, all terms which are for us, those at least who remember what I teach, of some considerable importance.

But, nevertheless, she has not done badly, since for you, who are always in the difficult position of listeners, what has been highlighted are these two terms; on the one hand the notion of *aphanisis* and on the other hand, the way that Freud, no, that

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Jones with his concern with looking for what is involved in castration in women, sees himself referring back to certain positions which involve references that can be qualified, properly speaking, as structural references.

It is clear - consult the article - that he does not know how to organise these structural (18) references.

He does not know how to organise them because of the same concern as the one that guides his article on symbolism, namely, to highlight in a fashion that is rigorous and valid, what constitutes the moorings of the Freudian theory of the unconscious.

Symbolism took a whole series of threads which had become detached from the principal Freudian trunk, the value of something which allows a symbolic utilisation, in the usual sense of the term, of elements highlighted by the handling of the unconscious.

This symbolic utilisation, the one which means that Jung sees in the snake the symbol of the libido, for example, is something that Freud opposed in the strongest fashion, saying that the snake, if it is the symbol of something, is the representation of the phallus.

Because of this Freud, Jones - twice I have made this slip - Jones makes great efforts to show us metaphor - since when all is said and done he is forced to adopt this linguistic reference - to show us metaphor developing in two directions.

In one direction, of an always greater lightness of content, one cannot refer to another register, even though it is not the term that he employs, but he is forced to employ so (19) many others which are all, which are all of the same order, namely, a sort of rarefaction, of emptying, or abstraction, or generalisation, in short, of respect for this sort of ordering, of hierarchy concerning the consistency of the object of the classical theory of knowledge, that, one can see clearly that what is involved is to show us that in no case does the symbol have this function, that the symbol, on the contrary, is this something which brings us back to what he calls in his language, and as he is able, primary ideas, namely, something which is distinguished by a character that is at once concrete, particular, unique, involving the totality, as one might say, and the specificity of the individual in his very life, we will say, in order not to use the term which, of course, he avoids, and which is none other than the term of being.

It is quite clear, nevertheless, that when he refers to these primary ideas, and when he inscribes precisely in them, terms concerning what being is, namely, birth, death, relationships with near relatives, for example, he designates himself something which is not a biological given, but quite the contrary, an articulation which transcends, which transposes, which transcribes this biological given within conditions of existence which can only be situated in relationships of being.

(20) The whole ambiguity of Jones' article on symbolism comes from that. Nevertheless, what he aims at, and principally his effort to show that what is involved in symbolism, circumscribes something that he does not know how to designate, but that he circumscribes all the same, in a way, by the movement proper to his *élan,* to his own concrete experience, to what is involved in analysis, he arrives at the result of

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putting forward in such a unique way, symbols which are all in different degrees, symbols of the phallus, that he forces us indeed to ask ourselves the question, when all is said and done, about what the phallus is in the symbolic order.

He does not convince us, far from it, that the phallus is purely and simply the penis. But he leaves open the question of the central value possessed by a certain number of entities among which the phallus is the one which is presented with the greatest incarnation, even though it is only presented behind a veil, a veil that he has not lifted.

That is why I will have this article taken up again by someone who prepared it for today but who prefers, in short, of his own accord, to put it off to a later stage, namely, let us say to our next closed seminar, I will take up, on that occasion, by way of commentary, the details of this article on the theory of symbolism, but I am already advising you that there is an article by me which appeared, if I remember correctly, in *La psychanalyse,* number six. It was in number six that it appeared?

(21) Mr Safouan: Five.

Doctor Lacan: Five, on Jones' theory of symbolism.

What we are doing today has, with respect to what I will have to develop then in the next seminars on the function of the o-object, a certain value - I would not say of anticipation - but of horizon. For, when all is said and done, there is a relationship between the place of the o-object in so far as it is fundamental, that it allows us, in a certain type of structure which has no other name than that of phantasy, to comprehend the determining function, determining in the manner of a support or of a mounting, I have said, which the o-object has in determining the splitting of the subject.

This o-object, as I indicated to you in my discourse earlier, and of course it is not a novelty, is presented under, not four forms, but let us say four aspects *(versants),* because of the way in which it is inserted on two aspects first of all, demand and desire, on the demand aspect, the objects that we know under the species of breast, in the sense and in the function that we give it in psychoanalysis, and of excrement or again as we express it, faeces.

The other aspect is the one that the relationship to desire has; it is therefore a function of a higher degree. For I point it out to you in passing. The earlier reading of the French text that Mademoiselle Grazien gave, reveals an incorrectness in it, what was translated by *désir* at a certain place, namely, that the homosexual was led to surrender her desire for the object in order not to surrender her sex is incorrect, in English it is (22) "*the wish*", and from the moment it is "*the wish*", it is not desire, it is the *voeu* or the demand.

We have situated the topological place of desire sufficiently with respect to demand for you to conceive of what I mean when I say, I am speaking about another aspect, in connection with the function of two other o-objects, namely, the look and the voice.

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In these two couples an opposition is made which, from the subject to the Other can be situated as follows: the demand *of* the Other, is the o-object faeces, the demand *to* the Other, is the o-object breast.

Now then, the same opposition exists, even though it cannot fail to appear still more obscure to you, since I have not explained it to you, there are also some forms, such that the obscurity is not about the desire *of* the Other, which you will already immediately sense is supported by the voice, as this desire *to* the Other which represents a dimension that I hope to be able to open out to you, in connection with the look.

But, at the heart of the function of this o-object, it is clear that we should find what is altogether central to the establishment, to the institution of the function of the subject, it is very properly speaking, the function that the phallus comes to occupy at the same place which, precisely, has absolutely not the same character as regards what one can (23) something like a common question englobing in its parentheses the totality of the objects in question;it has not, it does not enter as organ, since,when all is said and done, in all these cases, and however material two of them may appear to you, it is well and truly, in all these cases, a matter of an organic representative.

Undoubtedly, it already seems less substantial, less graspable, at the level of the look and of the voice, but this is not, nevertheless, by reason simply of a sort of difference of scale, of scalar difference, as one might say, in the ungraspable character that we find the phallus here. The phallus enters, as such, in a certain function that it is now a matter of defining and which, properly speaking, can only be defined with reference to the signifier.

The double dimension which is revealed here is, as you will see, something which differentiates the slipping away, ungraspable character of the substantiality of the o-object when it is a matter of the look and of the voice, this slipping away, ungraspable character is absolutely not of the same nature with respect to these two objects and with respect to the phallus.

What happens when someone like Mr Jones, I am saying, nourished, inspired by the very purest style of the first analytic research into the value as discovery that the realities of experience had, still could not in any way be reduced to not being able, little (24) by little, to be drawn into a series of paths, of traces, which represent, properly speaking, with respect to this experience, a rationalisation and which is the whole one which made psychoanalysis develop along a path which, in some way, deserves to be situated in some parallelism with respect to the educative reduction, as one might say, that Anna Freud made of psychoanalysis at the level of children.

However masked such a deviation of psychoanalysis may be with respect to the adult, we can say that everything that brings into play in the present state of things and in the way that this has been expressed, some reference, whatever it may be, to reality or again to the establishment of a better, less distorted, stronger ego, as it is put, all of this only consists in making the paths that analysis has allowed us to imagine, enter into the register of development, in the sense of a fundamental orthopaedics which dissipates, properly speaking, the sense of psychoanalytic experience. Jones is certainly not at that point, and the reality (*fait*) of what he produces before us well

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represents something which tends to rediscover the supporting points in a certain number of accepted references, this is what Mademoiselle Grazien alluded to in speaking about a certain number of appeals to what one could call a certain number of scientific prejudices, the primacy, for example, of the biological reference, why primacy? There is absolutely no question, of course, of neglecting it, nor even of not saying, when all is said and done, that it is first, but undoubtedly to pose it firstly as first, is where the whole error lies, for what is involved, on this occasion, is to prove it. Now, it is not proved. It is not proved, at least at the beginning, when we find ourselves before a phenomenon as paradoxical as the generality of the castration complex, in so far as generality means also its incidence in both sexes, the two sexes not finding themselves with respect to this something which is first of all presented, and in a fundamental fashion, as outlining the structure of this castration complex, involves something which refers to a part and to a part only of the genital apparatus, in the part which comes to offer itself in a manifest and visible and in a way pregnant fashion from the point of view of *Gestalt,* which in man is the penis. Not a privilege, but a privilege which takes on a value as one might say of *phanie,* of manifestation, and where it is as such, it appears, at least at first appearance, that it is introduced with a prevalent value.

Such, in other words, is the function that the castration complex is going to take on if we examine it from a certain angle. Well then, it is extremely remarkable that Jones' first step should go in the direction of a subjectivication. I am giving to this word the weight it may take on here, given what I announce about the definition of the subject for almost two years already, and for much longer, of course, for those who have more or less always been coming here.

(26) We cannot fail to see, if we are already a little practised in this perspective, the relationship between the introduction by Jones of the term *aphanisis,* in connection with the castration complex, and what I represented for you as the essence of the subject, namely, this *fading,* this perpetual movement of occultation behind the signifier or intermittent emergence, which defines as such the subject in its foundation, in its status, in what constitutes the being of the subject.
There is something twisted which allows there to be approached, in a quite different fashion the relationship of being, non-being, not in a fashion which, in a way, is extracted from it as if a judgement could grasp somewhere the relationship of being and non-being, but in a fashion which is here in some way profoundly implicated, makes us grasp that we will never in any way be able to speculate, reason, structure everything that is involved in the subject, without beginning from the fact that we ourselves as subject, are implicated in this profound duplicity which is the same as the one the Cartesian *cogito* separates out by fixing itself on a point that is more and more reduced to the ideal, to the point of being itself the nothingness which the "I think" is, "I think" meaning nothing just by itself, which allows there to be set aside, to be divided, to be shown the degree of torsion we must suppose there is, in a way, submitted this subsistence of the subject for it to be able to appear in such a perspective, that being is dissociated between the being prior to thinking and the being that thinking gives rise to.

(27) The being of the "I am" of the one who thinks, the being which is led to emerge, from the fact that the one who thinks says "therefore I am".

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Jones' *aphanisis* is absolutely not conceivable except in the dimension of such a being. For, how does he himself articulate it for us? What could be the recoiling of anything whatsoever which is not of the order of the subject as regards a fear of losing the capacity of what is called in English:

capacity
the term *sexual enjoyment.*

I know that it is very difficult to give a support which is equivalent to our French word *jouissance* to what it designates in English. "Enjoyment" does not have the same resonance as *jouissance,* and it would have, in a way, to be combined with the term "lust", which would perhaps be a bit better.

In any case this dimension of *jouissance* which I told you the last time we were going to introduce, that it is in a way a term which of itself poses essential problems that we can really only introduce after having given its status to the "I am" of the "I think".

Jouissance, for us, cannot but be identical to every presence of Kant. *Jouissance* can only be apprehended, can only be conceived of with regard to what is body. And from which there could never arise from a body something which is supposed to be the fear (28) of no longer having orgasm (*de ne plus jouir*). If there is something that the pleasure principle indicates to us, it is that if there is a fear, it is a fear of orgasm (*de jouir)*. *Jouissance* being properly speaking an opening out whose limit cannot be seen, and whose definition cannot be seen either.

However well or badly it may orgasm, it is only a body that can orgasm or not orgasm, this at least is the definition that we are going to give to *jouissance.* For as regards what constitutes divine *jouissance,* we will put this question off, if you do not mind, until later.

Not that it is not posed. It seems to us that there is a defile that is important to grasp; it is the following, how can the relationships between *jouissance* and the subject be established?

For the subject says "I am". The centre, that I would not describe as implicit, because in fact it is formulated, it is clearly stated in Freud, the centre of analytic thinking, is that there is nothing which has more value for the subject than orgasm *(l'orgasme).*

Orgasm is the moment in which there is realised a privileged, unique, summit of happiness. This merits reflection. Because, what is more, it is no less striking that such an affirmation involves, in a way, of itself a dimension of agreement. Even those who have some reservations about the more or less satisfying character of orgasm in the conditions that we may manage to reach it, are not going, for all that, not to think (29) that if this orgasm is insufficient, there is not a truer, more substantial one that they call by some name, whether what is involved is union, the unitive way, fusion, totality, loss of self, anything you wish, it will still be orgasm that is in question.

Is it not possible for us, even if we keep a question mark attached to what is here taken as a starting point, is it not possible for us, from now on, to grasp the fact that we can consider orgasm in this, let us say, provisional function, as representing a crossing

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point, or again a point of emergence, a point where precisely *jouissance,* I would say, surfaces. This takes on a privileged sense for us from the fact that where it surfaces, at the surface *par excellence,* the one that we have defined, that we are trying to grasp, as structural, as that of the subject.

I indicate also for you the references that this may take on in - why not - what we will call our system. I do not reject the word system on condition that you describe as system the fashion in which I systematise things and which is precisely made up of topological references.

We can indeed consider *jouissance,* the one that is in orgasm, as something which will be inscribed, for example, in a particular shape that our torus will take on, if our torus (30) is this cycle of desire, which is accomplished through the succession of the repeated loops of a demand, it is clear that in function of certain definitions of orgasm as a terminal point, as a point of retrogression, as you like, what would be involved is a torus constructed more or less as follows,

but here it has a punctual value, in other words, every demand is reduced to zero in it, but it is no less clear that it deceives (*il blouse*) desire.

It is what one might call the ideal and naive function of orgasm. For anyone trying to define it from introspective data, it is this short moment of annihilation, a moment moreover that is punctual, fleeting, that is represented in the dimension of everything that the subject can be in its tearing apart, in its division, that this moment of orgasm, I said of orgasm, is situated.

It is clear that it is as *jouissance,* which it is not sufficient for us to notice only in the ideal moment, I insist on the ideal, it is realised in sexual union, for us to say that it is (31) immanent in sexual union, and the proof is that this moment of orgasm is exactly equivalent in masturbation.

I am saying in so far as it represents this end point of the subject. We will retain then, in this function, only the character of *jouissance* and *jouissance* which is not yet defined or justified. But this will allow us to comprehend, provided we notice the analogy between the shape of the Klein bottle, as I might say, if in fact one can speak about the shape, but after all, since I draw it, it has a shape, if I represent it in a shape that is inverted with respect to what you normally see, in the drawing that I called its opening, its circle of reversion, the Klein bottle appears above as the point made earlier. This circle of reversion, where I already taught you to find the nodal point of these two aspects of the subject as they can be joined together from the affronting of the stitching of the being of knowledge to the being of truth, I also told you that this was the place where we ought to inscribe, precisely, as a conjunction between one and the other, what we call the symptom, and it is one of the most essential foundations

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not to be forgotten about what Freud always said about the function of the symptom, the fact is that, in itself, the symptom is *jouissance.*

There are, then, modes of emergence, other than orgasm, structurally analogous to *jouissance* at the level of the subject. I do not need, it would be easy but time prevents (32) me, to refer you to the number of times that Freud highlighted the equivalence of the function of the orgasm to that of the symptom. Whether he is right or wrong is a different question to knowing what he means on this occasion, and what we for our part, can construct on it.

So then, it would be well, perhaps, to look twice at it before making orgasm equivalent to sexual *jouissance.* That orgasm is the manifestation of sexual *jouissance* in man, and one singularly complicated by the function that it comes to occupy in the subject, is indeed what we have to deal with and we would be quite wrong to collapse, in a way, into one and the same reality, these three dimensions.

For this is properly speaking to reintroduce, in a dangerously masked and also ridiculous shape, the old implications of mysticism to which I alluded earlier, into the domain of an experience which in no way requires them.

Once upon a time, a poet who said *"post coitum omne animal triste"* added "*praeter* (because this bit is always forgotten) *mulierum gallumque*", except women and cocks.

It is a curious thing, ever since what I call psychoanalytic mysticism exists, people are no longer sad after coitus. I do not know whether you have ever noticed that, but it is a fact.

(33) Women, of course, were already not sad but since the men used to be, it is curious that they no longer are so. On the contrary, when women do not orgasm *(ne jouissent pas)* they become extraordinarily depressed even though up to then they accommodated themselves extremely well to it. This is what I call the introduction of psychoanalytic mysticism.

No one has yet definitively proved that it is necessary that a woman must at all costs have an orgasm in order to fulfil her role as woman. And the proof is that people are still quibbling about what this famous orgasm is in the case of women. Nevertheless, this metaphysics has taken on such value, I know a very great number of women who are ill because they are not sure that they really orgasm *(jouissent),* while after all they are not so discontented as all that with what they have and if they had not been told that it was not that, they would not have worried about it.

This makes it necessary to dot the i's a little, about what is involved in sexual *jouissance.* If one posits first that what primarily interests us is to know what is involved at the level of the subject, this is a first way to make the question a healthier one. But one could also ask oneself the question of what is involved in it at the level of sexual union, because here, it is very remarkable that it is a strange phenomenon that we always speak as if, from the simple fact that sexual difference exists among living beings with what it requires in terms of union, the accomplishment of the union (34) is accompanied by a sort of univocal *jouissance,* and univocal in this sense that

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we ought quite simply to extrapolate from what we, the humans or, if you wish, the most particularly evolved primates, know about this *jouissance.*

Well then, I am not going to go into this chapter today because it is very curious that it is never treated. Indeed it is a fact that it is not. But, indeed, it is quite clear that first of all, it is impossible to define, to grasp, any signs of what one could call orgasm in most females in the animal domain. For the one or two species where one can, which only show, precisely, that one could find signs if they existed, since sometimes one does find them, it is quite clear that everywhere else one does not find them, in any case objective signs of orgasm in the female.

So then, since one could find them and one does not find them, this is already something made to throw a little doubt on the modalities of *jouissance* in sexual union. I am not saying, I do not see why I should except sexual union from the dimension of *jouissance,* which appears to me a dimension that is absolutely coextensive with that of the body.

But that it should be that of orgasm, seems to be in no way required. It is perhaps of a quite different nature and the proof, moreover, is precisely where sexual union is most (35) impressive, where it lasts for ten days, between frogs for example, that one clearly sees that what is involved is something other than orgasm. It is very important all the same.

Here we are full of metaphors. Tumescence, detumescence, is one of those which appear to me to be most extravagant. It is a matter of manifesting in the sequence of behaviours of what one could call, with regard to union, an ascending behaviour or a behaviour of approach, followed by a behaviour of the resolution of charges, after which there is produced the separation .

With the existence of an erect organ, which is very far from being universal, there are animals - I am not going to amuse myself by teaching you biology here but I would ask you to open the big treatises of zoology - there are animals who realise sexual union with the help of an organ of fixation which is completely non-tumescent since it is purely and simply a hook.

It clearly appears that orgasm in these cases, if it exists, must take on, even in the case of the male, a quite different appearance and there is nothing to say, for example, that it is liable to any subjectification. These distinctions appear to me to be important to introduce because if Jones, at the beginning, in a way, sets aside and is astonished at and this is how he introduces his notion of *aphanisis,* the distinct character, in short, (36) there is between the idea of castration as it is substantified in experience, namely the disappearance of the penis, and something which appears to him to be more important, namely a disappearance which is not that of the penis, which for us can only be that of the subject, and that he imagines to be the fear of the disappearance of desire, even though this is in a way a contradiction in terms, for desire precisely is sustained by the fear of losing itself, that there could not be an *aphanisis* of desire, that there could not be in a subject a representation of this *aphanisis* for the good reason that desire is sustained by it.

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To persevere with it in the Spinozian being is the same text and the same theme which says: "desire is the essence of man". Man perseveres in being as desire. And he cannot escape in any way from this support of desire. There is precisely the ambiguity of being able to carry on with one's own restraint and one's own fear as being an aspect of defence at the same time as an aspect of suspension, towards *jouissance*.

So then, do we not see here the whole value of the other end of the arch, of the trajectory that Jones accomplishes for us, when very firmly and how correctly, because it is a matter of introducing things at the level of the subject, he puts us, as regards the (37) woman, since she is the one in question, at the heart of the way in which the subjective *impasse* can present itself for her.

Over against the son-mother couple, from which there began, not without reason, the whole analytic exploration, he speaks to us about the father-daughter couple. And what does he tell us? Everything begins here from a privation. Father-daughter incest, as we know, for our part, from all our experience, is in its consequences - analytic ones, I cannot define them otherwise - let us say, neurotogenic, but the term is not enough because it can go so far as to have psychotic consequences; it is infinitely less dangerous, it is even dangerous to a zero degree as compared to mother-son incest, which always has devastating consequences, to which I have alluded.

At the level of the father-daughter couple, the function of interdiction, as it is exercised in its dialectical consequences, in what is called the fundamental interdiction of incest which is the interdiction of the mother, takes on a simplified form which clearly highlights the privileged function of the woman with regard to sexual union. For if the specificity of a certain sort of living being is that an organ which is at once erectile and as such privileged as a support for *jouissance,* is its ambocepteur, well then, what does that mean? It is that for her, there is no problem. To make love, ... if things had an absolute value, of course, is necessarily alloplastic, as I might say, implies that she should go to the one who has it. If she did not have some of the properties of the little (38) boy there would be no problem. The little boy has other ones precisely because of the fact that he can enjoy himself (*jouir de lui-même*) exactly like a little monkey.

The question would, therefore, be quite simple but this is not what is involved, precisely because there is language and the law, the father is forbidden, and the problem comes into play along this path. Now, what does Jones tell us? What does he cry out to us at the top of his voice in giving an account of his experience? What does he tell us if not that here again the woman is going to keep her advantage, is going to win, but it is necessary to see how, and in order to see how, one must not keep all these prejudices in one's head.

Let us see what he tell us. It is necessary for the woman to choose between her sex and her object. She surrenders the paternal object and she preserves her sex. There exist only two possibilities for expressing libido in this situation and both one and the other of these paths can be taken. *Grosso modo,* between abandoning her erotic attachment to the father and the abandonment of her femininity. She must change either the object or the desire. And what is he going to tell us about what is involved

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at this level, let us see, describe it for us exactly, Mademoiselle Grazien, tell me exactly the place of the paragraph where he describes ….....

Here it is. "In the first case feminine wishes are developed on the adult plane - ie, (39) diffuse erotic charm", (he underlines), "(narcissism)."

What does that mean? The fact is that Freud, here, from his experience, the first thing that he puts forward, as regards what results from the choice that I would not describe as normal but as legal. The one who renounces the paternal object in order to preserve her sex, in short, this is what is at stake, well then, this means it is no use renouncing the object in order to preserve something, because this something that one wishes to preserve at the cost of a renunciation is precisely what one loses.

For, what has diffuse erotic charm, which consists in the manipulation in the narcissistic apparatus, have to do with the essence of femininity, if not very precisely what Madame Joan Riviere pinpointed as womanliness as a masquerade and this must indeed reflect something, which is that, precisely starting from such a choice, the woman has to take the place, for reasons which it is a matter for us of specifying, of the o-object.

In the paternal and patriarchalising perspective, the woman, born from the man's rib, is an o-object. Submitting to the law in order to preserve her sex not only does not avoid her losing it, but necessitates it.

On the contrary, it is not I who say this, it is Jones, in the other case, retaining the (40) object, namely the father, what will be the result. The result is a homosexual choice. I repeat. I can do no more today than to say: it is Jones who says it. And after all, all our previous experience behind, including the pinpointing that is a little bit incomplete because elided of the whole presence of Proust, which links this case with the whole divinatory character of his intuition and his art, but what matter!

In the other case, namely, in as far as the father-object is retained, the woman finds what? What Jones says then: namely her femininity. For in every homosexual attitude or function, what the woman finds, in place of the object and people say it is in place of the primordial object, is her femininity.

And then, a second moment of what happens within this second choice. Here, Jones' terms are not equivocal, despite himself. It is from stressing the function of what is at stake, namely, a certain object, and this object as lost, that the choice is going to be made, whether this object is going to become an object that is claimed and that the so-called homosexual becomes a woman in rivalry with men and claiming to have the phallus like them, or that in the case of homosexual love, it is *qua* not having it that she loves, namely, to realise what is in fact the high point of love, to give what she does not have.

(41) So that, when all is said and done, we would only have, and, after all, why not admit it, *jouissance* of femininity as such from this homosexual beginning, which only simply illustrates the mediating function that this phallus takes on which then allows us to designate its place.

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For if what is involved as regards the status of the subject is to know what the individual (*l'être*) loses of its being by being the one who speaks or who thinks, it is also a matter of knowing what comes to take the place of this loss when it is a matter of enjoying *(de jouir).*

And what is more natural than that the privileged organ of *jouissance* should be employed here, since the fact is, as I might say, that man has it within hand's reach. But in that case, things happen at two degrees. This organ, like every organ, is used for a function. Far from the function creating the organ, there are a whole lot of animals that have organs which they have certainly for a long time never known what to make of, until they have found a way of using them. I could give you a number of them. Naturally, they are not organs absolutely like the liver or the heart. There is one that has a little saw in the oesophagus; you have to go to so much trouble to understand what he can do with it, that you are lost in admiration that he has succeeded in doing something with it. Well, it is the same thing. It is with this penis that there is going to be made something much more interesting, namely, a signifier, a (42) signifier of the loss that occurs at the level of *jouissance* through the function of the law. And what is important, is not its function as signifier. When you look a little bit more closely than most of you have done at what is called in language morphemes, you will see the function of what is called the case or the unmarked form. There can be here a termination or a flection which indicates that it is the future, the past, the substantive, the partitive or the *torsif*. And that there is sense in the fact that there is precisely no mark in this place. This is the essence of the function of significance *(signifiance)* and if the woman keeps, retains, raised to a higher power what is given to her by not having the phallus, it is precisely by being able to make of this function of the phallus the perfect completion of what is at the heart of castration, the word phallus, namely, castration itself, it is to be able to raise the function of significance to this point by not being marked.

It is on this that I will end today, certainly forced to abbreviate things given the time. I think, at least for those who are here and who I very particularly desire should grasp where we are going to be led by this re-emergence of this castration complex, of which nobody ever speaks any more, for it is rather striking that in the last article that I told you to consult, it is a Dominican priest who is neither analysed nor an analyst who points out that in a certain book there is absolutely nothing said about the castration complex. It is not astonishing. I never taught him what it was. He could not know. But I hope that with, I think, sufficient time, namely, not later than the end of the year, (43) we will have gone a little bit further into it.

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Seminar 16: Wednesday 4 May 1966

It is a matter, for us, of situating our topology; to situate ourselves, we analysts, as acting in it. In a closed meeting, a small little group, someone asked me, recently, in connection with what I said about this topology - that it is not a metaphor - what is it then? What does it mean for us to situate ourselves as subjects in a reference which is not metaphorical. I did not answer; the person who was questioning me had not been at the last closed seminar and the elliptical response that I would have been able to give, would have confronted us with *jouissance,* would have been a reply that was not sufficiently commentated on.

To be situated in what is no longer the metaphor of the subject, is to go searching for the foundation of its position, not at all in any effect of meaning, but in what results from the combinatorial itself.

What exactly is involved in the subject, in its classical position, from this locus (2) necessitated by the constitution of the objective world? Note that in this pure subject, the subject whose unitary reference the theoreticians and the philosophers have taken to extremes, this subject, I am saying, is not altogether believed in and with good reason. People cannot believe that the whole world is suspended on it. And it is indeed in this that there consists the accusation of idealism.

It is here that the visual structure of this subject ought to be explored. I already approached the material contributed by our analytic experience, and in the first place the screen, the screen that our analytic experience teaches us to be the principle of our doubt, what is seen does not reveal but hides something.

This screen, nevertheless, supports, for us, everything that presents itself. The foundation of the surface is at the source of everything that we describe as an organisation of form, a constellation. Henceforth, everything is organised in a superimposition of parallel planes and labyrinths are established with no exit to representation as such.

In a book that I recommended to the greater part of those who are here since, as a matter of fact, this audience is not much bigger than the one that I had the last time, a book called *Les paradoxes de la conscience* by Monsieur Ruyer, you will see the consequences of this structural reference. Everything that we conceive of as point by (3) point correspondence of what is on one surface onto another, is imaged by the representation of a point from which the rays start, traversing the two parallel planes manifesting there a trace on a different one to that on a plane to the corresponding plane, a fundamental homothety, homology, so that, however we may manipulate the relationship of the image to the object, the result is that there must indeed be somewhere this famous subject, who unifies the configuration, the constellation, by limiting it to a few brilliant points, who unifies it somewhere, this something in which it consists. Hence the importance of the subject.

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But this flight into a mythical unity, in which it is easy to see the requirement of the pure unifying spirit, the path, the path along which I am leading you, which is properly speaking what is called method, culminates at this topology which consists in this remark that it is not at all by seeking something that is going to correspond to this surface at the back of the eye which is called the retina or moreover to any other, at whatever point the image is formed, that it is a matter of referring to as constituting the unifying element. Of course, this begins from the Cartesian distinction between extension and thought. This distinction supposes that extension is space as homogenous, in this unthinkable sense that it is, as Descartes says, entirely to be (4) conceived of as *partes extra partes,* except for something which is hidden in this remark, which is that it is homogenous, that each point is identical to all the others while at the same time being different, which is really what the hypothesis means, namely, that all its parts are of equal value.

Now, the experience of what is involved in this structure of space, not at all when we distinguish it from thought, from thought in so far as the signifying combinatorial supports it uniquely and fundamentally, that this space cannot effectively be at all separated from it, that it is on the contrary intimately consistent with it, that there is no need for an over-arching thought to grasp it again in this necessary coherence, that thought is only introduced into it by introducing measure into it, a measure in a way that is applicable, as in land-surveying, which far from exploring it, constructs it. I have designated here the essence of what is involved in the first steps of geometry, the trace of which is still conveyed by its name, geometry, of Greek, Euclidean geometry, entirely founded precisely on this theme of a measure being introduced, which hides that it is not at all thought which carries it but properly speaking what the Greeks themselves called measure. "Man is the measure of all things", namely, his body, the foot, the thumb and the cubit (*la coudée*).

(5) Now, the progress of the thinking that has continued to be called geometric and, no doubt, it is not for nothing that *more geometrico* has always appeared to be the ideal for every deduction of thought, the progress, I am saying, of this geometry shows us the emergence of another mode of approach in which extension and combinatorial are closely tied together and which is, properly speaking, projective geometry.

Not at all equality, measure, an overlapping effect, but as you still remember, the often painful effort to ground the first deductions of geometry. Remember the time when you were put through the Hey presto! of a reversal onto the plane. God knows, this is an operation which did not seem to be implied in the premises to ground the status of the isosceles triangle. Displacement, translation, manipulation, even homothety; this whole operation starting from which Euclidean deduction fans out, is transformed, properly speaking in projective geometry, precisely by introducing from figure to figure the function of equivalence by transformation.
Curiously, this progress is marked, historically, by the contribution properly speaking of artists, namely, those who were interested in perspective. Perspective is not optics.
(6) It is not at all a matter in perspective of visual properties but, precisely, of this correspondence of what is established concerning the figures which are inscribed on one surface with those which, on another surface, are produced from the simple consistency established of the function of a point starting from which straight lines join this point to the articulations of the first figure, to find themselves, by crossing another surface, making another figure appear.

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We rediscover here the function of the screen. And it is not at all implied that between one figure and the other there should appear a relationship of resemblance or of similarity, but simply of the consistencies that we can define between the two. The screen, here, functions as what is interposed between the subject and the world. It is not an object like any other. Something is painted on it. Before defining what is involved in representation, the screen already announces to us, at the horizon, the dimension of the representative of the representation. Before the world becomes representation, its representative - I mean the representative of the representation - emerges. I will not deprive myself of the opportunity of evoking here for the first time, even if only to come back to it, a notion which, although prehistoric, cannot in any way be taken as archaeology in the matter.

(7) Cave picture (*l'art pariétal*) the one that we find precisely at the bottom of these closed spaces that are called caves, is it not a fact that in its mystery, whose principal one is undoubtedly that we still remain embarrassed as regards knowing the degree to which these places were illuminated; they were so only at the opening, to what degree these places were visited, they seem to have been rarely so if we are to believe the traces that we can pick out in the shape of traces of footprints in places which, nevertheless, are capable of carrying such marks.

Cave picture seems to refer us to nothing less than to what, later, is announced in the Platonic myth of the cave, which would then take on a different import, in effect, than a metaphorical one. If it is into the womb of a cave that Plato tries to take us in order to give rise for us to the dimension of the real, is it by chance that no doubt what is found on these walls, where recent explorations by methods which are scientific, and which are no longer breathless before these figures, imagining the man of earliest times in some anxiety or other about bringing back enough for the midday meal to his bourgeois wife, this exploration which, for its part, being brought to bear not on the imaginative interpretation of what can be involved in the relationship of an arrow and (8) an animal, especially when it appears that the wound carries the most obvious traces of being a vulvar representation, this method which brought into play, with M Leroy-Gourant, a carefully maintained card index, indeed even the use of an electronic machine, shows us that these figures are not scattered around at random, and that the constant, univocal frequency of deer at the entrance, of bison in the middle, introduces us directly, in a way, even though M Leroy-Gourant, and with good reason, does not make use of this reference point which, nevertheless, is very simple, which is immediately given to him by the import of my teaching, namely, that there is no need for those who participated, very obviously, around these pictures which are still enigmatic for us, in a form of worship, that these people had no need to go to the back of the cave for the signifiers at the entrance to represent them for the signifiers at the back, which had no need, on the contrary, to be so frequently visited, as such, outside of the precise time for initiation.

Everything that accompanies these singular processions, lines of points, arrows which appear here to be much more directing of the subject than conveying an alimentary intention, everything indicates to us that a structural chain, that a distribution whose essence is properly speaking to be signifying, and this something which, of itself, can (9) give us the guide of a thinking, that is at once firm and prudent, with respect to what is in question.

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The function of the screen as a support, as such, of significance is what we find immediately with the awakening of this something which, as regards man, assures us that, whatever tone of voice he emitted there, he was a speaking being.

It is here indeed that it is a matter of grasping in a closer way the relationship of significance to visual structure which is found, by the force of things, namely, by the fact that it seems, as far as anyone knows, that we will never have any trace of the voice of these first men, it is undoubtedly from the style of writing that we find the first manifestations in him of the word.

I do not need to insist on a very curious fact that these representations also highlight, that people go into ecstasy about the fact that they are naturalist, as if we had not learned from our analysis of realism the point to which, in every art, it is fundamentally metonymical, namely, designating something other than what it presents to us, these realistic shapes represent with a remarkable constancy this oscillating line which is (10) expressed in fact by the shape of this elongated S in which I, for my part, would see no inconvenience to see intersecting that of the S with which I designate the subject for you. Yes. Exactly for the same reason that when Monsieur Hogarth tries to designate what is involved in the structure of the beautiful, it is also exactly and specifically to this S that he refers.

To give body, of course, to these extrapolations, which may, I agree, appear to you to be bold, we must now come to what I earlier called the visual structure of this topological world, the one on which there is founded any establishment of the subject. I said that this structure is logically prior to the physiology of the eye and even to optics, that it is the structure which the progress of geometry allows us to formulate as giving, in an exact form, what is involved - I underline exact - what is involved in the relationship of the subject to extension.

And, undoubtedly, I am of course prevented by simple considerations of propriety from giving you here a lecture on projective geometry. It is necessary then that by a few indications, I stimulate the desire in you to refer to it, by means of some apologues, to make you sense its proper dimension.

Projective geometry is properly speaking combinatorial, combinatorial of points, of (11) lines, of surfaces that can be traced out rigorously, but whose intuitive foundation - what points, lines, planes, evoke for you - is dissipated, is reabsorbed, and finally vanishes behind a certain number of purely combinatorial necessities, such as, for example, that the point will be defined as the intersection of two lines, that two lines will be defined as always cutting one another, for a combinatorial definition is not valid if it involves exceptions of the intuitive order. If we believe that parallels are precisely lines which do not cut, two lines will always cut one another at a point, and one may make out as best one can, but it is necessary for this point to exist.

Now, it appears that precisely this point exists, and that it is even by making it exist that projective geometry is founded and it is indeed in this that there consists the contribution of perspective, the fact is that it is precisely by projecting it onto another plane that one will see appearing, on this other plane, in a way whose interest is not that it is intuitive there, namely, perfectly visible in the joining of two lines on the

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horizon line, but that it has to correspond, according to strict laws, to an expected equivalence, starting from hypotheses that are purely combinatorial, I repeat, which are the ones which will be pursued in the terms that two points, for example, will only (12) determine a single straight line, and that two straight lines cannot cut one another at two points.

To make you sense what is involved in such definitions, I remind you, that the result is that in encountering the manipulations of Euclidean proofs, the admission of these principles, which are summarised in a form called the principle of duality, a purely projective, non-metrical, geometry can with confidence translate a theorem established in terms of points and of lines, by substituting point for line in its statement and line for point, and by obtaining a statement that is certainly as valid as the preceding one.

This is what emerges in the 17th century with the genius of Pascal, already prepared, without any doubt, by the multiple advent of a mental dimension as it is always presented in the history of the subject, which means, for example, that the theorem described as Brianchon's which states: "That a hexagon formed by six straight lines which are tangents of a conic" - therefore the hexagon circumscribes, I imagine that you know what a conic is, but I remind you, a conic is a cone, it may be a hyperbola or a parabola, which means, on this occasion, that it is a matter of some of their shapes as they are generated in space and not simply in the form of revolutions; a cone being (13) defined then by the shape that it presents in space, through the enveloping of a line joining a point to a circle, for example, and not necessarily joining it from a point situated perpendicular to its centre - "all of these lines then present the property that the three lines that join the opposite vertices, which is easy to determine whatever the shape of the hexagon may be, by simply counting, these three lines converge in one point."

From the simple fact of admitting the principles of projective geometry, this is immediately expressed by the fact that a hexagon formed by six points which repose on a conic, which is thus an inscribed hexagon, that in this case, the three points of intersection of the opposite sides, are on the same line.

If you have listened to these two statements, you see that they can be translated from one to the other by simple substitution, unequivocally, from point to line and from line to point. There is here in the process of the proof, as you clearly sense, something completely different to what brings into play measuring, ruler or compass, and that, as regards the combinatorial, it is indeed with points, with lines, indeed with planes, in terms of pure signifier and, moreover, with theorems that can be written out simply with letters that we are dealing.

(14) Now this, just by itself, is going to allow us to give a completely different import to what is involved in the correspondence of an object with what we will call its figure.

Here, we will introduce the apparatus which served us already as being essential to confront this mythical image of the eye which, whatever it may be, eludes, elides what is involved in the relationship of the representation to the object, since, in some way or other, the representation in it will always be a double of this object.

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Confronted with what I first of all presented to you as the structure of vision opposing to it that of the look, and in a first approach, I put this look where it is grasped, where it is supported, namely, where it is scattered in this work that is called a picture.

The sort of originating relationship of the look with the stain, in so far even as the biological phylum *(phyllome)* may make it effectively appear to us in extremely primitive organisms, in the form of a stain, starting from which the localised sensitivity that the stain represents in its relationship to light, can serve us as an image, as an example, for this something where the visual world originates.

But undoubtedly this is only an evolutionary equivocation whose value can only take (15) on, can only be affirmed as a reference by being referred to a perfectly graspable synchronic structure. What is involved in what are opposed as field of vision and as look precisely at the level of this topology?

Undoubtedly, the picture is going to continue to play a role in it, and this should not astonish us, if we have already admitted that something like a *montage,* like a mounting, like an apparatus, is essential for what we are aiming at having the experience of, namely, the structure of the phantasy. And the picture about which we are going to speak, because it is in this sense that we expect it to be of service, and of use, it is indeed as it is mounted on the easel that we are going to take this picture, as something which holds up as a material object, this is what is going to serve us as a reference for a certain number of reflections.

In projective geometry, this picture is going to be the plane that I spoke about earlier onto which, as everyone thinks, the lines that we will call, if you wish, ocular lines, so that there will be no equivocation with visual rays, the lines which join the essential point at the beginning of our demonstration, that we are going to call eye, and which is this ideal subject of identification of the classical subject of knowledge, do not forget for example, in all the schemas that I gave on identification, that it is from an S-point (16) of the eye that there start these lines that I trace out from this point in a straight line, an ocular line which is joined to what, to what we will distinguish as a support, point, line, even plane, in the ground plane (*plan-support*), these lines cross this other plane and the points, the lines where they cross it, indeed the crossing of the plane which will be determined with respect to one of these lines, to contain it for example, these crossings of the figure plane - I am distinguishing therefore ground-plane and figure plane - this crossing of the ocular line, leaving its trace on the figure plane, and this is what we have to deal with in what is involved in the construction of perspective. And this is what ought to reveal, materialise for us, the topology from which it results that something is produced in the construction of vision which is nothing other than what gives us the basis and the support of the phantasy, namely, a loss which is none other than the one that I call the loss of the o-object, and which is none other than the look and, on the other hand, a division of the subject.

What, in effect, does perspective teach us? Perspective teaches us that all the ocular lines which are parallel to the ground plane are going to determine on the figure plane a line which is none other than the horizon line. This horizon line is, as you know, the major reference point for any construction of perspective.

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(17) What does it correspond to in the ground plane? It corresponds also, if we maintain firmly the principles of the consistency of this combinatorial geometry, to a line. This line is, properly speaking, the one that the Greeks, in fact, only missed for reasons that today we will leave to one side, even if we ought one day to put them in question, that the Greeks could not but miss and what is, properly speaking, this line, a line that is also, and from our principles, also a straight line which is found at infinity on the ground plane and that, intuitively, we can only conceive of as representing, as I might say, the whole of it.

It is on this line that there are found the points where in the ground plane the parallel lines converge, which is shown in the figure plane, as you know, by the convergence of almost all the parallel lines at the horizon.

This is imaged, in general, and one sees it written by the best authors, this is something you know well, when you see a road going off towards the horizon, it becomes smaller and smaller, narrower and narrower. People forget only one thing, the danger of such references, for everything that we know as horizon is a horizon of our terrestrial ball, (18) namely, a completely different horizon, determined by the spherical shape, as is noted elsewhere, moreover, without seeing in this, it seems, the slightest contradiction, as is noted when we are told that the horizon is the proof of the roundness of the earth.

Now, I would ask you to notice that even if we were on an infinite plane, there would always be a horizon line, for anyone who stood upright on it. What troubles and disturbs us in this consideration of the horizon line, is first of all what I will come back to later, namely, that we never see it except in a picture.

We will see later what is involved in the structure of a picture. Since a picture is limited, it does not even cross our minds that if the picture were infinitely extended, the horizon line would be straight to infinity, to such a degree on this occasion, do we satisfy ourselves with having simply to think in a crudely analogical way, namely, that the horizon there on the picture, is a horizon like our horizon, which one can go around.

Another remark is the following: it is that a picture is a picture and perspective is something different. We are going to see later how we get out of it in the picture.

But if you begin from the conditions that I gave you for what must come to be traced (19) on the figure plane, you will notice the following, which is that a picture made under these conditions, those of strict perspective, would have as an effect, if you suppose, for example, because you have to hang onto something, that you are standing on a plane covered by a pattern of squares going to infinity, that this pattern of squares has, of course, stopped - we will see later how - at the horizon.

And above the horizon? Naturally, you are going to say the sky. But not at all, not at all, not at all, not at all. Above, what is there, on the horizon, behind you, as I think that if you reflect on it, you can immediately grasp it, by drawing the line which joins the point that we have called S to what is behind on the ground plane which you will immediately see is going to be projected above the horizon.

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Let us suppose that at this horizon of the projective plane there comes, from the ground plane, to be stitched at the same point of horizon, the two opposite points of the ground plane, one, for example, which is on your extreme left on the horizon line of the ground plane, will come to be stitched to another one which is on your extreme right, also on the horizon line of the ground plane.

(20) Have you understood? I mean …. No? Let us begin again.

You have a surface in front of you. You have in front of you a plane made out in squares. Let us suppose, for the greatest simplicity that it is horizontal and that you, for your part, are vertical. It is a line joining your eye - I am going to say things that are as simple as possible - to some point or other of this chequered ground plane and at infinity which determines on the vertical plane, let us say, to satisfy you, which is that of projection which is going to determine the correspondence point by point.

To every point on the horizon, namely, at the infinity of the ground plane there corresponds a point on the horizon of your vertical plane. Reflect on what is happening. Of course, it is a matter of a line which, precisely, as I began to say, has nothing to do with a visual ray. It is a line which starts behind you from the ground plane and which goes to your eye. It is going to end up on the figure plane at a point above the horizon. To a point which corresponds to the horizon of the ground plane there is going to correspond another point coming to touch it from above, as I might say, on the horizon line, and what is behind you, on the right, since this passes and is crossed at the level of the eye point, is going to come exactly in the opposite sense to (21) which it would present itself if you were to turn around, namely, that what you would see on the left, if you were to turn towards this horizon, you would see being picked out on the right, above the horizon line on the projective plane, of the projection.

In other words, that a line that we cannot define as round, since it is only round because of our daily apprehension of terrestrial roundness, that it is from this line, which is at infinity on the ground plane, that we will see the points knotting together, coming respectively from above, and from below, and in a way that, for the horizon behind, is attached in a strictly reverse order to what is involved for the horizon in front.

I can, of course, on this occasion, suppose, as Plato does in his cave, my head fixed and, consequently, determining two halves of which I can speak, as regards the ground plane. What you see there is nothing other, moreover, than the pure and simple illustration of what is involved when I represent the projective plane for you on the board in the form of a cross-cap, namely, that what you see, instead of a spherical world, is a certain ball knotted in a certain way, crossing itself and which means that (22) what presented itself at first as a plane to infinity, comes in another plane, having been divided, to be knotted onto itself at the level of this horizon line; and to be knotted in such a way that to each one of the horizon points of the ground plane, is knotted what? Precisely, what the shape that I already put on the board of the projective plane, namely, its diametrically opposite point. It is indeed for this reason that it comes about that in such a projection, it is the point behind on the right which is knotted to the point in front on the left.

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This is what is involved in the horizon line, indicating to us, already, that what gives its consistency to a signifying world with a visual structure, is an envelope structure and not at all one of indefinite extension. It nevertheless remains, that it is not at all enough to say these things as I have just imaged them for you, for I forgot in the question the squares that I had put there uniquely to be of use to you, but which is not indifferent, for a pattern of squares being made up of parallel lines, it must be said that having also admitted the fact that I fixed my head, all the parallel lines of space, as you have, I think, no difficulty in imagining, are going to rejoin at a certain vanishing point at the horizon, one single point, namely, that it is the direction of all the parallel lines in (23) a certain given position which determines the unique horizon point at which they are going to cross in the figure plane.

If you have this infinite pattern of squares that we are speaking about, what you will see joining together at the horizon, will be all the parallel lines of all the squares at a single point. Which does not prevent it being the same point where all the parallel lines of all the pattern of squares behind, will also join together from above.

These remarks which are fundamental for any science of perspective and which are those that any artist who has trouble ordering anything whatsoever, a series of figures on a picture, or moreover the lines of what is called a monument, which is the arrangement of a certain number of objects around a void, will take into account; and that this point on the horizon line that I spoke about earlier in connection with the pattern of squares is exactly what is usually called, I do not see that I am contributing here anything that is really all that transcendent, the vanishing point of the perspective. This vanishing point of the perspective is properly speaking what represents in the figure the eye that looks. The eye is not to be grasped outside the figure, it is in the figure and everyone, ever since there has been a science of perspective, has always (24) recognised it as such and called it that. It is called the eye in Alberti; it is called the eye in Vignola; it is called the eye in Albrecht Dürer. But that is not all. For I regret that I have been made waste time in explaining this point that is really very accessible, that is not all. That is not at all the whole story for there are also things which are between the picture and me.

The things that are between the picture and me, can also, by the same procedure, be represented on the plane of the picture. Or they will go towards depths that we can hold to be infinite, none of this hinders us, but they will stop at a point which corresponds to what? To the plane parallel to the picture which passes - I am going to say, to facilitate things for you - which passes through my eye or through the point S.

We have here two traces. We have the trace of that through which the picture has cut the ground (*support*). It is the inverse of the horizon line. In other words, it is what, if we were to reverse the relationships, and we have the right to, constitutes as horizon line in the ground, the infinite line in the figure. And then, there is the line which represents the section of the ground by the plane of the picture. They are two lines.

(25) It is late and I will tell you something much less rigorous because of the little time that remains to me. Things take much longer to explain than might appear at first.

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Rigorously, this means that there is another eye point (*point d'oeil*) which is the one constituted by the line to infinity on the figure plane, and its intersection by something which is well there, namely, the line through which the figure plane cuts the ground plane.

These two lines cut one another since they are both on the figure plane. And what is more, they cut one another at a single point for this point is well and truly the same on the line to infinity.

In order to remain in the domain of images, I would say that this distance of two parallel lines which are on the ground plane, the ones that are determined by my fixed position as a looker, and the one which is determined by the insertion, the meeting of the picture with the ground plane, this gap, this gap which, in the figure plane, is only translated by one point, by a point which, for its part, is totally hidden for we cannot designate it as we designate the vanishing point at the horizon.

(26) This point essential for the whole configuration and very specially characteristic, this lost point, if you are willing to be satisfied with this image, which falls in the gap between two parallel lines as regards what is involved as regards the ground, this is the point that I am calling the point of the looking subject.

We have therefore the vanishing point which is the point of the subject *qua* seeing *(voyant),* and the point which falls in the gap between the subject and the figure plane which is the one that I am calling the point of the looking *(regardant*) subject.

This is not a novelty. It is a novelty to introduce it in this way, to find in it the topology of $, with respect to which it must now be known where we situate the (o) which determines the division between these two points. I am saying, of these two points in so far as they represent the subject in the figure.

Going further will allow us to establish an altogether rigorous apparatus, *montage,* which shows us at the level of the visual combinatorial, what the phantasy is.

Where we will have to situate it in this totality, is what will be said later.

But from now, so that you do not think that I am leading you here into abyssal regions (27) - I am not doing depth psychology, I am trying to do geometry, and God knows I have taken precautions, after having read everything that may be referred to this history of perspective, from Euclid, who missed it so completely in his *Aphorisms,* down to the people of whom I spoke earlier, and even to Michel Foucault's last book which directly alludes to these matters in his analysis of Las Meninas *(Les suivantes*) in the first chapter of *Les mots et les choses,* I tried to give you something that would be altogether a support for it, it must be said.

But as regards this perfectly defined point that I have just given as the second point representing the seeing subject in the projective combinatorial, do not believe that I am the one who invented it. But it is represented otherwise, and this otherwise has already been called by people other than myself, the other eye, for example.

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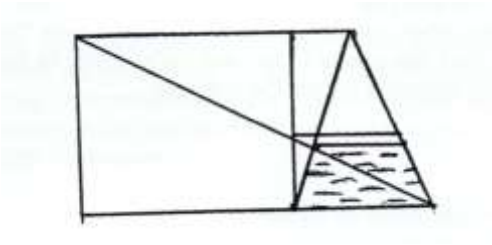
It is exactly well known by all painters, this point. For since I told you that this point, in its rigour, falls into the gap as I defined it on the ground plane, in order to situate itself at a point that you naturally cannot highlight, but which is required by the fundamental equivalence of projective geometry and which is found in the figure point, (28) it is all very well for it to be at infinity, it finds itself there. How is this point used?

It is used by all of those who have made pictures by making use of perspective, that is very exactly between Massachio and Van Eyck in the form of what is called the other eye, as I told you earlier. It is the point which allows there to be constructed any plane perspective in so far as it vanishes, in so far as it is precisely in the ground plane. It is constructed very exactly in this way in Alberti. It is constructed a little differently in what is the *pélerin.* Here it is:



(29) This is what is involved in discovering perspective, namely, a pattern of squares, for example, whose base is supported here. We have a reference.

If I lend myself to this, I mean if I want simply to do things that are simple for your comprehension, I put myself in the middle of this reference of the pattern of squares and a perpendicular line raised on the base of this pattern of squares gives me the vanishing point at the horizon. I will know then, already, that my pattern of squares is going to be arranged like that, with the help of my vanishing point.

But what is going to give me the height from which there is going to come the pattern of squares in perspective? Something which requires me to use my other eye. And what people discovered, rather late because, when all is said and done, the first theory is given of it in Alberti, a contemporary of those whom I have just named, Massachio and Van Eyck, well then, I will take here a certain distance, which is exactly what corresponds to what I gave you earlier, as this gap of my block on the board. On this distance, taking a point situated at the same height ..... as the vanishing point, I make a construction, a construction which, in Alberti, passes through a vertical line situated here. I trace out the diagonal here; here a horizontal line and here, I have the limit at (30) which my pattern of squaring will end, the one that I wanted to see in perspective.

I have therefore complete freedom as regards the height that I will give to this pattern of squares taken in perspective, namely, that inside my picture I choose as I wish the distance at which I am going to place myself from my pattern of squares so that it will appear to me in perspective, and this is so true, that in many classical pictures, you have in a masked form a little stain or indeed sometimes quite simply an eye.

An indication, here, of the point from which you yourself ought to take, the distance that you ought to put yourself from the picture, in order that the whole effort of perspective may be realised for you. As you see, this opens up another dimension

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which is the following, this one which is exactly the same as the one that astonished you earlier, when I told you that above the horizon there is no sky. There is sky because you put at the back, on the horizon, a strut (*portant*) which is the sky. The sky is never anything but a strut in reality as in the theatre, and in the same way, between you and the sky there is a whole series of struts.

(31) The fact that you can choose your distance in the picture, and in any picture whatsoever in the picture, and already the picture itself is a taking of distance, for we do not make a picture of you in the opening of the window in which you are framed.

Already you make the picture within this frame. Your relationship with this picture and what it has to do with phantasy, will allow us to have reference points, an assured figure for everything which, subsequently, will allow us to show the relationships of the o-object with the $, this is what I hope, and I hope a little bit more quickly than today, I will be able to present for you the next time.

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Seminar 17: Wednesday 11 May 1966

As regards knowledge (*savoir*), it is difficult not to take into account the existence of the knower *(savant),* knower taken here only as the support, the hypothesis of knowledge in general, without necessarily giving it the connotation of scientific.

The knower either knows something or he knows nothing. In both cases, he knows that he is a knower.

This remark is simply made to highlight for you this problem which has been prepared for a long time and, I would even say, presentified not simply since I have been teaching, but since I made my first remarks about the fundamentals that analysis reminds us of, and which is centred around the function of narcissism or the mirror stage.

Let us say, to go quickly, since we began late, that the status of the subject, in the broadest sense, in the sense not yet clarified, not at all in the sense whose structure I am in the process of trying to circumscribe for you, what is called the subject in general, which means simply, in the case that I have just spoken about, there is knowledge therefore there is a knower.

(2) The fact of knowing that one is a knower cannot but be profoundly enmeshed in the structure of this knowledge. To go straight at things let us say that the teacher (*professeur*), since the teacher has a lot to do with knowledge since he transmits knowledge, he has to cart around a certain quantity of knowledge, which he went looking for either in his experience, or in an accumulation of knowledge that has been done elsewhere and which is called, for example, in one or other domain, philosophy for example, tradition.

It is clear that we cannot overlook that the preservation of the particular status of this knower, I evoked the teacher but there are many other statuses, that of the doctor, for example, that the preservation of his status is of a nature to divert, to give a certain direction to what, for him, for his part, will appear to be the general status of his knowledge. The content of this knowledge, the progress of this knowledge, the high point of its expansion cannot but be influenced by the protection necessary for his status as a knowing subject.

This seems to me to be rather obvious if one thinks that we have before us the materialisation made tangible by social consecration of this status which mean that a gentleman is not considered to be a scholar (*savant*) uniquely in the measure that he knows or that he continues to function as a scholar, considerations of productivity (3) come here very far behind those of maintaining a permanent status for the one who has acceded to a scholarly function.

This is not unjustified, and on the whole it suits everyone; everyone adjusts to it very well. Everyone has his place; the scholarly knower in designated places, and one does

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not look too closely to see if his knowerliness, from a certain moment on, is repeating itself, is getting rusty, or has even become a pure semblance of knowerity.

But as in the case of many social crystallisations, we should not stop simply at what pure social exigencies, what are habitually called group functions and how a certain group takes on a more or less privileged status for reasons which are, when all is said and done, to be traced back to a certain historic origin.

There is indeed here something structural which, as the structural often forces us to notice it, goes way beyond a simple inter-relationship of utility. One may consider that from the point of view of output, there would be an advantage in making the status of the knower less stable. But we have to believe, precisely, that there are in the mirages of the subject, and not in the structure of the subject itself, something which ends up with these stable structures, which necessitates them.

(4) If psychoanalysis forces us to put in question again the status of the subject, it is no doubt because it tackles this problem, the problem of what a subject is, from a different starting place. If, for long years, I was able to show that the introduction of this experience of analysis into a field which can only be mapped out by joining to it a certain putting in question of knowledge in the name of truth, if the scansion of this field is to be sought at a more radical point, at a point prior to this encounter, to this encounter of a truth which poses itself and proposes itself as foreign to knowledge, as we have said, this is introduced first from the angle of demand, which first of all, in a perspective which is subsequently reduced, proposes itself as more primitive, as more archaic, and which makes it necessary to question how there are ordered, in their structure, this demand and something with which it is discordant and which is called desire.

This is how that from this angle, in a certain way in this structural splitting, we have come to put in question the status of the subject, to consider that, far from the subject appearing to us as a pivotal point, a sort of axis around which there would turn whatever may be the rhythms, the pulsation that we might attribute to what turns, around which there might turn, the expansions and the retreats of knowledge.

(5) We cannot consider the drama that is played out, that grounds the essence of the subject as it is given to us in analytic experience, by introducing the angle of desire at the very heart of the function of knowledge, we cannot do it on the foundations of the status of the person which, when all is said and done, is what has dominated up to now the philosophical view which was taken about the relationship of man to what is called the world in the form of a certain knowledge.
The subject appears to us to be fundamentally divided in the sense that to question this subject, at the most radical point, namely, whether or not it knows anything, is Cartesian doubt; we see what is the essential thing in this experience of the *cogito*, the being of the subject when it is questioned, fleeing, in a way, diverging, in the form of these two ranks of beings which only coincide in an illusory form, the being which finds its certainty by manifesting itself as being at the heart of this questioning, “I think”: thinking that I am, but I am what thinks and to think: I am, is not the same thing as being what thinks.

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A point that is not noticed but which takes on its whole weight, its whole value by being crosschecked, in analytic experience, with the fact that the one who is that which thinks, thinks in a way that the one who thinks: “I am”, is not aware of.

(6) This is the subject whom there is charged to represent the one who, directing the analytic experience, and being called the psychoanalyst, sees there being posed again for him what is involved in the question of the knower.

The relationship of the psychoanalyst to the question of his status takes up again here, in the form of a sharpness that has been increased tenfold, the one which has always been posed concerning the status of the one who possesses knowledge, and the problem of the formation of the psychoanalyst is really nothing other than, through a privileged experience, to allow there to come to birth, as I might say, subjects for whom this division of the subject is not simply something that they know but something in which they think.

It is a matter of there coming to birth some people who will know how to discover what they experience in psychoanalytic experience, starting from this position that is maintained that they will never be in the position of failing to recognise that at the moment of knowing, as analysts, they are in a divided position.

Nothing is more difficult than to maintain in a position of being what, undoubtedly, for each one if he deserves the title of analyst, had been, at some moment experienced in the experience.

So there you are.

(7) From the moment that the status of the one who is supposed to know is established in the analytic perspective, there is reborn all the prestige of specular miscognition which cannot but reunify this status of the subject, namely, let drop, elide the other part which is the one that, all the same, ought to be the effect of this unique experience, ought to be the separating effect with respect to the rest of the flock, that some people should not simply know it but should, should at the moment of approaching any experience of the order of their own, should conform to those who at least have a presentiment about what is involved in this divided structure.

It is nothing other than the sense of my teaching to recall this exigency when, undoubtedly, the means of being introduced into it are elsewhere, but that through a structure, I repeat, which goes way beyond its social conditioning, something, whatever the experience may be, from the simple fact of the functioning in which each one is identified to a certain nameable status, in this case that of being a knower, tends to put into the shadows the essential of the *schize* through which alone, nevertheless, there can be opened up an access to the experience which is at the proper level of this experience. It is as divided subject that the analyst is called on to respond to the demand of the one who enters with him into an experience of subject (*expérience de sujet*).

(8) That is why it is not pure refinement, an ornamental detail, the depiction of a particular sector of our experience which might illustrate, in a way, what must be added in terms of information to what we may be able to know, for example, about the

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scopic drive, that the last time I was led to develop before you the functions of the notion of perspective.

It is in the measure, on the contrary, that it is a matter for you of illustrating what can sustain by its apparatus, around what the subjectivity of the analyst must take its bearings, and in taking his bearings never forget even when the second vanishing point, as I might say, of his thinking, tends to be forgotten, elided, left to one side, at least because of the strength of some schema, sees himself being reminded that he ought to seek out the place where there functions this other vanishing point at the very moment, in the very place at which he tends to formulate some truth which from its very expression, if he is not careful, will see itself falling into the old unitary schemas of the subject of knowledge and will encourage him, for example, to put in the foreground one or other idea of totality which is, properly speaking, what he ought to most distrust in the synthesis of his experience.

(9) The last time, trying by abbreviated paths to presentify for you what the experience of perspective can contribute to us and teach us, even though I chose these paths to be as practical as I could, no doubt, I had the feeling of not always having succeeded in concentrating, if not all your attention, at least to have always succeeded in compensating it.

For want perhaps of some schema, and, nevertheless, this indeed is what I intended to reject, to pull back from in order to avoid some misunderstanding, nevertheless, I am going to do it today, to summarise it, and to say what, in this experience of perspective, can properly speaking illustrate for us what is involved, namely, the relationship between the division of the subject and what specifies, in analytic experience, the properly visual relationship to the world, namely, a certain o-object.

This o-object that up to now, and in an approximate fashion, one which moreover was not taken up, I distinguished from the field of vision as being the function of the look, how can this be organised in experience, structural experience, in so far as it establishes a certain type of thinking in geometry, in so far as it is made tangible in all functioning (10) of art and especially in painting.

The last time I made, verbally, a construction which is easy to find as such in a work on perspective. This is not the one in question: it was brought me just a few moments ago. It is the work, for example, or rather the collection of articles by Erwin Panofsky on perspective. There is a German edition which comes from somewhere else in which the articles, I see, are grouped differently to this Italian edition.
I recalled that, in the relationship which is described as projective which is established between the plane of what one could call the picture and the plane of what, in order to be simple today we will call the ground plane *(le sol perspective*), there are fundamental linear correspondences which are established and which imply elements that are properly speaking non-intuitible and which are, nevertheless, fundamental elements of what one can call projective space or extension.

A coherent geometry, establishing a perfect demonstrative rigour, which has nothing in common with metric geometry, namely, on condition of admitting what is happening in what I call today the perspective ground, to replace a term, I realised, that is more (11) difficult to keep in mind, the one that I used the last time, the

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correspondence of the lines traced, therefore, on the ground plane to lines traceable on the picture, imply that a line to infinity on the perspective ground, is translated by the line on the horizon of the picture.

This is the first step in any perspective construction. I am going to schematise it in the following fashion: suppose that this is the perspective ground here, I will leave the picture in profile for you, I am putting here what I have not yet spoken about: the eye point of the subject. I sufficiently indicated the last time what was involved for you to understand now the sense of the outline that I am going to make. I told you that independently of anything whatsoever that you have to refer yourself to in experience and specifically not the horizon as it is effectively experienced on our globe in so far as it is round, an infinite plane supposes that, from this eye-point, it is at (i), posing a plane parallel to the perspective ground, that you should determine the horizon line on the picture in accordance with the line where this parallel plane cuts the plane of the picture.

The experience of the picture and of painting tells us that any point whatsoever of this horizon line is such that the lines which come together on it correspond to parallel lines whatever they may be, on the ground plane.

(12) We can therefore choose any point whatsoever of this horizon line as centre of perspective. This is what is, in effect, done in every picture that is subject to the laws of perspective. This point is properly what, in the picture, does not correspond only, as you see, to the ground to be put in perspective, but to the position of the point S and as such, in the figure, represents the eye.

It is in function of the eye of the one who is looking that the horizon is established on a picture plane.

To this, as I told you the last time, all those who have studied perspective, add what they call the other eye, namely, the impact on perspective of the distance of this point S to the picture plane.

Now, moreover, one ensures that in the usage that one makes of it in any picture whatsoever this distance is arbitrary, it is up to the choice of the one who makes the picture. I mean that it is open to choice within the picture itself.

Does this mean that from the point of view of the structure of the subject, in so far as the subject is the subject of the look, that he is the subject of a seen world, this is what interests us, does that mean that we can neglect this part of the subject, that it only appears to us in function of an artifice, while the horizon line is structural, the fact that (13) the choice of distance is freely left to my choice, to me who is looking, I can say that what we have here is only an artifice of the artist, that it is from the distance at which I put myself mentally from one or other plane that I choose in the depths of the picture that this is therefore in a way out of date and secondary and not structural.

I am saying it is structural and no one has ever sufficiently noted it up to now. This second point, in perspective, is defined from the remark that whatever may be the distance of the provisional subject, of the subject S, which is precisely what we have to put in suspense and to see how it enters the picture, that whatever may be the

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distance of this subject from the picture, there is something which is simply the between him and the picture, which separates him from the picture, and this is not simply something which will be noted from the metrical value of this distance, that this distance, in itself, is inscribed somewhere in the structure and that it is here that we ought to find, not the other eye, as the authors on perspective (in inverted commas) say, but the other subject. And this is demonstrated in the way I did it the last time and which, for certain people, was not understood, and which is grounded on the remark that:

If we make pass through the point S a plane parallel, not this time to the ground (14) plane (*plan perspectif*) but to the picture, two things result. First of all, that this urges us to note that there exists a line of intersection of the picture with the plane, a perspective sum (*somme)* whose name is known, which is called, if we are to believe the book by Pankofsky, which is called …..... the fundamental line.

I did not call it that the last time and it is this line here. The plane parallel to the picture which passes through the point S, cuts the plane of the perspective ground in a line that is parallel to the first.

From the representation of these two lines on the picture, what I called the last time the figure plane, there is going to be deduced what we will call the second subject point.

In effect, in the triple relationship S, subject point, picture plane, ground plane, we have seen that to the infinite line on the ground plane - I think I sufficiently indicated the last time what this infinite line means - to the infinite line of the ground plane there corresponds the horizon line on the picture plane.

In the same group of three, you can, if you look closely at it, perceive that the line defined here - let us call it line b, the one parallel to the fundamental line - has the same (15) function with respect to the infinite line of the picture plane as the horizon in the picture plane has with respect to the infinite line in the ground plane.

It is therefore represented in the figure by this infinite line, of course, in the picture, and on the other hand, as the fundamental line is already in the picture, the other subject point, while the first was defined thus, any point whatsoever on the horizon line, the subject point can be written as follows: the point of intersection of the infinite line of the picture plane with the fundamental line.

You see here that I represented in a way that is only imaged, that is insufficient, the infinite line by a circle since in short, for intuition, it is this line which is always, from all sides at infinity on any plane whatsoever.

Intuitively, we represent it as a circle but it is not a circle. This is proved by the whole way it is handled and the line by line, point by point correspondences that constitute the essential of this projective geometry. The apparent double point of encounter that it has with the fundamental line is only pure appearance since it is a line, a line to be considered as a straight line like all the other lines, and that two straight lines could (16) only have a single point of intersection.

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These are not things that I am asking you to admit in the name of a construction which is my own. I cannot push open the door of projective geometry for you, and specifically not for those who still have no practice in it. But it is very simple for any one to refer to it and to see that there is nothing to be corrected in what I am putting forward here, namely, that what results from it is that we have two subject points in every structure of a projective world or of a perspective world, two subject points, one which is any point whatsoever on the horizon line, on the plane of the figure, the other which is at the intersection of another line parallel to the first, which is called the fundamental line which expresses a relationship of the figure plane to the ground plane with the line to infinity, in the figure plane.

This deserves to be highlighted by the path along which it came, where we have been able to establish it. But once established along this path, which you will see subsequently does not fail to constitute for us an important trace every time we will have to locate this other subject point, in order to tell you now that if, in the figure plane, we trace out the horizon line ……..... which is parallel to this fundamental line, we should deduce from it that the horizon line cuts this infinite line exactly at the same (17) point where the fundamental line cuts it since it is a line which is parallel to the first one.

Whence you will see there being greatly simplified the relationship between these two points, one is any point whatsoever on the horizon line, the other is the point at infinity, in the fact that the point at infinity is not just any point whatsoever, that it is a unique point despite the fact that here, it seems to be two.

This will be for us, when it is going to be a question of highlighting the relationship of the subject in phantasy, and specifically the relationship of the subject to the o-object, this will have for us the value of a support, and which will merit your having spent the necessary time, no more, no more than in Descartes' demonstrations, a demonstration once it is grasped is demonstrated, but its rigour and its process must still be maintained. This is what ought to serve us, serve us as a reference every time that we have to operate in terms of the scopic phantasy.

This divided subject is sustained by a common setting (*monture*), the o-object which, in this schema, is to be sought for where? It is to be sought for at a point where of course it falls and vanishes, without that, it would not be the o-object. The o-object is represented here by this something which, precisely, in the figure that I hope to have shown you of it here, with this success of making something tangible out of it for you, (18) the o-object is what supports this joint (?), S, which I imaged here by the world of this parallel plane. What is elided in it and what, nevertheless, still exists, is what, under more than one form, I already introduced into the structural relationship of the subject to the world; it is the window in the scopic relationship of this subject at the point S from which there begins the whole construction, there appears specified, individualised in this wall, if I can express myself in that way, that is represented by this parallel plane in so far as it is going to determine the second point of the subject in this wall, it is necessary that there should be an opening, a split, a view, a look. It is this, precisely, that cannot be seen from the initial position of the construction.

We have already seen this function of the window being of service to us last year as a surface of what can be written from the very first as function of signifier. Let us call it

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by the name that it deserves, it is, precisely, in this closed structure which is the one that would allow us to knot together with one another all the different planes that we have just traced out and reproduced, the structure of the projective plane in its purely topological shape, namely, under the envelope of the cross-cap. It is this something holed in this structure which, precisely, allows there to be introduced the irruption on which there is going to depend, on which there is going to depend the production of the division of the subject.

(19) Namely, properly speaking, what we call the o-object. It is in so far as the window, in the relationship of the look to the seen world is always what is elided, that we can represent for ourselves the function of the o-object, the window, namely, just as much the slit between the eye lids, namely, just as much the entrance of the pupil, namely, just as much what constitutes this most primitive of all objects in anything concerned with vision, the camera obscura (*la chambre noire*)

Now this is what I intend to illustrate for you today, to illustrate for you by a work which I told you had been put in the foreground of a recent production by an investigator, whose type of research is certainly not very distant to that of which I have charge here, in the name of analytic experience, even though he does not have the same base, nor the same inspiration, I am speaking about Michel Foucault and this picture by Velazquez which is called *Las Meninas.*

I am now going to have this picture projected before you - close the window - so that we can see in it in a tangible fashion what is allowed by a reading of something which is not at all, in a way, designed to respond to the structure of this picture itself but which, you are going to see, what it is going to allow us - what's happening ? This is (20) a slide which has been loaned to me by the Louvre that I was not able to experiment with earlier and which, really, will give here only the weakest support, but which for those who have seen it, or some photograph of this picture called *Las Meninas,* or simply remember a little bit about it, will serve us as a reference point - you don't have a little pointer, something that would allow me to show things? It's not much but I suppose it's better than nothing.

There you are. So then, perhaps you can, you can see something, a little, the minimum? There at the back, can you see anything?

X: As well as earlier. Monsieur Milner tried.

Lacan: You know, its not too bad, is it. Here, you have the figure of the painter. Substitute it right away, so that all the same, you can see clearly that he is there. So, can you focus it?

X: That's it, I can't do any better

Lacan: All right. Go back to where you were. The painter is in the middle of what he is painting. And what he is painting, you see spread out on this canvas, in a way that we are going to return to. Here, this stroke that you see is the limit, the external edge, touched by light, that is why it emerges, from something which goes from here, very (21) exactly to a point which is found there. You see almost the whole height of the

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picture which represents to us, you see here one leg of the easel, a picture seen back-to-front (*à l'envers*).

It is on this canvas. He is working on this picture and the picture is turned round (*retourné*). What do you have to say?

This is the essential plane from which we must start. And what in my opinion Michel Foucault, whom I asked you all to read, in his very remarkable text, has eluded. It is in effect the point around which one has to make turn the whole value, the whole function of this picture.

I would say that this picture is a sort of face down card and we cannot fail to take into account that it is like a face down card, that it takes on its value by belonging to the module and the model of other cards.

This face down card is really constructed there to make you lay down your own. For in effect there was, I cannot fail to mention it, discussion, debate about what is involved in the fact that the painter, Velasquez in this case, is here at a certain distance from the picture, from this picture that is being painted.

The way in which you respond to this question, in which you will lay down your cards, is in effect absolutely essential for the effect of this picture.

This implies this dimension that this picture subjugates.

(22) Ever since it has existed, it has been the basis, the foundation of all sorts of debates. This subjugation has the closest relationship with what I call this subversion, precisely, of the subject on which I insisted in the whole first part of my discourse today, and it is precisely by being based on it that it takes on its value.

In fact, the relation to the work of art is always marked by this subversion. We seem to have admitted, with the term sublimation, something which, in short, is nothing else. For if we have sufficiently explored the mechanism of the drive to see that what is happening in it is a return journey from the subject to the subject, provided one grasps that the return is not identical to the outward journey and that, precisely, the subject, in conformity with the structure of the Moebius strip, fastens on to itself there after having completed this half-turn which means that, starting from its front, it comes back and is stitched onto its back, in other words, that it is necessary to make two drive circuits for something to be accomplished, which allows us to grasp what is authentically involved in the division of the subject. This indeed will be shown to us by this picture, whose capturing-value depends on the fact that it is not simply what we always limit ourselves to, precisely because we only do one circuit and that, perhaps, in (23) effect, for the sort of artist we deal with, namely, the ones who consult us, the work of art is for internal use. It helps them to make their own loop (*boucle*).

But when we are dealing with a master like the present one, it is clear that at least what remains from any apprehension with this work is that the one who looks at it is fastened onto it *(y est bouclé).* There is no spectator who simply does anything more than pass in front at all speed and pay his dues to the ritual of the museum, who is not

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seized by the particularity of this composition, as regards which, all agree in saying that something is happening in front of the picture which makes of it something quite specific, namely, - we express ourselves as we can - that we are caught up into its space. And people give themselves a headache trying to work out the trick of construction and of the construction of perspective, through which this can be produced. Starting from there, people go further, people speculate about what is involved in the function of each of the personages and of the groups, and they do not see that all of this is only one and the same question.

People proceed generally along this path which is in effect the question which is going to remain at the heart of the problem and which is the one to which at the end I hope to be able to give the response. What is the painter doing? What is he painting?

(24) Which implies, and it is most often because it is the art critic who is involved, the form in which the question is posed: What was he trying to do? Because in short, of course, no one, properly speaking, takes seriously the question: What is he doing? The picture is there: it is finished and we do not ask ourselves what he is now painting. We ask ourselves: What was he trying to do? Or, more exactly, what idea does he want to give us of what he is in the process of painting? A point where already we obviously see marked out a relationship which, for us, is quite recognisable: what we desire and desire to know is very properly something which is something of the order of what one can call the desire of the other, since we say: What was he trying to do?

It is certainly the wrong position to take up, because we are not in a position to analyse, I would not say the painter, but a picture. It is certain that the painter did what he wanted to do, because it is there before our eyes. And that consequently, this question, in a way, cancels itself out because it is on this hither side of the point at which it is posed, since we pose it, in the name of what he has already done. In other words in the loop-like return of which I spoke earlier, and it is already because of this (25) that the picture introduces us to the dialectic of the subject: there is a circuit already made and we have only to make the other one. Only to do that we must not miss out the first one.

The presence of the picture which occupies all this height and which, from the very fact of this height, encourages us to recognise in it the picture itself, which is presented to us by, this is something I note, in a way, in the margin of our progress which goes along a different path, that this discussion for those who have advanced this thesis that I permit myself to consider to be futile, that it is a different picture that is involved, you will see it later, we will discuss it in more detail, namely, the portrait of the king and of the queen whom you cannot, of course, see on this figure, which is of course quite inadequate, that I brought you, they are here in the background and as you know, I hope, on the whole, is present in a frame which we will have to discuss later as regards its significance, but whose testimony some people take as indicating that the king and the queen are here in front of the picture and it is them that the painter is painting.

This, in my opinion, can be refuted. For the moment, I only want to remark that it is against this background that I tell you that the size of the canvas is already an argument that can be brought that this is not the way things are and that this (26)

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represented canvas is exactly, represents, the picture that we have here, in so far as it is a canvas supported on a wooden easel whose framework we see here, and that, in other words, we have in this picture the representation of this picture as reality.

Here I can indeed push this little door which means that once again we find in it the crosschecking with my formula which means that the pictorial object is a *Vorstellungs- representanz*.

I am not at all saying that the painting is a representation of which the easel, the support, is the representative. If it functions here to make us perceive the truth that is there, it is in the fact that by putting ourselves into the picture which, a curious thing, is done there for the first time, for there were already things like mirrors in the picture. even numerous ones at this epoch, but the picture in the picture, which is not the play within the play, not at all, is something that was done here it seems for the first time and has scarcely ever been done since except at the level of the point where I picked it out for you, namely in Magritte.

Representation is indeed, in effect, what this figure of the reality of the picture is, but it is there to show us clearly that, at the level of reality and of representation, what is (27) traced out here in the picture and the picture mutually saturate one another. And that this is why it is highlighted for us that, precisely, what constitutes the picture in its essence is not representation, for what is the effect of this picture in the picture: *Vorstellungsrepresentanz*. It is precisely all these personages that you see precisely in so far as they are not at all representations but that they are showing off (*en représentation),* that all these personages, whoever they may be, in their status, as they are here effectively in reality, although long dead but they are still there, are personages who are sustained as showing off and with complete conviction, which means, precisely, that none of them represents anything of what they represent. And this is the effect of this something which introduces into the space of the picture, binds them together, crystallises them in this position of being personages on show, personages of the court.

Starting from there, that Velasquez, the painter, should put himself in the middle of them takes on all its sense. But, of course, this goes much further that this simple touch of what one could call social relativism.

The structure of the picture allows us to go well beyond to the truth, to go beyond, it (28) would have been necessary to start from a question, not from a question but from a completely different movement than this movement of the question, which I told you cancelled itself out from the simple fact of the presence of the work itself, but starting from what the work imposes as we see it here, namely, that the same childhood mouth (*bouche d'enfance*) which is suggested to us by the central character, by this little Infanta who is the second daughter of the royal couple: Philip IV and Dona Marianne of Austria, the little Dona Margherita who was painted fifty times, I would say, by Velasquez, that we should allow ourselves to be guided by this personage who comes, in a way, before us in this space which is for us the question mark as for all of those who have seen this picture, who have spoken about this picture, who have written about this picture, the question mark that it poses us, it is the cries emitted from her mouth, I would say, that it would be well to start from in order to make what I would call the second circuit of the picture and it is the one, it seems to me that is missing in

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the analysis of the work of which I spoke earlier: "let me see" (*fais voir*) what is behind the canvas as we see it from the back, it is a "let me see" which summons him and that we are more or less ready to pronounce.

Now, from this simple "let me see" may arise what, in effect, starting from there is (29) imposed, that is, what we see, namely, these personages as I qualify them as being essentially personages on show.

But we do not see only that. We see the structure of the painting, its perspective *montage.* It is here that undoubtedly I regret that we do not have here a support that is sufficient to demonstrate for you these features in all their rigour. Here, the personage that you see framed in a door of light at the back is the very precise point where the lines of perspective come together. It is at a point more or less situated according to the lines that are traced out between the figure of this personage - for there are slight fluctuations of intersection which are produced - and his elbow that there is situated the vanishing point, and it is not by chance if through this vanishing point, it is precisely this personage and a personage who is leaving.

This personage is not someone indifferent. He is also called Velasquez. Nieto instead of being called Diego-Rodrigues. This Nieto is the person who had some say in the vote which allowed Velasquez to accede to the position of *Aposentador* of the king, namely, something like a chamberlain or grand marshal. He is, in brief, a sort of personage who reduplicates him and this personage, here, is designated to us because of this since we do not see and of whom we say "let me see", not alone does he see it from where he is, but that he has, as I might say, seen too much, he is leaving. Is there (30) a better means of designating this high-point as regards what opens out as regards the subject in terms of the function of the eye than something which is expressed by a "seen that" *(vu*) that is, in a way, definitive.

Henceforth, the presence of Velasquez himself in this position where you have seen him earlier and the second photo being no better than the first, you have not been able to see what you could see on better reproductions and what a thousand authors who have spoken about it have born witness to, namely, that this personage who is looking, people underline, towards us spectators - God knows the amount of speculation that has gone on about the orientation of the look - this person has precisely the look that is least turned towards the outside.

This is not an analysis that is personal to me. Several authors, the great majority, have pointed it out. The sort of absent, dreamy, aspect turned towards some *disegno interno,* as the Gongorists express it, I mean the whole theory of baroque, mannerist, conceptist theory, anything you like, and of which Gongora is the example, is the flower, *disegno interno,* this something to which there is referred the mannerist discourse and which is, properly, what I call that in this discourse there is no metaphor, that the metaphor enters into it as a real component, this presence of Velasquez in his (31) canvas, his figure bearing in a way the sign and the support that he is here, at once, as a component and as an element of it, this is the structural, represented point through which there is designated to us what may be involved in it, along what path it can happen that there appears in the canvas itself the one who supports it *qua* looking subject (*sujet regardant*).

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Well then, it is something quite striking whose value cannot, in my opinion, be mapped out except from what I introduced to you in this topological structure.

Two features are to be highlighted: that this look is looking and with respect to it everyone says, it is us, we the spectator. Why believe so much in ourselves? No doubt it summons us to something since we respond in the way that I told you. But what this look implies, just like the presence of the turned picture in the picture, just like this space which strikes all those who look at the picture as being in a way unique and singular, is that this picture extends into the dimensions of what I called the window and designates it as such.

This ensures that, in a corner of the picture, through the picture itself, that is in a way turned onto itself in order to be represented in it, there is created this space in front of the picture which we are properly designated as inhabiting as such, this presentifying (32) of the window in the look of the one who has put himself, not by chance, or in any random fashion in the place that he occupies, Velasquez, this is the point of capture and the specific action this picture exercises on us.

There is a crosscheck for this in the picture. I can only regret once more to have to refer you to images, in general, moreover, I must say, in numerous volumes, all rather bad and either too dark or too clear. This picture is not easy to reproduce but it is clear that the distance between the painter and the picture, in the picture where he is represented, is very sufficiently emphasised to show us that he is precisely not within range to reach it and in this there is an intention, namely, that this part of the group, what is here called *Las Meninas, Les Ménines,* namely, Dona Margarita with Dona Maria Agostio Sariento who is on her knees before her, are in front of the painter, while the others, even though they seem to be on an analogous plane, in front, are rather behind, and that this question about this space between the painter and the painting is here not alone what is presented but what is presentified to us by this trace that it is enough to designate to recognise that here a transversal line marks something (33) which is not simply a luminous division, a grouping of the canvas, but a veritable furrow of the passage of this phantastical presence of the painter in so far as he is looking.

If I tell you that it is somewhere at the level of the intersection of the fundamental line and the ground plane and at a point in infinity that the look of the subject is going towards, it is indeed also from this point that Velasquez made, in this ghost-like form which specifies this self-portrait among all the others, one of the traits which is distinguished undoubtedly by the style of the painter. He will tell you himself: “Do you believe that I would paint a self-portrait from this drop, from this oil, with this paintbrush.”

You have only to consult the portrait of Innocent X which is in the Palazzo Doria Pamphili to see that the style is not at all the same.

This ghost of the looking subject entered by this trace which is still tangible there and of which I might say that all the personages bear the vibration, for, in this picture, in which it has become a cliché, a common-place and I have heard it articulated in the mouths, I must say, of not only the most authorised but the most high ranking in the hierarchy of creators.

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(34) This picture which we are told is the picture of looks which cross one another and of a sort of inter-vision, as if all the personages were characterised by some relation with one another. If you look at things closely you will see that except for the look of the maid of honour Maria Agostina Sariente who is looking at Dona Magarita, no other look fixes on anything.

All these looks are lost on some invisible point, as one might say, "an angel has passed", precisely the painter. The other maid of honour who is called Isabelle de Velasque, is there, in a way, as forbidden, her arms, in a way, spread apart from the trace of this passage.

The idiot, here, the monster Maria Barbola, the dwarf, is looking elsewhere and not at all, as it is said, towards us. As regards the little dwarf, he is occupied here with very precisely doing, with very precisely playing the role that he is made to play *qua* imitation little boy, he is playing the little brat: he is giving the dog a kick in the behind as if to say to him, in a way: "Are you asleep! You didn't smell the mouse that has just passed."

A look, we will be told, if someone still wished to sustain it, but observe that in a picture which is supposed to be a picture about the interplay of looks, there are not in (35) any case, even if we must retain the look of one of the maids of honour, two looks which meet, complicitous looks, intelligent looks, searching looks.

Dona Margarita, the little girl, does not look at the maid servant who is looking at her. All the looks are elsewhere. And, of course, the look at the back of the one who is leaving is nothing more than a look which means: "I am leaving you", and is far from being pointed at anyone.

Henceforth, what can be meant by the fact that is brought to the centre of the theory of this picture, when it is claimed that what is here in the forefront, at our place, and God knows whether the spectator can take delight in such a support, in such a hypothesis, is the king and the queen who are reflected in the mirror which ought to appear here for you and which is at the back?

To this I would object that the painter, from where he shows himself in this picture, where does he intend that we should put it? One of the hypotheses and one of the ones which seduced most among those put forward, is that, since the painter is there, and this is what he has painted, he must have seen all of this in a mirror, a mirror which is where we are and there we are, transformed into a mirror. This does not lack seduction nor does it fail to involve a certain appeal with respect to all I evoke for you (36) as regards the relativity of the subject to the other, except that when you want, it is around such an experience that I would highlight for you the strict difference there is between a mirror and the window; two terms precisely which structurally have no relationship.

But let us stick to the picture. The painter is supposed to have painted himself having seen the whole scene of people around him in a mirror. I only see one objection to it: it is that nothing indicates to us from the testimony of history - and God knows this is the sort of news that history charges itself with transmitting - nothing indicates to us

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that Velasquez was left-handed. Now, this indeed is how we ought to see him appearing if we are to take seriously the fact that, in a painting supposedly made with the help of a mirror, he represents himself as he indeed was in effect, namely, holding his paintbrush in his right hand.

This may appear to you to be a very slight reason. It nevertheless remains that, if this is how things are, this theory would be completely incompatible with the presence here of the king and the queen. Either it is a mirror that is here, or it is the king and the queen. If it is the king and the queen, this cannot be the painter, if the painter is elsewhere, if the king and the queen are there, it cannot be the painter who is there, as I suppose he effectively was.

You do not understand, Monsieur Castoriadis?

Castoriadis: No

Lacan: In the hypothesis that the king and the queen, reflected back there in the mirror, were here to have themselves painted by the painter, since I have eliminated the hypothesis that the painter was there otherwise than through the art of his brush, it is necessary that the painter be either here or elsewhere. The requirement that the painter should be there and not on the other side of a mirror, which would be ourselves, lies in the fact of supposing that the king and queen are in the mirror.

In other words, we cannot put at the same place any two personages whatsoever of this trio which are: a supposed mirror, the king and the queen, or the painter. We are always forced, in order that this should hold up, to put two of them at the same time, and there cannot be two at the same time.

If the king and the queen are there so as to be reflected at the back in the mirror now it is impossible that they should be represented as being there in the mirror, if only because by reason of scale, of the dimensions in which they are seen in the mirror where they are more or less the same scale as the person who is on the point of leaving next to them. Even though given the distance that we are at, they ought to be exactly (38) twice as small. But this is only another additional argument.

If the king and the queen are there in this hypothesis, then, the painter is here and we find ourselves before the position put forward by tellers of anecdotes, by Madam de Motteville, for example, namely, that the king and the queen were here - and what is more they are supposed to be standing - in the process of being, of posing and are supposed to have before them the array of all these people whose natural function, you can see, would be if really at this time Velasquez was in the process of painting something quite different to them and, what is more, something that they do not see because they see all of these personages in a position that surround him.

I put forward, in opposition to this obvious impossibility, that what is the essential in what is indicated by this picture is this function of the window. That the fact that the trace is, in a way, marked by that through which the painter can return to it, is really here what shows us how it is there the empty place. That it is in symmetry to this empty place that there appear those, as I might say, not whose look, but the supposition that they see everything, that they are in this mirror exactly as they might

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(39) be behind a grill or an un-silvered window pane and after all, at the limit, nothing prevents us from supposing that it is something of the kind, namely, what is called a connector, connecting with a large room, one of these places of the type of a place for spying, that they are here in effect, that the fact that they see everything is what sustains this world as being on show, that there is here something which in a way gives us the parallel for the "I think, therefore I am" of Descartes; that Velasquez says "I paint, therefore I am", and I am the one who is leaving you here with what I have done for your eternal interrogation. And I am also in this place from which I can return to the place that I leave you which is really the one where there is realised this effect from the fact that there is a fall (*chute*) and disarray of something which is at the heart of the subject.

The very multiplicity of interpretations, one might even say their embarrassment, their awkwardness is there sufficiently designed to underline it. But at the other point what do we have? This presence of the royal couple, playing exactly the same role as the God of Descartes, namely, that in everything that we see, nothing deceives on the single condition that the omnipresent God, for his part, is deceived by it. And it is there, the presence of these beings that you see in the so confused and singular (40) atmosphere of the mirror. And this mirror is there, in a way, the equivalent of something which is going to vanish at the level of the subject O who is there, as a pendant of this small (o) of the window in the foreground, would this not deserve our dwelling a little more on it?

A painter, about thirty years later, called Luca Giordano, a mannerist precisely in painting and who preserved in history the label of *"fa presto"* because he went a little quickly, also extraordinarily brilliant, having contemplated at length this image whose history I have not given you as regards its denomination, uttered a word, one of these words, God knows, that one might expect from someone who was at once a mannerist and very intelligent, he said: "It is the theology of painting".

And of course, it is indeed at this theological level, where the God of Descartes is the support of a whole world that is in the process of being transformed through the intermediary of the subjectival ghost, it is indeed through the intermediary of the royal couple, who appear to us scintillating in this frame at the back, that this term takes on its sense.

But I will not leave you without telling you, for my part, what suggests to me the fact that a painter like Velasquez, how much of the visionary there was in him. For who (41) will speak in connection with him about realism, who for example in connection with Philanderus (?) would dare to say that this is painting of a popular crudeness. It no doubt is, which simply means eternalising the *flash* that he might have had one day leaving the royal tapestries factory and seeing there the workers in the foreground providing a frame for what was being produced at the back.

I would ask you simply to consult this painting, which is worth more than what I have shown you there, in order to see the degree to which there can be distant from any realism, and, moreover, there is no realistic painter, undoubtedly, who is not a visionary. And by looking more carefully at what is happening at the back of this scene, in this mirror where these personages appear to us to be twinkling, and for their part undoubtedly distinct from what I called earlier ghostly but really brilliant.

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There came to me the following, that in polar opposition to this window in which the painter frames us as in a mirror, he makes there emerge what for us, no doubt, does not come in an indifferent place as regards what happens for us in terms of the relationship of the subject to the o-object - the television screen.

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I would like to salute the presence among us of Michel Foucault who does me the great honour of coming to this seminar. As for myself I rejoice, for it is less a matter for me of giving myself over, before him, to my usual exercises than to try to show him what constitutes the principal goal of our meetings, namely, a goal of formation which implies several things, among ourselves, first of all that things should not be these things of two sides, yours and mine, and immediately located at the same level, otherwise what use would it be? It would be a fiction of teaching.

It is indeed for this reason that, for the last three of our meetings, I was led to return to the same plane, on several occasions, through a sort of effort of reciprocal accommodation. I think that already, between the second last time and the last time, a step was taken and I hope that another one will be taken today. In a word, I will return today again to this quite admirable support that is given to us by *Las Meninas,* (2) not that they were brought into the forefront as the principle object, of course, - we are not here at the Ecole du Louvre - but because it seemed to us that there was illustrated there in a particularly remarkable fashion, certain facts that I had tried to highlight and to which I will return again for anyone who has not sufficiently followed me. We are dealing here obviously with things that are not all that usual.

The usual use of teaching, whether it is university or secondary, by which you have been formed, being of course to have put between you and what constitutes, for example, the really essential form of modern geometry, remains not simply unknown by you but particularly opaque, and, of course, I was able to see the effect of this when I tried to bring you some of it by these figures, very simple and exemplary figures when I tried to bring you something that showed its dimension to you.

At this point *Las Meninas* presented themselves, as often happens. One really has to marvel, one is wrong to marvel, things come to you like a ring on the finger, we are not alone in working in the same field. What Monsieur Foucault had written in his first chapter was immediately noted by some of my listeners, I must say before me, as (3) constituting a particularly relevant point of intersection between two fields of research. And it is indeed in this way that it must be seen, and I would say all the more so when one applies oneself to re-reading this astonishing first chapter, which I hope that those who are here noticed was taken up a little further on in the book, at the key point, at the turning point, at the one where there is made the junction between this mode, this constitutive mode, as one might say, of relationships between words and things as it is established in a field which begins with the maturation of the sixteenth century to culminate at this particularly exemplary and particularly well articulated point in his book which is that of the thinking of the eighteenth.

At the moment of arriving at what constitutes its goal, in his perspective, at the point that he has led us to, the birth of another articulation, the one which is born in the nineteenth century, the one which already allows him to introduce us both to the function and the profoundly ambiguous and problematic character of what are called the human sciences, here Monsieur Michel Foucault stops and takes up his picture,

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Las Meninas, again around the personage in connection which whom we ourselves left our discourse suspended the last time, namely, the function of the king in the picture.

(4) You will see that this is what is going to allow us today, if we have the time, if things are set up as I hope, to establish for me the junction between what has been brought forward by contributing this precision that projective geometry may allow us to put into what one can call the subjectivity of vision, to make the junction between this and what I already contributed a long time ago under the theme of the narcissism of the mirror.

The mirror is present in this picture in an enigmatic form, so enigmatic that the last time I was able to end humorously by saying that, after all, for want of knowing what to make of it, we might see there what appears to be, in a surprising fashion, in effect, something which singularly resembles our television screen. But this is obviously a witticism. But you are going to see today, if we have the time, I repeat, that this relationship between the picture and the mirror, what one and the other not alone illustrate for us or represent for us, but truly represent as a structure of representation, this is what I hope to be able to introduce today.

But I do not want to do it without having had here some testimony of the questions which may have been posed after my earlier discourses. I asked Green who, moreover, (5) since we are in a closed seminar, offered himself spontaneously, in a way, to bring me this reply by bringing it to me from outside this circle. I am therefore going to give him the floor. I believe that Audouard, I do not know if he is here, is also willing to bring us some elements of interrogation, and immediately afterwards I will try in replying to them, perhaps, I hope, lead Monsieur Foucault to make a few remarks. In any case, I will certainly not fail to call on him.

Good. I give you the floor, Green.

My voice is a little tired today. I am not sure that in this room, whose acoustics are as bad as its cleanliness, today at least, I am not sure whether I can be clearly heard at the back. Yes? Anyway it would not be a bad thing if you were to move in a body and come a little closer. I would feel surer.

Dr Green: In fact, what Lacan asked me, was essentially to give him the opportunity to start again on the development that he had begun the last time. And it was starting from certain remarks that I myself made at the time of his commentary, that I had taken the liberty of writing to him.

These remarks related essentially to the conditions of projection which were very directly linked to Lacan's commentary and to his own place, preoccupied as he was by the commentary, and to what he could not perceive from the point at which he was.

The conditions of this projection having been, as you know, very poor, and the lack of sufficient darkness considerably misrepresented the picture and, in particular, certain details of this picture became totally invisible. It was in particular the case for what concerned …..

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Lacan: Green, this is not a criticism, we are going to project it again today. Today it will work. I do not think that it was the lack of the darkness, even though darkness is very precious to us, this is not what was in question.

(7) This is not what was at stake. I think that it was the fact that the bulb was, I do not know why, badly regulated or prepared for some other use.

In short, my negative the last time, I cursed the Ecole du Louvre. I was wrong and I went to apologise. My negative was not only very adequate but, as you are going to see, excellent. It was therefore a matter of the bulb. Naturally, you have to lower these curtains if we want to have the projection. So do it quickly. You are very kind. There you are. Thank you.

So then, on you go, Gloria. Put on *Las Meninas*.

Green: In fact what was effaced on that occasion was the person of Velasquez himself, the painter, and the couple…. Today, one can see it better, but the last time, precisely, what was effaced was the personage of the painter and this couple, this couple which appeared to be totally effaced.

I questioned myself about this effacing and I asked myself whether, instead of considering it as a simple inadequacy, we might not consider that this effacement itself signified something, like one of these productions of the unconscious, like a bungled (8) action, like forgetting, and whether there was not here a key, a key which strangely unites the painter and this couple who found themselves in the penumbra, who seemed, moreover, to be uninterested in the scene and to be whispering together.

And it was starting from this reflection that I asked myself whether there was not here something to be explored in connection with this effacing, and the effacing of the trace in the picture, where the planes of light are distinguished in a very precise fashion, by Lacan as well as by Foucault with, notably, the plane of light at the back, of the other Velasquez, the Velasquez at the back, and the plane of light which comes to him from the window.

It is therefore in this between-the-two, in this between the two lights that, perhaps, there would be something to be explored as regards the meaning of this picture.

Now we can perhaps put on the lights again if you do not mind.

These, then, are two remarks that I had made to Lacan in writing without thinking at all that they had any other goal that that of re-launching his reflections.

And then, I took up Foucault's text, this very remarkable chapter, and noted there a certain number of points of convergence with what I have just told you, and (9) particularly what he himself says about the painter, he says:

"His dark torso and bright face are half-way between the visible and the invisible".

On the other hand, Foucault seems to me to have been very silent about the couple that I have been speaking about. He alludes, moreover,he speaks about the courtesan

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who is there and he does not speak at all about the feminine character who, from appearances, seems to be a religious, from what one can see.

Here I must say that the reproduction in Foucault's book does not allow her to be seen at all, while the reproduction that Lacan has pin-pointed here, allows one to think that there are strong reasons that she is a religious.

And I re-discovered, obviously in Foucault's text, a certain number of systematic oppositions which illuminate the structure of the picture. Some of these oppositions have already been highlighted and particularly, for example, there is the opposition of the mirror, the mirror as support for an opposition between the model and the spectator, the mirror as an opposition to the picture and to the canvas, and, in particular, as regard this canvas, a formulation by Foucault which reminds us, I believe, a good deal, about the barrier of repression. "It prevents there ever been located or (10) definitively established the relationship between the looks."

This kind of impossibility conferred on the situation of the canvas, being back-to-front, namely, what is inscribed on it, makes us think, for our part, that there is here an altogether essential relationship.

But above all, as regards Lacan's reflections on perspective, what appeared to me to be interesting, is not to rediscover other oppositions, there are such and I forget some of them, of course, but above all to try to comprehend the succession of different planes from the back towards the surface, precisely in Lacan's perspective on perspective.

Well then, it is certainly not indifferent, I believe, that one can rediscover there at least four planes. Four planes which are, successively, the plane of the other Velasquez, the one at the back, the plane of the couple, the plane of the painter, and the plane constituted by the Infanta and her handmaidens, the idiot, the fool and the dog who are in front of Velasquez. They are in front of Velasquez and I think that one can divide this group itself into two sub-groups: the group constituted by the Infanta where Foucault sees one of the two centres of the picture, the other being the mirror - and I believe that this is obviously very important - and the other sub-group constituted by the animal and the monsters, namely, the idiot and the fool Nicolas Percusato with the (11) dog.

I believe that this division on the style of from the back to the front, with these two groups may make us think, and there, perhaps, I am advancing a little - but it is uniquely to provide matter for your commentaries and your criticisms - as something which makes of this picture, of course, a picture about representation, the representation of classical representation, as you were saying, but also, perhaps, of representation as creation and, finally, as this antinomy of creation with, on the left-hand side, with this individual, absolutely, who in the relationship of the Infanta to her two parents who are behind, represents creation in the most successful, the happiest, human form and, on the contrary, deported to the other side on the side of the window, as opposed to that of the canvas, these failures of creation, these marks of castration that are represented by the idiot and the fool.

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So that that then, this couple in the penumbra, would have a singular value with respect to the other couple reflected in the mirror, which is that of the king and the queen.

This duality probably being too directed, at that moment onto the problem of creation, in so far as, precisely, it is what Velasquez is in the process of painting, and (12) where we find this duality, probably, between what he is painting and the picture that we are looking at.

I believe that it is in opposition to these planes and these perspectives and, probably, the fact that it is not by chance, something I did not know, that the personage at the back, and Foucault writes in connection with this personage at the back, whom I did not know was called Velasquez, and of whom one can say that he is the other Velasquez, he says of him, in a phrase that really struck me: “Perhaps he is going to enter the room? Perhaps he is confining himself to spying on what is happening inside, content to surprise without being observed.”

Well then, I believe, precisely, that this person because of his situation, is precisely in a position to observe, and he observes what? Obviously everything that is taking place in front of him while Velasquez, for his part, is absolutely not in a position to observe this couple in the penumbra and can only look at what is in front of him, namely, the two sub-groups that I have just spoken about.

I do not want to be much longer in order to give the floor to Lacan but I believe that we cannot but see the degree to which in all of this and in the relationship of the (13) window to the picture that Lacan speaks about, well then, I believe that the fascination-effect produced by this picture, and I think that this is what is most important for us, that this picture produces a fascination-effect, is directly related to the phantasy in which we are caught up and, perhaps, that precisely there is here some relationship with these few remarks that I was making about creation, in other words the primal scene.

(14) Dr Lacan: Good. We can thank Green for his intervention and also, God knows, this does not seem very nice, his brevity. But we lost a lot of time a the beginning of this session, I would ask Audouard if he wishes, to make an intervention which I have no doubt will have the same qualities.

(15) Monsieur Audouard: Precisely, it seemed to me that in a seminar like this one, speakers ought not to be limited to those who have understood, the most brilliant pupils, but that those who have not understood, and that those who have not understood, should be able to say so.

So I would like to say to Monsieur Lacan and to yourselves, apologising in advance for the rather graceless nature of this intervention, that what I would like to express is above all what I have not understood in the presentation that Monsieur Lacan gave us, about the topology that Monsieur Lacan has made for us, in part in the encounter of the ground plane and the figure plane.

First of all, there are many ways of not understanding. There is one way which is to go out of the seminar saying: “I understood nothing at all. Did you understand

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anything?" "Me neither" says the other. And one remains with that. And then, there is another way which for once I have adopted which is to put myself in front of a sheet of paper and try to make my own little graph, my own little schema.

(16) Not without some trouble. It was especially this morning because this morning Monsieur Lacan telephoned me to tell me that I might perhaps have something to say. So then I rushed to construct something so that it is really like that, impromptu.

Only I am a little uncomfortable because I would like to have put my little graph somewhere and I see that this would mean destroying the organisation of the session and ….

Lacan: The paper is there for that. Use that.

Audouard: Thank you very much. So then, what I am going to do, I am simply going to tell you the way in which I saw myself obliged to express things to myself, and I would ask Monsieur Lacan to tell me where I went wrong ….

Lacan: On you go, my friend, on you go.

Audouard: This will allow us to see better. Good. I am going to image with a circular plane this plane of the look in which my eye is caught, the plane of the look in which my eye is caught, therefore, that my eye cannot see.

Here, there is going to be an infinite line which is going to lead to the horizon. Here, there is going to be the projective repetition of this line which will not only be the (17) projective repetition of this line as if it were a matter of metrical geometry, but which is going to be the possibility, for a metrical geometry, that each one of its points, of course, parallel to this line is going to be projected onto it and constitute a parallel line, but in reality, for my eye situated here in the field of the look, each one of these lines is therefore no longer parallel, and will come to constitute a point, like this, in the perspective offered to my eye.

Good. It is also certain that the infinite line which is traced from the field of the look to the horizon, will itself be, in one way or another, and it is here that, perhaps, my position is a little bit uncertain, in one way or another projected onto this line and therefore, when all is said and done, onto this point.

Every point of this line and every point of this line will in the final analysis be projected onto this point. Here I have the figure plane, namely, what offers itself to me, which offers itself to my look when I look: my field, my field in which the plane that I, for my part, cannot see, namely the ground plane, the plane of the look in which my eye is caught up, in one way or another, is going to be projected. To such a degree and so well that, as Monsieur Lacan has often pointed out to us, I am seen just as much as I (18) see. Namely, that the lines which come here to rejoin the plane of the look or this fundamental line that Monsieur Lacan spoke to us about, at this figure plane, will moreover be invertible, as I might say, like this, by an exactly inverted projection. So that, if I consider that the look-plane is projected onto the figure plane, the look-plane sends me back something which came from the figure plane, there will be at each intermediary point between the plane of the look and the infinite line, the

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vanishing point, the point at the horizon, there would be at every point of this space, a difference between perspective, if I consider it as vectorialised as it were like this or vectorialised like that, namely, that for example a tree that would have this dimension in this vector, will have that dimension in that vector.

Therefore, there would be here a separation (*écart*), something not seen which is there only to express that at each point of this plane there is also a separation of each point with respect to itself, namely, that this space is not homogeneous and that each point is displaced with regard to itself in a separation that is not seen, not visible, which nevertheless comes strangely to constitute each one of these points that my eye perceives in the perspective plane. Each one of these things, seen in the perspective-plane being sent back by the figure plane, in so far as in this figure plane, the plane of (19) the look is projected; each one of these separations can be called (o) and this (o) is constitutive of the separation that each point of the look-plane takes on with regard to itself.

An absolute non-homogeneity of this plane is thus uncovered, and each object is uncovered as being able to have a certain distance with respect to itself, a certain difference with respect to itself.

And I am struck that in what Green told us, if one considers in effect this sort of intersection of the illuminations of the plane, the figures that he speaks to us about are situated, as it were, at an intersection, to rejoin, in a way, to rejoin what is crossed over here like that. And that, in effect, there is perhaps, one can also say, in the illumination of the faces as compared to the bodies, something which goes further and which could, by way of simple illustration, I am not claiming to do any more, which could indicate to us this little difference, precisely, that the object takes with respect to itself when one opposes (*mets en regard*), it is the moment to say it, the plane of the look and the plane of the figure. This is the way in which I expressed things to myself, and I will leave it to Monsieur Lacan to tell me whether I am completely mistaken or whether I misunderstood a part of what he told us the other day.

(20) Dr Lacan: Thank you very much, Audouard.

There we are. It is really an interesting construction because it is exemplary. I find it difficult to believe that there was not mixed up in it for you the desire to reconcile a first schema that I had given when I was speaking about the scopic drive, two years ago, with what I brought you the last and the second last time.

This schema, as you have produced it, and which corresponds to neither one nor the other of these two statements of mine, has all sorts of characteristics, the principal one of which is to want to image, at least this is what I think, if I am not mistaken myself about what you meant, in short, a certain reciprocity between the representation that you have called the figure, and what is produced in the plane of the look from which you began.

I think, indeed, in effect, that it is a kind of strictly reciprocal representation that is involved in which there is marked, as one might say, the permanent vertigo of inter-

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subjectivity. And with this you introduce, in a way that would deserve to be criticised in detail, something or other that I do not want, with which I do not want to burden myself with. From which something would result through which the object, it is (21) indeed an object that is in question since you have supposed a little tree, which would draw in a way, I am going a little quickly but, which would draw all its relief, from the non-coincidence of two perspectives that they grasp, which, in effect, ought to be more or less sustainable in the way in which you have posed things.

And, moreover, I believe that at the end it is not for nothing that you present us, in the plane of the look, with two points separated from one another and which come here, curiously, without my knowing if it is your intention, but in a striking fashion, evoke binocular vision. In short, you appear, with this schema, to be completely prisoner of something undoubtedly confused, and which takes on its prestige from overlapping rather well what properly optical physiology tries to explore.

Now, - naturally I am going very quickly, it would be worth discussing this in detail with you, but then I think that the seminar today cannot be considered as remaining in the axis of what we have to say - in short, it is easy to locate here the defects of your construction with respect to what I have contributed, the fact that you have started from something which, let us say, you call the plane of the seeing subject or the plane (22) of the look, that you should have started from there is an error that is altogether tangible and extremely determining for the embarrassment that the rest of your attempt to cover what I said left you in. This will only give me an opportunity to express it once more.

To start from there by saying that this, whose horizontal line you drew without specifying immediately what it was, and, moreover, this is something that we remain embarrassed by, because what this line is determined by, what it is determined by is this plane that I called the first time the support plane, and that I subsequently called more simply and to give an image, the ground, the ground plane. You do not specify it but, on the contrary, suppose that anything whatsoever on this plane, on this plane of the look, can go and project itself onto this something that you introduced first and which is the horizon line. This is really to miss, really the essential of what was contributed by the construction that I showed you the last day in a second phase, after having first of all expressed it in a fashion, after all, which could be simply translated by letters or by numbers on the board.

Nothing on the plane of the look, if we have defined it as I defined it, namely, as (23) parallel to the figure plane or again to the picture, is that not so, nothing, very precisely, can be projected there onto the picture in a way that is representable by you, since this is going, in effect, to be projected there, since everything is projected there, but this is going to be projected there in accordance, not with the horizon line but the line at infinity of the picture.

This point here, therefore - I am going to do it in red to distinguish it from your marks - this point there, then, is the point at the infinity of the picture plane. Are you with me?

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This is easy to conceive of because, if we re-establish things as they ought to be, namely, I am drawing here - would you please get me some other sheets of paper, Gloria, because it will really be too confusing.

In the meantime, I am, all the same, going to try to say why all of this is of interest to us because, after all, for someone like Foucault who has not been present at our previous conversations, this may appear to be a little bit outside the limits of the blue-print, it must be said.

But after all, this may be an opportunity for me, this may be the opportunity, to specify what is in question. We are psychoanalysts. What do we deal with? A drive which is called the scopic drive. This drive, if the drive is something constructed as Freud has (24) inscribed it for us, and if we try, following what Freud inscribed about the drive, that it is not an instinct, but a *montage,* a *montage* between realities of an essentially heterogeneous level, like those which are called the pressure, the *Drang,* something that we can inscribe as being the orifice of the body where this *Drang,* as I might say, finds its support and from which it draws, in a way that is only conceivable in a strictly topological fashion, its constancy: this constancy of the *Drang* can only be developed by supposing that it emanates from a surface and the fact that it is supported on a constant edge, finally assures, as one might say, the vectorial constancy of the *Drang.*

From something subsequently which is a return movement, every drive includes in a way in itself, something which is, not its reciprocal, but its return to its base. It is starting from something that we can conceive, at the limit, and in a way, I would say, that is not metaphorical, but fundamentally inscribed in existence, namely a circuit *(tour),* it describes a circuit, it goes around something, and it is this something that I call the o-object.

(25) This is perfectly illustrated, in a constant fashion, in analytic practice, by the fact that the o-object, in the measure that it is for us the most accessible, that it is literally circumscribed by analytic experience, is on the one hand what we call the breast, and we call it that in sufficiently numerous contexts for its ambiguity, its problematic character, to leap to the eye of everyone.

That the breast is a little object, all sorts of things are designed to show that it is not a matter here of this something carnal which is what is at stake when we speak about the breast, it is not simply this something that the nurseling squashes his nose against, it is something which in order to be defined, if it must fulfil the functions and, moreover, represent the possibilities of equivalence that it manifests in analytic practice, it is something which must be defined in a completely different way.

I am not going to put the emphasis here on the function, which also presents the same problems, that is constituted by, however you may call it, by this scybalum, waste, excrement, here we have something which is, in a way, quite clear and well circumscribed.

Now, once we pass into the register of the scopic drive, which is precisely the one that (26) in this article, this article on which I am basing myself - not simply because it is Freud's sacred article - because it is a supreme article in which, for him, there is

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expressed precisely some necessity which is along the path of this topological specification that I am striving to give.

If in this article, he particularly highlights this outward and return function in the scopic drive, this implies that we ought to try to circumscribe this o-object which is called the look. So then, it is the structure of the scopic subject that is involved and not of the field of vision. Immediately, we see there that there is a field in which the subject is implicated in an outstanding fashion. Because for us - when I say us, I am saying you and I, Michel Foucault - who interest ourselves in the relationship between words and things because, when all is said and done, there is nothing in analysis but that, we also immediately clearly see that this scopic subject is involved in an outstanding way in the function of the sign.

It is a matter, therefore, of something which already introduces a completely different dimension to the dimension that we could qualify as physics, in the elementary sense of the word, which represents the visual field in itself.

At this point, if we do something which, I do not know whether you would accept the (27) title, it is for you to tell me, if we try to construct, on some precise point or from some angle something called the history of subjectivity, it is a title that you would accept, not as a sub-title, because I believe there already is one, but as a sub-sub-title, and that we might define as a field, as you have done in the *Birth of the clinic,* or for the history of madness, or a historical field as in your ....., it is quite clear that the function of the sign appears there as this essential thing, this essential function that you give yourself in such an analysis.

I have not the time, thanks to these delays that we have had, perhaps to raise point by point all the terms in your first chapter, not at all that I would have anything to object to but, quite the contrary, which seemed to me literally to converge towards the sort of analysis that I am doing.

You end up with the conclusion that this picture is, in a way, the representation of the world of representations, as you consider that it is what the infinite system, I would say, of reciprocal application which constitutes the characteristic of a certain moment of thought. You are not completely against what I am saying here?

(28) You agree. Thank you. Because that proves that I have understood properly.

It is certain that nothing is more instructive for us about the satisfaction that its *éclat* gives us, than such a controversy. I do not in any way believe that I am bringing forward an objection in saying that, in the final analysis, it is only with a didactic end in view, namely, to pose for ourselves the problems that are imposed by a certain limitation in the reference system which is, in effect, important that such a grasp of what, let us say, thinking was during the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, is proposed to us.

How can we proceed differently if we even wish to begin to suspect from what angle problems are proposed to us. Nothing is more illuminating than to see, to be able to grasp in what, I can say the word, a different perspective there can be proposed in a different context, even if only to avoid errors in reading, I would even say more,

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simply to allow the reading when we are not naturally disposed to it, of authors like those whose way of working you put forward in such a dazzling fashion, like Cuvier for example. I am not speaking, of course, of everything that you also contributed in the register of the economy of the epoch and also of its linguistics.

(29) I put this question to you: do you believe or do you not believe that, when all is said and done, whatever may be the outline, the testimony, that we may have about the lines on which the thinking of an epoch took its assurance, there was always posed to the speaking being, when I say posed, I mean that he was in and that, because of this fact, we cannot avoid speaking about thinking, that exactly the same structural problems were posed in the same way for them as for us.

I mean that this is not simply a kind of metaphysical presupposition and even, to say it more precisely, a Heideggerian one, namely, that the question of the essence of the truth was always posed in the same way. And that people refused it in a certain number of different ways. This is the whole difference, but all the same, we can put our finger on its presence. I mean not simply like Heidegger by going back to extra-ancient Greek antiquity, but in a direct fashion.

In the sequence of chapters that you give: speaking, exchanging, representing. I must say, moreover, that in this respect to see them summarised in the table of contents is something gripping. It seems to me that the fact that you did not make figure there the word counting is a rather remarkable thing.

(30) And when I say counting of course I am not speaking just about arithmetic nor about *"bowling"*. I mean that you have seen that, at the very heart of the thinking of the seventeenth century, something which certainly has remained unrecognised, and which has even been booed, you know as well as I who I am going to speak about, namely, the one who received the cooked apples, who had pulled back from things, and who, nevertheless, remains indicated, for the best people, as having shone with the most brilliant *éclat,* in other words Georges Desargues, is to mark something which escapes, it seems to me, from what I would call the trait of inconsistency of the reciprocal mode of representations in the different fields that you describe to us in order to give an account of the seventeenth and of the eighteenth centuries.

In other words, Velasquez' picture is not the representation of, I would say, all the modes of representation, it is, in accordance with a term which of course is only going to be there as a dessert, which is the term on which I insist when I borrow it from Freud, namely, the representative of representation.

What does that mean? We have just made, I mean had, a striking testimony - I apologise, Audouard - of the difficulty in getting across the specificity of what I tried (31) to introduce, for example, at one time not too long ago, namely, for two of our meetings.

When what is at stake is the scopic field, the scopic field, it has served for a long time in this relationship to the essence of truth. Heidegger is there to recall it for us, in this work that I can hardly conceive why it was not the first to be translated, as *Wesen* not as *Wesen der Wahrheit,* but of Plato's Lehre [?] on the truth, a work which is not only not translated but, what is more, is unfindable, is there to remind us the degree to

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which in the first information, it is absolutely clear, manifest, as regards this subject of the truth, that Plato made use of what I would call this scopic world.

He made a use of it, as usual, that was much more astute and wily than one might imagine for, when all is said and done, all the material is there, as I recently recalled, the hole, the darkness, the cave, this thing which is so capital, namely, the entrance, what I am going to call later the window and then, behind, the world that I would call the solar world.

It is indeed the entire presence of all the paraphernalia which allows Heidegger to make such a dazzling use of it which, at least you, Michel Foucault, here, you know, because I think that you have read it, and since this work is unfindable there must be (32) few people here who have read it up to now, but I already spoke about it a little all the same, namely, to make Plato say much more that he ordinarily says, and to show, in any case, the fundamental value of a certain number of movements of the subject which are very exactly something which, as he underlines, links the truth to a certain formation, a certain *paideia,* namely, to these movements that we know well, in any case those who follow my teaching know well, the value of the signifier, a movement of turning and of returning, the movement of the one who turns round and who must maintain himself in this turning around (*renversement*).

It nevertheless remains that subsequent times show us the confusion that such a debate can lend itself to, if we are not able to isolate severely in this field of the scopic world, the difference between structures.

And, of course, it is to go about it in a summary way, for example, to make in it one of these oppositions, an opposition from which I am going to begin.

The apologue, the fable of Plato, as it is usually received, only implies something which is a point of radiation of light, an object that he calls the true object, something that is (32) in the shadow.
That the prisoners in the cave see only shadows, this is usually all that is taken from this teaching. I earlier marked the degree to which Heidegger managed to get more out of it by showing what, in effect, is involved.

Nevertheless, this way of starting from this centrality of light towards something which is going to become not simply this structure that it is, namely, the object and its shadow, but a sort of degradation of reality which is going to introduce in a way at the very heart of everything that appears, of everything that is *scheinen,* to take up again what is in Heidegger's text, a sort of mythology which is precisely the one on which there reposes the very idea of the idea which is the idea of good, the one where there is, where there is found the very intensity of reality, of consistency, and from which, in a way, there emanate all the envelopes which will be no more, when all is said and done, than expanding envelopes of illusions, of representations always of representation, it is here moreover precisely, if you will allow me to remind you, I do not know after all if you remember clearly that on January 19th, I illustrated here by making Madame Parisot, here present, give a commentary on two texts by Dante: the (34) only two in which he spoke about the mirror of Narcissus.

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Now, what our experience, the analytic experience, brings us is centred on the phenomenon of the screen. Far from the inaugural foundation of the dimension of analysis being something where at some point the primitiveness of light, by itself, makes there emerge everything that is darkness in the form of what exists, we have first of all to deal with this problematic relationship which is represented by the screen.

This screen is not simply what hides the real, it surely is that, but, at the same time, it indicates it. What structures carry this frame of the screen in a way that strictly integrates it into the existence of the subject, this is the turning point starting from which we have, if we want to account for the least terms that intervene in our experience as connoted by the term scopic, and here, of course, we are not only dealing with screen memories, we are dealing with something which is called phantasy: we have to deal with this term that Freud calls not a representation but a representative of representation. We have to deal with several series of terms, and we have to know whether or not they are synonyms. This is the reason that we perceive that this scopic world that is in question is not simply to be thought in terms of the magic lantern, (35) that it is to be thought out in a structure which, happily, is given to us. It is given to us, I must say, that it is present all the same throughout the centuries; it is present in the whole measure that one or other person has missed it.

There is a certain Pappus' theorem which is found in a surprising fashion to be exactly inscribed in the theorems of Pascal and of Brianchon, those on the rectilinearity of the colinearity of the meeting points of a certain hexagon in so far as this hexagon is inscribed in a conic. Pappus had found a particular case of it which is very exactly the one where this hexagon is not inscribed in what we usually call a conic but simply in two straight lines crossing one another, which was, I must say, up to an epoch which was that of Kepler, people had not noticed that two lines which crossed one another constitute a conic. This indeed is the reason why Pappus did not generalise his invention.

But that one is able to make a series of punctuations which prove that at every epoch, this thing which is called projective geometry was not unrecognised, is already sufficient to assure us that there was present a certain mode of relationship to the scopic world, and I am going to try to say now, and in the haste that we are always in (36) for working, what its structuring effects are.

What are we looking for? If we want to account for the possibility of a relationship, let us say, to the real - I am not saying to the world - which is such that when it is established, there is manifested in it the structure of phantasy, we ought in this case to have something which connotes for us the presence of the o-object, of the o-object in so far as it is the setting (*monture*) of an effect, not alone, I do not have to say that we know well, precisely, we do not know it. We have to give an account of this first, given, effect, from which we start in analysis, which is the division of the subject, namely, that in the whole measure, I know that you are fully aware of it, that you maintain the distinction between the *cogito* and the unthought (*impensé*), for us there is no unthought. The novelty for psychoanalysis, is where you designate, I am speaking at a certain point of your development, the unthought in its relationship to the *cogito;* where there is this unthought, it thinks (*ça pense*), and this is the fundamental relationship which, moreover, you know very well is problematic since

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you subsequently indicate, when you speak about psychoanalysis, that it is in this that psychoanalysis radically puts in question everything that belongs to the human sciences.

(37) I am not deforming what you say? What?

Michel Foucault: You are reforming.

Lacan: Of course. And what is more, naturally, in more than one way, which would require more breakthroughs and stages. Now, what is involved is a geometry which allows us, not simply to be a representation, in a figure plane of what is on a ground, but that there is inscribed in it this third term, which is called the subject, and which is necessary for its construction. It is very precisely why I made the construction that I am forced to make which, moreover, has nothing original about it, which is simply borrowed from the most common books on perspective, provided they are illuminated by Desargues' geometry and by all the developments that it made, moreover, in the nineteenth century, but precisely Desargues is here to highlight that in the heart of this seventeenth century, already, this whole geometry that he perfectly well grasped, this fundamental existence, for example, of a principle like the principle of duality which does not mean essentially by itself that geometrical objects are referred to an operation of symbolic equivalence, well then, with the help simply of the most simple usage of the goal-posts *(montants*) of perspective we find that, in so far as it is necessary to (38) distinguish this subject point, this figure plane, this ground plane - naturally I am forced to represent them by something, you must understand that all of these extend to infinity of course - well then, something is locatable in a double fashion which inscribes the subject in this figure plane which, because of this fact, is not simply an envelope, a detached illusion, as one might say, of what it is a matter of representing, but in itself constitutes a structure which is the representative of the representation.

I mean that the horizon line, in so far as it is directly determined by this point that must not be called the eye point, but the subject point, the subject point, in parenthesis, as one might say, I mean the subject necessary for the construction, and which is not the subject, since the subject is engaged in the adventure of the figure and it is necessary that there should be produced there something which, at the same time indicates that he is somewhere at a point, necessarily, but that his other point, even though it is necessary that it should be present, should, in a way, be elided. This is what we obtain in remarking, I recall - I lack the time to re-do the proof in such an articulated fashion - that if this horizon line is determined simply by a parallel, a parallel plane which passes (39) through the subject point, a plane parallel to the ground plane, everyone knows this, but that this type of horizon, moreover, in the establishment of some perspective or other, implies the choice of a point on this horizon line, and that if everyone knows that, it is what is called the vanishing point and that, therefore, the first presence of the subject point in the figure plane is any point whatsoever on the horizon line, let us say, any point whatsoever, I again underline, in principle there should be one.

When there are several of them, it is when it happens that painters give themselves some licence, when there are several, it is for particular ends. Just as we have several ego ideals or egos ideals - you can say both - it is for certain ends. But that there is, but that is of course one of the necessities of perspective, all of those who are the

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founders of it, namely, Alberti and Pellerin, otherwise known as Pellegrini, but also Albert Dürer, what he calls the other eye, I repeat, this lends itself to confusion for in no case is it a question of binocular vision, perspective has nothing to do with what one sees and relief, contrary to what is imagined, perspective is the mode, at a certain time, at a certain epoch, as you might say, by which the painter as subject puts himself (40) into the picture, exactly as the painters of the epoch that is wrongly called primitive put themselves in the picture as donors. In the world of which the picture was supposed to be the representative, at the time of these so-called primitives, the painter was in his place in the picture.

At the time of Velasquez, he gives the impression of putting himself into it, but you only have to look at him to see - you have underlined it very clearly - the point to which he is in it in a state of absence. He is in it at a certain point that I precisely describe in the fact that one touches the trace of the point from which it comes, from this point for you, for you alone, for I have already said enough for the others, this point that I have not up to the present qualified, which is the other point of presence, the other subject point in the field of the picture, which is this point which is determined, not in the way you were told earlier, but in taking into account precisely the fact that there is a point and a single parallel to the plane of the picture which can in no way be inscribed in the picture. And this indeed is what makes leap to our eyes the degree to which the first presence of the point S on the line at the horizon in the form of any point whatsoever is problematic.

This, any point whatsoever, in its form as a point of indifference, is indeed precisely (41) something of a nature to suspend us around what one could call its primacy.

On the contrary, in taking into account the fact that this line that we determine as the line of intersection of the plane which passes through the point S supposed at the beginning, the intersection with the ground plane, that this line on the figure plane has a translation that is easy to grasp, because it is enough simply to invert (*renverser*), which appeared to us to be quite natural to admit as regards the relationship of the horizon with the infinite line on the ground plane here in the other arrangement, it appears immediately that this, if you wish, constitutes a horizon line with respect to which the line to infinity of the figure plane will play the inverse function and that, henceforth, it is at the intersection of the fundamental line, namely, of the point where the picture cuts the figure plane, at the intersection of this fundamental line with this line to infinity, namely, at a point at infinity, that there is placed the second pole of the subject.

It is from this pole that Velasquez returns after having split his little group and the line of cleavage which marks there by its passage, you agree, in a way by what forms his model group, sufficiently indicates to us that it is from somewhere, outside the picture, that it has arisen here.

(42) This, I regret, makes me take things from the most abstract and theoretical point. And time is passing. I can therefore not take things today to the point that I would have wished to take them. Nevertheless, the very form of what was brought to me earlier as an interrogation required me to put it in the forefront.

Nevertheless, if some of you can still make the sacrifice of a few minutes after this

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2 o'clock time, I am going all the same to pass, namely, taking things at the level of what I must say is the fascinating description that you have given of *Las Meninas*, to show you the concrete interest that these considerations take on, on the very plane of description.

It is clear that, from all time, the critics as well as the spectators have been absolutely fascinated, disturbed by this picture. The day that someone - I do not want to tell you his name even though I have all the literature here - made the discovery that this little king and queen that are seen at the back were extraordinary, that this surely was the key to the affair, everyone acclaimed him as if it were really extraordinary, intelligent, to have seen this which is obviously, which is displayed where it can fascinate, not in (43) the foreground, because it is at the back, but after all it is impossible not to see it.

In any case people progressed from heroic discoveries to other discoveries that were sensational in different ways, but there is only one thing that people have not quite explained, it is the degree to which this thing, if it were only that - cuckoo, the king and queen are in the picture - would be enough to give the thing its interest.

In the light, as one might say, because we are not working here on the *photopique* plane, we are not dealing with colour, I reserve it for next year, if next year in fact exists, we are working in the scotopic field in effect, in the penumbra, like here.

What is important, interesting, is what happens between this ritual S point …. for it only serves for the construction, all that is important for us here is what is in the figure, but all the same it plays its role, it is what happens between this point here in the interval between him and the screen. Now, if there is something that this picture imposes on us, it is thanks to an artifice which is the one, moreover, from which - I compliment you on this - you began, namely, that the first thing you said is that in the picture there is a picture, and I think you do not doubt any more than I do that this (44) picture in the picture is the picture itself, the one that we see. Even though, perhaps, on this point you may lend yourself to perpetuating the interpretation that the picture is the picture on which he is making the portrait of the king and the queen. Can you imagine, he would have taken the same picture of three metres and eighteen centimetres with the same frame to make just the king and the queen, these two little idiots there at the back.

Now, it is precisely from the presence of this picture, which is the only representation in the picture, this representation saturates in a way the picture *qua* reality. But the picture is something else since, I will not prove it to you today, I hope that you will come back next week because, I think that one can say something about this picture which goes beyond this remark which is truly inaugural, namely, what this picture really is.

I sufficiently underlined the last time the space (?) that all the interpretations that have been made of it represent, but obviously one must start from the idea that what is hidden from us and whose function you highlight so well of something hidden, of a face-down card that forces you to lay down your own, and God knows that, in effect, (45) the critics have not failed to lay down their cards and say a series of extravagant things, not that much though. It was enough to bring them together to end up, all the same, by knowing why their extravagances, one of which one is, for example, that the

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painter is painting in front of a mirror which is supposed to be where we are. It is an elegant solution, unfortunately, it goes completely against this story of the king and the queen who are at the back because in that case, it would also be necessary for them to be at the place of the mirror. You have to choose.

In short, all sorts of difficulties present themselves, if simply we can maintain that the picture is in the picture as a representation of the love object. Now, this problematic of the distance between the point S and the plane of the picture is properly at the base of the captivating effect of the work.

It is in the measure that it is not a work with a usual perspective, it is a kind of mad attempt which, moreover, is not limited to Velasquez, thanks be to God I know enough painters and, in particular, the one whom I am going to show you something of, like that, to give you a little treat, at the end of this presentation in which I regret (46) that I am always forced to return to the same planes which are too arid, a painter, one of whose works I am going to show you here, as I leave you, one that you can all go to see, moreover, where it is on display, that it is indeed the problem of the painter, and this, consult my first dialectics on this when I introduced the scopic drive, namely, that the picture is a trap for the look, that it is a matter of trapping the one who is there in front and what better way of trapping him than to extend the field of limits of the picture, of the perspective, to the level of what is there at the level of this point S, and what I am calling, properly speaking, what always vanishes, which is the element of fall (*chute*), the only fall in this representation, where this representative of the representation which is the picture in itself, is this o-object, and the o-object is what we can never grasp and especially not in the mirror, for the reason that it is the window that we ourselves constitute by simply opening our eyes. This effort of the picture to catch this vanishing plane which is properly what we have contributed, all of us, loafers that we are, there at the exhibition, believing that nothing is happening to us when we are in front of a picture, we are caught like a fly in glue; we lower our look as one lowers one's pants, and for the painter it is a matter, as I might say, of making us enter into the picture.

(47) It is precisely because there is this interval between this high canvas represented from behind, and something which puts forward the frame of the picture, that we are ill at ease. It is a properly structural and strictly scopic interpretation. If you come back to hear me the next time, I will tell you why this is the way it is, for in truth I remain here today strictly within the limits of the analysis of the structure, of the structure as you have done, of the structure of what one sees on the picture.

You have introduced nothing into it of the dialogue, as I might say, of the dialogue that it suggests between what and what? Do not believe that I am going to engage in reciprocity, like Audouard, namely, that we are asked for our part to dialogue with Velasquez. I sufficiently said for a long time that the relationships of the subject to the Other are not reciprocal, for me not to fall into this trap today.

Who speaks in front (*en avant*)? Who interrogates? Who is it, rather, who cries and begs and asks Velasquez: "Let me see" (*fais voir):* this is the point from which one must begin, I indicated it to you the last time, in order to know in fact who is, what is there, in the picture?

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And that this interval, this interval between the two planes, the picture plane and (48) the plane of the point S, that this interval which cuts the ground plane into two parallels and by that which in Dessargues' vocabulary is called the axle (*essieu*).

For, what is more, as a way of making himself more unpopular, a vocabulary which was not the same as that of everyone else.

In the axle of the earth what is happening? Certainly not what we will say today and that the picture is made to make us sense this interval, is what is doubly indicated in our relationship to being nabbed by this picture on the one hand, and in the fact that in the picture Velasquez is manifestly so much there in order to mark for us the importance of this distance, that he is not, notice, you must have noticed it but you did not say it - he is not within range, even with his elongated brush, of being able to touch the picture.

Naturally, people say he stood back to see better. Yes. Of course. But after all, the fact that obviously he is not within reach of the picture is here the capital point, in short, that the two key points of this picture are not simply the one who for his part is also escaping ….... towards a window, towards a gap, towards the outside, posed there as if in parallel to the gap in front, and on the other hand Velasquez whose (49) knowledge, what he tells us there is the essential point. I will make him speak in order to end, not to end because I still want you to see Balthus' picture all the same, to say things in a Lacanian language since I speak in his place, why not?

In reply to "Let me see": "You do not see me from where I am looking at you" (*tu ne me vois pas d'ou je te regarde)*. It is a fundamental formula to explicitate what interests us in every relationship of looking, it is a matter of the scopic drive and very precisely in exhibitionism as well in voyeurism, but we are not here to see whether, in the picture, people are tickled nor whether something is happening.

We are here to see how this picture inscribes for us the perspective of the relationships of the look in what is called phantasy is so far as it is constitutive. There is great ambiguity about this word phantasy. Unconscious phantasy, all right, that is an object. First of all it is an object in which we always lose one of the three pieces that are in it, namely, two subjects and one (o). Because do not believe that I have the illusion that I am going to bring you the unconscious phantasy as an object. Without that, the drive of the phantasy would spring up elsewhere. But what is disturbing, is that every time (50) people speak about unconscious phantasy, they also speak implicitly about the phantasy of seeing it. Namely, that the hope, from the fact that people are chasing it, and this introduces a lot of confusion into the matter. I, for the moment, I am trying to give you, properly speaking, what is called a frame *(bati),* and a frame which is not a metaphor, because unconscious phantasy depends on a frame, and it is this frame that I do not despair, not only of making familiar to those who listen to me but of making it get under their skin. This is my goal and this is an absolutely risky exercise which, for some people, appears to be derisory, that I am pursuing here, and that you only hear distant echos of.

I am now going to pass around among you, thanks to Gloria, Monsieur Balthus' image. There is a Balthus exhibition on at the moment. It is at the Pavillon de

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Marsan, I am giving you the information free. For a modest sum, you can all go and admire this painting.

Well then, it is a little homework that I am giving to some people. I am giving them the whole vacation for it. Let us see. Look at this picture. I hope to get some reproductions of it but it is not very easy. I owe this one to Madam Henriette Gomez who happened, it was moreover for her astonishing, who found that she had it in her (51) filing index. There you are, there is a slight difference in the picture that you will see, you see, contrary to what happens in Velasquez because obviously there are questions of epoch.

Here, in this picture, people are being tickled a little and to ensure the tranquillity of the present owner this hand has been slightly raised by the author.

I showed it to him again last evening, I must say that he told me that, all the same, it was very much better composed like that. He was sorry for having made a concession that he thought he ought to …....., it was a sort of counter-concession. He said : "After all, perhaps I am doing that to annoy people, so why not drop it", but it is not true. He had put it there because it ought to be there. In any case, all the other things which are there ought also to be there and, when all is said and done, when I saw this picture, I had seen it once previously and I no longer remembered it, but when I saw it this time, in this context, you will attribute this to what I do not know, to my lucidity or to my delusion, you have to decide, I said: "That is *Las Meninas*". Why is this picture *Las Meninas*? This is the little piece of holiday homework then that I am leaving to the best of you.

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Seminar 19: Wednesday 25 May 1966

I am going to begin, *sotto voce,* by reading to you, rapidly, something which represents a short account of my seminar, that I have been asked for, as is done at this time of the year. It will be less long than the one that I gave you, already developed for you, about last year's seminar, but as I know that this first reading was of some service as regards last year's seminar, I am going to begin things today by giving you, by recalling to you what the situation of this year's seminar is.

"This seminar which is, for us, still in progress," I write, "was concerned, following its path, with the function long mapped out in analytic experience under the title of object relations. It is held in it, for the analysable subject, it dominates his relation to the real, and the oral or anal object are promoted in it at the expense of others whose status, even though manifest, remains uncertain in it.

(2) "The fact is that, if the first - of these objects - depend directly on the relationship of demand, very suitable for a corrective intervention, the others require a more complex theory, because there cannot fail to be recognised in them a division of the subject impossible to reduce by the simple efforts of good intentions, being the very division by which desire is supported."

"These other objects, specifically the look and the voice, if we leave for what is to come the object at stake in castration, are an integral part of this division of the subject and presentify in the very field of the perceived the elided part of it as libidinal.

"As such, they push back the appreciation of the practice that threatens the overlapping of these objects by the specular relationship with the ego identifications which people want to respect in it."

"This relationship is enough to justify our having insisted this year, by preference, on the scopic drive and on its immanent object, the look. We have given the topology which allows there to be conceived the presence of the *percipiens* himself in the field where as unperceived, he is nevertheless perceptible when he is even too much so in the effects of the drive which manifest themselves as exhibitionism or voyeurism."

(3) "This topology which is inscribed in projective geometry and the surfaces of the *analysis situs,* is not to be taken, as in the case of the optical models in Freud, under the heading of metaphor but indeed as representing the structure itself. This topology accounts, finally, for the impurity of the scopic *perceptum,* by rediscovering what I believed I was able to indicate in one of my articles, very precisely the one on the *Question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis,* what I believed I was able to indicate in terms of the presence of the irreducible *percipiens* from the mark that it carries there of the signifier, when it shows itself to be minted in the never conceived phenomenon of the psychotic voice."

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"The absolute requirement in these two scopic and invocatory points of a theory of desire, brings us to a rectification of deviations in practice, to the necessary self-criticism of the position of the analyst, a self-criticism which is directed at the risk attached to his own subjectification, if he wants to respond honestly, even simply to the demand."

I am going, today, to pursue this exemplary object that I chose three seminars ago, to take, in order to fix before you the terms in which there is situated this problematic, the problematic of the o-object and of the division of the subject, in so far as I have just (4) said, that since the obstacle in question is the one procured by specular identification, it is not without reason, it is by reason of the particular role, at once through its latency and the intensity of its presence, that the o-object constitutes at the level of this drive.

Would you mind letting us see again the picture of *Las Meninas?* Here is this picture. You already saw it enough the last time, I think to have since had the curiosity to come back to it, this picture, you now know, by the thematic that it furnished, in the dialectic of the relationships of the sign with things, specifically in the work of Michel Foucault around whom my whole statement the last time was produced, through the numerous discussions that it has provided within what one could call art criticism, this picture, let us say, presents us, reminds us of what was advanced in its connection, in terms of a fundamental relationship that it suggests with the mirror, this mirror which is at the back and where people wanted to see, in a way, and, as it were, in treating lightly the trick which consists in representing in it those who are supposed to be there in front as models, namely, the royal couple, this mirror, on the other hand, is put in question when it is a matter of explaining how the painter could situate himself here, and (5) painting for us what we have there in front of us, can, for his part, see it. The mirror, thereforee, which is at the back and the mirror at our level.
Lights please.

This, the mirror and the picture, introduces us to the reminder by which today I want to enter into the explanation that I hope to be able to make complete today, complete and definitive, as regards what is in question.

The relationship of the picture to the subject is fundamentally different to that of the mirror. When I put forward that in the picture, as a perceived field, there can be inscribed both the place of the o-object and its relationship to the division of the subject, that this, I showed it to you in introducing my problem, by the putting in the foreground the function, in the picture, of perspective, in so far as it is the way in which, starting from a certain historically situatable date, the subject, specifically the painter, makes himself present in the picture, and not simply in so far as his position determines the vanishing point of the aforesaid perspective. I designated the point where there is, not at all as people say, the artists speaking as artisans, the other eye, this point which regulates the distance at which it is proper to place oneself in order to appreciate, to receive the maximum effect of perspective, but this other point that I (6) characterised for you as being the point at infinity in the picture plane.

This, just by itself, is sufficient to distinguish in the scopic field the function of the picture from that of the mirror. They both have, of course, something in common, it is the frame, but in the mirror, what we see is this something in which there is no more perspective than in the real world; organised perspective means the entry into the

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scopic field of the subject himself. In the mirror, you have the world unadorned, namely, this space in which you locate yourself, with the experiences of ordinary life, in so far as it is dominated by a certain number of intuitions in which there is joined, not simply the field of optics, but where it is joined to the practice and the feel of your own movements.

It is in this respect, and in this respect first of all, that one can say that the picture, so differently structured and in its frame, in its frame which cannot be isolated from another reference point, the one occupied by the S point dominating its projective, that the picture is only the representative of the representation. It is the representative of the representation in the mirror. It is not, in its essence as being, the representation. And modern art illustrates this for you: a picture, a canvas, with a simple piece of shit (7) on it, a real piece of shit, for after all what else is a big splash of colour? And this is manifested in a provocative fashion, in a way, by certain extremes of artistic creation. Duchamp's *ready made* is as much a picture as it is a work of art, namely, moreover, the presentation before you of a portmanteau hanging on a rod.

It is structure different to any representation. It is in this connection that I insist on the essential difference constituted by this term of representative of the representation, *Vorstellungsrepresentanz,* borrowed from Freud.

The fact is that the picture, through its relationship to the point S of the projective system, manifests this, which, parallel to it, exists, framing this point S itself in a plane, therefore, parallel to the plane of the picture and what I call the window, namely, this something that you can materialise as a frame parallel to that of the picture, in so far as it gives its place to this point S, that it frames it.

It is in this frame, where the point S is, that there is, as I might say, the prototype of the picture, the one where, effectively, the S is sustained, not at all reduced to this point which allows us to construct perspective in the picture, but as the point where (8) the subject itself is sustained in its own division around this present o-object which is its setting. This indeed is why the ideal of the realisation of the subject would be to make present this picture in its window, and this is the provocative image that a painter like Magritte produces before us when, in a picture, he in fact inscribes a picture in a window. It is also the image to which I had recourse to explain what is involved in the function of phantasy. The image which implies this contradiction, that if ever it were realised in some room, like this one, lit by a single window, the perfect realisation of this ideal would plunge the room into darkness.

This indeed is why the picture must be produced somewhere in front of this plane where it is established as a place of the subject in its division, and that the question is to know what happens to this something which falls in the interval, because the subject separates (*écarte*) the picture from himself. What happens, what the exemplary object around which I am working here before you manifests, is that the subject, in its divided form, can be inscribed in the figure plane, in the plane separated from the plane of the phantasy where the work of art is realised.

The artist, like every one of us, moreover, renounces the window in order to have the picture, and this is the ambiguity that I gave the other day, that I indicated about the (9) function of phantasy, phantasy is the status of the being of the subject and the word

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phantasy implies this desire to see the phantasy being projected, this space of withdrawal (*espace de recul*) between two parallel lines, thanks to which, always insufficient but always desired, at once do-able and impossible, the phantasy can be summoned to appear in some way in the picture.

The picture, nevertheless, is not a representation. A representation "can be seen". And how can we express this "can be seen" *(ça se voit)?* "Can be seen", it is anyone at all who sees it, but it is also the reflexive form; because of this, there is immanent in every representation, this "to see oneself" *(se voir).* Representation as such, the world as representation and the subject as support of this world which is represented, this is the subject transparent to itself in the classical conception, and it is there precisely what we are asked by the experience of the scopic drive, what we are asked to come back on.

That is why, when I introduced the question of this picture with the "show me" *(fais voir),* put in the mouth of the personage to whom we are going to return today, the central personage of the Infanta, Dona Margarita Maria of Austria, "show me", my reply was first, the one that, in my terms, I gave to the figure of Velasquez, present in (10) the picture: "You do not see me from where I am looking at you".

What does that mean? As I already put forward, the presence in the picture of what, simply in the picture, is representation, that of the picture itself which, for its part, is there as representative of the representation, has the same function in the picture as a crystal in a super-saturated solution, the fact is, everything in the picture is manifested as no longer being representation but representative of representation.

As it appears, in seeing - do I have to produce this image again - that all the personages who are there, properly speaking, represent nothing to themselves, and precisely not the fact that they represent. Here, the figure of the dog that you see on the right, takes on all its value. None of the other figures, any more than him, does anything other than show off (*être en representation*), be court figures who mimic an ideal scene where everyone is in his function of showing off, while hardly being aware of it. Again, that here lies the ambiguity which allows us to remark that, as you see on the stage when an animal is brought onto it, the dog, also, is for his part also a very good actor.

"You do not see me from where I am looking at you": since it is a formula minted in my style that is in question, I will allow myself to point out to you that in my style I did (11) not say: "you do not see me, there, from where I am looking at you" *(tu ne me vois pas, là, d'ou je te regarde),* that the "there" is elided, this "there" on which modern thinking has put so much accent in the form of the *dasein,* as if everything were resolved about the function of being open to the fact that there is a being there. There is no "there" that Velasquez, if I make him speak, invokes, in this "you do not see me from where I am looking at you". In this gaping place, in this unmarked interval, there is precisely this "there", where there is produced the fall of what is in suspense under the name of o-object. There is no other "there" involved in the picture, than this interval that I showed you in it, expressly drawn, between what I could trace out but that you can, I think, imagine as well as I can of two grooves which would outline the trajectory in this picture, like on a stage in the theatre, of the way in which there arrive these stays or practicables, of which the first is the picture in the

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foreground, in this slightly oblique line that you see being easily prolonged by seeing simply from the figure of this large object on the left, and the other, traced across the group - I taught you to recognise its furrow - which is the one through which the painter introduced himself as one of the phantasmagoria personages which are made in (12) the great theatrical machinery by having himself placed at the right distance from this picture, namely, a little bit too far for us to be in any ignorance about his intention.

These two parallel grooves, this interval, this axle that this interval constitutes, to take up again the term from the baroque terminology of George Desargues, there and there alone, is the *dasein.*

That is why one can say that Velasquez the painter, because he is a real painter, is therefore not there to traffic with his *dasein,* as I might say. The difference between good and bad painting, between the good and the bad conception of the world, is that, just as bad painters never do anything but their own portrait, whatever portrait they do, and that the bad conception of the world sees in the world the macrocosm of the microcosm that we are supposed to be, Velasquez, even when he introduces himself into the picture in a self-portrait, does not paint himself in a mirror, any more than this is done in any good self-portrait.

The painting, whatever it may be, and even the self-portrait, is not a mirage of the painter but a trap for the look. It is therefore the presence of the picture in the picture (13) which allows the remainder of what is in the picture to be freed from this function of representation. And this is why this painting seizes us and strikes us. If this world that Velasquez gave rise to in this painting - and we will see what his project was - if this world is indeed what I am telling you, there is nothing excessive in recognising in it what it manifests, and what it is enough to say for it to be recognised.

What is this strange scene which has had for centuries this problematic function, if not something equivalent to what we know well in the practice of what are called parlour games and what is other than a parlour game, namely a *tableau vivant.*

These individuals who are here, no doubt, because of the very necessities of the painting projected before us, what are they doing, if not representing to us exactly this sort of group which is produced in this game of the *tableau vivant.* What is this almost gourmet attitude of the little princess, of the maid on her knees who is presenting to her this strange useless little pot on which she is beginning to put her hand, these others who do not know where to place these looks, which people persist in telling us are there to intersect when it is manifest that none of them meet, these two (14) personages of whom Mr Green made something the other day and among whom, let this be said in passing, he would be wrong to think that the female personage is a religious, she is what is called a *guarda damas,* as everyone knows, and even that her name is Dona Marcella de Ulora.

And there, what does Velasquez do if not show himself to us, as a painter, and in the middle of what? Of this whole gynaeceum. We will come back to what it means, to the really strange questions that one can pose oneself about the first title that was given to this picture, I saw it still written in a dictionary which dates from 1872: *The*

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family of the king. Why the family? But let us leave this for a moment, when there is obviously nobody except the little Infanta representing it here?

This *tableau vivant,* I would say, and it is indeed in this fixated gesture which makes life into a still-life, that no doubt these personages, as has been said, are effectively presented. And this is the reason why, however dead they may be, as we thus see them, they survive themselves, precisely because they are in a position which, even during their lives, never changed.

So then, we are going to see, in effect, what first of all suggests to you this function of the mirror. Is this individual, in this position of fixed life, in this death which, for us, makes it across the centuries, rise up as almost alive, like a geological fly in amber, do we not, by having made her pass over to our side to say her "let me see", evoke in her connection, this same image, this same fable of Alice's leap which would join our own by plunging, in accordance with an artifice which the literature of Lewis Carroll and up to Jean Cocteau was able to use and abuse, the passage through the mirror.

No doubt, in this sense, there is something to traverse which, in the picture, is, in a way, preserved in a congealed way for us. But in the other? Namely, from the path which, after all, seems to be open to us and summons us to enter, ourselves, into this picture; there is none, for this indeed is the question which is posed to you by this picture, to you who, as I might say, believe that you are alive, simply because, which is a false belief, it is enough to be there to be numbered among the living. And this indeed is what torments you, what grabs everyone in the gut, at the sight of this picture, as in every picture in so far as it summons you to enter into what it truly is and what it presents to you as such; the fact that the individuals are not at all represented there, but showing off (*en representation*). And this, indeed, is the basis of what makes it so necessary for everyone to make emerge this invisible surface of the mirror (16) which one knows one cannot go through. And this is the real reason why in the Prado, you have, slightly to the right and at three quarters, so that you can hang onto it if you become anxious, namely, a mirror for it is necessary for those whom this may make dizzy to know that the picture is only a lure, a representation.

For after all, in this perspective, it must be said, at what moment do you pose yourself the question or do you distinguish the figures in the picture in so far as they are there, naturally, showing off without knowing it? Thus, in speaking about the mirror in connection with this picture one is no doubt getting warm. For it is not there simply because you add it on. We are going to say, in effect, the degree to which the picture is that very thing, but not from the angle that I believed, just now, I had to set to one side. Of these little *Meninas* with their *dasein* time still sharpened - but I do not want here to be telling you anecdotes, to be telling each one of you what, at this point where they are caught here, they still have to live, that would only be a detail that would lead you astray and it is not appropriate, remember, to confuse the reminder of the little pickings of observation and of anamnesis with what is called the clinic, if one forgets the structure in it.

(17) We are here today to sketch out this structure. What is involved then in this strange scene where what holds you yourself back from jumping, is not simply the fact that in the picture there is not enough space? If the mirror holds you back, it is not by its resistance or by its hardness. It is by the capture that it exercises, which means that

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you show yourself to be very inferior to what the dog in question is doing, since it is he who is there, let us take him, and, that moreover, what he shows us, is that he very quickly goes around the mirage of the mirror once or twice, he has clearly seen that there is nothing behind it.

And if the picture is in a gallery, namely, in a place where if you make the same circuit, you will also be very reassured, namely, you will see that there is nothing, it is nonetheless true that, in a way completely opposite to the dog, if you do not recognise what the picture is the representative of, it is precisely by missing this function that it has, of reminding you that with respect to reality, you yourself are included in a function analogous to the one the picture represents, namely, caught up in phantasy. So then, let us question ourselves about the sense of this picture: the king and the queen at the back, and, it seems, in a mirror, such is here the indication that we can draw from it.

(18) I already indicated the aim of the point where we ought to seek this sense. The royal couple, no doubt, has something to do with the mirror. And we are going to see what.

If all of these personages are showing off, it is within a certain order, the monarchical order whose major figures they represent.

Here, our little Alice, in her sphere, a representative, is indeed in effect like Carroll's Alice, but with at least one element which - I already employed the metaphor - presents itself like figures on a playing card. This king and this queen whose unbridled exclamations are limited to the decision: "Off with her head".

And moreover, to give here a reminder of what I had to pass over earlier, observe the degree to which this room is not simply furnished with these personages whom I hope I have illuminated for you, but also with innumerable other pictures; it is a room of paintings and people have played the game of trying to read on each one of these cards what value the painter may well have inscribed on them. There again, there is an anecdote which I am not going to wander off on, on the subject of Apollo and Marsyas at the back, or again of the dispute between Arachne and Pallas in front of the tapestry of this carrying off of Europa that we find at the bottom of the neighbouring painting (19) by Hilanderas which is displayed here.

Where are they, this king and this queen around whom, in principle, the whole scene is properly speaking suspended? For there is not only the primal scene, the inaugural scene, there is also this transmission of the scene function which does not stop at any primordial moment.

Let us observe why and for whom the representation is made? For them to see; but from where they are, they see nothing, for here it is well to remember what the picture is, not at all a representation around which one turns and for which one changes one's angle. These personages have no back, and if the picture is turned round there, it is in order precisely for that which is in front of it, namely, what we see, to be hidden from us. This is not to say that, for all that, it presents itself to the prince. This royal vision is exactly what corresponds to the function, when I tried to articulate it explicitly, of the big Other in the narcissistic relationship. Consult my article entitled *Remarks* on a

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certain discourse which was given at the Royaumont Congress. I recall for those who no longer remember it, or for others who do not know it, that what was at stake then was to give its value, to restore in our perspective two themes which had been put (20) forward by a psychologist, and which put the accent on the ideal ego and the ego ideal, functions that are so important in the economy of our practice; but where seeing the incorrigible psychology of these consciousness references enter into the field of analysis, we saw there being produced again, the first as the ego that one believes one is and the other as the one that one wants to be.

With all the kindness of which I am capable when I am working with someone, I only collected what, in this beginning, seemed to me right to recall, what was in question, namely, an articulation which makes it absolutely necessary to maintain in these functions their structure, with what this structure imposes from the register of the unconscious, that I imaged it through this image of the point S, with respect to a mirror, effectively, whose ambiguous function it is now a matter of getting to know.

By putting oneself, therefore, with the help of this mirror through which I define in this schema the field of the Other, in a position to see, thanks to the mirror, from a point which is not the one that he occupies, which he cannot see otherwise because of the fact that he keeps to a certain field, namely, what it is a matter of producing in this field, what I represented for you by an upside-down vase under a little board, and taking advantage of an old experiment in physics-for-fun that was taken as a model.

(21) Here it is not at all a matter of structure but, as in each case that we refer to optical models, of a metaphor, of course, a metaphor which is applied, if we know that thanks to a spherical mirror a real image can be produced of an object hidden under what I call a little board. And that, then, if we have there a little bouquet of flowers ready to welcome this circumscribing, the neck of this mirror [vase?], there is here an operation which is precisely the one which constitutes this little physics-for-fun trick, on condition that in order to see it one is in a certain field of the stage which is outlined starting from the spherical mirror. If one does not occupy it, precisely, one can, by having oneself transferred as seeing into a certain point of the mirror, find oneself there in the conic field which comes from the spherical mirror.

Namely, that it is here that one sees the result of the illusion, namely, the flowers surrounded by their little vase. This, of course, as an optical model, is not at all the structure, any more than Freud ever thought of giving you the structure of any physiological functions whatsoever in speaking to you about the ego, the super-ego, the ego ideal, or even the Id. It is nowhere in the body, the body-image, on the contrary, is in it. And here, this spherical mirror has no other role than to represent that which, in effect, in the cortex, may be the system necessary to give us, in its (22) foundation, this image of the body.

But it is a matter of something quite different in the specular relationship, and what gives this image its value for us in its narcissistic function, is what for us it has both encompassed and hidden in terms of this function of (o).

Latent in the specular image there is the function of the look. And nevertheless, I am astonished, without knowing what to refer it to, to distractedness, not I hope to a lack of work, or simply to the desire not to embarrass oneself, is there not here some

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problem that is at least raised ever since I told you that (o) is not specular. For, in this schema, the bouquet of flowers comes from the other side of the mirror. The bouquet of flowers is reflected in the mirror. This indeed is the whole problematic of the place of the o-object.

To whom does it belong in this schema? To the battery of what concerns the subject here in so far as it is involved in the formation of this ideal ego, incarnated here in the vase, of the specular identification on which the ego is based, or indeed to something else, of course, this model is not exhaustive. There is the field of the Other, this field (23) of the Other that you can incarnate in the child's game, that you see being incarnated in the first references that he makes as soon as he discovers his own image in the mirror, he turns around, to have it, in a way, authenticated by the one who, at that moment, is holding him, is supporting him, or is in the neighbourhood.

The problematic of the o-object remains entire, therefore, at this level. I mean, that of this schema. Well then, do I need to insist very much in order to allow you to recognise, in this picture from the brush of Velasquez, an image that is almost identical to the one that I have presented to you here.

What resembles more this sort of secret object, in a brilliant garment (*vêture)* which is on the one hand, here, represented in the bouquet of flowers hidden, veiled, taken, encompassed, around this enormous dress of the vase, which is both a real image and a real image seized in the virtual due to the mirror, than the clothes of this little Infanta, the illuminated personage, the central personage, the preferred model of Velasquez who painted her seven or eight times, and you have only to go to the Louvre to see her painted the same year. And God knows that she is beautiful and captivating!

(24) For us analysts, what is this strange object of the little girl that we know well. No doubt, she is already there, in accordance with the good tradition which would have it that the queen of Spain has no legs. But is this a reason for us to ignore it: in the centre of this picture is the hidden object, and it is not because of having the deviant mind of an analyst - I am not here to push you towards a certain easy thematic - but to call it by its name, because this name remains valid in our structural register, and is called the slit *(fente).*

There are many slits in this picture, it seems, ... and we could set about counting them on our fingers beginning with Dona Maria Agostina de Sarniente, who is the one on her knees, the Infanta, the other who is called Isabelle de Velasquez, the idiot, the monster Maria Barbola, Dona Marcella de Ulora also, and then I do not know, I do not find that the other personages are of any other kind than that of being personages to remain in a gyneceum in complete security for those who protect them. The quaint *guarda damas,* who is on the extreme right, and why not the pooch too, who however much of an actor he may be, seems to me to be a rather tranquil individual. It is really curious that Velasquez should have put himself there, in the middle. He really must have meant it.

(25) But going beyond this anecdote, what is important is the contrast of the fact that this whole scene, which is only supported by being caught in a vision and seen by the personages who, I have just underlined for you, see nothing because of their position.

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Everyone turns their back on them and only presents to them in any case what is not to be seen there.

Now, everything is also only sustained by the supposition of their looks. In this gap there lies, properly speaking, a certain function of the Other, which is precisely that in which the soul of a monarchical vision at the moment that it empties itself, just as on several occasions, as regards the conception of the classical, omnipresent, omniscient, all-seeing God, I ask you the question: "Is this God able to believe in God, or does this God know that he is God?".

In the same way, what is inscribed here in the structure, is this vision of an other who is this empty other, pure vision, pure reflection, what is seen, properly speaking, at the mirror-like surface of this other void, of this other complementary to the "I think" of Descartes, as I underlined it, of the other in so far as it is necessary that he should be there to support what does not need him in order to be supported, namely, the truth which is there, in the picture, as I have described it for you.

(26) This other void, this God of an abstract theology, pure articulation of a mirage, the God of Fenelon's theology, linking the existence of God to the existence of the ego, is here the point of inscription, the surface upon which Velasquez represents for us what he has to represent for us.

But as I told you, in order for this to hold together, it remains that it is necessary that there should also be the look. This is what is forgotten in this theology, and this theology still lasts in so far as modern philosophy believes that a step forward has been taken with Nietzsche's formula which says that God is dead. So what?

Has this changed anything? God is dead, everything is allowed, says this old imbecile called Karamazov *père* or indeed Nietzsche, we all know well that ever since God is dead, everything is as always in the same position, namely, that nothing is lost, for the simple reason that the question at stake is, not the vision of God and his omniscience, but the place and the function of the look. Here, the status of what has become of God's look has not been volatilised. That is why since I was able to speak to you as I did about Pascals' wager since, as Pascal says, "we are all committed", and the story of this wager still holds up.
(27) And that we are still playing ball between our look, God's look, and some other tiny objects like the one that the Infanta presents us with, in this picture.

This will allow me to end on a point that is essential for the continuation of my discourse. I apologise to those who are not used to handling what I earlier advanced in the order of my topology, namely, this tiny object called the cross-cap or the projective plane, where there can be cut out, with a simple circuit of a scissors, the fall of the o-object, making appear this doubly rolled up S which constitutes the subject.

It is clear that in the gap realised by this fall of the object which is, on this occasion, the painter's look, what comes to be inscribed is, as I might say, a double object, for it involves an amboceptor. The necessity for this amboceptor I will demonstrate to you when I take up my topological demonstration; on this occasion, it is precisely the Other.

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In place of his object, the painter, in this work, in this object that he produces for us, has placed something which is made up of the Other, of this blind vision which is that of the Other, in so far as it supports this other object.

(28) This central object, the split, the little girl, the *girl* = phallus, which is what, moreover, I earlier designated for you as the slit.

What is involved in this object? Is it the object of the painter or in this royal couple whose dramatic configuration we know, the widower king who marries his niece, everyone is amazed (*s'esbaudit*), twenty-five years in the difference. It is a good gap in age but perhaps not when the husband is around fortys year old. We have to wait a little.

And, between the two of this couple where we know that this impotent king preserved the status of this monarchy which, like his own image, is no longer but a ghost and a shadow, and this woman, jealous, as we also know from contemporary testimony, when we see that in this picture which is called The King's Family, even though there is another one, who is twenty years older, called Marie-Thérèse and who will marry Louis XIV. Why is she not there if it is the family of the king? It is perhaps because the family means something different. It is well known that etymologically, family comes from *famulus,* namely, all the servants, the whole household. It is a household well centred, here on something. on something which is the little Infanta, the o-object, (29) and we are going here to remain on the question in which it is brought into play, in a perspective on subjectifcation as dominant as that of a Velasquez, of whom I can only say one thing, which is that I regret having abandoned its field in the Meninas this year, since moreover, you see clearly that I also wanted to talk to you about something else.

When there is produced this something which is not of course the psychoanalysis of the king since, first of all, it is the function of the king that is in question and not the king himself.

When there appears, in this perfect shot, this central object where there come to join together, as in Michel Foucault's description, these two crossed lines which divide up the picture in order to isolate for us, in the centre, this brilliant image.
Is this not done so that we analysts, who know that here is the meeting point of the end of an analysis, should ask ourselves how, for us, there is transferred this dialectic of the o-object, if it is to this o-object that there is given the term and the rendezvous in which the subject must recognise himself. Who ought to provide it? Him or us?

(30) Do we not have as much to do as Velasquez did in his construction? These two points, these two lines which cross one another, bearing in the very image of the picture, this frame of the setting, the two up-rights (*montants*) which cross one another.

This is where I want to leave suspended the rest of what I will have to tell you, but not without adding to it this little feature. It is curious that if I end on the figure of the cross, you might tell me that Velasquez is wearing it on this kind of blouse with slashed sleeves in which you see him dressed.

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Well then, you are going to learn something that I thought was very good. Velasquez had demonstrated (*demontré*) for the king the setting of this world which depends entirely on phantasy. Well then, in what he first painted, he did not have a cross on his chest and for a simple reason which is that he was not yet a chevalier of the order of Santiago. He was named about a year and a half later and one could only wear it eight months after that. In any case that brings us, all of that brings us to 1659. He died in 1660 and the legend says that after his death, it was the king himself who came, through some subtle revenge, to paint this cross on his chest.

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Seminar 20: Wednesday 1 June 1966

We are advancing towards the end of this year, which I see that, as compared to the greater part of my colleagues, I am prolonging with unusual zeal. It is not the custom to ask you to be present after the beginning of June, but, nevertheless, you know that my custom is different, and it is probable that I will not modify it much this year. It all depends on the place that I will give to the closed seminar: one or two
There remain, therefore, two occasions for me to speak to you in today's position, that of the open lecture. This will, of course, be to try to gather together the sense of what I brought before you this year under the title of the object of psychoanalysis, which you know is not at all this sort of vague opening which is offered by a simple reading of the title, but that it very specifically means what I articulated in the structure as the o-object.
You can also note that, if the o-object is indeed the one which is found to include in its embrace the totality of the objects that psychoanalysts made function under this rubric, (2) I would certainly have failed a little, or even a lot, in my descriptive or collective function. I enumerated them, from time to time, one after another, but one could not say that I dwelt too long on them as a bunch, and since the other day I recalled their representation precisely in the form of a bouquet of flowers, I have not overdone the botanical aspects of each one.
Above all, I spoke about topological elements, and topological elements in which in short, I have not, up to the present, in an explicit fashion, completely highlighted where to put this o-object. Naturally, those who listen carefully to me were able, more than once, to gather that the o-object is a topological structure, the one that I imaged for you by the figures of the torus, the cross-cap, the mitre, even the Klein bottle, one can detach it from them with a pair of scissors.
They were also able to understand that this is an operation about whose nature one would be completely wrong if one believed that to detach it from them with a pair of scissors in the form of some rings, represents anything whatsoever.
Here, again, the term of representative of the representation would be appropriate, for the representation is absolutely not at all in this operation of isolation, of cutting out, (3) and it is easy to notice that, if these structures on which I operated in order to highlight the articulation of this operation, these structures have as I might say their own resources at points which, curiously, with respect to what they represent, can scarcely be designated, precisely, except by the term of hole.
If our torus is effective in representing something, a repetitive, successive, rolling around, like this famous amphisbaena serpent which represented a symbol of life for the ancients, in short, if this torus has any value it is precisely because it is the topological structure which is marked by this central thing, which is undoubtedly very difficult to circumscribe somewhere, because it simply seems to be only a part of its exterior but which, undoubtedly, structures the torus very differently to a sphere.
Well then, the o-object, I was saying earlier, those who paid attention to what I say and who were even, incidentally, able to see me explicitly pronounce it, the o-object is here, in this kind of hole that it is, properly speaking, let us say, representable, properly by the very fact that it is in no way represented.

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We are going to see these things coming together later on. Namely, why, in short, we (4) come to a reference that is properly situated in the topological field, but from now on you can see that there is surely some consistency between the fact that in the last phase of the preceding seminars, including the closed seminars, which were entirely spent in developing, in connection with a very outstanding painting, to allow there to be manifested, accentuated in a way, by the painter, the function of perspective, we found ourselves, I must say in a way in which you can have the greatest confidence, I mean that I pushed there as far as possible the rigour with which there can be stated in the case of the scopic field, how the phantasy is composed, indeed, that it is for us the representative of any possible representation of the subject.
You can sense very well that there is a relationship between the fact that I focused the whole spotlight on the scopic field, on the scopic o-object, the look, in so far, it has to be said, as it has never been studied, never been isolated, I am speaking here where I have to speak, namely, in the psychoanalytic field, where it is all the same very strange that people did not perceive that there was here something to isolate otherwise than by evoking it, and again, without naming it, in crude analogies. An author whose name is (5) a little bit hackneyed in analytic teaching, Mr Fenichel, demonstrated for us the analogies between scoptophilic identification and manducation. But analogy is not structure and it does not isolate within scoptophilia what object is involved and what its function is - something quite different again by means of which the look would have been able to make its entry.
At the point that we are at, and where at least some of you were able to hear me the last time, after having situated this look, at the very centre of the picture, hidden somewhere under the robes of the Infanta, to give them, as I might say, from this enveloped point, their radiation and I pointed out that it was there through what function?
If it is true, as I told you, that what the painter represents to us is the image that is produced in the empty eye of the king, this eye which, like all eyes, is made to see nothing and which supports in effect this image, as it is painted for us not at all in a mirror but well and truly its image in the proper sense, right side out (*à l'endroit*). Here the look is elsewhere, there in the object which is the o-object with respect to those who, right at the back, the royal couple in the position both of seeing nothing and of seeing by their reflection somewhere at the back of the scene, there where we (6) are, this o-object before this, in short, inexistent mirror of the other, we have posed the question of who does it belong to, to those who support it in this empty vision, or to the painter placed here as a looking subject, who gives rise to the transmutation of the work of art.
This ambiguity of the belonging of the o-object, is here what allows us to refer it back to, to link it up to, the preceding thread that we left hanging about the function of the stake in so far as we have illustrated it by Pascal's wager.
The o-object rejoining here its most universal combinatorial, is what is operating between the S and the O in so far as neither of them can co-exist with the other except by being marked with the sign of the bar, namely, of being in a position of being divided, precisely, by the impact of the o-object.
The impasse, the splitting apart, in which the function of the subject is put, precisely, into the function of the wager, this really crucial, absurd, wager for all of those who have devoted themselves to its analysis, I recall that I made it the introductory chapter, in the course of my presentation this year, about the o-object. Today, it is a matter of placing what I am putting forward in this way, of replacing it in the economy of what you know, what serves as a support for you in Freud's doctrine.

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(7) For, moreover, it ought not to be forgotten in order to situate the import of what I am teaching you about the procedure of my teaching, that it is nothing other than what it declared itself to be at the beginning, and what gives it its flesh, and its link, for otherwise, one might be astonished at one or other detour in my journeying. And for anyone who takes up what I have been enouncing now for almost fifteen years, in the collection which has been made always with care if not with success, and which will at least allow the general network of it to be preserved, it will be seen that there is nothing there which was not each time, very exactly determined by the fact that what is demanded of me is what? To rethink Freud. This is how I will put it forward first, lending in this way to all sorts of ambiguities or even misunderstandings. *Zurück zu Freud*, return to Freud, I said first of all, at a moment when this took on its sense from the confused manifestations of a colossal deviation in analysis.
It is of secondary importance whether it appears or not, that to what ever little degree, I obviated it. It was less from this contingency that I authorised myself. The very classical ideal, in all sort of idealisations, of a return to the sources was not what I affected (*me poignait*). To rethink, that is my method. But I prefer the second word if, precisely, you study it in order to take it apart a little bit, you realise what the word (8) method can mean exactly: a path taken up again afterwards. The word *meta,* like all Greek prepositions and, in truth, like prepositions in every tongue provided one takes an interest in them, is always an extraordinarily rewarding object of study. If there is a kind of word in connection with which one can say that any kind of pre-eminence given in the study of linguistics to meaning is destined to lose itself in an inextricable labyrinth, it is indeed all the prepositions.
The exploration of the richness and the diversity of the range of senses of the word *meta,* you can yourself try to test out with the dictionaries, and you will see that nothing prevents this word *meta* - I am passing over what is properly necessitated by the structural forms that I put forward for you this year, and specifically in showing you on the Moebius strip which, apparently, plays in two of these shapes the function of an altogether fundamental, exemplary, relationship, the function of a support for what is their structure, and which is also latent in the third, this Moebius strip which exemplifies for us what I would call the necessity, in the structure, of a double circuit. I mean that with a single circuit, you will only apparently loop around what is circumscribed in it, since you only get back to your starting point on the single (9) condition of having reversed your orientation in it. A non-orientable surface, which requires that after, as I might say, having lost it twice, you will only rediscover it by making two circuits.

This is very exactly the sense that I would give to my method with respect to what Freud taught. If there is, in effect, something strange which is the fastened, closed, completed character, even though marked by a twist, through something which connects up with itself in this point which I have for a long time underlined in his writing, as the *Spaltung* of the ego, and which returns fully charged with the sense accumulated in the course of a long exploration, that of his whole career, towards an original point with a completely transformed sense, an original point from which he started, almost, from the completely different notion of the duplication of personality.

Let us say that he was able to transform completely this current notion by the reference points of the unconscious, it is to it that at the end, in the form of the division of the subject, he gave his definitive seal.

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What I have to do is very exactly to describe the same circuit a second time, but in such a structure, doing it a second time has absolutely not the sense of a pure and simple reduplication.

(10) And this structural necessity has something so primary about it that we are only allowed to accede to it along a path that is difficult to map out, something which, I would say, almost requires a sort of compass in which I have to, in the fashion in which I have to operate, speaking to practitioners, I had to trust you to trust mine, very properly in so far as it is supported by a combination of analytic experience and the reading of Freud, but whose trigonometry has all the same a sanction, namely, let us say the word, whether it fits or not.

All of those who come here to listen to me may effectively cross-check that with a construction which, many times, seems to be decked out with elements quite foreign to Freud, it is precisely at these important meeting points that I find myself re-centring him, and in a fashion which illuminates from a completely new perspective the points to which Nietzsche gave the acccent of value.

I said earlier that it was not so important that during the time that I am pursuing this operation, there is quite clearly manifested something which from what is announced from the mainstream of psychoanalysis is an overturning of the movement.

It is necessary in any case for me to resign myself to the fact that what I am teaching (11) will not immediately deliver what it is designed to generate, that it be content in the first place to gather together those who can find material in it.

For,moreover, there is a certain order of operations to which I am not going to give a general name, except to say that it is properly the one which is exemplified by what I have just defined, namely, the completion of a structure of which it can be said that it is not so essential that it should be immediately sanctioned by the effects of communication.

To the great astonishment of someone that I am evoking here in my memory, I was able to state that what I had said one day before an audience which was certainly not you, before an audience which was not of too bad a quality, but before an audience that was very little prepared, what I was able to put forward under a title like "*Dialectic of desire and subversion of the subject*". "How", it was said to me, "can you believe that there is the slightest interest in stating what you are stating here in front of people who are so little prepared to understand it? Do you think that this exists in a sort of third or fourth space?"

Undoubtedly not, but that a certain loop *(boucle*) had been effectively looped and that something of it, however little it may be, remains indicated somewhere, this is something which is perfectly sufficient to justify one giving oneself the trouble to state it.
(12) It is here that the notion of intersubjectivity becomes quite secondary; the plan of the structure can wait; once it is there, it is sustained by itself and in the fashion, I would say, - the metaphor only comes to me here extemporaneously - in the fashion of a trap, of a hole, of a ditch. It is waiting for some future subject to be caught in it.

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Therefore, there is no need to be disturbed about what one could call the failure of a certain community, on this occasion the psychoanalytic one, or rather one should map out, in this connection, what this failure consists of, precisely in the measure, as I sometimes do, that one can map out that it gives testimony in favour of the structure that has to be sketched out in it.
You will say to me: “Where are the criteria of the one who gives the right structure?” But, precisely, it is the structure itself. In the field where what is in question is the subject, if the structure is only such in the outline, the project that you make of a field of objectification, it is not implied as necessary that you should find the brand, the imprint, the bloody and divided trace of the subject himself, if it is excluded in advance, as I might say, in the name of this false experimental modesty which, believing that it (13) can authorise itself from what has been achieved in the physical sciences, believes that it can allow itself to project into this field that is described as psycho-sociology this sort of full objectification, and that by right, in the name of some fashion or other of standing back from the game at the beginning, protected by this false experimental modesty, we will say that there is a criteria, a register of proof, which is valid, logically, that I would describe in these terms. There are initial structures in the progress of thinking about which one can say nothing more than that they can or cannot be suspected of being true. That is the test of the structure.
However falsely modest may be the one which is advanced in its field, the one that I named earlier, in a fashion which does not present in itself the necessity of this tearing apart, of this gap, of this wound which will be found, it is the sign in a certain number of paradoxes and, moreover, the field of this no doubt successful science, which ours is in so far as in the whole of its physical field it has succeeded in foreclosing the subject, can only give its foundation, its mathematical principle, by rediscovering the same gap, in the form of a certain number of paradoxes. From this point of view, it continues to be able to be suspected of being true.
(14) But this whole wound that we allow to spread, in the name of not being able to justify what is meant by the fact that it cannot in any case be suspected of being true, this is what leaves the field free to what I called this wound that you can pin-point again with the term of medico-pedagogical.

Here indeed is the gravity of the case of the psychoanalyst. For this is their whole strength, and I think that the words that I am speaking have enough weight and import, in order that, as regards their place, you will give its sense to this prestige - they have no other one - in the field of science, that they really want to be suspected of being the representatives of a representation that is true.
It is indeed in this register, and what gets caught up and comes to a halt before what is supposed to be normal, a pure and simple position of rejection since moreover, we have not yet succeeded in giving a valid status to the material they bring us.
Now, it is really there and the slippage is the alibi that a formation corresponds to a definition of structure through which it can be suspected of being true. Which, since there is only a suspicion, does not mean sufficiency but implies an “it is necessary” beyond which, perhaps, nothing additional can contribute decisively as sufficiency.
(15) Such is this sign which is the definition of this suspicion, and this is indeed our problematic before what the symptom proposes to us as a question about the truth.
Every time, camped in different ways in knowledge, we have to deal with this question about the truth, the same ambiguity is presented that the term of the representative of representation supports and incarnates.

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And this is the way in which there has always failed, on the lure that I am going to mention, the critique of religion by the *Aufklärung.*
These representatives know very well the error in which this representative of the truth consists, from attacking it in the representations, in the representations that it gives of it, and this the representatives themselves, namely, the personages that are sacralised in different ways, know very well. They encourage the besiegers of the citadel to discuss the likelihood of the stopping of the sun in Joshua's battle, or one or other little story of the kind in the sacred text. The question is not to be directed at the structure which claims to involve the question of the truth of the representations, whatever they may be, at those that may be the representations of this structure, but at the representatives of the representation.
(16) That is why of course they prefer that the battle should be waged on the themes that are all the more impregnable in revelation that one can cleave them in twain as long as you wish, since they have the same material as the structure, namely, not the same materiality as the swords that go through them, they will be in the best of health for a long time to come.

So that, what we could call the betrayal of psychoanalysts is the inverse of this. The fact is that even though they are representatives of a position which may be suspected of being true, they believe that they have a duty to embody (*donner corps*) by every other means than the ones which ought to flow from the strictest circumscribing of their function as representatives; they strive on the contrary to authenticate representations in all the ways that are most foreign, and they seek to give them the seal of the generally accepted.
Here then is the goal of what we are trying to construct, the criteria of the structure in so far as they respond to these exigencies, given what is being tackled, namely, the structure of the subject, that a doctrine may be suspected of being true, which implies in those who are its representatives something different than to base themselves on foreign criteria. This is what justifies not alone the method but the limits according to which we ought to approach certain key elements of this (17) structure, and concerning such and such an o-object, the one for example of the scopic field, undoubtedly, to impose this discipline on ourselves which does not exclude a certain Puritanism, to make little of the richness of what is offered here to us, for moreover, how can one not note what a point of agreement is this look, around which already Freud, for his part, and he alone, has taught us to locate its function, its value, from the sign of *Unheimlichkeit,* for you can note by taking up his study, that in the works that he brings in as bearing witness to this dimension, the role, the function played in it by the look in this strange form of the eye that is blind because it has been torn out. ..... some attributes which may represent a close equivalent, glasses, for example, or again a glass eye, a false eye. This is the whole thematic of Hoffman, and God knows that it is even richer than what I can evoke here; the reference to *The devil's elixir* is there within your reach.
There is a whole history of the eye, it has to be said. And those who have here their ears open to what may be disguised information, know what I am alluding to in speaking about the history of the eye.
(18) It is a book published anonymously by one of the most representative personages of a certain essential uneasiness, in our own day, which is supposed to be an erotic novel.

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L'histoire de l'oeil is rich in a whole texture that is well designed to remind us, as one might say, of the fitting together, the equivalence, the interconnection of all the o-objects and their central relationship with the sexual organ.
Of course, it is not without effect that we could recall that it is not in vain that it is at this point of the slit between the eye-lids that there is produced the phenomenon of tears, which it cannot be said we do not have to question ourselves about, on this occasion, as regards its relationship to the structural meaning given to this slit.
And how can we not see also that it is not in vain that the eye, or rather this slit, plays the role also, for us, the function of the gateway to sleep.
This is a lot, and enough to make us go astray. Too much richness and too many anecdotes are only designed to make us fall back into the rut of some developmental reference or other or to seek once more the specific moments in history which, whatever may be the interest of these reference points, only dissimulate from us what it is a matter of defining, namely, the function occupied by (19) the scopic field in a structure which is, properly speaking, the one which involves the relationship of the subject to the Other.
It is quite strange, precisely, that while in the course of all this time we have promoted the function of communication in language as being that which, essentially, ought to centre what concerned the unconscious, while from every angle we have not ceased hearing again and again this objection which is really not one, namely, that there is the pre-verbal, the extra-verbal, the ante-verbal, while people were making great play, we are saying, of gesture, of mimicry, of paleness and all the other vasomotor, kinaesthetic, or other forms, where supposedly there is exercised some ineffable communication or other as if we had ever contested it, that no one has ever put forward what was nevertheless the only point on which there was really something to say, namely, the order of communication which passes through the look.
This, in effect, is not language. It is precisely what supports the importance of my recentering of the handling of the unconscious upon language and the word, the fact is, precisely, that Freud inaugurated the analytic position by excluding the look from it. It is a primary truth which one is all the same forced to take into account, because the fact precisely that one elides them and forgets them, proves the degree (20) to which one is missing the point.
Now this o-object, the one in question in the scopic field, why is it that this is the one that we have, in a way, put forward in the forefront, and this year found ourselves focusing, what is called, on this occasion, our attention.
The o-object is the stake (*l'enjeu*) of what is foundational for the subject in his relationship to the Other. Our question is suspended on the subject of its belonging.
Let us look more closely at what is involved, and starting from the most elementary things that are given to us in experience in connection with what analysts call object-relations.
If they have clearly allowed this relationship of the subject to the Other to deviate by reducing it to the register of demand, let us take advantage of it.
The two best known of these objects, the typical objects, as I might say, in the function, the account that analysis gives of them, makes of the good breast, as it is called, an object of the demand made on the other; it is the object of the demand which comes from the other that gives its value to the excremental object.
It is clear that all of this leaves us locked in a perfectly dual relationship, when I say perfectly, I am not writing it here with any accent of getting a good mark but of being closed, of being completely closed.

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(21) And one know what results from it in terms of the reduction of every perspective whether it is theoretical, comprehensive, practical, clinical, psychological and even pedagogical to lock oneself into this cycle of demand that is consistent with that of frustration or gratification, frustration or non-frustration.
The restitution that is, in a way, internal, immanent to the function of demand, of what ought to emerge from it as another dimension, from the very fact that this demand is expressed by means of language in so far as it gives primacy to the locus of the Other, and allows sufficient status to be given to the dimension of desire.
In the dimension of desire, there comes to be manifested the specific character of the o-object which causes it, in so far as this object takes on an absolute value, this *cachet* which ensures that what we discover in effective terms in experience, is that it is not properly speaking the satisfaction of need that is at stake, it is not that the child is filled, nor that having been filled he sleeps, that counts, it is that something which takes on such a particular accent, an accent of a such absolute condition that it has been isolated in terms that are differently described, that is called the *nipple*, the tip the breast, the good breast, the bad breast, it is not its biological shape that is at stake but a certain structural function which, precisely, allows us to find (22) whatever equivalent one wishes in a soother, for example, a feeding bottle, or any other mechanical object, or even the little corner of a little piece of a handkerchief, provided it is the mother's dirty handkerchief, will give, will make present the function of this oral object in a fashion which deserves to be specified, structurally, as being there, the cause of desire.
This function of absolute condition to which a certain object is raised, and which is only definable in structural terms, this is what it is important to put the accent on, in order to give it its characteristics.
For, in effect, it is something which is borrowed from the carnal domain and which becomes the stake in a relationship that, to speak quite incorrectly, one could call intersubjective.
But what is the correct status of this object? It is precisely what we are in the process of trying to define. For the first two objects that I highlighted are in operation in the demand but, nevertheless, not without involving the desire of the Other.
The value taken on by the object claimed in the oral as well as in the anal dialectic, plays on the fact that in giving it or in refusing it the partner, in any case, highlights (23) what is involved in his desire in his consent or his refusal.
The dimension of desire arises with the advent of this object which, I repeat, is not the object of satisfaction of a need, but of a relationship of the demand of the subject to the desire of the other. It is at the inauguration of the function of desire and it introduces, into this dimension of demand, which originates in need, the absolute condition of the relationship to the desire of the Other.
This is why these two objects find themselves so prevalent in the structure of neurosis and why, by remaining within a horizon that is all the more easily limited in that it is they themselves who limit it, when I say horizon, it has a sense, since I have been speaking, in a certain fashion, about the scopic object, the psychoanalysts content themselves, so easily, with a theory which puts the whole accent on demand and frustration, without noticing that it is a specific characteristic of neurosis.
The neurotic has this relationship to the Other, that his demand is aimed at the desire of the Other, that his desire is aimed at the demand of the Other. In this interlacing which is linked - I accentuated it several times - to the properties of the structure of the torus, lies the limitation of the neurotic structure.

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(24) Another dimension is involved for the objects that I already introduced into a certain foursome which, perhaps, constitutes a dial, namely, the voice and the look.
It is certainly remarkable that I have not [laid stress], this year, given the predilection that I have for the field of the effects of the word, on the voice. No doubt I had some reasons for that, if only that the limits of time imposed on me the necessity perhaps of having to take something from it in order to make understood and to put forward the new things that I contributed, precisely in the scopic field.
That as regards what is involved in the voice, in any case, the o-object is directly and immediately implicated at the level of desire, is something obvious. If the desire of the subject is founded on the desire of the other, this desire as such is manifested at the level of the voice. The voice is not alone the causal object but the instrument in which there is manifested the desire of the Other. This term is perfectly consistent and constitutes, I might say, the high point with respect to the two senses of the demand, either to the Other or coming from the Other.
How then could we situate this object and this scopic field?
(25) Is it not here that we see it allow us, as it were, to be guided by the parallelisms of the terms desire, demand, of, to, that we see there being opened out this singular dimension that is already offered to us by the evocation of the window which, moreover, is willingly itself called a look, in this dimension of the desire of the Other, of openness, of aspiration by the Other which is properly speaking what, at this level, is at stake.
It is then that we can see why it takes on, in topology itself, this privileged function, since, when all is said and done, to whatever combinatorial reduction we can push these topological shapes which I make such a play of before you by making an image of them, it seems that there remains in them some residues of what, perhaps falsely, one calls the intuitive, and what is properly this o-object that I call the look.
I am going, to end today, and in order simply to provide a point of scansion, to evoke in a form which will have the advantage of showing you the polyvalence of recourses that one has at the level of structure, evoke for you another just as topological a shape which will crosscheck with the paradigm, the exemplification (26) that I gave you of this scopic structure at the level of *Las Meninas.*
I am going to end my lecture today, in order to find a finishing point, on what I presented to you as the amusing joke of the king sticking the Cross of Santiago on the chest of the painter in the picture *Las Meninas,* whether or not it was, as legend says, by putting his own hand to the brush.
This little feature, if I am to believe the echoes, has moved some good souls in the gathering here, who see in it a secret allusion to what I myself have to carry around.
Let these good souls be consoled, I do not feel myself to be crucified, and for a simple reason, which is that the cross from which I began, that of the two lines which divide the picture of Las Meninas, the one which goes from the horizon point which loses itself, passing through the door, the person who is leaving, to the foreground at the foot of the big picture, the representative of the representation, and the other line, the one which starts from Velasquez' eye in order to go towards the extreme left, where it connects up with its natural locus where I situated it, namely, at the line to infinity of the picture, are two lines which, quite simply, and however crossed they may appear, do not cross one another for the good reason that they are on different planes.
(27) So that, if it is a cross that I have to deal with in my relationship with the analysts, namely, it has been represented to you like that in an interrupted fashion.
We have therefore two lines which are not on the same plane. Well then, you should know, it is a little discovery, made a very long time ago by people who are occupied

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with what are called conics, that when one takes as an axis any third line whatsoever between these two preceding ones, which are thus like that, and one turns the whole lot like a top, what is produced?
One produces something to which very few people seem, indeed, in the preceding minutes to have thought about, since I do not hear any cry to tell me what is involved, one produces something like that, which in order to make you understand, because God knows what is still going to be produced, I would ask you to picture to yourselves what is called a diabolus. In other words a surface modelled in this way except for the fact that, of course, since it is a straight line, it goes off to infinity.
What is this surface? This can be shown. It is what is called a hyperboloid of revolution. What does a hyperboloid of revolution mean? It is quite simply what one obtains by making a hyperbola turn, rotate around a line that is called its (28) derivative. A hyperbola, then, is what is there, namely, these two lines that you see here in profile but that now I am isolating on a plane. What is a hyperbola? It is a line, all the points of which have the property that their distance from two points, which are called the foci, have a constant difference. What results from this is that the measure of this difference is exactly given by the distance which separates the two vertices of this curve, the points at which they approach to the maximum without managing to touch one another.
It is remarkable that precisely at the surface of what is obtained by such a revolution one can trace the series of straight lines which have as a property to go off to infinity. I hope that you are paying a little attention to what I am doing here for it is precisely the key point and a quite amusing one: it is always straight lines that can thus be drawn, as I might say, making there be deployed around the surface defined in a fashion which, starting from its origin as a plane, appears in effect complex and to be what is called a conic, we find then on a hyperbola, on a hyperbola with different revolutions, the same property of straight lines that can indefinitely (29) prolong themselves, as we would find in a cone which is another form of conic of revolution.
What results from that? That precisely each one of the points of what is on this hyperbola, even when it is deployed in space by this revolution, has this property of having with respect to each one of the foci such a distance that the difference between the two distances is constant.
We are now then in a position to illustrate something which is represented by a sphere which might be characterised, exactly, by the fact of having as a diameter the measure of this difference, that this represents something which, within this hyperbolic surface, is precisely what has passed here at its point of maximum narrowness.
This is, if you wish to see another representation of the relationships between S and of O, what would allow us to symbolise the o-object in a different way.
But what is important in it, is not this possibility of finding a structural support, it is the function in which we can include it.
This will be the object of our next meeting. No element can have the function of o-object if it cannot be associated to other objects in what is called a group structure. (30) You already see clearly what is possible. For we have other elements. Again, this group structure implies that one can employ any one of these objects with a negative sign.
What does that mean? And where does this lead us? This is what will allow us, this is what I hope to do the next time, to finish this year with something which completes the structural definition implying the combinatorial of the o-object and the value that it can take on as such in what is the very foundation of the properly Freudian dimension of desire and of the subject, namely castration.

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..... Take it as having the value of these kind of cork markers, floating on more or less calm water, which can help you to locate where you have left a net hanging. Moreover, neither this schema on the right, nor these bizarre words - whose resonance, I hope, already says something to you - have a strictly operational value; they are reference points, floaters that concern what I have to tell you today, and where, of course, I will try to bring things to the stopping point which is involved in the fact that this is my last open seminar for this year.

To preserve the note of gravity that some people have had the good sense to perceive in some of the things that I was saying the last time, I am going to start again from …....., start from an analogous point which is, which was provided for me by a conversation that I had this week with one of my mathematician friends: "In mathematics," said this excellent friend, whose name I am not giving because, after all, I do not know whether I have any right to publish these sorts of revelations of the (2) heart - they are not common among mathematicians, they are people who, on the whole, lack a little dash in this department, this is not the case for this distinguished person who said to me: "In mathematics," - in short, and perhaps after all this avowal was torn from him by a certain fashion that I have of harassing him, of trying to get out of him the most I can for these sorts of vermicular shapes that I afterwards twiddle in front of you in the shape of my topology - "in mathematics," he remarked, "one does not say what one is speaking about (*on ne dit pas de quoi on parle*)", - everything is in this "one does not say" - "one quite simply speaks it; hence a certain air," he said textually, "of pretence (*de faire semblant*)", and this is what he called in a tone, like that, in a style that is not usual in this sort of dialogue, this is what he called, "some air or other of hypocrisy that exists in mathematical discourse". I would not dare myself to put forward something like that, if I had not garnered it from the mouth of a mathematician, who himself, it must be said, is someone who, in this respect, is very (3) exigent. It is as if the person stated, that taken at a certain level, this mathematical discourse always found itself in the position of hiding something; but here my mathematician is lowering the tone a little (*n'est pas sans baisse*) because of the fact that he is expecting something from this confidence, which also depends, perhaps - let us not omit any of the aspects of the situation - on the net that he is offering me, namely, what he also from his side, wants to extract from this knowledge that I am supposed to possess, he comes back all the same on his feet, to his position, and adds that, after all, what he the mathematician conceals is strictly what he ought to conceal. The trick in rational discourse is always to manage to leave concealed what one does not say about exactly the matter, the subject of mathematics what, in any case, one is speaking about, one quite simply speaks it.

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A little parenthesis, the result of this is that the thickest people and only those, only those, you should realise, believe that mathematics speaks about things that do not exist. And if I announce that I am making a little drawing, some pencil marks in the (4) margin, it is a pleasure that I am giving you, just like that, in passing, but it is not at all the axis of what I am going to continue to tell you, only I am going to point out to you, for example, that if you open Musil's book, the one of which a very nice film has been made, even though it misses out a little, *Young Toerless*, you will notice that when the schoolboy is a little subtle, there are the closest relationships between the day when his schoolmaster flounders about lamentably in giving him an account of what imaginary numbers are, and the fact that he rushes headlong, as if by chance, around that time, into a properly perverse configuration in his relationships with his little pals.

All of this is only a note in the margin. I wanted to take things up again and to say what is at once the difference and the kinship between the position of the psychoanalyst and that of the mathematician.

When all is said and done, and we will see it in a precise way, at a certain level, he does not say what he is speaking about either. Only, it is for reasons that are a little different to those of the mathematician.

(5) In truth, as everyone knows, if he does not say what he is speaking about, it is not simply because he does not know anything about it, it is because he cannot know it. This is properly what is meant by the fact that there is an unconscious, an irreducible unconscious, and an *Urverdrangung*.

But can one say, as the mathematician says, that he quite simply speaks it? It is quite obvious that he is not at all in the same position. In a certain fashion someone speaks what is at stake, only it is the one to whom he gives the floor, namely, the patient. It is a matter of knowing where he is because he has some responsibility for the position in which he is, in so far as he ensures that the patient speaks. For when the patient speaks, he speaks in his own way about what he has to say, what he speaks about and which cannot be said.

The curious thing is that it is also necessary for psychoanalysts to speak, and that the result of this is not that they speak as the mathematician does, quite simply, what he does not say he is speaking about, but that he speaks about it inexactly. There is a (6) little syndrome that the psychiatrists found a long time ago, which is called Ganser's syndrome. This inexact speaking which characterises the discourse of the analytic community, will perhaps allow us to illuminate in a curious lateral or ambiant light, I do not really know, one would have to look carefully at what is involved in Ganser's syndrome, which is called precisely that, the inexact reply.

In short, the psychoanalyst is led to have a sort of discourse which returns to this fundamental necessity, of course, of discourse, namely, that it is short and really to enter further into this subject, it is to metaphors about the usage of money, not even metaphorical, that I should be told, namely, about the difference between a certain discourse which has a forced currency, within this circle, and on the other hand the way in which it has in short to show its value on the exchange markets of outside circles. It is something that I tried to tackle when I wrote an article that I found myself

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reading for reasons that were not completely contingent, because it is going to
(7) reappear with a whole collection, an article about the variations of technique, to which you can refer.

The question is, all the same, the following, a practical one for you analysts. It is formulated in a very nice, very naive, way: Is it really necessary to learn topology in order to be a psychoanalyst? For, when all is said and done, it is not with babies that these dialogues are exchanged, it is at this sort of question that a certain impasse ends up, even though I have to decide between the much more nuanced notes that I had put down on this theme, but one has to cleave the waves, and I have other important things to tell you today in order to cleave them and respond to this question. Whoever poses it is already prepared for me to give him this response. Topology is not something that he must learn as an extra, in a way, as if the formation of the psychoanalyst consisted in knowing with what colour one was going to paint oneself; one does not have to ask oneself the question as to whether or not one ought to learn something about topology, with the abbreviated and, I would say, imprecise label by
(8) which I designate the little bit of it that I bring here, the fact is that topology is the very stuff into which he cuts (*taille*), whether he knows it or does not know it, it does not matter whether he opens a book on topology or not, from the moment that he does psychoanalysis, this is the stuff into which he cuts, into which he cuts the subject of the psychoanalytic operation. Pattern, dress, model, and that what may be at stake, in what he has to unstitch and to restitch, if his topology is constructed in a mistaken way, will be at the expense of his patient. It is not today or yesterday, of course, that I tried to form this construction, these networks, these written indicators, these orientated networks that are called successively Schema L or Schema R or the Graph or ..... finally, this year … .... let us say, for some years, the usage of the surfaces of the *analysis situs;* after all those who have been able to see me working, bringing along these things, know that I constructed them, certainly against wind and tide, but not uniquely from a desire to displease my audience, either the old or the present one, but because I only had to follow this plan to develop, in the very discourse of my
(9) patients, or in each one of those at least as far as I could test it, who come within my reach to do what is called in psychoanalysis, a supervision, bring to me in a raw living form these very formulae which on occcasion are my own; patients say them strictly, rigorously, exactly as they are said here. If I had not had a little hint of this topology, already, my patients would have made me re-invent it.

The question then is clear, a legacy that one can take from one or other reference to this something as regards which the mathematician does not say what it is, but that he speaks, well then, there is every chance that this will clear the path a little for us, that it will give us instruments, or, on occasion, help us to recognise what we are dealing with, what I posited from the beginning when I got myself involved in speaking about psychoanalysis, namely, the function of language and the field of the word.

And for those who still keep in their heads this kind of objection: yes, but that is not
(10) everything! I would repeat once again, ever since the time I first had to repeat it, that in effect it is not everything, but that everything which comes within our horizon in psychoanalysis, comes through this. In other words, as regards what remains hidden about it, much more than hidden, limitless, unknown, scarcely approached at some access points, I said, something that we also only say very rarely; even to the point that it is better not to say it, I am speaking about *jouissance.*

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We would have no idea of any kind about this dimension, about this depth, as regards which one cannot say that it offers itself to us since it is prohibited, but at the very least we can name *jouissance.* We would have no idea of any kind of it, were it not the foundation of the subject in language which by way of repercussion in so far as it grounds in us this order, this barrier, this defence, which is called desire, which by repercussion, I am saying, did not force us to question: against what are we defending ourselves? What is involved in this *jouissance?* A question, of course, that no being (11) who is not a speaking being, asks itself! What is profiled for you by the unfolding of this line at the right? But, if something remains to you from the schema SI, IO, you can see the fundamental arrangement which goes from S to the field of the big Other which designates for you what I am going to remind you of later: namely, that it is from this field that there is withdrawn by the subject, as a belonging, the o-object. That something is at stake more on this hither side, concerning another function of the Other, since this Other here, behind the subject, completely hidden from him and perceived only as in a mirage where he projects it, onto the field of the Other, J, *jouissance* is to be placed. This is the general orientation of what I have to say to you today.

In effect, the fundamental value of the object of *jouissance* is to show us by what meshing together, for we have nothing else up to the present, I would defy any philosophy whatsoever to account to us, at present, for the relationship between the emergence of the signifier and this relationship of the individual (*l'être*) to *jouissance*. (12) There is necessarily one. What is it? Effectively, it is in the net of subjective topology that there is collected something from this field of *jouissance.* The fact is, very precisely, that the thing is in suspense at this point where Freud told us, this is the sense of what he says. In this subjective net, in what ensures that the subject is not immanent, but latent, vanishing, in the network of language, within this is *jouissance* caught in so far as it is sexual *jouissance.* This is the originality and the abrupt accent of what Freud tells us. But why is it this way? No philosophy, I am saying, meets up with us at present. And these miserable abortions of philosophy that we drag around behind us, like clothes that are coming apart, are nothing other, since the beginning of the last century, than a way of fooling around rather than attacking this question, which is the only one about truth, and which is called, and what Freud named the death instinct (*instinct*), the primordial masochism of *jouissance,* namely, metaphors, the lightning reflections that our experience projects onto this question. The whole (13) philosophical word deviates and slips away. We do not know, then, anything about what is caught in this net, in this frightening field which had been nevertheless already announced in the whole phantasy of tragedy; we do not know why something comes into our experience in a contingent fashion, perhaps, with Freud, who tells us: what is taken from the field of the word and of language is that part of *jouissance* which has a relationship with this other mystery that has been left intact, I would ask you to note, in the whole development of analytic doctrine, and which is called sexuality.

So then, what I call getting your finger caught in the machine, is the fact that what is at stake is something quite different than accounting for, we are not at the stage of trying to master the why of this adventure, it is already a lot for us to know how to get into it, how we are caught by the little finger; it is perhaps here, by making some reflections, the ones that are required about the topology of this mechanism, that some light about these relationships and these limits may come to us. All the more so, since

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(14) this whole mechanism has already been functioning for some time, by perceiving things from this angle, we can, perhaps, come to know a good deal, by seeing the way in which, previously, people obliged themselves not to see.

So then, the way in which one enters into it is, obviously, the whole sense of the o-object. In this relationship to what we have inscribed as necessary from the locus of the Other, in this relationship which is established by demand and which pushes us towards it starting from need, something very simple comes into play; the fact is that, from this field of the Other, we manage to recuperate our own body in so far as it is already there, that the breast is only an appurtenance of this body which has strayed into this field of the Other by what we will call, provisionally, from our point of view, a biological contingency which is called, simply, being a mammal. We, my little friends, are mammals and we can do nothing about it! And this has many other consequences. It is, in general, accompanied by the following fact: that of having this bizarre apparatus which is called a penis, which ensures that copulation is sustained by a (15) certain *jouissance.* This is nothing very extraordinary *(Ça ne casse pas les manivelles),* as they say, what! After all it is one of them; one of the things that one has within hand's reach. I am making you laugh, but it is the centre of psychoanalytic teaching. It began by starting from there. "Don't touch that or it will be cut off". This was one of the first truths. This was how there was made in the the same wave, this formidable discovery which is called the Oedipus Complex. It is all the same necessary to see that it is at this level of trivial truth, that this other little boat about the relationship with the penis is attached to, in the enormous business of the Oedipus Complex; that ought, all the same, make us reflect a little. Is that everything? In other words, we are faced with the task of what must be taught about castration.

This has a relationship with two terms that I have just put forward: the short cycle of sexual *jouissance* in the mammal. Now, I did not waste my time this year in explaining to you how this might work for bugs. It must be unplumbable! Compared to that, your own can always be overhauled! It is very important, this remark. The second, in (16) effect, is like a lot of things, a lot of things for man, it is within hand's reach for the reason that there are not many beings, outside him, who have a hand. The primates habitually, all day long, make the use of it that I evoked earlier and, consequently, have much simpler questions about *jouissance*. But one should point out that, for example, simply in a dog who has the advantage over the primate of entering into the field of the human word, everything that refers to this rubbing *(frottis-frotta)* takes on a further degree of complication; one can only admire one thing: how well brought up dogs are. It is from this that one must begin. You see that, very quickly, we find ourselves engaged in a kind of collusion, which is indeed the one short-sighted people have precipitated themselves onto, the collusion between the o-object of demand and something which concerns what one refuses *from* or *to* the object of *jouissance*. The fact is precisely, that by remaining there, one will not get very far; one will not get very far because, by remaining at this level of demand, at that which …..... some appurtenance of the body. I did not speak about the other one, namely, about the most (17) trivial, the one of which it is said that it is demanded from us by the Other, and by means of which we give her what we have to give with our bodies, by putting it at the locus of the Other, considered as a refuse dump, as a sewage farm, namely, what we modestly call faeces, the scybalum, *"scubalon",* what one rejects, it is a very elegant word and, in truth, let us say that it is, in general, the function of bodily waste. By limiting, as tends to happen within a certain analytic

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horizon, the whole dialectic of the relationships of the subject to the Other to demand, one ends up at this sphere limited to frustration, at the prevalence of the maternal Other, just about raised to the degree of complication that is called the composite parent, and one obtains, in effect, something rather closed which has really only one draw-back, which is that people ask themselves, after that, why the Oedipus Complex was invented, even though, precisely, this invention was original, that it emerged *bille en tête*, fully armed, from Freud's brain. It is quite certain that it is to this there is referred this dimension of desire, in so far as Freud, for his part, also set it up at first, and that it is only around it that there (18) was built up, that there was discovered the mechanism of demand, and that there is no demand, which not only does not evoke, but which, literally, can only be evoked from the formation at its horizon of the summons of desire.

Let us say that the Other, instead of being this inert field in which one recuperates something, namely, this breast which is the ideal object that is always missing, that human machinery tries to reproduce in all sorts of apparatuses, when all is said and done, whether it is the person who travels in a submarine or the one who flies off into the "cosmos", as one says nowadays, it is always from a little nursing apparatus he has with him, forming a closed circuit that delimits him, there is no need for that to imagine his nostalgia for the maternal uterus within which, precisely, his equipment was, in this respect, singularly deficient - I mean in the register that I have just evoked - and very poor from the symbiotic point of view. The field of the Other is what it is a matter of involving in desire; desire comes to involve the Other. And this is the different essence of the two other o-objects.

(19) That is why, this year, I highlighted, and even isolated, the paradigm of the first of these objects, namely, the look as representing the advanced phase of my presentation; I did not delay on the others that we are able to handle sufficiently well - even though we will have to come back to that - but I spoke about the look. The look has this privilege of being that which goes to the Other, as such. It is, of course, there is here a whole phenomenology on which one can delay, or even feast on, but since it is a slit, at what moment does it function? When it is opened or closed? There is a dream in the *Traumdeutung* on this, which is called "to close the eyes". Consult it, a little bit, everything is already there, there are a host of questions to be asked; but as regards this function of the look, I put the picturesque completely to one side, I did not ask why it is from the moment that he is blinded that Tiresias becomes a seer. Idiocies which make our curious milieu so full of joy. I gave the structure. And how, with the look, there enters into play, still complete, a topology that I described and which (20) cannot be gone back on, which is the one which justifies the existence of the screen. In the field of the Other, the look is what introduces the screen and the necessity - that one of my pupils, Melman, remarked to me recently, is inscribed in the article by Freud, *"Über Deckerinnerungen",* on screen memories - the necessity that the subject should inscribe himself in the picture. There is not described there, of course, this topology which is so essential, so fundamental to the whole Freudian development that it is as important as that of the Oedipus Complex, this topology which is the real foundation and which gives its consistency to this function that is called - why? - the primal scene.

What is it, if not the necessity of these frames, of these struts, that I tried, this year, to set up before you, in order to make you notice in them the structural condition which

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is only, perhaps, - this is what has to be confirmed - the other side (*l'envers*), the lining, the second circuit, thanks to which, already complete in Freud, but not completed up to now by anyone, not completed because not followed in the order of (21) its double circuit, establishes, alongside the law of desire, in so far as it is the desire conditionned by the Oedipus Complex, this law which links from that through which the subject is attached to the locus of the Other, makes necessary this certain order constructed around the object of the look, which means that when this object of the Other erects itself on something that we are calling, as you wish, the picture, the scene or the screen, what is the attachment, precisely, related to a term whose origin I think you know from André Breton, that I would call the Other, in so far as it is characterised by this little reality *(peu de réalité)* which is the whole substance of phantasy but which is also, perhaps, the whole reality to which we can gain access.

This is why we have left until later, and, not unintentionally, for the requirements of presentation, this other object, which is strange, in short, because it is linked to the object of the look, I mean the voice. But in the measure that, even though it obviously comes from the Other it is, nevertheless, within that we hear it. If the voice, of course, is not simply this noise which is modulated in the auditory field, but what falls (*choit*) (22) in this retroaction of one signifier on the other, which is what we have defined as the fundamental condition for the apparition of the subject. In other words, in the whole measure that you hear very little of all the things that I am telling you, it is because you are busy with your voices, like everyone else.

And now, it is a matter of knowing what is meant, in all of this, by the function of castration. Castration seems to me to be linked to the function of desire in so far as, in this field of the Other, it is literally projected to a limit point, sufficiently indicated in the myth by the murder and the death of the father, and from which there results the dimension of the law. One forgets too easily that, in the myth, it is not only the mother that the father takes over, but all the women, and that after the enunciation of the law of incest, what is at stake is nothing other than to signify that all women are prohibited, just as much as the mother; in other words, the story of the Oedipus Complex needs so many extensions, namely, that it is through transference that the other women etc. …. It is an accident, as if it were an accident! In short, that the Oedipus myth would, (23) otherwise, have no meaning. In other words, castration presents itself when it is taken from this angle, as something which suggests to us that we should ask ourselves about the object through which the subject is involved in this dialectic of the Other, in so far as this time it does not respond either to demand or to desire, but to *jouissance,* since we are starting from a question posed by Freud, about the *jouissance* of woman. In a first phase, let us repeat that *jouissance,* here, then, opens out for the first time as a question, in so far as the subject is barred from it, what we have called formerly, in our discourse on *Anxiety*: embarrassed! Of course, all of this has remained a little bit in the air, it is certainly by far the best seminar that I gave; those who took care to nourish themselves on it again in the vacation which followed can bear witness to it. But at that time, I had in the very front row, NCO's who enthusiastically took down what I was writing, but they were thinking so much about something else that one can understand that none of it remained with them.

The subject is embarrassed before this *jouissance.* And this barrier which embarrasses (24) him is very precisely desire itself. It is precisely for that reason that he projects into the Other, into this Other whose mannequin Freud picks out for us in the form of

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this murdered father, in which it is easy to recognise Hegel's master, in so far as he is substituted for the absolute master. The father is at the place of death and he is supposed to have been able to sustain all *jouissance.* It is true in Freud, except for the fact that, also in Freud, we can perceive that it is a mirage. It is not because it is the desire of the father which, mythically, is posed at the origin of the law, thanks to which what we desire has as a better definition what we do not want, it is not because things are that way that *jouissance* is there, behind the support of the Oedipus myth then what I called its mannequin. It appears, on the contrary, so well that it is only a mirage here, that it is here also that we have no trouble in highlighting the Hegelian error, I am speaking about the one which, in the *Phenomenology of the spirit,* attributes to the master, to him of the fight to the death for pure prestige, - you know the tune I hope - (25) attributes to the master the keeping, in his presence, of the privilege of *jouissance,* this on the pretext that the slave, in order to preserve his life, renounces this *jouissance.* I think, already, on one occasion, a few seminars ago, that I highlighted a little bit the question from this aspect. For where does one get the laws of this singular dialectic. That it would be enough to renounce *jouissance* in order to lose it! But you do not know the laws of *jouissance*!

It is probably the opposite, it is even certainly the opposite. It is precisely on the side of the slave that *jouissance* remains, and, precisely, because he renounces it. It is because the master erects his desire that he comes to grief on the margins on *jouissance*. His desire is even only made for that, to renounce *jouissance,* and that is why he engages in the struggle to death for pure prestige. So that the Hegelian story is a good joke, which is sufficiently justified by the fact that it is totally incapable of explaining what can be the cement of the society of masters; while Freud gives the (26) solution just like that: it is quite simply homosexual. It is the desire, that is true, not to undergo castration, which means that the homosexuals, or, more exactly, the masters are homosexual and this is what Freud says. The starting point for society is the homosexual bond, precisely in its relationship to the prohibition of *jouissance,* the *jouissance* of the Other, in so far as it is what is involved in sexual *jouissance,* namely, that of the feminine other. This is what, in Freud's discourse, is the masked part. It is extraordinary that however masked it may be, this truth, which displays itself all over the place, it must be said, in his discourse for anyone who, in any case, comes from our experience, namely, that the whole problem of sexual union between man and woman on which we have emptied all the idiocies about our so-called genital stage, our fabulous oblativity, this problem which is really the one on which analysis has played the role of the most furious obscurantism and this problem reposes entirely on the following, it is the difficulty, the extreme obstacle to the fact that in inter-sexual union (27) - the union of man and woman - desire should be in agreement; in other words that feminine *jouissance* - this is what has always been known, ever since Ovid: read the myth of Tiresias, there are here twenty verses of Ovid that I put in my first report, that of Rome, because it is an essential point and one that I tried to get across again since, when people were speaking about feminine sexuality in Amsterdam. There were some lovely things said! How can one forget the profound disparity that exists between feminine *jouissance* and masculine *jouissance*! This, indeed, is why in Freud everything is spoken about, activity, passivity, all the polarities that you wish, but never masculine-feminine, because this is not a polarity, and that moreover since it is not a polarity, it is altogether useless to try to speak about this difference. There is a single intermediary for this difference: the fact that in feminine *jouissance* there can enter as an object the desire of the man as such. This

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means that the question of phantasy is posed for the woman. But since she knows a little bit more about it, (28) probably, than we do, about the fact that phantasy and desire are precisely barriers to *jouissance,* this does not simplify the situation. It is a pity that such primary truths in the analytic field, can take on such an air of scandal; but it is necessary for them to be put forward, because it is properly this that justifies the precise moment that we are at in our presentation, namely, contrary to the fact which would have it that it is one or other appurtenance of the body, an object fallen from the body in a certain field which organises demand and desire as regards what is involved in the relationship of desire to *jouissance,* in so far as it involves the subject of the opposite sex, the intermediary is no longer from an object nor even a prohibited object - from the pedantic prohibition, as I might say, which is a whole register of Freudian castration which goes from the prohibition brought to bear on the hand of the little boy or of the little girl, up to the formation that you receive at the university, it is always a matter of preventing us from seeing things clearly - but the other function of castration that is confused with the first one is much deeper, it is the one through which, if an agreement is possible - an (29) agreement you should understand in the way in which I may try to make a sample of colour which will reproduce, alongside this one, something of the same shade. It is thanks to the fact that this object which is the penis, but that we are forced to raise to this function of being pin-pointed as phallus and be treated in such a fashion as the one which is the same as when one gives oneself over to this exercise of agreement, they are things which, out of discipline, I did not develop this year: but it is a different register to the visual and the look. With any coloured pencil whatsoever one can make a little mixture which reproduces any other one whatsoever - I am saying: *any one whatsoever* and *any one whatsoever* (*n'importe quel et n'importe quelle*) - except what one allows oneself when it does not work - what is produced on a large enough margin - to make use, to make use of one of the colours of the trio in order to subtract it from the sample on the other side. In other words, there are certain qualities, certain objects, which we must get to take on a negative sign; in other words, it is necessary that in the man-woman relationship, the contingent object, the decrepit (*caduc*) object (30) of mammal *jouissance* should be capable of being negatived; it is necessary for the man to perceive that masturbatory *jouissance* is not everything, and, inversely, that the woman should open out to the dimension that this particular *jouissance* is lacking to her. There is no wizardry in what I am saying; but this is the true foundation of the castration relationship, if we want to give it any sense whatsoever as regards the fashion in which it really functions. Saying it as I have just said it to you, ends up by being a common- place. In this case you do not see where the problem lies, namely, what is the nature of this negative sign which must be given to this object, the phallus. These are not, of course, things that I will even try to tackle in the last minutes of my seminar of this year, but it is precisely to respond to such questions that next year's, if God grants it his favour, will be called *The logic of phantasy.*

Nevertheless, I would like, as of now, to point out to you, as an introduction to this (31) logic, that the question of what is involved in the negative, as they say, or of negativity, would deserve us taking an orientation which is not simply fragmentary. And in order, not so much to decipher it, but to clear the way, I will begin, as I have always begun, with instruments: the wooden plough opening up a summary furrow, of course, and it is the one I have amused myself with for a long time, I do not know whether I ever even brought it out in front of you as an audience, by highlighting these three registers which are:

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- the first, the imaginary, which I write like that, in a little Chinese spelling, which we all say when what? When in a field we find the void. And if you think that it is easy to explain that: this notion of field and of void! Of course, the Gestaltist register proposes itself immediately, only the rapidity with which it is contaminated in the direction of a symbolic version in the notion of class, for example, which takes on, precisely, from its presence, all the density which ought to make us extremely prudent in handling it. In any case, to write it with this baroque spelling, (32) of which I am making nothing except an occasion to make it memorable as a transitory instrument, I called that the "hiarien", written as you see here. There is something which is in any case completely settled, and which has nothing to do with the "hiaren", it is the one which I express on

- the second line, and in this form there are, after all I have no reason to withhold the anecdote from you, this form borrowed from the language of a little boy who was very intelligent since he was my brother. He *gniakavait,* he said to me, conjugating bizarrely in this way a verb whose root would be "*gniaka".* Well then, a register of *"gniaka"* is absolutely essential! Something through which a present state is supposed to derive from something which ensures that it is amputated from something. This is the most radical form by which there is introduced a whole category where we will, precisely, have to orientate ourselves as regards the properly symbolic constitutions of negation. For "*gniaka"* goes very far, it can be a lack, it can also be a starting point: "*gniaka",* to take a starting point, one might call that zero, the neutral element. With nothing except this "*gniaka"* here you (33) have what is called an Abelian group. This in order to indicate to you the path along which we will be led to order our reflections next year; but, undoubtedly, this "*gniaka"* does not fail to indicate to us to come back on what we said last year as regards the function of zero as suturing the agency of the subject and of articulating the relationship of the subject to desire and also to castration. "*Gniaka",* by putting the negative sign onto the penis and the phallic function, is established with all the absolutely blind usage that we know how to make of it.

- and then there is something for which there is no word, or pin-pointing, at least in my register and this for a good reason: it is because if I named it, or if I supposed it, there would be some relationship with this imaginary function or that of symbolisation. This third term, the one that for the three years that I have been here I have taught you to know along some path that I could not say to be that of palpating, it is much more, I am trying, I solicit, I summon from you so that you (34) may identify yourselves to what one could call in mathematical language the *tor* (t.o.r.) factor which means what there is in the real, in this real that we have to deal with and which is precisely what is beyond, outside this necessity which constrains us to conjoin to *jouissance* only this little reality of phantasy; this real bears witness to a certain torsion. This torsion is not the *ananke* that Freud speaks of, for *ananke* and *logos* are both of the order of the symbolic. The only constraining necessity is the one that the *logos* imposes. And the real only enters beyond, as is manifest in experience, so as, amongst these necessary solutions - for there are always several of them - to designate the one that is impossible. Such is the function of the real and its torsion. This torsion is the very one that we are trying to grasp in our field and I have, at least, this year, tried to bring you the material which will allow you, for the continuation of what we are going to have to say, to map out how there is cut out, in a stuff which is common, this relationship of the (35) subject to the Other, this advent of the subject in

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the signifier, thanks to which there is sustained this phantasy in its relationship to the real, thanks to which opacity appears to us to be an indefinite *jouissance.*

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..... Take it as having the value of these kind of cork markers, floating on more or less calm water, which can help you to locate where you have left a net hanging. Moreover, neither this schema on the right, nor these bizarre words - whose resonance, I hope, already says something to you - have a strictly operational value; they are reference points, floaters that concern what I have to tell you today, and where, of course, I will try to bring things to the stopping point which is involved in the fact that this is my last open seminar for this year.

To preserve the note of gravity that some people have had the good sense to perceive in some of the things that I was saying the last time, I am going to start again from …....., start from an analogous point which is, which was provided for me by a conversation that I had this week with one of my mathematician friends: "In mathematics," said this excellent friend, whose name I am not giving because, after all, I do not know whether I have any right to publish these sorts of revelations of the (2) heart - they are not common among mathematicians, they are people who, on the whole, lack a little dash in this department, this is not the case for this distinguished person who said to me: "In mathematics," - in short, and perhaps after all this avowal was torn from him by a certain fashion that I have of harassing him, of trying to get out of him the most I can for these sorts of vermicular shapes that I afterwards twiddle in front of you in the shape of my topology - "in mathematics," he remarked, "one does not say what one is speaking about (*on ne dit pas de quoi on parle*)", - everything is in this "one does not say" - "one quite simply speaks it; hence a certain air," he said textually, "of pretence (*de faire semblant*)", and this is what he called in a tone, like that, in a style that is not usual in this sort of dialogue, this is what he called, "some air or other of hypocrisy that exists in mathematical discourse". I would not dare myself to put forward something like that, if I had not garnered it from the mouth of a mathematician, who himself, it must be said, is someone who, in this respect, is very (3) exigent. It is as if the person stated, that taken at a certain level, this mathematical discourse always found itself in the position of hiding something; but here my mathematician is lowering the tone a little (*n'est pas sans baisse*) because of the fact that he is expecting something from this confidence, which also depends, perhaps - let us not omit any of the aspects of the situation - on the net that he is offering me, namely, what he also from his side, wants to extract from this knowledge that I am supposed to possess, he comes back all the same on his feet, to his position, and adds that, after all, what he the mathematician conceals is strictly what he ought to conceal. The trick in rational discourse is always to manage to leave concealed what one does not say about exactly the matter, the subject of mathematics what, in any case, one is speaking about, one quite simply speaks it.

A little parenthesis, the result of this is that the thickest people and only those, only those, you should realise, believe that mathematics speaks about things that do not exist. And if I announce that I am making a little drawing, some pencil marks in the (4) margin, it is a pleasure that I am giving you, just like that, in passing, but it is not at all the axis of what I am going to continue to tell you, only I am going to point out

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to you, for example, that if you open Musil's book, the one of which a very nice film has been made, even though it misses out a little, *Young Toerless*, you will notice that when the schoolboy is a little subtle, there are the closest relationships between the day when his schoolmaster flounders about lamentably in giving him an account of what imaginary numbers are, and the fact that he rushes headlong, as if by chance, around that time, into a properly perverse configuration in his relationships with his little pals.

All of this is only a note in the margin. I wanted to take things up again and to say what is at once the difference and the kinship between the position of the psychoanalyst and that of the mathematician.

When all is said and done, and we will see it in a precise way, at a certain level, he does not say what he is speaking about either. Only, it is for reasons that are a little different to those of the mathematician.

(5) In truth, as everyone knows, if he does not say what he is speaking about, it is not simply because he does not know anything about it, it is because he cannot know it. This is properly what is meant by the fact that there is an unconscious, an irreducible unconscious, and an *Urverdrangung*.

But can one say, as the mathematician says, that he quite simply speaks it? It is quite obvious that he is not at all in the same position. In a certain fashion someone speaks what is at stake, only it is the one to whom he gives the floor, namely, the patient. It is a matter of knowing where he is because he has some responsibility for the position in which he is, in so far as he ensures that the patient speaks. For when the patient speaks, he speaks in his own way about what he has to say, what he speaks about and which cannot be said.

The curious thing is that it is also necessary for psychoanalysts to speak, and that the result of this is not that they speak as the mathematician does, quite simply, what he does not say he is speaking about, but that he speaks about it inexactly. There is a (6) little syndrome that the psychiatrists found a long time ago, which is called Ganser's syndrome. This inexact speaking which characterises the discourse of the analytic community, will perhaps allow us to illuminate in a curious lateral or ambiant light, I do not really know, one would have to look carefully at what is involved in Ganser's syndrome, which is called precisely that, the inexact reply.

In short, the psychoanalyst is led to have a sort of discourse which returns to this fundamental necessity, of course, of discourse, namely, that it is short and really to enter further into this subject, it is to metaphors about the usage of money, not even metaphorical, that I should be told, namely, about the difference between a certain discourse which has a forced currency, within this circle, and on the other hand the way in which it has in short to show its value on the exchange markets of outside circles. It is something that I tried to tackle when I wrote an article that I found myself reading for reasons that were not completely contingent, because it is going to (7) reappear with a whole collection, an article about the variations of technique, to which you can refer.

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The question is, all the same, the following, a practical one for you analysts. It is formulated in a very nice, very naive, way: Is it really necessary to learn topology in order to be a psychoanalyst? For, when all is said and done, it is not with babies that these dialogues are exchanged, it is at this sort of question that a certain impasse ends up, even though I have to decide between the much more nuanced notes that I had put down on this theme, but one has to cleave the waves, and I have other important things to tell you today in order to cleave them and respond to this question. Whoever poses it is already prepared for me to give him this response. Topology is not something that he must learn as an extra, in a way, as if the formation of the psychoanalyst consisted in knowing with what colour one was going to paint oneself; one does not have to ask oneself the question as to whether or not one ought to learn something about topology, with the abbreviated and, I would say, imprecise label by (8) which I designate the little bit of it that I bring here, the fact is that topology is the very stuff into which he cuts (*taille*), whether he knows it or does not know it, it does not matter whether he opens a book on topology or not, from the moment that he does psychoanalysis, this is the stuff into which he cuts, into which he cuts the subject of the psychoanalytic operation. Pattern, dress, model, and that what may be at stake, in what he has to unstitch and to restitch, if his topology is constructed in a mistaken way, will be at the expense of his patient. It is not today or yesterday, of course, that I tried to form this construction, these networks, these written indicators, these orientated networks that are called successively Schema L or Schema R or the Graph or ..... finally, this year … .... let us say, for some years, the usage of the surfaces of the *analysis situs;* after all those who have been able to see me working, bringing along these things, know that I constructed them, certainly against wind and tide, but not uniquely from a desire to displease my audience, either the old or the present one, but because I only had to follow this plan to develop, in the very discourse of my (9) patients, or in each one of those at least as far as I could test it, who come within my reach to do what is called in psychoanalysis, a supervision, bring to me in a raw living form these very formulae which on occcasion are my own; patients say them strictly, rigorously, exactly as they are said here. If I had not had a little hint of this topology, already, my patients would have made me re-invent it.

The question then is clear, a legacy that one can take from one or other reference to this something as regards which the mathematician does not say what it is, but that he speaks, well then, there is every chance that this will clear the path a little for us, that it will give us instruments, or, on occasion, help us to recognise what we are dealing with, what I posited from the beginning when I got myself involved in speaking about psychoanalysis, namely, the function of language and the field of the word.

And for those who still keep in their heads this kind of objection: yes, but that is not (10) everything! I would repeat once again, ever since the time I first had to repeat it, that in effect it is not everything, but that everything which comes within our horizon in psychoanalysis, comes through this. In other words, as regards what remains hidden about it, much more than hidden, limitless, unknown, scarcely approached at some access points, I said, something that we also only say very rarely; even to the point that it is better not to say it, I am speaking about *jouissance.*

We would have no idea of any kind about this dimension, about this depth, as regards which one cannot say that it offers itself to us since it is prohibited, but at the very least we can name *jouissance.* We would have no idea of any kind of it, were it not

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the foundation of the subject in language which by way of repercussion in so far as it grounds in us this order, this barrier, this defence, which is called desire, which by repercussion, I am saying, did not force us to question: against what are we defending ourselves? What is involved in this *jouissance?* A question, of course, that no being (11) who is not a speaking being, asks itself! What is profiled for you by the unfolding of this line at the right? But, if something remains to you from the schema SI, IO, you can see the fundamental arrangement which goes from S to the field of the big Other which designates for you what I am going to remind you of later: namely, that it is from this field that there is withdrawn by the subject, as a belonging, the **o**-object. That something is at stake more on this hither side, concerning another function of the Other, since this Other here, behind the subject, completely hidden from him and perceived only as in a mirage where he projects it, onto the field of the Other, J, *jouissance* is to be placed. This is the general orientation of what I have to say to you today.

In effect, the fundamental value of the object of *jouissance* is to show us by what meshing together, for we have nothing else up to the present, I would defy any philosophy whatsoever to account to us, at present, for the relationship between the emergence of the signifier and this relationship of the individual (*l'être*) to *jouissance*. (12) There is necessarily one. What is it? Effectively, it is in the net of subjective topology that there is collected something from this field of *jouissance.* The fact is, very precisely, that the thing is in suspense at this point where Freud told us, this is the sense of what he says. In this subjective net, in what ensures that the subject is not immanent, but latent, vanishing, in the network of language, within this is *jouissance* caught in so far as it is sexual *jouissance.* This is the originality and the abrupt accent of what Freud tells us. But why is it this way? No philosophy, I am saying, meets up with us at present. And these miserable abortions of philosophy that we drag around behind us, like clothes that are coming apart, are nothing other, since the beginning of the last century, than a way of fooling around rather than attacking this question, which is the only one about truth, and which is called, and what Freud named the death instinct (*instinct*), the primordial masochism of *jouissance,* namely, metaphors, the lightning reflections that our experience projects onto this question. The whole (13) philosophical word deviates and slips away. We do not know, then, anything about what is caught in this net, in this frightening field which had been nevertheless already announced in the whole phantasy of tragedy; we do not know why something comes into our experience in a contingent fashion, perhaps, with Freud, who tells us: what is taken from the field of the word and of language is that part of *jouissance* which has a relationship with this other mystery that has been left intact, I would ask you to note, in the whole development of analytic doctrine, and which is called sexuality.

So then, what I call getting your finger caught in the machine, is the fact that what is at stake is something quite different than accounting for, we are not at the stage of trying to master the why of this adventure, it is already a lot for us to know how to get into it, how we are caught by the little finger; it is perhaps here, by making some reflections, the ones that are required about the topology of this mechanism, that some light about these relationships and these limits may come to us. All the more so, since (14) this whole mechanism has already been functioning for some time, by perceiving things from this angle, we can, perhaps, come to know a good deal, by seeing the way in which, previously, people obliged themselves not to see.

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So then, the way in which one enters into it is, obviously, the whole sense of the **o**-object. In this relationship to what we have inscribed as necessary from the locus of the Other, in this relationship which is established by demand and which pushes us towards it starting from need, something very simple comes into play; the fact is that, from this field of the Other, we manage to recuperate our own body in so far as it is already there, that the breast is only an appurtenance of this body which has strayed into this field of the Other by what we will call, provisionally, from our point of view, a biological contingency which is called, simply, being a mammal. We, my little friends, are mammals and we can do nothing about it! And this has many other consequences. It is, in general, accompanied by the following fact: that of having this bizarre apparatus which is called a penis, which ensures that copulation is sustained by a (15) certain *jouissance.* This is nothing very extraordinary *(Ça ne casse pas les manivelles),* as they say, what! After all it is one of them; one of the things that one has within hand's reach. I am making you laugh, but it is the centre of psychoanalytic teaching. It began by starting from there. "Don't touch that or it will be cut off". This was one of the first truths. This was how there was made in the the same wave, this formidable discovery which is called the Oedipus Complex. It is all the same necessary to see that it is at this level of trivial truth, that this other little boat about the relationship with the penis is attached to, in the enormous business of the Oedipus Complex; that ought, all the same, make us reflect a little. Is that everything? In other words, we are faced with the task of what must be taught about castration.

This has a relationship with two terms that I have just put forward: the short cycle of sexual *jouissance* in the mammal. Now, I did not waste my time this year in explaining to you how this might work for bugs. It must be unplumbable! Compared to that, your own can always be overhauled! It is very important, this remark. The second, in (16) effect, is like a lot of things, a lot of things for man, it is within hand's reach for the reason that there are not many beings, outside him, who have a hand. The primates habitually, all day long, make the use of it that I evoked earlier and, consequently, have much simpler questions about *jouissance*. But one should point out that, for example, simply in a dog who has the advantage over the primate of entering into the field of the human word, everything that refers to this rubbing *(frottis-frotta)* takes on a further degree of complication; one can only admire one thing: how well brought up dogs are. It is from this that one must begin. You see that, very quickly, we find ourselves engaged in a kind of collusion, which is indeed the one short-sighted people have precipitated themselves onto, the collusion between the **o**-object of demand and something which concerns what one refuses *from* or *to* the object of *jouissance*. The fact is precisely, that by remaining there, one will not get very far; one will not get very far because, by remaining at this level of demand, at that which …..... some appurtenance of the body. I did not speak about the other one, namely, about the most (17) trivial, the one of which it is said that it is demanded from us by the Other, and by means of which we give her what we have to give with our bodies, by putting it at the locus of the Other, considered as a refuse dump, as a sewage farm, namely, what we modestly call faeces, the scybalum, *"scubalon",* what one rejects, it is a very elegant word and, in truth, let us say that it is, in general, the function of bodily waste. By limiting, as tends to happen within a certain analytic horizon, the whole dialectic of the relationships of the subject to the Other to demand, one ends up at this sphere limited to frustration, at the prevalence of the maternal Other, just about raised to the degree of complication that is called the composite parent, and one obtains, in effect, something rather closed which has really only one

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draw-back, which is that people ask themselves, after that, why the Oedipus Complex was invented, even though, precisely, this invention was original, that it emerged *bille en tête*, fully armed, from Freud's brain. It is quite certain that it is to this there is referred this dimension of desire, in so far as Freud, for his part, also set it up at first, and that it is only around it that there (18) was built up, that there was discovered the mechanism of demand, and that there is no demand, which not only does not evoke, but which, literally, can only be evoked from the formation at its horizon of the summons of desire.

Let us say that the Other, instead of being this inert field in which one recuperates something, namely, this breast which is the ideal object that is always missing, that human machinery tries to reproduce in all sorts of apparatuses, when all is said and done, whether it is the person who travels in a submarine or the one who flies off into the "cosmos", as one says nowadays, it is always from a little nursing apparatus he has with him, forming a closed circuit that delimits him, there is no need for that to imagine his nostalgia for the maternal uterus within which, precisely, his equipment was, in this respect, singularly deficient - I mean in the register that I have just evoked - and very poor from the symbiotic point of view. The field of the Other is what it is a matter of involving in desire; desire comes to involve the Other. And this is the different essence of the two other **o**-objects.

(19) That is why, this year, I highlighted, and even isolated, the paradigm of the first of these objects, namely, the look as representing the advanced phase of my presentation; I did not delay on the others that we are able to handle sufficiently well - even though we will have to come back to that - but I spoke about the look. The look has this privilege of being that which goes to the Other, as such. It is, of course, there is here a whole phenomenology on which one can delay, or even feast on, but since it is a slit, at what moment does it function? When it is opened or closed? There is a dream in the *Traumdeutung* on this, which is called "to close the eyes". Consult it, a little bit, everything is already there, there are a host of questions to be asked; but as regards this function of the look, I put the picturesque completely to one side, I did not ask why it is from the moment that he is blinded that Tiresias becomes a seer. Idiocies which make our curious milieu so full of joy. I gave the structure. And how, with the look, there enters into play, still complete, a topology that I described and which (20) cannot be gone back on, which is the one which justifies the existence of the screen. In the field of the Other, the look is what introduces the screen and the necessity - that one of my pupils, Melman, remarked to me recently, is inscribed in the article by Freud, *"Über Deckerinnerungen",* on screen memories - the necessity that the subject should inscribe himself in the picture. There is not described there, of course, this topology which is so essential, so fundamental to the whole Freudian development that it is as important as that of the Oedipus Complex, this topology which is the real foundation and which gives its consistency to this function that is called - why? - the primal scene.

What is it, if not the necessity of these frames, of these struts, that I tried, this year, to set up before you, in order to make you notice in them the structural condition which is only, perhaps, - this is what has to be confirmed - the other side (*l'envers*), the lining, the second circuit, thanks to which, already complete in Freud, but not completed up to now by anyone, not completed because not followed in the order of (21) its double circuit, establishes, alongside the law of desire, in so far as it is the

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desire conditionned by the Oedipus Complex, this law which links from that through which the subject is attached to the locus of the Other, makes necessary this certain order constructed around the object of the look, which means that when this object of the Other erects itself on something that we are calling, as you wish, the picture, the scene or the screen, what is the attachment, precisely, related to a term whose origin I think you know from André Breton, that I would call the Other, in so far as it is characterised by this little reality *(peu de réalité)* which is the whole substance of phantasy but which is also, perhaps, the whole reality to which we can gain access.

This is why we have left until later, and, not unintentionally, for the requirements of presentation, this other object, which is strange, in short, because it is linked to the object of the look, I mean the voice. But in the measure that, even though it obviously comes from the Other it is, nevertheless, within that we hear it. If the voice, of course, is not simply this noise which is modulated in the auditory field, but what falls (*choit*) (22) in this retroaction of one signifier on the other, which is what we have defined as the fundamental condition for the apparition of the subject. In other words, in the whole measure that you hear very little of all the things that I am telling you, it is because you are busy with your voices, like everyone else.

And now, it is a matter of knowing what is meant, in all of this, by the function of castration. Castration seems to me to be linked to the function of desire in so far as, in this field of the Other, it is literally projected to a limit point, sufficiently indicated in the myth by the murder and the death of the father, and from which there results the dimension of the law. One forgets too easily that, in the myth, it is not only the mother that the father takes over, but all the women, and that after the enunciation of the law of incest, what is at stake is nothing other than to signify that all women are prohibited, just as much as the mother; in other words, the story of the Oedipus Complex needs so many extensions, namely, that it is through transference that the other women etc. …. It is an accident, as if it were an accident! In short, that the Oedipus myth would, (23) otherwise, have no meaning. In other words, castration presents itself when it is taken from this angle, as something which suggests to us that we should ask ourselves about the object through which the subject is involved in this dialectic of the Other, in so far as this time it does not respond either to demand or to desire, but to *jouissance,* since we are starting from a question posed by Freud, about the *jouissance* of woman. In a first phase, let us repeat that *jouissance,* here, then, opens out for the first time as a question, in so far as the subject is barred from it, what we have called formerly, in our discourse on *Anxiety*: embarrassed! Of course, all of this has remained a little bit in the air, it is certainly by far the best seminar that I gave; those who took care to nourish themselves on it again in the vacation which followed can bear witness to it. But at that time, I had in the very front row, NCO's who enthusiastically took down what I was writing, but they were thinking so much about something else that one can understand that none of it remained with them.

The subject is embarrassed before this *jouissance.* And this barrier which embarrasses (24) him is very precisely desire itself. It is precisely for that reason that he projects into the Other, into this Other whose mannequin Freud picks out for us in the form of this murdered father, in which it is easy to recognise Hegel's master, in so far as he is substituted for the absolute master. The father is at the place of death and he is supposed to have been able to sustain all *jouissance.* It is true in Freud, except for the fact that, also in Freud, we can perceive that it is a mirage. It is not because it is the

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desire of the father which, mythically, is posed at the origin of the law, thanks to which what we desire has as a better definition what we do not want, it is not because things are that way that *jouissance* is there, behind the support of the Oedipus myth then what I called its mannequin. It appears, on the contrary, so well that it is only a mirage here, that it is here also that we have no trouble in highlighting the Hegelian error, I am speaking about the one which, in the *Phenomenology of the spirit,* attributes to the master, to him of the fight to the death for pure prestige, - you know the tune I hope - (25) attributes to the master the keeping, in his presence, of the privilege of *jouissance,* this on the pretext that the slave, in order to preserve his life, renounces this *jouissance.* I think, already, on one occasion, a few seminars ago, that I highlighted a little bit the question from this aspect. For where does one get the laws of this singular dialectic. That it would be enough to renounce *jouissance* in order to lose it! But you do not know the laws of *jouissance*!

It is probably the opposite, it is even certainly the opposite. It is precisely on the side of the slave that *jouissance* remains, and, precisely, because he renounces it. It is because the master erects his desire that he comes to grief on the margins on *jouissance*. His desire is even only made for that, to renounce *jouissance,* and that is why he engages in the struggle to death for pure prestige. So that the Hegelian story is a good joke, which is sufficiently justified by the fact that it is totally incapable of explaining what can be the cement of the society of masters; while Freud gives the (26) solution just like that: it is quite simply homosexual. It is the desire, that is true, not to undergo castration, which means that the homosexuals, or, more exactly, the masters are homosexual and this is what Freud says. The starting point for society is the homosexual bond, precisely in its relationship to the prohibition of *jouissance,* the *jouissance* of the Other, in so far as it is what is involved in sexual *jouissance,* namely, that of the feminine other. This is what, in Freud's discourse, is the masked part. It is extraordinary that however masked it may be, this truth, which displays itself all over the place, it must be said, in his discourse for anyone who, in any case, comes from our experience, namely, that the whole problem of sexual union between man and woman on which we have emptied all the idiocies about our so-called genital stage, our fabulous oblativity, this problem which is really the one on which analysis has played the role of the most furious obscurantism and this problem reposes entirely on the following, it is the difficulty, the extreme obstacle to the fact that in inter-sexual union (27) - the union of man and woman - desire should be in agreement; in other words that feminine *jouissance* - this is what has always been known, ever since Ovid: read the myth of Tiresias, there are here twenty verses of Ovid that I put in my first report, that of Rome, because it is an essential point and one that I tried to get across again since, when people were speaking about feminine sexuality in Amsterdam. There were some lovely things said! How can one forget the profound disparity that exists between feminine *jouissance* and masculine *jouissance*! This, indeed, is why in Freud everything is spoken about, activity, passivity, all the polarities that you wish, but never masculine-feminine, because this is not a polarity, and that moreover since it is not a polarity, it is altogether useless to try to speak about this difference. There is a single intermediary for this difference: the fact that in feminine *jouissance* there can enter as an object the desire of the man as such. This means that the question of phantasy is posed for the woman. But since she knows a little bit more about it, (28) probably, than we do, about the fact that phantasy and desire are precisely barriers to *jouissance,* this does not simplify the situation. It is a pity that such primary truths in the analytic field, can take on such an air of scandal;

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but it is necessary for them to be put forward, because it is properly this that justifies the precise moment that we are at in our presentation, namely, contrary to the fact which would have it that it is one or other appurtenance of the body, an object fallen from the body in a certain field which organises demand and desire as regards what is involved in the relationship of desire to *jouissance,* in so far as it involves the subject of the opposite sex, the intermediary is no longer from an object nor even a prohibited object - from the pedantic prohibition, as I might say, which is a whole register of Freudian castration which goes from the prohibition brought to bear on the hand of the little boy or of the little girl, up to the formation that you receive at the university, it is always a matter of preventing us from seeing things clearly - but the other function of castration that is confused with the first one is much deeper, it is the one through which, if an agreement is possible - an (29) agreement you should understand in the way in which I may try to make a sample of colour which will reproduce, alongside this one, something of the same shade. It is thanks to the fact that this object which is the penis, but that we are forced to raise to this function of being pin-pointed as phallus and be treated in such a fashion as the one which is the same as when one gives oneself over to this exercise of agreement, they are things which, out of discipline, I did not develop this year: but it is a different register to the visual and the look. With any coloured pencil whatsoever one can make a little mixture which reproduces any other one whatsoever - I am saying: *any one whatsoever* and *any one whatsoever* (*n'importe quel et n'importe quelle*) - except what one allows oneself when it does not work - what is produced on a large enough margin - to make use, to make use of one of the colours of the trio in order to subtract it from the sample on the other side. In other words, there are certain qualities, certain objects, which we must get to take on a negative sign; in other words, it is necessary that in the man-woman relationship, the contingent object, the decrepit (*caduc*) object (30) of mammal *jouissance* should be capable of being negatived; it is necessary for the man to perceive that masturbatory *jouissance* is not everything, and, inversely, that the woman should open out to the dimension that this particular *jouissance* is lacking to her. There is no wizardry in what I am saying; but this is the true foundation of the castration relationship, if we want to give it any sense whatsoever as regards the fashion in which it really functions. Saying it as I have just said it to you, ends up by being a common- place. In this case you do not see where the problem lies, namely, what is the nature of this negative sign which must be given to this object, the phallus. These are not, of course, things that I will even try to tackle in the last minutes of my seminar of this year, but it is precisely to respond to such questions that next year's, if God grants it his favour, will be called *The logic of phantasy.*
Nevertheless, I would like, as of now, to point out to you, as an introduction to this (31) logic, that the question of what is involved in the negative, as they say, or of negativity, would deserve us taking an orientation which is not simply fragmentary. And in order, not so much to decipher it, but to clear the way, I will begin, as I have always begun, with instruments: the wooden plough opening up a summary furrow, of course, and it is the one I have amused myself with for a long time, I do not know whether I ever even brought it out in front of you as an audience, by highlighting these three registers which are:

- - the first, the imaginary, which I write like that, in a little Chinese spelling, which we all say when what? When in a field we find the void. And if you think that it is easy to explain that: this notion of field and of void! Of course, the Gestaltist register proposes itself immediately, only the rapidity with which it is

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contaminated in the direction of a symbolic version in the notion of class, for example, which takes on, precisely, from its presence, all the density which ought to make us extremely prudent in handling it. In any case, to write it with this baroque spelling, (32) of which I am making nothing except an occasion to make it memorable as a transitory instrument, I called that the "hiarien", written as you see here. There is something which is in any case completely settled, and which has nothing to do with the "hiaren", it is the one which I express on

- - the second line, and in this form there are, after all I have no reason to withhold the anecdote from you, this form borrowed from the language of a little boy who was very intelligent since he was my brother. He *gniakavait,* he said to me, conjugating bizarrely in this way a verb whose root would be "*gniaka".* Well then, a register of *"gniaka"* is absolutely essential! Something through which a present state is supposed to derive from something which ensures that it is amputated from something. This is the most radical form by which there is introduced a whole category where we will, precisely, have to orientate ourselves as regards the properly symbolic constitutions of negation. For "*gniaka"* goes very far, it can be a lack, it can also be a starting point: "*gniaka",* to take a starting point, one might call that zero, the neutral element. With nothing except this "*gniaka"* here you (33) have what is called an Abelian group. This in order to indicate to you the path along which we will be led to order our reflections next year; but, undoubtedly, this "*gniaka"* does not fail to indicate to us to come back on what we said last year as regards the function of zero as suturing the agency of the subject and of articulating the relationship of the subject to desire and also to castration. "*Gniaka",* by putting the negative sign onto the penis and the phallic function, is established with all the absolutely blind usage that we know how to make of it.

- and then there is something for which there is no word, or pin-pointing, at least in my register and this for a good reason: it is because if I named it, or if I supposed it, there would be some relationship with this imaginary function or that of symbolisation. This third term, the one that for the three years that I have been here I have taught you to know along some path that I could not say to be that of palpating, it is much more, I am trying, I solicit, I summon from you so that you (34) may identify yourselves to what one could call in mathematical language the *tor* (t.o.r.) factor which means what there is in the real, in this real that we have to deal with and which is precisely what is beyond, outside this necessity which constrains us to conjoin to *jouissance* only this little reality of phantasy; this real bears witness to a certain torsion. This torsion is not the *ananke* that Freud speaks of, for *ananke* and *logos* are both of the order of the symbolic. The only constraining necessity is the one that the *logos* imposes. And the real only enters beyond, as is manifest in experience, so as, amongst these necessary solutions - for there are always several of them - to designate the one that is impossible. Such is the function of the real and its torsion. This torsion is the very one that we are trying to grasp in our field and I have, at least, this year, tried to bring you the material which will allow you, for the continuation of what we are going to have to say, to map out how there is cut out, in a stuff which is common, this relationship of the (35) subject to the Other, this advent of the subject in the signifier, thanks to which there is sustained this phantasy in its relationship to the real, thanks to which opacity appears to us to be an indefinite *jouissance.*

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Seminar 22: Wednesday 15 June 1966

We have heard, I am saying this for those who take part in the closed seminar and who also attend the debates described as *Communications scientifiques* in the Ecole Freudienne, there is here, for example, a large part of the gathering who make up ….. this meeting of a ..... character.

Obviously, we heard a very, very good paper. Moreover, I noted it; but after all it is very, very much to be placed, if you will allow me this thing which is to be taken with a pinch of salt, in what constitutes, for me, the problematic of what is called a paper *(communication)* - you saw earlier that I did not finish - a scientific paper, in psychoanalysis.

This must not be particularly special to psychoanalysis. There must be other configurations in which the same effect is produced. In any case, for psychoanalysis, let us call that ..… that this always turns a little into a conspiracy against the patient!

(2) And this is what falsifies things, and means, after all, that one comes to say things that go a little bit beyond, as I might say, strict scientific thinking, which is the one that one would restrict oneself to if what were in question were real scientific meetings.

Since we are at the end of the year, you will perhaps allow me to open my heart about the reasons that I have to be reticent about this style, in so far as it is the current motor of analytic work, and which is described as meetings where there are papers which are called scientific, and which are really not all that much so.

In consideration of which, on the plane of a clinical description of something centred around the perverse couple, Clavreul, whose absence here today I regret, for I would have reiterated my compliments, gave us something excellent. There we are. The only thing that was missing in it was something that was finally said in the discussion, but that nobody heard because it was not said clearly, which is that, in short, to speak altogether scientifically about perversion it is necessary to start from what is quite simply its basis in Freud.

Someone said, someone brought forward, timidly, these *Three essays on sexuality,* the fact is that perversion is normal.

(3) You have to start from there once and for all, and in that case the problem, the problem of clinical construction, would be to know why there are abnormal perverts.

Why are there abnormal perverts? This would allow us to enter into a whole configuration that on the one hand would be historical, because historical things are not historical simply because an accident happened, they are historical because it was necessary for a certain shape, a certain configuration, to come to light.

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It is quite clear that it is the same problem as that of our friend Michel Foucault, who is not here either, he did not think that he was invited to the closed seminar, it is great pity, our friend Michel Foucault, in short, tackles with his excellent books, to which we have referred - you can hear me at the back? Yes? Good - *The History of Madness* or *The Birth of the Clinic*. You will understand why

there are normal perverts,
there are perverts who are considered abnormal, the least that can be said is that once there are abnormal perverts, there are also people who consider them to be such, unless things happen in the reverse order. But we should not force anything in this direction.

(4) In any case, I regret the absence of Clavreul, because I would have recommended him some reading for this next lecture that he will certainly give us, and one that is even still more excellent, by beginning, as I advised him, from what I highlighted, namely, that his best reference in everything that he told us - let us not forget that his lecture was entitled *The perverse couple,* as if there were pure and simple perverse couples. Precisely, that is the whole drama. Anyway let us leave it.

The remark is the one pinpointed by Jean Genêt, that there is always in the exercise of the perverse act, a place in which the pervert really wants to have put the brand of falsity *(la marque de faux).* I advised him to begin again from there.

Today, I would recommend some reading to him, reading, moreover which should be read by all, that I recommend to all of you, and which will allow you to give a very simple and very convincing illustration of what I am in the process of telling you, that one must begin from the fact that perversion is normal. In other words, that under certain conditions, it may not stand out as a blemish at all. In consideration of which, this book, that I took the trouble to go to the bookshop for, so that you could see that (5) it exists, and I no longer remembered that it had been printed by the Mercure de France, quite recently, moreover, so that as a result you will be able to get it, which is called *Mémoires de l'Abbé de Choisy en femme,* read it, read it and by means of it you will see where to find a sound starting point as regards the register of perversion.

You will see someone who is, not simply completely at ease in his perversion, and this from one end to the other, which did not prevent him from being someone who led a career carried out with general respect, receiving all the marks of public and even royal confidence, and writing with perfect elegance an account of things which, in our day, would literally turn our heads upside-down, and would even push us to do such extraordinary things as getting a medico-legal opinion, without even counting the discredit that would result for the higher clergy who are, nevertheless, well known for being particularly expert in these practices, while, in our day, they are forced to dissimulate these things which are only the sign of a healthy and normal relationship to fundamental things.

(6) Here then is some reading that I would recommend to you. Naturally, some of the people who are here, or who are not here, will see in this a confirmation of the fact that, as it is put, I am a *bourgeois* from between the two wars. Good God, how small-minded people are! I am a *bourgeois* from before the French revolution, so you can see how far ahead they are putting me.

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Anyway, you will be convinced of it after this approbation, this stamp of "book to be read", that I have put on this book for you.

At this point, today, I would like, since it is not simply a closed seminar but it is the second last one, and that, God knows, in the last one I must put on the appearance of giving a closure to some things, I hesitated about what I would close on.

Perhaps, after all, I could, all the same, restate something which constituted the beginning of the closed seminar this year, namely, the discussion about the articles in which our excellent friend Stein, put forward his positions on the subject of what he called the analytic situation, which he wanted to limit to the conditions at the beginning, namely, what one is engaged on in carrying out analytic sessions; then, after that, he dealt very gently with transference and counter-transference; it is a matter of (7) understanding what he puts under these two rubrics. And, after that, he spoke about the judgement of the psychoanalyst. There was a debate, a debate which I did not attend in its entirety because, for one part, Doctor Irène Perrier-Roublef was kind enough to direct it in my absence. All of this would undoubtedly deserve a complement, a complement and, perhaps, illumination, an illumination, and, perhaps, something more, after all, something more firm, I mean, I mean that perhaps later, we will begin to speak about it, if it works, well, this might also encourage us to ask Stein to come the next time because, moreover, it would not be altogether suitable either that this closure should take place without his presence. Anyway, that will perhaps come up later on. I mean the beginnings of that.

What I would like, and happily what I took care to guarantee, so that I would at least have something to reply to, what I would like is that, after all, after a year in which I told you things of which a large residue must all the same remain in your heads, I said things, some of which were altogether new, at least for some of you, others which (8) were really structured for the first time in a fashion that was not simply absolutely exemplary but rigorous, I also dared to add, taking in this way a sort of definitive commitment, considering, for example, the schema that I gave you about the function of the look. Well, I would not be unhappy, I would have no regrets, if some people were to pose me questions.

Naturally, the rumour has been confirmed that this is not something to be done, on the pretext that the other day, for example, I seemed to say to Monsieur Audouard who, in short, is the only person who at this level gave me complete satisfaction this year, namely, that he quite simply risked doing what I asked, namely, that someone should respond to me.

Monsieur Audouard, it is true, made a big mistake, a big mistake, in sticking into the schema of perspective the eye of the artist on what one can, in short, call the picture plane, this at the time of the foundation of perspective. Good. It is all the same necessary that you could conceive of the fact, that given that everyone is here with his (9) own little narcissism in his pocket, namely, the idea of not making himself ridiculous, it is all the same necessary to tell you that what Monsieur Audouard did, is very exactly what, with respect to Alberti, I told you that he was in this famous schema of perspective, I drew it on the board, after all, I went to a lot of trouble, in what Alberti founded and that someone named Viator, it was because he was called

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quite simply Pellerin in French, took up again, well then, the error that Monsieur Audouard made is exactly the error made by Albert Dürer, namely, when one consults the writings of Albert Dürer, one sees very exactly that certain mistakes, a certain displacement of the schema which does not fail to have repercussions elsewhere on the rather upside-down things that you see in the perspectives of Albert Dürer, when you look at them closely, are due, very exactly to an initial error of this kind. You see then that Monsieur Audouard is not in bad company.

I cannot, of course, demonstrate this for you because, because it would be necessary, anyway it is very easy, I can give those of you who are interested the bibliography, there is someone who highlighted this very nicely, an American who wrote some clever little books on art and geometry, and one in particular concerning the status of (10) perspective, in so far as it originates with Alberti, Viator and Albert Dürer. And all this is explained, is explained very well. All this is explained in function of the fact, precisely, that Albert Dürer began to pose the problem of perspective starting from what I would call a radically opposite approach, one which comes from the consideration of the luminous point, and the formation of the shadow, namely, the previous position, the one that I showed you was completely antinomical to that of the construction of perspective, which for completely opposite goals, which are not the goals of the constitution of the illuminated world but the constitution of the subjective world, if you will allow me to make this clear-cut opposition, clear-cut and justified from the whole previous discourse.

It is in the measure that what interests Dürer is the shadow of a cube, that he does not succeed in constructing the correct perspective of the cube.

Good, this having been said, and Monsieur Audouard having been restored to his position, namely, having only undergone the prestige to which people other than us, and, one might say, greater, succumbed, I would all the same like to encourage those who may have some questions to pose about what I have said and, for example, what I (11) said the last time about this schema, which ends up really posing very, very big questions about this schema, which is there at the back, and where we find ourselves, with the subject, in this position in respect to the field of the Other, that everything that concerns his relationship to *jouissance,* has to come to him through the mediation of what is linked to the Other, and which is presented in this way as linked to a certain function which is not without being the .....… since, moreover, what the apparatus illustrated, for example, by *Las Meninas*, from the structure which was produced by Velasquez, demonstrates to us. Let us say that in the apparatus of perspective and of the look, we can conceive, make coexist, not just the reason why this narcissistic register coexists.

My whole first effort of teaching was to detach it from the articulation it has, that not only how they can coexist but how at the level of a certain object, the look, one can provide the key for the other and the look as the effect of ..... …. to be the true principle, the true secret of narcissistic capture.

Therefore, in this relationship of S to O, we have been able to establish the function of this (o) of which I spoke, if you wish, with a privilege for one of them, the least (12) studied and, nevertheless, the most fundamental for the whole articulation of the thing itself. And then the correspondence in advance or, if you wish, the equivalence

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that the (-phi), namely, the phallus *qua* the object at stake in the relationship to *jouissance,* in so far as it requires the union of the other in the sexual relation ….....

Ah, good, there you are Stein. Come over here. I was lamenting your absence.

Well then, this obviously poses, seems to me to offer an opportunity for all sorts of questions.

When I say that I re-make the circuit a second time, when I go twice around the Freudian Moebius strip, you should see in it not at all an illustration but the very fact of what I mean in the fact that the drama of the Oedipus Complex, which I think I have sufficiently articulated for you, has another aspect by means of which one could articulate it from one end to the other and make a complete circuit of it.

The drama of the Oedipus Complex, is the murder of the father and the fact that Oedipus enjoyed (*a joui de*) his mother. One also sees that the matter remains in suspense because of an eternal questioning about the law and everything that is (13) generated from it because of the fact that Oedipus, as I often say, did not have an Oedipus Complex, namely, that he did it in all tranquillity. Of course, he did it without knowing it. But one can illuminate the drama in another way and say that the drama of Oedipus, in any case the drama of the tragedy, is in the clearest fashion the drama engendered by the fact that Oedipus is the hero of the desire to know. But as I already have been saying for a long time now, but I am repeating it in this context, I already said a long time ago what the term of the Oedipus Complex is.

Oedipus, before the revelation, on the torn screen of what there is behind, and with - this was how I described it - his eyes lying on the ground, Oedipus tearing out his eyes, which has nothing to do with vision, which is properly speaking what gives the symbol of this fall into this between-the-two, into this space that Desargues designates by the name of heavens, and that I identify, it is the only identification possible, to what we call the *Dasein,* this is where the look of Oedipus fell. This is the end, the conclusion and the sense of the tragedy, at the very least it is just as permissible to translate this tragedy onto this reverse side as to pose it in front where it reveals to us the generating drama of the foundation of the law. The two things are equivalent for the very reason which ensures that the Moebius strip only really connects up with itself when two (14) circuits have been made.

Good. Well then, this having been brought forward, it will be accompanied by no more than one remark, which is that the consideration of the o-object and of its function, in so far as this consideration alone leads us to pose the crucial questions which concern the castration complex, namely, how there arises the group - it is necessary to use a mathematical term - which permits the functioning of a certain (-phi), which we have used for a long time but in a more or less specified way, in a logical structure; well then, this is the decisive thing introduced by the o-object, namely, that through which it will allow us to tackle this properly speaking virgin terrain, virgin for a psychoanalyst, like that, produced (*émis*) in our day, as I might say, namely, the castration complex.

It is quite clear that people never speak about it except in a marginal way, behaving as if we knew what that meant. Obviously, we have a little inkling, because I spoke

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about it a little here and there. But all the same, after all, not enough for Monsieur Ricoeur, for example, to have brought the slightest fragment of it into his book which provoked so much interest. It is even remarkable that there is not even a trace of it.

(15) It must be then, that people do not speak about it elsewhere either. It would indeed be necessary for one to be able to say something about the castration complex. Now, it seems to me that the last time, I began to say something very firmly articulated on this point. Obviously in the measure that we can at least outline the program, to say that next year, we will speak about this sort of logic which may allow us to situate what, very specifically, re-emerges for the function (- phi) with respect to this first plane that we have assured this year about the o-object.

There is one thing, in any case, that is certain, since we have spoken about the Oedipus myth. Of course Oedipus is the corner stone, and that if we do not see that everything that Freud has constructed was around the Oedipus complex, we will never see absolutely anything. Only, it is still not enough to explain the Oedipus complex for you to know what Freud was talking about, unless you know, having been broken to the vocabulary that I unfold before you, that what it is a matter of articulating, is the foundation of desire, and that as long as one does not get that far, one has not even guaranteed the field of sexuality. The Oedipus myth tells us nothing at all about what it is to be a man or a woman.

(16) It is absolutely displayed in Freud. As I said the last time, the fact that he never puts forward the masculine-feminine couple, except to say that one cannot speak about it, precisely, sufficiently proves this kind of limit.

One only begins to pose questions that concern sexuality, masculine as well as feminine, starting from the moment where there comes into play the phallic organ and function. For want of making these distinctions, people are in the most absolute confusion.

It must be said that here there is something which operates, perhaps, at the basis of the fact that Freud did not complete, why would he not himself have completed his second circuit? Why did he leave it to be done by someone else? One could also ask oneself that question.

This is where I am very embarrassed. Experience teaches me, it teaches me at my expense, counsels me never to procede without very great precautions. In truth, it is not quite in my nature, but others take them for me. In short, since this tightly-knit series of events which culminated one day in making me interrupt at my first lecture a seminar I had announced under the title of *Les noms du père,* will tell you that, for (17) psychoanalysts, it is all the same quite natural to give a sense to events and that, whatever may be the contingent detours, the policies, the little bloomers, which, precisely, brought about that day, the fact that, after all, people, perhaps, more alive to the importance of what I have to say, took very good care that I would keep my word not to say it in certain cases, it is because there was there, all the same, some reason and one which touches, which touches precisely at this delicate point of the limit at which Freud stopped.

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If so many things of the order which culminate at these singular rendezvous, of which one cannot say that, of themselves, they are progressive, it is indeed because there is something in Freud that people cannot tolerate. If I take it away from them, what are they going to support themselves with? Those who support themselves, precisely, in short, with what is intolerable *(insupportable)* in this something regarding which we must believe that this was already sufficiently put forward, in a certain sense, because one cannot go any further. So that, in short, it is only in a fashion, a very light touch, and in a way something like a shadow, a negative factor, that I will point out that we (18) owe to Freud, all the same, that up to the end of his life, it appears, a mystery seems for him to reside in the following question that he expressed thus: "What does a woman want?". We owe this to an cuntess who reported it to us, and before whom he had, like that, allowed his ventral mug to open. There are moments when even idols exposed themselves. It must be said that, for this to happen, particularly horrible sights are necessary.

What does a woman want? Freud, as Jones put it, had a trait which cannot, all the same, fail to strike, this trait which is only well expressed, which is only really pinpointed in the English tongue, which is called *uxorious*. In French, it is not used very much. We are perhaps not sufficiently uxorious for that. But any way, in one case as in the other, whether one is or whether one is not, it is never anything but the specification of a position that one can boast about on this point. It is no luckier to be it or not to be it. He was uxorious and not with regard to someone indifferent.

"Caeser's wife must be above suspicion", we are told. That is used a lot. It is like when one says "the style is the man", for example. It is an incorrect quotation, but that does not matter.

(19) These are things that always work. Put in the right place, it is not open to discussion. What does it mean? Suspected of what? Of being a real woman perhaps? Freud's wife who, one can wager everything, was his only woman, cannot be the object of such suspicion. We have in Freud's writings, after all, all the most extraordinary traces. The use of the term *sich strauben,* to bristle up, in the analysis of the dream of Irma's injection is, in a way, in this style, this *Umschreibung,* this twisted style, almost the only case where I can reconcile mine with his. He brings us where he wants to go, of course, without telling us; the fact is that, when all is said and done, all of that, a woman *sich straubt*, it is like Mrs Freud and it is, all the same, a little annoying.

Yes, here obviously is a reference point of a kind to give us the feeling of knowing where the problem is posed, where the question is, and where we have got in it, where are, in a way, the structural barriers, inherent to the very structure of the concept brought into play, which explains a lot of things, for example, about ….... about the history of psychoanalysis ever since, and the way in which there have been highlighted in it not alone femininity and its problems, but women themselves.

(20) What one can call the mothers of our psychoanalytic community. They are funny old mothers!

Mme Roublef: We can't hear.

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Dr Lacan: Perhaps its just as well!

So then, on this point I would like some questions to be posed to me. Since, in short, for example, the last time, in posing the subject before, as I might put it, this surface of reflection, that is constituted by the dialectic of the Other, in order to locate in it, in a fashion which requires, here also, a certain order of mirage. The place of *jouissance,* I indicated many things to you, specifically, and settled this question in passing of what I called Hegel's error, that *jouissance* is in the master. One is astonished. If the master has anything to do with the absolute master, namely death, what an extraordinary idea to place *jouissance* on the side of the master. It is not easy to make the agency of death function. No one has ever yet imagined that it is in this mythical being that *jouissance* resides. The Hegelian error is, then, well and truly an analysable error. And here, we put our finger, in the structure here written on the board, written in these little letters in which there lies the essence, the dramatic knot which is properly the one that we have to deal with; how does it happen that it is at this place of O, at the place (21) of the Other, in so far as it is there that signifying articulation is constructed, that there is posed for us the aim of a mapping-out which tends towards *jouissance* and, properly speaking, sexual *jouissance*.

That the (- phi), namely, the organ, the particular organ whose contingency I explained to you, I mean that it is in no way necessary, in itself, for the achievement of sexual copulation, that it took on this particular form for reasons which, until we know how to articulate a little beginning of something in the matter of the evolution of forms, well then, we will content ourselves with taking the thing as it is. As long as we have not substituted for some imbecilic principles this first apperception, that it is enough to look a little bit at the zoological functioning of animals, in order to know that instinct (*instinct*) does not concern only them. What is the living being going to do with an organ? Not only does the function not create the organ, this leaps to the eye, and how can this even be done, but enormous cleverness is required to give a use to an organ. This is exactly what the functioning of things really shows us, when one looks closely at it.

(22) The living organism does what it can with the organs that are given it, and with the penile organ, well then, one can no doubt, but one can do little. In any case it is quite clear that it enters into a certain function, into a role which is a little bit more complicated than that of fucking, which is what I called the other day, to serve as a sample, to create an accord between male *jouissance* and female *jouissance.*

This being placed completely at the expense of male *jouissance,* not simply because the male cannot accede to it, except by allowing the penile organ to fall to the rank of an o-object function, but with this quite special sign which is the negative sign, to which it will be a matter for us, next year, in learned logical researches, to see, to specify what exactly is the function of this (-) sign, with respect to those in use, and which are moreover used, I mean currently, among the majority of people who are here, for example, without at all knowing what one is doing, even though it would be quite simple to refer to excellent little books on mathematics, which now can be found at every street corner, for all this is now being popularised, thank God, with a 150 year delay, but, after all, it is never too late to do the right thing, but everyone can perceive (23) that the minus sign can have, according to groups, and can bring into play, extremely different senses. It is a matter of knowing, therefore, what it is for us. But

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let us leave that. Let us take this (-phi) in block, and let us say that the relationship that it is a matter of establishing in sexual union to a *jouissance,* precisely gives precedence to feminine *jouissance,* which would not have this importance at all, if it did not come to be situated, precisely, at the place that I have marked here with an O, the locus of the Other. This does not at all mean, of course, that the woman goes more directly there than we men, for she is exactly at the same place of the S, and both, the poor dear little darlings, as in the celebrated tale of the immortal Longus, are there with this lovely dessert of the (-phi) in their hands, looking at one another, and asking one another what they are to do with it, in order to come to an agreement about *jouissance.*

So then, after that, people would be better off not talking to us about genital maturation, as a given, about the existence of perfect domestic arrangements. Because, of course, oblativity, this sacred oblativity that I end up by no longer talking so much about, and which one must not go on speaking eternally about, one day we (24) must close this parenthesis for good, it must not be believed either that it is a windmill, I have pupils who take it for that, they hurl themselves against it in all sorts of circumstances, in places, what is more, where it does not exist.

It is certain, all the same, that it must be said that there are things that must be said, all the same. The oblative husband exists, for example. There are some who are so oblative that you can scarcely imagine it. You meet people like that! This has different origins. One must not discredit it in advance. It may have noble origins: masochism, for example. It is an excellent position.

From the point of view of sexual realisation, afterwards, I am beginning to have some experience, indeed. Yes I do. Thirty-five years, all the same. It is beginning to add up. Naturally, I have not seen a great number of people, anymore than anyone else. One has so little time. But, all the same, I have only seen it in a woman, that unleashes, properly speaking, you know that, that unleashes very, very curious reactions and abuses which, from the outside, like that, from the moralistic point of view, are altogether manifest.

In any case, a great insistence on the part of the woman, on the *chanterelle* of the castration of the husband.

(25) Which is not something which happens all by itself, which is not implied in the schema, you understand, when I speak about the minus phallus here, as the vibrant sample which ought to permit agreement, that does not mean that castration is reserved to men since, precisely, and this is the whole interest of analytic theory, the fact is that one perceives that the concept of castration operates in so far as it is brought to bear also on someone who is not by nature castrated, he may even not be so, if it is the penis that is at stake.

It is in this perspective that it would be appropriate, for example, to ask oneself about the extraordinary efficacity as regards sexual revelation, because this exists, this extraordinary efficacity on many woman, or even on the woman, the woman exists, it exists down there, at the level of the o-object. The extraordinary value then, for this operation, of what are called feminine men. There is absolutely no doubt about their success. This has always been known and has always been seen. Let a woman who

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has had this kind of husband, the golden type, carved out with a chisel, take the butcher of *la belle bouchère,* just meet up with a *chanteur à voix,* and strange things are going to happen. It is from these facts, in effect, which are massive, commonly (26) observed, renewed every day, that fill us analysts up, we can see the pleasure that women have with a *chanteur à voix*. It is fantastic, the way they have rediscovered themselves there. I am not telling you that they stay there. They do not stay there because it is too good. The whole problem is posed again about the relationship of desire and *jouissance,* but it is all the same necessary to know from what side *jouissance* is accessible.

I sense that I am entering, very gently, like that, onto the slope of, I do not know, memories of thirty years of psychoanalysis. And then, it is the end of the year, we are already a little among friends. You will forgive me for saying things that are between banality and scandal but, if one forgets them, end up really by being precisely what open the door finally to the most permanent idiocies. Which is all the same, despite everything, despite all my efforts, the one which remains absolutely in use and dominant in this country as in our neighbours, it has to be said.

Well then since I am on this slope, I must all the same … Ah yes, I spoke about finishing up with . … settling, not to speak any more about this business of oblativity. One must all the same remember, since I spoke about context, the *milieu* in which, in (27) what narrow little circus, this idea made its rounds, namely, put in a few names, it is not for me, all the same to bring them out for you. This did not emerge from anywhere bad. There was someone called Edouard Pichon who had only a single fault, which was to be a Maurassian, and that is irremediable. He is not the only one. Between the two wars, there were a lot of them. He fomented that with a few clinicians, anyway, since it was between the two wars, those who had escaped the first, as you know, were not all that brilliant.

And then, this was taken up again. It was taken up again, I do not know why, yes, but after all, it is not for me to say it to you, in a certain context which is much more recent, and fed on a history which had, in short, nothing to do with oblativity, and which was this very special mode of relationship that arose from a certain analytic technique described as being centred on object relations, in so far as it brought into play in a certain fashion the phallic phantasy, and the phallic phantasy especially in obsessional neurosis.

There you are. And then, as regards everything that was played out around the phallic phantasy, God knows I spoke enough about it on several occasions in my seminar, (28) came back on it often enough, all the same, in its details, in its technical usage, you have, all the same, clearly seen the mainsprings, the forced points, the unwarranted points, and here, I can really only say, I cannot even say, say something that summarises everything that I showed about it in detail, but which shows what I really think about what is in it.

There is something which found special favour, from the fact that the general sliding, which ensured that the whole theory of analysis no longer took as reference anything but frustration, I mean made everything turn, not around this initial double point of transference and demand, but quite simply of demand.

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Since transference effects, of course, were not neglected but simply put in brackets, because people were expecting them, when all is said and done, to go away, and that, on the contrary, demand, especially with this fact that things happen on this point, and in effect, things happen, but they do not happen at all in the way that you say, Stein. But, after all, if you come back the next time, we will talk about it again.

The position of the analyst in the session with respect to his patient is certainly not to be this disturbing pole linked to what you call the reality principle. I believe that it is (29) necessary all the same to come back to this thing which is really constitutive, which is that his position is to be the one who demands nothing. This indeed is what is dangerous, since he demands nothing, and because one knows where the subject is coming from, especially when he is neurotic, one gives him what he does not demand. Now, what is to be given is one single thing and one single o-object. There is a single o-object which is in relationship with this demand which is specified as being the demand of the other, this object that for its part one also finds in the heavens, in the between-the-two where the look has also fallen, the eyes of Oedipus and ours before the picture by Velasquez when we see nothing in it, in this same space, it rains shit (*il pleut de la merde*). The object of the demand of the Other, we know it by the structure and the history, after the demand to the Other, the demand for the breast, the demand which comes from the Other, and which establishes discipline and which is a stage in the formation of the subject, it is to do that, to do that in time and in the proper form. It rains shit, the expression is not all the same going to surprise psychoanalysts who know something about it. People speak about nothing but that, after all. But, after all, it is not because people speak only about that, that one everywhere perceives where it is. Anyway, the rain of shit, is obviously less elegant than the rain of fire in Dante, but they are not so (30) far from one another. And then again, there is also shit in Hell. There is only one thing that Dante did not dare to put in Hell, or in Paradise either, I will tell you another time. It is all the same rather striking.

And what is more, huh, the fact that we analysts have to pile it on about the soil-tub, is not, all the same, one of the things that is going to win us any stars! For a whole century, the bourgeoisie considered that this sort of piling on, that I call piling on the soil-tub was exactly what was educative in military service. And that is why they sent their children into it.

You must not think that things have changed enormously. Except that now, it is accompanied by kicks in the shin and some other exercises of down-on-your-stomach, applied to the recruit or to the one who subsequently is confided to him, for example, when it is a matter of colonial enterprises. This is a slight complication which people naturally have been legitimately alarmed about, but the basis is that: piling on the soil-tub. I do not see the special merit that analysts introduce into this business. Everyone knew that shit had the closest relationship with every kind of education, even, as you (31) see, that in virility, because after having done that, you come out of the army, a man. What I am in the process of saying, is a matter of theory and some people know very well the one I am aiming at, the fact is that if you read attentively everything that has been said about this phallic dialectic, especially in the obsessional, and about the touching and the not touching, and of the precautions and of the approaches, all of that smells of shit. I mean, that what is involved is an anal castration, namely, a certain function which, in effect, intervenes at the level of the relationship of the demand of

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the other, or of the anal phase, namely, the first functioning of the passage from one side to the other of the bar which ensures that what is on one side with a positive sign is on the other side with a negative sign. One gives or one does not give one's shit. And thus one arrives or does not arrive at oblativity. It is all made up of gift and of present, as we have always known, since Freud never said anything else; it is never a question of anything, when one gives what one has, than to give shit. This is also the reason that when I tried to define love for you, in a kind of flash, like that, I said that love was to give what one does not have. Naturally, it is not enough to repeat it to know what that means.

(32) I realise that I have left myself go a little down the slope of confidences. And that I am going to close with something which is not inappropriate, is that not so Safouan, after what I have been saying, so that you can give them the little paper that you had the kindness, like that, to put together on the off-chance, right along the line of what you contribute. Will a quarter of an hour be enough for you? If not we can put it off until the next time.

Duquenne: We have time.
Safouan: That depends.
Lacan : How long to you think you have in order to say what you have to say?
Safouan: Twenty minutes.
Lacan : Well then, start right away, it will be five past two, that is the time we normally finish. I am incorrigible.

Monsieur Safouan

(33) The subject of this paper, is the duplication of the feminine object in the love life of the obsessional. It is a subject that I chose precisely because, it leads me to the same questions that Monsieur Lacan announced as being those that he is going to deal with next year, and led me to appreciate the interest and the importance which, for an analyst, is attached to the fact that this question should be treated.

Before subjecting it to an examination, I am going to present you first of all with some material, which is, in effect, rather exemplary to permit an easy mapping-out of the structure underlying this duplication, but whose quite typical character you will certainly not fail to see.

At a given moment of his analysis, a patient falls in love, and this is accompanied with impotence on the sexual plane. "It is as if every part of her body were put in a jewel case", he says, speaking about the person that he loves. From which I conclude to the presence of a protective intention with respect to the body of the beloved object, but also with respect to his phallus which he does not manage to put to use, and starting (34) from an identification of these two terms.

This, obviously, calls for a lot of details which, precisely, are going to emerge subsequently. Moreover it is perhaps not without interest to underline the fact that the same object which fascinated him, did not fail to inspire in him at times a certain disgust. For example, in noticing a missing fastening at the wrist, which means also that he did not fail to detail this indicative object that his relationship was not at all

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foreign to the narcissistic dimension. I say, in effect, because this is how he described it himself.

But the important thing is that, parallel to this love that he described himself as narcissistic, he was also linked in a way that he qualified, for his part, as anaclitic to another young woman who, not only put him, but asked him expressly to let himself be put, into an entirely passive position, in order to pour out on him all the perverse excitations he wanted.

So that the totality of the situation was expressed for him in this phantasy, namely, he says, "that he flies towards his beloved, his phallus erect and pointed downwards, but the other interposes herself, catches him in flight, pumps him, and when he arrives, it is flaccid."

(35) And it is in this context that the patient brought a dream in which he saw his friend whom I will call, let us say, Barot, wearing a nylon stocking, and the sight of his leg and of a part of his thigh clothed in this way put him in exactly the same state of excitation as if he were a woman. And he asks himself: "What is this stocking?" At which point I replied: "It is a jewel-case".

I leave to one side, for the moment, I leave to one side the subsequent effects of this interpretation, which made him rediscover, for a while, his sexual potency, but the important thing is that, right away, he replied by saying that he was going to launch himself into homosexual affairs, but he perceived that his friend Barot was only involved in the business because of his own name, for example: *Bas barot,* that the knot of the question is in this jewel-case and that there, he really gets very close to perversion. What is this jewel-case and what does he put in it? And if he cannot prevent himself from saying yes, after all why not, because one also puts jewels in a jewel-case and jewels are shit. This is what he connects up with with his stories about masturbation, which he describes as anal.

This is the material. The jewel-case is the curtain, the curtain in the thematic of the (36) beyond of the curtain, which Monsieur Lacan treated in his seminar on object relations, namely, not even i(o), the real image of the body, but i(o'), a virtual image.

If I refer, obviously, to the optical schema which appeared in Monsieur Lacan's article in number 6 of *La Psychanalyse,* one thing that deserves to be underlined according to this article, is the fact that it is not the unique, that the most immediate grasp is not of the immediate but of the mediated, and that i(o) is never apprehended outside the artifices of analysis.

I mean by that, that there would not even be assumption, that there would not even be a simple relationship to what, otherwise, would be not only an indigestible contingency, since the notion of contingency already supposes the notion of a network, but what would be rather due to being rejected, namely, the specular image emerges from this mediation of the other, to whom the child turns.

In other words, it is right away as i(o'), that the sexual act functioning in the field of the other, that the body image functions, and that a whole procedure, which is really

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the analytic procedure, puts the subject in a position from which he can see i(o), really.

(37) Doctor Lacan: He can never see it, it is constructed in the schema, and then it remains there, it is a construction, i(o).

Monsieur Safouan: Yes. Yes, of course. Precisely, yes. But the content of the jewel-case no longer poses a problem. The content of the jewel-case is found to be sometimes, proves to be sometimes shit, and sometimes the phallus. This phallus finds itself identified to the beloved object, so that the question is posed: either there is an error of translation somewhere, or a correct translation poses the paradox of this kind, which is probably the case given that, given the experience.

So then, to take up this translation again, this equivalence of phallus = beloved object, phallus = girl, you see that I based it on the presence of a protective intention. Hence the question is posed: from whom is he protecting it? Surely not from the honest girl, but from the other one, the one that he calls perverse. This illuminates a fact that up to now I have not underlined, namely, that all his anxiety was effectively engaged in his relations with his beloved, namely, the one who was a pole of desire, a term which one can see is more adequate than to speak simply about narcissism, as he does for his part, because he does not see that i(o), because nothing is visible, in principle, except the i(o'); it is here that all his anxiety was engaged, will he be able, will he not be able, (38) while this anxiety was completely absent in his relationship with the perverse girl, whom one can thus call, designate, as a pole of demand, which one can see is much more adequate than to speak about an anaclitic relationship as he called it himself .
It is therefore necessary to examine more closely the description that he gives of his behaviour and of the latter. What emerges is that she made use of him as a phallus, but that in the sense of an object subject to the exercise of her caprice, and not in the sense of the organ of which he is the bearer, because it is precisely this sense which is excluded from this relationship. She put his real phallus outside the circuit and, no doubt, she uses this castration to guarantee her desire and, no doubt, the exasperation of these perverse exercises come back to the impossibility in which she was of being able to integrate, as I might say, her condition of being really an o-object, namely, an exchangeable object.

For it would also be very difficult, obviously, to quote several observations which would throw light on this state of things, namely, that it is in the very measure that a subject finds it impossible, as I might say, to "*s'avoir"* (to have oneself, to know) as (39) object of *jouissance,* that he thinks he is it, hence, moreover, the paradox of a being whose whole thinking would be necessarily false; naturally, people do not know that this itself is God, it is because one does not know that religion always preserves, and the forms of religious life always preserve, their structural connection with guilt.

Moreover, one can also ask oneself in what measure one might not say that the unconscious is that, namely, this false knowledge whose statement, nevertheless, constitutes the true, and which is situated nowhere except in the gap of this "*s'avoir*" in sufferance, but with all of these considerations, which appear to be philosophical, I am only anticipating the clinical conclusion of this work or of this observation.

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To return then to the patient, there is a misunderstanding, or perhaps an understanding, this is where it is difficult for me to decide, just as much a misunderstanding that I would qualify as comic, if the consequences were not so grave, is going to be set up and mark his relationship to the perverse girl. This is a misunderstanding that can be brought to light. The fact is, that in the measure that there intensified the temptations which would put him entirely at her mercy, at the moment then at which there intensified the temptations, in short, linked to the fact that i(o') attempts, in its mode of (40) exchange, to coincide with phi, or more simply with what he perceives as an object which does not calm him, but which calms something in her, he will have no other recourse than to guarantee her castration with his own, without noticing that it has already happened, namely, that he does not notice that not only is this castration the same on one side and the other, but in the sense that it is one and the same object which is lacking to both one and the other, which is obviously not the real phallus, because this is not lacking to him, and, as far as she is concerned, one can say that she does not lack it either, because it is, precisely, what she does not want. But which is the image linked to this organ, namely, the imaginary phallus, which is henceforth to function as (-phi), and it is from this angle the one can say that the phallic position ensures that the subject is, not neither man nor woman, but one or the other.

In other words, what is involved in the final analysis is the following, it is that the neutralisation and the putting outside the circuit, not of any organ whatsoever, but of his phallus, is going to promote the function of the image which is attached to it as (-phi). In other words, in other terms, the more i(o') tends to identify itself to phi, the (41) more the subject, for his part, tends not to be identified but to subtilise, as I might say, into (-phi), namely, into a phallus that is always present elsewhere.
Starting from which, one sees, not how he identifies the beloved girl with the phallus, for this is not an operation that he accomplishes. It is a matter rather of an operation in which he is caught up, but one sees how by engaging along this path, he only sees narcissism, the remainder, namely the identification of the girl to the phallus being the effect of what the demand of the other already evoked starting from a desire.

It is a curious thing, but this seems to me to merit further examination, or again, I would go more gently, one could say at a push that this (-phi), which is signified in this statement: "it is as if each part of her body was placed in a jewel-case", where this misunderstanding is going to reverberate necessarily in a mistake, as I might say, which is going to mark his relationship to the beloved girl as a brand of origin.

The mistake, here, does not consist in the fact that the beloved girl is the phallus but, on the contrary, in the fact that she is not it, or, more precisely, in the fact that she is minus phi, the guarantee of the castration of the other. The fact is that, in the whole measure that the erotic life of the subject is thus placed under the sign of his dependence on the all-powerfulness of the other, and here I am treating the question, (42) the other question, the other problem which is posed, namely, that if my body were identified to shit, then this becomes clear, I am saying that, starting from this, that in the whole measure that the erotic life of the subject is placed under the sign of dependency on the all powerfulness of the other, one is not surprised that the same beloved object is also found to be identified to faeces.

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The formula which clarifies this state of things, and on which I am going to conclude, is the following: the more the desire of the mother is lured into what is going to function right away in the sight of the subject as i(o'), the more the subject not only regresses, but is alienated in a pre-genital object, here the scybalum, which object will only function, nevertheless, in reference to the gap, which in the desire of the other is always signified as castration.

I think that it is starting from there that one can correctly pose the problem of normativing Oedipal castration - I mean castration in so far as it regularises precisely the phallic position, the which phallic position is strictly identical, as has been seen, to imaginary castration. It is starting from there that one can pose the problem of Oedipal castration, and one sees that really, the question of knowing along what pathways there is effected this symbolic castration, can only be resolved by setting up distinctions up to now unpublished, unformulated, concerning negation.

Doctor Lacan

Good. Thank you very much, my dear Safouan. That was excellent. Naturally, as they say, like every text that is read, it is better that it should be re-read. We will see, for example, with Milner whether it could not find a place in *Les Cahiers,* in that way everyone will be able to get to know it.

I am going, all the same, to conclude Safouan's contribution, to tell you something which has come to my mind, as they say, nevertheless.

You will have understood that immediately after his double commitment with these two objects which are so differentiated, he had this dream about the leg of his friend in a stocking, and it is around that that everything turns, the whole phenomenology of castration, that you presented so subtly, Safouan. That reminded me of what Napoleon said about Talleyrand: a stocking full of shit.

Green: A silk stocking.

Lacan: Yes. But this poses some problems. Napoleon knew something about the leg, as regards what concerns things associated with love. He said that the best thing was to take to one's heels *(prendre les jambes à son cou).* The only victory in love is flight. He knew how to make love. We have proof of it.

On the other hand, it is obvious that shit had a very large place in Talleyrand's politics. In any case, he also had some relationships with the all-powerful. And that his desire found its way rather well there, is something that is not in doubt.

It is necessary also, therefore, to distrust the following, the object of the desire of the Other: what is it that leads us to think that it is shit? In the case of Napoleon, there may be a little problem about Talleyrand who, in the last resort, defeated him.

There you are. This was simply an order of reflection that I wanted to propose to you, and which comes as a codicil to what I told you about the o-object today.

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Seminar 1: Wednesday 16 November 1966

Today I am going to throw out some points that are rather in the nature of a promise.

"*Logic of phantasy*", I entitled, this year, what I count on being able to present to you about what is required at the point that we are at on a certain path. A path which implies, I will recall it forcefully today, this sort of very special return that we have already seen, last year, inscribed in the structure and which is properly speaking fundamental in everything that Freudian thinking uncovers. This return is called repetition. To repeat is not to find the same thing again, as we will articulate later, and contrary to what is believed, it is not necessarily to repeat indefinitely.

We will come back then to themes that I have in a certain fashion already situated for a long time. It is, moreover, because we are at the moment of this return and of its function, that I believed I could no longer put off presenting to you in a unified way what up to now I thought necessary as a minimal indication of this journey, namely, this volume that you already find within hand's reach. It is because this year it will no doubt be possible for us to study in depth the function of this relation to writing - which after all, in a certain way, I forced myself up to the present if not to avoid, at least to delay - that here again I believed I could take this step.

These few indicative points that I am going today to state before you, I have chosen to be five:

The first consisting in reminding you of the point that we are at about the logical articulation of phantasy, which this year will be, properly speaking, my text.

(2) The second, to the reminder of the relation of this structure of phantasy - which I will have first recalled to you - to the structure of the signifier as such.

The third, to something essential and really fundamental which has to be recalled, about what we can, what we ought, this year, call - if we put in the foreground what I called the *logic* in question - an essential remark about the *Universe of discourse*.

The fourth point, some indication relative to its relation to *writing* as such.

Finally, I will end on the reminder of what Freud indicates to us, in an articulated fashion, about what is involved in the relation of thinking to language and to the unconscious.

So, the logic of phantasy. We will begin from the writing of it that I already constructed, namely, from the formula: *S barred diamond* ***small o*** (\$ **o**). I recall what the S barred signifies: the S barred represents, takes the place in this formula of what it returns from concerning the division of the subject, which is found at the

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source of the whole Freudian discovery and which consists in the fact that the subject is, in part, barred from what properly constitutes it *qua* function of the unconscious. This formula establishes something which is a link, a connection between this subject as thus constituted and something else which is called **small o. Small o** is an object whose status what I am calling, this year, "constructing the logic of phantasy", will consist in determining - its status, precisely, in a relation which is a logical relation properly speaking.

A strange thing, no doubt, which you will allow me not to go into. I mean what this term phantasy suggests in terms of a relation to *phantasia*, to the imagination. I will not give myself the pleasure, even for an instant, of marking its contrast with the term logic with which I intend to structure it. The fact is, no doubt, that phantasy as we claim to instaure its status is not so fundamentally, so radically antinomical as one might first think to this logical characterisation which, properly speaking, disdains it. Moreover, the imaginary feature of what is called the **o**-object will appear still better to you - in the measure that we will mark what permits it to be characterised as a logical value - to be much less related, it seems to me, at first sight, to the domain of what is properly speaking the *imaginary*. The imaginary, rather, is attached to it, surrounds it, accumulates in it. The **o**-object has a different status. Undoubtedly, it is desirable that those who listen to me this year (3) should have had the opportunity last year to get some grasp, some idea of it. Of course, this **o**-object is not something which is yet, so easily - for all and especially for those for whom it is the centre of their experience, the psychoanalysts, even more - has yet, as I might say, sufficient familiarity for it to be, I would say, presented to them without fear or indeed even without anxiety.

"What have you done then," one of them said to me, "what need did you have to invent this little **o**-object?"

I think, in truth, that taking things from a broader horizon it was about time. Because, without this **o**-object - whose incidences, it seems to me, have made themselves widely enough felt for the people of our generation - it seems to me that much of what is done as analyses, of subjectivity as well as of history and of its interpretation, and specifically of what we have lived through as contemporary history, and very specifically of what we have, rather crudely, baptised with a most improper term, under the name of totalitarianism … Anyone, who after having understood it, is able to occupy himself in applying to it the function of the category of the **o**-object, will perhaps see there being illuminated what it returned from, in that for which we still lack, in a surprising manner, satisfying interpretations.

The barred subject, in its relation to this **o**-object, is joined in this formula written on the board, by this something which is presented as a lozenge shape, which I earlier called the diamond (*le poinçon*), and which, in truth, is a sign that was forged expressly to join together in itself what can be isolated from it, depending on whether you separate it with a vertical stroke or with a horizontal stroke.

Separated by a vertical stroke, it represents a double relation which can be read in the first place as greater (>) or lesser (<): $ smaller or indeed greater than big O. $

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included or in fact excluded from big O [*sic*]. What does that mean, if not that what is suggested at the first level of this conjunction, is something which, logically, is called the relation of *inclusion* or again of *implication,* on condition (4) that we make it reversible and which is articulated … (I am going quickly, no doubt, but we will have time enough to expand and to take these things up again; today, I am indicating to you, it is enough for us to take some suggestive steps) … this relation which is articulated in a logical articulation, which is called: *if and if only* S *barred* in this sense, namely: the *diamond shape* being divided by the vertical bar, is the subject barred from this relation of *if and if only* with the **o**-object.

This brings us to a stop. There exists, then, a *subject*. This is, logically, what we are forced to write at the origin of such a formula. Something, here, is proposed to us which is the division between *de facto existence* and *logical existence*.

De facto existence, of course, refers us to the existence or not of *beings* (the word *beings* between two bars) *speaking beings*. These are in general living. I am saying "in general", because it is not at all necessary: we have the table guest in stone who does not exist only on the stage where Mozart brings him to life. He walks around among us quite habitually!

Logical existence is something different and, as such, has its status. There is something of the subject (*du sujet*) from the moment we do logic, namely, when we have to handle signifiers.

What is involved in *de facto* existence, namely, that something results from the fact that there is something of the subject at the level of beings who speak, is something which like every *de facto* existence, requires a certain articulation to have been, already, established. Now, there is nothing to prove that this articulation takes place directly, that it is directly because of the fact that there are living beings or others who speak, that they are for all that, and in an immediate fashion, determined as subjects.

The *if and if only* is there to remind us of it. I am justifying here for you, the articulations we are going to have to go through; but they are themselves sufficiently unusual, sufficiently untraveled, for me to believe that I ought to indicate to you the general line of the plan of what I have to explain before you.

The **small o** results from an operation which has a logical structure which, for its part, is carried out not *in vivo,* not even on the living being, not at all properly speaking in the confused sense that the term 'body' preserves for us. It is not necessarily the 'pound of flesh', even though it could be, and, after all, when it is so, this is not such a bad way to arrange things. But, anyway, it appears that in this entity of *body* which is so poorly grasped, there is something that lends itself to this operation of logical structure, that remains for us to determine. You know: the *breast*, the *scybalum*, the *look*, the *voice*, these detachable parts which are nevertheless entirely linked to the body - this is what is involved in the **o**-object.

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(5) To make an **o** *(du **o**)* then, let us limit ourselves, since we are demanding some logical rigour of ourselves, to noting here, that a loan is necessary to provide it (*du prêt-à-le-fournir*); for the moment this may be enough for us. But this fixes nothing! This fixes nothing for what we have to advance into: to make a phantasy, something ready-to-wear-it (*prêt-à le porter*) is necessary.

You will allow me here to articulate some themes in their most provocative form, because, in fact, what is involved is to detach this domain from the fields of capture which make it inevitably return to the most fundamental illusions of what is called psychological experience. What I am going to advance is very specifically what will be supported, what will be grounded, what everything that I am going to unfold before you this year will show the consistency of.

To unfold, I already said it had been done a long time ago. When in the fourth year of my seminar I dealt with '*object relations'* already everything was said about the **o**-object as regards structure. The relation of small **o** to the Other is very specially and very sufficiently outlined in the indication that the subjective structure of the child is going to depend on the imaginary of the mother.

Undoubtedly, what it is a question here of us indicating is how this relation is articulated in properly logical terms, namely, arising radically from the function of the signifier. But, it should be noted that for the person who summarised at that time, what I was able to indicate in this sense, the slightest mistake - I mean: lack – about where there belonged each of the terms of these three functions which, at that time, could be designated as *subject*, *object* (in the sense of love-object) and the beyond of this: our present **o**-object - the slightest mistake, namely, the reference to the imagination of the subject, obscured the relation which it was a matter of outlining there. Not to situate the function of the **o**-object in the field of the Other as such, leads to writing, for example, that in the status of the pervert, it is at once, for him, the function of the phallus and the sadistic theory of coitus which are the determinants. While it is nothing of the kind, that it is at the level of the mother that these two incidences function.

I advance, therefore, into what is to be stated here: in order to make phantasy something ready-to-wear-it is necessary. What carries (*porte*) the phantasy? What carries the phantasy has two names which concern one and the same *substance*, if you do not mind reducing this term to this function of *surface*, as I articulated it last year. You already know some of the shapes of this primordial surface that we require to make our logical articulation function; they are closed surfaces; they (6) have something of the *bubble* about them, except for the fact that they are not spherical. Let us call them *the bubble* and we will see what motivates, to what the existence of *bubbles* is attached in the real. This surface which I call *bubble* has properly speaking two names: *desire* and *reality*.

It is quite useless to exhaust oneself in articulating the *reality* of *desire* because, primordially, desire and reality are related in a *seamless texture*. They have no need of needlework, they have no need to be sewn together. There is no more 'reality of desire', we would say, than it would be correct to say 'the back of the front': there is one and the same fabric that has a front and a back. Again this

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fabric is woven in such a way that one goes without noticing it, since it has no cut or stitches, from one to the other of its faces. And that is why, before you, I made so much of a structure like the *projective plane*, imaged on the board by what is called the *mitre* or the *cross-cap*. The fact that one passes from one face to the other without noticing it, really means that there is only one of them, I mean one face. It nevertheless remains, as in the surfaces that I have evoked, one limited shape of them being the Moebius strip, that there is a front and a back! It is necessary to posit this, in an original fashion, to recall how there is grounded this distinction between the front and the back as *already-there* before any cut. It is clear that anyone - like the little animals that the mathematicians talk about concerning the function of surfaces – who here is totally implicated in this surface, would see very little in this distinction, which is nevertheless certain, between the front and the back - in other words: absolutely nothing.

Everything that refers - in the surfaces that I talked about before you, in a series going from the projective plan to the Klein bottle - to what one could call extrinsic properties, that go very far, I mean that most of what seems most evident to you when I image these surfaces, are not properties of the surfaces: it is in a third dimension that they take on their function. Even the hole in the middle of the torus, you must not believe that a purely toric being would even notice its function! Nevertheless, this function is not without consequences since it is in accordance with it that I - it must be now, by God, something like almost six years ago- already tried to articulate for those who were listening to me then (among whom I see some in the front row) - to articulate the relations of the subject to the Other in neurosis. It is, in effect, this third dimension, in them, of the Other, that is involved, as such. (7) It is with respect to the Other and in so far as there is here this other term, that it may be a matter of distinguishing a front from a back. This is still not to distinguish *reality* and *desire*. What is the *front* or the *back* primarily at the locus of the Other, in the discourse of the Other, is played out there as heads or tails. This in no way concerns the subject, *for the reason that as yet there is not one*.

The subject begins with the *cut*. If, among these surfaces, we take the most exemplary one because it is the simplest to handle, namely, the one that I called earlier the *cross-cap* or the *projective plane*, a cut and not just an indifferent one, I mean (I recall it for those for whom these images are still present in some way): if - I repeat, in a purely imaged way, but an image that is necessary – namely, on this bubble whose walls (let us call them the anterior and the posterior) come here, in this no less imaginary line, to cross one another, this is how we represent the structure of what is involved: every cut which crosses this imaginary line will establish a total change in the structure of the surface, namely, that this entire surface becomes what, last year, we learned how to cut out in this surface under the name of the **o**-object. Namely, that this entire surface becomes a disc that can be flattened, with a front and a back, and you cannot pass from one to the other except by crossing an *edge*. This *edge* is precisely what makes this crossing impossible, at least this is how we can articulate its function. First of all, *in initio,* the bubble by this first cut - rich in an implication which does not leap to the eyes immediately - by this first cut, becomes an **o**-object.

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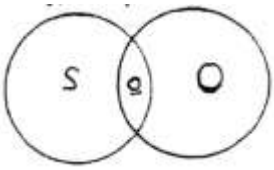
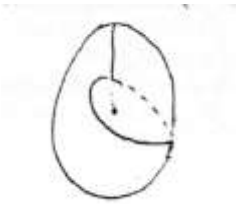
This **o**-object preserves - because it has this relation from the beginning, for anything whatsoever about it to be explained - a fundamental relation with the





Other. In effect, the subject has not appeared yet with the single cut through which this bubble, that the signifier establishes in the real, first lets fall this *foreign* object which the **o**-object is. It is necessary and sufficient, in the structure here indicated, in order to notice what is involved in this cut, in order also to notice that it has the property of joining up with itself simply by reduplicating itself - in other words that it is the same thing to make a single cut or to make two of them. I can consider the gap of what is, here, between my two circuits, which are only one, as the equivalent of the first cut, which in effect: if I separate it, it is this gap which is produced; but (8) if in the fabric where this cut is made, I make a double cut, I separate out from it, I restore what was lost in the first cut, namely, a surface whose front is continuous with the back. *I restore the primal non-separation between reality and desire.*

How, subsequently, we will define *reality*, what I called earlier the *ready-to-wear the phantasy* (*le prêt à porter le fantasm*), namely, what constitutes its frame and we will then see that reality, the whole of human reality, is nothing other than a *montage* of the symbolic and the imaginary - that the desire, at the centre of this apparatus, of this frame, that we call reality, is moreover, properly speaking, what covers - as I have always articulated - what must be distinguished from human reality, and which is properly speaking the *real*, which is never more than glimpsed. Glimpsed when the mask, which is that of the phantasy, vacillates, namely, the same thing as Spinoza grasped when he said: *desire is the essence of man.*

In truth, this word 'man' is a transitional term impossible to preserve in an a-theological system, which is not the case for Spinoza. For this Spinozian formula, we have simply to substitute this formula, this formula, whose miscognition leads psychoanalysts to the crudest aberrations, namely, that **desire is the essence of reality.**

But, this relation to the Other - without which nothing can be glimpsed about the real operation of this relation – is what I tried to sketch out for you as fundamental having recourse to the old support of the Euler circles. Undoubtedly, this representation is inadequate, but if we accompany it with what it supports in logic, it may be serve. What emerges from the relation of the subject to the **o**-object is defined as a first circle, that another circle, that of the Other cuts, the **small o** is their intersection.

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It is because of this that never - in this relation of an originally structured *vel* which is the one in which I tried to articulate alienation for you three years ago now - that the subject can only be established in a relation of lack to this **o** which is from the Other, except by wanting to be situated in the Other, also not to have it except amputated from this **o**-object.

(9) The relation of the subject to the **o**-object involves the sense of Euler's image takes on when it is raised to the level of the simple representation of two logical operations which are called *union* and *intersection*. Union depicts for us the liaison of the subject to the Other and intersection defines the **o**-object for us. The totality of these two logical operations are the very operations that I posited as original, in saying that the **o** is the result effected by logical operations which must be two in number.

Which means what? That it is essentially in the representation of a lack, in so far as it travels around, that there is set up the fundamental structure of the *bubble* that we first called the *stuff of desire*.

Here, on the plane of the imaginary relation, there is established an exactly inverse relation to the one that links the *ego* to the image of the *other*. The *ego* is, as we shall see, doubly illusory. Illusory in the fact that it is subject to the avatars of the image, namely, in fact, given over of the function of semi or total sham. It is also illusory in the fact that it establishes a perverted logical order whose formula we will see - in psychoanalytic theory - in so far as it crosses imprudently this logical frontier, which supposes that at some given moment or other of the structure that is supposed to be primordial, what is rejected can be called 'non-ego'. This is very precisely what we contest!

The order in question - which implies, without it being known, and, in any case, without it being said, the coming into play of language - in no way admits such a complementarity. And it is precisely what will make us put in the forefront of our articulation, this year, the discussion of the function of *negation.* Everyone knows and can see in this collection that is now being put at your disposal, that the first year of my seminar at Sainte Anne was dominated by a discussion on the *Verneinung,* in which M Jean Hippolyte, whose intervention is reproduced in the appendix of this volume, punctuated excellently what the *Verneinung* was for Freud. The secondary nature of the *Vereinung* is articulated there sufficiently powerfully for it already to be in no way admitted that it should appear right away at the level of this first division that we call *pleasure and unpleasure*.

This is why, in this *lack* established by the structure of the *bubble*, which constitutes the stuff of the subject, there is no question of us limiting ourselves to the term, now obsolete, because of the confusions that it implies, of "negativity". The signifier can in no way - even if propaedeutically it was necessary for a time to repeat by rote its function to the ears that were listening to me - the signifier (and (10) you can note that I never properly articulated it as such) is not simply what supports what is not there. The *fort-da,* in so far as it refers to maternal presence or absence, is not, here, the exhaustive articulation of the coming into play of the signifier. **The signifier does not designate what is not there, it engenders it.**

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What is not there, at the origin, is the subject itself. In other words: at the origin there is no *Dasein* except in the **o**-object. Namely, in an alienated form, which remains to mark up to the end, every statement about the *Dasein*. Is it necessary to recall, here, my formulae that there is no subject except through a signifier and for another signifier. It is the algorithm:

$$\frac{S}{\$} \longrightarrow S^1$$

S, in so far as it *takes the place* of the subject, only functions *for another signifier*.

Urverdrängung, or primal repression, is the following: what a signifier represents for another signifier. It does not bite on anything, it constitutes absolutely nothing, it accommodates itself to an absolute absence of *Dasein*.

For around sixteen centuries, at least, the Egyptians hieroglyphs remained as solitary as they were uncomprehended in the desert sands. It is clear and it has always been clear for everyone, that this meant that each of the signifiers cut into stone at least represented a subject for the other signifiers. If it were not so, no one would ever even have taken this to be writing! It is not at all necessary that writing should mean something for anyone at all, for it to be writing, and for it to manifest, as such, that each sign represents a subject for the one that follows it.

If we call that *Urverdrängung,* it means that we are admitting that it appears to us to be in conformity with experience, to think about what happens - namely, that a subject emerges in the state of barred subject - as something which comes from a locus in which it is supposedly inscribed, into another locus in which it is going to be inscribed anew.

Namely, exactly in the same fashion in which I structured, formerly, the function of metaphor in so far as it is the model of what happens as regard the return of the repressed:

$$\frac{S^1}{\$} \nearrow \frac{\$}{s}$$

In the same way, it is in the measure that with respect to this primary signifier, and we are going to see what it is, the barred subject that it abolishes comes to emerge at a place to which we are going to be able today to give a formula which has not yet been given: **the barred subject, as such, is what represents for a signifier - this signifier from it has a arisen - a sense.**

(11) By "sense" I understand exactly what I made you understand at the beginning of one year in the formula: *"Colourless green ideas sleep furiously"*. Which can be translated into French by the following, which depicts admirably the ordinary order of your cogitations: "*Des idées vertement fuligineuses s'assoupissent avec fureur"*.

This, precisely, for want of knowing that they are all addressed to this signifier of the lack of the subject that a certain first signifier becomes, once the subject articulates his

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discourse. Namely - as all psychoanalysts glimpsed clearly enough, even though they were not able to say anything worthwhile about it – namely, the **o**-object which, at this level, fulfills precisely the function that Frege distinguishes from sign under the name of *Bedeutung*. The **o**-object is the first *Bedeutung,* the first referent, the first reality, the *Bedeutung* which remains because it is, after all, all that remains of thinking at the end of all the discourses.

Namely, what the poet can write without knowing what he is saying when he addresses himself to "his mother Intelligence from whom all sweetness flows": "what is this neglect that allows her milk to dry up?"

Namely, a look that is grasped, the one transmitted at the birth of the clinic.

Namely, what one of my pupils, recently, at the Congress of the University of Johns Hopkins, took as a subject calling it "The voice in literary myth".

Namely, also, what remains of so many thoughts dispensed in the form of a pseudo-scientific hotchpotch that one can also call by its name, as I have long done, about part of analytic literature, and which is called shit. On the admission, moreover, of the authors! I mean except for a tiny failure of reasoning about the function of the **o**-object, one of them can very well articulate that there is no other support for the castration complex than what is modestly called "the anal object".

This is not then a pinpointing coming from a pure and simple judgement, but much more the necessity of an articulation, the simple statement of which ought to give us pause. Since, after all, it is not formulated by the least qualified writers, and since it will be, in fact, this year, our method, in formulating the logic of the phantasy, to show where, in analytic theory, it has tripped up. I have not, after all, named this author whom many of you know. Let it be clearly understood that the flaw in reasoning is still reasoned, namely, examinable (*arraisonable*), but not necessarily so. And the **o**-object in question can in a certain article show itself quite nakedly while not being appreciated by him. This is what we will have occasion to show in certain texts, after all, which I do not see why, as a kind of practical work, I should not soon (12) distribute rather generally to you, if I have enough at my disposal, which is almost the case. This will happen when we have to attack a certain register; and from now, I want, all the same to mark, what prevents certain interpretations which have been given to my function of metaphor from being admitted, (I mean among those of which I have just given you the least ambiguous example) by confusing it with anything whatsoever that makes of it a sort of proportional relation.

When I wrote that substitution - the fact of grafting a signifier substituted for another signifier into the signifying chain - was the source and origin of all meaning, what I articulated is correctly interpreted in the form in which, today, through the emergence of this barred subject as such, I gave you the formula. Which requires of us the task of giving it its logical status, but to demonstrate to you right away the example of the urgency of such a task, or even of its necessity, note that the confusion was made in this four fold relation:

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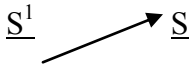

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S s

(the S^1, the two S's and the small s of the signified) with this relation of proportion in which one of my interlocutors, M. Perelman, the author of a theory of argumentation, promoting once again an abandoned rhetoric, articulates metaphor, seeing in it the function of analogy, and that it is from the relation of one signifier to another in so far as a third reproduces it by giving rise to an ideal signified that he grounds the function of metaphor. To which I replied, at the appropriate time. It is only from such a metaphor that there can emerge the formula that was given, namely: S^1 over small s of meaning enthroned above a first register of inscription of which the *Underdrawn*, of which the *Unterdruckt,* of which the other register substantiating the unconscious, is supposed to be constituted by the strange relation of the signifier to another signifier, and we are told that it is from there that language takes its ballast:

$$\frac{S^1}{s}$$

$$\frac{S}{S}$$

I think that you now sense that this formula, described as that of "reduced language" *(du langage reduit),* is based on an error which is to introduce into this four-fold relation the structure of proportionality. It is difficult to see, in fact, what can emerge from it, since, in fact, the relation S/S then becomes rather difficult to interpret. But we do not see in this reference to a reduced language any other plan (which is (13) moreover admitted) than to reduce our formula that the unconscious is structured like a language – which, more than ever, is to be taken literally.

And since it is obvious that today I will not finish the five points that I announced to you, I am nonetheless able to punctuate, for you, the key of the whole structure which reduces an enterprise articulated in this way - precisely at the beginning of the little collection I spoke about to you earlier which concerns the turning point in my relations with my audience that was constituted by the Congress of Bonneval – to futility. It is erroneous to structure in this way on a so- called myth of reduced language any deduction of the unconscious, for the following reason: **it is of the nature of each and every signifier not to be able in any case to signify itself.**

It is too late for me to impose on you, in a hurry, the writing of this inaugural point for the whole of set theory, which implies that this theory can only function starting from an axiom described as that of *specification*. Namely, that the only interest in making a set function is when there exists another set which can be defined by the definition of certain x's in the first as freely satisfying a certain proposition. "Freely" means: independently of any quantification: small number or all. The result of this, (I will begin my next lecture with these formulae) the result of this is that by positing any set whatsoever, by defining in it the proposition that I indicated as specifying x's in it, as being simply that *x is not a member of itself*, - that which, as regards what interests us, namely, for the following, which is necessary once one wishes to introduce the myth of a reduced language: that there is a language which is not one, namely, which constitutes, for example the totality of signifiers. What is proper to the totality of signifiers, I will show it to you in detail, involves the following as necessary - if we

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simply admit that the signifier cannot signify itself - involves the following as necessary: that there is something that does not belong to this set. It is not possible to reduce language, simply because of the fact that language cannot constitute a closed set; in other words: that **there is no Universe of discourse**.

For those who may have had some difficulty in understanding what I have just formulated, I will recall simply the following which I already said at the appropriate time: that the truths that I have just stated are simply those which appeared in a confused fashion at the naive period of the establishment of set theory in the form of what is wrongly called Russell's paradox - because it is not a paradox, it is an image - the catalogue of all the catalogues which do not contain themselves. What does that mean? Either it contains itself or it contradicts its definition, or it does not contain itself and in that case it fails in its mission. This is not at all a paradox. One has only to declare that in making such a catalogue one cannot take things all the way, and for good reasons…

But, what I earlier gave you the statement of, in the formula that in the Universe of discourse there is nothing that contains everything, this is something which properly speaking encourages us to be particularly prudent here as regards the handling of what is called whole and part, and requires us, at the origin, to distinguish very severely - this will be the object of my next lecture - *the One from the totality* – which, precisely, I have just refuted, saying that at the level of discourse there is no Universe, which undoubtedly leaves still more in suspense whether we can suppose it to be anywhere else - to distinguish this One from the *countable One* in so far as, of its nature, it slips away and slides, and can only be the One by repeating itself at least once and closing in on itself, to establish, at the origin, the lack involved: the one involved in the establishment of the subject.

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Seminar 2: Wednesday 23 November 1966

I am going to try today to trace out for your use some relations that, I would say, are essential and fundamental to secure at the beginning what constitutes our subject this year. I hope that no one is going to object that they are abstract, for the simple reason that this would be a quite improper term, as you are going to see! There is nothing more *concrete* than what I am going to put forward, even if this term does not correspond to the quality of density which is its connotation for many. It is a matter of making tangible for you one or other proposition like the one that up to now I have only put forward under the appearance of a sort of aphorism, which may have played at one or other turning point of our discourse the role of axiom, such as the following: *there is no metalanguage* - a formula which has the appearance of being, properly speaking, contrary to everything that is given, if not in the experience, at least in the writings of those who try to ground the function of language. At the very least, in many cases, they show in language some differentiations that they find it good to begin from, starting, for example, from an object-language, in order to construct on this base a certain number of differentiations. The very act of such an operation seems to imply that in order to speak about language one should use something which is not part of it or which, in a way, is supposed to envelope it in an order different to the one that makes it function.

I believe that the solution of these apparent contradictions which, in short, manifest themselves in discourse, in what is said, is to be found in a function which it seems to me essential to bring out, at least from the angle that I am going to try to inaugurate it today - to bring out and especially for our purposes - because the logic of phantasy, it seems to me, can in no way be articulated without reference to what is involved, namely, to something that at least in order to announce it I pinpoint under the term of writing *(l'écriture).*

Naturally, this is not to say, for all that, that it is what you know under the ordinary (2) connotations of this word. But if I choose it, it is because it must have some relation with what I have to state.

A point, precisely, on which we are going to have to operate ceaselessly today is the following: *that it is not the same thing, after we have said it, to write it or indeed to write that one is saying it*. Because the second operation, essential to the function of writing, precisely from the angle, from the point of view whose importance I am going to show today, as regards our most appropriate references in this year's subject, this, I am saying, immediately and from the beginning presents itself with paradoxical consequences. After all, why not, in order to alert you, start from what I already presented before you from a particular angle? Without you being able to say, I believe, that I am repeating myself. It is sufficiently in the nature of the things that are discussed here, that they emerge from some angle, from some line that breaks through a surface to which we are forced to keep by the simple fact of speaking - that they should appear at some moment before they

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really take on their function. Here, then, I remind you, is what I one day wrote on the board and which someone, after all, who is here will render me the service of writing in my place, so that I do not have to immerse myself to the level of your dear heads.

Madame! Take this little piece of chalk, make a rectangle, write... no! make it very big almost as big as the board, there you are! Write: 1,2,3,4, on the first line. No! inside the frame... 1,2,3,4, and then write: the smallest whole number which is not written on the board, beneath 1,2,3,4 (*laughter*). No, write the sentence: "the smallest whole number which is not written on this board".

1 2 3 4

the smallest whole number
which is not written on this board

(3) This could have been presented in a different form, namely - instead of doing me the service which has been done, and I thank the person who was good enough to write this sentence that you see written out - that I could, without writing it, have asked you or even, if you wish, made a little person from those mouth there would emerge what they call in comic strips a bubble: "the smallest whole number which is not written on this board". In which case you would all have been in agreement, and I would not have contradicted you, that it is the number 5. It is clear that from the moment that this sentence is written: "the smallest whole number which is not written on this board", the number 5 - being written, there by this very fact - is excluded. You have only to search, then, whether the smallest whole number which is not written on the board might not, perchance, be the number 6, and you find yourself with the same difficulty, namely, that from the moment that you pose the question, the number 6 as the smallest whole number which is not written on the board, is written on it and so on.

This, like many paradoxes, is only of interest, of course, for what we want to make of it. What follows is going to show you that it was, perhaps, not useless to introduce the function of writing from this angle from which it may present some enigma to you. It is, let us say, properly speaking, a logical enigma and it is no worse a way than any other to show you that there is, in any case, some close relation between the apparatus of writing and what one can call logic. This also deserves to be recalled, at the start, at the moment at which - the majority of those who are here, I think, having a adequate notion of it, even for those who have none this can serve as a point to hang onto - at which to recall that undoubtedly, if there is something which characterises the new state, undoubtedly, undoubtedly new… - in this sense that they are far from and in no way able to be contained, to be reabsorbed within the framework of what was called classical or again traditional logic - the new developments, I am saying, of logic are entirely linked to these operations of writing.

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So let us pose a question. Ever since I have been speaking about the function of language, ever since, in order to articulate what is involved in the subject of the unconscious, I constructed - I must say that it was necessary for me to do it stage by stage, and before an audience of whom the least one can say is that they needed to be coaxed in order to listen - that I constructed the graph which is designed to order, precisely what, in the function of the word, is defined by this field, this field which the structure of language requires: it is properly what is called the *paths of discourse* or again what I called the *defiles of the signifier*. Somewhere in this graph there is inscribed the letter capital O on the right, on the lower line: if someone would rub this out I could rapidly draw the whole graph for those who do not know it. This **small o** [*sic*] that in a sense one can identify to the locus of the (4) Other, which in fact is the locus where there is produced everything that can be described as a statement in the broadest sense of the term, namely, what constitutes what I, incidentally, called the treasury of the signifier - which is not limited, in principle, to the words in the dictionary. When, precisely, correlatively to the construction of this graph, I began to speak about the witticism, taking things from the angle, which perhaps appeared the most surprising and the most difficult for my listeners at that time, but which was precisely indispensable to avoid any confusion. The *non-sensical* feature - not senseless but close to this operation that English defines extremely well, makes resonate under the term of *nonsense* - that exists in the witticism; whose kinship, after all, in order to make understood the dimension that it was a matter of bringing out, I then showed - at least at the level of reception, of tympanic vibration - the kinship it has with what was, for us, at a testing time, the *personal message*. I alluded to the personal message – namely, every statement, in fact, in so far as it is cut up "*non-sensically*" - the last time, by recalling the celebrated: "*Colourless green ideas, etc*". The totality of statements then - I am not saying of propositions - also forms part of this Universe of discourse which is situated in capital O.

The question which is posed and which is properly a question of structure, the one which gives its sense to the fact that I say that the unconscious is structured *like a language,* which in my stating it is a pleonasm, since I identify structure to this "like a language", in the structure, precisely, that I am going to try today to make function before you.

What is involved in this Universe of discourse, in so far as it implies this operation of the signifier? In so far as it defines these two dimensions of metaphor - in as much as the chain can always graft itself (*se enter*) with another chain along the path of the operation of substitution - in so far as on the other hand, in its essence, it signifies this sliding which comes from the fact that no signifier belongs properly to any meaning. Having recalled this domain of the Universe of discourse which permits this sea (*mer)* of variations in what constitutes meanings - this essentially moving and transitory order, where nothing, as I said at one time, can be guaranteed except from the function of what I called in a metaphorical form: *buttoning points* (*points de capiton*)- today, it is this Universe of discourse that it is a matter of questioning, starting from this single axiom regarding which it is a matter of knowing what it may specify within this Universe of discourse. An axiom which is one that I put forward the last time: that the signifier - this signifier that we have, up to now, defined by its function of representing a subject for

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another signifier - this signifier, what does it represent faced with itself, with its repetition as signifying unit? This is defined by the axiom that no signifier - even if it is, *and very precisely when it is*, reduced to its minimal form, the one that we call the *letter* - can signify itself.

(5) Mathematical usage which depends precisely on the fact that when we have somewhere - and not only, as you know, in an exercise of algebra - when we have posited somewhere a letter, capital A, we take it up, subsequently, as if it were still the same the second time that we make use of it. Do not raise this objection; today is not the day I am going to give you a class in mathematics. You should know, simply, that no correct statement about any use whatsoever of letters - even if it were, precisely, in what is closest to us today, for example, in the use of a Markov chain - would require of any teacher (and this is what Markov himself did) a stage, which is in a way propaedeutic, to make clear the impasse, the arbitrariness, what is absolutely unjustifable (quite apparent moreover) in employing A the second time to represent the first A, as if it were still the same. It is a difficulty which is at the source of the mathematical use of so-called identity. We do not have to deal with it explicitly here today, because we are not dealing with mathematics. I want simply to recall to you that the foundation, that the signifier is not grounded by signifying itself, is admitted by those very people who, on occasion, may make a use that is contradictory to this principle - at least in appearance. It would be easy to see the intermediary by which this is possible, but I do not have the time to go astray in this. I want simply to pursue - and without tiring you any more - my proposition which is then the following: **what is the consequence in this Universe of discourse of this principle: that the signifier cannot signify itself?**

What does this axiom specify in this Universe of discourse in so far as it is constituted, in short, by everything that can be said? What sort of specification is it and does the specification that this axiom determines, form part of the Universe of discourse? If it does not form part of it, this is undoubtedly a problem for us. What specifies, I repeat, the axiomatic statement that the signifier cannot signify itself, will have the consequence of specifying something which, as such, would not be in the Universe of discourse. Even though, precisely, we have admitted saying that it encompasses everything that can be said, into its ambit. Are we going to find ourselves in some diversion which would signify that what, thus, cannot form part of the Universe of discourse, cannot be said in some way or other? And, of course, it is clear that since we are speaking about it, about what I am bringing to you, it is obviously not to tell you that it is the ineffable thematic regarding which you know that from pure consistency and without for all that belonging to the school of Mr. Wittgenstein, I consider as: that it is vain to speak.

(6) Before coming to such a formula, and you can see after all that I am not sparing you either its relief or the impasse that it constitutes, since moreover we are going to have to come back to it - I really do everything to open up the paths to what I am trying to get you to follow me in - let us take care to put to the test the following: that what specifies the axiom that the signifier cannot signify itself, remains part of the Universe of discourse.

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What do we then have to posit? What is at stake in, what specifies the relation that I stated in the form that the signifier cannot signify itself - let us take arbitrarily the usage of a little sign which serves in this logic which is founded on writing, this *W* in which you will recognise the shape (these games are not perhaps purely accidental) of my diamond, in a way with its hat knocked off, that has been opened up like a little box, and which serves, this *W*, to designate, in the logic of sets, *exclusion*. In other words, what is designated by the Latin *or,* which is expressed by an *aut*: one or the other. The signifier, in its repeated presentation, only functions *qua* functioning the first time or functioning the second. Between one and the other there is a radical gap, this is what is meant by: the signifier cannot signify itself.

S *W* S

We suppose, as we have said, that what determines this axiom as a specification in the Universe of discourse is what we are going to designate by a signifier, B - an essential signifier which you will notice can be appropriated to something the axiom specifies: that it cannot, in a certain relation and from a certain relation, generate any meaning. B is very specifically the signifier which can be specified, without objection, by the fact that it marks, as I might say, this sterility. The signifier in itself being characterised precisely by the fact that there is nothing obligatory, that it is far from being in the first spurt that it generates a meaning. It is this that gives me the right to symbolise by the signifier B this feature: that the relation of the signifier to itself does not generate any meaning.

But let us start, to begin with, from the following which after all seems to be required: the fact is that something that I am in the process of stating to you forms part of the Universe of discourse. Let us see what results from that. That is why I make use for the moment - because after all it does not seem to me to be inappropriate - of my little diamond in order to say that B forms part of A, that it has relations with it whose richness I will certainly have to bring into play, for you, throughout this year, and whose complexity I indicated to you the last time, by decomposing this little sign in all the binary fashions in which it can be done.

B ◊ A

(7) It is a matter of knowing, then, whether there is not some contradiction resulting from it. Namely, whether from the very fact that we have written that the signifier cannot signify itself, we can write that this B, not signifies itself, but, forming part of the Universe of discourse, can be considered as something which, in the style which characterises what we have called a specification, can be written: *B forms part of itself.*

It is clear that the question arises: does B form part of itself? In other words what the notion of specification grounds, namely, what we have learned to distinguish in several logical varieties, I mean that I hope that there are enough people here who

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know that the functioning of a set is not strictly speaking super-imposable on that of a class, but that in fact all of this at the origin, must be rooted in this principle of a specification. Here, we find ourselves before something whose kinship in fact should sufficiently resonate in your ears with what I called the last time Russell's paradox, in so far as to what I am stating, that here, in the terms which interest us, the function of sets - in so far as it does something that I, for my part, have not yet done, for I am not here to introduce it but to maintain you in a field which logically is on this hither side, but to introduce something that there is an opportunity to grasp in this connection: namely, what is grounded by the bringing into play of the apparatus described as set theory, which today is presented as something quite original, undoubtedly, for any mathematical statement, and for which logic is nothing but what mathematical symbolism can grasp - this function of sets will also be the principle, and this is what I put in question, of the whole foundation of logic.

If there is a logic of the phantasy, it is because it is more fundamental (*principielle)* than any logic which flows into the formalising defiles where it has revealed itself, as I have said, to be so fruitful in the modern epoch.

Let us try then to see what Russell's paradox means, when it covers something which is not far from what is there on the board. Simply, it promotes as altogether enveloping this fact of a type of signifier, that it takes moreover to be a class. A strange error! … To say, for example, that the word "obsolete" represents a class in which it would itself be included, under the pretext that the word "obsolete" is obsolete, is undoubtedly a little conjuring trick, which has strictly no interest except to found, as a class, the signifiers which do not signify themselves. While precisely we posit as an axiom, here, that in no case can the signifier signify itself and that it is from there that one must start to sort oneself out, even if it were only to see that it is necessary to explain differently that the word "obsolete" can be qualified as obsolete. It is absolutely indispensable to bring into it what the division of the subject introduces.

(8) But let us leave "obsolete" and let us start from the opposition that Russell sets up to mark something which is supposed to be a contradiction in the formula which might be stated as follows:

$$(B \lozenge A \ / \ S \ W \ S)$$

of a sub-set B whose status it would be impossible to guarantee, starting from the fact that it would be specified in a different set A, by a characteristic such that an element of A would not contain itself.

Is there some sub-set, defined by this proposition of the existence of elements which do not contain themselves?

It is undoubtedly easy, in this condition, to show the contradiction that exists in this because we have only to take an element *y* as forming part of B, as an element of B:

$$(y \ \varepsilon \ B)$$

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for us to see the consequences that there then are in making it at the same time, as such, form part, as an element, of A:

$$(y \in B) \qquad (y \in A \ / \ y \notin y)$$

and not being an element of itself. The contradiction is revealed by putting B in the place of *y*:

$$(B \in B) \qquad (B \in A \ / \ B \notin B)$$

and seeing that the formula operates from the fact that every time we make B an element of B, there results, because of the solidarity of the formula, that since B forms part of A, it ought not to form part of itself. If on the other hand - B having been put, substituted for the place of this *y* - if on the other hand it does not form part of itself, satisfying the parenthesis on the right of the formula, it then forms part of itself being one of these *y*'s which are elements of B.

This is the contradiction before which Russell's paradox put us.

It is a of matter knowing whether, in our register, we can stop at it, provided we notice in passing what is meant by the contradiction highlighted in set theory, which would allow us perhaps to say the way in which set theory is specified in logic, namely, what step forward it constitutes as compared to the more radical one that we are trying to establish here.

The contradiction involved at this level where Russell's paradox is articulated, depends precisely - as the simple usage of words shows us - on the fact that I *say* it. For if I do not *say* it, nothing prevents this formula, the second one, very precisely, from holding up as such, written out and there is nothing to say that its use will stop there. What I *say* here is no word play, for set theory as such has absolutely no other support except the fact that I *write* as such, that everything that can be (9) *said* about a difference between the elements is excluded from the operation.

To write, to manipulate the literal operation which constitutes set theory consists in writing, as such, what I am saying there: namely, that the first set can be formed at once from the charming person who is in the process today, for the first time, of typing my discourse, from the mist on this window and from an idea which just now is going through my head, that this constitutes a set, from this fact, that I *say* expressly that no other difference exists than the one which is constituted by the fact that I can apply to these three objects, that I have just named and which you see are rather heteroclite, a unary stroke upon each one and nothing else.

Here then is what ensures that since we are not at the level of such a specification, since what I bring into play is the Universe of discourse, my question does not encounter Russell's paradox, namely, that there is deduced no impasse, no impossibility to the following, that B which I do not know, but which I have begun to suppose forms part of the Universe of discourse, undoubtedly for its part, although constituted from the specification that *the signifier cannot signify itself,*

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may perhaps have this sort of relation to itself which escape Russell's paradox, namely, demonstrate to us something which might be perhaps its own dimension and in connection with which we are going to see in which status it forms part or not of the Universe of discourse.

In effect, if I was careful to remind you of the existence of Russell's paradox, it is probably because I am going to be able to make use of it to make you sense something. I am going to make you sense it first of all in the simplest fashion and, after that, in a fashion that is a little bit richer. I am going to make you sense it in the simplest fashion because I am prepared, for some time now, for any concession (*laughter*). People want me to say simple things, well then, I will say simple things! You are already, all the same, sufficiently formed to the following, thanks to my care, to know that there is not such a direct path towards understanding. Perhaps, even if what I tell you appears simple, there will remain with you, all the same, a little mistrust...

A catalogue of catalogues: here indeed, in a first approach, is what is involved as a signifier. Why should we be surprised that it does not contain itself? Naturally, since this seems, to us, to be required from the beginning. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent the catalogue of all the catalogues which do not contain themselves, from printing itself, inside it! In truth, nothing would prevent it, even the contradiction that Lord Russell would deduce from it!

But let us consider precisely this possibility that exists, that in order not to contradict itself, it does not inscribe itself in itself.

Let us take the first catalogue; there are only four catalogues, up to then, which do not contain themselves:

A B C D.

(10) Let us suppose that there appears another catalogue which does not contain itself, we add it on: E.

Why is it inconceivable to think that there is a first catalogue which contains A B C D, a second catalogue which contains B C D E, and not be surprised that each of them lacks this letter which is properly the one which would designate itself?

But from the moment that you generate this sequence, you have only to arrange it around the circumference of a disc and see that it is not because in each catalogue one of them will be missing, indeed even a greater number, that the circle of these catalogues will not add up to something which is precisely what corresponds to the catalogue of all the catalogues which do not contain themselves. Simply what will constitute this chain will have this property of being an additional signifier *(un signifiant en plus)* which is constituted from the closure of the chain. An uncountable signifier and which, precisely because of this fact, is able to be designated by a signifier. Because, being nowhere, there is no difficulty in a signifier arising which designates it as *the additional signifier*: the one that is not grasped in the chain.

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I take another example: catalogues are not made, in the first place, to catalogue catalogues, they catalogue objects which have some right (*titre*) to be there (the word "*titre*" having here all its importance). It would be easy to become engaged on this path in order to open up the dialectic of the catalogue of all the catalogues, but I am going to go to a more lively path, since it is necessary that I should leave you some exercises for your own imagination.

The book: with the book we enter, apparently, into the Universe of discourse. Nevertheless, in the measure that the book has some referent and that it also may be a book that has to cover a certain surface, in the register of some title (*titre*), the book will include a bibliography. Which means something which is presented properly for us to image the following, what results in so far as the catalogues live or do not live in the Universe of discourse. If I make the catalogue of all the books that a bibliography contains, naturally I am not making a catalogue of bibliographies! Nevertheless, in cataloguing these books, in so far as in the bibliographies they refer on to one another, I may very well cover the totality of all the bibliographies.

Here indeed is where there may be situated the phantasy which is properly the poetic phantasy *par excellence,* the one which obsessed Mallarmé: of the a*bsolute Book*. It is at this level where things are tied together at the level of the use not of pure signifier, but of the purified signifier, in so far as I *say* - and that I *write* that I *say* - that the signifier is here articulated as distinct from any signified and I then see there being outlined the possibility of this *absolute Book,* whose property would be that it would encompass the whole signifying chain, properly in the following: that it may no longer signify anything. In this, then, there is something that proves to be founded in existence at the level of the Universe of discourse, but (11) we have to suspend this existence on the proper logic which that of the phantasy may constitute, because moreover, it is the only one that can tell us the way in which this region is attached to the Universe of discourse. Undoubtedly, it is not excluded that it should enter it, but on the other hand, it is quite certain that it specifies itself in it, not at all by this purification of which I spoke earlier, for purification is not at all possible of what is essential to the Universe of discourse, namely, meaning. And were I to speak to you for another four hours about this *absolute Book* it would nevertheless remain that everything that I tell you has a sense.

What characterises the structure of this B - in so far as we know where to situate it in the Universe of discourse, inside or outside - is very precisely this feature that I announced earlier, in making for you the circle, simply of this A B C D E, in so far as, by simply closing the chain, there results that each group of four can easily leave outside itself the extraneous signifier, which can serve to designate the group, for the simple reason that it is not represented in it, and that nevertheless the whole chain will be found to constitute the totality of all these signifiers, giving rise to this additional unit, uncountable as such, which is essential for a whole series of structures, which are precisely the ones on which I founded, since the year 1960, my whole operation *(opératoire)* of identification. Namely, what you find of it, for example, in the structure of the torus, being quite obvious that by buckling on the

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torus a certain number of circuits, by making operate a series of complete circuits at a cut and by making of them the number that you like (naturally the more of them there are, the more satisfying it is, but the more obscure it is). It is enough to make two of them to see there appearing at the same time this third required for these two to buckle together and, as I might say, for the line to bite its own tail: it will be this third circuit, which is assured by the buckling around the central hole, through which it is impossible not to pass in order for the first two loops to cut one another.

If I am not making any drawing on the board today, it is because in truth - in saying it - I am saying enough about it for you to understand me and also a good deal too little for me to show you that they are at least two paths, at the origin, along which this can be effected and that the result is not at all the same as regards the emergence of this additional One (*Un en plus*) that I am in the process of speaking to you about.

This simply suggestive indication contains nothing to exhaust the richness of what the least topological study provides us with.

What it is a matter simply of indicating today, is that the specificity of this world of writing is precisely to distinguish itself from discourse by the fact that it can close. And, closing on itself, it is precisely from there that there arises this possibility of a "one" which has a completely different status to that of the one which unifies and encompasses. But from this "one" which already, from the simple closing - without there being any need to go into the status of repetition, which nevertheless (12) is closely linked to it - just from its closing, it gives rise to what has the status of the *additional One*, in so far as it is only sustained by writing and that it is nevertheless open, in its possibility, to the Universe of discourse; since it is sufficient, as I pointed out to you, for me to **write** - but it is necessary that this writing should take place - what I **say** about the exclusion of this *one,* this is enough to generate this other plane where there unfolds properly speaking the whole function of logic; the thing being sufficiently indicated to us by the stimulus that logic received, by submitting itself to the simple operation of writing, except for the fact that it still fails to remember that this only reposes on the function of a *lack*, in the very thing that is written and which constitutes the status, as such, of the function of writing.

I am saying simple things to you today, and perhaps this in itself risks making this discourse appear disappointing to you. Nevertheless, you would be wrong not to see that this is inserted into a register of questions which henceforth give to the function of writing something which cannot but have repercussions down to the deepest level of any possible conception of structure. For if the writing of which I speak is only supported from the return buckled onto itself, from a cut (as I illustrated it from the function of the torus), we find ourselves lead to the following: that precisely the most fundamental studies, linked to the progress of mathematical analysis, have put us in a position to isolate in it the function of the *edge*.

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Now, once we speak about edge, there is nothing which can make us substantify this function, in so far as here you might improperly deduce that this function of writing is to limit this changeability (*mouvant)* of which I spoke to you earlier as being that of our thoughts or of the Universe of discourse. Far from it! If there is something which is structured as edge, what it itself limits is in a position to enter in its turn into the edging function. And here indeed is what we are going to have to deal with.

Or indeed - and this is the other face on which I intend to end - it is the reminder of what has always been known about this function of the *unary stroke (trait unaire)*.

I will end by evoking the 26th verse of a book which I have already made use of, at one time, to begin to make understood what is involved in the function of the signifier: the book of Daniel and in connection with the story about the zouave's trousers which is designated in it by a word which remains in the state of what is called an hapax and which is impossible to translate unless it was the socks that the characters in question wore.

In the book of Daniel, you already have the theory of the subject that I am presenting to you, and precisely arising at the limit of this Universe of discourse. It is the famous story of the dramatic festival of which we no longer find, moreover, the slightest trace in the annals, but no matter!

(13) *Mene, Mene*, for this is how verse 26 is expressed, *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin,* which is usually transcribed in the famous *Mene, Tekel, Parsin*. It does not seem useless to me for us to notice that *Mene, Mene* which means "counted" - as Daniel pointed out in interpreting it to the worried prince - is expressed twice in order to show the most simple repetition of what constitutes counting; it is enough to count up to two for everything that is involved in this *additional One*, which is the true root of the function of repetition in Freud, to take place and to be marked in the following: except for the fact that contrary to what occurs in set theory, one does not *say* it.

One does not say the following: that what repetition seeks to repeat is precisely what escapes, because of the very function of the mark, in so far as the mark is original in the function of repetition. That is why repetition takes place, because the mark is repeated, but that for the mark to provoke the sought-for repetition, it is necessary that on what is sought because the mark marks the first time, this very mark is effaced at the level of what it has marked and that is why what is sought for in repetition, of its nature slips away, allows there to be lost the fact that the mark cannot not be reduplicated, except by effacing, on what is to be repeated, the first mark, namely, to let it slip out of reach.

Mene, Mene … something in what is rediscovered lacks weight: *Tekel*. The prophet Daniel interprets it, and interprets it by saying to the prince that he was in effect weighed, but that something is missing there, which is expressed as "*Parsin*". This radical lack, this first lack which flows from the very function of the *counted* as such, this *additional One* that one cannot count, it is this which constitutes properly this lack to which it is a matter for us of giving its logical

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function, in order that it should secure what is involved in the final "*Parsin*", the one which precisely explodes what is involved in the Universe of discourse, of the bubble, of the empire in question, of the sufficiency of what is closed in on the image of the imaginary whole.

Here is exactly the path along which there is brought to bear the effect of the entry of what structures discourse at the most radical point, which is undoubtedly - as I always said and accentuated, to the extent of employing the most popular images for it - the *letter* that is involved, but the *letter* in so far as it is excluded, as it is lacking.

This is indeed about what - that moreover, since today I am making a new irruption into this Jewish tradition - to tell the truth, I had so many things prepared, even to the extent of having come to grips with a little exercise of learning to read Massoretic, a whole work which was in a way put in cold storage because of the fact that I was not able to construct the thematic that I had intended to develop around the Name of the Father - and that moreover, there remains something of all of this and specifically that at the level of history of Creation: "*Berechit, Bara, Elohim"* the Book begins, namely by a Beth. And it is said that this very letter that we have used today, the capital A, otherwise called Aleph, was not, at the beginning, among those from which there emerged the whole of creation.

Hebrew Quotation

(14) This indeed is here to indicate to us, but in a fashion that is in a way turned in on itself, that it is in so far as one of these letters is absent that the others function, but that no doubt it is in its very lack that there resides the whole fruitfulness of the operation.

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Seminar 3: Wednesday 30 November 1966.

Today you are going to hear a piece of work, a paper by Jacques-Alain Miller. This – about which I warned you the last time, perhaps a little late, a part of the audience having already dispersed when I announced it - marks the fact that I would like there to remain justified this curious name of *seminar,* which was attached to my teaching from the time of Sainte-Anne where, as you know, it was held for ten years.

To speak only of the two previous years here, some of you are not unaware - to your great annoyance - that I wanted this seminar to be held in an effective fashion, believing that this effectiveness could be linked to a certain reduction in this so numerous and so kindly audience that you offer me through your assiduity and attention. And, good God, so much assiduity and attention deserve a lot of respect, and they made the sorting out that was necessary for this reduction very difficult. So that, in total, your more reduced number was not such that from the point of view of quantity - which plays such an important role in communication - the scale of things changed to any great extent. So I will leave in suspense this year the solution of this difficult problem. Until further notice and without in any way committing myself to it, I am not closing any of these Wednesdays whether they are terminal, semi-terminal or other.

I would like simply that there should be at least maintained this name of seminar, in a more marked style than we experienced at Saint-Anne, where up to the very last years there were meetings in which I delegated the role of speaking to one or other of those who were following me at that time. Nevertheless, some ambiguity remains, which suspends this appellation of seminar between the proper usage of a category: - a place where something ought to be exchanged, where the
(2) transmission, the dissemination of a doctrine ought to be manifested as such, namely, in the process of being transmitted - there remained some ambiguity between this usage proper to the category and some other usage or other, not properly speaking of the proper name - because every discussion of the proper name can become engaged in this - let us say a nomination *par excellence,* the which nomination *par excellence* might become a nomination *par ironie*. Hence, in order to mark clearly that it is not the state of things in which I intend there to be stabilised the use of this appellation, you will see intervening periodically a certain number of people who show themselves disposed to it.

Undoubtedly, Jacques-Alain Miller, in inaugurating what follows, has some right, this year, since he provided you with this *index* in my book, with this *reasoned index of concepts*, which, according to what I hear is very welcome for many people, who find a great advantage in this Ariadne's thread which allows them to move through a succession of articles in which one or other notion, one or other concept (as the term is used more correctly), is found at diverse stages. A tiny detail: I note, to answer a question which has been put to me by someone, that in

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this index, the numbers in italics mark the essential passages, the straight or roman numbers, mark the passages where the concept is involved more in passing. It can happen that on the page that is designated for you, what is referred to in this way is simply limited to an indication in one line of the page. This will tell you the care with which this little apparatus, which is so usable, is constructed.

I am told, in this connection, that this book is, as they say in this *franglais* which I, for my part, do not reject, "out of print", which means *épuisé* [exhausted]. I find "out of print" nicer, with *épuisé* people ask what has happened to it (*laughter*). I hope that this "out of print" will not last too long, it is what is called a success, but a success in terms of *sales*. Let us not prejudge the *other* success. We have to wait and see and this, after all, leaves the question open. It has been remarked that I was hardly in a hurry to put this book into circulation.

If I delayed so long in doing so, one could pose this question: "Why now?" What do I expect from it?" It is clear that the reply: "*that it should be of service to you*!" was no less valid a year or two ago, or even earlier. The question is therefore not simple. It involves everything about my relations with what plays the function of a base, namely, psychoanalysis in its *incarnated* - we might say quickly – or again *subjectified* form, in other words: with psychoanalysts themselves. It is certain that there were many elements which appeared to me to justify that what I was trying to construct should remain in a reserved field, which allowed, in a way, this selection (3) which was made of those who wanted to decide to recognise what the study of Freud implied as a consequence in their practice.

Finally, things never happen in the way you plan, in these difficult matters in which resistance is not restricted to what must be designated in the narrow sense of this term in analytic praxis, but where it has another form, in which the social context is not without its impact. This indeed is what makes it very delicate for me to explain myself before such a large audience.

This indeed is why, in everything which concerns the *external relations* of my teaching – for I do not envisage in any other way the hullabaloo and the to-do around a certain number of my terms, with which I see myself associated in a way that I do not like, including that of *structuralism*, which for the moment benefiting from a certain fashion, is not the least to inspire my suspicion - nevertheless, here again, it is not the case - except in as much as I am forced to it by some incidence of what I called earlier the success of the book - this is something for which I am in no way disposed to take time here, to eat into this measured time in which you see - in which you ought to sense more or less by your experience of these last years - that I have no time to lose, if I want to state things before you at the level of the construction that you saw me inaugurating in its style by my last seminar and the points on which I wanted to establish the beginning of this logic that I have to develop before you this year.

Hence, and since all the same this book exists with the first movements that it is bringing with it - which will be followed by others - and that, in short, the two or three points that I have brought up like that, as principal - but there others - risk remaining in suspense for you, I believe that because of this, I ought to warn you

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that you will find, faith, the explanation - at least a sufficient explanation to permit you to respond to at least some of the questions which may remain in suspense for you – in two sorts of conversations, as they say, or again interviews, which are going to appear, I believe - if my information is correct, this week - in places, God knows, which have nothing of the fairground about them, which are called respectively the *Figaro littéraire* and *Lettres francaises*, where perhaps you will get to know a little more about these points. Besides, since I cannot help myself, every time that I have one of these kinds of *external relation*, putting into it all the same what is on-going, it is possible that you will find here and there something which refers to our discourse of this year.

It is obvious that I have some scruples - for example, as I did the last time, in speaking to you about the *repetition of the unary stroke*, as being situated, (4) established fundamentally from this repetition (of which one can say that it only happens once, which means all the same that it is double, otherwise there would be no repetition) which right away, in short, for whoever wants to delay on it a little, establishes in its most radical foundation the *division of the subject* - I cannot avoid having some scruple at having announced it before you the last time almost in passing, while at this congress which took place at Johns Hopkins (as a certain number of you know) in October, I chewed it over for about three quarters of an hour. It is perhaps because I give you greater credit than my listeners at that time; certain echoes received since having showed me that the structuralist ear - to take up again the term from earlier - well then, my God, the structuralist ear, whoever may be its bearer on a particular occasion, is capable of showing itself to be a little deaf! (*laughter*).

There are two still more unexpected places, where you will perhaps see…(in the audience: "We can't hear!" - **Doctor Lacan**: "What? Who can't hear? How long have you not been able to hear anything?" (*laughter*)) - Good, then, in still more unexpected places you will perhaps find on these different themes - up to and including these little initial indications, my God, which can never come too soon - on certain themes which I will have to develop subsequently and, for example, in passing, on the function of the *preconscious* - a curious thing, that people do not seem to have occupied themselves with for a long time, namely, ever since people mixed up everything while believing they had kept it distinct, people no longer occupy themselves after all so much with the functions that Freud reserved for it - it slipped in in passing, if I remember rightly, in one of these conversations, I cannot remember which one, to which, then, it would be well to add the two other unexpected ones, I think, for you, which are conversations at the O.R.T.F. There will be one next Friday at 10.45, which is what is called, I have been assured, a "peak listening time" (*laughter*). I am thinking: not for those who are listening to me here at this hour, precisely, because I think at this peak listening time, they are at the hospital. Anyway, too bad, you can organise things as you wish and I hope after all to be able to communicate this text if the Radio is willing to give me the authorisation. There will be another one on Monday - you can see that they are in a hurry. For the first, it is Georges Charbonnier who is kind enough - I will not say to receive it - to give me a place and for the second it is M. Sipridio, thanks to whom you will perhaps have something a bit more lively than the first one, since it will be a dialogue with the person who is most qualified to sustain it, namely,

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Francois Wahl who is here and was kind enough to agree to carry out this exercise with me.

Now then, (in the audience: "At what time?") Well it appears that it is at … I (5) would not swear to it, it appears that it is starting at 6.15, only they are not going to be speaking just about my book and I cannot very well tell you at what stage it will appear between 6.15 and 7 p.m., each one having his quarter of an hour…. What then, is there another question? It is a peak listening time (*laughter*) which in general is accompanied by exercises in gymnastics. There you are, anyway, we will see how all of that works out.

And now I give the floor to Jacques-Alain Miller (the audience: "Oh!").

I am going all the same to communicate something very amusing to you, which was brought to me by one of my faithful followers. It is a little paper done by a sort of special journal, linked, I think, both to IBM machines and what has been done on an experimental level in the *Massachusetts Institute of Technology* (MIT, as it is usually called) and which speaks to us about the use of one of these high-level machines that are being made now, to which there was given – and certainly not for nothing - the name of Elisa; at least it is called Elisa for the use that is made of it - that I am going to tell you about... (Elisa is, as you know, the person who in a well known play - *Pygmalion* - the person who is taught to speak properly; she was a little flower seller on a busy London street and it is a matter of training her to be able to express herself in the best society, when it is noticed that she does not belong to it). It is something of this order which emerges with this little machine; in truth, what is involved is not properly speaking that a machine should be capable of giving articulated answers, simply when one speaks to it - I am not saying when one questions it - it is something which now proves to be a game and which puts in question what can happen in terms of obtaining responses from the one who is speaking to it. The thing, faith, is not absolutely articulated in a fashion which would be completely satisfying for a situation, in effect, that is so usable for us - which gives us such an interesting reference in the discourse pursued here - it is not properly speaking stated in a fashion which would satisfy us completely - in other words which takes into account the framework into which we might insert it – nevertheless, it is very interesting because, when all is said and done, there is something suggested which may be considered as a therapeutic function of the machine and in a word, it is nothing less than the *analogue* of a sort of *transference* which can be produced in this relationship, about which the question is raised.

The thing did not dissatisfy me. I would like simply in this connection... - since moreover it is not unrelated to everything that I am leaving open concerning the fashion in which, in short, I have to manage the diffusion of what is called my teaching - I could say that what you will find in terms of the handling of a first symbolic chain (designed in its time, for me, to give me the notion that (6) psychoanalysts are required to conceive of … the notion to which their mind should accommodate itself, to centre in a proper fashion on what Freud called memory (*rémémoration)*, to give them a sort model that is suggestive of that), in the construction of this symbolic chain and of its own kind of memory, that is undoubtedly consistent and even insistent, which is articulated in what comes now

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in this book, in the second, let us say chapter or moment, namely, in the inverse position in which the *Introduction to the purloined letter* which precedes it is fixed in this book, namely, just after *The purloined letter*. I recall to those who were listening to me at that time that this construction, like all the others, was made before them and for them, step by step, and that I started very exactly: first of all, from an examination, starting from a text by Poe, about the way in which the mind works on this theme: can one win in the game of odds and evens, and that my second step was the following: to imagine a machine, precisely of this kind - and what is effectively produced today differs in nothing from what I articulated then - simply: the machine is supposed by the subject to be provided with a programme which takes into account the gains and the losses. I mean that starting from this: that the subject might question the aforesaid machine, by playing the game of odds and evens with it - starting from this single supposition, that it preserves, at least for a certain number of throws, the memory of its gains and its losses, one can construct this sequence of: +, +, -, +, -… which encompass, united in a parenthesis of a typical length and which is displaced by a notch each time, allows us to establish this trajectory that I constructed and upon which I am founding this first most elementary type of the model … (We do not need to consider memory under the register of the physiological impression but only of the symbolic memorial)… It is starting from a hypothetical game with what was not yet perhaps in a position to function then at this level, but which all the same existed as such, as electronic machine, namely, in fact, something which can be written on paper (this is the modern definition of the machine), it is starting from there - well before, then, this got onto the agenda of the pre-occupations of engineers, who devoted themselves to these apparatuses, as you know, that are always progressing, because people expect nothing less than automatic translation - it is starting from there that 15 years ago I constructed a first model for the proper use of psychoanalysts, with the goal of producing in their *mens*, *mind*, this sort of necessary detachment from the idea that the functioning of the signifier is necessarily the flower of consciousness, which was at that time to introduce a step that was absolutely unprecedented.

Over to you…

(There follows the presentation of **M Jacques-Alain Miller** on Boolean logic)

Doctor Lacan: - I am not going to add any commentary. I consider that the work which has been pronounced before you as being truly able to guarantee by the perfect ease of its presentation, something which supports, grounds, corresponds to what I introduced the last time as being the absolutely necessary starting point for any logic which is properly the one the psychoanalytic terrain requires.

This commentary is not to be considered as a reduplication. It showed you something in the confrontation with the first of these sets, in the mathematical-logic sense of the term: which was given by this Boole set and the confrontation of this Boole set - in so far as it finds itself apparently much more homogeneous with classical logic - you have seen that from this set itself, we are allowed to construct this logical precedence, this necessity which radically distinguishes the status of meaning and its origin in the signifier - I find that you have had there, at once a very elegant demonstration and at the same time this constitutes a moment which

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was necessary for the assimilation, in a way, and the complement, the control, the configuration of what, the last time, I succeeded in bringing before you and which you will have the continuation of the next time.

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Seminar 4: Wednesday 7 December 1966

You were able, the last time we met here, to hear what Jacques-Alain Miller put to you. I was not able to add many observations to it by reason of time.

I think that you were able to notice in this presentation - marked by a sure knowledge of what, properly speaking, was inaugurated, we can say, on the whole, as modern logic, by the work and the labour of Boole –(it is perhaps not a matter of indifference to let you know that Jacques-Alain Miller, who had not been present at my last lecture, let us say, who had not been able either to have it communicated to him, since I myself only got the text two days ago, found himself then, by the path and the presentation that he chose… and you were able also to sense very well, I think, that at the moment that I announced him at my last lecture, I was not too sure of the subject that he had chosen. These remarks have their interest, precisely, because of the extraordinary convergence, let us say, or again if you wish re-application of what he was able to state before you, no doubt, of course, knowing what he was about, namely, knowing what are the principles and, as I might say, the axioms around which, for the moment, my development is turning...).

It is nevertheless striking, that with the help of Boole - in whom, of course, there is absent this major articulation that **no signifier is able to signify itself** - that in starting from Boole's logic ... namely, from this turning point at which, in a way, one sees, by having wanted to formalise classical logic, that this formalisation itself allows there to be brought to it not simply major extensions, but is revealed to be the hidden essence on which this logic had been able to orient itself and to construct itself, while believing it was following something which was not really its foundation, while believing that it was following what we are going to try to (2) circumscribe today in order, in a way, to set it apart from the field in which we are going to proceed, in so far as we have announced: the logic of phantasy.

The surprising ease with which, from fields left blank in the logic of Boole, Miller rediscovered the situation, the place, where the signifier in its proper function is in a way elided, in this famous (-1), whose exclusion he admirably separated out in the logic of Boole - the fashion in which, by this very elision, he indicated the place where what I am trying to articulate here is situated, is here something which I believe, has its importance, not at all that I am complimenting him on it here, but which allows you to grasp the consistency, the straight line, in which there is inserted this logic that we are obliged to found in the name of the facts of the unconscious and which, as is to be expected, if we are what we are, namely, rationalists - what must be expected, is, of course, not at all that the previous logic should be in some way overturned, but that it should rediscover there its proper foundations.

Moreover you were able to see it being marked, in passing, that in this point which requires for us the bringing into play of a certain symbol, this something which

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corresponds to this (-1) which Boole does not use, or forbids himself to use, not being sure whether this (-1) is the best to use. For what is proper to a logic, to a formal logic, is that it operates, and what we have to bring out this year are new operators whose shadow, in a way, has already been profiled in the fact that, depending on the ears to which I was addressing myself, I already tried to articulate in a manageable fashion - manageable for what had to be handled, which was nothing other, on that occasion, than analytic praxis - but what, this year, we are taking to its limits, to its edges properly speaking, obliges us to give more rigorous formulations to circumscribe what we are dealing with, and which deserves in some aspects to be taken, to be undertaken, in the most general articulation which is given to us at the moment in the matter of logic, namely: what is centred on the function of sets.

I leave this subject, of what Miller brought us then the last time, less as an articulation of what I am developing before you, than as confirmation, assurance, a framework in the margin. It is not without interest to highlight for you that in designating, in Sartre, under the name of "thetic self-consciousness", the fashion in which, in a way, he occupies the place where this logical articulation resides - which is our task this year - what is involved here is indeed only what is called a substitute *(tenant-lieu)* - very properly - namely: that which, what we have to occupy ourselves with, we analysts, only in a fashion that is strictly equivalent to the way in which we occupy ourselves with other substitutes, when we have to handle what is an effect of the unconscious.

(3) This is the reason why one can say that in no way can what I am stating about the structure be situated with respect to Sartre, since this fundamental point, around which turns the privilege that he tries to maintain of the subject, is properly this sort of *substitute* which can in no way interest me except in the register of its interpretation.

Logic, then, of the phantasy … It is almost necessary to recall - but we can only do it very rapidly in the way that, touching a bell with the tip of the finger, one makes it vibrate for an instant - to remind you on this point of the unextinguished vacillation of what is attached to the tradition, that the term "university" will pinpoint here (if we give to this sense not at all anything whatsoever which designates or shames a geographical point, but this sense of *Universitas litterarum* or a *cursus classici*, let us say), it is not useless in passing to indicate that - whatever may be the other much more historical sense that one can give to this term of "university" - there is here some allusion to what I called the *Universe of discourse*. At least it is not vain to bring the two terms together.

Now, it is clear that in this hesitation (remember the waltz) that the professor of philosophy - in the year I think you all went through, more or less as many of you as are here - performed around logic, (namely: what is involved in it, the laws of thinking or its norms, the way it functions and that we are going to extract scientifically, will we say, or the way it ought to be conducted?) - you must admit that in so far as this debate has not yet been settled, perhaps a suspicion may arise for us that the function of the University in the sense that I articulated it earlier, is perhaps precisely to put off the decision about it.

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All that I can say is that this decision, perhaps, is more involved - I am speaking about logic - in what is happening in Vietnam, for example, than what is involved in thinking, if in fact it still remains suspended in this way, in this dilemma between its *laws*... which in that case leaves us asking ourselves whether it is applied to the "world" as they say, let us say rather: to the real, in other words: whether it is not dreaming? (I am not losing my psychoanalytic bearings. I am speaking about things that interest us, us analysts, because for us analysts, to know whether the man who is thinking is dreaming is a question that has the most concrete sense. To whet your appetite, to keep you in suspense, you should know that I have indeed the intention of posing the question, this year, of what is involved in the waking state…) *Norms* of thinking, opposed to the other, here indeed is something that also interests us, and in the dimension that is not reduced by this little sand papering by which generally, the professor, when he is dealing with logic in the philosophy class, will end up by ensuring that these laws and these (4) norms end up by being presented with the same "smoothness", which allows one to pass one's finger from one to the other, in other words to handle all of that blindly.

For us, the relief has not been lost (I am saying, us analysts) of this dimension which is entitled: that of the true. In so far as, after all, it does not require, does not imply in itself the support of thinking, and that if in questioning what it is - the true that is at stake - in connection with which there is stirred up the phantasy of a norm, undoubtedly, it clearly appears - from the origin - that this is not immanent to thinking.

If I allowed myself, to touch the ears that it was necessary to make vibrate, to write one day, erecting a figure which it was not moreover very difficult to bring to life - that of the truth, emerging from the well, as it has always been depicted - in order to make it say: "Me, the truth, I speak", it is indeed in effect to highlight this relief in which it is a matter for us of maintaining that to which, properly speaking, our experience is attached and which is absolutely impossible to exclude from the articulation of Freud: for Freud is here put, immediately, up against it - and there is no need to intervene for that: he put himself there himself.

The question of the way in which the field of interpretation is presumed, the mode in which Freud's technique offers an opportunity for it, *free association* in other words, carries us to the heart of this formal organisation from which there are outlined the first paths of a mathematical logic, which has a name which, all the same, could not possibly have failed to tickle the ears of all of you, that is called *network* (*réseau*) – yes, and it is specified, but it is not my function today to specify and to remind you of what is called a trellis or lattice (an English transposition of the word *treillis).* This is what is involved in what Freud, as much in his first outlines of the new psychology, as in the fashion in which, subsequently, he organises the handling of the analytic session as such, this is what he constructs in advance (*avant la lettre*), as I might say. And when the objection is put to him, at a precise point of the *Traumdeutung* (as it happens I did not bring today the copy in which I had picked out the page for you), he has to respond to the objection: "of course, with your way of proceeding, at every cross-roads you will indeed have the

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opportunity of finding a signified which will provide the bridge between two meanings and with this fashion of organising the bridges, you will always go from somewhere to somewhere else". (It is not for nothing that I had put the little poster taken from Aurus Apollo, as it happens, namely, from an interpretation in the (5) XVIth century of Egyptian hieroglyphs, on a journal which has now disappeared which was called *"La Psychanalyse"*: the Ear and the Bridge.) This is what is involved in Freud, and every point of convergence of this *network* or *lattice*, in which he teaches us to ground the first questioning, is in effect a little bridge. This is how it functions and the objection made to him is that in this way everything will explain everything else.

In other words, what is fundamentally opposed to psychoanalytic interpretation, is not at all any kind of "scientific critique" (in quotes) - as is imagined from what is ordinarily the only piece of baggage that minds who enter the field of medicine still have from their year of philosophy, namely, that the scientific is founded on experience! Naturally, they have not opened Claude Bernard, but they still know the title. It is not a scientific objection, it is an objection which goes back to the medieval tradition, when people knew what logic was. It was much more widespread than in our time, despite the means of diffusion that we have.

Things have, in fact, got to the point that, having let slip recently in one of the interviews that I spoke to you about, that I had got my taste for commentary from an old practice of the scholastics, I asked them to take it out. God knows what people would have deduced from it! *(laughter*).

Anyway, in short, in the Middle Ages people knew that: *Ex falso sequitur quod libet.* In other words, that it is characteristic of the false to make everything true. The characteristic of the false, is that one deduces from it in the same step, on the same footing, the false and the true. It does not exclude the true. If it excluded the true, it would be too easy to recognise it! Only in order to see that, it is necessary precisely to have carried out a certain minimal number of exercises in logic, which up to now, as far as I know, do not form part of medical studies, and it is very regrettable! And it is clear that the fashion in which Freud responds, brings us immediately onto the terrain of the structure of the *network*. He does not express it, of course, in every detail, in the modern specifications that we could give it. It would be interesting moreover to know how he was able and how he was not able to profit from Brentano's teaching, which he was certainly not unaware of - we have the proof in his university *cursus*. The function of the structure of the *network*, the way in which the lines - of association, precisely - come to overlap one another, to cross-check with one another, to converge at elective points from which they depart again electively, this is what is indicated by Freud. We know enough by all his subsequent work, the unease, we would say, the veritable concern, to be more precise, that he had about this dimension which is indeed properly speaking that of the truth. Because from the point of view of reality, one (6) is at ease! Even to know that perhaps the trauma is only a phantasy. In a certain fashion, a phantasy is even more sure, as I am in the process of showing you; it is structural. But this does not leave Freud - who was just as capable of inventing this as I am, as you can imagine - this does not leave him any more at peace. Where is here, he asks, the criterion of truth? And he would not have

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written the W*olfman*, if it were not on this track, on this particular requirement: is it true or not?

"Is it true?" He supports this by what is discovered in questioning the fundamental figure manifested in the repetition dream of the *Wolfman*. And "is it true?", is not reduced to knowing whether yes or no and at what age he experienced something which had been reconstructed with the help of this figure of the dream. The essential - it is enough to read Freud in order to perceive it - is to know how the subject, the *Wolfman,* had been able to verify this scene - to verify it with his whole being. It is through his symptom. Which means - for Freud does not doubt the reality of the original scene - which means: how had he been able to articulate it properly in terms of signifier? You only have to remind yourselves of the figure of the Roman five, for example, in so far as it is involved and reappears everywhere in the outspread legs of a woman, or the beating of the wings of a butterfly, to know, to comprehend that what is involved is the handling of the signifier.

The relation of the truth to the signifier, the detour through which analytic experience rejoins the most modern process of logic, consists precisely in the fact that this relation of the signifier to the truth can short-circuit all the thinking which supports it. And just as a sort of aim is outlined at the horizon of modern logic - one which reduces logic to a correct handling of what is simply *writing* - in the same way for us, the question of verification, concerning what we have to deal with, passes along the direct line of the operation of the signifier, in so far as on it alone the question of the truth remains suspended.

It is not easy to put forward a term like that of the *true*, without making immediately resonate all the echoes in which there come to slip in the most suspect "intuitions" (in inverted commas) and without immediately producing objections, made up from the old experiences that those who engage themselves on this terrain know only too well, so that, like scalded cats, they fear cold water. But who says that because I make you say: "Me, the truth, I speak", that through this I am allowing the re-entry of the theme of *Being*, for example? Let us look twice at it, at least in order to know. Let us be content with this very particular knot that I have just made between the truth - and by this I have not indicated any person, except the one whom I made say these words: "Me, the truth, I speak". No person, divine (7) or human is involved outside her, namely: **the point of origin of the relations between the signifier and the truth.**

What relation is there between this and the point from which I started earlier? Does it mean that by bringing you onto this field of the most formal logic, I forgot the one on which there is played out, as I said earlier, the fate of logic?

It is quite clear that Mr Bertrand-Russell is more interested than M Jacques Maritain in what is happening in Vietnam. This just by itself may be an indication for us. Besides, in invoking here *Le Paysan de la Garonne* - it is his latest outfit - I am not taking as a target … (you did not know that *Le Paysan de la Garonne* has been published? Well then, go and get it…) (*laughter*]). It is the last book of J Maritain, an author who has occupied himself a lot with the scholastic authors in so far as there is developed in them the influence of the philosophy of St Thomas

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who, after all, has no reason not to be evoked here, in the measure that a certain way of posing the principles of being is, all the same, not without some incidence on what one makes of logic. One cannot say that this prevents the handling of logic, but it can at certain moments be an obstacle to it. In any case I wanted to specify - I apologise for this parenthesis - that if I evoke Jacques Maritain here and if then, as a consequence, implicitly, I urge you to discover, not that the reading of it is contemptible, but that it is far from being uninteresting, I would ask you all the same to consult it in this spirit of paradox which is demonstrated in it, of the maintenance in this author, having arrived at his great age (as he underlines himself), of this sort of rigour which allows there to be seen in it, there being pushed really to a caricatural impasse, in a very exact mapping out of the whole relief of the modern development of thought, the maintenance of the most unthinkable hopes about what ought to develop either in its place, or in its margin, and in order that there should be maintained what is his central attachment, namely, what he calls: "the intuition of Being". He speaks in this connection of "philosophical Eros", and in truth I do not have to repudiate - with what I put forward before you about desire - the use of such a term. But its use on this occasion – namely, in order, in the name of the philosophy of Being, to hope for the renaissance, correlatively with the development of modern science, of a philosophy of nature - is part of an Eros it seems to me that can only be situated in the register of Italian comedy!…(*laughter*). This in no way prevents, of course, that in passing, while taking one's distance and repudiating it, there being highlighted some remarks, more than one, and in truth throughout the book some sharp, and pertinent remarks, concerning what is involved, for example, in the structure of science. That effectively, our science has nothing in common with the (8) dimension of knowledge *(connaissance)*, is something which in effect is quite correct but which does not include in itself a hope, a promise of this renaissance of knowledge, in the ancient and rejected sense that is involved in our perspective.

So then, I take up again then, after this parenthesis, what it is a matter of us questioning. There is no need for us to retreat from the use of these truth tables through which the logicians introduce, for example, a certain number of fundamental functions of propositional logic.

To write that the conjunction of two propositions implies - a table, I remind you, I am not going to make all of them for you, can be seen by anyone - implies that if we put here the values of two propositions, namely, of the proposition p, the value true and the value false (namely, that it can be either true or false), and for the proposition q, the value true and the value false and that in this case, what is called conjunction, namely, that what they are, united together, will not be true unless both are true. In all the other cases, their conjunction will give a false result. Here is the type of table that is involved:

p.q	p	q
T	T	F

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F F F

I do not have to vary it for you, because it is enough for you to open the beginning of any volume whatsoever on modern logic, in order to find how there is defined differently, for example, disjunction, or again implication, or again equivalence.

And this can be a support for us, but it is only a support and a prop for what we have to ask ourselves, namely, is it licit - what we handle as I might say, by the word, what we say, in saying that there is truth - is it licit to write what we say, in so far as *writing* it is going to be for us the foundation of our manipulation?

In effect, logic, modern logic (I have just said it and repeated it), wants to establish itself - I did not say from a convention - but from a rule of writing; which rule of (9) writing, naturally, is grounded on what? On the fact that at the time of constituting its alphabet, we have posed a certain number of rules, called axioms, about their correct manipulation and that this is, in a way, a word that we have given ourselves.

Do we have the right to inscribe the signifiers T and F, the true and the false, as something that can be handled logically? It is sure that - whatever may be, in a way, the introductory, preliminary (*premissiel*) character of these truth tables in the tiny logical treatises which may come into your hands - it is sure that the whole effort of the development of this logic, will be such as to construct propositional logic without starting from these tables, even if in fact, after having constructed differently their rules of deduction, one has to come back to them. But for our part, what interests us, is also to know, let us say, at least what was meant by the fact that use was made of them, I am saying here, very especially in Stoic logic. Earlier I alluded to the *Ex falso sequitur quodlibet*... It is of course something that must have appeared a long time ago, but it is clear that it was never articulated with such force, anywhere better than among the Stoics.

The Stoics questioned themselves about the true and the false along this logical path. Namely, what is necessary for the true and the false to have a relation to logic in the proper sense that we put it here, namely, where the foundation of logic is not to be found elsewhere than in the articulation of language, in the signifying chain. That is why their logic is a logic of propositions and not one of classes. For there to be a logic of propositions, for that even to be able to operate, how must the propositions be linked together with respect to the true and the false? Either this logic has nothing to do with the true and the false, or if it has anything to do, the true ought to engender the true. This is what is called the relation of implication in the sense that it makes nothing else intervene but two propositional moments: the *protasis* (I am saying "protasis" in order not to say "hypothesis" which would immediately awaken in you the idea that one believes in something, it is not a matter of belief, nor of believing that it is true, it is a matter of positing: "protasis", that is all. Namely, that what is affirmed is affirmed as true). And the second proposition: *apodosis*. We define implication as something in which there can be, nothing more, a true protasis and apodosis: this can only give something that we put in parenthesis and which constitutes a true liaison.

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That does not at all mean that that is all that can happen! Let us suppose the same protasis false and the apododis true. Well then, the Stoics will tell you that this is true, because very precisely *ex falso sequitur quodlibet.* From the false there can be implied the true just as much as the false and, consequently, if it is true, there (10) is no logical objection here. Implication does not mean the cause, implication means this liaison in which there are united, in a certain fashion, as regards the truth table, the protasis and the apodosis. The only thing that cannot happen, at least this is the doctrine of someone called Philon who played here an eminent role, is that the protasis is true and the apodosis false. The true cannot imply the false. This is the most radical foundation of any possibility of handling, in a certain relation to the truth, the signifying chain as such.

We have here then the possibility of a table which, I repeat, is constructed in this fashion:

……. p q	p	q
T	T	T
F	F	T

Namely, when the proposition p being true, the proposition q is false, then the liaison of implication is connoted as false.

What does that mean? Naturally, the most radical conditions for the existence of a logic, as I told you. The problem is quite obvious. This is what we for our part have to do, when we subsequently shall have to speak about what is written there. In other words, when the stating subject (*sujet de l'énonciation*) comes into play. In order to highlight it, we have only to observe what happens when we say: "it is true that it is false". It does not budge, namely, quite simply the *false* regains some lustre, framework, which makes it become a radiating *false*. All the same, this is not nothing. To say: "it is false that it is true", has the same result, I mean that we ground the false, but, is it quite the same thing? Were it only to indicate the following that we have to note, that we will say rather: "it is false that it might be true". The use of the subjunctive indicates to us here that something is happening.

To say: "it is true that it is true", can also be said and leaves us an assured truth, even though it is tautological, but to say: "it is false that it is false", no doubt does not assure the same order of truth.

To say, "it is not false", does not mean to say for all that: "it is true".

We see again then, with the dimension of stating, there being put in suspense something that was only asking to function, in a quite automatic fashion at the level of writing.

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(11) This is why it is altogether striking to note what is the slippery aspect of this point where the drama, as I might say, arises very exactly from this duplicity of the subject, and it is the one that, I must say, I will not hesitate to illustrate with a little story, to which I already alluded on many occasions because it did not fail to have an impact (let us say: the career of my little story). This kind of complaint, indeed exigency, which one day emerged precisely from the throat of someone who was very seduced by what I was contributing in terms of the first articulations of my teaching, a touching ejaculation launched towards the heavens: "Why" said this personage, "why does he not say the true about the true?" This sort of urgency, indeed unease, would already find its answer sufficiently, I think, on this single condition of going again to the written signifier.

The true about the true! The T about the T. The signifier cannot signify itself, except precisely when it is not itself that it signifies, namely, when it uses metaphor. And there is nothing to prevent the metaphor which substitutes a different signifier for this T of the truth, from making the truth re-emerge at this moment, with the ordinary effect of metaphor, namely: the creation of a false signified.

This even happens all the time. And in connection with discourse, however rigorous I am attempting to make it today, this may still, in many corners of what one calls more or less appropriately your brain, generate these sorts of confusions, linked precisely to the production of the signified in metaphor. Certainly, it is not astonishing that it comes to my ears that from the same source, then, from which there was produced this nostalgic invocation, a recent statement should have taken as aim, concerning what Freud taught, what this mouth articulated so elegantly as a "conceptual watering down". There is here, in effect, a certain sort of admission in which precisely there is designated the following: the close relation that the partial object has with the structure of the subject. The ideal or even, simply, the fact of admitting that it is possible in any way to comment on a text of Freud by watering down his concepts invincibly evokes what can in no way satisfy the function of the partial object: the partial object ought to be able to be settled. In no way can the mustard pot, the mustard pot that I defined at one time as being necessarily empty (empty of mustard naturally) be filled in a satisfying fashion with what this watering down sufficiently evokes, namely, soft shit.

It is extremely essential to see the consistency, precisely, between these primordial objects and any correct handling of a dialectic that is described as subjective.

To take up again, then, the first steps that we have taken as regards implication, it is necessary to see there arising here - in this joint between the truth and this (12) handling of writing - to see what is involved, namely: **what can be written and what cannot be.**

What is meant by this "cannot be" whose definition, at the limit, remains entirely arbitrary? The only limit posed, in modern logic to the functioning of an alphabet, in a certain system, the only limit being that of the initial, axiomatic, given word. What is meant by this "cannot be?" It has its sense in the initial interdictory word

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that is given, but what can be written about it? The problem of negation is to be posed at the level of writing, in so far as it regulates it as logical functioning.

Here, immediately, of course, there appears to us the necessity which gave rise at first to this use of negation in these intuitive images marked by the first outline of what people did not even know then was an edge: the images in a way of a limit, the one in which the first logic, the one introduced by Aristotle, predicative logic, marks the field in which a class is characterised by a given predicate and the *outside this field* as designated by *not joined to the predicate*.

Naturally, it is not perceived, it is not articulated in Aristotle, that this involved the unity of the Universe of discourse. To say, as I wrote somewhere in connection with the unconscious, to show its absurdity: "there is black, and then … everything that is not so"; that this has a sense, is the foundation of the logic of classes or of the predicate. It is very precisely because of what this already involves as suspect, if not of blind alley, that people tried to establish something else.

It is not today, but certainly in the sessions that are going to follow, that I am going to try to distinguish for you, in a complete fashion, what are the logical levels, properly speaking: what it is necessary - what it is necessary from writing itself - to distinguish, concerning negation. It is by means of little letters as clear and also once fixed on this blackboard, that I will show you that there are four different levels of negation, and that classical negation - the one that invoked and appears to be founded uniquely on the principal of non-contradiction - and that classical negation is only one of them.

This technical distinction, I mean of what can be strictly formulated in formal logic, will undoubtedly be altogether essential to allow us to put in question what Freud says, (and what of course since he said it has been repeated without there ever being the smallest beginning of an examination!): that the unconscious does not know contradiction.

It is really sad that certain remarks should be launched in this form of illuminating arrow - for it really puts us on the track of the most radical developments - should (13) have remained in this suspended state, to the point that even a lady, qualified by this title that she had in effect, officially, of princess, was able to repeat it believing that she was saying something! That is precisely the danger of logic. That logic is only supported where one can handle it in the use of writing, but that properly speaking, no one can be assured that someone who speaks of it is even saying something. This indeed is what makes people suspicious of it! It is also the reason why it is so necessary for us to have recourse to the apparatus of writing. Nevertheless, our danger, our risk, is that we ought to take notice of the mode in which there arises, elsewhere than in the written articulation, this negation. Where does it come, for example? Where are we going to be able to grasp it, where are we going to be forced to write it, simply with the systems that I already produced here before you.

Let us take this implication: the proposition p implies the proposition q. Let us try to see what is involved in this starting from q, namely, what we are able to

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articulate about the proposition p if we put it after the proposition q. Well then, we ought to write negation before, or to one side, or above, somewhere linked to q.

p implies q indicates that *if not q not p*. I repeat: it is an example, and one of the most tangible ones, of the necessity of the emergence in writing of something that one would be quite wrong to believe is the same as the one that was functioning earlier, as a complementary, for example, namely, which of itself posited the Universe of discourse as One. The two things are so dissimilar that it is enough to decree it to disarticulate one from the other, to make one and the other function distinctly.

Among the varieties of this negation, which is proposed for us as having to be questioned before what can be written, namely: from the point where there is eliminated the duplicity between the stating subject and the subject of the statement - if you wish from the point at which this duplicity is maintained. We will first have the function of negation in so far as it rejects from any order of discourse, in so far as the discourse articulates it, what it is speaking about. Or, I will point it out to you very specifically, what Freud advances and what is misunderstood, when he articulates the first step of experience, in so far as it is structured by the pleasure principle: as being ordered, he says, by an *ego* and an *non-ego*. People are so little logicians that they do not see that at this moment it can only be question - this in a way that is all the more culpable because in the text of Freud the two stages are distinguished: the *ego* and the *non-ego* in so far as they are defined in the *Lust-Unlust* opposition - and so little to be considered as being of the order of this complementarity imposed by the universe of discourse, that Freud distinguished it by putting in the first line: *Ichsaussenwelt,* which is not at all of the same register.

(14) If *ego* and *non-ego* meant at that moment: grasp of the world in a Universe of discourse - which is properly speaking what is evoked by considering that primary narcissism can intervene in the analytic session - this would mean that the infantile subject, at the point at which Freud already designates it in the first functioning of the pleasure principle, is capable to doing logic. While what is at stake is properly the identification of the ego in what pleases it, in the *Lust* . Which means that the ego of the subject is alienated here in an imaginary fashion. Which means that it is precisely *outside* that what pleases is isolated as *ego*. This first *no* which is foundational as regards the narcissistic structure, in so far as in the rest of Freud it will develop into nothing less than this sort of negation of love, in connection with which - when one finds it as has happened in my discourse - it will not be said that I say the truth about the true, but that I say the truth about what Freud said.

That all love is founded on this primary narcissism is one of the terms from which Freud starts, soliciting us to know what is involved in this supposedly universal function in so far as it has reached out to this famous “intuition” - denounced earlier - of Being.

Here is this negation that we will call the mis- (*me-*) of miscognition *(meconnaissance)* which already poses us its question and which is distinguished from the complement, in so far as in the Universe of discourse it designates - and can it designate? - the counterpart, what we will call if you which, here the *counter,*

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in order to say no more and to call it the *contrary*, which is perfectly distinct from it, and is in Freud himself.

Subsequently, it is this which will enter further and in a more manageable way than it is in logical writing - what I made an allusion to earlier in implication - in so far as to regulate it in the appearance of these negations that are completely opaque in their reversal (*retourmement)*, one can call it in implication itself: the *not without (pas sans)* in implication as it is defined by the Stoic tradition, as it cannot be avoided whatever may be its paradoxes. For undoubtedly if there is some paradox in the fact that it is constituted in such a way that any propositions whatsoever, "p" and "q" constitute an implication if you join them together and that it is clear that to say: "If Madame such-and-such has straw-coloured hair, then quadrilateral triangles (*laughter*), equilateral triangles have such and such a proportion to their height". No doubt there is some paradox in this use, but what the position of reversal implies, namely, that the condition becomes necessary to go back from the second proposition to the first, it is from the aspect of the *not without* (this does not happen without). Madame such-and-such may have straw coloured hair, that does not have a necessary liaison for us with the following: that the equilateral triangle should have a particular property. Nevertheless, it remains true that the fact that (15) she has or that she does not have straw coloured hair does *not happen without* the thing which, in any case, is true.

Around the suspension of this *not without* there is profiled at once the place and the mode of emergence of what is called the *cause*. If we can give a sense, a substance to this phantastical being which people have never succeeded in exorcising from this joint, despite the fact that obviously everything that science develops always tends to eliminate it and does not reach its perfection except where there is no longer any need to speak about it, it is the function of this *not without* and the place that it occupies that will allows us to flush it out.

And to end on what will constitute, in short, the whole object and the question of our next meeting, what is meant by the term no (*non)*? Can we even make it emerge as a form of complementary, neither as a form of the *me*- of *meconnaissance,* nor in terms of this *pas sans*, when it comes to be applied to the most radical terms around which I always made turn for you the question of the fact of the unconscious. Namely, might the idea even come to us that when we speak about "*non-being*", it is a matter of this something which is supposed to be in a way on the periphery of the bubble of being? Is *non-being* then all the space outside? Is it even possible to suggest that this is what we mean when we speak, very confusedly in truth, about this *non-being* that I would prefer, on this occasion, to entitle by what is at stake and that the unconscious puts in question, namely: *the place where I am not.*

As regards *not thinking*, which will lead it to be said that here is something that cannot in any way be grasped, in that around which all the logic of the predicates turns, namely: this famous distinction - which is not one - between *extension* and *comprehension*! As if *comprehension* constituted the slightest antinomy to the register of *extension*, when it is clear that everything that has been taken as a step in

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logic in the sense of *comprehension*, was always and uniquely when one took things uniquely from the angle of *extension*.

Is this a reason for negation, here, to be able even to continue to be put to use without a primordial questioning about what is involved, if it ought to remain linked to extension? Because there is not only for us this *not to be*, since moreover the fate of *being* which is important for us as regards the subject, is linked to thinking. So then what is meant by *not thinking*? I mean: what does it mean at the point that we can write it in our logic?

This is the question - that of "I am not" (*je ne suis pas)* and of the "I do not think" *(je me pense pas)* – on which I will bring our next conversation to bear.

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Seminar 5: Wednesday 14 December 1966

While I am waiting for this piece of chalk that I may need and that I hope is going to come before long, let us talk about … the news. It is a curious thing that is not foreign to what unites us here, to speak about the way in which this book has been received in a certain zone, precisely the one that you represent, all of you, such as you are, who are here. I mean that it is curious, for example, that in far-away universities where I had no reason up to now to think that what I limited myself to saying in the seminars had such an echo, well, I do not know why, this book is sought after. So then, since I am alluding to Belgium, I point out that this evening at ten o'clock, the third programme of Radio-Bruxelles, but on FM, (the only people who will be able to benefit from it then are those who live near Lille, but I know that I also have listeners from Lille) well then, at ten o'clock there will be transmitted a little response that I gave to someone who is one of the most agreeable of those who came to interview me. On this point there are others, of course, other countries that are still more distant, in which it is not sure that it is always so successful.

But in any case I am going to start - because we have to make a transition - I am going to start from an idiotic question which was put to me. What I am calling an idiotic question is not what one might think, I mean, something which in no way displeases me - I love idiotic questions - I also love idiots *(idiotes)*, I also love idiots *(idiots)*, it is not a privilege of the sex. In a word what I call idiotic, is something that, in this case, is quite simply natural and proper. An idiotism is something that is confused too quickly with singularity, it is something natural, simple, and in a word, very often linked to the situation. The person in question, for example, had not opened my book. She posed me the following question: "What is the link between your *Ecrits*"? I must (2) say that it is a question that would never had struck me of my own accord. Of course! I must also say that it is a question that it would never have struck me would have struck anyone else. But it is a very interesting question, in truth, to which I made every effort to reply.

And to respond to, well, my God, as it was put to me, namely, that since it was put to me for the first time, it was for me a veritable source of questions and, to go quickly, I replied to it in the following terms. That what seemed to me to form the link - I am thinking here not so much of my teaching but my *Ecrits* as they may present themselves to someone who, precisely, is going to open them - well then, it is what - in the order of what is called "identity" - everyone has the right to refer to, in order to apply it to himself.

I mean that from the *Mirror stage* up to the last notations that I was able to write under the rubric of the *Subversion of the subject*, when all is said and done, this would be the link.

And as you know, this year (I am only recalling it for those who come here for the first time), I thought I ought - in speaking (I am saying it also for them) about the logic

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of the phantasy – to start from this remark which, for those who are familiar with here has nothing new about it, but is essential, that the signifier cannot signify itself. It is not quite the same thing for the subject as this question bearing on the sort of identity that might be applicable to himself. But anyway, to say things in a way that makes them resonate, the start - and what remains a link up to the end of this collection - is indeed this something thoroughly discussed, this is the least that can be said, throughout these *Ecrits* and which is expressed in this formula - which comes to everyone and which is maintained, I must say, with regrettable certainty - which is expressed as follows: "Me, I am me" *(moi, je suis moi)*.

I think there are few of you who do not have to struggle in order to shake off this conviction and, after all, moreover, even if it were struck from their documents, large or small, it nevertheless remains that it is always extremely dangerous. In effect what is immediately engaged on, the path onto which people slip is the following, which I signalled at the beginning of this year - you see that the question is posed immediately and in the most natural fashion. The very people among whom there is so strongly established this certainty, do not hesitate to settle just as frivolously what is not part of them. "It is not me". "I did not behave in that way". It is not the privilege of babies to say "It is not me". A whole theory of the psychological genesis of the world for each person, will even start quite plainly from this: that the first steps in experience, for the one who is living it, the being who is "*infans*", and subsequently infantile, will be for him to make the distinction (says the professor of psychology) between the (3) "ego" and the non-ego. Once engaged along this path, it is quite clear that the question cannot be taken further. Because to engage oneself in this opposition between the ego and the non-ego, as if it were considered as something which could be decided with the simple limit of a negation (including, in addition, the excluded third, I suppose), completely rules out, makes it completely out of the question, that there should be attacked, what is nevertheless the only important question, namely, whether "me, I am me".

It is certain that in opening my book, every reader will be caught very quickly in this link. But this is not, for all that, a reason for him to remain in it. Because what is bound together by this link, also gives him enough opportunities, a sufficiently enormous number of opportunities, to occupy himself with other things, things which, precisely, are illuminated by being caught in this link and, therefore, slip out of its field again.

Which is conceivable because of the fact that it is obviously not on the terrain of identification itself that the question can really be resolved. It is precisely by referring, not simply this question, but everything that it involves - in particular the question of the unconscious, which presents, it has to be said, difficulties which leap much more immediately to the eye as regards what it should be identified to - it is, with regard to this question of identification, but not simply limited to what in the subject is believed to be grasped under the identification me *(moi),* that we employ the reference to structure. We have to start from something external to what is given immediately, intuitively, in this field of identification, namely, for example, the remark that I re-evoked earlier, that no signifier is able to signify itself.

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So then, to start today from why I asked for chalk, since it is a matter of structure, what. One of the sources of my embarrassment here, sometimes, is that it is necessary for me to make rather long detours to explain certain elements to you. It is certainly not my fault if they are not within your reach, namely, commonly enough in circulation, for, as one might say, these first truths to be considered as understood when I speak to you about them. I am going to make for you here the schema of what is called a group. I alluded on several occasions to what a group signifies starting, for example, from set theory. I am not going to begin again today, especially given the path that we have to travel. What is involved is the *Klein group*, in as much as it is a group defined by a certain number of operations. There are no more than three of them. What results from them is defined by a very simple series of equalities, between two of them, and a result that can be obtained otherwise, namely, by one of the others, for example, one by the *other* of the two, for example.

(4) I am not saying at all by one of the others, and you are going to see why. We are going to symbolise this Klein group by the operations in questions, on condition that they are organised in a network such that each coloured line corresponds to one of these operations. The colour pink, then, corresponds to one and the same operation, this blue colour also, the yellow line also. You see then that each one of these operations - which I can leave in the most complete indetermination, until I have given it greater specificity - each of these operations is found at two different places in the network. We define the relation between these operations, by which they are founded as a Klein group. It is the same Klein that I mentioned in connection with the bottle, called by that name. Operations of these three, a, b, c, each of them, all of them, have this character of being operations which are described as *involutional*. The most simple, to represent this type of operation, but not the only one, is for example: *negation*. You deny something, you put the sign of negation onto something, whether it is a predicate or a proposition: *it is not true that*… You put a negation again on what you get. The important thing is to posit that there is a use of negation where there can be admitted the following: not as you are taught, that two negations are the same as an affirmation (we do not know what we started from, we have perhaps not started from an affirmation), but whatever we have started from, this sort of operation, of which I am giving you an example in negation, has as a result: *zero*. It is as if one had done nothing. That is what is meant by saying that the operation is involutional. Therefore, we can write, (if by making the letters succeed one another, we mean that the operation is repeated) that *aa, bb, cc*, are each equivalent to zero. Zero with respect to what we had before, namely, that if before, for example, we had 1, that means that after *aa,* there will still be 1. This is worth underlining. But there can be many other operations of negation which have this result. Suppose it is a question of a *change of sign* (this is not the same as negation). By having 1 at the beginning, I would have –1, then, making the *minus* function on the *minus* of -1, I would again have 1 at the start. It nevertheless remains that these two operations, although different, would have had as a same manifestation being involutional, namely, to arrive at zero as a result. On the other hand, it is enough for you to consider this diagram for you to see that *a* to which there succeeds *b* has the same effect as *c*, that *b* to which there succeeds *c* has the same effect as *a*. This is what is called the Klein group.

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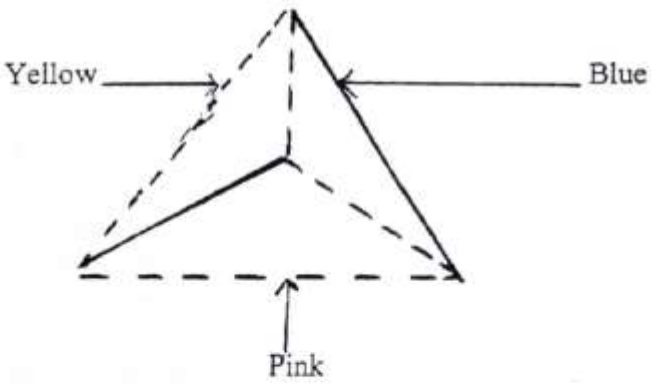
(5)

KLEIN GROUP

a . b . c.

Figure 1



a a = o

b b = o

c c = o

a b = c

a c = b

b c = a

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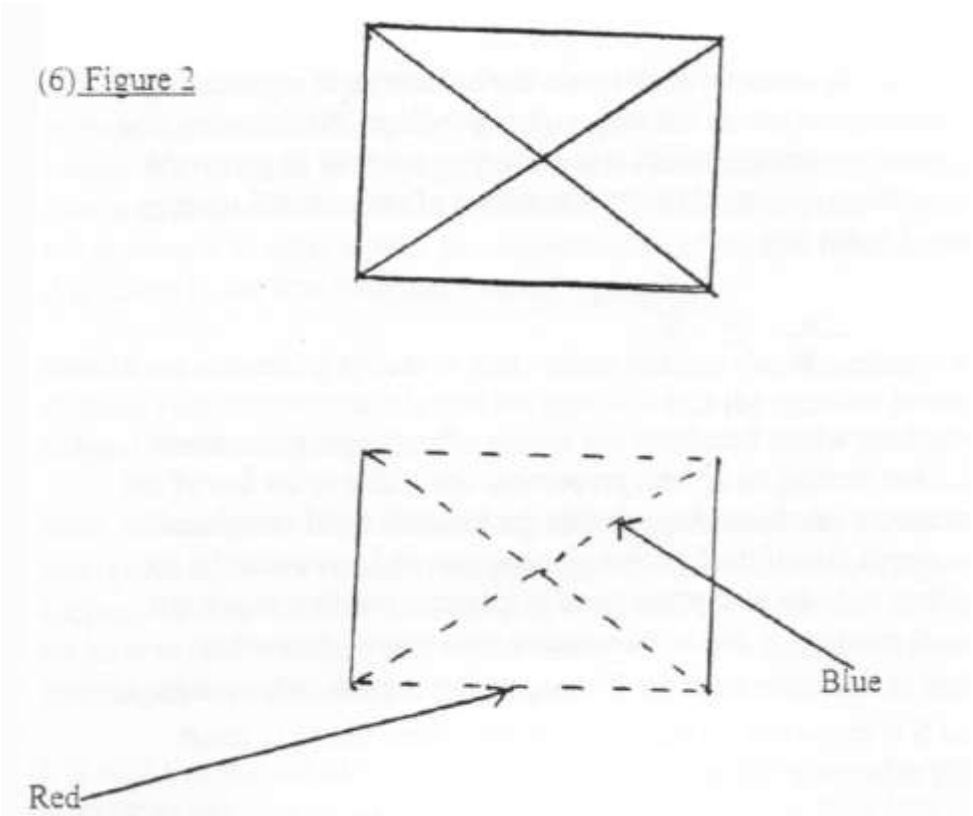
Since, perhaps, certain intuitive exigencies you may have, would like to have on this a little more to get your teeth into, I can note for you - because here, this week, it is



(7) really within the reach of everyone, in all the kiosques - a rather slim issue of a journal which… (you know already what I think of journals and I am not going to indulge today in the repetition of a certain play on words that I usually use), anyway, in this journal [*Les Temps Modernes*] where there is not very much, there is an article on structure in mathematics which obviously could be more developed but which - on the short surface that it has chosen, quite correctly, faith, since it is precisely the Klein group that is involved - chews things over for you, I must say with extreme care. For what I have just shown you there, which is very simple, I believe that there are, faith, twenty-four pages which are taken a step at a time. Nevertheless, this could be a very useful exercise - in any case for those who like things to be drawn out - a very useful exercise, which can really accustom you to what is involved in this Klein group. If I take it up it is because - and if I present it to you from the beginning - it is going to be, at least I hope so, of some service to us.

If we start again from structure, you remember enough of the steps I made it turn around for the idea to strike you that the functioning of a group structured in this way … which to function, as you see, can be satisfied with four elements, which are represented here on the network which supports it by the vertices, in other words where there is encountered the skeleton of this little figure that you see inscribed here. Note… [**How long are we going to have to put up with this***?*]. Note that there is no difference between this figure and the one that I sketch in here rapidly with the white chalk and which also has four vertices, each one having the property of being linked to the three others. From the point of view of structure, it is exactly the same. But we

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have only to colour in the lines that join the vertices, two by two, in the following way, for you to see that it is exactly the same structure. In other words, the median point in this network, in this figure is not privileged. The advantage in representing it differently is to mark that there is not, in this respect, any privilege. Nevertheless, the other figure has still another advantage, which is to make you put your finger on the fact that there is here one thing among others that the notion of proportional relation may eventually overlap. I mean that:

$$\frac{a}{b} = \frac{c}{t}$$

(8) for example, is something which functions, but among others, among numerous other structures which have nothing to do with proportion, according to the law of the Klein group. It is a matter for us of knowing whether the function that I introduced under terms, like for example that of the function of metaphor, as I represented it by the structure: S, a signifier, in so far as it posits itself in a certain position which is properly the metaphorical position or that of substitution with respect to another signifier - S coming then to substitute itself for S' - something is produced, in so far as the link between S' and S is preserved, as possible to reveal, there comes to result from it the new meaning otherwise called a *signified effect*.

Two signifiers are involved, two positions of one of these signifiers, and a heterogeneous element, the fourth element *s*, signified effect, the one which is the result of the metaphor and that I write as follows:

$$\frac{\text{S (signifier)}}{\text{S}^1\text{ (signifier)}} \times \frac{\text{S}^1}{\text{s (signified effect)}}$$

The fact is that S in so far as it has come to replace S', becomes the factor of an S(1/s) which is what I call the *metaphorical effect of meaning*.

$$\frac{\text{S}}{\text{S}'} \times \frac{\text{S}^1}{\text{s}} \longrightarrow \text{S}\,\frac{(1)}{(\text{s})}$$

As you know, I give great importance to this structure in so far as it is fundamental to explain the structure of the unconscious. Namely, that in the moment considered as primary, original, in repression, it is a matter, I say - since this is the mode of presenting it that is proper to me - it is a matter, I say, of an effect of signifying substitution at the origin. When I say at the origin, what is at stake is a *logical* origin and not anything else. What is substituted has an effect that the *penchants* of the tongue, as one might say, in French, can allow us to express immediately in a very lively fashion: the substitute has as effect to *sub-situate(sub-situer)* what it substitutes itself for. What is found, because of this substitution, in the position that is believed, that is imagined, that is even made part of the doctrine - very wrongly, as it happens - to be effaced, is *simply sub-situated,* which is the way that today I will translate - because it seems to me particularly practical – Freud's *Unterdrückt*.

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(9) What then is the repressed? Well then, however paradoxical this may appear, the repressed as such, in this theory is only supported - is only **written** - at the level of its return. It is in so far as the signifier extracted from the formula of metaphor, comes as a liaison, in the chain, with what constituted the substitute, that we put our finger on the repressed, in other words: the representative of the first representation in so far as it is linked to the first – logical - fact of repression.

Should not something appear to you, whose relation you immediately sense to the formula - not identical to this one but parallel - that **the signifier is what represents a subject for another signifier?**

Here, the metaphor of the functioning of the unconscious: the S in so as far as it re-emerges to allow the return of the repressed S' - the S finds itself representing the subject, the subject of the unconscious, at the level of something else, which is what we have to deal with here and whose effect we have to determine as an effect of meaning and which is called: the symptom.

It is with this that we have to deal and this is, moreover, what it is necessary to recall in so far as this four term formula - a four term formula which is here the cell, the kernel in which there appears to us the proper difficulty of establishing a primordial logic, as such, of the subject, in so far as this comes to rejoin what, from other horizons, through other disciplines, which have reached a point of rigour very superior to ours, notably that of mathematical logic, is expressed as follows: that it is no longer tenable now to consider that there is a *Universe of discourse*.

It is clear that in the Klein group there is nothing to imply this flaw *(faille)* of the Universe of discourse. But nothing implies either that this flaw is not there! For what is proper to this flaw in the Universe of discourse, is that if it is manifested at certain points of paradox - which are not always so paradoxical, moreover, as I told you: the so-called paradox of Russell is not one - and it is by expressing things differently, that it must be designated that the Universe of discourse does not close on itself.

Nothing indicates then, in advance, that a structure so fundamental in the order of structuring references as the Klein group does not allow us - on condition of grasping our operations in an appropriate fashion - does not allow us to support in some way what it is a mattering of supporting, namely, on this occasion - this is my aim today - the relation that we can give, to our requirement of giving its structural status to the unconscious … to what? To the Cartesian *cogito.*

(10) For it is quite certain that this Cartesian *cogito* - it is not even the thing to say, to remark, that I did not choose it by chance - it is indeed because it presents itself as an *aporia,* a radical contradiction to the status of the unconscious, that so many debates have already revolved around this supposedly fundamental status of self-consciousness.

But if it was found, after all, that the *cogito* presents itself as being the best reverse side (e*nvers)* that you could find, from a certain point of view, to the status of the unconscious, there might perhaps be something gained, which we can already presume is not at all improbable, in the fact that I have already reminded you of. That

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there cannot even be conceived - I am not saying a formulation but even a discovery - what is involved in the unconscious, before the advent, the inaugural promotion of the subject of the *cogito*, in so far as this promotion is co-extensive with the advent of science.

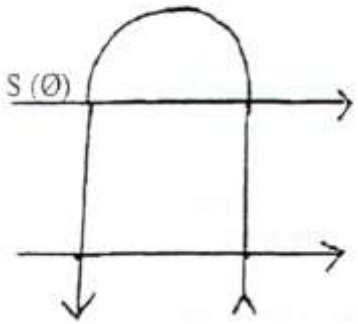
There could not have been any psychoanalysis outside the era, so structuring for thinking, that is constituted by the advent of our science. This is the point on which we ended not last year, but already the previous year.

In effect, remember the point whose interest I already signalled to you, of this graph, of this graph that most of you know and to which you can now easily refer in my book, specifically as it is developed in the article: *Subversion of the subject and dialectic of desire.*

What is meant (it is perhaps worthwhile remarking it now) by what is found at the level of the upper chain and on the left of this little graph which, when drawn, is constructed as follows:

Here we have the mark or the index S(Ø)which I have not – for the years that it exists, that it is placed in this graph - about which I have not given so many commentaries, in any case certainly not enough for me to not to have the opportunity today, here, to point out that what is involved, precisely, in this place of the graph, is the S of a signifier,in so far is it is supposed to concern,
in so far as it is supposed to be the equivalent, to something like the following, the presence of what I called the <u>One too many</u> *(Un-en-trop)*, which is also what is lacking, what is lacking in the signifying chain, in so far, very precisely, as there is no Universe of discourse.

(11) “There is no Universe of discourse”, means very exactly the following: that at the level of the signifier, this *One too many*, which is at the same time the signifier of lack, is properly speaking what is at stake and what ought to be maintained, maintained as altogether essential, preserved in the function of the structure, in so far as it interests us, of course, if we follow the track, along which, after all, I have up to the present lead more or less all of you - since you are there - that the unconscious is structured like a language.



In a certain place, it appears, (it was reported to me and I do not see any reason why this information should not be correct), someone, and it would not displease me if one day he came to present himself here - begins his lectures on the unconscious by

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saying: “If there is anyone here for whom the unconscious is structured like a language, he can leave right away!” (*laughter*).

We can relax a little. I am going, all the same, to tell you how these things are commented on at the baby level - because since my book has appeared even the babies are reading my book! - at the baby level, something was reported to me that I cannot help communicating to you. People discuss then a bit, about this and that, and among those who are not in agreement, there is one who says the following (which in short I could not have invented): “Here as elsewhere, there are the a-Freud*”! (general laughter*). You know this is not too wide of the mark! Just before an interview that I allowed myself to be surprised by, on the radio, just before me, there is someone, a voice, an anonymous one I must say (so that I would not upset anyone by quoting him), to whom the question was posed: “Must one read Freud?” “Read Freud”, replied this psychoanalyst who had been described as eminent (*laughter*) - “read Freud? Nay! Absolutely no necessity! No need, no need, simply the techique, the technique! But Freud, it is not at all necessary to interest oneself in him”….

So that I really do not have too much trouble in showing that there are places where, “a-Freud” or not, people scarcely concern themselves with Freud.

So then let us take things up again. This signifier, it is a matter then, this signifier of the following: something which concerns the necessary “one too many” *(Un-en-trop)* of the signifying chain as such, *qua* written - I underline - it is for us the substitute for the Universe of discourse. For this indeed is what is at stake, it is a matter here of what is, for the start of this year, our guiding thread - that it is in so far as we treat language and the order that it proposes to us as a structure, through the medium of writing, that we can highlight that there results from it the proof, on the written plane, of the non-existence of this Universe of discourse.

(12) If logic (what is so called) had not taken the path that it took in modern logic, namely, of treating logical problems by purifying them, to the final limit, of the intuitive element which had been able for centuries to make so satisfying, for example, Aristotle’s logic - which, incontestably, retained a large part of this intuitive element - to render it so seductive that, for Kant himself - who was certainly no idiot - that for Kant himself, there was nothing to add to this logic of Aristotle. Even though it was enough to let a few years pass to see that by treating - by simply being tempted to treat - these problems by this sort of transformation which resulted simply from the use of writing, so that already since then it has become widespread and has accustomed us to its formulae by means of algebra, so that suddenly everything in the structure came to pivot and change sense. Namely, allows us to pose the problem of logic quite differently, in reaching what - far from diminishing its value and precisely what gives it all its value - in reaching what in it, as such, is pure structure. Which means: the structure effect of language.

This then is what is at stake.

And what does that mean, this capital S with, in brackets, this O barred, (Ø), if not, at the level that we are at, the designation by a signifier of what is involved in the *One too many*?

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But then, you will say to me - or rather, I hope, you are going to restrain yourselves from saying – for, naturally, since we are always on the edge, on the cutting edge of identification - just as quite naturally, from the mouth of the naive person who starts to indoctrinate you: "I am not me"… So then, she says: "Who is me?" - in the same way around this invincible renaissance of the mirage of the identity of the subject, we can say: do we not, by making this signifier of *One too many* function operate as if the obstacle, as I might say, could be overcome and if we were to leave in the circulation of the chain what precisely cannot enter into it? Namely: the catalogue of all the catalogues which do not contain themselves, printed in the catalogue, and consequently, devaluating.

Now this is not what is at stake. This is not what is at stake, because in the signifying chain, (that we can consider, for example, as made up of the whole series of letters that exist in French) it is in so far as at every instant, in order that any one of these letters whatsoever can take the place of all the others, it is necessary for it to be barred from it, that this bar then is turning and - virtually - strikes each one of the letters, that we have, inserted in the chain, the function of the *One too many* among the signifiers. (13) But you evoke this signifier too many as such provided, as is indicated here, we put it outside the brackets where the bar functions, always ready to suspend the use of each signifier when it is a matter of it signifying itself, the signifying indication of the function of the *One too many,* as such, is possible. Not alone is possible, but is properly speaking what is going to manifest itself as the possibility of a direct intervention on the function of the subject. In so far as the signifier is what represents the subject for another signifier, everything that we do which resembles this S (Ø) and which, you clearly sense, corresponds to nothing less than to the function of interpretation, is going to be judged by what? By, in conformity with the system of the metaphor, by the intervention, in the chain, of this signifier which is immanent to it as *One too many*, and as *One too many* capable of producing in it this effect of metaphor, which here is going to be what? Is it by a signified effect (as the metaphor seems to indicate) that interpretation operates? Undoubtedly, in conformity with the formula, by a meaning effect. But this meaning-effect (*effet de signification*) is to be specified at the level of its logical structure, in the technical sense of the term. I mean that the rest of the discourse, of the one that I am addressing to you, will specify all the reasons why this meaning-effect is made precise, is specified and ought in a way to delimit the function of interpretation in its proper sense, in analysis, as a **truth-effect** *(effet de vérité).*

But, moreover, this of course is only a step along the road, after which there opens out a parenthesis, to give you all the motives for this that would allow me, thus, to specify the interpretation-effect. You should clearly understand that I said *truth-effect*, that the truth of the interpretation can in no way be prejudged, I mean, whether, until further notice, the index "true" or "false", may or not be affected to the signifier of interpretation itself. This signifier up to now was only an *additional signifier* or even a signifier *too many,* as such, signifying, until it arrives, some lack, some lack, precisely, as lacking in the Universe of discourse. I only said one thing, which is that the effect is going to be a truth-effect. But it is not for nothing either that I put forward certain things, as I am able, each one in its turn, as one sometimes pushes a flock of sheep. And that if, last time, I made the remark, the remark that in the order

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of implication, *qua* material implication, namely, in so far as there exists what is called the *consequence* in the signifying chain, which means nothing other than *antecedent* and *consequent*, *protasis* and *apodosis,* and that I pointed out to you that there is no obstacle to a premise being false provided its conclusion is true, for it to be classified with the index of truth

Suspend your spirit, then, on what I called the *truth-effect*, until we know a little bit (14) more about it, are able to say a little bit more certainly what is involved in the function of interpretation.

Now, we are going to be lead simply, today, to produce something that concerns the *cogito*. The Cartesian *cogito,* in the sense that you know it, is not all that simple, since among the people who devote to the work of Descartes - or who have devoted - their existence, there remain very large divergences, as regards the way in which it ought to be interpreted and commentated.

Am I going or am I doing up to the moment something which would consist in involving myself, I, a specialist … non-specialist (*laughter*), or a specialist in something else, involve myself in Cartesian debates? Naturally, after all, I have as much right to it as anybody else. I mean that the *Discourse on method*, or the *Meditations* are addressed to me as much as to anyone. And that it is appropriate for me, on any point that is being dealt with, to question myself about the function of the *ergo*, for example, in the *cogito, ergo sum*. I mean that I am permitted, as much as any one else, to highlight that in the Latin translation that Descartes gives of the *Discourse on method,* very precisely in 1644, there appears, as a translation of the *Je pense, donc je suis*: *Ergo sum sive existo*; and on the other hand, in the *Meditations*, in the second meditation and, just after, he feels some enthusiasm, he compares to the point of Archimedes, this point from which one may expect so much, he says: "If I have only touched, if I have only invented (*invenero)*, this minimum, which includes something certain and unshakeable *(certum et inconcussum)",* that it is in the same text that he formulates (this formula which is not absolutely identical): *Ergo sum, ego existo*. And that, finally, in the *Principle*s *of the search for truth by natural light,* it is: *dubito ergo sum*; which for the psychoanalyst has a completely different resonance - but a resonance in which I will not try today to engage myself in, it is too slippery a terrain, to… (with the current habits, those which allow people to speak about M Robbe-Grillet by applying to him the grid of obsessional neurosis) (*laughter)* - presents for psychoanalysts too many dangers of tripping up, or even of ridicule, for me to go far in this sense.

But on the contrary, I underline that what is involved for us is something which offers us a certain choice. The choice that I am making, on this occasion, is the following: to leave in suspense everything that a logician may bring up in terms of questions around the *cogito ergo sum.* Namely, the order of implication that is involved. If it is simply material implication, you see where that leads us. If it is material implication - according to the formula that I wrote the last time on the board (and that I do not mind (15) writing again provided I am given the space) - it is uniquely in the measure that the second proposition of implication - *I am* - would be false in so far as the *therefore* indicates it, that the link of implication between the two terms could be rejected. In other words, the only important thing is to know whether if the *I am* is true, there

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would be any difficulty in the *I think* being false - I am saying: for the formula to be acceptable *qua* implication.

I think: it is me who says it. After all, it may be that I believe that I am thinking, but that I am not thinking. This even happens every day to many people. Since implication, that is - which I repeat, in pure and simply implication, the one that is called *material implication* - requires only one thing: that the conclusion should be true.

In other words, logic including a reference to the functions of truth, in establishing the table in a certain number of matrices, can only define - in order to remain consistent with itself - can only define certain operations as implications, by admitting them as functions which would be still better named: *consequences*. *Consequences* only meaning by that the following: the breadth of the field in which, in a signifying chain, we can put the connotation of truth. We can put the connotation of truth on the liaison of a *false* first of all, subsequently of a *true* and not the inverse.

This, of course - it is certain - leaves us far from the order of what has to be said about the Cartesian *cogito* as such, in its proper order, which no doubt implies, involves, the constitution of the subject as such. Namely, complicates what is involved in writing *qua* regulating the functioning of the logical operation, goes beyond it precisely in the fact that this writing itself, no doubt, here only represents a more primordial functioning of something which, from this point of view, deserves indeed for us to be posited as a function of writing, in as far as it is on it that there depends the veritable status of the subject and not on his intuition of being the one-who-thinks. An intuition justified by what, if not by something that at this moment is profoundly hidden from him. Namely, what does he *want* in seeking this certainty on this terrain of progressive evacuation, of cleaning up, of sweeping away everything that is within his reach concerning the function of knowledge.

And then, after all, what is this *cogito*?

Ago: I push, (as I was speaking about it earlier - my sheep: this forms part of my work when I am here, it is not necessarily the same when I am all alone nor when I am in (16) my analyst's chair).

Cogo: I push together.
C*ogito:* all that is being stirred up!

When all is said and done, if there were not this desire of Descartes which orients this cogitation in such a decisive fashion, we could translate the *cogito,* as one can translate it after all, wherever cogitating goes on, one could translate it as I am fiddling!…

Why *cogito* and not *puto*, for example, which has also a sense in Latin. This even means: to prune: which, for us analysts, has little resonances … anyway, *puto ergo sum* would have perhaps a different core, a different style, perhaps different consequences. We do not know if he had begun by pruning - really in the sense of

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pruning - he would perhaps, at the end, have pruned God! While with *cogito* it is something different.

And, moreover, *cogito…cogito* is written, first of all, if we have noticed that *cogito* could be written with respect to the total formula: *Cogito*: "*ergo sum"*, it is here indeed that we can grasp again the intuition and have it grasped that some…content, this liquid which fills, which derives from …- properly: from structure - from the apparatus of language.

Let us not forget, as regards certain functions, in so far perhaps … (I said "perhaps" because I am beginning to introduce it and I will have to come back to it) … in so far, perhaps, as they are those where the subject does not simply find himself in the position of *acting being* (*être-agent)*, but in the position of subject; very precisely in so far as the subject is more than involved, is fundamentally determined by the very act in question.

The ancient tongues had a different register: *diathesis*, as those who have the vocabulary say, on this terrain, that is called *median diathesis*, that is why – as regards what is a stake and which is called language, in so far as it determines this other thing in which the subject is constituted as a speaking being - one says: *loquor.*

And then, it is not today or yesterday that I tried to explain all these things to those who come to listen to me whatever may be the pre-occupations which render them more or less deaf to it. Let them remember the time when I explained to them the difference between *celui qui te suivrai* and *celui qui te suivra. "Je suis celui qui te suivrai"* does not have the same sense as *"je suis celui qui te suivra"*. If there are two of them, which can only be recognised in this difference of tense, after the opacity of the relative and of *celui*, which designates the subject, it is because there is no middle voice in French, that it is not seen that *suivre* can only be said as *sequor*, in so far as by the simply fact of following, one is not the same as not having followed. These are (17) not complicated things. They are things that interest us as regards what can be said about a thinking that would really be such. A truly true thinking! How would this be said in Latin in the middle voice? What would be preferable would be to find one of them which would be among what is called the *media tantum*: where the verb only exists in the middle voice, as in the two that I have just quoted for you.

It is a riddle! No one is lifting a hand to propose something? I regret that. I will tell you. But after all it would perhaps be going a little bit quick to tell you now. Perhaps, precisely, it is on the occasion of what the psychoanalyst does, when he interprets, that I will be lead to tell you … But anyway, we still have to advance, as we are doing, step by step.

To give you all the same a little indication about this voice, I refer you (you understand that all this is not my own invention, uniquely) to the article by Benveniste, in the recent collection, that he also made. He includes an article that luckily we have all read a long time ago in the *Journal de Psychologie,* on the *active voice* and the *middle voice*. It will explain something to you that, perhaps, if I am thinking of it now, may open up your ideas a little.

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It appears that in Sanskrit you can say, "I sacrifice", in two ways. It is not a verb that is *media tantum*, nor *activa tantum*, there are the two, as for many verbs, moreover, in Latin. But in any case, one uses the active voice when? For the verb *to sacrifice*. Well then, it is when the priest is making the sacrifice to Brahma -or to whomever you want - for a client. He says to him: "Come, a sacrifice must be made to God", and the chap says: "Very well, very well". He give him his gadget and then, voila!, a sacrifice. That is the active one! There is a nuance. One uses the middle voice when he is officiating **in his own name**.

It is a little complicated for me to be putting this forward to you now; because this does not simply bring into play a flaw (*faille)*, that has to be put somewhere between the stating subject and the subject of the statement, which works immediately as regards *loquor*. But here it is a little bit more complicated because there is the Other. The Other, that with the sacrifice, one catches in the trap. It is not the same thing to catch the Other in the trap in one's own name or if it is simply for the client, who needs to have his duty done to the divinity and who is going to look for the technician. A riddle: (I sense that I am going from riddle to riddle!) where are the analogies in the relation that is described as the analytic situation? Who officiates and for whom? It is a question that one may ask.

(18) I am only posing it to make you sense the fact that there is a function of the failure (*déchéance)* of the word within analytic technique. I mean that it is a technical artifice that submits this word to the simple laws of consequence. One puts one's trust in nothing else: it must simply keep going. It is not all that natural, as we know, from experience. People do not learn this trade, as someone has said, immediately. Or else they must really want to officiate. Because this is very like an office, precisely, that one is asks him to perform, as our worthy Brahmin has to, when he has learnt his trade a little, pouring out his little prayers or thinking about something else.

Cogito, ergo sum … What *sum's* in this *sum*? This is something that may help us understand that in any case, whatever may be the correct place of our reflections with respect to what concerns this Cartesian step - which it is not at all a matter, of course, of reducing; you know that I give it its adequate historical place - so that here, as you clearly see, it is only a matter of a utilisation, but a utilisation, moreover, which remains relevant! Namely, that it is starting from there, in this case, if what I am saying is true, starting from the moment that one is dealing with thinking - thinking is something, it has its past, its titles of nobility! - I know well that previously people did not dream, no one ever dreamt, of making the relation to the world turn around: "Me, I am me"! The division between the me and the non-me is something which never struck anyone before some recent century! It is the ransom, it is the price that had to be paid for what? The fact of having thrown thinking in the dustbin, perhaps.

Cogito, after all, in Descartes, is rubbish, since he effectively put in the waste-paper basket everything that he examined in his *cogito*. I think that those who follow me see a little bit the interest and the relation that all of this has with what I am in the process of putting forward.

Starting from the written formulation of the new logic, a certain number of things were stated, which had not appeared with any obviousness up to then, and which,

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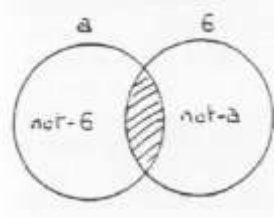
nevertheless, are of interest. For example, that if you want to deny *a* and *b*, I put in a bar, and, by convention, this constitutes negation:

$$\overline{a \quad \text{and} \quad b}$$



(19) The advantage of these written procedures is well known: it is that this must work like a little mill: no need to reflect! It consists in writing, not-*a* or not-*b*, there you are, that is all.

$$\overline{a \quad \text{and} \quad b} \quad = \quad \overline{a} \quad \text{or} \quad \overline{b}$$

You can go looking in Mr de Morgan, who discovered this and in Mr Boole who rediscovered it, what that corresponds to.

Good, I am going all the same - to my great regret - to image it for you. Because I know that there people who are going to be annoyed if I do not do it. But I regret it, because these people are probably going to be satisfied and believe that they have understood something … That moreover is the reason why I am going to show it to them, but, at that moment, they will be definitively plunged into error! Nevertheless, what does that mean?

Here are two sets, *a* and *b*: either one or the other. Either not-*a*, or not-*b*. It is naturally excluded: this (hatched part), namely, what is called the symmetrical difference; this is what is called the complement, in this set. This is, interpreted at the level of sets, the function of negation - negation being what is not this *a* and *b*, they are the two other areas of these two sets which as you see have a common sector - it is the two areas indifferently - I say, indifferently - which fulfill this function.

I am announcing to you - in order (since it is two o'clock) to put it off to the next time - that we will exam all the ways that we can seek, to operate on this *I think, therefore I am,* in order to define in it operations which would allow us to grasp its relation, first of all to being put in the wrong:

"*I think and I am not"*
(Je pense et je ne suis pas)

To another transformation, also, which is possible and which you will see is of burning interest, when I tell you that it is the Aristotelian position:

"*I am not thinking or I am"*
(Je ne pense pas ou je suis)

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And then the fourth, which overlaps very exactly the one inscribed as follows:

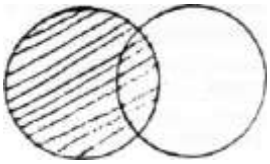
This whole circle, symbolising, since I chose to give a support so that you may retain today something of the point that I have got to:

Either I am not thinking or I am not
(Ou je ne pense pas ou je ne suis pas)

I will try to put forward such an apparatus as being the best translation that we could give to our use of the Cartesian *cogito*, to serve as a point of crystallisation for the subject of the unconscious.

This inverse - and you clearly see that this inverse is only negation with respect to the set in which we make it function – it is a matter for us of questioning this inverse that the "*either I am not or I do not think"* realises with respect to the *cogito,* in such a way that we discover - both the sense of this *vel (or)* which unites it and the exact import that negation can take on here, for us to account for what is involved in the subject of the unconscious.

This is what I will do then on the 21st of December. This is what will close, I hope, finally - if I can keep going until then - this year, which will allow us the right starting point, subsequently, for what it is appropriate for us to work through this year as *logic of phantasy.*



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Seminar 6: 21 December 1966

I think I proved to you the last time that I can tolerate a lot of little trials: the bulb, like that, going on and off…(*laughter*). In previous times, in these bogey-man stories, the explanation was given how people were lead, in certain places, to their auto-critique. It was used for that. In any case, it was less disagreeable for me than for you, I must say - because I had it over me and you had it in your eyes.

You were able to see that these little discomforts are not capable of deviating me from what I have to say. That is why I hope you will not try to refer to any personal sensitivity the fact that today we will not be celebrating, despite the fact that it is the season for it. I am warning you right away; I will not give today the seminar that I had prepared for you. I apologise to those who perhaps might have delayed their holiday plans in some way to benefit from it. At the very least no one will have gone out of his way for absolutely nothing, since I hope you all have the little copy with which I pay homage to you as an end of year gift. I have not gone so far as to put in a dedication for each of you, since there are too many names that I do not know, but of course it can always be done!

We have arrived at the moment at which I am going to formulate formulae about the unconscious that I consider as decisive, logical formulae that you saw appearing written on the blackboard the last time, in the form of this "either I do not think or I am not" (*ou je ne pense pas ou ne suis pas)*, with this reservation: that this *or* is neither a *vel* (the *or* of union: the one, the other, or both), nor an *aut* (at least one, but no more: you have to choose). It is neither one nor the other.

And this will be the occasion for me to introduce, I hope, in a fashion which will be acceptable in logical calculation, a different function: the one which, in these truth tables, would be characterised by this operation which should be called by a different (2) name, even though there is one which I have already used, but since it has other applications, may be ambiguous. It doesn't matter! I will make the link with it: it is a matter of nothing other, I point out to you - I am not here to play at mysteries - than what I at one time indicated here under the term of *alienation*, but what matter! It is up to you to make the choice. Meanwhile, let us call this operation *omega* and, in the truth table, let us characterise it by the following: if the two propositions on which it operates are true, the result of the operation is false.

You can consult the truth tables that you have within hand's reach, and you will see that none of those in use up to now from conjunction, to disjunction, to implication, fulfil this condition.

When I say that the conjunction of the true and the true gives, by this operation, the false, I mean that every other conjunction here is true: that of the false and the false, of the false and the true, of the true and the false.

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The relation between this with what is involved in the nature of the unconscious, is what I hope to articulate before you on the 11th January, for which in any case I give you a *rendezvous*. You can well imagine that if I am not doing it today - on this point, I think, you can trust me - it is because my formulation if not ready, nor what I could limit it to today. Nevertheless, if, effectively, it is from a certain fear of putting it before you in all its rigour, on a day where I find myself embarrassed, because of the fact that I spent these last hours questioning myself about something which is nothing less than the appropriateness or not of continuing this: the fact that we are all together for the moment and what is called my seminar.

If I ask myself this question, it is because it is worth posing it: this little volume [*Language and the unconscious]* that I have given you and which it seemed to me ought to be brought to your attention just before I bring forward a logical formula which allows in a way there to be secured in a firm and certain way what is involved in the reaction of the subject caught up in this reality of the unconscious, it is not useless for this volume to bear witness to you of what is involved in the difficulties of this abode, for those whose praxis and function it is to be there. Perhaps it is for want of measuring the relation between this "*being there*" to a certain necessary "*not being there*". This volume will bear witness to you of a meeting that took place around this theme of the unconscious. There participated in it in an outstanding role two of my pupils, amongst those who were most precious to me, and still others … everything is in it, even the Marxists of the CNRS.

You will see on the first page in very small characters, a very singular manifestation. (3) Any analyst here will recognise what is called technically, what Freud alluded to at one point of the five great case histories (I will leave it up to you - this will allow you to go through them a little - to find this point) what Freud and the police, with one voice call "the gift" or "the visiting card". If one day it happens that your apartment is visited in your absence you will be able to note perhaps that the trace that the visitor may have left there is a little shit. We are here on the plane of the little **o**-object. It is not surprising that such things happen in the relations with subjects that you are tracking by your discourse on the paths of the unconscious.

In truth, there are strong and major excuses for the lack that psychoanalysts of today demonstrate in keeping themselves to the theoretical heights required by their praxis. For them, the function of resistances is something regarding which you will be able to see that the formulae that I wish to be as sure of myself as possible, the day when I try to give them to you in their essential and in their true agency…you will see the necessity which is attached to resistance and that it cannot in any way be limited to the non-psychoanalysed. Moreover, from the schema that I will try to give you of the relation, not between the *un-thought* and *non-being* (do not believe that I am on the slopes of mysticism!) but between the *I am not* and the *I do not think* which will allow there to be marked for the first time, I believe, and in a tangible fashion not simply the difference, the non-overlapping of what is called resistance and of what is called defence, but, even, to mark in an absolutely essential fashion, even though it has not been published up to now, what is involved in defence, which is properly what circumscribes and what preserves exactly the *I am not*. It is for want of knowing it that everything is displaced, maladjusted in the perspective in which everyone phantasises what is involved in the reality of the unconscious. This something which

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we lack and which constitutes the risky part of what we are confronted with not by some contingency, namely: this new conjunction between *being* and *knowledge*.

This distinct approach of the term truth, makes of Freud's discovery something which can in no way be reduced and criticised by means of a reduction to any ideology whatsoever.

If I am given the time, I will take here … and if I am announcing it to you it is not for the vanity of waving before you something tawdry designed to allure you in the circumstances, but rather to indicate why you will lose nothing in first re-opening Descartes, since moreover, this is the pivot around which I make revolve this necessary return to the origins of the subject, thanks to which we can take it up, take it up again in terms of subject. Why? Because precisely, it is in terms of subject that Freud articulates his aphorism, his essential aphorism around which I taught to turn not simply myself, but those who listen to me, the *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden.* The "*Ich"* in this formula, and the date when it was articulated - in the *New introductory lectures,* as you know - can in no way be taken for the function "*das Ich"* as it is articulated in the second topography, as I translated it: "*Where it was, there must I*" - I added *as subject* but it is a pleonasm: the German *"Ich"* here is the subject – "*become*".

Just as I revived before you the sense of the *cogito* by putting around the "I am" the quotation marks which illuminate it, I would go into Freud's aphorism, where we can - a formula more worthy of the tablet than the one he dreamt of: here was discovered the secret of dreams - the "*Wo Es war, soll Ich werden",* if you are carving it, do not forget to drop the comma: it is "there where it was" that the "*Ich"* must come. Which means - at the place where Freud places this formula, the final one in one of his articles - which means that what is at stake in this indication, is not the hope that all of a sudden, in all human beings, as it is expressed in a verminous language: "the ego must dislodge the id"; but this means that Freud indicates here nothing less than this revolution of thought that his work requires.

Now, it is clear that this is a challenge, and is a dangerous one for whoever advances, as is the case for me, in order to sustain it in his place. "*Odiosum mundo me fecit logica"* - a certain Abelard, as perhaps some of you still remember, wrote one day these words - "logic made me hateful to the world" … and it is onto this terrain that I intend to carry some decisive terms, which no longer allow there to be confused what is at stake when what is at stake is the unconscious. We shall see whether or not someone may say that, here, I am slipping outside, or am trying to turn away from it.

To grasp what is involved in the unconscious, I want to mark, so that you can in a way prepare your minds for it by some exercises, that what is prohibited for us in it, is exactly this sort of movement of thought which is properly that of the *cogito*, which just as much as analysis requires the Other (with a capital O). Which in no way requires the presence of some imbecile or other.

When Descartes publishes his *cogito*, which he articulates in this movement of the *Discourse on method,* that he develops in writing, he is addressing himself to someone. He leads him along paths of an always more urgent articulation. And then,

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suddenly, something happens, which consists in taking off from this path that has been traced out, in order to make emerge from it this other thing which is the "I am".

There is here this sort of movement that I will try to qualify for you in a more precise way, which is one that you find only sometimes in the course of history, and I could (5) designate the same one for you in this VIIth book of Euclid, in the proof that we are still enslaved to, for we have not found any others and it is of the same order, very exactly to prove (whatever may be the formula that you might give, if it were found, give to the genesis of prime numbers) that it would be necessary - no one has yet found this formula, but if it were to be found! - that it is necessarily deduced that there are others that this formula cannot name. It is this sort of knot in which there is marked the essential point of what is involved in terms of a certain relation which is that of the subject to thought.

If I touched last year on Pascal's wager, it was with the same intention. If you refer to what appears in modern mathematics, as what is called "diagonal process" (*l'apprehension diagonal),* in other words what allows Cantor to establish a difference between infinities, you have still the same movement, and more simply, if you do not mind, between now and the next time, procuring in this form or in another: *Fides quaerens intellectum* of St. Anselm, in chapter II (so that I will not be obliged, for my part, to read it to you), you will read, even if you have to go to some trouble to procure this little book (this is the translation by Koyre, published by Vrin; I do not know if any of them are left, but undoubtedly they will not be left!) - you will read in chapter II, in order to go over again as an exercise, what is involved in what university imbecility has discredited under the name of the ontological argument. They thought that St. Anselm did not know that it is not because one can think the most perfect that it exists. You will see, in this chapter that he knew it very well, but that the argument has a completely different import, the import of this progress that I am trying to designate for you, which consists in leading the adversary along a path such that it is from its sudden detachment that there arises a dimension unnoticed up to then.

Such is the impossible movement that constitutes the horror of the relation to the dimension of the unconscious; everything is allowed to the unconscious except to articulate: …"therefore I am". This is what requires different approaches, and properly the logical approaches that I am trying to trace out before you, of what rejects to its nothingness and its futility everything that has been articulated in the woolly ideas of a psychologist about self-analysis.

But if undoubtedly the whole difficulty that I may have in re-animating, in a field whose function is affirmed and is crystallised, precisely the difficulties - let us call them noetics if that suits you - of the theoretical approach to the unconscious, a too comprehensible point, which does not exclude my joining up with this *milieu* on the plane of technique and of precise questionings, precisely, for example, to be able to require that there should be opened up there the terms in which the training analysis is justified.

(6) For me, the question, can be posed about what are the consequences of a discourse, that the circumstances - and also my plan to use the detours imposed on me by these circumstances - to open this discourse on Freud to a larger public.

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The honourable man who signature is at the bottom of what I called "the gift", writes: "Is it becoming, under the pretext of liberty, to tolerate that the forum should be transformed into a circus?" Here, the gift is precious to me: the truth emerges, even from incontinence.

I am the one who is supposed precisely, in this volume, to be substituting the circus for the forum, may God bless me if I really succeeded! Sure! In this little article on the unconscious, I really had, in effect, in composing it, the feeling that I was exercising myself at something which was at once rigorous and breaking through the limits, if not those of the roof of the circus tent at least those of acrobatics, and why not clown if you wish, in order to substitute something which has not, in effect, any relation to what I was able to say in this forum of Bonneval, which was like all forums, a noisy fair! (*Dr Lacan throws the pamphlet on the table*!)

The precision of a circus exercise is all the less within the capacity of everyone that what I am in the process of demonstrating to you, when I speak to you about the *cogito*, is something which, in effect, is in the style of a circus, except that the circuit does not close, that there is somewhere this little projection *(ressaut)* which takes one from this "*I think*" to this "*I am*", which also allowed there to be taken, at such and such a date, something so rare, an essential step in the revolutions of the subject.

The one that I took the last time is that of Cantor. You should know that he, for his part, was spat on to such an extent (*Dr Lacan again throws the pamphlet on the table*) that he finished his life in an asylum. Don't worry, it won't happen to me! (*laughter*) I am a little bit less sensitive than he was to expressions by colleagues and others. But the question that I am asking myself is whether now that I am articulating - in a dimension which is conveyed by the rather stupefying sale of these *Ecrits* - that I am articulating, then, this discourse, whether or not I am going to have to occupy myself this the noisy fair. Because, of course, one cannot count on those whose trade it is to promote themselves, by grabbing in passing any little thing whatsoever that they find in Lacan's discourse, or in the discourse of someone else, to produce a paper in which "he" shows his originality.

Between the Bonneval congress and the time I came here, I lived in the middle of a fair. A fair in which I was the beast: I was the one who was on sale in the market-place. This does not upset me. First of all, because these operations did not concern me - I mean in my discourse - and also because this did not prevent the same people who were carrying out this service coming to my seminar and writing down everything that I was saying - I mean to write it carefully, and all the more carefully (7) because they knew very well that, given their own plans, they did not have much time. So then, it is not just any fair that is in question.

What is now going to come into the fair, is all sorts of other things, which are going to consist - as has already happened and already before the appearance of my *Ecrits* - which are going to consist in making off with any one of my formulae in order to make it serve God knows what! Like trying to demonstrate to me that I do not know how to read Freud, after the thirty years that I have spent doing nothing but that!

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So then, what response should I give? Or should I have given? What a mess! Perhaps I have more useful things to do. Specifically, to occupy myself with the point at which things may bear fruit, namely, among those who follow me in the praxis.

In any case, as you see, this question does not leave me indifferent. It is indeed because it does not leave me indifferent that I found myself posing it with the greatest acuity. I must say that there is only one thing which prevents me from settling it in the way that you see being outlined here: it is not your quality, ladies and gentlemen, even though I am far from not feeling honoured, to have among my listeners, today or other days, some of the people with the best formation, and those for whom it is not vain for me to offer myself to their judgement. Nevertheless, would this by itself be enough to justify what, moreover, can be transmitted by way of writing? Despite everything, at the level of writing, it happens that what is worth something remains afloat, even though, of course, in a university like the French university where for a hundred years people are Kantian, those responsible - as I already pointed out to you in one of my notes - have not, in the course of the hundred years in which they have herded and pushed before them crowds of students, found a way to produce a complete edition of Kant. What makes me hesitate, what ensures that perhaps (perhaps: if I like the idea) I will continue this discourse, is not therefore your quality but your number. For after all, that is what strikes me. That is why, this year, I abandoned this closing of the seminar which had, in previous years, its little experimental period and the opportunity to show its inefficacy. It is because of this number, of this something unbelievable which makes people, a good share of those who are here, people - whom I salute because, moreover, they are there to prove to me that there is something in what I am saying, something which resonates, which resonates sufficiently for them to come to listen to me, rather than the discourse of one or other of their professors about things that interest them, because that forms part of their programme - should come to listen to me, who does not form part of it; this gives me all the same the sign that through what I am saying, which can certainly not pass as demagogy, there must be something in which they found themselves interested.

(8) It is through this that undoubtedly I can justify myself, if this happens, in pursuing this public discourse. This discourse, undoubtedly, which just as throughout the fifteen years that it had already lasted, is a discourse in which undoubtedly everything is not decided in advance, but which I constructed and of which entire parts still remain scattered in memories, which, faith, will do what they want with it; there are nevertheless parts which deserve more and better.

I will make reference to the witticism in what I will tell you about the formula of what I called earlier “the omega operation”. For three months, in front of people who could not believe their ears, who asked themselves whether I was joking, I spoke about the witticism. I would ask you, since you are going to be on holidays to procure, if by chance it is possible (because you never know, the works of Freud are also unfindable), to procure for yourself the *Jokes* book, and to soak yourself in it. If I also have to take holidays, for my part, it is the first thing - from my past seminars - that I would try to give an equivalent of in writing.

On this, there you are now provided for this intermediary time, with what I wanted to say: it is not always a festival. In any case not for me.

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The last time that I alluded to festivals, it was in a little writing, which was really not a writing at all, because I wanted it remain in the state of a discourse that I gave before a rather large medical audience. The reception of this discourse was one of the experiences of my life. It was not moreover an experience that surprised me. If I no longer do it, it is because I know its results in advance. I must say that I was not able to resist adding to it a modification which really has nothing to do with the discourse; this allusion to the festival, to the festival of the Symposium … if it was in allusion. The public will recognise better in the bulletin of my little Ecole no doubt than in that of the College de Medecine where moreover it will be published, the allusion to the festival of the Symposium. What is at stake is the one where there come, one begging, one astray, two characters, two allegorical characters whom you know and who are called Poros and Penia: the Poros of psychoanalysis and the university Penia. I am in the process of questioning myself about how far I can let the obscenity go. Whatever may be at stake, it is worth looking twice at the matter, I mean: even if what is at stake is what someone called, rather comically, philosophical Eros.

Happy Christmas!

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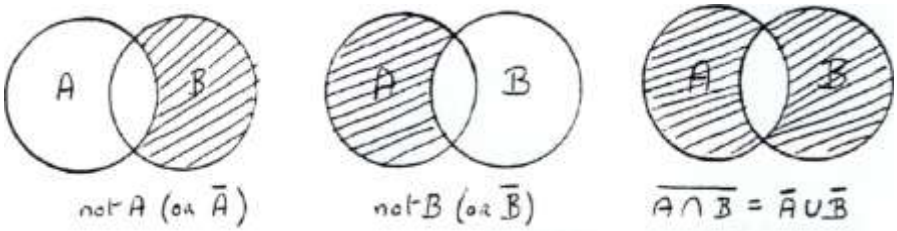
Seminar 7: Wednesday 11 January 1967

I left you on the operation defined by me as *alienation*, if you remember, in the form of the forced choice in which it is imaged by being brought to bear on an alternative that results in an essential lack. At least I announced to you that I would take up this form again in connection with the alternative in which I translate the Cartesian *cogito* and which is the following: "either I do not think or I am not" (*ou je ne pense pas ou je ne suis pas)*.

This transformation, a logician formed in symbolic logic will recognise - will recognise as representing the formula brought to light in the register of this symbolic logic, for the first time by de Morgan in the middle of the last century, in as much as what it stated - which represented a veritable discovery, which had never been brought to light in this form up to then - was first of all expressed as follows: that in the propositional relation which consists in the conjunction of two propositions, (which is expressed, on the upper right of these white sheets on which I wrote in black so that, the conjunction of A and of B would be more visible), if you deny it as a conjunction, if you say that it is not true, for example, that A and B are tenable at the same time: this is equivalent to *union* … *Union* means something different to *intersection*. *Intersection* is (if you represent, if you image the field of what is produced in each one of these propositions by a circle covering an area) intersection is this (1). Union is that (2).

(2) As you see it is not addition, because there can be a part that is common to each of the two fields. Well then, de Morgan's statement is expressed as follows: that in the set formed by these two fields here covered by the two propositions in question, the negation of intersection – namely, what is involved in the fact that A and B are together -

is represented by the union of the negation of A (let us write here A: its negation is this part of B) and the negation of B (namely, of this part of A). You see that something remains in the middle which is excepted, and which is the complement of the union of these two negations and corresponds properly speaking to what is denied,



namely, to the field of intersection of A and B.

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This simple formula was found to take on such importance in the development of symbolic logic, that it is considered as fundamental in it in terms of what is called the *duality principle* which in its most general form is expressed thus: namely, that, if we raise things not to this attempt of literalising the handling of propositional logic, but if we raise it to the plane of what comes at the foundation of the formulation of mathematical development, namely, set theory: set theory introduces in a masked form something which is precisely what allows there to be made of it the foundation of the development of mathematical thinking. The fact is that, in a masked fashion, one could say, what I have taught you to distinguish from the *subject of the statement* as being the *stating subject*, finds itself - in the primary statements, in the definition of the set as such - the stating subject finds itself in a way frozen in it, it does not even escape, it remains implicated in it - in so far, of course, as set theory is what allows there to be unfolded the presentation, the secure consistency of the development of mathematical thinking. Quite different, of course, is the progress of invention, the proper progress of mathematical reasoning, which is not that of tautology, whatever may be said, which has its own fecundity, which is extracted from the purely (3) deductive plane and through this source which is essential it to it, joins what is called reasoning by recurrence or again, to use Poincare's term "complete induction".

This, in order to be highlighted, requires a recourse to *temporality*, to the progress of reasoning in so far as it is punctuated by this something which is properly what is constitutive of reasoning by recurrence, is carried out as based on a process that is indefinitely repeatable.

But at the level of set theory, we have only to seek an apparatus which allows us to symbolise what is guaranteed from mathematical development and for this, what in the act of stating is isolated as the subject - the stating subject in so far as it is different from the point in the statement where we can recognise it - this is what, in the notion of set - and very precisely in so far as it is grounded on the possibility of the empty set as such - this is where there is guaranteed in a veiled fashion the existence of the stating subject.

At the level of set theory de Morgan's transformation is expressed as follows: that in every formula in which we have a set, (some set or other), the empty set, the sign of union and the sign of intersection, by exchanging them two by two, namely, in substituting for the set the empty set, for the empty set a set, for union intersection, for intersection union, we preserve the truth value which was established in the first formula.

This is, fundamentally, what is meant by the fact that we substitute for the *I think, therefore I am*, this something which requires that we should look more closely at it in its handling, but which, quite brutally, quite massively, quite blindly, I would say, can first of all be articulated as something in which the *or* of union is to be looked at more closely and which united an *I do not think* with a *I am not*. Moreover, these two *nots* (*ne pas)* are not of course, starting from the moment at which there is introduced this dimension of the empty set, in so far as they support this something defined by stating (to which no doubt it may be nothing responds, but which is established as such).

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This empty set *qua* representing the stating subject forces us to take up, in a value which is to be examined, the function of negation.

Let us take it up: *I do not desire*. It is clear that this *I do not desire*, just by itself is designed to make us ask what the negation is brought to bear on. If it is a transitive *I* (4*) do not desire,* it implies the undesirable (undesirable because of me: there is some particular thing that I do not desire). But, in fact, the negation could mean that it is not *I* (*moi*) who desire, implying that I take no responsibility (*je me decharge)* for desiring, which may also indeed be what carries me while at the same time not being *me*. But again it remains that this negation may mean that *it is not true*, that I desire, that the desire, whether it is from *me* or from *not-me* has nothing to do with the question.

This shows you that this dialectic of the subject, in so far as we are trying to order it, to delineate it, between the subject of the statement and this stating subject, is here a very useful piece of work and especially at the level that we are taking up again today the questioning of the *cogito* of Descartes, in so far as it is what can allow us to give its veritable sense, its exact positioning, to what Freud modifies in it and to say it right away: which is proposed to us in these two forms that are too easily superimposed and confused, which are called respectively the unconscious and the Id and which are what we have to distinguish in the light of this questioning that we make begin from the examination of the *cogito.*

That the *cogito* should still be discussed (this is a fact in philosophical discourse) is indeed what at once allows us to go into it ourselves with the use that we intend to make of it; since moreover, this certain vacillation which may remain in it is indeed what bears witness in it to something where it ought to be completed.

If the *cogito* is a base in the history of philosophy, - why? Because - to say the very least - it substitutes for the pathetic relationship, for the difficult relationship which constituted the whole tradition of philosophical questioning, which was none other than that of the relationship of *thinking to being* … Go and look, not through commentators, but directly … of course this will be easier for you if you know Greek, if you do not know it there are good translations, very adequate commentaries in English, of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. There is a French translation done by Tricot, which, in truth, brings with it the veil and the perpetual mask of Thomist commentary. But in so far as through these deformations you can try to join up with the original movement of what Aristotle communicates to us you will see the degree to which – (5) but subsequently - everything that may have been accumulated in terms of critics and exegesis around this text, in which one or other scholiast will tell us that such and such a passage is debatable, or that the order of the books was disturbed - the degree to which, on a first reading, all these questions appear to be really secondary as compared to something direct and fresh, which makes of this reading (on this single condition that you get out of the atmosphere of the School) something which strikes you in the register of what I called earlier the "pathetic"; when you see there being, at every moment, there being renewed and springing up again - in something which still seems to carry the trace of the very discourse in which it was formulated - this questioning of what is involved in the relation between thinking and being. And when you see arising one or other term, like that of *to semnon* (what is dignified), the

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dignity, which is that which is to be preserved of thinking, with respect to what ought to bring it to the height of what is involved in what one is trying to grasp: namely: it is not simply the being (l'etant) or what is, but that **through which** being manifests itself in it. What has been differently translated: "Being *qua* being" it has been said. A very bad translation for these three terms (which I took care to note on the top left-hand side of this board) and which are properly: firstly *to ti esti* which means nothing other than "what is it?". It seems to me that it is just as valid a translation as that of the *quid* to which people ordinarily believe they should limit themselves to: the *to ti en einai* which is indeed, faith, one of the most striking features of the vivacity of this language of Aristotle, for it is certainly not - here much less still - "being *qua* being" which is appropriate to translate it, because however little you know about Greek, you can read this thing - which is a common turn of phrase in Greek (and not simply a literary one) which is manifestly this feature of the *origin* of the Greek verb and which it has precisely in common with what the imperfect means in French - on which I dwell so often in the course of what I left some trace of in my writings - this "it was" (*c'etait)*, which means: "it has just disappeared", at the very same time as it can mean: "just a little more and it was going to be"; this *to ti en einai* which is the same thing as what is said in the *Hippolyte* of Euripides, when they say: "*kupris ouk en theos",* namely: "Cypris-Aphrodite, for you, *was not* a goddess". Which means that since she behaved herself as she had just done, undoubtedly what she was flees and escapes us: and that moreover we should put in question everything that is involved in being a goddess or being a god. This *to ti en enai* the "what was being" - "what being was", when? Before I spoke about it properly speaking. There is this kind of feeling in the (6) very language of Aristotle, of still inviolate being and the measure that it touched already this *noein,* this thinking, as regards which everything that is discussed is about the degree to which it can be worthy of it, namely, be raised to the heights of being. This is the original trace in which you cannot fail to sense in some way the root – which is of the order of the sacred -, it is to this that there is attached the first articulation of philosophy (*philosopheme*) in the case of the one who had to introduce (one might say), the first steps of a positive science.

For the *to on ... on*, it is also indeed in effect - this final term - "the being *through which*, .., it is being", namely, again this something which points towards being and everyone knows that the… free movement of the philosophical tradition represents nothing other than the progressive distancing from this source of lucky finds, from this first invention which culminates, through the schools which succeed one another more and more, to circumscribe only in terms of logical articulation what can be retained from this first questioning.

Now, Descartes' *cogito* has a sense: *the fact is that for this relation of thinking to being, its substitutes purely and simply the establishment of the being of the* ***I***.

What I want to produce before you is the following: the fact is that, in so far as the experience, the experience which for its part, is what follows and is the effect of this breakthrough of thinking, which represents, in fact, something which can be called "a refusal of the question of Being" - and precisely in so far as this refusal has engendered this consequence, this new emergence of an approach to the world which is called science - that if something, within the effects of this breakthrough, was produced which is called the Freudian discovery, or again his thinking, indeed his

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thinking about thinking - the essential point is that in no case does this mean: a return to the thinking of Being. Nothing, in what Freud contributes, whether it is the unconscious or the Id, returns to something which, at the level of thinking, re-places us on this plane of the interrogation of Being.

It is only within - and remaining in the consequences of this limit of breaking through, of this break by which, for the question that thinking poses to being, there is substituted, and in the form of a refusal, the simple *affirmation* of the being of the *I* - it is within this that what Freud brings forward takes on its sense, as much from the side of the unconscious as from that of the Id. It is in order to show it to you, to show you how this is articulated, that I am advancing this year into the domain of logic that we are, in fact, pursuing now.

(7) In the *cogito* itself, which deserves to be gone over once again at this point, we are going to find the beginnings, the beginnings of the paradox which is the one that having recourse to de Morgan's formula introduces as I first produced it for you and which is the following: is there a being of the *I* outside discourse? This indeed is the question that the Cartesian *cogito* settles, even though one must still see how it does it.

It is in order to pose the question of it, that we have introduced these inverted commas around the "*ergo sum*", which subverts its naïve import (as one might say), which makes of it a cogitated *ergo sum*, whose only being in short depends on this *ergo*, which - for its part - within thinking, presents itself for Descartes as the sign of what he articulates himself on many occasions and, moreover, in the *Discourse on method* as in the *Mediations* or in the *Principles*, namely, as an *ergo* of necessity. But if, only, this *ergo* represents this necessity, can we not see what results from this: that the *ego [ergo?] sum* is only a *refusal* of the hard path from *thinking* to *being* and of the knowledge (*savoir)* which ought to take this path. This "*ergo sum"* takes the shortcut of being the one which thinks, but to think that there is no need even to question a being (*l'etant)* on the trajectory where it has its being, because already the question of its own existence is, for its part, guaranteed.

Does this not mean placing oneself, as *ego,* outside the grasp in which being may embrace thinking? To posit oneself: e*go, I think* as pure thinking being (*pense-etre)*, as subsisting by being the *I* of a local *I am not*; which means: *I only am on condition that the question of being is eluded*, I give up being, *I* … am not, except there where - necessarily - I am, by being able to *say* it. Or to say it better: where I am, by being able to say it to *you*, or more exactly: by making it be said to the Other, because this is indeed the process, when you follow it closely in Descartes text.

This is why, moreover, it is a fruitful process, since it has, properly speaking, the same profile as that of reasoning by recurrence, which is in a way the following: to lead the other for a long time on a path, on a path which is here, properly speaking the path of renouncing one, and the other, and soon all the paths of knowledge and then, at a turning point, to surprise it in this avowel that here, *at least* - by making him travel this path - it must be that I am (*il faut bien que je sois)*.

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But the dimension of this Other is so essential in it that one can say that it is at the (8) core of the *cogito* and that it is what properly constitutes the limit of what can be defined and be secured - at best - as an empty set, which constitutes the *I am*, in this reference where the *I* - in so far as *I am* - is properly constituted by the following: *of not containing any element.*

This framework is only valid in so far as I think the *I think,* namely, that I argue the *cogito* with the Other. A*m not* signifies that there is no element in this set which - under the term of *I* - exists: *Ego sum, sive ego cogito,* but without there being anything so stock it.

This encounter makes it clear that the *I think* is only a similar costume. If it is not at the level of the *I think* - which prepares this avowal of an empty set - that we are dealing, it is the emptying (*vidage*) of another set. It is after Descartes had put to the test all the ways of access to knowledge that he founded this thinking, properly speaking from the avoidance of being, because he was only greedy for certainty, and which results in something that we have already called emptying and which ends with this question: namely, whether this operation itself, as such, is not enough to give its only veritable substance to the ego.

It is indeed from this alone, and in as much as we grasp its importance, that there becomes thinkable following a guiding thread, what is going to be at stake when Freud brings us what? What, if it is not what results from it, in what he calls, to employ his own terms, not mental functioning (as it is wrongly translated when the German is translated into English) but the *psychische Geschehen*, the psychic event.

As we are going to see: there remains nothing, - in what Freud questions himself about - of something which can reanimate, revive the thinking of being, beyond what the *cogito* has henceforth assigned to it as a limit.

In fact, being is so thoroughly excluded from everything that may be at stake, in order to enter into this explanation, I could say, that to take up one of my familiar formulae - that of *Verwerfung* - it is indeed something of this order that is at stake. If something is articulated in our day, which can be called the end of a humanism - which does not of course date from yesterday or the day before, nor from the moment when M Michel Foucault articulates it, nor myself, which is something that has been settled for a long time - it is very precisely from the fact that the dimension is opened up to us which allows us to discover how there operates - in accordance with the formula that I have given of it - this *Verwerfung*, this rejection of being. What is rejected from the symbolic, I have said from the beginning of my teaching, reappears in the real.

If this something which is called the being of man is indeed in effect what is rejected, from a certain date, we see it reappearing in the real and in a quite clear form.

(9) The being of man, in so far as it is fundamental for our anthropology, has a name, where the word of *being* is rediscovered in the middle of it, where it is enough to put it in parenthesis. And, to find this name, as moreover what it designates, it is enough to leave your house one day to go to the country for a little outing and, crossing the road, you will meet a camping site and, on the camping site or more exactly all around

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it, marking it with a circle of scum, what you will meet up with, is this being of man in so far as – *verworfen* - it reappears in the real, it has a name: it is called refuse (*detritus)*.

It is not today or yesterday that we have known that the being of man, *qua* rejected, is here what appears in the form of these tiny circles of twisted iron, which, we do not know why, we find a certain accumulation of around the habitual site of campers.

If only we are a little bit pre-historians, or archaeologists, we must presume that this rejection of being must contain something, which did not appear for the first time with Descartes nor with the origin of science, but which perhaps marked each of the essential breakthroughs which allowed there to be constituted, in forms that are punctuated but perishable and always precarious, the stages of humanity. And I do not need to try to re-articulate before you, in a tongue that I cannot speak and which would make it unpronounceable for me, what is designated, what is pinpointed as a signal for one or other phase of this technological development, in the form of these little piles of shells that are found in certain areas, in certain zones of what remains for us of prehistoric civilisation.

The *refuse* is here indeed the point to remember, and it represents - not simply as a signal, but as something essential - around what, for us, there is going to turn what we are now going to have to question ourselves about as regards this alienation.

Alienation has a *patent* aspect, which is not that we are the Other, so that the "others", as they say, by taking it away from us defigure or deform us. The fact of alienation is not that we are taken up, remade, represented in the Other, but it is essentially grounded, on the contrary, on the rejection of the Other, in so far as this Other - the one that I signal with the capital O - is what has come *in place* of this questioning of Being, around which I am making revolve today essentially the limit and the breakthrough of the *cogito.*

Would to God, then, that alienation consisted in us finding ourselves at ease in the locus of the Other!

For Descartes, it is undoubtedly what allows him the cheerfulness of his approach. And in the first *Regulae* (which represent his original work, a youthful work, the one whose manuscript, later, was rediscovered and moreover still remains lost among the papers of Leibniz) the *sum ergo Deus est,* is exactly the prolongation of the *cogito* (10) *ergo sum.* Of course, it is an advantageous operation to leave entirely to the charge of an Other - which is guaranteed by nothing other than the establishment of being, as being the being of the *I* - of an Other, whom the God of the Judaeo-Christian tradition facilitates as being the One who presented himself, as being "I am what I am" (*Je suis ce que je suis*), but undoubtedly, this fideist foundation which remains so profoundly anchored still in thinking in the 17th century, is the very one precisely, which is not for us all that sustainable and it is because it is subjectively struck out, that it really alienates us.

Which I already illustrated with this *liberty or death*. A marvellous intimation no doubt. Who, in this intimation, would not in effect refuse this Other *par excellence*

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which is death? As a result of which, as I pointed out to you, there remains to him the liberty to die.

It is the same for what already the Stoics formulated in the *et non propter vitam vivendi perdere causas* (but in order not to lose it, are you going to lose life?) for things not to be read here already rather clearly. But for us, what is at stake is to know what is going to be involved between this *either I do not think or I am not*, I mean: *I* as *am not*.

What is going to be the result? The result in which we do not have a choice! We do not have a choice - from the moment when this *I*, was chosen as established in being - we do not have a choice: is it towards the *I do not think* that we must go. For this establishment of I as the pure and unique foundation of being is very precisely what henceforth puts a term - a term, I mean a final full stop - to all questioning of *noein*, to any approach which would make of thinking anything other, than what Freud, with his time and with science, made of it: *Das Denken*, he wrote in the formulation on the double principle of the psychic event, it is nothing other than a formula, a trial formula and one that is trying to open things up in a way, which is always to be done with the least psychic investment which allows us to question, to measure, to trace in fact, the path along which we have to find satisfaction for what presses us and stimulates us, by some motor procedure to be traced in the real.

This essential *I am not thinking*, is where we have to question ourselves about what results from it, concerning the resultant loss of choice: the *I am not,* of course, in itself, as we have earlier grounded it, namely, as the essence of the *I* itself. Can the loss of alienation be resumed in this? Certainly not. Precisely, something appears, which has the form of negation, but of negation that is not at all directed towards being, but towards the *I* itself *qua* grounded in this *am not*.

In connection with the choice of the *I do not think* something arises whose essence is not to be *not I*, at the very place of the *ergo*, in so far as it is to be put at the (11) intersection between the "I think" and "I am", in what alone is supported as a being of cogitation: this *ergo* then, at this very place something appears, which sustains itself by not being not-I.

This not-I, so essential to articulate in this way for being in its essence, is what Freud brings us in the second step of his thinking which is what is called the "second topography", as being the Id (*ca)*.

But it is precisely here that there is the greatest danger of error and that moreover - by approaching it myself in the measure that I was able to do it, when I spoke about the *Wo Es war* - I was not able, for lack of the logical articulation which allows it to take on its veritable value, to really make it felt where there lies the essence of this not-I constituted by the Id and which renders so ridiculous the way in which there seems to infallibly fall anyone who is this subject which remains on psychological paths, namely, in so far as they inherit from the tradition of ancient philosophy: that of the soul, or of the psyche, they make something which is. The Id, for them, will always be what a particular imbecile trumpeted in my ear for the ten years we were neighbours, that "the Id is a bad ego".

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Nothing of this kind can be formulated in any way whatsoever! And in order to conceive of it, it is extremely important to notice that this Id, in this strange anomalous positiveness that it takes on by being the *not* of this *I* which by essence *am not*, one must know what this may mean, what strange complement may be at stake in this non-I.

Well then, one has to know how to articulate it and to say it, in such a way that effectively the whole delineation of what is involved in the Id articulates it for us.

The Id that is at stake is undoubtedly not, of course, in any way, the "first person", which was a veritable error - to be rejected to the rank of the grotesque, it has to be said, whatever may be the respect that we bear, in the name of history, to its author - to have been lead to produce, that the psychology of Freud was a psychology in the first person. And that one of my pupils - in the course of this little report which forms part of the pamphlet that I distributed to you the last time - that one of my pupils thought himself obliged to take that path again, holding for a moment to the illusion that it was even a path along which I am supposed to have lead you to formulate it (and it is of course forced, after having heard me, formulating the contrary, is that not so!), is in itself as sort of bluff and the swindle, because this has nothing to do with the question.

The Id is neither the first, nor the second person, nor even the third, in so far as, to follow the definition that Benveniste gives of it, the third is supposed to be who one talks about.

The Id (*ca)* is, something we approach a little bit more in statements like *"ca brille"* or "*ca pleut*" or *"ca bouge*". But it is again to fall into an error to believe that it is that, that it is that in so far as it makes a statement about itself! It is still something (12) which does not highlight enough what is at stake.

The Id is properly speaking what, in discourse, *qua* logical structure is very exactly everything that is not *I,* namely all the rest of the structure. And when I say "logical structure" you should understand it as: *grammatical*.

It is not for nothing, that the very support of what is involved in the drive, namely, the phantasy, should be able to be expressed as follows: *Ein Kind ist geschlagen*, *a child is being beaten.*

No commentary, no metalanguage will account for what is introduced into the world in such a formula! Nothing can either re-duplicate it or explain it! The structure of the sentence *a child is being beaten* is not there to be commented on, simply: *it shows itself*. There is no *physis* that can account for the fact that *a child should be beaten*. There may be, in the *physis* something which requires that he should knock himself, but that *he should be beaten* is something different! And, that this phantasy should be something so essential in the functioning of the drive, is something which only simply reminds us of what I demonstrated about the drive before you (in connection with the scoptophilic drive and in connection with the sado-masochistic drive), that it is traced out, that it is a *montage* - an outline, a grammatical *montage* whose inversions,

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reversals, complexities, are not ordered otherwise then by the application of diverse reversals (*Verkehrung),* of partial and chosen negations, that there is no other way of making function the relationship of the *I, qua* being-to-the-world but passing through this grammatical structure, which is nothing other than the essence of the Id.

Naturally, I am not going, today, to go through this lecture with you again. I have enough of a field to cover for it to be necessary for me to be content with marking what is the essence of the Id, in so far as it is not-I: it is all the rest of the grammatical structure. And it is not by chance that Freud remarks that - in the analysis of *Ein Kind ist geschlagen*, in the analysis of "a child is being beaten" - that never does the subject, the *Ich*, the *I* - which nevertheless ought to take a place there (for us in the reconstruction of what we are making of it, in the *Bedeutung* that we are going to give it, which is necessary in the interpretation), namely, that at one moment, he is the one who is beaten - but in the statement of the phantasy, Freud tells us, this moment - and for good reason! - is never avowed for the *I*, as such, is precisely *excluded* from the phantasy.

We can only account for this, by marking the dividing line between two complementaries: the *I* of *is beaten* - this pure being which it is, like a refusal of being - with what remains as articulation of thinking and which is the grammatical structure of this sentence. This, of course, only takes on its import and its interest by being linked to the *other element* of the alternative, namely: what is going to be *lost* in it.

(13) *The truth of alienation only shows itself in the lost part,* which is none other - if you follow my articulation - than the *I am not*.

Now, it is important to grasp that we have here the essential of what is involved in the unconscious. For everything that pertains to the unconscious, is characterised by what, only *one* disciple - a single disciple - of Freud was able to maintain as an essential trait, namely: by surprise. The foundation of this surprise, as it appears at the level of every veritable interpretation, is nothing other than this dimension of *I am not* and it is essential to preserve as a revelatory character, as one might say, in this phenomenology.

That is why the witticism is the most revelatory and the most characteristic of the effects of what I called: "the formations of the unconscious". The laughter in question is produced at the level of this *I am not*. Take up any example to it and, to take up the first one which is offered on opening the book, that of *famillionnairely*, is it not manifest that the derision effect of what Hirsch-Hyacinth says there (when he says that he is in a quite famillionaire relationship with Salomon Rothschild) resonates both from the non-existence of the position of the rich man - in so far as he is only fictional - and from that of this something in which the one who is speaking - or the subject - finds himself in this very non-existence, reduced himself to a sort of being for whom there is nowhere a place? It is not obvious that the derision effect of this *famillionairely* lies here?

But here, quite contrary - quite contrary to what happens when we were defining the Id and when you were able to recognise (in this reference to grammatical structure) that what is at stake is an effect of *Sinn,* or of sense - we are dealing here with

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Bedeutung. Namely, that there where I am not, what happens is something that we have to locate by the same sort of inversion that guided us earlier: the *I* of the *I am not thinking* is inverted, is alienated for its part also in something which is a *pense-choses*.

This is what gives its veritable sense to what Freud says about the unconscious, namely, that it is constituted by thing-presentations, *Sachvorstellungen*. It is in no way an obstacle to the unconscious being structured as a language, for what is at stake is not the *Ding*, the unsayable thing, but the perfectly articulated *affair*, but in so far, in effect, as it supersedes- like *Bedeutung* - anything whatsoever that may order it.

To designate what is involved in the unconscious, as regards the register of existence and of its relationship with the *I*, I would say that - in the same way as we have seen that the Id, is a thought bitten by something which is not the return of being, but something like an unbeing (*desetre)* - just as non-existence at the level of the (14) unconscious, is something which is bitten by an *I think* which is not *I* and this *I think* which is not *I,* and which - by being able for a moment to reunite it with the Id (*ca)* - I indicated it as an it speaks (*ca parle)*, what we have here (as you are going to see) is a short circuit and an error.

The model of the unconscious, is undoubtedly that of an "it speaks", but on condition that one clearly sees that there is no being at stake. Namely, that the unconscious has nothing to do with what Plato again and later after him people were able to preserve as being the level of enthusiasm. *There may be something of God, in the "it speaks" but very precisely what characterises the function of the unconscious, is that there is none of it.*

If the unconscious, for us, must be circumscribed, situated and defined, it is in as much as the poetry of our century has nothing in common with what was, for example, the poetry of a Pindar.

If the unconscious has played such a role as reference, in everything that has been traced out as a new poetry, it is very precisely from this relation of a thinking which is nothing because of being only the not-I of the *I do not think*, in so far as it has an impact on the field which defines the *I qua* "I am not".

So what then? …

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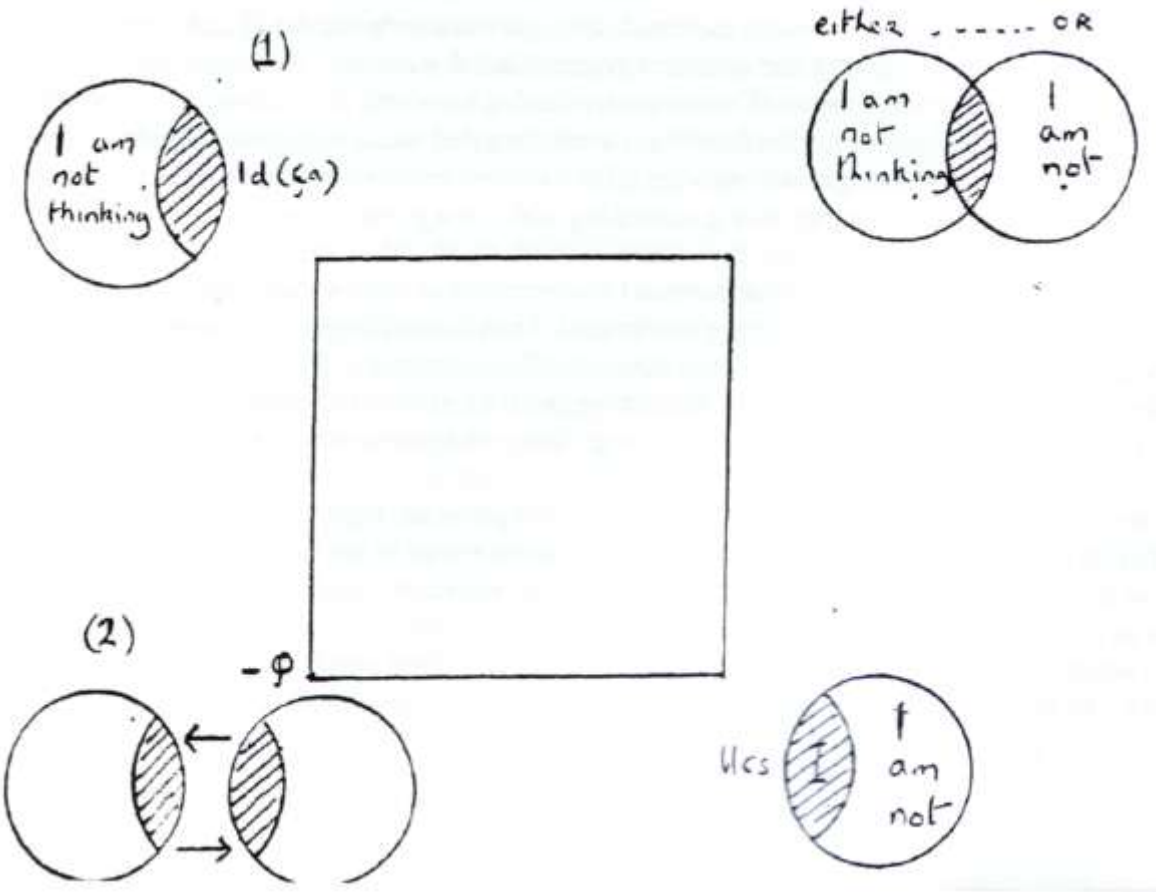
If I told you earlier that - the full field of the Id (*ca*) [1] - I may have, in the "it speaks" (*ca parle*) given the impression that it has something which overlaps the unconscious, it is very precisely what I want to end on today: the fact is, precisely, they do not overlap

If the two circles, the two fields that we have opposed as representing the two terms, only one of which gains access to the real of alienation, if these two terms are opposed as constituting different relationships of the *I* in thinking and existence, it is because when one looks more closely at the circles in which this has now been circumscribed, you see that, at a further stage, what is completed in this operation, in a fourth term, a four fold term which is going to be situated here [2]- it is because this "I am not thinking" *qua* correlate of the Id, is called on to join itself to the "I am not", *qua* correlate of the unconscious, but in a way that they eclipse, hide one another, by overlapping. It is to the place of the "I am not" that the Id is going to come, of course, positivising it in a "I am that (ca)" which is only a pure imperative, an imperative which is very properly the one that Freud formulated in the *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*.

If this *Wo Es war* is something, it is what we have said earlier: but if *Ich soll* - ought to! - *werden* there (I might say: …become green there [*y verdir*]) (*laughter*) it is because it is not there! And it is not for nothing that I recalled earlier the exemplary character of sado-masochism: you can be sure that the year will not pass without our



having to question more closely what is involved in the relation of the *I* as essential in

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the structure of masochism. And I simply remind you here of the link that I made, between the ideology of Sade and the imperative of Kant. This *soll Ich werden* is perhaps just as impracticable as the Kantian *ought*, precisely because of the fact that *I* is not there, that the *I* is called on- not as has been ridiculously written (let the reference at least be of use to us here!): to "dislodge the Id" - but to take up its dwelling place there and (if you will allow me this equivocation) to lodge itself in logic.

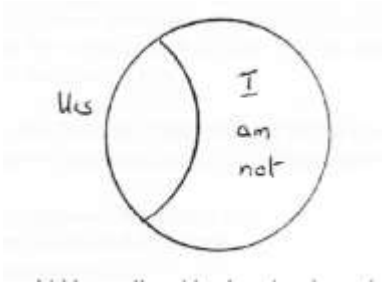
Inversely, what can also happen is that here in passing … the passage by which a

circle is in a way hidden, eclipsed by the other, is produced in the inverse sense and that the unconscious in its poetic and *Bedeutung* sense comes to the place of this "I do not think". What it then reveals to us is precisely what, in the *Bedeutung* of the unconscious, is struck by some caducity or other in thinking.

Just as in the first type of occultation, what we had was - in place of the I *am not*" - the revelation of something which is the truth of the structure (and we will see what this (16) factor is, we will say what it is: it is the **o**-object) - in the same way, in the other form of occultation, this flaw, this fault in thinking, is hole in the *Bedeutung* – something that we have only been able to accede to along the path, entirely traced by Freud, of the process of alienation - his sense, his revelation, is *the incapacity of any Bedeutung to cover what is involved in sex.*

The essence of castration is what, in this other relation of occultation and eclipsing, is manifested in the following: that *sexual difference* is only supported by the *Bedeutung* of something *lacking* under the aspect of the phallus.

I have given you then today the outline of the apparatus around which we are going to be able to pose again a certain number of questions. May you have been able to



glimpse there the privileged part that there plays in it, as an operator, the **o**-object, the only element that still remains hidden in today's explanation.

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Seminar 8: Wednesday 18 January 1967

I will come back today, to articulate it once again and with more insistence, to the operation that I introduced the last time under the term of alienation.

Alienation is the pivotal point in what I am presenting to you and, first of all, this term transforms the use that has been made of it up to now. It is the pivotal point thanks to which there can and ought be maintained for us the value of what one can call from the angle of the subject; the **Freudian foundation**, the decisive step that the thinking of Freud and, still more, the praxis which is maintained through his patronage under the name of psychoanalysis, have, once and for all, brought to our attention as decisive.

We shall speak about a thinking that is not *I*: such is, from a first vague approach, the way in which the unconscious is presented. The formula is certainly insufficient, the value it has is that it puts at the pivot of what Freud produces for us as decisive, this term of *I.* Naturally, this does not allows us for all that to content ourselves with a formula that is so vague, even though poetic (which, moreover, is never extracted from its poetic context except always with a little misuse) - everything has not been said in putting forward that *I am another*. This is why it is necessary to give a more precise logical articulation to it.

As you know, the function of the Other (as I write it with this big O placed in the top left corner of our board today) is its the determining function.

It is not simply impossible correctly to articulate the logic of thinking as the Freudian experience has established it, it is also impossible to comprehend anything whatsoever in what was represented in philosophical tradition - as it came to us, up to Freud - it is impossible to situate correctly what was represented by this step of putting at the centre of reflection, the function of the subject as such - if we do not bring into play this function of the Other, as I define it when I mark it with this capital O - if we do not remember that I called the Other, marked in this way, what takes on the function of being the *locus of the word.*

(2) What does that mean? We can never come back to it often enough, even though I think I have hammered it out a little.

Freud - when he speaks to us about this thinking which is not *I,* at the level for example what he calls "*dream thoughts*", the *Traumgedanken* - seems to tell us that this thinking remains singularly independent of any logic. He underlines at first: in fact their system is not embarrassed by contradiction. More than one feature again is articulated: those who say, at a first approach, that negation as such cannot be represented there and that, moreover, causal articulation, subordination, conditioning, seem to flee what, in these thoughts, is apparently linked together and cannot be rediscovered in its thread except by the ways of the most free association. There is

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something that I am only recalling because, for many people, this is still the received idea about what is at stake in the order of the unconscious. But in fact, to speak about the disconnected linking that is supposed to be presented by thoughts that we locate at the level of the unconscious, which are indeed those of a subject or ought to be such, to say that these thoughts do not follow the laws of logic is only a first approach, which supposes something which is rather an antinomy with a preconceived real or rather a preconception of what ought to be the relations of all thinking with the real.

The real, we think - this is the correct and the proper order of any efficacy of thinking - ought to be imposed on it. In truth, this is too much under the sway of the presupposition of a pedagogical logic which is based on a schema of adaptation, not to justify at once Freud - speaking to people not otherwise formed who may be the people of his ordinary audience - making a reference to it, but that also, for any reflection which takes into account what is different in what is involved in the relation of any subject whatsoever to the real - because of the fact that it, as subject, is only grounded, is only established in so far as, in the real, there already are, and being exercised as such, the powers of language - obliges us to take our questioning further.

The path that Freud makes us take certainly remains no less astonishing - in truth only takes on the value which grounds the appropriate astonishment we experience on hearing it - from the fact that we articulate more precisely what he renews about the relations between *thinking and being*. Undoubtedly a theme that has been brought onto the agenda by the discourse of one or other contemporary philosophers, Heidegger in the first place, but undoubtedly in the noise created around what he articulates, it would be indeed be the most naïve form to translate what he calls – as from some reminder or other which ought, at the turning point at which we are at, come from Being itself to thinking for it to be renewed by it, for it to break with what, because of the thread that it has followed for three thousand years, has lead it to some *impasse* or other where it can no longer grasp itself in its essence, and at which one (3) could ask oneself as Heidegger does: "*Was heisst Denken"*? "*What does thinking mean"*? - to expect the renewal of the sense of this word *think* only from some trans-metaphysical accident or other, which would amount to a complete overturning of everything that thinking has traced out. Undoubtedly this is not the sense of Heidegger's text and, for those who dwell on it, one could evoke the humouristic and derisory metaphor which is that of the girl who does not know how to give herself other than by spread-eagling herself on the bed, limbs all over the place, waiting for the initiative to come from the person she thinks she is offering herself to - it is not so rare an adventure in a time of mediocre civilisation and everyone knows that the person who finds himself thus confronted is not for all that especially stimulated to take action! It would be well for thinking not to have an image of the same order, but to be willing to recall that it is not always without a little bit of trouble that true unions come about.

It is indeed something that has a contribution to make to this problem of *being*, that the path traced out by Freud brings us. But not otherwise - I am coming back to it - than by gauging the connection, the consequences of what results for thinking from the decisive step, from this step which has been taken, which is the one that we have called, by a sort of convention which is historically founded, the *Cartesian step*; namely, the one which limits the establishment of being as such to that of the *I am*

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implied by the pure functioning of the subject of the *I think* as such, in so far as it gives the appearance - for it is only an appearance - of being transparent to itself, of being what we could call a *suis-pensee (an am-thinking)*. Allow me, with the neologism, to translate or to support in a caricatural way what is usually called "self consciousness", a term which resonates badly and insufficiently as compared to the use that the German composition allows of: *Selbstbewusstein*. But in fact, at the level of Descartes and of the *cogito*, what is at stake is properly a *suis-pensee,* this *I think*, which is only situated at the moment at which it is no longer supported except by articulating: "I think".

It is from what follows as a consequence of this, in so far as it is a decisive step forward, that it is a matter - I mean that it is in a thinking determined by this first step that Freud's discovery is inscribed.

I spoke about the Other … it is clear that at the level of the Cartesian *cogito*, there is a remitting to the charge of the Other of the consequences of this step. If the *cogito ergo sum* does not imply what Descartes wrote quite literally in his *Regulae* - where there can be so clearly read the conditions which determined it as thinking - if the *cogito* is not completed by a: *sum, ergo Deus est* (which undoubtedly makes things much easier), it is not tenable. And nevertheless, if it is not tenable as an articulation - I mean a philosophical one - it nevertheless remains that the benefit has been won; that the procedure which reduces to this narrow margin of the thinking being, in so far as he thinks he is able to ground himself as *I am,* simply on this thinking, it remains (4) that something has been won whose consequences can be read very quickly moreover, in a series of contradictions. For this is indeed the place to mark, for example, that the supposed foundation of simple intuition, which would see there being radically distinguished the *extended thing* from the *thinking thing*, (the first being founded on the exteriority one from another of its parts, from the foundation of *partes extra partes*, as characteristic of extension) is, in a very short space of time, annihilated by the Newtonian discovery, in which I do not think there is sufficiently underlined that the characteristic that it gives to extension, is precisely that in each one of its points, as I might say, no mass is unaware of what is happening at that very instant in all the other points. An obvious paradox certainly and one which gave to contemporaries, and very specially to Cartesians, a lot of difficulty in admitting - a reticence which has not dried up and in which there is demonstrated something which, for us is certainly completed by the fact that the *thinking thing* imposes itself on us, precisely, from Freudian experience, as being - for its part - no longer this thing which is always marked with an indefectible unification, but, quite the contrary, as marked, by being characterised by being fragmented, indeed fragmenting - carrying in itself the same mark which is developed and in a way is demonstrated in the whole development of modern logic; namely, that what we call the machine, in its essential functioning, is what is closest to a combinatorial of notations and that this combinatorial of notations is for us the most precious, the most indicative fruit of the development of thinking.

Freud, here, makes his contribution by demonstrating what results from the **effective** functioning of this aspect of thinking. I mean: from its relation not at all to the subject of mathematical proof, whose essence we are going to recall right away, but to the subject that Kant would call the *pathological subject*, namely, to the subject in so far

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as it may suffer from this sort of thinking. The subject suffers from thinking, in so far, says Freud, as he *represses* it. The fragmented and fragmenting character of this repressed thinking is what our experience teaches us every day, in psychoanalysis.

This is why it is a crude and dishonest mythology to present, as the foundation of our experience, some nostalgia or other for a primitive unity, for a pure and simple pulsation of satisfaction, in a relationship to the Other, which is here the only one who counts, and who is imaged, who is represented as the Other of a feeding relationship. The following step, still more scandalous - as I might say - than the first, becoming necessarily what happens, what is articulated in modern psychoanalytic theory throughout its length and breath: the confusion between this feeding Other and the sexual Other.

There is really no salvation - as I might say - for the thinking, any possible preservation of the truth introduced by Freud (but also indeed technical honesty), that cannot, that ought not to be grounded on the setting aside of this crude lure, of this scandalous abuse that it represents: by a sort of contrary pedagogy; a deliberate use of a capture, by a sort of illusion especially untenable for anyone who throws an honest (5) look at what psychoanalytic experience is.

To re-establish to Other in the only status which is valid, which for it is that of the locus of the word, is the necessary starting point from which everything in our analytic experience can take again its correct place.

To define the Other as the locus of the word, is to say that it is nothing other than the locus where an assertion is posited as veracious. It means, at the same time, that it has **no other kind of existence**. But, since to say it, is still to appeal to it in order to situate this truth, it is to make it re-emerge every time that I speak. And that is why I cannot *say* this expression: "*that it has no kind of existence*", but I can *write* it. And that is why I write S signifier of capital O barred as constituting one of the nodal points of this network around which there is articulated the whole dialectic of desire, in so far as it is hollowed out from the interval between statement and stating.

There is no insufficiency, no reduction to some careless gesture or other, in the fact of affirming that the writing: S (O) plays here, for our thinking, an essential pivotal role. For there is no other foundation to what is called mathematical truth, if not that the recourse to the Other, in so far as those to whom I am speaking are asked to refer to it (I mean: *qua* big Other) in order to see inscribed there the signs of our initial conventions as regards what is involved in what I manipulate in mathematics, which is very exactly what Mr Bertrand Russell, an expert in the matter, would go so far as to dare to designate in these terms: that we do not know what we are talking about, nor whether what we are saying has the slightest truth. And in effect, why not? Simply the recourse to the Other - in so far as corresponding in a certain field to a limited use of certain signs, it is incontestable that, having spoken, I can write and maintain what I have written. (If I cannot, at every moment of mathematical reasoning, make this to and fro movement between what I articulate through my discourse and what I inscribe as being established, there is no progression possible of what is called mathematical truth and this is the whole essence of what is called, in mathematics: proof). It is

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precisely of the same order as what we are dealing with here - the recourse to the Other, is, in every effect of thinking, absolutely determining.

The *I am* of the Cartesian *I think* not only does not avoid it, but is grounded on it, it is grounded in it, even before it is forced, to place this Other at a level of divine essence in order simply to obtain from the interlocutor what follows: the *therefore* of the *I am* - this Other is very directly summoned, it is to it, it is to the reference to this locus, as locus of the word, that Descartes remits himself, for a discourse which calls for consent to do what I am in the process of doing before you: in exhorting me to doubt, you will not deny that I am; the argument is ontological from this stage and undoubtedly if it does not have the cutting edge of St. Anselm's argument, if it is more (6) sober, it does not fail for all that to involve consequences which are the ones that we are going to come to now and which are precisely those which result from having to write by a signifier, that this Other is not something else.

St. Anselm … (I had asked you during this vacation to refer to a certain chapter and in order that the matter does not remain in the air, I will recall here the order of this famous argument, which is unfairly disparaged and which is well designed to give all its relief to the function of this Other. The argument concern in any way - as is said in the manuals - the following: that the most perfect essence would imply existence.)

Chapter II of the *Fides quarens intellectum*, articulates the argument by being addressed to what is called "the fool"; the fool who, says scripture, has said in his heart: "there is no God".

The argument consists in saying: "Fool! Everything depends on what you call God, and since it is clear that you have called God the Being who is most perfect, you do not know what you are saying". For, says St Anselm, I St Anselm know well that it is not sufficient that the idea of the most perfect Being exists as an idea, in order for this Being to exist. But if you consider that you have the right to have this idea, that you say, that this Being does not exist, what will you look like, if perchance it exists? For you are proving then, that in forming the idea of the most perfect Being, you form an inadequate idea, since it is separated from the following: that this Being can exist and that as existent it is more perfect than an idea that does not imply existence.

It is a proof of the impotence of the thinking of the one articulating it, through a certain critical bias concerning the inoperancy of thinking itself. It is to prove to him that in articulating something about thinking, he himself does not know what he is saying. That is why what is to be re-examined is elsewhere and very precisely at the level of the status of this Other in which I not simply can but in which I cannot do otherwise than establish myself, every time something is articulated which belongs to the field of the word.

No one, as one of my friends has written recently, believes in this Other. In our time, from the most devout people to the most libertine - if this term still has a sense - everyone is an atheist. Philosophically, anything that is based on any form of existence of this Other is untenable.

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That is why everything is reduced in the import of the *I am* which follows the *I think*, to the fact that this *I think* makes sense, but exactly in the same say as any nonsense makes sense. Everything that you articulate, on this single condition, as I already taught you - that there must be maintained a certain grammatical form (do I need to go back on the "green colourless ideas, etc"?), anything which has simply a grammatical form makes sense. And this means nothing else than that starting from there I cannot (7) go any further. In other words, that the strict consideration of the logical import that any operation of language involves, is affirmed in what is the fundamental and sure effect, of what is called *alienation* and which does not at all mean that we remit ourselves to the Other, but on the contrary, that we see the caducity of anything that is founded simply on this recourse to the Other, of which nothing can subsist except what grounds the course of mathematical proof from a reasoning by recurrence; the typical form of which is that if we can prove that something that is true for *n* is also true for *n - 1,* it is enough for us to know what is involved when n = 1 in order to affirm that the same thing is true for the whole series of whole numbers. So what? …

This in itself does not involve any other consequence than the nature of a truth which is the one that I earlier sufficiently pinpointed in the judgement of Bertrand Russell: for our part, we must posit - since something comes to reveal to us the truth hidden behind this consequence - since it is not our place to retreat before what is essential; that the status of thinking, in so far as alienation is realised in it as the fall of the Other, is composed of this; namely, of this white field which is on the left of S [*pointing to the board*]and which corresponds to this status of the I, which is that of the I in so far as it reigns, and this incontestably, over the majority of our contemporaries and which is articulated by an *I do not think*, which is not only proud but even glories in this affirmation! As a result of which, what completes it is what here, I designated as *Es* and which I articulated the last time as being certainly a complement, but a complement which comes to it from this fallen part of this alienation, namely: from what comes to it from this locus of this vanished (*disparu*) Other, in what remains of it as being the *not-I* and that I called - because it is in this way that it must be designated - nothing but this: **the grammatical structure**.

It is certainly not the privilege of a Freudian to conceive of himself in this way, read Mr Wittgenstein: *Tractatus logico philosophicus* … You must not believe that because a whole school, which is called logical-positivist, dins into our ears a whole series of the most insipid and mediocre considerations, that the step taken by Wittgenstein amounts to nothing. This attempt to articulate what results from a consideration of logic in so far as it can do without any existence of the subject, is well worth following in all its details and I recommend you to read it.

For us Freudians, on the contrary, what this grammatical structure of language represents is exactly the same thing as what ensures that when Freud wants to articulate the drive, he cannot do other than pass by way of grammatical structure, which alone gives its complete and ordered field to what, in fact, comes to dominate when Freud speaks about the drive; I mean to constitute the only two *functioning* (8) examples of drives as such, namely the scoptophilic drive and the sado-masochistic drive.

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It is only in the world of language that the *I want to see* can take on its dominant function leaving it open to know from where and why I am looked at.

It is only in a world of language, as I said the last time in order to highlight it simply in passing, that "a child is being beaten" has its pivotal value.

It is only in a world of language that the subject of the action gives rise to the question of *who* supports it, namely, for whom it acts?

No doubt, nothing can be *said* about what is involved in these structures. Our experience, nevertheless, affirms to us that it is they that dominate and not what prowls along some corridor or other of the analytic assembly, namely, a "genital" drive which anyone would be quite incapable of defining as such - that it is they that give their law to the function of desire. But this cannot be *said*, except by *repeating* the grammatical articulations in which they are constituted; namely, exhibiting in the sentences which ground them what can be deduced from different fashions that the subject may have of dwelling there. Nothing, I am saying, can be *said* about them, except what we in fact hear, namely, the subject in his *complaint*.

To know that for all that he is not found in them, that the desire that he grounds in them has for him this ambiguous value of being a desire that he does not assume, that he is only able *despite himself*. It is indeed to return to this point that we are articulating everything that we have to unfold here before you. It is indeed because this is the way things are and because people *dared to say it*, that we must examine **where** this discourse could have started from.

It could have started from this: that there is a point of experience from which we can see what is involved in the truth, because of what I will call as you wish: the obscuring, the strangling, the impasse of the subjective situation, under this strange incidence whose final source is to be grounded in the status of language.

It is at the level where thinking exists as: *it is not I who think*.

This thinking - as it is here, supported by this little shuttle (*on the bottom right of the schema*) which carries the capital I [*in French*] - this thinking, which has the status of unconscious thoughts, implies the following: that it *cannot say* - and this is the status that is proper to it - either: *therefore I am*, nor even the *therefore I am not*, which nevertheless completes it and which is its virtual status at the level of the Other.

For it is there and only there that this Other maintains its agency. It is there where the *I*, as such, is only effectively inscribed by an *I am not* - by an *I am not* which is supported by this fact that it is supported by as many others as there are to constitute a dream - that the dream, Freud tells us, is essentially egoistic - that in everything that (9) the dream presents us with we have to recognise the agency of the *Ich*, under a mask; but, moreover, it is in so far as it is not articulated as *Ich*, that it masks itself there - that it is present.

This is why the place of all the dream-thoughts is marked here, on the right-hand side by this blank area where it is designated that the *Ich,* as such, is certainly indicated in

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each one of these dream-thoughts by finding it, by what is going to constitute what Freud calls *Trauminhalt*, namely, very precisely, this set of signifiers of which a dream is constituted by the different mechanisms of the unconscious: condensation, displacement, *Verdichtung*, *Verschiebung*; if the *I*, the *Ich*, the *ego*, is present in all of them, namely, very precisely in the fact that it is **in all**, namely, that *it is absolutely dispersed in them.*

What does that mean, and what is the status that remains to the thoughts that constitute this unconscious, if not to be what Freud told us, namely, these signs through which each thing - in the sense that I said the last time: *Sache*, affairs, things encountered - play with respect to one another this function of referring on which makes us, in the analytic operation, lose time in harvesting them, as in an unordered world?

But what is the operation realised by Freud going to - be and especially in this part of the *Traumdeutung* which is called the dream-work *die Traumarbeit* - if not to show us what it articulates - what it articulates at the beginning of this chapter in the clearest fashion and *quite literally* (whatever maybe said by people who are reading me nowadays for the first time and who are astonished), - that for so many years I have been articulating - that the unconscious is structured like a language! *Der Trauminhalt* - the dream content - is given to us: *gleichsam* - just like - in a writing made up of images (which designates the hieroglyphs) whose signs are only *zu ubertragen* - to be translated - *in die Sprache*- into the tongue - of the dream-thoughts; and all that follows on the *Zeichenbeziehung*, on the comparison with a rebus, on the fact that one only understands a rebus by reading it and articulating it, for otherwise it is absurd to see an image - he tells us - composed of a house on which there is a ship or a person running with a comma in place of his head - that all of this has only sense in a *tongue* and after having told us that the world of dream-thoughts is illogical by nature … (I would simply ask you to refer to Freud's text) - which is not simply to bear witness to you of what is really patent and crudely illustrated on every page, namely that nothing is spoken about except language - but to see that what Freud articulates, are all the ways that exist in order that in this world - of things, no doubt, but what does that mean? That means: - *das Bedeutung*, of what this refers to, this sense of the rebus, and what that refers to, namely, in effect, the images which constitute it.

(10) What does Freud do if not show us how, in a certain fashion precisely by altering them - these images, for example - one can designate the index thanks to which, in their sequence, we rediscover all the grammatical functions eliminated at first. And to show us how there is expressed the relationship of a subordinate to a principal (read the whole of this enormous chapter VI of the *Traumarbeit*), how a causal relationship can be expressed, how in fact the form of negation makes its way back. And very precisely, you will find things whose kinship with the schemas that I have given you, brought here, will appear obvious, like the function of the either - or, he says, which serves to express - because it cannot be done otherwise - a conjunction. And when you look more closely at it you will find exactly what I told you, namely, that in the either – or, suspended between two negations, you have precisely the same value as in the negation of this conjunction.

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Undoubtedly these … devices, as I might say, will appear to you a little bit further ahead in their results than those that Freud gives you, but Freud gives you plenty of them to encourage you to go along the same path. Namely, that when you take the *Secerno* dream, the dream in which you have to close either one eye or two eyes, you will notice what that signifies, namely, that this means: that one cannot have, at the same time, one eye open or two eyes open, that it is not the same thing.

In short, the legitimacy of the logic of the phantasy is precisely this something for Freud's whole chapter, to speak of only that one, prepares us. Prepares us by showing us that of which Freud is tracing the path is a *logic* of these thoughts, namely, the following which means: *it* requires this support of the locus of the Other, which cannot very precisely, here, be articulated except by a *therefore, I am not*.

So here we are suspended at the level of this function, at a *you are not, therefore I am not.* Does that not tickle your ears in a certain way? Do we not have here, I would say, the most importunate language of love itself?

What does that mean? Must we take further the sense, which moreover gives its truth: *you are only what I am*. Everyone knows and can recognise that if the sense of love, is indeed in effect this formula that I give, love in fact in its agitation, in its naïve *elan*, as in many of its discourses, does not commend itself as a function of thinking.

I mean that if, from a formula such as: *you are not, therefore I am not*, there emerges (11) the monster whose effect we know rather well in everyday life, it is very precisely in so far as this truth - that of the *you are not, therefore I am not* - is rejected (*verworfen)* in love. The manifestations of love in the real is very precisely the characteristic that I state of every *Verwerfung*, namely: the most inconvenient and the most depressing effects - this is a still further an illustration of it - in which the paths of love are nowhere to be designated as so easily traced out.

Undoubtedly, in Descartes' time there was no one unaware of these laws, of course. We were at the time of Angelus Silesius, who dared to say to God: "If I were not there, well then, it is very simple: you, God, *qua* existing God, you would not be there either". In such a epoch one can talk about the problems of our own; more exactly one can put oneself back there to form a judgement on what constitutes an impasse for us.

What does Freud tell us, to take further the examination of his logic? If you have still preserved the slightest doubt about the nature of this subversion, which makes of the *Bedeutung* - in so far as we grasp it at the moment of its alteration, of its torsion as such, of its amputation, indeed of its ablation - the source which can allows us to recognise in it the re-established function of logic. If you still have the slightest doubt, you would see these doubts vanishing by seeing how Freud, in the dream, reintegrates everything that appears there as judgements, whether these judgements are internal to the lived experience of this dream, but still more when they present themselves as - in appearance - waking judgements.

When, he tells us, in connection with the dream, something in the dreamer's account, is indicated as being a moment of oscillation, of interruption, of a lacuna (as formerly

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I said at the time when I was making something of the "lacuna") *Lucken*, an *Unterbrechung,* a rupture, in the account that I the dreamer may give of it, this itself is to be reinstated, Freud tells us, as forming part of the text of the dream. And what does this designate? It is enough for me to refer, somewhere, in what Freud gives us as an example of it:- I am going, says one of his dreamers, with Fraulein K. - *in das Volksgartenrestaurant* - into the restaurant of the *Volksgarten* … and here, there is a *dunkel Stelle*, this is the passage of which there is nothing more to be said: he no longer knows, and then it takes up again: "then I find myself in the salon of a brothel, - *in dem ich zwei oder drei Frauen sehe* - in which I see two or three women, one in a chemise and drawers.

The analysis: the Fraulein K. is the daughter of his previous boss and what is characteristic, is the circumstance in which he had to speak to her and which he designates in these terms: "we recognised - *Mann sich erkante*, - *gleischsam*: in a sort of equality - *in seiner Geschlechtigkeit*, in her sexual description, as if what is being (12) said was: I am a man *Ich bin ein Mann - und du ein Weib* - and you a woman."

Here, very precisely is why Fraulein K. is chosen: to constitute the beginning of the dream, but also no doubt to determine its syncopation. For what is going to follow, in the dream, proves itself very precisely to be what comes to disturb this lovely relationship full of certainties between man and woman. Namely, that the three persons who are linked, for him, to the memory of this restaurant and who also represent the ones that he finds in the salon of the brothel are, respectively, his sister, the wife of his brother-in-law, and a friend of hers (or of his, it does not matter), in any case three women with whom one cannot say that his relationships are marked by a frank and direct sexual approach.

In other words, what Freud demonstrates to us as being **always** and strictly correlative to this syncopation of the *Trauminhalt*, to the lack of signifiers, is, precisely, once it is approached, anything whatsoever **in language** (and not simply the mirages of looking into one another's eyes) that would put in question what is involved in the relationships of sex as such.

The original logical sense of castration, in so far as analysis discovered its dimension, reposes on this: that at the level of *Bedeutungen*, of meanings, language - in so far as it is what structures the subject as such - is very mathematically lacking, I mean: reduces what is involved in the relationship between the sexes to what we designate as we can, by this something to which language reduces sexual polarity, namely: *having* or *not having* the phallic connotation.

It is very precisely what the effect of analysis represents – and only represents.

No approach to castration as such is possible for a human subject, except in a renewal - at a different stage (separated by the whole height of this rectangle that I have drawn here) - of this function, that I earlier called: alienation, namely: where there intervenes - as such - the function of the Other in so far as we ought to mark it as barred.

It is precisely in so far as analysis by its work, comes to invert this relationship, which made of everything that was of the order of the status of the subject in his *I am not*, an

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empty field - a non-identifiable subject; it is in so far as this field is going to be filled (here: in the bottom left corner) that there is going to appear inversely (here) the minus phi ( ) of the failure of the articulation of the sexual *Bedeutung*. *Die bedeutung des Phallus* I entitled (because I gave it in German) this lecture that I gave on the meaning of the phallus … it is starting from there that there ought to be posed the question of what is involved in what distances these two equally alienating operations: that of (13) pure and simply logical alienation and that of the re-reading of the same alienating necessity in the *Bedeutung* of unconscious thoughts. With, in both cases - as you see - a different result (because they even seem - in looking at them as they are there, shaded - to be strictly opposed to one another).

The fact is that the whole distance between the one and the other of these operations, consists in their field of departure, one of which is the reconstructed one starting from which I designate the foundation of any logical operation, namely, the choice offered between *either I do not think or I am not*, as being the true sense of the Cartesian *cogito*; this culminates in an *I do not think* and at the foundation of everything that makes of the human subject a subject especially subjected to two drives that I designated as scoptophilic and sado-masochistic.

That if something of the **Other**, which is related to sexuality, is manifested starting from unconscious thoughts, it is very precisely the sense of Freud's discovery, but also that through which there is designated **the radical inadequation of thinking to the reality of sex.**

The question is not to go beyond what is unthinkable here - unthinkable and nevertheless healthy - because this is the very core of why Freud held so essentially to the sexual theory of the libido.

You have to read, in the really … shamanic, inspired - God knows, I do not know how to qualify them … writings of Jung his stupor, his indignation, in gathering from Freud's mouth something which seems to him to constitute some strictly anti-scientific bias, when Freud says to him: "And then above all, huh, you, Jung do not forget it: you have to stick to this theory" - "But why", Jung says to him - "To prevent", says Freud the "*Schlammflut*", the tide of mud! - Of what? "Of occultism" say Freud to him, knowing very well everything that is involved in the fact of not having touched this precisely designated limit; because it constitutes no doubt the essence of language, in the fact that language does not dominate - from this foundation of sex in so far as it is perhaps most profoundly linked to the essence of death - does not dominate what is involved in sexual reality.

This is the teaching, full of sobriety, that Freud gives us.

But then, why are there thus two paths and two ways in? No doubt because there is something which deserves a name in the operation that we have not spoken about, the one which makes us pass from the level of unconscious thinking to this logical, theoretical status. Inversely the one which can make us pass from this status of the subject - in so far as he is the subject of scoptophilic and masochistic drives - to the status of analysed subject, in so far as the function of castration has a sense for him.

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(14) This, which we will call “operation truth” - because like the truth itself, it blows and realises itself where it will, when it speaks - this, which was linked to the discovery, to the irruption of the unconscious, to the return of the repressed, this allows us to conceive of why we can rediscover the agency of castration in *the objet-noyau*, in the core-object (c-o-r-e, to say it in English) in the object around which the status of the grammatical subject turns, this can be designated and translated starting from this corner obtained because of the fact that language is, by its very status, “antipathetic” (as I might say) to sexual reality.

This is nothing other than the locus of the operation around which we are going to be able to define, in its logical status, the function of the **o**-object.

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Seminar 9: Wednesday 25 January 1967

I left you, the last time, on a first circuit of the rectangle which is repeated here as an evocative support for you, as an indication that one must always refer to it as regards the foundation of what we are trying to construct, this year, in terms of a logic of the phantasy.

That the choice posed at the source of the development of these logical operations is this sort of very special alternative, that I am trying to articulate under the proper name of alienation, between an *I do not think* and an *I am not*, with what it involves in terms of forcing in the choice that it imposes, which goes of itself to the *I do not think*. It is from there that we will start again.

We have undoubtedly travelled enough distance to know now how the analytic reference is situated with respect to the discovery of the unconscious in so far as this discovery gives the truth of this alienation.

Something is already sufficiently indicated from the fact that there is, from what supports this truth, under the term several times repeated before you, the little **o**-object.

Undoubtedly, all of this is only possible in the measure that for a long time I have been speaking to you about this **o**-object and that it may already represent for you some support. Nevertheless the special articulation it has with this logic, has in no way been pushed to its term - far from it. Simply, I wanted to indicate to you, at the end of our last conversation, that *castration* is undoubtedly not without a relation to this object; that it represents the following:

- the fact is that this object, as cause of desire, dominates everything that it is possible for the subject to circumscribe as field, as grasp, as hold on what is called properly speaking, in the essence of man, *desire*. (There no point in telling you that here, the essence of man is a reference to Spinoza, and that I do not accord to this (2) term *man*, any more of an emphasis than I ordinarily give it)
- that this desire, in so far as it is limited to this causation by the little **o**-object, is very exactly the same point which requires that at the level of sexuality, desire is represented by the mark of a lack
- that everything is ordered and originates in the sexual relationship as it is produced in the speaking being, by reason of the following: around the sign of castration, namely, - at the start - around the phallus, in so far as it represents the possibility of a lack of object.

Castration, then, is something like waking up to the fact that sexuality - I mean: every bit of it that is realised in psychic events - is **that (*ca*)**: namely, something which is marked by the sign of a lack. From the fact, for example: that the Other - the Other of the inaugural lived experience of the life the child - must at some moment appear as

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castrated and, no doubt, this horror which is linked to the first apprehension of castration, as being supported by what we designate in analytic language as *the Mother* – namely, what is not to be purely and simply taken as the person charged with diverse functions in a certain typical relation at the origin of the life of the little human, but, in fact, as something which has the most profound relation with this Other which is put in question at the origin of this whole logical operation - that this Other should be castrated, the correlative and regular horror, as one might say, which occurs at this discovery, is something which carries us to the heart of what is involved as regards the relation of the subject to the Other in so far as it is grounded in it.

Sexuality, as it is lived, as it operates, is, in this respect, something fundamentally - in all that we map out in our analytic experience - something which represents a prohibiting oneself (*un "se defendre")* from following the consequences of this truth: **that there is no Other**.

This is what I have to commentate for you today. For, undoubtedly, I took the approach of the philosophical tradition to pronounce: "This Other does not exist", and in this connection, to evoke the atheistic correlation that this profession involves. But, of course, is it not something at which we can stop. And we have to ask ourselves, go further in the sense of posing the question: what is meant by this fall of the big Other (capital S, O barred in brackets) that we pose as being the term logically equivalent to the inaugural choice of alienation?

Nothing can fall except what is and, if O is not…? We posit that there is no locus where the truth constituted by the word can be guaranteed. If it is not the words that are empty, but if it is rather, if one has rather to say that the words do not have a place (3) which justifies the putting in question - always by common consciousness - of what is only words, as they say; what is meant, what is added by this formulation of capital S brackets O barred that I am giving you as being the key which allows us to start, to start on a correct footing and that we can sustain long enough, as regards the logic of the phantasy.

If it is an algorithm of the mathematical type that I make use of to support this capital S brackets O barred, it is no doubt clearly to affirm that there is another deeper sense to be discovered. That which - truly, modern consciousness (whether it is that of religious people or of those who are not so) is on the whole atheistic - would it not be something like blowing on a shadow (*souffler un ombre*), simply, to affirm this non-existence of the big O? Is it not a matter, behind this, of something else? …

There are many ways of seeing that it is, as a matter of fact, something else.

What is meant by capital O marked by a bar? Well then, I have just said it - I do not need to go looking for it any further: it is marked.

Is not the sense of what Pascal called the "God of philosophy" - from this reference to the Other so essential in Descartes and which allowed us to start from it in order to secure our first step - is it not, precisely, that the Other, the Other of what Pascal calls the God of the philosophers, the Other in so far as he is in effect so necessary for the edification of any philosophy, is it not the case that what characterises it - at best, at

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most, and, even also, we would go further: among the mystics who are contemporaries of the same stage of reflection on this theme of the Other - is not what characterises it essentially not being marked? Negative theology …

And what is meant by this perfection invoked in the "ontological argument", if not precisely that no mark cuts into it?

In this sense, the symbol: capital S brackets O barred, means that we cannot consider our experience unless we start from the following: that the Other is **marked**.

And this indeed, in effect, is what is involved, with the approach of this primal castration affecting the maternal being: the Other is marked. We perceive it very quickly, in tiny signs …

If it were necessary, before I put it forward here, before you, in a magisterial fashion, (which is always to abuse a little the credit given to the word of the one who is teaching), to try to see in little signs like these, which are seen by what one does when one translates: if I were speaking German, you could ask yourself the question of how I would translate this Other that you have been passing on to me for so many years (4) (because I have dinned it into yours ears!): *das Anderes*, or *der Andere*?

You see the difficulty which arises from the simple fact not, as has been said, that there are tongues in which the neuter is supposed to constitute the un-marked as regards gender … this is completely absurd! The notion of gender is not to be confused with the masculine/feminine bi-polarity. The neuter is also a gender and one precisely marked. What is proper to tongues in which it is not marked, is that there can be something un-marked which is going to shelter regularly under the masculine. And this is what allows me to speak to you about the Other, without you having to question yourselves about whether it should be translated by "*der Andere"* or "*das Anderes"*.

Which involves, as you may notice, if one has to make a choice… I would have to speak - I did not have the time before to construct these reflections today for you - I will have to talk with some English speakers (there is no lack of them in my audience) but, I wanted to do it last evening, I did not have the time: why, in English, there is some attraction - I was able to notice it during my last talk for Baltimore - to translate it by *the Other*? As far as I can see, this is not obvious in English … (I imagine that it is because of the quite different value that the *the*, the definite article has in English) and that it would have been necessary for me to go - to speak about this Other, about *my* Other - to "*the Otherness"*.

It was still a matter of going in the direction of the un-marked. People took the path they were able to, in English. They went by means of… a quality, an uncertain quality: the *Otherness,* something that essentially slips away, since what we reach will always be other. I cannot say that I am terribly as ease to find in it a representative of the sense that I want to give to the Other and, undoubtedly, neither were those who proposed the translation of it to me.

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But this, this in itself, is significant enough as regards what is involved and, very precisely, of the repugnance that exists to introduce, into the category of the Other, the function of mark.

So then, when you are dealing with the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, you are not deprived of marks! This indeed is the reason why this is not obvious and why, moreover, that those who still have to deal, very directly, personally, collectively, with this sort of Other, have a destiny, for their part also, that is well marked.

I had dreamt, - for some of the little ones of this tribe that surrounds me – of doing them the service of elucidating the question a little, of their relations to the name - to the God - the God with the unpronounceable name, to the one who expressed himself in this register of the "I", it has to be said. Not "I am the one who is", a pale transposition of a Plotinian thought, but "I am what I am", quite simply. Yes, I had (5) thought - I said that I would still come back to it - of rendering them this service, but we will still stay at this point as long as I have not taken up this question of the Name of the Father …

I spoke about the "little ones". Undoubtedly there are also the "great" … the great Jews do not need me to confront their God.

But we, we are dealing here with the Other *qua* field of the truth. And, that this Other is marked, whether we want it or not, as philosophers, that it is marked from the very first, by castration, this is what we are dealing with today, and that nothing can prevail against, once analysis exists.

That is why I consider that it is every reason to break on a certain terrain; that there are speculations that one must not let oneself go with in this direction, not even to judge, as has been imputed to me, but simply to go looking there for what they bear witness to, involuntarily, about the truth that they lack. Because, to point out there (in the thinking, for example, of one or other contemporary philosopher, that at one or other point, there is something which comes to take the place of a lack, precisely, and which is expressed in a more or less embarrassed way, for example, as "thetic self-consciousness", that there is really nothing to say about, except that it is not an *Unsinn,* because an *Unsinn* is not nothing as regards *Sinn*, as we know, but that it is properly speaking - I said: "an non-thetic self-consciousness, did I not - that it is, properly speaking, "*Sinnlos")*, is still to say too much about it, because that concedes that this point could even be the mark of the very place which would be this something indicated as lacking.

Now, it is nowhere, it is nothing like it, it is not in this unthinkable priority of what is established as a point of *Selbstbwusstsein*, that we ought to search for this nodal point, if it is necessary to define - and it is necessary to define, because it is findable, as you are going to see - this nodal point, which would be for us, in the position in which we are placed, the turning point at which to find the link with the *cogito.*

It is not nothing, nevertheless, that the Other should reappear, for example, in such a speculation, in so far as I invoke it here. And if I speak about it, it is to show that

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even in the details that are pursued, only a rupture can respond to the research previously traced out.

How, for example, can one not see that this thinking that I am invoking here - without wanting to give its label, precisely to clearly mark what is involved, as regards what we have to decide on, on this path of thinking - cannot in any way be authorised by any (6) label, and less by mine than by any other.

See where this thinking leads me, when what is at stake is the confusion of the voyeur, for example: this emphasis put, this look also, this thinking which is directed, to justify it, towards his surprise - that of the voyeur - by the look of an other, precisely: of someone arriving, coming on the scene, while he has his eye at the door. So that this look is already sufficiently evoked by the little noise that announces this arrival, when very precisely what is involved, as regards the status of the act of the voyeur, is indeed in effect this something that we, for our part, must also name the *look*, that is involved; but which is to be sought quite elsewhere, namely, precisely in what the voyeur wants to see, but in which he fails to recognise that what is involved in what looks at him most closely, in what fixates him in his fascination as a voyeur, to the point of making him for his part as inert as a picture.

I will not take up here again the outline of what I have already fully developed. But the radical deviation which is the same as the one which is expressed in camera in this formula: that hell is our image forever fixed in the Other. Which is false. If hell is anywhere, it is in *I*.

And in this whole deviation there is no bad faith to be invoked, just as much of an excuse, when all is said and done, as the apologetic Christian ruse of good intentions, constructed to tame the narcissism of the sinner. There is the correct path or there is the false path, there is no transition, the stumblings of the false path have no value as long as they are not analysed, and they cannot be analysed except by beginning from a radically different starting point on this occasion. On this occasion: the admission at the base and in principle - of the unconscious and the search for what constitutes, as such, its status.

What supplies for the lack of the *Selbstbewusstsein* cannot in any way be situated as its own impossibility. It is elsewhere that we have to search for its function, as I might say, since this will not be the same function.

About what is involved, in this track that I am now leaving and on which I had, in the name of some confusion … that it seems it is almost necessary to find oneself implicated in, since I was able to hear, from the mouth of analysts, that there was all the same something to be retained in the *rapprochement* that people were trying to establish on the outside, between the sudden arrival of a certain thinking, on the foundation - supposedly - of a philosophy supposedly attacked or indeed subverted by it. It is very surprising that the possibility of such a reference could even - and by someone, for example, who is an analyst – be admitted as one of these simple possible effects of what is called, on this occasion, alienation. I heard this - and from the (7) lips of someone who is not always wrong - certainly at a time when I had not yet,

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perhaps, made his ears sufficiently ring with what is really to be thought about this term: alienation.

Alienation has absolutely nothing to do with the deformation, the loss, that results in everything involved in communication: even, I would say, in the most traditional fashion - and now that it is sufficiently established - of a thinking that is called "Marxist". It is clear that alienation, in the Marxist sense, has nothing to do with what is properly speaking only confusion. Marxist alienation, moreover, does absolutely not suppose in itself the existence of the Other, it consists simply in the following: that I do not recognise, for example, my work in this thing (which has absolutely nothing to do with the opinion and that no… sociological persuasion will modify in any case) namely, that my work, my own, re-turns to me and that I have to *pay* a certain *price*. This is something which is not resolved by any direct dialectic, which pre-supposes the operation of all sorts of quite real links, if one wishes to modify in it- not the chain, nor the mechanism, which is impossible to break - but the most injurious consequences.

It is the same for what is involved in alienation and that is way the important thing in what I am stating here - concerning alienation - takes its relief, not from the fact that one or other person remains more or less deaf to the sense of what I am articulating, but very precisely from its effects on those who understand it perfectly well; on this single condition that they are concerned with it in a primary fashion. And that is why it is at the level of analysts that sometimes, as regards the most advanced things that I put forward, I pick up the signs of an anxiety, let us say, which can go as far as an impatience, and that simply the last time, for example, when I stated in a more or less lateral fashion (intended to give its true illumination to what I was defining there as the position of the "I am not", in so far as it is correlative to the function of the unconscious) and that I articulated on this point a formula as being the truth of what love here allows itself to formulate - namely: "if you do not exist, I die!" says love, we know this cry and I translate it: "you are nothing, except what I am" - is it not strange that such a formula … which certainly goes well beyond in what it traces out in terms of openness to love, for the very fact simply that it indicates there that the *Verwerfung* that it constitutes only arises precisely from the following: that love does not think, but that it only articulates - as Freud for his part does purely and simply - that the foundation of *Verliebtheit*, of love, is the *Lust-Ich* and that it is nothing else (because this is affirmed in Freud): than the effect of narcissism. How then, at a formula - which appears immediately to be infinitely more open, because it goes no less far than to this remark (implied in a certain commandment which, I think, is not unknown to you, that (8) it is in the most secret part of myself that there ought to be sought the mainspring of the love of neighbour - how then can such a formula, and I insist on it: to a analytic ear, evoke some alarm or other, as if what I pronounced there was disparaging if (as I heard), I was committing an imprudence of the following order: "that to listeners who are twenty five years old, I allow myself to put forward a remark which would reduce love to nothing"

A curious thing: among the twenty five year olds, I only had to this utterance - as far as I know, of course, but there are some of them who come to confide in me in the following week - nothing but particularly bracing reactions, I would say. However austere the formula may be, it appeared invigorating to many.

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What is it, then, that possibly conditions the unease of an analyst… if not very precisely what I marked here on this formula, with this little swerve (*crochet*) which displaces the *nothing* by a fraction: *You are only this nothing that I am* (*Tu n'es que ce rien que je suis*); which is no less true, in effect, than the preceding formula, in so far as it refers us to the key function, which is restored - in the status of this *I* of the "I am" - to this small **o**, which constitutes in effect the whole question about it (and it is on this that I want to delay a little more today) and which one can understand, in effect, interests the analyst.

For, in the operation of analysis - in so far as it alone allows us to go far enough in this relationship of thinking to being at the level of the *I*, for *it* to be what introduces the function of castration - the small **o**, in this operation, has to be completed with a signifying tail: the small **o,** in the path that analysis traces out, **is the analyst**.

And it is because the analyst has to occupy this position of the small **o**, that in effect, *for him*, the formula - and very legitimately - gives rise to an appropriate anxiety, if one remembers what I formulated about anxiety: that it is not without an object. And this indicates that it is all the more grounded, in that with this object, the one who is called by the signifying operation that is analysis, find himself, at that very place, stimulated to interest himself at the very least.

That to know how he assumes it, is something which is still rather distant from the consideration that we can bring to it here. But how can one fail to recognise that there is nothing here which ought to upset us any more than what for a long time had been formulated along the paths of an aphoristic short-circuit of a wisdom that has certainly been lost but is not completely without an echo - in the form of *Tat twam asi*: recognise yourself, you are that. Which, of course, could only remain opaque because of a certain bias of philosophical tradition. If the *that*, in any way, can in effect be (9) identified to the correlate of representation in which, in this tradition, the subject is more and more established, there is nothing more empty than this formula. That I am my representation, is only here this something which it is too easy to say corrupts the whole modern development of a thinking under the name of idealism - and the status of representation, as such, has to be taken up again by us.

Undoubtedly, if these words have a sense, which is called structuralism … (I do not want to give any others, - like: the *Nouvelle Critique)*, they ought of course to begin by articulating something about representation.

Is it not quite clear, by simply opening a volume like the last of the *Mythologiques* that has appeared, by Claude Levi-Strauss, that if the analysis of myths, as it is presented to us, has a sense, it is because it de-centres completely the function of representation. Undoubtedly we are dealing with dead matter, with respect to which we no longer have any *I*-relation. And this analysis is a game, is a fascinating game, because of what it reminds us of, and you can find the testimony of it - to take only this last volume - from the first pages. *From honey to ashes,* it is entitled, and we see there being articulated in a certain number of myths the relationships between honey - conceived of as a nourishing substance prepared by others than men, and, in a way, before the distinction of nature and culture - and what operates beyond the raw and the

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cooked of cooking, namely, what is reduced to smoke: tobacco. And we find from the pen of its author, this curious thing, attached to some little remark that he hooks onto certain medieval texts, for example, to the fact that before tobacco came to us, its place was in a way prepared by this opposite of ashes which was already indicated with respect to honey, that in a way, the honey-thing, for a long time - always - was waiting for the tobacco-thing!

Whether you follow or not along the path of the analysis of Claude Levi-Strauss, is it not designed to suggest to us what we know from the practice of the unconscious and allows there to be pushed further the critique of what Freud articulates under the name of *Sachesvorstellungen?* In the idealist perspective, one thinks - and after all why would Freud not have written it in this sense -: representation of things in so far as it is things which are represented.

But why should we object to thinking the relations of things, as supporting some representations which belong to the things themselves? Since things act as signs (with all the ambiguity that you can put into this term), act as signs to one another, can summon one another and wait, and be ordered as an order of things; that, without any doubt, it is on this that we operate every time that in interpreting as analysts we make function something as *Bedeutung*.

(10) Undoubtedly, this is the trap. And it is not analytic work either, however amusing it may be as a game, to rediscover in the unconscious the network and the plot of ancient myths; we will always have enough of those! Once we are dealing with the *Bedeutung,* we will find anything we want as structure from the mythical era.

This is the reason why, at the end of a certain time, the game wearied analysts. The fact is that they saw that it was too easy. The game is not easy when it is a matter of texts that are collected, attested, about existing myths. These are precisely not just indifferent ones.

But, at the level of the unconscious of the subject in analysis, the game is much more supple. And why? Precisely because there is unknotted in it, that it has become joined to an *I am not* in which there is sufficiently manifested - as I said the last time – in forms which, in the dream, make omnipresent and never completely identifiable, the function of the *I*.

But it is something different that ought to retain us! It is precisely the holes, in this operation of the *Bedeutung*. How has there not been noticed the following, which is nevertheless blindingly present, namely, what I might call the "stoppered" (*bouche*) aspect of *Bedeutung*, in which there is manifested everything that touches on the little **o**-object.

Naturally, the analysts do everything to link it to some primordial function that they imagine they have grounded in the organism, like, for example, when it is a matter of the object of the oral drive. This is why, moreover, they will speak quite incorrectly about good or bad milk, while it is nothing of the kind that is in question, since what is at stake is the breast.

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It is impossible to make a link between milk and an erotic object - which is essential to the status as such of the little **o**-object - while it is quite evident that as regards the breast, the objection is not the same.

But who does not see that a breast, is something - my friends, have you ever thought of it? - that is not representable! I do not think that I have here too big a minority of people for whom a breast may constitute an erotic object, but are you capable, in terms of representation, to define why it is so? What is a beautiful breast, for example? Even though the term is commonly used, I defy anyone to give any support whatsoever to this term of "beautiful breast"!

If there is something that the breast constitutes, it would be necessary for that, as one day an apprentice-poet who is not too far away, articulated at the end of one of the tiny quatrains that he produced, in the words: "the dazzling cloud of breasts"; there is no other way, it seems to me, except to play on this register of the cloudy, by adding something else to it, of the order of reflection, namely, something less graspable, (11) through which it may be possible to support, in the *Vorstellung*, what is involved in this object, which much more rather has no other status than what we can call with all the opaqueness of these terms: a point of *jouissance*. But what does that mean?

I would say that … I tried to say it, read a little (I do not know how I manage to get them across, but it does not matter, I perhaps wrote it in different terms) but while I was trying to centre, to make you sense it, what I called at the time this "syncopation of the *Bedeutung*" - since it was in order to show you that this is the point that the *Sinn* comes to fill in - quite suddenly, it appeared to me: but, what was most suitable to support this role of the breast-object in the phantasy, in so far as it is, for its part, truly the specific support of the *I* - of the *I* of the oral drive - was nothing other than the formula! … (since you are all here more or less initiated, practitioners, indeed *aficionados* of my discourse) but the formula that I used a hundred times to image the purely structural character of the *Sinn:* "*Colourless green ideas*…" - these ideas with no colour and nevertheless green, why not? - … "*sleep furiously*"! That is what breasts are!

Nothing, it seems to me, can better express the privilege of this object, nothing expresses it in a more adequate fashion, namely a poetic one on this occasion: that they sleep, furiously in this case and that it is not a small task to wake them up. This indeed is all that is involved, when it is breasts that are at stake.

This is designed to put us on a trial. Namely, the one that is going to bring us closer to the question of leaving in suspense, what can allow us to supply for *Selbstbewusstsein*. Because, of course, it is nothing other than the little **o**-object. Only one must know how to find it where it is. And it is not because one knows its name in advance that one encounters it and, moreover, encountering it does not signify anything, except some occasion for amusement.

But what does Freud - if we take things at the level of the dream - articulate for us?

We will be struck, undoubtedly, by what he lets slip, as I might say, to indicate a certain waking side of the subject, precisely when he is asleep. If there is something

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that well characterises this fault, or this Other-fault (*faute-d'Autre)* that I designate as fundamental to alienation, if the *I* is not much more than the opaqueness of the logical structure, if the non-transparency of the truth is what gives its style to the Freudian discovery, is it not strange to see him saying that a particular dream which contradicts his theory of desire signifies nothing other there than the desire to prove him wrong?

Is this not enough, both to show the correctness of this formula that I am articulating, that desire is the desire of the Other, and to show the suspense in which the status of (12) desire is left if the Other, precisely, can be said not to exist?

But is it not still more remarkable to see Freud, at the end of one of the sections of this VIth chapter on which I insisted the last time, specifying that it is in a very sure fashion that the dreamer arms himself and defends himself with the following: that what he is dreaming is only a dream. In connection with which he goes so far as to insist on the following: that there is an agency which always knows (he say: "which *knows*") that the subject asleep and that this agency (even if this may surprise you) is not the unconscious, that it is precisely the preconscious, which represents, he tells us on this occasion, the desire to sleep.

This will make us reflect about what happens on awaking. Since if the desire to sleep finds itself, through the intermediary of sleep, so complictious with the function of desire as such - in so far as it is opposed to reality - what guarantees for us that, emerging from sleep, the subject is more defended against desire, in so far as it frames what he calls "reality"? The moment of waking is perhaps never anything but a brief instant; the one when one changes the curtain.

But let us leave here this first putting in suspense, to which I will return, but that I wanted nevertheless to touch on today, since you have seen that I wrote here the word awaking (*l'eveil)*.

Let us follow Freud: to dream that one is dreaming must be the object of a function of course, for us to be able to say that in every case it designates the imminent approach of reality! Do we not see that for something to be able to notice that it is barricading itself with an error-function in order not to locate reality, that there is here - even though along a path exactly opposite to the assertion of the fact that an idea is transparent to itself - the trace of something which deserves to be followed? And in order to allow you to sense how to understand it, it seems to me that I cannot do better than to go - thanks to the path offered me by a fable which is well known since it is taken from an old Chinese text, one by Choang-tsu (God knows what has been attributed to the poor man!) - and specifically that in connection with this well-known dream, of what he is supposed to have said, in connection with having dreamt…, that he dreamt that he himself was a butterfly: he is supposed to have questioned his disciples on the subject of how to distinguish Choang-tsu dreaming that he is a butterfly, from a butterfly who - however awake he may believe himself to be - might dream that he was Choang-tsu. There is no point in telling you that this is absolutely not the sense that is normally given to it in Choang-tsu's text and that the sentences which follow sufficiently show what is at stake and where this takes us: what is at stake is nothing less than the formation of individuals (*etres)*. Namely, of things and of paths which have escaped us for a long time in very great measure. I mean as

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regards what was exactly thought about it, by those who have left us written traces of it.

But, I am going to allow myself to suppose that this dream was incorrectly reported: Choang-tsu, when he dreamt he was a butterfly, said to himself: “it is only a dream” - which is, I assure you, in complete conformity with his mentality. He does not doubt for an instant being able to overcome this tiny problem of his identity as Choang-tsu. He says to himself: “it is only a dream” and it is precisely in this that it lacks reality. For, in so far as something which is the *I* of Choang-tsu depends on the following - which is essential for any condition of the subject – namely, that the object is *seen*, there is nothing which better allows there to be surmounted the traitorous aspect of this world of vision, in so far as it is supposed to support this sort of collection (however we may call it: *world* or *extension*), of which the subject is supposed to be the only support and the only mode of existence. What gives the *con-sistency* of this subject in so far as he sees, namely, in so far as he only has the geometry of his vision, in so far as he can say to the other: “this is on the right” and “this is on the left” and “this is inside” and “this is outside”; what allows him to be situated as *I*, if not the following - which I already underlined for you at one time - that he is himself a *picture* in this visible world, that the butterfly is here nothing other than what designates him for his part as *stain* and as what is original in the stain in the emergence, at the level of the organism, of something which will become vision.

It is indeed in so far as the *I* itself is a *stain* on a *ground* and that what he is going to question what he sees about, is very precisely what he cannot rediscover and what slips away: this origin of the look - how much more tangible and manifest by being articulated for us than the light of the sun - to inaugurate what is of the order of *I* in the scoptophilic relationship.

It is not here that the: *I am only dreaming*, is only precisely what masks the reality of the look, in so far as it is to be discovered?

It is indeed to this point that I wanted to bring you today, concerning this reminder of the function of the **o**-object and its close correlation with the *I*.

Nevertheless is it not true that, whatever maybe the link that the *I* of all the phantasies supports and indicates - as framing it - we cannot yet grasp, in a multiplicity, moreover, of these **o**-objects, what gives it this privilege in the status of the *I*, in so far as it posits itself as desire?.

It is indeed what the invocation of repetition alone will allow us to outline, to inscribe in a more precise fashion.

If the subject can be inscribed in a certain relationship which is a relationship of *loss* with respect to this field in which there is drawn the stroke with which it is guaranteed in repetition, it is because this field has a structure, let us say: what we have already put forward under the term of *topology*.

(14) To guarantee in a rigorous fashion what is meant by the **o**-object, with respect to a surface - we have already approached it in this image of this something which can be

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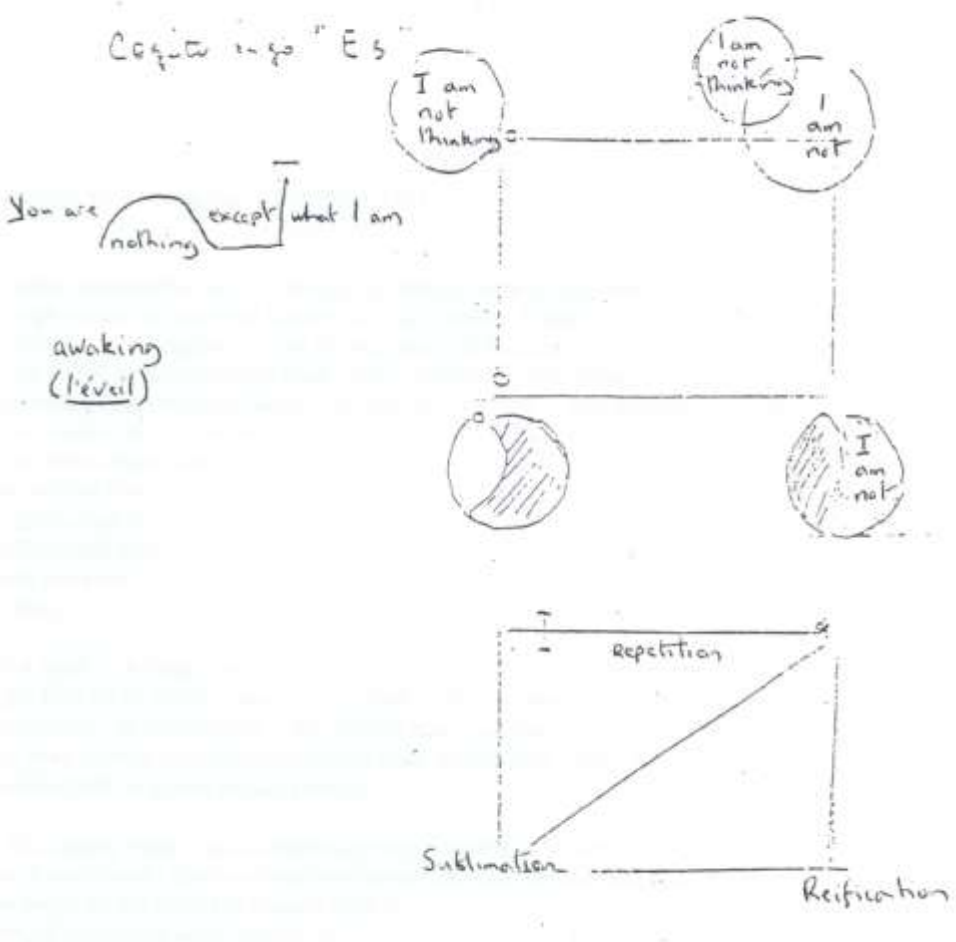
cut out in certain of these privileged surfaces, so as to let something fall, this object of the fall, which detained us and which we even believed we could image in a little fragment of surface - undoubtedly this is still, of course, a crude and inadequate



representation. Neither the notion of surface is to be rejected nor the notion of the effect of the stroke and of the cut. But, of course, it is not with the shape of any particular bit - however propitious this image may appear to us, by being linked to what is used in analytic discourse under the term of partial object - that we should content ourselves.

With respect to the surfaces that we have defined, not as something which is to be considered from a spatial angle, but something whose *every point,* precisely, bears witness to a structure which cannot be excluded from it - I mean at every point - it is in so far as we will come to articulate in it certain effects of cutting that we will know something about these vanishing points that we can describe as little **o**-objects.

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Seminar 10: Wednesday 1 February 1967

It is half past twelve, and I thank you for having come in such numbers today, even though we are, as everyone knows, having a day's strike. I thank you all the more because I also have to apologise to some of you, since it is because of the announcement that I made - until a recent day and hour - that I would give today what is called my seminar, that certainly some of the people who are here, are here. I had, in effect, intended to give it and to give it on the humorous theme that I had already written - at the top of these white pages that I use to make up for the bad lighting on the board - on which I had written this *cogito, ergo Es*, which as you may suspect from the change of ink [*cogito, ergo* in red; *Es* in black], is a play on words and plays on the homonymy, the approximate homophonie, between the Latin *es* and the German *Es*, which designates what you know in Freud, namely, what has been translated into French by the function of the *ca*.

On a logic … a "logic" which is not a logic, which is a totally unprecedented logic, a logic after all to which I have not yet given - I did not want to give, before it was established - its denomination. I am holding onto one, which seems valid to me, in my possession; even though it appeared appropriate to me that I should wait until I had given it a sufficient development, to give it its designation.

…On a logic, whose curious starting-point is made up of this choice – an alienating one, I underlined - that is offered you between an *I do not think* and an *I am not*, one could all the same ask oneself what is the place, because of the fact that we are here, of something which might well be called a *we think*! This would already take us far (2) afield, because this *we*, undoubtedly, as you sense - along the paths that I am advancing, which are those of the barred Other - poses a question.

In any case, it is certainly not without being a motif for such a large audience that I am doing something which is very like leading you along the paths of thinking. While this status of thinking would well deserve, in a way, to be at least indicated as giving rise to questions, starting from such premises.

But, today, I will limit myself to the following: the fact is, like every man who busies himself with - imagines himself, at least, to be busying himself with - this operation of thinking, I am a strong friend of order, and one of the most essential foundations of our order - of the existing order, it is always the only one to which one has to refer oneself - is the strike! Now, since this strike has been obeyed – unfortunately, I learned about it a little late - by all public offices, I have no intention of being an exception to it.

This is why I will not give today the lecture, which you might be expecting and specifically not - except to announce it to you as such - on the: *Cogito ergo Es*.

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I am not sorry, for all that, to be here, for one reason - the one which perhaps blinded me, a little bit later than was necessary to the fact that it was better for me not to give my lecture - which is the following: namely, the presence among us, today, of Professor Roman Jakobson, whom you all know how much we are indebted to, given what it persued here as a teaching. He was supposed to arrive in Paris last evening, in Paris where he does m the honour of being my guest, and undoubtedly, I was delighted at the idea of giving my usual lecture before him. He agrees with me, and he is even in complete agreement on the fact that it would be better for me not to give it. At least he has come here and if someone here has a question to ask him, he is quite prepared to respond to it - an act of courtesy which has nothing to do with the holding of our meeting today.

So then, I am going to say a few more words, to give you the time to collect your thoughts; if someone has the presence of mind to have a question ready to put specifically and, to himself, to Professor Jakobson (who is here in the first row) he has time - while I am still saying a few words to keep the company amused before the main event - to let it stew, to let it stew in order to say, on this occasion, something which, whether in effect the question is a real question, that may be of interest of everyone. There you are!

(3) So then, to whet your appetite, I will indicate what path - I think you have already sensed it (what good would it be for you to be so assiduous here if you were not able to foresee what more or less burning turning point the sequence of our discourse is leading us towards!) (As I had, already, then foreseen that next Wednesday - this is for reasons of personal convenience - and linked to what is called a moment of pause, transformed this year into the rather big vacation of Mardi Gras - I will not be giving my seminar either, you should know - and this time I am letting you know in advance: I will not be giving it next Wednesday. So I am giving you a rendezvous for the 15th of February; I hope that the thread of what unites us here, this year, on the same line of attention, will not have become too relaxed.)

In order to highlight, all the same, what is involved, this *Cogito ergo Es,* you see clearly the direction in which it is leading us. And that it is a way of posing again the question of what this famous *Es* is, which is not, all the same, all that obvious, since moreover I have allowed myself to describe as imbeciles those who can locate themselves in it all too easily, by seeing in it a sort of other subject and, in a word, of a differently constituted *ego*, of suspect quality, an "*outlaw*" of the ego or as certain people have quite crudely said, a "bad ego".

Naturally, it is not easy to give its status to such an entity! And to think that it is appropriate to substantify it simply from what comes to us in terms of an obscure inner pressure, is in no way to set aside the problem of the status of this *Es*. For, in truth, if it were that, it would be nothing other than that which, from all time and very legitimately, constituted this sort of subject that is called the ego.

You can well imagine that it is starting from the barred Other, that is involved, that we are going to have not to rethink it, but quite simply to think it. And that this barred Other, in so far as we start from it as the locus in which there is situated the

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affirmation of the word, is indeed something which puts in question, for us, the status of the second person.

From all time, a sort of ambiguity has been established, about the very necessity of the approach which made me introduce, by means of the "function and field of speech and language", what is involved as regards the unconscious.

The term *intersubjectivity* undoubtedly still prowls around, and will prowl for a long time, because it is written there quite literally in what has been the trajectory of my teaching. It was never without accompanying it with some reservations - but reservations that were not intelligible to the audience that I had at the time - that I made use of this term of intersubjectivity. Everyone knows that it is only too easily accepted, and that, of course, it will remain the fortress of everything that, precisely, I combat in the most precise fashion.

(4) The term intersubjectivity - with the equivocation that it keeps in the psychological order, and, precisely, in the forefront the one the that I have always designated as one of the most dangerous to mark, namely, the status of reciprocity, the rampart of everything that in psychology, **is best designed to ground every oversight about psychic development** - to symbolise it for you, to mark it, in a way, by an image that is striking and crude at the same time, I would say that the status of reciprocity, in so far as it marks the statutary limit in which the maturity of the subject is supposed to be established somewhere in development, is represented, if you do not mind, for all of those who have seen this something - and I think that there are enough in this gathering for my words to have an effect, and the others should inform themselves - for those who have read or seen in the cinema *Young Torless;* I would say that the status of reciprocity is what gives its position to this college of professors who supervise, and who in short want to know nothing, do not want to touch this atrocious story, which only makes more manifest that for what concerns formation, the formation of the individual and especially of a child, educators would be better off enquiring about the best ways that would allow him to situate himself, as being, in his very existence, the prey of the phantasies of his little pals, before trying to find out at what stage, at what level, he is capable of considering that the *I* and the *you* are reciprocal.

Here obviously is what is involved in what we are putting forward this year under the name of *Logic of the phantasy*, it is a matter of something which brings with it important interests. Naturally, this in no way goes in the sense of solipsism, but precisely in the direction of knowing what is involved concerning the big Other. This big Other whose place has been sustained in the philosophical tradition by the image of this divine, empty, Other, that Pascal designates under the name of the God of the philosophers and with whom we can absolutely not be satisfied any longer. This, not for the reasons of thinking, or of free thinking (Free Thinking is like freedom of association … enough said …). If we are here to follow the thread and the trace of Freud's thinking, I take advantage of the occasion to say it, namely, to put an end to I do not know what form of gad-fly of whom I find myself on occasion the designated victim; it is not the thinking of Freud in the sense that the historian of philosophy may - even with the help of the most attentive textual criticism - define it, in the sense, when all is said and done, of minimising it. Namely, to point out that at one or other

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point Freud has not gone beyond: that one could not impute to him something other than some gap, some hole, something badly darned at one or other turning point of what he stated.

If Freud retains our interest, it is not because of what he thought as an individual at (5) one or other detour of his effective life. What interests us, is not Freud's thinking; it is the **object** that Freud discovered.

Freud's thinking has its importance for us, because we note that there is no better way to rediscover the framework of this object, than to follow the trace of this thinking of Freud. But what legitimates the place that we give it, is precisely that at every instant these traces only mark out for us - and in a fashion that is, in a way, all the more heart-breaking in that these traces are torn apart- what object is involved and leads us to this, to the following, which is what is in question: namely, that it is a matter of not failing to recognise it. Which is undoubtedly the irresistible and natural tendency, in the present state of things, of every constituted subjectivity.

This indeed is what redoubles the drama of what is called research, and you undoubtedly know also that its status, for me, is not an unsuspect one. We are quite ready to go back to it and pose again the question (I hope to do it the next time) of the status that we can give to this word "research", behind which there is concealed for us, ordinarily, the greatest bad faith.

What is research? Nothing other, undoubtedly, than what we can ground as being the radical origin of Freud's approach concerning his object, nothing else can give it to us than what appears to be the irreducible starting point of the Freudian novelty, namely, repetition. Or, indeed, this research is itself, in a way, repeated by the question which gives rise to what I will call our relationships. Namely, what is involved in a teaching which supposes that there are subjects for whom the new status of the subject, which the Freudian object implies, is realised. In other words, which supposes that there are analysts. Namely, subjects who can sustain in themselves something which gets as close as possible to this new status of the subject, the one which the existence and the discovery of the Freudian object determines. Subjects who will be the ones who are up to the following: that the Other, the traditional big Other does not exist and that, nevertheless, there is indeed a *Bedeutung*.

This *Bedeutung* - for all those who have followed me enough up to now that for them the words that I employ (I am saying: that I employ) have a sense - this *Bedeutung,* let is be enough for me to pinpoint it here by something which has no other name than the following, namely: the **structure** in so far as it is **real**.

If I have laid out these little images upon which, today, my lecture was to have run, and you will recognise once again the Moebius strip, the Moebius cut in two in so far as this does not divide it, the Moebius strip once cut in two, which slides in a way on itself, in order to reduplicate itself in the easiest way (as you can see, if you are able to (6) copy properly what I took the trouble to draw) and then, when all is said and done, to obtain this something which is perfectly closed, which has an inside and an outside and which is the fourth figure, which is here that of a torus. **The structure is something which is like that - is real.**

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I am not saying that the structure is that, just by itself. I am telling you that what is real under the name of structure is exactly of the nature of what is drawn there. There is, in a way, a structural substance; that this is not a metaphor, and that it is in the measure that, through this, there is possible this something that we can unite like a set of the word "cut", that what we are dealing with exists.

What is to be said about a teaching which supposes, for its part, also, the existence of what, undoubtedly, does not exist? For there is still not, to all appearances, any analyst who can be said to support in himself this position of the subject. And this does nothing less than pose the question: what authorises me to take the floor as if addressing myself to these still non-existing subjects?

You see that these things are not unsupported, as is sneeringly remarked, by some suppositions, of which the least that can be said is that they are dramatic; this is still not to make a psychodrama of it! Because we have to close it by a logical closing. This is our object this year.

Undoubtedly, whatever may authorise me - and perhaps we can say a little bit more about that - it is clear that I am not alone. If I had to pose a question, myself, to Professor Roman Jakobson, but I give you my word that coming here in the car I did not even let him glimpse it (it is not that it has just comes to me now, but it is now that it comes to me to pose it to him), I would ask him if he, whose teaching on language has for us such consequences, whether he thinks also, for his part, that this teaching is of a nature to require a radical change of position at the level of what constitutes, let us say, the subject among those who follow him. I would also pose him the question as to whether - but this is a very *ad hominem* question - whether, from the very fact of the inflections that are involved … (I do not want to use big words and I am avoiding words which may suggest the ambiguity that is attached to the word "asceticism" or indeed words which you find in science-fiction novels … about "mutation" … certainly, we are not dealing with this nonsense!) It is a matter of this logical subject and what it involves, of what it involves in terms of a discipline of thinking, among those who are introduced to this position by their thinking… If things, for him, in the (7) consequences of what he teaches, go that far, is it a case, for him that the word "disciple" has a sense? For I would say, for me, that it does not have one; that by right, it is literally dissolved, evaporated, by the style of relationship that such a thinking inaugurates. I mean that "disciple" is to be distinguished from the word discipline. If we establish a discipline which is also a new era in thinking, something distinguishes us from those who have preceded us, in the fact that our word does not require disciples.

If Roman wants to begin by replying to me, if that is what suits him, let him do so!

Professor Roman Jakobson: "Do you think that, perhaps, it would be better if several questions were posed? And I will respond altogether then?"

Dr. Lacan - "Agreed. Who has a question to pose to Roman Jakobson?"

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[*Questions are put by Aubry, Irigary, Oury, Medeze and Stoianoff. Jakobson gives a fairly lengthy response but says that he will answer Lacan's question about discipleship on his next visit to Paris. In the meantime he says he is a disciple of Lacan's, admires him and learns a lot from him.*]

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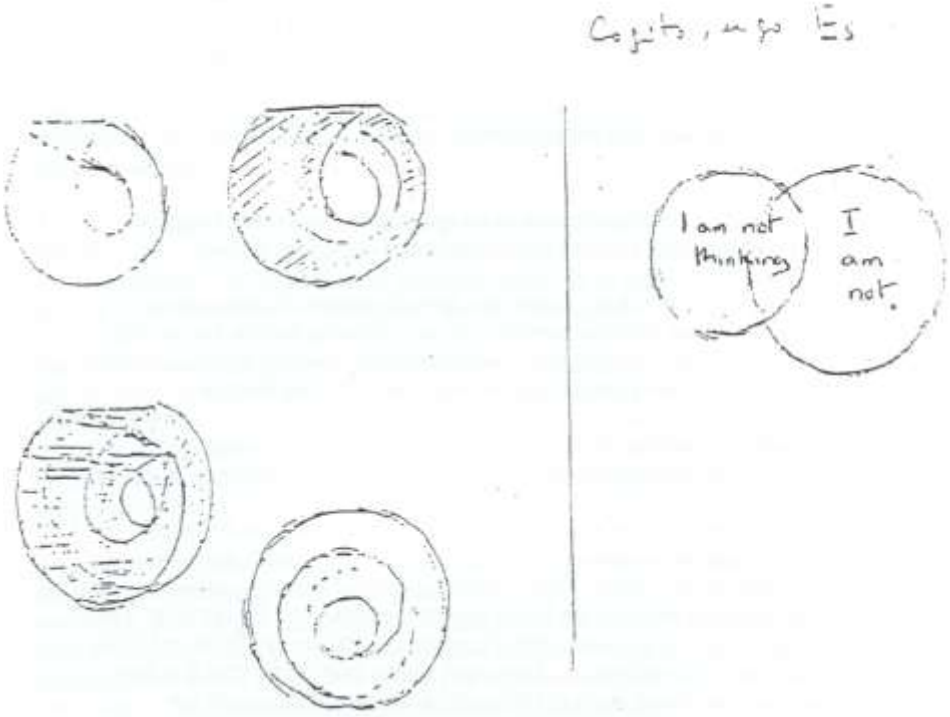
Seminar 11: Wednesday 15 February 1967

I have to advance and demonstrate in movement what the nature of analytic knowledge is; very exactly how this knowledge comes to pass into the real.

We posit that this - the fact *that it passes into the real* - happens all the more in the measure of the ever growing pretension of the *I* affirming itself as *fons et origo* of being. This is what we have posited; but this does not illustrate anything of course about what I have just called **the passage of this knowledge into the real**.

I am here alluding to nothing else than the formula that I gave of the *Verwerfung* or rejection, which is that everything that is rejected in the symbolic reappears in the real.

This prevalence of the *I* at the high point of something which is quite difficult to grasp without giving rise to misunderstandings … (to say: "the epoch", to say even as we



have said: "the era of science", always means opening up some bias towards a note that one could pinpoint well enough by the term of "Spenglerism", for example: the idea of "human phases" it not here, certainly, something that can satisfy us and lends itself to many misunderstandings)… Let us start simply from the following: that it is true that discourse has its empire and that I believe I have demonstrated this to you: that psychoanalysis is only thinkable by putting among its predecessors, the discourse of science.

It is a matter of knowing where it is placed in the effects of this discourse. Inside? Outside? It is there, as you know, that we are trying to grasp it as a sort of fringe

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which trembles, something analogous to these most tangible forms in which the organism reveals itself: I am speaking about what is: a fringe.

There is nevertheless a step to be taken before recognising in it the trait of the animated, for thinking, as we understand it, is not animated. It is the effect of the signifier, namely in the last resort, of the **trace**.

What is called structure, is that: we follow thinking by its trace (*a la trace)* and by (2) nothing else. Because the trace has always caused thinking.

The relation of this procedure to psychoanalysis can be immediately sensed, provided one can imagine it, or indeed has experience of it.

That Freud, inventing psychoanalysis, is the introduction of a method of detecting a trace of thinking, where thinking itself masks it by recognising itself differently in it - differently to the way that the trace designates it - this is what I have promoted. This is something against which no deployment of Freudianism as an ideology will prevail. A naturalist ideology, for example. That this point of view, which is a point of view of the history of philosophy, is put forward in these times, by people who authorise themselves as having the quality of psychoanalyst, is something which manifests what is going to give more precision to the response that the question I posed at first requires, namely: how does it happen that analytic knowledge comes to pass into the real.

The path through which what I am teaching passes into the real is none other, bizarrely, than the *Verwerfung,* than the effective rejection that we see happening at a certain level of the generation of the position of the psychoanalyst, in so far as it wants to know nothing about what is nevertheless his only and unique knowledge.

What is rejected in the symbolic ought to be focused in the subjective field, somewhere, in order to reappear at a correlative level in the real. Where? Here, no doubt. What does that mean? It is what touches you **here**, namely, this point which is the one to which witness is borne by what the journalists have already located under the label of "structuralism" and which is nothing other than: your interest; the interest that you take in what is said here, an interest which is real.

Naturally, among you, there are psychoanalysts. There is - it is already here - a generation of psychoanalysts in which there will be incarnated the correct position of the subject, in so far as it is required by the analytic act. When this generation has come to maturity, you will measure the distance travelled - by reading the unthinkable things, printed luckily, so that they will be able to bear witness, for anyone who knows who to read - from which it will have been necessary to extract the outline that this realisation of analysis requires.

Among these prejudices and these unthinkable things, there will be … there will also be structuralism, I mean: what is now entitled under this title with a certain value, quoted on the stock market of cogitation.

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If those among you who have lived through what will have characterised the middle of this century, (or let us say its first part), the trials that we have gone through in terms of strange manifestation in civilisation - if these had not been put to sleep,
(3) subsequently, by a philosophy which quite simply continued its noisy chatter, I would now have less leisure, to try to mark the necessary traits, for you not to be completely lost, for the phase of this century which is going to immediately follow.

When Freud introduced for the first time - in his *Jenseits*: the *Beyond the pleasure principle* - the concept of repetition, as a forcing: *Zwang* - repetition*: Wiederholung,* this repetition is forced: *Wiederholungszwang* - when he introduces it in order to give its definitive state to the status of the subject of the unconscious, do we properly measure the import of this conceptual intrusion?

If it is called *Beyond the pleasure principle,* it is precisely because it broke with what up to then gave him the module of a psychic function, namely: this homeostasis, which echoes the one that the substance of the organism requires, which reduplicates it and repeats it, and which is the one that, in the nervous system isolated as such, he defines by the law of least tension.

What the *Wiederholungszwang* introduces is clearly in contradiction with this primitive law: the one that was stated in the pleasure principle. And it is as such that Freud presents it to us.

Immediately, we who - I suppose - have read this text, can go to its most extreme point, that Freud formulates as what is called the "death drive" (a translation of *Todestrieb*); namely: that he cannot stop extending this *Zwang* - this constraint of repetition - into a field which not alone envelopes that of living manifestation, but overflows it, by including it in the parenthesis of a return to the inanimate. He solicits us then to make there subsist *as living* - and we really have to put this term in inverted commas - a tendency that extends its law beyond the duration of the living.

Let us look closely at it, because this is what constitutes the objection and the obstacle before which there rebels - as long, of course, as the thing is not understood - there rebels, first of all, a thinking that is used to giving a certain support to the term *tendency*; a support, precisely, which is the one that I have just evoked in putting the word "living" in quotation marks. Life, then, in this thinking, is no longer "the totality of forces which resist death", to quote Bichat; it is: the totality of forces in which there is signified that death will be for life its rail (*rail)*.

In truth this would not take us very far, if it were not a matter of something other than the being of life, what we can, in a first approach, call its sense. Namely, something that we can read in signs which come from an apparent vital spontaneity - since the subject does not recognise himself in it - but where it is necessary that there should be a subject - since what is in question could not be a simple effect of the … fall out, (as one might say), of the vital bubble which bursts, leaving the place in the state in which (4) it was previously - but of something which, everywhere we follow it, is formulated not as this simple return, but as a *thinking* of return, as repetition thinking.

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Everything that Freud grasped on its track in clinical experience, is - there where he is going to seek it, there where for him the problem is highlighted, namely, in what he calls “the negative therapeutic reaction”, or again what he tackles at this level as an effect (question mark) of primordial masochism, as that which, in a life, insists on remaining in a certain medium, (let us dot our i’s), let us say: of sickness or failure - this is what we ought to grasp as repetition thinking.

Repetition thinking is a different domain to that of memory.

Memory no doubt also evokes the trace, but how will we recognise the memory trace? It has precisely as an effect *non-repetition*.

(If we seek to determine in experience, the way in which a micro-organism is endowed with memory, we will see it from the fact that it will not react to a stimulus the second time, the way it did the first time. And after all, this will sometimes make us speak about memory, with prudence, with interest, with suspension, at the level of certain inanimate organisations …)

But repetition is something quite different! If we make of repetition the directive principle of a field, in so far as it is properly subjective, we cannot fail to formulate what unites in material - in the style of a copula - the *identical* and the *different*. This imposes on us again, to this end, the use of this unary trait, whose elective function we have recognised in connection with identification.

I will recall what is essential to it in simple terms, having been able to experience that such a simple function appears astonishing in the context of philosophers, or supposed ones, as I recently happen to have had experience of, and that people found obscure, even opaque, this very simple remark that the unary trait plays the role of symbolic reference point, precisely by excluding that it should be neither similarity nor the difference, which are posited at the principle of differentiation.

I already, here, sufficiently underlined that the use of the One, - which is this One that I distinguish from the unifying One, because of being the countable One - is to be able to function, to designate as so much “One” such heteroclite objects as a thought, a veil or another object that is here within our reach - and since I enumerated three, to count that: three. Namely, to hold as null even in their most extreme difference of a nature to establish their differentiation from something else.

Here is what gives us the function of number and everything that is established upon the operation of recurrence, whose proof, as you know, is based on this unique (5) module: that everything having been proved to be true … for n … that which … It being proved as true that what is true for n + 1 is so for n, it is enough for us to know what is involved so that n = 1, for the truth of a theorem to be guaranteed. This grounds a being of truth which is entirely slippery. This sort of truth is, as I might say, the shadow of the number, it remains without grasp on any real.

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But if we descend, as I might say, *into time*, which is … what is demanded of you today, in order to take up the identificatory schema of alienation and see how it functions: we will remark that the basic One of the operation of recurrence is not already there, that it is only established from repetition itself.

Let us take things up again. We do not have to remark here that repetition could not, dynamically, be deduced from the pleasure principle. We are only doing it to make you sense the relief of what is in question. Namely, that the maintenance of the least tension, as pleasure principle, in no way implies repetition. On the contrary, the re-discovery of a pleasure situation in its sameness can only be the source of operations that are always more costly, than simply following the angle of the least tension. By following it like an isothermic line, if I can express myself in this way, it will finish up indeed by leading, from pleasure situation to pleasure situation, to the desired maintenance of the least tension. If is implies some buckling or some return, this can only be along the path, as I might say, of an external structure, which is not at all unthinkable, since I evoked earlier the existence of an isothermic line. It is not at all in this way and from outside that the existence of the *Zwang* is implicated in the Freudian *Wiederholung*, in repetition.

A situation which is repeated, as a failure situation, for example, implies co-ordinates not of the greater or lesser tension, but of signifying identity of plus or minus as *sign* of what **must** be repeated. But this sign was not carried as such by the first situation. You should clearly understand that this was not marked by the sign of repetition, otherwise, it would not have been the first! Much more, it must be said that it becomes - that it **becomes** - the repeated situation and that, by that fact, it is *lost* as originating situation: that *there is something lost by the fact of repetition*. And this is not alone perfectly articulated in Freud, but he articulated it **well before** having been brought to this statement of the "Beyond of the pleasure principle".

From the *Three essays on sexuality* on, we see there arising, arising as impossible, the principle of rediscovery. The simple approach of clinical experience had already suggested to Freud the discovery and the function of the fact that there is, in the metabolism of drives, this function of the lost object as such. It gives the very sense (6) of what emerges under the rubric of *Urverdrangung*. That is why it has to be clearly recognised that far from there being here, in Freud's thinking, a jump or rupture, there is rather the preparation - through a meaning that has been glimpsed – the preparation of something which at last finds its final logical structure in the form of a law constitutive - even though again it is not reflexive - constitutive of the subject himself and which is: repetition.

The graph - as one might say - of this function, I think that you all have seen passing the shape that I gave as an intuitive, imaginative support of this topology of return, for it to solidify the part - which is just as important as its direct effect, as this effect that is itself imaged – namely, its retroactive effect: what I called, just now, what happens when by the effect being repeated, what was to be repeated becomes the repeated.

The trait by which there is sustained what is repeated, *qua* repeating, must close, must rediscover itself at the origin: the one (this trait) which, because of it, henceforth marks the repeated as such.

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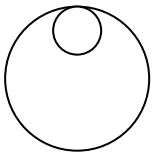
This, this outline, is nothing other than that of the double loop, or again of what I called, the first time that I introduced it, the "inverted eight" and that we write as follows: here it returns onto what it repeats and it is this which - in the first, fundamental, initiatory operation as such of repetition - gives this retroactive effect that cannot be detached from it, which forces us to think out the third relation, which - from the *One* to *Two* which constitutes the return - comes back in closing itself towards this *One* in order to give this non-numeral element that I am calling the additional One (*Un-en-plus)*, and which precisely - since it is not reducible to the series of natural numbers, neither additionable to, nor subtractable from this *One* and from this *Two* which succeed one another - still deserves this title of the *additional One,* which I designated as essential for any signifying determination and which is always ready, moreover, not simply to appear, but to be grasped, fleeting, detectable, in lived experience, once the counting (*c.o.m.p.t.a.n.t*) subject has to count himself among the others.



Note that this is the most radical topological form and that it is necessary to introduce what, in Freud, is put forward in these polymorphous forms that are known under the term of regression - whether they are topical, temporal or formal, regression is not homogenous here - their common root is to be found in this return, in the return effect of repetition.

Certainly, it is not for nothing that I delayed for so long the examination of these functions of regression. It would be enough to refer to a recent article, published somewhere on a neutral, medical terrain - an article on regression - to see the veritable gap it leaves open, when a thinking, used to not too much light, tries to connect the (7) theory with what analytic practice suggests to him. The sort of curious promotion that regression receives in certain of these most recent theoretical studies responds, no doubt, to something in the experience of analysis, through which, in effect, there deserved to be questioned the progressive effect that can be involved in regression, which, as everyone knows, is essential for the very process of the treatment as such.

But it is enough to see, to put your finger on, the distance, which in a way leaves veritably open everything that in this connection is re-evoked from Freud's formulae, and what is deduced from it as regards practical use (you should consult this article which is in the last number of *Evolution Psychiatrique*) for one to sense the point to which the regression that is involved here is of a nature to suggest to us the question of whether it is anything more than a theoretical regression.

In truth, this indeed is the major mode of this rejection that I am designating as essential to one or other present position of the psychoanalyst.

By taking up such questions anew, at their origin, as if they had not already been settled somewhere, one makes the pleasure last! It is certainly not the business of those for whom I take responsibility. I will come back to this at the appropriate time, for if, of course, there is in all these effects something in the order of an awkwardness, this is not for all that to remove every possible reference to something of the order of

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dishonesty, if from such formulae there is connected and legitimated a finality of the treatment which finds itself covering the crudest illusions of the ego, namely, what is most opposed to analytical renewal.

What is meant by what we have contributed under the term of *alienation*, when we begin to clarify it by this system of signifying involution (if I can call it that) of repetition?

We have put forward at first that alienation, is the signifier of the Other, is so far as it makes of the Other (with a capital O) a field marked by the same finiteness as the subject himself: the S (O), S, open brackets: O barred. What finiteness is at stake? The one which defines in the subject the fact of depending on the effects of the signifier.

The Other as such - I am saying: this locus of the Other, in so far as the need for the guarantee of a truth evokes it - the other as such is, as I might say, if you will permit this word that I have improvised: **fractured**. In the same way as we grasp it in the subject itself - very precisely in the way in which the double topological loop of repetition marks it - the Other also finds itself under the *impact* of this finiteness.

(8) Thus division is found to be posited at the heart of the conditions of truth. A complication, let us say, brought to any exigency, of the Leibnizian type - of *reservation* of the aforesaid, I mean, of the truth. The *salva veritate*, essential to any order of philosophical thinking, is for us - and not simply because of psychoanalysis - manifests at all points of this development which is carried out at the level of mathematical logic - is for us a little bit more complicated. It completely excludes in any case, any form of intuitive absoluteness; the attribution, for example, to the field of the Other, of the dimension - described in as Spinozian a way as you wish - of the Eternal, for example.

This permanent downfall of the Other is ineradicable from the given of subjective experience. It is what puts at the heart of this experience the phenomenon of belief in its ambiguity, constituted by the following: that it is not by accident, by ignorance, that the truth is presented in the dimension of the contestable. A phenomenon, then, which is not to be considered as a happening due to a defect, but as a fact of structure, and that here, for us, is the point of prudence. The point that which we are solicited to advance towards with the most discrete steps, I mean in the most discerning way, to designate the substantial point of this structure, in order not to lend to the confusion into which people precipitate themselves, not innocently no doubt, by suggesting here a renewed form of positivism.

We should much more rather find our models in what remains so misunderstood and nevertheless so alive in the fragmentary things tradition has bequeathed us in terms of *exercises* of scepticism, in so far as they are not simply these brilliant jugglings between opposed doctrines, but on the contrary veritable spiritual exercises, which corresponded certainly to an ethical praxis, which gives is veritable density to the theory that remains to us under this heading and under this rubric.

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Let us say that it is now a question for us of accounting, in terms of our logic, for the necessary emergence of this locus of the Other in so far as it is thus divided. Because, for us, it is here that we are asked to situate not simply this locus of the Other, the perfect correspondent of the fact that the truth is not deceitful, but much more precisely, at the different levels of subjective experience that the clinic imposes on us, how it is possible for there to be inserted into it - into this experience - agencies which cannot be articulated other than as demands of the Other - and this is neurosis…

And here we cannot fail to denounce how excessive is the use of such terms that we have introduced, highlighted, like for example that of demand, when we see it taken up under the pen of some novice or other exercising himself on the plane of analytic theory and marking the degree to which it is essential (the youngster shows his perspicacity here) to put at the centre and at the start of the adventure a demand - he says - a "current requirement". This is what has always been put forward, by making (9) analysis turn around "frustration and gratification". The use here of the term of demand, which is borrowed from me, is only there to put us off the track of what is essential in it, which is that the subject comes to analysis not to demand anything whatsoever in terms of a current requirement, but in order *to know* what he is demanding. Which leads him, very precisely, to this path of demanding that *the Other should demand something of him.*

The problem of the demand is situated at the level of the Other. The desire of the neurotic turns around the demand of the Other and the logical problem is to know how we can situate this function of the demand of the Other, on this support: that the Other pure and simple, as such, is the O barred.

Many other terms are also to be evoked as having to find their place in the Other: the *anxiety* of the Other - the true root of the position of the subject as a masochist position. Let us say again how ought we to conceive of the following: that **a point of *jouissance* is essentially locatable as *jouissance* of the Other**; a point without which it is impossible to understand what is at stake in perversion. A point, nevertheless, which is the only structural referent that can account for what in the tradition is grasped as *Selbstbewusstsein*. Nothing else in the subject really traverses itself, perforates itself, as I might say, as such - I will try to sketch out for you, one day, some childish model of it - nothing else, except this point which, from *jouissance,* ensures the *jouissance* of the Other.

We are not going to go into these problems immediately. We have today to trace the consequences to be drawn from the relationship of this graph of repetition, to what we have punctuated as the fundamental choice of alienation.

It is easy to see, from this double loop, that the more it sticks to itself, the more it will tend to be divided. By supposing that here (figure 1) the distance from one edge to the other is reduced, it is easy to see that it will be two rings (*rondelles)* that will come to be isolated.

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What relationship is there between this *passage a l'acte* of alienation and repetition itself? Well then, very precisely, what can and what ought to be called: the **act**. Today, I want to put forward the premises of a logical situation of the act as such.
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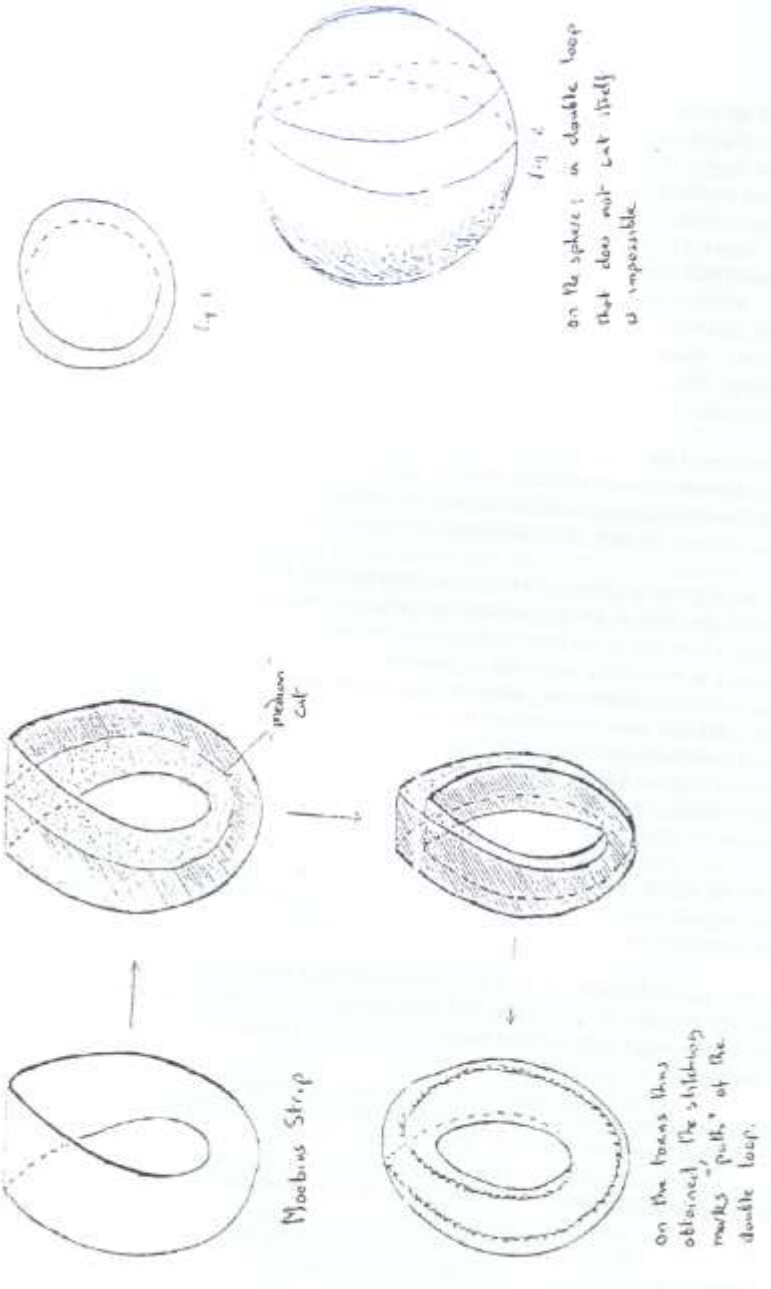
If this double loop of the outline of repetition imposes a topology on us, it is because *it cannot have its function as edge on just any surface whatsoever*. Try to draw it on



the surface of a sphere, I showed it a long time ago - you can tell me how you get on! - (Figure 2). Bring it back here and try to close it in such a way that it is an *edge*, namely, that it does not cut itself. This is impossible. These things are not possible - I (11) already pointed out a long time ago - except on a certain type of surface (those which are drawn here, for example) such as the *torus* that I summoned at one time, the *cross-cap* or the projective plane, or again the third *Klein bottle* which you know, I think, if you still remember, the little drawing in which it can be imaged (it being

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clearly understood that the Klein bottle has nothing which especially links it to this particular representation.) The important thing is to know what, in each one of these surfaces, results from the cut constituted by the double loop.

On the torus, this cut will give a surface with two edges. On the cross-cap, it will give a cut with a single edge.

The important thing is, what is the structure of the surfaces thus established.

The images on the left - and that I introduced the last time so that you could copy the drawing - represent for you what constitutes the most characteristic surface to image for us the function that we give of the double loop. It is (on the top left) the Moebius strip whose edge – namely, everything that is in this drawing (except this, which is a profile which is only inscribed there in a way to give rise in your imagination to the image of the support of the surface itself, namely, that here the surface turns from the other side, but this does not form part, of course, of any edge) - there only remains then the double loop, which is the edge - the single edge of the surface in question.

We can take this surface as symbolic of the subject, on condition that you consider, of course, that the edge alone constitutes this surface; as it is easy to demonstrate by the following: the fact is if you make a cut through the middle of this surface, this cut *itself* concentrates in itself the essence of the double loop. Being a cut, which, as I might say, "turns back" onto itself, it is itself - this single cut - just by itself, the whole Moebius surface. And the proof is that in fact, when you have made this median cut there is no longer any Moebius surface at all! What I might call the "median cut", removed it from you think you are seeing, here, in the form of a surface. This is what the figure on the right shows you, which shows you that once it is cut through the middle, this surface, which previously had neither a front nor a back, had only a single face, as it had only a single edge, now has a front and a back, which you see marked here in two different colours; it is enough, of course, for you to imagine that each one of these colours goes to the back of the other, where because of the cut they are continued. In other words, after the cut there is no longer a Moebius surface, but, on (12) the contrary, something which is applicable onto a torus. Which is what the two other figures show you: namely, that if in a certain way you make this surface - the one obtained after the cut - slide behind (*a l'envers*) itself, if I can express myself in that way, which is quite well imaged in the present figure - you can by sewing - as I might say - in a different way the edges in question, constitute in this way a new surface which is the surface of the torus, on which there is still marked the same cut, constituted by the fundamental double loop of repetition.

These topological facts are for us extremely favourable to image something, which is what is at stake. Namely, that just as alienation is imaged in two senses by different operations - where one represents the necessary choice between the curtailed *I do not think* of the *Es* of the logical structure, the other - an element that one *cannot* choose, of the alternative - which opposes, which connects the kernel of the unconscious, as being this something in which it is not a matter of a thinking that is in any way attributable to the established *I* of subjective unity, and which connects it to an *I am not,* clearly marked what I defined in the structure of the dream as *the inmixing of subjects*, namely, as the unfixable, indeterminate, character of the subject assuming the thinking of the unconscious - repetition allows us to put in correlation, in

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correspondence, two modes in which the subject may appear different - may manifest itself, in its temporal conditioning - in a way that corresponds to the two statuses defined as that of the *I* of alienation and as that which reveals the position of the unconscious in specific conditions, which are none other than those of analysis.

Corresponding to the level of the temporal schema, we have the following: that the *passage a l'acte* is what is allowed in the operation of alienation; that, corresponding to the other term - a term, in principle, impossible to choose in the alienating alternative - corresponds to *acting-out*.

What does that mean? The *act,* I mean the act and not some manifestation of movement. Movement, motor discharge (as it is put at the level of theory) is something that in no way is enough to constitute an act. If you will allow me a crude image: a reflex is not an act.

But after all, this arena of not-an-act (*ne pas-acte)* must be extended far beyond. What is being solicited in the study of the intelligence of a higher animal, *conduite de detour* for example - the fact that a monkey sees what he has to do to get at a banana when he is separated from it by a plate of glass - has absolutely nothing to do with an act. And in truth, a very great number of your movements, as you can well imagine - those that you will carry out between now and the end of the day - have nothing to do of course with an act.

(13) But how define what an act is?

It is impossible to define it otherwise than on the foundation of the double loop, in other words, of repetition. And it is precisely in this that the act is foundational for the subject.

The act is, precisely, the equivalent of repetition, by itself. It is this repetition in a single stroke that I designated earlier by this cut that it is possible to make in the centre of the Moebius strip. It is in itself the double loop of the signifier.

One could say, but this would be to deceive oneself, that in its case the signifier signifies itself. Because we know that it is impossible. It is nevertheless true that it is as close as possible to this operation.

The subject - let us say, in the act - is equivalent to its signifier. It remains nonetheless divided.

Let us try to clarify this a little and let us put ourselves at the level of this alienation at which the *I* is founded on an *I do not think* which is all the more favourable for leaving the whole field to the *Es* of logical structure.

"I do not think" … if *I am*, all the more in that *I do not think* (I mean: if *I am only* the *I* that the logical structure establishes), the medium, the trait, where there can be connected these two terms, is the: *I act*; this *I act* which is not, as I told you, a motor

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performance. In order that "I walk" should become an act, it is necessary for the fact that I walking to signify that I walk in fact and that I am saying it as such.

There is repetition intrinsic in every act, which is only permitted by the effect of retro-action - which is exercised because of the fact of the signifying incidence which is put at its heart - and retroaction of this signifying impact on what is called "the case" in question, whatever it may be.

Naturally, it is not enough for me to proclaim that I am walking! All the same it is already a beginning of action. It is an operetta action: "*Marchons, marchons"* It is also what is called, in a certain ideology, commitment, which is what gives it its well known comic character.

The important thing to detect about what is involved in an act, is to search where the logical structure gives us - and gives us *qua* logical structure - the possibility of transforming into an act what, at first approach, could be nothing other than a pure and simple passion. "I fall to the ground" or "I stumble", for example: reflect on this, that the fact of this signifying duplication, namely, that in my "I fall on the ground" there is the affirmation that I fall on the ground; "I fall to the ground" becomes, transforms my fall, into something signifying. I fall to the ground and by this I perform the act in which I demonstrate that I am, as they say, utterly crushed (*atterre)*. In the same way, (14) "I stumble" - even "I stumble" which bears in itself so manifestly the passivity of missing something - can be, if it is taken up and reduplicated by the affirmation "I stumble" the indication of an act in so far as I myself assume the sense, as such, of this stumbling.

There is nothing here which goes against the inspiration of Freud, if you remember that at a particular page of the *Traumdeutung* and very precisely on the one where he designates for us the first lineaments of his research on identification, he underlines very clearly himself - legitimating in advance the intrusions that I make of the Cartesian formula into the theory of the unconscious - the remark that *Ich* has two different senses in the same sentences, when one says "*Ich denke was gesundes Kind Ich war"*: "I think" - or: *Ich bedenke*, as he said exactly: I meditate, I reflect, I gargle - "at the thought of what a healthy child - *Ich bin ... Ich war* - I was".

The essentially signifying character as such, is reduplicated by the act, the repetitive and intrinsic insistence of repetition in the act, this is what allows us to connect up in an original fashion - and in such a fashion that it can subsequently satisfy in the analysis of all its varieties - the definition of the act.

Here I can only indicate in passing - for we will have to come back to it - that the important thing is not so much in the *definition* of the act, as in *its consequence*s. I mean, **what results from the act in terms of change of surface**.

For if I spoke earlier about the incidence of the cut on the topological surface - that I designate as that of the Moebius strip - if *after the act*, the surface is of a different structure in such a case, if it is of a still different structure in another one or even if in certain cases it may not change, here is something that is going to propose for us

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models (if you wish) to distinguish what is involved in terms of the incidence of the act, not so much in the *determination* as in the *mutations* of the subject.

Now, there is a term which for some time I have left to the testing and the tasting of those who surround me, without ever frankly responding to the objection made to me - and which has been made to me for a long time - that *Verleugnung* - since this is the term in question - is the term to which there should be referred the effects that I reserve for *Verwerfung*. I spoke enough about the latter, since today's discourse, not to have to go back on it. I simply highlight here that what is of the order of *Verleugnung* is **always** what is concerned with the ambiguity that results from the effects of the act as such.

I cross the Rubicon. That can be done … all by itself: it is enough to take the train at Cesena in the right direction, once you are on the train, you can do nothing more about it: you cross the Rubicon. But this is not an act. It is not an act either when you cross the Rubicon thinking about Caesar, it is an imitation of Caesar's act. But you already see that *imitation* takes on in the dimension of the act, a quite different structure than the one that is usually supposed for it. It is not an act, but it can all the same be one! And there is even no other possible definition for the suggestions, otherwise so excessive, as those that are entitled the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*, for example.

Around this act - whether it is imitation or not - whether it is the original act itself, the one that the historians of Caesar tell us clearly the sense indicated by the dream, which precedes this crossing of the Rubicon - which is none other than the sense of incest - it is a matter of knowing, at each of these levels, what is the effect of the act.

It is the labyrinth proper to the recognition of these effects by a subject who *cannot* recognise it, because he is entirely - as subject - transformed by the act, it is these effects that are designated, wherever the term is correctly employed, by the rubric of *Verleugnung*.

The act then is the only locus where the signifier has the appearance - the function in any case - of signifying itself. Namely, to function outside its possibilities.

The subject is, in the act, represented as pure division: the division, we will say, is his *Reprasentanz*. The true sense of the term *Reprasentanz* is to be taken at this level for it is starting from this *representance* of the subject as essentially divided, that one can sense how this function of *Reprasentanz* may effect what is called representation; which makes the *Vorstellung* depend on an effect of the *Reprasentanz*.

We are stopped by the time … there is going to be question for us the next time of how it is possible for there to be presentified the impossible to choose element of alienation. The matter is well worth the trouble of being put off for a discourse which is reserved to it, since it is a matter of nothing other than the status of the Other, where it is evoked for us in the most urgent fashion, so as not to lead to precipitation and error, namely, the analytic situation. But this model that is given to us by the act as division and final support of the subject; a point of truth which - let us say it before separating, in parenthesis - is the one which justifies the rise to the summit of philosophy of the function of *existence*, which undoubtedly is nothing other than the

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veiled form in which, for thinking, there is presented the original character of the act in the function of the subject.

Why has this act, in its agency, remained veiled, and this for those who knew best how to mark its autonomy - against Aristotle who had not and for good reason the slightest idea of this - I mean, St. Thomas?

(16) It is no doubt because the other possibility of cutting is given us, in the impossible to choose game of alienation (put within our reach, nevertheless, from the angle of analysis) - the same cut intervening at the other vertix, the one designated here, which corresponds to the connection: *unconscious - I am not* - this is what is called *acting-out* and it is the status of this that we will try to define the next time.

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Seminar 12: Wednesday 22 February 1967

We continue, by recalling what we are starting from - alienation.

Let us summarise, for those who have already heard us and especially for the others. Alienation - in so far as we have taken it as a start for this logical path that we are trying to trace out this year - is the e-limination, to be taken in the proper sense: a rejection beyond the threshold, the ordinary elimination from the Other. Beyond what threshold? The threshold in question, is the one determined by the *cut* in which the essence of language consists.

Linguistics is of service to us essentially in this, that it has provided us with the model of this cut.

This is why we find ourselves put on the side - approximately qualified as structuralist - of linguistics. And that all the developments of linguistics, specifically, curiously, what can be called semiology - what is described in this way, what designates itself, and what proclaims itself as such recently - does not interest us to the same degree. Which may, at first approach, seem surprising.

Elimination then from the Other. From the Other. What does that mean, the Other, with a capital O, in so far as here it is eliminated? It is eliminated *qua* closed and unified field. This means that we affirm, with the best reasons for doing so, that there is no universe of discourse, that there is nothing that can be assumed under this term.

Language is nevertheless solidary, in its radical practice, which is what psychoanalysis is … (note that I could also say its medical practice. Someone that I am surprised not to see here today, in his usual place, asked me for this sign that I left as a riddle of the term that I could have given, more strictly, in Latin of the "I think". If no one has found it, I am giving it today. I had indicated that this could only be conceived of by a (2) verb in the middle voice. It is *medeor,* from which there comes both *medicine* that I am evoking just now and *meditation*.)

Language, in its radical practice is solidary with something that we now are going to have to reintegrate, to conceive of in some fashion under the mode of an emanation from this field of the Other, from the moment that we have had to consider it as disconnected (*disjoint*). But this something is not difficult to name. It is what this field of the Other precariously authorises itself by and this is called - a proper dimension of language - the truth.

To situate psychoanalysis, one could say that it has been constituted everywhere the truth makes itself known only in the fact that it surprises us and imposes itself on us. An example, to illustrate what I have just said. There is no other *jouissance* given to me, or giveable, than that of my body. This does not impose itself immediately, but no one has any doubt about it and there is established, around this *jouissance*, which is

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indeed henceforth my only good, this protective grill of a law described as universal and which is called "Human rights". No one can prevent me from disposing as I wish of my own body. The result, at the limit -we put our finger, our foot on it, we analysts - is that *jouissance* has dried up for everyone!

This is the other side of a little article that I produced under the title of "*Kant with Sade"*. Obviously this is not said there up front - it is at the back. It was not for all that less dangerous to say it as Sade said it. Sade is indeed the proof of that. But since all I was doing there was explaining Sade, it is less dangerous for me!

The truth is manifested in an enigmatic fashion in the symptom. Which is what? A subjective opaqueness. Let us leave to one side what is clear. The fact is that the enigma has already this much resolved, that it is only a rebus. And let us base ourselves for a moment on the fact - which by going too quickly one may leave to one side - that the subject therefore can be non-transparent. The fact is also that what is obvious may be hollow, and that it would be better henceforth, no doubt, to make the word agree with the past participle, emptied (*evidé*).

The subject is perfectly thingy (*chosique*). And is the worst kind of thing! The Freudian thing, precisely.

As regards the facts, we know that it is a bubble and that it can be burst. We have experience of it already on several occasions. Such is the plane on which modern thinking makes its way, as Marx, first of all gave it its tone, then Freud. If the status of what Freud contributed is less evidently triumphant, it is perhaps, precisely, that he went further. You pay for that.

You pay for that, for example, in the thematic you will find developed in the two articles that I am proposing for your attention, for your study if you have enough leisure for that. Because they ought here to form the foundation on which there will find its place what I am going to advance, to take things up again at the point I left them the last time, to complete, in this quadrangle that I began to trace out as having (3) to be articulated fundamentally around repetition.

Repetition. A **temporal locus,** in which there comes to act what I first left suspended around the *purely logical* terms of alienation, at the four poles that I punctuated of the *alienating choice* on the one hand, of the establishment on the other hand at two of these poles, of the *Es,* of the Id, of the *unconscious*, on the other hand, in order to put at the fourth of these poles, *castration*. These four terms, which may have left you in suspense, have their English correspondents in what I began, the last time, to articulate by showing you the fundamental structure of repetition on the one hand (by situating it on the right of the quadrangle), of the function, on the other hand, on the right-hand pole, of this privileged and exemplary mode of the establishment of the subject which is the *passage à l'acte* is.

Passage à l'acte _____ Repetition

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What are the two other poles that I have to deal with now? One of them was already indicated to you the last time:

acting-out

acting-out, that I am going to have to articulate in so far as it is situated - at this place – in an elided way, in which something of the field of the eliminated Other, that I have just recalled, is manifested in the form of a truthful manifestation. Such is, fundamentally, the sense of acting-out. I am asking you, simply, to have the patience to follow me, since, moreover, I can only introduce these terms - what they refer to, the structure – without preliminaries (*bille en tête), a*s I might say. By wanting to make our way by a progression, or indeed a critique, of what has already been outlined about such a formulation in the theories already expressed in analysis, we would, literally, only lose ourselves in the same labyrinth that this theory constitutes.

(4) This does not mean, of course, that we reject either the data or the experience. But that we submit what we are contributing in terms of new formulae to this test of seeing whether it is not precisely our formulae that will allow there to be defined not only the well-foundedness but also the sense of what has already been initiated.

The acting-out, then, that I am putting forward - you already sense perhaps the relevance of putting it forward in this situation of the field of the Other, which it is a matter for us of restructuring, as I might say, if only because of the following. That history, like experience as it is being pursued, indicate to us, at the very least, a certain global correspondence between this term and what analytic experience establishes. I am not saying that acting-out occurs only during analysis. I am saying that it is from analysis and from what was produced in it, that the problem emerged. That there arose the fundamental distinction which lead acting-out to be isolated, to be distinguished, from the act, and from the *passage à l'acte* as it can pose us problems, as psychiatrists, and be established as an autonomous category. I have only put forward a correlate, then, the one that makes it like the symptom *qua* manifestation of truth. It is **certainly not the only one** and other conditions are necessary.

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I hope then that at least some of you know – in parallel to these statements that I am going to be lead to put at your disposition - will be able to glance through at least what, at a certain date - which is more or less 1947 or 1948 - the *Yearbook of psychoanalysis* began to be published after the last war - and the formula that Otto Fenichel gave of it: "*Neurotic acting-out"*.

I continue … What is the term that you are going to see being inscribed at the fourth meeting-point of these operational functions that determine what we are articulating on the basis of repetition? Even if this surprises you - and I think I will be able to sustain it as broadly as possible for your appreciation – it is something which, singularly, has remained in a certain suspense in analytic theory and is undoubtedly the conceptual point around which most clouds and false appearances have accumulated. To name it, and moreover it is already written on this board (since it is to this note by Heinz Hartmann that I would ask you to refer to grasp a typical fruit of the analytic situation as such) it is, *sublimation*.

Repetition

Passage _____
à
l'acte

Sublimation Acting-out

(5) Sublimation is the term - that I would not call mediating, for it is not that at all - is the term that allows us to inscribe the basis and the conjunction of what is involved in subjective stability, in so far as repetition is its fundamental structure and that it involves this essential dimension about which there remains the greatest obscurity, in everything that has been formulated up to the present in analysis, and which is called satisfaction.

Befriedigung, says Freud. You should sense there the presence of the term *Friede,* whose usual sense is peace. I think that we live in a time in which this word, at least, will not appear to be obvious to you.

What is the satisfaction that Freud conjugates for us as essential for repetition in its most radical form? Since, in fact, this is the mode in which he produces before us the function of the *Wiederholungszwang*, in so far as it encompasses not alone a particular functioning of life, for its part quite locatable under the term of the pleasure principle, but that it sustains this life itself about which we can now admit everything, even up to the point, which has become a tangible truth, that there is nothing in the material that it stirs up which, in the final analysis, is not dead (I am saying of its nature inanimate). But which it is nevertheless clear will not surrender this material that it collects together to its domain of the inanimate, "except in its own way", Freud tells us. Namely, everything being in this satisfaction which means that it has to repass and retrace, the same paths that it has - how? – constructed, and that undoubtedly it

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testifies to us that its essence is to retrace them. There is - let us be very modest! - **a world** between this theoretical illumination and its verification.

Freud is not a biologist and one of the most striking things - which might be disappointing if we believe that it is enough to give the chief place in his thinking to the powers of life, that it is enough to do anything whatsoever which resembles the construction of a science which might be called biology -we analysts have contributed **nothing** to anything whatsoever that resembles biology. It is all the same very striking!

But why, nevertheless, do we hold so firmly to the assurance that, behind the satisfaction that we have to deal with when it is a matter of repetition, there is something that we designate - with all the awkwardness, with all the imprudence that can be involved, at the point that we are at in biological research - this term that we designate … (this is the sense, the attachment point that I would go so far as to call *fideist* in Freud) - that we call *sexual satisfaction*. And this for the reason that Freud advanced before an astonished Jung, to stave off the "black tide of mud", which is how Freud judges it with respect to the thinking that he designates by the term to which one will not fail to come if one does not hold fast, that he designates as the recourse to occultism.

Does this mean that everything happens so simply, I mean that these affirmations (6) are enough to give an acceptable articulation? This is the question that I am trying to advance today before you and which makes me push forward sublimation as the locus which, since it has been up to the present left fallow or covered with common scribblings, is nevertheless the one which is going to allow us to understand what is at stake in this fundamental satisfaction, which is the one that Freud articulates as a subjective opaqueness, as the satisfaction of repetition.

This conjunction of a basic point for the whole of logic, because what we bring with us into this marginal place of thinking, which is the one - a place of penumbra, a *twilight* zone - in which there is developed analytic action, if we bring with us there the requirements of logic, which is something that we are lead to make a merit of so that we will be able to pinpoint it with what I think must be its best name: sub-logic. This is what in this very place, this year, we are trying to inaugurate.

I pronounce the term at the very moment that it is going to be a matter taking our bearings about what is involved in this *sublimation*.

Freud, even though he in no way developed it, for the same reasons which render the developments that I added to it necessary, Freud affirmed, in accordance with the mode of procedure which is that of his thinking, which consists - as someone else said, Bossuet, first name Jacques-Bénigne - which consists in holding firmly to the two ends of the chain. Firstly, sublimation. is *zielgehemnt*, and, naturally, he does not explain to us what that means! I already tried to mark for you the distinction already inherent in this term of *zielgehemmt.* I took my references in English, as being more accessible: the difference between the *aim* and the *goal*. Say it in French. It is less clear because we are forced to take words already in use in philosophy. We can, all the same, try to say *la fin*, it is the weakest word, because it is necessary to re-integrate

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into it the whole journeying which is what is involved in the *aim,* the target. There is the same distance between *aim* and *goal* as there is in German between *Zweck* and *Ziel*. We are not told that *Zweckmässigkeit,* sexual finality, is in any way *gehemmt,* inhibited, in sublimation. *Zielgehemmt*, and it is precisely here that the word is well made to detain us … what we gargle with this so called "object" of the blessed genital drive, is precisely what can without any inconvenience be extracted, totally inhibited, absent, in what nevertheless belongs to the sexual drive, without it losing anything of its capacity as *Befriedigung,* in terms of satisfaction.

Such is, from the appearance of the term *Sublimierung*, the way Freud defines it in unequivocal terms. *Zielgehemmt* on the one hand, but on the other hand satisfaction encountered without any transformation, displacement, alibi, repression, reaction or defence. This is how Freud introduces, poses before us, the function of sublimation.

You will see in the second of these articles - (there are three texts here, but what I am (7) calling the second, is the second that I named earlier, that of Heinz Hartmann. The first that I named being that of Fenichel, and Alexander is only a reference by Fenichel) - I mean the point designated by Fenichel, the major point of the introduction of the term acting-out in psychoanalytic articulation. Consult the article by Heinz Hartmann on sublimation. It is exemplary. It is exemplary of what, in our eyes, is not in any way obsolete in the position of the psychoanalyst. The fact is that the approach to what he is dealing with, taking responsibility for a thinking, always drives him back in some respect to one of these two terms that I will designate in the most temperate way as platitude. And everyone knows that for a long time, I designated as its the most eminent representative, Mr. Fenichel. May he rest in peace! His writings have for us the very great value of being undoubtedly the very scrupulous gathering together of everything that can emerge as holes in experience. All that is lacking at the place of these holes is the necessary question mark. As regards Heinz Hartmann and the fashion in which he sustains - for some fourteen or fifteen pages, if I remember correctly - with an interrogative accent the problem of sublimation, I think that it cannot escape anyone who comes to it with a fresh mind, that such a discourse, the one I am asking you to consult in the text, designating for you where it is, where you can easily find it, is properly speaking a lying discourse.

The whole apparatus of a so-called "energetics", around which there is proposed to us something which consists precisely in *inverting* the approach to the problem, by questioning sublimation - in so far as it is first proposed to us as being identical, and not displaced, with respect to something which is, properly, (with the quotation marks that the use of the word drive imposes at this level) all the same: the "sexual drive" - overturning this and questioning in the most punctuated manner what is involved in sublimation, as being linked to what is proposed to us. Namely, that the functions of the ego - which in the most improper manner has been posited as being autonomous, even as coming from a different source to what is called, in this confused language, an "instinctual" source, as if there had ever been in Freud a question of that! - to know, then, how these completely pure functions of the ego, related to the measure of reality, and providing it, as such, in an essential fashion - re-establishing here then at the heart of analytic thinking, what the whole of analytic thinking rejects - that there is this isolated, direct, autonomous, identifiable relation, a relation of pure thinking to a world that it is supposed to be able to approach, without itself being completely shot

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through by the function of desire - how can it happen that there can come from what is then elsewhere, the instinctual focus, some reflection or other, some painting or other, some colouring or other, that is called, textually, "the sexualisation of the ego functions"!

(8) Once introduced like this the question becomes literally insoluble, or, in any case, excluded forever from everything that is proposed to the praxis of analysis.

To approach what is involved in sublimation, it is necessary for us to introduce this first term without which (*moyennant quoi*) it is impossible for us to find our bearings in the problem, which is the one from which I started the last time in defining the *act*: the act is signifying. It is a signifier which is repeated, even though it happens in a single gesture, for topological reasons which make possible the existence of the double loop created by a single cut. It is the establishment of the subject *as such*. Namely, that, from a true act, the subject emerges different. Because of the cut, its structure is modified. And, fourthly, the correlate of misrecognition, or more exactly the limit imposed on this recognition in the subject, or if you wish again, his *Reprasentanz* in the *Vorstellung*, to this act, is the *Verleugnung*. Namely, that the subject never recognises it in its truly inaugural import, even when the subject is, as I might say, capable of having committed this act.

Well then, it is here that it would be well for us to notice the following - which is essential for any comprehension of the role that Freud gives to sexuality in the unconscious - for us to remember something that the tongue already gives us, namely, that *people speak about the sexual act.*

The sexual act, this could at least suggest to us - something moreover that is obvious - since, once one thinks about it … in any case, you touch on it right away … the fact is that it is obviously not pure and simple copulation. The act has all the characteristics of the act as I have just recalled them, as we manipulate it, as it has presented itself to us, with its symptomatic sediments and everything that makes it more or less stick and stumble. The sexual act clearly presents itself as a signifier, firstly, and as a signifier which repeats something. Because it is the first thing that was introduced to it in psychoanalysis.

It repeats what? The oedipal scene, of course!

It is curious that it is necessary to recall these things which constitute the very soul of what I proposed to you to see in analytic experience.

That it can be the establishment of something that offers no way back for the subject, is what certain privileged sexual acts, which are precisely the ones that we call incestuous, make us literally put our finger on. I have enough analytic experience to affirm to you that a boy who has slept with his mother is not at all, in analysis, a subject like the others! And even if he himself knows nothing about it, this changes nothing in the fact that it is analytically as tangible as this table here! His personal *Verleugnung*, the contradiction that he may oppose to the fact that this has the value of a decisive break-through, changes nothing in it.

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(9) Naturally, all of this would deserve to be supported. My guarantee is that here I have listeners who have analytic experience and that, if I said something too gross, would be able, I think, to protest loudly. But, believe me, they will not say the contrary, because they know it as well as I do. Quite simply, that does not mean that people know how to draw out the consequences, for want of knowing how to articulate them.

In any case, this leads us to try, perhaps, to introduce into it a little logical rigour.

The act is founded on repetition. What, at first approach, could be more welcoming for what is involved in the sexual act. Let us remember the teachings of our Holy Mother the Church, huh! The principle: you do not do that together, you do not have it off, huh!, except in order to bring into the world a new little soul! There must be people who think about it while they are doing it (*laughter*)! In any case, it is a supposition! It is not established. It could be that, however much in conformity this thinking may be with dogma - the Catholic one, I mean - it may be, where it happens, only a symptom.

This is obviously designed to suggest to us that there is perhaps room to try to circumscribe more closely - to see through what aspect there is admitted - the function of reproduction which is there behind the sexual act. Because when we are dealing with the subject of repetition, we are dealing with signifiers, in so far as they are the *precondition of a thinking*.

At the rate that this biology, that we leave so well to its own resources, is going, it is curious to see that the signifier is showing the tip of its nose, there, right at the root. At the level of chromosomes, at the moment, there is a swarm of signifiers - conveying quite specified characters. We are told that the chains - of DNA or of *RNA* - are constituted like well ordered messages which come, of course, after being brewed in a certain fashion, is that not so, in a big urn, to make there emerge the new kind of eccentric that everyone in the family is waiting to acclaim.

Is this the level at which the problem is posed?

Well then, it is here that I would like to introduce something that, naturally, I did not invent for you today. There is somewhere, in a volume called my *Ecrits*, an article which is called "*The meaning of the phallus"*; on page 693, on line 10 (I had some difficulty, this morning, in finding it), I write: *the phallus as signifier gives the ratio of desire (in the sense that the term* -I mean: "ratio" *– is used as the "mean and extreme" ratio of harmonic division).* This in order to indicate to you that, huh, obviously, it was necessary for time to pass, for me to be able to introduce what I am going to say to you today. I simply marked there the 'little white stone' intended to tell you that it was already from this that the meaning of the phallus was taking its bearings.

In effect, let us try to put an order, a measure, into what is involved in the sexual act in so far as it has a relation with the function of repetition.

Well then, it leaps to the eye, not that it is not known, since the Oedipus complex is known from the beginning, but that people are not able to recognise what that means,

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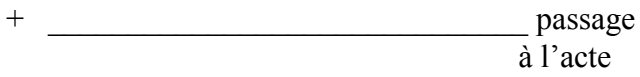
namely, that the product of repetition, in the sexual act *qua* act, namely, in so far as we participate in it as subjected to what is signifying in it, has its impact, in other words, in the fact that the subject that we are is opaque, that it has an unconscious.

Well then, it should be pointed out that the fruit of *biological* repetition, of reproduction, is already there in this space, well defined for the accomplishment of the act, which is called the bed.

The agent of the sexual act knows very well that he is a son. And that is why the sexual act, in so far as it concerns us psychoanalysts, has been referred to the Oedipus complex.

So let us try to see, in these signifying terms that define what I called just now "mean and extreme", what results from it.

Let us suppose that we are going to have this signifying relation supported by the simplest support, the one that we have already given to the double loop of repetition: a simple line. And, for still greater ease, let us lay it out, quite simply as follows:



A line to which we can give two ends. We can cut this double loop anywhere at all, and once we have cut it, we are going to try to make use of it.

Let us place on it the four points (points of origin), of two other cuts that define the mean and extreme ratio:

- (11) **small o**; the agreeable product of a previous copulation, which, since it happened to be a sexual act, created the subject, who is here in the process of reproducing it - the sexual act.
- capital O. What is capital O? If the sexual act is what we are taught, *as signifier*, it is the mother. We are going to give her … (because we find her trace everywhere in analytic thinking itself, everything that this signifying term of the mother carries with it in terms of thoughts of fusion, of a falsification of unity – in so far as she only interests us, namely, a countable unit - of a passage from this countable unit to a unifying unit), we are going to give her the value *One*.

What does the value *One* mean as a unifying unit? We are dealing with the signifier and its consequences for thinking. The mother as subject is *the thought of the One of the couple*. "The two shall be one flesh", is a thought of the order of the maternal capital O.

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Such is the mean and extreme ratio of what links the agent to what is patient and receptacle in the sexual act. I mean, in so far as it is an act, in other words, in so far as it has a relation with the existence of the subject.

The *One* of the unit of the couple is a thought determined at the level of *one* of the terms of the real couple. What does that mean? It is that it is necessary that something should emerge, subjectively, from this repetition, which re-establishes the *ratio* - the mean ratio as I have just defined it for you - at the level of this real couple. In other words that something should appear, which - as in this *fundamental* signifying manipulation that the harmonic relationship is - is manifested as the following: this magnitude (let us call it small c), as compared to the sum of the two others, has the same value as the smaller has compared to the larger.

But that is not all! It has this import, in so far as this value - of the smaller as compared to the larger - is the same value as that of the larger with respect to the sum of the first two. In other words, that *o over capital O = capital O over (o plus capital O),* equals what? This other value that I produced here and which has a name, which is called nothing other than *minus phi* in which there is designated castration, in so far as its designates the fundamental value. I am writing it out again a little further: equals *minus phi* over (*o plus capital O minus phi*). Namely, the significant relation of the phallic function *qua* **essential lack** of the junction of the sexual relation with its subjective realisation; the designation in the very fundamental signifiers of the sexual act of this: that, although everywhere summoned, but slipping away, the shadow of the unit hovers over the couple, there appears nevertheless, necessarily, the mark - this by reason of its very introduction into subjective functioning - the mark of something which ought to represent in it a fundamental lack.

This is called the function of castration *qua* signifying.

(12) In so far as man is only introduced into the function of the couple by way of a relationship which is *not immediately inscribed* in sexual union and which is only represented in it in this same *exterior* where you see there being outlined what is called, for that very reason, “the extreme ratio”.

The relation that the predominance of the phallic symbol has, with respect to sexual union *qua* act, is the one which gives both the measure of the relation of the agent to the patient, and the measure - which is the same - of the *thought* of the couple, as it is in the patient, to what the real couple is.

It is very precisely by being able to reproduce exactly the same type of repetition, that everything that is of the order of sublimation - and I would prefer not to be forced here to evoke it specifically in the form of what is called “artistic creation”, but, because it is necessary, I am bringing it in - it is precisely in the measure that something, or some object, can come to take the place that the *minus phi* takes in the sexual act as such, that sublimation can subsist, giving exactly the same order of *Befriedigung* given in the sexual act and as regards which you see the following: that it very precisely depends on the fact that what is purely and simply within the couple *is not satisfying.*

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This is so true that this kind of crude homily, that has been introduced into the theory under the name of "genital maturation", is only proposed as what? As very obviously, in its very text, (I mean in whoever tries to state it) as a kind of hold-all, refuse dump, where nothing really indicates what is enough to connect the fact, firstly, of a copulation (a successful one, they add on, but what does that mean?) and of these elements that are qualified as "tenderness", "recognition of the object". What object, I ask you? Is it so clear that the object is there, when already we are told that behind any object whatsoever, there is profiled the Other, which is the object which provided a shelter for the nine month interval between the union of the chromosomes and the coming to birth?

I know well that it is here that there takes refuge all the obscurantism which attaches itself madly to analytic proof. But it is not a reason either for us not to denounce it, if the fact of denouncing it allows us to advance more strictly into a logic, as regards which you will see, the next time, how it is concentrated at the level of the analytic act itself.

For if there is something interesting in this representation in a quadrangle, it is that it allows us to establish also certain proportions. If the *passage à l'acte* fulfils certain functions with respect to *repetition*, it is at least suggested by this arrangement, that it ought to be the same as what separates *sublimation* from *acting-out*. And in the other sense, that sublimation with respect to the *passage à l'acte* ought to have something in (13) common in what separates repetition from acting-out.

Undoubtedly, there is here a much bigger *gap,* the one which, undoubtedly, makes of the analytic act, as we are trying to grasp it in what we will say the next time, something which also deserves to be defined as act.

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Seminar 13: Wednesday 1 March 1967

I read last evening, somewhere, perhaps some of you too may have encountered it, this singular title: *"Know Freud before translating him"* … an enormity! As was said by a gentleman whom I do not claim to resemble because I do not go around like him with a stick, even though sometimes with a hat: "*hénaurme"!*

In any case, it is clear that it seems to me that to try to translate him, is a path that is certainly indispensable as a preliminary to any pretension of knowing him.

That a psychoanalyst should claim to know psychoanalysis may be acceptable, but to know Freud before translating him, invincibly suggests this stupidity of knowing him before having read him. This, of course, supposes all the necessary enlarging of the notion of translation. For undoubtedly, what is striking, is that I do not know if we can ever put forward something, which resembles this pretension of knowing Freud. Measure clearly for yourselves what it means - in the perspective that the thinking of Freud, once it has reached the end of its development, offers us - measure clearly for yourselves what it means to have proposed to us the model of subjective satisfaction in sexual union.

Was not the experience - the experience from which Freud himself started - very precisely that it was the locus of subjective dissatisfaction? And has the situation improved for us?

Frankly, in the social context which is dominated by the function of the *employment* of the individual - the employment, whether it is regulated against the measure of his subsistence purely and simply, or that of productivity - what margin in this context, is there left to what might be the proper time for a culture of love? And does not everything testify to us that this is indeed the reality most excluded from our subjective community?

No doubt this is, not what decided Freud to articulate this function of satisfaction as a (2) truth but, what seemed to him to be protected from this risk, that he avowed to Jung, of seeing a profound theory of the psyche finding itself in the rut of what he himself called "the black tide of mud of occultism".

It is indeed because with sexuality – which, precisely, throughout the centuries, had presided over what seems to us the follies, the delusions of Gnosis, of the copulation of the wise man and *sophia* (and along what path!) - it is indeed because in our century and under the reign of the subject, there was *no risk* that sexuality could presume to be some kind of model for knowledge, that, no doubt, he began this tune of the leader of the game, so well illustrated by this tale of Grimm that he loved, of the Pied Piper, drawing behind him this audience which, one can well say, as regards the paths of any kind of wisdom, represented the dregs of humanity.

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For undoubtedly, in what I called earlier the line that he traces out for us, and where one must start from the end, namely, the formula of repetition, it is necessary to measure what separates the *panta rhei* of the ancient thinker, when he tells us that nothing ever repasses in its own trace - that one never bathes in the same river - and what that signifies in terms of a profound tearing apart of a thinking, that can only grasp time in this something which only goes towards the indeterminate, at the price of a constant rupture with absence.

What is added to it by introducing here the function of repetition?

Well then, undoubtedly, nothing much more satisfying, than to always, incessantly, renew, a certain number of circuits.

The *pleasure principle*, undoubtedly, does not guide towards anything, and least of all towards the re-grasping of some object or other.

What can the pure and simple notion of discharge account for, in so far as it is supposed to take its model from the established circuit of the *sensorium,* from something, moreover, rather vaguely defined as being the *motor*, the *stimulus-response* circuit, as they say? Who does not see that by keeping to this the *sensorium* can only be the guide of what ensures, in effect, at the simplest level, that when the frog's leg is stimulated, it is pulled back. It does not lead to grasping anything in the world, but to fleeing what injures it.

What is it that the constant defined in the nervous system guarantees by the pleasure principle? The equality of stimulation, *isostime,* I would say - to imitate the *isobar* or the *isotherm* that I spoke about the other day - or *isorespe, isorésponse.* It is difficult to ground anything whatsoever on the *isostime,* for the *isostime* is no longer in any way a *stime*. The *isorespe*, the "groping" for the equality of resistance, here is what can define this isobar that the pleasure principle will lead the organism to avoid in the world. Nothing in all of that, in any case, pushes towards the seeking, to the grasping, (3) to the constitution of an object.

The problem of the object as such is left intact by this whole organic conception of a homeostatic system. It is very surprising that its flaw has not been marked up to now.

Freud, here, undoubtedly, has the merit of noting that the seeking of an object is something which is conceivable only by introducing the dimension of **satisfaction**.

Here we again come up against the strangeness of the fact that while they are so many organic models of satisfaction - beginning with digestive repletion and also some of the other needs that he evokes, but in a different register - for it is remarkable that it is precisely in so far as these schemas in which satisfaction is defined as **untransformed** by the subjective agency, (oral satisfaction is something that can put the subject to sleep, at the limit, but undoubtedly it is conceivable that this sleep may be the subjective sign of satisfaction) - how infinitely more problematic it is to highlight that the true order of subjective satisfaction is to be sought in the sexual act, which is precisely the point in which it proves to be the most torn apart.

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And this, to the point that all the other orders of satisfaction (those that we have just enumerated as present in effect in the Freudian evocation) only come to take on their meaning when put into a certain dependency - which I would defy anyone to define, to render conceivable, otherwise than by formulating it in terms of structure - into a dependency, I was saying, let us say - crudely - that is *symbolic* with respect to sexual satisfaction.

These are the terms in which I am proposing to you the problem that I am taking up again today and which consists in trying to give you the signifying articulation of what is involved in the repetition implied in the sexual act. Is it truly what I have said - what the tongue promotes for us and what undoubtedly our experience does not invalidate – namely, an *act*, after having insisted on what is involved in the act, in itself, in terms of conditioning, first of all, by the repetition which is internal to it.

As regards the sexual act I would go further, at least I thought I had to go further in order to grasp its import. The repetition that it implies, involves - at least if we follow Freud's indication - an element of measure and of harmony which is, undoubtedly, what the directive function given to it by Freud evokes, but which undoubtedly is what is to be specified by us.

For if there is something that is produced, that is promoted, by any of the analytic formulations, it is that in no case can this harmony be conceived of as being of the order of the *complementary*, namely, as the union of male and female, however simply (4) the populace pictures it, in the style of the union of the key and the lock, or in anything whatsoever which is presented in these habitual modes of gamic symbols. Everything indicates to us - and it seems that I only have to make something of the fundamental function of this third element which turns around the phallus and castration - everything indicates to us that the mode of measure and proportion implied in the sexual act is of a completely different structure and, to say the word, is more complex.

This is what, the last time, in leaving you, I had begun to formulate, in evoking - since it is a matter of harmony - the relation described as anharmonic which ensures that on a simple line that has been drawn, a segment can be divided in two ways:

- by a point which is internal to it - a point *c* between *a* and *b* - giving some relation or other, for example, 1/2.
- Another point *d*, outside, can realise in the segments determined between it - this point *d,* for example - with the points *a* and *b* of the initial segment, the same proportion, 1/2.

Already, this had appeared more suitable to us to guarantee what is involved, according to all our experience. Namely, the relation of one term to another term that is presented to us as a place of unity, the unity, I mean, of the couple. That it is in relation to the idea of the couple, where it is found - I mean effectively, in the subjective register - that the subject has to situate himself, in a proportion that he may find has to be established by introducing an external mediation to the confrontation that he constitutes - as subject - to the **idea of the couple**.

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This is only a first approximation and, in a way, the simple schema that allows us to designate what it is a matter of guaranteeing. Namely, the function of this *third element* that we see appearing at every turn of what one could call the *subjective field*, in the sexual relation, whether it is a matter (we pointed it out the last time) of what, subjectively, undoubtedly, appears there in the most distant fashion, namely, its always possible organic product, whether it is considered to be desirable or not. Whether it is this element, at first sight so different, so opposed, and, nevertheless, immediately connected to it by analytic experience, namely, this requirement of the phallus, which appears so internal, in our experience, to the sexual relation as it is subjectively lived. Is not the child-phallus equivalence something from which we can, perhaps, attempt to designate the relevance in some synchrony that we ought to discover in it and which, of course, does not mean *simultaneity*.

(5) What is more, does this third element not have some relation with what we have designated as the division of the Other itself, the S (Ø)?

It is in order to lead you along this path, that today I am introducing the relation which is structured in a very different order to that of the simple harmonic approach which the end of my last discourse designated. Namely, what constitutes the true *mean and extreme ratio*, which is not simply the relation of one segment to another, in so far as it can be defined in two ways, in a way that is internal or external to their conjunction, but the relation which posits, at the start, the equality of the relation of the smaller to the larger - the equality, I am saying, of this relation - to the relation of the larger to the sum of the two. Contrary to the indeterminacy, to the perfect liberty of the anharmonic relation - which is not nothing as regards the establishment of a structure (for I remind you that this anharmonic relation was something we already had to evoke last year as fundamental to any structure described as projective), but let us leave it now to attach ourselves to the following, which makes of the relation of the mean and extreme ratio, not any relation whatsoever - however directive, I repeat, this may appear, eventually, in the manifestation of projective constants - but a perfectly determined and **unique** relation, I mean numerically speaking.

I put on the board a figure that allows us to give its support to what I am stating here.

Here on the right are the segments in question. The first that I called small *o*, which for us is going to be the only element that we will be content with to build up everything that is going to be involved in this relation of measure or of proportion. On the single condition of giving to its correspondent, that you see here, from this point to this point (I do not want to give names of letters to these points in order not to risk confusion, in order not to make your ears spin when they are stated) I designate from here (1) to here (2), we have the value 1.

On condition of giving this value 1 to this segment, we can be content, in what we are dealing with, namely, the relation described as that of the mean and extreme ratio, to

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give it purely and simply the value *o*, which means, on this occasion *o/1*. We have posited that the relation *o/1* is the same as the relation of *1/1+o*.

(6) Such is this perfectly fixed relation, which has extremely important mathematical properties that I have neither the leisure nor the intention of developing for you today. You should know simply that its appearance in Greek mathematics coincides with the decisive step of putting order on what is involved in the commensurable and the incommensurable.

In effect, this relation is incommensurable. It is, in the search for the mode in which there can be defined - in the way in which there overlap - the succession of points given by the staggered series of two units of measure, incommensurable to one another. Namely, what is most difficult to imagine: the way in which they become confused, if they are incommensurable. What is proper to the commensurable, is that there is always a point where the two measures will come together on the same footing. Two commensurable values will always end up at a certain multiple, different for the one and for the other, constituting the same magnitude. Two incommensurable values, never. But how do they interfere with one another? It is along the line of this research that there was defined this procedure which consists in reducing (*rabattre*) the smaller into the field of the larger and asking oneself what happens - from the point of view of measure - to the remainder.

For the remainder, which is here, which is obviously *1-o*, we will proceed in the same way. We will reduce it within the larger one. And so on to infinity, I mean, without ever being able to arrive at the end of this process. It is in this that there consists precisely the incommensurabilty of a relation that is nevertheless so simple.

Of all the incommensurables, this one is the one that, as I might say, always leaves the greatest separation in the intervals that define the rationality of the commensurable. A simple indication that I cannot give any further commentary on here.

In any case, you see that it is a matter, anyway, of something which, in this order of the incommensurable, is specified by a very special accentuation, as well as a purity of relation.

(7) To my great regret - because I think that all the guts of occultism are going to tremble on this occasion - I am indeed obliged, for the sake of honesty, to say that this small *o* relation is what is called the *golden number*. After which, naturally, there is going vibrate, in the inner depths of your cultural acquisitions – especially as regards aesthetics - the evocation of anything you like: cathedrals … Albert Dürer … alchemical crucibles and all the other similar fiddle faddles!

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I hope nevertheless that the seriousness with which I introduced the strictly mathematical character of the matter - and very specifically its problematic nature, which in no way gives the idea of a measure that is easy to conceive of - made you sense that it is something different that is at stake.

Let us see now some of the remarkable properties of this *small o*. I wrote them in black on the left. You can see already that the fact that *1+o* is equal to the inverse of *o*, namely, to *1/o*, was already sufficiently guaranteed in the premises given by the definition of this relation. Because the notion that it consists in the relation of the smaller to the greater, in so far as equal to that of the greater to the sum, already gives us this formula, which is the same as this fundamental one:

$$o = \frac{1}{1+o}$$

Starting from this, it is extremely easy to see other equalities, whose obsolete and, in truth, for us, momentarily unimportant character is marked by the fact that I wrote in red the following equalities.

The only important thing to note being that the *one minus small o* which is here (1), can be equal to *o squared,* which is very easy to prove. And, on the other hand, that *two plus small o* which is here, and you can see - from the simple consideration of *one plus small o over one minus o* - how this *two minus small o* can be easily deduced. Which represents the following. Namely, what happens, when instead of involuting onto itself the reduction of segments, one develops them on the contrary towards the outside. Namely, that the *one over 2 plus small o* – namely, what corresponded earlier to our external segment in the anharmonic relation (it is equal to *one*, being obtained by the outside development of the *one* that the greater length represents) - the *one over two o* has the same value as this initial value that we started from, namely, *small o,* namely, *one over one plus o.* (cf Appendix)

Such are the properties of the mean and extreme ratio, in so far as they are going perhaps to allow us to comprehend something about what is involved in genital satisfaction.

As I told you, *small o* is one of the ordinary *(quelconque)* terms of this genital relation. (8) I am saying, one of the *ordinary* terms, **whatever may be its sex**. The girl, like the boy, in the sexual relation - the experience of the subjective relation in so far as analysis defines it as oedipal - the girl like the boy enters it first of all as a child. In other words, as already representing the **product** - and I am not giving this term at random, we will have to take it up again subsequently - in so far as it allows to situate, as different from what is called creation, what, in our day, circulates as you know, everywhere and even without rhyme or reason, under the name of *production*.

This relation of the subject as such to what is involved in production should be defined, and is indeed the most imminent, the most current problem proposed to thinking. Whatever may be advanced, I am saying, in a dialectic of the subject where it is not seen **how the subject itself can be taken as a production**, is entirely without

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value for us. Which does not meant that it is easy to guarantee, starting from this root, what is involved in production.

It is so little easy to guarantee, that if there is anything an unprepared mind might well be astonished at, it is the remarkable silence - the silence of *"Conrard"* - that psychoanalysis maintains on this delicate question, which is nevertheless … I ought to say which plays its part, however little, in our journalistic, political, domestic, daily, and anything you wish, even commercial life, and which is called *birth control.* We have yet to see an analyst saying what he thinks about it! It is all the same curious, in a theory that claims to have something to say about sexual satisfaction!

There must also, there must also be something in this which is very closely linked – not, I must say, in the most convenient fashion - with what one can call the religion of the Word (*Verbe)*, since, undoubtedly, after the very surprising hopes about liberation from the Law (which corresponds to the Pauline generation in the Church), it seems that in what followed, many dogmatic statements were weakened. In the name of what? Of **production** of course, the production of *souls*! In the name of the production of souls, this announcement of the passage of humanity to beatitude as being very near, suffered, it seems to me, a certain postponement.

But you must not believe that the problem is limited to the religious sphere. Another announcement having been made about the liberation of man, it seems that the production of *proletarians* must have played some role, in the precise forms socialist societies took on, starting from a certain idea of the abolition of the exploitation of man by man. As regards this production, it does not seem that a much clearer measure has been reached, and as regards what is produced - just as the Christian field, in the name of the production of souls, has continued to allow there to appear in the world beings of whom the least that one can say is that their soul-like quality is quite mixed - in the same way in the name of the production of proletarians, it does not seem that (9) there is coming to light anything other than this something respectable certainly, but which has its limits, and that one could call, *the production of managers* (*cadres)*.

Therefore, this question of production and of the status of the subject *qua* product, is now presentified to us at the level of something which is indeed the first presentification of the Other, in so far as it is **the mother**.

We know the value of the unifying function of this presence of the mother. We know it so well that the whole of analytic theory (and practice) has literally tipped over towards it and has completely succumbed to its fascinating value. The principle, from the origin, and this going (you are able to understand it because you saw it being supported in a debate which ended our last year), the whole analytic situation was conceived of as reproducing, ideally, I mean as being founded on the ideal of this unit of fusion (or this foundational unification if you wish), which is supposed to have united for nine months - as I recalled the last time - the child and the mother. Undoubtedly …

- **A female voice**: We can't hear you, sir.
- **Dr. Lacan**: What?

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- **The same voice**: It's very hard to hear you.
- **Dr. Lacan**: It's very hard to hear me. I'm terrible sorry that all of this is working so badly, but I am very grateful to you for telling me. I going to try to speak more loudly. Thank you.
- **The voice**: It's the microphone.
- **Dr. Lacan**: It isn't working at all today, huh. Good …

… what unites then the child and the mother. It is precisely *not to make* this union of the infant and the mother … (whatever way we qualify it, whether we make of it or not the function of *primary narcissism*, or simply the elective locus of *frustration* and of *gratification*) - this is precisely what is at stake, namely, not to repudiate this register, but to put it back in its correct place, that our theoretical efforts are about. It is in so far as there is somewhere - and I am saying at the level of sexual confrontation - this first affirmation of the unity of the couple, as constituted by what the religious statement has formulated as "*one flesh*". What a mockery! Who can affirm in any way whatsoever that, in what is called a genital embrace, the man and the woman form one flesh? Unless the religious statement here has recourse to what is put by analytic investigation, to what, in sexual union is *represented* by the maternal pole. I repeat: this maternal pole - since, in the oedipal myth, it seems to be confused with, to give purely and simply the partner of the little male - has in reality nothing to do with the male-female opposition. Because the girl just as much as the boy has to deal with this maternal locus of unity, as representing for her what she is confronted with at the moment of approaching what is involved in sexual union.

(10) For the boy as for the girl what he is as product, as **small o**, has to be confronted with the unity established by the idea of the union of the child with the mother and it is in this confrontation that there emerges this *1-o,* which is going to bring us this third element, in so far as it also functions as the sign of a lack, or, if you wish again, to use the humorous term, of the *little difference*, of the little difference which comes to play the capital role in what is at stake in terms of sexual union in so far as it involves the subject.

Of course, common humour or common sense, as you wish, makes of this little difference, the fact that, as they say, some people have one and the others do not. This is not at all what is in question, in fact. For the fact of not having it plays for the woman, as you know, just as essential a role, just as mediating and constitutive a role in love, as for man. Much more, as Freud has underlined, it seems that her effective lack confers some advantages on her. And this is what I am now going to try to articulate for you.

In effect, in effect, what do we see if not that, as we said earlier, the extreme ratio of the relation - in other words what reproduces it in its exterior - is going to serve us here in the form of the 1, which gives - which reproduces - the correct proportion, that defined by the **small o**, outside the relation thus defined as the sexual relation.

In order that one of the partners should posit himself *vis-à-vis* the other as an equal *one*, in other words, in order for there to be established the dyad of the couple, we have here, in the relation thus inscribed - in the measure of the mean and extreme ratio - the support, namely, this second 1 which is inscribed on the right and which gives

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again the proportion with respect to the whole - on condition that there is maintained in it this third term of the **small o.**

It is here, of course, there resides the fact that we can say that, in the sexual relation, it is in so far as the subject manages to make himself equal to the Other, or to introduce into the Other itself, repetition (the repetition of 1), that it finds itself reproducing, in fact, the initial relation, the one which maintains, always pressing, this third element, which here is formulated by the **small o** itself.

In other words, we rediscover here the same process, the one that I previously inscribed, in the form of a bar of division, as making the relation of the subject to the big O begin, in so far as - in the mode in which a division is produced - the O barred is given. That in relation to this big O, it is an S barred which comes to be established, and that the remainder is given there by a **small o** which is an irreducible element of it.

(11) What does that mean? What it means, is that we are beginning to conceive of how it can happen that such a local organ, as I might say, and in appearance a purely functional one, like the penis, can here come to play a role in which we can glimpse what is involved in the true nature of satisfaction in the sexual relation.

Something, in effect, somewhere, in the sexual relation, can symbolise, as one might say, the elimination of this remainder. It is in so far as it is the organ which is the seat of detumescence that, somewhere, the subject can have the illusion – a deceptive one undoubtedly, but even though it is deceptive it is nonetheless satisfying - that there is no remainder, or, at the very least, that there is only a perfectly vanishing remainder.

This, in truth, might be simply of the order of the comic, and certainly belongs to it, because this is, at the same time, what gives its limit to what one can call *jouissance*, in so far as *jouissance* is supposed to be at the centre of what is involved in sexual satisfaction.

The whole schema which supports, *fantastically*, the idea of discharge, in what is involved in instinctual (*pulsionnelles)* tensions, is in reality supported by this schema, where one sees there being imposed this limit to *jouissance,* on the basis of the function of detumescence.

Undoubtedly, this is the most disappointing aspect that one could imagine for a satisfaction, if, in effect, what was involved was purely and simply *jouissance*. But everyone knows that, if there is something that is present in the sexual relation, it is the *ideal of the jouissance of the other,* and, moreover, what constitutes its subjective originality. For it is a fact that if we limit ourselves to organic functions, nothing is more precarious than this intersection of *jouissances*. If there is, indeed, something that experience reveals to us, it is the radical heterogeneity of male *jouissance* and female *jouissance*.

This indeed is why there are so many good souls occupied, more or less scrupulously, with verifying the strict simultaneity of their *jouissance* with that of their partner. I am certainly not going to lay out today the range of the many failures, lures and

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deceptions that this lends itself to. But the fact is that what is involved is something quite different to this little exercise in erotic acrobatics.

If something - it is well enough known, the place it has taken in a certain psychoanalytic verbiage is also known - if something comes to be founded around the *jouissance* of the Other, it is in so far as the structure that we have stated today gives rise to the *phantom of the gift.*

It is because she does not have the phallus that the woman's gift takes on a privileged value as regards the individual (*l'être)* and is called love, which is - as I have defined it - *the gift of what one does not have*.

(12) In a love relationship, the woman finds a *jouissance* that is, as one might say, of the order precisely of *causa sui*, in so far as, in effect, what she gives in the form of what she does not have, is also the cause of her desire.

She becomes what she creates, in a purely imaginary fashion, and, precisely, what makes her an object - in so far as in the erotic mirage she can be the phallus - to be it and at the same time not be it. What she gives by not having it, becomes, I have just told you, the cause of her desire. It is only, one can say, because of this, that the woman completes genital union in a satisfying fashion.

But, of course, in the measure that, having provided the object that she does not have, she does not disappear into this object. I mean that this object only disappears - leaving her to the satisfaction of her essential *jouissance* - through the intermediary of masculine castration. So that, in short, she, for her part, loses nothing in it, since she only puts into it what she does not have and that, literally, she creates it.

And this indeed is why **it is always through identification to the woman that sublimation produces the appearance of a creation**. It is always in the mode of a genesis, which is certainly obscure - before I expose its lineaments before you here - but very strictly linked to the gift of feminine love, in so far as it creates this vanishing object - and what is more, in so far as she lacks it - which is the all powerful phallus. This is why there can be somewhere in certain human activities - which remain for us to be examined, according to whether they are a mirage or not - what is called *creation*, or *poetry*, for example.

The phallus is indeed then, if you wish, from one point of view, the penis. But it is in so far as it is its lack with respect to *jouissance* that constitutes the definition of the subjective satisfaction to which there is remitted the reproduction of life.

In fact, in copulation, the subject cannot really possess the body that he embraces. He does not know the limits of possible *jouissance*, I mean the one that he can have of the body of the Other, as such, because these limits are *uncertain*. And this is all that is constituted by this beyond that *scoptophilia* and *sadism* define. That phallic failure takes on the ever renewed value of a fainting of the being of the subject, is something that is essential to masculine experience, and what makes this *jouissance* be compared to what is called *the return of the little death*.

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This *fainting* function - for its part, much more direct, directly experienced, in masculine *jouissance* - is what gives the male the privilege from which has emerged the illusion of pure subjectivity.

If there is an instant, a somewhere, when man can lose sight of the presence of the (13) third object, it is precisely in this, this fainting moment at which he loses, because it fails, what is not simply his instrument, but, for him as for the woman, the third element of the relation of the couple.

It is starting from there that there were constructed, even before the advent of what we are calling here the status of pure subjectivity, all the illusions of knowledge.

The imagination of the *subject of knowledge*, whether it is before or after the scientific era, is a male forgery. And male in so far as it has some of the characteristics of impotence, that it denies the *minus something* around which there is constructed the effect of causation of desire, *which takes this minus for a zero*. As we have already said, *taking the minus for a zero*, is proper to the subject and the *proper name* is here designed to mark its trace.

The rejection of castration marks the delusion of thinking, I mean, the entry of the thinking of the *I*, as such, into the real, which is properly what constitutes, in our first quadrangle, the status of the *I am not thinking,* in so far as syntax alone sustains it.

This is what is involved, as regards structure, in what allows there to be edified what Freud designates for us about sexual satisfaction in its relation to the status of the subject.

We will remain there for today, designating for the next time what we now have to advance on the function of *acting-out*.

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Seminar 14: Wednesday 8 March 1967

What I am establishing, in short, is a method without which one can say that everything that, in a certain field, remains implicit about what defines these fields, namely, the presence as such of the subject, well then, this method that I am establishing, consists, allows there to be warded off, as I might say, everything that this implication of the subject in this field introduces into it in terms of *fallaciousness*, of *falsity* at the foundation. It is something as regards which one sees, in short, by standing back a little, whether this method has indeed all this generality. And, of course, I did not start from such a general aim. I would even say more: something that I see myself, after the event, that one day it may happen that people will use this method in order to rethink things where they are most interesting, on the political plane, for example. Why not?

It is certain that with enough adaptations *(amodiations),* some of the schemas that I give will find an application there. It is perhaps even there that they will have most success. Because, on the terrain for which I forged them, the outcome is not sure, given that, perhaps, it is here, it is on this terrain, on this terrain which is that of psychoanalysis, that a certain *impasse*, which is essentially the one that manifests what I call - and they are not univocal - the *fallacies* of the subject, finds it easiest to put up a resistance.

In any case, it nevertheless remains that is it here that these concepts will be forged. And, one can even further say, that the whole contingency of the adventure, namely, the very mode of what these concepts will have to confront, namely, for example, analytic theory as it has already been forged, the way in which they have to introduce a correction into this analytic theory and the very dialectic that their introduction into analytic theory involves in terms of difficulty, indeed of resistance - indeed of external resistance that, in appearance, is quite accidental - all of this comes in a way to contribute to the modes in which I have circumscribed them. I mean that what one can call the resistance of psychoanalysts themselves to what is their own field, is, perhaps, what contributes the most striking testimony to the difficulties that have to be (2) resolved, I mean to their very structure.

Here, then, is why, today, we are coming to a terrain that is still more alive, when what is in question is for me to speak to you about what I situated at the fourth vertex of the quadrangle, that we will describe - I am supposing that my listeners today were all there are my two previous lectures - that we will qualify - this quadrangle - as the one connoted by the **moment of repetition**. Repetition, I have said, to which there corresponds, as foundational of the subject, the *passage à l'acte.* I showed you, I insisted on (I will come back to it today because it is necessary to come back to it) the importance of this status of act that the sexual act has. Without defining it as *act*, it is absolutely impossible to situate, to conceive of, the function that Freud gave to sexuality, as regards the structure of what one should call, with him, satisfaction -

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subjective satisfaction, *Befriedigung* - which cannot be conceived of from any other locus than that from which the subject is established as such.

It is the only notion which functions in a way that can give a sense to this *Befriedigung*.

In order to give to this sexual act structural reference points - outside of which it is impossible for us to conceive of its place in what is involved, namely, Freudian **theory** - we have been lead to bring into play one of the most exemplary mainsprings (*ressorts*) of mathematical thinking. Undoubtedly, when I use such means, it is to be clearly understood that it always only reaches something partial in it - partial for whoever only knows about mathematical theory from what I myself have made use of as an instrument. But of course, the situation may be different for whoever knows the place of such a mainspring, that, no doubt, with some inexperience on my part, I extract, believe me, all the same, not without knowing the ramifications of what I am using in the totality of mathematical theory. And not without having assured myself, that whoever might want to make a more in-depth use of it, will find - in the theory as a whole, at the precise points that I chose to ground such a structure - will find the prolongations that will allow him to give it its proper extension.

Some echo has come back to me that in hearing me speak about the sexual act, by making use, in order to structure the tensions in it, of the ternarity that was provided for me by the proportion of the golden number, someone made this remark through clinched teeth: "The next time I go screwing, I must not forget my slide-rule!" Undoubtedly, this remark has all the agreeable character that one can attribute to the witticism, but it remains for me to be taken a little like the curate's egg when the one responsible for this amusing remark is a psychoanalyst. For in truth, I think very (3) precisely that successful *jouissance* in bed essentially results, as you have been able to see - I will dot the i's - from forgetting what may be found on the slide-rule. Why is it so easy to forget? This is what I will once more insist on later. It is even the whole source, in short, of what is satisfying in what, on the other hand, (subjectively) is expressed by castration. But it is quite clear that a psychoanalyst cannot forget that it is in the measure that another act interests him, that we will call, to introduce the term today, the psychoanalytic act, that some recourse to the slide-rule may evidently be required.

The slide-rule, of course, to avoid any misunderstanding, will not consist on this occasion, in using it in order to read on it (we are not yet at that point) what can be read at the meeting place of two little lines. But, because of what it carries in itself in terms of a measure, which is described as nothing other than a logarithm, it provides us in effect with something that is not completely unrelated to the structure that I am evoking.

There is a striking thing in the psychoanalytic act - to name it thus with reference to the whole theory - there is a striking thing which is going to allow us to make a remark, which perhaps was seen by some people in the margins of what I have announced up to now. It is the following. I insisted on the character of *act* that is involved in the sexual act. One could remark in this connection, that everything that is stated in analytic theory seems destined *to efface* - for the individuals, suffering or

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unsatisfied in different ways, that we take responsibility for - the character of *act* that exists in the fact of the sexual encounter.

The whole of analytic theory puts the accent on the mode of *sexual relation*, declared - rightly or wrongly, in any case under different headings, and under headings to which I have allowed myself to raise some objections on many occasions - to qualify as more or less satisfying such and such a form of what is called the sexual relation. One can ask oneself if this is not a way of eluding - or even swamping what is, properly speaking, living, decisive, since what is involved here is something which has the same structure of *cut* as that which belongs to any act - what is properly involved in the sexual act.

Since it is a cut which, as all our experience abundantly demonstrates, does not happen automatically and does not give, properly speaking, a result of simple equity, since all sorts of structural anomalies (which are moreover properly articulated and located, if not conceived of in their true import, in analytic theory) are the result of it. It is quite clear that the fact of eluding what is involved in the relief as such of the act, is undoubtedly something linked to what I will call the temperament, the tempered (4) way in which the theory advances, with the manifest aim of not bringing with it too much scandal.

The worst being, of course, the following (which does not seem for all that to be reduced by this prudence). That the sexual act, henceforth - whatever may be our aspirations towards freedom of thought - that the sexual act, contrary to what may be affirmed in one or other zone and the objective examination which emerges from ethics, well then, it has to be said - whether the theory recognises it or not, puts the accent on it or does not put it, it does not matter to us - experience, it seems to me, proves superabundantly that from a time which does not date from today or yesterday, where among the numerous attempts which were made, more or less inherited from extremely complicated experiments, those of what is called "the time of the man of pleasure", that the way in which there ended up, in certain extravagant formulae of libertarian circles at the beginning of this century, for example, of which there were still some examples surviving, floating, in circles on other terrains, that were much more serious - I mean revolutionary terrains - one was able to see there still being maintained the formula that, after all, in any case, the sexual act should not be taken as having any more importance than that of drinking a glass of water. That was said, for example, in certain zones, certain groups, certain sectors, of Lenin's entourage. I remember having read formerly, in German, a very nice little volume, which was called *Wege der Liebe*, if I still remember the title properly. It was even the beginning, before the war, of something that was very like a paperback. And, on the cover, there was the ravishing little mug of Madame Kollontai (it was the top team) who was, if I remember correctly, the ambassador at Stockholm. It was made up of charming stories on this theme. Since time has passed, and socialist societies have the structure that you know, it appears clearly that the sexual act has still not passed to the rank of what one satisfies at the snack bar. And, in a word, that the sexual act still carries with it - and will carry for a long time - this sort of bizarre effect of something or other … of discordance, of deficit, indeed of something untidy and which is called guilt. I do not believe that all the writings of the high-flown spirits who surround us and which are entitled things like, "*L'univers morbide de la faute"*, for example, as if

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it had been already conjured away! (It was one of my friends who wrote it; I always prefer to quote people that I am fond of). All of this in no way settles the question and does not do so in so far as we, in effect, have to occupy ourselves, probably for a long time yet, with what remains attached to this universe, in terms of the failures, let us say - but failures whose status precisely one must consider (these failures are perhaps essential) - the failures, I am saying, or the non-failures of the structure of the sexual act.

As a result of which, I think I have to come back, very briefly certainly, but come back (5) again to what is inadequate in the definition which may be given to us in a certain register of *empty homily* about what is called the *genital stage*, on what is supposed to ensure the ideal structure of its object. It is not completely vain to consult this literature, since in truth, the dimension of tenderness evoked there is undoubtedly something respectable, is not to be contested. But that one should consider it to be something like a structural dimension of it is something with which I do not believe it is vain to enter into some contestation. I mean, first of all, moreover, it is not either absolutely …

- What's happening? [*There is a smell of something scorching; one of the wires of the sound recording machine has begun to burn. The typist leaves her place.*]

- What? You see! The moment seems to me to be very appropriate! Let us take things up again. This incident is going to give me the opportunity to settle and even to abbreviate what I think I have to say on the subject of this famous tenderness (*laughter*). You can think a little bit about it in this connection.

  There is an aspect of this tenderness, and perhaps any tenderness, that could be pinpointed by some formula that would be near enough to the following: *the compassion we should have for the impotence to love*. To structure that, at the level of the drive as such, is not easy. But, moreover, to illustrate what should be articulated, with regard to what is involved in the sexual act and satisfaction, it would perhaps be good to recall what experience imposes on the psychoanalyst in terms of the *ambi..guity* - they call it ambivalence … and then again so much use has been made of the word ambivalence that it no longer means absolutely anything - the amcapitaluity of love.

  Is a sexual act less a *sexual* act, an immature act, to be referred by us to the field of an incomplete subject, who has remained attached to the backwardness of some archaic stage, if it is committed - this sexual act - quite simply in *hatred*?

  The case does not seem to interest analytic theory. It is curious. I have nowhere seen this case raised.

  [*Here there are exclamations. People are saying: "Louder". Others are saying: "We can't hear". "Yes", others are saying. In reality, at the back of the hall one only gets bits and pieces*].

  Dr. Lacan: "You can't hear me? So this thing isn't working?" (*Dr. Lacan makes an allusion to the microphone).*

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One of the audience: "You have to shout!"
Dr. Lacan continues, raising his voice. *Bravos*!

To introduce the consideration of this dimension, I had, in a seminar that is already old - indeed at a time when the seminar was a seminar! - I had to make use of Claudel's well-known play, more exactly the trilogy, which begins with "*The hostage"*.

Are the loves of Turelure and of Sygne de Coûfontaine an immature union or not?

What is admirable in it, is what, I believe, I amply highlighted in terms of the merits and the incidences of this tragic trilogy, without anyone, I should also say, to my knowledge, among my listeners, having perceived its import. It is not surprising, because I was not careful to put the accent expressly on this precise question and that in general the listeners - from any echo that I had of it - easily avoid this point. There (6) are two kinds of them. Those who follow Monsieur Claudel into the religious resonance of the plane where he situates a tragedy which is undoubtedly one of the most radically *anti-Christian* (in inverted commas) which has even been forged - at least with respect to a Christianity with the proper tone and emotional tenderness. Those who follow it in this atmosphere think that Sygne de Coûfontaine, of course, remains intact in all of this. This is not what she, for her part, seems to articulate in the drama! But what matter! People hear through certain screens. It is a curious thing: the listeners who might seem not to have to be inconvenienced by this screen – namely, the *non-religioused* listeners in the first place – seem, in the same way, not to want to hear anything about what is very precisely involved.

In any case, since we do not have other references within our reach (I mean within hand's reach, here, from the top of a rostrum), I leave the question raised all the same of whether a sexual act consummated in hatred is any less a sexual act with all its implications, I would say.

Raising the question to this level would lead to many approaches, which would not be unfruitful, but that I cannot get into today. Let it be enough for me to note, in the reigning theory concerning the genital stage, another trait, which seems to agree badly with those that people use. Namely, the limited, moderate, temperate in any case, character, as one might say, that the affect (*affection*) of mourning takes on in it. The sign of genital maturity being that when this object is realised in the spouse, (since it is a matter, after all, of a formula which tends to adapt itself to morals that are as conformist as one might wish) it is supposed to be normal and a sign of the same maturity, that one should be able to mourn this object, within a time-span that we will call decent.

There is here something, first of all, which makes one think that it is supposed to be within the norm of what one can call an affective maturity, that it should be the other who goes first! That makes me think of the story, which was undoubtedly told by somebody psychoanalysed, that Freud talks about somewhere. The gentleman – a Viennese, of course, it is a Viennese story - who says to his wife: "If one of us dies, I'll go to Paris". It is curious -here I am only making remarks along this crude path of contrasting oppositions - that there should never be evoked in the theory either,

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anything about - as regards the mature subject - about the mourning that he for his part will leave behind him. This could, moreover, be a characteristic that one might very seriously envisage about the status of the subject! It is probable that this would interest the *clientèle* less! So that, on this point, the same blank.

There are other remarks that this little incident makes me abbreviate because of the (7) time we lost on it.

I would simply say the following. Is not the insistence which is equally put, the burgeoning of developments about what is called the "situation", or again the "analytic situation", is this not designed also to allow us to elude the question about what is concerned in the *analytic act*?

The analytic act, of course, people will say, is interpretation. But since interpretation, is undoubtedly, in a growing way, going in the direction of a decline - it is what seems most difficult in the theory to articulate anything about - we will do no more for the moment than take note (*prendre acte),* as we might put it, of this deficiency.

We will note that - in a fashion which does not fail to involve, I ought to say, some promise - we have all the same something present in the theory, which combines the function of the analyst (I am not saying "the analytic relation", at which I have very exactly pointed my finger, in order to say that it has, on this occasion, a screening function) - that the analytic function then, is brought closer to something which is of the register of act.

This is not unpromising, as we are going to see, for the following reason. The fact is that, if the analytic act needs indeed to be specified at this point - naturally, for us, the most lively and the most interesting one to determine (which is the point on the lower left of the quadrangle, which concerns the level where it is a matter of the unconscious and the symptom) - the analytic act has, I would say, in a fashion rather in conformity with the structure of repression, a sort of *inexact* position. A representative (if I can express myself in this way) of its deficient representation is given us under the name precisely of *acting-out*, which is what I have to introduce today.

All here who are analysts, have at least a vague notion that the axis, the centre of this term, is given by the following. That certain acts, having a structure on which all do not necessarily have to agree, but which one can all the same recognise, are likely to be produced, in analysis and in a certain relation of greater or lesser dependency, not with regard to the situation or the analytic relation, but to a precise moment of the intervention of the analyst, to something, then, which ought to have some relation with what I consider as not at all defined, namely, the *psychoanalytic act.*

Since we should not, in such a difficult field, advance like bulls in a china shop, we have to go at it gently. With acting-out we have something, something to which it seems possible to draw the attention of all those who have an experience of analysis, in a way which promises agreement. We know that there are things called *acting-out* and that they have a relation to the intervention of the analyst.

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I designated the page of my *Ecrits*. It is in my dialogue with Jean Hippolyte, about the (8) *Verneinung*, where I highlighted a very nice example of it taken from testimony that can be trusted, for it is a really innocent testimony (it is the least that can be said!), that of Ernst Kris, in the article he wrote under the title of *"Ego psychology and interpretation in psychoanalytic therapy", Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, volume 20, no. 1. I marked*, per longum et latum*, in this text of mine which is easy to find, (I repeat, I even gave the page, one of the last seminars. It is in my dialogue with Jean Hippolyte, the one which follows *"The function and field of speech and language",* otherwise called the *Rome discourse*). I highlighted there what is involved for Kris in the fact of having - following a methodological principle which is the one that ego psychology promotes - intervened in the field of what he calls "the surface" and that we, for our part, will call *the field of an appreciation of reality*.

This appreciation of reality plays a part in analytic interventions. In any case, in the terms of reference of the analyst it plays a considerable role! Not the least distortion of the theory is the one, for example, which says that it is possible to interpret what are called the manifestations of transference, by making the subject sense the way in which repetitions, which are supposed to constitute its essence, are inappropriate, displaced, inadequate, with respect to what had been written, printed in black and white: the field - not of the analytic situation - of the confinement in the analyst's office considered as constituting (this has been written) such a simple reality! The fact of saying: "You do not see the degree to which it is inappropriate that such and such a thing should be repeated here, in this field, where we meet three times a week" - as if the fact of meeting three times a week was such a simple reality - has something about it, undoubtedly, which makes one think very strongly about the definition that we have to give of what reality is in analysis.

In any case, it is no doubt in an analogous perspective that Mr. Kris puts himself, when, dealing with somebody who in his, Kris', eyes is pinpointed as accusing himself of plagiarism, having got his hands on a document which in his, Kris', eyes, proves manifestly that the subject is not really a plagiarist, thinks he ought, as a "surface" intervention, articulate well and truly that he, Kris, assures him that he is not a plagiarist; since the volume in which the subject believed he found the proof, Kris had sought and found and that there was nothing especially original in it from which the subject, his patient, might have profited.

I would ask you to consult my text, and moreover that of Kris, and again (if you can put your hands on it) the text of Melitta Schmideberg, who had the subject for a first period or tranche of analysis.

(9) You will see in it, the absolutely exorbitant thing that is involved in taking this path to approach a case where, quite obviously, what is essential is not that the subject is or is not really a plagiarist, but that his whole desire is to plagiarise. This for the simple reason that it seems to him that it is only possible to formulate something which has a value, if he has borrowed it from someone else. This is the essential mainspring. I can schematise so firmly, because this is the mainspring.

In any case, after this intervention, it is Kris himself who communicates to us that after a little moment of silence of a subject who, for Kris, acknowledges the hit, he

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simply states this tiny fact that for some time now, he goes, every time he leaves Kris, to have a nice little meal of fresh brains.

What is this? I do not have to say it, since, already, right at the beginning of my teaching I highlighted the fact that this is an *acting-out*. In what way? In what way - which could absolutely not be articulated at that time as I can do it now - in what way if not the following. That the oral **o**-object is here in a way made present, brought in on a plate - as one might say - by the patient, in relation, in connection with this intervention. So what?

So what? This of course is only of interest for us now - even though, of course, it has a permanent one for all analysts - this is only of interest now if it allows us to advance a little into the structure.

So then, we call that, *acting-out*. What are we going to make of this term?

First of all we will not dwell, I think, on the following, which is to make the mistake of using what is called "*franglais*". For me the use of "*franglais*", I must say - I think I have some taste for the French tongue - does not put me out in any way. I really do not see why we should not adorn our use of the tongue by eventually using words that do not form part of it. That does not affect me one way or the other! This, all the more, because I am not able in any way to translate it and that it is a term in English, of extraordinary revelance. I signal it in passing for the reason that in my eyes it is, in a way, as one might say, a confirmation of something. Namely, that if the authors - I am not going to give you the history of the authors who introduced it, because time is pressing on me - if the authors have used *acting-out,* the term *acting-out* in English, well then, they knew very well what they meant and I am going to prove it for you. Not in making use of what I believed I would find in an excellent, fundamental, philological dictionary (that I have, of course, at home, in thirteen volumes) the *New English Oxford Dictionary;* no trace of *act out.* But it was enough for me to open *Webster's* (which is also an admirable instrument, even though in a single volume; (10) and which is published in America) to find at *to act out* the following definition that I hope I can find … here we are: to (I apologise for my … for my English … for my articulation, my inadequate *"spelling*" in English) *to represent*, in parenthesis, *as a play, story and so on, in action* Therefore, to represent as a play on a stage, a story in action, *as opposed to reading*. *As to act out a scene that one has read*. Therefore, as: *act out* (I am not saying "*jouer"* since it is *act out*, is it not, it is not *to play*, huh!) a scene that one has read.

Thus, there are **two moments.** You have read something. You read Racine, you read him badly, of course, I mean that you read him aloud in a detestable fashion. Someone here wants to show you what it is. He acts it. This is what *to act out* is.

I suppose that the people who chose this term in the English literature, to designate *acting-out*, knew what they meant. In any case, it fits perfectly: I act out something, because this was read, translated, articulated, signified inadequately to me, or incorrectly.

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I would add that if you happen to have the adventure that I imaged earlier, namely, that someone wants to give you a better presence of Racine, it is not a very good starting point, it will probably be as bad as your way of reading. In any case this will start already from a certain instability. There is already something inexact, even deadened, in the *acting-out* introduced in such a sequence.

This is the remark around which I intend to approach what I am simply putting in question today.

To speak about the logic of the phantasy, it is indispensable to have at least some idea of where the psychoanalytic act is situated. This is what is going to force us to take a little step backwards.

One can in effect remark that it goes without saying - but it goes a lot better by saying it - that the psychoanalytic act is not a sexual act. It is even not at all possible to make them interfere. It is quite the contrary.

But to say the *contrary*, does not mean *contradictory*, since we are doing logic! And to make you sense it I have only to evoke the analytic couch. It is all the same there for some reason!

In the topological order, there is something I have noticed, but it is really a problem: that the myths make very little of it. And, nevertheless, the bed is something that has to do with the sexual act.

The bed, is not simply what Aristotle speaks to us about in order, I remind you, to designate in this connection the difference between *physis* and *techne*. And to presentify for us a wooden bed as if, from one minute to the next, it might start budding again! I searched carefully in Aristotle: there is no trace of the bed (11) considered as … I do not know, what I would call, in my language - and which is not too far from that of Aristotle - the locus of the Other! He, for his part, also had a certain sense of the *topos*, when what was in question was the order of nature. It is very curious! Having spoken, in book *eta* (if I remember correctly) of the *Metaphysics* (but I would not swear it), about this bed, so finely and so well, he never considers it as a *topos* of the sexual act.

One says "*un enfant du premier lit*" (a child of the first marriage). It is all the same also to be taken literally. Words are not said, are not connected up, at random.

In certain conditions, the fact of entering into the arena of the bed can, perhaps, qualify an act as having a certain relation with the sexual act (Cf. the *ruelles* of the *Précieuses*). So then … the analytic bed signifies something: an arena which is not without a certain relation to the sexual act, which is a contrary relation properly speaking, namely, that it cannot in any way become it. It nevertheless remains that it is a bed and that this introduces the sexual in the form of an empty field or an empty set, as has been said somewhere.

And then, if you refer to my little structural schema, since it is there that we have already placed the sexual Other, it is there also that the analytic act, in any case, has

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no business. There remains this (1) and this (2): the capital O and the **small o** and their relation … I mean the other capital O with regard to which, after all, I would like from time to time to be able to elide the heavy things, but in fact, for those who are deaf, who have not heard me yet, it is indeed a matter of this field of the Other, not in so far as it is reduplicated, but that it is reduplicated in such a way, that, precisely, there is within it a question of an Other *qua* field of the sexual act. And then, that this Other, here, which seems indeed not to be able to-do-without, and which is this field of the Other of alienation - this field of the Other which introduces us to the Other of the O barred, which is also the field of the Other in which the truth is presented for us,

but in this broken, fragmentary, bitty fashion which constitutes it properly speaking as intrusion into *knowledge*.

Before daring even to pose the questions about the following: **where is the psychoanalyst**, we have to give a reminder of what is in question, what the **small o**

segment designates here.

You have, I think, already sensed that it is quite clear that there is a relation between this **small o** which is here (2) and this capital O which is there (1), that they even have the same function with respect to two different things.
The **small o**, a closed form, a form given at the beginning of analytic experience, in which the subject presents himself, a production of his history and we will say even more, the refuse of this history, a form which is the one that I designate under the name of the little **o**-object has the same relation with the O of the sexual Other, as this O of truth - from the field of intrusion of this something which limps, which sins in

the subject, under the name of symptom - the same relation as this **small o** with what? With the whole.

Every cut made in this field - and this does not mean that the analyst who goes about it is to be identified to this field of the Other, as one would obviously, however little, be tempted to do (the crude analogies between the analyst and the father, for example,

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since, moreover, it might also be here that there functions this measure destined to determine all the relations of the whole, and specifically those of the **small o**, with the field of the sexual O. Let us not rush, I ask you, into such precipitous formulae, especially since they are false.) This does not prevent the closest relation existing between the field of the capital O of veracious intervention and the fashion in which the subject comes to presentify the **small o**, were it only (as you have just seen appearing in the example borrowed from Ernst Kris) by way of protest to an premature cut. There is only one problem: it is, precisely, that this is not what the intervention of Kris brought about. It had an effect in this field, in so far as in analysis - I said: in

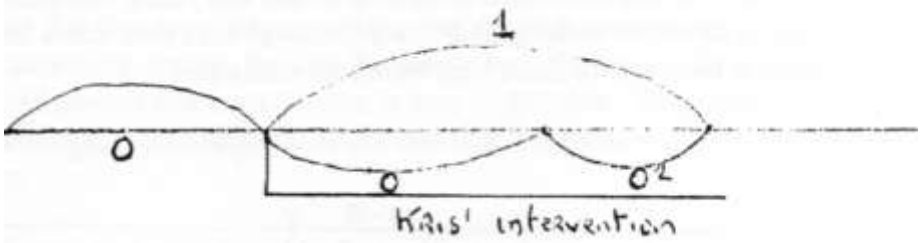
analysis - it is a desexualised field. I mean that in the subjective economy, it is on the de-sexualisation of the field proper to the sexual act that there depends the economy, the reverberations then, that the different sectors of the field are going to have on one another.

(13) That is why it is worthwhile (before I go any further, something which will only happen after the Easter vacation, because the next one of our sessions, which will be the last one before it, I will reserve for someone who asked to intervene about what I put forward at least since the beginning of the month of January, about this topology, the one which comprises the four terms of *alienation* as well as those of *repetition*), it is worthwhile, in these conditions, to delay on what is involved in this field, in so far as, in analysis, it is here that there is found to be reserved the place of the sexual act.

I return to the foundation of the satisfaction of the sexual act, in so far as it is also what gives the status of **sublimation**. I return to it, for not being able this year to push any further what I am introducing on this point.

What is involved in the satisfaction of the sexual act?

It springs from the following, that we know by analytic experience, that there is - not from one partner to the other, but from any one of the partners to the idea of the couple as One - this lack that we can define differently as lack of being, lack in the *jouissance* of the Other, this lack, this non-coincidence of the subject as product, in so far as he advances into the field of the sexual act, for he is nothing more than a product, at that moment. He has no need either to be or to think or to have his slide-rule. He enters this field and he believes himself to be equal to the role that he has to



hold in it. This, whether he is man or woman. In *both* cases the phallic lack - that is called *castration* in one case or *Penisneid* in the other - is here what symbolises the essential lack.

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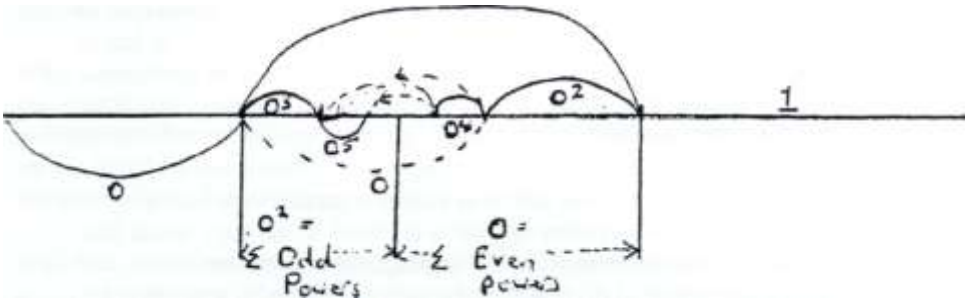
This is what is at stake. And why does the penis find itself symbolising it? Precisely because of being that which, in the form of *detumescence*, materialises this flaw, this *lack in jouissance,* materialises the lack which derives or, more exactly, which appears to derive, from the *law of pleasure*.

It is in effect in the measure that pleasure has a limit, that *too much pleasure* is an un-pleasure, that it stops here and that it appears to lack nothing. Well then, it is an error in calculation, exactly the same as we would make - and I can get this across to you as a "hey presto". I assure you that if I put forward a certain number of little equations concerning this *o*, this *1+o*, this *1-o* which is equal to o^2 and everything that follows, I will make it get across to you as nothing, that this *2+o* that you see here under the form of that *o* which is there and of these here which are each equal to *1*

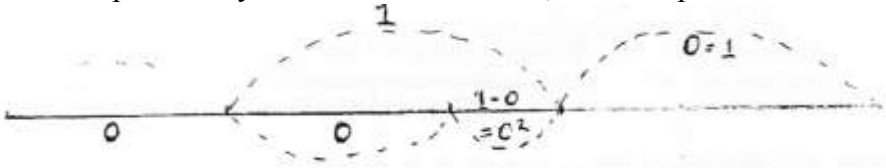
… I would transform it for you, by an error, of course, into a *2o+1*, without you (14) having even seen a trace of it. I do not have the time today. If you want me to do it the next time, when we will have a little debate together, it will be easy to do, and it is even very amusing! There is nothing more amusing than this very pretty function which is called the *golden number*.

The *1-o* which is here, and which it is easy to demonstrate is equal o^2, is what is satisfying in the sexual act. Namely, that in the sexual act one does not notice what is missing.



This is the whole difference to *sublimation.* Not that, in sublimation, one knows it all the time, but that one obtains it as such, at the end, if in fact there is an end to sublimation. This is what I am going to materialise for you by the use of what is involved in this relation described as the *mean and extreme ratio*.

In sublimation, what happens? Far from the lack which is here under the function of o^2, with respect to this **small o** which has been put here above the 1, in the way that you see above. The interesting thing about this relation, as I told you the last time, is the power to proceed by a successive reduction, which is produced as follows. You



reduce (*rabattre*) the o^2 here and you obtain, as regards what remains, namely, the *o* here, another subtraction of *o*, namely, $o-o^2$, which is found to be - it is easy to prove, just as o^2 was equal to *1-o* - equal to o^3, which is placed here.

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Here then is what you obtain, by taking always the *remainder* - and not of course what you have reproduced in terms of o^2; if you reduce o^3 in this way, you obtain here a sector which has the value of o^4; then you reduce it and you have here o^5. You have, therefore, all the even powers on one side and all the odd on the other.

It is easy to see that they are going, as I might say, towards meeting one another, until they totalise themselves in one, but that the point where the cut will be produced, between the odd powers and even powers, is easy to calculate. This point is very precisely a point that is determinable by the fact that it is equal to o^2 which was first produced here.

It is enough for you to manipulate these proportions a little on a blank page, for you to be able to verify it yourself.

What does this give as a structure of the sublimatory function?

(15) First of all, that contrary to the pure and simple sexual act, it is from the lack that it starts and it is with the help of this lack that it constructs what is its work which is always the reproduction of this lack.

Whatever it may be, however it may be taken - and the work of sublimation is not at all necessarily the work of art, it can be many other things again, including what I am in the process of doing here with you, which has nothing to do with the work of art - this reproduction of the lack, which goes as far as circumscribing the point at which its final cut is strictly equal to the starting lack o^2, is what is involved in any completed work of sublimation.

This of course, implies within the act, a *repetition*. It is only by reworking the lack in an infinitely repeated fashion, that you reach the limit that gives its measure to the entire work.

Naturally, in order for this to function, it is necessary that the measure should be correct at the start. Because, notice something: with the measure **small o**, that we have given as being an especially harmonic measure, you have the following formula: $1 + o + o^2$ … (etc… to infinity as regards the powers invoked) is equal to 1/1-*o*.

This is not only true for the *o* of the correct measure, that of the g*olden number*, in so far as it serves as an image for us, to the measure of the subject with respect to sex in an ideal case. This functions for any *x* whatsoever, of whatever value, on this simple condition that this *x* is included between 0 and 1. Namely, that it also involves, with respect to 1, some defect or some lack.

- But naturally, the manipulation of it will not be as easy as regards the repetitive function of sublimation. It is the question of what is involved, at the start, about this *o*, that is at stake. The *o* is not concerned, in the subject, only with the sexual function, because it is even prior to it. It is linked purely and simply to repetition in itself. The relation of *ao* to the S barred, in so far as the S attempts to be

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precisely situated with respect to sexual satisfaction, this is what is properly called phantasy and it is what, this year, we desire to deal with. But before seeing how we can accede to it, namely, in the analytic act, it was necessary for me to articulate for you in a fashion which, certainly, may appear distant from the facts - it is not (as you will see), however much as you may believe, in joking about the presence or not, in your pocket of the slide-rule - you will see, on the contrary, that it is by introducing these novelties into the structural order, that many of the confusions, of the collapses, of the muddles in theory, can be ventilated in a fashion which has its sanction in the order of efficacy.

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Seminar 15: Wednesday 15 March 1967.

I want to give all the time, usually reserved for our talk to Dr. Green, whom you see on my right. I am beginning, then, a little bit earlier to say very quickly the few words of introduction that I have thought of for this occasion, without moreover knowing in advance, even, that he had, as he has just told me, many things to tell us, namely, that very probably he will take the whole hour and a half. There you are.

Good. In virtue of the secret and always very sure texture of my super-ego, since today, in short, implicitly, I have given myself a holiday, I found a way to have to speak yesterday evening at 5 o'clock, at 5 o'clock in the evening, to the young psychiatric generation at Sainte-Anne. That means, good God, to the generation of analytic candidates.

What was I doing there? In truth, not a lot, given that those who had preceded me, and specifically my pupils and the ones best equipped to teach them what is destined to illuminate them about my teaching, Mme Aulagnier for example, Piera (what will we not found on this *pierra*?….), Serge Leclaire, even Charles Melman, to name them alphabetically, and even others … yes … .

Well then, apart from the distraction that pushes me sometimes to say "yes" when I am asked something, I had all the same some reasons to be there. Namely, that all of this was happening in the framework of a teaching which is that of my old friend, of my old comrade, Henri Ey. There you are … .

Our generation, since it is the same, Henri Ey's and mine, had then some role. This old comrade, in particular, is the one to whom, in my opinion, I would easily give pride of place, as regards a function which is nothing other than the one that I would call that of a *civiliser*.

(2) It is difficult for you to imagine what the students' residence was like in Sainte-Anne, when the two of us arrived there, with others also who had more or less the same vocation, but in fact, who broke down on the way!

The under-development, as I might say, as regards logical arrangements, since we are talking about logic here, were really, at this level, around 1925, huh! - it is not yesterday - something extraordinary. Well then, since that time, Henri Ey introduced his great machine: *organodynamism* … it is a doctrine. It is a false doctrine, but an incontestably civilising one. In this respect, it has fulfilled its role. One could say that there is not, in the field of psychiatric hospitals, a single mind that has not been touched by the questions that this doctrine puts in the forefront and these questions are questions of the greatest importance.

That the doctrine is false is almost secondary as compared to this effect. First of all, because it cannot be otherwise. It cannot be otherwise, because it is a medical

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doctrine. It is necessary, it is essential for the status of medicine, that it should be dominated by a doctrine. We have always seen that. The day when there is no longer any doctrine, there will no longer be any medicine either. On the other hand, it is no less necessary, as experience proves, that this doctrine should be wrong; otherwise it would not be able to lend its support to the medical status.

When the sciences - with which medicine now surrounds itself and helps itself, allows itself … opens itself to them on all sides - have joined together at the centre, well then, there will no longer be a medicine. There will perhaps still be psychoanalysis, which will then constitute medicine. But this will really be a pity, because it will be a definitive obstacle for psychoanalysis becoming a science. This is why I do not wish it.

Well then, last night, I was lead before this chosen audience, to speak about the operation of alienation. About which, I think, for the majority, given that people do not move so easily from Sainte-Anne to the Ecole Normale, *(It is a long way!),* I thought that, for them, I ought - for those who constitute in short the sector that is summoned to psychoanalytic responsibilities, in other words, for those who are going to become psychoanalysts - I thought I ought to pinpoint for them, because this was really the place, to pinpoint for them how there is posed, as one might say, what is called the inaugural choice which is, as you know, a false choice because it is a forced choice. What are the names suitable for this choice in this central sector of those who are going to be in charge in the future? So then, as a way, like that, of getting them to prick up their ears, I gave it suitable names, appropriate names. I am forced to allude to it, because it is rare for even restricted conversations like these to remain secret, especially in a students' residence, and something about these names may come to your ears in the form of some echoes, as something to gloat over. They are not (3) necessarily helpful names, obviously. But between the "I am not thinking" and "I am not", this has not advanced either, as regards a larger sector, as the fundamental constituents of this primary alienation. This is not very helpful either for the totality of this zone that I detach in the human field, in the shape of the field of the subject. Either he is not thinking, or he is not. Moreover, this changes if you put it in the third person. It is indeed a matter of the "I am not thinking" or "I am not". So then, this tempers a good deal the value of terms that I used last night, especially if you think that in virtue of the operation of alienation, one of these two terms always remains excluded. Then, I showed that the one which remains takes on a completely different value, that is in a way positive, in proposing itself - in imposing itself even - as a scalar term (*terme d'échelle)* which proposes itself, precisely, to the criticism of what I invoked at that moment, that I invoked by considering that the proper position of a candidate is *criticism*. It was very urgent. Because if the old situation was that of the underdevelopment of logic, the current situation in this generation, through a sort of paradox and by an effect which is precisely that of analysis, the incidence, *casus*, of the best optimism, may be in many of these cases *pessimus*, the worst. The others were underdeveloped in logic, but these have a tendency to be its monks. I mean that in the way that monks withdraw from the world, they withdraw also from logic. They wait until their analysis is finished to think about it.

I urged them in a lively fashion to abandon this point of view. I am not the only one, moreover. And it happens that there are others, that there is someone at my side, for

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example, who is one of those who, in this order, try to awaken, while there is still time, - I mean not at all necessarily at the end of the training analysis, but also perhaps in the course of it and perhaps this is better - the critical vigilance of those that he may have occasion to indoctrinate.

Nevertheless, I must say that it is as a psychoanalyst, as a representative of this field, the problematic one where for the moment there is still being played out the whole future of psychoanalysis, that Mr. Green is given the floor by me today. This by reason of the fact, good God, which is very important, that he proposed it himself. I mean that it is in no way because he is one of my students if not one of my followers that he is going to tell you today the reflections that the last terms that I have brought forward concerning the logic of the phantasy have inspired in him. I am now going to give him the floor, exactly for all the time that he wants, and reserve to myself the right to profit for your use and for mine, from what he has to say today.

Green, you have the floor.

(**presentation by Dr. A. Green**)

(32) I want to thank Green very much for the contribution that he brought to us today. I do not need, I think, for people who have their ears well tuned, to underline everything that, in his presentation, was able to satisfy me profoundly. If he contributed numerous questions, on different planes, about my agreement or my distance from Freud, or about the elucidation, the putting in question, of one or other point of what is here a "*work in progress",* of something which is constructed and is developed before you and for your purposes, this is something else that I ought to be grateful to him for. Since, thanks to the stage that his intervention constitutes, the level of these questions is posed which ought to allow us subsequently, not alone what I will undoubtedly do - while also designating the point that I want to connect up with - to reply to him, but even to pursue the construction, I would say, in taking the bearings of this level contributed by the really profound, substantial study that he produced before us today, with reference - I can say it and I think that he will take it as a homage - with reference to my discourse.

I can only add my compliments for the long suffering attitude that he adopted in the course of this little test, to which we were all subjected and I ought in a way to apologise to him since undoubtedly it was not he personally who was aimed at on this occasion.

I am giving you a rendezvous, then, for the next meeting on Wednesday … four plus seven, that gives us the 11th of April; there will be no seminar on the 4th of April as some might have expected.

In the audience: The 12th, the 12th!

Dr. Lacan: The 12th! The 12th of April.

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Seminar 16: Wednesday 12 April 1967

Non licet omnibus adire… since no one ever finishes it: …*Corintho*. I pronounced the first word in the Latin way, in order to suggest to you the translation that "it is not the bus for Corinth" (*laughter*). The adage, which was transmitted for us in Latin from a Greek formula, signifies more, I think, than the remark that at Corinth the prostitutes were dear! They were dear because they initiated you into something. Therefore, I would say, that it is not enough to pay the price. This is rather what the Greek formula meant.

It is not open to all, either, to (quotation marks)"become a psychoanalyst".

This is way it has been for centuries as regards being a geometer. *"Let there enter here"* …you know what comes next*: "only those who are geometers"*. This requirement was inscribed on the facade of the most celebrated philosophical school of antiquity and it indicates clearly what is involved: the introduction to a certain mode of thinking, that we can specify, by taking a further step, namely, that it is a matter of *categories* (in the plural).

Categories means (as you know), in Greek, the equivalent of the word "*prédicaments"* in Latin: what is most radically predicable to define a field.

This is something that carries with it a specified register of proof. This is why, following the Platonic requirement, there was heard manifested in a reiterated fashion the pretension of proving *more geometrico;* which bears witness to the degree to which the aforesaid style of proof represented an ideal.

You know - I would like you to know, I indicated to you as much as I can, namely, within the limits of the field that is reserved to me - that metamathematics has now, through the range of these categorical reconstructions that have historically punctuated the conquests of geometry, this metamathematics - I am saying - has radicalised still more the status of the *provable*.

As you know, geometry is distancing itself more and more from the intuitions that grounded it - spatial ones for example - in order to attach itself to being no longer (2) anything more than a specifiable, and moreover variously layered, form of proof. To the point that in the end, metamathematics is no longer occupied with anything other than the order of this layering, with the hope of arriving at the most radical requirements for proof.

Let us imagine a science that can only begin with what is - in the reconstructions, thus evoked, of a certain field - their terminal point. There is no point, for such a science, in stammering about an initial survey, in which there would be ordered a first familiarity with the measurable, or even the transmission of the most promising formulae, emerging singularly under the aspect of the secret of calculation. I mean

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there is no point in it, or it is at the very least deceptive and vain, to dwell on the Babylonian stage of geometry. This, because every standard of measurement, encountered at the start, carries from it the stain of a mirage that is impossible to dissipate.

This is what we highlighted first of all in our teaching, in denouncing - without naming it yet with its term of the imaginary, as we have pinpointed it - the deceptions of narcissism, when we established the function of the *mirror stage*. Encountering such an obstacle was the lot of many sciences, in effect. It is even here that there is situated the privilege of geometry.

Here of course, there is offered to us almost immediately, the purity of the notion of magnitude. That it is not what foolish people believe is not something that is going to detain us here. For the science that we are imagining, it is a completely different tablature. It is not simply that the standard of measurement is inoperant in it, but that the very concept of a unit does not fit in, as long as one has not realised the sort of equality in which its element is established, namely, the heterogeneity that is hidden in it.

Just remember the equation of value, in the first steps of *Capital* (… by Marx for those who might not know it … you never know there are perhaps people who are distracted!). Clearly in his writing on this equation, it is the proportion which results from the price of two pieces of merchandise. So much of one equals so much of the other: an inverse relation between the price and the quantity of the merchandise obtained. Now, what is at stake is not at all what is clear, but what it conceals, in terms of what the equation retains in itself, which is the *difference* in nature between values thus connected and the *necessity* of their difference.

It cannot, in effect, be the proportion, the degree of urgency, for example, of two habitual values, which grounds the price, nor of that - and for good reason! - of two exchange values. In the equation of values, one intervenes as a use value and the other as an exchange value. You know that we see a similar trap being reproduced, when it is the value of work that is at stake.

The important thing, is that it is proved, in this "critical" work (as it entitles itself) that *Capital* is, that if it fails to recognise these traps any proof remains sterile and goes astray.

The contribution of Marxism to science - I am certainly not the one who has done this (3) work - is to reveal what is latent as necessary at the start - at the very start I mean of political economy.

It is the same thing for psychoanalysis, and this sort of latent thing, is what I am calling - what I call, for my part - what I call **structure**.

Having given my reservations about every effort to drown this notion - by circumscribing, from starting points necessary in a certain field that cannot be defined otherwise then the critical field - to drown this in something that I identify badly under the vague name of "structuralism", you must not believe, of course, that this latency is

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lacking in geometry! But history proves that it is at its end-point now that one can be content to notice it, since it is not *by chance* that the prejudices about the notion of magnitude, which come from its handling in the real, have damaged its logical progress. Again it is only now that it can be known, by noting that the geometry that has been constructed no longer has any need of measurement, of the metrical nor even of the space that is described *real*.

It is not the same, as I told you, for other sciences and the question: why can some of them not start up without having developed these facts, I mean the facts that one can describe as final, since they belong to the structure. Perhaps we can now pose its question as relevant, if we can make it homologous to these facts.

In truth, we are ready for it, since we have noted as well as practised this structure, from encountering it in our psychoanalytic experience, and because our remarks - if we introduce them from a point of view, that is moreover trivial (I am pushing open doors here) about the order of sciences - our remarks are not without aiming at results such that it is indeed necessary, after all, for this order - I am saying: the order of sciences - to accommodate itself to them.

The structure I have taught, ever since I have been teaching - not since I have been writing, since I have been teaching - the structure is that the subject is a fact of language (*fait de langage),* is something to do with language *(fait* ***du*** *langage)*.

The subject thus designated is what the function of the word is generally attributed to.

It is distinguished for having introduced a style of being which is its own energy (I mean in the Aristotelian sense of the term *energy*). This style is the *act* in which he keeps quiet (*il se tait*). *Tacere* is not *silere*, and nevertheless they overlap at an obscure frontier.

To write, as has been done, that there is no point in searching in my *Ecrits* for any allusion to silence, is a stupidity. When I wrote the formula of the drive - on the top right of the graph - as *S barred diamond of capital D* (the demand): it is when the demand keeps quiet that the drive begins.

But if I did not speak at all about silence, it is because precisely *sileo* is not *taceo*. The act of keeping quiet does not liberate the subject from language. Even if the essence of the subject, culminates in this act - if he brandishes the shadow of his liberty - if this *keeping quiet* remains heavy with an enigma, which made heavy, for (4) such a long time, the presence of the animal world, we no longer have any trace of it except in phobia. But let us remember that for a long time the gods were put there.

The eternal silence of anything whatsoever, now only half scares us because of the appearance that science presents to common consciousness of positing itself as a knowledge which refuses to depend on language, without for all that this so-called consciousness being struck by this correlation: that it refuses at the same time to depend on the subject.

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What really happens, is not that science does without the subject, but that it clears it out of language, I mean expels it. The fact is that it creates its formulae from a language that is emptied of the subject. It starts from a prohibition on this subject-effect of language. This has only one result, which is to prove that the subject is only an effect of language but it is an empty effect. Henceforth, the void circumscribes it, namely, makes it appear as a pure structure of language. This is the sense of the discovery of the unconscious.

The unconscious is a moment where there speaks, at the place of the subject, pure language; a sentence about which there is always question of knowing who has said it.

The unconscious, its status, that one can well say to be scientific, since it originates because of science, the fact is that the subject … the fact is that it is the subject which, rejected from the symbolic, reappears in the real, making present there what is now done in the history of science - I mean accomplished - presentifying there its only support, language itself. This is the sense of the appearance, in science, of the new linguistics.

What does language itself speak about, when it is thus unmoored from the subject, but because of that, *representing* it in its structural radicalised void? This we know in general: it speaks. It speaks about sex, with a word - in that I am going to tackle the sexual act to question it - in that the sexual act represents silence, namely - you are going to see how necessary it is - with a tenacious, obstinate word to force this silence and for good reasons.

I will take the time all the same … I will take the time to dissipate here in a fashion that I do not believe is pointless, the first prejudice to present itself. It is not new, of course! But to illuminate it in a novel way is always important.

The first prejudice to present itself in the psychologising context - the difference is constituted there with reference to the statement, the only true one, that we have given about the unconscious - could be formulated from the fall, in our statement, of an index essential to the structure. Does this unconscious speak in the name of sex, as I said?

Here, frivolous minds - and God knows they abound - swallow this "about" (*du).* The unconscious speaks sex: it bells, it rails, it coos, it mews. It belongs to the order of all those vocal noises of the word. It is a "sexual aspiration". Such is the sense, in effect, that is pre-supposed, in the best cases, by the use that is made of the term life-instinct in psychoanalytic rumination.

Every erroneous use of discourse about the subject has the effect of reducing this discourse itself to the level of what it phantasies in place of the subject. This psychoanalytic discourse of which I speak is itself a rattle. It rattles by summoning up the figure of an Eros that is supposed to be a unitive power and again having a universal impact. To take as the same essence what holds together the totality of the cells of an organism and - as having same essence - the force that is supposed to push the individual thus composed to copulate with another, belongs properly to the domain of delusion, at a time when meiosis, I think, is sufficiently distinguished from

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mitosis, at least under a microscope! … I mean as regards everything that is presupposed by the anatomical phases of the metabolism that they represent.

The idea of *Eros* as a soul with goals contrary to those of *Thanatos* and working through sex, is a discourse of a *"midinette au printemps*"; as it was put by the late lamented Julien Benda, someone who has been quite forgotten in our day but after all who represented, for a while, this sort of swash-buckling style which results from an intelligencia that has become useless.

If something was required to put those who are going astray back on the axis of the unconscious *structured like a language*, would not the facts furnished by these objects, that were never yet appreciated in the way that we were able to do it, be sufficient: namely, the phallus, the different partial objects?

We will return to what results from their inmixing into our thinking, on the turn taken by the fumes of one or other vague contemporary philosophy, more or less qualified as existentialism. For us, these objects testify that the unconscious *does not speak sexuality*, any more than it sings it, but that by producing these objects it finds itself - precisely what I said - *speaking about it*. Since it is by being in a relation of metaphor and metonymy to sexuality that these objects are established.

However strong, however simple these truths may be, they must generate a very great aversion. Since it is by avoiding their remaining at the centre, that they can no longer be anything more than the pivot of any articulation of the subject, that there is engendered this sort of droll freedom to which I alluded more than once in these last sentences and which characterises lack of seriousness.

What can be *said* about what the unconscious says about the sexual act?

I might say, if I wanted to imitate here Barbey d'Aurevilly*:* "What is" - one day he imagined saying one of these demoniacal priests that he excelled in simulating - "what is the secret of the church?" The secret of the church, as you know, which is well (6) designed to terrify old women in the provinces, "is that there is no purgatory".

So then I will amuse myself by telling you what will perhaps have a certain effect on you. And, after all, it is not for nothing that I am punctuating what I am going to say about this stage. The secret of psychoanalysis, the great secret of psychoanalysis, is that **there is no sexual act.**

This could be sustained and illustrated by reminding you of what I called *act,* namely, this reduplication of a motor effect as simple as "I am walking". This ensures simply that by just *being said*, with a certain accent, it is repeated, and, from this reduplication, takes on the signifying function that makes it able to be inserted into a certain chain in order *to inscribe* the subject in it.

Is there, in the sexual act, this something in which - *in the same form* - the subject might inscribe itself as sexed, establishing in the same act its union to the subject of the sex that is described as opposite?

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It is quite clear that everything in analytic experience speaks against this. There is nothing born of this act, which does not testify that there can only be established a discourse in which this third *counts*, as I earlier sufficiently announced by the presence of the phallus and the partial objects, and whose function must now be articulated, in such a way that it demonstrates to us what role this function plays in this act. A function that is always sliding, a function of substitution, which is equivalent almost to a sort of juggling and which, never allows us in any case to posit in the act - I mean in the sexual act - the man and the woman opposed in some eternal essence.

And nevertheless … I would efface what I said about the "great secret" as being that there is no sexual act, precisely by the fact, that it is not a great secret! That it is obvious, that the unconscious ceaselessly cries it at the top of its voice and that this indeed is why psychoanalysts say: "Let us close its mouth when it says that, because if we repeat it along with it, people will no longer seek us out!" What is the point if there is no sexual act?

So then, the accent is put on the fact that there is sexuality (*de la sexualité*).

In effect, it is indeed because there is sexuality that there is no sexual act! But the unconscious, perhaps, means that one lacks it! In any case, it really seems to be so!

Only for this to have its impact, it must be accentuated from the first that the unconscious *says it*.

You remember the anecdote about the parish priest who preaches, huh? He preached against sin. What did he say? He was against it … (*laughter*). Well then, the unconscious which, for its part, also preaches in its way about the subject of the sexual act, well then, it is *not for it*!

It is from there, first of all, that one must begin to conceive of what is involved when it is a question of the unconscious. The difference between the unconscious and the (7) parish priest deserves all the same to be picked out at this level. The fact is that the parish priest says that sin is sin, instead of, perhaps, the unconscious which for its part makes a sin of sexuality. There is a little difference.

On this point, the question is going to be of knowing how the following is proposed to us: that the subject has to measure himself against the difficulty of being a sexed subject.

This is why I introduced into my last logistical remarks, this reference whose aim I think I sufficiently indicated. To establish the status of the little **o**-object, the one called the *golden number*, in so far as it gives properly in an easily handled form its status to what is in question, namely, the incommensurable.

To introduce it, we start from the idea, that in the sexual act there is no question at all that this small **o**, in which we indicate this something which is in a way the *substance* of the subject … (if you understand this substance, in the sense that Aristotle designated it in the *ousia, n*amely - which is forgotten - the fact is that what specifies

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it is precisely the following: that it cannot in any way be attributed to any subject, the subject being understood as *upokeimenon*). This little **o**-object, in so far as it serves us as a module to question the one who is supported by it, does not have to search for its complement in the dyad - what it lacks in order to be two - which would be very desirable. The fact is that the solution to this relation, thanks to which the two can be established, depends entirely on what is going to happen in the reference of the **small o**, the golden number, to the One in so far as it generates this lack, which is inscribed here from a simple effect of continuation (*report)* and, at the same time, of difference, under a form of *one minus o* which, by calculation (very simple calculation that I already wrote on this board so that I can ask you to find it yourselves) is formulated by $\mathbf{o}^2$.

I am only recalling it here, in order to put - at the start of what I want to introduce, about what it is essential to articulate, for you, as I said earlier - at the beginning, at the start of our science, namely, what necessarily, although paradoxically, introduces us to this sexual knot, in which there flees and makes off from us the act which, for the moment, constitutes our question. The link of this **small o**, in so far as here you see it represents, *darstellt,* supports and makes present first of all the subject himself. That this is the *same* as is going to appear in the exchange, whose formula we are now going to show as being able to make use of this object that we touch in the dialectic of the treatment, under the name of partial object. The relation then of these two aspects of the function **small o**, with this index, this form of object, which is at the principle of castration.

I will not close this cycle today. That is why I want to introduce it by two formulae responding to a sort of problem that we pose *a priori.* What value should be given to this little **o**-object - if it is indeed there as having to represent, in the sexual dyad, the (8) difference - for it to produce two results between which there is suspended our question today?

A question that can only be tackled along the path that I am leading you, in so far as it is the logical path. I mean the path of logic. The *dyad* and its uncertainties is what logic itself develops from the beginning, if one knows how to follow its trace.

I cannot retrace for you here the history of logic, but let it be enough for me to evoke here, at the dawn of the Aristotelian *Organon*, which is something quite different to simple formalism, if you know how to plumb it. At the first point of the logic of the predicate, there is established the opposition between *contraries* and *contradictories*. We have made, as you know, a good deal of progress since, but this is not a reason for not interesting ourselves in what constitutes the importance and the status of their entry into history.

It is moreover not … (I am saying it also in parenthesis, for those who sometimes open books on logic) to prevent us - when we take up line by line what Aristotle stated at the same time, not even in the margin - introducing what, for example, Lukasiewicz has since completed. I am saying this, because in the excellent book of the two Kneale's, moreover, I was struck by a protestation, like that, which arose in turning a page. Because to say what Aristotle said, Mr. Lukasiewicz, for example, is lead to

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distinguish what belongs to the principle of contradiction from the identity principle, and from the principle of bivalence! There you are.

The identity principle, is that A is A. You know that it is not clear that A should be A. Luckily, Aristotle does not say it, but that it should be pointed out is all the same interesting!

Secondly, that a thing can be at once, *at the same time*, A and not A, is again something quite different!

As regards the principle of bivalence, namely, that a thing ought to be either true or false, this is a third thing again!

I find that to point it out rather illuminates Aristotle. And to point out that Aristotle surely never thought of all these niceties, has nothing to do with the question! For it is precisely what allows its importance to be given to what I am going to start again from now, namely, this crude business of contraries. First of all, in so far as, for us - I mean as regards what is not in Aristotle, but which is already indicated in my previous teaching - we will designate it by the **not without** (*pas sans)*. (This will be of use of us later. Do not worry! Allow me to lead you a little bit.)

Contraries and this is what gives rise to the logical question of whether, yes or no, the particular proposition implies existence. This has always shocked people enormously. In Aristotle it incontestably implies it. It is even on this that his logic depends. It is curious that the universal proposition does not imply it!

I can say, "every centaur has six limbs". It is absolutely true! Except there are no (9) centaurs. It is a universal proposition. But if I say, (in Aristotle!): "there are centaurs who have lost one", this implies that centaurs exist, for Aristotle. I am trying to reconstruct a logic that is a little less lame as regards centaurs! But this does not interest us for the moment.

Simply there is *no* male *without* a female. This is of the order of the real. This has nothing to do with logic. At least in our day.

And then, there is the *contradictory*, which means the following: if something is *male*, then it is not *non-male*, nothing else.

It is a matter of finding our way in these two distinct formulae. The second is of the symbolic order; it is a symbolic *convention*, which has a name, precisely*, the excluded third.*

This ought to make us sense sufficiently that it is not from this angle that we are going to be able to arrange things since, at the start, we have sufficiently accentuated the function of a difference, as being essential to the status of the sexual dyad. If it can be grounded - I mean subjectively - we will need this third.

Let us try, let us not try … let us not make an ugly grimace by claiming to attempt what we have already introduced, namely, the logical status of the contrary. Of the

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contrary in so far as here *the one and the other* are opposed to *the one or the other* there.

This *one and the other*, is the intersection - I mean logical intersection - male and female. If we want to inscribe in a proper way this *one and the other* in the form of the intersection of Boole's algebra, this means this little lune of spatial overlapping. And it fills me with consternation to have once again to present this figure to you because, of course, you see clearly that it does not satisfy you to any degree! What you would like, is that one should be male and the other female, and that from time to time they step on one another's toes! This is not what is in question. It is a matter of logical multiplication.

The importance of recalling this Boolean figure to you, is to remind you, as opposed to here, which is the very important locus of the game of heads or tails (in which I tried to form those who followed me the first years, at least for a trimester, as a way of making them understand what a signifier was). In opposition to the game of heads or tails, which is inscribed quite simply in a succession of *pluses* or *minuses*, the relation of *the one and the other* is inscribed in the form of a multiplication, I mean a logical multiplication, a Boolean multiplication.

What value - since this is what is at stake - can we suppose for the element of difference, in order that the result should be, quite clearly, the dyad? But, of course, to know it is really within everyone's reach. You have all at least preserved this tincture of the mathematics that you were so stupidly taught, provided you are over thirty. If (10) you are twenty, you have perhaps had the chance to hearing it spoken about in a slightly different fashion. What matter! You are all on the same footing, as regards the formula (a + b) multiplied by (a - b). Here is the difference: there is one of them which has it in addition, the other which has it less. If you multiply them that gives you $a^2 - b^2$. What is necessary for $a^2 - b^2$ to be - quite clearly - equal to two, to the dyad? It is very easy: it is enough to make what is written here, b, equal to the *root of minus 1*. Namely, to a numerical function that is described as an *imaginary number* and which now intervenes in all calculations, in the most common fashion, to ground what is called - an extension of real numbers - *complex numbers*.

If it is a matter of specifying *a* in two opposite fashions, with plus something and with minus something, and for the result to be 2, it is enough to make it equal to *i*. This is how one usually writes, in an abbreviated fashion, and moreover one much more convenient, this function of the square root of minus one which is described as imaginary.

You must not believe that what I am explaining here is of any use to us! I am introducing it here, on the brink of what I have to explain to you, because it will be of use of us subsequently and because it illuminates a *rapprochement.* What is presented to us as the other possibility, namely, if we ask ourselves in advance what must be obtained - which also has its interest for us! For it is very interesting also to know why, why, in the unconscious, as regards the sexual act, well then, precisely, what circumscribes, what marks the difference in the first rank of what the subject itself is. Well then! Not alone are we forced to say that this remains at the end, but it is required, for it to be a sexual act that it remain at the end! In other words, that (a + b)

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multiplied by (a - b) equals … a! In order for this to be equal to **o** - (when **o**, of course, is naturally not this O here that I was speaking about). [**The convention adopted by the translator requires this switch from a to o]**

The O, here, we are going to make (like earlier, when it was a question of obtaining 2) we are going to make equal to 1. It is to be clearly understood that it is (1 + i) (1 - i) which is equal to 2.

(1 + o) (1 - o) gives **o**, on condition that **o** is equal to this golden number - it is worthwhile repeating it - that I am using to introduce, for you, the function of the little **o**-object. Verify this: when small **o** is equal to the golden number the product of (1 + o) (1 - o) is equal to **o**. [**A note in the margin of one French manuscript says: "Jacques Lacan's golden number is thus the inverse of the golden number of the mathematicians]**

This is where I am going to suspend for a time, the time of the lecture that I have to finish, what I wanted to propose to you in terms of a logical *grid*.

(11) Let us now come to consider what is involved as regards the sexual act.

What is going to be of use to us in dealing with it, is what justifies the fact that earlier I introduced Marx's formula.

Marx tells us, somewhere in the *Philosophical manifestos,* that the object of man is nothing other than his very essence taken as object; that the object also to which a subject refers, by essence and necessarily, is nothing other than the proper essence of this non-objectified subject.

People, some of whom are among those who are listening to me, have clearly shown, the aspect that I would describe as primary, of this Marxist approximation. It would be curious if we were to be very far ahead of this formulation.

This object that is at stake, this proper essence of the subject, but objectified - are we not the ones who can give it its veritable substance?

Let us start from the fact - on which we have based ourselves for a long time - that there is a relation between what psychoanalysis states on the subject of the fundamental law of sex: the prohibition of incest - in so far as for us it is another reflection, already very sufficient, of the presence of the *third* element in every sexual act, in so far as it requires the presence and foundation of the subject.

There is no sexual act - this is the entry of psychoanalysis into the world - which does not carry the trace of what is called incorrectly, the traumatic scene, in other words, of a fundamental referential relation to the parental couple.

You know how things are presented at the other end. Levi-Strauss: *The elementary structures of kinship,* the order of exchange on which there is established the order of

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kinship. It is the woman who pays the price, it is women who are exchanged. Whatever they maybe: patriarchal, matriarchal, is does not matter! What the logic of inscription imposes on the ethnologist is to see how the women travel between the lines of descendance.

It seems that between one and the other there is some gap. Well then, this is what we are going to try today to indicate: how this gap, for us, is articulated. In other words, how, in our field, it is filled.

We noted earlier that the origin of economic unmasking, demystification, is to be seen in the conjunction of two values of a different nature. This indeed is what we have to deal with. And, for the psychoanalyst, the whole question is this: seeing that what creates a problem about the sexual act is not *social*, since it is here that the principle of the social is established, namely, in the law of an exchange.

Exchange of women or not, this does not concern us yet. For if we perceive that the problem is of the order of value, I would say that, already, everything begins to be sufficiently illuminated, by giving it its name. At the source of what is reduplicated, (12) of what duplicates, in its structure, value at the level of the unconscious, there is something that takes the place of exchange-value, in so far as, from its false identification to use-value, there results the foundation of the object of merchandise. And one can even say more: capitalism is necessary for this choice, which far anticipates it, to be revealed.

In the same way the status of the subject, as science forges it, is necessary - this subject reduced to its function of interval - for us to perceive that what is at stake, in terms of the equalising of two different values, is suspended here between *use-value* - and why not?, we will see this later! - and *jouissance-value.*

I underline: *jouissance-value* plays here the role of *exchange-value*.

You ought, right away, to sense clearly that this function of *jouissance*-value is something that concerns the **very heart** of analytic teaching. And that, perhaps, this is what is going to allow us to formulate in a completely different fashion what is involved in castration. For, after all, if something is accentuated, in the very notion, however confused it may still be, in the theory of instinctual maturation (*maturation pulsionnelle)*, it is all the same the fact that there is no sexual act - I mean in the sense that I have just articulated its necessity - which does not involve (a strange thing!) castration.

What do we call castration?

It is not, all the same, like in the formulae so nicely put forward by little Hans that "the little tap is unscrewed"! For it is necessary for it to remain in its place. What is in question, is what is displayed everywhere, moreover, in analytic theory, is that it cannot take its *jouissance* in itself.

I am at the end of my lecture today. So that here, you can be sure, I am abbreviating. I will come back to it the next time. But it is simply to accentuate the following, from

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which I would like to start; namely, what this equation of two values, described as *use* and *exchange*, contains as essential for our material.

Imagine man reduced to what has to be described - he has never yet been reduced institutionally - to the function that the stallion has among domestic animals. In other words, let us use English, where as you know, to say *une chèvre,* you say *a she-goat,* which means an *elle-bouc.* Well then, let us call man, appropriately, a *he-man*. It is quite conceivable, instrumentally. In fact, if there is something that gives a clear idea of use-value, it is what one does when one brings along a bull to cover a certain number of times. And it is quite curious that no one should have imagined inscribing the elementary structures of kinship in this circulation of the all-powerful phallus!

It is a curious thing. It is we who discover that it is the woman who represents this phallic value!

(13) If *jouissance* - I mean penile *jouissance* - carries the mark described as that of castration, it seems that it is in order that, in a way that we will call with Bentham, "fictional", the woman should become what one enjoys (*jouit)*.

A singular pretension! Which opens up to us all the ambiguities proper to the word, *jouissance*, in so far as in terms of the juridical development that it involves since then, it implies possession.

In other words, here is something turned inside out. It is no longer the sexual organ of our bull – use-value - which will serve for this sort of circulation in which there is established the sexual order. It is the woman, in so far as she herself has become on this occasion, the locus of transference of this value subtracted at the level of use-value, in the form of *object of jouissance*.

It is very curious! It is very curious, because this leads us: if I introduced earlier for you, the *he-man* - here I am, and moreover in a way very much in conformity with the genius of the English tongue, which calls *la femme* "woman", and God knows that literature has gloated over this "wo", which indicates nothing good (*laughter*) - I would call her *she-man*, or again, in French, by this word - which is going to lend itself, once I introduce it, to some gloating and, I suppose an enormous amount of misunderstanding: *l* – apostrophe - *homme-elle.*

I am introducing here the *homme-elle*! (*laughter*). I present her to you, I hold her by the little finger. She will be of great service to us.

The whole of analytic literature is there to bear witness to the fact that everything that has been articulated about the place of the woman in the sexual act is only in the measure that the woman plays the function of the *homme-elle*.

Let the women who are here not wince, for in truth, it is precisely to reserve, where it is, the place of this Woman (capital W), about whom we have been speaking from the beginning, that I am making this remark.

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Perhaps everything that is indicated to us about feminine sexuality - in which moreover, in conformity with eternal experience, a role is played that is eminently one of *masquerade*, namely, the way in which she uses an equivalent of the phallic object, which has always made her the wearer of jewels - "indiscreet jewels", Diderot says somewhere. We are going to be able, perhaps, to finally know how to make them speak.

It is very curious that, from the subtraction somewhere of a *jouissance* which is only chosen for its character of easy handling - if I can designate penile *jouissance* in this way- we should see there being introduced here, with what Marx and ourselves call the *fetish*, namely, this extracted, fixed, use-value, a hole somewhere - the only point of insertion necessary for any sexual ideology.

This subtraction of *jouissance* somewhere, is the pivot.

But you must not believe that the woman - there where she is the *alienation* of analytic theory and that of Freud himself who is the great enough father of this theory (14) to have noticed this alienation in the question that he repeated: "What does the woman want?" - you must not believe that the woman, on this subject, is any worse off! I mean that she disposes of **her** own *jouissance* in a way that totally escapes this ideological grasp.

Even though she is an *homme-elle,* she is never lacking in resources and it is because of this that even feminist demands do not involve anything particularly original. It is still the same masquerade that continues, simply with a contemporary flavour. Where she remains impregnable, impregnable as a woman, is outside the system described as the sexual act.

It is starting from there that we have to gauge the difference between what is involved, concerning the act, as regards the respective status of the original sexes - man and woman - in what the sexual act establishes, in so far as a subject can be grounded on it. They are brought to the height of their disunion through the point to which I have led you today. Because if I spoke to you about the *homme-elle* … the *homme-il*, for his part has disappeared! Ha! There are no more of them! Since they are precisely, as such, withdrawn from use-value.

Naturally this does not prevent them circulating *really*. Man, as a penile value, circulates very well. But it is clandestine! Whatever may be the certainly essential value that this plays in social climbing. Through the left hand, generally speaking.

I would say further. We ought not to omit this. If the *homme-il* is not recognised in the status of the sexual act in the sense that it is foundational in society, there exists "a society for the protection" of *homme-il*. This is even what is called masculine homosexuality. It is on this point that, in a way, is marginal and humorously pinpointed, that I will stop today, simply because time has set a term to what I had prepared for you today.

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Seminar 17: Wednesday 19 April 1967

I brought you a certain number of statements the last time. I formulated ones such as, for example, "*there is no sexual act*". I believe that the news of this has gone all over town (*laughter*). But anyway, I did not give it as an absolute truth. I said that this is what was properly speaking articulated in the discourse of the unconscious.

That said, I framed this formula and some others into a sort of reminder, that I must say was rather dense, of what gives it its sense and also its premises. This lecture was a sort of stage marked by assembly points, which will perhaps serve as a written introduction to something, then, that I am pursuing, that I want to pursue today, I would say in a form that is perhaps more accessible, in any case conceived of as an easier path, a first way of disentangling the articulations into which I am going to advance, which are still those that I presentified to you on the last two or three of my lectures. Namely, this triple articulation between the **small o**, one value *One* (which is only there to give its sense to the value **small o**, given that this is a number, properly speaking the golden number) and a second value *One*.

Naturally, I could, once again, re-articulate them in a fashion that I could describe as apodictic, show their necessity. I will proceed differently, thinking rather to begin by exemplifying the use that I am going to make of them, even if it entails taking things up again subsequently in the necessity way, which I am therefore going to put to one side. I am going to do it in a mode that one could call eristic.

This, then, thinking of those who do not know what is at stake. What is at stake is psychoanalysis. It is not necessary to know what is involved in psychoanalysis to draw profit from my discourse. But you must still have spent a certain time dealing with this discourse. I must suppose that this is not the case for everyone, especially among those who are not psychoanalysts.

If I am concerned in this way about those who are to be introduced to what I called my (2) discourse, it is, of course, not without thinking about psychoanalysts. But it is also the fact that up to a certain point, it is necessary for me to address myself to those whom I have first of all defined, and whom I found myself one day pinpointing as being "the number". It is necessary for me to address myself to them in order that my discourse should return, in a way, from a point of reflection to the ears of psychoanalysts.

It is in effect striking - and *internal* to what is at stake - that the psychoanalyst does not enter all that easily into this discourse, precisely in the measure that this discourse involves his practice. And that it is demonstrable - the continuation even of my discourse, of my discourse today, will put the point on why it is conceivable - that the psychoanalyst finds in his very status, I mean in what establishes him as psychoanalyst, this something which creates a resistance very specially to the point that I introduced, inaugurated, in my last discourse.

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To say the word: the introduction of *jouissance*-value poses a question, at the very root of a discourse, of any discourse, which can be entitled a truth-discourse. At least in as much - understand me - as this discourse may enter into competition with the discourse of the unconscious, if this discourse of the unconscious is indeed, as I told you the last time, really articulated by this *jouissance*-value.

It is very curious to see how the psychoanalyst always has to retouch a little this competitive discourse. It is precisely where its eventual statement is true, that he always finds something to correct in it. And it is enough to have a little experience to know that this contestation is always strictly correlative - when one can measure it - to this sort of gluttony which is linked in a way to the psychoanalytic institution, that constituted by the idea of having oneself recognised on the plane of knowledge.

Jouissance-value, I said, is at the source of the economy of the unconscious.

The unconscious, I said again - underlining the article *du* - speaks of sex (*du sexe)*. Not speaks sex (*parle sexe)* but speaks of sex.

What the unconscious designates for us are the paths of a knowledge. To follow them, one must not want to know before having taken them.

The unconscious speaks of sex. Can one say that it *says* sex? In other words, does it say the truth? To say that it *speaks* it is something which leaves in suspense what it *says*. One can speak in order to say nothing, as often happens. This is not the case with the unconscious.

One can say things without speaking. This is not the case for the unconscious either. It is even the relief - unnoticed of course - like many other features, which depend on what I articulated at this starting point that the unconscious speaks (ç*a parle).* If one had a little bit of an ear, one could deduce from it that it is necessary to speak in order (3) to say something! I have never seen anyone yet who brought this out, even though in my Rome discourse it is said in ten different ways. One of these was recently presented to me in the course of conversations with very pleasant young people, very taken by a part at least of my discourse, in connection with the famous formula, which has had its good fortune all the more, of course, because it is a formula - distrust always wanting to gather everything into a formula - when I said that the analysand speaks to you the analyst, then speaks about himself, and that when he speaks to you about himself to you.

The formulae which, like this one, have had the good luck to be picked up, ought to be put back in their context in order to avoid generating confusion.

Does the unconscious, then, *say* the truth about sex? I did not say that, though Freud, you should remember, already raised the question. This of course deserves to be specified. It was in connection with a dream, a dream of one of his female patients, obviously constructed - this dream - to pull his leg, I mean Freud's; to make him believe the moon is made of blue cheese. The generation of disciples at that time was sufficiently fresh for it to have been necessary for him to explain this as a scandal. In

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truth it is easy to get out of it. The dream is the royal road to the unconscious! But it is not, in itself, the unconscious.

To pose the question at the level of the unconscious is a different kettle of fish *(paire de manches*) that I already turned inside out- I mean the aforesaid sleeves - which I always do very quickly leaving no place for ambiguity, when, in my text called *The Freudian Thing,* written in 1956 for Freud's centenary - I made emerge this entity which says: "Me, the truth, I speak".

The truth speaks. Since it is the truth, it has no need to say the truth.

We hear the truth. And what it is saying can only be understood by someone who knows how to articulate what it is saying. What it is saying where? In the symptom, namely, in something that is going wrong. This is the relation of the unconscious, in so far as it speaks, to the truth.

It nevertheless remains that there is a question that I opened up, last year, at my first lecture which appeared - when I say last year, I do not mean last October/November, the October/November before - the one that was published in the *Cahiers pour la psychanalyse,* under the title of *Truth and science*. The question remains open in it as to why - the statement by Lenin that introduces this journal - why "the theory will conquer because it is true"?

What I said earlier about the psychoanalyst, for example, does not immediately give to this statement a very convincing sanction.

Marx himself on this matter, as on so many others, let slip something that does not fail to be an enigma. Like many others before him, in effect, beginning with Descartes, he proceeded, as regards the truth, according to a singular strategy that he states somewhere in these pungent words: "The advantage of my dialectic is that I say things (4) little by little and, since they believe that I am finished, in rushing in to refute me, they only display their stupidity". It may appear curious that someone from whom there proceeds this idea that "the theory will conquer because it is true", should express himself in that way.

Politics of the truth and, in a word, its complement, in the idea that, in short, only what I called earlier "the number" – namely, what is reduced to being only number, namely, what is called in the Marxist context "class consciousness", in so far as it is the class of number - cannot be mistaken! A curious principle, nevertheless, on which all those who have the merit of having pursued Marxist truth in faith have never varied.

Why should class consciousness be so sure in its orientation, I mean, when it even knows nothing or knows very little about the theory, when class consciousness functions, to listen to the theoreticians, even at the uneducated level, if it is reduced properly to those who belong to the level defined on this occasion by the term of " the class excluded from capitalist profits"?

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Perhaps the question about the force of the truth is to be sought for in this field into which we are introduced, the metaphorical one that we can - I repeat in a metaphor - call the *truth-market*, if, like the last time, you can glimpse that the main-spring of the market is *jouissance*-value.

Something is in effect exchanged, which is not the truth in itself. In other words, the link between the one *who speaks* to the truth is not the same depending on the point at which he sustains his *jouissance*.

This indeed is the whole difficulty of the position of the psychoanalyst. What does he do? What does he enjoy (*de quoi jouit-il)* at the place he occupies? This is the horizon of the question that I still have only introduced, marking it at its splitting-point, with the term of *desire of the psychoanalyst*.

The truth, then, in this exchange which is transmitted by a word, whose horizon is given to us by analytic experience, is not in itself the object of exchange. As can be seen in practice, the psychoanalysts who are here bear witness to it by their practice. Naturally they are not here for nothing, they are here for the bit of truth that may fall from this table, even indeed what they can make of it by faking a little.

Such is the necessity they are obliged to by the fact of a status that is fettered as regards the *jouissance*-value attached to their position as psychoanalysts. I had, I can say, confirmation. I will undoubtedly have it again. I am going to take an example.

(5) Someone who is not a psychoanalyst, M Deleuze to name him, presents a book by Sacher Masoch: *Présentation de Sacher Masoch.* He writes on masochism undoubtedly the best text that has ever been written! I mean the best text, compared to everything that has been written on the theme in psychoanalysis. Naturally he has read these texts. He is not inventing his subject. He starts first of all from Sacher Masoch, who has all the same his little word to say when masochism is involved! I know well that his name has been shortened a little, that nowadays one says, “maso” (*laughter*). But in any case it is up to us to mark the difference between “maso” and “masochist”, or even “masochian” or “masoch” just by itself. In any case, this text, to which we will certainly return, for, literally, I can say… (as a subject on which I have not remained mute, since I wrote *Kant avec Sade,* but in which there is literally only a glimpse, specifically on the fact that sadism and masochism are two strictly distinct paths, even if of course, one should always locate both of them in the structure, that every sadist is not automatically “maso”, nor every “maso” a sadist who does not know it. It is not like a glove that one turns inside out. In short, it could be that M Deleuze - I will swear it all the more from the fact that he quotes me abundantly - has profited from these texts. But is it not striking that this text really anticipates everything that I am, now, going to have effectively to say about it, along the path that we have opened up this year. While there is not a single one of the analytic texts which do not have to be completely taken up again and remade in this new perspective.

I took care to have it confirmed to me by the author himself whom I am quoting, that he has no experience of psychoanalysis.

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Such are the points that I want to mark here, with their date, because after all, with time, they may change, the points which take on an exemplary value and deserve to be retained even if only to require of me that I take them fully into account, I mean in detail.

With this, it remains for me to enter into the articulation of this structure, whose very simple line, which is on the board, gives the basis and foundation and which you already are not without having had, from my mouth, some clarifications about the way it is going to be of use.

Nevertheless, I repeat, the **small o**, here, is what already, in connection with the object thus designated, I was able to make you sense as being in a way what one could call the "setting" (*monture*), the setting of the subject. A metaphor which implies that the subject is the jewel and the setting - what supports it, what sustains it - the frame. Already, I recall, nevertheless, that we have defined and imaged the little **o**-object as what falls in the structure, at the level of the most fundamental act of the existence of the subject, since it is the act from which the subject, as such, is engendered, namely, repetition. The *fact* of the signifier, signifying what it repeats, is what engenders the subject and something *falls* from it.

(6) Remember how the cut of the double loop, in this tiny mental object that is called the *projective plane*, cuts these two elements which are, respectively, the Moebius strip which, for us, figures as a support of the subject, and the ring which necessarily remains of it, which cannot be eliminated from the topology of the projective plane.

Here, this little **o**-object is supported by a numerical reference in order to image what is incommensurable about it - incommensurable to what is involved in its functioning as subject, when this functioning operates at the level of the unconscious, and which is nothing other than sex, quite simply.

Naturally, this golden number is only a support chosen here because it has the following privilege - which makes us retain it, but simply as symbolic function - has this privilege, that I already indicated to you as I could, for want of being able to give you - this would certainly take us too far - the most modern and the strictest mathematical theory of it, of being, as I might say, the incommensurable which circumscribes least quickly the intervals in which it can be localised. In other words, the one which, in order to arrive at a certain limit of approximation, demands, of all the forms - they are multiple and I think almost infinite - of the incommensurable, to be the one which demands most operations.

I recall to you at this point what is involved. Namely, that if the **small o** is here referred back to the 1, allowing its difference from the 1, (1-**o**), to be marked by $\mathbf{o}^2$ - this depending on its own property as **small o**, which is that it should be such that 1+**o** = 1/**o,** from which it is easy to deduce that 1-**o** = $\mathbf{o}^2$. Do a little multiplication and you will see it immediately. The $\mathbf{o}^2$ subsequently will be referred back to this **o** which is here in the -1 (here for example) and will generate an $\mathbf{o}^3$, the which $\mathbf{o}^3$ will be referred back to $\mathbf{o}^2$, in order for there to emerge, at the level of difference, an $\mathbf{o}^4$ which will be referred back thus, so that there can appear here an $\mathbf{o}^5$.

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You see that, on either side, there are displayed, one after the other, all the even powers of **o** on the one side and the odd powers on the other. Things being such that by continuing them to infinity, since there will never be a stop or a term for these operations, their limit will nevertheless be **o**, for the sum of the even powers, $\mathbf{o}^2$ – namely, the first difference - for the sum of the odd powers.

It is here then that there will come to be inscribed, at the end of the operation, what in the first operation, was here marked as the difference. Here, at the **o**, the $\mathbf{o}^2$ is going to come at the end to be added, realising in its sum, here, the 1, constituted by the complementing of **o** by this $\mathbf{o}^2$.

Which here is constituted by the addition of all the remainders, being equal to the first O, from which we started.

I think that the suggestive character of this operation does not escape you, all the more so because for a good while - for a least a month or a month and a half - I have been pointing out to you how it could support, give an image, for the operation of what is (7) realised on the path of the sexual drive, under the name of sublimation.

I will not come back to it today, because I must advance. Simply, by indicating it in this way, to give you the aim of what we are going to have to do in making use of this support. As you will see and already have suspected, it will not be enough for us. Everything indicates to us - even in the very "sublime" success, it has to be said, of what it presents to us - makes us sense that if things were thus, if sublimation were able to make us reach this perfect *One*, itself placed at the horizon of sex, it seems to me that given the time that people have been talking about this One, it should be known. There must remain, between these two series - those of the even powers and the odd powers of the magical **small o** - something like a gap, an interval. In any case, everything in experience indicates it.

Nevertheless, it is not a bad thing to see that with the most favourable support for such traditional articulations, we already see, still, the necessity for a complexity from which, in any case, we ought to start.

Let us not forget that if the first 1, the 1 on which I have projected the succession of operations, is there, it is only there to image the problem with which, precisely, as such, the subject has to be confronted, if this subject is the subject that is articulated in the unconscious. It is, namely, sex. The 1 in the middle of the three elements of my little pocket ruler - this 1 in the middle, is the locus of sexuality.

Let us stay there! We are at the door!

Sexuality, huh, is a type, a moire, a puddle, a "black tide" as has been said for some time. If you put your finger in it and you put it to the tip of your nose, you will smell what is involved. When people say "sexuality", that refers to sex. For it to be part of sex, it would be necessary to articulate things a little bit more firmly.

I do not know, here, what point of a bifurcation I ought to engage myself on, because it is an extremely litigious point. Must I give you here, immediately, the idea of what

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the subjectification of sex might be - if it worked! Obviously you can dream about it! Indeed that is all you do, because this is what constitutes the text of your dreams! But this is not what is at stake. What could that be, if it were so? If it were so and if you give a sense to what I am in the process of developing before you: a signifier. On this occasion what is called - and you are going to see immediately how embarrassed you are going to be! - for if I say "male" or "female", all the same, huh, that is very animal, so it is! So then, I do not mind, "masculine" or "feminine". There, it proves right away that Freud, the first one who advanced along this path of the unconscious, speaks quite clearly about this. There is not the slightest way, I am saying … (not that I am saying to you who are here before me " what proportion of you is masculine and (8) what proportion feminine?" This is not what is at stake. It is not a matter either of biology, nor of the organ of Wolf and Muller) … it is *impossible* to give a sense, I mean an analytic sense, to the terms *masculine* and *feminine*.

If a signifier, nevertheless, is what represents a subject for another signifier, this ought to be here the elective terrain. For you see how good things would be, how pure, if we could put some subjectification - I mean a pure and valid one - under the term *male*. We would have what we need. Namely, that a subject manifesting itself as male, would be represented as such, I mean as subject, with respect to what? To a signifier designating the term *female,* and there would be **no need** for the latter to determine the slightest subject! The reciprocal being also true!

I underline that if we question sex as regards its possible subjectification, we are not giving proof here of any manifestly exorbitant requirement for intersubjectivity. It may be that this would hold up like that. It would not only be suitable, but what, quite clearly - if you question what I called earlier class consciousness, the class of all those who believe that man and woman exist - could not be anything other than that and as that, it would be very nice if it were so. I mean that the source of what is comically called - I must say, that here, the comic is irresistible - "the sexual relation", if I could make … (in a gathering like this, which is becoming familiar to me, a gathering in which I can make understood, in just the right way, that there is no sexual act, which means, there is no act at a certain level and this indeed is the reason why we have to search out how it is constituted) … if I could bring it about that the term "sexual relation" should take on in each one of your heads exactly the farcical connotation that this locution deserves, I would have gained something!

If the sexual relation existed, this is what it would mean: that the subject of each sex could touch something in the other, at the level of the signifier. I mean that this would involve in the other, neither the conscious nor even the unconscious! Simply agreement. This relation of signifier to signifier, when it is found, is undoubtedly what makes us marvel in a certain number of striking little points … tropisms in the animal. We are far from what is involved in man, and perhaps, moreover, in the animal, where things only happen through the intermediary of certain *phanères* reference points, which, certainly, must lead to some failures!

In any case, the virtue of what I have thus articulated is not completely disappointing. I mean that these signifiers, designed so that one presents and represents to the other, in the pure state, the opposite sex, already exist at the cellular level! They are called sexual chromosomes!

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It would be surprising if we were able one day, with some chance of certainty, to establish that the origin of language – namely, what happens *before* it engenders the (9) subject - had some relation with these operations of matter which give us the aspects that we find in the union of sexual cells. We are not at that point and we have other things to do! Simply, let us not be surprised at the distance we are at from this level, in which there would be manifested, in short, something which is not at all designed not to seduce us, at this level where there could be designated something which might be called "the transcendence of matter". Believe me, I am not the one who invented that, it already appeared in some other people. Simply if I do not designate this extreme point - while expressly underlining that it is completely unresolved, that the bridge has not been made - it is simply to mark for you that on the contrary, in the order of what is called more or less properly thinking, people have, throughout the course of the centuries - I mean those that we know about at least - never done anything other than talk as if this point had been resolved! For centuries, knowledge, under a more or less masked form, a more or less imaged, a more or less contraband one, never did anything other than parody what would be involved if the sexual act existed to the point which allows us to define what is involved, as the Hindus say, between *Purusha* and *Parakrita*, between *animus* and *anima,* and all the rest of the music!

What is required of us, is to do more serious work. Work that is required simply by the following. The fact is that between this interplay of primordial meanings, as they might be inscribable in terms, I underline, implying some subject, well then, we are separated from it by the whole thickness of something that you can call, as you wish, *the flesh* or *the body*, on condition of including in it the specific things contributed by our condition as mammals, namely, a quite specific and in no way necessary condition, as the abundance of a whole kingdom proves to us (I am speaking about the animal kingdom). Nothing implies the form that the subjectification of the sexual function takes on for us, nothing implies that what comes into play here, symbolically, is necessarily linked to it. It is enough to reflect on what this might be in an insect and, moreover, besides, the images which may depend on it - let us not deprive ourselves of using them - to make there appear, in phantasy, one or other singular trait of our relations to sex.

So then, I took one of the two paths offered to me earlier. I am not sure that I was right. Now I have to take up the other again; the other and in order to designate for you why the *One* comes here on the right of the **o,** at this point that I designated as representing here locally, by a signifier, the fact of sex.

There is here a surprising convergence between what is really at stake – namely, what I am in the process of telling you - and what I would call on the other hand the major point of psychoanalytic abjection.

I ought to say that you owe it uniquely to Jacques-Alain Miller, who made a reasoned index of my *Ecrits,* that it does not have the alphabetical index at which I would have, (10) I ought to say, however little, exulted in imagining it beginning with the word *abjection*. It never happened. It is not a reason why this word should not take its place.

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The *One* that I am putting here - through a purely mathematical reference, I mean that it images simply the fact that in order to talk about the incommensurable I have to have a unit of measure and there is no unit of measure that is better symbolised than by the One - the subject *in the form* of its support the **small o** is measured, **is measured by sex** *(se mesure au sexe)* - you should understand that as if one were to say that he is measured by the bushel or by the pint. That is what the *One* is: the *sex unit*, nothing more!

Well then, this *One* is not nothing. It is always a matter of knowing the degree to which it converges, as I said earlier, with this *One* which reigns at the very mental foundation of psychoanalysts, to this day, in the form of the unitive virtue, which is supposed to be at the source of everything that they unfold in terms of a discourse on sexuality. The vanity of the formula that sex "unites" is not enough. It is also necessary that the primordial image of it should be given them by … the fusion from which the enjoyer of his enjoyment (*jouissade*) is supposed to benefit: the little *baby* in its mother's womb (where no one up today has been able to bear witness that it is in any more comfortable position than is the mother herself in carrying it); and where there is supposed to be exemplified what you heard again here, last year, in the discourse of M Conrad Stein (whom, moreover, we have not seen since, to my regret), as necessary for psychoanalytic thinking, as representing this lost Paradise of the fusion of the ego and the non-ego, which, I repeat, in listening to them, the psychoanalysts, is supposed to be the *cornerstone* (*la pierre angulaire)*, without which nothing could even be thought about the economy of the libido - for this is what is at stake!

I think that there is here a veritable touchstone – I take the opportunity to signal it to whoever intends to follow me. The fact is that anyone who remains in any way attached to this schema of *primary narcissism*, may well put in his buttonhole all the Lacanian carnations he wants, the aforesaid person has nothing to do, from near or far, with what I am teaching.

I am not saying that this question of primary narcissism, is not something that poses a question in the economy of the theory and deserves one day to be emphasised.

I am beginning today precisely, by remarking that if *jouissance-value* takes its origin in the lack marked by the castration complex - in other words, the prohibition of auto-eroticism being brought to bear on a precise organ, which only plays there the role and the function of introducing this element of unit (*unité*) at the inauguration of a status of exchange, from which there depends everything that is going to be subsequently economy, in the speaking being whom we are dealing with in sex - it is clear that the important thing is to see the *reversal* which results from it. Namely, that it is in so far as the *phallus* designates - from something raised to a value, by this *less* which the castration complex constitutes- this something which constitutes precisely the distance between the **small o** and the unit of sex.

(11) It is starting from there, as the whole experience teaches us, that the individual (*l'être)* who is going to come, to be raised, to the function of partner - in this test to

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which the subject is put, of the sexual act - the woman, to image my discourse, is going to take on, for her part, her value as *object of jouissance.*

But, at the same time and by the same operation, look at what has happened. It is no longer a matter of he enjoys (*il jouit)*; he enjoys something (*il jouit de)*. *Jouissance* has passed from the subjective to the objective, to the point of sliding to the sense of possession, in the typical function, as we have to consider it as deducible from the incidence of the castration complex and - I already brought this forward the last time - it is constituted by this change of direction which makes of the sexual partner a phallic object. A point I am only highlighting here, in the direction of the "man" to the "woman" (both in inverted commas), in so far as it is here that the operation is, as I might say, most scandalous. For it can be articulated, of course, just as much in the other direction, except that the woman does not have to make the same sacrifice, since it is already attributed to her, at the beginning.

In other words, I am underlining the position of what I would call the *male fiction*, which can be expressed more or less as follows: "one is what has" (*on est ce qui a*). There is no one happier than a chap who has never seen further than the end of his nose and who expresses a provocative formula like that: "to have or not" … "one is what has". The one who has you know what… And then: "*one has what is*". The two things hold up. "*What is*", is the object of desire: it is the woman.

What I should call this simplistic fiction is being seriously revised. For some time people have noticed that it is a little bit more complicated. But, again, in a report named *"Direction of the treatment and the principles of its power"*, I thought I had to re-articulate with care that people do not seem to have seen very clearly what is involved in what I would oppose to this male fiction, as being - to take up one of my words from the last time - the value *homme-elle*: "*one is not what one has*" (*on n'est pas ce qu'on a*). This is not altogether the same sentence, pay attention, huh? "One is what has", but "one is not what one has". In other words, it is in so far as the man has the phallic organ that he is not it. Which implies that, on the other hand, one can and even one *is* what one has - what one does not have. Namely, it is precisely in so far as she does not have the phallus that the woman can take on its value.

Such are the points that it is extremely necessary to articulate at the start of any induction into what the unconscious says about sex, because this is properly what we have learnt to read in its discourse! Only, where I speak about castration complex – with, of course, all the litigiousness that it involves, for the least that one can say is that it may lend, however little, to an error about the person, especially on the male side, concerning what Genesis describes for us so well, namely, the woman conceived of as this something of which the body of man has been deprived. (This is called, in (12) this chapter that you know well, a "rib", for the sake of modesty!) What has to be seen, is that in any case, where I speak about the castration complex as original in the economic function of *jouissance*, the psychoanalyst gargles the term of "objectal libido". The important thing is to see that if there is something that deserves this name, it is precisely the carry-over of this negatived function which is grounded in the castration complex.

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The *jouissance-value* prohibited at the precise point, at the organ-point constituted by the phallus, is what is brought forward as "objectal libido"; contrary to what is said, namely, that the libido described as narcissistic is supposed to be the reservoir from which there has to be extracted what will be objectal libido.

This may appear as a subtlety to you. Because after all, you will tell me, if, as regards narcissism, there is the libido which is brought to bear on one's own body, well then - even though you specify things - it is a part of this libido that is at stake, you will tell me. In what I am presently stating, it is nothing of the kind! Very precisely because to tell you that one thing is extracted from another, it would be necessary to suppose that it is purely and simply separated from it by way of what is called a *cut*, but **not simply** by a cut, by something which subsequently plays the function of an *edge*.

Now this is precisely what is debatable and not simply what is debatable, but what is already settled. The fact is that there is no homomorphism, there is no structure such that the phallic scrap (as one might say) is graspable in the same way as a part of narcissistic investment. The fact is that it does not constitute this edge, which is what we must maintain between what allows narcissism to construct this false assimilation of the one to the other which is the doctrine in the traditional theories of love. The traditional theories of love, in effect, leave the object of the good within the limits of narcissism.

But the relation that is really involved - the economy of *jouissance* - is distinct. Objectal libido, in so far as it introduces something which, as one might say, leaves us desiring the exact note of the act which claims to be sexual, is of a nature (it has to be said) that is properly speaking settled, distinct. It is here that there lies the live point, around which it is essential not to weaken. For, as you will subsequently see, it is only around this point that there can take their correct place, especially everything that happens in the field of the analytic act, whether it is a matter of the relation of the analysand-analyst or the effects of regression.

I apologise for leaving things in suspense. The law of my discourse does not allow me to cut it always at the end point that suits me. Time interrupts us here today. I will continue the next time.

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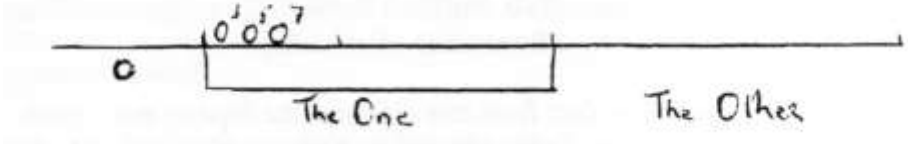
Seminar 18: Wednesday 26 April 1967



While what was on the board was being cleaned off, I made this drawing for you. This drawing is incomplete. But let us not lose time. It is incomplete in the sense that it is not finished. The same length *One* that defines the field of **small o** ought to be reproduced here, but I began it too far out. I already sufficiently indicated to you that these two segments, namely, this one and the one that is not finished, are, if you wish qualified as One and the Other - the Other in the sense that I ordinarily understand it, the locus of the Other, capital O - the locus where there is articulated the signifying chain and the truth that it supports.

These are the terms of the essential dyad in which the drama of the subjectification of sex has to be forged. Namely, what we have been in the process of speaking about for a month and a half. *Essential*, for those who have their ears formed to Heideggerian terms - which, as you will see, are not my privileged references - nevertheless, for those, I mean, not an essential dyad in the sense of what *is,* but in the sense of what - it has to be said in German - of what *west*, as Heidegger expresses it, in a fashion, moreover, that is already forced with respect of the German tongue. Let us say, of what operates as *sprache*, the connotation left to Heidegger, of the term language.

What is at stake is nothing other than the economy of the unconscious, or indeed what is commonly called *primary process*.

Let us not forget that for these terms - those that I have just put forward like those of the dyad, of the dyad from which we start, of the *One* and the *Other*; the *One* as I specifically articulated it the last time and that I am going, moreover, to take up again, the *Other*, in the use that I have always made of it - let us not forget, I am saying, that we have to start from their effect. Their effect has this derisory aspect that it lends itself to the crude metaphor that it is the child *itself*. The subjectification of sex gives birth to nothing, except misfortune.

But what it has already produced, what is given to us in a univocal fashion in psychoanalytic experience, is the waste product from which we start as a necessary supporting point to reconstruct the whole logic of this dyad. This, in allowing (2) ourselves to be guided by what

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this object is the cause of - you know it, properly speaking - is the cause of, namely, the phantasy.

Logic - if it is true that I can pose as its initial thesis, as I do, that *there is no metalanguage* - this is what logic means: that one can extract from language, specifically, the loci and the points where, as one might say, language speaks of itself. And this indeed is the way that it is expanding in our day. When I say "expanding in our day" it is because it is obvious. You have only to open a book of logic to see that it has no pretension to be anything else - nothing ontic, in any case, scarcely ontological. On this point, all the same, betake yourself, since I am going to give you a two week break, to a reading of the *Sophist* - I mean Plato's dialogue - to know the degree to which this formula is correct, I am saying, as regards logic, and that its start does not date, therefore, from today or yesterday.

You will understand that it is, in fact, from this dialogue, the *Sophist*, that Martin starts - I mean, Martin Heidegger - in his restoration of the question of Being. And, after all, it would be a no less salubrious discipline for you, to read, since my lack of information has meant that, having only recently received it through a press service, it is only today that I can advise you to read the *Introduction to metaphysics*, in the excellent translation that Gilbert Kahn has made of it. I say "excellent", because in truth he did not try to do the impossible and, for all the words for which it is impossible to give an equivalent, except an equivocal one, he has calmly forged or reforged French words as he could, even if it entails a lexicon at the end to give us the exact German reference. But all of this is only a parenthesis.

This easy read - which perhaps could be contested about Heidegger's other texts, but I assure you that this one is extraordinarily easy, and it even has a very clear cutting note of facility - it is impossible to render more transparent the way in which he intends that there should be re-posed at our historical turning point, the question of Being.

It is certainly not that I think that what is at stake here is anything other than an exercise in reading, and I have just said that it is very salubrious. It cleans up many things, but it nonetheless goes astray by giving the simple instruction of a return to Parmenides and Heraclitus - however brilliantly he situates them - at the level precisely of this meta-discourse that I am speaking about as immanent to language. It is not a metalanguage. The meta-discourse immanent to language that I call logic, is of course something that deserves to be refreshed at such a reading.

Certainly, I do not use - as you notice - in any way the etymological procedure, by which Heidegger makes admirably relive the formulae described as pre-Socratic. It is because, as a matter of fact, the direction that I intend to indicate differs, differs (3) from his, precisely in

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something which is irreversible, and which the *Sophist* indicates - it also is an extraordinarily easy read and which does not fail also to make its reference to Parmenides - precisely to mark how far and how alive it was against this defence that Parmenides expresses in these two verses:

> ***"No, you will never bend by force non-beings to being;***
> ***From this path of research set aside your thinking".***

It is precisely the route opened, opened by the *Sophist* that is imposed on us, properly speaking, on us analysts, in order for us simply to know what we are dealing with.

If I had succeeded in making a psychoanalyst literate, I would have won the game. Namely, that from then on, the person who is not a psychoanalyst would become, by that very fact, an illiterate. Let the numerous literati who people this room reassure themselves, they still have their little remainder!

The psychoanalyst must to come to conceive of the nature of what he is handling, as this dross (scorie) of Being, this rejected stone which becomes the cornerstone and which is properly what I am designating by the **o**-object. And that it is a product - I am saying, product - of the operation of language, in the sense in which the term product is required in our discourse by the raising, since Aristotle, of the dimension of *ergon*, exactly, of work.

It is a matter of re-thinking logic starting from this **small o**. Since this **small o** - though I have named it, I did not invent it - is properly what has fallen into the hands of analysts, starting from the experience they have gone through in what is involved in the sexual thing. Everyone knows what I mean and, what is more, they talk only of that. Since analysis, this **small o**, is yourselves! I am saying, each one of you, in your essential kernel. It puts you back on your feet, as they say, It puts you back again on your feet of desire, from the delusion about the celestial sphere, of the subject of knowledge.

This having been said, it explains, and it is the only valid explanation, why, as everyone can see, people start, in analysis, from the child. It is for properly metaphorical reasons. For the **small o** is the metaphorical child of the One and the Other, in so far as it is born as a piece of refuse from the inaugural repetition, which, in order to be repetition, requires this relation of the One to the Other, a repetition from which there is born the subject.

The real reason for the reference to the child in psychoanalysis is not therefore in any case along the grain of the G.I., the promised prize of becoming a happy swine which seems to Mr Erik Erikson to be a sufficient motive for his cogitations and his labours. But, simply this problematic essence, the **o**-object whose exercises stupefy us, naturally,

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not just anywhere at all: in the phantasies, very amply put into effect, of the child! That it is at their level that one sees the operations and the paths best opened out: but it is necessary for that to receive confidences which are not within the reach of the child psychologist.

In short, it is this that ensures that the word *soul* has, in the slightest sexual frolicking of the child - in his perversion as they say - the single, the unique and the only worthy presence that should be accorded to this word, the word *soul*.

(4) So then, as I said the last time, the One is simply, in this logic, the coming into play of the operation of measurement, of the value to be given to this **small o** in this operation of language which is going to be, in short - what else is proposed to us? - the *attempt* to reintegrate this **small o** into what! Into this universe of language, as regards which I already posed at the start of this year, what! That it does not exist! That it does not exist, why? Precisely because of the existence of the little **o**-object, as effect.

Therefore, a contradictory and despairing operation, and happily the simple existence of arithmetic - even elementary - assures us that the enterprise is a fruitful one. For, even at the level of arithmetic, people have perceived, recently it has to be said, that the universe of discourse does not exist.

So then, how do things present themselves at the start of this attempt? What does it mean to write - since we need this *One* and because we will be content with it to measure the little **o**-object - the following: *One plus **o** equals One over small **o***?

You may well suspect that once my theory starts to become an object of serious questioning on the part of logicians, there will be a lot to be said on the introduction here of three signs which are drawn as *plus*, *equal*, and also the *bar* between the 1 and the **small o**.

These are tests as regards which it is necessary, provisionally - so that my course does not extend indefinitely - that you should have confidence that I have done them for myself, only allowing to appear here the points at the level at which they may be useful to you.

It must be remarked, nevertheless, that if - since this comes up all by itself and because really it is more convenient, (we still have a long enough path to take) - I inscribe here, quite simply, the formula which is found to overlap what I called the greatest incommensurable or again the golden number, which designates very properly speaking the following: that of two magnitudes, the relationship of the bigger to the smaller, of the *One* to the **o** on this occasion, is the same as that of their sum to the greater, that if I operate in this way, it is not in order to get across - too quickly moreover - hypotheses which it would be a great pity for you to

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take as decisive, I mean for you to believe too much in this paradigm, which simply is intended to make function, for a time, for you, the small **o**-object, as incommensurable to what is at stake: its reference to sex. It is under this heading that the *One* - this sex (and its enigma) - is charged with overlapping it.

But nothing indicates, moreover, in the formula *One plus small **o** equals One over small **o***, that we can immediately make enter into it the mathematical notion of *proportion*. As long as we have not expressly written it, which implies this writing as it is here, for someone who reads it at the level of its usual mathematics, namely, that it is *One plus small **o** over One equals One over small **o***. As long as this 1 is not (5) inscribed, the formula can be considered as much less tight. It indicates nothing other than the fact that it is from the *rapprochement* of the *One* to this **small o**, that we intend to see there emerging something else. What? Why not, on this occasion, that the *One* represents the **small o**.

I scarcely ever use my symbolisations at random. And if those here can remember the symbolisations that I gave of the metaphor, they will recall that after all, when I write the sequence of signifiers, with the indication that this chain includes underneath a substituted signifier, and that it is from this substitution that it results that the new signifier substitutes for capital S - let us call it S' - because of what it contains of the signifier for which it is substituted, takes on the value of this something - that I already connoted as S'(1/s) - takes on the value of the origin of a new signified dimension which belongs to neither one nor the other of the two signifiers in questions.
Does it not appear that something analogous, which would only be properly here the emergence of the dimension of measure or of proportion, as original meaning, is implied in this moment of interval which, after having written 1+**o** = 1/**o**, completes it with the *One* which was absent from it even though immanent, and which, because of being distinguished in this second moment, takes on the figure of the function here of the signifier sex as repressed.

It is in the measure that the relation to the enigmatic One, taken here in its pure conjunction, *One plus small **o***, can, in our symbolism, imply a function of the *One* as representing the enigma of sex *qua* repressed, and that this enigma of sex is going to present itself to us as being able to realise the substitution, the metaphor, overlapping with its proportion the **small o** itself. What does that mean?

The *One*, you are going to object to me, is in no way repressed. Like here, where keeping to an approximate formula, I made a chain of signifiers as regards which it would be necessary that effectively none

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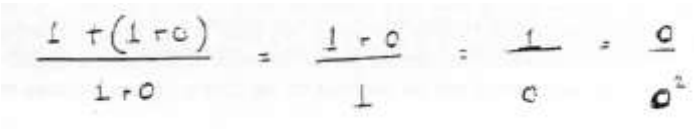
of them should reproduce this repressed signifier, (this indeed is why I must distinguish the repressed), here does this *One* of the first line, go against the articulation that I am trying to give you of it? Surely not, because of the following: the fact is, as you know, (if you have taken the trouble to exercise yourself a little, the tiniest little bit with what I showed you about the use that should be made of the **small o** with respect to *One*, namely, having marked its difference and carried out its subtraction from the *One*), to remark, as I told you, that *One minus o* is equal to nothing other than to **o** to the power of two or **o** squared, to which there succeeds, provided you withdraw this $\mathbf{o}^2$ back to the **o**, brought in here in the first operation, to which there succeeds an $\mathbf{o}^3$, which is reproduced here on $\mathbf{o}^2$, by the same mode of operation, to obtain here an $\mathbf{o}^4$; all the even powers lining up, as I told you, on one side, over against the odd powers on the other, ($\mathbf{o}^5$, $\mathbf{o}^7$) which are staggered here, and their total realising this sum which amounts to **small o**. What we (6) then have on the top of this proportion, is nothing other than $\mathbf{o} + (\mathbf{o}^2+\mathbf{o}^3+\mathbf{o}^4)$ and so on, which begins from $\mathbf{o}^2$ up to infinity, being strictly equal to the big *One.*

The result is that you have here a rather good image of what I called in the signifying chain the metonymical effect that for a long time I already illustrated by the sliding in this chain of the **small o** figure.

That is not all. If the measure thus given in this operation of *writing* - for it is a matter of nothing else - is correct, there flows from it, very immediately, that it is enough for us to make this whole block of the *One plus small **o*** pass to the function of *One* for which it is imposed as a substitution, to obtain the following:

that I can very easily offer myself the luxury of, as a way of continuing



to amuse you, I mean, not writing the last 1, reproducing at its level the earlier manoeuvre, which allows me to write subsequently: *One over **o*** which, if you continue to proceed along the same path, is followed by the formula ***o**/1-**o*** - the which *1 - **o*** being equal to $\mathbf{o}^2$ - is nothing other than **o** [later corrected by Lacan to 1/**o**], the final identification which in a way, sanctions the fact that throughout these detours, these detours which are not nothing since it is here that we can learn to make there operate correctly the relations of the **small o** to sex, brings us back purely and simply to this identity of the **small o**.

For those for whom this still remains a little difficult, do not omit the fact that this **small o** is something that is altogether existent! I have not done it up to the present, but I can write out its value. Everyone knows

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it, do they not? It is *the square root of five minus one over two.* And, if you want to write it in figures, if I remember correctly, it is something of the order of 2.236068 [Corrected later]. I no longer remember very clearly. Here it is exactly 67 and not 68 but subsequently there are 9's etc. It goes on for a some time. In short, do not hold me to it. It is a memory of the time ... in any case in my time one learnt mathematics like that, one knew a certain quantity of numbers by heart. When I was fifteen years old, I knew the six first pages of my logarithmic tables by heart. I will explain to you another time the use of that, but it is quite certain that it would not be one of the less good methods of selection for candidates to the function of psychoanalyst. We have not reached that yet... I have so much trouble bringing in the slightest thing on this delicate subject, (7) that I have not even suggested, up to the present, that this criterion should be used (laughter). It is certainly as good as those that are presently used!

We will take up again then, in this formula, these moments to designate properly speaking here in the 1+**o**, the high point of these formulations which best designate what we can call the *sexual subject*.

If the *One* designates in its first moment as enigma, the signifying function of sex, it is from the moment that the 1+**o** comes to the denominator of equality as we see it
being developed here, always the same, that there emerges, as you can see, even though I did not write it imprudently, at the upper level, this famous *two* of the dyad that one cannot write under the form of 2 without having warned that this requires some supplementary remarks, on this occasion, about what is called the associativity of addition. In other words, that I detach the second 1 here in so far as it is in this parenthesis, to group it in the same parenthesis with the other 1 which precedes it, but which has a different function. Now, it is not difficult to notice in these three terms - this 1, this 1 and this **small o** - the three intervals that are in question here, namely, those that pose the **small o** as a problem with respect to the two other 1's.

What can all of this mean? (*laughter*).

In order to confront the **small o** with the unit - which is simply to establish the function of measure - well then, one must begin by **writing** this unit. It is this function that I introduced a long time ago, under the term of unary stroke. "Unary", I said, because it can happen that I lower my voice. So then, where does one write it, this unary trait which is essential to operate for the measure of the little **o**-object with respect to sex? Well then, surely not on the back of the little **o**-object, because no little **o**-object has a back. I think it is precisely the usefulness, I think that you have always known it, of what I called the locus of the Other, in so far as it is precisely here represented as summoned by this whole logical approach. Namely, the locus of the Other, first of all, in so far as, as such, it introduces the duplication of

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the field of the *One*, namely, even though we have here nothing other, properly speaking, than the imaging of what I articulated as the original repetition, as that which means that the first *One* - this *One* so dear to the philosophers, and which, nevertheless, opposes some difficulty to their manipulations - that this *One* only emerges in a sort of retroactive way starting from the moment at which there is introduced a repetition *as signifier*.

This unary stroke - I remember the desperate cries of one of my most subtle listeners, when I simply picked out in a text by Freud, the *einziger Zug*, where it had passed unnoticed by this charming interlocutor who would have loved to have made the discovery himself. Do not believe, for all that, that it only exists there. Freud did not discover the unary stroke. And if you wish, simply among others - of course, (8) naturally, I am going to speak later about the Greeks - but simply to remain with current affairs, open the last number of this excellent journal, Arts Asiatiques. You will see in it the translation of a very pretty treatise on painting by a painter - happily I have the good luck to have little…, in any case, these are called kakemonos, by him - who is called Sheu Tao, and who makes a lot, faith, of this unary stroke. He talks about nothing but that, yes, he talks about nothing but that for a few pages which are excellent. This is called in Chinese - and not simply for painters, because the philosophers speak a lot about it - yi, which means One and hua, which means stroke. It is the unary stroke. It functioned a good deal, I assure you, before I dinned it into your ears here.

But the important thing, then, also, is to recognise ... (I know, I know it is written as if ... it is very badly done my Chinese character, but I do not have here, I do not have my ... yes, good, yes, ok) ... to recognise here in this essential function which requires in opposition, as if in a mirror, the field of the Other to this field of the enigmatic One, properly speaking, what is imaged for a long time in my graph by the connotation, signifier of capital O barred, S(Ø). Which also allows in this article that I entitled "Remarks.....", and which gives the formula for what is called, in psychoanalysis and in the Freudian text, one of the forms of identification, identification to the ego ideal, whose stroke I put precisely in the Other, as indicating at the level of the Other this mirror reference, from which there starts precisely for the subject the vein of everything that is identification. Namely, what is especially - in the field that we are speaking about today, that of the dyad - to be distinguished (Here Lacan goes to the board), to be distinguished as being situated, and being situated as distinct from two other functions which are respectively that of repetition (we will put identification in the middle) and finally the relation ... I told you the last time what should be thought about anything whatsoever which may authorise itself from it - of the sexual dyad. I called it ridiculous, this relation that people speak about as something which would have the slightest consistency when it is sex that is at stake.

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I would simply, here, make one remark to you. At the very time - just after that of the *Sophist* - that Aristotle intervenes, when he founds in a fashion which it is correct to say that - whatever may be the dissolution that we have been able, subsequently, to operate on the operations of logic - of which it is correct to say that its *Categories* preserve an unshakeable character. I have already strongly urged you to take up this little treatise. It is purely admirable for everything that concerns this exercise which may allow you to give a sense to the term subject. The enumeration of categories ... I am not going to go over it for you, that of place, of time, of quantity, of why, of how, etc. Is it not striking that after an enumeration which remains so exhaustive, one notices that, precisely, Aristotle did not introduce into the categories this sort of relation that one could write - try it a little, you will tell me all about it - the sexual relation?

(9) All logicians have the habit of exemplifying the different types of relations that they distinguish as transitive, intransitive, reflexive, etc., illustrating them, for example, from the terms of kinship; if someone, if A is the father of B, B is the son of A and so on. It is rather curious, at least as curious as the absence in the Aristotelian categories of the sexual relation, that no one has ever dared to say that if A is the husband of B, then B is the wife of A.

This relationship, nevertheless, of course, forms part of our question concerning what is at stake, namely, this question of the status, which may be founded by these terms which are properly speaking those that I have put forward under the form of man and woman.

In order to do it, it is quite pointless to project - to use a term that the psychoanalyst uses at in all kinds of ways - to project the *One* which comes to mark the field of the Other, into what I am now going to call x, in order to mark clearly that this *One* was nothing other, up to the present than a *denomination*. That it is necessary to denominate from the *One* of the unary stroke what it is here between the **small o** and the big Other, is something that it is only an error to consider as unifying this field x, what is more making it unitive.

Naturally, it is not only yesterday that this sliding took place, and it is not the privilege of psychoanalysts. The confusion of a Being - what Being - the Supreme, with the One as such, is something that is incarnated in an eminent fashion, for example, in the writings of Plotinus. Everyone knows that.

The prevalence of this fundamental median function - which is not nothing, since it operates - that I called the ego ideal, in so far as there depends on it a whole cascade of secondary identifications, specifically that of the ideal ego, which is the kernel of the ego. All of this has been presented and remains inscribed at its place and in its time, and just by

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itself gives rise to the question about the motive which necessitates the multiplicity of these identifications. It is clear that it is enough to refer to the little optical schema that I gave of it which, for its part, is only a metaphor, while this has nothing metaphorical about it, since they are metaphors which precisely are operative in the structure!

In short, that the link between the One and the Other by identification and especially if it takes on this reversible form which makes of the One the supreme Being is properly speaking typical of the philosophical error. Naturally, if I told you to read Plato's *Sophist*, it is because in it people are far from falling into this One, and Plotinus is here the best reference in order to test it.

I would only like to oppose to it the mystics ... in so far as these are those that we can define as having advanced, to their cost, from the **small o** towards this Being which, for its part, has done nothing except to announce itself as not to be pronounced – not to be pronounced as regards its name - by nothing other than these enigmatic letters which reproduce - do people know that? - the general form of the *I am*, not at all*, the one who I am,* nor *the one who is*, but *what I am*. Namely, keep looking!

You see there nothing which specifies all that much - even though it deserves to be (10) specified at another level because of the reference that is made to the father in it - the God of the Jews. For in truth the Tao states, as you know, in our day when Zen is all over town, you have certainly been able to gather in some corner that the Tao who can name himself is not the true Tao. Anyway, we are not here to go on gargling with these old jokes.

When I speak about mystics, I am speaking simply about the holes that they encounter. I am speaking about the *Dark night*, for example, which proves that, as regards what may be unitive in the relations of the creature to anything whatsoever, he can always - even with the most subtle and the most rigorous methods - meet up with a difficulty there. The mystics, in a word - this is, I should also say, the only point in which they interest me, I am not in the process of making of the sexual act (I think you are sufficiently aware of it), a "mystical theory" (in inverted commas) - the mystics, are spoken about to signal that they are less stupid than the philosophers just as the sick are less stupid than the psychoanalysts. This results uniquely from the following: the fact is ... it is ... it is one of the renewed alternatives of what I have already on several occasions given as the formula of alienation: *your money or your life, liberty or death, stupidity or blackguardism*, for example. Well then, there is no choice! When the question, stupidity or blackguardism is posed, at least at the level of philosophers or ... of psychoanalysts, it is always stupidity that wins. There is no way of choosing blackguardism.

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In short, to take this field **between** the **small o** and the capital O, you see that I drew two lines: one dotted and then continuous, drawn simply to mark that the **small o** is equal in the first part to the external **small o**, and that there is this remainder of $\mathbf{o}^2$. But I drew a second line, a second line which might well be the only one, to mark for us that this point, this field, is to be considered - I mean for us analysts - as being in its totality something that is at least suspected of sharing in the function of the hole.

And I can only - if only in gratitude for the contribution that M. Green was good enough to contribute here two sessions ago, I think, to my work - introduce here, why not, the reference that he was good enough to add to it. It is the one that he introduced, I must say - do not let yourselves get carried away - very remarkably, in the shape of this cauldron, this cauldron of the *Es*, that he extracted from where moreover enough of us here knew it, in the 31st or the 32nd of Freud's new lectures. The cauldron, in a certain image that one can give of it, expresses something like the following: it is boiling in there. In truth, in Freud's text, this indeed is what is at stake. With some irony, Freud could let such images pass. It is something, of course, that should be studied. It is not immediately within our reach. It would be necessary, first of all, to give oneself over ... anyway, ... to a solid scouring operation, as I often remarked, of what covers the text ... anyway, is that not so ... the black tide! Let us not say too much about this, except, after all, the following, that one of the most essential things to distinguish - I would like you to retain the formula - is (11) the difference between *rottenness* and *shit*. For want of making an exact distinction, people do not notice, for example, that what Freud designates is this something rotten in *jouissance*. I am not the one who invented this term. *La terre gaste* is already found in courtly literature, they are the poetic terms used in the romances of the Round Table, and we see them taken up again - we find our good where it is - in the writings of that old reactionary T.S. Eliot under the title, *The Waste Land*. He knows very well what he is talking about! Read *The Waste Land*, it is still a very good read, and I must say a very amusing one, even if it is less clear than Heidegger! What is at stake is nothing else, from one end to the other, than the sexual relation!

One of the most useful things, would be, obviously, to decant from this field the rottenness, the shitty coaltar - I am saying, properly speaking, given the privileged function that the anal object plays in this operation - with which current psychoanalytic theory covers it.

So then, at the place that I had defined as the *Es* of grammar - you will see afterwards what grammar is involved - M. Green reminded me that I must not forget the existence of the cauldron. The cauldron, in so far as it goes, "glug, glug, glug, phew!" The question is essential and, in truth, and I render him altogether this homage, that he took a path that was very much one of mine, by immediately making function what he modestly called the association of ideas, and which was a reference to

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the *Witz*, to remind us of the other use that Freud makes of the cauldron, namely, that in connection with this famous cauldron that we are reproached for having given back with a hole in it, the exemplary subject replies in the usual way that, in the first place, he had not borrowed it, in the second place that there was already a hole in it and, thirdly, that he had given it back intact. A formula which, undoubtedly, has its whole value as irony and as *Witz,* but which is here particularly exemplary when what is at stake is the function of analysts, because the use that analysts make, of this place which I willingly agree must be represented by something like a cauldron, on condition, precisely, of being aware that it is a cauldron with a hole in it, that it is consequently quite useless to borrow it in order to make jam, and that moreover we do not borrow it. The whole of analytic technique - one is wrong not to notice it - consists precisely in *leaving empty* this place of the cauldron. As far as I know, one does not make love in the analyst's office! It is precisely because one operates on this place and what one has to measure in it, on what is there, to the right and to the left, from the **small o** and the big O, that we can perhaps say something about it.

Therefore, I would say that these three amusing references to the embarrassment of the borrower of the cauldron, only cover over on the part of analysts a triple refusal to recognise what precisely is in operation. In the first place, that they did not borrow this cauldron, they deny this, did...not (ne... pas) and they imagine that effectively they have borrowed it. In the second place, it seems that they want to (12) forget as long as they can, that, as they nevertheless know very well, there is a hole in this cauldron and that to promise to give it back intact is something quite risky.

It is only starting from there that one can notice what is involved at the level of phenomena which are these truth phenomena, that I tried to pinpoint in the formula: "Me, the truth, I speak".

This is true, whatever the psychoanalysts think of it and even if they want to think something that does not force them to close their ears to the words of truth.

Here, what does the very element of psychoanalytic theory teach us, if not that to accede to the sexual act is to accede to a *jouissance* that is guilty, even and especially if it is innocent! Full *jouissance*, that of the king of Thebes, the saviour of the people, the one who has taken up the fallen sceptre people do not know how and without a line of descent. Why? It has been forgotten - in short, this *jouissance* which covers over what? Rottenness, what finally explodes in the plague. Yes, King Oedipus for his part, realised the sexual act. The King reigned. Reassure yourselves, moreover, it is a myth. It is a myth, like almost all the other myths of Greek mythology. There are other ways of realising the sexual act. In general they find their sanction in hell. That of Oedipus is the most "human", as we say today, namely, using a term of

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which there is no exact equivalent in Greek, where nevertheless, humanism finds its wardrobe.

What ocean of feminine *jouissance*, I ask you, was necessary for the ship of Oedipus to float without sinking? Until the plague finally shows what the sea of his happiness consisted in. This last sentence may appear enigmatic to you. The fact is that, in effect, there is to be respected here the enigmatic character that a certain knowledge should properly preserve, which is the one that concerns the span that I here mark by the hole. Moreover, there is no possible entry into this field without unravelling the enigma. And this, as you know, is what the Oedipus myth designates. Without the notion that this knowledge - which only images that the enigma, and whether it is or not reasoned - that this knowledge, I say, is intolerable for the truth. For the Sphinx is what presents itself every time the truth is in question. The truth throws itself into the abyss when Oedipus resolves the enigma. Which means that he shows there, properly, the sort of superiority, of *hubris* as he said, that the truth cannot tolerate.

What does that mean? That means *jouissance* in so far as it is at the source of truth. That means what is articulated at the locus of the Other, so that *jouissance* - which it is a matter of knowing there where it is – posits itself as questioning in the name of truth.

And it is necessary that it should be in this place in order to question. I mean at the locus of the Other. For one does not question from any other place. And this indicates to you that this locus that I introduced as the locus in which there is inscribed the discourse of truth is certainly not, whatever one or other person may have given to understand, this sort of locus that the Stoics called incorporeal. I would have to say what is involved in it, namely, precisely, that it is the body. It is (13) not there that I have yet to advance today, in any case.

Oedipus knew something about what was posed him as a question, and its form ought indeed, to retain our perspicacity, in our turn. Does not the simplistic figure of the response deceive us for centuries with its four feet, its two legs and then the stick of the old man which is added at the end? Is there not in these ciphers something different whose formula we will better find by following what the function of the little **o**-object is going to indicate to us?

Knowledge is thus necessary at the establishment of the sexual act. And this is what the Oedipus myth says. Judge a little then what Jocasta had to deploy as a power of dissimulation, since on the paths of the encounter, of the tuche, which is the one that one has only once in one's life, since it is the only one that can lead him to happiness, since Oedipus was able not to know the truth earlier. For after all, all the years that his happiness lasted, whether he was making love in the evening in bed or during the day, did Oedipus never, never have, never

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to evoke this bizarre scuffle which happened at the cross-roads with this old man who died there? And, furthermore, the servant who had survived it, and who, when he saw Oedipus ascending the throne cleared out! Come on! Come on! Does not this whole story, this flight of all the memories, indeed this impossibility of encountering them, is this not all the same designed to evoke something for us? And, moreover, if Sophocles gives us, of course, this whole story of the servant, in order to make us avoid thinking about the fact that Jocasta, at least, could not have not known it, he was not able to avoid all the same (I brought it here for you) to prevent Jocasta crying out at the moment that she advises him to stop - "For your own good, I am giving you the wisest counsel". "I'm beginning to have enough of this" Oedipus answers. "Unhappy man, may you never know who you are"! She knows it, she already knows it very well already and this is why she kills herself for having caused the destruction of her son.

But who is Jocasta? Well then, why not the lie incarnated in what is involved in the sexual act? Even if nobody up to now was able to see it or say it, it is a locus to which one accedes only by having set to one side the truth of *jouissance*.

Truth cannot make itself heard there, for if it makes itself heard everything makes off and a desert is formed. Nevertheless, the desert is an inhabited place usually, as you know! Namely this x-field into which our measurements do not penetrate. There is normally a whole crowd there: masochists, hermits, devils, empusae and larvae. It was enough simply for people to begin to preach there, specifically psychoanalytic sermonising, for everyone to clear out!

This is what is at stake. From where to speak about it? Well then, from where, faith, everyone brings *jouissance* into it. For *jouissance*, as I told you, is not there! This is the value of *jouissance*. But this, in Freud, is very well said, precisely by the myth, when he reveals the final sense of the Oedipus myth: guilty *jouissance,* rotten *jouissance*, no doubt, but again this means nothing if one does not introduce the (14) function of the *value of jouissance*, namely, what transforms it into something of another order.

The master of the myth that Freud, for his part, forged, what is his *jouissance*? He enjoys (*jouit*), as it is said, all the women. And what does that mean? Is there not here some enigma? And these two aspects of the sense of the word "*jouir*" that I told about you the last time, the subjective aspect and the objective aspect. Is he the one who enjoys essentially? But in that case, all the objects are there, in a way, fleeing outside the field. Or, in what he enjoys, is it the *jouissance* of the object, namely, the woman, the important thing? This does not mean that there escapes, for the simple reason that it is a myth, that it is a matter of designating, at this point, in this field, where the original function of an absolute *jouissance* which, the myth says it sufficiently,

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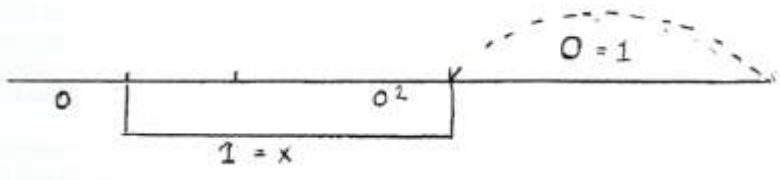
only functions when there is a killed-off *jouissance*, or if you wish, an aseptic jouissance. Or again to take for my own a word that in reading M. Dauzat or M. le Bidois I learnt that the Canadians use, they use the word *can*, which as you know is a *jerrycan*, for example, and they use the word *canné*. Here is good *franglais*, once again!

A canned *jouissance* is what Freud, in the myth of the original father and of his murder, designates for us as being the original function without which we cannot even advance in conceiving of what is now going to be our problem. Namely, what is played out in the operations, thanks to which there are exchanged, there are economised and there are reversed the functions of *jouissance* such as we have to confront



them in psychoanalytic experience.

It is after what I have put forward before you today, I think, to fasten - even though in a preparatory way - what we will advance starting from the 10th of May.

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Seminar 19: Wednesday 10 May 1967

Good … I want first of all to announce to you that to my great regret I will not be giving this lecture - or this seminar, whatever you want to call it - next Wednesday. Because of the fact that there is a strike and that after all I intend for my part to respect it, besides the inconveniences that would be caused by the fact that it is announced that, all electricity being cut off, what has given me so much trouble, for several sessions, to make function here for your benefit and my own, would be rendered useless. Therefore, it should be written up again between now and the end of the session, so that the people who arrive late will not be unaware of the fact that the next seminar, since it is called that, will only take place in a fortnight's time. This, I believe, is the 10th May, so that gives us then the 24th. We will meet therefore on the 24th.

Has anyone any observation to make to me about what I communicated to you at the last session? Has anyone reflected especially - I am putting my cards on the table – about what I wrote on the blackboard?

It seems not … and I do not know whether or not this should make me breathe again! Is it because of the profound distraction with which people receive what I may write? But in any case, I was furious with myself when I went home, for having written on the blackboard the formula of **small o**, which is, of course, the square root of 5 minus 1 over 2 - and then immediately afterwards, the value of the square root of 5 as 2.236 … anyway, and something ... I was making some jokes about the logarithmic tables, but I would have been better off specifying for you, of course, that what I was writing there was not the value of **small o,** of course, but the square root of 5. You must not imagine that **small o** is two point something or other! Since on the contrary **small o** is less than unity. It is a figure which is a little bit greater than six tenths, and this is something that it is not pointless to know when you want to inscribe these lengths or these lines that I make use of, and to put in an almost exact proportion the length of **small o** next to the (2) length defined as being equivalent to the unit.

The second error that I made, is that after a long series of equalities, specifically that inscribed by the *one plus **o** over 1*, for example, I finished at the end by writing, equals **small o**, when it was 1/**o** that should have been written. Good, in any case, let those who have copied these formulae correct them!

We continue to advance into our object for this year and, of course, this logic that I am developing before you under the name of a *logic of the phantasy*, has a goal that I frequently defined and which must necessarily finally come to be applied. To be applied to something that could only be, of course, a work of sifting or even properly speaking criticism, against what is advanced at a certain level of experience and in a theoretical form, which, sometimes, leads to mistakes.

With this in mind, I opened, or rather reopened, for your use, a work which did not fail to appear important to me when it was produced, and it is quite accessible to all of you

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since it has been translated into French under the name of *La névrose de base,* by someone who undoubtedly lacks neither talent nor analytic penetration and who is called Mr. Bergler. It is a work that I recommend to you - since you are again going to have a fortnight before you - that I recommend to you by way of example or of occasional … support, of the use that our work here can be put to. In recommending it to you by way of example, of course, this does not mean that I am recommending it to you as a model! It is, nevertheless, as I have already said, a work of great merit. It is certainly not along these paths that we will in any way see being clarified what is involved in the nature of neurosis. But undoubtedly, this does not mean either that something is not glimpsed there about some essential mainspring. The notions of structure which are put forward here (and which, moreover, in the sense that I am using this word at the moment, are not the privilege of this author), what is stated usually in the notion of *layers* - that for the same reason one layers things from the superficial to the deep or, inversely, from the deep to the superficial - those specifically from which the author start s. Which means that in the cases that he envisages, but again it must be added that he considers them as by far the most numerous in neurosis, the cases defined in his sense by what he calls "oral regression", are defined by something that after all I have no reason - since it is summarised there in a few lines - not to directly borrow from his text (it would be safer!):

"*Oral neurotics are people who constantly provoke the situation of the following triad of the 'mechanism of orality':*:

(1) I shall repeat the masochist wish of being deprived by my mother …"

(3) Will someone write: 1° "*To be deprived (Etre rejeté)*", in the top right hand corner. Muriel! If you do not mind, will you do that for me. Take one of these big gadgets that are there for that.

"*Secondly, I shall not be*" … I am finishing the first paragraph: "*I shall repeat the masochistic wish"*, therefore, "*of being deprived by my mother, by creating or misusing situations in which some substitute of my pre-oedipal mother-image shall refuse my wishes."*

This is the deepest layer, the one to which access is most difficult, the one against the revelation of which the subject will defend himself most strongly and for the longest time. (I am saying this for listeners in this room who are complete novices).

"(2) I shall not be conscious of my wish to be refused and initial provocation of refusal, and see only that I am justified in self-defense, righteous indignation and pseudo-aggression because of the refusal."

2° *"Pseudo-aggression".* Write only these words, please.

"(3) Afterwards, I shall pity myself because such an injustice 'can only happen to me', and enjoy once more psychic masochistic pleasure."

I pass over what Bergler adds in terms of what he calls "the clinical picture", a singular differentiation, moreover, that he makes between what he considers as summarising the

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genesis of the problem – "the genetic picture" - this clinical form or aspect being defined for him by the intervention of a super-ego, whose vigilance consists precisely in maintaining the presence of the element that he designates here as masochistic, as an always active element in the maintenance of the defence.

This second point of view is in itself debatable and I will not treat it today. What I am putting forward today on this subject is the following: that nowhere is there articulated the way - which, moreover, is correct - the oral position of the subject, let us say, wants to be refused. Why it is not true to say that the oral drive consists in wanting to obtain, specifically, the breast. If the observation is justified in its radical position, at no point in this work by Bergler is there in any way taken into account what this means with respect to the drive defined as oral. And why, in a way, at the start, what seems, let us say, its most natural tendency is thus overthrown. An important point, nevertheless, because of the fact, precisely, that it is from his natural position that the subject will argue to sustain this aggression that Bergler, very correctly, calls "pseudo", because it is not one. This, of course, leaving open what is involved at the level of an aggression that is non-pseudo.

Since, on this subject, I introduced a register which is properly speaking that of (4) narcissism, equivalent to what, in the generally accepted theory, is called "secondary narcissism", since I put aggression into it as being its constitutive dimension, distinct, in this respect, from pure and simple aggression, we find ourselves here before a range of notions: from the raw one of aggression, which is almost never appropriate when it is a question of neurotic phenomena, through that of narcissistic aggression, and finally to, this pseudo-aggression that Bergler specifies as emerging, at a certain level, from the oral neurosis.

I am simply highlighting these distinctions, without for the moment giving them their full development.

In any case, the question is posed of what should be maintained as the status - up to the present defined as aggressive - of a certain moment of the oral drive and why, in the oral neurosis, this accent of "to be refused" is posited by Bergler as being the most radical. The only import of my remark is not to settle it as regards the facts, (besides the fact, of course, that to settle it would imply seeking out what he is talking about, namely, what neurosis, and the moment at which it is approached), but on the following, which is lacking in the theoretical text, namely, that there is no need to focus, precisely at the point where here things come to a halt, namely, on what the term "to be refused" means, and why it is relevant.

"To be refused" suggests some questioning suspense: "to be refused" in what respect? "To be refused" as what?

All the same, what happens when we present ourselves in a relation, for example, that will described as intersubjective, is not something novel for us, if we suppose ourselves on the threshold of analytic theory. You know, in this respect, what has been put forward in a certain style of thinking, the Hegelian one, whose value Sartre himself, detaching a branch, has accentuated at a certain level that he takes up, the one that has been qualified by a radical and mutual exclusion of consciousnesses, the incompatible

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character of their coexistence, of this "*either him or me*" which is supposed to arise once the dimension of subject appears, properly speaking.

This also sufficiently states the degree to which this putting into relief falls within the range of criticisms that have been put forward against the genesis initially taken in the "fight to the death", the fight to the death which takes its status from this radical conception of the subject as absolutely autonomous, as *Selbstbewusstsein*.

Is it something of this order that is at stake? It certainly seems not. Since everything that analytic experience brings us concerning the stage that is described as oral makes many other dimensions intervene in it, and specifically, this corporal dimension of oral aggression, of the need to bite and of the fear of being devoured.

Is this "to be refused" then to be taken on this occasion as concerning the object? In truth, we would easily see its justification being highlighted in the following: that *to be refused* would be, in this register, properly speaking, to save oneself from being
(5) engulfed by the maternal partner.

It would also perhaps be a little bit too simple to answer in this way the question of the status of the "to be refused". And to say that it is too simple is sufficiently underlined by something which is repeated twice in the lines that I have just read to you, by Bergler, and which associates to this oral neurosis, as being essential to it, the dimension of masochism. The "to be refused" in question is a defeated refusal, it is a "humiliating refusal", the author again writes elsewhere, and this is why he allows himself to introduce the label of masochism, which he describes as "psychic masochism" on this occasion, consecrating, in a way, a popular use of the term masochism, which I am not saying that one or other text of Freud does not give a pretext for introducing, but understood and taken in this use, which is now more and more current, is properly speaking ruinous.

The allusion to the reference to the object, at the level of this refusal, is here what alone might justify the introduction of the dimension of masochism at this level.

It is incorrect to say that what characterises masochism, is the painful aspect of a situation, assumed as such. To tackle things from this angle culminates in the abuse of making, as some do, the pseudo-masochist dimension, the essential register, for example, of the whole analytic relation. There is here a veritable perversion, as much of Freud's thinking as of the theory and the practice. And this is, properly speaking, unsustainable, when the dimension of masochism is defined, specifically, no doubt, by the fact that the subject assumes the position of an object, in the most accentuated sense that we give to the word *object*, in order to define it as this effect of falling and of waste, of remainder from the advent of the subject.

The fact that the masochist establishes a situation regulated in advance and regulated in its details, which can go as far as to put himself under the table, in the position of a dog, forms part of a production, of a scenario, which has its sense and its advantage and which, incontestably, is at the source of a gain of *jouissance*, whatever note we may or not add to it, concerning the maintenance, the respect and the integrity of the pleasure principle.

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That this *jouissance* is closely linked to a *manoeuvre* of the Other which, I would say, is most commonly expressed in the form of *contract* (when I say "of contract", I am saying of *written* contract), of something which dictates just as much to the Other - and much more to the Other than to the masochist himself - his whole behaviour - is what ought to instruct us about the relation which gives its specificity, its originality, to masochistic perversion and is supremely designed to illuminate for us, into its depths, the part that the Other - in the sense that I understand this term, I mean the Other with a capital O – plays in it. The Other, the locus in which there is deployed on this occasion a word (6) which is a contract word.

To reduce the use of the term "masochism", after that, to being something which is presented as simply an exception, an aberration, to reaching the simplest pleasure, is something likely to generate every abuse, of which the first, of which the first is the following, for which, good God, I do not believe I am using too strong nor inappropriate a term, in picking it out in Bergler's lines, from one end to the other of this remarkable book, full of observations that are very thorough and altogether instructive, in picking out, nevertheless, this something that I would call an exasperation which is not far from producing a spiteful attitude with respect to the patient: all these people that he calls, that he calls as if this were a great wrong on their part, "injustice collectors"! As if, after all, we were in a world in which justice was such an ordinary state that you really would have to go out of your way to have to complain about something! These "injustice collectors", in whom, undoubtedly, he uncovers their most secret operation in the fact of having been rejected. But, after all, can we not put forward against Bergler this idea that in certain cases, after all, to be rejected - as we have it moreover sufficiently in phantasies, but that is something different, I am speaking here about reality -- it is perhaps better, from time to time, to be rejected than to be accepted too quickly! The encounter that one may have with one or other person, who asks for nothing better than to adopt you, is not always… the best solution is not always not to escape from it!

Why this partiality which, in a way, implies that it would be in the order, in the nature of things, taking them at their proper angle, to do everything necessary to be admitted. This supposing that "to be admitted" is always to be admitted to a benevolent table.

It is, undoubtedly, not something undisturbing or something that may not appear to us, on occasion, to require to be highlighted, to remark that one or other thing that may happen in the world, and for example, quite simply at the moment, in a certain little district of South West Asia. What is at stake? It is a matter of convincing people that they are quite wrong not to want to be admitted to the benefits of capitalism! They prefer to be rejected! It is starting from there, it seems, that there ought to be posed questions about certain meanings. And specifically the following, for example, which will show us - which will show us no doubt, but today it not the day that I will even take the first steps in this direction - that if Freud wrote somewhere that "anatomy is destiny", there is perhaps a moment, when people have come back to a sound perception of what Freud discovered for us, that it will be said - I am not even saying "politics is the unconscious" - but, quite simply, *the unconscious is politics*!

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(7) I mean that what binds men together, or what opposes them, is precisely to be justified by that whose logic we are trying for the moment to articulate.

Because it is for want of this logical articulation that these slippages can be produced. This means that before noting the fact that in order to be rejected, for the "to be rejected" to be essential as a dimension for the neurotic, the following, in any case, is essential: **that he offers himself**.

As I wrote somewhere: just as much with the neurotic as with what we do ourselves - and with reason, since these are the paths that we are following - this consists precisely, with an offer of trying to make a demand. And such an operation, of course, does not always succeed, either in neurosis or in analytic treatment, especially if it is conducted in a clumsy way. This also, moreover, is of a nature … (for no analytic discourse fails to present to us with the opportunity - in questioning it - the opportunity of seeing what it implies along a certain innocent path, in which it never knows - I mean, this analytic discourse - how far it is going in what it articulates). This allows us to see, in effect, that if the key to the neurotic position depends on this close relation to the demand of the Other, in so far as he tries to make it emerge, it is indeed - as I was saying just now - because he is offering himself. And that, at the same time, we see here the phantastical and therefore obsolete character of this myth - of this myth introduced by analytic sermonising - called oblativity. It is a neurotic's myth.

But what motivates these needs which are expressed in these biases that are paradoxical and always so badly defined if one refers them purely and simply to the reality gain, collected or not in their train, if one omits this first essential stage, in the light of which alone (I mean, the stage) what emerges from these results in the real can be judged? It is the *logical articulation* of the position, the neurotic one in the present case, and, in fact, of all the others. Without a logical articulation which does not bring in any prejudice about what is to be wished for the subject, what do you know about it? What do you know about it, if the need … if the subject needs to get married to this or that person? And if he has messed up his marriage at one or other turning point, whether it is not for him a piece of good luck? In other words, what are you interfering with? When the only thing that you have to deal with, is the logical structure of what is involved. Of what is involved specifically, as regards a position like the one in which - to describe it as the *wish to be refused* (désir d'être rejeté)- you have first of all to know what the subject is pursuing at this level. What is, for the neurotic, the necessity, the gain, perhaps, in being refused? And to pin to it, in addition, the term *masochist* is simply, on this occasion, to introduce into it a pejorative note, which is immediately followed - as I pointed out earlier - by a directive attitude of the analyst which may on occasion go as far as to be persecutory.

(8) This is why it is altogether necessary to take things up again as I intend to do this year. And while we are at it, to recall that, if I started, this year, from the sexual act in its act structure, it is in relation to the fact that the subject only comes to birth through the relation of a signifier to another signifier and that this requires of them - I mean of these signifiers - the *material*.

To perform an act, is to introduce this relation of signifiers through which the conjuncture is consecrated as significant, namely, as an *opportunity to think*.

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People put the accent on mastering the situation, because people imagine that it is the will that presides over the famous *fort-da*, for example, of the child's games. The essential dimension is not the active aspect of motricity. The active aspect of motricity is only deployed, here, in the dimension of the game. It is its logical structure that distinguishes this appearance of the *fort-da*, taken as exemplary and now become a fashion. It is because it is the first signifying thematising - in the form of a phonematic opposition - of a certain situation, that one can qualify it as active, but only in the sense that, henceforth, we will call active only what has, in a sense that I defined it, the structure of the act.

The putting in question of the act, in a relation as distorted, hidden, excluded, put in the shade, as the relation between two beings belonging to two classes, that are definitive for the registry office and for the army medical board but that, precisely, our experience has taught us to see, to see as being absolutely no longer obvious for familial life, for example, and rather obscured for the secret life. In other words, what defines man and woman.

Analytic experience and theory contribute here the notion of satisfaction. I mean as being essential to this act. *Satisfaction* - in Freud's text, *Befriedigung* - introduces the notion of a supervening peace. Is this satisfaction the satisfaction of discharge, of detumescence? A simple satisfaction in appearance and one that it is quite proper to accept. Nevertheless, it is clear that everything we develop in terms that are more or less appropriate, implies that satisfaction - since we distinguish the one, for example, which is supposed to be of the pre-genital order from that which is genital - implies another dimension, the one implied even by these differences.

That, undoubtedly, at first, a term like that of "object relations" should have imposed itself here, is self-evident. This takes nothing from the ridiculous character of what happens when one tries to inscribe under this term, to vary it, to stagger it according to the greater or lesser ease in which the relation is inscribed. For nothing else is at stake when one distinguishes the genital relation by these two traits; on the one hand, the supposed tenderness that one could easily, simply - I pride myself on doing it –hold to (9) be never anything but the reverse of contempt and, on the other hand, what is accentuated in it about this supposed essence of breaking up, even of bereavement. Thus, the progress of the relation, I mean "the sexual relation" (in inverted commas), in so far as it becomes genital, would be that one could all the more easily think about one's partner: "You can croak"!

Let us take things up on a different plane of certainty. What does the sexual act satisfy?

It is quite obvious, at first, that one can answer, legitimately, simply, pleasure. I do not know a single register where this answer is fully tenable. It is an ascetic plane that is at stake in the story of Diogenes, who makes a public gesture of masturbation, as the sign of this theoretical affirmation of a hedonism described - by very reason of this mode of manifestation – as cynical, that one can consider as a treatment, *Handlung,* a medical treatment of desire.

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It is not without paying a certain price, and since, earlier, I introduced the political dimension - a curious and quite tangible thing, this philosophical type excludes himself, as is seen not simply from anecdotes, but from the position of the personage in his barrel, even if he had a visitor like Alexander - who pays for it by an exclusion from the dimension of the city.

I repeat, there is here something that one would be wrong to smile at, it is a properly speaking ascetic aspect, a way of living. It is probably not as common as it appears. I can say nothing about it. I did not try it.

(You can hear or you can't? You can't hear? So what are all these gadgets for? Good, I will try to speak louder.)

So then, one must not forget this locus of pleasure, of the least tension. Good. Only it is clear that this locus is not enough and many other modes, that a great variety of modes of satisfaction appear at the level of the search implied by the sexual act.

Our thesis - it is the one which our course this year embodies - is about the impossibility of grasping the totality of these modes, outside a logical scrutiny, alone capable of assembling, in their variety as in their breadth, the different modes of this satisfaction. The totality in question is the one which establishes what we will call, provisionally and with reservations, a masculine individual (*être)* and a feminine individual, in this foundational act that we evoked at the beginning of our discourse this year, in calling it the sexual act. If I said that there is no sexual act, it is in the sense that this act is supposed to connect together, in a simple form of distribution, the one evoked in technique, in common techniques, in that of the locksmith, the description of the male piece and the female piece. This simple distribution constituting what one might call the inaugural pact through which subjectivity is supposed to be generated as such, male or female.

(10) I considered at its time and in its place the famous "you are my wife". Well then, it is quite clear that it is not enough for me to say it for me to remain her husband. But anyway, it is enough that this does not resolve anything!

I found myself as "her" something. It is a wish to belong, which is heavy with a pact, at the minimum, a pact of preference. This situates absolutely nothing about either the man or the woman. At the very most one could say that they are two opposing terms and that it is indispensable that there should be two, but what each one is, is altogether excluded from a foundation in the word, as regards what is involved in the union. The matrimonial one, if you wish, or any other. That a certain dimension raises it to the dimension of sacrament changes absolutely nothing. Absolutely nothing in what is at stake, namely, the being of the man or of the woman.

In particular, this leaves so completely to one side the category of femininity, since I took the example of "you are my wife". And it is never a bad thing to bring in the example of the master of psychoanalysis himself, of whom one could say that, for him, this pact was extraordinarily dominant. This struck all of those who approached him. *Uxorious*, as they say in English, *uxorieux*, is how Jones describes it, after so many others. And, after all, it is not a mystery either that this thinking up to the end came up

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against the theme: "What does a woman want?". Which comes back to saying: "What is it to be a woman?"

It must be added that, since then, sixty seven years of psychoanalytic *surgery* have not resulted in us knowing more about what is involved in feminine *jouissance,* even though we ceaselessly speak about the woman and about the mother, people do not really know how to express it. It is all the same something worthwhile noting.

This is why it is important to notice … and this heuristic schema - which I gave you in the form of these three lines, the **small o**, the One which follows, (a perforated One) and the Other - reminds us simply of this, which is the currency of what we articulate throughout the day, namely, that the sexual act implies a third element at every level. To know, for example, that what is called the *mother* - the mother in the Oedipus complex on whom there are hung all the debasements of love life – is prohibited in every case and, because of this fact, remains always present in desire. Or again the *phallus* in so far as it must be lacking to the one who has it - namely, to the man, in so far as the castration complex means something, something which is still not at all clarified, because it implies that we have to invent in connection with it the import of a special negation; for after all, if he does not have it, in the register and in so far as the sexual act can exist, this is not to say, for all that, that he loses it either!, (the subject of this negation, I hope, will be able to be tackled before the end of this year - that this (11) phallus, on the other hand, becomes the being of the partner who does not have it.

It is here that we no doubt find the reason why Aristotle, as I recalled the last time, however subjected to grammar he may appear to have been, we are told, in developing the range, the list, the catalogue of *Categories,* curiously, after having said everything (quality, quantity, *pote*, *pom*, *toti*, and everything … all the rest that follows with that lot), did absolutely not breathe a word about it. Even though the Greek tongue, like ours, is absolutely subject to what Pichon calls "*sexuisemblance"*, namely, that there is *le fauteuil* and that there is *la photo* (as moreover … wait a minute … in passing you can amuse yourself by reversing the spelling; this will tell you a lot about a completely hidden dimension in the analytic relation: the *photeuil* and the *fauto,* it is very amusing!) Anyway, in any case, Aristotle never dreamt of sustaining in connection with any being, what all the same imposed itself just as much in his time as in ours, of knowing whether there was a category of sex.

It is either one thing or the other. Either he was not guided by grammar as much as we are told, or there is some reason, then, for this omission. It is probably linked to the following. When I spoke earlier of a masculine individual (*être*) or a feminine individual, it was perhaps a faulty use, namely, that perhaps, the individual is, as Pichon expressed it again, "*insexuable"*; that the *to ti*, the *quiddity* of sex is perhaps lacking, that there is perhaps only the phallus. This, in any case, would explain many things. In particular, this savage struggle which is established around about and which gives us undoubtedly the visible, if not the final reason for what is called "the battle of the sexes"! Only, I also believe, there again, that the battle of the sexes is something about which, moreover, history shows that it was the most superficial psychoanalysts who dwelt on it. Nevertheless, it remains that a certain *aletheia,* to be taken in the sense, with the accent of *Verborgenheit* that Heidegger gives it, is perhaps, properly speaking, to be established as regards what is at stake concerning the sexual act.

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This is what justifies my use of this schema, which, I underline in passing, in order not to confuse it with other things that I have said in other circumstances and specifically concerning the structure and the function of the cut, of which I sometimes told you, that in the way in which I symbolise it when I make it operate on what is called "the projective plane", I am claiming not to *construct a metaphor*, but, properly speaking, to speak about *the real support* of what is involved. It is obviously not at all the same in this very simply little schema of this One, that I constructed the last time, in dots and perforated, of this Other and of this **small o**.

It is this very simple triad, around which there can and ought to be developed a certain number of points that we have to highlight in this connection, about what is involved, in referring to sex everything that is symptom, and which, this year, I intend to pose - certainly in a repeated fashion and I cannot repeat things too much when it is a matter of new categories -to repeat what is going to serve us as a foundation:

The One, to begin in the middle, is the most litigious. The One concerns this *so-called* sexual union, namely, the field in which there is put in question whether there can be produced this act of partition which the distribution of functions defined as male and female would necessitate.

We have already said, with the metaphor of the cauldron that I recalled the last time, that there is in any case here, provisionally, something that we can only designate by the presence of a *gap*, of a hole, if you wish. There is something which does not fit, which is not self-evident and which is precisely what I recalled earlier about the abyss which separates any promotion, any proclamation, of the male/female bipolarity, from everything that experience give us concerning the act which grounds it.

I want here for today, in the time that I have been given, to underline, that it is from there, from this field of the One, of this fictional One - of this One to which there is limited a whole analytic theory whose fallacy you heard me denouncing on several occasions these last times - it has to be posited that it is from this, from this field designated as One, numbered One, not assumed as unifying - at least until we have proved it - that it is from there that all truth speaks, in as much as for us, analysts, (and for many others, before we even appeared, even though not a long time before, for a thinking which dates from what we can call by its name after all: the Marxist turning point), **the truth has no other form than the symptom.**

The *symptom*, namely, the significance of the discordances between the real and what it pretends to be. The ideology, if you wish. But on one condition, which is that for this term, you should go as far as to include in it perception itself.

Perception is the *model* of ideology. Because it is a sieve with respect to reality. And moreover why should one be astonished at it? Since everything that exists in terms of ideologies, ever since the world has been full of philosophers, was never after all constructed except on a first reflection, which was brought to bear on perception.

I am coming back to it. What Freud called the "river of mud", concerning the largest field of knowledge, this whole part of absolutely inundating knowledge from which we

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are scarcely emerging, to pinpoint it by the term of mystical knowledge. At the basis of everything that has manifested itself to the world, in this order, *there is **only** the sexual act.* The other side of my formula: *there is **no** sexual act*.

It is altogether superfluous to pretend to be referring to the Freudian position in any way whatsoever, if one does not take literally the following. At the basis of everything that (13) has been contributed, up to the present, my God, in terms of satisfaction, knowledge … (I am saying, *knowledge*, I pinpointed it as mystical in order to distinguish it from what has been born in our day in the form of *science*)… of everything that belongs to knowledge, there is nothing, at it source, *except* the sexual act.

To read, in Freud, that there are, in the psyche, *desexualised* functions, means - in Freud - that one must seek sex at their origin. This does not mean that there is what is called in one or other place, for political needs, this famous "non-conflictual sphere", for example, an ego that is more or less strong, more or less autonomous, that can have a more or less aseptic apprehension of reality.

To say that there are relations to the truth - I am saying: the truth - that do not involve the sexual act, is properly speaking not true. There are none such.

I apologise for these formulae, whose cutting edge, I suggest, may perhaps be felt in too lively a manner. But I made this observation to myself. First of all, that all of this is implied in everything that I have ever stated, in so far as I know what I am saying. But also this remark: that the fact that I know what I am saying is not enough! That is not enough for you to recognise it there. Because, basically, the only sanction of the fact that I know what I am saying, is what I do not say! This is not a fate proper to me. It is the fate of all of those who know what they are saying.

This is what makes communication very difficult. Either one knows what one is saying, and one says it. But, in many cases, we must consider that it is pointless, because no one notices that the core of what you have to get across, is precisely what you never say! This is what the others say and what continues to make noise and, still more, involves certain effects. This is what forces us, from time to time, and even more often that our turn, to do a good sweeping out. Once one is engaged on this path one has no reason to finish. There was, formerly, someone called Hercules who, it appears, finished his work in the stables of someone call Augias. It is the only case that I know of stables being cleaned up, at least when it is a certain domain that is at stake!

There is only a single domain, it seems - and I am not sure about it - which has no relation with the sexual act in so far as it concerns the truth: it is mathematics, at its point of confluence with logic. But I believe that this is what allowed Russell to say that one never knows whether what one is putting forward is true. I am not saying, truly true! Quite simply, true.

In fact, it is true, starting from a definitional position of the truth. If such and such of some axioms are true, then a system develops, which one can judge to be consistent or not.

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What is the relation of this with what I have just said, namely, with the truth, in so far as it requires the presence, the putting into question as such of the sexual act?

(14) Well then, even after having said that, I am not sure, all the same, that this marvellous, this sublime modern deployment of mathematical logic, or of logical mathematics, is altogether without a relation with the hesitation about whether there is or not a sexual act.

It is enough for me to hear the groans of someone like Cantor. Because it is in the form of a groan that at given moment of his life he states that people do not know that the great difficulty, the great risk of mathematics, is that it is a place of freedom. We know that Cantor paid very dearly for this freedom!

So that, the formula that the true concerns the real, in so far as we are engaged in it by the sexual act, by this sexual act about which I am advancing, first of all, that one is not too sure that it exists - even though it is the only thing that interests truth - appears to me the most correct formula, at the point that we are getting to in it.

The symptom, then, any symptom, is knotted together at this locus of the holed One. And this is why it always involves, however astonishing this may appear to us, its aspect of satisfaction. I am saying, for the symptom.

Sexual truth is exigent and it is better to satisfy it a little bit more than not enough.

From the point of view of satisfaction, we can conceive that a symptom, in this respect, may be more satisfying than reading a detective story.

There is a greater relation between a symptom and the sexual act, than between the truth and the fundamental “I am not thinking”, with which I reminded you at the beginning of these reflections, man alienates his “I am not”, which is not easy to tolerate. Compared to which, our earlier alibi of “to be rejected”, even though it is not all that agreeable in itself, may appear more tolerable.

So then? We are finished for the moment with the One. I had to indicate this. Let us go to the Other, as the locus where the signifier takes place. Because I did not tell you up till now that the signifier was there, since the signifier only exists as a repetition. Because it is what brings about the thing that is at stake as true.

At the origin, one does not know where it comes from. It is nothing, as I told you the last time, but this stroke which is also a cut, starting from which the truth can be born.

The Other is the reservoir of material for the act.

Material accumulates, very probably, because of the fact that the act is impossible.

When I say that, I am not saying that it does not exist. It is not enough to say it. Since the impossible is the real, quite simply. The pure real. The definition of the possible always requiring a first symbolisation.

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If you exclude this symbolisation, this formula will appear much more natural to you: *the impossible is the real*.

(15) It is a fact that the possibility of the sexual act has not been proved in any formal system. As you see, I am insisting, huh? I am coming back to it!

What proves that one cannot prove it? Now that we know very well that non-computability, non-decidability do not in any way imply irrationality, that people define, that people circumscribe perfectly well, that whole volumes are written on this domain of the status of the non-decidability and that one can perfectly well define it logically.

At this point, then, what is it? What is this Other, the big one, there, with a capital O? What is its substance? Huh?

I allowed myself to say - for in truth, even though in truth, you must believe that I allow myself to say it less and less, because one no longer hears, anyway, I no longer hear: it no longer comes to my ears - I allowed myself to say, for a time, that I camouflaged under this locus of the Other, what is called agreeably and, after all, why not, the spirit. The trouble is that it is false.

The Other, when all is said and done, and if you have not already guessed it, the Other here, as it is written, is the **body**!

Why would one call something like a volume or an object, in so far as it is subject to the laws of movement, in general, like that, a body? Why should one speak about falling bodies? What a curious extension of the word "body"! What relation is there between a little ball which falls from the tower of Pisa and the body which is ours, if not that it is starting from the fact that it is first of all the body, our presence as animal body which is the first locus in which to put inscriptions, the first signifier, as everything is there to suggest to us in our experience; except, of course, that things always impassion us. When one speaks about a wound, one adds narcissistic and one thinks right away that this ought to annoy the subject, who naturally is an idiot! Nobody imagines that what is interesting in a wound, is the scar.

The reading of the Bible could be there to remind us, with roses put at the bottom of the rushes where Jacob's flocks are going to graze, that different devices to impose a mark on the body do not date from yesterday and are quite radical. That if one does not start from the idea that the hysterical symptom, under its simplest form, that of a "*ragade*" does not have to be considered as a mystery, but as the very principle of any signifying possibility. You do not have to rack your brains. The fact that the body is made to inscribe something that is called the mark would avoid a lot of worries for everyone and the resifting of a lot of stupidities. The body is made to be marked. It has always been done. And the first beginnings of the gesture of love, is always to outline more or less this gesture a little bit.

There you are. This having been said, what is the first effect, that most radical effect of (16) this irruption of the One (in so far as it represents the sexual act), at the level of the body.

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Well then, this is what gives us our advantage over a certain number of dialogued speculations about the relation of the One and the many. We, for our part know that it is not as dialectical as all that. When this One irrupts into the field of the Other, namely, at the level of the body, the body breaks into fragments.

The fragmented body; this is what our experience shows us to exist at subjective origins. The child dreams of dismemberment! He breaks the beautiful unity of the empire of the maternal body. And what he experiences as a threat, is to be torn apart by her.

It is not enough to discover these things and to explain them by a little mechanics, a little ball game: aggression is reflected, reflects back, comes back, starts again! What began it? Before this, it could well be useful to put in suspense the function of this fragmented body. Namely, the only angle from which it has interested us in fact, namely, its relation to what may be involved in truth, in so far as it is itself suspended on *aletheia* and on *Verborgenheit*, on the hidden character of the sexual act.

Starting from there, of course, the notion of Eros, in the form that I recently railed against as being the force which is supposed to unite by an irresistible attraction all the cells and the organs that our sack of skin gathers together; a conception that is at least mystical, because they to do not put up the least resistance to being extracted from it and the rest do not carry on too badly! It is obviously a compensatory fantasy for the terrors linked to this Orphic phantasy that I have just described for you.

Moreover, it is not at all explanatory. Because it is not sufficient that terror should exist for it to explain anything whatsoever. It is rather it that should be explained. That is why it is better to direct oneself along the path of what I call a consistent, logical system for, in effect, it is necessary that we should now come to the following**: why is there this Other** (with a capital O)?

What is the position of this strange double that – you should note - the single takes on? Because the Other (with a capital O), for its part, is not two.

This position, then, of double that the single takes on, when it is a matter of explaining this curious One which, for its part, is tied together in the beast with two backs, in other words in the embrace of two bodies. Because this is what is at stake. It is not this funny One; that the Other, for its part, is still funnier. There is no link between them - I mean: this field of the One, this field of the Other. Quite the contrary. This is even the reason why the Other is also the unconscious. Namely, the symptom *without its sense*, deprived of its truth, but on the contrary always more responsible for what it contains in terms of knowledge. What cuts them off from one another, is very precisely what constitutes the subject.

There is no subject of the truth, unless it is of the act in general, of the act which, (17) perhaps, cannot exist *qua* sexual act. This is very specifically Cartesian; the subject knows nothing about itself, except that it doubts. Doubt … doubt, as the jealous man says when he has just seen through the keyhole hindquarters about to affront legs that he knows well. He asks himself whether it is not God and his soul! The foundation of Descartes' subject, its incompatibility with extension, is not a sufficient reason for identifying the body with extension. But its exis… its exclusion as subject is, on the

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contrary, grounded in that. And by taking it from the angle that I am presenting to you, the question of its intimate union with the body - I am speaking about the subject, not the soul - is no longer one.

It is enough to reflect on the fact that there is (attention, huh, those who are not used to it!) as regards the signifier, namely, for the structure, no other support - of a surface, for example - than the hole that it constitutes by its edge. This is all that defines it. Raise things by a degree, take things at the level of volume. There is no other support for the body than the sharp edge that presides over its cutting up.

These are topological truths as regards which I will not decide here whether they have or not a relation with the sexual act, but every possible development of what is called an algebra of edges, requires the following - which gives us the image of what is involved in the subject, at this joint between what we have defined as the One and the Other - the subject is always a structural degree below what constitutes its body.

This also explains why in no way, can its passivity, namely, this fact through which it depends on a mark of the body, cannot in any way be compensated for by any activity, even its affirmation in act.

So then, of what is this Other the Other?

I am very distressed. The time, a certain inordinate, perhaps also a certain paradoxical use of the cut - but in this case you can take it as intentional - means that I will leave you here, today, at the end of the hour.

The Other is only the Other of what is the first moment of my three lines: namely, this **small o**. This is where I started from during our last talks, in order to tell you that its nature is that of the incommensurable, or rather, that it is from its incommensurability that there arises every question about measure.

It is on this **small o**, object or not, that we will take up our conversation the next time.

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Seminar 20: Wednesday 24 May 1967

I am going to try to make you enter today into this arcanum, which, even though it is trivial in psychoanalysis, is nonetheless an arcanum. Namely, the following that you will meet at every turn: that if the analysed subject, if the analysable subject, adopts what is called a regressive, or again, *pre-* (pre-oedipal, pre-genital, anyway pre-something or other …) position, which would be very desirable, and one might moreover be astonished, on this occasion, that it is not designated as *post-*, since it is in order to evade the operation, the impact of castration, that the subject is supposed to have taken refuge there …

If I am trying, this year, to sketch out before you a structure that presents itself as logical - a chancy, very precarious logic, perhaps, in which also I am sparing you, not giving too quickly, the forms that I have come to trust in my own scribblings, but am trying to show you what is accessible in an articulation of such a kind, in this easy form that, after all, I chose among others, which consists very simply in taking what is most incommensurable to the One, specifically, the golden number - and this with the aim simply of making tangible for you how along such a path, in which, I repeat to you, I do not claim at all either to have given you the definitive steps, nor even to have taken them myself, but how much more preferable is such a path, which is guaranteed by some truth concerning the dependency of the subject, rather than giving oneself over to these painful exercises of the usual analytic prose which distinguish themselves by these sort of prevarications, of senseless detours, which seem to be always necessary to account for the operation of libidinal positions; the bringing into play of a whole population of subjective entities, that you know well and which can be found everywhere, the ego, the ego ideal, the super ego, the id (*ça)* even, without counting the new and refined things that can be added to them by distinguishing the ideal ego from the ego ideal. Does not all of this carry in itself, indeed - as has been done in Anglo Saxon literature for some time - to add in the *self*, which, by manifestly being added to remedy this ridiculous multitude, nonetheless fails because it only (2) represents, in the way in which it is handled, a supplementary entity. Entities, beings of reason, always inadequate from the moment that we bring into play in a correct way the function of the subject as nothing other than what is represented by a signifier for another signifier.

In no case is a subject an autonomous entity. Only the proper name can give the illusion of it. The *I*, it is too much to say that it is suspect - since I have been speaking to you about it, it ought even no longer be so! - It is only very precisely this subject that - as signifier - I represent for the signifier walk, for example, or for the couple of signifiers: *la boucle*: "I shut up" *(je la boucle)*!

You can sense that if I took this formula, it is to avoid the pronominal form "I keep myself quiet" (*Je me tais)* which undoubtedly would begin to take us very far if we were to pose ourselves the question of what the *me* means in such a form as in many others. And you would see the degree to which its so-called reflexive acceptation is

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displayed across a range which does not allow it to be given any degree of consistency. But I will not extend myself, of course, in this direction, which is here only a reminder.

There is therefore a function, a subjective function, called castration as regards which one ought to recall how striking it is that it is presented to us (and this had never been said previously, I mean before psychoanalysis) … that it is presented to us as essential to gain admission to what is called the genital. If this expression were appropriate to the highest degree - I mean that it is not so - one might marvel at this something which, in that case, might be expressed as follows. That - let us say, in any case, how it might be presented if one tackled it from outside and after all we are, all of us, still there! - that the passage to the phantasy of the organ is, in a certain function – an undoubtedly privileged one, henceforth, the genital precisely - necessary for the function to be accomplished. I do not see any way of getting out of the blind alley, here, except by saying - and a psychoanalyst of importance, one notable in the political topography, used this means. I mean at the turning point of a sentence, without even properly noticing the import of what he is saying, he affirms to us that, after all, castration … well, it is a dream! This, used in the sense that it is one of the stories told by sick people.

Now it is nothing of the kind! Castration is a subjective structure - as I recalled just now - altogether essential precisely for something of the subject, however slim, to enter into this affair that psychoanalysis calls: "the genital".

I have to say that I think I have made a little opening in this blind alley, changed - as they say - something in it, in as much as, good God, not too long ago - four or five of our meetings ago - I introduced the remark that it could not simply be a matter of introducing the subject into this function of the genital! … (If in fact we know what (3) we mean when we call it that). Namely, about the passage from the function to the *act*. And the putting into question of whether this act may merit the title of sexual act. There is none? … There is? … *Chi lo sa?* There is, perhaps …We will know perhaps one day whether there is a sexual act - whether, I am going to give a commentary, sex (mine, yours) reposes on the function of a signifier capable of operating in this act.

In any case, one cannot in any way evade the fact, which is not alone affirmed by the doctrine, but that we encounter at every turn of our experience, that the only one who is capable of operating in the sense of the sexual act - I am speaking about something which resembles it and is not … (this is what I am going to try to refer myself to today, to introduce register of, properly speaking), namely, … perversion - the only one capable of operating in a fashion that is not faulty (*fautive)* is, let us say, the subject who is *castrated* and - let us repeat ourselves like dictionaries, (a sense to add to the word "castrated") - *in order* (*en règle)*, (expressing ourselves in this way does not take us far), *in order* with this complex called the castration complex. Which of course does not mean that one has a complex, but quite the contrary, as any literature worthy of this name (psychoanalytic, I mean), which is not the chatter of people who do not know what they are saying (which happens to even the highest authorities), which means well and truly, in any sound analytic literature, that one is, I would say,

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normed *(normé)* with respect to the sexual act. This does not mean that one gets to it. It means, at the very least, that one is on the right path!

In any case, *normed* has a very precise sense in the breakthrough from affine geometry to metric geometry. In short, one enters into a certain order of measure, which is the one that I am trying to evoke with my golden number, which here, I repeat, is of course only metaphorical. Reduce it to the term of the most spaced out incommensurable there is with respect to the One.

The castration complex, then, - I am saying it, good God, I hope I only have to say it here for the ears of novices - can in no way content itself with the support of the little story of the kind: Daddy said "It's going to be cut off … if you claim to succeed your father". First of all, because most of the time, (as naturally everyone has been able to see for a long time, as regards this little story, this little remark), it is Mammy who says it. She says it at the precise moment when John, or Johnny, in fact, succeeds his father, but in the moderate measure that he fiddles with himself quietly in a little corner, as quietly as a simpleton (*Baptiste)* ... that he fiddles with his little gadget … obviously, the way Daddy had already done when he was his age!

This has nothing to do with the castration complex. It is an amusing little story which (4) is not made any more likely by the fact that guilt about masturbation is encountered at every turn in the genesis of the troubles that we have to deal with.

It is not enough to say that masturbation is not physiologically harmful and that it is through its place in a certain subjective economy, we will say precisely, that it takes on its importance. We will even say, as I recalled one of these last times, that it can take on a quite clear hedonistic value, since it can, as I recalled, be pushed as far as asceticism. And that one or other philosophy can make of it, on condition of course of adopting behaviour completely coherent with its practice, can make of it a foundation for one's wellbeing. Remember Diogenes to whom it was not alone familiar, but who promoted it as an example of the way one should treat what remains, in this perspective, of the tiny surplus of organic tickling: *titillatio*. It must be said that this perspective is more or less immanent in every philosophical position and even encroaches on a certain number of positions that can be described as religious, if we consider the retreat of the hermit as something that, of itself, involves it.

It only begins to take on its interest - thus on this occasion its guilty value - where one is trying to reach the sexual act. Then the following appears. The *jouissance*, sought for in itself, of a part of the body, and which plays a role - I am saying "which plays a role" because one must never say that an organ is made for a function. One has organs … (I am telling you that … if you generalise a little, if you make yourself from time to time into a mussel or some other little beast and if you try to reflect what would it be like if you were in what one can scarcely call their skin, then you would understand quickly enough that it is not the function that makes the organ, but the organ that makes the function. But, in any case, it is a position that goes too much against the obscurantism described as transformist in which we bathe, for me to insist on it. If you do not want to believe me, go back into the main stream.) … It is therefore completely out of place to allege, in accordance with the moralising tradition … anyway, according to the way this is explained in the *Divine Comedy* … that

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masturbation is culpable and even a grave sin, because it not only deflects a means from its end … (the end being the production of little Christians, indeed - I come back to it, even though people were scandalised the last time that I said it – indeed, little proletarians) … well then, the fact that it raises a means to the rank of an end has absolutely nothing to do with the question as it should be posed, because it is that of the norm of an act, taken in the full sense that I recalled about this word *act*, and that this has nothing to do with the reproductive shoots that it can take on, with the end of perpetuating the animal.

On the contrary, we ought to situate it with respect to the following. The passage of the subject to the function of signifier, in this precise locus - completely outside the ordinary field in which we are at ease with the word *act* - which is called this problematic point that is the sexual act.

(5) That the passage from *jouissance*, where it can be grasped, should be … - by such an interdiction (to keep to the word that is used), by a certain negativing (in order to be more prudent and keep in suspense the fact that, perhaps, one could arrive at the formula in a more precise fashion) - that this passage, in any case, has the most manifest relation with the introduction of this *jouissance* to a *value* function, is what, in any case, can be said without being imprudent.

That experience - an experience, even, in which, as one might say, a certain listener's empathy is not foreign - announces to us the correlation between this passage of a *jouissance* to the function of a value, namely, its profound adulteration: the correlation between this and … (I have no reason to refuse myself what the literature gives here, since as I have just told you, the only way in here is an empathic one; this should be purified in a second moment, but after all we do not refuse ourselves this way in either, when we are on a difficult terrain) … should then, this castration, should have the closest relation with the appearance of what is called the object in the structure of orgasm, in so far - I am repeating it to you: we are still talking about empathy - as it is mapped out as distinct from a *jouissance* that is- ah! what are we going to call it?, autoerotic? this is a concession … *masturbatory*, and that is all, given what is at stake, namely, an organ, and a quite specific one.

Since, like autoerotism … God knows what has already been made of it and therefore what is going to be made of it! And as you know this is precisely what is in question here, namely, that this autoerotism which has here, in effect, which can have, an altogether specific sense, that of a local and manageable *jouissance*, like everything that is local! is soon going to be made into the oceanic bath in which we are going to have to map out all of this! As I told you: whoever, whoever grounds anything whatsoever on the idea of a primary narcissism and starts from there to generate what is supposed to be investment in the object, is quite free to continue (since it is with this that psychoanalysis functions throughout the world as a guilty industry) but can, moreover, be sure that everything that I am articulating here is designed to repudiate him absolutely.

Good! I said then, I admitted, I spoke about an object present in orgasm. There is nothing easier, from that, than to slip - and of course people do not fail to do so - towards simpering about the dimension of the person! When we copulate, those of us

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who have arrived at genital maturity, we have a reverence for the person. This is how it was expressed, twenty-five or thirty years ago, especially in the circle of French psychoanalysts, who have after all their interest in the history of psychoanalysis. Yes … Well then, there is nothing less sure. For precisely to pose the question about the object involved in the sexual act, is to introduce the question of whether this object is Man, or indeed *a* man, Woman or indeed *a* woman.

(6) In short, the interest of introducing the word *act* is to open up the question, which after all is worth opening up - because I am certainly not the one who makes it circulate among you - of whether, in the sexual act (in as much as for any of you it has ever happened: a sexual act), whether it is related to the advent of a signifier representing the subject as sex for another signifier, or whether it has the value of what I called in another register, the *encounter*, namely, the unique encounter! The one which, once it has happened, is definitive.

Naturally, people talk about all of that. People talk about it and - this is what is serious - people talk about it frivolously.

In any case, to mark that there are two distinct registers, namely, whether in the sexual act, man arrives at Man, in his status as man, and the woman in the same way, is a completely different question to whether one has, yes or no, encountered one's definitive partner. Since this is what is at stake when people evoke the encounter. Curious! It is curious that the more the poets evoke it, the less efficacious it is in the conscience of each one as a question.

That it is the person, in any case, may make anyone who has had a little glimpse of feminine *jouissance* smile a little!

There is here, undoubtedly, a first point that is very interesting to put right in the forefront, as an introduction to any question that may be posed about what is involved in what is called feminine sexuality. When what is at stake is precisely *her jouissance*.

There is one thing very certain and which is worthwhile remarking. It is that psychoanalysis, without a question like the one that I have just produced, renders all the subjects installed in its experience - specifically the psychoanalysts - incapable of confronting it in the slightest way.

The males - the proof has been given superabundantly - this question of feminine sexuality has never taken a serious step, when it comes from a subject apparently defined as male by his anatomical constitution. But the most curious thing is that women psychoanalysts, then, for their part, in approaching this theme, manifestly show all the signs of a feebleness that suggests just one fact. That they are absolutely terrified by what they might have to formulate about it!

So that the question of feminine *jouissance* does not seem to be really going to be studied in the near future, since this is, good God, the only locus in which one could say something serious about it. At the very least, to evoke it in this way, to suggest to everyone, and especially the feminine part of those who are gathered here as listeners,

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the fact that one can express oneself in this way about feminine *jouissance*, is enough for us to place it, to inaugurate a dimension, which, even if we do not enter it, for want to being able to do so, is absolutely essential to situate everything that we have to say along another route.

(7) The object, then, is not at all given in itself by the reality of the partner! I mean the object involved in the normed dimension, described as genital, of the sexual act. It is much closer - in any case it is the first approach that is given to us - to the function of detumescence.

To say that there is a castration complex, is precisely to say that detumescence in no way suffices to constitute it. This is what we have, rather dully, taken care to affirm at first. Now, of course, this fact of experience that it is not the same thing to copulate or to masturbate.

It nevertheless remains, that this dimension which ensures that the question of the value of *jouissance* is attached, takes its point of support, its pivotal point, where detumescence is possible, ought not to be neglected! Because the function of detumescence, whatever we may have to think about it on the physiological plane, (royally neglected by psychoanalysts, who on this point have not brought the slightest little clinical light that is new, which is not already in all the manuals, about the physiology of sex, I mean, which could not be found everywhere before psychoanalysis was born) but what matter! This only re-enforces what it is a matter of knowing: that detumescence is only there for its subjective utilisation, in other words, to recall the limit described as the pleasure principle.

Detumescence, by being the characteristic of the functioning of the penile organ, specifically, in the genital act - and precisely in the measure in which what it supports in terms of *jouissance* is kept in suspense - is there to introduce, legitimately or not (when I say legitimately, I mean, as something real, or as a supposed dimension), to introduce the fact **that there is *jouissance* beyond**. That the pleasure principle, here, functions as a limit at the edge of a dimension of *jouissance* in so far as it is suggested by the union described as the sexual act.

Everything that experience shows us, what is called premature ejaculation, and what it would be better to call, in our register, *premature detumescence*, gives rise to the idea that the function, that of detumescence, can represent in itself the negative of a certain *jouissance.* Of a *jouissance* which is precisely the following, and the clinic only shows us too much of it, of a *jouissance* which is … what the subject sets his face against. Indeed the subject makes off, in so far, precisely, as this *jouissance* is, as such, too consistent with this dimension of castration, perceived in the sexual act, as a threat. All this precipitation of the subject with respect to this beyond allows us to conceive that it is not without foundation that, in these stumblings, these lapses of the sexual act, there is demonstrated precisely what is at stake in the castration complex. Namely, that detumescence is cancelled out as a good in itself, that it is reduced to the function of protection, rather, against a dreaded evil, whether you call it *jouissance* or (8) castration, as itself a lesser evil. And, from then on, that the smaller the evil is, the more it is reduced, the more perfect is the evasion. This is the mainspring that we put

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our finger on clinically, in everyday treatments, of everything that can come under the different modes of impotence, especially in so far as these are centred around premature ejaculation.

Therefore, there is no *jouissance,* in any case one that can be located, except of one's own body. And what is beyond the limits that the pleasure principle imposes on it, it is not chance but necessity which associates it as such with the evocation of the sexual correlate, by making it appear only in this conjuncture of the sexual act, without our being able to say any more about it.

In other words, for all those who already have their ears open to the usual terms of psychoanalysis, it is on this plane and on this plane alone that Thanatos can be found o be in any way connected to Eros. It is in the measure that the *jouissance* of the body - I am saying of one's own body, beyond the pleasure principle - is evoked, and is not evoked elsewhere than in the act, precisely in the act which puts a hole, a void, a gap, in its centre, around what is localised in hedonistic detumescence, it is from that moment on that there is posed a possibility of the conjunction of Eros and Thanatos. It is starting from there that the fact is conceivable, and is not a crude mythical lucubration, that into the economy of the instincts, psychoanalysis introduced what, not by chance, it designates under these two proper names.

Well then, all of that, as you see, it still only turning around it! God knows, nevertheless, that I am making an effort so that it will not be like that! We have to believe then that if we are still going around it, it is because it is not easy to enter into it!

We can, at least, retain, gather, these truths: that the sexual encounter of bodies does not pass, in its essence, by way of the pleasure principle.

Nevertheless, that to orient oneself in the *jouissance* that it involves (I am saying, that it involves, supposedly, because to orient oneself in it does not yet mean entering it, but it is very necessary to orient oneself with respect to it) … to orient oneself with respect to it, it has no other reference point than this sort of negativing brought to bear on the *jouissance* of the organ of copulation, in so far as it is the one that defines the presumed male, namely the penis. And that it is from there that the idea arises, (these words are chosen), that the idea arises of a *jouissance* of the feminine object. I said, that the idea arises, and not the *jouissance,* of course! It is an idea. It is subjective. Only what is curious and what psychoanalysis affirms - only for want of expressing it in a logically correct fashion, naturally, no one notices what it means, what it involves! - is that feminine *jouissance* itself can only pass by way of the same (9) reference point! And that this is what is called, in the case of the woman, the castration complex! It is indeed because of that that the woman-subject is not easy to articulate, and that at a certain level I propose to you the *Homme-elle.* That does not mean that every woman limits herself to that, precisely. There is something of the woman somewhere … "*odor di femina"* … But she is not always easy to find! I mean, to put in her place! Since, to organise a place there, a reference is necessary whose organic accidents mean that it is only found in what is called, anatomically, the male. It is only starting from this suspense posed on the male organ, that an orientation for the two, the man and the woman, is encountered, that the function, in

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other words, takes on the value of being, with respect to this hole, this gap of the castration complex, in a reversed (*renversée*) position.

A reversal is a sense. Before the reversal, it may happen that there is no subjectifiable sense! And after all, it is perhaps to this that there must be referred the altogether striking fact that I told you earlier, namely, that women psychoanalysts have taught us nothing more than men analysts had been capable of lucubrating about their *jouissance.* Namely, very little!

Starting from a reversal, there is an orientation, and however little it may be, if it is all that can orientate the *jouissance* involved, in the woman, in the sexual act, well then, you understand that until further notice we have to be content with it.

In short, this leaves us at a point that has its characteristic. We will say that as regards the sexual act, what can be currently formulated about it, is the dimension of what is called, in other registers, *good intentions*. A good intention, concerning the sexual act, here, at least in what can, at the point that we are in it, be formulated, this is what, reasonably, according to the psychoanalysts, here is what reasonably we can and we should be content with.

All of this is very well expressed in the myth, the fundamental myth. When the Father, the original Father is said to "enjoy all the women", does that mean that the women have any enjoyment, however little it may be? The subject remains intact. And it is not only with a humorous intention that I am evoking it at this point. The fact is, as you are going to see, this is a key question! I mean that everything that I am going to have to articulate, I am saying in our next meeting, concerning what I am going to take up again, namely, what I left open the last time. That if we had to leave deserted and uncultivated this central field, that of the One, of sexual union - in so far as we find slightly unsettling the idea of a process, whatever it may be, of partition, allowing there to be grounded what are called "the roles", and that we, for our part, call the *signifiers* of man and of woman - that if what I left you on the threshold of the (10) last time, namely, a quite different conjunction, that of the Other, of the big Other, on the register, on the tablets of which there is inscribed this whole adventure, and I told you that this register and these tablets, were nothing other than the body itself, that this relation of the Other, of the big Other, to the partner which remains to him, namely, what we started from - and it is not for nothing that I called it **small o** – namely, your substance, substance as subject, in so far as, as subject, you have none, except this object fallen from signifying inscription, except what ensures that this **small o** is this sort of fragment, belonging to big O, *en ballade*; namely, you yourselves, who are indeed here as subjective presence, but who, once I shall have finished, will clearly show your nature as **o**-object, from the aspect of a great clearance that will take place immediately in this room! Well then, I will leave in suspense the question of what is involved in the phallic object. Because it is necessary - and it is not a necessity which is imposed only on me – for me to carefully examine the way in which it is supported as object. All of this, precisely, in order for me to perceive that it is not supported itself. This is what the castration complex means: there is no phallic object!

This is what leaves us our only chance, precisely, for there to be a sexual act.

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It is not castration, it is the phallic object which is the effect of the dream, around which the sexual act fails!

To make you sense what I am in the process of articulating, there is no lovelier illustration than the one given us by the sacred book, by this unique book, by the Bible itself. And if you have become deaf to its reading, go to the narthex of what is called the Church of St. Mark, in Venice, in other words the Doge's Chapel. It is nothing else, but its narthex is worth the trip. Nowhere, in an image, can there be expressed with more relief what is in the text of Genesis. And among others, you will see there, I must say sublimely magnified, what I would call "this infernal idea of God's" when from Adam-Cadmus, from the one who, since he was One, had to become two - he was man under its two aspects, male and female - "It is good", said God (*Lacan punctuates this with a laugh*) "that he should have a companion"! Which would still be nothing, if we were not to see that, in order to proceed to this adjunct, all the more strange in that it seems that up to then, the Adam in question, a figure made of red earth, had done very well without it, God *takes advantage of his sleep*, to take from him a *rib*, from which he fashions, we are told, the first Eve!

Could there be any more gripping illustration of what introduces, into the dialectic of the sexual act, this fact that man, at the precise moment at which there comes to be marked on him a supplementary divine intervention, is found henceforth to have to deal, as object, with a piece of his own body?

Everything that I have just said, the Mosaic law itself and, moreover, perhaps the (11) accent added to it by underlining that this piece is not the penis, since, in circumcision it is in a way incised in order to be marked by this negative sign. Is this not designed to make there arise before us the perverse gate, I would say, there is in the establishment, on the threshold of what is involved in the sexual act, of this commandment: "*They shall be one flesh*".

Which means that in a field interposed between us and what is involved, in what might be, something that can be called the sexual act, in so far as the man and woman valorise themselves in it for one another. First - and we would have to know whether this thickness can be crossed - there would be the autonomous relation of the body to something that is separated from it, after having formed part of it.

Such is the enigma, the sharp threshold where we see the law of the sexual act in its crucial datum. That the castrated man can be conceived of as never having to embrace anything but this complement, with which he can deceive himself - and God knows he does not fail to do so - by taking it as a phallic complement.

I pose today, in ending my discourse, this question: that we still do not know how to designate this complement. Let us call it, logic.

The fiction that this object is other, undoubtedly requires the castration complex.

It is not astonishing that we are told, that we are told in the mythical asides of the Bible, these asides, curiously, that one finds in the little marginal additions by the

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rabbis, that we are told that something, which is perhaps indeed precisely the primordial woman, the one who was there before Eve, and whom they call - I mean the rabbis, I am not the one who gets involved in these stories! - whom they call Lilith. That it was she, perhaps, who, in the shape of a serpent and by the hand of Eve has presented to Adam … what? The apple! The oral object, and which, perhaps, is there for no other reason than to awaken him to the true sense of what had happened to him while he was asleep! It is indeed in this way, in effect, that things are taken in the Bible. Since we are told that starting from there, he enters for the first time into the dimension of knowledge.

It is precisely because, this dimension of knowledge, the effect of psychoanalysis is the following: that we have located in it at least in two or three of its major forms, and one could say also in two others, even though the link to it is not yet made, what the nature, what the nature and function is of this object completely concentrated in this apple. It is only along this path that we may be able to come to specify better, and, precisely, from a series of contrasting effects, what is involved in this object, the phallic object, of which I said that it would be necessary, in order finally to articulate it, for me to carefully examine it first.

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Seminar 21: Wednesday 31 May 1967

For the those who find themselves, for example, returning today after having followed my teaching for a while, I have to signal what I have been able, these most recent times, to introduce into it in terms of new articulations.

An important one, which dates from our antepenultimate meeting, is undoubtedly to have designated, expressly, I would say - since, in fact, it was not inaccessible to those who understand me - expressly, the locus of the Other - everything that I articulated as such up to now (I mean since the beginning of my teaching) - designated the locus of the Other in the body. ("*Voilà*", murmurs a feminine voice.)

The body itself is, from the origin, this locus of the Other, in so far as it is there that, from the origin, there is inscribed the mark *qua* signifier.

It was necessary for me to recall it today, at the moment that we are going to take the next step, in this logic of the phantasy, which is found - you will see it being confirmed in the measure that we advance - which is found to be able to accommodate itself to a certain logical laxity. *Qua* logic of phantasy it pre-supposes this dimension described as fantasy, in the sense that, at the beginning, exactness is not required of it. Moreover, we find that what is most rigorous in the exercise of an articulation that deserves the title of logic includes in itself a growing approximation. I mean a mode of approximation which involves in itself not alone a growth, but a growth that as far as possible is the best, the most rapid there is, towards the calculation of an exact value. And it is because of this that … in referring to an algorithm of very great generality, which is none other than the one most proper to guarantee the relation of an ideal incommensurable, the most simple there is, the most spaced out also, by circumscribing what it constitutes in terms of the irrational by its very progress. I mean that the incommensurability of this **o** … that I only image as being the golden number for the legibility of my text. Because those who know, know that this sort of number constituted by the very progress of its approximation is a whole family of (2) numbers and, as one might say, can start from anywhere whatsoever, from any exercise whatsoever of relation, on the single condition, that the incommensurable requires that the approximation should have no term, while being, nevertheless, perfectly recognisable at each instant as rigorous.

This then is what is at stake: to grasp what we are confronted with in the form of the phantasy as reflection of a necessity. In other words, the problem, which for a Hegel could be contained in this simple limit constituted by the certainty included in self-consciousness… [*at this point a loudspeaker starts up in the room: "OK then five ... four ... three ..."*]… this certainty about oneself, with which Hegel can allow himself, can allow himself, given certain conditions that I will evoke later which are the conditions of history, to put in question the relation with a truth - this certainty, in Hegel - and this is how he concludes a whole process through which philosophy is the exploration of knowledge. He can allow himself to introduce into it the *telos*, the end,

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the goal, of an absolute knowledge. It is in so far as at the level of certainty, he finds himself being able to indicate that it does not contain its truth in itself.

[*Another loudspeaker starts up*]

This is the way that we find ourselves being able not simply to take up again the Hegelian formula, but to complicate it. The truth with which we have to deal depends on this act through which the foundation of self-consciousness, through which subjective certainty is confronted with something which of it nature is radically foreign to it and which is properly the fact that…

[*Dr. Lacan is interrupted once again. "The minister has insisted …", says another loudspeaker.*
Dr. Lacan *– "Can nothing be done to stop this interruption?"* ***Madame Aubry*** *– "Unplug the microphone!"*
Murmuring and interruptions. One of the audience climbs up onto a window to try to unhook the microphone, without success … (That's dangerous, someone says, anticipating his gesture). A lot of whispering goes on in the room.
"If there is an examination of perspective, there is an entrance examination." continues another loudspeaker
Dr. Lacan *– "Which loudspeaker seems to be speaking, at the moment? Are all of them?"*
Dr. Faladé heads towards the tape-recorder
Dr. Lacan *– "Can anything be done?"* ***One of the audience****: "Switch off the mains"!*
Dr. Lacan *(pointing at the emergency exit) … "Yes but it is closed!"*
Madame Aubry *– "It must be in the projection room."*
Dr. Lacan*, (to the official, who arrives and who is heading towards the emergency exit) … "It's closed. You weren't told? But I have just told you")*
The official *– "Is it open down there?" (He points at the little room on the left, gets into it and fixes the problem without delay)]*.

What it is a matter of introducing today, then, and all the more rapidly since our time has been shortened, is the following: psychoanalytic experience introduces the fact that the truth of the sexual act gives rise to questions in experience. Naturally, the importance of this discovery only takes on its relief starting from a positioning of the term *sexual act* as such. I mean, for ears already sufficiently formed to the notion of the prevalence of the signifier in any subjective constitution, to notice the difference between a vague reference to sexuality that - one can scarcely say as a function - as a dimension proper to a certain form of life, the one specifically most profoundly linked to death. I mean, intermixed, interlaced with death. This is not the whole story, once we know that the unconscious is the discourse of the Other. From that moment on, it is clear that everything that brings into play the order of sexuality in the unconscious, only penetrates into it around the putting in question of: is the sexual act possible? Is there this knot, definable as an act, in which the subject grounds himself as sexed, that is, as male or female, being in itself, or, if not, proceeding in this act to something which can - even if only at its term - culminate at the pure essence of male or female? I mean, at the disentangling, at the distribution, in a polar form of what is male and what is female, precisely in the conjunction that unites them in something - whose term I am not introducing here, at this hour, nor for the first time - in something that I

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named as *jouissance.* I mean introduced a long time ago and, specifically, in my seminar on *Ethics*.

It is in effect required that this term *jouissance* should be put forward, and properly so, as distinct from pleasure, as constituting its beyond.

What indicates it to us, in psychoanalytic theory, is a series of converging terms, in the first rank of which is *libido*, which represents a certain articulation of it. And we must point out - at the end of these talks this year – point out how its use can be so slippery as not to sustain, but make slip away, the essential articulations that we are going to try to introduce today.

Jouissance, namely, this something that has a certain relation to the subject, as this confrontation with the hole left in a certain questionable register of act, that of the sexual act. This subject is suspended by a series of modes or states of dissatisfaction. This is what, just by itself, justifies the introduction of the term *jouissance*, which, moreover, is what at every instant, and specifically in the symptom, is proposed to us as being indistinguishable from this register of satisfaction, since at every moment the problem for us is to know how a knot, which is only sustained by discontent and suffering, is precisely that through which there is manifested the agency of suspended satisfaction, the one, properly speaking, to which the subject keeps in so far as he *tends* towards this satisfaction.

Here the law of the pleasure principle, namely, of least tension, only indicates the necessity of detours from the path by which the subject is sustained along the path of his search - search for *jouissance* - but does not give us its end, which is this proper end, an end nevertheless entirely masked for him in its final form, in as much as one can also say that its completion, its completion is so questionable, that one can just as well start from this foundation that there is *no* sexual act, just as much as the fact that it is *only* the sexual act which motivates this whole articulation.

This is why I wanted to bring in the reference - which everyone knows I have used for a long time - the reference to Hegel, in as much as this process - this process of the dialectic of different levels of the certainty of oneself, of the *Phenomenology of the spirit,* as he said - is suspended on a movement which he calls “dialectical” (and which undoubtedly, in his perspective, can be held to be only dialectical) of a relation that he articulates from the presence of this consciousness, in so far as its truth, its truth escapes it as regards what constitutes the operation of the relation of a self-consciousness to another self-consciousness in the relation of intersubjectivity.

Now it is clear, it has been proved for a long time - if only by the revelation of this social gap, in so far as it does not allows us to assimilate to a confrontation of one consciousness to another consciousness, what is presented as a struggle, specifically, (4) of the master and the slave - it is not even for us to criticise what is left open … what is left open by the Hegelian development. This has been done by others and specifically by one other, by Marx, to name him, and keeps the question of its outcome and of its modes in suspense.

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The way in which Freud comes and takes things up at a point that is only analogical to the Hegelian position, is inscribed, is already sufficiently inscribed in this term, in this term of *jouissance,* in so far as Hegel introduced it. The starting point, he tells us, is in the fight to the death between the master and the slave. After which there is established the fact that the one who had not been willing to risk, risk the stake of death, falls into a state of dependency with respect to the other, which for all that is not without containing the whole future of the dialectic in question.

The term *jouissance* comes into it. *Jouissance,* after the end of this fight to the death, of pure prestige, we are told, is going to be the privilege of the master, and for the slave the path then traced out will be that of *work*.

Let us look at things more closely and at this *jouissance* that is at stake. Let us see in Hegel's text … (that, after all, I cannot produce here and still less with the shortening that we are constrained by today) … what the master enjoys?

The matter is very adequately seen in Hegel. The relation established by the articulation of the work of the slave means that if, perhaps, the master enjoys, it is not at all absolutely. At the limit and to force things a little, which is to our cost as you are going to see, we might say that he enjoys only his *leisure*. Which means, the disposition of his body.

In fact this is very far from being the case. We will indicate it again later, but let us admit that from everything that he has to enjoy as things, he is separated by the one who is charged to put them at his mercy, namely, the slave, of whom one can then say - and I do not have to defend it, I mean this crucial point, since already in Hegel it is sufficiently indicated - that for the slave there is already a certain *jouissance* of the thing, in so far as he not only brings it to the master, but he has to transform it in order to make it acceptable to him.

After this reminder I have to question myself, with you - make you question - what the word *jouissance* implies in such a register. Of course nothing is more instructive, always, than a reference to what is called the lexicon, in so far as it is attached to goals as precarious as the articulation of meanings. "The terms included in each article", we read somewhere in the note of the preface of this magnificent work called *le grand Robert,* "the terms included in each article constitute just as many references, links, which ought to culminate in the means for expressing thought". "The asterisk ", for in effect you can note that in each one of these articles, which fulfil their programme very well, "the asterisk refers on to articles which develop at length an idea suggested (5) from a single word". So that the article *Jouissance* begins with the word *plaisir,* marked by an asterisk. This is only an example, but it is not by chance that the word, no doubt, presents us with these paradoxes. Naturally, *jouissance* was not tackled for the first time by *Robert*. You can also study the word in *Littré.* You will see in it that its use, its most legitimate use, varies from the aspect indicated by the etymology which attaches it to *joie*, to that of possession and what one can dispose of in the final analysis: the *jouissance* of a title. The *jouissance* of a title, that this term signifies some juridical title or some paper representing a value in the stock exchange. To have the *jouissance* of something, of dividends for example, is to be able to give it up. The sign of possession is to be able to resign it. *Jouir de* is something different to *jouir.*

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And undoubtedly, there is nothing better than these slippages of sense - in so far as they are circumscribed in this apprehension that I called earlier "lexical", in its exercise in the dictionary - to show us to what point the reference to thought is indeed what is most inappropriate there, to designate the function, the radical one, I mean, of one or other signifier.

It is not thinking which gives the effective and final reference of the signifier. It is from the instauration that results from the effects of the introduction of a signifier **into the real**. It is in as much as I articulate in a new way this relation of the word *jouissance* to what is in operation, for us, in analysis, that the word *jouissance* finds and can preserve its final value. And today I intend to make you sense the import of this at its most radical point.

The master enjoys (*jouit de*) something; whether it is himself - he is his own master, as they say - or, moreover, the slave. But what does he enjoy in the slave? Precisely his body. As we read in Scripture, "The master says go and he goeth". As I allowed myself - I no longer know whether I wrote it or whether I simply stated it: if the master says "*jouis!"* (*enjoy*), the other can only answer with this *j'ouis* (*I hear*), with which I amused myself. In general I do not amuse myself by chance. This means something. I might moreover have been picked up by one of those who listen to me. I too often regret gathering nothing more than what forces me to do it myself.

The question is the following*: Does what one enjoys*, if there is this *jouissance* which is inaugurated in the *I* of the subject in so far as he possesses*, does what one enjoys enjoy (ce dont on jouit cela jouit-il?)*.

It seems nevertheless that this is the real question. Because, moreover, it is clear that *jouissance* is in no way what characterises the master. The master, in so far as he is the one, in the City, who cannot be just anyone, but who is marked by his function as master, has other things to do than to abandon himself to *jouissance*. And the mastery of his body - for it is not simply a matter of leisure - is something that is only achieved by severe discipline. At every epoch of civilisation, he who is master does not have (6) the time to let himself go even in his leisure!

Types should be distinguished. But after all the type of the ancient master is not of such a purely ideal order that we do not have its reference points. It is sufficiently inscribed, I would say, in the margins of the first philosophical discourse, for us to be able to say that Hegel gives us a sufficient testimony of it.

The question is precisely the following. Is the one - which after all is only just and in conformity with the first stake of the game – who, if we are to believe Hegel, was not able from the beginning to take the eventual risk of the loss of life, (which is indeed, in effect, the surest way to lose *jouissance),* the one who held to *jouissance* enough to submit and to alienate his body, and why then would not *jouissance* remain in his hands?

We have a thousand testimonies of this - that a short sightedness, some phantasy or other, which always wants everything to be on the same side, the whole bunch to be in one hand - we have a thousand testimonies that what characterises the position of the

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one whose body is put at the mercy of another, is that it is from then on that there opens up what can be called pure *jouissance*. And, moreover, in glimpsing, in following the indices which give us at the very least a crosscheck for it, perhaps certain questions will be eliminated about the sense of certain paradoxical positions and, specifically, the masochistic one. But, after all, it is better sometimes that the most immediately open doors should not be gone through. Because it is not enough for them to be easy to go through for them to be the right ones. I am not saying that this is the source of masochism. Very far from it! Because undoubtedly what has to be said is that if it is thinkable that the condition of the slave is the only one that gives access to *jouissance*, in the measure, precisely, that we formulate him as subject, we will never know anything about it.

Now the masochist is not a slave. He is on the contrary, as I will tell you later, a cute whore, someone very able. The masochist *knows* that he is in *jouissance*. It is precisely in connection with him, for what is to be understood, at stake, about him, that in the end the whole of this discourse progresses, for your use. And in order to make it progress, it was necessary to show that in Hegel there is more than one defect. The first, of course, being the one which allowed me, to produce it before those who listen to me. Namely, that before I put it forward and spoke about it, *with the mirror stage*, I noted that in no case was this sort of aggression which is active and present in the fight to the death for pure prestige, anything other than a lure. And, since then, since then, rendered obsolete any reference to it as a first articulation.

I am only highlighting again in passing the problems posed, posed and left gaping wide, by the Hegelian deduction about the society of masters. How can they get on with one another? And then, good God, the simple reference to what is involved, namely, that the slave, in order to make a slave of him, is not dead! That the result of (7) the fight to the death is something that did not bring death into play. That the master has only the *right* to kill him, but that precisely, and that is why he is called *Servus,* the master *servat*, saves him. And that it is starting from there that the real question is put: what does the master save in the slave? We are brought back to the question of the primordial law, of what the rules of the game establish, namely, one can kill the one who is defeated, and if one does not kill him, at what price will it be?

At what price? It is indeed here that we re-enter the register of significance. What is involved, in the position of the master, is the following: the consequences - always - of the introduction of the subject into the real.

To measure what is involved concerning the effects of *jouissance,* one has to pose, at the level of this term, a certain number of principles. Namely, that if we have introduced *jouissance*, it is in the logical mode of what Aristotle calls an *ousia*, a substance. Namely, something very precisely which cannot be - this is how he expresses himself in his book of *Categories* - which can neither be attributed to a subject nor put into any subject. It is something that is not susceptible to being greater or lesser, which is not introduced into any comparative, into any *greater* or *lesse*r sign, indeed any *lesser* or *equal.*

Jouissance is this something *in which* the pleasure principle marks its traits and its limits. But it is something substantial and which, precisely, is important to produce,

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to produce in the form that I am going to articulate in the name of a new principle: *There is no jouissance* ***except*** *that of the body* (*il n'y a de jouissance* ***que*** *du corps)*.

Allow me to say that I consider that the maintenance of this principle, its affirmation as being absolutely essential, appears to me to have a greater ethical import than that of materialism. I mean that this formula has exactly the import, the relief, that the affirmation that *there is only matter* introduces into the field of knowledge. For after all, you have only to see, with the evolution of science, that this matter, when all is said and done, is confused so well with the interplay of elements into which it is resolved, that it becomes at the limit almost indistinguishable to know what is being played out before us, whether it is these elements (*stoicheia*), these final signifying elements, or those of the atom. Namely, what they themselves contain that is quasi-indistinguishable from the progress of your mind, the operation of your research. But what is involved in it in the final analysis is a structure that you can no longer refer in any way to what you have as a common experience of matter.

But to say that there is no *jouissance* except that of the body and, specifically, that this refuses you the eternal *jouissances*, is what is at stake in what I called the ethical value of materialism. Which consists, namely, in taking what happens in your everyday life seriously, and if there is a question of *jouissance*, to look it straight in the face and not reject it into the uncertain future…

(8) There is no *jouissance* except that of the body. This corresponds very precisely to the truth requirement in Freudianism.

So here we are, then, leaving entirely to its wanderings the question of whether what is at stake is to be or not to be. Whether it is a matter of being a man or a woman in an act that is supposed to be the sexual act. And if this is what dominates the whole suspense of *jouissance*, it is also what, ethically, we have to take seriously. Something in connection with which there arises this something that we could call our right of inspection.

Oedipus is not a philosopher. He is the model of what is at stake as regards the relation of what is involved in a knowledge and the knowledge that he proves to have, this is indicated to us, at least, in the form of the riddle, is a knowledge about what is involved in the body. Through this he breaks the power of a ferocious *jouissance*, that of the Sphinx, which very strangely is offered to us in the form of a vaguely feminine figure, let us say semi-bestial, semi-feminine. What he accedes to after that - which does not make him, as you know, any more triumphant for all that - is undoubtedly a *jouissance*. The moment that he enters it, he is already in the trap. I mean that this *jouissance* is what marks him, already and in advance, with the sign of guilt.

Oedipus did not know what he was enjoying. I posed the question of whether Jocasta, for her part, knew it. And even, why not, did Jocasta enjoy letting Oedipus remain in ignorance of it? Let us say: what part of Jocasta's *jouissance* corresponds to the fact that she left Oedipus in ignorance of it?

It is at this level that, thanks to Freud, there are posed henceforth serious questions about what is involved in the truth.

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Now the introduction that I already gave of the function of alienation - in so far as it is consistent with the genesis of the subject as determined by the vehicle of significance - allows us to say that as regards what interests us and is first posited – namely, that there is no *jouissance* except that of the body - the fact is that the effect of the introduction of the subject, himself an effect of significance, is properly to put the body and *jouissance* into this relation that I defined by the function of alienation.

I mean that, as I have just articulated for half an hour before you, the subject, in so far as he is grounded in this mark of the body which privileges him, which ensures that it is the mark, the subjective mark, which henceforth dominates everything that is going to be involved for this body, that it will go here and then there and not elsewhere, and that it is free or not to do so. Here no doubt is what distinguishes the master, because the master is a subject.

Jouissance is, in this first foundation of the subjectification of the body, what falls into dependency on this subjectification, and, in a word, is effaced. At the origin, the (9) position of the master – and this is what Hegel glimpses - is precisely a renunciation of *jouissance,* the possibility of engaging everything on this disposition or not of the body. And not only of his own, but also that of the Other.

The Other is *the set of bodies,* from the moment that the operation of social struggle simply introduces the fact that the relations of bodies are henceforth dominated by this something which, moreover, is called the law. A law that one can say is linked to the advent of the master, but indeed only if one understands it as the advent of the absolute master. Namely, the sanction of death as having become legal.

This, then, allows us to glimpse that if the introduction of the subject as an effect of the signifier, lies in this separation of the body and *jouissance,* in the division put between the terms which only subsist from on another, it is here, for us, that the question ought to be posed, the question of knowing *how jouissance can be handled starting from the subject.*

Well then, the answer, the answer is given through what analysis discovers as an approximation of this relation to *jouissance.* No doubt, in the field of the sexual act, what it discovers, is the introduction of what I called *jouissance*-value, namely, the cancellation of the *jouissance* most immediately involved as such in sexual union; what it calls *castration.*

This does not solve anything. Of course, it explains to us how it happens that the simplest and the clearest legal form of the sexual act - in so far as it is instituted in a regular formation which is called marriage - was first of all, at the beginning, only the privilege of the master. Not simply, of course, of the master *qua* opposed to the slave, but, as you know, if you know a bit of history and specifically Roman history, even opposed to the pleb. Not everyone who wants it has access to the institution of marriage, only the master.

But, moreover, as everyone knows - everyone knows, good God, through experience, what this marriage, which has since been put within everyone's reach, still carries

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with it in terms of heartbreak - everyone knows that it does not work automatically! And if you open Livy, you will see that there is an epoch, not all that late in the Republic, when the ladies, the Roman ladies, who are really marked by the true *connubium*, poisoned throughout a whole generation - with a breadth and a perseverance which did not fail to leave some traces in the memory and that Livy wrote down - poisoned their husbands. This was not without reason. It must be believed that the institution of marriage, when it functions at the level of true masters, must bring with it some inconveniences, which are probably not uniquely linked to *jouissance,* since it is rather the accentuated character of the hole put at this level - namely, from the fact that *jouissance* has nothing to do with conjugal choice - that these little incidents result.

When we, for our part, speak about the sexual act at the level that it interests us, us (10) analysts, it is precisely in so far as *jouissance* is in question. As I reminded you the last time, God did not disdain keeping an eye on it. It is enough for the woman to enter into the game of being this object that the biblical myth designates so well for us, of being this phallic object, for the man to be fulfilled. Which means, exactly, to be completely swindled, namely, encountering only his corporal complement.

The discovery of analysis is precisely to notice that it is uniquely in the measure that man is not swindled to the point of only discovering his own flesh - there is nothing astonishing that, from then on, there should only be one flesh, since it is his own - it is precisely in the measure that this swindling operation does not take place, namely, where castration takes place, that there is, yes or no, a chance that there may be a sexual act.

(1)

But then! What is meant by what is involved in *jouissance*? Since the characteristic of a sexual act that is grounded, is supposed to be precisely the fact of this lack of *jouissance,* somewhere.

This interrogation about what is involved in *jouissance* as a third function, is precisely what is given to us in a different approach, an approach which is called - exactly the inverse of this step, of this breakthrough, which is made in the sense of the sexual act - which is called …and precisely, and uniquely because it is in an inverse sense, concerning a certain progression, logical progression - which is called, because of that, *regression*.

And it is here that our algorithm - that our algorithm in so far as it confronts the **small o** with the *One*, or towards the inside as I have already drawn it, namely, **small o** being reduced to the *One*, giving, here (1), the difference *One minus* ***o***, which is at the same time $\mathbf{o}^2$. There is also another way to treat the question. It is the one suggested to us by the function of the Other, namely, that this *One* here (2), comes to be inscribed here at **o**, that it is the **small o**, here - without being reduced, namely, leaving between it and the capital O the large interval of the *One* - that is in question.

You cannot but see that this privileged fact, that the *One over* ***o*** is precisely equal to *One plus* ***o*** and that this is what gives its value to this algorithm. It is precisely

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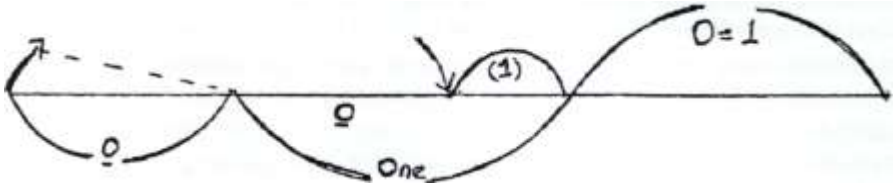
through this that we are given the locus, the topology of what is involved in *jouissance.*

(11) In the case of the slave, the slave is deprived of his body. How can we know about his *jouissance*? How can we know it, except precisely in what, from his body, has slipped outside subjective mastery. Everything that is involved for the slave, in so far as his body comes and goes at the whim of the master, allows nevertheless to be preserved these objects which are given to us as emerging, precisely, from the signifying dialectic.

These objects which are its stake but also its forgery, these objects taken at the frontiers, these objects which function at the level of the edges of the body, these objects that we know well in the dialectic of neuroses, these objects on which we will have to come back again and on several occasions, in order to define clearly what gives them their price and their value, their quality as exceptions. I do not need to recall them, as regards what is involved in terms of the *oral* and what is also called the *anal.* But these others also, superior, less known, of a more intimate register, which, as compared to demand, is constituted as desire, and which are called the *look* and the *voice*. These objects, in so far as they cannot in any way be caught in the domination - whatever it may be - of the signifier, were it entirely constituted in the rank of social domination. These objects which, of their nature, escape it, what does that mean?

Is it there? Since for the slave, there is only a *supposed jouissance* on the Other's part (Hegel was mistaken in the fact that it is *for the slave* that there is a *jouissance* of the master). But the worthwhile question, I posed to you earlier*: does what he enjoys,*



enjoy? And if it is true that something of the real of *jouissance* can only subsist at the level of the slave, then it would indeed be for him in this place, left in the margin of the field of his body, that is constituted by the objects whose list I have just recalled. It is there, it is at this place, that there ought to be posed the question of *jouissance*.

Nothing can take from the slave the function, either of his look or of his voice, nor that also of what he is, in his function as nurse, since so frequently this is the function in which antiquity shows him to us, nor indeed either in his function as a warped object, an object of contempt.

At this level there is posed the question of *jouissance*. It is a question and, as you see, it is even a scientific question.

Now, the pervert … the pervert, well then, this is what he is. Perversion is looking for this point of perspective, in so far as it can give rise to the accent of *jouissance.* But he looks for it in an experimental fashion. Perversion, while having the closest relation to *jouissance*, is - like the thinking of science - *cosa mentale.* It is an operation of the subject in so far as he has perfectly located this moment of

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disjunction through which the subject tears the body from *jouissance,* but who *knows* that *jouissance* has not only been, in this process, an alienated *jouissance*, that there is also the following: that there remains somewhere a chance that something has escaped from it. I mean that the whole body has not been caught in the process of alienation. (12) It is from this point, from the locus of the **small o,** that the pervert *questions*, questions what is involved in the function of *jouissance*.

By never grasping himself except in a partial fashion, and, as I might say, in the perspective - I would not say of the pervert … for truly one could say that psychoanalysts comprehend nothing about it … (was there not one, recently, who posed this sort of equation, in this connection that the pervert cannot be at the same time subject and *jouissance,* and that in the whole measure in which he was *jouissance* he was no longer subject!) … The pervert remains subject throughout all the time of the exercise of what he poses as a question to *jouissance*. The *jouissance* that he aims at is that of the Other, in so far as *he* is perhaps the only remainder of it. But he poses it through a subject-activity.

What this allows us to reassemble, can be done only on a single condition. It is that we should perceive that these terms - *sado-masochism* - for example, as they are tied together, only make sense if we consider them as researches *along the path* of what is involved in the sexual act.

The relations that we call sadistic between one or other vague unit of the social body are only of interest for the following reason. They image something that involves the relations of man and of woman.

As I will tell you the next time, since this time, faith, I will have been cut short, you will see that in forgetting this fundamental relation, one allows there to escape any means of grasping what is involved in sadism and in masochism. This does not mean either that these two terms image in any way relations comparable to those of male and female.

A personage of, I must say, unbelievable naivety writes somewhere this truth: that "masochism has nothing specifically feminine about it". But the reasons that he gives for it go to the level of formulating that undoubtedly, if masochism were feminine, that would mean that it is not a perversion, because it would be natural to the woman to be masochistic. Therefore, starting from there, one can clearly see that, naturally, women cannot be qualified as masochists, because, being a perversion, that could not be something natural!

Here is the kind of reasoning in which people get bogged down. Not at all, certainly, without a certain intuition, I mean the first, namely, that a woman in not naturally masochistic. She is not naturally masochistic, and for good reason! Because if she were, in effect, masochistic, that would mean that she is capable of filling the role that the masochist gives to a woman. Which, of course, gives a completely different sense, in this case, to what feminine masochism would be. The woman has, precisely, no vocation to fill this role. This is what constitutes the value of the masochistic enterprise.

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That is why you will allow me to end today on this point, while promising you - as an end point, as the high point of what is put in question by this introduction to perversion - by allowing you to indicate as a high point, that we will finally put, I hope, some order or at least some clarity, about what is at stake, when we are dealing with masochism.

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Seminar 22: Wednesday June 7 1967

What is common to what are being called lately the "structuralisms"? It is to make the function of the subject depend on signifying articulation.

This means that, after all, this distinctive sign can remain more or less elided, that in a sense it always is. Naturally, I know that some of you may find that in this regard the analyses of Levi Strauss leave precisely this central point in suspense, leave us, in a word, before this question, in as much as, for some years, this analysis has been centred on myth. Are we to think, after all, that honey was expecting, I mean from all time, was awaiting, in tobacco, the truth of its relations with ashes?

In a certain sense … [**a little laugh from Lacan**] … it is true! And that is why, the putting in suspense of the subject flows from any approach like this. And this is sufficient to make us contribute to something which is nevertheless not a doctrine, which is simply the recognition of an efficacy, which seems indeed to be of the same nature as the one which grounds science.

It nevertheless remains that a notion of class such that it would imply structuralisms, in the plural, that a minimum of characteristics cannot in any way connect into a whole a certain number of researches, in as much as, to take mine, for example: after all, it is not as an office, as a helping system, that it had to encounter, in order to articulate it, this necessity of subjective articulation in the signifier. It is only, in a way, the preface. Nothing can correctly be thought about it without that.

Nevertheless, it is not without good reason that we ought to produce, finally, what in the same field was articulated too quickly, which is the fundamental relation of the *subject* thus constituted to the *body.*

What I am coming to - which accounts for the fact that symbolism always means in the last resort corporal symbolism - had to be set aside for years by me, precisely by reason of the fact that it is thus, from all time, that it is in this way, traditionally, that symbolism was articulated. Namely, in a fashion that lacked the essentials, as (2) happens, from being too precipitate.

The members and the stomach … I have for a long time, always, evoked at the horizon the fable of Menenius Agrippa. It was not too bad! To compare the nobility to the stomach is better than to compare it to the head! And then it puts the head back in its place, among the members! …

This all the same is to go a little too quickly. And if we know that, it is because of the fact that what is at the centre of our research, we analysts, is something which, no doubt, passes along no other paths than those of structure, the incidences of the signifier in the real, in so far as it introduces the subject into it. But that its centre … and it is a sign that I can only recall it with this force at the moment when, properly

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speaking, I am installing my discourse in what I can legitimately call a logic, that it is at this moment that I can recall that everything turns, for us, around what is involved in what has to be called the *difficulty* - not of *being*, as someone said in his old age - the difficulty *inherent in the sexual act*.

There are other difficulties that foretold this one. To introduce this function of *difficulty*, is not nothing! The day when the difficulty of social harmony took on, legitimately, this name, of *class struggle*, a step was taken. The difficulty of the sexual act may take on a certain weight, if one dwells on it. I mean, if everything that we have to articulate in this field is centred effectively on this difficulty.

I suspect that one of the reasons why psychoanalysts prefer to hold that by putting the Thing, with a capital T, if you wish, that by putting the Thing in the centre, light is thrown on a whole zonal region, I suspect that - apart from something that I will have to signal later - it is, first of all, a logical difficulty.

One could, in this connection, take as an index, that the institution of marriage reveals itself to be all the more, I would not say solid, it is much more than that: *resistant*, as the right is given in our society, for there to be articulated all the "aspirations", as the psychologists say, all the aspirations towards the sexual act. If it has been found that a break-through has been made in the clarification of the difficulty of social harmony, it is in effect quite striking that it is not especially where the right was most open to articulate aspirations towards the sexual act. That marriage shows itself there - I would not say, more resistant, it did not resist - more established (*institué*) than elsewhere. And that, in the field in which the aspirations are articulated, in a thousand effective forms, in all the fields of art, of cinema, of the word, without counting in that of the great neurotic discontent of civilisation, marriage, of course, remains at the centre, not having budged by an inch in its fundamental status.

In other words, to summarise this institution, to see that it is grounded on this single statement once pronounced, which I used (differently!) as an example, to indicate in it the structuring of the message, in itself: "You are my wife". Which does not even (3) need to be reduplicated by another announcement; which makes it almost purely formal to ask her whether she is in agreement.

It is on this that there depends - and in all the forms in which this institution persists, at least for the moment - it is on this that there depends the inauguration of what we will call a *couple*, defined as productive. This is not quite to say, simply, that it is a matter of the couple in the sense of the sexual pair. Of course it is required, but it should be noted that we could say that its product, is something other than the child reduced to the biological offspring, to the effect of the function of reproduction.

And this is what we mean by designating as **small o** what we have to question, at the start, about its entry into the sexual act. This **small o -** and not simply as a biological offspring - is *already* its product, and I told you could very crudely, if you absolutely want to situate it in your philosophical boxes, identify to what the residue of this tradition has come to in the final term, after having raised to perfection the isolation of the function of the subject and having had to keep mum about the beyond, it nevertheless remains, that before signalling to us, "Bye bye, sail away now", on what

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succeeds me and into which you have plunged a little, into this world which is stirred up, which is going to be the last to emerge from its contradictions (it is beginning), at that moment also it told you that, all the same, a little residue remained, from the beneficial dialectic to which there was offered in advance total order, *absolute knowledge,* and which is called the *Dasein*. This residue of presence, *qua* linked to subjective constitution, is in fact the only point where we remain in continuity with the philosophical traditions. We receive it from its hand, we who discover it precisely as the *sub-product* of this something that had remained masked in the dialectic of the subject, namely, that it has something to do with the sexual act.

The subjective residue is *already there* at the moment when there is posed the question of the mode in which it is going to operate in the sexual act.

If the whole human discourse is so structured that it leaves gaping wide the very possibility of the subjective establishment implied in the sexual act, the whole human discourse has already produced - not in each subject; at the level of its subjective effect in itself - this rain, this trickling of residues which accompanies each of the subjects involved in the process. And it happens - I think you remember it because it is from this angle that we first approached it - that this residue is, in the final analysis, the surest junction, however partial it may be in its essence, the surest junction of the subject with the body.

That this **small o** presents itself, certainly, as body - but not, as it is said, as total body - as fall, astray with respect to this body on which it depends, according to a structure which must be strongly maintained if one wishes to comprehend it. One can only comprehend it by referring oneself to the centre. And this indeed is what is maintained by certain indications, like those of the incidence of these objects that I am calling **small o,** are all linked – people do not say "to the act", of course, because I (4) was the first to say it - to something all the same which is destined for it, since it is entirely around, not alone biological prematurity, in so far as it invokes this call made to the body towards the locus of the act, not alone prematurity or its attempt, pre-puberty, we are told, the first pressure which, in a way, indicates its future and horizon and just by itself - but not without invoking a whole conjunction, a whole social circumstance of repression, at least of appreciation, of discursive reference, of demand and of desire - already *pre-formed*, makes the subject, as **small o,** arrive as a sub-product from this central point of difficulty, to the difficulty itself.

Perhaps the relative shirking (*carence*), which, even if it is relative, nevertheless remains radical - I am saying, perhaps - of psychoanalysts, with regard to their task, comes from the fact that they do not posit themselves, as committed to experience, in its extremes, the difficulty of the sexual act.

For if the training analysis is, of course, more than required in order, let us say, to form a scar over the effects of chance that everyone has, of this difficulty, this does not mean that it constitutes in itself the fact of testing oneself against this difficulty!

It is rather convenient, once you have gone through - call it what you will - the cleansing, the purification, to go back to your slippers, which are not, whatever may be said, the chosen locus of the sexual act!

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Certainly, it is already a way in to be capable of *thinking about desire* (*Penser le désire).*

Do you believe [**a little laugh from Lacan**] that I am giving you this slogan that it is a matter of *thinking about the sexual act (penser l'acte sexuel)*?

An act, you should note, if you remember the way I introduced it, has no need to be thought, to be an act. The question even arises whether that is not why it is an act! I will not go any further in this sense, which favours seeming acts only too much. It is not an easy business, but it is certain, whether or not one should think it, that one can only think about it afterwards! The nature of the act is that it must first be committed. Which, perhaps, does not prevent it from being thought.

This to tell you that, if one starts from the difficulty of the sexual act, this does not put within hand's reach the *time* to think about it!

So then, let us take up at the lowest level how this is posed. If it is an act, the constitution in act of a signifier - starting from some motion, we will say, invoking here only the register of movement, something measurable in the weighing of a body - there ought to be, if the signifier is reduced to the most simple chain, this opposition that I already inscribed on two unexpected little plaques in one of my articles, and that we will retranslate here by - I am not even saying *I - am a man*, and its relation to *am a woman*. Namely, that we come back here to what, earlier, was presented as the message, in an inverted form.

Is it not absolutely fabulous that we are absolutely not able, in any case, to account for a link between these terms which would justify our taking them as the inverse of one (5) another? And that it is then necessary for us to question them as they are, namely, as you are not unaware and as it is articulated at every line of Freud, while being totally incapable of giving them any sure correlate whatsoever. Activity, passivity, for example, are only substitutes whose, I would not say inadequate, suspect character Freud underlines every time he uses them.

So then let us pose the question again with the apparatuses furnished by our good little tradition of handling the subject. It ought to be able to be put to the test here! And even if it is of no use, the way in which it will be rebuffed by the object will instruct us perhaps about something concerning the object itself, its elasticity for example!

We are going to find something analogous to the male-being *(l'être-male)*, to take him first - but just as much the female-being; they are exactly in the same position at this level of discourse - in what our handling of the subject has lead us to. There must indeed be two aspects there also. Moreover, this leaps to the eye immediately! There is an *in itself* (*en soi)* and then a *for* (*pour)* - a for … for something! But what is immediately seen is that this is not at all *for itself* (*pour soi)* by very reason of the fundamental requirement of the sexual act. He cannot remain for himself, but let us not say that he is "*for*" the one who makes up the pair!

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This is where the introduction of the function of the big Other ought to be of service to us. What corresponds here to our questioning, as opposed to this rather slippery *in itself* - which corresponds to the male-being and much more again to the female-being - is a *for the Other,* with a capital O. Namely, - which we had to evoke first – namely, the locus from which the message returns to him in an inverted form.

I point out to you, it is a little reminder - I will accentuate it more the next time, but here I can only begin it in passing - of this alternative, whose range I broadened by showing that it is not simply that of alienation, since it already allowed us, in the first semester, to establish this logical operation of alienation in its relation with two others - you have perhaps forgotten it - which form with it something that I questioned in the manner of a Klein group. Briefly, the start of this little rectangle in which I situated the fundamental alienation of the subject, precisely in its relation to a possibility which was only the place marked for the sexual act in the logical form of sublimation. This alternative: *either I am not thinking or I am not,* a seductive choice, as you see, which is the start of what is offered to the subject once there is introduced the perspective of an unconscious, in so far as it is constructed from this difficulty of the sexual act. You see here how it is prepared. The *I am not thinking*, is undoubtedly the *in itself,* if ever it manifests itself, of the male-being or of the female-being. The *I am not* being on the other side, namely, on the side of the *for the Other.*

(6) What the sexual act is called on to assure, since it is grounded in it, is something that we can call a *sign* coming from where *I am not thinking*, from where I am as not thinking, in order to arrive where *I am not*, where I am as not being. For, if *I am where I am not thinking* and if *I think where I am not* - this indeed is the occasion to remind oneself of it - in this relation which may well happen where I am not, namely, me, as a male, at the level of the woman. It is here, all the same, that - whatever may have been the pretensions of philosophers to detach the *to phronein*, I am thinking, from the *to khairein*, I am enjoying - it is here, all the same, that my destiny, even at the level of the *to phronein* is played out. The fact of having dialogued with Socrates never prevented anyone from having obsessions that tickle, greatly upset, his *to phronein*!

So then the next step is the one offered us - and this is why I recalled it - by the function of the message. It is a fact that, imprudently and absolutely not knowing what I am saying, I announce myself as being man where I am not thinking, in this form of "*You are my wife*", where I am not. This has, all the same, the importance of giving to the woman the possibility of announcing herself also. And this is what requires that she should be there *qua* subject. For she becomes it, she, like me, once she announces herself.

This encounter - under the pure form, which is all the more pure, I insist, because one absolutely does not know what one is saying - this is what puts in the very forefront the function of the subject in the sexual act. And it is even as pure subject that we notice, precisely at the level of the foundation of this act, that this pure subject is situated at the junction, or to put it better, at the disjunction of the body and *jouissance*. It is a subject *in the measure of this disjunction*.

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How is that best seen here? Naturally, we know from the tradition, since earlier I evoked *Philebus* in particular, where the *to phronein* and the *to khairein* are subjected to this operation of separation, with a rigour which is precisely the reason why on the eve of the last vacation I recommended you to re-read it.

But, here, even if you wanted to tell me that, after all, as regards this act we could well dispense with its exigencies as act, that perhaps one does not need the sexual act in order to fuck in a perfectly appropriate way! It is a matter, in effect, of knowing, in the relief of the act, what in it requires the subject.

It is perhaps not saying much to say that everything depends on the opposition of the signifiers *man*, *woman*, if we still do not know even what they mean.

And, in effect, where one sees the incidence of the subject is not so much in the word *woman*, as in the word *male*.

Jouissance, as I pointed out, is an ambiguous term. It slides. From something which makes us say that there is no *jouissance* except that of the body and which opens the field of the substance in which there come to be inscribed the severe limits in which the subject contains itself from the incidences of pleasure. And then this sense in which to enjoy (*jouir)*, as I said, is to possess, the *my*. I enjoy something. Which (7) leaves in suspense the question of whether this something, from the fact that I enjoy it, enjoys. There, around the *my*, there is very precisely this separation between *jouissance* and the body. Because it is not for nothing that I introduced you to it the last time, with the reminder of this articulation - a fragile one because limited to the traditional field of the genesis of the subject - of the phenomenology of the spirit, of the master and the slave.

My... Henceforth I enjoy your body, namely, your body becomes the metaphor for *my jouissance*.

And Hegel, all the same, does not forget that it is only a metaphor. Namely, that however much of a master I am, my *jouissance* is already displaced, that it depends on the metaphor of the serf. And it remains that for him, as for what I am questioning in the sexual act, there is *another jouissance* which is adrift.

And do I need once more to write it on the board with my little bars?

(*my*) body	body
?	*my jouissance*

This body of the woman, which is *my*, is henceforth the metaphor for my *jouissance*. It is a matter of knowing what is there in the form of my body. Of course, I do not even think, innocent that I am, of calling it "*my*". It is also going to have its metaphor relation, which, undoubtedly, would ground everything in the most elegant and easy

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fashion, with the *jouissance* that is in question and which creates the difficulty of the sexual act.

You will say to me: "Why is it at the level of the woman that it gives rise to a question?"

We are going to say it right away, very quickly and very simply. Every psychoanalyst knows it! They do not necessarily know how to say it, but they know it! They know it in any case by the following. The fact is that, men or women, they have not yet been capable of articulating the slightest thing that holds up on the subject of feminine *jouissance*!

I am not in the process of saying that feminine *jouissance* cannot take this place. I am in the process of stopping you at the moment where it is a matter of not going too quickly in saying that this is the difficulty of the sexual act!

And this reference - which was less intolerable, uniquely because it is a myth - that I took the last time in the relations of the master and the slave, namely, from the *jouissance* that is adrift, you can well imagine when we are dealing with the slave. Namely, that there is no reason that *jouissance* should not always be there, and this all the more in that he had not, like the master, the foolishness to put it at risk! So then, why would he not have kept it? It is not because his body has become the metaphor of (8) the *jouissance* of the master that his own *jouissance* should not to continue its little life! As everything proves!

If you read ancient comedy, if you re-read our dear Terence, for example, who is not precisely a primitive, who is even quite the opposite, of whom one can even say that things are pushed so far, in his case, so exhausted, that it supersedes in simplicity anything that we might think up. It is much more simplistic than a film by M. Robbe-Grillet, even when it is slap dash! But it is not slap dash! Only we absolutely no longer see what is at stake! There is a certain story, *Andria,* for example. When you read it you will say: "My God, what a story!" All this because a boy who has a father and who ought or ought not to marry a girl who is from good or bad society. And since, at the end, the bad society turns out to be the good, because of this eternal story of recognition, she had been kidnapped when she was a little girl and so forth and so on. What a story! And what an idiotic story! Only the problem is that if you reason in this way there is one thing you do not see. The fact is there is only a single interesting person in this whole comedy, called Davus! He is well and truly a slave! For one can, quite seriously … he who directs everything, he who is the only intelligent one among all of these persons, and he does not even dream of suggesting to you that the others could begin to be so. The father plays the paternal role to the degree of … anyway … desirable brutishness, anyway … veritably… completely superfluous! The son is a poor pet who is completely astray! The girls involved? We do not even see them, they are of interest to no one! There is a slave who fights for his master so that he almost risks being, from one minute to the next - it is written down - crucified! And he guides the affair with a master's hand, it has to be said!

This is what is at stake in ancient comedy. Except for the fact that this has only a single interest for us. Namely, to show you that there can be a question of what

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happens to *jouissance* when there is produced this little movement of displacement, of *Verschiebung*, which is properly speaking constituted once the function of subject is introduced between the body and *jouissance.*

It is not with the *jouissance* proper to a body in so far as this *jouissance* defines it! A body is something that can enjoy. Only there you are. It becomes the metaphor of the *jouissance* of another! And what becomes of its own? Is it exchanged? That is the whole question. But it is not resolved.

Why is it not resolved? All the same, we analysts know. This does not mean that we can always say it! It is a general observation! I am not going to be repeating it all the time! Let us write it…. We are going to do it like that, huh, for the body, it will be more amusing. … And this resembles my little plaques, on which, in one of my articles, I wrote, "Men", "Women". You see it going into urinals!

J? J

A little plaque can serve as a body for us. With a certain number of things, in effect, written on it. This is the function of the body, since we have recalled that it is the locus of the Other. So then, one makes the same little bar, so that you will not be disturbed, and here we write, J, to mean, *jouissance.*

Here, then, there is a question mark because it is this and because, finally, we do not know whether it comes there, whether the body of the male is well and truly, surely, what the male affirms, since he does nothing but affirm it! This is where we start from, in the "You are my wife". Namely, that the body of the woman is the metaphor of his own *jouissance*.

There we are. It is enough to add a line to make this little articulation expressive.

In effect, for reasons that depend… that depend on the fact that there is not only the couple involved in the sexual act. Namely, that, as other structuralists who function in different fields have reminded you, the relation of the man and the woman is subject to exchange functions, which imply at the same time an exchange value. And that the locus where something which is in use is struck by this negativing which makes of it an exchange value, is here - for reasons taken from the natural constitution of the function of copulation - is here taken from masculine *jouissance,* since one knows where it is! Anyway one believes one does! It a little organ that one can catch hold of! Which is what the baby does immediately, with the greatest ease.

Ah! This is something, I can tell you, in parenthesis, now here really we have … I really have to show it to you. I was brought a little romantic book on masturbation! With drawings! It is something that is so … anyway, so absolutely entrancing, that I cannot believe that if I pass it around it will come back to me! [**General laughter**] So then, I do not know what to do. I do not know what to do. I will have to put it … I do

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not know. There ought to be machines where you can project, like that, objects and open it page by page but … good, anyway, you have to see this! It is called *Le livre sans titre* and it is intended to … there are at least twenty five drawings, anyway, or about twenty, which show the ravages **[Lacan says these last words interrupting them with a laugh**] brought on a misfortunate … on any misfortunate young man, of course, you know what a bad reputation masturbation had at the beginning of the last century, the ravages and the horrors, anyway, that it produced! And all of that with drawings! And colours! Anyway [**laughter**], to see this misfortunate young man … the misfortunate young man vomiting blood! Because this is one of the things that are the consequences … in any case, it is … something sublime!

I apologise. This has nothing to do with my discourse [**laughter**] absolutely nothing to (10) do with it! This is going to cost me an awful lot! It is one of the reasons, also, why I did not want to separate myself from it! [**laughter**] Yes! It is of a beauty that surpasses everything, and if there exist … machines with which one can project, even if the thing is not transparent … I would like to show you that … it is … it is … I never saw anything like it! Good, anyway, in brief! …

Anyway, in short, as you know, this embargo, huh, on masculine *jouissance*, in so far as it is graspable somewhere, is something which is structural - even though hidden - for the foundation of value.

If a woman, who is after all a subject, in the sexual act - I would say even more, I have just articulated that there cannot be a sexual act if she is not, at the start, grounded as a subject - for a woman to be able to take on her function as exchange value, she must cover something which is what is already established as value and which is what psychoanalysis reveals to us under the name of castration complex.

The exchange of women, I am not in the process of telling you that it is easily retranslated by the *exchange of phalluses*! Otherwise, it is hard to see why the ethnologists could not just as well make their tables of structures by calling things by their name! It is the exchange of phalluses, *qua* symbols of a withdrawn *jouissance* as such.

Namely, not the penis, but what ensures, since the woman becomes the metaphor of *jouissance,* that one can in its place take a new metaphor, namely, this negatived part of the body that we call the phallus, in order to distinguish it from the penis. And this leaves the problem that we have just articulated no less open! In other words, something is established, on which a different process, that of social exchange, in the foundation of the *material*, as I might say, destined for the sexual act. This leaves no less in suspense whether we can, by reason of this external element, situate something about the woman in her function as metaphor, with respect to a *jouissance* that has passed to the function of value. This is expressed in many myths. I do not need to remind you of Isis and her eternal mourning, of what is involved in this final part of the body that she has reassembled. I simply signal to you in passing that in this extreme myth, in which precisely the goddess is defined as being for her part (this is what distinguishes her from a mortal) *pure jouissance,* certainly also separated for its part from the body, but why? Because there is no question for her of what constitutes a body in its status as mortal body! This does not mean that the gods do not have

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bodies! Simply, as you are well aware, they change them! Even the God of Israel has a body! You would have to be mad not to notice it. This body is a column of fire in the night and of cloud during the day. This we are told in the Book and what is at stake there is properly speaking his body!

It is, like my other story, (this is a parenthesis), it is one of the things that I would have better developed if I had been able to give a seminar on the Name of the Father.

The goddess is *jouissance*, it is very important to recall it. Her status as goddess is to (11) be *jouissance*. And to fail to recognise it is properly to condemn oneself to understanding nothing of all that is involved in *jouissance.* And that is why *Philebus* is exemplary, when a reply announces to us that in no case do the gods have anything to do with *jouissance.* It would not be worthy of them. Here, as one might say, is the weak point at the start of philosophical discourse. It is to have radically failed to recognise the status of *jouissance* in the order of beings.

I am only making these remarks in an incidental fashion and to recall to you the import of this reading of *Philebus,* in so far as it allows there to be located, with an exemplary exactitude, the limited field in which there develops what is going to be involved in the status of the subject and what is signified by the re-entry, the recuperation, of questions which, because of it, have been isolated.

Here we are then around this question of what *jouissance* is involved in the sexual act.

Let us say, to introduce the end of this discourse, what it is essential, at first, to articulate with the most extreme scansion. The end of this discourse is to allow us to map out the way in which the acts that are put, legitimately, in the register of perversion, concern the sexual act.

If they concern the sexual act it is because at the point where there is question of *jouissance* - and you will see, from the fact that this point exists, that there can be no less a question at the level of the body of the woman, but that it is from another angle that we can tackle it - given that the hold, the model that is given to us, of what is going to appear in the attempts at solution, in *the instauration of the value of jouissance,* is there on the right. Namely, in the fact that there is negatived the function of a certain organ, the very organ through which nature, by the offer of pleasure, assures the copulating function, but in a fashion which is completely contingent, subordinate. In other animal species, it assures it quite differently, it assures it with hooks, for example. And nothing can guarantee for us that, in this organ, there is anything whatsoever that concerns *jouissance*, properly speaking. Here we have the term through which value is introduced. **It is through this, that at the level where the question of *jouissance* is, this *jouissance* comes into play,** very precisely**, in the form of a question.**

To pose oneself the question of feminine *jouissance*, well then, this is already to open the door of all perverse acts.

And the result is this. This is why men have, in appearance at least, the privilege of the great perverse positions. But let the question be posed - it is already something to

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pose it - whether the woman herself has a suspicion of it. Naturally, through the reflection of what this lack of *jouissance* of the man introduces into her, she enters into this field along the path of desire, which, as I teach, is the desire of the Other, namely, the desire of the man.

But the question of *jouissance* is posed *more primitively* for the man. It is posed because of the fact that it is involved, at the start, at the foundation, of the possibility (12) of the sexual act. And the way in which he is going to question it, is by means of *objects*. Of these objects which are precisely the objects that I call **small o**, in so far as they are *marginal*, that they escape from a certain structure of the body. Namely, from what I called *specular*, and which is the mirage through which it is said that the soul is the form of the body.

That everything belonging to the body passes into the soul, is something that can be retained. Here is the *image* of the body. It is through this that the analysts believe they can grasp what is involved in our reference to the body. Hence so many absurdities.

For it is precisely in this part of the body, in this strange limit which, as I might say in commenting on these images, create a ball or create a symphysis in these parts of the body, that we will call, as compared to the specular reflection, the *anaesthetic* parts, this is where the question of *jouissance* takes refuge.

And it is to these objects that the subject for whom this question is posed - in the first place, the male subject - that this subject addresses himself**, to pose the question of *jouissance*.**

Naturally, at the moment that I am leaving you, this may appear to you to be a closed formula. And it is true. … In as much as, at the very least, it is necessary to demonstrate it in an exemplary way, for each of these major objects that I have just evoked which are the ones that I designate under the name of little **o**-objects. But what I will demonstrate to you, this will be for our next meeting, is *how* these objects serve as questioning elements.

This can only be given to us if we start from what I first articulated already the last time, and again today, as the *constitutive separation of the body and jouissance.*

Do I simply need to begin to indicate something about it, so that your thoughts may go immediately onto the path of the drive that is called - that is wrongly called! - sado-masochistic, but which is all the same, nevertheless, with scoptophilia, the only term that Freud uses as a pivot when he has properly to define the drive.

That the sado-masochistic drive operates, completely, in an interplay where what is in question is there, in this point of disjunction, sufficiently marked by my siglum or algorithm, as you wish, of the *signifier of the O barred*, namely, the disjunction between *jouissance* and the body. It is in as much (and you will see it the next time in all its details) as the masochist - and it is from him that I will start - questions the completeness and the rigour of this separation and sustains it as such, it is through this

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that he comes to subtract, as I might say, from the field of the Other, what remains available for him in terms of a certain operation of *jouissance*.

It is in so far as the masochist gives a solution, which *is not* the path of the sexual act, but which passes *along this path*, that we can situate, in the correct fashion, the approximate things that are always said about this fundamental position of masochism. In as much as it is a perverse structure and that at its level - for having (13) articulated it at one time, which is here primordial - he alone allows us to distinguish, because they have to be distinguished, what is involved in the *perverse act* and what is involved in the *neurotic act.*

As you will see, I am pointing it out to you because I have the feeling of not having said so much about it to you today and, after all, time is getting on. I am indicating it to you in as much as it may serve already as a theme of reflection for some of you: *you must radically distinguish the perverse act from the neurotic act*.

The *perverse act* is situated at the level of this question about *jouissance.*

The *neurotic act*, even if it refers to the model of the perverse act, has no other goal than to sustain what has nothing to do with the question of the sexual act, namely, the *effect of desire*.

It is only by posing the questions in this radical fashion - and it can only be radical by being articulated logically - that we can distinguish the fundamental function of the perverse act. I mean, perceive that it is distinct from anything that resembles it, because it borrows its phantasy.

There you are! To the next time.

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Seminar 23: Wednesday 14 June 1967

Analysis may be interminable but not a course. It has to have an end. So then, the last of this year will take place next Wednesday. Today's then is the second last.

This year, I chose not to have any closed seminars. I nevertheless made room, at least, I apologise if I forgot it, for at least two people who brought their contribution here.

Perhaps at the beginning of this second last lecture there might be someone among you, someone or several, someone who would like to tell me, perhaps, on what he would like to see me, who knows, putting a greater accent … or give an answer … to begin a stage for the future. This, either in the second last lecture or in the last one. Anyway, I will see if I can answer today. I will strive at least to indicate in what sense I can answer, or indeed I do not know, not answer, the next time. In short, if some of you would not mind, here, immediately, rapidly, giving me, as I might say, some indication of their wishes on this, about what I left them desiring concerning the field that I articulated this year on the logic of the phantasy, well then, I would be very grateful to them. Well then, who wants the floor? On the other hand we must not delay. Who wants to speak? Good … It's hot! Good, well then let us speak no more about it, at least for the moment. Those who may have *l'esprit de l'escalier* can perhaps send me a little word … my address is in the directory in Rue de Lille. I do not think, moreover, you will have any hesitations. As far as I know I am the only one, at least in that place, called Dr. Lacan.

Good. So then let us start again. I am going to continue then at the point that we left things. And since we no longer have much time to complete what can pass as forming a certain circumscribed field, in what I said this year, I am going, by God, to try to indicate to you the final reference points in as simple a way as I can.

I am going to try to do things simply, of course, which presupposes that I should alert (2) you to what this simplicity means.

You see clearly that at the end of this logic of the phantasy, a term sufficiently justified by the fact that I am going once more to re-accentuate today. The phantasy, is, in a still narrower way than all the rest of the unconscious, structured like a language. Since, when all is said and done, the phantasy is a sentence with a grammatical structure, which seems to indicate then, that to articulate the logic of the phantasy, which means, for example, posing a certain number of logical questions which, however simple they may be, have, some of them, not been articulated too often, I am not saying for the first time by me, but perhaps for the first time by me in the analytic field, (the relation of the subject of the statement, for example, to the stating subject.) Good, well then this does not rule out that, at the end of this first clarification, this indication, this direction given of the sense in which there may develop in the future in a fuller, more articulated, more systematic fashion this logic of the phantasy, I only claim this year to have opened up the furrow. (Its furrow …

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yes who is uneasy, you? - [**Someone in the hall: "I can't hear**] You can't hear, well now you know!) Not alone does it not rule it out, but it indicates, of course, that somewhere, this logic of the phantasy is attached, is inserted, is suspended on the economy of the phantasy. That indeed is why at the end of this discourse I introduced the term of *jouissance*.

I introduced it while underlining, while accentuating that this is a new term, at least in the function that I give it, and that it is not a term that Freud had put in the forefront of theoretical articulation.

And if my teaching, in short, could find its… axis, from the formula of *setting off to advantage* the doctrine of Freud, this indeed is something which implies, precisely, that I announce in it, that I initiate in it, one or other function, one or other reference point which is in a way circumscribed, outlined, required, implied in it. To set Freud off to advantage, is to do what I always do. First as they say, to render to Freud the things that are Freud's; which does not exclude some other allegiance! The one, for example, of setting him off to advantage, with respect to what he indicates, with respect to what he involves, in terms of the relation to the truth.

I would say that, if something like that is possible, it is precisely in the measure that I never fail to render to Freud what is Freud's, and I do not appropriate it to myself. This is a point that, I must say, has its importance, and perhaps I will have the time to come back to it at the end.

It is rather curious to see that for some people, it is by appropriating to themselves, I mean by not rendering to me what they manifestly owe me - anyone can notice it in their formulations - this is not what is important, it is that this failure to render to me, prevents them from immediately taking the next step, which would be nevertheless quite easy in many fields. Instead, alas, of leaving it always to me to make it, even if it entails, subsequently, their despairing that I should have, as it seems, cut the ground from under their feet.

(3) So then, let us approach this function of the phantasy. And first of all to notice, to simply say, as the very start of our question, it is something which leaps to the eye, that it is something *closed.* That it presents itself to us, in our experience, as a closed meaning - for the subjects who, usually, most commonly, most customarily, support it for us, namely, the neurotics - let it be noted, as Freud does with energy, in the exemplary examination that he made of one of these phantasies, "*A child is being beaten";* that I already did, if you remember, when I introduced the first schemas of this year (that, of course, I would advise you, when you have assembled what you have been able to take in terms of more or less extensive notes, to which, I hope, you will have recourse anew, in order to grasp the path which has been gone through here) is something closed, therefore is to be situated, and doubly so, in these two terms that I accentuated: one as the correlative of the choice constituted by the *I am not thinking*, in which the *I* is constituted by the fact that the *I*, precisely, comes in reserve, as I might say, as a negative curtailing (*écornage)* in the grammatical structure.

This phantasy - not "one beats a child", for example, but to be strict, "a child is being beaten" as it is written in German - this phantasy is indeed the structure that at the

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level of the only possible term of the choice as it is left by the structure of alienation - the choice of "I am not thinking" - this phantasy appears as this grammatically structured sentence: *Ein Kind ist geschlagen*.

But, as I told you, if this structure - the only one that is proposed to us, the forced choice, at the level of *either I am not* or *I am not thinking* - if it is there, it is in the measure in which it may be called on unveil the other, to reject it, and that at the level of the other, that of the *I am not*, it is the unconscious *Bedeutung* which comes correlatively to bite on this *I*, which is *qua* not being. And the relation to this *Bedeutung* is precisely this meaning, in so far as it escapes, this closed meaning, this meaning that is nevertheless so important to underline, in so far as, as one might say, it is what gives the measure of the *comprehension*, the accepted measure, the received measure, the intuition, the experience, that one challenges, as regards making these false discourses which appeal to comprehension, as opposed to explanation: philosophical sanctity and vanity. Mr Jaspers in the first rank.

The point of your gut that he aims at to make you believe that you understand things from time to time, is this little secret, isolated thing that you have within you, in the form of the phantasy, and that you believe you comprehend, because it awakens in you the dimension of desire.

This is, quite simply, what is at stake as regards what is called *comprehension*.

And recalling it is important here. Because … it is not because on average all of you as you are, I am saying for the majority, a little neurotic around the edges, that the (4) phantasy gives you the measure of comprehension, precisely at this level at which phantasy awakens desire in you - which is not to be sneezed at, because this is what centres your world - this is not a reason for you to imagine that you comprehend what, alone, betrays the logic of the phantasy, namely, perversion.

You must not imagine that for the pervert phantasy plays the same role. And this is why I am trying to explain to you the roots of what the pervert does which can only be defined with reference to the term that I introduced, new also in being so accentuated, which is called the *sexual act*.

Therefore, as you see, there are connections that have to be distinguished. To articulate the nature of the *jouissance* involved in perversion, with respect to the difficulty or to the impasse of the sexual act, is to produce something which has, with respect to the phantasy, to the phantasy as it is given to us in the closed state - and that is why I recalled earlier this example of "*A child is being beaten"* in the Freudian text - the function of this phantasy which cannot as such present, be anything other, than strictly this formula, *ein Kind ist geschlagen.* It is not because it can involve, in the sense that it has a configuration that you can point, refer to the economy of perverse *jouissance*, by making some terms of the one correspond to some terms of the other, that it is in any way of the same nature! In other words, in order right away to recall this crucial point that is, all the same, not difficult to pick up in passing in this text of Freud, which is so clear, it is, for example, the following: that it has not such a specificity in the cases of neurosis in which he encountered it.

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In the structure of a neurosis, this phantasy - to take this one because we have to take something on which to fix our attention - this phantasy in not linked specifically to one or other. Here indeed is something that might retain our attention for a moment!

Indeed, as regards what is involved in the structure of symptoms, I mean what symptoms signify in the economy, there, we cannot say that this arranges the same thing in one neurosis or in another.

I will never repeat it too much, even if I seem astonished when, among those who trust me enough to come to be supervised by me, I energetically protest against the use of terms like these, for example: "hystero (hyphen) phobic structure". Why that? A hysterical structure is not the same as a phobic structure! No closer to one another than to the obsessional structure, whose symptom represents a structure.

This is the striking point. The fact is, as Freud indicates to us, that in very different structures, this phantasy can be here what wanders around, with this privilege, this privilege of being more *inadmissible* than anything - I am reading Freud - I repeat (5) it here for the moment: *inadmissible* involves many things. One could dwell on it.

In any case, to remain at the level of a crude approach of the year 1919, when this was written, let us say that there is appended to it, like a cherry on a pedicle, the feeling of guilt. It is at this, in any case, that Freud pauses, to relate it to what he calls a scar. That, precisely, of the Oedipus complex.

This is well designed to make us say that, as regards the way in which it emerged in our experience, the phantasy has the characteristics of the experimental aspect, of a foreign body.

That we should have been lead - this by reason of a veritable theoretical bridge in Freud - to sense this firm meaning, is related to something else, much more developable, much richer in virtualities, which is called properly speaking perversion. It is not because Freud made this leap, very quickly, that we, for our part, ought not to reinstall the distances, the correct relation, question ourselves, all the same, after having acquired a lot of experience about what is involved in perversion.

Perversion, then, I said, is something which is articulated, is presented, as a proper way into the difficulty which is generated, let us say: by the project - and you should put this word in inverted commas, namely, that it is only analogical here; I am bringing it in as a reference to a discourse other than my own - the putting in question, to be more exact, which is situated in the angle between these two terms. **There is *no* …, there is *only* … something of the sexual act, … the sexual act** (*il n'y a pas …, il n'y a que …, d'acte sexuel …l'acte sexuel)*.

There is no sexual act, I said, in so far as we are incapable of articulating its resulting affirmations. Which does not mean, of course, that there are not some subjects who have acceded to it, who can legitimately say, "I am a man", "I am a woman". But we analysts, [**Lacan punctuates this with a little laugh**] this is what is striking. The fact is that we are not capable of saying it.

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Nevertheless, there is *only* this act, put in suspense at this level, that can *account* for this something which, after all, - the matter has not simply remained but still remains ambiguous - could be separated from it, which is called perversion. Why?

If it were a perversion in the absolute sense, in the sense that Aristotle takes it, for example, when he sets aside (*teras,* these are monsters) from the field of his *Ethics* a certain number of practices, which were perhaps, why not, more manifest, more visible, more alive even, in his world than in ours (where, moreover, it must not be believed that they are still not there). Namely, the example that he gives of bestial love, indeed, if I remember correctly, the allusion to the fact that some tyrant or other, Phalaris, if I remember correctly, rather liked to put some of his victims - whether they were friendly or unfriendly to him - to put them through some machine or other where (6) they cooked as in an oven for a certain time. Aristotle sets this aside from the field of ethics. This is not, of course, for us an univocal model, since in his *Ethics*, the sexual act, precisely - as in no ethics of the Greek philosophical tradition - the sexual act does not have a central value, I mean one that is admitted, patent. It remains for us to read it. It is not the same for us, thanks to the fact of the inclusion of the Judaic *Commandments* in our morality.

But, undoubtedly, with Freud the thing is definite. The interest that we take in sexual perversion - even if we find it more convenient to loosen its chains, in the form of a reference to some endogenous development or other, or some stage or other that we claim, I do not know why, to be biological - it remains that perversion only takes on its value by being articulated with the sexual act.

I am saying with the sexual act as such. And that is why I chose this little model … this little model of incommensurable division *par excellence,* of this **small o**, the one to develop its incommensurability in the widest way, which is defined by the *One over* ***o*** *equals One plus* ***o,*** $1/\mathbf{o} = 1+\mathbf{o}$, and allows us to inscribe it in a schema, in the form of a double development. Am I going to have to write it out again today? I indicate only that this being *One*, there is a way of folding back here the **small o**, then what remains of it - which is found, as it happens, to be the square of **o**, itself equal to 1-**o** (it is not difficult to verify it immediately) - to produce here an $\mathbf{o}^3$, which is folded back on the preceding $\mathbf{o}^2$ in order to give here an $\mathbf{o}^4$, the which $\mathbf{o}^4$, etc… and to culminate here as a sum of the odd powers which is found to be equal to $\mathbf{o}^2$, while the sum of the equal powers is finally found to be equal to **o**. As a result of which, what you have seen first of all being projected into the *One*, namely the **o** on the left, the $\mathbf{o}^2$ on the right, are found at the end to be separated in a definitive fashion an inverted form.

A schema which it would be easy to show - even though in a purely metaphorical fashion - can represent rather well what, in the sexual act can be presented for us in a fashion that is in conformity with Freud's presentiment, namely, realisable, but only in the form of sublimation.

It is precisely in the measure that this path - and what it implies - remains problematic, and that I exclude it this year. For to say that it can be realised in the form of sublimation, is to separate oneself precisely from what we have to deal with, namely, that in its field there arise, structurally, the whole chain of difficulties which unfold, which are included because of a major gap, and a gap which remains, which is that of

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castration... It is in the measure … on that, the common vote, as I might say, of the authors, of those who have experience of it, is clear. It is that as a minimum, one might say, along a path that is the inverse of that leading to the stumbling point of castration, that perversion is articulated.

The interest of this schema is the following. It is to show that this measure **small o**, first projected here onto the 1, can also be developed in an external fashion. Namely, (7) that the relation of the *One over one plus* ***o*** is also equal to this fundamental relation that the **small o** designates, which means here, I recalled it at one time, ***o*** *over one.*

What is at stake at the level of perversion is the following. It is that in the measure that the presumed One, not of the sexual act but of sexual union – of the pact, if you wish - in the measure that this *One*, is left intact, that a partition is not established in it, that the subject described as perverse, comes to find - at the level of this irreducible, of this original **small o** that he is – his *jouissance*.

What renders this conceivable is the following:

that there cannot be a sexual act, any more than any other act, except in the signifying reference which, alone, can constitute it as act;

that this signifying reference, here, does not involve - by this very fact - *two natural entities*, the male and the female;

that from the very fact that it dominates, because it is a lower field of the sexual act, this signifying reference only introduces these beings - which we can in no way maintain in the state of natural beings - introduces them in the form of a subject-function;

that this subject-function - this is what I articulated the previous times - has as effect the *disjunction of the body and jouissance,* and that it is there, it is at the level of this partition, that perversion most typically intervenes.

What it highlights, to try to reconnect this *jouissance* and this body, separated by the fact of the signifying intervention, is here the way in which it situates itself on the path of a resolution to the question of the sexual act.

It is because in the sexual act, as I showed you in my schema the last time, there is, for whoever of the two partners, whoever, there is a *jouissance*, that of the other, which remains in suspense.

It is because the inter-crossing, the required chiasma - which would make of each of the bodies, by right, the metaphor, the signifier of the *jouissance* of the other - it is because this chiasma is in suspense, that we cannot but, from whatever angle we tackle it, see this displacement which, in effect, makes a *jouissance* dependent on the body of the other. As a result of which, the *jouissance* of the other, as I told you, remains adrift.

The man, for the structural reason which means that it is on his *jouissance* that there is taken a sample which raises it to the function of a *jouissance*-value, the man is found, more electively than the woman, to be caught in the consequences of this structural subtraction of a part of his *jouissance*. The man is effectively the first to support the

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reality of the hole introduced into *jouissance*. This indeed is also why it is he for whom this question of *jouissance* is, not of course of greater weight - it is just as much so for his partner - but is such that he can give it articulated solutions. He can do so because of this: that there is in the nature of this thing which is called the body, something which reduplicates this alienation, which is - from the structure of the subject - alienation of *jouissance*.

(8) Alongside subjective alienation - I mean that dependent on the introduction of the function of the subject - which is brought to bear on *jouissance*, there is another which is the one incarnated in the function of the **o**-object.

Jouissance, Eurydice, as one might say, twice lost, this *jouissance* that the pervert rediscovers, where is he going to rediscover it? Not in the totality of his body, in which a *jouissance* is perfectly conceivable and perhaps even required, but where it is clear that it is here that it creates a problem when it is the sexual act that is at stake.

The *jouissance* of the sexual act can in no way be compared to what the womaniser (*coureur*) with this free and arrogant approach may experience. Nowhere more than in the field of sexual *jouissance* - and it is not for nothing that it is there that it appears to be prevalent - nowhere more than in this field does the pleasure principle - which is properly the limit, the stumbling point, the term put to every form which is situated as an excess of *jouissance* - nowhere does it appear better that the law of *jouissance* is subject to this limit. And that it is here that there is going to be found very specially for the man - in so far as I said that, for him, the castration complex already articulates the problem - there is going to find its field, I mean that there are objects which, in the body, are defined by being, in a way - with respect to the pleasure principle – *outside the body (hors corps)*.

This is what the **o**-objects are. The **small o** is this something ambiguous, which, however little it may belong to the body, to the individual object itself, it is in the field of the Other, and with good reason, because this is the field in which the subject is outlined, that he has to make the request for it, has to find its trace.

The *breast*, this object which must indeed be defined as this something which, even though it is stuck, attached, as on a surface, parasitically like a placenta, remains this something that the body of the child can legitimately claim as belonging to him. One sees this enigmatic belonging clearly. I mean, of course, that through an accident in the evolution of living beings, it appears that in this way, for some of them, something of them remains attached to the body of the being who engendered them.

And then, the others … we have already said *excrement*. It is hardly necessary to underline how marginal this is with respect of the body, but not without being extremely linked to its functioning. It is clear enough to see in all its weight what living beings add to the natural domain in terms of these products of their functions.

And then, there are those I designated under the terms of the *look* and of the *voice*. Seeking, at least for the first of these two terms … having abundantly articulated here what is involved in the vision relation, the question still remains in suspense which is the one, so simple to articulate - which one can say that, in spite of everything, the

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phenomenological approach, as the work of Merleau-Ponty proved in his last hours cannot resolve – namely, what is involved in this root of the visible, which ought to be rediscovered in the question of what the look *is,* radically.

(9) The look that cannot, any longer, be grasped as a reflection of the body, that none of the other objects in question can be recaptured in the soul. I mean in this regulatory sensibility (*esthésie*) of the pleasure principle, in this representative sensibility, where the individual rediscovers and supports himself, as identified to himself, in the narcissistic relation in which he affirms himself as individual.

This remainder - this remainder which only emerges from the moment at which there is conceived the limit which grounds the subject - this remainder which is called the **o**-object, is where there takes refuge the *jouissance* that does not fall under the influence of the pleasure principle. It is also there, it is by being there, it is because the *Dasein*, not only of the pervert but of any subject, is to be situated in this outside the body; this part which outlines already this presentiment that is somewhere in *Philebus* (in this passage that I asked you to look for) and what Socrates calls, in the relation of the soul to the body, the *anaesthetic* part. It is precisely in this anaesthetic part that *jouissance* lies, as is shown by the structure of the position of the subject in these two exemplary terms, which are defined as that of sadist and the masochist.

To tame you, as I might say, with this way in, do I need to evoke for you the most elementary marionette of what we can imagine about the sadistic act? Except for the fact, of course, that at the start I established my guarantees, and that I ask you clearly to grasp that here I am asking you to dwell on something other than what, for all of you, I said, more or less vacillating on the edges of neurosis, the slightest little phantasy of this order may awaken in you in terms of vague empathy. It is not a matter of "comprehending" how moving or not, imagined or not, one or other practice of this register may be. It is a matter indeed of articulating the following - which will avoid new questions about the economy, in this function, of pain, for example, about which I hope people have stopped agonising - what the sadist plays with, we will say, is the subject. I am not going to introduce any prosopopoeia about this … first of all I already wrote something on it which is called *Kant avec Sade,* to show that they are in the same vein.

He plays with the subject. What subject? The subject, I would say, as I said somewhere: "that one is subject to thinking or subject to vertigo", the subject to *jouissance*. Which, as you can clearly see, introduces this reflection which, from the subject, makes us pass to what I marked as being its remainder, the little **o**-object.

It is at the level of the Other, with a capital O of course, that he brings about this subversion, in regulating - I say in regulating - what from all time the philosophers have sensed as worthy of qualifying what they call disdainfully the relations of the body to the soul, and which in Spinoza in called, by its true name: *titillatio*", tickling.

Apparently, he enjoys the body of the Other. But you clearly see that the question is to be displaced to the level of the one that I formulated in a field where things are less captivating, when I imaged this relation of the master and the slave by asking, does

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(10) what one is enjoying, enjoy? So then, you see clearly the immediate relation with the field of the sexual act.

Only the question, at the level of the sadist, is the following. It is that he *does not know* that it is to this question *as such* that he is attached, that he becomes its *instrument*, pure and simple. That he does not know what he himself is doing as a subject, that he is essentially in *Verleugnung*. That he can sense it, interpret it in a thousand ways, which he does not fail to do.

It is necessary, of course, that he should have some powers of articulation, which was the case of the Marquis de Sade, as a result of which, legitimately, his name remains attached to the thing.

Sade remains essential because of having clearly marked the relation of the sadistic act to what is involved in *jouissance* and for having - when he tried in a derisory manner to articulate its law in the form of a universal rule worthy of the articulation of Kant, in this celebrated fragment: "Frenchmen, one more effort to be republican" (the object of my commentary in the article that I evoked earlier) - for having shown that this law can only be articulated in terms, not of *jouissance* of the body – note it clearly in the text - but of *parts* of the body. Each one, in this phantastical State (with a capital S) which is supposed to be founded on the right to *jouissance,* each one being bound to offer to whoever marks his designs on it, the *jouissance* of one or other "part", the author writes (and not in vain here), of his body.

Refuge of *jouissance,* this part, which the sadistic subject does not know is, this part, very exactly what is, for him, his *Dasein*, that it realises the essence of it. Here is what is already given as a key by Sade's text.

Naturally… I do not have the time - because, my God, time is passing - to re-articulate what results from this renewal, from this reclassification, one with respect to the other, of *jouissance* and the subject, and how close it is, of course, to the phantasy immediately articulated by Sade, of *jouissance* where it is, raised to its absolute in the Other, (very precisely in this part of the 1 which is here farthest to the right), where we have seen sliding, at the beginning of the problem, unsupported *jouissance,* the one that is at stake, and for which Sade, the atheist, must construct this figure, who is, nevertheless, the most manifest and the most manifestly like God: that of the *jouissance* of an absolute wickedness.

This essential and sovereign evil, which then and then alone - carried along, as one might say, by the logic of the phantasy - Freud … Sade admits the sadist is only the servant of; that he ought to open up, for the radical evil that nature constitutes, the paths for the maximum of destruction.

But, let us not forget, what is at stake there is only the *logic* of the thing. If I developed it .. in - or indicated you to refer to its sources - in the so manifestly futile, ridiculous, character, in the always miserably aborted character of sadistic enterprises, it is because it is starting from this appearance that we will better be able to make the (11) truth appear. The truth which is properly given by masochistic practice, where it is obvious that the masochist - in order to withdraw, as one might say, to steal away,

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to the only corner where manifestly it is graspable, which is the little **o**-object - gives himself over, for his part deliberately, to this identification to this object as rejected. He is less than nothing not even an animal, the animal that is mistreated, and moreover a subject who has abandoned by contract all the privileges of his function as subject.

This search, this almost frantic construction, of an impossible identification to what is reduced to the extremes of waste products, and that this is linked for him to the capture of *jouissance,* here is where there appears naked, exemplary, the economy that is at stake.

Here, let us observe, without pausing at this sublime verse [**a little ironic laugh from Lacan**] which humanises, as I might say, this manoeuvre:

Tandis que des mortels la multitude vile,
Sous le fouet du Plaisir, ce bourreau sans merçi,
Va cueillir des remords dans la fête servile, ...

["While the base multitude of mortals, under the lash of Pleasure, that merciless executioner, gather only remorse in their slavish feasting…"]

All of this is only a joke! It is a reflection bearing on the law of pleasure. Pleasure is not a "merciless executioner". Pleasure maintains you precisely within a rather padded limit, because it is pleasure. But, what is at stake, when the poet expresses himself in this way, is very precisely to mark its distance:

Ma douleur, donne moi la main; vient par ici,
Loin d'eux, etc…

[*My pain*, g*ive me your hand; come this way, far away from them, etc*…]

Flute music to show us the charms of a certain path which is obtained, by these colours, thus inverted.

If we are dealing with a masochist, a sexual masochist, let us note the necessity of our schema.

What Reik underlines - with a awkwardness that one could say really makes your head spin - about what he calls the "imaginary" or "fantastical" exactly (*Phantasiert*) character of masochism. He has not really grasped (even though everything that he contributes as examples designates it sufficiently) that what is at stake is precisely what we have projected there at the level of the *One*, on the right, namely, the absolute *One* of sexual union, in so far as, on the one hand, it is this pure - but *detached* - *jouissance* of the feminine body. (This, Sacher Masoch - just as exemplary as the other person, for having given us the structures of the masochist relation - incarnates in a woman, essentially in the figure of a woman, this Other, from whom he has stolen her *jouissance.* There is no question even for an instant, that this Other absolute but completely enigmatic *jouissance,* can give pleasure, as I might say, to the woman! This indeed is the least of the masochist's worries! This indeed is why, moreover, his wife - whom he provided with a name that was not hers, the name Wanda in *Venus*

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with furs - his wife, when she wrote her memoirs, shows us the degree to which she is almost as embarrassed about his requests as a fish with an apple).

On the contrary, why torment oneself about the fact that *it is necessary* that this *jouissance – purely imaginary*, as I told you - should be incarnated, on this occasion, (12) by a couple, required precisely - this is obvious - from the structure of this Other, in so far as it is only the reduction of this *One* not yet distributed into the sexual division. One does not, in a word, have to agonise, to get into these oedipal evocations, to see that it is necessary that this being who represents this mythical *jouissance* - here am referring to feminine *jouissance* - should be on occasion represented by two supposedly sexual partners, who are there for the show, for the *guignol*, and alternate.

The masochist then, for his part in a manifest fashion, is situated and can only be situated *with respect to a representation* of the sexual act, and defines, by his place, the *locus* in which *jouissance* takes refuge from it.

This is even what is derisory in it. And it is not simply derisory for us, it is derisory for him. This is how there is explained this double aspect of *dé-rision* - I mean, to the outside - in so far as he never fails to put into the production - as someone who knows something about it, M Jean Genet, has remarked - this little thing which marks, not for an eternal public, but so that any passer-by should make no mistake about it (this forms part of the *jouissance*), that all of this is a device, even a laugh. And this other aspect that one can call, properly speaking, *mockery*, which is directed at … that it is enough to have re-read (since you now have it within reach following the admirable *Presentation* by Gilles Deleuze), *Venus in furs*. You see the moment when this personage Sacher Masoch, who was all the same a bit of a *lord*, imagine this personage of his novel - whom he makes into a great lord – who, while he is playing the role of a valet running behind his lady, has all the trouble in the world not to burst out laughing, even though he puts on the saddest appearance possible. It is only with difficulty that he restrains his laughter.

And it is again to introduce into it, therefore, as essential, the following. The aspect that I would call - and which also struck Reik without him being able to account for it completely in this connection - the *demonstration*-aspect of the thing, which forms part of this position of the masochist. That he demonstrates [proves] - like me on the blackboard, it has the same value - that he demonstrates that here alone is the locus of *jouissance*. Demonstrating it forms part of his *jouissance*. And the demonstration is no less valid for all that.

All perversion has always this demonstrative dimension. I mean not that it demonstrates for us, but that the pervert is himself a demonstrator. And he is the one who has the intention, not of course the perversion.

It is starting from here that there can be soundly posed the questions about what is involved in what we are calling, more or less prudently, moral masochism. Before introducing the term of masochism at every turn in our remarks, we must first of all have clearly understood what masochism is at the level of the pervert.

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I sufficiently indicated to you earlier that what links neurosis to perversion is nothing other than this phantasy that within its own field, that of neurosis, fulfils a very special function, about which, it seems, people have never really questioned themselves enough. It is only by starting from there that we can give a correct value to what we will introduce more or less correctly, at one or other turning of neurosis, by calling it masochism.

I am caught for time today and what I am telling you - by not being able to continue onto neurosis –is literally broken in two. This is linked to the fact that, of course, I always badly judge what I can tell you in one go. But today, I clearly articulated what constitutes the source of perversion in itself, and at the same time showed you that sadism is in no way to be seen as a reversal (*retournement)* of masochism. For it is quite clear that both operate in the same fashion, except that the sadist operates in a more naive fashion. Intervening in the field of the subject, in so far as he is subject to *jouissance*, the masochist, after all, knows well that it matters little to him what is happening in the field of the Other. Of course it is necessary that the other should play the game, but he *knows* the *jouissance* that he has to draw from it. As for the sadist, he finds himself, in truth, a slave of this passion, of this necessity, to bring under the yoke of *jouissance*, what he is aiming at as being the subject. But, he does not take into account, that in this game, he himself is the dupe, making himself the slave of something which is entirely outside himself, and most of the time remaining half-ways from what he is aiming at. But on the contrary, not failing to realise *in fact* - I mean in his case without knowing it, without seeking it, without situating himself in it, without placing himself in it - the function of the **o**-object. Namely, to be objectively, really, in a masochistic position, as the biography of our divine Marquis - I underlined it in my article - sufficiently demonstrates. What could be more masochistic than to have remitted oneself entirely into the hands of the Marquise de Montreuil.

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Seminar 24: Wednesday 21 June 1967

It is necessary… it is necessary for me, today, to end abruptly. I announced to you, the last time, that this would be my last lecture for this school year. We must close this subject without having done any more than open it up. I hope that others will take it up, if I have been able to animate them with this desire.

To end abruptly, I intend to terminate on what one could call a clinical reminder. Not at all, certainly, that when I speak about logic and specifically about the logic of the phantasy, I leave, even for an instant, the field of the clinic. Everyone knows, everyone testifies, among the practitioners, that it is in the day-to-day declarations of their patients that they rediscover, very frequently, my principal terms. And, moreover, I, for my part, have not gone looking for them anywhere else.

What I am placing, by what I call these reference-terms of my teaching, what I am placing, I mean what I am arranging the place of, is the psychoanalytic discourse *itself*.

No later than the beginning of this week, in this case it is a testimony which is the inverse, in a way, of the one that I very often hear, namely, that such and such a patient seemed to tell his analyst, the very afternoon or the day after my seminar, something which seemed to be a repetition of it, to the point that people were asking themselves if he could have had an echo of it. And if one marvels all the more at cases where this is really impossible, inversely, I could say that, no later than the beginning of this week, I found, in the accounts of three sessions that were brought to me, of a psychoanalysis - it does not matter whether it was a training or therapeutic one - the very terms that I knew (since it was Monday) that I had been … "excogitating" the night before, in the place in the country where I prepare my seminar for you.

So then, as regards this analytic discourse, I do nothing other than give, in a way, the co-ordinates in which it is situated. But what does that mean? Because I can bring together, because everyone can, so often, bring together this discourse, and it is not enough to say that it is the discourse of a neurotic. That does not specify this (2) discourse. It is the discourse of a neurotic in the conditions, even in the conditioning, it is given by the fact of being held in the office of a psychoanalyst. And from now on it is not for nothing that I am putting forward this condition of the place (*local*).

Does this mean that these echoes, these transfers even, signify something very strange?

Everyone knows, everyone can see, everyone can have experienced, that my discourse, of course, here, is not one of free association.

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Does that mean that this discourse to which we recommend the method, the path, of free association, this discourse of the patients, is the same as, overlaps my one here, only when he fails in it in a way and when he speculates … when he introspects … when he lucubrates, when he intellectualises, as we put it so nicely. No of course not. There must indeed be something else which, again, can tell us that the patient is obeying the recommendation of free association in so far as it is the path that we propose to him, can all the same, in a way legitimately, say things, and, in effect, everyone knows well that if we ask him to pass along the paths of free association, this does not mean a slipshod discourse, nor a broken discourse. But all the same, in order for something to reach, sometimes even in its tricks, such a distinction about the impact of his relation to his own demand, to his question about his desire, is all the same something of a nature of make us reflect for an instant on what conditions this discourse beyond our instructions.

And here we have of course to bring into play this element (today I will really remain at the level of what is most commonly obvious) called interpretation.

Before asking oneself what it is, how, when, it has to be made … something which does not fail to provoke, more and more, in analysts, some embarrassment, for want perhaps of posing the question at a time prior to the one at which I am going to pose it. It is the following: how is the discourse, free discourse, the free discourse which is recommended to the subject, conditioned by the fact that it is, in some fashion, on the way to being interpreted? And this is what leads us simply to evoke some reference points that the logicians, here, have given us for a long time and this indeed is what pushed me, this year, to speak about logic. Not that here, certainly, I was able to give a course on logic. This was not compatible with what I had to cover. I tried to give the framework of a certain logic, which interests us at the level of two registers: of alienation, on the one hand, of repetition on the other. These two quadrangular, fundamentally superimposed schemas that I hope some of you at least will remember. But I hope also to have stimulated some people to open, like that, to open a little, to cast a side-long glance at some book on logic, were it only to remind themselves about the distinctions of value that the logician introduces into discourse when he distinguishes, for example, the sentences called assertive, from imperative or (3) implorative sentences. Simply to signal that it happens, that it can happen, it can be posed, it is localised, at the level of the first of the questions that the others, which are not, of course, any less words full of impact, and which might also interest the logicians. But, a curious thing, they only tackle them by going around them and, in a way, from an angle, which ensures that up to today, they have left this field rather intact. The sentences that I called imperative, implorative, in so far as, after all, what? They solicit indeed something which, if we refer ourselves to what I defined as an act, cannot but interest logic. If they solicit active interventions it can sometimes be under the heading of acts. Nevertheless, only the first would be, according to the logicians, able to be submitted to what can be called *criticism*.

Let us define this as the criticism which requires a reference to the conditions necessary so that, from a statement, there can be deduced another statement.

A person who, today, might have been parachuted in here for the first time and who would never, of course, have heard tell of these things, would find that this is quite

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banal. But in fact, I suppose all the same that for all of you, there is resonating for your ears the distinction here between stating and the statement.

And the fact that the statement, in order to understand me - to understand me in what I have just said - is constituted by a signifying chain. This means that what is, in the discourse, the object of logic, is therefore limited at the start by formal conditions, and this indeed is what makes this logic be designated by the name of formal logic.

Good, well then, there at the start - certainly not stated at the start by the one who is here the great initiator, namely Aristotle, only stated by him in an ambiguous, partial, fashion, but undoubtedly brought out in subsequent progress - we see, at the level of what I called the "necessary conditions", there being highlighted the function of negation in so far as it excludes the third.

This means that something cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time from the same point of view. This, at least, is what Aristotle states. Expressly this.

After all, we can indeed here, immediately, put in the margin what Freud affirms to us: that it is still not this principle which is called that of "non-contradiction", a limit that brings to a halt … brings to a halt, what? What is stated… in the unconscious.

As you know, Freud, from *The interpretation of dreams* on, underlines it. Contradiction – namely, that the same thing can be affirmed and denied very properly at the same time, and from the same angle - this is what Freud designates for us as being the privilege, the property of the unconscious.

If something were needed to confirm, to those into whose skull this has still not
(4) entered, that the unconscious is structured like a language, I would say: how then could you even justify Freud taking the care to underline this absence, in the unconscious, of the principle of non-contradiction? For the principle of non-contradiction has absolutely nothing to do with the real! It is not that there is no contradiction in the real, there is no *question* of contradiction in the real!

If the unconscious… Is that not so? Like those who, having to speak about the unconscious, anyway, in places where, in principle, a teaching is given that begins by saying: "those in this room who believe that the unconscious is structured like a language may leave now!". Certainly they are quite right, because this proves that they already know everything! And that, in any case, they have no need to remain to learn that it is something different! But this something different, if it is the "tendencies", as they say, pure tendency or tension, in any case huh! There is no question of it being anything other than what it is! It can be composed, on occasion, according to the parallelogram of forces, it can be inverted - in so far as we suppose it has a direction - is that not so? But it is in a field that is always subject, as I might say, to composition!

But, in the principle of contradiction, something else is at stake. It is a matter of *negation*. Negation is not found like that in the streams! You can go and look under the foot of a horse and you will never find a negation! Therefore, if it is underlined, if Freud, who all the same ought to know something about it, takes care to underline that

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the unconscious is not subject to the principle of contradiction, well then, it is indeed because, for him, there can be a question about whether it is subject to it! And if there is a question about whether it is subject to it, it is quite obviously because of what is seen: that it is structured like a language! In a language … the use of a language is prohibited. Which after all has the characteristics a certain convention. The prohibition has a sense, the principle of contradiction functions or does not function. If one notes that it does not function somewhere, it is because it is a discourse that is at stake! To invoke it means that the unconscious violates this logical law and that proves, at the same time, that it is installed in the logical field and that it articulates propositions.

So then, to recall this is not, of course, except incidentally, to return to the basics, to the principles, but rather, in this connection, to remind you that the logicians teach us that the law of non-contradiction - even though people were mistaken about it for a long time - is not the same thing. It is to be distinguished, from what is called the law of bivalency.

It is one thing to prohibit in logical usage - in so far as it has given us the limited goals that I told you about earlier, limited in its field to assertive sentences, limited to the following: to bring out the necessary conditions so that from a statement there should be deduced a correct chain. Namely, which permits the same assertion to be made (5) about another statement, an assertion which is affirmative or negative - it is one thing to ground that and to say – the law of bivalency -: every proposition is either true or false.

I am not going to develop further here. First of all, because I already did so. I indicated from my first lectures of this year some … I gave some *hints*, to make you sense the degree to which it is easy to show that it is not simply because one does not know, that a proposition can easily be constructed which makes you sense the degree to which this bivalency - this bivalency as decided on - is problematic. All the nuances there are and which are inscribed in, between *is it true that it is false,* or *it is false that it is true.* It is not at all something linear, univocal and decided.

But, precisely, this indeed is what gives all its value to the presence of this dimension, which is ours, the one within which there is situated this discourse which we ask not to look any further, as I might say, than the tip of its nose. It is enough that you have to pose yourselves the question, I say to those who come into analysis with me, as to whether you should say that or not. The matter is settled. It is the clearest fashion to state the analytic rule. But, after all, what I do not tell him but which is the position from which he starts, is that it is only the truth, in the final analysis, which is here posed as having to be searched for in the faults (*failles*) of statements. Faults that in short, I give him plenty of time - that I almost recommend him - to multiply, but which then, of course suppose, suppose at the source of the rule itself that I give him, a coherence implying the eventual restoration of the aforesaid faults. A restoration which is to be done, according to what norms if not those evoked, suggested, by the presence of the of the dimension of truth. This dimension is *inevitable*, in the establishment of analytic discourse.

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Analytic discourse, is a discourse submitted to this law of soliciting this truth - which I already spoke about in the terms which are here the most appropriate: a truth that speaks - to solicit it, in short, to state a *ver-dict*, a *dict* that is truthful.

Naturally, the rule takes on a quite different value! This truth which speaks and whose verdict one is waiting for… one strokes it, one tames it, one pats it on the back! This is the true sense of the rule! One wants him to do better. And in order for him to do better one pretends, in short - this is the sense of the rule of free association - one pretends not to be concerned about it and not to give a feck about it, to be thinking about something else, in that way it will perhaps let something important appear. That is the principle. These things… I almost blush, anyway … to be making something of it here! But do not forget that I am dealing with psychoanalysts. Namely, with those who –as regards what I am saying here, which is, in any case, tangible and almost within the reach of everyone - who have the greatest tendency to forget it and, of course, they have the strongest reasons for that. I am going to say what they are right away.

(6) So then the question is there, I highlight it in passing. The fact is that, in short, one questions the truth of a discourse, which - if it is true, following Freud, as I said earlier - is the truth of a discourse which can say yes or no, at the same time, about the same thing (since it is a discourse that is not subject to the principle of contradiction) and which in being said, in being constructed, as a strange discourse, introduces a truth. This is also fundamental! For proof, so fundamental (even though of course it is not always brought out in the type of teaching that I evoked earlier), it is so fundamental that it is from there, that there comes the startled response with which we know or sense, we have the testimony, Freud had to deal with, when he had … - it is surely there that it happened - to explain to his band (you know, the Viennese pals, huh, on Wednesday) that he had a patient who had dreams that were *expressly* designed to drop Freud in it! A startled response! A startled response in the audience and even, probably, an outcry! Since, moreover, one sees that Freud … finally sets about taking some trouble to resolve the question. He explains it, of course, as he can. Namely, that dreams are not the unconscious, that dreams can be liars. It nevertheless remains that the least that one can say is that you must not push this unconscious! I mean if this dimension is to be preserved, as Freud does, it is in the name of the following. That the unconscious for its part *preserves* a truth that it does not avow! And that if one pushes it, well then, of course, it can start lying on all cylinders. With the *means* that it has. But what does all that mean?

Naturally, the unconscious only has a sense, except for the imbeciles who think that it is evil, only has a sense, henceforth, if one sees that it is not, what we will call, like that, if you wish, a "whole subject" (*sujet à part entière*). Or more exactly that it is before, before the whole subject. There is a language before the subject … is supposed to know anything whatsoever.

There is then a logical priority of the status of the truth with respect to anything, described as subject, which may come to dwell in it.

It is this that … I know well that when I say these things, when I wrote them for the first time in the *Freudian thing*, this produced … in any case this had its little

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romantic resonance. Who cares, I cannot do anything about it. The truth is a personage to whom one has for a very long time given a skin, hair and even a well to dwell in and to act the imp. It is a matter of finding the reason for that. What I want simply to tell you, is that it is, as I told you earlier, *impossible* to exclude, for the reason that you are going to see.

The fact is that if interpretation does not have this relation to what there is no means of calling anything other than the truth; if it is only what, finally, one shelters behind, like that, in our everyday manipulations, huh … one is not going to worry, like that, the little dears that one is supervising, stick on their backs the responsibility of truth (7) … So then one tells them that the interpretation has, or not, "succeeded", as they say because it has … what? - This is the criterion, huh! - Had its discourse-effect! … Which can be nothing other … than a discourse! Namely, that there was material, it rebounded, the chap continued to blather on.

Good. But if that is it then … if it is only a *pure* discourse-effect, this has a name that psychoanalysis knows perfectly well and which is, moreover, a problem for it, which is funny. This, and not anything else, is very precisely what is called *suggestion*! And if interpretation were only something that produces material, I mean, if one radically eliminates the dimension of truth, all interpretation is only suggestion.

This is what puts in their place these very interesting speculations - because one clearly sees that they are only designed to avoid the word *truth* - when Mr. Glover speaks about correct or incorrect interpretation, he can only do so by avoiding this dimension of the truth and he does it, the dear man, (a man who knows very well what he is saying) not simply to avoid the dimension - for you are going to see that he does not avoid it. Only look. The fact is that one can speak about the dimension of truth, but that it is very difficult to speak about a "false" interpretation. The bivalency is polar, but it leaves us embarrassed as regards the excluded third. And that is why he admits the eventual fruitfulness - I mean, Glover - of incorrect interpretation. Consult his text. Incorrect does not mean that it is false. It means that it has nothing to do with what is at stake at that moment, in terms of truth. But sometimes it is not necessarily wide of the mark for all that, because … because there is no way here of not seeing it re-emerge. Because the truth rebels! That however inexact it might be one has all the same tickled something.

So then in this analytic discourse designed to capture the truth, it is the interpretative interpretation - response that represent the truth, the interpretation … as being possible there - even if it does not happen - which orients the whole discourse. And the discourse that we have ordered as free discourse has as a function making room for it. It tends to nothing else then to establish a locus of reservation in order that this interpretation maybe inscribed there as a locus reserved for the truth.

This place is the one that the analyst occupies. I point out to you that he occupies it, that is not where the patient puts him! This is the interest of the definition that I give of transference. After all, why not recall that it is specific? He is placed in the position of a subject who is supposed to know, and he knows very well that this only works because he holds that position, because it is there that the very effects of transference are produced, the ones, of course, on which he has to intervene to rectify

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them in the sense of the truth. Namely, that he is between two stools. Between the false position, of being the subject *supposed to know* (which he knows well he is not) and that of having to rectify the effects of this supposition on the part of the subject, (8) and this in the name of the truth. This indeed is why the transference is the source of what is called resistance. The fact is, if it is quite true, as I say, that truth in the analytic discourse is placed elsewhere, at the place of the one who is listening to it, in fact the one who is listening can only function as a relay with respect to this place. Namely, that the only thing he knows, is that he himself, as subject, is in the same relation as the one who is speaking to him, to the truth. This is what is usually called the fact that he is necessarily - like everyone else - in difficulties with his unconscious. And this is what creates the function, the limping character of the analytic relation.

The fact is, precisely, that *only* this difficulty, his very own, can answer, can answer *worthily*, where there is awaited - where there is awaited and where sometimes one can wait for a long time - where one awaits the interpretation!

Only as you see, a difficulty - whether it is one of being or whether it is about the relation with the truth - it is probably the same thing - a difficulty does not constitute a status!

This indeed is why it is on this point that people do everything to give to this, which is the condition of the analyst - to be only able to respond with his own difficulty of being…an analyst, why not? – people do everything to camouflage it. In recounting things. For example that, of course, anyway … for his unconscious the affair is settled, huh! … He has had a psychoanalysis and even a training one! And, of course, this all the same allowed him, in any case, to be a little bit more at ease about it, when all is said and done.

Though we are not in the domain of greater or less. We are at the very foundation of what constitutes analytic discourse.

This is not going very quickly, huh? Well then, nevertheless, this is how one must advance.

If this truth is related to desire, this is perhaps going to account for the difficulties that we have in handling this truth here, in the same way as the logicians can do it. Let it be enough for me to evoke that desire, is not something like that, in effect, whose truth is so simple to define.

Because, the truth of desire … [**a little laugh from Lacan**], is tangible! We always have to deal with it, because that is why people come to us. On the subject of what happens, for them, when desire comes to what is called "the moment of truth"! That means, I desired something a lot - whatever it maybe - but I am in front of it, I can have it …and that is when an accident happens!

Yes. *Desire*, I already tried to explain it, *is lack*. I am not the one who invented that, it has been known for a very long time. Other deductions have been made from it, but it is from there that people started, because one can only start from there. It is (9) Socrates. *Desire is lack in its very essence*. And this has a sense. The fact is that

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there is no object that desire is satisfied with, even if there are objects that are the *cause* of desire.

What becomes of desire at the moment of truth?

It is indeed these well-known accidents that wisdom takes advantage of and prides itself on considering it as folly, and then, establishing all sorts of dietary measures in order to be preserved from it. I mean, from desire.

There you are. Only… the problem … the problem is that there is a moment when desire is desirable. It is when it is a matter of what is happens, not without reason, in the execution of sexual action. And then there, the error, the considerable error, is to believe that desire has a function that one inserts into the *physiological*. People believe that the unconscious only brings about a disturbance in it. It is an error! It is an error that today, by God, I … I, like that, I am putting on a pin, because, like that, [**Lacan waves goodbye**] I am going to say farewell to you for a few months. But one can very easily see that it is, despite everything, an error that remains inscribed at the bottom … of even the most alert spirits, I mean of psychoanalysts.

It is very strange that people do not comprehend that what appears, after all, as the measure, the test, of desire, in other words, by God … erection. Well then, by God, that has nothing to do with desire! Desire can function perfectly, operate, have all its impact, without in any way being accompanied by it. Erection is a phenomenon that must be situated *along the path* of *jouissance*. I mean that, of itself, this erection is *jouissance*, and that precisely, what is demanded, for the sexual act of operate, is that one should not stop there. It is auto-erotic *jouissance*. One does not see, if it were otherwise, why this *jouissance* should be marked by this sort of veil. Normally, I mean when the sexual act - at least it must be supposed - has its whole value, well then, priapic emblems are raised at every cross-roads! It is an object that must be withdrawn from common contemplation only in the measure, precisely, that this erection is questionable, is questionable with respect to the sexual act as act.

The desire in question, *un-con-scious* desire, the one spoken about in psychoanalysis in so far as it has a relation with the sexual act - it is first necessary, it is fitting, to define it properly and to see from where this term emerges before it functions.

It is very important to recall the fact, which has nevertheless from all time been my whole teaching, for the following. The fact is, if one does not remember, if one does not pose in these terms the operation indispensable for the sexual act, if it is not in the register of *jouissance* - and not of desire - that one puts the operation of copulation, its possibility of realisation, one is absolutely condemned to understand nothing of everything that we say about feminine desire; which we explain is, like masculine desire, in a certain relation to a lack, a symbolised lack which is the phallic lack. How (10) comprehend, how situate correctly, the sense, the place of what we are saying here about feminine desire, if one does not start from the following, which - on the plane of *jouissance* - fundamentally differentiates the two partners, creates an abyss between them that I will designate sufficiently, I think, by taking two reference points. That for the man that I defined just now as erection, on the plane of *jouissance*, and that for the woman for which I will find nothing better than the following, and happily

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I did not wait to be a psychoanalyst to have the confidences and that each one of you may have. It is the way in which young girls designate among themselves what appears to them to be closest to what I am designating at this level, namely, what they call, "*le coup de l'ascenseur*". When it does something like that to them, like what happens when it goes down a little suddenly, they know, they know very well, that this is something which is of the order, of the register, of what is at stake in the sexual act.

This is where one must start from in order to know the *distance* at which to place desire, namely, what is involved in the unconscious, desire *in its relation* to the sexual act.

It is not a relation of front to back. It is not a relation of epiphenomena. It is not a relation of things that fit together. This is why it is quite necessary to exercise oneself for many years with the knowledge that desire has nothing to do except with *demand*; that it is what is produced as **subject** in the *act* of demand.

And desire is only involved in the sexual act, in so far as a demand can be involved in the sexual act, which, after all, is not obligatory but, in any case, is common! Is common in the measure that the sexual act - which is what I defined for you, namely, what never ends up by making a man or a woman - anyway, let us say that to provoke you. The fact is that the sexual act is inserted into something that is called the sexual *market* or commerce.

So then, people have to make demands. It is from the demand - and fundamentally from the demand - that desire arises. This indeed is the reason why desire, in the unconscious, is structured like a language. Because it emerges from it!

It is unfortunate that I have to mouth these things which are absolutely within everyone's reach. And which are regularly omitted and forgotten in everything that is lucubrated in the simplest theories concerning psychoanalysis.

There you are. This means, at the same time, that this desire which is only a sub-product of demand (I do not have to construct the theory of that for you), is where, (11) indeed, one grasps why it is *of its nature* not to be satisfied.

Because if desire emerges from the dimension of demand, even if the demand is satisfied on the plane of the need which stimulated it, it is of the nature of demand - because it belongs to language - to generate this break (*faille*) of desire which comes from the fact that it is an articulated demand, which means that there is something *displaced*, which makes the object of the demand unsuitable for satisfying desire. Such as the breast which is everything - … which is what *displaces* everything that passes through the mouth for digestive needs, which substitutes for it this something which is properly what is lost, what can no longer be given. There is no chance that desire will be satisfied. One can only satisfy the demand.

And that is why it is correct to say that desire is the desire of the Other. Its break is produced at the locus of the Other, in so far as it is to the locus of the Other that the demand is addressed. This is where it finds itself having to co-habit with what the

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Other is also the locus of, under the heading of truth. In this sense that there is nowhere a shelter for the truth except where language has a place, and that language finds its place at the locus of the Other.

So then? So then, this is where it is necessary to comprehend a little what is at stake concerning this desire in its relation to the desire of the Other.

I tried, for that, to construct for you a little apologue that I borrowed, certainly not by chance, but for reasons that are quite essential to what is called the art of the seller. Namely, the art of making an offer with the intention of creating a demand. You have to make someone desire an object that he has no need of, in order to push him to demand it.

So then, I do not need to describe for you all the tricks that are used for that. One tells him that he is going to miss it, for example, because someone else is going to take it, who, because of this fact, will have an advantage over him (*aura **barre** sur lui)*. I am using words that echo my usual symbols. It is nevertheless literally like that that this functions in the mind of what is called a good salesman. Or again one tries to show him that this will be an altogether major external sign for the style that he is trying to give his life. We believe in it … In short, it is through the desire of the Other that every object is present when it is a matter of …buying it (*l'acheter)*.

L'acheter, l'acheter … lâcheté (cowardice). What do you know! … It is rather curious, it is a word … *lâcheté*, *Feigheit* … You are a coward sir! … *Tua res agitur*! It is indeed, in effect, a matter of cowardice. But you are the one involved. Yes. This indeed is what is at stake. Which can be seen from the fact that the principal result, as you know very well, that emerges from this series of malversations, the ones that life summarises under the sign of desire, the principal result will be the one that always pushes you further in the sense of redeeming yourself. Of redeeming yourself from cowardice.

I took care, all the same, before introducing this dimension which is, of course, always (12) masked in analytic interventions, but that those, the others, that those who are in the know, I mean the one who speaks an analytic discourse does not mince words about. He knows very well that the dimension of cowardice is involved, but I do not know. I took the trouble to re-open up for you, in any case … like that, any one at all of the great observations by Freud. I came right away to the *Ratman,* to the fact that the patient immediately introduces this dimension of his cowardice! Only, what is not clear is where this cowardice is. It is just like the earlier dimension, that of truth. The courage of the subject is, perhaps, precisely to play the game of desire, the desire of the Other. It is to give pride of place to something which is moreover, perhaps, the cowardice of the Other who is buying him and to find oneself there at the end, to rediscover oneself. For, when all is said and done, this indeed is where the problem is when neurosis is at stake.

But, for that, it is important to grasp clearly or, more exactly, to recall, to bring back to the forefront of what I have said about desire, what I said in its time about desire, when I said: desire *is* its interpretation. Huh? One could all the same object. Because after all this desire … this unconscious desire, whose meaning no one wants to know,

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an unconscious desire. What ought, in principle, to be more conscious than desire? If one speaks about unconscious desire, it is indeed, in effect, because it is the desire of the Other that it is possible. If there exists, precisely, what I have just evoked, by a reminder of the metaphor of buying, as regards which one does not know who it has a hold on, of this ac-captivation in the desire of the Other … it is because there is a step to be taken.

Unconscious desire, we are told, if it is unconscious, it is because in the discourse which supports it, a link has been broken so that the desire of the Other … is what? … Unrecognisable! It is the best gadget that has been found to stop this machine. There is a step, well then, we create on the hither side of this step, not the *non-desire*, but the *desire-not*. The definition of unconscious desire is this - which allows us to express the subtleties of negation in French – namely, this point of arrival that the *pas*, the *point,* designate for us, and I already made use of it on the subject of the *pas de sens*.

This desire-not, I would even go - if you leave me a little bit of rope – as far as making of it a single written name and to give to this *des* which dominates it, the same accent as *désespoir,* or as *desêtre*, and to say that the unconscious desire of *désirpas*, is something which collapses with respect to some *irpas* or other. An *irpas* which designates very precisely the desire of the Other. With respect to which to interpret it would be verbalised rather well by an *irpassé*. The inversion can be carried out around this. The fact is that the interpretation, in effect, is for its part what takes the place of desire, in the sense that, earlier, you were objecting to me that it is there first, however unconscious it may be. But it is there, also, as one passes by it again, because it is already articulated and interpretation, when it took its place … luckily (13) that does not settle anything, because it is not at all sure that the desire that we have interpreted has an outcome. We even count on the fact that it will not have one, and that it will always remain, and all the better, a *désirpas*.

This even gives us, a lot of elbow-room in the interpretation of desire.

But then, it is necessary to know here what is meant by its support under the name of phantasy, and what game we are playing in interpreting unconscious desires, specifically those of the neurotic. It is here that we have to pose the question about the phantasy. We have posed it ceaselessly. Let us pose it again here, at the end, one last time.

When the logicians - from whom the whole of this discourse today started - limit themselves to the formal functions of the truth, I told you, they find a *gap*, they find a singular space, between this principle of non-contradiction and that of bivalency. And you find it in Aristotle, precisely in the book called *On interpretation* and which - I point it out to you for your convenience - is in paragraph 19-a, in the notation which designates the classic manuscripts of Aristotle and that you will find on page 100 (it is easy to remember), in the very bad translation that I am recommending to you: that of Tricot, which is the usual one.

Aristotle puts into question the function involved in the bivalency of the *true* and the *false* in its consequences. I mean in what it involves when it is a matter of the contingent, in what is going to happen. What is going to happen, whether yes or no, if

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we posit that it is true or false. It is therefore true or false immediately, namely, that it already decided. Naturally, that cannot work.

The solution that he gives of it, the one that consists in casting doubt on bivalency, is not what is in question here. I will not push the discussion here. But, on the contrary, what I will point out is that the logical solution - the banal, current, one given, for example, in the volume by the Kneales (I believe I am pronouncing their name correctly) *The development of logic* - the one which consists in saying that what is true, cannot be the signifying articulation, but what it *means,* is a false solution.

This solution is false, as the whole development of logic shows. I mean that what is deduced from the whole formal set-up cannot, in any case, be founded on meaning, for the simple reason that there is no possibility of fixing any meaning that is univocal, and that, whatever may be the signifiers that you put forward to pinpoint true or false, it is always possible to implicate it in a circumstance in which the most clearly stated truth, under the heading of signified content, will be false, and even more than false: a characteristic deception.

It is only possible to establish an order, by attributing - I am speaking about logic - by attributing the function of truth to a signifying grouping. That is why this logical use of the truth is only encountered in mathematics, where as Bertrand Russell says, one (14) never knows in any case what one is talking about. And if one thinks one knows, one is quickly disabused. You have to tidy things up quickly and get rid of intuition.

I recall this in order to question what is involved in the function of the phantasy.

I am saying – model: *A child is being beaten* - that the phantasy is only a signifying arrangement, whose formula I gave a long time ago, by coupling in it the **small o** to the *S barred*. Which means that it has two characteristics; the presence of the **o**-object and on the other hand, nothing other than what engenders the subject as *S barred*, namely, a sentence. This is why *A child is being beaten* is typical. *A child is being beaten* is nothing other than the signifying articulation, *A child is being beaten.* Except for the fact (read the text, consult it) that, over it there wanders, that over it there flies, nothing other than the following, which is impossible to eliminate, which is called the look.

Before bringing into play the three moment of the genesis of this product called the phantasy, it is important all the same to designate what it is!

It is not because Freud was dealing with illiterates that it does not remain interesting to posit the firm framework of the status of the phantasy and to say: it is strictly nothing other - in conformity with what I brought you at the beginning of this year, about the coupling of a part of *I am not thinking*, with the grammatical structure, to tell you that it is at the very place of this grammatical structure that at the fourth vertex of the quadrangle there emerges the small **o**-object and to add - because we have already designated two of them, the two on the left - that the angle on the bottom right, the one from which *I am not* leaves the place, that it curtails (*écorne)* at the level of the unconscious, to the following, which is the complement of the purely signifying

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grammatical structure of the phantasy, namely, what I started from today and which is called **a truth meaning**.

What must be remembered, to be picked out, in everything that Freud states about the phantasy is simply this little clinical trait - the one he puts forward here in order certainly to demonstrate so many things for us about its usage, how to manipulate it - but what must be remembered is a feature like the following: that the phantasy, the same one, is encountered in very different neurotic structures. But, moreover, as you know, that this phantasy remains at a singular distance from everything that is debated, from everything that is discussed in analyses, in the measure that what is at stake in it is to translate the truth of symptoms.

It seems that it is there as a sort of crutch or foreign body, something to be used, after all, as you know, which has a well-determined function. It is *to supply* for something that, after all, one may well call by its name: a certain *lack* of desire. In so far as it is (15) brought into play, involved - it is necessary that it should be, if only to step inside, to tidy up the room - at the entry of the sexual act.

This distance of the phantasy, with respect to the zone in which there is played out what I highlighted earlier as primordial, about the function of desire and about its link to demand and the following - so obvious that it is from that that there results the inflection of the whole of psychoanalysis around registers described as frustration and analogous terms - this is what allows us to make the point of the difference there is between a perverse and a neurotic structure.

What does it mean when I say that the phantasy here has the role of a truth-meaning? Well, I am going to tell you! I am saying the same thing as the logicians say. Namely, you miss the command by wanting at all costs to insert this phantasy into the discourse of the unconscious, when, in any case, it resists this reduction very well. And when you have to say that in the middle moment, the second phase of *A child is being beaten* - the one where it is the subject who is there, in the place of the child - this you only obtain in exceptional cases. The fact is that in truth the function of the phantasy… I mean in your interpretation and more especially again in the general interpretation that you will give of the structure of one or other neurosis, (which ought always, in the final analysis, be inscribed in the registers that I gave, namely: for phobia, anticipated desire, for hysteria, unsatisfied desire, for obsession, impossible desire. What is the role of the phantasy in this order of neurotic desire? Well then, truth-meaning, I have said. That means the same thing as when you mark with a capital T - a pure convention in the theory given, for example, of such and such a set - when you mark with the connotation of truth something that you will call an axiom: in your interpretation the phantasy has no other role, you have to take it as literally as possible and what you have to do, is to find in each structure, a way to define the laws of transformation which guarantee for this phantasy, in the deduction of the statements of unconscious discourse, **the place of an axiom**.

Such is the only possible function that one can give to the role of phantasy in the neurotic economy. That this comes, that its arrangement is borrowed from the field of the determination of perverse *jouissance*, is something, as you have seen, that I demonstrated and whose formula, I believe, I sufficiently fixed in our previous talks,

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with respect to the disjunction, in the field of the Other, of the body and of *jouissance*, and of this preserved part of the body in which *jouissance* can take refugee.

That the neurotic finds, in this arrangement, the support designed *to provide against* the lack of his desire in the field of the sexual act, is something, then, which is less likely to surprise us. And if you want me to give you something which will serve at once as reading - I cannot say it will be a very agreeable read for you (it is as annoying (16) as hell!) - but, all the same, as an example of real rubbish in scientific matters, I would recommend to you the reading, in Havelock Ellis, of the celebrated case of Florie. One could not better see to what point a certain mode of approach of a field in which people pride themselves - in the name of some objectivity or other - on breaking down doors, while they are completely enslaved, and enslaved in a fashion that is really singular. There is not one of the lines of this celebrated observation that does not carry, in a way, the marks of the cowardice of the professor.

It is a sensational text, this case of Florie. Undoubtedly, it will appear to you with all the characteristics - after the reference points that I have given you - to be a neurosis. In no way, does the moment at which Florie breaks through - in the sense of this something which can in a way happen to a neurotic without there ever being for her the equivalent of perverse *jouissance*, but breaks through in the ambiguous sense which makes of it at once a *passage à l'acte* and, for us who are reading it, an *acting-out* - something which ensures that Florie, affected by her phantasy of flagellation, manages, for once, to break through the prohibition that they represent for her. It is worth while confronting this with the absolutely manifest lacks in this observations, to the point that - Florie having confessed to him that it is only exceptionally that she brings a real person into these phantasies, someone that she admires and that she venerates - it is really unbelievable to see from the pen of Havelock Ellis there been written: "I did not ask her who was involved". When it is clear … - as in the case of Père Ubu when you see him again with the pig's tail between his teeth - that of course it is Havelock Ellis, naturally, who is there rolled in flour from one end to the other by this patient, who is involved! And, after that, it is necessary to have more to do with the great personage to correct the members of the analytic community, who have allowed themselves to give an opinion on the same case, with a respect that is moreover completely unjustified, for the collection of this observation by Havelock Ellis.

This, all the same, is indeed of a nature to show you at once, all together, all the difficulties that I wanted to highlight today, concerning what is involved in the appreciation of the phantasy.

If it can be said, I would say, that from the phantasy - as we imagine it, we poor neurotics - from the phantasy in its function at the level described as perverse, to that of its function in the neurotic register there is exactly the distance - I am ending on this to make it sound clinical - of the *bedroom*!

Are there bedrooms? There is no sexual act …that leaves, as regards the bedroom, huh? - apart from that of Ulysses where the bed is a trunk rooted in the ground - this leaves, on the subject of bedrooms - and especially at our epoch, huh, when everything

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is … is … thrown against the wall! - that leaves a serious doubt. But anyway it is a (17) place which, at least theoretically, exists.

There is all the same a distance between the bedroom and *the toilet*. Pay careful attention to the fact that everything neurotic that happens, happens essentially in the toilet (these questions of the arrangements of logic are very important) in the toilet or in the *ante-chamber*, it is the same thing.

The man of pleasure in the 18th century also, for him … everything happened in the *boudoir*. Each to his own place!

If you want specifications, huh? Phobia can happen in the *wardrobe* … or in the *corridor*, in the *kitchen*.

Hysteria happens in the *parlour*, the parlour of nun's convents, of course. What?!

Obsession, in the *bog*.

Pay careful attention to these things, they are very important.

Yes … all of this leads us to the door of what I will invite you to cross next year, namely, a bedroom in which there happens … nothing except that the sexual act is presented there as foreclosure, properly speaking: *Verwerfung*. It is what is commonly called the *analyst's office*.

The title that I will give to my lectures next year, will be, *The psychoanalytic act*.

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THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN

BOOK XV

The psychoanalytic act

1967-1968

Translated by Cormac Gallagher from unedited French manuscripts

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Seminar 1: Wednesday 15 November 1967

This year I chose as subject the psychoanalytic act. It is a strange couple of words, which, to tell the truth, has not been common up to now. Assuredly, those who have followed for a certain time what I am stating here, may not be astonished at what I am introducing under these two terms.

What my discourse of last year closed on within this logic of phantasy, all of whose lineaments I tried to bring here, those who heard me speaking in a certain tone and in two registers about what the equally coupled term of the sexual act can and ought to mean, these people may feel themselves in some way already introduced to this dimension that the psychoanalytic act represents. Nevertheless, I have to behave as if a part of this assembly knew nothing about it and introduce today what is involved in this usage that I am proposing. Psychoanalysis, it is understood as least in principle, it is supposed, at least by the fact that you are here to listen to me, that psychoanalysis does something. It does, that is not enough, this is the essential, it is at the central point, it is properly speaking the poetic view point of the thing, poetry also does something. I remarked moreover in passing, having interested myself a little recently in this field of poetry, that people have paid very little attention to what it does and to whom, and more especially, why not, to the poets.

Perhaps to ask oneself that would be a kind of introduction to what is involved in the act in poetry. But this is not our business today since what is at stake is psychoanalysis, which does something, but certainly not at the level, on the plane, in the sense of poetry.

(10) If we have to introduce and very necessarily at the level of psychoanalysis the function of the act, it is in as much as this psychoanalytic doing profoundly implicates the Subject. That to tell the truth, and thanks to this dimension of the subject which completely renews for us what can be stated about the subject as such and which is called the unconscious, this subject, in psychoanalysis, is as I already formulated, activated (*mis en acte*) in it.

I recall that I already put forward this formula in connection with transference, saying at a time already long past, and at a level of formulation that was still approximate, that transference was nothing other than the activation of the unconscious. I repeat that this is only an approach and what we will have to put

forward this year about this function of the act of psychoanalysis will allow us to bring to it a specificity worthy of the numerous steps - some decisive I hope - that we have been able to take since then.

Let us approach simply along the path of a certain obviousness, if we keep to this sense that the word act has which can be constituted with respect to what - let us leave that to one side - can constitute a breakthrough.- It is sure that we encounter the act on entering analysis. It is all the same something that merits the name of act to decide, with everything that this involves, to decide to do what is called a psychoanalysis. This decision involves a certain commitment. We encounter there all the dimensions that ordinarily, are accepted, in common usage, in the common use of this word act. There is also an act which can be described, the act by which the psychoanalyst sets himself up as such, here is something which merits the name of act, up to and including the fact that this act can be inscribed somewhere: Mr So-and-so, psychoanalyst.

In truth, it does not appear foolish, inordinate, out of place, to speak about the psychoanalytic act in the same way that one speaks about the medical act. In this sense what is the psychoanalytic act? One could say that it could be inscribed under this rubric in the register of Social Security. Is the psychoanalytic act the session, for example? I can ask what it consists of. What sort of intervention is involved? Because after all one does not write out a prescription. What is the act properly speaking? Is it interpretation? Or is it silence? Or anything whatsoever that you want to designate in the instruments of the function.

But in truth, these are illuminations which scarcely make us advance and to go to the other end of the supporting point that we can choose, to present, to (11) introduce the analytic act we will point out that in psychoanalytic theory, precisely, people speak about it. We are moreover not yet in a position to specify this act in such a way that we are able in any way to establish its boundary with what is called in a general term, not current, faith, in this psychoanalytic theory: action.

People speak a lot about action and it plays a role as a reference. A rather curious reference role since, moreover, to take the case, it is made use of with great emphasis, namely, when it is a matter of accounting, I mean theoretically, and for a rather large field of theoreticians who express themselves in analytic terms, to explain thinking. Through a sort of need of security, as it were, this thinking, which for reasons that we will have to deal with, people do not want to make into an entity which appears too metaphysical, people try to account for this thinking on a foundation that on this occasion they hope is more real. And thinking will be explained to us as representing something that is motivated, that is justified by its relation to action, for example in the form that it is a more reduced action, an inhibited action, an incipient action, a little model of action. Indeed that in thinking there is something like a sort of taste of what the action that it supposes, or that it renders immanent may be.

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These discourses are known to all. I have no need to illustrate them by quotations, but if someone wants to look more closely at what I am leaving understood, I would evoke not just a famous article, but a whole volume written on this by Mr Rappaport, a psychoanalyst of the New York Society. What is striking, is that assuredly for someone who is introduced without prejudice into this dimension of action, the reference in this case does not appear any clearer to me than what is referred to. And that to illuminate thinking by action might presuppose, perhaps, that first of all one should have a less confused idea than the ones which are manifested on these occasions about what constitutes an action, in as much as an action seems indeed, if we meditate for an instant, to presuppose at its centre the notion of act.

I know well that there is a fashion, which is moreover the one to which those who try to formulate things in the register that I have just spoken of cling onto, I mean energetically support themselves with, which is to identify action to motor (12) activity. Here indeed we have to carry out at the beginning of what we are introducing an operation, call it what you will, of simple elucidation or of clarification, but it is very essential. In effect, it is well known and, after all, my God, why not, acceptable, that people want here to apply in a way that is admissible, quite routine, to obey or even simply pretend to obey the rule of not explaining what people continue to call, not always moreover with a lot of justification, the superior and the inferior. Of not I am saying, explaining the inferior by the superior but, as it is said - people now no longer know very well why - that thinking is superior. To start from this inferior which is supposed to be the most elementary form of response of the organism, namely, this famous circle whose model I have given you under the name of the reflex arc. Namely, the circuit that is called, according to the case, stimulus-response, when you are prudent and when you identify to the sensory-excitation couple, whatever it may be, and the motor release which here plays the role of response. Besides the fact that in this famous arc it is not too sure that the response is at all necessarily and obligatorily motor. But that when, for example, if it is excretory, indeed even secretory, the response is that it becomes wet, well then the reference to this model, to situate in it, to take as a starting point in it the foundation of the function we can call action, assuredly appears much more precarious. Besides one can remark that the motor response, if we only pinpoint it from the link defined by the reflex arc, has truly only very little right to give us the model of what can be called action. Because what is motor, once you insert it into the reflex arc, appears quite simply as a passive effect, as a pure and simple response to stimuli, a response which involves nothing other than a passivity-effect.

The dimension which is expressed in a certain way of conceiving the response as a discharge of tension - a term which is also current in psychoanalytic energetics - will then present action to us here as nothing other than a consequence, indeed a flight, following on a more or less intolerable sensation, let us say in the broadest sense of stimulus in as much as we bring into it

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elements other than those that psychoanalytic theory introduces under the name of intermittent stimulation.

Here we are then, assuredly, in the position of not being able to situate the act (13) from this reference to either motor activity or discharge. We must now on the contrary ask ourselves why the theory still has, and manifests, such a strong penchant for making use of them as support and finding in them the original order in which there is supposed to be established, from which there is supposed to begin, in which there is supposed to be installed as a lining, that of thinking.

It is clear that I am only giving this reminder because we are going to have to make use of it. Nothing produced in the order of these elaborations, however paradoxical this appears when seen from a certain point, can fail to leave us, nevertheless, with the idea that there is some motivation for sustaining this paradox, and that from this very motivation, this is the method that psychoanalysis never fails to use, from this very motivation we can draw certain fruit.

That the theory occasionally takes support then from something that, precisely, analytic theory is in a better position to know to be only a short circuit as compared to what it must indeed establish as the status of the psychic apparatus, that not only the texts of Freud but all psychoanalytic thinking can only be sustained isolating, in the interval between the afferent element of the reflex arc and its efferent element, this famous psi-system of the first Freudian writings. But that nevertheless it feels the need to maintain the emphasis on these two elements, assuredly here testifies to something which urges us to mark its place, (I mean for analytic theory), with respect to what we call, in a more comprehensive way the physiologising theory of the psychic apparatus. It is clear that we see there being manifested here a certain number of mental edifices founded in principle on recourse to the experiment. These try to use, to make use of this first model given as the most elementary, whether we consider it at the level of the totality of a micro-organism, the stimulus-response process at the level of the amoeba, for example, and to make of it in a way a homologue, the specification for an system which is supposed to concentrate, at least on a certain powerfully organising point, its reality on the organism, namely, at the level of this reflex arc once it has been differentiated in the nervous system.

Here is what we have to account for in this perspective, that this difference persists at a level, in a technique – psychoanalysis - which seems to be, properly speaking, the least appropriate to have recourse to it, given what it implies in terms of a completely different dimension, in effect, radically opposed to this (14) reference which results from an obviously lame conception of what is involved in the act, not satisfactory in an internal fashion, completely opposed in effect to what we have to do, to this position of the function of the act that I evoked at first in its purely obvious aspects, and which, it is well known, is the one that interests us in psychoanalysis. I spoke earlier about commitment, whether it is that of the analysand or of the analyst. But, after all, why not pose

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the question of the act of the birth (*l'acte de naissance, birth certificate)* of psychoanalysis. Because in the dimension of the act, there immediately comes to light this something that a term like the one that I have just spoken about implies. Namely, the inscription somewhere, the correlative signifier which, in truth, is never lacking in what constitutes an act. If I walk up and down here while speaking to you, that does not constitute an act, but if one day it is to cross a certain threshold by which I put myself outside the law, that day my motor activity will have the value of an act.

I put forward here, in this very room, that it is simply to have recourse to an admitted order of obviousness, of properly speaking language dimensions about what is involved in an act. This allows there to be gathered together in a satisfying fashion all the ambiguity that this term may present, going from one to the other end of the scale that I first evoked, including in it not simply, beyond what I called on this occasion a notarised act, I mentioned this term: the act of the birth of psychoanalysis. Why not? This is how it emerged at a particular turning point of my discourse. But, in fact, if we dwell a little on it, we are going to see there being easily opened up the dimension of the act with respect to the very status of psychoanalysis. Because after all, if I spoke about inscription, what does that mean? Let us not remain too close to this metaphor. Nevertheless, the one whose existence is recorded in an act when he comes into the world is there before the act. Psychoanalysis is not a nurseling. When one speaks about the act of the birth of psychoanalysis, which indeed has a sense, since, precisely, it appeared one day, it is the question that is evoked. Did this field that it organises, over which it reigns in more or less governing them, did this field exist before? It is a question that it is well worthwhile evoking when such an act is at stake. It is a question that is essential to pose at this turning point. Of course, there is every chance that this field existed before. We are certainly not going to contest that the unconscious made its effects felt before (15) the act of the birth of psychoanalysis. But all the same if we pay very careful attention, we can see that the question of who knew it, is perhaps not without import here.

In effect, does this question have any other import than the *epoché*, the idealist suspension, the one founded on the idea, taken as radical, of representation as founding all knowledge and which then demands where reality is, outside of this representation.

It is absolutely certain that the question that I am raising in the form of, who knew this field of psychoanalysis, has absolutely nothing to do with the fallacious antinomy on which idealism is founded. It is clear that there is no question of contesting that reality is prior to knowledge. Reality, yes! But knowledge? Knowledge (*le savoir)* is not knowing (*la connaissance).* And to touch the minds that are least prepared to suspect this difference I have only to make an allusion to *savoir-vivre*, or to *savoir-faire* [art of living, know-how]. There, the question of what is there before takes on all its sense. *Savoir-vivre* or *savoir-faire* can emerge at a given moment. And then, provided the accent that I

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have always put on language has ended up by taking on its import for a certain number of you, it is clear that here the question takes on all its weight. That of knowing precisely what was involved in something that we can call the manipulation of the letter, according to a formalisation described as logical, for example, before it was tackled. The field of algebra before the invention of algebra is a question that takes on all its import.

Before people knew how to manipulate something that must be called by its name, figures (*chiffres*), and not simply numbers, I am saying figures - without being able to go into it here, I appeal to the few that I suppose exist among you, who have sufficiently read somewhere in a journal or in popular books, how Mr Cantor proceeded in order to demonstrate to you that the transfinite dimension in numbers is absolutely not reducible to that of the infinity of the series of whole numbers, namely, that one can always fabricate a new number which had not been included in principle in this series of whole numbers, however astonishing this may appear to you, and this, with nothing more than a certain way of operating on the series of figures in accordance with the method that is called diagonal. In short, the opening to this undoubtedly testable order which has a right, quite simply just as much as any other term to the qualification of truthful, was this order there, awaiting Mr Cantor's operation from all eternity? Here is a question that has its value and which has nothing to do with that of the (16) priority of reality with respect to its representation. A question which has all its weight. It is a combinatorial and the dimension of truth that is deployed in it is what allows there to emerge in the most authentic way what is involved in the truth that it determines before knowledge *(savoir)* is born from it.

This indeed is why an element of this combinatorial can come to play the role of representative of representation and justifies the insistence that I put on the fact that this is how there ought to be translated the German term in Freud of *Vorstellungrepräsentanz*. That it is not because of a simple personal sensitivity that every time that I see emerging in one or other marginal note the translation ideational-representative, I only denounce in it, I only designate in it, in a quite valid way, an intention, precisely this confusing intention. And it is a matter of knowing why such and such become the holders of it in a certain place in the analytic field. In this order, formal quarrels are not vain because they bring along with them a whole subjective presumption which is properly speaking in question. We will subsequently have to bring in one or other pinpointing which will allow us to orientate ourselves on this point. It is not my object today when, as I told you, it is a matter only of introducing the function that I have to develop before you. But already, I indicate that in simply marking with three reference points something that has the function of a term like that of set, in mathematical theory, to show in it the distance, the distinction from that of class in use for a much longer time, and to hook onto it in a relation of articulation which shows that what I am going to say is inserted there by a certain articulated difference, and which implicates it in the same order, this order of the subjective positions of being which was the true subject, the secret title of the second year of teaching that I gave here under the name of *Crucial Problems*, to refer to the

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distinction between set and class, the function of the object insofar as the **o** takes on its whole value of subjective opposition. This is what we will have to do at the right time. I am only marking it here as a boundary stone whose indication and at the same time whose essence you will rediscover when we shall have to start from it again. For today, having marked then what is at stake, I want to start again from the physiologising reference in order to show this something which, perhaps is going to illuminate in the most efficacious way possible, what (17) I mean by the term of psychoanalytic act. And since we have so easily criticized the assimilation of the term action to motor activity, it will perhaps be easier, more comfortable for us, to grasp what is involved in this fallacious model. For to support it with something which comes from everyday experience, for example the triggering of a tendon reflex, I believe that from now on, it will perhaps be easier for you to see that it constitutes a functioning which, I do not see why, is called automatic, since automation has well and truly in its essence a reference to chance, while what is implied in the dimension of the reflex, is precisely the contrary. But let us leave that.

Is it not obvious that we cannot conceive in a rational fashion of what is involved in the reflex arc, except as something in which the motor element is nothing other than what is situated in the little instrument, the hammer with which one triggers it. And that what is picked up is nothing other than a sign, a sign in this case of what we can call the integrity of a certain level of the medullar system. And in this sense a sign of which it must indeed be said that what is most indicative about it is precisely when it is absent, namely, when it condemns the non-integrity of this system. For on the subject of what is involved in this integrity, it does not give us very much. On the contrary, its value as a sign of lack, of lesion, which has a positive value, yes, there is takes on its whole value.

To make of this something which has only the entity and the meaning of being something isolated in the functioning of the organism, isolated in function of a certain questioning that we can call clinical questioning, who knows, we can push it further, indeed, even the desire of the clinician, is something which does not give to this totality that we call the reflex arc, any special title to serve as a conceptual model for anything whatsoever that can be considered as fundamental, elementary, an original reduction of a response of the living organism.

But let us go further, let us go to something which is infinitely more subtle than this elementary model, namely, the conception of the reflex at the level of what you will indeed allow me to call, because this is what I am going to interest myself in: Pavlovian ideology.

This is to say that I intend here to question, not at all certainly from the point of view of any absolute critique, but for what, as you are going to see, it brings us as a suggestion about what is involved in the analytic position. I certainly do not (18) dream of depreciating the totality of the works that have been inscribed in

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this ideology. I am not saying anything either which goes too far, in saying that it proceeds from a project of materialist development - and it avows it - from something which is a function in which it is a matter precisely of reducing the reference which might be made - as if what was at stake here again is a terrain where it would be necessary to fight - to some entity of the order of the spirit.

The perspective of Pavlovian ideology, in this sense, is much better accommodated, for its part, than this first order of reference that I indicated with the reflex arc and that we could call the organo-dynamic reference. This perspective is much better accommodated in effect because it is organised from the grip of a sign on a function that, for its part, is always organised around a need. I have no need, I think, you have all done enough secondary studies to know that the usual model by which it is introduced into the manuals, and which we can also make use of now to support what we are going to say, of the association of the fact of the sound of a trumpet, for example, to the presentation of a piece of meat before an animal, a carnivorous one of course, is supposed to obtain after a certain number of repetitions the triggering of a gastric secretion, provided that the animal in question has in effect a stomach, and this, even, after the untying, the freeing of the association, which is of course carried out in the sense of maintaining only the sound of the trumpet. The effect being easily demonstrated by the fitting of a stomach fistula. I mean that one collects in it the juice emitted, after a certain number of repetitions, from the simple production of the sound of the trumpet.

I would dare to qualify this Pavlovian enterprise as extraordinarily correct as regards its perspective. For in effect what it is a matter of grounding, when it is a matter of accounting for the possibility of higher forms of such and such a functioning of the mind, it is obviously from this grasp on the living organism of something, which here, only takes on its illustrative value, from the fact of not being an adequate stimulus for the need that is involved in the affair; and even properly speaking to be only connoted in the field of perception by being really detached from any object of eventual fruition, fruition meaning enjoyment *(jouissance)*. I did not mean to say enjoyment, for since I already put a certain stress on the word enjoyment, I do not want to introduce it here with its whole context; fruit is the contrary of useful. It is not a useable object that is at stake. It is the object of the appetite founded on the elementary needs of the living (19) being. It is in so far as the sound of the trumpet has nothing to do with anything that might interest a dog, for example, at any rate in the field in which his appetite is awakened by the sight of a piece of meat, that Pavlov legitimately introduces it into the field of the experiment.

Only if I say that this way of operating is extraordinarily correct, it is very precisely in the measure that Pavlov reveals himself there, as I might say, to be a structuralist at the start. At the start of his experiment, he is a structuralist ahead of time, a structuralist of the strictest observance, namely, of the Lacanian observance, in so far as precisely what he demonstrates there, what he holds in a way to be implicated there, is very precisely something that means that the

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signifier, namely, that the signifier is what represents a subject for another signifier.

Here in effect is how to illustrate what I have just put forward. The sound of the trumpet represents nothing other here than the subject of science, namely, Pavlov himself. It represents it for whom? For what? Obviously for nothing other than for something which is not a sign, but a signifier, namely, this sign of gastric secretion, which only takes on its value, very precisely, from the fact that it is not produced by the object that one would expect to produce it, that it is an effect of deception, that the need in question is adulterated and that the dimension in which there is installed what is produced at the level of the stomach fistula, is what is involved, namely, the organism in this case is deceived.

There is indeed an effect then, a demonstration of something which, if you look more closely at it, is not of course that you are going to make a completely different type of animal from a dog. All Pavlovian experimentation would really be of no interest if it were not a matter of constructing the essential possibility of the grasp of something which is well and truly, and not to be defined otherwise, than as the effect of the signifier on a field which is the living field. This has no other repercussion, I mean theoretical repercussion, than to allow it to be conceived how, where there is language, there is no need to search for a reference in a spiritual entity. But who dreams of it now? And who could be interested in it? It must all the same be highlighted that what is demonstrated by the Pavlovian experiment, namely, that there is no operation involving signifiers as such which does not imply the presence of the subject, is not entirely the first thing that foolish people may think about.

(20) It is in no way the dog who gives this proof and not even for Mr Pavlov, because Mr Pavlov constructs this experiment precisely to show that one can do very well without a hypothesis about what the dog thinks. The subject whose existence is demonstrated, or rather the demonstration of his existence, it is not at all the dog who gives it, but, as everyone knows, Mr Pavlov himself, because he is the one who blows into the trumpet, he or one of his helpers, it does not matter. I made a remark incidentally, saying that, of course, what is implied in this experiment, what is implied is the possibility of something which demonstrates the function of the signifier and its relation to the subject. And I added that, of course, no one had the intention of obtaining in this way anything whatsoever of the order of a change in the nature of the animal. What I mean by that is something which has indeed its interest. It is that one does not even obtain a modification of the order of those that we must indeed suppose to have taken place, at the time when this animal who is called a dog was made pass over to the domestic state.

It must be admitted that the dog has not been domesticated since the time of the earthly paradise. So then, there was a moment when people were able to make of this animal not at all, certainly, an animal endowed with language but an

animal as regards which, perhaps, it seems to me that it would be interesting to examine whether this question, the one which is formulated as follows, namely, whether the dog, perhaps, can be said in a way to know (*savoir)* that we are speaking, as is apparently the case. What sense is to be given here to the word *savoir*? This appears to be just as interesting a question at least as the one raised by the *montage* of the conditioned or conditional reflex.

What strikes me, rather, is the way in which in the course of these experiments we never receive from the experimenters the least testimony of what is involved and which, nevertheless, must exist, in the personal relations, as I might say, between the animal and the experimenter. I do not want to play the tune of the Society for the Protection of Animals, but you must admit that it would all the same be very interesting, and that perhaps there, one would learn a little more about what can be called neurosis at the level of animals, than what is registered in practice. For one aims, in the practice of these experimental stimulations, when they are pushed to the point of producing these sorts of diverse disorders which go from inhibition to disorganised barking, and that are qualified as (21) neurosis on the sole pretext of something, which firstly is provoked, secondly, has become completely inadequate with respect to external conditions as if for a long time the animal has not been outside all of these conditions, and which in no case, of course, has the right under any heading to be assimilated to what precisely analysis allows us to qualify as constituting neurosis in a being who speaks.

In short, we see it not alone here, Mr Pavlov shows himself in the fundamental instauration of his experiment, as I said, to be a structuralist and one of the strictest observance. But one could say that, even what he receives as response, has really all the characteristics of what we have defined as fundamental in the relation of the speaking being to language, namely, that he receives his own message in an inverted form. My formula produced a long time ago applies here quite appropriately, for what happens? What he hooked onto, put in second place: the sound of the trumpet as one might say, first, to illustrate with respect to the physiological sequence set up by him at the level of the organ, a stomach fistula, what does he get now? What he gets is an inverse sequence in which the animal's reaction presents itself as attached to this sound of the trumpet. For us in all of this there is very little mystery, which moreover takes nothing from the import of the benefits which were able to be produced in this sort of experimentation, at the level of one or other point of cerebral functioning. But what interest us are its aims. That its aims are only obtained at the cost of a certain miscognition of what constitutes the structure of the experiment at the start, is designed to alert us to what this experiment signifies *qua* act, for this subject - Pavlov here - who in this case does nothing more than very exactly, and without being aware of it, pick up in the most correct form the benefits of a construction which can be very exactly assimilated to the one imposed on us, once it is a matter of the relation of the speaking being to language. This is something, in any case, that deserves to be highlighted, if only because it has

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been left out of the demonstrative point, as one might say, of the whole operation.

In connection with the whole field of activities described as scientific at a certain historical period, this aim of a reduction described as "materialist" deserves to be taken as such for what it is, namely, symptomatic. Should they have believed in God, someone is going to shout at me. But in truth, it is so true (22) that this whole construction described as materialist or organicist, as we might say again, in medicine, is very well accepted by spiritual authorities.

In the final count, all of this leads us to ecumenism. There is a certain way of carrying out the reduction of the field of the divine which, in its final term, in its final source, is quite favourable in ensuring that all the little fish are finally gathered into the same big net. This, which is even manifestly more tangible, is spread out - as I might say - before us, this tangible fact which is manifestly spread out before your eyes, ought all the same inspire in us a certain withdrawal as regards what is involved - as I might say - in the relations to truth in a certain context.

If the lucubrations of logicians at a time now ended, considered as relegated in the order of the values of thinking, which is called the Middle Ages, if the simple lucubrations of logicians were able to draw down major condemnations, and if on one or other point of doctrine in the field on which we operate, and which were called heresies, people very quickly came to the point of strangling one another, of massacring one another, why think that these are the effects, as they say, the effects of fanaticism? Why the invocation of such a register, when perhaps it would be enough to conclude from it that one or other statement about the relations of knowledge could communicate, were infinitely more sensitive at that time in the subject, to the effects of truth.

We no longer retain anything from all these debates that are rightly or wrongly called theological - we will have to come back to this, to what is involved in theology - except texts that we know how to read more or less well, and which, in many cases in no way deserve the title of dust-covered. What we, perhaps, do not suspect, for example, is that this had, perhaps, immediate, direct consequences in the market place, at the school door, and if necessary in household life, in sexual relations. Why should such a thing not be conceivable? It would be enough to introduce a different dimension to that of fanaticism, that of seriousness, for example.

How does it come about that, that as regards what is stated in the framework of our teaching functions and of what is called the university, how does it happen that, on the whole, things are in such a state that it is not absolutely scandalous to formulate that everything that is served up to us by the *Universitas Litterarum,* the Arts Faculity, which still has the upper hand on what are nobly (23) called the Human Sciences, is a knowledge (*savoir)* titrated in such a way that in no case does it have in fact any kind of consequence. It is true that there

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is the other side, the *Universitas* no longer holds its place very well because there is something else which is introduced into it and which is called the Science Faculty.

I would point out to you that in the Science Faculty, because of the mode of inscription of the development of science as such, things cannot be so distant. Because here it has proved that the condition of the progress of science, is that people want to know nothing about the consequences of what this knowledge of science involves at the level of truth. These consequences are allowed to develop all by themselves.

For a considerable time in the historical field, people who already well and truly deserved the title of *savant* looked twice before they put into circulation certain systems, certain styles of knowledge that they had perfectly well glimpsed. There was a certain Mr Gauss, for example, who is rather well known, who had rather advanced ideas on this. He allowed other mathematicians to put them in circulation thirty years later while it was already in his own papers. It appeared to him that, perhaps, the consequences at the level of truth deserved to be taken into consideration.

All of this to tell you that the complaisance, indeed, the consideration the Pavlovian theory enjoys in the Science Faculty, where it has the greatest prestige, depends perhaps on the fact which I emphasise, and which is properly speaking its futile dimension. Futile, you do not know perhaps what that means, in fact. Neither do I, I did not know up to a certain moment, up to the moment when I found myself, found myself stumbling by chance on the use of the word *futilis* in a corner of Ovid, where that means properly speaking, a vase that leaks (*fuit*).

Leakage (*la fuite*), I hope I have sufficiently circumscribed it, finds itself at the base of the Pavlovian edifice. Namely, that what it is a matter of demonstrating has not been demonstrated, since it is already said at the beginning. That simply Mr Pavlov demonstrates here that he is a structuralist, except that he does not know it himself. But this obviously takes away any import from what may claim to be here any proof whatsoever, and that moreover all that is to be demonstrated has really only a very reduced interest, given that the question of what God is about, is hidden somewhere quite different. And, in a word, everything that is concealed in terms of foundations for belief, of hope for (24) knowledge, of an ideology of progress in the Pavlovian functioning, if you look closely at it, resides only in the fact that the possibilities that the Pavlovian experimentation demonstrates, are supposed to be already there in the brain.

That one should obtain from the manipulation of the dog in the context of signifying articulation, effects, results, which suggests the possibility of a higher degree of complication of these reactions has nothing astonishing about it because we introduce this complication. But what is implied is entirely in what

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I highlighted earlier, namely, whether the things that one reveals are already there beforehand.

What is at stake when what we are dealing with is the divine dimension and generally that of the spirit, turns entirely around the following: what do we suppose to be already there before we discover it. If in a whole field it proves that it would not be futile, but frivolous, to think that this knowledge (*savoir*) is already there, waiting for us before we make it emerge, this could be of a nature to make us carry out a so much more profound questioning.

This indeed is going to be what is at stake in connection with the psychoanalytic act.

The time forces me to stop here the remarks that I am making before you today. You will see the next time in getting closer to what is involved in the psychoanalytic act, in this ideological model, whose paradoxical constitution as I told you consists in the fact that someone can ground an experience, can ground an experience on presuppositions that are profoundly unknown to himself. And what does it mean that they are unknown to him? This is not the only dimension to bring into play, that of ignorance, I mean, concerning the properly structural presuppositions of the instauration of the experience. There is another much more original dimension, to which I have been alluding for a long time, it is the one that next time I will venture to introduce in its turn.

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Seminar 2: Wednesday 22 November 1967.

I cannot say that the crowd of you who are here this year does not pose me a problem. What does that mean for a discourse which, if there were any doubt about it, I repeated it often enough for it to be known, which, essentially is addressed to psychoanalysts. It is true that my place here, the one from which I am speaking to you, already bears sufficient witness to something that happened which puts me in an eccentric position with respect to them. The very place that for years, in short, I have done nothing but question, what I took this year as subject: the psychoanalytic act. It is clear that what I said the last time, could not but encounter this murmur of satisfaction which came to me about the general opinion of the audience, if I can express myself in this way, which in truth, for a part (those necessarily who are there, given this number, who are coming here for the first time) for a part then, who came to see because they had been told that they would comprehend nothing. And in fact they had a pleasant surprise.

In truth as I pointed out in passing, to speak about Pavlov in this case as I did, was indeed to lend a helping hand to the feeling of comprehension since, as I said, nothing is more respected than the Pavlovian enterprise, especially in the Arts Faculty. But it is all the same from that quarter that on the whole you come to me. Does that mean that this sort of approval pleases me in any way? You have no doubt: certainly not, since after all, moreover, this is not what you come looking for either.

To get to the nub, it seems to me that if something can decently explain this (26) crowd, it is something that in any case would not depend on this misapprehension that I do not lend myself to. Hence, the type of expectation to which I alluded earlier, is all the same something which for its part is not a misapprehension, and it encourages me to do my best to face up to what I called this crowd. The fact is that, to a greater or lesser degree, those who come, on the whole, it is because they have the feeling that here something is being stated which might indeed, who knows, be of importance.

It is obvious that if this how things are, this crowd is justified since the principle of the teaching that we will describe, as a way of crudely situating things, university teaching, is precisely that anything whatsoever in everything that touches on the most burning subjects, indeed current politics, for example, all of this should be presented, put into circulation, precisely in such a way that it is of

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no importance. This is at the very least the function that university teaching has satisfied for a long time in developed countries. This indeed is the reason moreover why the university is at home in them, because where it does not satisfy it, in underdeveloped countries, there is a tension. So then it fulfils its function properly in developed countries. The fact is that it is tolerable in that whatever is professed in it does not involve any disorder.

Naturally, it is not on the plane of disorder that we will consider the consequences of what I am saying here, but the public suspects that at a certain level, which is precisely that of those to whom I am addressing myself, namely, the psychoanalysts, there is a certain tension. This, in effect, is what is at stake as regards the psychoanalytic act. Because today we are going to advance a little bit further. We are going to see what is involved for those who practise this act. Namely, this is what defines them, those who are capable of such an act, and capable in a way that they can situate themselves in it, as they say among the other acts, sporting or technical, as professionals.

Assuredly, from this act, in so far as one makes a profession of it, there results a position as regards which it is natural that one feels assured in what one knows, in what one possesses from one's experience. Nevertheless, this is one of the ways, one of the interests of what I am advancing this year. There results from the proper nature of this act a field which, it is not unimportant to say it, I did not even skim the surface of the last time. On the nature of this act there depend more serious consequences as regards what results from the position that must (27) be held, if one is skilled in exercising it.

It is here that there can be situated, curiously, as you are going to see, the fact that I can allow others beside analysts, non-analysts, to conceive of what it is in this act which, all the same, concerns them.

The psychoanalytic act concerns very directly and in the first place, I would say, those who do not make a profession of it. It will be enough here to indicate that, if it is true as I teach that what is at stake here is something like a conversion in the position which results for the subject as regards what is involved in his relation to knowledge, how can we not immediately admit that there cannot but be established a really dangerous gap if only some people take an adequate view of this subversion, since that was what I called it, of the subject. Is it even conceivable that the subversion of the subject, and not of one or other elective moment in a particular life, should be something that is even imaginable as being produced only here and there, indeed at a particular gathering point at which all of those who have not undergone this turnabout, comfort one another?

The fact that the subject is only realisable in each one, of course, leaves no less intact its status as structure precisely, and put forward in the structure. Henceforth, it already appears that to make understood not outside, but in a certain relation to the analytic community what there is in this act which interests everyone, cannot but allow there to be seen more clearly within this

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community what is desired as regards the status that those who make an active profession of this act can give themselves. And this is how the approach that we find ourselves taking this year in tackling it, as we were able the last time to put forward about what must precisely be distinguished at first, as one can, in flicking through pages see it sometimes presented, the act from motor activity. And attempting immediately to go through some stages, which are in no way presented as an apodictic approach, which cannot, which above all does not, claim to proceed by way of a sort of introduction which is supposed to be on the psychological scale of greater or lesser depth. It is, on the contrary, in the presentation of accidents regarding what is stated about this act, that we are going to seek the diversely situated flashes of light that allow us to grasp where the problem really is. So that in having spoken about Pavlov, I was not looking for any classical reference in this connection, but rather pointing out what is in (28) effect in the corner of not a few memories. Namely, the convergence noted in a classic work, that of Dalbiez, between Pavlovian experimentation and Freud's mechanisms. Of course, this still has its little effect, especially given the epoch. You cannot imagine, given the background of the psychoanalytic position, how precarious it felt, what joy some people experienced at the time, as they say, namely, in the years 1928 or 30, that psychoanalysis was spoken about in the Sorbonne. Whatever may be the interest of this work, carried out, I must say, with great care, and full of relevant remarks, the sort of comfort that can be drawn from the fact that Mr Dalbiez articulates, my God, relevantly that there is in a sense no derogation between the psychology, the physiology of Pavlov and the mechanisms of the unconscious, is extremely weak, extremely weak, why? For the reasons that I noted for you the last time, namely, that the link from signifier to signifier in so far as we know it to be subjectifying in its nature is introduced by Pavlov in the very setting up of the experiment. And, therefore, there is nothing astonishing in the fact that what is constructed from it rejoins the analogical structures that we find in analytic experience in as much as you have seen that I was able to formulate the determination of the subject in it as founded on this link of signifier to signifier.

It nevertheless remains that except for the fact that they find themselves closer to one another than either to the conception of Pierre Janet, this indeed is what Dalbiez emphasises, we will not have gained very much from such a *rapprochement* founded precisely on the failure to recognise what grounds it. But what interests us still more is Pavlov's failure to recognise the implication that I called, more or less humorously, structuralist, not at all humorously in the fact that it is structuralist, humorously in as much as I called him a Lacanian structuralist, as it happens. This is where I stopped, suspended around the question: what is involved in what one can call here, from a certain perspective, what? A form of ignorance? Is that sufficient? No. We are not going, all the same, from the fact that an experimenter does not question himself about the nature of what he is introducing into the field of experimentation, (it is legitimate for him to do so, but let him go no further into what might be called this prior question!) we are not, all the same, going to introduce here these functions of the unconscious.

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(29) Something else is necessary which, in truth, we are lacking. Perhaps this other thing will be given to us in a way that is more manageable to see, something quite different. Namely, let us go at it immediately in a crude way. A psychoanalyst who, before an audience - it is always necessary to take into account the ears that any formula whatsoever is addressed to - a psychoanalyst who puts forward this remark which was recently reported to me: "I do not admit any psychoanalytic concept that I have not verified on a rat!"

Even to ears that were prepared, and it was the case at the time of this statement, they were ears as one might say, and at the time, because this remark was made at an already distant epoch, let us say fifteen years ago, it was to a communist friend since it was he who reported it to me fifteen years later, he was the one addressed by the psychoanalyst in question, even to ears which might have seen in it something or other, like a reminiscence, the remark appeared a little crude.

This then was reported to me recently and far from expressing a doubt, I began to dream out loud, and addressing myself to someone who was on my right during this meeting, I said: So and so it quite capable of having made this remark. I named him, I will not name him here, he is the one that in my *Ecrits* I call the "*benêt*".

"*Benêt*" says the excellent dictionary that I often speak to you about, that of *Bloch et von Wartburg*, is a late form of *benoît*, which comes from *benedictus*, and its modern sense is a subtle illusion, which results from this remark written in chapter 5, paragraph 3 of Matthew "Blessed (*bénis)* are the poor in spirit".

In truth, this is what makes me pin the name *benêt* on the person in question. And, as it happens, my interlocutor immediately said to me: "But yes, he was the one who said it to me". Up to a certain point, he was the only one who could have said it.

I do not necessarily lack respect for the person who could in a theoretical statement about psychoanalysis make such an astonishing remark. I consider the fact to be rather a fact of structure that, in truth, does not properly speaking involve the qualification of poverty of spirit. For me it was rather a charitable gesture to impute to him the happiness reserved for the aforesaid poor in spirit. I am almost certain that to take up such a position is not any kind of chance, either good or bad that is involved, either subjective or objective, but that, in truth, he must feel himself rather beyond chance to come to such extremes. And (30) also moreover you can see that his case, far from being unique, if you consult a certain page of my *Ecrits*, that of the Rome discourse where I give an account of what is put forward by a certain Masserman who in the United States has the position of what in Alain is called an Important Person. This Important Person in the same search no doubt for comfort, gives a glorious account of the researches of a Mr Hudgins, on which I dwelt at the time, it is already a long time ago, it is the same time as the remarks that I reported to you earlier. He

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gives a glorious account of what he was able to obtain from a reflex which was also conditioned, constructed in a subject, this time a human one, in such a way that the contraction of the pupil was regularly produced by pronouncing the word "contract". The two pages of irony that I developed, because it was necessary to do so at the time to be even heard, namely, whether the link supposedly determined in this way between the sound and what he believes to be language, appeared to him to be also sustained if one substituted for "contract", "marriage contract", or "contract bridge" or "breach of contract" or even if one concentrated the word until it is reduced to its first syllable, is obviously the sign that there is something here in the breach of which it is not vain to maintain oneself, since others choose it as a key point in the comprehension of what is a stake.

Perhaps after all this personage will tell me that I cannot but see here a contribution to this dominance that I accord to language in analytic determinism. This indeed shows in effect the degree of confusion that one can come to from a certain perspective.

The psychoanalytic act, you see then, can consist in questioning first of all, and starting - of course, this is necessary - from what one considers must be set aside, the act as it is effectively conceived of in the psychoanalytic circle with the critique of what this may involve. But this may, all the same also, this conjunction of two words, "the psychoanalytic-act", evoke for us something quite different, namely, the act as it operates psychoanalytically, what the psychoanalyst directs of his action into psychoanalytic operancy. In this case then, of course, we are at a completely differently level.

Is it interpretation? Is it to transference that we are thus brought? What is the essence of the act of the psychoanalyst *qua* operating? What is his part in the (31) game? This is something which psychoanalysts do not fail, in effect, to question among themselves. Here is something about which, thank God, they put forward more relevant propositions, even though they are far from being univocal or even progressive as the years go by.

There is something else. Namely, the act, I would say, as it is read in psychoanalysis. What is an act for the psychoanalyst? It will be enough, I think, to make myself understood at this level, for me to articulate, for me to recall, what each and every one of you know, that no one is ignorant of in our time, namely, what is called the symptomatic act, so particularly characterised by the slip of the tongue, or moreover by this level which in general can be classified as belonging to the register, as one says, of daily action, hence the awkward term of *"Psychopathology of everyday life"*, of what properly speaking has its centre in the fact that what is always at stake, and even when it is a matter of a slip of the tongue, is its aspect of act.

It is here indeed that we see the value of the reminder that I gave about the ambiguity left at the conceptual basis of psychoanalysis between motor activity

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and act. It is assuredly by reason of these theoretical starting points that Freud favours this displacement precisely at the moment that, in a chapter to which I will perhaps have time to come later, concerning what is involved in mistakes, *Vergreifung*, as it is called, he recalls that it is quite natural that one should come to this after seven or eight chapters on the field of the act, since like language, he says, we will be remaining here on the motor plane. On the contrary, it is quite clear that everything in this chapter and in the one which follows, the one about accidental or again symptomatic actions, there will never be anything else at stake than this dimension that we have posited as constitutive of every act, namely, its signifying dimension. There is nothing introduced in these chapters about the act except the fact that it is posited as signifying.

Nevertheless, it is not so simple, for if it takes on its value, its articulation as a signifying act with regard to what Freud then introduces as unconscious, it is certainly not that it shows itself off, that it posits itself as act. It is quite the contrary. It is more than effaced here as an activity, as the person involved says, an activity to fill a gap, which only occurs if one is not thinking about it, in the measure that one does not concern oneself with it, which is only there where it is expressed, for a whole part of his activities, to occupy hands that are supposedly distracted from any mental relation. Or again, this act is going to put its sense (32) precisely on what it is a matter of attacking, of shaking, its sense under the protection of awkwardness and failure. Here then is what analytic intervention is. The act then, a reversal similar to the one that we carried out the last time about that of the very motor aspect of the reflex that Pavlov calls absolute. This motor aspect is not in the fact that the leg stretches out because you have tapped a tendon. The motor aspect is where one holds the hammer to provoke this. But if the act is in the reading of the act, does that mean that this reading is simply added on and that it is from the act reduced *Nachträglich* (subsequently) that it takes on its value? You know the stress that I have laid for a long time on this term which would not figure in the Freudian vocabulary, if I had not extracted it from Freud's text. I was the first and, moreover, in truth, for a long while the only one.

This term has its value. It is not simply Freudian. Heidegger uses it, with a different perspective it is true, when it is a matter for him of questioning the relationships between being and *Rede*. The symptomatic act must already contain in itself something which at least prepares it for this way in, for that which for us, in our perspective, will realise its plenitude as act, but subsequently. I insist on it, and it is important from now on to mark it. What is the status of the act? It must be said to be new, and even unheard of if one gives its full sense, the one we started from, the one which has from all time been valid about the status of the act.

And then what? After these three acceptations, the psychoanalyst in his acts of affirmation, namely, what he utters when he has to give an account very especially of what is involved for him about this status of the act. And here a lucky turn of events means that quite recently, precisely, someone, in a certain

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context, called that of the psychoanalysts of the romance languages, had to give a report, an account of what is envisaged from the point of view of the authorised psychoanalyst about the *passage à l'acte*, or again acting out. Here after all, why not, is a very good example to take, which I did moreover, since it is available to us. I opened the report by one of them called Olivier Flournoy, a celebrated name, the third generation of great psychiatrists, the first being Theodore, the second Henri. And you know the celebrated case by which Theodore remains immortal in the analytic tradition: this deluded clairvoyant with the marvellous name on whom he produced a whole work. And you will greatly profit from it if the work comes into your hands. I believe that it is not widely available at the moment. So then, in the third generation, this young man (33) puts forward something to us which consists in taking at least a part of the field, the one that the other *rapporteur* who spoke about acting out did not take. He is going to deal with *l'agir* [acting], and since, no doubt, people believe not without foundation that there is an acting in what concerns transference, he puts forward some questions about transference which, moreover, have the value of propositions.

I am not of course going to read it for you, because there is nothing more difficult to put up with than reading before such a large audience. Nevertheless, in order to give you the tone of it, I will take the first paragraph which goes more or less as follows:

"From this review of the recent evolution of ideas from which one always gathers the impression of something obscure and unsatisfying. ... Why should a regression imply transference, namely, the absence of memory and an acting in the form of a transformation of the analyst, by projection and introjection, and why does it not simply imply regressive behaviour? Namely, its own structure. In other words, why does it evoke transference? Why does an infantilising situation imply transference, and not an infantile behaviour based on the model of child-parent behaviour, alluding to another register which puts the accent on development and on the antecedents of development and no longer on the proper category of regression which alludes to the phases located in analysis. Indeed, he adds, repeating a conflictual situation and even drawing its force from it."

Is this enough to confer on this behaviour the epithet of transference? What do I mean, in already announcing to you the question introduced in this tone. It is assuredly, and everything that follows will demonstrate it, a certain tone, a certain style of interrogating transference. I mean, to take things in a rather lively way, and in putting its very concept in question as radically as possible. This is something that I did myself very exactly nine years ago or more exactly almost nine and a half years ago, in what I entitled "*The direction of the treatment and the principle of its power*".

In truth you can find there in chapter 3, page 102, "Where have we got to with transference", the questions which are posed here. Posed and developed with infinitely greater breadth and in a way which, at the time, was absolutely without

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an equivalent. I mean that what since then has made its way, I am certainly not (34) saying thanks to my opening things up, but through a kind of convergence of times which meant, for example, that someone called Sachs [Szasz?] posed the most radical questions about the status of transference. So radical, I would even say, that, in truth, transference is considered as so much at the mercy of the very status of the analytic situation that it is posited as being properly the very concept which would make psychoanalysis worthy of objection. Because things have got to the point that a psychoanalyst of the strictest observance - and one very well placed in the American hierarchy - can find nothing better to say to define transference than that it is a mode of defence of the analyst. That it is to keep at a distance the reactions, whatever they may be, obtained in the situation and which might seem to involve him too directly, concern him, be his responsibility, properly speaking, that analysis forges, invents the concept of transference. Thanks to which he decides, he judges in such a way that he says, in short, essentially, in the radical foundation of this concept, that he has not for his part any share in the aforesaid reaction. And specifically not by being there as an analyst. But simply being able to highlight in them what they contain in terms of a revival, a reproduction, of previous behaviour, of living stages of the subject, who finds himself reproducing them, acting them instead of remembering them.

Here then is what is at stake and what Flournoy confronts, with some spirit no doubt, but giving its whole place to the conception to which, at the extreme position, there seem to be reduced within psychoanalysis itself, those who believe themselves to be in the way of theorising it.

If this extreme position, which, once it is introduced, is going to have its consequences, I mean that for Szasz everything depends, in the final analysis, on the capacity for strict objectivity in the analyst. And since this can be in any case only a postulate, the whole of analysis from this point of view is doomed to a radical interrogation, to a fundamental putting in question of every point where it intervenes.

God knows I have never gone that far, and with good reason, in the questioning of analysis. And it is, in effect, remarkable as well as strange, that in the circles where people are most attached to maintaining its status socially, the questions can in short within this circle be pushed so far that what is at stake is nothing less than whether analysis in itself is well founded or illusory.

(35) This would be a very disturbing phenomenon if we did not find in the same context, as one might say, the foundation of what is called information, which is established on the basis of total liberty. Only, let us not forget, we are in the American context. And everyone knows that however broad may be the liberty to think, a commonsense liberty and from all the ways in which it is expressed, we know very well what it involves. Namely that, in short, one can say anything at all, that what counts is what is already well and truly established. Consequently from the moment that the psychoanalytic societies are firmly

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established on their base, one can also say that the concept of transference is worth damn all. That does not affect anything. This indeed is what is at stake. Very precisely, it is also indeed here that, by taking a different tone, our lecturer is going to be engulfed and that henceforth we are going to see the concept of transference remitted to the discretion of a reference, to what one can, all the same, call a little story, the one from which no doubt, apparently, it emerged, namely, the history of Breuer, of Freud and Anna O, which, between ourselves, shows much more interesting things than what is made of it in this case, and what is made of it in this case goes very far. I mean that we are going to see being highlighted the third relation, of course, the fact that Freud first of all protected, defended himself, as it is put, and by means of transference, by sheltering himself from the fact that, as he says to his fiancée - for there is also the fiancée naturally in the explanation we are dealing with, because there is going to be a question of nothing less than what I called the other day the act of the birth of psychoanalysis - he will say to his fiancée that these are things, of course, that could only happen to someone like Breuer.

A certain type of relevance, even cheap daring, which is going to make transference appear to us as being entirely linked to accidental conjunctions. Indeed later, as one of them announces, a specialist in hypnotism, that later when the incident reoccurs with Freud himself, at that very moment the maid came in. Who knows, if the maid had not come in, what might have happened? So in that case Freud was able to re-establish the third party situation. The maidly superego played its role and allowed him to re-establish what has been since then the natural defence. It is written in this report that when a woman coming out of hypnosis throws her arms around you should say to yourself: "I welcome her as a daughter".

This sort of *mühen* of trivialities is obviously what more and more is the law of what I called earlier the act of affirmation of the analyst. The more one affirms (36) oneself from trivialities, the more one engenders respect.

It is all the same curious that this report which, no doubt, this can be seen by many signs, and it is in this sense that I am asking you on this occasion to get to know it - that will increase the sale of the next *Revue de Psychanalyse*, the organ of the *Societé Psychanalytique de Paris* - to see if there is not some relation between this audacious meditation and what I was stating nine years previously. In truth the question, will remain eternally undecided, since the author in these lines bears no witness to it. But some lines, some pages further on, something happens to him. Namely, that at the moment when he is speaking, my God, of what is in question - because it is a personal advance - the tone that he has just given to things, consists in highlighting in it what he nobly calls "the inter-subjective relation".

Everyone knows that if you read the Rome Discourse quickly you may think that this is what I am talking about. You can discover the dimension of the inter-subjective relation through intermediaries other than me, since this error, this

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misconstruction, which consists in believing that this is what I re-introduced into a psychoanalysis that ignored it too much, was made by many people around me at that time. And if you are formed by them you could indeed, in effect, put forward the inter-subjective experience as a reference to be recalled in this context.

"It is this inter-subjective context", he writes, "which appears original to me in analysis. It explodes the straitjacket of the diagnosis described as 'mental affection'. Not that psychopathology is a useless word. It is undoubtedly indispensable for an exchange between individuals outside the experience. But its meaning evaporates during the treatment." You see the tone except that between "not that psychopathology is a useless word", and "it is of course indispensable", a parenthesis explodes and I ask you what justifies it here.

"In this connection in re-reading an *Ecrit* of Lacan, I was astonished to see that he speaks about the sick person (*du malade*), he who is oriented above all towards language".

This relates to me as you are going to see. I must say that I do not know in which of my writings I speak about the sick person. It is not, in effect, quite my style. I am not going to object to it. In any case but the idea of paging through the nine hundred and fifty pages of my *Ecrits* to see where I speak about the sick person is not one that would have come to me.

(37) On page 70 on the contrary, I find 'desire'. "Desire of what one is not, desire which cannot be satisfied, or even a desire to be unsatisfied as Lacan, Lacan in the same *Ecrits* quoted" ... (ah! what a relief, we are going to be able to see) ... "in the same *Ecrits* quoted, unceremoniously presents it with respect to the butcher's wife". And there is a little note on what I say about the butcher's wife, which is fairly well known, because it is a rather brilliant piece. You might expect that this is what is referred to. Not at all. You are referred back to the butcher's wife in Freud. Good for me, I can use that. I can go searching not for the passage about the butcher's wife that you will find on page 620, but what is at stake:

"This theory, (I am taking the second theory of transference) whatever point of degradation it has come to recently in France" - it is object relations that is at stake, and as I explain, I am dealing with Maurice Bouvet – "has, like geneticism its noble origin. It is Abraham who opened up its the register, the notion of partial object is his original contribution. This is not the place to demonstrate its value. We are more interested in indicating its link to the partiality of the aspect that Abraham detaches from transference in order to promote it in its opacity as the capacity to love, as if this were, (this capacity to love), a constitutional given in the sick person in which there can be read the degree of his curability..."

I will spare you the rest, this "in the sick person" is thus attributed to Abraham.

I apologise for having developed before you such a long story. But it is to make the link between what I called just now the psychoanalyst in his acts of affirmation and the symptomatic act which I stressed the moment before. For what does Freud bring us in the psychopathology of every day life in connection precisely with errors and, properly, of this kind?

It is, he tells us, and he says it knowingly, in connection with three mistakes that he made in the interpretation of dreams. He links them explicitly to the fact that at the time he was analysing the dreams in question there was something that he held back, put in suspense in the progress of his interpretation. Something was held back at this precise point, as you will see in chapter ten, which is that on mistakes, in connection with three of these mistakes, specifically that of the famous station *Marburg,* which should have been *Marbach,* Hannibal whom he transformed into Hasdrubal and some one of the Medicis that he attributed to the history of Venice. What is curious in effect, is that it is always in connection with something when in short he held back some truth that he was lead into (38) committing these errors.

The fact that it is precisely after having made this reference to the butcher's beautiful wife which was difficult to avoid given that there follows a little piece which is written as follows. "The desire to have what the other has in order to be what one is not. The desire to be what the other is in order to have what one does not have. Indeed the desire not to have what one has, etc." Namely, a very direct extract - and I must say a little bit amplified, but amplified in a way that does not improve it - from what I wrote precisely about this direction of the treatment, as regards what is at stake in the phallic function. Do we not see here being touched the fact that it is curious that someone should be grateful for it, by this mistake obviously, if not by the irrepressible reference to my name, even if it is put under the heading of some incomprehensible stumbling or other on the part of someone who above all speaks about language, as he puts it. Is there not something there which makes us question ourselves? About what? About what is involved in the fact that with respect to a certain analysis, a certain field of analysis, people, even while supporting themselves explicitly by what I put forward, can only do so on condition that they repudiate it, I would say. Does not this just by itself pose a problem, which is none other than the problem, on the whole, of the status that the psychoanalytic act receives from a certain coherent organisation and which is, for the moment, the one which reigns in the community which is concerned with it.

To make this remark, to manifest the emergence, at a level which is certainly not that of the unconscious, of a mechanism which is precisely the one that Freud highlights with regard to the act, I would not say the most specific, but the new dimension of the act that analysis introduces. This itself, I mean to make this *rapprochment*, and to pose a question about it, this itself is an act, mine. I ask your pardon only because in order to bring it to a close I took what may appear to you to be an inordinate amount of time. But what I wanted to introduce here

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is something that is difficult for me to introduce precisely before such a numerous assembly in which things can reverberate in a thousand displaced ways. I would not however want there to be displaced the notion that I am trying to introduce. I will no doubt have to take it up again. It has its importance, as you will see. It is not that in using it for a long time in its key forms I have not announced it coming one fine day.

(39) In praise of stupidity (*Eloge de la connerie*).

It is a long time now since I produced the project, the eventual work, let us say that after all, in our epoch it would be something to merit the truly prodigious success that one cannot be surprised at, which ensures that there still remains in the library of every doctor, pharmacist and dentist, the "*In praise of folly*" by Erasmus which, God knows, no longer touches us.

The praise of stupidity would undoubtedly be a more subtle operation to carry out for, in truth, what is stupidity? If I introduce it at the moment of taking the true essential step concerning what is involved in the analytic act, it is in order to point out that it is not a notion. To say what it is, is difficult. It is something like a knot, a knot around which many things are constructed, and delegate to themselves all sorts of powers which is undoubtedly something stratified, and that one cannot consider as simple. At a certain degree of maturity, as I might say, it is more than respectable. It is perhaps not what merits the greatest respect but it is assuredly what receives it.

I would say that this respect comes from a particular function, which is altogether linked with what we have to highlight here. A function of *"dé-connaissance"*, if I may express myself in this way. And if you will allow me to amuse myself a little, to recall that people say "*il déconnait*" [he was talking rubbish]. Do we not have here a crypto-morpheme? Is it not by taking it in the present that there would emerge the solidly established status of stupidity?

People always think that it is the imperfect. "He was talking rubbish at a mile a minute", for example. But, in truth, the fact is, this is a term which, like the term "I am lying" is always difficult to use in the present.

In any case, it is very difficult not to see that the status of the stupidity in question, *qua* established on the "*il déconnait*", does not invest simply the subject that the aforesaid verb includes. There is in this approach something intransitive and neuter in the style of *"il pleut"* which gives its whole import to the aforesaid morpheme.

The important thing is what stupidities was he talking? Well then, this is how there is distinguished what I would call the true dimension of stupidity. The fact is this "she was talking stupid", is something which, in truth, is what deserves to be affected with this term, namely, to be called stupidity. The true dimension of (40) stupidity is indispensable to grasp as being what the psychoanalytic act has

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to deal with. For if you look closely at it and specifically in these chapters that Freud gives us under the heading of mistakes and under that of accidental and symptomatic acts, each and every one of these acts is distinguished by great purity. But not when it is a question for example of the celebrated story of taking out one's keys before a particular door which are precisely the wrong ones. Let us take the case that Jones speaks about, because Freud showed the meaning and the value that this little act may have. Jones is going to tell us a story which ends with, "I would have liked to be at home here". Ten lines later we are at the end of another story which interprets the same gesture by saying, "I would have been better off at home". All the same it is not the same thing!

From the relevance of the noting of this function of slip, of mistake in the use of the key, to its floating, equivocal interpretation is there not an indication that you will easily rediscover in considering a thousand other facts collected in this register? And specifically the first twenty-five or thirty that Freud collects for us. It is, in a way, what the act transmits to us. It is undoubtedly something that it images assuredly in a signifying way and for which the suitable adjective would be to say that it is not so stupid (*pas si conne*).

Here indeed is the fascinating interest of these two chapters. But that everything that tries to adapt itself to them as interpretative description already represents this certain form of *dé-connaissance*, of fall and of evocation in which it must be said, in more than one case here, quite radical as regards what cannot but be sensed as stupidity. Even if the act, which we have no doubt about, for at this point of the emergence of what is original in the symptomatic act, there is no doubt that there is here an opening, a flash of light, something flooding in which will not be closed off for a long time.

What is the nature of this message which Freud underlines for us that at the same time, he does not know that he is giving it to himself and that, nevertheless, he does not want it to be known. What lies at the final term in this strange register which, it seems, cannot be taken up again in the psychoanalytic act except by falling below its proper level?

That is why I would like to introduce today, before leaving you, this slippery term, this risky term which, in truth, is not easily manageable in such a large (41) social context, which is given the note of curse, of insult and disparagement which is attached in the French tongue to this strange word "*le con*". This is, let it be said in parenthesis, findable neither in *Littré* nor in *Robert*. Only the *Bloch et von Wartburg*, which deserves to be honoured for it, gives us its etymology: *cunnus* (Latin).

Assuredly, to develop what is involved in French as regards the function of this word, *"le con"*, which is nevertheless so fundamental in our tongue and in our exchanges, it is indeed the case that it would be the task of structuralism to articulate what links one to the other, the word and the thing. But how can it be done? How can it be done, except by introducing here, something or other

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which would be the prohibition for under eighteen's, or perhaps it should be the over forties.

This nevertheless is what is at stake. And someone whose words we have in a book which is distinguished by the very special - I do not think anyone has ever made this remark - absence of stupidity, namely, the gospels, has said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's". Observe that naturally no one has ever notice that it is absolutely extraordinary to say, "render to God" what he has contributed to the operation. It does not matter. For the psychoanalyst, the law is different. It is, "Render to truth what belongs to the truth, and to stupidity what belongs to stupidity".

Well then, it is not so simple. Because they overlap. And because if there is a dimension which is here proper to psychoanalysis it is not so much the truth of stupidity as the stupidity of the truth.

I mean that apart from the cases in which we can asepticise, which comes down to saying de-sex, the truth, namely, to no longer make of it as in logic, only a value with a capital T which functions in opposition to a capital F, everywhere that truth is engaged with something else, specifically with our function of speaking being, the truth finds itself in difficulty because of the incidence by which something which is the centre in what I am designating, on this occasion, by the term of stupidity, and which means the following - I will show you the next time that Freud also says it in this same chapter, even though everyone lets it pass - and which means that the organ which gives, as I might say, its category to the attribute in question, is precisely marked by what I would call a particular inappropriateness for enjoyment. It is from this that what is at stake takes on its relief. Namely, the irreducible character of the sexual act for any truthful (42) production. This is what is at stake in the psychoanalytic act, for the psychoanalytic act, assuredly, is articulated at another level which corresponds at this other level to the deficiency that truth experiences in approaching the sexual field. This is something whose status we must question.

To suggest to you what is at stake, I will take an example. One day I picked up from the mouth of a charming young man who had every right to be called a *con* the following anecdote. He had had a misadventure. He had had a rendezvous with a young girl who had let him drop like a pancake. "I understood right away he told me that once again she was a *femme de non recevoir*". That was what he called it.

What is this charming stupidity, because he said it like that, with all his heart. He had heard three words following one another and he applied them. But supposing that he had done it deliberately this would have been a witticism. In truth, the simple fact that I, I am reporting it to you, that I am raising it to the field of the Other, effectively makes of it a witticism. It is very funny, for everyone except for him and for whoever receives it face to face with him. But once it is told, it is extremely amusing. So that one would be quite wrong to

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think that the *con* lacks wit, even if it is from a reference to the Other that this dimension is added.

In a word, what is involved in our position *vis-à-vis* this amusing little story is still exactly what we have to deal with every time that it is a question of putting in form what we grasp as a dimension, not at the level of all the registers of what happens in the unconscious, but very properly speaking in what belongs to the psychoanalytic act.

I wanted simply to introduce today this register which you may guess is undoubtedly risky. But you will see that it is useful.

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Seminar 3: Wednesday 29 November 1967

(43) At the beginning of an article on counter-transference published in 1960, a good psychoanalyst to whom we will give a certain place today, Dr Winnicott, writes that the word counter-transference ought to be referred back to its original use. And, in this connection, to oppose it, he takes into account the word self. A word like self, he says, here I am going to have to use English: "naturally knows more than we do", *en sait naturellement plus que nous ne pouvon faire, ou que nous ne faisons.* It is a word which he says, "uses us and commands us", *nous prend en charge, peut nous commander,* as I might say.

It is a remark, by God, which is interesting to see from the pen of someone who is not distinguished by a special reference to language, as you are going to see.

This feature appeared rather piquant to me and will appear still more from what I will have to evoke before you today about this author. But moreover, for you, it takes on its value from the fact that, whether you suspect it or not, you are integrated into a discourse that obviously many of you cannot see in its totality.

I mean that what I am advancing this year only has its effect from what has gone before, and it is not because you are only approaching it now - if such is the case for some of you - that you are any less subject to its effect. Curiously, because of this, the fact is in short that this discourse - you find perhaps that I am insisting too much on this - is not, in short, directly addressed to you. It is addressed to whom? My God, I repeat it every time: to psychoanalysts, and in (44) conditions such that it has to be said that it is addressed to them from a certain atopia. An atopia which is my own and which therefore has to give its reasons. It is precisely these reasons that are going to be here, I mean today, a little more emphasised.

There is a rhetoric, as I might say, about the object of psychoanalysis, that I claim is linked to a certain style of teaching of psychoanalysis which is that of the existing societies. This relation may not appear to be immediate, and in effect - why should it be – only provided at the price of a certain investigation one may feel to be necessary.

To start from there, namely, from an example of what I will call a normative knowledge about what is useful behaviour with all that this can involve as extension to the general good, and the particular good, I will take an example

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which is worth what it is worth. But which is worthwhile from the fact that it is typical, and that coming from the pen of a well known author, simply, however little you may be initiated into what is involved in the analytic method to the extent to knowing, in general, that what is involved is to speak for weeks and for months at the rate of several sessions a week, and to speak in a certain particularly loose way, in conditions which, precisely, abstract from any perspective concerning this reference to the norm, to the useful, precisely, perhaps, to come back to it, but above all to free oneself from it in such a way that the circuit, before returning to it, is the simplest possible.

I believe that the lines that I have chosen, taken where they are found, namely, at the beginning of an article very explicitly from the pen of an author who published it in 1955, put in question the concept of the genital character. Here is more or less where he starts from in order, effectively, to contribute a critique that I do not have to develop. Today it is the style that is at stake. It is a piece from the classical Mr Fenichel, in as much as the author admits, I mean the author specifies it carefully, Fenichel forms part of the basis of this teaching of psychoanalysis in the institutes.

A normal, genital character is an ideal concept, he says himself. Nevertheless, it is certain that the achievement of genital primacy involves a decisive advance in the formation of character. The fact of being capable of obtaining full satisfaction from genital orgasm makes the regulation of sexuality, a physiological regulation, possible and this puts an end to the *damming up*, that is to the barrier, to the stemming of instinctual energies with their unhappy effects (45) on the behaviour of the person. "It also does something for the full development of *love*, of love and hate", he adds in parenthesis, namely, the surmounting of ambivalence. Besides, the capacity to discharge large quantities of excitation signifies the end of "reaction formations" and a growth in the capacity to sublimate.

The Oedipus complex and the unconscious feelings of guilt which have an infantile source can now be really overcome. As regards emotions, they are no longer kept in reserve but can be developed by the ego. They form a harmonious part of the total personality.

There is no longer any necessity to keep the still demanding pre-genital impulses in the unconscious. Their inclusion in the total personality - I am expressing it as it is in the text - in the form of traits or advances in sublimation, becomes possible. Nevertheless, in neurotic characters, the pre-genital impulses retain their sexual character and disturb rational relations with objects. However it is with neurotics, in the normal character they serve, as partial impulses, the goal of fore-pleasure or of preliminary pleasure, under the primacy of the genital zone. But in as much as they come in a greater proportion they are sublimated and subordinated to the ego and to *reasonableness*, *la raisonabilité*, I believe that one cannot translate it otherwise.

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I do not know what such an enchanting picture inspires in you or whether you find it alluring. I do not believe that anyone - analyst or not - provided he has a little bit of experience of others and of himself, can for a moment take seriously this strange lullaby. The thing is properly speaking wrong, completely contrary to reality and to what experience teaches us.

I also allowed myself, in my text, in a text that I evoked the other day - that on the direction of the treatment - some derisive remarks about what was put forward about it, in another context, and in a form that is even literally much more vulgar - the tone in which people were able to speak at a certain date, precisely that of my text, around 1958 - about the primacy of object relations and the perfections in which they reached the effusions of internal joy which came from having reached this highest point, which is properly speaking ridiculous, and in truth is not even worth while taking up again here, no matter who wrote about them at the time.

(46) The curious thing is to ask oneself how such statements can preserve - I will not say the appearance of seriousness, in fact they do not have that for anyone - but appear to respond to a certain necessity concerning, as was said at the beginning of what is stated here, a sort of ideal point which would have at least this virtue of representing in a negative form the absence then of all the inconveniences which would accompany, which would be the ordinary thing, in other states. I cannot think of any other reason.

This is naturally to be taken up in so far as we can grasp the mechanism in its essence, namely, notice the measure in which the psychoanalyst is in a way called, even constrained, for what are wrongly called didactic ends, to speak in a way which, in short, one could say, has nothing to do with the problems that his experience puts up to him in the sharpest and in the most everyday fashion.

The matter, in truth, has a certain import in so far as it might allow it to be seen that a discourse, in the measure - and this says nothing about it - from which there comes a certain number of clichés finds itself, nonetheless, up to a certain point incapable of reducing them in an analytic context, and indeed much more as regards what is involved in the organisation of teaching. Naturally, no one believes any more in a certain number of things, or is completely at ease with a certain classical style. But fundamentally, on many points, of levels of application, it nevertheless remains that this changes nothing. I mean, moreover, that one can simply see my discourse taken up, I mean in some of its forms, of its sentences, of its statements, indeed its turns of phrase, taken up into a context that in its fundamentals has hardly changed.

I asked, a rather long time ago, someone who could be seen in more recent times assiduously attending to what I was trying to bring order into here, I asked: "After all, given your general positions, what advantage do you find in coming to my lectures?" My God, with a smile of someone in the know, I mean of someone who knows what he means: "No one", he answered me, "speaks about

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psychoanalysis like that." Thanks to which, of course, that gives him material and choice to add to his discourse a certain number of ornaments, flourishes. This does not prevent him on occasion, from referring back radically to the tendency that is supposed by him to be constitutive of a certain psychic inertia, (47) referring back radically the status, the organisation of the analytic session in itself - I mean in its nature, in its finality also - to a return which occurred along a sort of slide, of slippage, everything that is most natural, towards this fusion where something which was essentially of its nature, this so-called fusion presupposed at the origin between the child and the maternal body, and it is within this sort of figure, of fundamental schema, that there is supposed to be produced what? My famous "it speaks".

You see clearly the use that can be made of a discourse by broadcasting it cut off from its context which was that in saying "it speaks" in connection with the unconscious, I absolutely never meant the discourse of the analysed person - as he is improperly called it would be better to say the analysand - we will come back to this subsequently, but assuredly which, even, unless one wants to abuse my discourse, may suppose that there is anything whatsoever in the application of the rule which comes in itself from the "it speaks", which suggests it, which calls for it. In no way, at least, you see, would I have had this privilege of repeating after Freud, after Breuer, the miracle of a phantom pregnancy, if this way of evoking the concavity of the maternal womb can represent what happens in the analyst's office. Well indeed, in effect, what is found to be justified at another level, I am supposed to have repeated this miracle but on psychoanalysts. Does that mean that I analyse the analysts?

Because after all one could say that. It is even tempting. There are always little smart-alecks who find elegant formulae like that to summarise the situation. Thank God, I put up a barrier to this aspect also, ahead of time, by writing I believe somewhere - I do not know if it has appeared yet – in connection with a recalling, it was a matter of a little account that I gave of my seminar last year, of a reminder of these two formulae that there is not in my language an Other of the Other. The Other in this case being written with a capital O. There is no, to respond to an old murmuring at my seminar at Sainte-Anne, alas, I am very sorry to have to tell you, true about the true. In the same way there is no reason to consider the dimension of the transference of transference. This means of any possible transferential reduction, of any analytic taking up of the status of transference itself.

I am still a little embarrassed, given the number of those who occupy this room this year, when I put forward such formulae, because there may be some of you (48) who have not the slightest idea of what transference is, after all. It is even the most usual case, especially if you have heard about it. You are going to see that in the rest of what I have to say today.

Let us highlight here, I already put it forward all the same the last time, that the essence of this position of the concept of transference is that this concept allows

the analyst - this is even how certain analysts, I put forward the last time, and by God, how vainly, believe themselves obliged to justify the concept of transference in the name of what, by God, something which appears to them to be very threatened, very fragile, namely, from a sort of superiority in the possibility of objectifying, of objectification, or from the quality of outstanding objectivity which is supposed to be what the analyst has acquired and which would allow him in a situation that is apparently present to be in a position to refer it to other situations which explain it and that it only reproduces them with this illusory accent or the illusions that this involves.

I already said that, far from this question which appears to impose itself, which appears even to involve a certain dimension of rigour in the one who puts forward in a way its interrogation, its critique, it is purely superfluous and vain for the simple reason that transference, its manipulation as such, the dimension of transference, the first strictly coherent aspect of what I am in the process of trying to produce this year before you under the name of psychoanalytic act, outside what I called the manipulation of transference, there is no analytic act.

What must be understood, is not the legitimising of transference in a reference which would ground its objectivity, it is to grasp that there is no analytic act without this reference. And of course to state it in this way does not dissipate every objection. But it is because, precisely, to state it in this way is not, properly speaking, to designate what constitutes the essence of transference, this is why we have to advance further in it.

That we should be forced to do so, that I should be required to do it before you, at least suggests that this analytic act is precisely what has been least elucidated by the psychoanalyst himself. Much more, that it is what has been completely more or less eluded. And why not, why not in any case question oneself as to whether the situation is not so, because this act cannot but be eluded after all. (49) Why not? Why not up to Freud and his interrogation of the psychopathology of everyday life, what we now call, what is current, what is within the range of our modest understanding under the name of symptomatic act, of parapraxis (*acte manqué*). Who would have dreamed, and even who still dreams of giving to them the full sense of the word act.

Despite everything, the idea of missing out (*ratage*) which Freud says is only a shelter behind which there is dissimulated what are properly called acts, does not count. People continue to think of them in function of missing out, without giving a fuller sense to the term act.

Why then should it not be the same about what is involved in the analytic act? Assuredly what can enlighten us is whether we, for our part, can say something about it that goes a little further. In any case, it may well be that it cannot but be eluded, if for example what happens when it is a matter of an act, is that it is in particular, completely intolerable, intolerable in what regard? It is not a matter of something that is intolerable subjectively, at least I am not suggesting this.

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Why not intolerable in the way of acts in general, intolerable in one of its consequences. I am approaching, as you can see, by little touches. I cannot say these things in terms that are immediately noticed - as one might say - not at all that I do not do so on some occasions, but because here in this matter which is delicate, what must above all be avoided is misunderstanding.

This consequence of the analytic act, you will tell me, ought to be well known, ought to be well known through the training analysis. Only I, for my part, am speaking about the act of the psychoanalyst. In the training analysis, the psychoanalytic act is not on the part of the subject who, as it is put, submits to it. This does not mean that he might not have a suspicion of what the result is for the analyst of what is happening in the training analysis.

Only look, things are such up to the present that everything is done to hide from him, in a quite radical way, what is involved at the end of the training analysis on the side of the psychoanalyst.

This masking, which is fundamentally linked to what I was calling earlier the organisation of psychoanalytic societies, this might, in short, be a subtle modesty, a delicate way of leaving something in its place, the supreme refinement of Far Eastern politeness. It is nothing of the kind. I mean that it is (50) not quite from this angle that things ought to be considered, but rather on what results from it for the training analysis itself. Namely, that by very reason of this relation, this separation that I have just articulated, the result is that the same *blackout* exists on what is involved in the end of the training analysis.

A certain number of unsatisfying, incomplete things have all the same been written about the training psychoanalysis. Things have also been written that are very instructive because of their mistakes about the end of analysis. But strictly no one has ever yet succeeded in formulating - I mean black on white - I am not saying anything valid, anything whatsoever, yes or no ... nothing about what might be the end, in every sense of the word, of the training analysis.

I am simply leaving open here the point of whether there is a relation, there is the strictest relation between this fact and the fact that nothing has been articulated either about what is involved in the psychoanalytic act.

I repeat. If the psychoanalytic act is very precisely that to which the psychoanalyst seems to oppose the most frenzied miscognition, this is linked not so much to a sort of subjective incompatibility, the subjectively untenable aspect of the position of the psychoanalyst, which, it can assuredly be suggested, Freud did not miss out on, and much more I would say, from what would result once the perspective of the act is accepted as regards the assessment the analyst may make of what he for his part picks up, subsequent to the analysis, in the order properly speaking of knowledge.

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Since, after all, I have here an audience, or it seems so - even though for the past two or three times I cannot locate clearly - in which there is a certain proportion of philosophers, I hope they will not think too badly of me, I was able, even at Sainte-Anne, to obtain permission to go this far. I managed to speak for a whole trimester and even a little more, about Plato's *Symposium,* precisely in connection with transference.

Well then, today I would ask at least some people, if this is of interest to them, to open a dialogue called *Meno*. I once spoke for a whole semester about Plato's *Symposium* in connection with transference. Today I am asking you to open *Meno.*

It even happened formerly that my dear friend Alexandre Koyré did us the honour and had the generosity to speak to us about *Meno*. This did not last long. The psychologists who were there said "All right for this year, but that's the end (51) of it, that's enough now! No, no, no, no. Among serious people, this is not the sort of water that is going to warm us up".

Nevertheless, I assure you that you would lose nothing by engaging with it a little bit, quite simply by opening it. I found in paragraph 85, according to the numeration of Henri Estienne:

"He will know then without having had a master, thanks to simple questions, having found of his own accord his science in himself".

And the following reply:

"But to rediscover science in oneself of one's own accord is that not precisely to recollect it? Is it not necessary that he should have received at a certain moment the science that he now has, or indeed that he always had it"?

All the same, for analysts, to pose the question in these terms, does one not have the feeling that there is here something that one is not sure applies, I mean in the way in which it is said in the text. But anyway that this is designed to remind us of something.

In fact, it is a dialogue on virtue. To call that virtue, is no worse than something else. For many people, this word and words like it have since resonated differently through the centuries. It is certain that the word virtue has now an opening, a resonance, which is not quite that of the *areté* that is at stake in *Meno*, since moreover *areté* goes rather in the direction of the search for the good. One is struck to grasp it, in the sense of the profitable and useful good, as it is called. This is designed to make us see that we also, for our part, that we have returned there, that it is not completely unrelated to what, after this long detour, has come to be formulated for us in the discourse of a Bentham. I already made a reference to Utilitarianism, at a time that is already in the distant

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past, when I took on the task of stating throughout a year something which was called *The ethics of psychoanalysis*.

(52) It was, if I remember correctly, the year 1958-59. Unless it was not quite that; then the following year it was transference.

As for the four years since I have been speaking here, a certain correspondence could be made between each one of these years with two. And in the order of the years of my previous teaching, we would arrive then at the level of this fourth year at something which would corresponds to the 7th and 8th year of my preceding seminar, echoing in a way the year on ethics, as can be clearly read in my very statement of the psychoanalytic act and from the fact that this psychoanalytic act is something that is quite essentially linked to the functioning of transference. This should allow some people at least to find their way along a certain path that I am taking.

So then, it is *areté* that is at stake and an *areté* which at the start puts its question in a register which should not at all disorient an analyst since moreover what is at stake is a first model given of what this word means in the Socratic text about good political administration, namely, of the city. As regards man, it is curious that from the first moment there appears the reference to the woman, saying that, my God, the virtue of the woman is the proper ordering of the house. As a result of which, here are the two of them on the same footing, on the same plane. There is no essential difference and, in effect, if that is how it is taken up, why not?

I am only recalling this because among the thousand riches that will be suggestive to you in this text, if you are willing to read it from beginning to end, you will be able to put your finger there on the fact that the characteristic of a certain morality, traditional morality properly speaking, has always been to elude, but it is admirably done, in a way, to conjure away at the start in the first exchanges, so that one no longer has to speak about it, nor even to pose the question that is precisely so interesting for us analysts, in so far as we are analysts, of course, as to whether there is not perhaps a point where the morality of the man and of the woman might perhaps be distinguished, at the moment when they find themselves in a bed, together or separately.

But this is promptly eluded in what concerns a virtue that we can already situate on a more public, more environmental terrain. And because of this fact, the questions posed can proceed in a way that is the one by which Socrates proceeds, and which quickly comes to pose the question of whether, how one can ever come to know [*connaître*] by definition what one does not know since the first condition of knowing [*savoir*], of knowledge, is to know what one is talking about. If one does not know at the beginning what one is talking about, as is proved after a long series of exchanges with his partner who is the Meno in question, there emerges what you know and what appears in the two or three sentences that I read for you earlier, namely, the theory of reminiscence.

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You know what is involved, but I will take it up again. It is time to develop it, to show what that means, what that can mean for us, why this deserves to be taken up by us again.

That it is said, that it is expressed that the soul - as it is expressed, it is the language used in any case in this dialogue - does nothing more when it is taught than remember, involves in this text as in ours, the idea of an endless extension or rather a duration without limit as regards what is involved in this soul. It is a little what we also say when we find ourselves out of arguments to refer to. Since we do not see very clearly how this can happen in ontogenesis for things that are always the same and so typical to be reproduced, phylogenesis is appealed to. I do not see much difference.

Then, what more, where is this soul going to be sought out to demonstrate that it is only remembrance as regards everything that it can learn? It is indeed the significant gesture made by Socrates at his epoch. Look Meno, I will show you. You see, there you have your slave, he of course never learnt anything in your house, a completely cretinous slave.

He is questioned and by means of a certain style of questioning, in effect, you manage to make him say things, by God, that are rather sensible, which do not go very far in the domain of mathematics. It is a matter of what happens or of what has to be done to make a surface the double of the one that you started from, if it is a square that is involved. The slave picks up, like that, out of the blue, that it is enough for the side of the square to be twice as long. It is easy to quickly make him see that with a side that is twice as long the surface will be four times bigger.

As a result of which, by proceeding in the same way with questions we will quickly find the right way to operate, which is to operate by the diagonal, to take a square whose side is the diagonal of the preceding one.

What do we get from all these amusements, these primitive recreations which do (54) not even go so far as people had already gone at that epoch as regards the irrational character of the root of two? It is because we have taken an exceptional subject, a slave, a subject who does not count.

There is something more ingenious and better that comes afterwards as regards what must be raised, namely, whether virtue is a science. All in all, it is certainly the best part, the best piece of the dialogue. There is no science of virtue. This is easily demonstrated by experience, by showing that those who make a profession of teaching it are masters who can be very much criticized - it is the Sophists that are in question - and that as regards those who could teach it, namely, those who themselves are virtuous, I mean virtuous in the sense that the word virtue is used in this text, namely, the virtue of the citizen, and that of good politics, it is very manifest that this is developed by more than one

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example, they do not even know how to transmit it to their children. They teach something different to their children.

So that what we arrive at, at the end of this, is that virtue is much closer to true opinion, as it is put, than to science. Now true opinion, where does it come to us from? Well, from the heavens. Here is the third characteristic of something which has this in common, it is that what we refer ourselves to, is namely what can be learned.

You sense how close it is - I am being prudent - to the notation that I give under the term of subject. What can teach itself, is a subject who already has this first characteristic of being universal. On this all subjects are at the same starting point. Their extension is of such a nature to them that this supposes they have an infinite past, and therefore probably a future that is no less so, even though the question about what is involved in the afterlife is not settled in this dialogue.

We are not putting forward the myth of the of Er the Armenian, but assuredly that the soul has from all time, and in a properly speaking immemorial fashion, stored up what has formed it to the point of rendering it capable of knowing, this is something that is not simply contested here but is at the very principal of the idea of reminiscence.

That this subject is exceptional (*hors classe*), is another term. That he is absolute in the sense that he is not, it is expressed in the text, as science marks with what is called there by a term that really echoes everything we are able to (54) say here, that he is not marked by logical concatenation, articulation in the very style of our science. This 'true opinion', is it something that ensures that it is much more, and it is said again, of the order of *poiesis*, of poetry? This is what we are lead to by the Socratic questioning.

If I took so much care with this reminder, it is to note for you what is meant, in this archaic point which has remained present in the questioning of knowledge, what is meant by the fact which had not been isolated before I did so, properly in connection with transference, the function, not even in the articulation, in the presuppositions of every question about knowledge, by what I call the subject supposed to know. Questions are posed starting from the fact that there is somewhere this function, call it what you will, here it appears in all its aspects, obvious because mythical, that there is somewhere something which plays this function of the subject supposed to know.

I already put this forward here, as a question mark in connection with one or other advance, breakthrough, progress of a certain sector of our science. Is the question not posed of where there was, of how we can conceive, for example, before one or other new dimension in a mathematical conception of infinity, is it a fact that before this infinity was forged, we can conceive it as having been known somewhere. Can we already report it as known from all time? This is the question. It is not a matter of knowing whether the soul existed before being

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incarnated. It is simply of whether this dimension of the subject *qua* support of knowledge is something that must be pre-established in a way to questions about knowledge.

Note, when Socrates questions the slave, what does he do? He uses, even if he does not do it on the board, since it is a very simple drawing, one can say that he uses the drawing of this square. And moreover, in the way that he reasons – namely, in the first mode of a metric geometry, namely, by decomposition into triangles and counting the triangles of equal surface. In this way it is easy to show that the triangle constructed on the diagonal will include just the number of little squares that are necessary compared to the first number. And that if the first number had four squares there would be eight if we proceed in this fashion. All the same it is indeed a drawing that is in question and, questioning the slave, it is not we who invent the question. It has been remarked for a long time that (54) this procedure has nothing very demonstrative about it, in as much as far from Socrates being able to find an argument in the fact that the slave never did geometry, and that though he has not been given lessons, just the way of organising the drawing by Socrates is already to give to the slave, as is very tangible, a lesson in geometry. But that is not where the question is for us.

It is, as I might say, to be considered in these terms. Socrates uses a drawing. If we say that in the mind of his partner, there is already everything necessary to respond to what Socrates brings along, that can mean two things that I would express as follows. Either it is a drawing, I would not say a double, or, to use a modern term which corresponds to what is called a function, namely, the possibility of the application of Socrates' drawing onto his own or inversely. It is, of course, not at all necessary for the squares to be correct, either in one case or in the other. But, let us say, in one case it is a square according to a Mercator projection, namely, a square square, and in the other case something twisted in different ways. It will nevertheless remain that the point by point correspondence is what gives to the relation of what Socrates contributes, to that through which his interlocutor answers him, a very particular value which is that of deciphering. This interests us, us analysts. Because in a certain way this is what our analysis of transference means in the interpretative dimension. It is in the measure that our interpretation links in a different way a chain which is nevertheless a chain and already a signifying chain that it works. And then there is another possible way of imagining it. Instead of our seeing that there are two drawings which are not, at first approach, the transfer (*décalque)* one of the other, we can suppose a metaphor, namely, that nothing is seen, I mean from the side of the slave, but in the way that one can say in certain cases: this is a drawing. You see nothing, but it must be exposed to fire. You know that there are inks that are called sympathetic and the drawing appears. There is then, as we say when we are dealing with a sensitive plate, a revelation.

Is it between these two terms that the suspense occurs of what is at stake for us in analysis, in terms of a re-translation, I am saying "re" because in this case already the first signifying inscription is already the translation of something. Is

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it onto the signifying organisation of the unconscious structured like a language that our interpretation is applied? Or, on the contrary, is our interpretation in a (57) way an operation of a quite different order, one that reveals a drawing hidden up to then?

It is very obviously not that, neither one nor the other, despite what perhaps this opposition might have suggested in terms of a first response, to some people that I teach.

What is at stake is something that makes the task much more difficult for us. Namely, that, in effect, things have to do with the operation of the signifier, which renders highly possible the first reference, the first model to give of what a deciphering is. Only, look, the subject, let us say the analysand is not something flat, as suggested by the image of the drawing. Inside, he is himself the subject as such already determined and inscribed in the world as caused by a certain effect of the signifier.

What results from it is the fact that not a lot is necessary for it to be reducible to one of the preceding situations. All that is necessary is the following: that knowledge, at certain points that may, of course, be still unknown, fails. And it is precisely these points which, for us, give rise to questions in the name of truth.

In this respect, the subject is determined in a way that makes it unsuitable, as our experience demonstrates, to restore what is inscribed by the signifying effect, by its relation to the world, in making it incapable of closing in on itself, of completing itself at certain points in a way that is satisfying, as regards its status as a subject. And they are the points that concern him in so far as he has to posit himself as a sexed subject.

Before this situation, do you not see what results from what is going to be established if the transference is set up, as it is in effect set up, because this has always been the movement, the movement really established from what is traditionally inherent. The transference is set up in function of the subject supposed to know, exactly in the same way that was always inherent in every questioning about knowledge. I would even say more, that from the fact that he goes into analysis, he refers to a subject supposed to know better than the others.

That does not mean, moreover, contrary to what is believed, that he identifies it to his analyst. But this indeed is the core of what I want to designate before you today. It is that immanent to the very start of the movement of analytic research, there is this subject supposed to know. And as I was saying just now, supposed to know better again, so that the analyst submits himself to the rules of the (58) game. And that I can pose the question of whether, when he responds in a way that he ought to respond, whether it is a matter of Socrates' slave and that the slave is told to flounder around as he wishes. Which is not done, of course, at the level of the experience of the *Meno*.

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The question of the intervention of the analyst is posed in effect in the suspense I mentioned earlier. The two maps corresponding point by point or on the contrary one map that thanks to some manipulation or other one reveals its nature as map. This indeed is how everything is conceived of, through, in a way, the data given at the beginning of the operation.

The anamnesis is carried out in so far as what one remembers, is not so much things, as the constitution of the amnesia or the return of the repressed which is exactly the same thing. Namely, the way the chips are distributed at every moment in the squares of the game, I mean in the squares where one has to bet. In the same way the effects of interpretation are received at the level of what? Of the encouragement that it lends to the inventiveness of the subject. I mean of this poetry that I spoke about earlier.

Now, what does the analysis of transference mean? If it means anything, it can only be the following: the elimination of this subject supposed to know. For analysis, and still less for the analyst there is nowhere - and this is the novelty - a subject who is supposed to know. There is only what resists the operation of the knowledge making the subject, namely, this residue that one can call the truth.

But precisely, it is here that Pontius Pilate's question can arise: what is truth? What is truth, is properly the question that I am posing to introduce what is involved in the properly psychoanalytic act.

What constitutes the psychoanalytic act as such is very curiously this feint by which the analyst forgets that, in his experience as a psychoanalysand, he was able to see there being reduced to what it is, this function of the subject supposed to know. Hence, at every instant, all these ambiguities, which moreover transfer, for example, towards the function of adaptation to reality. The question of what is involved in the truth, is to feign also that the position of the subject supposed to know is tenable because it is the only access to a truth from which the subject is going to be rejected by being reduced to his function of cause of a process that is in an impasse.

The essential psychoanalytic act of the psychoanalyst involves this something (59) that I am not naming, that I outlined under the name of feint, and which becomes serious if this becomes forgetting, to feign to forget that one's act is to be the cause of this process. That what is involved there is an act is accentuated by a distinction that it is essential to make here.

The analyst, of course, is not without a need, I would even say to justify to himself what is done in analysis. Something is done, and what is at stake is indeed this difference between doing (*faire*) and acting. It is to this bench that one harnesses, that one puts the psychoanalysand, it is the bench of a doing. He does something. Call that what you will, poetry or breaking in, he does something. And it is quite clear that precisely one part of the instructions of

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psychoanalytic technique consists in a certain *laisser-faire*. But is that enough to characterise the position of the analyst when this *laisser-faire* involves, up to a certain point, the maintaining intact in himself of this subject supposed to know in so far as he knows from experience what it is to fall away and be excluded from this subject, and what results from the analyst's side ?.

What results from it, I am not putting forward immediately today since it is precisely what we have to further articulate in what follows. But I will end by indicating the analogy encountered from the fact that in order to advance this new angle of interrogation about the act, I have to address myself to this third that you constitute by reason of the register that I already introduced under the function of number. Number is not multitude, because not much is necessary to introduce the dimension of number. If it is by such a reference that I introduce the question of what can be involved in the status of the psychoanalyst, in so far as his act puts him radically out of synch with respect to these preliminaries, it is to remind you that it is a common dimension of the act, not to include in its agency the presence of the subject.

The passage of the act is that beyond which the subject will rediscover his presence as renewed, but nothing other.

I will give you the next time, because I did not have the time this time, something which is an illustration of it. The Winnicott by whom I introduced in connection with this word "self" the example of a sort of right touch with regard to a certain effect of the signifier. This Winnicott will give us the illustration of what happens to the psychoanalyst in the very measure of the interest that he takes in his object. He will make us touch that, precisely, in the measure that he is someone who is distinguished in the technique as outstanding for having (60) chosen an object that is privileged for him, the one that he qualifies more or less as this latent psychosis which exists in certain cases, he finds himself very curiously disavowing the whole analytic technique in itself.

Now, this is not at all a particular case but an exemplary case. If the position of the analyst is determined by nothing but by an act, the only effect that it can enregister for him is the fruit of an act. And since I employed this word fruit, I recalled already the last time its echo of fruition. What the analyst records as major experience cannot go beyond this turning point that I have indicated of his own presence.

What might be the means for there to be collected what, through this process triggered by the analytic act, is recordable in terms of knowledge, this is what poses the question of what is involved in analytic teaching. In the whole measure that the psychoanalytic act is mis-recognised, in this measure there are recorded negative effects as regards the progress of what analysis can add up in terms of the knowledge, that we have noted, that we can put our finger on. This is manifested and expressed in many other passages and across the whole

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breadth of the production of analytic literature, a deficit with regard to what can be added up, what it can store up in terms of knowledge.

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Seminar 4: Wednesday 6 December 1967

"What's the first thing you remember?"
"The first thing that comes into my head, you mean?"
"No - the first thing you remember.
(Pause) "No it's no good it's gone"
"You don't get my meaning. What is the first thing after all the things you've forgotten?"
(Pause)
"I've forgotten the question".

These few exchanges that I extracted for you (I will give you my sources) from a very skilful and even penetrating little play, which had attracted me by its title which contains two characters rather full of meaning for me: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Both one and the other, the title tells us, are dead. Would to heaven it were true! They are nothing of the kind. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are still there. These exchanges are well designed to evoke the separation, the distance that exists between three levels of mathesis, of learned understanding. The first, that the theory of reminiscence that I represented to you the last time by the evocation of *Meno,* gives an example of. I will centre it on an "I read" as a revelatory test. The second, different, which is made present in the tone - it is the correct word - of the progress of our science is an "I write". I write even when it is in order to follow the trace of a writing already marked out. The bringing out of signifying incidence as such, signifies our progress in this grasp of what knowledge is.

(62) What I wanted to recall to you, not by this anecdote, but by these very well forged exchanges which, in a way, designating their own place, by situating themselves in a new way of handling these puppets essential for the tragedy which is really our own, that of Hamlet, the one I spent a long time on, mapping out the place of desire as such, designating by that something which might have appeared strange up to then: that, very exactly, everyone was able to read his own in it.

These three exchanges designate then this proper mode of knowing apprehension which is that of analysis and which begins with "I lose". I lose the thread. Here is where what interests us begins. Namely, - whoever is astonished or open eyed at it on this occasion will clearly show that he is forgetting what the coming into the world of the first steps of analysis was - the field of the slip, of stumbling, of parapraxis.

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I reminded you of its presence from my first words this year. You will see that we will have to come back to it and that it is essential to maintain this reference always at the centre of our perspective if we do not want to lose our advantage as regards the most essential form of what I am calling this year the psychoanalytic act. But you have also seen me on almost every occasion, and from the beginning, in some kind of embarrassment that I apologise for, the reason was nothing other than your gracious attendance. I posed for myself in a form that is being centred today, the problematic of my teaching. What is meant by what I have been producing here, for the past four years now? It is worthwhile posing the question, is it a psychoanalytic act? This teaching is produced before you, namely, in a public way, as such it could not be a psychoanalytic act.

What is meant by the fact then that I am tackling its thematic. Does it mean that I am submitting it here to a critical agency? It is a position which, after all, could be assumed and, moreover, has been assumed many times, even if properly speaking it was not this term act that was used. It is rather striking that the attempt, every time it was made by someone from outside, only gave rather poor results. Now I am a psychoanalyst, and I am myself caught up in the psychoanalytic act. Could there be in my case a different plan than that of grasping the psychoanalytic act from outside? Yes. And here is how this plan is set up. A teaching is not an act. It has never been one. A teaching is a thesis, as was always very well formulated at the time when people knew what a teaching (63) in the university was. In the good old days when this word had a sense, it meant thesis.

Thesis supposes anti-thesis. With the anti-thesis the act can begin. Does this mean that I expect it from psychoanalysts? The matter is not so simple within the psychoanalytic act, since my theses sometimes imply consequences. It is striking that these consequences encounter there, I mean inside, objections which belong neither to the thesis nor to any other formulated antithesis than the ways and customs reigning among those who make a profession of the psychoanalytic act. It is curious then that a discourse that is not up to now within those who are in the psychoanalytic act easy to contradict, encounters in certain cases an obstacle which is not a contradiction. The hypothesis which in my case guides the pursuit of this discourse is the following. Certainly not that there is in it the indication to criticise the psychoanalytic act, and I am going to say why, but on the contrary to demonstrate, I mean in the agency of this act, what it fails to recognise, which is that by not getting out of it one would go much further. We have to believe then that there is something in this act that is intolerable, unsustainable enough for whoever is engaged in it for him to dread approaching, it must be said, its limits. Since, moreover, what I want to introduce is this particularity of its structure that is after all well enough known for anyone to grasp it but is almost never formulated.

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If we start from the reference that I gave earlier, namely, that the first form of act that analysis inaugurated for us, is this symptomatic act of which one can say that it is never so successful as when it is a parapraxis.

When the parapraxis is supposed, is tested, it reveals itself for what it is. Let us pin to it this word that I already insisted enough should be revived, the truth.

Observe that it is from this foundation that we analysts start in order to advance. Without this, no analysis would even be possible, because every act even which does not carry this little index of failure, in other words, which gives itself high marks as regards its intention nevertheless falls exactly under the same jurisdiction. Namely, that there can be posed the question of a different truth to that of this intention. Whence it results that this is properly to sketch out a topology that can be expressed as follows. That by simply sketching its way (64) out, one enters into it without even thinking. And that after all the best way to enter it, in a certain way, is to get out of it for good and all.

The psychoanalytic act designates a shape, an envelope, a structure such that, in a way, it makes everything that up to then has been established, formulated, produced as a status of the act, depend on its own law. It is, moreover, what from the point of the one who under some heading or other engages in this act, in a position where it is difficult to find an approach from any angle, henceforth suggests that some mode of discernment ought to be introduced. It is easy to pinpoint, by taking things up again from the start, that if there is nothing so successful as failure with respect to the act, this does not mean for all that, that a reciprocity is established, and that every failure is, in itself, the sign of some success, I mean the success of an act.

It is quite obvious that not all slip-ups are interpretable slip-ups. And this imposes at the start a simple remark which is, moreover, indeed the only objection which was every produced in their use. It is enough to begin, with some 'common sense' person, as they say, to introduce - if he is new, if he has still not been immunised, if he has kept some freshness - the dimension of analytic cogitations, for people to respond to you: "But what are you at, telling me so much about these stupidities that we know all about, and that are simply without any graspable support, that are only negative"!

It is sure that at this level, there is no certain rule for discernment. And this indeed is how you see that by remaining in effect at the level of these exemplary phenomena, the debate remains in suspense. It is not inconceivable that, where the psychoanalytic act takes its importance, namely, where for the first time in the world there are subjects whose act it is to be psychoanalysts, namely, who in this area organise, group together, pursue an experience, take their responsibilities in something which is of a different register to that of the act, namely a doing *(un faire)*. But pay attention: this doing is not their own.

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The function of psychoanalysis is clearly characterised by the following: setting up a doing through which the psychoanalysand obtains a certain goal that no one has yet clearly fixed. One can say that, if one is to trust the truly disordered oscillation of the needle that occurs when one questions the authors about it.

(65) This is not the time to give you the range of this oscillation, you can believe me and test it in the literature. The law, the rule as they say, which circumscribes the operation called psychoanalysis structures and defines 'a doing'. The patient, as it is still expressed, the psychoanalysand as I recently introduced the word, a pinpointing that spread rapidly, which proves that it is not inopportune and that moreover it is obvious. To say the psychoanalysed person leaves all sorts of equivocations about the completion of the matter while one is still in psychoanalysis. The only sense that the word psychoanalysis has is to indicate a passivity, which is not at all obvious, it is rather the contrary, since the one who talks the whole time is indeed the psychoanalysand. This is already a pointer.

The psychoanalysand whose analysis is brought to a term whose import as end, as I have just said, no one has yet strictly defined in all the acceptations of this word, but nevertheless it is supposed that it may be a successful doing. Pin on it a word like being, why not, this term remains rather empty for us and full enough, nevertheless, for it to be able to serve us here as a reference point. What could be the end of an operation that undoubtedly, at least at the start, has to do with the truth if the word being could not be evoked at its horizon.

Is it so for the analyst? Namely, the one who is supposed to have gone through such a journey on the principles that it presupposes and which are contributed by the act of the psychoanalyst. It is useless to question oneself whether the psychoanalyst has the right, in the name of some objectivity, to interpret the sense of a given figure in this poetic operation by this doing subject. It is useless to ask oneself whether it is legitimate or not to interpret this 'doing' as confirming the fact of transference. Interpretation and transference are implied in the act through which the analyst gives to this doing support and authorisation. It is designed for that. This all the same gives some weight to the presence of the act even if the analyst does nothing. Hence this separating out of the doing and of the act is essential to the status of the act itself. Where is it graspable that the psychoanalytic act shows it has run into an obstacle? Let us not forget that the psychoanalyst is supposed to have reached this point at which, however restricted it maybe, there has been produced for him this ending which includes the evocation of the truth.

From this point of being, he is supposed to be the Archimedes capable of making turn everything that develops in this structure first evoked, of which the circumscribing of an "I lose" by which I began, gives the key.

(66) Would it be interesting to see there being reproduced here this effect of loss, beyond the operation that the analytic act centres? I think that by posing

the question in these terms, it will immediately appear to you that there is no doubt that it is in the insufficiency, I would say, of analytic production that there ought to be read something which corresponds to this dimension of obstacle. Beyond an act that is supposed to bring to an end (*faire fin*), but whose magisterial point we must suppose if we want to be able to speak about anything at all concerning it. Moreover, there is nothing excessive in evoking it, when the analysts themselves, and those who may most fall under the threat of the designation of this obstacle - there where I am proposing that we should search for the incidence which can complete the support, indeed establish it - of our critique. There is nothing excessive in speaking about this turning point, in speaking about the passage of the psychoanalysand to the psychoanalyst, since among psychoanalysts themselves the reference to the very thing that I have just evoked is constant and given as a condition of any analytic competence.

It could be an infinite task to put the psychoanalytic literature to the test. Moreover, I have highlighted some examples of it on the horizon. In my first class this year I cited the article by Rappaport which could be called in French (it appeared in the *International Journal*) "*statut analytique du penser*". *Thinking,* the present participle. In such a large gathering it would be tedious, inefficient, to take such an article to see there being manifested in it the best of good intentions, as I might say. A sort of flattening of everything that can, from the Freudian statement itself, be organised in terms of stating what is involved for the function of thinking in what is called the analytic economy. The striking thing about it would be that the tearing apart that is marked at every instant, the impossibility of not, for example, making this *montage* or *démontage*, as you wish, of *thinking,* start from the primary process itself, at the level of what Freud designates as primary hallucination. This is linked to the first pathetic search, that supposed by the simple existence of a motor system. When it does not encounter the object of its satisfaction, it is supposed - at the source of the explanation of the primary process - to be responsible for this regressive process which makes the phantastical image of what is sought appear.

The complete incompatibility of this register, which is nevertheless put under the heading of thinking, with what in the secondary process is established in (67) terms of a thinking which is a sort of reduced action, a small scale action which makes it necessary to pass into a completely different register than the one first evoked, namely, the introduction of the dimension of reality testing, does not fail to be noted in passing by the author. In pursuing his path imperturbably he will come to see that not only are there not two modes and two registers of thinking but that there are an infinity of them which are to be more or less echeloned in what psychologists had previously noted in terms of stages of consciousness. And consequently to completely reduce the relief of what had been contributed by Freud to what is called the reduction to general psychology, namely, to its abolition. This is only a trivial example and each one of you can, each one as you wish, can go and confirm it. If other people saw the interest in holding a seminar in which something like this would be followed in its details - why not - the important thing it seems to me is that it is completely eluded in

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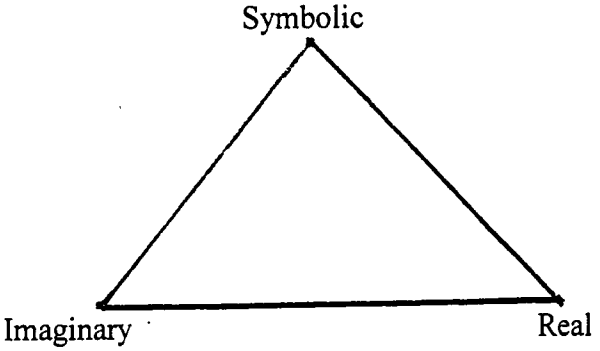
this perspective of reduction and consequently fails. What is striking, outstanding, extraordinary, implied in this dimension of primary process is something which can be expressed more or less as follows: not "in the beginning is dissatisfaction", which means nothing. It is not that the living individual chases after satisfaction that is important, it is that there is a status of enjoyment *(jouissance)* which is dissatisfaction.

To elude it as original, as implied in the theory of the one who introduced it, this theory, it does not matter whether or not he expressed it like that, but if he constructed it like that, namely, if he formulated the pleasure principle as it had never been formulated before him, for pleasure from all time served to define the good, it was satisfaction in itself. Except for the fact that no one was able to believe it, because everyone knew from all time that to be in the good is not always satisfying. Freud introduces this other thing. It is a matter of seeing what is the consistency between this point and the one first indicated in the dimension of truth.

I opened a journal by chance. I do not know what it is, a weekly, a tri-annual, in which I saw distinguished signatures, one from the side of the horizon where the divine battle is still firing on all cylinders, that for the good precisely. I saw an article which began with a sort of incantation around "the symbolic, the imaginary and the real". ... To which the person referred the illumination that had been brought into the world by this tripartition for which I am responsible. And he valiantly concludes: to us this says what it says, the Real is God. This is (68) how people can say that I am a contribution to theological faith.

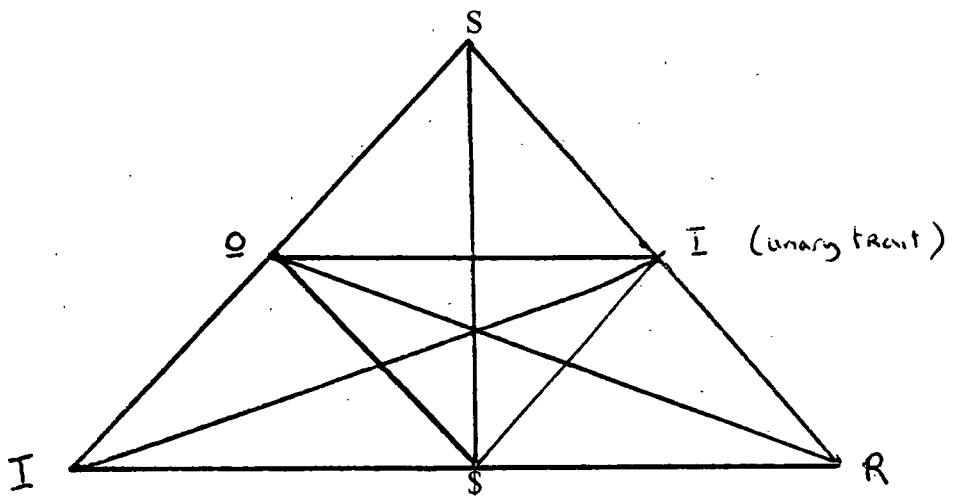
This, all the same, encouraged me to do something that I will attempt for the numerous people who see that this is mixed up. That what can be indicated, if one takes these terms otherwise than in the absolute, is the following:

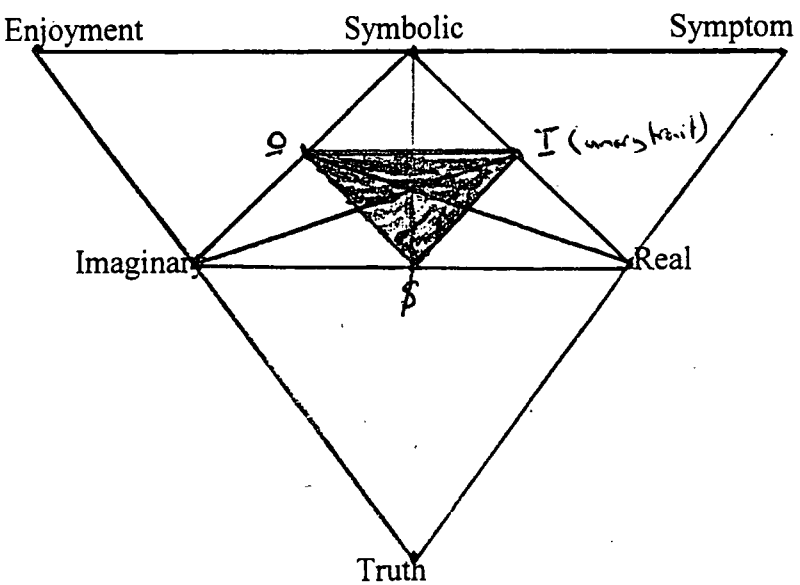


The symbolic, if you wish, we are going to put like that.

The imaginary, we are going to put it over here and the real ... it is completely idiotic, like that.

There would really be nothing to make of it, especially not a rectangular triangle, if, perhaps finally, to allow us a little to pose questions.





You are not going to go around with that on a piece of paper saying to yourself: what square am I in! All the same.

(69) If we remember what I teach about the subject as determined by two signifiers or more exactly by a signifier as representing it for another signifier, why not put the barred Subject like a projection onto the other side? This will allow there to be asked what is involved in the relation of the Subject between the Imaginary and the Real.

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On the other hand this I of the unary stroke, the one we start from to see how, effectively, in the development of the mechanism, this mechanism of the incidence of the signifier in development, is produced, namely, the first Identification. We will put it also as a projection on the other side.

The third function will be given me by this "**o**" which is something like a falling of the Real onto the vector stretched from the Symbolic to the Imaginary, namely, how the signifier can very well take its material, who would see in this an obstacle, in the imaginary functions, namely, in the most fragile, the most difficult thing to grasp as far as man is concerned. Not that there are not in him primitive images destined to provide us with a guide in nature, but precisely, as the signifier lays hold of them, they are always very difficult to locate in their raw state.

You see that the question can be posed about what the vectors uniting each one of these mapped out points represent. This is going to have an interest - that is why, of course, I am preparing you for this little game. The fact is that, all the same, since we have been speaking about the psychoanalytic act, all we have been able to do is to re-evoke the dimensions in which there are deployed our (70) references concerning the function of the symptom when we have posited it as putting a check on what is knowable, on knowledge, which always represents some truth. We would put here what constitutes the third pole, namely, enjoyment.

This introduces more correctly a certain fundamental attachment of the human spirit to the imaginary. This introduces something that can help you like cardinal points and which perhaps may serve as a support every time I evoke one of these poles, for example, like today, I pose the question of what is involved in the act of the analyst with respect to the truth.

At the start the question can and ought to be posed, does the analytic act take charge of the truth? It seems to do so, but who would dare to take responsibility for the truth without drawing derision on himself? In certain cases I take myself for Pontius Pilate. There is a pretty image in Claudel. Pontius Pilate whose only mistake was to pose this question, he was unlucky, he is the only one to have posed it before the truth. That knocked him a little off centre. The result is, (here I am staying in Claudel's register, it is he who invented that) that when he was travelling afterwards, all the idols (it is still Claudel who is speaking) saw their bellies opening and clattering down with the loud noise of a slot machine.

I am not posing the question, either in this context or with such vigour to obtain this result. But in any case, sometimes, it is close to it. The psychoanalyst does not take charge of the truth. He does not take charge of the truth because none of the poles can be judged in function of what it represents in terms of our three starting vertices, namely, that the truth is at the locus of the Other, the

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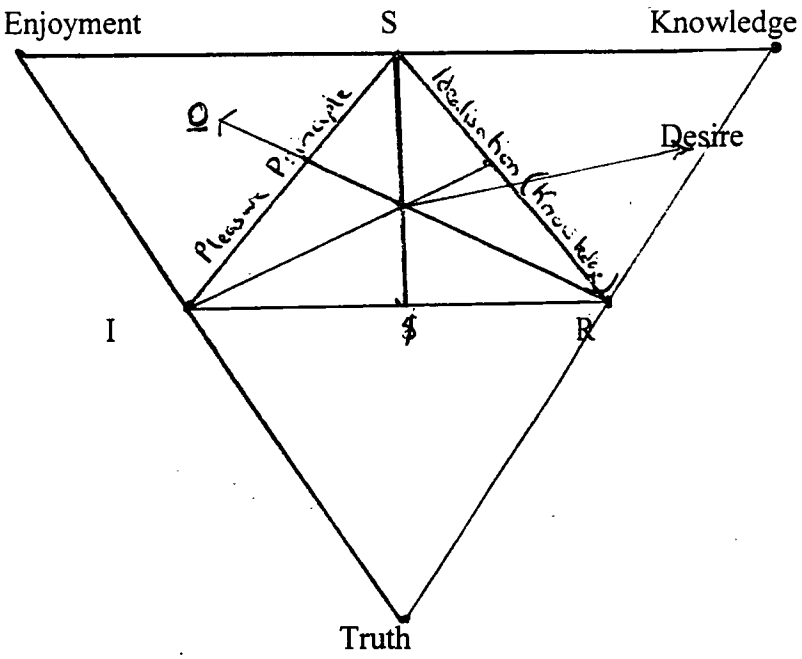
(71) inscription of the signifier. Namely, the truth is not there like that, any more than enjoyment in fact, which certainly has a relation with the Real, but from which precisely the pleasure principle is designed to separate us. As for Knowledge, it is an imaginary function, an incontestable idealisation, this is what renders delicate the position of the analyst who is in the middle, where there is the void, the hole, the place of desire.



But this involves a certain number of taboo points, in a way, of discipline, namely, that since one has to answer to something, I mean those who come to consult the analyst in order to find more security (*assurance*), well then my God, it happens that a theory is constructed of the conditions of the security that ought to come to someone who develops normally. It is a very lovely myth.

There is an article by Erik Erikson on the dream of Irma's injection that is constructed in this way. He enumerates in stages, how there ought to be edified the security of the little chap who first of all has had a suitable Mammy, one who has, of course, learnt her lessons in the books of psychoanalysts. And there is a series of stages which goes right to the peak, to give us (I already evoked it at one time) a perfectly secure GI. This can be constructed. Everything can be constructed in terms of psychology. It is a matter of knowing how the psychoanalytic act is compatible with such rubbish. It must be believed that it has something to do and the word rubbish (*déchet*) is not to be taken there as coming by chance. Perhaps by pinpointing, as we should, certain theoretical productions, we can immediately locate on this map, since it is a map, so Socratic a one that it is no more than the one I evoked the other day in connection with *Meno*. That has no more import, import as an exercise, than to see the relation that a production can have which, in no case, has a function with respect to the practice that even the analysts most exuberant about these constructions, in general optimistic, respect no less. No psychoanalyst, unless

through excess or by way of exception, is going to believe in it when he intervenes.

The relation of these productions to the natural high point of rubbish here, namely the **o**, may help us to make progress as regards what is involved in the relation of analytic production to another term. For example, that of the idealisation of his social position that we would put on the side of the I.

In short, the inauguration of a method of discernment of what is involved in the (72) productions of the analytic act, of the perhaps necessary amount of loss, I am not saying, that it involves, may be of a nature not at all simply to illuminate with a bright light what is involved in the analytic act, of the status that is presupposes and that it supports in the ambiguity it deploys. And why stop at any particular point of the extension of this ambiguity, until, as I might say, we have come back to our point of departure, if it is true that there is no way of getting out of it, we may as well complete the circuit of it.

We are going to try this year to give a first trial image of it. For this, for example, I am not, of course, going to take the worst examples. There is rubbish and there is rubbish. There is uninterpretable rubbish, even though you should pay attention that this designation of uninterpretable is not taken here in the proper sense.

Let us take an excellent author: Mr Winnicott. It is remarkable that this author to whom we owe one the most crucial discoveries, I remember, and I will never fail to come to it in homage in my memory, the help the transitional object, as he put it forward, gave me when I was questioning myself about the way to demystify the function of the so-called partial object, as we see it being sustained to support the most abstruse, the most mystifying, the least clinical theory about the so-called developmental relations of the pre-genital with respect to the genital.

The simple introduction of this little object that Mr. Winnicott calls the transitional object, this little piece of cloth that the baby, before the drama around which there have accumulated so many confused clouds, before this drama of weaning, which, when we observe it, is not at all necessarily a drama. As someone who does not lack penetration pointed out to me, it can happen that the person who most resents weaning is the mother. The presence, the simple presence in this case which seems in a way to be the support, the fundamental arch thanks to which everything would no longer ever after be developed simply in terms of a dual relation, the relation of the child to the mother. It is immediately interfered with by the functions of this tiny object whose status Winnicott articulates for us.

I will take up next year (January 10th) these features whose description one can say is exemplary. It is enough to read Mr Winnicott to translate him in a way. It is clear that this little piece of cloth or of blanket, a dirty piece that the infant

(73) clings onto, which in a way is something to see here, the relation to this first object of enjoyment which is not the mother's breast which is never there permanently, but one that is always within reach: the thumb of the child's hand. How can analysts distance themselves to this degree from their experience of what is brought to them in the first place about the function of the hand, to the point that for them human (*l'humain*) ought to be written *l'hu-main* (with a hyphen in the middle).

The reading that I am recommending to you is in number five of this journal which passed as mine for a long time, which is called, *La psychanalyse*. There is a translation of this transitional object of Winnicott. Read it. There is nothing more tiring than reading something and less likely to hold the attention. But if someone wants to do it the next time, who will not understand that all of this is to say what this little **o** object is. It is neither within, nor without, neither real nor illusory. It does not enter at all into this artful construction that the usual analysis edifies around narcissism by seeing in it something completely different than what it is meant for. Namely, not to make two moral aspects, namely, on the one side self-love and on the other that of the object, as they put it.

It is very clear, I already did it here, in reading what Freud said about the *Real Ich* and the *Lust Ich*, that it was to demonstrate to us that the first object was the *Lust Ich*, namely, myself the rule of my pleasure and that it remains so.

So then this whole precious description which is so close to the **o**-object, only lacks one thing, which is that one sees that everything that is said about it means nothing but the bud, the point, the first emergence from the earth of what? Of what the **o**-object commands, namely, the subject. The subject as such, which functions at first at the level of this transitional object. This is certainly not a test designed to diminish the sort of production that can be done around the analytic act. But you will see what is involved in it when Winnicott pushes things further. Namely, when he is no longer the observer of the little baby (he is more capable of it than many others), but maps out his own technique concerning what he, for his part, seeks to know, in an open way. I indicated it to you the last time at the beginning of the lecture, namely, The Truth.

This *self* that he speaks about as something that is there from all time, behind everything that is happening before even the subject is mapped out in any way, something is capable of freezing, he says, the situation of lack. When the (74) environment is not suitable in the first days, in the first months of the baby, something may function which brings about this *freezing*, this *gelation*. Undoubtedly, this is something which only experience can settle. And there again there is, with respect to these psychotic consequences, something that Winnicott saw very clearly. But behind this *freezing*, there is, Winnicott tells us this *self* which is waiting. This *self* which, by being frozen, constitutes the false self that Mr. Winnicott has to return to by a process of regression whose relation to the acting (*agir*) of the analyst it will be the object of my discourse the next

time to show. Behind this false self there is waiting what? The true to start up again. Who does not see, when we already have in analytic theory the *Real Ich*, the *Lust Ich*, the ego, the id, all these references already articulated enough to define our field, that the addition of this *self* represents nothing other than, as it is avowed in the text with *false* and *true*, the truth? But who does not also see that there is no other *true-self* behind this situation than Mr Winnicott himself, who places himself here as the presence of the truth.

This says nothing to involve in any way a disparagement of what this position leads him too. As you will see the next time, extracted from his own text, it is a position which avows that it must as such and in an avowed way emerge from the analytic act, to take up the position of doing, through which he assumes, as another analyst puts it, to answer all the needs of the patient.

We are not here to go into the details of what this leads to. We are here to indicate how the slightest miscognition - and how would it not exist since it is not yet defined - the slightest miscognition of what is involved in the analytic act, immediately draws the one who assumes it, and all the more so if he is more certain, more capable - I am quoting this author because I consider that there is no one who comes near him in English - that immediately he is brought, black on white, to the negation of the analytic position.

This just by itself appears to me to confirm, to give a beginning, if not yet a support to what I am introducing as the method of a critique by theoretical expressions of what is involved in the status of the psychoanalytic act.

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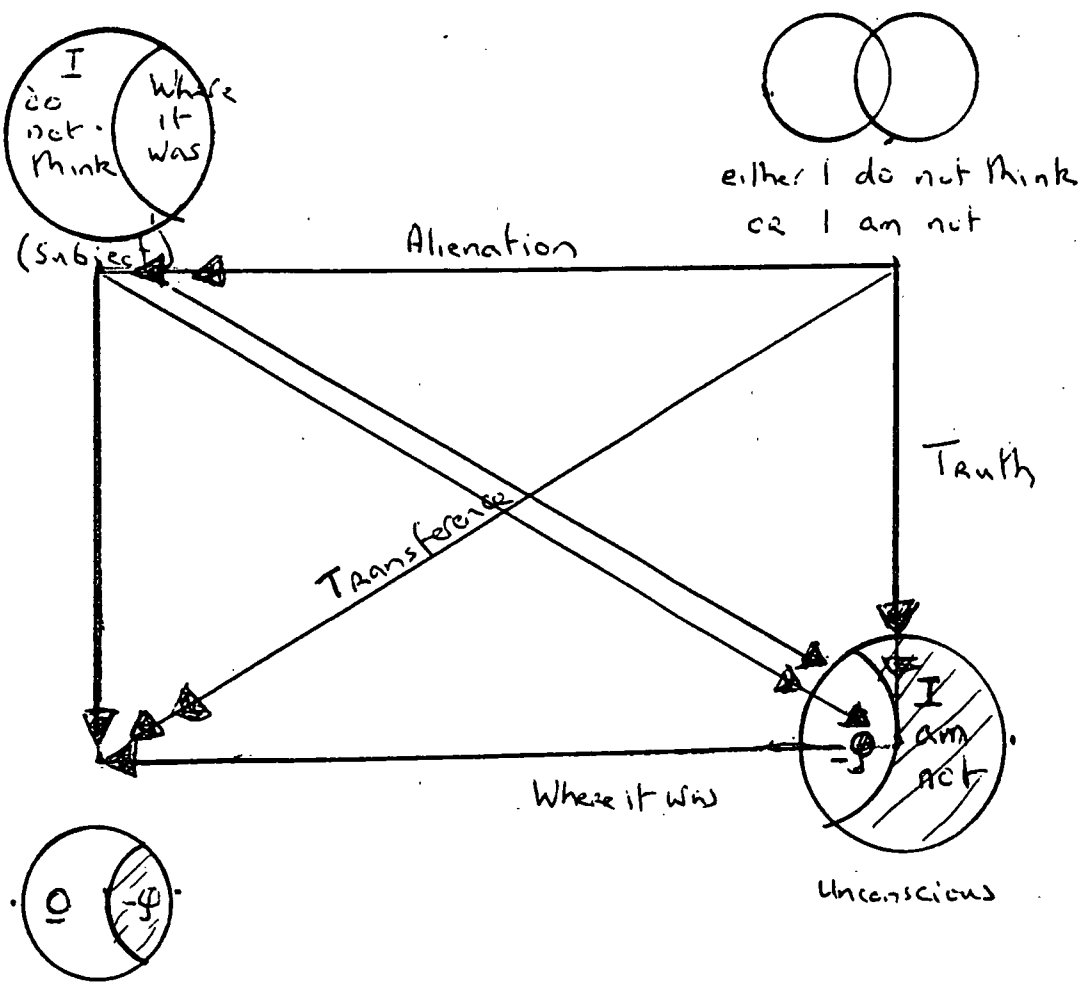
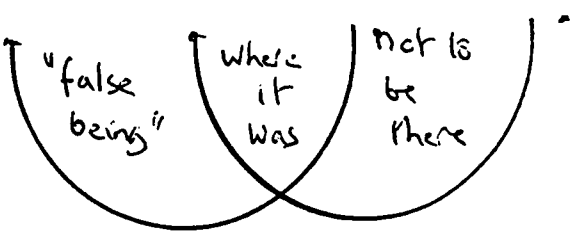
Seminar 5:

10 January 1968





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Seminar 5: Wednesday 10 January 1968.

I offer you my good wishes for the New Year, as they say.

Why "new"? All the same it is like the moon, when it has finished it begins again. And this point of finishing and of recommencing one could put anywhere, where, perhaps as opposed to the moon which was made, as every knows, and as a familiar saying recalls, for the intention of a not indifferent person. And there is a moment when the moon disappears, which is a reason for declaring it to be new afterwards.

But for the year, and for many other things and generally for what is called the real, there is no assignable beginning. Nevertheless, it is necessary that it should have one once it had been called "year", because of the signifying mapping out of what is found, for one part of this real, to be defined as a cycle.

It is a cycle that is not quite accurate, like all the cycles in the real. But once one grasps it as cycle, there is a signifier that does not quite agree with the real. It is corrected by speaking, for example, about a great year in connection with a little thing that varies from year to year until it makes up 28,000 years. In short, it is recycled.

So then, where should one put the beginning of the year, for example? This is where the act comes in. This at least is one of the ways of tackling what is involved in the act, a structure about which, if you search carefully, you will see that people have, when all is said and done, spoken little.

The New Year gives me the opportunity to approach it from this angle.

(76) An act is linked to the determination of the beginning, and very especially where there is need to make one, because, precisely, one does not exist. That is why, in short, what I did at the beginning has a certain sense. To offer you my wishes for a good year, is something that enters into the field of the act. Naturally, a small act, a very lay residue of act. But do not forget that if we make these little bowings and scrapings - which are always more or less going out of fashion, but which subsist, this is what is remarkable - it is as an echo of things that people speak about as if they were gone, namely, ceremonial acts which, in a

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framework that one can call the Empire, acts which consisted in the fact that on that day the Emperor handled the plough with his own hands.

It is an organised act that marked a beginning in so far as it was essential for a certain order of empire that this foundation renewed at the beginning of each year should be marked. We see here the dimension of what is called the traditional act, the one founded on a certain necessity of transferring something considered as essential in the order of the signifier. That it should be necessary to transfer it presupposes apparently that it is not transferred by itself, that beginning is well and truly renewal. This even opens the door by way of an opposition to the fact that it is conceivable that the act constitutes, if one can express it in this way, without quotation marks, a true beginning. That there should be in a word, an act, which is creative and that this is the beginning.

Now, it is enough to evoke this horizon of any functioning of the act to grasp that it is obviously here indeed that there resides its true structure, which is quite apparent, obvious, and shows the fecundity, moreover, of the myth of creation.

It is a little surprising that it did not emerge in a way that is now current, admitted into common consciousness, that there is a certain relation between the break produced in the evolution of science at the beginning of the 17th century and the realisation, the advent of the true import of this myth of creation which thus took sixteen centuries to come to its true incidence, to what one can call throughout this epoch, Christian consciousness. I cannot come back too often to this remark which, I underline, is not mine but that of Alexandre Koyré: "At the beginning was the action" says Goethe. A little later, people think that this is a (77) contradiction of the Johannine formula: "In the beginning was the word". This is what makes it necessary to look a little more closely at it. If you are introduced to the question along the path that I have just tried to open up for you in a familiar way, it is quite clear that there is not the slightest opposition between these two formulae. In the beginning was the action because without an act there can quite simply be no question of a beginning. Action is indeed at the beginning because there could not be a beginning without action.

If we can grasp from some angle what is never, or what has never been up to now, put forward quite as it is necessary to do, the fact is that there is no action that is not presented first and foremost with a signifying point. This is what characterises the act, its signifying point, and its efficiency as act has nothing to do with its efficacy as a doing. Something that reaches this signifying point. One can begin to speak about act simply, without losing sight - it is rather curious that it should be a psychoanalyst who can for the first time give to this theme of act this accent, more exactly what constitutes its strange and therefore problematic and double feature - on

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the one hand, that it is in the analytic field, namely, in connection with the parapraxis (*acte manqué*), that it appeared precisely that an act which presents itself as missing out is an act, and uniquely from the fact that it is signifying. And then, that a psychoanalyst presides, precisely, (let us limit ourselves to this term for the moment) over an operation described as psychoanalysis which, in its principle, commands the suspension of every act.

You sense that when we are now going to engage ourselves on this path, of questioning in a more precise, more insistent way than we were able to do in the introductory sessions of the last trimester, what is involved in the psychoanalytic act, I want all the same, a little bit more than I was able in these first words, to highlight that at our horizon, we know what it can be a question of in every act. Of this act whose inaugural character I showed earlier, and whose type as one might say, is given to us through this vacillating meditation that is carried on around the politics of the act described as that of Crossing the Rubicon, for example. Behind it others are profiled. The Night of the 4th of August, the *Jeu de paume*, the Days of October ...

Where is here the sense of the act?

Certainly we feel, we sense, that the point at which questioning is first (78) suspended, is the strategic sense of one or other breakthrough. Thank God, it is not for nothing that I first evoked the Rubicon. It is a rather simplistic example completely marked by the dimensions of the sacred. Crossing the Rubicon did not have a decisive military meaning for Caesar. But on the contrary, to cross it was to re-enter his motherland. The land of the Republic, which to attack, was to violate. This was a breakthrough that had been made, in the sense of these revolutionary acts that I find myself - unintentionally of course – to have profiled behind it. Is the act the moment when Lenin gives one or other order, or the moment when there are loosed upon the world the signifiers that give to one or other precise success in the strategy its sense of a beginning that is already traced out? Something in which the consequence of a certain strategy comes to take its place, and to take in it its value as sign.

After all, it is worthwhile posing the question here, at a certain starting point. Because in the way that I am going to advance onto the terrain of act, there is also a certain breakthrough in evoking this dimension of revolutionary act and pinning on it something different to any warlike efficacy and which is called stimulating a new desire.

"*Un coup de ton doigt sur le tambour décharge tous les sons et commence la nouvelle harmonie*
Un pas de toi c'est la levée des nouveaux hommes et l'heure en marche.
Ta tête se détourne, le nouvel amour. Ta tête se retourne, le nouvel amour."

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[Your finger on the drum looses all the sounds and begins the new harmony
A step from you is the rising of new men and time on the march.
Your face turns aside, the new love. Your face turns back, the new love.]

I think that none of you can fail to understand this text by Rimbaud that I am not finishing and which is called "*A une raison*".

It is the formula of the act.

Can the act of positing the unconscious be conceived of otherwise. And especially from the moment that I recall that the unconscious has a language structure, when having recalled it without recording the profound tremors among those who are interested by that, I take up and speak about its disruptive effects on the *Cogito*.

Here, I take up again, I underline, it happens that in a certain field I can formulate, "I think". That has all sorts of characteristics. What I dreamt last (79) night, what I missed this morning, or indeed what I touched on yesterday through some uncertain stumbling, without wanting to, by making what is called a witticism, sometimes without doing it deliberately.

In this "I think", am "I there"? It is quite certain that the revelation of the "I think" of the unconscious implies - everyone knows this whether one has done psychoanalysis or not, it is enough to open a book to see what is at stake - something that, at the level of what Descartes' *Cogito* makes us put our finger on about the implication of the "therefore I am", and this dimension that I would describe as that of defusing. This means that where I most certainly think, because I am aware of it, I was in it, but exactly as they say - you know I already used this example, but experience teaches me that it is not vain to repeat myself - it is in the same sense in which, according to the example extracted from remarks of the linguist Guillaume, in the same sense that this very specific use of the imperfect in French which gives all its ambiguity to the expression "*un instant plus tard la bombe éclatait*" [another second and the bomb was gone off]. Which means that precisely it did not go off.

Allow me to add, to stick this nuance onto the German *Wo Es war,* which does not include it, and by this to add to it the renewed use that can be given of "*Wo Es war soll Ich werden*". Where it was, where it is no longer anywhere but there, because I know that I thought it, "*soll Ich werden*". *Ich*: for a long time I have underlined that it can only be translated by, the subject. The subject must become. Only can he? That is the question!

"Where it was ..." Let us translate: "I must become", continue, "a psychoanalyst". Only from the fact - it is the question that I posed about this *Ich* translated by the subject - how is the psychoanalyst going to be able to find his place in this conjuncture. This conjuncture is the one that last year I expressly articulated under the title of the logic of phantasy, by a disjunctive

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conjunction of a very special disjunction which is the one that, more than three years ago, I introduced by giving a new sense to the term of alienation. Namely, the one which proposes this curious choice whose consequences I articulated which is a forced choice and, necessarily, a losing one. "Your money or your life", "liberty or death". The last one that we are introducing here and that I am bringing in to show its relation with the psychoanalytic act is: "either I do not think or I am not". If you add to it, as I did earlier to the *soll Ich werden,* the term which is indeed what is in question in the psychoanalytic act: the term psychoanalyst, it is enough to make this little (80) machine run. Obviously, there is to be no hesitation. If on the one hand I am not a psychoanalyst, the result is that I do not think.

Naturally the interest of this is not simply humorous. It ought indeed to lead us somewhere and particularly to asking ourselves what is involved simply in our experience of last year, in what I will call this starting supposition which is constituted by the "either I do not think or I am not". How does it happen that it has proved to be not simply efficacious but necessary for what I called last year a logic of the phantasy, namely, a logic of such a kind that it preserves in itself the possibility of giving an account of what is involved in the phantasy and of its relation to the unconscious.

Because it is there as unconscious, again I must not think of what is involved in my unconscious as thinking.. Where I think it, I am no longer at home. I am no longer there. "I am no longer there (*je n'y suis plus*)" in terms of language in the same way that I make the person who answers the door say: "Sir is not at home". It is an "I am not there" in so far as it is said. This indeed is what gives it its importance. This means in particular, this means that as psychoanalyst I cannot pronounce it. You can see the effect it would have on my clientele! This is also what corners me in the position of "I do not think". At least if what I am putting forward here as logic is able to be followed along its true thread. "I do not think" could be - having drawn the two circles below and their intersection (cf schema), I marked with all the quotation marks of prudence, and to tell you that you must not get too alarmed - this "false-being *(faux-être)*". It is the being of all of us. One is never so solid in one's being as when one does not think. Everyone knows that.

Only all the same, I would like to mark clearly the distinction from what I am putting forward today.

There are two distinct falsehoods. Everyone knows that when I came into psychoanalysis with a little broom which was called the mirror stage, I began by mapping out, because after all it was in Freud, it is said, mapped out, seried. I took the mirror stage to make a portmanteau. It is even much more emphasised immediately than I was ever able to do it in the course of statements that spared peoples sensitivities, that there is no love which does not derive from this narcissistic dimension. That if one knows how to read

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Freud, what is opposed to narcissism, what is called object libido, what (81) concerns on the bottom left hand corner the **o**-object, for that is object libido. It has nothing to do with love since love is narcissism and the two are opposed: narcissistic libido and object libido.

So then when I speak about "false-being" it is not a matter of what comes to plant itself there upon it, in a way, like mussels on the hull of a ship, if you wish. It is not a matter of an individual (*être*) puffed up with the imaginary. It is a matter of something underneath which gives it its place.

It is a matter of the "I do not think" in its structuring necessity *qua* inscribed at this starting place without which we would not have been able, last year, to articulate the least thing about what is involved in the logic of the phantasy.

(82) Naturally, it is a convenient place, this "I do not think". It is not just the puffed-up individual that I spoke about just now, who finds his place there. Everything comes into it, medical prejudice as a whole, psychological or psychologising prejudice no less. On the whole, note the fact that in any case the psychoanalyst is particularly subject to this "I do not think" because he is inhabited by everything that I have just stated, pinpointed, as prejudices by qualifying them by their origin. He has others besides, for example about doctors. The advantage as I might say, when medical prejudice preoccupies him, and God knows that it preoccupies him a good deal, for example, to take only it. And precisely indeed the doctors do not think about it, even though it still worries them - but not the psychoanalyst. He takes it like that, precisely in the measure that he has this dimension that it is only a prejudice, but since it is a matter of not thinking he is all the more at ease with it.

Have you ever, unless exceptionally, seen a psychoanalyst who questioned himself about what Pasteur meant in the medical adventure? Pasteur is not a fashionable subject, but this might precisely have caught the attention of a psychoanalyst. It has never been seen. We will see if it changes. In any case, it would be necessary here to propose to oneself this little exercise: what is this initial point? It is worthwhile all the same posing oneself the question, if as we have glimpsed at the beginning - it is the axis of our progress today - the act in itself is always related to a beginning. I quite deliberately did not pose the question of this logical beginning last year, because, in truth, like more than one point of this logic of the phantasy, we would have had to leave it in suspense. Let us pin it down as *arché*, since this is how we have entered today, by the beginning. It is an *arché*, an *initium*, a beginning but in what sense?

Is it in the sense of the zero on a little measuring apparatus? An individual, for example, quite simply. It is not a bad start to ask oneself this question, because already it seems it can even be seen right away that to pose the question in this way is to rule out that it is a beginning in the sense of the unmarked.

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We even touch with our finger that the only fact that we have to question this *arché*-point about, namely, is whether it is zero. The fact is that in any case it is already marked, and that, after all, this works out rather well all the same for from the effect of the mark, it appears very satisfying to see there flowing the "either I do not think" or "I am not". "Either I am not this mark", or "I am nothing but this mark", namely, that "I do not think". For (83) the psychoanalyst, for example, this applies very well.

He has the label, or indeed he is not it.

Only one must not be deceived by it. As I have just marked it, at the level of the mark, we see only the necessary result precisely of alienation. Namely, that there is no choice between the mark and the individual, so that if it must be marked somewhere, it is precisely on the top left (cf schema of the "I do not think"). The alienating effect has already taken place and we are not surprised to find there, in its original form, the effect of the mark, which is sufficiently indicated in this deduction of narcissism that I made in a schema that I know that at least some of you know, the one that relates in their dependence the ideal ego and the ego ideal.

So then knowing the nature of the logical starting point remains in suspense in so far as it still depends on the conjunction before the disjunction, the "I do not think" and the "I am not". Assuredly, last year it was towards this, since it was our starting point, and as I might say the initial act of our logical deduction, we would not be able to come back to it if we did not have what constitutes the opening, the gap that it is always necessary to find in every presentation of the analytic field, which made us, after having constructed the moment of the logic of phantasy, spend the last trimester around the sexual act, precisely defined by the fact that it constitutes an aporia.

Let us take up again then, starting from the psychoanalytic act, this questioning about what is the *initium* of the logic of the phantasy that I had to begin to recall here. That is why I inscribed on the board today this aspect of it that I articulated last year under the terms of operation alienation, operation truth, operation transference, to make of them the three terms of what one can call a Klein group, on condition of course of grasping that in naming them in this way, we are not seeing the return, the operation, of what constitutes for each one the return operation. That here as they are inscribed with these vectorial indications, there is only, as I might say, half a Klein group.

Let us take up the act at the sensitive point that we see it in the analytic institution and let us start from the beginning in so far as this today means that the act establishes the beginning.

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(84) Is it an act to begin a psychoanalysis, yes or no? Yes, assuredly. Only who performs this act? We pointed out earlier what it implies for the one who engages himself in psychoanalysis, what it implies precisely in terms of relinquishing the act. It becomes very difficult, in this sense, to attribute the structure of the act to the one who engages in a psychoanalysis. A psychoanalysis is a task, and some people even say that it is a trade. I am not the one who said it, but people all the same who know about it. These people who have to follow the rule or not, however you define them, must be taught their trade. In any case, in that quarter people do not talk about their trade as psychoanalysands. They are going to say it now because the word has become popular. Nevertheless, that is what it means.

So then, it is clear that if there is an act, it is probably necessary to look for it elsewhere. We do not after all have to force ourselves very much to ask ourselves to say that if it is not on the side of the psychoanalysand, it is on the side of the psychoanalyst. There is no doubt about it. Only this becomes a difficulty. Because after what we have just said, as regards the act of positing the unconscious, is it necessary for the psychoanalyst to posit it again each time? Is it really possible, especially if we think that after what we have just said, to reposit it each time would be to give us each time a new opportunity for not thinking?

There must be something else, a relation between the task and the act which has perhaps not yet been grasped and which perhaps cannot be. It is necessary perhaps to make a detour. One sees right away where we can find this detour. At another beginning, at this moment of beginning when one becomes a psychoanalyst.

We must take into account the fact which is in the data that if one is to believe what is said, it is necessary to trust oneself in this domain.

Beginning to be a psychoanalyst, as everyone knows, begins at the end of a psychoanalysis. We have only to take that as it is given to us if we want to grasp something. We must start from that, from this point which is accepted by everyone in psychoanalysis.

So then, let us start from things as they present themselves. You have come to the end once. It is from this that you must deduce the relation that this has with the beginning on every occasion. You have reached the end of your analysis once, and it is this act so difficult to grasp at the beginning (85) of each psychoanalysis that we guarantee. It must have a relation with the end of what once occurred.

Now here it is already necessary that what I put forward last year should be of some use. Namely, the way in which there is formulated in this logic the end of psychoanalysis.

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The end of psychoanalysis supposes a certain realisation of the truth operation. Namely, that if in effect this ought to constitute this sort of journey, which, from the subject installed in his false-being makes him realise something about a thinking which includes the "I am not". This does not fail to rediscover as is appropriate, in a crossed and inverted form, its truer place, its place in the form of "where it was" at the level of the "I am not". This is found in this **o**-object whose sense and practice we have done a lot, it seems to me, to give you, and on the other hand, this lack which subsists at the level of the natural subject, of the subject of knowledge, of the false-being of the subject, this lack, which from all time, has been defined as the essence of man and which is called desire, but which at the end of an analysis is expressed by this thing, not only formulated but incarnated, which is called castration.

This is what we usually label with the letter minus phi (-φ). The inversion of this relation of left to right which makes the "I do not think" of the alienated subject correspond to the "where it was" of the unconscious in the discovery of the "where it was" of desire in the subject in the "I am not" of unconscious thinking, this reversing itself is properly what supports the identification of the **o** as cause of desire, and of the minus phi (-φ) as the place from which there is inscribed the gap proper to the sexual act.

It is precisely here that we ought to suspend things for a moment. You see it, you put your finger on it, there are two "*wo Es war*", two "where it was", corresponding moreover to the distance which in the theory splits the unconscious from the Id. There is the "where it was" inscribed here at the level of the subject, and I already said it, I am repeating it so what you will not let it pass, where it remains attached to this subject as lack. There is the other "where it was", which at an opposite place is the one is on the bottom right (cf schema), of the locus of the unconscious which remains attached to the "I am not" of the unconscious as object, object of loss.

The initial lost object of the whole analytic genesis, the one that Freud hammered at every phase of the birth of the unconscious, is there, this lost object, cause of desire. We are going to see it as being at the source of the act.

(86) But this is only an announcement. I am not justifying it immediately. There is still a journey to take before being sure of it, we have to pause there for a while. In general, it is only worthwhile pausing for a while to grasp the time that one has passed on it without knowing it, we will say moreover, to correct ourselves. Passed ... it would be better to say "passing (*passant*)" and if you will allow me to play with the words "not without knowing it (*pas sans le savoir*)".

Namely, with knowledge, one passed it. But precisely, it is because I have presented to you the result of my schemas from last year, that you are

supposed to know, though there is not some exaggeration in this. Yes, it is with this knowledge that I passed this time, too quickly, namely, in haste. As you know haste is precisely what allows the truth to escape. This moreover allows us to live. The truth is that the lack (on the top left), is the loss, (of the bottom right). But the loss for its part, is the cause of something else. We will call it the cause of itself on condition, of course, that you are not deceived. God is the cause of himself, Spinoza tells us. Did he realise how right he was? Why not, after all. He was someone very able. It is quite certain that the fact of conferring on God the fact of being the cause of himself, dissipated the whole ambiguity of the *Cogito*, which might well have a similar pretension, at least in the minds of some people. If there is anything that analytic experience reminds us of, it is that if this expression, "cause of itself", means something, it is precisely to indicate to us that the self, or what is called such, in other words, the subject to which everyone has to come, since even in one or other Anglo-Saxon field where it can be said that people understand nothing about any of these questions, the word *self* had to emerge. It can be adapted to nothing in analytic theory, nothing corresponds to it.

The subject depends on this cause which makes it divided and is called the **o**-object. Here is what marks what it is important to underline: that the subject is not its own cause, that it is the consequence of loss and that it has to put itself into the consequence of the loss, the one that the **o**-object constitutes, to know what he is lacking.

That is why I am saying that we would be going too quickly to state as I have done, these two points of the oblique line, from left to right (cf schema) and from top to bottom, of these two separated terms of the first division. The thing is supposedly known in the statement that the "where it was" is lack starting from the subject. It is only truly such if the subject makes of (87) himself a loss. Now this is what he cannot think except by making himself be. "I think, he says, therefore I am". He rejects himself invincibly into the being of this false act, which is called the *Cogito*. The act of the *Cogito* is error about being, as we see in the definitive alienation resulting from it of the body, which is rejected into extension, the rejection of the body outside of thinking is the great *Verwerfung* of Descartes. It is stamped with its effect that it reappears in the real, namely, in the impossible. It is impossible for a machine to be a body. That is why knowledge continues to prove it by making it into spare parts. We are in this adventure, I do not need I think to make allusions to it. But let us leave our Descartes here for today to return to what followed and to the punctuation that we must give today to our progress.

We know that the subject of the analytic act can know nothing about what is learnt in the analytic experience, unless there operates in it what is called transference. The transference that I restored in a complete fashion, by relating it to the subject supposed to know.

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The term of analysis consists in the fall of the subject supposed to know and his reduction to the arrival of this **o**-object, as cause of the division of the subject which comes in its place. The one who, phantastically, with the psychoanalysand, plays the game with respect to the subject who is supposed to know, namely, the analyst, it is he the analyst who comes to the term of analysis by being able to tolerate being nothing more than this remainder. This remainder of the thing known, which is called the **o**-object, it is around this that our question should be brought to bear.

The analysand who has come to the end of the analysis in the act, if there is one, which carries him to become a psychoanalyst, must we not see that this passage only takes place in the act which puts back in its place the subject supposed to know.

We now see this place where it is because it can be occupied. But it is only occupied in so far as this subject supposed to know, is reduced to this term that the one who up to then guarantees it there by his act, namely, the psychoanalyst, the psychoanalyst for his part has become this residue, this **o**-object.

He who at the end of a training analysis takes up, as I might say, the challenge of this act, we cannot omit that it is knowing what his analyst has become in the accomplishment of this act, namely, this residue, this rubbish, this rejected thing. By restoring the subject supposed to know, by himself picking up the torch of the analyst, he cannot but install, even if he does not (88) touch it, cannot but install the **o** at the level of the subject supposed to know. This subject supposed to know, that he can only take up again as condition of every psychoanalytic act, he knows, at this moment that I called in the pass, he knows that here is the *désêtre* that through him, the psychoanalysand, has struck the being of the analyst. I am saying, without touching it, that this is how he is engaged. Because he, the subject in the pass at the moment of the analytic act, knows nothing about this *désêtre* established at the point of the subject supposed to know. Precisely because he has become the truth of this knowledge, and that, if I may say a truth that is reached "not without knowing it", as I said earlier, well, it is incurable: one is this truth.

The analytic act functions at the start, as I might say, with a falsified subject supposed to know. For the subject supposed to know now proves what was quite simple to see immediately: that it is what is at the *arché* of analytic logic. If the one who becomes analyst could be cured of the truth that he has become, he would be able to mark what has happened in terms of a change at the level of the subject supposed to know. This is what in our graph we have marked by the signifier of S (Ø).

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It would be necessary to grasp that the subject supposed to know is reduced at the end of the analysis to the same "not being there" which is characteristic of the unconscious itself, and that this discovery forms part of the same truth-operation.

I repeat. The putting in question of the subject supposed to know, the subversion of what, I would say, the whole functioning of knowledge implies and that I already questioned before you many times in the form of: "so then this knowledge, whether it is that of the transfinite number of Cantor or of the desire of the analyst, where was it before it was known?

From that alone perhaps, can one proceed to a revival of the individual (*l'être*) whose condition it is to grasp that if its origin and its re-challenging, that which could take place from the signifier of the other that has finally vanished towards what replaces it, since moreover it is from its field, from the field of the Other that this signifier has been torn, namely, the **o**-object, this would also be to grasp that the individual as it can emerge from any act whatsoever, is an individual without essence as all the **o**-objects are without essence. This is what characterises them.

Objects without essence which are, or not, to be re-evoked in the act starting (89) from this sort of subject which, as we will see, is the subject of the act, of every act, I would say, in so far as like the subject supposed to know at the end of the analytic experience, it is a subject which is not in the act.

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Seminar 6: Wednesday 17 January 1968

(91) In speaking about the "psychoanalytic act", I have, as I might say, two ambitions: one long term and the other short, but necessarily the short term one is the better. The long term one, which cannot be set aside, is to illuminate what is involved in the act. The short term is to know in what the act of the psychoanalyst consists. Already in some writings in the past, I spoke about the psychoanalyst. I said that I was only starting from the fact that there is something of the psychoanalyst (*du psychanalyste*). The question of whether there is "the" psychoanalyst is not to be put completely in suspense either, but that of knowing how there can be a psychoanalyst is a question that is posed more or less in the same terms as what is called in logic the question of existence.

The psychoanalytic act, if it is an act and it is indeed from this that we began last year, is something that puts to us the question of articulating it, of saying it, which is legitimate. And even going further, implies the consequences of the act in so far as the act itself is in its proper dimension a statement (*un dire*). The act says something. This is what we started from.

This dimension has always been glimpsed. It is present in the facts, in experience. It is enough to evoke for even an instant some pregnant formulae, formulae that have worked, like that of "to act according to one's conscience", to grasp what is at stake. To act in accordance with one's conscience is indeed a kind of middle point around which the history of the act could be said to have turned or that one can take as a point of departure to centre it. To act in accordance with one's conscience. Why and before whom?

(92) The dimension of the Other, in so far as the act bears witness to something, cannot be eliminated either. Does this mean that this is the true turning point, the centre of gravity? Could we even sustain it for an instant where we are coming from, namely, where conscience as such is put in question, put in question in the measure that it can lead to what? Assuredly not to knowledge or to the truth either. It is from here that we start again by taking the measure of what has not yet been defined, of what has not yet been really circumscribed, of what is only introduced here, not even presupposed, the psychoanalytic act, in order to question again this point of equilibrium around which the question is posed of what the act is.

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On the horizon, of course, as we know, a distant murmur, a murmur which comes from afar, which comes from the times described as classical, or again our Antiquity, where assuredly we know that all that is said on the subject of the exemplary act, of the meritorious act, of Plutarchism, if you wish. We surely sense already that there is a little too much self-esteem getting into the game, and nevertheless are we that far from it? I think that today it is around a discourse on the subject that we will take up the act again. And that our advantage comes from nothing other than something which has made us restrict the supporting point of this subject by imposing on ourselves the most severe discipline, by only wanting to take as certain this dimension by which it is the grammatical subject.

Let us clearly understand here that it is not new, and that last year in our presentation of the *Logic of Phantasy*, we marked at its place, the place of "I do not think", this form of the subject which appeared as a curtailing of the field reserved to it. This dimension properly of grammar which meant that the phantasy was able to be dominated literally by a sentence which is only sustained, which is only conceived of in the grammatical dimension: *Ein Kind wird geschlagen*, a child is being beaten. We know all about it. This is the surest point we have, around which, in the name of what we posit for disciplinary purposes, that there is no meta-language, that logic itself must be extracted from this given which language is. It is around this logic, on the contrary, that we made revolve this triple operation, to which by a sort of attempt at a trial, a divination, a risk, we gave the form of the Klein group. (93) An operation that we began by highlighting, on the path along which we tackled it, by the terms of alienation, truth, and transference.

Undoubtedly, this is only a pinpointing. And having gone over them in a certain direction we are - to find our way in them, to support what they can represent for us - forced to give them another name, and of course, on condition that we see that it is the same journey that is at stake.

So then it is starting from the subversion of the subject that we have already for some ten years sufficiently articulated, so that people can conceive of the sense that this term takes on, when we say that it is from the subversion of the subject that we have to take up again the function of the act. In order for us to see that it is between this grammatical subject, the one that is there, inscribed in the very notion of act, in the way in which it is made present for us, the *I* of action, and this subject articulated in these terms that are sliding, always ready to flee us by a displacement, by a jump, to one of the vertices of this tetrahedron, in recalling to you the functions of these terms, namely:
the position of the *either-or* from which there starts the originating alienation, the one which culminates at the "I do not think", for it to be even chosen - and what does this choice mean? - the "I am not" articulates its other term. These vectors, or more exactly these directions in which the fundamental operations

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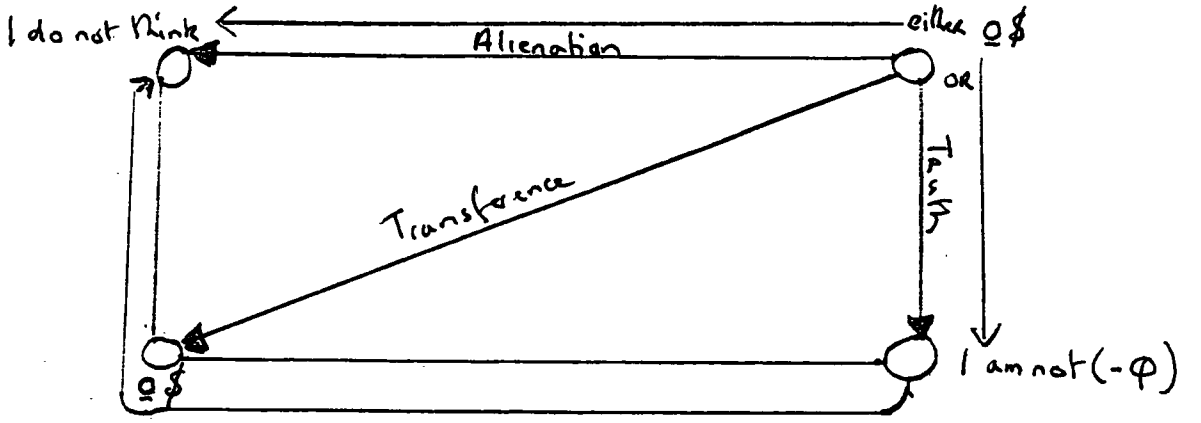
are taken being those that I recalled earlier under the terms of alienation, truth, and transference.



What does that mean? Where does that lead us?

We posit the psychoanalytic act as consisting in the fact of supporting the transference. We are not saying: who supports, who performs the act, the (94) psychoanalyst therefore implicitly. This transference which would be a pure and simple obscenity, I would say, with some babbling added on, if we did not restore to it its true core, in the function of the subject supposed to know. Here, we have done this for some time by showing that everything that is articulated, about its diversity, as a transference effect, can only be organised by being referred to this truly fundamental function that is always present in everything that is involved in any progress of knowledge. This takes on its value here precisely from the fact that the existence of the unconscious puts it in question - a question never posed because we are still there, as one might say, implicitly - the answer is even unnoticed. From the moment that there is knowledge, there is a subject, and there must be some shift, some split, some shaking, some moment of *I* in this knowledge, for one to notice all of a sudden, for there to be thus renewed this knowledge that he knew before.

This is scarcely noticed when it is happening, but it is the field of psychoanalysis that makes it inevitable. What is involved in the subject supposed to know, since we have to deal with this sort of unthinkable thing which in the unconscious situates for us a knowledge without a subject? Naturally, this is something that one may not notice, by continuing to think that this subject is implied in this knowledge, quite simply by allowing there to escape everything involved in the efficacy of repression, and that it cannot be conceived of otherwise than in the fact that the signifier present in the unconscious, and liable to return, is precisely repressed in that it does not imply a subject, that it is no longer what represents a subject for another signifier, which is something that is articulated to another signifier without for all that representing this subject. There is no other definition possible of what is really involved in the function of the unconscious, in so far as the Freudian

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unconscious is not simply the implicit, or the obscured, or the archaic, or the primal. The unconscious is always in a completely different register, in the movement established as doing by this act, of supporting, or accepting to support the transference.

The question is what becomes of the subject supposed to know? I am going to tell you that in principle, the psychoanalyst knows what becomes of it. Assuredly, it falls. What is implied theoretically in this suspension of the subject supposed to know, this line of suppression, this bar on the S which symbolises it in the becoming of analysis, manifests itself in the fact that something is produced at a place, that is certainly not indifferent to the (95) psychoanalyst, since it is at his own place that this thing arises. This thing is called the little **o**-object.

The little **o**-object is the realisation of this sort of *désêtre* that strikes the subject supposed to know. That it is the analyst, and as such, who comes to this place is not in doubt. It is marked in all the inferences in which he felt himself implicated to the point of no longer being able to do anything but bend the thinking of his practice in the sense of the dialectic of frustration, as you know. This is linked to the fact that he presents himself as the substance that is operated on and manipulated in the analytic deed. But this is precisely to fail to recognise the distinction there is between this deed and the act which allows it, the act which establishes it, the one that I started from earlier by defining it as this acceptation, this support given to the subject supposed to know, to the fact that the psychoanalyst knows that he is nevertheless doomed to *désêtre* and which thus constitutes, as I might say, an act that is out of synch since he is not the subject supposed to know, since he cannot be it. And if there is someone who knows it, it is above all the psychoanalyst.

Must I now, or a little later, yes, but why not now, why not right away, provided I can come back on something that I want to make you familiar with, by reminding you of its co-ordinates in other registers, in other statements. Must I now remind you that the analytic task, in so far as it is outlined from this point of the already alienated subject, in a certain sense naïve in its alienation, the one that the psychoanalyst knows to be defined by the "I do not think", that what he sets him to as a task, is an "I think" which takes on precisely its whole emphasis, from the fact that he knows the "I do not think", inherent to the status of the subject?

He sets him to the task of a thinking that is presented in a way in its very statement, in the rule that he gives him of it, as admitting the fundamental truth of the "I do not think", that he should associate and do so freely. That he does not seek to know whether or not he is entirely there as subject, whether he affirms himself there. The task to which the psychoanalytic act gives its status is a task which already implies this destitution of the subject, and where does that lead us?

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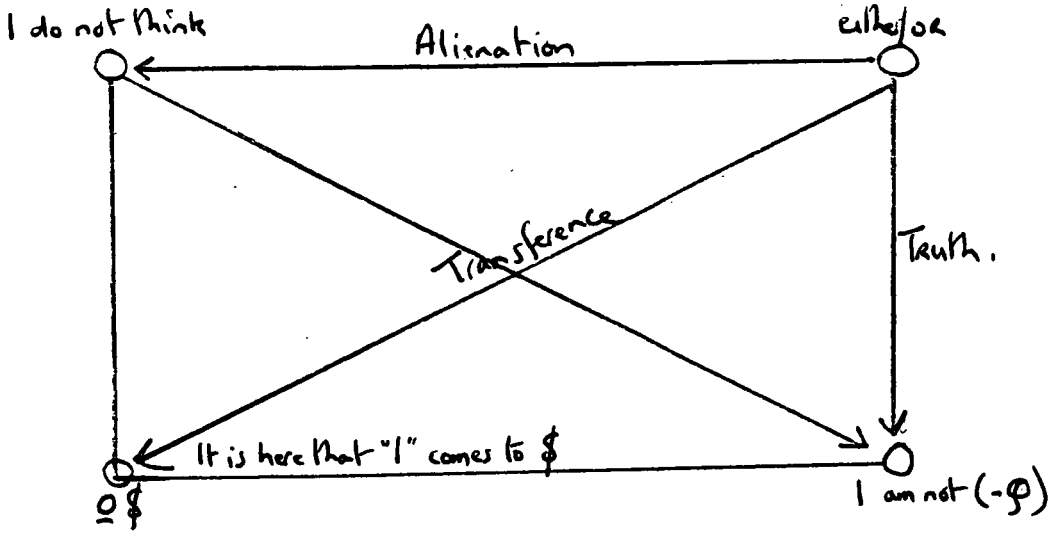
You must remember, you must not spend your time forgetting what is articulated about it, what is articulated about it in Freud, explicitly about the result. It has a name, and Freud did not soften it for us, which is something that is all the more to be highlighted because as subjective experience this was (96) never done before psychoanalysis. It is called castration, which is to be taken in its dimension of subjective experience in as much as nowhere except along this path can the subject be realised. I mean the subject of course.



This subject is only realised exactly *qua* lack, which means that the subjective experience culminates in something that we symbolise by (-φ). But if every use of the letter is justified by demonstrating that it is enough to have recourse to its manipulation in order not to be mistaken, on condition that one knows how to use it, it nevertheless remains that we have a right to try to be able to put into it an "it exists" - which I evoked earlier in connection with the psychoanalyst at the start of today's discourse. And that this "it exists" in question, this "it exists" of a lack, must be incarnated by us in what effectively gives it its name: castration. Namely, that the subject realises that he does not have, that he does not have the organ of what I would call unique, unary, unifying enjoyment *(jouissance)*. It is a matter, properly, of what makes enjoyment *one* in the conjunction of subjects of opposite sex. Namely, what I insisted on last year, in picking out the fact that there is no possible subjective realisation of the subject as element, as sexed partner in what is imagined as unification in the sexual act.

This incommensurability - that I tried to circumscribe before you, last year, by using the golden number, in so far as it is the symbol that allows the greatest play, this is something on which I cannot insist, because it belongs to the mathematical register - this incommensurability, this relation of **small o**, since it is the **small o** that I took up again not unintentionally to symbolise it in the (97) golden number, of **small o** to 1. This is where there operates what appears as subjective realisation at the end of the psychoanalytic task. Namely, this lack is not the organ, this naturally is not without a background

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if we remember that the organ and the function are two different things. So different that one can say that there comes back from time to time the problem of knowing what function must be given to each organ, and this is where the true problem of the adaptation of the living being lies. The more organs he has, the more entangled he is.

But let us pause ... It is a matter then of a limited experience, of a logical experience and after all, why not? Because for a moment we have jumped onto a different plane, onto a plane of the relation of the living being to itself, that we only tackle by the schema of this subjective adventure. We must clearly recall here that from the point of view of the living being all of this, after all, can be considered as a artefact. And that logic is the locus of truth changes nothing in it, because the question that comes at the end is precisely the one to which we will be able to give its whole emphasis in time. What is the truth?

It is up to us to see that from these two lines, the ones that I designated as the task, the path taken by the psychoanalysand in as much as he speaks, a naïve subject who is moreover the subject alienated from this realisation of lack, in as much as, as I pointed out to you the last time, this lack is not what we know to be at the place of the "I am not". This lack was there from the start, and that from all time we have known that this lack is the very essence of this subject that is called man. Sometimes that it is desire, as has already been said, which is the essence of man. Quite simply this lack has made progress in the articulation of its function as *organum*, an essentially logical progress in this realisation as such of the phallic lack. But it involves that the loss in so far as it was there at first, at the same point, before its journey was followed through, and simply for us who know - the loss of the object which is at the origin of the status of the unconscious, this had always been explicitly formulated by Freud - is realised elsewhere. It is so precisely, this is what I started from, at the level of the *désêtre* of the subject supposed to know.

It is in as far as the one who gives its support to transference is there under the black line, that he knows where he is starting from. Not that he is there, he knows only too well that he is not, that he is not the subject supposed to (98) know, but that he is rejoined by the *désêtre* that the subject supposed to know undergoes. That in the end it is he, the analyst, who embodies what the subject becomes in the form of the little **o**-object. So then, as is to be expected, it is in conformity with every notion of structure that the function of alienation which was at the start, and which meant that we started from the top left hand vertex of an alienated subject, finds itself at the end equal to itself, as I might say. In this sense that the subject has been realised, in his castration, along the path of a logical operation. An alienated path, remits to the Other, gets rid - and this is the function of the analyst - of this lost object, from which, in Genesis, we can conceive that the whole structure originates. The distinction of alienation, of **small o** in so far as it comes here and is

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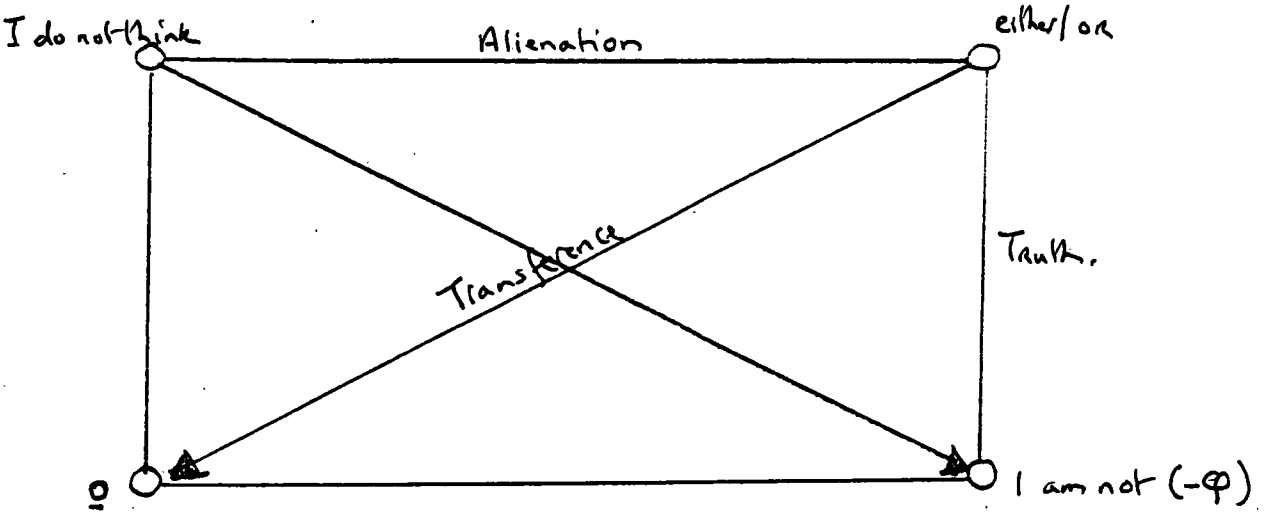
separated from (-φ), which at the end of analysis is ideally the realisation of the subject. This is the process that is at stake.



There is a second phase in this statement that I am producing. I open a parenthesis here in order to put what I came to a stop before earlier, in order to give what I should have given to it, an introduction. I will now give a reminder of it, which is that it is not by chance, a scholarly game, a question of taking a familiar point that your brains were tickled by, at the end of secondary school teaching, that I refer to Descartes' *cogito*. The fact is that it includes in itself this element that is particularly favourable for the Freudian detour to be relocated in it. Not at all, of course, in order to demonstrate here some historical consistency or other, as if all of this could be put end to end, from century to century, as a kind of progress, when it is only too obvious that if there is anything that this evokes, it is much more rather the idea of a maze. What matter, let us leave Descartes. In looking closely at the *cogito*, note carefully that the subject who is supposed there as being, may well be that of thinking, but of what thinking, in short? Of that thinking which has just rejected all knowledge. It is not a question of what is done after Descartes by those who meditate on the immediacy from "I am" to "I think", an obviousness that, as they wish, they make consistent or fleeting. What is at stake is the Cartesian act itself, in so far as it is an act. What is reported and said to us about it, it is precisely by saying it that it is an act. It is from this point, where there is completed a suspension of all possible knowledge. That this is what assures the "I am": is it to be "thought" by the *cogito* or is it from the rejection of knowledge?

The question is well worth asking if one thinks of what is called in the manuals of philosophy the successors, the posterity of a philosophical thinking, as if it were simply a question of taking it up again, a piece of treacle to make another mixture out of it. While what is at stake every time is a renewal, an act which is not necessarily the same. And that if we take Hegel, of course, there again, as everywhere else, we find the putting in suspense of the subject supposed to know, except for the fact that it is not for

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nothing, that this subject is designed to give us, at the end of the adventure, absolute knowledge.

To see what that means, one must look more closely at it, and why not look at it at the start. If the *Phenomenology of the spirit* is explicitly set up by being generated from the function of act, is it not visible in the mythology of the fight to the death for pure prestige, that this knowledge of the origin, by having to trace out its path in order to become this unthinkable thing, this absolute knowledge, and one can even ask oneself - and one is entitled to ask oneself because Hegel formulates it - what kind of subject can depend upon it, for even a single instant. That this starting knowledge, that is presented to us as such, is the knowledge of DEATH, namely, another extreme, radical form of putting in suspense as the very foundation of this subject of knowledge.

Is it by questioning this again from the point of view of consequences, something that is easy for us to see that, what psychoanalytic experience proposes as the little **o**-object - along the path of my discourse in so far as it only summarises, highlights, gives its sign and its sense to what is articulated everywhere in this experience - this is what generates in disorder and confusion this little **o**-object. Do we not see that it comes in the same place (100) where there is in Descartes, this rejection of knowledge, in Hegel, this knowledge as knowledge of death. And we assuredly know that this is its function. That this knowledge of death, articulated precisely in this fight to the death of pure prestige, in so far as it grounds the status of the master, it is from it that there comes this *Aufhebung* of enjoyment. This explains it. And it is as renouncing enjoyment in a decisive act, in order to make himself the subject of death that the master is established. And it is moreover there, for us, I underlined it at one time, that there is put forward the objection that we can make to this through a curious paradox, a paradox unexplained in Hegel. It is to the master that enjoyment is supposed to return from this *Aufhebung*. Many times we have asked why? Why, if it is because he has not renounced enjoyment that the slave becomes a slave? Why does he not keep it? Why should it come back to the master, whose status is precisely to have renounced it, unless in a form that we can, perhaps, require a little more of than the conjuring trick, the Hegelian *maestria* to account for it? It is no little test if we can feel in the Freudian dialectic a manipulation that is more rigorous, more exact, and more in conformity with experience as regards what is involved in what becomes of enjoyment after the first alienation.

I already sufficiently indicated it in connection with masochism for people to know here what I mean and that I am only indicating a path to be taken up again. We certainly cannot delay on it today, but it was necessary to indicate its beginnings at the right place.

To continue on our path in function of what is involved in the psychoanalytic act, we have done nothing up to now except to demonstrate what it generates

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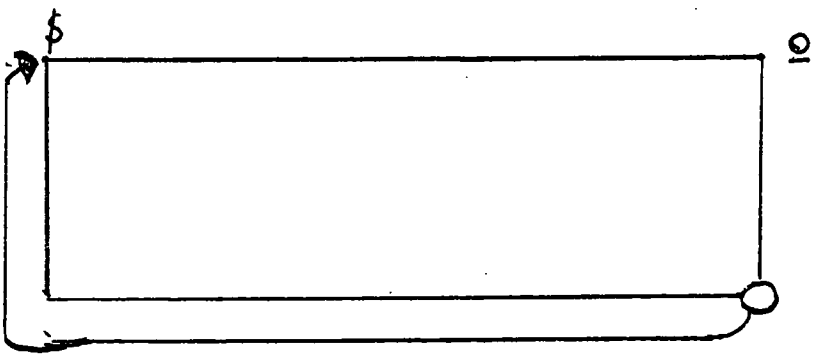
by being carried out. To take a further step, let us now come to the only point where the act can be questioned: at its point of origin.

What are we told? I evoked it again the last time. That it is at the end of an analysis that is supposed to be complete that the psychoanalysand may become a psychoanalyst. It is not at all a matter here of justifying the possibility of this connection. It is a matter of posing it as articulated and of putting it to the test of our little tetrahedric schema.

It is the subject who has accomplished the task at the end of which he has realised himself as subject in castration, *qua* something lacking in the enjoyment of sexual union. This is what we have to see by a rotation, or a tipping over, to a certain number of degrees, as this figure is drawn, by 180° in (101) order to see passing, coming back what has been realised here to the starting position. Except for the fact that the subject who comes here (on the top left), knows what is involved in the subjective experience, and that this experience also implies that on the left, there remains what has become of the one whose act is responsible for the path taken. In other words, that for the analyst as we now see him emerging at the level of his act, there is already a knowledge of the *désêtre* of the subject supposed to know, in so far as it is the necessary starting position for this whole logic.



It is precisely because of this that there is question of what is involved for him in this act, that we have defined earlier as an act that is out of synch. What is the measure of the illumination of his act? Because in so far as he has taken the path that permits this act, he is himself already the truth of this act.

This is the question that I posed the last time, in saying that a truth conquered "not without knowing it" is a truth that I described as "incurable", if I can express myself thus. For if we follow what results from this tipping over of the whole figure which is the only one in which there can be explained the (102) passage of the conquest, the fruit of the task, to the position of the one who breaks through the act by which this task can be repeated. It is here that there comes the $ which was there at the start in the *either-or* of the "either I do not think" or "I am not". And effectively, in so far as there is an act mixed up with the task that sustains it, what is at stake is properly a signifying intervention. The way the psychoanalyst acts, however little it may be, but

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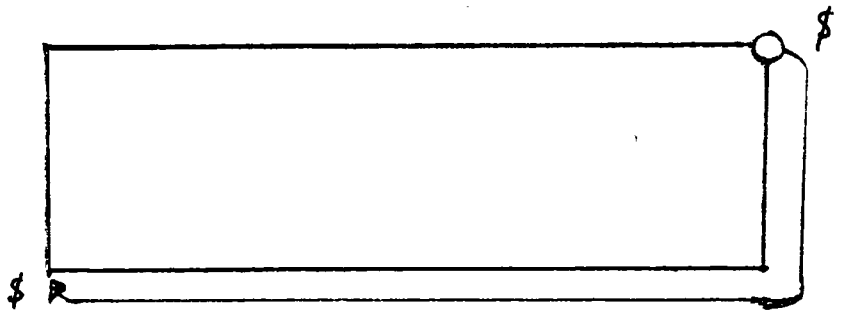

where he properly acts in the course of the task, is to be capable of this signifying interference which properly speaking is not open to any generalisation that might be called knowledge.

What analytic interpretation generates is this something, which cannot be evoked from the universal except in the form that I would ask you to notice is so contrary to everything that has been qualified as such up to now. It is, as one might say, this sort of universal key, the key that opens all the boxes. How the devil can it be conceived of? What does it mean to offer oneself as the one who has at his disposal what initially can only be defined as something or other particular?

Such is the question that I am also leaving only opened up here about what is involved in the status of the one who at the point of this subject, $, can ensure that there exists something in the task, and not in the foundational act, which corresponds to the subject supposed to know. Here is quite precisely what opens up the question. What is necessary for it to be possible that there should be an analyst? I repeat, on the top left of the schema, what we started from, is that in order for the whole schematisation to be possible, for the logic of psychoanalysis to exist, there had to be something of the psychoanalyst (*du psychoanalyst*).

When he puts himself there, after having himself taken the psychoanalytic path, he already knows where he will be lead to then as psychoanalyst by the path to be re-travelled: the *désêtre* of the subject supposed to know by being nothing but the support of this object called the little **o**-object. What is outlined for us by this psychoanalytic act, one of whose co-ordinates it must be carefully recalled is precisely to exclude from the psychoanalytic experience any act, any injunction to act? It is recommended to what is called the patient, the psychoanalysand, to name him, as far as possible he is recommended to wait before acting. If something characterises the position of the psychoanalyst, it is very precisely that he only acts in the field of signifying intervention that I delimited just now.

But is this not also an opportunity for us to grasp that the status of every act (103) emerges from it completely renewed? For the place of the act, whatever it is, and it is up to us to notice from its trace, what we mean when we speak about the status of the act, without even being able to allow us to add to it, of the human act. The fact is that, if there is somewhere that the psychoanalyst at once does not know himself, and, it is also the point where he exists, it is in

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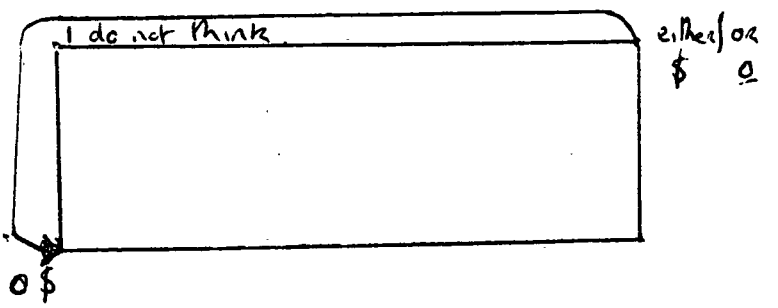
so far as he is, assuredly, a divided subject, even in his act. And that the end where he is awaited, namely, this little **o**-object, in so far as it is not his own,



but what the psychoanalysand requires of him as Other, so that with him, he is rejected from it. Is this not an image to open up for us what is involved in the destiny of every act. And this under diverse figures, from the hero where Antiquity from all time has tried to place, in all its breadth, in all its drama, what is involved in the act. Not at all certainly that at this same time knowledge was not oriented towards other traces, for it is also, and it is not negligible to recall it, a time when people sought the reason for what is involved in a wise act - and in truth there is nothing there to be disdained - in a good. "The fruit of the act", here is what seems to give its first measure to ethics. I took it up at one time in commenting on Aristotle's.

The *Ethics to Nicomachus* starts from this: that there is something good at the level of pleasure and that following a correct channel in this register of pleasure will lead us to the conception of the sovereign good.

It is clear that this was, in its way, a sort of act that has its place in the journeying of any act described as philosophical. The way that we may judge it is of no importance here. It was a time, as we know, when there was set up a completely different questioning, the tragic questioning about what is involved in the act, and this was what was remitted to an obscure divinity. If there is a dimension, a force, which was not supposed to know, it is indeed that of the ancient *ananke*, in so far as it was incarnated by these furious (104) madmen that the gods were.

Measure the distance travelled from this perspective on the act to that of Kant. If there is something which in another way renders necessary our statement about the act as a saying (*un dire*), it is indeed in the measure that Kant gives of it, from the fact that it ought to be regulated by a maxim that could have a universal range. Is this not also what I took my time to caricature, by connecting it to a rule as it is stated in the phantasmagoria of Sade?

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Is it not true, on the other hand, that between these two extremes, I am speaking about Aristotle and Kant, the reference to the Other taken as such is the one, also very farcical, which was given at least by a classical form of religious direction? The measure of the act in the eyes of God is supposed to be given by what are called good intentions. Is it possible to initiate a more established path of dupery than that of putting this measure at the principle of the value of the act.

Can the good intention in an act in any way remove for a single instant for us the question of what is its fruit? It is certain that Freud is not the first to allow us to emerge from these closed rings. That to put in suspense what is involved in the value of a good intention, we have a quite effective, explicit and useable critique in what Hegel articulates for us about the law of the heart or the delusions of presumption. That it is not enough to rise up against the disorder of the world, for this very protestation not to be itself its most permanent support. What succeeded the act of the *cogito*, has given us many models, precisely, of this thinking When the order, arising from the law of the heart, is destroyed by the critique of the *Phenomenology of the spirit*, what do we see, if not the return, that I cannot do otherwise than qualify as offensive, of the ruse of reason.

It is here that we must notice that this meditation opened out very specially on to something called the political act. And that assuredly it is not vain that what was generated not simply in terms of political meditations but of political acts, in which I in no way distinguish the speculation of Marx from the way in which is has been put into effect at one or other detour of the revolution, is it not possible for us to situate a whole line of descent of reflections on the political act, in so far as assuredly they are acts, in the sense that these acts were a saying *(un dire)* and precisely to say in the name of such a one who brought to them a certain number of decisive changes, is it not possible to question them again in the same register as the one at which there will culminate today what is outlined in terms of the psychoanalytic act? There where at the same time it is and it is not, and which could be expressed as follows, in virtue of the slogan that Freud gives to the analysis of the unconscious. *Wo Es war*, he says and I taught you to re-read it the last time, *soll Ich werden*?

Wo $ tat and you will allow me to write the S of the letter barred here, there where the signifier worked in the double sense that it has just ceased or that it was just going to act, not at all *soll Ich werden* but *muss Ich*, I who am acting, I who am launching into the world this thing to which one can address oneself as to a reason *muss Ich (o) werden.* I must become the waste product of what I am introducing as a new order into the world.

Such is the new form in which I am proposing to you to posit a new way of questioning what is involved, in our day, in the status of the act, in so far as this act is curiously related to a certain number of original introductions, in

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the first rank of which is the Cartesian *cogito,* in as much as the psychoanalytic act permits the question to be posed again.

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Seminar 7: Wednesday 24 January 1968

(107) Today there is going to be something a little bit modified in our pact. Naturally, it is understood that in accordance with the good law of offering an exchange, you give me your presence for something that you are expecting. This is supposed to emerge from a certain background and to have been, up to a certain point - it is a matter of knowing which - predestined. In short you are expecting a lecture, a class.

On several occasions, it happens from time to time that I pose myself the question of whom I am addressing myself to, and where it (*ça*) speaks from. You know the amount of care I take to insist on the fact that I cannot for a single instant lose sight of the original reference point, which is that this discourse on psychoanalysis is addressed to psychoanalysts. There are so many people who are not such and who are gathered here, to hear something. This just by itself demands a certain number of explanations. One would be wrong in this connection to content oneself with historical explanations, namely, an encounter or encounters, the effects of crowd pressure, what it means that I found myself in the position of being heard elsewhere than where I gave it originally. This is obviously not enough to explain things. It is indeed here that one could compare the references of history - for after all, what one in general calls history, this scrum - and of structure.

There are obviously reasons of structure. If I am speaking this year about the act, and am posing the question of the act, that I arrived at the point of what I said the last time which seemed to me by some little samples, proofs that I received, that at least some people have glimpsed the importance of what was formulated the (108) last time in as much as it marks a point which justifies, which allows there to be gathered together at least in a core point, what began to be articulated by me from the start of our year and which of course might have left a fuzzy impression, especially if one starts from the idea that what is first said are necessarily principles. In many cases one is forced to proceed otherwise, even when one has a structural reference and even especially when one has one, because it is of its nature not to be able to be given at the beginning. It has to be conquered. Otherwise I do not see why a schema of the type of the Klein group, upon which I am trying for the moment to articulate what is involved in the act in the perspective that the psychoanalytic act opens up, I do not see why I would not have started from there fifteen years ago.

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Today, there will be a pause whose occasion here is only a pretext, although that does not mean, for all that, that it is marginal. It is planned in this year's seminar on the psychoanalytic act, that the 31st January, the 28th February, the 27th March and the 29th May entry will be by invitation. This means that it will be reduced to a certain number of more restricted encounters, in order to allow a conversation.

This has been planned to give a minimum of this something that has always been difficult to handle. The rule governing closed seminars, with all the complications that this involves in the way of choosing. There is always established in things of this order a kind of competition. The place where you do not want to go, you begin to desire once your pal is going. All of this does not make the principle of who to welcome easy, but it is necessary to try to establish a *milieu* of exchange that has a somewhat different internal relation. I thought of it today but because no one having been warned, I had my reasons for not doing it. It is certain that apart from the people of my school who for their part were, not many candidates would have presented themselves.

Here is how I intend to resolve matters. Something that has nothing to do with the series means that, this 31st, I will not be there. This is not a reason for there not to be a closed seminar. It was agreed that the members of the Paris School described as Freudian, which everyone knows I look after, and this altogether legitimately because moreover they are psychoanalysts, that these should be the ones, in the measure in which they manifest the desire, to come here on the 31st January. I have not even asked yet - I am asking him now - Dr Melman to be (109) there, in short, to organise this meeting.

I had set out the principle that only the members of the School who have shown themselves here in a sufficiently regular fashion to know what I have stated up to now, should come to this meeting. You are going to see the degree to which it is justified. Because I am going to give to this meeting the following object: the idea moreover is not uniquely my own, far from it, I would even say that it was given to me by Dr Melman who, in the context of the teaching of the School, recently proposed to me that in the course of this seminar, which is particularly important all the same, it is hard to see how one could touch on a point more central for psychoanalysts than that of the psychoanalytic act itself, provided of course this word has a sense. This is what I hope has been sufficiently laid out up to the present in your sight, that at the very least I gave a certain shape to this sense. One can articulate it by following a certain number of questions and whether one can answer it and whether these are even questions, is precisely what is left open. This is the way, all the same, the problem is posed. I gave it its initial articulation, as a result of which one can see there being manifested within it certain blanks, in other points squares that are already full or even super-abundantly filled, or even completely overflowing, unbalanced because of not taking others into account. This is precisely the interest of introducing what is called "structure". It is rather curious that we are still at it, and I am obliged to say it since there are certain recent manifestations it among psychoanalysts to

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even consider whether there can be a question, at the level of principle, about structure. There are things that I really did not have the time to look at and which it is not even sure that I will look at closely but of which, of course, I hear echoes.

One sees people who have a psychoanalytic authority of a certain weight, honourable practitioners as they say, who find themselves manifesting very curiously the point at which things are at. For example, there is a whole *milieu* where is was, as everyone knows, forbidden even to come within range of the accursed word. And then there was a time, a fabulous time - but it has to be said that things go slowly in this very special *milieu* - can you imagine, 1960, there are people here who were fourteen years old at the time. The Congrès de (109) Bonneval is immemorial, it is dust-covered, unbelievable! It must be said that it took almost six years to produce its proceedings. There are people who, to discuss what I am teaching, think that it is great to take things up again from the Congrès de Bonneval!

I thank very much the people of my school for having produced a journal, which is obviously not mine, which allows these decanting effects. One could not put it elsewhere, elsewhere is not its place. In a certain *Revue Francaise de Psychanalyse,* as it is called, there is no question of discussing what I teach, and that is understandable, because psychoanalysis is not spoken about in it. So then, at this point, the empty pockets from next door can empty themselves to discuss what I am saying about the signifier. With all that I have been saying for four years, which has largely gone beyond the question of whether it must be known if at the source it is a matter or not of the signifier.

People go back to the Congrès de Bonneval which was a tunnel, this famous tunnel where the blacks fought one another, without knowing who was hitting who, and where there are the most fantastical lucubrations. There was someone called Lefebvre there, unbelievable people, the friendliest of people, my dear friend Merleau-Ponty who intervened on that occasion. But, everyone at that time, was off target. It was simply a matter, for the first time, of publicly discussing what at that time I had been teaching for seven years at Sainte-Anne to a little circle.

That is how things happen, and this is what makes tangible that in every discourse, there are act-effects. If there had only been the dimension of discourse in it, it ought to have spread more quickly. Precisely, this is what must be highlighted. That this discourse of mine, has this dimension of act at the moment that I am speaking about the act, is something that leaps to the eye. If one looks closely at it, it is the only reason for the presence of people who are here, for it is hard to see, particularly at the level of a young audience, what they can come looking for here. We are not on the plane of providing university services. I can bring you nothing in exchange for your presence. What amuses you is that you sense there is something happening. People do not agree. It is already a little beginning in the dimension of act.

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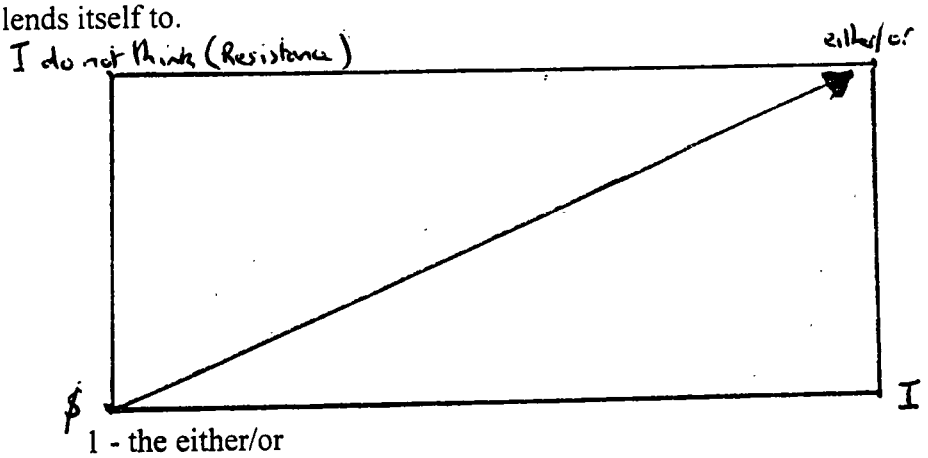
It is truly fabulous - naturally I only have this by hearsay - but in any case it has been affirmed to me that these kind of authors that I spoke about earlier, are among the people who object to this structure which is supposed to leave us, we (111) who are persons, so ill at ease. The being of the person is supposed to be something that would suffer from it. I am afraid that here we are into something which altogether merits analysis and study. What is involved in the being of the person of the psychoanalyst, is precisely something that can only be really grasped from its mapping out in the structure.

In this little tetrahedron which we have started from these last times, something all the same must be quite tangible in it: the multiplicity of translations that it lends itself to.



1 - the either/or

2 - the I am not/ I do not think

3 - this worthy unconscious; I am not

4 - the I do not think, which is not a place reserved to the psychoanalyst, all the same. The psychoanalyst reveals its necessity. That is something quite different. He reveals it in the fact that if it is obviously necessary for someone who is dealing only with thoughts "not to think", what are we to say about the others! This is why this starting point is instructive, and that in short it is something which makes quite clear the fact that this point on the top left then, of the forced choice which is the definition that I gave of alienation in its revised form, alienation as I have explained it here for you, a little improvement given to the notion of alienation as it had been discovered before us. It had first of all been pointed out at the level of production, namely, at the level of social exploitation.

This "I do not think" is what allows us to give its sense, to this word truly manipulated in a way that up to the present was rather abject, in this sense that it reduced the position of the psychoanalysand, the patient, to an attitude that I would qualify as disparaged, if the psychoanalysand, who is rightly or wrongly called the patient in a certain vocabulary, resisted. Anyway you see what that (112) reduces analysis to. To something that analysis certainly is not and that no one had ever thought of making of it, namely, operation of ensnaring, of getting the rabbit out of his burrow; he resists. What resists is obviously not the subject in analysis. What resists is obviously the discourse, and very precisely in the

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measure of the choice that is at stake. If he renounces the position of "I do not think" as I have just told you, he is all the same drawn to the opposite pole which is that of the "I am not". Now, the "I am not" properly speaking cannot be articulated. It is certain that what is presented first in resistance, is that discourse is not able to go and be something. What?

One would like to ask the people who speak to us about the being of the person in order to make of it an objection to structure, to articulate what it is for them, what they call in this case Being. It is not easy to see very clearly where they place it. They speak for themselves. There is a certain way of placing the being of the person in the others which is a rather something of an operation of odd jobbing.

What this act with a rather exceptional structure - we are going to try to say how it is so - that the analytic act is, what it is a matter at least of putting forward, of suggesting, of pointing out, is how it can preside at a certain renewal of what all the same remains, and from all time, the orienting point of our compass, the way in which it can renew the function of the enlightened act. There can be some renewal in it. If I use the term enlightened, it is not without seeing in it an echo of the *Aufklärung*. But it is also to say that if our compass always seeks the same north, and here I endorse this north, it can be posed for us in terms structured a little differently.

At the two poles that I defined and articulated of the position of the psychoanalyst, in as much as I do not refuse him at all the right to resistance, it is hard to see why the psychoanalyst should be stripped of it, this psychoanalyst in so far as he establishes the psychoanalytic act, namely, gives his guarantee to the transference, namely, to the subject supposed to know. While his whole advantage, the only one that he has over the psychoanalysing subject, is to know from experience what is involved in the subject supposed to know. Namely, what he - and in as much as he is supposed to have traversed the psychoanalytic experience in a way of which the least that can be said without entering any further to doctrinal debates, is that it ought to be a way that we could say is (113) pushed a little further than that of treatments - he ought to know about what is involved in the subject supposed to know. Namely, that for him, and I explained to you the last time (cf schema), why it is that the subject supposed to know comes here. For him who knows what is involved in the psychoanalytic act, the outline, the vector, the operation of the psychoanalytic act ought to reduce this subject to the function of the little **o**-object. That is what in an analysis, the one that founded this analysis in an act, his own psychoanalyst has become.

He had become it precisely in as much as at the end he has become joined to what he was not at first, I mean in the subjectivity of the psychoanalysand, he was not at first, at the start, the subject supposed to know. He becomes it, at the end of the analysis, I would say by hypothesis. In analysis, one is there to know something. It is at the moment when he becomes it that also he is vested for the

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psychoanalysand with the function occupied in the dynamic by him, the psychoanalysand as subject, the little **o**-object.

This particular object that the little **o**-object is, I mean in this sense that it offers a certain diversity which moreover is not very broad, because we can make it quadruple with something empty in the centre, in so far as this little **o**-object is absolutely decisive for everything that is involved concerning the structure of the unconscious.

Allow me to return to my earlier questioning about those who are still there on the edge, hesitating about what is or is not acceptable in a theory sufficiently developed for there to be no longer a question of disputing its principles, but simply of knowing whether at one or other point its articulation is correct, or to be criticised. Is it not the case for any of those who are here, I would even say those, if there are such, who might be arriving for the first time, is not what settles - that does not mean of course that this could have been said so simply before - is not what settles purely and simply the question of the following: can analysis, yes or no, say - it seems difficult to me, in the way that I am going to say it, for people not to see what is at stake - yes or no, does analysis mean that in whatever you wish, a being as they say, or a becoming, or anything whatsoever, something which is of the living order, there should be, whatever there may be, events which have their consequences? Here we have the term consequence, which has all its emphasis.

(114) Is a consequence conceivable outside a signifying sequence? From the very fact that something which happened subsists in the unconscious in a way that one can rediscover it on condition of catching hold of a piece which allows a sequence to be reconstituted, is there a single thing that can happen to an animal that can be imagined as inscribed in this order? Is not everything that has been articulated in analysis, from the beginning, of the order of this biographical articulation in as much as it refers to something that can be articulated in signifying terms? That this dimension is impossible to remove from it, to expel from it from the moment that, as has been seen, it can no longer be reduced to any notion of plasticity or of reactivity or of biological stimulus-response which, in any case, will not be of the order of what is preserved in a sequence. Nothing of what can operate in terms of fixation, of transfixing, of interruption, indeed even of, of setting up, around a system, of what is only a system, and specifically the nervous one, is by itself alone capable of corresponding to this function of consequence. The structure, its stability, the maintaining of the line on which it is inscribed, implies another dimension, which is properly that of structure. This is a reminder and which does not come here at the point that I have got to, at the moment when then I interrupted myself to give this reminder.

Here we are then at this point $ which situates what is specifically involved in the psychoanalytic act, in so far as it is around it that there is suspended the resistance of the psychoanalyst. The resistance of the psychoanalyst in this structuring is manifested by the fact, which is altogether constitutive of the

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analytic relation - that he refuses to act. It is in effect quite original in the status of what is involved in the analytic function. Every psychoanalyst knows it, and finally this ends up by being known even by those who have not approached its field. The analyst is the one who is surrounded by a whole zone, who is called frequently by the patient, to make an intervention in terms of act. Not simply in as much as he may be called from time to time to take sides, to be on the patient's side, with regard to a close relation or anyone else. And even simply to perform the sort of act that is indeed one which consists in intervening by an approbation or the contrary, to give advice. This is very precisely what the structure of psychoanalysis leaves blank.

(115) It is very precisely for that reason that I put on the same diagonal - I am saying that to give an image, because of course what happens on that line (the diagonal) has no more right to be called diagonal than what happens on the others. It is enough to turn the tetrahedron, to make horizontal or vertical lines of it, but for reasons of imagination, it is more convenient to represent in this way. You must not be taken in by it. Even though there is nothing more diagonal in transference than in alienation, or in what I called the truth operation. If there are diagonals it is by reason of the schema. It is indeed because the act remains blank that it is also the one which in the other direction can be occupied by transference. Namely, in the course of what the psychoanalysand does by moving towards its horizon, the mirage, the point of arrival at which I already sufficiently defined the rendezvous in so far as it is defined by the subject supposed to know $. At the start, the psychoanalysand picks up his staff and puts on knapsack, to go to meet the subject supposed to know at the rendezvous.

This alone is what permits this careful prohibition that the analyst imposes on himself with respect to the act. In other words, if he did not impose it on himself, he would be quite simply a deceiver, because he knows in principle what is to become in analysis of the subject supposed to know. It is because analysis is, as we have more or less the original experience of it, this artefact, this something which only appears, perhaps, in history from a certain moment as an extremely limited type of episode, of extremely particular cases of a practice, which by chance opened up a completely different style of act relations between humans. This would not for all that be its privilege. I believe I gave you enough indications the last time of the fact that in the course of history the relation of the subject to the act has been modified. That it is not even what can still be found in manuals of morality or sociology that effectively give us an idea of what is effectively involved in act relations in our epoch. For example, it is obviously not only a matter of your having to remember Hegel, in the way the professors speak about him, for you to be able to measure the importance of what is involved in what he represents in terms of a sharp turn with respect to the act.

Now, I do not know what I ought to do at this turning point. To advise you to read something is always so dangerous because everything depends on the degree to which one has previously been more or less cleaned up. It seems (116) difficult to me not to have been sufficiently so, to be able to situate a book,

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to give a sense, a weight to what I have just stated. A little book appeared by someone whom I believe I saw at this seminar at one time, who sent it to me because of this, which is called the *Discours de la guerre* by André Glucksmann.

It is a book which perhaps can give you the dimension on a certain plane, in a certain field of what can arise from something which is rather exemplary and rather complete in as much as the relation of war is something about which everyone speaks without rhyme or reason. But as regards the influence of the discourse of war on war, an influence which is not nothing, as you will see from reading this book, namely, one which corresponds to a certain way of taking Hegel's discourse in so far as it is a discourse on war in which one sees clearly how many limits there are on the side of the technician, on the side of the soldier. And then alongside the discourse of the solider, here again one would be wrong to despise the soldier from the moment that he knows how to sustain a discourse. This rarely happens, but when it happens it is all the same very striking that it is rather more effective than the discourse of the psychoanalyst.

The discourse of Clausewitz in so far as it is connected with that of Hegel and contributes its counterpart to it, can give them some idea of what my discourse could contribute along this line about a relation, which would allow it to be believed, that in our epoch, there is a discourse acceptable outside the discourse of war. This perhaps might also account for a certain gap between Hegel and Clausewitz at the level of a discourse on war. Naturally, Clausewitz did not know the little **o**-object. But if by chance the little **o**-object has allowed us to see a little bit more clearly into something that Clausewitz introduced as the fundamental asymmetry between two parties in war, namely, the absolute heterogeneity there is. And this asymmetry is found to dominate the whole game between offensive and defensive, even though Clausewitz was not precisely someone to go on about the necessities of the offensive. This is only a simple indication.

I am filling in, in a way, hastily, a certain number of lacks in the foundation of what I am articulating in connection with what the psychoanalytic act allows us, in short, to establish or to restore about what constitutes the co-ordinates of the act, of what we are trying to open up the path of this year.

(117) You see then that there are several lacks. First of all something that ought to be taken for granted, namely, what in a logical structure establishes for our mapping out at the minimal level of something quite privileged, psychoanalysis, in so far as it constitutes the connection between an act and a doing. If we do not set up this logical structure, with the parts that are alive in the operation, and then those that are left for dead, we cannot find our bearings in the analytic operation. It is therefore something primordial and something that is not simply important for our practice itself but also to explain the paradoxes of what is produced in its surrounds. Namely, how it can lend itself and very especially on the part of those who are engaged in it, to a certain number of elective

miscognitions which correspond to the dead or suspended parts in the very operation that is at stake.

That gives already two aspects. The third which is no less thrilling, is this something to which, at the end of my discourse the last time, I gave a too facile, too tempting an indication to express rapidly something about which an echo came back to me. One that I cannot subscribe to and which is quite amusing having come from one of these numerous voices that I have at my disposal. It is someone, I no longer remember whom. I no longer know who repeated it to me. He said to me today, decidedly, this is a Che Guevara seminar. All that because in connection with the subject supposed to know, the $ barred on the bottom left, I had said that what is perhaps - at least this model poses the question for us - the end, the finish, the tipping over, the somersault, which is the normal end in itself of what is involved in the act, in so far as if there is something this psychoanalysis reveals to us, and this from the start, it is that it is not an act of which anyone can say that he is entirely master. It is not something to tear us away from all our certainties, from everything that we have picked up fundamentally from our experience, from what we know about history and a thousand other things again. Every act and not simply the psychoanalytic act promises to the one who takes its initiative only this end which I designate in the little **o**-object. And it is not something to make eardrums burst out of their orbits. It is hardly worthwhile because of that to believe that this is a Che Guevara seminar. There have been others before. I am not in the process of polishing up the tragic in order to make it shine. What is at stake is perhaps something else.

(118) What is at stake is something which is obviously more within our reach, if we bring it back to what we must know about the logical structure of the act to truly conceive of what is happening in the limited field of psychoanalysis.

It is here that questions can be formulated among those who belong to my School who one are presumed to be able to put what I am stating in its place, all along a construction, the necessity of whose different stages they have been able to follow. Let them bring me through the intermediary of Doctor Melman, and this no later than next Wednesday, something like a testimony. A testimony that they are capable of pushing a little bit further the turning points, the living things, the hinges, the doors, the way of using this apparatus in so far as it concerns them.

I mean that what I am expecting from the meeting, from which, I apologise, the majority of those who are here will find themselves excluded in advance, is a certain number of questions which prove to me that, at least up to the point that I have gone this year concerning what is involved in the act, people can question themselves about something, propose an interpretation and to this interpretation an objection. "If you interpret things in this way this is what it means" or "it is in contradiction with one or other point of our experience". In short, to show that up to a certain point I am being understood. This is what will serve then for

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the following closed seminar (28/2), in as much as the only people who will be invited, are those of my School who have taken part in this first meeting. It is an act to go out of one's way. It is especially an act not to go out of one's way. It happens, for example, that I can ask someone why a particular analyst, who is very aware to what I am teaching, and I ask, why he is not here, precisely this year, at what I am stating about the act. You will say that people take notes. In passing, I would like to point out that it is better to take notes than to smoke. Smoking is not such a good sign as regards listening to what I am saying. I do not disapprove of smoking ...

It seems to me that since I made an allusion to the fact that what seems to me to motivate this audience which honours me by its presence, is the aspect of opening up of what is happening before you. And I do not even find that on the part of analysts, not to be present here at the moment that I am speaking about the act - namely, that it is not just any discourse whatsoever - even if they are given faithful and well informed notes, there is something rather telling, significant, and which may well lie where I inscribed the term, resistance.

(119) I intended to ask one or two or three people to put one or two questions to me, to give a model for entering the closed seminar. It would not be a bad thing. I also know the freezing effect that results from this large number. I propose, nevertheless, that it should be established that apart from a few exceptions, that for the regulation of the seminar of those admitted on the 28/2, it is those who will have sent me a written question which seems to me to be on the right lines about what I am trying to bring you who will receive the little invitation card for the 28/2.

It only remains for me to pinpoint something here and there to advance us a little, even if today it is not of the *ex cathedra* order that I habitually adopt, alas. It must all the same be noted that this gap, which still remains between the act and the doing, is what is at stake. This is the burning point around which people have been racking their brains for a certain very limited number of centuries, from the few great, great-grandfathers that are necessary to be right away at the epoch of Caesar. You have no idea of the degree to which you are implicated in things that only history manuals make you think belong to the past.

If people rack their brains - look at Hegel - about the difference between the master and the slave, you can give to this as elastic a sense as you wish, if you look carefully at it, it involves nothing other than the difference between the act and the doing, to which we are trying to give a different body, a little bit less simple than the subject who poses the act. It is not at all necessarily and uniquely - this is what is disturbing - the subject who commands. Pierre Janet constructed a whole psychology around that. That does not mean that he was badly oriented, on the contrary, simply his analyses are rather rudimentary. They do not allow very much to be understood. Because outside the fact of what is represented on Egyptian bas-reliefs, namely, a pilot, moreover, that there is a conductor at Pleyel or elsewhere, that there are those who have - this does not

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explain very much, because where there is truly a master, that does not mean so much those who have a cushy time as people think - there are those who have to deal with the act and those who have to deal with the doing. So there is doing and doing. This is where one can begin to understand how this doing, despite its futile character, I am speaking about psychoanalysis, has perhaps a greater chance than any other of allowing us access to enjoyment.

(120) Look carefully at this doing in a feature that I would like to underline. There is no need to say that it is a doing of pure speech. It is something that I have killed myself recalling for years in order to try to see its function in the field of speech and of language. What is not noticed, is that, because it is a doing of pure speech, that it gets close to being an act as compared to common doing and that one could moreover express it by the signifier in act. If we look at things very closely, namely, what is truly the sense of the fundamental rule, it is precisely, that up to a point that is as advanced as possible, these are the instructions: that the subject should absent himself from it.

The task, the doing of the subject is to leave this signifier to its operation. The "in act" is a device, but it is not the act of the signifier. The signifier in act has this connotation, this evocation of the signifier that one could call in a certain register, in potency. But to know what our doctor earlier would like there to be recalled among those who put the stress on structure, there are so many there ready to rabbit on about the person. Being is so superabundant that for us to try to catch ourselves in its precise rails, in this logic which is not a logic at all, about which one cannot in any way and by any right put the sign of emptiness. It is not so easy to construct this logic, you see here what it results from. Let us say, that for an analyst to bring up terms like that of the person is something excessive, at least to my ears. But if he wants to reassure himself, let him observe that I would define this logic a little bit like one that would remain as close as possible to grammar. That startles you, I hope. So then, Aristotle, quite calmly, huh? Why not?

We must quite simply try to do better. I point out to you that if this logic of Aristotle has remained un-punctured for long centuries up to our own, it is because of the objections that were made to it of being, as they said, a logic which did not notice that it was doing grammar. I admire enormously professors in the university who know that Aristotle did not notice something. He is the greatest naturalist who ever existed. You can still reread his *History of animals*. It still holds up. It is fabulous. It is the greatest step ever taken in biology. Not that some have not been taken since. In logic also, steps taken precisely starting from grammar. It is still something that we can rack our brains about even after (121) having added to it some very astute things, quantifiers for example. They have only one inconvenience, which is that they are quite untranslatable into language. I am not saying that this does not bring up to date the question on which I took a kind of dogmatic stand, a label, a banner, a slogan: there is no meta-language. You can well imagine that it worries me also if perhaps there is

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one. In any case, let us start from the idea that there is not. This would not be a bad thing. It would avoid us believing wrongly that there is one.

It is not sure that something that cannot be translated into language does not suffer from a quite effective deficiency. In any case, following my remarks, bringing us to the question of quantifiers, it is obviously going to be a matter of posing certain questions, which are going to concern what is involved, what is going to happen in the corner of the $ of the subject supposed to know which has been removed from the map. What we will have to lucubrate about the availability of the signifier in this place, will perhaps leads us to this joint of grammar and logic. This is - I am only remarking it in this connection and to recall it to mind - very precisely the point by which we have always navigated, this logic that my entourage of the time called, with tentative sympathy, an elastic logic. I am not in complete agreement about this term. Elasticity is not the best thing that one could hope for as a standard of measurement.

The joint between logic and grammar, is also something perhaps which will make us take some further steps. In any case, what I would like to say in ending, is that I cannot summon psychoanalysts too much to meditate on the specialness of the position which happens to be theirs, of having to occupy a corner completely different to the one where they are required, even if they are forbidden to act. It is all the same from the point of view of act that they have to centre their meditation on their function.

But it is not for nothing that it is so difficult to get it. There is in the position of the psychoanalyst, and by function, if this schema renders it sufficiently tangible for no offence to be seen in it, something like taking cover (*de tapi*). We will try to decipher somewhere "an image in the carpet", or in the ..., as you wish. There is a certain way for the psychoanalyst to centre himself, to savour something that ends up in this position of taking cover. They call that what they (122) can, they call it listening, they call it the clinic. You cannot imagine all the opaque words that are found on this occasion. For I ask myself what can in any way, what can allow the accent to be put on what is quite specific about this flavour of an experience. It is certainly not accessible to any logical manipulation. In the name of this, I do not dare to say solitary enjoyment, morose delectation, in the name of this to allow oneself to say that all theories are of equal value. That above all you must not be attached to any one of them, whether one expresses things in terms of instinct, of behaviour, of genesis, of Lacanian topology. All of that, we should find ourselves equidistant from this sort of discussion. All of this fundamentally is a hypocondriacal enjoyment. This centred aspect, peristaltic and anti-peristaltic at the same time is something intestinal to psychoanalytic experience. It is indeed this that effectively you are going to see imaged, which displays itself on a rostrum, it is not necessarily the easiest point to win through the effect of a dialectic. This is the essential point around which there is played out, alas, what Clauswitz describes as asymmetrical between offensive and defensive.

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Seminar 8: Wednesday 31 January 1968

Jacques Lacan did not attend this "seminar".

Among those who participated in the discussion were: C Melman, G Michaud, J Oury, P Lemoine, F Tosquelles, J Rudrauf, X Audouard, I Roublef, E LemoineT Abdoucheli, C Conté, J Ayme, M Noyes, L Mélèse, C Dorgeuille, F Guattari, J Nassif and others.

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Seminar 9: Wednesday 7 February 1968

I am taking up again then after a fortnight the continuation of what I am advancing before you this year about the psychoanalytic act. It is parallel to a certain number of propositions, to employ the proper term, that I proposed in a circle composed of psychoanalysts.

The responses to these propositions, which moreover are not limited to those entitled such, are followed by a certain number of other productions. There is going to appear at the end of this month a journal which will be the journal of the School. All of this has as a result a certain number of responses or manifestations, which are certainly not in any case without interest for those to whom I am addressing myself here. It is clear that some of these responses, of these reactions, made to the most lively point where my propositions are rather consequent with what I am producing before you on the psychoanalytic act, are assuredly full of sense to define through a test that can be described as crucial, what is involved in the status of the psychoanalyst.

In effect the last time, I left you with the indication of a logical reference. It is quite certain that at the point that we are at, where the act defines by its cutting edge what is involved in the passage in which the psychoanalyst is instaured or established, it is quite clear that we cannot but pass again by way of the kind of testing that logical questioning constitutes for us.

Will it be, to take the inaugural reference of Aristotle, at the moment when, as I evoked, he takes the decisive steps from which there is instaured, as such, the (146) logical category in its formal species? Is it a matter of an approach with an demonstrative or dialectical intention? The question, as you are going to see, is secondary.

Why is it secondary? Because what is at stake is instaured from the discourse itself. namely, that everything that we can formulate about the psychoanalysand and the psychoanalyst, is going to turn - I think I am not going to surprise you in stating it as I am going to - I prepared it sufficiently for the thing to appear to you now as already said - is going to turn around the following: how contest the fact that the psychoanalysand, in his place in the discourse is at the place of the subject? Whatever reference we arm ourselves with to better situate him, it is

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naturally in the first place with the linguistic reference. He is essentially the one who speaks.

He is the one who speaks and on whom there are tested the effects of the word. What is meant by this "on whom are tested" ("*sur qui s'éprouvent*")? The formula is deliberately ambiguous. I mean that his discourse as it is regulated, set up, by the analytic rule, is designed to be the test of the way in which, as subject, he is already constituted as effect of the word. And nevertheless, it is also true to say that this discourse itself, as it is going to be pursued, be sustained as task, finds its sanction, its evaluation, its result *qua* discourse-effect, above all from this proper discourse itself, whatever may be the way the analyst inserts himself into it by his interpretation.

Inversely, we should notice that if the always current, indeed sometimes burning question is brought to bear on the psychoanalyst, let us say, to be prudent, to say the minimum, that it is in so far as the term "psychoanalyst" is given as a qualification. Who, what, can be said to be - predicate - "psychoanalyst"?

Assuredly, if even this way of getting into the question appears to be going too quickly, it is by a twist that it will be justified if this is the way that, to go to the kernel, I am announcing under what escutcheon, under what rubric I intend to place my discourse today. You can trust me, it is not without having, in this connection, renewed contact, as I might say, with what is enlightening in the very history of logic, in the way in which, in our time, the handling of what is designated by this term logic see-saws in such a way, a way which truly makes, as I might say, not always more difficult, but makes us more and more confused before Aristotle's starting point.

(147) You have to consult his text, and specifically the *Organon*, at the level of the categories for example, or the *Prior Analytics*, or the first book of the *Topics*, to notice how close to our problematic is the thematic of the subject, as he states it. For assuredly, from the first statement, nothing is already more tangible to enlighten us about what, in this subject, is of its nature something that slips away *par excellence*. Nothing that at the start of the logic is more firmly affirmed as being distinguished from what has been translated, very insufficiently undoubtedly as "substance", *ousia*. What is at stake in translating it by substance is clearly seen, in the course of time, to be an excessive slippage in the function of the subject in its first Aristotelian steps, for the term "substance", which constitutes here an equivocation with what the subject includes in terms of supposition, for the term "substance" to have been so easily put forward.

There is nothing in the *ousia* in what is – namely, for Aristotle - the individual, of a nature to be able to be or situated in the subject, nor affirmed, namely, nor attributed to the subject.

But what else is more likely to make us immediately jump with both feet into the formula in which I believed I could, in all rigour, bear witness to this truly key,

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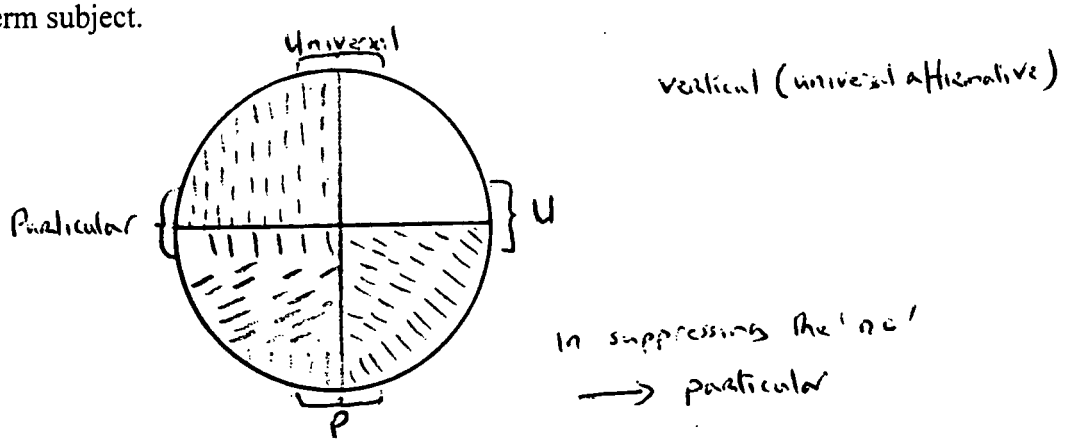
truly central point of the history of logic. The one which by being dulled by a growing ambiguity, the subject rediscovers on his path as in modern logic, this other aspect of a sort of turning point which makes its perspective tip over, as one might say, the one which, in mathematical logic, tends to reduce it to the variable of a function. Namely, something which is going to enter subsequently into the whole dialectic of the quantifier, which has no other effect than to make it henceforth irremediable in the way in which it is manifested in the proposition. The term "turning point" seems to me well enough fixed in the formula that I thought I should give of it, in saying that the subject is very precisely what a signifier represents for another signifier.

This formula has the advantage of re-opening what is eluded in the position of mathematical logic. Namely, the question of what is initial, initiating, in positing any signifier whatsoever, by introducing it as representing the subject. For this is, and this is since Aristotle, what is essential about it and what alone allows there to be situated in its correct place the difference between this first bipartition, the one which differentiates the universal from the particular, and the second bipartition, the one which affirms or which denies. One and the other as you know cross over (148) one another to give the quadripartition of the universal affirmative, the universal negative, and of the particular negative and affirmative, by turns.

The two bipartitions have absolutely no equivalence. What is meant by the introduction of the subject, in so far as it is at its level that there is situated the bipartition of the universal and the particular? What can that mean, to take things as did someone who found himself, as happened to Peirce, Charles Sanders, at this historic point, at this level of the joining of traditional logic to mathematical logic? Which means that in a way, we find from his pen this moment of oscillation in which there is outlined the turning point that opens up a new path. No one more than he - and I already produced his testimony when I had to speak in 1960 about the term identification - has better underlined, or with more elegance, what is the essence of this foundation from which there emerges the distinction between the universal and the particular and the link of the universal to the term subject.



He did it by means of a little exemplary drawing that those who have already followed me for some time know well, but that moreover it is not without interest to repeat, to designate here. The fact is that it gives the facility of giving as a

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support to the subject what is really involved in it, namely, nothing. In this case a stroke (*trait*).

None of these strokes that we are going to take in order to exemplify what is involved in the function of the subject for the predicate, there is none of these (149) strokes as we are going to inscribe them which is not already specified by the predicate around which we are going to make the statement of our proposition turn, namely, the "vertical" predicate.

1) In the first box, on the top left, the strokes correspond to the predicate, they are vertical strokes.
2) And then there are others in this bottom left box, some of which are not so.
3) Here on the bottom right none is.
4) Here, as you see, there are no strokes. This is where the subject is.

This is where the subject is, because there are no strokes. Everywhere else, the strokes are masked by the presence or absence of the predicate. But to make you grasp clearly why it is the "no stroke (*pas de trait*)" that is essential, there are several methods, even if it were only by instauring the statement of the universal affirmative, for example, as follows. There is no stroke that is not vertical.

You will see that it is making the "no" function on the "vertical" or by removing it that will allow you to make the affirmative or negative bipartition, and that it is by suppressing the "no" before the stroke, and that it is by leaving, the stroke that is or not vertical, that you enter the particular. Namely, at the moment when the subject is entirely subjected to the variation of vertical or not vertical. There are some that are, and others that are not. But the status of universality is only instaured here for example by the union of two boxes. Namely, the one which has only vertical strokes, but the one moreover where there are no strokes. For the statement of the universal, which says that all the strokes are vertical, is only substantiated, legitimately, from these two boxes and their union.

It is also true, it is more essentially true, at the level of the empty box. There are no strokes except vertical ones means that where there are no verticals, there is no stroke. Such is the acceptable definition of the subject in so far as beneath every predicative stating, it is essentially this something that is only represented by a signifier for another signifier.

I will only mention quickly, for we are not going to spend our whole talk dwelling on what we can draw from Peirce's schema. It is clear that it is similar from the union of these two boxes (the right hand bracket) that the statement: no stroke is vertical takes its support, why? This indeed is why it is necessary for me (150) to accentuate how it is demonstrated - what is already known if one reads Aristotle's text in an appropriate way - that the universal affirmative and the universal negative in no way contradict one another, that they are both acceptable on condition that we are in this top right hand box. It is also true at the level of this box to state that all the strokes are vertical, or that no stroke is vertical, the two

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things are true at the same time, something that curiously Aristotle, if my knowledge is correct, failed to recognise.

At the other points of the crucial division you have the instauration of particulars. There are in these two boxes (those on the left) vertical strokes, and, at the junction of the two lower boxes, there are only, and nothing more, strokes which are not so.

You see then that at the level of the universal foundation, things are situated in a way that involves an exclusion, that of this diversity, the one in the box on the bottom left. Likewise at the level of the particular differentiation, there is an exclusion: that of the box on the top right.

This is what gives the illusion that the particular is an affirmation of existence. That it is enough to speak at the level of "some", some man, for example, of yellow colour, to imply that from this fact that is stated in the form of a particular, there is supposed to be from this fact, if I may express myself thus, from the fact of this stating, the affirmation also of the existence of the particular. This indeed is something around which innumerable debates have turned on the subject of the logical status of the particular proposition. And this is assuredly what makes it derisory, for it is not enough for a proposition to be stated at the level of the particular, to imply in any way the existence of the subject, except in the name of a signifying arrangement, namely, as effect of discourse.

The interest of psychoanalysis is that it ties together, as has never been able to be done up to the present, these problems of logic, by contributing to them what, in short, was at the source of all the ambiguities that developed in the history of logic, by implying in the subject an *ousia,* a being. That the subject can function as not being (*comme n'étant pas*), is properly - I have articulated it, I have insisted on it from the beginning of this year - what can bring us the enlightening opening thanks to which there can be re-opened an examination of the development of logic. The task is still open - and who knows, perhaps by stating it here, I will (151) provoke a vocation - of showing us what is truly meant by so many detours, so much embarrassment, sometimes so curious, so paradoxical, manifested in the course of history. These are what have marked logical debates throughout the ages and render so incomprehensible, seen from a certain age, at least from ours, the time they sometimes took, and which appear to us for a long time to have constituted stagnations, even passions around the stagnations, whose import we can hardly sense as long as we do not see what was truly at stake behind them. Namely, nothing less that the status of desire whose link, because it is secret, with politics, for example, is altogether tangible at the turning point which constituted the instauration in one philosophy, English philosophy specifically, of a certain nominalism. It is impossible to comprehend the consistency of this logic with politics, without noting what the logic itself implies about the status of the subject and about the reference to the effectiveness of desire in political relations.

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For us, for whom this status of the subject is illustrated by questions - and I marked again that all of this happens in a very limited, indeed very short *milieu*, marked by discussions about its pregnance - whose burning character, participates I would say in these ancient underpinnings, which is why, in this case, we take as example, what we are able to articulate. This is why it cannot but have an incidence on a much larger domain in as much as it is assuredly not just in the practice which turns around the function of desire in so far as analysis discovers it, it is not simply here that the question of it is played out.

Here then are the psychoanalysand and the psychoanalyst placed by us in these distinct positions which are, respectively, what is going to be the status of a subject defined by this discourse, by this discourse that, I told you the last time, is established by the rule, especially because of the fact that the subject is asked to abdicate from it. This is the aim of the rule, and by committing himself, at the limit, to the drift of language, he is going to attempt by a sort of immediate experience of its pure effect, to connect up with its already established effects.

Such a subject, a subject defined as effect of discourse, to the point that he undertakes the trial of losing himself in it in order to find himself, such a subject whose exercise is in a way to put himself to the test of his own resignation, when can we say to what is a predicate applied? In other words, could we state (152) something that falls under rubric of the universal? If the universal did not already show in its structure that it finds its source, its foundation in the subject in so far as he can only be represented by his absence, namely, in so far as he is never represented? We would assuredly have the right to pose the question if anything whatsoever could be stated of the order, for example, of "every psychoanalysand resists".

I am however not going to decide yet whether any universal whatsoever can be posited about the psychoanalysand. We will not set it aside, despite the appearance, that in positing the psychoanalysand as this subject who chooses to make himself, as one might say, more alienated than any other, to dedicate himself to the fact that only the detours of an unchosen discourse, namely, this something which is most opposed to what is here - in the schema - at the start. Namely, that it is of course by a choice, but a choice that is masked, eluded, because made earlier. We have chosen to represent the subject by the stroke, by this stroke that is no longer seen because it is henceforth qualified. There is nothing more opposed, in appearance, to how the psychoanalysand constitutes himself, which is all the same by a certain choice, this choice that I earlier called abdication, the choice of testing oneself against the effects of language. It is indeed here that we are going to find our bearings.

In effect, if we follow the thread, the web that the use of the syllogism suggests to us, what of course we ought to arrive at, is something that is going to connect this subject to what is here advanced as a predicate, the psychoanalyst - if a psychoanalyst exists. And, alas, this is what we lack to support this logical

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articulation. If one psychoanalyst exists, everything is assured. There can be a crowd of others.

But for the moment, the question for us is to know how the psychoanalysand can become a psychoanalyst. How does it happen that, in the most well grounded way, this qualification is only supported by the task completed by the psychoanalysand. Here indeed we see there being opened up this other dimension, which is one that I already tried to profile before you, about the conjunction of the act and the task. How do the two connect up? We find ourselves here before another form of what created a problem and ended up by being articulated in the Middle Ages. It is not there for nothing this *inventio medi,* from which there starts with this admirably lively step the *Prior Analytics* (153) of Aristotle. Namely, the first figure of the middle term, of this middle term about which he explains to us that by being situated as a predicate, it will allow us to connect in a rational fashion this vanishing subject to something which is a predicate. Through the middle term, this connection is possible. Where is the mystery? How does it happen that it appears that something exists which is a middle term and which appears in the first figure as predicate of the major where the subject awaits us, as subject of the minor which is going to allow us to lay hold again of the predicate in question. Is it yes or no, attributable to the subject?

This thing which, with the passage of time, passed through different colours, which appeared, at the turn of the 16th century, when all is said and done - there is no doubt that one sees it from the pen of the authors – to be a purely futile exercise. We will give it body again by noticing what is at stake.

What is at stake is what I called the **o**-object which is for us here the true middle term that is proposed, assuredly, as a plus one, of a more incomparable seriousness by being the effect of the discourse of the psychoanalysand. And by being on the other hand, as I have stated it, in the new graph that you see me using here for the last two years, not what the psychoanalyst becomes, what is implied at the start by the whole operation, what ought to be the outcome of the psychoanalysing operation, what liberates in it something of a fundamental truth. The end of psychoanalysis, namely, the subject being unequal to any possible subjectification of sexual reality and the requirement that, in order that this truth should appear, the psychoanalyst should already be the representation of what masks, obtrudes, stoppers this truth and which is called the **o**-object.

Note well, in effect, that I will return at length to the essential of what I am articulating here, the essential is not that at the end of the psychoanalysis, as some people imagine - I saw it from the questions posed - the psychoanalyst becomes the **o**-object for the other. This "for the other" here curiously takes on the value of a "for oneself", in as much as, as subject there is none other than this Other to whom the whole discourse is left. It is neither for the Other, nor in a for oneself which does not exist at the level of the psychoanalyst, that there resides this **o**. It is indeed an in itself (*en soi*), an in itself of the psychoanalyst. It is in as much as,

as the psychoanalysts themselves protest moreover - it is enough to open the (154) literature on it to see the testimony of it at every moment - they are really this breast of the "oh, my mother Intelligence", of our Mallarmé; that they are themselves this waste product, presiding over the operation of the task, that they are the look, that they are the voice. It is in so far as they are in themselves the support of this o-object that the whole operation is possible. There is only one thing that escapes them, which is the degree to which it is not metaphorical.

Now let us try to take up again what the psychoanalysand is, this psychoanalysand, who is engaged in this curious task that I described as being supported by his abdication. Are we not going to sense here that, in any case, there is something enlightening in whether he can or cannot be taken, we do not know, under the function of the universal? There is perhaps another thing that is going to strike us. It is that we have posited him as subject not without intention. That means that the sense of what this word, psychoanalysand, means when we articulate it at the level of the subject, in so far as he is the one who plays with all these colours taken, like those of a murena on the plate of a rich Roman, cannot be put to use except by changing its sense as an attribute. The proof is that when one uses it as an attribute, one uses the term psychoanalysed, as foolishly as possible. But one does not say that these or those or all of these or all of those are psychoanalysands. I did not use, as you notice, the singular term. This would be still more outrageous. But let us leave the singular to one side, experiencing at this turning point the same repugnance that ensures that Aristotle does not use singular terms in his syllogistics.

If you do not sense right away what I am aiming at in connection with this tangible testing of the use of the term psychoanalysand, as subject or as attribute, I am going to make you sense it.

Use the word worker, as it is situated in the perspective of: "workers of the world unite", namely, at the level of the ideology which picks out and emphasises their essential alienation, the constitutive exploitation which considers them as workers. Oppose this to the use of the same term in the paternalistic expression, the one that would describe a population as hardworking (*travailleuse*). These people are workers by nature, they are (attribute) "good workers". This example, this distinction is one which perhaps is going to introduce you to something which will perhaps make you pose the question after all, of why, in this so curious (155) operation which is the one by which, as I told you, the subject of the psychoanalytic act is supported, how, on the principle of the fact that the act by which psychoanalysis is established, starts elsewhere? Is this not designed to make us grasp that there is here also, a kind of alienation. And after all, you are not surprised at it since it was already present in my first schema, that it is from a necessary alienation, the one in which it is impossible to choose between the "either I do not think" and the "or I am not", that I derived the whole first formulation of what is involved in the psychoanalytic act.

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But then, perhaps like that, in a sidelong way, it is a way that I have, like that, a heuristic one, of introducing you, you might ask yourselves - I put the question because the answer is already there of course - what does this psychoanalysing task produce?

To guide us we already have the **o**-object. For if at the end of a terminated psychoanalysis, this **o**-object, which is no doubt always there, at the level of our question, namely, the psychoanalytic act, it is all the same only at the end of the operation, that it is going to reappear in the real, from another source. Namely, as rejected by the psychoanalysand.

But this is where our middle term functions, that we find it weighted with a completely different accent. This **o** that is at stake, as we have said, is the psychoanalyst. It is not because it is there from the start, that at the end, from the point of view of the psychoanalysing task this time, it is not what is produced. I mean that one can ask oneself the question of what description can we give of the psychoanalyst. One thing in any case is certain, there is no psychoanalyst without a psychoanalysand. And I would say more, that this thing which is so curious for having entered into the field of our world, namely, that there are a certain number of people of whom we are not so sure that this has the power to establish their status as subject. There are, all the same, people who work at this psychoanalysis. The term work has never been excluded from it for a single instant, from the origin of psychoanalysis. *Durcharbeitung*, *working through*, is indeed the characteristic to which we must indeed refer ourselves in order to admit the aridity, the dryness, the detours, even sometimes the uncertainty of this area.

But if we put ourselves at the level of an omnitude where all the subjects frankly affirm themselves then, in their universality, as no longer being, and as being (the (156) box on the right) the foundation of the universal. What we see is that, assuredly, there is something that is going to depend on it, which is the product and even properly speaking the production.

Here already I can pinpoint what is the nature of these "people", of this species: the psychoanalyst, by defining him as production. If there were no psychoanalysand, I would say, like in some classic humour or other that I am reversing: if there were no Poles there would be no Poland. It can also be said: if there were no psychoanalysands, there would be no psychoanalyst. The psychoanalyst is defined at this level of production. He is defined as being this sort of subject who can approach the consequences of discourse, in a fashion so pure that he can isolate its plane in these relations with the one for whom, by his act, he sets up the task and the programme of this task. And through all the sustaining of this task, only sees in it relations which are properly those that I designate when I handle this algebra: the $, the **o**, indeed the O and the i(o). The one who is capable of maintaining himself at this level, namely, of only seeing the point at which the subject is at this task, whose end is, when there falls, when there drops, at the final term the **o**-object. The one who is of such a kind, which means the one who is capable, in relation to someone who is here in the position

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of treatment, of not letting himself be affected by everything involved in that by which every human being communicates in every function with his fellow.

And this has a name, which is not simply the one that I have always denounced, namely, narcissism, up to its extreme term, which is called love. There is not only narcissism, nor luckily only love between human beings, as it is called. There is something that someone who knew how to speak about love happily distinguished. There is taste, there is esteem. Taste is one aspect, esteem is perhaps not the same, but they connect up admirably. There is fundamentally this something which is called "I like you, *Tu me plais*", and which is made up essentially of this titration, of what ensures that in an exact and irreplaceable proportion, of what you can put in the bottom left hand box, the relation, the support the subject takes from the **o** and from this i(o) which grounds the narcissistic relation, resonates, is for you exactly what is necessary for you to like him. This is what ensures that in relations between human beings there is an encounter. It is very precisely from this, which is the flesh and blood of everything that has ever been articulated in the order of what in our day people try to mathematicise in a farcical way under the name of human relations. It is from (157) this that the analyst precisely distinguishes himself, by never having recourse in the relation within analysis, to this unexpressible, to this term which gives its only support to the reality of the other which is the "I like you" or "I do not like you".

The extraction, the absence of this dimension means that there is a being, the being of the psychoanalyst who can make everything that is at stake in the fate of the psychoanalysing subject turn, by being himself in the position of the **o.** Namely, in truth, to make his relation to him turn purely and simply around these terms of an algebra which are in no way concerned with a crowd of existing and more than acceptable dimensions. A pile of givens, of substantial elements in what is in operation, in place and breathing there on the couch. Here is a production that is altogether comparable to that of one or other machine which circulates in our scientific world and which is, properly speaking, the production of the psychoanalysand.

Here is something original. Here all the same is something that is rather tangible, which is not all that new, even though it is articulated in a way that may appear striking to you. Because what does it mean if one asks the psychoanalyst not to bring into play in analysis what is called counter-transference? I would defy anyone to give it another sense than the following. That there is no place either for "I like you", or "I do not like you", after having defined them as I have just done. But then we find ourselves up against the question of what is involved, after having transformed the **o**-object for you at this point into an assembly line production, if the psychoanalyst produces the **o** like an Austin. What can the psychoanalytic act mean, if in effect the psychoanalytic act is, all the same, committed by the psychoanalyst?

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This of course means that the psychoanalyst is not entirely **o**-object. He operates as **o**-object. But I think I have already articulated the act in question strongly enough up to the present to be able, to take it up again without commentary, the act which consists in authorising the psychoanalysing task, with what this involves in terms of having faith in the subject supposed to know. The thing was quite simple as long as I had not announced that this faith is unsustainable. And that the psychoanalyst is the first, and up to now the only one, to be able to measure it. It has not yet been done. Thanks to what I am teaching it is necessary for him to know that:

1 - The subject supposed to know is precisely what the transference considered as a gift from heaven, depended on.

2 - But that also from the moment that it proves that transference is the subject supposed to know, he the psychoanalyst, is the only one able to put in question the following. The fact is that if this supposition is in effect quite useful in order to engage in the psychoanalytic task, namely, there is a – call it what you wish the omniscient, the Other - there is someone who already knows all of that, everything that is going to happen. Naturally not the analyst. But there is someone. The analyst, for his part, does not know that there is a subject supposed to know and even knows that everything involved in psychoanalysis, because of the existence of the unconscious, consists precisely eliminating from the map this function of subject supposed to know.

It is then a curious act of faith that is affirmed by putting one's faith in what is put in question, since by simply engaging the psychoanalysand in the task one prefers this act of faith, namely, one saves him.

Do you not see here something that overlaps in a curious way a certain quarrel? One of these things that have now lost their relief a little, to the point that now no one gives a damn about them. At Luther's last centenary it appears that there was a postcard from the Pope: "Best wishes from Rome". Is it faith or works that save? You see perhaps there a schema where the two things are connected. Between psychoanalysing work and psychoanalytic faith, there is some tie-up, which may perhaps allows there to be clarified retrospectively the validity and the asymmetrical order in which there these two formulae of salvation by the one or by the other were posited.

But it will no doubt seem more interesting for us - at least I hope so - to see there being highlighted at the end of this discourse something that I must say, for myself, it is a surprise to find.

If it is true that in the field of the psychoanalytic act what produces the psychoanalysand is the psychoanalyst, and if you reflect on this little reference that I took in passing about the essence of the universal consciousness of the worker, properly speaking, *qua* subject of exploitation of man by man, does not focusing the whole attention about economic exploitation on the alienation of the

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product of work not mask something in the constitutive alienation of the economic exploitation of man? Is this not to mask an aspect, and perhaps not without motivation, the cruellest aspect of it which perhaps a certain number of political facts make likely? Why would we not ask ourselves the question of (159) whether it does not appear at a certain degree of the organisation of production, precisely, that the product of the worker, under a certain aspect, is precisely the singular form, the figure that capitalism takes on in our day. I mean that by following this thread, and in then seeing the function of capitalist faith, take some little references in what I am indicating about the subject of the psychoanalytic act. And keep that in the margin, in your head, for the remarks with which I am going to pursue my discourse.

I am going to continue then in a fortnight in virtue of the very vacation that is given to the little brats in secondary school. I am giving it to myself and I am giving you an appointment in a fortnight's time.

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Seminar 10: Wednesday 21 February 1968

(161) One of these days a little journal is going to appear that I am not responsible for presenting to you. You will find it out there, at St. Germain des Prés, in a few days. You will see in it a certain number of features which will be particular to it in the first rank of which, the fact that apart from my own, for reasons that I shall explain, the articles in it are not signed. This fact astonished people and created a certain fuss, naturally, principally where it ought to have been grasped almost immediately. I mean among those who, up to now were the only ones to have been informed that this was the way the articles would appear. I mean not simply psychoanalysts, but, better still, people who are members of my School, who, because of that ought to have their ears a little alerted to what is said here. In any case, I hope that after what comes in the order of what I am teaching you, namely,, what I am going to say today, the explanation, the source of this admitted principle that the articles in it will not be signed will, perhaps, appear clearly. Since it seems that few people are capable of taking this little step forward, even though it is already indicated by the earlier approach.

The piquant thing is still that in the news report, it was specified that the fact that these articles were not signed did not mean that one would not know the authors. Because it was said that the aforesaid authors would appear in the form of a list at the end of each year. The term of unsigned article was immediately picked up, amplified by ears, anyway ... ears that are like seashells, from which there emerge singularly ridiculous things about what the function of anonymity is. I will spare you all the things that have been said in this connection. Because if I (162) communicated with some people about this, uniquely for instructional purposes, namely,, how one thing can be transformed into another. There is no worst deafness than when one does not wish to hear the first time. Others have gone further and in copious personal correspondence have pointed out to me the degree to which the visage of anonymity represented a way of using one's collaborators like employees. This is done, it appears, in certain journals that are perhaps not more badly placed because of that, in any case from the outside. This is how people allow themselves to describe the fact that in journals of critics in which it is not usual for the critic to put his name, they are only, it appears, employees of the management. In that case who knows how far the notion of employee can be taken! Anyway, I heard everything that can be heard, as I do every time that I have to get a response to an innovation.

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An innovation of something important that is beginning to come to the fore today following the psychoanalytic act. Namely,, what results from that act as a position of the subject described as a psychoanalyst, precisely in so far as this predicate is to be affected to him. Namely,, his consecration as psychoanalyst. This, if the consequences of it that we see, as in the case I have just quoted for you, this would take the form of a sort of, of a sort of very obvious stunting of the faculty of comprehension. If this is demonstrated as being, in a way, included in the premises, as the consequence of what results from the inscription of the act, in what I called the consecration in a predicative form, it would greatly relieve us as regards the comprehension of this singular effect that I called stunting, without pushing any further what one can say about it at the level of the people involved. On occasion the term puerile is used, as if truly, in truth, one should refer to the child as regards what is at stake in its effects.

Naturally, it happens, as has been demonstrated in very good places, that children become mentally handicapped because of the action of adults. It is not all the same to this explanation that one can refer, in the case we are dealing with, namely, that of psychoanalysts. Let us take up again what is involved in the psychoanalytic act, and let us clearly posit that today we are going to try to advance in this direction, which is that of the psychoanalytic act.

Let us not forget the first steps that we have taken in explaining it, namely, that it (163) is essentially inscribed as a language effect. Assuredly, in this case, we were able to notice, or at least simply recall that this is how it is for every act, but of course this is not what specifies it. We have to develop what is involved in it, how the language effect in question is organised. It is in two stages. It presupposes psychoanalysis itself precisely as language effect. It is only definable, in other words, at least by including the psychoanalytic act as being defined by the accomplishment of psychoanalysis itself. We have shown that we have here to reduplicate the division. Namely,, that psychoanalysis cannot be instaured without an act, without the act of the one who authorises its possibility, without the act of the psychoanalyst. And that within this act of psychoanalysis, the psychoanalysing task is inscribed, within this act. I already made there appear in a way this first structure of envelopment.

But what is at stake, and, moreover, it is not the first time that I am insisting on this distinction at the very heart of the act, is the act through which a subject gives to this curious act, its strangest consequence. Namely, that he himself should be the one who institutes it, in other words that he posits himself as psychoanalyst. Now this does not happen without having to hold our attention. Because what is at stake is that he takes this position, that in short he repeats this act, knowing full well what is involved in the continuation of this act. That he makes himself the champion of something whose ending he knows. Namely, that by putting himself in the place of the analyst, he will finally come to be, in the form of the **o**, this rejected object, this object in which there is specified the whole movement of psychoanalysis. Namely, the one that comes at the end, by coming to the place of the psychoanalyst, in as much as here the subject separates himself off decisively,

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recognises himself as being caused by the object in question. Caused in what way? Caused in his division as subject. Namely, in so far as at the end of the psychoanalysis, he remains marked by this gap which is his own and which is defined in psychoanalysis in the shape of castration.

Here at least is the schema commented, summarised as I am making it for the moment, that I gave of the result, the effect of psychoanalysis. And I marked it on the board for you as represented by what happens at the end of the double movement of psychoanalysis marked in this line by transference, and by what is called castration, and which comes finally to this disjunction of (-) on the one hand and of the **o** which comes to the place at the end of the psychoanalysis.

(164) There is the psychoanalyst, through the operation of the psychoanalysand, an operation he authorised, in a way, knowing what its end is. And an operation whose culminating being he himself establishes, as I told you, despite, as one might say, the knowledge he has of what is involved in this end.

Here the opening remains agape, as one might say, about how this leap can operate, or again, as I did in a text which was a text meant as a proposition, to explore what is involved in this leap that I have called the pass (*la passe).* Until we have looked at it more closely, there is nothing more to be said about it, except that it is, very precisely, a leap. Naturally, many things are done, one could say that everything in the organisation of psychoanalysis is done to conceal that this leap is a leap. That is not all. On occasion people will even make a leap of it, on condition that there is a kind of blanket stretched over what has to be got over, which does not let it be seen that it is a leap. It is still the best case. It is, all the same better, than putting a little safe, convenient foot-bridge, which in that case no longer makes of it a leap at all.

But as long as the matter has not been effectively questioned, interrogated in analysis, and why wait any longer to say that my thesis is that every organising of what is done and exists in psychoanalysis is designed so that this exploration, this interrogation will not take place. As long as, effectively, it has not taken place, we cannot say anything more about it than what is said nowhere, because in truth it is impossible to speak about it all alone.

On the contrary, it is easy to designate a certain number of points, of things, as being, to all appearances, the consequences of the fact that this leap is put in parenthesis. Question for example what is involved in the effects, as I might say, not of official, but of *officiale* consecration, of consecration as office, of what a

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subject is before and after this leap is presumed to have been taken. Here indeed (165) is something that, after all, is worth questioning and which it is worthwhile making the questioning of more urgent. I mean that is not simply worth questioning but is the prelude to the response. The insistence, as one might say, of the question of whether it proves that in the very measure of the duration of what I called consecration in the office, something fundamental becomes opaque, about what is effectively involved in the necessary pre-supposition of the psychoanalytic act. Namely,, what I ended on the last time by designating it as being in its own way what we call an act of faith.

An act of faith, I said, in the subject supposed to know and precisely by a subject who has just learned what is involved in the subject supposed to know, at least in an exemplary operation, which is that of psychoanalysis. Namely,, I mean that far from psychoanalysis being able to be established as has been done up to now from the statements of a science, I mean, this moment at which what has been acquired from a science passes over to the state of being teachable, in other words professorial. What is stated from a science never puts in question what it was before the knowledge emerged. Who knew it? The matter, I ought to say, came into nobody's head, because it is so obvious that there was, beforehand, this subject supposed to know. The statements of science, in principle the most atheistic, is firmly theist on this point. For what else is this subject supposed to know, and in truth I know nothing serious that was put forward in this register, before psychoanalysis itself posed us the question. Namely, something that is properly speaking untenable. That the subject supposed to know pre-exists its operation, when this operation consists precisely in the sharing between its two partners of two terms of what is at stake as regards what is operating. Namely,, what I learned to articulate in the logic of phantasy. These two terms of $ and **o**, in as much as at the ideal end of psychoanalysis, the psychoanalysis that I would describe as finite, and note clearly that here I am leaving in parenthesis the accent this term may receive in its use in mathematics, namely, in set theory. Namely,, this step that is taken when what is at stake is a finite set, to the one where one can treat by means that are tested, inaugurated at the level of finite sets, a set which is not such.

Let us keep for the moment to the level of finite psychoanalysis and let us say that at the end the psychoanalysand, we are not going to say that he is all subject since precisely he is not all, because he is divided. We cannot say for all that that he is two, but that he is only a subject and that he is not this divided subject. That he is not without (*pas sans*), according to the formula to which I accustomed the few people who were listening to me when I was giving my seminar on *Anxiety,* that he is not without this object, finally rejected to the place prepared by the presence of the psychoanalyst, so that he can situate himself in this relation of cause of his division as subject. And that, on the other hand, we will not say either that the analyst, for his part, is all object, that he is nevertheless at the end simply this rejected object. It is indeed here that there lies some mystery or other that conceals, in short, what all practitioners know well. Namely, what is established

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at the level of human relations, as it is put, at the end, after the end, between the one who followed the path of psychoanalysis and the one who was "his guide".

The question of how someone can be recognised otherwise than along the very paths that he is sure of, namely,, recognised otherwise than by himself to be qualified for this operation, is a question, after all, which is not special to psychoanalysis.

It is solved habitually, as in psychoanalysis, by election or by a certain kind of choice. Seen from the point of perspective as we are trying to establish it, election or choice, all of that is resumed as being more or less of the same order, from the moment that this presupposes as being still intact, not put into question, the subject supposed to know. In the kinds of election that aristocrats declare to be the most stupid, namely,, democratic elections, I do not see why they should be any more stupid than the other, simply this supposes that the base, the member, the voter, knows something about it. It cannot depend on anything else. It is at his level that the subject supposed to know is put. As long as it is there, things are always very simple, especially from the moment that it is put in question. For if there is put in question, what one maintains nevertheless in a certain number of operations, it becomes much less important to know where it is put. And it is difficult to see in effect why it should not be put at the same level as everyone else.

That is why the Church has been for a long time the most democratic institution, namely, where everything happens through elections. It is because she, she has the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a notion that is infinitely less stupid than that of the subject supposed to know. There is only one difference, at this level to be put forward in favour of the subject supposed to know, it is that on the whole one (167) does not notice that the subject supposed to know is always there, so that one is not at fault in maintaining it.

It is from the moment that it can be put in question that one can raise categories like the one that I have, as a way of tickling your ears, brought out under the name which cannot naturally be in any way be sufficient, of stupidity (*bêtise*). It is not because one is obstinate that one is stupid. It is sometimes because one does not know what to do. As regards the Holy Spirit, I would point out to you that it is a much more elaborated concept, whose theory I am not going to develop, but as regards which it is all the same easy, for anyone who has reflected a little about what is involved in the function of the Christian Trinity, to find quite precise equivalents as compared to the functions that psychoanalysis allows to be elaborated. And especially those that I highlighted in one of my articles, the one on the questions preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis, under the terms of the as regards which precisely it is not in a very tenable position, except in the categories of psychosis.

Let us leave there pointing, in a way, this detour which has its interest and let us come back one more time to the transference. But it is today very necessary to

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articulate the degree to which, since I introduced it as constituting the psychoanalytic act, the degree to which it is essential for the configuration as such of transference. Naturally, if one does not introduce into it the subject supposed to know, transference maintains all its opaqueness. But once the notion of the subject supposed to know is fundamental and the fracture that it undergoes in psychoanalysis is brought to light, transference is singularly illuminated. And this, of course, takes on all its value by taking a look back and noticing, for example, how every time transference is at stake, the authors, the good ones, the honest ones, evoke that the notion, the distance taken which permitted the instauration, in our theory of transference, goes back to nothing less than to the precise moment when as you know, when in emerging from a triumphant session of hypnosis, the patient, Freud tells us, threw her arms around his neck. There you are.

So then what is that? Naturally people stop and marvel. Namely,, that Freud was not very moved for all that. "She is taking me for someone else", people translate the way in which moreover Freud expressed himself. "I am not that *unwidersetzlich*, irresistible", there is something else. People marvel as if there were here, I mean at this level here, something to marvel at. It is perhaps not so (168) much that Freud, as he puts it, in his humorous way, did not believe himself to be the object in question. It is not because one believes oneself or not to be the object. It is that when this is what is at stake, namely, love, people think they know what they are at. In other words, people have this sort of complacency which, however little, gets you caught up in this treacle that is called love.

Because in fact, for the moment, people perform all kinds of operations, of arabesques around what must be thought about transference. We see some people showing courage and saying: but come on! Let us not reject the whole of transference onto the side of the analysand (*analysé*), as it is put. "We are involved in it too", and how! And we are involved in it and the analytic situation is also a little responsible for it. Starting from there comes a different kind of excess. The analytic situation determines everything. Outside the analytic situation there is no transference. Anyway you know the whole variety, the scale, the roundabout that emerges when each one is in rivalry to show a little more freedom of spirit than the others. There are very strange things also. There is a person who, like that, during one of the last congresses where we were dealing with things that were put in question during the meeting of the closed seminar here, was asking at what moment of the psychoanalytic act, I was going to link all of that to the *passage à l'acte*, to *acting-out*.

Of course I am going to do it. In truth, the person who best articulated this question is someone who, exceptionally, remembers what I was already able to articulate about it on a certain 23 January 1963. The author whose personality I began to introduce earlier is an author who, in connection with *acting-out* - no one properly speaking asked him to do it - gives on this subject a little class on transference. He gives this class on transference, which is modelled on this little article which, now, is spreading more and more. Things are articulated about

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transference that would not even be conceived of if Lacans' discourse did not exist. Moreover, it is consecrated by demonstrating, for example, that a particular formulation that Lacan put forward in his report on *The function and field of speech and language*, namely, for example that the unconscious is this something which is lacking to discourse, that must in a way be supplied, completed in the history for the history to be re-established in its completeness, in order that, etc. the symptom should be removed. And naturally your man sniggers "Wouldn't it be lovely if that was how things were".

(169) Everyone knows that it is not because the hysteric remembers that everything is arranged. Moreover, that depends on the case, but what matter. People go on to show the degree to which what is at stake in the analytic discourse is more complex. And that it is necessary to distinguish something which is not only, it is said - believing they are taking up arms against me - the structure of the statement, but that it must also be known what use it is to know if one is telling the truth or not. And that sometimes to lie is properly speaking the way in which the subject announces the truth of his desire, since precisely there is no other angle from which to announce it than the lie.

It is something which, as you see, consists precisely in saying only things that I articulated in the most explicit way. If I mentioned earlier this seminar of the 23 January 1963, it is because it is exactly what I said about the function of a certain type of statement of the unconscious, in so far as the stating of desire which is involved is very properly that of the lie. Namely,, the point that Freud himself put his finger on in the case of the female homosexual. And that it is precisely thus that desire is expressed and is situated. And that what is advanced in this connection as being the register where analytic interpretation is played out in its originality, namely,, precisely what ensures that in no way is it possible in a kind of anteriority for there to have been known, what is revealed by the interpretative intervention. Namely,, what makes of transference, something quite different to the object already there, in a way inscribed in everything that it is going to produce. A pure and simple repetition of something which already, from previously, would only be waiting to express itself there, instead of being produced by its retroactive effect.

In short, everything that I have said for the last three years which it must not be believed, of course, does not make its own little way, like that, by absorption. And, in a second moment, remembering what I said ten years before and by making of the second part an objection to the first, in short, people easily arm themselves, on occasion, against what I am stating with what I may have stated after a certain number of stages, built up and shot through with what I am constructing to enable you to find your bearings in the analytic experience. And objections are made from what I said at a later date, as if they were inventing it themselves, to what I first said and which, of course, can be understood as partial, especially if it is isolated from its context. In short, what is involved in the effect of certain purely complementary interpretations of a particular piece of history at the level of the hysteric, was effectively specified by me as being extremely

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(170) limited and absolutely not corresponding, since that very epoch when I articulated this too objectifying notion of history which would consist in taking the function of history otherwise than as the history constituted starting from present pre-occupations, namely, like every kind of existing history, and very specifically in my discourse described as the Rome discourse, I rather insistently put my foot in it on this point. Namely, that no kind of function of history can be articulated, can be understood, without the history of the history, namely, from what does the historian construct.

I am only making this remark about a statement which presents itself as a banality to designate this something which is not after all without a certain relation with what I called earlier the structure of what happens in connection with the step that has to be taken, the one that I am trying to get psychoanalysts to take. Namely, what results from the putting in question of the subject supposed to know. What results from it, namely, the style of exercising the question, the formulation of a logic which makes something manageable starting from the necessary revision at the level of this preliminary step, of this pre-supposition, of this pre-establishment of a subject supposed know, which can no longer be the same at least in a certain field. The one in which what is at stake is to know how we can handle knowledge, there, at a precise point of the field where what is at stake is not knowledge but something which, for us, is called truth.

To obtain this sort of answer where, precisely, my question can only be felt as most annoying, because the whole ordering of analysis is constructed to mask this question about the function to be revised of the subject supposed to know. This very precise type of answer which consists - for anyone who knows how to read - in a way that is purely fictitious, in decomposing two phases of my discourse in order of create an opposition between one and the other. Which is moreover quite impossible to find in most cases and which only results from the fiction which would have it that the author who is expressing himself is himself supposed to have discovered the second part. While I would be supposed to have limited myself to the first, to this rather derisory thing which does not fail to stick, if one can also say it here, it must be recognised where things are inserted in their reality, to what is involved at the very foundation of the question.

When I spoke about transference in order to bring it back to its simple and very miserable origin, and if I was able to speak in this connection, so badly, about the (171) terms of love, is it not because the difficulty of putting in question what transference constitutes is neither that it is love, as some people say, nor that it is not so as others are happy to advance. It is that it puts love, as I might say, puts love on the spot. And precisely in this derisory way, the one which allows us to see here, in this gesture of the hysteric coming out of the hypnotic capture, to see what is at stake in what is indeed here, at bottom, in what is affected. What is affected, first of all, is that through which I define what is involved in this thing, which is so rich and instructive and, in truth, new to the world which is called psychoanalysis.

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The hysteric reaches the goal immediately. The Freud she is kissing is the **o**-object. Everyone knows that this is what a hysteric needs especially coming out of hypnosis. Things are in a certain way, as one might say, cleared away. Of course Freud, this indeed is the problem about him, how was he able to put in suspense in this radical way what is involved in love? We can perhaps be sure of it by mapping out what is strictly involved in the analytic operation.

The question is not there. Putting it in suspense allowed him to establish, from this original short circuit that he was able to lay out, to the point of giving it this excessive place of the analytic operation in which one discovers the whole human drama of desire. And in the end what? This immense acquisition is not nothing. The new field opened out onto what is involved in subjectification. In the end what? The same result which was reached in this brief instant, namely,, on the one side this $ symbolised by this moment of the emergence, this overwhelming moment of 'between two worlds' in awakening from a hypnotic sleep, and the **o** suddenly clasped in the arms of the hysteric. If the **o** for its part is so suitable, it is because it is what is at stake at the heart of the apparel of love. What is grasped there - I sufficiently articulated and illustrated it - it is around this **o**-object that there are installed, that there are established all the narcissistic coatings with which love is supported.

But the hysteric for her part, clearly knows here what she needs, I mean what necessitates this "I want and I do not want" at the same time, which proceed at the same time from the specificity of this object and from its intolerable rawness.

So that it is amusing incidentally to think that in making this whole construction of psychoanalysis, this Freud, up to the end of his life, asked himself, what does a woman want? Without finding the answer. Precisely that, what he had made, a psychoanalyst. At the level of the hysteric in any case, it is perfectly true. What (172) the psychoanalyst becomes at the end of the psychoanalysis, if it is true that he is reduced to this **o**-object, this is what the hysteric wants. One understands why, in psychoanalysis, the hysteric is cured of everything except her hysteria. This of course is only a marginal remark, in which you would be wrong to see a greater import than that on which it is quite simply inscribed.

But what must be known, is what in a recent fashion, I indeed was lead to say to make a certain number of those who hear these things, here, more sensitive. Is there not here in this expulsion of the **o**-object something which evokes for us (since the telly shows it to us) a little penchant that one might rather easily take by finding analogies between what we are operating on and something or other that might be found at the most abyssal levels in biology.

Biologists are happy to express chromosomic terms in terms of messages. Someone can come to the point, as I recently heard - because when there are stupidities to be said one can say that the opportunity is never missed - someone made this discovery that one could say that language is structured like the unconscious. People will like that, there are people who believed that one should

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go from the known to the unknown, but here off you go, huh? Let us go from the unknown to the known, that is often done, it is called occultism. It is what Freud called the taste for the *mystisch Element.* It is very precisely the reflection he made when the hysteric flung her arms around his neck. He speaks very precisely at this moment of the *mystisch Element.*

The whole sense of what Freud did, consists precisely in advancing in such a way that you go against the *mystisch Element* and do not start from it. Let us not forget that it is spoken about. And if Freud protests against the protestation, for it is exactly what he did, which arose around him the day he said that a dream is lying, he repeats at that moment that if people are indignant at the thought that the unconscious can be a liar it is because there is nothing to be done. Whatever I said about the dream, they will continue to want to maintain in it the *mystisch Element,* namely,, that the unconscious cannot lie.

Let this not prevent us from taking a little metaphor. Whether this **o**-object that has to be expelled at the end of analysis, which comes to take the place of the analyst, does not resemble something. You have not heard of that? The (173) expulsion of polar globules in meiosis. In other words, from what the sexual cells get rid of in their maturity. This, in short, would be elegant, this would be what is at stake. Thanks to which the comparison is pursued. What becomes then of castration? Castration is precisely that. It is the result, the reduced cell in a way. Starting from there the subjectification is carried out, which is going to allow them to be, what they say. God made them male or female. Castration is supposed to be truly the preparation for the connection of their enjoyments *(jouissances).*

From time to time, in the margins of psychoanalysis, this naturally does not involve any seriousness but in any case there are those who dream, this has counted. I am saying that. There is only one little misfortune, which is that we are at the level of the subjectification of this function of the man and the woman. And at the level of subjectification, it is *qua* **o**-object, this object to be expelled, that there is going to be presented in the real the one who is called to be the sexual partner. It is here that there lies the difference between the union of gametes and what is involved in the subjective realisation of the man and of the woman. Naturally, one can see all the female lunatics in the world precipitating themselves onto this level. In any case, thank God, in our field there are not too many of them. Those who are going to look for their references concerning some supposed obstacles of feminine sexuality in the fear of penetration which is supposed to be circumscribed at the level of the break that the spermatozoid makes into the capsule, into the envelope of the ovule. You see that it is not I who, for the first time, waves it in front of you. But so that we can distinguish ourselves from it, so that we can clearly mark in this connection the differences to supposedly biological phantasies.

When I say that it is in the **o**-object that there will subsequently always necessarily be rediscovered the sexual partner, we see arising a truth inscribed in

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a corner of Genesis. The fact that the partner, God knows that this does not involve her in any way, figured in the myth, as being Adam's rib, the **o** then.

That is why things have gone so badly since that time, at regards what is involved in this perfection which might be imagined as being union of two enjoyments. In truth I am sure of it. It is from this first simple recognition that there emerges the necessity of the medium, of the intermediary of the defiles constituted by the phantasy. Namely, this infinite complexity, this riches of desire, with all its tendencies, all its regions. This whole map, which can be drawn, all the effects at (174) the level of these slopes that we call neurotic, psychotic or perverse and which are inserted, precisely, in this distance forever established between the two enjoyments.

That is why it is strange that in the Church, where they are not so, not so stupid all the same, they should notice that here Freud is saying the same thing as what they are presumed to know to be the truth. Which obliges them, precisely to teach it. There is something that does not work on the side of sex. Otherwise what use is this stupefying technical network? Well then, not at all. Their preference in this area goes much more rather towards Jung, whose position it is clear is exactly the opposite. Namely,, that we enter into the sphere of Gnosis, namely,, the obligatory complementarity of the Ying and the Yang and of all the signs that you see turning around one another. As if, from all time, they were there to connect up with one another, *animus* and *anima*, the complete essence of the male and the female.

You can take it from me: ecclesiastics prefer that.

I am opening the question as to whether it is not precisely because of that. If we were in the truth like them, what would happen to their magisterium? I am not giving myself over to vain excesses of language simply for the pleasure of going for an uncomfortable stroll in the field of what is called *aggiornamento*. Because, of course, these are remarks that, at the point at which we are at, I can go as far as to make them to the Holy Office. I went there not long ago, they were very interested in what I told them. I did not push the question to the point of saying to them, is it because it is the truth that you do not like it? The truth that you know to be the truth? I gave them time to become accustomed to it.

If I am only speaking to you about it here, why is that? It is to tell you that what is perhaps so annoying at the level of power in certain areas, where there is a little more bottle than among us, can be something of the same order. What can happen at the level of this something, of this kind of bizarre Principality of Monaco of the Truth called the International Psychoanalytic Association. There can be effects of the same order. To know exactly what is happening is not always easy. All the more so because, when all is said and done, we for our part can dot the i's for a certain number of things. Namely,, that the analytic adventure, as long as it allows things to be articulated, very precisely in the whole field of the (175) unconscious of human desire, perhaps contributes something

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which renews what was beginning to be put forward on a certain slope of cretinisation, such as the one accompanied by the idea of obligatory progress, the seed of science. You have to see where this renewal of the truth is situated. If this is how the analytic experience is defined, by instauring its defiles, this formidable production which is installed where? In a gap that is not at all constituted by castration itself, of which castration is the sign, the most accurate tempering, the most elegant solution. But it nevertheless remains that we know very well that enjoyment, for its part, remains outside. We do not know a single word more about what is involved in feminine enjoyment. It is not a question that dates from yesterday, all the same. There was already a certain Jupiter, for example, this subject supposed to know, well then, he did not know that, he asked Tiresias. An extraordinary thing, Tiresias knew something more about it. He only made one mistake, which was to say it. At that, as you know, he lost his sight.

You see that these things have been inscribed for a long time, in truth, in the margins of a certain human tradition. In any case it would be worth our while, perhaps, to notice in order to understand properly, this moreover is what renders legitimate our intrusion of logic into what is at stake in the psychoanalytic act. It is, moreover, what is here able to encompass our bubble. It is certainly not reducing it to nothing to describe it as a bubble if it is there that there is situated everything that happens which is sensible, intelligible and also even senseless. But in any case it would be worth our while knowing where things are situated, for example, as regards what is involved in feminine enjoyment. There it is quite clear that it is left completely out of consideration.

Why am I talking to you first of all about feminine enjoyment? It is perhaps to already specify something that the subject supposed to know that we are dealing with - some people, we must not deceive ourselves about it, may believe with all the confusion that is being produced that we are somewhere on the side of the subject supposed to know - how one goes to enjoyment! I call on all psychoanalysts, those who all the same know what we are talking about and what can be aimed at, reached. We clear the ground in front of the door, but as regards the door, I believe that we are not very competent.

After a very good analysis, let us say that a woman can find her feet. All the same, if there is a little advantage won, it is very precisely in the measure and in (176) the case that, just before, she might have taken herself for the mentioned earlier. Because, in that case of course, she is frigid.

There is not only that. Freud noted that when what is at stake is the libido as he defined it, namely, the field that is at stake in psychoanalysis, the libido desires, there is only the masculine sort, he tells us. This ought to make us prick up our ears and show us precisely, even though I already stressed it, that the operation and what is at stake is the relation of subjectification concerning the sex thing. But in as much as this subjectification culminates in the relation logically defined by $ **o,** in which case everyone is equal.

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As regards the libido, it can be qualified as masculine or feminine, as you wish. It is quite clear that what makes us think that it is rather masculine, is that, from the side of enjoyment, as regards the man, this means again going back much further, since feminine enjoyment, we still have it there from time to time within reach of what you know. But for masculine enjoyment, at least as regards analytic experience, it is a strange thing, no one has ever seemed to notice that it is very precisely reduced to the Oedipus myth.

Only there you are. Ever since I have been killing myself in saying that the unconscious is structured like a language, no one has yet noticed that the original myth, that of *Totem and Taboo*, the Oedipus complex in a word, is perhaps an original drama, but it is an aphasic drama. The Father enjoys all the women, such is the essence of the Oedipus myth, I mean from Freud's pen. There are some for whom that does not work. It is botched or it is eaten. It has nothing to do with any drama. If psychoanalysts were more serious, instead of spending their time fiddling around in Agamemnon and Oedipus to draw something or other out of them, always the same thing, they could begin by making this remark. That what is to be explained is why precisely this should have turned into a tragedy. But there is something much more important to be still explained: why psychoanalysts have never explicitly formulated that the Oedipus complex is only a myth thanks to which they put in place the limits of their operations. It is so important to say it. This is what allows there to be put in its place what is involved in psychoanalytic treatment, within this mythical framework destined to contain in an outside already within, from which there is going to be able to be put the realised division from which I started. Namely, that at the end of the analytic act, there is on the stage, this stage which is structuring, but only at this level, the **o**, at (177) this extreme point that we know to be at the end of the destiny of the hero of tragedy. He is no longer any more than that. And everything that is of the order of subject is at the level of this something which has this divided character that exists between the spectator and the choir.

It is not a reason, but this is what is to be looked at closely, since this Oedipus has come one day onto the stage so that we do not see that its economic role in psychoanalysis is elsewhere. Namely,, this putting in suspense of these enemy poles of enjoyment, male enjoyment and the enjoyment of the woman.

Assuredly, in this strange division which already escapes, we notice what, in my sense already truly throws into relief the difference between the function of the myth of Oedipus, namely, the father of the primordial horde, who has no right to be called Oedipus, as you see, and the usage imaged on the stage when Freud recognises him, transposes him, and brings him into play on the stage, whether it is the Sophoclean stage or that of Shakespeare. This is what allows us to create the distance between what really operates in psychoanalysis and what does not operate in it.
To be complete, and before continuing, I would add that you will note that there is in Freud's text a third term, that of *Moses and monotheism.* Freud does not

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hesitate in this third case, any more than in the first two which have no resemblance, to claim to make function there, still in the same way, the Father and his murder. Ought this not begin to awaken in you some little suggestions? By doing nothing more than bringing up such a question and especially about the obvious tripartition of the function summarised as Oedipal in Freudian theory, and that not the least little beginning of a development at the true level of what is at stake, nothing has yet been done and specifically not by me. You know why.

I had prepared it by the analysis in my seminar on the Name of the Father, everything having proved at that moment that it was not by chance that it happened like that. If I began to enter into this field, let us say that they appeared to me to be a little fragile. I am speaking about those interested in this and who have quite enough of their psychoanalytic field that we now see defined as being in no way something which, in any way, can claim to take the stage again, either of tragedy or of the Oedipal circuit.

(178) What are we doing in analysis? We notice failures, differences, with respect to something that we know nothing about, to a myth, to something which allows us to put order on our observations. We are not going to say that we are in the process, in psychoanalysis, of doing anything whatsoever to mature a so-called pre-genital. Quite the contrary, since it is by regression that we advance into the fields of prematurity. Just as it leaps to the eye, like anyone who is not absolutely caught up by the things to which we must come, by women who are assuredly in psychoanalysis those who are most efficacious, in certain cases the least stupid, by women, by Melanie Klein. What do we do? We notice that it is precisely at the pre-genital levels that we have to recognise the function of the Oedipus complex. It is in this that psychoanalysis essentially consists.

Consequently, there is no Oedipal experience in psychoanalysis. The Oedipus complex is the frame in which we can regulate the game. I am intentionally saying the game. It is a matter of knowing what game one is playing. That is why I try to introduce here a little logic. It is not usual to begin playing poker, and to say all of a sudden, oh, excuse me, I have been playing manille for the last five minutes. That is not done, especially in mathematics. That is why I am trying to take some reference points from it.

I am not going to detain you any longer today, especially as in this respect we are in no hurry. I do not see why I should make the cut here or there, I will do it according to the time. I am going to posit important elements in terms of logic, why? Because in all of science - I am giving you this new definition of it - logic is defined as this something that properly has as end to resorb the problem of the subject supposed to know.

In it alone, at least in the modern logic from which we are going to start the next time when it will be a matter precisely of posing the logical question, namely,, of these literal figures thanks to which we can progress in these problems, by

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figuring in them in literal terms, in terms of logical algebra, how there is posed the question of what "a psychoanalyst exists" means in terms of quantification.

We will be able to make progress where up to the present people have been able to do nothing except something as obscure, as absurd as ratification of a (179) qualification of everything that has ever been done elsewhere and that I evoked earlier, and which, here precisely, by following an experience that is so particularly serious concerning the subject supposed to know, takes on an aspect, an accent, a form, a value of relapsing which precipitates in it such dangerous consequences. Consequences which can figure in an implacable and as it were tangible way, by simply supporting them by these traits, these units, these figures, these propositions of modern logic. I am speaking about the one that introduced what I already announced in a word. I already emitted the word quantifiers.

Well then, if this is of service to us, you should know that it is precisely in function of what I put forward earlier, a definition which, certainly, was never given by any logician, because he is a logician, because this dimension was always for them resorbed, conjured away. They do not notice - everyone has his black spot - that the function of logic is the following. That there should be duly resorbed, conjured away the question of the subject supposed to know. In logic, this is not posed. There is absolutely no kind of doubt that before the birth of modern logic there was very certainly no one who had the slightest idea of it. Within logic, I am not going to prove it to you today, but it would be easy to do so, in any case I am proposing its trace and its indication, it could be the object of an elegant work, more elegant than I would be able to do myself, on the part of a logician, what grounds and legitimates the existence of logic, is this minute point. Very precisely, when the field is defined in which the subject supposed to know is nothing.

It is precisely because it is nothing there, and that moreover it is fallacious, that we are between the two, finding support on logic on the one hand, on our experience on the other. We can at least introduce a question which it is not sure - the worst, as Claudel says, is not always sure - is ever without an effect on psychoanalysts.

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Seminar 11: Wednesday 28 February 1968

(181) Someone who had already been alerted the last time through the good offices of Mr Charles Melman, who was kind enough the last time to take this place for the closed seminar at the end of January, found himself solicited by him and in a way that is all the more legitimate in that Jacques Nassif, who is the person in question, was good enough to produce, for the *Bulletin de l'Ecole Freudienne,* a summary of my seminar of last year, that on *The logic of phantasy.* He was good enough to answer this call which consisted in asking him if he did not have
something to say or to question, or to present, which gives an idea of the way in which he understands the point that we have got to this year.

I am very grateful to him for having been willing to give this answer, namely, for preparing something which is going to serve as an introduction to what is going to be said today.

I can say already the sense in which this brings me satisfaction. First of all, for the pure and simple fact that he has prepared this work, that he has prepared it in a competent fashion, being perfectly *au fait* with what I said last year. And then it happens that what he extracted from this work, I mean what he highlighted, what he isolated with respect to the content of what I said last year, is properly speaking the logical network. And above all its importance, its accent, its meaning in what is, perhaps, defined, indicated as the orientation of my discourse, indeed its perspective, its end, to say the word.

That we should be precisely at the point at which, in this development, this question that I am posing about the analytic act which presents itself as something (182) that profoundly implicates each one of those who are listening to me here as analysts. We are coming precisely to the point at which I am going to put a still stronger stress than has been put up to now, precisely, in order not, simply, on this something which might be understood in a certain way as: "there is a logic in everything". No one knows very clearly what it means to say that there is an internal logic to something. Here one would be simply looking for the logic of the thing, namely, that the term "logic" would be here put to use in fashion that is in a way metaphorical. No, it is not quite to that we are coming. And the last time, at the end of my discourse, there was an indication of it in this certainly audacious affirmation, to which I do not expect in advance to find an echo, a resonance. I hope, at least, for the sympathetic ear of one or other of those that I may have in my audience, who are here present as logicians. Anyway, what I indicated is that that there ought to be (and, of course, I hope to show that I am in

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Seminar 12: Wednesday 6 March 1968

P	Je ne connais pas tout	
		de la poésie
U	J'ignore tout	
P	*I don't know everything*	
		about poetry
U	*I don't know anything*	

I wrote "*Je ne connais pas*" and "*J'ignore*". I am confronting this "*Je ne connais pas*" and this "*J'ignore*" with something that is going to serve me as a foundation: "about poetry".

For greater rigour, I am saying that I posit that "*je ne connais pas*" is equivalent to "*j'ignore*". I admit, I accept that negation is included in the term "*j'ignore*". Of course, another time, I could return to *ignosco* and to what it indicates very precisely in the Latin tongue from which it comes to us. But logically I am positing today that these two terms are equivalent. It is starting from this supposition that what follows is going to takes its value.

I am writing the word *tout,* twice. They are indeed equivalent. What results from this? That, from the twice-repeated introduction of this identical term at these two levels, I obtain two propositions of essentially different value. It is not the same thing to say "I don't know everything about poetry" and "I don't know anything about poetry". Between one and the other there is the distance - I am saying it immediately to clarify, since it is necessary, where I want to get to, it is to the signifying distinction, I mean in so far as it can be determined by signifying procedures - between what is called a universal proposition, to express it like (210) Aristotle, and, moreover, also like everything that has been prorogued in logic ever since, and a particular proposition.

Where then is the mystery if these signifiers are equivalent term by term. Let us say that here we have posited it by convention, I repeat, it is only a scruple about the etymology of *j'ignore*. *J'ignore* means well and truly what it means on this occasion: *je ne sais pas, je ne connais pas*. How does that end up with two propositions, one of which is presented clearly as referring to a particular of this

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field of poetry (there are some things within it that I do not know; I do not know everything about poetry) and this well and truly universal, even though negative proposition: I know nothing about anything that belongs to the field of poetry, I don't have a clue (which is the case in general).

Are we going to stop at this which, immediately, introduces us into the specificity of a positive tongue, into the particular existence of French which, as very learned people have put it in their time, presents a duplicity in the terms negation is supported by. Namely, that the *ne* which seems to be the sufficient support, (adjunctive, as they say) necessary and sufficient for the negative function, is supported, in appearance is reinforced, but perhaps after all is complicated, by this adjunction of a term which only the usage of the tongue allows us to see what it is for. On this, someone that I can only quote in the margin, namely, a psychoanalytic colleague and eminent grammarian named Pichon, in the work on French grammar that he excogitated with his uncle Damourette, introduced some very pretty considerations, in accordance with his method and procedure, concerning what he calls the rather discordant function of the *ne* and the rather foreclusive one of the *pas*. About this he said things that were very subtle and packed with all sorts of examples taken at every level and very well chosen without, I think, being on the axis which, at least for us, may be truly important.

How this importance is determined for us, is what I shall make you understand later, at least I hope so, and for the moment by referring myself to this specificity of the French tongue. I only want to take the support of this something that must indeed also happen elsewhere, if it happens in our tongue. The fact is - for example - one could raise the following. If the result of this statement depended, for example, on the fact that we can group together the *pas tout*, in which case the sense of the sentence would return, rendering superfluous, in a way, allowing (211) there to be elided, as happens in familiar conversation (I am not saying to suppress, to elide, to swallow) the *ne*. *J'connais pas tout* with *pas tout* together, would be the non-separability of negation, that we can describe as included in the term of *j'ignore*, and which would here be the source of it, and everyone would be happy. I do not see why one should not be satisfied with this explanation if all that were involved, of course, was to solve this little riddle. It is funny but anyway this does not perhaps go so far as its seems to.

Yes, it goes further, as we are going to try to demonstrate by referring to another tongue, the English tongue, for example.

Let us try to start from something that corresponds in meaning to the first sentence:

I don't know everything about poetry,

and the other sentence:

I don't know anything about poetry.

What is nevertheless going to appear to us, in considering things expressed in this other tongue, is that, although producing these two meanings equivalent to the

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distance between the first two, the explanation that we evoked earlier of the blocking together of two signifiers is going to find itself necessarily inverted. Because this blocking of the *pas* with the term *tout* in the first example is realised here - at the signifying level I mean - in what corresponds to the second articulation, the second proposition, the one we have qualified as universal.

"Anything", as everyone knows, is there in effect as the equivalent of "*something*", something which is transformed into "*anything*" in the measure that is intervenes as negative.

Consequently, our first explanation is not fully satisfying, since it is by something completely opposite, it is by a blocking carried out in the second sentence, the one which realises the universal on this occasion, that there is produced this blocking, this equally ambiguous detaching moreover, the *don't* not disappearing for all that, to obtain this sense, I am completely out of it as regards poetry.

On the contrary it is where "*everything*" is joined to "*I don't know*" that the first sense is realised. This is well designed to make us reflect on something that (212) involves nothing less than - as I told you already, showing my hand - what is involved in the mystery of the relations between the universal and the particular.

We will try later to say what was the fundamental preoccupation of the one who introduced this distinction into history, namely, Aristotle.

Everyone knows that, on the subject of the angle from which these two registers of the statement should be taken, a little revolution of the spirit occurred, one that I already pinpointed on several occasions as the introduction of quantifiers.

There are perhaps some people here - I would like to suppose it - for whom it is not simply something that tickles their ears. But there must also be many for whom it is truly only the announcement that I made that at a given moment I would speak about it and - God knows how - I am going to have to talk to you about it from the point where it interests us, the point that I am at, the point then where it seemed to me it could be of use to us. Namely, that I cannot give you its whole history, all its antecedents, how it arose, it emerged, it was perfected and how (when all is said and done, this is what I have to limited myself to) it is thought of by those who make us of it. How can one know that? Because it is not at all certain that because they make use of it, they think about it, I mean that they situate in any way what their way of using it implies in thinking.

So then, I am going to be forced to start from the way in which I for my part think about it, at the level that I think interests you, namely, at the level where this can, be of some use to us.

In Aristotle, everything depends on something that is designated as a sign, which he believes he can allow himself. He allows himself to operate in this way,

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namely, that if he said that *every man is an animal*, he can for any useful purpose, if this appears to him to be of some use, extract from it: *some man is an animal.*

This is what we will call - it is not quite the term that he uses - since what is at stake is a relation that has been qualified as subalternate between the universal and the particular, an operation of subalternation.

I will probably have to make some remark more than once regarding the fact, the way that "man" is dinned into our ears in the examples, the illustrations the logicians give to their developments, which is certainly not without a (213) symptomatic value. We can begin to be sure of it in the whole measure that we have made the remark that we perhaps do not know as well as all that what man is. Anyway this would take us ...

The question of whether two sets, as is said in our day, can have something in common is a grave question which is in the process of involving a whole revision of mathematical theory. Because after all, we might very well, from the beginning, and without making vain gestures, I dare to say it, like those of our friend Michel Foucault performing the last rites for a humanism, so long dead that it has gone down the river without anyone knowing where it has got to, as if it were still a question and as if it was what was essential about structuralism. Let us pass on ... Let us say simply that, logically, we can only retain the fact that all that is important for us is whether we are talking about the same thing when we say - I mean logically - *every man is an animal*, or, for example, *every man speaks*. The question of whether two sets, I repeat, can have a common element, is a question that is very seriously raised in as much as it raises the following. Namely, what is involved in the element, if the element itself can only be - it is the foundation of set theory - something in connection with which you can speculate exactly as if it were a set. This is where the question begins to arise, but let us leave it.

You know that the fatherland is at once the most beautiful reality, and that of course it is self-evident that *every Frenchman ought to die for it*. But it is from the moment that you subalternate to know whether some Frenchmen ought to die for it that it seems to me that you ought to notice that the operation of subalternation presents some difficulties. Since *every Frenchman ought to die for it* and *some Frenchman ought to die for it*, is not at all the same thing! These are things that you see every day.

This is when you notice the amount of ontology, namely, something a little more than was his intention in constructing a logic, a formal logic, how much ontology his logic still brings with it.

I am avoiding, I assure you, many digressions. I do not want you to lose my thread ...

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(214) Here I am going to introduce right away by an opposition process that is obviously a little decisive. I am happy, perhaps wrongly, but usually there is an eminent logician here in the first row. I always keep the corner of my eye on him to see when he is going to start shouting. He is not there today, I do not believe I see him. On the one hand that reassures me, on the other hand it annoys me. I would like to have known what he would say to me about it at the end. Normally he shakes my hand and tells me that he is in complete agreement, which always does me a lot of good. Not at all because I need him to say it to know naturally where I am going, but everyone knows that when you venture onto a terrain which is not your own, properly speaking, you are always at the risk of - bang bang! Now for my part, of course, it is not encroaching onto terrain that is not my own that is important to me. It is to find, in logic, something that would be for you an example, a thread, an exemplary guide in the difficulties we have to deal with. We, those in the name of whom I am speaking, those also to whom I am speaking - and this ambiguity is here quite essential – namely, the psychoanalysts with respect to an action which concerns nothing less and nothing other than what I tried to define for you as "the subject". The subject is not man. If there are people who do not know what man is they are indeed the psychoanalysts. It is even their merit to put him radically in question, I mean *qua* man, in as much as this word has even still an appearance of sense for anyone.

So then I pass to the logic of quantifiers. And I allow myself, with this *bulldozer* approach that I use from time to time, to indicate that the radical difference in the way of opposing universal to particular, in the logic of quantifiers, resides in the fact (naturally, when you open books on it, you will find your bearings again with what I am telling you, you will of course see that it can be tackled in a thousand different ways, but the essential, is that you should see that this is the principal thread, at least for what interests us) that the universal, at least the affirmative one, must be stated as follows. "There is no man who is not wise" (*pas d'homme qui ne soit sage*).

There you are, believe it from me at least for a moment. The important thing is that you are able to follow the thread to see where I want to get to, which gives the formula of the universal negative. Namely, what in Aristotle, might be articulated as: *All men are wise*, a reassuring statement that on this occasion, (215) moreover, is of no importance. What is important to us, is to see the advantage that we may find in articulating this statement differently.

Here, right away, you can note that this universal affirmative will bring into play to support itself nothing less than two negations. It is important for you to see the order in which things are going to be presented. Let us put on the left the Aristotelian forms, the universal affirmative and negative. It is the letters A and E which designate them among Aristotle's posterity, and the letters I and O are the particulars, I being the particular affirmative (all men are wise, some man is wise).

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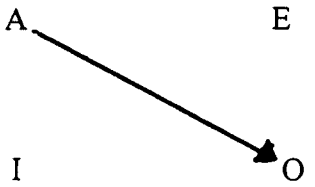

How, in our quantifying articulation, is *some man is wise* going to be expressed?

I had said first of all *there is no man who is not wise*. Now we articulate *there is a man who is wise* or *man who is wise*. But we will support this *man*, who might remain suspended in thin air, as it is appropriate, with a *he is*, just as *no man who is not wise* is *there is no man who is not wise*, *il n'est homme qui ne soit sage*.

But you also see that there is no longer a *ne,* in *is not wise*. This is how it has to be for *who is wise* to have a meaning. Or, if you again want to articulate *there is a man such that he is wise*, this *such that* is not excessive because you can also put it at the level of the universal: *there is no man such that he is not wise*. So then, to give the equivalent of our Aristotelian subalternation we had to efface two negations. This is very interesting. Because first of all we can see that a certain use of the double negation is not meant to be resolved into an affirmation, but precisely to allow - according to the sense in which this double negation is used, whether it is added or removed - to assure, the passage from the universal to the particular.

This is striking and makes us ask ourselves what indeed must be said for us to be able, in certain cases, to assimilate the double negation to a return to zero. (216) Namely, what existed in terms of affirmation at the start, and in other cases with this result.

But let us continue to interest ourselves in the property presented by the function we started from, that we have pinpointed, because it is correct, because this is what it corresponds to the quantifying operation. Let us only remove one negation, the first one: *there is a man such that he is not wise*. There also, I particularise, and in a fashion that corresponds to the particular negative. It is what Aristotle would call *some men are not wise* - no longer of subalternation but of the opposite subalternation which is diagonal, the opposition between A and O, from *all men are wise* to *some men are not wise* - this is what he calls "contradictory".

The use of the word contradiction interests us, us analysts. All the more so because, as Mr. Nassif recalled at the last closed seminar, it is an altogether essential point for psychoanalysts that Freud once threw out for them this assuredly primary truth that the unconscious does not know contradiction.

The only inconvenience -you never know the fruits borne by what you announce as a truth, especially a primary one - is that this had as a consequence that psychoanalysts, from that moment on, thought they were on holidays, as I might

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say, with respect to contradiction. They thought that this at once allowed them to know nothing about it, namely, not to be interested in it in the slightest.

It is a consequence that is obviously excessive. It is not because the unconscious, even if it were true, does not know contradiction that psychoanalysts should not have to know it, even if it were only to know why it does not know it, for example!

Anyway, let us remark that "contradiction" deserves a more attentive examination which, of course, logicians have carried out a long time ago. And that it is something quite different to speak about contradiction in the principle of contradiction, namely, that A cannot be not-A from the same point of view and at the same place, and the fact that our particular negative is not contradictory here. It is true that it is. But you see from the angle *there is a man such that he is not wise*, I am only raising it, with respect to the formula which served us as a point of departure, founded on the double negation, I am only raising it to the position of an exception.

(217) Of course the exception does not confirm the rule, contrary to what is usually said and which suits everyone. It simply reduces it to the value of a rule without a necessary value. Namely, it reduces it to the value of rule. That is even the definition of the rule.

So then you begin to see the degree to which these things can be of interest to us. I am appealing here to my psychoanalytic audience a little in order to allow it not to be bored. You see the interest of these articulations that allow us to nuance things as interesting as the following, for example. It is not the same thing to say (this is why I made this distinction at the level of contradiction) *man is non-woman* - here, of course, we will be told that the unconscious does not know contradiction - but it is not quite the same as to say (universal) *there is no man* (we are dealing with the subject, of course) *who does not rule out the feminine position, the woman,* or (the state of exception and no longer of contradiction) *there is a man who does not rule out the woman.*

This may show you, however, something manageable and designed to show the interest of these logical researches, even when the psychoanalyst believes himself (a thing which well deserves, with time, to be called obedience) obliged to have his gaze fixed on the horizon of the pre-verbal.

Let us continue, for our part, on the contrary, our little path of conducting an experiment.

There is a man such that he is not wise, I have said. You have been able to note that we have been able, up to the present, to do without the "*pas*". Let us try to see what that is going to give. *There is a man such that he is* - for example - *not wise*. There is no problem about this, it means the same thing. There are still some who are not wise.

Let us be careful. This *not wise* may well serve us as a passage to something a little unexpected.

If we restore the "*ne*" it still works. *There is a man such that he is not wise (ne soit pas sage)*", that will still work.

Let us come then to the *not wise* and let us come back in the diagonal to the A, the universal affirmative of Aristotle being the quantifying locution: *there is no man such that he is not not wise (pas d'homme tel qu'il ne soit pas sage).* The fact is that this gives a funny sense, all of a sudden. It is the universal negative: they are all not wise.

What could have occurred? This added *not*, which was perfectly tolerable at (218) the level of the particular negative, here if we put it into what previously was the universal affirmative, which appeared altogether designed to tolerate it just as well, with this *not,* it swerves towards blackness and towards some colour or other at E in the Rimbaud's sonnet. But at the Aristotelian level, it is black, it is the universal negative: *all of them are not wise.*

I am going to tell you right away the lesson we are going to take from this. It is obviously something which makes us put our finger on the fact that the relation of the two *ne,* as it exists in the fundamental structure of the quantified universal affirmative, which is this formula, *there is nothing which does not*, has something which suffices in itself. And we have the proof of it in the liberation of this *pas* which all of a sudden, while inoffensive elsewhere, here makes one universal turn into the other.

This is what allows us to advance and to affirm that the distinction of the quantifying operation, when we give it its rectifying (*rectrice*) function, a normal function of logical operation, is distinguished from the logic of Aristotle by the following. It substitutes - at the place where the *ousia*, the essence, the ontological is not eliminated, at the place of the grammatical subject - the subject that interests us *qua* divided subject. Namely, the pure and simple division as such of the subject in so far as he speaks, of the stating subject *qua* distinct from the subject of the statement.

The unit in which this presence of the divided subject is presented, is nothing other than this conjunction of two negations. This, moreover, is what justifies that to present it to you, to articulate it before you, whether you have noticed it or not - but it is time to notice it - things would not work without using a subjunctive. *There is nothing which is not (qui ne soit)* wise or not wise, the thing is of little importance. It is this *soit* which marks the dimension of this slippage from what happens between these two *ne* and which is precisely where there is going to operate the distance which always subsists between stating and stated. It is therefore not for nothing that in giving you, a few sessions ago, the first example of what is involved in Pierce's formulation, I well and truly pointed

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out to you that, in this exemplification that I showed you of these little lines divided, well chosen, in four boxes, what constituted the veritable subject of every universal, is essentially the subject in so far as he is essentially and fundamentally this no subject (*pas de sujet*) which is already articulated in our (219) way of introducing it: *no man who is not wise*.

It is difficult to stay on this cutting edge. The theory, of course, is very exactly constructed to eliminate it. I mean that what interests us, is that the theory of quantifiers, if we articulate it, forces us to uncover in it this relief and this irreducible flight. Which means that we do not know where there is slipped in the properly instituting core of what only seems to be at first repeated negation, and is, on the contrary, creative negation, in so far as it is from it that there is instaured the only thing which is truly worthy of being articulated in knowledge. Namely, the universal affirmative, what is valid everywhere and in every case. This alone interests us.

This is how you will see there being formulated from the pen of the logicians of quantification that we can treat as equivalent what is expressed by a ∀, namely, the universal value of a written proposition such as ∀x, F(x), we must write in algebraic terms of symbolic logic. Namely, that this universal truth is valid for every x, that x functions in the function F(x), namely, - for example - on this occasion the function of being wise, and that man will be an x which will be always at its place in this function.

The transformation which is acceptable in the theory of quantifiers is represented as follows: by -∃x, this ∃ being the symbol that specifies quantification for us, the existence of an x, of a value of x such that it satisfies the function F(x). And we will be told that x, F(x) can be expressed by a -∃x. Namely, that no x exists that is such that it explodes the function F(x). -∃x-F(x). In brief, that the conjunction of these two minus signs (and it is indeed something which is found to overlap the articulated, nuanced language form under which I put it forward to you) is enough to symbolise the same thing. It is not true at all. For it is quite clear that even though it is a minus in logical symbolisation, these two minuses do not have the same value. There exists no x which, I was lead to tell you, explodes, namely, renders false this function F(x). I symbolised these two terms. That of non-existence and that of the effect, which end up with the falsity of the function, are not of the same order. But this is precisely what is at stake. It is to mask something that is precisely the fissure and is altogether essential for us to determine and to fix in its plane, which is the distance between the stating subject (220) and the subject of the statement. I will again point this out to you, for example, in connection with another way, among other authors, of giving to the function an image that is more manageable at the level of its properly predicative application. For, in truth, F(x) can designate all kinds of things, including all kinds of mathematical formulae that you can apply to it. It is the most general formula.

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On the contrary, if you want to remain at the level of my *all men are wise*, here is the formula: ($\bar{m}$ V w), with the sign of disjunction V that I already put on the board the last time. A formula to which, according to the logicians who introduced quantification, it would be enough to add the $\forall$ of *pan* to make of it the universal or particular proposition:$\forall$ ($\bar{m}$ V w) and which means, in short, that what we are dealing with is the disjunction between *no man* and this *w*. This means that if we choose the contrary of *no man,* namely, *man*, we have the disjunction: he is wise, either in every case, or in certain particular cases.

If we take the negation of wise, namely, if we renounce wise, we are at the other side of the disjunction, namely, on the side of no man. This can still work, up to this point.

But this in no way implies the requirement of not wise for what is not man. Now this is not indicated in the formula. For this it is necessary that the disjunction should be marked, for example, like that,$\exists$ ($\bar{m}$ V w), a sign then which would be the inverse of the one of the square root. This is designed to show us that with respect to implication, if we know here, in short, at the level of the universal that man implies wise, that not wise, certainly, does not imply no man. But that wise is perfectly, for its part also, with no man. Namely, that there can be something other than man who is wise is elided in the way of presenting quite crudely the formula of disjunction, between a subject which is negated and the predicate which is not.

A point, also, which demonstrates something that, in the system described as that of double negation, to express oneself in this script (*scription*) of Mitchell, always allows to escape this something which, this time, far from suturing the fissure, leaves it gaping without knowing it. A confirmation that it is the fissure that is always at stake.

In other words, what is at stake, as regards logic, I mean formal, is always this. What can be drawn, and up to what point, from a statement, namely, to get a (221) reliable statement. It is indeed from there also that Aristotle started.

Aristotle, of course, let us not say that he was at the dawn of thinking, because what is proper to thinking is precisely never to have had a dawn. It was already very old and it knew something. In particular it knew that of course there would be no question of knowing, if there were no language. That is not enough, of course, because knowledge does not depend only on language. But what was important for it, was to know precisely - because thinking did not date from yesterday - what could make of a stating, something necessary. There is no way of yielding on this point. The first *ananke* is the *ananke* of discourse.

The formal logic of Aristotle was the first step in knowing what properly and distinguished as such, at the level of the statement, could be formulated as giving this source - which does not mean that it was the only one, of course - its necessity for stating. Namely, that here there is no way of retreating. Moreover,

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it is the sense that the term *episteme* had at that time, it is that of a stating about the distinction between *episteme* and *doxa* is nothing other than a distinction situated at the level of discourse.

It is the difference between what is for us science, to go in the same direction, namely, between a strictly reliable statement, and indeed it is certain for us, who have made some original contributions to what is involved in the statement, and in fact in no other place than in mathematics. These laws of the statement, to be reliable, have become, still become every day more and more exigent and, in this respect, do not fail to show their limits. I mean that it is in the whole measure that we have taken, in logic, some steps, among which of course is the one that I am presenting to you here. But it is the original step, that interests us. Why? Because we analysts find ourselves beyond this attempt at capturing stating by the networks of the statement. But what luck that the work has been pushed so far elsewhere, if through this there are given to us some rules to carefully map out the fissure.

When I state that the unconscious is structured like a language, that does not mean that I know it, since, what I completed it with, is properly this *one (on)* on which I put the emphasis and which is the one which gives vertigo to all the (222) psychoanalysts. The fact is that one knows nothing about it. *One*, the subject supposed to know, the one who must always be there to make us comfortable.

If I state it, therefore, it is not because I know it, it is because my discourse, in effect, organises the unconscious. I am saying that the only discourse that we have about the unconscious, that of Freud, makes sense. This certainly is not what is important, because it makes sense as one makes water: everywhere. Everything makes sense, as I showed you. "*Colourless green ideas sleep furiously*", also makes sense. It is even the best characterisation that one could give to the totality of analytic literature. If in Freud this sense is so full, so resonant with respect to what is at stake, - the unconscious. If, in other words, it is distinguished from everything that he rejected in advance as occultism, if everyone knows and senses it is not Mesmer - that it why it subsists despite the senselessness of the analytic discourse - it is a miracle that we can only explain indirectly. Namely, by the scientific formation of Freud.

The important thing in this discourse is not its sense which must first of all exist so that what I put forward with "the unconscious is structured like a language" has its reference, its *Bedeutung*. Because it is here that one notices that the reference is language. In other words that everything that my discourse articulates about that of Freud on the unconscious ends up with isomorphic formulae, the ones required if what is at stake is language taken as object. The isomorphism that the unconscious imposes on my discourse about the unconscious, with respect to what is involved in a discourse on language, is what is at stake. Which means that every psychoanalyst ought to be caught up in this discourse, in so far as he is engaged in this field defined by Freud for the unconscious.

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Starting from there, I can only barely state, before leaving you, some pinpointing designed for you not to lose your heads in this business. I hope that what I have said at the final term concerning the formula "the unconscious is structured like a language" will preserve all the same its value as a turning point for those who have heard for a long time as, moreover, for those who refuse to hear it.

Of course our science, the one that is ours, is not defined simply by these co-ordinates, which mean that there is no knowledge except through language. It nevertheless remains that science itself cannot be sustained except by putting in reserve a knowledge made up purely of language. Namely, of a logic that is (223) strictly internal and necessary for the development of its instrument in so far as the instrument is mathematics. And everyone can put his finger at every instant on the properly language impasses in which the progress of the mathematical instrument itself puts it. In as much as it both welcomes and is welcomed by every new field of these factual discoveries and is an altogether essential resource for modern science.

It remains indeed then that there is a whole level where knowledge is about language. And it is a vanity to say that this field is properly tautological, that it is at the very origin of what constitutes the start of science, namely, taking the measure of the cleavage thus defined in discourse, from a logical asceticism called the *cogito.* It is a sign that I was able to develop this asceticism sufficiently to found on it the logic of the phantasy. The one whose articulations were, I must say, very well isolated the last time during the closed seminar by one of those who are working here in the field of my discourse.

It is not a matter, as he said, and as he said in a legitimate fashion in the perspective of what he was trying to contribute as an answer to this discourse, of a "new negation" which is supposed to be the one that I am producing. May heaven preserve me from giving again to anyone whomsoever with the introduction of a novelty the opportunity of conjuring away what is at stake. Which is indeed the complete contrary of this thing that is plugged up because it is something that cannot be plugged. May heaven grant that I do not in any way give to the psychoanalyst a renewed alibi to the one that he has by being in the analytic discourse. Namely, in the proper and Aristotelian sense, his *upokeimemon*, his subjective support certainly, but in so far as he himself assumes its division.

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Seminar 13: Wednesday 13 March 1968

What is it to be a psychoanalyst? It is towards this aim that there is making its way what I am trying to tell you this year, under this title of the psychoanalytic act.

It is strange that some, among the messages that are sent to me and for which, since I asked for them, I thank those who were good enough to take this step, it is strange that there sometimes crops up the following. That I am doing here something that is supposed to be close to some kind of philosophical reflection. Perhaps all the same some sessions, like the last one, which, of course, if it did not fail to grip those among you who are best following my discourse, sufficiently warns you nevertheless, that what is at stake is something else. Experience - an experience, it is always something which one recently has had the echoes of - proves that the state of mind produced in a certain order of studies described as philosophical, adapts itself badly to the whole precise articulation of this science called logic. In this echo, I even picked out and retained this humorous judgement, that such an attempt to bring in, properly speaking, what has been constructed as logic into the classes, into what is imposed for the philosophical cursus or gradus, would be something akin to this ambition of the technocrat, whose final slogan among all auricular resistances, is to accuse those who, on the whole, are trying to contribute this more precise discourse, which my own is supposed to be a part of, under the title of structuralism. This, in short, is distinguished by this common characteristic, of taking properly as object, what is constituted, not under the heading of what (226) constitutes the ordinary object of a science, namely, something from which one is once and for all at a sufficient distance to isolate in the real as constituting a special species, but to be occupied properly by what is constituted as language-effect.

To take the language-effect as object is indeed, in effect, what can be considered as the common factor in structuralism. And that assuredly, in this connection, thinking finds its basis, its angle, its way of escaping, in the form of a reverie, from this something which, precisely, around this strives to become embodied, and to restore to it, what? Ancient themes which, under different headings, always found themselves flourishing around every discourse in so far as it is properly the backbone of philosophy. Namely, keeping oneself at the point of what, in the use of discourse, has certain effects. Where precisely there is situated the way in which this discourse unfailingly comes to this sort of

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mediocrity, inoperancy which means that the only thing left outside, eliminated, is precisely this effect.

Now it is difficult not to notice that psychoanalysis offers a privileged terrain for such reflection.

What in effect is psychoanalysis? I happened, incidentally, in an article, the one found in my *Ecrits* under the title *"Variants de la cure type, Variants of the standard treatment"*, to write something that I took care to re-extract this morning. That to ask oneself what is involved in psychoanalysis, since precisely it was a matter of showing how there could be defined, established, these variants, which presupposes that there is something typical. And it was indeed precisely to correct a certain way of associating the word *type* to that of the efficacy of psychoanalysis, that I wrote this article. So then I said, incidentally: "This criterion rarely stated because it is taken to be tautological" - it was already so well before, it is more than ten years ago - I write, "a psychoanalysis, standard or not, is the treatment that one expects from a psychoanalyst".

"Rarely stated", because in truth, in effect, people back away from something that might be not only, as I wrote, tautological, but either would be, or would evoke, this something or other unknown, opaque, irreducible which consists precisely in the qualification of the psychoanalyst.

Observe, nevertheless, that this indeed is what is involved, when you want to verify whether someone is correct in claiming to have gone through an analysis. (227) Who did you go to? Is that person a psychoanalyst or not? This is something that is not settled in the question. If for some reason - and the reasons are precisely what are to be opened up here with a big question mark - the person is not qualified to call himself a psychoanalyst, a scepticism at least is generated as to whether, yes or no, in the experience from which the subject authorises himself, it was indeed a psychoanalysis that was at stake.

In effect, there is no other criterion. But it is precisely this criterion that it would be a matter of defining, in particular when it is a matter of distinguishing a psychoanalysis from this broader thing, whose limits remain uncertain, that is called a psychotherapy.

Let us break up this word "psychotherapy". We will see it being defined by something that is "psycho", psychology, namely, a material of which the least that can be said is that its definition is still subject to some contestation. I mean that nothing is less obvious than what people have wanted to call the unity of psychology, since moreover it only gets its status from a series of references, some of which appeared to be reassuring, because they are most foreign to it. Namely, what is most opposed to it, for example, as belonging to the organic. Or, on the contrary, by the establishment of a series of severe limitations that in practice render what has been obtained, for example, under certain experimental conditions, in the laboratory context, more or less inadequate, indeed

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inapplicable, when what is at stake is something that is still more confused, called therapy. Therapy. Everyone knows the diversity of styles and of resonances that this evokes. The centre of it is given by the term suggestion. At least, it is that of all of them. What is referred to the action, the action of one individual on another, being exercised in ways that certainly, cannot claim to have received their full definition. At the horizon, at the limit of such practices, we will have the general notion of what are called on the whole, and what have been rather well situated as techniques of the body. At the other end, we will have ...- I mean by that what, in many civilisations, is manifested as what is propagated here in the erratic form of what people are happy to pinpoint in our epoch as Indian techniques, or again what are called the different forms of yoga. At the other extreme, Samaritan help, which confusedly loses itself in the field, in the abysses, of the elevation of the soul; indeed! It is strange to see it taken (228) up in advertising what is supposed to be produced at the end of the exercise of psychoanalysis; this curious effusion described as the exercise of some goodness or other.

Psychoanalysis let us start then from what is for the moment our only firm point: that it takes place with a psychoanalyst. "With" must be understood here in the instrumental sense, or at least I am proposing that you should understand it in that way.

How does it happen that there exists something that cannot be situated except with a psychoanalyst. As Aristotle says, not at all that one should say, he assures us, "the soul thinks" but "man thinks with his soul" indicating explicitly that this is the sense that should be given to the word "with", namely, the instrumental sense. A strange thing, when I made an allusion somewhere to the Aristotelian reference, things seem rather to have brought effects of confusion to the reader, for want no doubt of recognising the Aristotelian reference.

It is with a psychoanalyst that psychoanalysis penetrates into this something that is at stake. If the unconscious exists and if we define it, as it seems at least, after the long march that we have been making for years in this field, to go into the field of the unconscious is properly to find oneself at the level of what can be best defined as language-effect, in this sense that, for the first time, it is articulated that this effect can be isolated in a way from the subject. That there is knowledge, knowledge in so far as here is what the typical language-effect constitutes. That knowledge is incarnated without the subject who is holding his discourse being conscious of it, in the sense that here, being conscious of his knowledge, is to be co-dimensional with what the knowledge includes, it is to be complicit in this knowledge.

Assuredly, there is here an opening onto something through which there is proposed to us the language-effect as object, in a way that is distinct. Because it excludes from this dialectic, as it has been constructed at the end of the traditionally philosophical questioning, and which would put us on the path of a possible, exhaustive and total reduction of what is involved in the subject, in so

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far as it is what states this truth, which claims to give the final word on discourse in these formulae. That the *en-soi* is of its nature destined to be reduced to a *pour-soi.* That a *pour-soi* would envelop at the end of an absolute knowledge everything involved in the *en-soi.* That things are different, by the (229) very fact that psychoanalysis teaches us that the subject, because of the effect of the signifier, is only established as divided and this in an irreducible fashion. This is something that solicits from us the study of what is involved in the subject as language-effect. And how this is accessible, and the role that the psychoanalyst plays in it, is assuredly something essential to ground.

In effect, if what is involved in knowledge always leaves a residue, a residue in a way constitutive of its status – is not the first question posed about the partner, about the one who is there, I am not saying as aid, but as instrument, for something to occur, the psychoanalysing task, at the end of which the subject, let us say, is aware of this constitutive division, after which, for him, something opens up which cannot be called otherwise nor differently than *passage à l'acte*, let us say an enlightened *passage à l'acte* - it is precisely from the fact of knowing that in every act, there is something which escapes him as subject, which will have an incidence there, and that at the end of this act, the realisation is, let us say for the moment, at the very least veiled about what he has to accomplish, from this act, as being his own realisation.

This, which is the end of the psychoanalysing task, leaves completely to one side what happens to the psychoanalyst, in this task that has been accomplished. It would seem, in a kind of naïve questioning, that we could say that by setting aside the full and simple realisation of the *pour-soi* in this task taken as asceticism, its term could be conceived of as a knowledge which at least would be realised for the other. Namely, for the one who is found to be the partner of the operation, to have established its frame and authorised its process.

Is this how it is? It is true that in presiding, as I might say, over this task, the psychoanalyst learns a lot about it. Does this mean that in any way he is the one in the operation who, in a way, can pride himself on being the authentic subject of a realised knowledge? The specific objection to this is that psychoanalysis disputes all exhausting of knowledge and this at the level of the subject himself, in so far as he is brought into play in the psychoanalytic task.

What is at stake in psychoanalysis is not at all a *gnothi seauton* but precisely a grasp of the limit of this *gnothi seauton.* Because this limit is properly of the nature of logic itself, and because it is inscribed in the language-effect that it always leaves outside itself. And, consequently, in so far as it allows the subject (230) to be constituted as such, this excluded part which means that the subject, of his nature, either only recognises himself by forgetting what firstly determined him in this operation of recognition, or indeed even by grasping himself in this determination, as denial, I mean only sees it arising in an essential *Verneinung* by failing to recognise it.

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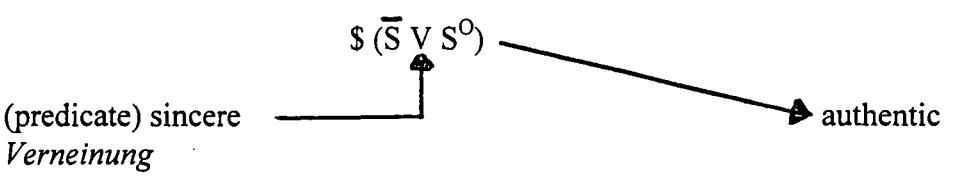
In other words, we find ourselves, with the basal schema of two forms, specifically the hysterical and the obsessional from which analytic experience starts. These are here only an example, an illustration, a flowering, and this in the measure that neurosis is essentially constructed from the reference of desire to demand. We find ourselves face to face with the same logical schema that I produced the last time, in showing you the framework of what quantification is. The one that links the elaborated approach that we can give of the subject and of the predicate, which here, would be inscribed in the form of the repressed signifier S, in so far at it is representative of the subject for another signifier S^O. Let us give this signifier the co-efficient O, in so far as it is the one in which the subject has in fact to recognise himself or fail to recognise himself, where it is inscribed as fixing the subject somewhere in the field of the Other, whose formula is the following: $\$ (\bar{S} \vee S^O)$. That for every subject in so far as it is of its nature divided, here exactly, in the same way as we can formulate that every man is wise ($\bar{m}Vw$), we have the disjunctive choice, between the *no man* and the *to be wise*. We have fundamentally this. As the first analytic experience teaches us, the hysteric, in her final articulation, in her essential nature, quite authentically, if authentic means "to find one's own law only within oneself", is sustained in a signifying affirmation which, for us, looks like theatre, looks like comedy. And in truth it is for us that she presents herself in this way as authentic $\$ (\bar{S} \vee S^O)$. No one will be able to grasp what is involved in the true structure of the hysteric, if he does not take it on the contrary as being the most firm and most autonomous status of the subject, the one that is expressed in the signifier on condition that the first, the one that determines it, remains not alone forgotten, but in ignorance of the fact that it is forgotten. While it is quite sincerely at the level of the structure described as obsessional that the subject produces the signifier that is at stake, in so far as it is his truth, but provides it with the fundamental *Verneinung,* through which he announces himself as not being what precisely he is articulating, that he admits he is formulating.
(231) Consequently, he only establishes himself at the level of the predicate, maintained in its pretension of being something else, only formulates himself, as it were, in a failure to recognise in a way indicated by the negation itself with which he supports it, by the denegatory form with which this failure to recognise is accompanied.



[other version: $\bar{m}Vw$
sincere]

It is then from a homology, from a parallel to what has been inscribed in writing in which, more and more there is established what is imposed from the very progress which forces, in discourse, the enriching it is given by having to match itself with what comes to us from the varieties, the conceptual variations, that

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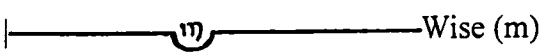
the progress of mathematics imposes on us. It is from the homology of forms of inscription - I am making an allusion for example to Frege's *Begriffschrift*, Frege, which is the writing of the concept. As you know, it is enough to open him. As a writing of the concept, I already gave you some examples of it. And in so far as we are trying to begin with Frege to inscribe in this writing predicative forms which, not only historically, but because of the fact that throughout history they hold up, they are inscribed in what is called the logic of predicates, and first degree logic. Namely, which contributes no quantification at the level of the predicate.

Assertoric judgment

Let us say, to take up our example again, in truth it is important not to spare it too much, that the use that I made the last time of the quite humorous universal affirmative: all men are wise, that the way in which, in his *Begriffschrift*, Frege would write it, would be in a form which posits, in the horizontal lines, the (232) simply propositional content, namely, the way in which the signifier are stuck together, without anything for all that being required of them except syntactical correctness. By the bar he puts on the left, he marks what is called the implication, the presence of the judgement. It is starting from the inscription of this bar that the content of the proposition is affirmed, or passes to the stage that is called assertoric. The presence here of something that we can translate by "it is true" assuredly we must translate it. And this "it is true" is precisely what, for us, namely, where what is at stake is a logic, which does not deserve in any way to be called technically primary logic, for the term is already used in logical constructions. It designates specifically what can only operate by combining truth values. It is indeed for this reason that what might well be called primary logic, if the term were not already employed, we will call sub-logic. This does not mean inferior logic, but logic in so far as it is a matter of a logic *qua* constitutive of the subject. This "it is true", is indeed for us at the level at which we are going to place something other than this assertoric position, it is indeed in effect here that for us the truth is in question. $\forall(Fx) - \exists x - (Fx) \rightarrow$ double negative, this little hollow, this concavity, this hollowing-out in a way, that here Frege reserves to indicate in it what we are going to see. This is why it seems indispensable to him to assure its correct status to his *Begriffschrift.* It is here that there is going to come something which operates in the proposition inscribed here under the heading of content, "all men are wise", that we are going to inscribe in this way, for example,



by putting the "wise" as being the function, and here man as what he calls in the function the argument.

There is, for him, no other correct way of proceeding for any subsequent handling of this *Begriffschrift* , writing of the concept, than to inscribe here, in the hollow and in a form explicitly indicative of the function that is at stake, that

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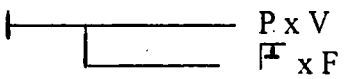
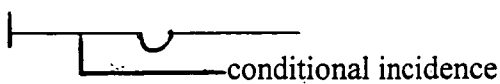
the same m of the man in question, indicating by this that, for every m, the formula "man is wise" is true.

I do not have to develop for you here the necessity of such a procedure, because it would be necessary to give what follows, its riches and its complications. Let it be enough for you here to know that in the link that we might make, between (233) such a proposition and another which is supposed to be, in a way, its condition, a thing which in the *Begriffschrift* is inscribed thus:

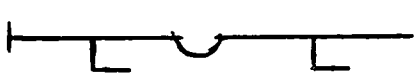


namely, that a proposition F has a certain relation with a proposition P, and that this relation is defined once, (I am saying it for those for whom these words have a sense), in accordance with the module of what is called Philonian implication. Namely, that if this (P) is true, this (F) cannot be false. In other words, that to give order, coherence to a discourse, there only has to be ruled out, and simply ruled out the following: that the false can be conditioned by the true. All the other combinations, including the fact that the false determines the true are admissible.

I am simply indicating this to you, in the margin, that by writing things in this way, we will have the advantage of being able to distinguish two different forms of implication, according to whether it is at the level of this part of the *Begriffschfift*, namely, at the level at which the proposition is posited as assertoric, that the conditional incidence will come to connect itself:

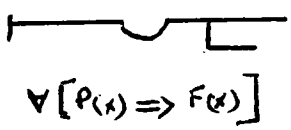


or on the contrary this:



(1)

(1) French editor says this shd be corrected to:



at the level of the proposition itself. Namely, that it is not the same thing to say that, if something is true, we might state that man is wise, or that if something else is true, it is true that all men are wise. There is a world between the two things.

This is only designed, moreover, to indicate to you in the margin, and to show you what the necessity of this hollow corresponds to, which is the following. That somewhere there deserves to be isolated the term which logically, at the point of adequate advancement of logic that we are at, gives body to the term **all** as being the principle, the base starting from which, through the simple operation of diversified negation, there can be formulated all the first positions

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defined, contributed by Aristotle. Namely that, for example, there is to be put (233) here, in the form of this vertical line, the negation,

that it will be true for every man, that man is not wise, namely, that we will incarnate the universal negative.

On the contrary, to say in this way:

we are saying that it is not true that for every man we can state that man is not wise. We obtain by these two negations, the manifestation of the particular universal. For if it is not true that for all men, it is true to say that man is not wise, it must be then that there is one little fellow, lost somewhere, who is. And that inversely, if we remove this negation here and only leave that one, we are saying that it is not true that for every man, man is wise, namely, that there are some who are not so.

You sense some artifice in articulating things in this way. Namely, that the fact you sense as artifice, for example the appearance of the last particular described as negative, highlights that in the original logic, that of Aristotle, something is masked from us, precisely by implying these subjects to be a collection, whatever they may be, whether by grasping it in extension or in comprehension. That the nature of the subject is not to be sought in something that is ontological, the subject functioning in a way itself as a sort of first predicate, which it is not. What the essence of the subject is, as it appears in logical functioning, starts whole and entire from the first writing, the one that posits the subject as affirming itself of its nature as all. For every m, man, the formula: "man is wise" is true. And it is starting from that, in accordance in a way with a deduction the inverse to the one that I highlighted before you the last time, that existence, comes to light and specifically the only one that is important for us, (235) the one that the particular affirmative supports: there is a man who is wise. It depends, and through the intermediary of a double negation, on the affirmation of the universal. Just as the last time, in presenting the same thing to you (for we are still dealing with quantifiers), it was the double negation applied to existence that I showed you could express the function of all. That the function, $\forall$ (Fx), I said could be expressed be reversed into a-$\exists$(x). No x exists which renders the F(x) function false, namely a double minus,- $\exists$x.- Fx.

This presence of the double negation is what for us, creates a problem. Since in truth, the connection with it is only made in a enigmatic fashion with what is involved in the function of the all, because this fact again of course that the linguistic nuance, of the function opposite to *pan* or of *pantes* in Greek, is opposed to the function of *olos*, just as *omnis* is opposed to *totus*. It is, nevertheless, not nothing that Aristotle himself, as regards what is involved in

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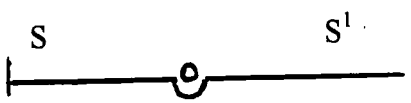
the universal affirmative, says it is posited *kath olon* "for the whole", and the ambiguity in French remains unaffected, because of the confusion between two signifiers, between which fundamentally has some relation, namely, this function of the all (*du tout*).

It is clear that if the subject, that we manage, with the perfection of logic, to reduce to this "no one who is not" (*pas qui ne*) that I noted the last time, that this subject, nevertheless, in what one might call its native pretension, poses itself as being of its nature capable of apprehending something like all, and that what gives it its status and also its mirage, is that it can think of itself as subject of knowledge. Namely, as an eventual support, just by itself, for something which is all.

Now it is there that I want to lead you, to this indication. I do not know whether the discourse that I am making today as short as I can, as I always do, after having very seriously prepared its stages for you, depending on the attention of the audience - or my own state - I am indeed forced, as in every articulated discourse, and more especially when it is a matter of a discourse about discourse, about logical operations, to take a short cut when it is necessary. It is the fact that, in the way I already indicated to you, the first division of the subject is set up in the repetitive function, what is at stake is essentially the following. The fact is that the subject is only set up as represented by a signifier for another signifier (S and S^1). And it is between the two, at the level of (236) primitive repetition, that this loss, this function of the lost object takes place, around which, precisely, the first operational attempt of the signifier turns, the one that is established in the fundamental repetition;



that what comes here to occupy the place given in the establishment of the universal affirmative, to this factor called "argument" in Frege's statements, which is why the predicative function is always acceptable. And that in every case the function of **all** finds its base, its original turning point and, as I might say, the very principle that establishes its illusion, with reference to the lost object, in the intermediary function of the **o**-object, between the original signifier in so far as it is repressed signifier, and the signifier that represent it in the substitution established by the repefition which itself is first.

And this is illustrated for us in psychoanalysis itself, and by something capital, in the fact that it represents, that it incarnates in a way in the liveliest fashion, what is involved in the function of the **all** in the economy, I would not say of the unconscious, in the economy of analytic knowledge, precisely in so far as this knowledge tries to totalise its own experience. It is even the bias, the slope, the trap into which analytic thinking falls when, for want of being able to grasp itself in its essentially divisive operation, at its term with respect to the subject, it establishes as primary, the idea of an ideal fusion that it projects as original,

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but which, if you wish, operates here around this universal affirmative, which is precisely the one that it is supposed to be created to make problematic, and which is expressed more or less as follows: no unconscious without the mother. No economy, no affective dynamic, without this thing which is supposed in a way to be at the origin, that man knows the all, because he was in an original fusion with the mother.

This kind of parasitic myth, for it is not Freudian, it was introduced from an enigmatic angle, that of the birth trauma, as you know, by Otto Rank. To bring in birth from the angle of trauma is to give it a signifying function. The thing then in itself was not intended to contribute a fundamental vitiation to the exercise of a thinking which, as analytic thinking, can only leave intact what is (237) at stake. Namely, that on the final plane where the identificatory articulation stumbles, the gap remains open between man and woman, and that consequently, in the very constitution of the subject, we can in no way introduce, let us say, the existence in the world of male and female complementarity.

Now how was the introduction by Otto Rank of this reference to birth from the angle of trauma used? To profoundly vitiate it subsequently in analytic thinking, because it is said that as least this all, this fusion which means that, for the subject there was a primal possibility, and therefore the possibility of re-conquering, a union with what constitutes the all. It is the relation of the mother to the child, of the child to the mother in the uterine state, at the stage before birth, and here we put our finger on where the bias and the error is. But this error is exemplary, because it reveals to us where this function of the all originates in the subject, in so far as it falls under the bias of unconscious destiny. Namely, that it is only recognised authentically by being forgotten, or it is only sincerely recognised by being mis-recognised.

And here in effect, very simply, is where the mainspring is, from the moment that we take things at the level of the function of language: there is no demand that is not addressed to the mother.

We can see this manifesting itself in effect in the development of the child, in so far as he is first of all *infans* and that it is in the field of the mother that he will first of all have to articulate his demand.

What do we see appearing at the level of this demand? This, uniquely, is what is at stake and what every analysis designates for us: it is the function of the breast. Everything that analysis makes operate, as if what were at stake here were a process of knowledge, namely, that the fact that the reality of the mother is first of all only brought to us, designated by the function of what is called the partial object. But this partial object - I do not mind it being called that - in effect, except that we ought to notice that it is at the source of the imagination of the all. That if something is conceived of as totality between the child and the mother, it is in the measure that, at the heart of the demand, namely, in the gap

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between what is not articulated and what is articulated as demand, the object around which there arises the first demand, it is the only object which brings to this little newly born being this complement, this irreducible loss, which is its (238) only support. Namely, this breast, so curiously placed here for this use, which of its nature is logical: the o-object, and what Frege would call the variable, the variable I mean in the instauration of any function Fx whatsoever. If a variable is quantified, it passes to another status, precisely by being quantified as universal. This means not simply any one whatsoever, but that fundamentally, in its consistency, it is a constant. And that it is for this reason that, for the child who begins to articulate, with his demand, what will constitute the status of his desire, if an object has this favour of being able for an instant to fulfil this constant function, it is the breast. And, moreover, it is strange that there did not immediately appear, in speculating on the biological terms that psychoanalysis aspires to, since it refers to them, that people do not notice that this thing, which seems to be stated as self-evident, that every child has a mother - and people even underline, in order to put us on the track, that assuredly for the father, we are in the order of faith! But would it be so certain that there is a mother if, instead of being a human, namely, a mammal, it was an insect? What are the relations of an insect with its mother?

If we allow ourselves perpetually to play - and this is presentified in psychoanalyses - between the term, the reference, of conception and that of birth, we see the distance there is between the two. And that the fact that the mother is the mother does not depend, except by a purely organic necessity - I mean, of course, that up to the present, she is the only one who can produce in her own uterus her own eggs, but after all, since people practise artificial insemination nowadays, people will also perhaps perform ovular insertion - the mother, is not, essentially at the level that we take her in analytic experience, this something which is referred to sexual terms. We always speak about the relation described as sexual, let us also speak about the sexual described as relation. The sexual described as relation is completely masked by the fact that human beings of whom we can say that if they did not have language, how would they even know that they are mortal? We will also say, moreover, that if they were not mammals, they would not imagine that they had been born. For the emergence of being, in so far as we operate in this constructed knowledge, which moreover becomes perverting for the whole operational dialectic of analysis, that we make turn around birth, is it anything other than something that was presented in Plato in a manner that I for my part find more sensible. Read the myth of Er. What is this wandering of souls once they have left the body, who are there in a hyperspace before entering to re-lodge themselves somewhere, according to their taste or chance, it does not matter, what is it if not something which has much more sense for us analysts. What is this wandering soul, if not precisely what I am speaking about: the residue of the division of the subject? This metempsychosis appears to me logically less flawed than the one constituting what happens before everything that happens in the psychoanalysing dynamic, the sojourn in the mother's womb. If we do not imagine this sojourn, as it is after all, at the beginning of the mammal line of

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Seminar 14: Wednesday 20 March 1968

"Every man is an animal, except that he names himself"
(*Tout homme est un animal, sauf à ce qu'il se n'homme*)

I put that on the board for you as a way of getting you going, since in reality I am not in a very good mood. This little formula has no pretension to being thinking. It may however serve a number of you as something to hold onto, as a pivot for a certain number of you who will understand nothing, for example, of what I will say today, something that is not unthinkable. They will understand nothing, but this will not prevent them from dreaming about something else. I am not insulting you, I do not think that this is the generality of cases, but anyway let us say an average!

The reverie aspect of what is always produced in every kind of statement with thinking pretensions or is believed to be such, must always be taken into account and why not give it a little point to hook onto. Suppose, for example, that this aspect of my teaching, namely, what can pass for being thinking, does not have - as has happened to many people, and those of greater stature than mine - any follow-up. There will remain little things like that, it has happened to the very great. So then on this point, there is produced what is called as in the animal kingdom a sort of very special fauna, these kinds of little beasts of the insect class, individuals with wing-sheaths, there are a whole lot of them which feed on cadavers. They are called death squads in legal medicine. There are about ten generations that come to consume what remains in terms of human debris. When I say generation, I mean that they succeed one another, that different species come (242) at different stages.

This is more or less what the use of a certain number of university activities around the remainders of thinking is like, death squads. There are already some busying themselves, for example, without either waiting for me to die, or seeing the result of the things that I have stated before you in the course of the years, at gauging at what moment, in what is constituted by what I collected, as I was able, with a brush, under the title of *Ecrits*, I really began to speak about linguistics, at what moment, and up to when, what I am saying overlaps what Jacobson says. You will see, this is going to develop. Moreover, I do not at all believe that such an operation is a result of my merits. I believe indeed that it is a rather deliberate operation on the part of those directly interested by what I am saying and who would like the people whose business it is to set about proliferating right away

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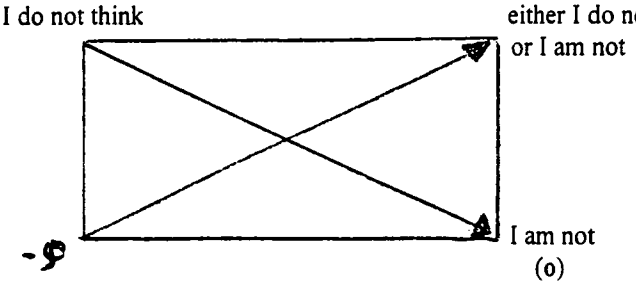
about what can be retained from my statements under the title of thinking. That gives them a little anticipation of what they are hoping for. Namely, that what I am announcing, and which is not necessarily thinking, is without consequences, I mean for them. There is some feeding in it!

Nevertheless, you will see that this has a certain relation with what I am going to tell you today. We are still of course, at the psychoanalytic act. Why, in short, am I speaking about the psychoanalytic act? It is for psychoanalysts. They are truly the only ones who are implicated in it. Moreover, everything is in that. Today, I am advancing onto a terrain which is obviously little designed for such a large public, namely, how the psychoanalytic act can operate to bring about this something that we will call the identification of the psychoanalyst.

It is a way of taking up the question that at least has this interest: it is new. I mean that up to the present nothing sensible or solid has been articulated about what is involved in what qualifies the psychoanalyst as such. People speak, of course, about rules, about procedures, about modes of access, but this still does not say what a psychoanalyst is. The fact that I am speaking about the psychoanalytic act, from which in short I hope we will be able to take a step forward in what is called the qualification of the psychoanalyst, that I should be lead to speak about the psychoanalytic act before a public which is only in part concerned with it, like this one, is something that in itself gives rises to a problem. A problem that, moreover, is not at all insoluble. Because I want once more to mark what justifies - not what conditions: what conditions, is a series of (243) position-effects which, precisely, what we are able to push forward in our discourse today is going to allow us perhaps to specify something about. But in any case, whatever may be the conditioning [*Lacan interrupts his seminar to make an intervention directed at the audience "... please! Stop that messing! I have enough of it! I am asking you to put that wherever you want and leave me in peace"*] what justifies that, when one is speaking about the act before a wider public than the one interested in it, namely, properly speaking the psychoanalysts, it is obviously because the psychoanalytic act has a particularity. I could do a little more scribbling on the board to show you what it comes from in the famous quadrangle, the one that starts from "either I do not think, or I am not". With what it involves in terms of "I do not think", which is here on the top left, and "I am not", which is here on the bottom right. And you know that the psychoanalytic act takes place on this axis, culminating in this ejecting of the **o**



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which has devolved, in short, to the charge of the psychoanalyst who has posed, has allowed, has authorised the conditions of the act, at the price of coming himself to support this function of the little **o**-object. The psychoanalytic act is obviously what gives this support, authorises what is going to be realised as the psychoanalysing task, and, it is in as much as the psychoanalyst gives to this act his authorisation that the psychoanalytic act is realised.

Now there is something quite curious in the fact that this act whose trajectory, in a way, ought to be accomplished by the Other, with this at least presumed result that what is properly speaking act, in so far as we might be lead to ask ourselves what an act is, is obviously not either in this condition, nor in this quite atypical trajectory that there ought to be drawn at least on this quadrangle, but in this one (-φ). Namely, in as much as the psychoanalysing subject, for his part, having come to this realisation of castration, it is a return achieved to the inaugural point, which in truth he never left, the statutory one, that of the forced choice, the (244) alienating choice between "either I am not" and "or I do not think", which ought, by his act, accomplish this something finally realised by him. Namely, what makes him divided as subject. In other words, that he accomplishes an act while knowing, being fully aware, why this act will never realise him fully as subject.

The psychoanalytic act then, as it presents itself, is of a nature to - because it introduces another dimension of this act which does not act of itself, as I might say - may allow us to throw some light on what is involved in an act, the one that I drew just now crossways, the act without qualification. For I am not all the same going to call it human. I am not going to call it human for all sorts of reasons which this little hooking term that I quoted at the beginning can give you an inkling of, since it grounds man in principle. Or rather it grounds him again, or that it grounds him again every time the act in question, the act just by itself, the act that I am not naming, takes place ... which does not happen often.

At this point, naturally, I all the same tried to give some definitions so that we know what we are talking about. Specifically, that the act is a matter of the signifier (*un fait de signifiant*). It is indeed from this that we started when we began to stammer about it. A matter of the signifier where there takes its place the return of the effect described as the subject-effect which is produced by the word, in language of course, a return of this subject-effect in so far as it is radically divided. This is the novelty brought as a challenge by the psychoanalytic discovery that posits as essential that this subject-effect is a division-effect. This division-effect is that in as much as it is once realised, something can be its return. There can be a re-act. We can speak about act and this act that the psychoanalytic act is, which, for its part, is posited in such a curious fashion, because it is quite different in this sense that nothing requires it to be produced after what, in psychoanalysis, leaves the subject in the position of being able to act. Nothing implies that this, henceforth isolated by the action of the Other who guided him in his psychoanalysis, by a psychoanalysis whose act

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allowed the task to be accomplished, nothing explains this leap through which this act which allowed the realising task, the psychoanalysing task, the psychoanalysand, as one might say, to assume what? The programme.

As regards the act - this is a little reflexive parenthesis that I will give here at the start and which is important, which refers moreover to the words by which I (245) began concerning the future of all thinking - all organised thinking is situated in a *bivium,* or starting from a *bivium,* which in our day is particularly clear. Either it rejects this subject-effect I am starting from by linking it once more to itself in a moment which would be original. This is the sense that the *cogito* had historically, the *cogito* is its model, and the honest model as one might say and it is honest because it posits itself as origin. When you see someone beginning to speak about the phantasy of the origin, you can know that he is dishonest. There is no phantasy to be grasped except *hic et nunc.* From now on this is the origin of the phantasy, after that, we can talk about it when we have found out where we are with it. As regards the *cogito* it did not posit itself as origin. Nowhere does Decartes say: "at the origin, the one who thinks gives rise to being". He says: "I think, therefore I am". And, starting from there, it is a good thing in fact, there is no need to be worried about it any more. He completely freed up the entry of science which will absolutely never worry again about the subject. Except, of course, at the required limit where this subject is found, when it has, after a certain time, to notice what it is operating with, namely, the mathematical system and, at the same time, the logical system.

It will do everything then in this logical system, to systematise it without having to deal with the subject, but it will not be easy. In truth, it will only be at these logical frontiers that the effect of the subject will continue to make itself felt, to make itself present and to create some difficulties for science. But for the rest, by reason of this initial approach of the *cogito*, one can say that to science everything was given, and, in short, in a legitimate way. Everything fell into its hands, it has to be said, with a immense field of success. But it is in a way at the price that science has absolutely nothing to say about the subject of the act. It does not impose one. It allows a lot to be done. Not everything that one might wish, it can do what it can, what it cannot do, it cannot. But it is able to do a lot. It is able to do a lot but it does not justify anything, or, more exactly, it gives no explicit reason for doing anything. It only presents itself as a temptation to do (*de faire*), an irresistible temptation, it is true. Everything that we can do with what science has conquered for three centuries, is not nothing, and we do not deprive us (246) ourselves of doing it. But it is in no way said that any act will measure up to it. Where it is a matter of act, where it is decided, where one makes use of it knowingly for ends that appear justified, it is a matter of a completely different style of thinking. It is the other part of the *bivium.* Here thinking gives itself up to the dimension of the act and, for that, it is enough for it to touch the subject-effect.

An example: the fundamental remark of a doctrine that is easy, I think, for you to recognise. The subject does not recognise itself, namely, is alienated in the order

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of production which conditions his work. This by reason of the subject-effect called exploitation. No need to add "of man by man", because we have seen that one must be a little suspicious of man on this occasion, and then everyone knows that it was possible to turn this usage into an agreeable witticism. This by reason of the subject-effect then, which is at the foundation of all exploitation, here is something that has consequences as act. That is called the revolution. And, in the act consequences, thinking has the greatest difficulty in recognising itself as has been demonstrated to you, I think, your whole life long, since for a certain number of you it had even begun before your birth. The difficulties that what is called the *intelligentzia* had, continues to have, with the Communist order.

All thinking, then, of this category which touches on the subject-effect participates in the act. To formulate it indicates, as one might say, the act and its reference. Only as long as the act has not got going, it is a reference, of course, that is difficult to sustain in the whole measure that it is only isolated at the end, as everyone knows. Any thinking that, in the past, gave rise to a school - the things that remain, like that, pinned up in university herbariums, the Stoic school, for example - had this end of act. This sometimes stops abruptly. I mean that, for the moment, for example, in the circle to which I made allusion, the act which in our time is pinpointed by the term revolutionary, the result is not there yet. It is not isolated nor isolatable, this reference to the act. But anyway, for the Stoics as I evoked them earlier, the fact is that this stopped short, that at a moment, people had nothing more to take than what had been taken from those who were engaged in this path of thinking. Starting from which the necrophagia that I spoke about earlier can begin, and, thank God it cannot go on forever either since there do not remain that many things as wrecks, as debris of this Stoic thinking. But in any case that keeps people busy!

(247) Having said this, let us come back to our psychoanalytic act. And let us take up again this little cross-piece exhibited on the board, about which I already made the remark many times, that you do not have to give a privileged value to the diagonals in it. You ought rather, to have a correct idea of it, see it as a sort of tetrahedron in perspective. That will help you to notice that the diagonal has no privilege in it.

The psychoanalytic act essentially consists in this sort of subject-effect that operates by distributing, as one might say, what is going to constitute the support. Namely, the divided subject, the $, in so far as this is the acquisition of the subject-effect at the end of the psychoanalysing task. It is the truth conquered by the subject whatever he is and under whatever pretext he has become engaged in it. Namely, for example, for the most banal subject, the one who comes to it with the goal of getting relief. Here is my symptom. I now have the truth of it. I mean that it is in the whole measure that I did not know everything about what was involved in me. It is in the whole measure that there is something irreducible in this position of the subject that is called, in short, and is quite nameable, the impotence to know everything about it. That I am here and that, thank God, the symptom that revealed what remains masked in the subject-effect reverberates

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with a knowledge. What is masked there I had lifted, but assuredly not completely. Something remains irreducibly limited in this knowledge. It is at the price - since I spoke about distribution - of the fact that the whole experience turned around this little **o**-object of which the analyst became the support. The little **o**-object in so far as it is what is, was and remains structurally the cause of this division of the subject. It is in the measure that the existence of this little **o**-object has been demonstrated in the psychoanalysing task, and how? But you all know it. In the transference-effect. It is in so far as the partner is the one who is found to fulfil, from the structure established by the act, the function that, ever since the subject has operated as subject-effect, as caught in the demand as constituting desire, he found himself determined by these functions that analysis pinpointed as being those of the feeding object, of the breast, of the excremental object, of the scybalum, of the function of the look and of that of the voice. It is in so far as it is around these functions, in so far as in the analytic relation they have been distributed to the one who is the partner, the pivot, and to say the word, the support of it, as I said the last time, the instrument, that there has been able to be realised the essence of what is involved in the function of $, namely, the impotence of knowledge.

(248) Will I evoke here the analogy between this distribution and the tragic act? For you sense clearly that in tragedy, there is something analogous. I mean that what there is for us, in tragic fiction as it is expressed in a mythology in which it is not at all ruled out that we should see incidents that are altogether historical, lived, real. I mean that the hero, each and every one who engages himself alone in the act, is doomed to this destiny of finally being only the waste product of his own enterprise. I have no need to give examples. Just the level that I call that of fiction or of mythology suffices to fully indicate its structure. But, all the same, let us not forget, let us not confuse tragic fiction - I mean the myth of Oedipus, or Antigone, for example - with what is truly an acceptation, the only valid grounded one of tragedy, namely, the staging of the thing. In the staging we are obviously closer to this *schize* as it is supported in the psychoanalysing task. At the end of psychoanalysis, one can support the division of the psychoanalysing subject that has been realised, with the division in the arena in which there could be played out the tragic production in the purest form. We can identify this psychoanalysand, to the divided and related couple of the spectator and the chorus. While the hero, there is no need for there to be a crowd of them, there is never more than one, the hero, is the one who, on the stage, is nothing but that figure of waste product with which there closes every tragedy worthy of the name.

The structural analogy hovers there in such an obvious fashion that it is the reason why it was brought in massively, as one might say, under the pen of Freud. It is why this analogy haunts, as one might say, the whole analytic ideology. Only with an effect of exaggeration which is close to the grotesque and which ensures, moreover, the total incapacity revealed in this literature that is called analytic to make anything other, around this mythical reference, than an extraordinarily sterile kind of circular repetition. With from time to time, all the same, the feeling that there is something there about a division. And people do not see what

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separates it, people do not see where is the radical insufficiency which makes us inadequate to it.

This strikes certain people. It is not the worst that it strikes. But it gives results that truly cannot go much further than yapping. Let us not forget the Oedipus complex, nor what the Oedipus complex is, nor the degree to which it is the interring, integrally linked to the structure of all our experience. And when one (249) has produced this reminder, one does not have to go much further. It is indeed why, moreover, I do not consider that I am wronging anyone by having sworn to myself never to take up again the theme of the Name of the Father. Upon which, seized by some vertigo or other which has happily abated, I once said I would engage myself in the circuit of one of my years of seminars. Things taken up at this level are *hopeless,* while we have a much surer way of tracing it concerning the subject effect, and which has to do with logic.

If I led you to the cross-roads of this properly logical effect that modern logic has so well defined under the term of the function of quantifiers, it is obviously for a reason very close to the one that I announced to you as being the question for today. Namely, the relations of the psychoanalytic act to something of the order of a predication. Namely, what is involved, how can we say that it situates the psychoanalyst.

Let us not forget, if it is at the end of an experience of the division of the subject that something called the psychoanalyst can be established, we cannot trust a pure and simple identification of the term of the one which is at the source of the definition of the signifier, that every signifier represents a subject for another signifier. Precisely, the signifier, whatever it may be, cannot be all that represents the subject. Precisely, as I showed you the last time, because the function that we pinpoint as "all" is dependent on a cause which is none other than the little **o**-object, if this little **o**-object, fallen into the interval which, as one might say, alienates the complementarity - I reminded you of it the last time - of what is involved in the subject represented by the signifier of the subject $ with the S, whatever it maybe, a predicate that can be established in the field of the Other. So then, that what is involved, through this effect, of the "all" in so far as it is stated, involves something completely different to that towards which, as I might say, identification does not go. Namely, towards the recognition come from the Other, since this is what is at stake, that in nothing of what we can inscribe of ourselves in the field of the Other, can we recognise ourselves.

This "all", what represents us in this business of recognition could have to do with this void, with this hollow, with this lack. Now this is not the way things are.

The fact is that at the source of the establishment of this "all" that is required (250) every time we state anything universal, there is something other than the (*im*)possibility that it masks, namely, that of having oneself recognised. And this has been proved in analytic experience by something that I will articulate in a

very condensed way because it is exemplary: that sex is not an *all* (*pas tout*), for this is the discovery of psychoanalysis. It is all very well to see there emerging today all sorts of collections by people who have been delegated to collect a certain number of texts about what is involved, about this famous field so bizarrely preserved, reserved, which psychoanalysis is. A research bursary is given to a gentleman called Brown who wrote something not all that bad: *Life against death*, once upon a time. He took advantage of it to say rather sensible things about Mr Luther, and since it was for the benefit of the Wesleyan University, all of that was rather well justified. But in the end losing all sense of measure in these collecting operations, he published something called *Love's body* in which there is a commentary in a note that speaks about Freudian pansexualism. Now precisely, if what Freud said signifies anything, it is of course that there was a reference to what people might expect should be produced from sexual conjunction, namely, a union, a whole (*un tout*). If there is something that is forced on us, precisely, at the end of the experiment, it is that, in the sense that I am indicating to you and that I am making resonate for you, sex is not everything (*tout*). The all finds its place, which does not at all mean that this place is the place of the all. The all usurps it by making it believe, as I might say that it, the all comes from sex. This is how the function of truth changes its value, if I can express myself in this way, and that what is found to fit in very well, which is encouraging, with certain discoveries which have been made in the field of logic, which can be expressed as follows, make us put our finger on the fact that the all, the function of the all, the quantifier all, the function of the universal, that the all should be conceived of as a displacement of the part. It is in as much as the little **o**-object, alone, justifies and gives rise to the function of the all as such, that we find ourselves subjected in logic to this category of the all. But at the same time that there are explained a certain number of curiosities which isolate it in the totality of logical functions, I mean this field in which there reigns the system of the quantifier, which isolates it by giving rise in it to curious difficulties, strange paradoxes.

Of course, there is every interest in the greatest possible number of you - and I am also saying for everyone just as much as for you - should have a certain logical (251) culture. I mean that no one here has anything to lose by going to educate himself in what is taught in places about the already constituted fields of the progress of present day logic. You have nothing to lose in going very precisely to educate yourself in it in order to understand what it is I am trying out here, in outlining a logic functioning in an intermediary zone, in as much as it has not yet been handled in a appropriate fashion. You will lose nothing, by grasping what I am alluding to when I say that even though the logic of quantifiers has managed to obtain its proper and truly quite rigorous status, I mean has every appearance of having excluded the subject from it, I mean can be managed by means of pure and simple rules which depend on the handling of letters, it nevertheless remains that, if you compare the use of this logic of quantifiers with such and such another sector, segment, of logic as they are defined in different terms, you will notice that it is curious that while, for all the other logical systems you can always give a rather large number, for example, of geometrical, economic, conceptual

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interpretations, I mean that each one of these manipulations of logical systems is quite multivalent as regards interpretation, it is quite striking, on the contrary, to see that whatever may be the rigour to which people have been able, when all is said and done, to push the logic of quantifiers, you will never manage to remove from it this something which is inscribed in the grammatical structure, I mean in ordinary language, and which makes intervene these functions of all and some.

This has consequences one of which has only been able to be highlighted among logicians, I mean where people knew how to make use of what a deduction is. Namely, that anywhere we underpin a system, an apparatus such as the one at stake in the use of the quantifiers, we cannot create algorithms such that it is enough for it to be settled in advanced, that every problem is purely and simply subjected to the use of a rule, of a calculation fixed once and for all. Once we are in this field, we will always be capable of making the undecidable emerge in it.

A strange privilege. For those here who have never heard tell of the undecidable, I am going to illustrate what I am saying by a little example. What does "undecidable" mean? I apologise to those for whom what I am going to say will appear to be an old refrain. I take an example, there are many. You know - or (252) you do not know - what a perfect number is. It is a number such that it is equal to the sum of its divisors. For example: the divisors of the number 6 are 1, 2 and 3, 1+2+3 = 6. It is also true for 28. It is not a matter of prime numbers, it is a matter of divisors, which means: given a number, into how many equal parts can you divide it? For 28, that will give 14, 7, 4, 2 and 1 that gives you 28.

You see that these two numbers are even numbers. We know lots of them like that. We do not know any odd number that is perfect. That does not mean that they do not exist. The important thing is that one cannot prove that it is impossible that some exist. This is something undecidable. Something undecidable whose link with the structure, the logical function of quantifiers it is not my role here to make you touch. Let us say that if it is really necessary this could be reserved for a closed seminar. I will ask someone whose job it is more than mine to do it in association with me.

But this privilege of the function of quantifiers in so far as it interests us to the highest degree, as you are going to see right away, this privilege - I am raising the hypothesis provisionally, let us say - this impasse in so far as it is, you should note, a fruitful impasse. For if we had the slightest hope that everything could be subjected to a universal algorithm, that in everything we could settle the question of whether a proposition is true or false, this would be rather a closing down. The hypothesis that I am raising depends on the fact that this privilege of the function of quantification depends on what is involved in the essence of the all and its relation to the presence of the little **o**-object.

There exists something that functions so that every subject believes himself to be all, so that every subject believes himself to be all subject, and through that very

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fact the subject of all (*tout*), from this very fact having a right to speak about everything.

Now what analytic experience shows us is that there is no subject whose totality is not an illusion, because it comes from the little **o**-object *qua* elided.

We are now going to try to illustrate it, by showing why this interests us in the most direct fashion. How is there correctly expressed what is involved in the properly analytic dimension if not as follows: all knowledge is not conscious.

(253) The ambiguity, the problematic, the fundamental *schize* that the function of quantifier introduces in so far as it introduces a "for all" and an "it exists", consists in the fact that it admits but at the same time puts in question the fact that if we say: "it is not true that for all ... what follows, things are such and such", this implies that it exists. That there is, of this all, something which is not, because it is not true that for all that there are some which are not (*il y en a qui ne pas*).

In other words that, because a negation operates on the universal, something arises from the existence of a particular and that, in the same way, because not all is affected with a not (*ne pas*), something still more striking, there are some - as they say - who, giving rise to a positive particular existence from a double negation, that of a truth which, withdrawn from the all by not being, will make a particular existence emerge from it.

Now, is it enough that it is not demonstrated that all something for there to exist something which is not? You clearly sense, there is here a danger, a question which, just by itself, is enough to render very suspect this use of negation in so far as it would be enough just by itself to assure the link, the coherence of the reciprocal functions of the universal and the particular. As regards what is involved in knowledge, if from the fact that all knowledge is not conscious, we can no longer admit as fundamental that knowledge knows itself, does that mean that it is correct to say that there is something unconscious (*de l'inconscient*)?

It is very precisely what, in this article included in my *Ecrits* called *Position of the unconscious*, I tried to make tangible by using in it what I was able to construct at that time. Namely, a little parable which was nothing other than a way of imaging in a species that even, if I remember correctly, I called, because I rather like playing on the word *homme*, "*l'homelette*" and which is nothing other than the little **o**-object. Naturally, this may be the opportunity for a future "scholar" to imagine that when I was writing my *Position of the unconscious,* I had not the slightest idea about logic, as if of course what constitutes the order of my discourses did not consist precisely in adapting them for a certain audience, as it is supposed to be. This is, moreover, not entirely so, because one knows well what the ears of psychoanalysts are capable of receiving or not receiving at a given moment...

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(254) As regards qualification, for a very long time, for everything involved in knowledge, the constructive reflection around *episteme* put in question what is involved for the practitioner when it is knowledge that is at stake. At the level of Plato every time it is a matter of assuring a knowledge in its status it is the reference to the artisan which predominates. And nothing seems to me to prevent it being announced that every human practice - I am saying practice (*pratique*) because this is not at all to say, because we are making the act predominate that we reject the reference to it - every practitioner supposes a certain knowledge if we want to advance into what is involved in *episteme*. To know everything about carpentry is what for us will define the carpenter.

This secretly implies that carpentry knows itself as an art - I am not saying as material, of course - which is prolonged for us analysts by the fact that knowing everything about therapeutics qualifies the therapist, which implies, and in a more doubtful manner, that therapy knows itself.

Now if there is something which most - excuse me, I am going to say it! - instinctively repels the psychoanalyst, it is that knowing everything about psychoanalysis qualifies the psychoanalyst, and it is not without reason, very precisely because of the following. Not of course that we know any more in that way about what the psychoanalyst is. But that all knowledge about psychoanalysis depends so much on the reference to the experience of the little **o**-object, in as much as at the end it is radically excluded from any subsistence as subject. That the psychoanalyst in no way has the right to posit himself as giving an evaluation of the experience of which he is properly speaking only the pivot and the instrument. Any knowledge which depends here on this function of the little **o**-object assuredly does not guarantee anything, and is precisely not able to answer for its totality, except in a reference to this instrumentation, certainly requires that should be nothing that can present itself as an all of this knowledge. But that precisely this absence, this lack, does not in any way require one to be able to deduce from it either that there has been or that there has not been psychoanalysis. The reflection, the rebounding of negation at the level of the all does not imply any consequence at the level of the particular that the status of the psychoanalyst as such depends on nothing other than the following. That he offers himself to support, in a certain process of knowledge, this role of object of demand, or cause of desire, which means that the knowledge obtained can only be taken for what it is: a signifying realisation linked to a revelation of the phantasy.

If the *not all* that we put in the *not all knowledge is conscious*, represents the (255) non-constitution of all knowledge, and this at the very level at which knowledge is required, it is not true that there necessarily exists unconscious knowledge that we can theorise in accordance with just any logical model.

Is the psychoanalyst that the psychoanalysand is, at the end of his task, what it is? A whole way of presenting the theory, because it implies a way of thinking, puts into psychoanalytic action this factor which intervenes as a parasite. The psychoanalyst has the last word about what must be thought of it. Namely, that

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he is the one who has the thinking out of the whole affair. That the psychoanalysand at the end is supposed to be regularised, which implies that he brings into being a certain subjective conjunction, that he re-posits himself anew with a renewed *I do not think* only it goes from the special to the general.

Is that how things are? Never. It is not a simple riddle that the psychoanalyst, who knows it better than anyone through experience, should set about conceiving in this form of science fiction, it has to be said, the fruit that he himself obtains from it.

Is it then in the order of *pour-soi* that the psychoanalysand's trajectory is completed? This is something that is no less contradicted by the very principle of the unconscious, through which the subject is condemned not alone to remain divided from a thinking which cannot be assumed by any *I am who is thinking* which posits an *en-soi* of the *I think* that is irreducible to anything thinking it for itself. It is precisely the end of psychoanalysis that he should realise himself as constituted by this division, this division in which every signifier, in so far as it represents a subject for another signifier, includes the possibility of its inefficacy precisely by bringing about this representation of its failure as a representative. There is no one psychoanalysed, there is someone "who has been a psychoanalysand", from which there results only a subject who has been made aware, of what he cannot think of as constitutive of any of his own actions.

We do not yet have any existing type to conceive of what must be involved in this experienced subject. It can only be judged with regard to an act which is to be constructed like the one that, reiterating castration, is established as a *passage à l'acte*. Just as its complement, the psychoanalytic task itself, is reiterated by cancelling itself out as sublimation.

But this tells us nothing about the status of the psychoanalyst for, in truth, if its essence is to assume the place, in which the **o**-object is situated in this operation, (256) what is the possible status of the subject who puts himself in this position? The psychoanalyst in this position may not at all have what I have just developed, namely, not the slightest idea of what conditions it; not the slightest idea of science. This is even the usual thing. In truth, he is not even asked to have it, given the field he occupies and the function that he has to fulfil in it. He will have a lot to learn on the contrary about the logical support of the science. But if I refer in its connection to the statutes of the practitioner whatever they may be, is it to be ruled out that in any of these statutes, as they have been evoked for us since antiquity, in terms of reflection on science, but still in fact present in a certain number of fields, is what can be defined as obvious in the light of, no doubt, and only by, psychoanalysis, in a practical function, by highlighting the presence of the little **o**-object, not a resource, a value for him?

Why, at the end of the year on the *Crucial problems of psychoanalysis*, did I make so much here of the function of perspective? It seems that it is a theory, an operation that only interests an architect, if it is only to show, what he himself had

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isolated from all time, I mean ever since the time when, we do not know too well how, to justify the ideal which directed, for example, what is bequeathed to us in the *grammatismes* of a Vitruvius. That what is at stake, what dominates, what we would be quite wrong, given the presence of ideals, to reduce to the utilitarian function of building, for example, what dominates, is a reference that I tried to explain to you in relation to the subject-effect when perspective comes into its proper structure with Dessargue. Namely, when it establishes this other definition of space called projective geometry. And this putting in question of the very domain of vision could it seems, as a first approach, be entirely supported by a patterning of squares. But, on the contrary, there appears there this closed structure, starting from which I was able to try to isolate, to define for you amongst all the others, and because it is the most neglected in the analytic function, the function of the little **o**-object called the look.

Is it for nothing that at the end of this same year, around the painting of *Las Meninas*, I made a presentation to you that is no doubt difficult but that must be (257) taken as an apologue, an example, a reference for the behaviour of a psychoanalyst. Because what is involved in the illusion of the subject supposed to know is always around what is admitted so easily by the whole field of vision. If on the contrary, around this exemplary work, the painting *Las Meninas*, I wanted to show inscribed the function of what is involved in the look, and the fact that it has to operate in such a subtle way that it is at once present and veiled, it is, as I pointed out to you, the very existence of us spectators, that it puts in question. Reducing it to being in a way no more than a shadow with respect to what is established in the field of the painting in terms of an order of representation that does not, properly speaking, have anything to do with what any subject can represent to himself. Is this not the example and the model in which something of a discipline which relates to the very core of the position of the psychoanalyst could be exercised? Is it not the trap to which there yields, in this curious fictitious representation that I tried to give you earlier as that where the psychoanalyst ends up by coming to a halt, with regard to the experience he calls clinical. Could he not find there the model, the reminder, the sign, that nothing can be established in the world, that nothing can be established in the world of his experience without there being, in all necessity, presentified there, and as such, the function of his own look.

Assuredly this is only an indication. But an indication given, as I often do at the end of one or other of my discourse, very much ahead of time. It depends on the fact that if, in psychoanalysis - I mean in the operation situated within the four walls of the office in which it is practised - everything about the little **o**-object is brought into play, it is with a very curious reserve, and this is not by chance, concerning what is involved in the look. And there, I would like to indicate before leaving you today the proper accent the little **o**-object takes on from a certain immunity to negation which may explain the way in which, at the end of the psychoanalysis, the choice is made which leads to the establishment of the psychoanalytic act, namely, what is undeniable in this little **o**-object.

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Notice the difference in this negation when it is brought to bear, in predicative logic, on the not-man, as if that existed, but it is imagined, it is supported. "I do not see", the negation depends on something indistinct, where it is a matter of a failure of my sight or a failure of the lighting, that motivates the negation. But, "I am not looking", is this not something that just by itself gives rise to more complementary objects than any other statement. I mean that I am looking at this or that, "I am not looking" means assuredly that there is something undeniable, since I am not looking at him. And the same thing in the four other registers of the little **o**-object which would be incarnated in a "I am not taking" for what concerns the breast - and we know what that means, the appeal that it realises at the level of anorexia nervosa. Of the "I am not letting go" and we know what that means in this structuring avarice of desire. And will I go on to evoke, at the end of what I have to say to you today, what we make understood with an "I am not saying", is in general understood as, "I am not saying no". Hear it yourselves as that: " I am not saying no".

Seminar 15: Wednesday 27 March 1968

J Lacan: This seminar does not at all seem to me to have begun under inauspicious conditions. The reduction of your number is certainly favourable for what I would like, namely, that there should be exchanged here some questions and perhaps answers or rectifications. This small number is probably the result of different conditions, up to and including the fact that there are holidays coming and even also examination periods, and a thousand other factors. One cannot but regret that certain senior members of my School who attend my seminars are not here ... I hope that they will show up because I would like them to get into action. But if they are not there we will do without them.

How to proceed? I received a certain number of letters responding to my soliciting questions. We could read a certain number of them. I have to choose because I received a good number. Is Mr Soury there? I begin with his.

"You have attached the effects of the signifier to the possibility of a consequence ..." This in effect is a quotation, I do not know whether everyone caught it in passing in one of my sentences. I did not have the time to verify the moment at which, under what circumstances I pronounced it but this is not too important; I must, at the beginning of a lecture, have put the accent, probably in response to some contradiction that had been glimpsed, on the term of consequence and on the fact that, to connote it by a biographical figure, the essence of what we put forward as the testimony of our experience, is that events have consequences in it. (259) It is quite certain that the term "consequence", at the moment that I put it forward, I must have put it forward with the connotation that it takes on from everything that is brought to us in terms of reflection and of what is presentified for us. The fact is that the very notion of consequence as we are able to apprehend it, in so far as we are taught to reflect, is linked to the functions of logical succession. What is there before any consequence, is the articulation of a discourse with what it involves as a continuation, as an implication. One could say that the first field in which we have the apprehension of a necessity, is that of logical necessity. When we say something, it has its importance (*ça tire à conséquence*). Namely, that we can be caught at one or other detour of this sentence, a place to land, a conclusion, a way to close or to conclude. This is implicit in the discourse itself.

You say to me: "consequence can be used for temporal succession, for determinist objects" (I do not see very clearly what you mean by determinist

objects) " for animal life ..." and you quote right away, to articulate what you are saying: "the consequence of an impact is that the particle has as impulsion ...". Yes, I do not know if it is the best use of the word 'consequence'. We try as far as possible, to express the effect of an impact, namely, the transmission of impulsions, in formulae that will include the least consequences possible, and 'consequence' comes to take its place, we will speak about it again. We will say rather as regards what concerns the law of the transmission of the impact, namely the effect of action and reaction, that all of this will have its importance when we have to speak about it.

In other words, what is important in analysed, analysable experience is not presented at all, in effect, at all at the level of effects which are conceived uniquely from a dynamic function but at the level of a dimension of effects which implies that a question is posed at a level which is locatable as that of language-consequences.

In other words, it is because a subject has not been able in any way, to articulate something primary, that his subsequent effort to give it, I would not even say meaning, sense, but articulation in the sense properly that this articulation is made up of nothing other than a signifying sequence, which takes on a more precise form, the accent of consequence starting from the moment when scansions are established in it. It is in this dimension that there is carried out the whole of this experience which is analytic experience, in so far as what it concerns, is assuredly (261) all sorts of things which have an effect in completely different registers than those of pure and simple discourse. But the fact is that it is in as much as it is a matter of the domain of what takes effect, is caught up in this language articulation, that it interests us, that it creates a question, that we can grasp it in the analysable field.

By their duration, by their persistence, by their adhesive effect on what lasts, on what is maintained in this effect of articulation, we can in effect indirectly measure what is displaced, into the other field that is precisely the field of real forces. But it is always through some knot of consequences, and of signifying consequences, of signifying articulations that we have a hold on what is at stake.

Naturally, this cannot claim in any way to be sufficient. But since you do not seem to be struck by what I wanted simply to give at this level in terms of a brief remark, the fact is that the term "consequence" takes on its true import, its resonance, its ordinary usage at the logical level. And it is indeed because it is a matter of a re-working, of a work, of a logical development that we have to deal with something analysable.

This is a first approach. Naturally, it is in the whole measure that we have been able to push things much further, to give a formulation of these effects that I call subject-effects, to the point of really being quite close to giving them a status, that all of this in tenable.

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But this was only a reminder. I am saying this to you as a way of awaking your attention, to accommodate your ear to the inspiration of a discourse.

You then articulate, as if it were convincing: "a child is the consequence of a copulation".

Logically, the use of this term 'consequence' is suspect. In this connection, you appeal to someone to anticipate a little the consequence of his acts. You will say that precisely because you have passed on to the ethical plane. In the case of the mid-wife you are not going to talk about pregnancy as a consequence; that would seem to be superfluous.

And then you add some remarks who have nothing to do with my course but which are personal to you. I read them since, after all, I do not see why I would not take them into account. "Mathematics are diverted into obscurantism because, probably, the rigour in the handling of the signifier becomes the alibi of the absence of rigour in the use of the signifier - social classification, salary indices, examination marks, statistics. The internal concatenation of demonstration, of definitions, is converted into lectures, a concatenation of lectures. Modern mathematics, with its structure, allows there to be formulated the absence of rigour in question, but this possibility is not utilised".

What do you mean by that?

M. Soury: That recent mathematics allows there to be formulated abuses in the use of figures. If one wants to make understood obscurantist usage, an example is the zero in class, which has replaced the dunce's cap. The modern school does not give a dunce's cap, but zero's. The zero has come from figures and benefits from the prestige of figures and from the prestige of the rigour of figures.

How has the zero, coming from this tradition, become an insult at the disposition of the professor, an ignominious label used against pupils.

The astonishing passage is how a rigorous creation like figures, and the zero in particular, has become an insult to pupils, a dunce's cap, but which is more respected than if a real dunce's cap were used?

J. Lacan: Do you believe that we have to bring modern mathematics into play to rise up against this or pose ourselves some questions about the use of the zero?

What I see interesting in what you are saying, what that suggests to me are little points of history that people do not think about, in effect. Since when has zero been used in class? There must be historical testimonies of this. It is obvious that one could only have been able to give a zero in class from the time that the zero functioned in mathematics, which only happened with the adoption of Arabic figures. Namely, that people did not give a zero in the time of the Roman pedants, since the zero did not exist.

Since when were marks given from zero to twenty, might be interesting. Nevertheless, perhaps to extend the reprobation that is inspired in you by the zero conceived of as a weapon to something or other that is supposed to be inherent in the use of mathematics, appears problematic to me.

(263) **Soury:** Not inherent.

J. Lacan: But in any case you make an allusion to the dimension of modern mathematics. I thought, in truth that your remark was closer to something that I suggested, not that the structures allow there to be formulated absences of rigour, but that, in the logic of this mathematics, we see there arising the necessity that it finds itself brought to by its own development, of elaborating its logic. We find ourselves confronted with knots which are inherent in logic itself and which can for us, appear as a kind of resonance of something that constitutes in our field, the field of analysis, what we have to elaborate in terms of logic from a register that is necessarily different because it is applied to a completely different order. Anyway, let us not go on about this.

I will take other questions. Rudrauf, would you like to make a little choice in what you have written?

M. Rudrauf: In fact I had taken up one of your formulae. You have, it seems to me - this is the way I experienced it - stigmatised a certain inversion of your formula "the unconscious is structured like a language". Someone had said, "why not language is structured like the unconscious"? To which you responded clearly that in logic one should go from the known to the unknown and not from the unknown to the known.

This inversion of your formula seemed to me ... to pose a problem of comprehension about the formula itself, in this sense. To say: "the unconscious is structured like a language", is to suppose language known and the unconscious unknown. Since after all this language - and what language? - in the image of which we see the unconscious being structured, was it so well known? And this unconscious to which we might refer was it so completely unknown?

During a subsequent seminar you made some remarks that seemed to me, where you said: "if I say that the unconscious is structured like a language, that does not mean that I know it".

This is obviously to pose the whole question of the knowledge of the analyst, or of the knowledge through which, or from the angle of which, by means of logical articulation. But all the people who are confronted by analytic problems are (264) confronted with the problem of knowing what is happening, what the sick person knows, what the sick person and ourselves learn about this x, which is the unconscious. After all, this x, why say this x, why do I structure the unconscious

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here through x, namely mathematical language or through a mathematical figure ...

J. Lacan: x is not in itself a formulation equivalent to "unknown". It is in the language of novels that one designates an unknown as Mr X or Mr Y. The mathematical usage of x is not at all something which stands for unknown: x designates what is called a variable. It is not the same thing.

M. Rudrauf: In a problem that is posed, x = the unknown in the language of the little pupil.

J. Lacan: Good, let us leave x aside. I do not believe I ever designated the unconscious, in so far as I consider it - as you say very well - as, if not unknown, at least at the start, for us, in its function as unconscious, much less known, and with good reason, than language, I have not for all that identified it to the function usually in use for the letter x in mathematics.

On the contrary you have brought together two things which obviously it is quite legitimate to bring together, which are the fact that I first said that it is not at all the same thing to say that "the unconscious is structured like a language" and to say that "language is structured like the unconscious". First of all, because the second thing does not really have any follow-up. People were trying to formulate things and rather closely to me, in a fashion that is much more pointed, much more important, than that the order of the unconscious is what the possibility of language can be founded on. This has greater pretensions than the other, and it is more dangerous, as I might say. It is not less weak, but it is more insinuating.

On the contrary, when I say that I can implicate in this dimension, in this approach of my teaching, this whole part of my position that is not knowledge, it is a correction, it is more than a correction. It is to try to bring in here that there can be, when it is a matter of an analyst, a teaching which is supported without involving this principle that there is somewhere something which entirely settles (265) the question. There is a subject supposed to know.

I am saying that we can, in effect, advance into this teaching and in as much, very precisely, as it has as a start this formula without it implying that we also put ourselves in this position that I called properly professorial and which is the one that always elides the fact that the subject supposed to know is in a way there; that the truth is already somewhere. What is the point of your remark once you have made this connection which I have told you that I accept?

M. Rudrauf: If I take up again the text as I formulated it there, it means that to say that the unconscious is structured like a language, is to mark on first hearing, the unconscious is represented as an existing field, according to another of your formula, namely, existing before it is known. Thus sending us back to other reversible formulae, to ask: how is the unconscious structured?

One could say: the unconscious is structured like symptoms, because we search for the psychoanalytic meaning of the symptom; that the unconscious is structured like a dream - of course one could say that the dream is structured like a language - that the unconscious is structured like a child's drawing.

J. Lacan: If you contest that the unconscious is structured like a language it does not take you very far. I assure you that there are many reasons to contest that the dream is structured like a language. If the dream is structured like a language, it is in as much precisely as the dream is the royal road to the unconscious, but that it is not the unconscious just by itself. It is a phenomenon that has many other dimensions than that of being the royal road to the unconscious, and one can speak about the dream otherwise than by speaking about the unconscious. It is even regrettable that people are not more attached to the phenomenon of the dream when it has been separated out, extracted from its relation to the unconscious.

There are all sorts of dimensions of the dream that would deserve to be explained. When I see one or other person who, happily, writes in an obscure journal so that it avoids me having to fight against a style of objection that is really lamentable. (266) When a person trots out a certain number of features to which he believes he can give consistency in the form that one of the effects of what he calls the dream work is the violence it exercises on something whose material, when all is said and done, he does not at all contest belongs to language, it is a distortion, implied in a quite summary fashion with respect to what concerns the incidences of desire that characterise the dream. He can find, here and there, with no difficulty, in the text of Freud himself, a support for these remarks. But one cannot say that he contributes anything whatsoever to the essence of the question. I am not denying at all that, in the dream, language, if only because of the *Rücksichtsdarstellbarkeit*, considerations of representability, and many other things as well, undergoes extremely important distortions, contractions, deformations. Not only am I not denying it, but who would dream of denying it? If the dream interests me in so far as there appears in it, and from the first, this mechanism that I identified to metaphor and to metonymy because it forces itself on us, it is precisely in the measure that the dream is the royal road to the unconscious. It is not something different. It is not to exhaust the substance of the dream, so that it is not an objection to see something else intervening in it.

So then let us not insist too much on this article, except to mark that the confusion of notions of violence undergone with that of work is to say the least strange from the philosophical point of view. The confusion of dream work with violence is supposed to be a kind of representation which I am not denying, when all is said and done, is related to language, but whose whole interest would be to present to us in such a distorted fashion something quite curious and which obviously only draws its source from the fact of coming from a work place, whose principal goal is to distort what I am saying.

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I ask myself moreover how it would it have been possible, in this same tender book, to set about distorting anything whatsoever if the material of what I say did not exist. (I am talking very specifically about the course of Mr Ricoeur).

M. Rudrauf: I think that this question of the dream as the royal road to the (267) unconscious is effectively directly linked to this discovery by Freud that the dream speaks, that the dream is structured like a language and that, to understand the dream, to interpret the dream, it is a matter of translating its language, of transforming what up to then appeared like a series of images into a linguistically organised series of signifiers.

The question I thought I was asking (I find it difficult to take up again the synthesis of this question) is the following: this language which is at the same time the path along which we are trying to arrive at the unconscious, and which is at the same time the object that we are searching for, this language what is it? And whose is it? This brings us back to the question of the subject in so far as it is a fact of language, and of language in so far as it is not language except in so far as it is for us revelatory of the subject, an act of the subject. It is at this level more or less that the question is posed.

J. Lacan: Language is not at all an act of the subject. A discourse can on occasion be an act of the subject. But language, precisely, puts us face to face with something as regards which it is altogether to make a jump, and an excessive jump, if you settle this point as regards which I am not saying either that we can say the contrary. I made an allusion to some dimensions. In particular to one of them which is called the undecidable. Why not use it on this occasion? I am not saying that we can prove that it is not an act of the subject. The fact of not being able to prove it, obviously, does not decide anything. But in any case this does not allow us either to affirm in any way that language is an act of the subject, which is obviously implied by the whole position described as the search, whatever it maybe, for the origin of language, which consists in imagining something that up to the present no one has managed to imagine in a satisfying way. Namely, how it could have happened one day that there were people who spoke.

I note simply that, in the history of linguistics, it is very precisely from the day when a certain number of people came together by engaging their honour to one another not to raise this question that linguistics was able to begin. This is simply a historical fact. It has no more of a consequence that one day, someone (he was called Lavoisier) said to himself, in all of these little manipulations by chemists, one should weigh what had gone into the sphere at the beginning and at the end. This does not mean that chemistry is all a matter of weighing, far from it, as was (268) proved by what followed. But here it is of the same order. It is a decisive act at the beginning. We are precisely going to abstain from thinking about everything that could emerge from language as an act of the subject. From that moment on, the extraordinary thing is that people made some valid discoveries in the matter of linguistics, which it must indeed be said, there was no trace of

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before. It is all very well point out, there is no need to tickle one's brain to find that *Cratylus* is not so bad. So there were already people who are capable of saying things that were not bad, but this does not constitute in any way even the beginning of a science of language. Linguistics is born from a certain moment when as in all the moments of the birth of a science, it is a moment of that order, of a practical order, there is someone who began to fiddle with the material by imposing a certain number of exclusive laws on himself and limiting himself to a certain number of operations. From this moment on something is possible; it is no more demonstrative; it begins to become demonstrative from the moment that we pose ourselves questions about what can be called the subject-effect. Namely, how does the prohibition of a certain number of registers happen. Setting them aside allows there to be better determined what is happening as a subject-effect, which is not at all necessarily a subject homogeneous to the one that we have to deal with in the common, ordinary usage language. But when we prohibit precisely something that, when one looks at it closely, comes back to limiting language, not at all dominating it, overcoming it, inscribing it in anything whatsoever that might be called a meta-language or a meta-tongue, but on the contrary by isolating certain fields of it. And then subject-effects are produced which are not moreover necessarily human subjects or speaking subjects.

I think that the term "subject" to indicate the field of a science is not necessarily badly chosen either. I spoke about chemistry or about linguistics. There is a subject of chemistry, or linguistics, just as there is also a subject of modern logic. It is more or less established, it goes more or less far, it is more or less vague, it is altogether capital for us to take this sort of reference to know what we are saying when we are speaking about the status of the subject.

It is quite obvious that the status of the subject that we are dealing with in analysis is none of those subjects, nor indeed any of the other subjects that may be situated in the field of a currently constituted science.

(269) **M Rudrauf:** I would like to specify that when I said: "language is a act of the subject", I meant that the language that you give us, your act of discourse, is your act. But in the measure that language is not an act of the subject, I think that it ought to be defined as being the locus of the act of the other.

J. Lacan: Yes, it is risky. I will redirect the question to our dear Nassif, but Nassif has done on this point a work of condensing everything that I said last year, adding to it a note that we still have to take great advantage of. I do not want to abuse either him or you by asking him to answer you on this subject. It is very daring in any case what you have just said. It is more than daring, it can be criticised. Unfortunately our time is measured and I cannot give all its development to all of this.

I would like, because I always have a little scruple about making you go out of your way without you leaving with something in your knapsack, to try to take advantage of the fact that today we are an informal group. I insist - it is especially

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for me that this may be insulting, more than for anyone else - on the absence here, of a certain number of people who at other moments are assiduous in attending what I am putting forward this year in the seminar. Why are they not there? Is it because perhaps I might have summoned them to respond in my place to what is being stated here? Who knows? We do not know. It is perhaps for that reason. It is perhaps also because they have a sense of economising their time. So that if they believe they are going to find themselves fiddling around in what I am stating here, once this is only an attempt at work, they think that they will not get enough benefit from it. Who knows, that is another possibility. In short, I deplore it.

On the other hand, I am delighted at the presence of all of those who have been good enough to come to hear something. And it is for them and because we are in an informal group that after all I would like to be able to give you a sense of things - because there are also here many people I have admitted with pleasure, even though they are not analysts - give a sense of the, of the breadth of what is at stake, and also why I cannot say everything, or indeed particular things before just any audience, I mean before an audience that I can locate less well than I can by (270) looking at your faces, before the one that is here today. We write on the board:

All men love women

All psychoanalysts desire to know

I do not think

I am not

Precisely, this in order to presentify things since what is at stake are subjects, subjects that are obviously much less manageable and about which, luckily, linguistics gives us orientations.

It is quite obvious that we are already a little oriented, thanks to my discourse, not thanks to my language, thanks to my discourse. Here, these are subjects that we find at first sight, designated in Greek as what is usually called the grammatical subject, the subject of the sentence. It is on this occasion the subject that one can quite well introduce into propositional logic and rediscover the Aristotelian formula of predicative logic with the help of tiny changes:

all men are loving to women (*sont aimant la femme*)

all psychoanalysts are desiring to know (*sont desirant savoir)*

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The interest of the matter is that these are propositions, which because of the presence of the *all* fall under the heading of what I introduced this year, and not without reason, as the implication of what is called the logic of quantification.

It is obvious that to write *all men* or to write *all psychoanalysts*, is a way that is distinct from the one that is going to be marked in the two other articulations underneath, by implying what I always put in question to distinguish it severely, by implying the stating subject in the statement.

This is obviously why the logic of quantification interests us, it is at the level of what is called the universal. And once you make the universal intervene, it is clear that what is interesting, what gives it its relief are things that I present to you here, in short, in a familiar way. I mean that it is not strictly rigorous from the point of view of proof. I mean that the remarks that I am going to make to you before leaving you, are rather things in which I am allowing myself a certain laxity with respect to certain requirements of rigour which are not vain, to which I am absolutely obliged to submit myself in a largely public discourse. Here, since it is on a friendlier basis, I can say things like the one that I am saying just now. Namely, that it is quite obvious for you to sense that the reason why this interests us, a formula like the one that all men, for example, are mortal, is in order to point out that there is something which is always profoundly elided. This gives it in a way its secret charm its sticky side, the side which means that we adhere so much, all the same, that we are so interested in these stupendously inane things, like the exemplary syllogisms that we are given. If truly all that was at stake was knowing that all men are mortal and that Socrates being a man, Socrates is mortal, those who do not understand it like that say - what they have always said: what is all that about? It is a *petitio principii.* If you have just said that Socrates is a man, how could you deny that Socrates is mortal, except by putting in question what you said first. It was Locke who discovered that it was a *petitio principii.*

This is a complete idiocy. There is no *petitio principii*, there is something whose interest lies quite elsewhere. Its interest is obviously in the following - it is in the conjurer's sleeves - that it is not at all vain to speak about Socrates on this occasion since Socrates is not mortal in the way that all other men are. And that this is precisely what, when all is said and done, captures and even excites us. It is not simply by a lateral incidence due to the particularity of the illustration, but because this indeed is what is in question right at the heart of logic. Always to know how one could be rid of this sacred stating subject, which is not done easily, and especially not at the level of quantification which is here particularly resistant.

It is not quite the same thing then as this quantified subject, as this much more disturbing subject that then for its part is qualified, is designated quite specifically and in a way that one could say is unveiled as the stating subject. What (272) linguistics has been indeed forced to recognise by giving to the "I" this definition of being the *shifter* which is the "*chief raté*", in other words the index

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of the one who is speaking. In other words "I" is variable at the level of each discourse, it designates the one who is giving it. From which there result all sorts of consequences, in particular that a whole series of statements that have "I" as subject are very disturbing. People have dwelt at length on the *I am lying* throughout the ages. That I for my part should have added to it the *I do not think* and *I am not* assuredly has its interest, an interest that you are all capable of seeing in all its developments. It is quite certain that it is much more interesting to dwell on how impossible the *I am not* is, than on the *I am lying* which is so self-evident that truly one cannot say it, as I might say. This *I am not*, is worth the trouble of dwelling on a little, especially if one can give it a support which is quite precise as regards what is at stake, namely, concerning the subject of the unconscious.

The fact is that, once you have noticed it - I do not know if you are there yet but it may come to you - it is when you have noticed the impossibility of saying at all that it is so, because it is, precisely, that is that I am not. It is just as true for you as for me, and that starting from the moment that you have noticed it, the *I am* appears to become not unpronounceable - it can always be pronounced - but simply grotesque.

Now these things are very important to realise, if they appear coherent and strictly coherent, from the introduction into a certain domain which is that of the questions that are posed by the existence or not of the unconscious.

In any case, it is naturally a matter of knowing why I am occupying myself this year with the psychoanalytic act on the one hand, and with the psychoanalyst on the other. Even though it is centred around this act (we are still with familiar language today, I repeat, "centred around" does not mean very much) that *all men love women*, is obviously false. In our day we have enough experience - it has always been known, precisely - let us say, in one half of society (speaking broadly) this is not true, it is false. But the fact that it is false does not solve anything. The important thing is not at all to know that it is grossly false. The important thing is to notice that if we can simply admit that if it is not true, it is because of the fact that there are some people who make a mistake. I do not know how well aware you are of this, the fact is that this seems to be the (273) hypothesis of psychoanalysis. Let us even say the following, let us be quite precise, I do not mean that psychoanalysis says that, in every case, that it is because there are people who make mistakes that they prefer something else. Psychoanalysis may well (here I am on velvet) allow itself every prudence. It may well say that there are some people, male homosexuals, for whom this is due to organic or grandular things or something or other of that kind. It may say something of this kind; that costs it nothing. Moreover, what is remarkable, is the number of things that do not cost it anything.

But as regards what does cost it, it is much less precise. But it seems that it has never asked itself the question of what is involved for those at least among whom it made the hypothesis intervene. The fact is if it is not true, it is because there are

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those - I am summarising - who make a mistake. This has its equivalent in analytic theory, but it is from this that it returns.

This is where I would like to remark the following, which is that it is a matter of knowing whether, yes or no, this thing, to which we may give the most subtle body *all men love women* (you will notice that I said "*la femme,* the woman") namely, the entity of the opposite sex. It is something that a psychoanalyst holds to be true or not. It is absolutely certain that he cannot hold it to be true because what psychoanalysis knows, is that all men love not the woman but the mother.

This has, of course, all sorts of consequences including that it may happen, in extreme cases, that men cannot make love with the women they love, because it is their mother. Why on the other hand they can make love with a woman on condition that she is a debased mother, namely, a prostitute.

Let us still remain in the system. I would like to pose the following question. In the case that a man can make love to the woman he loves - which also happens, he is not always impotent with the women he loves - I would like to know the following, what the following question implies, which is a slight modification of the universal statement that I wrote *all men love women.* Is it true that all men desire a woman (there, it is no longer *la femme*) when she is proposed to them as such, namely *qua* object within their reach?

(274) Let us suppose that there are no impotent people, let us suppose that there is no debasement of love-life. I am posing a question that clearly shows the distinction between what I will call the naturalist foundation, with what is called the organic reserve. For it is absolutely not the same thing to say, in the cases that we have to deal with in psychoanalysis, that there are cases which belong to the organic. It is not at all in the name of that that we want to pose the question of whether is it self-evident. And here you are going to see that you are forced to put things that sufficiently show the artificiality of what I am raising. Because I first have to tell you that outside every context, namely, the context of his engagements, of his links, of links that the woman previously has, of this or of that, is it a fact that it is, in principle, natural, let us say us, that in the situations which it is rather remarkable that novelists have been forced to give themselves all sorts of trouble to invent, namely, the situation that I will call - I do not know what to call it - it is unthinkable, the situation of the mountain chalet; a man, a woman normally constituted, they are isolated, as they say in nature - you always have to bring in nature on these occasions - is it natural that they should copulate? That is the question. It is a matter of the naturalism of the desirable.

Here is the question that I am raising. Why? Not at all to tell you things that are afterwards going to do the rounds of Paris, namely, that what Lacan is teaching, means that the man and the woman have nothing to do (*rien á voir*) together. I am not teaching it; it is true. Textually, they have nothing to do together. It is annoying that I cannot teach this without it giving rise to scandal. So then I do not teach it, I withdraw it.

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It is precisely because they have nothing to do with one another that the psychoanalyst has something to do with this affair, *cette affaire là*, (let us write it on the board), *Staferla*. (You also have to know how to use a certain way of writing).

Naturally I do not teach it. Why? Because even if this is what emerges from a way that is strictly required from everything that psychoanalysis teaches us, namely, that it is never "who has *tenus femina*", I am saying "*femina*" not even "*mulier*" in so far as the "woman" is desired. That desire must be constructed upon a whole order of sources in which the unconscious is absolutely dominant and in which consequently there intervenes a whole dialectic of the subject.

To state in this bizarre fashion, that man and woman finally have no business with (275) one another, is simply to mark a paradox, but a paradox which has no more import but which is of the same order as this paradox in logic that I noted before you. It is of the same order as "I am lying " or Russell's paradox of the catalogue of all the catalogues that do not contain themselves. It is the same dependency.

There is obviously no interest in producing them as if it were a matter, precisely, of the only point at which this would constitute on this occasion no longer simply a paradox but a scandal, namely, if this were a naturalist reference.

When someone writes in a little note or elsewhere that, in the way that Lacan re-interprets Freud, it appears, it is a Freud-Lacan, there is an elision of what there would nevertheless be an interest in preserving, the naturalist reference. I ask on the contrary what can now subsist of the naturalist reference concerning the sexual act after the statement of everything that is articulated in Freudian experience and doctrine.

It is precisely by giving to these terms, "man and woman", a naturalist substratum that people are able to state things which might be presented in effect as follies. That is why I do not pronounce them. But what I am pronouncing today - there is a remarkably inadequate number of psychoanalysts here - is the following question. What does the clinician think "instinctively" - you may well imagine that a word like that never comes from my mouth by chance, - in the name of his clinical instinct - what a clinical instinct is remains to be defined - about the story of the mountain chalet?

You have all only to refer not only to your experience but to your innermost intuition. The chap who comes to tell you that he was with a pretty girl in a mountain chalet, that there was no reason to, not to have a go, simply he did not feel like it. You say "Oh! There is something ... something is not working". You first of all try to find out if he often has little blockages like that. In short, you launch yourselves into a whole speculation which implies that it ought to work.

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This simply in order to show you that what is at stake is the coherence, the consistency of things in the mind of the analyst. For it the analyst reacts like that, instinctively, there is no need even to bring into play the clinical instinct. Behind, (276) there is the naturalist resonance, namely, that the man and the woman are made to go together. I am not saying the contrary. I told you: they can go together without having anything to do with one another. I told you that they had nothing to do with one another.

If the clinician, the clinical essence, intervenes to "wince" in a certain way, it is a matter of knowing if it is something that is – perhaps, why not, that does exist - simply of the order of common sense. I am not against common sense. Or it is something else that is at stake. Namely, whether he allows himself, as analyst, who has every reason to know, whether this woman who, I repeat, for the psychoanalyst is not at all automatically desired by the male animal when this male animal is a speaking being, this woman believes herself to be desirable. Because this is the best thing for her to do when she is embarrassed in a certain way. And then that leads us again a little bit further.

We, for our part, we know that as regards the partner, she believes she loves him, this is even what dominates. It is a matter of knowing why this dominates, in what is called her nature. We also know very well that what really dominates, is that she desires him. That is even the reason why she believes she loves him.

As regards the man, of course, we know the tune. For us it is everlastingly repeated. When it happens that he desires her, he believes he desires her but he is dealing on this occasion with his mother, so then he loves her. He offers her what? The fruit of the castration linked to this human drama. He gives her what he no longer has. We know all that. It goes against common sense.

Is it simply holding on to common sense which ensures that the analyst, with this clinical instinct, believes all the same that if on some occasion there is nothing of all that, because the novelist has done everything for it to be no longer on the horizon (the mountain chalet) if it does not work, it is because there is something wrong?

I am claiming that it is not simply because of common sense. I am claiming that something ensures that the psychoanalyst is precisely, in a way, installed, established, in something consistent. He is so for the very precise reason which ensures that *all psychoanalysts desire to know*, is just as false as what is stated above and we have to know why it is false. Naturally, it is not false because of the fact that it is false, because one can always write it, even if everyone knows that it is false. In both cases there is a misunderstanding somewhere.

(277) After having defined the psychoanalytic act which I defined in a very risky fashion, I even put in the centre this acceptation of being rejected like the **o**-object, it is enormous, it is new, no one ever said that, it becomes tangible, it is tangible. Someone could all the same try to contradict me, to say the contrary, to

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bring in something else, to raise an objection. It is curious that, since I said it, it is not so long ago that I put it in the forefront, no one has even simply begun to protest, to say something against it. Even though, in its essence it is absolutely outrageous, one could shout, say: "what sort of carry-on is this! The end of analysis has never been explained to us like that. What is this analyst who is rejected like a piece of shit"? Shit disturbs people enormously. There is not just shit in the **o**-object, but often it is as a piece of shit that the analyst is rejected. That depends uniquely on the psychoanalysand. It is necessary to know whether for him shit is really what was at stake. But it is striking that all the things I say, I can develop this discourse, articulate it, a whole lot of things can begin to turn around it before anyone dreams of raising the slighted protestation and giving another indication, another theory on the subject of the end of analysis. Curious, curious. This abstention is strange, because on the whole, it is something that involves all sorts of disturbing consequences. This might suggest a sort of inventiveness in contradiction. No, nothing!

So then, if no one brings up the slightest contradiction, it is because, all the same, people sense very well, know very well that the misunderstanding, whether we are dealing with the first proposition or the second, turns around the fact that the psychoanalyst, for his part, does not have to put his tuppence halfpenny in - it a metaphor, it means does not have anything to say about it - except in so far as he joins in the ballet. I mean the psychoanalyst. It is absolutely clear that we are lost if we start from the idea that the psychoanalyst is the one who knows better than anyone else, in the sense that, as regards this whole affair of what is involved in the sexual act and the status that results from it, he is supposed to have the distance which would ensure that he knows something about the matter.

This is absolutely not what is at stake. That is also why he does not have to take sides about whether it is natural or not natural, in what cases it is or in what cases (278) it is not. Simply he sets up an experiment in which he has to put his tuppence halfpenny worth in the name of this third function, this **o**-object, which plays the key function in the determination of desire. Which means that it is in effect the recourse of the woman, in what is involved in the embarrassment that the exercise of her enjoyment leaves her in her relation to what is involved in the act.

I can go further, I can say "what is forced on her" from elsewhere. Here I seem to be making a feminist claim but do not believe it, it is much wider than that. What is forced on her is in the structure, the one that designates her, in the subjective dramatisation of the sexual act, that forces on her the function of the little **o**-object. in so far as she masks what is at stake. Namely, a hollow, a void, this thing lacking at the centre and of which one can say - which is this thing that I tried to symbolise - that it seems that the man and the woman together - and hold on to the choice of terms that I have used, have nothing to do with one another (*rien à voir ensemble*). In other words, since she has no reason, for her part, to accept this function of little **o**-object, he finds himself simply on this occasion on the occasion of his enjoyment, and from the dependence of this on his relation to

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the act, noticing the power of deception, but a deception which is not hers, which is something other, which precisely is imposed through the establishment, on this occasion, of the desire of the male.

What the man discovers on his side is nothing other than his own impotence to aim at anything other than what? A knowledge, of course. No doubt there is somewhere and from the origin, to give ourselves over to developmental lucubrations, a certain knowledge about sex. But this is not what is at stake. It is not because all male and female children have sensations that they are not without some hold on and that they can more or less properly channel. What it is a matter of arriving at, knowledge of a sex, this is precisely what is at stake, it is that one never has knowledge of the other sex.

As regards what is involved in the knowledge of a sex, on the male side, it is much worse than on the female side.

You must not believe that when I say that there is no sexual act, I am pronouncing something that signifies in any way that what is happening should be put under the title of radical failure. Let us say that by taking things at the level of psychoanalytic experience, it demonstrates to us, by remaining at this level - you see that here I am making a reservation – that this knowledge of one sex for a male, when it is a matter then of his own, culminates in the experience of (279) castration. Namely, at a certain truth which is that of his impotence, of his impotence to do, let us say, anything full in the sexual act.

You see that all of this can go rather far, namely, this pretty literary hesitation between the power of the lie on the one hand and the truth of impotence on the other; there is an interlacing. You see then how easily all of this might tip over into a type of wisdom, indeed a teaching on sexology, as people might say, anything at all that could be resolved by means of an opinion survey. What I would like to point out, is that what is at stake, in specifying what a psychoanalyst is, is to take note that he has no right to articulate at any level whatsoever this dialectic between knowledge and truth in order to make of it a sum, an evaluation, a totality, by recording some failure or other. Because this is not what is at stake. No one is in a position to master what is at stake, which is nothing other than the interference of the function of subject in this act. And we cannot even say where in our experience - I mean analytic - its reference - let us not say "natural" since this is where it vanishes - but its biological reference is tangible.

The point that I am at when I tell you that the rule for the analyst to escape the vacillation which makes him tip over into a sort of an ethical teaching, is that he should notice what is involved in the question, at the very place of what conditions its essential vacillation. Namely, the little o-object, and that, rather than at the end of his years of experience, considering himself as a clinician namely, the one who, in every case, knows how to measure the cubic content of the affair, he should rather give himself - as I was saying the last time, at the end of my last discourse, at the high point of what I said the last time, before what I

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call a larger audience - this reference, that I borrowed from the discourse of a previous year. Namely, I will not say the apologue because I never give apologues, I show you the reality of what is involved for the analyst imaged in other examples. It is not astonishing that these are examples taken from art, for example, something to take one's bearings from. Namely, in order to have a different kind of knowledge than this kind of fictional knowledge he has and which paralyses him, when he questions a case, when he carries out the anamnesis, when he prepares it, when he begins to approach it and once he enters it with the analysis, that he searches in the case, in the history of the subject, like (280) Velasquez in the picture of *Las Meninas*, where he, for his part was already the analyst at a particular moment and at a particular point of the history of the subject.

This will have one advantage. He will know what is involved in the transference. The centre, the pivot of transference, does not pass at all through his person. There is something that was already there.

This would give him a completely different way of approaching the diversity of cases. Perhaps, from that moment on he might manage to find a new clinical classification to that of classical psychiatry which he has never been able to touch or to shake and for a good reason, up to the now. He has never been able to do anything else than follow it.

I would like to image for you still more what is involved, and I would like to do it in the few minutes that I am accepting and that I thank you for giving me.

People speak about private life (*vie privée*). I am always surprised that this word "private life" should never have interested anyone, especially among the analysts who ought to be particularly interested by that. A life deprived (*privée*) of what? One could make rhetorical embellishments.

What is the private life? Why is it so deprived, this private life? That ought to interest you. From the moment one does an analysis, there is no longer a private life. It has to be said that women are furious when their husbands do an analysis, they are right. It is all very well for that to annoy us analysts, you have to recognise that they are right, because there is no longer a private life. That does not mean that it becomes public. There is an intermediary lock: it is a psychoanalysed, or psychoanalysing life. It is not a private life.

This is of a nature to make us reflect. After all why is it so respectable, this private life? I am going to tell you. Because private life, is what allows there to be maintained intact these famous norms that in connection with the mountain chalet, I was in the process of exploding. "Private" means everything that preserves on this delicate point of what is involved in the sexual act and of everything that flows from it, in the pairing of individuals, in the "you are my wife, I am your husband" and other essential devices on another register that we know well, that of fiction, this is what allows there to hold up in a field in which

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we analysts introduce an order of relativity which, as you see, is not at all easy to (281) master, and which can be mastered on a single condition. If we are able to recognise the place that we hold in it, we, as analysts, not as analysts who are subjects of knowledge but as analysts who are instruments of revelation.

Here there is posed the question of the private life of the analyst. I am only mentioning it in passing because naturally there are works that are widely diffused and which are tissues are stupidity and one of them has had the greatest success, where it is said that the qualification, the pinpointing of the good analyst, the least that one can require, is that he should have a happy life. It is adorable! And what is more, everyone knows the author; I do not want to start speculating. Anyway...

But that an analyst, for example, could maintain what I have just defined as being the status of private life, is really something! It is precisely because the analyst no longer has a private life that it is better, in effect, for him to keep many things under wraps. Namely, that if he, for his part, has to know what place he already was at in the life of his patient, the reciprocal is not inevitably necessary.

But there is a completely different plane on which it operates, this business of private life. It is precisely the one that I have just raised, namely, that of the consistency of discourse. It is precisely because the analyst is not able, up to the present, to sustain to any degree a discourse about his position, that he creates for himself all kinds of other ones. For him everything is good. He gives a sort of teaching that is like every other teaching, even though his ought in no way to resemble the others, no other one, namely, that he is teaching what? What is necessary for the taught who are already that, namely, to teach them, about the subjects in question, what they already know. Namely, precisely everything that is most irrelevant; every reference is the same to him; he will teach everything, anything whatsoever, except psychoanalysis.

In other words, what I took care to begin with by taking things at the lowest possible level, namely, what may seem to be the least contestable, and to show us that psychoanalysis precisely contests it. It is impossible to write, except by way of challenge, the two first lines that are there. What constitutes the status of the analyst is in effect a life that deserves to be called a private life. Namely, the status that he gives himself is properly the one in which he will maintain - it is constructed for that - the authorisation, the investiture of analysis, its hierarchy. (281) Ascending its grades, in such a way that at the level where for him this function, his own, may have consequences, the most risky of all, that of occupying the place of this little **o**-object, this allows him to preserve, nevertheless, stable and permanent, all the fictions that are most incompatible with what is involved in his experience and the fundamental discourse which establishes it as technique.

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Here is what I am ending today for you, and will understand that I reserved it for a more limited audience, which is not obliged to drawn from it a harvest of scandals, of gossip or of bla-bla-bla.

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8 and 15 May 1968: Notes

Since Lacan stood by the call for a strike by the *S.N.E.S.* [the union of teachers in higher education] he refused to give his seminar on the 8th and 15th May, but he was present, knowing that some of his audience would be there. He insisted on the fact that his discourse is addressed uniquely to psychoanalysts, and to them alone, and on the fact that these strikes give him time to read things that usually he only judges on the signature.

Then, as regards contemporary events, he highlights the effect of the shoulder-to-shoulder - of those who are batonned while singing the *Internationale* - as surface: those who are in this field allow themselves to be carried along by it with the feeling of absolute community.

He asks the question, that the events of the moment have again given rise to, of the responsibility of psychoanalysts. They are not at the university, and nevertheless the question of teaching is crucial for them. He then evokes his 1966 text "*Science and truth*" as having contemporary relevance for what is not simply unruliness, as Raymond Aron would like us to think. Contrary to the latter, for Lacan what is at stake is a structural phenomenon, in which the relations between desire and knowledge are put in question. These relations, which are those of the transmission of knowledge, psychoanalysis establishes on the level of lack, of inadequacy.

Once there is a question of dialogue, support should be taken on logic, even that of logicians, but in any case not on an energetics.

Evoking then the relations of expectations between psychoanalysts and insurgents, he says that if the psychoanalysts ought to expect something from the insurrection, the insurrection for its part only expects throwers of stones, which, like the tear gas, occupies the function of o-object.

The way for this whole insurrection was prepared in the *cité universitiare* of Nanterre, by the ideas of Reich. Ideas, says Lacan, that are demonstrably false. And this interests psychoanalysts, because it leads to the fact that anyone can say anything at all. The testimony of psychoanalysts as regards what they can say from a experience of language involving the relations of one sex to the other, is not simply passed over in silence or swamped in a flood of other things by psychoanalysts themselves but, when it is said, is not taken into account. It is all happening as if there never had been psychoanalysts.

Lacan insists on what has always guided him in his teaching: to give reference points, so that what is insisting can be heard. And his failure, with which he opens his publication, is that psychoanalysts make of it something of no importance. Psychoanalysts do not want to be up to what they have taken responsibility for.

Things exist and have their effects. There have to be people to take these effects into account and operate in their fields.

End

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MEETING of 15 May 1968

I came here today, like last week, anticipating that there would be a certain number of people, as a way of keeping contact.

I am not going to give, any more than last week, what I habitually give under the heading of a class or a seminar. This in the measure that I am keeping to the call for strike action that I think exists at this time in the Syndicat Nationale de l'Enseignement Supérieur.

This is a simple question of discipline. It is nevertheless not enough to do what would be desirable – to be worthy of the events that are taking place.

In truth it is not very convenient for many people. Since I for my part have only to concern myself with psychoanalysts – I have always underlined it, I am not going to deny now what I always took care to repeat – am only addressing myself to psychoanalysts. It is for psychoanalysts that I have sustained for several years a work that is not meagre. I would even say up to a certain point that this is an opportunity for me to realise it because the simple fact of not having to prepare one of these seminars (since it was already prepared for the last time) I feel as a great relief for me.

Naturally this opens the door to all sorts of things. By the same token I notice something that effort and work always mask, namely, my dissatisfactions. It also gives me the opportunity also perhaps to read articles that I necessarily let pass like that, and only read their signatures. You have even to read the articles of people that you know in advance there is nothing to be expected (286) from. I have on occasion been very surprised. (I am speaking about articles by my colleagues, of course.)

Anyway, for the moment, to be worthy of the events, I would say that even though psychoanalysts bear witness to their sympathy for those caught up in pretty hard encounters, for which one needs to have – and this should be underlined – great courage. You would have to have received, as we analysts do, the testimony of what is experienced at these moments to measure better and at its true value what is represented by this courage. Because from the outside, like that, you can admire, of course, but you cannot always realise that the merit is no less great because these lads are really at certain moments carried away by the feeling of being absolutely bound to their comrades. They express this as they want to, that it is exalting to sing the International while being battened, this is the surface. The International is a very fine song,

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but I do not think that they would have this irrepressible feeling that they could not be anywhere other than where they are if they were not carried along by a feeling of absolute community, there, in action with those they are shoulder to shoulder with. This is something that should be explored - as people say without knowing what they are saying – in depth.

I mean that it does not seem to me, to come back to our psychoanalysts, that the fact of signing, in this connection, even if there also people are very much shoulder to shoulder (but of course it is not quite the same thing), 75 people can, this is the number mentioned last night, sign a text protesting against the regime and its operatives (I mean its police operatives). Of course it is meritorious and one would not turn anyone away from putting his signature at the bottom of such a protest, but it is slightly inadequate, it is clearly not enough. If everyone signs it, people coming from every origin and horizon, fine, but to sign as a psychoanalysts – besides it was very quickly opened to people coming from psychology – appears to me to be a rather comfortable way of doing what I was saying earlier: to consider that one had done one's bit for the events.

It seems that when something of this order occurs, of such a seismic order, one could perhaps question oneself when one has had a responsibility oneself. (287) Because after all psychoanalysts had responsibilities, one cannot say in education because they are not in it, any of them. I am in it like that on the edges, on the margin but none of them is properly speaking in the University. But it is not just the University that has responsibilities in teaching. Perhaps after all one might say to oneself that the psychoanalysts did not concern themselves much with what, after all, by being connoted easily at the level of relationships, that since they are collective relationships, fell no less directly under a certain heading, under a certain field, under a certain knot that is their own. Let us try call that without insisting too heavily on the fact that after all I myself highlighted that somewhere in my *Ecrits* there is a text called *Science and truth* which is not completely out of season, since it has a little idea that one cannot reduce what is happening to what we might call the effects of a turbulence that is more or less everywhere.

There is someone whom I could not say I do not esteem, he is a comrade, we sat on the same benches, with links together and we got to know one another. It is a friend, M Raymond Aron, who published an article this morning in a paper that reflects the thinking of honest people who says: it is happening everywhere. But in saying that, for him that means, precisely, they are disturbed everywhere. Everyone must calm them down depending on what is not working out in each place. It is because in all these places there is something that is not working out that they are creating a disturbance. It is beginning as you know in Columbia, namely, in the middle of New York (I had very precise echoes very recently) and now it is going to Warsaw. I do not need to draw a map. What people do not want to ask themselves, or at

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least want resolutely to put to one side, which is the sense of this article, written in a very fine tone, is that there must be here a much more structural phenomenon. Since I made an allusion to this quarter, this knot, this field, for me it is quite clear that the relationships between desire and knowledge are put in question. Psychoanalysis also allows this to be tied to a level of shirking, of inadequacy that is properly speaking stimulated, evoked by these relationships which are relationships of the transmission of knowledge. As an echo there reverberate all kinds of currents, elements, forces as they say, a whole dynamic. And on this point I allude again to the article I read recently. (288) There was an insistence on the fact that in a certain order of teaching – my own, to name it –the whole dimension of energetics is supposed to be neglected.

I much admire the fact that these energeticists have not noticed the underlying displacements of energy that may be here. Perhaps this energy has a certain interest as a theoretical evocation, and to tie things together at the level of a logical or logicist reference, on an occasion when people are talking a lot about dialogue, might have a certain interest.

In any case I think, and I am it seems to me confirmed by the events in the fact of finding that this is the articulatable, manipulatable part of what we have to deal with. I am not wrong in leaning on it as much as I can. Where this is not done, where people even think they ought not to do it, where people freely talk about intellectualising – this is the big word as you know – we find no proof of a particular sense of orientation as regards what is happening nor a more correct estimate of the weights in question nor of the true and authentic energetics of the thing.

I note in passing, a simple pinpointing for your information. We had at a meeting last night, in this thing called my *Ecole*, one of the heads of this insurrection, a not too badly shaped head. In any case he is not someone who lets himself be taken in nor does he say silly things. He knows how to give a quick answer and when he was asked a rather touching question, I must say, like the following: "Tell us, my friend, from the point that you are at, what might you expect from psychoanalysts?" This is an absolutely crazy way of posing the question! I kill myself saying that psychoanalysts ought to expect something from the insurrection and there are those who retort: what does the insurrection expect from us? The insurrection answers them: what we expect from you for the moment, this is the time to help throw some paving-stones!

As a way of lightening the atmosphere a little, I point out that in that case – it is a discreet indication – that at the level of dialogue, the paving-stone fulfils exactly a function that has been foreseen, the one I called the o-object. I already indicated that there is a certain variety in the o-object. The fact is the paving-stone is an o-object that that responds to another that is really, for its

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part, capital for any future ideology of dialogue when it starts from a certain level: the one called a tear-gas grenade!

(289) Let us leave that. We learned in effect, from an authorised speaker (who found himself taking an immediate advantage about what could have unfolded differently) that at the start, all the disturbances at the start in a certain field, and specifically at Nanterre (this was really news) we learned that the ideas of Reich – you can believe me if you like, many of the people here are disposed to believe something because I transmit it to them, that astonishes me but it is true – really opened things up for them. And this in term of the very precise conflicts that manifested themselves in a certain *cité universitaire*. It is interesting all the same. It is interesting for psychoanalysts who may consider – this is my own position – that Reich's ideas are not simply incomplete, that they are demonstrably, fundamentally false.

The whole of psychoanalytic experience, if we really want to articulate it and not consider it as a kind of locus of whirlpools, of confused forces, an energetics of life instincts and death instincts co-embracing one another, if we really want to put a bit of order into what we objectify in an experience that is a language experience, we will see that Reich's theory is formally contradicted by our everyday experience.

Only since analysts do not testify to absolutely anything of things that might really interest everybody precisely on this subject of the relationships of one sex to another, things of this order are really open. I mean that anybody can say anything he wants. And this is seen at every level.

I was reading yesterday – since I have been left time to read – a little organ called Concilium (this is something done by priests). There were two rather brilliant articles on the accession of women to the functions of the priesthood, in which there were discussed a certain number of categories, that of the relationships of the man and of the woman. It is exactly, of course, as if psychoanalysts had never said anything about it. Not, of course, because the authors do not read psychoanalytic literature. They read everything. But if they read this literature they will find nothing that brings them anything new whatsoever as compared to what has always been discussed about this confused notion: who, the man or the woman, is, with regard to anything you (290) wish, Being, more superior, more worthy and all the rest of it. Because when all is said and done, it is all the same striking that what has been denoted by psychoanalysts at the level of experience, has been so perfectly swamped by them that when all is said and done it is exactly as if there had never been any psychoanalysts.

Obviously, all of this is a point of view that you may perhaps consider a bit personal. It is obvious that in this kind of note with which I believed I should

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open on a certain tone a certain publication which is mine and that I accentuate with a denotation that I call failure. Namely, that almost everything that I, for my part, tried to articulate - and that I must say it is enough to stand back from a little to see that it is not only articulated but articulated with a certain force and will remain like that attached as a testimony to something in which one can find one's bearings, where there is a north, a south, an east and a west, this will be seen perhaps, in short, when the psychoanalysts are no longer there to surrender it, by the very fact of what they do with it -has absolutely no bearing.

Meanwhile, people sign manifestos of solidarity with the students as would also be done when anyone at all might get beaten up in an affray.

In short, all the same there is this something that is happening, something that can be found well written in advance. I said that in any case even if the psychoanalysts do not want at any price to be worthy of what they have charge of, what they have charge of nevertheless exists, and in any case will make its effects no less felt – the first part of my propositions, we have got there – and it will all the same be necessary for there to be people who try to be worthy of a certain type of effect, those that were there in a way, offered and predestined to be treated by some people in a certain framework. If it is not they it will be certainly others, because there is no example that when effects become a little insistent, it must all the same be noticed that they are there and try to operate in their field.

I said this to you like that, so that you would not have put yourselves out in order to hear nothing.

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Annex 1

Lecture of 19th June. 1968

(293) I am not a fake: I did not give notice that I would say a few words to close the present year. as the document of the Ecole puts it. in order to give you what is called a seminar. I will rather say a few words of a ceremonial order.

This year. if I remember rightly. I made an allusion somewhere to the sign of the opening of the year in traditional civilisations. This time. it is for the school year that is ending.

There may remain some regrets that after having opened up a concept like *the psychoanalytic act*. fate decided that you would only have on this subject half of what I had intended to say about it; half ... in truth a little less because the entry procedures. for something that is so new, which had never been articulated as a dimension, as is the case for the *psychoanalytic act*, required in effect some time to open it up.

In truth, things do not have the same speed. It is rather something like when a falling body is subjected to the same force, during its fall, its movement, as they say, accelerates. So that you have not had half of what there was to be said about the *psychoanalytic act*; let us say that you have had a little less than a quarter of it.

It is very regrettable from some points of view, because in truth. it is not my custom to end so late, and in a way by a lucky fluke. something that was interrupted for whatever reason. internal or external.

(294) In truth. my regret is not unaccompanied by another aspect of some satisfaction. Because indeed in this case. the discourse was not interrupted by just something indifferent. but by something which brings into play. certainly at a very baby level. but which brings into play all the same some dimension which is not altogether unrelated to the act. So that. good God. it is not so dissatisfying.

Obviously. there is a little discord in all of that. The psychoanalytic act. this dissertation that I was projecting. was forged for psychoanalysts. as they say. matured by experience. It was destined above all to allow them. and at the same time to allow others. a more correct estimate of the weight that they have to lift. when something precisely marks a dimension of paradox. of internal antinomy. of profound contradiction that does not fail to allow us to conceive of the difficulty that is represented for them in having to bear its weight.

It must be said. that it is not those who best know this weight in practice. who have shown the most lively interest for what I was saying. At a certain level. I must say that they really distinguished themselves by an absence that was certainly not due to chance.

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So that, because we are at it, I will tell you by the way a little anecdote to which I already made an allusion, but that I am going to clarify further. One of these people, to whom I had gallantly sent a little letter to ask him whether this absence was an act, replied: "What are you thinking about! Not at all! It is neither an act, nor a parapraxis. As it happens this year, I made an appointment at 11.30 for a long job (he was having work done on his teeth) with a very capable practitioner, at 11.30 every Wednesday". It is not an act, as you can see. It is pure chance.

This tempers for me the regret that something remains as it were in suspense in what I have to transmit to the psychoanalytic community and very especially to the one that goes under the title of my School.

On the contrary, a certain dimension of the act which has, for its part also, its ambiguity, which is not necessarily made up of parapraxes, despite the fact that it gives plenty of work to those who would like to think things out in the traditional terms of politics. All the same, something was found, I mean just now, that the babies brought up one fine day under the heading (295) of act, which may well, like that, give some people work to do in the years to come.

In any case the question - and that is why today I wanted to address a few words to you, precisely to know if I am right to find in this something like a little balance or compensation, to feel myself in a way a little bit relieved of my own responsibility.

For after all, if it is in connection with psychoanalysis, or more exactly about the support it offered me and because this support was the only one, that it was not possible otherwise to grasp a certain knot or, if you wish, a ball, something singular, not located up to then in something that it is not easy to give a label to in our day, given that there are a certain number of traditional terms that are going down the drain: man, knowledge, knowledge, as you wish, this is not quite what is at stake. This particular knot which over there I was able with a red pencil ... on this kind of a knot-bubble that you know well. It is the famous internal eight that I have been producing for some eight years, these terms: knowledge, truth, subject and the relation to the Other, there you are, there is no word to put all four of them together. These four terms have nevertheless become essential for something that is to come, a future that may interest us, those of us who are here, in an amphitheatre not simply to be the plaint in the complaint but precisely with a concern to know. This teaching which showed something or other in terms of dissatisfaction, we can perhaps have a concern for what, after this great tearing apart that makes it so obvious that there is something in that quarter that is no longer working. What was infatuated with a term that is not at all random, the University, that takes its authority from the universe, this precisely is what is at stake.

Does the universe hold up? The universe has made many promises, but it is not sure that it is keeping them. It is a matter of knowing if something that was announced, that was a kind of opening out of the gap of the universe will be sustained long enough for us to see the last word on it.

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This question passes by way of what we have seen manifesting itself these last months, in a place, like that, that is bizarrely permanent in history. We have seen the function of place being re-animated. It is curious. It is essential. Perhaps we would not have seen things crystallise so vividly if there had not been a place to which they always returned to be beaten up.

(296) You must not imagine that what is being opened up, what was opened up as a question in this place, is the privilege of our national fabric. I have been, as a way of getting some fresh air, for two days in Rome where such things are not conceivable simply because in Rome there is no Latin Quarter. This is not a simple chance! It is funny but anyway that is how it is.

There were things there that really pleased me. It is easier to pick out there those who know what they are doing. A little group. I did not see a lot of them but even if I had only seen one of them that would have been enough. They are called the Birds, *Ucelli*.

As I said to one of those close to me, in Italy I am - to my amazement, it has to be said, it is the term that is used: (I am ashamed!) - popular. That means that they know my name. Naturally they do not know anything I have written! But, this is what is curious, they know that the *Ecrits* exist.

We have to accept that they do not need them, for the *Ucelli*, the birds in question, for example to be capable of actions like the one that obviously have the same relation to Lacanian teaching that the posters of the *Beaux-Arts* have with what is at stake politically, truly. But that means that they have a quite direct relation. When the dean of the Faculty in Rome, accompanied by an eminent representative of the Vatican intellgentsia, gives to them, all gathered together because there are general assemblies there also at which people speak to them, people are for dialogue, naturally where it is useful. So then the *Ucelli* come with one of these big devices that exist, when you go to a restaurant in the country, in the centre of a round table, there is an enormous umbrella, they all go under it for protection, they say, from language!

I hope you understand that that leaves me with some hope. They have not yet read the *Ecrits*, but they will read them! Do they really need them since they have discovered that? After all, the theoretician is not the one who finds the way. He explains it. Obviously, the explanation is useful to find the rest of the path. But, as you see, I trust them. If I have written some little things that might have been of use to psychoanalysts, this will be of use to others whose place, whose determination is quite specified by a certain field. This field is circumscribed by this little knot (see the scheme) that is constructed in a certain way by cutting into a certain bubble (297) extraordinarily purified by the antecedents of what culminated at this adventure that I tried to map out before you as being the moment that science was engendered.

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So then, this year, in connection with the *psychoanalytic act*, I had come to the moment when I was going to show you what is involved in having to take up one's place in the register of the *subject supposed to know*, and this precisely when one is a psychoanalyst. Not that he is the only one but that he is particularly well placed to know its radical division. In other words this position, inaugural for the psychoanalytic act, that consists in operating on something to which your act gives the lie. This is why I have reserved throughout the years, kept under covers, put to one side the term *Verleugnung* that undoubtedly Freud brings up in connection with an exemplary moment of the *Spaltung* of the subject. I wanted to reserve it, to bring it to life there where undoubtedly it is pushed to its high point of pathos, at the level of the analyst himself.

(298) Because of that, I had to undergo, throughout the years, the harassment of those individuals who followed on the trace of what I contribute to see where they could patch together a little piece, where I might stumble. When I be spoke about *Verwerfung*, which is an extremely precise term, and which situates perfectly what is involved in psychosis, people reminded me that it would be cleverer to use *Verleugnung*. In any case you find traces of all that in pathetic lectures and mediocre articles. The term *Verleugnung* could have taken on its authentic place and its full weight, if I had been able to speak to you this year as I had intended.

It was the next step to take. There were others that I cannot even indicate. Undoubtedly, one of the things that most struck me in the course of a teaching experience which you will allow me today to cast a backward glance at, precisely at this turning point, is the violence of the things that I allowed myself to say. Twice at St Anne's, for example, I said that psychoanalysis was something that at least had this in its favour that in its field - what a privilege! - blackguardism could only turn into stupidity. I repeated it on two consecutive years like that, and I knew what I was talking about!

We are living in an area of civilisation where, as they say, there is free speech, namely, that nothing of what you say is of any consequence. You can say anything whatsoever about someone who may well be at the origin of some of indecipherable murder or other; you can even create a play about it. The whole of America - the New York part, no more - crowds into it. Never previously in history would such a thing have been

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conceivable without the theatre being immediately closed. In the land of liberty, one can say everything, because this has no consequences.

It is rather curious that from the moment simply when some little paving stones start flying, for at least a moment everyone has the feeling that the whole of society might be involved in it in the most direct way in its daily comfort and its future.

We have even seen psychoanalysts questioning the future of the trade. To my eyes, they were wrong to question it publicly. They would have done better to keep it to themselves, because all the same, the people who saw them questioning themselves about it, precisely when they were questioning them about something completely different, found this a little funny. In any case one cannot say that the stock of psychoanalysis rose!

(299) I have a crow to pluck with the General. He stole a word from me that for a long time I had - it was certainly not of course for the use that he made of it: psychoanalytic disorder (*chienlit*). You cannot imagine for how long I wanted to give that as a title to my seminar. Now the chance has gone!

But then I am going to tell you, that I do not regret it because I am too tired. It is visible enough like that. I have no need to add a commentary.

In any case there is one thing all the same that I would really like - not everyone would like it but I really would - teaching psychoanalysis in the Faculty of Medicine.

You know there are some very restless people around, I do not know what has got into them, who push themselves forward to be there, in that place. I am not speaking about anyone from the *Ecole Freudienne de Paris*. I know well that in the Faculty of Medicine, they know the history of medical doctrines. That means that things have happened there, of the order of, to our eyes, with the perspective of history, of the order of mystification. But that does not mean that psychoanalysis as taught where it is officially taught - they talk to you about libido as if it were something that passed into communicating vessels, as an absolutely unbelievable personage expressed it, at the start of the time when I began to try to change things a little, as a libidinal hydraulics - to teach psychoanalysis as it is taught, let us say the word, at the Institute. That would be marvellous especially at the time that we are living through, when all the same those taught, as they say, are starting to be a bit demanding. I find that marvellous. You should see what is done in certain quarters in terms of a teaching of psychoanalysis. And after having done this little survey you will have been shown the hopes for better times that the course of events reserves for some people. You will tell me, of course, that the personage in question, for example, could always set about teaching Lacan. Obviously it would be better! But again he would have to be able to do it! Because there is a certain article that appeared in *Les cahiers de psychoanalyse* on the o-object in connection with which, (I regret to say it, this again is going to shock some of my closest and dearest colleagues), it was nothing but a long little squib of laughs for these damned Normaliens, as it happens. For my part, I was forced in a little discreet note, somewhere,

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just before my *Ecrits* appeared, to indicate that, whatever may be the need one may have (300) to work on psychoanalytic marketing, it is not enough to talk about the o-object for it to be quite that!

In any case, I would like to take things from a slightly higher level. And since I have prepared a few words - not these, I must say that I let myself go a little given the warmth, the familiarity, the friendship that I find in this company, namely, faces of which there is not one that I do not recognise because of having seen them from the beginning of this year - since I spoke about these four terms, let us map out, for those who are a little short sighted and who might not be aware of the quite critical importance of a certain conjuncture, let us recall their principal articulations. Namely, first of all knowledge because, when all is said and done, it is all the same rather curious on the side of knowledge, up to the present, in the classics, that people are wise, and one part of the wise position is obviously to keep quiet. That it should be at the level and as is very correctly said at a privileged level of the transmission of knowledge that so many things are happening, makes it perhaps worth the trouble to take advantage of stepping back a little to take a look.

There is a function, naturally, I apologise to the people who are here - there are a few - who are coming here for the first time, and come in order to see a little what I might say if I was questioned about the "events". I am not going to be able to give the theory of the Other, and this is already something that makes such a conversation, such an interview, very difficult. What the Other is must be explained. We begin with it because it is the key. So then for people who do not know what the Other is, I can say that on the one hand I defined it strictly as a locus, the locus where the word has taken its place. That is not self-explanatory: the locus where the word has taken its place. But in any case it is a quite indispensable topological function to bring out the radical and logical structure that is at stake in what I called earlier this knot or this bubble, this hollow in the world in connection with which there is the notion, this old notion of subject. The old notion of subject which is no longer reducible to the image in the mirror, nor to anything whatsoever of the order of an omnipresent reflection. But effectively this bubble still wanders around as a result of which this world is no longer properly speaking a world. This Other has been there for a long period of time, of course. It has not really being separated out because it is a good place and because there had already been installed in it something that is still there for many of you, called God. *Il vecchio con la barba!* He is still there. The psychoanalysts have not really added very much to (301) the question of whether, an essential point, whether he exists or does not exist. As long as this *or* is maintained, he will be always there.

Nevertheless, thanks to the bubble we can act as if he were not there. We can deal with his place. There was never any doubt that at his place precisely there lay what was at stake as regards knowledge. All knowledge comes to us from the Other - I am not talking about God I am talking about the Other. There is always an Other where there is a tradition, an accumulation, a reservoir.

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No doubt people suspected that things could happen. That was called discovery, or even again one of these changes of lighting, one of these ways of dispensing teaching that, in a way, changed its accent and its sense, which ensured precisely that for a certain time, it still held up. Have you ever noticed that what ensures that a teaching gains a foothold, is perhaps that precisely in a certain way of redistributing it, there is inscribed in its design, in its outline, in its structure something that is not immediately said, but is what is heard? Why after all would the subject not appear a little bit worn out for those on the benches? I mean that what is not said to be understood still needs to be something worth the trouble and not a simple hypocrisy, for example. There is some reason, in fact, that it was in the Faculty of Letters or again in the Schools of Architecture that things really became enflamed.

To this relation of the subject to the Other, psychoanalysis contributes a radically new dimension. It is more than what I called just now, like that, a discovery. A discovery still preserves something anecdotal about. This is a profound modification of the whole relationship.

There is a word that I brought in here a few years ago, into this dialectic. It is the word truth. And then, in truth, before articulating it precisely as I did here on a particular day, the perfectly logical mark of which the article *Truth and science*, in my *Ecrits* bears witness to, I had given to the word another function, in an article called *The Freudian thing*, where one can read these terms: *Me, the truth, I speak.*

Who? The *I* that is speaking? This piece, in truth a prosopopoeia, one of these enthusiastic games that I happened to allow myself to articulate for the centenary of (302) Freud, and at Vienna. It was rather a scream of the order of what Münch put so well into a celebrated engraving, this twisted mouth in which we see arising the sublime annihilation of a whole landscape.

A long time ago, in Vienna, I said it especially there where people had not heard for a long time the word truth. It is a very dangerous word. Apart from the use that is made of it when it is castrated, namely, in logical treatises. We know for a long time that people do not know what it means.

What is truth? This is precisely the question that must not be asked. I made an allusion in Lyon when I was speaking there last October to a certain piece by Claudel, a very brilliant one that I recommend to you. I did not have time to find the page for you before coming here - I did not know that I was going to speak about it - but you will find it by searching carefully in the subject index of Claudel's prose, if you look for Pontius Pilate, naturally.

This text describes all the misfortunes that happen to this benevolent colonial administrator for having pronounced in the wrong place at the wrong time this question: "What is truth?"

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Among people who for the moment situate themselves in this futile zone of these chaps to whom it is dangerous to state psychoanalytic truth, who give a terrible application to these words picked up in turning one of my pages *Me the truth I speak*, they are going to tell the truth in places where there is no need for it but where it has its effect.

It is very possible that a particular thing that people succeeded in damping down so well under the name of class struggle all of sudden becomes a very dangerous thing. Naturally, one can count on the healthy functions that have existed from all time to maintain what is at stake, namely, to leave things in the field of the sharing out of power.

Make no mistake, people who know a little bit about the handling of truth are not that imprudent. They have the truth, but they teach: all power comes from God. All. That does not allow you to say that it is only the power that suits them. Even the power that is against God comes from God, for the Church. Dostoyevsky grasped that very clearly. Since he believed in the truth, God put him into a blue funk. That is why he wrote *The grand inquisitor*. It was the conjunction, in short, foreseen in advance, of Rome and (303) Moscow. I think that all the same some of you have read it. But it is almost done, my little friends, and you see clearly that it is not as fantastic as that! When you are in the order of power, everything can be arranged!

That is why it is useful for the truth to be somewhere, in a strongbox. Privilege, revelation, is the strongbox.

But if you take seriously *Me, the truth, I speak* this can at first have, alas, great disadvantages for the one who takes this path.

Let us see all the same what novelty we analysts may have contributed to it. Obviously our field is very limited. It is at the level of the bubble.

How is the bubble defined? Its import is very limited. If after so many years, after having shown what is properly speaking its structure, I am now speaking to you about logic, it is not by chance. It is because, all the same, it is clear that this knowledge that interests us analysts is properly speaking only what is said. If I say that *the unconscious is structured like a language*, it is because this unconscious that interests us is what can say itself and that in saying itself, it generates the subject.

It is because the subject is a determination of this knowledge that it is what runs under this knowledge but does not run there very freely, that it encounters stumbling blocks. It is for this reason and for none other that we have to deal with a knowledge. Anyone who says the contrary is led onto paths that I earlier called those of mystification. It is because the unconscious is the consequence of what has been able to be circumscribed that has shown that this relation to discourse has much more complex consequences than had been seen up to then. It is specifically that the subject by being secondary with respect to knowledge, appears not to say everything that it knows, a point that was not doubted, even if for a long time people suspected it does not know everything it says.

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This is the point that allowed the constitution of the bubble: it resides very precisely in the fact that in this connection we grasp how the dimension of truth is produced. The truth. this is what psychoanalysis teaches us. lies at the point where the subject refuses to know. Everything that is rejected from the symbolic reappears in the real. This is the key to what is called the symptom. The symptom. is this real knot where the truth of the subject lies.

(304) At the beginning - very early on - of these little episodes. I told that you: "They are the truth". They are the truth. does not mean that they tell it. The truth is not something that knows itself like that. without labour. This is even why it takes this body that is called the symptom. that it demonstrates where is the lair of what is called the truth.

So then this refused knowledge that you come looking for in the psychoanalytic exchange. is it the knowledge of the psychoanalyst? Illusion. The psychoanalyst knows something perhaps: he knows in any case about the nature of the truth. But for the rest. namely. about refused knowledge, he does not know very much. That is why the teaching of psychoanalysis taken at the level of what is supposed to be substantial appears for what it is. pantaloonary. The libido that I spoke to you about earlier for example. if this means what I call desire. it is really rather piquant that it was discovered. tracked down. in the neurotic. namely. in the one whose desire is only sustained by fiction. To say that they are the truth is certainly not to deliver it to you. neither to you nor to them. But it is perhaps of some importance that one should know this mechanism of an exchange. a strange exchange which ensures that what is said by the subject. whatever it may be. whether he knows it or not. only becomes knowledge by being recognised by the Other. And this precisely moreover is what is meant by the quite primitive. rough-hewn notion. called censorship. It is the Other that for a long time. during the time of authority. always defined what could be said and what could not be. But it would be quite vain to link that to configurations that experience clearly shows. because they can be null and void. already were so when they were functioning.

It is in a structural way that it is only at the level of the Other that what determines the subject is articulated in knowledge. Stating. the subject of which is not at all necessarily the one who was speaking. stating - by the other – designates the one who said it. The Other was first of all the one he always was when the analyst interprets. and who says to the subject "you I" (this I that is you) I am saying: is that. And as it happens this has consequences. It is what is called interpretation. For a time this Other who was a philosopher. forged for his part. the *subject supposed to know*. It was already a deception as can be seen by simply opening Plato. He made the poor subject say everything that he wanted him to say. At the end. the subject learned. He learnt to say by himself "I say: black is not white", for example. "I say: either it is true or it is false". But (305) the total of what I am saying there. is certainly true because: either it is true or it is false.

Naturally. it is as childish as the movement of the 22nd March. It is not true that: either it is true or it is false. But that can be sustained. The subject has learned to endorse with

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an *I say* something that he declared himself ready to answer in a debate whose rules were fixed in advance, and that is what is called logic.

A strange thing. It is from what was purified by this path of the isolation of logical articulation, by the detaching of the subject from everything that can happen between him and the Other (and God knows things can happen, up to and including prayer) that there emerged science, knowledge. Not just any kind of knowledge, a pure knowledge that has nothing to do with the real, nor at the same time, with the truth. Because the knowledge of science is, as compared to the real, what is called in logic the complement of a language. It functions alongside the real. But it bites on the real. It introduces the bubble, namely, after all, something that, from the point of view of knowledge, has no more importance than a gag. But it finally gives the only thing that after all really incarnates Newton's laws, namely, the first Sputnik, which is undoubtedly the best gag that we have seen because it throws everything into question, it Gag...arins it. Because what has it to do with the cosmos, in so far as we have a relation with it, that one can set about turning around the world six times in 24 hours, in a way that undoubtedly completely transcends the understanding of those who believed that movement was related to effort?

Anyway the bubble has made others its own since then. Only there remains a residue of it, in a way. It is that the one who speaks is not always capable of saying *I say* as is proved - it is in this way that we are witnesses, we psychoanalysts – by the fact that we, psychoanalysts, are capable of telling him what he is saying. W were able in a small number of cases, especially if they put an enormous amount of goodwill into it, if they come to us to speak enormously, it can happen that we interpret something to them and what does it mean to interpret something? We never interpret the world for them; we bring them, like that, a little piece of something that appears to be something that has kept its place in their discourse without them knowing it. Where do we analysts pull this out of? There is something that I would have liked to have made you meditate on this (306) year, it is the *frozen words* of Rabelais. In truth, like many things, is has already been written for a long time, but no one has noticed it. I put a strong emphasis on a certain Mr Valdemar described by Poe. I made what one could call a satirical use of him. I spoke in this connection about something that is nothing other than what I denounced here one more time, namely, this survival of the Freudian discourse and of the dead societies that it appears to keep talking.

It is a myth that goes much further. What interpretation uncovers is not always very clear as regards what is at stake, whether they are the realities of life or of death. What I would have led you towards this year, if I had been able to speak about the psychoanalytic act up to the end, would have been in order to tell you that it is not for nothing if I spoke to you about the desire of the psychoanalyst. Because it is impossible to draw it elsewhere than from the phantasy of the psychoanalyst. And this is what undoubtedly may give you the shivers. But we are not next or near it in our day - that it is from the phantasy of the psychoanalyst, namely, from what is most opaque, most closed, most autistic in his word that there comes the shock by which the word is unfrozen in the analysand, and in which there comes to be multiplied insistently this

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function of repetition in which we can allow him to grasp this knowledge of which he is the plaything.

Thus it is confirmed that the truth makes itself known through the Other. This justifies that it has always emerged in this way. What we know more, is that it is in relation to the Other which no longer has anything mystical or transcendental about it that this is produced. And the knot whose curve I drew on the blackboard in the form of this little loop which is there and which can almost, you see, be close to appearing to be nothing more than a circle, to be fused in its duplicity as loop. This is what experience teaches us. Namely, that the *subject supposed to know*, where it truly is, namely, not us, the analyst, but in effect what we suppose this subject knows. This in so far as it is unconscious is duplicated by what the practice, this practice which is a little bit hedge-hopping, puts in parallel with it, namely, this *subject supposed demand*. Did I not see someone who appeared very proud to be questioning a member of the movement of the 22nd March, let us not name him, in order to ask him "What are you demanding of us analysts?" I wrote somewhere that the analyst was this privileged personage, a comic (307) one undoubtedly, who with the supply created the demand. It is quite obvious that here it did not work, but that does not prove that we have nothing to do with what is happening at this level. It means that they are demanding nothing of us. And afterwards! It is precisely the error of the analyst to believe that where we have to intervene as analysts, is at the level of demand, which never ceases to be theorised. While what is at stake, is very precisely this interval between the *subject suppose to know* and the *subject supposed demand*, and in the fact that it is nevertheless known for a long time that the subject does not know what he is demanding. Which allows him subsequently not to demand what he knows.

If we recognise this interval, this gap, this Moebius strip, where it is, in this little knot scribbled as I was able to do it on the board, in truth and I did not take much care, this is what is called this residue, this distance, this something to which there is entirely reduced for us the Other, namely, the o-object.

This role of the o-object which is of lack and of distance and not at all of mediation, it is on this that there is posed, that there is imposed this truth which is the discovery, the tangible discovery - and may those to have to touch on it not forget it - that there is no dialogue, the relation of the subject to the Other is of an essentially asymmetrical order, that dialogue is a dupery.

It is at the level of the subject in so far as the subject has been purified that the origin of science has been established. That at the level of the Other, there has never been anything more true than prophecy. It is on the contrary at the level of the Other that science is totalled, namely, that with respect to the subject it is completely alienated. It is a matter of knowing where there can still reside at the level of the subject something that is precisely of the order of prophecy.

End.

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ANNEXE 2
Logics of Phantasy

Frege's Logic

$\vdash p$ assertion of p

$\vdash_x p : (\forall x)\, p(x)$

$\top p$ negation, $\neg p$

$\vdash_q^p$ $p \Rightarrow q$

$\vdash_q^{x\ p}$ $[(\forall x)\, p(x) \Rightarrow q(x)]$

$\vdash_q^{\cdot x\ p}$ $(\forall x)[p(x) \Rightarrow q(x)]$

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Lacan's Logic

$\vdash_x$ $(\forall x)\, p(x) \Rightarrow q(x)$ U.A.

$\vdash_x \top$ $\neg(\forall x)\, \neg p(x)$

$\vdash_x$ $\neg(\forall x)\, p(x)$ P.A.

$\vdash_{S_1}^{S\ a}$: has no logical sense.

Annex 3

Lacan's summary of the seminar of 1967-68
for the year book of the
Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes

(311) The psychoanalytic act, neither seen nor heard of before me, namely, never mapped out, much less put in question, we suppose here to be something belonging to the elective moment when psychoanalysand passes to psychoanalyst.

This is the most commonly admitted recourse as regards what is necessary for this passage, all other conditions remaining contingent as compared to it.

Thus isolated from this moment of installation, the act is within the reach of everyone who enters into a psychoanalysis.

Let us say first of all: the act (simply) takes the place of an assertion, whose subject it changes. It is not an act to walk if all one says is "it walks, *ça marche*", or even "let us walk, *marchons*", but only if it ensures that "I am getting there, *j'y arrive*" is verified in it.

The psychoanalytic act seems suited to throw greater light on the act, because it is an act that reproduces itself from the very doing that it commands.

Through this it remits to the in-itself *(l'en-soi)* of a logical consistency, to decide whether indeed the relay can be taken up from an act which is such that it dismisses (*destitue*) at the end the very subject that establishes it.

From this step it can be seen that it is the subject here of whom it must be said whether it is knowledge.

Does the psychoanalysand, at the end of the task assigned to him, know "better than anyone" the subjective dismissal to which it has reduced the very one who commanded him to do it? For instance: this in itself of the o-object which at this end is evacuated by the same movement in which the psychoanalysand drops, because he has verified in this object the cause of desire.

(312) There is knowledge acquired there, but by whom?

To whom does it pay the price of the truth that at the limit the subject treated cannot be cured of?

From this limit can a subject be conceived who offers to reproduce what he has been delivered from?

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And when this itself subjects him to bringing about the production of a task that he only promises by presupposing the very lure that is no longer tenable for him?

Because it is starting from the fiction-structure in which truth is stated, that from his very being he is going to create the stuff for the production...of an unreal.

Subjective dismissal is not any the less in prohibiting this pass because it must, like the sea, always be recommenced.

One nevertheless suspects that the gap revealed here between the act and the dignity of its purpose, is only to be taken to instruct us about what makes of it a scandal: the fault perceived in the subject supposed to know.

A whole indoctrination entitled psychoanalytic, still does not know that it is neglecting here the point that makes all strategy vacillate because it is still not clear about the psychoanalytic act.

To say that there is an unconscious means that there is a knowledge without a subject. The idea of instinct crushes this discovery: but it survives because this knowledge never proves to be anything but legible.

There is a line of resistance to this work that is as inordinately advanced as a phobia can be. This means that it is hopeless and shows that one has understood nothing about the unconscious, if one has not gone beyond it.

Namely, that what it introduces in terms of a division into the subject because a knowledge that moreover holds up does not determine it, presupposes, simply by being stated in this way, an Other, that for its part knows it before it has been perceived. We know that even Descartes makes use of this Other to guarantee at least the truth of his scientific starting point.

This is why the all the philosophical –logies, onto-, theo-, cosmo-, as well as psycho-, contradict the unconscious. But since the unconscious is only understood by being crushed by one of the most bastard notions of traditional psychology, people do not even attend to the fact that to affirm it makes this supposition of the Other impossible. But it is enough for it not to be denounced, for it to be as if the unconscious never happened.

(313) From which one sees that the worst people can make "a return to general psychology" their slogan.

In order to disentangle this, a structure of the Other must be stated which does not permit it to be overridden. Hence this formula: that there is no Other of the Other, or our affirmation that there is no metalanguage.

Let us confirm the latter by the fact that what is called metalanguage in mathematics is nothing but the discourse from which a language wants to exclude itself, namely, strives for the real. Mathematical logic is not, as cannot be imputed to me except in bad faith, an opportunity to rejuvenate my type of subject. It is from the outside that it bears witness to an Other whose structure, and precisely because it is logical, does not overlap itself: this is the S(Ø) of our graph.

That such an Other should be explored, does not condemn it to know nothing about the effects that it involves for the living being that it carries as being subject-to its effects. But if transference appears to be already sufficiently justified by the signifying primarity of the unary trait, there is nothing to indicate that the o-object does not have a consistency that is sustained by pure logic.

It must then be advanced that the psychoanalyst in psychoanalysis is not a subject, and that by situating his act in the ideal topology of the o-object, it can be deduced that he operates by not thinking.

An "I do not think" which is the law, de facto makes the psychoanalyst depend on the anxiety of knowing where to give it its place to still think about psychoanalysis without being doomed to miss it.

The humility of the limit in which the act is presented to his experience, blocks by the reprobation of stating it to be missed (*manqué*) the surest paths to arrive at this knowledge that it conceals..

Moreover we started, to encourage him, from the testimony that science gives of the ignorance it is in as regards its subject with the example of the Pavlovian approach, taken up to make it illustrate Lacan's aphorism: that a signifier is what represents a subject for another signifier. From which it can be seen that it is by holding onto the rail when it was still in the dark, that the experimenter gave himself some cheap hope by putting the hat into the rabbit. This ingenuity of the slip is nevertheless sufficient to account for a rather broad equivalence of Pavlovian statements, in which the deviation of someone who only thinks of the banks between which he wants to force the analytic crisis, finds a good university alibi.

(314) Still more naive then is the one who hears echoes of this whole apologue and corrects it by saying that the subject of science is never where one thinks it is, since that is precisely our irony...

It remains to make an appeal to where the affair takes place. And it can only be in the structure that the psychoanalyst shows as a symptom, when suddenly struck by an inverted Grace, he comes to raise an idolatrous prayer to "his ear", a fetish that has arisen in his breast along a hypocondriacal path.

There is an area of stigmata that living in this field imposes, because of failing to map out the sense of the psychoanalytic act. It presents itself rather painfully in the penumbra of councils in which the collectivity identified by it, takes on the image of a parodied Church.

It is certainly not ruled out that there should be articulated there confessions that are worth collecting. For example this forgery called *the self*, the first perhaps from this surface to go outside the list of morphemes which make it taboo that they should have come from Freud.

The fact is that it took on its weight or even its very discovery from the doings of the psychoanalyst you have to meet in order for there to be imposed on you the respect for the imprint received from the passion for psychoanalysis.

We have brought to life the writing where in the light of the self there is honed, and made tangible by proving to be an effect of compression, the avowal that passion has only place and strength by going beyond the very clearly recalled limits of the technique. They would serve it better, nevertheless, by being inscribed in the charter of the act once it has been restored to this page that can only be turned by a gesture changing the subject, the very one by which the psychoanalyst is qualified in act.

This self that has been launched will be nevertheless – the theme proliferates and in the sense of the auspices under which it was born - the ruin of the psychoanalyst, who is disqualified by it. The cult element of his profession is, as in other cases, the sign of being unequal to the act.

Moreover the act itself cannot function as a predicate. And to impute it to the subject that it determines, the whole *inventio medii* has to be put in new terms: this is what the o-object can test itself against.

What can be said of *every* psychoanalyst, except something that makes it obvious that none at all exists?

If on the other hand nothing can ensure that a psychoanalyst exists, except the (315) logic by which the act is articulated with a before and an after, it is clear that predicates take on a dominance here, unless they are linked by an effect of production.

If the psychoanalysand makes the psychoanalyst, there is still nothing added except the bill. For it to be due, we must be assured that there is something of the psychoanalyst.

And this is what the o-object responds to.

The psychoanalyst is constituted by the o-object. Is constituted, to be understood as: is produced: from the o-object: with the o-object.

These remarks are too close to the place where logical quantifiers appear to stumble, for us not to have flirted with them as instruments. We feel the psychoanalytic act yielding by breaking hold in the universal that they have the merit of not satisfying.

(And this is what is going to excuse Aristotle for oscillating, in a still more inspired way than in isolating the *upokeimenon*, in not being able to avoid retrieving the *ousia* now and then.)

Because what this act perceives is the kernel constituted by the hollow by which the idea of the whole is justified, by circumscribing it in the logic of quantifiers.

From then on perhaps it allows it to be better named as a *désaïfication* [deconsecration?]

Here the psychoanalyst finds company in carrying out the same operation. Is it at the level of the open field offered to discourse for this purpose?

Such indeed in effect is the horizon traced out by the technique, but its artifice depends on the logical structure that it rightly trusts, because it never loses its rights. The experienced impossibility of a pulverulent discourse is the Trojan Horse through which there enters into the city of discourse its master who is the psychotic.

But there again, as we see, the corporeal deduction is already made from which *something of* the psychoanalyst is to be made, and this is what the psychoanalytic act must be harmonised with.

We can only outline the abrupt logic of the act by tempering the passion it gives rise to in the field that it commands, even if it only does so by withdrawing from it. It is no doubt because he failed to include this tempering that Winnicott believed he had to contribute to it something of his own *self*. But also to receive from it this transitional object from the more distant hands of the child, that I must indeed render to him here, since it is starting from it that I first formulated the o-object.

(316) Let us reduce the psychoanalytic act then to what leaves to the one that it alleviates what it has begun for him: it is that there remains declared to him that enjoyment (*jouissance*), privileged in that it commands the sexual relationship, is offered by a forbidden act, but that this is to mask the fact that this relationship is only established by not being verifiable because it requires the middle term that is distinguished as lacking in it: this is what is called making a subject of castration.

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The benefit of this is clear for the neurotic because it resolves what it represented as passion.

But the important things is that to whomsoever it gives only the enjoyment held to be perverse, is well and truly permitted by this, since the psychoanalyst makes of it the key, in order to withdraw it, it this true, at the end of his operation. Which means that it has only to be taken away from him in order to restore to it its proper use, whether he makes use of it or not.

This cynical outcome should clearly mark the secondary nature of any benefit with regard to the passions. That the axiology of psychoanalytic practice proves to be reduced to the sexual contributes to the subversion of the ethics that depends on the inaugural act only because the sexual is shown by negativities of structure.

Pleasure barrier to enjoyment (but not the inverse). Reality constructed from transference (but not the inverse). And the principle of supreme vanity because the verb is only worthwhile under the gaze of death (gaze to be underlined, not death which slips away).

In the ethics inaugurated from the psychoanalytic act, less ethiquette, if you will forgive me, than was ever glimpsed because of starting from the act, logic commands, this is certain because one finds its paradoxes in it.

Except, which is also certain, that types, norms, are added to it as pure remedies.

In order to maintain its own chicane, the psychoanalytic act must not become diluted by them.

Because from its reference points it becomes clear that sublimation does not rule out the truth of enjoyment, which is why heroisms, by being better explained, are organised according to whether they are more less alert

Moreover the psychoanalytic act itself is always at the mercy of *acting out* and we have sufficiently depicted above the figures in which it grimaces. And it is important to highlight the degree to which the approach of Freud himself is of a nature to warn us about it, when it is not so much from myth that he first (317) supported it, but from a recourse to the stage. Oedipus and Agamemnon represent stage productions. Today one sees the full import of a feebleminded clinging to it, in someone who put his signature to a mishap, by venturing on an exegesis of the o-object.

Because if the moral act is organised from the psychoanalytic act, it is because it receives its In-I (*En-Je*) from the fact that the o-object is co-ordinated from an experience of knowledge.

It is from it that there takes its substance the insatiable requirement that Freud was the first to articulate in *Civilisation and its discontents*. We are highlighting this insatiable with a different accent by the fact that it finds its balance in the psychoanalytic act.

Why put it to the credit of this act that we have reduced introduced its very status in time?

Nor push back this in-time, by having uttered it six months ago in the proposition that anticipated it and unleashed not simply a theoretical, but effective kind of house-breaking in our Ecole that since it got very close to me makes me dare to recognise it as bearing witness to a rendezvous.

Is it enough to remark that in the psychoanalytic act the o-object is only supposed to come in the form of a production for which the means, because it is required for all supposed exploitation, is supported here by knowledge whose proprietorial aspect is properly what precipitates a precise social fault?

Shall we go on to question whether it is indeed the man that an anti-eros would reduce to a single dimension that is distinguished in the May insurrection?

On the other hand putting the In-I into a mass by getting a grip on the knowledge that crushes not so much by its excess as by the auditing of its logic that makes of the subject a pure cleavage, here is where there is conceived a change in the very moorings of anxiety and it must be said that having laid down that it is not without an object, we have here also just grasped what was already disappearing over a ridge.

This is not enough for the act that is required in the field of knowledge, to collapse into the passion for the signifier for there to be some one or no one to take on the job of starter.

There is no difference, once the process has begun, between the subject devoted to subversion to the degree of producing something incurable in which the act finds its own end, and what takes on a revolutionary effect from the symptom, simply by no longer marching under the Marxist baton.

What people believed they were pinpointing here about the virtues of speaking out, is only the suspect anticipation of the rendezvous that is indeed there, but in (318) which the word only comes because the act was there. This should be understood as: was there a little more, even if it only arrived, was there at the very instant that it finally arrived.

This indeed is why I hold that for my part I did not fail to be at the place that the drama of today's psychoanalysts confers on me at this juncture, recognising

that I know a little bit more about it than those who ridiculously did not miss this occasion to display themselves as actors in it.

Here, as always, we find the lead I enjoy and it is enough for it to exist for it not to be something slight, when I remember the judgement, made by a particular person, that in the case from which there remains to be found everything that we know about obsessional neurosis, Freud had been "taken in like a tyro (*rat*)". This in effect was what was enough to read of the *Ratman*, for someone to be able to sustain oneself with regard to the psychoanalytic act.

But who will understand, even among those who are emerging from my meditation on this act, what is nevertheless indicated clearly in these very lines, where the psychoanalyst will come to be relayed from tomorrow, and also what held this place in history?

I am not a little proud, people should know, of this power of unreadibility that I have been able to maintain unspoilt in my texts to protect against, here for example, what the historialising of a situation offers as a blessed opening for those who are only in a hurry to histrionicise it for their own comfort.

To be too easy to comprehend is to give a way out to avoidance, and it is to make oneself the accomplice of it, in that in the same package which sends each one to his ruin, you provide a supplement from Elsewhere so that he may hurry to put himself into it.

Was I careful enough in approaching what is required to situate the psychoanalytic act: to establish what determines it from enjoyment and the ways at the same time it must protect itself from it? One can judge by the crumbs that have fallen from it onto the following year.

Here again we do not think it an unimportant augury that a cut was made that spared us from doing it.

Let the interest remains on this hither side, since it is not lacking in what is proliferating because of simply ignoring a lemma like this, bequeathed by me, in passing: to the act, of this seminar, "that there is no transference of transference". This nevertheless is what the report in an upcoming Congress stumbles over, for want of having the least idea of what it is articulating (cf. "The non-transference relationship" in *IJP*, 1969. Part 1, vol. 50)

If it were not irremediable because of having spent so much time in the commerce of the true about the true (the third lack), this Roman Congress might have been able to pick up a little bit more of what, once upon a time, was uttered in act there about the function as well as the field that language determines language.

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THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN

BOOK XVI

From an Other to the other

1968-1969

Translated by Cormac Gallagher from unedited French manuscripts

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Seminar 1: Wednesday 13 November 1968

The essence of psychoanalytic theory is a discourse without words.
(L'essence de la théorie psychanalytique est un discours sans parole)
(Written on the board)

We find ourselves here again this year for a seminar for which I chose the title *From an Other to the other (D'un Autre à l'autre)* to indicate the major reference points around which my discourse ought, properly speaking, to turn. That is why this discourse is crucial at the moment of time that we are at. It is so in as much as it defines what is involved in this discourse called the psychoanalytic discourse, whose introduction, whose coming into play at this time brings so many consequences with it.

A label has been put on this process. It has been called structuralism, a word that moreover was not necessary on the part of the publicist who suddenly, not so many months ago, God knows, put it forward in order to encompass a certain number of people whose labour had for a long time marked out some avenues of this discourse.

Thus it is the doing of what I have just called a publicist - everyone knows the play on words that I have made about "*poubellication*" – that a certain number of us, thanks to the labour of this agency, find ourselves together in the same dustbin (*poubelle*). One could have more disagreeable company! In truth, those that I find myself connected to being people for whose labour I have the greatest esteem, I could not in any case find myself uncomfortable in it, especially, since we know little bit about what is involved in dustbins in this period dominated by the genius of Samuel Beckett. For me

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personally, after having now lived almost 30 years, in three sections of fifteen, ten and five years, in three psychoanalytic societies, I know a little bit about what is involved in living with household refuse.

As regards structuralism, in truth one can understand the unease that may be produced among some people from the treatment that people pretend to inflict from the outside on our common habitat, and also that people may want to get out of it to stretch their legs a little. It remains, nevertheless, that ever since this impatience seems to all appearances to be taking hold of some people, I notice that I do not find myself all that uncomfortable in this basket, since moreover in my eyes it does not (8) seem to me that this structuralism should be identified to anything other than what I call very simply seriousness, and in no way certainly to anything that resembles in any way what one could call a philosophy, if by this word there is designated a vision of the world, or even some way of assuring on the right or the left the positions of a thinking. Let it suffice, to refute the first case, if it is true that as a psychoanalyst I cannot in any way claim to introduce in any fashion what is ridiculously called a psychoanalytic anthropology - it would be enough to recall, at the very entry into this domain of constitutive truths everything that psychoanalysis brings into this field, namely, that there is no union of man and woman without castration:

a) determining by way of phantasy, precisely, the reality of the partner for whom it is impossible,

b) without castration operating, in this sort of hiding place that posits it as a truth in the partner for whom it has been really spared, apart from some accidental excesses.

Let us strongly insist that, developing this formula from Genesis that God created them - there is also created *him* - man and woman – make no mistake, God knows why! - in the case of one the impossibility of the accomplishment of castration comes to posit itself as determining her reality; in the other, the worst thing that is threatened as being possible does not need to happen to be true, in the sense that this term offers no recourse.

This simple reminder, it seems, implies that at least at the heart of the field that is apparently ours, no harmony, however we may designate it, is in place, that assuredly

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some purpose is required of us which is precisely that of a suitable discourse. In order to sustain it, we will have in a way to ask ourselves the sort of question from which all philosophy started. Faced with so much knowledge, which is not without its value and efficacy, what is it that can distinguish this discourse, guaranteed of itself, grounding itself on a criterion that thinking would take as its own measure, and would make it deserve to be entitled *episteme*: science. We are brought, even if it is only at first by this challenge that I have just outlined as that put by truth to the real, to a greater prudence in this approach of harmonising thinking with itself.

A rule of thinking that has to guarantee itself from non-thinking as being that which may be its cause, this is what we are confronted with in the notion of the unconscious. It is only in the measure of the beyond-sense of remarks and not, as is imagined and as the whole of phenomenology supposes, from sense, that I am as thinking. My thinking cannot be regulated – whether one adds or not alas! – as I wish; it is regulated. In my act, I am not trying to express it but to cause it. But it is not a matter of the act. In the discourse, I do not have to obey its rule, but find its cause. It is in (9) the inter-sense – and you can understand this in as obscene a way as you may imagine – there is the being of thinking. What has passed through my thinking, is the cause. It allows to pass purely and simply what has been, as being, and this from the fact that always and ever, wherever it has passed, it has always passed producing effects of thinking.

"It is raining, *il pleut*" is a thinking event each time it is pronounced, and the subject of it is first of all this it (*il*), this hilum (*hile*), I would say, that it constitutes in a certain number of meanings. And that is why this "it" finds itself comfortable in everything that follows because by "it is raining" you can understand "it is raining primary truths", "there is some abuse, *il y a de l'abus*"; especially by confusing rain, a meteor, with *pluvia, aqua pluvia*, rain and the water that one collects from it. The meteor lends itself to metaphor and why? Because it is already made up of signifiers. It is raining. The being of thought is the cause of thinking *qua* beyond sense. It was always and ever the being of a thinking before.

Now using this structure rejects any promotion of infallibility. It is only helped precisely from the gap or rather from the very process because there is a process of

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gap, and it is the process helped by the structure of the practice, but it can only be helped by it by following it, which does not mean in any way going beyond it, except by allowing it to be grasped in the consequences that fix it to time, to the very point that the reproduction of the process comes to a halt. This means that it is when it stops that the result is seen. And this is what explains, let us say here with a discreet touch in passing, that all art is defective. It is from collecting what, at the point where its failure to be completed is hollowed out, it is from collecting this that it takes its force. And that is why music and architecture are the supreme arts – I mean supreme technically, as being at the height of the basal, producing the relation of the harmonic number with time and space, precisely from the angle of their incompatibility. Because the harmonic number is now only, as is well known, a strainer, since it does not hold on either to the one or to the other, neither to this time nor to this space.

This is what structuralism takes seriously. It takes seriously the fact of knowledge as cause, as cause in thinking and, most usually, it has to be said, in a delusional perspective. Do not be frightened, these are opening remarks, reminders of certainties, not truths. And I would like, before introducing today the schemas from which I intend to start, to mark that if something here and now ought already to be in the palm of your hand, it is what I took the care to write earlier on the board about the essence of the theory. The essence of psychoanalytic theory is the function of discourse and very precisely because of something that may appear new to you, or at least paradoxical, that I am saying that it is without words. It is a matter of the essence of the theory because this is what is at stake.

(10) What is the state of theory in the psychoanalytic field? About this, I hear strange echoes being bruited around me. There is no lack of misunderstanding. On the pretext that by positing a whole field of thought as manipulation, I seem to be putting in question traditional principles. I mean – and this is expressed astonishingly because it is in places or in minds that are close to me – by something or other called "theoretical impossibility". Indeed, did I not find this at a turn in some lines that what I one day announced in a context that clearly said what it meant, *that there is no universe of discourse*, so then why tire ourselves out, people seem to conclude. No doubt it would be less important in my eyes to correct my statement, because it does not lend itself to any ambiguity, and it is hard to see how the fact that one can state

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precisely what has been stated, that there is no point of closure in a discourse, that discourse is for all that, far from that, neither impossible, nor even simply devalued. It is precisely by starting from there that you are responsible for this discourse, and especially for managing it properly, taking into account what is meant by this statement that there is no universe of discourse. There is certainly nothing therefore in this respect to be corrected by me, except simply to come back to it to take the following steps; of what consequences are induced from the discourse that has already been put forward but also perhaps to return to what is meant by the fact that being attached to the degree that an analyst may be to the conditions of this discourse, he can at every moment be in a position to show its flaws.

There was a time – allow me a little interlude before getting into this domain – when I took the example of the pot, not without there being such a scandal that I left this pot, as I might say, in the margin of my *Ecrits*. What was at stake was the fact that the pot is, in a way, the tangible image that it is this meaning modelled by itself, thanks to which, manifesting the appearance of a form and a content, it allows there to be introduced into thinking the idea that it is the contents that is the meaning, as if thinking showed here this need to imagine itself as having to contain something else, for this is what the term "to contain" designates when it is highlighted with regard to an inopportune act. The pot, and I called it mustard in order to remark that far from necessarily containing any, it is precisely because it is empty that it takes on its value as a mustard pot. Namely, that it is because the word "mustard" is written on it, but mustard which means that there is much delay (*moult lui tarde*) for this pot before it reaches its eternal life as a pot which begins at the moment when this pot will be holed. Because it is under this appearance throughout the ages, that we find it in digs, namely, by searching in tombs something that will bear witness to us about the state of a civilisation. The pot is holed, it is said, as a homage to the dead person and so that a living person cannot make use of it. Of course it is a reason. But there is perhaps another one which is the following; it is that this hole is intended to produce, so that this hole produces, illustrating the myth of the Danai. It is in this state that, (11) this pot, when we have resurrected it from its burial place, occupies a place of honour on the shelf of the collector and, in this moment of glory, for it just as much as for God, it is in this glory that it reveals its nature. The structure of the pot – I am not saying its material – appears there as what it is, namely, correlative to the function of

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the tube and the drum. And, if we are going to search for preformations in nature, we will see that for a horn or a shell, it is still there, after the life has been extracted from it, that it shows what its essence is, namely, its capacity for producing sound.

Entire civilisations are no longer represented for us except by these little pots in the form of a head or again of some animal, covered by signs that are impenetrable to us, for lack of correlative documents. And here we sense that the meaning, the image is altogether outside, that what is left to being inside is precisely what lies in the tomb in which we find it, namely, precious materials, perfumes, gold, incense and myrrh as they say. The pot explains the meaning of what is there by virtue of what? By virtue of a use value, let us rather say of an exchange value, with another world and another dignity, of a token value. That it should be in pots that we find the manuscripts of the Dead Sea is something to make us sense that it is not the signified that is within, it is very precisely the signifier. And it is with it that we have to deal when it is a matter of what is at stake for us, namely, the relationship between discourse and the word in analytic efficacy.

Here, I ask you to allow me a short circuit at the moment of introducing what, I think, is going to image for you the unity of the theoretical function in this approach rightly or wrongly called structuralist. I shall appeal to Marx whose remarks I have had a lot of trouble not introducing earlier, importuned as I have been for a long time about him, into a field in which he is nevertheless perfectly in his place. I am today going to introduce in connection with the o-object the place in which we have to situate his essential function. Because it is necessary, I will proceed by way of a homologous stave and I will first of all recall something that was, by labours that are still recent, precisely and up to the disavowal of the author designated as structuralist, was perfectly highlighted, and not too far from here, in a commentary on Marx. The question is posed by the author whom I have just evoked of what the object of *Capital* is. We are going to see what, in a parallel way, psychoanalytic investigation allows there to be stated on this point.

Marx starts from the function of the market. His novelty is the place that he situates labour in it. It is not the fact that labour is new that allows his discovery, it is the fact that it is bought; that there is a labour market. This is what allows him to demonstrate

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what is inaugurating in his discourse - what is called surplus value. As it happens this approach suggests the revolutionary act that we know about, or rather that we know (12) very badly, because it is not sure that taking power resolved what I will call the subversion of the capitalist subject expected from this act. But for the moment it matters little to us. It is not sure that the Marxists did not in fact undergo many inauspicious consequences from it. The important thing is what Marx is designating and what his approach means. Whether his commentators are structuralist or not, they still seem indeed to have demonstrated that he for his part is structuralist. Because it is properly by being at the point, for his part, as a being of thought, being at the point that the dominance of the labour market determines, that there is brought out as cause of his thinking this function, an obscure one it has to be said – if this obscurity can be recognised in the confusion of the commentary – which is that of *surplus value*. The identity of discourse with its conditions is what I think is going to find some clarification from what I am going to say about the analytic approach.

No newer than labour was in the production of merchandise, is the renunciation of enjoyment (*jouissance*), whose relation to labour I do not have to define any further. Since, from the beginning and quite contrary to what Hegel says, or seems to say, it is what constitutes the master who clearly intends to make of it the principle of his power. What is new is that there is a discourse that articulates this renunciation and which makes appear in it – for this is the essence of the analytic discourse – what I would call the function of the *surplus enjoying* (*plus de jouir*). This function appears because discourse occurs, because what it demonstrates in the renunciation of enjoyment is an effect of discourse itself. To accentuate things, it must be supposed that in the field of the Other, there is this market, if you wish, which adds up its merits, its values, the organisation of choices, of preferences which implies an ordinal, indeed cardinal structure. Discourse holds the means of enjoying in so far as it implies the subject. There would be no reason of subject, in the sense that one can say reasons of state, if there were not a correlative in the market of the Other, which is that a *surplus enjoying* is established that is captured by some people.

A discourse must be pushed very far to demonstrate how the *surplus enjoying* depends on stating, is therefore produced by discourse, so that it appears as an effect. But in fact this is not something very new to your ears if you have read me, because it

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is the object of my writing on *Kant with Sade* in which the proof is given of the total reduction of this surplus enjoying to the act of applying to the subject the term **o** of the phantasy, through which the subject can be posited as cause of itself in desire.

I will develop this in the time to come by a return to this wager of Pascal that illustrates so well the relation of the renunciation of enjoyment to this element of wager in which life in its totality is itself reduced to an element of value. A strange way of inaugurating the market of enjoyment, to inaugurate it, I am clearly saying, in the field of discourse. But after all is this not a simple transition from what we have (13) just now seen being inscribed in history in this function of goods devoted to the dead? Moreover do we not have here what is now in question for us. We have to deal with theory in as far as it has been lightened precisely by the introduction of this function of the *surplus enjoying*. Around the *surplus enjoying* there is played out the production of an essential object whose function it is now a matter of defining, it is the **o**-object.

The crudeness of the echoes received at the introduction of this term is and remains for me the guarantee that it is indeed in effect of the order of efficacy that I bestow on it. In other words, there is a well known, well marked and celebrated passage in which Marx savoured, during the time he spent developing his theory, the opportunity to see the survival of the living incarnation of its miscognition!

I stated: *the signifier is what represents the subject for another signifier*. This like every correct definition, namely, is required. It is required that a definition should be correct and that a teaching should be rigorous. It is quite intolerable, at the moment when psychoanalysis is called on to give to something that you must not think I intend to elide, to the crisis that traverses the relation of the student to the university, it is unthinkable that one should respond by the statement that there are things that one cannot in any way define in a knowledge. If psychoanalysis cannot state itself as a knowledge and be taught as such, it has strictly nothing to do in a place where nothing else is at stake. If the market of knowledge is very properly shaken by the fact that science contributes to it this unit of value that allows there to be plumbed what is involved in its exchange even in its most radical functions, it is certainly not in order for something that can articulate something about it, namely, psychoanalysis should

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present itself by throwing in the towel. All the terms that may be employed in this connection, whether they are those of "non-conceptualisation" or any other evocation of some impossibility or other, can only designate in any case the incapacity of those who put them forward. It is not because the strategy with the truth in which the essence of therapy may reside does not lie in any particular intervention described as interpretation, a point where undoubtedly all source of particular functions, of lucky operations in the order of the variable can find their opportunity but only have sense by being situated at the precise point where theory gives them their weight.

This is what is well and truly at stake here. It is in the discourse on the function of the renunciation of enjoyment that there is introduced the term of o-object. The *surplus enjoying* as a function of this renunciation under the effect of discourse, is what gives its place to the o-object, like in a market, namely, because it defines some object of human labour as merchandise. Just as each object carries in itself something of (14) *surplus value*, in the same way *surplus enjoying* is what allows the isolation of the o-object.

What are we doing in analysis, if not establishing, by the rule, a discourse of such a kind that the subject suspends what on it? Precisely his function as subject. Namely, that he is dispensed from sustaining his discourse with an "I say" because it is a different thing to speak and to posit "I say what I have just stated". The subject of the statement says "I say", says "I posit", as I do here in my teaching. I articulate this word; it is not poetry; I am saying what is written here and I can even repeat it, which is essential, in the form in which by repeating it, to vary it I add that I have written it.

Here then is the subject dispensed from sustaining what he states. Is it then in this way that he is going to come to this purity of the word, this full word of which I spoke in a period of evangelisation, it has to be said, for the discourse called the Rome discourse. To whom was it addressed if not to ears that were most closed to hearing it. I will not qualify what made these ears provided with these opaque qualities. This would be to make a judgement that could not be in any way other than offensive.

But notice that it is in speaking about *The Freudian thing*, that I happened to launch myself into something that I myself called a prosopopoeia? It is a matter of the truth

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stating: "For you then I am the enigma of her who vanishes as soon as she appears; men who try so hard to hide me under the tawdry finery of your proprieties. But I am prepared to believe that your embarrassment is sincere." I note that the term "embarrassment" was highlighted for its function elsewhere. "For even when you take it upon yourselves to serve as my heralds, you place no greater value on wearing my colours than your own, which are like what you are, phantoms that you are. Where then will I pass into you? Where was I before I entered you? Perhaps one day I will tell you." It is discourse that is at stake here. "But so that you will find me where I am, I will teach you by what sign you will recognise me. Men, listen, I am giving you the secret. Me, the truth, I speak (*Moi, la verité, je parle*)."

I did not write, "I say". What speaks undoubtedly, if it came, as I also wrote ironically, the analysis, of course, would be closed. But it is precisely what does not happen, or what when it does happen deserves to be punctuated in a different way. And for that reason we must take up again what is involved in this subject that is here put in question by an artificial procedure, of whom it is demanded, in effect, not to be the one who sustains everything that is advanced. It must not be believed nevertheless that he is dissipated, for the psychoanalyst is very precisely there to represent him, I mean to maintain him throughout the time that he is not able, in effect, to place himself as regards the cause of his discourse.

Thus it is that it is a matter now of referring to fundamental formulae, namely, to those that define the signifier as being what represents a subject for another signifier. What does that mean? I am surprised that no one has ever remarked in connection (15) with this proposition that the result, as a corollary, is that *a signifier cannot represent itself.* Of course this is not new either because in what I articulated about repetition, this indeed is what is at stake. But there we have to pause for a moment in order to grasp it clearly in real life. What can be meant here in this sentence by this "itself" of the signifier? Note well that when I speak about the signifier I am speaking about something opaque. When I say that the signifier must be defined as what represents a subject for another signifier that means that no one will know anything about it except the other signifier. And the other signifier has no head, it is a signifier. The subject is stifled, effaced, immediately, at the same time as it appears. It is a matter precisely of seeing why something of this subject which disappears in

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emerging, produced by one signifier in order to be immediately extinguished by another, how somewhere this something can be constituted which can at the limit be taken as *Selbstbewusstein,* for something that is satisfied to be identical to itself. Now, very precisely, what this means, is that the signifier in whatever form it is produced, in its presence as subject of course, cannot connect up with its representative signifier without there being produced this loss of identity that is properly speaking called the o-object. This is what Freud's theory about repetition designates. As a result of which nothing is identifiable from the recourse to enjoyment in which, by virtue of the sign, something different comes to its place, namely, the stroke that marks it. Nothing can be produced there without an object being lost in it .

A subject is what can be represented by a signifier for another signifier. But is this not something traced out on the fact that as an exchange value the subject in question, in what Marx is deciphering, namely, economic reality, the subject of exchange value is represented for what? Use value. And it is already in this gap that there is produced, that there falls what is called surplus value. This loss is all that counts at our level. Henceforth no longer identical to himself the subject certainly no longer enjoys but something is lost that is called *surplus enjoying*; it is strictly correlative to the coming into play of what then determines everything involved in thinking. And in the symptom what else is involved. Namely, in terms of being more or less at ease in approaching this something that the subject is quite incapable of naming. But if he does not make a circuit of it he will not even know what to do. He does not simply have to deal with relations to his fellows, [but?] with his most profound relation, with the relation that is called vital, and for which economic references and configurations are much more suitable than the often distant, even though of course not completely wrong ones offered to Freud, those of thermodynamics.

(16) Here then is the way, the element that can allow us to advance into what is involved in analytic discourse. If we have *a priori* posited theoretically and without needing a long recurrence to constitute these premises, if what is at stake in the definition of the subject as caused by the inter-signifying relationship, of something that, in a way, forever prohibits us from grasping it, here also is the opportunity to perceive what gives it this unity, let us call it provisionally preconscious, not

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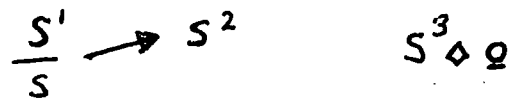
unconscious, the one that has permitted up to the present the subject to be sustained in his so-called self sufficiency. Far from being self sufficient, it is around the formula namely, it is around the being of the o, around the *surplus enjoying*, that there is constituted the relationship that allows us up to a certain point to see there being created this soldering, this precipitation, this freezing which means that we can unify a subject as subject of a whole discourse. I will draw on the blackboard something that images in a certain way what is at stake on this occasion.



This is what happens in the relation of a signifier to another signifier, namely, that it is the subject that is represented there, which here will never know. Once any signifier whatsoever in the chain can be put into relation with what is nevertheless only an object, namely, what is fabricated in this relationship to *surplus enjoying,* in this something that is able through the opening of the operation of the organism to take on the figure of these vanishing entities that I have already given the list of, which go from the breast to dejections and from the voice to the look, the fabrication of the discourse of the renunciation of enjoyment. The mainspring of this fabrication is the following, it is that around them can be produced the surplus enjoying. That assuredly if already in connection with Pascal's wager I told you that if there were only one life to be wagered to win beyond death, it would be well worth our while labouring enough in this one to know how to behave in the other. In this labour and its exchange as a wager with something, when we know that it is worth the trouble, there is found the mainspring of the fact that at the very foundation of the idea handled by Pascal it appears with the extraordinary blindness of someone who is himself at the beginning of a period of unleashing of the function of the market and its correlative the one that introduced scientific discourse. Let us not forget that he is also the one who wanted, at the most extreme moments of his retreat and his conversion, to inaugurate in Paris a *Compagnie des Omnibus Parisienne*. If this Pascal, who does not know what he is saying when he speaks about a happy life, we have the incarnation of it, what else is graspable under the term of happy if not precisely this function incarnated in the surplus enjoying? And moreover we have no need to wager on the beyond to know what it is worth.

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(17) Where the surplus enjoying is unveiled under a naked form has a name. It is called perversion. And that is why a holy woman has a perverse son. There is no need for the beyond to see what happens in the transmission from one to the other in terms of the operation of an essential discourse.

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Here then is opened the figure, the schema of what allows it to be conceived how it is around the phantasy, namely, of the relationship of the reiteration of the signifier that represents the subject in relation to itself that there is played out what is involved in the production of **o**. But inversely, by this fact, their relationship takes on consistency and it is from this that there is produced here something that is no longer either subject nor object, but that is called phantasy. Henceforth, the other signifiers can, by linking up, articulating and at the same time here, freezing in the effect of meaning, introduce this effect of metonymy which means that this subject, whatever he may be, whether it is in the sentence, at the level of the child of "A child is being beaten, *On bat un enfant"*, at the level of the *on*, something equivalent solders this subject and makes of him this solidary being that in the discourse we have the weakness to give the image of as an omnivalent image, as if there could be a subject of all signifiers.

If there is something that, through the analytic rule, can be sufficient relaxed in this chain for there to be produced these revelatory effects, what sense, what accent should we give to it so that it can have some import? The ideal no doubt is that this mythical [critical?] "I speak" which will bring about in analytic experience the effect, the image of the appearance of the truth.

It is here precisely that it must be understood that this emitted truth is suspended there, caught between two registers, those whose two limits I posed precisely in the two terms that figure in the title of my seminar this year. Because this *either*, a reference to the field where the discourse of the subject would take on its consistency, namely, to the field of the Other that I defined as this locus where every discourse at least posits itself in order to be able to offer itself to what is or not its refutation. That it can demonstrate, and in the most simple form – you will excuse me for not having the time to do it today – that the problem of whether or not there is a God who

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guarantees as for Descartes the field of truth is completely uncalled for. It is enough for us that it can be demonstrated that in the field of the Other there is no possibility of a complete consistency of discourse and this I hope the next time to be able to articulate for you precisely in function of the existence of the subject.

I already wrote it out once very rapidly on the board. It is a proof that is very easy to find in the first chapter of what is called set theory. But again it would be necessary, at least for part of the listeners here, to show why it is relevant to introduce into the elucidation of the function of a discourse such as ours, we analysts, in some way (18) extract it from a logic that it would be quite wrong to believe is a way of excluding it into the neighbouring amphitheatre to call it mathematical logic. If nowhere in the Other there can be assured in any way the consistency of what is called the truth, where then is it unless this function of the o corresponds to it. Moreover, have I not already on some other occasion expressed what is involved in the cry of the truth. "*Me, the truth*, I wrote, *I speak, and I am pure articulation expressed to your embarrassment*". What the truth can say is there to move us. But what the one who is suffering says by being this truth, ought to know that its cry is only a mute cry, a cry into the void, a cry that already at one time I illustrated by the celebrated engraving of Münch, because at this level nothing else can correspond to it in the Other than what gives it its consistency and in the naïve faith that it is like me, namely, that it is its true support, namely, its fabrication as o-object. Faced with it, there is nothing but that, than *the additional one (l'un en plus)* among so many others, that can in no way correspond to this cry of the truth except that it is very precisely its equivalent, non-enjoyment, misery, distress and solitude. It is the counterpart of this o, of this surplus enjoying that gives its coherence to the subject *qua* ego.

There is nothing else, unless for today to want to leave you on something that makes one smile a little. I take up again the words that, in *Ecclesiastes*, an old king who did not see the contradiction between being the king of wisdom and having a harem, who tells you, "All is vanity no doubt, enjoy the woman that you love, namely, make a ring of this hollow, of this void at the centre of your being, there is no neighbour if not this very hollow in you, it is the emptiness of yourself". But in this relationship undoubtedly guaranteed only by the figure that allowed Freud no doubt to hold on throughout this whole perilous path and to allow us to clarify the relationships which,

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in this myth, would otherwise not be tolerable, the divine law that leaves in its entire primitiveness this enjoyment between man and woman of which it must be said: "Give her what you do not have, because what can unite you to her, is only enjoyment". It is on this point that in the style of a simple, total, religious riddle, of one that is only approached in the Cabbala that I will discharge you today.

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Seminar 2: Wednesday 20 November 1968

The last time, which was a premiere, I made reference to Marx in a relation that, in a first moment, I presented as homologous, with all that this term involves by way of reservations. I introduced alongside, let us say, surplus value what is called, in the original tongue – not that this notion of course was being named for the first time but discovered in its essential function – *Mehrwert*. I wrote it because God knows what would happen if I only pronounced it, in front of what I have here as an audience, and especially psychoanalysts when they are recruited from among those that are described as being by nature or heredity, double agents. Soon people will be telling me that it is the sour mother (*mère verte)*, that I am rediscovering familiar paths. It is with this, with my "it speaks", people reintegrate the supposedly obstinate desire of the subject to find himself again nice and warm in the maternal womb. So then to this surplus value, I hooked on, I superimposed, I plastered on the other side the notion *of surplus enjoying*. It is said like that in the original tongue. It was said the last time for the first time, namely, in French. To restore it to the tongue from which the inspiration for it came to me, I would call it, provided no German scholar in this assembly does not oppose it *Merhlust*.

Naturally, I did not bring forward this operation without making a discreet reference, in the way I sometimes do, an allusive one, a discreet allusive reference to the one, why not, whose researches and thinking led me to it, namely, Althusser. Naturally, as usual, in the hours that followed, this created some stir in the cafes where people gather, and how flattered I am at it, even delighted, to chew the fat over what has been said here. In truth, what can be said on this occasion, and what I do not deny since it

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was on this plane that I introduced my remarks the last time, namely, this factor, the *poubellicant* or *poubellicatoir* factor, whatever you want to call it, of structuralism. I had precisely made an allusion to the fact that according to the last echoes I had Althusser was not very comfortable in it. I simply recalled that, whatever he may avow or renounce in structuralism, it seems indeed to whoever reads it that his discourse makes a structuralist of Marx and very precisely because he underlines his seriousness.

It is to this that I would like to come back since moreover, what I am indicating, is that one would be wrong to see in some mood or other that what is essential here is to (20) rally behind a flag. Namely, that as I already underlined on other occasions, what I am stating at least for myself when we are dealing with structure, I already said, is to be taken in the sense of what is most real, the real itself. And when I said at the time when here, on the board, I drew, indeed manipulated some of these schemas with which there is illustrated what is called topology, I already underlined that in this case, it was in no way a kind of metaphor. Either one thing or the other. Either what we are talking about has no kind of existence, or, if the subject has one, I mean as we are articulating it, well then it is exactly constructed like that, namely, it is constructed like these things that I wrote on the board, on the paper I use. On condition of course that you know that this little image which is all that one can put down, in effect, to represent it, on a page, that this little image obviously is only there to image for you certain connections that cannot be imagined but on the other hand can perfectly well be written. The structure is therefore real. It is determined by convergence towards an impossibility, in general. But that is how it is and it is because of this that it is real. So then there should almost be no need to talk about structure. If here I am speaking about it, if I speak about structure, if I speak about it again today, it is because I am forced to do so. Because of the chit-chat in the cafes! But I ought not to need to talk about it because I say it. What I say sets up the structure because it aims, as I said the last time, it aims at the cause of the discourse itself. Implicitly, and like each and every one who teaches, by wanting to fulfill this function, I defy in principle that I can be refuted by a discourse that justifies discourse differently to the way I have just said it. I am repeating it for those who are deaf. Namely, what it aims at is the cause of discourse itself. That someone should justify discourse in a different way as an expression of or as a relationship to a content for which a form is invented, that's up

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to him! But I remark then that it is unthinkable, with this position , that you should inscribe yourself under any heading whatsoever in the practice of psychoanalysis. I mean even not as charlatanism. You should understand that the question is whether the psychoanalysis I am indicating here exists. It is precisely this that is at stake.

But on the other hand there is something by which it indisputably affirms itself. It is the symptom of the point in time that we have come to, let us say, in this provisional word that I would call, like that, civilisation. I am not joking! I am not talking about culture. That is vaster! It is moreover a question of convention. We will try to situate culture in the current usage that is made of this term at a certain level that we will call commercial.

Good! Let us come back to my discourse.

To employ a metaphor here that I already used on several occasions to make you (21) sense what I mean by a discourse that is valid, I would compare it to a scissors' cut in this material that I talk about when I talk about the real of a subject. It is through this scissors' cut in what is called structure, in the way that this happens, that it is revealed for what it is. If one makes the scissors' cut somewhere, relationships change in such a way that what is not seen before is seen afterwards.

This is what I illustrated by saying that it is not a metaphor, in recalling to you that the scissors' cut in the Moebius strip makes a strip that no longer has anything to do with what it was previously. To take the next step, one could even say that in grasping this transformation, one perceives that it is the scissors' cut that, in itself, is the whole strip, I mean, as long as it is, in so far as it is, a Moebius strip.

This is a way of speaking about the slightest metaphor. In other words, in principle, whether you call it structuralist or not, let us say that it is not worth the trouble to talk about anything except the real in which discourse itself has consequences. Whether you call that structuralism or not, it is what I called the last time the condition of seriousness. It is particularly required in a technique whose pretension it is that discourse has consequences in it since the patient only submits himself in an artificially defined fashion to a certain discourse regulated in order that there should

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be consequences. Nothing prevails against these remarks, not even those that one sees displayed in books whose text is otherwise marked by this discourse itself, by saying that I neglect the energetic dimension for example. Things like that, I let pass. I let them pass when it is a matter of polemical responses. But here, we are at the heart of the subject since, as I pointed out the last time, for this exalted reference – especially for those who do not even know what it means – to energetics, I substituted a reference that, in our time, one would have difficulty in suggesting is less materialist, a reference to the economy, the political economy. But let us not disdain energetics on this occasion. For it to have a reference to our field, if we apply what I have just said, it is necessary that the discourse should have consequences in it.

Well then, precisely, it has! I am speaking about real energetics, about where it is situated in science, about physics. I even at one time, and well before these laughable objections were published, put into lectures that those involved were perfectly able to hear because they made use of them afterwards in their own lectures. I precisely underlined that energetics is not even conceivable otherwise than as a consequence of discourse. It is not because it is physics that it is not clear, that, without a signifying mapping out of the dimensions and the levels with respect to which there can be estimated, evaluated the initial function of the labour, naturally in the sense of (22) physics, there is not even the probability of beginning to formulate what is called the principle of all energetics in the literal sense of this term, namely, the reference to a constant, which is precisely what one calls energy, in relation to a closed system which is another essential hypothesis. That one can make with that a physics and one that functions, is indeed the proof of what is involved in a discourse that has consequences.

This implies at the same time that physics implies the existence of a physicist and, what is more, not just anyone whatsoever, a physicist who has a correct discourse in the sense that I have articulated it. Namely, a discourse that is worth the trouble saying and is not simply something that is all of a flutter; which is what energetics becomes when it is applied to a usage as delusional and hazy as that made of the notion of libido when people see in it what is called "a life drive". In short, to say that physics does not labour without the physicist is not, since I hope there will not be found any understanding here to formulate the objection – which would be rather

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ridiculous with what I have just stated – that this is an idealist postulate. Because what I am in the process of saying, is that it is the discourse of physics that determines the physicist and not the contrary. Namely, that there were never real physicists until this discourse prevailed. Such is the sense that I give to an acceptable discourse in what I am calling science.

Only there you are. Inevitably, people imagine that the realistic argument is to make an allusion to the fact that, whether we are there or not, we and our science, as if our science were ours, and if we were not determined by it, well then people say nature is always there. I absolutely do not dispute it. Nature is there. The way physics distinguishes itself from nature is that physics is worth saying something about, that discourse has consequences in it. In nature, as everyone knows – and that is even why it is so loved – no discourse has any at all! This is what differentiates nature from physics. To be a philosopher of nature was never taken at any period as a certificate of materialism, for example, nor of scienticity.

But let us take things up again, because that is not where we are. If physics does indeed give us a model of a discourse that is worthwhile, the necessities of our discourse ought to be taken at a higher level. Every discourse presents itself as heavy with consequences, but ones that are obscure. Nothing of what we say, in principle, fails to imply some. Nevertheless we do not know which. We notice in language – for it is at the level of language that I will take things up, and to clearly mark the limits – a syntax that is incarnated by a great number of tongues that, for want of boldness, are called positive tongues. Because I am there, and because I have just made a remark about nature that, I think, does not at all seem to you irrelevant, but (23) why, why should we inconvenience ourselves and not call them natural tongues? One would see better in this way what concerns linguistics and what allows it to be situated in the discourse of science. It is quite clear that even vis-à-vis language – whatever prevalence we may accord to it because we forget it as a natural reality – every scientific discourse about the tongue is presented by a reduction of its material. A functioning is highlighted in which consequences are grasped. I would say more, in which there is grasped the very notion of consequence with its varieties of necessary or contingent for example. There is carried out then a discursive split and this is what allows there to be given its whole value to the fact that I first of all affirm that there is

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no meta-language, which is true in the field of natural language. But why do you carry out this reduction of the material? I have just told you. It is to highlight a functioning in which consequences are grasped, and once you grasp consequences, you articulate them in something that you have the right to consider as meta-language, except for the fact that this "meta" can only create a confusion. And that this is why I would prefer what gives rise to the detaching in discourse of what must be called by its name, logic – I am indicating here nothing more – always conditioned by nothing other than by a reduction of material. And I illustrate here what I mean.

Reduction of material means that logic begins at this precise date in history when, for certain elements of language as functioning in their natural syntax, someone who understands it, who inaugurates logic, substitutes for certain of these elements a simple letter. It is starting from the moment when with, "if this, then that" you introduce an A or a B that logic begins. And it is only starting from there that in language you are able, about the use of this A and of this B, to pose a certain number of axioms and laws of discussion that will merit the title of being articulated as meta- or if you prefer para-language. So then no more than physics extends, like the goodness of God, to the whole of nature, does logic circumscribe the whole of language.

It nevertheless remains, as I have said, that either it is a delusion, absurd folly to dwell on it – this indeed in effect is the whole appearance that one has of it in these publications, most of them – to dwell on psychoanalysis, or what it states is that everything that you are, to be understood as up to now, as a sentient being – I did not say simply as a thinking being, even though after all there is no reason to have any repugnance for this term; is the fact of thinking the privilege of intellectualistic intellectuals who, as everyone knows, are the poison of this nether world, of this nether psychoanalytic world I mean – everything that you are as a sentient being falls under the influence of the consequences of discourse. Even your death, I mean the (24) quaint idea that you may have of it, is not separable from the fact that you can say it, and I mean by that not just to say it naively. Even the idea that I call quaint, because in effect it does not have any great weight for you, that you have of your death is not separable from the maximal discourse that you may weave about it. This indeed is the reason why the feeling that you have of it is nothing but quaint. I would

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even say that naively, you cannot begin to say it. Because what I am alluding to, is not at all to the fact that primitive people are naïve and that is why they speak about it in such a funny way. That for them it is always a device, a poisoning, a spell that has been cast, a gadget that is not labouring somewhere, in short an accident, this does not at all prove that they speak about it naively. Do you find that that is naïve! It is quite the contrary. But it is precisely for that reason that they also fall under this law. The feeling they have about their death is not separable from what they can say about it, which was what had to be proved.

There is a person, like that, earlier, among those who might instruct themselves a little bit here and get rid of their nonsense, who left because she finds no doubt that what I am saying are banalities. Apparently it is necessary to say them; otherwise why would I take the trouble, after all I have just said, about the fact that a discourse has consequences or not. It had in any case as a consequence this leaving, which serves as a signal. This indeed is why it is essential that in psychoanalysis we should have some minds formed in what is called - I do not know why - "mathematical logic", like that, through an old constraint, as if there were any other. It is quite simply logic. It happens that it has interested mathematics. This is all that distinguishes it from Aristotelian logic that very obviously did not interest mathematics. It is a progress for logic that it interests mathematics, yes! This mathematical logic, to call things by their name, is altogether essential for your existence; whether you know it or whether you do not know it. It is precisely because you do not know very much about it that things happen that stir things up from time to time, very recent things. People are waiting for me to talk about them, but I will speak about them, I will speak about them! It all depends on the time that I am going to spend in unfolding what I prepared for you today and I would like to have a little point, like that, to give you before leaving you. But it is not sure, because I never know too well. What I bring you is never absolutely measured out.

That is not where the question is. Whether you know it or whether you do not know it, the bizarre question is that obviously I have just alluded to the fact, since I told you that whether you knew it or whether you did not know it, whether it has always been true that mathematical logic has consequences as regards your existence as a subject, (25) which I have just said are there whether you know it or whether you do not know

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it. Because then the question is posed, of how it could happen before the logic that is called mathematical came to birth? It is the question of the existence of God. I have already remarked it but I repeat – one cannot repeat oneself too much – was mathematical logic already there, in the divine brainbox, before in your existence as a subject, which would have thus been conditioned from that moment on, you were already affected by it?

It is a problem that has all its importance because it is around this that there takes effect this advance that a discourse has consequences. Namely, that something close to the effects of discourse was required for there to be born that of mathematical logic. And that in any case, even if something could already represent in an existence of a subject something that retroactively we can attach to some facts in this existence of the discourse of logic, it is quite clear, it ought to be firmly held that they are not the same consequences as since this discourse, I mean that of mathematical logic, has been put forward.

Here there is situated the necessary and the contingent in the discourse that is effectively held. This indeed is where I have trouble in seeing why the structural reference is supposed to overlook the dimension of history. It is simply a matter of knowing what one is talking about! History as it is included in historical materialism appears to me to conform strictly to structural requirements. Was surplus value there before abstract labour, I mean what this abstraction is separated out from, I mean as a social means, resulted from something that we will call – I am not guaranteeing the exactitude of the first word but I want to say a word that has weight – the absolutisation of the market. It is more than probable, and for a good reason which is that we have, for that, introduced the *surplus enjoying*. That one can consider that this absolutisation of the market is only a condition so that surplus value can appear in discourse. There was therefore required this thing that can with difficulty be separated from the development of certain effects of language, namely, the absolutisation of the market to the point that it encompasses labour itself, for surplus value to be defined in the fact that in paying with money or not, with money because we are in the market, for labour, its true price, as the function of exchange value is defined in the market, there is an unpaid value in what appears as the fruit of labour, in a use value, in what is the true price of this fruit. This unpaid labour, even though

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paid in a correct fashion with respect to the consistency of the market, this, in the functioning of the capitalist subject, this unpaid labour is the surplus value. It is the fruit of the means of articulation that constitutes the capitalistic discourse from capitalist logic.

(26) No doubt, when it is articulated in this way this involves a claim about the *frustration* of the labourer. This involves a certain position of the "I" in the system, when this "I" is in the place of the worker, which is more and more generally the case. That this involves that is strange. This is what should be said. Because it is only the consequences of a perfectly well defined discourse, into which the labourer inscribes himself as a labourer, as "I". I said "I" here. Notice that I did not say subject although I spoke about the capitalist subject. I am going slowly because after all I will come back to it, we will look at it again – except I hope those who leave in the middle! – and you will see that it is not for nothing that I am saying here "subject", and that there I say "I". Because that will be found at a certain level, and at a level that must have functioned for a long time because it is that of my graph that I constructed more than ten years ago before an audience of donkeys. They still have not found where the "I" is on this graph! So then I will have to explain it for them. In order to explain it for them, I must prepare. We labour. It is work. Let us hope that I can tell you before the end how the labour, for us, at the level of this discourse, of the teacher, is situated. So then it is strange that this involves the idea of frustration, with the complaints which follow, the little reconstructions that are distinguished under the name of revolution. It is strange. It is interesting.

But I cannot from now on not articulate that at this precise point the conflictual dimension is introduced. It is difficult to designate it otherwise. I said that it was strange, and that it is interesting. That ought at least to encourage you to recognise it, no? I will designate it by this strange word, not less interesting but strange, which is the word truth. You know, the truth is not grasped just like that, huh! Of course I introduced it, like that, at one time, in its junction whose topology I tried to draw, in its junction with knowledge, because it is difficult to speak about anything whatsoever in psychoanalysis without introducing this junction. This clearly shows the prudence that is necessary because God knows what has come back to me in this connection in terms of the idiocies that are doing the rounds!

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We are going to try to approach it a little bit more closely and to see how the capitalist reality does not have such bad relationships with science. It can function like that, in any case for some time yet, to all appearances. I would even say that it accommodates itself to it not badly at all. I am speaking about reality, am I not? I did not speak about the Real. I spoke about what is constructed about the capitalist subject, what is generated from the complaint fundamentally made about the recognition – otherwise the discourse of Marx has no sense – called surplus value. This is properly the scientific incidence into the order of something that is the order of the subject. Obviously, at a certain level this does not accommodate itself badly at all (27) to science. People send into the spatial orbs objects that are quite well shaped as well as being habitable. But it is not sure that at a closer level, at the one where there is generated revolution and the political forms that it generates, something is entirely resolved on the plane of this frustration that we have designated as being the level of a truth. No doubt the labourer is the sacred locus of this conflictual element which is the truth of the system. Namely, that a knowledge which holds up all the more perfectly because it is identical to its own perception of being, is torn apart somewhere. So then let us take this step that is allowed us by the fact that what is at stake without any doubt is the same substance. Let us feel what is involved in the structural stuff and let us make our scissors' cut. It is knowledge that is at stake. It is in relation to it, in its scientific form, that I have just given a prudent appreciation about what is involved in the relations, in the two realities that are opposed in our political world.

Knowledge, even though earlier I seemed to begin my discourse from it, knowledge is not labour. It is worth labouring at sometimes but you can get it without labour. Knowledge, at the extreme point, is what we call the price. The price is sometimes incarnated in money, but just as much in knowledge! It is worth money and more and more so. This is what ought to enlighten us! The price of what? It is clear, the price of the renunciation of enjoyment. Originally it is through this that we begin to know a little bit. No need to labour for that. It is because labour implies the renunciation of enjoyment that every renunciation of enjoyment is only accomplished through labour. An illumination like that comes to you provided you know how to hold yourself back, or to contain yourself, as I alluded to it the last time to define thinking.

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A little moment of pause. You can perceive for example that the woman does not live on bread alone, but also on your castration, this for the males. After that you will be able to conduct your lives with more certainty. That is a use value, so it is! Knowledge has nothing to do with labour. But in order that something should be clarified in this affair it is necessary that there should be a market, a market of knowledge that knowledge becomes merchandise. Now this is what is being precipitated. If you had no idea of it you ought at least to have a little suggestion of it, in seeing the form that things are taking, in seeing the atmosphere of a fair that for some time it took on in the University for example.

There are things like that, that I spoke about incidentally from other angles. There is no intellectual property, for example. That does not mean that there is not theft. It is even like that that it begins, property! All of this is very complicated. All of this only exists, of course, since lectures given abroad were paid for. I mean that one pays the foreigner. And even in France that is starting. It is from that moment that one can (28) discern what I once called, in an intimate circle, a heart lifting price (*prix haut-le-coeur*) to whoever shows himself to be specially in view in this sort of speculation. But all of this is only anecdote. Knowledge becomes a market not at all through the effect of corruption or the imbecility of men. You should understand for example that the Sorbonne, this has been known for a long time, is the elective place for this sort of negative quality, this sort of weakness. That was known everywhere throughout history. At the time of Rabelais, they were already swine. At the time of the Jansenists....it never fails, they are always on the right side; which means the wrong one! That is not what is new. That is not it! I looked for the root of what are ridiculously called the "events"; there was not the slightest event in this business. But I will explain this for you another time.

The very process by which science is unified in so far as it takes its node from a consequent discourse that reduces all knowledge to a single market, and this, for what we are questioning, is the nodal reference. It is starting from there that we can conceive that there is something there also that *qua* paid at its true price of knowledge according to the norms which are constituted from the market of science, is nevertheless obtained for nothing. This is what I called *surplus enjoying*. Starting

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from knowledge, what is not new but is only revealed starting from the homogenisation of knowledge on the market, one finally sees that enjoyment is organised and can be established as *recherchée* and perverse. What is it then on this occasion that represents the discontent of civilisation as it is put? It is a *surplus enjoying* obtained from the renunciation of enjoyment, there being respected precisely the principle of the value of knowledge. Is knowledge a good [commidity?]? This is the question that is posed because its correlative is the following: *non licet omnibus* – as I already said – *adire Corynthum*. Not everybody has for all that access to *surplus enjoying*.

What is there then in this affair paid or not? Labour as we have seen above. But in this register what is at stake? What I already highlighted earlier as regards what emerges in terms of conflict from the function of plus value puts us on the path, and this is what I already called the truth. The way in which each one suffers in his relationship to enjoyment in so far as he does not insert himself into it only through the function of *surplus enjoying*, this is the symptom, and the symptom in so far as it appears from the fact that there is no longer anything but an average social truth, an abstract truth. This is what results from the fact that a knowledge is always paid no doubt in accordance with its true price, but below the use value that this truth always generates for other than those who are in the truth. This is what the function of the *surplus enjoying*, of the *Mehrlust* involves, this *Mehrlust* that completely mocks us because we do not know where it is ensconced. Good! That is why your daughter is (29) mute, my dear children, namely, why in May we had our squalls. A great "speaking out, *prise de parole*" as someone who does not have in my field a negligible place expressed it. Taking the floor, I think that one would be wrong to give to this taking any homology with the taking of any particular Bastille. I would say rather taking tobacco or coke. The fact is that it was positively the truth that was manifested on this occasion. A collective truth, and which must be seen in the sense that the strike did not resonate at all badly with this truth, is precisely this sort of relationship that welds the collectivity to labour. It is even the same. Because one would be completely wrong to believe that a chap caught up in an assembly line works in it collectively in it. After all he is the one who does the work! In a strike, the collective truth of labour is manifested and what we have seen in May, was the strike of truth. There also the relationship to the truth was obvious. The truth was

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displayed on the walls. Naturally, you should remember at this moment the relationship that happily I had highlighted 3 months before that the truth of stupidity (*vérité de la connerie*) does not fail to pose the question of the stupidity of truth. There are even stupidities that have been said about Lacan's discourse. It reproduced it like that – it was by chance, of course – almost textually. This obviously depends on the fact that things extracted from their context may well be truths but that does not prevent them being stupidities. This indeed is the reason why what I prefer is a discourse without words.

The strange thing was what one saw in terms of a passionate questioning, the one that emerged in the soul of what I would call – I think that you will see there being profiled his silhouette – the communist priest, the one whose goodness does not have a limit either in nature. Receiving, with him, moral propositions, you can count on it, these are things that come with age. There was one that I pinpointed forever with the title of *Mudjer Muddle*. This is the name I gave him, I thought it up myself. It evokes the crocodile and the mud that he bathes in and the fact that with a delicate tear he draws you into his well-meaning world. I met *Mudjer Muddle* on the pavement of Boulevard Saint-Germain. He told me that he was looking for Marxist theory and that he was inundated – by what? By the happiness that all of this bathed in. But it never occurred to him that happiness could come from the strike of the truth. Who would not be happy of course; from the weight that it weighs on us at every moment of our existence, we can be aware of what is involved by no longer having anything but a collective relationship with it.

So then I do not depreciate the fact that these truths displayed on the walls were sometimes stupid. As I told you no one has remarked that they are also in my discourse. That is because in mine they frighten people. But on the walls they frightened people also. And it is indeed from this that it comes, so many stupid things give rise to an unequalled fear. When collective truth emerges you know that any discourse can clear out.

(30) There you are. Things have returned to order a little. But it is smouldering. That is why there is an outflow of capital. Well then! Since I have taken the risk today of giving my interpretation of what are called the events, I would like to tell

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you, you should not think for all that that this will stop the process. You would be wrong not to notice that, for the moment, there is even no question of it stopping, what I called the market of knowledge! And you yourselves are the ones who will act for it to become more and more established. The appearance in the reform of a notion like that of credits (*unités de valeur*), in the little bits of paper that you may be granted, the unit of value is that! It is the sign of what that knowledge is going more and more to become in this field, in the market that is called the University.

So then of course things ought to be followed very, very closely in order simply to map out there what is quite onbvious that the truth may have its spasmodic functions here, but that this is not at all what will regulate for each of you your existence as a subject. Of what the truth, I reminded you of it the last time, the truth, my God, in a text, I was very kind, I made it state the most intelligent propositions that I could attribute to it. I loaned it what I say when I am not telling the truth. In other words, no discourse can tell the truth. The discourse that holds up, is the one that can hold up long enough without you needing to account for its truth. Wait there, with your backs to the wall, those who may present themselves to you by saying "psychoanalysis you know, huh, for our part we can say nothing about it." It is not the tone you require if you want to master the world by a value called knowledge. If a discourse is slipping away you have only one thing to do, call it to account. Why? In other words, a discourse that is not articulated to say something is a discourse of vanity.

You must not believe that the fact of saying that all is vanity which is what I left you on the last time, is something other here than a lure on which, as I told you, I wanted you to leave with your souls in pain until I took up this discourse again. And as regards what is involved in those who posit as a principle an essential vanity of all discourse, this is what the one I hold will have to take up with you again the next time.

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Seminar 3: Wednesday 27 November 1968

We arrived the last time at a point that requires me to give you today some clarifications that I would call topological. It is not something new to what I am introducing here. But it is necessary for me to link it to what, precisely, I introduced this year under this form that designated the relation of knowledge to something, certainly more mysterious, more fundamental. To something that runs the danger of being taken to have the function of background as compared to the field of a form, while what is at stake is something quite different. I am talking about enjoyment (*jouissance*). It is only too obvious that enjoyment is of course the substance of everything we speak about in psychoanalysis. Through it we know well that it is not formless. Enjoyment has here the significance of allowing us to introduce this properly structural function, that of the *surplus enjoying*. This *surplus enjoying* appeared, in my last talk, in function of a homology with respect to the Marxist surplus value. Homology, clearly means – and I underlined it – that the relation is not one of analogy. It is indeed the same thing that is at stake. It is a matter of the same stuff in so far as what is at stake is the scissors' mark of discourse.

Am I making myself understood?

If it is quite true that what is involved here in mine – because everyone who has followed for a sufficient time what I am stating here sees what function this relation of *surplus enjoying* to surplus value turns around

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– it is the function of the o-object. If in a certain sense I invented this o-object as one can say that the discourse of Marx invents, what does that mean, it is the lucky find of surplus value, this is not to say, of course, that it was not approached before my discourse. And it was called, but in a frankly inadequate way, as inadequate as was the definition of surplus value before the discourse of Marx made it appear in its rigour. But the important thing is not to underline this equivalence in the order of the importance of the discovery. The important thing is to pose the question of what we can think of the very fact of the discovery if, first of all, I define it as an effect of discourse. Because it is not a matter of theory in the sense that it might overlap something that at a given moment, may become apparent. The o-object is an effect of analytic discourse and, as such, what I say about it is only this very effect.

(32) Does this mean that it is only an artifice created by analytic discourse? This is the point that I designate, which is consistent with the foundation of the question as I am posing it, as regards the function of analysis. If the analyst himself were not this effect, I would say more, this symptom that results from a certain incidence in History, implying the transformation of the relationship of knowledge to this enigmatic foundation of enjoyment, of the relationship of knowledge in so far as it is determining for the position of the subject, there would be neither analytic discourse nor of course a revelation of the function of the o-object. But the question of artifice, as you see clearly, is modified, is suspended, finds its mediation in this fact that, what is discovered in an effect of discourse, already appeared as effect of discourse in History. That psychoanalysis in other words, only appears as a symptom in so far as a turning point of knowledge in History – I am not saying the history of knowledge – a turning point of the incidence of knowledge in History is already there that concentrated, as I might say, to offer us, to put this function within our reach. I am speaking about the one defined by the o-object. It is clear that no one, except one, my Italian translator whose modesty I will not offend,

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because she missed the plane this morning and is not here, who very clearly perceived, some time ago, the identity of this function of surplus value and the o-object. Why were there not more? Why not more people to have stated it unless of course it may have happened that the matter was not communicated to me?

This is the strange thing. The strange thing that undoubtedly is tempered by grasping in real life as I do, it is my destiny, the difficulty of the progress of this analytic discourse, the resistance that grows in the very measure that it is pursued. And nevertheless is it not curious, since moreover here I have a testimony that after all takes its value because it comes from someone who is of the youngest generation, is it not curious to see, through an effect, assuredly, that I will not designate as being that of my discourse, but as being that of the growing difficulty that is generated from what I called this absolutisation of the market of knowledge, I am able to touch very frequently, much more easily, in the coming generation, is my exchange with those who after all, through a little experiment of calculation, I was able to give the average age of, let us say with those who are 24 years old.

I would not go so far as to say that at 24 everyone is Lacanian! But surely that in a way, nothing of what I have been able to encounter over time, as they say, in terms of difficulties to make this discourse understood happens any longer, at least not at the same place as where I have to deal with someone or other – I am saying even being in no way a psychoanalyst – who approaches simply the problems of knowledge from their most modern angle and let us say has some openness to the domain of logic....You want me to speak a little bit louder over there? You are making a little gesture, good, good.

(33) Also, since it is in this generation that people are beginning – I have echoes of it already, fruits, results – to study my *Ecrits*, and even beginning to produce what are called diplomas or theses, anyway,

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putting them to the test of a university transmission, I was able recently, and I was not at all surprised by it, to note undoubtedly the difficulty that these young authors have in extracting from these *Ecrits* what can be called a formula that is acceptable and classifiable in the pigeonholes that are offered to them. Assuredly, what escapes them most is what is in it, what gives it its weight and essence, which is no doubt what grabs these readers that I am always so astonished to know are so numerous, is the dimension of work which, so precisely, is represented there. I mean that each one of them, each one of the *Ecrits* represents something that I had to displace, to push, to transport in the order of this dimension of resistance which is not at all of an individual order. It is simply, because the generations, already at the time when I began to speak, were recruited already at an older level, were in this slippery relationship to knowledge, in a word, formed, anyway, in such a style that nothing, in itself, was more difficult than to situate them at the level of this annunciating, denunciating experience that psychoanalysis is.

This indeed is why I am trying to articulate today, I am doing it in a certain hope that something can be connected up between what is offered to me in the attention of the younger generation and what is effectively presented as a discourse. Nevertheless, let there be no kind of expectation that this discourse can become an articulated profession of a position of distance with respect to what is really happening in the progress of analytic discourse.

What I am stating about the subject as itself an effect of discourse absolutely excludes that mine should become a system. While what constitutes its difficulty is to indicate, by its very process, how this discourse is itself determined by a subordination of the subject, of the psychoanalytic subject that I am here supporting with respect to what determines it and belongs to all knowledge. My position, as everyone knows, is identical at several points to what under the name of epistemology, poses a question that one could in a way always define

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as follows: what is involved in the desire that sustains in the most hidden fashion the apparently most abstract discourse, let us say mathematical discourse?

Nevertheless, the difficulty is of a completely different order at the level where I have to place myself for the reason that, if what animates mathematical discourse is uncertain, it is clear that each of its operations is constructed to scupper, to elide and stitch up again, to suture this question at every instant. And remember what already appeared here four years ago about the function of the suture. While on the contrary, what is at stake in analytic discourse is to give its full (34) presence to this function of the subject. This reverses, on the contrary, the movement of reduction in logical discourse which is perpetually centred, and in a way all the more problematic in that it is in no way permitted to us to supply for what is a flaw, except by artifice, and by clearly indicating what we are doing at the moment when we allow ourselves to designate this lack, effect of significance (*signifiance*) of something that, claiming to signify it, cannot be, by definition, a signifier.

If we indicate the signifier of Ø - S(Ø) - it is in a way to indicate this lack, and, as I articulated on several occasions, this lack in the signifier. What does that mean? What does this lack in the signifier represent if moreover we can admit that this lack is something specific to our misguided destiny? There we designate the lack. It has always been the same, and if there is something that puts us in relationship with History, it is to conceive the degree to which, for so much time, men have been able to protect themselves from it. But this is not the question that I have come to raise before you today; on the contrary, I told you, it is a matter of topology. If there is a formula that I repeated these days, these times with insistence, it is the one that roots the determination of the subject in the fact that a signifier represents it, represents it for another signifier.

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This formula has the advantage of inserting into the simplest, the most reduced connection, that of a signifier 1, S_1, to a signifier 2, S_2, $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$. This is what we must start from in order not to lose, no longer be able to lose for a single instant the dependency of the subject. The relation of this signifier 1 to this signifier 2, all those – and it is not at all rare to be able to hope, from a certain moment – all those who have heard something about what is involved in logic, in what is properly involved in set theory, in what is called an ordered pair. Here I can only give an indication of it even if it entails giving a commentary on it later if a demand comes to me. This theoretical reference is nevertheless important to be attached here.

Nevertheless, what I am calling my discourse does not date from today or yesterday. I mean that as I announced the last time to you, there is something that our path leads us to the edge of. It is what is already constructed at the very level of experience and I would say of work, of the work that consists in bringing into my discourse, in an "I say" provoking those who want to overcome the obstacle that is encountered by the simple fact that this discourse, at one time, began in an institution that, as such is designed to suspend it. And I tried to situate, to construct this discourse in its fundamental relation to the relationship of knowledge in something that some of those who may have opened my book may have found at a certain page drawn under (35) the name of graph – ten years! Ten years already since this operation culminated in its coming to birth in the seminar of 1957-58 on *The formations of the unconscious*. And to clearly mark things in the real life situation that was in question, I would say that it is through a commentary on the *Witz*, on the witticism as Freud puts it, on the witticism then I am saying that this construction began. In truth I did not work directly at referring myself to this discourse itself – to take up here the point at which I left it the last time – but much more to something that, it has to be said, without being perfect and even without bearing witness to singular carelessness, has the importance nevertheless of bearing witness that at a particular date, namely, this

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report, this summary was printed in the *Bulletin de Psychologie*. One can see in it that from that time, so prehistoric with respect to the emergence as such of the o-object that had not yet been designated – at this level which followed what I had done the previous year on object relations – that is not designated – but well and truly prefigured for whoever heard what followed – the o-object was only designated in the function of the metonymical object. Things are put in their place from that moment on and everyone can without referring to unpublished notes, find a testimony to it here in this report on *The formations of the unconscious* which covers in a first section the lectures of the 6th, 13th and 20th of November 1957. We find a first drawing which is presented as follows (figure 1).

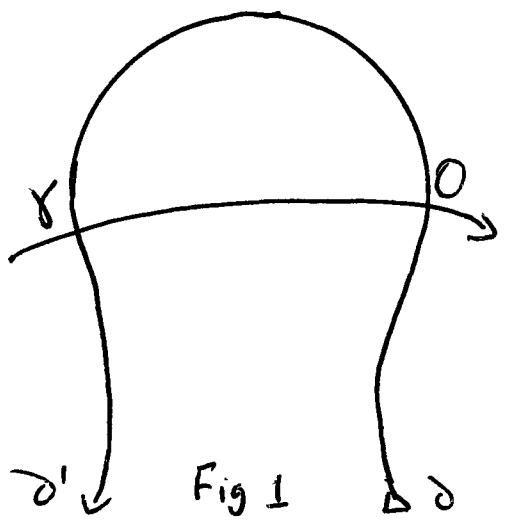

Fig 1

In the clearest fashion it is here at d that this line starts and culminates here at d'; whether we put in d' or whether we do not put it in, it is clear that in looking at the drawing of this curve with this arrow at the end and this little pyramid at the start, there is no question of making it start here to go in the opposite sense. What matter, except for this detail, the testimony of the author of the summary retains its interest. Its interest above all in the fact to which he bears witness that if, since the matter has become banal, that this first outline of the graph has the function of inscribing somewhere what is involved in a unit of the signifying chain in so far as it only finds its completion where it cuts again the intention at the future perfect that determines it. Namely, that, if something is established which is the meaning (*le vouloir dire*),

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(36) let us say that what is unfolded from the discourse will only be achieved by rejoining it, in other words only takes on its full import in the way designated here, namely, retroactively. It is starting from there that one can carry out a first reading of this relation to an O taken as Other, the locus of the code, namely, of what must already be supposed as a treasury of language in order for there to be extracted from it, under the seal of the intention, these elements that have been inscribed one after the other in order to unfold from there in the form of a series S_1, S_2, S_3, in other words a sentence that is only completed when something is firmly realised in it.

What would be more natural, if only in a didactic fashion, than to have articulated then – and after all, why would I myself not tremble now when I think how long this march was – to have let myself then slip into such weakness. Thank God there is nothing of the kind. I read from the pen of the scribe of that time who, despite his carelessness nevertheless very well retained here what is essential: "*Our schema represents not the signifier and the signified, but two states of the signifier*". The circuit, I am not going to repeat it for you in the way he states it because he states it wrongly, but it is obviously the following; the circuit designated as: ∂ O γ ∂', "*represents the signifying chain in so far as it remains permeable to the effects of metaphor and metonymy, that is why we hold it to be constituted at the level of phonemes. The second line* – it is the one you see drawn here whatever confusion is introduced into it by a bad mapping out on a schema that is poorly produced here, I am telling you simply almost at the level of literal designations – *represents the circle of the discourse, common discourse constituted by semantemes that, of course, do not correspond in a univocal way to something of the signified but are defined by their use*". You clearly sense the degree to which this, at the level at which I am constructing it, can be conditioned by the necessity of putting in place – even though it still had to be seen that this was the most evident access – of putting in place the *formation of the unconscious* in so far as it can produce on this occasion the *Witz*, what is involved in

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the formation of the word "*famillionnairely*". Is it not obvious that this can only be produced in so far as there can be re-cut in a precise structurally definable interference something that operates at the level of phonemes with something that belongs to the circle of discourse, of the most common discourse? When Hirsch Hyacinth – and it is essential here that it is not recounted here by Heinrich Heine the other H. H. – when Hirsch Hyacinth speaking about Solomon Rothschild says that he received him in 'a quite familiar way', familiarly comes into the circle of discourse, coming to say that he received him *famillionairely*. Namely, that there is inscribed there, that he brings into it supplementary phonemes, that he produces this priceless formula which does not fail to have an import, for anyone at all, this familiarity that, as Freud expresses it somewhere, does not fail to have (37) an aftertaste of millions. This is not a witticism, nobody will laugh if you express it in that way; if it is expressed, if it appears, if it makes a breakthrough in the form of *famillionairely*, laughter will not fail to be produced.

Why after all will it not fail? It will not fail very precisely because of the fact that a subject is involved in it. When it is a matter of knowing where to place it, and very obviously we can only here – as Freud himself articulates it – notice that the subject is always functioning in a triple register. There is a witticism only with respect to the presence of a third. The witticism does not hold up, as such, between one interlocutor and another. Namely, at the moment when Hirsch Hyacinth tells the thing to his pal, the latter sees himself as being elsewhere, as being ready to tell it to another third person. And effectively this tripleness is maintained when this other third person repeats it. Because in order for it to have its effect on the one to whom he is going to tell it, it is precisely in so far as Hirsch Hyacinthe here remains alone and questions from his place what is involved for the one who recounts it to the one towards whom the message is referred, namely, the new listener. Where is the sensitive point of this "famillionaireness" if not, very precisely in the fact that will escape

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each of those who transmit it. It is, namely, this novelty of the subject that I will not hesitate on this occasion to transplant into this field of the relation that I made intervene, that I introduced into our discourse under the term of capitalist subject. What is the function of each of those who pass between the links of the iron network that this constitutes and is insufficiently pinpointed by the notion of the exploitation of some men by others. All those who are not caught in these two extremes of the chain, what are they in this perspective if not employees? It is in so far precisely as each of the interlocutors feels himself, without knowing it, at the passage of this gentle fun of "famillionaireness", involved as an employee or if you wish, as implicated in the tertiary sector, that this causes laughter.

I mean that it is not at all indifferent that it is Heinrich Heine who tells us that he got it from the mouth of Hirsch Hyacinth. But let us not forget that after all if Hirsch Hyacinth had existed, he is also the creation of Heinrich Heine. I already showed what the relations between Heinrich Heine and Baron Betty were, and that whoever is introduced from this angle into this something which appears to be only a point, a sally, a witticism, if he laughs, it is *qua* involved in this capture exercised, not just by something indifferent, a certain form of riches, certain modes of its incidence in a relation that is not simply that of social oppression, but of the involvement of every position of the subject in the knowledge that it commands.

But the interest of recalling the structure, in recalling that from this point on I distinguished here in a rigorous way the circle of discourse, (38) is indeed to show that in this way there was prepared the true function of what completes this first approximation of what is involved in discourse. Namely, that nothing can be articulated concerning the function of the subject if it does not to duplicate him with what seems, at another level, uniquely in virtue of the dimensions of paper, to be presented as a higher stage, but which is only there – one could just as

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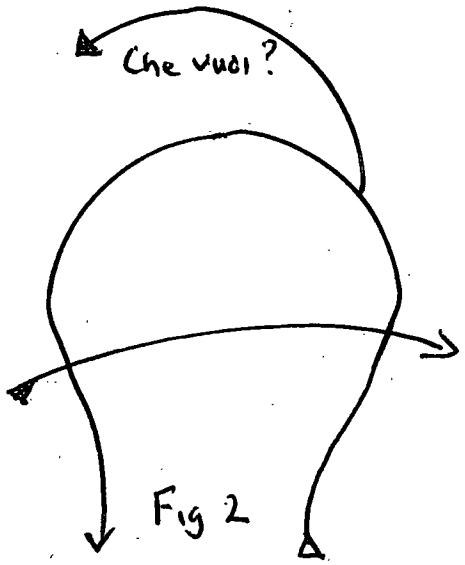
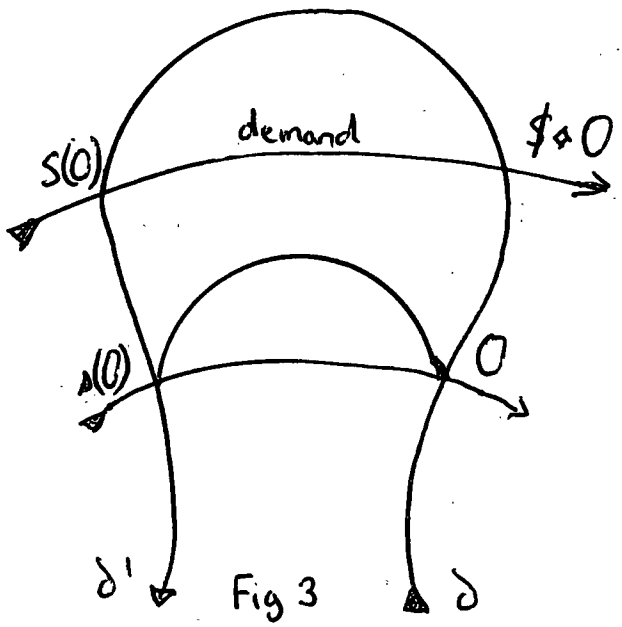


Fig 2

easily describe it upside down – in so far as it is precisely appended to this function of the big O which is the one that we have to question today.

We question it because there is no part of the discourse that, of itself, does not question it. I said in what well articulated way, so well highlighted by the analytic discourse itself in the way I introduced the hook as I might say, when I began to draw it in this way, stitching onto this simplified graph a question mark on top of it. I called it "*Che vuoi?*" in a reference to the *Diable amoureux.* What does it want? What does the Other want? I ask myself.(Figure 2). This duplicity of



[?]

Fig 3

the relation to the Other which means we have here reduplicated what is presented as discourse or, let us say it in the more refined way, stating that is presented as demand, in a way that is perfectly well

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indicated here, that this barred subject put into a conjunction, the one defined by what I will call provisionally the diamond shape, ◊, with the demand D, articulated as such (Figure 3). This is moreover what this text and this account bear witness to, that already, it is well and truly as demand that this line is constituted.

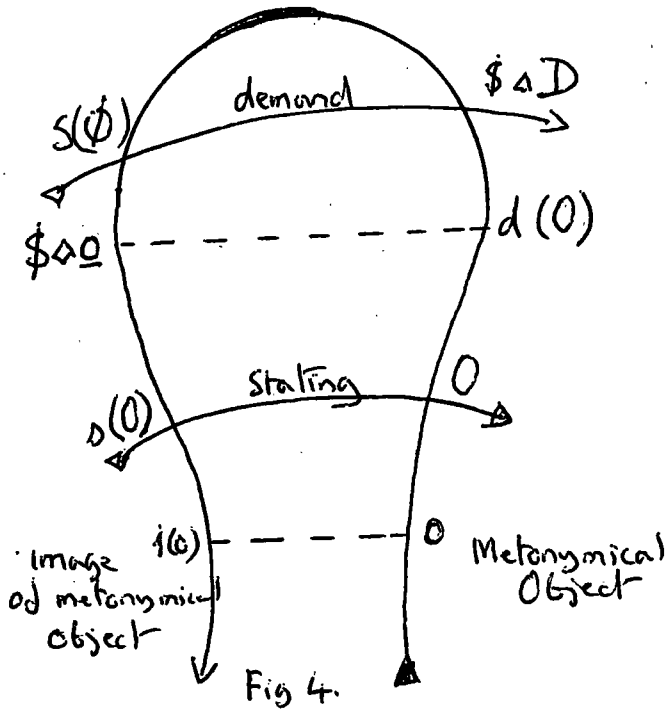

Fig 4.

If here, what is contributed as homologous to the function s(O), namely, to what is produced as subject-effect in the stating, here then, (39) the indication or the index S(Ø) is now what we have not I would say to interpret for the first time, for I already did it in several forms, but to question again in the perspective that we are introducing today. We must therefore start again from the point that the subject is defined at the lowest point of what here is presented as a ladder, as being what a signifier represents for another signifier.

It is not simply through the superimposition of the function of the Imaginary on the Symbolic that I indicated here in my first schema the presence of the object then simply called metonymical object, to put it in correspondence with something which is its image and its reflection in *e*, in other words the ego, the image of *o*. The questioning about the desire of the Other is here the mainspring of Imaginary identification. It is apparently Imaginary, that is why I am putting it in red, but we are

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going to see it also is articulated in a symbolic way. Here as you know there appeared for the first time the formula of phantasy, in the form of $ diamond o. (Figure 4).

If from this moment on it is clearly indicated that the chain that retroverts this one, $\partial O \gamma \partial'$, is the chain of the signifier, it is indeed because there is here already contained the relation of the signifier 1, S_1, to this minimal form that I called the ordered pair to which there is limited the statement of the signifier as being what represents a subject, a subject for what? For another signifier. This other signifier in this radical connection, is very precisely what represents knowledge, knowledge then, in the first articulation of what is involved in the function of the signifier in so far as it determines the subject. Knowledge is this opaque term in which, as I might say, the subject loses himself, or again is extinguished if you wish and this is what the notion that I underlined by using the term *fading* always represents. In this relation, in this subjective genesis, at the start, knowledge presents itself as this term in which the subject has extinguished itself; this is the sense of what Freud designated as *Urverdrängung*. This so-called (40) repression that is said, explicitly formulated, not to be such, but as being this kernel already beyond the reach of the subject while at the same time being knowledge. This is what the notion of *Urverdrängung* signifies in so far as it makes it possible for every signifying chain to connect up with it, implying this enigma, this veritable contradiction *in adjecto*, which the subject as unconscious is.

We have therefore sketched out here, from a very early or sufficiently early time in the articulation of this discourse that I find myself supporting in analytic experience, we have already put in question, interrogated, this question of what can be meant, at the level of discourse, of the formation of the unconscious, of the *Witz* on this occasion, who can say here: "I say". Because I precisely distinguished, and this from the origin of this discourse, what is involved in discourse and the word. And the key formula that I

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inscribed this year at the first of these seminars, about what is involved in a discourse without words, the essence as I said of analytic theory, is indeed here to remind you that it is at this joint that there is going to be brought into play, this year, what we have to advance so that, in *From an Other to the other* who are we allowing to speak? It is not at all the word that is at stake here and I have not yet shown you, though already nevertheless I brought it into play by reminding you of the discourse that I attributed to this essentially ungraspable person that I called the Truth. If I made her say: "*Me, I speak.....*", it is indeed, as I underlined, because it is a matter of something different to what she says. I am indicating it here to mark that it is in the background, that she is waiting for us as regards what we have to say about the function of discourse. Let us take it up again now and observe that what is involved in the signifying chain – always the same, I am drawing it again – is the relationship of the signifier to another signifier.

Let us be satisfied, it is an artifice of presentation – I have no reason to hide it here – that allows me to avoid an introduction along the path of set theory and the reminder – if I had to do it, I would have to do it in some articulated way – the reminder of this fact that at the first step, this theory stumbles over a paradox, the one called Russell's paradox. Namely, what is to be done in a certain definition, that of sets, namely, what is closest to the signifying relation, a relation of connection. Nothing else is yet indicated in what the first definition of the function of signifier articulates, if not that it is the signifier 1, in a relationship that we can define as we wish, the simplest term will be that of belonging, the relationship of a signifier to another signifier. In this relationship we have said, it represents the subject S_1 S_2. This so simple connection is enough to indicate to us if so many other traits did not indicate it to us, to indicate to us that from mathematical logic, as several linguists have perceived, it is set theory that finds itself most able to treat it. I am not saying to formalise it, but to treat this (41) connection. I remind you, for those who have heard it spoken of a little bit, that the first step that is met with is that with this single

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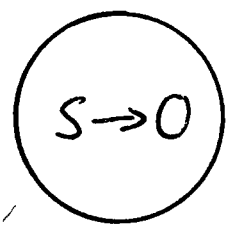
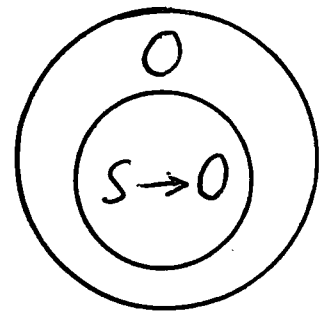
condition of considering as a class – and this can even be proved – every element of such a connection in so far as one can write that it does not belong to itself, is going to involve a paradox. I repeat, I am only giving this introduction here to indicate the place, to develop it would make us rebound onto still more curious statements. Perhaps if we have the time or if we take it later on we will be able to do it.

I am going to proceed differently and only starting from my graph try to show you in a way, a formal one, what we are led to by the fact that we take the formula, the signifier represents the subject only for another signifier, that we take the elements that are offered us by the graph itself at the start, from here. It is S, a signifier that we are going to put here. If we take as other signifier this one constituted by O, if





we called it first of all big O, the locus, the treasury of signifiers, do we not find ourselves in a position to question the following arrangement: what is involved in posing as signifier of the relation itself the same signifier that intervenes in the relation? In other words, if it is important, as I underlined, that in this definition of the signifier there only intervenes the alterity of the other signifier, what are we going to be led to? Can it be formalised in a way that leads somewhere, by pinpointing from this same signifier big O, the otherness of O? What is involved in the relation? This way of posing the question – I say it also to reassure those that it may disturb – is not at all foreign to what constitutes the starting point of a certain phylum of formalisation in mathematical logic. This, at this level, would require me to develop sufficiently the difference constituted by the definition of a set as compared to the class. The question is so well posed in mathematical logic that it is a point where it is indicated in this logic that, would to

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heaven concerned us more closely, because the problems are resolved in it. Namely, that the class of sets that contain themselves – you see here at least indicated an example of it under the form of this inscription – this class does not exist. But we have something different to do than mathematical logic.

Our relationship to the Other is a more burning relationship. And the (42) fact of knowing whether what emerges from the simple fact of the demand that the Other contains already in a way, everything it is articulated around, if it were simply a question of discourse. In other words if there were a dialogue, that very precisely, at the end of last year, I proposed here that there is not this dialogue, if then this Other could be conceived of as a closed code, one whose key you would only have to press for the discourse to be established without fail, so that the discourse can be totalised in it. This is what, in this rudimentary fashion, and in a way in the margin of set theory, I am questioning. In place of this S_I, I could have put a little b like that you would have noticed that it is a matter of b, a, ba. We are at the b, a, ba of the question. And from the ba you are going to see how it is dug out and this topologically. And this is how we have posed the question. It is clear that O in the ordered pair that constitutes this set is taken as identical to the O that designates it. We are therefore going to write as follows, the relationship of S with S in relation to big O, $S \rightarrow (S \rightarrow O)$.

I substitute for this O what this O is in so far as it is the signifier of the set constituted by the relationship of S to O, a relationship of ordered pair. This is quite usual in any development of a set theory whose very foundation is the fact that every element is supposed to be able to be the set itself. You see then what happens. Starting from this process we are going to have a series of – I do not know what the circles that I am drawing are, they helped us to make the set and its designation as such function – we have an indefinite repetition of S without ever being able at the end to stop the withdrawal, as I might say, of the big O.

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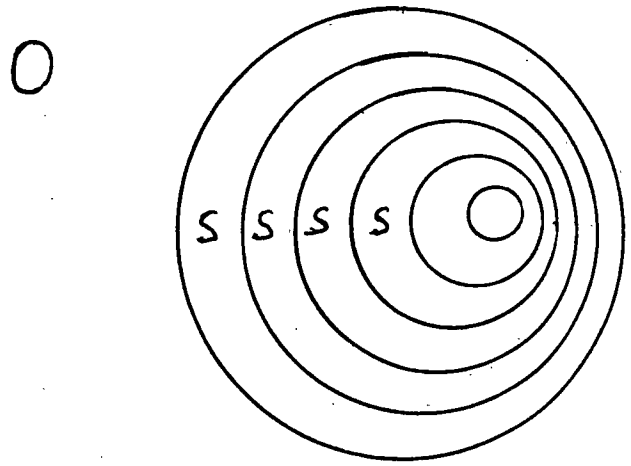

You must not get it into your head nevertheless that it is reduced, that it vanishes, as I might say spatially, that there is indicated here in any way something that constitutes whether it is of the order of an infinitesimal reduction of distance, or of some passage to the limit. It is only a matter of the ungraspability, even though it remains always (43) the same, of this O as such. This ungraspable character should not surprise us since we have made of this O the locus of the *Urverdrängung*. It allows us to see precisely that what I was questioning earlier, namely, what was involved in what is designated here as a circular drawing. It is in the measure that the O is multiplied in this way, simply from that fact, we can write it outside and inside, these circles are only indexing this identity. In other words, that this circle, pushed further in one direction, from which there emerges this notation of asymmetry will always in the final analysis join up with the starting circle.' That this flight which ensures that it is in its own interior that an envelope finds its outside, this is what – you may or may not sense the kinship – what we have drawn in one of the previous years in the topological form of the projective plane and illustrated in a materialised fashion for the eye by the cross-cap. That the big O, as such, has in itself this flaw that one cannot know what it contains if it is not its own signifier, is the decisive question in which there is highlighted what is involved in the flaw of knowledge. To the degree that it is at the locus of the Other that there is appended the possibility of the subject in so far as it is formulated, it is most important to know that what guarantees it – namely, the locus of truth – is itself a locus that is holed.

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In other words, what we already know about a fundamental experience that is not a random experience, an out of date production of priests, namely, the question *does Gòd exist*? We perceive that this question only takes on its weight because precisely it depends on a more fundamental structure, namely, at the locus of knowledge can we say that in some way knowledge knows itself? It is always in this way that I tried, for those who listen to me, to displace this question that can only be the object of a wager about the existence of God, to displace it onto something that can be well and truly articulated. Namely, that however we support the function of knowledge, we are not able, it is a fact of experience, to support it except by articulating it in the signifier. Does knowledge know itself or is it gaping wide in its structure?

The circle that draws this shape that, more simply again, I mean O, for you to be able to find your bearings in it, I could - given this character that my drawing has of being a circle that rediscovers itself, but turned inside out, since what is most interior is connected up in order that a sense can be given to it as an index of the difficulty that is at stake - have referred myself, I said, to the Klein bottle, which I made enough drawings of here, I hope, for some people to remember it. What appears from it is what? It is that this structure, and in so far as you see, as we can give it some imaginary support – and this indeed is why we ought to be particularly sober – this structure is nothing other than the o-object. It is precisely because of that that the o-object is the hole that is designated in the Other as such, that is put in question for us in (44) its relation to the subject.

Because let us try now to hold onto to this subject where it is represented. Let us try to extract this S, this signifier that represents it from the set constituted by the ordered pair. It is here that it would be very simple for you to find yourself on familiar terrain, it is Russell's paradox. What are we doing here if not extracting from the set Ω the signifiers that we can say do not contain themselves. It is enough –

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and I will let you search in the first pages of any theory at all, naïve or not, of sets – it is enough for you to have consulted it to know that, in the same way as it is perfectly illustrated in the articulation of the sophism, the class of all the catalogues that do not contain themselves cannot in any way be situated in the form of a set for the good reason that it cannot in any way be recognised in the elements already inscribed of this set. It is distinct from it, I already went over this theme. It is well known. It is trivial. There is no way of inscribing in a set this something that you could extract from it by designating it as the set of elements that do not contain themselves.

I am not going to show it here on the board. It is enough simply that what results from simply posing the question of whether S is in O – in so far as contrary to it, it does not start from the fact, that as O, with respect to itself, it contains itself – by simply wanting to isolate it, you do not know, try it out, where to place it. If it is outside it is inside. If it is inside it is outside. In other words that in no way, for any discourse that posits itself as being essentially founded on the relationship of a signifier to another signifier, it is impossible to totalise it as discourse in the measure in which this is said and is posed as a question. The universe of discourse – I am speaking here not simply of the signifier, but of what is articulated as discourse – will always have to be extracted from whatever field whatsoever that pretends to total it.

In other words, that what you will see being produced inversely to this schema, is that, in the measure that you question yourself about the belonging to the set of any S whatsoever first of all posited in this relation, the S will be necessarily excluded from the small **o**. And that the next S you question – I said small **o** that was a mistake – the next S that you question is the one reproduced in the relation S(O) that I here showed, reproduced, will also leave it. They will all leave it indefinitely given the essence of what is essentially metonymical in the

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continuity of the signifying chain. Namely, that every signifying element is extracted from any conceivable totality.

This, I apologise, to end, is no doubt a little difficult. But note that (45) in seeing this process being displayed with successive exits from envelopes that are never unfruitful, and not ever being able to be encompassed in it either, what is indicated, is that what is tangible in terms of the division of the subject emerges precisely from this point – that, in a spatial metaphor we call a hole, in so far as it is the structure of the cross-cap or of the Klein bottle – emerges precisely from this centre where the o is posited as absence.

This is enough to make you apprehend the continuation of the consequence that I will pursue as regards the graph and which may take on its full import as regards the place of analytic questioning between the chain of demand and the enunciating chain. Between the enunciating by which the subject only states himself as "he" and between what appeared not simply in terms of the demand, but of the relationship of the demand to the enunciating chain, as "I" and as "thou". This will be the object of our next meeting.

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Seminar 4: Wednesday 4 December 1968

Let us go to the heart of things because we are late and let us take things up by recalling on what, in short, were centred our last remarks about the Other, in short, about what I called *the big Other*. I ended by putting forward certain schemas, while sufficiently warning, I think, that they were not to be taken uniquely from their more or less fascinating appearance, but were to be referred to a logical articulation, the one properly made up of this relationship of a signifier to an Other signifier, $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$, that I tried to articulate in order to draw out its consequences by starting from the function, elaborated in set theory, of the ordered pair. At least it was on this logical foundation that I tried the last time to make you sense this something that has a point, a point around which there turns the interest - the interest for all I hope - the interest that it should be well articulated, that the Other, this big Other, O, in its function as I already approached it, the Other enclosed no knowledge that one can presume, let us say, will one day be absolute. You see, there I am pointing things towards the future while ordinarily I articulate towards the past, that this reference to the Other is the erroneous support of knowledge as already there. Good! So then here I am highlighting - because in a moment we are going to have to say it again - I am pointing up the use that I made of the function of the ordered pair. Because I had, my God, something that could be called the good luck, to receive from a hand that I regret is anonymous, a piece of paper posing the question of explaining myself perhaps a little more about this use of the ordered pair that, no doubt, to the author of

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this note seemed a little precipitous, if not excessive. He perhaps does not all the same go that far – precipitous. I am not going to begin with that, but I take note to say that later then I will come back to it.

That the Other should be put in question, is extremely important for the continuation of our discourse. There is not in this statement, let us say first – this statement that the Other contains no knowledge that is either already there or to come, in an absolute status – there is not in this statement anything subversive.

I read something recently somewhere, at an ideal point that moreover will remain in its corner, as I might say, the term 'subversion of knowledge'. This term 'subversion of knowledge' was there, my God, advanced more or less under my patronage. I regret it because in truth I advanced absolutely nothing of the sort, and such slippages can only (47) be considered as very regrettable and enter into this sort of shoddy usage that can be made of fragments that are not even very well detached from my discourse. A screwing together again of terms that my discourse, precisely, never dreamt of bringing together to make them function on a market which would not be at all happy if it took the turn of being used for university colonisation. Why should knowledge be subverted because it cannot be absolute? This pretension, wherever it shows itself, or wherever it has shown itself, it must be said, has always been laughable. Laughable, precisely, we are here at the heart of our subject. I mean that this new start made in the witticism in so far as it provokes laughter, it provokes laughter, precisely, in short, in so far as it is properly attached to the fault inherent in knowledge.

If you will allow me a little parenthesis, I will recall, I will recall somewhere in – I thought I still had 25 minutes when I began, thank God, to signal that I wanted a taxi to be called, so that I did not find exactly the page of the first chapter of the third part of *Capital, The production of absolute surplus value* and chapter V on *Labour and its*

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valorisation. It is there I believe that there are found a few pages, something that, make no mistake, I did not wait for the recent researches on the structuralism of Marx to pick out. I mean that this old volume that you see more or less coming apart in pieces, I remember the time when I read it in what was my transportation of that time, when I was 20 years old, namely, the Metro, when I was going to the hospital. And at that time, there was something that caught me and struck me, namely, how Marx, at the moment he introduces surplus value, he introduced a little more, a little surplus value, he did not introduce it, nor value, I am confusing you, but he introduces it and he introduces it after taking some time. Taking time like that, in a gentlemanly way, he allows the person involved, namely the capitalist, to speak. He allows him, in a way, to justify his position through what is then the theme. In any case the service that is rendered, in a way, by putting at the disposition of this man who only has, my God, his work, and at the very most a rudimentary instrument, his jointer, the lathe and the milling machine thanks to which he is going to be able to do marvels. An exchange of good and even loyal services. A whole discourse that Marx takes his time to develop, and what he signals, what struck me at that time, at the time of these good old readings is that he highlights there that the capitalist, a ghostly personage he is confronting, the capitalist laughs.

This is a feature that seems superfluous. It nevertheless seemed to me, it appeared from then on that this laughter is properly something that refers to what at that very moment Marx is unveiling, namely, what is involved in the essence of this surplus value. "My good apostle", he says to him, "keep talking. The service as you understand it, if you wish, of putting the means that you find you have at the disposition of (49) the one who can work. But what is at stake, is that this labour, this labour that you are going to pay for, that he can fabricate with this lathe and milling machine, you will not pay him any more for it than for what he was doing with his jointer that I evoked earlier. Namely, what he would have been able to guarantee by means of this jointer,

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namely, his subsistence." What is highlighted in passing, and of course not noted, about the conjunction of laughter with this relationship, this relationship here to a pleading that appears to be nothing but the most honest of discourses, is this relationship to this radically eluded function, whose proper relationship to this characteristic elision in so far as it properly constitutes the o-object, I already sufficiently indicated in our discourse

Here again, I am saying it because of not having been able to do so at the time when I began to construct the graph around the witticism, here is the fundamental relationship around which there still turns the shock, the forcing, a little more, a little less that I spoke about earlier, the conjuring trick, the hey presto that grabs our gut in the effect of the witticism. In short, the radical, essential function of the relation that is hidden in a certain relationship of production to work is indeed, as you see there as elsewhere, at another deeper point which is the one to which I am trying to lead you. Around *surplus enjoying* there is something like a fundamental *gag* that depends properly speaking on this joint into which we have to drive our wedge when what is at stake is this relationship that operates in the experience of the unconscious in its most general function. This is not to say – and here again I am going to take up something that may be used for risky formulae – this is not to say that there can in any way be a theory of the unconscious. In what I am doing, trust me, it is nothing of the kind that I am aiming at.

That there is a theory of psychoanalytic practice, undoubtedly, of the unconscious, no. Unless you want to pour in what is involved in this theory of psychoanalytic practice, which what? In the unconscious gives us what can be taken up in this field in the field of this practice, but nothing else. To speak about the theory of the unconscious, is really to open the door to this sort of ridiculous deviation that I am hoping to prevent. This is what has been displayed already, for long years, under the term of 'applied psychoanalysis', and has allowed all

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sorts of abuse. To apply it precisely to what? In particular to the fine arts! In short, I do not want to insist any more, towards this form of tipping over or dumping on the edge of the psychoanalytic road, the one that ends up in a hole that I find dishonourable.

Let us take things up again. The Other only gives the stuff of the subject, or his topology or that through which the subject introduces a subversion certainly, but that is not only his own in the sense that I have pinpointed when I spoke about the subversion of the subject. The subversion of the subject with respect to what has been stated about it up to now, this is what is meant by this articulation in the title I put it into. But the subversion that is at stake is the one that the subject (50) introduces certainly, but that the Real sticks to, which in this perspective, is defined as the impossible. Now, there is no subject at the precise point where it interests us, except the subject of an assertion (*dire*). If I posit these two references, that to the Real and that to the assertion, it is to clearly mark that here that you may still vacillate and pose the question, for example, whether this is not what was always imagined about the subject. It is moreover also there that you have to grasp what the term subject states in so far as it is the effect, the dependent (*la dépendance*) of this assertion. There is no subject except of an assertion, this is what we have to correctly circumscribe in order never to detach the subject from it.

To say moreover that the Real is the impossible, is also to state that it is only the most extreme circumscribing of the assertion in so far as it is the possible that it introduces and not simply that it states. The flaw remains no doubt, for some people, that this subject would then be, in a way, a subject taking its worth from this discourse. That if would only be the deployment, a canker crossing in the middle of the world where the junction takes place that, all the same, brings this subject to life.

It is not just anything in things that makes a subject. This is where it is important to take things up again at the point where we do not tip over

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into confusion in what we are saying - the confusion that would allow there to be restored this subject as thinking subject, any pathos whatsoever – about the signifier, I mean, through the signifier, does not of itself make a subject of this pathos. What this bathos defines is in every case, quite simply, what is called a fact. And it is here that there is situated the distance in which we have to question what our experience produces. Something different that goes much further than the being that speaks in so far as it is man that is at stake. More than one thing can suffer from the effect of the signifier, everything in the world that does not properly become a fact (*fait*) unless its signifier is articulated. Not ever, never, does any subject come unless the fact is said. Between these two frontiers is where we have to work. What cannot be said about the fact is designated in the assertion, by its lack, and that is the truth. That is why the truth always insinuates itself, but can be inscribed also in a perfectly calculated way where it simply has its place, between the lines. The substance of the truth is precisely what suffers from the signifier. That goes very far. What suffers from it in its nature. Let us say, when I say that this goes very far, this precisely goes very far in nature.

For a long time people seemed to accept what is called the spirit. It is an idea that got across in some little way. Moreover, nothing ever gets across as much as people think. In any case it got across a little because of the fact that it proves that there is never anything else at stake under the name of spirit than the signifier itself. Which obviously puts a lot of metaphysics out of sync. As regards the relationships of our effort to metaphysics, as regards what is involved in a putting in question that tends not to lose all the benefit of the (51) experience of metaphysics, something of it remains. Namely, the following which is indeed in a certain number of points, of areas more varied and better equipped than one might think at first approach and of very different qualities, it is a matter of knowing what 'structuralism' has to bring about. The question is raised in a collection that has just appeared, I got the first fruits of it, I do not

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know whether it is in circulation: "*What is structuralism*?" which we owe to the summons addressed to some people by our friend François Wahl. I advise you not to miss it, it brings a certain number of questions up to date. But undoubtedly this means that it is rather important to mark our distinction from metaphysics. In truth, we have, on this point, marked something that it is not useless to state, that one must not believe too much in what advertises itself as disillusion. The disillusion of the spirit is not a complete triumph if elsewhere it sustains the superstition that would designate in an idealness of matter this very substance that one first puts into the spirit as impassible. I am calling it superstition because after all we know its genealogy. There is a tradition, the Jewish tradition curiously, in which one can indeed highlight what a certain transcendence of matter may be able to sketch out. What is stated in the scriptures, singularly unnoticed of course, but quite clear concerning the corporeality of God. These are things that we cannot develop today. It was a chapter of my seminar on *The name of the father*, which as you know [*the sign of a cross in the air*] I have definitively renounced, make no mistake. But in any case, this superstition described as materialist – one may well add popular, that changes nothing at all – deserves the share of love that everyone has for it, because it is indeed what has been most tolerant up to now of scientific thinking. But you must not believe that this will always last. It would be enough for scientific thinking to make people suffer a little in this quarter – and it is not unthinkable – for the tolerance in question not to last!

A sensitivity that is evoked already, my God, towards remarks like the ones I made one day before an honourable member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, that cosmonaut appears to me to be a bad name. Because in truth, nothing appeared to me less cosmic than the trajectory that was his support. A kind of disturbance, of agitation for such a gratuitous remark, my God, the properly speaking rash resistance, that it is not sure, after all – that is what I meant to say – that anything whatsoever, whether you call it God in the sense of the

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Other, or Nature – it is not the same thing – but it is indeed to one of these two aspects that there must be reserved, attributed a prior knowledge of the Newtonian law for people to have been able properly speaking to talk about cosmos and cosmonaut. This is where one senses the amount of metaphysical ontology that continues to find shelter even in the most unexpected places.

(52) What is important for us is what justifies the rule that sets up psychoanalytic practice, quite stupidly, the one described as free association. Free means nothing other than dismissing (*congédiant*) the subject. To dismiss the subject is an operation, an operation that does not necessarily succeed; it is not always enough to tell somebody to quit for him to go. What justifies this rule is that the truth, precisely, is not said by a subject but is suffered. Let us pinpoint here what we will call phenomenological infatuation. I already picked out one of these tiny monuments that are displayed in a field where statements easily take on a patent of ignorance. *Essence de la manifestation*, is the title of a book very well received in the university field, and after all I have no reason to give the author because I am in the process of qualifying him as a conceited ass. The essence of his own manifestation, in any case, from this title as well as the power with which at a particular page there is articulated that there is one thing given to us as certain, it is that suffering, for its part, is nothing other than suffering. I know, in effect, this always does something to you when you are told that! It is enough to have a toothache and never to have read Freud to find that rather convincing. Here after all is why one may think incidentally – but there truly I think that I am also a little traditional – why one may give thanks for such blunders (*pas de clercs*), make no mistake, to call them that, to promote, as one might say, what is not to be said, for one to clearly mark the difference to what there has to truly be said. It is a little bit too much of a justification to give to error and that is why I am signalling in passing that in saying this, I do not completely adhere to it. But for that, my

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God, I would have to re-establish what is involved in an apologia for sophists, and God knows where that would lead us.

In any case, the difference is the following. If what we are doing, we analysts, works, it is precisely because suffering is not suffering and to say what should be said one should say: "Suffering is a fact". This seems to be saying almost the same thing, but it is not at all the same, at least if you have well understood what I told you earlier about what a fact is. Rather let us be more modest; there is some suffering that is a fact, namely, that conceals an assertion. It is through this ambiguity that we refute that it is unsurpassable in its manifestation, that suffering can be a symptom, which means truth. I make the suffering speak, as I made the truth speak in a first approach – the effects of discourse must be tempered – I made them say, although in terms not modulated in the same tone for the one and the other, *I speak.* I am recalling it since I came back to it recently.

Let us try to be more rigorous as we advance. Suffering has its language and it is quite unfortunate that anybody at all can say it without knowing what he is saying. But, in any case, that is precisely (53) the trouble with all discourse. It is from the moment that it is rigorously stated, since true discourse is a discourse without words, as I wrote this year as a frontispiece, anyone could repeat it after what I have said to you. It no longer has any consequences. This is one of the risky aspects of the situation. Let us then leave suffering to one side and, as regards the truth, let us specify what we are going to have to focus on subsequently.

The truth, for its part, essentially speaks. It speaks "I" and you see defined there two extreme fields, the one in which the subject is only located by being the effect of the signifier, the one in which there is the pathos of the signifier without any mooring point yet being made in our discourse to the subject, the field of fact, and then what finally interests us and what was not even touched on anywhere but on Sinai,

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namely, what speaks "I". On Sinai – I apologise, that just slipped out – I did not want to rush on to Sinai but since it has come out I have to justify why. Some time ago, just around this little flaw in my discourse called *The name of the father* and which remains gaping wide, I had begun to question the translation of a certain – I do not pronounce Hebrew well – "Haye". I think that this is pronounced "Hacher Haye", what the metaphysicians, the Greek thinkers translated by "I am the one who is". Naturally they had to have being. Only that does not mean that. There are middle terms, I am talking about people who say: "I am who am". That means nothing; it has the blessing of Rome. I pointed out, I believe that it should be understood as "I am what I am". In effect, this has all the same the value of a punch in the face. You asked me my name, I answer "I am what I am and go and screw yourself". This indeed is what the Jewish people have being doing ever since that time.

Since Sinai came out there in connection with the truth that speaks "I", it was Sinai that came out of me! But I had already thought about the question. I did not think I was going to speak to you about it today. But in any case since it has happened, let's go. I think it must be translated: "I am what I is" (*Je suis ce que je est*). That is why Sinai slipped out of me like that. It is to illustrate for you what I intend to question around what is involved in the 'I', in so far as the truth speaks 'I'. Naturally the rumour will spread in Paris, in the little cafes where all the gossip takes place that, like Pascal, I have chosen the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. Let the souls from whatever quarter they are carried to welcome this news, put their emotion back in the drawer, the truth speaks "I" but the reciprocal is not true. Not everything that says "I" is the truth, without that where would we be?

This does not mean that these remarks are completely superfluous. Because you should clearly understand that in putting in question the function of the Other, and on the principle of its very topology, what I am disturbing -it is not too great a pretension, it is really the question

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on the agenda - is properly what Pascal called the God of the (54) philosophers. Now to put that in question is not nothing! Because all the same, up to the present, he has had a hard life. And in the way that earlier I made an allusion to, he remains all the same quite present in a whole load of modes of transmission of this knowledge when I tell you that it is not at all subverted, even and much more, by putting in question this Other who is supposed to be able to totalise it. This is the sense of what I contributed the last time.

On the other hand, whether he told the truth or not, the other God that we should pay homage to our Pascal for having seen that he has strictly nothing to do with the other, the one who says "I am what I is". That this should have been said had some consequences. And I do not see why, even without seeing in it the slightest chance of truth, we should not enlighten ourselves from some of its consequences in order to know what is involved in the truth in so far as it speaks "I".

An interesting little thing, for example, is to notice that because the truth speaks "I" and because the response is given to it in our interpretation, for us psychoanalysts, it is an occasion for noting that interpretation is not simply our privilege. It is something I already spoke about at one time under the title of *Desire and its interpretation.* I pointed out that in putting the question around the "I" in this way, we ought, even if only to take a warning or indeed umbrage from it, to perceive that from then on, interpretation ought to be better circumscribed. Because prophetism is nothing else. To speak "I" in a certain furrow which is not that of our suffering is also interpretation. The destiny of the Other is suspended then, I would not say at the question, I would not say at my question, at the question posed by psychoanalytic experience. The drama is that whatever may be the fate this putting in question reserves for it, what the same experience demonstrates, is that it is from the desire of the Other that I am (*je suis*) - in the two marvellously homonymic senses of these two words in

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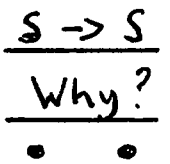
French - that I follow (*je suis*) the trace. It is moreover precisely for that reason that I am interested in the destiny of the Other.

So then we have another quarter of an hour and the little note that I received goes as follows: "*Last Wednesday you related, without specifying, the ordered pair and a signifier represents the subject for another signifier, (S S)*". That is quite true. That is why no doubt my correspondent put a bar underneath and underneath the bar "Why?" with a question mark. Underneath the why another bar, then marked by two big points or more exactly two little circles filled in in black. "*When the ordered pair is introduced into mathematics some force is necessary to create it.*" From this I recognise that the person who sent me this sheet knows what she is saying, namely, that she has a least a shadow, and probably more, of mathematical instruction. It is quite true. One begins by articulating (55) the function of what a set is and if one does not introduce into it, in effect, the function of the ordered pair by this sort of force that in logic is called an axiom, well then, there is nothing more to be done with it than what you have first defined as a set. In parenthesis, one adds on – either directly or indirectly – the set has two elements. "*The result of this force is to create one signifier that replaces the co-existence of two signifiers*". This is quite correct. A second remark "*The ordered pair determines the two components, while in the formula a signifier represents the subject for another signifier, it would be astonishing for a subject to determine two signifiers.*" I only have a quarter of an hour and nevertheless I hope to have the time to clarify as it should be done, because it is not difficult, what I stated the last time, which proves that I did not state it adequately since someone, who as you can see is very serious, questions me in these terms.



I am therefore going to write on the board – whatever may be the inconvenience that was pointed out to me the last time about using the board which ought to be put there so that everyone can see what I am writing and that is not going to happen today given the difficulties that

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conditioned my arriving late – this: $<S_1, S_2>$ At no time did I subsume the co-existence of two signifiers into one subject. If I introduce the ordered pair, as my interlocutor surely knows, I write for example the following: $< S_1\ S_2 >$, these two signs by a lucky chance find themselves to be the two pieces of my diamond shape when they are connected up, these two signs only serve on this occasion to very specifically write that this is an ordered pair. The translation in the form of a set, I mean articulated in the sense of the benefit expected from the force in question, is to translate this into a set whose two elements, the elements in a set being always themselves the set, you see there being repeated the bracket sign $\{(S_1), (S_1\ S_2)\}$, the second element of this set $\{S_1, S_2\}$, an ordered pair is a set which has two elements, a set formed from the first element of the pair and a second set; they are then both one and the other subsets formed from the two elements of the ordered pair.

$$\{(S_1), (S_1, S_2)\}$$

Far from the subject here in any way subsuming the two signifiers in question, you see, I suppose, how easy it is to say that the signifier S_1 here does not stop representing the subject as my definition *the signifier represents a subject for another signifier* articulates it, while the second subset makes present what my correspondent call this "co-existence", namely, in its broadest form this form of relation that one can call "knowledge". The question that I am posing in this (56) connection and in the most radical form, whether a knowledge is conceivable that reunites this conjunction of two subsets in a single one, in such a way that they can be under the name of O, of the big O, identical to the conjunction as it is here articulated in a knowledge of the two signifiers in question.

That is why after having pinpointed by the signifier O a set of S means that I no longer need to put 1, 2.... because I substituted O for $\{S_1, S_2\}$. I questioned what followed from this as regards the topology of the Other and it is following this that I showed you in a way that was

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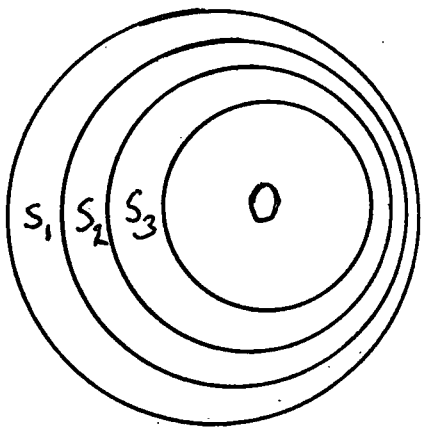
certainly too imaged to be logically fully satisfying, but whose necessity as an image allowed me to tell you that this succession of circles involuting in an asymmetrical way, namely, now always in the measure of their apparently greater interiority the subsistence of O, but in so far as this imaging might suggest a topology which is the one thanks to which the smallest of these circles comes to be joined to the largest in this figure and the topology suggested by such an imaging, makes of it the index of the fact that big O, if we define it as possibly including itself, namely, having become absolute knowledge, has this singular consequence that what represents the subject is only inscribed there, is only manifested there in the form of an infinite repetition, as you have seen there being inscribed under the form of this S, big S, in the series of inner walls of a circle in which they are indefinitely inscribed. S (S (S (



Thus the subject, by being inscribed only as an infinite repetition of itself, is inscribed there in such a way that it is very precisely excluded, and not by a relationship that is neither from the inside nor from the outside, from what is posited first of all as absolute knowledge. I mean that there is here something that takes into account, in the logical structure, what the Freudian theory implies as fundamental in the fact that originally the subject, with respect to what refers it to some fall of enjoyment, can only be manifested as repetition and unconscious repetition. It is therefore one of the limits around which there is articulated the link of maintaining the reference to absolute knowledge, to the *subject supposed to know*, as we call it in the transference with

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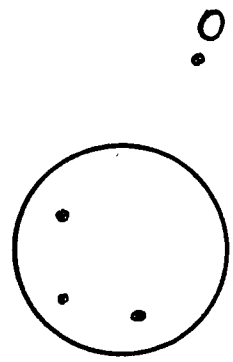
this index of repetitive necessity that flows from it which is logically the little o-object, the little o-object in so far as here its index is
(57) represented by these concentric circles.

On the other hand, what I ended on the last time is the other end of the questioning that we have to pose to big O, to big O in so far as we impose on it the condition of not containing itself. Big O only contains S_1, S_2, S_3 which are all distinct from what big O represents as signifier. Is it possible that in this other form the subject can be subsumed in a way that, without rejoining the set thus defined as universe of discourse, can be sure of remaining included in it? This is the point perhaps that I passed over a little quickly and that is why to end today I am coming back to it.

The definition of a set in so far as it joins elements, means that there is defined as a set every point to which several others are attached. I take point because there is no more tangible way of imaging the element as such. These points, for example, are with respect to this one, elements of a set that this fourth point can only image starting simply from the moment that we define it as element. Within the big Other then in which no O figures as an element, I can define the subject in this ultra-simple way in which it is precisely constituted, which seems to be exhaustive, by any signifier in so far as it is not an element of itself. Namely, that neither S_1 nor S_2 nor S_3 are signifiers like big O, that big O is the Other for all of them?



Am I going, as subject of the assertion – by simply putting forward this proposition that S, any signifier whatsoever, S_w meaning whatsoever, is not an element of itself – am I going to be thus able to assemble something which is this point here, namely, the set that connects all the signifiers thus defined, as I said, by an assertion (*dire*)? This is essential for you to remember for what follows. Because this "by an assertion" in other words, proposition, that around which we must first make the function of subject turn in order to grasp the flaw, because

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whatever use you subsequently give to a statement, even its use of demand, is because of having marked what, as a simple assertion, it demonstrates as a flaw, that you can most correctly, in the flaw of the demand, circumscribe in the stating of the demand what is involved in the flaw of desire.

Structuralism everywhere is logic, which means, even at the level at which you may question desire – and God knows of course that there is more than one way – there are types that bell, there are types that (58) shout, there are types that dramatise! And it is worthwhile! Simply you will never know anything about what that means for the simple reason that desire cannot be said. Of the assertion it is only the ending and that is why this ending must first of all be circumscribed in a pure assertion, there where lay the apparatus of logic can demonstrate the flaw. Now it is clear that what here has the role of the second signifier, in essence – here I call them S alpha, S beta, S gamma – the second signifier, the subject in so far as it is the subset of all the signifiers in so far as they are not elements of themselves, in so far as O is not O, what can we say about it?

We have posited as condition – let us take here to be simple the letters you are already more used to, namely, X is not an element of X. In order that something may be inscribed under the rubric of S_2, the subset formed by this signifier for which the subject is going to be represented by all the others, namely, precisely the one that subsumes it as subject, it is necessary for X, whatever it may be, to be an element of B here, the first condition is, that X is not an element of X and secondly, we take X as element of O, since the big O collects all of them. So then! What is going to result from this? Is this S_2 an element of itself? If it were an element of itself it would not respond in the way in which we have constructed the subset of elements in so far as they are not elements of themselves. It is therefore not an element of itself. It is therefore not among S alpha, S beta, S gamma. It is

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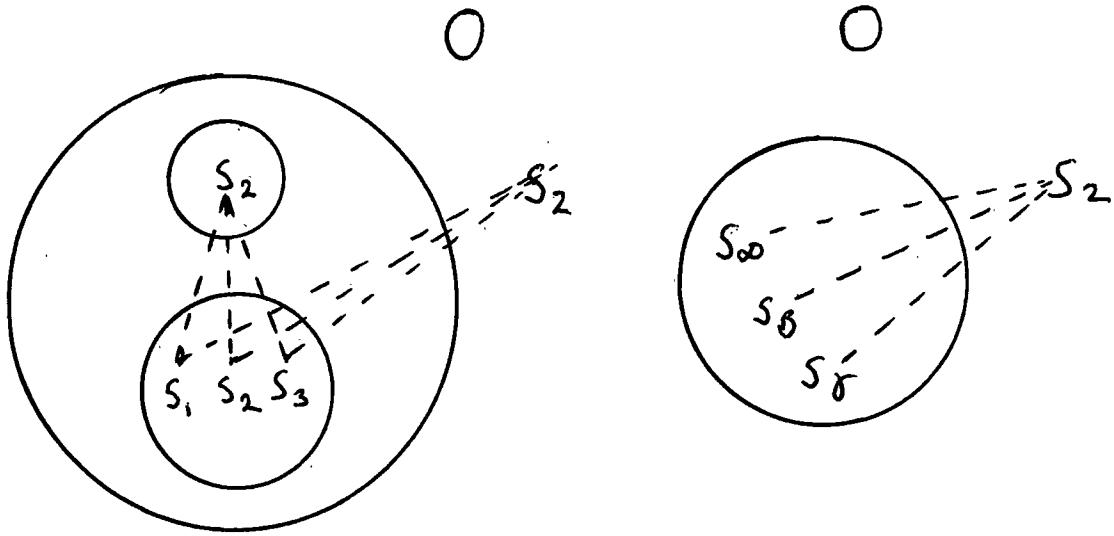
where I placed it in so far as it is not an element of itself. S_2 is not an element of itself. This is what I am writing here: $S_2 \notin S_2$.



Let us suppose that S_2 is an element of big O, what does that mean? It is that S_2 is an element of S_2 since everything that is not an element of itself while being an element of big O, we have defined as forming a part, as constituting the subset defined by X element of S_2, S_2. It must therefore be written that S_2 is an element of S_2, which we have (59) rejected earlier because the definition of this subset is that it is composed of elements that are not elements of themselves. What results from that?

For those who are not used to these sorts of reasonings which are nevertheless simple, I am picturing it, even though the picturing is here completely puerile. The fact is that S_2 not being an element of big O, can only be pictured here, namely, outside. This demonstrates that the subject in whatever way it intends to be subsumed, either from a first position of the big Other as including itself, or in the big Other by limiting itself to the elements that are not elements of themselves, implies something that, what? How are we going to express this exteriority in which I posited for you the signifier of the subset, namely, S_2? This means very precisely that the subject, in the last analysis, cannot be universalised. There is no proposition that says in any way, even in the form of the fact that the signifier is not an element

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of itself, that what this defines is an encompassing definition with respect to the subject. And this also demonstrates not that the subject is not included in the field of the Other, but that what can be the point where it is signified as subject, is a point let us say "outside" the Other, outside the universe of discourse. To say, as I also heard being repeated as an echo of my articulation, that there is no universe of discourse, meaning that there is no discourse at all. It seems to me that if I had not sustained here a rather tight discourse, this is precisely what you would have absolutely no idea about. May this serve as an example for you and a support for our method and also a point of expectation for what the next time, 11th December, I hope we will succeed in pushing further in terms of this articulation into what interests us. Not simply in so far as, as psychoanalysts you are the living point of it, but also in so far as psychoanalysands you are looking for it.

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Seminar 5: Wednesday 11 December 1968

I sometimes note, privately, little remarks intended for you. So then, in going through these papers I find one that is going to give me my starting point. "*What a pity*", I wrote, I no longer know when, "*that God is used, by what we call the proscription of his name, to conceal*" – this took on the form of a prohibition precisely no doubt where people best knew what is involved in the function of this term, God, namely, among the Jews. You know that among them he has a name that cannot be pronounced – well then! "*this proscription, precisely, helps to conceal*", I had started to say, "*a certain number of references that are absolutely essential for maintaining the "I" in a sufficient light, sufficient for it not to be able to be thrown (jeter)* – there is a *je* in that – *to be thrown to the dogs, namely, to professors*".

Which is what I started from the last time in order, in short, as you have heard if not seen, almost despite myself, to push forward at first this "I" reference. Through the intermediary of the God in question I translated what was once put forward in the form: *Eye acher eye, [Hebrew inscription],* by "I am what I is, *je suis ce que je est*". I told you then that I was myself a little bit overwhelmed by the way this stating that I justified, or believe I justified, came about as a translation. Then I said that, after all, Sinai emerged in spite of me from the ground between my legs. This time I did not receive a little note like the last time. I was expecting nevertheless that someone would point out to me that these words came from the burning bush.

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You see what the result would have been if I had told you that the burning bush had come out from between my legs. That is why the sentence orders itself, retroactively. It is indeed because I wanted to define it between my legs that I first of all put Sinai in the place of the burning bush. All the more so because after all, in Sinai, it is the consequences of it that are at stake. Namely, that, as I already remarked in the seminar on *Ethics*, the one who announced himself – in my assertion at least – as "I am what I is", he, under the form of what ever since has been transmitted in the imperative of the list of the Ten Commandments that are said to be from God, did nothing, I explained it a long time ago, but announce the laws of "I speak". If it is true, as I stated, that the truth speaks "I", it appears to be self evident that: "You will adore the one who has said: I am what I is" and you will only adore him alone, by the same consequence: "You will love", as it is also said, "your neighbour as yourself". Yourself being nothing (62) other than that to which it is said, in the same commandments, what is addressed as a "thou" and even as a "Thou art" (*tu es*) whose really magical ambiguity in the French tongue I underlined a long time ago. This commandment whose underlying prelude is this "thou art" that establishes you as "I" is also the same slope offered to this "thou-ing [*tu-ant*]" that is present in every invocation. And you know that we are not far from the order to respond to it. The whole of Hegel is constructed to show what is built on this.

One could take them one by one, by passing, of course, by way of the one the lie, then subsequently to this prohibition on "coveting the wife, the ox, the ass of your neighbour" who is always the one who kills you (*qui te tue*). It is hard to see what else one could covet! The cause of desire being, indeed, precisely there. It should be pointed out that undoubtedly, through a solidarity that has a certain obviousness, there is no word, properly speaking, except where the closure of one or other commandment preserves it. This clearly explains why, since the world has been the world, no one has exactly observed them. And that is why the word, in the sense that the truth speaks "I" remains profoundly

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hidden and only emerges to show a little tip of its nose, from time to time, in the interstices of discourse.

It is necessary then, it is necessary in so far as there exists a technique which trusts this discourse in order to find something there, a path, a way as they say which is presumed not to be unrelated, as it is put – but let us mistrust always the reverse sides of discourse – to truth and life. It would perhaps be well to question more closely what, in this discourse, is grounded as being able to initiate, give us a bridge towards this radical, inaccessible term, that with some boldness the last of the philosophers, Hegel, thought he could reduce to his dialectic.

For us, in an approach that I began to open up, it is before the Other - as allowing a logical failing to be circumscribed, as locus of an original flaw brought to bear on the word in so far as it might respond - that the "I" appears as, firstly subjected (*assujetti*). *a–sujet* I wrote somewhere to designate this subject, in so far as in discourse it is never produced except as divided. The speaking animal can only be embraced by the partner by being first of all subjected. It is because he has always been speaking, that in the very approach to this embrace he can only formulate the "thou art" (*tu es*) by killing himself in it, that he makes the partner other, that he makes of her the locus of the signifier.

Allow me here to come back for a moment to the "I is" (*Je est*) of the last time, since moreover, and from a well informed mind I saw coming back the objection that in expressing it in this way I was opening the door, let us say, to at least a reference to being. That this "is" was, at least by one ear, heard as an appeal to being. To being, (63) since according to the terminology of tradition, it depends on the fact that I state it – by reason of some order of nature, in the most original sense – as subsistent in this nature. Tradition constructs this supreme being in order to answer in it for all 'beings'. Everything changes, everything turns around the one who takes up the place of pivot of the universe, this *x* thanks to whom there is a Universe.

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Nothing is further from the intention of this translation than what I formulated, that to make understood, I can take up again as "I am what I is". Let us say that here the "is" is better read and that we come back to state what properly gives the foundation of the truth in the 'I' in so far as it simply speaks. These commandments that sustain it, as I said earlier, are properly anti-physical, and nevertheless there is no way, without referring to them, to tell the truth, as they call it. You should try! In no case! It is an ideal point, make no mistake. No one even knows what that means. Once you hold a discourse, what emerge are the laws of logic, namely, a subtle coherence, linked to the nature of what is called signifying articulation. This is what ensures that a discourse is sustainable or not, through the structure of this thing called the sign, that has to do with what is commonly called the letter as opposed to the spirit. The laws of this articulation are what first of all dominate discourse.

What I began to state in my presentation this year is this field of the Other in order to experience it as conceivable under the heading of the field of inscription of what is thus articulated in the discourse. This is not, at first, to give any incarnation to this field of the Other. It is starting from its structure that there can be defined the possibility of "Thou" that is going to reach us and appeal to something, in a third moment, that will have to say it is "I". It is clear that what is going to show itself is what we are expecting, what we know well. This "I" cannot be pronounced, in all truth is always unpronounceable. This indeed is why everyone knows how cumbersome it is and that, as the laws of the word itself to which I referred earlier recall, it is preferable never to say "I swear".

So then, before prejudging what is involved in the Other, let us leave the question open. If it is simply a blank page, even in this state, it will give us enough difficulties. Because what I showed on the board the last time, is that supposing you have written on this blank page, on condition that it is a page, namely, finite, the totality of signifiers,

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which after all is conceivable since you can choose a level where it is reduced to phonemes, it can be proved that on the single condition of believing that you can collect on it anything whatsoever about which you can announce this judgement - it is the subject, the term required (64) by this collecting – this choice will necessarily have to be situated outside this totality. It is outside the blank page that the S_2, the one that intervenes when I state *that the signifier is what represents the subject for another signifier*. This other signifier, the S_2 will be outside the page.

0 $R(x) = R: x \notin x$

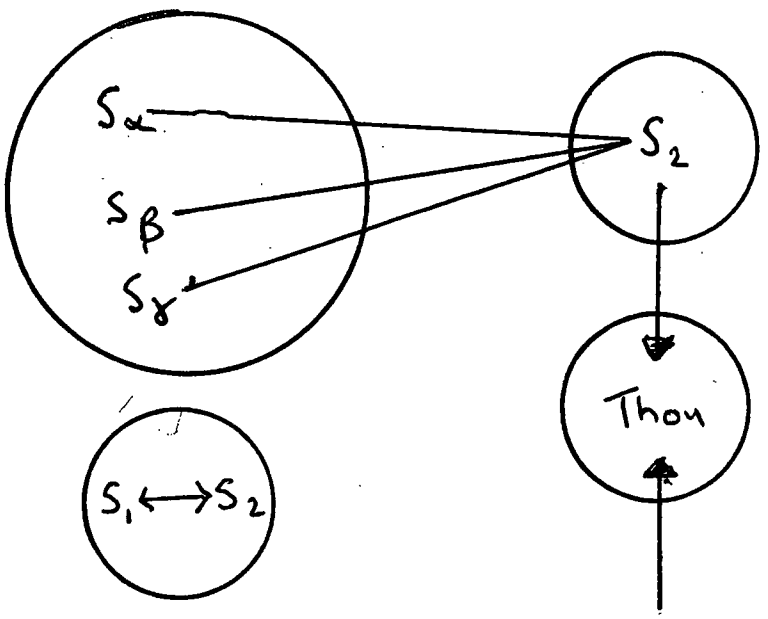

Fig 5

You must start from this phenomenon, that can be proved to be internal to every stating as such, to know everything that we can say subsequently about anything whatsoever that is stated. And that is why it is again worth while delaying on it for an instant.

Let us take the simplest statement. To say that someone announces that it is raining (*il pleut*), can only be judged, can only fully be judged by pausing at the fact that something emerges in that it is said that there is raining (*du "pleut"*). This is the discourse-event through which the very person who says it posits himself as secondary. The event consists in a saying; the one no doubt of which the "he/it" marks the place. But you have to be careful. The grammatical subject that,

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moreover, can present, depending on the tongue, distinct morphologies, that are not necessarily isolated. The grammatical subject here has a relationship with what I earlier called 'outside the field', more or less individualised as I have just recalled it. Namely, moreover, for example, reduced to an ending, "*pleut*". The *t*, this little *t* moreover that you will find wandering in all sorts of corners of French itself, why does it lodge itself here where it has nothing to do? In an *orne-t-il* [does he embellish], for example. Namely, where it was not in the conjugation. This grammatical subject then, so difficult to properly circumscribe, is only the place where something comes to be represented.

Let us come back to this S_1 in so far as it is what represents this something, and let us recall that when the last time we wanted to extract this S_2 from the field of the Other, as appeared necessary, because it could not maintain itself in it, in order to collect together the S alpha, S beta, S gamma in which we claim to grasp the subject. It is in so far precisely as in the field of the Other we have defined these three S's by a certain function, let us call it R defined elsewhere, namely, that x was not an element of x and that this R(x) (Fig 5) is what transformed all the signifying elements on this occasion into something which remained undetermined because open, which took on, in a word, the function of a variable. It is in so far as we have specified what this variable must correspond to, namely, a proposition that is not an indifferent one, not, for example, that the variable must be good, or anything else whatsoever, or red or blue but that it ought to be subject, that there arises the necessity for this signifier as Other, that it cannot in any way be inscribed in the field of the Other. This signifier is properly, in the most original form, what defines the function described as knowledge. I will of course have to come back to this, because this place, even as compared to what was stated up to now as regards logical functions, is perhaps not yet sufficiently emphasised. To try to qualify the subject as such puts us outside the

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Other. This "puts us" (*nous met*) is perhaps a form of *noumen* that will take us further than we think.

Let it be enough for me here to question whether it is not true that the difficulties that come to us, in a logical reduction, from the classical statements, I mean the Aristotelian ones of the universal and particular propositions, come from the fact that people do not perceive that it is there, outside the field, the field of the Other, that there ought to be placed the "all" and the "some". And we would be less embarrassed in perceiving that the difficulties generated by the reduction of these classical propositions to the field of quantifiers results from this. Rather than saying that all men are good, or bad, or whatever, the correct formula would be to state men, or anything else, anything that you can provide with a letter in logic, are all good, or are some good. In short, that by putting the syntactical function of the universal and the particular outside the field, you will find fewer difficulties in reducing them subsequently to the mathematical field. Because the mathematical field consists precisely in working desperately to ensure that the field of the Other as such holds up. It is the best way of testing that it does not hold up. But to test it by articulating all the stages, because it is at many different levels that it does not hold up. The important thing is to see that it is in so far as this Other is as they say technically, "consistent", that stating turns into demand, this before anything whatsoever, that carnally may correspond to it, has even come to lodge itself in it.

The interest of going as far as possible in the questioning of this field of the Other as such, is to note in it that it is at a series of different levels that its failing is perceived. It is not the same thing, and in order to put it to the test mathematics brings us an exemplary field of experience, because it can allow itself to limit this field to well defined functions, arithmetic, for example. It matters little yet, for the moment, what in fact this arithmetical research reveals. You have heard enough (66) about it to know that these fields, even if you choose the most

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simple, there is great surprise when we discover, for example, that completeness is lacking. Namely, that one cannot say that anything whatsoever that is stated there can either be proved or can be proved not to be. But, more again, that in such a field, and among the most simple, it can be put in question whether something, some statement can be proved in it, that another level is outlined of a possible proof, that a statement cannot be proved in it. But it becomes very curious and very strange that in certain cases this step that can be proved itself escapes for something that is stated in the same field. Namely, that since it cannot even be affirmed that it is not provable, a distinct dimension is opened up, called the *undecidable*.

These echelons, not of uncertainty but of defect in the logical texture, are the very ones that may allow us to grasp that the subject as such might, in a way, find there his support, his status. In a word the reference that, at the level of stating, is satisfied by adhering to this fault itself. Does it not seem to you that just as, perhaps, - on condition that such a numerous audience would be so obliging - as perhaps we can make it felt in some construction, even if it entails, as already I did in connection with the field of the Other, abbreviating it, it may be, in a way, rendered necessary in a statement of discourse, that there could not even be a signifier there, as, it appears, one can do. Because in tackling this field from the outside, from logic, nothing prevents us, it appears, from forging the signifier by which there is connoted what is wanting in the signifying articulation itself. If this something could, and I am still leaving this in the margin, be articulated, and this has been done, that proves that this signifier with which a subject, in the final analysis, can be satisfied by identifying himself to it as identical to the very lack of discourse, cannot be situated, if you will allow me here this abbreviated formula, are not all of those here who are analysts not aware that it is for want of any exploration of this order that the notion of castration, which is indeed what I hope you have sensed in passing to be analogous to what I am stating, that the notion of castration remains so vague, so uncertain and is handled with the

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thickness and the brutality that we know? In truth, in practice, it is not handled at all. People substitute for it quite simply what the other cannot give. People speak about frustration when it is something quite different that is at stake. On occasion, it is along the path of privation that people approach it, but as you see, this privation is precisely what participates in this defect inherent to the subject that it is a matter of approaching.

In short, I will only - to leave what today I am only tracing the outline of without being able even to foresee what between now and the end of the year I will manage to get you to tolerate - indicate simply, in (67) passing, that if something was able to be stated in the field of logic, you can, all those, at least, who here have some notion of the last theorems advanced in the development of logic, all of those know that it is very precisely in so far as this S_2, in connection with a particular system, the arithmetical system for example, properly plays its function in so far as it is from outside that it counts everything that can be made into a theory within a well defined O. That it is in so far, in other terms, that a man of genius called Gödel had the idea of perceiving that it was by taking literally "it counts", that on condition of giving to each of the statements of the theorems as situatable in a certain field, their number called the *Gödel number* that something surer could be approached than had ever been formulated about these functions that I could only make an allusion to in what I have previously stated, when they are called *completeness* or *decidability*.

It is clear that everything is different from a time in the past when it could be stated that after all mathematics was only tautology, that human discourse can remain, because it is a field that, according to this assertion, is supposed to have come from tautology, that there is somewhere an O that remains a big O identical to itself. Everything is different from the time that this is refuted, refuted in the surest fashion. That it is a step forward, that it is something that has been learned and that for anyone who finds himself confronted in experience, in an

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experience which appears to us like a transcendental aporia with regard to natural history as analytic experience does, we do not see the interest in going to find support in the field of these structures. Of these structures, as I said in so far as they are logical structures to situate, to put in their place this x that we are dealing with in the field of a quite different stating, the one that the Freudian experience allows and that moreover it directs.

It is therefore first of all in so far as the Other is not consistent that stating turns into demand and this is what gives its bearing to what in the big completed graph, the one that I drew here (Fig 6), is inscribed in the form of $◇D. All that is at stake is what is stated in a way that is not stated in what distinguishes any statement. The fact is that there is subtracted here this "I say that" which is the form where the "I" is limited. The "I" of grammar can be isolated outside any essential risk, can be subtracted from stating, and by this fact reduces it to the statement since this "I say that", by not being subtracted, leaves it whole and entire that, from the very fact of the structure of the Other, all stating, whatever it may be, becomes demand. Demand of what this Other is lacking. At the level of this $◇D the double question is: *I ask myself (je me demande) what you desire*, and its double which is precisely the question we are highlighting today, namely: *I ask you, not who I am, but further again what I is (ce qu'est Je).*

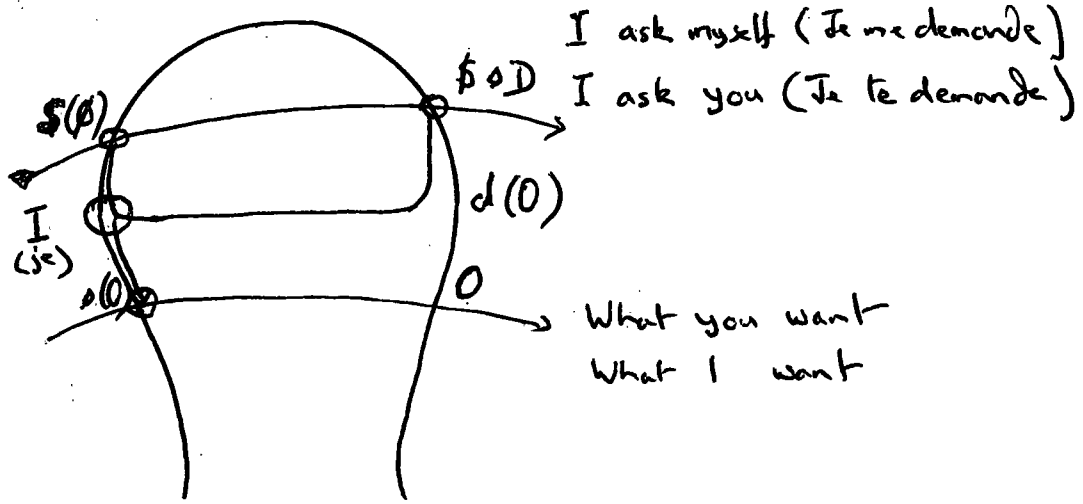

Fig 6

(68) Here there is installed the very knot, the one I formulated in putting forward that the desire of man is the desire of the Other.

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Namely, that, as I might say, if you take the vectors as they are defined on this graph, namely, coming here from the start of the pure signifying chain, in order here, from the cross roads designated by $◇D, with this return that completes the retroaction marked out here, it is well and truly at this point described as *d of O*, desire of the Other, that there converge these two elements that I articulated in the form of *I ask myself what you desire*. It is the question plugged into the very level of the setting up of O. "What you desire", namely, what you are lacking linked to the fact that I am subjected to you.

And on the other hand, I ask you what "I" is, the status of the "I" as such, in so far as it is here that it is established. I am marking in red this status of the "Thou", constituted by a convergence, a convergence that does occur. If all stating as such, the indifferent stating of analysis, because this is how the rule posits it in principle, turns into demand, it is because it is radically, from its very function as stating to be demand, concerning the "Thou" and the "I". As regards the "Thou", it is a convergent demand, a questioning stimulated by lack itself in so far as it is at the heart of the field of the Other, structured from pure logic. This is precisely what is going to give its value and its bearing to what is outlined, just as vectorised on the other side of the graph. Namely, that the division of the subject is made tangible there as essential to what posits itself as "I". To the demand of "What is I?", the structure itself replies by this signifying refusal of O, as I inscribed it in the functioning of this graph. In the same way the "Thou" here, establishes it from a convergence between the most radical demand, the one addressed to us analysts, the only one that sustains in the final term the discourse of the subject. "I come here to ask you". In the first phase, it is indeed "who I am" that is at stake even though it is at the level of "who is I" that the response is given. It is of course because logical necessity is what gives this step back (*recul*).

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A convergence, then, of this demand and here, something of a promise, of something that, in S_2 is the hope of gathering together this "I". It is (69) indeed what in transference I called the *subject supposed to know.* Namely, this prime conjunction, S_1 linked to S_2, in so far, as I recalled the last time, in the ordered pair, it is it, it is this conjunction, this knot that grounds what knowledge is.

What does that mean? If this "I" is only tangible in these two divergent poles, one called what I here am articulating as the "no", the refusal that gives form to the lack of the reply, and this something different articulated there as s(O), this meaning, what is it? Because is it not tangible that the whole discourse that I am spinning out to give the framework of the "I" of the questioning from which this experience is established, is it not tangible that I am pursuing it while leaving outside, at least up to this point that we have come to here, any meaning?

What does that mean? That after having formed you for long years to ground, on the differentiation of a linguistic origin, the signifier as material, from the signified as its effect, I am allowing it to be suspected, to appear here that some mirage lies at the source of this field defined as linguistic, the sort of astonishing passion with which the linguist articulates that what he tends to grasp in the tongue is pure form, not content?

Here I am going to bring you back to this point, that in my first lecture, I first brought forward before you, and not unintentionally, in the form of the pot. Nothing, those who are taking notes should know, is unpremeditated in what one could call, at first sight, my digressions. If I came back in an apparently digressive way to the mustard pot, it is certainly not without reason. And you may remember that I gave a place to the fact that, in the first forms of its apparition, it is to be strongly signalled, that there are never lacking, on the surface of this pot the marks of the signifier itself. Is there not introduced here

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something in which the "I" is formulated? The fact is that what sustains the whole of human creation, of which no image has ever appeared better than the work of the potter, is very precisely to make this something, the utensil, that pictures for us by its properties, that pictures for us this image that the language of which it is made – for where there is no language there is no worker either – that this language is a content. It is enough to think for a moment that this very fabrication is there to introduce the reference to this philosophically traditional opposition of form and content. It is not for nothing that in my first introduction of this pot I signalled that where it plays the part of an accompaniment to death in burial there is put this addition that properly speaking holes it. It is indeed in effect because its spiritual principle, its origin in language, the fact is that there is that there is somewhere a hole through which everything escapes. When it rejoins at their place those who have gone beyond, the pot for its part also, finds its true origin, namely, the hole that it was designed to mask in language. There is no meaning that does not leak away as regards (70) what a cup contains, and it is quite curious that I made this discovery that was certainly not made at the moment that I stated this function of the pot for you. Searching, my God, in what I usually refer myself to, namely, in the *Bloch et von Wartburg*, what is involved in a pot, I had, as I might say the happy surprise of seeing that this term - as is testified, it appears, by lower German and Dutch with whom we share it - is a pre-Celtic term. Therefore it comes to us from afar, from the Neolithic no less. But there is better. It is that because of having this idea, at least to give it a little base, we ground ourselves on these pots that are found before the Roman invasion, or more exactly as representing what was established before it, namely, the pots that are dug up, it appears, in the region of Trier. *Bloch et von Wartburg* express themselves as follows: "We see inscribed there the word Potus". This is enough, for them, to designate the very ancient, because it is a usage that is at stake, that they indicate that Potus, hypochoristically, as they put it, can designate the makers. What matter! The only thing that is important for me is that when the pot

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appears it is always marked on its surface by a signifier that it supports. The pot here gives us this function distinct from that of the subject, in so far as in the relation to the signifier the subject is not a preliminary but an anticipation. It is supposed, *upokeimenon*. It is its essence, it is its logical definition, supposed, almost induced, certainly, it is not the support. On the contrary, we can legitimately give to the signifier a fabricated support and even, I would say, a utensil. The origin of the utensil in so far as it distinguishes the field of human fabrication is even properly speaking there.

The meaning as product, this is what serves, and as a lure, to veil from us what is involved in the essence of language, in so far as, by its essence, it properly does not mean anything. What proves it is that the assertion in its essential function is not an operation of meaning and this indeed is how we analysts understand it. What we are seeking is what, not from the Other, but outside the Other as such, suspends what is articulated from the Other, the S_2, as outside the field. Here is the question of knowing what is involved in the subject, and whether this subject cannot in any way be grasped by discourse; here also is the justification for what can be substituted for it.

The sense of what is involved in castration is balanced with that of enjoyment. But it is not enough to grasp this relation as assuredly in what was manifested in a time that is close to us, of something in which at the same time this scream, need for truth, is an appeal to enjoyment. It is assuredly not enough to aspire to enjoyment without hindrances, if it obvious that enjoyment can only be articulated for every individual – himself included in language and the utensils – can only be articulated in this register of remainder inherent to one and the other that I defined as the *surplus enjoying*. It is here that on 8th of January we will take up our discourse again.

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Seminar 6: Wednesday 8 January 1969

(71) So then I wish you a Happy New Year, the New Year of '69. It is a good number! To open it, I am pointing out to you that on one or other occasion I always receive from some horizon a little gift. The last one, the one on this occasion, is a little article that appeared in the January 1st number of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* in which there is an article entitled "Some extracts from the style of Jacques Lacan". In effect, huh, my style is a problem! This is what I could have begun my *Ecrits* with. It is an old article that I never re-read, which was precisely on the problem of style. Perhaps if I re-read it, it will enlighten me! Meanwhile, of course, I am the last one to be able to account for it, and my God, I cannot see why somebody else should not try. This has happened. It comes from the pen of a professor of linguistics and I do not have to judge personally the result of his efforts. I will make you the judge of them. In general, I rather had an echo that in the present context, where suspicion is thrown, in any case, in some out of the way places, about the general quality of what is dispensed in terms of teaching from the mouths of professors, one might think that it was perhaps not the time to publish this. It is not the most opportune moment. In any case, I have heard that some people did not find it very good.

Anyway, as I said to you, you can be the judge. For my part I am not complaining about it! I find it difficult to see how anyone could get the slightest idea in it of what I have spread as a teaching.

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Nevertheless, there is a point; I am supposed to have dared, it appears, to write somewhere: "Freud and me". You see that, huh, he doesn't think that he's a nobody! This has perhaps not quite the sense that the indignation of the author thinks he should give it, but it show clearly the field of reverence, at least in certain domains, in which we live. Why, for this author who admits to not having the slightest idea of what Freud contributed, should there be something scandalous that someone who spent his life at it should say "Freud and me"? I would say more, reverberating myself from this outrage to the degree of respect that I am reproached with here, I could not do otherwise than remember the anecdote that I quoted here, about the time when in the company of P'tit Louis, as I recalled, I spent some time in the most difficult way at the tiny industries that people on the coast live on. With these three excellent people whose names are still dear to me, I (72) did many things that I am going to pass over. But I also happened to have with P'tit Louis the following dialogue. It was, as I told you, about a sardine tin that we had just eaten and that was floating next to the boat, and P'tit Louis said these very simple words to me: "Hah, this tin, you see it because you are looking at it. Well then it, for its part does not need to see you to look at you".

The relation between this anecdote and "Freud and me" leaves the question open of where I place myself in this couple. Well then reassure yourselves, I place myself always as the same place, at the place where I was, and where I still remain, alive. Freud does not need to see me in order to look at me. In other words, as a text I already quoted here states, "a living dog is worth more than the discourse of a dead person", especially when this has come to the degree that it has reached of international rottenness.

What I am trying to do, is to give to Freudian terms their function in so far as what is at stake in these terms, is an overturning of the very principles of questioning. In other words – which does not mean, says the same thing – in other words what is involved here is the minimal

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requirement of the passage to this renewed questioning. The minimal requirement is the following, it is a matter of making psychoanalysts. Because this questioning, in order to be posed, requires the subject to be replaced in his authentic position, and that is why I recalled at the beginning of this year what position was at stake. It is the one that puts it from the beginning into one of dependency on the signifier. So then around this requirement, this fundamental condition, there is organised everything acceptable that is affirmed up to now whose elements existed in the first practice of analysis where people undoubtedly took into account word play and language play. And with good reason! This level, I simply took up again, legalised I might say, by laying hold of what linguistics provided in this foundation that it brought forward called phonology, the operation of the phoneme as such. Because it was really necessary to see that what Freud had opened out quite simply found its status there, with some delay certainly, but obviously with less delay than that of the public in general, and at the same time psychoanalysts.

This is not a reason to remain there. This is why you see me, whatever might otherwise have been the degree of competence I previously showed in this use of what is, after all, only a part of linguistics, pursuing this work that consists in grasping everywhere already established disciplines offer the opportunity, pursuing this research that, from the level where it was really a matter of a coincidence, because it is really phonematic material itself that is at stake in the operations of the unconscious, pursuing it at the level where another discipline allows us to map out an isomorphism of approach between this status of the subject and what it develops, but that may just as well (73) reveal itself as covering an identity of material, as I already affirmed.

And what is this discipline? I would call it logical practice *(la pratique logicienne)* a term which does not seem to me a bad one to designate what exactly is involved, because it is from a place where this practice

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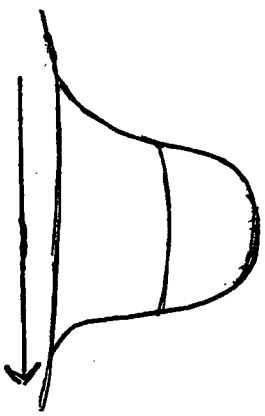
is exercised that it now finds what makes it necessary. But it is not inconceivable that it should find itself being brought to bear elsewhere. The place where effectively it is exercised, where something has happened that detached logic from the tradition in which, throughout the centuries, it remained enclosed, is the domain of mathematics. It is certainly not by chance, it was altogether foreseeable, unfortunately, subsequently, that it would be at the level of mathematical discourse that logical practice would find itself being exercised. What could be more tempting, in effect, than this place where discourse, I mean the demonstrative discourse, seemed to be based on a complete autonomy, an autonomy with respect to what is called experience. It seemed, it could not [?] have seemed that this discourse only took its certainties from itself, namely, from the requirements of consistency that it imposed.



What are we going to say about this reference? Are we going, in order to give a sort of image of this logic that has attached itself to the mathematical domain, to designate it as a recess of what would only be itself, in a certain style of thinking for mathematics, also something separated off, even though sustaining the scientific current. Something that, with regard to a certain progress, would be that and then that again: *recessus*. It is an image, but an image that it is worthwhile exorcising because we are going to see that nothing of the kind is at stake.

It is an opportunity to recall that the recourse to the image to explain metaphor is always false. Any domination of metaphor by the image ought to be suspect, its support being always the specular, anthropomorphic body image, which is faulty. Because it is very simple to illustrate again that it is only an illustration, this image simply masks the function of orifices. Hence the value as an apologue of my holed pot on which I left you last year. It is quite clear that one does not see the hole in this pot in the mirror if one looks through the aforesaid hole. Hence the inverted value of this utensil that I only put

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forward, I recalled it also in leaving you, to indicate the fact that under these simplest, most primary shapes what human industry fabricates is constructed properly speaking to mask what is involved in the true effects of structure. It is with this name that I return - and my digression was constructed to introduce it - to this explicit distinction by recalling that form is not formalism. It happens in certain cases that (74) even the linguists – I am not speaking of course about those who do not know what they are saying – make little errors on this point. The author of whom I spoke earlier, who gives me no proof of his explicit competence, charges me with having spoken about Hjelmsev, which is precisely what I never did. On the contrary, the name of Jakobson, as far as I could see – because I read his article, as he puts it himself, diagonally – is remarkably absent, which no doubt avoids him having to judge whether yes or no the use that I made of the functions of metaphor and of metonymy is relevant.

To return to this crucial point about the distinction between form and formalism, I will try, because this is what is first necessary to illustrate it from some forms. It is very necessary for whoever is engaged as is the case for the psychoanalyst in the cuts that, by affecting a field to which the body is exposed, culminate indeed at the fall of something that has some form. Nevertheless, I would recall – to touch on one of these images that psychoanalytic experience isolates and one does not know how – the cup/cut (*coupe*) that contains the milk, the one that evokes its being taken inside out under the name of breast, the first of the o- objects, this cut is not the structure through which the breast is affirmed as homologous to the sticking on of the placenta, because it is the same physiologically, and, unless the word comes into play, its reality. Only even to know what I have just said, namely, before this breast is implicated in the dialectic of the o-object, even to know what it is there, I mean physiologically, a rather advanced zoology is necessary. And this by the explicit use, otherwise it is not visible, of a classification whose relations to logic one would be wrong to minimise. Aristotelian logic has been reproached for having, with its

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use of the terms of genus, species, simply stuck onto a zoological practice the existence of individuals zoologically defined. One must be consistent and, if one states this more or less reprehensible remark, note that inversely this zoology itself implies a logic, made up of a structure, and of a logical structure, of course. As you see, it is the frontier between what every explorative experience already implies and what is going to be put in question about the emergence of the subject.

In mathematics, formalism will be brought out better in its function as cut. And in effect, what do we see as regards what is involved in the way it is used? Formalism in mathematics is characterised as follows. It is grounded on the attempt to reduce this discourse that I announced earlier, mathematical discourse, a discourse of which people have been able to say – and certainly not from the outside, it has also been said from the outside, it was what Kojève said but he was only taking it up from the mouth of Bertrand Russell – that this discourse has no sense and that one never knows whether what is said in it is true. An extreme, paradoxical formula regarding which it is worth recalling that it comes from Bertrand Russell one of the initiators of the logical (75) formalisation of this discourse itself. This attempt to take this discourse and to submit it to this test that we could define in short in these terms, to take one's assurance from what indeed it appears to be, namely, functioning without the subject. Because indeed to make even those who are not immediately with it sense what I am designating here, who then will ever speak, as regards what guarantees mathematical construction, of any incidence whatsoever of what can be detached from it as observer? There is no conceivable trace there of what is called "subjective error", even if it is here one can give the systems that allow it to be given a measurable sense elsewhere. This has nothing to do with mathematical discourse itself; even when it discourses about subjective error, it is in terms – I mean the terms of the discourse – for which there is no middle. They are exact,

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irrefutable, or they are not so. Such is at least its requirement; nothing will be accepted that is not indispensable as such.

It nevertheless remains that there is the mathematician. The use, the search for the formalisation of this discourse consists, as I said just now, in assuring oneself that even if the mathematician completely evaporates, the discourse holds up of itself. This implies the construction of a language that is very precisely the one called rather appropriately then, as you see, mathematical logic. It would be better to say practice of logic, logical practice in the mathematical domain, and the condition for realising this test is presented in a double form that may appear an antinomy. On one point this language seems to have no other concern than to reinforce what is involved in mathematical discourse whose character I have just reminded you of, namely, to refine its unequivocal character. The second condition, and this is why it appears antinomical, is that this unequivocal concerns what? Always something that one can call object, naturally not an indifferent one. And that is why, in the whole attempt to extend this new logical practice beyond the field of mathematics – to illustrate what that means, I am speaking about Quine's book *Word and object*, for example – when it is a matter of extending this practice to common discourse, people feel themselves required to start from what is called object-language, which is nothing other than to satisfy this condition of a language without equivocation. An excellent opportunity moreover to highlight what I always put the emphasis on from the start of my reference to language. It is of the nature of discourse, of fundamental discourse, not simply to be equivocal, but to be essentially made up of the radical slippage of meaning, essential for any discourse.

A first condition then, I said, to be unequivocal. This can only be referred to a certain object aimed at, of course, in mathematics, not an object like others. And that is why, once Quine transfers the handling of this logic to the study of common discourse, he speaks about "ob" (76) language, stopping prudently at the first syllable! But on the other

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hand, the second condition is that this language must be pure writing. That nothing of what concerns it ought to be constituted only by interpretations. The whole structure – I mean that one can attribute to the object – is what constructs this writing. Hence there is nothing in this formalisation that is not posited as interpretation. To the nevertheless fundamental equivocation of common discourse there is opposed here the function of isomorphism, namely, what constitutes a certain number of domains as falling under the capture of one and same written formula.

When one enters into the experience of what is thus constructed, if one takes a little trouble that I did not believe was unworthy of me to take, as the article evoked above seems to suppose, and if one approaches Gödel's theorem, for example – and after all it is within the reach of each of you, it is enough to buy a good book or go to some good places. We have gone multi-disciplinary, after all it is perhaps a requirement that did not emerge from nothing. It is perhaps from seeing the trouble one has from what is improperly called mental limitation – a theorem like this, moreover there are two of them, will tell you that as regards the domain of discourse that seems to be most assured, namely, arithmetical discourse, two and two are four all the same, there is nothing on which one is more securely based. Naturally people did not remain at that! Since that time, many things have been glimpsed, but which in appearance are only in the strict development of this two and two are four, in other words, that starting from there, there is a discourse that, to all appearances, can be called consistent. This means that when you state a proposition in it, you can say yes or no, this is acceptable, is a theorem, as they say, of the system. This one is not and is its negation which is, on this occasion, if one thinks one should take the trouble of making a theorem of everything that can be posited there as negative. Well then, this implies that this result is obtained by way of a series of procedures on which no doubt is brought to bear and that are called proofs.

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The progress of this logical practice has allowed to be assured, but only thanks to the use of formalisation processes, namely, by putting into two columns, as I might say, what is stated from the first discourse of mathematics, and this other discourse subjected to this double condition of getting rid of equivocation and of being reduced to a pure writing. It is starting from there and only starting from there, namely, from something that distinguishes the first discourse, the one in which mathematics has boldly made all this progress and without having, a curious thing, to correct it epoch by epoch, in a way that ruins the acquisitions generally accepted in preceding epochs, in opposition to this discourse pinpointed on this occasion, and very wrongly in my view, by the term of meta-language – the use of this formal language (77) called, for its part, no less wrongly, language – because it is from something that a practice isolates as a closed field in what is quite simply language, the language in which mathematical discourse could not properly speaking be stated. It is starting from there, I am saying, that Gödel shows that in this apparently most certain system of the mathematical domain, that of arithmetical discourse, the very supposed consistency of discourse implies what limits it, namely, incompleteness. Namely, that by starting even from the hypothesis of consistency, there will appear somewhere a formula, and it is enough for there to be one for there to be many others, to which it cannot, by the very paths of the accepted proof *qua* law of the system, be answered yes or no. The first phase, the first theorem.

The second phase, the second theorem. Here I must abbreviate. Not simply can the system, I mean the arithmetical system, not therefore assure its consistency except by making of it its very incompleteness, but it cannot, I am saying in the very hypothesis grounded on its consistency, demonstrate this consistency within itself.

I took a little trouble to get across here something that is not assuredly properly speaking our field, I mean the psychoanalytic field, if it is defined by some olfactory apprehension or other. But let us not forget

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that at the moment of telling you that it is not properly speaking about what the sentence implied that I am finishing with another subject, you see clearly where I land, on this vital point. Namely, that it is unthinkable to operate in the psychoanalytic field, without giving its correct status to what is involved in the subject.

What do we find in the experience of this mathematical logic? What, if not precisely this residue where the presence of the subject is designated? At least is this not what a mathematician himself, certainly one of the greatest, Von Neuman, seems to imply in making this rather imprudent reflection that the limitations, I mean the logically tenable ones, it is not a matter of any antinomy, of any of these classical mind games that allow it to be grasped that the term obsolete, for example, is an obsolete term. And that starting from there we are going to be able to speculate on the predicates that are applied to themselves and those that are not so applied, with all that this involves as a paradox. That is not what is at stake. What is at stake is something that constructs a limit that uncovers nothing, no doubt, that mathematical discourse has itself not discovered since it is on this field of discovery that it tests out a method that allows it to question it about something that is all the same essential. Namely, up to what point can it account for itself, up to what point can its coincidence with its own domain be affected if these terms had a sense, while it is the very domain in which the notion of content had properly speaking been (78) emptied. To say with Von Neuman that after all this is all very fine because it bears witness to the fact that mathematicians have still a reason to be there, since it is with what presents itself there in its necessity, its proper *ananke*, its necessities of detour, that they will indeed have their role. It is because something is missing that the desire of the mathematician is going to come into play.

Well then, I think that here indeed Von Neuman is going a little too far. Namely, I believe that the term residue is wrong, and that what is revealed here about this function that already I have evoked from

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several angles under the title of the impossible has a different structure than the one that we have to deal with in the fall of what I call the o-object. Much more, I believe that what is revealed here in terms of lack, even though no less structural, reveals no doubt the presence of the subject, but no other subject than the one that brought about the cut, the one that separated out the so-called meta-language from a certain mathematical field, namely, quite simply its discourse, the cut that separates this language from another isolated language, from an artificial language, from formal language. That is why this operation, the cut, is no less fruitful in so far as it reveals properties that are indeed the very stuff of the mathematical discourse, in that whether it is a question of whole numbers on the status of which you know people have not finished and that people will scarcely finish cavilling about for some time as to whether these numbers have such a place ontologically or not is a question that is totally foreign to the experience of discourse in so far as it operates with them and that can perform this double operation, 1) construct itself and 2) formalise itself.

We are far, no doubt, at first sight, from what interests us at the centre, and I do not know, given the little time that remains to me, how I can bring you back to it today. Nevertheless, allow me to recall rapidly, to sketch out here that the point that we had got to at the end of our last session was the following: the truth speaks "I". What about this "I"? If the "I" is here to be strictly distinguished from the subject that as you see one can somewhere can be reduced to the function of the cut, impossible to distinguish from the one called unary trait in so far as it isolates a function of the One as simply unique, and simply a cut in numeration. The "I" is not for all that in any way assured, because we can say the following about it. That it is and that it is not according to whether, as subject, it operates, and that operating as subject, it is exiled from the enjoyment which for all that is no less "I".

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And it is here that I must remind you that in this graph (fig 6), constructed to respond very precisely to the constitutive questioning of analysis, what lies between the two lines called stating and stated, namely that, cut again by that of signifying material, by the elementary differential chain of phonemes, it allowed us to guarantee these four (79) crossing points whose status is given precisely in terms of writing. Here the $◊D, here the O, the field of the Other, here the small s of O, namely meaning, and here finally the big S of Ø, the signifier of something approached several times, but never completely elucidated called the O barred. You know that here, homologous to the imaginary return line that integrates the narcissistic relation into the field of the statement, homologous, I am saying, you have here, halfway incarnated in this written form what is necessary at the pure enunciating level which is the following, namely, what is articulated as $◊D, which means here as elsewhere, everywhere I write it, *demand.* Demand, not an indifferent one, "I ask myself". And let us write here in this form, "what you want", the desire of the Other, in this complete ambiguity that still allows there to be written "I ask you...what I want", since my desire is the desire of the Other. There is no distinction here, except one induced by the very function of stating in so far as it bears in itself its sense as first of all obscure, as if all stating, as I already said, the most simple, only evokes its sense as a consequence of its own emergence. "It is raining" is a discourse-event and it is only secondary to know what it means about rain. Anyone at all is capable of evoking "It is raining" in a particular context. It can have very different senses. Do I need in this connection to recall that "Get out" does not sound the same everywhere as it does in *Bajazet.*

If there is something that is more important to map out from this graph than this discourse that accompanies it, it is the structural vectors as they are presented here at the level where the You, as dominating the I, as the you-ing (*tu-ant*) as I said at the level of the desire of the Other, the vectors that converge. It is around the desire of the Other that the demand of the discourse, of the discourse as we organise it in analytic

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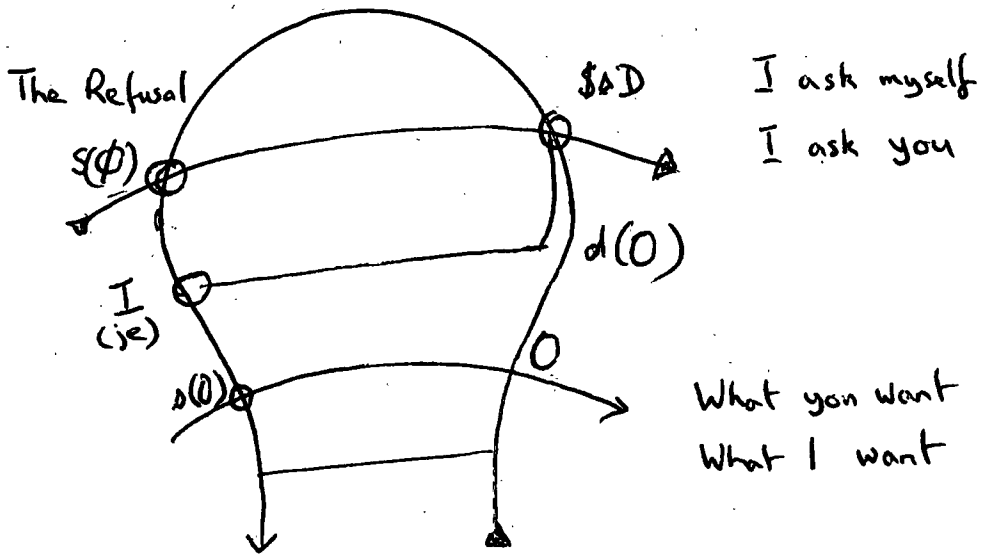
experience, of the discourse precisely that, under its aspect that fallaciously pretends to be neutral, leaves open the sharpest accent of the demand at its point. It is in a converging fashion around the desire of the Other that everything that is at the source, as the retroactive arrow indicated, everything that is at the source converges towards the desire of the Other.



(80) It is at the point that, as imaginary support, corresponds to this desire of the Other, what I have always written under the form of $◇o, namely, the phantasy, that there lies hidden this function of the "I". The "I" in so far as, contrary to the point of convergence called desire of the Other, it is in a diverging fashion that this "I" hidden under the $◇o, is directed under the form that precisely I called at the beginning that of a true questioning, of a radical questioning, towards the two points where there lie the elements of the answer. Namely, in the line on top, big S, which means a signifier, a signifier of the fact that O is barred, and which is precisely what I took, what I also gave you the trouble to have a support to conceive of what I am here stating. Namely, that the field of the Other does not secure, does not assure at any place, to any degree, the consistency of the discourse that is articulated here, in any case, even the most apparently certain.

And on the other hand, the lower line, a meaning in so far as it is fundamentally alienated. And it is here that you must grasp the sense of my starting this year with the definition of the *surplus enjoying* and

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its relationship with everything that one can call, in the most radical sense, the means of production, at the level of meaning, if already the pot, as I have pointed out to you, is only an apparatus to mask the consequences of discourse, I mean the major consequences, namely, the exclusion of enjoyment.

You see that in this way there is put into this *Entzweiung*, the term is Hegelian, into this radical division which is the very one at which Freud's discourse culminates at the end of his life, the division of the "I" articulated as such. It is nothing less than that between these two terms, namely, the field where the Other in a way, in some imagining, for a long time that of the philosophers, could correspond to any truth and where precisely this is cancelled out by the simple examination of the functions of language. I mean that we know how to make intervene in it the function of the cut that answers "no!", no to the God of the philosophers. And that, on the other hand, on a different register, the one in appearance where enjoyment is waiting. It is there precisely that it is a slave, and in the same way people said that up to now that one could reproach psychoanalysis for overlooking the conditions in which man is subjected to the social, as it is put, without seeing that one is contradicting oneself. The materialism described as historical only has a sense precisely by grasping that it does not depend on the social structure since it affirms itself that it is on the means of production. Namely, only from that with which one makes things that deceive *surplus enjoying*. Namely, that, far from being able to hope to fill the field of enjoyment, are not even sufficient for what is lost in it, because of the Other.

I was not able, my God, as usual, to go any quicker than my own violins. Nevertheless, I can announce here where I intend to take things up the next time. I will tell you that it is not in vain that from (81) the mouth of the God of the Jews, what I held onto is "I am what I is". It is indeed here that it is time for something to be finally dissipated, something already clearly said by someone called Pascal. If

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you wish, perhaps this will help you to understand what I am going to tell you the next time, to read a little book that has appeared in Desclée de Brouwer under the title of *Pascal's wager* by a M Georges Brunet, who knows admirably well what he is saying. As you have seen earlier this is not true for every professor! But he for his part knows. What he says, moreover, does not go very far, but at least he knows what he is saying. On the other hand, it is a disentangling that is indispensable for you about what is involved in this little sheet of paper folded in four, that, as I already said, I already spoke about this, was found in Pascal's pockets, the dead Pascal. I speak a lot about the dead God, it is probably to deliver us from many other relationships with others that I evoked earlier, my relationships with the dead Freud; that has a completely different sense.

But if you would not mind reading this *Pascal's wager* by Georges Brunet, at least you will know what I am talking about, when I speak about this text, which is scarcely a quarto, as you know. It is a writing that overlaps, that becomes entangled, that criss-crosses, that is annotated. It was a text for the pleasure, of course, of professors. This pleasure is brief, because they were never able to get absolutely anything from it.

There is something that is, on the contrary, quite clear, and it is with this that I will begin the next time. That strictly nothing else is at stake except precisely the "I". People spend their time asking whether God exists as if it were even a question. God is, there is absolutely no kind of doubt about that, that absolutely does not prove that he exists. The question does not arise. But it is necessary to know if "I" exists.

I think I will be able to make you sense that it is around this uncertainty, does "I" exist, that Pascal's wager is played out.

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Seminar 7: Wednesday 15 January 1969

(83) I announced the last time that I would talk about Pascal's wager. It is a responsibility. I even learned that there were people who changed their timetable, who came to Paris one more time than they had planned. This is to tell you how heavy such an announcement is to bear. In any case it is certain that I cannot set out here to bring you, to give an exhaustive discourse about everything that has been stated about Pascal's wager. I am obliged then to suppose that you have a certain rough knowledge of what is involved in Pascal's wager. I cannot properly speaking enunciate it again because, as I told you the last time, it is not properly speaking a statement that holds up. This is even what has astonished people: that someone who one is sure is capable of some rigour should have proposed something so untenable.

I think that I introduced sufficiently, just about sufficiently, the last time what justifies in general the use that we are going to make of it. But in any case let us not lose time in recalling it, you are going to see what this use is.

It is not the first time moreover for me to speak about it. On a certain day of February 1966, I believe, I already brought in this wager, and very precisely in connection with the o-object; you will see that today we are going to remain around this object. Already those who remember – perhaps there are some of them, I am even sure of it – what I said at that time can clearly see what is at stake. It happens that

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I was asked to go to speak about it again in October 1967 at Yale. And I was so busy with the people who motivate this effort of teaching, namely, the psychoanalysts, that I missed the opportunity of speaking to the people at Yale; I did not know until much later that this created a little scandal. It is true, it was not very polite. We are going to try today to say what I could have said over there, without there being moreover any preparation at all to hear it.

But, let us begin right at the ground level, as if we were at Yale. What is at stake? In general, you must have heard tell of something that is stated and that is written several times in the text of what has been collected under the title of *Penseés*, Pascal's *Penseés*, and that at the start there is something rather risky in the use that is made of what is called the wager itself. As you know, these *Penseés,* were notes taken (84) for a major work. Only this work was never done, so it was done in his place. First of all a work was created – this is the edition of the Messieurs de Port-Royal – it is not at all a work that is badly done. They were pals, and as someone called Filleau de la Chaise who is not properly speaking a luminary but who is very readable testifies, Pascal had very carefully explained to them what he wanted to do and they did what Pascal had indicated. It nevertheless remains that this left out a lot of things in the statements that were written out in notes for the purposes of the construction of this work. So then others ventured on a different reconstruction. And then others said: "Since in short as our culture advances, we perceive that the discourse, is not so simple a thing as that and that in putting it together, well, there is some loss" so then people set about making editions that were called critical, but that take on a completely different import when what is involved is a collection of notes. There again there was some difficulty. We have several editions, several ways of grouping these bundles as they say; that of Tourneur, that of Lafuma, that of X, that of Z. This does not simplify things, but be assured, it certainly clarifies them.

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As regards the wager, it is quite separate. It is a little piece of paper folded in four. That was the interest of what I recommended to you, it was for you to grasp this. Since, in this book there is a reproduction of the piece of paper folded in four and then a certain number of transcriptions. Because this too posed a problem given that they are notes, written freehand, with different divisions, a lot of things crossed out, whole paragraphs written between the lines of other paragraphs, and then a utilisation of the margins with references. All of this moreover is rather precise and gives ample material for examination and for discourse. But there is one thing that we can take as certain, it is that Pascal never claimed that he made his wager stand up. This little paper must all the same have been close to his heart since everything indicates that he had it in his pocket, in the same place that I have here this device, this microphone, this absolutely useless thing. In general, you have heard tell of something that sounds like *to renounce pleasures.* This thing which is said in the plural is also repeated in the plural. And moreover everyone knows that this act is supposed to be at the source of something that might be called the Christian life. It is the background noise. Through everything that Pascal and others around him tell us in terms of an ethics, this can be heard in the distance like the sound of a bell. What we have to know is whether it is a knell. In fact, it is not all that much of a knell. From time to time it has a gayer aspect. I would like to make you sense that it is the very principle on which there is installed a certain morality that one can qualify as modern morality.

To make understood what I am in the process of putting forward, I am going to give a few reminders of what is effectively involved. The (85) reinvestment, as they say, of profits, which is fundamental, this again is what is called enterprise, the capitalist enterprise, to designate it in its proper terms, does not put the means of production at the service of pleasure. Things have even got to the stage that a whole aspect of something that is manifested in the margins is, for example, an effort, a quite timid effort that does not at all imagine sailing

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towards success but rather casts doubt on what can be called our style of life. We will call this an effort to rehabilitate spending, and someone called Georges Bataille, a thinker in the margin of what is involved in our affairs, has thought out and produced on this point some quite readable works that are not for all that dedicated to efficiency.

When I say that it is modern morality, what I mean by that, is a first approach to the question, that looking at things historically, this is responding to a break. In any case, there is no reason to minimise it. This does not mean either that like every historical break, one must remain with it to grasp what is involved. And it is just as good to mark its time. The search for well being (*bien-être*) – I cannot insist a lot, because our time is measured out, of course, as always, on what justifies the use of this term. But in any case all of those who follow, even from time to time, superficially, what I say ought all the same to remember what I recalled in this place about the distinction between *Wohl, das Wohl,* there where one feels good, and *das Gute*, the good, in so far as Kant distinguishes them. It is quite clear that this is one of the core points of what I earlier called the break. Whatever may be the justification of Kant's statements, one must find in them the very soul of ethics, or indeed, as I did, illuminate by its relationship to Sade. It is a fact of thinking that this happened.

We have the notion for some time that the facts of thinking have a background, perhaps something that is already of the order of what I recalled. Namely, the structure that results from a certain use of the means of production that is in the background, but, as what I am articulating this year is proposing, there are perhaps other ways of taking it. In any case, by this well-being, I am aiming at what in the philosophical tradition is called *hedone*, pleasure. This *hedone*, as it has been used, presupposes that there corresponds to pleasure a certain relationship that we will call a relationship of the right tone, to nature of which we, men, or presumed to be such, would be in this

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perspective less the masters than the celebrants. It is indeed this that guides those who, let us say, from all antiquity, when they began, in order to ground morality, to take this reference point, that pleasure ought all the same to guide us along this path, that it is the original link in any case, that what is going to be at stake, is rather to pose as a question why certain of these pleasures are outside this correct tone. It is a matter then of pleasuring, as I might say, pleasure itself. Of (86) finding a module with the correct tone at the heart of what is involved in pleasure, and to see what is in the margin and what appears to function in a perverted fashion and is nevertheless justifiable with respect to what pleasure gives the measure of. Something is to be noted, which is that one can quite correctly say that this perspective involves an asceticism, an asceticism to which one can give its escutcheon which is the following: not too much work.

Well then up to a certain moment, that did not seem to do the trick. But I think all the same, all of you in so far as you are here, see that we are no longer in this atmosphere because in order to obtain this "not too much work", we have to make a ferocious effort! The strike, for example, that does not simply consist in folding one's arms but also of starving at the same time. Up to a certain time, people never needed to have recourse to means like that. This is what clearly shows that something has changed for so many efforts to be necessary to have "not too much work". This does not mean that we are in a context that follows its natural incline. In other words, the asceticism of pleasure, was something that scarcely needed to be stressed in so far as morality was grounded on the idea that there was somewhere a good and that it was in this good that the law resided. Things seem to be all of a piece in this sequence that I am designating.

Otium cum dignitate reigns in Horace, as you know – or you do not know; everyone knew it in the last century because everyone worked on Horace, but thanks to the solid education that you have received in the *lycée* you do not even know what Horace is. In ours, we are at the

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point when soon *otium*, namely, the life of leisure - naturally not our leisure which are forced leisures, you are give the leisure to go looking for a ticket in the Gare de Lyon, and then helter-skelter, and then you have to pay it, and then you have to transport yourself to the winter sports. There for a fortnight you are going to apply yourself to a solid *pensum*, that consists in queuing at the bottom of ski-lifts. You are not there to amuse yourself! The person who only does that, who does not work during his leisure time, is unworthy. *Otium,* for the moment is *cum indignitate*. And the further it goes, the more it will be like that unless there is an accident. In other words, to refuse to work, in our day, is something like a challenge. It is posed and can only be posed as a challenge. Excuse me for insisting again. St Thomas, in so far as he formally re-injects Aristotelian thinking – I am only saying formally - into Christianity, can only organise, even he, St Thomas, who may appear to you, like that to be a little grey faced, he can organise the Good as sovereign Good only in terms that in the last analysis are hedonistic. Naturally, this must not be seen in a monolithic fashion, if only because all sorts of misunderstandings are introduced into these (87) sorts of propositions that were already obvious even when they reigned. And it is certain that to follow their trace and see how the different spiritual directors got out of them would imply a great effort of discernment.

What I want to do is simply to recall here where we are centred by the fact that undoubtedly there has been in this respect a radical displacement. And that for us the starting points can only quite obviously be to question the ideology of pleasure through what renders everything that sustained it a little out of date. This by placing ourselves at the level of the means of production in so far as, for us, these are what really condition the practice of this pleasure. It seems to me that I sufficiently indicated already earlier how one can put on one side of a page the publicity for the proper use of holidays, namely, the hymn to the sun, and on the other side the obligatory conditions of the ski-lift. It is enough to add to it that all of this happens completely at

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the expense of the simple arrangement of ordinary life and of the cankers of sordidness in the midst of which we live, especially in big cities.

It is very important to recall in order to perceive that in short, the use that we make in psychoanalysis of the pleasure principle starting from the point at which it is situated, where it reigns, namely, in the unconscious, means that pleasure, what am I saying, its very notion, are in the catacombs. And that Freud's discovery about this plays the function of the evening visitor, the one who comes from afar to find the strange slippages that have taken place during his absence. "Do you know where I found it, he seems to say to us, this flower of our age, this lightness, pleasure? Now it is panting in the underground *Acheronta*, says Freud, simply concerned to prevent everything exploding, by imposing a measure on all of these enthusiasts, by slipping into it some lapse or other, because if it worked correctly, where would we be?" There is therefore in Freud's pleasure principle, something like that, a power of rectification, of tempering, of least tension as he puts it. It is like a sort of invisible weaver that is careful that there is not too much heat in the wheels.

What relationship is there between that and the sovereign pleasure of contemplative *farniente* that we pick up in the statements of Aristotle for example? This may be of a nature – if I am coming back to it, it is not in order to be always be going around in a circle – to make us suspect that there is perhaps all the same here some ambiguity. I mean a phantasy that we must also be careful perhaps not to take too literally, even though of course the fact that it comes to us after so much drifting renders it no doubt very precarious to appreciate what it was in its time. This to correct what in my discourse, up to the point that I have got to, may seem to be like a reference to the good old days. We know that it is difficult to escape from it, but it is not a reason (88) either not to mark that we do not give it too much credence.

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In any case, the presentation of pleasure, even in Freud, is struck by an admitted ambiguity, the one precisely of the beyond, as he says, of the pleasure principle. We are not going to develop things here. To be quit of it, we will say that Freud writes, "Enjoyment is fundamentally masochistic". It is quite clear that this is only a metaphor, because moreover masochism is something at a level that is differently organised than this radical tendency. Enjoyment would tend, Freud tells us when he tries to elaborate what is at first only articulated metaphorically, to lower the threshold necessary for the maintenance of life. This threshold that the pleasure principle itself defines as an *infimum*, namely, the lowest of the heights, the lowest tension necessary for maintaining this. But one can fall still lower, and that is where pain begins and can only be exalted, if really this movement, as we are told, tends towards death. In other words, behind the affirmation of a phenomenon that we can hold to be linked to a certain context of practice, namely, the unconscious, it is a phylum of a completely different nature that Freud opens up with this beyond. No doubt it is certain that here the ambiguity as I have just stated it has not failed to preserve its agency, that a certain ambiguity is profiled between this theoretical death drive on the one hand and a masochism that is only a much more astute practice, but of what. All the same of this enjoyment in so far as it is not identifiable to the rule of pleasure. In other words with our experience, psychoanalytic experience, enjoyment, if you will allow me this to abbreviate, is coloured. There is a whole background, of course, to this reference. It must be said that with respect to space with its three dimensions colour, if we knew how to deal with it, could no doubt add one or two perhaps three to it. Because from this note, you should note that on this occasion that the Stoics, the Epicureans, the doctrinaires of the reign of pleasure with regard to what is opened up to us as a questioning, this still remains black and white.

I have tried, since I introduced into our handling this function of enjoyment, to indicate that it is essentially a relationship to the body

but not an indifferent one. This relationship that is founded on the exclusion at the same time inclusion and constitutes our whole effort towards a topology that corrects the statements accepted up to now in psychoanalysis. Because it is clear that at every stage people speak only of this – rejection, formation of the non-ego, I am not going to recall all of them for you – but a function of what is called incorporation and what is expressed as introjection, as if what were at stake was a relationship of the inner to the outer and not a much more complex topology. Analytic ideology, in short, as it has been (89) expressed up to now is remarkably awkward and this is explained by the fact of the non-construction of an adequate topology.

What must be grasped is that this topology, I mean that of enjoyment, is the topology of the subject. It is what *poursoit*'s our existence as subject. The verb *poursoir* is a new word that emerged just like that. I do not see why, after all the time that we have been speaking about *en-soi* and *pour-soi* one could not construct variations. It is extraordinarily amusing, for example you could write the *en-soi* like that, *anse-oie* or again *en-soie*. I will spare you. When I am all alone I have great fun! The interest of the verb *poursoir*, is that it immediately it finds little friends, *pourvoir* for example or again *surseoir*. You have to change the spelling if it is on the side of *surseoir* you have to write *pourseoit*. The interest is that if this helps to think out things and in particular a dichotomy: is the subject pursued against enjoyment? In other words does he test himself against it? Is he carrying on his own little game in the affair? Is he master when all is said and done or is he *poursised* to enjoyment? Is he in a way dependent on it, a slave? It is a question that has its interest, but in order to advance in it, you must start from the fact that in any case our access to enjoyment is commanded by the topology of the subject. And that, I assure you gives rise to some difficulties at the level of statements concerning enjoyment.

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I speak from time to time with people who are not necessarily in the public eye but are very intelligent. There is a certain way of thinking that enjoyment can be assured by this impossible conjunction that I stated the last time between discourse and formal language. This is obviously linked to the mirage that all the problems of enjoyment are essentially linked to this division of the subject; but it is not because the subject is more divided that one will discover enjoyment. You must pay very careful attention to this. In other words, the subject creates the structure of enjoyment, but as far as we know, all that one can hope from it, are practices of recuperation. This means that what he recuperates has nothing to do with enjoyment, but with its loss. There was someone called Hegel who already posed these problems very clearly. He did not write "*pour-soi*" like me, and this is not without consequences. The way that he constructs the adventure of enjoyment is certainly, as it should be, entirely dominated by the *Phenomenology of the spirit,* namely, of the subject. But the error is there from the beginning as I might say and as such it cannot but have its consequences up to the end of what he says. It is very curious that in making this dialectic start, as it is put, from the relationship of the master and the slave, it is not manifest, and in a quite clear way from the very fact that he begins with, namely, the fight to the death, for pure prestige he insists, that this assuredly means that the master has renounced enjoyment. And since it is for nothing other than for the salvation of his body that the slave accepts to be dominated, it is hard (90) to see why, in such an explanatory perspective, why he should not be left with enjoyment. One cannot all the same have one's cake and eat it. If the master has taken the risk at the start it is indeed because he leaves enjoyment to the other.

Do I have to indicate, to recall, to evoke on this occasion what the whole of antique literature bears witness to, namely, that to be a slave, was not as troublesome as all that. It spared you, in any case, many political difficulties. Please do not misunderstand. I am speaking about the mythical slave, the one at the start of Hegel's

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phenomenology. And this mythical slave has his correspondents. It is not for nothing that in comedy – open Terence – the young girl destined for the final triumph of marriage with the nice daddy's boy is always a slave. For everything to be correct and to make us look foolish, because it is the function of comedy, it happens that she is a slave but from a very good family. It has happened by accident! And at the end everything is revealed. At that point, daddy's boy has put too much into it to be able to say in all decency "I am not playing the game; if I had known that she was the daughter of daddy's best friend, I would never have got involved with her!" But the sense of ancient comedy, is precisely that. It is to designate to us, when it is enjoyment that is at stake, that the daughter of the master of the allotment next door, is not the one that is recommended. She has something a little bit stiff about her, she is a little bit too attached to the patrimony that is attached to her.

I apologise for where these little fables take us, but it is in order to say that what historical evolution recuperates by freeing the slaves is of a different order. It frees them from something or other. But there is one thing certain. At every stage, it links them, at every stage of recuperation it links them to *surplus enjoying* which is, as I think I have sufficiently stated from the beginning of this year, something different. Namely, what responds not to enjoyment but to the loss of enjoyment in so far as from it emerges what becomes the cause conjugated by the desire for knowledge and this animation that I recently qualified as ferocious that proceeds from *surplus enjoying*. Such is the authentic mechanism, and it is important to recall it at the moment when all the same we are going to speak about Pascal, because Pascal like all of us is a man of his time.

Naturally the wager has to do with the fact that in the same years – and on these points of the sidelights of history, trust me, I have gone through everything that can be read. I simply signal to you that my friend Guilbaud has written in the reviews, I have only the offprint but

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I will try all the same to know where you can get it, some short, very short little articles that are quite decisive as regards the relationship of this wager. He is not the only one moreover. In Brunet's book the (91) thing is also dealt with. The rules of games (*la règle des partis*) are something that one should say a lot about to show you its importance in the progress of mathematical theory. You should simply know that there is nothing more up to date with regard to what is at stake, for us, when it is the subject that is at stake. To interest oneself in what is involved in what is called a game, in so far as it is a practice that is fundamentally defined by the fact that it involves a certain number of events that take place within certain rules. Nothing isolates in a purer way what is involved in our relationships to the signifier. Here, in appearance, nothing else interests us than the most gratuitous manipulation in the order of combination. To pose the question, nevertheless, of what is involved in the decisions to be taken in this field of the gratuitous, is designed to underline that nowhere does it take on more force and necessity. It is in this respect that the wager that is made in it takes on its importance, when we see that everything is lacking to it in terms of acceptable conditions in a game. The efforts of authors to rationalise it, in a way, with respect to what was in effect for Pascal the reference – but he was certainly the first to know it – and to demonstrate that it does not work, gives its value to the way Pascal's wager is handled. And there in the text of Pascal and taken up by the authors in a short sighted way that is here the most exemplary thing and of which one can say that after all the authors do us the service of showing how there is installed the impasse that they persevere in, this way of highlighting, with respect to this decision, the relationships of extension to what is at stake. Namely, on the one hand a life whose enjoyment one renounces in order to make of it, in exactly the same way as Pascal signals it in the study of what is called the rules of games, which is that when it is in play, it is lost. This is the principle of the bet, the bet on the other side, on the side of the partner, is what Pascal articulates, *an infinity of infinitely happy lives.*

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I am signalling to you that here a point is opened up of whether this infinity of lives is to be thought of in the singular or the plural. An infinity of life, in the singular, does not mean very much except changing the sense that in this context, the context of the rules of games, the word infinity has. Nevertheless we are here at the mercy of the ambiguity of little sheet of paper. The word happy (*heureuse*) is not finished; why should the word life (*vie*) be complete? The 's' that may well also belong to it, the numeral aspect of a comparison promoted here, namely, the numeral relationship between the stakes, with something that has no other name than uncertainty and that is itself taken, as such, numerically. Pascal writes that with respect even to a chance of gain one may suppose an infinity of chances of loss. To introduce then as a numerical element of chance, while it was properly speaking excluded in what he stated about the rules of games, which in order to be stated involves an equality of chances, shows clearly that in any case it is on the numerical plane that the stake ought to be (92) measured.

I insist, because in this little paper, which is in no way something edited or in a definitive state, which is a succession of written signs that are made, it is moreover stated at other points that to stake what is in question, namely, the fundamental uncertainty, namely, is there a partner. At other points Pascal states "there is one chance in two", namely, God exists or does not exist, a procedure that we of course see to be rather untenable and has no need to be refuted. But can it not be seen that in this everything resides precisely at the level of uncertainty? Because it is quite clear that nothing is imposed by this calculation and that one can always oppose to the proposition of the wager "what I have I hold and with this life I already have enough to do". Pascal lays it on and he says that it is nothing, but what does that mean? No, not zero, because there would be neither game, there would be no game because there would be no stake. He says that it is nothing, which is a completely different business, because this is precisely what is at stake when it is the *surplus enjoying* that is involved. And moreover if there

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is something that carries to the most essential, to the most radical point our passion for this discourse, it is precisely because this is what is at stake. The opposition no doubt still holds up. By betting in such a game, am I wagering too much?

And this indeed is why Pascal allows it to be inscribed in the argumentation of his supposed contradictor, a contradictor who moreover is nowhere except in himself because he is the only one to know the contents of his little piece of paper. But he answers him: "You cannot not wager because you are engaged". And in what way? You are not at all engaged except if the fact that you have to take a decision dominates. Namely, what is in the game, in games theory as it is called in our day, which is only the absolutely direct continuation of what Pascal inaugurated in the rules of games where decision is a structure. And it is because it is reduced to a structure that we can manipulate it in an entirely scientific way. Only there, at this level, if you have to take a decision, whichever of the two it may be, if you are engaged anyway, it is from the moment that you are questioned in this way, and by Pascal. Namely, at the moment that you authorise yourself to be "I" in this discourse. The veritable ambiguity, the dichotomy is not between God exists or does not exist, whether Pascal likes it or not. The problem becomes of a completely different nature from the moment that he affirmed we do not know, not whether God exists, but neither whether God is, nor what he is. And therefore the business about God will be – our contemporaries have perfectly sensed it and have articulated it – a matter of fact, which, if you refer to the definition that I gave of fact, is a matter of discourse. The only fact is one that is stated. And that is why we are entirely given over to the tradition of the book. What is at stake in Pascal's wager is the following. Does "I" exist or whether "I" does not exist, as I already (93) told you, at the end of my previous discourse. I have spent a time that was as it happens and perhaps I am a little bit too used to doing this, too much time introducing the core of what is involved, but I think that these premises were indispensable. This leads me then in a

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not particularly timely way to our cut today. You should know simply that contrary to what is believed, the wager is not on the promise but on the existence of the "I", something that can be deduced beyond Pascal's wager. Namely, if we put in its place the function of the cause as it is placed at the level of the subject, namely, the **o**-object. It is not the first time for me to write it thus, **o**-cause. It is precisely in so far as the whole wager has this essence of reducing this thing that is all the same not something that we can, like that, hold in the hollow of our hands, namely, our life of which after all we may have a completely different apprehension, a completely different perspective. Namely, that it comprehends us and without limit, and that we are here a place of passage, a phenomenon. Why should this not be sustained? It has been after all.

That this life should be reduced to this something that can thus be brought into play, is this not the sign that what dominates in a certain rise of the relationships to knowledge, is the **o**-cause. And it is here that in our subsequent steps we will have to measure what results, beyond this **o**-cause, in terms of a choice. To say *I exist* ***o***, with regard to this relationship to the **o**-cause, a whole succession of consequences perfectly and immediately formalisable. I will do a calculation of it for you the next time. And inversely, the very fact of being able to calculate in this way the other position, the one that speaks in favour of seeking what is involved in the *I* that perhaps does not exist, goes in the direction of the **o**-cause, in the sense of what Pascal proceeds to when he invokes his interlocutor to renounce it, here for us there takes on its sense, the direction of a research that is explicitly ours, as regards psychoanalysis.

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Seminar 8: Wednesday 22 January 1969

The most difficult thing to think about, is the One. That people strive to do so is not new. The modern approach is scripturist (*scripturaire*). There was a day when I extracted, to the astonishment, I remember, of one of my listeners who marvelled at it. "Ah! How did you manage to get your hands on that, *einziger Zug*", which I translated in a way that has lasted as the unary trait. It is in effect the term with which Freud pinpoints one of the forms of what he calls identification. I showed at that time in a sufficiently developed way for me not to have to come back to it today, except simply to recall that in this trait there is the essential of the effect of what for us analysts, namely, in the field that we have deal with the subject, is called repetition.

This thing, that I did not invent, but which is said in Freud, provided only one pays attention to what he says, this is linked in a way that one can call determining to a consequence that he designates as the lost object. Essentially, to summarise, it is in the fact that enjoyment is aimed at in an effort of rediscoveries and that it can only be so by being recognised by the effect of the mark, that this mark itself introduces into it a blemish from which this loss results. A mechanism that is fundamental and essential to confront with what already appeared in a research that, after all, was pursued along the same path, concerning every essence and culminated at the idea, the pre-existence of every form and at the same time by appealing to this thing that is not easy to think out. This is Plato, it is reminiscence.

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These points having been recalled, we are dealing with Pascal's wager. Its relationship to repetition, I think, is not altogether unnoticed by many of you who are here. Why am I now going through Pascal's wager? It is certainly not in order to sound clever, nor as a philosophical reminder, nor of the philosophy of the history of philosophy. What happens at the level of Jansenism, to recall the Pascalian context, is an affair that interests us precisely in this that the historian, as in many other things, is quite incapable of finding his bearings in it.

Read a little *Que-sais-je?* I apologise to its author for having forgotten his name, but I read the text from beginning to end, and naturally not to inform myself about Jansenism. Besides I will not say anything more about what is involved in my relationship to it, it would be too good an opportunity for you to precipitate yourself into the historical or (96) biographical determinations of my interests. In any case, some time ago, as it happens, I was able to get a grasp of it outside this sort of ghost that remains of it, namely, that they were people that are called rigorist, in other words who prevented you from living the way you wanted to. That is all that remains of it in effect, through one of these surprising effects of silting up that it must not be forgotten is also a dimension of history. But in reading this little book then, I was getting the testimony about what is said of it, simply by taking things precisely as the title of the collection indicates, at the level of *Que sais-je*? The author knows a lot of things. He starts from the origin, if indeed there was one, of the questions it gives rise to. He ends up at the point where it is drowned in the upheavals of the French Revolution, and he very nicely admits at the end that in the last analysis, you cannot really see, taking everything into account what Jansenism meant. Which is all the same, for a work of historical review, a rather curious but exemplary conclusion.

One thing appears in this history. It is that in taking it at the level of its historical recording, it begins as an affair among theologians. And moreover it is quite true that Jansenius is found to be the most

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representative of them, let us even say the most worthy to represent them, if only because of this exemplary thing which is that it appears that everything that was being stirred up at the epoch around the debate, about the contradiction and condemnations that followed it, the fundamental question, the one that almost none of the participants in the debate does not bring up, is: "And first of all you have not read him!" And it seems indeed in effect that the very great majority of those who were so passionate at that time, not only had not read him but had not even opened him. Some however, the two or three leaders, the Grand Arnaud must have read him; moreover was there any need to read him? People had read a lot of other things that were fundamental and in particular - before, well before this work that appeared posthumously, as you know perhaps, that is called *Augustinus,* by the person that I have just named, Bishop Jansenius - there was the thinking of St Augustine that one cannot deny is at the foundation of Christianity. In a word, the question is obvious once it is precisely Christianity that is at stake.

The measure in which Christianity interests us, I mean at the level of theory, can be measured precisely by the role given to Grace. Who does not see that Grace has the closest relationship with the fact that I, starting from theoretical functions that certainly have nothing to with the effusions of the heart, designate as d(O), the desire of the Other. Man's desire, I said at one time when, to make myself understood, I had to risk certain improbable words like Man, for example. I could have contented myself with saying, desire as it concerns you, this desire operates in the field of the Other in so far as it is articulated as the locus of the word. Who does (97) not also see what is implied, if what is stated here is correct, this relation orientated by the vector starting from $◇D on the graph towards this desire, the desire of the Other to question it in an "I ask myself what you want" which is also balanced by an "I ask you what I want". Anything that tends in any manifestation of desire towards a "Thy will be done" deserves to be posited first of all, in any judgement – it is not necessarily the privilege of spiritual people – about what is the nature of

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prayer. Its inextricable intermeshing with the functions of desire could be clarified from it.

This *tutoiement*, [Thying], I have said, does not have a simple start, because at the level of the subject, the question of who is speaking remains intact. It is nonetheless essential to note that this Thy is addressed to a faceless Other. There is no need for him to have one at all for it to be addressed to him, if we know how to distinguish this field of the Other from the relationship to one's fellow. Now this is precisely what articulates its definition in my theory. The relationship, the knot, the link between the disputes about Grace, which it seems that those responsible by right, namely, the Church, at the time that we are speaking about, could not get out of in any other way except by prohibiting in a repeated fashion for two centuries that anything whatsoever should be articulated either for or against in this debate. This prohibition of course only made the struggle rebound and multiply the books and the pamphlets. This is something in which what concerns us is that this frenzy that some people say is purely intellectual is completely solidary to a movement whose incidences of fervour there is no question of contesting. Nor in this case the properly convulsive effects. And this was pinpointed at the time. However we may be able to gauge as psychopathological what happened on the tomb of a certain Paris deacon. And when, the doors were closed at the entrance of the cemetery, so that there could be written over them *By order of the king God is prohibited from doing miracles in this place* the aforesaid convulsions continued elsewhere. It seems that even if it were only to pinpoint things in this ultimate consequence, we can see that this field is close to our own. And that after all, to take it in a way that is not altogether at basic, namely, "should they be interned or not?" we have all the same the right to try to articulate something and why not, in the freest, the most lucid, the most speculative way about the wager precisely of Pascal.

The *Name of the Father* – I am going to announce it like that at the start because it will perhaps be the best way to detach you from the effort of

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fascination that emerges from these confusions – the *Name of the Father*, that I am insisting on to say that it is not by chance that I was not able to speak about it, the *Name of the Father* takes on here a singular form that I am asking you to carefully locate at the level of the wager. This will change for you perhaps the haggling that the authors on this subject have usually devoted themselves to about whether it is worthwhile to wager. (98) What is worthwhile, is to consider how it is formulated from the pen of Pascal. I would say that this singular form, in the statement of what comes at the top of this little paper, this singular form is what I would call the absolute real; and the absolute real, on this little paper, is what is stated as heads or tails. Heads or tails (*croix ou pile*), it is not a matter of the cross, you can get that out of your heads. "*Croix ou pile*" was the way at the time of saying what we would call today heads or tails.

I want you to get the idea that if it is conceivable that we should arrive, at some point, at the final term of any science whatsoever in the modern sense, namely, by the operation of what is called a measure, it can only be very precisely at the point when what is to be said, is "heads or tails", "it is that or it is not that". It is what it is, there, because up to then, nothing confirms for us that we are not just measuring our own measures. It must come to a point, heads or tails, at which it is only the real that is involved as a check.

Pascal's wager contains at its start something that is referred to this pole point, the absolute real. And this all the more in that what is at stake, is precisely something that is defined: that we cannot know *either whether He is or is not.* This is explicitly what Pascal articulates as regards what is at stake, which of course, at the level of the wager, if the question of its act is posed, may well in effect be expressed by the question of the existence or not of the partner.

But there is not just the partner. There is the stake. And this is the interest of Pascal's wager. The stake, the fact that he can pose in these terms the question of our measure with respect to the real, the stake

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supposes that a step has been taken that, whatever the amateurs of historical ferreting out may say, namely, that already Raymond Sebond, Père Sirmond and Pierre Charron had brought up something of the order of this risk. Overlooking that if Pascal can advance in a fashion that makes it not at all a matter of chance that it has been so profoundly felt in the field of where it thinks, it is because he profoundly modified the approach of what is involved in the "I say", I mean of the I of the gambler. And this by proceeding as I might say to something that might be called an exorcism, the day he discovered the rules of games.

The resistances he encounters after having posed the problem of the just way to divide up the stake when, for some reason or other, necessary or by mutual consent, an interruption takes place during a game whose rules had already been given, the pivot of what allows him to settle it in such fruitful way, that it is through this that he articulates the foundation of what is called the mathematical triangle. This assuredly, of course, had already discovered by someone called Tartaglia. But he did not necessarily have to know that, moreover, besides, he draws different consequences from it. Because it is through it that he rejoins, takes up again and gives a new push to what, in the laws of the maximum and the (99) minimum in Archimedes, a prelude to what is going to be born from integral calculus. All of this rests on this simple remark, to settle what is at stake, which is that the essence of the game, in what it involves in terms of logic because it is regulated, depends on the fact that what is bet is lost at the start. While the question of the lure of gain distorts, refracts, in a way that does not allow theoreticians not to be weakened in their articulations, this initial purification allows there to be stated in a proper way what has to be done in order to carry out at every moment a sharing out of what is there at the centre as stake, as lost.

The question is interesting for us analysts, because it allows us to attach to it the essential motivation for the emergence of such a concatenation. If there is an activity whose starting point is grounded on the assumption of loss, it is indeed because what is at stake in the very approach of any rule -

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namely, of a signifying concatenation, of an effect of loss - is very precisely what I have been trying to dot the i's of from the beginning. Because of course our experience, as they say, in analysis confronts us at every instant with this effect of loss. And if one does not grasp what is at stake, one attributes it, under the name of narcissistic wound, to an imaginary injury. This is how innocent experience testifies that this effect of loss is met with at every step. It bears witness to it in an innocent way, namely, in the most harmful way, by referring it to this schema of narcissistic wound, namely, from a relationship to one's fellow that on this occasion has absolutely nothing to do with it. It is not because some fragment that is supposed to be part of the body is detached from it that the wound in question functions, and every attempt at reparation, whatever it may be, is condemned to prolong its aberration. What is at stake, the wound, is elsewhere in an effect that at the start, to recall it, I distinguished from the imaginary as symbolic. It is in the gap that is produced or aggravated, because we cannot plumb how much of this gap was already there in the organism, of this gap between the body and its enjoyment. In as much as then, as I have said, what determines it or aggravates it, and it is only this aggravation that is important, is the incidence of the signifier. The very incidence of the mark, the incidence of what I earlier called the unary trait, which gives it its consistency.

So then what is at stake is outlined by measuring the effect of this loss, of this lost object in so far as we designate it by **o**, at this locus without which it could not be produced, at this still unknown, still unmeasured locus called the Other. What does it mean, that one must first take this measure of which it is enough to have the experience, indeed the passion for gaming to see its relationship with the way we function as desire. What is going to be involved between this proportion that we must now (100) measure? Well then, there is something very strange. This proportion, this measure, is already there in the figures, I mean in the written signs with which we articulate the very idea of measure.

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We do not know anything, at this point, about the nature of the loss. I can behave as if we never give it any particular support. We give points, I will not say where we are able to scoop things out, where we get the wood shavings; but there is no need to know. As I said, on the one hand we only know the function of loss and on the other, we undoubtedly do not know what is involved in the 1 because it is only the unary trait. This *not knowing* is only what we are happy to retain of it. And nevertheless it is enough for us to write 1/o in which the proportion is inscribed. Namely, that the relationship of this 1, determining for the effect of loss, is equal and should be, since it seems indeed that it is a loss that is at stake, to something in which there is connected by an additive "and" this 1 and the written sign of this loss, 1/o = 1+o. Because such indeed in effect is the inscription from which there results what is involved in a certain proportion whose harmony, if it must be evoked, does not depend assuredly on aesthetic effects. Simply I would ask you, in order to measure it yourselves, to allow yourselves to be guided first of all by the examination of what is involved in its mathematical nature. The harmonies in question are not constructed by luck, from a lucky encounter. As I think the bringing together of the series that results from the recurrent function generated from this equality, as I think I can show you that one finds in it the characteristic note, that of **o**, in a whole other series generated from another starting point, but which interests us just as much. As you will see, it is the one that by taking things from another end would be generated from what we have called the *Spaltung* or the original division of the subject, in other words from efforts to make two disjointed units connect up. This is a field that must be gone through step by step.

It is necessary to write out in a clear way what is involved in the aforesaid series. We write it in the following form. We put here the **o** and here the 1, a direction, this direction only exists, I underlined it in passing, from the fact of our starting point. After the 1, we put 1+**o**. After the **o**, 1-**o**. The series is generated from the addition of two terms in order to produce the following term. So here we have:

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o	1
1-o	1+o
2o-1	2+o
2-3o	3+2o
5o-3	5+3o
5-8o	8+5o

(101) from which you can see that it does not fail to present some relationships with the opposite list. I pass on, I pass on because it is easy for you to check the fact that the continuation of these values represents a proportion that is maintained, namely, that 1+o is to 1 as 2+o is to 1+o. It is very exactly what is written in the initial formula. This might just as well be written:

$$1, 1/o, 1/o^2, 1/o^3, 1/o^4, \text{etc....}$$

a number that, since o is less than 1, will keep on increasing.

Here on the contrary you write o^2, o^3, o^4, o^5, o^6 a number that as I repeat since o is less than one, will always decrease.

Let us not leave our Pascal because, on the little paper where what he is working on is an articulation, therefore there is no need for it to be destined for someone else in order for the exchanges to have a value that is not persuasive but logically constructive. People have seen very clearly in our day that, for certain problems, there is a way to resolve them where the number of attempts counts. Namely, at the end of how many attempts one party has the last word. If he wins because of what one could call, but purely retrospectively, a mistake by the other party, it is clear that the test will consist in connection with the other party in a more risky response. But that, if the result is the same we can attribute to a logical articulation, I mean one that is accepted. It is enough to define it at the start, by way of a demonstration, which would be articulated as follows:

0	1	
$(1-o)o^2$	$(1+o)$	$\frac{1}{o}$
$(2o-1)o^3$	$(2+o)$	$\frac{1}{o^2}$
$(2-3o)o^4$	$(3+2o)$	$\frac{1}{o^3}$
$(5o-3)o^5$	$(5+3o)$	$\frac{1}{o^4}$
$(5-8o)o^6$	$(8+5o)$	$\frac{1}{o^5}$
$1+o$	1∞	

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It is a pity that people forget at an epoch, ours, which has very well been able to codify the laws of this function of yes or no, refutable yes or no, and to notice that it opens up a greater field than the pure and simply demonstrable. It is in this way - I pointed it out, I already announced it, initiated it the last time - that Pascal's process, the one that first of all made him sound out with regard to a pure "heads or tails" what is rational in the engagement of betting something in life which is precisely not defined against something that is at least an infinity of lives qualified, without specifying what they mean, as indefinitely happy. But perhaps it would be worthwhile, if we come after him, for us to re-question the (102) signs. We see that they are capable of delivering up something that necessarily specifies the sense.

This indeed is what we are in the process of carrying out at the level of these signs. And we perceive that if we lay hold of the **o** whose value we still do not know but only what it generates as a series in its relationship to 1, we see a series, nothing more. And one might even say that the question of what is involved in **o** and 1 as such, as terms set up in some way or other, even mathematically, does not have a sense. It is not like when it is a matter of defining whole numbers and what one can do with them, neutral elements. This 1 has nothing to do with the 1 of multiplication. Supplementary actions are necessary to put them to use. Nor is the **o**. The **o** and the 1 are everywhere, everywhere there is the relation of 1/**o**, namely, in the whole series. This is precisely the interest of starting from it because the only reason that requires us to start from it is that it is starting from them that we write. In any real whatsoever that appears to correspond to this scale, they have nowhere a place. Only without them we would not be able to write this scale. It is starting from it, from this scale, that I can allow myself to image, starting from another writing, also the most simple, we remain, it seems, within our limits, within those of the unary trait. Except for the fact that we are going to prolong it indefinitely, to try at least to prolong it indefinitely.

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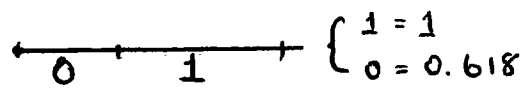
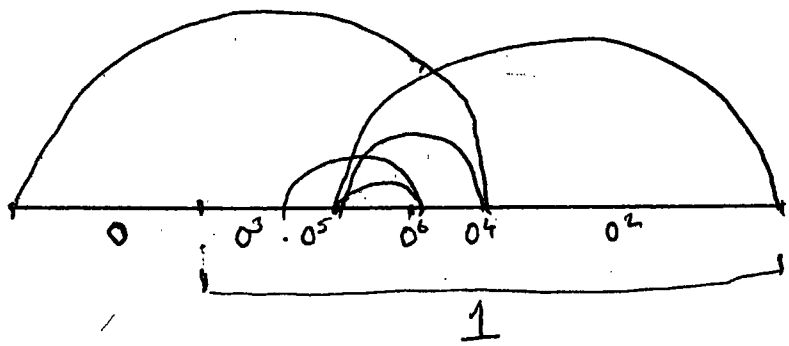
Here is the o, here is the 1. We are not obliged to measure them for them to be correctly written. Here also, I think that you will excuse me for abbreviating and for saying that we project this o onto this field considered in its function as 1. What we have just written indicates to us that what will be here will be o^2. The folding back of the o^2 gives us here an o^3; the folding back of o^3 gives us here an o^4. I hope you are following. You see then that there is going to be added together by operations that go in a certain direction all the even powers of o: o^2, o^4, o^6. And that here there are going to be reproduced, because if we refer the o, we will have o^5, the sequence of the odd powers o^3, o^5, o^7.





[Reconstructed Schema based on Lacan's Commentary]

(103) It is very easy to see that in this way, we will find at the converging meeting point of these powers, one even the other odd, the measure of o as a total for all the even powers, o itself being of course excluded. The measure o^2 as a sum of all the odd powers of o, o^2 and o giving a total of 1. Namely, that it is by this very operation of separated addition of even powers on the one hand and odd powers that we effectively find the measure of this field of the Other as 1, namely, something different to its pure and simple inscription as unary trait.

$$\begin{array}{ll} o^3 & o^2 \\ o^5 & o^4 \\ o^7 & o^6 \\ \hline o^2 + & o \end{array}$$

$$1$$

I only obtained this result by taking in isolation the proportional foundation of o. But if I take its development in the sense of growth, you easily see that by simply adding these already growing powers, if I were to tell you what this gives, at the moment that we can add the 1/o to some power until there has emerged o^{100}. It is very easy to make a calculation, if you have a page, and this takes no more than ten minutes, not about

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what $1/o^{100}$ is but the addition of the whole series. There are very well known and very easy formulae one can see that it is 2,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.

I mean that in effect, in a sense, we find what? Nothing more wonderful than a series including a growth that is called infinite of whole numbers, but that is all the same in the final analysis of the order of what is called numerable. A series constituted in this way, which is called a geometrical progression, in other words described as exponential, remains numerable.

When I pointed out to you that it is only in a scripturist way that the point where the 1 and the o lies is important for us, this is not to neglect its incidence now and to say that it is starting from some points that we see a difference. The decreasing infinity is the same in its generation. Only it culminates, instead of culminating at infinity since all the same we know a little bit more about infinity and we have learned to reduce this infinity of whole numbers to its proper and distinct value. Only on the other hand, as I showed you here, by beginning from there, because this has its interest, you will have a limit, a limit that the series can approach as closely as possible, in a way less than any size that is chosen, however small it may be, namely, very precisely $1 + o$.

The starting point of Pascal who in his notes writes simply *infinity-nothing* is in effect exactly the point where there lies at once his sureness (104) of touch and the really functional point from which everything that follows is determined. Because what he calls *nothing*, as moreover he indicates in the most explicit fashion in other notations of his, is simply that starting from a point, besides I told you any one whatsoever, we obtain in one direction, the decreasing direction, a limit. But it is not because it has a limit that it is less infinite. On the other hand what we obtain on the other side, namely, a growth that, for its part, has no limit, this does not specify this direction as more specifically infinite.
Moreover, when Pascal writes *nothing*, it is not by chance; he himself suspects, that nothing is not nothing, that it is something that can be put on

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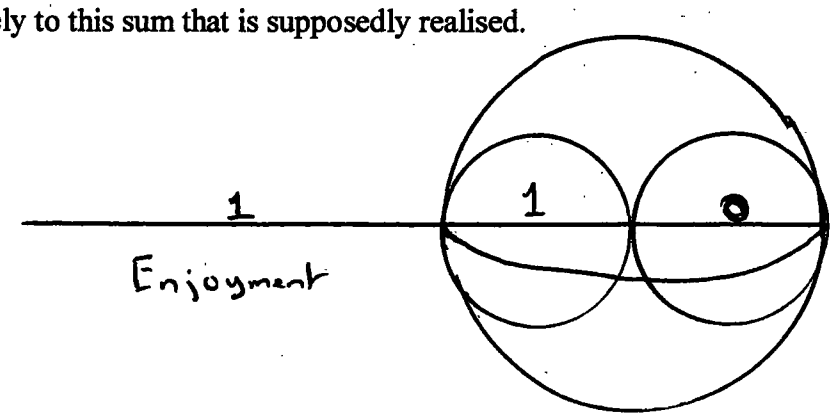
the scales, and very especially at the level that we have to put it in the wager.

But here does there not appear something, something that must be seen, that in the final analysis, if in the field of the Other there is stated a revelation that promises us, I repeat, an infinity of infinitely happy lives, I am sticking to their numerical statement. And for a while Pascal sticks to it also. Because he begins to ponder, one life against two lives, is that worth the trouble? But yes, but yes, he says; against three lives, still more; and naturally the more of them there are the more worthwhile it is!

Only we see this important thing, which is that in all the cases that we choose even when it is *nothing* that we lose we are deprived of a semi-infinite. This corresponds to the field of the Other and in the way that we can precisely measure it as 1 by means of the loss. As regards the genesis of this Other, if it is true that we can distinguish it from the 1 before the 1, namely enjoyment, you see that by having affirmed the 1 + o, by having done the addition of it with infinite care, it is indeed about o in its relation to 1, namely, about this lack that we have received from the Other as compared to what we can build up as the complete field of the Other, it is from there, from the o, and in an analogical fashion that we can hope to take the measure of what is involved in the 1 of enjoyment with respect precisely to this sum that is supposedly realised.



(105) We know that; we find that again, we analysts. The most characteristic, the most subtle form that we have given of the function cause of desire, is what is called masochistic enjoyment. It is an analogical enjoyment, namely, that at the level of the *surplus enjoying*, the

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subject takes on in a qualified fashion this position of loss, of waste product that is represented by **o**. And his whole effort is to constitute the Other as the field simply articulated in the style of this law, of this contract which our friend Deleuze has so happily emphasised to supply for the trembling imbecility that reigns in the field of psychoanalysis!

It is in an analogical way and by playing on proportion that there steals away what is approached about enjoyment along the path of *surplus enjoying*. It is through this point, at least that by tackling things along the starting path that we have taken, we see here that we have a way in that experience justifies. The question no doubt is not without interest as regards the way a certain renunciation functions in Pascal. But do not go too quickly. To treat those who have struggled with this logic without knowing it as universally masochistic, this is the order of short circuiting where there is designated what I called in this field blackguardism that turns into stupidity.

Today I was only able to lead you to the following approach: the proportion already inscribed in the simple entry into a field along the simple scripturist path. We have of course to verify it from other angles. If this **o**, I have said - and this is even, I underline, the image, the illustration and nothing more - is what conditions the distinction of the "I" as sustaining this field of the Other and being able to totalise itself as a field of knowledge, what has to be known, precisely, is that by being thus totalised, it will never reach the field of sufficiency that is articulated in the Hegelian theme of *Selbstbewusstsein*. Because precisely in this measure and in the very measure of its perfection the "I" of enjoyment remains completely excluded. What is important for us, is to confirm that not alone would no addition of one to the other not add up in the form of any figure whatsoever, of an added 2, this divided "I" finally connects up with itself. What is most piquant at this point, is to notice, as I will show you the next time, because this field, as you see, far from being interminable is simply long and I need time to articulate it for you, anyone between now and then, and I must say that I hope that there are a good

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number who will not need to do it, informs himself about what the Fibonacci series means will obviously be better prepared than the others for what I do for the others. That is, explain to them, namely, and it is very important, that a series constituted by the simple addition of 1 to 1, then of this last 1 to what precedes it to constitute the third term, in other words 2, then 1 + 1 = 2, 1 + 2 = 3, then 2 + 3 = 5 etc. 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13 etc. You can note in passing that these numbers are already inscribed and (106) that it is not without reason, only the relation of each of these numbers to the other is all the same not the o relationship.

I will start the next time from this fact that in the measure that they grow, namely, for any Fibonacci series – all the Fibonacci series are homologous – you can start from any number whatsoever and make it grow by any number whatsoever, if you simply observe the law of addition, it is a Fibonacci series and it is the same one. And whatever it may be, if you make it grow, you will obtain between these numbers these proportions that are already inscribed, namely, the relationship of 1 to o. And you will notice that it is from o as it was in relationship to 1 that the number leaped from one term to the other. In other words, whether you start from the division of the subject or whether you start from o, you will notice that they are reciprocal.

I wanted to leave you here, on this approach that I am calling that of pure logical consistency. This will allow us to situate better what is involved in a certain number of human activities. That the mystics should have attempted along their path this relationship of enjoyment to the 1, is not a field that I will be tackling here for the first time. Because already in the first years, the obscure times of my seminar, I put forward for you then, for those who were there, three or four, Angelus Silesius. Angelus Silesius is a contemporary of Pascal. Try to explain what his verse means without having his distichs. *Le Pélerin Chérubinique*, I recommend it to you; you can buy it at Aubier, it is not out of print!

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What is involved in it, certainly, does not directly concern our path. But if you want to see the place that the *I*, the *Ich* holds in it, you will see that it refers back to the question that is here our real goal and that I am repeating at the end today, do I exist *(est-ce que j'existe)*? You see how an apostrophe, is enough to falsify everything. If I say, I exist, that's it, you believe it, you think that I am talking about me, simply because of an apostrophe. Does it exist, speaking this time about the "I". But this it, ugh! Third person, we have said that it was an object. There we are making an object of the "I". Simply by omitting the third person, that can be used also to say *it is raining*. You do not talk about a third person, you do not say "he is raining", it is not your pal that is raining. It is raining. It is in this sense that I am using *it exists*. Is there something of the "I" (*du "Je"*) that exists?

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Seminar 9: Wednesday 29 January 1969

(107) I left you the last time rather firmly advanced into the field of Pascal's wager at the point punctuated by what I have just written on the board. Namely, on the remark about the essential identity of the series that I told you we place at a starting point situated between **o** and 1 in a completely arbitrary way. Arbitrary takes on its sense with the same accent that de Saussure gives this word when he talks about the arbitrary character of the signifier. I mean that at the point that we have placed the cut between a series decreasing to infinity and an increasing series, in the same way we have no reason to situate this point except from writing. Namely, that here the 1 has no other function than that of the trait, of the unary trait, of a stroke, of a mark. Only, however arbitrary it may be, it nevertheless remains that without this 1, this unary trait, there would be no series at all. This is the sense that must be given in de Saussure – an author who is no doubt super-competent declares that I betray him at my pleasure – that without this arbitrariness, language would not have, properly speaking, any effect.

So then, this series is constructed on the fact that each of its terms is produced by the addition of the two terms that precede this term. This is the same as saying that in the other direction, each is made up of the subtraction of the smaller of the two that follow it from the greater. It is constructed on the principle that the relationship of one of these terms to the following is equal to the relationship of the following one as it is produced by being added to it, which seems to add a second condition to it. To posit that the **o**, the term I have just spoken about, is equal to the following 1, in its relationship to what again is going to follow it, namely, to the addition of this 1 to **o**, seems to specify this series by a double

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condition. Now, this is precisely what is erroneous as can be seen by the fact that if you posit as a law of a series that each of its terms should be formed from the addition – no doubt the function of addition here deserves to be specified in a more rigorous fashion but since it is not a matter here, in this connection, of me having to go into extensive considerations about what is involved in set theory, we will stick to the operation commonly known under this term and which is already, moreover, given at the source of what we have posited, at the source of this series, I mean the first one.

Here then is the series 1, 1. It is enough to establish it to write that in this (108) series U_o will be equal to 1, that U_1 will be equal to 1 and subsequently that any U_n will be the sum of U_{n-1} and of U_{n-2}. This series is called the Fibonacci series and you see that it is subject to a unique condition. What is going to be produced in this series demonstrates that it is essentially the same as the series first posited. Namely, that if you operate between them by any defined operation whatsoever, if you add for example term to term, if you multiply term to term, also for example, you can also take other operations, there will result another Fibonacci series. Namely, that you confirm for yourself that the law of its formation is exactly the same, namely, that it is enough to add two of its terms to get the following.

What becomes then of this marvellous proportion, this **o** that seems, in the series that I started with, that you can decorate as you know with the function of the golden number that, in effect, appears there, from the beginning under the form of this **o**, manifested here by the fundamental position of **o**: **o** = 1/1+**o**. This little **o** is not missing in any Fibonacci series, for the following reason. If you make the relationship of each of its terms to the following term, namely, 1/1 first of all, that I did not write because 1/1 means nothing, then ½, then 2/3, 3/5, 5/8, you will obtain a result that very rapidly tends to inscribe the first two decimals, then the three, then the four, then the five, then the six, of the number that corresponds to this small **o**. And it does not matter that it is written as

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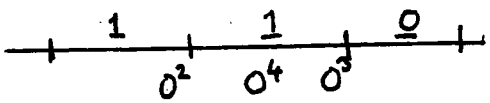
On the Board

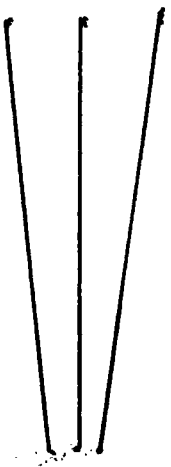
1 1 2 3 5 8

$\underline{0}$



$1-0 = 0^2$ 1/2
$20-1 = 0^3$ 2/3
$2-30 = 0^4$ 3/5
$50-3 = 0^5$ 5/8
$5-80 = 0^6$ 8/13
$130-8 = 0^7$ 13/21
$13-210 = 0^8$ " "
" "

$1+0 = \frac{1}{0}$



Enjoyment $1+0$

surplus ~~enjoyment~~ 1

$\underline{0}$

$$0 = \frac{1}{1+0}$$

False { enjoyment - subject
subject - divided subject

$S(\overline{S})$

$\underline{0} = 0.618$

$S(\frac{S}{\Delta} \rightarrow S')$

1 (2)

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0.618 and what follows, something that is very easy to verify. We already knew that o was less than unity and that the important thing is that we see that this o very quickly, once you get away from the starting point of the Fibonacci series, is going to be inscribed as a relationship of one of its terms to the following term. This to demonstrate that there is not in the choice of o, that we have precisely because it is placed before the problem of the represented command, which is lost in the position, in the fact of posing the inaugural 1 as reduced to its function of mark, this choice of o for its part, has nothing arbitrary because it is in the same way as the loss that we are aiming at, that which, at the horizon, at the goal of our discourse, constitutes *surplus enjoying*. Like this loss, the o, the limiting relationship of a term of a Fibonnaci series to the one that follows it, like this loss the o is only an effect of the position of the unary trait.

Besides, if something is necessary to confirm this for you, it is enough for you to look at the decreasing series as I have written it, or rather rewritten it, because I already wrote it the last time on the left. It is enough for you to see how it is constructed. The series of numbers that constitute the Fibonnaci series appears there in an alternating fashion, namely, that there is here an o, 3o, 5o, 8o and that as regards whole numbers, they also alternate 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13.....it is in an alternating fashion that what is written as whole number is at the right and then on the left and so on.

(110) In the same way as regards what is involved for the number that is affected to o; but as you see, the o has always here an advance on the whole number. It is 1, here, while the whole number will only be 1 at the following term and so on. That is why it changes places because, for a positive result to be maintained, and what is involved in this series, so that each of its terms should be written in a positive fashion, it is necessary that there should pass alternately from one side to the other what is numbered as a whole number and what is numbered as o. Now, as you see, since o is less than 1 and because we know on the other hand, because of the position of this first equality that it is going to be expressed by a growing power of o, the result of this difference is going to become

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smaller and smaller with respect to something that it constitutes as a limit. This is what is called a converging series and converging towards what? Towards something that is not 1 but, as I showed you the last time by the image of the folding back of this o onto the 1, then of the remainder which was o^2 onto the o, which produces here o^3, the o^3 being folded back, which produces here o^4, the whole arriving here at a cut that produces $o/o^2 = o + o^2 = 1$.

It is because of this that the limit of the converging series inscribed here is placed at the level of 1 + o, itself equal to 1/o. What does that mean? What is represented, properly speaking, by what is functioning here? The question of how it is possible to correctly represent what is involved in a possible conjunction of the division of the subject in so far as it would result from a rediscovery of the subject. Here, a question mark as regards this subject. What is involved in the absolute subject of enjoyment and the subject that is generated from this 1 that marks it, namely, the point of origin of identification. There is a great temptation to put forward the writing of the Hegelian *Selbstbewusstsein*, namely, that the subject being posited by this inaugural 1, has only to connect up with its own figure *qua* formalised. The subject of knowledge is posited as knowing itself. Now, it is precisely here that the fault appears, if it is not seen that this can only be effective by positing the known subject, as we do, in the relationship of the signifier to another signifier. This shows us that here it is the relationship not of 1 to 1 but of 1 to 2 that is at stake, and that therefore, at no moment is the original division abolished.

It is only at the horizon of an infinite repetition that we can envisage the relationship, here simply imitated, as something that corresponds to this relationship of 1 to 1, the subject of enjoyment as compared to the subject established in the mark whose difference remains irremediable since, however far you push the operation that this reduction generates, you will always find between one term and the other and inscribed as the result of the loss, the relationship that you start from, even if it is not inscribed in the original inscription, namely, the o relationship. This is all the more

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significant because it is a matter precisely of a relationship and not a simple difference that, in a way, will become more and more negligible with regard to the pursuit of your operation. So that if, as it is easy to (111) verify, you take this operation in the sense of the increasing series here, the difference between the whole numbers, namely, between what is inscribed in 1, the foundation of the original subjective identification and the number of o will always continue to increase because here, in the direction of the addition, it is always from the relationship of a number of o that corresponds to the smallest term to a number of whole numbers that correspond to the greatest term that is at stake. Namely, with respect as I might say to an extension of the whole numbers of the subject, taken at a mass level, there will always be a greater lack of o units. There will perhaps not be o for everyone. Take this, I am passing on, I will come back to it perhaps in an apologue question. What is important for us undoubtedly, what is going to count in our plumbing of Pascal's wager is what becomes of it in the sense that, in a no less infinite fashion, the o can be approached. That once more there appears to us what gives in an analogical form what is involved in the relationships of 1 to 1+ o. Namely, this o in which alone there can be grasped what is involved in enjoyment as compared to what is created from the appearance of a loss.

Let it be enough for me to add here this trait or more exactly to this highlighting of the distance between what is involved in the Hegelian solution of *Selbstbewusstsein* from the one that a rigorous examination of the function of the sign gives us every time that there reappears in any way whatsoever that it is in a relationship of 1 to 1 that the solution can be found. I am writing it here in a humorous fashion, make no mistake. Ask yourselves what is involved. What tends to give this image as representing an ideal that one day could be closed by an absolute knowledge? Is it indeed like the H that I have just translated humorously, is it indeed man, *homo*? Or why not the hysteric, because let us not forget that it is at the level of neurotic identification – re-read the text and preferably in German, in order not to be obliged to have recourse to these painful publications that the attention of some zealous people ensures are

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the only thing that we have recourse to when we only want to use French. Crappy editions, there is not even a table of contents. Anyway you will see – if you refer to the appropriate article, *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego*, in the chapter on identification, that it is, of the three types of identification stated by Freud, in the middle one that he inserts properly speaking into the field of neurosis, that there appears, that there arises the question of the *einziger Zug*, this unary trait that I extracted from it. If I recall it here, it is in order to indicate that in the continuation of my discourse I will have to come back to it. Because very curiously, it is in neurosis from which effectively we started, that there appears the most ungraspable form, contrary to what you may imagine - and it is in order to allow you to ward it off that I am announcing it here - the most ungraspable form of the o-object.

(112) Let us come back now to Pascal's wager and to what can be inscribed about it. The fastidiousness of philosophers seems in effect to make us lose the greater part of its meaning. It is nevertheless not because every effort has not been made for that including inscribing the data within a matrix in accordance with the forms in which there are today inscribed the results that are described as those of games' theory. In this form it is put, as I might say, in question. You are going to see how, strangely, people claim to refute it.

Here in effect is what is involved. Let us clearly observe that the wager is consistent from the following position, we cannot know either whether God is or what He is. The division then of the cases that result from a wager engaged on what? On a discourse that is attached to it, namely, a promise imputed to it, that of an infinity of infinitely happy lives thanks to the fact that I speak and I do not write. Here, even though I speak in French, you cannot know any more, I point out to you, than on the little bit of paper by Pascal which is in shorthand whether this infinity of lives is in the singular or in the plural. Nevertheless, it is clear, in everything that follows in Pascal's discourse that we ought to take it in the sense of a plural multiplication, since moreover he begins to argue that it would be

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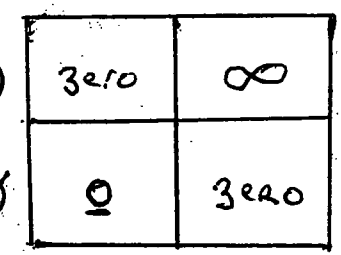
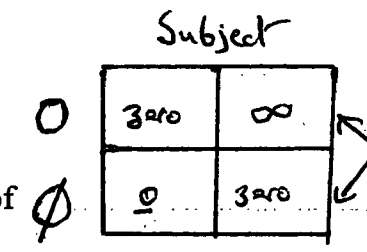
worthwhile to bet simply in order to have a second life, indeed a third and so on. What is at stake then is indeed a numerical infinity.

Here then is what is engaged, something, as has been said that we have at our disposition for the game, namely, a bet. Let us picture this bet. It is legitimate from the moment that we ourselves have been able to advance in order to grasp what indeed is at stake in the question, namely, this enigmatic surplus that makes us all be in the field of any discourse whatsoever, namely, the o. It is the stake; what we are going to have to justify is why we write it here in this little box. It is the stake and on the other hand, the infinity of infinitely happy lives. What are we dealing with? Ought we to imagine it as this support for the burgeoning of whole numbers, for the burgeoning that is always moreover behind the o-objects by a term. It is a question that is worthwhile evoking here if, as you see, it did not already involve some difficulties. But undoubtedly what was involved was the increasing series.



The infinity at stake is the one that Pascal illustrates by representing it by a sign analogous to the one here, the infinity of whole numbers, since it is only in relation to it that the starting element becomes ineffective, I mean neutral. It is under this heading that it becomes zero because it is (113) identified to the addition of zero to infinity, the result of the addition only being able to be represented by the sign that designates one of the two terms. Here then is how things are imaged and if I made this matrix it is not because it appears adequate to me but because it is the ordinary one that people use. Namely, that people remark that according to whether there exists or not what we image here in a legitimate fashion by o, since it is the field of a discourse depending on whether this o is to be admitted or to be rejected. You are going to see there being represented in each of these boxes which here have no more importance than the matrices by which a combinatorial is pinpointed in games' theory.



If this o is to be immediately retained, we have zero as the equivalent of this o, which represents nothing other than a risky stake that in games'

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theory must be considered as lost. If we want to articulate in a wager what is involved in Pascal's wager it is not at all a sacrifice. It is the very law of the game that there must be a zero possible, if the promise - just as there is not acceptable anything that is situated beyond death - is no longer tenable, and we ourselves, we have here a zero, but this means nothing, except that here also the bet on the other side is lost.

In fact, in Pascal's wager the stake is identical to the promise. It is because this promise is stated that we can construct this matrix and once it is constructed it is absolutely clear that the asymmetry of the stakes requires that effectively, if the conduct of the subject is only defined by what is determined from a signifying pinpointing, there is no question. The difficulty only begins when we see that the subject is not at all something that we can frame, any more than, earlier, from the relationship of 1 to 1, from the conjunction of any number of signifiers, but from the falling effect that results from this conjunction. And that gives to our **o** here written in the lower left hand box a liaison that is in no way separable from the construction of the matrix itself. It is very precisely what is at stake in the progress that is generated from psychoanalysis. It is this liaison that must be studied in its consequences that precisely creates the divided subject, namely, not linked to the simple establishment of this matrix. Because henceforth it appears obviously quite clear that the zeros in the matrix are themselves only a fiction because of the fact that you can lay out a matrix, in other words, write it. Because the zero written at the bottom is the starting zero, well marked by Peano's axiomatisation as (114) necessary for infinity to be produced from the series of natural numbers. Without infinity, there is no zero to be taken into account because the zero was there essentially to produce it.

It is also indeed from such a fiction as I reminded you earlier, that the **o** is reduced to zero when Pascal makes his argument. Besides, all you are doing is losing zero given that the pleasures of life, this is how he expresses himself, do not amount to much and especially with respect to the infinity that is opened out to you. This is very precisely to use a

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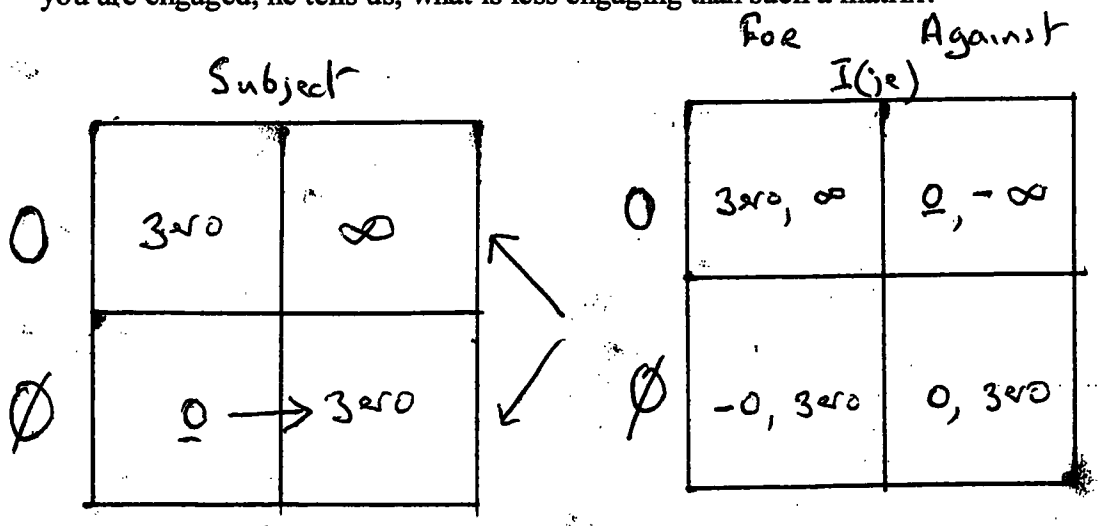
mathematical liaison, the one that states in effect that no unit, whatever it may be, added to infinity will do anything more than leave intact the sign of infinity. Except that, nevertheless, as I showed you on several occasions that we can absolutely not say that we do not know whether infinity, as Pascal argues to make it opaque in a way homologous to the Divine Being, that we cannot rigorously say, that it is ruled out that you can say that the addition of a unit will not ensure that we cannot say whether it is odd or even. Since, as you have seen in the decreasing series, all the even operations will be piled up on one another and all the odd operations on the other, to totalise the infinite sum which nevertheless remains reducible to a 1 of a certain type, the 1 that enters into connection with the o.

You sense here that I am only indicating in passing all sorts of points illuminated by the progress of mathematical theory that in a way, make the veil move. What is under this veil is very precisely what is really involved in the articulation of this discourse whatever it may be, including that of the aforesaid promise. The fact is that in neglecting what it hides, namely, its falling effect at the level of enjoyment you fail to recognise the true nature of the o-object. Now, what our practice, which is a practice of discourse and nothing else, shows us, is that it is necessary to divide up differently what is involved in the stake if we want to give it its true sense. Pascal himself indicates to us, this is what confuses it in minds, it must be (115) said, that seem to be singularly little prepared by a professorial function to master what is at stake, when what is at stake is a discourse, you are engaged, he tells us, what is less engaging than such a matrix?



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You are engaged, what does that mean if not to play on words, it is the moment of the entry of the "I" into the question. What is engaged is the "I". If there is a possibility in the game of engaging anything whatsoever to be lost, it is because the loss is already there, this indeed is why you cannot cancel the game. Now what we learn from psychoanalysis, is that there are effects that are masked by the pure and simple reduction of the "I" to what is stated. And how can we, for even an instant, when it is a matter of a game imaged by Pascal's pen, neglect the function of grace, namely, that of the desire of the Other. You must not believe that it may also have come into Pascal's mind that even to understand his so ridiculously imaged wager grace was necessary. As I told you, in every naive imaging of the relationship of the subject to demand, there is in short a latent "Thy will be done". This indeed is what is put in question when this will, which is precisely not ours, is lacking. In other words, let us not delay any longer and let us pass on to this God who is indeed the one, the only possible one in question, from Pascal's pen. The fact of giving him the same letters will change nothing about the difference, we are already going to see it being sufficiently articulated in the distribution on the table by which we are indeed going to see that this distribution is no different from itself.

Let us say things crudely: God exists. For the subject supposed to know it, we will then write the couple zero$_{\infty}$, in one of the squares of the matrix. I am supposed to know it but something has to be added, that I am for it. And if I am against it, all the while supposing the knowledge that God exists, in that case the choice is between the **0**, and this indeed is what is involved throughout the whole thread of the thinking that Pascal states, I deliberately lose the infinity of infinitely happy lives.

And then, I am supposed to know that God does not exist, well then, why not think that I can all the same engage the **0**, lose it, quite simply. It is all the more possible because it is its nature to be a loss. Because to measure what is involved in a game where here I keep it at a certain price, the price of less than the infinite, it can be legitimate to ask if it is worth the trouble,

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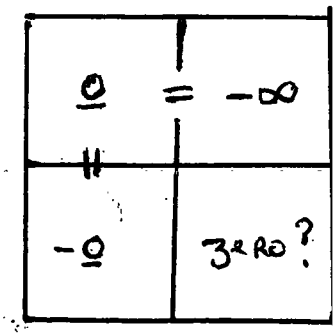
to give oneself so much difficulty to keep it. If there are some people who keep it at the cost of the loss minus infinity you must picture to yourselves that there were many people who threw out the o without having any concern about the immortality of the soul. These in general are what are called wise men, the granddads, not simply fathers, granddads. This has a lot to do with the father as you are going to see.

Here, you have those on the contrary who keep the o and let nothing (116) disturb their sleep. As regards the next zero, what is striking in this distribution, is the consistency that comes from the subject supposed to know but is it not a consistency made up however little of indifference.

He is, I am wagering for, but I do not know very well what He is. He is not, naturally I wager against, but it is not a wager, all of this has nothing to do with a wager. On the diagonal, you have people who are so certain that there is no wager at all, they go with the wind of what they know, but what does to know mean in these conditions? It means so little that even those who know nothing can form a unique box of it. Namely, that whatever it may be – and you will allow me to remark in passing that I am not extrapolating at all on what is in this respect Freud's tradition, namely, that I am not going beyond my borders – if you consult the volume that I recalled earlier, you will see that all the time Freud makes this calm remark that when all is said and done, everything involved in the belief of a Christian does not lead him to change his behaviour all that much as compared to those who are not so. It is in the position, as I might say, of a purified subject that what happens on the left-hand diagonal can be organised in the little matrix on top. But what is important, what undoubtedly shows us something unexpected is the one who wagers against, on the foundation of what he knows to be and the one who wagers for, just as if what he knows very well not to be, was.



You must think that here this becomes very interesting, namely, that this minus infinity that you see appearing in the top right hand box, this is expressed in the little writings of Pascal by the name of hell. Only this

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presupposes that there should be examined why the function of the **o** culminated in this most questionable idea that there is a beyond of death. No doubt because of its indefinite, mathematical slippage, in any kind of signifying chain wherever you pursue the final circumscribing, it always subsists intact as I already articulated at the beginning of the year in a certain schema of the relationships of S and O. But then this may induce us to ask ourselves what is meant by the emergence under the form of minus infinity of something on this table. Is this minus not to be expressed in a way more homologous to its arithmetical function, namely, that when it appears, the series of whole numbers is duplicated which means is divided. There is here the sign of this something that appeared to me the only thing worth recalling at the end of my last discourse. It is that by taking as an **o**-object and not otherwise what is brought into play (117) in the renunciation proposed by Pascal there is just as much infinity where there is a limit as where it does not encounter this operation of **o**. In any case, it is a half infinity that we engage with which singularly balances out the chances in the first matrix.

Only it may well be that we should remember differently what is represented in this myth which, even though it forms part of dogma does nothing, as Pascal reminds us, but bear witness that the mercy of God is greater than his justice since he plucks out some chosen ones, while they ought all to be in hell. This proposition may appear scandalous. I am astonished at it since it is quite clear and manifest that we have never been able to imagine this hell beyond what happens to us every day. I mean that we are already in it, that this necessity that surrounds us of not being able, except at a horizon whose limits need to be questioned, to realise the solid **o**, except by an indefinite repeated measure of what is involved in the cut of **o**. Is this not enough, just by itself, to make the most courageous lose heart? Only there you are. There is no choice. Our desire is the desire of the Other, and depending on whether grace has been lacking to us or not, what is played out at the level of the Other, namely, of everything that has preceded us in this discourse that has determined

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our very conception, we are determined or not to the course of stopping up the o-object.

So then there remains the fourth box, the lower one. It is not for nothing that I allowed myself today to smile about them. They are just as numerous, just as divided up as those who are in the field of the top right. I call them, provisionally, the granddads. You would be wrong nevertheless to minimise the with which they get around, but all the same what I would like to point to you is that, in any case, it is here that we in analysis, have placed the proper norm. *Surplus enjoying* is explicitly modulated as foreign to the question. If the question at stake in what analysis promises us as a return to the norm, how can we not see that this norm is well and truly articulated there as the law, the law on which the Oedipus complex is grounded. And it is quite clear that whatever end one takes this myth from that enjoyment is absolutely distinguished from the law. To enjoy the mother is forbidden, we are told, and this does not go far enough. What has consequences is the fact that to enjoy the mother is forbidden. Nothing is organised except from this first statement. This can be clearly seen in the fable in which the subject, Oedipus, never thought – God knows because of what distraction, I mean because of everything that was developed around him in terms of charm and probably also of harassment by Jocasta – the idea never came to him, even when proofs were flooding in. What is forbidden is to enjoy the mother and this is confirmed in the formulation in another form. It is indispensable to bring all of them together in order to grasp what Freud is articulating, that of *Totem and Taboo*. The murder of the father blinds all these imbecilic young bulls that I see circling around me from time to time in ridiculous arenas. The murder of the father means precisely that you cannot kill him. He has been dead for all time. It is indeed for this reason that something sensible is attached, even in places where it is paradoxical to see there being belled: God is dead. It is because obviously, by not thinking about it, you run the risk of missing one aspect of things.

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At the start the father is dead. Only there you are. There remains the Name of the Father and everything turns around that. If that was the way I began the last time it is also with that that I am ending. The virtue of the Name of the Father, is not something I am inventing, I mean that it is not something I made up; it is written in Freud. The difference, he says somewhere, between the field of man and that let us say of animality, consists, wherever it may be, even when this only happens in a masked form, namely, when it is said that there are some people who have no idea of what is the role of the male in generation, why not? What it demonstrates, I mean the importance of this function of the Name of the Father, is that even the very people who have no idea of it invent spirits to fill it. In a word, what is characteristic is that Freud in a very precise place articulates it – I am not going to waste my time telling you on what page and what edition because now there are places where Freudian readings are done and there are all the same competent people to indicate it to those that are interested in it – the essence, in a word, and the function of the father as Name, as pivot of discourse, depends precisely on the fact that after all, you can never know who the father is. You can always look, it is a question of faith. With the progress of science, you manage to get to know in certain cases who he is not, but in any case he remains all the same an unknown. It is altogether certain that this introduction moreover of biological research into paternity cannot be without an impact on the function of the Name of the Father.

Therefore, it is here, at the point where it is precisely only by maintaining oneself in the symbolic, that there is the pivot around which turns a whole field of subjectivity. We have to take the other aspect of what is involved in the relationship to enjoyment and, in a word, to be able to advance, which is our object this year, a little further into what is involved in the transmission of the Name of the Father. Namely, what is involved in the transmission of castration. I will end today, as usual, at the point that one gets to one way or another and I will see you the next time.

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Seminar 10: Wednesday 5 February 1969

I am going to restart from where I left you the last time. I said a lot of things the last time, and in particular I succeeded in touching some people by the mathematical evidence that I believe I succeeded in giving of the genesis of what is involved in o, through the simple virtue of the One *qua* mark. This depends on this *factum*, this fabrication that results from the simplest use of this One in so far as it multiplies once it is repeated, since it is only posited in order to attempt the repetition of, to rediscover enjoyment in so far as it has already fled. The first One, by rediscovering what was not marked at the origin, already alters it, since at the origin it was not marked. It is already posited then by grounding a difference that it does not constitute as such but in so far as it produces it. This is this original point that makes of repetition the key of a process about which the question is posed, once it has been opened up, of whether or not it can find its term.

You see that we are immediately brought to the question that is only terminal when applied to a single career, that of Freud, in so far as subject on the one hand, he was also a man of action, let us say a man who inaugurated a path. How did he inaugurate it? This is something that is worthwhile recalling perhaps at a detour in what I will say to you today. But every man's career is committed to something that has death as its limit, and it is only from this point of view that we can find the term of the path traced by Freud in the question that he poses, of the end of analysis, terminable or interminable. This only marks the phase of the question that I am opening up in

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saying: is what is engaged for the subject by the fact of repetition as origin, itself a process that has its limit or not? This is what I left open, in abeyance, but nevertheless advanced, by showing on the board the last time in the clearest possible fashion what I was able to express as the division, the bi-partition of two infinities, marking that this is what is fundamentally in question in Pascal's wager. The infinity on which it is based is the infinity of number. Now, by taking this infinity, as I might say, by further accelerating by setting up the Fibonacci series, which it is easy to show is exponential, that the numbers that it generates grow not arithmetically but geometrically. This is the very thing that generates, and precisely in the measure that we are more distant from its origin, the proportion articulated in **o**. In the measure that these numbers grow, **o** intervenes there under its inverted form in a more circumscribed and constant fashion. This is all the more striking in that it ties the 1 to **o**, that it is 1/**o**, that this proportion of one number to another ends up in the more and more rigorous constant of this 1/**o**, in the measure that the numbers increase.

I also wrote, taking it at its origin, the series that results from taking things in the other sense. There, because of the fact that **o** is less than 1, you see the process ends up not simply in a proportion but in a limit. Whatever you add of what is produced, inversely, by proceeding through subtraction, in such a way that it is always true that, in this chain, by taking things in an ascending way, each term is the sum of the two preceding ones, you will find again the function of **o** in so far as this time it reaches a limit. That in whatever numbers you add these terms, you will not go beyond 1 + **o**, which seems to indicate that by taking things in this direction, what repetition generates has a term.

This is where there intervenes the well known table in which those, in short, who miss what is involved in Pascal's wager, write what is involved in terms of games' theory. Namely, in a matrix that is constructed from distinct boxes, formulate what is involved, if God exists, and write as zero what results from the observation of these commandments, confused here with the renunciation of something. Whether we call it pleasure or something else, it nevertheless remains that here, in appreciating it by a

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spontaneity whose astonishing aspect we will see, that they write what is left in this life for believers as zero. As a result of which a future life is marked by the term infinity, an infinity of lives promised to be infinitely happy. In other words, by supposing that God does not exist, the subject, which we write as **o**, is presumed to be still caught up in the game, make no mistake, literally to know the limited and moreover problematic happiness that is offered him in this life. It is not groundless to choose this if, since God does not exist, it seems clear that there is nothing to expect from the other life.

3ERO	∞
0	3ERO

What I am pointing out here is the fragile character of this sort of writing, inasmuch as by following games' theory, the conjunctures can only be determined from the intersection of the play of two adversaries. Namely, that the subject ought to be in this position, while the enigmatic Other, the one involved in short as to whether he holds the wager or not, ought to find himself in that place, God exists or does not exist.

O	3ERO	∞
Ø	0	3ERO

But God is not involved. In any case, nothing allows us to affirm it. It is from this fact that it paradoxically results that face to face with him, on the table, as I might say, there is not man but the subject defined by this wager. The stake is confused with the existence of the partner, and that is why the signs written on this table have to be reinterpreted. The choice is made at the level of God exists or God does not exist. The formulation of the wager starts from that. And starting from there, only from there, it is clear that if there is no reason to hesitate, namely, that what you may win by wagering that God exists is not comparable to what you can certainly win, even though this certainty can easily be questioned. Because what will you win? **o** is precisely not defined.

O	3ERO	∞
Ø	0	3ERO

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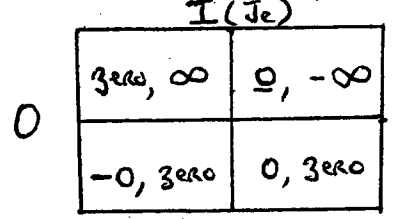
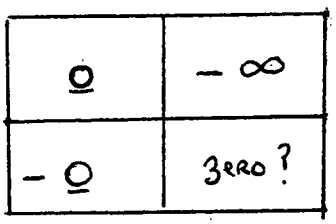
It is here that I open the question - not at the level of a formula that has nevertheless the interest of taking at its source the question of the intervention of the signifier, of what is involved in any act of choice whatsoever. This is where I pointed out the inadequacy of a table that is incomplete because it does not highlight that in taking things at the second stage, the one, perhaps, that restores the correct position of what the matrix involves as it is used in games' theory, is where there should be placed what I distinguish from the subject, the subject that is purely identical to the inscription of the stakes as well as the one that can envisage the case where even if God exists, he wagers against, namely, chooses o to his cost. Namely, knowing what this choice involves, that he positively loses the infinite, the infinity of happy lives that is offered him, so that there is reproduced in the two boxes that are marked here what first of all occupied the first matrix, there still remains this fourth to be filled. Namely, that it can be supposed that, even if God does not exist, the o as holding the (122) place that you see it occupying in the first box can be abandoned, this time in an explicit way. And because of this fact it appears in the negative, the subtraction of o with what we are writing here without any further commentary. And you see that even though it appears to be self-evident as zero, in effect it still constitutes a problem



In effect, let us now extract in order to isolate it simply in a new matrix something added on by our second composition, namely, o,-∞, - o, zero. To be honest, I explicitly mark what I have just indicated in passing in this very discourse, that this zero takes on the value of a question.



In effect, if the zeros were able to be thus posited in the first matrix, this is something that deserves to hold our attention, because what did I say earlier if not that in truth

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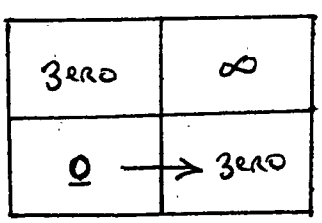
the only thing that counts in this position of the gambler, of the subject who alone exists, the only thing to be taken into account is the infinite and the finite o. What do these zeros designate if not that by putting some stake on the table, as Pascal underlined in introducing the theory of gaming, nothing correct can be stated about a game unless you start from this, unless by having a beginning and an end fixed in the rule. What is put on the table, what is called the bet, is lost from the start. The game only exists starting from the fact that it is on the table, as one might say, in a common mass. What the game is is implied and therefore from its constitution the game can here only produce zero. This zero only indicates that you are playing; without this zero, there is no game. Assuredly you could say the same thing about the other zero, namely, this one, that it represents the loss to which the other player resigns himself by bringing this infinity into play. But since precisely what is at stake is the existence of the other player, it is here, in the first matrix, that the zero *qua* sign of the loss becomes problematic.

(123) After all, since nothing forces us to precipitate any movement, because it is precisely in these precipitations that errors are produced, we can indeed abstain from justifying this zero in a way that is symmetrical to what is involved in the other. Because we have something that appears sufficiently in the discussion that the philosophers have had about Pascal's montage. Namely, that it appears in effect that the zero represents not the constitutive loss of the bet but, at least in the dialogue between Pascal and Méré which is not unimportant for the way Pascal writes and at the same time leads us astray – it is never, of course, without our collaboration – about the interest of the montage itself. Namely, that what dominates, is in effect that this zero can be the inscription of one of the choices that are offered which is not to sit down at this table. This is what is done by the person who, in this not simply ideal but effective dialogue, the one to whom there is addressed this schema of the wager. The zero does not mean the constitutive loss of the bet, but inscribes on the table the "no bet", namely, the one who does not sit down at the gaming table.



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It is starting from there that we have to question what is produced in the second matrix to see how, in it, there can be divided up what is involved in the game. In effect, I already indicated the last time the representations that can be given in the text of our practice. In truth, I was able to indicate it as rapidly as I did because already a certain graph of it had been constructed with what I recalled earlier at the beginning of my articulation. Namely, not the hypothesis, but what can be inscribed and hence the tangible. This means that o itself may well be only the effect of the entry of the life of man into the game. Pascal warns us about it in these terms no doubt not explicitly formulated, I mean in the very one that I am going to state: "You are engaged", he tells us, and it is true. It does not seem necessary to him, because he grounds himself on the word, on the word that for him of course is that of the Church. It is curious that he does not distinguish from it what – this is the blind point of centuries that were not for all that obscurantist – nevertheless provides him with a lot. It is assuredly because of the uneliminatable character of Holy Scripture throughout centuries of thought, that the most radical writing that, for us, appears in it in filigree is not really distinguished. But if I go looking for the weave of this writing in mathematical logic, this leaves my position homologous to his, except that, for us, we can no longer avoid (124) posing the question whether the stake itself is not as such essentially dependent on this function of writing. Let us observe yet another difference, the one that I put as an exergue in the first phase of my statements this year and which can be expressed, since it is not the exact formula, as simply: what I prefer, is a discourse without words, which means nothing other than this discourse that writing supports.

Here a little time to measure the import, the line, the absolutely solidary character of what I am stating at this point this year, with everything that I began to announce under the triad of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. Note carefully, and this is something that should be insisted on, the difference between philosophical discourse, whatever it may be, and what we are introduced to by this nothing other that is distinguished by starting from repetition.

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Philosophical discourse, whatever it may be, always ends up by detaching itself from what it nevertheless brandishes as a system in the material of language. The whole philosophical tradition comes up against the refutation by Kant of the ontological argument; in the name of what? Of the fact that the forms of pure reason, the transcendental analytic, fall under the influence of an imaginary suspicion, and this moreover is what constitutes the single objection, it is philosophical, to Pascal's wager. "*This God whose existence you may conceive to be necessary, says Kant, it nevertheless remains that you only conceive of him in the framework of a thinking that is only based on the prior suspense from which there comes the aesthetic*" qualified on this occasion as transcendental. This means nothing other than: you cannot state anything, state anything in words, except in the time and in the space whose existence, by philosophical convention, we put in suspense in so far as it is supposed to be radical.

Only there is a problem, and this is what gives Pascal's wager its interest. That is why I will permit myself, whatever people may think about having recourse to outworn ideas, to find in it an exemplary turning point. The fact is that in no case is the God of Pascal to be put in question on the imaginary plane because it is not the God of philosophers; it is not even the God of any knowledge. We do not know, writes Pascal, either what he is, of course, or even if he is. This indeed is why there is no way of leaving Him in abeyance by means of any philosophy, because it is not philosophy that grounds him.

Now what is at stake and what my discourse in particular means, when I take up again that of Freud, is very precisely that in grounding myself on what this discourse has opened up, it is essentially distinguished from philosophical discourse, in the fact that it is not detached from what we are caught up and engaged in, as Pascal says. But that, rather than making use of a discourse, when all is said and done, to fix its law to the world, its norms to history or inversely, it puts itself at this place where first of all (125) the thinking subject perceives that he can only recognise himself as an effect of language. In other words that before being thinking, to go quickly, to pinpoint in the

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shortest possible way what I am in the process of saying, once you set up the gaming table, and God knows if it has already been set up, he is first of all **o**. And it is afterwards that the question is posed of harmonising with it the fact that he thinks. But he did not need to think to be fixed as **o**. It is already done, contrary to what can be imagined, precisely because of the lamentable shirking, of the more and more striking futility of all philosophy, namely, that you can upset the gaming table. I can upset this one, of course, and blow up the tables at Vincennes and elsewhere, but that does not prevent the real table, the gaming table from being still there. It is not the university table that is at stake! The table around which the boss is reunited, whether with the pupils in a pretty little interior, when this interior is his own, nice and warm and grandfatherly, or the one in which it is framed in model nurseries!

This precisely is where the question is. That is why I allowed myself, in a scribbling that I do not know whether you will see appearing or not – it is not at all a scribbling, I spent a lot of time on it the day before yesterday – anyway I do not know whether you will see it appearing, because it will appear in only one place or it will not appear at all, and I am interested in whether it will appear or not appear! In short I went as far as this delusional exorbitance – because for some time I have been deluding in my own heart, these things always come out one day, in one form or another – I would like it to be noticed, this is my delusion or not, that it is no longer possible to play the role that is necessary for the transmission of knowledge if it does not involve the transmission of value, even though now this is inscribed in the registers of credits (*unité de valeur*), but to grasp what can be called a formation effect. This is why, in any case, whoever in the future, precisely because something has happened to this value of knowledge, wants to occupy a place that contributes in any way to this place of formation, even if it is mathematics, biochemistry or anything else whatsoever, would do well to be a psychoanalyst, if this is how there must be defined someone for whom there exists this question of the dependence of the subject with respect to the discourse that holds him, and not that he holds.

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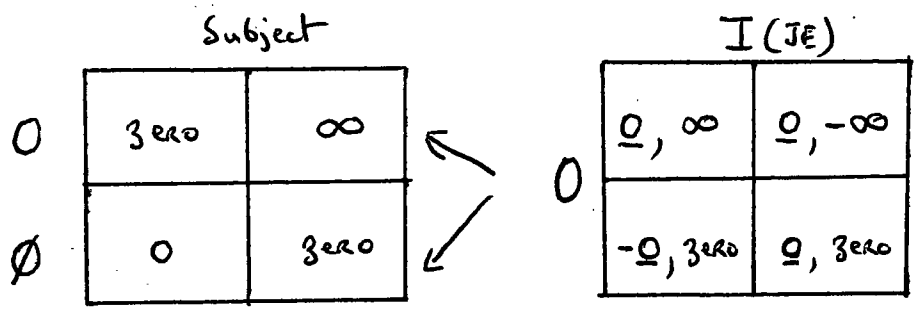
So then it is worth saying, since you see that I have just avoided something because of the fact that you are all products of the school, namely, of philosophical teaching. I know that I cannot tackle in too abrupt a fashion what is involved in terms of the change that is written in the second matrix, namely, pose the question of what is meant by the fact that here it is not **o** or zero because it has never been **o** or zero as I have just indicated it to you and as Pascal says. But since it is only ever philosophers that have read him, everyone has remained deaf. He said **o** is zero, which means that (126) **o** is the bet. It was nevertheless clearly specified in games' theory. No, that changed nothing, they remained deaf! And zero is zero with respect to infinity. Rubbish! What is changed by the fact that there is now not, as has been vainly said, in an imaginary fashion **o** or zero, but **o** or **-o**. And if **-o** effectively means what it seems to say, namely, that it is inverted, what can this thing be? And then also that in one case, whatever happens, even if it is at the cost of something that to be inscribed, appears to need to be costly, what again is this correlation, this equivalence that perhaps allows us to put elsewhere, to perceive that our connecting signs are upset. In any case here are two links that appear to me to be worth questioning. You see that they are not classified quite like the earlier ones.



Here, I regret not being further on than what I already, but too quickly, articulated in the last minutes of the last time. Namely, that I recalled that to start from the figure that is indicated here in Pascal's scribbling, the first link, this horizontal line from small **o** to **-∞**, we say, is hell. I shouted it out to people who were already making for the exit. But, on the whole, I pointed out to you that hell is something we know. It is everyday life. A curious thing, people know it, people say it, people say nothing but that. But it is limited to discourse and to some symptoms of course. Thank God,

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if there were no symptoms, it would not be noticed! If neurotic symptoms did not exist, there would not have been Freud! If the hysterics had not already opened up the question, there is no chance that even the truth would have show the tip of its ear!

So then here, we must make a short halt. Someone that I thank – because you should always thank people through whom presents arrive – reminded me for external reasons about the existence of the chapter of Bergler called "The underestimated superego", it is in the famous *Basic neurosis* that explains everything. You are not going to tell me that I explain everything. I explain nothing, precisely. This is even what interests you! I try at different levels, not simply here, to ensure that there are (127) psychoanalysts who are not imbeciles. My operation is an advertising operation, not to draw people into the hole of a school, but to try to give the equivalent of what psychoanalysts ought to have to people who have no means of getting it. It is a despairing enterprise. But experience proved that the other also, that of teaching it to psychoanalysts themselves, seems destined to fail, as I already wrote. Imbeciles, I mean as subjects, because as regards getting on in their practice, they are pretty smart! And it is precisely a consequence of what I am in the process of stating here. It is in conformity with the theory. This is what proves not alone that there is no need to be a philosopher but that it is much better not to be one. Only that has a consequence, which is that one understands nothing. Hence what I also spend my time stating, that it is much better not to understand. Only the problem is that they understand all kinds of little things, so it is swarming. For example "The underestimated superego" is a brilliant chapter, first of all because it collects together all the ways in which the superego has been articulated in Freud. Since he is not a philosopher, he absolutely does not see that they all hang together. Moreover he is charming, and he admits it. That is what is good about psychoanalysts, they admit everything! He admits that he has written to a gentleman, it is in a note, Mr H H Heart, who was making extracts from Freud. So then he wrote to him: "Send me some quotations about the superego". After all that can be done; it is moreover also in conformity with the theory; you can take things like that, with a pair of scissors, if writing is so important, everywhere there is superego, snip, snip, you cut it out! You

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make a list of fifteen quotations. And I must say that here I am being humorous. But he is reaching out to help me. Because of course Bergler has read Freud, anyway I like to imagine it! But all the same he admits that in order to write this chapter, he wrote to H H Heart to give him quotations about the superego. The result is that he can obviously clearly mark, exactly at the same level that all the existing psychoanalytic reviews are at, except mine, of course, the degree to which it is incoherent. It begins with the censor at the level of dreams; people believe that the censor is an innocent, as if it were nothing precisely to have the pair of scissors with which one subsequently constructs the theory. And after all, this becomes something that titillates you. And then afterwards it becomes a big bad wolf. And then after that, there is nothing more. And after that, Eros is evoked, Thanatos and the whole caboodle! Thanatos is going to have to find its place there. And then, I make arrangements with this superego; I bow and scrape to it. Ah! Dear little superego!

Good. Thanks to this presentation, of course, you get something it must be said that is rather laughable. You really have to be in our epoch for no one to laugh. No one laughs. Even a professor of philosophy. It must be said that they have got to a point, (128) in our generation! Even a professor of philosophy can read this stuff without laughing. They have been checkmated! There was all the same a time when there were people who were not especially intelligent, a chap called Charles Blondel, who shouted and roared about Freud. At least it was something. Nowadays even the people least in a position to imagine what is involved in a psychoanalysis read these absolutely astounding things without complaint. No. Everything is possible, everything is accepted. We are – moreover things are showing their lineaments elsewhere than in the real before descending into it – really in a regime of intellectual segregation.

Well then, this chap has noticed a whole lot of things. When something is there, under his nose, he understands it. And I would say that this is what is sad because he understands it at the level of his nose, which cannot of course be absolutely like that; it is necessarily pointy. But he sees a tiny little thing. He notices that what is

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explained to him, like that, in the quotations from Freud, as being the superego, he notices, that this ought to have a relationship with what he sees all the time. So then he begins by noticing, but like that in an intuitive way, at the level of sensation, that what is called *Durcharbeitung, l'élaboration* as it is translated in French – people spend their time noticing that it is untranslatable. *Durcharbeitung*, is not *élaboration*, we can do nothing about it; since there is not in French a word to say "work through", drilling, it is translated as *élaboration*; everyone knows that in France, people elaborate; it is something like smoke.

Analytic elaboration is not at all like that. People on the couch see that it consists in coming back the whole time to the same thing. At every turn one is brought back to the same thing. And it is necessary for that to last in order to get precisely to what I have explained to you, to the limit, to the end, naturally when one is going in the right direction, when one encounters a limit. He says "That's an effect of the superego". Namely, he notices that this kind of big wicked thing that nevertheless is supposedly extracted from the Oedipus complex, or again from the devouring mother, or from anyone of these see-saws. He notices that this has a relationship with this exhausting, boring, necessary, especially repeated aspect by which one arrives at something that, in effect, sometimes, has an end. How does he not see that this has nothing in common with this kind of picture of a scenario where the superego is, as people say, an agency, which would be nothing, but where people make it live like a person. Because, people have not well understood what an agency is, we attach the idea to the superego.

All of this must happen not on the other stage, the one that Freud spoke about, the one that functions in dreams, but in a kind of little play, where what is called analytic (129) teaching makes you play with puppets. The superego is the police superintendent and he hits the Guignol, which is the ego, on the head. Why, by simply seeing this rapprochement that he senses so well from the clinical point of view, with elaboration, *Durcharbeitung*, does this not suggest to him that the superego may well be found in something that would not require, like that, the

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multiplication of agencies in the personality. And then at every instant he lets it slip, he admits it, namely, that people have clearly mapped out, he says, that this has a relation with the ego ideal. But it must be admitted that absolutely nothing is known about it; no one has yet put things together.

All the same, in order that these discourses should be something other than memoirs of the psychoanalyst, namely, evoking the case of a young woman who, in this connection, one sees clearly that it was a guilt feeling that made her come into psychoanalysis. Let us hope that it was the same thing that made her get out of it! You can perhaps all the same note that, for example, this kind of little manoeuvre of a measure that is precisely the measure of what cannot be measured because it is the starting bet. This can in effect in some cases be represented with the greatest precision and be written on the board. It is in the manner of a certain way of regularly balancing that one manages to fill up this something that can in certain cases be represented as the One. You can all the same see that there is some interest in articulating in a way that is really precise something that allows it to be conceived that it is not at all in effect an abuse of terms to bring together, even in the name of a minimal intuition like that, the *élaboration*, the *Durcharbeitung* in the treatment, with the superego.

So then you have to choose. You cannot tell us that the superego is the big bad wolf and rack your brain to see whether it is not in the identification that I have with some person that this severe superego is born. That is not how questions should be put. It is like the people who tell you that if so-and-so is religious, it is because his grandfather was. That is not enough for me, because even if you had a religious grandfather you may also perhaps see that it is stupidity, is that not so?

It is necessary all the same to distinguish the direction of identification as compared to other things. It is necessary to know whether identification in analysis is the goal or is the obstacle. But this might well perhaps be the means by which one engages people precisely no doubt to do it, but by the same fact, it is abolished. And it is in the fact

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that it is abolished precisely because one has done it that they can appear something else that we can call the hole on this occasion.

I am going to leave you there today. I tried at the end of this discourse, to show you that it is a discourse that is of direct importance to bring some fresh air into our (130) practice. By that I mean that by using what were certainly not experiments in smell, it was not by following his nose that Freud advanced, one can in effect see in it, in the development of a function through his thinking, the framework that allows its consistency to be given. But it is indispensable if one wants to advance with something other than little stories, to assemble this coherence and to give it consistency and solidity. This would perhaps allow there to be seen quite different facts than simply analogical facts.

What I am saying does not take anything away from the importance of detail, precisely as Bergler insists. But read this chapter to see that even something that is relevant, well oriented, but oriented like particles of iron filings when you tap into a field already magnetised, contains no kind of true motivation for the power and the importance of detail. And why in effect it is only the details, it is quite true, that interest us. Again it is necessary to see in every case what is interesting. Because if one does not know it, one brings together disparate details in the name of pure and simple resemblance, while this is not what is important. We will take it up the next time at the level of the third figure.

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(131) Very bored with everything that is happening, huh! You too I think. One cannot all the same not notice it, because I am in the process of asking myself whether I am here to do my usual thing or whether I am occupying the place! Anyway! Some benevolent ears were prepared to understand that some of the things that I put forward, specifically during my second last seminar, had some relationship with a science – who knows? With perhaps not a new science, but with a bringing up to date of what is involved for the conditions of science.

Today I sense, for all sorts of reasons, even if it is only because we are getting close to Mardi-Gras, so then it is appropriate, that I should gently change the direction of things. I sense it, like that, after balancing what I thought out this morning before seeing you. I am going to bend myself a little bit towards something that you can call whatever you want, but which is rather a moral note. How could one moreover escape it, in the aura, in the margin, in the limits of that through which I tackled something which is Pascal's wager. It is certain that we cannot fail to recognise this incidence, even though, of course, what inspired me to speak to you about it, is that Pascal's wager is at a certain joint, and this, all the same, I am going to recall,

But, like that, as a way of introducing things a little and of relaxing, however little, the atmosphere – I told you that we were getting close to Mardi-Gras – I am going to read you a letter that I received. I am

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not going to tell you who sent it to me, nor even from what town it came.

"*Dear Mr Lacan. We are students and we have read almost all of your Ecrits. We find a lot of things in it. Obviously it is not always easy to approach but this all the same deserves our congratulations.....*" I don't get those every day! "*We would really like to know how one sets about writing such difficult things...*" I am not sending anyone up, and certainly not these chaps that I find really...anyway I will tell you what I think about it; there must have been two of them to write that! "*...it would be useful to us in our examinations. We may well have a degree in philosophy, but it is getting more and more complicated to get through the selection. We think that it would be better to use trickery and astonish the teachers rather than persisting in a style of banal down-to-earth discourse*". And they add "*make no mistake. Could you point us to some little fiddles in this direction?*" That strikes (132) me, because all I am saying is that, fundamentally, that is what I am in the process of doing! "*On the other hand, we would like again to ask you something if it's not too daring: Do you think you could send us as a souvenir one of your lovely bow ties? We would really like that. Thanking you in advance, we say farewell, Mr Lacan, and please receive our most respectful homage.*" I am not going to leave that lying around because ...they are not really up to date. They do not know that I have been wearing a polo neck for some time!

For me, that gives an echo, confirmation, a resonance to something that moves me when I hear right minded people going on, like that, since the month of May: "Things are no long the way they were". I think that where we are at, it is more than ever like it was before. And after all, I am very far of course from limiting the phenomenon to this little report that this letter gives of what is a corner of the affair. Obviously there are many other things at stake.

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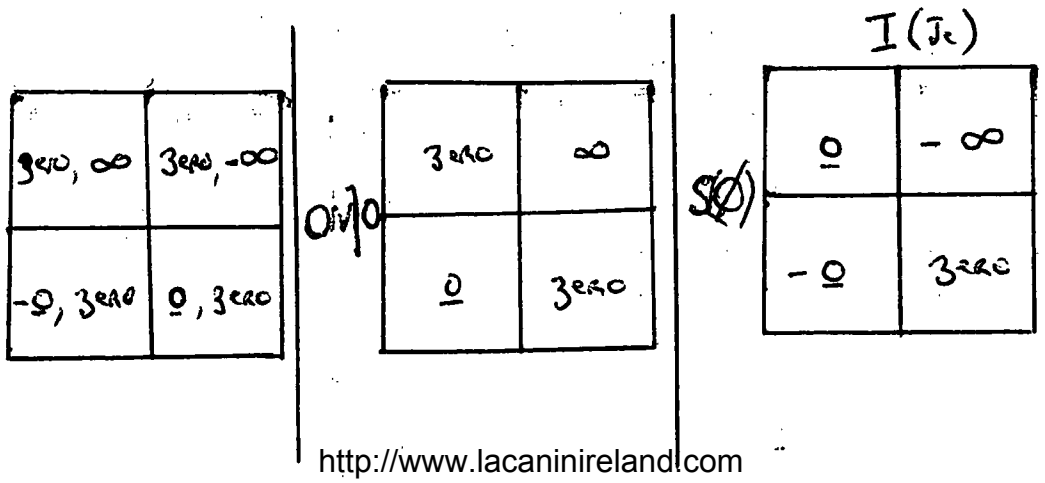
Only what is striking, is that from a certain point of view, this letter in my eyes may very well sum up the way people have listened to me, but in a zone that is not at all as distant from me as this town which is all the same a good distance away. As you see, they are not very up to date! But in any case, it is an aspect of the way that teaching is received. And then I do not see why one would blame them for the bow tie. Because there is someone who played a pivotal role in a certain examining board, like that, that a certain British Society sent us a long time ago, who put that down as a point that was quite worthy of putting in the scales with the rest of my teaching. I mean that that was how it was, this was on one pan and on the other, my bow tie. Namely, with the help of this accessory the identification of those who presented themselves at that time as my pupils was supposed to be possible. So then you see that this is not limited to the level of these little dears, nice naive people. They are perhaps not so naïve as that because, as they told you, you have to be a little tricky. We will come back to it.

So then we will take things up where we had dismantled them a little, namely, in the table of the wager. On the left – the blue lines are made to show where the limits of each one of these schemas stop, so that they do not overlap one another, either really or in your minds – so then the one on the left is the one with which I believed I should complete the matrix in which, in imitation of what is practised in games theory, one could schematise what was effectively discussed throughout the whole of the nineteenth and even during a good part of the beginning of our century around Pascal's wager. Namely, the way of demonstrating how, in a way, Pascal was trying to swindle us.



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I think that I have sufficiently made you sense that by reason of the (133) function of the zeros that do not really form part of the results of a wager that might be made against a partner, because it is precisely the existence of the partner that is in question and that it is what you have to wager on. In these conditions the two lines of possibility that are offered to the gambler do not intersect with any line of possibility that might belong to the Other, since one cannot even be sure of the existence of the Other. It is then at the same time on the existence or non-existence of the Other, on what promises his existence and what allows his inexistence, it is on this that the choice is brought to bear, and in this case it is plausible – I am saying, it is plausible, of course if one has a mathematical mind – to wager, and to wager in the sense that Pascal proposes.

Only, you will not forget that I introduced at this state of the affair, in order of course not to give rise to misunderstanding and the belief that here I am lending myself to something which would be the indication of the advantage of this solution, I effectively remarked the following. And in the very introduction to the reminder of the wager as it is presented, much less than it is through the grid of the discussions that have become classic, I pointed out that at this level one could substitute for the choice to be made on the subject of the existence of God, the remark that one would fulfil the function – which would completely change its sense – this remark that what is at stake, that what could be at stake, is this radical formulation which is that of the real, in so far as we can conceive of it and as moreover we sometimes put our finger on it, that it is not conceivable to imagine any other limit of knowledge than this stopping point at which one has only to deal with this, something unsayable and which either is or is not. In other words something that is related to heads or tails.

This was of course to put you in tune with what is involved in not losing the plot. Namely, that we are not amusing ourselves. We are in the process of trying to give articulations of such a kind that there can

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be played out for us the most important decisions that are to be taken. As it happens our times mark more and more that these most important decisions, in so far as they may be those of the psychoanalyst, may (134) also coincide with those required at a key point in the social body, namely, the administration of knowledge, for example.

But then, even though on this point it is well understood that I cleared the board, that I am not doing history and that I do not see why such a precise system, especially if we correctly conceive the joint at which it is situated, that Pascal's wager would have less resources for us than it had for its author. And we will indeed come back to this question of the situation, all the better because we are going to illuminate it now. It is therefore not, as you are going to see right away, doing history, to remind you, as I recalled the last time to remind you that in Pascal's time, Revelation existed. And I even stressed what was at stake with these two levels, the word of the Church, and then Sacred Scripture, and the function that Sacred Scripture played for Pascal. And it is obviously not to remind you that Newton also, who had other things on his mind, produced a big book – my hobby being bibliophilic, it happens that I have it, it is superb – which is a commentary on the Apocalypse and of Daniel's prophecy. He gave just as much care – I mean in the calculation, in the manipulation of numbers that are nevertheless extremely problematic as those that are at stake when it is a matter of situating the reign of Nebuchadnezzar for example – as in his study on the laws of gravity. This should be remembered then in the margin, but it does nothing for us.

What is at stake at this stage, is to remark that at the level that Pascal then proposes his wager to us, whatever may be the relevance of our remarks about what is involved in it in the final term, namely, that such a proposition can only be conceived of when the knowledge of science is born, it nevertheless remains that, for him, the wager reposes on what we can call the word of the Other, and the word of the Other naturally conceived of as truth.

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So then, if I am taking things up again at this point, it is because some people are not unaware, and I am informing the others - it would moreover be easy if they had behaved like my charming correspondents, if they had read almost all my *Ecrits* - that they should know about the connected and disconnected function that I articulated in a dialectic, as distinguishing if not opposing knowledge and truth. It is the last article that I collected; its title is very precisely *Science and Truth*. And as regards what is involved about the truth, everyone also knows, that in another one of these articles called *The Freudian Thing*, I wrote something that could certainly be understood as follows: that its property is that it speaks. We are thus supposed to be, or rather I am, I am supposed to be on a certain axis that, why not, could than be described as obscurantist since it connects up with this. Namely, that I am supposed to be giving a leg up to what Pascal is instilling, in so far (135) as he tries to bring us back to the plane of religion. So then, obviously, the truth certainly speaks, you will tell me. But obviously it is what you would say if you have understood nothing about what I say – which is absolutely not to be ruled out! – because I never said that. I made the truth say: "Me the truth I speak". But I did not make it say: "Me the truth I speak, for example, to express myself as truth", nor "To tell you the truth". The fact that it speaks does not mean that it tells the truth. It is the truth. It speaks. As regards what it says, you are the ones who are going to have to sort yourselves out with that. That could mean, this is what some people do: "Talk away, it's all you are able to do". If I may dare say so, I grant a little bit more to the truth. I have since even attributed to it the fact that it talks (*cause*), in effect, and not simply in the sense to which "talk away" (*cause toujours*)". It even causes, talks at full tilt. I mean that, in the same article, I recalled Lenin's word on the Marxist theory of society, which, he says: "Will triumph because it is true". But not necessarily because it tells the truth. That can be applied there also.

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Naturally, I am not going to dwell too long on it. Because it is said that my name is quoted to advantage – I did not go looking for it, I must say, because I did not have the time – in *l'Humanité*, because supposedly I am supposed to have begun this year, like that, seeing the way the wind was blowing, by making a mediation between Freud and Marx. Thank God, since I had the flu last weekend, this gave me all of a sudden a stimulus for what is called work, namely, great agitation. I set about going through the terrifying quantity of paper that I must make sure to destroy before I die, because God knows what would be done with it otherwise! I notice that I spoke about Marx, of use value, of exchange value, of surplus value. I noticed, in a word, that my Italian translator, whom I pinpointed, when I made the leap, to draw this sort of analogy between surplus value and *surplus enjoying,* that my Italian translator, it happened that she was there two years ago, had no merit in telling me that, in short, this was surplus value. Because I already spoke so much about Marx in connection with a certain number of fundamental articulations around what is involved in psychoanalysis that I ask myself whether I contributed anything new except this name *Mehrlust, surplus enjoying* as an analogy for *Mehrwert.* All of this to indicate moreover that through these radical points, naturally they absolutely do not develop in the same field, but since we are evoking Lenin, it is not any worse then to recall that what is at stake in Marxist theory, in so far as it concerns the truth, is what it states in effect. The fact that the truth of capitalism is the proletariat. It is true. Only it is from that very thing that there emerges the series and the import of our remarks about what is involved in the function of the truth. It is that the revolutionary consequence of this truth, this truth from which Marxist theory starts, naturally it goes a little bit (136) further since what it constructs the theory of, is precisely capitalism, the revolutionary consequence is that the theory starts in effect from this truth, namely, that the proletariat, is the truth of capitalism.

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The proletariat, what does that mean? It means that labour is radicalised to the pure and simple level of merchandise; which of course means that this reduces the worker himself to the same measure. Only once the worker, because of the theory, learns to know of himself as that, one can say that through this step, he finds the paths of a status – call that what you will – of a *savant.* He is no longer a proletarian, as I might say *an sich*, he is no longer pure and simple truth, he is *für sich*; he is what is called class consciousness. And he can even at the same time become the class-consciousness of the party in which people no longer speak the truth.

I am not satirising. I am only recalling that obvious things – that is why it is a relief – do not arise in any way from the scandal that is made of them, when people understand nothing about anything. Or that, if one has a correct theory of what is involved in knowledge and the truth, there is nothing easier to expect, that in particular it is hard to see why people should be astonished that it is from the most Leninistically defined relationship to the truth that there flows this whole Leninising in which the whole system is swamped! If you get it into your heads that there is nothing more soothing (*lénifiant*) than the hard men, you will be recalling, like that, a truth that has already been known for a long time. And then truly has that not always been known from all time? If people had not for some time, and I will tell you why, been so persuaded that Christianity is not the truth, people would have been able to recall all the same that for a certain time and not a short one, it was. And that what it proved is that around every truth that claims to speak as such, there prospers a clergy that is necessarily lying.

So then I ask myself why people are so high and mighty about the functioning of socialist governments! Will I go so far as to say that the pearl of the lie is the secretion of the truth? That would sanitise the atmosphere a little, an atmosphere moreover that only exists because of the fact that a certain type of cretinisation whose name I must give

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right away because at the end of what we have to say today, I will have to pin it again into one of these little squares. It is what is called a belief in progress (*progressisme*). I will try, of course, to give you a better definition than this reference to these effects of scandal, I mean producing scandalised souls. These things ought to have been ventilated a long time ago by a reading of Hegel, the law of the heart and the delusions of presumption. But in the way of all things that are a little rigorous, when they come out, of course, no one thinks of remembering them at the appropriate moment. That is why I put as an (137) exergue at the beginning of my discourse this year something that means that what I prefer, is a discourse without words.

So then what is at stake, what might here be in question if one wished, as they say, to lick the plate to the point that we can profit from it, putting our finger on it, is to notice that things do not have such bad effects as all that. Since, when I say that the service of the field of truth, the service as such – a service that is not asked of anyone, you have to have the vocation for it – necessarily leads to lies, I want also to point out the following, because one must be fair. This gives rise to enormous work. For my part I adore that, when it is the others, of course, who work! That is why I treat myself to the reading of a good number of ecclesiastical authors and I admire the patience and the erudition they must have had to cart around so many quotations that come at the right point for me or that are of some use to me. It is the same thing for the authors of the communist church. They are also excellent workers. I may well, like that, for some of them, in day to day life, not be able to tolerate them any more than personal contacts with priests. That does not prevent them from being capable of doing very good work and I enjoy myself when I read one of them on *The hidden God*, for example. This does not make the author any easier to associate with.

So then, in short, the fruit of what is involved, after all, all the same, for knowledge is not at all to be neglected. Because people are a little

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bit too concerned with the truth and they are so bogged down in it that they end up by lying. The only real question – because I said that here I would go to the limit – is not at all that this should have consequences. Because you see that after all it is a form of selection of elites, that is why they pick up also, in one field as in the other, so many mentally handicapped. There you are, that is the limit! That is the limit. But you must not believe that it is simply to amuse myself, by giving like that a little rap on the nose to groups of whom one does not know, after all, why they should be any more preserved than others from the presence of the mentally handicapped. It is because we analysts can perhaps on this point begin something that is precisely very important.

Here I refer you to the key that was quietly contributed by our dear Maud – Maud Mannoni for those who do not know who she is – the relationship of the mentally handicapped to the configuration that interests us, that for us analysts, is obviously burning precisely at the level of the truth. That is even why we are not able any more than the others to take precautions; even our lies, to which of course we are forced, are less impudent than the other – less impudent but more timid, it must be said. There are some all the same that, in this relationship, preserve some vivacity and precisely the works that I am evoking on the subject of what all of a sudden starts floating into (138) mental handicap with which, I must say that in my own regard, I got rather used to in the first phase of my experience. I was full of admiration at seeing the armfuls of flowers that I collected, flowers of truth when, inadvertently, I took into analysis what Freud, and how wrong he was, seems to have thought one should exclude from it, namely, a mentally handicapped person. There is no psychoanalysis, I must say, that goes better, if one means by that the joy of the psychoanalyst. It is perhaps not altogether uniquely what one might expect from a psychoanalysis, but in any case it is clear that, as regards what it conceals in terms of truths that precisely he brings out as pearls, unique pearls. Because here I only evoked this term in connection

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with lies, it must all the same be, that in the mentally handicapped person not everything is as handicapped as all that. And what if the mentally handicapped person were – you will understand better what I mean if you are able to refer to good authors, namely, to Maud Mannoni – a little trickster? This is an idea that came to some people. There is someone called Dostoyevsky who called one of his characters the Idiot, the one who conducted himself most marvellously, no matter what social field he was traversing and whatever embarrassing situation he found himself in.

I sometimes evoke Hegel, it is not a reason not to recast him. "The ruse of reason", Hegel tells us, I must say that this is something I have always been suspicious of. For my part, I have very frequently seen reason being screwed, but as for succeeding in one of its ruses, I must say that during my lifetime I have not seen it. Perhaps Hegel saw it. He lived in the little courts of Germany where there are many mentally handicapped and in truth, it was perhaps there that he found his sources. But as regards the ruse that may be in simple spirits, and it is not for nothing that someone who knew what he was saying baptised them as blessed, I am leaving the question open. And I am ending with this simple reminder very necessary and very healthy to recall in the context that we are living in.

What I would like to do now, is to take up at the level at which I left you the last time, namely, in the matrix that is isolated by the fact that it is no longer a matter of knowing what one is playing, a game where after all, all that Pascal's wager means, is that you cannot play this game in a correct fashion unless you are indifferent. Namely, that it is in the measure in which there is no doubt that the stake, infinite in so far as it is on the right, on the side of the existence of God, is a much more interesting stake than this kind of thing that I do not know what it is and that is represented as what? After all, in reading Pascal, this comes down to saying all the dishonesties that you will not do by following the commandments of God, and by following the

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commandments of the Church, some little supplementary inconveniences specifically in the relationships to the holy water font and some other accessories.

(139) It is a position of indifference, when all is said and done, with regard to what is involved. And this properly speaking all the more easily reaches the level of the wager as Pascal presents it in that after all, this God, he underlines it and it is worthwhile having it from his pen, this God, we do not know what he is nor if he is. It is in this sense that we can take Pascal. And it is here, namely, that there is an absolutely fabulous negation. Because, after all, in the preceding centuries, the ontological argument – I am not going to let myself be drawn into it but, to the eyes of all sensible spirits, and we would do well to follow its grain – had its whole weight. This amounted to nothing except to say what I am also in the process of teaching you, namely, that there is a hole in discourse, there is somewhere a place where we are not able to put the signifier that is necessary for all the rest to hold together. He thought that the signifier God could make things stick. In fact, it works at the level of something, about which after all it is a question of whether it is not a form of mental handicap, namely, philosophy. In general it is accepted, I mean among atheists, that the Supreme Being has a sense. Voltaire, who is generally thought to be pretty smart, held onto it *mordicus*. He had respect for Diderot, who had a clear advance, a good length over him as can be seen in what he wrote. It is also probably for that reason that almost everything that Diderot wrote that was really important only appeared posthumously, and then that as a total it is much less substantial than in the case of Voltaire. Diderot for his part had glimpsed that the question is that of the lack somewhere and very precisely in so far as naming it means putting a stopper into it, nothing more.

It nevertheless remains that in Pascal, we are at the point of the joint, at the point of the leap where someone dares to say what was there from all time. It is like earlier, it is more like before than ever, only there is

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a moment when that is separated. It ought to be known that he says "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob", has nothing to do with "the God of the philosophers". In other words he is one who speaks, I would ask you to pay attention to it, but he has this originality that his name cannot be pronounced, so that it is in this way that the question is opened up.

That is why, a curious thing, that it is through a son of Israel, someone called Freud, that we find ourselves really seeing for the first time at the centre of the field, not simply of knowledge, but of what makes knowledge grab our guts and even, if you wish, our balls, that here there is properly speaking evoked the Name of the Father and the tralala of myths that he lugs about. Because if I had been able to do my year on the Name of the Father, I would also have told you the result of my statistical researches; it is extraordinary that even in the Fathers of the Church people speak so little about this business of the Father. I am not talking about the Hebrew tradition, where very obviously it is everywhere in filigree and also, of course, if it can be in (140) filigree, it is because it is very veiled. That is the reason why, in the first seminar, the one after which I closed shop that year, I had begun by speaking about the sacrifice of Isaac, noting that the sacrificer is Abraham. These are obviously things that there would be every interest in developing, but that by reason of the change of configuration, of context and even of audience, there is in effect very little chance that I will ever be able to come back to it.

Nevertheless, a tiny little remark because there are words that are very much *à la mode*. From time to time, I pose questions like that; does God believe in God, for example? I am going to ask you one. If at the last moment, God had not held back Abraham's arm, in other words if Abraham had been in too much of a hurry and had butchered Isaac, would it have been what is called a genocide or not? People are talking a lot at the moment about genocide and the fact of pinpointing the locus of a truth about what is involved in the function of genocide

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especially concerning the origin of the Jewish people, I believe that this landmark deserves to be noted. In any case, what is certain, as I underlined in this first lecture, is that to the suspension of this genocide there corresponded the butchering of a certain ram that is quite clearly there as a totemic ancestor.

So then here we are at the second phase, the one that is brought out by taking what is involved when there is no longer indifference, namely, the initial act of what is involved in the game. What is in the game, Pascal settles. I have already lost it, or I am not playing at all. This is what is meant by each of the two zero's that are there in the central figure (page 3); they are only the indices of the bet on the one hand or the "no bet" on the other. Only, all of this only holds up if the bet, as Pascal says, is taken to be worth nothing. And in a certain way it is true. The o-object has no use value. It has no exchange value either as I already said. Only this, what was in question in the bet, once one has noticed the way it functions, and that is the reason that psychoanalysis is what has allowed us to take a step into the structure of desire, it is in so far as the o is what animates everything that is at stake in the relationship of man to the word. Precisely that a gambler, but a different gambler to the one that Pascal speaks about, namely, the very one that, because he sensed something all the same, Hegel understood, even though despite appearances his system is faulty. Namely, that there is no other game except risking everything for everything, that this is even what is called simply to act. He called that the fight to the death for pure prestige. This is precisely what psychoanalysis allows to be rectified. It is a matter of much more than life about which we do not after all know very much. We know so little about it that we do not hold onto it all that much, as can be seen every day provided you are a psychiatrist or simply are 20 years old. It is a matter of what (141) happens when something different, which has not been named and which is not any more so because I have called it o, is at stake. And this has meaning precisely only when it is brought into play with, on the opposite side, what is nothing other than the very idea of

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measure, measure in its essence that has nothing to do with God but that is in a way the condition of thinking. Once I think about something, however I name it, it comes back to calling it the universe, namely, One.

Thanks be to God, thinking has had enough of swarming around inside this condition to notice that the One, does not happen just by itself. And what is at stake, is to know the relationship that this has with this "I". This is described by the fact that in the second table there is an **o** on the one hand, which is no longer the **o** abandoned to the destiny of the game, the bet, which is the **o** in so far as it is me who represents myself, that here I am playing against, and precisely against the closure of this universe that will be One if it wishes, but that I am an extra **o**.

This ineradicable God who has no other foundation when one looks closely at him, than being the faith in this universe of discourse which is certainly not nothing. Because if you imagine that I am in the process of doing philosophy, I am going to have to give you an apologue. It is necessary to put in the corners big figures to make what is meant understood. You know that the modern era began like the others, this is why it deserves to be called modern, because otherwise, as Alphonse Allais says, look how modern we were in the Middle Ages! If the modern era has a sense, it is because of certain breakthroughs one of which was the myth of the desert island; I could just as well have started from it as from Pascal's wager. This still continues to worry us. What kind of book would you take with you onto a desert island? Ah! That would be amusing, a pile of the Pléiade, what fun one would have behind the leftover shrimps, somewhere, in reading something from the Pléiade, it would be really exciting! Nevertheless that has a sense. And to illustrate it I am going to give you my response. A moment of suspense: "What book would he take onto a desert island?" So then, tell me!

X – The Bible.

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Lacan: The Bible, naturally!!! I can do without it! What do you think I would do with it on a desert island! Onto a desert island I would take Bloch et Von Warburg. I hope all the same that you all know what it is, it is not the first time that I have spoken about it. Bloch and Von Warburg is entitled - that lends itself to misunderstanding of course - *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue francaise*. Etymological does not particularly mean that you are given the sense of words starting from the thinking that preceded their creation. It means that in connection with each word, you are given a little pinpointing with the dates of their forms and of their uses in the course of history. This has (142) such an enlightening, fruitful value, that just by itself, in effect, one can do without anyone. You see the degree to which language, is company all by itself. It is extraordinarily curious that Daniel Defoe, to take the one who did not invent the desert island – the one who invented it, is Balthazar Gracian, who was someone of a different class. He was a Jesuit, and moreover not a liar. It is in *Criticon*, in which the hero, returning from somewhere or other in the Atlantic, spends a certain time on a deserted island, which has for him at least the advantage of protecting him from women. It is extraordinary that Daniel Defoe did not notice that Robinson did not need to wait for Friday. That already the simple fact that he was a speaking being and knew his language perfectly well, namely, the English tongue, was an element absolutely as essential for his survival on the island as his relationship with some tiny natural trifles from which he succeeded in making a hut and feeding himself.

Whatever may be the case for what is at stake in this world which is that of signifiers, I cannot do better today, with the advancing time than to draw again what I gave here in the first terms that I put forward, namely, those to which the moment we have got to in mathematical logic allows us to give some rigour to. And in starting from the definition of the signifier as being what represents a subject

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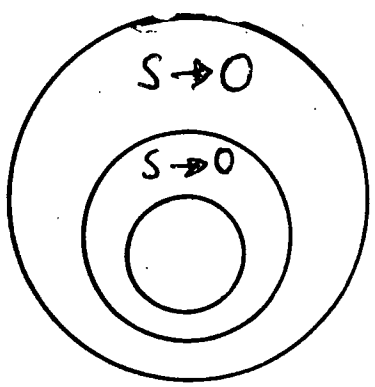
for another signifier, this signifier, I am saying, is other, which simply means that it is signifying.

$$S \rightarrow O.$$

Because what characterises, what grounds the signifier, is absolutely nothing whatsoever that is attached to it as sense as such. It is its difference. Namely, not something that is stuck to it, to itself, and would allow it to be identified but the fact that all the others are different to it. Its difference resides in the others. That is why this constitutes a step forward; but an inaugural step by asking oneself whether from this Other one can make a class, one can make a sack, and one can, in a word, make what is involved in this famous One.

Because then, as I have already drawn it, if the O is 1, it must include this S in so far as it is the representative of the subject, for what? For O. And this O, by being the same as the one that you have just seen here, as you see, is found to be what it is, a predicate in so far as the 1 in question is no longer the unary trait but the unifying 1 that defines the field of the Other. In other words, you see there being indefinitely reproduced the following, with here something that never finds its name, unless you give it in an arbitrary fashion. And that it is precisely in order to say that it does not have a name that names it that I designate it by the most discreet letter, the letter o.



What does that mean? Where and when is there produced this process (143) which is a process of choice? It is very precisely as regards the One, the game that is involved in so far as he really plays, not *jocus*, here a play with words, but *ludus* as it is forgotten from its Latin origin

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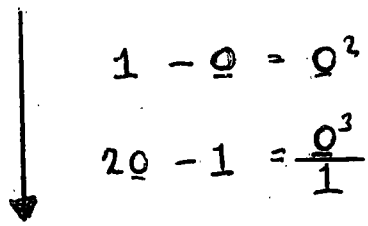
of which many things are to be said but undoubtedly this comprises this deadly game that I spoke about earlier, and that this varies the ritual games that Rome had inherited from the Etruscans – the word is very probably itself of Etruscan origin – up to the games of the circus, neither more nor less. And something else again, that I will signal for you when the time has come. It is in so far as in this game there is something that, with respect to the 1, is posited as questioning what the 1 becomes when I, o, am lacking to him. And at this point where I am lacking to him, if I posit myself once again as "I", it will be to question him about what results from the fact that I posited this lack.

It is here that you will have the series that I already wrote as the decreasing series, the one that goes towards a limit, in the series that I do not know how to describe otherwise, the series that is summarised by the double condition which is only one because of being the Fibonacci series, whatever it may be, namely, the relation between 1 and o.

I already wrote the results of this series in this line that continues to infinity, and signalled for you the total of that which, from the value of these different terms, is necessary in the measure that you continue towards the formulae of a decreasing order that culminate at a limit. Culminate if you have started from the withdrawal of o at something that, in totalising the even powers and the odd powers of o, easily realises the 1 as their total.



It nevertheless remains that, up to the end, what defines the relationship of one of these terms to the following one, namely, its true difference, is always and in a way that does not decrease but that is strictly equal, the o function.

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This is what is demonstrated by the written statement, formulated from (144) this decreasing chain. It is that, whatever may be the appearance linked to the schematisation, it is always the same circle that is at stake. And that this circle, in so far as we ground it, but in an arbitrary, chosen fashion, it is by an act that we posit this Other as field of discourse – namely, what we take care to distance any divine existence from– it is by a purely arbitrary, schematic and signifying act that we define it as One, namely, faith in what? Faith in our thinking. While we know very well that this thinking only subsists from signifying articulation, in so far as it already presents itself in this indefinite world of language. What then are we going to do and what are we doing in the logical order about this circumscribing in which we try to make appear in this all the **o** as remainder, if nothing more than, by having let it go, by having lost it, by having played in the knowledge of some "the loser wins" or other, to arrive at nothing other than identifying what is involved in the Other itself as **o**. Namely, by finding in the **o** the essence of the supposed One of thinking. Namely, to determine thinking itself as being the effect, I am saying more, the shadow of what is involved in the function of the **o**-object. The **o** at the point where here it appears to us, deserves to be called the cause, certainly, but specified in its essence as a privileged cause, plays an admirable sense...that play precisely gives us, the play of language in its material form. Let us call it as I already called it more than once on the board the **o**-cause (*l'a-cause*). Moreover in French does this not make an explosive sound because there exists the expression "*à cause de*". And have its resonances always been clearly seen? "*A cause de*", does this constitute the avowal that this "*à cause de*" is only an **o**-cause. On this every language has its price. And Spanish says "*por l'amor*". One could easily take the same effect from it.

But this - at which the limit of time that is imposed on us every time stops me - makes me have to announce to you that I am confirming it. And in confirming it completes the inverted test, namely, the one belonging to the field, to the goal, to the career in which there is

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engaged for us the relationship to knowledge. Not that of questioning the One in so far as at the start I put this lack into it and that then I find from the fact that it is identified to this lack itself, but to question this 1 because I am adding this **o** to it 1 + **o**; 1 + **o**, such is the first form, such is the upper line as I have written it in the matrix on the right.

What does the 1 + **o** give when it is in its field that there is engaged the radical questioning of knowledge? Knowledge added to the world in so far as, let us say it can, armed with this formula, with this preliminary banner, transform it. What is the logical consequence of it, questioned in the way in which I did it at the level of progressive differences? This is what will perhaps allow us to clarify more radically what is involved in the function of **o**. Its correlative is in which it is easy to glimpse many things, this thing that the authors were deluded by for a long time, and not just at an indifferent epoch, (145) precisely at the moment when the ontological argument had a sense. Namely, that what is lacking to desire is properly speaking the infinite; perhaps we will say something about it that will give it a different status.

Notice again that the fourth box of the matrix on the right, this zero is found, in the way in which I articulated it by the schema entitled the relationship of S to O, to clearly present the way it is radically distinguished from what is on the first schema, namely, the bet or on the contrary indifference. It well and truly represents the hole and, in a third phase, we will have to demonstrate what it corresponds to in the analysis of what takes its origin in this very hole.

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Seminar 12: Wednesday 26 February 1969

(147) You have been good enough to follow me up to the present along narrow paths and I think that, for a number of you, the line I am taking seems to pose the question of its origin and its sense. In other words, it may easily happen that you no longer know very well where we are. That is why it seems an opportune time to me, and not in a contingent way, to pose the question of my title, for example, *From an Other to the other*, under which my discourse for this year is presented. It is indeed in effect conceivable that it is not at the start, by way of a preface, indeed by way of a programme, that something can be elucidated about the end. It is necessary to have travelled at least a bit of the path so that the start is illuminated by retroaction. This not simply for you, but for myself. Since for me this means, in what I might call this drilling operation, which is indeed what interests you, what holds your attention, this means that for at least for a certain number of you who are here, if not for all, I must spend some time to take my bearings in what constituted its stages in the past.

Thus it is that I happened to take up the text – who knows, perhaps with publication in mind – of what I stated ten years ago now, I mean in the seminar 1959-60, it is a long time ago, under the title of *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*. It gave me some satisfactions of an intimate order to bring to light something that strives to reproduce as faithfully as possible the outline of what I did at that time. This of course, cannot but have all these retroactive effects from what I have stated since, and

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specifically here. This is therefore a delicate operation and the only thing that meant I could not keep to the excellent summary that had been done two years later by one of my listeners, namely, Safouan. I would have to give the reasons why I did not publish this summary at that time, but it will rather be the object of a preface to what will come out of it. My satisfaction on this occasion, that you can share if you trust me about the fidelity of the outline that I will try to produce of it, is due to the fact that not only does nothing force me to revise what I put forward at that time but that after all, I can lodge in it, as in a sort of little cup, the more rigorous things, let us say, that I am able to state today about this project.

In effect, what I thought I had to start from during this putting into (148) question, which had never before been done, of what is involved, on the ethical plane, is a new term. This, in a first attempt at an initial drafting that I tried to give of what new things are contributed by what I am stating in the way that seems to me to be the most rigorous, by the Freud event (*l'événement Freud*). I now have, at the date that we are at, the satisfaction of seeing for example as regards what is involved in the function of an author like Freud, I would say that a very broad minded society finds itself in a position of being able to measure his originality and in connection with him, as Michel Foucault did for example last Saturday, in a sort of evil place called the *Société de Philosophie*, in posing the question "*What is an author?*". And this led him to highlight a certain number of terms that deserve to be stated in connection with such a question, what is an author? What is the function of the name of an author? It was really, at the level of a semantic interrogation properly speaking that he found the means of highlighting the originality of this function and its situation closely internal to discourse. This involves, of course, a putting into question on this occasion, an effect of splitting, of tearing apart of what is involved in it for everyone, namely, for what is called the society of fine minds or the republic of letters, of this relationship to discourse. And whether Freud, in this respect, did not play a capital role, that

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moreover the author in question, Michel Foucault, not only accentuated but properly speaking put at the high point of his whole articulation. In a word, "The function of the return to..." he put three dots after it, in the little announcement that he had made of his project of questioning "*What is an author?*". "The return to..." was found at the end, and I must say by that very fact I considered myself as having been invited, there being no one after all, in our day who, more than me, has given weight to "return to..." in connection with a return to Freud. Moreover he highlighted it very well and showed how perfectly well informed he was about the very special sense, the key point that this return to Freud constitutes, compared to everything that is currently a slippage, an alteration, a profound revision of the function of the author, especially of the literary author. And of what in short is provided by this circle in terms of a critical function which, after all, there is no reason to be astonished in our day lags behind, or backwards, with respect to what is happening. Something that in other times, a critical function thought it could pinpoint with this bizarre term that undoubtedly none of those who are in the forefront of it accept but by which we now find ourselves affected as it were by a bizarre label that has been stuck on our backs without our consent, structuralism.

So then ten years ago, in beginning to introduce the question, as I told you, which had never even been raised, which is quite curious, about the ethics of psychoanalysis, assuredly perhaps the strangest thing is (149) this remark by which I thought I should illustrate it, not immediately certainly but I do not even know if I gave enough support at that moment to the thing, I had an audience of psychoanalysts, I thought I would be able in a way to address myself directly by something that must be given a name, when it is a matter of morality, of conscience, add on moral, so I did not remark too much at that stage that the ethics of psychoanalysis as it is constituted by a deontology did not even give a sketch, a beginning, the smallest feature of the beginning of the ethics of psychoanalysis. On the contrary, what I

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announced from the beginning is that, through the Freud event, what has been brought to light, the key point, the centre of the ethics is nothing other than what I supported at that time by the final term of these three references, categories, from which I had started my whole discourse, namely, the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. As you know it is in the Real that I designated the pivotal point of what is involved in the ethics of psychoanalysis. I pre-suppose, of course, that this Real is subjected to the very severe interposing, if I can express myself in this way, of the conjoined function of the Symbolic and the Imaginary. And that it is inasmuch as the Real, as one might say, is not easy to gain access to that it is for us the reference around which there ought to turn the revision of the problem of ethics. In effect it is not by chance that, in order to connect it, I started then from the reminder of a work that, even though it has remained a little bit in the shade, and, a curious piece of luck, was only resurrected by the operation of these people that we can consider as not being the best oriented as regards our questioning, namely, those we can call neo-positivists, or again those who believe that they have to question language from the angle of something whose futile destiny I pointed out at one time, to question something that they express in an exemplary fashion, namely, the question put about *the meaning of meaning,* about what is involved in the sense of the fact that these things have a meaning. It is quite certain that this is a path completely opposed to what interests us. But it is also of course not by chance that it should be them, and specifically Ogden who brought out or brought out again, edited rather, this work of Jeremy Bentham called *The theory of fictions.*

It is quite simply the most important work in what is called the utilitarian perspective, and you know that at the beginning of the nineteenth century people were trying to find a solution to the very current problem at that time, and with good reason, an ideological one in a way, described as the sharing of goods. *The theory of fictions* is already at this level, and with an exceptional lucidity, the putting in

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question of what is involved in all human institutions. And, properly speaking, nothing could be done, taking things from the sociological angle, that better isolates what is involved as such in this category of the symbolic which is found to be precisely the one that is reactualised, (150) but in a completely different manner, by the Freud event and what came after it. It is enough to understand the term fictions as not representing, not affecting by its domination, what it regards as in no way having an illusory or deceptive character. The way in which the term fictions is put forward does nothing other than overlap what, in an aphoristic way, I promoted by underlining the fact that the truth, in so far as its locus could only be the one where the word is produced, that the truth in essence, if one can express it in this way, forgive me this "in essence", it is to make myself understood, do not give it the whole philosophical stress that this term involves, the truth, of itself, let us say has the structure of fiction.

Here is the essential starting point that in a way allows there to be posed the question of what is involved in ethics in a way that can moreover accommodate all the diversities of culture. Namely, from the moment that we can put them within the brackets, in the parentheses of this term of the structure of fiction, which supposes, of course, reaching a state, acquiring a position with regard to this character in so far as it affects the whole foundational articulation of discourse in what one can call in general social relationships. It is starting from this point, that cannot of course be reached except by starting from a certain limit, let us say once again to evoke our Pascal, all of a sudden, at this turning point I remember him, who therefore dared before him to note simply as something that ought to form part of the discourse that he left incomplete, the one rather legitimately, rather ambiguously also collected under the term of *Pensées*, the formula "truth on this side of the Pyrenees, error on the other side". It is starting from certain degrees of relativism, and of the most radical type of relativism with respect not simply to morals and institutions but to truth itself, that there can begin to be posed the problem of ethics. And it is in this way

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that the Freud event shows itself so exemplary. In the fact, as I underlined it and with some support, with some stress in the first trimester of the articulation of the ethics of psychoanalysis, namely, the radical change that results from an event which is nothing other, as we are going to see, than his discovery, namely, the function of the unconscious. It is correlatively that we are going to see later why, in a way that, I think, will sufficiently strike you by its elegance, he made the pleasure principle function in a radically different way to everything that had done up to then. In short, I think that there are enough of you, after all, who have found themselves in one way or another permeated or traversed, let us say, by my discourse that I only need to recall in the briefest fashion what is involved in this principle.

The pleasure principle is essentially characterised at first by this paradoxical fact that its surest result, is not, even though it is written in (151) this form in Freud's text, hallucination, let us say the possibility of hallucination. But let us say that hallucination in Freud's text is its specific possibility. What in effect does the whole apparatus that Freud constructs to account for the effects of the unconscious show us? As you know this is found in Chapter VII of the *Traumdeutung*, when it is a matter of clarifying dream processes, *Traum-Vorgänge*. But we have had the chance, the luck, to see falling into our possession and under our examination what is in a certain way its underpinning in a certain *Entwurf*, in a certain outline that corresponds to these years when, correlatively to the discovery that he was making, guided by these admirable theoreticians that hysterics were – that hysterics are! - guided by them he had his experience of what is involved in the unconscious economy, correlatively he wrote this *Entwurf* to Fliess. A really very developed project, infinitely richer and more constructive than what he thought he could summarise of it, because it is sure that he himself could not fail to preserve a reference to it in this chapter of the *Traumdeutung*. What he constructs at that moment then, under the terms of the psi-system, inasmuch as it is what regulates in the organism the function of what he calls the pleasure principle, let us say

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to schematise it roughly, we can put it at the heart of something that is not simply a relay in the organism but a veritable closed circle that has its own laws. And that in order to be inserted into the cycle classically defined by the general physiology of the organism, of the stimulus-motor activity arc, and not response, which is an abuse of the term because response has a sense that ought to have for us a much more complex structure where something is interposed in the function, is defined very precisely not simply by being the hindrance effect imposed on the basal arc but properly speaking creating an obstacle to it, namely, constituting an autonomous psi-system within which the economy is such that it is certainly not the adaptation, the adequation of the motor response that, as you know, is far from being always sufficiently adapted, we suppose it to be free, but everything that happens at the level of the fact that a living animal, in so far as it is defined by the fact of being gifted with a motor activity that allows it to escape too intense stimuli, destructive stimuli that may threaten its integrity, it is clear that what is at stake at the level of what Freud articulates, is that something is lodged as such in certain of these living beings, and not just any ones. And without him being able to say certainly that the same apparatus may be defined simply from the fact that the being in question is a superior vertebrate or something simply provided with a nervous system, it is about what happens properly speaking at the level of human economy that is at stake. And it is at (152) this level, even if from time to time he risks the possibility of interpreting what is happening at the level of other neighbouring beings in reference to what happens in the human being defined in a necessary fashion simply through the consequences and the text of Freud's discourse as a speaking being, it is at this level that there is produced this homeostatic regulation which is defined by the return to perceptual identity. Namely, that in his research, in the broadest sense of the word, in the detours that this system carries out to maintain its own homeostasis, what its functioning ends up with as constituting its specificity, is the fact that what will be rediscovered about the identical perception inasmuch as what regulates it is repetition, what will be

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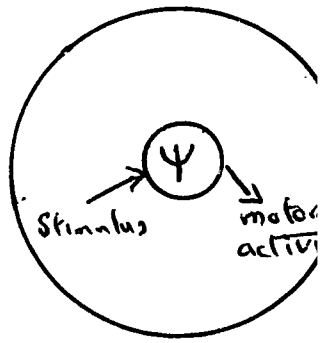
rediscovered does not carry in itself any criterion of reality. It can only be affected by these criteria in a way from outside and through the pure conjunction of a little sign, of something qualificatory that a specialised system already distinguishes from the two preceding ones that you see inscribed in this schema, namely, the reflex circle *qua* constituting the phi-system, the central circle that for its part defines a closed area and constituting the proper type of equilibrium, namely, the psi-system. It is from this afference of something whose function he closely distinguishes from energetics that can be applied to each of these two systems, and that for its part only intervenes in function of signs qualified through specific periods and which are those afferent to each of the sense organs and that eventually come to affect certain of the perceptats [?] that are introduced into this system of a *Wahrnehmungzeichen*, from a sign that what is at stake here is something that is an acceptable perception with respect to reality.



What does that mean? Certainly not that we should approve this use of the term hallucination that for us has clinical connotations. For Freud also, certainly, but he no doubt wanted to accentuate very particularly the paradox of the functioning of this system *qua* articulated onto the pleasure principle. Hallucination requires quite different co-ordinates. But moreover we have in a text by Freud himself what constitutes its major reference. It is enough that he refers to exemplify it to the function of the dream to help us find our feet again; it is essentially the possibility of the dream that is at stake. In a word, we find ourselves before this adventure that, to justify what is involved in the functioning of the apparatus that regulates the unconscious in so far as, we are going to recall it later and in the appropriate style, it governs an absolutely essential and radical economy that allows us to appreciate not simply our behaviour but also our thinking. Here the world, in a (153) completely opposite way from what is traditionally the support of philosophers when it is a matter of tackling what is involved in the good of man, here we have the world entirely suspended on the dream of the world.

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This means that this step, the Freud event, which consists in nothing other than properly a supposed arrest of what, in the traditional perspective, was considered as the foundation encompassing every reflection, namely, the rotation of this world, celestial rotation so manifestly designated in the text of Aristotle as constituting the referential point where every conceivable good ought to be attached. The radical questioning then of every effect of representation, of any connivance of what is involved in the represented as such, not at all in a subject, let us not say it too early because if in Aristotle this term of *upokeimenon* is put forward exactly in connection with logic, it is nowhere isolated as such. It took a long time and the whole progress of philosophical tradition for knowledge to be organised in its final term, the Kantian term, from a subject relation and something that remains entirely suspended, this is the sense of idealism in so far as there appears, with the *phainomenon*, leaving out the *noumemon*, namely, what is behind, again this representation is comfortable. What is to be underlined in the essence of idealism, is that after all, the thinking being is only dealing with his own measure, that he poses as a terminal point, the referential point that is in question for him. Now it is from this measure that he believes he is able to state in an *a priori* fashion at least the fundamental laws. It is properly speaking in this that the Freudian position differs. Nothing is tenable any longer about what is involved in representation except what is articulated at a point profoundly motivating for behaviour. And this by passing completely outside the circuit of any subject in which the representation is claimed to be unified, to a structure, to a structure made up of a weave and a network. And this is the true sense of these little schemas that the recent discovery of neuronal articulation allowed him to construct. It is enough to refer to this project, to this *Entwurf,* to see the decisive importance in the articulation of what is involved in this trellis, lattice, of this texture and since of course it has not been possible for us for a long time, as already Freud had no doubt a suspicion of, to identify to

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these movements, to these transfers of energy that we have been able to map out moreover, by other physical means, to these displacements that happen all along the neuronal texture. It is in no way under this mode that proves from experience to be quite distinct, that we can find the appropriate usage of these schemas that I have just qualified as network, lattice. We see clearly that what Freud used these schemas for, was in a way to support, to materialise in an intuitive form nothing more than what was at stake and that moreover is displayed on the (154) same schemas. At every one of these crossing points it is a word that is described, namely, the word that designates a particular memory. This word articulated as a response, a particular word striking, marking, engraming as I might say the symptom. And what is at stake in these little schemas that I would ask you to refer to – buy *The origins of psychoanalysis*, as a collection of letters to Fliess, to which is joined this *Entwurf*, is translated – and you will clearly see that in effect what Freud found a convenient support from in what was as that time within his hand's reach by what had also just been discovered, namely, neuronal articulation, was nothing other than the articulation, under the most elementary form, of signifiers and of relations that can be fixed in a way that, in our day the same schema that would have the same shape. Buy the last little book that has appeared, or rather buy *The axiomatic theory of sets* by M Krivine. You will see there exactly Freud's schemas except for the fact that what is at stake are little schemas oriented more or less like this, and that are necessary to make us understand what is involved in set theory. This means that every point, in the measure that it is linked by an arrow to another, is considered in set theory as an element of the other set. And you will see that it is a matter of nothing less than what is necessary to give a correct articulation to what is most formal in order to give its foundation to mathematical theory. And already you will see there, by simply reading the first lines, what is involved in every axiomatic step that is taken. Namely, the veritable necessities taken from the formal angle in what is involved in a signifying articulation taken at its most radical level. Notably this particularly

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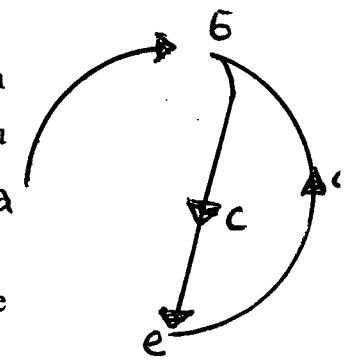
exemplary one, the notion defined there of a part concerning its elements, elements that are always sets, the way it is said that one of these elements is contained in another, depends on these formal definitions which are such that they are distinguished, that they cannot be identified to what a term like "be contained in", intuitively means. Because if you suppose that I make a schema that is a little more complicated than that one and that I write on the board as a note "the identification of each one of these terms in the set (*ces termes ensemblistes*)", it is not at all enough that one of them is written, namely, constitutes in appearance a part of the universe that I am establishing here, for it to be able in any way to be said that it is contained in any of the other terms, namely, to be an element of it. In other words what is articulated from a configuration of signifiers in no way signifies that the entire configuration, that the universe thus constituted can be totalised. Quite the contrary, it leaves outside its field as not being able to be situated as one of its parts, but only articulated as an element in a reference to others, the sets thus (155) articulated. It leaves the possibility of a non-coincidence between the fact that intuitively we might say that it is part of this universe and the fact that formally we can articulate it to it. This indeed is an altogether essential principle and is the one through which mathematical logic can essentially instruct us, I mean allow us to put in their correct place what is involved for us about certain questions. You are going to see which ones.



This minimal logical structure as it is defined by the mechanisms of the unconscious, I have for a long time summarised under the terms of difference and repetition. Nothing else grounds the function of the signifier except its absolute difference. It is only in the way that the other signifiers are different from it that the signifier is sustained. On the other hand these signifiers should be and function in a repetitive articulation. This is the other part of what is involved in the other characteristic, that a first logic can be established from what on the one hand results from this signifying pinpointing itself, not to fix but on the

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contrary to slide, that what fixes is a reference to the signifying pinpointing, is destined to slide from this pinpointing itself. Here is the fundamental function of displacement. That on the other hand it is of the nature of the signifier *qua* pinpointing to allow the substitution of one signifier for another, with certain expected effects that are effects of sense. That is the other dimension. But the important thing is the following and it is appropriate for us to accentuate it here to allow us to grasp what is really involved in our functions, I mean psychoanalytic functions. If at the level of the possibility of the dream, namely, of this pleasure principle through which essentially and at the start the function of the reality principle is constituted as precarious – certainly not cancelled out for all that but essentially dependant on the radical precariousness to which the pleasure principle subjects it – what must be grasped is the fact that what we see in the dream, since at the start it is here that there takes place essentially the approach of this function of the signifier, of this minimal logical structure whose terms I articulated again just now, there must be pushed to the end what is involved in the Freudian perspective. If, as everything seems to (156) indicate in our way of treating the dream, what is involved are sentences – let us leave aside for the moment the nature of their syntax – they have an elementary one at least at the level of the two mechanisms that I have recalled of condensation and of displacement. What must be seen, is that the way in which it appears hallucinatory for us, with the accent that Freud gave to this term at this level, what does it mean if not that the dream is already in itself interpretation, a wild one certainly, but interpretation. It is there besides that it can be grasped that this interpretation, which is to be taken as Freud himself quite calmly wrote – if I have underlined it, I am certainly not the one who discovered or invented it in the text – that if the dream is present as a rebus, what does it mean if not that to every one of these articulated terms that are signifying from a diachronic point of its progress where there is established its articulation, the dream, through its function, and the function of pleasure, therefore this imaged translation that itself only subsists because it can be articulated in a

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signifier, what do we do then in substituting for this wild interpretation our reasoned interpretation? On this it is enough to invoke the practice of each person but for the others, let them re-read in the light of this the dreams quoted in the *Traumdeutung* in order to grasp that what is at stake, is in this reasoned interpretation, nothing other than from a reconstituted sentence, to grasp the point where there is a flaw which is the one where, *qua* sentence, and not at all *qua* meaning, it allows there to be seen what is not working, and what is not working, is desire.

Take the dream, something really exemplary, and in a way put by Freud at the very start of the chapter where he questions dream processes, the *Traum-Vorgänge* and in which he tries to give what he calls their psychology. There you will read the dream of *"des alten Mannes"*, of the old man that tiredness had forced to abandon in the room next door the body of his dead son to be watched over by another old man. What he dreams about, is about this son standing, alive, who comes close to his bed, who grasps him by the arm and in a voice full of reproach says: *"Vater, siehst du denn nicht dass ich verbrenne?"*, father, do you not see I am burning? What could be more moving, what could be more pathetic than what happens. Namely, that the father awakes and going into the next room sees that effectively a candle has fallen over and has set fire to the sheets that are already licking at the body while the watcher has fallen asleep? And Freud tells us that undoubtedly apart from the fact that the dream was only there to prolong sleep in the face of the first signs of what had been perceived of this horrible reality, do we not further grasp that it is precisely by considering that reality overlaps this dream that proves that the father is still sleeping. Because how can we not understand the accent there is in this word when Freud tells us moreover that there is no word in the dream that has not come somewhere in the text of (157) words effectively pronounced. How can we not see that it is a desire that burns this child, but in the field of the Other, in the field of the one to whom he addresses himself, to the father on this occasion? What is at stake is some flaw that comes from the fact that he is a

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desiring being, some flaw he had shown with respect to this beloved object that his son was. And that it is from this which, Freud tells us, is not analysed but very sufficiently indicated, it is from this that reality itself protects him, in its coincidence. The interpretation of the dream is not in any case, and Freud agrees with this, what caused it in reality.

So then, when we interpret a dream, what guides us, is certainly not "what does that mean?" nor is it "what does it mean in saying that?" but "what by saying that does it wish?" Apparently it does not know what it wants. Here indeed is where the question lies and our formulae, in so far as they establish this first relationship linked in a way to the most simple function of number in so far as it is generated from this most elementary something that has a name in mathematics and that is called a sub-group where there intervene additions, what I called the Fibonacci series, simply the joining up of the two preceding terms to constitute the third: 1 1 2 3 5 ... that it is from that very place, as I told you, that there is generated this something that is not of the order of what is called the mathematical, the rational, namely, this unary trait, but something that, at the origin, introduces this first proportion, the most original one of all that we have designated and that is designated in mathematics where it is perfectly well known:

$$o = \frac{\sqrt{5}-1}{2}$$

simply by this proportion **o**/1-**o** = 1/**o** = 1+**o**.

Now at the place of **o**, write knowledge. We do not know yet what it is since this is what we are questioning ourselves about. If 1 is the field of the Other and the field of truth, the truth in so far as it does not know itself, we write:

$$\frac{\text{knowledge}}{\text{truth} - \text{knowledge}} = \frac{\text{truth}}{\text{knowledge}} = \text{truth with knowledge added on}$$

Let us try to see what these relationships mean. This means that knowledge about the unconscious, namely, that there is a knowledge

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that says "there is somewhere a truth that does not know itself" and it is this that is articulated in the unconscious, it is here that we ought to find the truth about knowledge. Does our relationship, the one that we made earlier, between the dream – I am isolating it from the totality of the formations of the unconscious – this is not to say that I could not (158) also extend it but I am isolating it for clarity, this role of which we may wrongly pose the question "what does that mean?". Because this is not what is important, it is where is the flaw in what is said? This is what is important for us. But it is at a level where what is said is distinct from what it presents as meaning something. And nevertheless it says something without knowing what it is saying since we are forced to help it by our reasoned interpretation. To know that the dream is possible, that is to be known, and that this is how it is. Namely, that the unconscious should have been discovered, is what indicates to us the singular proportion that we can write with the help of the term **o** *qua* original effect of the inscription itself, provided we simply give it this little push of being able to renew itself by connecting repetition and difference in this minimal operation called addition.

It is there that, inasmuch as in this register it is written **o/1-o = 1/o** , we can see that this knowledge about the diminished truth of knowledge, it is there that we have to take not simply the truth, namely, a word that is affirmed, truth about what is involved in the function of knowledge, but even on this occasion to be able to confront them on the same line and, in a word, to question what is involved in this junction which ensures that we can write truth plus knowledge.

Now all I am able to do, since I am pressed for time, is to recall the economic analogy that I introduced here about what is involved in truth as work, an analogy that is very sensitive to something in our experience. The fact is that a discourse, at least the analytic one, the work of truth is more obvious because it is painful. To make one's way without falling to the right or to the left into some intuitive

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identification or other that short-circuits, in a way, the sense of what is at stake in the least relevant references, that of need for example. And on the contrary, it is to the function of price that I homologated knowledge. Now price is certainly not established by chance, any more than any effect of exchange. But what is certain, is that the price in itself does not constitute a work and here indeed is the important point. It is that neither does knowledge, whatever may be said about it. It is an invention of pedagogues that knowledge is acquired by the sweat of your brow, we will soon be told, as if it were necessarily correlative to burning late oil. With good electrical light one can do without it! But I ask you: have you ever, I am not saying learned anything, because to learn is a terrible thing, you have to go through all (159) the stupidity of those who explain things to you. This is painful to bring up, but is it not a fact that getting to know something always happens in a flash?

Everything that is said about any learning by experience, having something to do with one's hands, knowing how to handle oneself on a horse or on skis, that has nothing to do with knowledge. There is a moment when you know how to sort out the things that are presented to you, which are signifiers, and in the way that they are presented to you, it means nothing. And then all of a sudden it means something and that from the very beginning. It is tangible from the way in which a child handles his first alphabet that what is in question is not any learning but the collapse that unites a big capital letter with the shape of the animal whose initial is supposed to correspond to the capital letter in question. The child makes the connection or does not make it. In the majority of cases, namely, in those where he is not surrounded by too much pedagogical attention he makes it. And that is what knowledge is. And every time a piece of knowledge is produced, of course, it is not useless for a subject to have passed through this stage in order to understand what happens from an effect of knowledge in the little schemas that I feel scrupulous about not having made you

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sense properly earlier on, but I was pressed for time, set theory. We will come back to it if necessary.

What is it to know? If we ought, pushing things further, to question what is involved in this fundamental analogy, the one which means that knowledge still remains perfectly opaque because it is a matter for the numerator of the first relation of a singular knowledge which is the fact that there is truth, and perfectly articulated to what it lacks *qua* knowledge. And that, by reason of this relation, it is from this very relation that we are expecting the truth about what is involved in knowledge. It is clear that I am not leaving you here at the level of a pure and simple riddle and that the fact that I have introduced it through this term **o** shows you that it is effectively in the articulation that I already, it seems to me, sufficiently circumscribed about the **o**-object that there ought to depend any possible manipulation of the function of knowledge.

Will I here, at the moment of ending, need to have the necessary boldness to give a plausible sense to what will be written in terms of a cross conjunction of the type that people use in arithmetic. From this knowledge about the unconscious to this knowledge questioned as a radical function. In so far, in short, as it constitutes this very object towards which there tends every desire in so far as it is produced at the level of articulation. How knowledge *qua* knowledge is lost at the origin because desire appears in every possible articulation of discourse. This is what we will have to consider in the talks that follow.

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Seminar 13: Wednesday 5 March 1969

I left you the last time on a formula balanced according to what we will call a harmonic proportion that I developed before you in these terms that

$$o/1\text{-}o = 1/o$$

which I was able to translate easily, because of what had been previously said, by something that carries in itself a certain degree of obviousness and is of a nature to satisfy by an *a priori* formula what is commonly accepted as being what the analytic conquest is. This is the fact that we know that somewhere, in this part that we call the unconscious, a truth is stated which has this property that we can know nothing about it. This, I mean this very fact, is what constitutes a knowledge. I therefore wrote: knowledge over the function of truth minus knowledge, this is what ought to give us the truth about knowledge.

Knowledge/Truth – Knowledge = Truth/Knowledge

At this point, to give you notice of a tiny episode among my encounters, I happened this week to hear a formula – I apologise to its author if I distort it a little. It was a matter of a formula at the beginning of a research into the line of my teaching, which was to situate the function of psychoanalysis not at all costs as a science but as an epistemological indication. Since research on the function of science is on the agenda, the formula is the following:

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"Psychoanalysis is supposed to be, in the sciences, something that one could formulate as a science without knowledge". My interlocutor went as far as that. And carried along no doubt by what is involved in a certain current movement, in so far as at a level that is indeed also one of experience, there is posed a question of what is involved in terms of a sort of relativity that is accused of being the style of social domination in the transmission of knowledge. I took up my interlocutor sharply, precisely in the name of the fact that it is false to say that nothing of psychoanalytic experience, that nothing in a (162) teaching could be properly articulated, be put forward as knowledge. And that because of that fact, because this is what is at stake at present, able to be stated in a magisterial fashion in the terms that are precisely those in which I state this knowledge here. And nevertheless from a certain angle, in a certain fashion, what my interlocutor was putting forward was the truth.

It is the truth at the level of this analytic knowledge that is not one, of knowledge, as compared to what it seems to be. What one might take it for if, under the pretext that it has stated the original, radical relationship of the function of knowledge to sexuality people precipitated themselves too quickly – this is a pleonasm! – to deduce from it that it is a knowledge about the sexual. Who has ever learned in psychoanalysis how to treat his wife properly? Because it is a fact that a wife counts! There is a certain way of taking her from the right angle, she is to be held in your arms in a certain way and she for her part has no doubt about it! She is capable of saying to you: "You are not holding me the way a woman should be held". That in an analysis the paths that prevented this man, to whom this woman was addressing herself in the way I have just said, from doing it properly can be clarified, is what people like to believe happens at the end of an analysis. And as regards technique, if you will permit me to express myself in this way, the result depends on his natural knowledge, his skill (*addresse*), if you will allow me to use this word, with all the ambiguity it possess in French from the ordinary resources of the

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language: the faculty pinpointed by this name and also the sense of whom that is addressed to, the address that is supposedly given at the end of a certain clearing out.

It is clear that there is nothing in common between the analytic operation and anything whatsoever pertaining to this register that I have just now called technique. Its extent can be measured when one maps out this domain, as Mauss did incidentally, for example, speaking about the characteristics in culture of this very widespread function, for which it is not without reason that in our civilisation, it is not properly speaking eluded but repressed into corners, this function he calls "the techniques of the body". I have here only to make an allusion to the dimension of properly erotic techniques in so far as they are put forward in one or other culture that one could not in any way describe as primitive, the Hindu culture for example, to make you sense that nothing of what is stated in what for you, in no case reaches you except under the heading of playthings, of pornography, in reading a book like the Kama-Sutra for example. And nevertheless, in another dimension that this text can be understood, it can take on an import that, with regard to the complete confusions about this word, the one that I am going to use, will be mapped out, not incorrectly, but approximately, as metaphysical. The angle then from which sexual knowledge is tackled in psychoanalysis, is why it takes on its weight in (163) the way that I write it. There again, once more, what is at stake, is a recourse to what is obvious from the start, and this is indeed the prohibition properly speaking that can cover this knowledge, sexual knowledge. The angle from which I would not say we enter into it but are confronted by it, is again the following, in the sense that this angle was never taken. It is to tackle it from the point where this prohibition is brought to bear, and that is why the first statements of Freud with respect to the unconscious put the accent on the function of censorship as such.

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This prohibition is exercised as affecting a certain "there", that place, where it speaks, where it avows itself, where it avows that it is preoccupied by the question of this knowledge. And admire there, in passing, once again the riches of language. Is not this "preoccupied" to translate *Besetzung*, the Freudian *Besetz*, not better than this "investment" or this "invested" that the translations deafen us with? It is pre-occupied, occupied in advance by this something whose position, henceforth, is going to become more ambiguous. What can be meant – and this is what requires us to return to it again, to this function of the unconscious – what can be meant by this knowledge whose mark at a certain level that is articulated from truth is defined by the fact that this knowledge that preoccupies you is what you know least. And this is what allows us to state perhaps, to clarify things that one can say from a certain point of view, that in our culture, our civilisation, in our sauce, for this frying pan or in any case it is indeed the only term that justifies this gathering here, one could go as far as to sustain that psychoanalysis has this function of maintaining this sort of hypnosis which means that after all, it is quite true, huh, among us the sexual is maintained in an unprecedented torpor.

All of this is not a reason for psychoanalysis to be used in any way to contest - because this is what is at stake - the well-foundedness of the transmission of any knowledge whatsoever, not even its own. Because after all it discovered something, however mythical its formulation, it discovered what in other registers is called the means of production, of what? Of a satisfaction. It discovered that there was something articulatable and articulated, something that I pinpointed, that I exposed as *montages*, and literally not being able to conceive of itself otherwise, that it calls the drives. And this only has meaning – which means that it does not present them as such – in as far as on occasion it is satisfying, and that, when one sees them functioning, that implies that it brings satisfaction with it. When, from the angle of a theoretical articulation, it exposes in behaviour the functioning of oral drives, anal drives, and of others again, scoptophilic or sado-masochistic drives, it

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is indeed to say that something is being satisfied and it is self-evident that it cannot be designated otherwise than as what is underneath, a subject, an *upokeimenon*, whatever division must necessarily result for (164) it, because here it is only the subject of a functioning instrument, an *organon*. The term is used here less with an anatomical accent, a prolongation, the more or less animated natural appendix of a body, than properly in its original sense, where Aristotle, uses it in logic as an apparatus, as an instrument. Naturally, the domain is no longer limitroph. And it is indeed because of this that some organs of the body that are moreover ambiguous in different ways, hard to grasp, because it is too obvious that some are only waste products, are found to be placed in this function of instrumental support. So then a question is opened up. How can we define this satisfaction? We have to believe that there must here be something, all the same, that is not working because what we spend our time on, with regard to these *montages*, is dismantling them. Does that mean that the pure and simple dismantling implies in itself, as such, in the foreground, that it is curative? If that was how things were, things might have gone a little quicker, and we would perhaps have covered the whole area a long time ago! If we put forward the function of *fixation* as essential, it is indeed because the affair is not so easy as that. And that what we have to retain in the psychoanalytic field is perhaps in effect that there is something that is inscribed as its horizon, and that this is the sexual. And that it is in function of this horizon, maintained as such, that the drives are inserted into their function as system.

You see then the prudence with which I am bringing forward my assertions here. I spoke about horizon; I spoke about field. I did not speak about sexual act, since moreover for those who were already here two years ago, I posed for the question of the act different premises, undoubtedly, than those that take it as a given that there is a sexual act. They will remember that I concluded that by taking as an aim the question of the sexual act, we can state that by taking the act with the structural emphasis where alone it subsists, there is no sexual

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act. We will come back to it. Moreover, you can be sure that it is indeed in order to return to it from another angle, that of this year, the one that goes from an Other to the other, that we find ourselves on this path where there deserves nevertheless to be recalled what we concluded using a different approach.

What is questioned about satisfaction as essential to the drive we are also forced to leave in suspense, if only in order to choose our path in order to be able to define it. For the moment we can make the leap from the living experience that is found somewhere at the level of the equals sign of the equation written here. Here indeed is what is at the centre of our questioning today. To what satisfaction can knowledge itself correspond, a knowledge that it is not for nothing I am, in short, putting forward here as notionally approachable, as the knowledge that will be identical to this field that I have just circumscribed, which would be "knowing one's way around, *savoir y faire*" in this field. Is (165) this even enough? This knowing one's way around it is still a little too close to know-how (*savoir faire*), about which there may have been earlier a misunderstanding that I encouraged, moreover, as a way of catching you where you have to be caught, in the gut. It is rather "knowing how to be with it, *savoir y être*", and this brings us back to the angle that is in question for us here. This always brings us back, as it should, to the basis of what is at stake for us. That what the Freudian discovery puts forward is that one can be with it without knowing that one is with it. And that to believe oneself more certain by being wary of this being with it, to believe oneself to be elsewhere, in a different knowledge, means one is fully in it. This is what psychoanalysis says, one is in it without knowing it; one is in it in all the fields of knowledge. And that is why it is from this angle that psychoanalysis is found to be important for putting knowledge in question. It is nowhere from any truth and specifically not from any ontology. Wherever one may be, wherever one functions, through the function of knowledge, one is in the horizon of the sexual.

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You must admit that it is all the same worth the trouble to look more closely at this. One is in it without knowing it. Does one lose oneself in it? There seems to be no doubt about that, because that is what people start from. One is screwed up to the hilt. The dupery of consciousness lies in the fact that it is used for something that it does not think it is used for. I said dupery, not deception. Psychoanalysis does not question itself about the truth of the matter. Nowhere can we extract from it discourses about the veil of Maya or about the fundamental illusion of the *Wille*. Dupery implies something, but it is here less easy to resolve than elsewhere. A dupe, is someone that someone else exploits. Who exploits here? The accent being put on dupery, all the same the question spreads out (*fuse*). And that is why in a zone which is the continuation of Marxist theory, there is some unease. Might this bloody psychoanalysis not give here – this is the term that I heard advanced like that, emerging in these words, I prefer, as I told you, a discourse without words but when I go to see people it is in order to talk, so they talk, they talk more than me, and then they say something like that: "After all, psychoanalysis might well be a further guarantee for the theory of social exploitation". They are not wrong; only here the exploiter is less easy to grasp; the style of revolution also. It is a dupery that benefits no one, at least in appearance.

So then is the knowledge of analytic experience only the knowledge that can be used not to be a dupe to the tune that is being played? But what use is it if it is not accompanied by a knowledge of how to get out of it or even, more specifically an introit knowledge, knowing how to enter into what is in question as regards this flash that can result from it because of the necessary failure of something which is perhaps not the privilege of the sexual act. It is this question about which psychoanalysis, in fact, has remained on the threshold. Why has it remained on the threshold? The fact that it remains on the threshold in

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(166) practice, is something that can only be justified in a theoretical way. This is what we are striving for. But that it should also have remained there on the theoretical plane is, I would say, its problem. Let us leave it to get out of it by itself; that does not prevent us, all of us as we are here, in so far as we are in the frying pan, from trying, we also, like the others, to go further.

It is certain that here, precisely, we find ourselves at the crossroads where, in a completely inverse way to what I stated earlier, we have perhaps to learn from the experience of other dimensions with regard to a certain text which proves with time not to be too different to ours, since the function of the sign and even of the signifier here has its own value, namely, the Marxist critique. It would perhaps be enough for a little bit less belief in progress on one side and the other for us to arrive at fruitful conjunctions - I mean theoretical ones. On this point, everyone knows that I am contributing something that is also an *organon*, precisely the one that may be of use to cross this frontier, and that some people pinpoint as the logic of the signifier. It is true, I managed to make some statements about this. And they stimulated in a lively way minds that nothing coming from psychoanalysis had prepared, but who found themselves stimulated by things that came from elsewhere. Elsewhere, which is not so simple to specify, because it is not simply a matter of political allegiance. But, moreover, a certain number of styles that in the present time, namely, well after I began to state the aforesaid logic, there were produced all sorts of questions about the handling of this signifier, about what a discourse is, about what a novel is, even about what the proper use of formalisation in mathematics is. So people are, there as elsewhere, in a bit of a hurry. Haste has its function, I already stated the logic of it. Again I only stated it to show the mental traps, I would go as far as to qualify them as such, into which it precipitates. People will end up, by wanting to accentuate the degree to which what I am stating as a logic

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of the signifier remains in the margin, in some way, of what a certain frenzy, adherence to pure formalisation would allow to separate out from it as, they say, metaphysics. We will end up with the notion that, even in the domain of pure mathematical exercise, the use of formalisation does not exhaust everything but leaves in the margin something in connection with which the question about what is involved in the desire to know is still valid. And, who knows, someone around me suggested it a few days ago, there will be perhaps despite myself one day in mathematics something that will be called the Lacan theorem! It is certainly not what I would have looked for, because I have other fish to fry, but this is precisely the way these things happen. By wanting to consider as closed – and this is indeed a characteristic of something that normally ought to end up elsewhere – an uncompleted discourse, one produces waste products like that. One (167) can still leave the statement of this theorem to an obscure future.

For the moment, let us come back to knowledge and let us start again from what is being stated here. It is not the same thing to state a formula if you start at one end rather than the other. Knowledge, one can say, contrary to our experience, is what truth lacks. That is why truth – which obviously, just by that, puts out of synch the debate of a certain logic, the logic of Frege in so far as it starts on the two crutches of two very notable values, 1 or 0, truth or error. Observe carefully the trouble he has in finding a proposition that he can describe as truthful. He has to invoke the number of satellites that Jupiter or some other planet has. In other words something nice and round that can be isolated, without noticing that this is only to have recourse to the oldest prestige of the way the real first appeared as what always comes back to the same place. Because he cannot advance anything other than the recourse to these astronomical entities, because of course there is no question of a mathematician stating as a formula bearing inherent to itself the truth of 2 and 2 are four. Because it is not true if by chance in

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each of the 2 there was one that was the same. They would only add up to 3. There are not many other formulae that can be stated as truth.

That the truth is the desire to know and nothing else is obviously only designed to put in question precisely the following, whether there was a truth before? Everyone knows that this is the sense of the Heideggerian *letting be*; is there something to *let be*? It is in this sense that psychoanalysis contributes something. It is there to say that there is something, in effect, that one can let be. Only it intervenes in it. And it intervenes in it in a way that interests us, beyond the threshold behind which it lies, in so far as it makes us question ourselves about what is involved in the desire to know.

That is why we come back to the drive. It is no doubt mythological, as Freud himself wrote. But what is not so, is the supposition that a subject is satisfied by it. Now it is not thinkable without the implication already, in the drive, of a certain knowledge, of its character of taking the place of the sexual. Only there you are, what does that mean, that it is not thinkable? Because things can go as far as to question the effect of thinking as suspect. Perhaps we know absolutely nothing about what that means, to take the place of the sexual (*tenir lieu du sexuel*). The very idea of the sexual can be an effect of the passage of what is at the heart of the drive, namely the **o**-object. As you know, that was done a long time ago. Dear Eve passed him the fatal apple! After all, this is also a myth. It is starting from there that he sees her as a woman. He becomes aware of all the things I told you about earlier. Beforehand, he had not noticed that she was (168) something extracted from the side of his ribcage. He found it, like that, nice, very agreeable. They were in Paradise! It is probably at that very moment – and in reading the text there is no doubt about it – that not only does he discover that she is the woman, but he begins to

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think, the little dear! That is why that to say "it is not thinkable" that the drive already involves, implies a certain knowledge, does not take us very far. And the proof, moreover, is that here is the connecting point with idealism. There was someone called Simmel who spoke, in his time, about sublimation, before Freud. It was in order to start from the function of values. And so then he explains very well how the feminine object comes to take on, within this, a privileged value. It is a choice like any other. There are values, one thinks in values; and then one thinks in accordance with values; and then one builds up values.

I told you that psychoanalysis and Freud are not worried either about illusion nor the veil of Maya, it is precisely because one and the other, the practice and the theory, are realist. Enjoyment is something that is only noticed by seeing how constant it is in Freud's statements. But it is also what is noticed from experience, I mean psychoanalytic. Enjoyment is here an absolute, it is the real, and in the way that I have defined it as what always returns to the same place. And if one knows it, it is because of the woman. This enjoyment as such is such that originally only the hysteric puts it in order logically, it is she in effect who posits it as an absolute, that is why she unveils the logical structure of the function of enjoyment. Because if she posits it in this way, which makes her a correct theoretician, it is at her own expense. It is precisely because she posits it as an absolute that it is rejected, and can only respond to it from the angle of a desire unsatisfied with respect to herself.

This position in logical unveiling starts from an experience whose correlation is perfectly tangible at every level of analytic experience. I mean that it is always from a beyond of enjoyment as an absolute that all the articulated determinations of what is involved in desire logically

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find their correct place. This reaches a degree of consistency in the statements that refutes all the out-of-datedness linked to the randomness of origins. It is not because the hysterics were there at the start through a historical accident that the whole affair was able to take its place. It is because they were at the right point where the incidence of a word could highlight this hollow which is the consequence of the fact that enjoyment plays here the function of being outside the limits of the game. It is because as Freud says, the enigma of what a woman wants is there, which is an altogether displaced way of pinpointing what is involved, on this occasion, about her place, which takes on its value from what a man wants. That the whole theory of analysis, as is sometimes said, has developed along an androcentric channel, is certainly not the fault of men, as is believed. It is not because they are (169) dominant, in particular, it is because they have lost their way and that from then on, it is only women, and especially hysterical women, who understand something about it.

If in the enunciation of the unconscious as I have written it, the mark of o is raised to the level where knowledge is lacking, it is in the measure that we know nothing about this absolute and this is even what constitutes it as absolute. It is because it is not linked in the statement but that what is affirmed, and this is what stating is in its unconscious part, is that this is what desire is *qua* lack of the 1. Now this does not guarantee that this is what desire is *qua* lack of the 1. This does not guarantee that the lack of the 1 is the truth. Nothing guarantees that it is not the lie. That is even why in the *Entwurf*, in the *Project for a scientific psychology*, Freud designates what is involved in the unconscious concatenation as having its start in a *proton pseudos*, which can only be translated correctly, when one knows how to read, by the sovereign lie. If that is applied to the hysteric, it is only in the measure that she takes the place of the man. What is at stake, is the function of this 1 in so far as it dominates everything that is

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involved in the field that has correctly been pinpointed as metaphysics. It is what is put in question much more than being by the intrusion of psychoanalysis. It is what has forced us to displace the accent from the sign to the signifier.

If a field were conceivable where sexual union functions, it would only be a matter, where it appears to work, in the animal, of the sign. "Make me a swan (*cygne*)", as Leda said to one of them! After that, everything is fine. Each one has been given a half of the dessert, we are united, that makes One. Only, if analysis introduces something, it is precisely that this One does not work. And that is why it introduces something new, in the light of which moreover even the exploits of eroticism that I made an allusion to earlier, in so far as it engages with them, can alone take on a meaning. Because if sexual union, at the same time, only involved its goal of satisfaction, there would be no subjective process to be expected from any experience. By which I mean not those that, in analysis, give the configurations of desire, but those that, well beyond, in a terrain that is already explored, already practised, are considered to be the paths of an asceticism where something of the order of being can come to be realised. Enjoyment, this enjoyment that is here only highlighted from the exclusion in a way of something that feminine nature represents. Do we not know that nature does not always seem to need to have recourse to it, in order to provide for the necessity of union in its thousands and ten of thousands of species? There are many other systems other than tumescent systems that function in particular arthropoda or arachnida. What is involved in enjoyment can in no way be reduced here to a (170) naturalism. The naturalistic aspect of psychoanalysis is simply this natural aspect of the systems that are called drives, and this natural aspect is conditioned by the fact that man is born into a sea of signifiers. There is no reason to give it any consequence at all in the sense of nature worship.

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The question that we are going to open up and which will be the object of our next talk will be clarified, I think, by these premises that I put forward today. How can it happen – it is from here that the question should be taken up - not that sublimation, which is the point where Freud himself marked what I called earlier the coming to a halt of analysis on a threshold. About sublimation he has only told us two things: that it had a certain relationship *an Objekt. Am, an,* you already recognise the *an sich.* It is not at all the same as the French *en.* When the *an sich* is translated by *en soi*, it is not that at all. This indeed is why my "*en-je*" when it is the **o** that is at stake is also ambiguous. I would have liked to have called it "*o-je*", putting in an apostrophe, *l'o-je*", and you will see immediately in this way where we are sliding. This is the correct use of tongues in practice. But, to take up again what is involved, when Freud articulates sublimation, he underlines that if it has a relationship with the object it is through the intermediary of something that he exploits at the level at which he introduces it and that he calls idealisation. But that, in its essence it is *mit den Trieb*, with the drive. This is in the *Einfürung zur Narzissmus.* But to refer you to other texts, there are a certain number, I do not think that I need to enumerate them for you, from the *Three essays on sexuality* to *Group psychology*, the accent is always put on the fact that as opposed to the censoring interference that characterises *Verdrängung*, and, in a word, from the principle that creates an obstacle to the emergence of work, sublimation is properly speaking and as such a mode of satisfaction of the drive. It is with the drive, a drive that he qualifies as *zielgehemmt*, diverted, people translate, from its goal. I already tried to articulate what is involved in this goal, and that perhaps it is necessary to dissociate at the level of the goal what is the path for what is properly speaking the target in order to see more clearly into it. But what need for such quibbling after what I have produced before you today. How can it not be seen that there is nothing easier than to see the drive being satisfied outside its sexual goal. However it may be defined, it is outside the field of what is defined in its essence as the system of the drive.

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In a word, to conclude, I would only ask one thing of you, to see where it has ended up everywhere when, not through instinct, that we would have a lot of trouble from today on to situate somewhere, but a social structure that is organised around the sexual function. We may be astonished that none of those who have applied themselves to showing us the society of bees or of ants have not put the accent on the fact that while they are occupied with quite different things, with their groupings, with their communications, with their revels, with their (171) marvellous little intelligence, to see that an anthill like a hive is entirely centred around the realisation of what is involved in the sexual relationship. It is very precisely in the measure that these societies are different from ours, that they take on the form of a fixedness which proves the non-presence of the signifier. This indeed is why Plato, who believed in the eternity of all relationships between ideas, created an ideal *Politeia* where all the children are in common. From that moment on, you are sure of what is involved, it is a matter of properly speaking centring society on what is involved in sexual production. The horizon of Plato, however idealistic you may imagine him to be, was nothing else, except of course a sequence of logical consequences of which there is no question that they carry in their fruits to cancel out in society all the effects of his dialogues. I will leave you with this for today and I am giving you a rendezvous the next time on the subject of sublimation.

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Seminar 14: Wednesday 12 March 1969

(On the board)

The Woman?	The Other?	The Thing?
X	The locus of the word with which one makes love	the vacuole of enjoyment
		Enjoyment
		The object (otolithic)

Sublimation to reach the Woman
courtly love, the idealisation of the object
Sublimation to reach Enjoyment
with the drive
The representative of representation.

(173) I put some little words on the board so that they may serve you as hooks for some of the remarks that I will make before you today. In fact, with the time that has passed, that ought to be enough for you! I mean that starting from these hooks that figure on the first line, question marks, I ought to be able to hand over to at least some of you

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so that they can carry out in my place this weekly work that consists in drilling into this discourse. In truth, it would not be a bad thing for people to take up the baton. I mean that, as has been done moreover in previous years, there should be people who are willing to devote themselves to pushing further along a certain number of subsisting objects, that it would be no harm to bring up to date after a certain lapse of time.

(174) It is quite obvious in effect that in what I state, there are phases, levels, especially if you think of the point from which I had to start in order first of all to hammer home this point that was nevertheless clearly visible in what I occupy myself with. Namely, that the unconscious, I mean the unconscious that Freud speaks about, is structured like a language. This is visible to the naked eye, there is no need for my spectacles to see it but in fact they were necessary. A friendly person said to me recently that reading Freud, in short, is too easy, because one can read him and be completely hoodwinked. After all, why not, because taking things in the round, this has been clearly proven by the facts. And the first massive thing, the one that people had to disentangle themselves from had not even been noticed, thanks to a sequence of configurations that one can call the operation of popularisation. Nevertheless time was necessary for me to get it across, and this even in the circle that in this respect had been most alerted to notice it.

Thanks to all these delays things happen that I cannot say are discouraging for me, far from it. It happens, for example, that a M Gilles Deleuze, continuing his work, has brought out in the form of his theses two capital books the first of which is of the greatest interest to us. I think that simply from its title *Difference and repetition*, you can see that it ought to have some relation with my discourse, of which of course he is completely aware. And because like that, without any delay, I had the happy surprise to see appearing on my desk an additional book that he is giving us. This moreover is a real surprise

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because he had not announced it in any way to me the last time I saw him after passing his two theses. It is called *The logic of sense*. It would be no harm all the same for someone, for example, among you to get to know a part of this book. I am not saying the whole thing because it would be a lot to bite off, but in any case it is constructed in a way that a book ought to be constructed. Namely, that each of its chapters implies the whole, so that by taking a well chosen part, it would not be a bad thing to notice that he, with his felicitous style has been able to take the time to articulate, to assemble in a single text not simply what is involved at the heart of what my discourse has stated – and there is no doubt that this discourse is at the heart of his books since it is admitted there as such and that the seminar on the purloined letter forms in a way the opening step of it, defines its threshold – but in any case he, he was able to have the time for all these things that have nourished my discourse, have aided it, have occasionally given it its apparatus, such as the logic of the Stoics, for example. He allows himself, he is able to show its place as essential support, he is able to do so with this supreme elegance of which he has the secret. Namely, he takes advantage of the works of all those who have clarified this difficult point of Stoic doctrine, difficult because moreover it is only left to us in scattered pieces, outside testimony, with which we are forced to reconstitute, in a way by tiresome illuminations, what (175) effectively was its relief, the relief of a thinking that was not simply a philosophy but a practice, an ethics, a way of conducting oneself in the order of things.

It is moreover why for example the fact of finding on a particular page, page 289, something, the only point on which, in this book where I am evoked on several occasions, he indicates that he separates himself from a doctrine that is supposed to be mine, at least, he says, if a certain report that at a turning moment of my teaching brought before the assembled psychiatric community the essential of my doctrine on the unconscious, that of the two excellent workers that Laplanche and Leclaire were. How on this point, to keep to it, he says, he makes this

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reservation. But he does not hesitate, of course, given the great relevance that on the whole this report has, to ascribe to me also something that seems to imply, namely, what he calls, what he translates as the plurivocity of signifying elements at the level of the unconscious. Or more exactly what is expressed in a particular formula that in re-reading this report, because I had my attention drawn to it by this remark of Deleuze, the possibility of any sense, it is written there, is produced from this veritable identity of the signifier and the signified that results, as perhaps some of you may remember, from a certain way of manipulating the metaphorical function, a little bit beyond the way I had done it. And to make the S, rejected below the limit, the bar, by the metaphorical effect of a substitution, function, to bring into play this S joined to itself as representing the essence of the relation in question and operating as such at the level of the unconscious. Undoubtedly, this is a point that I would leave all the more willingly to the authors who represented me in this remarkable report, represented me, because it is in effect what results from a certain manipulation by them of what I had stated up to then.

If anyone was willing to spend some time here going into the detail, that assuredly the excessive duties of my progress which is destined of its nature not to be able to stop at, given that it must still be a long one. If someone were able, in bringing together what Deleuze states in the whole of this work about what is here advanced absolutely not without relevance but undoubtedly in a way that represents a flaw, to establish why it is a flaw, to circumscribe in a more precise fashion what is faulty there, and what makes that fault very precisely consistent with what in this report plays around what I insisted on on several occasions the previous years, namely, what is essential in a correct translation, which comes back to saying in a correct articulation, of the function described as *Vortellungsrepräsentanz* and of its effective incidence with respect to the unconscious. If someone were willing to propose himself to clarify this which would have the advantage, as is always (176) necessary, to allow, and on this occasion in a public way, those

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who refer to my teaching - and who, of course, complete it, nourish it, accompany it - from what was able to be stated in a way that they complete and sometimes in a clarifying way, the works of my pupils. To allow there, all the same, to be clarified what in one or other place of this work does not entirely express not, I would say, what was at that moment the axis of what I was stating but what subsequently was demonstrated to be its true axis. While waiting for someone of good will to put himself forward, I underline that the article that I am alluding to *The unconscious, a psychoanalytic study* was published, moreover I do not know why, in *Les Temps Modernes* in July 1961, namely, a considerable time after this report had been given at a congress described as that of Bonneval, the one to which there refers what I contributed myself in something edited that itself was much later, in my *Ecrits,* under the title of *Position of the unconscious.*

I am returning now to our agenda and I pursue my remarks of the last time and along the axis of what I announced to you as being on the agenda today, which is sublimation. The last time, I highlighted and stressed two things: that what was at stake, from Freud's point of view - there are of course many other passages to be quoted but this one is capital, it is in the *Introduction to narcissism* - first of all of the relation of idealisation *am Objekt*, to the object, and on the other hand the fact that sublimation is essentially attached to the fate, to the avatar, to the *Schicksal* of drives. It is one of those avatars, the ones stated by Freud in the article entitled *Trieb und Triebschicksal*, drives and their avatars. It is the fourth of them, and this fourth is characterised by the fact that it is constructed *mit dem Trieb*, with the drive. This term "with" that it is striking to rediscover here from Freud's pen, at least for those who have heard me in the past hammering out this "with" on several occasions. And particularly in taking up the formula of Aristotle: "it must not be said that the soul thinks but that man thinks with his soul". Something is satisfied with the drive. What is it when on the other hand Freud tells us that this drive that he dismantles for us, from these four dismantled terms – it is the formula that I have always underlined

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as essential to the drive, it is a *montage* of these four terms: the source, *Quelle*, the *Drang*, the pressure, the *Objekt,* the object, and the goal (*but*), *Ziel* – the drive will find itself satisfying what? This is today what is in question, very precisely because of the fact that it is inhibited as regards the goal, that it elides what is involved in the sexual goal.

It is not enough all the same to translate this into what is undoubtedly the usual thing by thus imagining that it is at the expense of their sexual satisfaction that the authors, whoever they may be, whose works we appreciate, whose works take on a social value, because this is the term with which Freud himself accentuates the matter, that there is (177) here some obscure substitution or other. It is not enough to stay there to give its import to what Freud has stated. This indeed is why the premises, the time that I spent in tackling this subject by articulating explicitly in our two last meetings that sexuality, with respect to what interests us from the psychoanalytic field, certainly constitutes a horizon, but that its essence is much further away again, as I said. Neither its knowledge nor its practice, I am speaking about that of sexuality, are for all that either illuminated or modified by it.

This is what I would like to bring your attention back to again at a time when, on the biological plane, things are certainly clarifying a little. Everything we discover at the level of regulatory structure sometimes take on a strange isomorphism with our statements about the functioning of language. It is assuredly more than prudent not to remain, with regard to sex, at these crude schemas. If you approach with a little attention the works of someone like François Jacob on what is called bacteriography and everything that a rigorous experimental technique allows to begin to be seen about what is involved in the operation of living material, it may enter your head that even before there is a question of sex, there is a lot of copulating in it! That is why perhaps it is not unrelated that at another end of the field, our one, that has certainly nothing to say on the subject of biology,

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people also notice that it is a little more complicated than that to speak about sex. And that, for example, it would be well not to confuse what is involved in the relationship, this term being taken in its logical sense, of the relation that grounds the conjoined function of two sexes. This seems like that to be self evident, huh, that there should only be two! Why should there not be three or more? There is not the slightest allusion here to the frivolous uses that have been made of this term of the third sex, for example – a book that is particularly remarkable, I am saying in parenthesis, for the irresponsibility it bears witness to – biologically. Why in effect should there not be three of them? The fact that there are two constitutes certainly one of the fundamental bases of reality. In this regard it would be well to notice how far its logical incidences go. Because, by a curious return, every time we have to deal with the number two, behold, at least in our mental arithmetic, sex re-enters by the side door. This all the more easily because one knows nothing about sex. A little indication, like that, that there is an extra chromosome somewhere. It is rather curious moreover that one can never say in advance for a particular species on what side, male or female, this extra chromosome, this disconnected, asymmetrical chromosome is going to be found. So then people would do better to pay attention to the fact that to state something about the sexual relationship, has nothing to do with what is completely substituted for it, and especially in psychoanalysis. Namely, the phenomena of identification with a type described, on this occasion, as male or female.

(178) Having said that, despite appearances, what psychoanalysis demonstrates, is precisely that even this identification with a type is not so easy as that. On the whole, it is only with great awkwardness that people manage to state something about it. The masculine position or the feminine position, people say. Very quickly people slip, people talk about the homosexual position. The least of things, is to be even the slightest bit struck that every time that Freud wants to make a precise statement, he admits himself that it is altogether impossible to

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rely on this opposition of male or female, and that it is that of active or passive that he substitutes. It would be interesting to pose the question of whether if any one whatsoever of the two terms masculinity, maleness or femaleness *('malité' ou 'femellité')* femininity is an acceptable qualification as a predicate. Can one say "all males", can this even be stated in a naïve manipulation of adjectives. Why should an Aristotelian proposition not be dressed up as follows: "Every male in creation", for example? It is a question that would involve the following: does all the non- males, mean the females? The abysses opened up by such a confident recourse to the principle of contradiction might perhaps also be taken in the other sense and make us question ourselves, as in the approach I earlier announced, about what recourse to the principle of contradiction may itself contain in terms of sexual implications.

Of course there are modes other than yes or no that come into play in these phantasies coming from the improbable approach of the sexual relationship. There is the polarity, for example, of the sexual couple. This in the name of a more microscopic view of these filaments that are produced at the moment that, when the fecundating of the egg has taken place, something is established like a field between the two nuclei, a field that should be conceived of less as a kind of field of gradation than as a field involving, according as one approaches the two poles, an increasing and decreasing bivectoriality. Is the fact that it is supported in this way by this image of the field so fundamental in other domains, that of electromagnetics, for example, sufficient to allow us to think that sex and its fundamental relationship, is of that order, two poles, something that is organised, a texture of a spherical order between the two? Naturally, if one begins to ask oneself the question, one sees that the foundations are perhaps not so obvious as that. If we have forms that favour such a support, there are many other questions that may be raised, effects of dominance, influence, repulsion, indeed of rupture that are perhaps indeed of a nature to encourage us to put in question again what, I am saying, is only

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possible to put in question of course starting from the moment that people perceived the degree to which what controls it is not discussed, is naïve as they say.

In any case, it is very necessary, when people speak about (179) *Fortpflanzung* for example, of what is going to be made, speaking about the finality of sex, namely reproduction, to see that it is not simply at the level of, when two people sleep together, from time to time a little baby arrives, that this is what gives the image of what is involved in sex. If I began by starting from the effects of sexual copulation at the cellular level, it is quite obviously to indicate that what is at stake is less the third that is produced than the reactivation in sexual union of a fundamental production which is that of the cellular form itself that, stimulated by this passage, becomes capable of reproducing something that is at its very heart, namely, its arrangement. Let us pay attention therefore to these contaminations which make it so easy for us to cover over a function the whole essential of which escapes us perhaps, with the position of plus or minus in mathematics, indeed that of the one or zero in logic. And this all the more because, as I might say, Freudian logic puts us precisely at the sharp end of the fact that it cannot function in polar terms. Everything that it has introduced as a logic of sex comes under the jurisdiction of a single term which is truly its original term, namely, the connotation of a lack, an essential minus that is called castration. Without this, nothing would be able to function at its level in so far as its level is of a logical order. All normativity is organised for the man as for the woman around the transfer (*passation*) of a lack. This is what we see at the level of the logical structuring such as it flows from Freudian experience.

I ought to recall here what I developed at length in a year that I evoked at one of our last encounters under the title of the *Ethics of psychoanalysis*. It articulates that the very dialectic of pleasure, namely, what it involved in terms of a level of stimulation that is at

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once sought and avoided, a correct level of a threshold, implies the centrality of a forbidden zone, let us say, because the pleasure would be too intense. This centrality is what I designate as the field of enjoyment, enjoyment itself being defined as everything relating to the distribution of pleasure in the body. This distribution, its inner limit, is what conditions what at that time and of course with more words, more illustrations than I can give here, what I put forward, I designated as a vacuole, as this prohibition at the centre that constitutes, in short, what is nearest to us, while at the same time being outside us. It would be necessary to make up the word "extimate, *extime* " to designate what is at stake. At that time, I drew out of Freud's texts – I do not have time to expand on which ones – the putting into operation from his pen of this term that I picked out, all the more striking in that it is distinguished from everything that he may have been able to say about things. Things are always *Sachen* for him. Here, he says *das Ding*. I am not going to take up again here, because again I do not have the time, the stress I put on this *das Ding*. All that I can say or recall is (180) that Freud introduces it through the function of the *Nebenmensch*, this man who is closest, this man who is ambiguous because one does not know how to situate him. Who then is he, this neighbour who resonates in the evangelical texts in the name of the formula "love your neighbour as yourself". Where can he be grasped? Where is there, outside this centre of myself that I cannot love, something that is more neighbour to me? This moreover is what Freud, at the moment when, forced in a way by its necessity along deductive paths, cannot characterise it otherwise than by something absolutely primary that he calls the scream. It is in this ejaculatory exteriority that this something is identified, through which what is most intimate to me is precisely what I am constrained to recognise only outside. This indeed is why this scream does not need to be emitted to be a scream. I demonstrated in this magnificent engraving called *The scream*, by Münch, that nothing is more appropriate to its value as expression than the fact that it is situated in this calm landscape, with, not far down the road, two people taking their distance

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and not even turning back. It is of the essence that from the twisted mouth of the feminine individual that represents this scream in the foreground, nothing should emerge but absolute silence. It is from the silence that this scream centres that there emerges the presence of the closest being, of the being all the more awaited in that he is always already there, the neighbour, who has no *Erscheinung* except in the acts of the saints.

This neighbour, is it what I have called the Other, what I make use of to make function the presence of signifying articulation in the unconscious? Certainly not. The neighbour, is the intolerable imminence of enjoyment. The Other is only its cleared out terreplein. I can, all the same, say these thing rapidly, like that, given how long I have articulated for you the definition of the Other. It is precisely that, it is a terrain cleared of enjoyment. It is at the level of the Other that those who take the trouble will be able to situate what, in the book by Deleuze, is entitled with an admirable rigour and correctness, and as distinct, in agreement with everything that the modern thinking of logicians allows to be defined from what are called events, the production (*mise en scène*), and the whole carrousel linked to the existence of language. It is there, in the Other, that there is the unconscious structured like a language.

The question for the moment is not that of knowing how and by whom this clearing out was able to be made. We must begin first of all by recognising it. Perhaps afterwards we will be able to say sensible things. Only it is very important to define it like this because it is only starting from there that one can even conceive of what is perfectly well expressed in Freud, what I expressed in two terms that I think it is important to emphasise. On the one hand the formalisation, on the other hand the impassability, of what? Of desire. Because this is what Freud expresses, it is the last sentence of the *Traumdeutung*, the desire that is at stake, unconscious desire, maintains itself in its stability in an (181) impassable way, transmitting the requirements of what Freud

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calls, rightly or wrongly, the past. It is not because there is *Vergänglichkeit* that this ought right away to make us drift towards thoughts of good or bad impressions, of the traumatic neurosis of the little child that still persists in each one of us, and other commonplaces that, of course, are not unusable. But what is essential, is this permanence, this constancy, and by the fact itself, what is meant by this impassability of desire that can therefore be completely reduced to the formal. So then, at what level is the sexual relationship situated as regards what we can formulate about it? This is the sense of the question as it is written on the first lines on the board: the Woman, the Other, the locus of desire that slides intact, impassable under every word or indeed the Thing, the locus of enjoyment?

So then, of course, this indeed is the moment to remind you that if there is a point where what I said to you - there is no sexual relationship - is affirmed, quite calmly in analysis, it is that one does not know what a woman is. Unknown in the box, except, thank God, through representations, because of course from all time she has never been known except like that. If psychoanalysis highlights something precisely, it is that it is by one or several representatives of representation, this is indeed a case of highlighting the function of this term that Freud introduces in connection with repression. It is not a matter of knowing at the moment whether women are repressed, it is a matter of knowing whether the Woman as such is, and of course moreover, and why not in herself, of course. This discourse is not androcentric. If the Woman in her essence is something, and we know nothing about it, she is just as repressed by women as by men, and she is doubly so. First of all by the fact that the representative of her representation is lost, we do not know what the woman is. And then that the representative, if it is recuperated, is the object of a *Verneinung* because what else can be attributed to her as a characteristic except that of not having what precisely there was never any question of her having. Nevertheless, it is only from this angle that, in Freudian logic, the woman appears: an inadequate representative, alongside the phallus

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and then the negation that she has it. Namely, the reaffirmation of the solidarity with this thing that is perhaps indeed her representative but that has no relationship with her. So then, this ought to give us just by itself a little lesson in logic and see that what is lacking to the whole of this logic, is precisely the sexual signifier. When you read Deleuze – there are perhaps some who will take the trouble – you will be initiated into things that the weekly frequentation of my discourses was apparently not enough to make familiar to you, otherwise I would have more productions of this style to read. The fact is that the essential, as is said somewhere, of structuralism, if this word has a sense – only since it has been given a sense at the level like that of a whole forum, I (182) do not see why I would take on the privilege of it – the essential is at the same time this blank, this lack in the signifying chain, with what results from it in terms of wandering objects in the signified chain. So then the wandering object, here, for example, is a pretty little bladder that has been blown up, a little balloon, with two painted eyes and a little moustache on it. You must not believe that this is the man. What is written is that this is the woman, because it is indeed like that that one sees this ungraspable woman going about everyday; this is even what allows us to have a certain sense of the relative with regard to the fact that it might not be like that.

In a less logical epoch, when we go back into pre-history, where perhaps there was not yet the Oedipus complex, there are made little statuettes of women that must all the same have been precious for them to be still discoverable – they must all the same have been stuck into corners – who had a shape like that (drawing on the board). Here there is no longer a little bladder, or eyes or moustache, here huge buttocks and good, that is how a prehistoric Venus is composed. I have not drawn it very well but it was to give you an impression. It was less andromorphous. This does not at all mean what palaeontologists imagine, that does not at all mean that they were like that. The representative of the representation was different than it is for us. It was not one or two balloons. If you remember also the breasts of

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Tiresias, "Fly away, birds of weakness...". The representative of the representation was undoubtedly like that. This proves to you that depending on the times, the representative of the representation can be different.

So then, on these premises, we can now advance a little as regards what is involved in sublimation and I told you enough earlier about how Freud articulated it in order not to have to repeat it, *Zielgehemmt*, idealisation of the object, and working with the drive. Freud takes a certain number of doors through which it can happen. The simplest are obviously the *Reaktionsbildung*. If we know where the barrier is, namely, on the side of enjoyment, it is quite clear that one can imagine it, classify it, which moreover does not clarify it, among the *Reaktionsbildung*, the formation of reactions at the approach of enjoyment. But this is still not enough to explain to us how it gets out of step. Now Freud indicates to us in a little note, a sentence at the end, that there are outside all the approaches that he defines as possible for sublimation, other quite simple ones. Simply he does not say what they are. Perhaps he had some trouble thinking them out, in function of the fact after all that if he gave us the elements that can be called intuitive or again much more improperly naïve in mathematical logic about what constitutes our logical material, this does not mean for all that that he himself quite realised that it lent itself to formalisation.

(183) One sublimates, he tells us, with the drives. On the other hand, what do we know? Where do these drives come from? From the horizon of sexuality. Not in the slightest way clarified up to the present because of the fact that they involve a sexual satisfaction. But what we are told, is that their enjoyment is linked to sexuality. It is not a bad thing at this level that we first began by positing that we know nothing about sexuality. On the contrary what we have articulated and what I have articulated, is that in the drive there intervenes what is called in topology an edge structure, that it is the only way of explaining some of its traits. Namely, that what functions is essentially

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something always roughly characterised by orifices and where there is found the edge-structure. Because only this edge-structure, taken in the mathematical sense, allows us to begin to comprehend what Freud articulated no less at the level of *Drang*, of pressure. Namely, the constancy of the flux that this edge conditions. I put in a note on this, I improved it again in the last edition, referring to what, in vector theory is defined as rotational flux.

The drive, in a word, just by itself, designates the conjunction of logic and corporeality. The enigma is rather the following: as edge enjoyment, how was it able to be called to the equivalence of sexual enjoyment? If you have all the same a little imagination, I mean the possibility of linking up what you cogitate somewhere in your convolutions with your experience that is certainly obviously accessory and always between two doors, you might all the same say, at the level of sexual enjoyment, it is rather a matter of tumescence for example, and then of orgasm, what does that have to do with the functions of the edge? If there were not the configuration of the vacuole, of the hole proper to enjoyment, to this something intolerable for what is essentially regulated as a tempered tension, you would see nothing in the sexual that is analogous to what I am calling in the drive an edge structure. Here the edge is constituted by a sort of logistics of defence. If one did not know after all that this logistics of defence is met at every turn, even in sexual practice, and precisely in the measure that this practice is something different to what is done in a rush, like that, with the vague little directive flotsam that remains to you from the Freudian vocabulary about the enjoyment of the woman, perhaps something might begin to interest you in a closer, more intimate, more direct way about what is involved, not in the sexual relationship about which you cannot say very much, but about what is involved in the handling of sexual enjoyment. All the enigmas that appear, we do not know why, when people study feminine sexuality, the enigma the sensitivity of the vaginal wall presents to the eyes of some people and makes it in a way I am not saying unsituateable but limitrophe to

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(184) feminine enjoyment is something that will find itself much more easily in agreement with the topology that we are trying to approach here. But it is not our subject in its details. What is important is what I am putting forward, that something here resembles the Thing. And this indeed is why we give this Thing, that I made speak at one time under the title of the Freudian Thing, the features of a woman when, in the myth, we call it the Truth. Only it must not be forgotten – this is the sense of these lines on the board – that the Thing, for its part, is undoubtedly not sexed. This is probably what allows us to make love with her, without having the slightest idea of what the Woman is as a sexed thing.

So then that will perhaps allow us to introduce, given the time, the two directions from which sublimation can be studied. If I took care in my seminar on ethics to give a large place to courtly love, it is because this allowed us to introduce the fact that sublimation concerns the woman in the love relationship at the cost of constituting her at the level of the Thing. It is necessary, alas, because I am not going to redo all that this year, for you to refer – but I will try to make sure that you will have the text soon – to the long study I carried out at that time on courtly love to give its import to this. It is very enlightening, and it could be very advantageously re-read in the light of the formulae that I can finally now give in their absoluteness. The ritual of approach, the stages of gradus, as I might say, towards an enjoyment that is arranged, but moreover almost sacralised, is not one of the least amusing aspects of the affair, when one approaches and studies it. To see the awkwardness and I do not mean it is touching, it is simply repugnant, with which the people in these places where there is concentrated the run of the mill of these texts which, of course, no longer interest anyone. These people are irreducibly professors, namely, living in conditions that we all know when we go to visit them. Their major symbol I would say was very prettily given by Anatole France under the title of *Le mannequin d'osier*. I should also have made another drawing for you of the wicker mannequin, it would be in the opposite

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direction. This kind of stupor, of bewilderment that lays hold of them, and then, my God, how these people, at that epoch, the dark night of the Middle Ages were so unrefined – can you imagine they were less refined than the professor in question and his little wife. How were these people able to imagine such exalted homage, what does all that mean, all these women that the poets sing to us about, they are all, all of the same characteristics. Obviously they all have the same characteristics, it is also a representative of representation, they are like the prehistoric Venus, they all have the same characteristics. That does (185) not mean that these women did not exist nor that the poet did not make love to them in function of their merits! There were many other things again that stupefied them, including the stress put on trials, cruelty, a thousand things of this kind. I had great fun for two and a half months, and I hope those who were listening to me at that time also had, I will try to clean this up in a way that it can be transmitted. In any case it is a homage, anyway this is what remains to us of it, restored by poetry to what is its principle, namely, sexual desire. The attempt, in other words, to go beyond what is involved, whatever is said about it in Freud's text, in accessible love, outside special techniques, namely, to remain always narrowly narcissistic.

Only there is the other aspect, the relationship of sublimation to what is called the work of art. When Freud tells us that sublimation gives the satisfaction of the drive and this in a production regarding which the characteristic of esteem that society gives it is quite unexplained. Why the devil, when we have so many concerns, if it is not indeed on the hypothesis of diversion. Namely, that it is precisely in order not to be occupied by worries that are much more important that we get a taste for some of the things that are poured out within reach of our purses in the form of novels, paintings, poetry and novellas. Taking the thing from this angle there appears to be no way out. Nevertheless, I will give you, as regards what I will introduce the next time, too rapid a way in. The relationship of sublimation to enjoyment, since this is what is in question, in so far as it is sexual enjoyment, can only be

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explained by literally what I will call the anatomy of the vacuole. That is why I made on the right the outline of this something circumscribed that represents the vacuole. Imagine for a moment this vacuole as being the auditory apparatus of one these little animals that are called, I do not know why, primitive – nothing is more primitive than anything else – but take a daphne [?], it is like a tiny shrimp, but much simpler, it is found in waterways. The daphne, in something or other that one can say serves it as an auditory organ but at the same time as a vestibule, namely equilibrating, has what is called an otolith. If I know all that, it is because I have looked at the reviews....it is an article by a psychoanalyst, I will tell you who the next time, that drew my attention to it. It becomes very amusing, if, in place of the otolith you put a little piece of iron and afterwards you play around with magnets. This gives him enjoyment! Naturally one can presume it from the extraordinarily different attitude it takes up. Altogether a man in its moral life!

This is what I want to indicate to you as an introduction to the next time. It is that the ~~o~~-object plays this role with respect to the vacuole. In other words it is what tickles *das Ding* from the inside. There you are. This is what constitutes the essential merit of everything that is (~~1~~86) called a work of art. Nevertheless the thing deserves to be detailed. And since the ~~o~~-object has more than one form as Freud explicitly states in saying in his analysis of the drive that the object can be very variable, it waltzes around, nevertheless we have managed to state four of them, between the oral object, the anal object, the scoptophilic object and the sadomasochistic object. What is that one? Let us say that in connection with this one I am reserving some surprises for you the next time.

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Seminar 15: Wednesday 19 March 1969

I am laying my cards on the table, I am not going to give my seminar – you can call it what you like: my seminar, my lecture, in any case, my thing…I will start again. It is not for nothing that you did not hear me at first. I am not inclined to speak loudly, because I am not inclined to speak at all. And besides that is what I am going to do, or, more exactly, not do. My intention is not to speak to you today. There is a certain relief in that. Because it may be that I have had enough! But in any case, precisely, there is not much relief in it because, as you see, I am rather tired. Imagine whatever you like, a little Hong-Kong, like that, during the weekend, because naturally a psychoanalyst cannot allow himself to be sick except at the weekend. Anyway, the result is there, I will not speak to you today. Moreover this is what I had resolved, to say to you: "Listen, there you are, I am reporting sick; the seminar, as you call it, will not take place today", and then clear off.

It would be too simple. I already announced the last time the pleasure that it would give me to be able to hear something that might come to me as a response, a certain testimony that might come to me of what you are making of what is happening to you in terms of what I am trying to outline this year. It is obvious that many things push me to want it. First of all, a certain feeling, at the limit, of what I might be doing in pursuing here could be, what is pinpointed, it is hard to know why, in fact, as teaching. Does it really fit into the framework of teaching, apart from the fact that it takes place within the perimeter of

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the Ecole Normale? It is not certain. And then, my God, it has to be said today, why are there so many people? It truly is a problem. But it must be all the same that there is something interesting in it, like that. I have no reason to believe that it will be long lasting, at the rate things are going, I mean this interest taken in what is happening here.

I happened this week, which was necessarily not very stimulating - I rarely get a temperature of 39°, I spent a certain time, I spent two days telling myself that it is surely because there must be something like that not very stimulating in this state that I am still in – to ask myself what is happening here. So then I made a working hypothesis, make no mistake, that what I was doing here whether you know it or not, has (188) really all the nature of a work. This is what perhaps may allow you to glimpse certain things that I said this year. But in any case it is certain. The way I usually talk to you, when I have my little notes, that may astonish you, I more or less look at them; there are a lot of them, there are surely too many, it has really all the characteristics of what happens on a work bench, and why not? Indeed on an assembly line. The papers come from somewhere and will end up also by being transmitted to others. And with that, in effect, something happens as regards which, when I go out, I am always rather perplexed to question, with sometimes a little anxiety, those whom I know are able to say something that interests me. It is certain that I did on this something that has really the character of a work that has been produced with a certain material and which is something constructed, realised, a production.

Obviously, it is interesting; it is interesting to see it being done. It is not all that widespread to have the opportunity of seeing someone doing his work. For most of you in any case, I have the feeling that what this work is aimed at, what it is destined for, cannot but completely escape them. This is still more interesting. Only this gives to the thing, the fact of looking at someone working without knowing where it is going, of what use it is, this gives a rather obscene

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dimension to the thing. Naturally, it is not true for everyone. There are those who know well of what use it is. Anyway, what use it is in the short term. Since I am in the process of pushing this working metaphor, I would say that my bosses, for their part, know what use it is. Or, inversely, if you wish, those who know what use it is are my bosses. There are some here who are part of them. It is for them that I work. And then there are some others who are between the two classes and who, for their part also, have an idea of what use it is. These are the ones who, in a way, insert the work that I am doing here into a different text, or into a different context, which is that of something that is happening, for the moment, at what one can call the level of the University. I am very interested in it. I mean that there is something in what is happening anew in the University that has the closest relationship with the work that I am doing.

Because of this temperature and this pause that it gave me, anyway, you cannot imagine how happy one can be in taking advantage of having a temperature of 39°, I mean one is necessarily, one can usually put oneself in a horizontal position; it is very agreeable. Finally, when it subsides a little, at a certain turning point, one can open things, entertaining journals. There is one, as you know, the one managed by someone called Jean Daniel called *Le Nouvel Observateur*. It is no doubt called that in order to make you believe that there is something new in what is observed. You would be wrong to expect it, and the proof is that what I was able to read in it like that, horizontally, is the (189) sort of thing that, if I remember rightly, is something that is called "*The young ensnared, La jeunesse piégée*". I do not know why, it is perhaps due to my 39°, but this absolutely enraged me. First of all the title. Let every person that uses the word *piegé* know that the use of this word is considered to be repugnant – this is my own idea – a way of crudely stirring up castration anxiety, especially when one is talking to the young, and for the moment that seems to me to be in very bad taste. And then, faith, there is nothing in it but things that are very astute, very relevant. There is perhaps not a single one that, taking it

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as a sentence, as an indication of the justification, legitimising of whatever you want, not a sentence against which I could obviously, seriously raise any opposition. All of that is very good. It is very boring because it leaves completely to one side what is at stake. Because of course, I am not against any of the forms, even the most extreme ones, of what associates, for the moment, the contestation, as the student contestation is described, with the most revolutionary unions. But I think that none of this goes beyond the axis of something that has happened as a consequence of certain facts, of certain facts which are the following. "The university was inadequate in fulfilling its function and, all of a sudden, it had got to such a point, to such an excess, people believe, that was why 'May' happened." It is a very serious point as regards the interpretation of the thing. It was inadequate with regard to a certain traditional function, a certain glorious time that it had enjoyed and which had responded to the use at different epochs, of different functions, that had different incidences, precisely according to the epochs, about the transmission of knowledge.

If we place ourselves from the point of view of quality, lustre, historical influence, it is certain that for some time this had taken a turn that was not particularly brilliant, but in any case, there were islands that still held up very well. If it proved to be inadequate at a certain level, it is that because of certain social requirements it was no longer up to the task. The question should be posed if the fact that it was no longer up to the task – not of all, but of certain tasks – it was not, when all is said and done, intentional. I mean that, if, taking things from the angle of power, it was not something that was regulated precisely in a way not to embarrass it too much. It is certain that a certain evolution, which is that of science, risks posing altogether new and unexpected problems to the functions of power. After all, the thing had been announced perhaps for some time. This is how it is perhaps and, it must be said, it would really have a retroactive sense effect to notice that it is perhaps in function of this that the word revolution has taken a

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different sense, a different accent from the one it always had in history, where revolutions, by definition, were not new. From all time powers only came to an end by revolutions. The Revolution, like that, with a (190) capital R, did not notice soon enough that it is linked to something new which is highlighted from the side of a certain function of knowledge, something that is happening, which in truth renders it difficult to handle in the traditional way.

In order to indicate a little bit what I mean by that, I will bring it back to this something that I indicated earlier, namely, the fascination that can be produced about a work whose meaning people do not know, nor where it is leading. As a way of exemplifying, taken in the model given by what might motivate, in this supposition, your presence here, because obviously, from a certain angle, the reference that I found in the worker-boss relationship also has its prolongation here. The boss knows what the worker is doing, in the sense that he is going to bring him profits, but it is not sure that he has a clearer idea than the worker about the sense of what he is doing.

When you are dealing with the assembly line in Fiat or elsewhere, I am talking about that of Fiat because I already evoked it, here or elsewhere. I was there. I really had this feeling, in effect, of seeing people occupied with work and my absolutely not knowing what they were doing. That made me feel ashamed. It does not make you so, so much the better. But in any case, I was very embarrassed. I was precisely with the boss, Johnny, as he is called, as I call him. Johnny was also obviously...in any case, he too was ashamed. That expressed itself afterwards by the questions he asked me, which all had the obvious aim designed to dissimulate his embarrassment, the obvious aim of telling me that, to all appearances, they were happier there, with him, than in Renault.

I did not take this question seriously and I only interpreted it as you see, as a displacement, or perhaps as a way of avoiding on my part the

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question: "Finally, of what use is all of this?" Not that I am say that capitalism is of no use. No. Capitalism is precisely of use for something and we ought not to forget it. It is the things that it makes that are of no use. But that is a completely different affair. This is precisely its problem. In any case, what it is supported by, and it is a great force, ought to be clarified. It operates in the same sense as the one that I was telling you about earlier, it goes against power. It is of a different nature. And it causes great embarrassment to power. There also, it is obviously *nachträglich*, it is subsequently that we have to see the sense of what is happening. Capitalism completely changed the habits of power. They have perhaps become more excessive, but in any case they have changed. Capitalism introduced something that had never been seen before, what is called liberal power.

There are very simple things about which, after all, I can only speak from very personal experience. Observe that as far as historians can remember we have never heard tell of an organ of government that one leaves by handing in one's resignation. Where authentic, serious, subsistent powers exist you do not hand in your resignation, because it (191) has very serious consequences. Either it is a simple way of expressing oneself, you hand in your resignation, but you are shot on the way out. I call those places where power is serious. The idea of considering as a progress, and again as a liberal one, institutions where, when someone has completely bungled everything that he had to do for three months or six months and has proved to be incompetent, he has only to hand in his resignation and nothing will happen to him. On the contrary, he is told that he will have a wait before he comes back the next time; that all the same means what? That had never been seen in Rome! In places where it was serious! You have never seen a consul hand in his resignation, nor a tribune of the people! It is properly speaking unimaginable. That simply means that the power is elsewhere.

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It is obvious – the whole nineteenth century illuminates it – that if things occur through this function of resignation, it is because power is in different hands. I am talking about positive power. The interest, the only one, of the communist revolution, I am speaking about the Russian Revolution, is to have restored the functions of power. Only we see that it is not easy to hold onto, precisely because in the time when capitalism reigns, capitalism reigns because it is closely connected with this rise in the function of science. Only even this power, this camouflaged power, this secret and, it must also be said anarchic power, I mean divided against itself, and this without any doubt through its being clothed with this rise of science, it is as embarrassed as a fish on a bicycle now. Because all the same something is happening in the science quarter, something that transcends its capacity for mastery. So then what is necessary is that there at least a certain number of little heads that do not forget the fact that a certain permanent association of contestation with initiatives that are not controlled in the sense of revolution is vain. Well then, this again is what in the system, the capitalist system, can best serve it.

I am not in the process of telling you that things must be reformed. The reform itself, an incontestable consequence of the agitation in May, is exactly of a nature to aggravate its effects. If you have inadequate teachers, you will be given them by the shovel load, and you can be sure ones that are even more inadequate! Through reform the effects will always get worse. The question is what to do with regard to this phenomenon. It is certain that it cannot be responded to by a slogan, but that a process which tends towards the elimination of the best, in the long run, by the path of contestation, which is imposed, in effect, on the best people, will have exactly the wished for effect. This will be to bar for the very best people the interesting route, this joint, this access to a turning point, to a sensitive point, to a full stop put at present, concerning the function of knowledge in its most subversive mode. Because it is obviously not at the level of agitation (192) and hue and cry that there can be refined, treated, produced

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something that can give a decisive turn to things. I am not saying what, and for the best of reasons, it is precisely because one cannot say it. But it is only there that there can be presented something new, the only new thing in whose name there can appear what grounds the putting in question of what is presented up to now as this or that, as philosophy. Namely, any function tending to put order, a universal order, a unitary order, this mode of relationship to oneself that is called knowledge.

This trap (*piège*), that consists in refusing and doing nothing more is, properly speaking, for the moment, for everything that exists, for everything that subsists, most disadvantageous. The assured promise of subsisting and in the most unfortunate way, for anyone who creates illusions about what is called progress, I intend to posit the fact, I can only – to come back to this something, like that, which served as an occasion for it – find in it a further sign, in the fact that the entourage of the one under whose name – since it is an interview that allowed this article under the title of "*Jeunesse piègée*" – and that since this is how things are, all I can do, at this level, is to bestow on him the title of what, in this connection, has always been my thinking, namely, that after all, his thinking does not go any further, objectively, than that of an entertainer. This is serious enough. It is the testimony, after all, of a man who has lived long enough to testify, in a way, to two between-the-wars. The one between the two previous ones, that I lived with Giraudoux, Picasso, and other surrealists and it wasn't only Giraudoux that was original in all of that, this to tell you that I did not amuse myself a lot. Picasso existed from long before. Whatever you may think about them, these surrealists were a re-edition. Everything that constituted their core had existed before 1914, everything that projected something irreducibly unsatisfying in their presence between 1918 and 1939. You will note that I was their friend and that I never signed the least thing with them. This did not prevent a little scoundrel, named Laurin, who was a Canadian, from noticing it and making of it – I do not know...like that to initiate the public of

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Saskatchewan – about what I might be, in order to make a big deal of this surrealist root. There was also Parcheminey, a very special personage of the top drawer, with whom I was associated and made a lot of that. I explicitly told him that he should not take it into account, because I myself had taken care not to mark my link to any degree. This did not prevent him from writing "Lacan and the surrealists" ...You cannot be too accurate in feeding error.

And then, since the new between-the-wars, a failed between-two-wars because there is no end to it, this indeed is what embarrasses them, it is the expiry date. The fact is that capitalist power, this singular power whose novelty I would ask you to measure, needs a war every twenty (193) years. I am not the one who invented that; others have said it before me. This time, it cannot achieve it, but in any case it will manage all the same. It cannot arrange one and meanwhile it is very bothered. Finally, in this between-two-wars there was Sartre. He was no more amusing than the others. That did not disturb me. I never said anything about it, but anyway is it not curious that someone should feel the need to encourage so many of these young people to throw themselves against these obstacles that are placed before them, like that, to go to war, in short, a very mediocre war. Is it not beautiful to be able to go up against these muscle bound apparitors, because I approve of this thing called courage. Courage, physical courage is not a very great merit. I have never noticed that it caused a problem. I do not think that it is at that level that it is decisive. And above all it is of no interest. On some occasions, to throw oneself against the obstacles that are presented to you, is to behave exactly like the bull, is it not. What should be at stake precisely is to go somewhere other than where the obstacles are; in any case, not to be particularly interested in obstacles.

There is, in all of that, a veritable tradition of aberration. People begin by saying that philosophies for example throughout the centuries were only ideologies, namely, the reflection of the superstructure, of the

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dominant classes. So then the question is settled. They are of no interest. You have to aim elsewhere. Not at all! People continue to fight against ideologies *qua* ideologies. They are there for that. It is completely true that there have always been, naturally, dominating or enjoying classes, or the two, and that they had their philosophers. They were there to be abused in their place. That is what is done, namely, people follow orders. In fact, it is not at all correct, is that not so, it is not at all correct! Kant is not the representative of the dominant class of his epoch. Kant is still not only perfectly acceptable but you would do well to follow his line were it only to try to understand a little bit what I am in the process of telling you about the o-object. Anyway we will come back to that. Yes.

The last time I spoke to you about sublimation. So then obviously, we must not all the same remain there with it. It is not by chance, all the same, that it is at this point that there is a little suspension, or a little suspense, as you wish. Try to describe the relationships of this co-presence seen from your side? From mine? The question can be asked. Let us put it on the side of sublimation. It would be better, in any case, to put it there today, because that puts you in the position of the feminine pole. There is nothing dishonourable about that, especially at the level at which I placed it, the highest elevation of the object.

There are things that I did not underline the last time, but in any case I hope that you have good ears. The idea that sublimation is this effort (194) to allow love to be realised with the woman, and not simply... to pretend that it is happening with a woman. I did not underline that in this institution of courtly love, in principle, the woman does not love. Or at least one does not know anything about it. Can you imagine what a relief it is? Moreover, it all the same happens sometimes, in novels, it happens that she becomes inflamed. You also see what subsequently happens. At least, in these novels you know where you are going. In any case, in a sublimation like the one that can be

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realised here, I am saying that because it is about time to say it before we tackle another phase of sublimation that I began the last time, the one that is at the level of the drive and which, alas, concerns us much more, to which I gave the first prototype in the shape of the function of the bell (*grelot*). Something round with a little thing, the little o-object, which is strongly shaken inside. Let us use then, before this comes on the scene, more agreeable forms.

At the level, then, of man-woman relationships, if from the side of my audience I do not have to fear that any madness will occur, nevertheless if someone now wished all the same to bring me a sign of having heard by posing a question, either about what I have just said, or, which I would prefer, about what I have been saying since the beginning of the year. I would like a question or two to be directed to me, on this agreeable terrain for which, you see, I myself make a courteous effort not to disappoint, even on a day that I am at the end of my tether.

Who is there who can pose a few questions?

Do not discourage me too much. Because, after all, I could for my part be also tempted to resign...suppose for example that those whom I called my bosses, namely, the people for whom I work, do not threaten, once my work has consequences that interest them, do not threaten for their part their resignation. That may happen one day. Well then! I will be content to do my work before them. You are not there, all of you, all of you who are not, in short, psychoanalysts in my eyes, anyway from my point of view, my principal use is to give them the feeling indeed that they cannot, for their part, hinder me in continuing to do my work. Even if nobody answers me, from this field of non-psychoanalysts, I see very interesting faces down there. All the same I know my people.

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If none of those who are not psychoanalysts ever give me a response, not really a response that amuses me a little, suppose that one day I managed all the same to undo the psychoanalysts, by showing them that it would be just as interesting for them to work because they think that it is the privilege of the psychoanalysand. What is absolutely exaggerated in my way of working for them, is that I am doing, in short, what the psychoanalysand does. They have put the work (195) definitively into the hands of the psychoanalysand. They reserve the listening for themselves. There is among them, according to the latest news, one who summons them by saying "come and listen to me listen. I invite you to listen to my listening."

Now, perhaps, I am going to manage to shake up something on the side of this strange terrain, closely linked in its crucial points, about what is involved in this subversion of the function of knowledge. But I will not give an open seminar. I find that is not very serious. In a way, I question myself before the word of "handling knowledge" because this word "handling, *manier*" begins to take on a disturbing extension. There is a person, a marvellous chap moreover, who came to find me, who will do very well. Naturally, in the first meeting with me things happen. He came back the second time because you have to see someone at least twice. He told me that the previous time he had "manipulated". I searched my brain...I made him explain it...that means that I had manipulated him. The slippage of words is always interesting to see. The word "manipulate", has become, now, in the permanent vocabulary, through a type of fascination that comes from the fact that people do not think that one can perform any effective action on any group whatsoever without "manipulating" it. This, like that, in a way that is henceforth admitted, recognised. And after all it is not sure that in effect, as they say, the worst is perhaps certain, but after all, that is what it is, yes. But then, that this takes on an active value when one is manipulated, this is a tipping over point that I am signalling for you. If it should spread, you will let me know if you see it continuing like that.

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Anyway, this is obviously not the best of conditions in which to pursue questions concerning knowledge at the level at which they are presented, in the measure that psychoanalysis can bring something to it. The last time I highlighted the book of our dear Deleuze, about the *Logic of sense*. I asked Jacques Nassif, since in truth I am not astonished, I am as they say very embittered by the total absence of response after a provocation that has been pushed that far. It is not manipulation, precisely. There are other ways of working. But this total silence, this total absence of response to my desperate appeals for at least a little testimony! I will leave you a repeat examination. You can write to me. The written happens after the oral. Anyway, if one day, at the end of the year, I gave two or three sessions with closed doors, you should know that apart from the people that I already know, the people who have written to me will have the privilege of it.

Nassif, do you still feel you have the courage, after this exhausting session, at least for me, to take the floor? Well then! You are extremely kind.

(196 –203) **Jacques Nassif on Gilles Deleuze**

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(205) Today I am going to put forward primary truths, since moreover it appears that it would be no harm to touch base again. On the other hand, it also seems very difficult to organise these complementary fields of work that would allow us to be in accord, to attune our violins with everything contemporary that is being produced and is profoundly interested by what a certain step in psychoanalysis can put forward at the point we are at.

At our second last meeting, I left things at the point where sublimation should be questioned in its relationship to the role played in it, in short, by the o-object. It is this remark that showed me that it was necessary, that it was certainly, in any case, no harm for me to come back to what distinguishes this function, and that I should come back to it at the level of the experience from which it has emerged, from psychoanalytic experience as it has been extended since Freud. On that occasion, I was led to return to the texts of Freud in so far as they progressively established what is called the second topography. This, assuredly, is an indispensable echelon for comprehending everything that I myself was able to put forward, I mean in terms of discoveries, at this precise point that Freud remained at in his research. I already put the accent on what this word means in my speech, *circare*: to turn around a central point, as long as something is not resolved. Today, I will try to mark the distance at which psychoanalysis remained up to my teaching, a key point that assuredly from all sides the experience preceding it had formulated, sketched out in certain assertions. It had not been absolutely purified,

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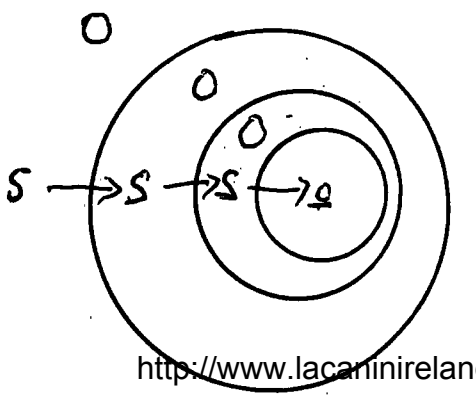
resolved, completed, and we will say at least now that we can construct other steps, but that do not correct it, namely, this function of the o-object.

Because it interests us at the level of sublimation, it is indeed certainly, as with this sort of almost clumsy prudence with which Freud put it forward, the work of art, to call it by its name, that today centres, constitutes the aim of what we are stating about sublimation. The work of art is not presented otherwise at the level where Freud grasps it, obliges himself not to grasp it otherwise than as a commercial value. It is something that has a price, perhaps no doubt an exceptional price, but once it is put on the market, not all that distinguishable from any other price. What is to be emphasised, is that this price is something it receives from a privileged (206) relationship of value to what in my discourse I isolate and distinguish as enjoyment. Enjoyment being this term established only by its evacuation from the field of the Other and by that very fact by the position of the field of the Other as locus of the word as such.

What makes of the o-object something that can function as equivalent to enjoyment, is a topological structure. It is very precisely in the measure that simply by taking the function through which the subject is only grounded, is only introduced as an effect of the signifier and by referring ourselves to the schema that I repeated a hundred times before you since the beginning of the year of the signifier S as representative of the subject for a signifier that, of its nature, is other. This means that what represents it can only posit it as before this other. This necessitates the repetition of the relationship of this S to this O as locus of other signifiers, in a relationship that leaves intact the locus which is not to be taken as a part but - in conformity with everything that is stated about the function of the set, as leaving the element itself as a potential set - makes this residue, even though it is distinct under the function of the o, equal to the weight



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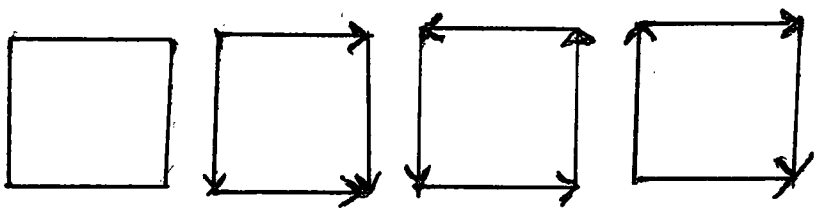
of the Other in its totality. It is in so far as it is here a place that we can designate by a term connecting the interior (*l'intime*) to radical exteriority, it is in so far as the o-object is extimate *(extime)* and purely in the relationship set up by the establishment of the subject as an effect of the signifier, as determining by itself in the field of the Other this structure in which it is easy for us to see the kinship, the variations in what is organised from any edge structure in so far as it has the choice, as one might say, to reunite itself in the form of a sphere, in so far as the edge thus drawn joins together at a most problematic point, even though apparently the most simple, of topological structures. Whether we pursue it in this shape, of what produces the torus, by joining the two opposite edges that correspond point by point in a double vectorial line, or on the contrary we have the structure – I am only here recalling it – of the cross cap, or that we have by combination of two different possibilities the structure described as the Klein bottle.



Sphere Torus Cross cap Klein bottle

(207) Now it is easy to see that the o-objects as they effectively function in the relationships engendered between the subject to the Other in the real, reflect one by one, these four topological structures, there are also four of them. But this is something that, to indicate it immediately, I will only come back to later, and by first reanimating for you the concrete function, the function that the o-object plays in the clinic. The o-object before being possibly, through the methods developing its production in the form that earlier we have described as commercial is at levels precisely exemplified by the clinic, in a position to function as the locus of the capture of enjoyment.

And here I will make a jump, I will go quickly and straight away to a certain core of the subject which perhaps my first remarks, coming to you

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here today, made a greater detour around. Very quickly, in theoretical statements, I am speaking about those of Freud, the relationship between neurosis and perversion was seen to emerge. How did that in a way force itself on the attention of Freud? Freud introduced himself into this field at the level of neurotic patients, subjects of all sorts of disturbances and who, through their stories, tended rather to lead him into the field of a traumatic experience as it appeared first of all to him, even though assuredly in the problem of what, in a way, welcomed this experience in the apparently traumatised subject, the question of the phantasy was introduced. This is indeed, in effect, the knot of everything that is at stake concerning an economy for which Freud produced the word libido. But again we should entirely trust the fact that these phantasies might allow us, in a way, to reclassify, to rearrange from outside, namely, from an experience that did not come from perverts, what at first in the same epoch – do I need to recall simply the names of Krafft-Ebing and of Havelock Ellis – presented in a descriptive fashion this field described as that of sexual perversion.

We know the difficulty that very quickly arose, after this first approach, already of a topological order because it was neurosis that was at stake, of finding in a way, because people spoke about the reverse side, something or other that already was presented as the announcement of these surfaces that interest us so much because they emerge when a cut slices them. But very quickly, the matter appeared to be in no way resolved, simplified in any way by being presented perhaps a little quickly as a function in stages, (208) neurosis assuredly, presenting itself with regard to perversion as at least repressing it on the one hand, as a defence against perversion. But is it not clear, was it not immediately so, that no resolution could be found by simply bringing out a perverse desire in the text of the neurosis? If this formed part of the spelling out, of the deciphering of this text, it nevertheless remains that in no case, is it on this plane that the neurotic finds his satisfaction in the treatment. So that in tackling perversion itself, it appeared very quickly that it presented with regard to structure no fewer problems and defences on occasion than neurosis. All of this fell under the jurisdiction of technical references whose impasses seem after all,

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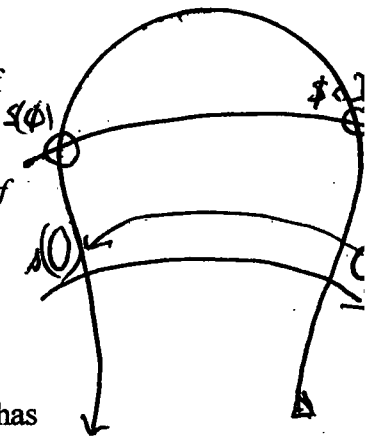
when one looks at them from a distance, to come only from a relative dupery undergone by the theory, from the very terrain to which, whether in the case of the neurotic or the pervert, it has to stick.



If we take things from the level that the return to this solid ground that nothing happens in analysis that ought not to be referred to the status of language and to the function of the word allowed us to articulate, we obtain what I did one particular year under the title of *The formations of the unconscious.* It is not for nothing that I started from what, in appearance, from what in these formations is most distant from what interests us in the clinic, namely, the witticism. It is starting from the witticism that I constructed this graph which moreover, even though it has not yet demonstrated to everyone how obvious it is, nonetheless remains fundamental on this occasion. As everyone knows and can see, it is made up of the network of three chains, two of which find themselves already marked, if not elucidated, by certain formulae some of which have been abundantly commentated on. Since $ ♦ D marks as fundamental the dependence of the subject on what, under the name of demand, has been strongly distanced from need. The very signifying form, the defiles of the signifier, as I expressed myself, specifying it, distinguishing it and in no way allowing the its effect to be reduced to the simple terms of physiological appetite. This of course is required but illuminated by this medium, is required from the simple fact that in our experience these needs only interest us in so far as they take up the position of being equivalent to a sexual demand. The other junctions, signified as coming (209) from O as the treasury of signifiers, only constitute, at the point that we are at, a simple reminder.

What I want to advance here, since moreover I never saw it distinguished by anyone, is that, even though what is at stake in these three chains are chains that can only be superimposed, established, fixed in so far as there is something of the signifier in the world, that discourse exists, that a certain type of being is caught up in it who is called man, or the speaking

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being, that here, starting from the existence of the possible concatenation as constituting the very essence of these signifiers, what we have there and what the complement of this graph demonstrates, is the following. If this symbolic function here of the possibility of return is operating, which is made up of the statement of the simplest discourse, of this fundamental one at the level of which we can affirm that there is no metalanguage, that nothing of all that is symbolic could be built up except from normal discourse. This we can specify from the category that I distinguish as the symbolic, and we notice that what is involved in the upper chain is very precisely its effects in the real. Moreover the subject, which is its first and major effect, only appears at the level of the second chain.

If there remains here something that assuredly, even though always discussed and particularly in my discourse of this year, did not take on, because this is the object starting from which I advance, its full agency, it is what is involved in the signifier as such through which there appears the fundamental incompleteness of what is produced when it is constituted as the locus of the Other, or more exactly what in this locus traces out the path of a certain altogether fundamental lure. The locus of the Other as evacuated of enjoyment is not simply a clear place, a burned circle, of what is not simply this Other, this place open to the interplay of roles, this something structured of itself from the signifying incidence, it is very precisely what introduces into it this lack, this bar, this gap, this hole that can be distinguished by the title of the o-object. Now this is what I intend to make you sense here by examples taken at the level of the experience to which Freud himself has recourse when it is a matter of articulating what is involved in the drive.

Is it not strange, after having put so much emphasis in experience on the oral drive, on the anal drive, so-called outlines, described as pre-genital, of something that is supposed to come to maturity by fulfilling some myth or other of completeness prefigured by the oral, some myth or other of gift, the giving of a present, prefigured by the anal, that Freud to all appearances, should articulate what, in these fundamental drives, is

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involved in the *montage* of the source, of the pressure, of the object, of the end, of the *Ziel*, with the help of the scoptophilic and sadomasochistic drives. What I would like to advance, just like that, is that the function of the pervert, the one he fulfils, far from being - as has long been said, as (210) people no longer dare to say for some time and principally because of what I have stated - founded on some contempt for the other or, as they say, of the partner, is to be measured in a much richer fashion. And that to allow it to be grasped, at least at the level of the heterogeneous audience that I have before me, I would articulate it by saying that the pervert is the one who devotes himself to filling this hole in the Other. That, up to a certain point, to give here the colours that give their relief to things, I would say that he is in favour of the Other existing, that he is a defender of the faith.

Moreover, in looking more closely at the observations, in this light that makes of the pervert a singular auxiliary of God, one will see there being clarified the bizarre things that are advanced from pens that I would describe as innocent. In a treatise of psychiatry very well done, faith, as regard the observations it collates, we can see that an exhibitionist does not manifest his frolics only in front of little girls. He may also do so in front of a tabernacle. It is certainly not simply by such details that something can be illuminated. But simply, first of all, by having been able to map out, which was done here already a long time ago, the function that can be isolated in everything that is involved in the field of vision, from the moment that these problems are posed in the work of art, what is involved in the function of the look. By definition, it is not easy to say what a look is. It is even a question that can very well sustain an existence and ravage it. I was able to see at one time a young woman for whom it was properly this question, joined to a structure that I do not have to indicate any further, that went as far as producing a retinal haemorrhage whose sequelae were lasting.

What prevents people from realising that before questioning oneself about what is involved in the effects of exhibitionism, namely, whether it

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frightens or not the witness who appears to provoke it, namely, if it is indeed the intention of the exhibitionist to provoke this shame, this fright, this echo, this something coy or consenting, who does not see first of all that what is essential in this aspect that you can describe as you wish, active or passive, I leave you the choice, of this scoptophilic drive – in appearance it is passive because it offers itself to be seen – is properly and above all to make the look appear in the field of the Other? And why, if not to evoke there this topological relationship of what is involved in the flight, in the ungraspable nature of the look in its relationship with the limit imposed on enjoyment by the function of the pleasure principle. It is the enjoyment of the Other that the exhibitionist watches over. It seems that here, what creates the mirage, the illusion, and gives, suggests this thinking that there is a contempt for the partner is the forgetting of the fact that beyond the particular support for the Other that this partner gives, there is this fundamental function which is nevertheless present there (211) every time the word functions, the one in which every partner is only included, namely, from the locus of the word, from the reference point where the word is posited as true.

It is in this field, the field of the Other *qua* deserted by enjoyment that the exhibitionistic act is posited to give rise there to the look. This is how one sees that it is not symmetrical to what is involved for the voyeur. Because what is important for the voyeur, and very often is the way in which everything that can be seen is in a way profaned at his level, is precisely to question in the Other what cannot be seen. The object of desire of the voyeur in the slender body, the profile of a little girl, is very precisely what can be seen there only by the fact that it supports [is supported by?] the ungraspable itself, a line where it is lacking, namely, the phallus. That the little boy sees himself sufficiently maltreated for nothing of what, for him, can be attached to this level of mystery, does not appear to hold the attention of an indifferent eye, to project all the more, this thing neglected in him, by restoring it in the Other, by supplementing the field of the Other with it, without even being aware of its support. Here, from this unawareness, the enjoyment for the Other, namely, the

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very end of perversion finds itself in a way escaping. But it is moreover what demonstrates first of all that no drive is simply the return of the other. They are asymmetrical and what is essential in this function is a supplement, something that at the level of the Other questions what is lacking in the Other as such, and provides for it (*y pare*). This is why certain analyses, and always in effect the most innocent ones, are exemplary. It is impossible for me, after having, as I did the last time, thrown doubt on the lack of seriousness of a certain philosophy, not to remember the extraordinary relevance of what is grasped in the analysis of the function of the voyeur. The one who, when he is looking through the keyhole, who is truly what cannot be seen, nothing more assuredly can make him fall from a height than being surprised in his capture by this slit, as regards which it is not for nothing that a slit itself, is called a look, even a day. The return is what is at stake, namely, his reduction to the humiliated, indeed ridiculous position which is not at all linked to the fact that he is precisely beyond the slit, but that he can be grasped by another in a posture that only collapses from the point of view of the narcissism of the upright position, that of the one who sees nothing because he is so sure of himself. This is what, at a page that you will easily find in *Being and nothingness*, has something imperishable about it, whatever may be the partial aspect of what is deduced from it as regards the status of existence.

But the following step is of no less interest. What then is the o-object in the sadomasochistic drive? Does it not seem to you that highlighting the prohibition proper to enjoyment, ought also to allow us to put back in its (212) place what people believe to be the key of what is involved in sado-masochism, when they speak about playing with pain and immediately retract and say that after all, it is only amusing if the pain does not go too far. This sort of blindness, of lure, of false fright, of tickling the question reflecting in a way after all the level at which there remains everything that is practised in this kind of thing, does this not run the risk, is it not in fact the essential mask thanks to which there escapes what is involved in sadomasochistic perversion?

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You will see later, if all of this does not appear too daring to you, indeed a speculation that is not favourable to an *Einfühlung*, and with good reason. For the majority of you, all of you such as you are, whatever you may believe, what is involved in perversion, in true perversion escapes you. It is not because you dream about perversion that you are perverse. Dreaming about perversion can be used for something completely different, and principally, when one is neurotic, to sustain desire, which one really has need of when one is neurotic! But this does not at all allow you to believe that you understand perverts. It is enough to have worked with an exhibitionist to see that one understands nothing about what in appearance I will not say makes him enjoy himself, since he does not enjoy himself. But he enjoys himself all the same, and on the single condition of taking the step that I have just said, namely, that the enjoyment that is at stake, is that of the Other. Naturally, there is a gap. You are not crusaders; you do not consecrate yourself to ensuring that the Other, namely, something or other blind and perhaps dead, should enjoy. But the exhibitionist for his part is interested in that. It is in that way that he is a defender of the faith.

That is why to catch up, I let myself go in speaking about crusaders. To believe in the Other, the cross, the French words [*croisés, croire, croix*] linking up like that. Every tongue has its echoes and its encounters – *croa-croa*, as Jacques Prévert also said - the crusades existed, they were also for the life of a dead God; it would mean something just as interesting to find out what, since 1945, is the game between communism and Gaullism. This has had enormous effects. As long as the knights went on crusades, love could become civilised where they had left the place vacant. While, when they were elsewhere, they encountered civilisation, namely, what they were looking for, a high degree of perversion, and at the same time they reduced everything to rubble. Byzantium has never recovered from the crusades. You have to pay attention to these games because this may still happen, even now, in the name of other crusades.

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But let us return to our sadomasochists who are precisely still separated. Namely, that because, as I said earlier, in the scoptophilic drive, there is one who succeeds in what has to be created, namely, the enjoyment of the Other, and an other who is only there to fill the hole with his own look, without ensuring that the other even sees there a little bit more about what (213) there is. It is more or less the same case in the relationships between the sadist and the masochist, on the single condition that one notices where the o-object is.

It is strange that, living in an epoch in short where we have resurrected very well all the practices of interrogation, of interrogation at the time that it played a role in judicial mores at a superior level, now that this has been left to operatives who do that in the name of some madness or other like the interests of the country or of the troop, it is curious, after also having seen some little games on the stage with which, after the war in which a lot of things happened, the latest of this type, the pleasure was prolonged a little for us on the stage by showing simulacrums, it is strange that people do not notice the essential function played at first at this level by the word, by confession (*l'aveu*). Despite everything, sadistic games are not simply interesting in the dreams of neurotics. One can all the same see, where it happens, people may well have their reasons, we know very well what must be thought of the reasons, the reasons are secondary as compared to what happens in practice. Whether effectively it is always around something where what is at stake is to peel the subject of what? Of what constitutes him in his fidelity, namely, his word, one could say that this has a part to play in interrogation. It is an approach. I am telling you right away, the o-object is not the word, but it is to put you on the track. Tackling the question from this angle is very open to misunderstanding, as you are going to see right away. Namely, that there is going to be precisely what I reject, namely, a symmetry, namely, that it is certain that the florid, the beautiful, the true masochist, Sacher Masoch himself, organises the whole business in a way that he can no longer speak.

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Why does this interest him so much? Let me be frank. What is at stake is the voice. That the masochist should make of the voice of the other just by itself what he is going to give the guarantee of answering like a dog, is essential in the matter. And it is illuminated by the fact that what he seeks out, is precisely a type of other who, on this point of the voice, can be put in question. The dear mother, as Deleuze illustrates, with the cold voice containing all sorts of arbitrary currents, is here something that with the voice, this voice that perhaps he has heard only too much of elsewhere, from his father's side, comes in a way to complete and here also to fill the hole. Only there is something in the voice that is more topologically specified, namely, that nowhere is the subject more interested in the other than through this o-object. And it is indeed there that the topological comparison, the one that is illustrated here by the hole in a sphere which is not one since precisely it is in this hole that it folds back on itself. An attentive examination of what happens at the level of organic structures, very specifically of the vestibular system or the semicircular canals, brings us to these radical forms of which I already gave you a glimpse a fortnight (214) ago by referring to one of the most primitive animals. Let us add to the one that I named the crustacean called the Palemon [*Palaemonias ganteri?*], a pretty name full of mythical echoes. But let it not distract us from the fact that the animal, when, at each moulting, it is stripped of all the outside of its systems, is obliged and with good reason, because otherwise he would not be able to move in any way, to set up, in the hollow opened up at his animal level on the outside, in the hollow of what is nothing less than an ear, some little grains of sand, so that they tickle it in there. It is strictly impossible to conceive what the function of the Superego is if one does not understand – this is not everything but it is one of the mainsprings – the essential of what is involved in the function of the o-object realised by the voice *qua* support of signifying articulation, by the pure voice in so far as it is, yes or no, established in a perverse way or not at the locus of the Other.

If we can speak about a certain moral masochism, this can only be founded on this point of impact of the voice of the Other not in the ear of

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the subject but at the level of the Other that he establishes as being completed by the voice. And, in the way that earlier the exhibitionist enjoyed himself, it is in this supplement of the Other - and not without a certain derision being possible which appears in the margins of masochistic functioning - it is at the level of the Other and of the remitting to him of the voice that the functioning axis, the axis of gravitation of the masochist operates. Let me say it. It is enough to have lived in our epoch to grasp, to know, that there is an enjoyment in this remitting to the Other, and all the more when he is less valorised, has less authority, in this remitting to the Other of the function of the voice. In a certain way, this style of evasion, of stealing of enjoyment can be, of all the perverse ones imaginable, the only one that is ever fully successful.

It is certainly not the same when the sadist tries in his way, he also, in the inverse way, to complete the Other, by removing the word from him, certainly, and imposing his voice on him. In general that fails. Let it suffice in this regard to refer to the work of Sade where it is really impossible to eliminate this dimension of the voice, of the word, of discussion, of debate. After all, we are told about all the most extraordinary excesses exercised with respect to the victims as regards whom one can only be surprised by one thing, their unbelievable survival. But there is not a single one of these excesses that is not in a way not simply commented on but in a way fomented from an order about which the most astonishing thing is that moreover it does not provoke any revolt. But after all we have been able to see through historical examples that this is how it can happen. There was apparently never seen in these herds that were pushed towards the crematory furnaces someone who all of a sudden (215) simply bit the wrist of a guard. The operation of the voice finds its full register here, there is only one thing, which is that enjoyment escapes here exactly as in the case of the voyeur. Its place is masked by this astonishing domination of the o-object, but enjoyment for its part is nowhere. It is quite clear that the sadist here is only the instrument of something that is called a supplement given to the Other, but which in this case the Other does not want. He does not want, but he obeys all the

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same. Such is the structure of these drives, in as much as they reveal that a topological hole just by itself can fix a whole subjective behaviour and make everything that may be forged around so-called *Einfühlung* highly relative.

Since the hour is late and since moreover it required a lot of subtlety to get this across, I had to give it all the time necessary, I announce nevertheless that the problem of the neurotic is the following. You can consult the article that I wrote under the title *Remarks on the discourse of Daniel Lagache*. It is indispensable to find our bearings in all the distractions of everything that is said in the Freudian texts about identification. The uncertainty, the clear contradiction there is throughout his works, throughout his statements about what is involved in what he calls *the reservoir of libido,* that sometimes is put forward as the *Ich*, namely narcissism, sometimes on the contrary as the Id, the ego being obviously inseparable from narcissism is found in a problematic position. Namely, is it because of the object that it offers the covetousness of the Id, that the ego must be said to introduce itself as the effective agency from which there would re-emerge in its turn the interest bestowed on objects.

Is it on the contrary, from the object fomented at the level of the Id, that the ego finds itself secondarily valorised, as a fellow, as well as the objects? This introduces us to posing in a radical fashion, to posing again the whole question of what is involved in identification. It is only in so far as the neurotic wants to be the One in the field of the Other, it is only in so far as idealisation plays a primordial logical role that it finds itself from then on confronted with narcissistic problems. But to simply make this remark, that I am suggesting to you at the same time, of asking ourselves whether we are not undergoing, with Freud in imagining primary narcissism, a deferred, imaged effect, even one that is unspeakably falsified. We add a little bit to it, just what is needed to fall into the snare of the neurotic. Namely, that it is in the measure that secondary narcissism, in the form characterised by imaginary capture, is the level where there is presented for him in a way whose problem is

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completely different from what is involved for the pervert. This is what I will try to make you sense the next time. It is in the measure that we believe that we are able to think that there was somewhere this relation not of supplement, but of complement for the One and that we invest the oral drive that it presents, nevertheless apparently on the single condition that (216) one is undeceived from the fascination of the neurotic, that there is presented apparently the same character of being centred around a third object which slips away, just as ungraspable in its way as the look or the voice and this famous breast, which with the help of a play on words one makes into the maternal lap. Behind the breast and just as stuck on as it onto the wall that separates the child from the woman, the placenta is there to remind us that far from the child in the body of the mother forming a single body with it, it is not even enclosed in its envelopes. It is not a normal egg. It is broken, broken in this envelope by this element of sticking on through which moreover we now know, there can be bound and played out all the conflicts, that fall under the jurisdiction of 'Byzantism', in the mixture of bloods and the incompatibility of one group with another.

This function of a third object that I call a plaque, or I might say pendant, because we will see it in its outstanding forms in everything that is built up from culture, the thing that is hung on the wall and that lures people. Is this not what appears effectively in the experience of the neurotic? I mean that by converting it, by completing it with the myth of a primitive unity, a lost paradise, supposedly ended by the trauma of birth, we do not fall into what is precisely at stake in the neurotic's affair. What is at stake for him, we will see, I will articulate it in detail and already you can find its first lines sketched in a perfectly clear fashion in this article, is the impossibility of bringing this little o-object onto the imaginary plane in conjunction with the narcissistic image. No representation supports the presence of what is called the *representative of representation*. One sees only too well here the distance, marked by this term, that there is between one and the other. Between the representative and the representation, there is no equivalence. This is what allows me to initiate, to indicate the

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point where all of this will be reorganised. The third line of the graph, the one that crosses the two others, is properly speaking what from a symbolic concatenation is carried on to the imaginary where it finds its ballast. It is on this line that in the complete graph you will encounter the ego, desire, the phantasy and finally the specular image before its point, its point which can only here on the left, at the bottom, be grasped as a retroactive effect. Its point only consists in the equally retroactive illusion of a primary narcissism. It is around this that the problem of the neurotic will be re-centred, the manifestation also of the fact that, *qua* neurotic, he is precisely destined to a failure of sublimation. So then, if our formula of S barred diamond o, ($ ♦ o), as formula of the phantasy is to be put forward at the level of sublimation, it is very precisely not before a critique has been brought to bear on a whole series of lateral implications which were given in an unjustified fashion because the experience, which nevertheless could not have taken place otherwise, the experience of the incidences of the signifier on the subject, was carried out at the level of neurotics.

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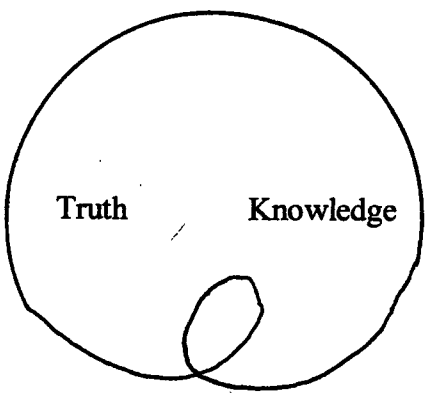
Seminar 17: Wednesday 23 April 1969

(On the board)

Truth on the hither side of thinking, knowledge beyond?

Censorship

Sense – cens



The Klein Bottle

(217) The vacation time interrupted our remarks. As you see, I also took my time in starting up again.

I left you on the subject of sublimation once it had been opened up, and we will have to continue on with some tallying about what is involved, from the point of structure, about what is involved in perversion. To this, I contributed this specification that we have to define, in a way that my schemas, my notions if you wish at a push, make very simple and very accessible. Namely, does the subject, in perversion, himself take care to supply for this flaw in the Other, which is a notion that you do not get into right away, since it requires a certain development of psychoanalytic experience. It is then uniquely for those who are familiar with my terms

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that this formula can take on the value of a step forward. This is certainly an inconvenience that is not the privilege of my teaching. It is a common factor in every science from the moment that it begins to be constructed. That is not for all that, of course, enough to authenticate as scientific what my teaching tries to provide against, to provide against something that in the name of a so-called reference to the clinic, always leaves the review of this experience at what one might well call a function reduced to some sort of sniffing out or other. This of course could not be exercised if there were not already given to it the points of an orientation that, for its part, was the (218) fruit of a construction and a very learned one, that of Freud. It is a matter of knowing whether it is enough to lodge oneself in it, and then, starting from there, to let oneself be guided to what one takes to be a more or less living apprehension of the clinic, but which is only quite simply giving a place to what the blackest prejudices regulate in it. That is taken as having a sense. It is to this sense that I think there ought to be applied a rating (*censitaire*) requirement, namely, that those who boast of it should prove themselves with sufficient guarantees taken from elsewhere. I will try to say today why these guarantees ought to be taken from somewhere other than in the field where ordinarily they have done nothing either to authenticate what they have received from Freud concerning what makes up the structure of this field, or – which is indeed the minimum requirement – account for it, in order to try to continue it.

I was among the first to hear about the publication of a scurrilous satire whose title, just by itself, is disgraceful, and I will not mention it here because of that fact. Under the avowed patronage of authors who declare themselves from the first lines to be two analysts, it claims to draw up an account, to measure, to reduce to its value - which does not go any higher than horizons that I must say are despicable, that are the rule in a certain field of psychoanalytic experience - to reduce what is involved to what they call, the name is included in their title, to what they broadly speaking designate as contestation. After that, you know what you can expect! The psychic regression, infirmity, sordid infantilism that is supposed to be shown by all of those who, under whatever heading, manifest themselves

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in this register – and God knows how nuanced it can be. These are really brought down to the level of what in a certain field, in a certain frame of psychoanalytic experience, people are capable of thinking. It does not go any further! I will not add another word. Simply I note, I record that, whatever suspicion there may have arisen in some of my most authentic pupils, this does not come from anyone whose face has ever been seen here. It is a fact. It is a fact that I even confirmed, in addressing myself to one or other person who may have fallen under suspicion.

I must say that the very fact of posing this question had something a little offensive about it. But in any case, from where I am, I have to be able to respond, and respond in the firmest way that none of those who, at any time appeared here to collaborate on occasion, to answer me, who to some degree attended this seminar, did anything other than repudiate with horror the slightest approbation that they may have given to this extravagant initiative, to this veritable debagging of the lowest kind of thinking.

So then these things have been aired. This moreover does not also rule out that, from some quarter, particular people that I am evoking just now may not also engage on a slope that, in the final analysis, does not fail to rejoin (219) what can be expressed in a certain register. That they do not do so, that the whole of French psychoanalysis is not behind the two authors whose names I happen to know through certain communications, and they are not trivial ones, they belong to an eminent Institute that everyone knows, that things are not at the stage that the whole of psychoanalysis is behind them in connection with contestation, after all I can indeed pride myself that it is because of my teaching.

One cannot say that it had much success in psychoanalysis. But, as was said on one occasion at a certain turning point of the adventures, the avatars of this teaching, by one of the very people that I thought I should question, without my suspicions properly speaking going to the point of believing that he would not repudiate this work, it is all the same the same person who, on one of these occasions, in connection with what I was

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stating, spoke about nothing less than terrorism. It is supposed to be then the terrorism brought out by my teaching that ensures that French psychoanalysis, after all, let us say, apart from certain rare exceptions, has not distinguished itself either by a great originality, nor by a particularly effective opposition to my teaching, nor by an application of it either. It nevertheless remains that certain types of discourse are impossible because of this teaching. One must really, and this exists, live in a milieu where it is properly speaking forbidden even to thumb through the few pages that I allowed to be published, for such statements to be produced that, I repeat, you will very quickly get to know. If I am speaking about it, it is because a particular weekly that is done by computer already highlights the narcissism imputed in this work to those who carry on a contestation, totally ignoring, of course, the renewal, make no mistake that I brought to this term.

Well then, since there is terrorism and because after all it is not limited to me, that it might perhaps have caught the attention of the authors, for example, that terrorism is not absent from the field they are considering, that it is not simply a search for comfort and reciprocal mirages that governs it. That certainly, in a rather varied way, something is exercised in it that cuts and that excludes, indeed that cuts people off from one another. This reflection, this description of what is an essential and characteristic effect of certain functions in our epoch and very especially of those that, under whatever heading, may be authorised by a school of thought, made me think that I ought to share with you today some reflections that connect very well to this term of what is involved in what must be understood under the register of the customary term that is brandished rightly and wrongly as freedom of thought. What does that mean? How the devil can people even consider that there is a value inscribed in these three words?

(220) As a first approach, let us spell out that if thought has some reference, if we consider it in what we could quickly call its objective relationship, naturally there is not the slightest freedom. The idea of freedom in this quarter of objective references has all the same a core point

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around which it arises. It is the function, or more exactly the notion of the norm. From the moment that this notion comes into play, there is introduced correlatively that of exception, indeed even that of transgression. It is here that the function of thinking can take on some sense by introducing the notion of freedom. In a word, it is by thinking about Utopia that, as its name states, is a place that is nowhere, no place, it is in Utopia that thinking would be free to envisage a possible reform of the norm. This indeed is how in the history of thinking from Plato to Thomas More things have been presented. With regard to the norm, the real locus in which it is established, it is only in the field of Utopia that freedom of thought can be exercised. This indeed is what results in the works of the last of those that I have just named, namely, the very creator of the term Utopia, Thomas More. And moreover by going back to the one who put forward, who consecrated under the function of the Idea the term of norm, Plato. Plato at the same time constructs for us a Utopian society, the Republic, where there is expressed freedom of thought with regard to the political norm of its time. Here we find ourselves then in the register not simply of the Idea. And moreover the slightest exercise of everything that I have promoted as distinguishing the imaginary from the real makes us clearly see the framing and formative effect in this register of a reference which goes entirely to its term in the register of the body image. As I underlined, the very idea of macrocosm was always accompanied by a reference to a microcosm that gives it its weight, its sense, its height, its depth, its right, its left. This is the basis of a mode of apprehension described as knowledge, the one in which there is exercised a whole development that quite correctly, is inscribed in the history of thinking.

On my graph where the two horizontal lines that I retraced the last time in order to have them intersected by this hook-shaped line that cuts both of them and determines the four essential crossroads where there is inscribed a certain mapping out. This hook-shaped line that rises and descends to cut both of them, is precisely, I remind you, the line in which there are inscribed and very precisely in the interval left by the two respective lines of stating and stated, in which there are inscribed the properly speaking

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imaginary formations, specifically, the function of desire in its relationship to phantasy, and of the ego in its relationship to the specular image. This means that the registers of the symbolic, in so far as they are inscribed in the two horizontal lines are not without a relationship, do not fail to find support in the imaginary function. But what is legitimate about them, I mean what can be rationally assimilated, must remain limited. This is why (221) the Freudian doctrine is a rationalist doctrine; it is uniquely in function of what can be articulated in defensible propositions, in the name of a certain logical reduction, that anything whatsoever can be admitted or on the contrary ruled out.

What is the status, at the point that we are at in science, of this imaginary function taken as a foundation for scientific investigation? It is clear that it is completely foreign to it. In anything we tackle, even at the level of the most concrete sciences, biological sciences for example, what is important is not to know how things are in the ideal case. It is enough to see the embarrassment of having recourse to the thinking that solicits from us every question of this order, namely, what is health for example? You should consider that what organises our scientific advance is not situated in the order of the ideal. What is important, in connection with everything that is and that we have to question, is how it can be replaced.

I think that this is sufficiently illustrated for you by the way it is used with the organic questioning of the functions of the body. It is not by chance, excess, acrobatics, exercise, that what appears to be most clear in the analysis of a particular function, is that one can replace an organ by something that does not look the least bit like it. If I started from an example that is raging today, it is certainly not to create an effect, because what is at stake is of a quite different nature. If this is how things are, it is because science did not develop from the Platonic idea but from a process linked to the reference to mathematics. Not what manifested itself as such at the origin, the Pythagorean one for example to give you an idea, namely, the one that connected the number to an ideal of the sort of those that I was referring to in speaking about Plato. In Pythagoras there is an essence of

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the One, an essence of the Two, even of the Three, and at the end of a certain time one comes to a stop. When one gets to Twelve, one is out of breath, this has absolutely nothing to do with the way in which we now question what number is. Between the formulae of Peano and this Pythagorean exercise there is absolutely nothing in common.

The idea of function, in the mathematical sense, but here it is not for nothing that it is homonymous with the style in which I saidearlier the organic function could be questioned, this function is always in the final analysis organised from a concatenation between two signifying chains, x = function of y. Here is the starting point, the solid foundation on which mathematics converge, because it did not at all appear so pure at the start. In accordance with the style, properly speaking, of the symbolic chain it is the point of arrival that gives its sense to everything that went before.

In so far as the theory of mathematics, I will not say has culminated, because already it is sliding forward, but let us stay with what constitutes (222) its point of equilibrium in our time, set theory, we note that the essential of numerical ordination is reduced in it to what it is, to its articulatory possibilities. It is constructed to strip this numerical order of all its ideal or idealised privileges, those that I was evoking as I could just now in recalling for you what was the One, the Two, indeed one or other number, in a tradition that we can describe broadly speaking as Gnostic. Set theory precisely is constructed to strip this numerical ordering – and this is what I call of ideal or imaginary privileges – of the unit. There is no trace of the unit in Peano's definitions, a number is defined with respect to zero and the function of the successor. The unit has no privilege in it – of unity, of corporeality, of essentialness, of totality itself. It must be clearly marked by the fact that an example cannot in any way be confused with a class. And by some feature like the fact that to speak about the part is profoundly contrary to the functioning of the theory, that the term sub-set is very precisely constructed to show that one cannot in any way inscribe in it that the whole is made up of the sum of the parts. As you know, sub-sets constitute from their union something that is in no way identifiable to

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the set, even by stripping away from it at the foundation, this is the sense of set theory, of recourse to space itself.

I apologise for this introduction designed to mark out the terms of an opposition that is as profound as it is necessary, the one in which there is defined what? The revolution or the subversion if you wish of the movement of a knowledge because, for some time, it is clear that I have taken off from the functioning here which is only inaugural, indeed supposed by thinking. It is indeed because I started from Plato that I could speak about thinking. So then it is not at all from the side of objective orientation that we have to question thinking about its freedom. In that quarter, it is not free, in effect, except in Utopia, which has no place in the real. Only, one of the interests of the very process that I took, is that undoubtedly, this discourse has something to do with thinking. This retreat from what is involved in the two aspects of knowledge, we shall call what? A reflection? A debate? A dialectic? It is in the subjective field, quite obviously, and inasmuch as, if the thing were possible, you would have an occasion to answer me, that we would, no doubt, have to make other diversities intervene.

In the foreground first of all, the notion of "all" (*tous*). In what I have just said what can be accepted by all? Does this "all" have a sense? We will rediscover the same opposition here. We will notice the moulting that logical requirements have taken on, and that moreover, to push such a debate sufficiently far, we would be led, to promote the function of the (223) axiom. Namely, a certain number of logical prefigurations that are held to ground what follows and moreover, to make what follows depend on the assent given or not to the axiom. The uncertainty of this "all" will be put in question not at all simply from the fact that concretely the unanimity of the "all" is the most difficult thing to obtain, but that the

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logical expression of the "all" proves to be very precarious, provided that, in the order of logic, we have the order of requirements that necessitates the theory of quantifiers. Pulling back from this, not going to involve myself in developments that would send us astray with respect to what we have to question, I will ask how there is expressed in this register what is involved in freedom of thought.

Here Hegel is a reference point that is not simply convenient but essential. In this axis that interests us, he prolongs the inaugural *cogito*. Thinking surrenders itself if one questions the centre of gravity of what is qualified there as *Selbstbewusstsein*. I know that I think. The *Selbstbewusstsein* is nothing else. Only what he adds to Descartes, is that something varies in this "I know that I think", and this is the point where I am. This, I was going to say by definition, in Hegel, I do not know. The illusion is that I am where I think. Freedom of thought here, is nothing other than what Hegel forbids me to think about, which is that I am where I want to be. In this respect, what Hegel reveals, is that there is not the slightest freedom of thought. The time of History is necessary so that at the end, I think at the right place, at the place where I will have become Knowledge. But, at that stage, there is absolutely no longer any need for thinking. I am carrying out a rather mad exercise before you because it is obvious, for those who have never opened Hegel, all of this cannot go very far. But in any case I hope all the same that there are among you enough people who are more or less introduced to the dialectic of the master and the slave, to remember what happens to the master who has the freedom – this is how he defines

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him at least, he is the mythical master – what happens when he thinks, namely, when he puts his mastery into the strangeness of language. He enters into thinking, perhaps, but undoubtedly it is the moment when he loses his freedom. That the slave, as 'vile consciousness', is the one who realises History. In work, his thinking is at every phase the servant of the step that he has to take to accede to the kind of state where there is realised what? The domination of knowledge. It is almost impossible to undo the fascination of Hegel. It is only some people of bad faith who consider that I have promoted Hegelianism within the Freudian debate. Nevertheless, you must not imagine that I think that one can finish with Hegel like that. This notion that the truth of thinking is elsewhere than in itself and is necessitated every moment by the relation of the subject to knowledge, and that this knowledge itself is conditioned by a certain number of necessary phases, is a grid whose applicability we cannot but sense at every instant, at every detour of our experience. It is of exemplary value as an exercise, (224) as a formation. It is really necessary to make an effort at disorganising, of veritable awakening to ask ourselves why, however little I may know it, there is this delay which means that I must think in order to know.

If one looks more closely at it, questions oneself, what does the articulation of effective knowledge with the way in which I think about my liberty matter, namely, "I am where I want"? It is clear from Hegel's demonstration that I cannot think that I am where I want. But it is no less clear in looking closely at it that it is this and nothing else that is called

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thinking. So that this "I am there where I want" which is the essence of freedom of thought as a stating is properly what cannot be stated by anyone. At that moment there appears this strange thing that in Hegel, in the *Phenomenology* and not in the *Encyclopaedia*, but where there is marked in the sharpest way this dialectic proper to thinking, this can be done in the absence of any history of knowledge. In the whole of the *Phenomenology of the spirit*, it is a matter of a reference to a truth that allows to be highlighted what thinking does not know about its function. From then on it is clear that where does Hegel detect it if not from his knowledge, I mean the knowledge of his time, of his epoch, of this scientific knowledge as Kant had accounted for it, Newtonian knowledge. Let us say in a word, for those who understand, this limit-knowledge that marks the apogee and the end of theology.

The difference between Hegel and Freud is the following. Thinking is not simply the question put about the truth of knowledge, which is already a lot and essential in the Hegelian step. Thinking, says Freud, bars the entry to a knowledge. Do I need to recall what is at stake in the unconscious, namely, how the first access to a knowledge had been thought out? The *Selbstbewusstsein* of Hegel, is "I know what I think". The Freudian trauma is an "I do not know", itself unthinkable since it supposes an "I think" dismantled of all thinking. The point of origin, not to be understood developmentally but structurally when it is a matter of understanding the unconscious, is that it is in this nodal point of a failing knowledge that there is born, in the form then of what can be called, on condition that you

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put the two last words in a sort of parenthesis, the desire (to know). This is simply unconscious desire in its structure. Moreover, I have for a long time marked on the upper line of my graph "he did not know" in connection with the celebrated dream of "he did not know that he had died". The "he did not know" is the putting in question of the stating as such of the subject divided at the origin. This is what creates the dimension of desire, being that of the desire of the Other. It is in so far as in the traumatic phantasy this desire of the Other cannot be formulated, that desire takes seed in what can be called, on the condition of putting the last words in parenthesis, the desire (to know). And we find there right away the fundamental themes on which I insisted. If the desire of the (225) Other is such that it is closed off, it is because it is expressed in what is characteristic of the traumatic scene, that the body is glimpsed there as separated from enjoyment. The function of the other is incarnated here. It is this body perceived as separated from enjoyment.

The step that Freud makes us take concerning this function of thinking with respect to *Selbstbewusstsein*, is that the essence of the "I know that I think", of this *Selbstbewusstsein* is nothing other than the excessive accent that is put on what "I know" while forgetting this "I do not know" which is its real origin. It is already against the division that this "I do not know" implies that the simple fact of the presence of the negation puts in suspense, as I might say – but precisely I am not saying it. It is an "I do not know" that the "I know that I think" is designed to screen in a definitive fashion. The truth henceforth is no longer the place where this

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"that I think" in Hegel really is. The truth is the designation of the place from which this "that I think" is motivated. Note that if this ought to be taken in all its rigour, there is nothing to be said about this place which has any sense. It is created by a "that means nothing". It is the place where "that means nothing" commands a replacement "that means".

I do not know for how many of you this recalling of these primary truths may be of use. But for the others I put some key words on the board which recall what I have already elucidated at length in a topology. Namely, this reference to the Klein bottle in so far as it gives us in a surface topology the possibility of a division, in which what is at the neck, namely, this little circle, where the surface is supposed to retrogress. And we will put on the one hand the truth and on the other knowledge. Note that in this schematisation there should be here a somewhere that reunites them, that is the same shape as the one that I am trying to make present more simply in the Moebius strip.

What is important is to pose some questions here. This truth which is the one that we question in the unconscious as creative failure of knowledge, as the original point of the desire to know, is the schema that comes from a knowledge condemned never to be in a way anything but the correlate of this failure. Is this not for us, in questioning things further, whether all thinking, and not simply the spontaneous thinking of whoever is oriented in the established realities of life, but thinking as such, namely, as questioning itself on this Hegelian point which is where a certain style of

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knowledge really situates the subject. If all of this thinking is defined as being essentially censorship, because this is what the Freudian articulation means, it is that this "I do not know", from the fact that it is radically forgotten, is impossible to return to its place, thinking-censorship, call that what you wish, slide the words, *pensée-censure*. Do we not sense there at least one of these essential correlatives of what is put abroad in our epoch (226) about a so-called end of philosophy?

There is an objection of structure, precisely, which is that philosophy, or even as is better said on occasion metaphysics, metaphysics never did anything but that, to consider itself as at an end. So then it must not be believed that because people bring in Kierkegaard, Marx and Nietzsche, as they say, this takes us so much outside the limits of the blueprint, uniquely seen from this point of view. This is only interesting in order to continue to question what is in our day, you should note it all the same, the most contested thing in the world, even though people arm themselves with nothing else, namely, freedom of thought. Whereever people work to realise something that seems to be the domination of knowledge – I mean where people work seriously, not where it is a fair – there is no freedom of thought. That does not prevent the students in Prague from going on strike for it.

So then what does that mean? It is in the measure that our analytic experience can perhaps contribute here an outline of reflection that this whole discourse is being carried on. If we proceed in experience by

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making hold up what? A discourse that is defined how? Free associations, that means without a link to the Other. You speak in analysis. This means that you have been freed from all the rules of the game. And to what, great God, is that going to lead? Not even to an aesthetic text. Because the surrealists, when they wanted to proceed along this path, you can imagine that at the end they made good use of a pair scissors, for that to end up by making something that we will speak about again, the work of art. That one should be able to arrive at it like that is already strongly indicative but quite impermeable to anyone who does not have an idea of the o-object.

We are not talking today about the o-object. What we are talking about is the following. That in order to give oneself over to such an exercise, that normally can only end up at a profound logical inadequacy – and that is all Freud means in reality when he says that the unconscious does not know the principle of contradiction, the principle of contradiction is something extraordinarily elaborated in logic and that one can even do without in logic, one can construct a whole logic without making use of negation, I am talking about a formal logic in the field of knowledge – if we can use a discourse that is free of logic, it is certainly not unattached to grammar. The fact is that in grammar there must remain something very rich in properties and consequences which ensures that we notice that a phantasy is expressed in nothing better than a sentence which has no sense other than grammatical. That in its operation in any case, as regards the formation of the phantasy, it is only debated grammatically, namely *A child is being beaten,* for example. It is in so far as something is only

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censored in it and can only be censored in it from the grammatical
(227) structure, namely, the agent for example, that something can operate around this sentence.

The neuroses then revealed the distinction between grammar and logic. It might be a matter of taking a further step and even if they do not reveal it right away, like that, openly, to tell us that if we discover – and this is what I am striving for – the homology of something that one can only know obviously by having done a little logic, the homology of flaws that is demonstrated by a correct logic, namely, one that is not more than a century old. Namely, which ensures that one sees for example that it is from the localisation somewhere of an undecideable that there depends the consistency of one of the most secure systems, namely arithmetic. That there is a homology between these flaws of logic and the structure of desire in so far as it is in the final term a connotation of the knowledge of relationships of the man and the woman by something that is most surprising, through the lack or the non-lack of an organon, of an instrument, in other words the phallus. That the enjoyment of the instrument creates a barrier to the enjoyment that is the enjoyment of the Other in so far as the Other is only represented by a body, in a word, as I stated it, I think, with sufficient force. That there is nothing that can be structured that is properly the sexual act, if this is correctly demonstrated, joins it, buckles it, is something that rejoins truth and knowledge from behind is conceivable. Thinking is precisely this *Vorstellungs-repräsentanz*, this thing that represents the fact that there is something

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unrepresentable because barred by the prohibition of enjoyment. At what level? At the most simple, at the organic level. The pleasure principle, is this barrier to enjoyment and nothing else.

That it should be metaphorised in the prohibition of the mother is after all something that is historically contingent and the Oedipus complex itself is only attached to that. But the question lies deeper. Castration, namely, the hole in the apprehension of this "I do not know" as regards the enjoyment of the Other, ought to be rethought as regards its relationships to the widespread, omnipresent effects of our science – these two points that seem to be very far from this dam which ensures that this sex that we speak about all the time, far from taking a step in any solution whatsoever of the field of the erotic, continues rather to obscure it, and marks out more the inadequacy of our reference points - that there is a relationship between that and these effects that I called widespread of our knowledge. Namely, this prodigious unfurling of the relationship to the o-object that the use of our mass-media are only the return, the presentification of, is not this just by itself the indication of what is involved in freedom of thought?

Because suppose that the structure is effectively here that of the Klein bottle, that the limit is effectively this locus of turning inside out where what was the front becomes the back and inversely, where apparently truth (228) is separated from knowledge. Let it be sufficient for us to think that this limit is not fixed, that of its nature it is everywhere, namely, that the question is posed for us of what to do so that there should not be stuck at a

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purely imaginary fixed point this division between truth and knowledge. And it is indeed this about which, for want of having even begun to suggest the problem in this way, the psychoanalysts are content to give a demonstration in this form of absolutely not being able to detach themselves from a certain stasis of this limit. Every treatment of neurosis that limits itself to the exhaustion of the identifications of the subject, namely, very precisely of that by which he is reduced to the other, no treatment of these identifications, we will come back to it, carries in itself any promise of resolution of what constitutes the knot for the neurotic.

What constitutes the knot for the neurotic, I will not say here today, I would be forced to go too quickly. But what I mean, is that because of what is involved in the nature of the neurotic, which is profoundly that he is asked what is involved in his desire, can the question not be posed whether the psychoanalyst is not here complicit by sustaining without knowing it the foundation of the structure of the neurotic, namely that his desire can only be sustained from this demand. In a word, curiously, if one can say that analysis consisted in a rupture with hypnosis, it is perhaps for a reason that is quite surprising when one considers it. It is that in analysis, at least in the form in which it stagnates, it is the analyst that is hypnotised. At the end, the analyst ends up by becoming the look and the voice of his patient. This is very different from what is presented, an illusion of thought, as recourse to the clinic. It would perhaps not be separating oneself from the clinic to pay attention to the fact that this mutation does

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not take place. I am only, as you can well imagine, indicating the ways that we will push forward in the sessions to come.

I would only like to end by making this remark. If I limited myself in my life to commenting my experience and questioning it in its relationships to Freud's doctrine, it is precisely with the aim of not being a thinker but, a thinking, the one Freud already constituted. To question it while taking into account what determines it, as regards what, speaking in a Hegelian way, constitutes or not its truth.

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Seminar 18: Wednesday 30 April 1969

(229) Perhaps some of you, who by chance, might be philosophers, may glimpse that a question that has been put behind us, through some sort of lassitude rather than from having received an effective solution, the one that opens up between the terms of idealism and realism, is being asked again here. As we are going to see later, it is fairly easy to get the measure of idealism, you can pick it up from the writings of those who have proposed this doctrine. You will see that up to a certain point I will take support in something that has not been refuted. It has not been refuted philosophically. This means that common sense which is, of course, realist, realist in the terms that idealism poses the question, namely, that according to it we are only supposed to know the real from representations, it is clear that this position that, from a certain schema, is irrefutable, can all the same be refuted once one does not make of the representation the pure and simple reflection of the real. I am going to come back to it.

It is notable that it is from within philosophy itself that the decisive blows have been dealt against idealism. Namely, that what was put forward first of all in the mythology of representation was able to be displaced into another mythology, the one that puts in question not

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representation but the function of thinking *qua* ideology. Idealism could only hold up by confusing the order of thought with that of representation. The matter is articulated, as you see, very simply and one can believe one is a realist by making of thinking what it is, something that is dependent on what is called on this occasion the real. Is this sufficient? It is difficult not to perceive that even within the mythology, that is what I call it, of ideology as dependent on a certain number of conditions and specifically social ones, namely, those of production, is it a position of realism to refer oneself to a real that as such, namely, in the fact that thinking is always dependent on it, cannot by this fact be fully apprehended, and this all the more in that we consider ourselves to be in a position to transform this real properly speaking. These are global reflections. What I want to point out, is that this real with respect to which we ought to consider – this is the sense of what is called the critique of ideology – our knowledge as in progress, is an integral part of the subversion that we are introducing into the real. The question is the following, is this knowledge in progress already there somewhere? It is the question that I posed (230) under the terms of *subject supposed to know.*

It is always as a presupposition and, in a word, a prejudice that is all the less criticised because it has not been seen that, even in excluding what the idea of knowledge indicates in terms of mysticism, even by having understood that the step of science consists properly speaking in having renounced it, by constituting a knowledge which is a system developing from the radical presupposition that we are dealing with nothing other than systems, that the subject does not only handle but in which he can purify himself as such, being nothing more than the support of what is articulated as organised knowledge in a certain discourse, a discourse separate from that of opinion, and that as such is

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distinguished from it as a discourse of science. It remains that even when this step has been taken, no serious question has been posed about the implications that, despite ourselves, persist of this prejudice in so far as it is not criticised. Namely, that in order to discover this knowledge ought we, yes or no, to think - a fact of thinking - that there is a place where, whether we want to or not, we conceive of this knowledge as already organised. As long as the consequences properly speaking of a radical putting in suspense of this question of the *subject supposed to know* have not been tested, we remain in idealism and, in a word, in its most backward form. In the one that, when all is said and done, has remained unshaken in a certain structure and that is called, neither more nor less, theology. The *subject supposed to know* is God, full stop, nothing else. And one can be a *savant* of genius, and not, as far as I know, for all that be obscurantist, one can in a word be Einstein, and have recourse in the most articulated way to this God. He has to be already there, supposed to know, since Einstein, arguing against the restructuring of science on the foundations of probability, argues that the knowledge that he articulates in his theory presupposes somewhere, commends itself, by something that is homogenous to what is indeed a supposition concerning this subject. He names him in the traditional terms the good old God, difficult perhaps to penetrate in that he sustains the order of the world, but not a liar. He is fair. He does not change the goalposts during the game.

And it is on this admission that the rules exist already, that somewhere the rules of the game, the one that presides over this deciphering that is called knowledge, are established simply by the fact that the knowledge already exists in God. It is at this level that one can question what results from a veritable atheism, the only one, as you

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see, that merits the name, which is the following: is it possible for thinking to sustain the confrontation of the putting in question of the *subject supposed to know.*

This, it must be said, is a putting in question that, though I am reformulating it, in no way means that again this formula here constitutes a step forward in anything whatsoever. Not of course that it is not a step that essentially occupies me. The fact is, in what I have to (231) articulate, which is solidary with it, namely psychoanalysis, I can only manage by getting across first of all what I solicited from the analysts: at least to have an up-to-date discourse about what they are effectively handling. Call that what you want, treatment, analytic experience, it is all one. And, in this respect, their thinking remains backward to the point that it is easy to put your finger on the fact that it is, when all is said and done, to one of the briefest forms of summing up the subject that there are attached particular notions that are by no means harmless. To take account of what the subject does in the treatment, to account for it in terms that by being attached to prejudices that for their part are summary, a veritable degradation of what critical thinking has been able to touch on at one or other of its turning points, is not without multiple consequences. First of all, by reinforcing everything that is signalled to us in thinking as being essentially constituted by a resistance. And then styles of intervention that can only reinforce in the subject described more or less correctly as the patient, but in any case, anyway, treated, woven into the very act of psychoanalytic experience, reinforce the same prejudices in the subject.

And to say what is at stake in a really obvious way, I will focus it on the terms of inside and outside that are evoked. That these terms are,

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of course, in Freud's discourse from the origin, is not a reason for us not to question them in the closest possible way. Otherwise we risk seeing being produced these sorts of deviations that hinder what might be glimpsed in analytic experience that is of a nature to nourish or at the very least flow into the essential question, that of the *subject supposed to know.* As long as the *subject supposed to know* before we know has not been put in question in the most serious way, one could say that our whole approach remains attached to what, in a thinking which is not detached from it, is a factor of resistance. Because a defective conception of the terrain on which we pose questions inevitably leads to their radical distortion.

How, with the use that is currently made by the analyst, not simply day by day but every minute, of the terms projection and introjection, how, if they are not criticised in themselves in a correct fashion, how can we not see their inhibiting effect on the thinking of the analyst himself. And much more their suggestive effect in the interpretative intervention and in a style that there is no excess in saying can only be cretinising. Does an inside and an outside, which seem to be self-evident if we consider the organism, namely, an individual who in effect is indeed there - what is inside, is what is in his sack of skin, and what is outside, is all the rest. That from there the step should be taken that what he represents to himself about this outside ought also to be inside the sack of skin is something that, in a first approach, appears a modest, self-evident, step. It is exactly on this after all that there is (232) based the articulation of Bishop Berkeley. After all, about what is on the outside, you only know what is in your head and what will consequently under some heading always be representation. Whatever you may put forward about this world, I can always point out that it comes from the way you represent it to yourself. It is really very

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curious that such an image was able to take on, at a moment in history, a dominant character. To the point that a discourse was able to be based on it that effectively, in a certain context, that of a representation that is designed to sustain this idea of representation, could not be refuted. I would like to imagine this representation that allows there to be given to representation this advantage in which there consists, when all is said and done, the secret knot of what is called idealism.

It is certainly quite striking that by simply approaching it in the way that I do, its canvas, as one might say, vacillates. If it is so simple, how were people even able to consider it? And to give body to this vacillation, I am going to do something that is of course required, namely, show how this mirage-representation is constructed. It is the simplest thing there is. There is no need even to have recourse to something that is all the same rather striking, Aristotle's text in his little treatise on *Sense and sensibilia,* to notice the style with which he tackles what is involved in sight, in the eye. What he says about it, where he tackles it from, the way in which he intends to account for the fact of vision, is something that just by itself makes us notice that he is lacking in a striking way what is unquestioned for us. Namely, the most elementary apparatus of optics. This is the time to say what an advantage it would be for a study to be made of the point that ancient science was at about optics, properly speaking. This science went very far, much further even than is believed, in all sorts of mechanical views. But it seems in effect that, on the proper point of optics, it presented a remarkable blank. In this model which gives its status at that time to representation in which the kernel of idealism was crystallised, the very simple model is that of the dark room. Namely, a closed space protected from all light, in which only a little hole opens up to the outside world. If this outside world is illuminated, its image

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is depicted and moves around, according to what is happening outside, on the inner wall of the dark room.

It is extremely striking to see that at a certain detour of science, and it is not for nothing that it is Newton's, who as you know was just as inaugurating and brilliant as regards optics as he had been as regards the law of gravitation. It is not for nothing at this turning point that I will recall that what earned him the praise of his time, was very exactly to have been able for – this was articulated by the best minds – the plans of God that he found himself deciphering. This to confirm the remark that I was making earlier about the theological envelope of the first steps of our science. Optics is therefore essential to this (233) imagination of the subject as something in an inside. A singular thing, it seems to be admitted from the place of this little hole on which the site of the image depends. It is enough because this little hole, this place is indifferent. An image will always be produced, in effect, in the dark room opposite the little hole. The difference of the place of the little hole does not appear to give rise to a question about the fact that one only sees the world from the side that the little hole is turned towards. It seems to be implied in this function of the subject modelled on the dark room that, in the room, this apparatus of the little hole should be compatible with the fact that, from what is outside and is only an image since it can no longer be expressed except as an image inside, outside in a space that nothing limits, in principle, everything can come to take up a place within the room. It is nevertheless manifest that if the little holes were multiplied, there would no longer be any image anywhere.

Nevertheless we are not going to insist too heavily on this question, this is not what is important to us. It is simply to remark that here, and

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here alone, is the support for the fact that what concerns the psyche is to be situated in an inside limited by a surface. A surface, of course, we are told, is already something in Freud's text. It is a surface turned towards the outside and it is on this surface that we henceforth localise the subject. It is, as they say, defenceless with respect to what is inside which is not of course simply representations but also, since the representations cannot be put elsewhere, at the same time one puts all the rest there, namely, what is called differently, confusedly, affects, instincts, drives. All of that is inside.

What reason is there, to know the relationship of a reality with its locus, whether it is inside or indeed outside. It would be well first of all to question oneself about what it becomes *qua* reality and perhaps for that to detach oneself from this fascinating virtue that there is in the fact that we can only conceive the representation of a living being inside its body. Let us go out of it a moment and let us pose the question of what is happening in the inside and the outside when it is a commodity that is at stake for example. The nature of commodity has been sufficiently illuminated for us for us to know that it is distinguished between use value and exchange value. Exchange value is, all the same, what functions outside. But let us put this commodity in a warehouse. That must also exist. A warehouse is an inside. That is where it is kept, that it is preserved. The barrels of oil, when they are outside, are exchanged and then consumed, use value. It is rather curious that it is when they are inside that they are reduced to their exchange value. In a warehouse, by definition, one is not there to break them up or to consume them; they are kept. The use value on the (234) inside, where one might expect it, is precisely prohibited, and it only subsists there by its exchange value. Where things are more enigmatic, is when it is no longer commodity that is at stake but the

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fetish *par excellence* of money. In that case, this thing which has no use value, which has only exchange value, what value does it preserve when it is in a safe? It is nevertheless quite clear that it is put there and that it is kept there. What is this inside that seems to make what is locked up in it completely enigmatic? Is it not in its way, with respect to what constitutes the money, is it not an inside that is altogether outside, outside of what constitutes the essence of the money?

The only interest of these remarks is to introduce what is involved in thinking which also has something to do with exchange value, in other words, circulates. This simple remark should suffice to mark the timeliness of the question for those who have not yet understood that a thinking cannot be properly speaking conceived of unless it is articulated, unless it is inscribed in language, unless it can be sustained in conditions that are called dialectic. This means a certain operation of logic, with rules, and of knowing then if there is any way of us not questioning ourselves in exactly the same way as we were doing a moment ago for the money placed in a safe. What is meant by a thinking when one keeps it to oneself? And if one does not know what it is when one keeps it to oneself, it is all the same because its essence must be elsewhere, namely, already outside, without one needing to make a projection to say that thinking is involved. In other words, something must be noticed that perhaps did not appear right away to everyone. This is that what is convincing in Berkeley's argument, what gives it its force, is perhaps indeed this intuition grounded on a model, I cannot have representation elsewhere. But the important thing in the affair is not that, namely, that we allow ourselves to be caught by another image, and one particularly dependent on a certain state of technique. The fact is that effectively his argumentation is irrefutable. In order for idealism to hold up, there must be not simply Bishop

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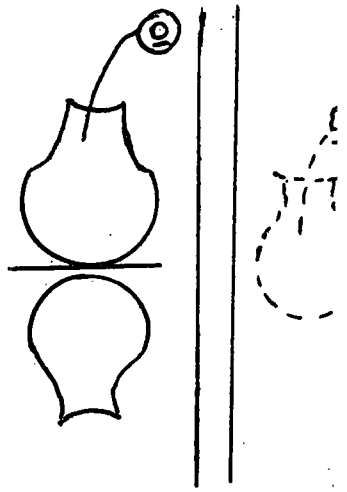
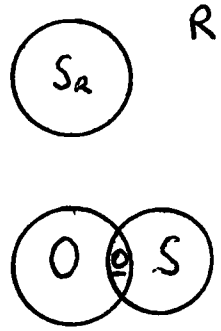


Berkeley but some other people with whom, on this subject of whether we only have an apprehension of the world that the philosophical limits of idealism defines. It is in the measure that one cannot get out of it, that, in the discourse, one has nothing to retort to it that it is irrefutable.

(235) So then on the subject of idealism/realism, there are quite obviously those who are right and those who are wrong. Those who are right are in the real, I am speaking from the realists' point of view; and those who are wrong, where are they? This should also be inscribed in the schema. The important thing is the fact that in the debate, the articulated discussion, Berkeley, at the point that he is at in the philosophical discussion of his epoch, is right, even though, of course, he is clearly wrong.

This is precisely what proves that the first outline of the field of objectivity grounded on the darkroom is false. But then is it necessary or not to substitute another one for it? And how can it be done? What becomes of inside and outside? And if what we are forced to redraw to find ourselves on this limit, on this middle line between the symbolic and the imaginary that a minimum of support, of intuitive support, for our cogitations, demands does this not involve us having, in analytic intervention, to radically abandon these terms of projection and introjection, as we constantly use them without contributing in the slightest to the schema that, in order to designate it, we will call Berkeleyan, the one marked by this little ring on top. This is the darkroom, in which I put the subject of representation with a real outside that is distinguished simply as being, as if it were self-evident, everything that is there outside. It is the real.



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Probably another very unfortunate apprehension of things, because it does not to distinguish in everything that is constructed outside different orders of the real. To pose the question simply of what this building, this house owes to an order that is not at all necessarily the real, because we made it, is something it would be well to put in place if we have to intervene in a field that is not at all the one that has been said to be that of elementary, organic, carnal, facts, biological pressures but of something that is called the unconscious. And that by being simply articulated as being of the order of thinking, does not escape from the fact that it is articulated in language terms. The radical character of what is at the foundation not of what I teach but of what I have only to recognise in our daily practice and in Freud's texts, poses the question of what is involved in the inside and the outside, and the way in which we can and ought to conceive of what corresponds to the facts always so awkwardly handled in the terms introjection and projection. To the point that Freud dares, it has to be said, at the origin of the definition of the Ego, to articulate things in these terms. Namely, that starting from a certain state of confusion (236) with the world the psyche is separated out into an inside and an outside. In his discourse, nothing is distinguished about what is involved in this outside, namely, whether it can be identified to what in this representation in common opinion, whether this outside can be identified to this indeterminate space. And this inside to something that we will hold henceforth to ground a rule of the organism all of whose components we are going to find inside.

It is quite clear that one can already take a step, in demonstrating how unthinkable the schema of the darkroom is. There is no need to go back to Aristotle to see that because he does not refer himself to the dark room, the questions are completely different to the ones that are

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posed to us and render properly speaking unthinkable the whole conception, let us say, of the nervous system. Read this text, it is piquant, this text with which there begin some chapters of a little treatise that he calls *Sense and sensibilia.* He already touches on the problem, namely, this something that is going to give rise to so many developments subsequently, namely, that there is something in vision that opens out to reflection. He approaches the "seeing oneself seeing" of Valery in the drollest way in the fact that when one puts pressure on an eye, this gives rise to something, it gives rise to phosphenes, namely, something that is like light. It is only there that he finds himself able to apprehend that this eye that sees, also sees itself in a way, since it produces light if you press on it. Many other things are piquant, and the formulae that he ends up with, make the dimension of the diaphanous essential to things. This accounts for the fact that the eye sees from the fact, and uniquely from the fact that, in this order of the diaphanous, it represents a particularly qualified system. Namely, that far from us having something that in any way resembles an inside and an outside, it is in so far, as one might say, as the eye shares a quality that we would describe as visionary (*visionnaire*) that the eye sees. It is not so stupid. It is a certain way, on this occasion, of plunging the subject into the world.

The question has become a little bit different. In truth, the people that Aristotle had to fight with, namely, a thousand other theories stated at his time, all of which moreover, from some point of view, share in something that we have no difficulty in finding in our images, including projection. Because, I ask you, what does this term projection presuppose, when it is a matter no longer of what sees itself but of the imaginary, if not that we suppose, with regard to a certain affective configuration, the one around which, at a particular moment,

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at a particular date, we suppose the patient-subject modifies the world. What is this projection if not the supposition of the fact that it is from inside that there begins the luminous pencil that is going to paint the (237) world, just as in ancient times, there were certain people who imagined these rays that, starting from the eye, went on in effect to illuminate the world and objects for us, however enigmatic this radiation of vision was. But we can, we prove it in our metaphors, be still at this point. And when you refer to this Aristotelian text, it is not the least brilliant aspect of what he shows us, that one can put one's finger on in a way, not so much what he constructs himself but everything that he refers to. Empedocles, notably, who makes the eye share in the function of fire, to which he himself retorts by an appeal to the element of water. Incidentally, what is annoying, is that there are only four elements, and since there are five senses, it is hard to see how the link can be made; he says it quite literally. He gets out of it at the end by unifying taste and touch as equally referring to earth, but let us not amuse ourselves any longer, moreover these things have nothing especially comical about them, there are rather exemplary. What appears in a way, in reading these texts, is this something that, for us, localises this field of vision by revivifying it, as I might say, with what we have put into it, thanks to perversion, with the desire that is put into it. One can see this, by simply allowing oneself, as one might say to be impregnated by what animates these texts which, however futile they may appear to us, were nevertheless not produced by stupid people. The mainspring of why they could be said in this way is in a way suggested to us, provided we have done some exercises in what is involved in the visual field in terms of the function of the o-object.

The o-object in the visual field, as regards the objective structure, falls under the jurisdiction of the function of this third term. And it is

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striking that the ancients literally do not know what to make of it, miss out on it, even though it is the crudest thing there is. They too found themselves between the two, sensation, namely the subject, and then the world that is sensed. They have to shake themselves, as one might say, to bring into play as third term, quite simply light, the luminous focus in so far as its rays are what are reflected on the object and which, for ourselves, come to form an image inside the darkroom. And then? Then we have this marvellous stupidity of the conscious synthesis which is somewhere, and, it appears, particularly easily thinkable uniquely from the fact that we can lodge it in a cortical fold. And why would the image in the cortical fold become something synthesising, all of a sudden, just because it is in a cortical fold rather than on the retina? The concept of the o-object is sufficiently indicated to us by the very hesitations that are outlined throughout tradition and which ensured in effect that they grasped very well that the solution of the problem of vision is not at all simply light. Light is a condition, of course; for one to see something there must be daylight; but how does (238) this explain the fact that one sees?

The o-object, in what concerns the scoptophilic field, if we try to express it at the level of sensibility (*esthésie*), is very exactly what you like, this white or this black, this something lacking behind the image, as one might say, and that we put so easily, by a purely verbal (*logomachique*) effect of synthesis, somewhere in a cortical fold? It is very precisely in so far as something is lacking in what is given as an image of it, that there is the mainspring of which there is only one solution, that, like the o-object, it is precisely *qua* lack and, if you wish, *qua* stain. The definition of the stain, is precisely what, in the field, is distinguished as the hole, as an absence. And we know precisely from zoology that the first appearance of this thing that

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astonishes us, which is so well constructed as a little optical apparatus, and that is called an eye, begins in lamellar beings as a stain. Will we make of this stain purely and simply an effect, because light produces stains? This is something certain. We are not at that point. To put the stain as essential and structuring as a place of lack in all vision, to put the stain at the place of the third term of the objectified fields, to put the stain at the place of light as the Ancients could not prevent themselves from doing – and this was their nonsense – here is something that is no longer nonsense. If we see that this effective metaphor, the metaphor of the point denied in the field of vision, as being at the source of what constitutes not its deployment more or less as a mirage but what attaches the subject, in so far as this subject is something whose knowledge is entirely determined by another more radical, more essential lack. This is the one that concerns it *qua* sexed individual, this is what shows how the field of vision is inserted into desire. And after all why is there no means of admitting that what ensures that there is sight, contemplation, all these relationships that have a hold on the speaking being, that all of this only really takes on its attachment, its root, at the very level of that which, by being a stain in this field, can succeed in filling, in completing what is involved in the lack. Of the lack itself perfectly articulated and articulated as lack, namely, the only term thanks to which the speaking being can find its bearings with respect to what is involved in its sexual belonging.

It is at the level of this o-object that there can be conceived this articulated division of the subject into a subject who is wrong because he is in the truth – this is Bishop Berkeley – and another subject who, putting in doubt that thinking is worth anything, in reality proves the fact that thinking is of itself censorship. And that what is important, is to situate the look *qua* subjective, because it does not see. This is how

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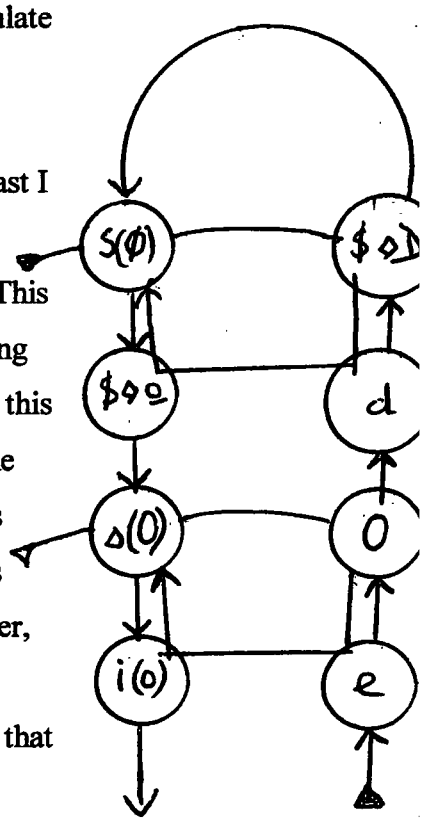
it can be thought that thinking itself is based on the fact that it is (239) censorship and on this alone. It is this that allows it to articulate itself metaphorically as creating a stain in logical discourse.



What I want to say today at the end of this long articulation - at least I can begin it - is the following. We had remained at the level of perversion founded on a different way of inscribing this outside. This outside, for us, is not a space open to infinity where we put anything whatsoever under the name of real. What we have to deal with, is this Other, which has its status as such. It is certainly not only from the efforts of psychoanalysts that we can articulate this status today as presenting itself to be explored by a simply logical questioning, as marked by a flaw. Which in the schema here, presents the big Other, the sign as giving the term of what is posited at the level of enunciating, of desiring enunciating. The fact is that the response that it gives is very exactly the flaw that this desire represents.

After all, it is not for nothing that these terms are manifested by little letters, by an algebra. What is proper to an algebra is to be able to have different interpretations. S(Ø) can mean all sorts of things, up to and including the function of the death of the father. But at a radical level, at the level of bringing logic into our experience, S(Ø) is exactly, if it is somewhere and can be fully articulated, what is called structure. If one can in any term qualify as structuralism – and you know the reservations I have about this philosophical label – it is in so far as the relationship between what allows there to be edified a rigorous logic and what on the other hand is shown to us in the unconscious by certain irreducible faults of articulation from which proceeds this very effort that bears witness to the desire to know. As I told you, what I defined as perversion, is in some way the primary restoration, the

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restitution, of the **o**, to this field of O. This is made possible because this **o** is an effect of the grasping of something primitive, primordial. (240) And why would we not admit it, on condition of not making a subject of it. It is in the measure that this animal being that we were taking earlier at the level of its sack of skin is caught up in language that something in it is determined as **o**, this **o** given over to the Other, as one might say. That indeed is why the other day, in introducing the pervert before you, I compared him to the man of faith, indeed ironically to a crusader; he gives to God his veritable plenitude.

Allow me to end on some rather humorous word play. If it is true that the pervert is the structure of the subject for whom the castration reference, the fact that the woman is distinguished by the fact that she does not have the phallus, that this if filled, masked, completed, by the mysterious operation of the **o**-object, is it not here that there is articulated this formula that I once put forward once. That this way of warding off the radical gap in the order of the signifier that the recourse to castration represents, warding it off is the basis and the principle of the perverse structure. And providing something that completes, that replaces the phallic lack, in providing this Other, in so far as he is asexual, is this not what one day, before you, I designated by the term *l'hommelle*. This is a reference that, as regards the basis of a certain outside with regard to the operation of the unconscious, will render you some service by this pinpointing, even though it appears to be simply picturesque.

But to leave you and moreover because today, as usual, I was not able to go through, as usual, as much of the field as I wanted to open up for you. Because this is what leads from perversion to phobia, by seeing in it the intermediary that is going to finally allow you to situate the

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neurotic authentically and what is involved at his level by inside and outside. If we write this *hommelle*, by modifying the term which is here, S(O), by modifying it in this sense that it is an unfailing O, that this O of a signifier of O, that is at stake, and which gives the key to perversion, is it not – I will show you more in our next meeting – is it not inversely at the level of the signified s(O) of the flaw, that the division of this O is brought to bear in the neurotic? This is of great interest in topological organisation. Because it also shows that it is at the level of the statement that the text of the neurotic symptom is articulated. Namely, that this is how it is explained that it is between the field of the ego as it is organised in a specular way and that of desire in so far as it is articulated with respect to the field dominated by the o-object that the fate of the neurosis is played out.

This is what we will see better the next time when, founded on the old graphs, I will be able to show you the place taken in the operation of neurosis – I will take it up first of all in the phobia, taking up again everything that I already articulated in connection with little Hans and which was, I noticed, rather inadequately transmitted in the accounts (241) that were given of it..... So then, but if this signified of O *qua* barred, *qua* marked by its logical failure, if it comes to signify itself fully in the neurotic, this is indeed also what enlightens us about the way in which the experience of the neurotic was inaugural. He does not mask what is involved in terms of conflictual articulation at the level of logic itself. That because thinking falters in its own place of well regulated game, this is what gives its true import to the distance that the neurotic himself takes from it in his own experience. And in a word and to end on this wordplay that I announced to you, what is astonishing, if we amuse ourselves with the word *hommelle*, on the stage beneath to transform it into *famil*. The games and the encounters

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the state of the tongue allows, is this *famil* not truly something that appears to show us, like a sort of flash between two doors, what is involved in the metaphorical function of the family itself?

If for the pervert, it is necessary that there should be an uncastrated woman, or more exactly if he makes her so and *hommelle,* can it not be noted at the horizon of the field of neurosis that this "He" somewhere, of which the "I" is truly what is at stake in what is involved in the family drama, it is this o-object *qua* liberated. It is what poses all the problems of identification. It is with it that it is necessary, at the level of neurosis, to finish off, so that the structure of what it is a matter of resolving, namely mere structure, the signifier of Ø, is revealed.

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Seminar 19: Wednesday 7 May 1969

Anxiety, as I once said, is not without an object. This means that this something called objective, starting from a certain conception of the subject, that there is something analogous corresponding to anxiety, something – this is how it is expressed in psychoanalysis – of which anxiety is the signal in the subject. This is the sense of this "not without" in the formula which unveils nothing other than that this term, this something analogous to the object, is not missing. But this "not without" does not designate it; it simply presupposes the support of the fact of the lack. Now any evocation of lack supposes an established symbolic order, more than simply a law, an accumulation, and again a numbered, ordered one, as I underlined at the time.

If we define the real as a sort of thought abolition (*abolition pensée*) of symbolic material, nothing can ever be lacking. The animal, any one whatsoever, that dies because of a succession of perfectly adapted physiological effects, and the fact of calling that the effects of hunger, for example, is completely ruled out; it is the end of the organism *qua* soma. It lacks nothing. It has enough resources within the perimeter of its organism to measure what is described as its mortal reduction. The cadaver is also a real. It is through the effects by which the

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organism subsists that we are forced to conceive the imaginary. Something indicates to it that a particular element from the outside, from the milieu, from the *Umwelt* as they say, can be absorbed or more generally is favourable for its preservation. This means that the *Umwelt* is a sort of halo, a double of the organism, and that is all. That is what is called the imaginary. A whole order of the *Umwelt* can be described certainly in terms of adequation; without this the organism would not subsist for an instant. The category of the imaginary implies in itself that this *Umwelt* is capable of failing. But here also, this failure is not a lack of anything. It is the beginning of a succession of effects through which the organism is reduced, like earlier, carrying its *Umwelt* with it. It dies with its mirage which can very well be what is called, it is hard to say why, an epiphenomenon of this hunger that I evoked earlier.

So then up to this everything is reduced to a different level of the structuring of the real. For the fact of lack to appear, it is necessary that it should be said somewhere "it does not add up". For something to be lacking, things must be counted. Once there is something counted, there are also the effects of counting on the order of the image. These are the first steps of *episteme*, of science. The first (244) copulations of the act of counting with the image, is the recognition of a certain number of harmonies, musical ones for example. They give the type of it. This can be noted from lacks that have nothing to do with what, in harmony, are simply posed as intervals. There are places where there is no counting. The whole science that we describe as ancient consists in wagering that these places where there was no counting would be reduced one day in the eyes of the wise man, to the constitutive intervals of musical harmony.

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It is a matter of establishing an order of the Other thanks to which the real takes on the status of world, cosmos, implying this harmony. Things were done in this way once there were in the world, in this world of adventure and of concreteness called historical, emporiums, shops where everything is properly arranged. The emporiums and the empires that exist for some time, we are not the ones who invented them, are the same thing. It is the lining and the support of this conception of ancient science that is based, in short, on the fact that was accepted for a long time, that knowledge and power are the same thing. Because the one who knows how to count can divide up, he distributes, and by definition the one who distributes is just. All empires are just. If some doubt has been cast on this recently, there must be a reason for it. The horizon of what is happening here – and this is the excuse for this public discourse, for this something that I continue despite the fact that in principle it is only addressed to psychoanalysts – is something the times bear witness to, something that the wise men do not want to see, something that is already no longer a prodrome but an open tear. That fact is that a discordance has exploded between knowledge and power. It is a matter - it is interesting, in order quite simply for things not to delay any longer in this discordance, with all that it involves in terms of strange stammerings, of restatements, of absurd collisions - it is a matter of defining how this disjunction operates and to name it as such. So that people do not think it can be warded off in some episodic fashion or other by changing whoever is in power. To say that everything is all right because it is those who up to now were oppressed who are now going to exercise it, for example.

Not of course that I am personally setting aside in any way the possibility of this happening. But it seems sure to me that it only has

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meaning in as much as it is inscribed in what I have just called the essential change of course, the only one that is of a nature to change the sense of everything that is organised as presumed empire, even if it were knowledge itself, namely, this disjunction between knowledge and power. This formula which has only a crude value, which does not lead properly speaking to anything, which does not consist in any *Weltanschauung*, a utopian presumption or not of a mutation pushed by something or other, ought to be articulated. And it can be, not by reason of the fact that Freud allows it to be grasped, renewing in a (245) system that is in any way comparable to the one that wanted the myth of the conjunction of knowledge and power to perdure. But Freud here is himself much more the patient, the one who, by his word, the word of a patient, testifies to what I am inscribing here under this title, the disjunction between knowledge and power. He does not testify to it alone. He reads it in the symptoms that are produced at a certain level of the subjective. And he tries to ward it off, precisely where it can be read that he himself as well as them, those who testify in their particularity to this disjunction of knowledge and power, he is like them a patient of this effort, of this work, of the testimony given at one point of the effects that I am entitling the disjunction of knowledge and power.

This is how, at the point that I myself am only following this discourse, that in my very discourse I bear witness to what the testing of this conjunction leads to. Namely, to nothing that apparently completes it nor permits it to be hoped that it will ever be reduced to a norm, to a cosmos. This is the sense of what I am trying to pursue before you in terms of a discourse that Freud inaugurated. That is why I began by a careful reading of what this discourse bears witness to, and not simply

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in its mastery, because very precisely it is in its inadequacies that it is more instructive.

I re-read the seminar that I gave in 1956-57, a derisory distance of 13 years that, all the same, allows me to measure something of the path that has been taken, by whom? By what? By my discourse on the one hand and then, on the other hand, by a sort of obviousness, a manifestation of a tearing apart that this discourse designates. This, of course, owes nothing to this discourse itself but thanks to it perhaps testimony can be given that there is a discourse that I would not say of course is up to date, let us say is not trailing too far behind what has been produced. This having been said, by reason of the laws that pass as the reigning ones, those described as being of the status of the university, it is necessary in effect that this discourse should not simply be trailing behind but should always be forced to correct itself in principle as *nachträglich,* subsequently. This by reason of the fact that nothing registers it in a renewal of form like the one where there subsists what is involved in terms of major steps taken for some time in knowledge and in such a way that it is marked as an interring disconnected from any effect of power.

We will start again then at the source and this term of **o**-object that I produced, which was not there in 1956-57 while I was trying to work things out. If this were now published beyond the summary, moreover not so badly done, presented in the *Bulletin de Psychologie* under the heading of *Object relations and Freudian structures*, it could, if it could be done, follow the very text of what throughout more than a trimester I followed the scent of. This text just by itself, so confusing because it is like a labyrinth, attesting to a sort of spelling out, stammering, turning in circles, and in truth, whose outcome, apart from

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(246) the fact that little Hans is no longer afraid of horses, and so what? Is the interest of such a research to ensure that one or a thousand little boys are freed from something embarrassing that is called a phobia? Experience proves that phobias do not take any longer to cure spontaneously than with an investigation like the one involved on this occasion, that of his father, a pupil of Freud's and Freud himself. What at that epoch, 13 years ago, I had to underline, I had to spell out, is the real import of what is at stake, in terms of the study of a frontier, of a limit of what is played out at every instant - it goes well beyond the case - the frontier, the limit between the imaginary and the symbolic. And it is here that everything is played out. I will come back to it perhaps to add a few strokes in the course of what I say today.

But let us start again from the point where we have to fix what is involved in the operation of three orders, the real, the symbolic and the imaginary. What is really at stake, this turning point at which we are all patients, whatever may be the misadventures and symptoms of each one of us. Namely, what I am designating as a certain disconnection between knowledge and power. Let us posit somewhere at a point – let us be crude, let us be summary – what I earlier called the real. It is quite obvious that as I described it, it is involved. I have not yet gone to see it but there is, it appears, a film by Louis Malle on Calcutta. In it you see a great number of people dying of hunger. That is what the real is. Where people are dying of hunger, they die of hunger. There is nothing lacking. Why do people start talking about lack? Because they formed part of an empire. Otherwise, it appears, there would not even be a Calcutta. Because it appears – I am not enough of a historian to know but I accept it because we are told that – without the requirements of this Empire there would have been no conurbation in

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this place. Modern empires allow their dimension of lack to manifest itself precisely in the fact that knowledge achieved a certain growth in them, no doubt a disproportionate one, with respect to the effects of power. The modern empire has also this property that everywhere it stretches its wings, this disconnection also appears. And it is uniquely in the name of this that one can make of the famine in India a motive to incite us to a subversion or a universal revision of something, the Real!

In what concerned the symbolic, it must be counted as at least 1. For a long time, people believed that counting could be reduced to the One. To the One of God – there is only one – to the One of the Empire, to the One of Proclus, to the One of Plotinus. That is why there is nothing excessive in our symbolising the field of the symbolic here by this 1. What has to be grasped, is that of course, this 1 that is not simple and which – that was where the progress took place – people noticed, functioned as a numerical 1, namely, generated an infinity of (247) successors, on condition that there was a zero. This to give an example of the symbolic by one of the systems that are currently best established, it must be emphasised here. The fact is that this counting, whatever it is, at whatever level of structure we may place it in the symbolic, has its effects on the imaginary. And what is established, what is organised in my discourse, for those who follow it by experiencing it, is that these effects of symbolic counting, in the order of the imaginary that we recalled earlier, namely, in the fact that the imaginary is the order through which the real of an organism, namely, a quite established real is completed by an *Umwelt,* counting has, at the level of the imaginary, the effect of making appear in it what I call the o-object.

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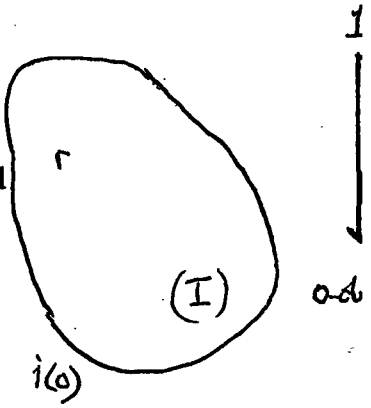

Now in the human being - and without this making of him a particular exception in the domain of living beings - one image plays a privileged role, as in many other animals. It is the one that is at the source of this dimension that we call narcissism, it is the specular image. We know that this is not limited to men, that among many other animals, at certain levels of their behaviour, of what is called ethology, animal behaviour, images of an apparently equivalent structure, privileged in the same way, exercise a decisive function on the organism. Everything that is observed, articulated by psychoanalysis as a phase in the relationships between i(o) and this **o**-object, this is the key point that for us is of primary interest, r: i(o)/**o**, to estimate at its value as a model everything that psychoanalysis gives us at the level of symptoms. This in function of what is involved, as is obvious in our epoch, about the effects of disconnection between knowledge and power.

I therefore first defined the **o**-object as essentially founded on the effects of what happens in the field of the Other, in the symbolic field, in the field of arranging, in the field of order, in the field of the dream of unity, on these malicious effects in the field of the imaginary. Note that this implies the very structure of the field of the Other as such, as I tried, thanks to a schema, to make you sense in more than one of my previous lectures this year. What is indicated here as effect in the field of the imaginary, is nothing other than the fact that this field of the Other is, as I might say, in the form of **o**. In this field, this is inscribed in a topology that, to image, because of course this is only an intuitive (248) image, presents itself as holing it.

The following step, the one that I made by stating in a way that after all is striking in that when I say things like that, they get across, like

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slicing butter – which obviously proves that the analysts have not a very sure idea of what they can hold onto in such a field – I said something simple. Namely, that to bring back these effects of the o in the imaginary to the Other, the field that they start from, to render to Caesar as I might say the things that are Caesar's - as was said one day as you know by a little imp, because he was that, the blackguard - was the essence of perversion, to render o to the one from whom it comes, the big Other. It is of course a rather apologetic way of presenting things. What has to be known, is what one can draw from it. If effectively something that is the subject, from some quarter, because an effect of the symbolic on the field of the imaginary we can consider still problematic, what place is it going to take? But that touches the subject, we can have no doubt about it, we who make of the subject something that is only inscribed from an articulation of one foot inside and another outside the field of the Other.

Let us try to recognise this aspect of what is at stake about the subject. It is of interest, it is important here to recognise what is involved in a term that Freud put forward, the one that before me had begun to take the dimensions of a certain room whose blackness is much less easy to calibrate than the one that I evoked the last time, the one that served for two centuries in the name of an optical model. That he should have done the circuit several times and given different names to the same things that he found himself discovering after his periplus should not surprise us. Freud spoke a lot about love, keeping the appropriate distance. It is not because this has gone to the heads of those who followed him that we do not have to put things back at the level at which he started them. At the level of love, he distinguished the anaclitic relation and the narcissistic relation. Since it happens that in other places he opposed object cathexis to that of the body, described

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as narcissistic on this occasion, people thought they could build on this some type of communicating vases or other thanks to which it is object cathexis that, just by itself, proved that one had got out of oneself, that one had brought the libidinal substance to bear where it should be. It is on this that there reposes this lucubration which that I went through that year, because it was still lively, on object relations, with the whole myth of the so-called oblative stage, also qualified as genital. It seems to me that what Freud articulates about the anaclitic, about the support taken in the Other, with what it implies about the development of a sort of mythology of dependency, as if this were what was at stake, that the anaclitic takes on its status, its true relationship by defining properly (249) what I am situating in fundamental structure of perversion. Namely, this operation through which the status of the Other is assured by being covered, by being filled, by being masked by a certain operation described as perverse, from the operation of **o** and which by this fact makes a stage of it, by taking – I am saying discursively if we want to give a logical approximation to what is in operation in all sorts of effects that interest us – the anaclitic relation here as being primary. And moreover this is the only foundation by which there can be justified a whole series of supposedly significant clouds through which the child is supposed to long for his paradise in some maternal physiological environment that, properly speaking, never existed in this ideal form. It is only essentially as an operation of this object definable as an effect of the symbolic in the imaginary, as the operation of this imaginary with regard to something that can claim, under some heading, for a while – and in this respect the mother can play this role just as well as anything else whatsoever, the father, an institution, even a desert island. It is as the operation of **o**, as mask, what I called this structure that is the same thing as this **o**, the in-form of **o** of the Other, it is uniquely in this formula that there can be

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grasped what one can call the effect of masking, the effect of blinding, that is precisely how the whole anaclitic relation is fulfilled.

To express things in this form, the important thing is not what it says because, as you can grasp, it is not easy to get into, precisely on the plane of what is called imagination. Because living imagination, the one from which we take, pick up what we avidly call varyingly pleasant meanings, depends on a completely different sort of image, and one much less obscure, the specular image. Much less obscure especially since our mirrors have become clear. We will never know, unless we reflect a little bit on it, what we owe to the emergence of clear mirrors. Every time that, in Antiquity, and this continues of course in the time of the Fathers of the Church, you see something indicated as being in a mirror that means something completely different to what it is for us. Their mirrors, because they were polished metal, gave much more obscure effects, this is perhaps what allowed there to subsist for such a long time a specular vision of the world. The world might well appear obscure to them, as for us, but this went along quite well with what was seen in the mirror. That was able to make the idea of a cosmos last for a rather long time, it was enough simply to perfect mirrors. It is because we have done so, along with other things, the elucidation of the symbolic, precisely, that things appear less simple to us.

Let us note that in this we have not yet advanced very far but, since it is knowledge that is at stake, let us observe that the order of satisfaction rendered to the Other, by way of this inclusion of the o, the (250) novelty, the one that analytic experience allows us to envisage It is very precisely this that, whoever he may be, the one that finds himself in the role, in the position of functioning as this Other, from all

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time, as long as he has been functioning, never knew anything about what was happening there. This is what I allow myself to articulate under some heading here and there, by posing insidious questions to theologians, of the type as to whether, for example, it is all that sure that God believes in God. If the question introduced as fundamental in any psychoanalytic approach is thinkable – I believe I formulated it along the line of something that, like all prodromes, had begun to be outlined at a certain philosophical turning point – the fact is that the interesting thing, in an altogether living fashion, and this in the measure that the impasses in which knowledge corners us progresses, is not to know what the Other knows. It is to know what he wants. Namely, with his form, his form in-form of o (*en-forme de a*), which is outlined quite differently than in a mirror. But in an exploration of perversion that has, moreover, scarcely been touched on, which makes us say that this topology that is outlined, and that the advance of knowledge specifies at many other levels than that of pathological experiences, means what? Where does it lead? It is not moreover quite the same thing. The question is still being studied. If one imagines that even as regards perversions, psychoanalysis closes the circle, that it has found the last word, even by using the o-object relation in a more applied way than I can do here, one would be wrong.

The important thing, is to take up, under the heading of symptoms that in a way enlighten us about what is involved in the relationships of the subject to the Other, ancient themes which are not the same at different epochs. And if I have not been able to make room here for Angelus Silesius of the *Cherubinic Pilgrim* whom I made such use of at one time in those lost years - and I do not know whether one day someone will be able to measure out the journey along which I brought to light the precarious sequence of this discourse - whom I made such use of, it

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is in the light of this relation that I define as anaclitic that there can be taken up the demistichs of his Cherubinic pilgrim, these distichs cut, balanced in four parts in which there is outlined the proper identity of what appeared most essential for him, what was impossible to grasp otherwise than in terms of the o-object and of God himself. Suffice it to note that everything that can be inscribed in function of order, of hierarchy and moreover of division, everything that is of the order of this fact of exchange, of transitivism, of identification itself, all of this depends on the quite different relation that we posit as specular. All of this refers to the status of the body image in so far as it is posited at a radical turning point as linked to this essential thing in the libidinal economy, considered as being the mastery of the motor activity of the body. It is not for nothing that the same consonants are found in the (251) one and the other, mastery of motor activity *(maîtrise motrice)*, everything is there. And it is through this that witness is born on every occasion to what is called good behaviour. Thanks to this mastery of motor activity, the organism qualified from its relationships to the symbolic, man on this occasion as he is called, moves about without ever leaving an arena that is well defined by the fact that it prohibits a properly central region which is that of enjoyment. It is there that the body image as I organise it from the narcissistic relation takes on its importance.

Consult the schema that I gave under the title of remarks to some propositions of a gentleman whose name will survive thanks to me. You will see there that the relationship that is designated is very properly the following. From the relationship that is established of the subject to the field of the Other, in so far as here I cannot do anything other in an image than something homogeneous to common space, and it is indeed for this reason that I make the Other function there. And

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why not, because moreover it is not withdrawn from the imaginary, like a mirror. This with the only purpose of being able to posit the second term. The signifier for whom the subject is represented by another signifier, is found there to be highlighted at a place that is none other than the one that I designate here by this enigmatic I [*in French*], from which there is presented the conjunction in another mirror, the conjunction of the **o** and the body image. This precisely designates what happens in phobia.

If we take any observation of phobia whatsoever, provided it is a little bit serious, which is the case, one cannot afford the luxury of publishing an observation in psychoanalysis without a rather complete anamnesis. To take for example in the book by Helene Deutsch on the *Psychoanalysis of the neuroses* the chapters that refer to phobia, what do we see, for example, by taking any of them? She was asked to treat someone because he had at a particular moment a phobia about hens. What do we see? The matter is perfectly articulated, but is only revealed of course, in a second phase of exploration. Namely, that at a time before the emergence of the symptom, hens were certainly not indifferent for him. They were birds that he looked after with his mother and from whom he also collected eggs. We are given all the details, namely, that in the way in effect of all of those who work with these fowl, feeling the cloaca from the outside is enough to see whether the egg is there, and ready to be laid. After that you just have to wait. This indeed is what interested the little the X in question to the highest degree. Namely that when he was being washed by his mother, he asked her to do the same thing to his own perineum. How can one not recognise that at this very place he points to himself as aspiring precisely to furnish the object of what no doubt, for reasons that are not otherwise explored but that are quite tangible there, were the object of

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a quite particular interest for the mother. The first phase, (252) is quite obviously "since you are interested in eggs I'm going to have to lay some for you". But moreover it is not for nothing that the egg here takes on all its weight. If it can happen that the o-object is thus involved, it is indeed in this sense that there is what I might call a demographic aspect of the relationships between the subjects which implies that, naturally, what is born is found in place of an egg.

I repeat, I am only evoking this moment in order to give right away the sense of what is going to be at stake when the phobia is unleashed. An older brother, much older in fact, much stronger than him, takes hold of him one day from behind, and this boy who knows perfectly well of course everything that is happening in the farmyard, says to him: "I'm the cock and you're the hen". He defends himself and fights back with the greatest energy declaring: "I won't be the hen!" Note that this "hen" in English, has exactly the same pronunciation with the aspiration as the "n" of the "*un*" that I spoke to you about earlier. He does not want to be the "hen". There was already someone called Alain who thought he made a great discovery when he said that to think, is to say no. He says no. Why does he say no when earlier he was so happy with his mother at being able to be for her, as I might say, an extra hen, a deluxe hen, one that was not in the farmyard, if not because narcissism is involved there. Namely, the rivalry with his brother, the passage, as has been well proved, to a power relation. The other holds him by the waist, by the hips, immobilises him and keeps him in a certain position as long as he wants.

The transfer (*virement*), I am not saying the tacking (*virage*), of what is invested in a certain meaning between one register and the other is the point at which the earlier function comes to grief. There comes to birth

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the fact that the hen is henceforth going to take on for him a perfectly signifying function, and no longer an imaginary one. Namely, that she frightens him. The passage from the field of anxiety, the one by which I inaugurated my discourse today, namely, that it is not without an object, on condition that one sees that this object is what is involved for the subject in the field of narcissism. It is here that there is unveiled the true function of phobia which is to substitute for the object of anxiety a signifier which is frightening. As compared to the enigma of anxiety, the relation to the danger that is signalled is reassuring. Moreover what this experience shows us, is that on condition that there is produced this passage to the field of the Other, the signifier is presented as what it is with respect to narcissism, namely, devouring. And it is indeed here that there originates the type of prevalence that the oral drive has taken on in the classical theory.

What I wanted to begin today, is properly speaking the following. That it in phobia that we can see not at all something that is a clinical entity but that is in a way a sort of turntable. It is by elucidating its relationships with what it most commonly veers towards, namely, the two great orders of neurosis, hysteria and obsessional neurosis, but also (253) by the junction that it realises with the structure of perversion, that this phobia enlightens us about what is involved in all sorts of consequences that have no need to be limited to a particular subject to be perfectly perceptible. Because it is not a matter of something that can be isolated from the clinical point of view but much more rather a figure clinically illustrated in a brilliant fashion no doubt, but in infinitely diverse contexts. It is from the point of this phobia that we will question again what we started from today, namely, the disjunction between knowledge and power.

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(255) It is impossible not to consider the incidence of the subject as primary in psychoanalytic practice. It is ceaselessly in the forefront in the way, to listen to him, the psychoanalyst thinks, at least if we keep to what is reported. It is from a particular point defined by what is called an identification that the subject is found to act, for example, to manifest a particular intention. A particular paradoxical behaviour will be stated to come from the fact that he goes back, for example, to himself, and from what point if not from another that he had been taking up. He goes back, to the place of someone to whom he is going to be identified, his first aggression. In short, at every instant the subject presents himself as provided with what is at least a curious autonomy, a mobility, especially, equal to none. Because there is almost no point in the world of his partners, whether or not they are considered as his fellows, that he cannot occupy, at least, I repeat, in a thinking that tends to account for a particular paradox in his behaviour. Let us say that the subject – and here there is no place, in this literature, to contest the legitimacy of this term – the subject is moreover absolutely not criticised. At the end in fact there are produced these singular statements that go as far as to talk about choice of neurosis, as if at one moment it was to some privileged point or

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other of this pulverised subject that the switching of points was reserved.

Naturally, it can be admitted that, in a first phase of analytic research, we were not in any way in a phase when there could be articulated in any kind of logical way what might be involved, in effect, in what presents itself as being apparently altogether determining at the beginning of an anamnesis, in a certain way of reacting to trauma. It would be enough perhaps to see that this point considered as original, directive in an anamnesis, is a point that was well and truly produced retroactively by the totality of interpretations. I am not talking only about the interpretations that the psychoanalyst makes, as they say, in his head or when he is writing his observation, but where he has intervened in what links him to the patient. This register, this register of questioning, of suspension of what is involved in the subject, is far from being able in any way to be purely and simply described as a relationship of one power to another, even when subjected to all that can be imagined there about the transference.

(256) That is why it is always essential to take up again the question of structure in psychoanalysis at the level of the subject. It is what constitutes the real progress. It is, of course, the only thing that can make what is improperly called the clinic progress. I hope that no one is deceived and that if, the last time, you were able to take some pleasure in seeing my discourse being illuminated at the end by the evocation of a case, it is not specifically the fact that a case was evoked that constitutes the clinical character of what is stated in this teaching.

Let us take things up then at the point where we can formulate them after having on several occasions, on several occasions, marked how

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there is formed, from a first and very simple definition, namely, that where we start from is a signifier. This is where we start from, this is where we start from because after all the only element analysis gives us certainty about - and I must say that it gives it its full relief - gives its weight to, is the signifier. If one defines the signifier, *the signifier is what represents the subject for another signifier.* Here is the formula, the originating formula, as I might say, that allows us to situate correctly what is involved in a subject, which we would not in any way be able to handle according to formulae that are apparently those of common sense, of good sense. Namely, that there is indeed some thing that constitutes this identity that differentiates this gentleman here from his neighbour. By being satisfied with this, we find ourselves in fact making every statement, every simple descriptive statement of what effectively happens in the analytic relation look like a puppet show. In it, I repeat, the subject is as mobile as the word itself, the very word of the master of these so-called puppets. Namely, that when he talks in the name of the one that he is holding in his right hand, he cannot at the same time speak in the name of the other one. But he is in fact capable of passing from one to the other with the rapidity that we know.

Here then is something that has already been sufficiently described here for me not to have to redo its whole construction and commentary, the first relationship that moreover is pregnant with all the others, from S_1 to S_2, from this signifier that represents the subject for another signifier. In the effort that we make to circumscribe what is involved as regards the other of these signifiers, we try, as we have already written, to open up the field in which everything that is second signifier, namely, the body, at the level of which the subject is going to be represented by a signifier, to inscribe at the locus of O, this locus

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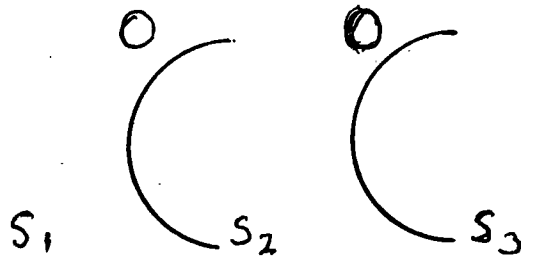
which is the big Other. I think that you sufficiently remember that by writing what is involved in this way, all we can do, at the level of the very inscription of S_2, is to repeat that for everything that follows, namely, everything that may be inscribed subsequently, we must put the mark of O again as locus of inscription. Namely, to see in short there being hollowed out from what I called the last time the in-form (*l'en-forme*) of this O - a new noun that we are making up for our own (257) use, *the in-form* of O - the o that holes it.



Let us pause for a moment at something that I consider as sufficiently understood because of having been - I had some testimony of it - tangible to some people who found some evidence, I mean in clinical work, for this *in-form* of O, a formula designed to show what is really involved in **o**. Namely, the topological structure of O itself, which means that the O is not complete, is not identifiable in any case to a 1, to a whole. In a word that this O is absolutely to be felt, to be represented, as if it were at the level of paradox, the paradox that logicians had good reason for creating, the paradox of the set described as that of all the sets that do not contain themselves. I think that you have already handled this paradox sufficiently. It is quite clear that as regards this set of all the sets that do not contain themselves, we have either one thing or the other. Either it is going to contain itself and that is a contradiction, or it does not contain itself, so then not being one of those that does not contain itself, it contains itself, and we find ourselves before a second contradiction. This is quite simple to resolve: the set of all the sets that do not contain themselves can only

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in effect be written as a function in the following form. Namely E, having as a characteristic this x in so far as it is different from x.

$$E\,(x \neq x).$$

Now this is where it overlaps our difficulty with the big Other. If the big Other presents this topological character which means that its *in-form* is **o**, and we are going to be able to touch very directly what that means, it is because it is true. It is because it must be posited that, whatever may be the conventional usage that is made of it in mathematics, the signifier cannot in any case be held to be able to designate itself. S_1 or S_2 in themselves are not each, in any way, cannot be, the representative of themselves except by being distinguished from themselves. This alterity of the signifier to itself is properly what is designated by the term of big Other marked by an O. If we inscribe this big Other, marked by an O, if we make of it a signifier, what it designates is the signifier as Other. The first Other there is, the first encountered in the field of the signifier is radically other, namely, other than itself. It introduces the Other as such into its inscription, as separated from this inscription itself.

This O, *qua* exterior to S_2 that inscribes it, is the *in-form* of O, namely, the same thing as **o**. Now this **o**, as we know, is the subject itself in (258) so far as it can only be represented by a representative that is S_1 on this occasion. The first otherness, is that of the signifier which can only express the subject in the form of what we have learned to circumscribe in analytic practice in terms of a particular strangeness. And it is this that I would like, I would say not to open up today because moreover in a seminar that I gave at one time, it was in the year 1961-62, on *Identification*, I laid its foundations. It is these foundations themselves that I am recalling, simply summarised and brought together today, to make you sense something that is not to be

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taken as given to any analyst, of course, except by analytic experience. He knows what is involved in this o as essential to the subject and as marked by this strangeness. Besides I already enumerated these o's long enough ago for it to be well known, from the breast to excrement, from the voice to the look, what is meant in its ambiguity by the word strangeness, with its affective note and also its indication of a topological margin. What is at stake, is to make those who do not have this as a datum of experience sense something or other that can evoke its reasonable place in the reference points of what is considered as practical experience – wrongly, it is no more practical than analytic experience. But let's go! What might be least strange in appearance could represent the subject for us here. Take it, at the start, as being as undetermined as you wish. What distinguishes the one who is here from the one who is there and who is only his neighbour, of course, we can grasp. We can make a start on it, from something that is supposed to be not strange at all, from a type of quite common material. This is what I did when I was talking about identification, I designated the trace (*trace*). The trace means something, the trace of a hand, the trace of a foot, an imprint. Observe carefully here, at this level, that trace is distinguished from signifier differently to what in our definitions we have already distinguished as sign. The sign, I said, is what represents something for someone. Here there is no need for someone. A track is sufficient in itself. And starting from there are we going to be able to situate what is involved in what I called earlier the essence of the subject?

We can here and now posit that what the trace becomes through metaphor, the sign if you wish, through metaphor also, these words are not in the right place because I have just ruled them out, what a subject signifies *qua* this trace, this sign, contrary to the natural trace has no

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other support than the *in-form* O. What does that mean? The trace passes on to the *in-form* of O the ways (*façons*) in which it was effaced. The subject is the very ways by which, as imprint, the track finds itself effaced. A witticism that I already pinned to this remark, entitling what could be said about it: the four effacings of the subject (*les quatre effaçons du sujet*). The subject is the one that effaces the trace, by transforming it into look, look to be understood as slit, half glimpse. It is through this that he tackles what is involved in the other who has left the trace. He has passed that way, he is beyond.

(259) It is not enough to say, of course, that a subject as such does not leave a trace. What defines him and at the same time delivers him (*le livre*), is first of all something through which he is effectively distinguished. As compared to any living organism what is involved in the animal that speaks, is that he can efface them, and efface them as such, as being his tracks (*traces*). This is enough for him to be able to make of them something other than tracks, rendezvous' that he gives himself, for example. When Tom Thumb lays a trail of white pebbles, it is something different to a track. You should sense here the difference that is already being outlined in the pack that, in pursuing something, behaves in a particular way, make no mistake about it, but behaves in a way that is inscribed in the order of smell, of sniffing, as they say. And this is not necessarily foreign to the human animal himself. But this behaviour is different to the scansion of a track that has been mapped out as such on the support of the voice.

Here you are touching the limit. At the level of the pack, who would dare to sustain that their baying covers their tracks? It is all the same already what can be called an outline of the word. But it is distinct, this support of the voice is distinct, this the datum of the voice, where

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there is language, where there is this support that characterises in an autonomous way a certain type of track. A creature that can read its tracks is able through this to re-inscribe himself elsewhere than where he found them. This re-inscription is the link that makes him henceforth dependent on another whose structure does not depend on him.

Everything opens up to what belongs to the register of the subject defined as "what effaces his tracks". The subject, at the limit and to make you sense the original dimension of what is at stake, I would call him the one that replaces his tracks by his signature. And you know, a signature, not much is asked to constitute someone as a subject. An illiterate at the *mairie* who does not know how to write, it is enough for him to make a cross, a symbol of the bar barred, of the effaced track, the clearest form of what is at stake. When first you leave a sign and then something cancels it, that is enough as a signature. And the fact that it is the same for whoever is asked for it, changes nothing in the fact that this will be accepted to authenticate the act in question, the presence well and truly of someone who, juridically, is held to be a subject. Nothing more and nothing less but whose level I am trying to define, certainly not to make an absolute of it but precisely to mark its links of dependency. Because the remark begins here. The signifier is born from effaced tracks. What is then the consequence of this? It is that these effaced tracks are only worthwhile through the system of others, whether they are similar or the same. It is only in these others established in a system, that there begins the typical import of language. These effaced tracks are the only ones accepted. Accepted by whom? Well then, here we land on our feet again. In the same way (260) that in the definition of the subject a signifier represents for another signifier, they are the only ones accepted by whom? Answer:

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By the other traces. A *pa-âté* does not count, as Bridoison says in *The marriage*. That indeed is why he takes such an interest in it because for him, Bridoison, who takes tracks seriously, it might count. It is a step taken in haste (*pas hâté*).

So then, if we know that these traces, these traces that are only effaced because they are there, an effaced embossing, these traces that have a different support that is properly the *in-form* of O in so far as it is necessitated by the fact that it makes an O, an O that functions at the level of the subject, we have then to consider them from the level of their substance. This indeed is what constitutes the import of an element like a look, for example, in eroticism and that the question arises, because it is tangible, of the relationship between what is inscribed in the look and the trace. Does an erotic look leave traces where it is inscribed, in the other, namely, in someone else? It is at this level that there is posed, inserted, the dimension of shame. It is demonstrated here in a tangible fashion. Shame is simply a dimension proper to the subject as such.

Will we briefly, at this turn, organise in a way that is a little different to the usual litany, this relation of the signifier to the *in-form* of O? Certainly yes, even though rapidly, to recall that it is not by chance that, at the high point of our contemporary life, writing is affirmed to be a relationship of writing to the look as o-object. This alone is what gives its correct status to a grammatology. The look, in all the ambiguity that I already marked earlier in connection with the relationship to the track, the glimpse and, in a word, the cut in what is seen, the thing that opens out beyond the seen. Undoubtedly the accent to be put on writing is capital for a correct evaluation of what is involved in language. And that writing is first and ought to be

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considered as such with regard to speech, is something after all that can be considered not simply as licit but made obvious by the simple existence of a writing like Chinese where it is clear that what is of the order of apprehension of the look is not unrelated to what is translated into the voice. Namely, that there are phonetic elements, but that there are many also that are not so. This is all the more striking in that, from the point of view of structure, of the strict structure of what is involved in a language, no tongue holds up in a purer fashion than this Chinese tongue where every morphological element is reduced to a phoneme. So then it is there that it would have been most simple, to say that writing is only a transcription of what is stated in words. It is striking to see that, quite the contrary, writing, far from being a transcription, is a different system, a system to which eventually there is attached what is cut up in a different support, that of the voice.

(261) Undoubtedly, the term cut is what predestines these supports, definable materially as look and voice, what predestines them to this function of being what, replacing the track, establishes this sort of totality from which a topology is constructed as defining the Other, at its term. As you see, only substructural considerations are involved here. Not at all, of course, original ones because, after all, this does not say how this Other began. It says how it holds together when it is there. Where it originated, is indeed something that up to the present is left in parenthesis. A marginal remark, because I continue, after this 1 and 2 concerning look and voice, to say what can come subsequently in an approach taken from this angle. It is not, as you see, immediately in the relationship of the subject to the Other *qua* structured that there comes what is announced now as *demand.*

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It is a curious thing that while in the order of the o-object the breast and the waste product seem to come in the forefront, to the point almost of leaving in a certain shade, in the most frequent handling of what is at stake in analytic regression, the terms of look and of voice, you see here that we are forced on the contrary to suppose as constructed on the support of look and voice, what is going to be of course an element in the demand. And if we rediscover an o-object here, it is for all that an opportunity to highlight that what is demanded is never anything but a place. And it is not for nothing that place evokes this sticking on (*placage*) which is the essence from which we define the breast as analogous to the placenta, in so far as it defines the subjective relationship founded, as it should be established, on the relationships of the child to the mother. The amboceptor role of the breast between the child and the mother is in reality a prevalent role. It is *qua* o-object, in so far as he is stuck onto its wall, that the child-subject is articulated, that his message is received from the mother and he is answered. The third term is what one asks for with these signifiers, and you see its link with this other element "o".

Finally, by articulating things from this angle, we will see, we will put our finger on the fact that what is generated, namely, any sense, the signified properly speaking, it is as an effect of a fall from this operation that it is to be situated here. Sense, which is not simply an effect but a rejected effect, an effect that is carried away, and moreover an effect that accumulates, culture in a word, participates in this something that flows from an economy founded on the structure of the o-object. Namely, that it is indeed as waste product, as excrement of the subjective relation as such, that what gives material for dictionaries, about what is said to be the accumulation of senses that have been concentrated around a signifier, in the course of a certain

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recordable practice, as having become common, it is indeed in the register of the second o-object, of the anal object that it must here be inscribed, in this perspective.

(262) Such are the four fashions/effacings (*effaçons*), in which the subject can be inscribed, the subject that, in the middle of this, is of course properly speaking ungraspable because of only able to be represented by a representative. It is in so far as it is inscribed in the field of the Other that it subsists, and this is what we have to deal with if we want to account in a correct fashion for what is at stake in psychoanalysis. The distance can be measured between what is defined as a subject and what is held to be a person. The distance can be measured, namely, they must be very severely distinguished. Every kind of personalism in psychoanalysis lends itself to every deviation, to every confusion. In the psychoanalytic perspective, what is defined, marked, in other registers described as moral, as being the person, we cannot situate at any other level than that of symptom. The person begins where, of course, this subject as I have situated it for you, is differently anchored, is anchored in a much broader way, the one that brings into play what, no doubt, is placed at its origin, namely, enjoyment.

It is because analytic experience teaches us here to outline differently the cartographical atlas, as I might say, of what is involved in these operations that refer to the subject, that it takes on its importance. It is in this that it inaugurates a method. It does not claim to reconstitute any new whole, but assuredly, here and now it upsets the old systems of projection that constituted a whole.

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Obviously there should here be pointed out in the margin all sorts of indications that are suggestions, indices. An important point in the meaning of the index, in a discovery in progress, is assuredly something quite different to the way we are able to distinguish it, for example, in the tongue. To make of it something distinctive in a certain sort of signifying indication, that I propose to those who may here have a penchant to come back to what Freud stated in *Group psychology and analysis of the ego*. To consider the degree to which the chief, the leader, the key element in identification as he states it, becomes clearer in this perspective in that there is shown there the solution that makes possible the way in which the subject is strictly identified to **o**. In other words that he becomes what he truly is, namely, a subject that is itself barred.

What we have seen and what henceforth ought to be considered by us as always being able to be reproduced, the passage from a whole mass to the function of univocal look, as I might say, is something that can only be accounted for by the perception of the possibilities offered in this register to the signifier that is privileged by being the most summary one, by being reduced to what Freud designates as being purely and simply the mark, the function of the 1 as unique. Now here then is the system to which thinking is entirely subject. From it, you should clearly sense, there is no question in any case of anything that can be articulated, and specifically as knowledge, going outside it. The consequences on something living of language, the system of signifiers, enveloping it, is very specifically that starting from it, the image is always more or less marked by being assumed into the system as signifying. This is necessary from the function of the type, and of what is called the universal.

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Why is it not tangible? Why has it not yet become common, and why is it not yet in some way effective in the renewal of institutions, that the fact that the images are taken up in the operation of the signifier is there to make us sensitive, the whole of psychoanalytic experience bears witness to it, to the fact that what is lost there, is the imaginary function in so far as it corresponds to the harmony of male and female. If there is something that analysis demonstrates it is that it is because of the grip in the subject not simply that everything that can be designated as male is ambiguous, indeed can be revoked when closely criticised, but that it is just as true on the other side. And that this is sanctioned by a very specific fact of experience that at the level of the subject, there is no recognition as such of the male by the female nor of the female by the male. Everything that any kind of deep exploration shows us about the history of the couple, is that identifications are multiple, overlapping one another and always at the end forming a composite whole. The ambiguity that remains about everything that could be inscribed in the signifier about what is involved in what distinguishes radically, as we know, at the biological level – when I say radically I am omitting of course at the level of mammals the characteristics described as sexually secondary and the possible distinction between sex tissue as compared to phanerogamic sex. But let us leave to one side what may be involved in this. Let us note that what analytic experience designates is very precisely that at this level, there is no signifying coupling. It is at the point that, in the theory, although active-passive, voyeur-seen, etc oppositions are made, no opposition designating male-female has ever been promoted as fundamental.

The important thing, and the important thing that is in a way preliminary to the question that is raised of what is involved, in the

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signifying system, of the function described as the phallus, in so far as it is what is effectively found to intervene, and in a way which it is of course never in any case anything but a third function. It represents either what is first defined as what is lacking, namely, grounding the type of castration as establishing that of the woman, or what on the contrary, on the side of the male, is indicated in a way that is so problematic, what one could call the enigma of absolute enjoyment. In any case, it is not a matter here of correlative reference points, of distinctive reference points. One and the same reference point dominates the whole register of what is involved in the relation of being sexed. This privileged signifier, I want to mark here, justifies (264) in a long construction, which was made in close contact with the analysis articulated of what has been written, from what remains as a testament of our experience of neurotics, I was able to qualify as *missing signifier*? The question is important because if assuredly for what is involved in the articulation of the function of the subject, you clearly see that, however far the articulation of knowledge may be pushed, the subject shows the flaw there. To say that the phallus is the missing signifier at the level that I was able to state it, at the point of my discourse when I risked, let us say, first putting it forward, I believe that the context was not yet sufficiently articulated for me to be able to say what I am now specifying.

Let us start again, and this is the interest of our reference today, of starting from the trace. Let us start from this supporting point and let us remember the Arab proverb that, in my *Ecrits*, I quoted somewhere a long time ago. There are four things (I no longer know which, I must say that I forgot the fourth or that I am not trying to remember it immediately) that leave no trace, the one that I evoked at this turning point. The foot of the gazelle on the rock, there is also the fish in the

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water and what interests us more, the man in the woman, says the proverb, does not leave a trace. This can on occasion be objected to in the following form, whose importance one knows in the phantasies of neurotics, a little sickness from time to time. But precisely this is what is instructive. The role of venereal diseases is not at all random in the structure. We cannot start from any trace to ground the signifier of the sexual relationship. Everything is reduced to this signifier the phallus, precisely, which is not in the system of the subject since it is not the subject that it represents but, as one might say, sexual enjoyment *qua* outside the system, namely, absolute. Sexual enjoyment in so far as it has this privilege as compared to all the others, the fact is that something in the pleasure principle, that we know constitutes a barrier to enjoyment, the fact is that something in the pleasure principle allows it access all the same. You must admit that even from Freud's pen, we read that this is enjoyment *par excellence,* and what is more it is true. But that it should be read from the pen of a savant who merits so much this title as our Freud does, this has all the same something that may make us dream. But it is not in this system of the subject, there is no subject of sexual enjoyment.

And these remarks have no other interest than to allow us to specify the sense of the phallus as missing signifier. It is the signifier outside the system, and in a word the conventional one to designate what is involved in sexual enjoyment as radically foreclosed. If I spoke about foreclosure quite rightly to designate certain effects of the symbolic relation, it is here that it must be seen, that the point must be designated where it cannot be revised. And if I add that everything that is repressed in the symbolic reappears in the real, it is indeed (265) because enjoyment is quite real. The fact is that in the system of the subject, it is nowhere symbolised, nor can it be symbolised. This

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indeed is why there is necessarily, in Freud's remarks, this enormity that seems to disturb no one, except a few people: a myth that strictly does not resemble any myth known to mythology. Old Kroeber and Levi-Strauss see very clearly that this does not form part of their universe and they say so, but it is exactly as if they had said nothing, since everybody continues to believe that the Oedipus complex is an acceptable myth. It is so, in effect, in a certain sense, but note that this means nothing other than the place where this enjoyment that I have just defined as absolute must be situated. The myth of the primordial father, is of the one who confuses in enjoyment all the women. The simple form of the myth says enough about it. It means that we do not know what enjoyment is at stake, is it his own or that of all the women? Except that feminine enjoyment has remained, as I have pointed out to you, also still at the state of an enigma in analytic theory.

What is meant then by this phallic function that seems, by not representing the subject, to mark nevertheless a point of his determination as a field limited by a relationship to what is structured as Other. It is by auscultating more closely, by coming back from these radical perspectives towards our experience, that we are immediately going to see how things are expressed. The turning point from which the birth of a neurosis emerges, is what? It is the positive intrusion of an auto-erotic enjoyment that is perfectly typified in what are called the first sensations more or less linked to onanism, however you want to describe it, in the child. The important thing is that it is at this point, for the cases that fall under our jurisdiction, namely, those that generate a neurosis, it is at this precise point, at the very moment that this positivisation of erotic enjoyment is produced that correlatively there is also produced the positivation of the subject as

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dependency, anaclitism I said the last time, on the desire of the Other. Here there is designated the entry point through which the structure of the subject becomes a drama. The whole experience that is going to confirm at what frontiers, at what junctions this drama is going to explode, deserves to be articulated. I think that I already sufficiently marked the last time the weight the o-object takes in it, not so much in so far as it is presentified but in demonstrating retroactively that it was what previously constituted the whole structure of the subject.

We are going to see at what other frontiers the drama breaks out. But here and now we know from the fall-out of these effects, that it is thanks to the positive relation, to the enjoyment described as sexual, but without, for all that, the sexual conjunction being in any way (266) assured, that something is designated as essential for the position of the subject. It is the desire to know. The decisive step taken by Freud about the relation of sexual curiosity to the whole order of knowledge, is the essential point of the psychoanalytic discovery. And it is from the connection between what is involved in o - namely, where the subject can rediscover his real essence as essentially lack of enjoyment, and nothing more, whatever representative he may be designated by subsequently - and the field of the Other, on the other hand, in so far as the knowledge that is at the horizon of this domain forbidden of its nature which is that of enjoyment is organised in it. With it the question of sexual enjoyment introduces this minimum of diplomatic relations that I would say are so difficult to sustain. It is in as far as something is produced that I called drama, that the significance of the Other *qua* structured and holed is something different to what we can metaphorically call the signifier that holes it, namely, the phallus. It is in so far as it is something different that we see what happens when the young subject has to respond to what is

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produced by the intrusion of the sexual function into his subjective field.

I made great play, and those who attended still remember it, in connection with little Hans. Little Hans which is the exemplary observation of a first absolutely disorganised exploration, going around in circles, up to a certain point undirected, with nevertheless the imperialist direction of the reference to the father first who plays a role whose flaws I marked and the Freud does not dissimulate. But Freud himself is for his part also the final reference, that of a knowledge presumed to be absolute. I took care, as I said, to take up at length everything that is outlined in this disorder in order to show its different strata. But one of them is nothing other than the game that little Hans indulges in which is that of the confrontation of the big giraffe and the small giraffe. I was able to underline its importance by showing what the phobia reveals at its foundation. Namely, the impossibility of making the *hommelle*, namely, this phallic mother - which is the relationship that Hans expresses in the big giraffe – co-exist with, on the other hand, anything whatsoever that might reduce it. If he draws the little giraffe, it is clearly to show not that it is an image comparable to the other, but that it is a writing on a sheet of paper. And for that reason, he *zerwurzelt's* it, as it is put in the text, he crumples it up and sits on it.

The important thing here is not the imaginary or identificatory function of Hans to this complement of the mother, the phallus, which is fundamentally his great rival. It is that he makes this phallus pass over into the symbolic because it is there that it is going to have its efficacy, and everyone knows what the order of efficacy of phobias is. If there is one thing that is useful in political vocabulary, and it is not for

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nothing at the joining of power and of knowledge, it is to launch into a corner of the world to which I already made an allusion earlier with language, that of the paper tiger. What is more of a paper tiger than a (267) phobia, since very often, the phobia is a phobia that a child has for the tigers that are in his album, tigers that are really paper. Only, if politicians have all the trouble in the world in persuading the masses to put paper tigers in their place, here the function, or more exactly the indication, to be given is exactly the opposite. It is to give all its importance to the fact that, to complete something, something that cannot be resolved at the level of the subject, at the level of intolerable anxiety, the subject has no other resource than to foment for himself the fear of a paper tiger. This all the same is what is instructive, because as well, of course, it is not a subject of the type that psychoanalysts imagine. Namely, the way it expresses itself, is a facility of style. He does all of that by arranging it as best he can. The paper tiger, at a moment, at the moment when what is at stake is precisely the person of little Hans, is entirely a symptom. At that moment, all by itself, the world, or at least its foundation, the *hommelle* before whom he is, all by herself is transformed into a paper tiger.

There is the closest link between the structure of the subject and the fact that the question is thus posed that the *hommelle*, is something that all of a sudden grimaces, is frightening. And whether it is a tiger or a smaller animal, a cat, this is of no importance, no analyst is deceived about its true function. If then we have been led, at the end, to see the importance of lack as regard the quite real object that the penis is in everything that determines what one can call a sexed relationship, it is because the path has been opened up for us by the neurotic, and by the castration complex, in so far as it effectively realises the place of lack in the field of the signifier. It is only the result of the discourse

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through which we have to ward off the questions posed by the neurotic. It is only at the end of a psychoanalysis that it is necessary that what is and well and truly remains, as little Hans says, rooted, *angewachsen*, and thank God, one would wish it to be, at least for most, in a position to be put to use, it is necessary that on a certain plane it should have been *zerwurzelt*, that one should clearly show that it is only a symbol.

Hence, of course, what I already said was a problem at the end of the treatment of little Hans. If it is necessary, of course, that he like every neurotic should come at the end to the formula that to become a man I do not have the penis as a symbol, because that is the castration complex. But it must be observed that this can be cut in two ways. The "I do not have the penis" which is precisely what is meant by saying that the end of analysis, is the realisation of the castration complex. This, of course, rejects elsewhere the pure and simple function of the penis as it functions, namely, outside the symbolised register. But this could also be cut differently. Namely: "I do not have the penis as a symbol, it is not the penis that qualifies me as signifier of my virility", and this was not obtained from little Hans because this is (268) what passed through the mesh of the net. Little Hans who never stopped during all this time playing with little girls his role of the one who has it, preserves, as I well and truly made the reservation at one time, preserves in sexual relationships this something that puts in the foreground the penis as an imaginary function. Namely, that this is what defines him as virile. Namely, that however heterosexual he may show himself to be, he is very exactly at the same point that the homosexuals are at, I mean those that recognise themselves as such. Because one cannot extend the field of what structurally corresponds

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properly to homosexuality too far into the field of the appearances of normal relations, when what is at stake are sexual relationships.

Hence the importance of the exploration and the statement of this joint that, between the imaginary and the symbolic, is at its correct place the function, or more exactly the aspects of the function that we define as castration complex. How this is further fed by the experience we have of the joint between the Other and enjoyment in other forms of neurosis, is what I will subsequently continue with.

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Seminar 21: Wednesday 21 May 1969

(269) The system of nowhere (*nulle part*), one could say, is what we have to present. It is here indeed that the term utopia would finally take on its sense, but this time realised from the proper end, as I might say. The old "nullibiquity" to which, in the distant past, I had given again the lustre it deserves for having been invented by Bishop Wilkings, is nowhere. What is it? It is enjoyment. What analytic experience demonstrates, it must be said again, is that by a link to something that is nothing other than what permits the emergence of knowledge, enjoyment is excluded, the circle is closed. This exclusion is only stated from the system itself in so far as it is the symbolic. Now, it is through this that it is affirmed as real, the last real of the functioning of the system itself that nowhere excludes it. It has become everywhere again from this very exclusion which is the way through which it is realised. This indeed, as we know, is what our practice applies itself to unmasking, unveiling in what we have to deal with, in the symptom, unmasking this relation to enjoyment, our real, but in so far as it is excluded.

That is why we advance these three terms as a support: enjoyment in so far as it is excluded, the Other as locus where that is known, the o as

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an effect of the fall that results - because that is what is at stake in the affair - that results from the fact that, in the operation of the signifier, it is nevertheless enjoyment that is aimed at. The signifier arises from the unspeakable relationship of this something that, by having received from somewhere, this means, the signifier, is stamped by it with a relation to this something that from there develops, takes shape as the Other. This link of the subject to the Other, an Other which has avatars, has not said its final word. This indeed is what we are grappling with. It is at the level of these terms that we have to situate this psychoanalysis which is, as I might say, from its origin the crude experience of them, which came to birth no doubt in an exceptional flash through Freud. Ever since, it has never ceased to be at the mercy of the different aspects presented to it, which are identical to those in whose network the subject it treats is caught.

I would like to start from something that is as close as possible. Listen, you can talk to me about morality as much as you want, analytic morality if you wish, or another one, it does not matter. Good. Here is an object that I have a preference for, a preference as an apparatus. It is a fountain pen that in its slenderness is as close as possible to a pen, a pen in the antique, antediluvian sense; there are only very few people (270) who use it. As such its content is very limited because as you see, its reservoir can fit in and end up by becoming reduced to something that can be held in the palm of your hand. Its reservoir contains very little. The result is that it is very difficult to fill, because osmotic effects are produced, which means that when one pours in a drop, the drop is just the same size as the entrance. It is therefore very inconvenient; and nevertheless I am fond of it. I have a very special preference for it, because it reproduces a certain type of pen with a feather, a real feather and in effect it dates, it dates from an epoch

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when it really was a feather and not something rigid like it is now. Someone who knew that I was looking for one gave this pen to me. It was a present that had just been made very few minutes, or hours or days before, it does not matter, by someone who certainly made of it a homage of a rather precise order, that was in fact fetishistic. It was moreover an object that was distinguished by coming from the grandmother of the person who donated it to the person who gave it to me. That indeed is why it is not easy to find. There are very particular shops, it appears, in New York where they sell pens from the Belle Epoque. I got one as you see along a different path.

I have then a glimpse of the history of this object that, moreover, is close to my heart for its own sake, altogether independently of this history, because in truth I am not specially grateful to the person who gave it to me for having made this present. My relation to it is independent; it is certainly very close to what the o-object is for me. I have a glimpse of its history but, for every object, do you not see something from the way I have brought this one to life, that this question of its history is posed just as much as for any subject. How can one imagine that one knows this history, who can answer for it except by establishing this Other as the locus where it is known. And who does not see, if one opens up this dimension to him, that at least for some people, and, I would dare to say, for everyone, it exists. For some people it is altogether prevalent, but for everyone it forms a foundation. There is somewhere where everything that has happened is known. Once one begins to question oneself along this path, one recognises that the signifier of O as completed is implicit and that for the obsessional neurotic it is much more so than for the others. That is why, at the level of history, in so far as – that is why I took this angle – it is suggested not at all directly about the subject but moreover about

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the fate of objects, it is along this path that we can see how mad is the presupposition of some locus or other where it is known. This is important because it is clear that "it is known, *ça se sait*" turns immediately into the interest the question takes on. There where it is known, in the neutral sense that we have introduced it, this is where the question is posed about whether it knows itself.

Reflexivity only emerges from consciousness by this detour that must (271) be verified, the fact is that where one supposes that it – everything - is known, does it know that it is known? If one questions oneself about what is involved in mathematical activity, it is a funny thing to note that the mathematician very specially is still just as incapable of saying anything about its foundation, except that he knows very well when he is doing mathematics. As far as telling you how he discerns it, up to the present, mum's the word. He can say that this is not it, but what it is has not yet been found. We are putting forward a statement that perhaps may begin something along this path; to organise things, things that are said, in such a way that it knows itself, undoubtedly, at every instant, and that it can bear witness to it. As someone said to me quite recently, a mathematician with whom I was speaking about it, what characterises a mathematical statement is the freedom of its context. A theorem can be stated all by itself and be defended. It carries in itself this sufficient dose of overlapping itself that makes it free of the discourse that introduces it. The matter is to be looked at again closely. This aspect of difference to other discourses where every quotation risks being excessive with respect to what surrounds it, what is called context, is important to note. This substance of instantaneous "it knows itself" as such, is accompanied by the fact that it supposes that everything that is reached there is known, in the sense of "it overlaps itself", it is known as a whole. Namely,

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that what is revealing, is that the presuppositions of a discourse that aspires to be able to entirely overlap itself encounters limits. It encounters limits in the fact precisely that points exist in it that cannot be posited. The first image of them will moreover be given by the sequence of integers and by something that articulates that what is defined as being greater than any other one can precisely not be posited, I mean in an infinite series, as they say, of integers.

It is precisely because this number is excluded, and properly *qua* symbol – nowhere can there be written this number greater than any other – it is very precisely from this impossibility of writing it that the whole series of integers takes on its character, not of being a simple representation (*graphie*) of something that can be written, but of being something that is in the real. This very impossibility is what the real arises from. This mechanism is very precisely what allows it to be taken up again, at the level of the symbol, and to write under the heading of transfinite this very sign that cannot be posited in the series of integers, and to begin to question what can be done starting from this sign that has been posited as not able to be posited in the series of integers. And to notice that effectively this sign, a symbol taken up at the level of what constitutes the reality of the series of integers, allows a new symbolic treatment where the relations acceptable at the end of the series of integers can be taken up again. Not all but very certainly a part of them. And this is the progress that is being pursued by a (272) discourse that, knowing itself at every instant, is never found without this combination of limits with holes that is called infinity. Namely, not graspable until precisely it is, by being taken up into a different structure, reduced to this limit, the aporia in any case only being the introduction to a structure of the Other.

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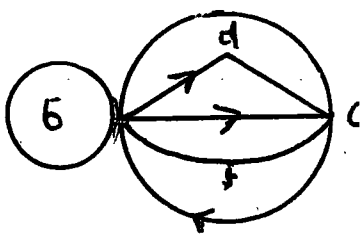
This is what is very clearly seen in set theory, into which one can for a certain time in effect advance innocently. It interests us in a particular way because after all, at the more radical level that we have to deal with, namely, the incidence of the signifier in repetition, in appearance there is no objection. There is no objection at first to the O being the entire inscription of all possible histories. Every signifier refers all the more to the Other in that it cannot refer to itself except as other. There is no obstacle then to the signifiers being divided up in a circular fashion, which, under this heading, allows it very easily to be stated that there is a set of everything that of itself is not identified to itself. By going around in a circle, it is perfectly conceivable that everything is organised, even the catalogue of all the catalogues that do not contain themselves. It is perfectly admissible on this single condition that one knows, and it is certain, that no catalogue contains itself, except by its title. This does not prevent the set of all the catalogues having this closed character that each catalogue, in so far as it does not contain itself, can always be inscribed in another that it contains itself. The only thing excluded, if we trace out the network of these things, is the sketch that would be written in this way. The one that admits from one point to another of any network whatsoever from an oriented network, that excludes, if b refers to a certain number of other points, d, e, f that excludes the fact that b refers to itself. It is enough on this occasion for b to refer to c, and that c itself refers to b for there no longer to be any obstacle to the correlative subsistence of b and c and that a set includes them. [e ?]



If something questions us, it comes precisely from analytic experience as locating somewhere this point at the infinity of everything that is organised in the order of signifying combinations. This point at infinity being irreducible in so far as it concerns a certain enjoyment, that has

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remained problematic, and that for us sets up the question of enjoyment under an aspect that is no longer external to the system of knowledge. It is around this signifier of enjoyment, this signifier excluded in so far as it is the one that we promote under the term of (273) phallic signifier, it is around this that there is organised all the biographies to which analytic literature tends to reduce what is involved in neurosis.

It is not because we can overlap with as complete a homology as possible what are called the interpersonal relations of what we call an adult – an adult, it must be said, fundamentally adulterated. Because what we find throughout these relations, we seek in the second biography that we say is original, which is that of his infantile relations. And there, at the end of a certain familiarisation by the analyst, we take as accepted the relations of tension that are established with respect to a certain number of terms, the father, the mother, the birth of a brother or a little sister that we consider as primitive. But that, of course, only takes on this sense, only takes on this weight by reason of the place that they hold in my articulation. Like for example – there will perhaps be more developed ones, I hope so – but like in fact the one I am articulating for you with respect to knowledge, enjoyment and a certain object in so far as primordially it is with respect to them that there are going to be situated all these primordial relations. In these it is not enough to bring up simple homology by going into the past with whoever comes to tell us about his present day relations. Whether we want it or not, whether we know it or not, we bring into play its weight, its presence and its agency in the whole way in which we understand this second primary biography, described as infantile. This is only there, quite often, to mask the question from us, the one on which we for our part should really question ourselves, I

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mean we analysts. Namely, what determines in this way the infantile biography whose mainspring is quite obviously always only the way in which there are presented what we call desires in the father, in the mother. These consequently stimulate us to explore not simply the history but the style of presence in which each of these three terms, knowledge, enjoyment and o-object were effectively presented to the subject. This is what ensures, and here there lies, what we call improperly the choice of neurosis, indeed the choice between psychosis and neurosis. There was no choice, the choice was already made in what is presented to the subject but is only perceptible, locatable in function of three terms as we have just tried here to bring them out.

This matter has more than one implication. It has a historical aspect. Who does not see that if we must posit what psychoanalysis signifies in history, and if certain choices are also offered to it, it is in as far as we live in a time when the dimension of community, the relationships of knowledge to enjoyment, are not the same as they were, for example, in ancient times. And that, undoubtedly, we cannot take our position as being comparable, for example, to that of the Epicureans or (274) any other such school. There was a certain position of withdrawal with respect to enjoyment that was possible for them, in a way that was rather innocent. At a time when, through the bringing into play of what we call capitalism, a certain position includes all of us in relation to enjoyment in a characteristic fashion, as one might say, by the purity of its framework. What is called the exploitation of the worker does not consist, very precisely, in the fact that enjoyment is excluded from work. At the same time, it does not give it all its real in the same way as we have evoked earlier the effect of the point at infinity. It is through this that there arises this sort of aporia that

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suggests the new sense with regard to the dominion of society, the new sense - without precedent in the ancient context - that the word revolution takes on. And this is why we have our word to say in it. To recall that this term is, as Marx perfectly well saw, and this is why he articulates the only thing that has been found efficacious up to the present, it is the close solidarity of this term called revolution with the very system that carries it, which is the capitalist system.

That on this we have something that can perhaps offer the opening through a series of examples of what can be involved in a joint where the circle will open out, this is the interest of psychoanalysis. I mean its interest in history. It is moreover what it must totally fail at. Because to take things at the level of biography, what we see being offered at the turning point that the moment of the outbreak of neurosis constitutes biographically is the choice that is offered. It is offered in a way that is all the more insistent in that it is what is determining in this turning point. The choice between what is presentified, namely, the approach to this point of impossibility, of this point at infinity, that is always introduced by the approach of sexual contact. And the correlative aspect that is announced from the fact that at the level of the subject, by reason of the premature moment – but how would it not always be premature with regard to impossibility – by reason of the premature moment that it comes into operation in childhood, what projects, masks, diverts this impossibility by having to be exercised in terms of inadequacy, of being only *qua* living being, a living being reduced to his own forces, necessarily not up to it. The alibi taken for impossibility in inadequacy, is moreover the slope that what I called the direction of psychoanalysis may take. And this, after all, is not humanly speaking something in which in effect we cannot fail to feel ourselves the ministers of a help that on one or other point, with

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respect to one or other person, may be the occasion of a benefit. Nevertheless, this is not what justifies psychoanalysis. It is not from there that it emerged. It is not there that it has its sense and for a simple reason, which is that it is not this that the neurotic bears witness to. Because what the neurotic testifies to us, if we want to hear what he (275) is telling us through all his symptoms, is that where his discourse is placed it is clear that what he is looking for is something different than to be equal to the question he poses.

The neurotic, whether it is a hysteric or an obsessional that is at stake – we will subsequently make the link between the two aspects and this o-object that we have brought forward in the efficacy of phobia – the neurotic puts in question what is involved in the truth of knowledge. And very precisely in the fact that he/it is attached to enjoyment. And in re-posing the question, is he right? Yes certainly, because we know that it is only from this dependency that knowledge has its original status and that in its development, it articulates its distance. Is he right? His discourse is certainly dependent on what is at stake in the truth of knowledge. But as I already articulated before you, it is not at all because this discourse relates to this truth, that it is true. The consistency of the suspension of knowledge on the prohibition of enjoyment does not render any more legible in what, at a certain level, exposes this constitutive knot, and moreover why would it also not express, in the final term, a certain form of aporia? If I said it earlier, in what is presented as a position taken up in the impasses that are formulated as the law of the Other, when it is the sexual that is at stake, I would say that in the final term, after having sifted as much as I could the angle from which the obsessional and the hysteric are distinguished, the best formula that I could give proceeds precisely from what is offered in nature, naturally, as a solution of the impasse

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of this law of the Other. For the man who has to fulfill this identification to this function described as that of the symbolic father, the only one that is satisfying - and this is why the position of virile enjoyment in what is involved in sexual conjunction is mythical - for the man, what is offered at the level of the natural is very precisely what is called knowing how to be the master. And, in effect, this was, this probably still is, this was and this still remains sufficiently within someone's reach.

I would say that the obsessional is the one who refuses to take himself as master because, with respect to what is at stake - the truth of knowledge - what is important for him, is the relationship of this knowledge to enjoyment. And what he knows of this knowledge, is that it has nothing, nothing more of what remains from the first incidence of its interdiction, namely, the o-object. Any enjoyment is only thinkable for him as a treaty with the Other as whole always imagined by him as fundamental, with whom he deals. Enjoyment for him is only authorised by a payment, by an always renewed payment, into the insatiable jar of the Danai, into this something that is never finished and that makes of the modalities of the debt the ceremonial where alone he encounters his enjoyment.

Inversely, on the opposite side, the hysteric, and it is not for nothing that there is met this form of answer to the impasses of enjoyment, at the opposite side, the hysteric – and it is precisely because of this that this style is more especially found among women – the hysteric is (276) characterised by not taking herself for the woman. Because in this impasse, in this aporia, just as naturally as for the master, things are offered just as plainly to the woman to fulfill a role in sexual conjunction in which naturally she has a rather large part. What the

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hysteric, they say, represses, but what in reality she promotes, is this point at infinity of enjoyment as absolute. She promotes castration at the level of this name of the symbolic father in the place of whom she posits herself, or as wanting to be, in the final moment, his enjoyment. And it is because this enjoyment cannot be reached that she refuses any other which, for her, would only have this diminished character of only being, which moreover is true, something external, by only being at the level of sufficiency or insufficiency, with respect to the absolute relationship that it is a matter of positing.

Read and re-read the observations of hysterics in the light of these terms, and you will see in a completely different way from that of anecdote, from a biographical going around in circles, that the transference by repeating no doubt makes more manageable, but only tempers, to understand the source of what comes to us as an opening, as a gap, by whatever means moreover we try to calm it. Is it not essential to spot this source from which it arises and which is nothing other than the way in which the neurotic questions again this frontier that nothing can in fact suture, the one that is opened up between knowledge and enjoyment.

If, in the articulation that I gave of the 1 and the **o**, which is certainly not promoted here by chance or in an out of date way, which is nothing other, as I told you, than the way in which, in a mathematical model there is inscribed – and there is no reason to be surprised at it because it is the first thing that you have to encounter – there is inscribed in a series what is connected to the simple repetition of the 1, on the single condition that we inscribe its relation in the form of an addition. After two 1's, a 2, and to continue indefinitely, the last 1 joined to the 2, a 3, 5, and afterwards an 8 and after that a 13, and so on. It is this, as I told

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you, that by the proportion that it generates, that gets tighter and tighter as the numbers grow, strictly defines the function of **o**. The series has this property of exposing by being taken up in the opposite sense, by proceeding by subtraction, of culminating at a limit in the negative sense. Which, marked by this proportion of **o**, will continue to diminish and come to what one makes of it, in this direction, the sum, at a perfectly well defined limit that, then, taken up again is a starting point.

What the hysteric does can be inscribed in this direction, namely, that he or she subtracts this **o** as such from the absolute 1 of the Other, by questioning it. By questioning whether it delivers or not this final 1, that is in a way her assurance. In this process, it is easy with the help of the model that I have just recalled, to demonstrate that at best all her effort, I mean the effort of the hysteric after having put in question this (277) **o**, will be nothing more than to find herself as such, strictly equal to this **o** and to nothing else. Such here is the drama that is expressed, by being transposed from the level where it is, where it is stated in a perfectly correct way in another, is expressed by the irreducible gap of a castration that has been realised.

There are other ways out of the impasse opened up by the hysteric by the fact that it is resolved at the level of statements, at this level that I characterised by the label "*famil*", by the encounter with castration. But at the other level, at that of stating, at that which promotes the relation between enjoyment and knowledge, who does not know that illustrious historical examples allow it to be grasped that at the level of a knowledge that is supposed to be a knowledge overlapping itself by an experienced knowledge of the relation as it is presented, of the sexual relation as it is only grasped from the apprehension of this point

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at infinity which is impasse and aporia, certainly, but which is also a limit, the solution can be found of a subjective equilibrium, on this single condition that the correct tribute is paid from the edifice of a knowledge.

For the obsessional, everyone knows that it is the same; everyone knows that a whole sector depends on the productivity of the obsessional; even those most blind, most closed to historical reality have glimpsed his contribution to what is called thinking. Is this not also here what expresses his limit, what necessitates it being exorcised to the highest degree? It is to here that Freud takes the question when he speaks about the relationships of obsessional ritual to religion. Assuredly all religion is not exhausted in these practices. And this indeed is what is anxiety-provoking in Pascal's wager. It makes us see that by taking things even at the level of the promise, by proving oneself to be a partisan of the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, and by rejecting the Other, by rejecting him to the point of saying that one does not know whether he is, nor of course much more what he is. It is nevertheless him, at the level of whether he is or not, of odds or evens, that he questions in the wager, because he is caught up, given his epoch, in this questioning of knowledge.

It is at this point that I will leave you today.

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(279) There are fewer people standing. For their sakes I am not sorry, but if this means that the audience is becoming depleted, I am sorry since moreover it is necessarily – this is my style – in the final meetings that I will say the most interesting things! This reminds me that last year, of my own volition and for reasons that I will not repudiate, I suspended what I had to say at the beginning of a memorable month of May. However legitimate these reasons may have been, it nevertheless remains that what I said about the psychoanalytic act remains truncated. Given what was at stake, namely, precisely the psychoanalytic act, that no one had even dreamt of naming as such before me, which is an altogether precise sign that people had not even posed a question about it. Since otherwise it was the simplest way to name it, once people realised that in psychoanalysis there was somewhere an act, we must believe that this truth had remained veiled.

I do not think that it is by chance that what I had to state that year about the act found itself then, as I have just said, truncated. There is a relationship, a relationship that is naturally not one of causation, between this shirking of psychoanalysts about the subject of what is involved in an act – specifically the psychoanalytic act – and these

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events. But there is a relationship all the same between what causes events and the field in which the psychoanalytic act is inserted. So that up to the present one can say that it is no doubt because of some lack of interest in this act that psychoanalysts have not shown themselves to be very prepared or available to even give a hint of a grasp, even a superficial one, of these events. Naturally, it is only accidental that, in the other sense, the events interrupted what I might have had to say about the act, but all the same it does not fail either to represent something that, for my part, I consider to be a certain rendezvous. A rendezvous that I do not regret because it spared me, on the subject of the psychoanalytic act, in short, from coming to say what should not be said.

There you are. All the same, we find ourselves, after what I put forward the last time, brought back to something that is not far from this field. Because what is at stake, as I announced last year, is indeed an act in so far as it is in relationship with what I called, stated, (280) proposed, as being the o-object. Let it be quite clear that, since it is in my title this year and this is what is at stake in my discourse, this is something that ought to find its most formal expression in these final meetings. And, at least for those who are *au fait* with what I ended on the last time, it seems to me that it is no harm to recall – I advanced it in terms of Pascal's wager – that it is at least the path that I chose this year to introduce it. To introduce it as being in the field of the Other, as defining a certain game (*jeu*), precisely the stake (*enjeu*), with the play on words that I make about this term *en-je*.

It may appear curious that a position that, in this respect, is not ambiguous, that is certainly not a position of religious apologetics, should introduce this element of the wager. And of a wager that finds

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itself formulated as responding to a certain partner. A partner who is taken there, as one might say, at his word, at the word of a statement that is attributed to him, under a heading, my God, that is generally accepted, the promise of eternal life, for every believer who follows God's commandments. This is held to be something accepted, at least in the field of what constitutes with respect to him, this God, the largest religious reference, namely, the Church.

It is not out of season to start from there, because it has a quite lively relationship with what is at stake as permanent in our structures, and in structures that go much further than structures that could be qualified as mental structures. Structures in so far as they are defined by common discourse, by language, obviously go much further than what can be reduced to the function of mentality. As I very often insisted, this enfolds us from every side, and in things that, at first sight, do not seem to have an obvious relationship. So that this structure which is the one that I am aiming at to start again from today, the original structure, the one that I called that of an Other, to show where, through the incidence of psychoanalysis, it is going, to reveal a quite different other, namely the o. This Other – let there be no doubt about it within our horizon - this Other which is precisely the God of the philosophers, is not so easy to eliminate as people believe. Since in reality it undoubtedly remains stable at the horizon, in any case, of all our thoughts. It is obviously not unrelated to the fact that there is the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob – you will see it, I will come back to it – and this will be my subject today, the structure of this Other. Because it is very necessary carefully to establish what is to be designated there. It is no less timely, at the outset, to indicate that what constitutes for us, in a certain horizon of structure, in so far as it is determined by common discourse, it is clear that it is no harm to recall

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that, if this structure, that of the big Other, is for us in a certain field, the very one Freud designated as civilisation, namely, Western civilisation. The presence of the other God, the one that speaks, (281) namely, the God of the Jews, the God of Abraham, Isaac and of Jacob, is not for nothing in the maintenance of this Other.

This is not simply because the God of the philosophers, this big Other is One. What distinguishes the God of the Jews, the one designated as being at the origin of monotheism, is not some development that the One was subsequently able to make. It is not that he posits himself as being himself One that characterises him. The God of the burning bush, the God of Sinai did not say that he was the only God. This deserves to be recalled. He says: "I am what I am". That has a completely different meaning. That does not mean that he is the only one. That means that there is none other at the same time as him where he is. And in truth, if you look at it closely in the text of the Bible, you will see that this is what is at stake. There where he is, in his field, namely in the Holy Land, there is no question of obeying anyone but him. But nowhere is the presence of others denied, where he is not, where it is not his land. And if you look closely at it, it is only when there is an encroachment of the honours rendered to others where there reigns alone the one who said "I am what I am", that chastisements rain down. This might seem in the eyes of some people to have only a historic interest. But I am laying my cards on the table. It is only coming back to what I stated at first, which is that this god that is in question, designates himself by the fact that he speaks. This is what makes it legitimate that whatever distortion was undergone later by this word, because it is not sure that they are saying quite the same thing in the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church, in any case the God that is defined by his relationship to the word, is a God that speaks. This

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indeed is why the prophets, as such, are pre-eminent in the Jewish tradition. In other words, the dimension of Revelation as such, namely, of the word as carrying the truth, was never highlighted as much outside this tradition. Elsewhere the place of the Truth is filled, it is necessary for it to be covered, on occasion by myths for example. It is not so by prophesy except in a quite local way that is called oracular but which has a completely different sense to that of the prophetic tradition.

A rather heavy introduction, but all the same necessitated by the reminder of certain quite massive reliefs to be maintained in order to properly understand what is at stake when we put forward, that with regard to the field of truth that interests us as such in an outstanding way, even if we do not identify it to revealed formulae, with respect to this field of the truth, knowledge is elsewhere. That indeed is why, once the dimension of Revelation is introduced, there is introduced at the same time the dimension traditional in our culture that one must not believe extinguished because we are in our time, the dimension of what is improperly called the double truth. That means the distinction between truth and knowledge.

(282) So then what interests us, because this is what psychoanalysis revealed, is what is produced in knowledge. What is produced in knowledge, but was not suspected before psychoanalysis, is the o-object in so far as analysis articulates it for what it is. Namely, the cause of desire, of the division of the subject, of what introduces into the subject as such what the *cogito* masks. Namely, that alongside this "to be, *à être*" that it thinks it can reassure itself with, it is essentially and from the beginning lack. It is here that I remind you that I am taking up again the plan through which I believed last year I should

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introduce the paradox of the psychoanalytic act, which is that the psychoanalytic act is presented as a stimulus to knowledge. It implies, in the rule that is given to the psychoanalysand, it implies this, since you can say anything you want. And God knows what this may represent at first in terms of being senseless, if we were taken at our word, if people really set about saying - and if this had a sense for those that we introduce to this practice - everything that passed through their heads. If everything that passed through their heads really meant anything at all, where would we end up? If we can have faith in those that we introduce into this enterprise, it is very exactly because of the fact that, even if the person that we introduce into this practice is not capable of saying it, is nevertheless there. Namely, that what is implicit, is that whatever you may say, there is the Other, the Other who knows what it means.

The God of philosophers, however he may have been throughout history attached to the train of the God that speaks, is certainly not foreign to him of course. It was not illegitimate to make of this God of the philosophers the base, the throne, the support, the seat of the one who spoke. That the seat remains even when the other has risen to go, at least for some, the seat remains of this Other, of this Other in so far as he situates this unifying, unified field that has a name for those who think. Let us call it, if you wish, the principle of sufficient reason. That you may not suspect, I mean at least a part of you, a part that I suppose, after all - I do not know whether it exists - you are perhaps all capable of perceiving that you are sustained by the principle of sufficient reason. If you do not perceive it, it is exactly the same thing. You are in the field where the principle of sufficient reason sustains everything. And it would certainly not be easy to make you conceive of what is happening where things are otherwise. What is perfectly

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conceivable from the moment that it is put to you, when it is stated as being, for example, at the horizon of what renders psychoanalytic experience possible, namely, that if there is not a sufficient reason for whatever you may say, in looking no further than to say what passes through your head, there will always be a sufficient reason for it. And that is enough to put on the horizon this big Other, the one who knows.

The thing is in any case quite clear in the privileged subjects of this (283) experience, namely, the neurotics. The neurotic seeks to know. We are going to see more closely why, but he seeks to know. And at the beginning of analytic experience, we have no trouble in encouraging him, in short to have faith in this Other as a locus where knowledge is established, in the *subject supposed to know*.

It is then as an intervention on the subject of what, at the most basic level, at the most basic level there is, is already articulated as knowledge, that we intervene by an interpretation that is distinguished from what supports the term interpretation everywhere else. Everywhere else an interpretation, that for example of any logical system whatsoever, is to give a system of lesser import that, as they say, illustrates, illustrates it in a way that is more accessible by the fact that it is of lesser import. We remain at the superimposition of articulations of knowledge. Analytic interpretation is distinguished by the fact that, in what is articulated here and now as knowledge, however primitive it may be, what it aims at, is an effect, an effect of knowledge by being articulated there and that it makes tangible under the heading of its truth.

Its truth, as we have said, is on the side of desire, namely, of the division of the subject. And to go straight to it, because naturally we

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cannot go over the whole path here and what I have to say today is something different to be gone through, which is that the truth that is at stake is summarised as follows. That the Freudian thing, namely, this truth – the Freudian thing, this truth is the same thing – has the property of being asexual, contrary to what is said, namely, that Freudianism is pansexual. Only since the living being who is this being through whom a truth is conveyed has a sexual function and position, there results something from it, something that I tried to articulate for you two years ago now and not simply one. Namely, that there is not, in the precise sense of the word relationship, in the sense where sexual relationship is would be a relation that is logically definable, there is precisely none. What could be called sexual relationship is missing, namely, a relation definable as such between the sign of the male and that of the female. Sexual relationship, what is usually called by this name, can only be made by an act. This is what allowed me to put forward these two terms that there is no sexual act in the sense that this act is supposed to be that of a correct relationship, and that inversely, there is only the sexual act, in the sense that there is only the act to make the relationship.

In what psychoanalysis reveals to us, the fact is that the dimension of the act, of the sexual act in any case, but at the same time of all acts, what has been obvious for a long time, is that its proper dimension is failure. That is why at the heart of the sexual relationship, in psychoanalysis, there is something called castration. I spoke to you earlier about what is produced in knowledge. Necessarily, of course, you did not pay much attention to it. I should have said, what knowledge produces. I was not able to say it in order not to go too (284) quickly. Because in truth, for that to have a sense, it is necessary to come back to it more closely and to denote here the relief of this

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dimension that is articulated as properly speaking production. This dimension that only a certain process of technical progress has allowed us to discern, to distinguish as being the fruit of work.

But is it so simple? Is it not apparent that in order for production as such to be distinguished from what was always *poiesis*, fabrication, work, the level of the potter, it is necessary that there should be made autonomous as such what is very well distinguished in capitalism, namely, the means of production. Since it is around this that everything turns, namely, who disposes of these means. It is by such a homology that the function of knowledge and what its production is will take on its relief. The production of knowledge *qua* knowledge is distinguished by being a means of production and not simply work of the truth. What knowledge produces, is what I designate under the name of o-object. And this o is what comes to be substituted for the gap that is designated in the impasse of the sexual relationship. This is what is going to duplicate the division of the subject by giving him what was not graspable up to then in any way, because what is proper to castration, is that nothing can properly speaking be stated, because the cause is absent. In its place there comes the o-object as cause substituted for what is radically involved in the flaw of the subject.

And what I told you last year, after having defined the function of the o-object in this way the previous year, is that the psychoanalyst is the one that by this incitement to knowledge even though he does not know all that much about it, and simply by having this path, this means, this device, this analytic rule, finds himself taking on the charge of what is truly the support of this *subject supposed to know*. And I told you on every tone of the scale that the problem of our epoch, of the state of psychoanalysis, is only itself to be taken as one of

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the symptoms. The fact is that it is certain that this *subject supposed to know,* this Other, this unique locus where knowledge is supposed to connect up, does not exist. Nothing indicates that the Other is One, that it is not like the uniquely signifiable subject of the signifier of a particular topology that is summarised by what is involved in the **o**-object.

How can the psychoanalyst then, and this is where I accentuated the enigma and the paradox of the psychoanalytic act, the psychoanalyst in so far as he induces, as he incites the subject, the neurotic on this occasion, onto the path where he invites him to meet the *subject supposed to know*, how can the psychoanalyst, if it is true that he knows what a psychoanalysis is, how can he proceed to this act. Because he knows what is involved about what, at the end of the operation and with his very in-self (*en-soi*) he the analyst is going to represent the evacuation of the **o**-object. From this incitement to knowledge that ought to lead to the truth and that represents the gap in it, he falls by becoming himself the rejected fiction.

(285) I put forward here the word fiction. As you know, I have for a long time articulated that the truth has the structure of fiction. Is the **o**-object to be taken as simply marking this subject of the truth as division, or ought we as it seems give it more substance? Do you not sense there where we find ourselves at this crucial point, the one already properly marked in Aristotle's logic and that justifies the ambiguity of substance and subject. Of *hupokeimenon* in as much as it is logically nothing else properly speaking than what mathematical logic was afterwards able to isolate in the function of the variable, namely, what can only be designated by a predicative proposition. The ambiguity is maintained right through Aristotle's text not without there

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being distinguished like a tress the function perfectly isolated by him of *hupokeimenon* and that of *ousia*. Honestly, it would be much better to translate it by being or by "*étance*", by Heideger's *Wesen* on this occasion, than by this word that only conveys this aforesaid ambiguity of *substantia*, substance. It is indeed there that we find ourselves brought when we try to articulate what is involved in the function of the **o**-object.

It is around the enigma, the questioning that remains here about an act that cannot be initiated for the very one that inaugurates it except by a veiling of what would be for it, I mean the one that inaugurates this act and specifically the psychoanalyst, its term. And not simply its term but properly speaking its end, in as much as it is the term that determines retroactively the sense of the whole process, is properly its final cause, which does not deserve any derision because everything that belongs to the field of structure is unthinkable without a final cause. The only thing that deserves derision in terms described as finalistic, is that the end is of the slightest use.

Does the analyst know or not what he is doing in the psychoanalytic act? This is the precise term where there came to a halt in the previous year suspended by the eventful encounter with which I introduced my remarks today. As I told you, this was what dispensed me, at the horizon of such a difficult knot, so rigorously questioned by a putting in question of what is involved in the psychoanalytic act, dispensed me from the undoubtedly embarrassing resonances around which, nevertheless, can be questioned what is involved both in the theory and in the psychoanalytic institution.

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Before indicating perhaps a little more about it, let us clearly recall what results from this way of posing between knowledge and truth and in the proper field of a production as regards which in short you see, it is the psychoanalyst as such that himself incarnates it. It is in terms of this production, it is in these terms that there ought to be situated the question, for example, of what is involved in transference. What need is there for everything that we designate as transference to be (286) interpreted in analysis in terms of repetition, except by those analysts who are absolutely astray in this network as I articulated it. What need is there to put in question what is objective in it and to claim that transference is a retreat before something or other that is supposed to be what is really operating in analysis. Since it is a situation that only takes its support from the structure, nothing can be stated within as discourse of the analyst that is not of the order of what the structure commands, and which then can grasp nothing except the order of repetition. The question is not of knowing here whether repetition is a dominant category or not in the story. It is that in a situation designed to question what is involved in what presents itself starting from the structure, nothing of the story is organised except from repetition. It is a matter, I repeat, of what can be said at the level of this putting to the test of the effects of knowledge. So that it is not correct to say that transference isolates in itself the effects of repetition. Transference is defined from the relationship to the *subject supposed to know* in so far as it is structural and linked to the locus of the Other, as the locus as such where knowledge is articulated in an illusory way as One. And that by questioning in this way the functioning of whoever seeks to know, it is necessary for everything that is articulated to be articulated in terms of repetition.

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To whom are we indebted for such an experience? It is clear that it would never have been established if there were not the neurotic who needs to know the truth. Only those that the truth makes uncomfortable. That is the definition of the neurotic. This we are going to have to circumscribe more closely. And there again, before leaving this field, and with good reason, where I have not looped the loop, I want, in something that with respect to what I outlined may pass for a parenthesis, to highlight all the same a final one of these reference points with which I try to punctuate in a correct way this field in so far as we operate in it. If this is how it is, as I have reminded you, in a way accepted as partial, we ought to admit that the only thing that can be interpreted in analysis is repetition, and this is taken to be transference.

On the other hand, it is important to punctuate that this end that I designate as the capture of the analyst, of the analyst in himself in drilling for **o**, is precisely what constitutes the uninterpretable. That in a word, in analysis, the uninterpretable, is the presence of the analyst, and that is why to interpret him as has been seen, as has even been printed, is properly to open the door to what is called this place, namely, acting out. I recalled it in my seminar on the act, that then of last year and in connection with the myth of Oedipus. Namely, the distinction to be made between the heroic staging that serves as a mythical reference for our analytic practice, and what is articulated behind it, in terms of a knot of enjoyment at the origin of all knowledge. It is the psychoanalyst who is at the place, certainly, of (287) what was played out on the tragic stage and it is this that gives its sense to the psychoanalytic act. And on the other hand, it is striking that he renounces there, that all he does is to be at the place of the actor, in so far as one actor is enough just by himself to hold the stage

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of tragedy. This division between the spectator and chorus in which there is modelled and is modulated the division of the subject in the traditional play, I recalled it last year, to designate what is involved exactly in the place of the analyst. Another paradox of the psychoanalytic act, this actor who is effaced, rejoining earlier what I said about him evacuating the o-object. If the *passage à l'acte* is in the rule of analysis what the person who enters into it is asked to avoid, it is precisely to privilege this place of *acting out* that the analyst just by himself takes and keeps charge of. To keep quiet, to see nothing, to hear nothing, who does not remember that these are the terms in which a wisdom that is not ours indicates the path to those who want the truth. Is there not something strange on condition that one recognises the sense of these commandments to see there an analogy in the position of the analyst? But with this singular fruit that gives it its context. Because he is isolated from it by keeping quiet, the voice that is the kernel of what, by being said, creates speech. By seeing nothing, which is very often only too well observed by the analyst, isolating the look that is the knot tightened on the sack of everything that is seen at least. And finally to hear nothing of these two demands into which desire has slipped, of these two demands that summon him, these two demands that block him from the function of the breast or indeed of excrement.

What reality is there to push him to fulfill this function? What desire, what satisfaction can the analyst encounter there? I do not intend to designate this right away even if before leaving you I should say something more about it. It is appropriate here to throw into relief the dimension of *scapegoat,* a theme cherished by Frazer. We know that its origin is properly speaking Semitic. The scapegoat, the one who takes on himself this o-object, the one who ensures that forever, the

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subject can be reprieved from it. The one that ensures that the fruit of a terminated analysis, I was able last year to designate as a truth of which the subject is henceforth incurable, precisely because one of the terms of it have been evacuated. How can it not be seen that it is from there that there is explained the singular position that, in the social world this community of psychoanalysts occupies, protected by an international association for the protection of scapegoats! The scapegoat escapes by forming a group, and better still by degrees. It is true that it is difficult to conceive of a society of scapegoats. So then you make sergeant majors out of some scapegoats. And from the scapegoats who are only waiting in the antechamber to become so. Curious!

This facile derision would have no other reason for existing if, in the text that I have just received of an upcoming congress that will have the cheek to be held at Rome, there were not already texts, I mean (288) already published exemplary ones. Because it is not because people do not know Lacan's discourse that they do not find themselves face to face with the difficulties that I have just articulated here, and particularly what is involved in transference. When people struggle to define what is non-transferential in the analytic situation, some statements have to be brought out that are the confession, properly speaking, of the fact that nothing is understood about it. Nothing is understood about it because people do not have the key. And they do not have the key because they do not go looking for it where I stated it! In the same way, they invent a term called the *self*, and I must say that it would be no harm for someone who has some curiosity to see how this can both be justified and be resolved in a discourse like the one that I have articulated today. If I have the time at our next meetings, I will say more about it then. Likewise the error and properly speaking

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the ineptitude of what is put forward on the subject of what is involved in psychoanalytic treatment of psychosis, and the radical failure marked in it to situate precisely psychosis in a psychopathology that is of an analytic order, comes from the same source.

Undoubtedly, if I indicated that I could have articulated something different, something from which I declared I was happily dispensed, about the subject of the psychoanalytic act, it is in the horizon of what is involved in the masochist that this articulation should be posed. And assuredly, of course, not in order to confuse them, psychoanalytic and masochistic practice. But it would be instructive and, in a way opened up, already indicated by what we were able to say, by what is literally displayed in masochistic practice, namely, the conjunction of the perverse subject with the o-object properly speaking. In a certain way, one can say that as long as he wants it, the masochist is the true master. He is the master of the true game. He can fail at it, of course. There is even every chance that he will fail, because he needs nothing less than the big Other. When the Eternal Father is no longer there to fulfill this role, there is no longer anyone. And if you address yourself to a woman, Wanda of course, there is no chance. She will understand nothing about it the poor thing. But even though the masochist fails he enjoys it all the same. So that he can say that he is the master of the real game. It is quite obvious that we do not dream for an instant of imputing such success to the psychoanalyst. That would be to trust him about the search for his enjoyment and we are far from according this to him. Besides it would be very inappropriate.

To put forward a formula that has its interest because I will have to take it up again and you must not be surprised, in connection with the obsessional, we will say that the psychoanalyst plays/makes the master

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(*fait le maitre*) in the two senses of the word *faire*. Pay a little bit of attention for just five minutes more because it is very much of a short circuit and it is delicate. You sense well that the question about the psychoanalytic act, is, as I told you earlier, that of the decisive act that (289) from the psychoanalysand makes there arise, be inaugurated, be established the psychoanalyst. If, as I indicated to you earlier the psychoanalyst is confused with the production of the doing, of the work of the psychoanalysand, it is here that one can really say that the psychoanalysand makes (*fait*), in the strong sense of the term, the psychoanalyst. But one can also say that at the precise moment the aforesaid psychoanalyst emerges, if it is so hard to grasp what can push him into this, it is indeed because the act is reduced to playing, in the sense of a pretence, to playing the psychoanalyst, to playing the one that guarantees the *subject supposed to know*. And who, at the start of his career, has not confided to whoever wants to aid him in his first steps that he has precisely this feeling of pretending to be a psychoanalyst (*de faire le psychoanalyste*)? Why remove its value from this testimony?

But this is what allows, by taking up these two functions of the word *faire*, to say that it is quite true that in leading someone to the term of his psychoanalysis, to the term of this incurable truth, to the point of the one who knows that if there is indeed an act, there is no sexual relationship, is it not here, even if this does not happen too often, to ensure somewhere a true mastery? But on the other hand, contrary to the masochist, if the psychoanalyst for his part also can be said to have some relationship to the operation, it is certainly not because he is the master of it. But that all the same, he supports, he incarnates the trump card, in so far as he is the one who brings into play the whole weight of what is involved in the o-object.

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What then, after having only pushed this discourse this far today, what about the point where this discourse itself can be situated, namely from where I state it? Is it from where the *subject supposed to know* keeps himself? Can I play the scholar in speaking about the psychoanalytic act? Certainly not. Nothing is closed off about what I am opening up as a question concerning what is involved in this act. That I am the logician of it, and in a way that is confirmed by the fact that this logic makes me odious to everyone, why not? This logic is articulated from the very co-ordinates of its practice and from the points where it takes its motivation. Knowledge in so far as it is produced by the truth - is this not what a certain version of the relationships between knowledge and enjoyment imagine?

For the neurotic, knowledge is the enjoyment of the *subject supposed to know.* This indeed is why the neurotic is incapable of sublimation. Sublimation for its part is the proper of what makes the circuit of what the *subject supposed to know* is reduced to. Every artistic creation is situated in this circumscribing of what remains irreducible in this knowledge *qua* distinguished from enjoyment. Something nevertheless comes to mark its enterprise, in so far as never in the subject does it designate what is its inaptitude for its full realisation.

Does not this imputation that the work of the exploited person is supposed in the enjoyment of the exploiter find something like its analogue at the entrance of knowledge? In the fact that the means that (290) it constitutes will make those that possess these means profit from those who win this knowledge by the sweat of their truth. No doubt the analogy would miss the point by operating in such distinct domains, if for some time, knowledge had not shown itself so

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complicit with a certain mode of exploitation. Under the name of capitalist, as it happens, the excess of exploitation is something that is not liked. I am saying is not liked because there is nothing more to be said. The principle of revolutionary agitation is nothing other than that there is a point where things are not liked. Now, if you remember, did I not mark last year that the position of the analyst, if it ought to remain in conformity in all rigour to his act, was that, in the field of what he inaugurates with the help of this act as doing, there is no place for there to be something that he does not like, nor that he likes either. And that if he makes room for this, he leaves it.

But this is not to say for all that that he will not have his word to say about what can divert, limit those who, in a certain field which is the field of knowledge, have got to the point of rebelling about a certain going astray of knowledge, about the correct way, that favours knowledge emerging once again from a field where it exploits. It is on this last word that I am leaving you, promising you for the next time to enter into the detail of what is at stake concerning the respective positions of the hysteric and the obsessional with regard to the big Other.

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Seminar 24: Wednesday 18 June 1969

(307) I would be in an even more excellent mood if I didn't feel like yawning as you have just seen me do, because of the fact that I had, I do not know why, by pure chance, a short night. My excellent mood is founded on these things that you have between two doors and that is called a hope. On this occasion, that it is possible, if things turn out in a certain way, that I may be liberated from this weekly sublimation that consists in my relations with you. "You do not see me from where I look at you", I stated in the course of one of these seminars of the previous years, to characterise what is involved in a type of o-object in so far as it is grounded in the look, that it is nothing other than the look. "You owe me nothing from where I devour you, *tu ne me dois rien d'ou je te devore*". Such is the message that I might well receive from you in the form that I defined in its inverted form in so far as it is itself mine. And I would no longer have to make the return journey here every week around an o-object which is properly what I am designating thus by a formula that as you sense – duty (*devoir*), devouring (*dévoration*) – is inscribed in what is properly called an oral drive. It would be better to refer it to what it is, the placentary thing onto which I stick myself as I am able. This great body that you constitute, to constitute from my substance something that might be for

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you the object of a satisfaction. "Oh! My mother Intelligence" as someone or other has said.

Today then, I am only going to half keep my word about what I told you the last time. Because it is only in the form of a riddle that I am rapidly questioning you about what may take shape in your minds about something which explains why, from next year, I will no longer have at my disposition this place where you do me the honour of crowding in, because of what I produce here. I was made an assistant lecturer by a rather noble school, the one described as *Hautes Etudes.* I was offered shelter by this School in this School here, *Normale Supérieure*, a protected place, that is distinguished by all sorts of privileges within the university. It was an eminent philosopher, whom I am designating, I think, sufficiently in these terms – an eminent philosopher, there are not a lot of them – who teaches here, who became my intercessor with the administration here so that I could occupy this room. Is it this very occupation that serves as a reason for my no longer disposing of it? I do not think that I am occupying it at a time that anyone else might envy. Is it because my presence here (308) generates a sort of confusion in that my teaching is authorised by the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, that I have just characterised here by the eminence it benefits from being in the university or more exactly excluded from it in a certain way. It should be remarked here that I have never authorised myself here by anything except the field whose structure I am trying to maintain in its authenticity. And that in truth I never authorised myself by anything else, and very especially not from the fact that these statements are produced in the *Ecole Normale.* Perhaps having me as a neighbour induced a certain movement in the *Ecole Normale*, a short, limited one moreover, that in no case seems to be able to be inscribed as a deficit. The *Cahiers pour l'analyse* that

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have appeared, in a way induced by the field of my teaching, cannot be seen as a deficit, even if one can say that it was not at all by me that the work was done.

So then, many reasons here for there to be no urgency to distinguish me from the *Ecole Normale*. Certainly there was somewhere, in a single place, a confusion made in this respect. Namely, a person I told you about on 8th January last. In an article that I must say is rather comical, that appeared in a journal that protected him very well, the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, someone brought up something or other that was called an extract, indeed an exercise of my style. And in this connection I was qualified, entitled by what was called my quality of professor, that I certainly am not, and still less at the *Ecole Normale*.

If it is because of this confusion in an article that moreover was marked by many other confusions, I mean that articulated my teaching in function of something or other that made of it a commentary on de Saussure, which it never was. I took de Saussure as one takes an instrument, a system, to be used for quite different ends, those of the field that I designated earlier. In this connection something or other was stated which is supposed to be articulated from nothing other than from the fact that I am supposed to have read him, as they say, diagonally. This simply shows in the person who wrote this article a surprising ignorance of the uses that this word diagonal can have. Because it is quite clear that I did not read de Saussure diagonally in the sense that I read the articles in *Le Monde* diagonally. They are made for that, de Saussure's course is certainly not. On the other hand the method described as diagonal is well known for its fruitfulness in mathematics, namely, by revealing that from any series (*sériation*) that claims to be exhaustive one can, by the diagonal method, extract some

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other entity that it does not include in its series. In this sense, I would be happy to accept that I made a diagonal use of de Saussure. But that from this, namely, from something that comes from an uncritical attitude that one might benevolently account for by an oversight that goes completely beyond this lack of criticism, to find in it material to (309) consider that some third person might see in it the justification for taking precautions, while it would simply be enough to point out that this oversight is nothing but that, and this on the part of someone who gave sufficient proofs of it in the rest of his text, there is obviously something or other rather curious. It suggests that when all is said and done the discussion about knowledge is excluded from the university. Because one can accept that someone who obviously is mistaken on one point may be able on another one to advance an incorrect qualification. This of itself justifies that it should be corrected by a measure other than pointing out to the person that there could be no confusion. This indeed is the conclusion that I am indicating now and that deserves to be drawn from it.

I will leave things there then, leaving you in suspense about whether any more can be said about it today. I am giving you explicitly a rendezvous then, the next time. This will be my next seminar when, accepting that it is in any case the last for this year, I believe I will be able in any case to promise you that I will distribute a certain number of little papers that I have in this briefcase, already prepared for you. In the case that this accent of finality is subsequently reinforced, this will mark at least something that will of course not be a diploma but a little sign that will remain to you of your presence here this year.

At this point, I am taking up again what I stated then the last time. Namely, what is pointed up by what I meant to articulate this year

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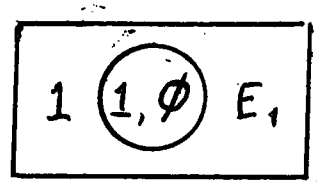
about the terms *From an Other to the other,* to which I was able the last time to give a certain structural form. I recall in short that what is involved is the following. That anything that allows itself to be caught up in the function of the signifier can nevermore be 2 without there being hollowed out in the locus described as that of the Other this something to which I gave the last time the status of empty set. This to indicate the way in which, at the present point of logic, there can be written what, on this occasion and without excluding that this can be written differently, what, I say, changes the relief of the real.

I am writing again the 1, this circle that we first used to write the Other. And in this circle, taken here to function as a set, two members, the 1, and then something that, if it is still the Other, is to be taken here under the heading of set. A set in which for reasons linked to mathematical usage it would be wrong to put a zero to designate the empty set. It is therefore more correct to represent it according to the classical style of set theory as follows, namely, to mark it with this oblique bar that you know moreover I make use of. Anything that allows itself to be taken up into the function of the signifier can no longer be 2 without there being hollowed out, and in a way that organises the field of this dual relation, in such a way that nothing can (316) any longer happen in it without being obliged to turn around this thing here at the extreme right that I called an empty set. That is properly – this for those that have put in the time to understand it – what, in my *Ecrits* as well as in my propositions, I always designated as the *additional one (un-en-plus).* This then means, indicates, that in the measure that my discourse, as I might say, advanced, if I had to introduce into the function and into the field of speech and language what was involved in the function of the unconscious by having recourse to this fragile and oh so problematic term of intersubjectivity,



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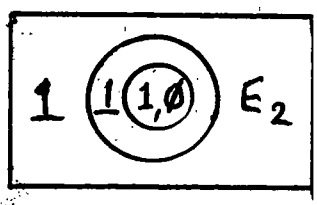
to put the accent more and more on what, of course, is required by Freud's second topography, namely, that nothing functions or is regulated there except intra-subjective correlates. Here comes the decisive accent put on this function of the *additional one* as exterior to the subjective.

Let us consider the drawing in which already the last time I made operate what I wanted to articulate for you about these remarks that I am taking up again today. Who does not see, I said, how by implicating a subject in the formula that a signifier represents it for another signifier, *from an Other* is already inscribed in this formula. This signifier for which the subject is represented is properly this *an Other* that is at stake in my title. This *an Other* that here you see inscribed because it is the resource for which what has to function as a subject is represented, in this field of the Other. This *one in the Other* as such cannot work without involving the *additional one*. That is why it is only at the moment that these three basic signifiers are inscribed, in so far as of themselves they already carry an effect of signifier and that it is sufficient to have to be inscribed in this way, as you see in a way that is not self-evident, that demanded months and years of explanation for those very people whose practice could not be sustained for a moment without being referred to this structure, I mean psychoanalysts. Just by themselves, these three terms inscribed under this mode of inscription, these three terms indeed constitute, in terms of what they already imply, before there is a question of making the apparition of the subject arise from it, a structure. Already, by their articulation, they constitute a knowledge.

This *an Other* here inscribed by 1 on the left of the circle, shows itself for what it is, namely, one in the Other, the one for whom the subject is



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found to represent itself from the One. What does that mean? Where does this 1 come from, this 1 for whom the subject is going to be represented by the 1? It is clear that it comes from the same place as this 1 that represents, that this is the first phase from which the Other is constituted. And if the last time I compared this locus of the Other to a Trojan Horse that functions in the opposite sense, namely, that each (311) time swallows a new unit into its belly instead of allowing them to be disgorged into the nocturnal city, it is because in effect this entry of the first 1 is foundational. Foundational in something that is very simple, namely, that it is the minimum necessary for this to be. The Other cannot in any way contain itself except in the state of subset.

Let us clearly understand one another. Can one say that here this Other contains itself, if I furnish this empty set with something that repeats these members, first a 1, and the empty set? It is not true that one can say that this means it contains itself. Because this set transformed in this way, is inscribed from members that we have just mentioned. And the totality of these members is not what is reproduced here from the couple first inscribed as that of the first set E_1, namely, the member 1, then the empty set, the empty set where now there is reproduced the member 1, the empty set. There is therefore no question of the set of all the sets that might not contain themselves, for the simple reason that at the level of the set, there are never sets that contain themselves. To talk about the set of all the sets that do not contain themselves does not constitute a set. But it is clear that the question of whether the set can, yes or no, contain itself is only posed, can only be posed by having absorbed this *an Other,* so that by its inclusion there appears as the *additional one* the empty set, for the reason that grounds the empty set as not being able to be in any case 2. There is no empty set that contains an empty set. There are not two empty sets.

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The inclusion then of the first 1 is what makes it necessary that in the field of the Other, the most simple formula for 2 to be inscribed is the 1, member, and the empty set, inasmuch as it is nothing else but what is produced in a set with one member, by distinguishing the subsets from it. The 1 just by itself sufficed for a long time. This allowed it to be said that the Other, was the 1, a confusion in that the structure of the set was not recognised. Even in the set with one member posited as such, there emerges as a subset this *additional one* that the empty set is. In other words the Other needs an other to become *additional one*, namely, what it is itself. What is produced then from the one to the other, in so far as it is a second, is another signifier, And in the Other, it is properly this that ensures that it is only at the level of the second 1, of S_2 if you want to write it in this way, that the subject comes to be represented. The intervention of the first 1, of S_1 as representation of the subject only implies the apparition of the subject as such at the level of S_2, of the second 1. And from then on, as I pointed out the other day, namely, that the *additional one*, the empty set, is S(O) namely the signifier of the Other, the inaugural O.

What this shows us, is that there is going, in the structure thus defined, that the relationship of the 1 inscribed in the first circle of the Other, to this second circle of the *additional one,* which can itself contain the 1 + the *additional one* which is distinguished from this relationship to this 1, and only by this not being the same empty set, but can repeat the same structure indefinitely. This same indefinitely repeated structure of the 1, circle 1, circle 1 and so on, this is what defines the Other. Namely, this is the very thing that constitutes the agency of the o-object as such. It is indispensable that there is at least one member reduced to the member 1 in the Other. This is what made the Other be

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taken for 1 for a long time. As I told you, there is a psychical structure that restores, as I might say, the apparent integrity of O, that grounds in an effective relation the S(O) as not marked by what the bar on the top left of our graph designates, S(Ø). This is nothing other than the identification of this indefinitely repeated structure that the o-object designates. In truth, I would employ the following metaphor to designate as a perverse structure the apparent restoration of the integrity of the Other in so far as it is the o-object, that is in a way the imaginary moulding of the signifying structure.

We are going to see later in effect what fills the place of this O, in the operation of psychic identification. In a word, let us see it right away. Let us spell out the texts, taking the first case to be presented under the figure of the hysteric, to Freud. We are going to see how he, who gives to this economy its first explanation, goes along with her. How in connection with Anna O, he does not question himself about what is involved in the relationship between these narratives, this *talking cure*, as she herself puts it, inventing the term, and this symptom that is particularly clearly designated in the case of the hysteric. Something at the level of the body that is emptied out, a field where sensitivity disappears. *An other* connected or not whose motor activity becomes absent without anything other than a signifying unit being able to account for it. The anti-anatomical nature of the hysterical symptom was sufficiently highlighted by Freud himself. Namely, if a hysterical arm is paralysed, it is because it is called arm (*bras*) and nothing else. Because nothing in any real distribution of impulses whatsoever accounts for the limit that designates its field. It is indeed the body here that comes to serve as a support in an original symptom, the most typical in that, because it is at the origin of analytic experience itself, we question it.

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Where then is, with respect to the progress operated by the talking cure, *la cure parlante,* how not remain as close as possible to the text. And even without knowing any more about it – which is not the case because we know a lot more, I mean that it is necessary to organise this structure differently – how can we not see that Freud here is at the place of the 1, here placed as inside. It is in Freud that there is established a certain subject. Without the listener, Freud, the question (313) is to know how he could subject himself to this function for one year, two years, to listen every evening, at the moment that a dissociated state marked the cutting, the cut by which Dora, by which a symptomatic Anna was separated from her own subject. How can we not question ourselves about the hidden relationship that ensured that simply by taking things as they were presented, that it is from the fact that a subject comes to know something that is a feature (*trait*), if you remember this observation, a feature moreover followed like a historical reprise, not lost in the darkness of some forgetting or other, simply cut off just the previous year. And that, in the measure that with this delay which just by itself ought to have a sense for us, means that when Freud was informed about it, the symptom whose relationship is only a distant one, is only forced with respect to what is articulated in it, the symptom is removed.

This foundation of a subject creates knowledge in a field which is that of the Other, and its relationship with this something creates a hollow at the level of the body. Such is the first outline that when we have elaborated it sufficiently after decades in order to be able from this structure in its unicity to make the collection, under the heading of what functions as the object described as o, which is this structure itself, we might say that with regard to this body emptied in order to

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function as a signifier, there is something that can be moulded there and this metaphor will help us to conceive as a statue properly speaking what, at the level of the pervert, comes to function as that which restores as plenitude, as O without a bar, this O. To appreciate the imaginary relation of what is involved in perversion, it is enough to grasp the statue of which I speak at the level of a baroque contortion whose representation of an incitement to voyeurism is only tangible in so far that it represents a phallic exhibition. How can we not see that used by a religion concerned with re-establishing its empire over souls at the moment that it is contested, the baroque statue, whatever it may be, whatever male or female saint it represents, indeed the Virgin Mary, is properly this look that is designed so that the soul may open up before it. If the rapprochement I made between a single feature of the perverse structure and some capture or other of the faith that must indeed be called idolatrous, puts us at the heart of what is presentified in our West by a quarrel over images, it is something exemplary that we have to draw profit from.

I said that I would tackle today what is involved in neurosis. And, as you heard, I began at the level of the obsessional, by articulating that nothing of the obsessional can be conceived of except by referring to a structure in which, for the master, in so far as he functions as 1, a signifier that only subsists by being represented for a second 1 that is in the Other, in so far as this represents the slave in whom alone resides the subjective function of the master. Between one and the other there is nothing in common except what I said had first been (314) articulated by Hegel as the bringing into play at the level of the master, of his own life. The act of mastery consists in this, the risk of life. Somewhere in this little book that has come out under the heading of the first number of *Scilicet*, I highlighted in the miraculous remarks

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of a child, what I gathered from the mouth of his father, because he had told him that he was "a trickster of life, *tricheur de vie*". An extraordinary formula, like those that undoubtedly one can only see flowering in the mouths of those for whom no one has yet confused matters. The risk of life, this is the essential of what one can call the act of mastery. And its guarantor is none other than what is, in the Other, the slave as signifier by whom alone the master is supported as subject. His support being nothing other than the body of the slave in so far as it is, to use a formula that had good reason to come into the forefront of spiritual life, *perinde ac cadaver*. But it is such only in the field by which the master is supported as subject. Something remains outside the limits of this whole apparatus, which is precisely what Hegel wrongly brought into it, death. Death, as has been sufficiently noted, is only profiled here in that it does not contest the whole of the structure except at the level of the slave. In the whole of the phenomenology of the master and the slave, only the slave is real. And this indeed is what Hegel glimpsed and it would be enough to ensure that nothing goes any further in this dialectic. This situation is perfectly stable. If the slave dies there is no longer anything. If the master dies everyone knows that the slave is still a slave. As long as we have known about slaves, the death of the master never freed anyone from slavery.

Such is, I would ask you to note, the situation when it is the neurotic that introduces the dialectic. Because it is only from the moment that we presuppose somewhere the *subject supposed to know* that in effect, with this horizon and with good reason, just like the rabbit in the hat, it is put in at the start, we can see there progressing then in a dialectic what is stated about the relationships of the master and the slave. And where? At the level of the slave himself towards an absolute

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knowledge. The subject, it is in so far as the master is represented at the level of the slave that the whole dialectic is pursued and culminates at this end which is nothing other than what is already put there under the function of knowledge. This function precisely in so far as it is not criticised, that nowhere is there questioned the order of underpinning of the subject in knowledge. This thing which nevertheless leaps to the eye, which is that the master himself knows nothing. Everyone knows that the master is a fool (*un con*). He would never have entered into this whole adventure, with what the future designates for him as a resolution of his function, if for an instant there existed the subject that, in his facile way of talking, Hegel imputes to him. As if this function of the fight to the death, of the fight for pure prestige, could be set up, in so far as it also makes him substantially depend on his partner, if the (315) master were not something other than what we properly call the unconscious, namely, unknown to the subject as such. I mean this unknown from which the subject is absent, the subject of which is only represented elsewhere.

All of this is only done to introduce the next step of what I have to articulate today. Previously, I spoke in connection with the hysteric about the analogue she took on from her reference to the woman. Just as I said that nothing that is articulated about the obsessional constitutes him except to introduce into the dialectic of the subject-master, what necessitates something that calls him, namely, the truth of this process. And, on the path of this truth, the taking up, the bringing into play of the *subject supposed to know*.

I am taking this up at the level of the other neurosis, of the hysteric. And to put at the heart of it the analogous apparatus, the model that is at stake, to which the obsessional refers himself, I already said, the

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hysteric, just as one can say that the obsessional does not take himself to be the master but supposes that the master knows what he wants, in the same way, the hysteric for the woman – not that the hysteric is for all that obligatorily a woman any more than the obsessional is obligatorily a man, it is a matter of the reference to the model of the master – in the same way, the hysteric, her model, is what I am now going to state in that what is involved in the model in which the woman establishes this thing that is much more central, as you are going to see, in our analytic experience.

When I put it forward, sometime around the 21st May, someone here posed me the question: but do we know what the woman is? Naturally, no more than we know what the master is. But what one can outline, is the articulation in the field of the Other of what is involved in the woman. It is just as stupid as the master, make no mistake. I am not for the moment talking about women, I am speaking about the subject "the woman". Do we not see what is involved in these two 1's when we are dealing with the woman? The inner 1, S_2, make no mistake, what it is a matter of seeing being erected does not appear doubtful to me and it then becomes very clear. It is to know why the 1 by which the woman subject is supported is so ordinarily the Phallus with a capital P. It is at the level of the 1 that it is a matter of bringing up that the identification of the woman in the dual mirage in so far as this Other is at its horizon, the empty set, namely a body, a body here emptied of what? Of enjoyment. Where the master-subject takes on the risk of life, in the inaugural wager of this dialectic, the woman – I did not say the hysteric, I said the woman because the hysteric, as the obsessional earlier does, is only explained by reason of these references – risks, wagers this enjoyment which everyone knows is for the woman inaugural and existing, and is such that without any of

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these efforts, of these detours that characterise autoerotism in the man, not only does she obtain but she always subsists distinct from and parallel to the one that she takes from being the wife of a man, the one (316) who is satisfied by the enjoyment of the man.

This enjoyment of the man that the woman takes, captures for herself as the master does to the slave, this is the stake of the game and gives its radical origin to what is involved in what here plays the same role as death for the obsessional and is just as inaccessible. Namely, that to say the woman identifies to it – I said the woman – is just as false, is just as vain as to say that the master identifies to death. On the contrary, just as the slave is bound and in the same way, I mean only subsists through the relation to death and with this relation makes the whole system subsist, the relationship of man to castration is also what here makes the whole system hold together. And moreover, if I earlier spoke of *perinde ac cadaver*, I would evoke here something rather remarkable that for the being caught up in the field of the signifier, the dimension called necrophilia exists, in other words erotism and very properly applied to a dead body. Do I need to evoke here on the horizon the figure Jeanne la Folle and her trailing about for a fortnight the body of Philippe le Beau?

It is only with respect to these structures, to these inaugurating functions in so far as they alone correspond to the introduction of what is properly the dependency on the signifier as analytic experience allows us to articulate it, that we can here see, just as for the obsessional, the hysteric is introduced as not taking herself for a woman. How does she not take herself for a woman? Precisely in the fact that she supposes that, in this structure, that I have just articulated as being that of the woman subject, this subject, at the level of the

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starting S_1, she makes into something supposed to know. In other words she is captivated, interested – remember Dora – by the woman in so far as she believes that the woman is the one that knows what is necessary for man's enjoyment. Now, what results from this something that is absent in the model, the function of the woman-subject, God be praised, make no mistake, does not know that what she is sustaining culminates in the castration of the man.

But, on the contrary, the hysteric is not unaware of anything about it and that is why she questions herself beyond what I already articulated about Dora, centred on a first approach that I made to transference. Beyond. Re-read the observation, and moreover do not omit everything that in the prior observations, those of *Studies in hysteria*, allows simply the following to be seen. The correlation between the fact that, for the hysteric, the woman supposes her knowledge of what is in the model, she does it unconsciously. That is why the two models not being able to be distinguished by this factor that is introduced that reunites under the heading of neurosis one type just as much as the other, you can note that the correlate of death is at stake in what the hysteric tackles about what is involved in being a woman.

The hysteric plays the man (*fait l'homme*) who supposes that the (317) woman knows. That indeed is why she is introduced into this game from some angle where the death of the man is always involved. Is there any need to say that the whole introduction of Anna O to the field of her hysteria does nothing other than turn around the death of her father? Is it necessary to recall the correlate, in the two dreams of Dora, of death in so far as it is implicated by the mother's jewel box. "I do not want, says the father, my children and me to perish in flames

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because of this box" and in the second dream that it is a matter of the burial of the father. Hidden truths, neuroses suppose them known. They must be disentangled from this supposition so that they, the neurotics, stop representing this truth in the flesh.

It is in as far as the hysteric, as one might say, is already a psychoanalysand, namely, already on the path of a solution, of a solution she seeks starting from the fact that in what she refers herself to she implies the *subject supposed to know*, and that is why she encounters contradiction. The fact is, as long as the analyst does not practice the cut between the unconscious structure, namely, the models that I properly articulated here of the 1, 1, the empty set, as much at the level of the master as at the level of the woman, namely, from what has made the neurotic naturally a psychoanalysand because here and now constituting in herself, and before any analysis, the transference. The coalescence of the structure with the *subject supposed to know*, this is what is testified in the neurotic by the fact that she questions the truth of these structures and becomes herself in the flesh this questioning. And that if something can make drop the fact that she is herself symptom, namely, precisely by this operation of the analyst practicing the cut thanks to which this supposition of the *subject supposed to know* is detached, is separated from what is at stake. Namely, the structure that she correctly locates, except for the fact that neither the master, nor the woman can be supposed to know what they are doing.

The operation of analytic treatment turns around this cut which is a subjective cut, because undoubtedly everything that we say about an unconscious desire, always, of course, supposes that a subject ends up

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by knowing what he wants. And what does that mean? Do we not here again still preserve, in stating such formulae, this something that means that there is knowledge and what one wants. Assuredly there is a locus where the two terms are distinguished. It is when it is a matter of saying yes or of saying no to what I called, what one wants. This is what is called the will. But to know what he wants, is for the master, as for the woman, desire itself, just as earlier I unified the three words of *an additional one* (*un-en-plus*), the knowing-what-he-wants that I mean here, is desire itself. What the hysteric supposes, is that the woman knows what she wants, in the sense that she is supposed to desire it, and this indeed is why the hysteric does not manage to (318) identify herself to the woman except at the price of an unsatisfied desire. In the same way, with respect to the master, whom he makes use of in the game of hide and seek to claim that death can only touch the slave, the obsessional is the one who, from the master, only identifies this thing which is the real, that his desire is impossible.

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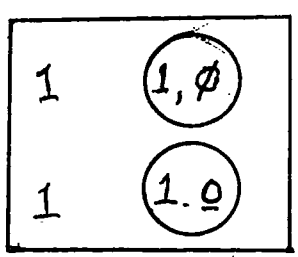
Seminar 25: Wednesday 25 June 1969

(319) Try not to lose the thread about what you are as effect of knowledge. You are split apart in the phantasy ($ ◊ o). You are, however strange this may appear, the cause of yourself. Only there is no self. Rather there is a divided self. Entering onto this path is where the only true political revolution may flow from. Knowledge serves the master. I am coming back today to underline that knowledge is born from the slave. If you remember the formulae that I aligned the last time, you will understand that, in parallel, I state: knowledge serves the woman, because it makes her the cause of desire. Here is what I indicated to you the last time, in a commentary on the schema that I am writing out again. I think I should take it up again, even for those who may be occupied elsewhere by concerns that appear more important to them.

Here is this schema. This schema emerges from the logical definition that I gave at our second last meeting of the Other as empty set and of its indispensable absorption of a unary trait, the one on the right, in order that the subject may be able to be represented there for this unary trait, under the species of a signifier. Where does this signifier that represents the subject for another signifier come from? From nowhere,



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because it only appears at that this place in virtue of the retro-efficacy of repetition. It is because the unary trait aims at the repetition of an enjoyment that another unary trait arises subsequently, *nachträglich* as Freud puts it. This term I was the first to extract from his text and to highlight as such. Whoever amuses himself in translating a certain "*Vocabulaire*", will be able to see that at this rubric of *aprés-coup*, which would not even exist without my discourse, I am not even mentioned. The unary trait arises in a deferred way, in the place therefore of S_1, of the signifier, in so far as it represents a subject for another signifier. On this I say: everything that is going to arise from this repetition that is repeated by the introduction of the in-form of **o**, here the sign of the empty set, is first of all this in-form itself, and this is the **o**-object.

At this people get alarmed: I am told: "So then, you are giving a purely formal definition of the **o**-object." No, because all of this is only produced from the fact that at the place of the 1 on the left, of S_1, there is what there is, namely, this enigmatic enjoyment attested to by the fact that we know nothing about it except the following, that I am going to reproduce at every stage where it is distinguished, nothing is (320) known about it except the fact that it wants another enjoyment. This is true everywhere. 4, 2, 3, the little fable to which is given the ridiculous answer that you know; at the answer, to have another one. In this Oedipus, the hysteric who has answered, answered in so far as the truth about the woman must indeed have been said for the Sphinx to have disappeared because of it. That is why, in conformity with the destiny of the hysteric, he subsequently played the man.

The hysteric, I will tell you...because there is going to be some little time before we meet again, the hysteric fills me with joy. She

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reassures me more than she did Freud, who was not able to understand that the enjoyment of the woman was perfectly sufficient in itself. She erects this mythical woman called the Sphinx. She articulates that the original game is that she must have something else, namely, enjoy the man, who for her is only the erect penis by means of which she knows herself as other, namely as phallus, of which she is deprived, in other words as castrated. Here is the truth that allows some lures to be dissipated and remind you that this is the year that I posited the o as *surplus enjoying*, in other words the stake that constitutes the wager in order to gain the other enjoyment.

That is why the last time I wrote the dialectic of the master and the slave differently by clearly marking that the slave is the ideal of the master. That he is also the signifier to whom the master-subject is represented by another signifier since what is at stake is the third term of data representations other than formal. Here it is in the form of the stake which here is o. In this dialectic, as a philosopher named Hegel glimpsed, the stake is indeed what can hold up in a signifying in-form as 1, a life. It is true that you only have one. Equally, it is an idiotic formulation because you cannot formulate that you only have one on the principle that you might have others, which is manifestly outside the game. A life, this indeed is what Hegel said, but he was wrong about which one. The stake is not the life of the master, it is that of the slave. His other enjoyment is that of the life of the slave. Here is what this formula of the fight to death envelopes, so completely closed, what one finds in the box. The fight to the death is a signifier, that is what it is.

It is all the surer in that it is very probably nothing other than the signifier itself. Everyone knows that death is outside the game. We do

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not know what it is, but the verdict of death, is the master as subject, a signifying verdict; perhaps the only true one. What he lives from, is a life, but not his own, the life of the slave. That is why any time the wager on life is at stake, it is the master who speaks. Pascal is a master and, as everyone knows, a pioneer of capitalism. For reference: the calculating machine, and then the bus. You have heard tell of that in some corner or other, I am not going to give you a bibliography.

This has a dramatic air; up to a certain point it has become such. At (321) the beginning it was not so, for the reason that the first master knows nothing about what is doing. And the master-subject is the unconscious. In ancient comedy, whose value as an indicator could not be exaggerated for us, it is the slave that brings to the master or to the son of the master – it is better again than the Son of Man, that imbecile – who brings him news of what is being said in the town, for example, from which he has come post-haste. He also tells him what to say, the passwords. The slave of antiquity, read Plautus better again than Terence, is a jurist, he is also a PR man. The slave was not a latecomer in antiquity. Do I need to pinpoint in passing two or three little notes that will perhaps be heard by an ear or two here, namely, that of course there are masters who have tried out knowledge, but after all why should the whole knowledge of Plato not be an unconscious philosophy? It is perhaps for that reason that it is of such profit to us. With Aristotle we pass onto a different plane. He serves a master, Alexander, who for his part undoubtedly absolutely did not know what he was doing. All the same he did it very well. Since Aristotle was at his service, he produced after all the best natural history there has ever been, and he began logic, which must mean something.

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Along what path then did the master come to know what he was doing? In accordance with the schema that I gave you earlier, along the hysterical path, by making of the slave the damned of the earth. He worked hard. He substituted for the slave surplus value, which was not something easy to find, but which is the awakening of the master to his own essence. Naturally, the master-subject could only articulate himself at the level of the signifier slave. Only this elevation of the master to knowledge permitted the realisation of more and more absolute masters than have ever been known from the beginnings of history.

To the slave, there remains class-consciousness. This means that he can just shut up. Everyone knows that I am telling the truth and that the problem of the relationships of class-consciousness to the Party are the relationships of the one to be educated to the educator. If something gives a sense to what is called Maoism, it is a taking up of these relationships between the slave and knowledge. But let us wait to see things more clearly. Up to now, the proletariat, like this philosophy of the master, the first one, had the gall to call it, had the right as you know, to abstention. You see that if people dare to say in these places of misinformation quite explicitly forged for this goal, that psychoanalysis only ignores class struggle it is not perhaps altogether certain, and it can perhaps restore its true sense to it.

You must not imagine that speaking out, as it is put, frees you in any way whatsoever, just because the master, for his part, speaks out and even a lot. But it is enough to take this phantasy at its place for the affair to be resolved; it is puerile. Do I need to say that this year I began my discourse on psychoanalysis by saying that psychoanalysis, (322) is a wordless discourse. Knowledge displaces things, not

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necessarily to the profit of the one for whom it claims to work. It claims moreover for, as I told you, knowledge is nothing like work. The only solution is to enter the defiles without losing the thread, it is to work at being the truth of knowledge.

If then, to take up at the two levels of the master and the slave what is involved in these three terms, I rewrite here S_1, S_2, **o**, sufficiently commented on I think, and I remind you, at the same time as I am completing it, of what I wrote the last time under another form, what concerns this relationship of the woman to her Other enjoyment, as I articulated it earlier. The woman who becomes cause of desire is the subject of whom it must be said – re-read the Bible a little bit – who would ever say (.....?....) about this story if he had not first been offered the apple, namely, the **o**-object. That is why, the signifier at the end, this Φ, the sign of what is assuredly lacking to the woman in the affair, and that is why he must furnish it.

It is amusing that after 70 years of psychoanalysis nothing yet has been formulated about what a man is. I am speaking about *vir*, the masculine sex. What is at stake here is not the human or other nonsense about anti-humanism and all this structuralist disorder, it is a matter of what a man is. He is active, Freud tells us. In effect, there is good reason for it. He even has to make an effort not to disappear into the hole. Anyway, thanks to analysis, he now knows that he is castrated; anyway he knows it at the end, that he always was so. Now he can learn it, a modification introduced by knowledge.

As you have seen, here there is something funny, it is this kind of non-adjustment; things have been detached from the 2, we have jumped from S_1 to **o**.

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S_1	S_2	o
S_2	o	S_1
o	S_1	2

Why would this not be done 1 by 1, that first of all there would have been this S_2, o, then S_1. We ought to be able to find our bearings in what that means. I am going to say the word to you right away, especially since you should be prepared. Earlier, I showed you a passage from the master to the schoolmaster, then the S_2, wherever it is, is the mapping out of knowledge. So then it is perhaps this that is at stake in the middle line. The hysteric marks what has remained at the S_2 on top, in the first line. But in any case where the S_2 is in its place, namely knowledge, at a master's place, look, you should recognise the place of stating.

I spoke to you about the *hommelle*. Does not all of this converge towards her, the *hommelle*, the one who is at once the master and knowledge? She speaks, she utters. If you wanted to have an image of (323) her, you should go and see something, but go in at the right time, as I did. It is a detestable film called *If*, my word, God knows why. It is the English university displayed in its most seductive forms, the ones that conform to everything that, in effect, psychoanalysis was able to articulate about what is involved in a society of men, a society in the earlier sense, a society of homosexuals. There, as you will see, the *hommelle* is the rector's wife, she is a ravishing, really exemplary disgrace. But the lucky find, is the moment – I should say that it is the only stroke of genius that the author of this film had – of making her walk all alone and naked, and God knows if there are not some, among the pans of knowledge, in the kitchen, altogether sure that she is of

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being queen in her own house. While the whole little homosexual *bordel* is in the yard marching preparing for some military occasion. So then you are beginning perhaps to see what I mean. The *hommelle*, the *alma mater*, the university in other words, the place where because of having practised a certain number of intrigues around knowledge gives you a stable institution, under the crook of a spouse. There you have the true figure of the University. So then we could perhaps identify rather easily what represents the o here, the pupils, the little dears taken in charge, themselves the creation of the desires of their parents. So this is what they are asked to bring into play, the way in which they have escaped from the desires of their parents. And the bet is this S_1 that ought to be identified to this something that is happening round about called the student insurrection. It seems that it is very important for them to agree to enter into this game, by the way in which they argue about the subject of what is sold at the end, namely, a parchment, let us say, that may perhaps have some relationship with this S_1. If you do not play the game, you will have no diploma this year. There you have, my God, a little system that permits in any case an approximation of the sense of these things where people no longer find their bearings, concerning what is now happening in certain places. I am not claiming to contribute any historical key. What I am stating, is the following. It is that to refuse to, only makes sense if the question is centred around the relationships that are precisely those around to which psychoanalysis takes the question, namely, what is called the relationship of knowledge and the subject.

What are the subjecting or subjection effects of knowledge? Student have no vocation for revolution. You can believe it from someone who having entered for historical reasons into the field of the University, very precisely because with psychoanalysts there was no way of

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getting them to know anything whatsoever. So then a little hope that through the effect of reflection, the field of the University would make them reason differently. In short, a resonating drum for the drummer when he does not resonate himself, make no mistake. So then students, you understand, I have seen some throughout the years; to be a student is quite normally a servile position. And then you cannot (324) imagine that because you have spoken out in some little corner, the affair is settled. Students, in a word, continue to believe the professors about what should be thought in such and such a case about what they say. There is no doubt for students, there is an established opinion that in one or other case this is not worth much. But it is still the professor, namely, one expects from him all the same what is at the level of S_1, which is going to make of you a master on paper, a paper tiger! I have seen students who have come to me saying: "You know, So-and- So, it's scandalous, his book is copied from your seminar". That's students for you. Me, I am going to tell you, I did not even open this book, because I knew in advance that there was nothing in it but that! They came to tell me, me. But to write it, is a different affair. And that is because they were students.

Good, what in the world could have happened so that all of a sudden there was this movement of insurrection. What does a revolt mean, Sire? In order for this to become a revolution, what would be necessary? It would be necessary for the question to be attacked not at the level of tickling some professors but at the level of the relationships of the student as subject to knowledge. It is because psychoanalysis says, this point connected for a long time, every knowledge implies a subject, as a result of which there quite gently slides in as well substance, well then no, it cannot work like that. Even the *upokeimenon* can be disconnected from knowledge. A knowledge that

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the subject is unaware of, this is not a concept, as I had the sadness to read in a review of what, in a certain place, where psychoanalysis is put to the test. Naturally it is not for nothing. Psychoanalysis in such conditions would be better off not being charming and not to say that in short there is only a single Freudian concept, and to call it the unconscious, not even what I have just said, a knowledge the subject is unaware of. It is not a concept, at either of the two levels. It is a paradigm. It is starting from there that the concepts that, thank God, exist to mark out the Freudian field, and Freud produced others that, acceptable or not, are concepts, starting from this first phase of the experience, of this example which was the unconscious he discovered. The neurotic, is s(O). This means that he teaches us that the subject is always another, but that in addition, this other is not the right one. He is not the right one to know what is in question, of what causes him, the subject. So then people try as best they can to reunify this Ø in the measure of what is involved in every significant statement, namely, to rewrite it s(O), which is on the left and on the lower line of my graph. It should be stated, in other words, where one knows what one is saying. It is there that psychoanalysis stops, while what should be done, is to reconnect what is on the top left, the S, signifier of Ø.

(325) It is the same thing for the pervert who, for his part, is precisely the intact signifier of O, as I told you, and people try to reduce him to the s of the same O. Always the same thing, so that that means something. There you are. Do you believe that I am going to continue for long like that, huh? And under the pretext that today is my last class, to continue to tell you things so that at the end you will applaud, for once, because you know that after that, watch out, huh, I am off!

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The discourse that I am speaking about has no need for these sort of glorious endings. It is not a classical *oratio*. And in effect, a discourse that is like a classical oration is not liked. A gentleman, who is here the administrative director of this establishment that is privileged with respect to the university, it seems that because of this the aforesaid establishment should have some control over what happens within it. It seems that there is no question of it, since it appears that in law, after having welcomed me at the request of one of the agencies of the school, like that, in a hospitable way, he has the right to tell me, that's it! I for my part agree, I completely agree. Because first of all it is true I am only here out of hospitality, and what is more, he has very good reasons that I have known about for a long time. It is that my teaching appears to him to be exactly what it is, namely anti-university in the sense that I have just defined it. He nevertheless took a very long time to say it to me. He only told me quite recently, on the occasion of a final little telephone call that I thought I should make to him, because there had been, I think, a type of misunderstanding that I absolutely wanted to dissipate before saying to him: "Of course, there is no question that...." etc. It is very curious that at that point he let it drop, in other words he told me that that was why. "Your teaching, he told me, your teaching is very with it (*dans le vent*)". You see that, the wind.... I would have believed that I was going against the wind here, but no matter!

Good, so then that he is within his rights, I have absolutely no reason to doubt, as regards myself. As regards you, it may be something else. But that is up to you. That for six years a certain number who have had the habit of coming precisely here are being evacuated, you see that does not count! This is even very explicitly what is at stake. In this respect, you understand I have some apologies to make to you, not

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because you are being evacuated, I have nothing to do with it; I could have warned you earlier. I have a little note here that I received, intentionally, since the 19th of March. The 19th of March. It is very funny, because on the 19th of March, I did not give a seminar. I tried by every means since, because I could not be bothered. And then, as you will understand, I am not moved by the fact of speaking before you for the last time, because every time I come here, as I told you, I tell myself that perhaps finally it is going to be the last time.

So then one day when I was questioning myself, when I was (326) questioning you about this flood of people that you make up, I cannot even say that it was when I was going home, the following morning I received this little note that I am going to read to you. I did not tell you about it because I said to myself, if by chance that disturbed them, what complications there would be! For my part you understand I was once in a similar state for two years. There were people who spent their time trying to liquidate me; I allowed them to continue their little work so that my seminar should continue, I mean that I should be heard at the level where I had certain things to say. It is the same thing this year, as a result of which then I received this on the 20th of March, and it is dated the18th of March. So then there is no relationship. I even kept the envelope. I had torn it up at first, I picked it up, and it is indeed stamped 18th. As you see, trust reigns!

Dr Lacan, 5, rue de Lille – as some of you know – Paris (7e).
"*Doctor,*
"*At the request of the 6th section of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, the Ecole Normale has put at your disposal a room to give a course for more than five years.*

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"The reorganisation of studies at the Ecole, which is a consequence of the general reform of the Universities... (laughter)....and of the recent law on the orientation of third level studies, as well as the development of teaching in several disciplines, is going to make it impossible for us to lend you the salle Dussane or any other room in the Ecole...(laughter)...for your course.

"*I am giving you enough notice*...(that's true!) ...*so that you can envisage from now the transfer of your course to another establishment at the re-opening of the next academic year 1969-70".*

Me, I really like that! I really like it; all of this is correct historically, it is quite true. It was in effect here at the request of the 6th section of the *Ecole Practique des Hautes Etudes*, like that, following a transmission of personal debt that there was.....anyway there was an eminent man called Lucien Fèbvre who had, one could not say the unfortunate idea, he is not to blame for it, of dying before giving me what he had promised me, namely a place in this Ecole. Others had availed of this personal debt. The university is very feudal. That is the way it happens in..... One is indeed, as you know in the university, something like that, a liegeman. The liegeman, the *l'hommelle*, all of that holds together!

So then it is under this title, it is at the request, as they say, that I was there. Good. So then I am delighted that it should be highlighted here. I am not against, you understand, the reform (*laughter*) being the reason that is put forward. You understand, I am not a complete baby, I know well that at half past twelve on Wednesday, who wants the *salle Dussane*? Some trouble was taken to make the acoustics in this (327) room work. By the way, there are people here, I am going to

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tell you all the same what you came to hear, I found that it was worth the trouble to make a number of photocopies that I hope is sufficient for my listeners today. The people to whom I gave these documents are going to distribute them to you; I would ask you to take only one each. What is more, this will be something or other. It is the S_1 you understand. You will all be bound together by something, you will know that you were here on the 25th of June 1969. And that there is even a chance that the fact that you were here on that day bears witness to the fact that you were here for the whole year. It is a diploma! (*Applause*)

You never know, that may help us to find one another because who knows, if I disappear into the wilds and one day I come back, it will be a sign of recognition, a symbol! (*Laughter*) I may very well say one day that any person can enter a particular room for a confidential paper on the subject of the function of psychoanalysis in the political register, because you cannot imagine the degree to which we are questioning ourselves about this! It is true that fundamentally there is here a veritable question about which one day, who knows, the psychoanalyst, even the University, may have some advantage in getting some idea of! I would be rather inclined to say that if ever I was the one who was asked to put forward something about it, I would give you a rendezvous in this room (*laughter*), so that you would have a final class for this year, the one that you are not getting, in short, because I stopped earlier. I stopped in order not to give a final class. This does not amuse me. So then you have this little object in hand. There are 300 all the same, 300 evacuees!

Since that is how we are now, after all I must leave you to leave you a little time among yourselves; it would not be a bad thing; because

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when I am there, despite everything, nothing comes out. Who knows, you may well have things to say to one another. But in any case one would scarcely believe that....your habits of smoking, for example, you know well, you see that plays a role, all of that! And then there are the people from administration also, because you know, in an affair like that, no one is missing. The admin staff said that I was receiving a strange group of people here (*laughter*) as such! It even appears that they had to repair the seats. Something happened! Jean-Jacques Lebel, you were not the one who was here with a band-saw? From time to time I heard a little noise, you must have been sawing the arms of the chairs!

One learns something every day! You are going to be able to fan yourself with that thing when I say goodbye to you in a moment! The smell on it will be substituted for the smoke.

What would be good, you see, is that you should give to this the only fate that it should really have worthy of what it is, a kind of signifier. You are going to find a sense for this word, *la Flacelière*. I for my part put that in the feminine like that; I would not say that this is a penchant but anyway it sounds rather feminine, the *cordelière*, or the *flatulencière*! What if this got into common usage, "do you take me for a *flacelière*? (*Laughter*).

That may be of use to you given the way things are happening! Do not pull too hard on the *flacelière*! I will leave you to find that. Me for my part I always taught that it is the signifiers that created the signifieds. That makes me dream a little. I realised a lot of things, in particular the complete ignorance of a certain use of paper that obviously could only happen when people had paper. Before that this was not done

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with a parchment or with a papyrus! We do not know at what date, I telephone the mother houses as I might call them, nobody knows, when this use of paper began; in a flash, because it is a question that I had posed myself only in connection with chapter XIII of Gargantua. Someone could perhaps inform me about the subject. Anyway do not use it for that; I did not give you a package, I only gave you one each.

My dear friends, at this point I will leave you. I point out to you that these papers are signed, signed, actually I was not going to put my signature on the back of this paper, but I put the date. On 191 samples, this date is from my hand. On the 150 others, it is from the hand of my faithful secretary, Gloria, who was kind enough to substitute herself for me in that – you know it gives you a cramp. To write 25.6.69 151 times may well be very graphic, all the same I took the trouble.

On this, if you have some reflections to make to one another or some message to send to me, I will leave you in the hands of the faithful Gloria who is going to collect messages on this occasion. Anybody who would like to give an opinion in any way that seems opportune to him, has a good 20 minutes to do it.

As for me I will say adieu and thank you for your fidelity. (*Lively applause).*

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THE SEMINAR OF
JACQUES LACAN

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller

The Other Side of Psychoanalysis

BOOK XVII

TRANSLATED WITH NOTES BY
Russell Grigg

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THE SEMINAR OF
JACQUES LACAN

BOOK XVII

Translator's Note

This is a translation of the seminar that Jacques Lacan delivered at the Law Faculty, Place du Panthéon, in 1969–70, in the unsettled aftermath of the eventful year of 1968. The original text is the version of the seminar edited by Jacques-Alain Miller and published by Éditions du Seuil.

Quite apart from the usual challenges facing any translator of Lacan into English, this seminar presents special difficulties of its own. Certain of them call for special comment.

l'envers

Beginning with the title itself, *l'envers*, translated here as "the other side," also carries the meaning of "back," "verso," "lining," "underside," "flip-side," "underneath," "bad side"—connotations of the unseen, even the obscene, which "the other side" in English only barely suggests.

lathouse

What is striking about this made-up word, pronounced LA-TOOZE, is its suffix, *-ouse*, which can be used to turn ordinary words into slang and informal language. Thus, *une bague*, a ring, becomes *une baguouse*; *la (prison) centrale* becomes *la centrouse*; and so on. With "lathouse" Lacan is obviously having a bit of fun with his object *a*.

astudé

This neologism, translated as "astudied," attempts to work the "*a*" of "object *a*" into the term " student" or "studied" to convey something of the place the student occupies in the university discourse.

alèthosphère

This neologism, constructed as it is from the Greek words for "truth" and for "ball," "globe," or "sphere," is plain enough for the English reader. Lacan introduces it to refer to the means by which something can be recorded at a distance, whether in the form of light or sound waves. The alethosphere obviously extends beyond the limits of the earth's atmosphere.

In other cases where the translation is open to question, potentially misleading, or has struck me as inadequate to the original French, I have included the original term in brackets; the reader can at least judge the adequacy of this English reflection to its French original.

I would like to thank Kerry Murphy and Justin Clemens for working their way through drafts, while Bruce Fink's detailed comments have also improved the quality of the translation.

Russell Grigg
Geelong, Australia

I

9*

Production of the four discourses

DISCOURSE WITHOUT SPEECH

LOGI PREINTERPRET

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND *JOUISSANCE*

THE SLAVE ROBBED OF HIS KNOWLEDGE

THE DESIRE TO KNOW

Allow me once again, my dear friends, to raise the question of this audience which has assisted me, most notably today, by following me in what for some of you is the third of my relocations.[1]

Before I do this, the least I can do is spell out how I have come to be here in order to thank those I owe thanks to. It is through an offer that the Faculté de droit has kindly made to several of my colleagues from the [École des] Hautes Études with whom they have kindly included me. I would like to thank, and I believe it is with your endorsement, the Faculté de droit, and in particular its senior Faculty, most notably the Dean.

As the notice may have informed you, I will only be speaking here—not that this place was not offered to me every Wednesday—the second and third Wednesdays of each month, thereby freeing me, no doubt, for other duties the other Wednesdays. And in particular, I believe I can announce that the first Wednesday of each month, at least for some of them, that is, every second month, and therefore the first Wednesday of December, February, April, and June, I will be going to Vincennes to give, not my seminar as was incorrectly announced, but what in contrast I have taken care to call, so as to stress that they are different, "Four Impromptus," to which I have given a humorous title that you can read in the [university] grounds where the poster has already been put up.

Since, as you can see, it pleases me to leave certain details up in the air, I shall take immediate advantage of this to air a scruple that has stayed with me following the welcome that I gave a certain person, because on reflec- 10

* The original French pagination is included in the margins to facilitate comparison with the French text.

[1] This was the first year of Lacan's seminar at the Faculté de droit, after having been first held at Sainte-Anne Hospital and then, under the patronage of the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, at the École normale supérieure.

tion it was not very friendly—not that I wanted it that way, but in fact that was how it turned out.

One day somebody who is perhaps here, and will no doubt not make herself known, accosted me in the street just as I was getting into a taxi. She pulled over on her scooter and said to me, "Are you Dr. Lacan?"

"Yes, I am," I said to her. "Why?"

"Are you holding your seminar again?"

"Yes, of course, soon."

"Where?"

And then, no doubt I had my reasons for this, and I ask her to take my word for it, I answered, "You'll see."

She then took off on her little scooter with so much throttle that I was left both nonplussed and full of remorse. It's my remorse that I want to convey to her today by apologizing to her, if she is here, in the hope that she will forgive me.

In fact, this is surely an opportunity to point out that it's never, in any way whatever, by another person's excesses that one turns out, in appearance at least, to be overwhelmed. It is always because their excesses happen to coincide with your own. It was because I was already at this point, in a certain state that represented an excessive preoccupation, that I no doubt expressed myself as I did, in a way I very quickly found inappropriate.

With that, let's go into what my contribution for this year is going to be about.

1

I thought I should call this seminar "Psychoanalysis upside down" [*La Psychanalyse à l'envers*].

Don't get the idea that this title owes anything to the current situation that thinks it is in the process of turning a number of places upside down. Let me give just the following as proof of this. In a text published in 1966—one of those introductions that I wrote at the time of the collection of my *Écrits*, and which punctuate it—a text called "De nos antécédents," "On My Antecedents," on page 68, I describe my discourse as being about, I say,
11 a revival of the Freudian project upside down. It's thus written down well before the events—*a revival from the other direction* [*reprise par l'envers*].

What does that mean? Last year I managed, with much perseverance, to ascertain what discourse is about, as a necessary structure that goes well beyond speech, which is always more or less occasional. What I prefer, I said, and I even wrote it up on the board one day, is a *discourse without speech*.

The fact is that, in truth, discourse can clearly subsist without words. It subsists in certain fundamental relations which would literally not be able to be maintained without language. Through the instrument of language a number of stable relations are established, inside which something that is much larger and goes much further than actual utterances [*énonciations*] can, of course, be inscribed. There is no need of the latter for our conduct, possibly for our acts, to be inscribed within the framework of certain primordial statements. If this were not so, what would we make of what we keep rediscovering in our experience, and especially in our psychoanalytic experience—I mention analytic experience in this connection only because it gives this a precise designation—what would we make of what keeps appearing in the guise of the superego?

There are structures—we cannot describe them in any other way—for characterizing what can be extracted from this "in the form of," one particular usage of which I took the liberty of stressing last year—namely, what happens by virtue of a fundamental relation, the one I define as the relation of one signifier to another. And from this there results the emergence of what we call the subject—via the signifier which, as it happens, here functions as representing this subject with respect to another signifier.

How is this fundamental form to be situated? Without any further ado we are, if you will, going to write this form in a new way this year. Last year I wrote it as the exteriority of the signifier S_1—the one that is the point of departure for the definition of discourse that we will emphasize at this first step—with respect to a circle marked with the sign A, that is, the field of the big Other. But, simplifying, we will take S_1 and the battery of signifiers, which we will refer to as the sign S_2. I am talking about those signifiers that are already there, whereas at the point of origin at which we place ourselves in order to establish what discourse is about, discourse thought of as the status of the statement [*l'énoncé*], S_1 is the one to be seen as intervening. It intervenes in a signifying battery that we have no right, ever, to take as dispersed, 12
as not already forming a network of what is called knowledge [*savoir*].

Knowledge initially arises at the moment at which S_1 comes to represent something, through its intervention in the field defined, at the point we have come to, as an already structured field of knowledge. And the subject is its supposition, its *hypokeimenon*, insofar as the subject represents the specific trait of being distinguished from the living individual. The latter is certainly its locus, where the subject leaves its mark, but it isn't of the same order as what is brought in by the subject, by virtue of the status of knowledge.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} S_1 & \rightarrow & S_2 \\ \$ & & a \end{array}$$

No doubt it's around this word "knowledge" that there is a point of ambiguity to which, we have to stress this today, I have already rendered your ears sensitive by means of several paths, tracks, moments of enlightenment, or flashes of light.

Shall I mention it for those of you who took note of it, for whom it is still fresh in your mind? Last year I had occasion to call the Other's *jouissance* "knowledge."

A strange business. To be honest, this formulation had never been proffered before. It's not new, since even last year I was able to make it sufficiently plausible for you, I could make the claim without raising any particular protests. This is something I announced I would return to this year.

Let me first of all finish what began with two legs, then had three. Let's give it its fourth.

The latter is something I have been emphasizing for quite a while, and last year especially, since for quite some time this was the purpose of the seminar—"*D'un Autre à l'autre*," "*From an Other to the other*," I called it. This other, this little other, with its famous "the," was what at this level, which is the level of algebra, of signifying structure, we designate as the object *a*.

At this level of signifying structure we have only to learn the way it operates. Thus we are at liberty to see what happens when we write the things out and give the entire system a quarter turn.

13 I have been speaking about this notorious quarter turn for long enough, and on different occasions—in particular, ever since the appearance of what I wrote under the title "Kant with Sade"—for people to think that perhaps one day it would be seen that this isn't limited to what the so-called Schema Z does, and that there are other reasons for this quarter turn than some pure accident of imaginary representation.

$$\frac{\$}{a} \rightarrow \frac{S_1}{S_2}$$

Here you have an example. If it seems justified to say that the chain, the sequence of letters of this algebra, must not be disturbed, then by performing this operation of a quarter turn we will obtain four structures, and no more, the first of which in some way gives you the starting point.

It is a simple matter to quickly reproduce the remaining three on paper.

I am only saying this to specify an arrangement that has absolutely not been imposed in any way—as they say, from a certain point of view, nothing has been abstracted from any reality. On the contrary it's already inscribed in what functions as this reality I was speaking about before, the reality of a discourse that is already in the world and that underpins it, at

least the one we are familiar with. Not only is it already inscribed in it, but it is one of its arches.

Of course, the form of letters in which we inscribe this symbolic chain is of no great importance, provided they are distinct—this is enough for some constant relations to become clear. As is the case with this formula.

What does it say? It locates a moment. What my discourse subsequently develops here will tell us what the appropriate meaning to give this moment is. It says that it is at the very instant at which S_1 intervenes in the already constituted field of the other signifiers, insofar as they are already articulated with one another as such, that, by intervening in another system, this $, which I have called the subject as divided, emerges. Its entire status, in the strongest sense of this term, is to be reconsidered this year.

Finally, we have always stressed that something defined as a loss emerges from this trajectory. This is what the letter to be read as object *a* designates.

We have not left undesignated the point from which we extract this function of the lost object. It's from Freud's discourse about the specific sense that repetition has in the speaking being. Indeed, repetition is not about just any old effect of memory in the biological sense. Repetition bears a certain relationship to what is the limit of this knowledge, and which we call *jouissance*. 14

This is why it's a logical articulation that is at stake in the formulation that knowledge is the Other's *jouissance*—the Other's, of course, insofar as—since there is no Other—the intervention of the signifier makes the Other emerge as a field.

You will tell me no doubt that here, in short, we are still going around in circles—the signifier, the Other, knowledge, the signifier, the Other, knowledge, and so on. But this is where the term *jouissance* enables us to show the apparatus's point of insertion. In doing so, we are no doubt leaving behind what knowledge authentically is, what is recognizable as knowledge, and referring to the limits, to the field of these limits as such, the field that Freud's words dare to confront.

What is the upshot of all that these words articulate? Not knowledge, but confusion. Well then, from this very confusion we have to draw some lessons, since it is a question of limits and of leaving the system. Leaving it by virtue of what?—by virtue of a thirst for meaning, as if the system needed it. The system doesn't need it. But we feeble beings, as we will keep on discovering for ourselves at every turning point over the course of this year, we need meaning. Alright then, here's one.

It's perhaps not the right one. But then, it is certain that we will find that there are many of these "It's perhaps not the right one"—the insistence of which is for us a good indication of the dimension of truth.

Notice the ambiguity that the word "Trieb" has taken on in psychoana-

lytic stupidity, instead of people striving to grasp how this category is to be unpacked. The category is not without ancestry, I mean the word is not without a usage already, one that goes back a long way, as far back as Kant, but what it is useful for in analytic discourse would merit our not rushing in and translating it as "instinct." But, after all, these slippages do not occur for no reason. And although for a long time I have been emphasizing the aberrant character of this translation, we are nevertheless within our rights to benefit from it. Not so as to enshrine the notion of instinct, to be sure,
15 and above all not in this respect, but to remind you what it is in Freud's discourse that renders it a habitable notion—and simply to try and make this discourse inhabit it in a different way.

Popularly, the idea of instinct is indeed the idea of knowledge—knowledge such that we are unable to say what it means, but it is supposed to result, and not without good reason, in the fact that life subsists. On the other hand, if we are to give any sense to what Freud says about the pleasure principle as essential to the functioning of life, being the principle whereby tension is maintained at its lowest level, aren't we already stating what, as his subsequent discourse shows, was forced upon him? Namely, the death drive.

What forced this notion upon him was the development of an experience, analytic experience, insofar as it has the structure of discourse. For don't forget that one does not invent the death drive by considering people's behavior.

We have the death drive here. We have it here, where something is taking place between you and what I am saying.

2

I said, "What I am saying." I am not talking about what I am. What would be the use, since, in short, one can see this, owing to your presence? It's not that your presence speaks in my favor. It does speak sometimes and, usually, in my place.

Be that as it may, what justifies me in saying something here is what I would call the essence of this manifestation that the diverse and successive audiences I have attracted according to the locations in which I have spoken have been.

I was particularly keen to tack the following remark on somewhere, because, as I am in a new location, today seemed to me to be the day. The location has always had an impact upon the style of what I am calling this manifestation, and I do not want to pass up the opportunity to say that it bears a relation to the usual meaning of the term "interpretation." What I

said by, for, and in your presence is at each of these moments, if we define them by their geographical locations, always already interpreted.

This will have to take its place in the little rotating quadrupeds I have begun to put to use today, and I will come back to it. But so as not to leave 16
you completely in the dark, I will point something out to you straight away.

If I had to interpret what I said at Sainte-Anne Hospital between 1953 and 1963, I mean pin down its interpretation—interpretation in a sense contrary to analytic interpretation, which makes you feel how much analytic interpretation itself goes against the grain of the ordinary meaning of the term—I would say that what was the loudest chord, the chord that really resonated, was having fun.

The most exemplary character in this audience, which was a medical one obviously—but then, some of the participants were not doctors—was the person who punctuated my discourse with a sort of continuous stream of jokes. This is what I will take as most characteristic of what over a period of ten years was the essence of my manifestation. Further proof of this is that things only started to turn sour when I dedicated a term to the analysis of jokes.[2]

That's a big aside, and I can't go on in this direction for very long, but I must add what it was that characterized interpretation at the place where you left me last time, the École normale supérieure.

E. N. S.—it's quite magnificent in initials. It revolves around being [*l'étant*]. One must always know how to benefit from literal equivocations, above all when they are the first three letters of the word *enseigner*, "to teach." As it happens, it was in rue d'Ulm that it was noticed that what I was saying was a teaching.

Before that, it hadn't been at all obvious. It was not even permitted. The professors, and especially the doctors, were very worried. The fact that it wasn't at all medical left serious doubts whether it deserved to be called teaching, right to the day when they saw these young blokes from the *Cahiers pour l'analyse* come along, who were trained in this part of the world where—as I had said a long time before, precisely at the time of the jokes—one of the effects of training is that one knows nothing but teaches it beautifully. The fact that that was how they interpreted what I was saying—I am speaking today of a different interpretation from analytic interpretation—does indeed make sense.

Naturally, no one knows what will happen here. I don't know whether law students will come, but actually, it would be wonderful for interpreta- 17
tion. This will probably be by far the most important moment of the three, since this year we are tackling psychoanalysis from the other side, and per-

[2] See *Le Séminaire, Livre V, Les formations de l'inconscient, 1957–1958* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1998).

haps, precisely, giving it its status, in what is called the juridical sense of the term. This, in any case, has surely always been concerned with the structure of discourse, and to the nth degree. If this isn't what law is, if we cannot grasp how discourse structures the real world here, then where can we? This is why we are no worse off here than anywhere else.

It is therefore not simply for reasons of convenience that I seized this opportunity. But it is also what causes you the least inconvenience in your travels, at least for those who were accustomed to the other side.[3] I am not so sure that, for parking, here is very convenient, but then, for that, you still have rue d'Ulm all the same.

3

Let's pick up the thread again.

We had got to the point of situating our instinct and our knowledge, in sum, on the basis of what Bichat defines as life. "Life," he says, and this is the most profound definition, it is not at all trite if you look at it closely, "is the totality of forces that resist death."[4]

Read what Freud says about life's resistance to the decline into Nirvana, as the death drive was otherwise described at the time he introduced it. No doubt, at the heart of analytic experience, which is an experience of discourse, he gives thought to this decline toward a return to the inanimate. Freud goes that far. But what, he says, makes for the subsistence of this bubble—really, this image forces itself upon you when you listen to these pages—is the fact that life only ever returns there via paths that are always the same, ones it has previously traced. What is this, if not the true sense given to what we find in the notion of instinct, which is that it implies knowledge?

This track, this pathway, is familiar to us. It's ancestral knowledge. And what is this knowledge, if we don't forget that Freud introduces what he himself calls "beyond the pleasure principle," the pleasure principle itself not being overturned thereby? Knowledge is what brings life to a halt at a certain limit on the path to *jouissance*. For the path toward death—this is
18 what is at issue, it's a discourse about masochism—the path toward death is nothing other than what is called *jouissance*.

[3] The École normale supérieure is located in the rue d'Ulm, which runs off the Place du Panthéon and is not far from the new location of Lacan's seminar at the Faculté de droit.

[4] Marie François Xavier Bichat (1771–1802), French doctor, anatomist, and physiologist. See his *Physiological Researches on Life and Death* (1827; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1977).

The relationship between knowledge and *jouissance* is a primitive one, and it is where what emerges with the appearance of the apparatus of the signifier comes to be inserted. It is henceforth conceivable that we are binding up the function of this emergence of the signifier.

"That will do!" I hear you say. "Do we really need to explain everything? And, why not, the origins of language?" We all know that to structure knowledge correctly one needs to abandon the question of origins. What we are doing, in spelling this out, is superfluous with respect to what we have to develop this year, which is situated at the level of structures. It is a futile search for meaning. But, as I have already said, let's take note of what we are.

I will go on, then. At the intersection of a *jouissance*—and not just any *jouissance*, it must no doubt remain opaque—at the intersection of a *jouissance* that is privileged above all others—not because it is sexual *jouissance*, since what this *jouissance* designates by being at this intersection is the loss of sexual *jouissance*, castration—in relation to this meeting point with sexual *jouissance* there emerges, in the Freudian fable of repetition, the engendering of something radical that gives body to a schema that is, literally, articulated. S_1, having emerged at the first moment, is repeated with respect to S_2. The subject emerges from this entry into a relation, the subject that something, a certain loss, represents. And it is worth having made this effort in the direction of meaning in order to comprehend the ambiguity.

It was not for nothing that last year I called "surplus *jouissance*" this same object that I had moreover described as the one that the entire dialectic of frustration in analysis is organized around. This means that the loss of the object is also the gap, a hole opened up to something, and we don't know whether or not this something is the representation of the lack in *jouissance*, which is situated by means of the knowledge process, insofar as it appears in a completely different light as a result of being, from that point on, knowledge scanded by the signifier. Is it even the same?

The relationship to *jouissance* is suddenly made to appear in a different light by this still virtual function called the function of desire. Moreover this is why I'm describing what appears here as "surplus *jouissance*" and not forcing anything or committing any transgression.

I beg you to bite your tongue a bit over all this nonsense. What analysis shows, if it shows anything at all—I invoke here those whose soul is a little bit different from the one of which one could say, as Barrès says of the cadaver, that it talks nonsense—is very precisely the fact that we don't ever transgress.[5] Sneaking around is not transgressing. Seeing a door half-open is not the same as going through it. We shall have the occasion to come back

19

[5] Maurice Barrès (1862–1923), French writer and conservative political figure of French nationalism.

to what I am introducing now—there is no transgression here, but rather an irruption, a falling into the field, of something not unlike *jouissance*—a surplus.

But perhaps even that has to be paid for. That is why I told you last year that in Marx the *a*, which is here, is recognized as functioning at the level that is articulated—on the basis of analytic discourse, not any of the others—as surplus *jouissance*. Here you have what Marx discovered as what actually happens at the level of surplus value.

Of course, it wasn't Marx who invented surplus value. It's just that prior to him nobody knew what its place was. It has the same ambiguous place as the one I have just mentioned, that of excess work, of surplus work. "What does it pay in?" he says. "It pays in *jouissance*, precisely, and this has to go somewhere."

What's disturbing is that if one pays in *jouissance*, then one has got it, and then, once one has got it it is very urgent that one squander it. If one does not squander it, there will be all sorts of consequences.

Let's leave the thing up in the air for the moment.

4

What am I up to? I am beginning to get you to acknowledge, simply through locating it, that this four-footed apparatus, with its four positions, can be used to define four radical discourses.

It's no accident that I presented this form to you as the first. There is no reason why I could not have begun with any of the others, with the second for instance. But it is a fact, determined by historical reasons, that this initial form—the one that we express by starting with this signifier that represents a subject with respect to another signifier—has a very special
20 importance, insofar as, in what I am going to state this year, it will be singled out as being, of the four, the one that articulates the master's discourse.

The master's discourse. I don't see any point in recounting its historical importance, given that you are, after all, on the whole recruited through this sieve called the university, and that, as a consequence, you are not unaware that it's all philosophy ever talks about. Even before it began talking about this alone, that is before it called it by its name—at least in Hegel it stands out, and is quite specially illustrated by him—it was already apparent that at the level of the master's discourse something appeared which is of interest to us concerning discourse, irrespective of its ambiguity, and which is called philosophy.

I do not know how far I will be able to go with what I want to point out to you today, since we mustn't delay if we want to go over the four discourses in question.

What are the others called? I will tell you straight away, why not?—even if only so as to whet your appetite.

That one, the second on the blackboard, is the hysteric's discourse. It's not obvious straightaway, but I will explain it to you.

And then, the other two. One is the analyst's discourse. The other. . . . No, definitely not, I won't tell you what it is. Saying it just like that today would create too many misunderstandings. You will see—it's a discourse that is highly relevant today.

Coming back to the first one, then, I must ground why it is that the present algebraic formula is described in this way, as the one that gives the structure of the master's discourse.

S_1 is, to say it briefly, the signifier, the signifier function, that the essence of the master relies upon. From a different angle you may perhaps recall what I emphasized several times last year—that the slave's own field is knowledge, S_2. Reading the testimonies we have about life in Antiquity, in any case discourse about this life—read Aristotle's *Politics* on this—what I am claiming about the slave as being characterized as the one who is the support of knowledge is not in doubt.

In Antiquity this was not simply a class, as with our modern slave, it was a function inscribed in the family. The slave Aristotle speaks of is just as much a part of the family as he is a part of the State, and even more a part of the family than a part of the State. This is because he is the one who has the know-how [*savoir-faire*]. Before we can know whether the knowledge is known, whether a subject can be founded on the perspective of a knowledge that is totally transparent in itself, it is important to know how to mop up the register of what, at its origins, know-how is. 21

Now, what is it that happens right before our very eyes, which gives meaning, an initial meaning—as you will see, there are other meanings—to philosophy? Fortunately we have traces of this thanks to Plato, and it is quite essential to remember this so as to put what is at issue in its place and, after all, if anything in what is bothering us has any sense, it can only come from putting things in their place. What does philosophy designate over its entire evolution? It's this—theft, abduction, stealing slavery of its knowledge, through the maneuvers of the master.

To see this it is enough to read Plato's dialogues from time to time, and, as only God knows, for the past sixteen years I have been making an effort to get those who listen to me to do it.

I will begin by distinguishing what on this occasion I will call the two aspects of knowledge, the articulated aspect and this know-how that is so

akin to animal knowledge, but which in the slave is not totally devoid of the apparatus that transforms it into one of the most articulated networks of language. The point is that this, the second layer, the articulated apparatus, can be transmitted, which means it can be transmitted from the slave's pocket to the master's—assuming they had pockets in those days.

It is here that you have the entire effort to isolate what is called *episteme*. It's a funny word, I don't know whether you have ever given it much thought—"putting oneself in the right position," in short it is the same word as *Verstehen*. It is all about finding the position that makes it possible for knowledge to become the master's knowledge. The entire function of the *episteme* insofar as it is specified as transmissible knowledge—see Plato's dialogues—is always borrowed from the techniques of craftsmen, that is to say of serfs. It is a matter of extracting the essence of this knowledge in order for it to become the master's knowledge.

And then, naturally, this is augmented by a little backlash, which is absolutely what is called a lapsus, a return of the repressed. But so says someone or other, Karl Marx or someone.

22 Refer to the *Meno*, where it is a question of the square root of 2 and its incommensurable. There's someone who says, "Hey, look, get the slave to come over, that little fellow, can't you see, he knows." They ask him questions, master's questions, of course, and the slave naturally answers what the questions already dictate as their response. You find here a form of ridicule. It's a way of scoffing at the character who is being taken apart here. It is shown that the serious business, the aim, is to make it known that the slave knows, but by acknowledging it only in this derisory way, what is hidden is that it is only a matter of robbing the slave of his function at the level of knowledge.

To give what I have just said its sense one has to see, and we will take this step next time, how the slave's position is articulated with respect to *jouissance*. I already began to say this last year, in the form of a colorful hint. What people usually say is that *jouissance* is the privilege of the master. What is interesting on the contrary, as everyone knows, is what belies this within it.

In short, it's the master's status that is at stake here. By way of introduction today I only wanted to tell you how profoundly interesting this status is to us, the utterance of which is worth keeping for a future step. It is interesting to us when what is being unveiled and, at the same time, reduced to a corner of the landscape is the function of philosophy. Given the space, briefer this year than others, that I have allowed myself, I will no doubt be unable to develop it. It is of no importance, perhaps someone else will take up this theme and do what he will with it. Philosophy in its historical function is this extraction, I would almost say this betrayal, of the slave's knowledge, in order to obtain its transmutation into the master's knowledge.

Does this mean that what we have seen emerge as the science that dominates us is the fruit of this operation? Here again, rather than having to rush in, we can observe that on the contrary it's nothing of the kind. This wisdom, this *episteme*, created with every recourse to every dichotomy, led only to knowledge that can be designated by the term that Aristotle himself used to characterize the master's knowledge—theoretical knowledge. Not in the weak sense that we give this word, but in the emphatic sense that the word "theoria" has in Aristotle. A singular mistake. I will come back to this, since for my discourse this is the crucial point, the pivotal point—it was only when, by a movement of renunciation of this wrongly acquired knowledge, so to speak, someone, for the first time as such, extracted the function of the subject from the strict relationship between S_1 and S_2—I named Descartes, whose work I believe I am able to spell out, not without agreement with at least a significant number of those who have discussed it—that science was born. 23

It is well to distinguish between the time at which this turn emerged in the attempt to pass knowledge from the slave to the master, and the time it recommenced, which is motivated only by a certain way of raising, within the structure, all possible functions of the statement insofar as the articulation of the signifier alone supports it. There you already have one small example of the insight that the type of work I am proposing this year may bring you. Don't think it stops there.

What I have been proposing here presents, as soon as one shows it, at least this characteristic of uncovering the obvious—who can deny that philosophy has ever been anything other than a fascinating enterprise for the master's benefit? At the other extreme we have Hegel's discourse, with its outrageous absolute knowledge, as it's called. What can this absolute knowledge possibly mean, if we begin with the definition that I took the liberty of recalling as being a foundational one for our way of proceeding concerning knowledge?

This is perhaps where we will start next time. It will at least be one of our points of departure, for there is another, which is no less important, and which is quite particularly salubrious because of the overwhelmingly outrageous things one hears from psychoanalysts concerning the desire for knowledge.

If there is one thing that psychoanalysis should force us to maintain obstinately, it's that the desire for knowledge bears no relation to knowledge—unless, of course, we wheel out the lubricious word "transgression." A radical distinction, which has far-reaching consequences from the point of view of pedagogy—the desire to know is not what leads to knowledge. What leads to knowledge is—allow me to justify this in the more or less long term—the hysteric's discourse.

There is as a matter of fact a question to be asked. Does the master who brings about this operation of the displacing, the conveyancing, of the slave's knowledge want to know? Does he have the desire to know? A real
24 master, as in general we used to see until a recent era, and this is seen less and less, doesn't desire to know anything at all—he desires that things work. And why would he want to know? There are more amusing things than that. How did the philosopher manage to inspire the master with the desire to know? I will leave you on this note. It's a bit provocative. If there are any of you who work this out between now and next time, let me know.

26 November 1969

Supplement

Following session: Agitation

The people who, for various reasons, love me warned me that agitation was in the air.

They are not sufficiently aware that for me, too, agitation is in the air. And I do so for a reason that is of supreme interest to me—for what it proves or disproves concerning this level at which I am situating the structure of a discourse.

I have just said "I."

It's obviously because I am viewing the discourse in question from somewhere else. I am viewing it from a place in which I am situated by another discourse, of which I am the effect—so that, in the present case, saying "This discourse situates *me*" is the same as saying "This discourse is situated."

At the level of this discourse it's not so as to be able to blow my own trumpet, to give a good course, as we say, which is everything. It doesn't count for nothing, to be sure, and no one can tell me that, up till now, there has been any lack of opportunity for taking notes.

25 To be honest, I cannot complain of ever having been disturbed.

But I do not think that agitating is about disturbing classes. It would be a pity if I had to teach this to the agitators themselves.

To be honest, as essential in fact as whether or not I speak without being disturbed is what my listeners are steeped in. In effect, what I am speaking about is a signal that this discourse that is not my own, but the one of which I am—to restrict myself to this provisional term—the effect, is swinging into action.

I went to Vincennes last week where people might have thought that what took place wasn't to my taste. Everyone agreed in fact that my going, solely by virtue of my being a prominent person, would be the occasion for obstruction. Does anyone believe that this would have made any sort of impression on me? Need I say that I was fully aware of what I was to encounter there? And what sort of great novelty, in the context, do people expect this incident to have constituted for me when such obstruction has nothing new about it?

If we go right back to the start, when I began my discourse at Sainte-Anne, what I am calling "what my listeners are steeped in" was at that time constituted by a little survey the frequency of which I couldn't say, but it may well have been monthly then quarterly. It was an anxious investigation they were carrying out on my listeners, in the very milieu where I was their guest, on the subject of knowing how well my teaching fulfilled the requirements of what constitutes medical teaching. It might have been the case—horror of horrors—that my teaching did not possess the characteristics of medical teaching.

On the subject that I chose to begin with, namely, good heavens, the critique of Freud, what could the characteristics of medical teaching have possibly been? Did it only have to consist in some act of reference—I didn't say "reverence"—to terms considered to be sacred because they are themselves located right in the center, at the heart, of medical teaching? Should I have indicated, in order for this teaching to be medical, that perhaps one day endocrinal causes will be found for neurosis? Or just simply recalled that there is one of these little elements that we cannot fail to take account of, and that we call the constitutional factor? That would have been medical.

In short, as I did not bother to waste time on these genuflections the investigations stopped and they were convinced that I had placed them in the unfortunate position of being subjected, at the heart of a place that is 26
essentially medical, to a teaching that wasn't.

It was then that I was made aware, by people through whom, since they were in analysis with me, one was, unfortunately, only too sure that the message regarding what one thought of my public would necessarily get to me.

I mention this because in the audience that you are today I can discern a bit better than last time the seams, the components, I can situate the faces better. There are many familiar faces here, but I am delighted by this, as I am also delighted with the relative decrease in numbers I can observe last time, it was a bit like a crowded Metro in here.

A fair few of you were already part of that very old audience before following me to that place from which I had to emigrate, as it turned out, and I can say that my audience at Sainte-Anne really did consist then of those

who are currently the pillars of the École freudienne—I do not mean by that that these are not people you can count on. Well then, good heavens, one had the impression, it seems, merely on the basis of watching them wander about before they went in to listen to me at half-past twelve, as usual, that they showed all sorts of signs of drug addiction and homosexuality. It was palpable. It was, obviously, what the style, the general form, and the bearing of these itinerants reflected.

This is so that you know that it's no recent thing that, because of its composition, my audience gives rise to—what? this is precisely what I am wondering about—a certain discomfort. We experienced this in a place that organized a venue for us, and, to be sure, I am grateful to those who mentioned the fact that it lasted as long as it did. Nevertheless, don't imagine that characterizing my audience as troublemakers began at these incidental places.

It was students at the École normale, the Normalian elements, these little princes of the university who know quite well that you don't have to know something in order to teach it, who discovered that very curious things were happening at my seminar. It so happened over there that when you smoked—in fact, for this reason I made myself the echo, every now and
27 then, of the fact that you might refrain from doing so—something happened that I have never seen anywhere, which is that the smoke went through the ceiling of the room, so that the elegant Normalians who were apparently in the library space above could no longer breathe.

These are extraordinary things that can obviously only occur because of the audience that you are. It is the importance of this that I am showing you.

[Arrival of a building supervisor.]

I was calling this agitation at Vincennes into question, you really see it, perfectly. This dear man is very touching.

All this takes place in a zone that nevertheless does not lose its meaning.

[The supervisor turns off the lights and retracts the blackboard.]

However amusing these jokes about higher offices, I declare the session over.

10 December 1969

AXES OF THE ANALYTIC SUBVERSION

II

31

The master and the hysteric

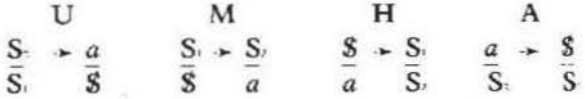
KNOWLEDGE THAT IS NOT KNOWN

THE HYSTERIZATION OF DISCOURSE

KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH

THE HALF-SAID

ENIGMA, CITATION, INTERPRETATION



These four formulas are useful to have here as a reference.

Those of you present at my first seminar heard my reminder of the formula that the signifier, as distinct from the sign, is what represents a subject for another signifier. Since there is no suggestion that the other signifier knows anything about the matter, it is clear that it is not a question of a representation but of a representative.

As a consequence, on that same occasion, I thought I would use it to illustrate what I have called the master's discourse.

1

If the master's discourse can be seen as reduced to a single signifier, this implies that it represents something. Calling it "something" is already saying too much. It represents *x*, which is precisely what is there to be clarified in the matter.

In effect, there is no indication of how the master might impose his will. That consent is necessary is not in doubt, and the fact that in this instance Hegel can do no more than refer to death as the signifier of the absolute 32
master, is, on this occasion, a sign—a sign that nothing is resolved by this pseudo-origin. In fact, for it to continue it would only be demonstrated that the master is the master if he were to be resuscitated, that is, if he had actually been put to the test. As for the slave, it's the same thing—he has, precisely, declined to confront it.

The enigma of the master's function does not therefore reveal itself immediately. I will point out, because it is already on our path—a path that we do not have to pretend we have discovered, and which is not that of the theory of the unconscious—that it is not at all self-evident that all knowledge, by virtue of being knowledge, is known as knowledge.[1]

What we discover in even the slightest bit of psychoanalytic experience is, indeed, of the order of knowledge [*savoir*], S_1, and not of acquaintance [*connaissance*] or representation. It is very precisely a question of something that links one signifier, S_1, to another signifier, S_2, in a relationship of reason.

These are fairly pulverizing terms, I would say, if in using this metaphor I can get you to see the connotation that should be placed, on this occasion, on the term "knowledge."

Nevertheless, the foundation of what is known, of what is quietly articulated as the little master, as the ego, as he who knows a bit about it, resides in such a relation as this and, precisely, insofar as it is not known.

All the same I do notice from time to time that this breaks down. Here we have the eruption of the entire phase of lapses and stumblings in which the unconscious is revealed. But it is much better and goes much further than in the light of analytic experience.

We allow ourselves to read a biography when we have the means to do so, when we have enough documents for it to be attested what a life believes, what it believed it was as destiny, step by step, indeed in certain circumstances even how it believed it has concluded this destiny.

Nevertheless, in light of this notion that it is not certain that knowledge is known, it does not seem impossible that we might be able to read at what level of unconscious knowledge the work has been carried out that delivers what is effectively the truth of everything that has been believed to be.

33 Operating on the schema of the discourse of the big M, let us say it is, invisibly, the slave's labor, the labor that constitutes a non-revealed unconscious, that reveals whether that life is worth speaking about—that which, out of truths, out of true truths, has brought forth so many detours, fictions, and errors.

Knowledge, then, is placed in the center, in the dock, by psychoanalytic experience. This fact alone imposes on us a duty to question, which has no reason to limit its field. In short, the idea that knowledge can, in any way or at any time, even as a hope for the future, form a closed whole—now there's something that didn't have to wait for psychoanalysis for it to appear questionable.

Perhaps this doubting was approached from a bit low down where the

1 " . . . *tout savoir, d'être savoir, se sache comme tel.*"

skeptics were concerned. I am speaking of those who adopted this name at the time this doubting formed a school, something that we no longer have anything but a very feeble idea of. But, after all, would that be worth it, what do we know about it? What do we know about this on the basis of what has remained for us from the skeptics? Perhaps it's better for us not to pass judgment. Concerning their own knowledge perhaps we only have what others were able to gather from them, others who did not know where their skeptical formulas that radically questioned all knowledge, and *a fortiori* the totalization of knowledge, were starting from.

What is well designed to show how little impact the schools carry is the fact that the idea that knowledge can make a whole is, if I may say so, immanent to the political as such. This has been known for a long time. The imaginary idea of the whole that is given by the body, as drawing on the good form of satisfaction, on what, ultimately, forms a sphere, has always been used in politics by the party of political preaching. What is more beautiful, but also what is less open? What better resembles closure of satisfaction?

We have to struggle against the collusion of this image with the idea of satisfaction whenever we encounter anything that forms a knot in the work in question, which is the work of bringing things to light via the paths of the unconscious. It is the obstacle, the limit, or rather it's the hard road on which we lose our bearings, and where we find ourselves blocked.

It is odd to observe that a doctrine such as Marx's whose articulation onto the function of struggle, the class struggle, which he instituted has not prevented it from giving birth to what for the moment is, indeed, the same problem that confronts us all, namely the persistence of a master's discourse.

To be sure, the present one does not have the structure of the old, in the sense in which the old is installed in the place indicated under this big M. 34
The present one is installed in the place on the left, the one capped by the U. I will tell you why. What occupies the place there, which we will provisionally call dominant, is this S_2, which is specified as being, not knowledge of everything [*savoir de tout*]—we've not got to that point yet—but all-knowing [*tout-savoir*]. Understand this as what is affirmed as being nothing other than knowledge, which in ordinary language is called the bureaucracy. It cannot be said that there are no problems created there.

In my opening remarks three weeks ago we began with the fact that in the initial status of the master's discourse knowledge is on the side of the slave. And I thought I could indicate, without being in a position to develop it last time owing to a minor inconvenience I regret, that what happens between the classical master's discourse and that of the modern master, whom we call capitalist, is a modification in the place of knowledge. I even thought it possible to go so far as to say that the philosophical tradition has some responsibility for this transmutation.

Consequently, because the proletarian has been dispossessed of something—this is before communal property, of course—he finds himself characterizable by this term "dispossessed," which justifies both the attempt at and the success of revolution.

Is it not evident that what is restituted to him is not necessarily his own share? Capitalist exploitation effectively frustrates him of his knowledge by rendering it useless. What, in a type of subversion, gets returned to him is something different—master's knowledge. And this is why all he has done is change masters.

What remains, in effect, is the essence of the master, namely, that he does not know what he wants.

There you have what constitutes the true structure of the master's discourse. The slave knows many things, but what he knows even better still is what the master wants, even if the master does not know it himself, which is the usual case, for otherwise he would not be a master. The slave knows what it is, and that's what his function as slave is. This is also why it works, since, indeed, it has worked for quite a while.

The fact that all-knowing has moved into the place of the master is something that does not throw light on it, but rather makes a little bit more obscure what is at issue, namely, truth. How does it come about that there is a master's signifier in this place? For this is well and truly the S_2 of the
35 master, revealing as it does the bare bones of how things stand under the new tyranny of knowledge. This is what makes it impossible that in this place, over the course of the movement of history, as we were perhaps hoping, the nature of truth might appear.

Now the sign of truth is somewhere else. It is to be produced by what has come to be substituted for the ancient slave, that is, by those who are themselves products, as we say, consumables every bit as much as the others. "Consumer society," we say. "Human material," as it was called at one stage—to the applause of some who thought there was something tender in this.

It was worth highlighting this, since what equally concerns us now is to question what is at issue in the psychoanalytic act.

2

I won't be taking this up at the level at which I had hoped to bring things to completion two years ago, which was left interrupted, concerning the act by which the psychoanalyst grounds himself, is instituted as such.[2] I will be

[2] *Le Séminaire, Livre XV, L'Acte psychanalytique, 1967–1968* (unpublished).

taking it up at the level of the analyst's interventions, once [analytic] experience has been instituted within its precise limits.

If there is knowledge that is not known, as I have already said, it is instituted at the level of S_2, which is the one I call the other signifier. This other signifier is not alone. The stomach of the Other, the big Other, is full of them. This stomach is like some monstrous Trojan horse that provides the foundations for the fantasy of a totality-knowledge [*savoir-totalité*]. It is, however, clear that its function entails that something comes and strikes it from without, otherwise nothing will ever emerge from it. And Troy will never be taken.

What does the analyst institute?

I hear a lot said about the discourse of psychoanalysis, as if this actually meant something. If we characterize a discourse by focusing on what is dominant in it, then the analyst's discourse exists, and this is not to be confused with the psychoanalyzing discourse, with the discourse effectively engaged in in the analytic experience. What the analyst establishes as analytic experience can be put simply—it's the hysterization of discourse. In other words, it is the structural introduction, under artificial conditions, of 36
the hysteric's discourse, the one that is indicated here by a capital H.

I tried to point this out last year by saying that this discourse exists, and that it would exist whatever the circumstances, whether there was psychoanalysis or not. I expressed it in a figurative way, giving it its most common support, the one from which the major experience has issued for us, namely the detour, the zigzag lines, on which this misunderstanding that sexual relations [*rapports*] constitute in the human species rests.

Since we have signifiers, we must understand one another, and this is precisely why we don't understand one another. Signifiers are not made for sexual relations. Once the human being is speaking, it's stuffed, it's the end of this perfection, this harmony, in copulation—which in any case is impossible to find anywhere in nature. Nature presents an infinite number of species of it, which, moreover, for the majority do not include any copulation. This shows how little it is part of nature's intentions that this form a whole, a sphere.

In any case, one thing is certain—if for man it works out more or less okay, it's due to a trick that makes it possible, by first of all making it insoluble.

This is what the hysteric's discourse means, industrious as she is. In saying "she," we are making the hysteric a woman, but this is not her privilege alone. Many men get themselves analyzed who, by this fact alone, are obliged to pass through the hysteric's discourse, since this is the law, the rule of the game. It is a matter of knowing what one deduces from this concerning the relations between men and women.

We therefore see the hysteric fabricate a man as best she can—a man who would be animated by the desire to know.

I raised this issue in my last seminar. We can observe that historically the master has slowly defrauded the slave of his knowledge and turned it into the master's knowledge. But what remains a mystery is how the desire to do this could have arisen for him. Desire, if you take my word on this, he can easily do without, since the slave satisfies him even before he himself knows what he might desire.

This is the point my reflections might have got to last time if this charming thing had not emerged from the real—I am informed that it is the real of decolonization. He was apparently a patient from a hospital, a supporter
37 of ours from the former Algeria and billeted here. As you can see, a charming romp, owing to which I won't know, at least not for sometime, for I have to move on, what kinship I place between the philosophical discourse and the hysteric's discourse, since it seems that it is the philosophical discourse that has inspired the master with the desire to know. What can the hysteria in question here be? There is a domain here that must not be spoiled. If there is anyone whose thinking loves to run on ahead of the speaker, they will find an opportunity here to exercise their talent. I assure them that to me it seems to be a promising path.

Be that as it may, so as to provide a formula that is more extensive than one that limits it to relations between man and woman, let's say that if we just read what I have inscribed here concerning the hysteric's discourse, we still don't know yet what this $ is. But if it concerns her discourse, and if it's this discourse that brings it about that there is a man motivated [*animé*] by the desire to know, it is because it is a matter of knowing . . . what? Of knowing at what price she herself is this person who speaks. For, qua object *a*, she is the fall, the fallen object, fallen as an effect of discourse, which in turn is always broken at some point.

What hysterics ultimately want one to know is that language runs off the rails concerning the magnitude of what she as woman is capable of revealing concerning *jouissance*. But this is not what matters to the hysteric. What matters to her is that that other called a man know what a precious object she becomes in this context of discourse.

Isn't this, after all, the very basis of analytic experience? If I say that it gives the other as subject the dominant place in the hysteric's discourse, it hystericizes his discourse, it turns him into this subject who is asked to abandon every other reference than to the four walls that surround him and to produce signifiers that constitute this free association that is, in a word, master of the field.

How could saying no-matter-what lead anywhere, unless it was deter-

mined that there is nothing in the random production of signifiers that, simply because it involves signifiers, does not bear upon this knowledge that is not known, and which is really what is doing the work?

The only thing is that there is no reason why he should not come to know a bit more about it. If the analyst doesn't speak, what might become of this swarming production of S_1s? Many things, surely.

The analyst who listens is able to record many things. With what your 38
average person today can state, if he pays no attention to anything, one can compile the equivalent of a small encyclopedia. This would generate an enormous number of keys, were it to be recorded. Afterward one could even construct a little electronic machine, get one made. And this is moreover the idea that some people can have—they construct an electronic machine so that the analyst only has to pull out a ticket that will give them their answer.

Let's see what is at work here in the analyst's discourse. It is he, the analyst, who is the master. In what form? This is what I shall have to reserve for our subsequent meetings. Why in the form of object *a*?

It's on his side that there is S_2, that there is knowledge—whether he acquires this knowledge through listening to his analysand, or whether it is already acquired, locatable knowledge, which at a certain level can be limited to analytic know-how.

The only thing is that what has to be understood about this schema—as was already indicated when in the master's discourse S_2 was put in the slave's place, and when in the modernized master's discourse it was then put in the master's place—is that the knowledge is not the same.

There in the last discourse on the right, what place is it in? It is in the place that in the master's discourse Hegel, the most sublime of hysterics, designates for us as being that of truth.

We cannot say, in effect, that *The Phenomenology of Spirit* consists of starting from the so-called *Selbstbewusstsein* grasped at the most immediate level of sensation, thus implying that all knowledge is known from the outset. What would be the point of all this phenomenology if it were not a question of something else?

It's just that what I am calling the hysteria of this discourse stems precisely from the fact that the discourse eludes the distinction that would enable one to perceive the fact that if this historical machine, which is in fact only the progress of the schools and nothing more, ever did culminate in absolute knowledge, it would only be to mark the annulment, the failure, the disappearance at the conclusion of the only thing that motivates the function of knowledge—its dialectic with *jouissance*. Absolute knowledge is supposed to be the abolition of this conclusion, purely and simply.

Whoever studies the text of *The Phenomenology* closely can be left in no doubt about this.

What does the position of S_2 in the place of truth offer us now?

39

3

What is truth as knowledge? It can be put like this: How can we know without knowing?

It's an enigma. This is one response—it's an enigma—among other examples. And I will give you a second one.

The two have the same characteristic, which is a property of truth—truth can only ever be said by halves. Our dear truth, from the imagery of Epinal, emerging from a well is only ever a body.[3]

In Italy, at one of the lectures I had been asked to give, I don't know why, and which I went about in a mediocre way, I know, I mentioned the Chimera, in which precisely the original characteristic of the hysteric's discourse is incarnated. And the Chimera put an enigma to Oedipus the man who perhaps already had a complex, but certainly not the one he gave his name to. He replied in a particular way, and that was how he became Oedipus.

There could have been many other replies to what the Chimera asked him. For example, he might have said, "Two feet, three feet, four feet—that's Lacan's schema." That would have produced quite a different result. He could also have said, "It's a man, a man as a baby. As a baby he starts out on four feet. He walks on two, he acquires a third, and instantly he flies as straight as an arrow into his mother's stomach." That's in effect what one calls, rightly, the Oedipus complex.

I think you can see what the function of the enigma means—it's a half-said [*mi-dire*], just as the Chimera appears as a half body, with the risk of disappearing altogether once the solution has been found.

Knowledge as truth—this defines what the structure of what we call an interpretation must be.

If I insisted at length on the difference in level between the utterance [*énonciation*] and the statement [*énoncé*], it was so that the function of the enigma would make sense. An enigma is most likely that, an utterance. I charge you with the task of making it into a statement. Sort that out as best

[3] The images of Epinal were a popular form of illustration, familiar to everyone in France, invented at the end of the eighteenth century.

you can—as Oedipus did—and you will bear the consequences. That is what is at issue in an enigma.

But there is something else, rarely thought of, that I have touched upon, 40
that I have raised from time to time, but frankly, it concerned me so much that it was not easy for me to speak freely about it. It's what we call a citation.

What does a citation consist in? In the course of a text where you are making more or less good progress, if you happen to be in the right places of the class struggle, all of a sudden you will cite Marx, and you will add, "Marx said." If you are an analyst you will cite Freud and you will add, "Freud said." This is fundamental.

An enigma is an utterance—you do what you can about the statement. A citation is like this. I make a statement, and for the remainder, there is the solid support you will find in the author's name for which I hand responsibility back to you. This is how it is, and it has nothing to do with the more or less shaky status of the author's function.

When one cites Marx or Freud—I haven't chosen these names by chance—one does so as a function of the part the supposed reader takes in a discourse. The citation is in its own way also a half-said. It is a statement about which someone is indicating to you that it is admissible only insofar as you already participate in a certain structured discourse at the level of the fundamental structures that are there on the blackboard. This is the one point—could I have explained it before now?—that makes it the case that the citation, the fact that one cites an author or not, can have second-order importance. I am going to get you to understand this and I hope that you will not take this the wrong way, because it's a familiar example.

Suppose that at a second moment someone cites a sentence indicating where it comes from—the author's name, Mr. Ricoeur, for instance.[4] Suppose that someone cites the same sentence, and that they put it in my name. This can definitely not have the same sense in the two cases. I hope I have made you feel how things are with what I am calling a citation.

Well then, it is these two registers that, insofar as they partake of the half-said, give the medium—and, if I can put it like this, the heading—under which interpretation intervenes.

Interpretation—those who make use of it are aware of this—is often established through an enigma. It is an enigma that is gathered as far as possible from the threads of the psychoanalysand's discourse, which you, the interpreter, can in no way complete on your own, and cannot consider 41
to be an avowal without lying. It is a citation that is sometimes taken from the very same text, on the other hand, from a given statement—such as the

[4] See Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970).

one that can pass for an avowal, provided only that you connect it to the whole context. But you are thereby appealing to whoever is its author.

What is striking, in effect, in this institution of the analytic discourse, which is the mainspring of the transference, is not, as some have thought they have heard me say, that the analyst is the one who is given the function of the subject supposed to know. If speech is so freely given to the psychoanalysand—this is precisely how he receives this freedom—it's because we recognize that he may speak as a master, that is, as a birdbrain, but that this will not give results that are as good as in the case of a real master, since it's supposed to lead to knowledge. This is knowledge of which he who is prepared, in advance, to be the product of the psychoanalysand's cogitations, that is, the psychoanalyst, makes himself the underwriter [*gage*], the hostage—insofar as, as this product, he is in the end destined to become a loss, to be eliminated from the process.

What does it mean to say that he may assume this place which at the level of the master's discourse is that of the master? Already in the simple functioning of the relations between master and slave, it is clear that the master's desire is the Other's desire, since it's this desire that the slave anticipates.

It's another question to ask what the analyst is taking the place of when he unleashes the movement that invests the subject supposed to know—a subject who, by being recognized as such, is, with regard to the analyst, ready in advance for what is called the transference.

To be sure, it is only too easy to detect here a shadow of satisfaction at being recognized. This is not what is essential, if one supposes that he, the subject, knows what he is doing any better than hysterics do, for whom it is the truth of their conduct, but not at all their very being.

The analyst makes himself the cause of the analysand's desire. What does this strange notion mean? Do we have to regard it as an accident, as a historical emergence, that has appeared in the world for the first time?

Anticipating the continuation of a path that will perhaps take us down a long detour, I will just indicate that this function has already appeared, and that it is not for nothing that Freud had a liking for resorting to so many Presocratics, Empedocles among others.

42 Since I am aware that this amphitheater is occupied at two o'clock, from now on I shall finish at a quarter-to. Let's meet again the second Wednesday of January.

17 December 1969

III

Knowledge, a means of *jouissance*

HOW I AM TRANSLATED

DOMINANTS AND FACTS OF STRUCTURE

REPETITION AND *JOUISSANCE*

THE PRODUCTION OF ENTROPY

TRUTH IS IMPOTENCE

$$\begin{array}{cccc} \text{U} & \text{M} & \text{H} & \text{A} \\ \frac{S_2}{S_1} \rightarrow \frac{a}{\$} & \frac{S_1}{\$} \rightarrow \frac{S_2}{a} & \frac{\$}{a} \rightarrow \frac{S_1}{S_2} & \frac{a}{S_2} \rightarrow \frac{\$}{S_1} \end{array}$$

I have been given red chalk, very red chalk. Red on black—it is not obvious that it is going to be legible.

These are not new formulas, since I already wrote them up on the blackboard last time.

They are useful to have present there because—as simple as they are, so simple to deduce one from one another since it's just a matter of their circular permutation with the terms remaining in the same order—it just so happens that our powers of mental representation are not able to compensate for whether they are written on the blackboard or not.

We shall therefore continue what I am doing here, where "here" is always at the same time, whether here or somewhere else, Wednesday at half-past twelve for the last seventeen years.

It's worth mentioning this again at a time when everybody is rejoicing at entering a new decade. I would instead turn it into an opportunity for looking back over what the previous one has given me.

1

Ten years ago two of my students presented something that came out of Lacanian theses under the title "l'Inconscient, étude psychanalytique."[1] 44

[1] The article, by Jean Laplanche and Serge Leclaire, appeared in Henri Ey, ed., *L'Inconscient* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1966) and appeared in English as "The Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Study," *Yale French Studies* 48 (1972): 118–75.

This was brought about by what one can call the efforts of a prince. A prince is the only person capable of a liberal act, if one understands a liberal act to mean an arbitrary act, allowing also that "arbitrary" means not governed by any necessity. There was no necessity urging the prince, my friend Henri Ey, in one direction or another on this point. He placed the unconscious on the agenda at a certain conference, that of Bonneval, and entrusted the composition of it, at least in part, to two of my students.

In some ways this work is considered definitive. And, to be truthful, not without reason. It is indeed definitive in the way in which these two, my students, thought they might explain some of what I was putting forward on an interesting topic, since it was about nothing less than the unconscious, that is, that from which at the outset my teaching took wing, and explain it to a certain group.

This group was characterized by having been given orders of some sort concerning what I was saying. The interest they took in it was manifested in effect by something that I translated recently in a small preface as "forbidden to anyone under fifty." It was 1960, don't forget, and we were a long way away—are we any closer? that's the question—from challenging authority—challenging, among other things, the authority of knowledge. The upshot was that this prohibition, proffered in strange characters—one of them rendered it comparable to a sort of monopoly, a monopoly on knowledge—this prohibition was observed, purely and simply.

This is to tell you what the task was that was proposed to the people who had been kind enough to take it on—it was the task of having to explain to the ears in question something that was strictly speaking unprecedented.

How did they go about it? It is not too late for me to take stock of this now, especially since there was no question of my doing so at the time, for the reason that it was already quite a lot to see this brought into play for ears that were totally uninformed, that had picked up not even the slightest of what I had been able to develop over a period of seven years. It was obviously not the moment, with respect to the very people who had dedicated themselves to this work of deciphering, to contribute anything at all that might have given the impression that there was anything there to be restated. Moreover, there were many excellent elements in it.

This point arises, then, apropos of a thesis, a recent thesis, which, good God, was produced at the frontier of the French-speaking region, there where they struggle valiantly to maintain their rights. In Louvain someone has written a thesis on what they have called, perhaps improperly, my work.[2]

Let's not forget that this thesis is an academic thesis, and, at the very

[2] See Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977).

least, what emerges is that my work lends itself poorly to that. Indeed this is why it is not unfavorable, at the head of any such proposition by a university thesis, to situate the extent of the contribution that what was already academic makes to serving as the vehicle of the said work, still in inverted commas. This is also why one of the authors of this Bonneval report is singled out there, and in a way that made me unable to observe in my preface that a division has to be made between what is possibly a translation of what I state and what I have strictly speaking said.

In this little preface I did for this thesis that is going to appear in Brussels, and it is obvious that a preface by me will lighten its wings, I am obliged to note—this is its one useful purpose—that it is not the same thing to say that the unconscious is the condition of language as it is to say that language is the condition of the unconscious.

Language is the condition of the unconscious—that's what I say. The way in which one translates it stems from reasons which, to be sure, could, in their detail, be altogether activated by a strictly academic motive—and this would certainly go a long way, and will perhaps take you far enough for this year. From a strictly academic motive, I say, flows the fact that the person who has translated me, by virtue of having a background in the style, in the form of imposition of the university discourse, cannot do anything other, whether he believes he is commenting on me or not, than reverse my formula, that is, give it a significance that, it has to be said, is strictly contrary to the truth, without even any homology at all with what I claim.

Surely, the difficulty endemic to translating me into academic language will also blight anyone who, for whatever reason, tries their hand at it, and in truth the author of the thesis I am speaking about was motivated by the 46
best of qualifications, that of an immense good will. This thesis, then, that is going to be published in Brussels retains its value nonetheless, its value as an example in itself, its value also as an example because of what it promotes to the level of distortion, in some way an obligatory one, of a translation into the university discourse of something that has its own laws.

I have to unravel these laws. They are the ones that claim to give at least the conditions of a properly psychoanalytic discourse. Of course, this remains subject to the fact that, as I stressed last year, because I am stating this from high up here on a podium there is in effect a risk of error, an element of refraction, which means that in some respects it will fall under the influence of the university discourse. There is something here that stems from something fundamentally off balance.

To be sure, in no way am I identifying with a certain position. I assure you that whenever I come here to speak it is certainly not to speak about just anything, nor is it a question of "What am I going to tell them this time?" I have no role to play in this respect, in the sense in which the func-

tion of anyone who teaches has to do with a role, with a place to occupy, which is, undeniably, a place that has a certain prestige. It is not this that I am asking of you, but rather something that is a kind of putting into order imposed on me by the fact that I have to submit this unraveling to this trial. I, like anyone else, would escape this putting into order if, before this sea of ears among which there is perhaps the odd critical pair, I didn't have to give some account, with this fearful possibility, of the path my actions are following with respect to the fact that there exists a psychoanalyst [*qu'il y a du psychanalyste*].

That is my situation. The status of this situation as such has so far not been settled in any appropriate way, unless by imitation, unless at the incitement, the semblance, of various other established situations. In the present case this results in timid selection practices, in a certain identification with a figure, in a form of conduct, indeed, in a human type whose form nothing seems to render obligatory, or again in a ritual, indeed in some other measure that, at a better time, a former time, I compared to that of a driving school, without moreover provoking any protest from anyone.[3] There was even someone among my students, very close at the time, who
47 remarked to me that this was, in reality, what was desired by everyone who was starting an analytic career—to receive one's driving license, as in a driving school, according to paths that were mapped out well in advance and that included the same type of examination.

It is certainly notable—I mean, worth noting—that after ten years I have arrived all the same at spelling out a way that is the one I call the discourse of this position of psychoanalyst. Let's say its hypothetical discourse, since this is also what is being put to you this year for your examination. Namely—what is the structure of this discourse?

2

I have managed to state the psychoanalyst's position in the following terms. I have said that it is substantially made from the object *a*.

In the way I characterize the structure of discourse, insofar as it interests us and, let's say, insofar as it is taken at the radical level it has attained for the psychoanalytic discourse, this position is, substantially, that of the object *a*, insofar as this object *a* designates precisely what presents itself as the most opaque in the effects of discourse, as having been misrecognized for

[3] See Lacan, "The Situation of Psychoanalysis and the Training of Psychoanalysts in 1956," pp. 384–411 in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006).

a long time, and yet is essential. It is question of an effect of discourse that produces a reject. I shall shortly try to indicate its place and its function.

That, then, is how it is, substantially, with the psychoanalyst's position. But this object stands out for another reason, which is that it occupies the place from which the discourse is ordered, from which, if I can put it in these terms, the dominant is issued.

You are well aware of the reservation with which this is used. Saying "the dominant" means exactly that by which I ultimately designate each of the structures of these discourses so as to distinguish them from one another, naming them differently, the university, the master's, the hysteric's and the analyst's, according to the various positions of the radical terms. Let's say that because I am unable to give a different value to this term for the moment I will call "dominant" what I use to name these discourses.

This word "dominant" does not imply dominance, in the sense in which this dominance is supposed to be, and this is not certain, specific to the master's discourse. Let's say that one can give, for example, different sub- 48
stances to this dominant according to the discourse.

Take the dominant in the master's discourse, whose place is occupied by S_1. If we called it "the law" we would be doing something that has great subjective value and that would not fail to open the door to a number of interesting observations. It is certain, for example, that the law—I mean the law as articulated, that very law within whose walls we are finding shelter, this law [*cette loi*] that constitutes the law [*le droit*]—must certainly not be taken as a homonym for what may be spoken of elsewhere under the heading of justice. On the contrary, the ambiguity and the trappings that this law adopts by virtue of the fact that it derives its authority from justice is very precisely a point on which our discourse can perhaps give a better sense of where its real resources are, I mean those that make the ambiguity possible and bring it about that the law remains something that is, first and foremost, inscribed in the structure. There are not thirty-six ways to make laws, whether motivated by good intentions, justice, or not, for there are perhaps laws of structure that make it the case that the law will always be the law located in this place that I am calling dominant in the master's discourse.

At the level of the hysteric's discourse it is clear that we see this dominant appear in the form of a symptom. It is around the symptom that the hysteric's discourse is situated and ordered.

This is an opportunity for us to make an observation. If this place remains the same, and if in a particular discourse this place is that of the symptom, this will lead us to wonder whether the same place is that of the symptom when it is in use in another discourse. This is, in fact, what we can see in our own time—the law is being called into question as a symptom.

And saying that this appears to us in the light of our own time is not sufficient to explain it.

I said before how it is that this same dominant place can be occupied when it is a question of the analyst. The analyst himself here has to represent, in some way, the discourse's reject-producing effect [*effet de rejet*], that is, the object *a*.

Is this to say that where the university discourse is concerned it will also be easy for us to characterize the said dominant place? What other name can we give it, one that would enter into this sort of equivalence that, as I have just been suggesting, exists at least at the level of a question, between
49 the law, the symptom, and even the reject insofar as it is the place the analyst is destined for in the psychoanalytic act.

The difficulty we face in giving a reply to what constitutes the essence, the dominant, in the university discourse has to make us aware of something in what is our research—for what I am outlining in your presence are the very paths over which, when I deliberate, my thoughts drift and wander before finding any points of certainty. It is here, then, that the idea might occur to us to look for what would appear altogether certain, as certain as the symptom where hysteria is concerned, in each of these discourses, so as to designate at least one of its places.

I have already shown you that in the master's discourse the *a* is precisely identifiable with what the thought of a worker, Marx's, produced, namely what was, symbolically and really, the function of surplus value. We would therefore already be faced with two terms and, thereby, we would only need to modify them slightly, give them a freer translation, in order to transpose them into other registers. The following suggestion presents itself here—since there are four places to characterize, perhaps each of the four permutations could, from within itself, yield the place that is the most prominent, making a step forward in an order of discovery that is nothing other than what is called structure.

In whatever way you put such an idea to the test, it will consequently lead you to put your finger on the following, which will perhaps not occur to you at first sight.

Independently of this place that, I am suggesting, may be the one that interests us, try, in each of these figures of discourse, as we'll call them, to get yourself simply to choose a different place, defined as a function of the terms "above," "below," "right," "left." You will not be able to get any of the places occupied by a different letter, no matter how you go about it.

Try, in the opposite direction, making it a condition of the game to choose a different letter in each of these four formulas. You won't be able to get any of the letters to occupy a different place.

Have a go. It is very easy to do it on a piece of paper, as it is if you use

this little grid that is called a matrix. With such a limited number of combinations, the specimen drawing is immediately sufficient to illustrate the thing in a perfectly obvious way. 50

There is here a certain signifying connection, which one can suppose is altogether radical. This simple fact presents us with an opportunity to illustrate what structure is. In supposing the formalization of discourse and in granting oneself some rules within this formalization that are destined to put it to the test, we encounter an element of impossibility. This is what is at the base, the root, of an effect of structure.

And this is what interests us, in the structure, at the level of analytic experience. And this is not at all because we would here be at what, at least in its pretentions, is an already higher degree of elaboration, but from the outset.

3

Why are we caught up in these manipulations of the signifier and its possible articulations? It is because it is in the material of psychoanalysis.

I mean that it is in what occurred to a mind as little accustomed to this sort of development as a Freud could be, given the training we know he received, in the paraphysical sciences and in a physiology armed with the first steps in physics and with thermodynamics in particular.

What Freud, in following the vein, the thread of his experience, was led to formulate at a second stage in his declarations is of even greater importance since after all nothing seems to have made it necessary at the first stage, which was that of articulating the unconscious.

The unconscious makes it possible to situate desire. That is the meaning of the first, already quite complete, step Freud took, which was not merely implied but in fact fully articulated and developed in the *Traumdeutung*. This is already acquired knowledge when, at a second stage that opens with *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, he states that we must take into account this function called what?—repetition.

What is repetition? Read Freud's text and see what he says.

What necessitates repetition is *jouissance*, a term specifically referred to. 51
It is because there is a search for *jouissance* as repetition that the following is produced, which is in play at this stage of the Freudian breakthrough—what interests us qua repetition, and which is registered with a dialectic of *jouissance*, is properly speaking what goes against life. It is at the level of repetition that Freud sees himself constrained, in some way, by virtue of the very structure of discourse, to spell out the death instinct.

This is hyperbole, and a fabulous and, in fact, scandalous extrapolation for anyone who takes the identification of the unconscious with instinct literally. It means that repetition is not only a function of the cycles that life consists of, cycles of need and satisfaction, but of something else as well. It is a function of a cycle that embraces the disappearance of this life as such, which is the return to the inanimate.

The inanimate. A point on the horizon, an ideal point, a point that's off the map, but one whose meaning reveals itself to a structural analysis. It is revealed perfectly by the fact of *jouissance*.

One only has to begin with the pleasure principle, which is nothing other than the principle of least tension, of the minimum tension that needs to be maintained for life to subsist. This demonstrates that in itself *jouissance* overruns it, and that what the pleasure principle maintains is a limit with respect to *jouissance*.

As everything in the facts, in clinical experience, indicates to us, repetition is based on the return of *jouissance*. And what, in this connection, is well spelled out by Freud himself is that, in this very repetition, something is produced that is a defect, a failure.

At the time, here, I pointed out the kinship with remarks by Kierkegaard.[4] By virtue of being expressed and as such repeated, of being marked by repetition, what is repeated cannot be anything other, in relation to what it repeats, than a loss. A loss of whatever you like, a loss of momentum—there is something that is a loss. Right from the outset, right from the elaboration that I am summarizing here, Freud insists on this loss—in repetition itself there is a reduction in *jouissance*.

This is where the function of the lost object originates in Freudian discourse. And there is really no need to remind you that it is explicitly around
52 masochism, conceived only in the dimension of the search for this ruinous *jouissance*, that Freud's entire text revolves.

Now, what Lacan contributes follows. It concerns this repetition, this identification of *jouissance*. Here I will borrow something from Freud's text and give it a sense that is not highlighted there, namely, the function of the unary trait, which is the function of the simplest form of mark, which properly speaking is the origin of the signifier. And I propose—this cannot be seen in Freud's text, but it can in no way be brushed aside, avoided, rejected, by the psychoanalyst—that everything that interests us analysts as knowledge originates in the unary trait.

Psychoanalysis in effect takes as its point of departure a turning point, one at which knowledge is purified, if I may put it like this, of everything

[4] See Soren Kierkegaard, *Repetition*, in his *Fear and Trembling; Repetition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983).

that may create ambiguity over natural knowledge, that may be taken for an unknown something that would be able to guide us in the world around us with the help of unknown sensors which, in us, would know how to orientate us in the world from birth.

Not, to be sure, that there is nothing like this. When a learned psychologist writes in our time—I mean not so long ago, forty or fifty years—something called *Sensation, guide de vie*, he is not saying anything absurd, of course not.[5] But if he is able to declare it in this way, it is precisely because the entire evolution of a science makes us see that there is no co-naturality between this sensation and what, by its means, can be born out of the apprehension of a supposed world. If a properly scientific construction, the examination of the senses of sight, even of hearing, demonstrate anything to us at all, it is something that we should accept as it is, with, exactly, the coefficient of fabrication [*facticité*] with which it presents itself. In the light spectrum there is an ultraviolet that we have no perception of—and why wouldn't we have any? At the other, infrared end it's the same. The same goes for the ear—there are sounds that we stop hearing, and no one can tell very well why it stops there rather than further on.

As a matter of fact, through being illuminated in this way, nothing else is graspable than the fact that there are filters, and that we are able to manage with these filters. The function, they say, creates the organ. On the contrary, one makes use of the organ as best one can.

This is something about which, concerning the mechanisms of thought, an entire philosophical tradition has sought to reason—a tradition that has tried, by paths you are familiar with, by means of an account of what hap- 53
pens at the level of abstraction, of generalization, to construct this thing, on the basis of a sort of reduction, filtering, on the nature of sensation regarded as foundational—*Nihil fuerit in intellectu quod*, etc.—this subject is deducible in the name of the subject of knowledge [*connaissance*].[6] This subject is constructible in a manner that now strikes us as so artificial, on the basis of vital systems, organs which it is not clear, in effect, how we could do without. Is this what is at issue in this signifying articulation in which these initial terms, which we are starting to spell out and tender here, can begin to play a role? These are the most elementary of the terms that, as I've already said, knot one signifier to another signifier, and which already have an effect in that this signifier is only manipulable in its definition insofar as the following makes sense—that it represents a subject, and nothing but a subject,

[5] Henri Piéron, *The Sensations: Their Functions, Processes, and Mechanisms* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1952).

[6] "*Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*," or "Nothing is in the understanding that was not previously in the senses." The quotation comes from John Locke.

for another signifier. No, there is nothing in common between the subject of knowledge [*connaissance*] and the subject of the signifier.

There is no way of escaping this extraordinarily reduced formula that there is something underneath. But precisely, there is no term that we can designate this something by. It cannot be an *etwas*, it is simply an underneath, a subject, a *hypokeimenon*. Even for a thought so invested with the contemplation of the exigencies—primary and not at all constructed exigencies—of the idea of knowledge [*connaissance*], I mean Aristotle's thought, the logical approach alone, the fact alone that he introduced it into the circuit of knowledge, requires him to rigorously distinguish *hypokeimenon* from all *ousia* in itself, from anything that is essence.

The signifier becomes articulated, therefore, by representing a subject for another signifier. This is our starting point for giving meaning to this inaugural repetition that is repetition directed at *jouissance*.

At a certain level knowledge is dominated, articulated by purely formal necessities, the necessities of writing, and in our day this leads to a certain type of logic. Now, this type of knowledge to which we can give the support of an experience, the experience of modern logic, which is, in itself and above all, the manipulation of writing, is the same knowledge that is at work when it is a question of measuring the effect of repetition in the analytic clinic. In other words, knowledge that seems to us to be the most purified,
54 even though it is quite clear that we could in no way extract it from empiricism through purification, is this same knowledge that one finds has been introduced from the outset.

This knowledge here reveals its roots in the fact that in repetition, and in the form of the unary trait to begin with, it is found to be the means of *jouissance*—precisely insofar as *jouissance* goes beyond the limits imposed, under the term of pleasure, on the usual tensions of life.

What becomes evident from this formalism, to keep following Lacan, is, as we were saying just before, that there is a loss of *jouissance*. And it is in the place of this loss introduced by repetition that we see the function of the lost object emerge, of what I am calling the *a*. What does this impose on us? If not this formula that at the most elementary level, that of the imposition of the unary trait, knowledge at work produces, let's say, an entropy.

That's spelled *e, n, t*. You could write it *a, n, t, h*, this would be a nice play on words.[7]

This shouldn't astonish us. Are you unaware that, whatever the ingenuous hearts of engineers believe, energetics is nothing other than the network of signifiers overlaying the world?

I defy you to prove in any way that descending 500 meters with a weight

[7] "*Entropie*" and "*anthropie*" sound the same in French.

of 80 kilos on your back and, once you have descended, going back up the 500 meters with it is zero, no work. Try it, have a go yourself, and you will find that you have proof of the contrary. But if you overlay signifiers, that is, if you enter the path of energetics, it is absolutely certain that there has been no work.

When the signifier is introduced as an apparatus of *jouissance*, we should thus not be surprised to see something related to entropy appear, since entropy is defined precisely once one has started to lay this apparatus of signifiers over the physical world.

Don't think I'm joking. Whenever you construct a factory somewhere, naturally you draw energy, you can even accumulate it. Well then, the apparatuses that have been installed so that these sorts of turbines function to the point where you can put energy in a bottle are built according to this same logic I am speaking about, namely the function of the signifier. Today, a machine has nothing to do with a tool. There is no genealogy between a 55
bucket and a turbine. The proof is that you can quite legitimately call a little drawing you've done on a piece of paper a machine. It takes hardly anything. It is simply enough that you have conductible ink for it to be a very effective machine. And why shouldn't it be conductible, since the mark in itself already conducts pleasure [*volupté*]?

If there is anything that analytic experience teaches us it is what concerns the world of fantasy. In fact, if it does not seem to have been explored prior to analysis, it's because no one knew how to extricate themselves from it except through recourse to the bizarre, to the anomaly, which serves as the basis for these terms, these names that pin down *masochism* this, *sadism* that. When we give these *-isms* we are at the level of zoology. But there is nevertheless something altogether radical, which is the association, in what is at the base, at the very root of fantasy, with this glory of the mark, if I can put it like this.

I am speaking of the mark on the skin, which, in this fantasy, inspires nothing other than a subject identifying itself as the object of *jouissance*. In the erotic practice I am alluding to, which, to give it its name in case anyone is hard of hearing, is flagellation, the enjoying [*le jouir*] adopts the very ambiguity by means of which it is at its level and no other that the equivalence between the gesture of making a mark and the body, object of *jouissance*, can be reached.

Whose *jouissance*? Is it the *jouissance* of whosoever carries what I am calling the glory of the mark? Is it certain that this means the Other's *jouissance*? Certainly, this is one of the ways in which the Other enters one's world, and assuredly, it is an irrefutable one. But the mark's affinity with *jouissance* of the body itself is precisely where it is indicated that it is only through *jouissance*, and *jouissance* alone, that the division distinguishing narcissism from the relation with the object is established.

There's no ambiguity here. It's at the level of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* that Freud strongly indicates that what in the end gives the specular image of the apparatus of the ego its real support, its consistency, is that it is sustained within by this lost object, which it merely dresses up, by which *jouissance* is introduced into the dimension of the subject's being.

56 In effect, if *jouissance* is forbidden, then it is clear that it only comes into play by chance, an initial contingency, an accident. The living being that ticks over normally purrs along with pleasure. If *jouissance* is unusual, and if it is ratified by having the sanction of the unary trait and repetition, which henceforth institutes it as a mark—if this happens, it can only originate in a very minor variation in the sense of *jouissance*. These variations, after all, will never be extreme, not even in the practices I raised before.

We are not dealing with a transgression, an irruption into some forbidden field through the wearing away of vital regulatory apparatuses. In fact, it is only through this effect of entropy, through this wasting, that *jouissance* acquires a status and shows itself. This is why I initially introduced it by the term "*Mehrlust*," surplus *jouissance*. It is precisely through being perceived in the dimension of loss—something necessitates compensation, if I can put it like this, for what is initially a negative number—that this something that has come and struck, resonated on the walls of the bell, has created *jouissance*, *jouissance* that is to be repeated. Only the dimension of entropy gives body to the fact that there is surplus *jouissance* there to be recovered.

And this is the dimension in which work, knowledge at work, becomes necessary, insofar as, whether it knows it or not, it initially stems from the unary trait and, in its wake, from everything that can possibly be articulated as signifier. This is the basis on which this dimension of *jouissance* is instituted, which is so ambiguous in the speaking being who can also theorize and make a religion of living in apathy, and apathy is hedonism. He can indeed turn it into a religion, and yet we all know that as a group—*Massenpsychologie* is the title of one of Freud's writings, from the same period—what animates him, what preoccupies him, what makes of him an order of knowledge different from these harmonizing knowledges that link the *Umwelt* to the *Innenwelt* is the function of surplus *jouissance* as such.

This is the hollow, the gap that no doubt a number of objects initially come and fill—objects that, in some way, are adapted in advance, designed to be used as stoppers. This is no doubt where a classical analytic practice stops, with its emphasis upon these various terms, oral, anal, scopic, not to mention vocal. These are various names by which we can designate, as an
57 object, the *a*—but the *a*, as such, is strictly speaking what follows from the fact that, at its origin, knowledge is reduced to an articulation of signifiers.

This knowledge is a means of *jouissance*. And, I repeat, when it is at work, what it produces is entropy. This entropy, this point of loss, is the sole point,

the sole regular point at which we have access to the nature of *jouissance*. This is what the effect the signifier has upon the fate of the speaking being translates into, culminates in, and is motivated by.

This has little to do with his speaking. It has to do with structure, which gets fitted out. The subject, who is called human, no doubt because he is only the humus of language, has only to speechify himself to its fittings.[8]

With something as simple as my four little signs, I was able before to get you to sense that we only have to place this unary trait in the company of another trait, S_2 after S_1, in order to situate, equally with licit signifiers, what its sense is and, on the other hand, the nature of its insertion into the Other's *jouissance*—this Other by virtue of which it is a means of *jouissance*.

This is where work begins. It is with knowledge as a means of *jouissance* that work that has a meaning, an obscure meaning, is produced. This obscure meaning is the meaning of truth.

4

No doubt, if I had not already been exploring these terms in various ways that enlighten us, I would certainly not have dared introduce them as I've done. But some work, a considerable amount of work, has already been accomplished.

When I speak of knowledge as having its initial locus in the master's discourse at the level of the slave, who apart from Hegel has shown that what the slave's work will yield is the master's truth? And, no doubt, the truth that refutes him. But, in truth, we are perhaps in a position to develop other forms of the schema for this discourse, and to perceive where the Hegelian construction gapes, remains gaping, and has been closed up in a forced way.

If there is one thing that our entire approach delimits, and that has surely been renewed by analytic experience, it is that the only way in which to evoke the truth is by indicating that it is only accessible through a half- 58
saying [*mi-dire*], that it cannot be said completely, for the reason that beyond this half there is nothing to say. That is all that can be said. Here, consequently, discourse is abolished. One isn't speaking of the unsayable, whatever the pleasure that this seems to give certain people.

It remains no less true that I illustrated this knot of the half-saying last time through indicating how one has to emphasize what is properly speaking the nature of interpretation, what I expressed as an utterance without a

[8] The punning here is untranslatable: "Cela a à faire avec la structure, laquelle s'appareille. L'être humain, qu'on appelle ainsi sans doute parce qu'il n'est que l'humus du langage, n'a qu'à *s'apparoler* à cet appareil-là."

statement, as a statement with the utterance in reserve. I indicated that these were the axis points, the points of balance, the axes of gravity, specific to interpretation, from which our developments must profoundly renew the question of truth.

What is the love of truth? It's something that mocks the lack in being [*manque à être*] of truth. We could call this lack in being something else—the lack of forgetting, which reminds us of its existence in formations of the unconscious. This is nothing of the order of being, of a being that is in any way full. What is this indestructible desire Freud speaks of at the end of his *Traumdeutung*? What is this desire that nothing can change or deflect when everything changes? The lack of forgetting is the same thing as the lack in being, since being is nothing other than forgetting. The love of truth is the love of this weakness whose veil we have lifted, it's the love of what truth hides, which is called castration.

I should not need these reminders, which are in some way so bookish. It seems that it is among analysts, particularly among them, that in the name of these few taboo words with which their discourse is soiled one is never made aware of what truth is, what knowledge is, what impotence is.

It is upon this that everything that has to do with truth is constructed. That there is a love of weakness is no doubt the essence of love. As I have said, love is giving what one doesn't have, namely what might make good [*réparer*] this original weakness.

And this role—I don't know whether I should call it mystical or mystifying—which since the birth of time, in a certain vein, has been given to love is immediately conceivable, half open. This love that they call universal, brandished on a piece of paper so as to calm us, is precisely what we make into a veil, a veil of obstruction, over what is the truth.

59 What is asked of the psychoanalyst, and this was already in my discourse last time, is certainly not what emerges from this subject supposed to know on which, by hearing it a little bit askew, as one usually does, it has been thought possible to found the transference. I have often insisted on the fact that we are not supposed to know very much at all. What analysis establishes is this, which is quite the opposite. The analyst says to whoever is about to begin—"Away you go, say whatever, it will be marvelous." He is the one that the analyst institutes as subject supposed to know.

This is after all not in such bad faith, because in the present case the analyst cannot put his trust in any other person. And the transference is founded on the fact that there is this character who tells me—me, the poor bastard—to act as if I knew what it was all about. I can say anything whatever, it will always produce something. This doesn't happen to you every day. There is a lot there to cause the transference.

What defines an analyst? I have said it. I have always said right from the

start, it's just that no one has ever understood anything, which moreover is natural, it's not my fault, that an analysis is what one expects from an analyst. But this "what one expects from an analyst"—we would obviously have to try to understand what it means.

It is very much there, just like that, within hand's reach—I nevertheless get the feeling, even now, that I am merely restating this—the work is mine, and the surplus pleasure is yours. What one expects from a psychoanalyst is, as I was saying last time, to get his knowledge to function in terms of truth. This is why he limits himself to a half-saying.

I said this last time, and I will have occasion to return to it, because it has consequences.

It is to the analyst and to him alone that this formula I have so often commented on, this "*Wo es war, soll Ich werden*," is addressed. If the analyst tries to occupy this place which determines his discourse at the top left, he is absolutely not there for himself. It is there where the surplus *jouissance*, the other's *jouissance*, was that I, as proffering the psychoanalytic act, must come.

14 January 1970

IV

Truth, the sister of *jouissance*

LOGIC AND TRUTH

WITTGENSTEIN'S PSYCHOSIS

POLITZER AND THE UNIVERSITY

DE SADE'S HUMOR

U	H	M
$S_2 \rightarrow a$	$\$ \rightarrow S_1$	$S_1 \rightarrow S_2$
$S_1 \quad \$$	$a \quad S_2$	$\$ \quad a$

At the level of structure we are trying to develop this year, the analytic discourse completes the three others, respectively named—I am recalling this for those of you who come here sporadically—the master's discourse, that of the hysteric, which today I've placed in the middle, and finally the discourse that interests us here to a high degree, since it is a question of the discourse situated as being that of the university.

But the fact that the analytic discourse completes the 90° displacement by which the three others are structured does not mean that it resolves them and enables one to pass to the other side. It doesn't resolve anything.

The inside does not explain the outside.[1] We are dealing with a relationship of weaving, of text—of fabric, if you like. It remains no less true that this material has a texture, that it captures something—not everything, to be sure, since language shows the limit of this word which only exists through language. It shows that even in the world of discourse nothing is everything, as I say—or better, that "everything" as such is self-refuting, founds itself, even, on having to be reduced in its employment.

This is by way of introduction to what will today form the object of an essential approach, with the aim of demonstrating what the other side, *l'envers*, is. *Envers* is assonant with *vérité*, "truth."

[1] "L'envers n'explique nul endroit." *L'envers* can mean "the lining," as in the lining of a jacket, and *endroit* "the outside." Thus, "The lining doesn't explain the outside."

1

62

In truth, something worth being supported right from the start is that "truth" is not a word to be handled outside propositional logic, where it is made into a value, reduced to the inscription, to the handling of a symbol, usually a capital *T*, its initial. This usage, as we shall see, is most particularly bereft of hope. This is what is salubrious about it.

Nevertheless, everywhere else, and notably for analysts—I do have to say this, and with reason—for women analysts, it provokes a curious shiver, of the same order as the one that has, for some time now, been pushing them to confuse analytic truth with revolution.

I have already spoken of the ambiguity of this term "revolution," which, in the use made of it in the mechanics of heavenly bodies, can mean return to the start. So much so that in certain respects what the analytic discourse, as I said initially, can accomplish with respect to the three other orders is situated in three other structures.

It is no accident that women are less enclosed than their partners in this cycle of discourses. Man, the male, the virile, such as we know him, is a creation of discourse—at least none of what is analyzable in him can be defined in any other way. The same cannot be said of woman. Nevertheless, no dialogue is possible unless it is situated at the level of discourse.

This is why, before she starts to shake, the woman animated by the revolutionary properties of analysis could tell herself that she will benefit much more than the man does from what we shall call a certain culture of discourse.

It is not that she has no gift for it, on the contrary. And once she becomes animated by it she becomes an eminent guide in this cycle. This is what defines the hysteric and this is why on the blackboard, breaking with the order of what I have been writing up there, I have placed her at the center.

It is, however, clearly not by chance that the word "truth" provokes this particular emotion in her.

Except that truth is not, in our context, easily accessible. Like certain birds that I used to be told about when I was little, you can only trap it by putting salt on its tail. This is not easy. My first reading book had as its first 63
text a story that was called *The Story of Half a Chicken*. It is true, that was what it was about. It is not a bird that is any easier to catch than others when the requirement is to put salt on its tail.

What I have been teaching, ever since I have been developing something about psychoanalysis, could well be called *The Story of Half a Subject*.

Where is the truth in this relationship between the story of half a chicken and the story of half a subject? It can be taken from two angles. One might

say that the story in my first reading determined the development of my thought, as an academic thesis might put it. Or, from the point of view of the structure, the story of half a chicken could have represented, for the author who had written it, something in which there is some kind of presentiment, not of "*sychanalisse*" as it is said in *Paris Peasant*, but of the nature of the subject.[2]

What is clear is that there was also an image. The image of half a chicken was in profile, from its good side. You didn't see the other side, the cut one, the one where the truth probably was, since on the right-hand-side page you saw the half without the heart, but not without *liver* no doubt, in the two senses of the word.[3] What does that mean? It means that truth is hidden, but perhaps it is only absent.

This would settle everything if it were so. One would only have to know all that there is to know. After all, why not? When one says something there is no need to add that it is true.

An entire problematic of judgment turns on this. You know that Mr. Frege raises the question in the form of a horizontal stroke, and distinguishes it from how things are when one affirms that it is true, by putting a vertical stroke on the far left. Then it becomes an affirmation.[4]

However, what is it that is true? My God, it is what was said. What is it that was said? A sentence. But the only way of having a sentence supported is by signifiers, insofar as they do not involve objects. Unless, like a logician whose extremist views I will come to shortly, you claim that there are no objects, only pseudo-objects. As for us, we hold that signifiers are not concerned with objects but with sense.

64 The only subject of the sentence is the sense—thus this dialectic we started with, which we call the *pas-de-sens*, the no sense, with all the ambiguity of the word "*pas*."[5]

This begins with the non-sense forged by Husserl, "The green is one for." However, this may very well have a sense, if for instance it is about voting with green balls and red balls.

However, what leads us down the path where the nature of being derives from sense is that which has the most being. It is down this path, in any case, that the step-of-sense [*pas-de-sens*] has been taken of thinking that what has the most being cannot fail to exist.

Sense, if I may say so, is responsible for being. It does not even have any

[2] Louis Aragon, *Paris Peasant* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971).

[3] The two senses are *foie*, "liver," and *foi*, "faith."

[4] See *Begriffschrift*, in Jean Van Heijenoort, ed., *Frege and Gödel: Two Fundamental Texts in Mathematical Logic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).

[5] *Pas-de-sens* means both "no sense" and "the step of sense."

other sense. The only thing is that it was observed some time ago that this is insufficient for carrying the weight—the weight, precisely, of existence.

A curious thing that non-sense carries the weight. It grabs you by the stomach. And the discovery that Freud made is to have shown that this is what is exemplary about a witticism (*mot d'esprit*), a word with neither tip nor tail.

This doesn't make putting salt on its tail any easier. Precisely, the truth flies off. The truth flies off the very moment you no longer wanted to grab it.

Moreover, since it didn't have a tail, how could you have? Stupefaction and light.

As you will recall, a little story, a fairly dull one moreover, about responses over the Golden Calf (*veau d'or*) may suffice to wake up this calf that *sleeps* (*veau qui dort*) standing up. You can see then that it is, if I may say so, of *hard gold* (*d'or dur*).[6]

Enter Eluard's hard desire to endure (*dur désir de durer*) and the desire to sleep, which is indeed the greatest enigma, which no one seems to be aware of, that Freud proposes in the dream mechanism. Let's not forget it—"*Wunsch zu schlafen*," he says. He didn't say, "*schlafen Bedürfnis*," need to sleep, this is not what it's about. It's the *Wunsch zu schlafen* that determines the dream's operation.

It is curious that he complements this indication with the further one that a dream wakes you up just when it might let the truth drop, so that the only reason one wakes up is so as to continue dreaming—dreaming in the real or, to be more exact, in reality.

That is all very striking. It's striking because of a certain lack of sense, where truth, like nature, comes galloping back.[7] And even at such a gallop that it has scarcely crossed our field before it has already departed on the other side.

The absence I mentioned before has produced a curious contamination 65
in French. If we take the *sans*, "without," supposedly derived from the Latin *sine*, which is highly unlikely since its initial form was something like *senz*, we can see that the *absentia*, in the ablative, used in legal documents and which this term *sans* with neither head nor tail comes from—we have already produced this little word right from the start of what we have been stating today.

And so what? *Senz* and then *sans*—aren't we dealing with a *puissance*, a "power"? One quite different from this *en puissance*, "potentiality," of an imaginary virtuality, which is a power only through being deceptive. It is rather what of being there is in sense, which is to be taken otherwise than

[6] Also *ordure*, "rubbish."
[7] "Changez le naturel, il revient au galop." French proverb.

being full sense, which is rather what escapes being, as happens in so-called witticisms.[8]

Just as, as we know, this always occurs in acts. In an act, of whatever kind, it is what escapes it that is important. And this is also the step that analysis has gone beyond, by introducing the bungled act, the parapraxis, as such, which is after all the only one that we know, with certainty, is always successful.

Around all this there is a play of litotes whose weight and emphasis I've tried to show you in what I am calling the "not-without." Anxiety is *not without* an object. We are *not without* a relationship with truth.

But is it certain that we should find it *intus*, within? Why not to one side? *Heimlich, unheimlich*—each of us, from our reading of Freud, has been able to recall what shelters in the ambiguity of this word which, through not being within and yet evokes it, accentuates precisely everything that is strange.

On this point languages themselves vary strangely. Have you noticed that "homeliness" in English means *sans façon*, without standing on ceremony? It is, however, just the same word as *Heimlichkeit*, but that doesn't have the same tone at all.

This is why *sinnlos* translates into English as "meaningless," that is, the same word which, in translating *Unsinn*, "nonsense," will give us *non-sensé*.

We all know that the ambiguity of the roots in English lend themselves to unusual avoidances. On the other hand, and in a way that is almost unique, English will call "without" the *sans-avec étant dehors*.[9]

66 Truth does in effect seem to be foreign to us, I mean our own truth. It is no doubt with us, but without concerning us to the point that one really wants to speak it.

All that can be said, and this is what I was saying before, is that we are *not without* it. A litotes, in short, of the fact that when we are within its reach we would happily do without it.

We go from "without" to "not-without," and from there to "without-past."[10]

[8] " . . . comme il arrive dans le mot justement dit d'esprit." *Mot d'esprit*, literally "word with mind or spirit," translates the German *Witz*, and is closer to the English "witticism" than "joke," by which it is translated in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74), hereafter cited as SE.

[9] Lacan is referring to the fact that "without" (*sans* in French) is composed of "with" (*avec*) and "out" (*dehors*).

[10] *sans, pas-sans, sans-passé*. One can also hear *s'en passer*, "to do without."

2

Here I will make a little leap and move to the author who has given the most forceful formulation to what results from the enterprise of proposing that the only truth there is is inscribed in a proposition, and from articulating that which, in knowledge as such—knowledge being constituted on the basis of propositions—can in all strictness function as truth. That is to say, what results from articulating what, concerning whatever is proposed, can be said to be true and upheld as true.

I have in mind someone by the name of Wittgenstein who is, may I say, easy to read. Surely. Try him.

It requires that you know how to be content to move around in a world that is, strictly speaking, a world of cogitation without seeking any fruit in it, which is your bad habit. You are very keen on picking apples from an apple tree, even on gathering them from the ground. For you, anything is better than not gathering apples.

Dwelling for a time under this apple tree whose branches, I assure you, may suffice to capture your closest attention, provided you make an effort, will nevertheless have the characteristic that you will not be able to draw anything from it except the affirmation that nothing can be said to be true other than the agreement with a structure which I will not even situate, if I can place myself outside the shade of this apple tree for an instant, as logical, but, and the author puts this well, as grammatical.

For this author grammatical structure constitutes what he identifies with the world. Grammatical structure is the world. And all that is true is, in 67
short, a composite proposition comprising the totality of facts that constitute the world.

If we choose to introduce, into the set, the element of negation that enables it to be articulated, we will have an entire set of rules which constitute a logic to disengage, but the set is, he says, tautological, that is to say, as stupid as the following—whatever you state is either true or false. Stating what is either true or false is necessarily true, but also it annuls sense.

Everything I have said, he concludes at propositions 6.51, 2, 3, 4, since he numbers them, everything I have just stated is strictly speaking *Unsinn*, that is, it annuls sense.

One cannot say anything that is not a tautology. What is at stake is that once the reader has passed through the long circuit of statements, and please believe me, all of them are extremely attractive, he will have risen above everything that has just been said and concluded that nothing else is sayable—but that everything that can be said is only nonsense.

I have perhaps been a bit swift in summing up Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.[11] Let us add just this remark, that nothing can be said, that nothing is true, except on the condition that one starts from the idea, on Wittgenstein's approach, that a fact is an attribute of an elementary proposition.[12]

What I am calling an elementary proposition will elsewhere be placed in quotation marks, in Quine for instance, who distinguishes between a statement and an utterance. This is an operation which, because I have constructed my graph precisely on its foundation, I have no hesitation in calling arbitrary. It is in effect clear that it is defensible to say, and this is Wittgenstein's position, that no sign of affirmation needs to be added to what is assertion pure and simple. An assertion declares itself to be the truth.

How then can one avoid Wittgenstein's conclusions, other than by following him exactly where he is led, namely toward the elementary proposition, whose notation as true or as false is what must, in every case, whether it be true or false, assure the truth of the composite proposition?

Whatever the facts in the world might be, I would go further, whatever we might say about them, the tautology of the totality of discourse is what makes the world.

68 Take the simplest proposition, I mean grammatically. It is not for nothing that the Stoics had already used it, introducing it into the simplest form of implication. I won't go that far, I will only take the first part of it, since, as you know, implication is a relation between two propositions. "It is day." That is the bare minimum. "It," in the impersonal. "It is," "that is"—in certain circumstances these have the same sense.

Thus, for Wittgenstein the world is supported only by facts. No things unless supported by a web of facts. No things, moreover, but that are inaccessible. Facts alone are articulable. This fact, that it is day, is only a fact by virtue of that, its being said.

The true depends only—this is where I have to reintroduce the dimension I am arbitrarily separating from it—on my utterance, namely on whether I state it appropriately. The true is not internal to the proposition, where only the fact, the factitious nature, of language is declared.

It is true that it is a fact, a fact constituted by my saying it, on those occasions when it's true. But that it is true is not a fact, unless I explicitly add that, moreover, it's true. It is just that, as Wittgenstein puts it very well, it's quite superfluous for me to add it.

Well, except that what I have to say in the place of this superfluity is that

[11] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974).

[12] Proposition 4.21.

I have to have a reason for really saying it, and this will be explained by what follows.

But then, I don't say that I have a reason, I continue with the rest, namely my deduction, and I integrate "It is day," perhaps fallaciously—even if it's true—into my exhortation, which may be to take advantage of it so as to get someone to believe that he can clearly see what my intentions are.

The stupid thing, if I may say so, is to isolate the factitiousness of "It is day." It is a prodigiously rich piece of stupidity, for it gives rise to a leverage point, very precisely the following one, from which it results that what I have used as a leverage point myself, namely that there is no metalanguage, is pushed to its ultimate consequences.

There is no other metalanguage than all the forms of knavery, if we thereby designate these curious operations derivable from the fact that man's desire is the Other's desire. All acts of bastardry are based on the fact of wishing to be someone's Other, I mean someone's big Other, in which the figures by which his desire will be captivated are drawn.

Thus this Wittgensteinian operation is nothing but an extraordinary 69
parade, the detection of philosophical skulduggery.

The only sense is the sense of desire. This is what one can say after having read Wittgenstein. The only truth is the truth of what the said desire for its lack hides, so as to make light of what he does find.

There is no more certain light under which what results from what logicians have always articulated appears, if only to dazzle us with the air of paradox contained in what has been called material implication.

You know what this is. It's simply implication. It has only recently been called material implication, because, all of a sudden, they have rubbed their eyes and begun to understand what a scandal implication is, I am speaking of the one that a certain Stoic upheld. That is to say, that the three following implications are legitimate, that, to be sure, the false implies the false, the true implies the true, but that it is not at all to be rejected that the false imply the true, since in total it is a matter of what is implied and that if what is implied is true the entire implication is also true.

However, this means something, why couldn't we, by slightly altering the word "implies," observe what is relevant in this—that it was well known in the Middle Ages, *ex falso sequitur quodlibet*—that the false sometimes also entails the true means that the true can be about anything.

But that if, on the other hand, we reject that the true entail the false, that it can have a false consequent—for this is what we are rejecting, in the absence of which there would be no possible articulation of propositional logic—we end up with this curious fact that the true has a genealogy, that it always goes back to an initial true, from which it is no longer able to fall.

This is such a strange indication, one that is so challenged by our entire life, I mean our life as a subject, that this alone would be sufficient to question whether truth could in any way be isolated as an attribute—as an attribute of anything capable of articulating with knowledge.

As for the analytic operation, it is distinguished by advancing into this field in a way that is distinct from what is, I would say, found embodied in
70 Wittgenstein's discourse, that is, a psychotic ferocity, in comparison with which Ockham's well-known razor, which states that we must admit only notions that are necessary, is nothing.

3

Truth—we begin again from first principles—is certainly inseparable from the effects of language taken as such.

No truth can be localized except in the field in which it is stated—in which it is stated as best it can. Therefore, it is true that there is no true without the false, at least not in principle. This is true.

But that there is no false without the true, that is false.

I mean that the true can only be found outside all propositions. To say that the true is inseparable from the effects of language, considered as such, is to include the unconscious within them.

The claim, on the contrary, as I was saying last time, that the unconscious is the condition of language gets its sense here, by virtue of wishing that an absolute sense corresponds to language.

One of the authors of the discourse on "The Unconscious," subtitled, "A Psychoanalytic Study," once wrote it out by superimposing an *S* over itself, by placing it below and above a bar, arbitrarily treated moreover with respect to what I had done with it. The signifier thereby designated, the sense of which is supposedly absolute, is very easy to recognize, for there is only one capable of answering to this place—it is the I.

This is the I insofar as it is transcendental, but, equally, insofar as it is illusory. This is the ultimate root operation, the one that what I am describing as an elaboration of the university discourse guarantees for itself—and this is what shows that finding it here is no accident.

The transcendental I is what anyone who has stated knowledge in a certain way harbors as truth, the S_1, the I of the master.

It is, very precisely, out of the I identical to itself that the S_1 of the pure imperative is constituted.

It is, very precisely, in imperatives that the I is displayed, for they are always in the second person.

The myth of the ideal I, of the I that masters, of the I whereby at least 71
something is identical to itself, namely the speaker, is very precisely what the university discourse is unable to eliminate from the place in which its truth is found. From every academic statement by any philosophy whatsoever, even by a philosophy that strictly speaking could be pointed to as being the most opposed to philosophy, namely, if it were philosophy, Lacan's discourse—the *I-cracy* emerges, irreducibly.

Of course, no philosophy is ever reducible to this. For philosophers the question has been a lot more supple and pathetic. Remember what is in question, everyone acknowledges it more or less, and some of them, the most lucid, do so clearly—they want to save truth.

This has taken one of them, good heavens, a long way—to the point where, like Wittgenstein, by making it the rule and the foundation of knowledge, there is nothing left to say, at least nothing that concerns truth as such, so as to refuse, to avoid, this rock. Surely the author has something close to the analyst's position, namely, that he eliminates himself completely from his own discourse.

I mentioned psychosis before. Here, in effect, one of the most assured discourses and something or other that is strikingly suggestive of psychosis concur so much that I am saying this on the sole basis of feeling its effect. How remarkable it is that a university like the English university made a place for him. A place apart, it's appropriate to say, a place of isolation with which the author went along with perfectly well himself, so much so that he withdrew from time to time to a little house in the country and then returned to pursue this implacable discourse, of which, one can even say, the discourse of Russell's *Principia Mathematica* turns out to be a fabrication.

Wittgenstein wasn't interested in saving the truth. Nothing can be said about truth, as he said. This isn't certain, since we are dealing with it every day. But how, then, does Freud define the psychotic position in a letter I have quoted many times? Precisely by what he calls, strangely, *unglauben*, not wanting to know anything about the spot where truth is in question.

For the academic it is such a pathetic thing that one can say that Politzer's discourse entitled "Foundations of Concrete Psychology," which was instigated by his approaching psychoanalysis, is a fascinating example of it.[13]

Everything in this attempt at leaving behind this university discourse that has shaped him from head to toe is to be commended. He is well aware that there is some ramp there he could take to escape from it.

You must read this small work, republished in paperback without any 72

[13] This work had just been republished as vol. 2 of Politzer's *Ecrits* (Paris: Éditions sociales, 1969), edited by Jacques Debouzy. Politzer was executed by the Gestapo in 1942. See his *Critique of the Foundations of Psychology: The Psychology of Psychoanalysis* (Pittsburgh, Penn.: Duquesne University Press, 1994).

evidence, to my knowledge, that the author has himself authorized this new edition, whereas everyone knows how much of a trial he found the accolades with which what was initially presented as a cry of revolt was covered.

These scathing pages on psychology, particularly academic psychology, are, curiously, followed by steps which in some way lead him right back again. But what enabled him to grasp where there might be hope for him to escape from this psychology was his emphasizing the fact—which nobody had done in his day—that what in Freud's method was essential for exploring formations of the unconscious was to trust the narrative [*récit*]. He emphasized this fact of language, from which everything, really, might have followed.

At the time there was no question—this is a piece of trivia—of anyone, not even at the École normale, having the slightest idea of what linguistics is, but it is extremely unusual that he should have thus come across the fact that this is the mainspring that gives some hope for what he curiously calls concrete psychology.

You must read this little book, and if I had it here I would read it with you. Perhaps one day I will make it the substance of our exchanges here, but I already have enough things to say for me not to have to dwell on something whose significant oddness each one of you can see for yourself—that in seeking to escape from the university discourse one implacably reenters it. One can follow this step by step.

What objections does he make to the statements, I mean to the terminology, concerning the mechanisms Freud proposes in his theoretical development? He declares, concerning facts isolable by formal abstraction, as he confusingly puts it, that what escapes Freud is for him essential to what is required in matters of psychology, namely that all scientific facts are utterable only if one preserves what he calls the act and, even better, the continuity of the I. This is what he writes—the continuity of the I.

This term is no doubt what made it possible for the editor I mentioned before to shine at Politzer's expense, to whom he makes a little reference—an episode, as it were, for enticing his audience such as it then was. An academic who in another connection has shown himself to be a hero—
73 what a fitting occasion to evoke him. It is always good to have one from time to time, but that is not sufficient, if you benefit from it without managing to show what in the university discourse is irreducible in relation to analysis. This book testifies to a unique battle, however, for Politzer cannot fail to sense how close analytic practice is in fact to what he ideally sketched out as being completely outside the field of anything that had previously been done as psychology. But he cannot avoid falling back upon requiring the I.

Not, to be sure, that I see there anything that is irreducible. The editor

in question lets himself off too lightly when he states that the unconscious does not express itself in the first person, and arms himself for this with one of my remarks about the fact that the subject receives his message from the other in inverted form.

That is clearly not a sufficient reason. Elsewhere I have in fact said that truth speaks I. "I, truth, am speaking."[14] It's just that what doesn't occur either to the author in question or to Politzer is that the "I" in question is perhaps innumerable, that the I does not need to be continuous for it to multiply its acts.

This is not what is essential.

4

In the face of this use of propositions are we not, before we part, going to present the following? "A child is being beaten." This entire fantasy really is made up of a proposition. Are we able to attribute to it anything whatsoever that the terms "true" or "false" designate?

This case, exemplary in that there is no definition of a proposition that it cannot be eliminated from, makes us grasp the fact that if this proposition has the effect of being sustained by a subject, it's undoubtedly a subject, as Freud immediately analyzes, divided by *jouissance*. Divided, I mean that also he who states it, this child who, *becomes virtue, turns green (wird, vertu, verdit, verdoie)* through being beaten, *geschlagen* – let's play on this a bit longer—this child who becomes green [with fear], beaten, he jests—*vertu, virtue*, these are the misfortunes of the *vers-tu, toward-you*, that is, the one who is striking him, and who is unnamed, no matter how the sentence is stated.

The "You are beating me" is this half of the subject whose formula con- 74
stitutes his liaison with *jouissance*. He receives, to be sure, his own message in inverted form—here this means his own *jouissance* in the form of the Other's *jouissance*. This is what is involved when the fantasy happens to join the father's image to what is initially another child. The fact is that the father gets *jouissance* from beating him, which here places the emphasis of the meaning, and also the emphasis of this truth that is a half-truth—for equally he who is identified with the other half, with the subject as child, was not this child, unless, as Freud says, one reconstitutes the intermediate stage—never, in any way, substantiated by memory—where it is him, in

[14] See Lacan, "The Freudian Thing," pp. 344–63 in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006).

effect. It is he who makes this sentence the support of his fantasy, the beaten child.

Here we are led back to this fact that a body can be formless [*sans figure*]. The father or the other, whoever this may be, who here plays the role of *jouissance*, assures its function, gives it its place, is not named at all. A formless god—this is truly what it is. He nevertheless cannot be grasped except as a body.

What has a body and does not exist? Answer—the big Other. If we believe in this big Other, then it has a body, ineliminable from the substance of the one who has said "I am what I am," which is another form of tautology altogether.

It is in this that, before leaving you, I will allow myself to advance this, which is so striking in history that, quite frankly, it is astonishing that it has not been emphasized enough or even not emphasized at all—materialists are the only authentic believers.

Experience has proved it—I am speaking of the time of the most recent historical eruption of materialism in the eighteenth century. Matter was their god. And indeed, why not? That stands up better than any other way of founding him.

It's just that this is not enough for the rest of us. Precisely because we have logical needs, if you will allow me this term. Because we are beings born of surplus *jouissance*, as a result of the use of language.

When I say, "the use of language," I do not mean that we use it. It is language that uses us. Language employs us, and that is how it enjoys. This is
75 why the only chance for the existence of God is that He—with a capital H—enjoys, that He is *jouissance*.

This is why it was clear to the most intelligent of the materialists, namely de Sade, that the aim of death is not at all the inanimate.

Read the propositions of Saint-Fond near the middle of *Juliette* and you will see what it's all about. When he says that death consists of nothing other than the invisible collaboration with the operation of nature, it is of course because for him, after death, everything remains animate—animated by the desire for *jouissance*. He can just as well call this *jouissance* nature, but it is obvious in the total context that it is *jouissance* that's at stake. *Jouissance* by what? By a unique being who has merely to say "I am what I am."

Why is this so? How does de Sade sense this so well?

This is where the fact that in appearance he is sadistic is played out. It's because he refuses to be what he is, to be what he says he is. When he makes this furious appeal to give to nature in its murderous operation, from which forms are always being reborn, what is he doing, if not displaying his impotence to be anything other than the instrument of divine *jouissance*?

That's de Sade the theoretician. Why is he a theoretician? I perhaps have the time, at the last moment as I usually do it, to tell you why.

The practitioner is different. As you know from a number of stories, about which we have his testimony in his own hand moreover, the practitioner is simply a masochist.

This is the only astute and practical position where *jouissance* is concerned, for exhausting oneself at being the instrument of God is backbreaking work. The masochist is a fine humorist. He has no need of God, his lackey will do. He gets his kicks by enjoying within limits that are moreover discreet, naturally, and like any good masochist, as you can see, you just have to read him, he finds it funny. He is a humorous master. Why in the devil, then, is de Sade a theoretician? Why this exhausting wish, for it is completely out of his reach, this wish that is written, designated in this way? This wish that these particles, in which—following the most extraordinary imagined acts—fragments of broken, shredded, dismembered lives result, be struck down by a second death. Within whose reach is this?

Of course, it is within our reach. I stated this a long time ago on the subject of Antigone. It's just that, being a psychoanalyst, I can see that the second death is prior to the first, and not after, as de Sade dreams. 76

De Sade was a theoretician. And why? Because he loved truth.

It is not that he wants to save it—he loves it. The proof that he loves it is that he refuses it, that he does not appear to notice that by decreeing this God dead he exalts Him, he bears witness to Him, witness to the fact that he, de Sade, only achieves *jouissance* through the small means I mentioned before.

What can it mean to say that by loving truth one thus falls into a system that is so obviously symptomatic? Here one thing is becoming clear—by proposing itself as the residue of the effect of language, as what makes it that the effect of language only extracts, from enjoying, what last time I was saying about the entropy of a surplus *jouissance*—this is what one does not see—truth as external to discourse—but what—is the sister of that forbidden *jouissance*.

I say, "It's the sister," because they are only related by this. If the most radical logical structures effectively attach themselves to this stem that is uprooted from *jouissance*, the inverse question arises of what corresponds to the enjoying of these conquests in logic that in our day are being made. There is this, for example, that a logical system is consistent, however "weak" it is, as they say, only by designating its force of effect of incompleteness, where its limit is marked. To what *jouissance* does this way in which the logical foundation itself proves to be opening up correspond? In other words, what is truth here?

It is not in vain, nor by chance, that I describe as sisterly the position of truth with respect to *jouissance*, apart from the fact that I am stating it in the hysteric's discourse.

Oddly enough, quite recently, someone gave a lecture to the Americans on something that everybody knows. Freud was having, with his sister-in-law, what is coyly called an affair. So what? We have known Minna Bernays' place in Freud's preoccupations for a very long time. Adding some Jungian gossip to it doesn't change a thing.

But I will hold onto this position of the sister-in-law. Isn't it because of his sister-in-law that de Sade, whom, as we all know, Oedipal prohibition
77 had separated from his wife—as the theoreticians of courtly love have always said, there is no love in marriage—loved truth so much?

I will leave you with that question.

21 January 1970

V

79

The Lacanian field

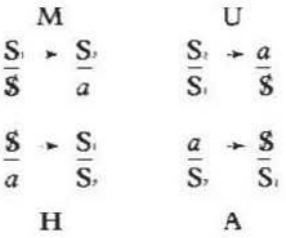
FREUD MASKS HIS DISCOURSE

THE HAPPINESS OF THE PHALLUS

MEANS OF *JOUISSANCE*

HEGEL, MARX, AND THERMODYNAMICS

WEALTH, PROPERTY OF THE WEALTHY



We are going to push on, and perhaps so as to avoid one misunderstanding, among others, I would like to give you this rule of first approximation—the reference of a discourse is what it acknowledges it wants to master. That is sufficient to classify it in the kinship of the master's discourse.

This is the difficulty faced by anyone whom I try to bring as close as I am able to the analyst's discourse—and who has to be located at the opposite of any wish, at least any declared wish, for mastery. I say, "at least declared," not because one has to dissimulate the wish, but because it is easy after all to spin off into the discourse of mastery.

As a matter of fact, this is the starting point for teaching the discourse of consciousness, which has recommenced, recommences every day, indefinitely. One of my best friends, who is very close to me, in psychiatry of course, described it best—it is a discourse of synthesis, a discourse of the consciousness that masters.[1]

He was the one I was replying to in certain views that I put forward some time ago on psychical causality, and which are there to testify that well 80
before I took the analytic discourse in hand I already had some orientation, in particular when I said to him, more or less, how could one grasp all that psychical activity other than as a dream, when thousands upon thousands

[1] See Lacan, "Presentation on Psychical Causality," pp. 123–58 in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York, W. W. Norton, 2006). The friend Lacan refers to is the psychiatrist Henri Ey.

of times over the course of the day one hears "this bastard chain of fate and inertia, of throws of the dice and astonishment, of false success and missed encounters, which make up the usual script of a human life"?[1]

Don't expect anything more subversive in my discourse than that I do not claim to have a solution.

1

Nevertheless, it is clear that there is no more burning question than what, in discourse, refers to *jouissance*.

Discourse is constantly touching on it, by virtue of the fact that this is where it originates. And discourse arouses it again whenever it attempts to return to this origin. It is in this respect that it challenges all appeasement.

Freud has an odd discourse, it has to be said, one that is most contrary to the coherence, to the consistency, of a discourse. The subject of discourse does not know himself as the subject holding the discourse. That he does not know what he is saying doesn't matter too much, one has always found a substitute [*suppléance*] for this. But what Freud says is that the subject does not know who it is that is saying it.

Knowledge—I think I have insisted upon this sufficiently to get it into your head—is something spoken, something that is said. Well then, knowledge that speaks all by itself—that's the unconscious.

This is the point at which it should have been attacked by what is more or less diffusely called phenomenology. It was not enough, to contradict Freud, to remind us that knowledge is known ineffably. The attack had to bear upon this, which is that Freud stresses what everyone is able to know—knowledge comes in bits, knowledge is enumerable, it comes in parcels, and—this is what isn't self-evident—what is said, the litany, is not said by anyone, it unfolds of its own accord.

With your permission, I wanted to start with an aphorism. You will see why
81 I hesitated. I have hesitated, as I usually do, but fortunately I am doing it before twelve thirty-one and thus have not delayed the end of our seminar this time. If I started in the way I always feel like starting, I would start abruptly. It's because I feel like doing it that I don't do it, I am sparing you, I am avoiding shocks for you. I wanted to begin with an aphorism which, I hope, will strike you by its obviousness, because it's the reason that Freud has carried the

[1] "Presentation on Psychical Causality," *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 130.

day despite the protestations that greeted his entry into the world of commerce of ideas. What carried the day is this—Freud doesn't bullshit [*déconne*].

This is what gives him this sort of priority he has in our day. It's probably also what makes it the case that there is another who, as we know, survives fairly well despite everything. What is characteristic of the two of them, Freud and Marx, is that they don't bullshit.

We can see it in the fact that in contradicting them there is always a risk of sliding, one slides very easily, into bullshitting. They throw into confusion the discourse of those who want to trip them up and very often freeze it into a sort of irreducibly conformist, retarded, academic recursion.

I am perfectly happy for these contradictors, if I may be so bold, to bullshit. They would be unpacking the consequences of Freud, they would be continuing a certain order, the order of what is at issue. After all, one does ask oneself why from time to time they say So-and-so is an idiot [*con*]. Is this so devaluing? Haven't you noticed that when one says that So-and-so is an idiot it actually means he is not so stupid? What depresses one is that one does not very well know in what way he deals with *jouissance*. And that's why he is called an idiot.

This is also what gives Freud's discourse its value. He is worthy of it. He is worthy of a discourse that maintains itself as close as possible to what refers to *jouissance*—as close as it was possible up till Freud. It is not very comfortable. It is not very comfortable to be situated at this point where discourse emerges, or even, when it returns there, when it falters, in the environs of *jouissance*.

Obviously, with respect to this Freud sometimes shies away, abandons us. He abandons the question of feminine *jouissance*. At the latest report Mr. Gillespie, an eminent character who has distinguished himself by all sorts of operations of horse-trading between the different currents that have 82
permeated analysis these last fifty years, marks some kind of jubilation, an unusual liveliness, in the latest issue of the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* over the fact that, owing to a number of experiments on vaginal orgasm that have apparently been carried out at the University of Washington, much light has apparently been thrown on what was a matter of debate, namely the primacy or not, in woman's development, of a *jouissance* initially reduced to the equivalent of male *jouissance*.[2]

These studies by a certain Masters and Johnson are not, frankly, lacking in interest. Nevertheless, when, without having been able to refer directly to the text, but on the basis of certain quotations, I see it appear there that the greater orgasm, which is apparently the woman's orgasm, emanates from the total personality, I do wonder how a movie camera that takes

[2] William Gillespie, "Concepts of Vaginal Orgasm," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 50 (1969):495–7.

images in color, placed inside an appendage representing the penis, recording from the inside what takes place on the lining of what, on its being inserted, surrounds it, is capable of grasping the said total personality.

This is perhaps very interesting, as an accompaniment in the margin of what Freud's discourse enables us to propose. But it is what gives meaning to the word *déconner*, "to bullshit," like one says *déchanter*, to change one's tune. You know perhaps what *le déchant*, the descant, is—it's something that is written alongside plain chant, it can also be sung, it can be an accompaniment, but ultimately it is not at all what one expects from plain chant.

It is because there is so much descant here that one has to remind oneself of what emerges, in brutal outline, from what I could call the attempt at economic reduction that Freud gives his discourse on *jouissance*.

It is not without reason that he masks it in this way. You will see what effect this has when stated directly. But it is what I thought I should do today in a form that, I hope, you will find striking, even though it will teach you nothing but the right tone for Freud's discoveries.

83

2

We are not going to speak about *jouissance* in that way.

I have already said enough to you for you to know that *jouissance* is the jar of the Danaides, and that once you have started, you never know where it will end.[3] It begins with a tickle and ends in a blaze of petrol. That's always what *jouissance* is.

I will take these things up via another factor which cannot be said to be absent from analytic discourse.

If you read the veritable anniversary corpus that is this issue of the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* you will see the authors congratulating themselves on the solidity displayed over these past fifty years. I ask you to carry out this test—take any issue from these past fifty years, you will never be able to tell when it dates from. They all say the same thing. They are always equally insipid, and because analysis preserves, they are always the same authors. It's simply that, as fatigue sets in, they reduce their contributions from time to time. One of them expresses himself in a single page.

[3] The Danaides were daughters of Danaus, a mythical king regarded by the ancient Greeks as one of their progenitors. Forced to marry their cousins, the sons of Aegyptus, the Danaides, with one exception, stabbed their husbands to death on the wedding night, with daggers their father had provided; the murderers were punished in the Underworld by having to fill leaky jars with water.

They congratulate themselves on the fact that, in sum, these fifty years have indeed confirmed these fundamental truths, that the mainspring of analysis is goodness, and that what has fortunately become obvious over the course of these years, with the progressive effacing of Freud's discourse, is particularly the solidity and glory of a discovery that is called the autonomous ego, namely, the ego free of conflict.

This is the result of fifty years of experience, by virtue of the insertion of three psychoanalysts, who had blossomed in Berlin, into American society where this discourse of a solidly autonomous ego undoubtedly promised attractive results.[4] For a return to the master's discourse, in effect, one could do no better.

This gives us an idea of the consequences, retrogressive if you like, that rebound from any form of attempt at transgression, which, all the same, analysis was at one time.

Now, we are going to put things in a certain way, and concerning a word that you will easily find in turning to this issue [of the journal], since it's also one of the current themes of analytic propaganda—in English it's called "happiness," in French we call it *le bonheur*.

Unless we define happiness in a rather sad way, namely that it is to be 84
like everyone else, which is what the autonomous ego could be resolved into—nobody, it has to be said, knows what it is. If we are to believe Saint-Just who said this himself, then since that time, his own day, happiness has become a political factor.

Let's try to give body to this notion by another abrupt statement which, I ask you to note, is central to Freudian theory—the only happiness is the happiness of the phallus.

Freud writes this in all sorts of ways, and even writes it in a naïve manner which consists in saying that nothing can come closer to the most perfect *jouissance* than that of the male orgasm.

However, where Freudian theory places the emphasis is on the fact that it is only the phallus that is happy—not the bearer of said. Even when, not out of oblativity, but out of desperation, he places it, the above said phallus, inside the womb of a partner, supposedly disappointed at not bearing one herself.

There you have what psychoanalytic experience teaches us positively. The bearer of the said phallus, as I put it, strives to get his partner to accept this privation, in the name of which all his efforts at love, his detailed caring and tender services, are in vain, since he reawakens the said wound of privation. There is no compensation for this wound in the satisfaction that

[4] The allusion is to Ernst Kris, Rudolf Loewenstein, and Heinz Hartmann.

its bearer purportedly derives from alleviating it. On the contrary, it is reawakened by its very presence, by the presence of that thing the regret for which causes this wound.

This is exactly what was revealed to us by what Freud was able to extract from the hysteric's discourse. It is the basis on which we can understand how the hysteric symbolizes the initial non-satisfaction. I have highlighted her promotion of unsatisfied desire supported by the minimal example that I have commented on in the article [*écrit*] that goes under the title of "The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of Its Power," namely, the dream of the butcher's beautiful wife.[5]

You will recall that there is the beautiful wife and her husband, who loves a fuck, who is a perfect idiot, because of which she has to show him that she does not value what he wants to satisfy her to excess with, which means that nothing is settled as to what is essential, even though she has what is essen-
85 tial. There you have it. What she does not see, because she too has limits to her own little horizon, is that by leaving what is essential to her husband to another woman, she would obtain surplus *jouissance*, for this is what is at stake in the dream. She doesn't see it in the dream, that's all one can say.

There are others that do see it. For example, Dora does. Through the adoration of the object of desire that woman has become on her horizon—the woman she envelops herself in and who in the case study is called Frau K., the woman she is going to contemplate in the figure of the Dresden Madonna—through this adoration, she plugs her penile claims [*revendications*]. And this is what makes it possible for me to say that the butcher's beautiful wife does not see that, like Dora, she would ultimately be happy to leave this object to another woman.

There are other solutions. If I take this one it's because it is the most scandalous.

There are many other refinements in the ways of finding a substitute for this *jouissance*, whose framework, which is that of the social, and which leads to the Oedipus complex, brings it about that by virtue of being the only *jouissance* that would bring happiness, precisely because of that, this *jouissance* is excluded. This is, strictly, the meaning of the Oedipus complex. And this is why it is interesting in analytic investigation to know how it is that by being substituted for the prohibition of phallic *jouissance* something is introduced whose origin we have defined by a thing that is quite different from phallic *jouissance*, one that is situated by, and as it were mapped out [*quadrillé*] by, the function of surplus *jouissance*.

I am only recalling here some outstanding features of Freudian discourse that I have highlighted many times before and that I want to insert

[5] See Lacan, *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 489ff.; also Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, SE 4:147ff.

into their relationship of configuration—which is not central but it is related—with the situation I am trying to give of this discourse's relationships to *jouissance*. This is the respect in which I am recalling them and want to place renewed emphasis on them, with the intention of modifying any aura that the idea that the Freudian discourse is centered on the biological facts of sexuality may hold for you.

I will see how I measure up here, which is something that I must confess to you I did not discover very long ago. It is always the things that are most visible, the ones that display themselves, that one sees least. I suddenly asked myself, "But how does one say 'sex' in Greek?"

The worst of it is that I did not have a French-Greek dictionary, and anyway there aren't any—well, only small, ugly ones. I had found *genos*, which of course has nothing to do with sex, since it means a bunch of other things, race, lineage, engenderment, reproduction. Then another word appeared on the horizon, but its connotations are quite different—*phusis*, "nature." 86

This division of living beings, of one part of them, into two classes, with what one realizes that this entails, namely, most likely, the irruption of death, since the others, those that are not sexed, do not give the appearance of dying all that much—this is not what we are saying at all, it doesn't have this ring about it at all when we say "sex." The stress, of course, is not at all on this biological reference. This is clearly what shows that one has to be very, very careful before assuming that it is a reminder not just about organicism but even about a reference to biology that foregrounds the function of sex in Freudian discourse.

It is here that one notices that "sex," with the significance it has for us and its level of use, its meaningful diffusion, is *sexus*. In relation to Greek one would have to conduct the enquiry into other languages, but in Latin it is, very clearly, attached to *secare*. In Latin *sexus* is implicated in what I initially made evident, namely that the entire game revolves around the phallus.

Of course, it is not only the phallus that is present in sexual relations. However, what this organ has that is privileged is that in some way it is quite possible to isolate its *jouissance*. It is thinkable as excluded. To use violent words—I am not going to drown this in symbolism for you—it has, precisely, a property that, within the entire field of what constitutes sexual equipment, we may consider to be very local, very exceptional. There is not, in effect, a very large number of animals for whom the decisive organ for copulation is something as isolatable in its functions of tumescence and detumescence, determining a perfectly definable curve, called orgasmic—once it's over, it's over. *Post coitum animal triste*, as has already been said. This is no exaggeration, moreover. But it does clearly indicate that he feels himself to be frustrated. There is something there that does not concern him. He can take things differently, he can find it very cheerful, but ulti-

87 mately Horace found it to be rather sad—and this is proof that he had still retained illusions about the relationships with the Greek *phusis*, with this bud that he thinks sexual desire constitutes.

That is putting things in their place, when one sees that this is, nevertheless, how Freud presents things. If there is something in biology that might echo, have a vague resemblance with but in no way be rooted in this position whose roots in discourse we are now going to indicate, if there is something which, so that we can say good-bye to the domain of biology, would give us an approximate idea of what it means to say that everything is played out around this stake, which one of them doesn't have and the other doesn't know what to do with, it would be more or less what takes place in certain animal species.

Just recently I saw—and this is why I mention it to you—some fish that were very pretty and monstrous, as a species has to be in which the female is about this size and the male is like this, tiny. He comes and latches onto her stomach, and he latches on so well that his own tissues are indiscernible—it is not possible, even under a microscope, to see where the tissues of one end and the tissues of the other begin. There he is, hooked on by his mouth, and there he fulfils, if it can be put like this, his male functions. It is not unthinkable that this greatly simplifies the problem of sexual relations, when in the end the weary male resorbs his heart, his liver, and none of it is left at all, there he is, suspended from the good place, reduced to what after a certain time remains in this little animal pocket, namely, principally the testicles.

The question is to elaborate the nature of this phallic exclusion in the great human game of our tradition, which is that of desire.

Desire has no immediately proximate relationship with this field. Our tradition states it for what it is, Eros, the making present of a lack.

And this is where one can ask how it is possible to desire anything. What is lacking? There was someone who one day said, "But don't wear yourself out, nothing is lacking, look at the lilies in the field, they do not weave nor do they spin, it is they who are in their place in the Kingdom of heaven."[6]

It is obvious that to make these claims of genuine defiance, one really would have had to be the very one who was identifying with the negation
88 of this harmony. This at least is how he was understood, interpreted, when he was characterised as the Word. He had to be the Word itself if he was to negate the obvious to this extent. At least, this is the idea that formed around him. He didn't say as much. He said, if one of his disciples is to be believed, "I am the Way, the Truth, the Life."[7] But the fact that they made

[6] "Consider how the lilies grow in the fields; they do not work, they do not spin." Matt. 6:28.

[7] John 14:6.

this into the Word indicates where people nevertheless knew more or less what they were saying when they thought that only the Word was capable of repudiating itself to this extent.

It is true that we can well imagine the lily in the fields as a body entirely given over to *jouissance*—each stage of its growth identical to a formless sensation. The plant's *jouissance*. Nothing in any case makes it possible to escape it. It is perhaps infinitely painful to be a plant. Well, nobody amuses themselves by thinking about this, except me.

It is not the same for animals, who have what we interpret as an economy—the possibility of movement in order to obtain, above all, the minimum of *jouissance*. This is what is known as the pleasure principle. Let's not stay there where one enjoys, because God only knows where it might end, as I was already saying earlier.

Now, there is this thing, which is that we nevertheless know the means to *jouissance*. I was speaking to you just before about tickling and grilling. There, we know how to go about it. That's even what knowledge is. In principle nobody wants to overuse it, and yet it's tempting to.

This is actually what Freud discovered in fact around 1920, and here, in a way, is the point at which his discovery backtracks.

His discovery was to have spelled out the unconscious, and I defy anyone to say that this can be anything other than the remark that there is a perfectly articulated knowledge for which strictly speaking no subject is responsible. When a subject happens to encounter it all of a sudden, to come upon this knowledge he was not expecting, good God, he—he who speaks—finds himself very confused indeed.

This was the first discovery. Freud said to subjects, "Speak, speak then, do what the hysterics do, let's see what knowledge it is that you encounter, and the manner in which you have aspired to it or, on the other hand, in which you reject it, let's see what happens." And that necessarily led him to this discovery, which he called beyond the pleasure principle. And it was 89
this, that the essential thing in determining what one is concerned with when exploring the unconscious is repetition.

Repetition. This does not mean that one redoes what one has finished, like digestion or some other physiological function. Repetition is the precise denotation of a trait that I have uncovered for you in Freud's text as being identical with the unary trait, with the little stick, with the element of writing, the element of a trait insofar as it is the commemoration of an irruption of *jouissance*.

This is why it is conceivable that the rule and the principle of pleasure are violated, why it succumbs to displeasure. There is nothing else to say—not to pain obviously, but to displeasure, which can only mean *jouissance*.

This is where inserting the generation, the genital, the genitive [*génésique*], into desire shows itself to be entirely distinct from sexual maturity.

There is no doubt that speaking of premature sexualization has its point. Certainly, what is called the early manifestation of sexuality in man is very obviously what it is said to be, namely, premature. But apart from the fact that this can imply, in effect, the presence of *jouissance*, it nevertheless remains the case that it is not merely organic autoerotism that introduces the division between libido and nature. There are other animals than men who are capable of stroking themselves, and that hasn't led them, monkeys, to a highly advanced elaboration of desire. On the contrary, we find favor here in the function of discourse.

It is not just a matter of talking about prohibitions, but simply about a dominance of the woman as mother, and as a mother who says, a mother of whom one makes demands, a mother who gives orders, and who thereby establishes the child's dependence.

Woman lends herself to *jouissance* by daring the mask of repetition. She presents herself here as what she is, as the institution of masquerade. She teaches her little one to parade. She tends towards surplus *jouissance*, because she, the woman, plunges her roots, like a flower, down into *jouissance* itself. The means of *jouissance* are open on the principle that he has renounced this closed, foreign *jouissance*, renounced the mother.

It is here that a vast social connivance will come and insert itself, inverting what we can call the differences between the sexes in nature into the
90 sexualization of organic difference. This overturning implies as common denominator the exclusion of the specifically male organ. Henceforth the male is and is not what he is with respect to *jouissance*. And thereby, also, woman is produced as an object, precisely through not being what he is, sexual difference, on the one hand, and on the other through being what he renounces by way of *jouissance*.

These reminders are absolutely essential to make at a time when, in talking of the other side of psychoanalysis, the question arises of the place of psychoanalysis in politics.

3

The intrusion into the political can only be made by recognizing that the only discourse there is, and not just analytic discourse, is the discourse of *jouissance*, at least when one is hoping for the work of truth from it.

Characterizing the master's discourse as comprising a hidden truth does not mean that this discourse is hidden, that it is lying low. The word *caché*,

hidden, in French has its etymological virtues. It comes from *coactus*, from the verb *coactare, coactitare, coacticare*. This means that there is something that is compressed, that is like a superimposition, something that needs to be unfolded in order to be legible.

It is clear that his truth is hidden from him, and a certain Hegel stated that it is delivered to him by the work of the slave. There you have it, however, it is a master's discourse, this discourse of Hegel's, which relies on substituting the State for the master via the long pathway of culture, culminating in absolute knowledge. It does seem to have been definitively refuted by discoveries made by Marx. I am not here to comment on this, and I won't add an appendix here, but I will simply show the extent to which, from the perspective of our psychoanalytic belvedere, we are comfortable about casting doubt on whether work engenders absolute knowledge, or even any knowledge at all, on the horizon.

I have already developed this point for you, and I can go back over it again here. But it is one of the axes in which I beg you to locate yourselves so as to grasp what the analytic subversion is.

Whereas knowledge is a means of *jouissance*, work is something else. Even if work is accomplished by those who have knowledge, what it pro- 91
duces can certainly be truth, it is never knowledge—no work has ever produced knowledge. Something objects to this, which is given by a closer observation of the nature, in our culture, of the relations between the master's discourse and something that has emerged, something which has reestablished the examination of what, from Hegel's point of view, was wrapped around this discourse. This something is the avoidance of absolute *jouissance*, insofar as it is determined by the fact that in attaching the child to the mother social connivance makes her the privileged site of prohibitions.

Moreover, doesn't the formalization of a knowledge that renders all truth problematic suggest to us that, rather than progress having been made through the work of the slave—as if there has been the slightest progress in his condition, quite the contrary—it is a matter of the transference, plundering, spoliation of what, at the beginning of knowledge, was inscribed, hidden, in the slave's world? In this connection it was the master's discourse that had to impose itself. But also, by virtue of this fact, reentering into the mechanism of its repeated assertion, he had to apprehend the loss of his own entry into discourse and, in a word, see this object *a* emerge, which we have nailed down as surplus *jouissance*.

In short, this and nothing more than this is what the master had to make the slave, the sole possessor of the means of *jouissance*, pay for.

The master was satisfied with this little tithe, this surplus *jouissance*, such that, after all, there is no indication that in himself the slave was unhappy to be giving it. The case is quite different with respect to what is found, on

the horizon of the rise of the master subject, in a truth which asserts itself on the basis of his equality with himself, on the basis of this I-cracy I once spoke of, and which is, it seems, the essence of every affirmation in culture that has seen this master's discourse flourish over all others.

If we look at it more closely, what subtracts the slave's knowledge from him is the entire history whose stages Hegel follows step by step—something unusual, without having seen where it was leading, and for good reason. He was still in the field of Newton's discoveries, he hadn't seen the birth of thermodynamics. If he had been able to take on board formulas which, for the first time, unified this field that was designated as thermodynamics, perhaps he would have been able to recognize in it this reign of the signifier, of the signifier repeated at two levels, S_1, S_1 again.

92 S_1 is the dam. The second S_1, down below, is the pond that receives it and turns the turbine. There is no other meaning to the conservation of energy than this mark of an instrumentation that signifies the power of the master.

What is collected in the fall has to be conserved. This is the first of the laws. There is unfortunately something that disappears in the interval, or more exactly does not lend itself to a return to, to restoring, the starting point. This is the so-called Carnot-Clausius principle, although a certain Mayer contributed to it substantially.

Doesn't this discourse which, essentially, gives primacy to everything at the beginning and at the end and neglects everything in between, which may be of the order of something arising from knowledge, placing these pure numerical truths, that which is countable, on the horizon of a new world signify, all by itself, something completely different from the increasing role of absolute knowledge? Isn't this very ideal of a formalization in which henceforth everything is merely to be counted—where energy itself is nothing other than what is counted, than what, if you manipulate the formulas in a certain way, always turns out to add up to the same total—the rotation, the quarter turn, here? Doesn't this make it the case that in the place of the master an articulation of completely new knowledge, completely reducible formally, is established, and that in the slave's place there emerges, not something that might be inserted in no particular way into this order of knowledge, but something which is its product instead?

Marx denounces this process as spoliation. It's just that he does it without realizing that its secret lies in knowledge itself, just as the secret of the worker himself is to be reduced to being no longer anything but a value. Once a higher level has been passed, surplus *jouissance* is no longer surplus *jouissance* but is inscribed simply as a value to be inscribed in or deducted from the
93 totality of whatever it is that is accumulating—what is accumulating from out

of an essentially transformed nature. The worker is merely a unit of value—an indication for those for whom this term produces an echo.*

What Marx denounces in surplus value is the spoliation of *jouissance*. And yet, this surplus value is a memorial to surplus *jouissance*, its equivalent of surplus *jouissance*. "Consumer society" derives its meaning from the fact that what makes it the "element," in inverted commas, described as human is made the homogeneous equivalent of whatever surplus *jouissance* is produced by our industry—an imitation surplus *jouissance*, in a word.

Moreover, that can catch on. One can do a semblance of surplus *jouissance*—it draws quite a crowd.

4

If I wanted to give you matter for your dreams about where this process, of which our science is the status, begins I would tell you, since I reread it recently, to amuse yourselves with the *Satiricon*.

I didn't find what Fellini did with it bad. What he will never be forgiven for is having made a mistake in writing "Satyricon," whereas there is no "y," but apart from that, it's not bad. It's not as good as the text, because in the text you are serious, you don't stop at the images and you see what it's all about. In a word, it's a good example for drawing the distinction between what the master is and what the rich are.

What is marvelous in the discourses, whichever discourse it may be, even the most revolutionary, is that they never say things directly, as I have just been trying to—a bit. I do what I can.

From time to time I stick my nose into a stack of authors who are economists. And we can see the extent to which this is of interest for us analysts, because if there is something that remains to be done in analysis, it is to institute this other field of energetics, which would demand other structures than those of physics, and which is the field of *jouissance*.

You can unify the thermodynamic and the electromagnetic fields as much as you want, if you are a Maxwell. You nevertheless run into a difficulty with the field of gravitation, and it's fairly curious because it's with gravitation that everybody started—but, in the end, that doesn't matter. As for what comes from the field of *jouissance*—which, sadly, will never be called the Lacanian field, for I will surely not have the time even to sketch out the bases, but I have wanted to—there are some remarks to be made.

* In France the number of courses or subjects that one takes for a degree are calculated in terms of *unités de valeur*.

94 One opens the book by a certain Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, and he is not alone, they are all there, Malthus, Ricardo, and others, racking their brains—what is the wealth of nations? There they are, trying to define use value, that must count, exchange value—it's not Marx who invented all that. Now, it is extraordinary that ever since there have been economists nobody, up till now, has—not even for an instant, I am not saying this in order to stop here—ever made this remark that wealth is the property of the wealthy. Just like psychoanalysis which, as I said one day, is done by psychoanalysts, this is its principal characteristic, you have to begin with the psychoanalyst. Why not, concerning wealth, begin with the wealthy?

I have to stop in two minutes time, but all the same I am going to make a remark to you that stems from an experience that is not particularly that of an analyst, but is one that anybody could have.

The wealthy have property. They buy, they buy everything, in short—well, they buy a lot. But I would like you to meditate on this fact, which is that they do not pay for it.

One imagines that they pay, for reasons of accounting that stem from the transformation of surplus *jouissance* into surplus value. But first, everyone knows that they very regularly add on surplus value. There is no circulation of surplus value. And, very much in particular, there is one thing that they never pay for, and that is knowledge.

In effect, not only is there the dimension of entropy in what takes place on the side of surplus *jouissance*. There is something else as well, as someone has noticed, which is that knowledge implies an equivalence between this entropy and information. Of course, it's not the same, it's not so simple, as M. Brillouin says.[8]

The wealthy are masters—and this is what I ask you to go and look for in the *Satiricon*—only because they have redeemed themselves. The masters in question on the horizon of ancient Greece are not businessmen. See how Aristotle speaks of them—they disgust him.

On the other hand, when a slave has redeemed [racheté] himself he is a master only in that he has begun to risk everything. Indeed this is how a character, who is none other than Trimalchio himself, puts it in the *Satiricon*. Why is it that once he has become rich he can buy everything without
95 paying for it? Because he will have nothing to do with jouissance. That is not what he repeats. He repeats his purchase. He buys everything again or, rather, whatever turns up, he buys. He is cut out to be a Christian. He is, by destiny, the redeemed.

And why does one let oneself be bought by the wealthy? Because what

[8] Most likely Marcel Brillouin, French physicist and professor of mathematical physics at the Collège de France in the early twentieth century.

they give you stems from their essence of wealth. Buy from the wealthy, from a developed nation, you believe—and this is what the meaning of the wealth of nations is—that you are simply going to share in the level of a rich nation. However, in the process, what you lose is your knowledge, which gave you your status. The wealthy acquire this knowledge on top of everything else. It's simply that, precisely, they don't pay for it.

We have arrived at the limit today of what I am able to say before we vacate the auditorium. I will merely raise, and I will end with this, the question of what can happen with the promotion, the vocal reprise, of the nature of surplus *jouissance*, of *a*, at the level at which the function of the wealthy operates, the one for which knowledge is only a tool of exploitation. This is, in some way, what the analyst's function gives something like the dawn of.

I will try to explain to you next time what its essence is. It is certainly not to refashion this element into an element of mastery.

In effect, as I will explain to you, everything hinges on failure.

11 February 1970

BEYOND THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX

VI

99

The castrated master

THE MASTER SIGNIFIER DETERMINES CASTRATION

SCIENCE, MYTH, THE UNCONSCIOUS

DORA AND HER FATHER

UNUSABLE OEDIPUS

It must be beginning to dawn on you that the other side of psychoanalysis is the very thing that I am putting forward this year under the title of master's discourse.

I am not doing this in an arbitrary way, this master's discourse already has its letters of credit in the philosophical tradition. Nevertheless, in the way I am trying to uncover it, it takes on, here, a new light by virtue of the fact that in our day it so happens that it can be uncovered in a sort of purity—and this, through something that we experience directly, and at the level of politics.

What I mean by this is that it embraces everything, even what thinks of itself as revolutionary, or more exactly as what is romantically called Revolution with a capital R. The master's discourse accomplishes its own revolution in the other sense of doing a complete circle.

This evaluation is a bit aphoristic, I agree, but it is made, as is the destiny of aphorisms, so as to illuminate in a simple flash. On its horizon there is the fact, which interests us, by which I mean you and me, that this master's discourse has only one counterpoint, the analytic discourse, which is still so inappropriate.

I call it counterpoint because its symmetry, if one exists—and one does—is not around a line, nor around a plane, but around a point. In other words, it is obtained by completing the circle of this master's discourse I was referring to a moment ago.

The layout of these four terms, the two numbered Ss, $, and *a*, as I rewrote them last time, and whose transcription I hope that you more or 100
less all still have in your notes, sufficiently displays this symmetry in relation to a point, which makes it the case that the psychoanalytic discourse is quite precisely located at the opposite pole from the master's discourse.

1

In psychoanalytic discourse it sometimes happens that we see certain terms that serve as a *filum* in an explanation, that of the father for instance. And it sometimes happens that we see someone try to draw the major elements together—a painstaking task when carried out from within what, at the point we have come to, one expects from a psychoanalytic utterance [*énoncé*] and statement [*énonciation*], that is to say, from within a genetic reference.

Concerning the father one thinks one is obliged to begin with childhood, with identifications, and then it's something that can tend toward extraordinary nonsense, a strange contradiction. One will speak about primary identification as what binds the child to the mother, and indeed this seems self-evident. However, if we refer to Freud, to his work of 1921 called *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, it is quite precisely the identification with the father that is given as primary.[1] This is certainly very odd. Freud indicates there that, completely primordially, the father happens to be the one who presides over the very first identification, precisely in that in a privileged way he is the one who deserves to be loved.

This is very odd, to be sure, and is to be placed in contradiction with everything that the development of analytic experience is found to have established concerning the primacy of the child's relationship with the mother. There is an odd discordance between Freudian discourse and the discourse of psychoanalysts.

Perhaps these discordances are the result of confusion, and the order I am trying to introduce by referring to configurations of discourse that are in some way primordial is there to remind us that it is strictly unthinkable to state anything that is at all ordered in analytic discourse unless one bears the following in mind. Our effort is, as we know perfectly well, a reconstructive collaboration with whoever is in the position of the analysand whom we are, in some way, enabling to embark upon his career. To be effec-
101 tive this effort, which we make to extract, in the form of imputed thought, what has in effect been lived by him who, on this occasion, well deserves the title of patient, must not make us forget that by virtue of the signifier connection the subjective configuration has a perfectly mappable objectivity which founds the very possibility of the assistance we bring in the form of interpretation.

There, at a given point of the link, namely the altogether initial one between S_1 and S_2, it is possible for this fault we call the subject to open.

[1] See Sigmund Freud, SE 18 (1921):100.

There, the effects of the link, which as it happens is a signifier link, operate. Whether this lived experience [*vécu*] that is more or less correctly called thought is or is not produced somewhere, something is produced there that derives from a chain, exactly as though it were thought. Freud is never saying anything else when he speaks of the unconscious. This objectivity not only induces but determines this position, which is that of the subject, as the focus of what is called the defenses.

What I am advancing, what I am going to announce that is new today, is that in expressing itself toward those means of *jouissance* that are what is called knowledge, the master signifier not only induces but determines castration.

I shall return to what one should understand by "master signifier," starting from what we have put forward on this topic.

At the outset, surely, there aren't any. All signifiers are in some sense equivalent, if we just play on the difference of each from all the others, through not being the other signifiers. But it's for the same reason that each is able to come to the position of master signifier, precisely because its potential function is to represent the subject for another signifier. This is how I have always defined it. However, the subject it represents is not univocal. It is represented, undoubtedly, but also it is not represented. At this level something remains hidden in relation to this very same signifier.

The game of the psychoanalytic discovery is played out around this. Like any other, it has been prepared for. It has been prepared for by this hesitation—which is more than a hesitation—this ambiguity, maintained under the name of dialectic by Hegel, when it was found to have been posited at the outset that the subject asserts himself as knowing himself.

Hegel has the courage to set out, in effect, from *Selbstbewusstsein* in its most naïve formulation [*énonciation*], namely that all consciousness knows that it is consciousness. And yet he interweaves this departure point with a 102
series of crises—*Aufhebung*, as he puts it—from which it results that this very *Selbstbewusstsein*, the inaugural figure of the master, finds its truth in the work of the other *par excellence*, in the other who only knows himself through having lost this body, this very body he supports himself with, because he wanted to retain it for its access to *jouissance*—in other words, the slave.

How can one not try to break this Hegelian ambiguity? How can one not attempt to take a different path, starting out from what is given to us in analytic experience, which it is always a matter of returning to in order to grasp it better?

More simply, it concerns the fact that there is a use of the signifier that we can define by starting out from the master signifier's split from this body we have just mentioned, the body lost by the slave, which becomes nothing other than the body in which all the other signifiers are inscribed.

It is in this sort of way that we might illustrate the knowledge that Freud defines by placing it between the enigmatic parentheses of the *Urverdrängt*—which means precisely what has not had to be repressed because it has been repressed from the start. This headless knowledge, if I can put it like that, is indeed a politically definable fact, structurally definable. Consequently, everything that is produced through work—I mean this in the strict, full sense of the word "produced"—everything that is produced concerning the truth of the master, namely what he as subject hides, is going to join company with this knowledge insofar as it is split off, *urverdrängt*, insofar as it is split off and nobody understands a thing about it.

There you have what, I hope, rings true for you—without your knowing whether it's ringing on the left or on the right. This is initially structured in what has been called the mythical support of certain societies. We can analyze them as ethnographic, that is to say, as escaping the master's discourse, to the extent that the latter begins with the predominance of the subject as, in fact, tending to be supported only by this ultrareduced myth of being identical with his own signifier.

This is where I indicated to you last time what in mathematics has an affinity with this discourse, where A represents itself, without any need for a mythical discourse to give it its relations. This is how mathematics represents the master's knowledge insofar as it is constituted on the basis of other laws than those of mythical knowledge.

103 In short, the master's knowledge is produced as knowledge that is entirely autonomous with respect to mythical knowledge, and this is what we call science.

Last time I sketched this out for you by briefly mentioning thermodynamics and, later, the total unification of the field of physics. This unification rests on the preservation of a unit that is nothing other than a constant that is always rediscovered in the calculation—I will not even say in the quantification—by an operation on figures, that is, one defined in such a way as to make this constant appear in the calculation every time. There you have what alone supports what is called, at the foundation of physical science, energy.

This support stems from the fact that mathematics is constructible only on the basis of the fact that the signifier is capable of signifying itself. The A that you have written down on one occasion can be signified by its repetition as A. Now, this position is strictly untenable, it constitutes a violation of the rules with respect to the function of the signifier, which can signify anything except, surely, itself. It is this initial postulate that one must throw off in order for the discourse of mathematics to get started.

Between the two, the original violation and the construction of the discourse of energetics, the discourse of science only sustains itself, in logic,

by making truth a play of values, by radically avoiding its entire dynamic power. In effect, the discourse of propositional logic is, as has been stressed, fundamentally tautological. It consists in ordering propositions composed in such a way that they are always true, whatever the value, true or false, of the elementary propositions. Isn't this to rid oneself of what I have just been calling the dynamism of the work of truth?

Well then, the analytic discourse is specified, is distinguished by the fact that it raises the question of what the use is of this form of knowledge which rejects and excludes the dynamics of truth.

A first approximation—its use is to repress what inhabits mythical knowledge. But, excluding the latter at the same time, it knows [*connaît*] nothing more about it except in the form of what we rediscover under the species of the unconscious, that is, as the debris of this knowledge [*savoir*] in the form of disjointed knowledge. What is reconstructed out of this disjointed knowledge will in no way make its way back into the discourse of science, nor into its structural laws.

That is to say that here I am distancing myself from what Freud has said on this. This disconnected knowledge, such as we find it in the uncon- 104
scious, is foreign to the discourse of science. And, precisely in this respect, it is striking that the discourse of the unconscious imposes itself. It imposes itself precisely by virtue of the fact I articulated the other day in this form—and you have to believe that, if I employed it, I didn't find anything better—that it doesn't bullshit. As stupid as this discourse of the unconscious is, it is responding to something that stems from the institution of the discourse of the master himself. This is what is called the unconscious. It imposes itself upon science as a fact [*fait*].

This fabricated [*faite*], that is to say artificial [*factice*], science is unable to misrecognize what appears to it as an artifact, this is true. It's just that it is prohibited, precisely because it is the master's science, from raising the question of the artisan, and this will make the fact all that much more of a fact.

Very shortly after the last war—I had already been born quite some time before—I took into analysis three people from the high country of Togo, who had spent their childhood there.[2] Now, I was unable, in their analysis, to find any trace of their tribal customs and beliefs, which they had not forgotten, which they knew, but from the point of view of ethnography. It has to be said that everything was done to separate them from this, given what they were, these courageous little doctors who were trying to insert themselves into the medical hierarchy of the metropolis—these were still colo-

[2] Togo is a West African country that gained independence in 1960, having been a French-administered territory since 1922.

nial days. What they knew about this, then, at the level of the ethnographer was more or less that of journalism, but their unconscious functioned according to the good old rules of Oedipus. This was the unconscious that had been sold to them along with the laws of colonization, this exotic, regressive form of the master's discourse, in the face of the capitalism called imperialism. Their unconscious was not that of their childhood memories—you could sense it—but their childhood was retroactively lived out in our *famil-ial* categories—spell the word how I showed you to last year. I defy any analyst whatever, even one who has been out into the field, to contradict me.

It is not psychoanalysis that can be used to conduct an ethnographic inquiry. That said, the said inquiry has no chance of coinciding with autochthonous knowledge, unless it be through reference to the discourse of science. And unfortunately, the said inquiry has not the slightest idea about this reference, since it would be obliged to relativize it. When I say that one cannot understand an ethnographical inquiry through psycho-
105 analysis, I certainly have the agreement of all ethnographers. I will have their agreement less if I say that, in order to have a bit of an idea about the relativization of the discourse of science, that is to say, in order to have perhaps a slight chance of conducting a correct ethnographical inquiry, one must, I repeat, not proceed by way of psychoanalysis, but perhaps, if there is such a thing, be a psychoanalyst.

Here, at this crossroads, we state that what psychoanalysis enables us to conceptualize is nothing other than this, which is in line with what Marxism has opened up, namely that discourse is bound up with the interests of the subject. This is what, from time to time, Marx calls the economy, because these interests are, in capitalist society, entirely commercial. It's just that since the market is linked to the master signifier, nothing is resolved by denouncing it in this way. For the market is no less linked to this signifier after the socialist revolution.

2

I am now going to spell out the essential [*propres*] functions of discourse, according to my way of stating them.

$$\frac{\text{master signifier}}{\text{subject}} \qquad \frac{\text{knowledge}}{\textit{jouissance}}$$

This putting into operation of discourse is defined by a split, precisely by differentiating out the master signifier with respect to knowledge.

In societies that are called primitive, insofar as I describe them as not being dominated by the master's discourse—I am saying this for the benefit of anyone who would like to know a bit more about it—it is quite likely that the master signifier can be located by means of a more complex economy. Indeed, the best sociological research in the field of these societies verges on doing this. We should be delighted, particularly as it is no accident that the master signifier functions more simply in the master's discourse.

It can be completely manipulated by means of this relation between S_1 and S_2 that you see written there. In this discourse the subject finds himself, along with all the illusions that this comprises, bound to the master signifier, whereas knowledge brings about his insertion into *jouissance*. 106

Well then, this year I will make this contribution—these functions that are specific to discourse are able to find different sites. This is what their rotation around these four places defines, which as you see are in no way designated by letters here, but only by what, whenever necessary, I call "top," "left-hand side," "bottom," and "right-hand side."

I will add, a bit late in the piece, in order to enlighten those who will have designated them through the effect of a bit of nous, that here for instance we have desire, and on the other side the site of the Other. This represents what I spoke about, in an ancient register, at a time when I used to be happy with this sort of approximation, when I said that man's desire is the Other's desire.

The place underneath desire represents the place of truth. Under the Other it is the place where loss is produced, the loss of *jouissance* from which we extract the function of surplus *jouissance*.

$$\frac{\text{desire}}{\text{truth}} \qquad \frac{\text{Other}}{\text{loss}}$$

This is where the hysteric's discourse gets its price from. It has the merit of maintaining in the discursive institution the question of what the sexual relation is, namely how a subject is able to maintain it or, to express it better, is unable to maintain it.

As a matter of fact, the answer to the question of how he is able to maintain it is the following—leave speech to the Other, and precisely as locus of repressed knowledge.

What is interesting is the truth that what is in sexual knowledge is entirely yielded up as foreign to the subject. This is what in Freudian discourse was originally called the repressed.

But this is not what matters. Taken in its pure form this has no other effect, if one can say this, than a justification of obscurantism—truths that are important to us, and more than slightly, are condemned to obscurity.

This is not the case at all. I mean that the hysteric's discourse does not testify to the fact that what is inferior is down below. On the contrary, as a battery of functions it is indistinguishable from those assigned to the master's discourse. And this is what enables the same letters that are in the 107 service of the latter to appear there—$, S_1, S_2, and *a*.

$$\begin{array}{ll} \$ & \rightarrow \quad S_1 \\ a & \quad\ S_2 \end{array}$$

It's simply that the hysteric's discourse reveals the master's discourse's relation to *jouissance*, in the sense that in it knowledge occupies the place of *jouissance*. The subject himself, the hysteric, is alienated from the master signifier as he whom this signifier divides—"he," in the masculine, represents the subject—he who refuses to make himself its body. People speak about somatic compliance with respect to hysterics. Although the term is Freud's, can't we see that it is very odd, and that it's more a question of the body's refusal? In following the effect of the master signifier, the hysteric is not a slave.

Let's give him the gender under which this subject is most often embodied. She, in her own way, goes on a kind of strike. She doesn't give up her knowledge. She unmasks, however, the master's function, with which she remains united, by emphasizing what there is of the master in what is the One with a capital "O," which she evades in her capacity as object of his desire. This is his true function which a long time ago we located, at least in the field of my school, under the title of idealized father.

I won't beat about the bush. I'll mention *Dora*—one has to—which I presume everyone who has come here to listen to me is familiar with.[3]

You must read *Dora* and throughout all the convoluted interpretations—I use the very term Freud gives for the economy of her maneuvers—not lose sight of something that I would go so far as to say Freud covers with his prejudices.

I am making a little detour. Whether you have the text in your head or not, consult it, and you will see these sentences that for Freud seem to be self-evident—for instance, that a girl can sort out these little difficulties all on her own or, even, when a man throws himself at her, she still mustn't create a scene over it, when one is a nice girl, of course. And why? Because this is how Freud thinks. Or again, and this goes even further, that a nor-
108 mal girl should not be disgusted when someone puts the hard word on her. That seems to be self-evident. You have to recognize the operation of what

[3] Sigmund Freud, "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria," SE 7:1–122.

I am calling a prejudice in a certain way of approaching what is revealed here by our *Dora*.

If this text has nevertheless retained some of the reference points I am trying to induct you into, you will see that it will not seem illegitimate to you yourselves to pronounce this word "convoluted" that I uttered just before. Perhaps the extraordinary subtlety, the astuteness, of these reversals, the multiple planes of which, as Freud explains, refract Dora's maneuvers, as I call them, in matters of love across three or four successive defenses, so as to echo what Freud himself designated in his text *Die Traumdeutung*, will make apparent to you that there these convolutions depend on a particular approach.

Along the lines of what I announced at the start of my discourse today on the father, that the subjective conjuncture of its signifying articulation receives a certain kind of objectivity, why not begin with the fact that Dora's father, the pivotal point of the entire adventure, or misadventure, is strictly a castrated man, I mean as concerns his sexual potency? It is obvious that he has had it, that he is quite unwell.

In every case, from *Studien über Hysterie* onward, the father is himself made out of symbolic appreciation. After all, even an ill person or a dying person is what he is. To consider him as deficient in relation to a function in which he is not occupied is to give him, properly speaking, a symbolic affectation. It is implicitly to proffer that the father is not merely what he is, that it is a title like "ex-soldier"—he is an "ex-sire." He is a father, like the ex-soldier, until the end of his life. This implies that in the word "father" there is something that is always in fact potentially creating. And it is in relation to this fact that, in this symbolic field, it must be observed that it is the father, insofar as he plays this pivotal, major role, this master role in the hysteric's discourse, that, from this angle of the power of creation, sustains his position in relation to the woman, even as he is out of action. This is what is specific to the function from which the hysteric's relation to the father stems, and it is very precisely this that we designate as the idealized father.

I told you I wouldn't beat about the bush. I am taking *Dora* and I am 109
asking you to reread the case after me in order to see whether what I am saying is true. Well then, how does what is organized within Herr K., whom I shall curiously call here the third man, suit Dora?

I have been saying it for a long time, but why don't we take it up again, cleaving to the structural definition such as we can give it with the help of the master's discourse? What suits Dora is the idea that he has the organ.

Freud sees this and he indicates very precisely that it's what plays the decisive role at the outset, in Dora's initial run-in, if I can put it like this, with Herr K. when she was fourteen, and when the other corners her in a

window recess.[4] In no way does this affect relations between the two families. Moreover, nobody thinks of being astonished by it. As Freud says, a girl works this sort of thing out on her own. What is curious is that, as it happens, she does not work it out on her own, she puts everyone else on the spot—though later.

Well, why "the third man"? To be sure, it's the organ which gives him his price, not so that Dora can find happiness in it, if I can put it thus, but so that another woman should deprive him of it.

What Dora is interested in is not the jewel, even indiscreet. Recall this observation that lasts for three months, and which is entirely meant for serving as a cupule for two dreams. The first dream, the one called the dream of the jewel box, bears this out—it isn't the jewel, it's the box, the envelope of the precious organ, there you have the only thing she gets *jouissance* out of.

She knows very well how to get *jouissance* from it herself, as is borne out for us by the decisive importance of infantile masturbation, whose mode moreover is in no way indicated in the observation, unless it's that it is probable that it had some relationship with what I will call the fluid, flowing rhythm, the model of which is enuresis. In her history her enuresis is given to us as belatedly induced by her brother's, who, a year and a half older than her, had got to eight years of age affected by enuresis so that she, in a way, belatedly takes up the running.

This enuresis is completely characteristic and is like a stigma, as it were, of the imaginary substitution of the child for the father, specifically as
110 impotent. Here I invoke everyone who, from their own experience with children, can gather such episodes, for which it is quite frequent to seek the intervention of an analyst.

Add to this the theoretical contemplation of Frau K., if I can put it this way, such as it unfolds in Dora's resting, openmouthed, before the Dresden Madonna. It is Frau K. who knows how to sustain the idealized father's desire, but also how to contain the respondent, if I can put it like this, and at the same time how to deprive Dora of it, who thus finds herself doubly removed from his grasp. Well then, by virtue of this, this complex is the mark of the identification with a *jouissance* qua the master's *jouissance*.

A little aside. It is not nothing to recall the analogy that has been made between enuresis and ambition. But let us confirm the condition imposed upon Herr K.'s presents—they have to be a box. He never gives her anything else, a jewel box. For she is the jewel. His jewel, his indiscreet jewel as I was saying before, if only it would go and lodge itself elsewhere, and that this be known. Whence the rupture whose meaning I marked a long

[4] SE 7:28.

time ago, when Herr K. says to her, "My wife means nothing to me." It is quite true that at this moment the Other's *jouissance* is offered her, and she doesn't want to have anything to do with it because what she wants is knowledge as the means of *jouissance*, but in order to place this knowledge in the service of truth, the truth of the master that she embodies as Dora.

And this truth, to say it at last, is that the master is castrated.

In effect, if the sole *jouissance* to represent happiness, which last time I defined as perfectly closed, the *jouissance* of the phallus, were to dominate this master—you see the term I am using, the master is only able to dominate by excluding her—then how would the master establish this relationship with knowledge—the knowledge held by the slave—the benefit of which is the buildup of surplus *jouissance*? The master can only dominate him through excluding this *jouissance*.

Moreover, the second dream indicates that the symbolic father is indeed the dead father, that one accedes to him only through an empty place that is without communication. Recall the structure of this dream, the manner in which she receives the announcement by her mother, "Come if you like," the mother says, as if echoing the fact that Frau K. invited her, the other time, to come to the place where all the scenes that we have mentioned must have taken place with her husband. "Come if you like, your father is dead, and he is being buried"—and the manner in which she takes herself there, without it being possible to know in the dream by what means she manages to get to a place about which she has to wonder whether this is 111
really the place where her father dwells, as if she didn't know the answer.[5]

Well then, in this empty box of an apartment deserted by those who, having invited her, have for their part left to go to the cemetery, Dora easily finds her substitute for this father in a big book, the dictionary, the one where one learns about sex.[6] She indicates clearly there that what matters to her, even should this be beyond the death of her father, is that he produce knowledge. And not just any knowledge knowledge about the truth.

This will be sufficient for her, in the psychoanalytic experience. She will get enough satisfaction from getting everybody to acknowledge this truth to which Freud carefully helps her—and this is what attaches her to him. The true state of affairs concerning her father's relations with Frau K., and concerning her own relations with Frau K., everything that the others wanted to bury concerning episodes that were nevertheless perfectly authentic, and were episodes of which she makes herself the representative—all of that is necessary, which is sufficient for her to conclude, with

[5] SE 7:94.
[6] SE 7:100.

dignity, what has gone on in the analysis, even if Freud does not appear at all satisfied with its outcome concerning her destiny as a woman.

3

There would be a few minor remarks to make in passing, which won't be in vain.

For instance, concerning the jewelery dream, where Dora is leaving because of the threat of fire, Freud, pausing in the analysis, tells us that one must not forget that a dream stands on two feet, and that it is not sufficient that it represent a decision, a lively desire, by the subject as to the present. There must be something that gives it support in a desire from childhood. And here, he takes as his reference—this is usually taken as a display of elegance- -the entrepreneur, the entrepreneur of decisions, in his relationship to the capitalist whose accumulated resources, the capital of libido, will enable this decision to pass into action.

These are things that look like they are a metaphor. Isn't it amusing to see how this takes on a different value after what I have been telling you concerning the relationship between capitalism and the function of the master—concerning the altogether distinct nature of what can be done with
112 the process of accumulation in the presence of surplus *jouissance*—in the very presence of this surplus *jouissance*, to the exclusion of the big fat *jouissance*, plain *jouissance*, *jouissance* that is realized in copulation in the raw? Isn't this precisely where infantile desire gets its force from, its force of accumulation with respect to this object that constitutes the cause of desire, namely that which is accumulated as libido capital by virtue, precisely, of infantile non-maturity, the exclusion of *jouissance* that others will call normal? There you have what suddenly gives Freud's metaphor its proper connotation when he refers to the capitalist.

But on the other hand, if through his lucid courage Freud happened to carry a degree of success with Dora to term, nevertheless, I would say, his clumsiness as regards retaining his patient is no less clearly in evidence.

Read these few lines in which, in some way despite himself, Freud indicates the extraordinary lengths which are, good heavens, staggering, pathetic, he goes on to tell himself that perhaps, by showing more interest in her—and God knows he shows her plenty of it, the entire case demonstrates it- -he would no doubt have succeeded in getting her to take further this exploration into which- it cannot be said on his own admission—he did not manage to lead her without making mistakes.

Thank heavens Freud didn't do this. Fortunately, in giving Dora these

satisfactions of being interested in what he felt as her demand, her demand for love, he didn't take, as is customary, the mother's place. For one thing is certain. Isn't it to this experience, however much it could have altered his attitude subsequently, that we owe the fact that Freud observed—and he drops his head, he is discouraged by it—that everything he was ever able to do for hysterics ends in nothing other than what he pins down as *Penisneid*? Which means, explicitly, when it is spelled out, that where this ends is in the girl's reproaching her mother for not having created her a boy, that is, in carrying forward onto the mother, in the form of frustration, what, in its meaningful essence, and in such a way that it gives the hysteric's discourse its place and its living function with respect to the master's discourse, is divided into, on the one hand, the castration of the idealized father, who yields the master's secret, and, on the other hand, privation, the assumption, by the subject, whether feminine or not, of the *jouissance* of being deprived.

And why did Freud fall into error at this point, whereas, if my analysis of today is to be believed, he only had literally to chew over what was being hand-fed to him? Why did he substitute this myth, the Oedipus complex, for the knowledge that he gathered from all these mouths of gold, Anna, 113
Emma, Dora?

The Oedipus complex plays the role of knowledge with a claim to truth, that is to say knowledge that is located in the figure of the analyst's discourse in the site of what just before I was calling the site of truth.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} a & \rightarrow & \$ \\ \overline{S_2} & & \overline{S_1} \end{array}$$

If all analytic interpretation has taken the path of gratification or non-gratification, of a response or not to demand, in short, the path toward an ever-increasing eluding, in favor of demand, of what is the dialectic of desire, metonymic sliding when it is a question of assuring the constant object, it is probably a function of the strictly unusable character of the Oedipus complex. It is odd that this did not become clearer more quickly.

And in effect, who uses, what place is held by this reference to this famous Oedipus complex? I ask all those here who are analysts to reply. Those who are from the Institute never use it, to be sure. Those from my school make some small effort. Of course, this doesn't yield anything, it comes down to the same thing as for the others. It is strictly unusable, except as this coarse reminder of the mother's value as an obstacle to all investment in any object as the cause of desire.

Whence the extraordinary ruminations that analysts come to concerning the "combined parent," as they say. That means only one thing—construct-

ing an A as receiver of *jouissance*, one generally called God, with whom it is worth the effort of playing double or quits with surplus value, that is, this functioning called the superego.

I am spoiling you today. I hadn't produced this word before. I had my reasons. I had to get at least to the point I am at so that what I stated last year about Pascal's wager could become operative.

Perhaps some of you will have guessed—the superego is exactly what I was beginning to spell out in telling you that life, this provisional life that is
114 played out in favor of a chance of eternal life, is the *a*, but that it is only worth the effort if the A is not barred, in other words, if it is everything at once. However, just as the combined parent doesn't exist, there is the father on one side and the mother on the other, so the subject also doesn't exist, it is equally divided in two, as it is barred, as, in a word, it is the response designated in my graph to the utterance—this seriously calls into question whether one can play at doubling surplus enjoyment or nothing with eternal life.

Yes, this recourse to the myth of Oedipus is really quite sensational. It is worth making the effort to elaborate this. And I was thinking of getting you today to appreciate what is outrageous in the fact that Freud, for example, in the last of the *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, should think he had cut the question of the rejection of religion off from any acceptable horizon, should think that psychoanalysis has played a decisive role in this, and should believe that it was the end of the matter when he has told us that the support of religion is nothing other than this father whom the child has recourse to in its childhood, and who he knows is all loving, that he anticipates, forestalls what may manifest itself within him as malaise.

Isn't this an odd thing when one knows how things in fact are with the father's function? To be sure, this is not the only point at which Freud presents us with a paradox, namely, the idea of referring this function to some kind of *jouissance* of all the women, when it is a well-known fact that a father barely suffices for one of them, and even then—he mustn't boast about it. A father has, with the master—I speak of the master as we know him, as he functions—only the most distant of relationships since, in short, at least in the society Freud was familiar with, it is he who works for everybody. He has responsibility for the "famil" I was speaking of before. Isn't that sufficiently strange to suggest to us that after all what Freud retains in fact, if not in intention, is very precisely what he designates as being the most essential in religion, namely, the idea of an all-loving father? This is indeed what is designated by the first of the three forms of identification that he distinguishes in the article I mentioned before—the father is love, the first thing to be loved in this world is the father. Strange vestige. Freud believes

that this will make religion evaporate, whereas it is really the very substance of it that he preserves with this strangely composed myth of the father.

We shall come back to this, but you can all see the main thread—it all ends with the idea of the murder, namely that the original father is the one 115
whom the sons have killed, after which it is through the love of this dead father that a certain order unfolds. In all its enormous contradictions, in its baroqueness and its superfluousness, doesn't this seem to be nothing but a defense against these truths that the abundance of all these myths clearly spells out, well before Freud diminishes these truths in opting for the myth of Oedipus? What is there to conceal? That, as soon as the father enters the field of the master's discourse where we are in the process of orientating ourselves, he is, from the origins, castrated.

This is what Freud gives us the idealized version of, and it is completely masked. However, the experience with the hysteric, if not her sayings, at least the configurations she presented him with, should have guided him better here than the Oedipus complex does and led him to consider that this suggests that, at the level of analysis itself, everything is to be put back into question concerning what is necessary from knowledge, in order for this knowledge to be called into question in the site of truth.

There you have the aim of what I am trying to unpack for you here this year.

18 February 1970

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VII

Oedipus and Moses and the father of the horde

THE MASTER'S PURE KNOWLEDGE

THE MALAISE OF THE ASTUDIED

GENEALOGY OF SURPLUS VALUE

THE FIELD OF BULLSHITTING

THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX, FREUD'S DREAM

The formulation I tried to give you of the discourse of analysis locates it on the basis of the master's discourse, which is what, via all sorts of traces, at first sight, it manifests itself as already related to.

Or rather analysis draws its importance from the fact that the truth of the master's discourse is masked.

1

Among the four places in which are situated the articulating elements on which I found the consistency that can emerge when these discourses are put into relationship with one another, the place I have designated as that of truth is only distinguishable if we look at how things function with what comes out of that articulation in that place. This is not peculiar to it, the same can be said of all the others.

The localization that consisted until now of designating the places as "upper right" or "upper left" and so forth are of course not satisfactory. It is question of a level of equivalence of functioning. For example, one could thus write that what is the S_1 in the master's discourse can be said to be congruent with, or equivalent to, what comes and functions as S_2 in the university discourse, in what I have qualified as such so as to focus the mind, or at least the mental accommodation.

$$M\ (S_1) \simeq U\ (S_2)$$

118 The place in question will be said to function as the place of orders, of the command, whereas the place that is subjacent to it in my various little four-legged schemas is the place of truth, which does indeed pose its own problem.

At the level of the master's discourse, in effect, the place on the lower left can be occupied only by this $, which, in truth, initially nothing necessitates, occupied only by what in the first instance does not quietly place itself as identical with itself. I will say that this is the principle, not of mastered, but of "master-ized" discourse, with a hyphen, the principle of discourse insofar as acting the master is to think of oneself as univocal.

And surely it is psychoanalysis that leads us to say that the subject is not univocal. Two years ago, when I was trying to characterize the psychoanalytic act—a trajectory that has remained broken down and, like others, will never be taken up again—I gave you the resounding formulation, "Either I am not thinking or I am not." This alternative, simply through being produced, comes to play a role, and a fairly resounding one, as soon as the master's discourse is at issue.

Nevertheless, in order to justify this formulation, we still need to produce it, moreover, where it is simply evident. It has to be produced in the dominant place in the hysteric's discourse in order for it to be in effect quite certain that the subject is confronted by this "vel" that is expressed in the "either I am not thinking or I am not." There where I am thinking I do not recognize myself, I am not, this is the unconscious. There where I am, it is all too clear that I am lost.

In truth, presenting things in this way shows that, if this has remained obscure for such a long time at the level of the master's discourse, it is precisely because it has been in a place which, by virtue of its very structure, masked the division of the subject.

What have I said, in effect, about any possible saying [*dire*] in the place of truth? The truth, I have been saying, can only be stated via a half-saying [*mi-dire*], and I have given you a model for it in the enigma. For this is how it is always presented to us, and certainly not in the form of a question. The enigma is something that presses us for a response in the name of a mortal danger. Truth is a question, as has been known for a long time, only for the administrators. "What is truth?" We know by whom that was, on one good occasion, eminently pronounced.

But this form of half-saying that truth restricts itself to is one thing, and 119
this division of the subject which takes advantage of this to mask itself is another. The division of the subject is something quite different. If "where he is not, he is thinking," if "where he is not thinking he is," it is indeed because he is in both places. And I would even say that this formulation of the *Spaltung* is improper. The subject partakes of the real precisely in that it is impossible, apparently. Or, to put it better, if I had to employ a figure that doesn't occur here by chance, I would say that the case with it is like that of the electron, where the latter is proposed to us as being at the intersection of the wave theory and the corpuscular theory. We are forced to

admit that it's as one and the same that it passes through two separate holes at the same time. The order, therefore, of what we characterize by the *Spaltung* of the subject is different from the one that commands that truth can only be figured through being stated in a half-saying.

Something appears here that it is important to stress. From this very ambivalence, taking the word up in another sense, through which truth is figured only as a half-saying, each of the formulas on the basis of which a discourse can be located takes singularly opposite senses.

Is this discourse good, is it bad? I pin it down as the university discourse intentionally, because it is, in a way, the university discourse that shows where it is capable of sinning, but in its fundamental disposition it is, equally, the one that shows what guarantees the discourse of science.

$$\frac{S_2}{S_1} \quad \not\rightarrow \quad \frac{a}{\$}$$

S_2 occupies the dominant place in that it is this place of the order, the command, the commandment, this place initially held by the master, that knowledge has come to occupy. Why does it come about that one finds nothing else at the level of its truth than the master signifier, insofar as it brings the master's order?

This is what the current movement of science depends on, after it hesitated for a moment, which we have evidence for in Gauss, for instance, when we see in his dairies that he had come close to the remarks that a Riemann subsequently put forward, and made the decision not to release them. "One doesn't go any further." Why put this knowledge into circulation, even though it's purely logical, if it seems that on this basis, much that is in a state of rest may effectively be disturbed by it?

It is clear that we are no longer at the same point. This stems from progress, from this seesaw that I describe as a quarter turn, which brings an unnatural knowledge out of its primitive localization at the level of the slave into the dominant place, by virtue of having become pure knowledge of the master, ruled by his command.

Who, in our day, is capable of dreaming even for an instant of arresting the movement of articulation of the discourse of science in the name of anything at all that could come out of it? Things are already at that stage, for heaven's sake. They have shown where we are headed, from molecular structure to atomic fission. Who can think for even one instant that it would be possible to stop that which, through an interplay of signs, and by overthrowing content in favor of changing combinatory places, incites the theoretical attempt to put oneself to the test of the real, in a manner which, through revealing the impossible, brings about a new power?

It is impossible not to obey the commandment there in the place of what is the truth of science, "Continue. March on. Keep on knowing more and more."

Very precisely, every question about the truth of this sign, about the fact that the sign of the master occupies this place, is properly speaking quashed, and in particular every question about what may be veiled by this sign, the S_1 of the command, "Keep on knowing," about what this sign, through occupying this place, contains that is enigmatic, about what this sign that occupies this place is.

In the field of these sciences that courageously call themselves human sciences we see clearly that the command, "Continue to know," creates a bit of a stir. In effect, as in all the other little squares or schemas with four legs, it is always the one up here on the right that does the work—and thus gets the truth to emerge, for this is the meaning of work. In the master's discourse this place is occupied by the slave, in the discourse of science it is the *a* student.

One might play around with this word, perhaps it might revitalize the question a bit.

A while ago we saw him compelled to continue to know on the level of physical science. On the level of the human sciences we see something for which a word would have to be made. I don't know yet if this is the right 121
one, but off the cuff, initially, instinctively, for its assonance, I would say, "astudied."

If I bring this word into our vocabulary, I would have more chance than when I wanted the name of the floor mop changed. "Astudied" has more justification at the level of the human sciences. The student feels "astudied." He is "astudied" because, like any worker—get your bearings from the other little orders—he has to produce something.

My discourse happens to give rise to responses that bear some relationship to him. It's a rare occurrence, but it happens from time to time, and it gives me pleasure. When I came to the École normale it so happened that there were some young people who started discoursing on the subject of science, which I had made the object of the first of my seminars in 1965. It was pertinent, this subject of science, but it is clearly not self-evident. They got rapped over the knuckles and it was explained to them that the subject of science doesn't exist, and not at the very point at which they thought they had made it emerge, namely in the relation between zero and one in Frege's discourse. It was demonstrated to them that the progress of mathematical logic had enabled the subject of science to be completely reduced—not sutured but vaporized.

The unease of the astudied is, however, not unrelated to the fact that they are nevertheless requested to constitute the subject of science with

their own skin—which, on the latest account, seems to present a number of difficulties in the zone of the human sciences. And it is thus that, for a science so well founded on the one hand, and so obviously triumphant on the other, triumphant enough for it to be qualified as human, no doubt because it takes humans for humus, things happen that land us on our feet again, and bring us into contact with what follows from the fact that the pure and simple command, that of the master, is substituted at the level of truth.

Don't think that the master is always there. It's the command that remains, the categorical imperative, "Keep on knowing." There is no longer any need for anybody to be present. We have, as Pascal says, all embarked upon the discourse of science. It remains the case that the half-saying nevertheless happens to be warranted by the obvious fact that, concerning the human sciences, nothing holds together.

I would like to arm myself against the idea that could emerge in some retarded little brain, that my propositions would imply that one should restrain this science and that, all things considered, if we return to Gauss's
122 attitude, there may perhaps be some hope of salvation. These conclusions, if they were imputed to me, could be very correctly characterized as reactionary. I point them out because it is not unthinkable that, in zones that, in truth, I am not very disposed to frequent, one might deduce this sort of misunderstanding from what I am currently telling you. It would, however, be necessary to get into one's head the idea that in whatever it might be that I am articulating with a particular aim of clarification, there is not the slightest idea of progress, in the sense in which this term might imply a happy outcome.

What truth, when it emerges, has that is resolvent can from time to time be fortunate—and then disastrous in other cases. One fails to see why truth would always necessarily be beneficial. You would have to have the devil in you to imagine such a thing, when everything demonstrates the contrary.

2

Concerning the position called that of the analyst—in cases that are moreover improbable, for is there even a single analyst? Who knows? But one can raise it theoretically—it is the object *a* itself that comes to the place of the command. It's as identical with the object *a*, that is to say with what presents itself for the subject as the cause of desire, that the psychoanalyst offers himself as the end point for this insane operation, a psychoanalysis, insofar as it sets out on the trace left by the desire to know.

I said at the start that this desire to know, the "epistemological drive" is

the name they have invented for it, isn't self-evident. It was a matter of seeing where it could have emerged from. As I pointed out, it wasn't the master who invented that all on his own. Someone must have imposed it upon him. It wasn't the psychoanalyst, who, good heavens, has not always been in evidence. And moreover, it is not he that instigates it, he offers himself as the end point for anyone who gets bitten by this particularly problematic desire.

We shall return to this. In the meantime, let me point out that in the structure of what's called the analyst's discourse, the analyst, you see, says to the subject, "Off you go, say everything that comes into your head, however divided it might be, no matter how clearly it demonstrates that either you are not thinking or else you are nothing at all, it may work, what you produce will always be admissible [*recevable*]." 123

$$\frac{a}{S_2} \rightarrow \frac{\$}{S_1}$$

Odd. Odd for reasons that we will have to punctuate, but which we can begin to sketch out now.

You have been able to see, on the upper line of the structure of the master's discourse, a fundamental relationship, which is, to state it quickly, the one that forms the link between master and slave, by means of which, Hegel *dixit*, the slave will over time demonstrate his truth to him—also by means of which, Marx *dixit*, he will have been occupied during all this time in fomenting his surplus *jouissance*.

Why does he owe this surplus *jouissance* to the master? This is what is masked. What is masked at the level of Marx is that the master to whom this surplus *jouissance* is owed has renounced everything, and *jouissance* first up, because he has exposed himself to death, and because he remains firmly fastened to this position whose Hegelian articulation is clear. He has deprived the slave of the disposal of his body, to be sure, but this is nothing, he has left him his *jouissance*.

How does *jouissance* come back within the master's reach and express his demand? I think I explained it well in its time, but I will pick it up again, because the things that are important cannot be repeated too often. The master in all this makes a small effort to make everything work, in other words, he gives an order. Simply by fulfilling his function as master he loses something. It's at least through this something lost that something of *jouissance* has to be rendered to him—specifically, surplus *jouissance*.

If, by means of this relentlessness to castrate himself that he had, he hadn't computed this surplus *jouissance*, if he hadn't converted it into surplus value, in other words if he hadn't founded capitalism, Marx would have

realized that surplus value is surplus *jouissance*. None of this, of course, prevents it being the case that capitalism is founded by him, and that the function of surplus value is designated with complete pertinence in its devastating consequences. Nevertheless, to get on top of it, one would per-
124 haps need to know at least what the initial stage of its articulation is. It's not because one nationalizes the means of production at the level of socialism in one country that one has thereby done away with surplus value, if one doesn't know what it is.

In the master's discourse, since it is, all the same, there that surplus *jouissance* is situated, there is no relationship between what will more or less become the cause of desire for a character like the master who, as usual, fails to understand anything about it and what constitutes his truth. As a matter of fact, there is a barrier here, on the lower level.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} S_1 & \rightarrow & S_2 \\ \$ & \blacktriangle & a \end{array}$$

The barrier which we are within reach of naming at the level of the master's discourse is *jouissance*, quite simply insofar as it is prohibited, prohibited fundamentally. One takes *jouissance* by morsels, but as for going right to the end, I have already told you how that is embodied—no need to reactivate lethal fantasies.

This formula, as defining the master's discourse, has the interest of showing that it is the only one that makes possible this articulation that we have pointed out elsewhere as fantasy, insofar as it is a relationship a has with the division of the subject—($\$ \diamond a$).

In its fundamental beginning the master's discourse excludes fantasy. And that's what makes him, fundamentally, completely blind.

The fact that fantasy can emerge elsewhere, and specially in analytic discourse where it stretches out along a horizontal line in a completely balanced way, tells us a bit more about the foundation of the master's discourse.

Be that as it may for the moment, taking things up again at the level of the analyst's discourse, notice that it's knowledge—that is to say the whole articulation of existing S_2, everything that can be known—that is, in my way of writing—I am not saying in the real—put in the place called the place of truth. What can be known is, in the analyst's discourse, invited to function in the register of truth.

125 We get the sense that this is of interest to us, but what on earth does it mean? I have not made this detour into what is current today for nothing. The low level of tolerance, let us say, for the fact that knowledge in the form known as science, modern science, has taken off at a gallop is what can per-

haps, without our always understanding much further than the end of our nose, make us sense that surely, if, somewhere, we have an opportunity for it to make sense to question knowledge in terms of truth, it must be in our little turnstile, at least if we are prepared to trust it.

I am saying this in passing. It's for instance what justifies my saying that since at one time they gagged me when I was about to speak about the names of the father I will never talk about them again. That seems to be teasing, not nice. And then—who knows?—there are even people, science fanatics, who tell me, "Keep on knowing. But what? But you have to say what you know about the names of the father!!" No, I will not say what the name of the father is, precisely because I am not part of the university discourse.

I am a little analyst, a rejected stone initially, even if in my analyses I become the cornerstone. As soon as I get up off my chair I have the right to go for a walk. That is reversed, the rejected stone which becomes a cornerstone. It may also be, inversely, that the cornerstone goes for a walk. It's even like that that I will perhaps have some chance that things will change. If the cornerstone left, the entire edifice would collapse. There are some who are tempted by this.

Well, let's not joke about it. I simply cannot see why I should speak about the name of the father, since, in my own way, where it is placed, that is to say at the level at which knowledge functions as truth, we are properly speaking condemned to only being able, even on this point, still vague for us, about the relationship between knowledge and truth, to declare anything at all—take note—through a half-saying.

I do not know whether you sense the import of this. It means that if we say something in a certain way in this field there will be another part of it which, by virtue of this saying itself, will become absolutely irreducible, completely obscure. In such a way that, in sum, there is a degree of arbitrariness, there is a choice that can be made about what is in need of clarification. If I do not speak about the name of the father, this will enable me 126
to speak of other things. This will not be unrelated to the truth, but it's not as it is for the subject—it won't be the same.

3

Let's return to what we observe about what knowledge becomes in the place of truth, in the analyst's discourse.

I don't think you have been waiting for what I am going to tell you now for it to appear for you. You must all the same remember that what occurs there at the start has a name—it's myth.

To see this one hasn't had to wait for the master's discourse to fully develop and reveal its last word in the capitalist's discourse, with its curious copulation with science. This has always been observed and, in any case, it's the totality of what we see where truth is concerned, the first truth in any case, the one that is of some interest to us a bit all the same, even though science makes us renounce it by giving us only its imperative, "Keep on knowing in a certain field"—a curious thing, in a field that is in some discord with what concerns you, my good man. Well then, it's occupied by myth.

Myth has today been made a branch of linguistics. I mean that what one says that is most serious about myth comes out of linguistics.

I can only recommend on this, in *Structural Anthropology*, a collection of articles by my friend Claude Lévi-Strauss, that you refer to chapter 11, "The Structure of Myths."[1] You will see the same thing there obviously expressed as what I am telling you, namely that truth is supported only by a half-saying.

The first serious examination that one makes of these large units, as he calls them, for they are mythemes, obviously yields this, which I do not impute to Lévi-Strauss, for I am leaving to one side what he writes literally. The impossibility of connecting groups of relations—it is a question of bundles of relations, as he defines myths—with one another is overcome, or, more exactly, replaced by the affirmation that two mutually contradictory
127 relations are identical, this being so insofar as each is, like the other, self-contradictory. In short, half-saying is the internal law of every species of enunciation of the truth, and what incarnates it best is myth.

One can all the same declare oneself not to be altogether satisfied that we are still, in psychoanalysis, dealing with myth. Do you know what effect the use of the central typical myth of psychoanalytic discourse, the Oedipus myth, has had upon the mythographers? I think that you can all answer this question. It's quite amusing.

There are people who have been occupied with myths over a good period of time. No one had waited for our dear friend Claude Lévi-Strauss, who has contributed an exemplary clarity, in order to take a very lively interest in the function of myth. There are circles in which one knows what a myth is, even if one does not necessarily define it as I have just tried to situate it for you—even though it is difficult to admit that even the most obtuse operator does not see that everything that can be said about myth is this, that the truth reveals itself in an alternation of strictly opposite things, which have to be made to revolve around one another. This holds for what-

[1] "The Structural Study of Myth," pp. 206–31 in *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1963).

ever has been constructed ever since the world has been the world, including the higher, very elaborate, myths like Yin and Yang.

One can bullshit a lot over myths, because it is precisely the field of bullshitting. And bullshitting, as I have always said, is truth. They are identical. Truth enables everything to be said. Everything is true—on condition that you exclude the contrary—except that it nevertheless plays a role that it be like that.

Well, the Oedipus myth such that Freud made it function—I can tell you for the sake of those who are unaware of this—makes the mythographers inclined to laugh. They find this completely baseless.

Why is this privilege being given to this myth in analysis? The first serious study that it has been possible to make of it shows that it is much more complicated, moreover. As if by chance, Claude Lévi-Strauss, who does not refuse the challenge, states the complete myth of Oedipus in this same article. One can see that it concerns something quite different from whether or not one is going to fuck one's mummy.

It is curious nevertheless that, for example, an altogether good mythographer, with a good head, from the right school, from the right stream that begins with Boas and has converged upon Lévi-Strauss, a certain Kroeber, 128
after having written an inflammatory book on *Totem and Taboo* has, twenty years later, written something that makes it known that all the same this must indeed have its raison d'être, that there was something in it, he wasn't able to say what, moreover, and that in this myth of Oedipus there was a bone.[2] He doesn't say any more than this but, given the critique he made of *Totem and Taboo*, it's altogether noteworthy. It had been bothering him, having spoken so ill of it was plaguing him, above all when he saw that that was spreading, namely that the latest student believed he was able to join in the chorus—he couldn't bear that.

Totem and Taboo. One would need—I don't know if you want me to do it this year—to study how it is composed, it is one of the most twisted things one can imagine. It's not at all the case that because I preach a return to Freud I cannot say that *Totem and Taboo* is twisted. It's even for this reason that one has to return to Freud—it's in order to perceive that if it's twisted in this way, given that he was a chap who knew how to write and think, there must be a good reason for it. I would not like to add, "*Moses and Monotheism*, don't even mention it!" because, on the contrary, we are going to talk about it.

You can see that all the same I am putting things in order for you, even though I have not begun by giving you any kind of well-worn path. I have

[2] See Alfred Louis Kroeber, "Totem and Taboo: An Ethnologic Psychoanalysis" (1920) and "Totem and Taboo in Retrospect" (1939) in his *The Nature of Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952).

done it entirely by myself, to be sure—nobody helped me—so that we know what formations of the unconscious are, for example, or the object relation. One could think that now I am simply making little somersaults around Freud. That's not what it's about.

Let's try to cotton onto, ever so little, something of what the Oedipus myth is about in Freud. As I do not rush, I won't get to the end of it today. I don't see why I should wear myself out. I speak with you as it comes to me, and we shall see where, slowly, slowly, it leads us to.

129

4

I will start at the end and give you my aim straightaway, because I don't see why I shouldn't lay down my cards. It wasn't quite like this that I was counting on speaking to you, but at least it will be clear.

I am not at all saying that the Oedipus complex is of no use, nor that it has no relationship with what we do. It is of no use for psychoanalysts, that's true, but as psychoanalysts are not clearly psychoanalysts, this doesn't prove anything. Psychoanalysts are becoming increasingly involved in something which is, in effect, excessively important, namely the mother's role. For heaven's sake, I have already begun to examine these things.

The mother's role is the mother's desire. That's fundamental. The mother's desire is not something that is bearable just like that, that you are indifferent to. It will always wreak havoc. A huge crocodile in whose jaws you are—that's the mother. One never knows what might suddenly come over her and make her shut her trap. That's what the mother's desire is.

Thus, I have tried to explain that there was something that was reassuring. I am telling you simple things, I am improvising, I have to say. There is a roller, made out of stone of course, which is there, potentially, at the level of her trap, and it acts as a restraint, as a wedge. It's what is called the phallus. It's the roller that shelters you, if, all of a sudden, she closes it.

These are things that I have expounded in their own time, at a time when I spoke to people one had to treat gently, psychoanalysts. They had to be told things crudely, like that, so that they would understand. Moreover, they didn't understand. I spoke therefore about this level of the paternal metaphor. I have only ever spoken of the Oedipus complex in that form. That should be a bit indicative, don't you think? I said that it was the paternal metaphor, whereas this is nevertheless not how Freud presents things to us. Above all he clings strongly to what actually happened, this blessed story of the murder of the father of the horde, this Darwinian buffoonery.

130 The father of the horde—as if there has ever been the slightest trace of it,

this father of the horde. We have seen orangutans. But not the slightest trace has ever been seen of the father of the human horde.

Freud holds that this was real. He clings to it. He wrote the entire *Totem and Taboo* in order to say it—it necessarily happened, and it's where everything began. Namely, all those little shitty things—including being a psychoanalyst.

It's striking—someone could have got a little bit excited about this paternal metaphor and known how to make a little hole. This is what I have always desired, that someone should make some progress, make a trace for me, begin to show a little path. Anyway, be that as it may, it has never happened, and the question of Oedipus is intact.

I am going to make some preliminary remarks for you, because the thing really does have to be hammered home. This history can't be whisked away. There's something that we are very used to, trained in, in analytic practice, which is these stories of manifest content and latent content. That's our experience.

For the analysand who is there, in the $, the content is his knowledge. We are there in order to get to the point where he knows everything that he does not know even as he knows it. That's what the unconscious is. For the psychoanalyst the latent content is on the other side, in S_1. For him the latent content is the interpretation that he is going to give, insofar as it is, not this knowledge that we discover in the subject, but what is added on to it to give it a sense. This remark could be useful for some psychoanalysts.

Let's leave this manifest content and this latent content to one side for the moment, except for retaining the terms. What's a myth? Don't all answer at once. It's a manifest content.

This is not enough to define it, and we defined it differently before. But it is clear that, if it is possible to put a myth on index cards that one then stacks up to see what combinations unfold, this is the manifest order. Two myths are, one in relation to the other, exactly like these little machines that you can turn around through ninety degrees and get results. They are not latent, my little letters on the blackboard, they are manifest. Well, what's that doing there? The manifest content has to be put to the test. And, having done this, we shall see that it is not so manifest as all that.

Let's proceed like that—I am proceeding as best I can—let's recount 131
the story.

The Oedipus complex as it is recounted by Freud when he refers to Sophocles is not at all treated like a myth. It's Sophocles' story minus, as you will see, its tragic component. According to Freud what Sophocles' play reveals is that one sleeps with one's mother when one has killed one's father—murder of the father and *jouissance* of the mother, to be understood in the objective and the subjective senses, one enjoys the mother and the

mother enjoys. The fact that Oedipus absolutely does not know that he has killed his father, nor that he causes his mother to enjoy, nor that he enjoys her, changes nothing about the question, since, precisely, it is a fine example of the unconscious.

I think I have been pointing out the ambiguity that there is in the use of the term "unconscious" for long enough. As a substantive it's something that in effect has the repressed representative of representation as its support. One can say that this poor Oedipus was unconscious, in the adjectival sense. There is an equivocation there, the very least one can say. However that may be, this does not disturb us. But, in order for it not to disturb us one has to see what the things mean.

There is the myth of Oedipus, then, borrowed from Sophocles. And then there is this cock-and-bull story I was speaking about earlier, the murder of the father of the primal horde. It is quite curious that the result is exactly the contrary.

The old daddy had the women all to himself, which already is incredible—why would he have them all to himself?—whereas there are other blokes around, nevertheless, perhaps they too might have their own little idea. They kill him. The consequence is completely different from the myth of Oedipus--for having killed the old man, the old orang, two things happen. I place one of them in brackets, for it is incredible—they discover that they are brothers. Well, that may give you some idea of what brotherhood is about, I will give you a little elaboration, something temporary—we will have the time perhaps to return to it before we part this year.

The energy that we put into all being brothers very clearly proves that we are not brothers. Even with our brother by birth nothing proves that we are his brother—we can have a completely opposite batch of chromosomes.
132 This pursuit of brotherhood, without counting the rest, liberty and equality, is something that's pretty extraordinary, and it is appropriate to realize what it covers.

I know only one single origin of brotherhood—I mean human, always humus brotherhood—segregation. We are of course in a period where segregation, ugh! There is no longer any segregation anywhere, it's unheard of when you read the newspapers. It's just that in society—I don't want to call it "human" because I use terms sparingly, I am careful about what I say, I am not a man of the left, I observe—everything that exists, and brotherhood first and foremost, is founded on segregation.

No other brotherhood is even conceivable or has the slightest foundation, as I have just said, the slightest scientific foundation, unless it's because people are isolated together, isolated from the rest. It is a matter of grasping its function, and of knowing why it is like this. But, in the end, that

it is like this jumps out at you, and acting as if it weren't true must, necessarily, have drawbacks.

What I said just then was half-saying. I am not telling you why it is like this. Initially it's because, if I say this is how it is, I am unable to say why it's how it is. That's an example.

Be that as it may, they discover they are brothers, one wonders in the name of what segregation. This is to say that the myth is more like a fable. And then, they all decide, with one mind, that no one will touch the little mummies. Because there is more than one of them, to top it off. They could exchange, since the old father had them all. They could sleep with their brother's mother, specifically, since they are only brothers through their father.

No one ever seems to have been flabbergasted by this curious thing, the extent to which *Totem and Taboo* has nothing to do with the current use of the Sophoclean reference.

Moses is the limit. Why does Moses have to be killed? Freud gives an explanation, and it's the richest of them all—it's so that Moses will return among the prophets, via repression no doubt, via mnesic transmission through chromosomes, he is forced to admit.

The remark made by an imbecile like Jones that Freud does not appear to have read Darwin is accurate. He had read him, however, since it's on Darwin that he bases himself so as to carry *Totem and Taboo* off.

It's not for nothing that *Moses and Monotheism,* like everything else Freud 133
writes, is absolutely fascinating. If one is independent-minded, one can say that it makes absolutely no sense at all. We will speak about it again. What is certain is that what the prophets are about does not have anything at all to do, this time around, with *jouissance.*

Let me point out to you—and, who knows? perhaps someone could do me this favor—that I went off in search of the book that serves as a basis for what Freud says, namely the work of a certain Sellin published in 1922, *Mose und seine Bedeutung für die israelitisch-jüdische Religionsgeschichte.*

This Sellin is not unknown. I obtained *Die Zwölf Propheten.* He begins with Hosea [*Osée*]. He's a minor one, but a daring one [*osé*]—so daring, it seems, that he is the one in whom one finds a trace of who is supposed to have murdered Moses.

I must tell you that I haven't waited to read Sellin before reading Hosea, but never in my entire life have I been able to procure this book for myself, and I am starting to become obsessed by it. It's not in the Bibliothèque nationale, it's not in the Alliance israélite universelle, and I have turned all Europe upside down to get it. I still believe, though, that I will manage to get my hands on it. If any of you had it in your pocket, you might bring it to me at the end of the seminar, I would return it to you.

In Hosea there is one thing that is quite clear. This text Hosea is extraordinary. I don't know how many people there are here who read the Bible. I can't say that I was brought up on the Bible, because I was raised a Catholic. I regret it. But then, I don't regret it, in this sense that when I read it now—well, "now" is a fair while ago—it has a fantastic effect upon me. This familial delusion, these entreaties by Yahweh to his people, which contradict one another from one line to the next, it makes you sit up and take note.

One thing is certain, all relations with women are [. . .], as he says in his strong language. I will write it in Hebrew on the blackboard for you, in very beautiful letters. It's "prostitution," *znunim*.

זְנוּנִים

134 Addressing Hosea, this is the only thing it's about—his people have prostituted themselves definitively. Prostitution covers more or less everything that surrounds him, the entire context. What the master's discourse uncovers is that there is no sexual relation, I have already put this to you in strong terms. Well then, one has the idea that our chosen people found themselves in a bit of a pickle where things were very probably different, where there were sexual relations. This is probably what Yahweh calls prostitution. In any case, it is quite clear that, if it's the spirit of Moses that returns here, it is not exactly an issue of a murder which has engendered access to *jouissance*.

All of this is so fascinating that no one has ever seemed to realize—it would doubtless have seemed too immediate, too stupid to make these objections, and moreover they are not objections, we are fully into our subject—that the prophets, in the final analysis, never mention Moses. One of my best students made this remark to me—it has to be said that she is a Protestant, to the point where she had noticed this a long time before I did. But above all, they absolutely do not speak of this thing that, for Freud, seems to be the key, namely that the god of Moses is the same god as the god of Akhenaton, a god who is supposed to be One.

As you know, very far from this being the case, the god of Moses simply says of the other gods that one must not have relations with them, but he does not say that they do not exist. He says that one must not hasten toward idols, but, after all, he's referring to idols that represent him, as was certainly the case of the Golden Calf. They were expecting a god, they made a Golden Calf, that was quite natural.

We can see that there is a completely different relationship there, which is a relationship with truth. I have already said that truth is the little sister of *jouissance*, we will have to come back to this.

What is certain is that the crude schema *murder of the father—jouissance of the mother* totally elides the tragic mainspring. To be sure, it's through murdering the father that Oedipus finds free access to Jocasta, and that this is granted to him, to popular acclaim. Jocasta, as I have always said, knew something about this, because women do not lack these little pieces of information. She had there a servant who had been present during the whole affair, and it would be curious if this servant, who returned to the palace and who is found at the end, hadn't said to Jocasta, "He's the one who blew your husband away." Be that as it may, it's not important. What's important is that Oedipus was admitted to Jocasta's side because he had triumphed at a trial of truth. 135

We shall come back to the enigma of the Sphinx. And then, if Oedipus comes to a very sticky end—we will see what this "comes to a very sticky end" means, and to what extent that's called coming to a sticky end—it's because he absolutely wanted to know the truth.

It is not possible seriously to examine the Freudian reference without bringing the dimension of truth to bear, along with murder and *jouissance*.

That's where I can leave you today.

It's simply that, seeing how Freud articulates this fundamental myth, it is clear that it is truly incorrect to put everything in the same basket as Oedipus. What in God's name, so to speak, does Moses have to do with Oedipus and the father of the primal horde? There really must be something there that stems from the manifest content and the latent content.

To finish up for today, I would say that what we propose is to analyze the Oedipus complex as being Freud's dream.

11 March 1970

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VIII

From myth to structure

TRUTH, CASTRATION, AND DEATH

THE FATHER, A STRUCTURAL OPERATOR

THE DEAD FATHER IS *JOUISSANCE*

ACT AND AGENT

THE HYSTERIC WANTS A MASTER

A person in this audience saw fit, and I thank her for it, to be so kind as to season what I said last time with a certain disappointment. This person has, as she put it, given me the pleasure—pleasure, as you know, is the law of least effort—of having preceded me down a pathway that I am said to have opened.

The person in question—I can see she is smiling, she is present, why not name her, Marie-Claire Boons—sent me, then, a little offprint from a highly interesting journal called *L'Inconscient*. I have reasons for not having read her article before. This journal, in effect, in which there have been some very good things, I must say, is not even distributed to me, paradoxically perhaps because of this very fact that in principle, at least in its editorial committee, it used to base itself on [*s'autorisait de*] my teaching. My attention having been drawn to this issue on "Paternity," I first read the article by Marie-Claire Boons with great care, and then read another one by our friend Conrad Stein.[1]

I am quite prepared, if Marie-Claire Boons wants, to take her article today as a text for commentary, and a number of questions might arise concerning the path she takes over the father's murder in Freud. I believe, as a matter of fact, that it would easily appear that there is nothing in it that anticipates what I have already advanced concerning the Oedipus complex by the date at which she published this article—advanced, I said, very modestly.

138 There is another method, which is that today I try to go further by showing that this is already implied in the careful progress I have made up till now. Then, perhaps, at a second stage, on the occasion of one of our gatherings, what I would like to say will retroactively become clearer than if I

[1] Marie-Claire Boons, "Le meutre du père chez Freud," *L'Inconscient* 5 (1968):101–31; Conrad Stein, "Le père mortel et le père immortel," *L'Inconscient* 5 (1968):59–100.

were just to leave you hanging concerning the different points in an article which, in effect, from many aspects presents a sort of introduction, questioning, and, if you will, preparation.

You may express a wish here for one or other of these two methods—I give the floor to Marie-Claire Boons.

I will proceed in the second way, then.

1

The father's death. In effect, everyone knows that this appears to be the key to, the vital point for everything that is stated, and not only in the name of myth, concerning what psychoanalysis is about.

By the end of her article Marie-Claire Boons would even give us to understand that many things flow from this death of the father and notably a certain something that would make it the case that in some way psychoanalysis frees us from the law.

Fat chance. I am well aware that this is the register in which a libertarian hook supposedly attaches itself to psychoanalysis.

I think that this is not at all the case, and this is the entire meaning of what I am calling the other side of psychoanalysis.

The father's death, insofar as it echoes this statement with its Nietzschean gravity, this statement, this good news, that God is dead, does not seem to me to be of a kind to liberate us, far from it. The first plank in the proof of this is indeed Freud's own utterance. Quite rightly, at the start of her article Marie-Claire Boons draws our attention to what I was already saying two seminars ago, that the announcement of the death of the father is far from incompatible with the motivation for religion that Freud proposes in the name of an analytic interpretation of the latter. Namely, religion itself reposes on something that Freud quite astonishingly puts forward as primary, which is that it is the father who is recognized as deserving of love. There is already the indication of a paradox here, which leaves the author I have just named in a certain difficulty concerning the 139
fact that, in sum, psychoanalysis would prefer to maintain, to preserve, the field of religion.

Here, too, it can be said that this is not at all the case. The pinnacle of psychoanalysis is well and truly atheism, provided one gives this term another sense than that of "God is dead," where all the indications are that far from calling into question what is in play, namely the law, it is consolidated instead. A long time ago I observed that for the sentence of old father Karamazov, "If God is dead, then everything is permitted," the conclusion

that forces itself upon us in the text of our experience is that the response to "God is dead" is "Nothing is permitted anymore."

To clarify this point whose horizon I am announcing for you, let's start with the death of the father, allowing that Freud did declare it to be the key to *jouissance*, to *jouissance* of the supreme object identified with the mother, the mother as the object of incest.

It is certainly not as an attempt to explain what sleeping with the mother means that the murder of the father is introduced into Freudian doctrine. On the contrary it's on the basis of the father's death that the prohibition of this *jouissance* is established in the first place.

As a matter of fact, it is not just the father's death that is at issue, but the father's murder, as the person I am speaking of also put it very well in the title of her investigation. It's here, in the Oedipus myth as it is stated for us, that the key to *jouissance* is found. But if this is in fact how this myth—we are examining it closely—is presented to us in its statement [*énoncé*], I have already said that it is appropriate to treat the latter for what it is, namely manifest content. By virtue of this fact one has to begin by expounding it properly.

The Oedipus myth, at the tragic level at which Freud appropriates it, clearly shows that the father's murder is the condition of *jouissance*. If Laius is not brushed aside—in the course of a struggle in which, moreover, it is far from certain that by this step Oedipus is going to accede to *jouissance* of the mother—if Laius is not brushed aside then there will not be any *jouissance*. But does he obtain it at the price of this murder?

It's here that the principal thing is presented, and because the reference is taken from a myth enacted in tragedy, it becomes all important. He obtains it in the name of the fact that he has delivered the people from a question that is decimating its best by seeking to answer what presents itself
140 as an enigma, that is to say, what is represented as being supported by this ambiguous being of the Sphinx, in whom strictly speaking a double disposition is incarnated, by virtue of being made, like the half-saying, from two half-bodies. By answering, Oedipus finds himself—this is the ambiguity—suppressing the suspense that the question of truth thus introduces among the people.

He has surely no idea of the extent to which the answer he gives to that question anticipates his own drama, nor of the extent to which, through his making a choice, this answer perhaps falls into the trap of truth. It's man. Who knows what man is? Is it to say everything about him to reduce him to the process—and how ambiguous it is in the case of Oedipus—which makes him go first on all fours, then on the two hind ones—in which Oedipus, like his entire line, is characterized, as Claude Lévi-Strauss has very well pointed out, by not walking straight—then, at the end, with the aid of

a stick which, while not the white cane of the blind man, was for Oedipus nonetheless of the most unusual character, this third element being, to give it its name, his daughter Antigone?

Truth has strayed? What does that mean? Is this so as to leave the way open to what for Oedipus will remain the path of return? For the truth will reemerge for him, as this will be because he will again want to intervene in the face of a misfortune that is twice as great this time, no longer decimating his people by the choice of those who volunteer for the Sphinx's question, but striking at all his people in this ambiguous form that is called the plague, and for which the Sphinx is responsible in the themes of Antiquity. This is where Freud points out for us that for Oedipus the question of truth is renewed, and that it ends with what? With this thing that we are able to identify, in a first approximation, with something that at least bears a relationship to the price paid in the form of castration.

Is that really saying everything—given that, in the end, what happens to him is not that the scales fall from his eyes, but that his eyes fall from him like scales? Don't we see Oedipus being reduced to this very object, not by being subject to castration but, as I would prefer to say, by being castration itself?—namely, being what remains when one of the privileged supports of the object, in the form of his eyes, disappears from him.

What does this mean? It can only mean that the question arises whether the price he has to pay is not to be mounted on the throne by the path of succession, but by way of being chosen as the master, for having effaced the 141
question of truth? In other words, introduced to my statement, as you already are, that what constitutes the essence of the master's position is to be castrated, can't you see that here we find, veiled to be sure, but indicated, that what is properly called succession proceeds from castration also.

Given that fantasy is always very curiously indicated by, but never properly attached to, the fundamental myth of the father's murder, then, if castration is what strikes the son, is it not also what brings him to accede, by the right path, to what the function of the father is about? This is indicated in all our experience. And does it not indicate that castration is transmitted from father to son?

Henceforth, what about death, which presents itself as being there at the origin? Do we not have an indication here that it is perhaps a kind of mask? Even though it has emerged from, been experienced in, the analyst's position in the subjective process of the function of castration, isn't there something here that nevertheless hides it, veils it in a certain way, and places it, if one can put it this way, under its aegis?—and thereby saving us from going to the heart of what the analyst's position enables us to state in a final and rigorous manner?

How has this happened? It is not irrelevant to point out that the myth of

the father's murder, as essential, is initially encountered by Freud at the level of the interpretation of dreams, where a wish for death appears. Conrad Stein's article produces a remarkable critique of this by picking up the recrudescence of these death wishes with respect to the father at the very moment at which his death became real. In Freud's own words *The Interpretation of Dreams* emerged from his father's death. Freud thus wished to be guilty for his father's death.[2]

Is there equally here, as the author stresses, the mark of something hidden that might properly speaking be a wish that the father be immortal?

This interpretation is put forward along the lines of analytic psychologism, where it is regarded as a basic presupposition that the essence of the child's position has its foundation in an idea of omnipotence that would place it beyond death. In the hands of an author who does not abandon his
142 presuppositions, this interpretation is, if I may say so, predictable. On the contrary, by criticizing what is said about what the essence of the child's position is, it follows that these wishes for death and what they mask, if indeed they mask anything, have to be explored via another avenue.

And in the first place, in the observations we have to make concerning subjective structure as being dependant upon the introduction of the signifier, can we place at the head of that structure anything at all we could call knowledge [*connaissance*] of death?

For his line of interpretation, which is that of a denial of death in the name of omnipotence, Conrad Stein makes clever use of Freud's analyses concerning a number of his major dreams, such as the famous request to close the eyes, with the ambiguity of this "an eye" under a bar, which he also produces as the product of an alternative.[3]

But it can also be read in another sense.

2

It is, in effect, perhaps susceptible to another sense, if we take the last dream in the same series and make it the central one, which I have done in its day.

Freud himself puts the emphasis on a dream that is not his own, but one of his patient's, a dream which goes, "He didn't know he was dead."[4]

I broke this dream down to analyze it, lining it up along the two lines of

[2] See "Preface to the Second Edition," SE 4:xxvi.
[3] Sigmund Freud, SE 4:317–8.
[4] SE 5:430–1.

utterance and statement. This was designed to remind us that one of two things must be true. Either death doesn't exist and there is something that survives, but this does not resolve the question whether the dead know that they are dead. Or there is nothing beyond death, and it is quite certain that, in this case, they do not know it. This is to say that no one knows, no living being in any case, what death is. It is remarkable that spontaneous productions formulated at the level of the unconscious are stated on the basis of this, that, for anyone, death is properly speaking unknowable.

In its day I emphasized that it is indispensable for life that something irreducible does not know—I won't say, "Doesn't know that we are dead," 143
because that's not what we should say, in the name of "we," we are not dead, not all at once in any case, and that's our foundation—but, "Something does not know that *I* am dead." I am dead, very exactly, insofar as I am destined to die—but, in the name of this something that does not know it, I don't want to know either.

This is what makes it possible for us to place at the center of logic this "all men"—"all men are mortal"—the basis of which is precisely the nonknowledge of death, just as it is what makes us believe that "all men" means something, all men born of a father, who, we are told, insofar as they, the men, are dead do not enjoy what is there for them to enjoy. An equivalence is therefore drawn, in Freudian terms, between the dead father and *jouissance*. It is he who keeps it in reserve, if I can put it like that.

In the manner in which it is stated, not at the level of the tragic, with all its subtle suppleness, but in the statement of the myth of *Totem and Taboo*, the Freudian myth draws an equivalence between the dead father and *jouissance*. This is what we can describe with the term "structural operator."

Here the myth transcends itself through stating in the name of the real—for this is what Freud insists upon, that it actually happened, that it is the real—that the dead father is what guards *jouissance*, is where the prohibition of *jouissance* started, where it stemmed from.

The fact that the dead father is *jouissance* presents itself to us as the sign of the impossible itself. And in this way we rediscover here the terms that are those I define as fixing the category of the real, insofar as, in what I articulate, it is radically distinguished from the symbolic and the imaginary—the real is the impossible. Not in the name of a simple obstacle we hit our heads up against, but in the name of the logical obstacle of what, in the symbolic, declares itself to be impossible. This is where the real emerges from.

In effect, there beyond the Oedipus myth we recognize an operator, a structural operator, which is called the real father—with, I would say, this property that in the name of a paradigm, it is also the promotion, at the heart of the Freudian system, of what the father of the real is, which places a term for the impossible at the center of Freud's utterance [*énonciation*].

144 That is to say, Freud's utterance has nothing to do with psychology. No psychology of this original father is conceivable. However, in the way in which it is presented it evokes derision, and I don't need to repeat what I said about this at the last seminar—he who enjoys all the women is inconceivable to imagine, whereas it is fairly normally observable that being enough for one is already quite a lot. We are referred here to a completely different reference, that of castration, as soon as we have defined it as the principle of the master signifier. By the end of today's discourse I will have shown you what that can mean.

The master's discourse shows us *jouissance* as coming to the Other—it is he who has the means for it. Anything that is language only obtains *jouissance* by insisting to the point of producing the loss whereby surplus *jouissance* takes body.

First, language, including the language of the master, cannot be anything other than a demand, a demand that fails. It is not from its success, it is from its repetition that something of another dimension is engendered, which I have described as a loss—a loss whereby surplus *jouissance* takes body.

This repetitive creation, this inauguration of a dimension by which everything the analytic experience can be judged by is ordered, may equally well start out as an original impotence—to be explicit, the child's impotence, a far cry from its omnipotence. If it has been possible to see that psychoanalysis shows us that the child is the father of the man, it's very much because there has to be, somewhere, something that mediates them, and this is very precisely the instance of the master, insofar as it comes to produce, and this can be any signifier after all, the master signifier.

At a time when I formulated what is involved in the object relation in relation to Freudian structure, I suggested that the real father is the agent of castration.[5] But I only suggested it after I had first of all taken care to uncover what there is that is distinct in the essence of castration, frustration, and privation. Castration is an essentially symbolic function, that is, is conceivable from nowhere else than the articulation of signifiers, frustration is imaginary, privation, as is self-evident, is real.

What can one define as a result of these operations? We have to make the enigma that the phallus poses for us, insofar as it is manifestly imaginary,
145 the object of the first of these operations, castration. It is—why not?—always a question of something very real in frustration, even if the only resource that the claim on which it is founded has is to imagine that one is owed this real, which is not self-evident. It is clear that privation can only

[5] See *Le Séminaire, Livre IV, La relation d'objet, 1956–1957* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1994).

be situated with respect to the symbolic, for as far as anything real is concerned, nothing can be lacking—what is real is real, and it has to be from elsewhere that this introduction, which is nevertheless essential, be made, for without it we would not be in the real ourselves, namely that something in it is lacking—and this is what initially characterizes the subject.

I remained less explicit then about the level of the agents, though I did indicate it. The father, the real father, is none other than the agent of castration—and this is what affirming the real father as impossible is destined to mask from us.

What does "agent" mean? Initially, we slip into the fantasy that it is the father who is the castrator. It is very striking that none of the forms of the myth that Freud was attached to give any idea of this. It is not because at some initial hypothetical time, the sons, who were still animals, did not have access to the troop of women that, so far as I know, they are castrated. Castration as the statement [*énoncé*] of a prohibition can in any case only be founded at a second moment, that of the myth of the murder of the father of the horde, and as this actual myth states, it arises out of nothing other than a common accord, a singular *initium* whose problematic character I was showing last time.

Equally, the term "act" needs to be picked up here. If, when discussing the psychoanalytic act, what I was able to say about the level of the act is to be taken seriously, that is, if it is true that there can only be an act in a context already replete with everything involving the signifier's effect, its entry into the world, there can be no act in the beginning, at least none that could be described as murder. This myth can have no other sense here than the one I have reduced it to, a statement of the impossible. There can be no act outside a field which is already so completely articulated that the law is located within it. There are no other acts than those that refer to the effects of this signifying articulation and include its entire problematic—with on the one hand whatever loss [*chute*] the very existence of anything at all that can be articulated as subject entails, or rather is, and with on the other 146
whatever preexists it as a legislative function.

Does the real father's function, then, follow from the nature of the act concerning castration? This is exactly what the term "agent" that I have proposed enables us to put in suspense.

The verb *agir*, "to act," has more than one resonance in our language, beginning with that of actor. *Actionnaire*, "shareholder," also—why not, the word is made from *action*, and this shows you that *une action*, "a share," is perhaps not quite what one thinks it is. *Activiste* also—doesn't the activist properly speaking define himself on the basis of the fact that he tends to consider himself to be rather the instrument of something? Actaeon, while we're at it—this would be a good example for anyone who knew what this

meant in terms of the Freudian thing. And finally, what one quite simply calls *mon agent*, "my agent." You can see what this means in general: "I pay him for that." Not even, "I compensate him for having nothing else to do," or "I honor him,"[6] as they say, pretending to begin from the fact that he is capable of doing something else.

This is the appropriate level of the term at which to take both this "real father" and this "agent of castration." The real father carries out the work of the master agency.

3

We are becoming increasingly familiar with the functions of an agent. We live at a time at which we know what this conveys—fake stuff, advertising stuff, things that are there to be sold. But we also know that it works this way, at the point we have come to in the expansion, the paroxysm, of the master's discourse in a society founded on it.

It is getting late.

I am going to be forced to leave something out here, which I will indicate to you in passing, because we might perhaps return to the matter at hand, which for me is of some value, and which for me does not seem unworthy of our making the effort to clarify. Since I am stressing, giving a very special mark to, the function of agent, some day I will have to show you all the elaborations it can lend itself to by introducing the notion of a double agent.

147 Everyone is aware that in our day this notion is one of the most indisputable, the most certain, objects of fascination. The agent who starts again. He doesn't just want the master's little market, which is the role of each. He thinks that what he is in contact with, namely that everything that has true worth, I mean in the order of *jouissance*, has nothing to do with the web of intrigues. In his little job it's ultimately this that he conserves.

It's a strange story, one with many implications. The true double agent is the one who thinks that what escapes the web would also have to be arranged [*agencé*]. Because if that is true, the arrangement is going to become true, and by the same token the first arrangement, the one that was obviously fake, will also become true.

This is most likely what was guiding a character who placed himself, no one knows why, in the function of prototypal agent of this master's discourse, insofar as he allowed himself to keep something whose essence an

[6] As in "I pay him an honorarium."

author, Henri Massis, has profiled by speaking these prophetic words, "Walls are good." Well, someone called Sorgue, with this so Heideggerian name, found a way to be with the Nazi agents, and to make himself a double agent—for whose benefit? For the benefit of the Father of the People, who everyone hopes, as you know, will bring it about that the true will also be arranged [*agencé*].[7]

The reference I evoke concerning the Father of the People has many links with that of the real father as the agent of castration. As the Freudian statement cannot do otherwise than set out from the master's discourse, if only because it speaks of the unconscious, all Freud can make of this famous real father is the impossible. But then we actually do know this real father—he is something of a completely different order.

First, in general, everybody acknowledges that he is the one who works, and does so in order to feed his little family. If he is the agent of something, in a society that obviously does not give him a big role, it nevertheless remains the case that he has some exceedingly nice aspects. He works. And also he would very much like to be loved.

There is something that shows that the mystagogy that makes him into a tyrant is obviously lodged somewhere quite different. It's at the level of the real father as a construction of language, as Freud always pointed out moreover. The real father is nothing other than an effect of language and 148
has no other real. I am not saying, "other reality," since reality is something quite different, it's what I was talking about a moment ago.

I can even immediately go a little bit further and point out that the notion of real father is scientifically unsustainable. There is only one real father, which is the spermatozoon, and at least up till now, nobody has ever thought to say that he was the son of this or that spermatozoon. Naturally, one can lodge objections, aided by a number of examinations of blood groups, of rhesus factors. But this is quite recent, and it has absolutely nothing to do with anything that up till now has been said to be the function of the father. I sense that I am entering dangerous territory, but too bad—it is, after all, not only in the Aruntas tribes that one could raise the question of what the father really is on an occasion when a woman finds she is pregnant.[8] If there is one question that analysis could raise, it's that one. Why, in a psychoanalysis, would it not be—one suspects that this is the case from time to time—the psychoanalyst who is the real father even if he is in no way the one who has done it, there, on the level of the spermatozoon?

[7] Henri Massis (1886–1970) was a right-wing intellectual who, despite his support for Pétain during the war, was elected to the Académie française in 1960. The "Father of the People" referred to is Marshall Pétain.

[8] An allusion to Ernest Jones, "Mother-Right and the Sexual Ignorance of Savages," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 6 (1925):109–30.

From time to time one has the suspicion when it concerns a woman patient's relationship with, to be modest about it, the analytic situation that she has finally become a mother. There is no need to be an Arunta to ask oneself questions about what the father's function is.

By the same token we are aware, because this gives a broader perspective, that there is no need to take the reference to analysis, which I have taken as the most burning one, for the same question to arise. One can very well give one's husband a baby, and yet this be someone else's child, even if one hasn't fucked with him, someone, precisely, whom one would have liked to be the father. Yet, it's for that reason that one has had the child.

This takes us, as you see, a little way into the dream, as it were. I am only doing this to wake you up. If I said that what Freud has lucubrated—not, to be sure, at the level of myth, nor at that of the recognition of death wishes in patients' dreams—is a dream of Freud's, it's because, in my opinion, the analyst should tear himself away from the plane of dreams a little.

What analysts have encountered when guided by what is shocking in
149 what Freud introduced, what they have learned from this encounter, has not yet been decanted at all. Last Friday at my patient interviews I presented an ill patient—I don't see why I should say he was ill—to whom certain things had happened, which meant that his encephalogram, as the technician told me, is always on the border of sleep and a waking state, oscillating in such a way that one never knows when he is going to pass from one to the other, and that is where things stand. This is a little bit how I see all our analyst colleagues, and perhaps myself too, in the end. The shock, the traumatism of the birth of analysis leaves them like that. And this is why they spread their wings to try and extract something more precise from the Freudian articulation.

This is not to say that they don't get any closer to it, but what they see is this, for example. It is the position of the real father as articulated by Freud, namely, as impossible, that makes the father necessarily imagined as a depriver. It is not you, nor him, nor me who imagines, it arises from the position itself. It is not at all surprising that we always encounter the imaginary father. It necessarily, structurally depends on something that evades us, which is the real father. And it is strictly out of the question that the real father be defined in any assured manner unless it's as the agent of castration.

Castration is not what every person who psychologizes necessarily defines it as. We saw this appear, it seems, not so long ago at a thesis defense when someone who has decisively chosen the approach of making psychoanalysis the psychopedia we all know said, "For me, you know, castration is only a fantasy." Not so. Castration is a real operation that is introduced through the incidence of a signifier, no matter which, into the sexual rela-

tion [*rapport du sexe*]. And it goes without saying that it determines the father as this impossible real that we have been talking about.

It is now a question of knowing what is meant by this castration, which is not a fantasy, and the result of which is that the only cause of desire is produced by this operation and that fantasy dominates the entire reality of desire, that is to say, the law.

As for dreams, everyone now knows that they are a demand, that they are signifiers at liberty, which insist, which squawk and stamp their feet, which have absolutely no idea what they want. The idea of putting the omnipotent father at the origin of desire is very adequately refuted by the fact that Freud extracted its master signifiers from the hysteric's desire. It must not be forgotten, in effect, that this is where Freud began and that he acknowledged what it is that remains at the center of his question. The fact it has been recorded is made all the more valuable for having been repeated by an ass who had no idea what it meant. It's the question, "What does a woman want?"[9] 150

A woman. Not just any woman. Merely raising the question means that she wants something. Freud didn't say, "What does *woman* want?" Because after all it is not written down anywhere that woman wants anything at all. I won't say that she will put up with every circumstance. She is put out by every circumstance, *Kinder, Küche, Kirche,* but there are many others, *Culture, Kilowatt, Culbute* [*somersault, tumble*], as someone puts it, *Cru et Cuit,*[10] all of that suits her equally well. She absorbs them. But as soon as you ask the question, "What does a woman want?" you locate the question at the level of desire, and everyone knows that, for woman, to locate the question at the level of desire is to question the hysteric.

What the hysteric wants—I say this for those who do not have this vocation, there must be a lot—is a master. This is absolutely clear—so much so that you have to wonder whether this isn't where the invention of the master began. This would elegantly bring to a close what we are in the process of tracing out.

She wants a master. That is what resides in the top right-hand little corner, for want of giving it another name. She wants the other to be a master, and to know lots of things, but at the same time she doesn't want him to know so much that he does not believe she is the supreme price of all his knowledge. In other words, she wants a master she can reign over. She reigns, and he does not govern.

[9] The reference is to Marie Bonaparte.

[10] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked* (New York: Octagon Books, 1969).

This is where Freud set out from. "She" is the hysteric, but this is not necessarily specific to one sex. As soon as you raise the question, "What does So-and-so want?" you enter the function of desire, and you produce the master signifier.

Freud produced a number of master signifiers, which he covered with the name of Freud. A name can also be used to plug something up. I am astounded that it is possible to associate the idea that at this level there can be some murder or other with this plug of a name of the father, whatever it may be. And how can one believe that analysts are what they are by virtue
151 of a devotion to Freud's name? They are unable to untangle themselves from Freud's master signifiers, that's all. It's not so much to Freud that they adhere as to a number of signifiers—the unconscious, seduction, traumatism, fantasy, the ego, the id, and whatever else you like—there's no question of their leaving that order. They have no father to kill at this level. One is not the father of signifiers, at the very most one is "because of." No problem at this level.

The real mainspring is the following—*jouissance* separates the master signifier, insofar as one would like to attribute it to the father, from knowledge qua truth. If we take the schema of the analyst's discourse, the obstacle raised by *jouissance* is found there where I have drawn the triangle, namely, between what can be produced as master signifier, whatever form it may take, and the field that knowledge has at its disposal insofar as it poses as truth.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \frac{a}{S_2} & \rightarrow & \$ \\ & \blacktriangle & S_1 \end{array}$$

And there you have what enables how it truly is with castration to be articulated—it is that even for the child, whatever one might think, the father is he who knows nothing about truth.

I will recommence at this point next time.

18 March 1970

Supplement

The following session: Radiophonie

I do not know what you have been doing over the time that has kept us apart. You have in any case benefited from it in some way. For my part, I
152 indicate to the person who so kindly wanted to indicate to me that they

were an astudied of the Sorbonne, that I got the Sellin I spoke to you about from Copenhagen, that is, this little book of 1922 which subsequently underwent a degree of rejection, and which is this book around which Freud makes his assurance that Moses was *tudied* revolve.[11]

I am not aware that many psychoanalysts, apart from Jones and perhaps one or two others, have taken any interest in it.[12] This Sellin, in his text, does deserve to be examined, however, since Freud considered that he carried weight, and it is suitable, naturally, to follow him and put this consideration to the test. It seems to me that this is in line with what I am advancing this year concerning the other side of psychoanalysis. But as I have only had this book for roughly five days, written in a very robust [*corsé*] German, you will understand that despite the assistance that a number of greater and lesser rabbis—actually, greater, there are no lesser rabbis—have been kind enough to give me, I am not yet ready to give you an account of it today, at least not one that would satisfy me.

Moreover, it so happens that I have been requested—not for the first time, this is an extended request—to reply on Belgian radio, and this by a man, M. Georgin, who, frankly, has evoked my esteem by providing me with a long text which gives at least this proof that he, contrary to many others, has read my *Écrits*. Good Lord, he got what he could out of it, but it was not nothing, all things considered. Truthfully, then, I was rather flattered. To be sure, this doesn't make me any the more inclined toward this practice that consists in having oneself recorded on the radio—it always wastes a lot of time. However, since it appears that he has taken care to ensure that it takes as little time as possible, I might perhaps agree to it.

The one who will perhaps not agree to it, on the other hand, is he, given that, in order to answer these questions which I will give you three examples of, I did not think I could do any better than reply in writing and not yield to the inspiration of the moment, to this groundbreaking work that I perform here every time I stand before you, which is nourished by plenty of notes, and which works because you see that I am prey to this groundbreaking. This is even the one thing, perhaps, that justifies your presence here.

The circumstances are different when it comes to speaking for some tens, even hundreds, of thousands of listeners, for whom the abrupt test of 153
presenting oneself without the support of the person can produce other effects.

[11] Ernst Sellin, *Mose und seine Bedeutung für die israelitisch-jüdische Religionsgeschichte* [*Moses and his Meaning for Israelite and Jewish History of Religion*] (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1922).

[12] See Ernest Jones, "The Birth and Death of Moses," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 39 (1958):1–4.

In any case I will refuse to give anything but these texts that have already been written out. I am, then, placing a lot of trust in this condition since, as you will see, the questions put to me necessarily lie in the interval between what a constructed articulation produces and what I shall call a common consciousness expects. A common consciousness also means a series of common formulas. The Ancients, the Greeks, had already called this language, in their own language, the *koine.* This can be immediately translated into French—the *couinée.*[13] It squawks.

I don't despise the *koine.* It is just that I believe that the *koine* isn't undisposed to certain effects of precipitation being produced within it, to precisely the most abrupt discourse that there is being introduced.

There you are. This is why today I am going to share my replies to three of these questions with you. It is not merely to compensate myself for the effort, for it will be a far greater effort, believe me, to read these texts to you than to proceed as I usually do.

Without any further delay, I will give you the first of these questions, which is this: "In your *Écrits* you state that Freud anticipated, without being aware of it, the researches of Saussure as well as those of the Prague Circle. Can you explain what you meant?"

That is what I will do, then, not by improvising but, as I warned you, by replying as follows.

[The text of these three replies was published as "Radiophonie" in the journal *Scilicet*, nos. 2/3, pp. 55–99 (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1970). See also *Autres écrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2001), 403–47.]

8 April 1970

[13] *Couïner*, "to squeak," "squeal," "squawk."

IX

155

Yahweh's ferocious ignorance

FREUD AND SELLIN
FALSE INTERPRETATION
MAKING PERFUME
MOSES SLAIN
THE MARITAL ALLEGORY

I will not say I am introducing Professor André Caquot, Director of Studies in the Fifth Section of Sciences of Religion of the Hautes Études, where as you know I am Chargé de Conférences.

I will not say I am introducing him because he needs no introduction. I present myself as having been, thanks to his grace and kindness, completely dependent on him over the time that has passed since two days prior to our last meeting, that is, from the moment I decided I wanted to know a thing or two about Sellin's book.

1

I have said enough about this book for you to be aware of its importance. For the sake of those who by chance have come here for the first time I will repeat that this book turned up at just the right moment, or again, as I put it, like a gift from the gods, for Freud who was then able to maintain the theme of the death of Moses according to which he was murdered. Moses is said to have been killed.

Thanks to Monsieur Caquot I have learned about the situation of this book with respect to exegesis, namely its being located within the efflorescence of what can be called textual technique, as it was instituted, particularly beginning in the nineteenth century, in German universities. I was able 156
to situate Sellin in relation to those who came before him and those who came after him, Edouard Meyer and Gressman, as well as many others.

It was not without difficulty, as I indicated last time, that I managed to get hold of this book, since it was completely unfindable in Europe. Through the efforts of the French-Israelite Alliance, I was finally able to obtain it from Copenhagen. I brought it to Monsieur Caquot's attention,

who was one of the rare people not only to have had wind of it, but to have already had it in his hands some time before I went to him with my request. And we examined this text, particularly concerning the point at which it enabled Freud to situate what he had his heart set on, and not necessarily for the same reasons as Sellin.

This obliged us to turn to this field in which my ignorance is profound. You cannot know all that I am ignorant of—fortunately, because if you knew everything I was ignorant of, you would know everything. In the ordeal of the attempt I made at putting order into what I myself had managed to learn from Monsieur Caquot, I suddenly realized that there is a big difference between knowledge, knowing what one is talking about, what one believes one is capable of talking about, and then what I will presently give a name to, using a term that will serve to explain what we are going to do here.

There will therefore be a break for a second time in the manner in which I address you. Last time you were subjected to a difficult trial, to the point where some of you advanced the hypothesis that it was done in order to air out the room a bit—with a mediocre result, seeing how many of you are here. This time I believe that on the contrary you will have reason to stay. And if, subsequently, I were to offer you again what I am able to do today thanks to Monsieur Caquot, I would do it differently. Let's say that all things considered I felt myself drawing away from the thought of handling again today what we have been obliged to handle, namely the Hebrew letters.

In the text I read out to you last time I inserted a definition from Midrash. It was about a relationship to the written that is subject to certain laws that are of enormous interest to us. In effect, as I was saying to you, it is a question of placing oneself in the interval of a certain relationship between the written and a spoken presentation that draws on it and makes reference to it.

157 Analysis in its entirety, I mean analytic technique, can, in a certain manner, elucidate this reference, to be considered as a "game"—in inverted commas—of interpretation. This term has been used indiscriminately ever since people have been talking about conflicts of interpretation, for instance—as if you could have any conflict between interpretations.[1] At the very most interpretations complement one another, indeed, they play with this reference. What matters here is what I was saying last time, the *falsum,* with the ambiguity that the fall of the false, I mean the contrary of the true, can establish for itself around this word.[2] On occasions this false of interpretation may even have its impact of displacing a discourse. This is actu-

[1] The allusion is to Paul Ricoeur's book, *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1974).

[2] "Falsum," a range of punishable wrongdoing including perjury, bearing false witness, forgery, falsifying documents, etc.

ally what we will see. I could not wish for better than this for conveying to you what this is about.

For me, in this field, this can in no way correspond to a form of knowledge, but rather it corresponds to what I have called putting [someone] on the scent [*mise-au-parfum*]. I am going to continue the operation in your presence, that is, continue trying to put myself on the scent, in the form, which has nothing fictive about it, of questions that necessarily remain unexhausted, and which are those that I have been putting to Monsieur Caquot over the last few days. I will, in this respect, like you, be in a relationship of putting myself on the scent concerning a certain form of knowledge, that of biblical exegesis.

Need I tell you that Monsieur Caquot is in this Fifth Section under the heading of Comparative Semitic Religions? Through the experience I have had of it I have come to believe that in this domain nobody can more adequately, in the sense in which I found it myself, get you to feel what the approach of a Sellin is about, when from the texts of Hosea, you will see by what procedures, he extracts a thing that he himself really wants to bring out. He has his reasons for this, and these reasons matter to us. What Monsieur Caquot conveyed to me on this is equally valuable.

I mentioned ignorance just before. To be a father, I mean not only a real father but a father of the real, there are things that one must ferociously ignore. One would, in a certain way, have to ignore everything that is not what last time I tried to set into my text as being of the level of structure, this level having to be defined as the order of the effects of language. This is where one falls, if I can put it this way, upon truth—the "upon" could equally well be replaced by "from." One falls upon truth, that is to say, a remarkable thing, if we envisage this reference to be absolute, it could be 158
said that anyone who adhered to it—but, of course, it is impossible to adhere to it—would not know what he is saying.

In no way is this saying anything that might in any way serve to specify the analyst. This would be to place him—or, more precisely, you are ready to tell me that this would be to place him—on the same rung as everybody else. Who knows, in effect, what he is saying? This would be a mistake. It is not because everybody speaks that everybody says something. It could be a question of an entirely different reference, of knowing what discourse one is inserted into, at the limit of this position that is in some sense fictitious.

Here is someone who satisfies that position, and whom I am going to name without hesitation, because he seems to me to be essential to the interest that we analysts should bring to Hebraic history. It is, perhaps, inconceivable that psychoanalysis could have been born anywhere else than in this tradition. Freud was born into it, and he insists on this fact, as I have stressed, that for making advances in the field he has discovered he only

truly has confidence in these Jews who have known how to read for quite a long time and who live—this is the Talmud—on the reference to a text. He whom I am going to name, who, or which, actualizes this radical position of ferocious ignorance, has a name—it's Yahweh himself.

In interpellating this chosen people, it is characteristic of Yahweh, when he announces himself, that he is ferociously ignorant of everything that exists of certain religious practices that were rife at the time, and that are founded on a certain type of knowledge—sexual knowledge.

When we talk about Hosea in a moment, we will see the extent to which this is the basis on which he inveighs. He has in his sights a relationship that blends supernatural agencies in with nature itself which, in a way, is itself dependent on them. What right do we have to say that this has no basis? That the manner of moving the Baal who, in return, fertilized the earth, didn't correspond to something that may well have worked? Why not? Simply because there was Yahweh and because a certain discourse was inaugurated that this year I am trying to isolate as the other side of analytic discourse, namely the master's discourse—for precisely this reason we no longer know anything about it.

Is this the position the analyst has to have? Surely not. The analyst—would I go so far as to say that I have been able to experience it on
159 myself?—the analyst does not have this ferocious passion that surprises us so much where Yahweh is concerned. Yahweh is located at the most paradoxical point with respect to another perspective that might, for example, be that of Buddhism, where it is recommended that one purify oneself of the three fundamental passions, love, hatred, and ignorance. What is the most striking thing about this unique religious manifestation is that Yahweh lacks none of them. Love, hatred, and ignorance—there, in any case, are passions that are not absent from his discourse.

What characterizes the analyst's position—I won't go and write it up on the blackboard today with the help of my little schema, where the analyst's position is indicated by the object *a* on the top left-hand side—and this is the only sense that one can give to analytic neutrality, is not to partake of these passions. This constantly places him in an uncertain zone where he is vaguely in quest of being put on the path, of being put on the scent, of knowledge, which he has, however, repudiated.

Today we are concerned with one approach to Yahweh's dialogue with his people, with what Sellin might have had in mind, and also with what can be revealed to us by the encounter that happens to take place with what grabs Freud's attention—which is properly speaking along these lines, but he stops, he fails, and makes the thematics of the father a sort of mythical knot, a short circuit, or, to be precise, a failure. This is what I am now going to spell out for you.

As I have said to you, the Oedipus complex is Freud's dream. Like any dream it needs to be interpreted. We have to see where this displacement effect is produced, an effect which is to be understood as one that can be produced by that which is out of phase [*décalage*] in a writing.

The real father, if one can try to reconstitute it from Freud's elaboration, is properly articulated with what only concerns the imaginary father, namely the prohibition of *jouissance*. On the other hand, what makes him essential is noted, namely, the castration that I was alluding to just before when I said that there was an order of ferocious ignorance there, I mean in the place of the real father. This is what I hope to be able to demonstrate to you all the more easily once, today, concerning Monsieur Sellin, we have clarified a few things.

This is why I will allow myself to put a few questions to Monsieur Caquot first of all. He is well aware, since I have expressed it to him in a thousand different ways, of the heart of our problem on this point—how, 160
why did Freud need Moses?

It is obvious that it is essential for the audience to have a bit of an idea of what Moses means. Sellin's text in fact begins by raising this question, "What was Moses?," summarizing the various positions of those who preceded him, and those who are there working alongside him.

There is no question that these positions can only be clarified in relation to knowing how long Yahweh had been around.

Was Yahweh already the god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Is there a tradition there that we can be certain about? Or is it possible that this tradition was retroactively reconstituted by the founder of the religion, who is supposedly Moses insofar as, at the foot of the Horeb, or more precisely on the Horeb itself, he is supposed to have received, take note, already written out, the Tablets of the Law? These are obviously quite different.

Sellin's book revolves, properly speaking, around this—*Mose und seine Bedeutung für die israelitisch-jüdische Religionsgeschichte*.

Why was it necessary for Sellin to present Moses to us as killed? It's a question I do not even want to begin to answer, so as to leave the field completely open to Monsieur Caquot. It is certain that this is closely linked to the fact that Moses is regarded as a prophet. Why does he have to be killed in his capacity as a prophet? More precisely, Sellin thinks he has undergone a martyr's death in his capacity as a prophet.

This is already something Monsieur Caquot will be so kind as to elucidate for us.

[*Monsieur Caquot's presentation follows. See Appendix, p. 209.*]

2

Something astounds me in Sellin's thought. Naturally, we are unable to penetrate Sellin's thought, but if we assume that what is written has the meaning he deciphers in it when he reconstitutes a text with a certain sense, there's no guarantee anywhere that this text, if one can call it a text, or this vocalization could be understood by anyone. In saying, for instance, that Numbers chapter 25 hides the event of *Moses' murder,* one is right in the midst of ambiguity.

161 In the register of Sellin's thought, which I do not believe brings the categories of the unconscious into play, the fact of hiding the event of Shittim by such an absurd story is altogether unsustainable.

This is obviously where it gets interesting—the extraordinary latency that such a way of proceeding comprises.

One can understand, up to a point, how Freud derives reinforcement here for the idea that it is a question of a memory, supposed in his register, that stands out despite all the intentions, despite a strong resistance. It remains very odd nevertheless that it is supported by writings, and that it is with the aid of writings that it can be redeciphered.

Jones attests that Freud would have had, apparently, according to Sellin himself, communicated to him that he was not so confident as all that.[3] Moreover, as you indicated just before, he takes the question up again in the second edition.

Monsieur Caquot: In the second edition Sellin left the exegesis of 1922 for chapters 5 and 9. However, on the other hand, he gave up promoting his hypothesis of Moses' death in his works on the famous dead servant of the Deutero-Isaiah.[4] *He perhaps retained the idea of Moses' death, but he abandoned the idea of using it to interpret the chapter on the servant. I wonder whether Freud didn't fall victim to Sellin's academic prestige.*

The question I wonder about is whether Freud read very closely.

Monsieur Caquot: I think he did. The book is clear and rigorous. It's false, but clear.

That's true. But Freud doesn't build anything on this construction. He simply indicates that a certain Sellin has recently expressed as defensible the

[3] See Ernest Jones, *Sigmund Freud: Life and Works* 3:400–1 (London: Hogarth Press, 1957).

[4] Caquot seems to be referring to Sellin, *Das Rätsel des deuterojesajanischen Buches* (Leipzig, 1908).

hypothesis that Moses had been killed. The note is very brief, and gives a reference to the work that we have a photocopy of, nothing more.[5] I pointed out just before that Jones mentions that, in a work of 1935, which is later than we have been able to verify ourselves, Sellin maintained his position.[6]

If, really, I have not up till now already overabused the effort that I have led you to make, for which I thank you, it would be interesting, for what I will subsequently have to say, if you could give us some idea of how Hosea 162
has a meaning which has nothing to do with these minutiae.

The important point is the use of the *'ich* we were talking about the other day. The novelty of Hosea, if I have understood correctly, is in sum this appeal of a very special kind. I hope that everyone will get out a little Bible to obtain some idea of the tone of Hosea. It has a type of invective ferocity, really terrifying, which is that of Yahweh speaking to his people in a lengthy discourse. When I spoke of Hosea before obtaining Sellin's book, I said, "I have read nothing in Hosea that is close to resembling what Sellin finds," but on the other hand I pointed out in passing the importance of invective, of the imputation of a rite of sacred prostitution that extends from start to finish, and, in opposition, advances of some kind whereby Yahweh declares himself to be the spouse. It is possible to say that this is the beginning of the long tradition—in itself quite mysterious, and it does not seem to me to be obvious that we can really locate its meaning—which makes Christ the spouse of the Church and the Church the spouse of Christ. It begins here, there is no trace of it prior to Hosea.

The term used for spouse, *'ich*, is the very one which, in the second chapter of Genesis, is used to name Adam's partner. The first time that anyone speaks, that is to say, in verse 27 of the first chapter in which God creates them man and woman, is, if I read it properly, *zakhar* and *nekevah*. The second time—since things are always repeated twice in the Bible—*'ich* is the name for being, object, the rib, in the form *'ichâ*. As if by chance, one only needs to add a little *a* to it.

If you could testify to its usage to designate the term where it concerns something even more divested of sexuality.

[5] Freud actually makes several references to Sellin, and in one place quotes him at length. See *Moses and Monotheism*, SE 23:51–2.

[6] Jones, *Sigmund Freud: Life and Works* 3:400. The book is *Geschichte des israelitisch-jüdischen Volkes* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1935); see pp. 76–8. Jones says he was told by Jewish scholars of the day that Sellin subsequently "withdrew his suggestion and apologized for having made it." However, Jones goes on to say that he could never find any support for this in any of Sellin's later writings. He claims that in a work published some thirteen years later Sellin maintains he has found "further confirmation" for his thesis "in the writings of other prophets" (Jones, 3:400).

Monsieur Caquot: The conjugal uses are only a minor part of the acceptations of the word 'ich, *which designates man in general. It is no more surprising than when one says "my man" for "my husband." In French* mon homme, *"my man," is more familiar.*

The following verse says, "I would like to be called your spouse." It is to be compared to the term *Baal,* which can have the same meaning on occasions, namely lord and master, in the sense of spouse.

163 *Monsieur Caquot: The terminology is extremely fluid. In Hosea the acceptations are restricted in such a way as to play upon "Yahweh" in opposition to "Baal."*

An extremely sharp difference is accentuated here, a difference that in short remains quite opaque, despite centuries of commentaries. It's quite curious.

Monsieur Caquot: This is the first time that this conjugal metaphor makes its appearance in the Bible. It is what makes possible, much later, the allegorization of The Song of Songs. *It's Hosea that makes this allegory possible. I wondered whether there were not a kind of demythification, of transference onto the Israel collectivity of the goddess who is the wife of Baal in the Semitic religions. There are at times several traits by which Israel is described as a goddess. But that has never been said.*

That's very important. Ultimately something of what I was beginning to announce before hinges on that. You hadn't indicated that to me at all.

Monsieur Caquot: One has the impression that the prophetic religion replaces the goddess with Israel. This would be the case with Hosea—it replaces her with the people.

Given the hour, I think we can leave it there.

15 April 1970

THE OTHER SIDE OF CONTEMPORARY LIFE

X

Interview on the steps of the Pantheon

AFFECTS
PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS
SCIENCE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS
THE STUDENT AND THE PROLETARIAN

[As the Law Faculty in rue Saint-Jacques was closed, an exchange with a small number of participants took place on the steps of the Pantheon. Several questions, inaudible on the recording, are missing.]

I would like an explanation for the disagreeable process that has brought us here. In the circumstances I will await your questions.

X: [*On Hegel's dialectic.*]

I have become aware lately that I have already spoken quite precisely about the functions of master and slave, extracted from Hegel's discourse, and much more than I am doing now.

I only ever give things that come to me in advance, and I had therefore already assumed this was the case. But this is not the same as going back and checking the text of my seminar, which is always taken down in stenography, as you know.

In November 1962, when I commenced my seminar on anxiety at Sainte-Anne and, I think, from the second session on, I clarified, in an extremely precise manner, something which is, in short, identical with what I am now developing concerning the master's discourse.[1] I indicated how the positions of the master and the slave, formulated in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, differ. This is Kojève's starting point, and he always evaded what was there prior to their coming to be—but this is not what I emphasize.

What I find myself developing at the moment, under the heading "master's discourse," was already motivating the way in which I approached anxiety. 168

[1] See *Le Séminaire, Livre X, L'Angoisse, 1962–1963* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2004).

Someone whose intentions I don't need to describe is doing an entire report, to be published in two days time, so as to denounce in a note the fact that I put affect in the background, that I ignore it. It's a mistake to think I neglect affects—as if already everyone's behavior was not enough to affect me. My entire seminar that year was, on the contrary, structured around anxiety, insofar as it is the central affect, the one around which everything is organized. Since I was able to introduce anxiety as the fundamental affect, it was a good thing all the same that already, for a good length of time, I had not been neglecting affects.

I have simply given its full importance, in the determinism of *die Verneinung* [negation], to what Freud has explicitly stated, that it's not affect that is repressed. Freud has recourse to this famous *Repräsentanz* which I translate as *représentant de la représentation,* and which others, and moreover not without some basis, persist in calling *représentant-représentatif,* which absolutely does not mean the same thing.[2] In one case the representative is not a representation, in the other case the representative is just one representation among others. These translations are radically different from one another. My translation implies that affect, through the fact of displacement, is effectively displaced, unidentified, broken off from its roots—it eludes us.

This is what is essential in repression. It's not that the affect is suppressed, it's that it is displaced and unrecognizable.

X: [*On the relations between existentialism and structuralism.*]

Yes, it's as if existential thought was the only guarantee of a recourse to affects.

X: What do you think of the relations that exist between you and Kierkegaard concerning anxiety?

No one can yet imagine the extent to which people attribute thoughts to me. I only have to mention someone and I am said to be condescending.
169 It's the very model of academic vertigo. Why in fact wouldn't I speak about Kierkegaard? It's clear that if I place all this emphasis on anxiety in the economy, for it's a question of economy, it's obviously not in order to neglect the fact that at a certain moment there was someone who represents

[2] Lacan has in mind Freud's term "*Vorstellungsrepräsentanz,*" which Strachey renders as "ideational representative" in SE. Lacan's translation, *représentant de la représentation,* comes out as the "representation's representative," while the alternative rendering, *représentant-représentatif,* would give, in English, the equally awkward "representative representative." See Jean Laplanche and Serge Leclaire, "The Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Study," *Yale French Studies* 48 (1972):118–75; and also Michel Tort, "A propos du concept freudien de 'Représentant'(Repräsentanz)," *Cahiers pour l'analyse* 5 (1966):41–67.

the emergence, the coming into being, not of anxiety but of the concept of anxiety, as Kierkegaard himself explicitly calls one of his works. It's not for nothing that historically this concept emerged at a certain moment. This is what I was counting on expounding for you this morning.

I am not alone in making this comparison with Kierkegaard. Yesterday I received a book by Manuel de Diéguez.[3] Well, the things he says about me! As I had to prepare my stuff for you and because it is all done at the very last minute—what I have to tell you is never ready until the final hour, everything I write down and recount to you is generally noted down between five and eleven in the morning—I haven't had the time to locate myself in all this great to-do I am inserted into, in relation not only to Kierkegaard, but to Ockham and Gorgias too. It's all there, as are huge chunks of what I recount. It's fairly extraordinary, because without quoting me half of the book is called "Lacan and"—I'll give you three guesses—"transcendental psychoanalysis." Read it. To me it seems to be pretty overwhelming. I hadn't thought of myself as all that transcendental, but then, you can never be very certain. Someone once said to me, concerning books that were published about him, "Ah! We do have ideas, my friend, we do have ideas!" Let's move on.

X: Do you think, then, that the ideas you get from the practice of psychoanalysis give you something that cannot be found outside it?

It's precisely because I do think that that I have gone to all this effort for the past eighteen or nineteen years. Otherwise I can't see why I would do it. And I can't see what would lead to my name's being added precisely to a list of philosophers, which doesn't seem to me to be entirely judicious.

X: Can you go back to what you started saying about Hegel?

I certainly won't be giving this morning's seminar here. This is not why I 170
am here. I am using the occasion to learn a bit about what some of you might have to say to me, which doesn't easily occur when we are in a lecture theater.

X: You spoke about the Other as the treasure trove of signifiers, and you said that there was no confronting it. Might it include incoherent things? The signifier is not necessarily coherent.

Are you sure that I have said what you are imputing to me? Where did I say that there was no confronting the Other? I do not think I have said that at

[3] The book in question is *Science et nescience* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970).

all. I would be surprised. If I did say it, it was out of clumsiness, but I would be just as surprised to have committed such a blunder.

X: [*Inaudible.*]

I will try to give you the essential part at my next seminar, if it takes place.

X: [*Inaudible.*]

I am attacking philosophy? That's greatly exaggerated.

X: That's an impression.

Yes, that is an impression. I was asked just a minute ago whether I believed that things I recount may not be problematic. I said that I did. My sole motivation for advancing them is because of a precise experience, the psychoanalytic experience. If it weren't for that I would consider that I had neither the right nor above all the desire to extend the philosophical discourse very much beyond the point at which it was most properly effaced.

X: That transforms it.

That doesn't transform it. It's a different discourse. This is what I am trying to show you by reminding those who have no idea about analytic expe-
171 rience, to the entire extent that I believe it to be so, that this is, all the same, its currency. This is where I start from. Otherwise this discourse would not have an aspect that is philosophically so problematic, which was pointed out just before by the person over there, who spoke first, when he translated it into sophistical terms. I don't think this is right. The person I was talking about before places me as a kind of point of emphasis, locates me at the center of some kind of mixture, of fracturing, opening up of philosophical discourse. It's not badly done, it's done in an extremely sympathetic manner, but my initial response—perhaps I will change my views on it—I said to myself, "And yet, to place me in that heritage is quite some *Entstellung*, quite some displacement, away from the import of what I am capable of saying."

X: What you say is always decentered in relation to sense, you shun sense.

This is perhaps precisely why my discourse is an analytic discourse. It's the structure of analytic discourse to be like that. Let's say that I adhere to it as much as I can, without daring to say that I strictly identify myself with it, if I am successful.

Yesterday I read quite an amazing article in a review that, for personal reasons, I had never opened, which is called *L'Inconscient*. In the latest issue to be published a certain Cornelius Castoriadis, no less, has this question about my discourse, supposedly with reference to science.[4] What does he say? He says what I find myself repeating, namely that this discourse has an extremely precise reference to science. What he denounces as the essential difficulty of this discourse, namely—I will spell it out for you—this displacement that never ceases, is the very condition of analytic discourse, and it's in this respect that one can say that it is, I won't say totally the discourse of science, but conditioned by it, in that the discourse of science leaves no place for man.

I was counting on emphasizing this for you this morning. I won't spoil what I am going to say about it next week.

X: Concerning anxiety, I thought it was the opposite of jouissance.

What I insist upon when I address the affects is the affect that is different 172
from all the others, that of anxiety, in that it's said to have no object. Look at everything that has ever been written about anxiety, it's always this that is insisted upon—fear has a reference to an object, whereas anxiety is said to have no object. I say on the contrary that anxiety is not without an object. I have already stated this, I did so a long time ago, and it's quite obvious that I will still have to explain it to you again.

At the time I did not designate this object as surplus *jouissance*, which proves that there was something to construct before I could name it as such. It's very precisely the . . . I am unable to say the name, because, precisely, it's not a name. It's surplus *jouissance*, but it's not nameable, even if it's approximately nameable, translatable, in this way. This is why it has been translated by the term "surplus value." This object without which anxiety is not can still be addressed in some other way. It's precisely this that over the course of the years I have given more and more form to. I have in particular given many chatterboxes the opportunity to rush hastily into print on the subject of what I may have had to say with the term "object *a*."

X: [*Inaudible.*]

In the articulation that I describe as the university discourse the *a* is in the place of what? In the place, let's say, of the exploited in the university dis-

[4] "Epilegomena to a Theory of the Soul Which Has Been Presented as a Science," pp. 3–45 in *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984).

course, who are easy to recognize—they are students. In focusing one's reflection on this place in the notation many things can be explained in these singular phenomena that, for the moment, are happening around the world. To be sure, one has to differentiate between the emergence of its radicality—this is what is happening—and the way in which the university's function has become clogged up, blocked, maintained—this can last for a very long time. The university has an extremely precise function, in effect, one that at every moment is related to the state we are in with respect to the master's discourse—namely, its elucidation. As a matter of fact, this discourse has been a masked discourse for a very long time. Through its internal necessity it will become less and less masked.

What use has the university been? This can be read according to each epoch. By virtue of the increasingly extreme denudation of the master's dis-
173 course, the university discourse finds itself displaying—all the same, don't think it's shaken or finished—that for the moment it's encountering a heap of difficulties. These difficulties can be approached at the level of the close relationship that exists between the student's position of always being, in the university discourse, in a more or less masked manner, identified with this object *a*, which is charged with producing what? The barred S that comes next on the lower right-hand side.

That is the problem. A subject has emerged, from out of this product. Subject of what? A divided subject in any case. That it should be less and less tolerable for this reduction to be limited to producing teachers is brought completely into the light of day in the present epoch, and this requires a study that is all the more improvised for being in the process of becoming a fact. What is being produced, and this is called the crisis of the university, can be inscribed in this formula. It requires it, because it's founded at an altogether radical level. It's not possible to limit oneself to treating it in the way it's being treated. It's uniquely on the basis of the rotating relationship, which is revolutionary, as I say in a slightly different sense from the usual one, between the university position and the three other discourse positions that what is currently happening in the university can be illuminated.

X: [*On revolutionaries and the proletariat.*]

The proletarian? When did I mention the proletarian? At the level of the master's discourse his place is altogether clear.

In its origins the master's discourse has to do with everything that initially happened as being the proletarian, who was initially the slave. We fall back here on the Hegelian term. The slave, as I have stressed, was knowledge at the outset. The evolution of the master's discourse is here. Philosophy has played the role of constituting a master's knowledge, extracted

[*soustrait*] from the slave's knowledge. Science as it has currently come to light properly consists in this transmutation of the function, if one can put it like that—one is always more or less led at some moment to grasp at an archaic theme, and, as you know, I incite you to be prudent.

Be that as it may, there is certainly a difficulty in knowledge, which resides in the opposition between know-how and what is *episteme* in the strict sense. The *episteme* was constituted out of an interrogation, a purification of 174
knowledge. The philosophical discourse shows the philosopher making reference to it at every turn. It's not for nothing that he questioned the slave, and that he demonstrates that the latter knows—that he knows what he doesn't know, moreover. One shows that he knows only because one asks the right questions. This is the path by which the displacement was brought about that makes it the case that our scientific discourse is currently on the side of the master. It's precisely this that cannot be mastered.

X: Where do you place the proletarian, then?

He can only be in the place that he has to be in, on the top right-hand side. In the place of the big Other, don't you think? Very precisely, there knowledge no longer has any weight. The proletarian is not simply exploited, he has been stripped of his function of knowledge. The so-called liberation of the slave has had, as always, other corollaries. It's not merely progressive. It's progressive only at the price of a deprivation.

I won't risk going into this, I would only go into it cautiously, but if there is something whose tone strikes me in the thematics called Maoist, it's the reference to the knowledge of manual labor. I do not claim to have an adquate view on this, but I will make one observation that struck me. The renewed emphasis on the knowledge of the exploited seems to me to be very profoundly motivated structurally. The question is knowing whether this is not something that is entirely dreamed up. In a world in which there has emerged, in a way that actually does exist, that is a presence in the world, not the thought of science, but science objectified in some way, I mean these things entirely forged by science, simply these little things, gadgets and things, which at the moment occupy the same space as us—in a world in which this emergence has taken place, can know-how at the level of manual labor carry enough weight to be a subversive factor? This is how, for me, the question arises.

What do you do with all I tell you? You record it on a little machine, and afterward, you give parties which you hand out invitations to—that's a Lacan tape for you.

13 May 1970

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XI

Furrows in the alethosphere

THERE'S ONLY ONE AFFECT
THE OBJECT *A* AND THE COGITO
SCIENCE AND PERCEPTION
THE MULTIPLICATION OF LATHOUSES

A lot of water has passed under the bridge since our last meeting, I am speaking of the one in April, and not the most recent one, which took place elsewhere, and only with some of you.

The exchange of remarks on the steps of the Pantheon was not of a bad level, since it enabled me to go over a number of points that deserved to be made precise, in response to questions that were not at all inept. That is what I think with the lapse of a week. But my first reaction immediately afterward when I was with someone who was accompanying me was, however, of a certain inadequacy.

Even the best of those who spoke, and who were not unjustified in their questions, seemed to me, except at the start, to be lagging behind a bit. This seems to me to have been reflected in the fact that, at least in this friendly interpellation that was still not a questioning, they situated me within a number of references.

These references are not all to be rejected, certainly. I recall that the first was to Gorgias, of whom I am supposed to be conducting some sort of repetition. Why not? But what was inappropriate is that in the mouth of the person who evoked this character whose effectiveness we, in our days, cannot evaluate very well it was about someone from the history of thought. This is the distancing that seems disturbing to me—this term enables a sort of sampling of views from a distance concerning this person and that person whom one has bracketed together under "function of thought."

176 It seems to me that there is nothing less homogeneous here—if I can put it like that - nothing that would enable one to define a species. It is not legitimate to give some people, in whatever capacity one might imagine them, the function of a species representing thought. Thought is not a category. I would almost say it is an affect. Although, this is not to say that it is at its most fundamental under the aspect of affect.

There is only one affect--this constitutes a certain position, a new one

to be introduced into the world, which, I am saying, is to be referred to what I am giving you a schema of, transcribed onto the blackboard, when I speak of the psychoanalytic discourse.

As a matter of fact, transcribing it onto the blackboard is distinct from talking about it. I remember that at Vincennes, when I appeared there for the first time which hasn't been repeated since, but which will be repeated, it occurred to someone to call out to me that there were real things that were truly preoccupying the assembly. Namely, that there was a brawl going on at a place at some distance from where we were gathered, that this was what we should be thinking about, that the blackboard had nothing to do with this real. That's where the error is.

I would say that, if there is any chance of grasping something called the real, it is nowhere other than on the blackboard. And even, whatever commentary I am able to give it, which will take the form of speech, relates only to what is written on the blackboard.

That's a fact. And it is demonstrated by this fact, by this artifice that is science, whose emergence one would be completely wrong to inscribe as arising solely out of a philosophical concoction. Metaphysical, rather than physical, science, perhaps. Does our scientific physics deserve to be called metaphysical? This is what would need to be spelled out.

Spelling it out seems possible to me, namely on the basis of the psychoanalytic discourse. In effect, from the perspective of this discourse, there is only one affect, which is, namely, the product of the speaking being's capture in a discourse, where this discourse determines its status as object.

This is where the Cartesian cogito derives its exemplary value from, provided that one examine it and revise it, as I will do once again, today, to start with.

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I mentioned that affect by which the speaking being of a discourse finds itself determined as an object. It has to be said that this object is not nameable. If I try to call it surplus *jouissance*, this is only a device of nomenclature.

What object is it that results from this effect of a certain discourse? We know nothing about this object, except that it is the cause of desire, that is to say that strictly speaking it manifests itself as want-to-be. There is therefore no being that is thereby determined.

Certainly, what the effect of a given discourse bears upon may well be a being that one may call man, for example, or else a living being to which one can add that it is sexed and mortal, and one will fearlessly advance

toward thinking that what the discourse of psychoanalysis bears upon is here, under the pretext that sex and death are constantly at issue here. But from our perspective, if it is true that we start at the level of what reveals itself initially, and as the prime fact, to be *structured like a language,* we are not yet at this point. It is not a question of beings [*étant*] in the effect of language. It is only a question of a speaking Being [*être*]. At the outset we are not at the level of beings, but at the level of Being.

We must, however, beware of the mirage here of thinking that Being is thereby settled, and beware of the error, which lies in wait for us, of assimilating this to everything that has been worked out as the dialectic of an initial position of being and nothingness.

The initial affect of this effect, let's now put this in inverted commas, of "Being" only appears at the level of what makes itself the cause of desire, that is to say, at the level of what we situate, of this initial effect of the setting [*appareil*], of the analyst—the analyst as the place that I am trying to grasp with these little letters on the blackboard. This is where the analyst positions himself. He positions himself as the cause of desire. This is an eminently unprecedented position, if not a paradoxical one, one that is validated by a practice.

The importance of this practice can be measured by taking what has been designated as the master's discourse as a reference point. It is not a question here of a distant relationship, or of an overview, but of a fundamental relationship—the analytic practice is, properly speaking, initiated by this master's discourse.

178 There is something that becomes present by virtue of the fact that all determination of the subject, and therefore of thought, depends on discourse. In this discourse, in effect, there arises the moment at which the master becomes differentiated. It would be quite false to think that this occurs at the level of a risk. This risk is, despite everything, quite mythical. It's the trace of a myth that still remains in Hegelian phenomenology. Isn't this master nothing other than the one who is the strongest? This is certainly not what Hegel records. The struggle for pure prestige at the risk of death still belongs to the realm of the imaginary. What does the master do? This is what the articulation I am giving you of discourse shows. He plays upon what I have called, in different terms, the crystal of language.

Why not use in this respect what can be designated in French by the homonym *m'être, m'être à moi-même*? It's from this that the *m'être* signifier emerges, whose second term I leave to you to write as you will.[1]

[1] *m'être*, a construction of Lacan's, is homophonic with *maître*, "master." Having the grammatical form of a quasi pronominal construction, it can be taken roughly to suggest being as an activity, thus, "I am being."

This unique signifier operates by means of its relation with what is already there, already articulated, in such a way that we can only conceive of it against the presence of a signifier that is already there, that, I would say, has always been there. In effect, if this unique signifier, the signifier "the master," write it as you wish, is articulated to some part of a practice that it orders, then this practice is already shot through, woven through, with what, to be sure, does not yet emerge from it, namely, the signifying articulation. The latter is at the heart of all knowledge, even if it could only have been approached through know-how.

We find the trace of the initial presence of this knowledge where it is already some distance off, by virtue of having been fiddled with for a long time in what is called the philosophical tradition—a judgment about the grip that the signifier of the master has on this knowledge.

Let's not forget that when Descartes asserts his "I am thinking therefore I am," it's by virtue of having for some time sustained his "I am thinking" by calling into question, putting in doubt, this knowledge that I am saying is "fiddled with," which is the knowledge already elaborated at length through the master's intervention.

What can we say about contemporary science that will give us a reference point? I will mention three stages here because, poor teacher that I am, I am not sure that you are cottoning onto my sentences. Three stages—science—behind, philosophy—and beyond, something of which we have a notion if only through biblical anathemas.

This year I have given a large place to the text Hosea, with reference to 179
what Freud extracts from it, according to Sellin. The greatest benefit of it is perhaps not, though it does exist on this level, calling the Oedipus complex into question, which I have called this "residue of myth," in psychoanalytic theory. Surely, if there were something necessary here to make present some ocean of mythical knowledge regulating the life of men—and how do we know whether it was harmonious or not?—the best reference could well be what Yahweh condemns, with what I called his ferocious ignorance, with the term "prostitution."

This is enough of a foothold [*bias*], to my mind, and surely a better one than the common reference to the fruits of ethnography. Ethnography conceals all kinds of confusion within itself, through adhering to what it gathers as if it were natural. And how is it gathered? It is gathered in writing, that is to say, detailed, extracted, distorted forever from the supposed terrain on which one is supposedly uncovering it.

This is certainly not to say that mythical knowledge could inform us at greater length, or inform us better, about the essence of the sexual relation.

If psychoanalysis makes sex and, as a dependency, death present for us—even though here nothing is certain, except a general apprehension of a link

between sexual difference and death, it's by demonstrating, in a way that I wouldn't call lively but merely articulated, that concerning the capture of this being—whatever it may be, which is to say that it is not even a being—in discourse the articulation in which the sexual relation is expressed only ever appears in a complex manner. This complex manner is one that cannot even be said to be mediated, even though there are *medii—media,* if you prefer—one of which is this real effect that I am calling surplus pleasure, which is the little *a*.

What does experience indicate to us, in point of fact? That it is only when this little *a* is substituted for woman that man desires her. That, inversely, what a woman has to deal with, insofar as we are able to speak about this, is this *jouissance* that is her own and is represented somewhere by a man's omnipotence, which is precisely where man, when he speaks, when he speaks as master, discovers that he is a failure [*en défaut*].

This is where one has to start from in analytic experience—what could
180 be called man, that is to say the male as speaking being, disappears, vanishes through the very effect of the master's discourse—spell it as you will—through being inscribed solely in castration, which, by this very fact, is properly to be defined as being deprived of woman—of woman insofar as she would be realized in a suitably congruent signifier.

Being deprived of woman—this, expressed in terms of the failure [*défaut*] of discourse, is what castration means. It is indeed because this is not thinkable that the speaking order institutes this desire, constituted as impossible, as an intermediary and that makes the mother, insofar as she is prohibited, the privileged feminine object.

This is the wrapping established by the fundamental fact that in a mythical union between man and woman there is no possible place that could be defined as sexual.

This is, indeed, where what we grasp in the psychoanalytic discourse—the unifying One, the whole One—is not what is involved in identification. The pivotal identification, the major identification, is the unary trait. It is Being, marked *one*.

Prior to the promotion of any being, by virtue of a singular *one*, of what bears the mark from this moment forward, the effect of language arises, as does the first affect. This is what the formulas I wrote on the blackboard are saying.

$$\frac{1}{1+1} \quad = \quad ? \quad \frac{\text{I am one}}{\text{I am thinking} = \text{therefore I am one}}$$

Somewhere this something that the cogito only marks is isolated, also with the unary trait, that one can suppose the "I am thinking" has in order

to say, "Therefore, I am." Here the effect of division is already marked by an "I am" which elides the "I am marked by the one"—for Descartes is, to be sure, inscribed in a scholastic tradition, which he wriggles out of acrobatically, which is not at all to be disdained as a means of escape.

Moreover, it is as a function of this initial position of the "I am" that the "I am thinking" can be even so much as written. You will recall how I have been writing it for a long time now—"I am thinking, 'Therefore I am.'" This "Therefore I am" is a thought.

It supports itself infinitely better by carrying its characteristic of knowledge, which does not go beyond the "I am marked by the one," by the singular, by the unique, by what?—by this effect which is, "I am thinking."

But here again, there is an error in the punctuation, which a long time 181
ago I expressed thus—the "ergo," which is nothing other than the "ego" in play, should be put alongside the "cogito." The "I am thinking, therefore, 'I am'" gives the formula its real significance. The cause, the "ergo," is thought. The point of departure to take is the effect of what is involved in the simplest order, from which the language effect comes into play at the level of the emergence of the unary trait.

To be sure, the unary trait is never alone. Therefore, the fact that it repeats itself—that it repeats itself in never being the same—is properly speaking the order itself, the order in question because language is present and already there, already efficacious.

2

Our first rule is never to seek the origins of language, if only because they are demonstrated well enough through their effects.

The further back we push their effects, the more these origins emerge. The effects of language are retroactive, precisely in that it is as language develops that it manifests what it is qua want-to-be.

Moreover, I will indicate—in passing, for today we have to move on—that we can write it like this, and that we can bring into play here, in its strictest form, something that right from the origins of a rigorous use of the symbolic appeared in the Greek tradition, namely at the level of mathematics.

Euclid is the fundamental reference here, and the definition he gives us of proportion is primary, it had never been given before him, I mean before what remains as having been written in his name—of course, who knows from where he might have borrowed this strict definition? The one that gives the only true foundation of geometrical demonstration can be found, if I remember correctly, in book five.

The term "demonstration" is ambiguous here. By constantly highlighting the intuitive elements that are here in the figure, he makes it possible for you to miss the fact that, very formally, the requirement in Euclid is one of symbolic demonstration, of an order that is grouped into equalities and inequalities, which alone enable proportion to be assured in a way that is not an approximation but is properly demonstrable, in this term "logos," in the sense of proportion.

182 It is curious and indicative that we had to wait for the Fibonacci series to see what is given in the apprehension of this proportion which is called the proportional mean. I will write it out here—you will be aware that I made use of it when I discussed *From an Other to the other.*[2]

$$\cfrac{1}{1+\cfrac{1}{1+\cfrac{1}{1+1}}} = \gamma$$

A romanticism still continues to call this the golden number and goes astray in finding it on the surface of everything that has been possible to paint or draw over the ages, as if it were not certain that this is only about being able to visualize it. One only has to open a work of aesthetics that makes a case for this reference in order to realize that, while it may be possible to superimpose it, it is certainly not because the painter had drawn the diagonals in advance, but because there is in effect a kind of intuitive harmony, which means that it is always this that sings most sweetly.

Except that there is also something else, which it will not be easy for you to grasp. By taking each of these terms and starting to calculate from the bottom up, you will quickly see that you are dealing first with 1/2, then with 2/3, next with 3/5. You will thus find the numbers the sequence of which constitutes the Fibonacci series, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, . . . , each being the sum of the two preceding numbers, as I pointed out to you at the time. This relation of two terms we can write for instance as $u_{(n+1)} = u_{(n-1)} + u_n$. The result of the division u_{n+1} / u_n will be equal, if the series is continued long enough, to the effectively ideal proportion that is called the proportional mean, or again, the golden number.

If we now take this proportion as an image of what affect is, insofar as there is repetition of this "I am one" on the next line, this retroactively results in what causes it—the affect.

We can momentarily write this affect as "equal to *a*," and we can see that we rediscover the same *a* at the level of the effect.

[2] *Le Séminaire, Livre XVI, D'un Autre à l'autre, 1968–1969* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2006).

$$\frac{1}{a+1} = a$$

This a, the effect of repeating the 1, is at the level of what is designated 183
here by a bar. The bar is precisely only this, that there is something to get past in order for the 1 to affect. In short, it is this bar that is equal to a. And there's nothing astonishing in the fact that we can legitimately write the affect below the bar, as that which is the effect that is here thought, overturned, when the cause is made to emerge. It is in the initial effect that the cause, as thought cause, emerges.

This is what is motivating me to find a more certain articulation of what the effect of discourse is in this initial tentative use of mathematics. It's at the level of the cause, insofar as it emerges as thought, the reflection of the effect, that we attain the initial order of what the want-to-be is. Initially Being only affirms itself with the mark of the 1, and everything that follows is a dream—notably, the mark of the 1 insofar as it supposedly encompasses, could supposedly combine, anything at all. It can combine nothing at all, unless it is, precisely, the confrontation, the addition of the thought of the cause with the initial repetition of the 1.

This repetition already costs and institutes, at the level of the a, the debt of language. Something has to be paid to the one who introduces its sign. This year I have designated this something, using a nomenclature that tries to give it its historical weight—strictly speaking it was not this year, but let's say that for you it was this year—with the term *Mehrlust*.

What does this infinite articulation reproduce? As the little a is the same here as it is there, it is self-evident that repetition of the formula cannot be the infinite repetition of the "I am thinking" within the "I am thinking," which is the mistake the phenomenologists never fail to make, but only the following: "I am thinking," were it to be done, is only able to be replaced by "I am, 'I am thinking, therefore I am.' " I am he who is thinking, "Therefore I am," and so on indefinitely. You will observe that the small a always gets farther and farther away in a series that reproduces exactly the same order of 1s, such as they are here deployed on the right, with the sole difference that the final term will be a small a.

$$\cfrac{1}{a+\cfrac{1}{a+1}} = a$$

Notice that it's a remarkable thing, this small a. It is sufficient that it sub- 184
sist, however far down you take it, for equality to be the same as in the for-

mula I first wrote up, namely that the multiple and repeated proportion equals, in total, the result of the small *a*.

In what way is this series marked off? In sum, it does nothing other, if I am not mistaken, than mark the order of the converging series which has the largest intervals while remaining constant. Namely, still the object *a*.

3

In a certain sense, this is only a local articulation. It certainly does not pretend to solve, with a fixed and guaranteed proportion, the question of the effectiveness of the most primary manifestation of number, namely the unary trait. I only did it to remind you what science is such as we have it now, if I can put it like this, on our hands—I mean, present in our world in a manner that goes well beyond anything that an effect of knowledge [*connaissance*] may lead us to speculate about.

In effect, it is, all the same, necessary not to forget that it is characteristic of our science not to have introduced a better and more extensive knowledge of the world but to have brought into existence, in the world, things that did not in any way exist at the level of our perception.

Attempts have been made to organize science according to some mythical genesis that begins with perception, under the pretext that such and such a philosophical meditation had supposedly come to a standstill for a long time over the question of knowing what guarantees that perception is not illusory. This is not where science emerged from. Science emerged from what was embryonic in the Euclidean demonstrations. Nevertheless, these still remain very suspect because they still contain that attachment to the figure, the self-evidence of which serves as a pretext. The entire evolution of Greek mathematics proves to us that what rises to the highest point is the manipulation of numbers as such.

Consider the method of exhaustion which, already in Archimedes, prefigures what leads to what is essential, to what for us is, as it happens, structure, namely the calculus, the infinitesimal calculus. There is no need to wait until Leibniz, who, moreover, at his first attempt shows himself to have
185 been a little awkward. It had already been started by Cavalieri, simply by reproducing Archimedes' exploit on the parabola, in the seventeenth century, but well before Leibniz.

What is the result of this? No doubt you can say of science that *nihil fuerit in intellectu quod non prius fuit in sensu*, what does that prove? The *sensus* has nothing to do, as people nevertheless know, with perception. The *sensus* is

only there in the manner of what can be counted, and the actual counting rapidly dissolves. Taking what is our *sensus* at the level of the ear or eye, for example, leads to counting vibrations. And it was owing to this play of numbers that we in fact set about producing vibrations that had nothing to do either with our senses or with our perception.

As I was saying the other day on the steps of the Pantheon, the world that is assumed to have always been ours is now populated, in the very place where we are, without your having the slightest suspicion of it, by a considerable and intersecting number of what are called waves. This is not to be neglected as the manifestation, presence, existence, of science, and to describe what is around our Earth would require that one not be satisfied with speaking of atmosphere, of stratosphere, of whatever you would like to spherize, however distant the particles we can apprehend. It would be necessary to take account also of what in our day goes well beyond, and which is the effect of what? Of a knowledge that has progressed less through its own filtering, through its own critique as we say, than through an audacious leap from an artifice, no doubt that of Descartes—others will choose different ones—the artifice of giving the guarantee of truth back to God. If truth there be, that he take responsibility for it. We take it at face value.

Solely by means of the play of a truth that is not abstract but purely logical, solely by the play of a strict combinatory that is subject only to the requirement that rules, under the name of axioms, must always be given—this is where a science is constructed, one that no longer has anything to do with the presuppositions that the idea of knowledge [*connaissance*] has always implied—namely, the mute polarization, the imagined ideal unification of that which is knowledge [*connaissance*], where one can always find, whatever the name one dresses them up in, "endosunia," for instance, the reflection, the image, which is moreover always ambiguous, of two principles, the male principle and the female principle. 186

The space in which the creations of science are deployed can only be qualified henceforth as the *in-substance*, as the *a-thing*, *l'achose* with an apostrophe—a fact that entirely changes the meaning of our materialism.

It is the oldest figure of the master's infatuation—write "master" as you will—for man to imagine that he shapes woman. I think you all have experienced enough to have encountered this comical story at one stage of your life or another. Form, substance, content, call it what you will –this is the myth scientific thought must detach itself from.

I figure that I am allowed to plow on fairly crudely in order to express my thought well. I am failing to act as if I had had a thought, whereas, precisely, this is not the issue, but, as everyone knows, it's thought that communicates itself, by means of misunderstanding, of course. Well, let's communicate and

say what this conversion consists in, the conversion by which science is shown to be distinct from any theory of knowledge [*connaissance*].

This doesn't make sense, in fact, because it is precisely in the light of the apparatus of science, to the extent that we can grasp it, that it is possible to found the nature of the errors, the obstacles [*les butées*], the confusions that in effect didn't fail to be present in what was being articulated as knowledge [*connaissance*], with this undercurrent that there were two principles to cleave apart—one that forms and one that is formed. This is what science makes quite clear for us, and this is confirmed by the fact that we find an echo of it in analytic experience.

To express myself in these large-scale, approximate terms, take the male principle for example—what effect does the incidence of discourse have on it? It is that, as a speaking being, he is summoned to give an explanation of his "essence"—irony, inverted commas. It is very precisely and solely because of the affect that this discourse effect subjects him to—that is, insofar as he receives this feminizing effect of the small *a*—that he recognizes what makes him, that he recognizes the cause of his desire.

Conversely, at the level of the so-called natural principle, where it is not for nothing that it has always been symbolized, in the bad sense of the word, by a female reference, it is, on the contrary, from out of the insub-
187 stance, as I was saying just before, that this void appears. Void of what? Let's say that the something in question, if we want, very much from a distance, from a very long way away, to give it the horizon of woman, is in what is in question as unformed *jouissance*, precisely without any form, that we can find the place, in the "operceive" in which science comes to be constructed.[3] What I perceive, which is claimed to be original, must, in effect, be replaced by an operceive.

Insofar as science only refers to an articulation that only takes form in the signifying order, it is constructed out of something where there was nothing beforehand.

This is what it is important to grasp if we wish to understand something that has to do with—what?—with the forgetting of this very effect. Being what we are, all of us, to the extent that the field increases by virtue of the fact that science perhaps functions as the master's discourse, we do not know how far—for the reason that we have never known at any point—each one of us is initially determined as object small *a*.

I was speaking before of these spheres with which the extension of science—which, curiously, is found to be very effective at determining what a being is—encircles the earth, a series of zones that science describes as

[3] The word is a construction by Lacan comprising "operate," as in "operational," and "perceive."

being what it finds. Why not also take account of the place in which these fabrications of science are located, if they are nothing more than the effect of formalized truth? What are we going to call this place?

Here again I am overly emphasizing what I want to say, and I am not necessarily very proud of what I am putting forward on this occasion, but I think that it is useful, you will see why, to raise this question which is not a question of nomenclature.

It is a question about a place that is well and truly occupied—by what? I was speaking just before about waves. This is what is at issue. Hertzian waves or other waves—no phenomenology of perception has ever given us the slightest idea of them and it would certainly never have led us to them.

We certainly won't be calling this place the noosphere, which we ourselves supposedly populate.[4] If indeed there is anything that as it happens is in the background, twenty-five rows back, of everything that may be of interest to us, it is this. But in using *aletheia* in a way which, I agree, has nothing emotionally philosophical about it you could, unless you find something better, call it the alethosphere.

Don't get too excited. The alethosphere gets recorded. If you have a little 188
microphone here, you are plugged into the alethosphere. What is really something is that if you are in a little vehicle that is transporting you toward Mars you can still plug into the alethosphere. And, even, this surprising effect of structure which meant that two or three people have gone wandering around on the moon, you must think that, concerning their exploit, it was certainly not for no reason that they always stayed within the alethosphere.

These astronauts, as they are called, who had some minor problems at the last minute, would probably not have overcome them so well—I am not even talking about their relations with their little machine, for they would perhaps have overcome that on their own—if they had not been accompanied the entire time by this little *a* that is the human voice. By virtue of this they could allow themselves to say nothing but bullshit [*conneries*], such as for example that everything was going well when everything was going poorly. But that's beside the point. The point is that they stayed within the alethosphere.

It takes time to observe all the things that populate it, and this is going to oblige us to introduce another word.

The alethosphere—it sounds good. That's because we suppose that what I have been calling formalized truth already has, sufficiently, the status of truth at the level at which it operates, at which it operceives. But at the level of the operated-on, of what moves around, the truth is not at all unveiled.

[4] Neologism by Teilhard de Chardin from the Greek *noos*, "mind."

The proof of this is that the human voice, with its effect of grabbing you by the perineum, as it were, does not unveil its truth at all.

We shall name that with the help of the aorist of the same verb that, as a famous philosopher pointed out, *aletheia* came from. Only philosophers would ever notice such things, and perhaps the odd linguist. I'm going to call that the "lathouses."

The world is increasingly populated by lathouses. Since you seem to find that amusing, I am going to show you how it is spelled.

You will notice that I could have called that "lathousies." That would have gone better with *ousia*, this participle with all its ambiguity.[5] *Ousia* is not the Other, it's not a being, it's between the two. It is not altogether Being either, but, ultimately, it's pretty close.

As far as the feminine unsubstance is concerned, I would go as far as "parousia." And these tiny objects little *a* that you will encounter when you
189 leave, there on the footpath at the corner of every street, behind every window, in this abundance of these objects designed to be the cause of your desire, insofar as it is now science that governs it—think of them as lathouses.

I notice a bit late, since it's not long since I invented it, that it rhymes with *ventouse*.[6] There is *vent*, "wind," inside, lots of wind, the wind of the human voice. It is quite comical to find that at the end of our gathering.

If man had less often played the spokesman of God in order to believe that he forms a union with a woman, this word "lathouse" would have perhaps been found a long time ago.

Be that as it may, this little emergence is designed to make you ill at ease in your relations with the lathouse.

It is quite certain that everyone has to deal with two or three of this species. The lathouse has absolutely no reason to limit its multiplication. What is important is to know what happens when one really enters into relationship with the lathouse as such.

The ideal psychoanalyst would be one who commits this absolutely radical act, and the least that one can say is that seeing it done causes anxiety.

One day, at a time when it was a question of my being traded, I tried, because it was part of the ritual, to advance a few little things on this subject. In effect, while I was being traded, people were very keen to pretend to be interested in what I might have to say about the training of analysts, and I put forward, in a spirit of absolute indifference, since everyone was only interested in what was happening in the corridors, that there was no reason why a psychoanalysis should cause anxiety. It is certain that if the

[5] *Ousia* in Plato is usually rendered into English as "essence" or "being," and in Aristotle as "substance."

[6] A *ventouse* is a sucker (of an octopus), a suction cap (on the tip of a toy arrow), or a cupping glass (for the bleeding of a patient).

lathouse exists, anxiety—since that is what we are dealing with—is not without an object. That is what I started with. A better approach to lathouse must calm us a little bit.

The question is to put oneself in a position where there is someone whom you have taken charge of with respect to his anxiety, who wishes to come and hold the same position that you occupy, or that you do not occupy, or that you barely occupy, who wishes to come to know how you occupy it, and how you do not occupy it, and why you occupy it, and why you do not occupy it.

This will be the object of our next seminar, whose title I can already give 190
you—it will be on the relations, still supported by our little schemas, between impotence and impossibility.

It is clear that it is completely impossible to hold the position of the lathouse. However, that's not all that is impossible, there are many other things as well, provided one gives this word "impossible" a strict meaning—that is to say, provided one determines them only at the level of our formalized truth—namely, that in every formalized field of truth there are truths that one can never demonstrate.

It's at the level of the impossible, as you know, that I define what is real. If it is real that there are analysts, it's precisely because this is impossible. This forms part of the position of the lathouse.

What's annoying is that, in order to be in the position of the lathouse, it is really necessary to have established that it is impossible. It is for this reason that one loves to emphasize impotence so much more, which also exists, but which is, as I will show you, in another place than strict impossibility.

I know that there are some people here who are distressed from time to time by seeing me, as one says—how does one say?—abuse, interpellate, vociferate against analysts. These are young people who are not analysts. They do not realize that I am doing something nice, that these are little signs of acknowledgment that I am giving them.

I do not want to put them through too difficult a trial. And when I allude to their impotence, which is therefore my own, it means that at that level we are all brothers and sisters, and that one has to extricate oneself as best one can.

I hope this will calm them down before I talk to them about the impossibility of the analyst's position.

20 May 1970

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XII

The impotence of truth

FREUD AND THE FOUR DISCOURSES
CAPITALISM AND THE UNIVERSITY
HEGEL'S PRACTICAL JOKES
IMPOTENCE AND IMPOSSIBILITY
WHAT CAN A MISCARRIAGE DO?

We are at that time of the year when final examinations happen. I am going to try to lighten things up a bit.

Fortunately, it's drawing to a close, *ça se tire*, as we say. I would even be inclined to leave it at that, if I didn't have to give you, all the same, two little complements that are intended to bring out the essential of what I hope to have got across this year—two little points for the future, which may give you a glimpse, by drawing you a bit closer to it, of the way in which there are perhaps notions that are fairly new, and that have, in every case, this mark that I am always emphasizing, which those who find themselves working with me at a more practical level can confirm, of operating on a level with an experience.

It is not impossible that this will be of use elsewhere, at the level of something that is taking place now, without, for the moment, our knowing quite what. Naturally, when things happen, one never quite knows at the time they are happening what they are, especially when one covers them over with the news. But ultimately something is happening in the university.

In various places people are surprised. What's eating them, these students, the little dears, our favorites, the darlings of civilization? What's up with them? Those who are saying this are playing the fool, this is what they are paid to do.

It should nevertheless be possible that something of what I am elaborating about the relationship between the analyst's discourse and the master's discourse should show people a way to enable them, in some way, to explain themselves to one another and to understand one another.

192 What is happening at the moment is that everyone is competing with everyone else in an attempt to minimize the seriousness of failed, suppressed little demonstrations, increasingly confining them to a street, a corner. To explain it, to make it understood at the very moment at which I say I could do it, I would like you to understand this, which is that to the

extent to which I managed to do this, to the extent to which I succeeded in getting you to understand something, you could be certain that to that extent I would have made you make a big mistake. For it is ultimately limited to this.

Today I would like to spell out, as simply as I can, the relationship between what is happening and the things I have been daring to manipulate for a while, which, by virtue of this fact, gives a kind of guarantee that this discourse hangs together. I have dared manipulate them in a way which is, ultimately, completely wild.

I have not hesitated to speak about the real, and not for some time, since it is even where I took the first step in this teaching. Then, years later, this little formula emerged, the impossible is the real. Heavens knows that no one abused it at first. Then I happened to trot out some reference to truth, which is more common. There are nevertheless some very important observations to make, and I think I am under an obligation to make a number of them today, before leaving all that within the reach of innocents to use without rhyme or reason, which is really par for the course, sometimes, in my entourage.

1

I made a trip to Vincennes last week—this succinctly tells the tale that I had replied to an invitation from that place. Besides, I announced this to you here last time, to set you off on the right path for a reference I began with, one that is far from innocent—this is even the reason why one must read Freud.

In effect, in "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" we can read the lines concerning what an analyst is.

It is observed there that one would be very mistaken to require of analysts a large dose of mental normality and correctness, they would become too rare, and then, it must not be forgotten that the analytic relation, "*unendlich ist nicht zu vergessen, dass die analytische Beziehung auf Wahrheitsliebe,*" is founded on the love of truth, and "*d. h. auf die Anerkennung der* 193
Realität gegründet ist," that is to say, on the recognition of realities.

"*Realität*" is a word you will recognize since it is copied from our Latin. It is in competition, in the way Freud uses it, with the word "*Wirklichkeit*" which also can sometimes signify what the translators, without looking any further, translate quite consistently, in both cases, as "reality."

I have on this issue a little recollection of the truly frothing rage that overcame a couple, or more particularly one of them—I really do have to

call him by his name, it is not an accident, it's a certain Laplanche, who has had a certain role in the avatars of my relations with analysis—at the thought that another—whom I am also going to name, since I named the former, a certain [Pierre] Kaufmann—had put forward the idea that it was necessary to distinguish between this *Wirklichkeit* and this *Realität*. The fact that he had been beaten by the other to make this remark, which was, in fact, altogether primary, had unleashed a kind of passion in the former of these two characters.

The pseudocontempt displayed by this fussing about is, actually, something quite interesting.

The sentence finishes thus, "*gegründet ist und jeden Schein und Trug ausschliesst,*" excludes from this analytic relationship all false appearances, all deception.[1] A sentence like that is very rich. And immediately, in the following lines, it appears—despite the friendly little greeting that Freud gives the analyst on the way—that in sum there is no *Analysieren*. We are quite close here to truly having, we have all the appearances of, this function that is the analytic act. "*Das Analysieren*" does not mean anything other than this term that I employed as the title of one of my seminars.[2] The analytic act would be the third impossible profession, in inverted commas, "*'unmöglichen' Berufe.*"

Freud quotes himself here, making reference to the fact that he has already mentioned—Where did he say it? My research is incomplete, perhaps it is in the letters to Fliess—the three professions in question, which in this previous passage he had called *Regieren, Erziehen, Kurieren,* and in which he is obviously following common usage. Analysis is new, and Freud inserts it into this series by substitution. The three professions, if indeed
194 they really are professions, are therefore *Regieren, Erziehen, Analysieren,* that is, governing, educating, and analyzing.[3]

You can't miss the overlap between these three terms and what this year I am identifying as forming the radical of the four discourses.

The discourses in question are nothing other than the signifying articulation, the apparatus whose presence, whose existing status alone dominates and governs anything that at any given moment is capable of emerging as speech. They are discourses without speech, which subsequently comes and lodges itself within them. Thus I can say to myself, concerning this intoxicating phenomenon called speaking out, that certain

[1] SE 23:248. The English translation reads, "And finally we must not forget that the analytic relationship is based on a love of truth—that is, on a recognition of reality—and that it precludes any kind of sham or deceit."

[2] *Le Séminaire, Livre XV, L'Acte psychanalytique, 1967–1968* (unpublished).

[3] Not Freud but Strachey indicates that a similar passage occurs in Freud's "Preface to Aichhorn's *Wayward Youth,*" SE 19:273.

reference points in the discourse in which this is inserted would perhaps be of such a nature that, occasionally, one does not start to speak without knowing what one is doing.

Given a certain style of speech, in use in the month of May, the idea cannot fail to occur to me that one of the representatives of the little *a*, at a level that was not instituted in historical but rather in prehistoric times is, surely, the domestic animal. One can no longer employ the same letters in this case, but it is quite clear that a particular knowledge was required to domesticate what corresponds to our $\mathbb{S}$—a dog, for instance, is its barking.

One cannot fail to form the idea that if an animal that barks is indeed what barking is then S_1 takes on a meaning that there would be nothing abnormal in discovering at the level at which we are situating it, at the level of language. Everyone knows that the domestic animal is merely implicated in language by primitive knowledge, and that it does not have one. It is, obviously, only open to it to pick over what it has been given that comes closest to the signifier S_1—that is, carrion.

You will know this if you have had a good dog, whether a guard dog or some other kind, one you have had as a good friend. They are incapable of resisting carrion, they adore it. Look at the Bathory, a charming woman, a Hungarian, who every now and then liked to carve up her servants, which, of course, is the least of things one can offer oneself in a certain position. If she ever placed the said morsels a bit too close to the ground, her dogs would return them to her immediately.

This is a somewhat neglected aspect of the dog. If you didn't keep stuffing him full, at lunch or dinner, by giving him things he only likes because 195
they come from your plate, this is what he would mainly bring you.

You have to pay very close attention to the fact that at a higher level—that of an object little *a*, and that of another species, which we will try to define later and which will bring us back to what I have already said—speech can very easily play the role of carrion. In any case, it is no more appetizing.

This has contributed a great deal to the fact that it has been poorly understood what the importance of language has been. The deployment of speech, which has no other symbolic value, has been confused with what discourse is. As a result it is never just in any old way or at just any old time that speech functions as carrion.

The aim of these remarks is to get you to wonder over, and at least to ponder this question concerning the master's discourse. How can this discourse, which is so wonderfully well understood, have maintained its name—as is proven by the fact that workers work, whether they are exploited or not?

Work has never been given such credit ever since humanity has existed. It is even out of the question that one not work.

This is surely an accomplishment of what I am calling the master's discourse.

For this to be the case it needed to go beyond certain limits. In a word, it comes down to something whose mutation I have tried to point out for you. I hope you remember it, and in case you can't—which is quite possible—I am going to go back over it straight away. I am speaking of this capital mutation, also, which gives the master's discourse its capitalist style.

Why, good heavens, is this taking place, and why is it not taking place by chance?

You would be wrong to think that there are knowledgeable politicians somewhere who are calculating exactly how everything has to be done. You would be equally wrong to think that there are none—there are some. It is not clear that they are always in a place where one can engage in suitable action. But, ultimately, it is perhaps not this that is so important. That they exist, even if in another place, suffices for what is of the order of the displacement of discourse to be transmitted nevertheless.

196 Let's now ask how this society called capitalist society can afford to allow itself a relaxation of the university discourse.

This discourse is nevertheless merely one of these transformations that I have been expounding all along. It's the quarter turn in relation to the master's discourse. Hence a question which it is worth making the effort to envisage—if we embrace this relaxation which, it has to be said, has been offered, aren't we falling into a trap? The idea is not new.

As it happens, I have written a short article on university reform, which I had been invited to write for a newspaper, the only one to have a reputation for balance and honesty, by the name of *Le Monde*. They had insisted that I write this little page concerning the reorganization of psychiatry, concerning reform. Now, it is quite striking that despite this insistence this little article, which I will publish some day, did not get through.

In it I speak of "a reform in its hole." Precisely, it was obviously a matter of using this whirlwind of a hole to take a number of measures concerning the university. And good heavens, by correctly referring to the terms of certain fundamental discourses one might have certain scruples, let's say, about acting, one might look twice before jumping in to profit from the lines that have opened up. It is quite some responsibility to transport carrion down these corridors.

That is what our remarks today, which are not usually, not commonly said, must be linked up with.

2

$$\frac{S_2}{S_1} \rightarrow \frac{a}{\$} \qquad \frac{S_1}{\$} \rightarrow \frac{S_2}{a}$$

$$\frac{a}{S_2} \rightarrow \frac{\$}{S_1} \qquad \frac{\text{agent}}{\text{truth}} \rightarrow \frac{\text{work}}{\text{production}}$$

This is like an apparatus. You should, at least, get the idea that it could be used as a lever, as a pair of pliers, that it can be screwed down, assembled in one way or another.

There are several terms. It's no accident if I have given only these little 197
letters here. It's because I do not want to put things up that might give the appearance of signifying. I do not at all want to signify them, but to authorize them. Writing them is already to authorize them a bit more.

I have already discussed what constitutes the places in which these non-signifying things are inscribed, and I have already spelt out what it is that is the agent.

This term carries a connotation as if it were a sort of enigma of the French language—the agent is not at all necessarily someone who does but someone who is caused to act.

As a consequence, and as you may already suspect, it is not at all clear that the master functions. This, in all probability, defines the place of the master. This is the best thing one can ask oneself concerning him, and naturally people didn't wait for me to do it. A certain Hegel had a go at it, though you have to take a closer look.

It is very irritating to think that there are perhaps not five people here who have fully read *The Phenomenology of Spirit* since I have been talking about it. I won't ask them to raise their hand.

It pisses me off that I have until now only come across two people who have read it completely, since I too, I have to confess, have not peered into every corner. I have in mind my master, Alexandre Kojève, who has demonstrated this a thousand times over, and one other person, of a kind that you won't believe. The latter has truly read *The Phenomenology of Spirit* in an illuminating manner, to the extent that everything that might be in Kojève's notes, which I had and which I passed onto him, was truly superfluous.

What is unheard of is that, even though at one stage I wore myself out making people aware of the fact that *The Critique of Practical Reason* is manifestly a book of eroticism that is extraordinarily more amusing than what Eric Losfeld has published, it has had no kind of effect, and that, if I say to

you that *The Phenomenology of Spirit* is hysterically funny, well then, this won't fare any better.[4] And yet, that is what it is.

It is truly the most extraordinary thing there is. It is also a cold, I won't say black, humor. There is one thing you can be absolutely convinced of, which is that he knows perfectly well what he is doing. What he is doing is sleight of hand and he takes the whole world in. And this, on the basis of the fact that what he says is true.

198 There is obviously no better way to pin down the master signifier S_1, which is up there on the board, than by identifying it with death. And so, what is involved? It involves showing in a dialectic, as Hegel puts it, what it is that is the zenith, the highest point, the thought of this term's function.

What, in sum, is the point of entry of this brute, the master, into the phenomenology of mind, as Hegel puts it? The truth of what he articulates is absolutely seductive and sensational. We can actually read it there, opposite us, provided we allow ourselves to be taken in by it, since I assert, precisely, that it cannot be read off directly. The truth of what he articulates is this—the relationship to this real insofar as it is, properly speaking, impossible.

It's not at all clear why there should be a master who emerges from the struggle to death of pure prestige. And this is despite the fact that Hegel himself says that it would result in this strange outcome at the start.

To cap it off, Hegel finds a way—it is true, in a conception of history that touches on what emerges from it, namely the succession of phases of dominance, of composition of the play of the mind [*esprit*], which runs the length of this thread that is not nothing, which up until his day was called philosophical thought—Hegel finds a way to show that what results from this is that in the end it is the slave who, through his work, produces the master's truth, by pushing him down underneath. By virtue of this forced labor, as you can see from the outset, the slave ends up, at the end of history, at this point called absolute knowledge.

Nothing is said about what happens next, because in truth, in the Hegelian proposition, there were not four terms, but initially the master and then the slave. I call this slave S_2, but you can also identify him here by way of the term *jouissance*, which, first, he did not want to renounce and which, secondly, he did indeed want to, since he substitutes work for it, which is not at all its equivalent.

Owing to what? Owing to the series of dialectical mutations, to the ballet, the minuet that is established on the basis of this initial moment and that traverses the entire development of culture from start to finish, thread by thread, history finally compensates us with this knowledge that is not described as completed—there are good reasons for this—but as absolute,

[4] Eric Losfeld was a French publisher of comic books.

as indisputable. And the master subsequently appears only as the instrument, the magnificent Cuckold of history. 199

It is sublime that this quite remarkable dialectical deduction was undertaken, and that it should have succeeded, if one can say this. All the way through—take as an example what Hegel is able to say about culture—the most pertinent remarks concerning the play of events and exercises of wit abound. I repeat, there is nothing more amusing.

The cunning of reason is, he tells us, what directed the entire game.

This is a very fine term which has a lot of value for us, analysts, and we can follow it at the level of our ABC, whether reasonable or not, for we are dealing with something very cunning in speech where the unconscious is concerned. However, the high point of this cunning is not where one thinks it is. It is the cunning of reason, no doubt, but one has to recognize the cunning of the reasoner, and take one's hat off to him.

Had it been possible that at the beginning of the last century, at the time of the battle of Iéna, this extraordinary dirty trick called *The Phenomenology of Spirit* should have subjugated anyone, the trick would have succeeded.

It is in effect quite evident that not for a single instant can one hold that we are in any way approaching the ascendancy of the slave. This unbelievable way of giving him the credit—giving his work the credit—for any kind of progress, as we say, of knowledge is, truly, extraordinarily futile.

But what I am calling the cunning of the reasoner is there to make us aware of an essential dimension, which one has to be careful about. If we designate the agent's place—whoever it is, this place is not always that of the master signifier, since all the other signifiers are going to pass through there in turn—the question is as follows. What makes this agent act? How is it possible to produce this extraordinary circuit around which what deserves, strictly speaking, to be designated by the term "revolution" revolves?

Here, at a certain level, we rediscover Hegel's expression, "putting work back into the world."

Which is truth? It is located there, with a question mark. What inaugurates this agent, what brings him into play? For, in the end, it has not been there forever, it has been there ever since historical time.

A good thing to appreciate concerning such a brilliant case, so dazzling that precisely for that reason it doesn't occur to one, one is unable to see it, is this. Hegel is the sublime representative of the discourse of knowledge [*savoir*] and of university knowledge. 200

We others in France only ever have as philosophers people who travel the highways and byways, little members of provincial societies, such as Maine de Biran, or else characters like Descartes, who wander all over Europe. You nevertheless have to know how to read him, too, and listen to his tone—he

speaks of what he can expect from his birth. One sees what sort of a fellow he was. This doesn't mean he was an idiot, far from it.

Here in France, you won't find the philosophers in the universities. We can claim this as an advantage. But in Germany they are in the university. And people are capable, at a certain level of university status, of thinking that these poor fellows, these dear little chaps, the ones who at that time were only just entering the industrial era, the great era of hard labor, of exploitation unto death, will be captivated by the revelation of this truth that they are the ones who make history, and that the master is only there to get the show on the road.

This is a valuable remark, and it is my intention to emphasize it forcefully, because of Freud's phrase that the analytic relationship must be founded on the love of truth.

He really was a charming character, this Freud. He really was all fire, all flame. He also had his weaknesses. His relationship with his wife, for example, is something unimaginable. To have tolerated such a trollop his entire existence is quite something.

Anyway, take note of the following—if there is something that truth must inspire you with, if you want to uphold *Analysieren*, it is certainly not love. For truth, as it happens, makes this signifier "death" appear. And even, there is every appearance that if there is one thing that gives a completely different sense to what Hegel proposed, it is what Freud had nevertheless discovered at that time, which he characterized as best he could, as the death instinct, namely the radical character of repetition, this repetition that insists, and which characterizes the psychical reality, if there is such a thing, of this being inscribed in language.

201 It's perhaps the case that truth has no other face. That's no reason to go mad over it.

This isn't exact either. Truth has more than one face. But that's the point, what could be the first line of conduct to maintain as far as analysts are concerned is to be a little suspicious of it, and not to become all of a sudden mad about a truth, about the first pretty face encountered at the first turn in the road.

This is precisely where we encounter this remark of Freud's in which we find "reality" accompanied by this *Analysieren*. It is indeed the sort of remark to make us say that, in effect, there is perhaps, just like that, a completely naïve real—this is how people generally speak—that passes itself off as the truth. Truth is experienced, this does not at all mean that it thereby knows [*connaît*] any more about the real, especially if one speaks about knowing, and if one bears in mind the features of the real that I point out.

If the real is defined as the impossible the real is placed at the stage at which the register of a symbolic articulation was found to be defined as the

impossible to demonstrate to be true. This may help us take the measure of our love for truth—and it may also enable us to put our finger on why governing, educating, analyzing also, and why not, causing desire, so as to complete the series with a definition of what the hysteric's discourse might be, are operations that, strictly speaking, are impossible.

These operations exist, they are robust, very much so, in so far as they raise for us the question of what their truth is—that is to say, how they are produced—these mad things which are defined in the real as only being able to be articulated, when one nears them, as impossible. It is clear that their full articulation as impossible is precisely what gives us the risk, the barely glimpsed opportunity, that their real, if I can put it like this, breaks out.

If we are obliged to swan around at such length in the corridors, the labyrinths of truth, it's because there is precisely something that prevents us from concluding. And why be astonished by this when it concerns those discourses that for us are brand new? It is not as if one has not yet had a good three-quarters of a century to envisage things from this angle, but then, being seated in an armchair is perhaps not the best position from which to come to grips with the impossible.

Be that as it may, we are forever wandering about in the dimension of 202
the love of truth, and everything indicates that this dimension makes the impossibility of that which maintains itself as real slide between our fingers, at the level, quite precisely, of the master's discourse, as Hegel has said. This fact necessitates the reference to what analytic discourse, fortunately, enables us to glimpse and articulate exactly. And this is why it is important that I articulate it.

3

I am persuaded that there are five or six people here who will be very well able to displace what I am saying in such a way that it will have a chance of reemerging.

I won't say that this is Archimedes' lever. I will not tell you that this makes the slightest claim to a renewal of the world system, or of thinking about history. I am only indicating how it is that analysis places us on a footing to accept, through chance encounters, a number of things that may appear to be illuminating.

Myself, for example, I might easily have never encountered Kojève. If I had never encountered him, it is highly likely that, like all French people educated over a certain period, I would never have suspected that there was anything in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.

It would not be a bad thing if analysis enabled you to realize what the impossibility is due to, that is to say, what it is that stands in the way of grasping, of seizing the only thing that could perhaps ultimately introduce a mutation, namely, the naked real, without truth.

But there's the rub. Between us and the real, there is truth. Truth, as I once told you one day in a flight of lyricism, is the dear little sister of jouissance. I hope that this has come back to mind, at least for some of you, at the moment when I am stressing the contrast between the first line and the second in each of the four formulas that I have given you.

The first line comprises a relation, indicated here by an arrow, which is always defined as impossible. In the master's discourse, for instance, it is effectively impossible that there be a master who makes the entire world
203 function. Getting people to work is even more tiring, if one really has to do it, than working oneself. The master never does it. He gives a sign, the master signifier, and everybody jumps. That's where you have to start, which is, in effect, completely impossible. It's tangible every day.

With impossibility written on the first line, it is now a matter of seeing, as is already indicated by the place given to the term "truth," whether it might be at the level of the second line that one would have the last word.

However, at the level of the second line there is no suggestion of an arrow. And not only is there no communication, but there is something that acts as a block.

What is it that is blocking? It is what results from the work. And what a certain Marx's discovery accomplished was to give full weight to a term that was already known prior to him and that designates what work occupies itself with—it's called production.

Whatever the signs, whatever the master signifiers that come to be inscribed in the place of the agent, under no circumstances will production have a relationship to truth. One can do all one wants, one can say all one wants, one can try to conjoin this production with needs, which are the needs one fashions—there is nothing doing. Between the existence of a master and a production's relation with truth, there is no way of getting it to work.

Each impossibility, whatever it may be, between the terms that we put in play here is always linked to this—if it leaves us in suspense over its truth, it is because something is protecting it, which we shall call impotence.

Take, for instance, in the university discourse, the initial term, the one that is articulated here under the term S_2 and is in this position of unheard-of pretension of having a thinking being, a subject, as its production. As subject, in its production, there is no question of it being able to see itself for a single instant as the master of knowledge.

This can be detected here, tangibly, but it extends much further back,

back to the level of the master's discourse which, thanks to Hegel, I allow myself to presuppose since, as you will see, we no longer know it now except in a considerably modified form.

This surplus *jouissance* that I have articulated this year is a construction, even a reconstruction, and I am putting it at the start as a support. It is a 204
truer support. Let's be careful, this is indeed what is dangerous about it, but all the same it does have the strength to be articulated in this way, as one can see by reading people like Aristotle, principally, who have not read Hegel.

When we read Aristotle we have the suspicion that the master's relation to the slave really presented him with a problem. He was looking for the slave's truth, and it is really magnificent to see the way in which he tries to extricate himself in the three or four passages in which he deals with it—he only goes in a single direction, that of an essential difference from which the slave's good would emerge.

He is not an academic. He is not a clever little fellow like Hegel. He senses that when he utters this or that, it gets away from him, it slides all over the place. He is neither very sure nor very passionate. He does not impose his own opinion. But then, he feels that this is where there might well be something that motivates the relationship between master and slave. Ah! If they were not the same sex, if they were man and woman, this would be truly sublime, and he hints that there would be some hope. Unfortunately, that's not how it is, they are not of different sexes, and he shrugs his shoulders. We can see clearly what is going on, it's what, in the name of surplus *jouissance*, the master receives from the slave's work.

It would seem that this has to be self-evident. And what is unheard of is that nobody seems to notice that there is, precisely, a lesson to be learned from the fact that it is not self-evident. The problems of ethics here, suddenly, start to abound—the *Nicomachean Ethics,* the *Eudemian Ethics,* and several other works of moral reflection.

It's irresolvable. Nobody knows what to do with this surplus *jouissance.* In order to successfully place a sovereign good at the heart of the world, you need to be as embarrassed as a fish with an apple. And yet the surplus *jouissance* that the slave brings us lies within arm's reach.

What is demonstrated, attested to, by all the thought of Antiquity that Hegel makes us revisit with his wonderful sleight of hand and other acts, including the politicized masochism of the Stoics, is that to calmly set oneself up as the master's subject cannot be done qua surplus *jouissance.*

Let's now take the hysteric's discourse as it is articulated—place the $ on the top left-hand corner, the S_1 on the right, the S_2 underneath, the small *a* in the place of truth. It cannot be the case, either, that the hysteric's 205
division, symptomatic tearing apart, is motivated as the production of

knowledge [*savoir*]. Her truth is that she has to be the object *a* in order to be desired. The object *a* is a bit thin, at the end of the day, although, of course, men go crazy about it and they are unable even to suspect that they could get by with anything else—another sign of the impotence that covers the most subtle of all impossibilities.

Let's move on to the level of the analyst's discourse. Naturally, nobody has made the observation that it is fairly curious that what he produces is nothing other than the master's discourse, since it's S_1 which comes to occupy the place of production. And, as I was saying last time when I was leaving Vincennes, perhaps it's from the analyst's discourse that there can emerge another style of master signifier.

In truth, whether it is another style or not, it is not in two days' time that we will learn what it is, and at least for the moment we are completely impotent when it comes to referring it to what is at play in the analyst's position, namely, this seduction of truth that he presents in the fact that he would know a bit about what, in principle, he represents.

Am I adequately stressing the features of the impossibility of his situation?—insofar as the analyst puts himself in the position of representing, through being the agent, the cause of desire?

4

This, then, is the relationship between these terms that are four in number. The one I have not named is the unnamable one, because the entire structure is founded upon its prohibition—that is to say, *jouissance*.

This is where the little perspective, the little window, the way of looking that analysis has contributed introduces us to what may be a fertile step, not of thought, but of act. And it is in this that it appears to be revolutionary.

It is not situated around the subject. Whatever fertility the hysteric's questioning has displayed, questioning which, as I have said, is the first to introduce the subject into history, and although the entry of the subject
206 as agent of discourse has had very surprising results, the foremost of which is that of science, it is not here, for all that, that the key to all the mainsprings is to be found. The key lies in raising the question of what *jouissance* is.

It could be said that *jouissance* is limited by natural processes. But, actually, we have no idea whether they are natural processes. We simply know that we have ended up considering to be natural the mollycoddling that a society that is more or less orderly maintains us in, except that everyone is

dying to know what would happen if things went really bad. Hence this sadomasochistic dread that characterizes our nice sexual ambiance.

That is completely futile, even secondary. What is important is that, whether natural or not, it is well and truly as bound to the very origin of the signifier's coming into play that it is possible to speak of *jouissance*. Nobody will ever know anything about what the oyster or the beaver enjoys, because, in the absence of the signifier, there is no distance between *jouissance* and the body. The oyster and the beaver are at the same level as the plant, which, after all, perhaps may have *jouissance* at this level.

Jouissance is very precisely correlated with the initial form of the entry into play of what I am calling the mark, the unary trait, which is a mark toward death, if you want to give it its meaning. Observe that nothing takes on any meaning except when death comes into play.

It is on the basis of the split, the separation, between *jouissance* and the henceforth mortified body, it is from the moment that there is a play of inscriptions, a mark of the unary trait, that the question arises. There is no need to wait until the subject has shown itself to have been well hidden, at the level of the master's truth. The subject's division is without doubt nothing other than the radical ambiguity that attaches itself to the very term, "truth."

It is insofar as language, everything that institutes the order of discourse, leaves things in a gap that, in sum, we can be confident that in following our thread we are always doing nothing other than following a contour. But it does bring us something extra, and it is the minimum that it would be really necessary for us to know for a reply to the question with which I began, namely, what is currently going on at the level of the university discourse.

We have to begin by seeing why it is that the master's discourse is so solidly established, to the point where few of you, it seems, judge how stable it is. This stems from something Marx demonstrated—without, I have to say, emphasizing it—concerning production and which he calls surplus value, not surplus *jouissance*. 207

Something changed in the master's discourse at a certain point in history. We are not going to break our backs finding out if it was because of Luther, or Calvin, or some unknown traffic of ships around Genoa, or in the Mediterranean Sea, or anywhere else, for the important point is that on a certain day surplus *jouissance* became calculable, could be counted, totalized. This is where what is called the accumulation of capital begins.

Don't you feel, in relation to what I said before on the impotence of conjoining surplus value with the master's truth, that ground is being won here? I am not saying that it is the most recent step that is the decisive one,

but the impotence of this conjunction is all of a sudden emptied. Surplus value combines with capital—not a problem, they are homogeneous, we are in the field of values. Moreover, we are all up to our necks in it, in these blessed times in which we live.

What is striking, and what no one seems to see, is that from that moment on, by virtue of the fact that the clouds of impotence have been aired, the master signifier only appears even more unassailable, precisely in its impossibility. Where is it? How can it be named? How can it be located?—other than through its murderous effects, of course. Denounce imperialism? But how can this little mechanism be stopped?

Where do things stand now with the university discourse? Nowhere else can there be any possibility that things should move a bit. How can they move? I reserve the right to point this out to you later since, as you can see, I am going slowly. But I can already tell you that at the level of the university discourse the object *a* comes to occupy a place that is in play each time it moves, the place of more or less tolerable exploitation.

The object *a* is what makes it possible to introduce a little bit of air into the function of surplus *jouissance*. You are all an object *a*, insofar as you are lined up there—so many miscarriages of what has been, for those who engendered you, the cause of desire. And this is where you have to get your bearings from—psychoanalysis teaches you this.

Please don't bore me stupid telling me that I would do well to point out to those who are agitating here and there that there is a world of difference between the miscarriage of the high bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat.
208 After all, the miscarriage of the high bourgeoisie, as miscarriage, is not obliged constantly to carry its incubator around with it.

The fact remains that the claim to situate oneself at a point that would all of a sudden be particularly illuminated, illuminable, and that would manage to make these relations move, must not, all the same, be elevated to the point to which things were pushed by a person—a little recollection that I give to you—who accompanied me for two or three months of what it is customary to call the folly of youth. This delightful person said to me, "I am of pure proletarian race."

We are never finally done with segregation. I can tell you that it will only ever continue to increase. Nothing can function without it—what is happening here, as the *a*, the *a* in living form, miscarriage that it is, displays the fact that it is an effect of language.

Be that as it may, there is in every case a level at which things do not work out. It's the level of those who have produced the effects of language, since no child is born without having to deal with this traffic by the intermediary of his beloved so-called progenitors, who were themselves caught up in the entire problem of discourse, with the previous generation behind

them also. And this is the level at which it would really be necessary to have made enquiries.

If it's one's wish that something turn—of course, ultimately, no one can ever turn, as I have emphasized enough—it is certainly not by being progressive, it is simply because it can't prevent itself from turning. If it doesn't turn, it will grind away, there where things raise questions, that is, at the level of putting something into place that can be written as *a*.

Has that ever existed? Yes, no doubt, and it is the Ancients who, in the end, give us its strongest proof and, subsequently, over the course of ages, the formal, classical things that in some way were copied from them.

For us, at the level at which things are happening for the moment, what can this point of auscultation, everything that in the body remains alive, remains as knowledge, this nursling, why not, this look, this cry, this squawking, it barks—what can this hope for? What can it do?

I will try to tell you next time what that which I call "the strike of culture" signifies.[5]

10 June 1970

[5] *Grève de la culture.* "Strike," as in "Go on strike."

209

XIII

The power of the impossibles

A BIT OF SHAME IN THE SAUCE

THE MILK OF TRUTH PUTS ONE TO SLEEP

THE LUSTER OF THE REAL

THE STUDENT, BROTHER OF THE LUMPEN-PROLETARIAT

A LITTLE SHELTER

It does have to be said that it is unusual to die of shame.

Yet it is the one sign—I have been talking about this for a while, how a signifier becomes a sign—the one sign whose genealogy one can be certain of, namely that it is descended from a signifier. After all, any sign can fall under the suspicion of being a pure sign, that is to say, obscene [*obscène*], Vincennes [*vinscène*], dare I say, a good example to make you laugh.[1]

Dying of shame, then. Here, the degeneration of the signifier is certain—certain to be produced by the signifier's failure, namely, being toward death, insofar as it concerns the subject—and who else could it concern? Being toward death, that is, the visiting card by which a signifier represents a subject for another signifier—you are beginning to know this off by heart, I hope.

This visiting card never arrives at the right destination, the reason being that for it to bear the address of death, the card has to be torn up. "It's a shame [*une honte*]," as they say, which should produce a (h)ontology [*hontologie*] spelled properly at last.

In the meantime, to die of shame is the only affect of death that deserves—deserves what?—that deserves to die.

People have been quiet about this for a long time. Speaking about it, in effect, is to open this redoubt, which is not the last, the only one that what can be said honestly of the honest partakes in, "honest," which stems from the honor—that is all shame and companion—of making no mention of
210 shame. Precisely, of the fact that it is impossible for the honest to die of shame. You know from me that this means the real.

"He doesn't deserve to die for that!" people say about anything and

[1] Vincennes was the site of the University of Paris VIII campus. The university was founded in 1969 and included the Department of Psychoanalysis headed at that time by Serge Leclaire. Lacan is playing on "vain scene."

everything, thus bringing everything down to being futile. Said as it is said, with that end in mind, it elides the fact that death can be deserved.

Now, it should not be a matter of eliding the impossible, as it happens, but of being its agent. To say that death is deserved—the time at least to die of shame that it's not so, that it's deserved.

If it happens now, well then, it was the only way to deserve it. You were lucky. If it doesn't happen, which, with respect to the preceding surprise, is bad luck, then you're left with a life of shame by the bucketful, by virtue of the fact that it is not worth dying for.

Is it worth my speaking about it in this way?—when, as soon as one speaks about it, the twenty scenes [*vingt-scènes*] I mentioned above are only asking to be taken up again in the form of buffoonery.

1

Vincennes, precisely.

They were, it seems, pleased with what I said there, pleased with me. It wasn't reciprocal. I was not very pleased with Vincennes.

Despite there being one nice person who tried to fill up the first row, to make a Vincennes [*faire Vincennes*], there was clearly no one from Vincennes there, or hardly anyone, only the ears of those most worthy of awarding me a good mark. It was not quite what I had been expecting, especially as my teaching, it seems, has been propagated there. There are times when I can be aware of a certain slack.

But then, there was nonetheless just what was needed to indicate to us the point of agreement that there can be between *La Minute* and *Les Temps modernes*. I only mention it because, as you will see, this touches on today's topic—how to behave in the face of culture?

Sometimes something minor is enough to throw a glimmer of light, a recollection which nobody knows how I myself became aware of. Once you recall the publication of a certain tape recording in *Les Temps modernes*, the relationship with *La Minute* is striking.[2] Try this, it's fascinating, I have done it. You cut out paragraphs from the two newspapers, you mix them up 211
together somewhere, and you draw them out. I assure you that, except for the paper, it won't be so easy to work out which is which.

This is what must make it possible for us to take the question in another way than on the basis of the objection I made just before to touching on

[2] *Les Temps modernes* caused a scandal when it published the transcript of an analytic session secretly recorded by the analysand.

things in a certain tone, with a certain word, out of fear that they might get carried away by buffoonery. Begin, instead, with the following fact, that the buffoonery is already present. Perhaps, by adding a bit of shame to the mix, who knows, this might keep it in check.

In short, I am playing the game of "You hear me because I am talking to you." Otherwise, there would, rather, be an objection to your hearing me, since in many cases this prevents you from hearing what I am saying. And it's a pity, for at least the younger ones among you have for a fair while now also been capable of saying it without me. You lack for that, precisely, a bit of shame. It might come to you.

Obviously, you do not find it under the hooves of horses, of a hobby-horse even less, but the furrows of the alethosphere, as I said, that take care of you, and even careful you [*soyousent*] all alive already, would perhaps already be quite a sufficient load of shame.

Appreciate why it was that Pascal and Kant fidgeted about like two valets in the process of acting like Vatel with respect to you. There has been a lack of truth up above for three centuries. The service has arrived nevertheless, reheating on demand, even as the musician has from time to time, as you know. Don't make such a long face, you are being served, you can say that there is no longer any shame.

These boxes about which, when I say that they are empty of chatter, you wonder what is bothering me—well then, quickly make provision in them for enough shame so that when the festivities begin, there is no lack of seasoning.

You will say to me, "What's the use of shame? If that is what the other side of psychoanalysis is, we don't want any." My reply to you is, "You've got enough to open a shop." If you are not yet aware of this, then do a bit of analysis, as they say. You will see this vapid air of yours run up against an outlandish shame of living.

That's what psychoanalysis discovers. Be a bit serious and you will
212 notice that this shame is justified by the fact that you do not die of shame, that is, by your maintaining with all your force a discourse of the perverted master—which is the university discourse. *Rhegel yourselves!* I say.

On Sunday I returned to this damned satire called *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, wondering whether I wasn't misleading you last time when I dragged you through those reminiscences I was indulging myself in. Not at all. It's staggering.

You will see this, for example, "Ignoble consciousness is the truth of noble consciousness."[3] And it's dispatched in a way that draws you up

[3] See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 316–7.

short. The more unworthy you are—I won't say obscene, that's been out of the question for a long time—the better off you are. That really clarifies the recent reforms of the university, for instance. Everything, credit points—to have the makings of culture, of a hell of a general, in your rucksack, plus some medals besides, just like an agricultural show, that will pin onto you what people dare call mastery. Wonderful! You'll have it coming out of your ears.

Being ashamed of not dying from this would perhaps introduce another tone to it, that with which the real is concerned. I said the real and not the truth for, as I already explained to you last time, it's a temptation to suck the milk of truth, but it's toxic. It will put you to sleep, and that's all that is expected of you.

I recommended to one charming person that he reread Baltasar Gracián, who, as you know, was a Jesuit living at the turn of the sixteenth century. He wrote his great pieces at the start of the seventeenth century. All things considered, this is where the view of the world that suits us was born. Even before science climbed to our zenith people sensed it coming. It's curious, but that's how it is. It's even to be recorded for any truly experimental appreciation of history that the Baroque, which suits us so well—and modern art, whether figurative or not, is the same—began before, or at just the same time as, the initial steps of science.

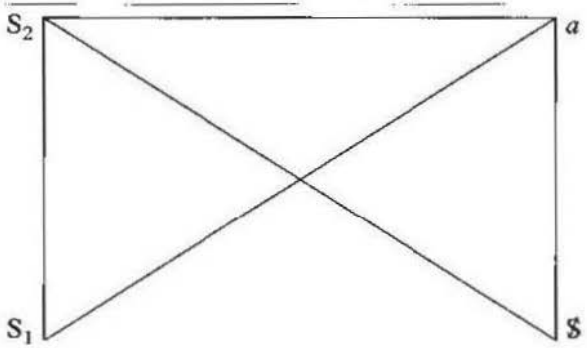
In *El Criticón*, which is a sort of fable in which the plot of Robinson Crusoe, for example, is already found to be included—the majority of masterpieces are the crumbs of other unknown masterpieces—in the third part, on the dimension of old age—since he takes this graph of ages—we find something called "truth in labor" in the second chapter.

'Truth is in labor in a town that is only inhabited by beings of the high- 213
est purity. This doesn't stop them from taking flight, and under the influence of a hell of a fear, when they are told that truth is like having a child.

I wonder why they asked me to explain this, when this discovery was made for me—for, in truth, it wasn't me that located it—unless they didn't come to my last seminar, for this is precisely what I said then.

It's here that one has to hold firm, for if you want your remarks to be subversive, you must take great care that they don't get too bogged down on the path to truth.

What I wanted to spell out last time in putting on the board these things that I can't keep drawing every time is that the S_1, the master signifier which holds the secret to knowledge in its university situation, is very tempting to stick to. You remain caught up in it.



What I am indicating, and perhaps it's this alone that a number of you will be able to retain from this year, is that one should focus on the level of production—of the production of the university system. A certain production is expected of you. It is perhaps a matter of obtaining this effect, of substituting another for it.

2

On this matter, simply as a stage, a relay, and because I presented them as an indicator of what I had declared to you last time, I will read you three pages. I apologize to those few people with whom I have already been through this.

These three pages are a reply to this inquisitive Belgian who asked me some questions that hold my interest sufficiently for me to wonder whether I hadn't dictated them myself without knowing it. He deserves credit for them.

214 Here, then, is the sixth one, charmingly naïve, "In what respect are knowledge and truth"—everyone knows that I have tried to show that they are stitched together, these two virtues—"incompatible?"[4]

I say to him, "Speaking off the cuff, nothing is incompatible with truth: we piss on it, we spit on it. It is a thoroughfare or, to put it better, a place for the evacuation of knowledge and all the rest. It is possible to cleave to it permanently, even to be driven mad by it.

"It is worth noting that I put psychoanalysts on their guard, by connoting this locus they are engaged to through their knowledge as 'love.' I would say to them straight away: one does not marry truth; there can be no contract with her, and even less can there be any open liaison. She won't stand

[4] "Radiophonie," *Autres écrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2001), 440.

for any of that. Truth is firstly a seduction, intended to deceive you. If you are not to be taken in, you must be strong. *This is not the case with you.*

"This is how I spoke to psychoanalysts, this ghost that I hail, even that I haul, against the joy of rushing at the invariable hour and day ever since the times when I upheld the wager for you that psychoanalysts understand me. It is therefore not you that I am informing; you do not run the risk of being bitten by truth; but—who knows?—should what I am fashioning ever come alive, should the psychoanalyst ever take over from me, at the limits of the hope that this is not encountered, it's them that I am alerting; that one has everything to learn from truth, this common place destines each one to get lost in it. It will be enough that each knows something about it, and he would do well to leave it at that. It would be even better were he to do nothing. There is no more treacherous an instrument.

"We know how a—not *the*—psychoanalyst typically extracts himself; he leaves the thread of this truth to the one who already has his worries with it and who, in this capacity, really does become his patient, as a result of which he worries about it like a curse.

"Nevertheless, it is a fact that for some time some people have been making it their business to feel themselves more concerned about it. This is perhaps due to my influence. I have perhaps played some part in this correction. And this is precisely what makes it my duty to warn them not to go too far, because if I have obtained it, it's through not giving the appearance of having laid a finger on it. But this is precisely what is serious, besides, of course, one pretends to be somewhat terrified by it. It is a refusal. But a refusal doesn't exclude collaboration. A refusal can itself be a collaboration."

For those who listen to me on the radio and who do not, as I was saying before, have any impediment to hearing what I am saying, which is to understand me, I will go on. It is for this reason that I am reading it to you, since, if I can speak it at a particular level of the mass media, why not give it a trial run here?

And then, these initial responses that have so bewildered you here, and 215
that, it seems, went across over the radio much better than people think, have confirmed the principle that I have adopted, and that is in the line of things that today I would like to pass on to you. This is one of the methods by which it would be possible to take action upon culture.

When one is caught by chance at the level of a large public, of one of these masses that a type of medium presents you with, why not precisely raise the level, in proportion to the assumed ineptitude—which is a pure assumption—of this field? Why lower the tone? Who do you have to rope in? It is precisely the game of culture to engage you in this system, namely, once the aim is reached, you can't tell head from tail.

Here, then, and even though it is still altogether possible to say it in this

room, I am saying what is remarkable, for not having been remarked upon, in my formula of the subject supposed to know, as the mainspring of the transference.

"I have not said that the psychoanalyst is moreover supposed to know the truth about the supposed knowledge out of which, according to me, the psychoanalysand makes the transference. Think about it, and you will understand how adding this complement to it would be fatal for the transference. But equally, do not think about it if understanding this would, precisely, prevent its effect from remaining true.

"I suffer indignation over the fact that one person dresses up what I am denouncing in the little knowledge from which the transference draws its material. It's only up to him to furnish that with something besides the chair he says he is ready to sell if I am right. He leaves no way out of the affair only because he doesn't restrict himself to his means. The psychoanalyst only insists upon not having a bone to pick in his being. The famous non-knowledge for which people mock us is only dear to his heart because, for him, he knows nothing. He repudiates the mode of unearthing a shadow and then pretending it is carrion, repudiates being valued as a hunting dog. His discipline steeps him in the fact that the real is not initially there to be known—this is the only dam that can hold idealism back.

"Knowledge gets added to the real; indeed, it is for this reason that it can bring the false into being, and even into being there a bit.[5] I *dasein* with all my force on this occasion, one needs help for this.

"To be truthful, it is only from where knowledge is false that it is concerned with the truth. All knowledge that is not false couldn't give a damn about it. In becoming known, only its form is a surprise, a surprise in dubious taste, moreover, when by the grace of Freud it speaks to us of language, since it is nothing but its product.

216 "This is where the political impact takes place. It concerns, here, this question in act: Out of what knowledge is the law made? Once one has uncovered this knowledge, it may happen that that changes. Knowledge falls to the rank of symptom, seen from another perspective. And this is where truth comes in.

"For truth one fights, which is, however, only produced through its relations with the real. But that it is produced is much less important than what that produces. The effect of truth is only a collapse of knowledge. It is this collapse that creates a production, soon to be taken up again.

"The real is neither better nor worse off as a result. In general it dusts itself off until the next crisis. Its momentary benefit is that it has refound

[5] *être-là*, "being there," is the French for *Dasein*, picked up in the following sentence.

its gloss. This would even be the benefit that one might expect from any revolution, this gloss that would shine for a long time in this always murky locus of truth. But there's the rub. This shine never again throws light on anything."

That is what I had cast into a corner the day after the last seminar—for you, apparently, since there is no longer any question of adding it to my little radiological raft.

What has to be understood in this respect is the following—what is frightening about truth is what it puts in its place.

The locus of the Other, as I have always said, is made for truth to be inscribed there, that is, everything of that order, the false, even lies—which only exist on the foundation of truth. This is in the free play speech [*parole*] and language.

But what about truth in this quadrupedal structure, which presupposes language and takes a discourse to be structured, that is, which conditions any speech able to be produced therein? What does the truth in question, the truth of this discourse, that is what it conditions, put in its place? How is it that the master's discourse holds firm? This is the other face of the function of truth, not the visible face, but the dimension in which it is necessitated by something hidden.

Our furrows in the alethosphere are traced out on the surface of the longtime deserted heavens. But at issue is what one day I called—using this word which titillated some of you enough to the point of wondering what had come over me—the lathouse.

It wasn't I who invented this dimension of truth which makes it the case that it is hidden. It is *Verborgenheit*[6] that constitutes it. In short, things are 217
such that it makes one think it has something in its belly.

Very early on there were some clever people who observed that if this were to emerge, it would be dreadful. Probably winged as well, so as to improve the landscape. Nowadays, it is equally possible that this is the whole thing, that it would be terrible if it were to emerge. If you spend your time waiting, then you are done for. In sum, one mustn't tease the lathouse too much. What does undertaking this always assure? What I am forever explaining to you—it assures the impossible by virtue of the fact that this relationship is effectively real. The more your quest is located on the side of truth, the more you uphold the power of the impossibles which are those that I respectively enumerated for you last time—governing, educating, analyzing on occasion. For analysis, in any case, this is obvious.

The subject supposed to know scandalizes, when I am simply approaching the truth.

[6] "Concealment." The term is Heidegger's.

3

My little quadrupedal schemas—I am telling you this today to alert you to it—are not the Ouija boards of history. It is not necessarily the case that things always happen this way, and that things rotate in the same direction. This is only an appeal for you to locate yourselves in relation to what one can call radical functions, in the mathematical sense of the term.

Concerning functions, the decisive step was taken somewhere around this epoch that I designated some time ago, around what there is in common between Galileo's initial step, the emergence of the integrals and differentials in Leibniz, and then also the emergence of logarithms.

A function is this something that entered the real, that had never entered it beforehand, and that does not correspond to discovering, experimenting, seizing, detaching, disclosing, no, but to writing—writing two orders of relations.

Let me illustrate where logarithms arose. In one case the first relation is addition. Addition is nevertheless intuitive. There are some things here,
218 some things there, you put them together, and you get a new collection. Multiplying loaves is not the same as collecting loaves. It is a matter of applying one of these relations to the other. You invent the logarithm. It starts to run wild in the world, on the basis of little rules that seem to be insignificant. But do not think that the fact that they exist leaves you, any of you who are here, in the same state as before they appeared. Their presence is all that matters.

Well then, let me tell you that these more or less winged little terms—S_1, S_2, a, $\$$—can be of use in a very large number of relations. One only needs to become accustomed to how to manipulate them.

For example, starting with the unary trait, though one can restrict oneself to it, one can still try to investigate the functioning of the master signifier. Well then, it is altogether usable, if you notice that, provided you make it structurally well founded, there is no need to add a thing to it, none of this grand comedy of the struggle to death of pure prestige and its outcome. Contrary to what people have concluded from their questioning of things at the level of what is true by nature, there is no contingency in the slave's position. There is the necessity that something be produced that functions in knowledge as a master signifier.

One cannot prevent oneself from dreaming, to be sure, or from trying to find out who was the first to do it, and then, one discovers the beauty of this ball that goes back and forth between the master and the slave. But perhaps it was simply someone who was ashamed, who put himself forward like that.

Today I have brought you the dimension of shame. It is not a comfortable thing to put forward. It is not one of the easiest things to speak about. This is perhaps what it really is, the hole from which the master signifier arises. If it were, it might perhaps not be useless for measuring how close one has to get to it if one wants to have anything to do with the subversion, or even just the rotation, of the master's discourse.

Be that as it may, one thing is certain, you have this introduction of S_1, the master signifier, within your grasp in the merest of discourses—it is what defines its readability.

There is, in effect, language and speech and knowledge, and all that seems to have worked in Neolithic times, but we have no trace that any dimension called reading existed. There is not yet any need of any writings [*écrit*], nor of any impression—not that writings haven't been there for a long time, but, in some way, through a retroactive effect. What makes it the 219
case that when we read any text we can always ask ourselves what characterizes it as readable? We have to search for the joint in the direction of what it is that makes the master signifier.

I will point out to you that, as literary works, everything that one has ever read is off in cloud-cuckoo-land. Why does that hang together?

In my latest blunder—I adore these—I happened to read Balzac's *L'Envers de la vie contemporaine*.[7] It really is off in cloud-cuckoo-land. If you haven't read it, you can still have read everything you might like to read on the history of the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth—the French Revolution, to call it by its name. You can even have read Marx. You won't understand a thing, and there will always be something that escapes you, which is only there, in this story that will bore you stiff, *L'Envers de la vie contemporaine*.

Please have a look at it. I am sure not many of you will have read it. It is one of the least read of Balzac's. Read it, and do the following exercise.

Do exactly the same as the one which, about one hundred years ago, I had tried to give to the people I was speaking to at Sainte-Anne concerning the first scene of Act 1 of *Athaliah*. All they heard were the quilting points. I am not saying that it was an excellent metaphor. In the end, it was this S_1, the master signifier.

Heaven knows what they made of this quilting point, they even took it off to *Les Temps modernes*—all things considered, this is not *La Minute*.[8]

It was a master signifier. It was a way of asking them to notice how something that spreads throughout language like wildfire is readable, that is to say, how it hooks on, creates a discourse.

[7] Available as *The Wrong Side of Paris* (New York: Modern Library, 2004).
[8] *Minute-La France*, a right-wing, anti-Semitic weekly established in 1962.

I still maintain that there is no metalanguage. Anything that one might think is of the order of a search for the meta in language is simply, always, a question about reading.

Let us suppose—pure supposition—that I am asked for my advice on something I have not been involved in except on the basis of my place in this location—a place that is, it has to be said, quite an unusual one—and I would be astonished if today that would make an open book of my place with respect to the university. But then, if there are others who, from where
220 they are, and for reasons which are not at all negligible but which appear all the more clearly when one refers to my little letters, find themselves in the position of wanting to subvert something in the order of the university, where should they look?

They can look on the other side, where everything can be threaded onto a little stick, where one can place them, the little pile that they are, along with others who are, as is the nature of the progression of knowledge, dominated.

On that side it is intimated to them that one might find a way to live with this. For ages this has been like a myth. I am not here to preach this to you. Myself, I have spoken of the shame of living.

If they search on that side, they may find that with my little schemas they can find a way of justifying that the student is not displaced in feeling a brother, as they say, not of the proletariat but of the lumpen-proletariat.

The proletariat are like the Roman plebs—these were very distinguished people. The class struggle perhaps contains this little source of error at the start, that it absolutely doesn't take place at the level of the true dialectic of the master's discourse—it is located on the level of identification. *Senatus Populusque Romanus.* They are on the same side. And the entire Empire includes all the rest.

The question is why students feel that they belong with all the rest. They don't at all seem to be able to see clearly how to resolve it.

I would like to point out to them that production is one essential point of the system—the production of shame. This translates as—it's impudence.

This is why it would perhaps not be a very bad means not to go in that direction.

4

In effect, and to designate something that is very easily recorded in these little letters, what does one produce? One produces something cultural.

And when one thinks like the university, what one produces is a thesis.

This order of production is always related to the master signifier—not simply because that discerns it for you, but quite simply because it forms a 221
part of the presuppositions according to which everything in this order is related to the author's name.

It is very refined. There is a sort of preliminary step, which lies at the threshold of the university. You will have the right to speak there, subject to the altogether strict convention that you will forever have your thesis pinned onto you. This gives your name its weight. Nevertheless, you are in no way subsequently bound by what is in your thesis. Normally, in any case, you content yourself with that. But that doesn't matter, you will always be able to say whatever you want if you have already become a name. This is what plays the role of a master signifier.

May I say it? I would not like to give too much importance to what I have done. This is how the idea came to me of a thing which you haven't heard much about for a while, *Scilicet*. Some people have nevertheless been struck by the fact that I said it would be a place in which unsigned things should be written.

You mustn't think that mine are more unsigned. See what I have written—a solo voice singing of a painful experience, the one I had with what is called a school, to which I had contributed propositions so that something would be inscribed there, something that has not failed to be inscribed there, moreover—some effect of catalepsy.

The fact that it is signed by me would only be of interest if I were an author. I am in no way an author. Nobody even dreams of this when they read my *Écrits*. For a very long time this had remained carefully confined to an organ that had no other interest than to be as close as possible to what I am trying to define as calling knowledge into question. What sort of a disaster does analytic knowledge produce? That is what was in question, what has been in question for as long as it has not made them all itching to become authors. It is very curious that the non signed should appear paradoxical, whereas of course over the centuries all the honest men there have been have always at least acted as if someone had torn their manuscript from their hands, as if someone had played a dirty trick on them. No one expected to be sent a note of congratulations on publication.

In short, if it were possible for something to come out of seriously calling into question knowledge that is lavished about and propagated within the established framework of the university, there is no reason why this couldn't be done under a bit of shelter, a type of place, that would adopt the same law for itself, that is to say, not to present something to make 222
someone important, but in order to say something structurally rigorous,

whatever might become of it. This could have a greater impact than one might initially expect from it.

A character called Diderot published *Rameau's Nephew,* let it fall from his pocket.[9] Someone else took it to Schiller, who knew very well it was by Diderot. Diderot never worried about it. In 1804 Schiller passed it on to Goethe, who immediately translated it and, up until 1891—I can tell you this, because here is the tome, which I brought from my own library—we only had a French retranslation of the German translation by Goethe, who, moreover, had completely forgotten about it one year after it appeared, and who perhaps never saw it, for they were in the midst of that Franco-Prussian brawl, and the people didn't take well to this revolutionary intrusion. In short, this translation went unnoticed, Goethe himself was no doubt unaware that it had appeared, and yet this did not stop Hegel from making it one of the main threads of this booklet so full of humor to which I have been referring lately, *The Phenomenology of Spirit.*

As you can see, there is not much reason for you to worry that what comes out of you carries the label of what concerns you. This is such an obstacle, let me assure you, to the publication of anything decent—if only because of the fact that even within what you might be naturally interested in you believe that you are obliged, in the name of the laws of a thesis, to refer it to the author—he is talented, it's unconvincing, he hasn't got any ideas, what he says is not totally stupid. And if he has contributed something important that may not concern him in any way, you are absolutely obliged to think that this is a mind that thinks. And with that, you've had it for a long time.

As for psychology, it is striking that there is not even a shadow of it in the order of things that are enlightening, like *L'Envers de la vie contemporaine* I was speaking to you about just before. It is a little montage whose entire value comes through its master signifiers, it is valuable because it is readable. No need of the slightest psychology.

To spell it out for you, to clear my own name, what saves *Écrits* from the accident that befell it, namely that people immediately read it, is that it is a "worst-seller" nevertheless.

223 I am not going to prolong this discourse any further today in this heat. This is the last I am going to give this year.

There are clearly many things missing, but it would not be pointless to add the following—if, to speak as Hegel would, there are some slightly less than ignoble reasons for your presence here in such numbers, which has so often been an inconvenience for me—this is obviously a question of tact as

[9] Denis Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew,* in *Rameau's Nephew; and, D'Alembert's Dream* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976).

Goethe would say, I make of it, it would seem, not too much but just enough—if this phenomenon takes place, which is frankly incomprehensible, given what it is that I put forward for the majority of you, it is because I happen to make you ashamed, not too much, but just enough.

17 June 1970

APPENDIXES

A

227

Analyticon

AN AGITATOR PREPARES HIS OWN CHOCOLATE

THE IMPASSE OF PSYCHOANALYTIC SELECTION

CREDIT POINTS

NOTHING IS EVERYTHING

LOOK AT THEM DOING IT

[This session took place at Vincennes, an experimental university, on 3 December 1969. It was announced as the first of four under the title "Analyticon, four impromptus."]

I will be talking about my Egeria, who is one of those [a dog walks across the podium].

She is the only person I know who knows what she is speaking—I am not saying, "what she is saying."

It's not that she doesn't say anything—she doesn't say it in words. She says something when she is anxious—which happens—she puts her head on my knee. She knows that I am going to die, which a number of people also know. She's called Justine, she's my dog, she is very beautiful, and you would have heard her speak . . .

The only thing she lacks by comparison with that person wandering around is that she hasn't been to university.

1

Here I am then, an invited guest, at the experimental center of the said university, an experiment which seems rather exemplary to me.

Since it is a question of an experiment, you might wonder what your use is. If you ask me, I will do a diagram for you—I will try to—because after all the university is very strong, it has deep foundations.

I have kept for you the announcement of the title of one of the four discourse positions I have announced elsewhere—where I started my seminar. 228

"The master's discourse," as I said, since you are accustomed to hearing about this. And it is not easy to give an example, as someone who is very

intelligent observed last night. I shall try all the same. This is where I have got to, having left the thing unfinished at my seminar. And, to be sure, there is no question of continuing it here. "An impromptu," I said. You can see that that thing with its lowered tail provided me with one a minute ago. I shall continue in the same tone.

Secondly, hysteric's discourse. This one is very important because it is what the psychoanalyst's discourse takes shape with. Except that there would need to be psychoanalysts. I'm making this my business.

INTERVENTION: There aren't any psychoanalysts at Vincennes, at any rate.

As you say, not at Vincennes.

INTERVENTION: Why is it that Vincennes students, at the conclusion of the teaching they are supposed to have received, can't become psychoanalysts?

This is precisely what I am going to explain, Mademoiselle. This is precisely what is in question. Psychoanalysis is not something that can be transmitted like other forms of knowledge.

The psychoanalyst has a position that sometimes manages to be that of a discourse. He doesn't thereby transmit a body of knowledge, not that there is nothing for him to know, contrary to what is foolishly asserted. This is what is called into question—the function in society of a certain form of knowledge, the one that is conveyed to you. It exists.

There is an algebraic sequence that essentially constitutes a chain whose starting point is in this formula—

$$\begin{array}{ccc} S_1 & \rightarrow & S_2 \\ \overline{\$} & & a \end{array}$$

A signifier is defined as representing a subject for another signifier. This is an altogether fundamental notation. It can be taken as one at any rate.
229 Through my offices, an attempt has been developed, which is the one I am coming to now, having put the necessary time into putting it into shape. This is an attempt to found what would be decently required to manipulate a notion by encouraging subjects to trust it and to work with it. This is what is called the psychoanalysand.

I initially wondered what could come of it for the psychoanalyst, and where he, the analyst, was in all this. For on this point it is very obvious that the notions are not clear, since Freud, who knew what he was saying, said that it was an impossible function—and yet fulfilled every day. If you reread his text closely you will see that it is not the function that is in question but the being of the psychoanalyst.

How does it happen that one fine day a psychoanalysand commits himself to being a psychoanalyst? This is what I tried to articulate when I spoke of the psychoanalytic act. I stopped my seminar before the end that year, it was '68, like that, in order to show my sympathy for what was astir and which continues—moderately. The agitating makes me think of something that was invented one day, if I recall correctly, by my good, late friend Marcel Duchamp, "A bachelor prepares his own chocolate." Take care that the agitator is not preparing his own chocolate.

In short, this psychoanalytic act was left for dead, as it were. And I have not had the time to return to it, especially as examples of what that leads to are breaking out all around me.

An issue of a journal called *Études freudiennes* has appeared.[1] I cannot recommend reading it too highly, never having hesitated to suggest to you bad readings which themselves are in the nature of best-sellers. If I recommend it to you, it is because they are very, very good texts. This is not like that grotesque little text on the remarks about my style that came naturally to find its place in the site vacated by the asinine [*Paulhânerie*].[2] This is different. You will draw the greatest benefit from it.

Apart from an article by its editor, of whom I could never speak too highly, you have statements that are indisputably and universally agitating against psychoanalytic institutions. There is a charming, solid, and very likable Canadian who, good heavens, makes some highly pertinent remarks. There is someone from the Institut psychanalytique de Paris, occupying a very important position there on the education committee, who gives a cri- 230
tique of the psychoanalytic institution as such, as being in strict contradiction with everything that the very existence of the psychoanalyst calls for—it's really marvelous. I cannot say that I would sign it myself, for I already have signed it—the remarks are my own.

In any case, for me, this has a sequel, namely a certain proposition that draws conclusions from this impasse that is so masterly demonstrated. It would have been possible to say, in a tiny little note somewhere, that in a certain place there is an extremist who has tried to work this into a proposition that radically renews the meaning of the entire psychoanalytic selection process. It is clear that this hasn't been done.[3]

I am not really complaining about it, since according to the very people concerned, this agitation is in a state of complete disarray, gratuitous. There

[1] *Études freudiennes* nos. 1–2 appeared in November 1969, with articles by André Lussier, Jean-Luc Donnet, and Robert Barande on the organization of psychoanalytic societies.

[2] A pun on the name of the French writer Jean Paulhan.

[3] See "Proposition of 9 October 1967 on the Psychoanalyst of the School," *Analysis* 6 (1995).

is absolutely no question of this modifying anything at all concerning the present functioning of the Institute that the authors belong to.

2

INTERVENTION: I haven't understood a word yet. So, one could start by saying what a psychoanalyst is. For me he is a kind of cop. The people who go into psychoanalysis don't talk and are only concerned about themselves.

INTERVENTION: We already have priests, but since that was no longer working, we now have psychoanalysts.

INTERVENTION: Lacan, we have been waiting for over an hour now for what you have been stating obliquely, a critique of psychoanalysis. That's why we are silent, because this would also be your own self-criticism.

But I am not criticizing psychoanalysis in the slightest. There is no question of criticizing it. He's hard of hearing. I am not at all an agitator.

INTERVENTION: You said that psychoanalysts were not trained at Vincennes, and that this was a good thing. In fact a body of knowledge is dispensed, but you haven't said what it is. It, in any case, is apparently not a body of knowledge. And so what?

231 Be a bit patient. I will explain it to you. I am your guest, let me remind you. This is beautiful, it's big, it's generous, but I am your guest.

INTERVENTION: Lacan, is psychoanalysis revolutionary?

Now, there's a good question!

INTERVENTION: Is it a body of knowledge or isn't it a body of knowledge? You're not the only paranoid around here.

I will speak about a certain aspect of things where I won't be today, namely the Department of Psychoanalysis. There is the difficult question of credit points.[4]

[4] *Unités de valeur*, units or courses that are credited toward a degree.

INTERVENTION: The question of credit points is settled, and this is not the place to throw it into the ring. There was all this scheming on the part of the academics in the Department of Psychoanalysis, so as to drag them out over the year. We couldn't care less about credit points. It is psychoanalysis that is at stake. Do you understand? We couldn't care less.

Personally, I do not get the sense that no one could care less about credit points. On the contrary people care a lot about credit points. It's customary to. I have put the schema for the fourth discourse on the board, the one I didn't name last time, and which is called the university discourse. Here it is. And here, in the master position, as we say, is S_2, knowledge.

INTERVENTION: Who are you kidding here? The university discourse is in the credit points. That up there is a myth and what you are asking is that we believe in a myth. The people who invoke the rules of the game that you are imposing are stymied by that. So, don't have us think that the university discourse is up on the board. Because that is just not true.

The university discourse is on the board, and knowledge occupies, on the board, the top left-hand corner, already designated in a previous discourse. For what is important in what is written up are the relations, where this works and where it doesn't work. If you begin by putting in its place what 232
essentially constitutes the master's discourse, namely, that he commands, that he intervenes in the system of knowledge, you can ask yourselves what it means when the discourse of knowledge, through this ninety-degree displacement, does not need to be on the board because it is in the real. In this displacement, when knowledge takes the helm, at this moment in which you are located, it is here that the result, the fruit, the fallout of the relations between master and slave has been defined—namely, what in my algebra is designated by a letter, the object *a*. Last year, when I made the effort to announce something called *D'un Autre à l'autre*, I said that the object *a* was the place Marx revealed, uncovered, as surplus value.

You are the product of the university, and you prove that you are the surplus value, even if only in this respect—which you not only consent to, but which you also applaud—and I see no reason to object—which is that you leave here, yourselves equivalent to more or fewer credit points. You come here to gain credit points for yourselves. You leave here stamped, "credit points."

INTERVENTION: Moral—it would be better to leave here stamped "Lacan."

I am not stamping anyone. Why do you presume that I want to stamp you? What rot!

INTERVENTION: No, you won't stamp us, rest assured. What I mean is that the people here are stamped with the fact that, wanting to maintain the discourse that you maintain for them, they are unable to maintain it in a way that is compatible with their presence here. Some people want to speak in the name of an agitation that you describe as vain. There are others who go "Tiddly tiddly bom bom" in their corner, and that is what forms public opinion. No one says this, pretending that it's for you to say it. What I would like is that you have the desire to keep quiet.

Ah, they're wonderful! They think that I would say it much better than they. As for me, I am going back home—that's what they reproach me for.

233 *INTERVENTION: Oh, Lacan, don't make fun of people, okay?*

You contribute a discourse which makes such demands that. . . .

INTERVENTION: What I propose is that people not be made fun of when they ask a question, that you don't speak in a high voice as you've already done three times now. You give a reply, and that's it. Now, what was the question you asked? And then there is something else, since there are people here who think that psychoanalysis is all about problems of arse, all we have to do is have a love-in. Are there any people here who would like to transform this into a wild love-in?

[*He takes off his shirt.*]

Listen, my friend, I've seen this before. I was at the Open Theatre last night, there was a bloke who did that, but he had more cheek than you do, he took everything off. Away you go, come on. Shit!

INTERVENTION: You shouldn't poke fun at him all the same. Why does Lacan confine himself to such a limited criticism of the comrade's practice? To say of the comrade that he cannot undress, while you bang on the table, is perhaps very funny, but it's also very simplistic.

But I am simplistic!

INTERVENTION: And that makes them laugh, which is interesting.

But I don't see why they should stop laughing all of a sudden.

INTERVENTION: Well, I would really like it if they didn't laugh at that point.

That's sad.

INTERVENTION: Just as it is sad to see people leaving here as if to catch the six-o'clock Metro.

So, where are we? It seems that people cannot speak about psychoanalysis because they expect me to. Well then, they are right. I will do it much better than they would. 234

INTERVENTION: That's not quite right, since they feel the need to speak among themselves.

That's been proved.

INTERVENTION: There are a number of people, the same ones who are taking notes and who are laughing, who, when Lacan takes the audience in hand, say a number of things to one another, without so much as rising from their seats, for this is the order of a certain topology. Well then, it is these people that I would like to hear.

INTERVENTION: Come on, let Lacan speak!

In the meantime you say nothing.

INTERVENTION: Lacan with us!

I am with you.

Time is getting on. Let me try, nevertheless, to give you some idea of what my project is.

It is a matter of articulating a logic which, no matter how feeble it may seem to be—my four little letters that are almost nothing except that you have to know the rules according to which they function—is still strong enough to comprise what is the sign of this logical force, namely incompleteness.

That makes them laugh. Except that it has a very important consequence, especially for the revolutionaries, which is that nothing is everything [*rien n'est tout*].

Whatever way you come at things, whatever way you turn them, each of these little four-legged schemas has the property of leaving its own gap.

At the level of the master's discourse, the gap is precisely that of the recuperation of surplus value.

At the level of the university discourse, it's a different gap. And that's the one that torments you. Not that the knowledge that you are given is not structured and solid. On the contrary, you have only one thing to do, which 235

is to weave yourselves into it along with those who work, that is with those who teach you, under the banner of the means of production and, consequently, of surplus value.

As to the hysteric's discourse, it is what made the decisive shift possible by giving its meaning to what was historically elaborated by Marx. That is, that there are historical events that can only be judged in terms of symptoms. No one saw where that was heading, not till the day when one had the hysteric's discourse to bring about the shift to something else, which was the psychoanalyst's discourse.

At first, the psychoanalyst only had to listen to what the hysteric was saying. "I want a man who knows how to make love."

Ah, yes, that's where man stops. He stops at the fact that he actually is someone who knows. As to making love, we'll get back to you on that later. Nothing is everything and you can always make your little jokes, there is one that is not funny, and it's castration.

3

INTERVENTION: While this little class is purring along peacefully there are 150 comrades at Beaux-Arts who are being arrested by the cops and who have been at Beaujon since yesterday, because they are not giving classes on the object a like this Mandarin here in our presence, and who no one could care less about. They went to hold a spontaneous seminar at the Ministry of Equipment on the slums and on the politics of Monsieur Chalandon. So I think that the smooth running of this magisterial lecture is a fairly good translation of the current state of decay in the university.

INTERVENTION: If people don't want me to speak it's obviously because no one knows how loud I can shout. Lacan, I would like to tell you a few things.

It strikes me that we have reached the point where it is obvious that some form of agitation is more or less a possibility in this auditorium. It is clear that one can utter a few shrill words, make a few good jokes, but it is also clear, and perhaps in
236 *an obvious way today, that we will never manage to make a critique of the university if we remain within it, in its classes and within the rules that it established before we intervened in it.*

I think that what the comrade has just said concerning the Beaux-Arts students who went outside the university to hold a spontaneous class on the slums and on the politics of Chalandon is a very important example. It makes it possible for us to find an outlet for our will to change society and, among other things, to destroy the university. And I would like Lacan to give us his point of view on this

in a moment. For the university will not be destroyed by a majority of students who are on the inside, but it is much more likely with an alliance over revolutionary positions that we students must make with the laborers, with the peasants and with the workers. I am well aware that this has no relationship with what Lacan was saying before, but. . . .

But not at all, one does exist.

INTERVENTION: Perhaps it does exist, but it is not obvious. The relationship between the actions that we must have toward the exterior and Lacan's discourse, if that's what it is, is obviously implicit. And it would be good if Lacan now said what he thinks of the necessity to leave the university and stopped nit-picking over words, challenging academics over this or that quotation from Marx. Because we're fed up to here with the academic Marx. We've been hearing drivel on this in this university for a year now. We know it's shit. Going on about the academic Marx serves the bourgeois university. If the university is to be overthrown, it will be from the outside, with others who are on the outside.

INTERVENTION: So why are you on the inside?

INTERVENTION: I am inside, comrade, because I want people to leave, I have to come in and tell them.

You see! It's all there, my friend. To get them to leave, you enter.

INTERVENTION: Lacan, let me finish. No, it's not all there, because some students still think that by listening to Monsieur Lacan's discourse they will find elements in it that will enable them to challenge his discourse. I claim that this is to let yourselves get caught in a trap.

Quite true. 237

INTERVENTION: If we think that by listening to Lacan's discourse, or Foucault's, or someone else's we will obtain the means to criticize the ideology that they are making us swallow, we're making a big mistake. I claim that we have to look outside to find the means to overthrow the university.

But outside what? Because when you leave here you become aphasic? When you leave here you continue to speak, consequently you continue to be inside.

INTERVENTION: I don't know what aphasic is.

You don't know what aphasic is? That's extremely revolting. You don't know what an aphasic is? There is a minimum one has to know, nevertheless.

INTERVENTION: I am not at the university twenty-four hours a day.

Still, you don't know what an aphasic is?

INTERVENTION: When some people leave the university it is so as to carry out their own personal buggerizing around. Others leave to militate outside. That's what leaving the university means. Now, Lacan, briefly give us your own point of view.

Create a critical university in short? That is what is happening here? Is that it? You don't know what a critical university is either. Nobody has ever spoken to you.

Okay. I would like to make a small remark. The configuration of workers—peasants has nevertheless led to a form of society in which it is precisely the university that occupies the driving seat. For what reigns in what is commonly called the Soviet Union of Socialist Republics is the university.

238 *INTERVENTION: Who gives a damn? We're not talking about revisionism but Marxism-Leninism.*

That's enough. You ask me to speak, so I will speak. I am not saying things that are up in the stratosphere, I am saying something precise.

INTERVENTION: You are not saying anything.

Haven't I just said how I construe the organization of the USSR?

INTERVENTION: Absolutely not.

I didn't say that knowledge was king? I didn't say that? Did I?

INTERVENTION: So?

So, that has a number of consequences. You, my friend, would not be very comfortable there.

INTERVENTION: You have been asked a question concerning a certain society and you answer by speaking about another society. What you have to say is why you think it is inevitable.

I agree totally. The fact is that there are unsurpassable limits to a certain logic, which I have called a weak logic, but still strong enough to leave you a bit of incompleteness, which you effectively bear out perfectly.

INTERVENTION: I wonder why this amphitheater is packed full with 800 people. It is true that you are a good clown, famous, and that you have come here to speak. A comrade also spoke for ten minutes to say that groups were unable to get themselves out of the university. And everyone, recognizing that there is nothing to be said, is speaking but saying nothing. So, if there is nothing to say, nothing to understand, nothing to know, nothing to do, why are so many people here? And Lacan, why do you stay?

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INTERVENTION: We have strayed into a bit of a false problem. All because the comrade said that he was coming to the university in order to leave again with other comrades.

INTERVENTION: People speak about a New Society. Will psychoanalysis have a function in that society and what will it be?

A society is not something that can be defined just like that. What I am trying to spell out, because psychoanalysis gives me the evidence for it, is what dominates it, namely, the practice of language. Aphasia means that there is something that has broken down in this respect. Just think that there are people who happen to have things in their brain and who no longer have any idea how to manage with language. That makes them somewhat crippled.

INTERVENTION: One could say that Lenin almost became aphasic.

If you had a bit of patience, and if you really wanted our impromptus to continue, I would tell you that, always, the revolutionary aspiration has only a single possible outcome—of ending up as the master's discourse. This is what experience has proved.

What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a master. You will get one.

INTERVENTION: We've already got one, we have Pompidou.

Do you believe that you have got a master in Pompidou? What's all that about?

I, too, would like to ask you some questions. For whom, here, does the word "liberal" have a meaning?

INTERVENTION: Pompidou is a liberal, so is Lacan.

240 I am, like everybody is, liberal only to the extent that I am antiprogressive. With the caveat that I am caught up in a movement that deserves to be called progressive, since it is progressive to see the psychoanalytic discourse founded, insofar as the latter completes the circle that could perhaps enable you to locate what it is exactly that you are rebelling against—which doesn't stop that thing from continuing incredibly well.

And the first to collaborate with this, right here at Vincennes, are you, for you fulfill the role of helots of this regime. You don't know what that means either? The regime is putting you on display. It says, "Look at them enjoying!"

Good-bye for today. Bye. It's over.

3 December 1969

B

Monsieur Caquot's presentation

In suggesting that Moses may have been put to death by his own people, S. Freud appeals to the authority of Ernst Sellin. This biblical scholar, born in 1867, was one of the most productive representatives of the German exegetical school. In 1922, the date of publication of his book *Mose und seine Bedeutung für die israelitisch-jüdische Religiongeschichte* [*Moses and his Meaning for Israelite and Jewish History of Religion*], he was Ordinary Professor of the Old Testament at the University of Berlin. As with many of his contemporaries, one can detect, in his work as a historian and exegete, a certain ideology and a methodological option that it is worth discussing if we are to understand the explanations he gives of the Bible.

The ideology is that of liberal Protestantism which sees the high point of biblical revelation in a form of moral preaching that is summed up in the Ten Commandments and developed by the prophets of the eighth century BC, the proto-Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah. Less skeptical than some of his friends, E. Sellin held Moses to be the founder of the religion of Israel, the author of the Ten Commandments and the initiator of the moral preaching that the great prophets were merely furthering. The prophets not only adopted Moses' teaching, they also preserved, within their tradition, a record of his life. This is why, according to E. Sellin, Hosea makes, in a passage I will refer you to, allusions to Moses' violent death, which the "historical" literature of the Bible does not mention (Deut. 34:5–6 mentions Moses' death and burial; but it adds that no one knows the location of his tomb, and this somewhat mysterious indication has given birth to the legend of Moses' ascension to heaven). Sellin thinks that the tradition of Moses' violent death was censored by historians from the circle of priests.

The methodological option consists of not trusting the traditional Hebrew text, called "the masoretic." One usually prefers the doyen of translations, the Greek version called the "Septuagint," in which manuscript testimonies are most often earlier than the Hebrew text. But even without the

slightest support from the versions of Antiquity (Greek, Syriac, or Latin), recourse is readily made to corrections in the received Hebrew text, with the aim of giving it a sense that is judged to be more satisfactory. It is supposed that over the course of time the received text, or the Hebrew underlying such a version, has undergone "corruptions" in the oral or written transmission. Exegesis thus understood has sometimes been an exercise in arbitrary virtuosity. E. Sellin's work on Hosea offers a number of examples of this.

It was probably while composing the first edition of his commentary on Hosea, also published in 1922 in the series entitled *Kommentar zum Alten Testament*, that Ernst Sellin thought he had found allusions to the murder of Moses in the prophet's text. The passages he picks out with the help of his hypothesis will be treated briefly as they were understood before or after Sellin and as he interpreted them and what arguments he used.

1. Hos. 5:2a. The hemistich appears in an invective by the prophet against the priests and against the "house of Israel." It consists of three words, not very clear, which would literally translate as "And the massacre, the strayed deepened [it]." The name translated by "strayed" has been understood best, it would seem, by the Jewish tradition which uses "the idolaters" there. But in the first half of the nineteenth century, F. W. Umbreit proposed that this word be replaced by the toponymous "Shittim," which is the same but for the initial hushing, aspirate consonant, which is different, as is the vocalization of the first syllable. This correction led to others: by substituting a simple *t* for the emphatic *ṭ* in writing the first word, and by detaching the final *h*, to form the article belonging to the toponym, one obtained a sentence judged to be more satisfactory as an accusation: "They deepened the pit at Shittim."

243 E. Sellin welcomes this conjecture enthusiastically, for the toponym "Shittim" presents him with a reference point in the historical literature that plays an essential role in his reasoning in favor of the assassination of Moses. This is the famous passage of Numbers 25 where the straying of the Israelites into the sanctuary of Baal of Peor, which occurred while they were staying at Shittim, is recounted. The Israelites were led into temptation by the Moabite women. God became irritated and sent down a plague. The priest Phinehas put an end to it when he transfixed an Israelite caught in adulterous flagrante delicto with a Moabite woman. A bit further on it is said that the man's name was Zimri and the Moabite's was Cozbi.

Sellin would no doubt not have been led to understand the passage in Numbers as he did if his interpretation of Hosea had not conveyed to him his intuition about the assassination of Moses. What he says concerning the episode of Shittim and Baal of Peor indicates an excessive imagination. He reconstitutes an entire scenario in which the Israelite put to death was none other than Moses, who as we know had a Moabite wife (Exod. 2:15–22),

and the violent death of the guide of Israel originally has the value of an expiatory sacrifice that brought the plague to an end. Later, the sacerdotal tradition supposedly recomposes the episode entirely to the glory of the clergy (represented by Phinehas whose zeal is remunerated by the "alliance" granted him by God) and effaces the name of Moses. He is, according to Sellin, the primitive hero of the story the authentic record of whom the prophetic tradition has maintained; they have substituted the name of the insignificant Zimri for his and replaced the name of the Midianite Zipporah by that of Cozbi, constructed on the basis of the root, signifying "to lie."

2. Hos. 9:9. Again, a prophetic indictment against "Ephraim." As in 5:2 this name "the house of Israel" alludes to the kingdom of the North, separated from Judah in 922 and the constant object of Hosea's polemic. 9:8 concerns a "prophet" for whom Ephraim sets a trap. Sellin supposes that it was Moses. The hemistich 8b ending by "he [finds] an adversary in the house of his god" enables Sellin to rediscover the toponym Shittim with which the Hebrew name for the adversary (*mastemah*) has some resemblance. He restitutes, as the primitive text, "At Shittim, in the house of his god." At verse 9 one rediscovers words close to those of 5:2, and just as difficult to understand, for the translation would literally be "They have deep- 244
ened, they have corrupted as in the days of Gibeah." It is likely that the word commonly translated as "deepen" has a modal value and serves to indicate that the corruption "Ephraim" is accused of has been continuous and systematic. The allusion to the "days of Gibeah" concerns a memorable crime committed in this place, according to the Book of Judges 19. Sellin once again corrects the text to bring it into line with 5:2 as he reads it; by changing the vowels of the verb "they have corrupted," he obtains the substantive "his grave" and translates " . . . Shittim, in the house of his god, they have deeply dug his pit."

3. Hos. 12:13-13:1. The end of chapter 12 (verse 14) is the sole passage of Hosea in which "the prophet" undeniably refers to Moses: "It was by the intermediary of a prophet that YHWH brought Israel up from Egypt and it was by a prophet that [Israel] was tended [*gardé*]." The text of Hosea 14 can be paraphrased as follows, to bring out the value of the pronominal suffixes that are often equivocal in Hebrew: "Ephraim [= Israel] irritated [YHWH] bitterly, but his blood [= the blood that Ephraim has spilled] will come back upon him [Ephraim] and the Lord will bring the opprobrium that he has committed back upon him."[1] Israel is here accused of crimes of blood, and her punishment by God is announced without any equivocation. The

[1] *The Revised English Bible* gives "Ephraim gave bitter provocation; he will be left to suffer for the blood he has shed; his Lord will punish him for all his blasphemy." (Hos. 12:14).

difficulty lies in 13:1, which could be literally translated as "While Ephraim was speaking [there was] a tremor; it arose in Israel. But he became guilty because of Baal, and he is dead." In all probability this is a satire on the grandeur and decadence of the tribe which, according to Hosea, most directly represents the schismatic royalty, since it is the Ephraimite Jeroboam who in 922 brought about the separation of Israel (in the restricted sense, designating the kingdom of the North) from the kingdom of Judah.

Sellin's conjecture consists of substituting the name "my law" (whose consonants would be *trt*) for the name "tremor" (whose consonants are *rtt*); reading the substantive *nasi* ("prince") in place of the verb *nasa* ("to rise"); giving the verb "make oneself guilty" the acceptation "expiate" which he believes possible because the name of the same root designates an expiatory sacrifice; and, finally, displacing the hemistich 12:15b after the verse 13:1. This would give (12:14) "It was by a prophet [Moses] that YHWH
245 brought Israel up from Egypt and it was by a prophet that [Israel] was tended." (12:15a) "But Ephraim irritated [YHWH] bitterly." (13:1) "While Ephraim was speaking my law, he was prince in Israel. He [the prophet] expiated because of Baal [the sin of Baal of Peor] and he is dead." (12:15b) "But his blood [the blood of the prophet] will come back upon him [Ephraim] and the Lord will bring back upon him the opprobrium that he has committed." Sellin finds here the clearest expression of the meaning he wants to give to the alleged murder of the prophet: Moses was put to death by his own people as an expiatory victim following the collective sin of Baal of Peor. He justifies this strange hypothesis by a declaration by Moses in Exod. 32:32 where the hero pleads for a divine pardon for the people for their sin of the Golden Calf, even if it should be he who is to be effaced from the book of God. But it is not possible to ignore the Christian roots of Sellin's ideas, which in this way found in Moses the prototype of the mysterious suffering characters of whom the prophetic literature speaks: the "servant of YHWH" of Deutero-Isaiah (see in particular Isa. 52:13–53:12 and the "transfixing" of Zech. 12:10).

Sellin was aware of the fragility of his hypotheses of 1922. In 1928, in an article in the *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (46:261–3) entitled "Hosea und das Martyrium des Mose," he returns to the study of Hos. 12:14–13:1, proposing some new corrections to the text of 13:1a: "While Ephraim was uttering these rebellious words [reading *rbt* in place of *rtt*], he [namely the prophet, that is, Moses] took [it] upon himself and he expiated." It is in the second edition of his commentary on Hosea, published in 1929, that he shows himself to be the most skeptical with respect to his initial intuition. He still believes that Hosea contains the record of an expiatory death of Moses, but he no longer reads 13:1 as he had interpreted it in 1928. In Hos. 5:2 he rejects F. W. Umbreit's correction, even contests the

relevance of the alleged reference to Shittim for evoking the affair of Baal of Peor, and translates 5:2 as "Deeply have they dug the tomb of the strayed." In 9:8–9 he no longer corrects *mastemah* as "Shittim," and while he does retain his translation of 9:9a, "Deeply have they dug his pit," he no longer thinks that the "prophet" that the possessive refers to is Moses. This would be a personification of the prophetic function as Sellin conceives it; the vehicle of the divine word is destined to be a martyr.

As K. Budde points out in 1932 ("Goethe zu Moses Tod," *Zeitschrift für* 246
die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 50:300–03), Goethe had imagined the violent death of Moses a century and a half before E. Sellin. In one of his *Noten und Abhandlungen zu besseren Verständnis des west-östliches Diwans* (in the Hempel IV edition, p. 320 ff.), he supposes that Joshua and Caleb, tired of Moses' indecision over crossing Jordan to get to the promised land, assassinated the elderly guide in order to take control of Israel. This is a more simple conjecture than Sellin's, but no less gratuitous, for the laconic information of Deut. 34:5–6 on Moses' unknown tomb can certainly stir one's imagination, but it justifies no hypothesis about Moses' death. One might wonder whether S. Freud might not owe this idea of Moses' violent death to a distant recollection of his reading of Goethe and whether he might not have wanted to give it a justification judged to be more scholarly by evoking the sole authority of E. Sellin.

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THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN

BOOK XVIII

On a discourse that might not be a semblance

1971

Translated by Cormac Gallagher from unedited French manuscripts

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Seminar 1: Wednesday 13 January 1971

[Lacan writes on the board]

D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant
(On a discourse that might not be a semblance)

A discourse, it is not mine that is at stake. I think I made you sense well enough last year what should be understood by this term *discourse*. I remind you of the discourse of the Master and what we could call its four positions, the displacements of its terms with respect to a structure, reduced to being tetrahedral. I left whoever wanted to work on it to specify what motivates... these ...slidings (*glissements*) which could have been more diversified, I reduced them to four. If no one has worked on it, I will perhaps this year give an indication in passing about the privileged status of these four.

I only took up these references with respect to what was my end, stated under the title of *The reverse side of psychoanalysis*. The discourse of the Master is not the reverse side of psychoanalysis, it is where there is demonstrated the torsion that is proper, I would say, to the discourse of psychoanalysis, what ensures that this discourse poses the question of a front and a back (*un endroit et un envers*) because you know the importance, the emphasis, that is put in the theory, ever since Freud stated it, the importance and the stress that is put on the notion of double inscription. Now what I wanted you to

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put your finger on, is the possibility of a double inscription, on the front, on the back, without an edge being crossed. It is the structure well known for a long time, that I only had to use, which is called the Moebius strip.

(10) These places and these elements, are where there is outlined that what is properly speaking discourse, can in no way be referred from a subject, even though it determines him. This, no doubt, is the ambiguity of that through which I introduced what I thought I should make understood within psychoanalytic discourse. Remember my terms, at the period that I entitled a certain report as the function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis. At that time I wrote *intersubjectivity*, and God knows the number of false tracks that the statement of terms like that can give rise to. I hope I will be excused for having been the first to make these tracks. I was not able to go ahead except through a misunderstanding. *Inter,* certainly, in effect, is the only thing that subsequently allowed me to talk about an inter-significance (*intersignifiance*), subjectivity from its consequences, the signifier being what represents a subject for another signifier where the subject is not. This indeed is how it is, because of the fact that where he is represented he is absent, that nevertheless being represented, he thus finds himself divided. As for discourse, it is not simply that it can henceforth only be judged in the light of its unconscious sources, it is also the fact that it can no longer be stated as anything else than what is articulated from a structure where somewhere he finds himself alienated in an irreducible fashion. Hence my introductory statement: *On a discourse* – I stop – it is not mine. It is from this statement, a discourse not being able, as such, to be a discourse of any particular person, but being founded from a structure, and from the emphasis that is given by the division, the sliding of certain of its terms, it is from this that I am starting this year for what is entitled "*On a discourse that will not be a semblance*".

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For those who were not able last year to follow these statements which were made previously, I indicate that the appearance, which dates already for more than a month, of *Scilicet 2/3,* will give them the written references. *Scilicet 2/3*, because it is a writing, it is an event, if not an advent of discourse. First of all by the fact, that it is the one that I find myself to be the instrument of, without avoiding the fact that it requires the pressure of your numbers, in other words that you should be there and very precisely, under this aspect, a singular aspect of which creates this pressure, undoubtedly with, let us say, the incidences of our history which is something that can be touched, which renews the question of what is involved in discourse in so far as it is the discourse of the Master, this something that can only be made of something that one questions oneself about in naming it. Do not go on too quickly to make use of the word revolution. But it is clear that it is necessary to discern what it is in (11) short that allows me to pursue my statements, with this formula *On a discourse which will not be a semblance*. Two features are to be noted here in this number of *Scilicet.* I put to the test, after all, more or less, something which is moreover my discourse of last year, in a setting which precisely is characterised by the absence of what I called this pressure of your presence. And to give it its full emphasis, I will say it in these terms, what this presence signifies, I would pinpoint as a pressurised surplus enjoying (*plus-de-jouir pressé*). Because it is precisely from this figure that there can be judged, if it goes beyond a discomfort, as they say, as regards too much semblance in the discourse in which you are inscribed, the University discourse, the one that is easy to denounce for neutrality, for example, that this discourse cannot claim to be sustained by a competitive selection when all that is at stake are signs that are addressed to those who are in the know, in terms of a formation of the subject, when it is something quite different that is at stake. Nothing allows us to go beyond this kind of discomfort of semblances - so that something can be hoped for which allows us to get out of it - than to posit that a certain style, that a certain style that

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is required in the advancement of a discourse, does not split, in a dominant position in this discourse, what is involved in this triage, these globules of surplus enjoying, in the name of which you find yourselves caught up in the University discourse. It is precisely that someone, starting from the analytic discourse, places himself with respect to you in the position of an analysand. This is not new, I already said it but no one paid any attention to it. This is what constitutes the originality of this teaching. This is what justifies what you contribute to it by your pressure and that is why in speaking on the radio, I put to the test this subtraction precisely of this presence, of this space into which you press yourselves, cancelled out and replaced by the pure It exists (*Il existe*) of this inter-significance that I spoke about earlier in order that the subject can vacillate in it. It is simply a switching of points towards something whose possible import we will learn in the future.

There is another feature of what I called this event, this advent of discourse, it is this printed thing that is called *Scilicet*, it is, as a certain number already know, that people write in it without signing. What does that mean? That each of these names that are put in a column on the last page of these three issues that constitute one year, can be permuted with each of the others, affirming in this way that no discourse can be that of an author. This is a wager. Here, it speaks (*ça parle*). In the other case, it is... here the future will tell if it is the formula that, let us say, in five or six years all the other journals will adopt. I mean the good journals. It is a gamble, we shall see!

(12) I am not trying in what I am saying to escape from what is experienced, sensed in my statements, as accentuating, as sticking to the *artefact* of discourse. This means of course, it is the least that can be said, that doing this rules out my claiming to cover all of it, it cannot be a system and in this regard it is not a philosophy. It is clear that for whoever takes from the angle that analysis allows us to renew what is involved in discourse, this implies that one moves around, I

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would say, in a *désunivers*, it is not the same thing as *divers* (diverse). But I would not even reject this diverse and not simply because of what it implies in terms of diversity, but of what it also implies in terms of diversion. It is very clear also that I am not talking about everything. It is even in what I state, it resists anyone saying everything about it. You can put your finger on that every day. Even on the fact that I state that I am not saying everything, that is something different, as I already said, that comes from the fact that the truth is only a half-saying.

This discourse then, which limits itself to acting only in the artefact, is in short only the prolongation of the position of the analyst, in so far as it is defined by putting the weight of its surplus enjoying at a certain place. It is nevertheless the position that here I cannot sustain, very precisely by not being in this position of the analyst. As I said earlier, except for the fact that you lack knowledge about it, it is rather you who will be in it, by the pressure of your numbers. This having been said, what can be the import of what, in this reference, I am stating?

On a discourse which might not be a semblance, that can be stated from my place and in function of what I previously stated. It is a fact in any case that I am stating it. Note that it is a fact also *because* I state it. You may be completely hoodwinked by it, namely, think that there is nothing more than the fact that I am stating it. Only, if I spoke in connection with discourse about the artefact, it is because for discourse, there is no fact, as I might say, already there, there is only a fact from the fact of saying it, the stated fact is entirely a fact of discourse. This is what I am designating by the term artefact, and of course, this is what has to be reduced. Because if I speak about artefact, it is not to give rise in it to the idea of something that might be different, a nature, that you would be wrong to get engaged in with a view to tackling its obstacles, because you would never get out of it. The question is not set up in the terms: is it or is it not discourse,

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but in the following: it is said or it is not said. I start from what is said, in a discourse whose artefact is supposed to be sufficient for you to be there; a cut here, because I am not adding, that you should be (13) here in the state of *pressurised surplus enjoying*. I said a cut because it is questionable whether it is already as pressurised surplus enjoying that my discourse gathers you together. It is not decided, whatever one or other may think, that it is this discourse, the one made up of the series of statements that I present you, that places you where? In this position from which it can be questioned by the "not talking" of the discourse which might not be a semblance.

D'un semblant, what does that mean in this statement? A semblance of discourse, for example. You know that this is the position described as logical positivism. The fact is that if starting from a signifier, to be put to the test of something that decides by yes or no, what cannot present itself for this test, this is what is defined as meaning nothing. And with that, people think they have finished with a certain number of questions described as metaphysical. This is certainly not what I hold to. I want to point out to you that the position of logical positivism is untenable, in any case starting from analytic experience in particular.

If analytic experience finds itself implicated by taking its claims to nobility from the Oedipal myth, it is indeed because it preserves the cutting edge of the oracle's enunciation, and I would say more, that in it interpretation always remains at the same level. It is only true by its consequences, like every oracle. Interpretation is not put to the test of a truth that can be settled by a yes or a no, it unleashes truth as such. It is true only in so far as it is truly followed. We will see later that the schemas of implication, I mean of logical implication, in their most classical form, these schemas themselves require the foundation of this truthfulness in so far as it belongs to the word, even if it is properly speaking senseless. The passage from the moment where the truth is settled by its simple unleashing, to that of a logic that is

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going to try to embody this truth, is precisely the moment when discourse, *qua* representative of representation, is dismissed, disqualified. But if it can be so, it is because some part of it is always there, and this is what is called repression. It is no longer a representation that it represents, it is this continuation of discourse that is characterised as effect of truth.

The effect of truth is not a semblance. The Oedipus complex is there to teach us, if you will allow me, to teach us that it is red blood. Only there you are, red blood does not reject the semblance, it colours it, it makes it re-semble (*re-semblant*), it propagates it. A little bit of sawdust and the circus starts up again. This indeed it is why it is at (14) the level of the artefact of the structure of discourse, that the question can be raised about a discourse that might not be a semblance. In the meantime, there is no semblance of discourse, there is no meta-language to judge it, there is no Other of the Other, there is no true of the true.

I amused myself one day by making the truth speak. I ask where is the paradox, what could be more true than stating 'I am lying'? The classical quibbling that is stated under the term of paradox is only embodied if you put this *I am lying* on paper, as something written. Everyone knows that there is nothing truer that one can say on some occasions than to say: 'I am lying'. It is even very certainly the only truth that in this case is not broken (*brisée*). Everyone knows that in saying: 'I am not lying', one is absolutely not protected from saying something false. What does that mean? The truth that is at stake, when it speaks, the one that I said speaks I, which states itself as an oracle, *who* speaks?

This semblance is the signifier in itself. Who can fail to see that what characterises this signifier that, as far as linguists are concerned, I use in a way that embarrasses them, there were some who wrote these lines designed to clearly warn that undoubtedly Ferdinand de

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Saussure did not have the slightest idea about it. What do we know about it? Ferdinand de Saussure was like me, he did not say everything; the proof is that people found in his papers, things that were never said in his classes. People think that the signifier is a nice little thing that has been tamed by structuralism, people think that it is the Other, *qua* Other, and the battery of signifiers, and everything that I explain, of course. Naturally it comes down from heaven, because from time to time I am an idealist!

Artefact, I said initially; naturally, the artefact, it is absolutely certain that it is our everyday fate that we find it at every street corner, within reach of the slightest gestures of our hands. If there is something that is a sustainable, or at least sustained discourse, specifically that of science, it is perhaps no harm to remember that it started very specially from the consideration of semblances. The start of scientific thinking, I am talking about history, what is it? The observation of the stars, what is it if not the constellation, namely, the very type of a semblance. What do the first steps of modern physics turn around at the start? Not, as is believed, elements, because the elements, the four and even if you wish to add a fifth essence, are already discourse, philosophical discourse, and how! They are (15) atmospheric phenomena (*météores).* Descartes wrote a *Traité des Météores.* The decisive step, one of the decisive steps turned around the theory of the rainbow, and when I talk about a meteor, it is something that is defined by being qualified as such as a semblance. No one has ever believed that the rainbow, even among the most primitive people, that the rainbow was something there, set up in a curve. It is questioned as an atmospheric phenomenon. The most characteristic atmospheric phenomenon, the most original one, the one that without any doubt is linked to, has the very structure of discourse, is thunder. If I ended my Rome discourse on the evocation of thunder, it is absolutely not like that, by fantasy, no *Name of the Father* is tenable without thunder, and everyone knows very well that we do not even know what thunder is the sign of. It is the very figure

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of the semblance. This is why there is no semblance of discourse, everything that is discourse, can only present itself as semblance, and nothing is built on it that is not at the basis of this something that is called signifier, which, in the light in which I put it forward for you today, is identical to this status as such of the semblance.

On a discourse that will not be a semblance; for it to be stated, it is necessary then that this *a semblance* can in no way be completed by reference to discourse. It is something else that is at stake, the referent no doubt! Restrain yourselves a little bit. This referent is probably not immediately an object, because precisely what that means, is that this referent, is precisely what is walking around. The semblance in which the discourse is identical to itself, is at the level of the term *semblance,* it is the semblance in nature. It is not for nothing that I reminded you that no discourse that evokes nature ever did anything other than start from what in nature is a semblance. Because nature is full of them. I am not talking about animal nature, which quite obviously superabounds with them. This is even what ensures that there are gentle dreamers who think that the entire animal nature, from fish to birds, sings divine praises, it is self-evident. Every time they open like that, something, a mouth, an operculum, it is a manifest semblance, nothing requires there to be gaps. When we go into something whose efficacy has not been settled, for the simple reason that we do not know how it has come about that there were, as I might say, an accumulation of signifiers, because signifiers, huh, I can tell you, are scattered throughout the world, in nature, they are there by the shovelful. For language to come to birth, it is already something to initiate that, for language to be born, it was necessary that there should be established somewhere (16) this something that I already indicated to you in connection with the wager, it was Pascal's wager, we do not remember it. In presupposing this, the trouble is that this already presupposes the functioning of language because what is at stake is the unconscious. The unconscious and its operation, means that among the numerous

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signifiers that travel the world there is going to be in addition the fragmented body. There are, all the same, things from which one can start by thinking that they already exist. They already exist in a certain functioning in which we would not be forced to consider the accumulation of the signifier. It is this business about territory. If the signifier 'your right arm' enters the territory of your neighbour to pick up something – these are things that happen all the time – naturally your neighbour grasps your signifier 'right arm' and throws it back over the dividing wall. This is what you very curiously call *projection*, do you not, it is the way of understanding one another! It is from a phenomenon like that that we have to start. If your right arm, in your neighbour's property, was not entirely occupied in picking apples, for example, if it had stayed quiet, it is fairly probable that your neighbour would have adored it, it is the origin of the master signifier, a right arm, the sceptre. The master signifier only needs to begin like that, right at the beginning.

Unfortunately it requires a little bit more, it is an unsatisfactory schema. Going a little further, that gives you the sceptre, right away you see the thing materialising as signifier. The process of history shows itself according to every testimony, in the ones that we have, a little more complicated. It is certain that the little parable, the one with which I first began, the arm that is thrown back from one territory into another, it is not necessarily your arm that comes back to you, because signifiers are not individual, one does not know who owns which. So there you see, here we enter into a different kind of original operation as regards the function of chance and that of myths. You construct a world, on this occasion let us say a schema, a support divided like that into a certain number of territorial cells. This happens at a certain level, the one at which it is a matter of putting forward, where it is a matter of understanding a little what has happened.

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After all, not alone can one get an arm that is not one's own, in the process of expulsion that you have called, I do not know why, *projection*, if it is only that, you are projected, of course, not simply an arm which is not yours, but several other arms, so then from that moment on, it is no longer important whether it is yours or whether it (17) is not yours. But anyway, since after all, inside a territory, one only knows one's own frontiers, one does not have to know that on this frontier there are six other territories. You throw it a little bit as you wish, so then it can happen that there is a whole shower of territories. The idea of the relationship that may exist between the rejection of something and the birth of what I earlier called the master signifier, is certainly an idea to remember. But for it to have its whole value, it is certainly necessary that there should have been, by a process of chance, at certain points, an accumulation of signifiers. Starting from there it is possible to conceive something that might be the birth of a language. What we see properly speaking being built up as a first way of supporting in writing what serves as language, gives in any case a certain idea. Everyone knows that the letter A is a bull's head turned upside down, and that a certain number of elements like this, movable, still leave their trace. What is important, is not to go too fast and to see where holes continue to remain. For example, it is quite obvious that the start of this outline was already linked to something marking the body with a possibility of ectopia and of excursion (*d'ectopie et de balade*) that obviously remains problematic. After all here again, everything is still there. We have finally, this is a very sensitive point, that we can still test every day. Not too long ago, again this week, something, very pretty photos in the newspaper, that everyone was delighted with, the possibilities of the practice of cutting up a human being on another human being are quite impressive. It is from there that everything started.

There remains another hole. As you know, people have tormented themselves about it, people have noted that Hegel is all very well, but there is all the same something that he did not explain. He explains

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the dialectic of the master and the slave, he does not explain how there can be a society of masters. It is quite clear that what I have just explained to you is certainly interesting in that, by the simple operation of projection, of retort (*rétorsion*), it is clear that at the end of a certain number of throws, there will certainly be, I would say, a greater average of signifiers in certain territories than in others. Anyway, it still remains to be seen how the signifier is going to be able to construct a society of signifiers in this territory. One should never leave in the shadows what one does not explain, under the pretext that one has succeeded in giving some little beginning of explanation.

(18) In any case, the statement of our title this year, *On a discourse that is not a semblance*, concerns something that deals with an economy. Here we will hide (*nous tairons*) the *a semblance* from itself, it is not a semblance of something else, it is to be taken in the sense of the objective genitive, what is at stake is the semblance as proper object by which there is ruled the economy of discourse. Are we going to say that it is also a subjective genitive? Does *du semblant* concern also what gives the discourse? The word subjective is the only one to be rejected here for the simple reason that the subject only appears once there has been established somewhere this liaison of signifiers. A subject can only be the product of signifying articulation. A subject as such never masters in any case this articulation but is properly speaking determined by it.

A discourse, by its nature, appears (*fait semblant*) as one might say to be a success, or to be light, or to be chic. If what is stated in words is precisely true by always being very authentically what it is, at the level we are at, of the objective and of articulation, it is then very precisely as object of what is only produced in this aforesaid discourse that the semblance is posited. Hence the properly senseless character of what is articulated and it must be said that it is here indeed that there is revealed what is involved in the richness of

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language, namely, that it contains a logic that surpasses by far everything that we succeed in crystallising of it, in detaching from it.

I employed the hypothetical form of a discourse which might not be (*ne serait pas*) a semblance. Everyone knows the developments that logic took on after Aristotle, by putting the emphasis on the hypothetical function. Everything that is articulated by giving the value True of False to the articulation of the hypothesis, and combining what results from the implication of a term within this hypothesis, as being signalled as true. This is the inauguration of what is called the *modus ponens*, and of still many other modes and everyone knows what was made of them. It is striking, at least as far as I know, that no one has ever formalised the resource involved in the use of this hypothetical in the negative.

A striking thing, if one refers for example to what is collected about it in my *Ecrits*, when someone at the epoch, a heroic epoch at which I began to clear up the terrain of analysis, when someone came to contribute to the deciphering of the *Verneinung*. Even though in commenting Freud letter by letter, he noticed very clearly – because Freud says it quite literally – that the *Bejahung* only involves a judgement of attribution, which means that Freud ... shows a finesse (19) and a competence that are quite exceptional at the time he wrote this – because only some logician who is not widely known was able at that time to underline it – the judgement of attribution, in no way prejudges existence. The simple positing of a *Verneinung*, implies the existence of something which is very precisely what is denied. A *discourse which might not be a semblance* posits that the discourse, as I have just stated, *is* a semblance.

The great advantage in putting it like that is that one does not say a semblance of what. Now, it is here of course, it is around this that I propose to advance our statements, namely, to get to know what is involved where it *might not be* a semblance. Naturally, the terrain is

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prepared by a singular even though timid step, which is the one that Freud took in *Beyond the pleasure principle*.

Here I do not want, because I cannot do any more than indicate the knot formed in this statement, by repetition and enjoyment. It is in function of this that repetition goes against the pleasure principle which, I would say, does not recover from it. Hedonism, in the light of analytic experience, can only go back to what it is, namely, a philosophical myth. I mean, a myth of a perfectly defined (and clear) class. And I stated last year the help that they have given to a certain process of the master, by permitting the discourse of the master as such to build up a knowledge. This knowledge is the knowledge of the master. This knowledge has supposed, since the philosophical discourse still carries its trace, the existence over against the master of another knowledge and, thank God, philosophical discourse did not disappear without first pinpointing that there ought to be at the origin a relationship between this knowledge and enjoyment. The one who thus closed philosophical discourse, Hegel to give him his name, naturally only sees the way in which, through work, slavery comes to accomplish what? Nothing other than the knowledge of the master.

And what is introduced, what is introduced anew by what I will call the Freudian hypothesis? It is, in an extraordinarily prudent, but all the same a syllogistic form, the following: if we call *pleasure principle* the fact that always, by the behaviour of the living being, he comes back to a level which is that of minimal excitation, and that this rules his economy; if it proves to be the case that repetition is exercised in such a way that a dangerous enjoyment, an enjoyment that goes beyond this minimal excitation, is brought back – is it possible, it is in this way that Freud states the question – that it could be imagined that life, caught up itself in its cycle – it is a novelty with (20) respect to this world which does not universally comprise it –

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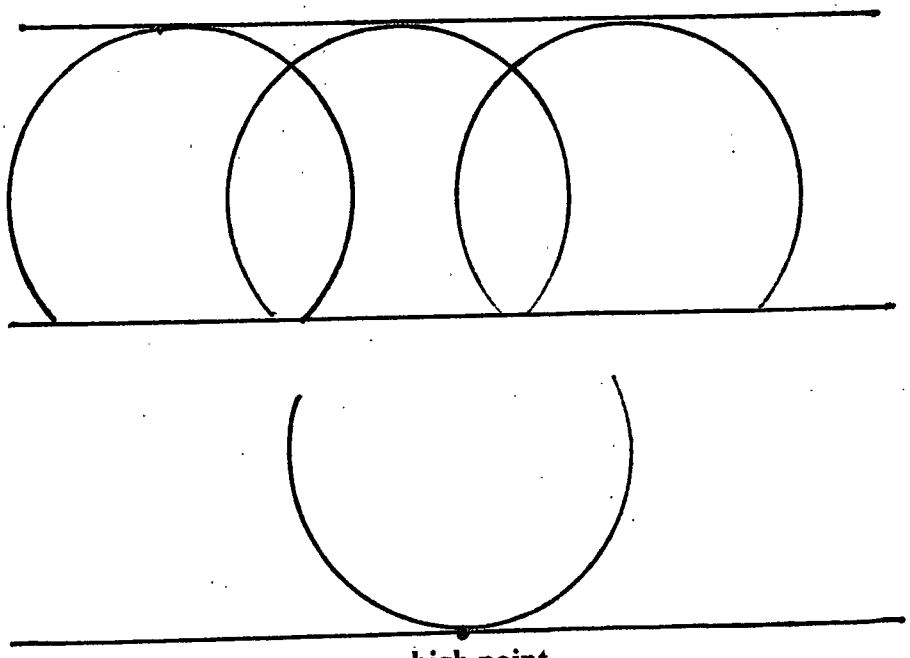
that life includes this possibility of repetition which would be the return to this world in so far as it is a semblance?



high point

I can point out to you by a drawing on the board that this involves, instead of the series of ascending and descending curves of excitation, all close to a limit, which is an upper limit, the possibility of an intensity of excitation that can moreover go to infinity, what is conceived as enjoyment not involving in itself, in principle, any other limit than this lower tangential point, this point that we will call high (*supreme*), in giving its proper sense to this word which means the lowest point of a higher limit, in the same way as the lowest (*infime*) is the highest point of a lower limit. The coherence given of the mortal point, then conceived without Freud underlining it, as a characteristic of life but in truth, what people do not think of is, in effect, the fact that we confuse what is non-life, and which is far, my word, from not stirring up the eternal silence of the infinite spaces that dazed Decartes. They talk, they sing, they move about in every (21) way, now when we look at them. What is called the inanimate world is not dead. Death is a point, is designated as a terminal point, a point at the term of what? Of the enjoyment of life.

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This is precisely what is introduced by the Freudian statement, one that we could qualify as hyper-hedonism, if I can express myself in this way. Who can fail to see that the economy, even that of nature, is always a fact of discourse. It cannot grasp that this indicates that nothing else could be at stake here but enjoyment in so far as it is itself not only a fact, but an effect of discourse.

If something that is called the unconscious can be half-said as a language structure, it is so that finally there can appear to us the relief of this effect of discourse that up to then appeared to us as impossible, namely, surplus enjoying. Does that mean, to follow one of my formulae, that in so far as it was impossible, it functioned as real? I am opening up the question, because in truth, nothing implies that the irruption of the discourse of the unconscious, however stammering it remains, implies anything whatsoever, in what preceded it, that was subjected to its structure. The discourse of the unconscious is an emerging, it is the emerging of a certain function of the signifier. That it existed up to then as a token, is indeed the reason why I put it at the source of the semblance.

But the consequences of its emerging, is what ought to be introduced so that something may change, which cannot change, because it is not possible. It is on the contrary because a discourse is centred from its effect as impossible that it will have some chance of being a discourse that might not be a semblance.

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Seminar 2: Wednesday 20 January 1971

If I was looking through these sheets, it was not to assure myself, but to reassure myself about what I said the last time, the text of which I do not have at the moment. I have just been complaining about it. Remarks of this kind come back to me - I do not have to go to any trouble for that - it happens that some people were asking themselves at certain points of my discourse the last time as they express it, what I was getting at (*où je veux en venir*). Other remarks came to me from elsewhere, that it is very hard to hear at the back of the room. I will try – I was absolutely unaware of it the last time, I thought that the acoustics were just as good as in the previous amphitheatre – if you don't mind giving me a sign when my voice lowers despite myself, I will try to do my best.

So then, at certain turning points, people may have asked themselves the last time what I was getting at. In truth, this sort of question seems to me to be too premature to be significant, namely, that it is people who are far from being insignificant, people who are very well informed from whom this remark was reported, and sometimes quite calmly by themselves. It would perhaps have a greater implication, given precisely what I put forward the last time, if they were to ask where I am starting from or even where I want you to start from. Already, this has two meanings, this perhaps means, to go somewhere, and again this may also mean, to get a move on from where you are. This 'what I am getting at' is in any case a very good

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example of what I put forward about the desire of the Other: *che vuoi*? What does he want? Obviously when you can say it right away, you are much more comfortable. This is an opportunity to note the factor of inertia that is constituted by this *che vuoi,* at least when (24) you can answer it. This indeed is why in analysis one strives to leave this question in suspense.

Nevertheless, I clearly specified the last time that here I am not in the position of the analyst. So that in short, I believe I am obliged to answer this question, and in saying this I ought to give the reason why I have spoken. I spoke about the semblance and I said something that is not common knowledge; first of all, I insisted, I laid stress on the fact that the semblance that presents itself as what it is, is the primary function of truth. There is a certain *I speak* that brings this about, and it is not superfluous to recall it in order to give to this truth, which gives rise to so many logical difficulties, its correct positioning. This is all the more important to recall in that, if there is in Freud, to designate like that a certain tone, if there is in Freud something revolutionary - I already warned about the excessive use of this word - but it is certain that, if there was a moment when Freud was revolutionary, it is in the measure that he put in the foreground a function which is also the one, it is the only common element moreover, which is also this element that Marx contributed, namely, to consider a certain number of facts as symptoms. The dimension of the symptom is that it speaks, it speaks even to those who do not know how to hear; it does not say everything, even to those who know it. This promotion of the symptom, is the turning point that we are living through in a certain register which, let us say, was pursued, rumbling quietly throughout the centuries, around the theme of knowledge. It cannot all the same be said that from the point of view of knowledge we are completely lacking, and we clearly sense what is outmoded in the theory of knowledge when it is a matter of explaining the order of a process constituted by the formulations of science. Physical science gives models of it today. The fact that we

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are, in parallel to this revolution of science, in a position that one can qualify as being on the path of a certain truth, is what shows a certain heterogeneity of status between the two registers. Except for the fact that, in my teaching, and only there, an attempt is made to show their coherence, which is not obvious, or which is not obvious for those who, in this practice of analysis, go on about the semblance. This is what I will try to articulate today.

I said a second thing. The semblance is not only locatable, essential, to designate the primary function of truth, it is impossible without this reference to qualify what is involved in discourse. What defines discourse, this at least is the way I tried last year to give some weight (25) to this term by defining four of them whose titles I was only able to recall last time, to hastily recall, at which point certain people found that they were out of their depth. What is to be done? I am not going to go through, even rapidly, an account of what is involved, even though of course I will have to come back to it and to show what is involved in it. I pointed out that you could refer in the answers described as *Radiophonie* in the last *Scilicet*, to what is involved in them, in what there consists this function of discourse as I announced it last year. It is supported by four privileged places among which one precisely remained unnamed, and precisely the one which, gives the title of each of these discourses, by the function of its occupant. It is when the master signifier is at a certain place that I speak about the discourse of the Master; when a certain knowledge also occupies it, I speak of that of the University; when the subject in its division, fundamental for the unconscious, is in place there, I speak about the discourse of the Hysteric, and finally when *surplus enjoying* occupies it, I speak about the discourse of the Analyst. This place, which in a way is sensitive, that of the top left, for those who were there and who still remember, this place which is here occupied in the discourse of the Master by the signifier as master, S_1, this place still not designated, I am designating by its name, by the name that it deserves, it is very precisely the place of the *semblance*. This shows,

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after what I stated the last time, the degree to which the signifier, as I might say, is here at its place. Hence the success of the discourse of the Master, the success all the same that makes it worth while to pay attention to it for an instant, because after all, who can believe that any master ever ruled by force? Especially at the start, because after all, as Hegel reminds us in this admirable sleight of hand, one man is worth another. And if the discourse of the Master gives the basis, the structure, the strong point around which several civilisations are organised, it is indeed because its mainspring is all the same of a different order to violence.

This does not mean that we are in any way sure that, in these facts, which it must be said we can only articulate with the most extreme caution, that once we pinpoint them by some term or other, as primitive, pre-logical, archaic, and anything whatsoever of whatever order it may be, archaic, *archè*, are the beginning, why? And why would this not also be a waste product, these primitive societies? But nothing settles it. What is certain, is that they show us that it is not necessary for things to be established in function of the discourse of the Master; first of all the mytho-ritual configuration, which is the best way of pinpointing them, does not necessarily imply the (26) articulation of the discourse of the Master. Nevertheless, it must be said, it is a certain form of alibi to interest ourselves so much in what is not the discourse of the Master, in most cases it is a way of confusing things completely; while you busy yourself with that, you are not looking after something else. And nevertheless the discourse of the Master is an essential articulation, and the way I expressed it ought to be something that some people, I am not saying everyone, some people, should try to get their heads around. Because what is at stake, and this I also clearly stressed the last time, what is at stake, anything new that can happen and is called, I have always said it, insisting on the tempering that should be applied to it, because what is called revolutionary can only consist in a change, in a displacement of discourse, namely, of each of these places. I would like in a way,

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to give an image – but you know the sort of cretinising that an image can lead to – to represent by what one might call four bowls, each of which would have its name, the way that into these bowls there slide a certain number of terms, specifically what I have distinguished by S_1, S_2 in so far as, at the point that we are at, S_2 constitutes a certain body of knowledge, the **o**, in so far as it is directly a consequence of the discourse of the master, the $ which in the discourse of the master, occupies this place which is a place that we are going to talk about today, that for its part I have already named, which is that of the truth.

Truth is not the contrary of semblance, the truth as I might say is this dimension, or this *demansion*, if you will allow me to make up a new word, to designate these bowls, this *demansion* which is strictly correlative to that of the semblance. This *demansion*, I told you that the latter, that of the semblance, supports it. So then, something is indicated all the same about what this semblance is getting at. It is clear that there is a question that is a little inexact, I mean the one that came back to me along quite indirect paths. Two young sages, whom I greet if they are here again to day, I hope they will not be offended that they were overheard in passing, gravely nodding their heads, it appears, asking one another: 'Is he a dangerous idealist?' Am I a dangerous idealist? That seems to me to be completely beside the point! Because I began – and with what emphasis, I would say that I said the opposite of what exactly I wanted to say – by putting the emphasis on the fact that discourse is an artefact. What I am initiating with that, is exactly the contrary, because the semblance is the contrary of an artefact. As I pointed out, semblances flourish in (27) nature. The question, once knowledge is no longer at stake, once we no longer believes that it is along the path of perception, from which we are supposed to extract some quintessence or other, that we know something, but by means of an apparatus which is discourse, there is no longer any question of the idea.

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The first time, moreover, that the idea made its appearance, it was a little better positioned than after the exploits of Bishop Berkeley. It was Plato who was involved, and he asked himself where was the real of what was called a horse. His idea of the idea, was the importance of this naming. In this multiple and transitory thing which was moreover perfectly obscure in his epoch more than in ours, is not the whole reality of a horse in this idea in so far as that means the signifier, *a horse*. You must not believe that because Aristotle put the emphasis of reality on the individual, that he got any further. The individual means exactly what one cannot say. And precisely at a certain point, if Aristotle had not been the marvellous logician that he was, who took the unique step, the decisive step, thanks to which we have a reference point about what an articulated sequence of signifiers is, one could say that in his way of highlighting what *ousia* is, in other words the real, he behaves like a mystic. What is proper to *ousia*, he says it himself, is that it cannot in any way be attributed, it is not sayable. What is not sayable, is precisely what is mystical. Only it appears, he is not of that opinion, but he leaves the place to the mystic. It is obvious that the solution to the question of the idea could not come to Plato. It is from the angle of the function and of the variable that all of that finds its solution.

If it is clear that if there is something that I am, it is not a nominalist, I mean that I do not start from the fact that the name is something that is stuck like that onto the real. And you have to choose; if one is a nominalist, one must completely renounce dialectical materialism, so that in short the nominalist tradition, which is properly speaking the only danger of idealism that can be put forward here in a discourse like mine, is very obviously rejected.. It is not a matter of being realist in the sense that people were in the Middle Ages, the realism of universals. But it is a matter of designating, of highlighting the fact that our discourse, our scientific discourse, only discovers the real because of the fact that it depends on the function of the semblance.

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The effects of what I call the algebraic articulation of the semblance and as such it is only letters that are at stake, is the only system by (28) means of which we designate what is real; what is real, is what makes a hole in this semblance. In this articulated semblance which is scientific discourse, scientific discourse progresses without even asking itself any more whether or not it is semblance. It is simply a question of whether its network, its net, its *lattice*, as they say, makes the holes appear in the right place. The only reference is the impossible at which these deductions culminate; this impossible, is the real. The apparatus of discourse in so far as it is what, in its rigor, encounters the limits of its consistency – it is with this that we aim, in physics, at something that is real.

What is important for us in what concerns us, namely, the field of truth – and why it is the field of truth, only qualified as such, that concerns us, I am going to try to articulate today – in what concerns us, we are dealing with something that takes into account that it differs from this position of the real in physics, this something that resists, that is not permeable to every meaning, which is a consequence of our discourse, and which is called phantasy. And what has to be tested are its limits, its structure, the function, the relationship in a discourse of one of the terms, of the **o**, the surplus enjoying, the $ of the subject, or precisely the point which is broken (*rompu*) in the discourse of the master. This is what we have to test in its functioning, when in the completely opposite position, that in which the **o** occupies this place, it is the subject that is opposite, this place where it is questioned, it is here that the phantasy must take on its status, its status which is defined by the very part of impossibility that there is in analytic questioning.

To illuminate what is involved in *where I want to get to*, I will go to what I want to mark today, about what is involved in analytic theory. Because of this, I am not coming back, I am skipping over a function

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that is expressed in a certain way of speaking that I use here when I address you. Nevertheless, I cannot but draw your attention to the fact that, if the last time, I challenged you with a term which might have appeared impertinent, and rightly so, to many, of *plus de jouir pressé* (a pressurised surplus enjoying) ought I then talk about some kind of pressurised....? Nevertheless this has a meaning, a meaning which is one from which I preserve my discourse, that in any case has not the character of what Freud designated as the discourse of the leader. It is indeed at the level of discourse, at the beginning of the 20's, that Freud articulated in *Massenpsychologie und Ichanalyse* something which curiously was found to be at the source of the Nazi phenomenon. Consult the schema that he gives in this article, at the (29) end of the chapter on *Identification*; you will see indicated there almost open to view the relations between capital I and small o. Truly, the schema seems to be designed for the Lacanian signs to be imposed on it.

That which, in a discourse, is addressed to the Other as a Thou, gives rise to an identification to something that one can call the human idol. If I spoke the last time about red blood as being the blood that is most useless to propel against the semblance, it is indeed because, as you have seen, one cannot advance and overthrow the idol without immediately afterwards taking its place, and we know that this is what has happened to a certain type of martyr! It is indeed in the measure that something in every discourse that appeals to the Thou provokes a camouflaged, secret identification, which is only one to this enigmatic object that may seem to be nothing, the tiny little surplus enjoying of Hitler, that went no further perhaps than his moustache, this was enough to crystallise people who....who had nothing mystical about them! Who were the most committed to the process of the discourse of the capitalist, with what that involves in terms of a questioning of surplus enjoying in its form of surplus value. It was a matter of seeing whether, at a certain level, one would still have one's little bit (*son petit bout*) and indeed this was enough

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to provoke this effect of identification. It is amusing simply that this should have taken the form of an idealisation of the race, namely, of the thing which on that occasion was least involved. But one can find where this character of fiction comes from, one can find it. What must be simply said, is that there is no need for this ideology for a racism to be constituted, and that all that is needed is a surplus enjoying that recognises itself as such. And that whoever is a little bit interested in what may happen would do well to tell himself that every form of racism, in so far as a surplus enjoying is very well capable of supporting it, is now what is on the agenda. This is what is in store for us in the years to come.

You will understand why better, when I tell you what the theory, the authentic exercise of analytic theory, allows us to formulate as regards what is involved in surplus enjoying. People imagine, people imagine they are saying something when they say that what Freud has contributed, is the underlay of sexuality in everything involved in discourse. People say that when they have been touched a little by what I state about the importance of discourse to define the unconscious. And then when they do not pay attention to the fact that I have not yet for my part, tackled what is involved in this term sexuality, sexual relationship. It is certainly strange – it is only strange from one point of view, the point of view of the charlatanism (30) that presides over every therapeutic action in our society – it is strange that people have not noticed the world there is between this term sexuality, wherever it is beginning, where it is only beginning, to take on a biological substance - and I would point out to you that, if there is somewhere that one can begin to notice the sense that this has, it is rather on the side of bacteria - of the world that there is between that and what is involved concerning what Freud states about the relations that the unconscious reveals. Whatever stumblings he himself may have succumbed to in this order, what Freud reveals about the functioning of the unconscious has nothing biological about it. This only has the right to be called sexuality

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because of what is called the sexual relationship. It is completely legitimate, moreover, until the moment when one makes use of sexuality to designate something else, namely, what is studied in biology, namely, the chromosome and its combination XY or XX, or XX, XY. This has absolutely nothing to do with what is at stake, and has a name that can be perfectly well stated, called the relationships of man and woman. It is necessary to start from these two terms with their full sense, with what that involves in terms of *relation*. Because it is very strange when one sees the little timid attempts that people make at thinking within the framework of a certain system which is that of the psychoanalytic institution. They notice that not everything is regulated by the frolics that are presented as conflictual, and they would really like something different, the non-conflictual, that is more restful. And so then they notice for example, that there is no need to wait for the phallic phase to distinguish a little girl from a little boy, they are not at all the same. They marvel at this! And then – I am pointing it out to you because between now and when we meet again, it will be only in the month of February, the second Wednesday of February, you will perhaps have the time to read something, because once I recommend a book, that improves its circulation, which is called *Sex und Gender, and Gender*, it is in English, pardon me! It is by someone called Stoller, very interesting to read, because this gives on an important subject, that of transsexuals, a certain number of very well observed cases with their familial correlates. You know perhaps that transsexualism consists very precisely in a very forceful desire to cross over by every means to the other sex, even by having oneself operated on, when you are male. There you are! With the co-ordinates, the observations that are there you will certainly learn a lot about this transsexualism because these are observations that are quite usable. You will also learn the (31) complete....the completely invalid character of the dialectical apparatus with which the author of this book treats these questions, and which means that there arise quite directly the great difficulties he encounters in explaining his cases. One of the most surprising

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things, is that the psychotic aspect of these cases is completely eluded by him, because he has no reference points, Lacanian foreclosure never having reached his ears, which immediately and very easily explains the form of these cases. But what matter! The important thing is this, that to speak about gender identity, which is nothing other than what I have just expressed as this term, man and woman, it is clear that the question is posed of what emerges precociously from the fact that at adult age, it is the destiny of speaking beings to divide themselves up between men and women and that to understand the emphasis that is put on these things, on this agency, one has to take into account that what defines the man, is his relationship with the woman, and inversely. That nothing allows us in these definitions of man and woman, to abstract them from the complete speaking experience, up to and including in the institutions where they are expressed, namely marriage.

If one does not understand that in adult age, what is at stake is to be-a-man (*de faire-homme*), that this is what constitutes the relation to the other party, that it is in the light, at the start, starting from something that constitutes a fundamental relation, that there is questioned everything that in the behaviour of the child can be interpreted as being oriented towards this being-a-man, for example and that one of the essential correlates of this being-a-man, is to indicate to the girl that one is so, that we find ourselves, in a word, put right away into the dimension of the semblance. But besides, everything bears witness to it, including references that are common, that one finds everywhere, to sexual display principally in the higher mammals, but also among ... in a very great number of insights that we can have very, very far into the animal phylum, which shows the essential character, in the sexual relationship, of something that should be clearly limited to the level at which we touch it, that has nothing to do either with a cellular level, whether it is chromosomic or not, nor with an organic level, whether it is a matter or not of the ambiguity of one or other tract involving the gonad, namely, an

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ethological level which is properly one of a semblance. It is in so far as the male, most often the male, the female is not absent from it because she is precisely the subject affected by this display, it is in so far as there is a display that something which is called sexual (32) copulation, no doubt, in its function, but which finds its status in particular elements of identity, it is certain that human sexual behaviour easily finds its reference in this display as it is defined at the animal level. It is certain that human sexual behaviour consists in a certain maintenance of this animal semblance. The only thing which differentiates it from it, is that this semblance is conveyed in a discourse, and that it is at this level of discourse, at this level of discourse alone, that it is carried towards, allow me, some effect that might not be a semblance. That means that instead of having exquisite animal courtesy, it can happen, it can happen that a man rapes a woman, or inversely. At the limits of discourse, in so far as it strives to make the same semblance hold up, there is from time to time something real, this is what is called the *passage à l'acte*, I see no better place to designate what that means. Note that in most cases, the *passage à l'acte* is carefully avoided. It only happens by accident; and this is also an occasion to illuminate what is involved in what I have long differentiated from the *passage à l'acte*, namely, acting out, to bring the semblance onto the stage, to put it on the stage, to make an example of it, this is what in this order is called acting out. Or again, it can be called passion. But, I am forced to go quickly, you will notice that it is in this connection, and here as I have just illuminated things, that one can clearly highlight, clearly designate what I am always saying: it is that discourse is there in so far as it allows the stake of what is involved in surplus enjoying, namely, I am giving it the full treatment, it is very precisely what is forbidden to sexual discourse.

There is no sexual act [or relationship?], I already expressed this on several occasions, I am tackling it here from a different angle. And this is made quite tangible in a massive way by the economy of

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analytic theory, namely, what Freud encountered, first of all so innocently, as I might say, that this is why it is a symptom, namely, that he advances things to the point that they concern us on the plane of truth. Who can fail to see that the myth of Oedipus is necessary to designate the real, because this indeed is what it pretends to do, and more exactly what the theoretician is reduced to, when he formulates this hyper-myth, the fact is that the real properly speaking is incarnated...by what? By sexual enjoyment, as what? As impossible, since what the Oedipus complex designates, is the mythical being whose enjoyment – his enjoyment – is supposed to be that of what? Of all the women. That such ... a system is here in a way imposed by discourse itself, does this not provide the surest (33) cross-check in terms of what I state as theory, concerning the prevalence of discourse, concerning everything that is precisely involved in enjoyment? What analytic theory articulates is something whose character, graspable as an object, is what I designate by the o-object, in so far as through a certain number of favourable organic contingencies - breast, excrement, look or voice – it comes to fill the place defined as that of surplus enjoying.

What does the theory state if not the following: something that tends, this relationship of surplus enjoying, a relationship in the name of which the function of the mother comes to such a predominant point in all our analytic observation, surplus enjoying is only normalised from a relationship that one establishes to sexual enjoyment, except for the fact that this enjoyment, this sexual enjoyment is only formulated, is only articulated from the phallus in so far as the phallus is its signifier. Someone one day wrote that it is the signifier that designates the lack of signifier. This is absurd, I never articulated such a thing. The phallus is very properly sexual enjoyment in so far as it is co-ordinated, is solidary with a semblance.

This indeed is what happens and this is what it is rather strange to see all the analysts striving to turn their gaze from. Far from having

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insisted more and more on this turning point, this crisis of the phallic phase, they use every opportunity to elude the crisis, the truth, to which not one of these young speaking beings does not have to face up to, which is that there are some of them who do not have the phallus. A double intrusion into lack, because there are those who do not have one, and then this truth was lacking up to the present. Sexual identification does not consist in believing oneself to be a man or a woman, but in taking account of the fact that there are women, for the boy, and that there are men, for the girl. And what is important, is not so much what they experience, it is a real situation, if you allow me, the fact is that for men, the girl is the phallus. And this is what castrates them. That for women, the boy, is the same thing, the phallus and this is what castrates them also, because all they acquire is a penis and that spoils things. Neither the boy nor the girl initially run risks except through the dramas that they unleash, they are the phallus for a moment. This is the real, the real of sexual enjoyment in so far as it is detached as such, it is the phallus, in other words the Name of the Father, the identification of these two terms having in its time scandalised some [pious?] people.

(34) But there is something that is worth insisting on a little more. What is the fundamentally foundational part in this operation of the semblance, such as the one that we have just defined at the level of the relationship of man and woman, what is the place of the semblance, of the archaic semblance? This assuredly is why it is worth the trouble to hold on a little more to the moment of what the woman represents. The woman is precisely in this relation, this relationship, for man, the moment of truth. The woman is in a position, with respect to sexual enjoyment, to punctuate the equivalence of enjoyment and the semblance. In this indeed lies the distance that man finds himself from her. If I spoke about a moment of truth, it is because she is the one that the whole formation of man is designed to respond to, and now over and against everything, the whole status of her semblance. It is certainly easier for a man to

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confront any enemy on the plain of rivalry than to confront the woman in so far as she is the support of this truth, of the semblance in the relationship of man to woman.

In truth, that the semblance is here enjoyment, for the man, is sufficiently indicated by the fact that enjoyment is semblance. It is because it [he?] is at the intersection of two enjoyments that man suffers in the highest way the malaise of this relationship that is designated as sexual. As someone or other said, these pleasures that are called physical.

On the contrary, no one other than the woman, because it is in this that she is Other, no one other than the woman knows better what is disjunctive between enjoyment and the semblance, because she is the presence of this something that she knows, namely, that enjoyment and semblance, if they are equivalent, in a dimension of discourse, are nonetheless distinct in the test, that the woman represents for man the truth, quite simply, namely, the only one that can give its place as such to the semblance. It has to be said, everything we have been told as being the mainspring of the unconscious represents nothing but the horror of this truth. It is this, of course, that today I am trying, I am attempting to develop for you just as one makes Japanese flowers. It is not particularly agreeable to listen to, because this is what is usually packaged under the register of the castration complex. By means of which, in that case, with this label, one is at peace, one can leave it to one side, one has no longer anything else to say about it, except that it is there and that one makes a little genuflection to it from time to time.

But that the woman is the truth of man, that this old proverbial business, when it is a matter of understanding something, the *cherchez la femme*, to which people naturally give a police-style (35) interpretation, is something completely different, namely, that to grasp the truth of a man, one would do well to know who his wife is.

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I mean his spouse in this instance, and why not? This is the only situation that can give a meaning to something that one day someone in my entourage called the *pèse-personne*. To weigh a person, there is nothing like weighing his wife. When the woman is at stake it is not the same thing! Because the woman has a very great liberty....

Louder!
What's that?
We can't hear!
You can't hear?
No.

I said: the woman has very great freedom with respect to the semblance! She will manage to give weight even to a man who has none. These are...these are truths, of course, that in the course of the centuries, have been perfectly well noted for a long time, but which are never said except from mouth to mouth, as I might say. And a whole literature has been constructed, exists, it would be a matter of getting to know its breadth, naturally it is only of interest if one takes the best.

Someone, for example, that someone must take responsibility for one day, is Baltazar Gracian, who was an eminent Jesuit, who wrote some of the most intelligent things that could be written. They are absolutely prodigiously intelligent in that everything that is involved, namely, to establish what one could call the sanctity of man, he resumes in one word, resumes it in what? His book on the *Courtier*, in a word, two points: to be a saint. It is the only point of western civilisation where the word *saint* has the same sense as in Chinese, *Tchen-Tchen*. Note this point, because, this reference, because all the same it is late, today, I am not going to introduce it today, I will give you this year some little references to the origins of Chinese thinking.

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In any case, yes, I have noticed one thing, which is that perhaps I am a Lacanian because I formerly did Chinese. I mean by that that I notice that in re-reading things like that, that I had gone over, but mumbled through anyway like a like a simpleton, with donkeys ears, I notice in re-reading them now that, it is on all fours with what I am (36) telling you.

I don't know, I will give an example; in Mencius, which is one of the fundamental, canonical books of Chinese thought, there is a chap who is his disciple moreover, not him, but who begins to state things like the following: "What you do not find on the side of *yen*, this is discourse, do not look for on the side of your spirit". I translate it for you as *spirit*, it is *hsin*, but that means, that by *hsin* which means heart, what he designated was well and truly the spirit, the *Geist* of Hegel. But anyway that would demand a little bit more development. "And if you do not find it on the side of your spirit, do not look for it on the side of your *tchi*", namely, of what the Jesuits translated like that, as best they could, losing breath a little, your sensibility. I am only indicating these stages to tell you the distinction which is very strict between what is articulated, what belongs to discourse, and what belongs to the spirit, namely, the essential, if you have not already found it at the level of the word, it is hopeless, do not try to find it elsewhere at the level of feelings. *Meng-tseu, Mencius*, contradicts himself, it is true, but it is a matter of knowing along what path and why.

This to tell you that a certain way of putting discourse right in the forefront is not at all something that makes us go back to archaisms because discourse at that epoch, and the epoch of Mencius, was already perfectly well articulated and constituted. It is not through references to primitive thinking that one can understand it. In truth, I do not know what primitive thinking is. Something much more concrete that we have within our reach, is what is called underdevelopment. But that underdevelopment is not archaic,

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everyone knows that it is produced by the extension of the capitalist reign. I would even say more, what one notices, and what will be noticed more and more, is that underdevelopment is precisely the condition for capitalistic progress. From a certain angle, the October Revolution itself is a proof of it.

But what must be seen, is that what we have to confront is an underdevelopment that is going to be more and more patent, more and more widespread. Only what in short is at stake, is that we should put the following to the test: if the key of the different problems that are going to propose themselves to us is not to put us at the level of this effect of capitalist articulation that I left in the shadows last year by simply giving you its root in the discourse of the master, I will perhaps give you a little more of it this year. It would be well....we must see what we can draw from what I would call an underdeveloped logic. This is what I will try to articulate before you, as the Chinese texts say, "for your better use".

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Seminar 3: Wednesday 10 February 1971

I was asked if I was going to give my seminar because of the strike. There were two or perhaps just one, but perhaps two of these people who asked me what I thought of the strike, more exactly they asked my secretary. Well I for my part ask you! Nobody has anything to bring up in favour of the strike? At least in connection with this seminar? I will not absent myself from you...from your presence. Nevertheless this morning I was myself rather inclined to go on strike. I was led to this because the person that I have just spoken about, my secretary, showed me a little rubric in a newspaper about the aforesaid strike. The slogan of the strike, to which there was added, given the newspaper in question, a communiqué from the Ministry of National Education about everything that had been done for the University; the averages of the teachers employed per number of students, etc. Naturally, I am not going to dispute these statistics. Nevertheless the conclusion that is drawn from them, of this very extensive effort which ought in any case to satisfy people, I will say that it does not agree with my information which nevertheless comes from a good source. So that...because of this, I was rather inclined to go on strike. Your presence will force me, let us say by a fact which counts, it is what is called in our tongue courtesy, and in another that I announced like that, as a sort of come-along, that I would refer to, namely, the Chinese tongue about which I went as far as to confide to you that there was a time, when I learned a little bit of it, it is called *yi*.

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The *yi*, in the grand tradition, is one of the four fundamental virtues, (40) of whom? Of what? Of a man at a certain date. And if I speak about it like that, as it comes to me, because I thought I was going to have to make some casual remarks to you, it is moreover on this plane that I am going to give this discourse today. It will not be, properly speaking, what I had prepared. In my own way all the same I will take account of this strike and it is in a way - you are going to see, the level at which I am going to put things - it is in a more familiar way to reply in a fair-minded way. This is more or less the best sense that can be given to this *yi*, to reply in a fair-minded way to this presence. You will see that I shall take advantage of it to tackle a certain number of points that have given rise to an equivocation for some time. Namely, that since moreover there is something in question in the University, it is also at the level of the University - the movements of which in many cases I disdain to remark on when I hear about them - that today I think I should respond.

As perhaps you know – how can we know whether your presence bears witness to it or not - in my relationship to the aforesaid University I am only in what could be called a marginal position. It believes it should give me some shelter, for which certainly I pay it homage, even though for some time something has manifested itself that I cannot but take into account, given the field in which I find myself teaching. It is a certain number of echoes, of rumours, of murmurs that come to me from a quarter of a field defined in a university fashion and which is called linguistics.

When I speak, of course about disdain, I do not mean a feeling; what is at stake is a way of behaving. At a time which already, precisely, if I remember correctly, is something like...how long ago is it, two years, it is not enormous, there came out in a journal that nobody reads any more, whose very name seems out of date, *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, there appeared a certain article called *Exercices de*

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style de Jacques Lacan. It was an article that I signalled, moreover, at that time I was under the roof of the *Ecole Normale*, anyway under the roof!...under the porch roof, at the door. I said: "You should read that, it will give you a laugh". It proved, as you saw subsequently, that it was perhaps a little less funny than it seemed, because it was in a way the bell in which I was rather, even though I was deaf, to hear the confirmation of what had already been announced to me: that my place was no longer under that porch roof. It is a confirmation that I could have heard, because there was written in the article, there was written something that I must say is rather crude, that one might (41) hope, now that I am no longer under the porch roof of the *Ecole Normale*, for the introduction into the aforesaid Ecole, of linguistics, I am not sure of exactly quoting the terms, you can well imagine that I did not refer to it this morning, because all this is improvised, high quality, high tension linguistics, something or other of this kind, perhaps, something that designated the fact that something was besmirching the name of linguistics, good God, within this *Ecole Normale*. In the name of what, great God, I had no responsibility in the *Ecole Normale* for any teaching, but if the *Ecole Normale* found itself, according to this author, so little initiated in linguistics, it was certainly not I who should have been blamed for it.

This indicates to you the point on which I intend all the same to specify something this morning. It is in effect the following, something which is raised and for some time with a sort of insistence, the theme is taken up in a more or less frivolous way in a certain number of interviews, there is a question which is raised about something: is one a structuralist or not when one is a linguist? And people tend to demarcate themselves and say: I am a functionalist. Why am I a functionalist? Because structuralism, is something, moreover, that is a purely journalistic invention. I am saying, structuralism is something which serves as a label and which of course, given what it comprises, namely, a certain seriousness, does not fail to be disturbing, so that, of course, people want to stake out

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their own preserve. [*André Martinet interviewed in Le Monde, 5 January 1971.*]

The question of the relationships of linguistics to what I teach, is, in other words, what I want to put in the forefront in order, in a way, todissipate, dissipate I hope in a way that will mark an epoch, a certain equivocation. Linguists, the university linguists, would like in short to reserve to themselves the privilege of speaking about language. And the fact that it is around the development of linguistics that the axis of my teaching operates, is attached to, is supposed to be excessive in some way and is denounced in different formulae the principal one of which is the following, in any case it seem to me to be the most consistent one. That of linguistics there is made - in the field which happens to be the one that I am inserted into, in the one also in which someone who certainly, on occasion, would deserve to be looked at a little more closely, much more as regards what comes from me, because....which people might have only a rather vague idea of, at least it is proved, Levi- Strauss for example, and so then Levi-Strauss and then some others again, Roland Barthes - we also are supposed to be making of linguistics a use, I quote, "a metaphorical use". Well now! It is in effect about (42) this that I would like to clearly make some points. First of all there is something from which we should start because all the same it is written, written in something that counts, the fact that I am still here sustaining this discourse, the fact that you are also here to listen to it, the fact is, we have to believe that a formula is not altogether displaced as regards this discourse, in so far as I pronounce it, the fact is in a certain way finally, let us say that I know....I know what? Let us try to be exact, it seems to be proven that *I know what I should keep to* (*je sais à quoi m'en tenir*). Holding a certain place, I am underlining this, this place is no other – I am underlining it because I am not stating it for the first time, I spend my time clearly repeating that this is what I hold onto – than the place that I identified as that of

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a psychoanalyst – the question can after all be debated, because many psychoanalysts debate it – but in any case this is what I hold to.

It is not quite the same as if I were to state, *I know where I stand* (*je sais où je me tiens*), not because the I is repeated in the second part of the sentence, but this is where language always shows its resources, it is because to say *I know where I stand*, it is on the *where* that the emphasis would be put as regards what I was priding myself knowing. I would have, as I might say, I would have the map, the *mapping* of the thing. And why after all would I have it?

There is a strong reason why I could not even sustain that I know where I stand. This is truly the axis of what I have to tell you this year. The fact is that the principle of science in so far as the process is engaged for us, I am talking about what I refer to when I give its centre as Newtonian science, the introduction of the Newtonian field, the fact is that in no domain of science, does one have this *mapping* this map, to tell us where we are. And what is more, everyone agrees with this, but whatever the worth of the ell, of the objection that may be raised once one begins to speak precisely of a map, of its chance and of its necessity, well then, anyone at all is in a position to object to you that you are no longer doing science, but philosophy. That does not mean that anyone at all knows what he is saying when he says it. But anyway, it is a very strong position.

The discourse of science rejects this *where we have got to* (*où nous en sommes*) it is not with this that it operates. As regards the hypothesis, remember Newton affirming that he did not claim to construct any, the hypothesis, although used, never concerns the foundation of things. A hypothesis, in the scientific field, and whatever anyone may think, a hypothesis is, above all, something to do with logic. There is an *if*, the conditional of a truth that is never (43) articulated except logically; so then, *apodosis*: a consequent ought to be verifiable. It is verifiable at its level, as it is articulated.

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This in no way proves the truth of the hypothesis. I am absolutely not in the process of saying that science is swimming about there like a pure construction, that it does not engage with the real. To say that it does not prove the truth of the hypothesis, is simply to recall what I have just said, namely, that implication in logic in no way implies that a true conclusion cannot be drawn from a false premise. It nevertheless remains that the truth of a hypothesis in an established scientific field is recognised from the order that it bestows on the totality of the field in so far as it has its status and its status cannot be defined otherwise than by the consent of all those who are authorised in this field, in other words the status of the scientific field is of a university kind (*universitaire*).

These are things that may appear crude. It nevertheless remains that this is what justifies situating the level of the articulation of the University discourse, as I tried to do last year. Now it is clear that the way that I articulated it is the only one that allows it to be noticed why it is not accidental, out of date, linked to some accident or other. The status of the development of science involves the presence, the subvention of other social entities that are well known, the Army for example, or again the Navy, and of some other elements for a certain provisioning. It is quite legitimate if we see that radically the University discourse can only be articulated if it starts from the discourse of the Master.

The distribution of domains in a field whose status is university-like, is the only place where there can be posed the question of what is happening and first of all of whether it is possible for a discourse to be entitled differently. Here there is introduced in its massiveness – I apologise for starting again from such a basic point, but after all since there are directed at me, and from people authorised as being linguists, objections like the one that I only make a metaphorical use of linguistics, I ought to recall, I ought to respond whatever may be the occasion I do so, and I am doing it this morning because of the

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fact that I was expecting to meet a more combative atmosphere – well then, I ought to recall here then, that if I can say decently that I know, I know what? Because after all perhaps I put myself somewhere in a place that the person called Mencius, whose name I introduced to you the last time, the person called Mencius, may perhaps allow us to (44) define, good, it remains that if – may Mencius protect me! – *I know what to limit myself to*, I have to say at the same time that I do not know what I am saying. I know that what I am saying, in other words, is what I cannot say. This is the date, the date that marks the fact there is Freud and that he introduced the unconscious. The unconscious means nothing if it does not mean that whatever I say, or wherever I stand, even if I behave correctly, well then, I do not know what I am saying, and that none of the discourses, as I defined them last year, leave any hope, allows anyone to put forward anything at all, to claim, to hope even in any way to know what he is saying.

I say, even if I do not know what I am saying; only I know that I do not know it. And I am not the first to say something in these conditions. It has already been heard. I say that the cause of this is only to be sought in language itself and that what I am adding, what I am adding to Freud, even if in Freud it is already there, open to view, because whatever he demonstrates about the unconscious is never anything but language material, I add this: *that the unconscious is structured like a language*. Which one? Well then, precisely, look for it!

I will talk to you (*je vous causerai*) about French and about Chinese. At least I would like to. It is only too clear that at a certain level, what I cause is bitterness, especially on the side of linguists. This is of a nature rather to make one think that the university status is only too obvious in the developments that force linguistics to turn into a funny mixture; from what one sees of it, there is no doubt about it. That I should be denounced on that occasion, good God, is not that important. That people will not debate with me, is not very

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surprising either, because I do not take my stand from a certain definition of the university domain, nor could I do so.

The amusing thing is, since it is obvious that it is not our fault, a certain number of people among whom I ranked myself earlier, adding to it two other names and one could add a few more, it is obviously starting from us that linguistics sees there increasing the number of posts, those counted out this morning in the review of the Ministry of National Education, and then also the number of students. Good!

The interest, the wave of interest that I contributed to bringing to linguistics, is, it appears, an interest that comes from the ignorant. Well then! That already is not too bad! They were ignorant before, now they are interested. I succeeded in interesting the ignorant in (45) something that, in addition, was not my goal, because linguistics, I can tell you, I don't give a damn about it! What interests me directly, is language, because I think that this is what I am dealing with, that that is what I am dealing with when I am dealing with a psychoanalysis.

It is up to the linguists to define the linguistic object. In the field of science, every domain progresses by defining its object. They define it as they wish and they add that I am making a metaphorical usage of it. It is curious all the same that linguists do not see that every use of language, whatever it may be, moves around in metaphor, and that the only language is metaphorical, as is demonstrated by every attempt at metalanguage, if I can express myself in this way, which can do nothing other than to try to start from what has always been defined, every time people advance onto an effort described as logical (*logicien*), to define first of all an object-language in which it is clear, in which one puts one's finger, in the statements of any one of these logical efforts, that this language-object is ungraspable. It is of the nature of language, I am not saying of speech, I am saying of

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language itself, that as regards approaching anything whatsoever that is signified in it, the referent is never the right one, and this is what makes a language.

Every designation is metaphorical; it can only be done through the mediation of something else. Even if I say: that! That and pointing at it, well then, I already imply, by calling it that, that I chose to make it nothing but that. Even though that is not that, the proof is that when I light it, it is something different, even at the level of that, this famous that (*ça*) which is supposed to be the redoubt of the particular, of the individual, we cannot omit that it is an event of language to say: 'that'. What I have just designated as that is not my cigar, it is so when I smoke it, but when I am smoking it, I do not talk about it. The signifier to which the discourse refers to on occasion, when there is discourse – it appears that we can scarcely escape from what is discourse – is what the discourse about something refers to and this signifier may be the only support. Of its nature it evokes a referent. Only this cannot be the right one and that is why the referent is always real, because it is impossible to designate it. In consideration of which, the only thing that remains is to construct it. And one constructs it if one can.

There is no reason why I should deprive myself, anyway I am not going to remind you all the same of what you all know about because you have read it in a pile of occult thrash that you drink in as (46) everyone knows, do you not, I am speaking about the *yang* and the *yin*. Like everyone else you know that, huh, the male and the female. They are drawn like that. They form very beautiful little characters. Here is the first as *yang* and as for the *yin,* I will make it for you another time.

yin

I will make it for you another time because...in this connection...I do not see why I should misuse...these characters that count so little for you. I am going to make use of them all the same. We are not here

yang

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either to do conjuring tricks. If I speak to you about it, it is because it is quite obvious that...here is the example of unfindable referents. That does not mean, damn it, that they are not real. The proof is that we are still encumbered with them.

If I make a metaphorical use of linguistics, it is starting from the fact that the unconscious cannot adapt itself to a research, I mean linguistics, that is unsustainable. This does not prevent it continuing, of course, it is a wager. But I have already made enough use of the wager to know, for you to know rather, that you should suspect that it can be of some use; it is just as important to lose as to win.

Linguistics can only be a metaphor that is fabricated in order not to work. But when all is said and done, it is of great interest to us, because you are going to see - I am announcing it to you, this is what I have to tell you this year - is that psychoanalysis for its part, moves about in this same metaphor under full sail; this indeed is what suggested to me this return, like that, after all, we know what it is, to the Chinese I learned in the past. After all, why would I not have understood it too badly when I learned it from my dear master Demiéville? I was already a psychoanalyst.

wei (wei)

So then, for there to be a tongue all the same in which the following, this is read *wei* and it functions both in the formula *wu wei* which means inaction, so then it means to act, and then you see *wei* used as *like*, it means like, namely, that it acts as a conjunction to make a metaphor. Or again it means, *in so far as that refers to something* which is even more into metaphor, in so far as it refers to something, (47) namely, precisely, it is not one because one is forced to refer to it. When one thing refers to another, the greatest possible breadth, the greatest possible flexibility is given to the eventual use of this term *wei* which nevertheless means *to act*. It is not bad, a tongue like that! A tongue where the verbs and the plus-verbs – to act, what is more of a plus-verb, what more active plus-verb is there? – is

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transformed into tiny conjunctions. That is the usual thing. This helped me a lot all the same to generalise the function of the signifier, even if it fits in badly with some linguists who do not know Chinese. For my part I would really like to ask a particular one, for example how for him the double articulation that he keeps talking about for some years – I tell you this double articulation is killing us – what does he make of the double articulation in Chinese? Huh? In Chinese, you see, it is the first that is all alone, and then finds itself like that producing a meaning which from time to time means that, since all the words are monosyllabic, one cannot say that there is a phoneme which means nothing, and then the word that means something, two articulations, two levels. Well then, yes, even at the level of the phoneme, that means something. This does not prevent when you put several phonemes together, which mean the same thing, this gives a big word of several syllables, just like with us, which has a meaning that has no relationship with what each of the phonemes mean. So the double articulation looks rather funny there! It is funny that it is not remembered that there is a tongue like that, when one states as general a function of the double articulation as characteristic of language. I don't mind if all I'm saying is pure stupidity, but explain it to me! Let a linguist come here who can tell me how the double articulation holds up in Chinese [cf. André Martinet, *Eléments de linguistique général*, new edition, Paris 1967.]

So then, this *wei* like that, to get you used to it I am introducing it, but very gently. I will bring you a minimum of other things, which may in fact be of some use. It illuminates many things moreover that this verb is at the same time to act and the conjunction of the metaphor. Perhaps the *Im Anfang war die Tat*, as your man says, there where the act was right at the beginning it is perhaps exactly the same thing as to say *en arché*, in the beginning was the word. There is perhaps no other act than this. The terrible thing is, is that I can lead you like that for a long time with metaphor and the further I go, the more you will go astray because precisely, what is proper to the

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metaphor is not to be all alone. There is also metonymy which functions at this time and even while I am speaking to you , because it is after all the metaphor, as very competent, very friendly people called linguists tell us; they are even so competent that they have been forced to invent the notion of competence. The tongue is competence in itself. What is more it is true. One is competent in nothing else. Only, since they have also perceived, there is only one way to prove it, which is performance. They are the ones who call it that, performance. I don't, I have no need of it. I am in the process of giving it, the performance, giving the performance of speaking to you about metaphor, naturally I confuse you, because the only interesting thing, is what happens in the performance, it is the production of surplus enjoying, of yours and of the one that you impute to me when you reflect. That happens to you. That happens to you especially when you ask yourselves what I am doing here. It must be that this gives you some pleasure, at the level of this surplus enjoying that pressurises you; as I already explained to you, it is at that level that the operation of metonymy is carried out, thanks to which you can be more or less led anywhere at all, led by the nose, naturally not simply to go along the corridor. But this is not what is interesting, to lead you into the corridor, nor even to beat you in the public square. The important thing, is to keep you there, well arranged, close together, well pressed against one another. As long as you are there, you are doing nobody any harm! This will take us rather far, this little banter, because it is all the same starting from there that we are going to try to articulate the function of *yin*.

You understand, I remind you of this business of the surplus enjoying, I remind you of it anyway as I am able; it is quite certain that it was only definable by me starting from what? From a serious construction, that of object relations as it can be separated out from the experience described as Freudian. That is not enough. I had to scupper these relations to make them the bowl of Marx's surplus value, which nobody had ever dreamt of as having this use. Marx's

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surplus value cannot be imagined just like that. If it is invented, it is in the sense that the word invention means that one finds a good thing already well established in a little corner, in other words that one makes a lucky discovery. To make a lucky discovery, it was necessary that it should be there already well polished, grounded, by what, by a discourse. So then, surplus enjoying, like surplus value, is only detectable in a developed discourse, that there is no question of debating whether it can be defined as the discourse of the capitalist. (49) You are not very curious, and then especially not very interventionist, so that last year, when I spoke to you about the discourse of the Master, no one pushed me to ask me how the discourse of the Capitalist was situated within it. For my part I was expecting that, I was only waiting to explain it to you, especially because it is the simplest thing possible. A tiny little contraption that turns and your discourse of the master shows everything that is highly transformable into the discourse of the capitalist. That is not what is important, the reference to Marx was enough to show you that it had the closest relationship with the discourse of the master. What I am trying to get to is the following, it is to catch hold of something as essential as what is here, let us say the support – the support, everyone knows that I do not pile it on for you, it is indeed the thing that I am most distrustful of in the world, because it is indeed with that of course that people make the worst extrapolations, it is with this in a word that people construct psychology, psychology, this is what is necessary to be able to manage to think out the function of language – so then when I realise that the support of surplus enjoying is metonymy, it is because here I am entirely justified, this is what ensures that you follow me, through the fact that this surplus enjoying is essentially a sliding object. Impossible to stop this slide at any point of the sentence.

Nevertheless, why should we refuse to notice that the fact that it is useable in a discourse - a linguistic one or not, as I already told you, it is all the same to me - in a discourse which is my own, and that it is

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only such by being borrowed not from the discourse, but from the logic of the capitalist, something that introduces us, or rather brings us back to what I contributed the last time and which left some people a little bit perplexed. Everyone knows that I always finish what I have to tell you in a little gallop, because perhaps I dragged things out too much, dawdled along earlier, some people tell me, what matter, everyone has his own rhythm. That is how I make love.

I spoke to you about an under-developed logic. That left some people scratching their heads. What could that be, this under-developed logic?

Let us start from this. I had clearly marked out beforehand that what carries along the extension of capitalism, is under-development. Anyway I am going to say it now because someone that I met on the way out and to whom I confided something, I told him "I would really like to have illustrated the thing by saying that Mr Nixon, is in fact *Houphouet-Boigny* in person", "Oh", he told me, "you should have said it". Well then I am saying it. The only difference between (50) the two, is that Mr Nixon is supposed to have been psychoanalysed! You see the result! When someone has been psychoanalysed in a certain way, and *this is always true* in every case, when he has been psychoanalysed in a particular way, in a certain field, in a certain school, by people that one can name, well then, he is incurable. All the same you have to say things the way they are. He is incurable. It even goes very far. It is for example obvious that it is ruled out that someone who has been psychoanalysed somewhere, in a certain place, by certain people specifically, not by just anyone, well then, he can understand nothing of what I am saying. That has been seen and there are proofs. Books even come out every day to prove it. Just by itself, that gives rise all the same to questions about what is involved in the possibility of performance, namely, of functioning in a certain discourse.

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So then, if the discourse is sufficiently developed, there is something, let us say no more, this something as it happens is you, but that is a pure accident, nobody knows your relationship to this something, it is a something that interests you all the same.

You see this is how this is written. That can be read, in a classical French transcription *sing*. If you put an *h* in front – *hsing* – this is the English transcription, and the most recent Chinese transcription, if I am not mistaken, because after all it is purely conventional, is written like that: *xing*. Naturally that is not pronounced *xing*, it is pronounced *'sing*. It is nature. It is this nature which you have been able to see I am far from ruling out of the affair. If you were not completely deaf, you were able to notice all the same that the first thing that was worth retaining in what I told you in our first talk, is that the signifier – I strongly insisted – can be found everywhere in nature. I spoke to you about stars, more exactly of constellations, because there is a star and a star; for centuries all the same that is what the sky is: it is the first feature, what is above, that is important. It is a tray, a blackboard. I am reproached for using a blackboard. It is the only thing that remains to us to serve as a sky, my good friends, that is why I use it, to put on it what ought to be your constellations.

hsing (xing)

t'ien (tian)

(51) So then, a sufficiently developed discourse. From this discourse the result is that all of you no matter how many of you there are, and whether you are from here or from the USA, it is the same thing, and even elsewhere, you are underdeveloped with respect to this discourse. I am talking about this thing, this something by which people are interested but which is certainly what people speak about when they speak about your underdevelopment. Where is it to be situated exactly? What can be said about it? It is not doing philosophy to ask where it comes from, what is its substance. There are things in this dear Meng-Tzu, I do not see, after all, any reason to drug you, I really have no hope that you will make the effort to stick your nose into it, so then I will go moreover, why not, to what I have

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to set out in three stages, especially since he tells us extraordinarily interesting things. There is one thing, there is no knowing how it came out moreover, because it is made God knows how, it is a collage, this book of Meng-Tzu, things follow one another, as they say, and are not alike. Anyway! Alongside this notion of *hsing*, of nature, there emerges all of a sudden that of *ming*, the decree of the heavens.

Obviously, I could very easily stick with the *ming*, with the decree of the heavens, namely, continue my discourse, which means in short: that is how it is because that is how it is, one day, science will grow on our terrain. At the same time capitalism did its own thing, and then there was a chap, God knows why, heaven's decree, there is Marx who has, in short, ensured a rather long survival for capitalism. And then there is Freud who all of a sudden was disturbed by something which obviously became the only element of interest that still had some relationship with this thing that people had previously dreamt about and which was called knowledge. At an epoch when there was no longer the slightest trace of something which had a meaning of this kind, he noticed that there was the symptom.

ming (ming)

(52) This is where we have got to. It is around the symptom that there turns everything that we can, as they say, if the word still had a meaning, have an idea of. It is around the symptom that you orient yourselves, as many of you as are here. The only thing that interest you, and which does not fall flat, which is not simply inept as information, are the things that have the appearance of a symptom, namely, in principle, things that make a sign to you, but that you understand nothing about. It is the only sure thing, that there are things that make signs to you that you know nothing about.

I will tell you how man, it is untranslatable, that is how it is, he is a good chap, made up of curious little turns of juggling and exchange between *hsing* and *ming*. It is obviously much too subtle for me to

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speak about it to you today, but I put it at the horizon, at the point, in order to tell you that this is where we have to get to, because in any case, this *xin*, is something that does not work out, that is underdeveloped; we really have to know where to put it. That it can mean nature, is not very satisfactory given the state that things are at as regards natural history. This *hsing*, there is no kind of chance that we will find it in this thing that requires great cunning to get, to get a close hold of, which is called the surplus enjoying. If it is so slippery, that does not make it easy to get one's hands on it. It is all the same not, certainly not to this that we refer when we talk about underdevelopment.

I know well that by ending now, because time is passing, I am going to leave you perhaps a little bit in suspense. All the same, I am going to go back, onto the plane of metaphorical acting and to tell you how, because today that was my pivot, linguistics properly filtered, criticised, focussed, in a word, on condition that we make of it exactly what we want and what linguists do, good God, why not take advantage of it? They may happen to do something useful. If linguistics is what I was saying earlier, a metaphor that is deliberately fabricated in order not to work, this may perhaps give you ideas about what may well be for us the goal. From where we situate ourselves with Meng-Tzu and then some other people at his epoch who knew what they were talking about, because you must not confuse all the same underdevelopment with the return to an archaic state, it is not because Meng-Tzu lived in the 3rd Century before Jesus Christ that I am presenting him to you as a primitive mentality. I am presenting him to you as someone who, in what he said, probably (53) knew part of the things that we do not know when we are saying the same thing. So then, this is what may serve to teach us with him to sustain a metaphor, not fabricated in order not to work, but whose action we suspend. It is here perhaps that we will try to show the necessary path.

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I will remain there today for a discourse that might not be a semblance.

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Seminar 4: Wednesday 17 February 1971

[Before the seminar Lacan writes on the board a quotation from Meng-Tzu: probably the following.]

"*Everywhere under the heavens, when one speaks about nature, what is meant are natural effects*"

孟子

Meng tzu
meng zi

- This is the name of the author of this little formula...
- *Louder!*
- This is the name of the author of this little formula!
- *Thank you.*
- this little formula to which, despite the fact that it was written around 250BC, in China as you see, in chapter 2 of Book IV, the second part, sometimes it is classified in a different way, so that in that case it would be part VIII, of Book IV, the second part of paragraph 26 of Meng-Tzu, whom the Jesuits called Mencius, because they are the ones who took a step forward, well before the epoch when there were sinologists, namely, at the beginning of the 19th Century. I had the pleasure of acquiring the first book on which there are found conjointly a plaque of Chinese printing, it is not quite the same thing as the first book in which there were at the same time Chinese characters and European characters, it is the first book in which there was a Chinese printing plate with things written, with things printed, from our part of the world. It is a translation of Aesop's fables. This appeared in 1840, and it prides itself, quite rightly in being the first book in which this conjunction was realised. (56) 1840, you can say that it is more or less, precisely, the notice of

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the moment when sinologists came on the scene. The Jesuits were in China for a very long time, as perhaps some of you may remember. They almost made the connection between China and what they represented as missionaries. Only they allowed themselves to be a little, a little bit impressed by the Chinese rites, and as you know perhaps, in the middle of the 18th Century, that created some difficulties for them with Rome, which did not show on this occasion particular political acuity. That happens sometimes in Rome. Anyway in Voltaire, if you read Voltaire, but of course no one reads Voltaire anymore, you are making a great mistake, it is full of all kinds of things. In Voltaire, there is, very exactly in *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*, an appendix, I think that it forms a particular lampoon, a long elaboration about this Quarrel of the Rites, of which many things in history now find themselves in a position of filiation.

In any case then, we are talking about Mencius, and Mencius wrote this – because I wrote it on the board....to begin with that does not form properly speaking a part of my discourse today, that is why I finished it before the exact hour of 12.30 – I will tell you, or I am going to try to make you sense what it means, and then this will get us into the swing of what, properly speaking, is the object of what I want to state today, it is namely that....in what preoccupies us, what is the function of writing (*l'écriture*).

Since writing, exists in China since...time immemorial, I mean that well before we have to properly speak of works, writing already existed for an extremely long time, and one cannot evaluate how long it did exist. This writing has, in China, an altogether pivotal role, in a certain number of things that happened, and it is rather...it is quite illuminating as regards what we may think about the function of writing. It is certain that writing has played a quite decisive role in supporting something, something to which we have... this particular access and no other, namely, a type of social structure that was sustained for a very long time and from which, until a recent epoch,

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one could conclude that there was a completely different filiation as regards what was supported in China, than what was engendered among us, and specifically by one of these phyla that interest us particularly, namely, the philosophical phylum in so far as, I highlighted it last year, it is nodal to understand what is at stake as regards the discourse of the Master.

(57) So then this is how this exergue is stated. As I showed you on the board the last time this designates the heavens, it is called *tien*. *T'ien hsia*, is under the heavens, everything that is under the heavens. Here there is a determinative *tchih*, what is at stake is something that is beneath the heavens; what is beneath the heavens, is what comes afterwards. What you see there is nothing other than the designation of the word that on this occasion we will state as *yen*. *Yen hsing*, I already put it on the board the last time, in signalling to you that this *hsing*, was precisely one of the elements that will preoccupy us this year, in so far as the term that gets closest to it is nature. And *yeh* is something that concludes a sentence without saying, properly speaking, that what is at stake is something of the order that what we are stating here *is*, *being*, it is a conclusion. It is a conclusion or let us say a punctuation, because the sentence continues here since things are written from right to left, the sentence continues here with a certain *tse* which means *consequently*, or which in any case indicates the consequence. So then let us see what is at stake. *Yen* means nothing other than language, but like all the terms stated in the Chinese tongue, it is liable also to be used in the sense of a verb. So then that can mean both the word and the one who speaks, and who speaks what? In this case that would be what follows, namely *hsing*, nature, what speaks about nature under the heavens, and *yeh* would be a punctuation.

t'ien (tian)

hsia (xia)

chih (zhi)

yen (yan)

hsing (xing)

yeh (ye)

Nevertheless, and this is why it is interesting to take an interest in a sentence of the written tongue, you see that you can cut things up differently and say: the word, indeed the language, because if it was a

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matter of specifying the word, we would have another character that is slightly different. At this level, as it is written here, this character can just as well mean word as language. These sorts of ambiguities are altogether fundamental in the use of what is written, very (58) precisely, and this is the importance of what I am writing. As I pointed out to you, as I pointed out to you at the start of my discourse this year, and especially the last time, it is very precisely in so far as the reference as regards everything involved in language is always indirect that language takes on its import.

We could then also say: language, in so far as it is in the world, as it is under the heavens, language, is what makes *hsing*, nature, because this nature is not, at least in Meng-Tzu, just any nature, what is at stake is precisely the nature of the speaking being, which, in another passage, he is careful to specify is the difference between this nature and the nature of the animal, a difference, he adds, he highlights in two terms which mean what they mean, "an infinite difference." And which perhaps is the one that is defined there. You will see, moreover, whether we take one or other of these interpretations, the axis of what is going to be said as a consequence will not be changed.

Tse therefore, is the consequence. In consequence, *ku*, is here *ku*, in consequence, relates to the cause – because cause means nothing else, whatever may be the ambiguity that in a certain book, a certain book called *Mencius on the mind*, namely, a book produced by someone called Richards, who was certainly not a newcomer – Richards and Ogden are two leaders of a position originating in England and altogether in agreement with the best tradition of English philosophy, who established at the beginning of this century the doctrine described as logical positivism, whose major work is entitled *The meaning of meaning*. It is a book to which you will already find an allusion in my *Ecrits* where I take up a certain disparaging position with regard to it. *The meaning of meaning* means *le sens du sens*. Logical-positivism proceeds from this requirement that a text should

則

tse (ze)

故

ku (gu)

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have a graspable meaning, which leads it to a position which is the following: a certain number of philosophical statements find themselves in a way devalorised in principle by the fact that they are not...that they give no graspable result as regards a search for meaning. In other words, if a philosophical text is caught red handed in non-sense, it is ruled out for that very reason. It is only too clear (59) that this is a way of pruning away the things that scarcely allows us to find our way, because if we start from the principle that something that has no meaning cannot be essential in the development of a discourse, we quite simply lose our bearings. I am not saying of course, that such a requirement is not a procedure, but that this procedure forbids us in a way any articulation whose meaning is not graspable, this is something which, for example, may culminate in the fact, for example, that we can no longer make use of mathematical discourse, which, on the admission of the most qualified logicians, is characterised by the fact that it may be that at one or other of its points, we can no longer give it any meaning - which does not prevent it from being precisely, among all the discourses, the one that is developed with most rigor. We find ourselves moreover, because of this fact, at a point that is quite essential to highlight concerning the function of writing.

wei (wei)

i (yi)

li (li)

erh (er)

i (yi) de *erh i*

i (yi)

So then, it is *ku* that is at stake, it is *ku* that is at stake and as *i wei*, because I already told you that this *wei* that can in certain senses mean *to act* indeed something that is of the order of *to do* even thought it is not just anything whatsoever, *i* here has the sense of something like *with*, it is with that we are going to proceed like, like what? Like *li*, this is the word about which I point out to you, I am highlighting for you the fact that *li*, I repeat, that this *li* which means *reward, interest, profit*, and the thing is all the more remarkable in that precisely Mencius, Mencius in his first chapter, in presenting himself to a certain prince, it does not matter who, of what made up the kingdoms described, described afterwards, as the warring kingdoms, finds himself with this prince who demands his advice,

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with this prince, pointing out that, he is not there to teach him what constitutes our law which is present to everyone, namely, what is appropriate for the increase of the wealth of the kingdom, and specifically what we would call surplus value. If there is a meaning that one can give retroactively to *li*, this indeed is what is at stake. (60) Now, it is indeed here that it is remarkable to see that what Mencius points out on this occasion, is that starting then from this word which is nature, or if you wish from the word that concerns nature, what is going to be at stake, is to arrive at the cause, in so far as the aforesaid cause, is *li, erh, i i*, which means the *li, erh* is something that means at the same time like and, and like but, *erh i*, is simply that, and so that there can be no doubt about it, the *i* that ends, which is a conclusive *i*, this *i* has the same accent as *simply*. It is *li*, and that is enough. Here I am allowing myself in short to recognise that, as regards the effects of discourse, as regards what is under the heavens, what emerges from it is nothing other than the function of the cause, in so far as it is surplus enjoying.

You will see, if you refer to the text of Meng-Tzu, you have two ways of doing it, you can find it on the one hand in an edition that in short is very good which was produced by a Jesuit at the end of the 19th Century, someone called Wieger, in an edition of the *Four fundamental books of Confucianism*. You have another way, which is to get hold of this *Mencius on the mind*, which was published by Kegan Paul in London. I do not know if nowadays there are a lot of copies still *available*, as they say, but after all it is worth the trouble, why not, to try to get it for those who might be curious to consult something that is so fundamental, for a certain illumination of a reflection on language which is the work of a neo-positivist and which is certainly not negligible. *Mencius on the mind*, therefore, by Richards, can be found in London at Kegan Paul. And those who find it worthwhile to take the trouble of getting a copy, if they cannot get the book, could get perhaps a photocopy, and they will

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understand all the better a certain number of references that I will make to it this year because I will come back to it.

It is one thing then to speak about the origin of language, and another thing of its link to what I am teaching, to what I am teaching in conformity with what I articulate, what last year I articulated, as the discourse of the analyst. Because you are well aware, linguistics began with Humboldt with this sort of prohibition, not to ask oneself the question of the origin of language, otherwise one would certainly go astray. It is no small thing that someone should have noticed at the height of the period of developmental mythmaking, this was the style at the beginning of the 19th Century, should have posited that nothing would ever be situated, established, articulated, about language, if one did not start first of all by forbidding the questions of (61) origin. It is an example which might well have been followed elsewhere, this would have avoided us a lot of lucubrations of the type called primitivist. There is nothing like a reference to the primitive to...make thinking more primitive. It is what regularly regresses to the very measure of what it claims to discover as primitive.

The discourse of the Analyst, I have to tell you, because in short you have not heard it, the discourse of the Analyst is nothing other than the logic of action. Why have you not heard it? Because in what I articulated last year with these little letters on the board, in this form, the small o over the S_2 and of what happens at the level of the analysand, namely, the function of the subject in so far as he is barred and in so far as what he produces as signifiers, and not just any ones, master signifiers. It is because it was written like that, because I wrote it down on many occasions, it is for that very reason that you did not hear it. It is in this way that writing is differentiated from speaking, and it is necessary to put the word back into it and to butter it up seriously, but naturally not without fundamental drawbacks for it to be heard. One can write then a whole pile of things without

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them reaching any ear. It is nevertheless written. That is even the reason that I called my *Ecrits* as I did. That scandalised, like that, sensitive people and not just anyone. It is very curious that the person that this literally threw into convulsions was a Japanese woman. I will deal with that later. Naturally here, it did not give anyone convulsions, the Japanese woman that I spoke about is not here. And anybody at all, who comes from that tradition, will be able I think on this occasion to understand why this kind of effect of insurrection was produced. It is through the word of course that the path towards writing is opened up. If I entitled my *Ecrits* that, it is because they represented an attempt, an attempt at writing, which is very sufficiently marked by the fact that it culminated in graphs. The trouble, is that, is that people who claim to give a commentary on me start immediately from the graphs. They are wrong, the graphs are only understandable in function, I would say, of the slightest effect of style of the aforesaid *Ecrits*, which are in a way the steps to reach it. As a result of this the written, the written taken up all by itself, whether it is a matter of one or other schema, the one that is called L or any other one whatsoever, or the big graph itself, presents an opportunity for all sorts of misunderstandings. What is at stake is a (62) word, in so far as, of course, and why, it tends to clear the way to these graphs that is at stake. But it would be well not to forget this word, for the reason that it is the very one that is reflected by the analytic rule which is as you know, speak, speak, speak. It is enough for you to speak, here is the box from which there come all the gifts of language, it is a Pandora's box. What is the relationship then with these graphs? These graphs of course, no one has yet dared to go that far, these graphs in no way show you anything whatsoever that allow you to return to the origin of language. If there is something that appears there immediately, it is that not alone do they not give it, but they do not promise it either.

What is going to be at stake today is the situation with respect to the truth that results from what is called free association, in other words a

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free use of the word. I have never spoken about it except with irony. There is no more free association than one could say that a variable linked to a mathematical function is free, and the function defined by analytic discourse is obviously not free, it is bound, it is bound by conditions that I will rapidly designate as those of the analytic consulting room. At what distance is my analytic discourse as it is here defined by this written arrangement, at what distance is it from the analytic consulting room, this is precisely what constitutes what we will call my disagreement with a certain number of analytic consulting rooms. So then this definition of analytic discourse, to highlight where I am, does not appear to them to be adapted to the conditions of the psychoanalytic consulting room. Now, what my discourse outlines, or at least delivers, is one part of the conditions that constitute the analytic consulting room. Just measure what one does when one goes into analysis, it is something that indeed has its importance, but in any case as far as I am concerned, is indicated by the fact that I always undertake numerous of preliminary conversations.

A pious person that I will not designate otherwise found, it appears, according to the latest news, anyway news three months old, at least it was an unsustainable wager for her to ground transference on *the subject supposed to know,* because moreover the method implies that it is sustained by a total absence of prejudice as regards a case. *The subject supposed to know* what, then? I would allow myself to ask this person, if the psychoanalyst should be supposed to know what he is doing, and if he effectively does it? Starting from there, starting from there one will understand that I pose my questions on transference in a certain way, in *The direction of the treatment* for example, which is a text to which I see with pleasure in my school (63) something new is happening. The fact is that in my school people are starting to work as a school, this is all the same a step that is new enough to be noted. I was able to note not without pleasure that people had seen that in this text, I do not in any way settle what

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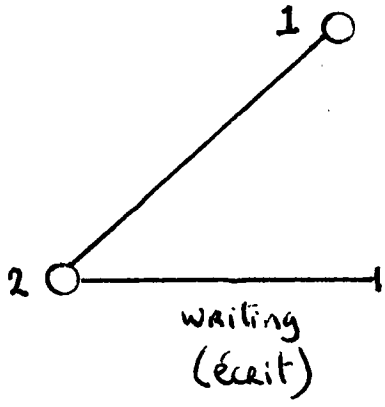
is involved in transference. It is very precisely by saying *the subject supposed to know*, as I define it, that the question is...remains untouched as to whether the analyst can be supposed to know what he is doing.

To take it up in a way at the start, the start of what today is going to be stated, and for which this little Chinese character because this is one, it is one of them, I greatly regret that the chalk did not allow me to put in the accents that the brush would allow, it is one of them which has a meaning, to satisfy the requirement of the logical positivists, a meaning which you are going to see is completely ambiguous because it means at the same time *twisted* (*retors*) that it also means *personal* in the sense of private. And then there are still other ones. But what appears remarkable to me, is its written form, and its written form is going to allow me to tell you immediately where there are placed the terms around which my discourse today is going to turn.

szu (si)

If we place here somewhere (1) what I am calling in the broadest sense – you are going to see that it is broad...I should say that I have no need, it seems to me, to underline it – the effects of language, it is here (2) that we will have to put what is involved, where they find their source. Where they find their source, is in the fact that analytic discourse reveals something which, which is a step, I tried to recall it, even though what is at stake for analysis is primary truth. It is with this that I am going to begin right away. We would have here then (3) the fact of writing.



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(64) It is very important at our epoch, and starting from certain statements that have been made and that tend to establish very regrettable confusions, to recall that all the same writing is not the first step but the second with respect to a whole function of language, and that nevertheless without writing, it is in no way possible to come back and question what results in the first place from the effect of language as such, in other words the symbolic order, namely the dimension, to please you, but you know that I introduced the term of *demansion* the *demansion*, the residence, the locus of the Other of truth. I know that this *demansion* raised a question for some people, echoes have come back to me, well then, if *demansion* is in effect a term, a new term that I fabricated and if it still has no meaning, well then, that means that it is up to you to give it one. To question the *demansion* of the truth, of the truth in its dwelling place, is something, here is the term, the novelty of what I am introducing today, which can only be done by writing, and by writing in so far as it is only from writing that logic is established. This is what I am introducing at this point of my discourse this year. There is no logical question unless it starts from writing, in so far as writing is precisely not language. And this is why I stated that there is no meta-language, that writing itself in so far as it is distinguished from language is there to show us that, if it is from writing that language is questioned, it is precisely in so far as writing is not it, but that it only constructs itself, only fabricates itself from its reference to language.

After having posited this which has the advantage of opening up to you my perspective, my project, I start again from something which concerns this point, this point which is of the order of this surprise to which there is signalled the effect of retrogression by which I have tried to define the junction between truth and knowledge, and that I stated in these terms that there is no sexual relationship in the speaking being. There was a first condition which could have immediately allowed us to see it, which is that the sexual relationship, like every other relationship when all is said and done,

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only subsists from the written. What is essential in the relationship, is an application, *a* applied onto *b* (a→b), and if you do not write this *a* and *b*, you do not sustain the relationship as such. This does not mean that things are not happening in the real. But by what right would you call it a relationship? Something as crude as that would be already enough, let us say, to make it conceivable, that there is no sexual relationship, but it would in no way settle the fact that one cannot manage to write it. I would even say more, there is something that has been done for some time, which is to write it like this: ♂ ♀, (65) using little planetary signs, namely, the relationship of what is male to what is female. I would even say that for some time, thanks to the progress that the use of the microscope allows, because let us not forget that before Swammerdam, one could have no kind of idea of it, this...may seem to articulate the fact that the relationship, however complex it may be, however meiotic the process may be by which cells described as gonadic give a model of fecundation from which proceeds reproduction, well then, it seems that in effect something is founded, established there, that allows there to be situated at a certain level described as biological what is involved in the sexual relationship. The strange thing assuredly – and after all, good God, not all that much so, but I would like to evoke for you the dimension of strangeness of the thing – is that the duality and the sufficiency of this relationship have from all time had their model, I evoked it for you the last time in connection with little Chinese signs, they are those whose signs, all of a sudden I became impatient to show you, this seemed to be done simply to startle you, well then, the *yin* that I did not make for you the last time here it is – and the *yang*, here it is. I am repeating myself am I not, right! Another little feature here. The *yin* and the *yang*, the male and female principles, are things which after all are not special to the Chinese tradition. This is something that you will find in every kind of cogitation about the relationships of action and passion, about the formal and the substantial, about Purusha, the spirit, and Prakriti some feminised matter or other. The general model of this relationship of the male to

陰
yin

陽
yang

天
t'ien (tian)

下
hsia (xia)

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the female is indeed what has always haunted for all time the mapping out, the mapping out of the speaking being as regards the forces of the world, those which are *t'ien hsia,* under the heavens.

It would be well to mark something completely new, what I called the effect of surprise, to understand what has emerged, whatever it may be worth, from analytic discourse. It is that it is untenable to (66) remain in any way with this duality as sufficient, the fact is that the function described as the phallus, which is to tell the truth very awkwardly handled, but which is there, which functions in what is involved, not simply in an experience, linked to something or other that would be considered as deviant, as pathological, but which is essential as such for the establishment of analytic discourse. This function of the phallus renders henceforth untenable this sexual bipolarity, and untenable in a way that literally makes vanish into thin air anything involved about what can be written about this relationship.

It is necessary to distinguish what is involved in this intrusion of the phallus, from what some people thought they could express by the term of "lack of signifier". It is not the lack of signifier that is at stake, but the obstacle raised to a relationship. The phallus, by emphasising an organ, does not designate, does not in any way designate the organ described as the penis with its physiology, nor even the function that one may, faith, attribute to it with some verisimilitude, as being that of copulation. It aims in the least ambiguous way, if one refers to analytic texts, at its relationship to enjoyment. And this is how they distinguish it from the physiological function. There is, this is what is posited as constituting the function of the phallus, there is an enjoyment which constitutes in this relationship, different from the sexual relationship, what, what we will call its condition of truth. The angle from which the organ is taken which, with respect to what is involved for the totality of living beings, is in no way linked to this particular form; if you knew the

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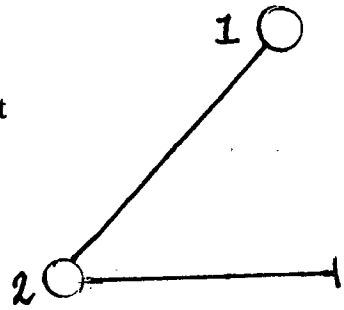
variety of organs of copulation that exist in insects, you could, which is after all the source of what is still wearing well, namely, astonishment, to question the real, you could certainly, in effect, be astonished that it is like that in particular that it functions in vertebrates. What is at stake here is the organ in so far – I have to go quickly here, because I am not after all going to go on forever and take up everything again, people can consult the text that I spoke about earlier, *The direction of the treatment and the principles of its power* – the phallus is the organ in so far as it *is*, it is being that is at stake, in so far as it *is* ...feminine enjoyment. This is where and in what there resides the incompatibility of being and having. In this text, this is repeated with a certain insistence, and putting into it certain emphases of style, which I repeat are just as important to make one's way as the graphs at which they culminate. And behold, I had in front of me, like that, at the famous Congrès de Royaumont, some people who laughed derisively, if everything is there, if it is a matter of being and having, that did not seem to them to have any great importance, being and having. One makes one's choice, huh! (67) This is nevertheless what is called castration.



What I am proposing is the following, it is to posit that we will put language here (1), in its reserved field in this gap of the sexual relationship, as the phallus leaves it open, by positing that what it introduces here, is not, not two terms that are defined as male and female, but this choice between these terms of a quite different nature and function that are called being and having. What proves, what supports, what renders this distance absolutely obvious, definitive, is the following, something whose difference it does not seem people have noticed, is the substitution for the sexual relationship of what is called *sexual law*. It is here that there is this distance in which it is inscribed that there is nothing in common between what can be stated as a relationship which lays down the law in so far as it derives, in some form or other, from the application that a mathematical function circumscribes most closely, and a law that is coherent to the whole

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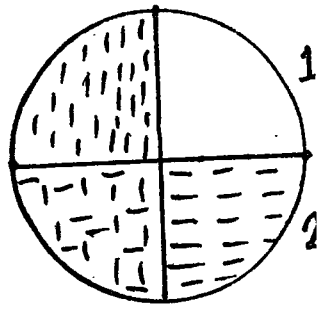
register of what is called desire, of what is called prohibition, of what underlines that it is from the very gap of the inscribed prohibition that there derives the conjunction, indeed the identity, as I dared state, of this desire and of this law, and what is posited correlatively for everything that derives from the effect of language, from everything that establishes the *demansion* of the truth from a structure of fiction.

The correlation that has always been made between ritual and myth, whose ridiculous weakness is to say that myth is supposed to be simply a commentary on the ritual, what is done to sustain it, to explain it, while it is, in accordance with a topology that I have already for long enough given a destiny not to have to recall it, ritual and myth are like the front and the back (*l'endroit et l'envers)*, on condition that this front and this back are in continuity. The maintaining, the maintaining in analytic discourse of this residual myth that is called the Oedipus complex, God knows why, which is in fact that of *Totem and taboo*, in which there is inscribed this myth that is entirely invented by Freud, of the primordial father in so far as he enjoys all the women, it is all the same here that we ought to question a little further from the point of view of logic and of writing, what it means.



It is a long time since I introduced here the schema of Peirce about propositions in so far as they are divided into four, universal, particular, affirmative and negative, the two terms, the two couples of terms interchanging. Everyone knows that to say that: *every x is y*, if the schema of Peirce, Charles Sanders, has an interest, it is to show, it is to define as necessary that *every something* is provided with such an attribute, is a perfectly acceptable universal position without there being for all that any *x*. In Peirce's little formula, little schema, I remind you, here we have a certain number of vertical strokes, here we have none, here we have a little mixture of the two, and that it is from the overlapping of two of these boxes that there results the specificity of one or other of these propositions. And that it is by

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bringing together these two quadrants that one can say: every stroke is vertical. There is no stroke if it is not vertical. To give the negative, it is these two that must be brought together. Either there is no stroke, or there are none that are vertical. What the myth of the enjoyment of *all the women* designates, is that there are not *all the women*. There is no universal of the woman. Here is what is posed by a questioning of the phallus, and not of sexual relationship, as regards what is involved in the enjoyment it constitutes, because I said that it was feminine enjoyment.

It is starting from these statements that a certain number of questions can be radically displaced. After all, but it is possible that there is a knowledge of the enjoyment that is called sexual which is attributable to this *particular woman*. This is not unthinkable, there are like that, mythical traces of it in certain corners. The things called *Tantra*, it is said that this is practised. It is all the same clear that for a good while, if you will allow me to express my thinking in this way, the skill of female flute players is much more open to view. It is not to ... play with obscenity that I am putting forward that at this point. The fact is, there is here, and I suppose there is at least one person who knows what it is to play the flute, it is the person who recently, pointed out to me in connection with this flute playing, but one can (69) say it also with respect to any use of an instrument, what division from the body the use of an instrument, whatever it may be, makes necessary. I mean a breakdown of synergy. It is enough to play any instrument whatsoever. Get onto a pair of skis, and you will see immediately that your synergies have to be broken. Take up a golf club, I do this from time to time, I started again, it's the same thing, huh? There are two types of movement that you have to make at the same time, at the beginning you will absolutely not succeed in doing it, because synergetically, it is not arranged like that. The person who reminded me about the thing in connection with the flute, also pointed out to me that for singing, where in appearance there is no instrument, this is why singing is particularly interesting, it is

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because here too you have to divide your body, that you divide two things which are quite distinct, in order to be able to sing, but which usually are absolutely synergetic, namely, the placing of the voice and breathing. Good! These primary truths which I did not need to be reminded of, because moreover I told you that I had my last experience of it with a golf club, this is what leaves open, as a question, whether there is still somewhere a knowledge of the instrument phallus.

Only the phallus instrument is not an instrument like the others, it is like singing, the phallus instrument, I already told you that it is not at all to be confused with the penis. The penis, for its part, is regulated by law, namely, by desire, namely, by surplus enjoying, namely, by the cause of desire, namely, by phantasy. And this, the supposed knowledge of the woman who is supposed to know encounters a problem (*un os*) precisely the one that the organ is lacking, if you will allow me to continue in the same vein. Because in certain animals there is one of bone. Yes! Here there is a lack, it is a missing bone, it is not the phallus, it is desire or its functioning. The result is that a woman has the testimony of her insertion into the law, of what supplies for the relationship, only through the desire of the man. Here it is enough to have a tiny little bit of analytic experience to be certain of it, the desire of the man, as I have just said, is linked to its cause, which is surplus enjoying, or again as I put it on several occasions, if it has its source in the field of...from which everything starts, the effect of language, in the desire then of the Other, and the woman, on this occasion, one sees that it is she who is the Other. Only she is the Other from a completely different source, from a completely different register than her knowledge, whatever it may be.

(70) Here then the phallic instrument is posited, with inverted commas, as "cause" of language, I did not say the origin. And here, despite the late hour, good God, I will go quickly, I will point out the trace that one can have of it, namely, the maintaining, whatever you

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may wish, of a prohibition on obscene words. And because I know that there are people who are waiting for this something that I promised them, to make an allusion to Eden, Eden, Eden, ah! And to say why I do not sign, what are they called, these things, these petitions, in this connection, the fact is, it is certainly not because my esteem for this attempt is lukewarm. In its way, it is comparable to my *Ecrits*. Except that it is much more despairing; it is completely hopeless to language the phallic instrument. And it is because I consider it as being hopeless at this point that I also think that nothing but misunderstandings can develop around such an attempt. You see that my rejection is placed at a highly theoretical point on this occasion.

What I want to get to is this: from where does one question the truth? Because the truth can say whatever it wants. It is the oracle. That has always existed, and after that, we can only do the best we can. Only there is a new fact, huh? The first new fact ever since the oracle has been functioning, namely, from all time. The new event is one of my writings called *The Freudian thing* where I indicated something that no one had ever said, huh? Only since it is written, naturally you have not heard it. I said that "the truth speaks I, *la vérité parle Je*." If you had given its weight to this kind of polemical luxuriance that I carried out to present the truth as that, I no longer even know what I wrote, like coming into a room to the sound of a shattering mirror, that would perhaps have opened your ears. This sound of breaking mirrors does not strike you in something written. It is nevertheless rather well written, this is what is called an effect of style. This would certainly have helped you to understand what is meant by "the truth speaks I".

That means that you can say thou to it and I am going to explain what use that is to you. You are going to think of course that I am going to tell you that it can be used for a dialogue. It is a long time now since I said that there was no dialogue. And with the truth, naturally, still

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less. Nevertheless, if you read something *La Métamathématique* by Lorenzen, I brought it along, it is published by Gauthier-Villars et Mouton. Good! And then I am even going to indicate the page where you will see some very clever things. They are dialogues, they (71) are written dialogues, namely, that it is the same person who writes the two rejoinders. It is a quite particular dialogue, only it is very instructive. Look at page 22. It is very instructive and I could translate it in more ways than one, including making use of my earlier being and having. But I will tackle things more simply in order to recall to you something that I already emphasised, namely, that none of the so-called paradoxes that classical logic dwells on, specifically the one of *I am lying*, hold up except from the moment they are written. It is quite clear that to say *I am lying* is something that creates no obstacle, because we do nothing but that, so then why would it not be said? What can that mean? That it is only when it is written that here there is a paradox, because people say: "Well here, either you are lying or you are telling the truth?" It is exactly the same thing that I pointed out to you at one time, as to write: "The smallest number that can be written in more than 15 words". You see no obstacle to it when you say it. If it is written, you count them, you see that there are only 13 of them, in what I have just said. But that is only counted when it is written. Because if it is written in Japanese, I would defy you to count them. Because here you ask yourself the question all the same, there are little bits of wailing like that, little *o*'s and little *oua*'s, about which you ask whether they must be stuck to the word, or whether they must be detached and counted as a word, it is not even a word, it is eh, it is like that. Only when it is written, it is countable.

So then the truth, you will notice that exactly as in the metamathematics of Lorenzen, if you posit that one cannot at the same time say *yes* and *no* on the same point, there you win. You will see later what you win. But if you bet that it is either yes or no, there you lose. Consult Lorenzen, but I am going to illustrate it

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immediately. I posit: it is not true, I say to the truth, that you are telling the truth and that you are lying at the same time. The truth can answer many things. Because it is you who make it answer, it costs you nothing. In any case, this is going to culminate at the same result, but I will detail it for you to remain close to Lorenzen. She says: "I am telling the truth!"; you answer her: "I am not making you tell it!". So then to piss you off, she says to you: "I am lying." To which you reply: "Now I have won, I know that you are contradicting yourself!" It is exactly what you discover with the unconscious, it is no more important. That the unconscious always tells the truth and that it lies, is, from its point of view, perfectly (72) sustainable. It is simply up to you to know it. What does that teach you? That you do not know something about the truth until it is unleashed; because it is unleashed, it has broken your leash, it has told you the two things, moreover, when you said that the conjunction was not sustainable.

But suppose on the contrary, that you had said to her: "Either you are telling the truth, or you are lying". Well in this case you have had all your trouble for nothing. Because what is she going to answer you: "I grant it to you, I put myself in chains; you tell me: either you are telling the truth or you are lying and in effect that is quite true." Only in that case then, you for your part know nothing. You know nothing about what she has told you, since either she tells the truth or she lies, so that you lose out. I do not know whether you see the relevance of this, but it means something that we have constant experience of, which is that if the truth refuses itself, in that case it is of some use to me. This is what we have to deal with all the time in analysis and that, that she gives up, that she accepts the chain, whatever it may be, well then, it's all Greek to me. In other words that...that leaves me desiring. That leaves me desiring and that leaves me my position of demanding, since I am wrong to think that I can only deal with the truth that I can only recognise when it is unchained, showing you in what un-chaining you are participating.

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There is something that deserves to be highlighted in this relationship, it is the function of this something that for a long time I have been putting like that on the mat, and which is called freedom. It happens that through the phantasy, there are people who lucubrate about certain ways in which if not the truth itself, at least the phallus could be tamed. I am not going to tell you about all the variety of details in which these lucubrations can be laid out. But there is one striking thing. It is that, apart from a certain kind of lack of seriousness which is perhaps the most solid way to define perversion, well then these elegant solutions, it is clear that the people for whom that ... it is serious, this whole little affair, because good God, language counts for them and so does writing, if only because it allows for a logical questioning, because when all is said and done, what is logic if not this absolutely fabulous paradox that only allows writing to take the truth as a referent? It is obviously through this that one communes, when one begins by giving the first, the very first formulae of propositional logic, one takes as a reference that there are propositions that can be marked as True and others that can be marked as False. It is with this that there begins the reference to (73) truth. To refer oneself to the truth, is to posit an absolute false, namely, a false to which one could refer oneself as such.

Serious people, I take up again what I am in the process of saying, to whom there are proposed these elegant solutions which might bring about the taming of the phallus, you know it is very curious, it is they who reject them. And why, if not to preserve what they call liberty, in so far as it is precisely identical to this non-existence of the sexual relationship. Because after all, do we need to point out that this relationship of man and woman, in so far as it is radically falsified by the law, the law described as sexual, is all the same something that leaves it to be desired that each man has his woman (*qu'á chacun il y ait sa chacune)* to respond to it. If this happens what can we say? Certainly not that this is something natural, because in this respect

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there is no nature, since The woman does not exist – that she exists is the dream of a woman, and it is the dream from which Don Juan emerged, if there were A man for whom The woman existed, it would be marvellous, one would be sure of one's desire. It is a feminine lucubration. For a man to find *his* woman, what else if not the romantic formula: it was destined, it was written.

Once again, we have come to this crossroads at which I told you I would tip over what is involved in the true lord, this chap who is translated, very badly, faith, by man, like that a little bit above the common, it is this see-saw, between the *hsing*, this nature as it is inscribed by the effect of language, inscribed in this disjunction between a man and a woman. And on the other hand this: "it is written", this *ming*, this other character, whose shape I already once showed you here, which is the one before which freedom retreats.

hsing (xing)

ming (ming)

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Seminar 5: Wednesday 10 March 1971

Lacan writes on the board:

"L'achose"

Am I, am I present when I am speaking to you? It is necessary that the thing I am addressing you about should be there. Now, it is enough to say that the thing (*la chose*) can only be written as *l'achose* as I have just written it on the board, which means that it is absent there where it holds its place. Or more exactly, that the **o**-object which holds that place, when it is removed – when this **o**-object is removed – only leaves, in this place, only leaves the sexual act as I emphasise it, namely, castration. I cannot bear witness from there, if you will allow me, that *la-na-lyse* is anything whatsoever, but only by this, what concerns it (*la*) I am saying concerns it, *la*, castration. Make no mistake: Oh-la-la! The philosophical patter which is not nothing – patters, churns, it does no harm – was of some use for a long time, but for some time it wearies us. It ended up with producing a *being-there*, that is sometimes translated more modestly in French as *presence*, whether or not one adds living to it, anyway, what for the learned is called *Dasein*. I rediscovered with pleasure, in a text, I will tell you which one later, and so that the moment that I reread it, a text of my own, I noticed with surprise that it goes back a long way, this formula that I had stated at one time for people, like that, a little hard of hearing: "Eat your *Dasein*." What matter! We will come back to it later. The philosophical patter is not so incoherent. It only

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incarnates this presence, the 'being there', in a discourse that begins (80) precisely by disincarnating through an *epoché*. You know that, the *epoché*, putting in brackets, that is simply what it means, it is all the same better, because it does not have quite the same structure, it is all the same better in Greek. So that...it is obvious that the only way to be there takes place by putting oneself in brackets. We are approaching what I have essentially to tell you today.

If there is a hole at the level of *l'achose*, this allows you already to have a presentiment that it was a way of representing this hole, that this only happens in the shape of what? Let us take a quite derisory comparison, in the shape of this retinal stain that the eye has not the slightest desire to become entangled with, when after it has fixed the sun, first of all, it looks around the landscape. It does not see in it its being-there, this eye is no fool. There are for all of you a whole lot of Klein bottles...of the eye [*Klein d'oeil = clin d'oeil*, a wink?] There is no philosophical patter, which does not, as you clearly see, fulfil here its university office, whose limits I tried to give you last year, at the same time moreover as the limits of what you can do from inside, even if it is revolution.

To denounce, as has been done, to denounce as logocentric the aforesaid presence, the idea as they say of the inspired word, in the name of the fact that the inspired word, of course one could laugh at it, to make the word responsible for all the kinds of foolishness into which a certain discourse has strayed and to lead us towards a mythical archi-writing, uniquely constituted in short from what is perceived, quite correctly, as a certain blind point, that one can expose in everything that has been cogitated about writing, all of this scarcely marks an advance. One only ever speaks about something else in speaking about *l'achose*. What I said, for my part, at one time, one should not be exaggerated. I am not always talking about the full word and I think all the same that the great majority of you have never heard me in any way taking it into account. What I said

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about the full word, is that it fills (*elle remplit*). This is one of the lucky finds of language; they are always rather pretty, it fulfils *(remplit)* the function of *l'achose* which is on the board. The word, in other words, goes beyond the speaker, always, the speaker is someone spoken, this is all the same what I have been stating for some time. How can this be seen? This is what I would like to indicate in this year's seminar. Can you imagine, I am still at ... "I would like". After the 20 years that this has been going on.

Naturally, that is how things are because, after all, I did not say it, it has been clear for a long time, it has been clear first of all by the fact that you are there for me to show it to you, only there you are, if what (81) I am saying is true, your being there is no more convincing than my own. What I have been showing (*montrer*) you for some time is not sufficient for you to see it, I have *to prove* (*démontrer*) it to you. To prove on this occasion, is to say what I was showing, naturally not just anything, but I did not show you *l'achose*, like that, *l'achose* precisely cannot be shown, it is proved. So then I will draw your attention to the things that I showed, in so far as you have not seen them, so that they can be proved. To play the card that is at stake today, we will call it, with all the ambiguity that it may represent, writing (*l'écrit*).

Writing all the same, you cannot say that I have overburdened you with it. I mean that there really had to be extracted from me those that I collected one fine day, because of my total incapacity to make myself understood by psychoanalysts, I mean even those who remained tied in, like that, because they were not able to get on board elsewhere. Finally, it appeared to me that there were so many other people than they who for their part were interested in what I was saying, a little beginning of an absent being-there, that I let these *Ecrits* out. And then, faith, they were consumed like that, in a much larger circle than, in short, you represent, if I am to believe the figures that my editor gives me. It is a funny phenomenon that is

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worthwhile dwelling on, if indeed, to stick with what I always do. It is very exactly in terms of an experience that can be clearly fixed and that in any case I strove to articulate, specifically in recent times, last year, in trying to situate in its structure what characterises the discourse of the analyst. It is then by reason of this use of mine - which has no pretension to providing a conception of the world, but simply of saying what it seems self-evident to me to be able to say to analysts - about this, I gave for 10 years, in a rather well known place that is called Sainte-Anne, a discourse that did not claim certainly in any way to use writing otherwise than in a very precise way, which is the one that I am going to try to define today. Those who constitute, or who remain as witnesses of this epoch cannot protest against it, there are all the same not many in this room, of course, but all the same some. Anyway they could be counted on the fingers of one hand, those who were there the first months, can bear witness that what I did, with patience, tact, sweetness, bowing and scraping, I (81) constructed for them bit by bit, and fragment by fragment, things that are called *graphs*. There are some of them still sailing on, you can find them very easily thanks to the work of someone whose devotion I pay homage to, and whom I allowed to make, just as he wished, a reasoned index, in the text of which you can easily find the pages on which these graphs are to be found. That will avoid you having to search. But it can be seen, by simply doing that, one can already note that there are things which are not like the rest of the printed text. These graphs that you see here do not fail, of course, to set a little difficulty of what? Of interpretation, of course. You should know that for whom I constructed them, were not able to win even a single trick. Before putting forward the direction of a line, its crossing with a particular other, the indication of the little letter that I put at this crossing point, I spoke for a half an hour, three quarters of an hour, to justify what was at stake.

I insist, of course, not to make a merit out of what I did, fundamentally I liked doing it, no one asked me to do it, it was rather

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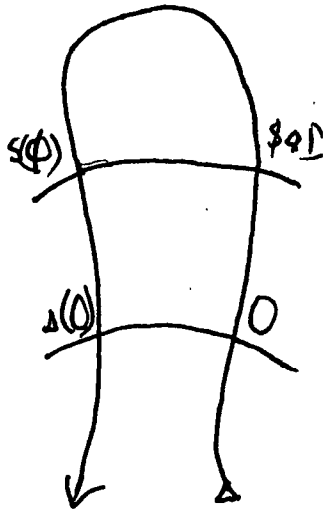
the contrary. But because we are entering here, with that, into the heart of what is involved in *l'écrit*, indeed even *l'écriture*, so now imagine it is the same thing, people speak about *l'écriture*, like that, as if it were independent of *l'écrit*. This is what sometimes greatly embarrasses discourse. Moreover this term, *"ure"*, like that, that is added on, allows you to clearly sense the funny sort of drunkenness (*biture*) that is involved on this occasion. What is certain, is that to speak about *l'achose*, as it is here, well then, that ought already, just by itself, enlighten you that I had to take, let us say no more, as apparatus, the support of writing (*l'écrit*) in the form of the graph.

It is worthwhile looking at the shape of the graph. Let us take here – I don't know - any one of them, the last one, here, the big one that you are going to find, I no longer know myself where it is, where it can be found, I think it is in *Subversion of the subject and dialectic of desire*. It is a thing that looks like that, in which there are here letters added in brackets, $ ◊ D of demand, and here is the S of the signifier, the signifier bearer of the function of O barred, Ø. You clearly understand that if writing can be of some use, it is precisely because it is different to the word. Who can take support on the word. The word cannot express S(Ø) for example. Only if it is based on that, even if it were only this shape, of course, it ought to remember that this shape does not work without there being here the other line (83) cutting the first, marked at these points of intersection of s(O) and of O itself. That there is here a capital I – I apologise for these infringements, but after all some people have this figure enough in their heads for this to be enough for them and for the others, good God, let them consult the proper page – what is certain, is that one cannot but, at least through this, through this figure, feel oneself, let us say, called on to answer the requirement of what it commands, when you begin to interpret it. Everything depends, of course, on the sense that you are going to give to capital O. There was one proposed in the writing where I happened to insert it. And then the sense that is imposed for all the others is not all that free.



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What is certain, is that what is proper to what anyway, I think, is certainly sufficiently specified for you since. Namely, that this graph, this one like all the others, and not simply mine, I will tell you that in a moment, that this graph, what it represents, is what is called, in the evolved language that has been given to us little by little by the questioning of mathematics by logic, is what is called a topology. There is no topology without writing. You have even perhaps been able to notice, if ever you really opened the *Analytics* of Mr Aristotle, that in it there is a little beginning of topology which consists precisely in making holes in what is written. "All animals are mortal". You say "animals" and you say "mortal" and you put in their place, the high point of writing, namely, a quite simple letter. So it is perhaps true, huh, that this was facilitated for them by some particular affinity or other that they had with the letter, one cannot really say how. On this you can consult things that are very...very attractive, as Mr James Février said, about some artifice, fakery, forcing, involved in the invention of logic with regard to what can rather sanely be called the norms of writing – *les normes*, not *l'énorme*, even though both are true. I am suggesting in passing to you today that this has something to do with, let us say, the fact of Euclid.

There you are, because I can only throw that out in passing, since after all it has to be checked out. I do not see why I also, why from time to time, I would not give, even to people very experienced in a certain area, a little suggestion that they will perhaps laugh at because they have noticed it a long time ago. I do not see why in effect they would not have noticed, they would not have noticed the fact that a triangle, because this is the start, that a triangle, is nothing other than, nothing else than a writing (*écriture*) or an *écrit*, precisely. And that the fact that you define *equal* in it as *metrically superimposable* that goes against it. It is a writing, where the metrically superimposable can be talked about. This does absolutely not depend on the

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separation, it depends on you the talker. No matter how you write the triangle, even if you do it like that, you will demonstrate the history of the isosceles triangle, namely, that if there are two equal sides, the two other angles are equal. It is enough for you to have made this little writing, because it is never much better than the way in which I have just written it, the figure of an isosceles triangle. They were people who had gifts for writing, huh! That does not take them very far!

One could perhaps go a little bit further. For the moment let us record, let us record the following in any case, which is that they very clearly perceived what a postulate was, and that this has no other definition than the following, which is that...in the demand, in the demand that one makes to the listener, in order not to say right away a hook (*crochet*), in this demand, this is what *is not required* of discourse, by the simple fact of the graph.

The Greeks seem then to have possessed a very clever handling, a subtle reduction of what already existed in the world under the species of writing. It was extremely useful. It is quite clear that there is no question of empire, if you will allow me the word, even the slightest empiricism, without the support of writing. If you will allow me here, an extrapolation with respect to the line that I am going along, I mean that, I am going to indicate the horizon, the distant perspective that guides all of this. Naturally, this is only justified if the lines of perspective prove effectively to converge. (85) What follows will show it to you. At the beginning, *en arché*, huh, as they say, which has nothing to do with any temporality whatsoever, because what flows from it is, in the beginning was the word. But the word, there is a good chance that during times that were still not centuries, imagine, they are only centuries for us, thanks to radioactive carbon and some other retroactive affairs of this kind, which start from writing, anyway throughout a whole part of something that one can call, not time – *l'aion, l'aion* of *aion* as they

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say - there was a time when people had great fun with things like that. They had their reasons, they were closer than us. Anyway the word made things. Things that were certainly less and less discernible from it, because they were its effects.

What is meant by writing? It is necessary all the same to circumscribe it a little. It is quite clear and certain when one sees what it is usual to call writing, that it is something that in a way rebounds on the word. About the dwelling place of the word, we have I think, said enough the last few times, to see that our discovery is, at the very least, closely articulated with the fact that there is no sexual relationship, as I defined it. Or if you wish, that the sexual relationship, is the word itself. You must admit that all the same, that leaves something to be desired, moreover, I think that you know something about it.

The fact that there is no sexual relationship, I already fixed under this form that there is not for the relation any way at present of writing it. Who knows, there are people who dream that one day this will be written; why not, huh? The progress of biology, M. Jacob is all the same there, huh? Perhaps one day, there will be no longer the slightest question about the sperm and the ovum, they are made for one another, it will be written, as they say, it is on this that I ended the lecture the last time. When that happens you will tell me about it, won't you? One could make science fiction, huh? Try it, it is difficult to write. Why not, that is how we push things forward.

Whatever about the present, this is what I mean, the fact is that this cannot be written without bringing into play something a little funny - because precisely, one knows nothing about its sex - which is called the phallus. If everything one manages to write – I thank the person who told me the page where in my *Ecrits* there is what is involved in the desire of man, written as $\Phi(o)$; Φ, is the signifier phallus, this for people who believe that the phallus is the lack of the signifier, I know

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(86) that that is debated in the cafes. There you are, and the desire of the woman....I don't give a damn about the *Ecrits*, huh? The desire of the woman is written Ø(φ), which is the phallus where people imagine it is, the little wee-wee.

Here is something that we are able to write better after, good God, something that we will simply call, like that, the fact of having arrived at, at a certain scientific moment. A scientific moment, is characterised by a certain number of written co-ordinates in the first rank of which is the formula that Mr Newton wrote, concerning what was at stake under the name of the gravitational field, which is simply a pure writing. No one has yet managed to give any substantial support, a shadow of verisimilitude to what this writing states, which seems up to the present a little hard, because people cannot manage to resorb it into the schema of other fields where, like that, people have more substantial ideas. The electromagnetic field gives you an image, huh? Magnetism, is always a little bit animal; the gravitational field for its part is not. It is a funny contraption. When I think of these gentlemen and soon these ladies and gentlemen who stroll around in this absolutely sublime place, which is certainly one of the incarnations of the sexual object, the moon, when I think that they go there simply carried by a writing, there is much to hope for. Even in the field where it might be of use to us, namely, desire. Anyway, it is not for tomorrow, huh! Despite psychoanalysis it is not for tomorrow or the day after.

Here then is writing in so far as it is something one can speak about. How? There is something that surprises me, even though it comes from the pen of a very special book that has been published by Armand Colin, anyway it is something that is very easy to find, it is in I don't know what number of the *Congrès de Synthèse*, and it is called, quite simply and nicely, *L'écriture*. It is a series of reports that begins with one by Métraux, this dear and now dead Métraux who was an excellent and really clever man. It begins with

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something by Métraux where he talks a lot about the writing of Easter Island. Anyway it is delightful. He starts simply from the fact that he, for his part, really understood absolutely nothing about it, but that there are some other people who succeeded a little better, that naturally it is debatable but anyway that his efforts, which obviously were absolutely unsuccessful, are here what authorise people to speak in effect about what the others were able to get from it with a questionable success. It is a quite marvellous introduction and well (87) designed to make you feel very modest, after which, innumerable papers deal with each of these writings. And after all, good God, it is rather sensible. It is rather sensible, anyway, it did not immediately happen, and we are going to see why it did not happen immediately that people started to say sensible things about writing. There was surely required, during this time, serious effects of intimidation, those which resulted from this blessed adventure that we call science, and none of us in this room, me included, of course, can have the slightest idea of what is going to come of it. Good, anyway let's leave it. People are going to get worked up a little bit like they do about pollution, about the future, a certain number of stupidities like that. And science plays its little tricks, and it would be no harm to see, for example, what its relationship with writing is, that may be of some use.

In any case, to read this large collection which is already a good ten years old, on writing, is something, compared to what is produced in linguistics, something fresh, you can breathe in it. It is not absolutely stupid. It is even very salubrious. There is even no question, when you come out of it, of you thinking that the business of writing only consists in something which seems to be nothing, but since it is written everywhere and no one reads it, it is all the same worth saying, that writing is the representation of words. That ought all the same mean something to you, *Wortvorstellung*. Freud wrote that, and he said that – but naturally everyone giggles, and people see clearly that Freud does not agree with Lacan – it is the secondary process. It

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is annoying all the same that, like that, in the circulation perhaps of your thoughts, of course you have thoughts, you even have, some of you who are a little bit backward, knowledge (*connaissances*). So then you imagine that you represent words for yourselves...it's hilarious! Because let's be serious! The representation of words, is writing.

And from this thing that is as simple as 'good day', it seems that people have not drawn the consequences which are nevertheless visible there, which is that every tongue that uses something that can be taken as figures, and that are called something or other, pictograms, ideograms, it is unbelievable, this ended up with absolutely mad consequences. There are people who imagined that with logic, namely the manipulation of writing, one would find the means for what? "New ideas", *de nouvelles idées*. As if we didn't have enough of them already. Whatever it may be, this pictogram, (88) this ideogram, if we study a writing, it is only because of this, there is no exception, it is because of the fact because it seems to represent, it is *pronounced* like that. Because of the fact that it seems to represent your mammy with two teats, it is pronounced *wu*. And after that, you can make whatever you want of it. Everything that is then pronounced *wu*, what the hell does it matter, whether there are two teats and that it represents your mammy? There is someone called, I no longer know what, Fu-hsien, that does not date from today or yesterday, you understand, you will find that more or less at the beginning of the Christian era, it is called the *Chouo-wen*, namely, precisely, *what is said qua written*. Because *wen*, is 'written', huh? There you are, try to write it all the same, because for the Chinese it is the sign of civilisation. And what is more it is true. So then, representation of a word, means something, it means that the word is already there before you make the written representation of it, with everything that it involves. What it involves, is that the gentleman from *Chouo-wen* had already discovered, at the beginning of our era, that one of the most essential sources of writing, is what is

wu (wu)

wen (wen)

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called, what he believes he has to call, because he still has prejudices the little darling, he imagines that there are written signs that resemble the thing that the word designates. I need room to write that, for example. That's it isn't it? What is it? It's a man. Ah! the people who knew that! They have been taught things! It is obvious that this for you is a man. What is represented? What I mean is how is it the image of a man? There is the head and the legs. I completely agree! And why not? There are dreamers. For my part what I see there is rather an inner leg...why not?

There is something funny, huh? The fact is all the same that we have signs since the *yin*. The *yin*, there is some little time, huh, this has lasted at least 2000 years, but before? And we still have these signs. (89) Which proves that all the same they knew something about writing. They are found on tortoise shells, there were people, fortune-tellers, people like us, who scribbled that, like that, alongside other things that were put on the tortoise shell, in order to give a commentary on it in writing. This probably created a greater effect than you believe. Anyway what matter. But there is something in effect that vaguely resembles – I do not know why I am telling you this, I am telling you this because I am letting myself be drawn along, I still have things to tell you, I am allowing myself to be drawn along all the same; anyway, too bad! It's done. Good – so then there is something that you see like that, that is good enough, right? Ah, it's pretty! Good, we will follow it because as you know writing, does not let go from one day to the next, if you are depending on the audio-visual, you can stick around, right! You will still have writing for a while because I tell you that it is the support of science, science is going to abandon its support like that. It is all the same in these little scribblings that your fate is going to be played out, just as at the time of the *yin*, the little scribblings that these guys did in their little corners, guys like me, and there are a lot of them. So then you follow me, you follow me epoch by epoch, you go down to the Tchou, to the Tchou, right, and after that, you have the Tsin, right, the epoch when

jen (ren)

yin

jen (ren)

i de *i wei*

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they burned the books. He was someone. He had the books burned. This Tsin had understood things, he was an emperor, it did not last twenty years. Right away writing started up again, and all the more painstakingly, anyway I will spare you the different forms of Chinese writing because the essential relationship of the writing with what was used to inscribe it, the quill, is absolutely superb. Anyway, I do not want to anticipate what this gives us as regards the value of the instrument, the quill. Well, you follow that, right, and then after a while, what do you find? You do not find at all what you are expecting, the dear little darling, here, which is called the *jen*. I am pronouncing it right or I am pronouncing it wrong, in any case I did not put in the tone, I apologise if there is a Chinese here, they are very sensitive to that, the tone, this is even what proves the...one of the ways of proving the primacy of the word, it is that in the four contemporary present ways, huh, this does not mean that in the Chinese world, the four usual ways of saying – precisely, this comes (90) at the right moment – of saying *i*, well that means four things at once, and which are not at all unrelated. Anyway I am going to let myself be carried along, perhaps I will tell you, I will often take it into account, when I have carefully practised the four pronunciations of *yi*, there is *i, i*, there is *i*, there you are. And this has not at all the same meaning, but I have learned from a very learned man that this has its place in linguistic consciousness. I mean that the tone itself, and that is why it is necessary to look at this more than once, before talking about arbitrariness, that the tone itself – can you hear me, Jenny? – that the tone itself has for them an indicative substantial value, and why reject that, when there is a tongue much more within our reach, English, whose modulatory effects are obviously quite seductive.

Naturally of course, it would be completely exaggerated to say that it has a relationship with the meaning, only for that you have to give to the word meaning a weight that it does not have. Because the miracle, the marvel of something that proves that from language,

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there is something to be made. I mean the witticism; that depends precisely on non-sense. Because anyway, if one refers to some other writings which have been published (*poubelliqueés*), one might have said to oneself that it is all the same not for nothing that I wrote *The agency of the letter in the unconscious.* I did not say the agency of the signifier, this dear Lacanian signifier, that people say, that people say, that people say, when people mean that I wrongly stole it from Saussure. Yes! The fact that the dream is a rebus, as Freud says, is naturally not something that will make me yield for a single instant on the fact that the unconscious is structured like a language, only it is a language in the midst of which there appeared its writing. That does not mean, of course, that one should put the slightest faith - and when indeed would we do so - in these figures that stroll around in dreams, once we know that they are representations of words. Because it is a rebus, it can be translated, *überträgt*, into what Freud calls thoughts. The thoughts, *die Gedanken,* of the unconscious.

And what is meant by the fact, what is meant by the fact that a lapse, a blunder, a mistake in some psychopathology of everyday life, no but what can that mean that you call at least three times in the same five minutes...I do not know why I am saying this to you, because it is not all the same an example in which I am revealing one of my patients, but anyway, in effect, not long ago, one of my patients, for five minutes, and every time correcting himself and laughing, but he (91) was not particularly worried about it, right, called his mother "my wife". "It is not my wife, because my wife...." etc and he went on for five minutes, he repeated it at least 20 times. But what is missing in this word, when what I am killing myself telling you, is that it is really a successful word, all the same! And it was like that because his mother was his wife! He called her what he should have called her. So then there is only a lapse with respect to what? With respect to what the authors of *archiécriture*, the writing that is in the world from all time prefigures the word. A funny exercise, right? I don't mind ...it is a function of the university discourse, to confuse

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things like that. So then everyone fulfils his function, so I also do mine, it also has its effects ... so then we are going to have a new figure of progress which is the coming into the world, the emergence, it is a substitute given to this idea of evolution which ends up as you know, at the top of the animal scale, with this conscience that characterises us, thanks to which we shine with a brilliance that you know all about. So then, it appears in the world of programming, I will only take up this remark, in effect, that there would be no conceivable programming without writing, in order to remark from another angle that the symptom, lapse, faulty action, psychopathology of every day life, does not have, cannot be sustained, has no meaning, unless you start from the idea that what you have to say is programmed, namely, written. Naturally if he writes "my wife" instead of "my mother", there is no doubt that it is a lapse, but there is no lapse except *calami*, even when it is a *lapsus linguae*. Because the tongue for its part, knows very well what it has to do. It is a little phallus that tickles nice and gently. When it has something to say, well then, it says it. There was already someone called Aesop who said that it was at once the best and the worst. That means many things.

In any case, you can believe me if you wish, given the state of weariness in which you certainly find me, after having tackled these things on writing, from one end to the other, right, because I do that, right? I believe myself obliged to do it, the only thing that I have never dealt with, is the superego. I believe myself obliged to read this stuff from one end to the other. That's how things are! To be sure, to be sure of the things that are affirmed or demonstrated by my experience of everyday life, but anyway all the same, I respect learned people. There are some perhaps who might well have unearthed something here, which might go against, and in effect why not, an experience that is so limited, so narrow, so short, limited to an (92) analytic consulting room, when all is said and done, there is perhaps all the same a certain need to know. Anyway, all that, I must

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say, I cannot impose on anyone, but on the whole, it is not appreciated.

There is something else, *The debate on writing and hieroglyphs in the 17th and 18th Century*. I hope you are going to rush. But you would perhaps not find it because for my part, I had to order it from a library, the general library of the *Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes*, 6th section, and I see the indication S.E.V.P.E.N., so that this must be some sort of publishing organisation, 13 rue du Four, Paris, if, it exists. Well then! This work by Madeleine David – you should all the same from time to time take the trouble to read something, you could read that, anyway let us go on – because for what I am going to end up by telling you, what I am going to end up telling you, that writing, this is where we will remain for today, that writing in short is something which is found, because of being this representation of the word on which, as you clearly see, I did not insist, representation, that also signifies repercussion, because it is not at all sure that without writing there would be words. It is perhaps the representation as such that makes these words.

When you have tinkered a little with a tongue like the one that I am in the process of learning here, and in effect I am not after all sure that in this case it is an effect of the superego, the Japanese tongue, well then, you will notice then the degree to which a writing can work upon a tongue. And as it is constructed, this melodious tongue, which is a marvel of subtlety and ingenuity, when I think that it is a tongue in which the adjectives are conjugated, and that I had to wait to be my age to have that at my disposition, I really do not know what I was doing up to now. For my part I aspired to nothing but that, that adjectives could be conjugated. And a tongue in which the inflections had this absolutely marvellous quality that they go off on their own. What is called the moneme, here, in the middle, is something you can change. You give it a Chinese pronunciation, quite different to a Japanese pronunciation, so that, when you are in

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the presence of a Chinese character, you have, if you are initiated, but naturally only the naturals know it, when you pronounce it *oniomo* or *kuniomi* depending on the case, which are always very precise, and for the chap who arrives there, like me, there is no question of knowing which of the two must be chosen; furthermore, you can have two Chinese characters. If you pronounce them *kuniomi*, namely, the (93) Japanese way, you are absolutely incapable of saying to which of these Chinese characters the first syllable of what you are saying belongs, and to which the second belongs, the one in the middle, of course, still less. It is the totality of the two Chinese characters that dictates to you the Japanese pronunciation in several syllables, that can be perfectly well understood, a pronunciation that corresponds to the two characters at once, because you must not imagine, on the pretext that a Chinese character corresponds in principle to a syllable, that when you pronounce it in the Chinese way, *oniomi*, if you read it in the Japanese way, one does not see in effect why one should be obliged to decompose this representation of words into syllables. Anyway, that teaches you a lot. That teaches you a lot about the fact that the Japanese tongue is nourished by its writing. How is it nourished by it? In a linguistic way of course, namely, at the point at which linguistics affects the tongue, namely, always in writing.

Because you have to admit naturally, that something that leaps to the eye, is that if M de Saussure found himself relatively in a position to qualify signifiers as arbitrary, it is uniquely by reason of the fact that what is at stake were written representations. How could he have done his little bar with this thing underneath and these things above, that I have sufficiently used and abused, if there were no writing? All of this to remind you that, when I say that there is no metalanguage, this leaps to the eye. It would be enough for me to give you a mathematical proof, you would see that I am forced to talk about it because it is something written, otherwise nothing would get across. If I speak about it, it is not at all metalanguage, it is what is called, what the mathematicians themselves, when they present a logical

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theory, call discourse, the common discourse the ordinary discourse. It is the function of the word, in so far as it is applied, not in an altogether unlimited, undisciplined way, this is what I earlier called "to prove", of course, but language, this is what is at stake, writing is what is at stake, what one is speaking about. There is no metalanguage in this sense that you never speak about language unless you start from writing.

So then, I am telling you all of this, all of this, I must say that this does not weary me, if you wish, it wearies me a little bit all the same. You can believe me if you wish, what I said to myself this morning, as I woke up, having read Madeline David until one o'clock, I said to myself that all the same it was not for nothing that my *Ecrits* began (94) with the seminar on the *Purloined Letter*. The letter is taken there in a different sense than that of *The agency of the letter in the unconscious*, the letter, the epistle. I am not very fresh, I went to bed late, after midnight; anyway, Gloria will bear witness to you that I spent from eight o'clock to half past nine re-reading the seminar on the *Purloined Letter*. It was worth the trouble, it is something that is quite clever. I never re-read myself but when I do re-read myself, you cannot imagine how much I admire myself! Obviously I had taken the trouble, I did something that was worked out with great difficulty, which was not too bad, which got across, which got across, when I did it, I no longer know at what date, it was still in front of the rabble at Sainte-Anne. Anyway I laboured at that in a place that I put at the end, I am conscientious, San Casciano, in the neighbourhood of Florence, and it really spoiled my holiday. Anyway, you know I have a tendency for that, for spoiling my holidays. Listen, it is getting late, and after all, I think it would be better for me to talk to you about it the next time.

But anyway, perhaps, who knows, that may tempt you to read it, and after all, it would be better not to tell you where you should go right away, I am going to tell you all the same, because, there are some

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people who may not notice, that at the end, in speaking about the *Purloined Letter*, when I speak about that, the function of the letter, you will remember perhaps, this letter that the Queen receives, you have perhaps read the story by Poe that is in question, the Queen receives..., it is a rather funny letter all the same. We will never know what was in it. This is precisely what is essential, it is that one will never know what is in it. And all the same nothing contradicts the fact that she is the only one who knows it when all is said and done. Moreover, to set the police on it, you understand, it is all the same necessary, she clearly has the idea that in any case, this would give no information to anyone. There is something, which is that it is certain that it has a meaning. And since it comes from a certain Duke of something or other who has addressed himself to her, if the King her good Master, gets his hands on it, even if he understands nothing either, he will say: "All the same! There is something funny going on!" and God knows where that might lead. I regret the old business that this led to in the past. It led the Queen to the scaffold, things like that. Good! So then at this point, at this point, I cannot do for you the thing I did on what Poe did, under the title the *Purloined Letter*, that I translated like that, approximately, *la lettre en souffrance*. Well then, read that between now and the next time, right? Because that will perhaps allow me to continue to bring out, to support you, what you see converging in my discourse today, from page 31 of the *Ecrits* (95) to the end.

What I am talking about, in speaking about what is at stake, you have perhaps vaguely heard talk of the effect of the displacements of this letter, of the way it changed hands, as you know, the minister pinched it from the Queen, after which Dupin, Dupin, Poe's genius, right, the most cunning of the cunning, who is not as cunning as all that; but Poe for his part is cunning, namely, that Poe for his part is the narrator of the story...I put a little question to you, here I am opening a parenthesis, the narrator of the story, this is of general importance, is he the one who writes it? Ask yourself this question for example

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when you read Proust. It is very necessary to pose it, because otherwise you are screwed, you think that the narrator of the story is a simple someone, like that, a little asthmatic, and after all a bit of a dope in his adventures! That has to be said, right! Only you do not at all have the impression, when you have worked on Proust, that it is in any way stupid. It is not what Proust says about the narrator, it is something different that he writes, anyway let us go on. From page 31, at a particular page, you will see when I speak about the letter, of its conveyancing, of the way in which the Minister took it from the Queen or when Dupin takes the baton from the Minister, and the consequences that result from being the one who holds (*le détenteur*) this letter; it's a funny word, right? That means perhaps: to have the possibility of *détente* (relaxation), this letter, you will see that from this page to this page, what I am talking about, I am the one who wrote it, did I know what I was doing? Well, I will not tell you. What I am talking about, is the phallus. And I would even say more, no one has ever spoken better about it. That is why I am asking you to consult it. It will teach you something.

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Seminar 6: Wednesday 17 March 1971

As regards this seminar on *The purloined letter*, then...I do not know yet what it may yield. Can you hear me there, in the fourth row? Wonderful! At least we can breath. That may allow more effective relationships. For example, in one case, I might ask someone to leave. In the extreme case I might have an attack of nerves, and leave myself. Anyway in the other one, in the other amphitheatre, it was a bit too much like the majority of cases where people think a sexual relationship exists. Because you are stuck together in a sardine tin. This is going to allow me to ask you to raise your hand. Who are the people who, following my explicit suggestion, made the effort to re-read pages 31-40 of what is called my *Ecrits*? Anyway, lift your hand all the same! Here you can raise your hand. There are not as many as all that. I don't know if I might not have an attack of nerves. Simply to leave, because in short it is necessary to have some minimal resources to ask someone what relationship he was eventually able to sense in these pages, in these pages, to what I said I was speaking about there, namely, the phallus. Who feels in the mood – you see I am very nice, I am not challenging anyone – who feels himself in the mood to say something, even that, why not, that there is scarcely any way of seeing it. Would someone be kind enough to communicate to me some of the reflections that may have been inspired in him, I am not saying by these pages but by what I said the last time about what they consisted of, according to me. X, listen, you, have you re-read these pages?

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X: .....

You haven't re-read them? Get the hell out of here! Anyway, it's very annoying. You don't expect me to read them for you. That (98) really is asking too much of me. But anyway, I take it as it comes. I am a little bit astonished all the same, I am a little bit astonished, not to be able to get an answer unless I take a teasing line. Yes! All the same it is very annoying. In these pages, I am very precisely only speaking about the function of the phallus in so far as it is articulated, as it is articulated in a certain discourse. And this was nevertheless not a time at which I had even sketched out the construction of this whole variety, this tetrahedric combination, with four vertices, that I presented to you last year. And I note nevertheless, from this level one cannot say, from this level, I mean, of my construction, from this time if you also wish, I directed my attack, as I might say, I directed my attack – this is saying a lot - to being able to shoot (*tirer*), it is already that, in such a way that it seems to me now not to be misleading. I mean in a further stage of this construction. Naturally, when I said the last time, I let myself go like that, especially when it is necessary to pretend one is breathing, I said the last time that I admired myself, I hope that you did not take that literally. What I was admiring, was in effect rather the outline that I had created at a time when I was simply beginning to plough a certain furrow as a reference point, which is not now to be completely rejected, which does not make me feel ashamed. It was on this that I ended last year, and it is rather remarkable. One might even perhaps take something from it, an outline, like that, some encouragement to continue. That it is altogether striking that everything that can be caught in it (*y est péchable*), as I might say, in terms of the signifier, is there. This indeed is what is at stake. I started to fish from this seminar on the *Purloined Letter* on, and I think that after all this time, the fact that I put it in first place, in spite of any chronology, showed perhaps that it was necessary, that I had

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the idea, that it was in short the best way to give an introduction to my *Ecrits*. So then the remark that I make about this famous man *who dares all things, those unbecoming as well as those becoming a man*, it is quite certain that if I insisted at that moment to say that not to translate it literally "*ce qui est indigne aussi bien que ce qui est digne d'un homme*" shows that it is in a block that the unsayable, shameful aspect, what is not said, as regards what concerns a man, is indeed there, in a word, the phallus. And it is clear that to translate it by fragmenting it in two: "*Ce qui est digne d'un homme aussi bien que ce qui est indigne de lui*", that what I am insisting on here, is that (99) it is not the same thing to say "*the robber's knowledge of the loser's knowledge of the robber*", that this element of knowing who knows, namely, by having imposed a certain phantasy of oneself, precisely the man who dares everything, is here as Dupin says right away, the key to the situation. I am saying that, I am saying that and I am going to come back to it. Because to tell the truth, what I indicated to you could have - for someone who would have taken the trouble - allowed there to be advanced directly in a text like this, most of the articulations that I will perhaps have to develop, to unfold, to construct today. As you are going to see, if you do not mind, in a second phase, after having heard what I will more or less have succeeded in saying. It was in fact well and truly written there, and not simply written there, with all and the same necessary articulations, those that I believe I have to take you through. So then everything that is there is not simply sieved and bound, it is clearly made up of signifiers that are available for a more elaborate meaning. That, in short, of a teaching - my own - that I can say is without precedent, other than that of Freud himself. And precisely in so far as it defines the previous one in such a way that one must read its structure in its impossibilities.

Can one say that properly speaking, for example, Freud formulated this impossibility of sexual relationships? Not as such. I am doing it simply because, and after all it is very simple to say, it is written

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everywhere. It is written in what Freud wrote. It only has to be read. Only you are going to see later why you cannot read it. I am trying to say it. To say why I for my part do read it. The letter then, *purloined,* not stolen, but as I explain, I begin with that, which makes a detour, or as I translate it for my part, the letter *en souffrance*, it begins like that and it ends, this little *écrit*, with the fact that it arrives nevertheless at its destination. And if you read it, I hope that there will be a few more who will read it between now and the time I am going to see you again, which will not be in the near future. Because all of this is very well calculated. The second and third Wednesday, I chose them because during the month of April, they fall during the Easter holidays. So then, you will only see me in May. You will have the time to read the 40 pages of *The purloined letter*. At the end I try to underline what is essential in it, and why the translation of "*la lettre volée*" is not a good one. The *purloined letter,* this all the same means, this all the same means, that it reaches its destination. And I give the destination. I give it as the fundamental destination of every (100) letter, I mean epistle. It reaches, let us say, not even him or her or those that can understand nothing about it, including the police on this occasion. Naturally they are completely incapable of understanding anything whatsoever, as I underline and explain for a number of pages – precisely that is even why they were not able to find it – about this substratum, this material of the letter. This is very prettily said, this invention, this magnificent fabrication of Poe, the letter is of course beyond the reach of explanation by space, since this is what is at stake. This is what the Prefect has come to say, indeed what the police first of all came to say, which is that everything in the Minister's house, given that they know that the letter is there, that it is there so that he always has it within hand's reach, they say why, that the space had literally been cross-ruled.

It's amusing, right?, to let myself go, like that, I don't know, every time I allow myself a little, from time to time, to follow a certain slope, why not, to certain considerations, like that, about space. This

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famous space which has been indeed for our logic, for a good while, since Descartes, the most bothersome thing in the world. This is all the same a good occasion to talk about it, even if it is necessary to add it on as a sort of note in the margin, like something that I isolate, like something that I distinguish as the dimension of the imaginary. There are all the same people who worry themselves, not necessarily about that *écrit*, about others, or even also sometimes who kept notes of what I may have said at a certain time, for example on identification. It was the year, 1961/62, I must say that all my listeners were thinking about something else, except, I do not know, one or two who came from outside, who did not know what exactly was happening. I spoke there about the unary trait and people worry themselves now, it seems that this is legitimate, about where this unary trait should be put. On the side of the Symbolic, or of the Imaginary? And why not of the Real? In any case just like, because this is how it is passed on, a baton, *ein einziger Zug*, because it is of course in Freud that I picked that out. This poses some questions, since I introduced it to you a little the last time, by this remark that it was completely impossible to think about anything whatsoever that holds up about this bipartition that is so difficult, so problematic for mathematicians. This is, namely, whether everything can be reduced to pure logic, namely, to a discourse that is sustained by a well-determined structure. Is there not an absolutely essential element that (101) remains, whatever we do to insert it into this structure, to reduce it, that all the same remains as a final kernel and that is called intuition. Assuredly, it is the question from which Descartes started. I mean, I would point out to you, that mathematical reasoning, as he saw it, extracted nothing efficacious, creative, anything whatsoever that was of the order of reasoning, but simply its start, namely, an original intuition, the one that is posited, established by its original distinction between space and thinking. Naturally, this Cartesian opposition, having been constructed more by a thinker than by a mathematician – one who was certainly not incapable of producing things in mathematics, as the effects have proved – was of course

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much more enriched by the mathematicians themselves. It is indeed the first time that something came to mathematics by way of philosophy. Because I would ask you to note something which seems to me to be very certain – let people contradict me if they can, it would be easy to find someone more competent than I on this matter – it is all the same very striking that the mathematicians of antiquity should have, for their part, pursued their progress without paying the slightest attention to everything that might have been happening in the schools of wisdom, in any of the schools of philosophy whatever they may have been. It is not the same in our day in which assuredly the Cartesian impulse concerning the distinction between intuiting and reasoning is something which has really tormented mathematics itself. This is indeed the reason why I cannot fail to find in it a vein, an effect of something that has a certain relationship with what here, in the field that is at stake and that I am struggling with. And that it seems to me that the remark that I can make, from the point that I am at, about the relationships between the word and writing, about what there is, at least in this first line, about what there is special about the function of writing with respect to any discourse, is of a nature perhaps to ensure that the mathematicians notice what I indicated the last time, that the very intuition of Euclidean space owes something to writing. On the other hand, if as I am going to try to push it a little further for you, what is called in mathematics logical research, logical reduction, a mathematical operation, is something that in any case is not going, cannot have any other support – to notice it, it is enough to follow history – than the manipulation of small or big letters, diverse alphabetical lots, I mean Greek letters or German letters, several alphabetical lots. Any manipulation by which logistical reduction in mathematical reasoning is advanced requires this support. As I am repeating to you, I do not see the essential difference between it and (102) what was, for a long time, for a whole epoch, the 17th and 18th centuries, the difficulty of mathematical thinking. Namely, the necessity of a drawing for Euclidean proof, that at least one of these triangles should be traced out. And at this point everyone gets

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frantic. This triangle that has been traced out, is it the triangle in general or a particular triangle? Because it is quite clear that it is always particular, and that what you prove for the triangle in general, namely, always the same story, namely, that the three angles made by two straight lines, well it is quite clear that you must not say that this triangle has not the right to be at once an isosceles rectangle at the same time as being equilateral. So then it is always particular. This worried mathematicians a great deal. I pass over, of course, this is not the place to recall it here, I am not here to show my erudition, through what and from what this flows since Descartes, Leibnitz or others. It goes up as far as Husserl. They seem to me, all the same, never to have seen the real problem, that writing is there on both sides. It is indeed homogenising intuiting and reasoning, that writing, in other words little letters, has no less of an intuitive function than the one outlined by our friend Euclid. What is at stake all the same is to know why people think that this makes a difference. I do not know whether I ought to point out to you that the consistency of space, of Euclidean space that ends with its three dimensions, should, it seems to me, be defined in a quite different way. If you take two points, they are at equal distance from one another, as I might say, the distance is the same from the first to the second as from the second to the first. You can take three of them and arrange for it to be still true, namely, that each one is equidistant from the two others. You can take four of them and organise it so that it is still true. I don't know, I have never heard that being explicitly highlighted. You can take five, don't rush into saying that here also you can put them at equal distance from each of the other four because, all the same in our Euclidean space, you will not manage it. It is necessary, in order to have five points at equal distance, you hear what I am saying, from each of all the others, for you to fabricate a fourth dimension. There you are! Naturally, it is very easy, to the letter, and then it holds up well, it can be proved that a four dimensional space is perfectly coherent in the whole measure that one can show the link between its coherence and the coherence of real numbers. It is in this very

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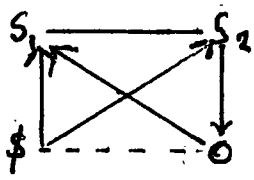
measure that it can be sustained. But anyway, it is a fact, that beyond the tetrahedron, already, intuition has to be supported by the letter. I got into this in order to tell you, because I said that the letter that (103) reaches its destination is the letter that reaches the police, who understand nothing about it, and that the police as you know, did not come to birth today or yesterday, three pikes like that in the earth, three pikes in the campus, provided you know a little bit about what Hegel wrote, you will know that it is the State. The State and the police, for anyone who has reflected a little, one cannot say that Hegel takes up such a bad position in this regard, is exactly the same thing. It is based on a tetrahedric structure, in other words, once we put in question something like the letter, we have to leave my little schemas of last year, which were constructed as you remember like that:

$$\frac{S_1}{\$} \rightarrow \frac{S_2}{o}$$



Here is the discourse of the Master, as you perhaps remember, characterised by the fact that of the six lines (*arêtes*) of the tetrahedron, one is broken. It is in the measure that one makes these structures turn on the four lines of the circuit that follow one another in the tetrahedron, this is a condition, are fitted in the same direction, in this direction that turns around one, it does not matter which of the two others, of the three others, that the variation is established about what is involved in the structure of discourse, very precisely in so far as it remains at a certain level of construction which is the tetrahedric one, this tetrahedric one that we cannot be satisfied with once the agency of the letter is brought out. It is even because one cannot be satisfied with it, that to remain at its level, there is always one of the sides of what makes the circle which is broken. So then, it is from this that it results that in the world as it is structured by a certain tetrahedron, the letter only reaches its destination by finding the one

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who in my discourse on *The purloined letter*, I designated by the term Subject which is not at all to be eliminated in any way or to be withdrawn, on the pretext that we are making some steps in structure, and as regards which it is all the same necessary to start from the fact that if what we have discovered under the term unconscious has a meaning, the Subject, I repeat, which is irreducible - we cannot, even at this level, not take it into account - but the Subject is distinguished by its very special imbecility. This is what counts in Poe's text, because of the fact it is not for nothing that the one whom he jokes (104) about on this occasion is the king, who here manifests this function of Subject. He understands absolutely nothing and his whole police structure will not prevent, nevertheless, the letter coming within his reach, given that it is the police that are holding onto it and that they can do nothing about it. I even underline that, even if it were found in their files, it would be of no use to the historian. In one or other page of what I wrote in connection with this letter, one can say that very probably only the Queen knows what it means, and that what gives it its weight, is the fact that, if the only person that it involves, namely the Subject, the King, got his hands on it, the only thing he would understand is that it surely has a meaning and this is the scandal, that it has a meaning that escapes him the Subject. The term of scandal, or again of contradiction, is in the right place in these last four little pages that I gave you to read, I underline.

It is clear that it is uniquely in function of the circulation of the letter that the Minister – because there must have been all the same some people here who have read Poe sometime, you ought to know that there is a Minister involved, the one who had nicked the letter – that the Minister shows us in the course of the displacement of the aforesaid letter, variations, like a fish going through variations of colour and in truth that its essential function, that my whole text plays on a little bit too much – but one cannot insist too much in order to make oneself understood – plays on the fact that the letter has a

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feminising effect. But once he no longer has the letter, because he knows nothing about it himself, once he no longer has it, we find him in a way restored to the dimension, precisely that his whole plan was designed to give to himself, that of a man who dares all things. And I emphasise this turn of events. It is on this that this statement of Poe ends. It is that at this moment that the thing appears, *monstrum horrendum*, and it is put in the text, what he wanted to be for the Queen, who naturally had taken account of it, because she tried to recover it, this letter, but anyway the game was played out with him. This is for our Dupin, namely, the cutest of the cute, the one to whom Poe gives the role, the role of throwing something that I would be quite happy to call, I underline it in the text, some dust in our eyes. Namely, that we believe that the cutest of the cute exists, namely, that he really understands, knows everything, that being in the tetrahedron, he can understand how it is made.

I have sufficiently ironised about these certainly very clever things, namely the play on words around *ambitus*, of *religio* or of *honesti homines*, to show and to say simply, in my own regard, that I went (105) further in seeking out the little beast, is that not so, and that in truth it is somewhere; it is somewhere to follow Poe, one can ask the question of whether Poe really noticed it. Namely, that the simple fact of the letter passing through the hands of Dupin, feminised him in his turn, enough to ensure that, with respect to the Minister, even though he nevertheless knows that he has deprived him of what might allow him to continue to play his role if ever he has to show his hand – it is precisely at this moment that Dupin cannot contain himself and manifests with respect to the one who is believed to be already sufficiently at his mercy in order to no longer leave a trace, sends him this message in the piece of paper that he substitutes for the stolen letter, "*un destin si funeste*.....", anyway you know the text, "*s'il n'est digne d'Atrée, est digne de Thyeste*".

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The question, as I might say, is to notice, as I might say, whether Poe on this occasion clearly sees the import of the fact that Dupin, in this sort of message that goes beyond all possibilities because, God knows, if the Minister ever took out his letter, and found himself at the same time deflated, this to tell you that castration is here, like it, suspended, perfectly realised.

I am also indicating this perspective which seems to me anyway not to be determined in advance. This only gives a greater value to what Dupin writes as a message to the person that he has just deprived of what he thinks is his power. This little *billet doux*, which makes him exult at the thought of what will happen when the person involved, before whom, to what end, will have to make use of it, what one can say is that Dupin enjoys (*jouit*). So then, here is the question, the question that I opened up the last time by asking you, whether the narrator and the one who writes are the same thing? What is incontestable, is that the narrator, the subject of the statement, the one who speaks, is Poe. Does Poe enjoy the enjoyment of Dupin or is it from elsewhere? This is what I am going to try to show you today.

I am speaking to you about *The purloined letter* as I articulated it myself, this is an illustration that I can give to the question that I asked the last time. Is the one who writes not radically different from the one who speaks in his own name as the narrator in a writing? At this level it is tangible. Because what happens at the level of the narrator, when all is said and done, is what I could call, I apologise for insisting on the demonstrative character of this little essay, is that when all is said and done, it is the most perfect castration that is demonstrated. Everyone is equally cuckolded, and no one knows (106) anything about it. It is certain that the King, of course, is asleep from the beginning and will sleep to the end of his days without noticing anything; the Queen does not realise that she is almost fated to become mad about this Minister, now that she has him in her grasp. Now that she has castrated him, right, it is love!

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The Minister has really been had, but when all is said and done it does not matter to him. Because as I very clearly explained somewhere, it is either one thing or another: either he will be happy to become the Queen's lover and that ought to be agreeable, in principle, people say that. Not everybody likes it, or if really he has for her one of these feelings which are of the order of what I for my part call the only lucid feeling, namely hatred, as I very clearly explained to you, if he hates her, she will only love him all the more, and that will allow him to go so far, that he will end up all the same by becoming sure that the letter has not been there for a long time. Because he will surely make a mistake. He will tell himself that if she goes that far with him, it is because she is sure of things, so then, he will open his little paper in time, but in no case will he get back to what he wished for, the fact is that the Minister will end up by making himself ridiculous. He will not be so! Good! Well then, there you are, here is what I succeeded in saying in connection with what I wrote, and what I wanted to tell you, is that it takes on its importance from the fact that it is unreadable.

That is the point, which if you would not mind listening to me again I am going to try to develop. Like many people, I am saying it to you right away because there are worldly people, the only people who are capable of telling me what they think about what I palm off on them. It was at a time when my *Ecrits* had not yet appeared, they gave me their point of view as technicians, "we can't understand anything in it" they told me. Note that this is quite something. Something that one understands nothing about, is full of hope, it is the sign that one is affected by it. It is a good thing that they understood nothing about it! Because one can never understand anything except what of course one has already in one's head. But anyway, I would like to articulate it a little better. It is not enough to write something that is deliberately incomprehensible, but to see why the unreadable has a meaning. I would point out to you first of all that...our whole business, which is the story of sexual relationships, is it not, revolves

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around the fact that you may think that it is written because in short, this is what was discovered in psychoanalysis, we were all the same clearly referred to a writing. The Oedipus complex, is a written myth and I would even say more, this is very exactly the thing that specifies it. One could have taken precisely any one at all, provided it was written. What is proper to a myth that is written, as Claude (107) Lévi-Strauss has already pointed out, is that by writing it, it has only a single form. While what is proper to myth, as the whole work of Lévi-Strauss tries to demonstrate, is to have a great deal of them. This is what a written myth constitutes as myth.

So then this written myth might very well seem to be the inscription of what is involved in sexual relationships. I would like all the same to point out a certain number of things to you. There you are! The fact is, that for that it is not a matter of indifference that I started from this text, the fact is that if this letter, this letter on this occasion may have this function, this feminising function, is that not so, it is with respect to what I told you about the fact that the written myth, the Oedipus complex is designed very exactly to highlight for us that it is unthinkable to say: the woman (*la femme*). Why is it unthinkable? Because one cannot say: *all the women.* One cannot say *all the women* because it is only introduced into the myth because of the fact that the Father possesses *all the women*, which is manifestly a sign of an impossibility. On the other hand, what I underline in connection with this purloined letter, is that there is only one woman, that in other words the function of the woman is only deployed in what the great mathematician Brouwer in the context of what I stated for you, put forward earlier about the mathematical discussion called multiunity(?) (*multinunité*), namely, that there is a function which is very properly speaking that the Father is there, the Father is there because he makes himself recognised in his radical function, in the one he has always manifested, every time for example monotheism was at stake. It is not for nothing that Freud landed on this, because there is an altogether essential function that should be reserved as

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being at the origin very properly speaking of writing. This is what I will call the *not more than one* (*pas plus d'un*). Aristotle, of course, makes altogether entrancing, considerable efforts, as he usually does, to make this accessible to us by stages, in the name of his principle that can be described as the principle of climbing the ladder from cause to cause and from being to being, etc. You really do have to stop somewhere, anyway what is very nice is that he really spoke for imbeciles. Hence the development of the function of the subject. The *not more than one* is posited in an altogether original way. Without the *not more than one*, you could not even begin to write the series of whole numbers. I will show you that on the board the next time. There must be a one, and then all you have to do subsequently is purse your lips anytime you want to start again, so that each time (108) this gives a further one, but not the same one. On the contrary, all those that are repeated in this way are the same, they can be added up. That is called an arithmetical series. But let us come back to what seems to us essential for this subject as regards sexual enjoyment. It is that, from experience, there is only one structure, whatever may have to be the particular conditionings, it is that sexual enjoyment is found not to be able to be written, and it is from this that there results the structural multiplicity, and first of all the tetrahedron in which something is outlined that situates it, but is inseparable from a certain number of functions that have nothing to do, in short, that can specify in the general case the sexual partner. The structure is such that man as such in so far as he functions is castrated, and on the other hand, something exists at the level of the feminine partner that one can simply trace out by this feature, whose importance I highlight, the whole function of this letter on this occasion, that the woman has nothing to do with it, if she exists – now, that is why she does not exist, it is in so far as *the woman*, has nothing to do with the law.

So then, how are we to conceive of what has happened? All the same we make love, right? All the same we make love and people have

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noticed from the time they became interested in it, for a long time, and people have perhaps always been interested in it, only we have lost the key to the way in which people were previously interested, but for us, at the heart, in the efflorescence of the scientific era, we learn what is involved in it through Freud. What is it? When what is at stake is to structure, to make function by means of symbols the sexual relationship, what creates an obstacle to it? It is that enjoyment gets mixed up in it. Can sexual enjoyment be treated directly? It cannot be, and it is for this reason, let us say, let us say no more, that there is the word. Discourse begins from the fact that here there is a gap. We cannot remain at that, I mean that I reject any position of origin, and after all, nothing prevents us from saying that it is because discourse begins that the gap is produced. It is a matter of complete indifference for the result. What is certain is that discourse is implied in the gap and since there is no metalanguage, it cannot get out of it. The symbolisation of sexual enjoyment, as is made obvious by what I am in the process of articulating, is the fact that it borrows all its symbolism from what? From what does not concern it, namely, from enjoyment in so far as it is prohibited by certain confused things, confused but not all that much, because we have managed to articulate it perfectly under the name of pleasure (109) principle. Which can only have one meaning, *not too much enjoyment.* Because the stuff of every enjoyment is close to suffering, this is even how we recognise how it is dressed up. If the plant was not manifestly suffering, we would not know that it was alive. It is clear then that the fact that sexual enjoyment only found as a way to structure itself the reference to prohibition, as named, of enjoyment, but an enjoyment which is not the one, which is this dimension of enjoyment, which is properly speaking a fatal enjoyment, in other words that sexual enjoyment takes on its structure from the prohibition laid on the enjoyment directed at one's own body, namely, very precisely at this crunch point, the frontier where it is close to mortal enjoyment. And it only reconnects with the dimension of the sexual by bringing a prohibition to bear on the

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body, from which one's own body emerges, namely the body of the mother. It is only in this way that there is structured, that there is connected up in discourse, what alone the law can contribute to it, what is involved in sexual enjoyment. The partner on this occasion is indeed in effect reduced to one, but not just anyone whatsoever, the one who gave birth to you. And it is around this that there is constructed everything that can be articulated once we enter the field in a way that can be verbalised. When we shall have advanced further, I will come back to the way in which knowledge comes to function as enjoying. We can skip it here. The woman as such finds herself in this position uniquely assembled because of the fact that she is, I would say, subject to the word. Naturally, I am sparing you the detours. That the word is what establishes a dimension of truth, the impossibility of this sexual relationship, is indeed also what gives its import to the word in the fact of course that it can do everything, except be of use at the point where it happens. The word strives to reduce the woman to subjection, namely, to make of her something from which one expects signs of intelligence, if I can put it this way. But naturally, we are not dealing with any real being here, to say the word, the woman on this occasion, as this text is designed to prove, the woman, I mean the woman in herself, the woman – as if one could say *all the women* – the woman – I insist, who does not exist – is precisely the letter. The letter, in so far as she is the signifier that there is no Other: S(O) (*sic*).

And it is about this that I would like, before leaving you, all the same to make a remark to you that outlines the logical configuration of what I am in the process of putting forward. In Aristotelian logic, you have the affirmatives, I am not going to put them in the usual (110) letters of formal logic. I am not writing A, I am writing the universal affirmative, and I am writing this as universal negative, this is what that means. I write here particular affirmative and particular negative. I would like to point out that at the level of Aristotelian articulation, it is between these two poles – because it is from

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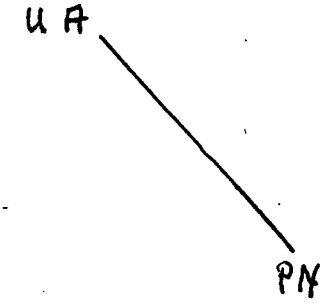
Aristotle that these propositional categories are borrowed – it is between these two poles that logical discrimination is carried out. The universal affirmative states an essence. I insisted often enough in the past about what is involved in the statement *every stroke is vertical* and that it is perfectly compatible with the fact that no stroke exists, the essence is essentially situated in logic. It is a pure statement of discourse. Logical discrimination, its essential axis in this articulation, is very exactly this oblique axis that I have just noted here. Nothing runs contrary to any identifiable logical statement whatsoever, nothing, except the remark that: "There are some that...do not" A particular negative, there are some strokes that are not vertical. This is the only contradiction that can be made against the affirmation that it is a matter of the essence. And the two other terms are, in the functioning of Aristotelian logic, quite secondary. Namely, "there are those that...", a particular affirmative, and afterwards how can we know if it is necessary or not, this proves nothing, and to say "there are none that" which is not the same thing as to say: "there are some who are not", namely, the universal negative. *There are none that*, well that proves nothing either. It is a fact. What I can point out to you, is what happens when, from this Aristotelian logic, we pass to their transposition in mathematical logic, the one that is constructed by means of what are called quantifiers. Don't complain that you cannot hear me for a while, first of all I am going to write it and precisely this is what is at stake. The universal, I was saying, the universal affirmative is now going to be written in this unverbalisable notation: it is an 'A' upside down; I say an 'A' upside down, anyway it is not part of discourse, it is writing. But it is a signal as you are going to see, in order to be able to babble on. $\forall$ x.F(x), the universal affirmative, $\exists$x.F(x) here particular affirmative. $\overline{\forall}$x.F(x), I want to express that this is a negative. How can I do so? I am struck by the fact that it has never been really articulated the way I am going to do it. What you have to do is to put a bar of negation above the F(x) and not at all, as is usually done above both. You are going to see why. And here, it is on the $\exists$ x that



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you have to put the bar. I am putting here now myself a bar (111) equivalent to the one that was here, and since the one that was there separated out in two zones the group of fours, here, it divides up by two in a different way.

What I am putting forward, is that in this way of writing, precisely, everything depends on what one can say about writing, and that the distinction in two terms united by a point from what is written in this way has the value of saying that one can say about every 'x' – it is the signal of the upside down 'A' – that it satisfies what is written, F(x), that it is not displaced into it. In the same way, but with a different accent, the fact that there is something unwriteable, namely that it is here that the emphasis of writing is brought to bear, there exist x's that you can make function in F(x), of which you then speak, that what is at stake, in what is here called a quantifying transposition by means of the quantifiers of the particular. On the other hand, it is so true that it is around writing that there pivots the displacement of the distribution, namely, that for what is put in the foreground, is acceptable, nothing is changed for the universal. It still has its value, even though it is not the same value. On the contrary what is at stake here, the cleavage consists in noticing the non-value of the universal negative, since here, the fact is that whatever 'x' you speak about, cannot be written as F(x). And that just as for the particular negative, there is the fact, that just as here the 'x' could be written, was acceptable, inscribable in this formula, here simply, what is said, is that it is not inscribable. What does that mean? The fact is, what has been neglected in a way, without value, in these two structurings, namely, the universal negative, the universal negative in so far as it is what allows there to be said that you must not write this if you are speaking about any 'x' whatsoever, in other words that it is here that there functions an essential cut. Well then, it is the very one around which there is articulated what is involved in the sexual relationship. The question concerns what

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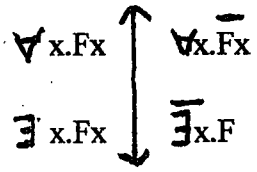
cannot be written in the function F(x), from the moment when this, the function F(x), is itself not to be written, namely, that it is what I said, stated, a little earlier, which is the point around which there is going to revolve what we will take up when I see you in two months time, namely, that it is properly speaking what is called unreadable.



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Seminar 7: Wednesday 12 May 1971

Lituraterre

This word that I have just written gives its title to what I am going to offer you today. Because needs must, since you have been summoned here, that I should throw out something to you. It is obviously inspired by current events. It is the title with which I strove to respond to a demand that was addressed to me to introduce an issue that is going to appear on *Literature and psychoanalysis.*

This word, *lituraterre*, which I invented, is legitimised by *Ernout et Meillet*, since there are perhaps some people here who know what it is; it is a Latin dictionary that is described as etymological. Look up *lino, litura*, and then *liturarius*. It is clearly specified that this has nothing to do with *littera*, the letter. I don't give a damn about the fact that it has nothing to do with it. I do not necessarily submit to etymology when I let myself go in this word play with which from time to time one constructs a witticism, the art of the spoonerism, which is obvious on occasion, coming to my lips and upsetting the ear. It is not for nothing that when you learn a foreign tongue, you put the first consonant of what you hear second, and the second first.

So then this dictionary, you should consult it, is a lucky omen for me, because of being grounded on the same starting point that I took in a first movement. You should understand starting point in

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the sense of restart, a starting point from an equivocation with which Joyce, I am talking about James Joyce, slips from *a letter* to *a litter*, from a *lettre*, I am translating, to *ordure*.

(114) There was, perhaps you remember, but very probably you know nothing about it, there was a rich patron who wanting, to do him a good turn, offered him a psychoanalysis, and she even offered to pay for him to do it with Jung. From the word play that we are recalling, he would have gained nothing from it because he went straight away, with this *a letter, a litter,* straight to the best thing that one can expect at the end of an analysis.

By making stable litter of the letter, is it St Thomas again - you remember perhaps, if you ever knew it, *sicut palea* - St Thomas again, who comes back to Joyce, as his work bears witness throughout its whole length? Or indeed is it psychoanalysis that bears witness to his convergence with what our epoch shows up in terms of an undoing of the link, of the ancient link by which pollution is contained in culture?

I had embroidered on this, as it happens, a little while before May 1968, in order not to disappoint, on that day, the wretches among the crowds that I now find come to see me when I visit somewhere. It was at Bordeaux. Civilisation, I recalled as a premise, is a sewer. It should no doubt be said, that it was a little while after my proposition of October '67 had been welcomed in the way you know, to tell you no doubt that, in playing on that, I was a little weary of the dustbin with which I had thrown in my lot. Still, you know that I am not the only one, in order to share things around, to admit it, *l'avouère*, to pronounce it in the old way, the 'having' that Beckett puts in the balance with the deficit that makes rubbish of our 'being'. This *avouère* saves the honour of literature and, which pleases me a great deal, relieves me of the privilege that I might believe I hold in my own place.

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The question is whether, what the manuals seem to display ever since they have existed, I am talking about manuals of literature, that literature is only a way of accommodating oneself to leftovers. Is it a matter of collecting in a writing, what was first of all, primitively, song, spoken myth, dramatic procession?

As regards psychoanalysis, the fact that it is appended to Oedipus, to the Oedipus of the myth, in no way qualifies it to find its way in Sophocles' text. It is not the same thing. The evocation by Freud of a text by Dostoyevsky is not enough to say that textual criticism, up to now the preserve of university discourse, has received any more fresh air from psychoanalysis.

Here, nevertheless, my teaching takes its place in a change of configuration that, currently, under the heading of actuality, currently is promoted in terms of slogans that promote the written (*l'écrit*). But, this change, including this testimony, for example, that it is in our day that Rabelais is finally being read, shows that it (115) is based perhaps on a literary shift that suits me better.

As an author I am less implicated than people might imagine. My *Ecrits*, a title that is more ironic than people might believe because what is at stake in short are reports produced in function of congresses. Or let us say, I would really like them to be heard like that, as open letters, in which no doubt I bring into question every time a slice of my teaching, anyway, that gives their tone.

Far in any case from my committing myself to this literary brou-ha-ha, which a psychoanalysis short of alibis is attaching itself to, I expose in it an unfailing tendency, by demonstrating the incapacity of its practice to justify the slightest literary judgement.

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It is nevertheless striking that I opened this collection of my *Ecrits*, with an article that I isolated by extracting it from its chronology - chronology was the guiding principle there - and that here, what is at stake is a story that one must say is quite curious because it cannot be entered into the organised list - you know that this has been made - of dramatic situations.

Anyway let us leave that. The story for its part, is constructed from what happens with the posting of a letter, a missive, without knowing what is going to happen. It is about following it and from what terminus there can be based the fact that I for my part can say about this letter, say in connection with it, that a letter always reaches its destination. And this, after the detours that it underwent in the story, renders a final account, as I might say, without having any recourse to the contents of the letter. This is what renders remarkable the effect that it brings to bear on those who one after another come into possession of it, however ardent they may be about the power that it confers. And to claim that this effect of illusion can only be articulated, which is what I did, as an effect of feminisation. This means - I apologise for coming back to it - clearly distinguishing, I am talking about what I am doing, the letter and the master signifier in so far as here it carries it. It carries it in its envelope, since here what is at stake is a letter in the sense of an epistle. Now, I claim that I am not making here a metaphorical use of the word letter, since precisely the story consists in the fact that there passes in it like 'Hey presto!' the message of which it is the writing (*l'écrit*), the letter itself then, which makes the journey.

My critique, if there is any reason to take it as literary, can only be brought to bear then, and this is what I try to do, on what Poe does, being a writer himself, in formulating such a message about the letter. It is clear that in not saying it as such, in the way that I for my part say it, he is not avowing it inadequately but all the more rigorously.

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(116) Nevertheless, the elision, the elision of this message can in no way be elucidated by any trait whatsoever of his psycho-biography; this elision would rather be filled in by it. A psychoanalyst who, perhaps you remember, scoured the other texts of Poe, here abandons her dishcloths! Marie does not even touch it! So much for Poe's text.

But as regards my text, could it not be solved by my own psycho-biography? The wish that I might formulate, for example, of being one day properly read. But, for that, for that to be worthwhile, it would be first of all necessary to develop, that whoever undertakes this interpretation, should develop what I mean by the fact that the letter carries far enough to always arrive, as I say, at its destination.

It is there perhaps that I am for the moment closely linked with those devoted to writing (*l'écriture*). It is certain that as usual psychoanalysis here is on the receiving end from literature and it might first of all take from it the line which would make of resorting to repression a less psycho-biographical idea. For my part, if I propose the text of Poe, with what is behind it, to psychoanalysis, it is precisely because it is unable to tackle it without showing its failure. It is in that way that I illuminate psychoanalysis, and you know, you know what I am invoking in this way, it is at the back of my book, in this way I am invoking those who seek enlightenment (*les lumières)*. Nevertheless I illuminate psychoanalysis by demonstrating where the hole is in it. There is nothing illegitimate in that. It has already borne fruit, as has been known for a long time, in optics, and the most recent physics, that of the photon, makes use of it. It is by this method that psychoanalysis may better justify its intrusion into literary criticism. This means that literary criticism may effectively renew itself from the fact that psychoanalysis is there so that texts can measure themselves against it, precisely from the fact that the riddle is on its

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side, and that it remains coy about it. But those, those psychoanalysts about whom it is no lie to say that rather than they exercising psychoanalysis, they are exercised by it, badly understand my remarks, at least when they are taken as a body.

As a way of getting to them, I oppose truth and knowledge. It is the first, in which immediately they recognise that their office is put in the dock, it is their truth that I am waiting for. I insist, correcting my aim, by saying a knowledge that is checkmated (*en échec*), this is where psychoanalysis shows itself at its best. A knowledge that is checkmated as one might say a shape that is damaged, that does not mean a failure of knowledge (*échec du savoir*). And forthwith I learn that people feel themselves dispensed from showing that they have any knowledge.

Is it supposed to be a dead letter that I put as a title to one of these (117) pieces that I call *Ecrits*, *The letter the agency* (*La lettre l'instance*) as reason of the unconscious? Does this not sufficiently designate what in the letter, by having to insist, is not there of right, if it is with the force of reason that it advances. To say that this reason is mean or extreme, I have already done it on occasion, shows clearly the bifidity in which any measure is engaged. But is there nothing in the real, which can do without this mediation? This might be perhaps a frontier. A frontier, by separating two territories, has only one defect, but it is an important one. It symbolises that they are the same, as I might say, in any case for whoever crosses it. I do not know whether you have thought about it, but it is the principle for which one day a man called von Uxküll made up the term *Umwelt*. This is done on the principle that it is the reflection of the *Innenwelt*, it is the promotion of the frontier to ideology. It is obviously an unfortunate starting point that a biology, because it was a biology that von Uxküll wanted to found with that, a biology which already gives itself right at the beginning, the fact of adaptation, in particular, which forms the basis of this

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coupling *Umwelt-Innenwelt*. Obviously, selection, selection is no better when it is an ideology. It is in canonising itself as natural that it is shown to be all the less so.

I am going to propose something, like that, quite bluntly to come after *a letter, a litter*. For my part I am going to say, is not the letter the literal because it is founded on the littoral? Because that is something different to a frontier. Moreover you have perhaps noticed that they are never confused. The littoral, is something that posits a domain, as being entirely making with another, if you wish, a frontier, but precisely because they have absolutely nothing in common, not even a reciprocal relation. Is the letter not properly speaking littoral? The edge of the hole in knowledge that psychoanalysis designates precisely, when it tackles it, from the letter, is this not what it designates?

The funny thing, is to note how psychoanalysis is obliged in a way by its own movement to fail to recognise the sense of what nevertheless the letter says *literally* (*à la lettre*), make no mistake, when all its interpretations can be summed up in enjoyment. Between enjoyment and knowledge, the letter might be the littoral. All of this does not prevent that what I said about the unconscious remaining there, all the same taking precedence, otherwise what I am putting forward would have absolutely no sense. We still have to know how the unconscious, which I say is the effect of language because it presupposes its structure as necessary and sufficient, how it commands this function of the letter.

(118) The fact that it is the instrument proper for the inscription of discourse does not make it in any way inappropriate to serve for what I make of it, when in the agency of the letter, for example, that I spoke about just now, I use it to show the operation of what your man, someone called Jean Tardieu, called one word taken for another, indeed the word taken by another, in other words metaphor

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and metonymy, as an effect of the sentence. So that it easily symbolises then all the effects of signifiers, but this does absolutely not require that the letter, in these very effects, for which it serves me as an instrument, should be primary. An examination is required less about this primary character, which is not even to be supposed, but about what in language calls the littoral to the literal.

Nothing of what I inscribed with the help of letters about the formations of the unconscious in order to rescue them from the way Freud formulates, states them, more simply as facts of language, nothing allows there to be confused, as has been done, the letter with the signifier. What I inscribed with the help of letters about the formations of the unconscious does not authorise making a signifier of the letter and of granting it, what is more, a primacy with regard to the signifier.

Such a confusing discourse could only arise from the discourse that is important to me, and precisely, which is important to me in another discourse that I pinpointed when the time had come as University discourse. In other words, as I have underlined sufficiently for a year and a half, I think, in other words knowledge put to use starting from the semblance.

The slightest feeling for the experience that I am warding off, can only be situated from a different discourse than that one. I should have protected the product of this discourse which I designated, no more, without admitting it, as mine. I was spared it, thank God, even though by bringing it to me, in the sense I mentioned earlier, I am being pestered.

If I found acceptable the models that Freud articulates in a project about how to describe the clearing, the drilling of imprecise routes, I would not for all that have taken up the metaphor of writing. And precisely, it is on this point of the *Project* that I do not find it

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acceptable. Writing is not an impression, despite everything that is being said in terms of a blah-blah about the famous *Wunderblock.*

When I took advantage of Letter 52, it was in order to read there what Freud was able to state under the term that he forges of WZ, *Wahrmehmungszeichen*, and to note that it was what he was able to find closest to the signifier at a time when Saussure had still not (119) brought to birth this famous signifier, which, all the same, does not date from him, because it dates from the Stoics. That Freud writes it there with two letters, since I moreover only write it with one, in no way proves that the letter is primary.

So then I am going to try to indicate to you today the core of what for us the letter appears to produce as a consequence, and of language, precisely from the fact that I say, that it dwells in whoever speaks. I will borrow its features from what in an economy of language allows to be outlined what advances, to my way of thinking, that literature may be in the process of turning towards *lituraterre*. You must not be surprised to see me setting about a literal demonstration because this means marching in step with the way in which the question is advanced. One might perhaps see in it, indeed see there being affirmed what a demonstration that I call literary might be. I am still a little bit at the edge. Why not, this time, throw myself into it?

I have just come back from a trip that I had wanted to make to Japan, because on a first, a first trip, I had experienced the littoral. You can understand me from what I said a little earlier about the *Umwelt* which I repudiated, precisely because of that, because of making the trip impossible, which, if you follow my formulae, would be to guarantee its real. Only there you are, it was premature. It is the departure that this makes impossible, unless we sing: "Let's go, let's go!" That is done a lot moreover. I would only note one moment of this trip, the one that as it happens I

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gathered, from what, from a new route, which as it happens I took simply because of the fact that the first time that I went there, it was simply prohibited. I have to admit that it was not on the outward journey, along the Arctic Circle, which traces this route for the aeroplane, that I managed to read what? What I was seeing of the Siberian plain.

I am in the process of proposing for you a Siberian trial (*un essai de sibériétique*). This trial would not have seen the light of day if the distrust of the Soviets, not in my regard, but with regard to aeroplanes, had allowed me to see the industries, the military installations which makes Siberia important. But anyway, this distrust, is a condition that we will call accidental. Why not even occidental, if one puts a little killing (*occire*) into it; what is being piled up in southern Siberia is what we are in for!

The only decisive condition is here precisely the condition of littoral. For me, because I am a little hard of hearing, it only operated on the return journey as being literally what Japan, from its letter, had no doubt done to me, a little bit too much tickling, which is just what is necessary for me to experience it. I say that I am (120) experiencing it because of course, in order to locate it, to anticipate it, I had already done it here, when I spoke to you a little bit about the Japanese tongue. About the fact that what properly creates this tongue, is writing, I already told you that.

What was required no doubt for that, was just this little bit too much that I needed in terms of what is called art should represent something. This stems from the fact of what Japanese painting shows here about its marriage to the letter, and very precisely in the form of calligraphy. I am fascinated by things that are suspended, *kakemono*, that is how it is said, things that are suspended on the wall of every museum over there, bearing the inscription of characters, Chinese in formation, that I know a little, very little

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about. But inasmuch as I knew it, it allowed me to measure what is elided in cursive writing where the particularity of each hand crushes the universal, in other words, taking up what I teach you, only takes its value from the signifier. You remember? The stroke is always vertical. It is still true even if there is no stroke.

So then, in cursive writing I cannot find the character, because I am still a novice; but this is not the important thing, because what I am calling this particularity can be based on a firmer shape. The important thing is what it adds to it. It is a dimension, or again, as I taught you to play on that, a *demansion*, where there dwells what I have already introduced to you in the last or the second last seminar, a word that I write to amuse myself as *papludun*. It is the *demansion* which you know allows me, it is all very well to say all that, from the little mathematical game of Peano, etc., and the way in which Frege has to tackle it to reduce the series of natural numbers, in inverted commas, to logic, the one then, from which I establish the subject in what I am going to call again today, because I am doing literature and I am happy, you are going to recognise it, I had written it in a form, in recent times, as the *Hun-en-peluce*. The Hun is of great use, it can be put in the place of what I call *l'Achose*, and that puts a stopper in it with the small o (*petit a*) which not by chance can be reduced like that, as I designate it, to a letter. At the level of calligraphy, this is the letter that is at stake in a wager, but which one? That is won with ink and a brush.

There you are, this is how it invincibly appeared to me in a circumstance that must be remembered, by the fact that it is necessary then that there should be distinguished erasure. Namely, that between the clouds, there appeared to me the trickling down which is the only trace to appear by operating in it still more than indicating the relief at this latitude in what one could call the Siberian plain. A plain that is really desolate, in the proper sense of (121) the word, of any vegetation, except the reflections, the

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reflections of this streaming which push into a shadow what does not reflect.

What is this trickling? It is a bouquet. It acts like a bouquet, in the fact that elsewhere I distinguished by its first feature and from the fact that it effaces. I said it one time, but people always forget a part of the thing, I said it in connection with the unary stroke, it is from the effacing of the stroke that the subject is designated. This is noticed then in two phases. It is necessary therefore that erasing should be distinguished from it.

Litura, Lituraterre. The erasing of any trace that was there before, this is what makes a land of the littoral. *Litura pure*, is the literal. Here, to produce this erasing, is to reproduce this half by which the subject subsists. Those who have been here for some time, but there must be fewer and fewer, ought to remember what one day I narrated about the adventures of half a chicken. To produce the only, definitive erasure, this is the exploit of calligraphy. You can always try, try to do simply what I am not going to do because I would fail, first of all because I have no brush. Try to make this horizontal bar, which is traced out from left to right, to represent by a stroke the unary one as a character, frankly. You will spend a long time finding out what erasure that is attacking and what is the suspense that arrests it, so that what you will do will be lamentable, it is hopeless for an Westerner. A different movement is necessary that can only be caught by being detached, from whatever you cross out.

Between centre and absence, between knowledge and enjoyment, there is littoral which only veers towards the literal from the fact that this bend is one you can take in the same way at every instant. It is only from that that you can hold yourself to be the agent who sustains it.

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What is revealed by my vision of streaming, by what dominates the erasure, is that by being produced between the clouds, it is conjugated at its source. It is indeed in Aristophanes' clouds that I am called to find what is involved in the signifier, I mean the semblance *par excellence*, since it is from its rupture that there rains down this effect from the fact that there is precipitated from it something that was a material in suspension.

It has to be said that the Japanese painting which I told you earlier mixed in calligraphy so very well, why? And that here there is no lack of clouds. It is from where I was at that moment that I really clearly understood the function of these golden clouds which literally block, hide a whole part of the scenes which in places, (122) places which are things which unfold in a different sense, the ones that are called *makemono*. They preside over the distribution of little scenes. Why? How can it be that these people who know how to draw, experience the need to mix them into this pile of clouds, if not precisely that this is what introduces the dimension of the signifier. And the letter which erases, is distinguished by being a rupture then, of the semblance, which dissolves whatever pretended to be a form, a phenomenon, a meteor. That's it, I already told you, that science operates at the start in the most tangible way on perceptible forms. But at the same time it must also be that in ridding them of what from this rupture constitutes enjoyment, namely, by dissipating from them what they sustain from this hypothesis, if I can express myself in this way, of enjoyment, which in fact constitutes the world, because the idea of the world, is that. To think that it is made up of such drives that moreover represent its void?

Well then, what is evoked in terms of enjoyment because of the fact that a semblance is broken, this is what in the real - this is the important point - presents itself in the real as furrowing (*ravinement*). This defines for you the way in which writing can be

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said to be in the real the furrowing of the signified, in other words the amount of semblance that has rained down in so far as it is what makes the signified. Writing does not trace out the signifier. It only goes back to it by taking a name, but exactly in the same way as this happens to all the things that have been named by the signifying battery after it has numbered them. Since, of course, I am not sure that my discourse is being understood, I am going, all the same, to have to pin it down by an opposition. Writing, the letter, is in the real, and the signifier, in the symbolic. Like that, this can act as a little jingle for you.

I come back to a later moment in the aeroplane. We are going to advance a little like that: I told you that it was on the return journey. So then there, what is striking is to see them appearing. There are other traces that one sees for their part being sustained in isobars; obviously, traces that are of the order of an embankment, anyway, in general, isobars. This makes them normal to those whose slope, one could say, stands out in the clearest relief, and is marked by curves.

Where I was, it was very clear, I had already seen at Osaka how the auto-routes seemed to come down from the sky, that is the only place that they were able to set them up like that, one above the other. There is a certain Japanese architecture, the most modern one, which is very well able to recapture the ancient. Japanese architecture consists essentially in the flapping of a bird's wing. This helped me to understand, to see right away that the shortest path between one point and another, would never have shown itself (123) to anyone, if there were not the cloud that quite frankly takes on the appearance of a road? Nobody in the world ever follows a straight line, neither man, nor the amoeba, nor the fly, nor the branch, nor anything at all. According to the latest news, we know that a beam of light does not follow it either, completely solidary as it is with the universal curvature.

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The straight line in all of this all the same inscribes something. It inscribes distance, but distance, according to Newton's laws, is absolutely nothing but an effective factor of a dynamic that we will call a cascade, the one that ensures that everything that falls follows a parabola.

So then, there is no straight line except in writing, of surveying except from the sky.

But they are both one and the other, in so far as they are such to sustain the straight line, they are artefacts because they only dwell in language. This all the same should not be forgotten. Our science is only operational from a streaming down of combined little letters and drawings.

Sous le pont Mirabeau, like under that of a journal that was mine in which I had put up as an ensign a bridge-ear borrowed from Horus Apollo, *sous le pont Mirabeau coule la Seine*, a primal scene, it is a scene such, do not forget, in re-reading Freud that there may beat in it the Roman V of five o'clock. It is in the *Wolfman*. But moreover that one does not enjoy it, is the misfortune of the interpretation.

That the symptom sets up the order on which our politics proves to be established - this is the step that it took - implies on the other hand that everything that is articulated of this order is open to interpretation. That is why we are quite right to put psychoanalysis under the heading of politics. And this may not be a very peaceful situation, if psychoanalysis proved to be more aware of what figured in politics up to now.

It would perhaps be enough, to put our hope elsewhere, which is what my men of letters do, if I can make them my companions. It would be enough for us to make a different use of writing than that

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of a tribune or tribunal in order for there to operate in it other words that we have to make up ourselves, that we would have to make our tribute.

I said, and I never forget it: there is no meta-language. Any logic is falsified by starting from a language-object, as it does not fail to do up to today. There is then no meta-language, but the writing that is fabricated from language might perhaps be the material that would bring about a strain and make me change my remarks. I see no other hope for those who are writing today.

(124) Is it possible in short to constitute from the littoral a discourse such that it is characterised, as I am putting the question this year, by not being emitted by a semblance? This is obviously the question that is only proposed in what is called *avant-garde* literature, which itself is a littoral fact and, therefore, is not sustained by a semblance, but for all that proves nothing, except, by showing the break that a discourse alone can produce. I say produce, put forward with a production effect, this is the schema of my quadrupeds of last year.

What a literature seems to claim in its ambition, is what I pinpoint as *lituraterrir*, it is to organise itself by a movement that it calls scientific. It is a fact that in science, writing has done marvels, and that everything shows that this marvel is not ready to run dry. Nevertheless, physical science finds itself, is going to find itself led to the consideration of the symptom in events by pollution. There are already scientists who are sensitive to it by the pollution of the part of the terrestrial that is called without any further critique, environment. This is the idea of Uxküll: *Umwelt*, but behaviourised, namely, completely cretinised.

In order to *litturaterrir* myself, I point out that in furrowing I created here images certainly but no metaphor: writing is this

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furrowing. What I wrote is included in it. When I talk about enjoyment, I legitimately invoke the audience I accumulate, and no less naturally the one I deprive myself of; the crowd you are keeps me busy. I prepared the furrowing.

That there should be included in the Japanese tongue, this is where I take things up again, a writing-effect, this is the important thing, offers us some resources to give an example of *lituratterrir*. The important thing is that the effect of writing remains attached to writing. That what conveys the writing effect in it is a specialised writing by the fact that in Japanese, this specialised writing can be read in two different pronunciations. In *oniomi* – I am not trying to bluff you, I will say as little Japanese as possible – *on-yomi* that is how it is called, and its pronunciation in character, is pronounced as such distinctly in *kun-yomi*, the way in which one says in Japanese what the character means.

But naturally you are going to walk straight into it, namely, that under the pretext that the character is a letter, you are going to believe that I am in the process of saying that in Japanese, the wreckage of the signifier flows on the river of the signified. It is the (125) letter and not the sign that here acts as a support to the signifier. But like anything else, by following the law of metaphor which I reminded you in recent times constitutes the essence of language, it is always moreover through it that language, discourse, catches anything whatsoever in the net of the signifier, therefore writing itself.

Only there you are! It is promoted from this to the function of a referent, just as essential as any things and this is what changes the status of the subject. It is through this that it takes its support from a constellated heaven and not simply from the unary trait for its fundamental identification. Well then! Precisely, there are too many of them, too many supports, it is the same thing as not to have

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any. That is why it takes its support, elsewhere, on 'thou'. The fact is in Japanese, you see all the grammatical forms for the slightest statement; to say something like that, anything whatsoever, there are more or less polite ways of saying it, according to the way I implicate him in the thou. I implicate him if I am Japanese. Since I am not Japanese, I do not do it, it would wear me out.

When you have seen - it is really within everyone's reach to learn Japanese - that the slightest thing is subject in it to variations in the statement, which are variations of politeness, you will have learned something. You will have learned that in Japanese, the truth reinforces the structure of fiction that I denote in it, precisely, by adding to it the laws of politeness.

Curiously, this seems to have as a result that there is nothing to defend against the repressed, because the repressed finds itself lodging in this reference to the letter.

In other words, the subject is divided by language, but one of its registers may be satisfied with the reference to writing and the other to the exercise of speech.

This no doubt is what gave my dear friend Roland Barthes this intoxicating feeling that with all his good manners, the Japanese subject envelops nothing, at least this is what he says in a way that I recommend to you, because it is a sensational work, *L'empire des signes*, he entitles it. In titles, people often make an incorrect use of terms. That is done for the editors. Which means obviously that it is the empire of semblances. It is enough to read the text to notice it.

The mythical Japanese, the little commonplace Japanese, I have been told, does not think much of it, at least that is what I heard over there. And in effect, however excellent this writing of Roland

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Barthes may be, I would oppose to it what I am saying today (126) namely, that nothing is more distinct from the void hollowed out by writing than the semblance. First of all by the fact that it is the first of my bowls that are always ready to give enjoyment a welcome, or at least to invoke it by its artifice. From our practices, nothing communicates less of itself than a particular subject who, when all is said and done, hides nothing. He only has to manipulate you, and I assure you that he does not fail to do so. For me it is a delight, because I adore that. You are an element among others of the ceremonial in which the subject is composed precisely by being able to decompose himself. The *bunraku*, perhaps some of you saw that sometime ago when they came to Paris. I went to see it again over there, I had already seen it the first time. Well then, the *bunraku* is the mainspring, it shows the very ordinary structure for those to whom it gives their very customs. You know that you see alongside the puppet clearly in view the people who are operating it, moreover as in the *bunraku*, everything that is said in a Japanese conversation may be read by a reciter. This is what must have relieved Barthes. Japan is the place where it is most natural to be supported by an interpreter, one is very happy, one can duplicate oneself with an interpreter, this does not require in any case an interpretation. You can imagine how relieved I was! Japanese, is the perpetual translation of the events of language.

What I love, is that the only communication that I had, outside the Europeans of course that I am able to understand with our usual misunderstanding, the only one that I had with a Japanese is also the only one which, there as elsewhere, might possibly be a communication, by not being a dialogue, it is the scientific paper (*communication*).

I went to see an eminent biologist whom I will not name, by reason of the Japanese rules of politeness, this encouraged him to show me his works, naturally, where they are done, on the blackboard. The

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fact that for lack of information I understood nothing about it, in no way rules out that what he wrote, his formulae, by being entirely valid, valid for the molecules of which my descendants will make themselves the subject without me ever having to know how I will transmit them to them which made it likely that for my part I classify them among living beings.

An asceticism of writing takes nothing away from the advantages that we can find in literary criticism. This seems to me, to close the loop on something more coherent, because of what I already put forward, this it seems to me can only get across by joining up with this impossible "it is written" from which there will be established perhaps one day the sexual relationship.

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Seminar 8: Wednesday 19 May 1971

If I begin with the abruptness, in short, of what I have to tell you, it could be explained as follows. The fact is that in what we are exploring, starting from a certain discourse, mine as it happens, mine in so far as it is that of the analyst, let us say that this determines functions, in other words, that the functions are only determined starting from a certain discourse. So then, at this level of functions determined by a certain discourse, I can establish the equivalence that writing is enjoyment (*l'écrit, c'est la jouissance*). Naturally, that can only be situated within this first articulation of functions determined by a discourse. Let us say that it holds exactly the same place within these functions.

This being stated quite abruptly, why? In order that you may put it to the test. You will see that it will always lead you somewhere. And even by preference to something exact. This of course does not dispense me from taking care to introduce you into it along suitable paths, namely, not those which justify it for me, given from where I speak to you, but those by which it can be explained. I suppose, I do not necessarily suppose, that I am addressing myself here always to analysts, besides, this is what accounts for the fact that my discourse is not easily followed. It is very precisely in so far as there is something that, in the discourse of the analyst, creates an obstacle to a certain type of inscription. This inscription, nevertheless, is what I leave, it is what I propose, it is what I hope will get across, will get

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across from a point, from which, as one might say, the analytic discourse takes on a new energy.

(128) So then, it is a matter then of making tangible how the transmission of a letter has a relationship with something essential, fundamental in the organisation of discourse whatever it may be, namely, enjoyment. For that of course, it is necessary that each time I get you into tune with the thing. How to do it, if not by recalling the basic example from which I started, namely, that it is very explicitly by studying the letter as such, in so far as what?, in so far as, as I said, it has a feminising effect, that I open my *Ecrits*. This letter in short, I underlined it again the last time functions very specifically in the fact that no one knows anything about its content, and that up to the end, when all is said and done, no one will know anything about it.

It is very exemplary. It is very exemplary in the fact that, naturally, it is only to the simpleton and even there, I think all the same it is only to the simpleton that the idea has not come, that this letter is something as summary, as crude, as something that might bear witness to what is commonly called a sexual relationship. Even though it may have been written by a man and it is said and it is underlined by a nobleman, by a nobleman and to a Queen, it is obvious that it is...that this is not what creates the drama, and that this letter, is in the style of the Court, as I might say, namely, something well grounded, is the best definition that can be given about the distribution of enjoyment. It is in the style of the Court that in this distribution, it puts what one can call properly speaking the sexual relationship in its place, namely, quite obviously, the lowest one. No one picks out as remarkable the services that a great lady may in this respect receive from a lackey.

With the Queen, of course, and precisely because it is the Queen, things ought to have a different emphasis. But first of all, then, it is

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posited, what we know from experience, is that a man born if I might say from a certain ancestry is one who cannot take umbrage at a liaison of his wife except in the measure of decency, namely, of respecting the proper forms. The only thing that could raise an objection to it is of course the introduction of bastards into the line of descent, but even that, after all, may serve to rejuvenate the bloodline. We see ourselves here obviously, in the framework that, even though it is not especially present in contemporary society, is nonetheless exemplary and fundamental in order to think out what is involved in social relationships. By this it can be see, I am saying in short that, there is nothing like an order founded on artifice to make there appear this element which here, in appearance, is precisely the (129) one which must appear irreducible in the real, namely, the function of need. If I have told you that, there is an order in which it is altogether put in its place, that a subject however highly placed, reserves for himself this irreducible share of enjoyment, the minimal share that cannot be sublimated, as Freud explicitly puts it, only an order founded on artifice, I specified the Court, the Court in so far as it duplicates the artefact of nobility with this second artefact of an organised distribution of enjoyment, and it is only there that need can decently find its place. The need explicitly specified as such is sexual need.

Only what appears on the one hand to specify the natural, as what, from a point of view that is a biological theorising of the sexual relationship, might make of need the starting point for what must result from it, namely, reproduction, we note that if the artefact is satisfying for a certain limited type of theorising on the one hand, on the other, it obviously yields to the fact that reproduction may moreover in this case not be, in quotes, a 'legitimate' reproduction. This need, this irreducibility in the sexual relationship, one can admit, of course, that it always exists, and Freud affirms it. But what is certain, is that it is not measurable - as long as it is not explicitly, and it can only be so in an artefact, in the artefact of the relation to the

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Other with a capital O – it is not measurable, and it is indeed in this element of indetermination that there is signed what is fundamental, which is very precisely that the sexual relationship is not inscribable, cannot be grounded as a relationship.

This indeed is why the letter, the letter from which I start to open my *Ecrits*, is designated by the fact that it is, and by the fact of how it indicates everything that Freud himself develops, which is that if, if it can be used for something that is of the order of sex, it is certainly not a sexual relationship, but a relationship, let us say, that is sexed (*sexué*). The difference between the two is the following. It is that, this is what Freud proved, the decisive thing he contributed, the fact is that by the mediation of the unconscious, we glimpse that everything that belongs to language has to deal with sex, is in a certain relationship with sex, but very specifically in that the sexual relationship cannot, at least up to the present moment, in any way be inscribed in it. The so called sexualisation by Freudian doctrine of what is involved in functions that are called subjective, provided one situates them clearly, situates them in the order of language, the so-called sexualisation consists essentially in the fact that what ought to result from language, namely, that the sexual relation in some way or (130) other should be able to be inscribed in it, shows precisely, and this in fact, shows its failure, it is not inscribable. You already see functioning here something that forms part of this effect of setting aside, this effect of division which is the one with which we still regularly have to deal, and it is indeed for that reason that you must in a way form yourself in it. The fact is that I state for example that for the sexual relationship, it is precisely in the measure that something fails (*échoue*), fails because it is – is it stated in language? - but precisely what I said is not 'stated', it is 'inscribable', inscribable in that what is required, that what is required for it to have a function, is that from language, something can be produced which is explicitly a writing as such of the function. Namely, this

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something that I already once symbolised for you in the simplest fashion, namely, f, in a certain relationship with x (f→x).

So then, at the moment of saying that language is this something that does not take into account the sexual relationship, how does it not take it into account? By the fact that the inscription that it is able to comment, there is no way that this inscription can be, because it is in this that it consists, can be what I define as an effective inscription of something which is supposed to be the sexual relationship in so far as it would put into relationship the two poles, the two terms which would be entitled man and woman, in so far as this man and this woman are sexes respectively specified as masculine and feminine, in whom, in what? – in a being *who speaks*. In other words, who dwelling in language, draws from it this usage which is that of the word.

That is why, that is why that here it is not unimportant to put forward the letter, properly speaking, as being in a certain relationship, a relationship of a woman with what in terms of written law, is inscribed in the context where the thing happens. Namely, because of the fact that she is, under the title of Queen, the image of the woman as conjoined to the King. It is in as far as something is incorrectly symbolised here, and typically around the relationship as sexual – and it is not indifferent that precisely it can only be incarnated in beings of fiction – it is in this measure that the fact that a letter, that a letter should be addressed to her, takes on its value, takes on the value that I designate to read myself, to state myself in my own remarks, *this sign*, this sign, I mean the letter, is indeed that of the woman "because she valorises her being in it, by establishing it outside the law, which still contains her through the effect of its origins, in a position of signifier, indeed of fetish". It is clear that without the introduction of psychoanalysis, such a statement, which (131) is nevertheless the one from which there proceeds, I would say, the revolt of the woman, such a statement saying that the law always

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contains her through the effect of her origins in a position of signifier, even of fetish, could not of course, I repeat, be stated outside the introduction of psychoanalysis.

So then, it is precisely in this that the sexual relationship is, as I might say, made into an affair of state (*étatisé*), namely, by being incarnated in that of the King and the Queen, highlighting the fictional structure of the truth, it is starting from there that the letter takes on its function, its effect, which is surely posited by being in relationship with deficiency, the deficiency marked by a certain arbitrary and fictive promotion of the sexual relationship, and that it is here that, taking on its value, it poses its question. It is all the same an opportunity here – you should not consider that this is connected in some way in a direct fashion with what I have just recalled, but this sort of jump, of change of phase, is properly required by the point to which I want to lead you, it is an opportunity to mark that here there is confirmed, of course, there is confirmed the fact that the truth only progresses, only progresses from a structure of fiction. Namely, that precisely, in its essence, it is from the fact that there is promoted somewhere a structure of fiction, which is properly the very essence of language, that something can be produced which is what? But precisely, this sort of questioning, this sort of pressure, of circumscribing, which puts the truth, as I might say, up against the wall of verification.

That is nothing other than the dimension of science. This is what shows precisely that as regards the path by which there is motivated, the path by which we see science progressing, the fact is that logic plays no small part in it. Whatever may be the originally, fundamentally, basically fictitious character of what makes up the material by which language is articulated, it is clear that there is a path that is called verification. It is what is attached to grasping where the fiction, as I might say, comes up short, and what brings it to a halt. It is clear that here, whatever it may be that has allowed us

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to write, and you will later see what that means, the progress of logic, I mean the written path along which it has progressed, it is clear that this checking is quite efficacious because it is inscribed within the very system of a fiction. It is called contradiction.

That if science apparently has progressed quite differently than along the path of tautology, this in no way changes the import of my remark, namely, that the summoning, brought to bear from a certain point, on truth to be verifiable, is precisely what has forced the (132) abandonment of all sorts of other supposedly intuitive premises, and that if – I am not going to go back on it today, I have sufficiently insisted on the characteristic of everything that preceded, opened up the path to the Newtonian discovery, for example – it is quite precisely from the fact that no fiction will prove to be satisfying other than one of them which precisely had to abandon any recourse to intuition and limit itself to something that can be inscribed. This therefore is why we have to attach ourselves to what is involved in the inscribable in the relationship to verification. In order to finish, of course, with what I said about the effect of the letter in *The purloined letter*, what did I explicitly say? That it feminises those who find themselves in the position of being in its shadow.

Of course, it is here that we touch on the importance of this notion, the function of the shadow, in as much as already the last time I stated to you what precisely a writing is, I mean something that presented itself in a literal, or literary, form. The shadow, in order to be produced, needs a source of light. Yes, and what I did was only tangible for you because of what is involved in the *Aufklärung*, from something that preserves the structure of fiction. I am speaking about the historical epoch, of course, which was not short, and it may be of use to us, it is so here, and this is what I am doing, to retrace its paths, or to take them up again. But in themselves, it is clear that what creates the light, is precisely what, starting from this field, defines itself as being that of the truth. And it is as such, as such a way, that

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the light that it spreads at every instant, even if it has this effect, effective by the fact that what is opaque in it projects a shadow, and that it is this shadow which carries the effect, that we always have to question this truth itself about its structure as fiction.

It is in this way that when all is said and done it emerges that, as it is stated, stated explicitly in this *écrit*, the letter, of course, it is not the woman, the woman whose address it bears, that it satisfies in reaching its destination, but the subject, namely, very precisely, to redefine it, what is divided in the phantasy. Namely, reality in so far as it is generated by a structure of fiction. This indeed is how the tale ends, at least in the way that in a second text, my one, I redo it, and it is from that that we should start to further question again what is involved in the letter. It is very precisely in the measure that this has never been done that, in order to do it, I ought to prolong in the same way this discourse on the letter.

(133) There you are! What we have to start from is all the same the fact that it is not for nothing that I summon you, that I call on you, to neglect nothing that is produced in the domain of logic. It is certainly not that you should oblige yourselves, as one might say, to follow its constructions and its detours. It is in the fact that, nowhere like in these constructions that entitle themselves "symbolic logic", nowhere does there better appear a deficit of any possibility of reflection. I mean that nothing is more embarrassed, this is well known is it not, than the introduction of a treatise of logic, the impossibility of logic to posit itself in a justifiable way is something that is quite striking. This is why the experience of reading these treatises, and they are all the more striking, of course, in the measure that they are more modern, as they are more in the vanguard of what effectively and very effectively constitutes a progress of logic. This is a project of the inscription of what is called logical articulation, the articulation of logic itself being incapable of defining itself or its goals, or its source, nor anything whatsoever that even resembles a [scientific] subject. It

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is very strange. It is very strange and it is precisely this that makes it very suggestive, because this indeed is what makes it worthwhile to touch, to explore, to explore what is involved in it, what is involved in something which only situates itself undoubtedly with respect to language. And to grasp that if perhaps in this language, nothing that is only ever put forward in an awkward way as not being a correct usage of this language, can very precisely not be stated except by not being able to justify itself, or by only being able to justify itself in a most confused way, by all sorts of attempts like, for example, those which consist in dividing language into an object language and a metalanguage. This is completely contrary to what is immediately demonstrated, namely, that there is no way for a single instant of speaking about this so called object language without using of course, not a metalanguage, but well and truly a language which is an everyday language. But in this very failure there can be exposed what is involved in the articulation that specifically has the closest relationship with the functioning of language, namely, the following articulation, which is, namely, that the relationship, the sexual relationship, cannot be written.

So then, in this respect, and with the goal only, as I might say, of making some movements that recall to us the dimension in which we move around, I will recall how first of all there is presented, there is presented what inaugurates the outline of logic, as formal logic, in (134) Aristotle. Naturally I am not going to take up again for you – even though it would be very instructive, it would be very instructive but after all, each one of you can simply take the trouble to open the *Prior analytics*, you can test yourself against this reprise. Open then the *Prior analytics*, and you will see what a syllogism is. And after all it is from the syllogism that we must start, at least it is from there that I am taking things up again, since at our second last meeting, it was on this that I ended.

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I do not want to take it up by giving examples, because we are limited by time for that, by giving examples of all the forms of the syllogism. Let it be enough for us to highlight rapidly what is involved in the Universal and the Particular, and quite simply in their affirmative form. I am going to take the syllogism described as *Darii*, namely, made up of one Universal affirmative and two Particulars, and I am going to recall to you everything that is involved in a certain way of presenting things. Well then, it is simply that, here nothing in any case can function, can function except by substituting into the texture of discourse, to substitute for the signifier the hole made by replacing it by the letter. Because, if we state the following, just taking *Darii*, that, to use Aristotle's terms, *"every man is good"*, the "every man" is the Universal and I have sufficiently underlined for you, sufficiently prepared you in any case to understand the fact that I can with nothing else recall, that the Universal does not have, in order to stand up, the need for the existence of any man. *"Every man is good"* may mean that there is no man who is not good, everything that is not good is not a man, right? Second articulation: "*Some animals are men*", and third articulation, which is called the conclusion, the second being the minor, "*therefore some animals are good*".

It is clear that this specifically only holds up from the usage of the letter for the reason that, it is clear that, unless they are supported by a letter, there is no equivalence between the "every man", the "every man" subject of the Universal, which here plays the role of what is called the middle term, and this same middle term at the place where it is employed as an attribute, namely, that "some animals are men". Because in truth, this distinction, which deserves to be made, nevertheless demands a lot of care. The man of "every man", when he is the subject, implies a function of a Universal which very precisely only its symbolic status gives it as a support. Namely, that something is stated as "man".

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(135) Under the species of the attribute and to sustain that some animals are men, it is necessary of course, it is the only thing that distinguishes them, to state that what we call "man" among the animals, is very precisely this type of animal which happens to inhabit language. Of course, it is justifiable in that case to posit that man is good. It is a limitation, it is a limitation very precisely by the fact that the thing on which there can be grounded that man is good depends on the fact, brought out a long time ago, and before Aristotle, that the idea of *good* can only be established from language. For Plato, it is at the foundation of it; there is no language, possible articulation, since for Plato, language is the world of ideas, there is no articulation possible without this primary idea of the good. It is quite possible to question differently what is involved in the good in language, and simply in this case, to have to deduce the consequences which will result from it for the universal position of the fact that "man is good". As you know, this is what Meng-Tzu does, and it was not for nothing that I put him forward in my previous lectures. Good, what does that mean? Good for what? Or is it simply to say, as has been said for some time "you are very kind, *vous êtes bon*". If things have got to a certain point that, in the putting in question of what is truth and, moreover, discourse, it is indeed perhaps in effect this change of emphasis that has come about as regards the use of the word "good". Good, good! No need to specify: good for the services, good for war, is saying too much about it. The "you are good" has its absolute value. In fact, this is the central link that there is good in discourse; once you dwell in a certain type of discourse, well then you are ready (*bon*) for it to command you.

This indeed is how we are led to the function of the master signifier, which I underlined is not inherent in language in itself, and that language only requires, anyway....I mean, only makes possible a certain determined number of discourses and that all of those at least

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up to the present, I articulated especially for you last year, that none of them eliminates the function of the master signifier.

To say that some animals are good, is obviously in these conditions not at all a simply formal conclusion. And this was why I underlined earlier that the use of logic, whatever it may state itself, cannot in any way be reduced to a tautology. That some animals are good precisely, is not limited to those who are men, as the existence of (136) those that are called domestic animals implies. And it is not for nothing that for some time I have underlined that you cannot say that they do not have some speech. If they lack language, and, of course, much more the resources of discourse, that does not render them any less subject of the word. It is even this that distinguishes them and that makes them means of production. This, as you see opens a door for us that might lead us a little bit further. I would point out to you that...I leave it to your meditation that in the commandments described as the Decalogue, the woman is assimilated to the aforesaid in the following form: "You shall not covet the wife of your neighbour nor his ox, nor his ass", and anyway there is an enumeration which is very precisely that of the means of production. This is not to give you an opportunity to snigger but to reflect by bringing together what I am pointing out to you here in passing, with what formerly, formerly I wanted to say about what was expressed in the commandments, namely, nothing other than the laws of the word, which limits their interest. But it is very important precisely to limit the interest of things in order to know why, really, they have an effect.

Good! Well then, this having been said, faith, as well as I could, namely, by a clearing of the way which is as usual, is that not so, the one I am forced to make of the inverted A, of the buffalo head, I pass on to the next stage, namely what allows us to inscribe the progress of logic. You know that something happened which moreover is very, very beautiful, like that, a little bit more than 2000 years ago,

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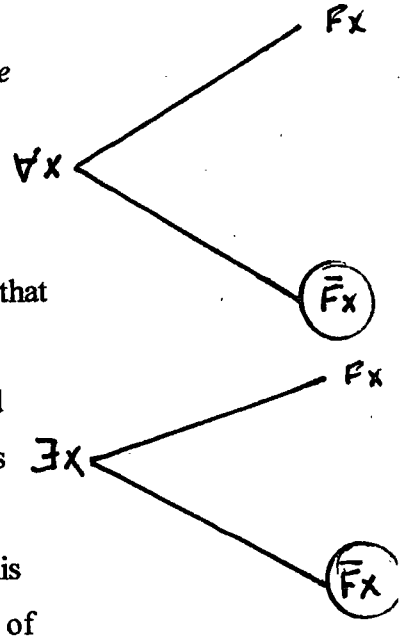
something happened that is called a reinscription of this first attempt made by means of holes in the right place. Namely, by the replacing of terms by letters, terms described as major, minor and middle terms, the terms described as extreme and middle terms, major and minor being the proposition, I apologise for this lapse. You know that with the logic inaugurated by de Morgan and Boole, we have come, it was only inaugurated by them and not pushed to its final point, we arrived at the formulae described as quantifiers.

- Who cannot hear? Nobody? How long have you not been able to hear me?

- When you were at the board.

- So then up to then it was OK? I am grateful to you for telling me when it's not working out. So then listen, I am going to write it rapidly and I'll come back here.



(137) Good. So then I have made these little circles to show you that the bar is not a bar between two f(x), which would besides mean absolutely nothing, and that the bar that you find in the right hand column between each one, each one of the pairs of f(x), this bar is uniquely linked to the f(x) which is below, namely, signifies its negation. Time is passing quicker than I had imagined, so that this may force me to shorten things a little. The fruit of the operation of complete inscription, the one that was allowed, suggested, by the progress of mathematics, it is because mathematics managed through algebra to be entirely written, that the idea of making use of the letter for something other than for making holes came. Namely, of writing in a different way our four kinds of propositions, in so far as they are centred on the All, on some, namely, on words that it would really not be difficult to show what ambiguities they supported. So then, starting from that idea, people wrote what presented itself first of all as subject. On condition of affecting it with this inverted A, we could

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take it as the equivalent of "every x" and that henceforth, what was at stake, was to know in what measure a certain "every x" could satisfy a relationship of function.

I think that I do not need to underline here – nevertheless I have to, otherwise all of this will appear empty – that the thing has altogether its full sense in mathematics, namely, that precisely in so far as we remain on the letter where there lies the power of mathematics, this x on the right, in so far as it is unknown, can legitimately be posited, or not posited, as being able to find its place in what happens to be the function that corresponds to it; namely, where the same x is taken as a variable. To go quickly, because I told you that it was getting late, I am going to illustrate it. I underlined, I said, I stated, that the x at the left, in the ∀ of x specifically, is an unknown. Let us take, for example, the root of a second-degree equation. Can I write, for every root of a second-degree equation, that it can be inscribed in this (138) function that defines x as a variable, the one from which real numbers are established? For those who might be completely like that, for whom this is really a language they have never heard, I underlined that real numbers, are in any case, for them, all the numbers they know. Namely, including irrational numbers even if they do not know what they are. They should simply know that real numbers, anyway, are done with, they have been given a status; since they do not suspect what imaginary numbers are, I am only giving them an indication to give them an idea that it is worthwhile making a function of real numbers. Good! Well then, it is quite clear that it is not true that for any x, namely, any root of a second-degree equation, one can say that every root of a second-degree equation satisfies the function on which real numbers are founded. Quite simply because there are roots of second-degree equations that are imaginary numbers, which do not form part of the function of real numbers.

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Good! What I want to underline for you is the following, it is that with that, people think they have said enough. Well then, no. Enough has not been said, because moreover for everything that is involved in the relationships of every x as well as the relationship that people think they can substitute for some – with which one can be satisfied on occasion – namely, that there exist roots of the second-degree equation which satisfy the function of the real number, and also, that there exist roots of the second-degree equation that do not satisfy it. But in one case as in the other, what results, far from us being able to see here the purely formal transposition, the complete homology of Universal and Particular affirmatives and negatives respectively, the fact is, that what this means, is not that the function is not true. What can be meant by the fact that a function is not true? From the moment that you write a function, this function is what it is. Even if it goes way beyond the function of real numbers. This means that as regards the unknown that constitutes the root of the second-degree equation, I cannot write to lodge in it the function of real numbers. This is something quite different to the Universal negative, whose properties moreover were well designed for us to put it in suspense, as I sufficiently underlined at one time. It is exactly the same at the level of *there exists an x,* there exists an x in connection with which, there exist certain x's, certain roots of the second-degree equations in connection with which I can write the function described as real numbers by saying that they satisfy it. There are others in (139) connection with which – it is not a matter of denying the function of real numbers – but in connection with which I cannot write the function of real numbers.

Well then, this is going to introduce us into the third stage which is the one, in short, that everything that I have said to you today is designed, of course, to introduce you to. The fact is, as you have clearly seen, I slipped quite naturally, by trusting the memory of what it is a matter of re-articulating, I slipped over to writing, namely, that the function, with its little bar above, symbolised something

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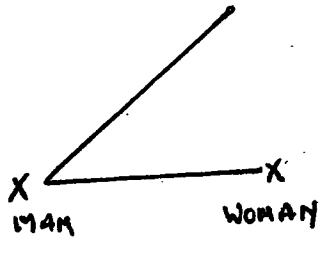
completely inept with respect to what I had effectively to say. You have perhaps noticed that, it never entered my head, at least up to the present, nor yours either, to think that the bar of negation perhaps had something to do, to say, not in the right-hand column but in the left. Let us try, what advantage can we draw from it? What can we have to say about the fact that the function did not vary, let us call it Φx, as it happens, and to put, which we have never had to do up to the present, the bar of negation. It can be said or indeed written. Let us begin by saying it: "It is not about every x that the function Φ of x can be written; it is not from an existing x that the function of Φ of x can be written".

$$\forall x \,.\, \overline{\Phi} x$$

There you are! I still have not said whether it was *inscribable* or not. But in expressing myself in this way, I am stating something whose only reference is the existence of writing. In a word, there is a world between the two negations, the one which ensures that I do not write it, that I exclude it, and, as someone who was a rather subtle grammarian formerly expressed it, it is *forclusive*. The function will not be written. *I want to know nothing about it.* The other is *discordant*. It is not in so far as there is a whole x that I can write or not write Φ of x; it is not in so far as there exists an x that I can write or not write $\overline{\Phi}$ of x.

This is very properly what puts us at the heart of the impossibility of writing what is involved in the sexual relationship. Because after there has subsisted for some time as regards this relationship, the well known structures of fiction, those on which there repose all religions in particular, we have come, and this through analytic experience, to the foundation of the fact that this relationship cannot work without a third term, which is properly speaking the phallus. Naturally I mean, (140) as I might say, a certain little understanding being formulated that this third term, is self-evident; precisely there is a third term, and



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this is why there must be a relationship! It is very difficult, of course, to image that, to show that there is something unknown there, man. There is something unknown here, woman. And that the third term *qua* third term, is precisely characterised by the fact, which is precisely, that it is not a middle term (*médium*), that if one links it to one of the two terms, the term of man for example, one can be certain that it will not communicate with the other, and inversely. That it is specifically this which is the characteristic of the third term. That naturally, even if the function of attribute was one day invented, why would it not be in relationship, in the first ridiculous steps of the structure of the semblance, that every man is phallic, every woman is not so. Now what has to be established, is something quite different. It is that *some man* is, starting from something that the second formula expresses here, starting from the fact that it is not as a particular that he is so. Man is a phallic function in so far as he is every man. But as you know, there are the greatest doubts to be had about the fact that *every man* exists. That is what is at stake: it is that he can only be so under the heading of *every man*, namely, of a signifier, nothing more.

$$\overline{\exists x} \cdot \overline{\Phi x}$$

And that on the contrary, what I stated, what I told you, is that for the woman, what is at stake is exactly the contrary. Namely, what is expressed by the discordant statement above, the one that I only wrote as I might say by not writing it. Because I am underlining that what is at stake is a discordant which is only sustained by the statement, it is that the woman, the woman can only fill her place in the sexual relationship, she can only be it under the heading of *a-woman, d'une-femme*. As I strongly emphasised, there is no *every woman*.

What I wanted to open up today, to illustrate for you, is that logic carries the mark of the sexual impasse, and that by following it in its

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(141) movement, in its progress, namely, in the field where it appears to have least to do with what is at stake in what is articulated as regards our experience, namely, analytic experience, you will discover in it the same impasses, the same obstacles, the same gaps, and in a word the same absence of the closure of a fundamental triangle.

I am astonished that things, I mean time, has gone so quickly, with what I had to open out for you today and that I now have to interrupt myself. I think that it will be easy for you perhaps before we meet again on the second Wednesday of the month of June, to notice for yourselves the appropriateness of this, from which it results, from which it results, for example, that nothing can be grounded about the status of man, I mean seen from analytic experience, except by constructing artificially, mythically, this *every man* with this presumed one, the mythical father of *Totem and Taboo*, namely, the one who is capable of satisfying the enjoyment of *all the women*.

But inversely, there are consequences in the position of the woman, in the fact, that it is only, starting from being *a-woman* that she can be established in what is inscribable by not being so. Namely, what is involved in the sexual relationship remaining gaping open, and that there arrives the following, so easy to read in what is involved in the so precious function of hysterics. The hysterics are the ones who, as regards what is involved in the sexual relationship, *tell the truth*. It is difficult to see how this path of psychoanalysis could have opened up if we had not had them. That neurosis – that one neurosis at the very least, I will demonstrate it also for the other – that one neurosis should not be strictly the point at which there is articulated the truth of a failure, which is no less true anywhere else than where the truth is told. This is where we should start from to give its meaning to the Freudian discovery. What the hysteric articulates is, of course, that as regards constructing the *every man*, she is just as capable as the *every man* himself, namely, by imagination. So then because of that,

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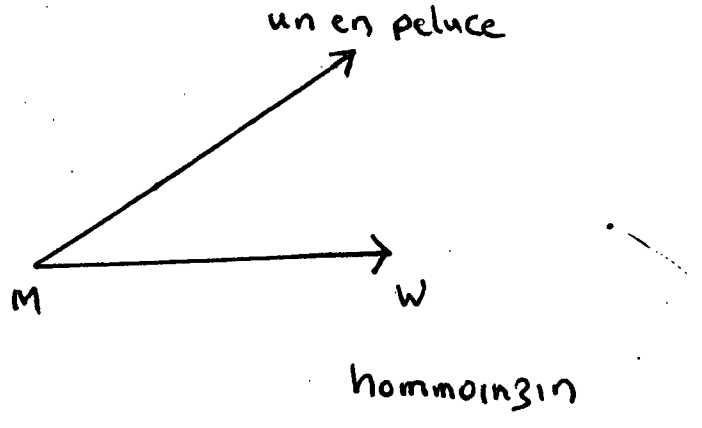
she does not need him. But if by chance the phallus interests her, namely, what she sees herself as castrated of, as Freud sufficiently underlined, only by the progress of the treatment, of analytic treatment, she only has to put up with it. Because we have to believe that she has this enjoyment, that she has it herself, and that if by chance sexual relationships interest her, she has to be interested in this third element, the phallus. And since she can only be interested in it through the relationship to the man, in so far as it is not sure that he even has one, her whole policy will be turned towards what I call having *at least one* of them.

(142) This notion of *at least one*, it is on this, good God, that I end, because the time shows me my limit. You will see that I will subsequently, of course, have to put it in function with what, of course, you already see there, already articulated, namely, that of the *un en peluce*, which does not come only from here, is that not so, as I wrote it last time: *un en peluce*. It is not for nothing that I wrote it like that. I think that this may all the same have some echoes for some people. We will write the *au-moins-un* as essential function of the relationship, in so far as it situates the woman with respect to the key third point of the phallic function, in this way because it is inaugural. It inaugurates a dimension which is very precisely the one on which I insisted for a discourse which might not be a semblance, the *hommoinzin*.



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Seminar 9: Wednesday 9 June 1971

I am going to dwell today on something that I took the trouble to write out. There you are. I am not saying this, simply like that, in passing. It is not superfluous. I will allow myself, like that eventually, to hum something about some term or other of writing (*l'écrit)*. But if you have sufficiently heard what I have been tackling this year about the function of writing, well then, I will have no need to justify any further that it is effectively an act. In effect it is not a matter of indifference that what I am going to say now is written. It has absolutely not the same import if I simply say or if I tell you that *I wrote*.....

- We can't hear you!

A man – can you hear me? – and a woman can understand one another, I am not saying no to that; they can as such hear one another crying out. That would be a jest if I had not *written* it. The written supposes that at least you have some hint, at least some of you, of what I said at another time about the cry. I cannot go back on it. It can happen that they cry out, in the case where they do not otherwise succeed in understanding one another, otherwise, namely, about an affair which is the test of their understanding. There is no lack of these affairs, including on occasion - this is the best of them - understanding in bed. There is no lack of these affairs, certainly, then, and this is why they lack something, namely, that to make oneself understood as man, as woman, which means sexually, would the man and the woman only understand one another by saying nothing? There is no question of that, because the man, the woman,

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have no need to speak to be caught up in a discourse. As such, as such, drawing on the same term as I used earlier, as such, they are facts of discourse. A smile here would be enough, it would seem, to (144) posit that they are not just that. No doubt, and who does not agree. But that they are also that, effects of discourse, fixates the smile and it is only in this way, fixated by this remark, that the smile on ancient statues finds its meaning. Infatuation, for its part, sniggers. It is in a discourse, then, that natural men and women, as one might say, have to valorise themselves as such.

There is no discourse except a semblance. If that was not self-evident, I exposed it, and I will recall how it is articulated. The semblance is only stated starting from the truth. This truth, no doubt, is never evoked in science. That is no reason for us to be any more concerned about it. It can do quite well without us. In order to make itself heard, it is enough to say, "I speak", and people believe it because it is true: whoever speaks, speaks. The only wager, I am recalling what I said about the wager, illustrating it with Pascal, the only wager is about what it says. As truth it can only say the semblance about enjoyment, and it wins over sexual enjoyment on every occasion.

I would like here, to put on the board for the eventual use of those who have not come these last times, the algebraic figures with which I thought I could punctuate what was at stake in the bind (*coinçage*) to which one is led, by writing what is involved in the sexual relationship.

$$\overline{\forall x}.\,\Phi x \qquad \overline{\exists x}.\,\overline{\Phi x}$$

The two bars put on the symbols on the left and with which there are respectively situated everything that is capable of answering to the semblance of sexual enjoyment, the two bars of negation, as they say, are such kind that precisely they are not to be written because what cannot be written, one quite simply does not write. One can say that

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they are not to be written, that the function of x cannot be written about *every x*, and that it is from *this is not all* that the woman establishes herself. There does not exist an x which satisfies the function from which there is defined the variable of being the function of x, that it does not exist, it is from this that there can be formulated what is involved in the man, in the male I mean. But precisely here the negation only has the function which is described as the *Verneinung*, namely, that it is only posited by having first of all put forward that there exists *some man*, and that it is with respect to *every woman* that a woman is situated. This is a reminder. That does not form part of what I have written which I am now taking up again.

(145) That I am taking up again. Which means that – I see that it is rather widespread, you are quite right in fact to be taking notes, the only important thing about writing is that afterwards you can situate yourself with respect to it. Good! Well then! You would do well to follow me in my discipline of the name, *n.o.m.* I will have to come back to it, especially the next time which will be the session with which we will conclude this year. What is proper to a name, is to be a proper name, even for a drop (*tombé*) among others for the use of a common noun, it is not a waste of time to find a proper use for it. And when a name has remained sufficiently proper, have no hesitation, take the example, and call the thing by its name, *the Freudian thing* for example, as I did, as I like to imagine you know. I will come back to it the next time. To name something is a summons, moreover in what I wrote, the Freudian thing in question, stands up and struts its stuff. I am not the one who dictates to it. It would even be perfect peace. Like the perfect peace of the semblance to which so many lives tie themselves. If I were not as a man, in the masculine, exposed here to the wind of castration. Re-read my text. The truth for its part, my unscrewable (*imbaisable*), partner is certainly exposed to the same wind. It even carries it: to be up to date (*dans le vent*) is that. But this wind does not make the slightest difference to it. For the reason that enjoyment is of little

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account to it. Because it leaves truth to the semblance. This semblance, for its part, also has a name, taken up from the mysterious times when the mysteries were being played out, nothing more, where it named the knowledge presupposed by fecundity and as such offered to adoration in the figure of the semblance of an organ. This semblance exposed by pure truth is, we have to recognise, rather phallic (*assez phalle*), rather involved in what for us is initiated by the virtue of coitus, namely, the selection of genotypes, with the reproduction of the phenotype and everything that results from it, sufficiently involved then to merit this ancient name of phallus. Even though it is clear that the inheritance that it covers nowadays is reduced to the acephalic nature of this selection, in other words the impossibility of subordinating the enjoyment described as sexual to that which *sub rosa* is supposed to specify the choice of the man and the woman taken as carriers each one of a precise batch of genotypes. Because in the best of cases, it is the phenotype that guides this choice. In truth, make no mistake, a proper name, because the phallus is still one, is only completely stable on the map where it designates a desert. These are the only things on a map that do not change their name. It is remarkable that even the deserts produced in the name of a religion, which is not rare, are never designated by the (146) name that was devastating for them. A desert is only re-baptised by being fecundated. This is not the case for sexual enjoyment, which the progress of science does not seem to be able to conquer for knowledge. It is on the contrary by means of the dam that it constitutes to the advent of the sexual relationship in discourse that its place was emptied out until, in psychoanalysis, it became obvious.

Such is, in the sense that this word has in Frege's logic *die Bedeutung des Phallus*. This indeed is why – I have my little tricks, huh? – it was in German, because it was in Germany, that I carried the message to which this title corresponds in my *Ecrits*, and it was to honour the centenary of the birth of Freud. It was a lovely thing in

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this country that was chosen out to be the place where this message had its resonance, the bewilderment that it produced. You cannot have the slightest idea, now that you are all strolling around with something like that under your arm. At that time, *die Bedeutung des Phallus* produced an effect. To say that I was expecting it would mean nothing, at least in my tongue. My strength is to know what it means to wait. As regards the bewilderment I am talking about, I am not taking blaming here the 25 years of racial cretinisation. This would only be to sanction that these 25 years have triumphed everywhere. I would insist rather that this *die Bedeutung des Phallus* is in reality a pleonasm. In language there is no *Bedeutung* other than the phallus. Language in its function as an existent, only connotes, in the final analysis, I said connote, huh, the impossibility of symbolising the sexual relationship among the beings that inhabit it, that inhabit language, by reason of the fact that it is from this habitat that they are able to speak. And let no one forget what I said, because speech, henceforth, is not the privilege of these beings that inhabit it that they evoke speech in everything that they dominate by the effect of discourse. It begins with my dog, for example, the one that I have been speaking about for a long time, and extends very far. The eternal silence, as someone or other has said, of infinite space, will not, like many others, other eternities, have lasted more than an instant. There is a hell of a lot of talk in the zone of the new astronomy, the one that was opened up immediately after this little remark by Pascal. It is because language is only constituted from a single *Bedeutung* that it borrows its structure, which consists in the fact that one can only, once one inhabits it, make use of it for metaphor, from which there result all these mythical insanities on which its inhabitants live, for metonymy, from which they take the little bit of reality that remains to them, under the form of surplus enjoying.

(147) Now this, what I have just said, only gets its stamp in history, once writing has appeared, and this is never simply an inscription,

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even if it takes on the appearance of what is put forward in the audio-visual. Writing from its origins, up to its last protean techniques, is only something that is articulated as bone (*os*) of which language is the flesh. And this indeed is how it proves that enjoyment, sexual enjoyment, has no bone, which we were already left in no doubt about by the habits of the organ which cuts such a comical figure in the speaking male. But writing, for its part, not language, writing provides a bone for all the enjoyments which, through discourse, open up for the speaking being; giving them bones, it underlines what was certainly accessible, but masked. Namely, that the sexual relationship is missing in the field of truth, in that the discourse that establishes it only proceeds from a semblance by only clearing the way for enjoyment that parody – this is the correct word – the one that is effective there but that remains foreign to it. Such is the Other of enjoyment, forever prohibited, the one that language will only allow a habitation for by providing it – why would I not use this image - with a diving suit.

Perhaps that means something to you, this image, huh? There are, all the same, some of you who are not so occupied by the function of trade unions that you cannot all the same be moved by our lunar exploits. Man has been dreaming about the moon for a long time. Now he has set foot on it. To really take account of what that means, you should do what I did before returning from Japan. That is a place where you can realise that dreaming about the moon was really a function. A person, whose name I will not mention, I do not want to indulge in erudition here, who is still there, locked up in fact, him, the very one. You realise what is meant by *persona*, it is the person himself, it is his mask that is locked in a little Japanese cupboard. It is shown to visitors.

We know that it is him, that the place to put him can be seen there, it is found in the place that is called the Silver Pavilion, at Kyoto. He dreamt about the moon. We like to believe that he contemplated it

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rather phallically. We like to believe it, but anyway, that leaves us somewhat embarrassed all the same. We no longer know what to make of it. The path that has been taken - is that not so? - to inscribe it, to get out of this embarrassment, you should understand that it is the achievement of the barred O of my graph, S(Ø).

All of this is only banter. It is a banter that gives a signal, a signal to (148) me of course. It warns me that I am touching on structuralism. I am forced to touch on it, like that, naturally, it is not my fault. It is for you to judge, but I blame it on the situation that I am undergoing. Time is passing and naturally I am going to have to shorten things a little, so that it is going to become more difficult to follow what I have written. But this situation that I am undergoing, I am going to pinpoint, pinpoint it by something that is not going to appear to you right away but that I have to say between now and the time that we leave one another, in a week's time. It is what I would pinpoint as a refusal of performance. It is a sickness, a sickness of our epoch, through whose 'Fork' one has to pass, because this refusal constitutes the cult of competence. Namely, of a certain idealness (*idéalité*) to which I am reduced, like, moreover, many fields of science, to authorise myself before you. The result - these are anecdotes you know - my *Ecrits* are for example.....one of them is translated into English, *Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage* has been translated as *The language of the self.* I have just learned that in Spanish, there is also something of this type, the translation of a certain number of them is entitled: *Structuralist aspects of Freud*, something like that. Good, anyway, let's leave it! Competence overlooks the fact that it is based on incompetence, by proposing that its idealness should be worshipped, that is how it leads to concessions, and I am going to give you an example of this. The sentence with which I began: *a man and a woman can understand one another, I am not saying no.* Well there you are, it was to sugar the pill for you, but the pill does not fix anything. The notion forged in the term *structuralism* tends to extend the delegating that occurred

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for some time to certain specialists, the specialists of truth, the delegating of a certain void that is noticed in the rarefying of enjoyment. This is what existentialism had flawlessly picked up, after phenomenology, much more hypocritical, had thrown down the gauntlet of its breathing exercises. It occupied the places left deserted by philosophy because they were not appropriate places. At the present time, they are just about suitable as a memorial for its contribution - which is no little thing - to philosophy, to the discourse of the master which it definitively stabilised with the support of science. Marx or not, whether he put philosophy on its feet or on its head, philosophy, it is certain that philosophy in any case, for its part, was not sufficiently phallic (*pas assez phalle*). Let no one count on me to structuralise this business of the impossible life, as if it were not from there that life had a chance to give proof of its real. My jocund prosopopea, "*I speak*", in the article quoted earlier, the (149) *Freudian thing*, even though it was attributed in a rhetorical way to the truth in person, did not make me fall into what I drew it from. Nothing is said there except what speaking means, the irremediable division between enjoyment and the semblance. The truth is to enjoy being a semblance, and in no way to admit that the reality of each of these two halves only predominate by affirming itself as being from the other, or by lying (*mentir)* in alternate jets. Such is the half-saying of the truth. Its astronomy is equatorial, in other words already completely out of date when it was born from the couple night-day. An astronomy is made reasonable by submitting itself to the seasons, by being seasoned. This is an allusion to Chinese astronomy, which, for its part, was equatorial and produced nothing.

It was not his competence as a linguist, and for good reason, that allowed Freud to trace out the paths of the thing we are dealing with. What I, for my part, remind you of is that he was only able to follow these paths by demonstrating a performance in language that was nothing short of acrobatic. And that here, only linguistics allows

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them to be situated in a structure, in so far as it is concerned for its part with a competence that is called linguistic consciousness, which is all the same quite remarkable, precisely by never shying away from its enquiry. Hence my formula that the *unconscious is structured like a language* implies that at the very least, the condition of the unconscious is language. But this takes nothing away from the impact of the enigma which consists in the fact that the unconscious knows more about it than it appears to, since it is because of this surprise that I started to name it as I did. It knows about things. Naturally, right away, the aforesaid unconscious was brought up short by attributing to it all the instincts, which moreover are still there like a wet blanket. Read anything at all that is published outside my school. The whole business was sewn up, there was nothing more to be done than to put on the label addressed to the truth, precisely, which skips over it sufficiently in our time, as I might say, not to disdain the black market. I put sticks in the hinge of clandestinity by hammering out that the knowledge in question could only be analysed by being formulated as a language, indeed in a particular tongue, even if this suffers from cross-breeding, which means moreover that it does no more than these aforesaid tongues permit themselves frequently, by their own authority.

No one challenged me about what language knows, namely *die Bedeutung des Phallus*, I said it but no one noticed it because it was the truth. So then, who is interested in the truth? Well, people. (150) People for whom I drew the structure of this crude image that is found in family-friendly topology. That's how it is drawn, huh? In this family-friendly topology, this is how the Klein bottle is drawn. There is no – I am coming back to it - point of its surface, that is not a topological part of the retrogression which is figured here by the circle, drawn here, of the circle which alone can properly give to this bottle the bottom that the other bottles are too proud of, because they have a bottom, God knows why!

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So then it is not where people think it is, but in its structure as subject that the hysteric – I am coming to some of the people that I designated just now – conjugates the truth of her enjoyment with the implacable knowledge that she has that the Other proper to cause it, is the phallus, in other words a semblance. Who could fail to understand Freud's disappointment in grasping that the no-cure at which he arrived with the hysteric resulted in nothing more than making him claim the aforesaid semblance suddenly provided with real virtues, by having hung it at this point of retrogression which since it is not unfindable on the body, is a quite incorrect topological figuration of enjoyment in the woman. But did Freud know that? We may well ask. In the impossible solution of her problem, it is by measuring the cause in the most accurate way, in other words by making of it a just cause that the hysteric comes to agree about what she feigns to be the holder of this semblance, at least one, (*au moins un*) that I write - do I need to write it again? - as *l'hommoinzin*, in conformity with the problem (*l'os*) that her enjoyment requires for her to gnaw on it. Her approaches to the *hommoinzin* - there are three ways of writing it. There is the usual way of spelling it, huh, because (151) after all I really have to explain it to you, (1). And then there is this, there is this expressive value that I am always able to give to a scriptural operation, (2). Then on occasion you can all the same bring it together and write it *a* (*u moins un*) like that, (3), so as not to forget that occasionally it can function as the o-object (*objet a*)

au moins un

hommoinzin

a (u moinzin)

Since his approaches to the *au moins un*, can only be made by admitting to the aforesaid cynosure which captures him, depending on his tendencies, the deliberate castration that she reserves for him, his chances are limited. You must not believe that his success passes

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by way of one of these men, men in the masculine, that the semblance rather embarrasses, or who prefer it to be more frank. Those that I am designating in this way are the wise men, the masochists. That situates the wise men. They have to be brought back to their correct place. To judge the result in this way is to fail to recognise what can be expected from the hysteric if only she is willing to inscribe herself in a discourse, because her destiny is to bring the master to heel (*mater le maître*), so that thanks to her, he falls back on knowledge.

There you are! I am not contributing here anything more am I? What is interesting in this *écrit*, is that it generates a whole lot of things, but you really have to know where the points are that have to be remembered. Nothing other than to mark that the danger is the same at this crossroads as in the one that I have just pinpointed by having been warned by it that it is from there that I started earlier, I have come back to the same point, huh? I am going around in circles.

To love the truth, even that which the hysteric incarnates as one might say, in other words to give her what one does not have on the pretext that she designates it, is very specifically to commit oneself to a theatre which it is very clear can no longer be anything than a parish fête (*fête de charité*). I am not just talking about the hysteric. I am talking about this something which is expressed in, I will tell you like Freud, the *malaise* of the theatre. For it still to be able to hold up, you have to have.....you have to have Brecht, do you not, who understood that that could not hold up without a certain distance, a certain cooling down. This *it is clear*, as I have just said, *which can no longer be, etc,* is properly speaking precisely, an effect of the *Aufklärung*, which is scarcely believable, is it not, linked to the coming onto the scene, however awkwardly it was done, of the

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discourse of the analyst. It was enough that the hysteric, the qualified (152) hysteric, I am in the process, as you can clearly see, of approaching the function for you, it was enough for the hysteric to renounce the extravagant clinic with which she furnished the gap in the sexual relationship. It is to be taken, it is to be taken as the sign, it is perhaps to be taken as the sign made to someone, I am talking about the hysteric, huh, that she is going to do better than this clinic. The only important thing here is what goes unnoticed, namely, that I am talking about the hysteric as something that supports quantification. In listening to me something might be written as an upside down A of x, and that is why I wrote it on the board, since it is always apt, while unknown, to function in of x, as a variable. This indeed is what I write and it would be easy in re-reading Aristotle to disclose what relationship to the woman, precisely identified by him to the hysteric – which rather gives the women of his epoch a very good ranking, at least they were stimulating for the men – to disclose what relationship to the woman identified to the hysteric allowed him - this is a jump - allowed him to establish his logic in the form, in the form of *pan*, the choice of *pas, pasa, pan,* the choice of this vocable rather than *ekastos*, to designate the proposition of the universal affirmative, and also the negative. Anyway the whole pantaloonery of the first great formal logic, is absolutely essentially linked to the idea that Aristotle had of the woman. This does not prevent, precisely, that the only universal formula that he did not allow himself to pronounce was *all women* (*toutes les femmes*). There is no trace of it. Open the *Prior Analytics*. No more than he, even though his successors rushed into it headfirst, would have allowed himself to write this incredible enormity, on which formal logic has lived ever since, *all men are mortal*. Which is something that completely prejudges the future fate of humanity. *All men are mortal*, that means that all men, because what is at stake is something that is stated in extension, all men *qua* all, are destined to death, that is that the human race is going to be extinguished, which to say the least is rather daring. That x requires the passage to a being, to an *every*

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woman (*toute femme*) that an individual as sensitive as Aristotle never in fact wrote this *every woman*, is precisely what allows it to be advanced that *every woman* is the statement by which there is decided the hysteric as subject, and that it is for this reason that a woman is solidary with a *papludun* which properly lodges her in this logic of the successor that Peano gave us as a model. The hysteric is not *a woman* (*une femme*).

It is a matter of knowing whether psychoanalysis as I define it gives access to *a woman* or whether, for *a woman* to come to pass, is the business of *doxa*. Namely, if it is like virtue, to listen to the people who were dialoguing in *Meno* – you remember *Meno*, but no (*mais non*) – like this virtue, and this is what gives its value, its meaning, to this dialogue, this virtue is what cannot be taught. This can be expressed, that what can be about her, about a woman, as I have defined the step, be known in the unconscious, i.e., in an articulated fashion. Because after all – I will stop there – someone who precisely puts it up on the stage again, as if this were a question worthy of absorbing great deal of activity – it is a book that is very well done - a great amount of activity on the part of the analyst, as if it were really what an analyst should specialise in, someone accords me the merit, in a note, of having introduced the distinction between truth and knowledge. Outrageous! Outrageous! I have just been talking to you about *Meno*, have I not? Naturally, he never read it, he only reads theatre. Anyway it was with *Meno* that I began to open up the first phases of a crisis that a certain analytic system has confronted me with. The distinction between truth and knowledge, the opposition between *episteme* and the true *doxa*, the one that can ground virtue, you will find written, quite crudely, in *Meno*. What I highlighted, is precisely the contrary, it is their junction. Namely, that there, there where they are knotted together in appearance, in a particular circle, the knowledge that is at stake in the unconscious is

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the one that slides, that is prolonged, which at every instant proves to be a knowledge of the truth.

And this is where just now I am putting the question. Does this knowledge effectively allow us to make progress with respect to *Meno*? Namely, is this truth, in so far as it is incarnated in the hysteric effectively capable of a subtle enough sliding to be the introduction to *a woman*. I know well, the question has risen by a notch since I proved that there is something that can be articulated in language which cannot for all that be articulated in words, and that it is on that simply that desire is based. It is nevertheless easy to settle, it is precisely because what is at stake is desire, in so far as it puts the emphasis on the invariance of the unknown, of the unknown which is on the left (*à gauche*), the one that is only produced under the heading of a *Verneinung*. It is precisely because it puts the emphasis on the invariance of the unknown, that obviously what belongs to desire cannot be inscribed by analysis in any function of a variable. This is the stumbling block by which there is separated as such the desire of the hysteric, from what nevertheless is produced, and allows innumerable women to function as such, namely, by playing the function of the *papludun* of their being for all their situational variations.

(154) The hysteric here plays the role of functional schema, if you know what that means. This is the import of my formula of desire described as *unsatisfied*. It can be deduced from this that the hysteric is situated by introducing the *papludun* by which each one of the women is established along the path of *it is not of every woman that it can be said that she is a function of the phallus* (*ce n'est pas de toute femme que se peut dire qu'elle soit fonction du phallus*). That this is the case with every woman is what constructs her desire and that is

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why this desire is sustained by being unsatisfied. The fact is that *a woman* results from it, but one who cannot be the hysteric in person. This indeed is how she incarnates my earlier truth, the one that after having made it speak I restored to its structural function.

The psychoanalytic discourse is established by this restoration of her truth to the hysteric. It was enough to dissipate the theatre in hysteria. This is why I say that it is not without a relationship to something that changes the appearance of things in our epoch. I had insisted on the fact that when I began to state things that carried all of that in potency, I immediately had as an echo the *splash* of an article on *Le théâtre chez l'hystérique*. Present day psychoanalysis is only dealing with a hysteric who is not up to date. When the hysteric proves that even when the page that has been turned, she continues to write on the back and even on the next one, people do not understand. She is a logician. This poses the question of the reference to the theatre made by Freudian theory, the Oedipus complex no less. It is time to attack that aspect of theatre that it has appeared necessary to maintain in order to sustain the Other scene, the one that I speak about, that I was the first to speak about. After all, sleep is enough perhaps, and that it shelters on occasion, this sleep, the *gésine* (?) of Fuchsian functions, as you know, perhaps, has happened, may justify a desire being constructed for it to be continued. It may happen that the signifying representatives of the subject always get across more easily when borrowed from imaginary representation. We have the signs of it in our epoch. It is certain that the enjoyment that one has by being castrated only has systemic relationships (*rapports d'appareil*) with representation. This indeed is why the Sophoclean Oedipus, which only has its privilege for us because the other Oedipus' are incomplete, and more often than not lost, is still much too rich and too diffuse for the articulation that we need. The

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genealogy of desire, in so far as what is in question is how it is caused, relates to a more complex combinatorial than that of myth.

That is why we have no need to dream about what myth was used for in olden times, as they say. To engage oneself along that path is metalanguage, and in this respect, the *Mythologiques* of Lévi-Strauss make a decisive contribution. They show that the combination of the (155) nameable forms of mythem, many of which have disappeared, operate according to laws of transformation that are precise but very short on logic. Or at the very least what we must say about them, this is the least that can be said, is that our mathematics enriches this combinatorial. Perhaps we would do well to question whether the psychoanalytic discourse does not have better things to do than to devote itself to interpreting these myths in a style which does not go beyond ordinary commentary, which besides is completely superfluous. Because what interests the ethnologist is the collection of the myths, pinpointing its collation and its re-collation with other functions, of ritual, of production, registered just as in a writing whose articulated isomorphisms are enough for him. No trace of any supposition, I was going to say, about the enjoyment that is circumscribed there. This quite true, even taking into account the efforts made to suggest to us the eventual operation of obscure knowledge which is supposed to be lodged in them. The note given by Lévi-Strauss in the *Structures* about the display-action exercised by these structures with respect to love luckily settles things here. This did not prevent it passing well over the heads of the analysts who were in favour at the time.

In short the Oedipus complex has the advantage of showing how man can respond to the requirement of the *papludun* that is in the being of a woman. He himself is supposed not to love *papludune* of them.

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Unfortunately it is not the same one; it is always the same rendezvous, when the masks are removed, it was neither he nor she. Nevertheless this fable is only supported by the fact that the man is never anything but a little boy. And that the hysteric is unable to let go of this is something that casts doubt on the function of her truth as being the last word.

A step towards seriousness could, it seems to me, be taken here by engaging with the man, and you will have noted that up to this point of my presentation I have given him the more modest part. Even though it is one of them, your servant, who forms part here of this beautiful world. It seems to me *impossible* - it is not for nothing that I come up against this word from the start - not to grasp the split that separates the Oedipus myth from *Totem and taboo*. I am showing my hand right away. The first is dictated to Freud by the dissatisfaction of the hysteric, the second by his own impasses. There is no trace in the second myth of the little boy, or of the mother, or of the tragic passage from the father to the son – passage of what, if not the phallus – of what is the very stuff of the first myth. Here, *Totem and taboo*, the father enjoys, a term that is veiled in the first myth by power. The father enjoys all the women until his sons slay him, which they only set about after a prior agreement, according to which (156) no one would succeed to him in his gluttony for enjoyment. The term is required by what comes in return, because the sons devour him, each one necessarily only having a part of him and by this very fact the whole making a communion. It is starting from that that there is produced the social contract. No one will touch, not the mother here, it is clearly specified, in *Moses and monotheism,* in Freud's own writing, that among the sons only the younger ones are still listed in the harem. So then it is no longer the mothers but the wives of the father, as such, who are concerned in the prohibition. The mother only comes into play precisely for her babies which are

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the grain of heroes. But if this is how there is constructed, according to Freud, the origin of law, it is not the law described as that of maternal incest, which is nevertheless given as inaugural in psychoanalysis. While in fact, this is a remark, apart from a certain law of Manou which punished it by a real castration, you will go to the west with your balls in your hand, etc., this law of maternal incest is everywhere more or less elided. I am not at all disputing here the prophylactic grounds for the analytic prohibition. I am underlining that at the level at which Freud articulates something about it, *Totem and taboo*, and God knows he stuck by it, he does not justify this prohibition mythically. The strangeness begins with the fact that neither Freud, nor moreover any other person either, seems to have noticed this.

I stride on. Enjoyment is promoted by Freud to the rank of an absolute which brings back to the care of the man, I am talking about *Totem and taboo*, of the original man - and this is all admitted - of the Father of the primitive horde, it is simple to recognise here the phallus, the totality of what 'femininely' can be subject to enjoyment. This enjoyment, I have just noted, remains veiled in the royal couple of the Oedipus complex, but it is not only from the first myth that it is absent. The royal couple is not even put in question until something which is stated in the drama, that they are the guarantors of the enjoyment of the people, which moreover agrees with what we know about all royalties, whether ancient or modern. And the castration of Oedipus has no other end than to end the Theban plague. Namely, to render to the people the enjoyment of which others are going to be the guarantors, which of course, given where it has started from, will not happen without some bitter adventures being experienced by all.

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Must I underline that the key function of myth is strictly opposed in the two? The law first of all in the first, so primordial that it exercises its retortions even when the guilty have only contravened it innocently, and it is from the law that the profusion of enjoyment has (157) emerged. In the second, enjoyment at the origin, then law, whose correlates with perversion you will spare me having to underline. Since it is, when all is said and done, with the promotion, sufficiently insisted on, of sacred cannibalism, that all the women are prohibited, in principle, for the community of males, which has been transcended as such in this communion. This indeed is the sense of the other primordial law, otherwise, what grounds it? Eteocles and Polynices are there, I think, to show that there are other resources. It is true that they proceed from the genealogy of desire. It must be that the murder of the father has constituted – for whom, for Freud, for his readers? – such a supreme fascination, that no one has ever even dreamt of underlining that in the first myth this murder happens without the knowledge of the murderer, who not only does not recognise that he is attacking the father, but who cannot recognise him because he has another, who, from all antiquity is his father, since he adopted him. It was even explicitly in order not to run the risk of attacking the aforesaid father that he exiled himself. What the myth is suggestive of, is to show the place that the generating father has at an epoch in which Freud underlines that, just like our own, this father is problematic.

Because, moreover, Oedipus would be absolved, if he were not of royal blood, namely, if Oedipus did not have to function as the phallus, the phallus of his people, and not of his mother. And that for a time, what is most surprising is that it worked, namely, that the Thebans were so implicated that it is from Jocasta that the turn-about had to come. Is it because of what she knew or of what she was unaware of? What is there in common in any case with the murder of

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the second myth which we are led to believe is one of revolt, of need, that in truth is unthinkable, indeed unthought, except as proceeding from a conspiracy.

It is obvious that all I have done there is to approach the terrain on which, in any case, let us say, a conspiracy also prevented me from ridding myself of my problem, namely, in *Moses and monotheism*, namely, from the point at which everything that Freud articulated becomes truly significant. I cannot even indicate to you what is necessary to bring you back to Freud. But I can say that in revealing to us here his contribution to the analytic discourse, he proceeds no less from neurosis than from what he picked up from the hysteric in the form of the Oedipus complex. It is curious that I have had to wait until now in order that such an assertion, namely that *Totem and taboo* is a neurotic product, for me to be able to put it forward, which is absolutely indisputable, without for all that my questioning in any (158) way the truth of the construction. That is even how it bears witness to the truth. One does not psychoanalyse an *oeuvre*, and that of Freud less than any other, is that not so? One criticises it, and far from a neurosis making its solidity suspect, it is the very thing that solders it in this case. It is to the testimony that the obessional contributes about his structure, to the aspect of the sexual relationship that proves to be impossible to formulate in discourse, that we owe the myth of Freud.

I will stop there for today. The next time I will give to this its exact import, because I would not like there to be any misunderstanding. The fact of articulating in a certain way what the contribution of Freud is to the fundamental myth of psychoanalysis, I underline, is not at all rendered suspect because its origin is underlined in this

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way. Quite the contrary, it is simply a matter of knowing where it can lead us.

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Seminar 10: Wednesday 16 June 1971

I am going to try today to fix the meaning of this road along which I have led you this year under the title of *Of a discourse which might not be a semblance*. This hypothesis – because this title is presented to you in the conditional – this hypothesis is the one by which every discourse is justified. Do not forget that last year I tried to articulate in four typical discourses, these discourses which are the ones that you have to deal with, in a certain established order, which of course is itself only justified from history. If I broke them into four, this is something I believe I justified from the development that I gave them and from the form that in a writing paradoxically described as *Radiophonie*, not all that paradoxical if you heard what I was saying the last time, a certain order then whose terms this writing recalls to you and the slippage, the always syncopated slippage, of the slippage of the four terms among which there are always two which create a gap. This discourse that I designated specifically as the discourse of the Master, of the University discourse, of the discourse that I privileged with the term of Hysteric and the discourse of the Analyst, if I used them, these discourses have the property of always having their organising point, which is also moreover the one with which I pinpoint them, of starting with a semblance. What is privileged about analytic discourse because it is the one that allows us, in short, in articulating them in this way, to also divide them up into four fundamental arrangements. It is paradoxical, it is curious, that such

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a statement is presented as being at the end of what the one who found himself to be at the origin of analytic discourse, namely Freud, permitted. He did not permit it starting from nothing. He permitted it starting from what is presented; I articulated it clearly (160) on several occasions as being the principle of this discourse of the Master, namely, of what is privileged by a certain knowledge that illuminates the articulation of the truth with knowledge. It is properly speaking prodigious that those very people who, caught up in certain perspectives, those that we might define as putting themselves forward, as it were, with respect to society, those therefore who, in this perspective, present themselves as infirm, let us be kinder, as limping, and we know that beauty limps, namely, the neurotics, and specifically the hysterics and the obsessionals, that it was from them that there started, this overwhelming flash of light that travels the length and breadth of the *demansion* that conditions language. The function that is the truth, indeed, on this occasion indeed, everyone knows the place it holds in Freud's statements, indeed this crystallisation which is the one we know in its modern form, what we know about religion, and specifically the Judeo-Christian tradition on which everything that Freud stated about religions is brought to bear.

This is consistent, I remind you, with this subversive operation of what up to then had been sustained throughout a whole tradition under the title of knowledge (*connaissance*), and this operation originates from the notion of symptom. It is historically important to note that it is not in this that there resides the novelty of the introduction of psychoanalysis brought about by Freud. The notion of symptom, as I indicated on several occasions, and it is very easy to locate by reading the one who is responsible for it, namely, Marx. The fundamental dupery that is contained in the theory of knowledge, this dimension of semblance that introduces the dupery exposed as such by Marxist subversion, the fact that what is exposed in it is precisely still in a certain tradition that reached its

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acme with the Hegelian discourse that some semblance is established in function of weight and measure, as I might say, as being the genuine article (*argent comptant*), and it is not for nothing that I use these metaphors, because it is around money, around capital as such that there operates the pivot of this exposure that makes the fetish reside in this something, a turning back of thinking, to put it back in its place, and very precisely *qua* semblance.

The curious thing about this remark is all the same also designed to make us notice that it is not enough for something to be stated in this exposure which puts itself forward as truth, in the name of which there emerges, there is promoted, surplus value as being the mainspring of what reduced to its semblance, what up to then was sustained by a certain number of deliberate oversights. It is not (161) enough, I remarked, and history proves it, for this irruption of truth to be produced for what is sustained by this discourse to be laid low. This discourse that we could call on this occasion that of the Capitalist, in so far as it is a determination of the discourse of the Master, finds itself at ease there, in fact, and is rather indeed its complement. It appears that, far from this discourse suffering from this recognition as such of the function of surplus value, it subsists no less, since moreover a capitalism caught up in the discourse of the Master is indeed what seems to distinguish the political consequences that resulted, under the form of a political revolution, that resulted from the Marxist exposure of what is involved in a certain discourse about semblance.

This indeed is why I am not going to dwell here on what is involved in the historic mission devoted in Marxism, or at least in its manifestos, devoted to the proletariat. There is, I would say, a left-over of humanist entification which, in a way, proliferates on what guarantees what in capitalism finds itself more and more stripped down to essentials, shows no less that something subsists, that

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makes it subsist effectively in this state of deprivation. And the fact that it is the support, the support of what is produced under the species of surplus value, is not for all that something that will in any way free us from the articulation of this discourse.

This indeed is why this exposure reverts back to a questioning about this something which may be more original and which might find itself at the very origin of every discourse in so far as it is a discourse of semblance. This is also why that what I articulated under the term of surplus enjoying, refers you to what is questioned in the Freudian discourse as putting in question the relationship of something which is articulated properly speaking and anew as a truth, in opposition to a semblance. And this truth is this opposition, and this dialectic of the truth and of the semblance is found, if what Freud has said has a meaning, is situated at the level of what I designated by the term of sexual relationship.

In short, I dared to articulate, to encourage people to notice, that if this revelation that is bestowed on us by the knowledge of the neurotic about something, is nothing other than something which is articulated as *there is no sexual relationship*, what does that mean? Certainly not that language, since already, already I am saying, there is no sexual relationship, is something that can be said since now, it is said, but of course it is not enough to say it, it still has to (162) be justified. And we take the justifications from our experience obtained from the unbroken thread of what is hooked onto this fundamental gap and this unbroken thread is knotted, this is its central starting place, entwined around this void, in what I call the discourse of the neurotic.

The last time, I sufficiently made you sense, sufficiently underlined, attempted to begin from a writing, how there can be situated what is involved as the starting point of this thread. My intention today - not at all of course, the thing is beyond, at the limit of anything that

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can be said in this limited space of a seminar - not at all about what the neurotic indicates about his relationship to this distance, but about what the myths, the myths from which there are formed, as I might say, not always under the dictation, but as an echo of the discourse of the neurotic, the myth that Freud forged. In order to do it in such a brief period, we have to start from the central point, which is also the enigmatic point of the psychoanalytic discourse, of the psychoanalytic discourse in so far as it is here only listening to this final discourse, the one which might not be the discourse of semblance. It is listening to a discourse which might not be and which moreover is not. I mean that what is indicated is only the limit imposed on discourse, when the sexual relationship is at stake. I tried, for my part, at the point that I have got to, where I am going ahead of everything that may be formulated later, to tell you that it is its failure at the level of a logic, of a logic which is sustained from what every logic is sustained by, namely, writing. The letter of Freud's work is a written work. But moreover also that what it outlines from these writings, is something that surrounds a veiled, obscure truth, one that is stated by the fact that, a sexual relationship, as it happens in some accomplishment or other, can only be sustained, can only be established, from this composition between enjoyment and the semblance called castration. That we see it re-emerging at every instant in the discourse of the neurotic, but in the form of a fear, of an avoidance, is precisely the reason why castration remains enigmatic. That none of its realisations, in fact, is as changeable, as shimmering. Or moreover the exploration of the psychopathology of analysable phenomena, at least of this psychopathology, that excursions into ethnology allow, it nevertheless remains that something from which there is, distinguished everything that is evoked as castration, we see it, in what form, always in the form of an avoidance. If the neurotic, as I might say, bears witness to the necessary intrusion of what I called just now this composition of enjoyment and the semblance that is presented as castration, it is precisely because of the fact that he

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(163) shows himself to be inapt for it in some way. And if everything that is involved in rituals of initiation which, as you know, or if you do not know, consult the technical works, and to take two of them which were produced within the analytic field itself, I designate for you respectively the *Problems of bisexuality as reflected in circumcision,* namely, *Problèmes de la bisexualité en tant que réfléchis dans la circoncision*, by Herman Nunberg, published by Englewoods, namely, when all is said and done, by the Imago publications of London, and on the other hand, the work entitled *Symbolic wounds, Blessures symboliques* by Bruno Bettelheim. You will see in them deployed in its whole ambiguity, in it fundamental vacillation, hesitation, in a way, of analytic thinking between explicatory ordering which leaves the fear of castration completely opaque and in a way to good or bad fortune as you wish, the accidents through which there is presented something which in this register is only supposed to be the effect of some misunderstanding or other. On this tangle of prejudices, of blunders, of something that can be rectified, or on the contrary of a thinking which notices that there is indeed here something of the constancy, at the very least, an immense number of productions that we can record on every register, even though the catalogues have been more or less done, whether those of ethnology or of psychopathology, that I evoked earlier, there are others confronting us with the fact that it is from – and Freud expresses it on occasion, it is very well said in *Civilisation and its discontents* – it is in connection with something which after all does not make all that new what I formulated in terms of *there is no sexual relationship.* He says that, he indicates of course as I did, in quite clear terms, that no doubt, on this point, very precisely in connection with sexual relationships, some fatality is inscribed that makes necessary in it what then appear as being the means, the bridges, the passerels, the buildings, the constructions, in a word, which at the deficiency, at the deficiency of this sexual relationship inasmuch as after all, in a sort of respective inversion, any possible discourse will only

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appear as a symptom, within this sexual relationship, arranges in conditions that as usual we refer to pre-history, to extra-historical domains, that in these conditions, gives a kind of success to what can be established as artificial, as a supplement, as supplying for what is lacking, is inscribed in short in the speaking being without one being able to know whether it is because he is speaking that it is like this, or on the contrary because the origin is that the relationship is not speakable. It is necessary for all of those who (164) inhabit language, it is necessary that for them there should be developed this something which makes possible in the form of castration, the gap left in this something that is nevertheless essential, biologically essential, biologically essential for the reproduction of these beings as living beings, for their race to remain fruitful. Such indeed, in effect, is the problem that is confronted by everything that is involved in the rituals of initiation. That these rituals of initiation comprise... let us call them manipulations, operations, incisions, circumcisions, that are aimed at and put their mark very precisely on the organ that we see functioning as a symbol in that which through psychoanalytic experience is presented to us as going well beyond the privilege of the organ, since it is the phallus, and that the phallus, in so far as it is to this third that there is ordered everything which, in short, creates an impasse in enjoyment, which makes of the man and of the woman, in so far as we might define them by a simple biological pinpointing, these beings who very precisely are with a sexual enjoyment and in an elective way among all other enjoyments, in difficulty with it, this indeed is what is at stake and it is from this that we have to start again if we want there to be maintained a correct meaning to what is inaugurated from analytic discourse.

And that if it is, as is supposed, something defined, this is what we call castration, which is supposed to have the privilege of warding off this something whose undecideability forms the basis of the sexual relationship, in so far as it presents enjoyment as organised,

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with regard to something that seems to me to be not avoidable. I am talking about the statements, the theatricals, about constraint which are a daily experience in analytic discourse is quite the opposite – this, it is a remark which gives its value to the second book, that of Bruno Bettelheim, that I highlighted for you – which is obviously altogether contrary to something which is the only important thing. It is not a matter of pushing back into prehistory what is involved in rituals of initiation, rituals of initiation, like everything that we would like to reject into prehistory, are there, they still exist, they are alive throughout the world, there are still Australians who have themselves circumscribed or subincised, there are entire zones of civilisation that submit to it, and to fail to recognise in a century described as illuminated that these practices not only subsist but flourish, are very healthy, and it is obviously from that that we must start in order to notice that it is not from any conceivable theatricality of constraint whatsoever, there is no example that it is simply constraint, it is still a matter of knowing (165) what a constraint means. A constraint is never just the production of something that the so-called prevalence of a so-called physical superiority or other, it is supported precisely by signifiers. And if it is the law, the rule, that is such here, that a particular subject wants to submit to it, it is indeed for reasons, and these reasons are what are important for us. And what is important for us, and it is here that we ought to question what is the compliance, to use a word which, by leading us straight to the hysteric, and which no less has an extremely general range, this compliance which ensures that there subsists well and truly and in times that are quite historical what is involved and what is presented as something whose image all by itself would be intolerable, it is perhaps intolerable as such, this is what is at stake, it is to know why.

This is where I take up my thread again, it is in following this thread that we give a meaning to what is articulated in language in what I will call this unpublished (*inédite*) word, because it was

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unpublished up to a certain epoch, a well and truly historical one within our reach, this unpublished word, and which is presented, in short, as having always partly to remain so. There is no other definition to be given to the unconscious. Let us come now to the hysteric because I like to start from the hysteric, to see where the thread leads us. The hysteric, we have asked ourselves, have we not, what it is, but precisely, this is the meaning, it is to such a question: "What is it?", what is it, what does it mean, the hysteric in person? It seems to me that I have worked for a long enough time starting from the imaginary, to indicate "that in person", to recall simply, what is already...inscribed in the terms "in person"...in a mask (*en masque*), no reply can be given at the start to this meaning. To the question "what is the hysteric?", the answer of the discourse of the analyst is: "You'll see". You will indeed see, precisely, by following where she leads us. Without the hysteric, of course, there would never have come to light what is involved in what I am writing, of what I am writing, anyway, I am trying to give you the first logical step of what is now at stake, of what I write as phi of x (ϕ x), which is, namely, that enjoyment, this variable in the function written in x, is not situated from this relationship with the capital Φ that here designates the phallus, the central discovery, or rather rediscovery or as you wish re-baptism, since I indicated to you why it is from the phallus as an unveiled semblance in the mysteries that the term is taken up again, not by (166) chance. That it is very precisely, in effect, that it is to the semblance of the phallus that there is referred the pivotal point, the centre of everything that can be organised, be contained in terms of sexual enjoyment, that from the first approaches to hysterics, from the *Studien über Hysterie* Freud leads us. The last time I articulated the following, that in short, in taking things from the point that could in effect be questioned, about what is involved in the most common discourse, that if we wish, not to push to its term what linguistics indicates to us, but simply to extrapolate it. Namely, to notice that nothing of what language allows us to do is ever

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anything but metaphor, or indeed metonymy. That the something that every word, whatever it may be, claims to name for an instant can only ever refer back to a connotation. And that if there is something that may in the final term be indicated as that which is denoted by any function apparelled in language, I already said it the last time, there is only one *Bedeutung, die Bedeutung des Phallus.* It is there alone what is involved in language, denoted, of course, but without ever anything corresponding to it, since, if there is something that characterises the phallus, it is not, not to be the signifier of lack, as some people thought they understood some of my words, but to be assuredly in any case that from which no word emerges. *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*, it is from there, I recalled the last time, it is from this opposition articulated by the really inaugurating logician who is Frege, *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*, define the models that go further than those of connotation and denotation. Many things in this article in which Frege establishes the two aspects of *Sinn* and of *Bedeutung*, many things are to be retained and especially for an analyst.

Because undoubtedly, without a reference to logic which of course cannot just be to classical logic, to Aristotelian logic, without a reference to logic, it is impossible to find the correct point in the subjects that I am putting forward. Frege's remark turns entirely around the fact that when we are brought to a certain point of scientific discourse what we note, is, for example, facts like the following. Is it the same thing to say Venus or to call it in the two ways that it was for a long time designated the Morning Star and the Evening Star? Is it the same thing to say *Sir Walter Scott* and to say *the author of the Waverley novels*? I inform those who might be unaware of it that he is effectively the author of this work that is called *Waverley*. It is in examining this distinction that Frege notices that it is not possible in any case to replace *Sir Walter Scott* by *the author of the Waverley novels*. This is how he distinguishes the fact that *the author of the Waverley novels* conveys a sense, a

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(167) *Sinn*, and that *Sir Walter Scott* designates a *Bedeutung*. It is clear that if one posits with Leibnitz that, *salva veritate*, to save the truth, it must be posited that everything that is designated as having an equivalent *Bedeutung* and which can be replaced indifferently, and if one puts the thing to the test as I am doing right away put it to the test along the paths traced out by Frege himself, that, it does not matter whether it was George III or George IV, on this occasion that has little importance, was asking, was informing himself, as to whether Sir Walter was the author of the Waverley novels. If we replace "the author of the Waverley novels" by "Sir Walter Scott" we obtain the following sentence: "George III was enquiring whether Sir Walter Scott was Sir Walter Scott", which quite obviously has absolutely not the same sense. It is starting from this simple remark, a logical operation, that Frege establishes, inaugurates his fundamental distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*. It is quite clear that this *Bedeutung* refers of course to an always more distant *Bedeutung*, which refers of course to the distinction between what he calls oblique discourse and direct discourse. It is inasmuch as it is in a subordinate clause that it is King George III who asks, that we ought to maintain here the rights of *Sinn* and in no way replace *the author of the Waverley novels* by *Sir Walter Scott*.

But this of course is an artifice which, for us, leads us onto the path of the following, namely, that Sir Walter Scott, on this occasion, is a name. And moreover when Mr. Carnap takes up again the question of *Bedeutung*, it is by the term *nominatum* that he translates it. And thus, precisely, he slips here into what he should not have slipped.

Because the thing that I am giving a commentary on, may allow us to go further, but certainly not in the same direction as Mr. Carnap. It is the matter of what is meant by a name, I repeat, like the last time. It is very easy for us to make the connection here with what I pointed out earlier. I pointed out to you that the phallus is

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something that puts us on the path of this point that I am designating here in an accentuated way, the fact is that the *nom*, the name and the noun, but one only sees things clearly at the level of the proper name, as someone or other has said. The name, is what summons, no doubt, but to what? It is what summons you to speak. And this indeed is what constitutes the privilege of the phallus, it is that you can summon it as much as you like, it will always say nothing.

Only this then gives its sense, gives its sense to what I called at one time the paternal metaphor and this is what the hysteric leads to. (168) The paternal metaphor, of course, when I introduced it, namely, in my article on *A question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis*, I inserted it into the general schema extracted from the rapprochement between what linguistics tells us about metaphor and what the experience of the unconscious tells us about condensation. I wrote S over S_1, multiplied by S_1 over a small s, I relied heavily, as I also wrote in *The agency of the letter*, on this aspect of the metaphor, which is to generate a sense. If *the author of the Waverley novels*, is a *Sinn*, it is very precisely because *the author of the Waverley novels*, replaces something else, which is a special *Bedeutung*, the one that Frege thinks he should pinpoint with the name of *Sir Walter Scott*. But still it is not only from this angle that I envisaged the paternal metaphor. If I wrote somewhere that the Name of the Father is the phallus – God knows what tremor of horror this evoked among some pious souls – it is precisely because at that date I could not articulate it better. What is sure is that it is the phallus, of course, but that it is all the same the Name of the Father. What is named Father, the Name of the Father, if it is a name which, for its part, is efficacious, it is because someone stands up to answer. From the angle of what happened in the psychotic determination of Schreber, it is *qua* signifier, signifier capable of giving a sense to the desire of the mother, that I could in a correct manner situate the Name of the Father. But at the level of

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what is at stake when it is, let us say, the hysteric who summons him, what matters is that someone should speak. I would like here to point out to you that if Freud sometimes tried to approach a little bit more closely this function of the Father which is so essential to analytic discourse, that one can say in a certain way that it is the product of it, if I write the analytic discourse for you as o/S_2, namely, the analyst over the knowledge he has from the neurotic, who questions the subject to produce something, one can say that the master signifier, up to the present, of the analytic discourse, is indeed the Name of the Father. It is extremely curious that the analytic discourse was necessary for questions to be posed about this. What is a Father? Freud does not hesitate to articulate that it is the name in essence which implies faith (or the law; *foi/loi*). That is how he expresses himself. We might perhaps all the same have desired a little bit more from him. After all, taking things at the fundamental biological level, one might perfectly well conceive that the reproduction of the human species – this has already been done, it has already emerged from the imagination of a novelist - might (169) happen without any kind of intervention designating itself under the Name of the Father, artificial insemination is not there for nothing. What in short constitutes presence – and this did not come from today or yesterday – is it not this essence of the Father, and after all, do not we analysts ourselves really know what it is? I would like all the same to point out to you that in analytic experience, the Father is only ever a referent (*référential*) (?). We interpret one or other relation with the Father. Do we ever analyse anyone *qua* Father? Let someone bring me a case-study. The Father is a term of analytic interpretation. To him something is referred.

It is in the light of these remarks – I have to cut things short – that I would all the same like to situate for you what is involved in the myth of the Oedipus complex. The myth of the Oedipus complex causes trouble in some way, is that not so, because supposedly it

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establishes the primacy of the Father, which is supposed to be a kind of reflection of patriarchy. I would like to make you sense something which, through which, for me at least, it appears to me to be not at all a patriarchal reflection. Far from it. It shows us simply this: a point first of all through which castration might be circumscribed, through a logical approach and, in the way that I will designate as being numeral.

The Father is not alone castrated, but is precisely castrated to the point of being nothing but a number. This is indicated quite clearly in dynasties. Earlier I was talking about a king, I no longer knew what to call him, George III or George IV....you should be under no illusion that this is precisely what seems most typical to me, in this presentation of paternity, namely, that in reality, this is how it happens, George I, George II, George III, George IV. But still, it is quite obvious that this does not exhaust the question, because...there is not simply the numeral (*numéro*), there is a number (*nombre*). In a word, I see in it the apperception point of the series of natural numbers (*nombres*), as it is put. And as it is not put too badly, because after all it is very close to nature, I would like to point out to you that because people always evoke at the horizon of history something that, of course, is an extremely suspicious reason, I would simply point out the following to you. That matriarchy, as it is put, has no need to be pushed back to the limit of history.

Matriarchy consists essentially in the following, the fact is for what is involved in the mother as production, there is no doubt. One can on occasion lose one's mother in the Metro, of course, but still there is no doubt about *who* is the mother. There is also no doubt about (170) who is the mother of the mother. And so on. The mother, in her line of descent, I would say, is innumerable. She is innumerable in all the proper senses of the term, she is not to be numbered, because there is no starting point. The maternal line of descent may well necessarily be in order, one cannot make it start

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from any point. I could point out to you on the other hand the following which appears to be the thing that one most usually puts one's finger on, because it is after all not rare, it is not at all rare that one may have as father one's grandfather. I mean as a true father. Or even one's great-grandfather. Yes! Because...people lived as we are told in the first line of descent of patriarchs, for around 900 years. I looked over that again recently, it is very pithy, it is absolutely sensational fakery. Everything is designed so that the two most direct ancestors of Noah died there just at the moment that the flood happened. That is what you see, it is titillating, anyway let us put that to one side, it is simply to put you in the perspective of what is involved in the Father.

From this, you see, what results – I am forced to go a little quickly, because time is passing – is that if we define the hysteric by the following, a definition that is not particular to him, the neurotic, namely, the avoidance of castration, there are several ways to avoid it. The hysteric has this simple procedure, the fact is that she unilateralises it on the other side, the side of the partner. Let us say that for the hysteric, a castrated partner is necessary. That he should be castrated, it is clear that this is at the source of the possibility of the enjoyment of the hysteric. But it is still too much. If he were castrated, there would perhaps be a little chance, since castration is precisely what I put forward earlier as being what allows the sexual relationship, it is necessary that he should be simply *what answers* in the *place* of the phallus.

So then, since Freud himself indicates to us, I will not tell you, all the same at what page, indicates himself that everything he elaborates as a myth – this is in connection with Moses: "I will not here criticise", he says about what he had written himself, at the date when he published it in 1938, about his historical hypothesis, namely, the one from Sellin that he had renovated, "because all the results that have been required", says the translator, "constitute

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psychological deductions which flow from it and ceaselessly refer to it". As you see that means nothing. In German that does mean something, it is "*denn sie bilden die Voraussetzung*", because they form the supposition, "*der psychologischen Erörterungen*" ,of psychological manifestations which, from these data, "*von ihnen ausgehren*", there flow and always anew "*auf sie zurück-kommen*", (171) and come back to them. It is indeed in effect under the dictation of the hysteric that, there is not developed, because the Oedipus complex was never really developed by Freud, it is indicated in a way, at the horizon, in the smoke, as one might say, of what raises itself up as a sacrifice of the hysteric. But let us clearly observe what is now meant by this nomination, this response to the summoning of the father in the Oedipus complex.

If I told you earlier that this introduces the series of natural numbers, it is because there, we have, what is the most recent logical development of this series, namely, that of Peano, proved necessary, namely, not simply the fact of succession, when one tries to axiomatise the possibility of such a series, one encounters the necessity of zero in order to posit the successor. The minimal axioms of Peano – I am not insisting on what may have been produced as a commentary, in the margin, in order to perfect it – but the final formula, is the one that posits zero as necessary for this series, without which it would then be innumerable, as I said earlier. The logical equivalence of the function is very precisely that this function that I have made use of is too often linked, I can only do it in the margin and very rapidly, I would point out to you that we will enter into the second millennium in the year 2000, as far as I know. If you simply admit that – on the other hand, you could moreover not admit it – but if simply you admit it, I would point out to you that this makes it necessary for there to have been a year zero, after the birth of Christ. This is what the authors of the Republican Calendar forgot. They called the first year, year 1 of the Republic. This zero is absolutely essential for any natural chronological

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mapping out. And then we understand what is meant by the murder of the Father. It is curious, singular, is it not, that this murder of the Father never appears even in dramas, as has been very relevantly been pointed out by someone who has written on this a chapter that is not bad at all, that even in dramas, no playwright has dared, the author says, to present, to manifest, the deliberate murder of a father by a son. Pay careful attention to that, even in Greek theatre this does not exist, a Father *qua* Father. On the contrary, it is all the same the term "murder of the Father" which appears at the centre of what Freud develops starting from the data constituted by, because of the hysteric, and those around him, the refusal of castration. Is it (172) not precisely in so far as the murder of the Father, here, is the substitute for this rejected castration, that the Oedipus complex was able to impose itself on Freud's thinking as he worked his way through these approaches to the hysteric? It is clear that in the hysterical perspective it is the phallus that fecundates, and that what it engenders, is itself, as one might say. Fecundity is phallic forgery, and it is indeed in this way that every child is a reproduction of the phallus, in so far as he is pregnant (*gros*), if I can express myself in this way, from his engendering.

But then, we also glimpse, since it is from the *papludun* that I have inscribed the logicised possibility of the choice in this unsatisfied relation of sexual relationship, that it is from the no more than one that I designated it for you. It is through this that the unbelievable complicity of Freud in a monotheism whose model he is going to seek, a very curious thing, quite elsewhere than in his tradition, it is necessary for him that it should be Akhenaton. There is nothing more ambiguous, I would say, on the sexual plane, than this solar monotheism, when you see it radiating with all its rays provided with little hands which are going to tickle the nostrils of innumerable little humans, children, of one sex and the other. And it is quite striking, in this imagery of the Oedipus structure, that, make no mistake, they resemble one another like brothers, and even

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more like sisters. If the word sublime can have an ambiguous meaning, it is indeed here. Since moreover it is not for nothing that the last monumental images, those that I was able to see the last time that I left Egyptian soil, of Akhenaton, are images that are not simply castrated but quite bluntly feminine.

It is altogether clear that if castration has a relationship to the phallus, this is not the place where we are going to be able to designate it. I mean that if I made the little schema which is supposed to correspond to the *pas tous* or the *pas toutes*, as designating a certain type of the relation to the Φ of x, it is indeed in this sense it is to the Φ of x that all the same the elect refer themselves to. The passage to "mediation", is indeed nothing other than this *au moins un* that I underlined and that we rediscover in Peano through this n+1 always repeated, the one that in a way presupposes that the n which precedes it is reduced to zero. In what way? Precisely, by the murder of the Father. By this ...this mapping out of, as one might, the detour, to use the term of Frege himself, make no mistake, oblique, *ungerade* way, whose *sense* of the murder of the Father is referred to a different *Bedeutung*, this indeed is what I have to limit myself to today, while apologising for not having been able to push things further. So that will be for next (173) year. I regret that things were this year, were necessarily truncated, but you will be able to see that *Totem and Taboo* on the contrary, namely, what I put on the side of the Father in terms of original enjoyment, is something to which there corresponds a no less strictly equivalent avoidance of what is involved in castration, strictly equivalent. And this is what clearly marks that fact that the obsessional, the obsessional who corresponds to the formula: *there is no x that exists that can be inscribed in the variable* Φ *of x,* the obsessional, how the obsessional slips away. He slips away simply by not existing. It is this something to which, why not, we will link up what follows in our discourse, the obsessional in so far as, he is in the debt of not existing with respect to this no less mythical

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Father who is the one of *Totem and Taboo*, how? It is to this that there is attached, that there is really attached everything that is involved in a certain religious construction, and the reason why it is not, alas, reducible, and not even by what Freud hooks on to his second myth, that of *Totem and Taboo*, namely, neither more nor less than his second topography. This is what we will subsequently develop. Because you should note, the second topography, his great innovation, is the superego.

What is the essence of the superego? It is on this that I can finish by putting something into the hollow of your hand, that you can try to manipulate for yourselves, what is the general order of the superego? Precisely, it originates from this more than mythical original father, from this summons as such to pure enjoyment, namely, also to non-castration. And what does this father say in effect, at the dissolution of the Oedipus complex? He says what the superego says. What the superego says – it is not for nothing that I have never really tackled it yet – what the superego says is: "Enjoy!"

Such is the order, the impossible to satisfy order, and as such it is at the origin of everything that is elaborated there, however paradoxical that may appear to you, in terms of moral conscience. To really sense the operation of the definition, you will have to read in *Ecclesiastes*, under the title: 'Enjoy as long as you can, enjoy', says the enigmatic author of this astonishing text, 'Enjoy with the wife you love'. This indeed is the height of paradox, because it is precisely loving her that creates the obstacle.

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Jacques Lacan

... or Worse

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan
Book XIX

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller

Translated by A. R. Price

polity

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Book XIX

. . . or Worse

1971–1972

OF ONE SEX AND THE OTHER

I

THE SMALL DIFFERENCE

The empty place
Prosdiorismoi
Nature and discourse
Let them muddle through!
Modality and negation

I could pass over my title, the meaning of which you're going to be able to see in a short while. Nevertheless, out of kindness, since it was devised to catch your attention, I shall introduce it with a commentary. Perhaps some of you have understood it, though. All in all, . . . *or worse* is what I'm always quite capable of doing. I just have to show you as much to take us to the heart of the matter, and this I do constantly.

However, to avoid remaining at the level of meaning, which like all meaning amounts to opacity, I'm going to give a textual commentary on the title. It so happened that some people read it wrongly. They thought it said . . . *ou le pire*, . . . or the worst, which really isn't the same thing. *Pire* is an adverb, like *well* or *better*.[1] You say, *I do it well*, or *I do it worse*.

It's an adverb, but it's disjoined. It's disjoined from something that is summoned to a place – precisely, the place of the verb – which here has been replaced by three dots. These three dots refer to the customary use in printed texts – and this is a curious thing – for denoting or creating an ellipsis.

My title underscores the importance of this empty place and also demonstrates that this is the only way to say something with the aid of language.

1

The remark that this empty place is the only way to catch hold of something by means of language allows us precisely to penetrate the nature of language.

You know that as soon as logic first succeeded in facing up to something that sustains a reference to truth, it produced the notion of the *variable*. I'm speaking of the *apparent variable*.[2] The apparent variable x is formed whenever an x marks an empty place in whatever is at issue. The precondition for this to work is that we put exactly the same signifier in each of the places set aside as empty. Only in this way can language get to something, and this is why I employed the formula – *There is no such thing as metalanguage*.

What does this mean? It would seem that in saying this all I would be doing is formulating a paradox, for where would I be saying it from? Since I am saying it in language, this would already be sufficient affirmation that there is one language from which I can say so. And yet this is clearly not the case. Whenever logic is at issue, it is necessary to create the fiction of metalanguage. That is, within a discourse, one forges what is known as an object-language, in view of which it is language that becomes *meta*. By *discourse* I mean common discourse, without which there are simply no means of establishing this division. *There is no such thing as metalanguage* denies that this division can be upheld. That there could be any discordance in language is foreclosed by this formula.

So, what occupies the ellipsis that I have produced to catch your attention? I said that it had to be a verb, because there is an adverb. However, eliding the verb by means of three dots is the one thing that may not be done in language once it is being examined in logic.

In this instance the verb is not hard to find. You just have to swivel the first letter of the word *pire* and you get *dire*. In logic, however, the verb is precisely the only term from which you cannot make an empty place. Indeed, when you try to turn a proposition into a function, the verb becomes a function, and you form an argument from what lies around it. So, by emptying out the verb, I'm turning it into an argument, that is to say, I'm turning it into substance. It's not *saying* per se, it's *one* fact of saying.

This fact of saying, which I'm taking up from last year's Seminar, is expressed, as is any fact of saying, in a complete proposition – *There is no such thing as sexual relation*. What this year's title proposes is that there's no ambiguity about this – move outside it and what you will say will only be worse.

There is no such thing as sexual relation is proposed, therefore, as

a truth. I've already said, however, that truth can only come midsay. So, what I'm saying is that, all in all, what the other half says is worse. How much simpler things would be if there were no worse!

The question is whether this doesn't already simplify matters. Since I've started with what I *can* do, and this is exactly what I'm *not* doing, doesn't this suffice to simplify matters? Yet there you go, it is not possible for me not to do this worse, just like everyone else.

When I say that *there is no such thing as sexual relation*, I'm asserting precisely the truth that sex does not define any relation in speaking beings.

I'm not denying the difference that there is, from the earliest age, between what are known as a young girl and a young boy. This is even my starting point. You should twig right away that when I take this as my starting point, you don't know what I'm talking about.

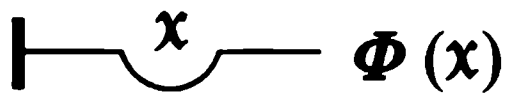
I'm not talking about the notorious small difference for which, with respect to one of the two, when he becomes sexually mature, letting out a hurrah will appear altogether equivalent to a *bon mot*, a quip. *Hurrah for the small difference!* The mere fact that this is funny is enough to indicate to us, by denotation, by reference, the complexual relationship with this organ. This relationship is fully inscribed in the analytic experience and we were led to it by the experience of the unconscious, without which there wouldn't be any quips.

Even then at this early stage, the small difference is separated off as an organ, which already says it all – *ὄργανον*, instrument. Does an animal have any idea that it has organs? Has anyone ever seen such a thing? And whatever for? Will it be enough to state that *all animals* – I said this somewhere else, it's another way of taking up what I stated recently about supposing so-called sexual jouissance to be instrumental in animals, but here I shall put it differently – *all animals that have pincers do not masturbate*? That's the small difference between *homme* and *homard*, between man and lobster. There you go. That always has its little effect.

In view of which, the historical aspect of this sentence escapes your notice. On no account is it because of what it asserts – I'm saying no more than that, the sentence asserts – but on account of what it introduces at the level of logic. This is concealed within it, but the only thing you haven't noticed is that it contains the *pas-tout*, the *not-all*, which is very precisely and very curiously what Aristotelian logic eludes in so far as it produced and isolated the function of the *προσδιορισμοί*, the *prosdiorismoi*, which are exactly what you are familiar with, namely the use of *all*, *πᾶν*, of *not*, *μή*, of *some*, *τί*, around which Aristotle took the first steps in formal logic.[3]

These steps have far-reaching consequences. They allowed for the development of what is known as the function of quantifiers. It was

with the *all* that the empty place I was speaking about earlier was established. When Frege comments on the function of the assertion in relation to a function $f(x)$ that is either true or false, in order for the x to have the existence of an argument – here placed in this little hollow, which is an image of the empty place – he makes sure to put something in front of it that is called *all* x, which is appropriate to the function.[4]



A *Höhlung* in the *Begriffsschrift*

Introducing the *not-all* is essential here. The *not-all* is not a denied universal. The *not-all* is not *none*. Namely, it is not *no animal that has pincers* masturbates. It is *not all animals that have pincers* are thereby necessitated to what follows. There are organs and then there are organs, just as we have *il y a fagots et fagots*,[5] the one who deals the blows and the one who receives them. And this brings us to the heart of our problem.

Indeed, you can see that simply by taking this first faint step we have thereby slid, without even the time to backtrack, into the midst of something where there is a machine that sweeps us along. It is this machine that I'm dismantling. However – this remark is intended for the use of certain people here – this is not to demonstrate that it is a machine, nor, even less, so that a discourse should be taken for a machine, as some have done in seeking to gear into my discourse. In so doing, what they have demonstrated is how they fail to gear into the very thing that forms a discourse, namely the real that passes through it. Dismantling the machine is on no account the same thing as what we have just done, namely to proceed without any further ado to the hole in the system, that is, to the site at which the real passes through you. And how it passes! Because it lays you flat!

Naturally, I would like, I really would like, I would very much like, I would like to preserve your natural knavery, which really is the nicest thing there is, but which, alas, alas forever starting over, as a certain someone says, is eventually reduced to foolishness by the very effect of this discourse that I'm demonstrating. Whereby you must surely have the immediate sense that there are at least two ways of demonstrating this discourse – it remaining open that my way of demonstrating it might be yet a third way.

You mustn't make me insist on this energetics of knavery and foolishness, to which I only ever make distant allusions.[6] Of course,

from the standpoint of energetics it doesn't hold water. It's purely metaphorical. But it belongs to that brand of metaphor by which the speaking being subsists. I mean that for him it is his bread and leaven.

So, I have asked you to let me off insisting, in the hope that the theory should make up for it. You can hear the subjunctive accentuation. I've picked it out because it might have been covered up by the interrogative accentuation. Spare a thought for all this, as and when it happens, especially so that you can avoid overlooking what appears there, namely the relationship between the unconscious and truth.

The right theory is the one that clears the very path along which the unconscious had been reduced to insisting. There would be no further need to insist had the path actually been cleared, though this doesn't mean that everything would be resolved, quite the contrary. Since it would offer this facility, the right theory ought to be light to the point that it seems not to touch it. It ought to possess the naturalness that, until now, has only been possessed by errors. Once again, *not all* of them, of course. But does this make it any more certain that there might be some that can sustain this naturalness which so many others affect a semblance of?

For these others to be able to affect this semblance, it is my assertion that among these errors that sustain naturalness, there has to be at least one, *hommoinzune*. You ought to recognize what I wrote last year, albeit with a different ending, with regard to the hysteric and the *hommoinzun* she requires.[7] The role of this *hommoinzune* can be no better sustained than by naturalness itself.

This is why, at the start, I didn't deny the difference that exists, that is perfectly noticeable, and from a very early age, between a young girl and a young boy. This difference, which asserts itself as something innate, is indeed altogether natural. It corresponds to the real by the fact that, within the species that has itself given itself the name *Homo sapiens* – a self-made species, in this and in many other respects – the sexes appear to be shared out into two sets of individuals that are pretty much equal in number. Fairly early on, earlier than one might expect, these individuals are distinct. It is quite certain that they are distinguished.

However, I would point out to you in passing that this does not partake of logic. They recognize themselves as speaking beings only by rejecting this distinction by means of all sorts of identifications, and it is the common practice of psychoanalysis to notice how this forms the mainspring behind the phases of every childhood. This is just a parenthesis, however.

Logically speaking, the important thing, and this is what I didn't

deny, is that they *se distinguent*. There is a slide here. What I did not deny is precisely not that. One distinguishes them. It is not *they* who distinguish *themselves*.

So it is that people say – *Oh, what a proper young lad he is. You can already see how different he is from a little girl. He's already restless, investigating, already in want of kudos*. The little girl, meanwhile, is far from resembling him. She's already thinking only of playing at hiding behind a fan, as it were, which consists in tucking her face into a niche and refusing to say hello. But there you go, people only marvel at this because this is exactly how it will be later on, in conformity with the *types* of man and woman such as they will be constituted from something quite different, namely from the consequence of the value that the small difference will have acquired in what comes next.

Needless to say, *hurrah for the small difference* had already been there for the parents for a long while. It had already had its effects on the way that the little lad and the little lass would be treated. It's not entirely sure. It's not always like that. But you don't need this for the judgement of recognition from adults in the child's ambit to be based on an error, the error that consists in recognizing them from what distinguishes them, no doubt, but recognizing them solely in accordance with criteria that have been shaped under language dependence. This assumes that it is the case, as I say it is, that the castration complex exists because these beings are speaking beings. I'm adding this in order to insist, so that you will understand properly what I mean.

It is in this respect that the *hommoinzune*, of error, lends consistency to the naturalness – which moreover is incontestable – of this premature calling, if I may put it like that, which each and every one of us experiences for our sex. Furthermore, it should be added that in cases where this calling is not apparent, it doesn't undermine the error, because it can be rounded out with ease by being attributed to nature as such, and no less naturally so. When things don't match, they say that she's a *garçon manqué*, a tomboy, don't they? In such cases, *manque*, lack, has great facility for being considered a success, to the extent that nothing stops one from imputing a little extra femininity to this lack. Woman, true woman, the proper young lass, hides behind this very lack. Moreover, this is a refinement that fully conforms to what the unconscious teaches us, never better succeeding than in failing.

In these conditions, to get to the other sex one really has to pay the price, the price of the small difference, which deceptively passes over to the real through the intermediary of the organ. This happens precisely when it stops being taken for an organ. By the same stroke,

it reveals what it means to be an organ. An organ is an instrument only through the intervention of the fact that it is a signifier, which is what founds any instrument.

It is qua signifier that the transsexual wants rid of it, and not qua organ. Thus, he suffers because of an error, the common error. The transsexual's passion is the madness of wanting to free himself from this error, the common error that doesn't see that the signifier is jouissance, and that the phallus is only its signified. The transsexual wants to be no longer signified phallus by sexual discourse, which, I say, is impossible. He is wrong in just one respect, in wanting to force, by means of surgery, sexual discourse which, qua impossible, is the point of passage to the real.

This is the same thing I once stated in a programme for a congress on female sexuality. I said, for those who know how to read of course, that only the homosexual, to be written in the feminine, *homosexuelle*, sustains sexual discourse in total safety.

This was why I called upon the testimony of Les Précieuses who, as you know, remain a model for me, Les Précieuses who, if I may say so, define so admirably the *excès au mot*, the excess in the word – allow me if you will to stop the word right there – the *Ecce homo* of love, because there's no way they will take the phallus for a signifier. *O fie, fie, fie!* O fie, phi, signi-Φ! It is only by breaking up the signifier at the level of its letter that one gets to the bottom of it with its final term.

It is unfortunate, though, that for her, the female homosexual, this amputates the psychoanalytic discourse, because it's a fact that this discourse completely blinds these very dear women to what is involved in feminine jouissance.

Contrary to what can be read in a famous play by Apollinaire, the same play that introduced the word *surréaliste*, Theresa becomes Tiresias – don't forget that I've just been speaking about blindness – not by letting go, but by retrieving the two *birds of her weakness* – I'm quoting Apollinaire, for those who haven't read it – namely, the large and small balloons that represent them on the theatre stage, and which are perhaps – I'm saying *perhaps* because I don't want to divert your attention, so I'll make do with a *perhaps* – the very thing owing to which a woman can find jouissance only in an absence.

The female homosexual is on no account absent in the jouissance that remains to her. I repeat, this puts her at ease with the discourse of love, but it's quite clear that it excludes her from the psychoanalytic discourse, which she can barely stammer through.

2

Let's try to move forward.

Given how late it is, I can only provide a quick indication of the following – that concerning what is involved in everything that is posited as sexual relation, instituting it through a sort of fiction that is called *marriage*, it would be a good rule for the psychoanalyst to tell himself on this score, *let them muddle through as best they can.*

This is the rule that the psychoanalyst follows in practice. He doesn't say so, nor does he even tell himself as much, through some kind of false shame because he believes himself duty-bound to overcome every tragedy. This is a legacy of sheer superstition. He plays the doctor, but never have doctors got caught up in ensuring conjugal happiness. Since psychoanalysts haven't yet noticed that there is no such thing as sexual relation, they are haunted by playing the role of Providence in couples.

All of the above – the false shame, the superstition, the inability to formulate a precise rule on this point, the same rule that I've just set out by saying *let them muddle through* – stems from a failure to recognize what their experience repeats to them, namely that there is no such thing as sexual relation.

I could even use the verb *seriner*.[8] It has to be said that the etymology of *seriner* leads us straight to *siren*. It's textual. It's in the *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française*. I'm not the one who's giving myself over to some such song here all of a sudden.

This is doubtless why the psychoanalyst, like Ulysses in similar conditions, stays lashed to a mast. Naturally, for as long it lasts – the Sirens' song that enchants him, that is to say, that makes him hear everything the wrong way round – he has to stay lashed to the mast, in which you cannot fail to recognize the phallus, that is to say, the major, all-embracing signified. This is only convenient for everyone in so far as it has no untoward consequences, because it's made for that, for the good ship psychoanalysis herself, that is, for all those who are in the same boat.

It is still the case that he hears the Sirens' song of experience the wrong way round, and this is why it has thus far remained a private domain – I mean, for those who are in the same boat. What happens on this boat, where there are also beings of both sexes, is none the less remarkable. It so happens that I hear from the lips of people who sometimes come to visit me from these boats – I who am, my goodness, on another one – that the same rules don't apply there. This would be rather exemplary, were the way I got wind of it not so peculiar.

In studying what emerges from a certain pattern to the misrecognition of what forms the psychoanalytic discourse, namely the consequences it has on what I shall call the style of what is related to *liaison* – because in the end the absence of sexual relation clearly doesn't prevent liaisons, far from it, but rather provides them with their conditions – this would perhaps afford a glimpse of what might result from the fact that the psychoanalytic discourse is still being accommodated on these boats, where currently it does its wandering. Something of this gives us to fear this might remain its privilege.

It could ensue that something of this style should come to dominate the realm of liaisons in what is improperly called *the vast field of the world* and, truth be told, this is not reassuring. It would surely be yet more untoward than the present state, which is such that it is from the misrecognition I have just pointed out that there arises what can often be seen at the start of a psychoanalysis, and which after all is not unwarranted, namely the fears that are sometimes expressed by subjects as to everything that might constrict or affect the engaging relationships, the enthralling acts, and even the creative upheavals, that are necessitated by the absence of relation.

They do not know that, all told, these fears are stirred up by giving credence to the institutionalized silence of psychoanalysis on this matter of there being no such thing as sexual relation.

3

Before taking leave of you I should like to make some headway into something, to explore what I called a new logic.

This new logic is to be constructed from what occurs on account of the following having been posited at the outset. Nothing of what occurs due to the instance of language can in any case whatsoever give rise to any formulation of relation that would be satisfactory.

This logical exploration is not only the questioning of what imposes a limit on language in its apprehension of the real. In the very structure of this effort at broaching it, in its specific handling, it demonstrates the aspect of the real that lies in the fact of having determined language. Can't we take something from this?

If it is at the site of a certain rift in the real – which is strictly speaking inexpressible because this rift is what would determine all discourse – that the lines of these fields lie, lines that we find in the psychoanalytic experience, is it not appropriate, probable, and fit to infer that what logic has traced out by referring language to what is posited as real can enable us to ascertain, along certain lines that

stand to be invented, an orientation? Here lies the theoretical effort I am designating as the *facility* that would find an insistence.

Before leaving you today, I shall do no more than point out that there are three registers that, strictly speaking, have already emerged from the expansion of logic, three registers that my efforts shall revolve around this year, in order to develop what is involved by way of consequence in the following, which was posited at the outset – *there is no such thing as sexual relation.*

First, we have what you've already seen cropping up in my disquisition, the prosdiorismoi.

Today, in the course of this first approach, I have only touched on the statement of the *pas-tous*, the *not-all*. Already, last year, I thought I should isolate this statement for you by writing $\overline{\forall(x)}$ beside the function Φx, which I'm leaving in its entirely cryptic state. This is not the function of sexual relation, but rather the function that makes access to it impossible. It stands to be defined this year. Think of it as a function of jouissance. Why would it not be possible to set down a function of jouissance in writing? It is in putting it to the test that we shall see its tenability, as it were, or otherwise.

I was already led to put forward the function of the *not-all* last year, and certainly from a point that is far closer with respect to what is at issue. Today I am doing no more than landing on our terrain. Last year, I put forward this function using a negative bar placed above the term $\forall(x)$ that in the theory of quantifiers denotes the equivalent of *all*. It is only its equivalent. I shall go still further and say that it's a paring down in relation to Aristotle's naïve use of the prosdiorismos *all*.

The important thing for today is to have put before you the function of the *pas-tout*, the *not-all*.

Everyone knows that what arises, as it were naïvely, from the proposition that Aristotle calls the *particular proposition* is that there exists something that is reckoned to correspond to it. Whenever you use the word *some*, this does indeed seem to go without saying. Yet it does not go without saying, because it is not enough to negate the *not-all* for existence to be affirmed for each of the two bits, if I can put it like that. Of course, should existence be affirmed, the *not-all* is produced. Our way forward has to take in this *There exists*.

On this score, ambiguities have been sustained for such a long time that people have come to mix up essence and existence, and even more astonishingly, to believe that it means more *to exist* than *to be*. The whole problem is perhaps precisely that *There exist*, certainly, men and women, who do nothing more than exist, all told. Because after all, in the correct use that stands to be made of it once logic has allowed itself to peel apart a little from the real, which in

truth is the only way for it to be identified in relation to the real, that is to say, once it has been guaranteed only by the portion of the real in which a truth is possible, that is to say, a mathematics, one can clearly see that any *There exists* whatsoever is but a number that fulfils the terms of an equation, for example.

I'm not settling the question as to whether number is to be considered real or not. So as not to leave you in any ambiguity, I can tell you that I do settle the question – number is part of the real. It is, however, a privileged real, in regard to which the handling of truth allows logic to progress. Be that as it may, the mode of existence of a number is not, strictly speaking, something that can guarantee for us what is involved in existence each time the prosdiorismos *some* is asserted.

There is a second plane that I shall do no more than pick out here as a reference point of the field we are going to have to move into, a logic that will be advantageous for us – the field of modality.

As everyone knows, by looking into Aristotle, modality is what is involved in the *possible*. It is what *may* occur. I shall do no more here than indicate the frontispiece to it.

Aristotle plays four categories against one other. There is the *possible*, which he pits against the *impossible*, and the *necessary*, which he pits against the *contingent*. We shall see that nothing in these oppositions holds water. For today, I'm simply pointing out to you what is involved in the formulation of the necessary, which is strictly speaking *not to be able not to*. This is what specifically defines necessity for us. Where does that lead? From the impossible, *not to be able*, to an *able not to*. Is the latter possible or contingent? Either way, what is quite certain is that should you care to take the opposite route, what you find is *able not to be able*, that is, it joins up with the unlikeliness, the obsolescence, of what may occur, namely, not the impossible to which one would return by looping the loop, but quite simply powerlessness. This is just to indicate the second field of questions to be opened, as a frontispiece.

The third term is *negation*.

Considering what I have written, and what completes it in the formulae from last year written up on the blackboard, $\exists x.\overline{\Phi x}$, does it not strike you that there are two utterly distinct possible forms of negation?

The grammarians have already tackled these forms, but, in truth, they did so in a grammar that claimed to go *from words to thought*, which says it all. You embark in semantics and shipwreck is guaranteed! The distinction they draw between foreclosure and discordance is worth recalling, however, as we enter what we shall be dealing with this year. I still need to specify – and the purpose

of the following sessions will be to afford each of these chapters suitable development – that foreclosure cannot in itself be bound, contrary to what Damourette and Pichon have said, to *pas*, to *point*, to *goutte*, to *mie*, or even to some of the other accessory terms that seem to support it in French.[9] Nevertheless, it should be noted that what runs counter to this is precisely our *not-all*. Our *not-all* is discordance.

But what is foreclosure? It is certainly to be placed in a register that is very different from that of discordance. It is to be placed at the point where we have written the term known as *function*. It is here that the importance of the fact of saying is formulated. There is no foreclosure but from the fact of saying so, but from this something that exists, since existence is already reserved for what we must surely furnish with its status – *that something may or may not be said*. This is what is at issue in foreclosure. Moreover, from the fact that something may not be said thereof, the only conclusion is a question that bears on the real.

For the time being, the function Φx, in the way I have written it, means solely that for everything that concerns the speaking being, sexual relation constitutes a question. All our experience lies here, I mean, the minimum that we may derive from it. As with any question, there would be no question were there not a response. The patterns this question follows when posed, that is, the responses, are precisely what it is a matter of setting down in writing in this function.

Without any doubt, this is going to enable us to form a juncture between what has been developed by way of logic and what can be grounded on the principle, considered as an effect of the real, that it is not possible to set sexual relation down in writing, namely the function that regulates everything that is involved in our experience.

By constituting a question, sexual relation, *which is no such thing*, in the sense that one cannot write it, determines everything that is developed in terms of a discourse the nature of which is to be a ruptured discourse.

8 December 1971

II

THE FUNCTION Φx

The written: the return of the repressed
A matheme verging on doltishness
Aristotle, Being, and the One
Castration and existence
The *not-all*

This morning I was given a little pen as a present. If you knew just how hard it is for me to find a pen that I like, you would be able to sense how much pleasure this has given me. I thank the person who brought it to me, who is perhaps here. This person admires me, as they say. I don't give a damn about being admired. What I like is to be treated well. Yet even from those who admire me, this seldom happens.

Be that as it may, I made use of this pen straightaway to do some writing, and this is where my reflections began. It's when I am writing that I find something. This is a fact. At least, it is for me. It doesn't mean that if I were not to write, I wouldn't find anything. But then, perhaps I wouldn't even notice.

1

With respect to this function of the *écrit*, of the written, which is on the agenda thanks to a few smart Alecs, perhaps I didn't really care to take sides, but my hand is being forced, so why not?

I'm going to spell out my idea of it – and this is perhaps what has led to some confusion in certain cases – emphatically, with no frills. Indeed, I said to myself, today in fact, that something written could be very helpful for me to find something, but writing something down just for the sake of sparing myself strain or risk, shall we say, or a good many other things besides, does not in the end make for

particularly good results. Better to have nothing to read for you. Furthermore, the written work in which now and then I do produce a few findings is not the same as that whereby I might prepare what I have to say here.

Then, there is also what is written for print, which is something more different still. More accurately, it would be untoward to believe that whatever I might once have written down in order to speak to you should constitute written work that would be fully admissible, or which I would anthologize.

I will venture, therefore, to say something that takes the plunge. My idea of the written – to situate it, to start from there, which may be debated afterwards – well, let's say it, colon, is the return of the repressed.

It's in this form that it might have led to confusion in some of my *Écrits*. If I have sometimes appeared to lend credence to the belief that I identify signifiers with letters, this is precisely because the signifier touches me most, as an analyst, in the form of the letter. It's as a letter that I most frequently see the signifier coming back, the repressed signifier. So, in *L'instance de la lettre*, it's all the more legitimate for me to have imaged this signifier with a letter given that everyone else does as much.

The first time that logic, strictly speaking, was opened up with Aristotle and the *Analytics*, there too, letters were used. This is not altogether in the same way as the letter comes back to the place of the signifier that makes a return. The letter comes there to mark out a place, the place of the signifier, which is a signifier that is lying around, that may at the very least be lying around all over the place. In the end, however, we can see that the letter is in some sense designed just for this, and all the more so given that this is how the letter first manifests itself.

I don't know whether you are fully aware of this, but in the end I do hope you will think about it, because even so, it does presuppose something that has not been said in what I have been putting forward. There has to be a kind of transmutation that occurs, from signifier to letter, when the signifier isn't there, when it's gone off course, when it's scarpered. One would have to ask oneself how this transmutation might come about. But this is not what I mean to go into today. I might turn to it some other day.

Even so, on the subject of this letter, one cannot feign that one is not dealing, in a field that is called mathematics, with a site at which one cannot write just any old thing. I'm not about to go into this either. I will simply point out that it's in this respect that this domain sets itself apart, and that probably this is even what constitutes what I have not yet alluded to here, at this Seminar I mean, but which I

reported in a few remarks at Sainte-Anne, which doubtless some of you here attended, namely what may be called a *matheme*. I posited that this *matheme* is the pivotal point of all teaching. In other words, mathematical teaching is the only teaching. The rest is banter.

Of course, this hinges on a different status of the written from the one I gave at the outset. I shall be trying to form a juncture between them during the course of the year.

In the meantime, my difficulty, the one that I hold to in spite of it all – I don't know whether this comes from me or whether it's not rather through your participation – is that, in view of the field of discourse that I have to establish, my own *matheme* invariably verges on doltishness.

This is self-evident, given what I've told you, since all in all what is at issue is that when it comes to sexual relation, *y en a pas*. There's no such thing. It ought to be written *hi-han* and *appât*, with a double *p*, a circumflex accent on the second *a*, and a *t* at the end.[1] Naturally, sexual relation shouldn't be confused with sexual intercourse, which is all there is.

However, these sexual encounters are always bungled, even, and above all, when they are acts. Well, let's move on.

2

While there is still time, I should like you to read a very fine introduction, something essential – Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

By the time I come back to it, perhaps at the beginning of March, you will need to have read it attentively, so that you can see its relationship with this business of ours. Naturally, I won't be speaking to you about the *Metaphysics*. Not that I don't admire doltishness. I daresay I bow low before it.

You lot, you don't bow low. You're an organized and mindful electorate. You don't vote for dolts. That's your undoing. A favourable political system should allow doltishness to have its place. Moreover, things go well only when doltishness dominates. That said, this is no reason to bow low.

Therefore, the text I'm going to take up is an exploit, and one of many such exploits that are, as it were, unexploited. This text is Plato's *Parmenides*, which is going to be of service to us. However, properly to comprehend the depth this text possesses, a text that is not doltish, one needs to have read Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

When I recommend reading the *Critique of Practical Reason* as a novel – it's brimming with humour – I don't know whether anyone has ever followed this advice and managed to read it as I do. At

least, no one has confided as much. This invitation is somewhere in *Kant avec Sade*, which I never know if anyone has read. So, I'll do the same again. I'm going to tell you to read Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. And I hope that, like me, you will sense that it's truly doltish. I don't want to dwell too long on this. These are brief sidelong remarks that have occurred to me. You cannot help but be struck by this character of doltishness, when you read the text, of course.

This is not about Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in its essence, in the signified, in everything that has been explained to you on the basis of this magnificent text, that is, everything that has gone to make up metaphysics in this part of the world in which we find ourselves. Because everything came out of this. It's quite fabulous. People speak about the end of metaphysics, but in the name of what? So long as this book exists, one can still do metaphysics.

This book, because it is a book, is very different from metaphysics. It's a *written* book, which I was speaking about earlier. It has been given a meaning that is called metaphysics, but even so, meaning has to be differentiated from the book. Naturally, once it has been given all this meaning, it's not easy to get back to the book. If truly you do get back to it, you will nevertheless see what has been read into it by people who have a discipline, which is a method that is called historical, critical, exegetical, what you will. Evidently they are capable of reading the text with a certain way of barring themselves off from the meaning, and when you look at the text, well, you are beset by doubts.

This obstacle, arising from everything that has been understood therein, can exist only at the academic level, and universities haven't always been in existence. Well, in Antiquity, three or four centuries after Aristotle, they started to air the most serious doubts about this text, because they still knew how to read. They voiced doubts, saying that it was a series of notes, or else that a pupil had put it together, amassing stuff. I must say I am not convinced in the slightest. It might be because I've just read a book by a certain Michelet, not our Michelet, not our poet – when I say our *poet*, by that I mean that I place him very highly – but instead a fellow who was a professor at the University of Berlin, also named Michelet, Karl Ludwig. He wrote a book on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, published in 1836, because the historical method that was then flourishing had mildly annoyed him with the doubts it was airing, which were not unfounded since they reach back to Late Antiquity. I must say that Michelet is not of this opinion, and nor am I.

Indeed, truly – how shall I put it? – doltishness is a mark of proof when it comes to authenticity. The dominant factor is the authenticity, as it were, of doltishness. Perhaps the term *authentic* is still

a little bit complicated for us, with its etymological resonances of Greek. There are languages in which it is better represented. It is *echt*. I don't know how you turn it into a noun. It must be *Echtheit*, or something of the like. No matter. There is nevertheless nothing more authentic than doltishness. So, this authenticity is perhaps not Aristotle's authenticity, but the *Metaphysics* – I'm speaking about the text – is authentic. It cannot be composed of pieces or fragments. It is constant in its doltishness.

What is the justification for calling it doltishness? One slides into doltishness when one pitches the questions at a particular level that is determined precisely by the fact of language, namely when one nears its essential function, which is to fill in everything that has been left gaping wide by the fact that there can be no such thing as sexual relation, meaning that nothing written, as a product of language, can account for it in a satisfactory way.

Of course, since the moment we first caught a view of gametes we have been able to write on the blackboard *man = bearer of spermatozoa*. This would be a rather odd definition because he's not the only one who bears spermatozoa, there's a host of other animals. Let's start talking about biology, then. Why are the spermatozoa of man the same that men carry? Because, since it's the spermatozoa of man that makes man, we are in a circle that turns around. So what? It can be written down.

Yet this bears no relation whatsoever to anything that may be, so to speak, sensibly written, that is, which would bear a relation to the real. Just because it's biological, this doesn't make it more real. It is the product of science that is called biological. The real is something else.

The real is what commands the entire function of *signifiance*. The real is what you encounter precisely on account of not being able, in mathematics, to write just any old thing. The real is what is entailed in the fact that, in the most commonplace function, you are immersed in *signifiance*, yet you cannot grasp all the signifiers at the same time. This is forbidden by their very structure. When you have some, a mass of them, you no longer have the others. They are repressed. This does not mean that you don't utter them none the less. Precisely, they are said *inter*. There is an *inter-diction*. It doesn't stop you from uttering them. But they are said censured. Either everything that psychoanalysis is possesses no meaning and can be slung in the bin, or else what I'm telling you here has to be your home truth.

This is what will be at issue this year. When one poises oneself at a certain level, Aristotle or not – either way the text is there and it's authentic – there's no plain sailing. It's engaging to see someone so

sharp, so learnèd, so alert, and so lucid, starting to flounder in this way. Why does he flounder? Because he wonders about the principle. Naturally, he hasn't the faintest idea that the principle is that there is no such thing as sexual relation. And yet one can see that it is solely at this level that he poses himself all the questions.

So, what is it that comes out of him like a bird on the wing, from the top hat into which he had simply placed a question the nature of which he was unacquainted with? It's like the conjurer who thinks he has put a rabbit in the top hat to emerge from it later, and out pops a rhinoceros instead. That's exactly how it is for Aristotle. Where is the principle? If it's the genus, he gets angry – because is it the broad genus or the more specified genus? It's clear that the broader is the most essential, but that even so, the more specified is what readily supplies what is most unique to each entity.

So, he doesn't even realize, but thank goodness he doesn't, for owing to this he doesn't mix them up. Because this business of essentiality and this business of oneness are the same thing, or more accurately, it is homonymous with what he examines. Thank goodness, he doesn't mix them up. He doesn't make them emerge from there. He asks himself – *is the One the principle, or is Being the principle?* This is when things start to become a damned awful muddle. The One must, at any cost, be. And Being must be One. This is where we lose our pedalling because, precisely, the way not to mess up is strictly to separate them. This is what we shall be trying to do later.

That's enough of Aristotle.

3

Last year, I took the step of announcing to you that this non-relation, if I can put it like that, needs to be written. It needs to be written at any cost. I mean that the other relation needs to be written, the one that blocks the possibility of writing the first one.

I put some items on the blackboard last year which I think it would not be a bad idea to posit here at the outset.

Naturally, there is some arbitrariness here. I'm not about to excuse myself by using the mathematicians as a shield to hide behind. They do as they please, and so do I. Even so, just for those who feel the need to make excuses for me, I can say that in Bourbaki's *Elements* they start by chucking letters around without saying a single word about what they might be used for. Let's call them written symbols, because they don't even look like letters. These symbols represent something that one can call *operations*. Not a word is said about

which operations are at issue. Only twenty pages in is one able to deduce this retroactively, based on the way they have been used.

I won't be going that far. I shall attempt to examine right now what is meant by the letters I wrote. However, since I reckon that for you it would be far more complicated were I to set them out one by one, as they become animated and assume a functional value, I would rather posit these letters as the items around which I will have to navigate afterwards.

Since you can't hear me when I turn to the blackboard, there are two ways of going about this – either I write and keep my mouth shut, then speak afterwards, or I carry on speaking a bit if you manage to keep within earshot. So, can you hear me?

Already, last year, and for reasons that are tentative, I thought I would write Φx as they do in mathematics, as a function. This is the function constituted by the fact that the jouissance called *sexual jouissance* exists, which is specifically what forms a barrier to sexual relation.

For the speaking being, sexual jouissance opens the door to jouissance. Train your ears and you will perceive that jouissance, when we refer to it like that *tout court*, might be what jouissance is for some – I don't exclude this – but it's really not sexual jouissance.

This is the merit that can be bestowed on Sade's text, for calling a spade a spade. Jouissance is the jouissance of a body. Jouissance is the embracing, the clutching, the fragmenting of the body. In legal parlance, *avoir la jouissance* of something is precisely that, to be able to treat some thing as a body, that is, to wreck it. This is the most regular mode of jouissance, and this is why these statements invariably have a Sadean resonance. *Sadean* is not to be confused with *sadistic*. So much rubbish has been spoken about sadism that the term has been devalued. I won't go any further on that point.

What is produced by the relationship between signifier and jouissance is what I am expressing with this notation Φx. This means that x merely designates a signifier. Each of you here can be a signifier, precisely at the slender level at which you exist as sexuated. It is, if I may say so, very slender in width, but it has a far larger surface than it does in animals. When they are not on heat, you can't differentiate in animals between what in the last lesson I was calling the young boy and the young girl. Lion cubs, for example, look utterly alike in their behaviour. But not you, precisely for as much as you sexuate yourselves *comme signifiant*, as signifying.

It is not about underscoring the signifier *man* as distinct from the signifier *woman*, calling one x and the other y, because this is precisely the question – how are they distinguished? It is for this reason that I'm putting the x in the place of the hole that I'm making in

the signifier, that is to say, I'm setting down this x as an apparent variable. This means that each time I have to deal with this sexual signifier, with this something that has to do with jouissance, I will be dealing with Φx. Among these $x$es, there are some that are specified in such a way that one can write *for all* x – whatever or whoever it may be – Φx. This means that what functions here is what is known in mathematics as a Φ function, that is, it can be written $\forall x.\Phi x$.

I'm going to enlighten you straightaway. Well, enlighten ... You're the only ones who will be enlightened. You will be enlightened for a short while. As the Stoics used to say, *if it is day, it is light*. As for me, as I wrote on the back cover of my *Écrits*, I take the side of the Enlightenment thinkers. I shine a light, in the hope that the day will come, of course. However, it's precisely this day that is in question. The day won't come tomorrow. The first step to be taken in Enlightenment philosophy is to know that the day hasn't dawned, that the daylight at issue is one of a faint shaft of light in a perfectly dark field. In view of which, you're going to think that it's clear when I tell you that Φx means the function that is called castration.

Since you think you know what castration is, well, I presume you're glad, at least for the time being. Yet can you imagine that if I'm writing all this on the board, which I'm going to continue to do, it's because I have no idea what castration is. It's because I'm hoping, with the help of what is played out in these letters, finally to see day dawning, namely to know that one really does have to pass through this, through castration. So long as one is unaware of this, no discourse can be sound, sound in the sense that it leaves half of its status and conditioning in the shadows. And one can become aware of this only by enabling a particular changing of the letters to be played out across different levels of topological relationship, and by seeing how this is shared out.

Until then, you are reduced to little stories – namely, *Dad said we're going to snip it off* – as though this were not the epitome of doltishness. So, somewhere there is a site at which it may be said that everything that is articulated by way of signifiers falls under the sway of Φx, under the sway of this function of castration.

There is one small advantage to formulating it in this way. You might get the idea that, if earlier I made the remark, not unintentionally – I'm more cunning than I might seem – about the subject of inter-diction, namely that never can all the signifiers be there, all together, it's because this perhaps bears a relation to castration. I'm not saying – *the unconscious = castration*. I'm saying that it bears a strong relation. Obviously, writing this as Φx amounts to writing a function that carries, as Aristotle would say, an incredibly broad scope.

I haven't said anything yet about the relation between this function and a certain signifier, but let's say it. This signifier is, for instance, *a man*. All this is exhausting because there is a lot to wade through, and then, since no one has ever done this before me, it runs the risk of toppling down on our heads at any moment.

Un homme, a man. I didn't say *l'homme*. It's rather funny, though, how the signifier gets used. People say to the lad, *Be a man*. They don't say, *Be man*. Why is that? What is curious is that you don't hear *Be a woman* very often. On the other hand, people speak of *la femme*, with a definite article, *the woman*. There has been much speculation about this definite article. Well, we'll be coming across this when the moment is right. What I simply want to say is that what is written in terms of Φx produces the effect that one no longer has the entirety of signifiers at one's disposal. I'm not even saying these two signifiers here, precisely, but these and a certain number of others that link up with them. Perhaps, right here, this is a first inroad to what is involved in castration from the point of view of this mathematical function, which is imitated in what I have written.

In a first phase, I ask no more of you than to acknowledge that my way of writing it is an imitation. This doesn't mean that for me, having already reflected on it, it doesn't go a great deal further. Anyway, there is a means of writing it such that, given any x, this functions.

This is specific to a way of writing that stems from the first skeleton of logic, for which Aristotle is responsible, which earned him prestige due to the fact that logic harbours a formidable jouissance, because it touches on the field of castration.

How otherwise could you explain how so broad a period, of such searing intelligence and such abundant output as our Middle Ages, was able to get excited to this extent about these affairs of logic, of Aristotelian logic? For it moved hordes of people, given that through the intermediary of logicians it had consequences in theology, where the *logic* dominated the *theo* a great deal. This is not the case in our time, where only the *theo* remains, still as solid as can be in its doltishness, and from which the logic has fairly evaporated. For it to have put people in that state in the Middle Ages, the matter must procure jouissance.

It was from here that was derived all the prestige that, in Aristotle's construction, reflected onto the famous *Metaphysics*, in which he writes such copious drivel.

I'm not going to give you a lesson today on the history of logic. I will tell you simply to hunt out the *First Analytics*, which is called more accurately the *Prior Analytics*. Even for those, who of course

are the majority, who will never muster the courage to read it, fascinating though it is, I recommend nevertheless that you read in what is known as Book I, chapter 46, what Aristotle produced on negation. He writes about whether saying *the man is not white* is indeed the contrary of *the man is white*, or whether, as many believed, and already believed in his time – which didn't hold him back, however – the contrary is to say *the man is non-white*.

It's absolutely not the same thing. I think that just in stating it like this, the difference is palpable. It is most important to read this chapter, however, because you have been told so many things about the logic of predicates, at least those who have already tried to tackle some of the places where people speak about this stuff, that you could imagine that syllogisms fall squarely within the logic of predicates. This is a brief indication that I'm giving on the side. Since I didn't want to dwell on it, I might have the time to take it up some other day.

I simply want to say that, for me to be able to write Φx, there was an essential mutation at the start of the nineteenth century, namely the attempt to apply this logic to the mathematical signifier, the special status of which I indicated earlier. This furnished the mode of writing, the depth and originality of which I think I will have the time to make tangible for you in what comes next. In short, it no longer says in any respect whatsoever the same thing as the propositions – because that's what's at issue – that function in syllogisms. As I wrote last year, $\overline{\forall x}.\Phi x$, the sign of negation placed at the level of the $\forall$, is a possibility that was opened for us precisely by the introduction of quantifiers. They are generally termed [in French] *quantificateurs*, but I prefer to call them *quanteurs* – I'm not alone in this, nor am I the first – because the important thing is that you should know that this has absolutely nothing to do with quantity, which is obvious. They have been so termed because no better has been found, which in itself is a sign.

This articulation of the quantifiers allows us to posit the function of the *pas-tous*, the *not-all*, which has never been done in this logic of quantifiers, and which I'm doing because I consider that it may be very profitable for us. There is a set of these signifiers that supplements the function of what is sexuated, which supplements it with respect to jouissance, at a site where this *not-all* is functioning within the castration function.

I make further use of the quantifiers. There is a way of articulating them, which is to write $\exists x$, meaning *There exists*. What exists? There exists a signifier.

When you are dealing with mathematical signifiers, which have a different status from our little sexuated signifiers, and which bite

into the real in a different way, you ought perhaps to try to bring to the forefront of your minds how there is at least one thing that is real, the only thing we can be sure about, and this is number. What people manage to do with number! They've done rather a lot. To manage to build the real numbers – that is, precisely the ones that are not real – number has to be something real. I'm addressing this in passing to the mathematicians, who might lob a few rotten tomatoes at me. But what matter. They will do so in private because they find me intimidating here.

Let's come back to what we have to say. *There exists*. The reference I've just made is not merely a digression. It tells you that this is where *There exists* carries a meaning. It's a precarious meaning.

It is indeed qua signifiers that you exist, all of you. You surely do exist, but this doesn't go far. You exist qua signifiers. Try imagining yourselves cleansed of this business, and let me know how you get on. After the war we were being incited to exist in a strongly contemporary fashion. Well, look what's left of that. I daresay people nevertheless had a few more ideas in their heads when they were proving the existence of God. It's clear that God exists, but no more so than you. This doesn't get us very far. Well, that is for the sake of developing what is involved in existence.

What is it that might interest us about this *There exists* in respect of the signifier? It would be that there exists *at-least-one* for whom this business of castration does not function. This is precisely why the *at least one* was invented. This is what is called the Father, and this is why the Father exists at least as much as God does, that is to say, not much.

So, naturally, there are a few smart Alecs – I'm surrounded by smart Alecs, who transform what I put forward into intellectual pollution, as a patient of mine put it, and I thank her for supplying me with that, she found it all on her own because she's a sensitive woman, and moreover, by and large only women understand what I'm saying – there are a few smart Alecs who discovered that I was saying that the Father was a myth because it's blindingly obvious that, indeed, Φx doesn't work at the level of *Totem and Taboo*.[2] The Father is not castrated. Otherwise, how could he possess all the women? Do you realize? It is even here alone that they exist as *toutes*, as all, because the *not-all* is suited to women. I'll be commenting on this at greater length in the near future.

So, it's on the basis of this *There exists one*, in reference to this exception, that all the rest can function. Yet there you go, having fully understood that the rejection of the function Φx can be written down, it is not true that this one gets castrated. This is the myth. But what the smart Alecs didn't notice is that this is correlative to

existence, and that this posits the *There exists* of the *it is not true* of castration.

It's two o'clock. So, I will simply mark out for you the fourth way of making use of what is involved in the negation grounded on the quantifiers, which is to write $\overline{\exists x}$, *There exists not*.

Who, or what, doesn't exist? Why shouldn't it be true that it is the function Φx that dominates what is involved in the usage of the signifier? Is that what this means? Just now, I differentiated existence from exception. If the negation here were to mean $\overline{\exists x}.\overline{\Phi x}$, that is, *without the exception of this signifier position*, it could be inscribed into the negation of castration, into the rejection, into the *it is not true* that castration dominates everything.

It is on this little enigma that I shall take leave of you today, because, in truth, this is very enlightening for the subject. One can make use of negation in a way that is not so straightforwardly univocal as the use that is made of it in the logic of propositions, where everything that is not true is false, and where – this is confoundedly big – all that is not false becomes true.

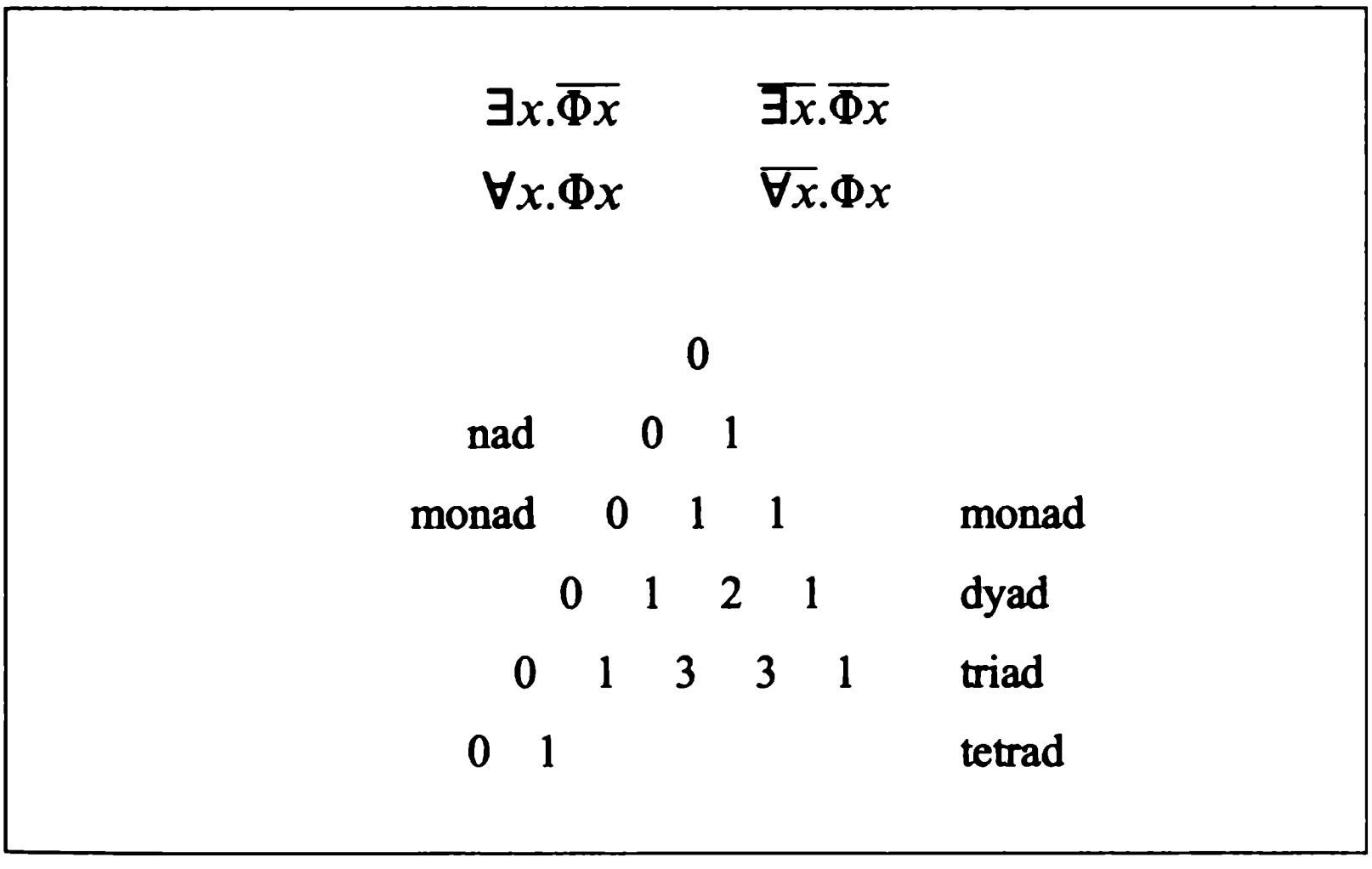
I'll leave things now as the hour hand is cutting me off, which is only right. I'll pick them up next time at the precise point at which I've left them today.

15 December 1971

III

FROM ANECDOTE TO LOGIC

Favouring the real of logic
A disturbed relation to the body
Function and argument
The *not-all* and the *at least one*
The possible and the contingent



On the blackboard

Were we to find in logic a means of articulating what the unconscious demonstrates by way of sexual values, this would come as no surprise to us.

I mean this would come as no surprise, right here, at my Seminar, that is, right down at the level of this experience, analysis, which was put in place by Freud and whereby a structure of discourse that I have defined was established.

1

Let's take up what I have just said in the density of my opening sentence.

I have spoken of sexual values. I will note that these values are accepted values – accepted in each and every language. *Man*, *woman*, these are what are called sexual values. That man and woman should be there at the outset is first and foremost a matter of language. This is the thesis I will start from today.

Language is such that any speaking subject is either *he* or else *she*. This exists in all the languages of the world. It is the principle behind the functioning of gender, feminine or masculine. Whenever there is a hermaphrodite, this is just an occasion to play, with more or less mindfulness, at bringing the *him* and the *her* into the same sentence. On no account does one call a hermaphrodite *it*, unless thereby to evince a horror of the sacred type. One does not refer to a hermaphrodite in the neutral.

That said, we don't know what man and woman are. For a while, this bipolarity of values was taken to be sufficient to support, to suture, what is involved in sex. It was from this very fact that resulted the muted metaphor that for centuries underpinned the theory of cognizance. As I have noted elsewhere, the world used to be what was perceived, even apperceived, as though it stood at the place of the other sexual value. The involvement of *νοῦς*, of the power of cognizance, was placed on the positive side, the active side, of what I will be examining today by asking what relation it bears to the One.

On any tight inroad to the sexual approach, the step that analysis has led us to take shows us, reveals to us, the detour, the barrier, the course, the chicane, the narrow pass, of castration. This step can be properly taken only on the basis of the articulation that I have provided of the analytic discourse. This is what leads us to think that on no account can castration be reduced to anecdote, to mishap, to the clumsy intervention of a word of threat or even of censure. The structure is logical.

What is the object of logic?

You know from experience, just by opening a book with the title *Traité de logique*,[1] how fragile, uncertain, and eluded, the first stage can be in any tract that goes under the heading of something along the lines of *the art of good conduct in one's thinking* – but where is this thinking to be conducted, and from which end is it to be taken? – or otherwise, some such recourse to a normality whereby what is rational would be defined independently of the real. It's clear that after this kind of attempt to define the object of logic, what presents

itself belongs to a different order and is consistent in a different way. I could simply leave a blank here, but I won't do that. I propose to define the object of logic as what is produced by the necessity of a discourse.

No doubt this is ambiguous, but it's not idiotic because it entails the implication that logic can change meaning completely, depending on where any given discourse draws its meaning from. Any given discourse can take its meaning from another discourse.

For a long time now I've been asserting fairly clearly, for it to be enough just to recall it here, that the real – a category from the triad with which my teaching got under way, *the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real* – is affirmed in the impasses of logic.

Let me explain. At the start, in its conquering ambition, what logic proposed was nothing less than the network of discourse qua articulated. In being articulated, this network was supposed to close into a universe that was reckoned to surround what is offered to cognizance, and to cover it like a net. The experience of logicians showed that things were different.

I needn't go into details here, because this audience is sufficiently well informed of where in our time the effort of logic has been able to start afresh to know the following. It's a matter of broaching something that in principle has been fined down to a real, namely arithmetic. It has been demonstrated that, in arithmetic, something can always be stated – whether or not it is put to logical deduction – which is articulated as though it stood in advance of the very thing which premises, axioms, and grounding terms, whereby the said arithmetic can find a base, enable us to presume to be provable or refutable. Here, in a domain that in appearance is the surest, we put our finger on what stands in opposition to the entire grasp of discourse, of logical exhaustion, which introduces a wide, irreducible gap here. This is where we designate the real.

Before arriving at the proving ground that might be looming on the horizon, which is indeed uncertain for those who have not formed a firm grasp of its latest proofs, it will be enough to call to mind what naïve discourse is.

Naïve discourse proposes itself at the outset, inscribes itself as such, as truth. Apparently it has never been hard to demonstrate to this naïve discourse that it doesn't know what it is saying. I'm not speaking of the subject. I'm speaking of discourse. This was the dawning – why not say so? – of the Sophist's critique. When somebody states what is invariably posited as truth, the Sophist demonstrates to him that he doesn't know what he is saying. This is even the origin of dialectic as a whole. And then, it's always ready to get a new lease of life. Whenever someone is put in the witness

box, the ABC of the barrister is to show him that he doesn't know what he's saying. But here we fall to the level of the subject, of the witness, whom it's a matter of throwing into a muddle. At the level of Sophistic action, it is always the discourse itself that the Sophist lays into. Since I announced that I would have to give an account of the *Parmenides*, we might this year have to show what is involved in Sophistic action.

In the development of what logicians have enunciated, to which I made reference just now, some of you perhaps noticed that what was at issue was nothing less than Gödel's theorem concerning arithmetic. Gödel proceeds to his demonstration that, in the field of arithmetic, there will always be something that can be stated in the specific terms it comprehends which does not lie within the scope of what it posits to itself as a mode to be taken as accepted in the proof. The remarkable thing is that Gödel does not proceed on the basis of truth values. He doesn't proceed to his demonstration on the basis of truth, but rather on the basis of the notion of derivation. It's by leaving the value of *true* or *false* as such in abeyance that the theorem is provable.

What I'm saying about the logical gap with regard to this point – a vital point in that it illustrates what I intend to push forward – is accentuated by the following. If the real, which is certainly of easy access, may be defined as the impossible – the impossible inasmuch as it is borne out by the very holding power of discourse, of the logician's discourse – this impossible, this real, is the one that ought to be favoured by us. When I say *by us*, I mean *by analysts*. Because it obtains in an exemplary way that this is the paradigm of what calls into question what can arise from language. From language, certain types of discourse arise which I defined as establishing a very definite type of social bond. But language questions itself about what it grounds as a discourse. It is striking that it can only do so by fostering the shadow of a language that would surpass itself, which would be metalanguage. I have often remarked that it can do so only by scaling back in its function, that is, by begetting, for a start, a particularized discourse. In turning our attention to this real inasmuch as it is affirmed by the logicians' interrogation of language, I propose that here lies the model of what is important for us, namely the model of what is offered up by the exploration of the unconscious.

What is offered up by the exploration of the unconscious is far from being a universal sexual symbolism, which is what the likes of Jung thought they would be able to revive by sliding back into the most ancient rut. Far from it being a universal sexual symbolism, it is very precisely what I called to mind earlier by way of castration,

underscoring, however, the requirement that it should not be reduced to the anecdote of a heard remark. Without this, why would one isolate it and accord it the privilege of goodness knows what trauma, or even the efficacy of a gap? It is only too obvious that it has nothing anecdotic about it. It is rigorously fundamental, not in what establishes, but in what renders impossible the statement of sexual bipolarity as such.

The curious thing is that we go on imagining sexual bipolarity at the animal level, as though every illustration of what constitutes in each species the tropism of one sex for the other were not just as variable for that species as their corporeal constitution is. Moreover, haven't we known already for some time now that, regarding sex, not at the level of what I have just defined as the real but at the level of what is articulated within each science, where its object is defined once and for all, there are at least two or three stages in what constitutes the sex, from the genotype to the phenotype? Following the most recent steps in biology – need I mention which? – it's quite sure that sex merely takes up its place as a particular modality of what allows for the reproduction of what is known as a living body. Far from sex being its typical instrument, it is merely one of its forms. Even though Freud indicated this, albeit approximately, people still far too often confuse the function of sex with the function of reproduction.

Things are far from being such that there is the lineage of the gonad on one side, what Weismann called the *germen*, and on the other the branch of the body, the *soma*.[2] It's clear that the genotype of the body does pass on something that determines the sex, but that this is not sufficient. From its bodily production, from its corporeal stasis, hormones are released that can interfere in this determination.

So, it's not that, on one side, there is sex inextricably associated with life because it is in the body, sex imagined as the image of what, in the reproduction of life, would supposedly amount to love, and then, on the other side, the body as having to fend off death. The reproduction of life, such as we have managed to examine it at the level of the appearance of its initial forms, emerges from something that is neither life nor death. Quite independently of sex, and even on occasion of something that is already living, something intervenes which we will call the *sequence*, or even the *codon*, as is said regarding one or another unit that has been ascertained in chromosomes.

The life-and-death dialogue occurs at the level of what is reproduced. From what we know, it only assumes a dramatic character from the moment that jouissance intervenes in the balance between life and death. The vital point, the point of emergence of something

that all of us here more or less believe we form part of, namely speaking being, is this disturbed relation to our bodies that is called jouissance.

The analytic discourse demonstrates that the centre of this, its point of departure, is a privileged relation to sexual jouissance. The value of the other partner, which I began by designating respectively as man and as woman, is unapproachable through language very precisely because language functions, from the start, by standing in for sexual jouissance. It thereby gives order, in bodily repetition, to this intrusion of jouissance.

Today I am going to start to show you how, by making use of logical functions, it is possible to provide what is involved in castration with an articulation that is different from the anecdotal one.

2

In the lineage of the logical exploration of the real, the logicians started with propositions. Logic only got under way when it was known how to isolate in language the function of what are called prosdiorismoi, which are *one*, *some*, *all*, and the negation of these propositions.

Aristotle defined, in order to set them in opposition, the universals and the particulars, and, in each of them, the affirmative and the negative. I want to stress the difference there is between this use of prosdiorismoi and something else that came about which – for requirements of logic, namely for an approach that was none other than the real that is called number – was completely different.

The logical analysis of what is called the propositional function is articulated by isolating something in the proposition, or more exactly through the lack, the void, the hole, the hollow that is made, in what has to function as an argument. To wit, it will be said that any argument in a domain that we can label as you wish, with an x or a gothic $\mathfrak{a}$, placed in the empty place in the proposition,[3] shall suffice, that is, shall supply its truth value. This is an inscription of what is here on the bottom left, the $\forall x.\Phi x$. It matters little what is here in the proposition. The function takes on a true value for any x in the domain.

What is this x? I have said that it is defined as though by a domain. Even so, does this mean we know what this is? Do we know what a man is when we say *all men are mortal*? We learn something about him from the fact of saying that he is mortal, and precisely from the knowledge that this is true for all men. However, before introducing this *all men*, we only know the most approximate features, which

can be defined in the most variable fashion. This is the story, which I suppose you've known for a long time, of the plucked chicken that Plato recounts. This means that we need to examine the phases of the logical articulation.

Indeed, whatever the prosdiorismos holds does not carry any meaning until it functions as an argument. It only takes on a meaning through entering the function. It takes on the meaning of true or false. It seems to me that this is just what it takes to make us touch on the wide gap that lies between the signifier and its denotation, because meaning, if it lies somewhere, lies in the function, yet denotation only begins when the argument comes to be inscribed within it.

By the same token, this calls into question the following, which is different, namely the use of the letter E, likewise inverted, ∃, meaning *There exists*. There exists something that can serve in the function as an argument and thereby assume, or not, a truth value. I would like to give you a sense of the difference that lies in this introduction of *There exists* as a problematic. It calls into question the very function of existence in relation to what was implied by the use of particulars in Aristotle, namely that the use of *some* would seem to bring existence along with it, such that, since the *all* was supposed to comprehend this *some*, the *all* assumed the value of what it is not. It assumed the value of an affirmation of existence.

The status of the *all*, namely the universal, lies only at the level of the *possible*. Given how late it is, we will only be able to see this next time. It is *possible* to say, among other things, that *all humans are mortal*. However, the curious thing is that, far from settling the question of the existence of the human being, one has first of all to be sure that the human being exists.

3

I want now to indicate the path that we will start on next time.

The domain from which each x assumes a value can be defined solely by the articulations of the four argument-function conjunctions, under the sign of quantifiers. It is possible to propose the following truth function, namely that all men are defined by the phallic function, the phallic function being specifically what obturates sexual relation.

The universal quantifier will be defined in a different way when the upside-down A is furnished, which is what I have been doing, with a bar that negates it, $\overline{\forall}$. I have put forward the essential trait of the *pas-tous*, the *not-all*, $\overline{\forall x}.\Phi x$, as that by which a fundamental

statement can be articulated regarding the possibility of denotation that a variable assumes in functioning as an argument.

Woman is situated through it being *pas toutes*, *not all* of them, who may be truthfully said to be functioning as an argument within what is stated of the phallic function. What is this *pas toutes*? It is very precisely what deserves to be examined as a structure. Indeed, contrary to the function of the particular negative, namely that there are *some that are not*, it is impossible to extract such an affirmation from the *pas toutes*. To this *pas toutes* is restricted the indication that somewhere, and nothing more, woman has a relation to the phallic function.

It is from here that the values to be given to my other symbols find their point of departure. Nothing can adapt this *all* to this *not all*. Between what symbolically grounds the argumental function of the terms *man* and *woman*, there remains the wide gap of an indeterminacy in their common relation to jouissance. They are not defined in relation to this jouissance by the same order.

The denotation of man hinges on the *all* of the phallic function. However, in spite of this *all*, *There exists* . . . – and here, *There exists* means that it exists exactly as it does in the solution of a mathematical equation – . . . *at-least-one* for whom the truth of its denotation does not hold in the phallic function.

Is there any need to spell it right out for you? *Totem and Taboo* is what was fashioned to give some idea of this logical condition that is the condition of indirect approach that woman can make to man.[4] Already, it is in itself extraordinary that it doesn't seem farcical to state the myth in terms of an originary man who is purported to enjoy precisely what does not exist, namely all the women. This is not possible, not simply because clearly one has one's limits, but because there is no such thing as *all the women*.

So, what is at issue is of course something else, namely that at the level of *at-least-one* it is possible for the prevalence of the phallic function to be subverted. It is possible for it no longer to be true.

Just because I said that sexual jouissance is the pivotal point of all jouissance, this doesn't mean that I have sufficiently defined what is involved in the phallic function. For the time being, let's say that they are the same thing.

Something is introduced at the level of the *at least one* of the Father. This *at least one* means that it is one that can work by itself. As the myth demonstrates – for it is designed especially for this – this means that sexual jouissance will be possible but it will be limited. It presupposes, for each man, at the very least some mastery of this jouissance in his relation with woman. For the woman, at least this much is required – that castration should be possible. This

is her approach to man. When it comes to enacting the said castration, she takes care of it.

I would not like to leave you before articulating what is involved in the fourth term. I will have to come back to this, because we've been set back a little today.[5] I had intended, as I intend each time, to cover a much wider field, but since you are patient, you will come back the next time.

We have said that the *There exists* is problematic. This year will be the occasion to examine what is involved in existence. After all, what exists? Has anyone ever even realized that alongside the fragility, the futility, and the inessentiality constituted by the *There exists*, the *There does not exist* does actually mean something? What does it mean to assert that *There does not exist* an x that would be such that it could fulfil the function Φx endowed with the bar that establishes it as being untrue? That is, $\overline{\exists x}.\overline{\Phi x}$.

This is precisely what I called into question earlier. If *not all women* have dealings with the phallic function, does this mean that there are women who do have dealings with castration? Well, this is very precisely the point at which man has access to woman.

I'm saying this for the analysts as a whole, those who dawdle, those who spin around, mired in Oedipal relations on the side of the Father. When they can't get out of this, when they can't move beyond what happens on the side of the Father, it has a very precise cause. It's that the subject would have to admit that the essence of woman is not castration.

To spell it right out, on the basis of the real, aside from a mere insignificant nothing – I'm not saying this by chance – women cannot be castrated because they don't have the phallus. I stress that I have still on no account said what this phallus is. From the moment it is impossible as a cause, woman is not linked to castration essentially and access to woman is possible in its indeterminacy.

Doesn't this suggest to you – I'm sowing this seed so that it might resonate here next time – that what is up here on the top left, $\exists x.\overline{\Phi x}$, the *at-least-one* in question, results from a necessity, and it's in this precise respect that it's a matter of discourse? There is only any necessity qua spoken, and this necessity is what makes the existence of man possible as a sexual value. Contrary to what Aristotle put forward, the possible is the opposite of the necessary. The mainspring of the possible lies in $\exists x$ being opposed to $\forall x$.

I told you that the *There does not exist* is asserted in a fact of saying, by the fact of being said by man. The impossible is that it is from the real that woman assumes her relation to castration. This is what delivers us the meaning of the $\overline{\forall x}$, that is, of the *pas-toute*. Just like what was involved in the left-hand column a moment ago,

the *pas-toute* means *not impossible*. It is *not impossible* that woman should know the phallic function.

What is this *not impossible*? It bears a name that is suggested by the Aristotelian tetrad, but which here is arranged differently. In the same way that the possible stood in opposition to the necessary, the contingent stands in opposition to the impossible. It is in so far as woman presents herself to the phallic function by way of an argument in contingency that what is involved in the sexual value *woman* can be articulated.

It is sixteen minutes past two. I'm not going to push any further today. The cut-off point is falling at a place that is really not especially desirable. I think I have advanced enough with this introduction to the functioning of these terms to have given you a sense of how the use of logic is not unrelated to the content of the unconscious.

Just because Freud said that the unconscious knows no contradiction, this doesn't mean that it is not a land of promise for logical conquest. Have we got to this century without knowing that logic can readily bypass the principle of contradiction?

To say that in everything Freud wrote on the unconscious, logic does not exist, or that the unconscious cannot be explored by the paths of logic, would imply never having read the use he makes of certain terms, for instance, *I love her, I don't love him*, and all the ways there are of negating *I love him* by taking grammatical paths.

12 January 1972

IV

FROM NECESSITY TO INEXISTENCE

The symptom, between truth and jouissance
Phallic jouissance
The emergence of the number 1
Leibniz, Frege, Pascal
The two Ones

The art of producing a necessity of discourse

$\exists x.\overline{\Phi x}$ $\quad$ $\overline{\exists x}.\overline{\Phi x}$ $\quad$ the signification of the phallus

$\forall x.\Phi x$ $\quad$ $\overline{\forall x}.\Phi x$ $\quad$ *die Bedeutung des Phallus*

Objective genitive: a desire → of a child

Subjective genitive: a desire ← of a child

The Law of Talion

0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			0	1	3	6	10	15	21
				0	1	4	10	20	35
					0	1	5	15	35
						0	1	6	21
							0	1	7

On the blackboard

The art of producing a necessity of discourse is the formula that last time I slipped in, rather than proposed, for what logic is.

Amid the hubbub made by everyone getting to their feet, I left you with the remark that the fact that Freud noted, as a characteristic of the unconscious, that it neglects the principle of contradiction, isn't enough to mean that logic has nothing to do with the elucidation of the unconscious, as some psychoanalysts imagine.

If there is a discourse that deserves to be pinpointed by the recent establishing of analysis, it is more than probable that its logic can be extracted, as for any other discourse.

The least one can say about discourse is that its meaning remains veiled. In truth, what constitutes discourse is very precisely formed through the absence of this meaning. There is no discourse that must not receive its meaning from another discourse. Moreover, concerning the appearance of a new structure of discourse – which is what the analytic discourse is, as I situated it for you last year – if it does take on meaning it is not just by receiving it in this way, but also because it becomes palpable that something original has been produced in the circle that closes through this final shift in what is articulated in the name of *signifiance*. Indeed, this discourse represents the final shift in a tetradic structure, a *quadripode*, as I have reminded you in a published text.

1

The art of producing a necessity of discourse is something other than this necessity itself.

Reflect on this. Logical necessity – there can be no other – is the upshot of this production. Necessity, *ἀνάγκη*, only begins with the speaking being, and by like token, everything that might appear to have been produced by it is invariably the doing of a discourse. If this really is what is at issue in tragedy, it's precisely in so far as tragedy is made concrete as the upshot of a necessity that is logical. This is obvious, for here it's a matter only of speaking beings.

It seems to me that nothing of what is properly speaking *ἀνάγκη* appears anywhere else but among speaking beings. This is also why Descartes saw animals as mere automatons. That was certainly an illusion, the impact of which we shall show in passing, in connection with what I am about to attempt to open up regarding this art of producing a necessity of discourse.

Produce has a double meaning here. First, it means to demonstrate what was there beforehand. Already, it is by no means sure that something is not reflected in, or does not contain the beginnings

of, the necessity that is at issue in the precondition of animal existence. However, for want of any demonstration, what is to be produced must indeed be held to have been inexistent beforehand.

Second, the other sense of *produce* is the one that a whole research project issuing from the elaboration of a discourse that has already been constituted, known as the discourse of the master, has already put forth under the heading *achieving through labour*.

It is precisely inasmuch as I myself am the logician in question, the product of the emergence of this new discourse, that production in the sense of demonstration can be declared here in front of you. It has to be supposed that it was already there, through the necessity of the demonstration, as a product of the supposition of the necessity of always, but also vouching precisely for the necessity – which is not a lesser necessity – of the labour of actualizing it. At this point of emergence, however, this necessity by the same token furnishes the proof that initially it can be supposed only as *inexistent*.

So, what is it then, necessity? No, I shouldn't say *it then*, which already entails too much Being, but rather, directly, *what is necessity?* such that from the very fact of producing it, it can only, before being produced, be presupposed as inexistent, which means *posed* as such in discourse. There is a response to this question, as there is to any question, due to the reason that it is posed, as is any question, only when one already has the response. You have the response, therefore, even if you don't know it. In response to the question *what is necessity?* you logically cobble together your *bricolage*. Even if you don't know it, you respond in your day-to-day *bricolage*. A certain number of you here – not all of you, of course – by virtue of being in analysis with me, come along to confide in me, without moreover being able to assume the sense that in coming to see me, prior to taking a particular step, you presume that I am myself this *bricolage*. Indeed, by cobbling together this *bricolage*, all of you, even those who do not confide in me, are already responding to the question. How so? Quite simply by repeating it, by tirelessly repeating this *bricolage*. This is what is called, at a certain level, the symptom. At another level, it is automatism, which is a somewhat improper term but which can be accounted for by its history.

From one instant to the next, inasmuch as the unconscious exists, you are carrying out the demonstration by which inexistence is grounded as what is preliminary to what is necessary. This is the inexistence of what lies behind the principle of the symptom. It has been so ever since the term assumed its value in emerging with Marx. It is the very consistence of the said symptom. What lies behind the principle of the symptom is the inexistence of the truth that it presupposes, even though it marks out its place. There

you have it for the symptom inasmuch as it attaches itself to truth that no longer has currency. In this respect, it can be said that like anyone who scrapes by in the modern age, not a single one of you is unacquainted with this modality of response.

In the second case, it is the inexistence of jouissance that the so-called automatism of repetition brings to the light of insistence, of this stamping at the door that is designated as the exit towards existence. Beyond the door, however, what lies in wait for you is not altogether what is called existence. It is rather jouissance, such as it is operative as the necessity of discourse.[1] And, you see, it operates only as inexistent.

Of course, I'm reminding you of these old refrains, these old chestnuts, with the intention of reassuring you, of giving you the sense that I'm merely delivering you speeches that answer for the fact that there is a particular substance, jouissance, truth in this case, the truth that is lauded in Freud. It still remains, however, that you cannot get down to the bone of structure when you stay at this level.

I asked, *what is the necessity that is established on the basis of a supposition of inexistence?* In this question, what counts is not that which is inexistent, but rather the *supposition* of inexistence, which is merely a consequence of producing necessity.

Inexistence only becomes a question on account of already having a response – the twofold response, certainly, of jouissance and of truth – but it already *inexists*. It is neither through jouissance nor through truth that inexistence assumes a status, that it may inexist, in other words that it may come to the symbol that designates it as inexistence, not in the sense of not having existence, but rather of only being in existence through the symbol that would make it inexistent and which, for its part, does indeed exist. As you know, this is a number that is generally designated as nought. This shows very well that inexistence is not what you might think it is, namely nothingness, for what could come out of nothingness?

The answer to that is nothing, of course, except belief. Belief in itself. There are not umpteen beliefs. *God made the world from nothingness.* It's no surprise that this should be a dogma. It is belief in itself, it is the rejection of logic, which is here expressed in accordance with the formula – it was one of my pupils who came up with this, all on his own, and I thank him for it – *Surely not, but all the same*. On no account will this be sufficient for us.

Inexistence is not nothingness. It is, as I've just told you, a number that is part of the series of integers. There can be no theory of integers if you don't take into account what is involved in nought. It is not by chance that this was noticed in an endeavour that was

coeval – slightly earlier, actually – with Freud's research. This is the path that was opened by a certain Frege – who was born eight years before Freud and died fourteen years before him – through examining logically what is involved in the status of number.

This has a weighty destiny in our examination of what is involved in the logical necessity of the discourse of analysis. It's what I was pointing out as what could escape your notice in the reference that I was illustrating it with just now as an application, in other words as a functional use, of inexistence. Inexistence is only produced in the retroaction from which there first arises necessity, namely from a discourse in which it manifests itself prior to the logician reaching it himself as a second consequence, that is, at the same time as inexistence itself. Its end is to be reduced right where this necessity manifests itself, prior to him.

I repeat – demonstrating it this time at the same time as I state it – this necessity is repetition itself, in itself, by itself, for itself, that is to say, the very thing through which life demonstrates that it is merely a necessity of discourse, because it finds nothing by which to hold out against death, that is, against its lot of jouissance, apart from recourse to this same thing, which is produced by an opaque sequencing. I stressed that this sequencing is very different from vital power, from love, or from some other poppycock. It's a radical sequencing, which has only started to emerge from the shadows a little with what the biologists have been doing at the level of bacteria, and the consequence of which is precisely the reproduction of life.

What discourse does – in demonstrating this level at which nothing of a logical necessity manifests itself except through repetition – here appears to join up, as a semblance, with what comes about at the level of a message. But this is a message that is in no way easily reduced to what we know of this term. It belongs to the realm of what is located at the level of short combinations, the modulations of which are those that pass from deoxyribonucleic acid to what of this is transmitted at the level of proteins, by the good will of a few intermediaries that are qualified as enzymatic or catalytic.

That here lies what allows us to refer to what is involved in repetition can only come about precisely by elaborating what is involved in the fiction whereby all of a sudden something appears to us to reverberate from the very foundation of what, one fine day, made a living being capable of speaking.

Indeed, among them all there is one living being who does not elude a particularly senseless jouissance, and which I would describe as local, in the sense of accidental. This is the organic form that sexual jouissance assumed for this living being. He colours all his basic needs with jouissance, needs which in other living beings are

merely ways of sealing off jouissance. If animals feed on a steady basis, it's quite clear that this is so as to avoid knowing the jouissance of hunger. With jouissance, he who speaks – and this is Freud's discovery – colours all his needs, that is to say, that by which he fends off death.

Just because of this, it shouldn't be thought, however, that sexual jouissance is life. As I told you earlier, it is a local, accidental, and organic production, which is very exactly centred on what is involved in the male organ. Clearly, this is particularly grotesque.[2] Detumescence in the male has generated the special type of appeal that articulated language is, by virtue of which the necessity of speaking is introduced into its dimensions. From this arises logical necessity as a grammar of discourse.

You can see that this is meagre. To notice it, it required nothing less than the emergence of the analytic discourse.

I was careful to put in my *Écrits* the pronouncement I made a while ago, in 1958, *The signification of the phallus*. Beneath it, I wrote *Die Bedeutung des Phallus*. I didn't do that just to take pleasure in making you think that I know some German, though it was indeed in German because it was in Munich that I thought I ought to give voice to what I provided in a retranslated text. It struck me as a timely opportunity to introduce under the term *Bedeutung* what in French, in view of the degree of culture we had reached back then, I could only decently translate as *signification*.

The Germans themselves, given that they were analysts – I indicate the shortcoming in a brief note added at the head of the text – didn't cotton on in the slightest to *Die Bedeutung des Phallus*. It wasn't long after the war, and it can't be said that analysis had made a great deal of progress during that time. As I underscore in the final term of the note, all of that struck them as, strictly speaking, *unheard of*. Moreover, it's curious that things have moved on to the extent that what I am saying today might already have become common currency for some of you, and rightly so.

Die Bedeutung was, nevertheless, in precise reference to the use that Frege makes of the word, to contrast it with the term *Sinn*, which corresponds most exactly to what I thought I should remind you of in what I have stated today, namely the meaning of a proposition. What is involved in the necessity that leads to this art of producing it as the necessity of discourse could be expressed differently, and you'll see that this is not incompatible. It could be expressed as, *what does it take for a word to denote something?* This is the sense that Frege gives to *Bedeutung* – pay attention, there will be some small changes now – to wit, *denotation*.

If you would care to open the book called *The Foundations of*

Arithmetic – it has been translated [into French], which makes it wholly accessible for you, within arm's reach, by a certain Claude Imbert, who if I remember rightly used to come to my Seminar – it will strike you as clear, as might have been anticipated, that for there to be reliable denotation it would not be a bad idea to turn first of all, gingerly, to the field of arithmetic as defined by the integers.

There was someone by the name of Kronecker who couldn't help himself, so great is the need for belief, from saying *the integers were created by God.* In view of which, he adds, *everything else is the work of man.* Since he was a mathematician, for him this *everything else* was everything else that has to do with number.

Nothing in this realm is certain. But a logical endeavour can at least attempt to account for the integers, and this is why I'm bringing Frege's work into the field of consideration.

2

Nevertheless, I would like to pause for a moment, if only to encourage you to reread it, on the pronouncement that I produced from the angle of *the signification of the phallus*, from which you will see that, at the point I've reached – I pride myself on this minor merit – none of it needs revising, even though at the time truly no one understood any of it. I was able to observe as much, then and there.

What does *the signification of the phallus* mean? In a determinative construction, you always have to ask whether it's an objective or subjective genitive. I'm illustrating this difference through the comparison of two *thrusts*, indicated here by the two little arrows. *A desire of a child* with an objective genitive is a child that one desires. *A desire of a child* with a subjective genitive is a child who desires.[3]

You can try it out. It's always very useful. The thrust of *The Law of Talion*, which I've written underneath without adding any commentary, can be either that the law is talion – I establish it as law – or what the talion articulates as law, that is, *eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth.* It's not the same thing. What I would like to get you to notice is that the signification of the phallus – and what I am going to develop will be designed to make you discover this – with the meaning that I have just specified for the word *thrust*, that is, the little arrow, is neutral. What is ingenious in the signification of the phallus is that what the phallus denotes is the power of signification.

This Φx is not, therefore, a function of the ordinary type. Provided you articulate it with a prosdiorismos, which is something that initially needn't carry any meaning whatsoever and which is itself a product of the research of logical necessity, and nothing

else, the argument of the function thus pinpointed will take on the signification of man or of woman depending on the prosdiorismos that is chosen, that is to say, either *There exists*, or *There does not exist* – either *all* or *not all*.

It is clear none the less that we cannot avoid taking into account what has been produced by a logical necessity, by confronting it with the integers, for the reason that this retroactive necessity implies the supposition of what *inexists* as such. Now, it is remarkable that it was in examining the integer, in having broached its logical generation, that Frege was led to found the number 1 upon the concept of inexistence.

For him to have been led to this, it has to be thought that what had hitherto been circulating on the foundation of the 1 did not give him satisfaction, a logician's satisfaction. For a long while, people had been content with very little. They thought that it wasn't very difficult. There are several of them, there are many of them, so, they count them. Of course, this poses unsolvable problems for the advent of the integer because it's merely a matter of doing what has been settled on, of coming up with a sign with which to count them.

Such signs exist. I've just been handed a little book with an Arabic poem at the start that indicates in verse what you have to do with your little finger, and then your index finger, and with your ring finger and some of the others, to convey the sign of the number. But precisely because it's a matter of making a sign, number must have another kind of existence besides simply designating, for example, each of the people present here, even letting out a bark for each one. For them to have the value of 1, they have to be divested of all qualities, without exception. People have always been aware of this. So, what remains? Of course, there were a few philosophers, called empiricists, to articulate this by making use of little objects, like small beads. A rosary, of course, is the best thing for it. But this doesn't resolve in the slightest the question of the emergence of the 1.

This was spotted very well by Leibniz, who thought he should start off from identity, which is what he compelled himself to do, specifically positing first of all –

Two is one and one
Three is two and one
Four is three and one[4]

He believed he had solved the problem by showing that, by reducing each of these definitions to the preceding one, it could be demonstrated that 2 and 2 is 4.

Unfortunately there is a small obstacle that the logicians of the nineteenth century noticed fairly quickly, which is that his demonstration is only valid on the condition that one neglect the utterly necessary parentheses that have to be inserted in 2 = 1 + 1, namely the parentheses around 1 + 1. What he neglects is that it is necessary to posit the axiom –

$$(a + b) + c = a + (b + c)$$

This negligence on the part of a logician who was as true a logician as Leibniz surely deserves to be explained, and, in one respect, something does justify it. Be that as it may, that this condition should have been omitted is enough, from the logician's point of view, for Leibnizian generation to be rejected, besides the fact that it also neglects any foundation of what is involved in 0.

Here, I'm merely indicating to you which notion of concept has to be chosen as a base – a concept that is supposed to denote something – so that everything will hold together. But after all, it cannot be said that the concepts they chose, the moons of Mars or of Jupiter, do not have sufficient scope of denotation for it to be said that a number is matched to each of them. Nevertheless, the self-subsistence of number can only be assured on the basis of the equinumerosity of the objects that a concept subsumes.[5]

Thereafter, the order of numbers can be furnished by the trick that consists in moving in exactly the opposite direction from Leibniz's procedure, so to take 1 away from each number. The predecessor number is the concept that – aside from any object that might have served as a support in the concept of any particular number – is identical with a number that is very precisely characterized by not being identical with the number before, let's say, with the exception of 1.

This is how Frege works his way backwards to the conception of the concept as an emptiness, under which no object falls. It is the concept, not of nothingness – because it's a concept – but of inexistence. He does this precisely by considering what he believes nothingness to be, namely the concept for which the number would be equal to the 0 that he believes he can define by formulating the argument *x different from x*, $x \neq x$, that is to say, *x* different from itself.

This is certainly an extremely problematic denotation, because what do we get? If it is true that the symbolic is what I have said about it, namely that it is entirely within speech, that there is no such thing as metalanguage, then where in language can an object be designated about which one can be certain that it is not different from

itself? Nevertheless, it is upon this hypothesis that Frege constitutes the notion that the concept *equal to nought* – in accordance with the formula that he provided at the start, of the predecessor number – yields a number that is different from what is involved in the 0 that is well and truly held to be nothingness. In other words, it yields a number that is different from the one for which what is suitable is not *equality with 0*, but the number 0.

Thereafter, it is in reference to this that the concept to which the number 0 is suited is – *identical with 0 but not identical with 0*.[6] The one that is quite simply *identical with 0* is held to be its successor, and as such is equal to 1. The whole thing is founded on a point of departure known as equinumerosity. Clearly, the equinumerosity of the concept under which no object falls, in the capacity of inexistence, is always equal to itself. There is no difference between 0 and 0. It was from the angle of this *no difference* that Frege sought to establish the foundation of 1.

Either way, for us this conquest remains a precious one to the extent that it furnishes us with 1 on account of it essentially being – listen carefully to what I'm saying – the signifier of inexistence.

Nevertheless, is it so certain that this is able to establish the foundation of 1?

3

This discussion could certainly be pursued along purely Fregean paths. Nevertheless, I thought I should reproduce for clarity's sake what could be said to bear no relation to the integer, namely the arithmetical triangle.

The arithmetical triangle is organized as follows. It starts off, as a given, from the sequence of integers. Each term to be inscribed is constituted without further commentary by the addition – you will note that so far I have not spoken of addition, any more than Frege does – of two figures, the one that stands immediately to its left and the one that stands to its left on the level above it.

0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	. . .
	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	. . .
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	. . .

When we have a whole number of points that we shall call *monads*, you can easily confirm that this automatically gives us, for example, what is involved in the number of subsets that can, within

the set that subsumes all these points, be formed of any number, chosen as lying underneath the integer at issue.

Thus, for example, if you take the line of the dyad, having encountered one dyad, what immediately obtains is that there will be two monads in the dyad.

1

2

1

It's not hard to imagine a dyad. It's a line with two terms, a beginning and an end.

Now let's take something more amusing. If you examine what is involved in the tetrad, you will obtain something that amounts to four possibilities of triads, in other words, to turn this into an image for you, the four faces of the tetrahedron. You next obtain six dyads, that is, the six edges of the tetrahedron. You also obtain the four vertex corners of a monad.

1

4

6

4

1

This is to lend support to what is to be expressed only in terms of subsets.[7] It's clear that you can see that, as the integer increases, the number of subsets that can be produced within it very quickly surpasses by far the integer itself.[8]

This is not what is of interest to us. It was simply that, in order for me to account for the series of integers by means of the same procedure, I had to start off from what lies at the origin of what Frege came up with.

Frege designated that the number of objects that fall under a concept qua concept of the number *n*, shall by itself be what constitutes the successor number. In other words, if you start counting from 0 –

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

this will invariably make what is here, namely 7 – 7 what? – 7 of this something that I have termed inexistent, on account of it being the foundation of repetition.

For the rules of the triangle to be met, the 1 that is repeating here still needs to arise from somewhere. And, since we have flanked the triangle at each level with 0 –

0 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 . . .

there is, therefore, a point here, a point to be situated at the level of the row of zeros. This point is 1.

0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 . . .

What does it articulate? It articulates the important thing to distinguish in the generation of 1, namely the distinction of *no difference* between each of these zeros, on the basis of the generation of what repeats, but which repeats as inexistent.

Frege does not, therefore, account for the sequence of integers, but rather for the possibility of repetition. Repetition is posited first and foremost as repetition of the 1, qua 1 of inexistence.

In the fact that there is not just a single 1, but rather 1 that repeats, and 1 that is posited in the sequence of integers, is there not – I can only ask the question, here – something that suggests that we have to uncover in this gap something that belongs to the realm of what we have examined by positing, as the necessary correlate to the question of logical necessity, the foundation of inexistence?

19 January 1972

THE OTHER: FROM SPEECH TO SEXUALITY

V

TOPOLOGY OF SPEECH

A TALK AT SAINTE-ANNE

Where does meaning come from?
Speech between semblance and jouissance
Analysis started with the norm
Science behind the wall . . .
. . . and discourse in front of it

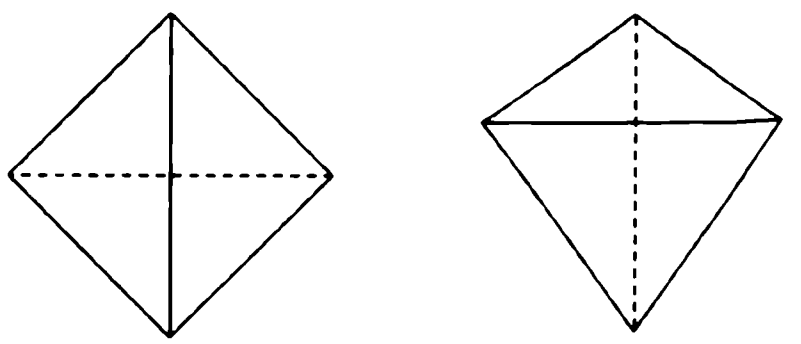
During the same academic year that Lacan was delivering his Seminar in the Law Faculty on the Place du Panthéon, he was also delivering 'talks' in the chapel at Sainte-Anne Hospital. From the fourth talk on, they were devoted to clarifying and extending his elaborations in the Seminar. In the present book can be found, in their chronological position, the talks that pick up the thread of . . .
or Worse – *JAM*

Two years ago I explained something that, once it got on the right highway, the *poubellic* highway, took the name *quadripode*. I was the one who chose the name, and you can only wonder why I gave it such a strange one. Why not *quadruped* or *tetrapod*? These would have had the advantage of not being crossbreeds. In truth, as I was writing it I asked myself the same question. I don't know why I kept it. Then I asked myself what we used to call these crossbreed terms when I was young, these half-Latin–half-Greek terms. I was sure I used to know what the purists called them but I've since forgotten.[1] Is there anyone here who knows how terms are designated when they are composed, for example, of a Latin element and a Greek element, like the word *sociology*, or *quadripode*? If anyone knows, I implore you, out with it!

Well, this is not encouraging. I started searching the day before yesterday and as I still couldn't find it I telephoned a dozen different people whom I thought most likely to be able to give me the answer. Well, too bad.

I called them *quadripodes* to give you the idea that one can sit on them. It was just to reassure people a little, because I was speaking through the mass media. In reality, however, when I'm on the inside, I explain that what I have isolated by way of four discourses results from the emergence of the last one to arrive, the discourse of the analyst. Indeed, the discourse of the analyst brings some order to a particular current state of thought, an order that clarifies the other discourses that emerged earlier. I have arranged them in accordance with a topology. It's one of the simplest, but it is no less a topology, in the sense that it's mathematizable. It's a topology in the most rudimentary fashion, namely in that it hinges on the grouping of no more than four points that we shall call monads.

It doesn't seem so, but it is so forcefully inscribed in the structure of our world that there is no other foundation to the fact of the space we live in. Note if you will the following, that putting four points at an equal distance from one another is the highest number with which you can do this in our space. You will never be able to put five points at an equal distance from one another.



This little shape is here to help you to sense what is at issue. The quadripodes are not tetrahedral, but tetradic. The number of vertex corners is equal to the number of surfaces, and this is linked to the same arithmetical triangle that I drew in the last lesson of my Seminar.

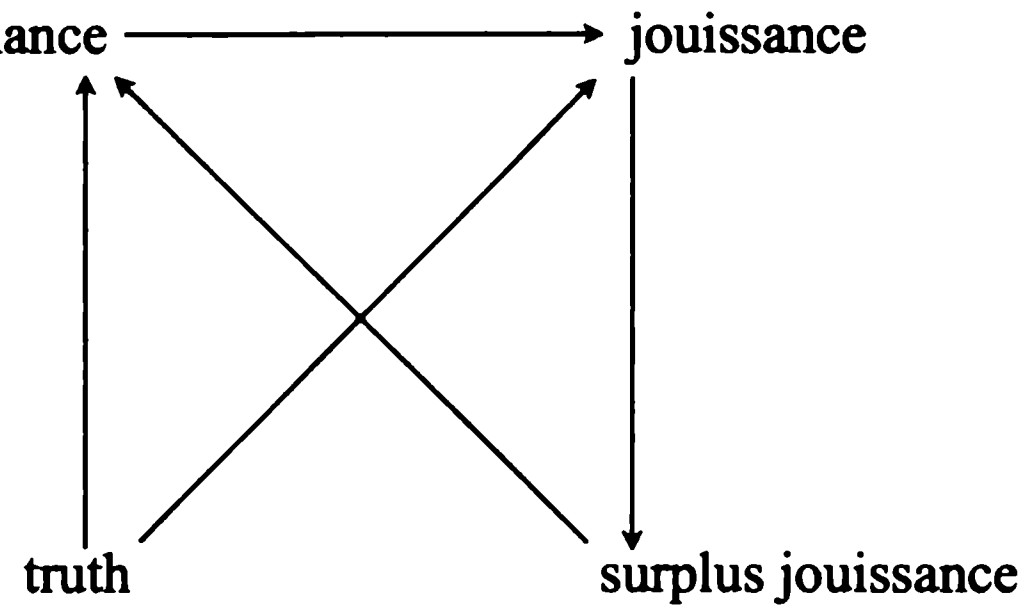
As you can see, to sit on it, whether the one on the left or the one on the right, affords no rest. You've got used to the one on the left-hand side of the board, to the point that you don't even feel it any more. The one on the right, however, isn't any the more comfortable. Imagine yourself sitting on a tetrahedron that is poised on its tip. Yet this is where we have to begin for everything that is involved in what constitutes a type of social base that is supported by what is called a discourse. This is what I specifically put forward in my antepenultimate Seminar.

The tetrahedral, to refer to it in its present appearance, possesses some curious properties. If it is not like this one, which is regular in shape – the equal distance is just to remind you of the properties of the number four with regard to space – if it is just any old how, then it will be strictly impossible for a symmetry to be defined in it.

Nevertheless, it does have the following particularity. If you take these edges – namely these short dashes that join what are known in geometry as *vertices* – and vectorize them, that is, give them a direction, you just have to posit as a principle that none of the vertices shall be privileged, that nowhere shall there be a convergence of three vectors at the same vertex, nor shall there be three vectors that depart from the same vertex – otherwise there would be at least two vertices that would not benefit from vectors – and you will necessarily obtain the following distribution.

2 incoming 1 outgoing
2 incoming 1 outgoing
1 incoming 2 outgoing
1 incoming 2 outgoing

This means that each of the said tetrahedrons will be strictly equivalent. In each case, by removing one of the edges you will obtain the formula with which I schematized my four discourses.



You can observe that one of the vertices has the property of divergence, but without any incoming vector to feed it. On the other hand, you've got this triangular trajectory. The number and the orientation of the vectors suffice to distinguish these four poles through a character that is altogether special. I state their terms as truth, semblance, jouissance, and surplus jouissance.

This is the fundamental topology from which any function of speech results, and it deserves to be commented on. What is the function of speech? The discourse of the analyst is formed in such a way as to make this question emerge. *The function and field of speech and language* – that's how I introduced what would lead us to the present point of defining a new discourse. Not that this discourse is mine, because at the time of speaking, this discourse has in fact been in place for three-quarters of a century.

That the analyst is capable, in some quarters, of rejecting what I say about this discourse is not a reason for him not to be its support. In truth, in this instance, *to be the support* means only *to be supposed.* However, that this discourse should assume meaning from the very voice of someone who is – this is my case – just as much of a subject as anyone else, is precisely what deserves to be paused over, so as to know where this meaning is drawn from.

In hearing what I've just put forward, the question of meaning might not seem to you to pose any problems. It seems that the analyst's discourse makes enough of an appeal to interpretation for the question not to arise. Effectively, going by a certain analytic scribbling, it seems that one can read – and this comes as no surprise, you're going to see why – all the meaning one wants, going right back to the most archaic. One can purportedly find an echo, the sempiternal repetition, of what has come down to us from the depths of ages under the term *meaning* in all the forms that, it has to be said, only become meaningful in their superposition.

Indeed, to what do we owe our comprehension of anything whatsoever in the symbolism in common use, for example in Holy Scripture? Everyone knows that comparing it with a mythology, whatever mythology it may be, is one of the most misleading types of slippage. For a while now, no one has stopped there. When one studies in a serious way what is involved in mythologies, one doesn't go to their meaning, but rather to the combinatory of mythemes. On this score, look up the works by an author whom I needn't, I think, name yet again.

The question is, therefore, as to where meaning comes from.

To introduce what is involved in the analytic discourse, I had no qualms about helping myself, because it was quite necessary, to the facilitation provided by what is called *linguistics*. To quell the ardour that might have been too quickly aroused in my vicinity, and which might have sent you back to the usual mire, I reminded you that this something that is worthy of the title *linguistics* as a science, which seems to have language and even speech as its object, was supported only on the condition that the linguists swear amongst themselves never – or never again, because this is what people had been doing for centuries – even remotely, to allude to the origin of language. This was one, among others, of the watchwords I gave to the form of introduction that was articulated in my formula *the unconscious is structured like a language*.

When I say that it was to avoid my audience returning to a particular miry equivocation – I'm not the one who helped myself to

the term, it was Freud himself, and specifically with respect to so-called Jungian archetypes – this is certainly not in order now to lift this prohibition. On no account is it a matter of speculating about any origin of language. I said that it's a question of formulating the function of speech.

A very long time ago I asserted that the function of speech is to be the only form of action that posits itself as truth. It is an otiose question to ask oneself what speech is. Not only do I speak, do you speak, and even *ça parle*, *it speaks*, as I said, but this carries on all by itself. It's a fact, and I would even say that it lies at the origin of all facts, because whatever might be at issue only assumes the rank of a fact *when it has been said.*

Note that I didn't say *when it has been spoken.* There is something distinct between speaking and saying. A word that founds a fact is a fact of saying, but speech functions even when it doesn't found any fact. When it gives a command, when it prays, when it insults, or when it voices a wish, it doesn't found any fact.

Today, we can indulge in some fun. These are not things I would come out with at the other place, at my Seminar, where fortunately I say more serious things, as I did in the last lesson. Here, because it is implied in the seriousness that I'm always sharpening to a finer edge, we can have a bit of a laugh while still holding ourselves on this edge. I do hope there will be fewer people there the next time, because that was no laughing matter.

In an amusing register, it's not for nothing that in cartoons, speech is spelt out on banderoles. Speech is where *ça bande*, where hard-ons occur, *role* or not. It is not for nothing that this establishes the dimension of truth, because truth, the actual truth, the truth that we have only started to glimpse with the analytic discourse, is what this discourse reveals to each and every person who simply commits himself to it in an agentive manner, as an analysand. It's that *bander*, getting a hard-on – excuse me for using the term again, but since I've started I'm not going to abandon it – which up there, on the Place du Panthéon, I've been calling Φx, bears no relation to sex, no relation to the other in any case.

Here we're surrounded by these walls, so I will say that to get a hard-on for a woman means – because one really ought to call a spade a spade – giving her the function of Φx, which means taking her as a phallus.

The phallus is no small matter. I've already explained to you – up there, where's it's serious – that the signification of the phallus is the sole case of a fully balanced genitive. This means that the phallus is signification. This is what Jakobson was explaining to you this morning. I'm saying this for those who are a little switched-on.

The phallus is that by which language signifies. There is only one *Bedeutung*, and it's the phallus.

Let's begin with this hypothesis. It will explain for us to a very large extent the entirety of the function of speech. Indeed, speech is not always being applied to denoting facts. Denoting *facts* is all it can do – one doesn't denote *things* – but it does so completely by chance, once in a while. Most of the time it makes up for the fact that the phallic function is precisely what means that in mankind there are only the relations you know between the sexes – poor relations – whereas everywhere else things seem to coast along, at least to our eyes.

This is why in my little quadripode you can see, at the level of truth, two diverging vectors.

Jouissance, which is at the end of the right-hand branch, is certainly a phallic jouissance, but one which cannot be called sexual jouissance. On the left, so that any one of these odd animals who have fallen prey to speech can maintain themselves, there has to be this pole, which is correlative to the pole of jouissance inasmuch as it is an obstacle to sexual relation. It is this pole that I designate as semblance. If we dare, as is done on a daily basis, to pinpoint our partners by their sex, it is striking that man and woman alike affect a semblance, each of them in this role. The important thing, however, at least when the function of speech is at issue, is that the poles should be defined as that of semblance and that of jouissance.

Were there in mankind what we quite needlessly imagine there to be, namely a specified jouissance of sexual polarity, we would know it. Perhaps it was once known, because whole ages have boasted as much and, after all, we have numerous testimonies – though sadly they are purely esoteric – that there were times when people really believed they knew how to hold that together. A certain van Gulik, whose book struck me as excellent, prods around here and there. Of course, he does as everyone does. He goes prodding around near what is involved in the Chinese written tradition. His subject is sexual knowledge, which is not very extensive, I assure you. Nor is it very enlightened. Well, have a look at his book should this amuse you, *Sexual Life in Ancient China*. I defy you to get anything out of it that could serve you in what earlier I called the current state of thought.

What is of interest in what I'm pointing out does not lie in saying that things have always been the same as here at the point we've now reached. There might once have been, and perhaps there still are, places where there is a harmonious conjunction between man and woman, which would purportedly take them to seventh heaven. But, at any rate, it's curious that this is always in places where one

has seriously to prove one's credentials before being allowed in. You only hear about it from the outside.

On the other hand, it's quite clear that each of us has a relation with capital Φ rather than with the other. This is plainly confirmed when one takes a look at those who are called, using a term that fits nicely thanks to the ambiguity of the Latin, or the Greek, *homos*. *Ecce homo*, as I was saying. It's quite certain that among homos there are better, firmer, and more frequent hard-ons. It's curious, but no one who has spent a certain amount of time hearing about such things can be in doubt about this fact. Still, don't be deceived. There are homos and homos. I'm not talking about André Gide. You oughtn't to believe that André Gide was a homo.

Let's not lose the thread. It's about meaning. For something to have meaning in the current state of thought, it's sad to say so, but it has to be pitched as normal. This was why André Gide wanted homosexuality to be normal. And, since you perhaps have the lowdown on this, within this meaning there are a host of different meanings. In two shakes of a lamb's tail it will fall under the cover of the normal, to such an extent that we will have new clients in psychoanalysis coming to tell us, *I've come to see you because I'm not a normal pederast*.[2] It's going to produce a traffic jam.

Analysis got off to a start with this. Had the notion of *normal* not taken on such an extension following certain vagaries of history, analysis would never have seen the light of day. It's very clear when you read Freud that a precondition to enter analysis, the minimum, to begin with was to have a good university education. This is the case for all patients, not only those whom Freud took on, but Freud says so in clear language. I have to underscore this, because the university discourse, which I have spoken badly of, and for the best reasons, is nevertheless what irrigates the analytic discourse.

You understand that you can no longer imagine, and I'm saying this to make you imagine something – if you are capable, who knows? – in being pulled along by my voice, a stretch of time that is called, because of this, *Antiquity*, when there was *δοχα* that was not academic. You know the famous *δοχα* that is spoken about in the *Meno*. *Mais non, mais non!* Nowadays, there is no *δοχα*, however futile, shaky, bumbling, or even daft it may be, that does not feature somewhere in university teaching. There is no example of an opinion, however stupid it may be, that has not been detected and, indeed, on the occasion of being detected, taught.

This falsifies everything, because when Plato speaks of *δοχα* as something that he literally doesn't know what to make of – even though he is a philosopher who is striving to found a science – he

notices that there are true forms of this *δοχα* that he meets on every street corner. Naturally, he didn't bother saying why, no more than any other philosopher, but no one doubts that they are true, because truth is something that imposes itself. The fact that *δοχα* had not been normalized provided a completely different context from what is called *philosophy*. There is no trace of the word *norm* anywhere in antique discourse. We invented that, and naturally we did so by hunting out a Greek noun that was hardly ever used.

One nevertheless has to start from there in order to see that the discourse of the analyst did not appear by chance. Things needed to have reached the highest state of extreme urgency for it to emerge.

Of course, because it's a *discourse of the analyst*, as with each of the four discourses that I have named, this takes on the sense of the objective genitive. The discourse of the master is discourse *about* the master. This was clearly seen at the peak of the philosophical epic in Hegel. It's the same thing with the discourse of the analyst. One is speaking about the analyst. He is the object *a*, as I have often stressed. Naturally, this doesn't make it easy for him to grasp what his position is, but from another angle it's a restful position because it's the position of semblance.

So, our Gide, to continue weaving – I take up this Gide, then let go again, then we take up this Gide together, and so on – our Gide is nevertheless exemplary here. He doesn't get us out of our little concern, far from it. His concern is to be desired, which is something we commonly find in our analytic probing. There are people who, in their early childhood, missed out on being desired. It drives them to do things so that it will come about late in life. This is even very widespread.

However, we need to divide things up carefully. It's not at all unrelated to discourse. These are not the kind of words that pop up left, right and centre at carnival time. Here, discourse and desire bear the closest relation. This is even why I have managed to isolate – at least, I think so – the function of the object *a*. This is a key point that, I must say, hasn't been taken advantage of to any great extent. It will happen, slowly and surely.

The object *a* is that by which the speaking being is determined when he is taken up in a discourse. He doesn't know at all what determines him. It's the object *a*. How is he determined? He is determined as a subject, that is, he is divided as a subject. He falls prey to desire. This sounds like it occurs at the same site as those words that subvert, but it's not at all the same. It's quite regular. It has to be said that it's a product. It produces, mathematically, the object *a* as cause of desire.

The object *a* is also the one that I called, as you know, the metonymic object, which courses throughout what unfurls as discourse, discourse that is more or less coherent, until it stumbles and peters out. It is still the case that we get our idea of the cause from this. We believe that everything in nature has to have a cause, on the pretext that we have been caused by our own blather.[3]

In André Gide, all the features are there to indicate that things are as I've told you. First of all, there is his relationship with the supreme Other. On no account should one believe, despite what he said, that the big Other had no impact. Where the *a* takes shape, Gide even had an exceedingly specific notion, namely that the big Other's pleasure was to disturb the pleasure of all the little ones. In view of which, he twigged very well that there was a point of bother there, which clearly saved him from his childhood neglect. All his teasing with God was something deeply compensatory for someone who had got off to such a poor start. This is not a special privilege of Gide's.

Some time ago I started a Seminar on the Name-of-the-Father. I gave just one lesson. Naturally, I began with the Father. I spoke for an hour and a half about God's jouissance. If I said that it was mystical banter, it was so as never to speak about it again. It is certain that, since the time that there has only been a single God, the one and only, the God that ushered in a certain historical era, He has been precisely the one who disrupts the pleasure of others. It is even this alone that counts.

There were the Epicureans, who did all they could to teach the method whereby each individual can avoid being disrupted in his pleasure, but it failed. There were others, called Stoics, who said, *But on the contrary, one should dive head first into divine pleasure.* This, however, also falls flat. You know it can only be played out between the two of them. What counts is the bother. With that, you are each in your natural environment. You don't get any jouissance, of course. It would be an exaggeration to say this, all the more so given that, either way, it's too dangerous. But still, it can't be said that you don't take any pleasure. It is even upon this that the primary process is grounded.

All of this puts us in a tight spot. What exactly is meaning? Well, we would be better off starting again at the level of desire.

The pleasure that the other gives you – this is commonplace – is even called, in a nobler region, *art*. This is where the wall should be attentively considered, because there is a region of meaning here that is thoroughly enlightened. It was thoroughly enlightened, for example, by the man known as Leonardo da Vinci, who as you

know left behind a few manuscripts and some little knickknacks – not a great deal, he didn't fill up the museums – but he uttered some profound truths that everyone ought to remember. He said, as have I, *Look at the wall.* Since then, he has become the Leonardo of families. They make gifts of his manuscripts. There is a luxury edition and, can you imagine, I've even been given a couple of these myself. This doesn't mean, however, that it's illegible. So, he explains to you – *Look carefully at the wall.*

This wall here is rather unclean. Were it better kempt, there might be damp stains and perhaps even mould. Well, going by Leonardo, when there is a mildew stain, it's invariably a fine opportunity to transform it into a Madonna or some muscular athlete. It lends itself to it far better because in mildew there are always shadows and hollows. It's very important to note that there is a class of things on walls that lends itself to the figure, to the creation of art, as they say. The stain in question is figuration itself.

All the same, we need to find out about the relation between this and something else that can occur on a wall, namely gullies. These are not only gullies of speech – though this can happen, indeed this is always how things get going – but gullies of discourse. In other words, we need to find out whether it belongs to this same order of mould on the wall, or to writing. This should be of interest to a few people here who, I think, not so long ago – it's getting on a bit now – used to be very taken with writing love letters on walls. It was a damned good time. Some of them never got over this time when one used to be able to write on walls and when, from this stuff in *Publicis*, one could surmise that the walls had the power of speech, as though such a thing could happen.

I would simply like to remark that it would be better were nothing ever to be written on walls. What has already been written on them should even be removed. *Liberté, égalité, fraternité*, for instance, it's indecent. *No smoking*, it's not possible, especially given how everybody smokes. There's a tactical error here. I've already said this concerning the *lettre d'amur*.[4] Everything that is written reinforces the wall. This is not necessarily an objection, but what is certain is that it oughtn't to be believed that this is absolutely necessary. It's useful none the less because, had no one ever written on a wall, whichever wall it might be, this one or another, it's a fact that no one would have taken a step into the meaning of what might be there to be beheld beyond the wall.

You see, there is something here of what I will be led to speak to you about a little this year, namely the relationships between logic and mathematics. To tell you straightaway, beyond the wall there is only, to the best of our knowledge, the real that is signalled precisely

by the impossible, the impossibility of reaching it beyond the wall. It no less remains that this is the real.

How did we manage to form some idea of it? Language certainly served in part. This is even why I'm trying to build this little bridge that you have been able to see taking shape in the latest lessons of my Seminar. How does the One make an entrance? This is what I have already been expressing for three years now with symbols, with S_1 and S_2. So that you might understand something from them, I designated the first as the master-signifier and the second as knowledge.

Would there be S_1, however, were there no S_2? This is a problem, because they need first of all to be twain in order for there to be S_1. I broached this in the latest lesson of my Seminar by showing you that, either way, they are at least twain, so that one alone may emerge. Nought and one, as they say, makes two. But this is in the sense that is said to be insurmountable. Nevertheless, you can surmount it when you are a logician, as I have already indicated for you in reference to Frege. I hope, however, that it appeared to you none the less that it was surmounted with a jaunty step. There and then – I will be coming back to this – I indicated that there was perhaps more than a short stride. This is not the important thing.

Someone whose name a few of you doubtless heard for the first time this morning, René Thom, who is a mathematician, doesn't think that logic – that is, the discourse that stays on the wall – is something that suffices even to account for number, the first step of mathematics. On the other hand, it does seem to him that he is able to account not only for what is traced out on the wall – this is nothing less than life itself, which as you know begins with mould – but also, through number, algebra, functions and topology, for what occurs in the field of life. I *will* be coming back to this. I'm going to explain to you that the fact that he finds in a mathematical function the very line of these curves formed by primal mould, before moving on up to mankind, pushes him to the extrapolation of thinking that topology can furnish a typology of natural languages. I don't know whether it's possible to settle the question at present. I'm going to try to give you an idea of where its current repercussion lies, no more than that.

In any case, what I can speak about is the cleaving performed by the wall. There is something in place in front of it, which I have called speech and language, and then there is another side that this works upon, perhaps mathematically. It's quite certain that we cannot form any other idea of it. There can be no doubting that science hinges not on quantity, as some have been saying, but on

number, function, and topology. A discourse that is called science has found the means to construct itself behind the wall.

Only, what I do believe I can formulate clearly, and in this respect I believe I am in agreement with everything that is most serious in scientific construction, is that it is strictly impossible to endue with the faintest shadow of meaning anything whatsoever that is articulated in algebraic or topological terms. There is meaning for those who, standing before the wall, take pleasure in mildew stains that are so readily transformed into Madonnas or athletes' backs. It is evident, however, that we cannot content ourselves with these confusional meanings. At the end of the day, this serves only to reverberate on the lyre of desire, on eroticism, to call a spade a spade.

In front of the wall, however, other things happen, and this is what I call discourses. There have been others besides the four of mine that I have listed, and which, moreover, are specified only by making you note straightaway that they are no more than four. It is quite sure that there have been others, nothing of which we are still familiar with nowadays, besides what converges in the four that remain. These four that remain are articulated in the ring of a, S_1, S_2, and indeed the subject – who is left to pick up the pieces. These four terms, in moving around in this ring to each of the four vertex corners, as follows, have allowed us to isolate something by which to take our bearings. This is something that gives us the current state of what is grounded, by way of a social bond, as discourse. In discourse, whichever place one occupies – the place of the master, of the slave, of the product, or of what sustains the whole affair – one doesn't get it in the slightest.

Where does meaning arise? It is in this respect that it's very important to have made the division, which is doubtless a heavy-handed division, that Saussure made between signifier and signified, as Jakobson was reminding us this morning. Moreover, this was something Saussure inherited from the Stoics, whose very peculiar position in these sorts of manipulations I told you about earlier. What is important, of course, is not that signifier and signified unite, or that the signified would allow us to distinguish what is specific in the signifier. On the contrary, what is important is that the signified of a signifier – which I articulate in the little letters I told you about earlier – to which one attaches something that may resemble meaning, always comes from the place that the same signifier occupies in another discourse.

This was precisely what went to their heads, all of them, when the analytic discourse was introduced. It seemed to them that they understood everything, the poor souls. Fortunately, through the care I've taken, this is not your case. Were you to understand what

I say elsewhere, the place where I'm serious, you wouldn't believe your ears. This is even why, in general, you don't believe your ears. It's because, in reality, you do understand it, but in the end you keep your distance. And this is understandable because, for most of you, the analytic discourse hasn't caught hold of you yet. This will happen, unfortunately, because it's becoming increasingly important.

I would nevertheless like to say something about the analyst's knowledge, on the condition that you don't stay at this level.

My friend René Thom manages with great ease to find, by means of cuts in complicated mathematical surfaces, something like a drawing, a crest line, ultimately something that he also calls a spike, a flake, a cusp, a fold, and to turn it to truly captivating use. In other terms, a slice is made through a thing that only exists because one can write *There exists an x that would satisfy the function f(x)*. However, while Thom performs this with such ease, it is still the case that so long as this has not accounted exhaustively for the very thing with which, in spite of it all, he is forced to explain this, namely common language and the grammar around it, there will remain a zone here, which I call the zone of discourse. It is upon this zone that the analytic discourse sheds a clear light of day.

What of this can be transmitted by way of knowledge? Well, you have to choose! It is the numbers that know. They know because they have managed to stir this organized matter at a point, an immemorial point, of course. They still know what they do. There is something quite certain here, which is that meaning is only put into this most improperly. The same goes for any idea of evolution or perfection process. In the supposed animal chain we can see absolutely nothing that attests to this so-called continual adaptation, to the point that at the end of the day they had to give up on it and say that, after all, those that made it through are those that were able to make it through. They call it natural selection. Strictly speaking, this doesn't mean anything. It has a little meaning that has been borrowed from the talk of a crook. Why not this one or some other?

The clearest thing that appears to us is that a living being does not always know very well what to do with one of its organs. After all, this is perhaps a particular case of the analytic discourse evincing the cumbrous aspect of the phallus. We are unable to say any more than the following – there is a correlation between this and what is stirred up by way of speech.

At the point we've reached in the current state of thought . . . This is the sixth time I've employed this wording and it doesn't look like it's bothering anyone. Yet this really is something worth returning to, because I'm turning this current state of thought into a

permanent fixture. It's true, though. Saying that thoughts are just as strictly determined as the latest gimmick is no idealism.

In any case, in the current state of thought, we have the analytic discourse which, when one cares to hear it for what it is, shows that it is linked to a curious adaptation, because in the end, if this business of castration is true, it means that, in man, castration is the means of adapting to survive. It's unthinkable, but it's true. All this is perhaps merely an artifice, an artefact, of discourse. That this discourse, which rounds out the others so knowingly, should be sustaining itself is perhaps just a historical phase. The sexual life of ancient China may perhaps flourish again. It will have a certain number of scruffy ruins to dispatch before that happens.

For the time being, however, what does the meaning we bring tell us? When all is said and done, this meaning is an enigmatic riddle, and it's an enigmatic riddle precisely because it is meaning.

Somewhere, in the second edition of a book that I allowed to come out, and which is called *Écrits*, there is a short addendum called *The metaphor of the subject*. I played at length on the expression that my dear friend Perelman repeated with relish, *an ocean of false learning*. You can never be sure what's in the back of my mind when I'm amusing myself, and I recommend you start off from there. *An ocean of false learning* could well be the analyst's knowledge. Why not? Why not, because it's only from the analyst's perspective that the following is clarified – that learning has no meaning, and that any meaning of discourse is merely partial, sustained as it is by another discourse.

If truth can only ever come midsay – this is the kernel, the essential part, of the analyst's knowledge – then, in what I have called a tetrapod or a quadruped, S_2 stands in the place of truth. This knowledge is a knowledge that is, therefore, always to be called into question.

On the other hand, there is one thing that is to be claimed of analysis, which is that there is a knowledge that is drawn out of the subject himself. At the place of the pole of jouissance, the analytic discourse positions the barred S. This knowledge is the result of the stumbling, the bungled action, the dreams, and the work of the analysand. As far as this knowledge is concerned, it is not supposed, it is a deciduous knowledge – scrap of knowledge upon scrap of knowledge.

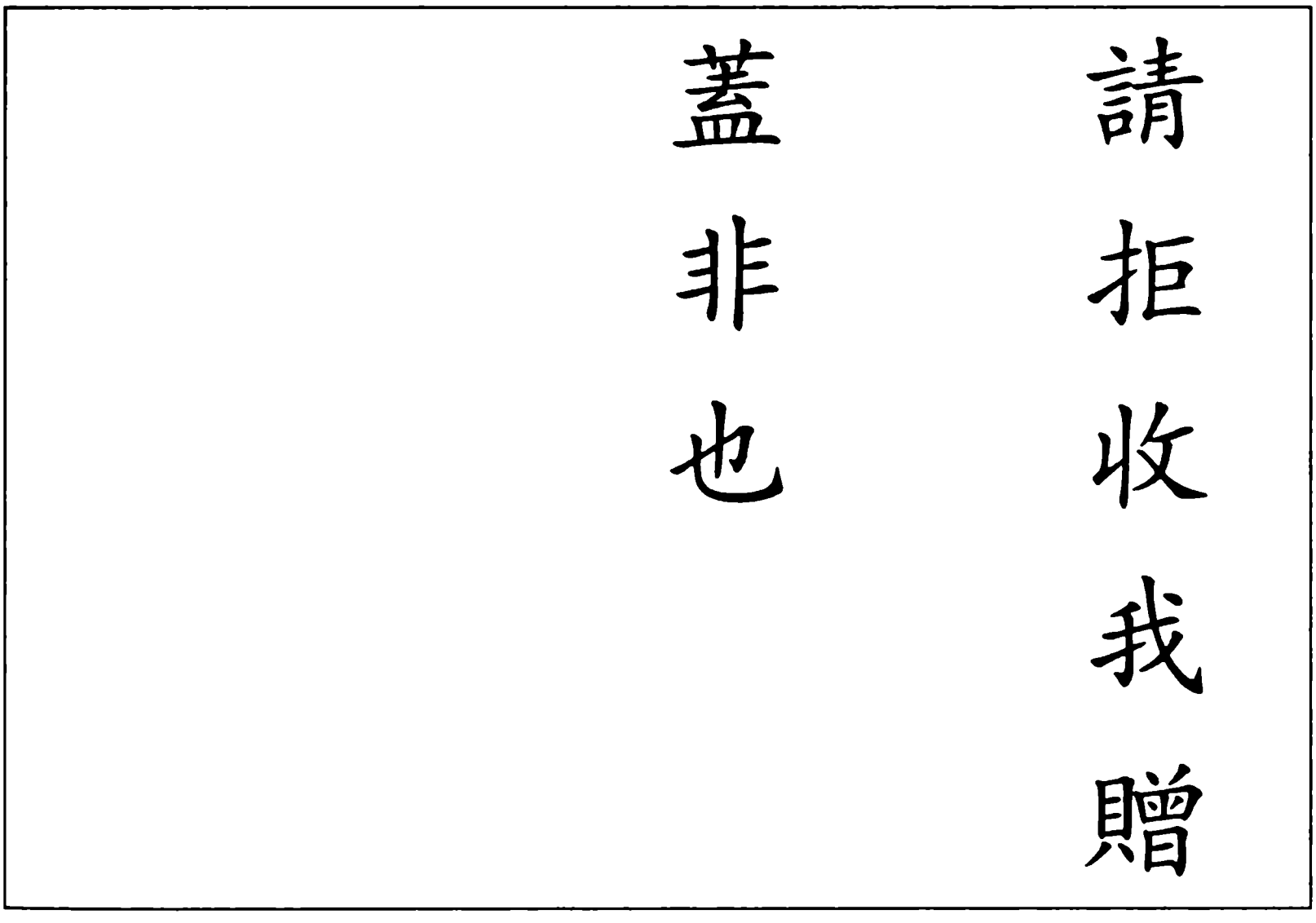
This is what the unconscious is. I take this knowledge on board and I define it as only being able to be posited – a newly emerging term – on the basis of the subject's jouissance.

3 February 1972

VI

I ASK YOU TO REFUSE ME MY OFFERING

. . . because: this isn't it
Linguistic analysis
Schematizing speech
Grammar and signification
The Borromean rings



On the blackboard[1]

You're fond of *conférences*.[2] This is why, by means of a short note that I delivered to him at about a quarter past ten, I asked my friend Roman Jakobson to give you the *conférence* he didn't give yesterday. I was hoping he would be present today. After announcing it – I

mean, after writing on the blackboard something equivalent to what I've just written here – he thought he should stick to what he called *generalities*, doubtless reckoning that this is what you would rather hear, that is to say, a *conférence*. Unfortunately – he telephoned me early this morning – he is tied up in a lunch appointment with some linguists, so you won't get the *conférence*.

I don't give *conférences*. As I have already said elsewhere in all seriousness, I amuse myself, whether in serious amusements or pleasant amusements. Elsewhere, specifically at Sainte-Anne, I tried my hand at some pleasant amusements. This speaks for itself. And while I said, over at Sainte-Anne, that this was also perhaps an amusement, here I say that I stick to the serious. But, even so, this is still an amusement.

Instead of relating it, at Sainte-Anne, to pleasant amusement, I related it to what I called *la lettre d'amur*.

1

La lettre d'amur? Well, here's a typical one – *I ask you to refuse me my offering*. There's a stop here, because I hope that for it to be understood there's no need to add anything. It's very precisely this, *la lettre d'amur*, the true one – *to refuse my offering*.

It can be finished off, for those who by chance might never have understood what *la lettre d'amur* is – to refuse my offering *because this isn't it*.

You see, I've slipped in – because my goodness, I'm speaking to you, to you who are fond of *conférences – ça n'est pas ça*. I've added the *n'*. When the *ne* is added, it doesn't need to be expletive to mean something, namely the true and rightful presence of the enunciator. The enunciation would be full precisely because the enunciator wouldn't be there. It should be written – *parce que*, colon, *c'est pas ça*.

I said that here the amusement is serious. What might that mean? I looked up the ways of saying *serious* in different languages. For my conception of it, I couldn't find any better than our way, which lends itself to a play on words. I don't speak the others well enough to work out what their equivalent would be, but in ours, *sérieux*, as I understand it, is *sériel*.

As a certain number of you already know, I hope, without me having to tell you, the principle behind the *serial* is the sequence of integers that no one has found any other way of defining but to say that a property is transferable from n to $n + 1$, which can only be the same property that transfers from 0 to 1. They also refer to this as reasoning by recurrence or mathematical induction.

Only, there you go, this is precisely the problem I tried to broach in my latest amusements – what exactly is it that could transfer from 0 to 1? It's a tall order. Yet this is the goal I set myself, for this year, to secure . . . *or worse*.

I won't be moving into the interval of what transfers from 0 to 1 today, which at first blush is bottomless. What is quite sure, however, is that, taking them one by one, you have to be clear in your mind about what you're doing, because whatever effort people might have made to logicize the sequence of integers, they didn't find any better than to designate the property that is common to all of them – and it's the only such property – as the property of what transfers from 0 to 1.

In the meantime, you were advised – well, those from my School were advised – not to miss the clarification that Roman Jakobson could bring you regarding what is involved in language analysis. This will be extremely useful for where I'm going to steer the question now. However, just because I took this as my starting point to get to my present amusements, it doesn't mean I should be bound to it.

What struck me, among other items, in what Roman Jakobson put before you was something that concerns the historical point that finding language on the agenda is not a recent occurrence. Indeed, he spoke to you about a certain Boetius de Dacia, who was very important, as Jakobson stressed, because he articulated *suppositiones*. I think that at least for some of you this will echo what I have long been saying about the subject, the subject that is radically *supposed* by the signifier. Then he told you that this Boetius, Dacia as he was called, which means Dane – he's not the same Boëthius whom you are familiar with, the one who is in the Bouillet dictionary, the one who extracted images of the past[3] – Boetius de Dacia took off, just like that, over a little question of deviation. In fact, he was accused of Averroism, and though it can't be said that it was unpardonable in those days, it might not be pardoned when the person concerned had caught people's attention with something that sounded a bit solid, like speaking about *suppositiones*, for example. It would not be altogether accurate to say that the two things are unrelated, and this is what I find striking.

What I find striking is that, for centuries, one had to be careful when one was dealing with language. There is a letter that only appears on the absolute margins in phonetic composition, the letter aitch, pronounced *hache* in French. Don't touch the *hache*![4] For centuries, this was wise when dealing with language, because it turns out that when one dealt with language in public, it used to produce an effect that was different from amusement.

One of the questions that it wouldn't be a bad idea for us to have a quick look at, right at the end – although I've indicated where it is that I amuse myself in a pleasant way, in the shape of this famous wall – is the question as to why nowadays linguistic analysis is part of scientific research. What might that mean, exactly? You don't have to look far. The definition of scientific research – here, I'm letting myself get swept along a bit – is very precisely the following. *Research* is the right word in that it's not a matter of *finding*, in any case, it's not about finding anything that would upset the public I was speaking about just now.

I recently received from a distant shore – I don't want to cause anyone any bother, so I won't say where – a question to do with scientific research. It came from a *committee for scientific research on weapons*. Word for word. Someone who is no stranger to me – this was why I was being consulted about him – intended to carry out a research project on fear. For this he was to receive financing that, converted into French francs, would amount to slightly more than a cool million in old francs, which would allow him – it was written in the text, which I can't give you, but I have a copy – to spend three days in Paris, twenty-eight days in Antibes, nineteen days in Douarnenez, and a fortnight in San Montano. Antonella, are you in the audience? San Montano must have a rather nice beach, I suppose? You don't know. Well, maybe it's close to Florence. Anyway, we don't know. He would then spend another three days in Paris.

Thanks to one of my pupils, I was able to sum up my appraisal [in English] in the following terms – *I am bowled over with admiration*. Then, I put a big cross over all the details of the appraisal I was being asked for, regarding the scientific quality of the programme, its social and practical impact, the competence of the person concerned, and all the rest. This story is only of limited interest, but it does offer some comment on what I was indicating. It doesn't get to the bottom of scientific research, but none the less it does denote something, and this is perhaps the sole interest of the affair.

Naturally, you don't know what [the English word] *bowl* means. Nor did I. It refers to the bowling ball. Therefore, I'm like a full set of skittles when a well-bowled ball has knocked them all over. Well, you'll believe me if you will, not knowing the expression *bowled over*, what I said on the phone when they called was *I'm blowed over*. I was trying to say *Je suis soufflé*. Naturally, it was completely wrong. *Blow*, which does indeed mean *souffler*, would become *blown*, not *blowed*. So, if I said *blowed*, was it because, without knowing, I did indeed know that it was *bowled over*?

Here, we're moving into the slip of the tongue, that is, into serious

matters. At the same time, however, this is all it takes to indicate that, as Plato glimpsed in the *Cratylus*, it's not altogether sure that the signifier is arbitrary. After all, it's not for nothing that *bowl* and *blow* are so close, because this is precisely how I only missed *bowl* by a hair's breadth. I don't know how you would qualify this amusement, but I find it serious.

In view of which, we come back to linguistic analysis, which, certainly, in the name of research, you're going to be hearing about more and more.

It's hard to wend one's way through this where the division is worthwhile. You learn things, for instance that there are parts of discourse. I've kept away from this like the plague. I mean, I've avoided dwelling on it, so as not to bog you down.

In the end, however, since research will certainly make itself heard here just as it does elsewhere, I'm going to start with verbs.

2

You are told that verbs express all sorts of things, and that it's hard to disentangle an action from its opposite. Intransitive verbs obviously create an obstacle here, and they become very hard to classify.

To stick to what has been most accentuated in this definition, you are told, as far as typical verbs are concerned, about a binary relationship, where it has to be said that the same sense of the verb cannot be classified in the same way in every language.

There are languages in which one says *the man beats the dog*. There are languages in which one says *there is beating of the dog by the man*. This is not the essential thing, because the relationship is still binary.

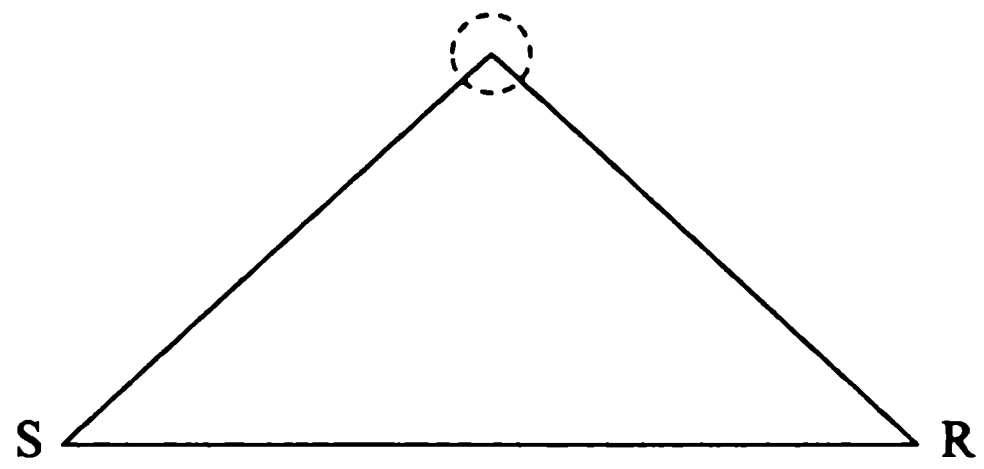
There are languages in which one says *the man loves the dog*. Is it still binary when one expresses oneself as follows in a language – *the man loves to the dog* – not to say that he *likes*, in the same way that he likes some trinket, but that he has love for his dog? There are differences here.

To love to someone, has always delighted me. I mean that I regret that we speak a language in which we say *I love a woman*, in the same way as saying, *I beat her*. *To love to a woman* seems more appropriate to me. This is so even to the extent that one day I noticed – since we're in the parapraxis, let's continue – that I was writing *tu ne sauras jamais combien je t'ai aimé*. I didn't put an *e* on the end, which is a slip, a spelling mistake if you like, incontestably.[5] On reflection, I told myself I'd written it like that because I must have felt *I love to you*. Well, this is a personal matter.

Be that as it may, one distinguishes with care between these first verbs and those that are defined by a ternary relationship. *I give you something*. This can range from a punch on the nose to a trinket, but in the end there are three terms. You've been able to note that I have always used *I . . . you* as an element of the relationship. This already pulls you in the direction that is precisely the one in which I'm steering you, because, as you can see, it is a piece of *I ask you to refuse me my offering*. This doesn't go without saying, because one can say *the man gives the dog a little pat on the brow*.

This distinction between the ternary relation and the binary relation is utterly essential. When the function of speech is schematized, you are told that there is S and R for Sender and Receiver.[6] To this is added the relationship that, in the commonly used scheme, is identified with the message, and it is stressed that for it to work out the Receiver has to be in possession of the code. If he doesn't have it, he will have to get it, and he will have to decode it.

Is this a satisfactory way of writing it out? The relationship that passes through speech, if indeed there is such a relationship – you know that such a thing may be called into question – implies that the ternary function should be inscribed, namely that the message should be distinguished, here –



The triangle of the message

Therefore, there is a sender, a receiver, and a message. I claim, however, that it is no less the case that what is stated in a verb is distinct from this. The fact that what is at issue is a Demand deserves to be singled out, in order to group the three elements together.[7] It is precisely in this respect that this is evident only when I employ *I* and *you*, or *you* and *me*. This *I* and this *you*, this *you* and this *me*, are precisely specified by the utterance of speech. There can be no ambiguity whatsoever here.

In other words, there is not only what is called, vaguely, *code*, as though it were only present at one point. Grammar forms part of the code, namely this tetradic structure that I have just marked out as essential to what is said. When you trace out your objective

scheme of communication – sender, message and, at the other end, the receiver – it is less complete than grammar, which forms part of the code. It is in this respect that it was important for Jakobson to voice this generality for you – that grammar also forms part of signification, and that it is not for nothing that it is employed in poetry.

This is essential when it comes to specifying the status of the verb, because soon enough the substantives will be sifted out for you in accordance with their respective weights. There are, so to speak, heavy substantives that are called *concrete*, as though there could be some other kind of substantive besides substitutes. But in the end, there has to be substance. I, meanwhile, think it is more pressing to indicate first of all that we are dealing only with subjects. Let's set these items aside for the time being.

You will recognize the scope of what I have been putting forward when you consider a criticism that curiously has only reached us after reflection, from the attempt to logicize mathematics. The criticism is that, in taking a proposition as a propositional function, we will have to note down the function of the verb, and not the function of what is done with it, namely the predicative function.

For the function of the verb, let's take the verb *to ask*. *I ask you*, F, and, opening the parentheses, *I* and *you* are x and y. Thus we have –

$$\mathrm{F}(x, y$$

What do I ask you? *To refuse*. Another verb. This means that, in the stead of what here could be the little pat on the dog's head, that is, z, you have for example f and, again, x, y –

$$\mathrm{F}(x, y, \mathrm{f}(x, y$$

Are you compelled to end here, that is, to put z? On no account is this necessary, because you can perfectly well have a ϕ. Let's not put Φ because it will only lead to confusion later. So, I'm putting a lower-case ϕ, and again x, y, for *my offering to you*. In view of which, we have to close three parentheses –

$$\mathrm{F}(x, y, \mathrm{f}(x, y, \phi(x, y)))$$

What I'm steering you towards is this – it's a matter of seeing, not how meaning arises, but how the object arises from a knot of meaning. I named this object, as best I could, the object *a*.

3

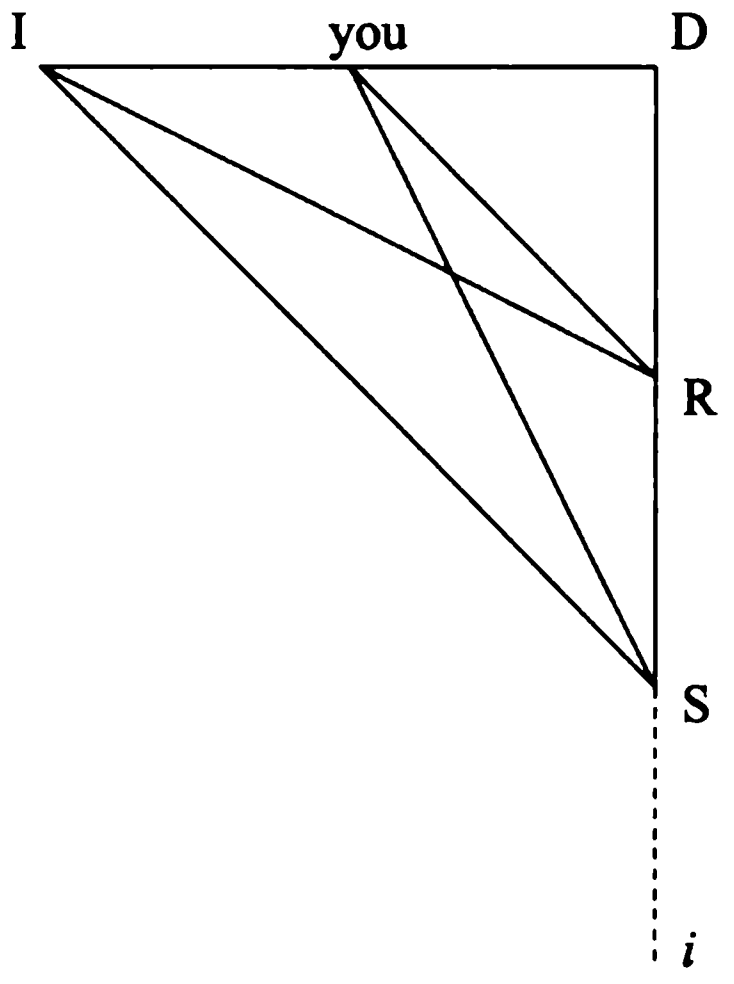
I know that reading Wittgenstein is very captivating.

Throughout his whole life, with admirable asceticism, Wittgenstein stated the following, which I'm condensing – *whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent*. In view of which he would hardly say anything at all. From one instant to the next, he would come off the footpath and into the stream, that is, he would then get back up on the footpath, the footpath defined by this exigency.

My friend Kojève expressly formulated the same rule. Goodness knows he didn't follow it. However, just because he formulated it, this doesn't mean that I should think myself obliged to stay at the level of the living demonstration that Wittgenstein gave thereof.

It seems to me that *whereof one cannot speak* is very precisely what is at issue when I designate as *this isn't it* that which alone prompts a request such as *to refuse my offering*. And yet, if there is one thing that should be palpable for everyone, then it's the *this isn't it*. This is where we are, at each instant of our existence. So, let's try to see what it means.

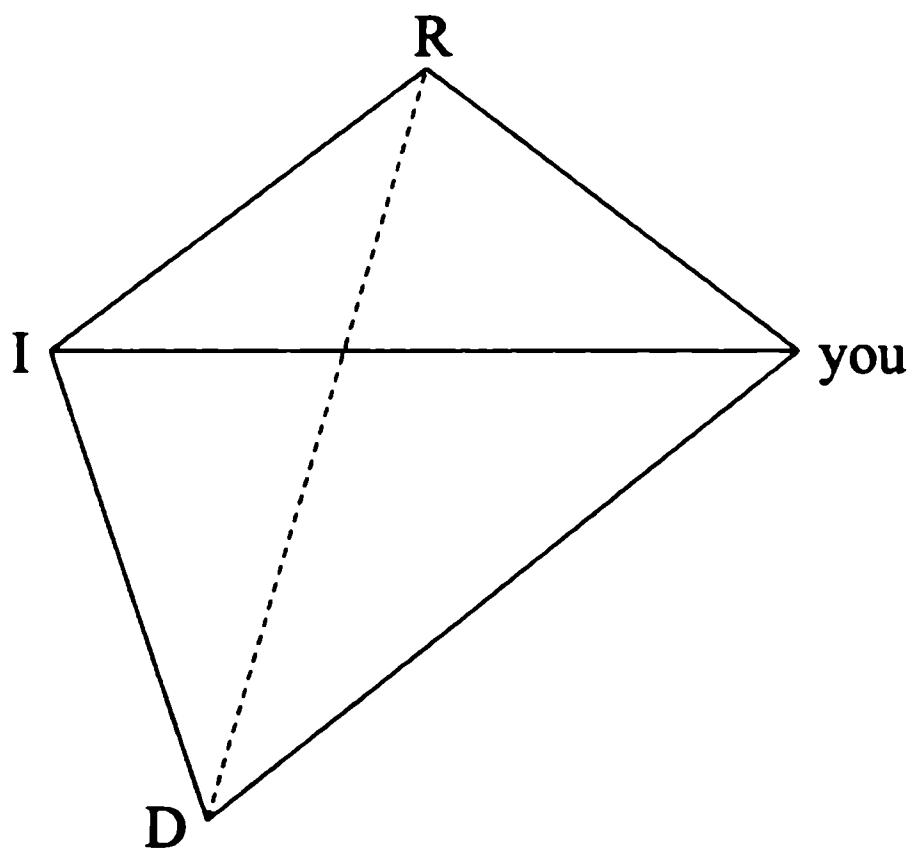
We could leave the *this isn't it* in its place, in its dominant place, in view of which we would clearly never see the end of it. Instead of cutting it off, however, let's try to insert it into the statement itself. *This isn't it* – isn't what, exactly? Let's put, in the simplest way possible, the *I* here, the *you* here, and *I ask you*, capital D for *Demand*, here, *to refuse me*, capital R, *my offering*, capital S for *Supply*, and then there is this that is lost – lower-case *i*.



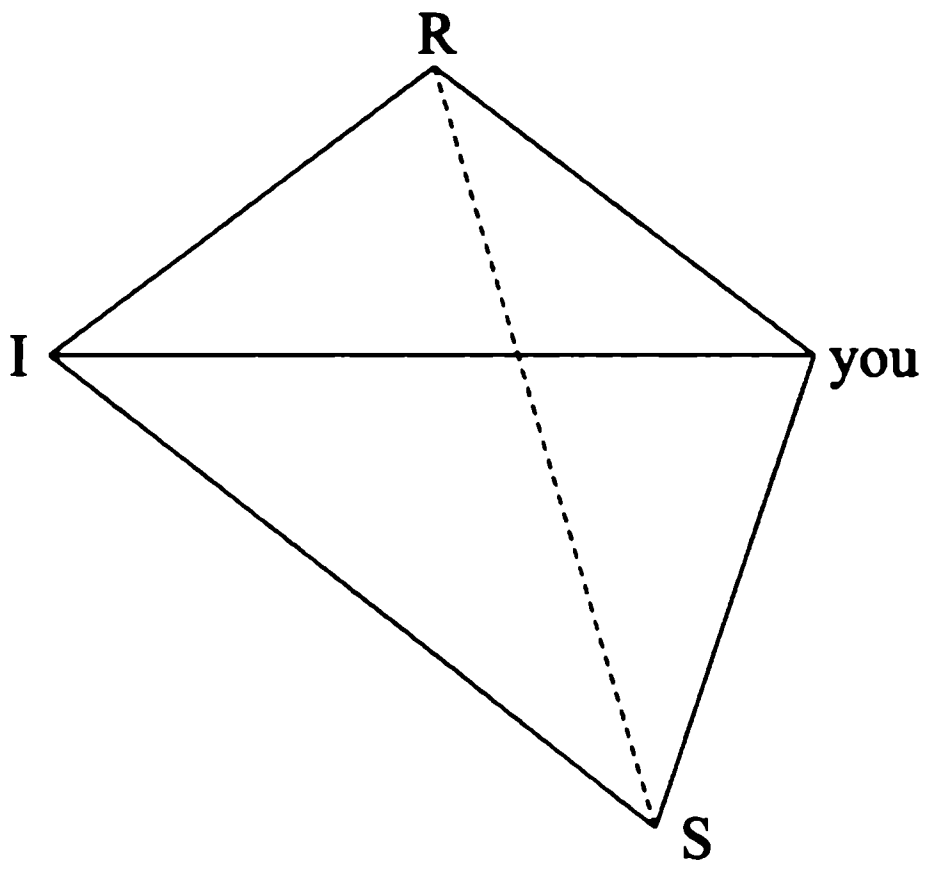
This isn't it inserted in the statement

However, if my offering isn't this, if I'm asking you to refuse it because *this isn't it*, then what you refuse is not my offering, so I needn't ask this of you. So, this is truncated at R. In view of which, if I needn't ask you to refuse it, why do I even ask you? Thus, this truncates at D.

To take this up in a more accurate diagram, the *I* and the *you* are here, the *Demand* here, the *Refusing* here, and the *Supply* here. This is, namely, a first tetrad, here – *I ask you to refuse*.



This is a second, here – *refuse my offering to you*.



Perhaps we can see, which will not astonish us, in the distance that lies between the distinct poles of *Demand* and *Supply*, between

the poles of asking and offering, that maybe here lies the *this isn't it*.

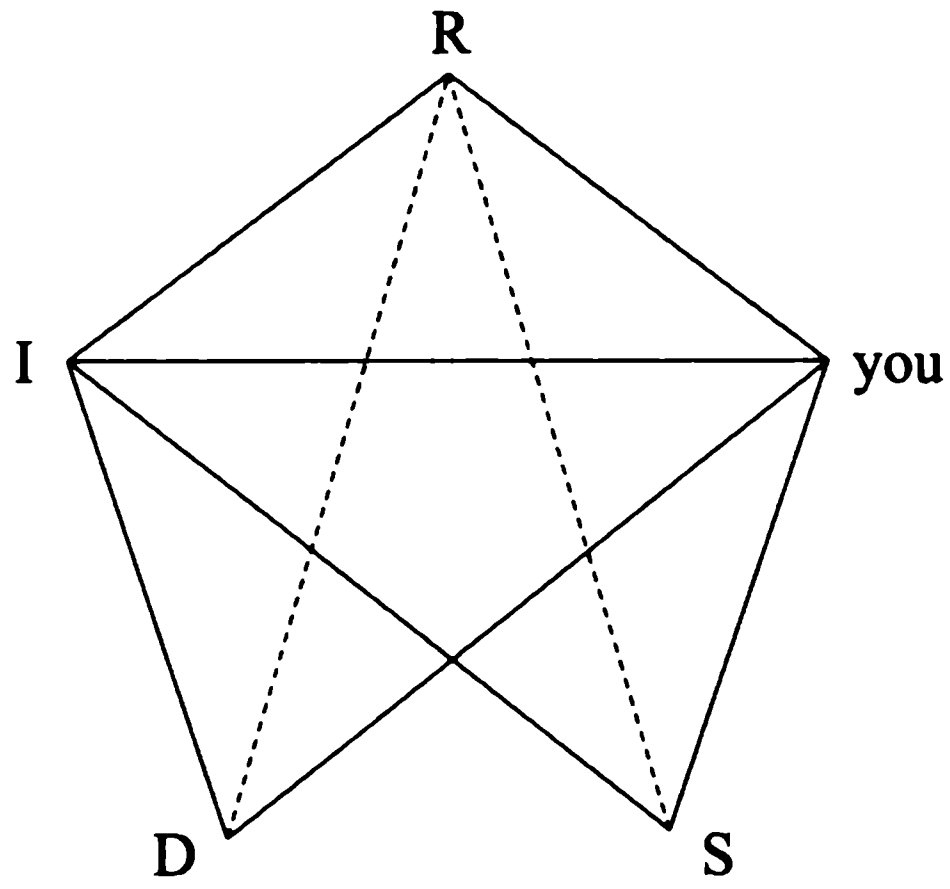


Diagram of the double tetrad

However, as I've just explained, if we are to say that this is the space that lies – that can lie – between what I have to ask you and my offering to you, it is equally impossible to sustain the relation between asking and refusing, and between refusing and offering.

Do I need to give a detailed commentary? This might be useful, after all.

First, you might be wondering why I'm giving you a spatial diagram of all this. It's not about space. Space is at issue to the extent that we project our objective schemes into it. But this already indicates enough about it, namely that our objective schemes perhaps govern something of our notion of space even prior to it being governed by our perceptions.

I know full well that we are inclined to believe that our perceptions provide us with the three dimensions. A certain Poincaré, who is not unfamiliar to you, made a very nice attempt to demonstrate as much. Nevertheless, this reminder about the precondition of our objective schemes will perhaps be useful when it comes to appreciating more fully the scope of his demonstration.

What I want to insist on is not merely the turn from *this isn't what I'm offering you* to *this isn't what you can refuse*, nor even to *this isn't what I'm asking you*. Rather, it's that *my offering* is perhaps not at all *what I'm offering you*, but rather *the fact of my offering*. It is on this basis that we get things wrong.

Indeed, what does *my offering* mean? It's enough to reflect on it to realize that it doesn't mean at all that I'm *giving*. Nor does it mean

that you're taking, which would endow the *refusing* with a meaning. When I offer something, it's in the hope that you will reciprocate. This is precisely why the potlatch exists.

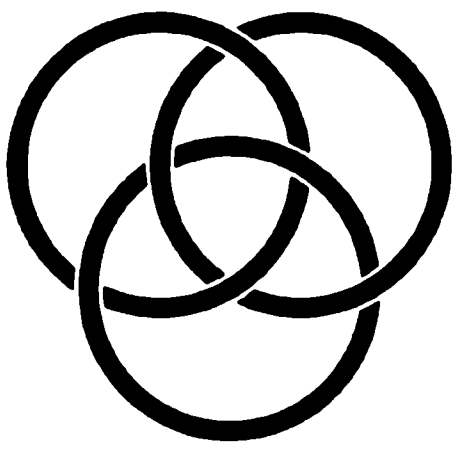
The potlatch is what drowns out, what outstrips, the impossible aspect of offering, the impossibility of it being a gift. And this is precisely why the potlatch has become completely foreign to us in our discourse. This is what makes it unsurprising that, in our nostalgia, we turn it into something that supports the impossible, namely the real – but the real as impossible.

If the *this isn't it* doesn't lie in the whereof of *my offering* either, let's observe what results from examining the fact of offering as such. It's not *what I'm offering*, but rather *the fact of offering*, as a gerund.[8] Remove supply and we see that demand and refusal lose all meaning, because what can it mean to ask to refuse?

A little exercise will be sufficient for you to notice that it is strictly the same if you withdraw any of the other verbs from the knot of *I ask you to refuse me my offering*. If you withdraw the refusal, what could the supply of a demand mean? As I told you, the nature of supply is that, if you withdraw demand, then refusing no longer has any signification. This is precisely why the question that arises for us is not about what is involved in the *this isn't it* – which plays out across each of these verbal levels – but to realize that it is by untying each of these verbs from its knot with the two others that we can uncover what is involved in this meaning-effect, in so far as I have called it the object *a*.

Now here's a strange thing. While I was wondering yesterday evening how I might present this to you today with my geometry of the tetrad, it so happened that, dining with a charming person who attends the courses of Monsieur Guilbaud, I was given, like a ring slid on my finger, something that I should like to show you now. It would seem to be nothing less – this I learnt yesterday evening – than the family crest of the House of Borromeo.

You need to take a bit of care over this, and this is why I'm doing just that. There you go. I haven't made any mistakes.



The Borromean rings

You can remake it with pieces of string. If you copy it down carefully, you will realize that – pay close attention – by removing this one, the third one, the other two are separated. This one passes over at this point here on the left, and again over the same ring here. They only hold together because of the third one. If you're lacking in imagination, you have to try it with three short lengths of string. You will see that they hold together.

You only have to cut one for the two others to come free, even though they might seem to be knotted together in the same way as those with which you are well acquainted, namely the rings of the Olympic Games, but the latter still hold together when one of them clears off. Well, there's no more of that with these Borromean rings! This is something that is nevertheless of great interest, because it shouldn't be forgotten that when I spoke about the signifying chain, I always implied this concatenation.

People don't seem to have realized that binary verbs have a special status that is very closely related to the object *a*. If, instead of taking the man and the dog as an example – these two poor animals – we had taken *I* and *you*, we would have noticed that what is most typical of a binary verb is, for example, *I bore you shitless*, or *I look at you*, or *I speak to you*, or *I gobble you up*.[9] These are the four guises, which only hold interest in their grammatical analogy, namely, on account of being grammatically equivalent.

Is it not the case that we now have, here in reduced form, in miniature, this something that enables us to illustrate the fundamental truth that any discourse only gets its meaning from another discourse? Assuredly, demand is not enough to constitute a discourse, but it possesses its fundamental structure, which is to be, as I put it, a quadripode. I stressed that a tetrad is essential for representing this demand, just as a quaternion of letters, F, *x*, *y*, *z*, is indispensable.

It's clear that, in the knot that I have put forward today, *demand*, *refusal*, and *supply* only take on their meaning each from the other. However, what results from this knot, in the way that I have tried to unravel it for you, or rather, in taking on the test of its unravelling, from telling, from showing you, that this never holds together with just two on their own, is that this is the fundament, the root, of what is involved in the object *a*.

I've given you the minimal knot, but you could add others to it. *Because this isn't it*. Isn't what? It isn't of my desiring. And who doesn't know that what is specific to demand is very precisely the fact of not being able to locate what is involved in the object of desire? With this desire, my offering, which is not of your desiring, we would easily be able to tie this thing up with your desiring of my asking.[10] And thus, the *lettre d'amur* will extend indefinitely.

Who can fail to see the fundamental character of a concatenation such as this for the analytic discourse?

I once said, long ago, and there are some who still find it soothing, that an analysis ends only when someone can say, not *I speak to you*, nor *I speak of me*, but *it's from me that I speak to you*. That was a first sketch. Is it not clear that the discourse of the analysand is grounded precisely on this – *I ask you to refuse me my offering, because this isn't it*? This is the fundamental request, and it's the same request that the analyst renders that much heavier when he neglects it.

I once quipped ironically – *with supply, the analyst creates demand*. But the demand that he satisfies is the recognition of the fundamental fact that what is being asked for, *this isn't it*.

9 February 1972

VII

THE VANISHED PARTNER

A TALK AT SAINTE-ANNE

The illusion of sexual relation
The *Hun* and the *Hautre*
All and *not-all*
The duality of woman's jouissance
The exorbitant emergence of the One

Please excuse me. This is the first time I've arrived late. I warn you that I'm unwell. You're here, and so am I. This is all well and good. It's all well and good for you. What I mean by this is that I feel abnormally well under the influence of a slightly high temperature and some medicine, and so, were this situation to change all of a sudden, I hope that those who have been listening to me for some time would explain to the newcomers that it's the first time this has happened to me.

So, this evening I'm going to try to live up to your expectations, here where I said I amuse myself. It is by no means certain that the tone will stay the same throughout. So, please excuse me, it certainly won't be due to my abnormal state. It will be in line with what I intend to say to you this evening.

Elsewhere, at my Seminar, obviously I don't make it easy on my audience. I see that a few of them are here, and they might remember that last time I spoke about this thing I encapsulated with the Borromean knot – I mean, a link of three rings made in such a way that by detaching one of them from the link, the two others will hold together not an instant more. What does this hinge on? I really do have to explain this for you because, after all, in its raw state I'm not sure this will be sufficient for everyone.

It has to do with a question concerning the condition of the unconscious, a question directed at what language is. Indeed, this is a question that has not been settled. Should language be broached in

its grammar? – in which case, this is certain, it hinges on a topology . . .

WOMAN IN THE AUDIENCE: *What is a topology?*

How nice this person is! Topology has a mathematical definition. It is approached through non-metric relationships that can be pulled out of shape. This was the case for those sorts of flexible circles that constituted *I ask you to refuse me my offering*. Each of them was a closed and flexible circle that only holds fast when linked to the others. None of them can sustain itself on its own. By virtue of its mathematical insertion, this topology is linked to relationships of pure *signifiance*, as the latest lesson of my Seminar demonstrated. It is in so far as these three terms are threefold that we can see the presence of the third term establishing a relationship between the two others. That's what the Borromean knot means.

There is another way of broaching language, and of course this is of current pertinence. It is of current pertinence given the fact that someone whom I mentioned by name – it so happens that I mentioned him after Jakobson had, but actually I knew him from before – a certain René Thom, attempts to broach the question of language, certainly not without having already cleared a number of paths, from the angle of semantics. That is to say, he doesn't broach language on the basis of signifying combinatorics, in the way that pure mathematics can help us to form a conception of it. The semantic angle doesn't prevent him from also drawing on mathematics, from finding in certain curves, and in certain forms that are deduced from these curves, something that would enable us to conceive of language as something like an echo of these physical phenomena.

For example, these curves are elaborated on the basis of what is purely and simply the communication of phenomena of resonance. Holding validity in a certain number of fundamental relations, these curves would purportedly, in a second phase, gather together and homogenize, as it were, to be taken up in a single parenthesis from which the various grammatical functions are purported to result. It seems to me that there is already an obstacle to conceiving of things in this way, which is that one is compelled to place very different types of action under the same heading of *verbs*. Why would language have gathered in some way, into a single category, functions that can only be conceived of originally in very different modalities of emergence? None the less, the question remains in suspense. It is certain that there would be something extremely satisfying about considering language to be modelled in some way on functions that are supposed to be functions of physical reality, even if this reality can be broached only from the angle of a mathematical functionalization.

For my part, what I'm putting forward for you is something that is necessarily attached to the purely topological origin of language. I believe I am able to account for this topological origin on the basis of its being linked essentially to something that occurs in the speaking being through the intermediary of sexuality. Does the speaking being speak because of this something that happened to sexuality, or did this something happen to sexuality because he is a speaking being? I abstain from settling this matter. I let you take care of that.

This evening, I'm going to try to push the fundamental scheme at issue a little further.

The function called sexuality is defined, to the extent that we know anything about it – we do know a bit about it, if only from experience – by the fact that the sexes are twain. This is so, regardless of what is thought by one famous author who, in her time, oriented by goodness knows what because in truth I hadn't started teaching anything yet, thought she should confer with me before delivering *The Second Sex*. She called me by phone to tell me that she would certainly need my advice in order to enlighten her as to what the psychoanalytic contribution to her book would be. As I remarked to her that it would take at least a good five or six months for me to unravel the question for her – which is a minimum because I've been speaking about it now for twenty years, and this is not by chance – she announced that of course it was out of the question for a book that was already being finalized to have to wait so long, the laws of literary production being such that it seemed to her that having more than three or four consultations with me was impossible. Following which, I declined the honour.

The fundament of what I've been coming out with for a while now, since last year, is very precisely that *there is no second sex*. From the moment language starts functioning, there is no second sex. Or, to put it differently, concerning what is called heterosexuality, the word ἕτερος, which is the term that in Greek is used to say *other*, is in the position – for the relation that in the speaking being is called sexual – of emptying itself of its Being. This emptiness which it offers to speech is precisely what I call the locus of the Other, namely the locus in which the effects of the said speech are inscribed.

I'm not going to fill what I have to say to you with etymological references because that would set us back. I'll spare you how ἕτερος, in one Greek dialect that I won't name, is called ἄτερος, and how this ἕτερος joins up to δεύτερος and marks out how this δεύτερος is, in this instance, elided, so to speak.

Clearly this might appear surprising, just as it is evident that, for many an age now, such a formula is precisely what has been

overlooked. Truth be told, I don't know whether there exists any reference for a time when it might have been formulated. Nevertheless, I claim that this is what the psychoanalytic experience brings, and I support this with what you can see on the blackboard.

$$\exists x.\overline{\Phi x} \qquad \overline{\exists x}.\overline{\Phi x}$$

$$\forall x.\Phi x \qquad \overline{\forall x}.\Phi x$$

For this, recall the basis of the conception we may have, not of heterosexuality – because all in all, if you have followed what I just put forward, heterosexuality bears the right name – but of bisexuality.

At the point we've reached in statements about the said sexuality, what have we got? What we refer to – and don't imagine that this goes without saying – is the model that is supposed to be animal. Therefore, there is a relation between the animal image of copulation and the sexes, which seems to furnish a sufficient model for what is involved in relation. By the same token, what is sexual is considered in terms of need.

This is far from having always been the case. Believe it. I don't need to remind you what *know* means in the biblical sense of the word. The relation between *voῦς* and something that is purported to receive its passive imprint – which is termed in various ways, but which is most usually denominated in Greek as *ὕλη* – this mode of relationship that is generated by the mind has always been considered to model not merely the animal relationship, but the fundamental mode of Being of what was held to be the world. The Chinese have long called upon two fundamental essences that are respectively the feminine essence, which they call *Yīn*, in opposition to the *Yáng* that I have written, doubtless not by accident, underneath.

陰 *Yīn*

陽 *Yáng*

Were there such a thing as relation that could be articulated on the sexual plane, were there such a thing as relation that could be articulated in the speaking being, the question is whether it would have to be stated of all those of one same sex with respect to all

those of the other. This is obviously the idea that is suggested to us, at the point we've reached, in reference to what I've called the animal model, which is the aptitude, if I may say so, of each of those on one side to be valid for all the others on the other side. You can see, therefore, that the statement is announced in keeping with the significant semantic form of the universal. If you replace in what I have just said *each of those* with *anyone* or *anybody* – anybody from one of these two sides – you would be wholly in the realm of the indeterminacy of what is being chosen in each *all* to correspond to *all the others*. Recognize if you will in this conditional mood something that echoes my discourse that would not be a discourse of semblance.

The *each of those* that I used at first has the effect of calling to your minds how, dare I say, the effective relation is not without an evocation of the horizon of *one to one*, of *every Jack has his Jill*. This one-to-one correspondence echoes what we know to be essential when it comes to presentifying number. Note that from the outset we can eliminate the existence of both of these dimensions, and it may even be said that the animal model is precisely what is suggestive of the animistic fantasy. Even if the choice happens through encounter, one-to-one coupling is what of this is apparent to us, namely that there are only two animals that are copulating together. If we didn't have this animal model, we would not have this essential dimension which is very precisely that the encounter is unique. When I say that it is here, and only here, that the animistic model is hatched, this is not by chance. Let's call it the soul-to-soul encounter.

In any case, it will come as no surprise to anyone who knows about the condition of the speaking being that, on the basis of this fundament, the encounter is to be repeated qua unique. There is no need to bring any dimension of virtue into play here. The very necessity of what is produced as unique in the speaking being is that it repeats. It is precisely in this respect that the fantasy I have called animistic is only hatched and sustained on the basis of the animal model. This fantasy is there to say *language does not exist*. Clearly this is not what interests us in the analytic field.

What gives us the illusion of sexual relation in the speaking being is everything that materializes the universal in what effectively amounts to herd behaviour in the relations between the sexes. I have already underscored that, in the sexual quest, or hunt if you prefer, the lads egg each other on in groups and the lasses like to pair up, so long as it is advantageous for them, of course. This was an ethological remark that I made, but which doesn't settle anything because a moment's reflection suffices to see in this a mirage that is equivocal enough for it not to last long.

To be more insistent here, and to hold myself at the most basal level of experience, I mean at the ground level of analytic experience, I will remind you about the imaginary. We reconstitute the imaginary in the animal model, and we do so in keeping with our own ideas, of course, because it's clear that we can only reconstruct it from observation. However, we do have an experience of the imaginary, an experience that is not effortless but which psychoanalysis has allowed us to extend. To put things crudely – it's not so *crude*, I ought rather to say *cruel* – I think it will not be difficult to make myself heard if I assert that in any sexual encounter, well, good Lord, if there is something that psychoanalysis enables us to assert, it's I know not what profile of other presence for which the vulgar term *partouze* is not to be altogether ruled out.[1]

In itself, this reference has nothing decisive about it, because, after all, one could assume an air of seriousness by saying that this is precisely the mark of the abnormal, as though the normal could be located somewhere. In putting forward this term – the vulgar name I have just uttered – I was certainly not striving to pluck the string of the erotic lyre for you, but simply to make a remark that may have something of the value of an awakening. At least this offers you, not the dimension that might echo Eros – I am certainly not here to amuse you in that key – but simply the pure dimension of a wake-up.

Let's try now to open up what is involved in the kinship between the universal proposition and our business, namely the statement that objects ought to be shared out into two *alls* of opposite equivalence. I've just told you that there is no cause to demand the equinumerosity of individuals, and I stuck, as best I could, to maintaining what I had to assert concerning simply the bi-uniqueness of coupling. If this were possible, it would amount to two universals defined solely as establishing the possibility of a relation of one to the other or of the other to one.

The said relation has absolutely nothing to do with what are commonly called *sexual relations*. We have stacks of relations to these relations. And, on these *rapports*, these relations, we also have a few little *rapports*, a few little reports. They keep us busy in our terrestrial life. However, on the level at which I position it, it's a question of grounding this relation in universals. How does the *man* universal relate to the *woman* universal? This is the question that forces itself upon us due to the fact that language demands very precisely that it should be grounded through this. Were there no such thing as language, well, there wouldn't be any question either. We wouldn't have to bring the universal into play.

To be more precise, and to render the Other absolutely alien to what otherwise might be mere seconding, pure and simple, this relation is perhaps what will force me this evening to accentuate the A – whereby I mark out the *Autre* as an emptiness – by means of something extra. With an extra aitch, the *Hautre* might not be such a bad way of making audible the dimension of the *Hun* that can come into play here.[2] It would enable us to perceive, for example, that all that we possess by way of philosophical lucubration has come, perhaps not by chance, from a certain Socrates. He was clearly a hysteric, clinically speaking I mean. Well, there are reports of his cataleptic manifestations.

The said Socrates was able to sustain a discourse that, not without reason, stands at the origin of the discourse of science. He was able to do so very precisely on account of having brought the subject to the place of semblance, as I have defined it. He was able to do so precisely because of the dimension that presentified for him the *Hautre* as such, namely his wife's hatefulness, to call a spade a spade. She was *sa femme* to the point that she *s'affemait*,[3] to such an extent that at the time of his death he had to adjure her kindly to withdraw so as to allow his death to take on its full political signification. This is simply a dimension indicative of the point at which the question we are raising lies.

I mentioned that if we can say that there is no such thing as sexual relation, this is surely not innocently. It's because of experience, namely a mode of discourse that is absolutely not that of the hysteric but rather the one that I have inscribed with a quadripodic distribution as the analytic discourse. From this discourse emerges the dimension of the phallic function, which hitherto had never been mentioned. The phallic function is what entails that at least one of two terms is not typified by sexual relation. This term is the one to which the word *Hun* is here being attached. It's not that its *Hun* position is reducible to this something that is called either *male* or, in the Chinese terminology, the essence of *Yáng*. On the contrary, it's very precisely by virtue of what deserves to be recalled in order to accentuate the meaning of the term *organ*. It is an organ only as an implement. This meaning is veiled because it comes to us from afar. The analytic experience prompts us to see everything that is stated by way of sexual relation as revolving around the implement. This is something new. I mean that it corresponds to the emergence of a discourse that certainly had never come to light of day before, and which would never have been conceived of without the precondition of the discourse of science in so far as the latter is an insertion of language on the mathematical real.

I have said that what stigmatizes this relation, on account of being

profoundly undermined in language, is very precisely that no longer can it be written down in terms of male and female essences. This gets done nevertheless, but in a dimension that strikes me as being a mirage. What does this mean, that it *cannot be written down*, since, after all, it has already been written down? If I reject this ancient writing in the name of the analytic discourse, you could raise a far more valid objection, which is that I too am writing it down. What I have put once again on the blackboard is something that claims to support the channelling of this sexual business by means of a form of writing.

Nevertheless, this writing is only authorized, it only takes shape, through a highly specified form of writing, which allowed the sudden entrance of a mathematical topology to be introduced into logic. It is only on the basis of the existence of the formulation of this topology that we have been able to imagine turning any proposition into a propositional function, that is, into something that is specified by the empty place that is left in it, and which functions to determine the argument.

What on this occasion I am borrowing from mathematical inscription, in so far as it supersedes the first forms – I'm not saying *formalizations* – sketched out by Aristotle in his syllogistic, might, so it would seem, offer us under the term *argument-function* a comfortable term with which to specify sexual opposition. What would it require? It would be enough for the respective functions of male and female to be distinct in the same way as *Yīn* and *Yáng*. It's precisely because the function is unique, because it's always Φx that is at issue, that difficulty and complication are generated. The simple fact that you are here means that it's not possible for you not to have at least a little idea of this.

Here, Φx affirms that it is true – this is the meaning that the term *function* carries – that what is related to the practice, to the register, of the sexual act falls within the remit of the phallic function. It is very precisely inasmuch as the phallic function is at issue, from whichever angle we look at it – I mean, from one side or the other – that something urges us to ask in what respect the two partners differ. This is what is inscribed in the formulae that I have put on the blackboard.

If it turns out that, due to the fact of dominating both partners equally, the phallic function does not make them different, it is no less the case that first of all we must seek out the difference elsewhere. It is in this respect that the formulae inscribed on the blackboard deserve to be examined from both sides. The left side stands in opposition to the right side, while the upper level stands in opposition to the lower level. The meaning of this deserves to be

auscultated, if I may say so, namely to be examined first of all in how they can show evidence of a certain misuse.

Just because I have made use of a formulation produced by the sudden emergence of mathematics in logic, this doesn't mean that I have employed it in quite the same way. Moreover, my first remarks are going to consist in showing that, indeed, I make use of it in such a way that on no account can it be translated into the terms of propositional logic. The mode of the variable – namely that which makes a place for the argument – is specified here by the quadruple form in which the relationship between argument and function is posited.

To introduce what is at stake, I'm going to remind you that in propositional logic we have on the foremost plane the four fundamental relationships that are in some sense the grounding of this logic, namely *negation*, *conjunction*, *disjunction* and *implication*. There are others, but they are seldom the first, and all the others are reducible to these.

I claim that the way our positions of argument and function have been written here means that the relation called *negation*, whereby all that is posited as truth can only be negated by passing over to falsehood, is unsustainable here. Indeed, you can see that at either level, both the upper and the lower, where the statement of the function – namely that the function is phallic – is posited either as a truth or as dismissible, the actual truth would be precisely what is not written, which here can only be written in the form that contests the phallic function, namely *It is not true that the phallic function is what grounds sexual relation*. In both cases, at each of the two levels that are as such independent, it is not at all a matter of making one the negation of the other, but on the contrary of one standing as the obstacle to the other.

What you can see distributed across the upper level is *There exists* and *There does not exist*. Likewise, on the lower level, on one side there is *all x*, namely the domain of what is here defined by the phallic function, while the difference in the position of the argument in the phallic function is that it is *not all woman* that is inscribed on the other side.

You can see very well that, far from one standing in opposition to the other as its negation, they subsist, quite to the contrary, by both being negated. On one side there is an *x* that can be sustained here beyond the phallic function, and on the other side there is not one, simply because a woman cannot be castrated, and for the best of reasons. This is the level of what is closed off for us as regards sexual relation, while at the level of the phallic function it is inasmuch as the *all* stands in opposition to the *pas-toute*, the *not-all*, that there is

a chance of a distribution, to the left and to the right, of what will be founded as male and as female. Therefore, far from the relationship of negation forcing us to choose, it is in so far as we have to *distribute* that the two sides stand in legitimate opposition to one another.

After negation, I spoke of *conjunction*. To put paid to this matter, I need only on this occasion remark – I hope there are enough people who have flipped through a book on logic for me not to have to insist – that conjunction is grounded in that it only takes on a value from the fact that two propositions can both be true. This is precisely what is in no way permitted by what is here on the blackboard, because you can see that from right to left there is no identity, and that at the level of what is posited as true, namely Φx, the universal propositions cannot conjoin. The universal proposition on the left-hand side stands in opposition to the right-hand side only by virtue of the fact that there is no articulable universal proposition, namely that woman, in regard to the phallic function, only situates herself as being *pas toute*, not all, subject to it.

The strange thing is that, in spite of this, *disjunction* doesn't apply either, if you recall that disjunction only takes on a value from the fact of it being impossible for two propositions to be false at the same time. Shall we say that this is the stronger or the weaker relationship? It is certainly the stronger in that it is the one that is the hardest nut to crack because, for there to be disjunction, the minimum requirement allows that one proposition is true and the other false, or else that both are true. Additionally, what I have called *one true, the other false*, may also be *one false, the other true*, so there are at least three combinatorial cases in which disjunction is sustained. The only thing that it cannot allow is for both to be false at the same time. Now, here on the board we've got two functions, the two at the top, which are posited as not being the truthful truth, as I said earlier. Seemingly, we've got something that gives hope that, at the very least, we might have articulated a veritable disjunction.

However, note what is written on one of the sides that has Φx with the sign of negation over it, the left side – and this is something that of course I will have occasion to articulate in a way that will bring it to life – namely that it's inasmuch as the phallic function is not functioning that sexual relation stands a chance. We have posited that there has to exist an x for this. Now, what do we have on the other side? Well, that there doesn't exist any other such x. This means that it may be said that the fate of a mode by which the differentiation of male and female, of man and woman, would be sustained in speaking beings, any chance of us having such a thing, is that while there is discord – and presently we shall see what I mean by this – at the

level of the universals, these universals are not sustained by the fact of the inconsistency of either one of them.

What happens here, where we have dismissed the function itself? While on one side it is supposed that there exists an x that satisfies the negated Φx, on the other side we have the express formulation that there is *no* x. I illustrated the latter by saying that woman, for the best of reasons, can on no account be castrated. Precisely, there is only the statement, *no* x. This means that at the level on which the disjunction would have some chance of being produced, we have, to one side, just one – or at the very least what I have put forward as the *at-least-one* – and to the other, non-existence, that is to say, the relation of 1 to 0.

At the level on which sexual relation would stand a chance, not of coming about, but simply of being hoped for beyond the abolition, the dismissing, of the phallic function, we only ever find the presence, dare I say, of one of the two sexes. This is very specifically what must be related to the experience that I have accustomed you to see being stated in the form that woman educes, in that for her the universal cannot arise from the phallic function. As you know – and this is the experience, one that is, alas, far too everyday not to veil its structure – she only participates in the phallic function by wanting it, either by stealing it from the man or, good heavens, by ordering him to serve it to her, so that in the . . . *or worse* of cases – mark my word – she may serve it back to him. This does not, however, universalize her, apart from the fact – which is the root of the *pas-toute*, the *not-all* – that she harbours another jouissance besides phallic jouissance. This other jouissance is strictly termed *feminine*, and on no account does it depend on phallic jouissance.

If woman is *not all*, it is because of the duality of her jouissance. This is what Tiresias disclosed when he came back after having been, for a while – by the grace of Zeus – Theresa. Naturally this had the consequence we know about, and which was ultimately laid out, if I may say so, visibly – this being the operative word – for Oedipus, to show him what was in store for him, in return for having existed as a man of the supreme possession that resulted from the deception his partner exercised over him regarding the true nature of what she was offering to his jouissance. Or, let's put it differently, it was for want of his partner asking him to refuse her offering. This clearly shows, but at the level of myth, that for having existed as a man at a level that eludes the phallic function, Oedipus had no other woman but the very one who, for him, should not have existed.

Why *should not have*? Why the theory of incest? This would make it necessary for me to go down the path of the Names-of-the-Father, precisely where I said I would never venture again. Because it so

happens that I've just reread, at someone's behest, this first lecture from the academic year of 1963/64, delivered here at Sainte-Anne. This was why I went back to it, because I enjoyed remembering it. I read it again, and it reads well. It even has a certain dignity, such that I would publish it, if I ever publish again. This doesn't depend on me. Others would have to publish with me. That would encourage me. If I do publish it, you will be able to see the care I took to pick out – though I'd already been saying it for five years – a certain number of registers, the paternal metaphor in particular, the proper noun, and so on. There was everything you need to give meaning, with the Bible, to the mythical lucubration of what I had said. But I won't ever do that again. I will never do it again because, after all, I can make do with formulating things at the level of logical structure which, after all, has every right here.

What I want to tell you is that at a certain level, the one where sexual relation stands a chance, this $\overline{\exists x}$, namely *There does not exist*, there is nothing else, this absent ἕτερος, is on no account necessarily a special privilege of the feminine sex. This is simply indicative of what, on my graph – I'm saying this because it's had its own small fate – I wrote as the Signifier of the barred Other. This means that, however you take it, from the moment sexual relation is at issue, the Other is absent.

Naturally, at the level of what is functioning – that is, the phallic function – there is simply the discord that I mentioned just a moment ago. It so happens that, on one side and the other, one is not in the same position. On one side, we have the universal founded on a necessary relation to the phallic function, and, on the other, a contingent relation, because woman is *pas toute*, not all.

Therefore, on the upper level I underscore that the relation that is grounded on the disappearance, the vanishing existence, of one of the partners, which leaves the place empty for the inscription of speech, is not at this level the special privilege of any one side. Only, for there to be a grounding of sex, as they say, they have to be twain. Nought and one certainly makes two. It makes two on the symbolic plane, in so far as we are in agreement that existence takes root in the symbol. This is what defines the speaking being.

The speaking being certainly *is* something. Perhaps, indeed . . . Who is not what he is? Yet this being is absolutely ungraspable. And this being is all the more ungraspable in that he is forced to go via the symbol in order to support himself. It's quite clear that a being that comes into being by the symbol alone is precisely this Beingless being in which you all partake through the mere fact that you speak. On the other hand, it's quite certain that what is supported is existence, and this is so to the extent that existing is not Being. To exist

depends on the Other. All of you here, from some angle or other, do indeed exist, but when it comes to your Being, you're not so tranquil. Otherwise you wouldn't come seeking assurance for it in so many psychoanalytic endeavours.

Obviously this is something that was utterly original in the first emergence of logic. There is something quite striking in this first emergence of logic, namely the difficulty and the wavering that Aristotle displays regarding the status of the particular proposition. These are difficulties that have been underscored elsewhere. I didn't discover them myself. For those who might care to look into them, I recommend issue 10 of the *Cahiers pour l'analyse*. The leader article, by a certain Jacques Brunschwig, is excellent on this score. In it they will be able to see a flawless indication of Aristotle's difficulty with the particular. Certainly, Aristotle perceives that existence can in no way be established except outside the universal, which is precisely why he locates existence at the level of the particular, a particular which is on no account sufficient to sustain it, even though it gives the illusion of doing so by virtue of the use of the word *some*.

In formalization this is known as a *quantifier*, due to a trace left in philosophical history by the fact that a certain Apuleius – who was a writer of not especially good-taste prose, notably *The Golden Ass*, and who was a feverish mystic to boot – one day introduced the notion that, in Aristotle, whatever had to do with *all* and *some* belonged to the realm of quantity. It's nothing of the sort. On the contrary, these are simply two different modes of what I could call – if you will let this past, since it's somewhat extempore – the incarnation of the symbol.

The incarnation of the symbol, the passage into day-to-day life, the fact that there are *alls* and *somes* in every tongue, is precisely what compels us to posit that language must nevertheless have a common root. Furthermore, since all tongues are profoundly different in their structure, this common root has to be related to something that is not language. Of course, one can understand how people slip up here. What we have a sense of as what lies beyond language can only be mathematical, and, on this pretext, people imagine to themselves that, because it's number, it must be a matter of quantity. Perhaps, however, it is number, strictly speaking, in all its reality, to which language affords access, but only by being capable of locking on to 0 and 1. The real would make its entry here, this real that alone may lie beyond language, namely the only domain in which a symbolic impossibility can be formulated.

This fact of relation that is accessible to language, if it is grounded by sexual non-relation – the fact that it cannot, therefore, confront 0 and 1 – would easily ensure its reflection in Frege's elaboration of

his logical generation of numbers. I have at the very least indicated what constitutes a difficulty in this logical generation, namely the wide gap that I pointed out for you in the mathematical triangle between this 0 and this 1, a gap that is duplicated by the confrontational opposition between them. Already, it is essential to remind ourselves that the fact that what may intervene is there only by virtue of it being the essence of the first couple, and that this can only be a third, is something that is far more dangerous to allow to persist in analysis than the mythical adventures of the primal Father.[4] These mythical adventures do not in themselves present any inconvenience in so far as they structure quite admirably the necessity that, somewhere, there should be *at-least-one* who transcends what is involved in the grip of the phallic function. The myth of the primal Father means just that. It is explained here quite well enough for us easily to make use of it, besides the fact that we find it confirmed by the logical structuration of what has been set out on the blackboard. On the other hand, there is certainly nothing more dangerous than the confusion over what is involved in the One.

As you know, Freud frequently invoked the One as the signifier of an essence of Eros, purported to be that of fusion. Specifically, libido would be a sort of essence that would tend towards making One from two. As one old myth has it, which is surely not good mysticism in the slightest, one of the fundamental tensions of the world tends only towards the forming of One. Truly, this myth is something that can function only on a horizon of delusion. It has strictly speaking nothing to do with anything we might meet in experience. If there is something quite patent in the relations between the sexes, and which analysis not only articulates but is designed to play out in every direction, it's that these relations between the sexes present a difficulty. Nothing in them resembles any kind of spontaneity, apart from the horizon I was speaking about earlier as being grounded, at a push, on goodness knows what animal myth. Eros is in no way a tendency towards One, far from it.

Any precise articulation of what is involved in the two levels depends on the fact that the opposition between the sexes is grounded only in discord, in that they can in no way be established on the basis of a universal. Conversely, at the level of existence, the possibility of the articulation of language harbours an opposition that consists in the annulling, in the voiding, of one of the functions, the function of the Other. This is what strikes me as being essential to bring to the fore.

Note that earlier, having spoken to you in succession of negation, conjunction, and disjunction, I didn't push on to what is involved in *implication*. Clearly, implication can function only between the

two levels, between the level of the phallic function and the level that dismisses it. Now, in spite of this, nothing that is a disjunction on the lower level, the level of the insufficiency of the universal specification, *implies* that this should be so *if and only if* the syncope of existence on the upper level should effectively be produced. Nor, reciprocally, does the latter require the discord on the lower level.

On the other hand, what we see functioning once again, but distinctly and separately, is the *relationship* between the upper level and the lower level. The requirement that there should exist *at-least-one-man* is a requirement that seems to be emitted at the level of the feminine, which is specified as being a *pas-toute*, a *not-all*, a duality, the only point at which duality stands a chance of being represented. There is a requisite here that is, if I may say so, needless. Nothing imposes this *at-least-one* except the unique chance – it still has to be gambled – that something might be functioning on the other side, but as an ideal point, as a possibility that all men could reach. Reach how? Through identification. There is but a logical necessity here, which is imposed only at the level of the wager.

Observe, however, what results from this concerning the barred universal proposition. Moreover, it is in this respect that the *at-least-one* by which the Name of the Father is supported, the Name of the mythical Father, is indispensable. This is where I am offering an insight that is missing in the function, in the notion, of species or of class. It's in this respect that it was no accident that this whole dialectic was bungled in the Aristotelian forms.

In the end, where does this $\exists x$ come to function, this *There exists at-least-one* who is not the serf of the phallic function? It is merely a requisite, I would say, of a desperate type,[5] from the standpoint of something that is not even supported by a universal definition. However, note that with regard to the universal proposition written $\forall x.\Phi x$, every male is serf to the phallic function. What is meant by the *at-least-one* that functions to elude this? I shall say that it is the exception. This is indeed the one time when the proverb that says, without knowing what it says, *The exception proves the rule*, turns out to be confirmed. It's peculiar that it's only with the analytic discourse that a universal can find its veritable fundament in the existence of an exception. At any rate, this means that we can certainly distinguish the universal that is thus founded from any use that is rendered commonplace by the philosophical tradition of the said universal.

There is a peculiar thing that I have found along the path of enquiry, and because, given some training long ago, I'm not completely ignorant in Chinese. I asked one of my dear friends to remind me about something, some trace of which I had kept more or less. I

had to have it confirmed for me by someone whose mother tongue is Chinese. It is certainly very odd that, in Chinese, the denomination of *all mankind* is either voiced *dōu*, which I won't write on the board because I'm weary, or, in a more ancient voicing, one says *tcha*.[6] Well, if it amuses you I will write it up for you after all.

都 *Dōu (Tcha)*

Can you imagine that one can say, for example, *all mankind eats*? Well, you say, *měi gèrén dōu chī. Měi* insists on the fact that he is indeed there, and should you have any doubt about it, the classifier *gè* shows very well that they are countable. But this doesn't make them *all*, so one adds *dōu*, which means *without exception*. I could of course cite you other things. I could tell you that *All the soldiers have perished*, they are *dōu sǐ*, all dead, which in Chinese is *Soldiers without exception kaput*. We can see the *all* spreading out for us from within, and meeting its limit only with inclusion, by being subsumed into larger and larger sets. In the Chinese language, one never says *dōu* or *tcha* without thinking of the totality of whatever is at issue as content.

What we discover in what I have articulated for you as a *relationship*, here of unique existence in relation to the status of the universal, assumes the figure of an exception. However, isn't this idea also the correlate of what earlier I called the emptiness of the Other? We have made progress in the logic of classes by creating the logic of sets. The difference between a class and a set is that when a class is empty, there is no class, whereas when a set is empty, there is still the element of the empty set. It is indeed in this respect that, once again, mathematics leads to progress in logic.

It is here that we are able to see – because we are still keeping this up, but I assure you it will be over soon[7] – where the unilateralism of the existential function can be taken up with respect to what is involved in the other party, in the partner, in so far as here it is *without exception*. This *without exception* that is implied by the non-existence of x in the right-hand portion of the table, namely that there is no exception and that here there is something that has no parallelism, no symmetry, with the requirement that earlier I called the *desperate* aspect of the *at-least-one*, is another requirement. This other requirement hinges on the fact that, all things considered, the masculine universal may feel at home in the assurance that no woman exists who would have to be castrated, and this is for reasons that strike him as obvious. Yet in fact this has no further impact for the reason that it's an utterly needless assurance. What I called to

mind earlier regarding woman's conduct shows well enough that her relation to the phallic function is an altogether active one. Here, however, as was the case earlier, while the supposition is grounded in some sense upon the assurance that an impossibility is at issue, this being the quintessence of the real, it still does not undermine the fragility of the conjecture, because in any case woman has no greater assurance of her universal essence.

The reason for this is that the contrary of the limit point, namely the fact that there is no exception, does not ensure the universal of womanhood, which already is so thinly established due to its discordance. Far from enduing consistency to any *all*, the *without exception* naturally offers even less to what is defined as *pas tout*, as *not all*, as essentially dual.

I hope that this will remain for you as a necessary peg in the steep climb that we might try to negotiate later on, if indeed we are led onto the path along which the sudden entrance of this strangest of items, namely the function of the One, has to be examined with severity. People ask themselves a great many things about animal mentality, when in the end it can only serve us as a looking-glass reference. A looking glass before which, as before any looking glass, one purely and simply disavows. There is something one could ask oneself – is there such a thing as One for animals?

The exorbitant aspect of the emergence of this One is what we shall be led to open up with Plato's *Parmenides*, which is why I've been inviting you for some time now to reread it, before I broach it.

3 March 1972

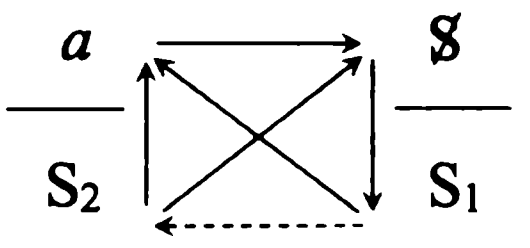
VIII

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE OTHER

Your fantasies derive jouissance from you
The *queue* of thoughts
Ontology is a dishonour
There is no transgression of the impossible
Woman between centre and absence

$\exists x.\overline{\Phi x}$ $\quad\quad$ $\overline{\exists x}.\overline{\Phi x}$

$\forall x.\Phi x$ $\quad\quad$ $\overline{\forall x}.\Phi x$



Since my aim this year is to speak to you about the One, I'm going to begin today by stating what is involved in the Other.

A while ago, I incurred some worry regarding this Other that I write with a capital A. It was evinced by a Marxist to whom I was then indebted for the venue where I had been able to resume my work. His worry was that this Other, this third party, when asserted in the couple's relation, could only be identified – according to him, the Marxist – with God. Did this worry develop thereafter to the extent of instilling his resolute mistrust of the trail I might leave?

This is a question that I shall leave to one side for today, because I'm going to begin by simply drawing back the veil on what is involved in this Other.

1

The Other at issue is the Other of the sexual couple, the very same. This is indeed why it will be necessary for us to produce the signifier that can be written only in so far as it bars the capital A.

Our jouissance is derived only from the Other. I'm stressing this without pausing over it because otherwise I won't move forward. It's more difficult to assert the following – inasmuch as what would seem to be vital is that what characterizes jouissance, according to what I've just said, would be evasive – our jouissance is derived only by the Other. This is precisely the gulf that is presented to us by the question of God's existence, an existence that I leave on the horizon as ineffable.

When I say that our jouissance is derived only from the Other, what is important is not the relation between what enjoys and what we might think of as our Being. What is important is that we do not derive jouissance from it *sexually* – there is no such thing as sexual relation – nor is jouissance derived from us in this way. You can see that lalingua – which I write in a single word – despite usually behaving itself, is resistant here. It gives a tight-lipped pout. It has to be said, from the Other we derive jouissance *mentally*.

There is a remark in the *Parmenides* that assumes the value of a model here, which is why I've been recommending that you go and sharpen yourselves up with it. Naturally, if you read it through the commentaries that are given in academia, you will locate it in the lineage of philosophers, where it's considered to be a particularly brilliant exercise, but then, after this brief salute, you are told that you won't get much out of it, that Plato was simply pushing to the ultimate degree of intensity what can be deduced for you from his Theory of Forms. Perhaps it needs to be read differently. It needs to be read innocently.

Note that every now and then something can touch you, if only for example when at the start of the seventh hypothesis he makes the passing remark that starts off from *if the One is not*. Very much as an aside, he says, *And what if we were to say that the non-One is not*?[1] Whereupon he sets about showing that the negation of anything whatsoever, not only the negation of the One but the negation of *non-large* or *non-small*, is as such distinguished by not negating the same term.

This is conducive to what is at issue, namely the negation of sexual jouissance, which is what I'm asking you to pause over now. The S, brackets, barred capital A, S(Ⱥ), is the same thing that I have just formulated, namely that from the Other we derive jouissance mentally. This writes something about the Other. As I have asserted, this

Other is the term in the relationship that, on account of vanishing, on account of not existing, becomes the locus where this relationship is written – written in the form of these four formulae that are written up here – so as to transmit a knowledge. Perhaps the knowledge at issue can be taught, but what gets transmitted is the formula.

It is precisely because one of the terms becomes the locus where the relationship gets written that it can no longer be a relationship, because the term changes function, because it becomes the locus at which the relationship gets written, and because the relationship *is* only on account of being written in the stead of this term. One of the terms of the relationship has to empty out to allow this relationship to be written.

Indeed, this is what radically removes any scope of idealism from the *mentally* that I have just put forward in the inverted commas that speech cannot state. Such incontestable idealism can be seen developing in remarks from Berkeley's pen, all of which hinge on the following – *nothing of what is thought is thought unless by someone*. This is the argument, or more accurately the irreducible argumentation, which would have more bite to it were it acknowledged that what is at stake is jouissance.

You derive jouissance only from your fantasies. There you have it for what sets the scope of the idealism that no one, moreover, despite it being incontestable, takes seriously. What is important is that your fantasies derive jouissance from you.

Here, I can only come back to what I was saying earlier. As you can see, even lalingua, which is well behaved, doesn't come out with this easily.

2

Idealism asserts that what is involved is *que de pensées*, nothing but thoughts. To get out of this, lalingua, which is well behaved, but not so well behaved as all that, might be able to offer you something that I won't need to write down in order to bid you have this *que* resound in a different way. Well, if I need to spell it out for you, it's q.u.e.u.e., *queue de pensées*, a *queue* of thoughts.

This is what the good behaviour of lalingua enables in French. It's the tongue in which I express myself so I don't see why I shouldn't take advantage of it. If I spoke a different one, I would find something else. What is involved here is a *queue* of thoughts, not, as the idealist says, in that one thinks them, nor even in that one thinks them *therefore-I-am*, which is still a mark of progress, but in that these thoughts really do think themselves.

It is in this respect that I include myself in the class of realists,[2] if indeed this holds the faintest interest because I don't see why I should classify myself philosophically, I through whom emerges a discourse that is not philosophical discourse, but psychoanalytic discourse, the scheme of which I have reproduced here. I qualify it as discourse because, as I have stressed, nothing takes on any meaning except from the relations between one discourse and another discourse.

Of course, this presupposes a certain practice to which I can neither say nor hope I have truly accustomed you. All this washes over you like water off a duck's back because – and this, moreover, is what constitutes your existence – you are solidly inserted in the discourses that came before, which have been there for a while, a very long while. This includes philosophical discourse, inasmuch as the university discourse transmits it to you, and in what a state! You are indeed solidly installed in all this, and this is what makes you feel quite at home.

It should not be thought that those who occupy the place of this Other, this Other that I'm bringing up to date, have been given much of an advantage over you, but even so, some furniture has been placed in their hands that is rather unwieldy.

Among this furniture there is the armchair, the nature of which has not been very well ascertained. Nevertheless, the armchair is essential because what is specific to this discourse is that it enables what is written up here in the top right, in the shape of the barred S. Like all writing, this is a very delightful shape. It is not altogether by chance that Hogarth used the S for the line of beauty. There must be some meaning to this somewhere, and surely too in the fact that it has to be barred. Be that as it may, it is curious to see that I write what is produced on the basis of this barred subject in the same way as what holds a different place, the dominant place, in the discourse of the master. This *S One*, S_1, is precisely what I'm trying to produce for you here in so far as I am speaking. As I have said several times, it is in this respect that I am in the place of the analysand, and this is instructive.

Has what is written been thought? This is the question. It might no longer be possible to say by whom it was thought. Indeed, this is what you are dealing with in everything that is written. The *queue* of thoughts that I was speaking about is the subject himself, as the hypothetical of these thoughts. Since Aristotle, people have been harping on at such length about the *ὑποκείμενον*, and yet it was quite clear. They made such a meal of it that a cat couldn't find her kittens. I'm going to call it a *tail*, this *queue* of thoughts, of something real

that produces this comet effect that I have called *queue de pensées* and which might indeed be the phallus.

Either what occurs here is not capable of being recaptured *nachträglich* by what I have just called the *tail* – which is conceivable only because the effect that it constitutes projects out in the same way as does its advent, namely the disarray, if you will allow me so to name the disjunction of sexual relation – or else what has been thought lies open, within reach of a rethinking that consists precisely in noticing, by writing it down, that they were thoughts. Whatever one might say, the written comes after these thoughts, these real thoughts, have been produced. The repetition that is the fundament of what the analytic experience uncovers for us lies in this effort of rethinking, in this *nachträglich*. That this should be written is proof of this, but it's proof only of the effect of resumption, *nachträglich*. This is what grounds psychoanalysis.

How many times, in philosophical dialogues, have you seen the argument – *If you don't follow me this far, there's no philosophy*. What I'm going to tell you is exactly the same thing. It has to be one or the other. Either what is commonly accepted in everything that gets written on psychoanalysis, in everything that flows from the pens of psychoanalysts, is valid, namely that what thinks is unthinkable and so there is no psychoanalysis, or else, in order for there to be psychoanalysis and, to say it all, interpretation, then what the *queue* of thoughts starts off from has to be thought, thought as in real thought.

This is why I gave you all that spiel about Descartes. *I think, therefore I am* doesn't mean anything if it's not truthful. It's truthful because *therefore I am* is what I'm thinking, before knowing it and, whether I like it or not, it's the same thing.

This same thing is precisely what I called *the Freudian Thing*. It's precisely because this *I think* and *what I think* are the same thing, that is to say, *therefore I am*, that there is no equivalence. This is why I spoke about the Freudian Thing, because in a Thing there are *deux faces* – spell that how you like, *face* or *fasse*[3] – which not only are not equivalent, but cannot be replaced, one by the other, in the fact of saying. It's not equivalent. It's not even similar. This was why I only spoke about the Freudian Thing in a certain fashion.

People read what I wrote. It is even curious that this should be one of those things that compel you to reread it. It was even designed for this. And when one rereads it, one realizes that I don't speak about the Thing, because one can't speak about it. I make the Thing itself speak. The Thing in question states – *I, Truth, speak*. And of course it doesn't say it just like that, but surely this can be

seen. This was even why I wrote it. It says it in all sorts of ways, and I daresay it's not a bad piece. *Only in my conundrums can I be apprehended.* What one writes of the Thing ought to be considered as what of the Thing gets written, coming from the Thing and not from whoever is writing.

This is indeed what means that ontology – in other words the consideration of the subject as Being – is, if you will allow me this, a dishonour.[4]

So, you've heard well, one has to know whereof one is speaking. Either *therefore I am* is merely a thought, demonstrating that the unthinkable is what is thinking, or it is the fact of saying that can act upon the Thing, enough for it to turn out otherwise. And it is in this respect that any thought is thought through its relations to what gets written thereof. Otherwise, I repeat, there is no psychoanalysis.

We are in the inane, which is currently what is most widespread, the inane-alysable. Saying that it is impossible is not enough, because this doesn't exclude it being practised. For it to be practised without being inane, it's not qualifying it as impossible that matters, rather it is its relation to the impossible that is at stake, and the relation to the impossible is a relation of thought. The relation will not carry any meaning if the demonstrated impossibility is not strictly an impossibility of thought, because it's the only demonstrable impossibility.

If we ground the impossible in its relation to the real, we still need to say the following, which I offer you as a gift. I got this from a charming woman, from way back in my past, who remains nevertheless marked by a delightful redolence of *savon*,[5] with her accent from the Vaud which she knew how to turn on, because even though she had purged herself of it she could still will it back. She used to say, *Nothing is impossible for man* – I can't imitate the Vaudois accent, not having been born over there – *what he can't do, he leaves.* This is to zero in on what is involved in the impossible, to the extent that this term is acceptable for anyone of sober mind.

Well, this annulling of the Other is produced only on the level at which is inscribed – in the only way it can be, namely as I inscribe it – $\overline{\Phi x}$. This means that you cannot write that what forms an obstacle to the phallic function is untrue.[6] So, what does $\exists x$ mean? Namely *There exists x*, such that it may be inscribed into this negation of the truth of the phallic function.

This deserves to be spelt out across its different moments in time. You can see that what we are going to call into question is very precisely this status of existence, in so far as it is unclear.

3

I think that you've had quite enough of people harping on about the distinction between essence and existence, drumming it into your *comprenoire*, to find it unsatisfactory.

In the meaning that the analytic discourse allows us to bring to the previous discourses, through the connection of these formulae, there is something that, at the end of the day, I will only be able to pinpoint with the term of a *motivation*. Failing to notice this motivation is what begets, for example, Hegel's dialectic. Due to this failure to notice it, Hegel's dialectic bypasses it only to consider that discourse as such rules the world.

Here I am moving into a little side note. I don't see why I shouldn't pick up this short digression, especially given that you ask nothing else, because when I go in a straight line, it tires you.

What does leave a shadow of meaning to Hegel's discourse is an absence, and very precisely the absence of surplus-value such as it is drawn from jouissance in the real of the discourse of the master. This absence does, however, note something. It notes, really, the Other, not as abolished, but precisely as the impossibility of any correlate. It is in presentifying this impossibility that it colours Hegel's discourse.

It won't cost you anything simply to reread the Preface to the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* in correlation with what I'm putting forward here. You see all the holiday homework I'm setting you, the *Parmenides* and the *Phänomenologie*, at least the Preface, because naturally you never read the *Phänomenologie*. But the Preface is damned fine. All by itself it's worth the effort of rereading. You'll see how it confirms, how it takes on meaning from what I'm telling you. I daren't promise you that the *Parmenides* will do as much, that it will take on meaning, but I do hope it will, because what is specific to a new discourse is that it refreshes what is lost in the whirling of old discourses, specifically *meaning*.

If I told you that there is something that colours Hegel's discourse, it's because the word *colour* means something other than *meaning* here. The promotion of what I'm putting forward precisely discolours it, and finishes off the effect of Marx's discourse. I should like to underscore something in this discourse that constitutes its limit. It entails a protest that turns out to consolidate the discourse of the master by completing it, not only with surplus-value, but by encouraging – I sense that this will cause a stir – the equal existence of woman.

Equal to what? No one knows, because one can also very well say that *man* = *0*, since he needs the existence of something that negates him in order for him to exist as *all*. *(Lacan slams his hand on the table.)*

In other words, there is a kind of confusion. This is not unusual because we live in confusion, and it would be wrong to believe that we live *on* it. This doesn't go without saying. I don't see why a lack of confusion should prevent one from living. It is even very curious that people rush into it. Mark my word, people bolt into it. When a discourse emerges, like the analytic discourse, what it proposes is that you may hold the reins tight enough to uphold the conspiracy of truth.

Everyone knows that conspiracies come to a sudden end. It's easier to come out with so much blather that you end up spotting all the plotters. People confound, people rush into the negation of sexual division, of difference. I've said *division* because it's operational, and I've said *difference* because it's precisely what this use of the equals sign in *woman* = *man* claims to efface.

I will tell you that the wonderful thing is not all this doltishness but rather the obstacle that this doltishness claims – employing this grotesque word – to *transgress*. I have taught things that did not claim to transgress anything, but rather to circumscribe a certain number of knotty points, of points of impossibility. In view of which, there were people whom this upset, of course, because they were the representatives, the sitting officials, of the psychoanalytic discourse, who dealt me one of those blows that diminishes your voice.

I was dealt one such blow, physically, by a charming lad. He did that to me, one day. What a sweetie! He put some heart into it. He did it despite the fact that I was being threatened at the same time with a thing I didn't especially believe in – though I went along with it – a revolver. However, the fellows who cut off my voice at one point in time didn't do so *despite the fact* . . ., but rather *because* I was being threatened with a shooter, a real one that time and not a toy like the other one. It consisted in subjecting me to an assessment, that is, to the *standard* of people who wanted to hear nothing of the analytic discourse, even though they occupied the said *sitting* position. So, what would you expect me to do? From the moment I submitted to this assessment, I was condemned in advance, which naturally made it easier to cut off the voice I had.

Because a voice is something that exists. It carried on like that for several years, I must say. I scarcely had a voice at all. All the same, I did have some voice, from which the *Cahiers pour l'analyse* were born. It's a very, very, very fine literature. I commend them whole-heartedly, because I was so fully occupied with my voice that, to tell the whole story, well, I can't do everything. I can't read the *Parmenides*, reread the *Phänomenologie*, and other stuff, and then read the *Cahiers pour l'analyse* as well. I had to perk up again, which

I've now done. I've read them all, from cover to cover, and they're great.

They're great, but they're marginal, because they weren't put together by psychoanalysts. During this time, the psychoanalysts were chattering. There has never been so much talk of transgression in my ambit as during the time I had my voice cut off.

Imagine if you will that when it's a matter of the veritable impossible, the impossible that is demonstrated, the impossible such that it is articulated, well, of course, that took some time. There were the first scribblings that allowed for the birth of a logic, aided by the questioning of language, and then it was noticed that these scribblings ran into something that existed, but not in the way that had hitherto been believed, not in the way of Being, that is, not in the way that each of you believe yourselves to be, on the pretext that you are individuals. It was noticed that there were things that existed in the sense that they constitute the limit of what can hold together through the advance of articulating a discourse. This is what the real is. It is approached along the path of what I call the symbolic, which means, the modes of what is stated through this field, this field that exists, of language. This impossible, inasmuch as it is demonstrated, cannot be transgressed.

There are things that have long since performed the tracking – mythical tracking perhaps, but tracking just the same – not only of what is involved in this impossible, but of its motivation. More precisely, this is specifically the fact that sexual relation cannot be written.

As far as this tracking is concerned, no one has ever done any better than, I won't say religion – because as I'm going to explain in minute detail, one doesn't engage in ethnology when one is a psychoanalyst, blending religion into a general term, which is what engaging in ethnology amounts to – nor do I want to say that there is only one religion, but there is the one in which we are immersed, the Christian religion. Well, believe me, the Christian religion puts up with your transgressions damned well. Indeed, this is all it could wish for. It's what consolidates it. The more transgressions there are, the better it is for it.

It is precisely this that is in question. It's a matter of demonstrating where lies the truthfulness of what allows a certain number of discourses that enmesh you to stay on their feet.

Today I will end – I hope I haven't damaged my ring by banging on the table – on the same point that I opened with. I started off from the Other. I haven't got to the end of it because time has gone by, and then, after all, you shouldn't think that when the session ends I haven't had my fill of it.

So, I will wrap up what I have been saying concerning the Other, as a localized remark, leaving aside for now what might be involved in what I've put forward regarding the pivotal point on which I've set my sights this year, namely the One.

There is a good reason for my not having tackled it today, because as you will see there is nothing quite so slippery as this One. It's very curious. If there is one thing that has *des faces*, faces, in that they *se fassent*, they make themselves, not at all innumerable, but peculiarly divergent, then it's the One.

There is a good reason for my initially having to get a foothold on the Other. The Other – hear this well – is therefore an *inter*, the *inter* that is at issue in sexual relation, but displaced, and precisely on account of being *Alterposed*.[7] It's curious that in positing this Other, what I have had to put forward today only concerns woman. Indeed, she is the one who gives us an illustration of this figure of the Other, an illustration that is within our reach, on account of being, as one poet wrote, *between centre and absence*.

Between the meaning that she takes on in what I have called the *at-least-one*, where she finds it only in the state of what I have announced – announced and no more – of being nothing but bare existence, what does *between centre and absence* become for her? It becomes this second bar that I have only been able to write by defining it as *pas toute*, *not all*. Not all is she who is not contained within the phallic function, without being its negation either. Her mode of presence is *inter*, *between centre and absence*. The centre is the phallic function of which she partakes singularly, on account of the *at-least-one* who is her partner in love renouncing this function for her. This allows her to leave the very thing whereby she does not partake of the phallic function in the absence that is no less jouissance, on account of being *jouissabsence*.

I think that no one will say that what I am stating of the phallic function arises from misrecognition of what is involved in feminine jouissance. On the contrary, it's that, within the portion that makes her *pas toute*, not all, open to the phallic function, the *at-least-one* is pressed to inhabit woman's *jouissepresence*, if I may put it like that, in a radical misinterpretation as to the requirement of its existence. It is due to this misinterpretation, which means that no longer can it even exist, that the exception of its very existence is ruled out and that this status of the Other – the fact of not being universal – vanishes. Man's misrecognition is necessitated by this, and this is the definition of the hysteric.

On this point, I take leave of you today.

8 March 1972

THE ONE: NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL REACH

IX

IN THE FIELD OF THE UNIAN

Parmenides, the One speaking
Yad'lun
Association is not free
Plato, Lacanian and feeble-minded
Existence in Aristotle

Last time, I told you something that was focused on the Other. The Other is more accommodating than what I'm going to speak to you about today, and whose relation to the Other I have already characterized by saying that it is not inscribable, which doesn't make matters any easier.

What is at issue is the One.

1

I have already indicated how its trail was blazed in Plato's *Parmenides*.

The first step towards understanding something in it is to perceive that everything that is stated about the One – as dialectizable, as developing – in any possible discourse on the subject of the One, is first and foremost, if we take it only at this level, which is to say nothing else about it, that *It is One*.

Perhaps there are a certain number of you who, on my adjuring, have opened the book and noticed that to say *One is* is not the same thing. *It is One* is the first hypothesis, and *One is* is the second. They are distinct.

Naturally, for this to deliver, you need to read Plato with a little something that comes from you. For you, Plato should not be what he is, an author. Since your childhood you've been brought up to *faire de l'auteur-stop*, to thumb a read. Ever since this became the

custom, you ought to know that this way of addressing whoever they might be, the authorized ones, hasn't led anywhere, even though it can, of course, lead you far.

With these observations out of the way, I am therefore going to speak to you today about the One, due to a reason for which I shall again have to apologize, because on what grounds should I be bothering you with this? Since I'm going to speak to you about the One, I've come up with a word that will serve as a heading for what I'm going to say about it.

I didn't invent the *Unary*. In 1962, I extracted the *unary trait* from Freud by translating what he calls *einzig*. At the time this struck a few people as a small miracle. It's rather curious that the *einziger Zug*, the second form of identification singled out by Freud, had never caught their attention until then. On the other hand, the word to which I will give a special distinction in what I'm going to tell you today is utterly new.

This word is designed to be something like a precaution, because in truth there are many things that have an interest in the One. Nevertheless, I'm going to open up something straightaway that locates the interest my discourse has in going via the One, to the extent that my discourse is itself the opening up of the analytic discourse. First of all, however, take if you will the field that is broadly designated as that of the *Unian*.

This is a word that has never been uttered, and which none the less holds the interest of prompting you to stay on your toes each time the One is at stake. Taking it thus, in an epithetic form, will call to mind for you what Freud promoted, and Plato before him, namely that it is in its nature to have various aspects. I think it will not escape your notice that this gets spoken about in analysis, if you recall how it presides over this strange assimilating of Eros to that which tends towards coagulation.

It is peculiar that Freud promotes the One on the pretext that the body is very obviously one of the forms of the One, that it holds together, that it's an individual, so long as there's no mishap. Truth be told, this is precisely what is called into question by the dyad of Eros and Thanatos that he puts forward. If this dyad were not supported by another figure, which is very precisely the figure in which sexual relation fails, namely the figure of the One and the not-One, namely nought, we would be hard-pressed to make out the function that this stupefying couple might hold. It's a fact that it has contributed to a number of misunderstandings, indeed to the indiscriminate censuring of the so-called death drive. It is certain, however, that in this unruly discourse, which was established by the attempt to make a statement about sexual relation, it is strictly

impossible to consider the copulation of two bodies as becoming One alone.

In this regard it's quite extraordinary that, while scholars snigger at the *Parmenides*, Plato's *Symposium* should be taken seriously as representing anything whatsoever to do with love. Perhaps some of you still remember that I made use of the *Symposium* during the academic year that preceded the one I mentioned earlier. In 1960/61, I took the *Symposium* as my practice range, and I didn't consider doing anything else with it but to use it to ground transference. Until further notice, while perhaps there is something of the twain on the horizon of transference, it cannot be passed off as a copulation.

None the less, I think that, at the time, I did indicate the mode of derision in which the scene unfolds, which very strictly speaking is designated as *Bacchic*. Aristophanes is the one who comes up with the famous bipartition of a creature that, at the start, would purportedly have been the beast with two backs that cling tightly together, and which was cleft in twain by the jealousy of Zeus. The fact that this statement comes from his lips is enough to indicate that fun is being had, and good fun too. Most incredibly, it is not apparent that she who crowns the entire disquisition, she known as Diotima, plays no other role but this, because what she teaches is that love hinges solely on the fact that the beloved, whether homo or hetero, is not to be touched. All that matters is Uranian Aphrodite. This does not exactly amount to saying that the One rules over Eros.

In and of itself, this would already be a reason to put forward a few propositions on the One – propositions which have already been opened up elsewhere – were there not also the fact that in the analytic experience the first step is to introduce, analysts that we are, the One. We bid it to step inside, whereby the first mode of the manifestation of the One is clearly when the analysand reproaches you for being merely *one among others*, though without noticing it of course. What thereby becomes manifest is very precisely the fact that he has no doings with these others, and this is why he wants to be the only one for you, the analyst, so that this may form two.

He doesn't know that what is at issue is precisely for him to realize that the twain is the One he believes himself to be, and in this it is a matter of his being divided.

2

So, therefore, there's Oneness. This ought to be spelt – I'm not really in the mood for writing today, but well, why not – *Yad'lun*.[1]

Why not spell it like this? You're going to see that spelling it like this holds a certain interest which is not without justifying my earlier choice of *Unian*. Spelt like this, *Yad'lun* brings out something propitious in the French language.

I'm not sure whether the same advantage could be drawn from [the English-language] *there is*, or from *es gibt*. Those who have a good grasp of these languages will perhaps let me know. *Es gibt* commands the accusative, does it not? You say, *es gibt einen* something, when it's in the masculine. You can say [in English], *there is one*, or *there is a* something. I know they have *there*, which is already a beginning that lies on this side, but it's not a simple form. In French you can say *y en a*.

It's very odd that there is something that I haven't managed to track down. I haven't managed to locate the historical emergence of this wording, *il y a*, as major as it is, which means *y en a*. This doesn't mean it can't be found. But, well, in my hasty fashion – I know a little something about the function of haste in logic, I have to press on because time is pressing – I didn't manage. I nevertheless consulted the *Littré*, the *Robert* while I was at it, the *Damourette and Pichon*, and even a few others, everything that a dictionary like the *Bloch and von Wartburg* is meant to afford you.

It is against a backdrop of indeterminacy that there emerges what is designated and pointed out, strictly speaking, by the *il y a*, for which, curiously, I shall say *n'y a pas*, there's no common equivalent in what we call ancient languages. It is thereby shown that, as the *Parmenides* tells and demonstrates, discourse changes.

It is in precisely this respect that the analytic discourse can represent an emergence, and that perhaps you would do well to make something of it, should it be the case that after my passing – which in the eyes of many is always a present, if not imminent, eventuality – you can expect the veritable downpour of rubbish that is already looming large. Indeed, the reckoning is that it can't be far off. On the trail of my discourse, it might be better for those who could take up this blazing of it to draw some reassurance from it. Fortunately, in one very particular place I have a few presages of this, but they are few and far between.

People spend their time nagging me and banging my eardrums to find out what relation the analytic discourse bears to revolution. It might well be this discourse that carries the seed of any possible revolution, in that revolution should not be confused with the low spirits that can seize hold of you just like that at every turn under this heading. It's not quite the same thing.

So, *y en a* stands against the backdrop of something that is formless. When one says *y en a*, it usually means *there is some* or *there are*

some. Once in a while, to *il y a des* you can even add *des qui*, *some who*. There are *some who* think, *some who* say, *some who* tell. Stuff like that. This remains a backdrop of indeterminacy. The question begins with what is meant by *de l'Un*, because as soon as *l'Un* is uttered, the *de* is merely a thin pedicle onto what is involved in the backdrop.

From where does this One emerge? This is very precisely what Plato tries to push forward in the first hypothesis by saying, as best he can, not having any other words at his disposal, *εἰ ἓν ἔστιν*, *if One is*.[2] Here, *ἔστιν* clearly has the function of making up for what is not accentuated to the extent it is in French with *il y a*. I can understand the misgiving that brings the translators to a standstill here. It should surely be translated either as *if there is One*, or *if there is the One*. This is for you to decide.

What is certain, however, is that Plato does choose, and that his One has nothing to do with what surrounds it. There is even something remarkable, which is that what he demonstrates right away is that this can bear no relation whatsoever to anything of what he has passed a thousand times through metaphysical recension, namely the dyad, inasmuch as it is everywhere in the experience of thought. The largest, the smallest. The youngest, the oldest. And so on and so forth. The inclusive, the included. And anything else of the sort you might care to add.

He begins very precisely by demonstrating what happens when the One is taken as the means of a discursive questioning. Who is being questioned? It's certainly not the poor kid, the dear lad, named Aristoteles if memory serves, whom it is hard to believe is the Aristotle who has left us his legacy.[3] It's quite clear that, as in any dialogue, any Platonic dialogue, there is no trace of an interlocutor. It only seems to be called a dialogue to illustrate what I've been stating for a long time, namely that there's no such thing as dialogue. This doesn't mean that at the bottom of the Platonic dialogue there isn't a very different presence from anything to be found in a great many other things that have been written since. Let's say it – this presence is a human presence

To vouch for this we need only turn to the first inroads, to the way in which what constitutes the core of the dialogue is prepared, which I shall call the *entretien préliminaire*, the preliminary consultation. As in all the dialogues, there is one who explains to us how this madcap thing has come about, which looks nothing like anything that might be called a dialogue. This is where you can really sense, if you didn't already know it from the commonplaces of life, that no one has ever seen a dialogue amount to anything. In this literature of a certain date, in what is called a *dialogue*, it's a matter of

grasping what this real is that can give the illusion that you can get to something by dialoguing with someone. So, it's worthwhile preparing the thing. It's worthwhile saying which nutcase is involved.

It's old Parmenides, and his gang, who are there. It took nothing less than that for something to be uttered that gives voice to what exactly? Well, precisely, to the One. Furthermore, once you make the One speak, it's worth taking the trouble to look at what the other one is there for, the other one who holds the floor, and who can only come out with things like

– *ταῦτα ἀνάγκη*
– *οὐ γὰρ οὖν*
– *τί δέ*
– *αληθή*
– *Oh my, it's yet three times truer than you were saying, is it not?*

That's what dialogue is when the One is speaking.

What is curious is the way Parmenides introduces him. The One puts his arm round his shoulder and says to the dear lad, *Off you go, dear little One, all this is mere gabbing*. Don't go translating *ἀδολεσχίας* as the idea that it has to do with adolescents. I'm saying this for those who are not conversant, especially when, on the facing page, you are told that it's a matter of behaving like innocents, like striplings, so you could get confused. This is not what striplings are called in the Greek text. *Ἀδολεσχίας* means *gabbing*.[4] It may, however, be considered as the prefiguration of what in our coarse language, wrought by the phenomenology that was to hand at the time, has been translated as *free association*.

Naturally, association is not free. If it were free, it wouldn't hold any interest. But it's the same thing as gabbing. This is designed to tame the sparrow. Association is, of course, tethered. I can't see what interest it would hold if it were free. It's quite certain, there can be no doubt about this, that the gabbing in question does not come from someone who is speaking. It's the One. Here you can see to what extent it is tethered, because it's highly demonstrative.

Delineating things in this way allows us to situate a number of items, and in particular the step that is taken from Parmenides to Plato.

A step had already been taken by Parmenides in this circle where, all in all, it was a matter of knowing what is involved in the real. We are still there. After they said that it was air, water, earth, and fire, and that after this you had only to start over, there was someone who became aware that the only common factor in all the substance at issue was the fact of being utterable.

Plato's step is different, however. His step is to show that as soon as one tries to say things in an articulate way, what is sketched out in terms of structure creates a difficulty. This is how we put it in what I've just called *our coarse language*. The word *structure* is worth no more than the term *free association*. But what is sketched out creates a difficulty, and it is along this path that the real is to be sought. *Εἰδος*, which is improperly translated as *form*, is something that already promises us a pinpointing of what stands as a gaping hole in the fact of saying.

In other words, to say it all, Plato was Lacanian. Naturally, he couldn't know that. What is more, he was somewhat feeble-minded, which doesn't make matters easier, but which surely helped him. What I call feeble-mindedness is the fact of being a speaking being who is not solidly installed in a discourse. This is what sets the value of the feeble-minded. No other definition can be given of them, except to be what is called *a little off beam*, that is to say, afloat between two discourses. To be solidly installed as a subject, one has to stick to one discourse, or else to know what one is doing. Either way, just because someone is on the fringes, it doesn't mean that they know what they are saying.

In Plato's case, he did have frameworks. It shouldn't be thought that in his time things weren't held in a very solid discourse. A little something of this shows through somewhere in the preliminary consultations of the *Parmenides*. After all, Plato is the one who wrote it. We don't know whether or not he's having a laugh, but in the end, to give us the dialectic of the master and the slave, he didn't wait for Hegel.

I must say that what he sets out is of a different pitch from what is put forward by the whole of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. Not that he comes to a conclusion, but he lays down all the material elements. He moves forward. He can do so because in his time this was no affectation. One wonders whether it was better rather than worse to allow people to imagine, which is what is affirmed therein, that the masters and the slaves can switch at any moment. And, indeed, they did switch at any moment. When masters were taken prisoner, they were enslaved, and when slaves were manumitted, well, they became masters. Thanks to this, Plato imagines, and he says as much in the preliminaries to this dialogue, the Master-essence, the *εἰδος*, and that of the Slave, may be considered to have nothing to do with what is really at issue. Between master and slave there are relations that have nothing to do with the relation between the Master-essence and the Slave-essence.[5] It's in this respect that he's somewhat feeble-minded.

We have seen the big mingle happening, have we not? It is always

brought about along a certain path and, curiously enough, people don't see the extent to which it portends what comes next. In this big mingle, we are brothers, one and all. There is an area of history like this, of historical myth. I mean myth to the extent that it *is* history. This was seen once, among the Jews. We know the purpose of fraternity among them. It gave us a great model. Fraternity exists so that one can sell one's brother,[6] which didn't fail to occur in the wake of each overthrow that was said to turn around the discourse of the master.

Consider all the great effort that Hegel goes to in the *Phänomenologie* – the fear of death, the struggle for pure prestige, *and I tell you all this, and then some* – whereby the essential thing to obtain is that there is a slave. But I ask, to all those who shiver at the thought of the changing of roles, what is it that can mean that, since the slave survives, there shouldn't ensue for him, immediately afterwards, his own struggle to the death for pure prestige, and the fear of death that changes camp?

All this only stands a chance of persisting on the condition that one should see very precisely what Plato dismisses. What Plato dismisses – but in the name of what we shall never know because, good heavens, one cannot fathom the depths of his heart, and it might be mere feeble-mindedness – is what is involved in what he calls *μετέχειν*, partaking. This is perhaps the finest opportunity to underscore this. The slave is only ever a slave through the essence of the master. I've been calling it *essence*, but call it what you like. I much prefer to write it S_1, the master signifier. As for the master, were it not for the S_2, the slave's knowledge, what would he make of it?

3

I'm tarrying to tell you what is important about this implausible thing, that there should be Oneness. This is the point to be delineated.

Indeed, as soon as you start to examine this One, it transforms like a thing coming apart. It becomes impossible to relate it to anything beyond the series of integers, which is none other than this One.

This arises only at the end of a long elaboration of discourse. In Frege's logic, the logic that is laid out in the *Grundlagen der Arithmetik*, you will see at once the insufficiency of any logical deduction of 1, because it has to pass via 0, which cannot be said to be 1, and yet everything unfolds in such a way that the entire

arithmetic sequence proceeds from the fact that 1 is missing at the level of 0. Because already, from 0 to 1, that makes two. From this point forth, it will make three, because there will be 0, 1 and 2. And so on, right on up to the first of the Alephs, which, curiously enough, yet not without reason, can only be designated as Aleph-Nought.

Of course, this might strike you as lying in some scholarly remoteness, which is why it has to be embodied, and which is why I first put *Yad'lun. Yad'lun!* The following announcement cannot be overexclaimed, namely that a host of exclamation marks in its wake, that precisely the Aleph-Nought, will be just enough to sound out what might be involved, if you approach it sufficiently, in the astonishment warranted by the fact that there should be Oneness.

Someone in the audience lets out a loud sneeze – Ouille!

Oui! This does indeed warrant being greeted by this *ouille*, because we're speaking in the *langue d'oïl*, I mean *hoc est ille*.

Well, here, it's by grabbing the One at issue by the ears that *y en a* shows the backdrop from which it *ex-sists*. This backdrop hinges on the following, which is not self-evident, namely that, taking to begin with the first item within arm's reach, the one of feeble mind, you can then add one bout of flu, one drawer, one nose-thumbing, one puff of smoke, one *hello from your Catherine*, one civilization, and even one mismatched garter. That makes eight. However dispersed this shovel load might seem, they all come along in answer to the call, *little ones, little ones!* What is important – because I have to make things palpable for you otherwise than by using 0, 1 and Aleph, don't I? – is that this always presupposes the same One, the One that cannot be deduced, contrary to the smoke and mirrors that John Stuart Mill puts on for us simply by taking distinct things and holding them to be identical.

This is a mere something that is illustrated by the abacus, which furnishes the model thereof. However, the abacus was designed expressly for things to be counted, and, when the occasion presents, for eight dispersed things such as I have just conjured up for you to be counted. Yet what the abacus will not give you is what is deduced directly, without any abacus, from the One, namely that between these eight items, there are, because there are eight of them, twenty-eight combinations, taking them two at a time, and not one more. That's how it is due to the fact of the One.

Naturally, I hope you find this striking. You didn't know in advance that, since I've taken eight, it would make twenty-eight combinations, even though this is easy. The number of subsets of n elements in a set of m elements is effectively given by the following formula, where the exclamation mark notes the factorial, namely $m! = 1 \times 2 \times \ldots \times m$.[7]

$$\frac{m!}{n!(m-n)!}$$

This gives us 7 times 8, 56, divided by 2, equals 28. This numerical figure can be known, and this is what is at issue.

Had I put fewer of them it would have put you to work, telling me that perhaps I should also count the relations of each one to the set. Why am I not doing this? I will have to wait till next time to explain this to you. The relation that each one bears to the set precisely does not eliminate the fact of there being *one* set and that, due to this fact, this means that you are including one again. Indeed, this would lead, taking them two at a time, to a considerable rise in the number of combinations. At the level of the triangle, if I had simply noted three 1s for you, there would be just three combinations. If on the other hand you take the set as 1, then straightaway you have six combinations. What is at stake, however, is to realize that there is another dimension to the One, which I will try to illustrate for you next time with the arithmetical triangle.

In other words, the One does not, therefore, always carry the same meaning. For example, there is the meaning of the One of the empty set, which curiously enough in our numeration of elements would add two. I'm going to be demonstrating why and on what basis. Nevertheless, we are already approaching something that, in not being based at all on the One as *all*, shows us how, in its emergence, the One is not univocal. In other words, we are refreshing Plato's dialectic.

This is precisely how I can claim to lead you somewhere, by pursuing, through this bifidity of the One – we still have to see if it holds up – the One that Plato distinguishes so well from Being. Certainly Being is One, always and in every case, but in the *Parmenides* it is perfectly demonstrated that the One knows how to be as Being.[8] It is precisely from here that the function of existence arose, historically speaking. Just because *the One is not*, this doesn't mean that it doesn't pose the question.[9] Indeed, it poses it all the more given that, wherever it may be that existence has to be at stake, the question will always revolve around the One.

Aristotle only approaches this timidly, at the level of the particular propositions. He imagines that it's enough to say that *some* – just *some*, not *all* – are like this or like that, for them to be set apart. He imagines, for example, that if *these ones here* are *not like that*, then this is enough to ensure their existence. This is precisely how already, from its first emergence, existence is initiated straightaway, is stated, through its correlative inexistence. There is no existence

except against the backdrop of inexistence, and inversely, *ex-sistere* only derives its support from an *out there* that is not.

It is indeed here that we have what is at issue in the One. For, in truth, from where does it arise? It arises from a *point* that Plato manages to circumscribe. It shouldn't be thought that this is – as it seems – merely a point in time. He calls it *τὸ ἐξαίφνης*. Translate that however you please.[10] It's the *instant*, the *sudden*, and it's the only point at which he can make it subsist. Goodness knows that the elucidation of the number has been pushed far enough to give us the idea that there are other Alephs besides the Aleph of the integers, and the said *instant*, the said *point* – which is what its true translation should be – is precisely what turns out to be decisive only at the level of a higher Aleph, at the level of the continuum.

The One seems, therefore, to get lost here, and to bring what is involved in existence to its culmination, to the extent of confining to existence as such, inasmuch as it arises from what it is most difficult to attain, from what is most elusive in the utterable. This is what led me to look up this *ἐξαίφνης* in Aristotle himself, noticing that actually there was an emergence of the term *to exist* in the *Physics*.

You can find it in Book IV, 222b. Aristotle defines it precisely as something that, *τὸ ἀναισθήτῳ χρόνῳ*, in a time that is imperceptible, *διὰ μικρότητα*, due to its smallness, is *ἑκστάν*.

I don't know whether the term *ἑκστάν* is uttered elsewhere in the literature of Antiquity, but it's clear that this is the past participle of the second aorist of *ἵστημι*, the aorist that is pronounced *ἔστην*. It's *στάν*, but I don't know if there is any verb *ἐξίστημι*. This will have to be checked. Be that as it may, the *sistere* is already here, to be stable, to be stable on the basis of an *out there*, *ἑκστάν*.

That which exists but through not being, this is what is at issue, and this is what I wanted to open up today under the general chapter heading of the Unian.

Pardon me, but I chose *Unien* [in French] because it's an anagram of *ennui*.

15 March 1972

X

YAD'LUN

From Plato to Cantor
Set and element
Impossible to denumerate
The empty set
The *nad* and the One of lack

$$\exists x.\overline{\Phi x} \qquad \overline{\exists x}.\overline{\Phi x}$$

$$\forall x.\Phi x \qquad \overline{\forall x}.\Phi x$$

I'm starting right away because I've been asked, due to overriding matters in this university, to finish early, much earlier than usual.

So, to tackle what has arisen in a framework that I hope will not be a too distant memory for you, I'm going to pick up the *Yad'lun* that I have already uttered.

For those who have parachuted in from afar, I will repeat what this means, because it doesn't sound very usual. *Yad'lun* seems to have come from goodness knows where, from the One, eh? This is not a usual mode of expression. Yet this is what I'm speaking about – of the One, *y en a*.

This is a mode of expression that I hope will turn out, at least for you, to be in agreement with something that is not new for everyone here. I know that some of the ears here have been informed, thank goodness, of the fields that it so happens I have had to draw on so as to square up to what is at issue in the psychoanalytic discourse. I'm going to explain to you in what respect this mode of expression shows itself to be in agreement with what has been produced historically in set theory. You've heard about this because this is how mathematics is nowadays taught in the sixth form. Of course, it's by no means sure that this has greatly improved understanding of it.

Between a theory that has writing as one of its mainsprings – not, of course, that set theory entails a univocal form of writing, but rather, as with many things in mathematics, it cannot be spelt out without writing – and the wording *Yad'lun* which I'm trying to bring across, there lies all the difference between that which is written and speech. This is a rift that it's not always easy to bridge.

Yet this is exactly what I try to do, when the occasion presents. And you ought immediately to be able to understand why.

1

I have written again on the blackboard the four formulae in which I try to define what makes up for what I have called the impossibility of writing what is involved in sexual relation. It is to the extent that two terms confront one another in the two upper formulae, one of which is *There exists* and the other *There does not exist*, that I have been trying to make the contribution that might usefully be carried in from set theory.

It's already quite striking that the fact that there should be Oneness has never been the subject of any astonishment. It might already be somewhat brisk to word it like that, because in the end some astonishment could be accredited to what I've been speaking about – and here I call upon you to astonish yourselves – namely the famed *Parmenides* by our cherished Plato, which I have been warmly encouraging you to familiarize yourselves with, and which is still so poorly read. In any case, I have been trying to read it in a way that is not altogether the accepted one.

It's altogether striking to see the degree to which the *Parmenides* puts the university discourse in a bind. All those who proffer things sagely in academic settings do so in a tremendously awkward way, as though it were a challenge, or a kind of purely gratuitous exercise, mere manoeuvring. The sequence of the eight hypotheses on the relations of the One and of Being remains problematic, an object of indignation. Some, of course, have distinguished themselves by showing its coherence, but this coherence appears on the whole to be gratuitous, and the confrontation between the interlocutors itself confirms the ahistorical character, so to speak, of the whole.[1]

Supposing that I might be able to put something forward on this point, I would say that what I find striking is really the exact opposite. If ever something has given me the idea that in Platonic dialogue there is some kind of initial foundation of a properly analytic discourse, I would say that the *Parmenides* is indeed the dialogue that would confirm this for me.

If you recall what I set down as a structure, you will note that it's no accident that the S_1 is to be found at the level of *production* in the analytic discourse. I admit that this might not be immediately apparent for you, and I ask you not to take it as self-evident, but it indicates the opportunity of focusing the ensuing part of our examination not on the numerical figure, but very precisely on the signifier One.

$$\frac{a}{S_2} \longrightarrow \frac{\$}{S_1}$$

The discourse of the analyst

That there should be Oneness does not go without saying. It *seems* to go without saying because, for example, there are living beings, and each of you here, lined up in such orderly fashion, looks in every respect to be quite independent from the others and to constitute what in this day and age is called an *organic reality*, to hold together as an individual. It was here that an entire first philosophy derived a certain support.

At the level of Aristotelian logic, in applying the principle of the same specification of the *x*, of the man, of the being who is qualified among speakers as masculine, if we take the term *There exists*, then *There exists at least one for whom Φx is not admissible as an assertion*. Well, from this standpoint, the standpoint of the individual, we find ourselves before a position that is markedly contradictory. Aristotelian logic is grounded on the intuition of the individual that Aristotle posits as real. Aristotle tells us that, after all, it's not the idea of the horse that is real, it's the horse that is well and truly alive, about which we are compelled to ask ourselves precisely how the idea comes about, where we draw this idea from. Aristotle, not without peremptory arguments, turns upside down what Plato stated, namely that the horse is upheld by partaking in the idea of the horse, that what is most real is the idea of the horse.

If we position ourselves from the Aristotelian angle, it's clear that there is a contradiction between the statement that *for all x, x* fulfils in Φx the function of an argument, and the fact that there is *some x* that can fulfil the place of argument only in the enunciation that is the exact negation of the former. If we are told *every horse is spirited*, and if it is added that there are *some*, or *at least one* horse that is not, in Aristotelian logic this is a contradiction.

By putting forward the two terms on the right in my group of four terms – it's no accident that there are four – I'm daring to advance something that is plainly lacking in the aforesaid logic. I am able to do so to the extent that the term *existence* has quite certainly changed meaning since then. When what is at issue is the existence of a term that is capable of holding the place of an argument in a mathematically articulated function, this is not the same existence.

So far, nothing has performed a join between the *Yad'lun* as such and the *at-least-one* that is formulated by the notation of an inverted E, *x*. The latter, *There exists an x, at-least-one*, lends a value that can be qualified as true to what is posited as a function. There is a distance between this and natural existence, which I will not name otherwise today, for want of a better word. Natural existence is not limited to living organisms. For example, we can see these Ones in the celestial bodies, which were among the first to have received properly scientific attention, and not without reason, precisely for the affinity that they have with the One. They appear as though they were inscribing themselves in the heavens as elements that are all the more easily marked out as Ones given that they are punctiform. It's certain that they did a great deal to lay the accent on the point, as a form of passage. In the interval between the individual and what is involved in what I shall call the *real One*, the elements that are signified as punctiform have played an eminent role as far as their transition is concerned.

Is it not palpable for you – and surely this has caught your ear in passing – that I'm speaking about the One as a real, a real that may equally have nothing to do with any reality whatsoever?

I use the word *reality* for the reality of your existence, for example. This is a mode of support that is assuredly material, and first and foremost because it is corporeal. However, it's a matter of knowing what is being spoken of when one says *Yad'lun*. On the path along which science has been travelling, I mean the path it has been travelling since the great turning point when it started to trust in number as such, the Galilean turning point, it's clear that from this scientific perspective, the One that we can qualify as *individual*, and then something that is stated in the register of the logic of number, there is no real cause to wonder about the existence, about the logical support, that can be given to the unicorn, given that no animal is conceived of in a more appropriate manner than the unicorn itself. It is indeed from this perspective that one can say that what we call reality, natural reality, can invariably be taken, at the level of a certain discourse, as fantasy. I do not recoil from claiming that this discourse is the analytic discourse.

The analytic discourse is designed to remind us that the real I've

been speaking about is accessed via the symbolic. We access this real in and through the impossible that is defined only by the symbolic. I'm coming back to this at the level of Pliny's *Natural History*. I don't see what differentiates the unicorn from any other animal that is perfectly existent in the natural order. The perspective that examines the real in a certain direction compels us to state matters in this way.

Even so, on no account am I speaking to you about anything that might resemble progress. What we have gained on the scientific plane, which is incontestable, absolutely does not increase our critical sense in matters of political life, for example. I have always stressed how what we gain on one side is lost on the other, in that there is a certain inherent limitation to what may be called the field of adequation in speaking beings.

Just because we have made some progress since Pliny regarding biology, this is not an absolute progress. Were a citizen of Rome to see how we live – unfortunately it's out of the question to conjure one up in person on this occasion – he would likely be overcome with horror. Since we can only envisage this on the basis of the ruins that this civilization has left behind, the idea we may form of it is to see, or to imagine, what the remains of our civilization will be like after a similar lapse of time, if this is supposable.

This is not to get you riled up, so to speak, over the matter of some confidence that I might have in science in particular. The analytic discourse is not a scientific discourse, but rather a discourse of which the material is provided by science, which is quite different.

The grasp that speaking beings have of the world is to conceive of it as something into which they have been immersed. This scheme already smacks of fantasy, does it not? It's quite clear, therefore, that this grasp will only increase to the extent that something is elaborated, and this is the use of number. I claim to be showing you here that this number boils down quite simply to *Yad'lun*.

So, we have to see what has enabled us, historically speaking, to know a little more about this *Yad'lun* than what Plato makes of it, by laying it out flat, so to speak, alongside what is involved in Being.

It's quite certain that this dialogue is extraordinarily suggestive and fruitful, and that if you would care to look into it closely, you will already find the prefiguration of my being able to state, on this basis, on the theme of set theory, that *Yad'lun*.

2

Simply begin if you will with the statement of the first hypothesis – *if the One.* It should be taken for its signification – *if the One is one*.[2]

What will we be able to make of this? The first thing that Plato sets down by way of objection is that this One will not be anywhere,[3] because if it were somewhere, it would be in an envelope,[4] in a limit,[5] and this is quite in contradiction with its existence of One.

(*Protests from the audience*). What's the matter? Am I speaking quietly? Too bad, that's how it is today. I can doubtless do no better.

The One was able to be developed in its existence of One in the way that is grounded by *Mengenlehre*. This has been translated into French, not unprofitably, as *la théorie des ensembles*, but certainly with an accentuation that does not correspond entirely to the meaning of the original term in German, which, from the standpoint of what we're aiming at is no better. This set theory only came on the scene late in the day, and only came about at all by virtue of the entire history of mathematics itself. Of course, there is no question of my tracing out even the briefest of synopses, but, in this history, one needs to take into account the following, which has taken on its full accentuation, its full scope, namely what I might call the extravagances of number.

Clearly this began very early on, because already in Plato's time irrational numbers were posing a problem. It turned out that he inherited – Plato sets out all these developments for us in the *Theaetetus* – the Pythagorean scandal of the irrational character of the diagonal of a square, the scandal being that you never get to the end of it. This can be demonstrated in a figure. It was the most favourable thing there was in that era by which to bring to light the existence of what I am calling *numerical extravagance*. I mean, something that moves out of the field of the One.

What came next? In Archimedes' method known as *exhaustion* there is something that we may consider to be the avoidance of what came along so many centuries afterwards in the form of the paradoxes of infinitesimal calculus, in the form of the statement of what is called the *infinitesimally small*. This is something that takes a very long time to work through, by positing some finite quantity about which it is said that, either way, a certain mode of operating will reach a yet smaller quantity. At the end of the day, this amounts to saying that one makes use of the finite in order to define a transfinite.

And then, my word, one cannot fail to mention the appearance of Fourier's trigonometric series, which certainly poses all sorts of problems for theoretical foundation. All of this is conjugated with the reduction to the perfectly finitist principles of the calculus that was called infinitesimal, which was being pursued at the same time, Cauchy being the great representative.

I am giving this extremely brisk reminder simply to date what is

meant by the resumption in Cantor's writings of what the status of the One amounts to. From the moment it becomes a matter of grounding it, the status of the One can only start off from its ambiguity, namely that the mainspring of set theory hinges entirely on how the One – that *there is* – of the set is distinct from the One of the element.

The notion of *set* leans on the fact that there is a set even with just one element. This is not the usual way of putting it, but what is particular to speech is that it advances clumsily. Besides, opening any old exposé of set theory is enough to put your finger on what this entails, namely that if the element posited as fundamental to a set is this something that the very notion of the set allows us to posit as an empty set, well, this means that the element is perfectly admissible. A set can have the empty set as its constituent element, and in this capacity it is absolutely equivalent to what is conventionally called a *singleton*, not to announce straightaway the card of the numerical figure 1. This is so in a perfectly well-founded fashion, for the good reason that we can define the numerical figure 1 only by taking the class of all the sets that are of one single element, and by highlighting their equivalence as what constitutes the grounding of the One properly speaking.

Thus, set theory is designed to restore the status of number. What proves that it does indeed restore it, within the perspective that I have been laying out, is that, setting out as it does the grounding of the One, and making number lean on this as a class of equivalence, set theory thereby manages to highlight what it calls the *non-denumerable*, which is very straightforward, as you are about to see. It's readily accessible, but to translate it into my vocabulary, I call it, not the *non-denumerable* – an object that I would unhesitatingly qualify as mythical – but the *impossible to denumerate*.

I apologize for not being able to give an illustration directly on the blackboard of how it is crafted, but then, after all, what's stopping those of you who are interested from opening a simple handbook called *Naive Set Theory*? You will see that through the Diagonal Method one can be led to put one's finger on how there is a means of laying out the sequence of integers in a series of different ways. In truth, one can lay out this sequence in umpteen thousand different ways. It will be immediately accessible to show that, irrespective of how you might have ordered it, simply by changing each time the values on the diagonal in keeping with a rule determined in advance, there will be yet another way of denumerating them.

It is very precisely in this that the real attached to the One consists.

3

If I am indeed able today to push the demonstration of this fairly far, within the time to which I promised I would limit myself, I am nevertheless going to accentuate now what is entailed by this ambiguity that lies at the foundation of the One as such.

Contrary to appearances, this ambiguity hinges precisely on the fact that the One cannot be grounded on sameness. On the contrary, it has been marked out, by set theory, as having to be grounded on pure and simple difference.

What governs the grounding of set theory consists in the following. Let's say, to go straight to the basics, that when you note down three elements, each separated by a comma – so, there are two commas – if one of these elements appears to be in any way the same as another, or if it can be united to it by any sign of equality, then it is purely and simply *all-at-one* with it. On the first level of assembly that constitutes set theory lies the Axiom of Extensionality, which means that, here at the outset, it cannot be a matter of the *same*. It is a matter of knowing at what point in this construction sameness emerges.

Not only does sameness emerge as a latecomer in this construction, and, if I may say so, on one of its edges, but I may also assert that this sameness as such is counted in number, and therefore the emergence of the One, inasmuch as it may be qualified as the same, only emerges in an exponential way, so to speak. I mean that, as soon as the One that is at issue is none other than this Aleph-Nought – which symbolizes the cardinal of the numerical infinite, this infinity that Cantor calls *improper*[6] and which is made up of elements of what constitutes the first proper infinite, namely the $\aleph_0$ in question – in the course of constructing this $\aleph_0$ there appears the construction of the *same*, and this *same* is itself counted as an element in the construction.

It is in this respect that it is, let's say, *inadequate* in the Platonic dialogue to make anything whatsoever of the *existent* participate in the realm of the *like-for-like*. Without the crossing-through whereby the One is initially constituted, the notion of *like-for-like* would not appear in any way whatsoever.

This is what we are going to see. If we don't see it here today, because I've been limited to a quarter of an hour less than I usually have, I will pursue this elsewhere. Indeed, why not at the forthcoming Thursday appointment at Sainte-Anne, because a certain number of you here know the route? Nevertheless, what I do want to stress is what results from this point of departure of set theory and from what I will call, why not, the *Cantorization* of number.

This is what is at issue. To ground cardinality in any way, there are no other paths but those of what is called the one-to-one mapping of one set onto another. When they want to illustrate this, they find no better, nothing else, but alternatively to evoke goodness knows what primitive potlatch ritual, where the prevailing competitor will emerge to be established at least temporarily as leader, or more straightforwardly the table-laying of the headwaiter, who matches each of the elements of a set of knives with a set of forks. Whether it's a matter of herds that each of the two competing chieftains send across a certain brink, or the headwaiter counting out his cutlery, what will appear? Well, it appears that the One begins on the level at which there is one missing.

The empty set is, therefore, strictly legitimized in that it is, so to speak, the gate that has to be gone through in order to constitute the birth of the One. This is the first One that is designated through an admissible experience. I mean mathematically admissible, in a way that can be taught, because this is what *matheme* means, and not one that appeals to any kind of coarse figuration. What constitutes the One and very precisely justifies it, which is designated only as distinct, and not through any other qualificative ascertainment, is that it only begins with its lack.

This is indeed what becomes apparent to us in the reproduction of Pascal's triangle that I have given here, namely the necessity of distinguishing each of these rows. I think you've known for a little while now how they are constituted. Each row is made by adding what stands above to what is in the same row, which is then notated to its right. Each of the rows is constituted as follows –

1	{1}	{1}	{1}	{1}	{1}
	1	2	3	4	5
		1	3	6	10
			1	4	10
				1	5
					1

What is important is to notice what each of the rows designates.

In Book VII of his *Elements*, lines *α΄* and *β΄*, Euclid defines the monad thus – *Μονάς ἐστιν, καθ' ἣν ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων ἓν λέγεται. Ἀριθμὸς δὲ τὸ ἐκ μονάδων συγκείμενον πλῆθος. The monad is that by which each entity may be said to be one*, and *number*, *ἀριθμὸς*, is very

precisely *this multiplicity composed of monads*. This definition sets out the error, the lack of grounding.

Pascal's triangle is not here just for the sake of it. It is here to figure what are called in set theory, not the elements, but the *parts* of these sets.[7] At the level of the parts, the parts of a set laid out monadically are the second row. The monad is second. What shall we call the first row, the row that is, in sum, constituted of this empty set, the crossing of which is precisely what constitutes the One? Why not make use of the echo that Spanish gives us, and call it the *nad*? What is at issue here in the One that repeats across the first row is very specifically the *nad*, namely the entrance porthole that is designated by lack.

On the basis of what is involved in the place where a hole is made, in this something that, if you want a figuration, I would represent as being the foundation of *Yad'lun*, there can only be Oneness in the figure of a bag, which is a bag with a hole in it. Nothing is One that doesn't come out of this bag, or which does not go back into the bag. This is the original grounding, to take it intuitively, of the One.

Given what I've promised, I can't push what I have brought any further today, and this I regret. Let me tell you simply that we are going to be examining the most straightforward figure, which I have already designated, namely the triad in which the parts, the subsets formed of the parts of the set, can be figured in a way that is satisfactory for us, then to move back up to the level of the dyad, and to the level of the monad.

You will see that by examining these primal numbers – not prime numbers – a difficulty will arise. I hope that the fact that this is a figurative difficulty will not prevent us from understanding what the essence of the One is, and from seeing what is involved in its grounding.

19 April 1972

XI

AN ISSUE OF ONES

A TALK AT SAINTE-ANNE

The twain, the structure of real sex
The One, an effect of lack
Disputing the non-denumerable
Equivalence between the element and the empty set
The two levels of the One

It's a funny old way to spend one's time, but in the end, why not? It so happens that over the weekends I sometimes write to you. In a manner of speaking. I write because I know we're going to see each other during the week. So, last weekend, I wrote to you. Naturally, in the meantime, I had all the time it took to forget this piece of writing. I've just reread it over dinner, a hurried dinner so that I could be here on time. I'm going to begin with this. It's a bit difficult, so perhaps you will take notes. Afterwards I'll say the things that I've thought since then, with you more really in mind.

I wrote the following – which, of course, I would never submit for *poubellication*, I don't see why I should swell the contents of libraries – *There are two horizons of the signifier*. Then, I've put a curly bracket. Since it's written, you'll have to pay attention. I mean that you mustn't believe you comprehend. After the bracket, there is *the maternal*, which is also *the material*, and then there is written, *the mathematical*.

I know I will have to, but, in the end, I can't start speaking straightaway. Were it not for this, I would never read you what I have written. Perhaps in the next part I will have to come back to this distinction, which I am underscoring as a horizon.

Articulating them as such in each of these two horizons – this is a parenthesis, I haven't written this – is therefore – this I have written – *to proceed in accordance with these two horizons themselves, because any mention of their beyond* . . . beyond the horizon . . . *is supported*

only by their position . . . when this starts to bore you, let me know and I'll tell you the items that I have to tell you this evening . . . *by their position in a de facto discourse. For the analytic discourse, this* de facto *implicates me sufficiently in its effects for it to be said that this is my* fait, *my doing, for it to be designated by my name. The amur* . . . – what I have designated as such here – . . . *reverberates this diversely with the available means of what is rightly called* le bord, *the rim, of this* bord-homme.[1] This *bord-homme* inspired me to write *brrom-brrom-wap-wap*. This was the discovery of a person who in times gone by mothered my children. It's an indication concerning *l'a-voix*, th'a-voice, which, as everyone knows, *aboie*, barks, and also *l'a-regard*, th'a-gaze, not to take so close *a-look*, and *l'a-t'suce*, a-stutely licking you into shape, and then *l'a-merde* as well, th'a-crap that from time to time forms the somewhat injurious graffito directed at my name on the pages of newspapers. In short, *c'est l'a-vie!* As somebody who is having fun for the moment would say, it's cheerful. In the main, this is true.

These effects have nothing to do with the dimension that is measured against my doing. This is to say that it is from a discourse that is not my own that I make the necessary dimension. It is from the analytic discourse, which, not yet having been . . . – and for good reason – . . . *properly instituted, finds itself in need of a few facilitations, to which I employ myself.* On the basis of what? Solely on the basis that, in fact, *my position is determined by it.*

Let's speak, now, about this discourse and about the fact that the position of the signifier as such is essential to it. Given the audience that you constitute, I would like to make a remark. This *position of the signifier* takes shape in an experience, which is within reach of every one of you, so that you may see what's at issue and how essential it is.

When you speak a language imperfectly, and you read a text, well, you comprehend, you still comprehend. This ought to put you a little on alert. You comprehend in the sense that you know in advance what is being said in it. Of course, this can result in the text contradicting itself. When you read, for instance, a text on set theory, the text explains what constitutes the infinite set of all integers. On the next line, you are told something that you comprehend, because you keep reading – *It would, however, be a fundamental mistake to deem this set infinite because the integers . . . increase infinitely*. Since it's just been explained to you that this is the reason that it is so, this gives you a start. When you take a closer look, however, you find the term *deem*. In other words, this is not the reason why you should deem it so, because they know that the series of integers doesn't stop, that it is infinite. It's not that the series is *indefinite*.

You realize that either you've skipped over *deem*, or you're not sufficiently familiar with English, and therefore you have comprehended too quickly, that is, you have skipped over this essential element, the element of a signifier that makes this change of level possible, this change of level that, for a moment, gave you the sense of a contradiction.

One should never skip a signifier. It's to the extent that the signifier doesn't halt you that you comprehend. Now – *comprehending always amounts to being comprehended oneself within the effects of discourse, a discourse that, as such, gives an order to the effects of knowledge that have already been precipitated through the formalism of the signifier alone. What psychoanalysis teaches us is that any naïve knowledge* . . . this is written, which is why I'm reading again . . . *is associated with a veiling of the jouissance that is realized therein, and poses the question as to what is betrayed therein of the limits of power, that is to say* – what? – *of the* tracé, *the layout, imposed on jouissance.*

As soon as we speak – this is a fact – *we suppose something of what is spoken, this something that we imagine as having been pre-posited, even though it is quite sure that we only ever suppose it after the event. That which speaks* . . . – whatever it is – . . . *is that which derives jouissance from the self as a body. The fact of speaking* . . . – in the current state of our knowledge – . . . *refers only to this. It derives jouissance from a body that it experiences as* tuable, *that is, as a body that it can address in the* tu *form and a body to which it can say* tue-toi, *kill yourself, in the same line. What is psychoanalysis? It is the tracking of what is comprehended by way of obfuscation, of what is obfuscated in comprehension, due to the fact of a signifier that has marked a point of the body.*

Psychoanalysis is what reproduces . . . – here you will find the usual guardrails – . . . *a production of neurosis. Everyone agrees on this point. There is not a single psychoanalyst who has not perceived this. This neurosis that is attributed, not unreasonably, to the action of the parents can be reached only to the extent that the action of the parents is articulated precisely* . . . – this is the term with which I started the third line – . . . *from the position of the psychoanalyst. To the extent that neurosis converges towards a signifier that emerges from it, neurosis will take on an order in accordance with the discourse whose effects produced the subject. Every traumatic parent is, in sum, in the same position as the psychoanalyst. The difference is that the psychoanalyst, from his position, reproduces the neurosis, whereas the traumatic parent produces it innocently.*

What is at issue is to reproduce it – this signifier – *on the basis of whatever its initial flowering had been. All in all, the operation of the analytic discourse is to fashion a model of the neurosis. Why? Well,*

to the extent that it takes out the rib of jouissance. Indeed, jouissance demands this special privilege. There are not two ways of doing this for each subject. Every reduplication kills jouissance. Jouissance only survives in that its repetition is of no avail, that is to say, it is always the same. It is the introduction of the model that completes it – this repetition of no avail. *A completed repetition dissolves it, in that it is a simplified repetition.*

Of course, when I speak of Yad'lun, *I am still speaking of the signifier. To lay out this* d'lun *in keeping with the extent of its empire, because it assuredly is the master signifier, it has to be approached right where it has been left to its talents, so as to box it into a corner.*

There you have it for what renders the point I have got to this year useful as an incidence, having no choice but this, . . . *or worse*. This incidence is the mathematical reference, so called because it is the realm in which the matheme governs, that is to say, that which produces a knowledge that, being merely a product, is bound to the norms of surplus jouissance, that is, of the measurable. A matheme is that which alone is taught, and strictly so. No teaching but of the One. We still have to find out what is at issue. And this is why I am examining it this year.

I'm not going to read any further. The text is rather difficult, but I think I've read it slowly enough for a few questions to be left hanging regarding each of the terms I have spelt out. I will now speak more freely.

The other day, as I was leaving the latest session up at the Panthéon, someone questioned me – he might be here again – on the subject of whether I believed in freedom. I told him he was being funny. And then, as I am always fairly weary, I broke off. But this doesn't mean I wouldn't be prepared to confide in him personally on this matter. The fact is, I seldom speak about freedom, and so this question was his initiative. Knowing why he asked me this would not be unwelcome to me.

So, what I would like more freely to say is that, in alluding in my written text to how I find myself in the position of facilitating the analytic discourse, clearly I consider it to constitute, at least potentially, this sort of structure that I have been designating with the term *discourse*. Through discourse, which is the pure and simple effect of language, a social bond is precipitated. Yet this was noticed without any need of psychoanalysis. This is even what is conventionally known as *ideology*.

The way in which a discourse takes on order in such a way as to precipitate a social bond entails, conversely, that everything that is articulated within it takes on an order through its effects. It is

indeed in this way that I understand what I have been articulating for you about the discourse of psychoanalysis. Were there no psychoanalytic practice, what I might articulate thereof wouldn't have effects that I might anticipate. I didn't say, *wouldn't have meaning*. What is particular to meaning is that it is always confusional, that is, it believes it forms a bridge between one discourse – in so far as a social bond is precipitated therein – and what, in another realm, stems from another discourse.

What is annoying is that whenever you proceed – since I have just said in this written text that it is a question of *proceeding* – that is, whenever you target, from one discourse, what holds the function of the One within it, what am I doing in such an instance? If you will allow me the following neologism, I am engaging in *henology*.[2] Given what I have been articulating, anyone could turn it into an ontology, in keeping with what he presupposes beyond these two horizons that I have marked out as being defined as the horizons of the signifier.

In the university discourse, one may set oneself to drawing the model from my construction by presupposing, at some arbitrary point, goodness knows what essence that would become – though who knows why? – the supreme value. This is particularly conducive to what is offered to the university discourse, in which what is at issue, according to the diagram I have designed for it, is to put S_2 at the place of semblance.

$$\frac{S_2}{S_1} \longrightarrow \frac{a}{\$}$$

University discourse

Before a signifier is truly put in its place, that is, picked out by the ideology for which it has been produced, it always has effects of circulation. In these effects, signification precedes the acknowledgement of its place, its instituting place. The very nature of teaching gives confirmation of the fact that the university discourse is defined by knowledge being put in the position of semblance. What can we see there? It is a false ordering of what has fanned out, so to speak,[3] over the course of the centuries by way of diverse ontologies. Its summit, its culmination, is what is gloriously termed *the history of philosophy*, as though philosophy didn't have its remit – and this has been amply demonstrated – in the adventures and misadventures of the discourse of the master, which does indeed need to be

overhauled once in a while. The cause of philosophy's shimmerings lies elsewhere, as has been affirmed sufficiently on the basis of points from which the notion of ideology has emerged, as though the cause at stake did not lie elsewhere. What is difficult, however, is that any process of articulating a discourse, above all if it has not yet been ascertained, offers a pretext for a certain number of new *beings* to swell up prematurely.

I know full well that none of this is easy, and that I shall have to tell you some more amusing things, in the fine tradition of what I have been doing here. So, let's speak about the analyst and love.

People speak about love in analysis. And, of course, this is due to the position of the analyst. All things considered, people don't speak about it any more here than elsewhere since, after all, this is what love is for. This is not what is most gratifying, but in the end, in mundane terms people speak about it a great deal. It is even tremendous that people still go on about it after all this time, because they might have noticed, after all this time, that this hasn't made it any the more successful. It's clear, therefore, that it's by speaking that one makes love. So, what is the role of the analyst in this? Can an analysis really make a loving relationship successful? I have to tell you that, as far as I'm concerned, I have no such example. And yet I did try. For me, not having quite come down in the last shower, this was a challenge.

I once took on someone on the basis of a request, though thank goodness I knew beforehand that he was in need of a psychoanalysis – you realize the dirty tricks I'm capable of pulling to verify my affirmations – the request being that he should at any cost obtain *conjugo* with the lady on whom he had set his heart. Naturally, of course, this failed – thank the Lord – and very quickly too. I do hope he's not here. I'm almost certain he isn't.

Let's put an end to this, because all this is anecdotal. One day, when luck is going my way, and I venture to do a little La Bruyère, I'll deal with the question of the relations between love and semblance. But this is not where we are this evening. There's to be no lingering over these knick-knacks. It's rather a matter – I'm returning to this because it seems to me that I did open this up – of knowing what the relation is between everything that I've been restating, which I'm recalling by briefly touching on the truths of experience, and the function of sex in psychoanalysis.

I think that on this score I have even got through to the tin ears with a statement that deserves to be commented on – that *there is no such thing as sexual relation*. Of course, this deserves to be spelt out.

Why does the psychoanalyst imagine that sex forms the base of his reference? That sex is real is not to be doubted in the slightest. Its very structure is the *dual*, the number *duo*. Whatever one may think, there are two of them. Men. Women. So they say. And they insist on adding Auvergnats.[4] That's an error. At the level of the real, there are no Auvergnats.

What is at issue when sex is involved is the other, the other sex, even when one prefers the same. Just because I said a moment ago that the aid psychoanalysis can bring is precarious when it comes to the success of a loving relationship, it shouldn't be thought that the psychoanalyst doesn't give a stuff, if I can put it like that. The psychoanalyst cannot be indifferent to the fact that the partner in question is of the other sex, and that what is in play is something that bears a relation to his or her jouissance – I'm speaking of the other, the third party, about whom this gab around love is voiced – because the one that is not there is, for the analyst, the real.

This jouissance, the jouissance that is not in analysis, if you will allow me to put it like this, holds the function of the real for the analyst. On the other hand, what *is* in analysis, that is to say, the subject, the analyst takes for what it is, namely for an effect of discourse. I ask you to note in passing that he doesn't subjectify it. This doesn't mean that all this is his own little idea, but rather that, as a subject, he is determined by a discourse from which he has long originated, and this is what is analysable.

I will specify that the analyst is on no account a nominalist. He does not think of his subject's representations. Rather, he has to intervene in his discourse by procuring for him *un supplément de signifiant*, an additional signifier. This is what is called *interpretation*. When it comes to what is not within his reach, which is what is in question here, namely the jouissance of the one who is not there in analysis, he takes it for what it is, that is, of the order of the real, because he can do nothing about it.

No one has ever dared, not even Bishop Berkeley, to state that sex, as real – I mean as dual, I mean that there are two of them – was a little idea that each person had in their head, that it was a representation. It is highly instructive that no one in the entire history of philosophy has ever ventured to extend idealism this far.

For a while now we have been able to see what sex is under the microscope. I'm not talking about sexual organs. I'm talking about gametes. Can you imagine that they had nothing of this prior to Leeuwenhoek and Swammerdam? They were reduced to thinking that sex was everywhere. Nature, *voῦς*, the whole racket, all that was sex. *And the female vultures made love with the wind.* From the pretext that, long before it was known that there are two kinds of

gamete, we have known for certain that sex is to be found in two small cells that do not resemble one another, psychoanalysts believe that there is such a thing as sexual relation. We have been seeing psychoanalysts, in their literature, in an area that cannot be said to be highly controlled, find in the intrusion of the male gamete – of the *spermato*, as they say, and then the *zoon* – through the girdle of the ovum, the model of goodness knows what formidable breach. As though there were the faintest relation between this reference – which doesn't bear the slightest relation to what is involved in copulation, except through the coarsest of metaphors – and anything whatsoever that might be referred to what is in play in *love relations*, which, as I said at the start, amounts to a great many words.

The whole question lies here, and it is indeed here that the evolution of the forms of discourse is far more indicative for us of what is at issue. What are at issue are effects of discourse, even if it is quite sure that the sexes are twain. This is far more indicative of what is at issue than any reference to what remains entirely in abeyance, namely whether what discourse is capable of articulating comprehends, or not, sexual relation. This is what deserves to be called into question.

The small items I have already written up on the blackboard for you include an opposition between $\exists x$ and $\overline{\exists x}$, between a *There exists* and a *There exists not*, on the same level of *it is not true that* Φx. Then, there is another level, that of *all x complies with the function* Φx, and of *pas tout*, *not all* – which is a new form, in the right-hand column – *and nothing more, is apt to satisfy the phallic function.*

As I shall strive to explicate in the forthcoming lessons of my Seminar, that is, somewhere else, what deserves to be pointed out is a series of gaps which are diverse, which are not the same in each case, between each of these points, the four points stated above, in order to give its rightful status to what is involved in sexual relation at the level of the subject.

This shows well enough to what extent language traces out, in its very grammar, the said subject-effects. It intersects sufficiently with what was first discovered in logic for us to be able, now, to set about hearing a signifier, as I have been doing since these reminders that I have been issuing, so that I might try to give it a meaning. For this is the only case, and rightly so, in which the term *meaning* is justified when stating *Yad'lun*, because there is one thing that must nevertheless be apparent to you, which is that if there is no relation, then each of the two remains One.

What is incredible is that, whereas psychoanalysts' mythology has

been condemned, more or less justifiably, oddly enough the mythology that people have failed to condemn is precisely the one that lies closest to hand. When the gametes conjoin, this does not result in their fusion. Before this can come about, there has to be a severe elimination, known as meiosis. The newly formed One is made from what we may call, quite rightly, I won't say the debris of *chacun d'eux*, the debris of each of them, but a *chacun deux*, an each twain, that has extruded a certain amount of debris.

From the pen of Freud we find the idea that Eros *se fonde* – in the subjunctive, you can see the equivoque between *fonder* and *fondre*, I don't see why I shouldn't exploit the French language[5] – that Eros should be founded by making One from two. Clearly this is a strange idea from which there stems, of course, the absolutely exorbitant idea that is embodied in the sermonizing that dear Freud nevertheless abhorred with all his being. He expresses in the plainest terms, in *The Future of an Illusion*, and in many other places besides, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, his repugnance at the idea of universal love. And yet the founding force of life, of the *life instinct*, as he puts it, would fall squarely into the Eros that is purportedly behind the principle of union. It is not only for didactic reasons that I would like to furnish you, on the subject of the One, with what can be used to fight back against this coarse mythology, aside from the fact that it might enable us to exorcize not only Eros – I mean the Eros of Freudian doctrine – but dear Thanatos too, which people have been boring us with for quite long enough.

At this juncture it is not unhelpful to make use of something that came to light some time ago, and not by chance. I have already introduced – I introduced it last time – an account of what has been identified as *la théorie des ensembles*, set theory. Men and women – we can laugh a little as well – are also *ensemble*, together. This doesn't stop them from being each on their own side. It's a matter of knowing whether we might be able to draw some light from the *ensemble* – from a *set*, of course, which was never designed for this – to shed on the *Yad'lun*. So, since I too release trial balloons, I propose simply to try to see with you what in all this might be of service, not as an illustration, for it's about something quite different. It's about what the signifier has to do with the One.

The One didn't come on the scene just yesterday. But, even so, it arose with regard to two quite different things, with regard to a certain use of instruments of measure, and at the same time something that bore absolutely no relation to this, namely the function of the individual.

The individual, this is in Aristotle. Aristotle was struck by these

beings that reproduce, always the same ones. This had already struck someone else, a certain Plato. Actually, I think that this was because he didn't have anything better to offer by which to give us an idea of form. He managed to state that form is real. He did indeed have to illustrate his idea of *Idea* as best he could. The other fellow, of course, remarked that, even so, form is all very nice, but what singles it out is simply that form is what we recognize in a certain number of individuals that resemble one another.

Here we find ourselves sliding off down various metaphysical slopes. This is of no degree of interest to us when it comes to illustrating the One, whether by the individual or by a certain practical usage of geometry. Irrespective of the developments that you might be able to add to this geometry, considering the proportions of the manifest difference between the length of a stake and the length of its shadow, it's been a good while since we first noticed that the One poses other problems, and this is for the simple fact that mathematics has progressed somewhat. I'm not going to go back over what I stated last time, about differential calculus, about the various trigonometric series, and in a more comprehensive way about the conception of number as defined by a sequence. What appears very clearly is that the question of what is involved in Oneness is posed altogether differently there, because a sequence is typified as being composed in the same way as the sequence of integers. It's a matter of accounting for what an integer is.

I am not, of course, going to lay out for you the theory of sets. I want simply to point out that we first had to wait until rather late in the day, the end of the last century, not even a hundred years ago, before there was an attempt to account for the function of the One. It is remarkable that the set should be defined in such a way that its first apparent aspect should be that of the empty set, and that, on the other hand, this constitutes a set, namely that of which the said empty set is the only element. This makes a set with one element. This is where we begin. Last time – I'm saying this for those who weren't up at the Panthéon when I started to tackle this slippery subject – I underscored how the grounding of the One turns out, by virtue of this fact, to be strictly constituted by the place of a lack.

I referred to pedagogical use in order to give a broad illustration of what it is a matter of getting across in set theory, in order to give you a sense of how this theory has no other direct object besides that of making it apparent how the specific notion of cardinal number can be generated through one-to-one correspondence. The illustration I used was that, at the moment at which, in the two compared series, a mate is missing, the notion of the One arises. There is one missing.

Everything that is said about the cardinal number stems from the fact that, if the sequence of numbers always necessarily entails one, and only one, successor, and provided that what is at issue in cardinality is realized in the order of number, then this is strictly the cardinal sequence in that, by starting from zero, it extends up to the number that immediately precedes the successor. By stating it thus, in an extempore manner, I have made a small mistake, which is to speak of a sequence as though it were already well-ordered. Take from this the following, which I didn't assert – it's simply that each number corresponds cardinally to the cardinal that precedes it by adding to it the empty set.

What is important in what I would like to give you a sense of this evening is that while the One arises as the effect of lack, taking the sets into consideration lends itself to something that I believe worthy of mention, and which I would like to highlight, in reference to how set theory has enabled us to distinguish two types of set. It has enabled us to admit the finite set and the infinite set. In this statement, what typifies the infinite set is that it can be posited as equivalent to any one of its subsets. As had already been remarked by Galileo, who didn't have to wait for Cantor for this, the sequence of all the square numbers is in one-to-one correspondence with each of the integers. Indeed, there is no reason ever to consider any of the square numbers to be too large to be in the sequence of the integers. This is what constitutes the infinite set, whereby it is said that it can be *reflexive*. On the other hand, the chief property of the finite set is that it is conducive to the specifically mathematical reasoning, which makes use of it, known as *induction*. Induction is admissible when a set is finite.

What I would like to say is that there is a point in set theory that I deem problematic. This point stems from what is called the non-denumerability of the *parts* – to be understood as the *subsets* – such as they can be defined on the basis of a set.

This is quite straightforward if you start off from the cardinal number. For example, you have one set composed of five elements. You call *subset* the subsuming of each of these five elements into a set. Next, taking the groupings that are formed by two out of these five elements, it will be easy for you to calculate how many subsets this makes. There will be exactly ten. Then you can take them three at a time. There will again be ten of them. Then take them four at a time. There will be five. In the end, you get to the set of which there is only one, the present set, containing five elements. To this should be added the empty set, which, in any case, without being an element of the set, can be indicated as one of its parts. The parts are not an element.

The ordering can be written as follows.

1

5

10

10

5

1

What have we written down as parts of the set? The empty set is here. The five elements, α, β, γ, δ, and ε, for example, are here. What comes next is $\alpha\beta$, $\alpha\gamma$, $\alpha\delta$, $\alpha\varepsilon$. You can do the same starting with β. You can do the same with γ, and so on. You will see that there are ten. Next, here, you have $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$, with ε missing. By missing out each of these five letters, you can obtain the number 5 that is necessary for the grouping as parts of elements.

1	$\varnothing$
5	$\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \varepsilon$
10	$\alpha\beta, \alpha\gamma, \alpha\delta, \alpha\varepsilon, \beta\gamma, \beta\delta, \beta\varepsilon, \gamma\delta, \gamma\varepsilon, \delta\varepsilon$
10	$\alpha\beta\gamma, \alpha\beta\delta, \alpha\beta\varepsilon, \alpha\gamma\delta, \alpha\gamma\varepsilon, \alpha\delta\varepsilon, \beta\gamma\delta, \beta\gamma\varepsilon, \beta\delta\varepsilon, \gamma\delta\varepsilon$
5	$\alpha\beta\gamma\delta, \alpha\beta\gamma\varepsilon, \alpha\beta\delta\varepsilon, \alpha\gamma\delta\varepsilon, \beta\gamma\delta\varepsilon$
1	$\alpha\beta\gamma\delta\varepsilon$

In view of which, you find that it would be enough for me to complement this statement of a set of cardinality 5 with the sequence – which we shall put alongside – that refers to a set of four elements.

1	1
4	5
6	10
4	10
1	5
	1

In other words, imagine this as a tetrahedron. You will see that you have one tetrad, that you have six sides, that you have four vertex corners, that you have four faces, and that you have one empty set. I have only alluded to this other case to show you that in both cases the sum of the parts is equal to 2^n, n being precisely the cardinal number of the elements of the set. This is not something that undermines in any way whatsoever the theory of sets. What is stated regarding denumerability has all its applications, for example in the remark that nothing changes with respect to the categorization of a set as *infinite* if any denumerable sequence is dropped from it. Nevertheless, with regard to the contribution that is made of non-denumerability, in that assuredly and in every case one cannot map onto a finite set the sum of its parts defined in the above manner, I ask, is this the best way to introduce the non-denumerability of an infinite set?

What is at issue here is a didactic introduction. I dispute it from the moment that the property of *reflexivity*, such as it is assigned to the infinite set, and which entails that it lacks the *inductiveness* that is characteristic of finite sets, allows it nevertheless to be written, as I have seen in some places, that the non-denumerability of the parts of the infinite set would emerge *by induction* due to the fact that these parts would be written just as the infinite set of integers is written, $2^{\aleph_0}$. I dispute this.

How do I dispute it? There is some artifice involved when the parts of the set are taken on the mounting scale, the addition of which does effectively give 2^n. It is clear, however, that if on one side you have a, b, c, d, e – to Romanize the Greek letters I wrote on the blackboard, which I did for a reason – and if you bring what corresponds to them, namely, a, b, c, d corresponds to e, while a, b, d, e corresponds to c, you can see that the number of parts, if you substitute a *partition* here, leads to a very different formula, the number 2^{n-1}. You will see why this is of interest to me.

Given the time, and then the fact that this is not of interest to absolutely everybody here, I cannot develop this now. However, I welcome contributions, as I usually do, in my helpless way. I solicit grammarians once in a while, to give me a little pointer. They do, but they're always poor ones. I've solicited mathematicians, a great many already, to respond to me on this matter, and the truth is they turn a deaf ear. I have to tell you that they cling to this non-denumerability of the parts of the set like fleas to the skin of a dog.

None the less, I propose the following, which holds its own small interest. I shall go straight to one point, which will leave to one side another point to which I should like to return afterwards. By replacing the notion of *parts* with that of *partition*, it is necessary – in the same way that we have admitted that the parts of the infinite set would

be $2^{\aleph_0}$, the smallest of the transfinites, the one that is constituted by the cardinal of the set of integers – that instead of getting $2^{\aleph_0}$, we get $2^{\aleph_0-1}$.

I suspect that this will give anyone an inkling of the misuse that consists in presupposing the bipartition of an infinite set. If, as the formula itself bears the trace, what is called *the set of the parts* leads to a formula that contains the number 2 raised to the power of the elements of the set, is this altogether admissible, above all from the moment we call induction into question when the infinite set is at issue? How is it admissible that we should accept a formula that shows so plainly that it's a matter, not of *parts* of the set, but of its *partition*?

To this I will add something that possesses its own special interest. Of course, $\aleph_0$ is merely an index. It's an index that has not been taken at random in that it has been wrought to perform a designation. There is the whole series of integers that can, in principle, serve as the index of what is involved in the set inasmuch as it grounds the transfinite. Nevertheless, as soon as what is at stake is the exponential function, and now that it seems we have misused induction by allowing ourselves to find therein the test of the non-denumerability of the parts of the infinite set, would we not find here, on closer inspection, another function for this nought, the nought in exponential power, namely that, whichever the number, designating its power with the exponent 0 makes it equal to 1? To reiterate, any number to the power of 1 is itself, but a number to the power of 0 is always 1, for the very simple reason that a number to the power of minus 1 is its inverse. Therefore, 1 serves as the pivotal element here.

From this moment forth, the partition of the transfinite set leads to the following. If in this instance we make $\aleph_0$ equal to 1, then what seems to be altogether admissible for the partition of the set is that the sequence of integers is supported by nothing other than the reiteration of the One, the One that came out of the empty set. It is in reproducing that it constitutes what I gave last time as the principle displayed in Pascal's triangle, at the level of the cardinality of the monads. Behind the supports – I'm saying this for the deaf ones who have been wondering what I said – you have what I call the *nad*, that is to say, the One that has come out of the empty set, which is the reiteration of the lack.

I stress that the One at issue is specifically what set theory replaces only with the reiteration of the empty set, whereby this theory shows the true nature of the *nad*.

Indeed, this is affirmed, from Cantor's own pen, in the principle of the set – which is certainly *naïve*, as one says – when he is opening up this truly sensational path. What Cantor's pen asserts is that the elements of the set can be as diverse as one might please, on the sole condition that we posit that each of them are what he will go so

far as to call *objects of our intuition or of our thought*.[6] This is how he expresses it. Indeed, why deny him this? It means nothing more than something as eternal as one may wish. It's utterly clear that as soon as you mix intuition with thought, you get signifiers, which of course is made manifest by the fact that this is written *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*. What is said, however, is specifically that what is ruled out when it comes to the membership of an element in a set is that any element should be repeated as such. Therefore, any element of a set subsists qua *distinct*. When it comes to what is involved in the empty set, it is affirmed as a founding principle of set theory that it can only be One. This One – the *nad* that is the principle behind the emergence of the numerical One, of the One from which an integer is made – is thus something that is posited as lying at the origin of the empty set itself.

This notion is important because we are examining this structure to the extent that for us in the analytic discourse the One suggests itself as the principle behind repetition. Therefore, it is a matter, here, precisely of the sort of One that finds itself marked out as never being anything but a lack, an empty set.

However, now that I have introduced the function of the *partition*, there is a point of Pascal's triangle that you will allow me to examine. With the two columns I have just made, I have enough to show you what my question marks.

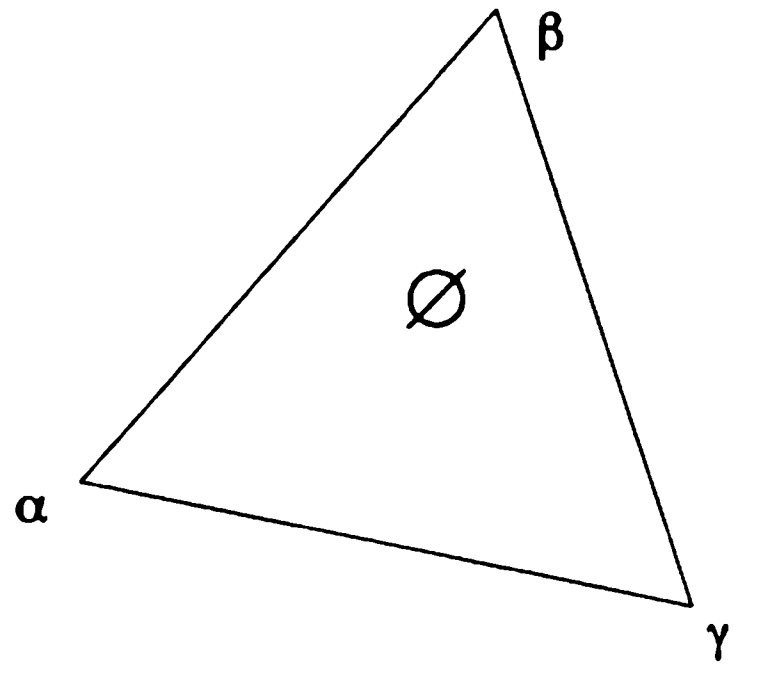
If it is true that as the number of the partitions we have only the number that was previously assigned to the set n–1, the set whose cardinal number is one unit less than the cardinal of a set, see how, on the basis of this number that corresponds to the presumed parts of the set that we shall call, more briefly, *lower by one*, the parts – which will find themselves in a bipartition – will compose the higher set, in accordance with the first statement. Each time, we have to add together the two numbers in the column to the left, one immediately to the left and the other above it. Here we obtain the figure 10, from the figure 4, here, and the figure 6.

1	1	1	1	1	1
	1	2	3	4	5
		1	3	6	10
			1	4	10
				1	5
					1

What does this mean? It means that we obtain the first figure, that of the monads of the set, of the elements of the cardinal number of

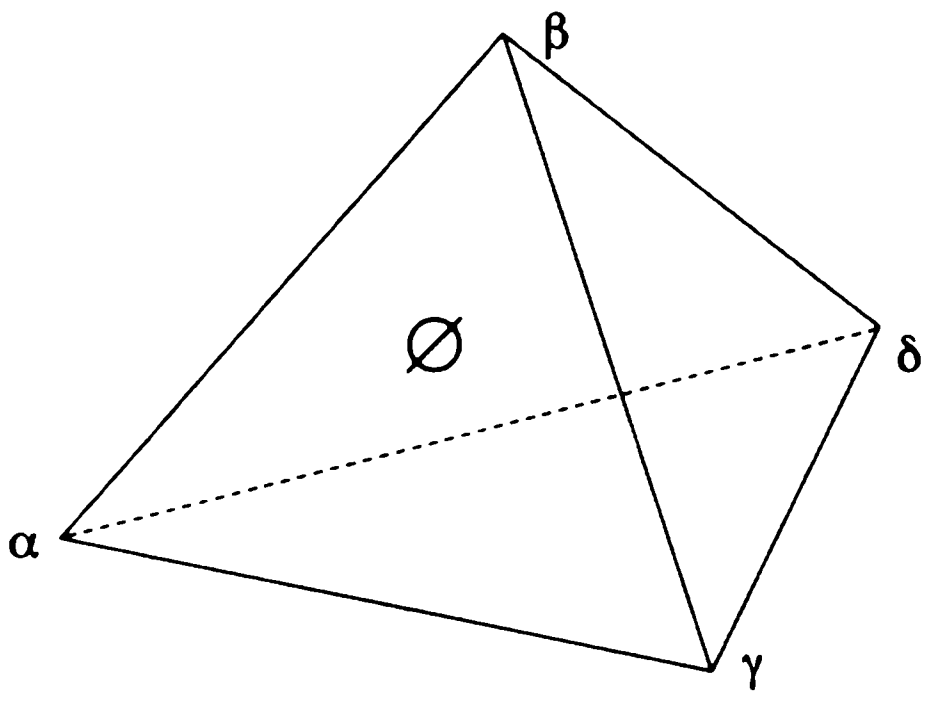
the set, solely from the fact of having put, by means of what I would call a necessary misuse, the empty set on the row of the monadic elements. In other words, it is by adding the empty set to each of the four monads from the previous column that we obtain the cardinal number of the monads, of the elements, of the higher set.

To make this figurable, let's simply try to see now what this yields in a diagram. To make things more straightforward, let's take the column before, the three monads, and not the four. We figure the set by means of a circle. But we figure the empty set as follows. It's not important for it to be in the centre.



We have said, when it's a matter of forming the tetradic set, that this empty set will come to the preceding row of monads. To represent it with a tetrahedron – of course, it's not about tetrahedra, it's about numbers – if this is designated by the Greek letters α, β, γ, we will have, here, the empty set as a fourth single-member element in the order of these subsets.

However, it no less remains that the empty set still exists at the level of this new set. At the level of this new set, we shall give a different term to what has just been extracted from the empty set. Since we already have α, β, γ, we shall call it δ.



What does this lead us to see? At the level of the elements of the antepenultimate subsets, we can see, to remain in intuition, the five quadrangles that can be highlighted in a polyhedral with five vertices.[7] There, too, what do we have to take up? We have to take up the four triangles of the tetrad in so far as we are going to be able to perform three different subtractions. This will be added together here, and constitutes it as a set, or more precisely as a subset. How can we make up our count, unless at this same level, where we will only have three subsets, each comprising three elements, we add to them the *single* elements of the set? Thus, α, β, γ, δ, in not having been subsumed into a set, that is, in being defined as *elements* – they are not *sets* – but in being isolated from what includes them in the set, they must be counted in order for us to have our count of four. To yield the partial aggregate of the figure 5 at the level of the five-element set, we have to bring in the elements that are four in number qua simply juxtaposed, and not as subsumed into a set, a subset in this instance.

We notice that, in set theory, every element is worth any other. And it is indeed in this way that unity can be generated. It is precisely in that the said concept of *distinct and definite*[8] on this occasion represents the fact that *distinct* can only mean *radical difference*, since nothing can resemble itself. There are no sorts. All that is distinguished in the same way is the same element. This is what this means.

By taking only the element of pure difference, we can also see it as the sameness of this difference. I mean, to illustrate this, that in set theory, one element is absolutely equivalent – as has already been demonstrated on the second line – to an empty set, because the empty set can also come into play as an element. Everything that is defined as an element is equivalent to the empty set. However, taking this equivalence, this sameness of absolute difference, as isolable – and not as subsumed into this aggregative inclusion, which would make it a subset – means that sameness as such is, at one point, counted.

This strikes me as having great importance, and very precisely, for example, at the level of what is played out in Plato, where similitude is turned into an idea of substance, a universal in the realist perspective, in so far as this universal is reality. What we see is that the idea of *like-for-like* is not introduced at the same level. This is what I alluded to in my most recent disquisition up at the Panthéon. The sameness of the elements of the set is, as such, counted as playing its role in the parts of the set.

This certainly holds importance for us, because what is at issue at the level of analytic theory? Analytic theory sees the One rearing

its head at two of its levels. At a first level, the One is the One that repeats. It lies at the foundation of this major incidence in the analysand's speaking, which he decries as a certain repetition with regard to a signifying structure. On the other hand, considering the diagram that I have provided for the analytic discourse, what is produced when the subject is placed at the level of the jouissance of speaking? What is produced, and which I have designated at the storey of surplus jouissance, is S_1. This is a signifying production that I propose to acknowledge, even if it means setting myself the task of giving you a sense of its incidence, but in what exactly?

What is the sameness of difference? What does it mean that something that we designate in the signifier by means of diverse letters can be *these same*? What might *these same* mean, if not that this is unique, based indeed on the hypothesis that the function of the element starts with in set theory? The One at issue, which the subject produces – an ideal point, let's say – in analysis, is, contrary to what is at issue in repetition, the One as One by itself. It is the One inasmuch as, whatever difference might exist, all differences are worth as much as another. There is only one of them, and this is *difference per se*.

It is with this that I wanted to bring this disquisition to a close this evening, besides the fact that it so happens that the time and my weariness are hurrying me to it. In the coming sessions I will give you an illustration of the function of the S_1 in the way I have positioned it in the formula that gives its rightful status to the analytic discourse.

4 May 1972

XII

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT TRUTH

Wisdom is knowledge of jouissance
They peel away and go astray
The analyst does not affect a semblance
The poverty of the phenomenology of love
The inaccessible cardinals

It's hard for me to blaze a trail for you in a discourse that is of interest to not all of you. I shall say, that is of interest to you *as not all*, and I shall even add, *only as not all.*

1

One thing is clear, and this is the key character of the *tous*, of the *all*, in Freud's thinking. The notion of the crowd that he inherited from that imbecile called Gustave Le Bon served him in entifying this *all.* It comes as no surprise that he discovered in this the necessity of a *There exists.* On that occasion, the only aspect of it that he was able to see was what he translated as the unary trait, *der einziger Zug.*

The unary trait has nothing to do with the *Yad'lun* that I've been trying to tighten up this year, on the grounds that we don't have better things to do, which I've been expressing as . . . *or worse.* It wasn't just for the sake of it that I said to say it adverbially.

I shall say right away that the unary trait is what repetition as such is marked by. Repetition doesn't ground any *all*, nor does it identify anything, because tautologically, so to speak, there cannot be a first of them.

It is in this respect that all the psychology of something that is translated as *des foules*, crowd psychology, misses what stands to be seen here with a bit more luck, namely the nature of the *pas-tous*, the *not-all* that grounds this psychology, a nature that belongs precisely

to *woman*, in inverted commas, which for father Freud constituted a problem right to the end, the problem of what she wants. I've already spoken to you about this. Let's come back to what I'm trying to spin out for you this year.

Anything whatsoever can serve to write the One of repetition. It's not that it's nothing, it's that it can be written with any old thing so long as it's easy to repeat in figures. For the being who finds himself in charge of making sure that, in language, *it speaks*, nothing lends itself more easily to figuration than what he is designed to reproduce naturally, namely, as they say, his *like* or his *type*. Not that he knows from the start how to produce his figure, but this figure marks him, and this he can give back to it. He can give back the mark that is precisely the unary trait. The unary trait is the support of what I started off from under the heading of the *mirror stage*, that is, *imaginary identification*.

However, this checking off of a support that is *typical*, that is to say, imaginary, the mark as such, the unary trait, does not constitute a judgement of value. It occurred to me that people said I used to make value judgements of the type – *imaginary*, poo, *symbolic*, yum-yum. But everything that I said, wrote, and inscribed in the graphs – which I schematized in the optical model where the subject is reflected in the unary trait, and where it's on this basis alone that he gets his bearings as an *ideal ego* – all of this insists precisely on how imaginary identification operates through a symbolic mark. So, whoever decries Manichaeism in my doctrine – the judgement of value, *bah!* – simply demonstrates what this is, on account of having heard me thus since the start of my disquisition, which is nevertheless coeval with it. A pig that rears back on its hind legs to become a standing pig is still the pig that it was of origin, but the pig is alone in imagining that anyone remembers this.

To come back to Freud, thus far I have only commented on the function that he introduced under the heading of narcissism. The unbelievable aspect of the institution for which he envisaged what he calls the *economy of the psyche*, namely the organization to which he deemed he should entrust the re-launch of his doctrine, stems indeed from the error he made when tying the ego, without any relay, to his *Massenpsychologie*.

Why did he want it to be so? He wanted to establish the safeguarding of a kernel of truth. This is what Freud thought it would be, and this is also how those who have proven to be the products of this conception express themselves in order to draw consideration thereof to themselves, even if they declare this kernel to be modest. Given the point things have reached in present-day opinion, this is comical. To make this apparent, it's enough to indicate what

is implied in the sort of guarantor that is known as a school of wisdom. This is what it has always been called. Is this what it is?[1]

As is plainly stated in the very book of patience, of sapience, that the Ecclesiastes is, wisdom is the knowledge of jouissance. Everything that is posited as such is characterized as esotericism, and it may be said that there is no religion, besides the Christian religion, that doesn't *s'en pare*, in the two senses of the word. In all religions, the Buddhist and the Mohammedan, not to mention the others, there is this *parading* and this way of *parrying*, I mean, of marking out the place of this knowledge of jouissance. Need I mention the tantras, for one of these religions, and the Sufis for the other? This is what the pre-Socratic philosophies also authorized for themselves, and it was what Socrates broke with. He replaced it – and we may say nominally – with the relation to the object *a* that is none other than what is called the *soul*.

The operation is illustrated well enough by the partner he is given in the *Symposium* in the guise of the perfectly historical Alcibiades, in other words, in the guise of sexual frenzy, which is the normal culmination of the discourse of the absolute master, if I may say so, which produces nothing but symbolic castration. I remind you of the mutilation of the hermai, which I mentioned in its time when I was using the *Symposium* to spell out transference. From Socrates onwards, this knowledge of jouissance was only to survive on the fringes of civilization, not without thereby feeling what Freud discreetly calls *its discontents*.

Once in a while some crackpot goes bellowing on, falling in with this undermining. It only goes down in history when he's capable of making it heard in the very discourse that produced this knowledge, Christian discourse, to get things perfectly straight, because, make no mistake, it's the heir to Socratic discourse. It's the up-to-date discourse of the master, the latest model of the master, and the young women who are model models are its offspring. I am assured that, within this kind, the one I'm calling *model model*, which now parades under various initials but which invariably starts with an M, they are aplenty.[2] I know because I've been told. Indeed, from where I'm standing, for me to be able to see them, it's not enough just to look at you, because to begin with, they are *pas toutes*, not all, model models.

Clearly this produces an effect when the remark that there has been an undermining – I said that it goes down in history – is proffered by the likes of Nietzsche. I simply note that he can only proffer it – I mean, make himself heard – by voicing it in the only audible discourse, namely the one that determines the up-to-date master as his progeny. Naturally, all these lovely people are delighted by this, but it changes nothing. Everything that has been produced has been

part and parcel of it from the start. Of course, the fact that the initials themselves, which were at issue just now, have also been there from the start is only discovered *nachträglich*.

I don't think it will be unhelpful to underscore here that the *pas-tous* has just slid quite naturally to *pas toutes*. That's what it's there for. Today I'm merely showing how all this blather can highlight one movement or another in the emergence of discourse, underscoring how its meaning remains problematic. In particular, it remains problematic on account of what ought not to be heard in what I have just said, namely a sense of history, because, like any other meaning, it only assumes clarity through what comes to pass, and what comes to pass depends only on fortune. This does not mean, however, that it isn't calculable. On what basis? On the basis of the One that is found therein. You mustn't be mistaken, however, as to which One you find. It's never the one you're seeking.

This is why, as I once said in echo of another who was in my situation, *I don't seek, I find*. The way, the only way, to avoid being mistaken is to start from the finding, to question oneself about what was there – if one so wanted – for the seeking.

What is the formula with which, once upon a time, I articulated transference? It was the now famous formula of the *subject supposed to know*. My artefacts of writing demonstrate a pleonasm here. *Subject* may be written with a barred S, which calls to mind how a subject is only ever supposed, *ὑποκείμενον*.

I only use this redundant form given the deafness of others. It's clear that knowledge is that which is supposed, and no one has ever made any mistake about it. Supposed of whom? Certainly not of the analyst, but of his position. On this point, you can consult my Seminars, because this is what's striking when you reread them. There are no blunders, unlike my *Écrits*.

Yes, that's how it is. It's because I write quickly. I'd never told myself that before, but I noticed it because it so happened that I recently spoke to someone, since the last time that some of you heard me at Sainte-Anne.

2

At Sainte-Anne, I put forward some items on the basis of set theory, which has been drafted in here to call into question the One I was speaking about just now.

I always take my risks, and it can't be said that I didn't this time, with all the necessary humour, by writing *two to the power of Aleph subscript nought minus one*.

$2^{\aleph_0-1}$

I think I've sufficiently underscored for you the difference that lies between the subscript 0 and the function of 0 when it is used in an exponential scale. Of course, this doesn't mean that I didn't tickle the sensitivity of any mathematicians who might have been in my audience that evening. What I wanted to say was in the expectation that I might receive some reaction. It was an appeal. What I wanted to say is that, subtract the One, and this entire edifice of numbers – when understood as the product of a logical operation, in particular the operation that proceeds from the position of 0 and the definition of the successor number – would come undone from the entire chain, until it comes back to its starting point.

It's curious that I had to summon someone expressly in order to hear from her lips the legitimacy of what I also uttered last time, namely that this entails not only the One that is produced from nought, but also another that, as such, I marked out as ascertainable in the chain, in passing from one number to another, when it's a matter of counting its parts. It is with this point that I should like to conclude.

Right now, however, I shall content myself with noting that the person who confirmed this to me is the same who, in a dedication that she honoured me with in connection with an article, herself expressed her perception that I wrote quickly. This idea had not occurred to me because what I write, I rewrite ten times. But it's true that the tenth time round, I do write very quickly. This is why blunders remain, because it's a text. A text, as the name indicates, can only be woven by tying knots. When one ties knots, there is something that remains and is left dangling.

I apologize for this. I have only ever written for people who were supposed to have heard me, and when, as an exception, I did write beforehand – a congress report, for example – I only ever gave an address on my report. Have a look at what I said in Rome, for the congress that went by the same name. I wrote the written report that people know about, and it was published in its time. In my written piece, I didn't take up what I said, but you shall certainly be more at ease with what I said than in the report itself. So, those for whom, all told, I carried out this work of logical recovery, which had the Rome Address as its point of departure, as soon as they give up the critical line that results from this work, to return to those beings – whom I show precisely that this address should forgo – and to make them the support of the analysand's discourse, they do no more than go back to chattering. This is why these people who gave

the Address a wide berth, no sooner said than done, utterly lost the sense of it.

In peeling away from the line into which I was guiding them, it ensued that they came out with – indeed, what is more, that they even published in cold print – things that showed they no longer knew anything about my *subject supposed to know*. They went so far as to say that to suppose this knowledge in the position of the analyst was quite dreadful because it amounts to saying that the analyst affects a semblance. There is just a small hairline crack in this, which I already pointed out earlier, which is that the analyst does not affect a semblance, he occupies the position of semblance.

The analyst occupies the position of semblance legitimately because there is no other tenable position in relation to jouissance such as he has to grasp it in the remarks of the one who, in the capacity of analysand, is supported by the analyst in his enunciation as a subject. It is from here alone that it may be perceived how far the jouissance of this authorized enunciation can be led without wreaking overly manifest havoc. But semblance does not feed on jouissance. Those who fall back into the discourse of this same old rut would have it that semblance scorns jouissance. This semblance lends its loudhailer to something other than itself, and precisely by showing itself as a mask, one that is openly worn, as on the Greek stage.

Semblance takes effect by being manifest. When an actor wears a mask, he is not pulling a face. He is not a realist. The pathos is reserved for the *chœur*, the choir, who give themselves over to it *à cœur joie*, wholeheartedly. What for? So that the spectator, the spectator of the stage in Antiquity, may find there his own communitarian surplus jouissance. This is indeed what for us constitutes the value of cinema. There, the mask is something else. It is the unreal aspect of the projection. But let's come back to us.

It is in giving voice to something that the analyst can demonstrate that this reference to the Greek stage is opportune. For what is he doing in occupying as such this position of semblance? Nothing other than demonstrating, than being able to demonstrate, that the terror that is felt in relation to the desire by which neurosis is organized, which we call *defence*, is, in regard to what is produced there as a labour of sheer loss, merely a conjuration to arouse pity. At either end of this sentence you can find what Aristotle designated as the effect that tragedy has on the listener.

Where did I say that the knowledge from which this voice originates would be semblance? Need it even appear to be so? Need it even assume an inspired tone? Nothing of the sort. Neither walking the walk nor talking the talk of semblance is suited to the analyst. Yet, there you have it. Since it's clear that this knowledge is not the

esoteric aspect of jouissance, nor merely the *savoir faire* of making a face, one must resolve to speak of truth as a fundamental position, even if not all is known about this truth, since I define it by its half-saying, by the fact that it cannot come more than midsay.

But what, then, is the knowledge that is assured by truth? It is nothing but what stems from what is noted as a result of the fact of positing truth on the basis of the signifier. This poise is rather tough to sustain, but is confirmed in yielding a non-initiatory knowledge, because it proceeds – no offence to anyone – from the subject who is subjected as such, by a discourse, to production. This is the subject that mathematicians can be found qualifying as *creative*,[3] specifying that a subject is indeed what is at issue, which corroborates the subject in my logic, exhausting himself to be produced as an effect of the signifier while of course still remaining just as distinct from it as a real number is from a series of which the convergence is assured rationally.

Saying *non-initiatory knowledge* is tantamount to saying *knowledge that is taught by other paths besides the direct paths of jouissance*. These paths are wholly conditioned by the founding failure of sexual jouissance. By that, I mean this whereby the constitutive jouissance of the speaking being is differentiated from sexual jouissance. The efflorescence of this separation and differentiation is certainly brief and limited, and this is why it has been possible to draw up a catalogue thereof, precisely on the basis of the analytic discourse, as an absolutely finite list of drives.

The finitude of this list is concomitant with the impossibility that is demonstrated in the veritable questioning of sexual relation as such. More exactly, it is in the very practice of sexual relation that the link – which as speaking beings we claim lies entirely elsewhere – between the impossible and the real is affirmed. The real is attested to by this alone.

All reality is suspect. It is not to be suspected of being imaginary, as is imputed to me, for in truth it's fairly patent that the imaginary such as it emerges in animal ethology is an articulation of the real. What we have to suspect of any reality is that it might be fantasmatic. And what allows of an escape from this is that an impossibility in the symbolic formula that we are enabled to draw from it demonstrates what is real therein. It is not for nothing that here, to designate the symbolic in question, the word *term* shall be used.

Love, after all, could be taken as the object of a phenomenology. The literary expression of what has been ventured on love is profuse enough for it to be presumed that something may be gleaned from it. Even so, it is curious that, apart from a few authors, Stendhal, Baudelaire, . . . and let's ditch the phenomenology of love in Surrealism, the moralism of which makes us go to pieces – forgive the

pun – this literary expression comes up so short that it cannot even be apparent to us. The only thing that would interest us is its strangeness.

While this suffices to designate everything that is set down in this regard in the nineteenth-century novel, the opposite is the case for everything that came before. Look at *L'Astrée*, which for its contemporaries was no small matter. We comprehend so little of what it might have been for these contemporaries that we feel nothing more than boredom on reading it, and thus it is rather difficult for us to constitute this phenomenology. Taking up its inventory, one can only deduce the poverty of what it draws on.

Psychoanalysis went venturing into this quite innocently. Of course, what it encountered at first was not especially cheerful. It has to be acknowledged that it didn't limit itself to this, and what remains of what it initially opened up by way of example is the model of love as furnished by the mother's care of her son. This is also inscribed in the Chinese character *Hǎo*, which means *good*, or *that which is good.*

好

It is composed of this, which means *son*, *Tseu* –

子

And this, which means *woman*, *Nǔ* –

女

Stretching this out from the daughter who cherishes the senile father, and even up to what I allude to at the end of my *Subversion of the Subject*, namely the miner whose wife gives him a rubdown before he fucks her, is not what will afford any great clarification of sexual relation.

Knowledge about truth is useful for the analyst to the extent that it allows him to widen a little his relation to these subject-effects, which I said he authorizes by leaving the field open to the analysand's discourse. Indeed, that the analyst ought to comprehend the analysand's discourse strikes me as preferable. But as to *whence* he ought to comprehend it, this is a question that doesn't seem to force itself on people's vision in merely noting that he should be occupying the position of semblance in this discourse.

Of course, it needs to be accentuated that he occupies this position of semblance as *a*. The analyst cannot comprehend anything except in respect of what the analysand says, namely in seeing himself not as the cause, but rather as the effect of this discourse, which does not prevent him by rights from recognizing himself therein.

This is why it is advisable for him to have gone through this in his didactic analysis, which can only be dependable when it has not been undertaken under this heading.

3

There is one facet of knowledge about truth that derives its strength from entirely neglecting its content.

This hammers home how the signifying articulation is its time and its place, and it does so to such an extent that something is shown which is nothing but this articulation.

The *monstration* of this articulation, in the passive sense, finds itself assuming an active sense and imposing itself as a *demonstration* to the speaking being who, in this instance, can only acknowledge, for the signifier, not merely inhabiting it but being no more than its mark. The freedom to choose one's axioms, that is to say, the point of departure chosen for this demonstration, consists solely in undergoing its consequences as a subject, consequences that, for their part, are not free.

Truth can be constructed on the sole basis of 0 and 1. This came about only at the start of the last century, somewhere between Boole and De Morgan, with the emergence of mathematical logic.

It should not be thought that 0 and 1 here stand for the opposition between truth and falsehood. This was the revelation by Frege and Cantor, which only assumes its value *nachträglich*. This 0 was said to be falsehood, which encumbered the Stoics for whom it was just that. This led to the charming folly of material implication. Not without reason did some refuse this. It posits that the implication that would be true is the one that makes formulated truth result from formulated falsehood. The falsehood that implies truth is a true implication.

There is nothing of the like in the following position, in mathematical logic –

$$(0 \rightarrow 1) \rightarrow 1$$

That 0 should imply 1 is an implication of 1 – that is, of the true – that can be noted down. For 0 carries just as much veridical truth

as 1, because 0 is not the negation of the truth, 1, but the truth of the lack that consists in 1 being missing at 2. This means that, on the plane of truth alone, truth can only speak occasionally to affirm itself, as was done for centuries, as *double truth*, but never as the whole truth.

0 is not the negation of just anything, especially of any multitude. It plays its role in the construction of number. As everyone knows, it is altogether accommodating. Were there only noughts, O how smoothly things would coast along. What it indicates, however, is that when there would have to be two of them, there is only ever one of them, and this is a truth. *That 0 implies 1, the whole implying 1*, is to be taken not as falsehood implying truth, but as two truths, one implying the other. But it can additionally be taken as affirming that the true only ever occurs in missing its mate.

The sole thing to which the 0 is opposed, but resolutely so, is that there could be a relationship with 1 such that 2 would result from it. It is not true – which I will mark with the bar that befits it – that *0 implying 1, implies 2*.

$$\overline{(0 \rightarrow 1) \rightarrow 2}$$

How, then, are we to grasp what is involved in this 2, without which it is quite clear that no number whatsoever can be constructed? I haven't been speaking about numerating them, but about constructing them. It is for precisely this reason that last time I led you as far as the Aleph. It was to give you a sense, in passing, of how in the generation from one cardinal number to another, in the counting of the subsets, something somewhere is counted as such that is another One. I marked this out using Pascal's triangle, noting that each number that, to the right, stands as the number of parts, is made by adding together what corresponds to it as parts in the previous set.

1	1
3	4
3	6
1	4
	1

Counting the subsets

It is this 1, the 1 that I characterized when it was a question of 3, for example, namely *ab* in opposition to *c*, and of *ba* which comes from the same. For there to be 4 of them, to *ab*, to *ba*, and to *ac*, we

have to put *abc*, the juxtaposition of the elements from the previous set – their juxtaposition as such – which come into account in the simple capacity of 1.[4] This is what I called the sameness of difference, since it is through no other property but that of their difference that the elements that here support the subsets are themselves counted in the generation of the parts that will ensue.

I insist. It is a question of what is at issue with respect to what has been tallied. It is the *One-to-boot*, in so far as it is counted as such in what has been tallied in the Aleph of its parts with each passage from a number to its successor. In counting difference as such as a property, what does the multiplication that is expressed in the exponential 2^{n-1} of the parts of the higher set, of its bipartition, bear out? What is borne out in the Aleph when put to the test of the denumerable? It is here that it is revealed that, given a One, the One at issue, what is at issue is another One. What is constituted on the basis of 1 and 0 as the inaccessibility of 2 is only delivered at the level of the $\aleph_0$, that is to say, the actual infinite.

To bring this to a close, I'm going to give you a sense of this in a form that is quite straightforward. It has to do with what can be said with respect to what is involved in the integers concerning a property that would be one of accessibility.

Let's define this property as follows – a number is accessible when it can be produced either as a sum or as an exponentiation of numbers that are smaller than it. In this respect, the start of the numbers is confirmed as not being accessible, and very precisely up to 2. This is of interest to us most especially with respect to this 2, because I have underscored sufficiently that in the relation between 1 and 0, the 1 is generated in that 0 is the mark of lack.

With 0 and 1, whether you add them, or raise one to the other, or even to itself, in an exponential relation, 2 is never reached. For the number 2, in the sense I have just set it out, the test as to whether it can generate smaller numbers, whether through a summation or an exponentiation, proves to be negative. There is no 2 that can be generated by means of 1 and 0.

A side-note from Gödel is instructive in this regard, that the $\aleph_0$, the actual infinite, turns out to realize the same case.

Meanwhile, for what is involved in the integers upwards of 2, there is no number that cannot be realized by one of the two operations using smaller numbers. Start with 3. It can be made of 1 and 2. And 4 can be made by raising 2 to its own exponentiation, and so forth.

At the level of $\aleph_0$, the rift that I'm calling inaccessibility is reproduced. There is strictly no number that ever gains access to the Aleph, irrespective of whether one uses a number by adding it to

itself indefinitely, or even to each of its successors, or else by raising it to a power however high you like.

It is quite striking – and this is what I must leave aside for today, perhaps to resume it in a smaller circle should this be of interest to some of you – that from Cantor's construction it results that there is no Aleph, starting from $\aleph_0$, that may be held to be accessible. It is no less true that in the opinion of those who have pushed forward this difficulty in set theory, it is only through the supposition that, in these Alephs, there is inaccessibility, that what I shall call *consistency* may be reintroduced into the integers.

In other words, without this supposition of inaccessibility being produced somewhere in the Alephs, what is at issue, and which was my starting point, is what is designed to suggest to you the usefulness of there being Oneness, should you manage to hear what is involved in this bipartition, this one-to-one between man and woman, which slips away from one instant to the next.

Is everything that is not man, woman? This is what tends to be accepted. However, since woman is *not-all*, why would all that is not woman be man?

The fact that in this one-to-one it is impossible to apply, in this matter of gender, something that would be the principle of contradiction, the fact that it takes nothing less than the acceptance of the inaccessibility of something beyond the Aleph for non-contradiction to be consistent, and the fact that it is valid to say that which is not 1 is 0, and that which is not 0 is 1, this is what I am indicating to you as what ought to enable the analyst to hear, a little further than through the spectacle lenses of the object *a*, what is produced by way of effect, what is created by way of One, by a discourse that hinges only upon the grounding of the signifier.

10 May 1972

XIII

THE FOUNDING OF SEXUAL DIFFERENCE

The geniality of strike action
The ancillary position of truth and meaning
Wavering in the sharing-out of the sexes
Theory of hunting
Difference and attribute

Analysis leads us to formulate the function Φx. What is at issue is to find out whether there exists an x that would satisfy this function. So, naturally, this presupposes that we spell out what *existence* might be.

It is fairly certain that, historically speaking, this notion of existence only emerged with the intrusion of the mathematical real as such. This proves nothing, however, because we are not here to set out the history of thought. There can be no history of thought. Thought is, in itself, an evasion. Under the name *mémoire*, it projects the misrecognition of its moire.

This does not prevent us from being able to try to map something out by starting from what I have written down in the form of a function.

1

I started to utter something that I hope will be of service to you. This something is a fact of saying. If I write it down, it goes in one direction, in the sense that it's a function that bears no relation to anything that *fonde d'eux*, that from *eux*, from them, founds One.

You can see that the whole trick is in the subjunctive, which belongs both to the verb *fonder* and to the verb *fondre*.[1] *D'eux* has not founded into One, nor is One founded by *d'eux*. This is what Aristophanes tells in a very nice tale in the *Symposium*. They were

cleft in twain, for at first they were shaped as a beast with two backs, or as a beast *à dos d'eux*, with the back of them both. Of course, if the fable were thought in the least to be something other than a fable, that is, to be consistent, on no account would this imply that they should produce offspring with two backs, *à dos d'eux*. No one remarks on this, and fortunately so, because a myth is a myth, and this one says quite enough.

I first envisaged this myth in a more modern form, in the form of Φx. All in all, this is what, concerning sexual relations, presents itself to us as a kind of discourse. I'm speaking about the mathematical function. At the very least, I propose this to you as a model that in this regard would allow us to ground something else – semblance . . . *or worse*.

This morning, I got off to the worse start. In spite of it all, I don't think it will be extraneous to let you know about this, if only to see where it might lead.

It was due to the brief power cut we had. I don't how long it lasted for you, but for me it went on until ten o'clock. It was a royal pain in the arse, because this is the time of day when I usually gather together these little notes and think them over. The power cut didn't help matters. What's more, this same power cut caused someone to smash a tooth mug of which I was particularly fond. If there are people here who love me, they can send me a new one. Then I might have several, which would allow me to smash all of them save the one I might prefer. I have a little courtyard that is there just for that.

So, I told myself that this power cut wasn't the doing of just anyone, but was a workers' decision. For my part, you cannot imagine the respect I have for the geniality of this thing known as a strike, industrial action. What sensitivity, to go no further than that. A strike is the most social thing there is in the whole world. It represents fabulous respect for the social bond. On this occasion, however, this power cut that had the purport of a strike carried a slight overtone.

At that time of day, when I was cooking up what I would be saying to you now, how bothersome it must have been for she who, being the worker's wife, is called, from the lips of the worker himself – despite everything, I do rub shoulders with them – the *bourgeoise*.[2] It's true that this is what they call them.

So, my mind started to wander, because all of this holds together. They are the workers, the exploited, precisely because they still prefer this to the sexual exploitation of the *bourgeoise*. That's worse. It's the . . . *or worse*, you understand?

What does this lead to, laying out articulations concerning things about which one can do nothing? It cannot be said that sexual

relation presents itself solely in the form of exploitation. It's prior to that. It's because of this that exploitation is organized, because we don't even have this kind of exploitation. There you go. This is worse. It's the . . . *or worse*.

It's not serious. It's not serious, even though we can see that this is precisely where a discourse that would not be a discourse of semblance ought to be. But it's a discourse that would end badly. It wouldn't be a social bond at all, in the way that a discourse needs to be.

So, now, what is at issue is the psychoanalytic discourse. It's a matter of making sure that he who functions as the *a* in this discourse should hold the position of semblance.

Of course, I explained this to you last time, and naturally it washed over you like water off a duck's back, though in the end some of you did seem to have got a little damp. I've had some feedback. Those of you who took an interest in it were moved by it. There are some psychoanalysts who have something that torments them, that anguishes them every so often.

This is not why I'm saying this, why I'm insisting on the fact that the object *a* should hold the position of semblance. It's not to get them all anxious. I would even prefer them not to have any anxiety. Well, that it should make them anxious is not a bad sign because it means that my discourse is not entirely superfluous, that it can take on a meaning. But this is not enough. That a discourse should have meaning guarantees absolutely nothing, because this meaning has at least to be ascertained. If you do that, well, Brownian motion means that from one instant to the next, it has a meaning. This is precisely what makes the psychoanalyst's position difficult, because the function of the object *a* is displacement.

It wasn't in connection with the psychoanalyst that I first fetched the object *a* down from the heavens. I started to circumscribe it, at a point from which it couldn't budge, in a little graph that was designed to provide the skeleton, or the bearings, of the formations of the unconscious. In the position of semblance, it's not so easy to stay put, because the object *a* will just slip through your paws in two shakes of a lamb's tail. As I explained when I started speaking about this, in connection with language, it's that *il court, il court, le furet*, in everything you say.[3] It is somewhere else from one instant to the next.

This is why we are trying to grasp *whence* something could be situated that would lie beyond meaning, beyond the meaning that also means that I can obtain no other effect but anxiety, when this wasn't remotely my aim. It is in this respect that we are concerned for this real to be anchored.

I say, and not without reason, that this real is mathematical,

because given the experience as a whole, the experience of what is at issue, of what gets formulated, of what in this instance gets written, we are able to put our finger on how there is something here that resists. I mean that this is something of which one cannot say just any old thing. One cannot give just any old meaning to the mathematical real.

This is even quite striking among those who, in a recent age, got close to this real with the preconceived idea of making it account for its meaning on the basis of truth. There was one great eccentric, whose reputation you are aware of because he made quite a splash in the world, by the name of Bertrand Russell. He was at the heart of this enterprise, and it was in fact he who said something along the lines of mathematics being something that is articulated in such a way that, in the end, we don't even know if it's true, or if it has a meaning. This doesn't prevent – indeed this proves – the fact that it cannot be given just any meaning or just any truth, and that it resists to the point of culminating in a result, which I consider to be a success. This success, the way in which it imposes its realness, is precisely due to the fact that neither truth nor meaning dominates here. They are secondary.

This ancillary position of these two thingummies called truth and knowledge remained uncustomary for those people. It made their heads spin a bit when they took the trouble to ponder it. This was the case for Bertrand Russell. He was a thinker. It was an aristocrat's fixation, you see. There's really no reason to view this as an essential function.

Yet those who have been constructing set theory – I'm not trying to be wry – have had quite enough to do in this real to find the time to do some thinking on the side.

The way they have committed themselves to a path which not only can they not leave, but which leads somewhere with a necessity, and then with a fecundity to boot, has meant that they have touched on how this has to do with something altogether different from what is nevertheless employed, which was the step taken in the *initium* of this theory.

2

This initial step consisted in examining everything that was involved in this real. This is where they started because they couldn't fail to see that number was the real, and because for some time there had been some exchanging of fisticuffs with the One.

None the less, it was no mean feat to realize that it could be

called into question as to whether real numbers had anything to do with the One, the 1, the first of the integers, known as the natural numbers. They'd had time, since the seventeenth century, and up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, to approach number very slightly differently from how they did in Antiquity. If this is my point of departure it's because this is what is essential.

Not only *Yad'lun*, but this can be seen in that the One, for its part, does not think. In particular, it does not think *therefore I am*. I hope you remember that even Descartes doesn't say that. He says, *Ça se pense*, *It thinks itself, 'therefore I am'*, in inverted commas. The One does not *think itself*, even all alone, but it says something, and this is even what distinguishes it.[4]

The One didn't wait for people to ask in its regard the question of what this means from the standpoint of truth. It didn't even wait for logic. For this is what logic is. Logic is a matter of ascertaining in grammar what takes shape as the position of truth, which in language makes it suitable for forming truth. *Suitable* does not mean that it will invariably succeed. So, in carefully seeking out its forms, one believes one is approaching what is involved in truth. However, before Aristotle became aware of this relation to grammar, the One had already spoken, and not to say just anything. The One says what it has to say. In the *Parmenides*, it is the One that *se dit*, that *says itself*. It *says itself* – it has to be said – in aiming to be true, hence the tizzy that naturally arises from it as a result.

Among those who cook up knowledge, there's not one who hasn't felt this to be quite a smash. It smashes your tooth mug. Even though there are some who put some goodwill into it, some courage, by saying that after all it could be admitted that this is somewhat far-fetched, we haven't yet got to the bottom of this thing that was nevertheless so straightforward, and which consists in realizing that the One, when it is veridical, when it says what it has to say, leads in every case to the total rejection of any relation to Being.

When the One *s'articule*, when it articulates itself, the only thing that arises from it is that *y en a pas deux*.[5] I said so – it's a fact of saying. You can even find in this, in arm's reach, the confirmation of what I've been saying when I say that truth can only go midsay. You just have to break up the wording. In order to say this, it can only say either *y en a*, *there is*, and, as I say, *Yad'lun*, or else, *pas deux*, *not twain*, which for us is immediately interpreted – there is no such thing as sexual relation. So, as you can see, this is already within our arm's reach.

Of course, it's not within reach of the unian arm of the One to make something of it, in the sense of meaning. Indeed, this is why I recommend to those who want to hold the position of analyst – with all that this entails in terms of knowing how not to slip out of this

position – that they should get up to speed with what could be read simply by working through the *Parmenides*.

But, all the same, this would come up a bit short. We hit the wall with the *Parmenides*, instead of something else happening, which – if, of course, we persevere a little, if we break ourselves in to it, and even if we break ourselves up on it – makes absolutely clear the distinction that there is between a real that is a mathematical real and anything whatsoever of the banter that starts off from this *je ne sais quoi* that is our queasy position, called *truth* or *meaning*.

This doesn't mean, of course, that this reading will not have an effect, an effect of massage, of reinvigoration, a breath of fresh air, a purging, in connection with what will become apparent to us as a requisite with regard to truth or indeed to meaning. But this is precisely what I expect from it. Training oneself to distinguish what is involved in the One, and relating it to this real which is at issue in that it supports number, will already afford the analyst a great deal. I mean that it may come to him from the angle where it is a matter of interpreting, of regenerating meaning, of saying things which are thereby a little less circumvented, a little less shimmering, than all the damned stupidity that can occur to us.

Earlier I gave you, . . . *or worse*, a sample of this on the mere basis of this morning's aggravation. I could have embellished, just like that, on the worker and his *bourgeoise*, and drawn a mythology from it. Besides, it got a laugh out of you, because when it comes to this sort of thing, the field is vast. There is no shortage of meaning and truth. It has even become the academic feeding trough, there is so much of it.

There is such a wide range of it that one day someone will come along to make an ontology out of it, as I told you, an ontology to say that I said that speech was an effect of filling in the open gap that I've been articulating as – *there is no such thing as sexual relation*. That can be rattled off smoothly just like that, a subjectivist interpretation, because it cannot be brought round to the fact that it requires some spiel. It's all quite straightforward.

What I've been trying to do is something different. It's to ensure that in your discourse you include less of this damned stupidity – I'm speaking about the analysts – and, to do so, that you try to air meaning a little with elements that would be somewhat novel.

Yet this is not a requirement that fails to impose itself, because it's quite clear that there is no means of sharing out any two series of attributes – *any*, I say – that would form a male series on one side and on the other the woman series.

To start with, I've avoided saying *man* so as not to lead to any confusion, because I'm going to be elaborating further on this, so

as to stay in the worst. Clearly it's tempting, even for me. I amuse myself. And I'm sure to amuse you by showing you the inanity of what is called *active*, if this is what you ground yourselves on to distinguish man from woman.

This is common currency – man, the dear lad, is active. However, in the sexual relation, it seems to me that it's rather the woman who gets a wriggle on. Indeed, you have only to look at the positions that we shall on no account label as primitive, though it's not because they are to be found in the *tiers monde*, in the third world, which is the world of Monsieur Thiers, is it not? It's plain to see that in normal life – and of course I'm not speaking about those blokes from the Gas and Electricity Board, who have taken their distance, who have set on labour, but rather about a life that we shall simply describe as it is, as it is everywhere, except where our great Christian overhaul has occurred – man twiddles his thumbs while woman does the milling, the grinding, the sewing, the errands, and, in those solid civilizations that have not been lost, she still finds the wherewithal to twirl her rump for the exhilarating satisfaction of the chap beside her. I'm speaking about a dance, of course. So, as far as active and passive are concerned, allow me to . . .

It's true that he does go hunting! And this is no laughing matter, my little ones. This is very important.

Since you're goading me, I'm going to carry on amusing myself. It's unfortunate, because this way I shall never get to the end of what I had to say to you today concerning the One. Since this is making you laugh, however, this matter of hunting, I don't know whether it wouldn't be entirely superfluous to see in this precisely man's virtue. When hunting, there is a virtuous display of what is finest about him, namely to be passive.

I don't know if you're aware of this, because of course all of you here are layabouts. There are no country folk here. None of you go hunting. But even if we did have some country folk here, they don't hunt well. For the country folk – they are not necessarily men, whatever one might say – the game is flushed out into the open. Whack, whack! All the game is driven towards them. That's not what hunting is.

You only have to look at the trance that hunting, when it exists, used to put people in. We have some faint traces of everything they used to offer to the thing in propitiation, which nevertheless was a thing that was no longer there. You understand that they were no more doolally than we are. A slain beast is a slain beast. Only, if they managed to slay the beast it was because they had submitted themselves so fully to everything that goes to make up its moves, its trace, its boundaries, its territory, its sexual preoccupations,

by having substituted themselves for that which does not belong to all that, for the wide-openness, for the unenclosedness, for the unboundedness, of the beast. We have to say the word – for *life*. And when, after having become this life so fully, they had to take it away, we can understand that they found not only that this was unpleasant, but also that it was dangerous, and that it could happen to them as well.

This might be one of those things that made a few people think, because one can still have a sense of such things. I heard this formulated in a curious way by someone who is inordinately intelligent, a mathematician. He said that it might well be that an organism's nervous system is nothing other than what results from its identifying with its prey. The fellow is extrapolating here, but even so, I'm giving you this because it's stimulating. I'm slipping you the idea, and all the more readily in that it's not mine. It was passed on to me, too. You can make what you will of it, of course. But on this basis one can knock together a new theory of evolution that will be a bit more of a hoot than the previous ones. I'm sure this will stimulate the ontological grey matter.

The same is true of the fisher, and, ultimately, of everything whereby man is woman. Think of the way a fisher rubs the underbelly of the trout beneath its rock. There must be some trout ticklers here. There is every chance of that. They would know what I'm talking about. It's quite something.

In the end, all of this does not afford us, on the subject of active and passive, a clear-cut sharing-out. I won't go on and on, because it suffices to compare each of these customary couples with an attempt at any sort of bisexual sharing-out to arrive at results that are every bit as farcical.

So, then, what might that be?

3

Even so, I do have to clean up my own backyard. I don't see why I shouldn't stick with this, because I'm going to be speaking to you on Thursday, 1 June. Can you imagine that? I'm forced to come back from my few days of holiday so as not to miss Sainte-Anne.

When I say *Yad'lun*, this doesn't mean that there is something of the individual. It seems to me that for many of you this is something you already know, but why not? This is precisely why I've been asking you to embed this *Yad'lun* right where it arises. That is to say, *there is no other existence of the One but mathematical existence*.[6] There is One something. One argument that satisfies a formula. And

an argument is something that is completely devoid of meaning. It's simply the One as One.

This is what at the start I had intended to mark out for you in set theory. Perhaps, even so, I shall be able to give some indication of this before taking leave of you.

First, however, we need to put paid to an idea. Even the idea of the individual in no case whatsoever constitutes the One. A number of people imagine that sexual relation is grounded on there being, in principle, as many individuals on one side as on the other, at least for the being who speaks. The number of men and women evens out, save exceptions, slight exceptions I mean – the British Isles, for example, where there are slightly fewer men than women. Large massacres of men also occur. But in the end, this doesn't stop each Jill from having her Jack. Well, their going one-by-one is not remotely sufficient to account for sexual relation.

It's all the same rather odd that there is a kind of impurity here in set theory with respect to this idea of one-to-one correspondence. You can see how the set has its roots in the class and how the class, like everything that is pinpointed with an attribute, is something that has to do with sexual relation. Yet what I am asking you to come to apprehend thanks to the function of the set is that there is a One that is distinct from what unifies a class as an attribute.

There is a transition through the intermediary of this one-to-one correspondence. There are as many on one side as on the other, and some people ground the idea of monogamy on this. One wonders why this is tenable, but in the end it's in the Gospel. There are as many on either side until a social catastrophe happens, which is what apparently occurred midway though the Middle Ages in Germany. It seems they were able to decree at that time that sexual relation would not have to be bi-univocal.

It's fairly amusing that people posed themselves the problem as such of the sex ratio, namely *are there as many males as there are females?*

There was a literature on this that has great zest, because all in all the problem is one that is most frequently resolved by what we shall call chromosomal selection. The most frequent case is clearly the sharing-out of two sexes into a quantity of individuals reproduced in equal number in either sex. But it's really very nice that they should have asked the question of what might happen should a skew start to occur. It is very easy to demonstrate that in some cases of such skewing, it can only grow, if we stick with chromosomal selection. We won't say that this is random, because what is at issue is a sharing-out. However, the altogether elegant solution they found was that this must be compensated for by natural selection.

Here we can see natural selection for what it is. It may be summarized by saying that the strongest are necessarily the fewest, and since they are the stronger, they thrive, and so they become as numerous as the others. The connection between this idea of natural selection and sexual relation is one of those cases in which it is clearly shown that the risk one runs whenever one tackles sexual relation is that one remains at the level of quips. Indeed, everything that has been said about it is of this order.

It is important that one should be able to voice something other than what gives rise to laughter because we are striving, in order to ensure the position of the analyst, for something different from what it appears to be in many cases, namely a gag.

In set theory, the starting point can be read in the function of membership. To be an element of a set is to be something that has no business belonging to a register that could be qualified as universal, that is to say, to something that falls within the scope of the attribute. What set theory attempts is to dissociate, to disarticulate, in a definitive fashion, the predicate from the attribute.

Prior to this theory, what characterized the notion in question in what is involved in the sexual type, inasmuch as this type might prefigure something of a relation, was precisely that the universal should be grounded on a common attribute. Moreover, there is a faint prefiguration here of the logical distinction between attribute and subject, and on this basis the subject is grounded. It is through this that something that is distinct can be called *attribute*.

From this distinction of the attribute there quite naturally results the following – you do not put in one same whole both apples and oranges, for example. In contrast to this category that is called *class*, there is the category of *set*, in which not only are apple and orange compatible, but in a set as such of each of these two kinds, there can be only one. In a set, if there is nothing to distinguish one apple from another, there can only be *one* apple, just as there can only be *one* orange. The One qua pure difference is what distinguishes the notion of the element. The One qua attribute is thus distinct from this.

The difference between the One of difference and the One attribute is that when you make use of the latter to define a class, in any attributive statement the attribute will not be supernumerary in the definition.

If you say *man is good*, positing that *man is good* does not rule out your having to account for how man does not always correspond to this appellation. Who is not compelled to say such a thing? Besides, plenty of reasons are invariably found to show that man is capable of not corresponding to this attribute, of evincing a failure to fulfil

it. This is the theory that has been made, and with all the range of meaning you have at your disposal to contend with it, you set about explicating how, though once in a while he can admittedly be *bad*, this changes nothing about his attribute. You could then tot up the balance from the standpoint of number by asking how many of them hold to this attribute and how many do not correspond to it. It's still the case that the attribute *good* will not come into the balance on top of each of the good men.

This is very precisely the difference compared with the One of difference. When it comes to articulating its consequence, this One of difference has to be counted as such in what is stated about what it grounds, which is a set and which has parts. Not only is the One of difference countable, but also it must be counted among the parts of the set.

My time is up. Indeed, it's now two. Therefore, I can only indicate what the next part will be to what, as usual, I'm having to cut off, more or less any old how, due precisely to another cut, this morning's power cut, with the consequences it had.

So, I'm led to give you a mere indication of what I will be picking up from the following pivotal affirmation.

It has to do with the relation that this One, which has to be counted on top of the rest, bears to what is specified – in what I describe not as a stand-in, but as being deployed in a locus *in the stead of sexual relation* – as *There exists*, not Φx, but the fact of saying that this Φx is not the truth.

$$\exists x.\overline{\Phi x}$$

It is from here that arises the One that means that this formula has to be put on the side of what founds man as such. And this is the only characteristic element.

Does this mean that this founding specifies him sexually? This is very precisely what is going to be called into question in what comes next, because it is still no less the case that the relation Φx is what defines man, attributively this time, as *all man*.

$$\forall x.\Phi x$$

What is this *tout*, or this *tous*? What is this *all men* inasmuch as it founds one side of the articulation of supplementation?

This question of what a *tous* is needs to be entirely posed anew on the basis of the function that is articulated as *Yad'lun*.

17 May 1972

XIV

THEORY OF THE FOUR FORMULAE

A TALK AT SAINTE-ANNE

The analyst's relation to knowledge
Freethinkers in the Vatican
Thinking only by means of the One
The modalities of the formulae
The family wowed by the father is a thing of the past

You know that here I say what I think. It's a feminine position, because all things considered, thinking is highly peculiar. So, since I write to you once in a while, I've set down in writing, during a short trip I've just taken, a number of propositions. The first of these is that it has to be acknowledged that the discourse that conditions the psychoanalyst puts him in a position that is, let's say, difficult. Freud said *impossible*, *unmöglich*. That's perhaps pushing it a bit. He was speaking for himself.

Second proposition. However little practised he may be in psychoanalysis, the psychoanalyst knows from his experience that he bears a common measure with what I've been saying. This is quite independent of whether he might be informed of what I've been saying, because what I've been saying culminates in locating his knowledge. This is the matter of knowledge about truth.

$$\frac{a}{S_2} \longrightarrow \frac{\$}{S_1} \qquad \frac{\text{semblance}}{\text{truth}} \longrightarrow \frac{\text{jouissance}}{\text{surplus jouissance}}$$

Terms Places

The place of truth is on the bottom left. On the top left is the place of semblance. On the top right is the place of jouissance. On the bottom right is the place of surplus jouissance, which I'm writing

in an abbreviated form as + *de-jouir*. For jouissance, we shall put a capital J.

What is difficult is the psychoanalyst's relation to knowledge, and not, of course, his relation to what I've been saying, because across the psychoanalytic no-man's-land as a whole they don't know that I've been saying this. It doesn't mean that they don't know anything about what I've been saying, because it comes from experience, but they abhor what they know about it.

I can say quite simply that I comprehend them. *I can say* means *I can say, if pressed.* I comprehend them. I can put myself in their place, and all the more easily in that this is where I am. I comprehend it all the more easily in that, like everyone else, I hear what I say. Nevertheless, this doesn't happen to me every day, because I don't speak every day. In reality, I hear what I say during those few days, say one or two, that come just before my Seminar, because that's the time when I start writing to you. On the other days I'm inundated with the thought of those I've been attending to. I have to confess this because right now I'm dominated by the restlessness of what in *Scilicet* I called my *failure*. That's what I called it, and I can still call it that, because seldom do I backtrack. There you have it.

Indeed, they know. I'm calling this to mind because the title of what I'm dealing with here is *Le Savoir du psychanalyste*. In this case, *du* connotes *le*, the definite article in French. Well, it's what is known as *definite*. Why not *des psychanalystes*, after what I've just told you? This would be in closer conformity with my theme this year, that is to say, *Yad'lun*. There are some who say they are such. I'm that much less inclined to dispute their saying so given that there are no others. Why am I saying *du*? Because I'm speaking to them, despite the presence here of a very large number of people who are not psychoanalysts.

The psychoanalyst, then, knows what I've been saying.

As I said, they know it from experience, however little they may have, even if this is restricted to the didactic aspect which is the minimum requirement for psychoanalysts to say they are such. Even if they miss out on what I've called *the Pass*, it will be restricted to their having had a didactic psychoanalysis, but at the end of the day this is enough for them to know what I've been saying. When I say that the Pass has been missed out on – all of this is also in *Scilicet*, which is the appropriate place – it doesn't mean that they haven't gone forward for the experience of the Pass. As I have often underscored, the experience of the Pass is simply what I've been proposing to those who are dedicated enough to expose themselves to it, with the sole purpose of affording information on a very delicate point, which is affirmed in the most certain fashion, namely that it's

altogether a-nomalous – object *a-nomalous* – that someone who has been through a psychoanalysis should want to be a psychoanalyst. This really requires a sort of aberration, which it was worthwhile taking the trouble to offer up to all that might be gathered by way of testimony. This is precisely why I set up this trial run, on a provisional basis, so as to know why someone who knows what psychoanalysis is, through didactic analysis, can still want to be an analyst.

I won't say any more about what is involved in the psychoanalysts' position, simply because I chose *The Psychoanalyst's Knowledge* as the title I would propose for my return to Sainte-Anne this year. On no account is this designed to make things easy for the psychoanalysts. They have no need of me when it comes to feeling the vertigo of their position, but I'm not about to intensify it by telling them so. Something that could be done – and perhaps I will do so on another occasion, with zest, using a reference that I shall only call *historical* in inverted commas – is to speak about the word *temptation*. I'm saying this for the wily ones.

Here, I'm going to speak only of knowledge, and I note that it's not a matter of the truth about knowledge, but of knowledge about truth. Knowledge about truth is articulated by means of the touch that I've been putting forward this year in connection with *Yad'lun*. *Yad'lun* and nothing more. It's an altogether particular One, the same that separates 1 from 2, and it's a gulf. I repeat, truth only comes midsay. When the free time is over, which will allow me to respect the alternation, I will speak about the other facet, that of the *mi-vrai*, the half-true. One ought always to *séparer le bon grain et la mivrai*, to winnow the wheat from the half-true.[1]

I've just got back from Italy, where I can never be anything but pleased with the welcome I receive, even from my psychoanalyst colleagues. Through one of them I met a third, who is quite up to speed – to my speed, anyway. He has been using Dedekind, and he came across it quite without my influence. I can't say that at the date he first got down to it I wasn't on to it already, but in the end the fact is that I spoke about it much later than he did, because I'm only speaking about it now whereas he'd already written a piece on it. In sum, he realized the value that mathematical elements could possess when it comes to making something emerge that genuinely concerns our experience as analysts.

As he is very highly thought of – he did everything it took for that – he managed to make himself heard in the upper echelons of what is called the IPA. I would translate it as the *Institution psychanalytique avouée*, the Avowed Psychoanalytic Institution. He managed to make himself heard, but what is most curious is that

they wouldn't publish his piece. They declined to publish, saying – *you do understand, no one will understand.* I must say that this comes as a surprise to me, because they're always so eager to fill the *International Journal* with a bit of Lacan, in inverted commas, and other items in the same vein that I'm supposed to represent for the botchers of a certain linguistics. Naturally, the more stuff there is in the bin, the less of it can be discerned. So, why the devil did they think they should stymie this case? As far as I am concerned, this is a stymie, and saying that the readers wouldn't understand is secondary. It's not necessary for all the articles in the *International Journal* to be understood. There's something in it, therefore, that they don't take kindly to.

Since the fellow I just mentioned – I haven't said his name, because you're utterly unfamiliar with his name given that he still hasn't managed to publish anything – is perfectly identifiable, I don't despair of seeing him published in the wake of what will filter through of today's remarks, especially if they find out that I haven't said his name. It seems that his heart is sufficiently set on this for me to help him quite willingly in this matter. Should it fail to appear, I'll speak about it a little more.

So, the psychoanalyst has a complex relationship with what he knows. He renounces it, he represses it – to employ the term that is used in English to translate *refoulement*, *Verdrängung* – and it can even happen that he may not want to know anything about it. And why not? What could this confound? Psychoanalysis, you will tell me. In this I hear the blather of someone who has not the faintest idea about psychoanalysis. In response to what might arise from this floor, I reply – is it knowledge that cures, whether the subject's knowledge or the knowledge that is supposed in the transference, or is it transference, such as it is produced in any given analysis? Why should knowledge – the knowledge which I say every psychoanalyst possesses a dimension of – be *avowed*, as I put it earlier?

It was from this question that Freud took *Verwerfung*. He calls it *a judgement which,* in choosing, *rejects*. He adds, *which condemns*, but I'm abridging. Just because *Verwerfung* makes a subject go mad when it is produced in the unconscious, this doesn't mean that the very same, and under the very same name, which Freud borrowed, doesn't rule the world as a rationally justified power.

Psychoanalysts in the plural, in contradistinction to *the* psychoanalyst, are the preference, the self-preference, you see. They're not the only ones. There is a tradition of this – the medical tradition. When it comes to self-preference, no one's ever done any better, except the saints. S-A-I-N-T-S. I'm spelling it out because people

go on so much about the others.[2] The saints also exercise self-preference. They think only of that. They are consumed by finding the best way for self-preference, when there are such simple ways, as shown by the *méde-saints*, too. Well, the *médecins*, the doctors, are not saints. This goes without saying. Few things are so abject to leaf through as the history of medicine. It could be recommended as a purgative or an emetic. It works as both. When it comes to knowing that knowledge has nothing to do with truth, there is really nothing more convincing. It might even be said that this goes so far as to turn the doctor into a sort of provocateur. This doesn't mean that the doctors didn't see to it that psychoanalysis would be brought to their heel, and for reasons that had to do with how the platform that the doctors shared with the discourse of science was becoming more confined. They were dab hands at this, and all the more so given that the psychoanalyst, who was in a terrible bind with his position, felt that much more disposed to receive counsel from experience. A purposeful article by Freud, on *Laienanalyse*, took a stand against this plotting.

I insist on underscoring this point in history, which was an altogether key moment as far as my affair is concerned. Due to the plotting that happened shortly after the war, I had lost the match before even making my first move. I declare, however, that it was very precisely on account of knowing full well at the time that I had lost the match that I made my move. I'm bearing witness this evening, and I'd like you to believe me on this matter. It's no accident that I'm doing so at Sainte-Anne because I told you that here I say what I think. A whole load of matches get played out in such conditions. There's nothing heroic about it. It's even one of the fundaments of what they call the human condition, and it doesn't come off any worse than any other enterprise. The proof is right here. The only drawback – though not for me alone – is that it doesn't afford you much liberty. I say this with a passing thought for the person who questioned me on whether or not I believed in freedom.

When I say I'd noticed perfectly well that the match was lost, I ask you to believe me. After all, I wasn't so shrewd. Perhaps I thought I should plough into it, and that I could mess up the Avowed Psychoanalytic International. But I have another declaration to make, and this time no one can dispute what I'm about to say. It's that I never dropped any of the people I knew were going to leave me, before they left of their own accord. And this is true also of the period to which I alluded a moment ago, when the match was lost for France, the little brouhaha amid the plotting by the medically qualified psychoanalysts, which gave rise to the start of my teaching in 1953.

On those days when I don't harbour the idea of pursuing this teaching, that is to say a certain many, needless to say I get the idea, like any imbecile, of what it might have been for French psychoanalysis if I had been able to teach where, for the reason I've just mentioned, I wasn't remotely disposed to let anyone drop. I mean that however scandalous were my propositions on the *Function and Field*. . . and yackety-yak . . . *of Speech and Language*, I was minded to smooth out the wrinkles even for the hardest of hearing, and, at the point we've now reached, no one among the psychoanalysts would have lost out.

By the way, someone sent me a tooth mug. I'm saying this for those who were up at the Panthéon last time. I'd like to know who it was, in order to thank them. I'd like to thank them all the more extensively given that it's not a tooth mug. It's a marvellous little red glass, tall and curved, in which I shall place a rose, whoever it was who sent me it. But I only received one, I have to say. Anyway, let's move on.

I told you that I'd made a little tour of Italy. There are people who like me a bit in practically every corner, even in the wings of the Vatican. Why not, after all? There are some great people there. For the person who questioned me about freedom, I shall say that the only freethinkers I know are in the Vatican. For my part, I'm no freethinker. I'm forced to stick to what I've been saying, but over there in the Vatican, what ease they have! You can understand how the French Revolution was helped along by the abbots. If you knew what liberty they have, my dear friends, it would send a shiver down your spine. I try to bring them back to the hard line, but there's no way. They outflank me. For them, psychoanalysis is old hat. You can see what use freethinking has. They're clear-sighted.

Yet it was a good profession, don't you think? It had a good side. When they say that it's old hat, they know what they're talking about. They're saying, *It's shot, because one really ought to do a bit better*. I'm saying this to forewarn those people who are not behind the times, and particularly of course those who follow me, that you should have a second think before getting your descendants involved, because it's quite possible that, given the way things are going, it will come to a sudden stop. Well, this is just for those who would get their descendants involved. I advise them to be prudent.

I've already spoken about what is happening in psychoanalysis. Some points that I've already broached really need to be specified, and consequently, now that we've come this far, I think I can look briefly at the discourse of the analyst. It's the only discourse among the four that I have catalogued – and in this we may pay homage to it – that is such that knavery necessarily culminates in foolery.[3] If

you were to know straightaway that someone who comes to ask you for a didactic analysis is a knave, you would tell him – *No psychoanalysis for you, dear fellow, you'll become simplicity itself.* But you cannot know this. It's carefully dissimulated. One does come to know, however, after a certain while of psychoanalysis. Knavery is not hereditary. It's not a matter of heredity, but rather of the desire, the desire of the Other, from which the one in question has arisen. It's not always his parents' desire. It might be his grandparents' desire. But if the desire from which he was born is the desire of a knave, then he is inevitably a knave. I've never seen an exception to this. This is even why I have always been so tender with the people I knew would leave me, at least in those cases where I was the one who had psychoanalysed them, because I knew they had become utter fools.

I can't say I did this on purpose. As I've told you, it's necessary. It's necessary when a psychoanalysis is pushed to the end, which is the least that ought to be done for a didactic analysis. If the analysis is not didactic, then it's a question of tact. You have to leave the fellow enough knavery for him thereafter to fend decently for himself. This is therapeutic in the proper sense. You should let him stay afloat. But for didactic psychoanalysis, you can't do that, because goodness knows what that would lead to. Imagine a psychoanalyst who has remained a knave. This haunts everyone's thoughts. Rest assured, contrary to what one might believe, psychoanalysis is always didactic in the true sense, even when practised by a fool, and, I would even say, all the more so in such cases. Anyway, the only risk is to have foolish psychoanalysts. As I've just told you, however, at the end of the day there are no drawbacks, because the object *a* in the place of semblance is a position that can be held. People can also be fools to begin with. It's very important to distinguish between the two.

As for me, I have found no better than what I've been calling *matheme* to approach something that concerns knowledge about truth, because all in all it's in psychoanalysis that we have managed to give it a functional scope.

It's far better when Peirce deals with it. He sets down the functions 0 and 1 to designate the two truth values. On the other hand, he doesn't imagine that one can write capital T or capital F for *True* and *False*. Up at the Panthéon, I've already indicated in a few sentences that there are two stages in relation to *Yad'lun*. There is the *Parmenides* and, then, set theory. They had to get to set theory in order to pose the question of a knowledge that takes truth as a mere function, which is far from contenting itself with this, and

which also entails a real that has nothing to do with truth. None the less, we have to believe that for centuries mathematics bypassed any question of this because it was only late in the day, and through the intermediary of a logical examination, that it led a step to be taken towards this question, which is crucial for what is involved in truth, namely how and why *Yad'lun*.

You will excuse me. I'm not alone in this.

Around this One revolves the question of existence. I've already made some remarks in this regard, namely that existence had never been tackled as such before a certain age, and that it took a long while to extract it from essence. I've spoken of the fact that, strictly speaking, there is nothing in Greek that would commonly mean *to exist*. Not that I'm unaware of *ἐξίστημι*, *ἐξίσταμαι*, but rather that I observe that no philosopher ever made use of it. Yet this is where something gets under way that might interest us. It's a matter of knowing what exists. *Il n'existe que de l'Un*. There is no existence but on the basis of the One.

Set theory is the examination of why *Yad'lun*. Whatever you may think, the One is not a dime a dozen, including the utterly illusory certitude, which has long been such – this doesn't stop people from holding to it – that you are One of them as well. You just have to raise your little finger to perceive that not only are you not One, but that you are, alas, innumerable. You are each innumerable for yourself. You are innumerable right up to the point that you will be taught – which might be one of the good results of the psychoanalytic contribution – that you are, depending on the case, either quite *finis*,[4] for the men, it's clear, you are *finis, finis, finis*, or, for the women, denumerable. I'm saying this rather briskly because I don't know for how much longer I'll be able to carry on. I shall try briefly to explain to you something that is starting to clear a path for you, because of course this is not one of those things that is blindingly obvious, especially when you don't know what *finite* and *denumerable* mean. However, if you follow my indications a little, you will read anything and everything, because this abounds in all the books on set theory these days, even to take an opposing stance.

There is a certain someone who is very kind, whom I hope to see later in order to apologize for not having brought back a book that I did everything I could to find, and which is out of print. He passed it on to me last time, and it's called *Cantor a tort*. It's a very good book. It's clear that Cantor *a tort*, that Cantor is wrong, from a certain standpoint, but he is incontestably right for the simple fact that what he put forward has given rise to innumerable descendants in mathematics. It all comes down to whatever allows mathematics to advance. This is enough for it to stand up for itself.

Even if Cantor is wrong from the standpoint of those who have claimed – we don't know why – that they know what number is, the entire history of mathematics, well before Cantor, demonstrated that there is no place where it is more true that the impossible is the real.[5] This began with the Pythagoreans, who one day were struck by the patent fact – which they must have known full well because they should not be taken for infants either – that the square root of 2 is not commensurable. This was taken up by the philosophers. However, just because this has come down to us by way of the *Theaetetus*, it shouldn't be thought that the mathematicians of the time were not up to it, or incapable of responding. Indeed, having realized that the incommensurable existed, they started to pose the question of what number is.

I'm not going to go over the whole history. There is a certain business of the square root of minus one, which has since been labelled – we don't know why – *imaginary*. There is nothing less imaginary than the square root of minus one, as was proved by what came in the wake of its discovery, because this is where what are called *complex numbers* emerged from. Complex numbers are among the most useful and productive things that have ever been created in mathematics. In short, the more objections that are levelled at what is involved in this entry via the One, that is, via the integer, the more it is demonstrated that the real is generated in mathematics precisely from the impossible. It is precisely in so far as something was able to be generated by way of Cantor, which was nothing less than Russell's entire life's work, and indeed infinitely many other points that have been extremely productive in function theory, that it is quite certain that, with regard to the real, Cantor is the one who is wholly on track in what is at issue.

If I'm suggesting to you, the psychoanalysts, to get a bit up to speed with this, it's because there is something to be got from it, in your guilty pleasures, of course. I'm saying this because I'm dealing with beings who ponder – who ponder, of course, because they can't do otherwise – who ponder, like Telemachus, or at least like the Telemachus described by Paul-Jean Toulet, who *pense à la dépense*. They ponder expending. Well, it's a matter of knowing whether you analysts, and those whom you steer, spend your time in vain or not.

In this regard, the pathos of pondering, which for you may result from a short initiation in set theory – though it shouldn't be too brief – is of such a nature as to make you reflect about notions like existence, for example. It's clear that only once there had been a certain reflection on mathematics did existence take on its meaning. Everything that had previously been said about it, through a sort of presentiment, in particular a religious presentiment, namely that

God exists, strictly speaking only holds meaning in that it lays the accent on the following point – I have to *mettre l'accent*, to lay the accent, because there are people who take me for a *maître à penser* – whether you're a believer or not, bear the following in mind. With God, you have to count. I don't believe in Him, but no one gives a stuff. For those who do believe it's the same thing. Whether you believe in Him or not, it's absolutely unavoidable.

This is why I'm writing once again on the blackboard the formulae around which I've tried to make what is involved in what is claimed to be sexual relation revolve.

$\exists x.\overline{\Phi x}$ $\quad\quad$ $\overline{\exists x.\overline{\Phi x}}$

$\forall x.\Phi x$ $\quad\quad$ $\overline{\forall x}.\Phi x$

Here, $\exists x.\overline{\Phi x}$ means there exists an x determined by having said no to the phallic function. The phallic function dominates sexual relation. I write it Φx. You can already see the question of existence being linked to something that we cannot fail to recognize as a fact of saying. It's a *saying no*, and even, I would say, a *naysaying*. This is crucial. It is what indicates for us, for our analytic training, the exact point at which we must take up what is stated by set theory – *there is at-least-one who naysays*.

This is a marker.[6] But it's a marker that doesn't hold up even for an instant, that is neither instructive nor teachable, if we do not conjoin it to another quantifier that is set down within the four terms, namely the quantifier that is said to be universal.

Thus, $\forall x.\Phi x$ is the point from which it may be said, as is stated in Freudian doctrine, that the only desire, the only libido – it's the same thing – is masculine. In truth, this is an error, but it is still the case that it's an error that has all its worth as a marker.

Next, $\overline{\exists x}.\overline{\Phi x}$ means that no x exists to say that it is not true that the phallic function is what dominates sexual relation.

Meanwhile, at a level that is complementary to these three terms,

we ought to write – I'm not saying that we *can* write – $\overline{\forall x}.\Phi x$, the function of *pas-tout*, *not-all*, as the function that is essential to a certain type of relation to the phallic function, inasmuch as the latter founds sexual relation.

This is what turns these four inscriptions into a set. Without this set, it is impossible to orient oneself correctly in what is at issue in the practice of analysis, inasmuch as it has to do with something that is commonly defined as *man*, on the one hand, while on the other the corresponding term is generally qualified as *woman*, which leaves it on its own.[7] If it is left on its own, this is not the fault of the corresponding term. It's the fault of man.

However, fault or no fault, this is not a matter that we should settle immediately. I shall say in passing that what we need to examine for the time being is the meaning that these four functions might have inasmuch as their quantic coupling diversifies them. For the four are merely two, one being the negation of the function and the other the opposite function.

It is clear that what is meant by $\exists x.\overline{\Phi x}$ reaches far enough back to the origin for it to be said that Freud's ignorance of it is utterly confounding. This $\exists x$ negation of Φx, this *at-least-one*, this One all alone,[8] which is determined as the effect of naysaying the phallic function, is very precisely the corner beneath which we need to place everything that has so far been said about *Totem and Taboo*, so that it can be something other than a myth.[9]

This holds all the more interest in that it is not a matter of genesis, nor of history, nor of anything whatsoever that might resemble an event, even though this is what Freud seems to have called it at some moments. It could not be an event in that it is represented for us as standing prior to all history. There is only an event when connoted as such in something that is stated. It's a matter of structure. The myth of *Totem and Taboo* is designed in the most patent fashion so that one may speak of *tout homme*, of man one and all, as being subject to castration.

Is it really necessary to start returning to mytheme-atical functions to set out a logical fact? Namely that, if it is true that the unconscious is structured like a language, then the function of castration is necessitated by it. Indeed, this is exactly what is implied by something eluding it. And whatever it is that eludes it is not inevitably something human. Why should it be? This is in the myth. Why not see the father of the primal murder as an orang-utan? A number of items coincide in this regard in the Judaic tradition, from which, all the same, it has to be said that psychoanalysis arose. The year when I didn't care to deliver more than the first session of my Seminar on the Names-of-the-Father, I still had time to accentuate that in

Abraham's sacrifice, what is sacrificed is effectively the father, which is none other than a ram. As in any self-respecting human lineage, its mythical descent is animal.

All things considered, what is at issue is what I said to you the other day about the function of hunting in man. I could have told you more about the fact that the hunter loves his quarry, just like the sons in the said primordial event in the Freudian mythology who kill the father, like those you can see traces of in the Lascaux caves. They killed him, my goodness, because they loved him, of course, as the ensuing part proved. The ensuing part is woeful. The ensuing part is very precisely that all the men, $\forall x$, the universality of men, is subject to castration.

At the point from which we are speaking, we shall not call the fact that there is an exception *mythical*. This exception is the inclusive function. What is to be stated of the universal, besides that the universal is enclosed by negative possibility? More exactly, existence here plays the role of the complement, or to speak more mathematically, of the boundary. Thus, somewhere there is an *all x*. This *all x* becomes the upside-down A of $\forall$ whenever it is embodied in what may be called *One Being*, one being at least that posits itself as Being, and specifically in the capacity of man.

This is very precisely what means that it is in the other column, and with a type of relation that is fundamental, that something may be articulated – for anyone who knows how to think with these symbols – in the capacity of woman. Simply by articulating it thus, $\overline{\exists x}.\overline{\Phi x}$, it gives us a sense of how there is something remarkable, remarkable for you, in what is thereby stated, namely that in the statement that it is not true that the phallic function dominates what is involved in sexual relation, there is not one who would take exception to it. To allow you to find your way here by means of references that will be a little more familiar to you, I shall say, my goodness, since I spoke earlier of the Father, that this *There does not exist any x that is determined as a subject in the statement of naysaying the phallic function*, concerns the virgin, properly speaking. You know that Freud reports on the taboo of virginity, and other outlandishly folkloric stories about this business, and the fact that in times gone by the virgins were not to be fucked by just anyone. It had to be a high priest or a local lord. Anyway, no matter. This is not the important thing.

What is important is what we may say in connection with this function of the *vir*, which is so striking in that, at the end of the day, people only ever say of a woman that she is virile.[10] Should you have ever heard anyone say of a guy that he is virile, you will point him out to me. It would be of interest to me. Here, however,

while the man is anything you please of this sort, a *vir*-tuoso, *vir*-ing to the portside, make ready to *vir*, *vir* whatever you like, the virile is on the side of woman.[11] She's the only one who believes in it. She thinks. This is even what characterizes her. In a short while I'm going to explain to you in detail why the *virgo* is not denumerable. It's because she is located between the 1 and the 0, contrary to the One which is on the side of the Father. It is well known that what lies between 0 and 1, even when one *a tort*, when one is wrong, is demonstrated in Cantor's theory, and in a way that I find absolutely marvellous.

There are at least a few people here who know what I'm talking about, such that I shall give a brief indication of it. What lies between 1 and 0 is altogether demonstrable. It can be demonstrated with decimals. We use decimals in the system that goes by the same name. Let's suppose – you have to suppose – that this system is denumerable. The method known as the Diagonal Method can allow you always to forge a new decimal sequence such that it is certainly not inscribed in what has been numerated. It is strictly impossible to construct this denumerable, to provide even a way, however meagre, of lining it up, which is the most straightforward operation because the denumerable is defined by its correspondence with the sequence of integers.

We begin, therefore, with a pure and simple *let's suppose*. In this respect, we will quite readily accuse Cantor, as is done in the book *Cantor a tort*, of having quite simply forged a vicious circle. A vicious circle, my good friends, but why not! The more vicious a circle is, the more fun it is, especially if you can get something to emerge from it, something like this little bird called the non-denumerable, which is one of the most pre-eminent and one of the most ingenious things ever invented, and which tallies most closely with the real of number. Well, let's move on. *The 11,000 virgins*, as is said in the *Legenda aurea*, is the way to express the non-denumerable, because 11,000 is an enormous figure for virgins, and not only in this day and age.

Having pointed up these facts, let's try now to understand what becomes of this *pas-toute*, this *not-all* [in the feminine], which is truly the vital point, the original point, in what I have written up on the blackboard, because until now the function of the *pas-tous* has never been put forward as such in logic.

In so far as the pattern of thinking is, so to speak, undermined by the lack of sexual relation, we think only by means of the One. The universal is something that results from the envelopment of a certain field by something of the order of One, with the proviso that the veritable signification of *set* is precisely that it is the mathematical

notation of this something in which, alas, I am not without responsibility, which is a certain definition that I have noted as barred S. This barred S is the subject, the subject inasmuch as it is nothing other than the effect of the signifier. In other words, it is what is represented by a signifier for another signifier. Some fellows – who were the least equipped to bring to light what is involved in the subject – found themselves, at a certain turning point in history, *necessitated*, as it were, in this respect. The set is nothing other than the subject. This is precisely why it cannot even be handled without the addition of the empty set.

I would say that up to a certain point the empty set is differentiated in its necessity in that it can be taken for an element of the set. Without inscribing the brackets that designate the set that has the empty set as its element, $\{\varnothing\}$, any handling of this function is absolutely unthinkable. I believe I've already indicated this sufficiently, but I will repeat that this function was devised very precisely at a certain turning point in order to examine, from the logical standpoint, but at the level of *common* language – the language of everybody, because on no account does *meta*language govern here – what is involved in the impact of number in language itself. Number is something that has nothing to do with language. Number is more real than anything, and the discourse of science has amply revealed this.

The *pas-tout*, *not-all*, is very precisely what results from the fact, not that nothing bounds it, but that the bound is located in a different way. To go quickly, I will say that contrary to the inclusion in $\exists x.\overline{\Phi x}$ – namely, there exists the Father whose saying no situates him in relation to the phallic function – it is in so far as there is the void, the lack, the absence of anything whatsoever that denies the phallic function at the level of woman that, conversely, there is nothing but this something that the *not-all* formulates in woman's position with regard to the phallic function. For her, this function is, in effect, *pas-toute*, *not-all*. This doesn't mean that she negates this function, in any capacity whatsoever.

I won't say that she is Other, because the mode whereby she does not exist in this function, which is very precisely the mode of negating it, is that she is the same as what is inscribed on my graph by the signifier of the Other as barred, $S(\not{A})$. Woman is not the locus of the Other. More to the point, she is inscribed as *not being the Other* in the function that I give to the capital A, namely the locus of truth. Just as I translated here, in $\exists x.\overline{\Phi x}$, the existence of the naysaying using the function of the empty set, what is inscribed here, in $\overline{\exists x}.\overline{\Phi x}$, in the non-existence of what might negate the phallic function, is the fact of absenting oneself, and even of being this *jouis-centre*. This

jouis-centre is conjugated to what I shall call, not an absence, but a *de-sense-cy*. Woman is posited for the signifying fact, not only that the big Other is not here – since it's not her – but that it is altogether elsewhere, in the locus where speech is located.

Since you have had the patience to carry on listening to me – it's already eleven o'clock – I still have to designate the gap that separates each of these terms in so far as they are statements. This is crucial among the number of crystallizing themes that I'm pressing forward for you now that we're at the end of the year.

Between *There exists*, $\exists x$, and *There does not exist*, $\overline{\exists x}$ – there's no need to garble this – lies *existence*.

Between *There exists one who does not . . .*, $\exists x.\overline{\Phi x}$, and *There is not one who is not . . .*, $\forall x.\Phi x$, there lies *contradiction*. When Aristotle highlights particular propositions to contrast them with universal propositions, he establishes contradiction between a particular affirmative and a universal negative. Here, it's the contrary. The particular is negative and the universal is affirmative.

Between the $\overline{\exists x}.\overline{\Phi x}$, which is the negation of any universality, and this $\overline{\forall x}.\Phi x$, we have the *undecidable*. This is just an indication. I'll be accounting for it afterwards.

What is at issue between the two universal quantifiers, $\forall x$ and $\overline{\forall x}$? I think that all of our experience of this situation shows that this is not so straightforward. We will call it lack. We will call it a rift. We will call it, if you like, desire. And to be more rigorous, we shall call it the object *a*.

$\exists x.\overline{\Phi x}$	existence	$\overline{\exists x}.\overline{\Phi x}$
contradiction		undecidable
	lack rift desire	
$\forall x.\Phi x$	object *a*	$\overline{\forall x}.\Phi x$

It's now a matter of finding out how, in the midst of all this, something functions that may resemble a circulation. For this, we have to ask ourselves about the mode in which these four terms are posited.

The $\exists x$ on the top left is literally the *necessary*. Nothing is

thinkable. It is absolutely not our function – for the rest of us men – to think. Well, when it comes to a woman, there is thinking. This is even from time to time the thought *therefore I am*. In which, of course, she deceives herself. But as far as the *necessary* is concerned, it is absolutely necessary, to think about anything whatsoever to do with relations that are called human relations – we don't know why – within the experience that is established by the analytic discourse, to posit that there exists one for whom castration is told to scram. This is what Freud tells us in the cock-and-bull story of *Totem and Total Bull*. What does castration mean? It means that it leaves everything to be desired. It means nothing but that. To think this through, that is to say, to think this through on the basis of woman, there has to be one who leaves nothing to be desired. This is the story of the Oedipus myth, but it's absolutely necessary.[12] If you lose sight of this, I really don't see what would allow you to find your bearings in any way whatsoever. It's very important to find your bearings.

I've already told you that this $\exists x$ is the *necessary*. Necessary on what basis? Precisely on the basis of what, my word, I wrote just now – the *undecidable*. In the end, we can say absolutely nothing that resembles anything that might constitute a truth function if we do not admit the necessity of *there being at-least-one who says no*. I'm insisting a little because this evening, due to the disturbances outside, I haven't been able to tell you all the niceties that I would have liked to be able to tell you on this score. I do have one, however, which is very nice indeed, and since I'm being teased, I'll come out with it. It's the function of *l'é-pater*.

People have been wondering a great deal about the function of the paterfamilias. What we may require of the function of the father needs to be better focused. How people indulge in these stories of paternal shortcoming! It's a fact that there is a crisis. This is not completely false. *L'é-pater ne nous épate plus*. His wowing us is a thing of the past. This is the only genuinely decisive function of the father. I've already marked out how it was not the Oedipus complex, how it was shot, how if the father was a legislator, the child this would produce is President Schreber. No more no less. On any plane, the father is the one who ought to wow the family. If the father no longer wows the family, something better will be found. It's not inevitable that he should be the father in flesh and blood. There is always one who will wow the family, which as everyone knows amounts to a herd of slaves. There are others who will wow them.

You can see how the French language can serve many things. I explained this to you last time by starting with *fondre* or *fonder*,

founding, *d'eux*, from them, a One. In the subjunctive it's the same word. To *fonder* you have to *fondre*. There are some things that can only be expressed in the French language. This is precisely why there is an unconscious, because equivoques are what *found*, in both senses of the word. Indeed, this is all there is. If you take *tous* and try to see how it is expressed in each language, you will find heaps of things, some absolutely terrific things. For my part, I have been looking into Chinese, because I can't make a catalogue of the languages of the whole world. Also, through the intermediary of the charming treasurer of our School, I questioned someone who got her father to write down how they say *tous* in Yoruba. It's crazy. I do this for the love of the art, but I know full well that, either way, I will find in every language that there is a means to say *tous*.

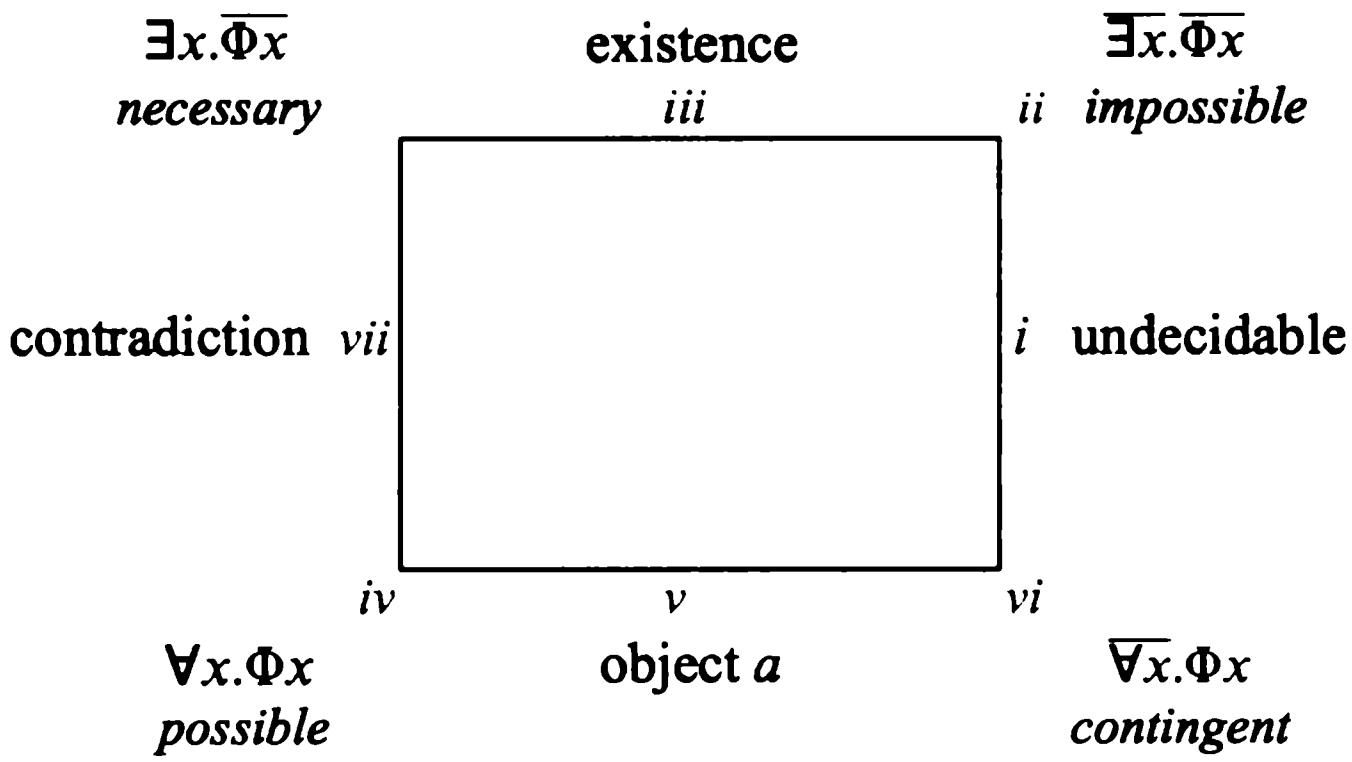
What is of interest to me is the signifier as One. This is what is used in every language. The only interest that the signifier holds is the equivoques that can emerge from it. That is to say, something of the order of *fonde d'eux un Un*, and other such messing about. This is the only interesting thing because what for us is involved in *tous* – you will always find this expressed – is unavoidably semantic. The mere fact that I may say that I would like to examine *all* the languages resolves the question because *les langues*, precisely, *ne sont pas toutes*, they are *not all*. This is their definition. On the other hand, when I ask you about *tous*, you understand. There you have it. In the end, semantics comes down to translatability. What else could I offer as a definition of this? It is thanks to semantics that a man and a woman comprehend each other only when they do not speak the same language. I'm telling you this to give you some exercises, because that's what I'm here for, and also perhaps to open up a little your *comprenoire* on the use I've been making of linguistics.

I want to wind this up.

With respect to what is involved in what necessitates existence, our point of departure is the gap of the *undecidable* [*i*], that is, between the *not-all* and the *pas-une*, the *not-one* [*ii*]. After, this goes to *existence* [*iii*]. Then, it goes to *all men are under the might of castration* [*iv*]. It goes to the *possible*, because the universal is never anything but that. When you say *all men are mammals*, it means all the possible men might be so.

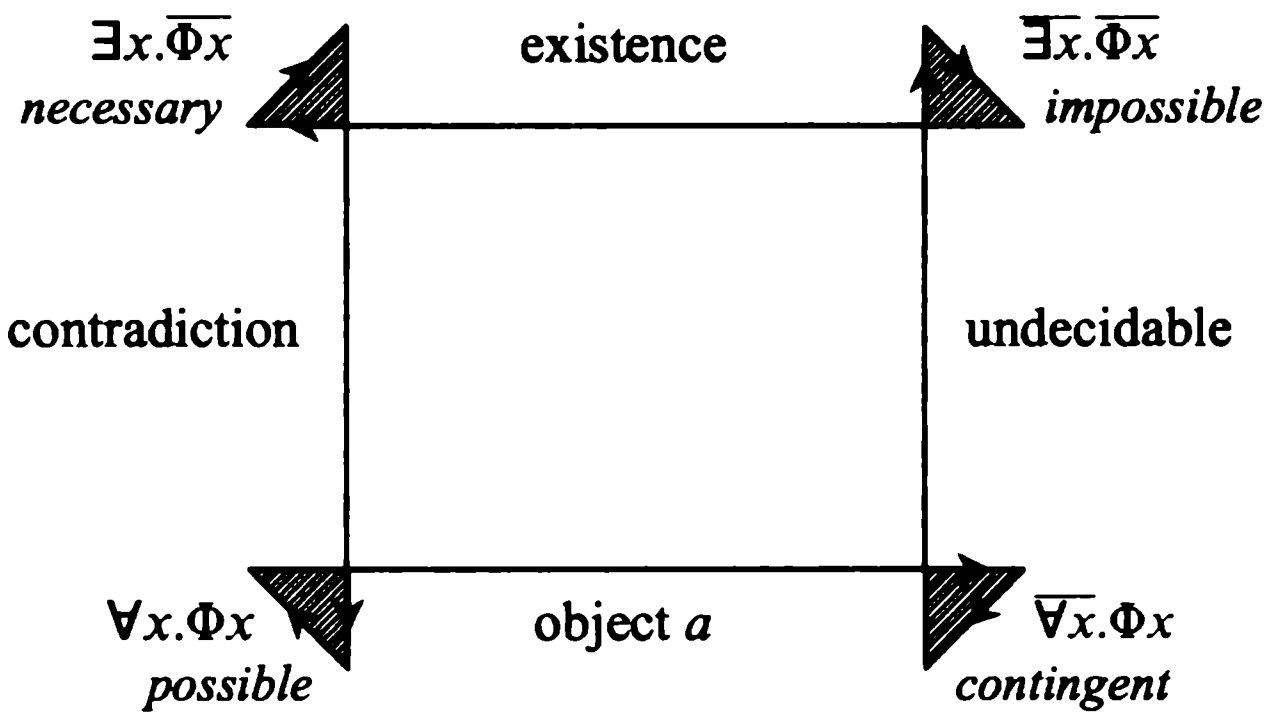
And after that, where does it go? It goes to the object *a* [*v*]. It is with the object *a* that we are in relation. And where does it go after that? It goes here, where woman is distinguished in not being unifying [*vi*]. All that remains is to complete this, here, in order to go towards *contradiction* [*vii*]. We're coming back from the *pas-toute*,

from the *not-all* which is, in sum, nothing other than the expression of *contingency*.



As I pointed out in its time, the alternation between *necessity*, the *contingent*, the *possible* and the *impossible* is not in the order that Aristotle gives, because what is at issue here is the impossible, that is to say, all things considered, the real.

So, follow this little path carefully, because it will be of use to us in the near future. You will be seeing something of it. The four triangles in the corners need to be indicated, too, along with the direction of the arrows.[13]



There you have it. I feel I've had enough for this evening. I have no desire to end with a show-stopping peroration. It's a matter of clearing the way. Let me check – *necessary*, *impossible*, *possible*, and *contingent*. Yes, it's written correctly enough. You will hear the rest when I give the next session of my Seminar up by the Panthéon. I'm not sure whether this is to be the last.

1 June 1972

CODA

XV

THE DESIRE TO SLEEP

Creating the verb *unigate*
Dreams according to Freud
The body's access to jouissance
Pollution represented in existence
The objection against *argumentum ad absurdum*

Given what I shall call the mixing, the communicating, that has occurred between my audience here and the audience at Sainte-Anne, I'm supposing that they have now become unified, this being the operative word. Last time at Sainte-Anne you saw that we have passed from what one day I labelled here, using a predicate specially formed for your use, the *Unian*, to a term of another fashioning, which may be promoted in the verb form *unier*, *to unigate*.

What I put forward last time, at Sainte-Anne, is the pivotal point that is taken in this order that is founded by the One. Put *fonde*, indeed *fondez-le*, in order for it to be *fondé-fondu*, a founded founding. All in all, I was pressing home that this founding should not appear to you as something overly fundamental. This is what I'm labelling as *le laisser dans le fondu*, to leave this founding *unigate* in a founded state.

There exists one who naysays. It's not quite the same thing as negating, but from this forging of the term *unigate*, as a verb that can be conjugated, we may assert that for what is involved in the function that is represented in analysis by the myth of the Father, it *unigates*.

This is what was there for the hearing for those who managed to hearken through the bangers reverberating around Sainte-Anne, and this is what today I should like to enable you to accommodate, let's say.

1

So, the Father *unigates*.

In the myth, he has the correlate of *toutes*, of all the women. If we follow my quantic inscriptions, there is cause to introduce a modification here. Certainly he *unigates* them, but precisely *pas toutes*, not all.

Something is touched on here that is not my own invention, namely the kinship between logic and myth. It simply marks out how the former can rectify the latter.

This is the work that lies ahead of us. For the time being, I will remind you that with what I permitted myself in terms of approximations of the Father, with what I inscribed using *l'é-pater*, you can see that the path that occasionally leads myth to meet up with derision is no stranger to us. In no respect does this touch on the fundamental status of the structures concerned.

It's amusing that there are people who are discovering, somewhat late in the day, terms like *signifier*, *sign*, *signification* and *semiotics*. From where I'm standing I can say that all the buzz and excitement that is being produced around these terms is a bit non-specific. It's on the centre stage, right now. The peculiar belatedness that is being shown in this respect is quite curious.

There is a little journal that is rather good, well, no worse than any other, in which, under the heading *L'Atelier d'écriture*, I've seen an article that, my goodness, is no worse than any other, called 'L'Agonie du signe'. Agony is always very touching. *Agony* means *struggle*, but it also means that someone is about to pass out. So, there is pathos in the agony of the sign. I would have preferred all this not to be revolving around pathos.

The article begins with a delightful invention, the possibility of forging a new signifier, that of *fourmidable*. Indeed, the whole article is *fourmidable*, and it begins by asking what the status of this *fourmidable* might be.

This is very much to my liking. All the more so given that it's someone who for a good while now has been fully abreast of a number of things that I have been putting forward. Yet at the start of the article he feels compelled to play the innocent, namely to hesitate over whether *fourmidable* should be classified as metaphor or as metonymy. He also feels compelled to say that there is something that has been neglected in Jakobson's theory, the theory that purportedly consists in running words into one another. But I explained this ages ago. I wrote *L'Instance de la lettre* expressly for this purpose. Capital S over lower case *s*, with the result of 1

effect of signification [I over *s*]. It's displacement, it's condensation, it's very precisely the path along which one can create *unigate*, which is all the same a little bit more amusing and useful than *fourmidable*.

Then, *unigate* can be used for something else. It can be used to explain, along another path, what I completely relinquished tackling along the path of the Name-of-the-Father. I relinquished this because at a particular moment I was prevented from doing so. And then, the people who prevented me were precisely the ones to whom it might have been of service. It might have been of service to them in their private lives. These are people who are particularly implicated on the side of the Name-of-the-Father. There is in this world a very special clique, which can be pinpointed as a religious tradition. They are the ones whom this might have aerated, but I don't see why I should devote myself especially to them.

So, I've been explaining the story that Freud broached as best he could, precisely to avoid his own story. El Shaddai, in particular. This is the name to designate the one whose name is not uttered. Freud turned to the myths, and then he produced something very proper, something that was a little aseptic. He didn't push it any further, but this is very much what is at issue.

Opportunities were missed to look again at what was steering him, and which should have meant that psychoanalysis would now be at its rightful place in its discourse. The chance has been missed.

2

On the aeroplane back from Milan yesterday evening, I came upon a really very nice article in a thing called *Atlas*, which is handed out to Air France passengers. I don't have it with me. I forgot to bring it, and fortunately so because that would have led me to read you some passages from it and there's nothing so tiresome as to hear people read aloud. Anyway, it informs us that there are high-flying psychologists in America who have been investigating dreams. Because people investigate dreams, don't they?

They've been investigating, and they've found that, in the end, sexual dreams are very few and far between. These people dream about everything. They dream about sport. They dream about a whole load of josh. They dream about falling. But, in the end, there is not an overwhelming majority of sexual dreams. Since the widely held conception of psychoanalysis, so we are told in this text, is to believe that dreams are sexual, the general public, which comprises the psychoanalytic propagation – you are a general public as well

– is naturally going to be peeved. The whole soufflé is going to collapse, just like that, to sink to the bottom of the dish.

Among this supposed general public – because all this is supposition – it's true that there is a certain resonance according to which Freud is purported to have said that all dreams are sexual. Except that he never, ever, said that. He said that dreams were dreams of desire. He never said it was sexual desire.

It took me some time to broach the relation between, on the one hand, the fact that dreams are dreams of desire and, on the other, this realm of the sexual that is characterized by what I have been putting forward.

I had to avoid throwing the spirit of these nice people into disorder, the same people who after ten years of my recounting them stuff thought only of returning to the bosom of the International Psychoanalytic Association. They were very nice exercises that I recounted, exercises in style, but these fellows were getting down to serious business. The serious business is the International Psychoanalytic Association. Which means that now I can assert, and it can be heard, that there is no such thing as sexual relation.

It is for this reason that this amounts to a whole order that is functioning in the place where this relation would be. It is here, in this order, that something has a consequence as an effect of language, namely desire. One could perhaps take a small step forward and ask, *when Freud said that the dream is the satisfaction of a desire, in what sense is satisfaction to be taken?*

When I think that I'm still here, and that among all these people who have set themselves to obfuscating what I say, to turning it into noise, no one has ever dared to assert the very thing that is nevertheless the strict consequence of everything I articulated in the most precise fashion, in 1957 if memory serves – no, even earlier, in '55 – in connection with the dream of Irma's injection.

To show how one ought to treat a text of Freud's, I carefully explained to them what was ambiguous. I explained that it is here, at the level of his present preoccupations, and not at all in the unconscious, that Freud interprets this dream, this dream of desire that has nothing to do with sexual desire, even if there are all the implications of transference that suit us down to the ground.

I put forward the term *immixing of subjects* in 1955.[1] Can you imagine? Seventeen years ago. I will have to publish that Seminar. I haven't done so already because I was absolutely sickened by the way it was taken up in a book that came out under the title *L'Autoanalyse de Freud*. It was my text, but added to in a way that no one would understand anything of it.

What does a dream do? It doesn't satisfy desire, for reasons that

are fundamental, and which I won't start developing today because it would require four or five sessions. It's for the simple reason that Freud says that the only fundamental desire when asleep is the desire to sleep.

It's making you laugh because you've never heard this. Fair enough. Yet it's in Freud.

How is it that this fact of what sleeping consists in doesn't occur straightaway to your gumption? It consists in suspending what is in my tetrad – semblance, truth, jouissance, and surplus jouissance. Anyone can just take a look at any sleeping animal to realize that sleep is designed to suspend the ambiguousness that there is in the body's relation to itself, namely the deriving of jouissance therefrom.

The body's possibility of gaining access to deriving jouissance from itself is plain to see everywhere. When it bumps into something. When it gets hurt. That's what jouissance is. So, here, mankind has some small ports of entry that the others don't have. He can turn it into a goal. In any case, when he sleeps, it's over.

When one sleeps, it's a matter of making the body coil up. It rolls itself into a ball. To sleep is not to be disturbed. After all, jouissance is disturbing. Naturally, the body gets disturbed, but so long as it's asleep, it can hope not to be disturbed. This is why, from then on, all the rest vanishes. Nor is it a question any more of semblance, nor of truth – because all of this holds together, it's the same thing – nor of surplus jouissance.

Except, there you have it. What Freud says is that, during this time, the signifier is still on the go. This is indeed why, even when I'm sleeping, I'm preparing my seminars. Monsieur Poincaré was discovering the Fuchsian functions.

3

[*Various noises*]

What's going on?

A MAN IN THE AUDIENCE – *Pollution!*[2]

Who said that? This precise term? I'm especially glad to hear you choose this term. You must be particularly intelligent.

I have already expressed in public how delighted I was that someone I analysed, who is here today somewhere – she's a particularly sensitive person – spoke about my discourse as *intellectual pollution*.

Pollution is an altogether fundamental dimension, you see. I probably wouldn't have pushed things quite that far today, but you seem to be so proud of having come out with this term *pollution* that

I suspect you might understand nothing of it. Nevertheless, you will see that not only am I going to make use of it, but also I'm glad a second time that someone should have come out with it, because this is precisely the difficulty of the analytic discourse.

I'm picking up on this interruption, seizing on it, taking on board something that, in the urgency of the end of the year, I find myself having occasion to say.

It is precisely in so far as the analytic discourse is characterized by locating the object *a* in the place of semblance that – can you imagine, sir, thinking you'd pulled quite a stunt – you've gone exactly in the direction of what I have to put forward, namely that the pollution that is most characteristic in this world is the object *a*, from which man takes his substance, you included.

In having to turn himself, in his body, in his existence as an analyst, into the representation of this pollution, which is the most certain effect across the surface of the globe, he has to take more than one look at this. It's made the little darlings ill, and I must tell you that I'm no more at ease in this situation than they are.

What I'm trying to demonstrate to them is that it's not entirely impossible to do so with a little decency. Thanks to logic, if they would kindly allow themselves to be tempted by it, I've managed to make this position bearable for them, the position that they occupy as *a* in the analytic discourse. It would allow them to conceive of how raising this function to a position of semblance, which is the key position in any discourse, is clearly no small matter. Here lies the mainspring of what I have always been trying to make you feel as the analyst's resistance – which is only too understandable – to truly fulfilling his function.

It oughtn't to be believed that the position of semblance is easy for anyone and everyone. It is tenable only at the level of scientific discourse. This is for the very simple reason that what is carried to the command position here is something that belongs utterly to the order of the real inasmuch as all that we touch on by way of the real is the *Spaltung*, the split, in other words, the way that I define the subject. This is because in scientific discourse it is the barred capital S that holds this key position.

For the university discourse, it is knowledge. The difficulty is yet greater here due to a kind of short-circuit, because in order to turn knowledge into semblance one has to know how to affect a semblance. And this soon wears thin.

In Milan, from which I have just returned, obviously I had a far less numerous audience than here, about a quarter of the number of you, but there was a throng of young people who are what is known as *in the movement*. There was even one most respectable character,

of fairly high stature, who happens to be the representative of the movement down there. Only afterwards was I told that he was there. I didn't want to question him, but does he know or doesn't he know that, by being posted at this outcrop, what he wants, like all those who are a little involved in the movement, is to restore to the university discourse its value? As the noun indicates, this culminates in units of value, in *credits*. They would like to know a little better how to affect a semblance of knowledge. This is what guides them.

Well, indeed, this is respectable. And why not? The university discourse has a status that is just as fundamental as any other. However, what I'm pointing out is that it's not the same as the psychoanalytic discourse. The place of semblance is held differently there.

Good gracious, how is one to manage with a new audience, and above all if they might be confused? I tried to explain to them a little what my place is in the story. I started by saying that my *Écrits* are a *poubellication*, and that they shouldn't believe that they could take their bearings from them. The word *Seminar* did nevertheless crop up thereafter. Of course, I was forced to confess that the Seminar is not a seminar. It's me wittering on all by myself, my good friends, as I have been for years now. Though there was a time, back in the day, when it lived up to its name, and there were other people who contributed.

So, being forced to come to that put me beside myself. And since on the return flight there was someone who was pressing me to know how it was that there once was a time when it was like a seminar, I told myself that today I would say that, for this penultimate session, good Lord, someone should come along to say something.

Whereupon I received a letter from Monsieur Recanati. I won't tell you the story just yet. I'm not pretending that I'm conjuring up a contribution from the floor. I'm simply saying that I received a letter, which moreover was a reply to one of mine. To my great surprise, my correspondent, who is here beside me, proved to me that he had understood something of what I've been saying this year. So, I'm going to give him the floor.

He has something to say to you that bears the closest relation to what I've been trying to open up, notably to set theory and mathematical logic. He's about to tell you which.

[*François Recanati's exposé revisits Lacan's thematic from the perspective of Peirce's logic. Lacan printed the exposé in the journal* Scilicet *4 (1973): 55–63, followed by Recanti's commentary on his own exposé, addressed to Lacan in the form of a letter, pp. 64–73. The following four paragraphs are drawn from Lacan's responses.*]

I think it should be underscored here that the bar placed over both terms, $\exists x$ and Φx, which are each negated, is an *It is not true that* . . . which is frequently used in mathematics, because this is the key point to which the so-called proof by contradiction leads. All in all, it's a matter of knowing why it is accepted in mathematics, but only in mathematics, that one can ground something affirmable upon an *It is not true that* . . . How could you do this anywhere else?

It is precisely here that the objection comes, within mathematics, to using the *argumentum ad absurdum*. The question is how, in mathematics, the *argumentum ad absurdum* can ground something, which as such proves not to lead to contradiction. This is where the specific domain of mathematics is specified.

So, under this *It is not true that* . . . , it's a matter of furnishing the status of the negative bar that I've been using at one of the points on my chart, in order to say *There does not exist an x to satisfy a negated* Φx.

I had to go to Milan to feel the need to get a response. I feel that the one I've just had is quite satisfactory enough for you to be able to be satisfied by it too, for today.

14 June 1972

XVI

BODIES CAPTURED BY DISCOURSE

The affable Umberto Eco
Self-cognizance is hygiene
The bodily support in analysis
Jurisprudence and fine sentiments
Racism and fraternity

Qu'on dise comme fait reste oublié derrière ce qui est dit, dans ce qui s'entend.

This statement, assertive in its form, belongs to the modal for issuing what it does by way of existence.

Today, I will be taking my leave of you, of those who've been coming along and then of those who haven't been coming but have come along for this leave-taking. There's no need to strike up the band.

What can I do? Summing myself up, as they say, is absolutely out of the question. So, I shall mark something, a point, a suspension point. Of course, I could say that I've continued to circumscribe this impossibility in which, for us in the analytic discourse, everything that can be founded as real is gathered.

At the last minute and, my word, by a stroke of luck, I received testimony that what I've been saying is being heard. I received it by virtue of the person who, to his great merit, was kind enough to speak at this final moment of the year, proving to me that indeed for

some, for more than one, for happenstances that come about from angles that I can on no account predict, they found some interest in what I've been trying to set out. I thank, therefore, the person who bore me this testimony, and not only to me. I hope that there are enough people for whom this created an echo, and who were able to realize that it can yield something. Naturally, it's always hard to know how far this reaches.

On this score, I don't think it beside the point to bring up the meeting I had with someone in Italy, whom I find to be a very affable fellow. He's in art history and is involved in the idea of the *Work*. It's not known why, though we might come to understand, he is interested in what is being set out under the heading of *structure*, and specifically in what I have been able to produce in this respect. He is interested in it on account of personal issues.

This idea of the Work, this art history, this vein, tends to enslave. There's no doubt about that. It can be seen quite clearly when one beholds what someone who was neither a critic nor a historian, but a creator, formed as an image of this vein, namely the slave, the captive. A certain Michelangelo showed us this. So, on the margins, there are the historians and the critics who pray for the slave. This is mummery like any other. It's a kind of divine service that can be practised. It's a way of making you forget what is in command, because the Work is always in command, even for Michelangelo.

The one in command is what I first tried to produce for you this year under the heading *Yad'lun*. The One is in command. The One makes Being. I asked you to go to look this up in the *Parmenides*. Some of you perhaps complied. The One maketh Being just as the hysteric maketh the man. Obviously, the One that maketh Being is not itself Being. It *maketh* Being. This is what is unbearable for a certain creativist infatuation.

The person I'm speaking about, who was really very affable with me, explained how he has got caught up on what he calls my *system*, in order to speak out against its barbs. This is why I'm making a big deal of this today, so as to avoid a particular confusion. He has got caught up on what in his mind is my practising too much ontology.

This is rather odd. I know that of course there are not just open ears in this audience. I think there are a certain number of deaf ears, as there are everywhere. But to say that I practise ontology is all the same fairly odd. And positioning this ontology in the big Other, which I show as having to be barred, and to which I pin the signifier of this barring, is curious indeed.

What has to be seen in the reverberations, in the response that one obtains, is that, after all, people respond to you with their own

issues. His issue is that ontology, and even Being, has got stuck in his craw. This is due to the fact that, if ontology is simply the puckering of the One, then obviously everything that is done on command becomes suspended from the One, and, my goodness, this is a nuisance for him. So, what he would like, all in all, is for structure to be *absent*.

Indeed, this would be more convenient for the *hey presto*. What is wanted here is that the sleight of hand that takes place, which is the work of art, should have no need of cups and balls. You have only to behold this in a painting by Hieronymus Bosch, who was an artist far above this. He doesn't hide how it's done, the captivation of gawkers.

This is not what we are busying ourselves with here. We are dealing with the analytic discourse.

1

Regarding this analytic discourse, I thought all the same that it might not be a bad idea before leaving you to punctuate something that would give you the idea not only that this is neither ontological nor philosophical, but indeed that it is only necessitated by a particular position. This particular position is the one in which I believe I have been able to condense the articulation of a discourse.

It's a matter of showing you what relation this bears to the fact that analysts have a relation – and you would be wrong to think that I'm ignorant of this – to something that is called the human being. Yes indeed. Of course. But I don't use this label. I avoid this label so that you won't stick your necks out, so that you'll stay right where you ought to be, to the extent that you're capable of seeing what the difficulties are that arise for the analyst.

Let's speak no more of cognizance, because man's relation to a world of his own – obviously this is where we've been starting off from for a long while now – has never been anything but play-acting in the service of the discourse of the master. The only world of one's own is the world that the master strings along at his beck and call.

As for the famous *knowing thyself*, *γνῶθι σεαυτόν*, which is what supposedly maketh the man, let's take as our point of departure the following, which is straightforward and palpable. Indeed, if you so wish, cognizance has a locus. It has the locus of the body. The cognizance of oneself is hygiene. Let this be our starting point.

So, throughout the centuries, illnesses continued to exist. Everyone knows that illness cannot be remedied by hygiene. There is illness, and this is indeed something that grips the body. For centuries,

illness was something of which doctors were supposed to have cognizance. During one of our recent talks I think I briefly underscored the failure of these two angles. All of this is plain to see in history. It's spread across it in all sorts of aberrations.

So, all the same, the question that I would like to make tangible for you today concerns the analyst who is now here and who seems to be taking up the baton. People speak about illness and at the same time people say that there is no such thing, that there is no mental illness, for example. They are quite right, in the sense that illness is a nosological entity, as used to be said. On no account is mental illness an entity. Rather, mentality has rifts. Let's put it like that, somewhat briskly.

Let's try to see, for instance, what is supposed in what I've written here, and which supposedly lays out where a particular chain is positioned. This chain is very certainly, and without the faintest ambiguity, *structure*.

$$\frac{S_1}{\$} \longrightarrow \frac{S_2}{a}$$

Discourse of the master

You can see two signifiers in succession, and the subject is here only in so far as one signifier represents it for the other signifier. Then, something results from this for which over the years we have extensively developed enough reasons to justify notating it as the object *a*. Evidently, if it here takes this tetradic form, this is not a topology that is devoid of some kind of meaning.

This is the novelty that was introduced by Freud, and it's no small matter.

There was someone who did something very fine by crystallizing the discourse of the master on the basis of a historical perspective that he succeeded in grasping. That someone is Marx. This was a step forward. There is no cause to reduce this step to the first. Nor is there cause to mix the two together. One wonders on what grounds they would have to be in absolute accord. They are not in accord. They are perfectly compatible. They are nested. They are nested, and then there is certainly a step that takes its place quite comfortably, and that is the step of Freud.

All in all, what was the essential thing that Freud introduced? He introduced the dimension of over-determination. I afford an image of over-determination in my way of formalizing, in the most radical

fashion, the essence of discourse, in so far as it occupies a pivotal position in relation to what I have just called a support.

After all, it was on the basis of discourse that Freud brought to light the fact that what was produced at the level of the support had to do with what was articulated by way of discourse. The support is the body.

We still have to pay attention when we say that it's the body. It's not necessarily *one* body. From the moment we take jouissance as the starting point, this means very precisely that the body is not on its own, that there is another one. It is not because of this that jouissance is sexual, since what I've just been explaining this year is that the least one can say is that this jouissance is not brought along. It's the jouissance of a bodily one-on-one. What is specific to jouissance is that, when there are two bodies, and even more so when there are more of them, naturally one cannot tell which of them is enjoying. It is for this reason that there might be several bodies involved in this affair, and even series of bodies.

One thing led to another and, goodness knows why, I found myself rereading a session of a Seminar I gave at the start of the last term of the academic year that I dedicated to the case of President Schreber. It is from 11 April 1956, right after the two first terms that are summarized in my *écrit* that goes by the title *D'une question préalable à tout traitement possible de la psychose*. I set out what is involved in structure. I'm calling it by its name, the name that it bears in my disquisition – *structure*. Structure is not always what the rabble believe,[1] but it's perfectly well expressed at this level.

It would have amused me to publish this Seminar, if the keybasher hadn't left a large number of lacunae because she hadn't heard me properly. If only she had accurately reproduced the sentence in Latin that I wrote on the blackboard. I no longer remember who the author was, and to find it again will certainly cost me some time, but no matter. I'll do it for the next issue of *Scilicet*. Everything that I said back then about the signifier – at a time when, in '56, it can't be said that it was in fashion – is still struck in a metal that I have no need to retouch.

What I said in this regard is precisely that what distinguishes the signifier is that it has no signification. I said it in a forthright way because back then I had to make myself heard by my audience. You do realize that, what is more, it was an audience of doctors. What the heck could they get out of it? They were just listening to a bit of Lacan. Well, a bit of Lacan . . . that is to say, this clown who was doing his marvellous trapeze act. Throughout that time, they already had an eye on how they would get back to their digestion, because one can't say that they are dreamers. That would be too

fine. They don't dream. They digest. It's an occupation like any other.

What one has to try to see is that what Freud introduced – and people imagine that I misconstrue this because I speak about the signifier – is the return to this grounding that is in the body, and which means that, quite independently of the signifiers by which they are articulated, these four poles are determined by the emergence as such of jouissance, precisely as something that is ungraspable. This is what makes the other three rise up, and, in response, the first, which is truth.

Truth already implies discourse. This doesn't mean that it can be said. I've been knocking myself out saying that it cannot be said, or that it can only go midsay. However, for jouissance to exist, one has to be able to speak about it. In view of which, there is something else, which is called *the fact of saying*.

Well, all told, I spent the whole of last year explaining this for you. It took a while to articulate. You have to see in this my necessity, my way of moving forward. Precisely, I can never articulate it as a truth. You have to turn around it in keeping with your own destiny. More exactly, you have to see how it turns, how it swivels, as soon as it is touched, and even how, up to a certain point, it's unstable enough to lead to all sorts of errors.

Either way, if I came out with the title – which all the same shows some gall – *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant*, on a discourse that would not be a discourse of semblance, then it was to allow you to sense, and you did sense it, that discourse as such is always a discourse of semblance, and that if there is something at some point that is authorized by jouissance, then this is precisely the fact of affecting a semblance. From this point of departure one can manage to conceive of something that we can only catch hold of here, namely surplus jouissance.

If there is someone who got to grips with this surplus jouissance in a way that was so self-assured, whose memory has to be hailed – *mémoire* as I write it, giving *mé* the same meaning as the *mé* in *méconnaisance* – who has been so well *mémorisé*,[2] so well memorialized that it's more a matter of his words having been made risible, then that someone is Plato.

Plato captured something that gives us to think that he's not only about Ideas and Forms, but also everything that can be got out of him by translating his statements with a certain grid that is, I admit, *vraisemblable*, plausible. Plato is nevertheless the one who put forward the function of the dyad as the chute down which everything has to pass, to leak. No *larger* without *smaller*. No *older* without *younger*. The fact that the dyad is the locus of our loss, the

locus of this leak, the locus that forces Plato to forge this One of Idea, of Form, this One that immediately multiplies and becomes *un*-graspable, is because like the rest of us it is steeped in this supplement.

Indeed, I spoke about all this in the session of my Seminar of 11 April 1956. I spoke of the difference between the supplement and the complement. Well, I had already spelt this out very clearly in 1956. It seems that this might have served to crystallize something of the function that is to be fulfilled, the function of the analyst, and which seems to be so impossible, more so than others, that people think only of camouflaging it.

So, everything turns around this. After everything I've just set out concerning jouissance, truth, semblance, and surplus jouissance, there is this support, which is what happens at the level of the body and from which all meaning emerges, but in a non-constituted form. This is what forms the ground. *Ground* is the word that was used the other day by the person who was kind enough to come and speak to us about Peirce, to the extent that it was in Peirce's note that he had heard what I was saying.

I don't need to tell you that back when I wrote up Peirce's quadrants, it came to nothing. You can well imagine that remarks on the total ambiguity of the universal, whether it is affirmative or negative, and of the particular, too, . . . well, what effect could that have on those who dreamed only of finding again their same old tune?

The ground lies here. It is indeed a matter of the body with its radical meanings on which we have no purchase.

2

It is not with truth, semblance, jouissance, or surplus jouissance that one philosophizes. One is doing philosophy when there is something that fills in this support, which can be articulated only on the basis of discourse. What does it fill this support with? It has to be said that it is filled with what you are made of, and all the more so given that you are a bit philosophical. This happens sometimes, but in the end it's rare. You are above all *astudied*, as I once said.[3] You are in the place where the university discourse locates you. You are taken as *à-former*.[4] For some time now, a crisis has been afoot, but we will speak about this presently. It's secondary. The question is a different one, therefore.

You need to realize that what you depend on most fundamentally – because in the end the university did not appear just yesterday – is the discourse of the master. The discourse of the master was the first

to arise, and this is the discourse that has endured and which stands little chance of being shaken. It could be compensated, balanced out, with something that would be, the day when this happens, the analytic discourse. At the level of the discourse of the master, one can say perfectly well what lies between the functions of the discourses such as they are articulated using this S_1, S_2, barred S, and *a*, and then, on the other hand, the body that represents you here and which, as an analyst, I address.

When someone comes to see me for the first time in my consulting room and I punctuate our entry into this business with a few preliminary consultations, what is important is the confrontation of bodies. It's precisely because it starts with this, with this encounter of bodies, that once one enters the analytic discourse, there will be no further question of this. It is still the case, however, that on the level at which discourse functions – which is not the analytic discourse – the question arises as to how this discourse has managed to capture bodies.

At the level of the discourse of the master, it's clear. As bodies, you are moulded by the discourse of the master. You can't hide this, regardless of your gambolling. This is what I shall call *sentiments*, and very precisely *bons sentiments*, fine sentiments. Between the body and discourse lies what analysts indulge in pretentiously calling *affects*. It's quite obvious that you are affected in analysis. But they claim that this is what constitutes an analysis. They have to hold on to something, to be sure they won't slip. What are fine sentiments formed by? We are very much compelled to come to this. At the level of the discourse of the master, it's quite clear. They are formed by jurisprudence. Given that I'm speaking here as a guest to the Law Faculty, it is as well not to forget this. It's as well not to misrecognize that fine sentiments are founded by jurisprudence, and nothing more.

Let's be clear. When something like this all of a sudden comes to move your heart because you don't know very well whether you might not be a little responsive to the way an analysis has taken a turn for the worse, if there were no deontology, if there were no jurisprudence, where would this heavy heart be? Where would this affect, as they say, be? One does have to try to speak the truth a bit once in a while.

A *bit* means that what I've just said is not exhaustive. I could also say something else that would be incompatible with what I've just said, and which would *also* be the truth. And this is indeed what happens simply on account, not of a quarter-turn, but of half a complete turn, of two quarter-turns, in the sliding of these functional elements of discourse.

In this tetrad there are vectors, the necessity of which can be established full well. These vectors are due neither to the tetrad, nor to truth, nor to semblance, nor to anything else of the kind. They stem from the fact that the tetrad is fourfold. On the sole condition that you require that there should be vectors going in both directions, namely that there should be either two incoming vectors and one outgoing, or one incoming and one outgoing, you will necessarily be led to the way they are laid out here. This is due to the number 4, and nothing else. Naturally, semblance, truth, jouissance, and surplus jouissance, cannot be added together. So, they cannot make four all by themselves. It is precisely in this that the real consists, in that the number 4 exists all on its own.

This is something that I also said on 11 April 1956, but I hadn't yet come out with all of this. Moreover, I hadn't even constructed all of this. Only, this is what proves to me that I'm on the right track because, back then, I said that the number 4 is a number that is essential when it comes to remembering. I find nothing surplus to requirement in this. I said it when it had to be said, at the time when it was a question of psychosis.

Don't trouble yourselves over the people who are walking out. They have to at this time. They have to go to the funeral of someone to whom I hereby pay my respects, someone from our School and who was very dear to me. I regret not being able to join them, in view of my commitments here.

What is there, in the analytic discourse, between the functions of discourse and this support, which is not the signification of discourse, and which does not depend on anything of what is said? Everything that is said is semblance. What's more, everything that is said is true. All that is said gives rise to jouissance. As I have written again today on the blackboard, *Qu'on dise, comme fait* . . . this fact of saying . . . *reste oublié derrière ce qui est dit*.

That which is said lies nowhere else than *in what is heard*. That's what speech is. The fact of saying is something else entirely. It's another plane. It's discourse. It's a matter of relationships, which hold each and every one of you together with people who are not necessarily the people here. What is called relationship, *religiō*, social binding, occurs as the level of a certain number of points of capture that are not produced by chance. These points of capture necessitate, save for a very occasional erring, a certain order in the signifying articulation. And for something to be *said* here takes something other than what you imagine under the name *reality*, because reality stems very precisely from the fact of saying.

The fact of saying has its effects, on the basis of which what is known as the fantasy is constituted. The fantasy is the relation

between the object *a* – which is what is concentrated through the effect of discourse in order to cause desire – and this something that is condensed around it, as a split, and which is called the subject. It's a split because the object *a* always lies between each signifier and the signifier that follows it, and this is why the subject was always not *between*, but, on the contrary, *gaping*.

In Rome, where I have just been, I was able to put my finger on the fairly gripping effect, an effect in which I recognize myself full well, of the copper plates by a certain Fontana – who is apparently deceased – who after having shown great felicity as a constructor, a sculptor, and so on, dedicated his last years to making what in Italian is called *squarcio*. I don't speak Italian very well. I had this term explained to me. It's a gash. He made gashes in copper plates.

This produces a certain effect. It produces an effect for those who are a little sensitive. There's no need to have heard my disquisition on the *Spaltung* of the subject to be sensitive to this. The first person who comes along, especially if she is of the feminine sex, can experience a little wobbling.

Fontana was surely not one of those who completely misrecognize structure, and who think that it's overly ontological.

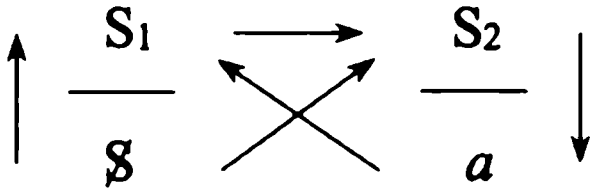
3

So, what is at issue in analysis?

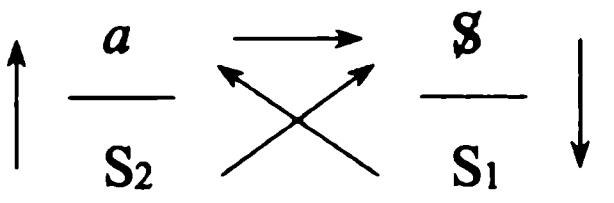
If I am to be believed, it must be thought that it is indeed as I have said it is, namely that the analyst installs the object *a*, and does so *en corps* – with all the legitimate ambiguity of this term[5] – in the place of semblance. It is on account of this that something exists that is called the analytic discourse. What does this mean? At the point we've reached, that is, where we've started to see this discourse taking shape, we can see that, as discourse – not in what is said but in its fact of saying – it allows us to apprehend what is involved in semblance.

This is why it is striking, at the end of a cosmological tradition, as we were allowed to feel it last time, to see the question being posed as to how the universe came to be born. Doesn't this question strike you as a rather dated one? It dates from the depths of ages, but it's no less dated. What is striking is that this led Peirce to a purely logical articulation, and even a logician's articulation. This is the point at which the fruit detaches from the tree of a certain articulation that I shall call illusory, which down through the ages has culminated in this cosmology fused with a psychology, with a theology, and with all that ensued.

Here we put a finger on the fact that, as was set out for you last time, there is no discourse on the origin that does not deal with the origin of a discourse. There is no graspable origin besides the origin of a discourse. This is what is important for us when it's a matter of the emergence of another discourse, the analytic discourse. In relation to the discourse of the master – the terms and arrangement of which I will quickly draw up again – the analytic discourse entails the double inversion of the slanting vectors.



Discourse of the master

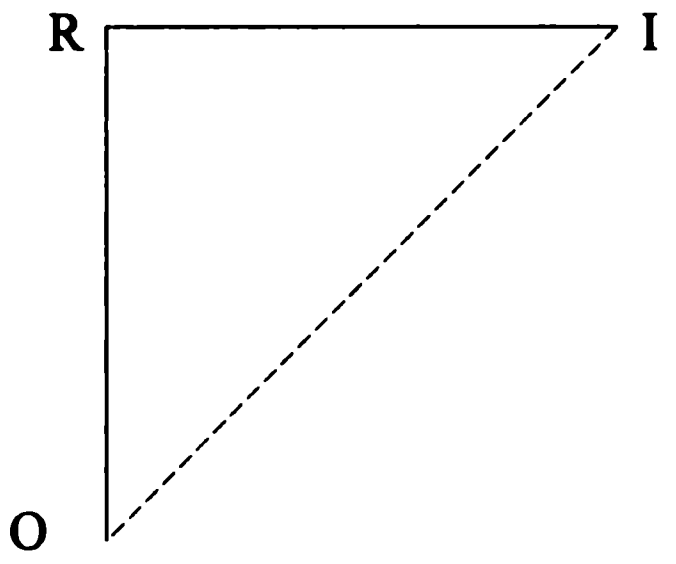


Discourse of the analyst

This holds all its importance. What Peirce dares to articulate for us, and here at the hinge of the cosmology of Antiquity, is the plenitude of what is at issue in bodily semblance. It is discourse in its relation, so he says, with the nothing. This means, with that around which any discourse necessarily turns.

Along this path, and by promoting set theory, I've been trying this year to suggest to those who hold the function of analyst that they should become versed, in order to train themselves, in this vein that exploits these statements that are formalized in logic. To train themselves in what? In the fact that there has to be a sifting apart of what earlier I called the filling in, the interval, the buffering, the gap, that lies between the body, jouissance, semblance, and discourse. This needs to be distinguished in order to realize that this is where the question is posed regarding something else, which is neither fine sentiment nor jurisprudence, and which bears a name, that of interpretation.

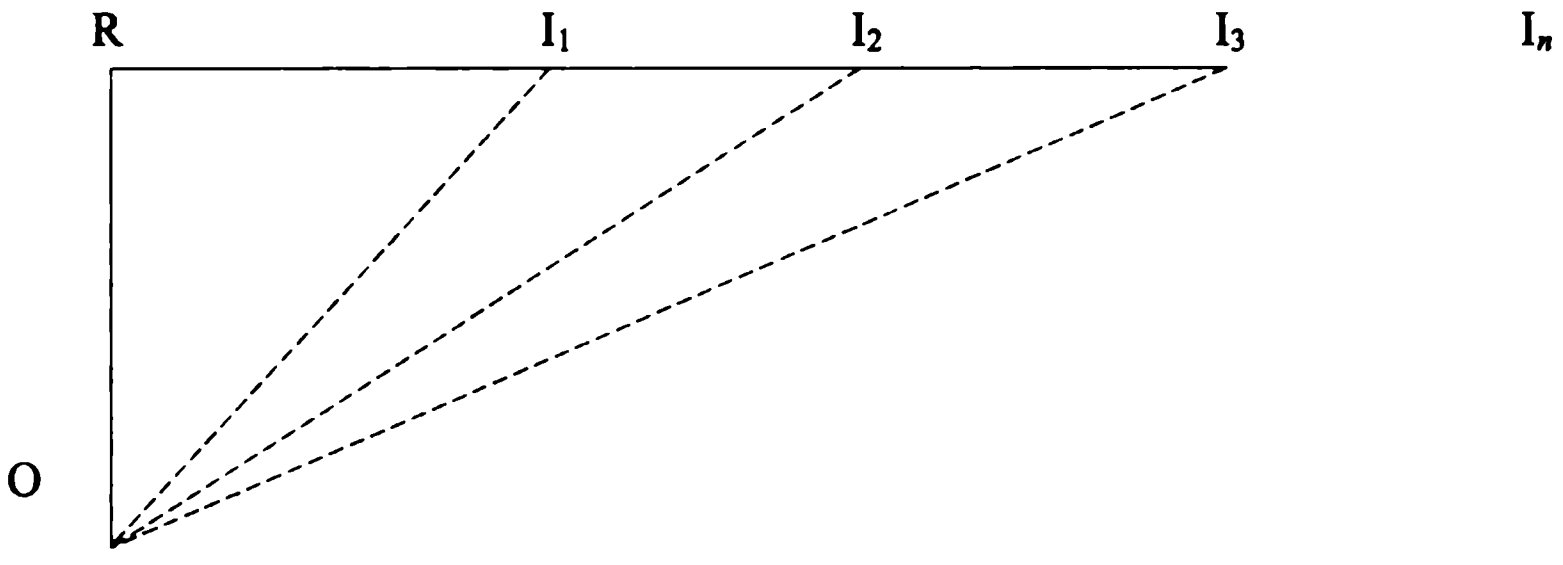
This was put up on the blackboard for you the other day in the form of what is called the semiotic triangle. It includes the *Representamen*, the *Interpretant*, and the Object. The relation is always ternary. The Representamen–Object pair is always to be reinterpreted, and this is what is at issue in analysis. The Interpretant is the analysand.



The semiotic triangle

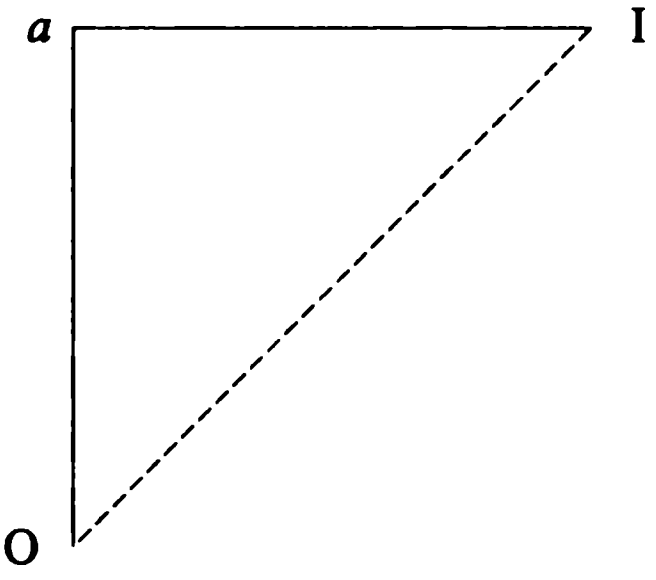
This doesn't mean that the analyst shouldn't be there to help him, to give him a bit of a push in the direction of interpreting. It has to be said that this cannot be done at the level of just one analyst, for the simple reason that if what I say is true, then this would merely be the lode of logic, the extraction of articulations from what is said, and not from the fact of saying. To spell it right out, if the analyst in his function – I mean, *en corps* – does not know how to gather up sufficiently what he hears from the Interpretant, from the one whom he allows to speak in the capacity of analysand, well, this analytic discourse effectively remains where Freud said it would, without budging a line. But then, as soon as it becomes part of common discourse, which is nowadays the case, it enters the armature of fine sentiments.

According to Peirce's diagram, which was drawn up last time, what does it take for interpretation to progress, for it to be possible? What is at issue in this relation between interpretation and Object? What is this Object for Peirce? There is no end to the extension of each new interpretation, unless there should be a limit precisely in what the analytic discourse should bring about, provided it doesn't languish in its current stagnation.



Endless interpretation

What needs to be replaced in Peirce's diagram so that it will match my articulation of the analytic discourse? Well, it's as easy as pie. For the effect of what is at issue in analytic treatment, there is no other Representamen but the object *a*. The analyst turns himself into the Representamen, in the place of semblance.



Where am I in the fact of saying?

The Object at issue is none other than what I've been examining here in my two formulas on the blackboard. It is none other than the fact of saying qua forgotten. This is the Object of the question that each of us poses – *Where am I in the fact of saying?*

If it is quite clear that neurosis has this staggered extension, this is very precisely because of this, which explains for us the wavering in what Freud put forward concerning desire, and especially desire in dreams. It's quite true that there are dreams of desire, but when Freud analyses one of his dreams, we can see which desire is at issue. It's the desire to posit the equation that desire equals zero.

At a time that was not much later than 11 April 1956, in 1957 precisely, I analysed the dream of Irma's injection.[6] This was transcribed as you can imagine it would be, by an academic, in a PhD thesis that is doing the rounds at present. The way that it was . . . I won't say *heard*, because he wasn't there – instead he worked from notes, and he thought he could add some of his own inventions to it. All the same, it's clear that if there is one thing that the sublime and divine dream of Irma's injection allows us to show, then it's what should have been exploited, given the time that's passed since I announced it, by anyone within the field of analysis. I left it to languish, because after all, as you're going to see, the thing isn't as consequential as all that. If, as I was reminding you recently, the essence of sleep is the suspension of the body's relation to jouissance, then it's quite obvious that desire, which is suspended from surplus jouissance, will not for all that be bracketed out.

One can clearly see what the dream works with, what it knits together. It uses elements from the day before, as Freud says it does. That is, it uses whatever is still lying utterly at the surface of memory, not in the depths. The only thing that connects the desire of the dream to the unconscious is the way in which it has to be worked through in order to solve the problem with a formula that includes = *0*, in order to find the root whereby its functioning is annulled. If it is not annulled, as they say, you wake up. In view of which, the subject goes on dreaming in his life.

Freud underscores that if desire has some interest in the dream, then it's in so far as there are cases in which the fantasy cannot be resolved. That is to say, it is perceived that desire – allow me to express it like this since I'm nearing the end – has no reason for being. It's that something has occurred, which is the encounter from which neurosis stems, the Medusa's head, the *split* from earlier, seen directly, inasmuch as it has no solution. It is precisely for this that, in most people's dreams, it is indeed a matter of the question of desire, in so far as it refers far beyond, to the structure by virtue of which the *a* is the cause of the *Spaltung* of the subject.

So, what binds us to the one with whom we are setting off, stepping beyond the first apprehension of the body? Is the analyst there to give him grief for not being sufficiently sexuated, for not enjoying well enough, and goodness knows what else? What is it that binds us to the one who is setting off with us in the position that is called that of the patient?

The term *frère* is splashed across every wall. *Liberté, égalité, fraternité*. But I ask you, at the cultural point we've reached, with whom are we brothers? With whom are we brothers in any other discourse besides the analytic discourse? Is the boss the brother of the worker? Does it not strike you that this word *brother* is precisely the one to which the analytic discourse affords its presence, if only in that it brings it back to what are called family affairs? If you think this is simply to avoid class struggle then you're mistaken. It has to do with many other things besides the family racket. We are brothers with our patient in that, like him, we are sons of discourse.

To represent this effect that I designate as the object *a* – to accustom us to this *désêtre*, this deserted Being, by dint of being the support, the refuse, the abjection, onto which can be hooked what will, thanks to us, be begotten by the fact of saying, which will of course be an Interpretant – I invite the analyst to support himself, in such a way as to be worthy of transference, through this knowledge that can be questioned as such, on account of being in the place of truth. This knowledge can be questioned with respect to what has always been involved in the structure of knowledge,

from *savoir-faire* through to the knowledge of science. From here, of course, we interpret. But who can do so if not the very one who engages himself in the fact of saying and who, brother that we are to him, will uplift us?

What is begotten by an analysis, what is begotten at the level of the subject, of the subject who speaks, of the analysand, is something that happens *with* – man thinks, said Aristotle, *with* his soul.[7] The analysand analyses *with* this piece of crap that is proposed to him in the figure of his analyst, the object *a*. It is *with* this something, this split thing, that must be begotten what is none other when all is said and done – to take up something that was put forward the other day with respect to Peirce – than the beam by which the scales of what is called *justice* can be set in balance. Our brother transfigured is what is begotten by the analytic conjuration, and this is what binds us to the one who is improperly called our *patient*.

It has to be said that this *parasexal* discourse can produce this kind of backlash. I would not like to leave you with just this saccharine treat. When it comes back at the level of a discourse, the notion of brother, however solidly it has been rubber-stamped by virtue of all sorts of jurisprudence throughout the ages, will produce its backlash at the level of the support.

In all of this, I haven't made the faintest mention of the Father. I consider that people have already said enough and explained enough about the Father to show you that it's around him who *unigates*, him who says no, that all that is universal can be grounded, must be grounded, and alone can be grounded. When we come back to the root of the body, if we reassert the value of the word *brother*, it will return full sail at the level of fine sentiments.

Since, nevertheless, it's not just about painting a rose-tinted future, you should know that what is on the rise, the ultimate consequences of which we have still not seen, and which is rooted in the body, in the fraternity of bodies, is racism.

You have not heard the last of this.

21 June 1972

APPENDICES

REPORT ON SEMINAR XIX

Jacques Lacan

First published in the *Annuaire de l'École pratique des Hautes Études, 1972–1973*, pp. 287–91; reprinted with minor editorial modifications in *Scilicet* 5 (1975): 5–10.

The title is a choice. Others *s'* . . . *oupirent*, suspire for worse. I abet not making as much my honour. At issue is the sense of a practice, psychoanalysis.

I will note that I doubled this seminar, with another bearing the entitling of the 'psychoanalyst's knowledge', seen through by the air of sarcasm of my inspiring by Saint-Anne where I was making a return.

In which respect does my Hautes-Études title justify that at Paris I–II, playing host, my having spoken of the One, this is what might have been asked of me, tacit as it was.

That such an idea should have occurred to no one follows from my granted position in advance within the field of psychoanalysis.

It raises those I have designated as suspiring for worse to the One.

As for the rest, I was fomenting no thought of the One, but on the basis of the fact of saying *y a dl'Un*, I was going to the full terms that are demonstrated by its use, to make psychoanalysis thereof.

This is already in the Parmenides, i.e. Plato's dialogue, by a curious vanguard. I recommended a reading of it to my audience, but did they do so? I mean: did they read it as I do? This is not irrelevant to the present report.

The date of the analytic discourse is indicative of applying, to a real like the arithmetic triangle, which is *mathematical* par excellence, that is, which is transmissible outside of meaning, the analysis whereby Frege generates the One from the empty set, born of its time – specifically, where it slides to the equivoque by the name of the number zero, to establish that zero and one makes two. Whereupon Cantor newly calls into question the entire series of

integers and refers the denumerable to the first infinite, named $\aleph_0$, the first other One to transfer the cutting edge from the first: the same that, de facto, cuts it off from the twain.

This is precisely what Leibniz foresaw with his monad, but which, failing to extricate it from Being, he left in the Plotinian confusion that is favourable to the defence and illustriation of the master.

This is where analysts take an imperious turn for the worse when they cannot accustom themselves to being promoted as abjection at the place defined by the One rightfully occupying it, with the aggravating factor that this is the place of semblance, specifically where *l'être* lays down the *lettre*, we might say.

How might they accustom themselves to it being on the analysand's side that the One is admissible, albeit put to work there (cf. below)?

What they can bear still less is the steadfastness of the One in modern science, not that the universe is maintained therein, but rather that the constancy of energy forms a pivot to the point that even quantum theory's refusals of univocity do not disprove this one and only constancy, indeed that probability promotes the One as the closest element to Nature, which is comical.

Turning oneself into a being of abjection presupposes the analyst as otherwise rooted in a practice that stakes everything on another real: the very same that is at stake for us in the fact of so saying.

And another thing is the remark that abjection in scientific discourse should hold the rank of truth, no less. This, manifest from the start in the hysteria of Socrates, and in the effects of science, coming back to light of day sooner than anyone can imagine.

But what can be found for the taking in analysts' me-at-the-least, when this is the blow I sustain?

Why, wherefore your daughter is mute, did Freud manage to account? This is the complicity we've just been saying, that of hysteria with science. As for the rest, the question is not as to the discovery of the unconscious, which has its material preformed in the symbolic, but as to the creation of an apparatus the real of which touches the real, namely what I have articulated as the analytic discourse.

This creation could only be produced given a certain tradition of Scripture, the hinging of which is to be sounded out with what it sets down of creation.

A segregation results from this, which I am not against, though a formation that is addressed to man one and all, such is my preference, even if, in keeping with my formulae not-all woman does it include.

This not that a woman should be less gifted when it comes to there sustaining herself, quite the contrary, and precisely because she does not suspire for worse of the One, being of the Other, to take up the terms of the Parmenides.

Bluntly to tell the truth that is inscribed by dint of Freud's statements on sexuality, there is no such thing as sexual relation.

This formula makes sense in summing them up. For if sexual jouissance is injected so deeply into the relationships of him that assumes being from speech – for this is what, speaking, being is – is it not so that he has no quantifiable relation to sex as specifying a partner, I would say to indicate what is required by science (and which it applies to the animal realm).

It is only too conceivable how the universitarian idea obfuscates this by classifying it under pansexualism.

Whereas, while the theory of cognizance was for a long time no more than man's relations with woman imagined in metaphor, it is precisely in taking an opposite stance that the analytic discourse is situated. (Freud throws out Jung.)

That analysis should have the task of voicing the critique of the inconsistency of the ancient sayings of love is what results from the very notion of the unconscious inasmuch as it is borne out as knowledge.

What the disposed experience of analysis brings us is that the faintest bias in the text of whatever the analysand's said offers us a purchase thereupon that is more direct than myth, which is aggregated only from the generic in language.

This is a return to the state of civil status, certainly, but why not take this humble path?

If there is solidarity – and no more to advance – between the non-relation of sexes and the fact that a being be speaking, then it's hither wise as valid as the erring habits of consciousness, locating what is presumed to be the crowning achievement of life, which is itself supposed to be a reproductive idea, when sex binds itself unto death as well.

Thenceforth it is in the knots of the symbolic that the interval that is located, by way of a non-relation, is to be mapped in its orography, which, in forming a world for man might equally be called *mur*, a wall, and to proceed from *l'(a)mur*.

Hence the watchword I have been giving to analysts, not to neglect this linguistic discipline in broaching the said knots.

Yet this is not so that they should dodge, following the fashion that affects a semblance of knowing in the university discourse, that which in this field outlined as linguistics, is real about it.

The signifier One is not one signifier among others, and it surmounts that whereby it is but be-twain these signifiers that the subject is supposable, by my so saying.

But this is where I recognize that this here One is but knowledge superior unto the subject, that is, unconscious insofar as it manifests itself as ex-sisting – the knowledge, I say, of a real of the One-all-alone, all-alone right where relation would be said.

Save but zero of meaning should be begotten from the signifier whereby the Other is inscribed in its being unto the subject barred, S(Ⱥ), I write it.

This is why I have been calling the Ones of one of the lateral series of Pascal's triangle *nads*.[1] This One repeats, but is not totalized through this repetition: which is seized from the mere nothings of meaning, facts of non-sense, to be recognized in the dreams, the slips, and indeed the 'quips' of the subject so that he may venture that this unconscious is his own.

His own as knowledge, and the knowing of it as such affects without doubt.

But what? This is the question where one deceives oneself.

– Not 'my' subject (the one that I said just a moment past: that it constitutes in its semblance, I said its letter).

– Nor the soul, which is the imagining of imbeciles, at least they would have believe as much when one finds on reading them this soul *with* which man thinks, for Aristotle, the soul that is reconstructed by the likes of Uexküll, in the guise of an *Innenwelt* that is the trait-portrait of the *Umwelt*.

I say, ergo, that knowledge affects the body of the being that becomes Being only through spoken words, in parcelling out his jouissance, in thereby carving him up to the extent of producing the off-cuts from which I make the (*a*), to be read object *a*, or indeed abject, which is what will be said when I am dead, the time when finally I shall be tended to, or further fleshed out, th(*a*) first cause of his desire.

This body is not the nervous system, though this system does serve jouissance inasmuch as in the body it fits out the predation, or better still the jouissance of the *Umwelt* taken in the manner of prey – which of the *Umwelt* does not, therefore, figure the trait-per-trait, as they persist in dreaming it, a residue of a philosophical vigil, the translation of which into 'affect' marks the unanalysed.

[1] We should specify that the monad is, therefore, the One that knows itself all alone, aught of real of the voided relation; the *nad* is this empty relation insisting; there remains the inaccessible henad, the $\aleph_0$ of the sequence of integers, whereby two, which ushers it in, symbolizes in language the supposed subject of knowledge.

It is true therefore that work (dream-work, among other sorts) bypasses thinking, calculating, and even judging. It knows what it has to do. This is its definition: it supposes a 'subject', and this is *Der Arbeiter*.

What does think, calculate, and judge is jouissance, and jouissance being of the Other, requires that the *Une*, the One that makes a function of the subject, should simply be castrated, that is to say symbolized by the imaginary function that incarnates powerlessness, in other words by the phallus.

In psychoanalysis it is a matter of raising powerlessness (the same that makes the fantasy hear reason) to logical impossibility (the same that incarnates the real). That is to say, of completing the lot of signs in which the *fatum hominum* is played out. Here, it is enough to know how to count up to 4, the 4 where the three major numerical operations converge, 2 and 2, 2 times 2, 2 to the power of 2.

The One *pro tanto*, which I locate by way of non-relation, is not part of these 4, precisely in but forming the set of them. Let's not call it monad any more, but the One-fact-of-saying inasmuch as therefrom come to ex-sist those that in-sist in repetition, the founding of which requires three (I said so elsewhere), which goes very well towards setting the subject aside of these 4, by subtracting from him his unconscious.

This is what the year is leaving in suspense, in keeping with what is ordinary in thought which does not except itself for all that from jouissance.

Hence it becomes apparent that thought proceeds only along the path of ethics. This ethics still needs to fall in with the *pas* of psychoanalysis.

Does the One-Fact-of-Saying, in knowing itself One-all-alone, speak on its own? *Pas de dialogue*, I have said, none such dialogue, but this nonesuch of dialogue has its limit in interpretation – whereby is ensured, like for number, the real.

The result of this is that analysis upends the precept: *bien faire et laisser dire*, to the point that saying it well gives satis-fact-ion, since there is but more-thereof-to-say in response from the *pas-assez*, the nonesuch-ficient.

What the French lalingua so illustriates in the saying: *com-bien* for making a question of quantity.

Let's say that the interpretation of the sign renders meaning unto the effects of signification that the signifying battery of language substitutes for the relation it could never encipher.

But the sign in return produces jouissance through the cipher the signifiers permit: which forms the mathematician's d-es-ire, enciphering beyond jouis-sense.

The sign is obsession that cedes, makes an obcession (spelt with a c) to the jouissance that decides upon a practice.

I give my blessing to those who pass commentary in my regard, contending with the torment that sustains a worthy thought, namely: one that is not content to be beaten by tracks of the same name.

Make these lines the trace of hap-py chance, theirs without the knowledge thereof.

LIBRARY TO SEMINAR XIX

Jacques-Alain Miller

The bibliographical notes below follow those prepared by Jacques-Alain Miller for the 2011 Seuil edition of Book XIX (pp. 245–54), with the notable difference that references to French publications have been supplemented, wherever possible, with published English-language translations, while references to French translations have generally been replaced by original sources and/or renderings in English. – ARP

Antiquity

– For Lacan's references to Plato (first and foremost the *Parmenides*, but also the *Meno*, the *Cratylus*, the *Theaetetus*, and the *Symposium*), one may consult the bilingual Greek/French edition published by Belles Lettres; likewise for his references to Aristotle (the *Prior Analytics*, *Physics*, and *Metaphysics*). In English, the *Complete Works of Aristotle* were published as a two-volume set by Oxford University Press in translations revised by Jonathan Barnes, 1984 (corrected edition 1995).
– Euclid, quoted on page 126: Lacan owned a copy of the Dover reprint of *The Thirteen Books of the Elements*, translated by Sir Thomas L. Heath (Cambridge University Press, 1908).
– Archimedes, cited on page 123: concerning his application of the method of exhaustion, derived from Eudoxus of Cnidus, see his works 'On the Sphere and Cylinder', 'Measurement of a Circle', and 'Quadrature of the Parabola'. They were published in French translation by Belles Lettres in 1970 and 1971 as the first two volumes of his complete works; Heath's 1897 *The Works of Archimedes; Edited in Modern Notation with Introductory Chapters* pre-dates the identification and deciphering of the Archimedes palimpsest, and has thus been largely superseded by the scholarship of Reviel

Netz and Nigel Wilson (*The Archimedes Palimpsest, Vols I & II*, Cambridge University Press, 2011 and Netz's translation *The Works of Archimedes, Vols I & II*, Cambridge University Press, 2004); for an excellent overview see Heath's *A Manual of Greek Mathematics* (Oxford University Press, 1931).
– Boetius de Dacia, cited on page 75: see Roman Jakobson's article 'Glosses on the Medieval Insight into the Science of Language' in the seventh volume of his *Selected Writings* (Mouton, 1985, pp. 192–3); one may also consult the article by Sten Ebbesen, 'Theories of Language in the Hellenistic Age and in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries' in *Language and Learning*, edited by D. Frede and B. Inwood (Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 299–319).
– Apuleius, cited on page 90: several translations of *The Golden Ass* are available, the most recent being by Sarah Ruden (Yale University Press, 2011); on his logic, one may consult *Apuleian Logic: The Nature, Sources, and Influence of Apuleius's Peri Hermeneias* by Mark W. Sullivan (North-Holland, 1967).
– Secondary sources: Karl Ludwig Michelet, cited on page 18, is a German philosopher (1801–93); his *Examen critique du livre d'Aristote intitulé Métaphysique*, written in French and published by J. Albert Mercklein in Paris in 1836, can now be consulted on Google Books. The article by Jacques Brunschwig, cited on page 90, appeared in *Cahiers pour l'analyse* 10 (1969): 3–25. On the Pythagoreans, cited on page 177, and the incommensurability of the diagonal of the square,[1] see, for example, the article by Jean-Toussaint Desanti, 'Une crise de développement exemplaire: la "découverte" des nombres irrationnels', in *Logique et connaissance scientifique* (Encyclopédie de la Pléiade, 1967, pp. 439–64). On modality in Aristotle, Lacan was later to read Jaakko Hintikka's contribution, *Time and Necessity: Studies in Aristotle's Theory of Modality* (Oxford University Press, 1973).

Logic and Mathematics

– Pascal: the 1654 *Traité sur le triangle arithmétique* was translated in abridged form by Anna Savitsky in D. E. Smith (ed.), *A Source Book in Mathematics* (McGraw-Hill, 1929, pp. 67–79). A full translation was made in 2009 by Richard J. Pulskamp, whose brief introduction points to some textual differences between the 1880 Hachette edition and the 1954 Pléiade edition. The latter is favoured as the source text of his translation, available online at: <www.cs.xu.edu/math/Sources/Pascal/Sources/arith_triangle.pdf>.
– Cauchy and Fourier are cited on page 123 in connection with the

history of infinitesimal calculus; on this subject, see the classic book by Carl B. Boyer, *The History of the Calculus and Its Conceptual Development* (Hafner, 1949); and also Margaret E. Baron, *The Origins of Infinitesimal Calculus* (Pergamon, 1969).
– Boole and De Morgan are mentioned on page 154 for their role in the emergence of mathematical logic; Lacan was a reader of the 'Kneale and Kneale', *The Development of Logic* (Oxford University Press, 1962); see also Józef M. Bocheński, *A History of Formal Logic* (Notre Dame Press, 1961).
– Frege: his 1879 *Begriffsschrift* was first Englished by Peter T. Geach ('*Begriffsschrift*, a Formalized Language of Pure Thought Modelled upon the Language of Arithmetic', in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, Blackwell, 1952, second edition, 1960, pp. 1–20), followed by the 1967 translation by Stefan Bauer-Mengelberg ('*Begriffsschrift*, a Formula Language, Modeled upon that of Arithmetic, for Pure Thought', in J. van Heijenoort (ed.), *From Frege to Gödel: A Source Book in Mathematical Logic, 1879–1931*, Harvard University Press, pp. 1–82), and then the 1972 translation by Terrell Ward Bynum (in *Conceptual Notation and Related Articles*, Clarendon, pp. 101–203), while the Preface and Part I were also translated by Michael Beaney (in *The Frege Reader*, Blackwell, 1997, pp. 47–78); Frege's 1884 *Grundlagen der Arithmetik* was translated by John Langshaw Austin as *The Foundations of Arithmetic* (Blackwell, 1950, revised second edition 1952), with selections and summaries included in *The Frege Reader* (op. cit., pp. 84–129); Frege's 1892 article 'Über Sinn und Bedeutung' was translated by Max Black as 'On Sense and Reference' (in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, op. cit., pp. 56–78), later modified (misleadingly) to 'On Sense and Meaning' (B. McGuiness (ed.), *Collected Papers on Mathematics, Logic, and Philosophy*, Blackwell, 1984, pp. 157–77), which in Beaney's translation bears the more prudent title, 'On *Sinn and Bedeutung*' (*The Frege* Reader, op. cit., pp. 151–71).
– Dedekind, page 171: see, for example, his 1872 pamphlet *Stetigkeit und irrationale Zahlen* and the 1888 article 'Was sind und was sollen die Zahlen?', which were translated by Wooster Woodruff Beman as 'Continuity and Irrational Numbers' and 'The Nature and Meaning of Numbers', in *Essays on the Theory of Numbers* (Open Court/Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1901). Beman's translation was extensively revised by William Ewald in *From Kant to Hilbert: A Source Book in the Foundations of Mathematics, Vol. II* (Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 765–79, 787–833). A French translation of the two essays, prefaced by Desanti and with an Introduction by Mohammed Allal Sinaceur, was published in 1979 as *Analytica* 12/13 (Navarin / Bibliothèque d'Ornicar).

– Peirce: Lacan was a reader of the *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, Vols. I–VI*, edited by C. Hartshome and P. Weiss, 1931–35, and *Vols. VII–VIII*, edited by A. W. Burks, 1958 (Harvard University Press).
– Poincaré, page 74 and page 193: see 'L'expérience et la géometrie', the fifth chapter in the 1901 collection *La science et l'hypothèse*, recently translated as 'Space and Geometry' by Mélanie Frappier, Andrea Smith, and David J. Stump, in *Science and Hypothesis* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).
– Cantor: his complete works are available in German as *Gesammelte Abhandlungen mathematischen und philosophischen Inhalts*, edited by E. Zermelo (Springer, 1932). The two versions of 'Beiträge zur Begründung der transfiniten Mengenlehre' (1895, 1897) were translated by Philip E. B. Jourdain as *Contributions to the Founding of the Theory of Transfinite Numbers* (Open Court, 1915). Further key texts, and his correspondence with Dedekind, are included in Ewald's English-language translations in *From Kant to Hilbert, Vol. II* (op. cit., pp. 838–940). See also Joseph Warren Dauben's *Georg Cantor: His Mathematics and Philosophy of the Infinite* (Harvard University Press, 1979). For a study of Lacanian influence, see Nathalie Charraud's *Infini et inconscient, essai sur Georg Cantor* (Economica, 1994).
– Russell: Lacan was familiar at least with the following works: *The Principles of Mathematics* (Cambridge University Press, 1903); *Principia Mathematica* (with Alfred North Whitehead, Cambridge University Press, 1910, 1912, 1913); and *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (Norton, 1940).
– Brouwer: Lacan alludes to Brouwer's theory of the 'creative subject' on page 152; see, for example, his text 'Consciousness, Philosophy and Mathematics', in *Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Philosophy* (North-Holland, 1949, pp. 1243–9), and the study by Walter P. van Stigt, *Brouwer's Intuitionism* (North-Holland, 1990).
– Gödel, page 30 and page 156: Gödel's *Collected Works, Vols I–V* are published by Oxford University Press, 2001–12, under the editorship of S. Feferman; one may also consult the book by Raymond M. Smullyan, *Gödel's Incompleteness Theorems* (Oxford University Press, 1992); and, by the same author, the accessible *The Lady, or the Tiger? And Other Logic Puzzles* (Knopf, 1982), and *Forever Undecided: A Puzzle Guide to Gödel* (Knopf, 1987).
– Bourbaki, page 20: the first volumes of the (at present) twelve Books of the *Éléments de mathématique* treatise were published in French and English by Éditions Hermann. The 1970 volume on the *Théorie des ensembles* (Book I), comprising chapters previously published in 1939, 1954, 1956 and 1957, is slightly later than

its English edition (*Theory of Sets*, Hermann, 1968). Likewise, the 1971 volume that comprises Chapters 1 to 4 of *Topologie générale* (Book III) was pre-dated by its English edition (*General Topology*, Hermann, 1966) and contains material first published between 1940 and 1942. Meanwhile, *Éléments d'histoire des mathématiques* groups together historical notes from the Books of the treatise; the first edition was published in 1960, followed by several further editions up to the 2007 Springer edition; the English-language translation by John Meldrum was first published by Springer in 1994 as *Elements of the History of Mathematics*.

– Thom: one may consult his 1972 book on *Structural Stability and Morphogenesis: An Outline of a General Theory of Models*, translated by David H. Fowler (Benjamin, 1975). A collection of papers dating from 1967 to 1981 was translated by W. M. Brookes and D. Rand as *Mathematical Models of Morphogenesis* (Ellis Horwood, 1983).

– The mention of *Naive Set Theory* on page 124 refers to the book by Paul Halmos (Springer, 1960).

– *Cantor a tort*, first mentioned on page 176, bears an author credit to Georges Antoniadès Metrios and a translation credit to Pierre Étienne Bessière (Sival-Presse, 1968). It is highly likely that both are pseudonyms.

The chapters one at a time

I The Small Difference

Lacan refers to his article in the *Écrits*, 'Propos directifs pour un Congrès sur la sexualité féminine'. On the Précieuses, Lacan had certainly read the classic study by René Bray, *La Préciosité et les Précieux: De Thibaut de Champagne à Jean Giraudoux* (Albin Michel, 1948); one can now read Myriam Dufour-Maître's *Les Précieuses: Naissance des femmes de lettres en France au XVII^e siècle* (Honoré Champion, 1999). Apollinaire's play *Les Mamelles de Tiresias* (1903), which is frequently cited by Lacan, was translated by Louis Simpson in 1961 as *The Breasts of Tiresias* (in M. B. Gale and J. F. Deeney (eds), *The Routledge Drama Anthology and Sourcebook: From Modernism to Contemporary Performance*, 2010, pp. 207–19), and by Maya Slater as *The Mammaries of Tiresias* (in *Three Pre-Surrealist Plays*, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 151–207). Regarding etymological dictionaries, Lacan owned the abridged two-volume set of Walther von Wartburg's *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (the full twenty-five volume work was

only completed in 2002). The Damourette and Pichon, a constant touchstone for Lacan, is their treatise *Des mots à la pensée: Essai de grammaire de la langue française*, 1911–56, the eight volumes of which have been reprinted by Vrin.

II The Function Φx

If the question of the written was 'on the agenda', this was due in particular to Jacques Derrida (*L'écriture et la différence* had been published in 1967 and *De la grammatologie* in 1967). 'L'instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient' is in the *Écrits*. Anyone interested in logic in the Middle Ages will read with profit *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism, 1100–1600*, edited by N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny, and J. Pinborg (Cambridge University Press, 1988). I would also mention the works in French of Alain de Libera.

III From Anecdote to Logic

'The most recent steps in biology': Lacan is no doubt thinking of Crick and Watson's discovery of the structure of DNA and the results that led to Jacob, Lwoff, and Monod being awarded the Nobel Prize in 1965; he had read François Jacob's *La Logique du vivant, une histoire de l'hérédité* (Gallimard, 1970, translated by Betty E. Spillman as *Logic of Life: A History of Heredity*, Princeton University Press, 1973). August Weismann: we know that Freud refers to him in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*; consult, for example, his *Essays upon Heredity and Kindred Biological Problems*, translated and edited by Sir Edward Bagnall Poulton, Selmar Schönland, and Sir Arthur Everett Shipley (Clarendon, 1891). The variations on 'I love her' are in Freud's text on President Schreber; there is a commentary by Lacan in his 'Discours de Rome' (in *Autres écrits*).

IV From Necessity to Inexistence

The pupil who 'came up with this, all on his own' is the psychoanalyst Octave Mannoni, cited for his 1963 article 'Je sais bien, mais quand même' (this phrase is translated by G. M. Goshgarian as 'I know well, but all the same' and by Wendy A. Hester as 'I know very well, but all the same'). 'La signification du phallus' is in the *Écrits*. Leopold Kronecker's anti-Cantorian comment is often quoted: 'Die ganzen Zahlen hat der liebe Gott gemacht, alles andere ist Menschenwerk'. The 'little book' on Arabic dactylonomy: I gave

this book to Lacan, but have been unable to recall the title; one may consult Karl Menninger's classic book from 1934, translated by Paul Broneer from the revised 1958 edition as *Number Words and Number Symbols: A Cultural History of Numbers*, MIT Press, 1969, along with the references listed in my note on Al-Uqlidisi in *Ornicar?* 16, 1978. Leibniz's lucubration on identity can be found in *New Essays on Human Understanding*, IV, vii, 10.

V Topology of Speech (*A Talk at Sainte-Anne*)

The four discourses are set out in 'Radiophonie', in *Autres écrits*. 'Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage en psychanalyse' was reprinted in the *Écrits*. On archetypes, see Jung's 1912 book *Symbols of Transformation: An Analysis of the Prelude to a Case of Schizophrenia*, translated by R. F. C. Hull (Bollingen Foundation, 1956). Roman Jakobson: Lacan makes several mentions of the series of *conférences* that his friend was delivering concurrently at the Collège de France at the invitation of Lévi-Strauss. Van Gulik's *Sexual Life in Ancient China: A Preliminary Survey of Chinese Sex and Society from ca. 1500 BC till 1644 AD* was published in 1961 (E. J. Brill; revised edition, 2003). On André Gide, see Lacan's 'Jeunesse de Gide' in the *Écrits*. Jean Paul Richter's 1883 two-volume translation of Leonardo's *Notebooks* and Edward MacCurdy's more complete 1905 rendering have long stood as the reference editions in English. Lacan came up with 'lettre d'amur' in his third *entretien* at Sainte-Anne (see *Talking to Brick Walls*, Polity, 2017).[2] 'La métaphore du sujet' features in the appendices to the second edition of the *Écrits*. In 1958, Chaïm Perelman co-authored with Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, translated by John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver, Notre-Dame, 1968.

VI I Ask You to Refuse Me My Offering

'Ne touchez pas à la hache' is the famed retort from General Armand de Montriveau in Balzac's *La Duchesse de Langeais*. The Antonella to whom Lacan appeals was then translating him into Italian; he calls her 'A' in his 'Préface à une thèse' (*Autres écrits*, p. 393). Wittgenstein's notorious aphorism is the last proposition in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Alexandre Kojève was Lacan's mentor and close friend, author of the famous *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, edited in 1947 by Raymond Queneau and translated by James H. Nichols Jr (Cornell University Press, 1969). On the potlatch, read the 1925 essay, *The Gift*, by Marcel Mauss (translated

by Ian Cunnison, Cohen & West, 1954; then again by W. D. Halls, Norton, 1990; and more recently in an expanded edition by Jane I. Guyer, University of Chicago Press, 2016) and *The Accursed Share* by Georges Bataille (three volumes, 1946; translated by Robert Hurley in two volumes, Zone Books, 1988). Georges Théodule Guilbaud was a mathematician and a friend of Lacan's whom he frequently consulted; among his other achievements, Guilbaud introduced game theory into post-war France. Lacan develops the Borromean knot at great length from his twenty-second Seminar (*RSI*) onwards.

VII The Vanished Partner (*A Talk at Sainte-Anne*)

Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* was published in two volumes in 1949 (translated by Howard Madison Parshley, Vintage/Random House, 1953; and later by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevalier, Cape, 2009). On Socrates, see in particular the eighth Seminar, on *Transference*.

VIII What is Involved in the Other

Hogarth: the S-shaped line is, according to him, the emblem of beauty; see his 1753 book *The Analysis of Beauty* and the note to Book XXIII of the Seminar (Polity, 2016, pp. 218–19). Lacan often asserted that he was the first to have pointed out the importance of Freud's *nachträglichkeit* (retroaction) and to have established its meaning (cf. in particular the case of the Wolf Man). Descartes: Lacan often commented on the *cogito*, and played at modifying it; see especially Seminars XII and XIV. 'La Chose freudienne' features in the *Écrits*, including Truth's prosopopeia. Lacan read the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* in German and in the French translation by his friend Jean Hyppolite (still in print by Aubier); there are several partial translations in English; for a full translation, see Sir James Black Baillie's *Phenomenology of Mind* (revised second edition, Allen & Unwin, 1931) and Arnold V. Miller's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford University Press, 1977). On the events that led to Lacan's 'excommunication' from the IPA (International Psycho-Analytic Association), see the bio-bibliographical information I supplied to *On the Names-of-the-Father* (Polity, 2013), the file in *Television/A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment* (Norton, 1990), and the opening lesson to Seminar XI, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Lacan had been the target of an armed robbery in his consulting room; he was struck in the throat by one of his assailants, and this left him with a hoarse voice for several days

afterwards; the identity of the aggressors was known; Lacan did not lodge a complaint.

IX In the Field of the Unian

John Stuart Mill came out with *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive, Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence, and the Methods of Scientific Investigation* in 1843 (third revised edition, John W. Parker, 1851, reprinted in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Vols. VII–VIII*, University of Toronto Press, 1974). During this session, Lacan gets into a muddle over the number of subsets; I have given the formula that features in Claude Berge's 1968 book *Principles of Combinatorics* (edited by Richard Bellman as Vol. 72 of the Mathematics in Science and Engineering series, Academic Press, 1971).

X *Yad'lun*

Pliny the Elder: following the influential English rendering by Philemon Holland in 1601, the first full translation of the thirty-six Books of the *Natural History* was produced by John Bostock and Henry Thomas Riley in 1855. The Harris Rackham (*Vols I–V, IX*), William Henry Samuel Jones (*Vols. VI–VIII*), and D. E. Eichholz (*Vol. X*) translation was printed in the Loeb library (Harvard University Press, 1949–54); see also the selection by John F. Healy (Penguin, 1991).

XI An Issue of Ones (*A Talk at Sainte-Anne*)

'Brrom-brrom-wap-wap' comes from Lacan's first wife, Marie-Louise, née Blondin. By Berkeley, one may read *A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710); and one may also consult Martial Gueroult's *Berkeley: Quatre études sur la perception et sur Dieu* (Aubier, 1956). Antonie van Leeuwenhoek and Jan Swammerdam, two Dutch scholars of the seventeenth century, were pioneers in the use of microscopy for biological observation; they are considered precursors of microbiology and cellular biology. On the biology of copulation, Lacan consulted in particular Charles Houillon's treatise on *Sexualité* (Hermann, 1967). Galileo's famous remark on infinity can be found in his 1638 book *Discorsi e dimostrazioni matematiche intorno a due nuove scienze* (translated by Henry Crew and Alfonso de Salvio as *Dialogues concerning Two New Sciences*, Macmillan, 1914; and later by Stillman Drake as *Two New Sciences*, University of Wisconsin, 1974).

XII Knowledge about Truth

Freud refers to Gustave Le Bon in his *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse*. The *einziger Zug* features in Chapter VII on 'Identification'. Lacan refers to the mutilation of the hermai in his Seminar on *Transference* and in his *écrit*, 'Proposition du 9 octobre 1967 sur le psychanalyste de l'École' (*Autres écrits*). It may be presumed that the mention of Nietzsche refers to *Der Antichrist* (first translated, with some censorship, by Henry Louis Mencken as *The Antichrist*, Knopf, 1918, then by Walter A. Kaufmann in *The Portable Nietzsche*, Viking Press, 1954, and then by R. J. Hollingdale as *The Anti-Christ*, Penguin, 1968). Aristotle looks at tragedy in his *Poetics* (numerous editions available). It may be presumed that in referring to Surrealism, Lacan is thinking of André Breton's 1937 *Amour fou* (translated by Mary Ann Caws as *Mad Love*, Bison, 1988); for Stendhal, the reference is surely *De l'amour* (translated by Philip Sidney Woolf and Cecil N. Sidney Woolf as *On Love*, Mayflower, 1915, then by Gilbert and Suzanne Sale as *Love*, Penguin, 1975, and more recently by Sophie Lewis as *On Love*, Hesperus, 2009); for Baudelaire, Lacan must be thinking of the 1846 *Choix de maximes consolantes sur l'amour* (translated by Rainer J. Hanshe in *My Heart Laid Bare*, Contra Mundum, 2017, pp. 1–12); *L'Astrée*, the novel by Honoré d'Urfé (1607–27), was translated in 1657 by John Davies under the title *Astrea*, and Part I was translated, under the same title, by Steven Rendall in 1995 (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, SUNY). The reference to the miner rubbing down his wife can be found in 'Subversion du sujet et dialectique du désir', in the *Écrits*.[3] The 'instructive' remark by Gödel is in his 1944 article, 'Russell's Mathematical Logic', in *Collected Works, Vol. II*, op. cit., pp. 119–41.[4]

XIII The Founding of Sexual Difference

Russell's remark, which was often quoted by Lacan, is from the 1901 paper 'Recent Work on the Principles of Mathematics' (later published as 'Mathematics and the Metaphysicians', in *Mysticism and Logic*, Allen & Unwin, 1917): 'Mathematics may be defined as the subject in which we never know what we are talking about, nor whether what we are saying is true'; he wrote a three-volume autobiography (Allen & Unwin, 1951–69).

XIV Theory of the Four Formulae (*A Talk at Sainte-Anne*)

As I have indicated, the first three of the seven *entretiens* that Lacan initially delivered under the heading *Le savoir du psychanalyste*

have been set apart in the book *Talking to Brick Walls* (Polity, 2017). The psychoanalyst mentioned for his use of set theory went by the name of Ignacio Matte Blanco; his book *The Unconscious as Infinite Sets: An Essay in Bi-logic* was published in London by Duckworth in 1975 (reprinted by Karnac, 1998). Lacan had earlier pointed out how, soon after his report on 'Fonction et champ . . .', the *International Journal* had published some considerations on language by his former analyst, Rudolph Loewenstein. The word *Verwerfung* features in the Schreber case; see the index of Freud's German terms in the *Écrits*. On imaginary numbers, an appellation that we owe to Descartes (Book III of *La Géométrie*, 1637), see Dominique Flament, *Histoire des nombres complexes: Entre algèbre et géométrie* (CNRS, 2003). Paul-Jean Toulet is a poet of whom Lacan was fond in his youth; his complete works were published by Éditions Robert Laffont in 1986; Lacan refers to *Contrerimes*, XXVI (*Œuvres complètes*, p. 12): *Comme les dieux gavant leur panse, / Les Prétendants aussi. / Télémaque en est tout ranci : / Il pense à la dépense*. The *Legenda aurea* by Jacobus da Varagine (*c.* 1260) was Englished by William Caxton in 1483 as *The Golden Legende*, later modernized by Frederick Startridge Ellis (Kelmscott, 1892); a more recent translation by William Granger Ryan was published in 1993 by Princeton University Press (two volumes). Lacan refers to his graph from 'Subversion du sujet . . .' in the *Écrits*.

XV The Desire to Sleep

The article 'L'Agonie du signe' is by Jean Paris, published in the eleventh issue of *Change* (themed *L'Atelier de l'écriture*, May 1972). The Seminar of 1954–1955 is Seminar I on Freud's technical writings, in which there is a commentary on the dream of Irma's injection.[5] The thesis that Lacan stigmatizes is Didier Anzieu's *L'Auto-Analyse de Freud*, which had been published in 1959 (translated by Peter Graham as *Freud's Self-Analysis*, International Universities Press, 1986). Henri Poincaré recounted to the French Société de Psychologie the circumstances of his invention of Fuchsian functions during a sleepless night ('L'Invention mathématique', 1908, translated by George Bruce Halsted as 'Mathematical Creation', in *The Foundations of Science*, The Science Press, 1913); the anecdote was taken up by the mathematician Jacques Hadamard in his *Essay on The Psychology of Invention in the Mathematical Field* (Princeton University Press, 1945). Lacan had been giving some lectures in Milan at the invitation of his Italian pupils.

XVI Bodies Captured by Discourse

The sentence on the blackboard (which had also been written up at the start of the previous session) appears in slightly modified form near the beginning of the article in which Lacan finalizes and extends the elaborations of . . . *or Worse*, namely 'L'étourdit', collected in *Autres écrits*; the four quantifying formulae are there designated as the formulae 'of sexuation'. Umberto Eco remained Lacan's friend; he went to listen to a lecture Lacan gave at the Italian Institute in Paris in the late 1970s: Eco evokes meeting Lacan in *Foucault's Pendulum* (translated by William Weaver, 1989).[6] The painting by Hieronymus Bosch is *The Conjurer*, in the municipal museum of Saint-Germain-en-Laye; it is attributed to his workshop.[7] On Marx, see in particular 'Radiophonie', in *Autres écrits*. The 1955–1956 Seminar, the third in the series, was published in 1981, shortly after Lacan's death, under the title *Les Psychoses*; the Latin sentence was from Cicero (see 'L'étourdit'). Peirce's quadrants are commented on and employed in Seminar IX, *L'identification*; they serve to demonstrate the universal and the particular in the affirmative and the negative. Lucio Fontana (1899–1968) founded 'Spatialism': this school sought to reveal the third dimension of pictorial space by making scratches, perforations, and incisions in the canvas; in Rome, Lacan had seen works from the series *Concetto spaziale, Attese*.[8]

NB: All characters in Chinese have been revised for this English edition.

JAM

Hieronymus Bosch and workshop, *The Conjurer*, *c.*1502, oil on wood,
53 cm × 65 cm, Musée Municipal, St.-Germain-en-Laye;
Photo: The Yorck Project / Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain

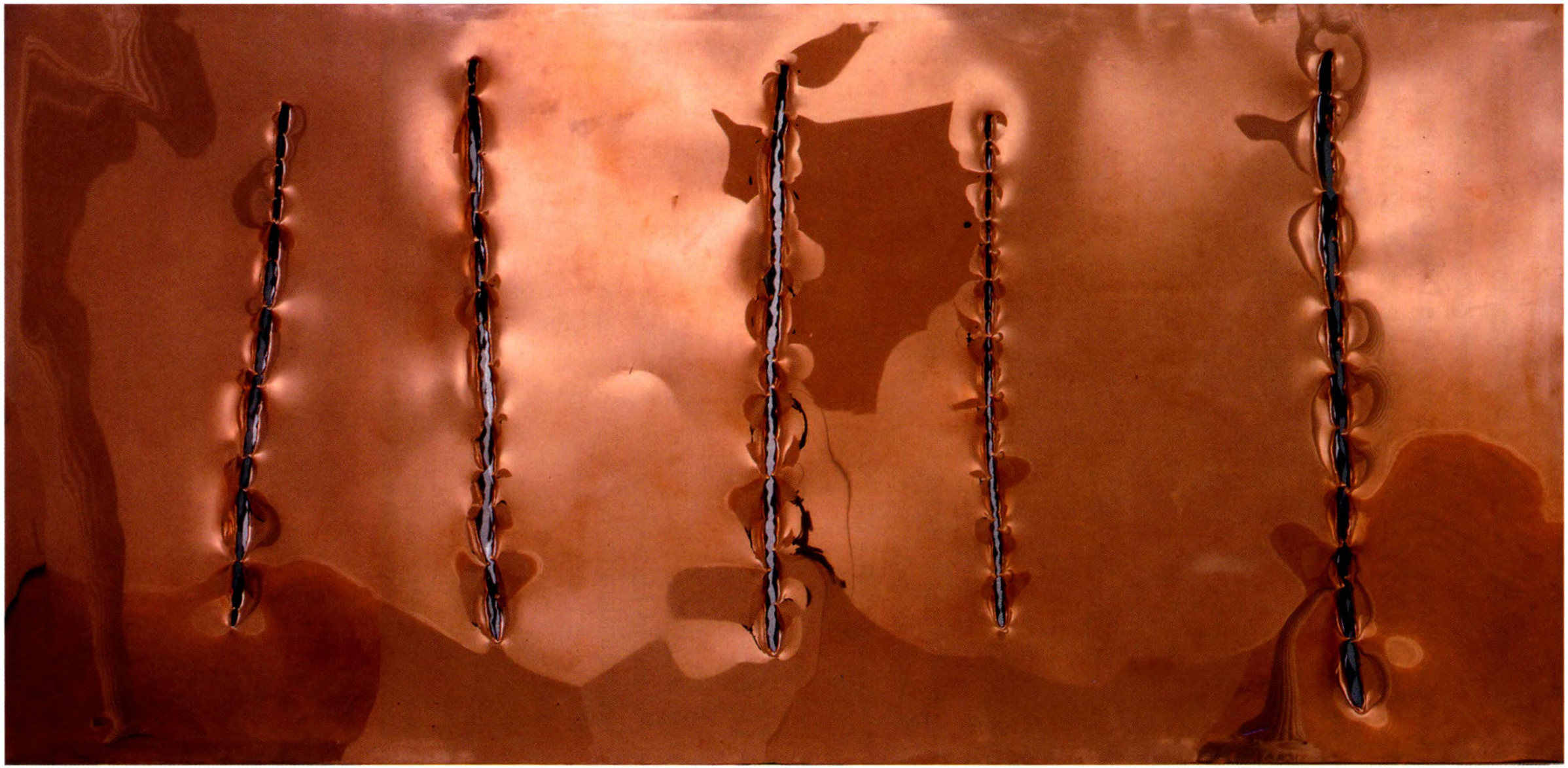
TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

Chapter I The Small Difference

1 Grammarians classify *pire* strictly as an adjective. The corresponding adverb is *pis*, and the comparative form *plus mal*. However, since *pis* has become increasingly outmoded, the erroneous adverbial use of *pire* has been on the rise. When in the following paragraph Lacan qualifies the adverb as *disjoint*, he may have in mind the 'disjunct adverb' (usually termed a *modalisateur* in French).

2 As Bertrand Russell notes in his 1908 article on 'Mathematical Logic as Based on the Theory of Types' (in J. van Heijenoort (ed.), *From Frege to Gödel: A Source Book in Mathematical Logic, 1879–1931*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967, p. 157n), the term *variable apparente* had been coined five years previously by Giuseppe Peano in the fourth volume of *Formulaire de mathématiques*. The term has since been largely superseded by David Hilbert's term 'bound variable', though some have contested their equation (e.g., Montgomery Furth in his Introduction to Frege, G., *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic: Exposition of the System*, translated by M. Furth, University of California Press, 1964, pp. xxxii–xxxiii).

3 Here and throughout the present edition, the quantifying *tout* is rendered as 'all'. While this usage conforms to a long-standing tradition of Aristotelian term logic in English, it may be remarked that Robin Smith asserted (drawing on Peter T. Geach in *Logic Matters*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1972, p. 69) that translating *ὑπάρχειν παντί* as 'belongs to all' is an 'unnecessary barbarism', with the plural form, 'belongs to every', being more advisable ('Preface' to *Prior Analytics*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989, p. ix). This opinion is counter to that of W. and M. Kneale in their 1962 book *The Development of Logic* (Oxford University Press) who assert: 'in some modern versions of Aristotle's doctrine the difficulties of his account of opposition are unnecessarily aggravated by use of examples and formulae in the plural' (p. 61). Recent translators and commentators have tended to maintain the use of 'all', foremost among them Gisela Striker in her *Aristotle's Prior Analytics, Book I*, Oxford University Press, 2009; see also M. Malink's note on '*Every* and *all*' from his chapter on 'The Orthodox *dictum* Semantics' in *Aristotle's Modal Syllogistic*, Harvard University Press, 2013, pp. 55–6. Lacan



Lucio Fontana, *Concetto spaziale*, 1962, copper 38¼ × 77⅝ inches (97.2 × 196.5 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Sperone Westwater, New York

employs extensively the four French declensions: *tout* (masculine singular), *toute* (feminine singular), *tous* (masculine plural), and *toutes* (feminine plural), which in this edition have on most occasions been reproduced alongside the uninflected 'all'. It should be noted, however, that the distinction between *toute* and *toutes* is inaudible in spoken French, and thus in the absence of an article or other quantifying grammatical feature there is transcriptive uncertainty in some instances.

4 In § 11 on 'Die Allgemeinheit' from the *Begriffsschrift*, Frege writes of inserting *eine Höhlung* in the *Inhaltsstriche*, which Geach translates as a 'concavity in the content-stroke' (*Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, second edition, Oxford: Blackwell, 1960, p. 16). Stefan Bauer-Mengelberg's 1967 translation (in van Heijenoort, J. (ed.), *From Frege to Gödel*, op. cit., p. 24) follows suit, as does Michael Beaney's 1997 translation (in *The Frege Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 69).

5 Originally coined by Molière in *Le Médecin malgré lui* (Act I, Scene 6), the phrase *il y a fagots et fagots* has passed into common idiomatic use in French to mean 'every alike is not the same'. The French *fagot* corresponds to its English-language cognate, signifying a bundle of twigs or small branches.

6 The French terms are *la canaillerie* and *la bêtise*, but the allusion is most probably to the distinction drawn in *Seminar VII* where Lacan reproduces the English vocabulary, referencing the tradition that reaches from Chaucer through to Elizabethan theatre. There, Lacan translates 'knave/knavery' as *canaille/canaillerie*, while 'fool' is rendered variously as *sot*, *innocent*, and *demeuré*.

7 The term was first coined at the end of the lesson of 19 May 1971. The Seuil edition transcribes as *hommoinzin* (*Le séminaire livre XVIII, D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant*, Paris: Seuil, 2006, p. 144). In 'L'étourdit' (*Autres écrits*, Seuil: Paris, 2001, p. 479) the spelling is *hommoinsun*. In the lesson of 9 June 1971, three possible forms are stipulated: *au moins un* ('at least one'); *hommoinzin*, punning on *homme* or *homo*; and *a(u moins un)*, highlighting the function of the object *a* (*Livre XVIII*, ibid., p. 153). Here in this opening lesson, Lacan pronounces the term in a way that suggests a terminal 'e' indicative of feminine declension (to accord with the feminine *erreur*).

8 *Seriner* is to repeat something incessantly, or to drum something into someone, as one might train a canary to sing. In their entry on *serin*, Bloch and von Wartburg trace the verb to 1812. Further to the avian signification, a *serin* in French is also a 'dimwit' or 'silly billy' (since 1821).

9 Damourette and Pichon list these forms of post-verbal negation, of which the latter two are rather antiquated, as examples of the negation that *forecloses*, in contrast to the 'discordential' negation represented by the pre-verbal *ne*. The special quality of these words is that they can be associated with *ne* to function as adverbs, producing a negative signification. (When the respective meanings of the latter three terms are rendered approximately in English as 'not a jot', 'not a drop', and 'not a speck', this special quality is lost, since the negation 'not' has been appended to the noun as it could be in any other negative construction.)

Cf. *Des mots à la pensée: Essai de grammaire de la langue française*, Vol. I (1911–1927), d'Artrey, chapter 7.

Chapter II The Function Φ*x*

1 *Hi-han* is the French onomatopoeia for a donkey's bray, equivalent to 'hee-haw' in English. An *appât* is 'bait' or a 'lure'. *Hi-han appât*, or *hihanappat* as Lacan will write it in the second paragraph of 'Joyce le Symptôme' (*Autres écrits*, op. cit., p. 565), is loosely homophonic with the informal *Y en a pas*, 'there is / are none'.
2 Lacan says, *au niveau du mythe d'Œdipe*, 'at the level of the Oedipus myth'. The present edition respects the alteration introduced in the Seuil edition.

Chapter III From Anecdote to Logic

1 Several French authors had used the title *Traité de logique* for their tracts on logic: Philibert Damiron in 1836 (third volume of his *Cours de philosophie*); Joseph Duval-Jouve in 1843; Edmond Goblot in 1918; Jules Tricot in 1928 (*Traité de logique formelle*); and Charles Serrus in 1945.
2 August Weismann used the Latinate *soma*, but not *germen* which was chiefly an intervention of French translators and commentators to refer to *Keimplasma*, 'germ-plasm' (occasionally 'germinative plasma' in English), the substance of *Keimzellen*, 'germ cells'.
3 Frege refers to the blackletter 𝔞 that he uses to denote the bound variable in the *Höhlung* as a *deutschen Buchstaben*. Like much of the symbolic apparatus of the *Begriffsschrift*, the convention was not retained by the more influential authors who adopted and expanded its notational principles.
4 As in the previous chapter, Lacan's reference to *le mythe de l'Œdipe* is altered in the Seuil edition to *Totem et Tabou*.
5 The opening of this lesson was disturbed by a tirade from a member of the public.

Chapter IV From Necessity to Inexistence

1 Here, and seven paragraphs below, *nécessité de discours* might also be rendered as: 'necessitated by discourse'.
2 In modern usage, the French adjective *grotesque* extends wider than its English cognate to encompass the ludicrous, the ridiculous, and the preposterous.
3 The ambiguity is of course stronger in French (*un désir d'enfant*), since in English one would speak rather in terms of 'a desire for a child' and 'a child's desire'. Cf. the bilingual title of Wladimir Granoff's 1955 article in French, 'Desire for Children, Children's Desire: Un désir d'enfant', in *La psychanalyse* 2: 75–110, and Lacan's mention of the same in Book VIII of the Seminar (Paris: Seuil, revised edition 2001, p. 147).

4 Frege quotes Leibniz from the 1840 Johann Eduard Erdmann edition of Book IV of the *Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement Humain* (Ch. vii, § 10, p. 363), in *Godhofredi Guillelmi Leibnitii Opera philosophica*. Whereas Leibniz, in his definitions, spells out each number in roman letters, Frege uses arabic numerals (Frege, G., *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, translated by J. L. Austin, London: Blackwell & Mott, 1953 revised edition, § 6, p. 7).

5 On the Englishing of Frege's coinage *Gleichzahlig*, see Austin's footnote to § 68 of *The Foundations* (ibid., p. 79).

6 Austin translates 'Unter den Begriff "gleich 0 aber nicht gleich 0" fällt [. . .] kein Gegenstand' (§ 77), as 'under the concept "identical with 0 but not identical with 0" [. . .] no object falls' (ibid., p. 90).

7 Lacan has arranged the arithmetical triangle (see page 27) into an upper triangular matrix, as did Pascal himself. In this arrangement, the column 1, 3, 3, 1 corresponds to the subsets of the elements of a triad, i.e. 1 figure, 3 (monadic) vertices, 3 (dyadic) edges, and 1 (triadic) face. Having established the number of edges, it is then possible to read the horizontal row 1, 3, 6, 10, 15 . . . as the triangular numbers, i.e. the number of objects that can be arranged into a triangle, thus: a minimal triangle of 3 discrete objects is configured of a base of 2 and an apex of 1; then, a larger triangle of 6 is configured, with a base of 3 added to the previous 3; followed by a triangle of 10, with a base of 4 added to the previous 6; and so on. The next column, 1, 4, 6, 4, 1, corresponds to the subsets of a tetrad, i.e. 1 figure, 4 (monadic) vertices, 6 (dyadic) edges, 4 (triadic) faces, and 1 tetrad. Having established the number of faces, it is then possible to read the row 1, 4, 10, 20 . . . as the tetrahedral numbers, i.e. the number of objects that can be arranged into a tetrahedron, thus: a minimal tetrahedral of 4 discrete objects is configured of a base of 3 and an apex of 1; then, a larger tetrahedron of 10 is configured, with a base of 6 added to the previous 4; and so on. Note that the additional 'base' level of each new tetrahedral is derived from the triangular number that stands one position to the left in the row immediately above, just as the additional 'base' level of each new triangle is derived from the linear number that stands one space to the left in the row immediately above. The arithmetical triangle can be used to generate infinitely larger figurate numbers, beginning at the next level with the pentatope numbers.

8 At no point in the Seminar does Lacan enumerate the figurate numbers. However, the stenographer's typescript inserts the opening sequence of dyadic numbers, then the opening sequence of pentatope numbers, then the opening sequence of tetrahedral numbers, and finally the opening sequence of triadic numbers, in an apparent attempt to parse this and the previous paragraphs. The Seuil edition reproduces these sequences on pp. 59–60.

Chapter V Topology of Speech (*A Talk at Sainte-Anne*)

1 Isidore of Seville groups such terms in the category of 'medial (*medius*) nouns', and also writes of 'mongrel' (*nothus*) terms with corrupted (i.e.

inter-lingual) suffixes. See entry vii.13 in Book I of *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, translated by S. A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, and O. Berghof, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 43.

2 The French reads: . . . *parce que je ne pédale normalement*. The verb *pédaler* carries the same primary signification as the English 'to pedal'. The noun *pédale* is sometimes used, informally and vulgarly, to label a male homosexual, and Lacan appears to be playing on this meaning here. The sentence that follows could be understood as reasserting the primary sense of the verb.

3 The French verb *causer* also means 'to talk' or 'to converse'. Thus, *nous sommes causés par notre propre bla-bla-bla* could be rendered as 'we are spoken by our own blather'.

4 In his previous talk at Sainte-Anne, on 6 January, Lacan gave himself over to some extemporized punning on *(a)mur*, a condensation of *mur* ('wall'), *amour* ('love'), and the object *a* (see *Talking to Brick Walls*, Cambridge: Polity, 2017, p. 98). The opening comments from the present session, included in the appendix to *Talking to Brick Walls*, explore the theme of 'the love letter/the letter on the wall' in relation to the story of the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast (ibid., pp. 108–9).

Chapter VI I Ask You to Refuse Me My Offering

1 Lacan offers no commentary on these characters. Reading right to left, they transliterate to Pinyin as: *qǐng* (please/invite/ask) *jù shōu* (refuse/reject) *wǒ* (I/me) *zèng* (offer/give) / *gài* (ancient form: because/probably/indeed) *fēi* (fusion of negative particle and copula: not be) *yě* (emphasis: thus/indeed not). The text is therefore a partial equivalent to *je te demande de me refuser ce que je t'offre, parce que c'est pas ça*; partial in that any analogues of *te* and *ce que* have been omitted. Although any source remains unidentified, the *zōngpái* script and the Old Chinese signification of 蓋 suggest a citation from an ancient text. The characters are missing from the Seuil edition (cf. Jacques-Alain Miller's response to a query on this matter in *Lacan Quotidien* 6 (25 August 2011): 6–7).

2 The French word *conférence* would in similar contexts translate fairly straightforwardly into English as 'lecture', but Lacan's ensuing comments seem to comprehend the more formal and antiquated use that links directly to the etymological root of conferring, conversing, consulting, and deliberating (from the Latin *conferre*). This signification coincides largely with the English 'conference'.

3 The *Dictionnaire universel d'histoire et de géographie* includes, as one would expect, an entry on Anicius Manlius Severinus Boëthius.

4 The French *ache* as in 'h' is homophonic with *hache* as in 'axe', thus the full sentence is homophonic with: 'Don't touch the axe'. For the bibliographic reference, see p. 227.

5 According to the rules of accordance for the *passé composé* in French, the past participle respects the gendered attribute of the *complément d'objet direct*, the pronoun that is directly attached to the verb. Thus, in this case, assuming the addressee denoted by *t'* to be female, the close of

the declaration should read: . . . *combien je t'ai aimée*. The full sentence could be rendered as: 'you shall never know how much I loved you'.

6 Lacan uses a lower-case d for *destinateur* and a capital D for *destinataire*. Jakobson's vocabulary is sometimes rendered in English, including by Jakobson himself, using Addresser and Addressee.

7 Lacan expressly conflates the D of Demand with the D for *destinataire* in the triangle diagram. It should also be borne in mind that the French *demande*, especially when preceded, as here, by the indefinite article, also translates as 'request'. Thus, the form rendered here as 'I ask you . . .' is, in French, *je te demande* . . .

8 Up to this point, Lacan's audience would in all likelihood have understood *Je te demande de me refuser ce que je t'offre* as 'I ask you to reject what I'm offering you', i.e. with the relative pronoun *ce que* standing in for a noun, and *offre* functioning in the present indicative tense. Here, Lacan reiterates that he entertains a different meaning, with *ce que* being essentially reducible to the conjunction *que*, and *offre* functioning as what he calls a *substantif verbal*. In the present translation, an analogous ambiguity is rendered by means of the alternation between 'offering' as a noun and 'offering' as a gerund. This has led to the suppression of Lacan's remark, in this same sentence, that the verbal substantive is 'purported to be a lesser substantive, but is nevertheless quite something'. This remark comes in echo of the earlier comment concerning the dubious classificatory distinction between 'concrete substantives' and others.

9 *Je te bouffe* could also mean something like 'I'm biting your head off' or 'I'm eating you alive'.

10 Again, *ce que tu désires que je te demande* might initially suggest 'what you want me to ask you'.

Chapter VII The Vanished Partner (*A Talk at Sainte-Anne*)

1 First coined in the early twentieth century, the term *partouze* (also spelt *partouse*) refers to group sex, in a similar colloquial register to 'gang bang' or 'orgy'. While the term resembles *partout*, 'everywhere', it is derived from *partie*, as in a *partie de cartes* (a game or a round of cards) and the argotic suffix *-ouse*, which is used to form nouns.

2 The aitch added to *Autre* introduces an aspect of haughtiness or elevation. With a French pronunciation, *Hun* is identical to *Un* ('One') prefixed by a voiced aitch. Lacan had previously used *Hun* in the written text 'Lituraterre' of the year before, in his coinage *Hun-en-peluce*. Cf. 'Lituraterre' in *Hurly-Burly* 9: 34.

3 Lacan is turning *sa femme*, 'his wife', into a verb. The *s* followed by the apostrophe indicates a reflexive form, reminiscent of *s'affamer*, 'to starve oneself', or perhaps even *s'affirmer*, 'to affirm oneself'.

4 Lacan says, *les aventures mythiques d'Œdipe,* 'the mythical adventures of Oedipus'. The Seuil edition alters to *les aventures mythiques du Père primitif*, which is respected in the present edition. See Chapter II, endnote 2, and Chapter III, endnote 4.

5 *Type désespéré* could also be a 'hopeless guy'.

6 In the Baxter–Sagart system, the Old Chinese pronunciation is notated /*tˤa/; in the Zhengzhang system, /*ta:/.
7 Lacan says *nous continuons à nous entretenir*, which is at once an allusion to the *entretien* format of his presentations at Sainte-Anne and a jocular acknowledgement of their aspect of 'getting in shape' as far as formal logic is concerned.

Chapter VIII What is Involved in the Other

1 This remark features at the start of what is most commonly classified as the fifth argument or 'hypothesis', not the seventh. Lacan is drawing on the Auguste Diès translation ('. . . si le non-Un n'est pas?' in the 1923 Budé edition of Plato's *Œuvres complètes*, Vol. VIII). For *εἰ μὴ ἓν μὴ ἔστιν* (160b6), F. M. Cornford takes issue with the Diès rendering, and tries 'if a not-one (no thing) does not exist' (*Plato and Parmenides*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1939, p. 219); but is in turn challenged by R. E. Allen (*Plato's Parmenides*, Yale University Press, 1997, revised edition, pp. 329–30), who offers, 'if not unity is not' (p. 55). R. S. Brumbaugh gives 'if it is not the case that the one is not' (*Plato on the One*, Yale University Press, 1961, p. 165); while S. Scolnicov gives: 'if the not-one is not' (*Plato's Parmenides*, University of California Press, 2001, p. 148). See also the formalization by S. C. Rickless in *Plato's Forms in Transition*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 212–13, *D5A1*; and the comparison of the Diès and Cornford renderings by D. O'Brien in '*Einai* copulatif et existentiel dans le *Parménide* de Platon', in *Revue des Études Grecques*, Vol. 118, 2005, §X, pp. 236–7.
2 The Seuil edition inserts *parmi les réalistes* to resolve an anacoluthon in the typescript. Lacan says only: *C'est en ça que je me classe* . . .
3 The French *face* and *fasse* are homophones. *Fasse* is the present subjunctive of *faire* in the third-person singular.
4 The pun is stronger in French: *l'ontologie est une honte*. For a more intricate extension of the same pun, see p. 426 of 'Radiophonie' in *Autres écrits*, op. cit.
5 There is likely a paranomasia here exploiting the signification of *un savon* as 'a telling-off' or 'a reprimand'.
6 Again, the Seuil edition, which is here respected, resolves an apparent anacoluthon. Lacan says: *Ce qui veut dire qu'on ne peut pas écrire que ce qui y fait obstacle, à savoir la fonction phallique, ne soit pas vrai.* ['This means that you cannot write that what forms an obstacle here, namely the phallic function, is untrue.']
7 Lacan plays on the proximity between *Autre* and *entre* to transform *entreposer* ('to store' or 'to stock') into *Autreposer*. In this coinage, one can also hear *Autre-poser*, 'to Alter-posit', or 'to posit Otherwise'.

Chapter IX In the Field of the Unian

1 The written form *Yad'lun* is an attempt to capture the concentrated pronunciation of *Y a de l'Un*, itself an informal contraction of *Il y a*

de l'Un. Thus, not only does the content of the expression indicate the prominence of the One, but its very form presents as a unitary element. Compare the orthography here with that on p. 215 of the written report in the appendix.

2 Lacan is again drawing on the Diès translation, which here gives *s'il est Un* (op. cit. p. 72). For *εἰ ἓν ἔστιν* (137c4), Cornford prefers 'if there is a One' (op. cit., p. 116). O'Brien concludes that a systematic comparison of all the occurrences formulated in the second part of the *Parmenides* confirms Cornford's translation of the verb in an existential sense, and disqualifies the Diès reading as a copulative verb (op. cit., p. 245). See also the discussion by C. C. Meinwald in *Plato's Parmenides*, Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 40–5. Brumbaugh gives 'if one is' (op. cit., p. 55); Scolnicov gives 'if the one is' (op. cit. pp. 78, 80); as does Rickless (op. cit., pp. 106–11, 114 (*D1A1*)). Allen, meanwhile, gives 'if Unity is' (op. cit., p. 17). A further likely source for Lacan's discussion is F. Regnault's 1968 article from the *Cahiers pour l'analyse*, recently translated by K. Peden and P. Hallward as 'Dialectic of Epistemologies', in *Concept and Form, Vol. I, Selections from the Cahiers pour l'analyse*, Verso, 2012, pp. 119–50.

3 Whereas in English it has become customary to distinguish orthographically between Aristoteles (of The Four Hundred and of The Thirty Tyrants) and Aristotle (of Stageira), French uses the single proper name Aristote for both instances of Ἀριστοτέλης. Some commentators in English have, however, preferred 'Aristotle' for the youth in the *Parmenides*, notably Meinwald (op. cit.) and Rickless (op. cit.).

4 For *ἀδολεσχίας* (135d4), Cornford gives 'idle talk' (op. cit., p. 103), as do Allen (op. cit., pp. 15, 207) and Scolnicov (op. cit., p. 74). Cf. Brumbaugh, op. cit., p. 22.

5 *L'essence-maître* and *l'essence-esclave* are Diès's renderings of *ὃ ἔστι δεσπότης* and *ὃ ἔστι δοῦλος* (133d6–133e1). Cornford gives 'the essential Master' and 'the essential Slave' (op. cit., p. 96); Allen gives 'what it is to be a master' and 'what it is to be a slave'; Scolnicov gives 'that which is master' and 'that which is slave' (op. cit., p. 70); Rickless gives 'what a master is' and 'what a slave is' (op. cit., p. 87).

6 Probably an allusion to Deuteronomy 15:12–18, though perhaps also to Genesis 37:27–8, and/or to Exodus 21:2–11, 20–1. Compare, however, Leviticus 25:39–55.

7 The Seuil edition introduces a modification here by inserting the general formula for computing the number of 2-element subsets in an *n*-element set (*n*-choose-2) in place of Lacan's formula that places $n(n-1)$ as the numerator and 2 as the denominator. Lacan's slip, saying 'seven times eight is forty-two', has also been emended (see the note on p. 229).

8 The stenographer's typescript, which is the source text for the Seuil edition, gives *que l'Un ne sache être comme être*, but no such *ne* is audible on the audio recording. Cf. *Parmenides*, 160c7–d1: *πρῶτον μὲν ἄρα γνωστόν τι λέγει, ἔπειτα ἕτερον τῶν ἄλλων, ὅταν εἴπῃ ἕν, εἴτε τὸ εἶναι αὐτῷ προσθεὶς εἴτε τὸ μὴ εἶναι: οὐδὲν γὰρ ἧττον γιγνώσκεται, τί τὸ λεγόμενον μὴ εἶναι, καὶ ὅτι διάφορον τῶν ἄλλων.*

9 Cf. *Parmenides*, 160b5, *passim*.

10 For *τὸ ἐξαίφνης* (156d3), Cornford gives 'the instant' (op. cit., p. 200), as do Brumbaugh (op. cit., p. 148), Allen (op. cit., p. 49), Scolnicov (op. cit., p. 137), and Rickless (op. cit., p. 193).

Chapter X *Yad'lun*

1 This mention of the ahistorical character of the *Parmenides* may indicate that, despite the reservations expressed in the previous lesson, Lacan nevertheless held the youth Ἀριστοτέλης to be the same as Aristotle the philosopher. Alternatively, this may be an allusion to the long-held notion (from Athenaeus of Naucratis down to Eduard Zeller) that the meeting between Parmenides and Socrates must be a 'poetic fiction'. Compare, however, T. L. Heath, *Aristarchus of Samos, the Ancient Copernicus*, Cambridge University Press, 1913, pp. 62–3, footnote 4.

2 The translation *si l'un est un* was first given for *εἰ ἓν ἔσται τὸ ἕν* (137d3) by Victor Cousin (*Œuvres de Platon*, Vol. XII, Paris: Rey, 1846, p. 28). Diès gives 'si l'Un doit être un' (op. cit., p. 23), which is endorsed by Regnault ('Dialectique d'épistémologies', *Cahiers pour l'analyse* 9: 53). Cornford gives 'if the One is to be one' (op. cit., p. 116); Scolnicov gives 'if the one is to be one' (op. cit., p. 80); and Allen gives 'if unity is to be one' (op. cit., p. 17). Cf. Rickless (op. cit., p. 108).

3 For *οὐδαμοῦ ἂν εἴη* (138a2) and *ἐστίν που τὸ ἕν* (138b5), Cornford gives 'it cannot be anywhere' and 'the One is not anywhere' (op. cit., p. 119). Brumbaugh gives 'the one [...] will be nowhere' and 'the one is not anywhere' (op. cit., pp. 62, 64); Allen gives 'it would be nowhere' and 'unity is nowhere' (op. cit., p. 18); Scolnicov gives 'it would be nowhere' and 'the one is not anywhere' (op. cit., p. 82). See also Rickless (op. cit., pp. 117–18, *DIA6*).

4 For *ἂν περιέχοιτο ὑπ' ἐκείνου ἐν ᾧ ἐνείη* (138a4), Cornford gives 'it would be encompassed all round by that in which it was contained' (op. cit., p. 119). Brumbaugh gives 'it would be encircled by that in which it was' (op. cit., p. 62); Allen gives 'it would be contained in a circle by what it was in' (op. cit., p. 18, and footnote 65 on p. 231, which takes issue with Cornford); and Scolnicov gives 'it would somehow be encompassed round by that in which it would be' (op. cit., p. 82).

5 For *ἄπειρον ἄρα τὸ ἕν* (137d7), Cornford gives 'it is without limits' (op. cit., p. 118). Brumbaugh gives 'the one is unlimited' (op. cit., p. 59); Allen gives 'unity is unlimited' (op. cit., p. 17); and Scolnicov gives 'the one is unlimited' (op. cit., p. 81) and 'the one is undelimited' (pp. 81–2). See also Rickless (op. cit., pp. 115–16, *DIA4*).

6 W. B. Ewald translates 'das Uneigentlich-unendliches' (*Grundlagen einer allgemeinen Mannichfaltigkeitslehre*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1883, p. 166) as 'the improper infinite' ('Foundations of a General Theory of Manifolds', in *From Kant to Hilbert: A Source Book in the Foundations of Mathematics, Vol. II*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 882). G. Chaitkin prefers 'non-genuine-Infinite' ('On the Theory of the Transfinite; Correspondence of Georg Cantor and Cardinal J. B. Franzelin (1885–1886)', in *Fidelio* 3(3): 101, 103).

7 In 'Beiträge zur Begründung der transfiniten Mengenlehre', Cantor uses the terms '"Teil" oder "Teilmenge"' (1895 version of 'Beiträge zur Begründung der transfiniten Mengenlehre', § 1, in *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, Berlin: Springer, 1932, p. 282), which P. E. B. Jourdain renders as '"part" or "partial aggregate"' (*Contributions to the Founding of the Theory of Transfinite Numbers*, London: Open Court, 1915, p. 86). As Lacan notes in the following chapter, the former vocabulary of 'aggregates' and 'parts' has since been superseded by that of 'sets' and 'subsets'. His pertinacious use of 'part' may be intended to evoke the Greek *μέρος*, used in Euclid's *Elements* (VII, *g′–d′*), and in the *Parmenides* (153d7–8); a coincidence noted by Diès and, previously, by Sir Thomas Heath (*A History of Greek Mathematics, Vol. I*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1921, p. 294).

Chapter XI An Issue of Ones (*A Talk at Sainte-Anne*)

1 The allusion is to the verb phrase *faire avec les moyens du bord*, which may be rendered as 'to make do with what is to hand' or '. . . with what is lying around'. When voicing his nonce word *bord-homme*, Lacan does not make a liaison 'd' at the end of *bord* ('rim' or 'frontier'), thus producing a phone that resembles the first two syllables of *borroméen*.

2 The neologism is not Lacan's own. The spelling in the Seuil edition, *hénologie*, matches the orthography that has come to dominate since Leo S. J. Sweeney first set down 'henology' in 1961 ('Basic Principles in Plotinus' Philosophy', in *Gregorianum* 42:510). However, Étienne Gilson had previously coined *énologie* in 1948 (*L'être et l'essence*, Paris: Vrin, p. 42).

3 Lacan's *s'éventailler* is a neologism in French. An *éventail* is a 'fan'. The closest verb form is *tailler* ('to trim', 'to prune', 'to chisel', etc.).

4 An *Auvergnate* is an inhabitant of the Auvergne. Cf. Alfred Delvau's jocular *Dictionnaire érotique moderne* (Brussels, 1864): 'AUVERGNATE. Qui appartient au troisième sexe – puisqu'elle n'est pas homme et ne veut pas être femme.'

5 Conveniently, the English verb 'to found' carries both the sense of 'to establish' and 'to melt'. See also Chapter XIII, endnote 1.

6 For 'Unter einer "Menge" verstehen wir jede Zusammenfassung *M* von bestimmten wohlunterschiedenen Objekten *m* unsrer Anschauung oder unseres Denkens [. . .] zu einem Ganzen' ('Beiträge zur Begründung der transfiniten Mengenlehre', op. cit., §1, p. 282), P. E. B. Jourdain gives: 'By an "aggregate" we are to understand any collection into a whole M of definite and separate objects *m* of our intuition or our thought' (*Contributions to the Founding of the Theory of Transfinite Numbers*, op. cit., p. 85).

7 That is, the pentahedroid, or 5-cell (C_5), this being the object that corresponds to the pentatope numbers in the arithmetical triangle (see Ch. IV, endnote 7, above). On the audio recording (the apparent source for the stenographer's typescript), there is a hiatus just before this sentence, which may account for the sudden skip from the columns for cardinals 3 and 4 to the column for cardinal 5.

8 Lacan uses *distinct* and *défini* for Cantor's *bestimmten wohlunterschiedenen* (see endnote 6 to this chapter).

Chapter XII Knowledge about Truth

1 Lacan says: *Voilà comment de toujours on aurait appelé ça. L'est-ce? point d'interrogation.* Even in stipulating the question mark, the juxtaposition of *Ça* and *Es* – the French translation and the German source of the term that James Strachey translated as the *Id* – is particularly striking.
2 This is a probable reference to the Mouvement de libération des femmes, which held its first public meeting in 1970. It grew out of the Mouvement démocratique féminin. It is unlikely that Lacan's term *modèles-modèles* is an allusion to fashion models (more commonly *mannequins* in French).
3 Though the term 'creative subject' abounds in the mathematical literature, 'creating subject' is a more loyal translation of L. E. J. Brouwer's *scheppende subject*.
4 Lacan likely intends *bc* instead of *ba*, since the four partitions of the three-element set {a,b,c} are: {ab/c}, {a/bc}, {ac/b}, {abc}. These could be arranged as follows:

3 {a,b,c}

3 {ab/c}, {a/bc}, {ac/b}

1 {abc} — 4

Chapter XIII The Founding of Sexual Difference

1 See Chapter XI, endnote 5.
2 *La bourgeoise* carries the same indecorous and disparaging tonality as 'her indoors' or 'the missus', but with the further connotation of 'she who rules the roost'.
3 'Il court, il court, le furet' ['He runs, he runs, the ferret'] is the title of a children's song (transcribed in 1870 by Jean-Baptiste Weckerlin), sung during 'Pass the parcel' and other party games. The title refrain, or the tune of the refrain, is often used independently of the song to insinuate that someone is being made to hunt for something, or is being given the runaround. Cf. Lacan's allusion to the *jeu du furet*, the 'hunt-the-ring' parlour game, in *Talking to Brick Walls*, op. cit., p. 99.
4 Similar use of such reflexive forms as *se penser*, *se dire* and, below, *s'articuler* is often translated into English as a passive construction ('to be thought', 'to be said', etc.) on the grounds that the grammatical subject does not hold grammatical agency. Here, however, there is a firm attribution of grammatical agency to the *Ça* and to the One.
5 As above, the signifier \dø\ might equally be transcribed: *d'eux*.

6 According to some transcripts, this sentence had been written up on the blackboard at the start of the lesson.

Chapter XIV Theory of the Four Formulae (*A Talk at Sainte-Anne*)

1 Lacan is punning on the expression *séparer le bon grain de l'ivrai*, 'to sort the wheat from the chaff'.
2 The French pronunciation of *saints* is homophonic with *seins*, 'breasts'.
3 Concerning the English terms that correspond to *canaillerie* and *bêtise*, see Chapter I, endnote 6.
4 Another pun, this time on the two senses of *fini*: both 'finished' and 'finite'.
5 On the audio recording, this sentence is interrupted midway by the first of several barrages of bangers being let off outside the chapel. This is the disturbance to which Lacan alludes at the end of the talk (p. 184) and at the start of the following chapter (p. 189).
6 *C'est un repère* perhaps contains a pun on *père*, 'father'.
7 Lacan says *l'homme* with a definite article, but *femme* with no article. What is here rendered as 'man' might also be understood as 'mankind'.
8 This may be an allusion to the *Parmenides* (139c 8). Although Diès translates *αὐτῷ* as 'par lui-même', Alexandre Kojève coins 'l'Un-tout-seul' specifically in reference to this passage (*Essai d'une historie raisonnée de la philosophie païenne*, Vol. I, Paris: Gallimard, 1968, p. 212). See also Lacan's footnote to his 'Report', on page 218 below.
9 Here and in the following paragraph, Lacan's reference to *l'Œdipe* is altered in the Seuil edition to *Totem et Tabou*, as it was in Chapters II, III, and VII.
10 The term *femme virile* is used in French when the term 'mannish woman' might be used in English.
11 Here Lacan is punning on the homophonic coincidence in French between the stem *vir-* and conjugations of the verb *virer*, 'to veer'. There is no shared etymology. *Parer à virer* is a command used in a nautical context: 'prepare to go about!'
12 As above, *mythe d'Œdipe* is altered in the Seuil edition to *mythe de Totem et Tabou.*
13 This diagram is a considerably modified version of the one recorded in the stenographer's original typescript, reproduced with slight alteration on page 207 of the Seuil edition. The typescript carries a warning that the accuracy of the diagram as there recorded is uncertain.

Chapter XV The Desire to Sleep

1 For *immixtion des sujets* (*Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre II*, Paris: Seuil, pp. 192, 228; *Écrits*, Paris: Seuil, 1966, p. 16), S. Tomaselli gives 'inmixing (*sic*) of subjects' (*The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II*, Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 160, 194) as does B. Fink (*Écrits* in English, New York: Norton, 2006, p. 10). See, too, R. Grigg's

footnote on page 193 of *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III*, Norton/Routledge, 1993.

2 The exclamation from the man in the audience is *Une pollution!* The indefinite article indicates that he is denoting a *pollution nocturne*, a 'nocturnal emission', in jocular response to the preceding discussion on sleep. In the present translation, the signifier 'pollution' is favoured due to Lacan's ensuing response.

Chapter XVI Bodies Captured by Discourse

1 Lacan here employs one of his favourite locutions, *Ce n'est pas* [. . .] *ce qu'un vain peuple pense*, which derives from Voltaire's *Œdipe*, Act IV Scene 1: 'Nos prêtres ne sont pas ce qu'un vain peuple pense'. The line was rendered by Thomas Francklin in 1761 as 'These priests are not what the vile rabble think them'.

2 *Mémorisé* is pronounced syllable by syllable in a way that suggests *mes mots risée*, 'my words, a laughingstock'.

3 Cf. R. Grigg's note on *astudé* on page 9 of his translation of *Book XVII* (Norton, 2007). The rendering 'astudied' appears on page 105 of the same. The prefixed '*a*' may function both as a privative and, crucially, as object *a*, the student holding the position of the *a* in Lacan's formalization of the university discourse. The verbal pun is on *étudié*, which means 'studied' in the sense of 'well thought out' or 'carefully considered', and *enseigné*, 'taught'. There is a further overtone of *astreinte*, 'obligation' or 'constraint', as Lacan observes in his intervention of 19 April 1970 (*Lettres de l'École Freudienne* 8: 211).

4 Respecting the orthography adopted in the Seuil edition, *à-former* could be rendered as 'for training'. Note, however, that the homophonic *a-formés* is also plausible: 'a-formed' or 'a-shaped'.

5 *En corps* ('in body') is homophonic with *encore*, 'again', 'still' or 'more'.

6 For the correct date, see the previous chapter (p. 192) and the 'Library to Seminar XIX' (p. 231).

7 For *βέλτιον γὰρ ἴσως μὴ λέγειν τὴν ψυχὴν ἐλεεῖν ἢ μανθάνειν ἢ διανοεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον τῇ ψυχῇ* (*De anima*, I, 4, 408b 13–15), R. D. Hicks gives 'Doubtless it would be better not to say that the soul pities or learns or thinks, but that the man does so with the soul (*De anima*, Cambridge University Press, 1907, p. 33); more paraphrastically, Walter Stanley Hett gives 'Probably it is better not to say that the soul pities, or learns, or thinks, but to say rather that the soul is the instrument whereby man does these things' ('On The Soul' in *Aristotle in Twenty-Three Volumes, Vol. VIII*, Loeb, 1953, p. 47); D.W. Hamlyn gives, 'For it is surely better not to say that the soul pities, learns, or thinks, but that the man does these with his soul' (*Aristotle's De Anima*, Book I, Oxford: Clarendon, 1968); Ronald Polansky gives, somewhat equivocally, 'It is better perhaps not to say the soul pities or learns or thinks, but the human being due to the soul' (*Aristotle's De Anima: A Critical Commentary*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 113); while more recently Christopher Shields has given the limpid rendering, 'For

it is perhaps better not to say that the soul pities or thinks, but that the human being does these things with the soul' (*De anima*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2016, p. 14). In his Commentary, Shields (p. 144), unpacks the two possible readings of *τῇ ψυχῇ* as i. 'with the soul' or ii. 'in virtue of his having a soul' / 'by means of having a soul', further noting that Jonathan Barnes prefers the latter (cf. 1972, 'Aristotle's Concept of Mind' in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 72:101–114) which he rejects in favour of the former (referring the reader to his 1988 article, 'Soul as Subject in Aristotle's *De anima*' in *Classical Quarterly* 38: 140–9). Lacan first uses the paraphrastic formula 'l'homme pense avec son âme' in the opening lesson of *Seminar III*.

Appendices: Library to Seminar XIX (Jacques-Alain Miller)

1 Reading *l'incommensurabilité de la diagonale du carré* for *l'incommunicabilité de la diagonale du carré* (p. 246 of the Seuil edition).
2 Lacan punned on *l'(a)mur* and *a-murs-ement* at the end of the *entretien* of 6 January 1972 (*Talking to Brick Walls*, op. cit., p. 98). 'Lettre d'amur' is from the opening section of this same *entretien* (3 February 1972), which is included as an appendix to *Talking to Brick Walls* (ibid., pp. 108–9). See above, Chapter V, endnote 4.
3 Miller inverts the husband and wife: in Lacan's example, 'sa femme le frictionne' (*Écrits*, p. 827).
4 While Gödel's 1944 paper contains some discussion of the theory of integers and transfinite orders (cf. pp. 134–6), the remark that more closely matches Lacan's comment is the third note defining technical terms in the 1947 paper 'What is Cantor's Continuum Problem?' (*Collected Works, Vol. II*, op. cit., pp. 186–7; revised in the 1964 reprint, pp. 264–5).
5 The Seminar of 1954–5, which includes the commentary on the dream of Irma's injection, is *Séminaire II* (sessions of 9 and 16 March), translated by Sylvana Tomaselli as *The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).
6 Eco's character 'Dr Wagner' seems to be loosely based on Lacan.
7 Lacan mistakenly attributes the painting to Brueghel. This is emended in the Seuil edition (p. 223), which includes a reproduction of the 1502 panel (reversed right to left).
8 Judging by Lacan's description, he had also seen works from the *Concetto spaziale, New York* series (1962), which are executed on copper plates. The Seuil edition includes a reproduction of a 1968 canvas from the *Concetto spaziale, Attese* series.

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ON FEMININE SEXUALITY,

THE LIMITS OF LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE, 1972–1973

ENCORE

THE SEMINAR OF JACQUES LACAN

Book XX

Edited by

Jacques-Alain Miller

Translated with Notes by

Bruce Fink

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On Feminine Sexuality
The Limits of Love and Knowledge

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Encore 1972–1973

TRANSLATED WITH NOTES BY

Bruce Fink

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PREFACE

This translation is long overdue. Published in French in 1975, this groundbreaking Seminar – including some of Lacan's most sophisticated work on love, desire, and jouissance – could well have appeared in English around the same time as the early *Écrits: A Selection* (1977) and *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (Seminar XI, 1978). In its absence, Lacan, instead of *presenting himself* to the English-speaking world, has been believed by many to be faithfully presented to us by certain of his one-time students – such as Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray, though their views diverge substantially from his on many points – and by a spate of American, Australian, and British critics who have, in my view, grossly misrepresented him.

This translation, long-awaited by the public and by me – I always wanted copies to distribute to students and colleagues, though I never expected to be given the opportunity to translate it myself until the day Jacques-Alain Miller and Norton proposed it to me – is thus offered up in the hope of rekindling debate on the basis of something closer to what Lacan actually said, and quieting the kinds of banal reductions of Lacan's views to pat phrases derived from commentaries on commentaries on commentaries that currently pass for serious academic discourse.

I have not deliberately tried to vindicate my own previously published interpretation of Lacan's view of sexual difference in this translation, attempting instead to remain open to being surprised by his formulations (and, indeed, I was surprised!). Nevertheless, Lacan's French is – as anyone who has made a serious attempt to grapple with it is aware – so polyvalent and ambiguous that some frame must be imposed to make any sense of it whatsoever. As is true in the case of an analyst listening to the discourse proffered by an analysand, there is no escaping a theoretical frame of sorts – for without some frame one hears nothing or simply falls back on the ready-

made frame provided by pop psychology – and the challenge to the analyst and translator alike is to keep the frame flexible enough to hear what is new, and to keep oneself flexible enough to adjust part or all of the frame accordingly.

The frame I rely on here is, as I hope will be apparent to the reader, the larger context of Lacan's work, including the complete *Écrits* (the 925 pages of which I am currently translating and retranslating for Norton), virtually all of Lacan's seminars, and other of Lacan's writings and lectures as well. I have striven to make sense of what Lacan says here in the context of what he said before and afterward. His work obviously fits into a historical, philosophical, literary, and psychiatric context as well, all the elements of which no one person could ever hope to master. Russell Grigg (the translator of Seminar III, *The Psychoses,* who is currently translating Seminar XVII) and Héloïse Fink were very helpful in providing such references. Readers of this translation are encouraged to write to me care of the publisher regarding specialized vocabulary and specific works and authors alluded to that I may have overlooked. Adequate translation of Lacan's work is a long-term project to which many people in many fields should contribute.

A word here about my translation "strategy": I have sought to keep the translation itself as "clean" and flowing as possible, and this has led me to relegate some complex phraseology and discussion of alternative readings to the footnotes. It seems to me that the impact of certain passages is easily defused by the inclusion of too many slashes, parenthetical remarks, and unusual typography (of which Lacan himself provides enough). I have endeavored throughout to make the English translation have as powerful an effect on the English reader as the French does on the French, and this can only be obtained by occasionally nailing down meanings more tightly than might be hoped for the purposes of extensive commentary. On such occasions I have dropped footnotes detailing what may well have been lopped off.

I am grateful to Russell Grigg who, in his thorough reading of Chapter I of this translation, reminded me once again of just how many alternative readings are possible. Héloïse Fink provided invaluable assistance by checking the *entire* French and English texts line by line and spending countless hours patiently pouring over Lacan's quirky grammar and endless ambiguities with me. I alone am responsible for the inaccuracies that inevitably remain.

Certain readers may need to be reminded that this was not a text at all originally, but rather a series of largely improvised talks given from notes. The French editor of the Seminar, Jacques-Alain Miller, had to work from a stenographer's faulty transcription of those talks, and was obliged to invent spellings for certain of Lacan's neologisms and condensations and new

ways of punctuating for Lacan's idiosyncratic speech. All of the paragraph breaks here follow the French text, and much of the punctuation here is modeled on that adopted by Miller and approved of by Lacan.

Few texts in the Lacanian opus are as difficult to render into English as this one, given Lacan's myriad word plays and his ever more polyvalent, evocative style. I can only hope – as I have said elsewhere – that my translation here "compensates" the reader for the inevitable loss in plurivocity with *another satisfaction.*

Bruce Fink

I

On jouissance

It so happened that I did not publish *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis.*[1] At the time, it was a form of politeness on my part – after you, be my guest, be my *worst.* . . .[2] With the passage of time, I learned that I could say a little more about it. And then I realized that what constituted my course was a sort of "I don't want to know anything about it."

That is no doubt why, with the passage of time, I am still *(encore)* here, and you are too. I never cease to be amazed by it. . . .[3]

What has worked in my favor for a while is that there is also on your part, in the great mass of you who are here, an "I don't want to know anything about it." But – the all important question – is it the same one?

Is your "I don't want to know anything about it" regarding a certain knowledge that is transmitted to you bit by bit what is at work in me? I don't think so, and it is precisely because you suppose that I begin from a different place than you in this "I don't want to know anything about it" that you find yourselves attached *(liés)* to me. Such that, while it is true that with respect to you I can only be here in the position of an analysand due to my "I don't want to know anything about it," it'll be quite some time before you reach the same point.

That is why it is only when yours seems adequate to you that you can, if

[1] Lacan's 1959–1960 seminar, entitled *L'éthique de la psychanalyse,* has since been edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, published in French (Paris: Seuil, 1986), and translated into English by Dennis Porter as *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1992). (N.B.: All the footnotes provided in this translation of Seminar XX are the translator's notes.)

[2] Lacan is playing here on several terms and registers at once: in *je vous en prie, je vous en pire, prie* ("beg," as in "I beg of you") and *pire* ("worse") are anagrams; *en pire* is pronounced in the same way as *empire* (to worsen or deteriorate); and Lacan's seminar the year before this one (Seminar XIX, 1971–1972, unpublished) was entitled . . . *ou pire (. . . or Worse).*

[3] Lacan manages to work the term *encore* into this sentence as well. Less idiomatically put, it could be translated: "I am still *(encore)* always astonished by it. . . ."

you are one of my analysands, normally detach yourself from your analysis. The conclusion I draw from this is that, contrary to what people have been saying, there is no contradiction between my position as an analyst and what I do here.

1

Last year I entitled what I thought I could say to you, . . . *ou pire (. . . or Worse)*, and then, *Ça s'oupire.*[4] That has nothing to do with "I" or "you" – *je ne t'oupire pas, ni tu ne m'oupires.* Our path, that of analytic discourse, progresses only due to this narrow limit, this cutting edge of the knife, which is such that elsewhere it can only get worse *(s'oupirer)*.

That is the discourse that underpins *(supporte)*[5] my work, and to begin it anew this year, I am first of all going to assume that you are in bed, a bed employed to its fullest, there being two of you in it.

To someone, a jurist, who had been kind enough to inquire about my discourse, I felt I could respond – in order to give him a sense of its foundation, namely, that language[6] is not the speaking being – that I did not feel out of place having to speak in a law school, since it is the school in which the existence of codes makes it clear that language consists therein and is separate, having been constituted over the ages, whereas speaking beings, known as men, are something else altogether. Thus, to begin by assuming that you are in bed requires that I apologize to him.

I won't leave this bed today, and I will remind the jurist that law basically talks about what I am going to talk to you about – jouissance.

Law does not ignore the bed. Take, for example, the fine common law on which the practice of concubinage, which means to sleep together, is based. What I am going to do is begin with what remains veiled in law,

[4] *Soupirer* means "to sigh," but the apostrophe Lacan adds creates a neologism here, a reflexive: "or-sighs itself," "or-is-sighed," "or-worsens itself." Lacan tells us in the next sentence that this invented verb does not work with "I" or "you," at least in part because the *s* of *soupirer* disappears when conjugated as Lacan conjugates it and the reflexivity drops out: "I do not or-worsen you nor do you or-worsen me."

[5] The verb Lacan uses here, *supporter,* recurs constantly in this seminar (and elsewhere in his work as well) and requires a word of explanation. In ordinary French, it most commonly means to bear, stand, or put up with, and is primarily used negatively (e.g., *Je ne le supporte pas,* "I can't stand him"). Even in the present context in the text, this possible sense cannot be entirely ruled out: while psychoanalytic discourse is "behind" Lacan, supporting, backing, bolstering, underpinning, sustaining, carrying, or corroborating what he says, it could also be understood as "putting up with" Lacan. While *supporter* has often been translated as "to prop up" or "propping," I have generally preferred to employ locutions using the verb "to base" and the noun "basis."

[6] Throughout this seminar, I always translate *langage* as language; when I translate *langue* as language, I always include the French in brackets.

namely, what we do in that bed – squeeze each other tight *(s'étreindre)*. I begin with the limit, a limit with which one must indeed begin if one is to be serious, in other words, to establish the series of that which approaches it.

A word here to shed light on the relationship between law *(droit)* and jouissance. "Usufruct" – that's a legal notion, isn't it? – brings together in one word what I already mentioned in my seminar on ethics, namely, the difference between utility[7] and jouissance. What purpose does utility serve? That has never been well defined owing to the prodigious respect speaking beings have, due to language, for means. "Usufruct" means that you can enjoy *(jouir de)*[8] your means, but must not waste them. When you have the usufruct of an inheritance, you can enjoy the inheritance *(en jouir)* as long as you don't use up too much of it. That is clearly the essence of law – to divide up, distribute, or reattribute everything that counts as jouissance.

What is jouissance? Here it amounts to no more than a negative instance *(instance)*.[9] Jouissance is what serves no purpose *(ne sert à rien)*.

I am pointing here to the reservation implied by the field of the right-to-jouissance. Right *(droit)* is not duty. Nothing forces anyone to enjoy *(jouir)* except the superego. The superego is the imperative of jouissance – Enjoy!

Here we see the turning point investigated by analytic discourse. Along this pathway, during the "after you" period of time I let go by, I tried to show that analysis does not allow us to remain at the level of what I began with, respectfully of course – namely, Aristotle's ethics. A kind of slippage occurred in the course of time that did not constitute progress but rather a skirting of the problem, slipping from Aristotle's view of being to Bentham's utilitarianism, in other words, to the theory of fictions,[10] demonstrating the use value – that is, the instrumental status – of language. It is from that standpoint that I return to question the status of being,[11] from the sovereign 11
good as an object of contemplation, on the basis of which people formerly believed they could edify an ethics.

Thus, I am leaving you to your own devices on this bed. I am going out,

[7] Lacan's term here, *l'utile,* literally means "the useful."

[8] It should be kept in mind that *jouir de* means to enjoy, take advantage of, benefit from, get off on, and so on. *Jouir* also means "to come" in the sexual sense: "to reach orgasm."

[9] Lacan's *instance,* like Freud's *Instanz,* is often translated as "agency." However, *instance* also implies a power or authority (as when we speak of a Court of the First Instance), and an *insistent,* urgent force, activity, or intervention; it also conveys a note of instantaneousness. "Agency" in no way conveys the *insistence* so important to Lacan's use of the term.

[10] See *Bentham's Theory of Fictions* (Paterson: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1959); Lacan discusses Bentham in Seminar VII on pages 12, 187, and 228–229.

[11] The French here, *ce qu'il en est de l'être,* is very imprecise, and could be translated as the nature of being, the status of being, or how being stands. Lacan repeatedly uses the locution *ce qu'il en est de* in this seminar in talking about being.

and once again I will write on the door so that, as you exit, you may perhaps recall the dreams you will have pursued on this bed. I will write the following sentence: "Jouissance of the Other," of the Other with a capital *O*, "of the body of the Other who symbolizes the Other, is not the sign of love."[12]

2

I write that, but I don't write after it "the end," "amen," or "so be it."

Love, of course, constitutes a sign *(fait signe)*[13] and is always mutual.

I put forward that idea a long time ago, very gently, by saying that feelings are always mutual. I did so in order to be asked, "Then what, then what, of love, of love – is it always mutual?" "But of course, but of course!" That is why the unconscious was invented – so that we would realize that man's desire is the Other's desire, and that love, while it is a passion that involves ignorance of desire,[14] nevertheless leaves desire its whole import. When we look a bit more closely, we see the ravages wreaked by this.

Jouissance – jouissance of the Other's body – remains a question, because the answer it may constitute is not necessary. We can take this further still: it is not a sufficient answer either, because love demands love. It never stops *(ne cesse pas)* demanding it. It demands it . . . *encore*. *"Encore"* is the proper name of the gap *(faille)* in the Other from which the demand for love stems.

Where then does what is able, in a way that is neither necessary nor sufficient, to answer with jouissance of the Other's body stem from?

It's not love. It is what last year, inspired in a sense by the chapel at Sainte-Anne Hospital that got on my nerves, I let myself go so far as to call *l'amur*.[15]

L'amur is what appears in the form of bizarre signs on the body. They are

[12] The French here is open to a number of different readings: *La jouissance de l'Autre*[. . .], *du corps de l'Autre qui le symbolise, n'est pas le signe de l'amour.* In the first part of the sentence, *jouissance de l'Autre* can mean either the Other's jouissance or one's jouissance/enjoyment of the Other; in the second part of the sentence, there seems, at first glance, to be a typographical error, as Lacan sometimes talks about the other *(autre)* who symbolizes or incarnates the Other *(Autre)* for someone. An alternative reading would be: "The Other's jouissance," that of the Other with a capital *O*, "[the jouissance] of the body of the Other who symbolizes the Other, is not the sign of love."

[13] *Fait signe* also means gives a sign, signals (something to someone), and plays the part of a sign.

[14] Ignorance is, according to Lacan (and others, including Plato), the strongest of the three passions: ignorance, love, and hate. On the three passions, see, for example, "Direction of the Treatment," *Écrits*, 627. An alternative reading of *le désir de l'homme, c'est le désir de l'Autre* earlier in the sentence would be "man's desire is for the Other's desire."

[15] A combination of *mur* ("wall") and *amour* ("love"). This term was introduced by Lacan on January 6, 1972. *Amure* (pronounced like Lacan's *amur*) is an old sailor's term for tack.

the sexual characteristics that come from beyond, from that place we believed we could eye under the microscope in the form of the germ cell[16] – regarding which I would point out that we can't say that it's life since it also bears death, the death of the body, by repeating it. That is where the *en-corps* comes from.[17] It is thus false to say that there is a separation of the soma from the germ because, since it harbors this germ, the body bears its traces. There are traces on *l'amur.*

But they are only traces. The body's being *(l'être du corps)* is of course sexed *(sexué)*,[18] but it is secondary, as they say. And as experience shows, the body's jouissance, insofar as that body symbolizes the Other, does not 12
depend on those traces.

That can be gathered from the simplest consideration of things.

Then what is involved in love? Is love – as psychoanalysis claims with an audacity that is all the more incredible as all of its experience runs counter to that very notion, and as it demonstrates the contrary – is love about making one *(faire un)?* Is Eros a tension toward the One?

People have been talking about nothing but the One for a long time. "There's such a thing as One" *(Y a d' l'Un)*.[19] I based my discourse last year on that statement, certainly not in order to contribute to this earliest of confusions, for desire merely leads us to aim at the gap *(faille)* where it can be demonstrated that the One is based only on *(tenir de)* the essence of the signifier. I investigated Frege at the beginning [of last year's seminar][20]

[16] The French *germen* ("germ" or "germ cell," i.e., the sexual reproductive cell) is contrasted with *soma,* the body of an organism.

[17] *En-corps* is pronounced like *encore,* but literally means "in-body."

[18] *L'être du corps* could also be translated as the being of the body, being qua body, the body qua being, and so on. *Sexué* means having a sex, a sexual organ, or being *differentiated* into male and female, i.e., sexually differentiated. The English word "sexed," used here to translate *sexué(e),* has the current disadvantage of being associated with the expressions "over-sexed" and "under-sexed," thereby suggesting something *quantitative* about the sexual drives that is not intended in the French. Note the close relation between *sexué* and *sexuation* (translated in this seminar as "sexuation"). *Sexué* and *asexué* are also translated as "sexual" and "asexual," respectively, in certain contexts (e.g., sexual or asexual reproduction).

In the next sentence, "the body's jouissance" could also be translated as "jouissance of the body."

[19] *Y a d' l'Un* is by no means an immediately comprehensible expression, even to the French ear, but the first sense seems to be "There's such a thing as One" (or "the One") or "There's something like One" (or "the One"); in neither case is the emphasis on the "thing" or on quantity. "The One happens," we might even say. A detailed discussion of Seminar XIX would be required to justify the translation I've provided here, but at least two things should be briefly pointed out: *Y a d' l'Un* must be juxtaposed with *Il n'y a pas de rapport sexuel,* there's no such thing as a sexual relationship (see Seminar XIX, May 17, 1972); and Lacan is *not* saying "there's some One" (in the sense of some quantity of One) since he is talking about the One of "pure difference" (see Seminar XIX, June 1, 1972).

[20] See Seminar XIX, December 8, 1971. Lacan discusses Frege in a number of earlier seminars as well, for example, in Seminar XV, March 13, 1968.

in the attempt to demonstrate the gap *(béance)* there is between this One and something that is related to *(tenir à)* being and, behind being, to jouissance.

I can tell you a little tale, that of a parakeet that was in love with Picasso. How could one tell? From the way the parakeet nibbled the collar of his shirt and the flaps of his jacket. Indeed, the parakeet was in love with what is essential to man, namely, his attire *(accoutrement)*. The parakeet was like Descartes, to whom men were merely clothes *(habits)* . . . walking about *(en . . . pro-ménade)*. Clothes promise debauchery *(ça promet la ménade)*, when one takes them off. But this is only a myth, a myth that converges with the bed I mentioned earlier. To enjoy a body *(jouir d'un corps)* when there are no more clothes leaves intact the question of what makes the One, that is, the question of identification. The parakeet identified with Picasso clothed *(habillé)*.

The same goes for everything involving love. The habit loves the monk,[21] as they are but one thereby. In other words, what lies under the habit, what we call the body, is perhaps but the remainder *(reste)*[22] I call object *a*.

What holds the image together is a remainder. Analysis demonstrates that love, in its essence, is narcissistic, and reveals that the substance of what is supposedly object-like *(objectal)*[23] – what a bunch of bull – is in fact that which constitutes a remainder in desire, namely, its cause, and sustains desire through its lack of satisfaction *(insatisfaction)*, and even its impossibility.

Love is impotent, though mutual, because it is not aware that it is but the desire to be One, which leads us to the impossibility of establishing the relationship between "them-two" *(la relation d'eux)*.[24] The relationship between them-two what? – them-two sexes.

3

Assuredly, what appears on bodies in the enigmatic form of sexual characteristics – which are merely secondary – makes sexed beings *(êtres sexués)*. No doubt.[25] But being is the jouissance of the body as such, that is, as
13 asexual *(asexué)*, because what is known as sexual jouissance is marked

[21] The French expression, sometimes attributed to Rabelais, *l'habit ne fait pas le moine* (literally, "the habit does not make the monk," figuratively, "don't judge a book by its cover" or "appearances can be deceiving"), is adapted here by Lacan: *l'habit aime le moine,* "the habit loves the monk."

[22] *Reste* can take on many meanings in French: "a remainder" in a division problem, "a leftover," "scrap," "residue," etc.

[23] This is a term from French object relations theory.

[24] *Deux,* "two," and *d'eux,* "of or between them," are homonyms in French.

[25] *Sans doute* is not as strong in French as the English "no doubt," which is generally a synonym for "indubitably." *Sans doute* is often better understood to mean perhaps.

and dominated by the impossibility of establishing as such, anywhere in the enunciable, the sole One that interests us, the One of the relation "sexual relationship" *(rapport sexuel)*.[26]

That is what analytic discourse demonstrates in that, to one of these beings qua sexed, to man insofar as he is endowed with the organ said to be phallic – I said, "said to be" – the corporal sex *(sexe corporel)*[27] or sexual organ *(sexe)* of woman – I said, "of woman," whereas in fact *woman* does not exist,[28] woman is *not whole (pas toute)* – woman's sexual organ is of no interest *(ne lui dit rien)* except via the body's jouissance.

Analytic discourse demonstrates – allow me to put it this way – that the phallus is the conscientious objection made by one of the two sexed beings to the service to be rendered to the other.

Don't talk to me about women's secondary sexual characteristics because, barring some sort of radical change, it is those of the mother that take precedence in her. Nothing distinguishes woman as a sexed being other than her sexual organ *(sexe)*.

Analytic experience attests precisely to the fact that everything revolves around phallic jouissance, in that woman is defined by a position that I have indicated as "not whole" (*pas-tout*) with respect to phallic jouissance.[29]

I will go a little further. Phallic jouissance is the obstacle owing to which man does not come *(n'arrive pas)*,[30] I would say, to enjoy woman's body, precisely because what he enjoys is the jouissance of the organ.

That is why the superego, which I qualified earlier as based on the (imperative) "Enjoy!", is a correlate of castration, the latter being the sign with which an avowal dresses itself up *(se pare)*, the avowal that jouissance of the Other, of the body of the Other, is promoted only on the basis of

[26] *Rapport* also means "ratio," "proportion," "formula," "relation," "connection," etc.

[27] *Sexe* in French can mean either "sex," in the sense of male or female, or "sexual organ."

[28] Lacan discusses this in detail in Chapters VI and VII; note here simply that, while in French, the emphasis goes on the singular feminine article, *la* of "la *femme n'existe pas*," in English, saying "*the* woman does not exist" is virtually nonsensical. Lacan is asserting here that Woman with a capital *W*, Woman as singular in essence, does not exist; Woman as an all-encompassing idea (a Platonic form) is an illusion. There is a multiplicity of women, but no essence of "Womanhood" or "Womanliness." *Pas toute*, and *pas-tout* further on, can, in certain instances, be rendered as "not all," but Lacan is not—in my view—primarily concerned here with quantity (all or some). Indeed, he prefers the French term *quanteurs* to *quantificateurs* (for both of which English has only "quantifiers") for the operators presented in Chapters VI and VII.

[29] Lacan uses a spatial metaphor here, *à l'endroit de la jouissance phallique*, which evokes a place. Hence one could literally translate this as "woman is defined by a position that I have indicated as 'not whole' in the place of phallic jouissance." Curiously enough, he says *pas-tout* here instead of *pas-toute*.

[30] While the ostensible meaning here is that "man does not manage to enjoy woman's body," *arriver* is a slang term for "to come" in the sexual sense.

infinity *(de l'infinitude)*.[31] I will say which infinity – that, no more and no less, based on Zeno's paradox.

Achilles and the tortoise, such is the schema of coming *(le schème du jouir)* for one pole *(côté)* of sexed beings.[32] When Achilles has taken his step, gotten it on with Briseis, the latter, like the tortoise,[33] has advanced a bit, because she is "not whole," not wholly his. Some remains. And Achilles must take a second step, and so on and so forth. It is thus that, in our time, but only in our time, we have managed to define numbers – true or, better still, real numbers. Because what Zeno hadn't seen is that the tortoise does not escape the destiny that weighs upon Achilles – its step too gets shorter and shorter and it never arrives at the limit either. It is on that basis that a number, any number whatsoever, can be defined, if it is real. A number has a limit and it is to that extent that it is infinite. It is quite clear that Achilles can only pass the tortoise – he cannot catch up with it. He only catches up with it at infinity *(infinitude)*.

14 Here then is the statement *(le dit)*[34] of the status of jouissance insofar as it is sexual. For one pole,[35] jouissance is marked by the hole that leaves it no other path than that of phallic jouissance. For the other pole, can something be attained that would tell us how that which up until now has only been a fault *(faille)*[36] or gap in jouissance could be realized?

Oddly enough, that is what can only be suggested by very strange glimpses. "Strange" is a word that can be broken down in French – *étrange, être-ange*[37] – and that is something that the alternative of being as dumb as the parakeet I mentioned earlier should keep us from falling into. Nevertheless, let us examine more closely what inspires in us the idea that, in the

[31] The French here could also be understood as "is promoted (or promotes itself) from infinity" or "from (the vantage point of) the infinite."

[32] As the context shows, it is the male "pole" of sexed beings that is in question here. I have preferred "pole" here to "side" in translating *côté* to emphasize that Lacan is referring to the two poles of sexual differentiation: male and female.

[33] It should be kept in mind here that, in French, the noun *tortue* ("turtle" or "tortoise") is feminine. Regarding Briseis, Achilles' captive mistress, see Homer's *Iliad,* Book I, verse 184 and Book XIX, verses 282–300.

[34] *Le dit* is a very important term in this seminar, and I have resorted to several different ways of translating it in the various contexts in which it appears: "what is said," "the said," "the statement," "the spoken," and so on. It is juxtaposed with *le dire,* another crucial term here, that emphasizes saying, speaking, or enunciating. The French is provided in brackets, except when I translate it as "what is said."

[35] *D'un côté* is often translated, "On the one hand"; here, however, Lacan is referring back to the two "poles" of sexed beings.

[36] *Faille* does not have the moral connotation of "fault" in English, conveying instead the geological meanings of fault – a slip or shift between different land masses or tectonic plates, a point at which things have broken apart. *Faille* also means "lack," "gap," "defect," "break," and "flaw."

[37] *Être-ange:* "angel-being" or "to be an angel."

jouissance of bodies, sexual jouissance has the privilege of being specified by an impasse.

In this space of jouissance, to take something that is limited or closed constitutes a locus, and to speak of it constitutes a topology. In a text soon to be published that is at the cutting edge of my discourse last year, I believe I demonstrate the strict equivalence between topology and structure.[38] If we take that as our guide, what distinguishes anonymity from what we talk about as jouissance – namely, what is regulated by law – is a geometry. A geometry implies the heterogeneity of locus, namely that there is a locus of the Other. Regarding this locus of the Other, of one sex as Other, as absolute Other, what does the most recent development in topology allow us to posit?

I will posit here the term "compactness." Nothing is more compact than a fault, assuming that the intersection of everything that is enclosed therein is accepted as existing over an infinite number of sets, the result being that the intersection implies this infinite number. That is the very definition of compactness.

The intersection I am talking about is the same one I put forward earlier as being that which covers or poses an obstacle to the supposed sexual relationship.

Only "supposed," since I state that analytic discourse is premised solely on the statement that there is no such thing, that it is impossible to found *(poser)* a sexual relationship. Therein lies analytic discourse's step forward and it is thereby that it determines the real status of all the other discourses.

Named here is the point that covers the impossibility of the sexual relationship as such. Jouissance, qua sexual, is phallic – in other words, it is not related to the Other as such.

Let us follow here the complement of the hypothesis of compactness.

A formulation is given to us by the topology I qualified as the most recent that takes as its point of departure a logic constructed on the investigation of numbers and that leads to the institution of a locus, which is not that of a homogeneous space. Let us take the same limited, closed, supposedly instituted space – the equivalent of what I earlier posited as an intersection extending to infinity. If we assume it to be covered with open sets, in other words, sets that exclude their own limits – the limit is that which is defined as greater than one point and less than another, but in no case equal either to the point of departure or the point of arrival, to sketch it for you quickly – it can be shown that it is equivalent to say that the set of these open spaces

[38] Lacan is referring here to his article, *"L'Étourdit,"* published in *Scilicet* 4 (1973), pp. 5–52.

always allows of a subcovering of open spaces, constituting a finity *(finitude)*, namely, that the series of elements constitutes a finite series.

You may note that I did not say that they are countable. And yet that is what the term "finite" implies. In the end, we count them one by one. But before we can count them, we must find an order in them and we cannot immediately assume that that order is findable.

What is implied, in any case, by the demonstrable finity of the open spaces that can cover the space that is limited and closed in the case of sexual jouissance? What is implied is that the said spaces can be taken one by one *(un par un)* – and since I am talking about the other pole, let us put this in the feminine – *une par une*.

That is the case in the space of sexual jouissance, which thereby proves to be compact. The sexed being of these not-whole women does not involve the body but what results from a logical exigency in speech. Indeed, logic, the coherence inscribed in the fact that language exists and that it is outside the bodies that are moved by it – in short, the Other who[39] is incarnated, so to speak, as sexed being – requires this one by one *(une par une)*.

And that is what is strange and, indeed, fascinating, that's the word for it: this requirement of the One, as the *Parmenides* strangely already allowed us to predict, stems from the Other. Where there is being, infinity is required.

I will come back to the status of the Other's locus. But right now I'm going to illustrate it for you, to give you an image of it.

You know how much fun analysts have had with Don Juan, whom they have described in every possible way, including as a homosexual, which really takes the cake. But center him on what I just illustrated for you, this space of sexual jouissance covered by open sets that constitute a finity and that can, in the end, be counted. Don't you see that what is essential in the feminine myth of Don Juan is that he has them one by one *(une par une)?*

That is what the other sex *(l'autre sexe)*,[40] the masculine sex, is for women. In that sense, the image of Don Juan is of capital importance.

From the moment there are names, one can make a list of women and count them. If there are *mille e tre* of them, it's clear that one can take them one by one – that is what is essential. That is entirely different from the One of universal fusion. If woman were not not-whole – if, in her body, she were not not-whole as sexed being – none of that would hold true.

[39] It should be kept in mind that French uses the same word, *qui*, for people and things (or abstract entities), whereas English requires us to use either "who" or "that."

[40] In English we would normally speak of the opposite sex, but given the importance in Lacan's work of the other and the Other, I usually prefer the less idiomatic "other sex" for men and "Other sex" for women.

4

16

The facts I am talking to you about are facts of discourse from which we solicit an exit in analysis – in the name of what? Of letting go of the other discourses.

Through analytic discourse, the subject manifests himself in his gap, namely, in that which causes his desire. Were that not the case, I could not summarize it with a topology that does not involve the same mainspring, the same discourse, but rather a different one, one that is so much purer and that makes so much clearer the fact that there is no genesis except on the basis of discourse. Doesn't the fact that that topology converges with our own experience, to the extent that it allows us to articulate it, justify what, in what I put forward, is lent support and or-worsened *(se s'oupire)* by the fact that it never resorts to any substance, never refers to any being, and breaks with everything smacking of philosophy?[41]

Everything that has been said about being assumes that one can refuse the predicate and say "man is," for example, without saying what. The status of being is closely related to this lopping off of the predicate. Thus, nothing can be said of it except through dead-end detours and demonstrations of logical impossibility, whereby no predicate suffices. As for being *(Ce qui est de l'être)*, a being that would be posited as absolute, it is never anything but the fracture, break, or interruption of the formulation "sexed being," insofar as sexed being is involved *(intéressé)* in jouissance.

November 21, 1972

COMPLEMENT

Beginning of the next class: STUPIDITY *(LA BÊTISE).*[42]

It seems that in his first "seminar," as it is called, of the year Lacan spoke – I won't beat around the bush – of nothing less than love.

The news has traveled. It even came back to me from – not very far away, of course – a little town in Europe to which it had been sent as a message.

[41] The French here, *d'être en rupture avec quoi que se soit qui s'enonce comme philosophie,* literally means "breaks with anything whatsoever that is enunciated qua philosophy."

[42] *La bêtise* is the term Lacan uses to translate the term Freud instructs little Hans' father to employ to characterize Hans' fear of horses, *Dummheit* (*Gesammelte Werke* VII, p. 263), translated into English as "nonsense" (in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* [New York: Norton, 1955], abbreviated hereafter as SE, followed by volume and page numbers), though it could equally well be rendered in Hans' case as "foolishness" or "funny business" (SE X, p. 28).

As it was from my couch that it came back to me, I cannot believe that the
17 person who told it to me truly believed it, given that she[43] knows quite well that what I say of love is assuredly that one cannot speak about it. "Talk to me of love" – what a lark![44] I spoke of the love letter *(la lettre d'amour)*, of the declaration of love – not the same thing as the word of love *(la parole d'amour)*.

I think it is clear, even if you didn't formulate it to yourselves, that in that first seminar I spoke of stupidity.

At stake is the stupidity that conditions what I named my seminar after this year and that is pronounced *"encore."* You see the risk involved. I am only telling you that to show you what constitutes the weight of my presence here – it's that you enjoy it. My sole presence – at least I dare believe it – my sole presence in my discourse, my sole presence is my stupidity.[45] I should know that I have better things to do than to be here *(être là)*.[46] That is why I might prefer that my presence not be guaranteed to you in each and every case.

Nevertheless, it is clear that I cannot withdraw, simply say *"encore,"* and expect it to go on without me *(que ça dure)*. It's stupidity because I myself obviously collaborate in it. I can only situate myself in the field of this *"encore."* Backing up from analytic discourse to what conditions it – namely, the truth, the only truth that can be indisputable because it is not, that there's no such thing as a sexual relationship – perhaps doesn't allow one in any way to judge what is and what is not stupidity. And yet it's impossible, given our experience, not to question something regarding analytic discourse: doesn't this discourse hang together *(se tient)* by basing itself on the dimension of stupidity?

Why not wonder about the status of this dimension, which is obviously quite present? After all, there was no need for analytic discourse – therein lies the subtlety – for the fact that there's no such thing as a sexual relationship to be announced *as truth.*

Don't think I hesitate to get my feet wet. Were I to speak of Saint Paul today, it would hardly be the first time. That's not what scares me, even if I compromise myself by discussing people whose status and lineage are not, strictly speaking, the kind I keep company with. Nevertheless, the fact that it was the consequence of the Message that men are at one pole *(côté)* and women at the other has had certain repercussions throughout the ages.

[43] The *elle* could just as easily be a "he" here, since it refers back to *personne*, a feminine noun.

[44] *Parlez-moi d'amour* is the title of a well-known French song from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

[45] *Présence seule*, which I have translated here as "sole presence," could also be rendered as "presence alone."

[46] *Être-là* is the French for Dasein.

That hasn't stopped the world from reproducing to the extent of your present numbers. Stupidity is still going strong in any case.

That is not quite the way analytic discourse is established, which I formulated to you as *a* with S_2 below it,[47] and as what that questions on the side of the subject – in order to produce what, if not stupidity? But, after all, in the name of what would I say that, if it continues, it's stupidity? How is one to get away from stupidity?

It is nevertheless true that there is a status to be granted to this new 18
discourse and to its approach to stupidity. Surely it comes closer, since in other discourses stupidity is what one flees. Discourses always aim at the least stupidity, at sublime stupidity, for "sublime" means the highest point of what lies below.

Where, in analytic discourse, is the sublimity of stupidity? That is what justifies both my giving a rest to my participation in stupidity insofar as it envelopes us here, and my calling on a person who can, on this point, provide me with a response *(réplique)* based on that which, in other fields, intersects what I say. It is what I had the good fortune to hear, already at the end of last year, from the same person we shall hear from today. He is someone who comes to listen to me here and who is thus sufficiently informed regarding analytic discourse. Right from the beginning of this year, I intend to have him contribute, at his own risk, a response based on what, in a discourse – namely, philosophical discourse – goes its own way, paving it on the basis of a certain status with respect to the least stupidity. I give the floor to François Recanati, whom you already know.

François Recanati's exposé can be found in Scilicet, *the journal of the École freudienne de Paris.*[48]

December 12, 1972

[47] Lacan is referring here to the formula for the analyst's discourse (or analytic discourse) he first elaborates in Seminar XVII:

$$\frac{a}{S_2} \rightarrow \frac{\$}{S_1}$$

The lower right-hand corner is where the *product* of a discourse appears. Lacan is suggesting here that the S_1 produced by analytic discourse is equivalent to stupidity or nonsense *(la bêtise)*. The "side of the subject," mentioned in this sentence, is the right-hand side of the formula. The formula is provided again in the next lecture of the present seminar.

[48] *Scilicet* 4 (1973), pp. 55–73. Recanati had already spoken at Lacan's seminar (Seminar XIX, . . . *ou pire*) on June 14, 1972.

19

II

To Jakobson

LINGUISTRICKS.
THE SIGN THAT ONE IS CHANGING DISCOURSES.
SIGNIFIERNESS BY THE BUCKETFUL.
THE STUPIDITY OF THE SIGNIFIER.
THE ENJOYING SUBSTANCE.

It seems to me that it is difficult not to speak stupidly about language. That is nevertheless what you, Jakobson, manage to do.

Once again, in the talks that Jakobson gave the past few days at the Collège de France,[1] I had the chance to admire him enough to pay homage to him now.

Stupidity nevertheless has to be nourished. Is everything we nourish thereby stupid? No. But it has been demonstrated that to nourish oneself is part and parcel of stupidity. Need I say more to the people present in this room where one is, ultimately, at a restaurant and where one imagines that one is being nourished because one is not at the university cafeteria? One is nourished by the imaginative dimension.

I trust you remember what analytic discourse teaches us about the old bond with the wet nurse, a mother as well, as if by chance, and behind that the infernal business of her desire and everything that follows from it. That is what is at stake in nourishment – some sort of stupidity, but one that analytic discourse puts in its rightful place *(assoit dans son droit)*.

1

One day, I realized that it was difficult not to look into linguistics once the unconscious was discovered.

On the basis of that, I did something that seems to me to be the only true objection I can formulate to what you may have heard the other day from
20 Jakobson's mouth, namely, that all that is language *(tout ce qui est du langage)* falls within the ambit of linguistics – that is, in the final analysis, within the ambit of the linguist.

Not that I don't agree with him about it quite fully when it comes to

[1] The most prestigious French academic institution, located in Paris.

poetry, regarding which he put forward this argument. But if one considers everything that, given the definition of language, follows regarding the foundation of the subject – so thoroughly renewed and subverted by Freud that it is on that basis that everything he claimed to be unconscious can be grounded – then one must, in order to leave Jakobson his own turf *(domaine réservé)*,[2] forge another word. I will call it linguistricks *(linguisterie)*.[3]

That leaves something in my work for the linguist to latch onto, and is not without explaining why I am so often subjected to more than one admonition from so many linguists – certainly not from Jakobson, but that's because he is kindly disposed toward me. In other words, he loves me – that's the way I express it in an intimate context.

The fact that I say *(Mon dire)*[4] that the unconscious is structured like a language is not part and parcel of the field of linguistics. That is a glimpse of what you will see commented upon in a text that will come out in the next issue of my well-known aperiodical *(Scilicet)* and that is entitled *"L'Étourdit,"* that's *d, i, t* at the end[5] – a glimpse of the sentence I wrote on the board several times last year without ever elaborating on it: "The fact that one says remains forgotten behind what is said in what is heard."[6]

Yet, it is in the consequences of what is said that the act of saying is

[2] Literally, "private hunting grounds," "game reserve," "private terrain," or "private domain."

[3] From *linguistique* (linguistics). The ending Lacan adds here, *linguisterie*, gives one the impression that it is a kind of specious or fake linguistics. François Raffoul suggested "linguistrickery," which I have shortened to "linguistricks." One could, of course, also see *linguisterie* as a condensation of various other words: *tricherie, strie,* and even *hystérie.*

[4] *Dire,* as a noun, normally refers to one's words, what one says. Here, however, it is not simply a dictum or a statement that is in question but the act of saying itself. As Lacan says in Seminar XIX, it is "qu'on dise comme fait" (June 21, 1972). This sentence could thus be formulated differently: "My saying that the unconscious is structured like a language is not part and parcel of the field of linguistics." Hereafter, I generally translate *le dire* as "the act (or fact) of saying"; when translated otherwise, the French is provided in brackets. The plural, *dires,* does not seem to be used by Lacan in this sense and I have generally translated it as "statements."

[5] *L'Étourdi* (without the final *t,* a homonym of *L'Étourdit*) is the title of a well-known play by Molière; the full title is *L'Étourdi ou les contretemps.* Someone who is *étourdi(e)* is scatterbrained, dizzy, thoughtless, heedless, walks around in a daze, has no idea what is going on, etc. The English translation of Molière's play is aptly entitled *The Blunderer.* By adding a *t* to the end of the word, Lacan creates a condensation involving *étourdi* and *dit* (as a noun, *dit* means "story" or "tale"; more literally, it means "what is said," "the said," or "statement"; as the past participle of the verb *dire,* to say, it means "said"). The construction also suggests that the *étourdi* is *said to be* étourdi, and perhaps only said to be *étourdi* without really being it. The decomposition of the word suggested by the condensation could also include *et* (and), *tour* (trick, tower, or tour), and *dit,* and no doubt other words as well.

[6] The French here does not literally include the words "the fact," relying instead on a subjunctive: *Qu'on dise reste oublié derrière ce qui se dit dans ce qui s'entend* ("That one may say remains forgotten . . ."). Note also the two reflexives and *entendre,* which means both "to hear" and "to understand."

judged. But what one does with what is said remains open. For one can do all kinds of things with it, like one does with furniture when, for example, one is undergoing a siege or a bombardment.

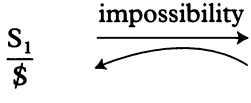
There's a text by Rimbaud that I brought up last year called *"À une raison"* that is scanned by a reply that ends each verse – "A new love" *(Un nouvel amour)*.[7] Since I am supposed to have spoken last time about love, why not take it up again at this level, with the idea once again of indicating the distance between linguistics and linguistricks?

In Rimbaud's text, love is the sign, indicated as such, that one is changing reasons, and that is why the poet addresses that reason. One changes reasons – in other words, one changes discourses.

I will remind you here of the four discourses I distinguished. There are four of them only on the basis of the psychoanalytic discourse that I articulate using four places – each place founded on some effect of the signifier – and that I situate as the last discourse in this deployment. This is not in any sense to be viewed as a series of historical emergences – the fact that one may have appeared longer ago than the others is not what is important here. Well, I would say now that there is some emergence of psychoanalytic discourse whenever there is a movement from one discourse to another.

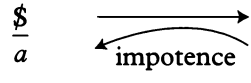
To apply these categories, which are structured only on the basis of the existence of psychoanalytic discourse, one must pay careful attention to the
21 putting to the test of the truth that there is some emergence of analytic discourse with each shift from one discourse to another. I am not saying anything else when I say that love is the sign that one is changing discourses.

Master's Discourse[8]

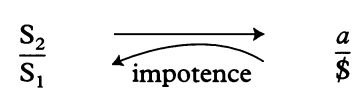


is clarified by regression from the:

Hysteric's Discourse

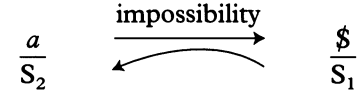


University Discourse



is clarified by its "progress" in the:

Analyst's Discourse



[7] The very short poem entitled *"À une raison"* can be found in Arthur Rimbaud, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), p. 130.

[8] Note that, on at least one occasion, Lacan says that *le discours du maître* can also be understood as the discourse on the master (Seminar XIX, February 3, 1972).

The places are those of:		The terms are:
		S_1, the master signifier
agent	other	S_2, knowledge
———	———	$, the subject
truth	production	*a*, surplus jouissance

Last time I said that jouissance of the Other is not the sign of love. And here I am saying that love is a sign. Does love consist in the fact that what appears is but the sign?

It is here that the Port-Royal logic, evoked the other day in François Recanati's exposé, could lend us a hand. That logic proposes that the sign – and one always marvels at such statements *(dires)* that take on weight sometimes long after being pronounced – is what is defined by the disjunction of two substances that have no part in common, namely, by what we nowadays call intersection. That will lead us to some answers a bit later.

What is not a sign of love is jouissance of the Other, jouissance of the Other sex and, as I said, of the body that symbolizes it.

A change of discourses – things budge, things traverse you, things traverse us, things are traversed *(ça* se *traverse),* and no one notices the change *(personne n'accuse le coup).* I can say until I'm blue in the face that the notion of discourse should be taken as a social link *(lien social),* founded on language, and thus seems not unrelated to what is specified in linguistics as grammar, and yet nothing seems to change.

Perhaps that poses a question that no one raises, that of the status of the notion of information whose success has been so lightning fast that one can say that the whole of science manages to get infiltrated by it. We're at the 22
level of the gene's molecular information and of the winding of nucleoproteins around strands of DNA, that are themselves wrapped around each other, all of that being tied together by hormonal links – that is, messages that are sent, recorded, etc. Let us note that the success of this formula finds its indisputable source in a linguistics that is not only immanent but explicitly formulated. In any case, this action extends right to the very foundations of scientific thought, being articulated as negative entropy.

Is that what I, from another locus, that of my linguistricks, gather *(recueille)* when I make use of the function of the signifier?

2

What is the signifier?

The signifier – as promoted in the rites of a linguistic tradition that is not specifically Saussurian, but goes back as far as the Stoics and is reflected in

Saint Augustine's work – must be structured in topological terms. Indeed, the signifier is first of all that which has a meaning effect *(effet de signifié),*[9] and it is important not to elide the fact that between signifier and meaning effect there is something barred that must be crossed over.[10]

This way of topologizing language's status *(ce qu'il en est du langage)* is illustrated most admirably by phonology, insofar as phonology incarnates the signifier in phonemes. But the signifier cannot in any way be limited to this phonemic prop. Once again – what is a signifier *(qu'est-ce qu'un signifiant)?*

I must already stop, having posed the question in this form.

"A" *(Un),* placed before the term, is usually the indeterminate article.[11] It already assumes that the signifier can be collectivized, that we can make a collection thereof and speak thereof as something that is totalized. Now the linguist would surely have trouble, it seems to me, grounding this collection, grounding it on a "the" *(le),* because there is no predicate that permits that.

As Jakobson pointed out, yesterday as a matter of fact, it is not individual words that can ground the signifier. Words have no other place in which to form a collection than the dictionary, where they can be listed. In order to make you see this, I could speak of sentences, which are clearly signifying units as well, that people sometimes try to collect by selecting sentences that are typical of one language. But instead I will evoke proverbs, in which a certain short article by Paulhan that recently came my way got me more interested.

Paulhan, in the kind of ambiguous dialogue that grabs the attention of the foreigner with a certain limited linguistic competence, noticed that the
23 proverb had a particular weight and played a specific role among the Madagascans. The fact that he discovered it on that occasion does not stop me from going further. Indeed, one can note, in the margins of the proverbial function, that "signifierness" *(signifiance)*[12] is something that fans out *(s'év-*

[9] The French here, *un effet de signifié,* can also be translated as "an effect as signified" or "the signified qua effect."

[10] Lacan is referring here to his algorithm (a reversal of Saussure's),

$$\frac{S}{s}$$

where "S" designates the signifier and *"s"* designates the signified (i.e., meaning), and the line between the two serves as a bar between the realms of the signifier and the signified. See *Écrits,* 515.

[11] In French, *Un* corresponds both to the indefinite article ("a" in English) and to the number 1. The twofold meaning of *un* must be kept in mind for the whole of the ensuing discussion.

[12] *Signifiance* is an important term that Lacan takes over from linguistics, the French *signifiance* being originally based on the English word "significance." It is taken over by Lacan in the sense that, in linguistics, it merely refers to "the fact of

entaille), if you will allow me this expression, from the proverb to the locution.

Look, for example, in the dictionary under the expression *"à tire-larigot,"*[13] and you'll see what I mean. Certain dictionaries go so far as to invent a Mr. Larigot: after pulling on his leg over and over, people ended up creating the expression *à tire-larigot.* What does that expression mean? There are plenty of other locutions that are just as extravagant. They mean nothing other than the following – the subversion of desire. That is the meaning of *à tire-larigot.* Through the pierced barrel of signifierness flows *à tire-larigot* a glass, a full glass of signifierness.

What is this signifierness? At the level we are at, it is that which has a meaning effect.

Don't forget that, at the outset, the relationship between signifier and signified was incorrectly qualified as arbitrary. That is how Saussure expressed himself, probably in spite of his better judgment – he certainly believed otherwise, that is, something far closer to the text of the *Cratylus,* as is seen by what he had in his desk drawers, namely, his anagrams. Now what passes for arbitrary is the fact that meaning effects seem not to bear any relation to what causes them.[14]

But if they seem to bear no relation to what causes them, that is because we expect what causes them to bear a certain relation to the real. I'm talking about the serious real. The serious – one must of course make an effort to notice it, one must have come to my seminars now and then – can only be the serial.[15] That can only be obtained after a very long period of extraction, extraction from language of something that is caught up in it, and about

having meaning," whereas in Lacan's work it has to do with the fact of being a signifier (hence the translation I am proposing here: signifierness). When Lacan uses the term, it is to emphasize the nonsensical nature of the signifier, the very existence of signifiers apart from any possible meaning or signification they might have; it is to emphasize the fact that the signifier's very existence exceeds its significatory role, that its substance exceeds its symbolic function, to signify. Thus, rather than referring to "the fact of having meaning," Lacan uses *signifiance* to refer to "the fact of having effects other than meaning effects." We should hear *defiance* in Lacan's *signifiance* – the signifier defies the role allotted to it, refusing to be altogether relegated to the task of signification.

[13] *A tire-larigot* figuratively means "a lot," "in large quantity," "by the bucketful," or "by the shovelful." *Tirer* means to pull. It may be helpful to readers who do not speak French to consider the American expression: "How do you like them apples!" Nothing in the expression itself – that is, none of the individual words or the way in which they are put together – seems to lead up to the meaning "So there!" or "Tough!" that the expression takes on in many contexts. The expression cannot be further decomposed: there are no smaller meaning units within it that create its meaning. The smallest meaning unit here is the whole sentence, which can thus be taken as a single signifying unit or signifier.

[14] For example, the meaning, "a lot" or "by the shovelful," seems to bear no relation to the locution, *à tire larigot,* that is, the signifier that causes it.

[15] *Le sériel,* "what forms a series."

which we have, at the point at which I have arrived in my exposé, only a faint idea – even regarding this indeterminate "a" *(un)*, this lure that we don't know how to make function in relation to the signifier so that it collectivizes the signifier. In truth, we will see that we must turn things around, and instead of investigating *a* signifier *(un signifiant)*, we must investigate the signifier "One" *(Un)* – but we haven't reached that point yet.

Meaning effects seem to bear no relation to what causes them. That means that the references or things the signifier serves to approach remain approximate – macroscopic, for example. What is important is not that it's imaginary – after all, if the signifier allowed us to point to the image we need to be happy, that would be fine and dandy, but it's not the case. At the level of the signifier/signified distinction, what characterizes the relationship between the signified and what serves as the indispensable third party, namely the referent, is precisely that the signified misses the referent. The joiner doesn't work.

24 What really takes the cake is that we nevertheless manage to use it by employing other devices *(trucs)*. To characterize the function of the signifier, to collectivize it in a way that resembles a predication, we have the Port-Royal logic, which is what I began with today. The other day, Recanati mentioned adjectives made into nouns *(substantivés)*.[16] Roundness is extracted from round and – why not? – justice from the just, etc. That is what will allow me to put forward my stupidity *(bêtise)* in order to show that perhaps stupidity is not, as people think, a semantic category, but rather a way of collectivizing the signifier.

Why not? The signifier is stupid.

It seems to me that this could lead to a smile, a stupid smile, naturally. A stupid smile, as everyone knows – it suffices to visit cathedrals – is an angel's smile.[17] Indeed, that is the only justification for Pascal's warning *(semonce)*.[18] If an angel has such a stupid smile, that is because it is up to its ears in the supreme signifier. To find itself on dry land would do it some good – perhaps it wouldn't smile anymore.

It's not that I believe in angels – as everyone knows, I believe in them inextricably and even "inex-Teilhard-ly"[19] – it's just that I don't believe

[16] In French, *un substantif* is a noun.

[17] Lacan is evidently referring here to the statue *L'Ange au Sourire* (the Smiling Angel), the guardian angel of Saint Nicaise, at the Cathédrale de Reims, dating back to the thirteenth century.

[18] Is it an accident that the term Lacan selects here, *semonce,* is of juridical origin and was also made into a noun? See Lacan's favorite dictionary, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française,* Bloch and von Wartburg (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1932).

[19] *Inextrayablement* and *inexteilhardement* sound more similar in French than do the terms I have used here to translate them: "inextricably" and "inex-Teilhard-

they bear the slightest message, and it is in that respect that they are truly signifying.

Why do I so strongly emphasize the function of the signifier? Because it is the foundation of the symbolic dimension that only analytic discourse allows us to isolate as such.

I could have approached things in another way – by telling you, for example, how people go about asking me to be their analyst.

I don't want to spoil such pristine purity. Certain people would recognize themselves – God knows what they might imagine I think. Perhaps they would believe that I think they are stupid. That is truly the last thing that would cross my mind in such a case. The question of import here concerns the fact that analytic discourse introduces an adjective made into a noun, "stupidity," insofar as it is a dimension of the signifier at work *(une dimension en exercice du signifiant)*.

Here we must take a closer look.

3

As soon as we turn things into nouns, we presuppose a substance, and nowadays, well, we just don't have that many substances. We have thinking substance and extended substance.[20]

On that basis, it would perhaps be appropriate to ask where the "substantial" dimension can be situated – however far it may be from us and, heretofore, giving but a sign to us *(ne nous faisant que signe)* – this substance at work *(en exercice)*, this dimension that should be written "dit-mension,"[21] 25
over which the function of language is first of all that which is watchful, prior to any more rigorous use.

First of all, it can be said that we have changed thinking substance considerably. Since the "I am thinking"[22] that, presupposing itself, grounds existence, we have had to take a step – that of the unconscious.

Since today I'm dragging my feet in the rut of the unconscious structured like a language, it should be realized that this formulation totally changes the function of the subject as existing. The subject is not the one *(celui)*

ly." Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) was a French Christian theologian and philosopher.

[20] *Res cogitans* and *res extensia*.

[21] *Dit* (the *t* is silent) means "what is said"; here Lacan is suggesting that it is a dimension of the said or spoken. *Mension* combines the homonyms *mansion* (from the Latin *mansio* [dwelling], which in French was the term for each part of a theater set in the Middle Ages), and *mention* (mention, note, or honors, as in *cum laude*).

[22] See the most recent English translation of Descartes' *Philosophical Writings* by J. Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986): "I am thinking, therefore I am."

who thinks. The subject is precisely the one we encourage, not to say it all *(tout dire)*,[23] as we tell him in order to charm him – one cannot say it all – but rather to utter stupidities. That is the key.

For it is with those stupidities that we do analysis, and that we enter into the new subject – that of the unconscious. It is precisely to the extent that the guy is willing not to think anymore that we will perhaps learn a little bit more about it, that we will draw certain consequences from his words *(dits)* – words that cannot be taken back *(se dédire)*, for that is the rule of the game.

From that emerges a speaking *(dire)* that does not always go so far as to be able to "ex-sist" with respect to the words spoken *(ex-sister au dit)*.[24] That is because of what gets included in those words as a consequence thereof.[25] That is the acid-test *(épreuve)* by which, in analyzing anyone, no matter how stupid, a certain real may be reached.

The status of the saying *(dire)* – I must leave all of that aside for today. But I can announce to you that an even bigger pain in the ass for us this year will be to put to this test *(épreuve)* a certain number of sayings *(dires)* from the philosophical tradition.

Fortunately, Parmenides actually wrote poems. Doesn't he use linguistic devices[26] – the linguist's testimony takes precedence here – that closely resemble mathematical articulation, alternation after succession, framing after alternation? It is precisely because he was a poet that Parmenides says what he has to say to us in the least stupid of manners. Otherwise, the idea that being is and that nonbeing is not, I don't know what that means to you, but personally I find that stupid. And you mustn't believe that it amuses me to say so.

Nevertheless, we will, this year, need being and the signifier One *(Un)*, for which I paved the way last year by saying – "There's such a thing as

[23] *Tout dire,* to say it all or to say everything, is a common French rendering of Freud's "say whatever comes to mind."

[24] The expression Lacan uses here, *ex-sister au dit,* is not easily rendered in English; Lacan is borrowing a term, *ex-sistence,* which was first introduced into French in translations of Heidegger's work (e.g., *Being and Time*), as a translation for the Greek εκστασις and the German *Ekstase.* The root meaning of the term in Greek is "standing outside of" or "standing apart from" something. In Greek, it was generally used for the removal or displacement of something, but it also came to be applied to states of mind that we would now call "ecstatic." (Thus, a derivative meaning of the word is "ecstasy.") Heidegger often played on the root meaning of the word, "standing outside" or "stepping outside oneself," but also on its close connection in Greek with the root of the word for "existence." Lacan uses it to talk about an existence that stands apart, which insists as it were from the outside, something not included on the inside. Rather than being intimate, it is "extimate."

[25] The meaning of Lacan's sentence here is very unclear: *A cause de ce qui vient au dit comme conséquence.*

[26] *Des appareils de langage:* literally, "language apparatuses" or "linguistic apparatuses."

One!" *(Y a d' l'Un!)* For it is there that the serious begins, as stupid as that too may seem. Thus, we'll have several references to take up in the philosophical tradition.

We can't get rid of that renowned extended substance, the complement of that other substance, that easily either, since it is modern space – the substance of pure space, like we say "pure spirit." It certainly isn't very promising.

Pure space is based on the notion of the part, as long as one adds to that the following, that all of the parts are external to each other – *partes extra partes.* People managed to extract a few little things from even that, but some serious steps had to be taken. 26

In order to situate my signifier before leaving you today, I will ask you to consider what was inscribed at the beginning of my first sentence last time – "enjoying a body" *(jouir d'un corps)*, a body that symbolizes the Other[27] – as it perhaps involves something that can help us focus on another form of substance, enjoying substance *(la substance jouissante)*.

Isn't that precisely what psychoanalytic experience presupposes? – the substance of the body, on the condition that it is defined only as that which enjoys itself *(se jouit)*. That is, no doubt, a property of the living body, but we don't know what it means to be alive except for the following fact, that a body is something that enjoys itself *(cela se jouit)*.

It enjoys itself only by "corporizing" *(corporiser)*[28] the body in a signifying way. That implies something other than the *partes extra partes* of extended substance. As is emphasized admirably by the kind of Kantian that Sade was, one can only enjoy a part of the Other's body, for the simple reason that one has never seen a body completely wrap itself around the Other's body, to the point of surrounding and phagocytizing it. That is why we must confine ourselves to simply giving it a little squeeze, like that, taking a forearm or anything else – ouch!

Enjoying *(jouir)* has the fundamental property that it is, ultimately, one person's body that enjoys a part of the Other's body.[29] But that part also enjoys – the Other likes it more or less, but it is a fact that the Other cannot remain indifferent to it.

Occasionally something even happens that goes beyond what I just described, and that is marked by utter signifying ambiguity – for the expression "enjoyment of the body" *(jouir du corps)* includes a genitive that has a certain Sadian flavor to it, as I've mentioned, or, on the contrary, an

[27] Lacan does not quote himself exactly here.

[28] The French *corporiser* (more commonly *corporifier*) means to give a body to that which is spirit or to give a solid consistency to a fluid.

[29] More literally stated, it is "the body of the one that enjoys a part of the body of the Other."

ecstatic, subjective flavor suggesting, in fact, that it is the Other who enjoys.[30]

As concerns jouissance, that is but an elementary level. The last time, I put forward the notion that jouissance is not a sign of love. That is what I shall have to argue for, and it will lead us to the level of phallic jouissance. But what I, strictly speaking, call "jouissance of the Other," insofar as it is merely symbolized here, is something else altogether – namely, the not-whole that I will have to articulate.

4

In this single articulation, what is the signifier – the signifier for today, and to close on this point, given the motives I have regarding it?

I will say that the signifier is situated at the level of enjoying substance *(substance jouissante)*. That is completely different from Aristotelian physics,
27 which I am about to discuss, and which, precisely because it can be used *(sollicitée)* in the way I am going to use it, shows us to what extent it was illusory.

The signifier is the cause of jouissance. Without the signifier, how could we even approach that part of the body?[31] Without the signifier, how could we center that something that is the material cause of jouissance?[32] However fuzzy or confused it may be, it is a part of the body that is signified in this contribution *(apport)*.

Now I will go right to the final cause, final in every sense of the term because it is the terminus – the signifier is what brings jouissance to a halt.

After those who embrace *(s'enlacent)* – if you'll allow me – alas *(hélas)!* And after those who are weary *(las)*,[33] hold on there *(holà)!* The other pole of the signifier, its stopping action *(coup d'arrêt)*, is as much there *(est là)* at the origin as the commandment's direct addressing *(vocatif)* can be.

The efficient, which Aristotle proposes as the third form of the cause, is nothing in the end but the project through which jouissance is limited. All kinds of things that appear in the animal kingdom make a parody of speaking beings' path to jouissance, while simultaneously sketching out message-like functions – for example, the bee transporting the pollen of the male

[30] The genitive here, *de* (combined here with *le* to form *du*), can, as Lacan says in "Subversion of the Subject and Dialectic of Desire" (*Écrits*, 814), be objective (e.g., I derive enjoyment *from* the Other's body) or subjective (e.g., the Other's body enjoys).

[31] That is, "that part of the body" discussed five paragraphs back or, more simply, "a part of the body."

[32] On the four Aristotelian causes, see also "Science and Truth" in *Écrits*.

[33] *Las* is also a very old French term for "alas."

flower to the female flower closely resembles what goes on in communication.

And the embrace *(l'étreinte)*, the confused embrace wherein jouissance finds its cause, its last cause, which is formal – isn't it something like grammar that commands it?

It's no accident that Pie.re beats Paul at the crux of the first examples of (French) grammar, nor that – why not put it this way? – Pierre and Paule *(Pierre et Paule)* constitute the example of conjunction, except that one must wonder, afterwards, who shoves *(épaule)* the other. I've already gotten a lot of mileage out of that one.

One could even say that the verb is defined as a signifier that is not as stupid – you have to write that as one word – *notasstupid* as the others, no doubt, providing as it does the movement of a subject to his own division in jouissance, and it is all the less stupid when the verb determines this division as disjunction, and it becomes a sign.

Last year I played on a slip of the pen I made in a letter addressed to a woman – *tu ne sauras jamais combien je t'ai aimé* ("you will never know how much I loved you") – *é* instead of *ée*.[34] Since then, someone mentioned to me that that could mean that I am a homosexual. But what I articulated quite precisely last year is that when one loves, it has nothing to do with sex.

That is what I would like to end with today, if you will.

December 19, 1972

[34] The past participle, *aimé*, is supposed to agree in gender with the sex of the person designated in the phrase by the direct object, *te* (here *t'*); if the person is male, the participle remains *aimé*, if female, an *e* should be added to the end: *aimée*.

29

III

The function of the written[1]

THE UNCONSCIOUS IS WHAT IS READ.

ON THE USE OF LETTERS.

S/s.

ONTOLOGY, THE MASTER'S DISCOURSE.

SPEAKING OF FUCKING.

THE UNREADABLE.

I am going to enter very slowly into what I have reserved for you today, which, before beginning, strikes me as rather reckless. It has to do with the way in which we must situate the function of the written in analytic discourse.

There is an anecdote to be related here, namely, that one day, on the cover of a collection I brought out – *poubellication,* as I called it[2] – I found nothing better to write than the word *Écrits.*

It is rather well known that those *Écrits* cannot be read easily. I can make a little autobiographical admission – that is exactly what I thought. I thought, perhaps it goes that far, I thought they were not meant to be read.

That's a good start.

1

A letter is something that is read.[3] It even seems to be designed as a sort of extension *(prolongement)* of the word. It is read *(ça se lit)* and literally at that. But it is not the same thing to read a letter as it is to read. It is quite clear that, in analytic discourse, what is involved is but that – that which is read, that which is read beyond what you have incited the subject to say, which, as I emphasized the last time, is not so much to say everything[4]

[1] What I am translating here as "the written" is *"l'écrit"* which can also mean writing, a text (as in Lacan's *Écrits,* i.e., his writings), etc. It is not always easily distinguished here from *écriture,* writing, but should not be confused with the act or fact of writing, as it refers specifically to that which *has already been* written. In the few cases in which I render it as "writing," I provide the French in brackets.

[2] *Poubellication* is a condensation of *poubelle,* garbage can (or dustbin), and *publication,* publication. It can perhaps also be seen to contain *embellir,* to beautify, and other words as well.

[3] Or "A letter is something that can be read" or "A letter is something you read": *La lettre, ça se lit.*

[4] In the context of the last chapter, I translated this *tout dire* as to "say it all."

as to say anything, without worrying about saying something stupid *(des bêtises)*.

That assumes that we develop the dimension [of stupidity], but it cannot be developed without the act of saying.[5] What is the dimension of stupidity? Stupidity, at least the stupidity one can proffer, doesn't go far. In common discourse, it stops short.

That is what I check when I look back, which I never do without 30
trembling, at what I have proffered in the past. That always makes me awfully afraid, afraid of having said something stupid, in other words, something that, due to what I am now putting forward, I might consider not to hold up.

Thanks to someone who is writing up this Seminar – the first year at the *École normale* will be coming out soon[6] – I was able to get the sense, which I encounter sometimes when put to the test, that what I put forward that year was not as stupid as all that, and at least wasn't so stupid as to have stopped me from putting forward other things that seem to me, because that's where I'm at now, to hold water.

Nevertheless, this "rereading oneself" *(se relire)* represents a dimension that must be situated in relation to what is, with respect to analytic discourse, the function of that which is read *(ce qui se lit)*.

Analytic discourse has a privilege in this regard. That is what I began from in what constitutes a crucial date for me in what I am teaching – it is perhaps not so much on the "I" that emphasis must be placed, namely, concerning what "I" can proffer, as on the "from" *(de)*, in other words, on from whence comes the teaching of which I am the effect. Since then, I have grounded analytic discourse on the basis of a precise articulation, which can be written on the blackboard with four letters, two bars, and five lines that connect up each of the letters two by two. One of these lines – since there are four letters, there should be six lines – is missing.

This writing *(écriture)*[7] stemmed from an initial reminder, namely, that analytic discourse is a new kind of relation based only on what functions as speech, in something one may define as a field. "Function and Field," I wrote, "of Speech and Language," I ended, "in Psychoanaly-

[5] *Sans le dire* could also mean "without saying so."

[6] Lacan is referring here to Seminar XI, published in English as *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1978). The text was edited by Jacques-Alain Miller and published by *Éditions du Seuil* in 1973.

[7] In English, we would normally refer to the kind of symbolism Lacan refers to here (the analyst's discourse whose written formulation was given in Chapter II) and also later in this chapter as *notation* or *symbols*, not as a writing, much less as *a* written or what is written. Given, however, Lacan's discussion in this chapter, I have opted to stretch the English use of the words writing and written, rather than always strive for the best-sounding English translation. Lacan himself uses the term "notation" later in this chapter.

sis"[8] – that amounted to designating what constitutes the originality of this discourse, which is not the same as a certain number of others that serve specific purposes *(qui font office)*, and that, due to this very fact, I qualify as official discourses *(discours officiels)*. The point is to discern the purpose *(office)* of analytic discourse, and to render it, if not official, at least officiating.

It is in this discourse that we must indicate what the function of the written in analytic discourse may be, if it is, indeed, specific.

To allow for the explanation of the functions of this discourse, I put forward the use of a certain number of letters. First of all, *a,* which I call "object," but which, nevertheless, is but a letter. Then A,[9] that I make function in that aspect of the proposition that takes only the form of a written formula,[10] and that is produced by mathematical logic. I designate thereby that which is first of all a locus, a place. I called it "the locus of the Other" *(le lieu de l'Autre)*.[11]

In what respect can a letter serve to designate a locus? It is clear that there is something that is not quite right here. When you open, for example, to the first page of what was finally collected in the form of a definitive
31 edition entitled *Theory of Sets,*[12] bearing the name of a fictitious author, Nicolas Bourbaki, what you see is the putting into play of a certain number of logical signs. One of them designates the function of "place" as such. It is written as a little square: □.

Thus, I wasn't making a strict use of the letter when I said that the locus of the Other was symbolized by the letter A. On the contrary, I marked it by redoubling it with the S that means signifier here, signifier of A insofar as the latter is barred: S(Ⱥ). I thereby added a dimension to A's locus, showing that qua locus it does not hold up, that there is a fault, hole, or loss therein. Object *a* comes to function with respect to that loss. That is something which is quite essential to the function of language.

Lastly, I used the letter Φ, to be distinguished from the merely signifying function that had been promoted in analytic theory up until then with the

[8] This is the title of Lacan's well-known Rome discourse from 1953 included in *Écrits.*

[9] In this Seminar (as elsewhere), I adopt the French convention of using A for Other *(Autre)* instead of O, because the barred Other, when written Ø, is easily confused with the empty set, {Ø}.

[10] The French here strikes me as somewhat ambiguous: *ce qui de la proposition n'a pris que formule écrite.*

[11] This could also be translated as "the Other's locus" or "the Other as locus."

[12] Originally published in French as *Éléments de mathématique, Théorie des ensembles* (Paris: Hermann), it was translated into English and published as *Elements of Mathematics: Theory of Sets* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1968).

term "phallus." It is something original whose true import I am specifying today as being indicated by its very writing.[13]

If these three letters are different, it is because they do not have the same function.

To once again take up the thread of analytic discourse, we must now discern what these letters introduce into the function of the signifier.

2

The written is in no way in the same register or made of the same stuff, if you'll allow me this expression, as the signifier.

The signifier is a dimension that was introduced by linguistics. Linguistics, in the field in which speech is produced, is not self-evident *(ne va pas de soi)*.[14] A discourse sustains it, which is scientific discourse. Linguistics introduces into speech a dissociation thanks to which the distinction between signifier and signified is grounded. It divides up what seems to be self-evident, which is that when one speaks, one's speech signifies, bringing with it the signified, and, still further, is only based, up to a certain point, on the function of signification.

Distinguishing the dimension of the signifier only takes on importance when it is posited that what you hear, in the auditory sense of the term, bears no relation whatsoever to what it signifies. That is an act that is instituted only through a discourse, scientific discourse. And it is not self-evident. Indeed, it is so scarcely self-evident that a whole discourse – which does not flow from a bad pen, since it is the *Cratylus,* by none other than Plato – results from the endeavor to show that there must be a relationship and that the signifier in and of itself means something. This attempt, which we can qualify from our vantage point as desperate, is marked by failure, because another discourse, scientific discourse, due to its very institution – in a way whose history we need not probe here – gives us the following, that 32
the signifier is posited only insofar as it has no relation to the signified.

The very terms we use to talk about it are still slippery. A linguist as discerning as Ferdinand de Saussure speaks of arbitrariness. That is tantamount to slipping, slipping into another discourse, the master's discourse, to call a spade a spade. Arbitrariness is not a suitable term here.

When we develop a discourse, if we are to remain within its field and not

[13] Lacan's phraseology is quite complicated here: *que je spécifie aujourd'hui d'être précisé dans son relief par l'écrit même.*

[14] The expression Lacan uses here, *aller de soi,* variants of which are repeated throughout the next few paragraphs, can generally be translated as "to be self-evident," but more literally means to "go it alone," "stand alone," or "require no outside support." Here linguistics is sustained by *another* discourse, scientific discourse.

fall back into another, we must always try to give it its own consistency and not step outside of it except advisedly. This vigilance is all the more necessary when what is at stake is what constitutes a discourse *(quand il s'agit de ce qu'est un discours)*. To say that the signifier is arbitrary does not have the same import as to simply say that it bears no relation to its meaning effect, for the former involves slipping into another reference.

The word "reference," in this case, can only be situated on the basis of what discourse constitutes by way of a link *(lien)*. The signifier as such refers to nothing if not to a discourse, in other words, a mode of functioning or a utilization of language qua link.

We must still indicate here what this link means. The link – we can but turn to this right away – is a link between those who speak. You can immediately see where we are headed – it's not just anyone who speaks, of course; it's beings, beings we are used to qualifying as "living," and it would, perhaps, be rather difficult to exclude the dimension of life from those who speak. But we immediately realize that this dimension simultaneously brings in that of death, and that a radical signifying ambiguity results from this. The sole function on the basis of which life can be defined, namely, the reproduction of a body, can itself be characterized neither by life nor by death, since reproduction as such, insofar as it is sexual *(sexuée)*, involves both life and death.

Already, by merely swimming with the tide of analytic discourse, we have made a jump known as a "world view" *(conception du monde)*, which to us must nevertheless be the funniest thing going. The term "world view" supposes a discourse – that of philosophy – that is entirely different from ours.

If we leave behind philosophical discourse, nothing is less certain than the existence of a world. One can only laugh when one hears people claim that analytic discourse involves something on the order of such a conception.

I would go even further – putting forward such a term to designate Marxism is also a joke. Marxism does not seem to me to be able to pass for a world view. The statement of what Marx says *(L'énoncé de ce que dit Marx)* runs counter to that in all sorts of striking ways. Marxism is something else, something I will call a gospel. It is the announcement that history is instating another dimension of discourse and opening up the possibility of com-
33 pletely subverting the function of discourse as such and of philosophical discourse, strictly speaking, insofar as a world view is based upon the latter.

Generally speaking, language proves to be a field much richer in resources than if it were merely the field in which philosophical discourse has inscribed itself over the course of time. But certain reference points have been enunciated by that discourse that are difficult to completely elim-

inate from any use of language. That is why there is nothing easier than to fall back into what I ironically called a world view, but which has a more moderate and more precise name: ontology.

Ontology is what highlighted in language the use of the copula, isolating it as a signifier.[15] To dwell on the verb "to be" – a verb that is not even, in the complete field of the diversity of languages, employed in a way we could qualify as universal – to produce it as such is a highly risky enterprise.

In order to exorcise it, it might perhaps suffice to suggest that when we say about anything whatsoever that it is what it is, nothing in any way obliges us to isolate the verb "to be." That is pronounced "it is what it is" *(c'est ce que c'est)*, and it could just as well be written, "idizwadidiz" *(seskecé)*. In this use of the copula, we would see nothing at all. We would see nothing whatsoever if a discourse, the discourse of the master, *m'être,*[16] didn't emphasize the verb "to be" *(être)*.

That is what Aristotle himself thinks about twice before propounding since, to designate the being he juxtaposes to τὸ τί ἐστι, that is, to quiddity or what it is, he goes so far as to employ the following, τό τί ἦν εἶναι – what would have happened if that which was to be had simply come to be.[17] It seems that the pedicle[18] is conserved here that allows us to situate from whence this discourse on being is produced – it's quite simply being at someone's heel, being at someone's beck and call – what would have been if you had understood what I ordered you to do.[19]

[15] *Comme signifiant* could also mean "as signifying."

[16] *Maître,* "master," and *m'être* are generally pronounced identically in French. The latter literally means "to be myself," but in certain expressions – e.g., *je me souviens de m'être aperçu que* . . . "I recall having noticed that . . ." – it is simply part and parcel of a reflexive construction.

Lacan's discussion here is continued in Seminar XXI (*Les non-dupes errent,* January 15, 1974), where Lacan says, " '[S]peaking being' . . . is a pleonasm, because there is only being due to speaking; were it not for the verb 'to be,' there would be no being at all."

[17] The Greek expressions here can be found in many passages in Aristotle's *Metaphysics;* see, for example, Book V, Chapter 18, 1022a25–27, where τό τί ἦν εἶναι is translated by W. D. Ross as "what it was to be." (Richard Hope translates it as "what it means to be.") Ross more generally translates it as "essence." Lacan's French here reads as follows: *ce qui se serait produit si était venu à être, tout court, ce qui était à être.* This could also be rendered: "what would have been produced if that which should have been had come into Being."

[18] The *pédicule* ("pedicle," "pedicel," or "peduncle") – a term that has many meanings in anatomy, botany, and zoology, and whose root is *pes,* "foot" – in question here is most likely the Greek word ἤν (if or unless), which is often used in subjunctive clauses and as part of a negation (with μὴ). It is thus similar to the French *ne* when used as an "expletive" (for example, in *craindre qu'il ne vienne*), which Lacan discusses in great detail in Seminar IX, *Identification.* See also Lacan's use of *pédicule* in Seminar XIX (March 15, 1972).

[19] The French here is far more polyvalent: *c'est tout simplement l'être à la botte, l'être aux ordres, ce qui allait être si tu avais entendu ce que je t'ordonne.* The *allait être* involves an imperfect tense, and Lacan often plays on the French imperfect, since it

Every dimension of being is produced in the wake of the master's discourse – the discourse of he who, proffering the signifier, expects therefrom one of its link effects that must not be neglected, which is related to the fact that the signifier commands. The signifier is, first and foremost, imperative.

How is one to return, if not on the basis of a peculiar *(spécial)* discourse, to a prediscursive reality? That is the dream – the dream behind every conception *(idée)* of knowledge. But it is also what must be considered mythical. There's no such thing as a prediscursive reality. Every reality is founded and defined by a discourse.

That is why it is important for us to realize what analytic discourse is made of, and not to misrecognize the following, which no doubt has but a limited place therein, that we speak in analytic discourse about what the verb "to fuck" *(foutre)* enunciates perfectly well. We speak therein of fucking,[20] and we say that it's not working out *(ça ne va pas)*.[21]

That is an important part of what is confided in analytic discourse, but
34 it is worth highlighting that analytic discourse does not have exclusivity in this regard. For that is also what is expressed in what I earlier referred to as "current discourse" *(discours courant)*. Let us write that as *"disque-ourcourant"* [pronounced in the same way as *discours courant,* but *disque* means record or disk], *disque aussi hors-champ, hors jeu de tout discours* [a disk that is also or so very outside of the field, out of the game, or beyond the rules of all discourse], *donc disque tout court* [thus, just a disk] – it goes around and around for nothing, quite precisely. The disk is found in the very field on the basis of which all discourses are specified and where they all drown, where each and every one of them is just as capable of enunciating as much of the field as the others, but due to a concern with what I will call, for very good reasons, "decency" *(décence)*,[22] does so – well – as little as possible.

What constitutes the basis of life, in effect, is that for everything having to do with the relations between men and women, what is called collectivity, it's not working out *(ça ne va pas)*. It's not working out, and the whole world talks about it, and a large part of our activity is taken up with saying so.

Nevertheless, there is nothing serious if not what is organized in another way as discourse. That includes the fact that this relationship, this sexual

can mean what "was going to be," "was about to be," or "would have been" if. . . . The French thus moves from an imperfect to a pluperfect *(avais entendu,* meaning "heard" or "understood," and perhaps even "heeded" or "agreed to" here) and then to a present tense (what I "order" or "am ordering" you to do).

[20] In the French, Lacan specifies here that he is talking about the verb form of *foutre* by referring to the English verb, "to fuck"; as a noun, *foutre* means "cum."

[21] This elementary French expression can be translated in a number of other ways as well: "it's no good," "it's not going well," etc.

[22] *Décence* is a homonym for *des sens,* meanings.

relationship, insofar as it's not working out, works out anyway *(il va quand même)* – thanks to a certain number of conventions, prohibitions, and inhibitions that are the effect of language and can only be taken from that fabric and register. There isn't the slightest prediscursive reality, for the very fine reason that what constitutes a collectivity – what I called men, women, and children – means nothing qua prediscursive reality. Men, women, and children are but signifiers.

A man is nothing but a signifier. A woman seeks out a man qua signifier *(au titre de signifiant)*. A man seeks out a woman qua – and this will strike you as odd – that which can only be situated through discourse, since, if what I claim is true – namely, that woman is not-whole – there is always something in her that escapes discourse.

3

What we need to know is what, in a discourse, is produced by the effect of the written. As you perhaps know – you know it in any case if you read what I write – the fact that linguistics has distinguished the signifier and the signified is not the whole story. Perhaps that seems self-evident to you. But it is precisely by considering things to be self-evident that we see nothing of what is right before our eyes, before our eyes concerning the written. Linguistics has not simply distinguished the signified from the signifier. If there is something that can introduce us to the dimension of the written as such, it is the realization that the signified has nothing to do with the ears, but only with reading – the reading of the signifiers we hear.[23] The signified is not what you hear. What you hear is the signifier. The signified is the effect of the signifier.

One can distinguish here something that is but the effect of discourse, of 35
discourse as such – in other words, of something that already functions qua link. Let us take things at the level of a writing *(un écrit)* that is itself the effect of a discourse, scientific discourse, namely the writing *(l'écrit)* S, designed to connote the place of the signifier, and *s* with which the signified is connoted as a place. Place as a function is created only by discourse itself. "Places everyone!"[24] – that functions only in discourse. Anyway, between the two, S and *s*, there is a bar, $\frac{S}{s}$.

[23] The French here is *la lecture de ce qu'on entend de signifiant,* which can be translated literally as, "the reading of what one hears qua signifier (or qua signifying)"; the sentences that follow in the text are what allow for the translation I have provided there.

[24] The French here, *chacun à sa place,* literally means "everyone in his place."

It doesn't look like anything when you write a bar in order to explain things. This word, "explain," is of the utmost importance because there ain't nothing you can understand in a bar, even when it is reserved for signifying negation.[25]

It is very difficult to understand what negation means. If you look at it a bit closely, you realize in particular that there is a wide variety of negations that it is quite impossible to cover with the same concept. The negation of existence, for example, is not at all the same as the negation of totality.[26]

There is something that is even more certain: adding a bar to the notation S and *s* is already a bit superfluous and even futile, insofar as what it brings out is already indicated by the distance of what is written.[27] The bar, like everything involving what is written, is based only on the following – what is written is not to be understood.

That is why you are not obliged to understand my writings. If you don't understand them, so much the better – that will give you the opportunity to explain them.

It's the same with the bar. The bar is precisely the point at which, in every use of language, writing *(l'écrit)* may be produced. If, in Saussure's work itself, S is above *s,* that is, over the bar, it is because the effects of the unconscious have no basis without this bar – that is what I was able to show you in "The Instance of the Letter," included in my *Écrits,* in a way that is written *(qui s'écrit),* nothing more.

Indeed, were it not for this bar nothing about language could be explained by linguistics. Were it not for this bar above which there are signifiers that pass, you could not see that signifiers are injected into the signified.[28]

Were there no analytic discourse, you would continue to speak like birdbrains, singing the "current disk" *(disque-ourcourant),*[29] making the disk go around, that disk that turns because "there's no such thing as a sexual relationship" – a formulation that can only be articulated thanks to the entire

[25] See Chapter VII, where Lacan uses a bar over the different "quantifiers" to signify negation.

[26] See Chapter VII, where Lacan introduces the existential and universal quantifiers.

[27] Presumably, the distance between the S and *s* in the notation $\frac{S}{s}$.

[28] Lacan's French here, *vous ne pourriez voir que du signifiant s'injecte dans le signifié,* is rendered a bit odd because Lacan doesn't say a signifier or several signifiers, but rather some signifier, in the sense in which we speak in English about "some bread" or "some water," in other words, as an unquantifiable substance. Here, signifier is injected into the signified, apparently like fuel is injected into an engine.

[29] "Disk" *(disque)* should be understood here primarily in the sense of a phonograph record.

edifice of analytic discourse, and that I have been drumming into you for quite some time.

But drumming it into you, I must nevertheless explain it – it is based only on the written in the sense that the sexual relationship cannot be written *(ne peut pas s'écrire)*. Everything that is written stems from the fact that it 36
will forever be impossible to write, as such, the sexual relationship. It is on that basis that there is a certain effect of discourse, which is called writing.

One could, at a pinch, write *x R y,* and say *x* is man, *y* is woman, and *R* is the sexual relationship. Why not? The only problem is that it's stupid, because what is based on the signifier function *(la fonction de signifiant)*[30] of "man" and "woman" are mere signifiers that are altogether related to the "curcurrent" *(courcourant)*[31] use of language. If there is a discourse that demonstrates that to you, it is certainly analytic discourse, because it brings into play the fact that woman will never be taken up except *quoad matrem.* Woman serves a function in the sexual relationship only qua mother.

Those are overall truths *(vérités massives)*, but they will lead us further. Thanks to what? Thanks to writing. Writing will not object to this first approximation since it is in this way that writing will show that woman's jouissance is based on a supplementation of this not-whole *(une suppléance de ce pas-toute)*. She finds the cork[32] for this jouissance [based on the fact] that she is not-whole[33] – in other words, that makes her absent from herself somewhere, absent as subject – in the *a* constituted by her child.

As for *x* – in other words, what man would be if the sexual relationship could be written in a sustainable way, a way that is sustainable in a discourse – man is but a signifier because where he comes into play as a signifier, he comes in only *quoad castrationem,* in other words, insofar as he has a relation to phallic jouissance. The upshot being that as soon as a discourse, analytic discourse, seriously took up this question and posited that the precondition of what is written is that it be sustained by a discourse, everything fell apart. Now you'll never be able to write the sexual relationship – write

[30] This ambiguous expression could also arguably be translated as "signifying function" or "function as signifier."

[31] *Courcourant* involves a doubling of the first syllable of *courant,* "current" (in all senses of the term), making it a bit singsong-like. *Cour* alone is courtyard, also suggesting that this is a courtyard or backyard use of language. *Cou cou* is a sound birds (or birdbrains?) make in French, and a *coucou* is a cuckoo (bird or clock). *Coucou* is also what you say to a little baby to say "peek-a-boo!" *Courrant* means running, giving the additional sense of a use of language that runs (drivels?) on and on. *Courcourant* is derived from the neologism Lacan provided two paragraphs back, *disque-ourcourant,* by lopping off the "dis."

[32] *Bouchon,* which I have translated here as "cork," can also mean "stopper" or "plug"; it seems to put a stop here to this form of jouissance.

[33] Or "this jouissance, which she has owing to the fact of not being whole . . ." or "due to her not being whole . . ."

it with a true writing *(écrit)*, insofar as the written is that aspect of language that is conditioned by a discourse.

4

The letter is, radically speaking, an effect of discourse.

What is nice about what I tell you – don't you agree? – is that it's always the same thing. Not that I repeat myself, that's not the point. It's that what I said before takes on meaning afterward.

The first time, as far as I recall, that I spoke of the letter – it must have been some fifteen years ago, somewhere at Sainte-Anne (Hospital) – I mentioned a fact known to everyone who reads a little, which is not the case for everyone, that a certain Sir Flinders Petrie believed he had discovered that the letters of the Phoenician alphabet existed well before the time of Phoenicia on small Egyptian pottery where they served as manufacturers' marks.
37 That means that the letter first emerged from the market, which is typically an effect of discourse, before anyone dreamt of using letters to do what? Something that has nothing to do with the connotation of the signifier, but that elaborates and perfects it.

We should approach things at the level of the history of each language. It is clear that the letters which upset us so much that we call them, God only knows why, by a different name, "characters," to wit, Chinese letters, emerged from very ancient Chinese discourse in a way that was very different from the way in which our letters emerged. Emerging from analytic discourse, the letters I bring out here have a different value from those that can emerge from set theory. The uses one makes of them differ, but nevertheless – and this is what is of interest – they are not without converging in some respect. Any effect of discourse is good in the sense that it is constituted by the letter.

All of that is but a first sketch that I will have the opportunity to develop by distinguishing the use of letters in algebra from the use of letters in set theory. For the time being, I would simply like to point out the following – the world, the world is in [a state of] decomposition, thank God. We see that the world no longer stands up, because even in scientific discourse it is clear that there isn't the slightest world. As soon as you can add something called a "quark" to atoms and have that become the true thread of scientific discourse, you must realize that we are dealing with something other than a world.

You must sit down and read a little work by writers, not of your era – I won't tell you to read Philippe Sollers, who is unreadable, like me as a matter of fact – but you could read Joyce, for example. You will see therein how language is perfected when it knows how to play with writing.

I can agree that Joyce's work is not readable – it is certainly not translatable into Chinese. What happens in Joyce's work? The signifier stuffs *(vient truffer)*[34] the signified. It is because the signifiers fit together, combine, and concertina – read *Finnegans Wake* – that something is produced by way of meaning *(comme signifié)* that may seem enigmatic, but is clearly what is closest to what we analysts, thanks to analytic discourse, have to read – slips of the tongue *(lapsus)*.[35] It is as slips that they signify something, in other words, that they can be read in an infinite number of different ways. But it is precisely for that reason that they are difficult to read, are read awry, or not read at all. But doesn't this dimension of "being read" *(se lire)* suffice to show that we are in the register of analytic discourse?

What is at stake in analytic discourse is always the following – you give a different reading to the signifiers that are enunciated *(ce qui s'énonce de signifiant)* than what they signify.[36]

To make myself understood, I will take a reference you read in the great book of the world. Consider the flight of a bee. A bee goes from flower to 38
flower gathering nectar. What you discover is that, at the tip of its feet, the bee transports pollen from one flower onto the pistil of another flower. That is what you read in the flight of the bee. In the flight of a bird that flies close to the ground – you call that a flight, but in reality it is a group at a certain level – you read that there is going to be a storm. But do they read? Does the bee read that it serves a function in the reproduction of phanerogamic plants? Does the bird read the portent of fortune, as people used to say – in other words, the tempest?

That is the whole question. It cannot be ruled out, after all, that a swallow reads the tempest, but it is not terribly certain either.

In your analytic discourse, you assume that the subject of the unconscious knows how to read. And this business of the unconscious is nothing other than that. Not only do you assume that it knows how to read, but you assume that it can learn how to read.

The only problem is that what you teach it to read has absolutely nothing to do, in any case, with what you can write of it.

January 9, 1973

[34] *Truffer* literally means to garnish with truffles; figuratively it means to stuff, lard, fill, or pepper.

[35] *Lapsus* is the usual French term for the broad Freudian category, "parapraxis," including slips of the tongue and of the pen, forgetting, and so on.

[36] Lacan's complicated phraseology would have us translate: "you give a different reading to what is enunciated qua signifier than what it signifies."

39

IV

Love and the signifier

THE OTHER SEX.[1]
CONTINGENCY OF THE SIGNIFIER, ROUTINE OF THE SIGNIFIED.
THE END OF THE WORLD AND THE "PARA-BEING."
LOVE MAKES UP FOR THE ABSENCE OF THE SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP.
THE ONES.

What can I still *(encore)* have to say to you after all the time this has lasted, without having all the effects that I would like? Well, it is precisely because it doesn't that I never run out of things to say.

Nevertheless, since one cannot say it all,[2] and for good reason, I am reduced to this narrow course, which is such that at every moment I must be careful not to slip back into what has already been done on the basis of what has been said.

That is why today I am going to try, once again, to stay this difficult ground-breaking course, whose horizon is strange, qualified, as it is, by my title – *Encore.*

1

The first time I spoke to you, I stated that jouissance of the Other – the Other I said to be symbolized by the body – is not a sign of love.[3]

Naturally, that goes over well, because you feel that it is at the same level as what I've said before *(le précédent dire)* and does not deviate therefrom.

Nevertheless, certain terms contained therein warrant commentary. Jouissance is exactly what I try to make present through this very act of speaking *(par ce dire même)*. "The Other" here is more than ever thrown into question.

On the one hand, the Other must be newly hammered out or recast for it to take on its full meaning, its complete resonance. On the other hand, it

[1] *L'Autre sexe* would normally be translated into English as "the opposite sex"; here, however, due to the capital *O,* I have translated it as "the Other sex." It should be kept in mind, nevertheless, that Lacan is playing off the two different meanings.

[2] *Tout dire* also means to "say everything."

[3] The exact quote from Chapter I is: "Jouissance of the Other, . . . , of the body of the Other who symbolizes the Other, is not the sign of love."

is important to put it forward as a term that is based on the fact that it is me who is speaking, and who can speak only from where I am, identified with a pure signifier. Man and a woman, as I said last time, are nothing but signifiers. They derive their function from this, from saying *(dire)* as a distinct incarnation of sex.

The Other, in my terminology, can thus only be the Other sex. 40

What is the status of this Other? What is its position with respect to this return on the basis of which *(de quoi)*[4] the sexual relationship is realized, namely, a jouissance, that analytic discourse has precipitated out as the function of the phallus, whose enigma remains utter and complete, since that function is articulated therein only on the basis of facts of absence?

But is that to say that what is at stake here is, as people all too quickly thought they could translate it, the signifier of what is lacking in the signifier? That is what this year ought to put an end to, and it should say what the function of the phallus is in analytic discourse. For the time being, I will say that what I put forward last time as the function of the bar is not unrelated to the phallus.

There is still the second part of the sentence linked to the first part by an "is not" – "is not the sign of love." And this year I shall have to articulate what serves as the linchpin of everything that has been instituted on the basis of analytic experience: love.

People have been talking about nothing else for a long time. Need I emphasize the fact that it is at the very heart of philosophical discourse? That is precisely what should make us suspicious. Last time, I had you catch a glimpse of philosophical discourse in its true light – as a variation on the master's discourse. I also said that love aims at being, namely, at what slips away most in language – being that, a moment later, was going to be,[5] or being that, due precisely to having been, gave rise to surprise. And I was also able to add that that being is perhaps very close to the signifier *m'être,*[6] is perhaps being at the helm *(l'être au commandement),*[7] and that therein lies the strangest of illusions *(leurres)*. Doesn't that also command us to question in what sense the sign can be distinguished from the signifier?

Hence we have four points – jouissance, the Other, the sign, and love.

[4] The French, *de quoi* (which I have translated here as "on the basis of which"), is quite vague and could be translated in a number of other ways, including "in relation to which," "from which," "by which," etc.

[5] *Allait être* (was going to be) could also be translated as "would have been."

[6] The French allows us to read either "the signifier *m'être*" or "the *m'être* signifier," *m'être* being a homonym of *maître,* master (thus, "the master signifier").

[7] In a race, the person winning is said *d'être au commandement,* that is, to be "leading," "out in front," "heading the pack," or "first." However, in the last chapter, Lacan was more clearly referring to being at someone's orders.

Let us read what was put forward at a time when the discourse of love was admittedly that of being – let us open Richard of Saint Victor's book on the divine trinity.[8] We begin with being, being insofar as it is conceived – excuse me for slipping writing *(l'écrit)* into my speech – as "be-ternal-ing" *(l'êtrernel),*[9] following Aristotle's elaboration, which is still so moderate, and under the influence, no doubt, of the eruption of the "I am what I am," which is the statement of Judaic truth.

When the idea of being – up until then simply approached or glancingly touched on – culminates in this violent ripping away from the function of time by the statement of the eternal, strange consequences ensue. There is, says Richard of Saint Victor, being that is intrinsically eternal,[10] being that is eternal but not intrinsically so, and being that is not eternal and does not possess its fragile or even inexistent being intrinsically. But there is no such thing as non-eternal being that is intrinsically. Of the four subdivisions that are produced by the alternation of affirmation and negation of "eternal" and "intrinsically," that is the only one that seems to Richard of Saint Victor to have to be ruled out.

41 Doesn't that have to do with the signifier? For no signifier is produced *(se produit)* as eternal.

That is no doubt what, rather than qualifying it as arbitrary, Saussure could have formulated – it would have been better to qualify the signifier with the category of contingency. The signifier repudiates the category of the eternal and, nevertheless, oddly enough *(singulièrement),* it is intrinsically.

Isn't it clear to you that it participates, to employ a Platonic approach, in that nothing on the basis of which something entirely original was made *ex nihilo,* as creationism *(l'idée créationiste)* tells us?

[8] Book III of *The Trinity* can be found in English in *Richard of St. Victor: The Twelve Patriarchs, The Mystical Ark, and Book Three of the Trinity,* translated by Grover A. Zinn (New York: Paulist Press, 1979). Complete editions can be found in French: *La Trinité,* translated by Gaston Salet (Paris: Sources Chrétiennes, 1969), and *De Trinitate: texte critique,* translated by Jean Ribaillier (Paris: 1958).

[9] *L'êtrernel* is a conflation of *être* (being) and *éternel* (eternal), and perhaps of *lettre* (letter) as well. *L'Éternel* is a term for God.

[10] The expression I am rendering as "intrinsically" is *de lui-même,* literally "by itself" or "from itself" (as opposed to "because of someone or something else"). In certain contexts, it can take on the sense of "self-generated," "self-caused," or "self-based," and seems quite clearly to refer back to Aristotle's *καθ' αὐτό.* Terence Irwin and Gail Fine, in their translation of Aristotle's *Physics* (254b12–30) in *Aristotle: Selections* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995), provide the locution "by its own agency." Other possible translations include "in its own right," "in itself," "essentially" (as opposed to "coincidentally"), and "that by virtue of which." See Aristotle's extensive discussion of the term in *Metaphysics,* Book V, Chapter 18 (1022a14–36). Grover A. Zinn, in his translation of Book III of *The Trinity,* renders it simply as "from himself" (p. 373).

Isn't that something that appears *(apparaisse)* – insofar as your laziness *(laparesse)* can be shaken up by any sort of apparition – in the book of *Genesis? Genesis* recounts nothing other than the creation, from nothing, in effect – of what? – of nothing but signifiers.

As soon as this creation emerges, it is articulated on the basis of the naming of what is. Isn't that creation in its essence? While Aristotle cannot help but enunciate that, if ever there was anything, it had always been there, isn't what is at stake in creationism a creation on the basis of nothing – thus on the basis of the signifier?

Isn't that what we find in that which, being reflected in a world view, was enunciated as the Copernican revolution?

2

I have been throwing in doubt for a long time what Freud thought he could say about the said revolution. The hysteric's discourse taught him about that other substance, which consists entirely in the fact that there are signifiers *(il y a du signifiant)*. Having apprehended the effect of the signifier in the hysteric's discourse, he managed to turn the latter by the quarter turn that made it into analytic discourse.[11]

The very notion of a quarter turn evokes revolution, but certainly not in the sense in which revolution is subversion. On the contrary, what turns – that is what is called revolution – is destined, by its very statement *(énoncé)*, to evoke a return.

Assuredly, we have by no means reached the completion of this return, since this quarter turn is being made in a very painful way. But it would not be an exaggeration to say that if there was, indeed, a revolution somewhere, it was certainly not at the level of Copernicus. The hypothesis had been advanced for many years that the sun was perhaps the center around which things revolved. But so what? What was of import to mathematicians was certainly the point of origin of that which turns. According to Aristotle, the eternal circling *(virée)*[12] of the stars in the last of the spheres presupposed an unmoved sphere, which was the first cause of the movement of those that revolve. If the stars revolve, it is because the earth itself turns. It was already wondrous that, on the basis of this circling, revolution, or eternal 42
turning of the stellar sphere, there were men who forged other spheres, conceiving the so-called Ptolemaic system, and made the planets revolve –

[11] See Chapter II, section 1, where analytic discourse can be seen to result from the hysteric's discourse if each of the elements is rotated ninety degrees to the right.

[12] *Virée* generally means "swerve," "curve," or "veering."

planets that, with respect to the earth, are in the ambiguous position of coming and going in a zigzag pattern – revolve in accordance with an oscillatory movement.

Wasn't it an extraordinary tour de force to have conceptualized the movement of the spheres? Copernicus merely added the remark that perhaps the movement of the intermediary spheres could be expressed differently. Whether or not the earth lay at the center was not what was most important to him.

The Copernican revolution is by no means a revolution. If the center of a sphere is assumed, in a discourse that is merely analogical, to constitute the pivotal point *(point-maître)*, the fact of changing this pivotal point, of having it be occupied by the earth or the sun, involves nothing that in itself subverts what the signifier "center" intrinsically *(de lui-même)* preserves. Man – what is designated by this term, which is nothing but that which makes (things) signify – was far from ever having been shaken by the discovery that the earth is not at the center. He had no problem substituting the sun for it.

Of course it is now obvious that the sun is not a center either, and that it is strolling through a space whose status is ever more precariously established. What remains at the center is the fine routine that is such that the signified always retains the same meaning *(sens)* in the final analysis. That meaning is provided by the sense each of us has of being part of his world, that is, of his little family and of everything that revolves around it. Each of you – I am speaking even for the leftists – you are more attached to it than you care to know and would do well to sound the depths of your attachment. A certain number of biases are your daily fare and limit the import of your insurrections to the shortest term, to the term, quite precisely, that gives you no discomfort – they certainly don't change your world view, for that remains perfectly spherical. The signified finds its center wherever you take it. And, unless things change radically, it is not analytic discourse – which is so difficult to sustain in its decentering and has not yet made its entrance into common consciousness – that can in any way subvert anything whatsoever.

Nevertheless, if you will allow me to make use of this Copernican reference, I will stress what is effective about it. It's not the fact of changing the center.

It turns. That fact still has a great deal of value for us, as reduced as it may be in the final analysis, motivated only by the fact that the earth turns and that it therefore seems to us that it is the celestial sphere that turns. The earth continues to turn and that has all sorts of effects, for example, the fact that you count your age in years. The subversion, if it existed some-

where, at some time, was not that of having changed the point around which it circles *(point de virée)* – it is that of having replaced "it turns" with "it falls." 43

What is crucial, as some people have noticed, is not Copernicus, but more specifically Kepler, due to the fact that in his work it does not turn in the same way – it turns in an ellipse, and that already throws into question the function of the center. That toward which it falls in Kepler's work is a point of the ellipse that is called a focus, and in the symmetrical point there is nothing. That is assuredly a corrective to the image of the center. But "it falls" only takes on the weight of subversion when it leads to what? To this and nothing more:

$$F = g\frac{mm'}{d^2}.$$

It is in this writing *(écrit)*, in what is summarized in these five little letters that can be written in the palm of your hand, and one number to boot, that consists what we unduly attribute to Copernicus. This is what rips us away from the imaginary function – nevertheless grounded in the real – of revolution.

What is produced in the articulation of the new discourse that emerges as analytic discourse is that the function of the signifier is taken as the starting point, for what the signifier brings with it by way of meaning effects is far from accepted on the basis of the lived experience of the very fact.

It is on the basis of meaning effects that the structuring of which I reminded you was constructed. For quite some time it seemed natural for a world to be constituted whose correlate, beyond it, was being itself, being taken as eternal. This world conceived of as the whole *(tout)*, with what this word implies by way of limitation, regardless of the openness we grant it, remains a conception[13] – a serendipitous term here – a view, gaze, or imaginary hold. And from that results the following, which remains strange, that some-one – a part of this world – is at the outset assumed to be able to take cognizance of it. This One finds itself therein in a state that we can call existence, for how could it be the basis of the "taking cognizance" if it did not exist? Therein has always lain the impasse, the vacillation resulting from the cosmology that consists in the belief in a world. On the contrary, isn't there something in analytic discourse that can introduce us to the following: that every subsistence or persistence of the world as such must be abandoned?

[13] Thus far, I have been translating *conception du monde* as "world view"; here *conception* appears alone. *Conception* has the same double meaning in French as in English: "view (or notion)" and "inception of pregnancy."

Language – the language *(langue)* forged by philosophical discourse – is such that, as you see, I cannot but constantly slip back into this world, into this presupposition of a substance that is permeated[14] with the function of being.

44

3

Following the thread of analytic discourse goes in the direction of nothing less than breaking up anew *(rebriser)*, inflecting, marking with its own camber – a camber that could not even be sustained as that of lines of force – that which produces the break *(faille)* or discontinuity. Our recourse, in llanguage *(lalangue)*,[15] is to that which shatters it *(la brise)*.[16] Hence nothing seems to better constitute the horizon of analytic discourse than the use made of the letter by mathematics. The letter reveals in discourse what is called – not by chance or without necessity – grammar. Grammar is that aspect of language that is revealed only in writing *(à l'écrit)*.

Beyond language, this effect, which is produced by being based only on writing, is certainly the ideal of mathematics. Now to refuse to refer to writing *(l'écrit)* is to forbid oneself what can actually be articulated using *(de)* all the effects of language. This articulation occurs in what results from language regardless of what we do – namely, a presumed shy of and beyond *(en deçà et au-delà)*.

We certainly sense that this shy of is no more than an intuitive reference. And yet this presupposition cannot be eliminated because language, in its meaning effect, is never but beside the referent.[17] Isn't it thus true that language imposes being upon us and obliges us, as such, to admit that we never have anything by way of being *(de l'être)?*

What we must get used to is substituting the "para-being" *(par-être)* – the being *"para,"* being beside – for the being that would take flight.[18]

I say the "para-being" *(par-être)*, and not the "appearing" *(paraître)*,[19]

[14] The term Lacan uses here, *imprégnée,* also means "impregnated," but primarily in the sense of saturated, not of fertilization.

[15] The French here, *lalangue,* is a term Lacan creates simply by putting together the feminine article *la* with the noun *langue* (language, but specifically spoken language, as in tongue). Lacan discusses what he means by *lalangue* in the course of this Seminar (as well as elsewhere); very roughly speaking, it has to do with the acoustic level of language, the level at which polysemy is possible due to the existence of homonyms (like those Lacan plays on throughout this Seminar). It is the level at which an infant (or songwriter) may endlessly repeat one syllable of a word (for example, "la la la"), the level at which language may "stutter" – hence the translation provided here, borrowed from Russell Grigg, "llanguage."

[16] *La* here could refer to "break," "discontinuity," or "llanguage."

[17] The French here, *à côté du référent,* could also be translated as "alongside the referent."

[18] *Fuir* (to take flight) also means "to leak."

[19] The neologism Lacan creates here, *par-être,* is pronounced exactly like *paraître,* which means "to appear" or "appearing." Two sentences further on, Lacan

as the phenomenon has always been called – that beyond which there is supposedly that thing, the noumenon. The latter has, in effect, led us, led us to all sorts of opacifications[20] that can be referred to precisely as obscurantism. It is at the very point at which paradoxes spring up regarding everything that manages to be formulated as the effect of writing *(effet d'écrit)* that being presents itself, always presents itself, by para-being.[21] We should learn to conjugate that appropriately: I par-am, you par-are, he par-is, we par-are, and so on and so forth.

It is in relation to the para-being that we must articulate what makes up for *(supplée au)*[22] the sexual relationship qua nonexistent. It is clear that, in everything that approaches it, language merely manifests its inadequacy.

What makes up for the sexual relationship is, quite precisely, love.

The Other, the Other as the locus of truth, is the only place, albeit an irreducible place, that we can give to the term "divine being," God, to call him by his name. God *(Dieu)* is the locus where, if you will allow me this wordplay, the *dieu* – the *dieur* – the *dire,* is produced. With a trifling change, the *dire* constitutes *Dieu.*[23] And as long as things are said, the God hypothesis will persist.

That is why, in the end, only theologians can be truly atheistic, namely, 45
those who speak of God.

There is no other way to be an atheist, except to hide one's head in one's arms in the name of I know not what fear, as if this God had ever manifested any kind of presence whatsoever. Nevertheless, it is impossible to say anything without immediately making Him subsist in the form of the Other.

That is quite evident in even the slightest movement of something I can't stand, for the best of reasons, that is, History.

People do History precisely in order to make us believe that it has some

intends both meanings when he says that "being presents itself, always presents itself, by *par-être,*" i.e., by appearing and being beside (or alongside).

[20] The French, *opacification,* is originally a medical term for the decrease in transparency of the cornea or crystalline lens. Lacan plays in this sentence on the similar French pronunciation of *noumêne* ("noumenon") and *nous mène* ("leads us").

[21] *Par-être* could also be rendered by the neologistic "ap-be-aring beside" or "appbesiding."

[22] The French, *supplée au rapport sexuel,* could more literally be translated as "supplements the sexual relationship." The end of the next sentence could be more literally translated as "language manifests itself merely in (or on the basis of) its inadequacy."

[23] The French, *Pour un rien, le dire ça fait Dieu,* is far more polysemic than my translation here; by translating it as "For a nothing, the saying amounts to God," one can see speech's godlike power to create *ex nihilo. Fait* here can be either "creates" or "plays the part of," "turns into" or "becomes." *Dieur,* in the last sentence, is a neologism, but since it is constructed like many other French terms, it can literally be understood to mean "sayer" or "speaker" (thus, the speaking god or the speaker as god).

sort of meaning. On the contrary, the first thing we must do is begin from the following: we are confronted with a saying *(dire)*, the saying *(dire)* of another person who recounts his stupidities, embarrassments, inhibitions, and emotions *(émois)*.[24] What is it that we must read therein? Nothing but the effects of those instances of saying *(dires)*. We see in what sense these effects agitate, stir things up, and bother speaking beings. Of course, for that to lead to something, it must serve them, and it does serve them, by God, in working things out, accommodating themselves, and managing all the same – in a bumbling, stumbling sort of way – to give a shadow of life to the feeling known as love.

It must, it really must, it must last longer *(encore)*. It must, with the help of this feeling, lead, in the end – as people have seen who, with respect to all of this, have taken their precautions under the aegis of the Church – to the reproduction of bodies.

But isn't it possible that language may have other effects than to lead people by the nose to reproduce yet again *(encore)*, in the body to body *(en corps à corps)*,[25] and in incarnated bodies *(en corps incarné)*?

There is another effect of language, which is writing *(l'écrit)*.

4

We have seen changes in writing *(l'écrit)* since language has existed. What is written are letters, and letters have not always been fabricated in the same way. On that subject, people do history, the history of writing, and people rack their brains imagining what purpose the Mayan and Aztec pictographs might have served and, a bit further back in time, the pebbles of the Mas d'Azil[26] – what could those funny sort of dice have been, and what kind of games did they play with them?

To raise such questions is the habitual function of History. One should say – above all, don't touch that H,[27] the initial of History. That would be a fine way of bringing people back to the first of the letters, the one to which I confine my attention, the letter A. The Bible begins, by the way, only with the letter B – it left behind the letter A so that I could take charge of it.

46 There is a lot to learn here, not by studying the pebbles of the Mas d'Azil,

[24] On the distinctions Lacan draws between *embarras, empêchement,* and *émoi,* see Seminar X, *Anxiety.*

[25] In French, *en corps* is pronounced exactly like *encore. Corps à corps* is usually translated as "hand to hand" (combat, for example).

[26] The Mas d'Azil is an area in southern France where artifacts from the Azilian industry, a tool tradition of Late Paleolithic and Early Mesolithic Europe, have been found. Art seems to have been confined to geometric drawings made on pebbles using red and black pigments.

[27] The letter *H* is pronounced exactly like *hache* in French, which means "ax" or "hatchet."

nor even, as I formerly did for my receptive audience *(bon public)*,[28] my receptive audience of analysts, by seeking out the notch on the stone to explain the unary trait[29] – that was within their ken – but by looking more closely at what mathematicians have been doing with letters since, scorning a number of things, they began, in the most well grounded of fashions, under the name of set theory, to notice that one could approach the One in a way other than the intuitive, fusional, amorous way.

"We are but one." Everyone knows, of course, that two have never become but one, but nevertheless "we are but one." The idea of love begins with that. It is truly the crudest way of providing the sexual relationship, that term that manifestly slips away, with its signified.

The beginning of wisdom should involve beginning to realize that it is in that respect that old father Freud broke new ground. I myself began with that because it affected me quite a bit myself. It could affect anyone, moreover, couldn't it, to realize that love, while it is true that it has a relationship with the One, never makes anyone leave himself behind.[30] If that, all of that and nothing but that, is what Freud said by introducing the function of narcissistic love, everyone senses and sensed that the problem is how there can be love for an other.

The One everyone talks about all the time is, first of all, a kind of mirage of the One you believe yourself to be. Not to say that that is the whole horizon. There are as many Ones as you like – they are characterized by the fact that none of them resemble any of the others in any way – see the first hypothesis in the *Parmenides.*

Set theory bursts onto the scene by positing the following: let us speak of things as One that are strictly unrelated to each other. Let us put together objects of thought, as they are called, objects of the world, each of which counts as one. Let us assemble these absolutely heterogeneous things, and let us grant ourselves the right to designate the resulting assemblage by a letter. That is how set theory expresses itself at the outset, that theory, for example, that I mentioned last time in relation to Nicolas Bourbaki.

You let slip by the fact that I said that the letter designates an assemblage. That is what is printed in the text of the definitive edition to which the authors – as you know, there are several of them – ended up consenting. They are very careful to say that letters designate assemblages. Therein lies their timidity and their error – letters *constitute (font)*[31] assemblages. They

[28] While *bon public* literally means "good audience," it also implies that they are receptive to or appreciate whatever Lacan says (no matter how absurd).

[29] See Seminar IX, *Identification.*

[30] *Sortir quiconque de soi-même* could also be translated as "go beyond himself."

[31] *Font* here can also mean "create" or "play the part of."

don't *designate* assemblages, they *are* assemblages. They are taken as *(comme)* functioning like *(comme)* these assemblages themselves.

You see that by still preserving this "like" *(comme)*, I am staying within the bounds of what I put forward when I say that the unconscious is structured *like* a language. I say *like* so as not to say – and I come back to this all
47 the time – that the unconscious is structured *by* a language. The unconscious is structured like the assemblages in question in set theory, which are like letters.[32]

Since what is at stake for us is to take language as *(comme)* that which functions in order to make up for the absence of the sole part of the real that cannot manage to be formed from being *(se former de l'être)* – namely, the sexual relationship – what basis can we find in merely reading letters? It is in the very play of mathematical writing *(l'écrit)* that we must find the compass reading toward which to head in order to draw from this practice – from this new social link, analytic discourse, that emerges and spreads in such a singular fashion – what can be drawn from it regarding the function of language, that language in which we put our faith in order for this discourse to have effects – middling, no doubt, but tolerable enough – so that this discourse can prop up and complete the other discourses.

For some time now, it has been clear that university discourse must be written "uni-vers-Cythera,"[33] since it must teach sex education. We shall see what that will lead to. We certainly shouldn't try to block it. The idea that something may be imparted regarding this bit *(point)* of knowledge – which is placed *(se pose)* exactly in the authoritarian situation of semblance – that can improve relations between the sexes is certainly destined to bring a smile to an analyst's face. But after all, who knows?

As I already said, the angel's smile is the stupidest of smiles, and one must thus never brag about it. But it is clear that the very idea of demonstrating something related to sex education on the blackboard does not seem, from the vantage point of the analyst's discourse, to promise much in the way of fortunate encounters or happiness.

If there is something in my *Écrits* that shows that my fine orientation, since it is of that fine orientation that I try to convince you, is not such a recent development, it is the fact that right after a war, where nothing obviously seemed to promise a pretty future, I wrote "Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty."[34] One can quite easily read therein – if

[32] There is a problem here in the French text; given the context, I have assumed that the word *qui* should be inserted between *ensembles* and *sont* (in *L'inconscient est structuré comme les assemblages dont il s'agit dans la théorie des ensembles sont comme les lettres*).

[33] Cythera (or Kithira) is the southernmost of the Ionian Islands in Greece, and is reputed to be the island of Aphrodite, an island of love and pleasure.

[34] Translated into English by Bruce Fink and Marc Silver, in *Newsletter of the Freudian Field* 2 (1988), pp. 4–22.

one writes and not only if one has a good ear – that it is already little *a* that thetisizes the function of haste. In that article, I highlighted the fact that something like intersubjectivity can lead to a salutary solution *(issue)*. But what warrants a closer look is what each of the subjects sustains *(supporte)*, not insofar as he is one among others, but insofar as he is, in relation to the two others, what is at stake in their thinking. Each intervenes in this ternary only as the object *a* that he is in the gaze of the others.

In other words, there are three of them, but in reality, there are two plus *a*. This two plus *a*, from the standpoint of *a*, can be reduced, not to the two others, but to a One plus *a*. You know, moreover, that I have already used these functions to try to represent to you the inadequacy of the relationship between the One and the Other, and that I have already provided as a basis for this little *a* the irrational number known as the golden number.[35] It is insofar as, starting from little *a*,[36] the two others are taken as One plus *a*, 48
that what can lead to an exit in haste functions.

This identification, which is produced in a ternary articulation, is grounded in the fact that in no case can two as such serve as a basis. Between two, whatever they may be, there is always the One and the Other, the One and the *a*, and the Other cannot in any way be taken as a One.

It is insofar as something brutal is played out in writing *(l'écrit)* – namely, the taking as ones of as many ones as we like – that the impasses that are revealed thereby are, by themselves, a possible means of access to being for us and a possible reduction of the function of that being in love.

I want to end by showing in what respect the sign can be distinguished from the signifier.

The signifier, as I have said, is characterized by the fact that it represents a subject to another signifier. What is involved in the sign? The cosmic theory of knowledge or world view has always made a big deal of the famous example of smoke that cannot exist without fire.[37] So why shouldn't I put forward what I think about it? Smoke can just as easily be the sign of a smoker. And, in essence, it always is. There is no smoke that is not a sign of a smoker. Everyone knows that, if you see smoke when you approach a deserted island, you immediately say to yourself that there is a good chance there is someone there who knows how to make fire. Until things change considerably, it will be another man. Thus, a sign is not the sign of some thing, but of an effect that is what is presumed as such by a functioning of the signifier.

[35] On the golden number, see, in particular, Seminar XIV, *The Logic of Fantasy*, and Seminar XVI, *From one Other to the other.*

[36] The French, *du petit a*, could mean "from the standpoint of little *a*," "on the basis of little *a*," and other things as well.

[37] Lacan is referring here to the proverb, *il n'y a pas de fumée sans feu*, "there's no smoke without fire."

That effect is what Freud teaches us about, and it is the starting point of analytic discourse, namely, the subject.

The subject is nothing other than what slides in a chain of signifiers, whether he knows which signifier he is the effect of or not. That effect – the subject – is the intermediary effect between what characterizes a signifier and another signifier, namely, the fact that each of them, each of them is an element. We know of no other basis by which the One may have been introduced into the world if not by the signifier as such, that is, the signifier insofar as we learn to separate it from its meaning effects.

In love what is aimed at is the subject, the subject as such, insofar as he is presumed in an articulated sentence, in something that is organized or can be organized on the basis of a whole life.

A subject, as such, doesn't have much to do with jouissance. But, on the other hand, his sign is capable of arousing desire. Therein lies the mainspring of love. The course I will try to continue to steer in our next classes will show you where love and sexual jouissance meet up.

January 16, 1973

V

Aristotle and Freud: the other satisfaction

ARISTOTLE'S HEADACHE *(TRACAS)*.
THE DEFICIENCY OF JOUISSANCE AND THE SATISFACTION OF BLAH-BLAH.
DEVELOPMENT, THE HYPOTHESIS OF MASTERY.
JOUISSANCE IS INAPPROPRIATE TO THE SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP.

"All the needs of speaking beings are contaminated by the fact of being involved in an other satisfaction" – underline the last three words – "that those needs may not live up to."[1]

This first sentence, which I wrote down this morning when I woke up so that you would write it down, sweeps away the opposition between an other satisfaction and needs – assuming this term ["needs"], which people so often resort to, can be so easily grasped, since, after all, it can only be grasped by not living up to *(faire défaut à)* that other satisfaction.

The other satisfaction is, as you must realize,[2] what is satisfied at the level of the unconscious – insofar as something is said there and is not said there, if it is true that it is structured like a language.

Here I am coming back to something I have been referring to for some time, namely, the jouissance on which that other satisfaction depends, the one[3] that is based on language.

1

In dealing, a long time ago, a very long time ago indeed, with the ethics of psychoanalysis, I began with nothing less than Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics.*

That can be read. There is only one problem for a certain number of you here, and that is that it cannot be read in French. It is manifestly untranslat-

[1] Lacan's French here, *à quoi ils peuvent faire défaut,* is quite ambiguous; it could suggest that those needs may come up short as regards that other satisfaction, not live up to it, or default on it.

[2] The French here, *vous devez l'entendre,* suggests that Lacan expects us to hear, realize, or grasp what is to follow in the sentence from the very expression "the other satisfaction" (and perhaps from the general theme of the Seminar thus far).

[3] Lacan does not repeat the noun, jouissance, here. Instead he simply says *celle* ("the one"), which could refer either to jouissance or the other satisfaction.

able. A long time ago, the Garnier publishing company came out with something that might have made me believe there was a translation, by someone named Voilquin. He was an academic, obviously. It's not his fault if Greek cannot be translated into French. Things have gotten condensed
50 in such a way that Garnier, which, moreover, has since merged with Flammarion, no longer gives you anything but the French text – I must say that publishers infuriate me. You all notice then, when you read it without the Greek on opposite pages, that you can't make head nor tail of it. It is, strictly speaking, unintelligible.

"All art and all research, like all action and all reflected deliberation" – what relation could there possibly be among those four things? – "tend, it seems, toward some good. Thus people have sometimes had good reason to define the good as that towards which one tends in all circumstances. Nevertheless" – and this comes out of the blue, not having yet been discussed – "it seems that there is a difference between ends."[4]

I challenge anyone to be able to clear away this thick morass without abundant commentary referring to the Greek text. It seems quite impossible that the text could sound like this simply because we have but badly taken notes. After a while, a light bulb flashes on in the heads of certain commentators – it dawns on them that, if they are obliged to work so hard, maybe there's a reason for it. Aristotle need not be unthinkable at all – I'll come back to this point.

In my own case, what wound up being written – that is, typed up on the basis of the stenography[5] – concerning what I had said about ethics seemed more than utilizable by the people who were, nevertheless, simultaneously engaged in pointing me out to the attention of the *Internationale de psychanalyse*[6] with the result that is well known. They would have liked to see preserved, all the same, my reflections on what psychoanalysis brings with it by way of ethics. It would have been sheer profit [for them] – I would have sunk to the bottom while *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* would have stayed afloat. That's an example of the fact that calculation is not enough –

[4] The passage of which Lacan is quoting the French translation is the very first paragraph of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1094a); here is the text of a very recent English translation of the passage: "Every craft and every investigation, and likewise every action and decision, seems to aim at some good; hence the good has been well described as that at which everything aims. However, there is an apparent difference among the ends aimed at" (*Aristotle: Selections,* translated by Terence Irwin and Gail Fine [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995], p. 347).

[5] A stenographer began to transcribe Lacan's seminars starting in 1952. Lacan had, in fact, begun giving his seminar two years before that, but no stenographer was present and only a few notes taken by Lacan's students remain.

[6] Lacan seems to be deliberately distorting the name of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA), generally known in French as the *Association psychanalytique internationale;* Lacan's name for it evokes the communist Internationals. Lacan was essentially forced out of the IPA in 1963, three years after he gave Seminar VII, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1959–1960).

I stopped my *Ethics* from being published. I refused to allow it to come out because I'm not going to try to convince people who want nothing to do with me. One must not convince *(convaincre)*. What is proper to psychoanalysis is not to vanquish *(vaincre)*, regardless of whether people are assholes *(con)* or not.[7]

It wasn't at all a bad seminar, in the end. At the time, someone who did not in any way participate in the calculation I just mentioned, wrote it up as he could, making an honest, wholehearted effort. He made it into a written text, a written text by him. He hadn't even thought of stealing it from me, and he would have published it like that if I had been willing. But I wasn't. Today, of all the seminars that someone else is going to bring out, it is perhaps the only one I will rewrite myself and make into a written text. I really should do one, all the same. Why not pick that one?

There's no reason not to put oneself to the test, not to see how others before Freud saw the terrain in which he constituted his field. It is another way of experiencing what is involved, namely, that this terrain is unthinkable except with the help of the instruments with which we operate, and that the only instruments by which accounts are conveyed are writings. A very simple test makes this clear – reading the *Nicomachean Ethics* in the French translation, you understand nothing in it, of course, but no less than 51
in what I tell you, and thus it suffices all the same.

Aristotle is no more comprehensible than what I talk to you about. It is even less comprehensible because he stirs up more things and things that are further from us. But it is clear that the other satisfaction I was talking about earlier is exactly the satisfaction that can be seen to emerge from what? Well, my good friends, there's no escaping it if you force yourself to look at it closely *(au pied du truc)*[8] – from the universals: the Good, Truth, and Beauty.

But the fact that there are these three specifications gives an air of pathos to the approach adopted by certain texts, those that are "authorized," with the meaning I give that term when placed in quotes, namely, those that are bequeathed to us under an author's name. That is what happens with certain texts that come to us from what I think twice about calling a very ancient culture – it's not culture.

Culture, insofar as it is distinct from society, doesn't exist. Culture is the

[7] In the present context, *un con* means "an idiot," "an asshole," "a jerk," and so on; as an adjective, *con* means "stupid," "idiotic," etc. In playing on the words *vaincre* and *convaincre*, Lacan is saying that, in psychoanalysis, there is no point trying to win over or convince jerks.

[8] Lacan has modified here the usual French expression *être au pied du mur*, "to be up against it," or "with one's back to the wall," by saying *si vous vous mettez au pied du truc*. That implies, it seems to me, putting yourself up against it, but also evokes the expression, *prendre quelque chose au pied de la lettre*, "to take something literally."

fact that it has a hold on us *(ça nous tient)*. We no longer have it on our backs, except in the form of vermin, because we don't know what to do with it, except to get ourselves deloused. I recommend that you keep it, because it tickles and wakes you up. That will awaken your feelings that tend rather to become a bit deadened[9] under the influence of ambient conditions, in other words, due to what others who come afterward will call your culture. It will have become culture for them because you will have already been six feet under for a long time and, with you, everything that you sustain qua social link. In the final analysis, there's nothing but that, the social link. I designate it with the term "discourse" because there's no other way to designate it once we realize that the social link is instated only by anchoring itself in the way in which language is situated over and etched into what the place is crawling with, namely, speaking beings.

We shouldn't be astonished by the fact that former discourses – and there will be others to follow – are no longer thinkable to us or thinkable only with great difficulty. Just as the discourse I am trying to bring to light is not immediately accessible to your understanding, similarly, from where we stand, it is not very easy to understand Aristotle's discourse. But is that a reason why it should no longer be thinkable? It is quite clear that it is thinkable. It is only when we imagine that Aristotle means something that we worry about what he is encompassing. What is he catching in his net, in his network? What is he drawing out of it? What is he handling? What is he dealing with? What is he struggling with? What is he maintaining? What is he working on? What is he pursuing?

Obviously, in the first four lines [of Aristotle's *Ethics*] that I read to you, you hear words, and you assume they mean something, but naturally you don't know what. "All art, all research, all action" – what does all of that
52 mean? It's because Aristotle threw in a lot of stuff after that, and because it comes down to us in printed form after having been copied and recopied for a long time, that we assume there must be something there that grabs one *(fait prise)*. That is when we raise the question, the only question – at what level did such things satisfy them?

It makes little difference what use was made of them at the time. We know that they were passed down and that there were volumes of Aristotle's work. That disconcerts us, and it does so precisely because the question "At what level did such things satisfy them?" is translatable only as follows: "At what level might a certain jouissance have been to blame?"[10] In other words, why – why did he get so worked up *(se tracassait)?*

[9] The French term Lacan uses here, *abrutis,* can also be translated as "moronic" or "idiotic."

[10] The French term, *faute,* recalls the *faire défaut* used at the very beginning of this lecture, and can mean "sin," "fault," "error," and so on. In the expression

You heard me right – failing, deficiency *(faute, défaut),*[11] something that isn't working out *(qui ne va pas).* Something skids off track in what is manifestly aimed at, and then it immediately starts up with the good and happiness. The good, the bad, and the oafish! *(Du bi, du bien, du benêt!)*[12]

2

"Reality is approached with apparatuses of jouissance."[13]

That is another formulation I am proposing to you, as long as we focus, of course, on the fact that there's no other apparatus than language. That is how jouissance is fitted out *(appareillée)* in speaking beings.

That is what Freud says, assuming we correct the statement of the pleasure principle. He said it the way he did because there were others who had spoken before him, and that seemed to him the way it could most easily be heard. It is very easy to isolate, and the conjunction of Aristotle with Freud helps us isolate it.

I push further ahead, at the point at which it can now be done, by saying that the unconscious is structured like a language. On that basis, language is clarified, no doubt, by being posited as the apparatus of jouissance. But inversely, perhaps jouissance shows that in itself it is deficient *(en défaut)* – for, in order for it to be that way, something about it mustn't be working.

Reality is approached with apparatuses of jouissance. That doesn't mean that jouissance is prior to reality. Freud left the door open to misunderstanding on that score – you can find his discussion in what is known in French as the *Essais de Psychanalyse.*[14]

There is, says Freud, a *Lust-Ich* before a *Real-Ich.* That is tantamount to slipping back into the rut, the rut I call "development," which is merely a hypothesis of mastery. It suggests that a baby has nothing to do with the

faute à une certaine jouissance, it is that certain jouissance that is to blame, that has sinned, come up short, proved inadequate, deficient, lacking, failing, etc.

[11] See footnotes 1 and 10 above regarding these highly polyvalent French nouns.

[12] Lacan seems to be playing off a somewhat nonsensical French advertisement for a liquor called Dubonet, which was well known at the time: *"Du du, du bon, Dubonet";* he may also be intentionally mimicking the sounds of certain jazz vocals – dooby dooby do.

[13] The French here, *les appareils de la jouissance,* could also be translated as "jouissance devices."

[14] Lacan may be referring here to the footnote on page 135 of the French collection of Freud's work entitled *Essais de Psychanalyse* (Paris: Payot, 1981 [the earlier edition contained the same texts in an older translation]), where Freud talks about "the child's development into a mature adult" (SE XVIII, p. 79). Freud's references to the "pleasure-ego" and the "reality-ego" can be found, above all, in "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (1911), "Instincts and their Vicissitudes" (1915), and "Negation" (1925).

Real-Ich, poor tot, and is incapable of having the slightest notion of the real. That is reserved for people we know, adults concerning whom, moreover, it is expressly stated that they never manage to wake up – when something happens in their dreams that threatens to cross over into the real, it dis-
53 tresses them so much that they immediately awaken, in other words, they go on dreaming. It suffices to read, be with them a little bit, see them live, and listen to them in analysis to realize what "development" means.

When we say "primary" and "secondary" for the processes, that may well be a manner of speaking that fosters an illusion. Let's say, in any case, that it is not because a process is said to be primary – we can call them whatever we want, after all – that it is the first to appear. Personally, I have never looked at a baby and had the sense that there was no outside world for him. It is plain to see that a baby looks at nothing but that, that it excites him, and that that is the case precisely to the extent that he does not yet speak. From the moment he begins to speak, from that exact moment onward and not before, I can understand that there is [such a thing as] repression. The process of the *Lust-Ich* may be primary – why not? it's obviously primary once we begin to think – but it's certainly not the first.

Development is confused with the development of mastery. It is here that one must have a good ear, like in music – I am the master *(m'être),* I progress along the path of mastery *(m'êtrise),* I am the master *(m'être)* of myself *(moi)* as I am of the universe. That is what I was talking about earlier, the vanquished idiot *(con-vaincu).* The universe is a flower of rhetoric. This literary echo may perhaps help us understand that the ego *(moi)* can also be a flower of rhetoric, which grows in the pot of the pleasure principle that Freud calls *"Lustprinzip,"* and that I define as that which is satisfied by blah-blah.

That is what I am saying when I say that the unconscious is structured like a language. But I must dot the i's and cross the t's. The universe – you might realize it by now, all the same, given the way in which I have accentuated the use of certain words, the "whole" and the "not-whole," and their differential application to the two sexes – the universe is the place where, due to the fact of speaking, everything succeeds *(de dire, tout réussit).*

Am I going to do a little William James here? Succeeds in what? I can tell you the answer, now that I have, I hope, finally managed to bring you to this point: succeeds in making the sexual relationship fail *(faire rater)*[15] in the male manner.

Normally I would expect to hear some snickering now – alas, I don't hear any. Snickering would mean "So, you've admitted it, there are two ways to

[15] *Rater* means to "fail," "botch," "screw up," "mess up," etc. I have translated it in a number of different ways in this chapter.

make the sexual relationship fail." That is how the music of the epithalamion[16] is modulated. The epithalamion, the duet *(duo)* – one must distinguish the two of them – the alternation, the love letter, they're not the sexual relationship. They revolve around the fact that there's no such thing as a sexual relationship.

There is thus the male way of revolving around it, and then the other one, that I will not designate otherwise because it's what I'm in the process of elaborating this year – how that is elaborated in the female way. It is 54
elaborated on the basis of the not-whole. But as, up until now, the not-whole has not been amply explored, it's obviously giving me a hard time.

On that note, I am going to tell you a good one to distract you a bit.

In the middle of my winter sports, I felt that I had to go to Milan by rail in order to keep my word. It took up a whole day just to get there. In short, I went to Milan, and as I cannot but talk about what I'm working on at the moment, that's the way I am – I said that I would rework *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* but that's because I'm drawing it out anew[17] – I picked an absolutely ridiculous title for my lecture to the Milanese, who had never heard anyone talk about such things before, "Psychoanalysis in Reference to the Sexual Relationship." They are very intelligent. They understood it so well that immediately, that very evening, the following was printed in the newspaper, "According to Dr. Lacan, Ladies" – *le donne* – "Do Not Exist!"

It's true – what do you expect? – if the sexual relationship doesn't exist, there aren't any ladies. There was someone who was furious, a lady from the women's liberation movement down there. She was truly. . . . I said to her, "Come tomorrow morning, and I'll explain to you what it's all about."

If there is some angle from which this business of the sexual relationship could be clarified, it's precisely from the ladies' side *(côté),* insofar as it is on the basis of the elaboration of the not-whole that one must break new ground. That is my true subject this year, behind *Encore,* and it is one of the meanings of my title. Perhaps I will manage, in this way, to bring out something new regarding feminine sexuality.

There is one thing that provides dazzling evidence of this not-whole. Consider how, with one of these nuances or oscillations of signification that are produced in language *(langue),* the not-whole changes meaning when I say to you, "Regarding feminine sexuality, our colleagues, the lady analysts, do *not* tell us . . . the *whole* story!" *(pas tout!).* It's quite striking.[18] They

[16] A nuptial poem or song in honor of a bride and bridegroom.

[17] *Je la réextrais* literally means "I am re-extracting it, mining it, drawing it out (of the ground)."

[18] Unfortunately, the word play is *not* very striking in English; I have not found a way to work "not whole" into such a formulation directly, without the interposition of other words.

haven't contributed one iota to the question of feminine sexuality. There must be an internal reason for that, related to the structure of the apparatus of jouissance.

3

That brings me back to what I myself earlier raised by way of objections to myself, all by myself, namely, that there was a male way of botching *(rater)* the sexual relationship, and then another. This botching *(ratage)* is the only way of realizing that relationship if, as I posit, there's no such thing as a sexual relationship. To say, thus, that everything succeeds does not stop us from saying "not-everything succeeds" *(pas-tout réussit)*, for it is in the same
55 manner – it fails *(ça rate)*. It's not a matter of analyzing how it succeeds. It's a matter of repeating until you're blue in the face why it fails.

It fails. That is objective. I have already stressed that. Indeed, it is so plain that it is objective that one must center the question of the object in analytic discourse thereupon. The failure is the object.

I already said long ago in what respect the good and the bad object differ. There is the good, there is the bad, oh la la! Today I am trying to begin with that, with what is related to what's good *(le bon)*, the good *(le bien)*, and to what Freud enunciates. The object is a failure *(un raté)*. The essence of the object is failure.

You will notice that I spoke of essence, just like Aristotle. So? That means that such old words are entirely usable. At a time when I dragged my feet less than today, that is what I turned to right after Aristotle. I said that, if something freshened the air a bit after all this Greek foot-dragging around Eudemonism,[19] it was certainly the discovery of utilitarianism.

That didn't faze my audience at the time because they'd never heard of utilitarianism – the result being that they couldn't make the mistake of believing that it meant resorting to the useful *(utilitaire)*. I explained to them what utilitarianism was in Bentham's work, which is not at all what people think it is. In order to understand it one must read *The Theory of Fictions.*

Utilitarianism means nothing but the following – we must think about the purpose served by the old words, those that already serve us. Nothing more. We must not be surprised by what results when we use them. We know what they are used for – they are used so that there may be the jouissance that should be *(qu'il faut)*. With the caveat that, given the equivocation between *faillir* and *falloir,* the jouissance that should be

[19] Eudemonism is the doctrine that the basis of moral obligations is found in the tendency of "right actions" to produce happiness.

must be translated as the jouissance that shouldn't be/never fails *(qu'il ne faut pas)*.[20]

Yes, I am teaching something positive here. Except that it is expressed by a negation. But why shouldn't it be as positive as anything else?

The necessary – what I propose to accentuate for you with this mode – is that which doesn't stop *(ne cesse pas)* what? – being written *(de s'écrire)*.[21] That is a very fine way in which to divide up at least four modal categories. I will explain that to you another time, but I will give you a bit more of a taste this time anyway. "What doesn't stop not being written" is a modal category, and it's not the one you might have expected to be opposed to the necessary, which would have been the contingent. Can you imagine? The necessary is linked *(conjugué)* to the impossible, and this "doesn't stop not being written" is the articulation thereof. What is produced is the jouissance that shouldn't be/could never fail *(qu'il ne faudrait pas)*.[22] That is the correlate of the fact that there's no such thing as a sexual relationship, and it is the substantial aspect *(le substantiel)* of the phallic function.

Let me now return to the textual level. It is the jouissance that shouldn't be/could never fail *(qu'il ne faudrait pas)* – in the conditional tense. That suggests to me that to use it we could employ protasis and apodosis.[23] If it 56
weren't for that, things would go better *(ça irait mieux)* – that's a conditional tense in the second part. That is the material implication, the implication the Stoics realized was perhaps what was most solid in logic.

How are we thus going to express what shouldn't be/could never fail with respect to jouissance, if not by the following? Were there another jouissance than phallic jouissance, it shouldn't be/could never fail to be that one.

[20] *Falloir,* used in all the tenses, but only in the third person singular, *il faut, il faudrait,* etc., means "one must," "one should," "one has to," "it is necessary," and so on. *Faillir* means to "fail," "falter," "default," "miss," or "come up short"; in certain contexts, e.g., *j'ai failli faire une gaffe,* "I almost made a blunder," it means to be on the verge of doing something. Both *faillir* and *falloir* are written *faut* in the third person singular, present tense. Hence *la jouissance qu'il ne faut pas* is the jouissance that mustn't be, shouldn't be, but can't fail to be or never fails anyway. (*Faillir* also formerly meant to sin [for a girl], to lapse, or to be remiss in one's commitments.) The phrase *la jouissance qu'il faut* works much better with *falloir* than with *faillir,* because the *il* refers to nothing in particular in the case of the former ("the jouissance that is necessary" or "should be"), whereas it refers to a "he" or an "it" in the case of the latter ("the jouissance that it defaults on" or "the jouissance that he doesn't live up to"). Moreover, for *faillir* to work here grammatically, the phrase would have to be recast: *la jouissance à laquelle il faut.*

[21] *De s'écrire* could also be translated here as "writing itself."

[22] Lacan is playing here on the same equivalence between the verbs *faillir* and *falloir* that he played on two paragraphs back, both verbs being written *faudrait* in the conditional tense, third person singular.

[23] Lacan introduces these terms in his early article, "Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty," where the protasis takes on the meaning of an "if" clause in an if-then type proposition, and the apodosis takes on the meaning of the "then" clause.

That's very nice. One must use things like that, old words, as stupid as anything, but really use them, work them to the bone. That's utilitarianism. And that allowed a giant step to be taken away from the old tales about universals that had preoccupied people since Plato and Aristotle, had dragged along throughout the Middle Ages, and were still suffocating Leibniz, to so great an extent that one wonders how he still managed to be so intelligent.

Were there another one, it shouldn't be/could never fail to be that one.

What does "that one" designate? Does it designate the other in the sentence, or the one on the basis of which we designated that other as other? What I am saying here is sustained at the level of material implication, because the first part designates something false – "Were there another one," but there is no other than phallic jouissance – except the one concerning which woman doesn't breathe a word, perhaps because she doesn't know *(connait)*[24] it, the one that makes her not-whole. It is false that there is another one, but that doesn't stop what follows from being true, namely, that it shouldn't be/could never fail to be that one.

You see that this is entirely correct. When the true is deduced from the false, it is valid. The implication works. The only thing we cannot abide is that from the true should follow the false. Not half bad, this logic stuff! The fact that the Stoics managed to figure that out all by themselves is quite impressive. One mustn't believe that such things bore no relation to jouissance. We have but to rehabilitate the terms to see that.

It is false that there is another. That won't stop me from playing once more on the equivocation based on *faux* (false), by saying that it shouldn't *(faux-drait)* be/could never fail to be/couldn't be false that it is that one.[25] Suppose that there is another – but there isn't. And, simultaneously, it is not because there isn't – and because it is on this that the "it shouldn't be/could never fail" depends – that the cleaver falls any the less on the jouissance with which we began. That one has *(faut)* to be, failing *(faute de)* – you should understand that as guilt – failing the other that is not.[26]

That opens up for us, tangentially, and I am saying this in passing, a little glimpse that has considerable weight in a metaphysics. There may be cases

[24] *Connaître* implies something more experiential than *savoir,* and could lead to the following translation here: "she doesn't experience it." Lacan is perhaps also playing on the *con* – the French equivalent for the English slang "cunt" – in *connaître,* and in other verbs as well further on. Cf. his comments in Chapter VI on woman's experience/knowledge of it.

[25] This play on words is untranslatable in English: *faux* ("false" or "wrong") is pronounced in French exactly like the first syllable of *faudrait.*

[26] *Faute de* usually means for lack of or failing that, but here Lacan wants us to also hear the sin or fault in *faute.* Lacan may also want us to hear *faut* at the beginning of the sentence as based on *faillir:* "That one defaults, failing. . . ." The same is perhaps true four paragraphs down.

in which, instead of it being us who go in search of something to reassure ourselves in the manger of metaphysics, we can even give something back to metaphysics. To wit, one must not forget that the fact that nonbeing is not is blamed by speech on being, whose fault it is. It's true that it is its fault, because if being did not exist, we would be far less uneasy with the 57
question of nonbeing, and thus it is deservedly that we reproach being for it, and consider it to be at fault.

That is also why – and this occasionally angers me, it is what I began with, moreover, and I assume you don't remember – when I forget myself *(m'oublie)* to the point of publishing *(p'oublier)*,[27] in other words, of forgetting everything *(tout-blier)* – the whole *(tout)* has something to do with it – I deserve to have to put up with people talking about me and not at all about my book. Which is just like what happened in Milan. Perhaps it wasn't entirely about me that people were speaking when they said that, according to me, ladies don't exist, but it certainly wasn't what I had just said.

In the end, if this jouissance comes to someone *(celui)* who speaks, and not by accident, it is because it is a bit premature. It has something to do with the renowned *(fameux)* sexual relationship, concerning which he will have only too many occasions to realize that it doesn't exist. It is thus second rather than first. There are traces of it in Freud's work. If Freud spoke of *Urverdrängung*, primal repression, it was precisely because the true, good, everyday repression is not first – it is second.

People repress the said jouissance because it is not fitting[28] for it to be spoken, and that is true precisely because the speaking *(dire)* thereof can be no other than the following: qua jouissance, it is inappropriate *(elle ne convient pas)*. I already sustained as much earlier by saying that it is not the one that should be *(faut)*, but the one that shouldn't be/never fails.

Repression is produced only to attest, in all statements *(dires)* and in the slightest statement, to what is implied by the statement that I just enunciated, that jouissance is inappropriate – *non decet*[29] – to the sexual relationship. It is precisely because the said jouissance speaks that the sexual relationship is not.

Which is why that jouissance would do better to hush up, but when it does, that makes the very absence of the sexual relationship a bit harder yet to bear. Which is why, in the final analysis, it doesn't hush up, and why the

[27] *P'oublier* evokes "forgetting" *(oublier)*, "publishing" *(publier)*, and "garbage can" *(poubelle)*.

[28] The French, *il ne convient pas*, can be rendered in a number of ways: it is not "fitting," "suitable," "becoming," "proper," or "appropriate." I translate it in several ways here.

[29] *Non decet* means "not fitting," "not befitting," "not proper," "unbecoming," "unsuitable," etc.

first effect of repression is that it speaks of something else. That is what constitutes the mainspring of metaphor.

There you have it. You see the relationship between all that and utility. It's utilitarian. It makes you capable of serving some purpose, since you don't know *(faute de savoir)* how to enjoy otherwise than to be enjoyed *(être joui)* or duped *(joué)*, because it is precisely the jouissance that shouldn't be/could never fail.

4

It's on the basis of this step-by-step approach, which made me "scand"[30] something essential today, that we must consider the light Aristotle and Freud can be seen to shed on each other. We must investigate how what they say *(dires)* can intersect and cross over into each other's work.

58 In book seven of the *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle raises the question of pleasure. What seems most certain to him, in referring to jouissance, is no more nor less than the idea that pleasure can but be distinguished from needs, from those needs with which I began in my first sentence, and with which he frames what is at stake in generation. Needs are related to movement. Indeed, Aristotle places at the center of his world – a world that has now definitively disappeared with the tide – the unmoved mover, immediately after which comes the movement it causes, and, a bit further away, what is born and dies, what is engendered and corrupted. That is where needs are situated. Needs are satisfied by movement.

Oddly enough, we find the same thing in Freud's work, but there it concerns the articulation of the pleasure principle. What equivocation makes it such that, according to Freud, the pleasure principle is brought on only by excitation, this excitation provoking movement in order to get away from it? It is strange that that is what Freud enunciates as the pleasure principle, whereas in Aristotle's work, that can only be considered as an attenuation of pain, surely not as a pleasure.

If Aristotle connects the status of pleasure with something, it can only be with what he calls ἐνέργεια, an activity.

Even more oddly, the first example he provides of this, not without coherence, is seeing – it is there that, in his view, resides the supreme pleasure, the one he distinguishes from the level of γένεσις, the generation of some-

[30] *Scander* is the verb form of "scansion," and is usually translated as "to scan" or "scanning" (as in scanning verse). I have opted in all of my translations of Lacan's work to date to introduce a neologism – to scand, scanding – so as to distinguish the far more common contemporary uses of scanning (looking over rapidly, quickly running through a list, taking ultra-thin pictures of the body with a scanner, or "feeding" text and images in digital form into a computer) from Lacan's idea here of cutting, interrupting, punctuating, or highlighting something.

thing, the one that is produced at the heart or center of pure pleasure. No pain has to precede the fact that we see in order for seeing to be a pleasure. It is amusing that having thus posed the question, he has to put forward what? What French cannot translate otherwise, lacking a word that is not equivocal, than by *l'odorer* (smelling). Aristotle here places smell and sight at the same level. As opposed as the second sense seems to be to the first, he tells us that pleasure turns out to be borne thereby. Thirdly, he adds hearing.

It is just about 1:45 p.m. To orient yourselves on the path along which we are proceeding, recall the step we made earlier by formulating that jouissance is centrally related to the one *(celle-là)* that shouldn't be/never fails, that shouldn't be/could never fail in order for there to be a sexual relationship, and remains wholly attached to it. Hence, what emerges with the term by which Aristotle designates it is quite precisely what analytic experience allows us to situate as being the object – from at least one pole of sexual identification, the male pole – the object that puts itself in the place of what cannot be glimpsed of the Other. It is inasmuch as object *a* plays the role somewhere – from a point of departure, a single one, the male one – of that which takes the place of the missing partner, that what we are also used to seeing emerge in the place of the real, namely, fantasy, is constituted.

I almost regret having, in this way, said enough, which always means too much. For one must see the radical difference of what is produced at the other pole, on the basis of woman. 59

Next time, I will try to enunciate in a way that stands up – and that is complete enough for you to bear the time before we meet again, in other words, half a month – that, for woman – but write woman with the slanted line with which I designate what must be barred – for ~~Woman~~, something other than object *a* is at stake in what comes to make up for *(suppléer)* the sexual relationship that does not exist.

February 13, 1973

61

VI

God and ~~Woman~~'s jouissance

READING-LOVING, HATING.

MATERIALISTS.

JOUISSANCE OF BEING.

THE MALE, POLYMORPHOUS PERVERT.

MYSTICS.

For a long time I have wanted to speak to you while walking around a bit among you. Thus, I was hoping, I must admit, that the so-called academic vacation would have diminished the number of you attending here.

Since I have been refused this satisfaction, I will return to what I began with the last time – what I called "another satisfaction," the satisfaction of speech.

Another satisfaction is the one that answers to[1] the jouissance that was barely *(juste)* required, just enough *(juste)* for it to happen between what I will abbreviate by calling them man and woman. In other words, the satisfaction that answers to phallic jouissance.

Note here the modification that is introduced by the word "barely" *(juste)*. This "barely" is a "just barely" *(tout juste)*, a "just barely successful" that is the flip-side of failure – it just barely succeeds. This already justifies what Aristotle contributes with the notion of justice as the bare mean *(le juste milieu)*.[2] Perhaps some of you recognized, when I introduced the whole *(tout)* – found in the expression "just barely" *(tout juste)* – that I circumvented the word "prosdiorism,"[3] which designates the whole that is not lacking in any language. Well, the fact that it is the prosdiorism, the whole, that allows us on this occasion to slide from Aristotle's justice to the just barely *(justesse)*, to the just barely successful *(réussite de justesse)*, is what

[1] The French here, *répond à*, can mean a number of different things: "responds to," "corresponds to," "answers to," "talks back to," and so on. It is found again in the next sentence.

[2] Aristotle defines justice as the intermediate point or mean between two extremes in *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book V, Chapters 3–5. I have changed the more standard translations – "golden mean" or "happy medium" – to convey Lacan's sense here of what "just barely" achieves the middle position.

[3] Lacan uses this term repeatedly in Seminar XIX (December 8, 1971, January 12 and 19, 1972, etc.) in reference to what have come to be known as the existential and universal quantifiers. They appear in Aristotle's work as "one," "some," "all," and the negations of these terms.

legitimates my having brought in Aristotle's work here. Indeed – right? – it cannot be understood immediately like that.

If Aristotle cannot be understood so easily, due to the distance that separates us from him, that is what, in my view, justifies my saying to you that reading in no way obliges you to understand. You have to read first.

1

62

That is why today, in a way that may seem paradoxical to certain of you, I will advise you to read a book regarding which the least one can say is that it concerns me. The book is entitled *Le titre de la lettre,*[4] and was published by the Galilée publishing company, in the collection *A la lettre.* I won't tell you who the authors are – they seem to me to be no more than pawns in this case.

That is not to diminish their work, for I will say that, personally, I read it with the greatest satisfaction. I would like you to put yourselves to the test of this book, written with the worst of intentions, as you will easily see in the last thirty pages. I cannot encourage its circulation strongly enough.

I can say in a certain way that, if it is a question of reading, I have never been so well read – with so much love. Of course, as is attested to by the end of the book, it is a love about which the least one can say is that its usual underside *(doublure)* in analytic theory need not be ruled out here.

But that goes too far. To even talk about subjects in this case, in any way whatsoever, may be going too far. To even mention their feelings is perhaps to recognize them too much as subjects.

Let us simply say that it is a model of good reading, such good reading that I can safely say that I regret never having obtained anything like it from my closest associates. The authors felt that they had to limit themselves – and, well, why not compliment them for it, since the condition of a reading is obviously that it impose limits on itself – to an article included in my *Écrits* that is entitled "The Instance of the Letter."

Beginning with what distinguishes me from Saussure, and what made me, as they say, distort him, we proceed, little by little, to the impasse I designate concerning analytic discourse's approach to truth and its paradoxes. That is, no doubt, something that ultimately escapes – I needn't probe any further – those who set themselves this extraordinary task. It is as if it were precisely upon reaching the impasse to which my discourse is designed to lead them that they considered their work done, declaring themselves – or rather declaring me, which amounts to the same thing given

[4] In English, see Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *The Title of the Letter,* translated by David Pettigrew and François Raffoul (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992).

their conclusions – confounded. It would be altogether appropriate for you yourselves to examine their conclusions, which, you will see, can be qualified as inconsiderate. Up until these conclusions, the work proceeds in a way that I can only characterize as strikingly illuminating *(éclaircissement).*
63 If it could, by any chance, lighten your attendance here *(éclaircir),*[5] I would regard that as merely an added perk for me, but, after all, I'm not sure – why not have faith in you *(vous faire confiance),* since there are always just as many of you here? – whether anything could put you off.[6]

Thus, apart from the last twenty or thirty pages – to tell you the truth, those are the only ones I skimmed through – the others will be a comfort to you that, overall, I can but wish you.

2

On that note, I will continue with what I have to say to you today, namely, to further articulate the consequence of the fact that no relationship gets constituted between the sexes in the case of speaking beings, for it is on that basis alone that what makes up for that relationship can be enunciated.

For a long time I have scanded what constitutes the first step in this undertaking with a certain "There's such a thing as One" *(Y a d' l'Un).* This "There's such a thing as One" is not simple – that's the word for it. In psychoanalysis, or more precisely in Freud's discourse, it is announced by the fact that Eros is defined as the fusion that makes one from two, as what is supposed to gradually tend in the direction of making but one from an immense multitude. But, since it is clear that even all of you – as numerous as you are here, assuredly forming a multitude – not only do not make one, but have no chance of pulling that off – which is only too amply demonstrated every day, if only by communing in my speech – Freud obviously has to bring in another factor that poses an obstacle to this universal Eros in the guise of Thanatos, the reduction to dust.

That is obviously a metaphor that Freud is able to use thanks to the fortunate discovery of the two units of the germ *(germen),* the ovum and the spermatozoon, about which one could roughly say that it is on the basis of their fusion that is engendered what? A new being. Except that that doesn't happen without meiosis, a thoroughly obvious subtraction, at least for one of the two, just before the very moment at which the conjunction occurs, a subtraction of certain elements that are not superfluous in the final operation.

[5] Lacan is playing here on the double meaning of *éclaircir,* which he used in the first sentence of this class in the sense of "diminishing" (the number of those attending his lecture); it also means to "enlighten."

[6] The French here, *je ne suis pas sûr . . . que rien enfin ne vous rebute,* could perhaps also mean "I'm not sure . . . whether there is nothing that could put you off."

But biological metaphors clearly cannot reassure us here – they reassure us here still less than elsewhere. If the unconscious is truly what I say it is, being structured like a language, it is at the level of language *(langue)* that we must investigate this One. The course of the centuries has provided this One with an infinite resonance. Need I mention here the Neo-Platonists? Perhaps I will have occasion to mention their adventure very quickly later, since what I need to do today is very precisely designate from whence the thing not only may but must be taken up on the basis of our discourse and of the revamping our experience brings about in the realm of Eros.

We must begin with the fact that this "There's such a thing as One" is to be understood in the sense that there's One all alone *(il y a de l'Un tout seul)*. We can grasp, thereby, the crux *(nerf)* of what we must clearly call by the name by which the thing resounds throughout the centuries, namely, love. 64

In analysis, we deal with nothing but that, and analysis doesn't operate by any other pathway. It is a singular pathway in that it alone allowed us to isolate what I, I who am talking to you, felt I needed to base transference on, insofar as it is not distinguished from love, that is, on the formulation "the subject supposed to know."

I cannot but mention the new resonance this term "knowledge" can take on for you. I love the person I assume to have knowledge. Earlier you saw me stall, back off, and hesitate to come down on one side or the other, on the side of love or on the side of what we call hatred, when I insistently invited you to read a book whose climax is expressly designed to discredit me *(déconsidérer)* – which is certainly not something that can be backed away from by someone who speaks, ultimately, but on the basis of "de-sideration"[7] and aims at nothing else. The fact is that this climax appears sustainable to the authors precisely where there is a "desupposition" of my knowledge. If I said that they hate me it is because they "desuppose" that I have knowledge.

And why not? Why not, if it turns out that that must be the condition for what I call reading? After all, what can I presume Aristotle knew? Perhaps the less I assume he has knowledge, the better I read him. That is the condition of a strict putting to the test of reading, a condition I don't weasel out of.

What is offered to us to be read by that aspect of language that exists, namely, what is woven as an effect of its erosion[8] – that is how I define what is written thereof – cannot be ignored. Thus, it would be disdainful not

[7] "Sideration" is a medical term for the sudden annihilation of the vital functions due to an intense emotional shock. In French, it is related to *sidérer,* "to stun," "stagger," or "shock." *Dé-sidération* is close in spelling to *déconsidérer,* used earlier in the sentence.

[8] The French here, *ce qui vient à se tramer d'effet de son ravinement,* is rather ambiguous.

to at least recall to mind what has been said about love throughout the ages by a thought that has called itself – improperly, I must say – philosophical.

I am not going to provide a general review of the question here. It seems to me that, given the type of faces I see all around the room, you must have heard that, in philosophy, the love of God *(l'amour de Dieu)*[9] has occupied a certain place. We have here a sweeping fact that analytic discourse cannot but take into account, if only tangentially.

I will recall to mind here something that was said after I was, as the authors express themselves in this booklet, "excluded" from Sainte-Anne [Hospital]. In fact, I was not excluded; I withdrew. That's a horse of a different color, especially given the importance of the term "excluded" in my topology – but it's of no import, since that's not what we're here to talk about. Well-intentioned people – who are far worse than ill-intentioned ones – were surprised when they heard that I situated a certain Other between man and woman that certainly seemed like the good old God of time immemorial. It was only an echo, but they made themselves the unpaid conduits thereof. They were, by God, it must be admitted, from the pure philosophical tradition, and among those who claim to be materialists – that is why I say "pure," for there is nothing more philosophical than materialism. Materialism believes that it is obliged, God only knows why – a serendipitous expression here – to be on its guard against this God who, as I said, dominated the whole debate regarding love in philosophy. Those people, to whose warm reception I owed a renewed audience, thus manifested a certain uneasiness.

It seems clear to me that the Other – put forward at the time of "The Instance of the Letter" as the locus of speech – was a way, I can't say of laicizing, but of exorcising the good old God. After all, there are even people[10] who complimented me for having been able to posit in one of my last seminars that God doesn't exist. Obviously, they hear *(entendent)*[11] – they hear, but alas, they understand, and what they understand is a bit precipitate.

So today, I am instead going to show you in what sense the good old God exists. The way in which he exists will not necessarily please everyone, especially not the theologians, who are, as I have been saying for a long time, far more capable than I am of doing without his existence. I, unfortunately, am not entirely in the same position, because I deal with the Other.

[9] The French here could also mean "God's love."

[10] The French here, *il y a bien des gens,* could also be translated as "there are plenty of people."

[11] *Entendre* means both "to hear" and "to understand"; here, however, it is being juxtaposed with *comprendre,* which I have translated as "to understand" in the latter part of this sentence.

This Other – assuming there is but one all alone – must have some relationship with what appears of the other sex.

On that score, I didn't stop myself, the year I mentioned last time, that of *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* from referring to courtly love. What is courtly love?

It is a highly refined way of making up for *(suppléer à)* the absence of the sexual relationship, by feigning that we are the ones who erect an obstacle thereto. It is truly the most amazing thing that has even been attempted. But how can one denounce the fake?

Rather than dwelling on the paradox of why courtly love appeared during the feudal era, materialists should see therein a magnificent occasion to show, on the contrary, how it is rooted in the discourse of loyalty *(féalité),* of fidelity to the person. In the final analysis, the "person" always has to do with the master's discourse. Courtly love is, for man – in relation to whom the lady is entirely, and in the most servile sense of the word, a subject – the only way to elegantly pull off the absence of the sexual relationship.

It is along this pathway that I shall deal – later though, for today I must break new ground – with the notion of the obstacle, with what in Aristotle's work – whatever else may be said, I prefer Aristotle to Jaufré Rudel[12] – is precisely called the obstacle, ἔνστασις.[13]

My readers – whose book you must, I repeat, all go out and buy later – even found that. They investigate the instance so thoroughly, so carefully – as I said, I have never seen a single one of my students do such work, alas, no one will ever take seriously what I write, except of course those about whom I said earlier that they hate me in the guise of desupposing my knowl- 66
edge – that they even discover the ἔνστασις, the Aristotelian logical obstacle that I had reserved for the end. It is true that they do not see where it fits in. But they are so used to working, especially when something motivates them – the desire, for example, to obtain their Master's,[14] a truly serendipitous term here – that they even mention that in the footnote on pages 28 and 29.[15]

Consult Aristotle and you will know everything when I at last come to

[12] A reference to the courtly love poet, Jaufré Rudel de Blaye. See *Les chansons de Jaufré Rudel,* edited by Alfred Jeanroy (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1924). In English, see, for example, *Trobador Poets,* translated by Barbara Smythe (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1966), and *Songs of the Troubadours,* translated by Anthony Bonner (New York: Schocken Books, 1972).

[13] ἔνστασις is the obstacle one raises to an adversary's argument; it is also the exception to a universal predicate, hence an instance or counterinstance that refutes a general claim. This is but one example of the inappropriateness of translating Lacan's *"Instance de la lettre"* as "Agency of the Letter."

[14] The French term, *maîtrise,* means both "Master's degree" (in arts or sciences) and "mastery."

[15] This corresponds to footnote 4 on page 24 of the English edition.

this business of the ἔνστασις. You can read, one after the other, the passage in the *Rhetoric* and the two sections of the *Topics*[16] that will allow you to truly know what I mean when I try to integrate my four formulas, $\exists x\overline{\Phi x}$ and the rest, into Aristotle's work.

Lastly, to finish up on this point, why should materialists, as they are called, be indignant about the fact that I situate – and why shouldn't I – God as the third party in this business of human love? Even materialists sometimes know a bit about the *ménage à trois,* don't they?

So let us try to push ahead. Let us try to push ahead regarding what results from the following, that nothing indicates that I don't know what I'm saying when I speak to you. What creates a problem right from the beginning of this book, which continues right up until the end, is that it assumes – and with that one can do anything – that I have an ontology, or, what amounts to the same thing, a system.

In the circular diagram[17] in which is supposedly laid out what I put forward regarding the instance of the letter, the authors are at least honest enough to use dotted lines – for good reason, since they hardly weigh anything – to situate all of my statements enveloping the names of the principal philosophers into whose general ontology I am claimed to insert my supposed system. But it cannot be ambiguous that I oppose to the concept of being – as it is sustained in the philosophical tradition, that is, as rooted in the very thinking that is supposed to be its correlate – the notion that we are duped (*joués*)[18] by jouissance.

Thought is jouissance. What analytic discourse contributes is the following, and it is already hinted at in the philosophy of being: there is jouissance of being.

I spoke to you of the *Nicomachean Ethics* because the trace is there. What Aristotle wanted to know, and that paved the way for everything that followed in his wake, is what the jouissance of being is. Saint Thomas had no problem after that coming up with the physical theory of love – as it was called by the abbot Rousselot, whom I mentioned last time[19] – namely, that the first being we have a sense of is clearly our being, and everything that is for the good of our being must, by dint of this very fact, be the Supreme Being's jouissance, that is, God's. To put it plainly, by loving God, we love

[16] Lacan is referring here to the passages in Aristotle's work mentioned in the footnote of *The Title of the Letter: Rhetoric* II, 25, 1402a, *Topics* VIII, 2, 157ab, and II, 11, 115b. The authors also mention *Prior Analytics* II, 26.

[17] Found on page 112 (page 110 of the English edition), and entitled " 'System' of 'The Instance of the Letter,' or *De revolutionibus orbium litteralium.*"

[18] The French here literally means "played"; figuratively it means "deceived," "had," "toyed with," "outsmarted," and so on.

[19] See Pierre Rousselot, *Pour l'histoire du problème de l'amour au moyen âge* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Buchhandlung, 1907). Lacan did not mention Rousselot in the last class as published in this Seminar.

ourselves, and by first loving ourselves – "well-ordered charity," as it is put[20] – we pay the appropriate homage to God.

Being – if people want me to use this term at all costs – the being that I 67
oppose to that – and to which this little volume is forced to attest right from the very first pages of its reading, which simply involve reading – is the being of signifierness. And I fail to see in what sense I am stooping to the ideals of materialism – I say "to the ideals" because they're beyond its scope – when I identify the reason for the being of signifierness in jouissance, jouissance of the body.

But, you see, a body hasn't seemed materialistic enough since Democritus. One has to find atoms and the whole nine yards, not to mention sight, smell, and everything that follows therefrom. All that goes together.

It's no accident that Aristotle occasionally quotes Democritus, even if he feigns disgust when he does so, for he relies on the latter's work. In fact, the atom is simply an element of flying signifierness, quite simply a στοιχεῖον.[21] Except that it is extremely difficult to make it work out right when one retains only what makes the element an element, namely, the fact that it is unique, whereas one should introduce the other a little bit, namely, difference.

Now, if there's no such thing as a sexual relationship, we must see in what respect the jouissance of the body can serve a purpose here.

3

Let us approach things first from the pole at which every x is a function of Φx, that is, from the pole where man is situated.

One ultimately situates oneself there by choice – women are free to situate themselves there if it gives them pleasure to do so. Everyone knows there are phallic women, and that the phallic function doesn't stop men from being homosexuals. It is, nevertheless, the phallic function that helps them situate themselves as men and approach woman. I shall discuss man quickly, because what I have to talk about today is woman and because I assume that I have already sufficiently hammered it home to you[22] that you still recall the following – there is no chance for a man to have jouissance of

[20] *"Charité bien ordonnée commence par soi-même"* is a well-known French proverb. In English, it literally means "Well-ordered charity begins with oneself," but the most closely related proverb in English is "Charity begins at home."

[21] στοιχεῖον means "element," "principal constituent," "letter," or "part of speech."

[22] Lacan had already devoted a great deal of attention in Seminars XVIII and XIX to the phallic function and the four logical formulas he quickly glosses below; that is what allows him to assume that his audience still recalls what he has already stated about man.

a woman's body, otherwise stated, for him to make love, without castration (*à moins de castration*),[23] in other words, without something that says no to the phallic function.

That is the result of analytic experience. That doesn't stop him from desiring woman in every way, even when that condition does not obtain. He not only desires her, but does all kinds of things to her that bear an astonishing resemblance to love.

As opposed to what Freud maintains, it is man – I mean he who happens to be male without knowing what to do with it, all the while being a speaking being – who approaches woman, or who can believe that he approaches her, because on that score there is no dearth of convictions, the *con-victions* I spoke about last time.[24] But what he approaches is the cause of his desire
68 that I have designated as object *a*. That is the act of love.[25] To make love (*faire l'amour*), as the very expression indicates, is poetry.[26] But there is a world between poetry and the act. The act of love is the male's polymorphous perversion, in the case of speaking beings. There is nothing more certain, coherent, and rigorous as far as Freudian discourse is concerned.

I still have a half hour to try to thrust you, if I dare express myself thus,[27] into how things stand at woman's pole. One of the following two things is true: either what I write has no meaning at all – which is, by the way, the conclusion of the short book [discussed earlier], and that is why I beg you to have a look at it – or when I write $\overline{\forall x}\Phi x$, a never-before-seen function in which the negation is placed on the quantifier, which should be read "not-whole," it means that when any speaking being whatsoever situates itself under the banner "women," it is on the basis of the following – that it grounds itself as being not-whole in situating itself in the phallic function.[28] That is what defines what? Woman precisely, except that Woman can only be written with a bar through it.[29] There's no such thing as Woman, Woman with a capital *W* indicating the universal. There's no such thing as

[23] The French here might also be translated as "anything less than (or short of) castration" or as "with something less than (or in the case of something less than) castration." See the last paragraph of this chapter.

[24] Lacan is referring back to the *con-vaincu* he mentioned in the last lecture, the vanquished (or convinced) asshole or idiot. In the play on words, *con* as "cunt" may also be intended.

[25] The French here, *l'acte d'amour,* seems to imply "the act of love-making," more than a "loving act." Hence it strikes me as more or less equivalent here to *l'acte sexuel,* i.e., intercourse.

[26] *Faire,* in French, often suggests something more make-believe than "make" in English. The hysteric who *fait l'homme* plays the part or role of man, perhaps like an actor. *Faire l'amour* can thus suggest something like "playing at love" or "creating love."

[27] *Introduire,* which I have translated here as "thrust," can take on the meaning of penetration in certain contexts.

[28] Or "it grounds itself as not-wholly situating itself in the phallic function."

[29] In the French, Lacan says that we must bar the article *"La"* in *"La femme,"* which, as he tells us in the next sentence, is the definite article that designates the

Woman because, in her essence – I've already risked using that term, so why should I think twice about using it again? – she is not-whole.

I see my students far less attached to reading my work than the slightest underling when he is motivated by the desire to obtain a Master's; not one of them has avoided producing an utter and complete muddle regarding the lack of a signifier, the signifier of the lack of a signifier, and other gibberish regarding the phallus, whereas with "woman" (*la*) I am designating for you the signifier that is, nevertheless, common and even indispensable. The proof is that, earlier, I already spoke of man and "woman" (*la femme*). That "woman" (*la*) is a signifier. With it I symbolize the signifier whose place it is indispensable to mark – that place cannot be left empty. "Woman" (*la*) is a signifier, the crucial property (*propre*) of which is that it is the only one that cannot signify anything, and this is simply because it grounds woman's status in the fact that she is not-whole. That means we can't talk about Woman (*La femme*).

A woman can but be excluded[30] by the nature of things, which is the nature of words, and it must be said that if there is something that women themselves complain about enough for the time being, that's it. It's just that they don't know what they're saying – that's the whole difference between them and me.

The fact remains that if she is excluded by the nature of things, it is precisely in the following respect: being not-whole, she has a supplementary jouissance compared to what the phallic function designates by way of jouissance.

You will notice that I said "supplementary." If I had said "complementary" what a mess we'd be in! We would fall back into the whole.

Women content themselves (*s'en tiennent*),[31] any woman contents herself (*aucune s'en tient*), being not-whole, with the jouissance in question and, well, generally speaking, we would be wrong not to see that, contrary to 69
what people say, it is nevertheless they who possess men.

Commoners – I know some of them, they're not necessarily here, but I know quite a few – commoners call their wife *"la bourgeoise."* That's what that means. He is the one who obeys orders (*à la botte*), not her. Since Rabelais, we have known that the phallus, her man, as she says, is not indif-

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universal. In English, the definite article "the" sometimes functions in that way, as in "the Good," "the Just," and so on. In the case of woman, however, "the woman" seems to imply a specific woman ("the woman of one's dreams," "the woman downstairs"), whereas Lacan is aiming here instead at a universal like womanliness or the essence of woman. See, on this point, Chapter I, footnote 28.

[30] *Il n'y a de femme qu'exclue* could also be rendered as "There is no woman except excluded."

[31] This could be translated in many ways: "Women confine themselves . . . to the jouissance in question," "Women stick . . . to . . . ," "Women go . . . with . . . ," etc.

ferent to her. But, and this is the whole point, she has different ways of approaching that phallus and of keeping it for herself. It's not because she is not-wholly in the phallic function that she is not there at all. She is *not* not at all there.[32] She is there in full (*à plein*). But there is something more (*en plus*).

Be careful with this "more" – beware of taking it too far too quickly. I cannot designate it any better or otherwise because I have to rough it out (*trancher*),[33] and I have to go quickly.

There is a jouissance, since I am confining myself here to jouissance,[34] a jouissance of the body that is, if I may express myself thus – why not make a book title out of it? it'll be the next book in the Galilée collection – "beyond the phallus." That would be cute, huh? And it would give another consistency to the women's liberation movement. A jouissance beyond the phallus. . . .

You may have noticed – I am naturally speaking here to the few semblances of men I see here and there, fortunately I don't know them for the most part, and that way I don't presume anything about the others – that now and then, there is something that, for a brief moment, shakes (*secoue*) women up or rescues them (*secourt*). When you look up the etymology of those two words in the Bloch et Von Wartburg that is so delectable to me, and that I am sure you don't even all have on your bookshelves, you'll see the relationship between them.[35] Such things don't happen by chance, all the same.

There is a jouissance that is hers (*à elle*), that belongs to that "she" (*elle*) that doesn't exist and doesn't signify anything.[36] There is a jouissance that is hers about which she herself perhaps knows nothing if not that she experiences it – that much she knows. She knows it, of course, when it comes (*arrive*). It doesn't happen (*arrive*) to all of them.

I don't want to end up talking about putative frigidity, but one must isolate that aspect of relationships between men and women that is related to current trends (*la mode*). It's very important. Of course in Freud's discourse, alas, as in courtly love, all of that is covered over by minute consid-

[32] This is an obvious commentary on Lacan's second matheme for women: $\exists x \Phi x$.

[33] *Trancher* literally means to "cut or slice"; figuratively it means "to decide, determine, or settle (a debate or question)." Lacan's concern here seems to be to simply lay down a few guideposts at the outset.

[34] Lacan uses the same expression here, *s'en tenir à la jouissance,* as he did at the beginning of the third paragraph back.

[35] The two verbs, *secouer* and *secourir,* are discussed on page 581 of the *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française,* by Oscar Bloch and Walther von Wartburg (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1932).

[36] This is, perhaps, a reference to what Lacan says elsewhere: "The so-called third person [he, she, or it] doesn't exist" (Seminar III, *The Psychoses,* translated by Russell Grigg [New York: Norton, 1993], p. 314).

erations that have led to all kinds of problems (*ravages*). Minute considerations concerning clitoral jouissance and the jouissance that people call by whatever name they can find, the other one, precisely, the one that I am trying to get you to approach by a logical pathway, because, as things currently stand, there is no other.

The plausibility of what I am claiming here – namely, that woman knows nothing of this jouissance – is underscored by the fact that in all the time people have been begging them, begging them on their hands and knees – I spoke last time of women psychoanalysts – to try to tell us, not a word! We've never been able to get anything out of them. So we call this jouissance by whatever name we can come up with, "vaginal," and speak of the posterior pole of the uterine orifice and other such "cunt-torsions" (*conneries*) – 70
that's the word for it! If she simply experienced it and knew nothing about it, that would allow us to cast myriad doubts on this notorious (*fameuse*) frigidity.

That too is a theme, a literary theme. And it's worth dwelling on for a moment. I've been doing nothing but that since I was twenty, exploring the philosophers on the subject of love. Naturally, I didn't immediately focus on the question of love, but that did dawn on me at one point, with the abbot Rousselot, actually, whom I mentioned earlier, and the whole quarrel about physical love and ecstatic love, as they are called.[37] I understand why Gilson didn't find that opposition to be a very good one.[38] He thought that Rousselot had made a discovery that wasn't really one, because that opposition was part of the problem, and love is just as ecstatic in Aristotle's work as in Saint Bernard's,[39] assuming one knows how to read the chapters regarding φιλία, friendship. Some of you must surely know what literary debauchery occurred around that: Denis de Rougemont – have a look at *Love in the Western World,*[40] it gets red hot! – and then another no stupider than anyone else, named Nygren, a Protestant, [the author of] *Agape and*

[37] See *Écrits,* 119, and Seminar III, 287. Rousselot explains that "physical love" was not understood in the Middle Ages as corporal or bodily, but rather as natural love – the kind of love one finds in nature between mother bear and cub, for example (*Pour l'histoire du problème d'amour au moyen âge,* p. 3). In the translation of Saint Thomas Acquinas' *Summa Theologica* prepared by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, it is rendered as "natural love" (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952) (Question 60).

[38] See Étienne-Henri Gilson, *The Choir of Muses* (*L'École des muses*), 1951.

[39] Lacan is, no doubt, referring here to Bernard of Clairvaux, a Cistercian; see *Bernard of Clairvaux: Selected Works,* translated by G.R. Evans (New York: Paulist Press, 1987).

[40] This book was published in French in 1939 as *L'Amour et l'Occident.* It was translated into English by Montgomery Belgion and published simultaneously in the U.S. and England under different titles: *Love in the Western World* (New York: Pantheon, 1940 and 1956) and *Passion and Society* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1940 and 1956).

Eros.[41] Christianity naturally ended up inventing a God such that he is the one who gets off (*jouit*)!

There is, nevertheless, a little connection when you read certain serious authors, like women, as if by chance. I will give you a reference here to an author, a reference I owe to a very nice person who had read the author's work and brought it to me. I read it immediately. I'd better write her name on the board, otherwise you won't buy it. It is Hadewijch d'Anvers, a Beguine – she is what we so quaintly refer to as a mystic.[42]

I don't use the word "mystic" as Péguy did.[43] Mysticism isn't everything that isn't politics. It is something serious, about which several people inform us – most often women, or bright people like Saint John of the Cross, because one is not obliged, when one is male, to situate oneself on the side of $\forall x \Phi x$. One can also situate oneself on the side of the not-whole. There are men who are just as good as women. It happens. And who also feel just fine about it. Despite – I won't say their phallus – despite what encumbers them that goes by that name, they get the idea or sense that there must be a jouissance that is beyond. Those are the ones we call mystics.

I have already spoken about other people who were not too bad in terms of mysticism, but who were situated instead on the side of the phallic function, Angelus Silesius, for example.[44] Confusing his contemplative eye with the eye with which God looks at him, must, if kept up, partake of perverse jouissance. For the Hadewijch in question, it's like for Saint Teresa – you need but go to Rome and see the statue by Bernini[45] to immediately understand that she's coming. There's no doubt about it. What is she getting off
71 on? It is clear that the essential testimony of the mystics consists in saying that they experience it, but know nothing about it.

These mystical jaculations are neither idle chatter nor empty verbiage; they provide, all in all, some of the best reading one can find – at the bottom of the page, drop a footnote, "Add to that list Jacques Lacan's *Écrits,*" because it's of the same order. Thanks to which, naturally, you are all going

[41] Anders Nygren's *Agape and Eros,* translated by Philip S. Watson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953); partial translations were published in England between 1932 and 1939 by the S.P.C.K. House. Originally published in Swedish as *Den Kristna Kärlekstanken genom tiderna. Eros och Agape* (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1930 and 1936).

[42] See, in particular, *Hadewijch: The Complete Works,* translated by Mother Columba Hart (New York: Paulist Press, 1980).

[43] See Charles Péguy, *Notre Patrie* (1905), *Notre Jeunesse* (1910), and *Mystère de la charité de Jeanne d'Arc* (1910).

[44] See, in particular, *Angelus Silesius: The Cherubinic Wanderer,* translated by Maria Shrady (New York: Paulist Press, 1986).

[45] "The Ecstasy of St. Teresa" is a marble and gilded bronze niche sculpture by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1645–52) located in the Coronaro Chapel in Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome. See the cover photo of the French edition of this Seminar.

to be convinced that I believe in God. I believe in the jouissance of woman insofar as it is extra (*en plus*), as long as you put a screen in front of this "extra" until I have been able to properly explain it.

What was attempted at the end of the last century, in Freud's time, what all sorts of decent souls around Charcot and others were trying to do, was to reduce mysticism to questions of cum (*affaires de foutre*). If you look closely, that's not it at all. Doesn't this jouissance one experiences and yet knows nothing about put us on the path of ex-sistence? And why not interpret one face of the Other, the God face, as based on feminine jouissance?

As all of that is produced thanks to the being of signifierness, and as that being has no other locus than the locus of the Other (*Autre*) that I designate with capital *A*, one sees the "cross-sightedness"[46] that results. And as that is also where the father function is inscribed, insofar as castration is related to the father function, we see that that doesn't make two Gods (*deux Dieu*), but that it doesn't make just one either.

In other words, it's no accident that Kierkegaard discovered existence in a seducer's little love affair. It's by castrating himself, by giving up love, that he thinks he will accede to it.[47] But perhaps, after all – why not? – Regine too existed. This desire for a good at one remove (*au second degré*), a good that is not caused by a little *a* – perhaps it was through Regine that he attained that dimension.

February 20, 1973

[46] *Biglerie* literally means cross-eyedness, and seems to connote a sort of hoodwinking based on double-vision.

[47] "It" here seems to refer to "existence." See, in particular, Soren Kierkegaard, *The Diary of a Seducer* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1966).

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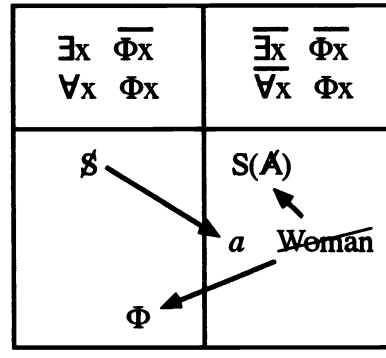
VII

A love letter *(une lettre d'âmour)*

COALESCENCE AND SCISSION OF *a* AND S(Ⱥ).
THE BEYONDSEX.
SPEAKING TO NO AVAIL.
PSYCHOANALYSIS IS NOT A COSMOLOGY.
KNOWLEDGE OF JOUISSANCE.



After what I just put on the board, you may think you know everything. Don't.

Today I am going to try to speak about knowledge, about that knowledge which, in the inscription of the four discourses – on which the social link is based, as I thought I could show you – I symbolized by writing S_2. Perhaps I will manage today to make you sense why this 2 goes further than a secondariness in relation to the pure signifier that is written S_1.

1

Since I decided to give you this inscription as a prop on the blackboard, I am going to comment on it, briefly I hope. I did not, I must admit, write it down or prepare it anywhere.[1] It doesn't strike me as exemplary, if not, as usual, in producing misunderstandings.

74 In effect, a discourse like analytic discourse aims at meaning. By way of

[1] It should be noted that the top four formulas in the table had already been presented by Lacan in Seminars XVIII and XIX.

meaning, it is clear that I can only deliver to you, to each of you, what you are already on the verge of absorbing. That has a limit, a limit provided by the meaning in which you live. I wouldn't be exaggerating if I said that that doesn't go very far. What analytic discourse brings out is precisely the idea that that meaning is based on semblance *(ce sens est du semblant)*.[2]

If analytic discourse indicates that that meaning is sexual, that can only be by explaining its limit. There is nowhere any kind of a last word if not in the sense in which "word" is "not a word" *(mot, c'est motus)*[3] – I have already stressed that. "No answer, not a word" *(Pas de réponse, mot)*, La Fontaine says somewhere. Meaning *(sens)* indicates the direction toward which it fails *(échoue)*.[4]

Having posited that, which should make you beware understanding too quickly, having taken all these precautions dictated by mere prudence – φρόνησις, as it is expressed in Greek in which so many things were said, but which remained far from what analytic discourse allows us to articulate – here is more or less what is inscribed on the blackboard.

We'll start with the four propositional formulas at the top of the table, two of which lie to the left, the other two to the right. Every speaking being situates itself on one side or the other. On the left, the lower line – $\forall x \Phi x$ – indicates that it is through the phallic function that man as whole acquires his inscription *(prend son inscription)*,[5] with the proviso that this function is limited due to the existence of an x by which the function Φx is negated *(niée)*: $\exists x \overline{\Phi x}$. That is what is known as the father function[6] – whereby we find, via negation, the proposition $\overline{\Phi x}$, which grounds the operativity *(exercice)* of what makes up for the sexual relationship with castration, insofar as that relationship is in no way inscribable. The whole here is thus based on

[2] The French, *semblant,* was still in currency in English in Carlyle's time; see his *Heroes* (1841), verse 284: "Thou art not *true;* thou art not extant, only semblant." It took on the meanings of seeming, apparent, and counterfeit, meanings still associated with the contemporary English "semblance." Jacques-Alain Miller proposes the term "make-believe" to render it in "Microscopia: An Introduction to the Reading of *Television*" (translated by Bruce Fink) in Jacques Lacan, *Television: A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment,* edited by Joan Copjec (New York: Norton, 1990). Here I have generally preferred "semblance"; in the instance at hand, Lacan says *du semblant,* implying either "some semblance" (like some water) or "based on semblance." On semblance see, above all, Lacan's Seminar XVIII, *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant* ("On a Discourse That Would Not Be Based on Semblance").

[3] *Motus* might also be translated as "don't breathe a word of it" or "mum's the word."

[4] *Sens* in French also means "direction."

[5] The French here could perhaps also be rendered as "can be written." *Inscription* in French also means "enrollment," "registration," and "matriculation."

[6] The French here, *la fonction du père,* could also be translated as "the father's function" or "the function of the father."

the exception posited as the end-point *(terme)*, that is, on that which altogether negates Φx.

On the other side, you have the inscription of the woman portion of speaking beings. Any speaking being whatsoever, as is expressly formulated in Freudian theory, whether provided with the attributes of masculinity – attributes that remain to be determined – or not, is allowed to inscribe itself in this part. If it inscribes itself there, it will not allow for any universality – it will be a not-whole, insofar as it has the choice of positing itself in Φx or of not being there *(de n'en pas être)*.[7]

Those are the only possible definitions of the so-called man or woman portion for that which finds itself in the position of inhabiting language.

Underneath – that is, below the horizontal bar where the vertical bar *(division)* is crossed over, that division of what is improperly called humanity insofar as humanity is divided up into sexual identifications – you have a scanded indication of what is in question. On the side of man, I have inscribed $, certainly not to privilege him in any way, and the Φ that props him[8] up as signifier and is also incarnated in S_1, which, of all the signifiers, is the signifier for which there is no signified, and which, with respect to meaning *(sens)*, symbolizes the failure thereof. It is "half-sense," "indesense" *par excellence*, or if you will allow me again, "reti-sense." This $, thus
75 doubled by that signifier on which, in the end, it does not even depend, this $ never deals with anything by way of a partner but object *a* inscribed on the other side of the bar. He is unable to attain his sexual partner, who is the Other, except inasmuch as his partner is the cause of his desire. In this respect, as is indicated elsewhere in my graphs by the oriented conjunction of $ and *a*, this is nothing other than fantasy. This fantasy, in which the subject is caught up *(pris)*, is as such the basis of what is expressly called the "reality principle" in Freudian theory.

Now for the other side. What I am working on this year is what Freud expressly left aside: *Was will das Weib?* "What does woman want?" Freud claims that there is only masculine libido.[9] What does that mean if not that a field that certainly is not negligible is thus ignored. That field is the one of all beings that take on the status of woman – assuming that being takes on anything whatsoever of her destiny. Moreover, it is improper to call her Woman *(la femme)*, because, as I stressed last time, as soon as Woman is enunciated by way of a not-whole, the W cannot be written. There is only barred Woman here.[10] ~~Woman~~ is related to the signifier of A insofar as it is barred. I will illustrate that for you today.

[7] This might also be rendered, "not being part of it."

[8] It's not clear whether *le* here refers to man or $.

[9] The French is difficult to render with the exact degree of negation: *il n'y a de libido que masculine.*

[10] Same structure as in the preceding footnote: *Il n'y a ici de* la *que barré.*

The Other is not simply the locus in which truth stammers. It deserves to represent that to which woman is fundamentally related. Assuredly, we have but sporadic testimonies of this, and that is why I took them up last time in their metaphorical function. Being the Other, in the most radical sense, in the sexual relationship, in relation to what can be said of the unconscious, woman is that which has a relationship to that Other. That is what I would like to articulate a little more precisely today.

Woman has a relation to the signifier of that Other, insofar as, qua Other, it can but remain forever Other. I can only assume here that you will recall my statement that there is no Other of the Other. The Other, that is, the locus in which everything that can be articulated on the basis of the signifier comes to be inscribed, is, in its foundation, the Other in the most radical sense. That is why the signifier, with this open parenthesis, marks the Other as barred: S(Ⱥ).

How can we conceive of the fact that the Other can be, in some sense *(quelque part)*, that to which half – since that it also roughly the biological proportion – half of all speaking beings refer *(se réfère)?*[11] That is nevertheless what is written on the blackboard with the arrow that begins from ~~Woman~~. ~~Woman~~ cannot be said *(se dire)*. Nothing can be said of woman. Woman has a relation with S(Ⱥ), and it is already in that respect that she is doubled, that she is not-whole, since she can also have a relation with Φ.

I designate Φ as the phallus insofar as I indicate that it is the signifier that has no signified, the one that is based, in the case of man, on phallic jouissance. What is the latter if not the following, which the importance of masturbation in our practice highlights sufficiently – the jouissance of the idiot?

2

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After that, to calm you back down, I need but speak to you of love – which I will do in a moment. But what does it mean that I have come to such a pass as to speak to you of love, whereas it is not very compatible with the direction from which analytic discourse can provide a semblance of something that would be science?[12]

You are barely aware of this "would be science." Of course, you know, because I have made you take notice of it, that there was a time when one could, not without reason, assure oneself that scientific discourse was grounded in the Galilean turning point. I have stressed that enough to

[11] The French here could also be translated as "refer themselves," "are related," "relate themselves," etc.

[12] The French here, *serait science,* reappears in the next sentence; in both cases it could also be translated as "would like to be science" or "would constitute science."

assume that, at the very least, some of you have gone back to the sources, I mean to Koyré's work.

Regarding scientific discourse, it is very difficult to maintain equally present two terms that I will mention to you.

On the one hand, scientific discourse has engendered all sorts of instruments that we must, from our vantage point here, qualify as gadgets. You are now, infinitely more than you think, subjects of instruments that, from the microscope right down to the radiotelevision, are becoming the elements of your existence. You cannot currently even gauge the import of this, but it is nonetheless part of what I am calling scientific discourse, insofar as a discourse is what determines a form of social link.

On the other hand – and here there is no linkup – there is a subversion of knowledge *(connaissance)*. Prior to that, no knowledge was conceived that did not participate in the fantasy of an inscription of the sexual link. One cannot even say that the subjects of antiquity's theory of knowledge did not realize that.

Let us simply consider the terms "active" and "passive," for example, that dominate everything that was cogitated regarding the relationship between form and matter, a relationship that was so fundamental, and to which each of Plato's steps refers, and then Aristotle's, concerning the nature of things. It is visible and palpable that their statements are based only on a fantasy by which they tried to make up for what can in no way be said *(se dire)*, namely, the sexual relationship.

The strange thing is that in this crude polarity that makes matter passive and form the agent that animates it, something, albeit something ambiguous, nevertheless got through, namely, that this animation is nothing other than the *a* with which the agent animates what? He animates nothing – he takes the other as his soul.[13]

Consider what progresses over the course of the ages regarding the idea of a God that is not the God of Christian faith, but that of Aristotle – the
77 unmoved mover, the supreme sphere. The idea that there is a being such that all other beings with less being than it can have no other aim than being the most being they can be, is the whole foundation of the idea of the Good in Aristotle's ethics, which I encouraged you to look at in order to grasp the impasses therein. If I base myself now on the inscriptions on the blackboard, it is assuredly revealed that it is in the opaque place of jouissance of the Other, of this Other insofar as woman, if she existed, could be it, that the Supreme Being is situated – this Supreme Being that is manifestly mythical in Aristotle's work, this unmoving sphere from which all movements

[13] The French, *il prend l'autre pour son âme,* could also be translated as "he (mis)takes the other for his soul."

stem, whatever they may be: changes, generations, motions, translations, increases, etc.

It is insofar as her jouissance is radically Other that woman has more of a relationship to God than anything that could have been said in speculation in antiquity following the pathway of that which is manifestly articulated only as the good of man.

The aim of my teaching, insofar as it pursues what can be said and enunciated on the basis of analytic discourse, is to dissociate *a* and A by reducing the first to what is related to the imaginary and the other to what is related to the symbolic.[14] It is indubitable that the symbolic is the basis of what was made into God. It is certain that the imaginary is based on the reflection of one semblable in another.[15] And yet, *a* has lent itself to be confused with S(Ⱥ), below which it is written on the blackboard, and it has done so by means of the function of being. It is here that a scission or detachment remains to be effectuated. It is in this respect that psychoanalysis is something other than a psychology. For psychology is this uneffectuated scission.

3

Now, in order to rest a little, I'm going to allow myself to read to you what I wrote to you a while ago, on what? I wrote from the only place where it is possible to speak of love.

Indeed, people have done nothing but speak of love in analytic discourse. How can one help but sense that, with respect to everything that can be articulated now that scientific discourse has been discovered, it is purely and simply a waste of time? What analytic discourse contributes – and perhaps that is, after all, the reason for its emergence at a certain point in scientific discourse – is that to speak of love is in itself a jouissance.

That is assuredly confirmed by the tangible effect that saying whatever

[14] The French, *ce qui est de l'imaginaire* and *ce qui est du symbolique,* could more literally be translated as "what is of the imaginary" and "what is of the symbolic," or as "what is based on the imaginary" and "what is based on the symbolic."

[15] *Semblable* is often translated as "fellow man" or "counterpart," but in Lacan's usage it refers specifically to the mirroring of two imaginary others *(a* and *a')* who *resemble* each other (or at least see themselves in each other). "Fellow man" – corresponding to the French *prochain* – points to man (not woman), the adult (not the child), and suggests fellowship, whereas *semblable* evokes rivalry and jealousy first and foremost in Lacan's work. "Counterpart" suggests parallel hierarchical structures within which the two people take on similar symbolic roles. My "counterpart" could also be someone who serves to complete or complement me, whereas my *semblable* is someone who is indistinguishable from me, competes with me, and usurps my role (this is especially evident in paranoia, where a total confusion of *a* and *a'* may occur). I have thus preferred to revive here the now archaic English "semblable" found, for example, in *Hamlet,* Act V, Scene II, line 124: "his semblable is his mirror; and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more."

[comes to mind] – the very watchword of the analysand's discourse – is what leads to the *Lustprinzip,* what leads to it most directly, without requiring the accession to the higher spheres that constitutes the foundation of Aristotelian ethics.

78 The *Lustprinzip* is, in effect, based only on the coalescence of *a* with S(Ⱥ).

A is barred by us, of course. That doesn't mean that it suffices to bar it for nothing to exist thereof. If by S(Ⱥ) I designate nothing other than woman's jouissance, it is assuredly because it is with that that I am indicating that God has not yet made his exit.

That is more or less what I wrote for you. What was I, in the end, writing for you? The only thing one can write that is a bit serious – a love letter.

I'm one of those people who doesn't give the psychological presuppositions, thanks to which all of that lasted so long, a good reputation. Still, it is hard to see why the fact of having a soul should be a scandal for thought – if it were true. If it were true, the soul could not be spoken except on the basis of what allows a being – speaking being, to call it by its name – to bear what is intolerable in its world, which assumes that the soul is foreign to it, in other words, phantasmatic. Which considers the soul to be here – in other words, in this world – owing only to its patience and courage in confronting it. That is confirmed by the fact that, up until our time, the soul has never had any other meaning.

It is here that llanguage, llanguage in French must help me out – not, as it sometimes does, by offering me a homonym, like *d'eux* for *deux* or *peut* for *peu,* or this *il peut peu,*[16] which must be there to serve some purpose for us – but simply by allowing me to say that one "souloves" *(âme).*[17] I soulove, you soulove, he souloves. You see here that we can rely only on writing, especially if we include "I so love soulove."[18]

The soul's existence can thus be thrown into question *(mise en cause)* – that's the right term with which to ask whether it's not an effect of love. In effect, as long as the soul souloves the soul *(l'âme âme l'âme),* sex is not involved. Sex doesn't count here. The elaboration from which the soul results is "hommosexual,"[19] as is perfectly legible in history.

What I said earlier about the soul's courage and patience in bearing the world is the true warrant *(répondant)* of what makes Aristotle, in his search for the Good, come up with the following – each of the beings in the world can only orient itself toward the greatest being by confounding its good, its

[16] He (or it) can do little.

[17] Lacan here is combining *aimer,* "to love," and *âme,* "soul."

[18] The French, *jamais j'âmais,* literally means "Never did I soulove," which could also be rendered as "Never did I so soulove."

[19] *Hommosexuelle* is a play on *homme,* "man," and "homosexual."

own good, with that with which the Supreme Being shines. What Aristotle evokes with the term φιλία, namely, what represents the possibility of a bond *(lien)* of love between two of these beings, can also, manifesting the tension toward the Supreme Being, be reversed in the way in which I expressed it – it is in their courage in bearing the intolerable relationship to the Supreme Being that friends, φίλοι, recognize and choose each other. This ethics is manifestly "beyondsex" *(hors-sexe)*,[20] so much so that I would like to give it the accent that Maupassant provides by enunciating somewhere in his work the strange term "Horla."[21] The "Beyondsex" *(Horsexe)* is the man about whom the soul speculated.

But it turns out that women too are in soulove *(âmoureuses)*, in other 79
words, that they soulove the soul. What can that soul be that they soulove in their partner, who is nevertheless homo to the hilt, from which they cannot get away? That can only, in effect, lead them to this final term – and it is not for nothing that I call it as I do – ὑστερια, as it is said in Greek, hysteria, namely, to play the part of the man *(faire l'homme)*,[22] as I have said, being thus *hommosexual* or *beyondsex* themselves – it being henceforth difficult for them not to sense the impasse that consists in the fact that they love each other as the same *(elles se mêment)*[23] in the Other, for, indeed, there is no need to know you are Other to be there *(il n'y a pas besoin de se savoir Autre pour en être)*.

So that the soul may come into being, woman is differentiated from it right from the beginning. She is called woman *(on la dit-femme)* and defamed *(diffâme)*.[24] The most famous *(fameux)* things that have come down to us about women in history are, strictly speaking, what one can say that is infamous *(infamant)*.[25] It is true that she retains the honor of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchuses. There's no need to speak of Cornelia to analysts, who hardly ever think of her, but speak to them of any old Cornelia and they'll

[20] Or "outside of sex."

[21] Guy de Maupassant's short story, *"Le Horla,"* can be found in the *Oeuvres complètes de Guy de Maupassant* (Paris: Louis Conard, 1927), volume 18, pp. 3–48; in English, see *The Life of Henri René Guy de Maupassant* (New York: M. Walter Dunne, 1903), volume 2, pp. 1–35.

[22] *Faire l'homme* means both "to make the man" (e.g., make a man of him) and "to play the man's part"; both meanings may perhaps be expressed in the English "to constitute a man."

[23] This neologistic expression is based on *elles s'aiment* – "they love themselves or each other" – and *même*, which means same in this context. The expression seems to suggest that they find themselves to be the same (in the Other) and love each other for their similarities or love themselves in each other. The last few words of the sentence, *pour en être*, could also be translated as "to be part of it" or "to participate in it."

[24] *Dit-femme* and *diffâme* are homonyms in French; the latter also contains *âme*, "soul."

[25] *Infamant* also means "defamatory." Phonemically speaking, *fameux* and *infamant* both contain *femme*, "woman."

tell you that it won't be very good for her children, the Gracchuses *(Gracques)* – they'll tell whoppers *(craques)* until the end of their existence.

That was the beginning of my letter, an âmusement.

Next I made an allusion to courtly love, which appeared at the time at which hommosexual âmusement had fallen into supreme decadence, in that sort of impossible bad dream known as feudalism. At that level of political degeneracy, it must have become perceptible that, for woman, there was something that could no longer work at all.

The invention of courtly love is not at all the fruit of what people are historically used to symbolizing with the "thesis-antithesis-synthesis." There wasn't the slightest synthesis afterward, of course – in fact, there never is. Courtly love shone as brightly as a meteor in history and afterward we witnessed the return of all the bric-a-brac of a supposed renaissance of stale antiquities. Courtly love has remained enigmatic.

Here there is a little parenthesis – when one gives rise to two *(quand un fait deux)*, there is never a return. They don't revert to making one again, even if it is a new one. *Aufhebung* is one of philosophy's pretty little dreams.

After the meteor of courtly love, what relegated courtly love to its original futility came from an entirely different partition. It required nothing less than scientific discourse, that is, something that owes nothing to the presuppositions of antiquity's soul.

And it is from that alone that psychoanalysis emerged, namely, the objectivization of the fact that the speaking being still spends time speaking to no avail *(en pure perte)*. He still spends time speaking for a purpose that is among the shortest-lived – the shortest-lived, I say, because it is no more than still *(encore)* underway. In other words, it will continue only as long as it takes for it to finally be resolved – that's what we have coming to us – demographically.

80 That is not at all what will fix man's relationship with women. It is Freud's genius to have seen that. Freud, what a funny name – *Kraft durch Freud*, it's a whole platform! It is the funniest leap in the sacred farce of history. One could, perhaps, while this turning point lasts, have an inkling of something that concerns the Other, insofar as woman deals with it.

I am providing now an essential complement to something that has already been very clearly seen, but that would be clarified by seeing by what pathways it was seen.

What was seen, but only regarding men, is that what they deal with is object *a*, and that the whole realization of the sexual relationship leads to fantasy. It was seen, of course, regarding neurotics. How do neurotics make love? That is the question with which people began. They couldn't help but notice that there was a correlation with the perversions – which supports my *a*, because *a* is what is there as the cause, whatever the said perversion.

What is amusing is that Freud at first attributed the perversions to women – see the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality.* That is truly a confirmation that, when one is a man, one sees in one's partner what one props oneself up on, what one is propped up by narcissistically.

But people had the opportunity after that to notice that the perversions, such as we believe we discern them in neurosis, are not that at all. Neurosis consists in dreaming, not perverse acts. Neurotics have none of the characteristics of perverts. They simply dream of being perverts, which is quite natural, for how else could they attain their partner?

People then began to meet perverts – they're the ones Aristotle didn't want to see at all costs. There is in them a subversion of behavior based on a savoir-faire, which is linked to knowledge *(savoir),* knowledge of the nature of things – there is a direct connection between sexual behavior and its truth, namely, its amorality. Put some soul at the beginning of that – âmorality. . . .

There is a morality – that is the consequence – of sexual behavior. The morality of sexual behavior is what is implicit in *(sous-entendu)* everything that has been said about the Good.

But endlessly saying good things leads to Kant where morality shows its true colors. That is what I felt I needed to lay out in an article, "Kant with Sade" – morality admits that it is Sade.

You can write Sade however you like: either with a capital *S,* to render homage to the poor idiot who gave us interminable writings on that subject – or with a lower-case *s,* for, in the final analysis, that's morality's way of being agreeable, and in old French, that is what that means[26] – or, still better, you can write it as *çade,* since one must, after all, say that morality ends at the level of the id *(ça),* which doesn't go very far. Stated differently, the point is that love is impossible and the sexual relationship drops into the abyss of 81
nonsense, which doesn't in any way diminish the interest we must have in the Other.

What we want to know – in what constitutes feminine jouissance insofar as it is not wholly occupied with man, and even insofar, I will say, as it is not, as such, at all occupied with him – what we want to know is the status of the Other's knowledge *(son savoir).*[27]

If the unconscious has taught us anything, it is first of all that somewhere

[26] The old French adjective, *sade,* out of use since the sixteenth century, meant "agreeable" (in reference to persons or things).

[27] The French here could mean "her knowledge," but given the fact that woman is not the grammatical subject of the sentence, and given the context of the preceding and subsequent sentences, "its knowledge" seems more likely, referring thus to the Other. In preceding chapters, however, Lacan raised the question of what woman knows of her jouissance; in any case, later in this section he equates the question of her knowledge with the question of the Other's knowledge.

in the Other it knows *(ça sait)*. It knows because it is based precisely on those signifiers with which the subject constitutes himself.

Now that leads to confusion, because it is difficult for whoever souloves not to think that everything in the world knows what it has to do. If Aristotle props up his God with the unmoving sphere on the basis of which everyone must pursue his good, it is because that sphere is supposed to know what is good for it. That is what the break *(faille)* induced by scientific discourse obliges us to do without.

There is no need to know why – we no longer have any need whatsoever for the knowledge Aristotle situates at the origin. In order to explain the effects of gravitation, we don't need to assume the stone knows where it must land. Imputing a soul to animals makes knowing the act par excellence of nothing other than the body – you see that Aristotle wasn't completely off the wall – except that the body is made for an activity, an ἐνέργεια, and that somewhere the entelechy of this body is based on the substance he calls the soul.

Analysis allows for this confusion by restoring the final cause, by making us say that, as concerns everything at least related to speaking beings, reality is like that – in other words, phantasmatic. Is that something that can, in any way whatsoever, satisfy scientific discourse?

There is, according to analytic discourse, an animal that happens to be endowed with the ability to speak *(qui se trouve parlant)* and who, because he inhabits the signifier, is thus a subject of it.[28] Henceforth, everything is played out for him at the level of fantasy, but at the level of a fantasy that can be perfectly disarticulated in a way that accounts for the following – that he knows a lot more about things than he thinks when he acts. But this isn't tantamount to the beginnings of a cosmology.

That is the eternal ambiguity of the term "unconscious." Certainly, the unconscious is presupposed on the basis of the fact that there is, somewhere in the speaking being, something that knows more about things than he does, but this is not an acceptable model of the world. Psychoanalysis, insofar as it derives its very possibility from the discourse of science, is not a cosmology, though it suffices for man to dream for him to see reemerge this immense bric-a-brac, this cluttered storeroom with which he has to make do, which assuredly makes a soul of him, a soul that is occasionally lovable when something is willing to love it.

A woman can, as I said, love in a man only the way in which he faces the
82 knowledge thanks to which *(dont)*[29] he souloves. But, concerning the knowledge thanks to which *(dont)* he is, the question is raised on the basis of the

[28] Or "is thus subjected to it."

[29] *Dont* is an extremely versatile pronoun that can be translated in many ways: "of which," "by which," "with which," "about which," "whose," etc.

fact that there is something, jouissance, regarding which *(dont)* it is not possible to say whether a woman can say anything about it, whether she can say what she knows about it.

At the end of today's lecture, I have thus arrived, as always, at the edge of what polarized my subject, namely, whether the question of what she knows about it can be raised. That is no different from the question whether the term she gets off on *(dont elle jouit)* beyond all this "playing" *(jouer)* that constitutes her relationship to man – the term I call the Other, signifying it with an A – whether this term knows anything. For it is in this respect that she herself is subjugated *(sujette)* to the Other, just as much as man.

Does the Other know?

There was someone named Empedocles – as if by chance, Freud uses him from time to time like a corkscrew – of whose work we know but three lines, but Aristotle draws the consequences of them very well when he enunciates that, in the end, God was the most ignorant of all beings according to Empedocles, because he knew nothing of hatred. That is what the Christians later transformed into floods of love. Unfortunately, that doesn't fit, because not to know hatred in the least is not to know love in any way either. If God does not know hatred, according to Empedocles, it is clear that he knows less about it than mortals.

The upshot is that one could say that the more a man can believe a woman confuses him with God, in other words, what she enjoys, the less he hates *(haie)*, the less he is *(est)* – both spellings are intended[30] – and since, after all, there is no love without hate, the less he loves.

March 13, 1973

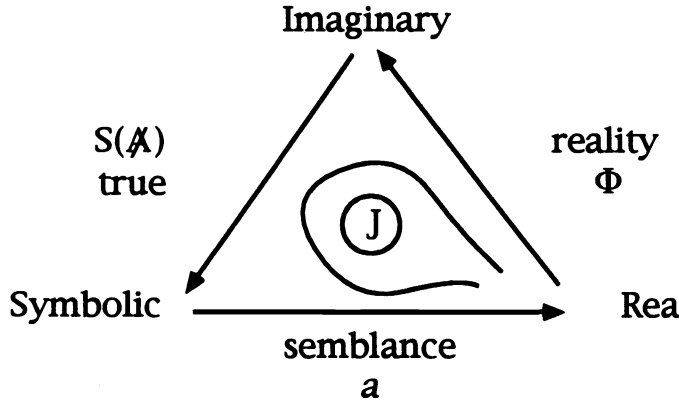
[30] Lacan is playing here on the equivalent pronunciation of *est* and *haie*.

83

VIII

Knowledge and truth

HATELOVING *(L'HAINAMORATION)*.
KNOWLEDGE ABOUT TRUTH.
CONTINGENCY OF THE PHALLIC FUNCTION.
FREUD'S CHARITY.
GETTING OFF ON KNOWLEDGE.
THE UNCONSCIOUS AND WOMAN.



I would really like it if, from time to time, I had a response, even a protest.

I left rather worried the last time, to say the least. It seemed altogether bearable to me, nevertheless, when I reread what I had said – that's my way of saying that it was very good. But I wouldn't be displeased if someone could attest to having understood something. It would be enough for a hand to go up for me to give that hand the floor, so to speak.

I see that no one is putting a hand up, and thus I must go on.

84

1

What I will willingly write for you today as *"hainamoration"*[1] is the depth *(relief)* psychoanalysis was able to introduce in order to situate the zone of

[1] *Hainamoration* is composed of the noun *haine* ("hate") and the adjective *énamoré* ("enamored"). "Depth" probably isn't the best translation for *relief* three words further on; other possible translations include "profile," "terrain," "ground," "outline," and so on.

its experience. It was evidence of good will on its part. If only it had been able to call it by some other name than the bastardized one of "ambivalence," perhaps it would have succeeded better in shaking up the historical setting in which it inserted itself. But perhaps that was modesty on its part.

I mentioned last time that it's no accident Freud arms himself with Empedocles' statement that God must be the most ignorant of all beings, since he does not know hatred. The question of love is thus linked to that of knowledge. I added that Christians transformed God's non-hatred into a mark of love. It is here that analysis reminds us that one knows nothing of love without hate. Well, if the knowledge *(connaissance)* that has been fomented over the course of the centuries disappoints us, and if today we must overhaul the function of knowledge, it is perhaps because hatred has never been put in its proper place.

True, that doesn't seem to be the most desirable thing to mention. That's why I ended last time with the sentence, "One could say that the more a man believes a woman confuses him with God, in other words, what she enjoys," recall the schema I presented last time, "the less he hates," and simultaneously, "the less he is," in other words, in this business, "the less he loves."[2] I wasn't too happy about having ended on that note, which is nevertheless a truth. That is why today I will examine once more in what respect the true and the real apparently get confused.[3]

"The true aims at the real" – that statement is the fruit of a long reduction of pretensions to truth. Wherever truth presents itself, asserts itself as if it were an ideal that could be based on speech,[4] it is not so easily attained. If analysis rests on a presumption, it is that knowledge about truth can be constituted on the basis of its experience.

In the little writing *(gramme)* I gave you of analytic discourse, *a* is written in the upper left-hand corner, and is supported by S_2, in other words, by knowledge insofar as it is in the place of truth. It is from that point that it[5] interrogates $, which must lead to the production of S_1, that is, of the signifier by which can be resolved what? Its relation to truth.

$$\frac{a}{S_2} \rightarrow \frac{\$}{S_1}$$

Schema of Analytic Discourse

Truth, let us say, to go right to the quick, is originally ἀλήθεια, a term 85
about which Heidegger speculated extensively. *Emet,* the Hebrew term, is,

[2] Lacan has slightly changed his formulation since the last time.
[3] The French here, *se confond,* could also be translated as "overlap."
[4] Or "an ideal of which speech could be the medium (or prop)."
[5] "It" here seems to refer to *a,* but could grammatically refer to S_2 or knowledge.

like every term for truth, of juridical origin. Even in our times, a witness is asked to tell the truth, nothing but the truth, and, what's more, the whole truth, if he can – but how, alas, could he? We demand of him the whole truth about what he knows. But, in fact, what is sought – especially in legal testimony – is that on the basis of which one can judge his jouissance.[6] The goal is that jouissance be avowed, precisely insofar as it may be unavowable. The truth sought is the one that is unavowable with respect to the law that regulates jouissance.

It is also in that sense that, in Kant's terms, the problem is raised of what a free man should do when one proposes to him all the jouissances if he denounces the enemy who the tyrant fears is disputing his jouissance. From the imperative that nothing pathetic[7] should dictate testimony, must we deduce that a free man ought to tell the tyrant the truth, even if that means delivering the enemy or rival into the tyrant's hands by his truthfulness? The reservations sparked in all of us by Kant's answer, which is affirmative, stem from the fact that the whole truth is what cannot be told. It is what can only be told on the condition that one doesn't push it to the edge, that one only half-tells *(mi-dire)* it.

Yet another thing restrains *(ligote)* us regarding the status of truth: the fact that jouissance is a limit. This is related to the very structure that was evoked by my "quadripodes" at the time at which I constructed them for you – jouissance is questioned *(s'interpelle)*, evoked, tracked, and elaborated only on the basis of a semblance.

Love itself, as I stressed last time, is addressed to the semblance. And if it is true that the Other is only reached if it attaches itself *(qu'à s'accoler)*, as I said last time, to *a*, the cause of desire, then love is also addressed to the semblance of being. That there-being[8] is not nothing. It is attributed to *(supposé à)*[9] that object that is *a*.

Shouldn't we find anew here the trace that, insofar as such, it (cor)responds to some imaginary? I have expressly designated that imaginary as *I* (*l'*I), isolated here from the term "imaginary." It is only on the basis of the clothing of the self-image that envelops the object cause of desire that the object relationship[10] is most often sustained – that is the very articulation of analysis.

[6] *Ce qu'il en est de sa jouissance* literally means "how things stand with his jouissance," or "the status or state of his jouissance."

[7] "Pathetic" in the Kantian sense of an emotional attachment to a person or thing.

[8] The French here, *cet être-là*, literally "that being over there" or "the being just mentioned," also plays off of the French term for Dasein: *être-là*, "being-there." *Qu'à s'accoler* in the last sentence could also be rendered as "if one attaches oneself."

[9] *Supposé à* would more literally be translated as "assumed in" or "presupposed in."

[10] *Rapport objectal* is not the same as the usual term for object relations in French, *relation d'objet*.

The affinity of *a* to its envelope is one of the major conjunctions put forward by psychoanalysis. To me it essentially introduces a point about which we must be suspicious.

This is where the real distinguishes itself. The real can only be inscribed on the basis of an impasse of formalization. That is why I thought I could provide a model of it using mathematical formalization, inasmuch as it is the most advanced elaboration we have by which to produce signifierness. The mathematical formalization of signifierness runs counter to meaning – I almost said *"à contre-sens."*[11] In our times, philosophers of mathematics say "it means nothing" concerning mathematics, even when they are mathematicians themselves, like Russell. 86

And yet, compared to a philosophy that culminates in Hegel's discourse – a plenitude of contrasts dialectized in the idea of an historical progression, which, it must be said, nothing substantiates for us – can't the formalization of mathematical logic, which is based only on writing *(l'écrit)*, serve us in the analytic process, in that what invisibly holds *(retient)* bodies is designated therein?

If I were allowed to give an image for this, I would easily take that which, in nature, seems to most closely approximate the reduction to the dimensions of the surface writing *(l'écrit)* requires, at which Spinoza himself marveled – the textual work that comes out of the spider's belly, its web. It is a truly miraculous function to see, on the very surface emerging from an opaque point of this strange being, the trace of these writings taking form, in which one can grasp the limits, impasses, and dead ends that show the real acceding to the symbolic.

That is why I do not believe that it was in vain that I eventually came up with the inscriptions *(l'écriture)* a, the $\$$ of the signifier, A, and Φ. Their very writing constitutes a medium *(support)* that goes beyond speech, without going beyond language's actual effects. Its value lies in centering the symbolic, on the condition of knowing how to use it, for what? To retain[12] a congruous truth – not the truth that claims to be whole, but that of the half-telling *(mi-dire)*, the truth that is borne out by guarding against going as far as avowal, which would be the worst, the truth that becomes guarded starting right with *(dès)* the cause of desire.

2

Analysis presumes that desire is inscribed on the basis of a corporal contingency.

[11] *Contre-sens* literally means "counter meaning," "counter direction," "against the tide or current," etc.; figuratively, it means "contradiction."

[12] *Retenir* can mean "to hold," "reserve," "retain," "keep," "carry," "accept," and so on, as well as to "hold back," "check," "stop," "keep back," etc.

Let me remind you what I base this term "contingency" on. The phallus – as analysis takes it up as the pivotal or extreme point of what is enunciated as the cause of desire – analytic experience stops not writing it. It is in this "stops not being written" *(cesse de ne pas s'écrire)*[13] that resides the apex of what I have called contingency.

Analytic experience encounters its terminus *(terme)* here, for the only thing it can produce, according to my writing *(gramme)*, is S_1. I think you still remember the clamor I managed to stir up last time by designating this signifier, S_1, as the signifier of even the most idiotic jouissance – in the two senses of the term, the idiot's jouissance, which certainly functions as a reference here, and also the oddest jouissance.[14]

The necessary is introduced to us by the "doesn't stop" *(ne cesse pas)*. The "doesn't stop" of the necessary is the "doesn't stop being written" *(ne cesse pas de s'écrire)*. Analysis of the reference to the phallus apparently leads us to this necessity.

87 The "doesn't stop not being written," on the contrary, is the impossible, as I define it on the basis of the fact that it cannot in any case be written, and it is with this that I characterize the sexual relationship – the sexual relationship doesn't stop not being written.

Because of this, the apparent necessity of the phallic function turns out to be mere contingency. It is as a mode of the contingent that the phallic function stops not being written. What submits the sexual relationship to being, for speaking beings, but the regime of the encounter is tantamount to contingency. It is only as contingency that, thanks to psychoanalysis, the phallus, reserved in ancient times to the Mysteries, has stopped not being written. Nothing more. It has not entered into the "doesn't stop," that is, into the field on which depend necessity, on the one hand, and impossibility.[15]

The true thus attests here that by making us beware the imaginary, as it does, it has a lot to do with "a-natomy."

It is, in the final analysis, from a depreciatory perspective that I contribute the three terms I write as *a*, $S(\not A)$, and Φ. They are written on the triangle constituted by the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real.[16]

To the right is the scant reality *(peu-de-réalité)*[17] on which the pleasure

[13] *S'écrire* could less idiomatically be translated as "to write itself" or "writing itself."

[14] The Greek root of "idiot," ιδιότης, means "particular" or "peculiar."

[15] I have left out two words before "impossibility," *plus haut,* which are quite vague and could be rendered as "higher up" or "above that" (as if Lacan were referring to a diagram), or as "before that" or "prior to that."

[16] See the triangle on the first page of this chapter.

[17] Cf. André Breton's use of this term in *"Discours sur le peu de réalité"* in his *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Pléaïdes, 1993), vol. 2.

principle is based, which is such that everything we are allowed to approach by way of reality remains rooted in fantasy.

On the other side, what is S(Ⱥ) but the impossibility of telling the whole truth *(tout le vrai)*, about which I spoke earlier?

Lastly, the symbolic, directing itself toward the real, shows us the true nature of object *a*. If I qualified it earlier as a semblance of being, it is because it seems to give us the basis *(support)* of being. In everything elaborated on being and even on essence, in Aristotle's work for example, we can see, if we read it on the basis of analytic experience, that object *a* is what is at stake. Contemplation, for example, Aristotelian contemplation, is based on the gaze, as I defined it in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, as one of the four media *(supports)* that constitute the cause of desire.

With such a "graphicization" – not to say "graph," because that term has a precise meaning in mathematical logic – we see the correspondences that make the real an open [set] between semblance, a result of the symbolic, and reality as it is based on the concreteness of human life: on what leads men, on what makes them always run headlong down the same pathways, and on what is such that the yet-to-be-born *(encore-à-naître)* will never yield anything but *l'encorné*.[18]

On the other side we have *a*. Being on the right path, overall, it would have us take it for being, in the name of the following – that it is apparently something. But it only dissolves *(se résout)*, in the final analysis, owing to its failure, unable, as it is, to sustain itself in approaching the real.

The true, then, of course, is that. Except that it is never reached except by twisted pathways. To appeal to the true, as we are often led to do, is 88
simply to recall that one must not make the mistake of believing that we are already at the level of semblance *(dans le semblant)*. Before the semblance, on which, in effect, everything is based and springs back in fantasy, a strict distinction must be made between the imaginary and the real. It must not be thought that we ourselves in any way serve as a basis for the semblance. We are not even semblance. We are, on occasion, that which can occupy that place, and allow what to reign there? Object *a*.

Indeed, the analyst, of all [those whose] orders of discourse are sustained currently *(actuellement)*[19] – and that word is not nothing, provided we give "action" its full Aristotelian meaning – is the one who, by putting object *a* in the place of semblance, is in the best position to do what should rightfully *(juste)* be done, namely, to investigate the status of truth as knowledge.

[18] *L'encorné* is "someone with horns," a reference to someone who has been cheated on: a cuckold. *L'encore-né* ("the reborn") is a homonym.

[19] There is a problem of grammatical structure in this sentence, as Lacan compares the analyst as a person, instead of analytic discourse, to other orders of discourse.

3

What is knowledge? It is strange that, prior to Descartes, the question of knowledge had never been raised. Analysis had to come onto the scene before this question was raised afresh.

Analysis came to announce to us that there is knowledge that is not known, knowledge that is based on the signifier as such. A dream does not introduce us into any kind of unfathomable experience or mystery – it is read in what is said about it, and one can go further by taking up the equivocations therein in the most anagrammatic sense of the word ["equivocations"]. It is regarding that aspect of language that Saussure raised the question whether the strange punctuation marks he found in the saturnine verses were intentional or not.[20] That is where Saussure was awaiting Freud. And it is where the question of knowledge is raised afresh.

If you will excuse me for borrowing from an entirely different register, that of the virtues inaugurated by the Christian religion, there is here a sort of belated effect, an offshoot of charity. Wasn't it charitable of Freud to have allowed the misery of speaking beings to say to itself that there is – since there is the unconscious – something transcendent, truly transcendent, which is but what the species inhabits, namely, language? Wasn't there, yes, charity in the fact of announcing the news that his everyday life has, in language, a more reasonable basis than it seemed before, and that there is already some wisdom – unattainable object of a vain pursuit – there?

Do we need this whole detour to raise the question of knowledge in the form, "What is it that knows?" Do we realize that it is the Other? – such as I posited it at the outset, as a locus in which the signifier is posited, and without which nothing indicates to us that there is a dimension of truth anywhere, a *dit-mension,* the residence of what is said, of this said *(dit)* whose knowledge posits the Other as locus. The status of knowledge
89 implies as such that there already is knowledge, that it is in the Other, and that it is to be acquired *(à prendre)*. That is why it is related to learning *(fait d'apprendre)*.

The subject results from the fact that this knowledge must be learned, and even have a price put on it – in other words, it is its cost that values it, not as exchange but as use. Knowledge is worth just as much as it costs *(coûte)*, a pretty penny *(beau-coût)*,[21] in that it takes elbow grease[22] and that it's difficult. Difficult to what? Less to acquire it than to enjoy it *(d'en jouir)*.

In the enjoying, the conquest of this knowledge is renewed every time it

[20] A probable reference to Verlaine's *Poèmes saturniens* (1866).
[21] *Beau-coût* sounds just like *beaucoup* in French.
[22] The French here, *qu'il faille y mettre de sa peau,* could also be translated as "one must pay with one's hide (or skin)" or "one must pay in blood."

is exercised, the power it yields always being directed toward its jouissance.

It is strange that it has never been brought out clearly that the meaning of knowledge resides altogether in the fact that the difficulty of its exercise is the very thing that increases the difficulty of its acquisition. That is because, with every exercise of this acquisition, we find anew that there's no point asking which of these repetitions was the first to have been learned.

Of course there are things that run and that certainly seem to work like little machines – they are called computers. I am willing to accept the notion that a computer thinks. But that it knows, who would say such a thing? For the foundation of knowledge is that the jouissance of its exercise is the same as that of its acquisition.

Here we encounter in a sure manner, surer than in Marx's own work, the true nature of use value, since in Marx's work use value serves only as an ideal point in relation to exchange value, to which everything is reduced.

Let us talk about this learned *(appris)* that is not based on exchange. With Marx's knowledge of politics – which is not nothing – one cannot do *"commarxe,"*[23] if you will allow me. No more than one can, with Freud's knowledge, *defraud.*

One has but to look to see that, wherever one does not come by such knowledge *(ces savoirs)* by pounding it into one's head by tough experience, it falls flat. It can neither be imported nor exported. There is no information that stands up unless it is shaped for use *(formé à l'usage).*

Thus is deduced the fact that knowledge is in the Other and owes nothing to being except that the latter has borne *(véhiculé)* the letter thereof. From whence it results that being can kill where the letter reproduces, but never reproduces the same, never the same being of knowledge.

I think you must have an inkling now of the function I grant the letter in relation to knowledge. I beg you not to too quickly associate this function with so-called messages, for it makes the letter analogous to a germ cell, which, in the realm of molecular physiology, must be strictly separated from the bodies with respect to which it transmits *(véhicule)* life and death together.

Marx and Lenin, Freud and Lacan are not coupled in being. It is via the letter they found in the Other that, as beings of knowledge, they proceed two by two, in a supposed Other. What is new about their knowledge is that it doesn't presume the Other knows anything about it – certainly not the 90
being who constituted the letter there[24] – for it is clearly on the basis of the

[23] A combination of commerce and Marx.

[24] The French here, *l'être qui y a fait lettre,* could also be translated as "the being who played the part of (or became) the letter there." The words I have translated as "it doesn't presume the Other knows anything about it," *n'en est pas supposé que l'Autre en sache rien,* could also be translated as "it doesn't presume the Other knows nothing about it."

Other *(de l'Autre)*[25] that he constituted the letter at his own expense, at the price of his being, which, by God, is not nothing at all for each of us, but not a whole lot either, to tell the truth.

I'm going to tell you a little secret about those beings from which the letter is wrought *(d'où se fait la lettre)*. Despite everything people have said, for example, about Lenin, I don't think either hate or love, *hainamoration*, has ever really killed *(étouffé)* anyone. Don't tell me stories about Mrs. Freud! On that score, I have Jung's testimony. He told the truth. Indeed, that was his flaw – he told nothing but that.

Those who still manage to make those kinds of rejections of being are really the ones who partake of scorn *(mépris)*. I will make you write it this time, since today I'm having fun, *méprix*.[26] That makes *uniprix*. We live in the age of supermarkets, so one must know what one is capable of producing, even by way of being.

The hitch is that the Other, the locus, knows nothing. One can no longer hate God if he himself knows nothing – in particular, of what is going on. When one could hate him, one could believe he loved us, since he didn't hate us in return. This is not apparent, despite the fact that, in certain cases, people went at it full speed ahead.

Lastly, as I come to the end of these discourses that I have the strength to pursue before you, I would like to tell you an idea that came to me, about which I have reflected just a little bit. The misfortune of Christ is explained to us by the idea of saving men. I find, rather, that the idea was to save God by giving a little presence and actuality back to that hatred of God regarding which we are, and for good reason, rather indecisive *(mous)*.

That is why I say that the imputation of the unconscious is an incredible act of charity. The subjects know, they know. But all the same, they don't know everything. At the level of this not-everything *(pas-tout)*, only the Other doesn't know. It is the Other who constitutes the not-everything, precisely in that the Other is the part of the not-at-all-knowledgeable *(pas-savant-du-tout)*[27] in the not-everything.

Thus, it may momentarily be convenient to make the Other responsible for this, to which analysis leads in the most avowed manner, though no one realizes it: if libido is only masculine, it is only from where the dear woman

[25] Or "from the Other." It is not clear to me what *il* here (rendered by "he") refers to.

[26] *Prix* itself means "price," and thus *méprix* literally means "mispriced." *Uniprix* (in the next sentence) is the name of a French supermarket and literally means "one price" or "united price." "Supermarkets" (in the sentence after that) is in English in the original.

[27] The French here could also be translated as "not-knowledgeable-of-the-whole."

is whole, in other words, from the place from which man sees her, that the dear woman can have an unconscious.

And what does it help her do?[28] It helps her, as everyone knows, make the speaking being, who is reduced here to man, speak, in other words – I don't know if you have noticed this in analytic theory – it helps her exist only as mother. She has unconscious effects, but her unconscious – at the limit point at which she is not responsible for everyone's unconscious, in other words, at the point at which the Other she deals with, the Other with a capital *O*, works in such a way that she knows nothing, because the Other knows even less, given how difficult it is to even maintain its existence – this 91
unconscious, what can we say of it, if not to sustain with Freud that it doesn't leave her sitting pretty?

The last time, I played *(joué)*, as I allow myself to do, on the equivocation, a bit farfetched, between *il hait* (he hates) and *il est* (he is). I enjoy *(jouis)* that equivocation only insofar as I ask whether it is worthy of a pair of scissors. That is precisely what is at stake in castration.

That being as such may provoke hatred cannot be ruled out. Certainly, Aristotle's whole concern was, on the contrary, to conceive of being as that by which beings with less being participate in the highest of beings. And Saint Thomas succeeded in reintroducing that into the Christian tradition – which is not surprising given that, having spread among the Gentiles, the Christian tradition had necessarily been thoroughly shaped thereby, the upshot being that one had but to pull the strings for it to work again. But do people realize that everything in the Jewish tradition goes against that? The dividing line *(coupure)* there does not run from the most perfect to the least perfect. The least perfect there is quite simply what it is, namely, radically imperfect, and one must but obey with the finger and the eye, if I dare express myself thus, he who bears the name Jahve, and several other names to boot. The latter chose his people and one cannot go against that.

Isn't it revealed therein that it is far better to betray him occasionally than to "be-thrate" him *(l'être-haïr)*,[29] the former being what the Jews obviously did not deprive themselves of doing. They couldn't work it out *(en sortir)* any other way.

On the subject of hatred, we're so deadened *(étouffés)* that no one realizes that a hatred, a solid hatred, is addressed to being, to the very being of someone who is not necessarily God.

We remain stuck – and that is why I said that *a* is a semblance of being –

[28] The French, *à quoi ça lui sert,* could also be translated as "what good does it do her" or "what purpose does it serve for her."

[29] Lacan here combines the verbs to be and to hate, but *l'ê tre-haïr* can also be heard as *le trahir,* "to betray him."

at the level – and it is in that respect that analysis, as always, is a little bit lame – of the notion of jealous hatred, the hatred that springs forth from "jealouissance," the hatred that "sprimages forth" *(s'imageaillisse)*[30] from the gaze of the little guy observed by Saint Augustine. Augustine is there as a third party. He observes the little guy and, *pallidus,* the latter pales in observing the *conlactaneum suum* hanging on the nipple. Fortunately, this [jealouissance] is the first substitute jouissance, according to Freud – the desire evoked on the basis of a metonymy that is inscribed on the basis of a presumed demand, addressed to the Other, that is, on the basis of the kernel[31] of what I called *Ding,* in my seminar, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* namely, the Freudian Thing, in other words, the very neighbor *(prochain)* Freud refuses to love beyond certain limits.

The child who is gazed at has it – he has the *a.* Is having the *a* the same as being it? That is the question with which I will leave you today.

March 20, 1973

92

Complement

Beginning of the next class: THE LINGUIST'S POSITION.

I hardly ever talk about what comes out when it is something by me, especially since I generally have to wait so long for it that my interest in it wanes. Nevertheless, it wouldn't be bad for next time if you read something I entitled *"L'Étourdit,"* that begins with the distance there is between the saying *(dire)* and the said *(dit).*

The fact that being may reside only in what is said *(Qu'il n'y ait d'être que dans le dit)* is a question I'll leave open. It is certain that nothing is said but of being *(il n'y a du dit que de l'être),* yet that does not imply the inverse. On the contrary, and this is something I have said *(mon dire),* the unconscious is only on the basis of what is said *(il n'y a de l'inconscient que du dit).* We can deal with the unconscious only on the basis of what is said, of what is said by the analysand. That is a saying *(dire).*

How to say it? That is the question. One cannot speak any old which way, and that is the problem of whoever inhabits language, namely, all of us.

[30] *S'imageaillisse* contains *s'image* and *jaillisse* and seems to suggest a sort of springing forth from the image.

[31] The French here could be translated in many different ways due to the ambiguity of the thrice repeated *de: le désir évoqué d'une métonymie qui s'inscrit d'une demande supposée, adressée à l'Autre, de ce noyau. . . .* What I have thrice translated as "on the basis of" could be replaced by "from," "by," "of," or "due to." The third *de* could also be understood as linked to *demande,* thus suggesting the translation "a presumed demand, addressed to the Other, for the kernel. . . ." *Noyau* (kernel) could also be translated as "nucleus" or "core."

That is why today – regarding the gap I wanted to express one day by distinguishing what I do here from linguistics, the former being linguistricks – I asked someone, who to my great appreciation was willing to grant my request, to come today to tell you how things stand currently from the linguist's position. No one is better qualified than the person I present to you, Jean-Claude Milner, a linguist.

End of the class: thank-you's.

I don't know what I can do in the quarter of an hour that remains. I will take an ethical notion as my guide. Ethics, as perhaps can be glimpsed by those who heard me speak about it formerly, is closely related to our inhabiting of language, and it is also – as a certain author whom I will mention another time has laid it out – in the realm of gestures. When one inhabits language, there are gestures one makes, greeting *(salutation)* gestures, prostration gestures on occasion, and gestures of admiration when it is a question of another vanishing point *(point de fuite)* – beauty. That implies that things go no further. One makes a gesture and then one conducts oneself like everyone else, namely, like the rest of the riffraff *(canailles)*.

Nevertheless, there are gestures and then there are gestures. The first gesture that is literally dictated to me by this ethical reference must be that of thanking Jean-Claude Milner for what he has told us concerning the present state of the fault line *(faille)* that is opening up in linguistics itself. That justifies perhaps a certain number of behaviors that we perhaps owe – I'm speaking for myself – only to a certain distance we were at from this 93
science on the rise, when it believed that it could become a science. It was truly urgent for us to obtain the information we have just received. Indeed, it is very hard not to realize that, regarding analytic technique, if the subject sitting across from us doesn't say anything, it is a difficulty concerning which the least one can say is that it is altogether unusual *(spéciale)*.

What I put forward, by writing *lalangue* [llanguage] as one word, is that by which I distinguish myself from structuralism, insofar as the latter would like to integrate language into semiology – and that seems to me one of the numerous lights Jean-Claude Milner shed on things. As is indicated by the little book that I had you read entitled *The Title of the Letter,* what is at stake in everything I have put forward is the sign's subordination with respect to the signifier.

I must also take the time to render homage to Recanati who, in his intervention, certainly proved to me that I had been heard *(entendu)*.[32] This can be seen in all the cutting-edge questions he raised – they are, in a sense, the

[32] *Entendu* also means "understood."

questions for which I have the rest of the year to provide you with what I now have by way of a response. The fact that he ended on the question of Kierkegaard and Regine is absolutely exemplary. As I had hitherto made but a brief allusion to them, it was certainly his own contribution. One cannot better illustrate the way in which the ground-breaking I am engaging in before you resonates, than when someone grasps what is at stake. The questions he asked me will certainly be helpful in what I will say to you in what follows. I will ask him for the written text of his talk so that I can refer to it when I am about to respond.

He also referred to Berkeley, and it is insofar as there wasn't the slightest allusion to Berkeley in what I have enunciated before you that I am still more grateful to him. To tell you the whole story, I even took the trouble quite recently to find a first edition – you see I'm a bibliophile, but it's only books I want to read that I try to find first editions of – and thus, last Sunday, I again came across the *Minute Philosopher,* also known as *Alciphron.* It is clear that if Berkeley hadn't been among my earliest reading, many things, including my freewheeling use of linguistic references, probably wouldn't have been possible.

I would nevertheless like to say something concerning the schema Recanati had to erase earlier.[33] To be hysterical or not – that is truly the question. Is there One or not? In other words, this not-whole *(pas-toute),* in classical logic, seems to imply the existence of the One that constitutes *(fait)* an exception. Henceforth, it would be there that we would see the emergence in an abyss – and you will see why I qualify it thusly – of that existence, that at-least-one existence that, with regard to the function Φx, is inscribed in order to speak it *(s'inscrit pour la dire).*[34] For the property of what is said is
94 being, as I said earlier. But the property of the act of saying is to ex-sist in relation to any statement *(dit)* whatsoever.[35]

The question then arises whether, given a not-whole, an objection to the universal, something can result that would be enunciated as a particular that contradicts the universal – you can see that I am remaining here at the level of Aristotelian logic.[36]

In that logic, on the basis of the fact that one can write "not-every *(pas-tout)* x is inscribed in Φx," one deduces by way of implication that there is

[33] Recanati apparently spoke at Lacan's seminar four months earlier, and thus it seems there may be an error in the French text here. Recanati had also mentioned Berkeley when he spoke at Lacan's Seminar the year before (June 14, 1972).

[34] *La* here could refer either to "existence" or "function," but "function" seems most likely.

[35] The French here reads *exister,* but the context seems to require *ex-sister.*

[36] As Aristotelian logic is usually understood, $\sim\forall x\Phi x$ (that is, not all x's such that phi of x) would normally imply $\exists x\sim\Phi x$ (that is, the *existence* of a particular x to which the phi function does not apply, of an x that denies universality).

an x that contradicts it. But that is true on one sole condition, which is that, in the whole or the not-whole in question, we are dealing with the finite. Regarding that which is finite, there is not simply an implication but a strict equivalence.[37] It is enough for there to be one that contradicts the universalizing formula for us to have to abolish that formula and transform it into a particular. The not-whole becomes the equivalent of that which, in Aristotelian logic, is enunciated on the basis of the particular. There is an exception. But we could, on the contrary, be dealing with the infinite. Then it is no longer from the perspective of extension that we must take up the not-whole *(pas-toute)*. When I say that woman is not-whole and that that is why I cannot say Woman, it is precisely because I raise the question *(je mets en question)* of a jouissance that, with respect to everything that can be used[38] in the function Φx, is in the realm of the infinite.

Now, as soon as you are dealing with an infinite set, you cannot posit that the not-whole implies the existence of something that is produced on the basis of a negation or contradiction. You can, at a pinch, posit it as an indeterminate existence. But, as we know from the extension of mathematical logic, that mathematical logic which is qualified as intuitionist, to posit a "there exists," one must also be able to construct it, that is, know how to find where that existence is.

I base myself on that when I produce this quartering *(écartèlement)*[39] that posits an existence that Recanati has very well qualified as eccentric to the truth. This indetermination is suspended between $\exists x$ and $\overline{\exists x}$, between an existence that is found by affirming itself and woman insofar as she is not found,[40] which is confirmed by the case of Regine.

In closing, I will tell you something that will constitute, as is my wont, a bit of an enigma. If you reread somewhere something I wrote entitled "The Freudian Thing," you should find therein the following, that there is only one way to be able to write Woman without having to bar it – that is at the level at which woman is truth. And that is why one can only half-speak of her.

The article on which Jean-Claude Milner's exposé was based can be found in his book, Arguments linguistiques, *pages 179–217 (Paris: Seuil, 1973).*

April 10, 1973

[37] In other words, $\sim\forall x\Phi x = \exists x\sim\Phi x$.

[38] If the French here, *se sert,* is changed to the identically pronounced *se serre,* the words "can be used" could read "is encompassed."

[39] The French here means splitting up or quartering (as by horses), and refers no doubt to Lacan's four formulas of sexuation. The last few words of this sentence, *excentrique à la vérité,* could also be translated as "eccentric with respect to the truth."

[40] *Elle ne se trouve pas* can also mean "she does not find herself."

95

IX

On the Baroque

WHERE IT SPEAKS, IT ENJOYS, AND IT KNOWS NOTHING.

I think of you *(Je pense à vous)*. That does not mean that I conceptualize you *(je vous pense)*.

Perhaps someone here remembers that I once spoke of a language in which one would say, "I love to you" *(j'aime à vous)*,[1] that language modeling itself better than others on the indirect character of that attack called love.

"I think of you" *(Je pense à vous)* already constitutes a clear objection to everything that could be called "human sciences" in a certain conception of science – not the kind of science that has been done for only a few centuries, but the kind that was defined in a certain way with Aristotle. The consequence is that one must wonder, regarding the crux *(principe)* of what analytic discourse has contributed, by what pathways the new science that is ours can proceed.

That implies that I first formulate where we are starting from. We are starting from what analytic discourse provides us, namely, the unconscious. That is why I will first refine for you a few formulations that are a bit tough going concerning where the unconscious stands with respect to traditional science. That will lead me to raise the following question: how is a science still possible after what can be said about the unconscious?

I will announce to you already that, as surprising as it may seem, that will lead me to talk to you today about Christianity.

1

I will begin with my difficult formulations, or at least I assume they must be difficult: "The unconscious is not the fact that being thinks" – though that is implied by what is said thereof in traditional science – "the uncon-

[1] See Seminar XIX, February 9, 1972.

scious is the fact that being, by speaking, enjoys, and," I will add, "wants to know nothing more about it." I will add that that means "know nothing about it at all."

To immediately show you a card I could have made you wait a little while for – "there's no such thing as a desire to know," that famous *Wissentrieb* Freud points to somewhere.[2] 96

Freud contradicts himself there. Everything indicates – that is the meaning of the unconscious – not only that man already knows all he needs to know, but that this knowledge is utterly and completely limited to that insufficient jouissance constituted by the fact that he speaks.

You see that that implies a question regarding the status of the actual science we clearly possess that goes by the name of a physics. In what sense does this new science concern the real? The problem with the kind of science I qualify as traditional, because it comes to us from Aristotle's thought, is that it implies that what is thought of *(le pensé)*[3] is in the image of thought, in other words, that being thinks.

To take an example that is close to home for you, I will state that what makes what we call "human relations" bearable is not thinking about them.

It is on that point that what is comically called "behaviorism"[4] is ultimately based – behavior, according to behaviorism can be observed in such a way that it is clarified by its end. People hoped to found human sciences thereupon, encompassing all behavior, there being no intention of any subject presupposed therein. On the basis of a finality posited as the object of that behavior, nothing is easier – that object having its own regulation – than to imagine it in the nervous system.

The hitch is that behaviorism does nothing more than inject therein everything that has been elaborated philosophically, "Aristotlely," concerning the soul. And thus nothing changes. That is borne out by the fact that behaviorism has not, to the best of my knowledge, distinguished itself by any radical change in ethics, in other words, in mental habits, in the *fundamental* habit. Man, being but an object, serves an end. He is founded on the basis of his final cause – regardless of what we may think, it's still there – which, in this case, is to live or, more precisely, to survive, in other words, to postpone death and dominate his rival.

It is clear that the number of thoughts implicit in such a world view, such a "Weltanschauung" as they say, is utterly incalculable. What is at stake is the constant equation of thought and that which is thought of.[5]

[2] See, for example, SE VII, 194, where it is translated as "instinct for knowledge," and SE X, 245 where it is translated as "epistemophilic instinct."

[3] *Le pensé* (unlike *la pensée,* thought) is "that which is conceptualized."

[4] Whenever Lacan mentions behaviorism here, he uses the English term instead of the French *comportementalisme.*

[5] That is, of thought and the "reality" thought "thinks" or conceptualizes.

What is clearest about traditional science's way of thinking is what is called its "classicism" – namely, the Aristotelian reign of the class, that is, of the genus and the species, in other words, of the individual considered as specified. It is also the aesthetic that results therefrom, and the ethics that is ordained thereby. I will qualify that ethics in a simple way, an overly simple way that risks making you see red, that's the word for it, but you would be wrong to see too quickly – "thought is on the winning side *(du côté du manche)*, and that which is thought of is on the other side," which can be read in the fact that the winner is speech – only speech explains and justifies *(rend raison)*.[6]

97 In that sense, behaviorism does not leave behind the classical. It is the said winner *(dit-manche)* – the Sunday *(dimanche)*[7] of life, as Queneau says,[8] not without at the same time revealing therein being as abased.

It's not obvious at first. But what I will point out is that that *Sunday* was read and approved of by someone who, in the history of thought, knew quite a bit, namely, Kojève, and who recognized in it nothing less than absolute knowledge such as it is promised to us by Hegel.

2

As someone recently noticed, I am situated *(je me range)* – who situates me? is it him or is it me? that's a subtlety of llanguage[9] – I am situated essentially on the side of the baroque.

That is a reference point borrowed from the history of art. Since the history of art, just like history and just like art, is something that is related not to the winning side but to the sleeve *(la manche)*,[10] in other words, to sleight of hand, I must, before going on, tell you what I mean by that – the subject, "I," being no more active in that "I mean" than in the "I am situated."

And that is what is going to make me delve into the history of Christianity. Weren't you expecting it?

[6] *Du côté du manche* also means "thought has the whiphand (or the upper hand)." *Le manche* literally means "handle," and the expression seems to imply "holding the reins." *Rendre raison* is usually used in the expression *rendre raison de quelque chose à quelqu'un*, "to explain or justify something to someone."

[7] With this neologism, *dit-manche*, Lacan is playing on the identical pronunciation of *dimanche*, "Sunday," and the combination of *dit* ("the said" or "spoken") and *manche*, "the winning side" (which also means "set" in tennis and "handle," as mentioned above).

[8] *Le dimanche de la vie* (literally, "The Sunday of Life") is the title of one of Raymond Queneau's novels.

[9] In French, *je me range*, could equally well mean "I situate myself" or "I am situated" (by someone else).

[10] *La manche* is a rubber (or round), as in the card game of bridge, or a sleeve; *la Manche* is the English Channel.

The baroque is, at the outset, the "storyette"[11] or little tale of Christ. I mean what history recounts about a man. Don't blow a fuse trying to figure it out – he himself designated himself as the Son of Man. That is reported by four texts said to be "evangelical," not so much because they bore good news as because (their authors) were announcers who were good at propagating their sort of news. It can also be understood that way, and that strikes me as more appropriate. They write in such a way that there is not a single fact that cannot be challenged therein – God knows that people naturally ran straight at the muleta. These texts are nonetheless what go right to the heart of truth, the truth as such, up to and including the fact I enunciate, that one can only say it halfway.

That is a simple indication. Their shocking success would imply that I take up these texts and give you lessons on the Gospels. You see what that would lead to.

I would do that to show you that those texts can best be grasped in light of the categories I have tried to isolate in analytic practice, namely, the symbolic, imaginary, and real.

To restrict our attention to the first, I enunciated that truth is the "dit-mension," the "mension" of what is said *(la mension du dit)*.[12]

In this vein, you can't say it any better than the Gospels. You can't speak any better of the truth. That is why they are the Gospels. You can't even bring the dimension of truth into play any better, in other words, push away 98
reality in fantasy *(mieux repousser la réalité dans le fantasme)*.[13]

After all, what followed demonstrated sufficiently – I am leaving behind the texts and will confine my attention to their effect – that this dit-mension stands up. It inundated what we call the world, bringing it back to its filthy truth *(vérité d'immondice)*. It relayed what the Roman, a mason like no other, had founded on the basis of a miraculous, universal balance, including baths of jouissance sufficiently symbolized by those famous thermal baths of which only crumbled bits remain. We can no longer have the slightest idea to what extent, regarding jouissance, that took the cake. Christianity rejected all that to the abjection considered to be the world. It is thus not without an intimate affinity to the problem of the true that Christianity subsists.

That it is the true religion, as it claims, is not an excessive claim, all the more so in that, when the true is examined closely, it's the worst that can be said about it.

[11] The term Lacan uses here, *historiole,* seems to be a neologism.

[12] *Mension* is a neologism, combining the homonyms *mansion* (from the Latin *mansio,* "dwelling," which in French was the term for each part of a theater set in the Middle Ages) and *mention* ("mention," "note," or "honors," as in *cum laude*). It is also the last part of the word "dimension."

[13] Or "back reality into fantasy."

Once one enters into the register of the true, one can no longer exit it. In order to relegate the truth to the lowly status it deserves, one must have entered into analytic discourse. What analytic discourse dislodges[14] puts truth in its place, but does not shake it up. It is reduced, but indispensable. Hence its consolidation, against which nothing can prevail – except what still subsists of the wisdom traditions, though they have not confronted it, Taoism, for example, and other doctrines of salvation in which what is at stake is not truth but the pathway, as the very name "Tao" indicates, and to manage to prolong something that resembles it.

It is true that the storyette of Christ is presented, not as the enterprise of saving men, but as that of saving God. We must recognize that he who took on this enterprise, namely Christ, paid the price – that's the least we can say about it.

We should be surprised that the result seems to satisfy people. The fact that God is indissolubly three is such as to make us prejudge that the count "1-2-3" pre-existed him. One of the two following statements must be true: either he takes into account only the retroactive effect *(l'après-coup)* of Christian revelation, and it is his being that suffers a blow – or the three is prior to him, and it is his unity that takes a hit. Whence it becomes conceivable that God's salvation is precarious and ultimately dependent upon the goodwill of Christians.

What is amusing is obviously – I already told you this, but you didn't catch it – that atheism is tenable only to clerics.[15] It is far more difficult for lay people, whose innocence in that realm remains utter and complete. Recall poor Voltaire. He was a clever, agile, devious, and extraordinarily quick-witted guy, but was altogether worthy of being placed in the umbrella stand[16] across the way known as the Pantheon.

Freud fortunately gave us a necessary interpretation – it doesn't stop *(ne*
99 *cesse pas)* being written, as I define the necessary – of the murder of the son as founding the religion of grace.[17] He didn't say it quite like that, but he clearly noted that this murder was a mode of negation *(dénégation)* that constitutes a possible form of the avowal of truth.

That is how Freud saves the Father once again. In that respect he imitates Jesus Christ. Modestly, no doubt, since he doesn't pull out all the stops.

[14] This is, perhaps, a reference to Marie Bonaparte's reductionistic translation of Freud's *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden: Le moi déloge le ça* ("The ego dislodges the id").

[15] The French here, *soutenable que par les clercs,* could also be translated as "bearable only to clerics."

[16] The French here, *vide-poches,* literally refers to a small piece of furniture into which one empties one's pockets. Seminar XX was held in the law school across the square from the Pantheon.

[17] See SE XXI, 136.

But he contributes thereto, playing his little part as a good Jew who was not entirely up-to-date.

There are plenty like that.[18] We must regroup them in order to get them moving. How long will it last?

There is something that I would nevertheless like to get at concerning the essence of Christianity. You're going to have to bust your asses to follow me here.

First I will have to back up a bit.

3

The soul – you have to read Aristotle – is obviously what the winning thought leads to.

It is all the more necessary – that is, it doesn't stop being written – since what the thought in question elaborates are thoughts about *(sur)* the body.

The body should impress you more. In fact, that is what impresses classical science – how can it work like that? A body, yours or any other one besides, a roving body, must suffice unto itself.[19] Something made me think of it, a little syndrome that I saw emerge from my ignorance, and that I was reminded of – if it so happened that one's tears dried up, the eye wouldn't work very well anymore. I call such things miracles of the body. That can be grasped immediately. What if the lachrymal gland didn't cry or drip anymore? You would run into trouble.

On the other hand, the fact is that it snivels, and why the devil does it when, corporally, imaginarily or symbolically, someone steps on your foot? Someone *affects* you – that's what it's called. What relation is there between that sniveling and the fact of parrying the unexpected, in other words, getting the hell out of there *(se barrer)?* That's a vulgar formulation, but it says what it means, because it precisely reconverges with the barred subject *(sujet barré),* some consonance of which you hear therein. Indeed, the subject gets the hell out of there *(se barre),*[20] as I said, and more often than it is his turn to do so.

Observe here simply that there are many advantages to unifying the expression for the symbolic, imaginary, and real – I am saying this to you in parentheses – as Aristotle did, who did not distinguish movement from αλλοίωσις. Change and motion in space were for him – though he didn't

[18] It is not at all clear to me what Lacan is referring to in this paragraph. *C'est excessivement répandu* could also be translated as "That's all too common." The only plural noun "them" could refer to in the next sentence seems to be Freud and Voltaire (lay people) or the three that God is, mentioned four paragraphs back.

[19] The French, *il faut que ça se suffise,* could also be translated as "it must be self-sufficient (or self-contained)."

[20] The French here literally means "bars himself."

realize it – the fact that the subject gets the hell out of there. Obviously
100 Aristotle didn't have the true categories, but, all the same, he sensed things very well.

In other words, what is important is that all that hang together well enough for the body to subsist, barring any accident, as they say, whether external or internal. Which means that the body is taken for what it presents itself to be, an enclosed body *(un corps fermé)*.

Isn't it plain to see that the soul is nothing other than the supposed identicalness *(identité)* of this body to everything people think in order to explain it? In short, the soul is what one thinks regarding the body – on the winning side.

And people are reassured by thinking that the body thinks in the same way. Hence the diversity of explanations. When it is assumed to think secretly, there are secretions. When it is assumed to think concretely, there are concretions. When it is assumed to think information, there are hormones. And still further, it gives itself over *(s'adonne)* to DNA *(ADN)*, to Adonis.

All of that to bring you to the following, which I announced at the beginning regarding the subject of the unconscious – because I don't speak just casually, to waste my breath[21] – it is truly odd that the fact that the structure of thought is based on language is not thrown into question in psychology. The said language – that's the only thing that's new in the term "structure," others do whatever they feel like with it, but what I point out is that – the said language brings with it considerable inertia, which is seen by comparing its functioning to signs that are called mathematical – "mathemes" – solely because they are integrally transmitted. We haven't the slightest idea what they mean, but they are transmitted. Nevertheless, they are not transmitted without the help of language, and that's what makes the whole thing shaky.

If there is something that grounds being, it is assuredly the body. On that score, Aristotle was not mistaken. He sorted out many of them, one by one – see his history of animals. But he doesn't manage, if we read him carefully, to link it to his affirmation – naturally you have never read *De Anima (On the Soul)*, despite my supplications – that man thinks *with* – instrument – his soul, that is, as I just told you, the presumed mechanisms on which the body is based.

Naturally, you have to watch out. We are the ones who introduce mechanisms because of our physics – which is already, moreover, on a dead end path because, ever since the rise of quantum physics, mechanisms don't

[21] The French here, *comme on flûte* (literally, "the way people play the flute"), recalls the expression, *c'est comme si je flûtais*, meaning "as if I were talking to a brick wall, to no purpose, to myself," etc.

work. Aristotle didn't enter into the narrow straits of mechanisms. Thus, "man thinks with his soul" means that man thinks with Aristotle's thought. In that sense, thought is naturally on the winning side.

It is obvious that people have nevertheless tried to do better. There is still something else prior to quantum physics – "energetism" and the idea of homeostasis. What I called inertia in the function of language is such that all speech is an energy not yet taken up in an energetics, because that energetics is not easy to measure. Energetics means bringing out, in energy, not 101
quantities, but numbers chosen in a completely arbitrary fashion, with which one arranges things in such a way that there is always a constant somewhere. We are forced to take up the inertia in question at the level of language itself.

What possible relationship can there be between the articulation that constitutes language and the jouissance that reveals itself to be the substance of thought, of that thought so easily reflected in the world by traditional science? That jouissance is the one that makes it such that God is the Supreme Being and that that Supreme Being can, as Aristotle said, be nothing other than the locus in which the good of all the others is known. That doesn't have much to do with thought – does it? – if we consider it to be dominated above all by the inertia of language.

It's not very surprising that no one knew how to grasp or catch jouissance, how to make it squeal, by using what seems to best prop up the inertia of language, namely, the idea of a chain, in other words, bits of string – bits of string that constitute rings and hook onto each other, though we're not too sure how.

I already presented this notion to you once before, and I will try to do better. Last year – I myself am surprised, as I get older, that last year's things seem a hundred years away to me – I took as my theme a formulation that I felt I could base on the Borromean knot: "I ask you to refuse what I offer you because that's not it" *(parce que ce n'est pas ça)*.[22]

That formulation is carefully designed to have an effect, like all those I proffer. See *"L'Étourdit."* I didn't say "the saying remains forgotten" and so on – I said "the fact that one says." Similarly here, I did not say "because that's all it is" *(parce que ce n'est que ça)*.

"That's not it" is the very cry by which the jouissance obtained is distinguished from the jouissance expected. It is here that what can be said in language is specified. Negation certainly seems to derive therefrom. But nothing more.

Structure, which connects up here, demonstrates nothing if not that it is of the same text as jouissance, insofar as, in marking by what distance jouis-

[22] See Seminar XIX, . . . *ou pire,* class given on February 9, 1972.

sance misses – the jouissance that would be in question if "that were it" – structure does not presuppose merely the jouissance that would be it, it also props up another.

Voilà. This dit-mension – I am repeating myself, but we are in a domain where law is repetition – this dit-mension is Freud's saying *(dire)*.

Indeed, that is the proof of Freud's existence – in a certain number of years we will need one. Earlier I associated him with a little friend, Christ. The proof of Christ's existence is obvious: it's Christianity. Christianity, in fact, is attached to it. Anyway, for the time being, we have the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* that I asked you to look at, because I will have to
102 use it again concerning what I call *la dérive* to translate *Trieb*, the drift of jouissance.[23]

All of that, I insist, is precisely what was covered over *(collabé)* during the whole of philosophical antiquity by the idea of knowledge.

Thank God, Aristotle was intelligent enough to isolate in the intellect-agent what is at stake in the symbolic function. He simply saw that the symbolic is where the intellect must act *(agir)*. But he wasn't intelligent enough – because he hadn't benefited from *(joui de)* Christian revelation – to think that speech *(une parole)*,[24] even his own, by designating the *νοῦς* that is based only on language, concerns jouissance, the latter nevertheless being designated metaphorically throughout his work.

The whole business of matter and form – what a lot of old claptrap it suggests concerning copulation! It[25] would have allowed him to see that that's not it at all, that there isn't the slightest knowledge *(connaissance)*, but that the jouissances that prop up the semblance thereof are something like the spectrum of white light – on the sole condition that one see that the jouissance at stake is outside the field of that spectrum.

It's a question of metaphor. Regarding the status of jouissance, we must situate the false finality as corresponding to the pure fallacy of a jouissance that would supposedly correspond to the sexual relationship.[26] In this respect, all of the jouissances are but rivals of the finality that would be constituted if jouissance had the slightest relationship with the sexual relationship.

[23] *Dérive* literally means "drift," but is very close in spelling to the English term for *Trieb*, "drive."

[24] Or "a word."

[25] "It" here seems to refer back to "Christian revelation" or to the notion that speech concerns jouissance.

[26] The French here, *adéquate au rapport sexuel*, implies a number of things that English cannot adequately render in a word: a jouissance that is supposedly "adequate to the sexual relationship," "sufficient for a sexual relationship (to be constituted)," and "appropriate." It would answer to it or correspond to it.

4

I'm going to add a little more frosting on the Christ, because he is an important personage, and because it fits into my commentary on the baroque. It's not without reason that people say that my discourse has something baroque about it.

I am going to raise a question – of what importance can it be in Christian doctrine that Christ have a soul? That doctrine speaks only of the incarnation of God in a body, and assumes that the passion suffered in that person constituted another person's jouissance. But there is nothing lacking here, especially not a soul.

Christ, even when resurrected from the dead, is valued for his body, and his body is the means by which communion in his presence is incorporation – oral drive – with which Christ's wife, the Church as it is called, contents itself very well, having nothing to expect from copulation.

In everything that followed from the effects of Christianity, particularly in art – and it's in this respect that I coincide with the "baroquism" with which I accept to be clothed – everything is exhibition of the body evoking jouissance – and you can lend credence to the testimony of someone who has just come back from an orgy of churches in Italy – but without copulation. If copulation isn't present, it's no accident. It's just as much out of place there as it is in human reality, to which it nevertheless provides sustenance with the fantasies by which that reality is constituted. 103

Nowhere, in any cultural milieu, has this exclusion been admitted to more nakedly. I will even go a bit further – don't think I don't mete out what I say *(mes dires)* to you – I will go so far as to tell you that nowhere more blatantly than in Christianity does the work of art as such show itself as what it has always been in all places – obscenity.

The dit-mension of obscenity is that by which Christianity revives the religion of men. I'm not going to give you a definition of religion, because there is no more a history of religion than a history of art. "Religions," like "the arts," is nothing but a basket category, for there isn't the slightest homogeneity therein.

But there is something in the utensils people keep fabricating to one-up each other. What is at stake, for those beings whose nature it is to speak, is the urgency constituted by the fact that they engage in amorous diversions *(déduits)*[27] in ways that are excluded from what I could call "the soul of copulation," were it conceivable, in the sense that I gave earlier to the word "soul," namely, what is such that it functions. I dare to prop up with this word that which – effectively pushing them to it if it were the soul of copula-

[27] *Déduits amoureux* could also be translated as "amorous pursuits."

tion – could be elaborated by what I call a physics, which in this case is nothing other than the following: a thought that can be presupposed in thinking.[28]

There is a hole there and that hole is called the Other. At least that is what I felt I could name *(dénommer)* it, the Other qua locus in which speech, being deposited *(déposée)*[29] – pay attention to the resonances here – founds truth and, with it, the pact that makes up for the non-existence of the sexual relationship, insofar as it would be conceptualized *(pensé)*, in other words, something that could conceivably be conceptualized *(pensé pensable)*,[30] and that discourse would not be reduced to beginning solely from semblance – if you remember the title of one of my seminars.[31]

The fact that thought moves in the direction of a science[32] only by being attributed to thinking[33] – in other words, the fact that being is presumed to think – is what founds the philosophical tradition starting from Parmenides. Parmenides was wrong and Heraclitus was right. That is clinched by the fact that, in fragment 93, Heraclitus enunciates *οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρυπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει*, "he neither avows nor hides, he signifies" – putting back in its place the discourse of the winning side itself – *ὁ ἄναξ οὗ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστλ τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς*, "the prince" – in other words, the winner – "who prophecizes in Delphi."[34]

You know the crazy story, the one that arouses my delirious admiration? I roll on the floor laughing when I read Saint Thomas (Aquinas), because it's awfully well put together. For Aristotle's philosophy to have been reinjected by Saint Thomas into what one might call the Christian conscience, if that had any meaning, is something that can only be explained by the fact that Christians – well, it's the same with psychoanalysts – abhor what was revealed to them. And they are right.

104 The gap inscribed in the very status of jouissance qua dit-mension of the

[28] The French here, *une pensée supposable au penser,* could also be translated as "a thought attributable to thinking."

[29] *Déposée* also means registered (as in a *marque déposée,* "a registered trademark") and deposed (as when a monarch is stripped of power).

[30] The awkwardness of this formulation is based on the fact that Lacan shifts from a verb form, *pensé* (thought of, conceived of, or conceptualized) in *il serait pensé,* to a noun form, *pensé* (what is thought of or conceptualized) in *pensé pensable,* which could perhaps also be rendered as "thinkable matter for thought."

[31] Seminar XVIII was entitled, *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant* ("On a Discourse That Would Not Be Based on Semblance").

[32] *Que la pensée n'agisse dans le sens d'une science* could also be translated as "The fact that thought acts in the sense of a science" or "stirs only in the direction of a science."

[33] Or "presupposed in thinking."

[34] This fragment is number 247 in *The Presocratic Philosophers* by Kirk and Raven (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957); the authors give *ἐστι* where the original French text of the Seminar has *ἐστλ*; the English translation they provide is: "The Lord whose oracle is in Delphi neither speaks out nor conceals, but gives a sign" (211).

body, in the speaking being, is what re-emerges with Freud – and I'm not saying anything more than him – through the test constituted by the existence of speech. Where it speaks, it enjoys *(Là où ça parle, ça jouit)*. And that doesn't mean that it knows anything because, as far as I've heard, the unconscious has revealed nothing to us about the physiology of the nervous system, the process of getting a hard-on, or early ejaculation.

To once and for all put an end to this business about the true religion, I will, while there is still time, point out that God is manifested only in writings that are said to be sacred. Sacred in what respect? In that they don't stop repeating the failure – read Salomon, the master of masters, the master of feeling *(senti-maître)*,[35] someone of my own ilk – the failure of the attempts made by a wisdom tradition to which being is supposed to testify.

None of that implies that there weren't things from time to time thanks to which jouissance – without it, there could be no wisdom – could believe that it had reached the goal of satisfying the thought of being *(la pensée de l'être)*. But that goal has never been satisfied, except at the price of a castration.

In Taoism, for example – you don't know what it is, very few do, but I have worked at it, by reading the texts, of course – this is clear in the very practice of sex. In order to feel good, one must withhold one's cum. Buddhism is the trivial example by its renunciation of thought itself. What is best in Buddhism is Zen, and Zen consists in answering you by barking, my little friend. That is what is best when one wants, naturally, to get out of this infernal business, as Freud called it.

The fantasizing *(fabulation)* of antiquity, mythology as you call it – Claude Lévi-Strauss also called it by that name – of the Mediterranean region – which is precisely the one we don't touch because it's the most profuse and, above all, because such a big to-do has been made of it that one no longer knows by what strand to approach it – mythology has also come to something in the form of psychoanalysis.

There were shovelfuls of gods – all one had to do was find the right one. Which led to this contingent thing that is such that sometimes, after an analysis, we manage to achieve a state in which a guy correctly fucks his "one gal" *(un chacun baise convenablement sa une chacune)*.[36] They were gods

[35] *Senti-maître* is a neologism that combines "master" *(maître)* and "sentimental" or "feeling" (*sentir* is "to feel"), and is also a homonym for *centimètre* ("centimeter").

[36] Lacan is modifying a well-known French expression, *À chacun sa chacune,* loosely translated, "A gal for every guy" or "Every guy has his gal." He inserts *un* before *chacun* and *une* after *sa* (rendering it grammatically incorrect) and before *chacune.* The *une chacune* is perhaps Lacan's way of insisting that women cannot be taken as a whole or set (that is, as Woman), but only one by one. A similar expression is found in Seminar XIX (May 4, 1972).

all the same, that is, rather consistent representations of the Other. Let us pass over here the weakness of the analytic operation.

Oddly enough, that is so completely compatible with Christian belief that we saw a renaissance of polytheism during the era known by the same name.

I am telling you all that precisely because I just got back from the museums, and because the Counter-Reformation was ultimately a return to the sources and the baroque the parading thereof.

105 The baroque is the regulating of the soul by corporal radioscopy.

I should sometime – I don't know if I'll ever have the time – speak of music, in the margins. For the time being, I am only speaking of what we see in all the churches in Europe, everything attached to the walls, everything that is crumbling, everything that delights, everything that is delirious.[37] It's what I earlier called obscenity – but exalted.

I wonder what effect this flood of representations of martyrs must have on someone who comes from backwoods China. That formulation can be reversed – those representations are themselves martyrs. You know that "martyr" means witness – of a more or less pure suffering. That was what our painting was about, until the slate was wiped clean when people began to seriously concern themselves with little squares.

There is a reduction of the human species here – that word, "human" *(humaine)*, resounds like "unhealthy humor" *(humeur malsaine)*, and there is a remainder that creates "misfortune" *(malheur)*. That reduction is the term by which the Church intends to carry the species – that's the word for it – right up to the end of time. And it is so well grounded in the gap peculiar to the sexuality of speaking beings that it risks being at least as well grounded, let's say – because I don't want to give up on anything – as the future of science.

The Future of Science is the title of a book by that other priestling named Ernest Renan, who was also an all-out servant of the truth.[38] He only required one thing of truth – but it was absolutely capital, failing which, he panicked – that it have no consequence whatsoever.

The economy of jouissance is something we can't yet put our fingertips on. It would be of some interest if we managed to do so *(qu'on y arrive)*. What we can see on the basis of analytic discourse is that we may have a slight chance of finding out something about it, from time to time, by pathways that are essentially contingent.

[37] *Délirer* literally means "to have delusions," "to be delirious," or "to imagine things." Figuratively it means "to go nuts," "to proliferate like mad," and so on.

[38] Renan's book was written in 1848–1849 and finally published in French in 1890 by Calmann-Lévy. It was translated into English by Albert Vandam and C. B. Pitman (London: Chapman, 1891).

If my discourse today hadn't been absolutely and entirely negative, I would tremble at having lapsed into philosophical discourse. Nevertheless, since we have already seen several wisdom traditions that have lasted quite a while, why shouldn't we find, with analytic discourse, something that gives us a glimpse of something precise? After all, what is energetics if it is not also a mathematical thing *(truc)*?[39] The analytic thing will not be mathematical. That is why the discourse of analysis differs from scientific discourse.

Well, let us leave that chance to lady luck – *encore.*[40]

May 8, 1973

[39] *Truc* can also mean "gizmo," "thingamabob," etc.

[40] Lacan transforms the usual expression here, *au petit bonheur la chance,* used when you try to get or do something haphazardly – you leave it to lady luck. He says, *Enfin, cette chance, mettons-la sous le signe d'au petit bonheur – encore.*

107

X

Rings of string

I dreamt last night that when I arrived, no one was here.

That confirms the wishful character of the dream. Despite the fact that I was rather outraged, that it would all be for naught, since I also remembered in the dream that I had worked until 4:30 in the morning, it was nevertheless the satisfaction of a wish, namely, that then I would have but to twiddle my thumbs.

1

I am going to say – that is my function – I am going to say once again – because I repeat myself – something that I say *(ce qui est de mon dire)*, which is enunciated as follows, "There's no such thing as a metalanguage."

When I say that, it apparently means – no language of being. But is there being? As I pointed out last time, what I say is what there isn't. Being is, as they say, and nonbeing is not. There is or there isn't. Being is merely presumed in certain words – "individual," for instance, and "substance." In my view, it is but a fact of what is said *(un fait de dit)*.[1]

The word "subject" that I use thus takes on a different import.

I distinguish myself from the language of being. That implies that there may be verbal fiction *(fiction de mot)* – I mean, fiction on the basis of the word. And as some of you may recall, that is what I began with when I spoke of ethics.[2]

Just because I have written things that serve the function of forms of language doesn't mean I assure the being of metalanguage. For I would
108 have to present that being as subsisting by itself, all alone, like the language of being.

[1] Or "a spoken fact."

[2] Lacan is referring here to Jeremy Bentham's *Theory of Fictions* (the first chapter of which is entitled "Linguistic Fictions"), mentioned in Seminar VII, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis.*

Mathematical formalization is our goal, our ideal. Why? Because it alone is matheme, in other words, it alone is capable of being integrally transmitted. Mathematical formalization consists of what is written, but it only subsists if I employ, in presenting it, the language *(langue)* I make use of. Therein lies the objection: no formalization of language is transmissible without the use of language itself. It is in the very act of speaking that I make this formalization, this ideal metalanguage, ex-sist. It is in this respect that the symbolic cannot be confused with being – far from it. Rather, it subsists qua ex-sistence with respect to the act of speaking *(ex-sistence du dire)*. That is what I stressed, in my text called *"L'Étourdit,"* by saying that the symbolic bears only ex-sistence.

In what respect? This is one of the essential things I said last time – analysis can be distinguished from everything that was produced by discourse prior to analysis by the fact that it enunciates the following, which is the very backbone of my teaching – I speak without knowing it. I speak with my body and I do so unbeknownst to myself. Thus I always say more than I know *(plus que je n'en sais)*.

This is where I arrive at the meaning of the word "subject" in analytic discourse. What speaks without knowing it makes me "I," subject of the verb. That doesn't suffice to bring me into being. That has nothing to do with what I am forced to put in being *(mettre dans l'être)* – enough knowledge for it to hold up, but not one drop more.

That is what was hitherto called form. In Plato's work, form is the knowledge that fills being. Form doesn't know any more about it than it says. It is real in the sense that it holds being in its glass, but it is filled right to the brim. Form is the knowledge of being. The discourse of being presumes that being is, and that is what holds it.

There is some relationship of being that cannot be known. It is that relationship whose structure I investigate in my teaching, insofar as that knowledge – which, as I just said, is impossible – is prohibited *(interdit)* thereby. This is where I play on an equivocation – that impossible knowledge is censored or forbidden, but it isn't if you write "inter-dit"[3] appropriately – it is said between the words, between the lines. We have to expose the kind of real to which it grants us access.

We have to show where the shaping *(mise en forme)*[4] of that metalanguage – which is not, and which I make ex-sist – is going. Something true can still be said about what cannot be demonstrated.[5] It is thus that is

[3] *Interdit,* in French, means "prohibited" or "forbidden," and is sometimes rendered in English as "interdicted."

[4] The French here usually means "formatting" or "editing," and also includes the Platonic "form."

[5] This is a reference to Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem.

opened up that sort of truth, the only truth that is accessible to us and that bears on, for example, the non-savoir-faire.

I don't know how to approach, why not say it, the truth – no more than woman. I have said that the one and the other are the same thing, at least to man. They constitute the same conundrum *(embarras)*. As it turns out, I relish the one and the other, despite what people say.

109 The discordance between knowledge and being is my subject. One can also say, notwithstanding, that there isn't any discordance regarding what still *(encore)* – according to my title this year – directs the game. We are still *(encore)* caught up in the insufficiency of knowledge. It is what directs the game of encore – not that by knowing more about it, it would direct us better, but perhaps there would be better jouissance, agreement between jouissance and its end.

Now, the end of jouissance – as everything Freud articulates about what he unadvisedly calls "partial drives" teaches us – the end of jouissance does not coincide with *(est à côté de)* what it leads to, namely, the fact that we reproduce.

The "I" is not a being, but rather something attributed to[6] that which speaks. That which speaks deals only with solitude, regarding the aspect of the relationship I can only define by saying, as I have, that it cannot be written. That solitude, as a break in knowledge, not only can be written but it is that which is written *par excellence,* for it is that which leaves a trace of a break in being.

That is what I said in a text, certainly not without its imperfections, that I called *"Lituraterre."*[7] "The cloud of language," I expressed myself metaphorically, "constitutes writing." Who knows whether the fact that we can read *(lire)* the streams I saw over Siberia as the metaphorical trace of writing isn't linked *(lié)* – beware, *lier* (to link) and *lire* consist of the same letters – to something that goes beyond the effect of rain, which animals have no chance of reading as such? It seems rather to be linked to that form of idealism that I would like you to get into your heads – certainly not that professed by Berkeley, who lived at a time when the subject had acquired its independence, not the idealism that holds that everything we know is representation, but rather that idealism related to the impossibility of inscribing the sexual relationship between two bodies of different sexes.

An opening, by which it is the world that makes us into its partner, is created thereby. It is the speaking body insofar as it can only manage to reproduce thanks to a misunderstanding regarding its jouissance. That is to

[6] Or "presumed in."

[7] *"Lituraterre"* originally came out in *Littérature* 3 (1971), a French journal published by Larousse. It was reprinted in *Ornicar?* 41 (1987), pp. 5–13.

say that it only reproduces thanks to missing[8] what it wants to say, for what it wants to say *(veut dire)* – namely, as French clearly states, its meaning *(sens)*[9] – is its effective jouissance. And it is by missing that jouissance that it reproduces – in other words, by fucking.

That is precisely what it doesn't want to do, in the final analysis. The proof is that when one leaves it all alone, it sublimates with all its might, it sees Beauty and the Good – not to mention Truth, and it is there, as I just told you, that it comes closest to what is at stake. But what is true is that the partner of the opposite sex *(l'autre sexe)* remains the Other. It is thus by missing its jouissance that it manages to be reproduced yet again *(encore)* without knowing anything about what reproduces it. And in particular – 110
and this is perfectly tangible in Freud's work, though of course it's nothing but gibberish, even if we can't do any better – it doesn't know whether what reproduces it is life or death.

I must nevertheless say what there is qua metalanguage, and in what respect it coincides with the trace left by language. For this is where the subject returns to the revelation of the correlate of language *(langue)*, which is the extra knowledge of being,[10] and constitutes for him his slim chance of going to the Other, to its being, about which I noted last time – and this is the second essential point – that it wants to know nothing. It is a passion for ignorance.

That is why the other two passions are those that are called love – which has nothing to do with knowledge, despite philosophy's absurd contentions – and hatred, which is what comes closest to being, that I call "ex-sisting." Nothing concentrates more hatred than that act of saying in which ex-sistence is situated.

Writing is thus a trace in which an effect of language can be read *(se lit)*. That is what happens when you scribble something.

I certainly don't deprive myself of doing so, for that is how I prepare what I have to say. It is worth noting that one must ensure things by writing *(de l'écriture, s'assurer)*.[11] The latter certainly is not metalanguage, nevertheless,

[8] *Ratage* means "missing," "failing," "backfiring," "misfiring," "messing up," "botching up," "spoiling," and "flunking," as well as "scratching out," "crossing out," etc.

[9] *Sens* also means "sense" and "direction"; it is pronounced exactly like the last syllable in *jouissance*. *Veut dire* literally means "wants to say" but is usually translated as "means." "Effective" here (as elsewhere) could also be rendered as "actual."

[10] The French here, *ce savoir en plus de l'être*, could also be translated as "being's extra knowledge."

[11] The French here could be understood in a number of different ways: "check over writing" or "capture or keep an eye on writing" is what the grammar would dictate, but Lacan's eccentric use of *de* suggests "assure oneself of things by using writing (or by writing things down)."

though one can make it fulfill a function that resembles it. That effect is nevertheless secondary with respect to the Other in which language is inscribed as truth. For nothing I could write on the blackboard for you based on the general formulas that relate energy and matter, at the present point in time – Einstein's last formulas, for example – none of it would stand up if I didn't prop it up with an act of speaking that involves language *(langue),* and with a practice which is that of people who give orders in the name of a certain knowledge.

But let me back up. When you scribble and when I too scribble, it is always on a page with lines, and we are thus immediately enmeshed in this business of dimensions.

2

What cuts a line is a point. Since a point has zero dimensions, a line is defined as having one dimension. Since what a line cuts is a surface, a surface is defined as having two dimensions. Since what a surface cuts is space, space has three dimensions.

The little sign I wrote on the blackboard (figure 1) derives its value therefrom.

It has all the characteristics of writing – it could be a letter. However, since you write cursively, you never think of stopping a line before it crosses
111 another in order to make it pass underneath, or rather in order to assume that it passes underneath, because in writing something completely different than three-dimensional space is involved.

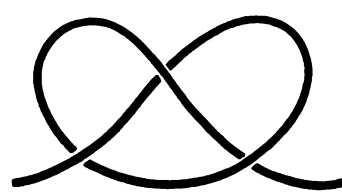


Figure 1

In this figure, when a line is cut by another, it means that the former passes under the latter. That is what happens here, except that there is only one line. But although there is only one, it is distinguished from a simple ring, for this writing represents for you the flattening out *(mise-à-plat)* of a knot. Thus, this line or string is something other than the line I defined earlier with respect to space as a cut and that constitutes a hole, that is, separates an inside from an outside.

This new line is not so easily incarnated in space. The proof is that the ideal string, the simplest string, would be a torus. And it took a long time for people to realize, thanks to topology, that what is enclosed in a torus has absolutely nothing to do with what is enclosed in a bubble.

Regardless of what you do with the surface of a torus, you cannot make a knot. But, on the contrary, with the locus of a torus, as this shows you, you can make a knot. It is in this respect, allow me to tell you, that the torus is reason, since it is what allows for knots.

It is in that respect that what I am showing you now, a twisted torus, is as neat *(sec)* an image as I can give you of the trinity, as I qualified it the other day – one and three in a single stroke.[12]

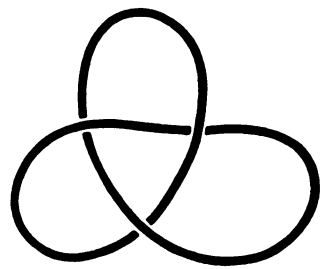


Figure 2

Nevertheless, it is by making three toruses out of it, using a little thingamabob I already showed you called the Borromean knot, that we shall be able to operate on the first knot. Naturally, there are people here today who weren't here last year in February when I spoke about the Borromean 112
knot.[13] I will try today to give you a sense of its importance and of how it is related to writing, inasmuch as I have defined writing as what language leaves by way of a trace.

With the Borromean knot, we are dealing with something that cannot be found anywhere, namely, a true ring of string. You should realize that, when you lay out a string, you never manage to join the two ends together in the woof *(trame)*. In order to have a ring of string, you have to make a knot, preferably a sailor's knot. Let's make a sailor's knot with this string.

That's it. Thanks to the sailor's knot, we have here, as you see, a ring of string. I will make two more. The problem that is then raised by the Borro-

[12] The overhand knot depicted in figure 2 is often referred to in English as a "clover-leaf knot." See *Introduction to Knot Theory* by Richard H. Crowell and Ralph H. Fox (New York: Blaisdell, 1963), 4.

[13] See Seminar XIX, . . . *ou pire,* class given on February 9, 1972.

mean knot is the following – once you have made your rings of string, how can you get these three rings of string to hang together in such a way that if you cut one, all three are set free?

Three is really nothing. The true problem, the general problem, is to work things out in such a way that, with any number of rings of string, when you cut one, every single one of the others becomes free and independent.

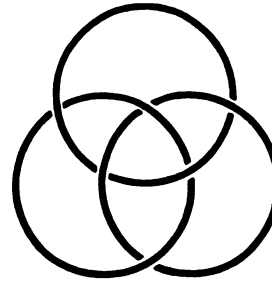


Figure 3

Here is the Borromean knot – I already put it up on the blackboard last year. It is easy for you to see that no two rings of string are knotted to each other, and that it's only thanks to the third that they hang together.

Pay close attention here – don't let yourself remain captivated by this image. I'm going to show you another way to solve the problem.

Here is a ring of string. Here is another. You insert the second ring into the first, and you bend it (see figure 4).

It suffices then to take up the second ring in a third for the three to be knotted together – knotted in such a way that it suffices for you to cut one for the other two to be set free (see figure 5).

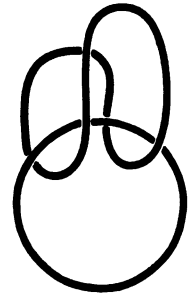


Figure 4

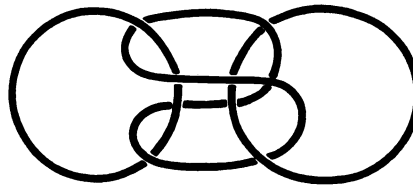


Figure 5

After the first bending, you could also bend the third ring and take it up in a fourth. With four, as with three, it suffices to cut one of the rings[14] for 113
all the others to be set free. You can add an absolutely infinite number of rings and it will still be true. The solution is thus absolutely general, and the line of rings can be as long as you like.

In this chain, whatever its length, the first and last links differ from the others: while the intermediary rings, in other words, the bent ones, are all ear-shaped, as you see in figure 4, the extremes are simple rings.

Nothing stops us from making the first and last rings coincide, by bending the first and taking it up in the last. The chain is thereby closed (see figure 6).

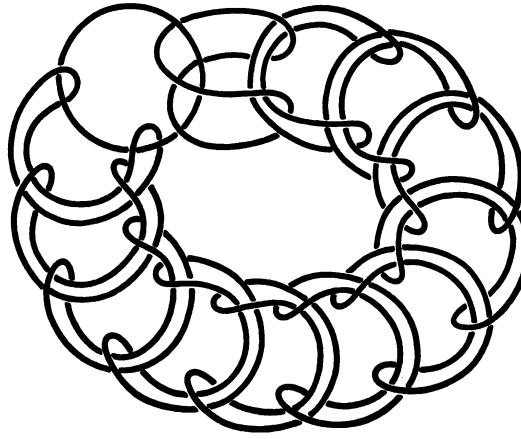


Figure 6

The collapse *(résorption)* of the two extremes into one nevertheless leaves a trace: in the chain of intermediary links, the strands are juxtaposed two

[14] The French here reads *noeuds,* "knots," which seems erroneous.

by two, whereas, when the chain closes on a simple, single ring, four strands on each side are juxtaposed to one strand, the circular ring.

That trace can certainly be effaced – you then obtain a homogeneous chain of bent rings.

114

3

Why did I formerly bring in the Borromean knot? It was to translate the formulation "I ask you" – what? – "to refuse" – what? – "what I offer you" – why? – "because that's not it." You know what "it" is; it's object *a*. Object *a* is no being. Object *a* is the void presupposed by a demand, and it is only by situating demand via metonymy, that is, by the pure continuity assured from the beginning to the end of a sentence, that we can imagine a desire that is based on no being – a desire without any other substance than that assured by knots themselves.

Enunciating that sentence, "I ask you to refuse what I offer you," I could only motivate it by the "that's not it" that I took up again last time.

"That's not it" means that, in the desire of every demand, there is but the request for object *a*, for the object that could satisfy jouissance. The latter would then be the *Lustbefriedigung* presupposed in what is improperly called the "genital drive" in psychoanalytic discourse, that drive[15] in which the full, inscribable relationship of the one with what remains irreducibly the Other is supposedly inscribed. I stressed the fact that the partner of this "I" that is the subject, the subject of any sentence that constitutes a demand, is not the Other, but that which is substituted for it in the form of the cause of desire – that I have diversified into four causes, insofar as the cause is constituted diversely, according to the Freudian discovery, on the basis of the object of sucking, the object of excretion, the gaze, and the voice. It is as substitutes for the Other that these objects are laid claim to[16] and made into the cause of desire.

It seems that the subject calls *(se représente)*[17] inanimate objects to mind as a function of the following – that there's no such thing as a sexual relation. It's only speaking bodies, as I said, that come up with an idea of the world as such. The world, the world of being, full of knowledge, is but a dream, a dream of the body insofar as it speaks, for there's no such thing as a knowing subject *(il n'y a pas de sujet connaissant)*. There are subjects who give themselves correlates in object *a*, correlates of enjoying speech qua

[15] The French here, *celle*, could also possibly refer to "jouissance" or *"Lustbefriedigung."*

[16] The French here, *réclamés*, could also be translated as "clamored for" or even "requisitioned."

[17] *Se représenter* literally means "to represent to oneself," and figuratively means "to think, imagine, conceive in one's mind," etc.

jouissance of speech *(parole jouissante en tant que jouissance de parole)*. What does it wedge *(coince-t-elle)*[18] but other Ones?

I pointed out to you earlier that bilobulation – the transformation by bending of the ring of string into two ears – can be carried out in a strictly symmetrical fashion. Indeed, that is what happens as soon as one gets to the level of four. Well, similarly, the reciprocity between the subject and object *a* is total.

For every speaking being, the cause of its desire is, in terms of structure, strictly equivalent, so to speak, to its bending, that is, to what I have called its division as subject. That is what explains why the subject could believe for so long that the world knew as much about things as he did. The world is symmetrical to the subject – the world of what I last time called thought 115
is the equivalent, the mirror image, of thought. That is why there was nothing but fantasy regarding knowledge until the advent of the most modern science.

This mirroring is what allowed for the chain[19] of beings that presupposed in one being, said to be the Supreme Being, the good of all beings. Which is also equivalent to the following, that object *a* can be said to be, as its name indicates, *a*-sexual *(a-sexué)*. The Other presents itself to the subject only in an *a*-sexual form. Everything that has been the prop, substitute-prop, or substitute for the Other in the form of the object of desire is *a*-sexual.

It is in that sense that the Other as such remains a problem in Freudian theory – though we are able to take it a step further – a problem that is expressed in a question Freud repeated – "What does a woman want?" – woman being, in this case, equivalent to truth. It is in that sense that the equivalence I produced is justified.

Does that enlighten you as to why it is of interest to work with the ring of string? The said ring is certainly the most eminent representation of the One, in the sense that it encloses but a hole. Indeed, that is what makes a true ring of string very difficult to produce. The ring of string I make use of is mythical, since people don't manufacture closed rings of string.

But still, what are we to do with this Borromean knot? My answer to you is that it can serve us by representing a metaphor that is so often used to express what distinguishes the use of language – the chain metaphor.

Let us note that, unlike rings of string, the elements of a chain can be forged. It is not very difficult to imagine how – one bends metal to the point where one can solder it. No doubt, it's not a simple prop, for, in order to

[18] *Elle* could refer either to speech or jouissance here. On wedging, see the section entitled "Answers" at the end of this chapter. "Wedge" here could also be replaced by "grab hold of" or "corner."

[19] The (great) chain of being, as it is known in English, doesn't include the word "chain" in French: *échelle* means "ladder" or "scale."

be able to adequately represent the use of language, links would have to be made in that chain that would attach to another link a little further on, with two or three floating intermediate links. We would also have to understand why a sentence has a limited duration. The metaphor cannot tell us that.

Do you want an example that can show you what purpose can be served by this line of folded knots that become independent once again as soon as you cut one of them? It's not very difficult to find such an example in psychosis, and that's no accident. Recall what hallucinatorily fills up Schreber's solitude: *"Nun will Ich mich . . .,"* "Now I shall . . .," or again *"Sie sollen nämlich . . .,"* "You were to. . . ."[20] These interrupted sentences, which I called code messages,[21] leave some sort of substance in abeyance. We perceive here the requirement of a sentence, whatever it may be, which is such that one of its links, when missing, sets all the others free, that is, withdraws from them the One.[22]

116 Isn't that the best basis we can provide for that by which mathematical language proceeds?

The nature of mathematical language, once it is sufficiently isolated in terms of its requirements of pure demonstration, is such that everything that is put forward there – not so much in the spoken commentary as in the very handling of letters – assumes that if one of the letters doesn't stand up, all the others, due to their arrangement, not only constitute nothing of any validity but disperse. It is in that respect that the Borromean knot is the best metaphor of the fact that we proceed only on the basis of the One.

The One engenders science. Not in the sense of the one of measurement. It is not what is measured in science that is important, contrary to what people think. What distinguishes modern science from the science of antiquity, which is based on the reciprocity between the νοῦς and the world, between what thinks and what is thought of, is precisely the function of the One, the One insofar as it is only there, we can assume, to represent solitude – the fact that the One doesn't truly knot itself with anything that resembles the sexual Other.[23] Unlike the chain, the Ones of which are all made in the same way, being nothing other than One *(de n'être rien d'autre que de l'Un)*.[24]

When I said, "There's such a thing as One" *(Y a d' l'Un)*, when I stressed

[20] See *Écrits* 539–540 and Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 172.

[21] See *Écrits* 807. *Messages de code* could also be translated as "messages made of (or based on) code."

[22] That is, takes away their unity or oneness.

[23] There seems to be a mistake here in the French text, which reads, *qui semble à l'Autre sexuel,* literally "that seems to the sexual Other" or "that seems sexual to the Other." I have assumed, on the basis of Lacan's argument here, that the French should read *ressemble* instead of *semble.*

[24] Or "being based on nothing but One."

that, when I truly pounded that into you like an elephant all of last year, you see what I was introducing you to.

How then can we situate the function of the Other? How – if, up to a certain point, what remains of any language when it is written is based simply on knots of the One – are we to posit a difference? For it is clear that the Other cannot be added to the One. The Other can only be differentiated from it. If there is something by which it participates in the One, it is not by being added. For the Other – as I already said, but it is not clear that you heard me – is the One-missing *(l'un-en-moins)*.[25]

That's why, in any relationship of man with a woman – she who is in question *(en cause)* – it is from the perspective of the One-missing *(l'Une-en-moins)* that she must be taken up. I already indicated that to you concerning Don Juan, but, of course, there was only one person who noticed – my daughter.

4

It is not enough to have found a general solution to the problem of Borromean knots, for an infinite number of Borromean knots. We must find a way to demonstrate that it is the only solution.

But, as of our point in time today, there is no theory of knots. Currently, there is no mathematical formalization applicable to knots, apart from a few little constructions like those I showed you, that allows us to foresee 117
that a solution like the one I just gave is not simply ex-sistent, but necessary, in other words, that it doesn't stop – as I define the necessary – being written. I'm going to show it to you right away. It suffices for me to do this.

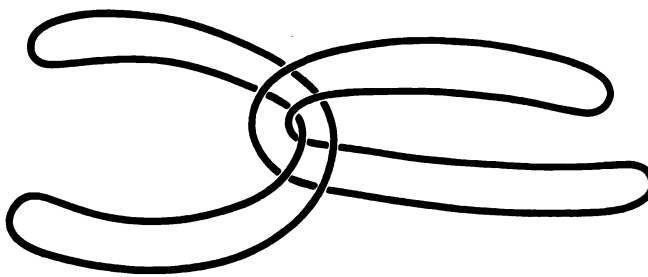


Figure 7

I just passed one of these rings around the other in such a way that they form, not the kind of bending I showed you earlier but simply a sailor's knot. You immediately see that I can, without any difficulty, pursue the

[25] This could also be translated as the "One-less" or "One-too-few."

operation on either side by making as many sailor's knots as I like, with all the rings of string in the world.

Here too I can close the chain, thereby eliminating the separability these elements had hitherto retained. I use a third ring to join the two ends of the chain.

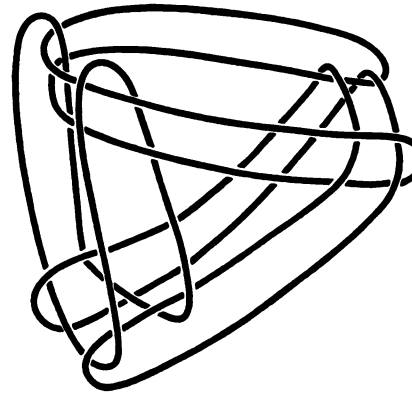


Figure 8

Here, without any doubt, we have a solution which is just as valid as the first. The knot enjoys the Borromean property that if I cut any one of the rings that I have arranged in this way, all the others are set free.

118 None of the rings here is any different from the others. There is no privileged point and the chain is strictly homogeneous. You realize that there is no topological analogy between the two ways of knotting the rings of string I showed you. In the case of the sailor's knots, there is what might be called a topology of twisting compared to the preceding one, which is simply one of bending. But it wouldn't be contradictory to use bent rings in a sailor's knot.

Hence you see that the question arises of knowing how to set a limit to the solutions of the Borromean problem. I will leave the question open.

What is at stake for us, as you have realized, is to obtain a model of mathematical formalization. Formalization is nothing other than the substitution of what is called a letter for any number of ones. What does it mean when we write that inertia is

$$\frac{mv^2}{2}$$

if not that, whatever the number of ones you place under each of those letters, you are subject to a certain number of laws – laws of grouping, addition, multiplication, etc.

Those are the questions that I am opening up, that are designed to announce to you what I hope to transmit to you concerning that which is written.

That which is written – what would that be in the end? The conditions of jouissance. And that which is counted – what would that be? The residues of jouissance. Isn't it by joining that a-sexual up with what she has by way of surplus jouissance – being, as she is, the Other, since she can only be said to be Other – that woman offers it to man in the guise of object *a?*

Man believes he creates – he believes believes believes, he creates creates creates. He creates creates creates woman. In reality, he puts her to work – to the work of the One. And it is in that respect that the Other – the Other insofar as the articulation of language, that is, the truth, is inscribed therein – the Other must be barred, barred on the basis of *(de)* what I earlier qualified as the One-missing.[26] That is what S(Ⱥ) means. It is in that respect that we arrive at the point of raising the question how to make the One into something that holds up, that is, that is counted without being.

Mathematization alone reaches a real – and it is in that respect that it is compatible with our discourse, analytic discourse – a real that has nothing to do with what traditional knowledge has served as a basis for, which is not what the latter believes it to be – namely, reality – but rather fantasy.

The real, I will say, is the mystery of the speaking body, the mystery of the unconscious.

May 15, 1973

Answers

119

I have transcribed here the answers Jacques Lacan gave to certain questions I asked him while I was establishing the text of this lecture. (J.A.M.)

It is remarkable that a figure as simple as that of the Borromean knot has not served as a point of departure for – a topology.

Indeed, there are several ways to approach space.

Being captivated by the notion of dimensions, that is, by cuts, is the characterology of a saw technique.[27] It is even reflected in the notion of the point, for the fact that it qualifies as one that which has, as is clearly stated, zero dimensions – that is, that which doesn't exist – says it all.

On the basis, on the contrary, of rings of string, a wedging *(coinçage)*

[26] The French here, perhaps erroneously, fails to capitalize the *u* of *l'un-en-moins.*

[27] See the beginning of section 2 of this chapter, where Lacan talks about a point cutting a line, a line cutting a plane, and a plane cutting a space.

occurs, since it is the crossing of two continuities that stops a third continuity. Doesn't it seem that this wedging could constitute the initial phenomenon of a topology?

It is a phenomenon that has going for it the fact of being in no point localizable. Consider but the Borromean knot – it is immediately clear that one can number three "spots" *(endroits)*, put that word in quotes, where the rings that create the knot can become wedged together.

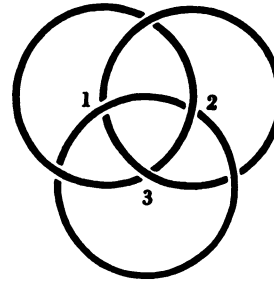


Figure 9

That assumes in each case that the two other spots get reduced to that one. Does that mean that there *is only* one? Certainly not. Though the expression "threefold point" is used, it cannot in any way satisfy the notion of a point. This point is not constituted here by the convergence of three lines, if nothing else because there are two different points – a right and a left.

For my part, I am surprised that it seems to be widely accepted that we cannot, by a message said to be informative, convey to the subject supposed by language the notion of right and left. People certainly realize that we can
120 communicate the distinction between them, but then how are we to specify them? As opposed to a certain argument, it seems quite possible to me, precisely by dictating a flattening out that is quite conceivable on the basis of the experience of knots, if a knot is, as I believe it is, a logical fact.

Note that the flattened out (knot) is something other than a surface.

It presupposes an entirely different dit-mension than the continuity implicit in space. And that is why I use a written form of the word that designates therein the "mension" of what is said *(dit)*. That is permitted only by the llanguage that I speak – but it is not such that I need deprive myself of it inasmuch as I speak. Quite the contrary, given what I think about it – I dare say.

In other words, what is important is not that there are three dimensions

in space. What is important is the Borromean knot and that for the sake of which we accede to the real it represents to us.

The illusion that we could not transmit anything to transplanetary beings regarding the specificity of right and left always seemed felicitous to me, insofar as it founds the distinction between the imaginary and the symbolic.

But right and left have nothing to do with what we learn *(appréhendons)* of them aesthetically, which means – in the relation founded by our bodies – of its *two* apparent sides.

What the Borromean knot *demonstrates* is not the fact that it is made of a ring of string, around which it suffices to bend another ring like two ears such that a third, linking the two loops, cannot become unbuckled due to the first ring. It is the fact that, of these three rings, any one of them can function as first and last, the third functioning thus as the intermediate link, that is, as the bent ears – see figures 4 and 5.

On the basis of that, the fact can be deduced that whatever the number of intermediate links – that is, of double ears – any of them can function as first and last, the others coupling them with their infinity of ears.

Those ears are thus laid out or constructed, not on the basis of a 1–2, 2–1 juxtaposition, but, in the interval between those two, on the basis of a 2–2 juxtaposition repeated as many times as there are rings minus three, namely, the number of rings in the Borromean knot.

Nevertheless, it is clear that, as the privileged links between the first ring and the second and the second to last and the last continue to be valid, the introduction of the first and the last in the central link leads to singular entanglements.

Dispensing with these, one can nevertheless refind the initial arrangement.

In their complexity, knots are well designed to make us relativize the supposed three dimensions of space, founded solely on the translation we give 121
for our body in a solid volume.

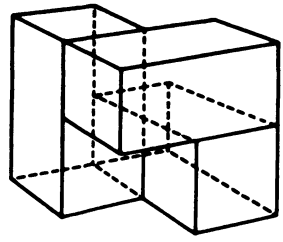
Not that it doesn't lend itself anatomically to that translation. But we have here the whole question of the necessary revision – namely, of that for the sake of which it takes on that form – apparently, that is, for the sake of our gaze.

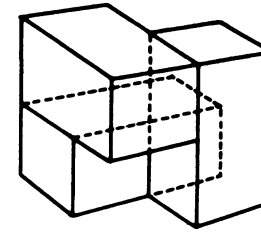
I indicate here where the mathematics of wedging, in other words, knots, could come in.

Let us take a cube and break it down into eight (2^3) little cubes, regularly stacked, the side of each little cube being half the size of that of the first cube.

Let us remove two little cubes whose vertices are at two of the diametrically opposed vertices of the large cube.

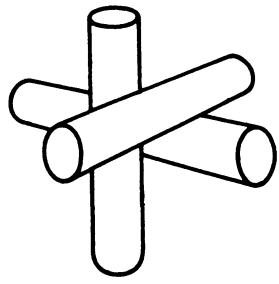
There are then two ways, and only two ways, to join the six little cubes [two by two] along their common sides.

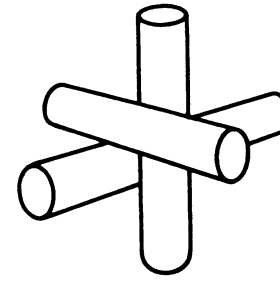




Figures 10 and 11

These two ways define two different arrangements by which to couple three full axes, according, let's say, to the directions of space distinguished by Cartesian coordinates.





Figures 12 and 13

For each of the three axes, the two empty cubes that were removed at first allow us to define in a univocal way the inflection we can impose upon them.

122 That is the inflection required by the wedging in the Borromean knot.

But there is more. We can require the jettisoning of the privilege constituted by the existence of the first and last circle – any of them being able to play that role – in the Borromean knot, namely, that the first and the last in the said knot be constituted by providing them with a bend *(reploiement)* with the same structure as the central link – in other words, that the 2–2 link be univocal there. That is figure 8.

That which inextricably results therefrom for any attempt at flattening out *(mise-à-plat)* felicitously contrasts with the elegance of the flatness *(à-*

plat) of the original presentation (figure 3). And nevertheless, you will notice that nothing is easier than to once again isolate therein two rings, in the same positions said to be first and last in the original knot. This time, any of them can fill those roles absolutely, since the privilege has disappeared that, as I said, so seriously complicated the arrangement of the intermediary links when we were dealing with the original Borromean knot, but raised to a number greater than four.

Indeed, the links in this case are no longer constituted by the simple bending of a ring, such as we imagine it having two ears, but by bending it such that four strands of the connected link are taken up by the rings I designated with the terms "first" and "last," but not in an equivalent fashion, one of the two taking them up simply, the other – which, by dint of this very fact, is definable as different – hugging the four strands in a double loop.

Everywhere in a central link the four strands allow for a certain number of typical crossings that are subject to variation.

In short, these links are four times shorter than the extreme rings.

I conclude from this that space is not intuitive. It is a mathematician – which is what everyone can read in the history of mathematics itself.

That means that space knows how to count, not much higher than we do – and for good reason – since it is only up to six, not even seven. That is why Jahve distinguished himself with his iron-clad rule of the week.

Of course, the man in the street goes up to ten, but that's because he counts on his fingers. He has had to back off, since with the zero, that is, he is wrong – one mustn't count on anything that is an apparent body or an animal movement. What is amusing is that science did not at first detach itself except at the cost of a 6 x 10, that is, a sexagisimal system – see the Babylonians.

To return to space, it seems to be part and parcel of the unconscious – structured like a language.

And if it counts up to six, it is because it can only refind the two via the three of revelation.

One more word – one must invent nothing. That is what the revelation of the unconscious teaches us. But there is nothing to be done – invention itches until we scratch. Because what is necessary is to turn away from the real and from what the presence of number signifies. 123

One word to finish. You might have noticed that collapsing *(homogénéisation)* the *extreme* links into one is not the same thing as hooking them together end to end, which, strangely enough, had no more effect on the chain than to leave them independent, except for the number of links, which it reduces by one.

What result can we expect from the original chain with three links when

we operate thereupon as well? Its reduction to two links that would assuredly come apart if either of them is cut.

But how will they be wound?

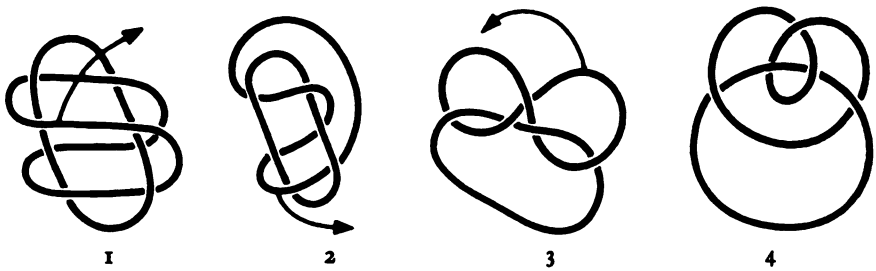


Figure 14

There will be a simple ring with an inner eight wound around it,[28] the same inner eight with which I symbolize the subject – allowing us hence to recognize in the simple ring, which, moreover, can be transposed into *(s'intervertit avec)* the eight, the sign of object *a* – namely, the cause by which the subject identifies with his desire.

October 22, 1973

[28] What I have translated here as the "inner eight" is rendered in Alan Sheridan's 1978 translation of Seminar XI, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis,* as the "interior eight."

XI

125

The rat in the maze

LANGUAGE IS KNOWLEDGE'S HAREBRAINED LUCUBRATION
ABOUT LLANGUAGE.
THE UNITY OF THE BODY.
THE LACANIAN HYPOTHESIS.
LOVE, FROM CONTINGENCY TO NECESSITY.

Thanks to someone who is willing to polish up what I tell you here, four or five days ago I received the nicely scrubbed truffle in my elocutions this year.

With this title, *Encore,* I wasn't sure, I must admit, that I was still in the field I have cleared for twenty years, since what it said was that it could still *(encore)* go on a long time. Rereading the first transcription of this Seminar, I found that it wasn't so bad, especially given that I began with a formulation that seemed a tad trivial to me, that the Other's jouissance is not the sign of love. It was a point of departure I could perhaps come back to today in closing what I opened at that time.

I spoke a bit of love. Yet the crux of or key to what I put forward this year concerns the status of knowledge, and I stressed that the use *(exercice)*[1] of knowledge could but imply *(représenter)* a jouissance. That is what I'd like to add to today by a reflection concerning what is done in a groping manner in scientific discourse with respect to what can be produced by way of knowledge.

1

To get right to the point – knowledge is an enigma.

That enigma is presented to us by the unconscious, as it is revealed by analytic discourse. That enigma is enunciated as follows: for the speaking being, knowledge is that which is articulated. People could have noticed that a long time ago, because in tracing out the pathways of knowledge they were doing nothing but articulate things, centering them for a long time on 126
being. Now it is obvious that nothing is, if not insofar as it is said that it is.

[1] *Exercice* could also be translated as "implementation," "putting into use," "putting into effect," "exercising," or "exercise."

I call that S_2. You have to know how to hear that – is it of them-two *(est-ce bien d'eux)*[2] that it speaks? It is generally said that language serves to communicate. To communicate about what, one must ask oneself, about which them *(eux)?* Communication implies reference. But one thing is clear – language is merely what scientific discourse elaborates to account for what I call llanguage.

Llanguage serves purposes that are altogether different from that of communication. That is what the experience of the unconscious has shown us, insofar as it is made of llanguage, which, as you know, I write with two l's to designate what each of us deals with, our so-called mother tongue *(lalangue dite maternelle)*, which isn't called that by accident.

If communication approaches what is effectively at work in the jouissance of llanguage, it is because communication implies a reply, in other words, dialogue. But does llanguage serve, first and foremost, to dialogue? As I have said before, nothing is less certain.

I just got hold of an important book by an author named Bateson about which people had talked my ears off, enough to get on my nerves a bit. I should say that it was given to me by someone who had been touched by the grace of a certain text of mine he translated into his language, adding some commentary to it,[3] and who felt he had found in Bateson's work something that went significantly further than "the unconscious structured like a language."

Now Bateson, not realizing that the unconscious is structured like a language, has but a rather mediocre conception of it. But he creates some very nice artifices he calls "metalogues." They're not bad, insofar as they involve, if we take him at his word, some internal, dialectical progress, being produced only by examining the evolution of a term's meaning. As has always been the case in everything that has been called a dialogue, the point is to make the supposed interlocutor say what motivates the speaker's very question, in other words, to incarnate in the other the answer that is already there. It's in that sense that dialogues, classical dialogues – the finest examples of which are represented by the Platonic legacy – are shown not to be dialogues.

If I have said that language is what the unconscious is structured like, that is because language, first of all, doesn't exist. Language is what we try to know concerning the function of llanguage.

[2] Lacan is playing off of the homophony between *d'eux,* of them, and *deux,* two, and between *S* and *est-ce.*

[3] Anthony Wilden translated Lacan's "Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis" in *The Language of the Self* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1968); he talked to Lacan about Gregory Bateson's book, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (New York: Ballantine, 1972). The whole discussion of "learning" (above all, of rat research based on "trial and error") in this chapter of the Seminar seems to be a response to Bateson's work.

Certainly, it is thus that scientific discourse itself approaches language, except that it is difficult for scientific discourse to fully actualize language, since it misrecognizes the unconscious. The unconscious evinces knowledge that, for the most part, escapes the speaking being. That being provides the occasion to realize just how far the effects of llanguage go, in that 127
it presents all sorts of affects that remain enigmatic. Those affects are what result from the presence of llanguage insofar as it articulates things by way of knowledge *(de savoir)*[4] that go much further than what the speaking being sustains *(supporte)* by way of enunciated knowledge.

Language is, no doubt, made up of llanguage. It is knowledge's harebrained lucubration *(élucubration)* about llanguage. But the unconscious is knowledge, a knowing how to do things *(savoir-faire)* with llanguage. And what we know how to do with llanguage goes well beyond what we can account for under the heading of language.

Llanguage affects us first of all by everything it brings with it by way of effects that are affects. If we can say that the unconscious is structured like a language, it is in the sense that the effects of llanguage, already there qua knowledge, go well beyond anything the being who speaks is capable of enunciating.

It is in that regard that the unconscious, insofar as I base it on its deciphering, can only be structured like a language, a language that is always hypothetical with respect to what supports it, namely, llanguage. Llanguage is what allowed me to turn my S_2 into a question earlier and ask – is it truly a question *of them-two (d'eux)* in language?

Stated otherwise, it has become clear, thanks to analytic discourse, that language is not simply communication. Misrecognizing that fact, a grimace has emerged in the lowest depths of science that consists in asking how being can know anything whatsoever. My question today regarding knowledge will hinge on that.

2

How can being know? It's amusing to see how this question is supposedly answered. Since the limit, as I have posited it, is constituted by the fact that there are beings who speak, people wonder what the knowledge of those who do not speak could be. They wonder about it. They don't know why they wonder about it. But they wonder about it all the same. So they build a little maze *(labyrinthe)* for rats.

They hope thereby to be on the right track by which to determine what knowledge is. They believe a rat is going to show the capacity it has to learn

[4] The French, *de savoir,* could also be translated as "by knowing," "since it knows," "qua knowledge," or "regarding knowledge."

(apprendre). To learn *(A-prendre)*[5] to do what? What interests it, of course. And what do they assume interests it?

They do not take the rat as a being, but rather as a body, which means that they view it as a unit, a rat-unit. Now what thus sustains the rat's being? They don't wonder about that at all. Or rather, they identify its being with its body.

People have always imagined that being had to contain a sort of fullness that is characteristic of it. Being is a body. That is where people began in
128 first approaching being, and they laboriously concocted *(élucubré)* a whole hierarchy of beings. Ultimately, they began with the notion that each one should know what keeps it in being *(maintenait à l'être)*[6] – that had to be its good, in other words, what gives it pleasure.

What change thus came about in discourse in order for people to suddenly question that being regarding the means it might have to go beyond itself, that is, to learn more than it needs to know in its being to survive as a body?

The maze leads not only to nourishment but to a button or flap that the supposed subject of this being must figure out how to use to obtain nourishment. Or it has to recognize a feature, a lit or colored feature, to which the being is capable of reacting. What is important is that the question of knowledge is transformed here into that of learning. If, after a series of trials and errors – "trials and errors" was left in English (in the translation) considering the people who carved out this approach to knowledge – the rate diminishes sufficiently, they note that the rat-unit is capable of learning something.

The question that is only secondarily raised – the one that interests me – is whether the rat-unit can learn how to learn. Therein lies the true mainspring of the experiment. Once it has taken one of these tests, will a rat, faced with another test of the same kind, learn more quickly? That can be easily attested to by a decrease in the number of trials necessary for it to know how it must behave in such a montage – let us call the maze, taken in conjunction with the flaps and buttons that function here, a "montage."

The question has been so rarely raised, though it has been raised, that people haven't even dreamt of investigating the differential effect of having

[5] By breaking *apprendre* ("to learn") down into *a-prendre,* Lacan seems to be pointing to the taking or grasping in learning, the taking by the rat of what interests it.

[6] Lacan's French here is quite idiosyncratic, since *maintenir* is a transitive verb. Lacan seems to construct his phraseology here along the lines of the expression *se tenir à quelque chose* (to hold onto or cleave to something); a more idiomatic translation would be "everyone should know what keeps him going (or alive)." Alternatively, the phrase could be understood as "everyone should know what keeps him alive as a body," for *l'être* could be taken as "to be it," *it* referring to the body.

the themes one proposes to the rat – by which it demonstrates its ability to learn – come from the same source or from two different sources, and of having the experimenter who teaches the rat to learn be the same or different. Now, the experimenter is the one who knows something in this business, and it is with what he knows that he invents this montage consisting of the maze, buttons, and flaps. If he were not someone whose relation to knowledge is grounded in a relation to llanguage, in the inhabiting of llanguage or the cohabitation with llanguage, there would be no montage.

The only thing the rat-unit learns in this case is to give a sign, a sign of its presence as unit. The flap is recognized only by a sign and pressing its paw on this sign is a sign. It is always by making a sign that the unit accedes to that on the basis of which one concludes that there is learning. But this relation to signs is external. Nothing confirms that the rat grasps the mechanism to which pressing the button leads. That's why the only thing that counts is to know if the experimenter notes that the rat has not 129
only figured it out, but learned *(appris)* how a mechanism is to be grasped *(se prend)*, in other words, learned what must be grasped *(à-prendre)*. If we take the status of unconscious knowledge into account, we must examine the maze experiment in terms of how the rat-unit responds to what has been thought up by the experimenter not on the basis of nothing, but on the basis of llanguage.

One doesn't invent just any old labyrinthine composition, and whether it comes from the same experimenter or two different experimenters is worth investigating. But nothing that I have been able to gather to date from this literature indicates that any such question has been raised.

This example thus leaves the questions regarding the status of knowledge and the status of learning *(apprentissage)* completely intact and distinct. The status of knowledge raises another question, namely, how it is taught.

3

It is on the basis of the notion of a kind of knowledge that is transmitted, integrally transmitted, that a sifting occurred in knowledge, thanks to which the discourse called scientific discourse was constituted.

It wasn't constituted without numerous misadventures. *Hypotheses non fingo,* Newton believed he could say, "I assume nothing." But it was on the basis of a hypothesis that the famous revolution – which wasn't at all Copernican, but rather Newtonian – hinged, substituting "it falls" for "it turns." The Newtonian hypothesis consisted in positing that the astral turning is the same as falling. But in order to observe that – which allows one to eliminate the hypothesis – he first had to make the hypothesis.

To introduce a scientific discourse concerning knowledge, one must

investigate knowledge where it is. That knowledge, insofar as it resides in the shelter of llanguage, means the unconscious. I do not enter there, no more than did Newton, without a hypothesis.

My hypothesis is that the individual who is affected by the unconscious is the same individual who constitutes what I call the subject of a signifier. That is what I enunciate in the minimal formulation that a signifier represents a subject to another signifier. The signifier in itself is nothing but what can be defined as a difference from another signifier. It is the introduction of difference as such into the field, which allows one to extract from llanguage the nature of the signifier *(ce qu'il en est du signifiant)*.

Stated otherwise, I reduce the hypothesis, according to the very formulation that lends it substance, to the following: it is necessary to the function-
130 ing of llanguage. To say that there is a subject is nothing other than to say that there is a hypothesis. The only proof we have that the subject coincides with this hypothesis, and that it is the speaking individual on whom it is based, is that the signifier becomes a sign.

It is because there is the unconscious – namely, llanguage, insofar as it is on the basis of the cohabitation with llanguage that a being known as speaking being is defined – that the signifier can be called upon to constitute a sign *(faire signe)*.[7] You can take "sign" here as you like, even as the English "thing."

The signifier is a subject's sign. Qua formal medium *(support)*, the signifier hits something other *(atteint un autre)* than what it is quite crudely as signifier, an other that it affects and that is made into a subject of the signifier, or at least which passes for such *(pour l'être)*. It is in that respect that the subject turns out to be – and this is only true for speaking beings – a being *(un étant)* whose being is always elsewhere, as the predicate shows.[8] The subject is never more than fleeting *(ponctuel)* and vanishing, for it is a subject only by a signifier and to another signifier.

It is here that we must return to Aristotle. In a choice guided by we know not what, Aristotle decided not to give any other definition of the individual than the body – the body as organism, as what maintains itself as one, and not as what reproduces. We are still hovering around the difference between the Platonic idea and the Aristotelian definition of the individual as grounding being. The question that arises for the biologist is to know how a body reproduces. What is in question in any work in so-called molecular chemistry is to know how something can be precipitated thanks to the combination

[7] *Faire signe,* like *faire l'homme,* has several meanings: "to play the part of a sign"; "to make, create, or constitute a sign"; and to "signal or give a sign (of life, for example)."

[8] The predicate here is presumably "speaking" in the expression "speaking being."

of a certain number of things in a special soup[9] – for example, the fact that a bacterium begins to reproduce.

What then is the body? Is it or isn't it knowledge of the one?

Knowledge of the one turns out *(se révèle)* not to come from the body. The little we can say about knowledge of the one comes from the signifier "One." Does the signifier "One" derive from the fact that a signifier as such is never anything but *one-among-others,* referred to those others, being but its difference from the others? The question has been so little resolved to date that I devoted my whole seminar last year to accentuating this "There's such a thing as One" *(Y a d' l'Un).*

What does "There's such a thing as One" mean? From the *one-among-others* – and the point is to know whether it is any old which one – arises an S_1, a signifying swarm,[10] a buzzing swarm. If I raise the question, "Is it of them-two that I am speaking?", I will write this S_1 of each signifier, first on the basis of its relation to S_2.[11] And you can add as many of them as you like. This is the swarm I am talking about.

$$S_1(S_1(S_1(S_1 \rightarrow S_2)))$$

S_1, the swarm or master signifier, is that which assures the unity, the unity of the subject's copulation with knowledge. It is in llanguage and nowhere else, insofar as llanguage is investigated qua language, that what a primitive linguistics designated with the term στοιχεῖον,[12] element – and that was no 131
accident – can be discerned. The signifier "One" is not just any old signifier. It is the signifying order insofar as it is instituted on the basis of the envelopment by which the whole of the chain subsists.

I recently read the work of a person who investigates the relation of S_1 to S_2, which that person takes to be a relation of representation. S_1 is supposed [by that person] to be related to S_2 insofar as it represents a subject. Whether that relation is symmetrical, antisymmetrical, transitive, or other, whether the subject is transferred from S_2 to an S_3 and so on and so forth, these questions must be taken up on the basis of the schema that I am once again providing here.

The One incarnated in llanguage is something that remains indeterminate *(indécis)* between the phoneme, the word, the sentence, and even the whole of thought. That is what is at stake in what I call the master signifier. It is the signifier One, and it was no accident that, in order to illustrate the

[9] Likely to be referred to now as the primal ooze or soup, instead of as a "unique bath" *(bain unique).*

[10] *Essaim,* which I have translated here as "swarm," is pronounced in French exactly like S_1.

[11] Recall that S_2 and *est-ce d'eux* are homonyms in French.

[12] This Greek term means "constituent," "element," "first principle," "primary matter," "letter of the alphabet," or "element of knowledge."

One, I brought to our last meeting[13] that bit of string, insofar as it constitutes a ring, whose possible knot with another ring I began to investigate.

I won't pursue that point any further today, since we have been deprived of a class due to exams at this university.

4

To change the subject, I will say that what is important in what has been revealed by psychoanalytic discourse – and one is surprised not to see its thread everywhere – is that knowledge, which structures the being who speaks on the basis of a specific cohabitation, is closely related to love. All love is based on a certain relationship between two unconscious knowledges.

If I have enunciated that the subject supposed to know is what motivates transference, that is but a particular, specific application of what we find in our experience. I'll ask you to look at the text of what I enunciated here, in the middle of this year, regarding the choice of love. I spoke, ultimately, of recognition, recognition – via signs that are always punctuated enigmatically – of the way in which being is affected qua subject of unconscious knowledge.

There's no such thing as a sexual relationship because one's jouissance of the Other taken as a body is always inadequate – perverse, on the one hand, insofar as the Other is reduced to object *a,* and crazy and enigmatic, on the other, I would say. Isn't it on the basis of the confrontation with this impasse, with this impossibility by which a real is defined, that love is put to the test? Regarding one's partner, love can only actualize what, in a sort of poetic flight, in order to make myself understood, I called courage – courage with respect to this fatal destiny. But is it courage that is at stake or pathways of recognition? That recognition is nothing other than the way in which the relationship said to be sexual – that has now become a subject-
132 to-subject relationship, the subject being but the effect of unconscious knowledge – stops not being written.

"To stop not being written" is not a formulation proffered haphazardly. I associated it with contingency, whereas I delighted in [characterizing] the necessary as that which "doesn't stop being written," for the necessary is not the real. Let us note in passing that the displacement of this negation raises for us the question of the nature of negation when it takes the place of a non-existence. I have also defined the sexual relationship as that which "doesn't stop not being written." There is an impossibility therein. It is also that nothing can speak it – there is no existence of the sexual relationship

[13] The French here erroneously reads "second to last meeting."

in the act of speaking. But what does it mean to negate it *(nier)?* Is it in any way legitimate to substitute a negation for the proven apprehension of the non-existence? That too is a question I shall merely raise here. Does the word "interdiction" mean any more, is it any more permitted? That cannot be immediately determined either.

I incarnated contingency in the expression "stops not being written." For here there is nothing but encounter, the encounter in the partner of symptoms and affects, of everything that marks in each of us the trace of his exile – not as subject but as speaking – his exile from the sexual relationship. Isn't that tantamount to saying that it is owing only to the affect that results from this gap that something is encountered, which can vary infinitely as to level of knowledge, but which momentarily gives the illusion that the sexual relationship stops not being written? – an illusion that something is not only articulated but inscribed, inscribed in each of our destinies, by which, for a while – a time during which things are suspended – what would constitute the sexual relationship finds its trace and its mirage-like path in the being who speaks. The displacement of the negation from the "stops not being written" to the "doesn't stop being written," in other words, from contingency to necessity – there lies the point of suspension to which all love is attached.

All love, subsisting only on the basis of the "stops not being written," tends to make the negation shift to the "doesn't stop being written," doesn't stop, won't stop.

Such is the substitute that – by the path of existence, not of the sexual relationship, but of the unconscious, which differs therefrom – constitutes the destiny as well as the drama of love.

Given the time, which is that at which I normally desire to take leave of you, I won't take things any further here – I will simply indicate that what I have said of hatred is not related to the level at which the hold *(prise)* of unconscious knowledge is articulated.

The subject can't not desire not to know too much about the nature of the eminently contingent encounter with the other. Thus he shifts [his focus] from the other to the being that is caught up therein.

The relation of being to being is not the relation of harmony that was 133
prepared for us throughout the ages, though we don't really know why, by a whole tradition in which Aristotle, who saw therein only supreme jouissance, converges with Christianity, for which it is beatitude. That gets us bogged down in a mirage-like apprehension. For it is love that approaches being as such in the encounter.

Isn't it in love's approach to being that something emerges that makes being into what is only sustained by the fact of missing each other *(se*

rater)?[14] I spoke of rats earlier – that was what was at stake. It's no accident people chose rats. It's because one can easily make a unit of it – the rat can be "eraticated."[15] I already saw that at a time when I had a concierge, when I lived in the rue de la Pompe – the concierge never missed *(ratait)* a rat. His hatred for rats was equal to the rat's being.

Doesn't the extreme of love, true love, reside in the approach to being? And true love – analytic experience assuredly didn't make this discovery, borne witness to by the eternal modulation of themes on love – true love gives way to hatred.

There – I'm leaving you.

Shall I say, "See you next year"? You'll notice that I've never ever said that to you. For a very simple reason – which is that I've never known, for the last twenty years, if I would continue the next year. That is part and parcel of my destiny as object *a*.

After ten years, my podium *(parole)* was taken away from me. It turns out, for reasons wherein destiny played a part, as did my inclination to please certain people, that I continued for ten more *(encore)* years. I have thus closed the twenty-year cycle. Will I continue next year? Why not stop the *encore* now?

What is truly admirable is that no one ever doubted that I would continue. The fact that I am making this remark nevertheless raises the question. It could, after all, happen that to the *encore* I add – "That's enough."

Well, I'll leave it for you to place bets on. There are many who believe they know me and who think that I find herein an infinite satisfaction. Next to the amount of work it involves, I must say that that seems pretty minimal to me. So place your bets.

And what will the result be? Will it mean that those who have guessed correctly love me? Well – that is precisely the meaning of what I just enunciated for you today – to know what your partner will do is not a proof of love.

June 26, 1973

[14] "Missing" should be understood here in the sense of missing the mark, not missing someone who is far away.

[15] The French here, *ça se rature,* literally means "can be erased, struck out, crossed out," etc.

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LES NON-DUPES ERRENT

Seminar 1: Wednesday 13 November 1973

I begin again. I am beginning again because I had thought I might have been able to finish. This is what I call elsewhere the *passe*: I believed that it had passed. Only there you are: this belief – 'I believed that it had passed' – this belief gave me the opportunity to notice something. This is even what I call the *passe* is like. It gives the opportunity all of a sudden to see a certain relief, a relief of what I have done up to now. And it is this relief that is exactly expressed by my title for this year, the one that you have been able to read, I hope, on the notice and which is written:

as in a relief map. Lights flows.

– or to ASTRAY

Les non-dupes errent: The unduped wander/are mistaken.

That has a funny sound, huh? It is my kind of little air. Or to put things better, a little *erre* –e, double r, e. You know perhaps what is meant by an *erre*? It is something like the initial impetus. The impetus of something when what is propelling it stops and it still continues to move on. It nevertheless remains that this sounds strictly the same as *les noms du père* (the names of the father). Namely, what I promised to never speak about again. There you are. This because of certain people that I no longer need to describe, who, in the name of Freud, precisely, made me suspend what I had planned to state about *the names of the father*. Yeah. Obviously, it is in order not to give them in any way a consolation for the fact that I could have brought them some of these names that they are ignorant of because they repress them. It could have been of use to them. Which is what I

Direct allusion to Lyotard who was an analysand of Lacan's. Lyotard's doctoral thesis was on 'In the Name of the Father' Lacan and Lyotard did not Read what he was talking about.

In 1964 after he was dumped from the IPA

http://www.lacaninireland.com

would have precisely nothing to do with. In any case, I know that (10) they will not find them all by themselves, that they will not find them, given the way they have started, under Freud's impetus. Namely, under the way psychoanalytic societies are set up. There you are.

So then *les non-dupes errent* and *les noms du père* are so consonant, are all the more consonant that contrary, like that, to a certain leaning that people who believe themselves to be literate have in making liaisons even when it is a matter of an 's', you do not say *les non-dupes z'errent*, you do not say either *les cerises z'ont bon goût*, you say: *les cerises ont bon goût* and *les non-dupes errent*". They are consonant. That's the richness of the tongue. And I would even go further – it is a richness that not all tongues have, but this indeed is why they are varied. But what I am putting forward, from these encounters that are described as witticisms, perhaps I will manage before the end of this year to make you sense it – to make you sense a little better what the witticism is.

This is debatable

And I am even right away going to put forward something about it.

In these two terms put into words, *les noms du père* and *les non-dupes qui errent*, it is the same knowledge. In the two. It is the same knowledge in the sense that the unconscious is a knowledge from which the subject can decipher himself. It is the definition of the subject that I am giving here. Of the subject as the unconscious constitutes him. It deciphers him, the one who by being a speaker is in a position to set about this operation, who is even up to a certain point forced until he reaches a meaning. And that is where he stops, because... one has to stop. One even asks for nothing but that! One asks only for that because one does not have the time. So then he stops at a meaning, but the meaning at which one ought to stop, in the two cases, even though it is the same knowledge, is not the same meaning.

Very dense
The terms sound
the same in French.
It's the same word.
knowledge. It's
part of the langue
as in a dream
of the whole field
Joyce etc.

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Which is curious.

And which allow us to put our finger right away on the fact that it is not the same meaning, simply by reason of the spelling. Which allows us to suspect something. Something whose indication, in fact, you can see in what in some of my previous seminars, I noted about the relationships of writing to language.

Do not be too astonished, anyway, that here I am leaving the thing as a riddle, since the riddle, is the fullness of meaning. And you should not even believe that on occasion, it remains there, in connection with (11) this rapprochement, of this phonematic identity, of *les noms du père* and *les non-dupes errent*, you must not believe that there is no riddle there for me myself – and this indeed is what is at stake.

This indeed is what is at stake, and also this: that there is no difficulty in the fact that I imagine I comprehend. It illuminates the subject in the sense that I said earlier, and it gives you work. It must indeed be said, that for me, there is nothing more deadly than to give you work...but anyway, it's my role!

Work (*le travail*), everyone knows where that comes from, in the tongue, in the tongue that I am chatting to you in. You have perhaps heard talk of it, it comes from *tripalium*, which is an instrument of torture. And which was made of three stakes. At the Council of Auxerre it was said that it was not appropriate for priests or deacons to be alongside this instrument by means of which *torquentur rei*, the guilty are tortured. It is not fitting that either the priest or the deacon should be there (it would perhaps give them a hard-on).

It is in effect quite clear that work, as we know it through the unconscious, is what makes relationships, relationships to this

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knowledge by which we are tormented is what makes these relationships to enjoyment.

So then I said: there is no objection to me imagining. I did not say 'I imagine myself'. It is you who imagine that you comprehend. Namely, that in this 'you-you', you imagine that it is you who comprehend, but I did not say that it was me, I said 'I imagine'. As regards what you imagine, I am trying to temper the matter. I am doing everything I can in any case, to prevent you. Because one must not comprehend too quickly, as I have often underlined.

What I put forward, nevertheless, with this 'I imagine', in connection with meaning, is a remark that I will put forward this year. It is that the imaginary, whatever you may have heard about it, because you imagine you comprehend – the fact is that the imaginary, is a *dit-mansion*, as you know I write it, just as important as the others. This can be very clearly seen in mathematical science. I mean in the one that is teachable because it concerned the real that the symbolic conveys. Which moreover only conveys it because of the fact that what constitutes the symbolic is always enciphered (*chiffré*). The imaginary is what stops the deciphering, it is meaning. As I told you, one must indeed stop somewhere, and even as soon as one can.

(12) The imaginary, is always an intuition of what is to be symbolised. As I have just said, something to chew on, to think, as they say. And in a word a vague enjoyment. Human wanking is more varied than is believed, even though it is limited by something that stems from the body, the human body, namely what, in the present state of things – but precisely it has not finished, something else may perhaps arrive – in the present state of things, assures the dominance of the *opsis* [appearance] in the little that we know about it, about this body, namely, anatomy.

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This dominance of the *opsis*, is what ensures that...is what ensures that all the same there is always intuition in what the mathematician starts from. I will perhaps this year make you sense the knot (make no mistake), the knot of the affair, in connection with what they call – I am talking about mathematicians, I am not one of them, I regret – of what they call 'vector space'.

It is very nice to see how this business, which is perhaps anyway, some of you must have heard it vaguely spoken about, I can in any case affirm to them, that it is truly the last great step in mathematics, it starts like that from a philosophical intuition *Ausdehnungslehre*: the maths (*Lehre* is what is taught), the maths of extension, as Grassmann calls it. And then it comes out of that vector space and the calculus of the same name, is that not so, namely, something that is mathematically quite teachable, as I might say, something strictly symbolised, and which, at the limit, anyway, can.....can function with a machine, huh?

It does not need to comprehend anything about it.

Why would it be necessary to return to comprehending – we will speak again about vector space, allow me simply to be satisfied today with an announcement – why is it necessary to return to comprehending, namely to imagining, in order to know where to apply the system?

More geometrico. Anyway, the most stupid geometry on earth, the one that you were taught at school, the one that proceeds from the cutting up of space with a saw: you saw a space in two, then after that you cut the shadow of the sawing along a line, and after that you mark a point... good. It is all the same amusing that *more geometrico* should have appeared like that throughout the centuries to be the model of logic. I mean that this is what Spinoza wrote at the head of the *Ethics*. Anyway that is how it was before logic, all the same.

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(13) learned certain lessons, lessons which mean that we have all the same arrived at emptying out intuition, is that not so, and that, at present, it has even gone to the extremes in a book of mathematics, of these modern mathematics that according to some people are execrable, for many chapters one can do without the slightest figure. But all the same – and this is what is strange – one gets there. One always finishes by getting there.

So then I am putting forward, I am putting forward this for you this year: one always gets there, and it is not because geometry is done in space, in the intuitive, is that not so, the geometry of Greeks, anyway, of which one can say that... it was not bad, but in the end it was no great shakes. One gets to it for a different reason. Singularly, I will tell you: the fact is that there are three dimensions of the space inhabited by the speaking being (*le parlant*), and that these three dit-*mansions*, as I write them, are called the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. This is not quite like Cartesian co-ordinates; it is not just because there are three of them, do not be misled. Cartesian co-ordinates belong to the old geometry. It is because....it is because it is a space of mine, as I define it from these three *dit-mansions*, it is a space whose points are determined quite differently. And this is what I tried – since this went beyond perhaps my capacities, it is perhaps this that gave me the idea of dropping the matter – it is a geometry where the points – for those who were there, I hope, last year – whose points are determined from the squeezing (*coincage*) of what you remember perhaps, what I called my 'rings of string'.

Because there is perhaps another way of making a point than beginning by sawing space, then afterwards tearing the page, then with the line which, one does not know from where, floats between the two, breaking this line, and saying: that is the point, namely nowhere, namely nothing, it is perhaps by noticing that, simply by taking three of them, of these rings of strings, as I explained it for you, when there are three, even though if you cut one of them, the two

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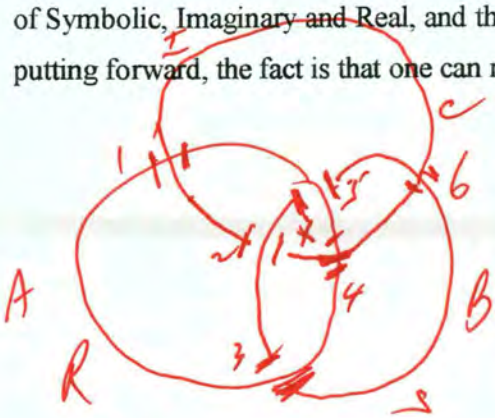
others are not linked, they can, simply because they are three (before this three the two remaining separate), simply by being three, they squeeze one another in such a way as to be inseparable. Hence the squeezing. The squeezing is written something like that: namely, if you pull somewhere on any one of these rings of string, you see that there is a point, a point which is somewhere around there where the three are squeezed.

(14) It is a little bit different to everything that has been lucubrated up to now *more geometrico*, because it requires that there should be three rings, three rings of string, something much more consistent than this void with which one operates on space; three of them are required always, in any case to determine a point. I will re-explain that for you still better, namely *per longum et latum*, but I am pointing out to you that it starts, it starts, this notion, from a different way of operating with space, with the space that we really inhabit...if the unconscious exists. I am starting from a different way of considering space; and that in qualifying these three dimensions, in pinpointing them by the very terms that I appeared up to now to strongly differentiate in terms of Symbolic, Imaginary and Real, and that I am in the process of putting forward, the fact is that one can make them strictly equivalent.



Space for your own version of the Borromean Knot !

This is a question which Freud asks himself at the end of *The interpretation of dreams* on the second last page: he asks the question of how what he calls – and one clearly sees that he does not any longer call it with such certainty, that he no longer pinpoints it by

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Freud talks about psychical + material reality.

something that would separate it out – what he calls reality, that he describes as *psychical*: what does that have to do with the real?

So here then, he vacillates, he vacillates again a little, and he catches hold of material reality, but what does *material reality* mean in its relationships with *psychical reality*?

He is going to spend time on the last two pages of the 'Interpretation' of Dreams.

We are going then, we are going then to try to distinguish them, to still keep an ounce of distinction between these three categories, while marking what I am putting on the agenda, namely, clearly marking that, as dimensions of our space – our space inhabited *qua* speaking beings – these three categories are strictly equivalent.

We already know the knack for that, huh? They are designated by (15) letters. This is the quite new path that has been opened up by algebra, and you see there the importance of the written. If I write R.I.S. (Real, Imaginary, Symbolic), or better: Real, Symbolic, Imaginary (you will see later why I am correcting it), you write them in capital letters, you cannot do otherwise, and they remain for you like that, sticking, in a way to the thing, simply a question of writing, it is quite heterogeneous, you continue like that because you have always comprehended – you have always comprehended, but wrongly – that the progress, the forward step was to have marked the overwhelmingly importance of the Symbolic with respect to this misfortunate Imaginary with which I began, I began by firing bullets at it, anyway, under the pretext of narcissism; only you know it is altogether real that the mirror image is inverted. And that even with a knot, especially with a knot, and despite appearances, because you imagine perhaps that there are knots whose mirror image can perhaps be superimposed on the knot itself, that is not at all the case.

Space – I mean like that intuitive, geometrical space – is orientable. There is nothing more specular than a knot. And that indeed is why (that indeed is why...) that it is something completely different if you

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make the choice of writing this same capital RSI – you see where the trick lies – of writing them a, b, c. Here everyone senses that, at the very least that brings them together, huh, an a is worth a b, a b is worth a c, and...and it turns around, like that. It is even on this that the combinatorial was founded. It was on this that the combinatorial was founded and that is why when you put the three letters in a sequence, well then, there are no more than six ways to order them. Namely, according to the factorial law that presides over this business, it is 1 multiplied by 2 multiplied by 3: that gives 6, huh? Once you have 4, there are 24 ways of ordering them.

Only if, if you submit yourself to a conception of space in which the point is defined in the way that I have just showed, by squeezing – excuse me today for not writing all of that in figures on the board, I will do it afterwards – you notice that it is not by reason, like that, of a scansion that goes from the better to the worse, from the Real to the Imaginary, putting the Symbolic in the middle, it is not by reason of some preference or other, that you should notice that, in taking things (16) from the angle of squeezing, in other words by the Borromean knot: one ring of string is the Real, one ring of string is the Symbolic, one ring of string is the Imaginary, well then, you must not believe that all the ways of making this knot are the same.

There is a laevogyratory knot and a dextrogyratory knot. (as in polarised light)

And even this, even if you have written the three dimensions of space that I define as being the space inhabited by the speaking being, even if you have not defined these dimensions by small letters, even if you define these dimensions by a, b, c, that you do not put here any emphasis on a diversely preferential content, you notice that, if you write a, b, c, there is a first series, and despite yourself, you will qualify it as the right one: the series that I call laevogyratory, which will be a, b, c, then b, c, a, then c, a, b, namely, that there is the series – the laevogyratory series which always leaves a certain order, which

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is precisely the order a, b, c,: it is the same one that is conserved in b, c, a. And that the c comes first is of no importance. It is legitimate for you to imagine, since it was the capital 'I' that I pinpointed with a small c, to imagine the reality of the Symbolic.

It is sufficient if the Real remains before it. And you must not believe for all that that this 'before' of the Real with respect to the Symbolic, is all by itself some kind of guarantee of anything whatsoever! Because if you re-transcribe the a, b, c, of the first formula you will have R. S. I., namely: what produces (*réalise*) the Symbolic from the Imaginary.

Well then, what produces the Symbolic from the Imaginary, what else is it except religion... for me? What produces in proper terms the Symbolic from the Imaginary, is indeed what ensures that religion is not about to end. And that puts us, us analysts, on the same side, on the laevogyratory side, by means of which imagining what has to be done, imagining the Real from the Symbolic, our first step taken a long time ago, is mathematics, and the final one, is what the consideration of the unconscious leads us to, in so far as it is from that that there is opened up – I have always professed it – it is from there that linguistics is opened up.

Namely, that it is by spreading the mathematical procedure which consists in noticing the fact that there is some Real in the Symbolic, that it is by this that a new passage is outlined for us.

The Imaginary does not need then to be placed at any rank (17) whatsoever. It is the order that is important, and in the other dextrogyratory order, curiously, you have the formula a, c, b, as a result of which it is in the second phase that c comes first, but b is before a, and in the third phase, it is b, a, c, namely, three terms which we will see are of no little importance in discourse, it is from there no less that there emerged some distinct structures, which are precisely

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all those by which other discourses are supported, only those that the laevogyratory discourses permit to demonstrate by the space that they determine – certainly not as having had at one time their efficaciousness, but as properly speaking put in question by the other discourses. And here I am not showing any partiality, since I am putting us on the same side as where religion functions.

I will say no more about it today. But what I am putting forward is this: if in the tongue, the structure, it must be imagined, is this not what I am putting forward by the formula: *les non-dupes errent?* Since this is not immediately accessible, I am going to try to show it to you.

There is something in the idea of dupery, which is that it has a support: it is the dupe. There is something absolutely magnificent in this business of the dupe, it is that the dupe, if you will allow me, the dupe is considered to be stupid. One must really ask why. If the dupe is truly what we are told – I am speaking etymologically, this has no importance – if the dupe is this bird called the hoopoe *(huppe)* the hoopoe because it is smart (*huppée*), naturally nothing justifies that smart should be called hoopoe, it nevertheless remains that that is how it is summed up in the dictionary, the dupe, it appears, is the bird one can trap, precisely because it is stupid. We can absolutely not see why a hoopoe should be more stupid than any other bird, but the remarkable thing for me, is the accent the dictionary puts on specifying that it is feminine. Dupe is *la*.

There is somewhere a thing that I picked out, that I picked out in Littré: that it was a mistake for La Fontaine to make the dupe masculine. He dared write somewhere:

Du fil et du soufflet pourtant embarrassé,
Un des dupe un jour alla trouver un sage
Embarrassed by the thread and the snub,
One of the dupes went one day to find a wise man.

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(17) 'This is quite wrong', Littré says clearly, 'one does not say, *un dupe*, anymore that one can say *un linnotte* (a linnet, a featherbrain) to describe *un etourdi* (a scatterbrain).' That's a powerful reason.

The interesting thing is to know what gender the (*le*) *non-dupe* is. You see? I say right away: *le non-dupe*. Is it because what is highlighted by a *non* is neutral? I am not going to decide this: but there is one thing that in any case is clear, it is that the plural, by not being marked, makes this reference to the feminine completely uncertain. And there is something, anyway, which is still funnier that I – I cannot say that I found it in Chamfort – I found it also in the dictionary, in another one, this quotation of Chamfort, but it's not bad all the same, anyway, that it should be at the word *dupe* that I picked out this: 'One of the best reasons', writes Chamfort, 'that one can have for never marrying' (ah!) 'is that one is not completely *la dupe* of a woman as long as she is not your own'. *La vôtre*! Your wife or your dupe. Now there's something, all the same, that appears, anyway... illuminating, huh?

Marriage as reciprocal dupery.

This indeed why I think marriage is love: feelings are always reciprocal, I have said. So then... if marriage is such at this point...it's not sure, huh! Anyway, if I let myself go with the flow a little, I would say that – this is what Chamfort means – also no doubt – a woman never makes a mistake. Not in marriage in any case. This is why the function of spouse has nothing human about.

We will explore that another time.

I spoke about the *non-dupe*. And I seemed to have marked him, in fact by an irremediable weakness, in saying that...he *errs*. Only we must clearly see what is meant by: *ça erre*.

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I pointed out to you earlier that *errer* (anyway you are going all the same to consult the dictionary of Bloch et von Wartburg, because I am not going to spend my time doing etymology with you, which means simply highlighting the usage throughout the ages, that etymology makes perfectly obvious, does it not?) the fact is that exactly as in my title *les Non-dupes errent* and *les Noms du père*, huh, it is exactly the same thing for the word *erre*, or more exactly for the word *errer*.

Errer results from the convergence of 'error', *erreur*, with something (19) that has strictly speaking nothing to do with it, and which is akin to this *erre* of which I spoke to you earlier, which is strictly the relationship with the verb *iterare*. *Iterare*, what's more (because if it were only that, it would be nothing) is there uniquely for *iter* which means a journey. This indeed is why the knight errant is simply an itinerant knight.

Only, all the same, *errer* comes from *iterare*, which has nothing to do with a journey, since it means to repeat, from *iterum* (re!). Nevertheless, this *iterare* is only used for what it does not mean, namely *itinerare*, as is proved by the developments that have been given to this very *errer* in the sense of wandering, namely, by making of the knight errant an itinerant knight.

Well then, that is the point of what I have to say to you, considering the difference, the difference that is... pinpointed from the fact that there are non-dupes. If the non-dupes are those (*ceux ou celles*) that refuse to be captured by the space of the speaking being, if they are those who keep their hands free of it, as I might say, there is something that we must know how to imagine, which is the absolute necessity that results from it, not wandering but error.

Namely, that as regards everything that is involved in life and at the same time in death, there is an invention (*imagination*) that cannot but

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support all those who want to be non-dupes in structure. It is this: that their life is only a journey.

Life is a journey . . . . Where is her conflict in the world of the speaking being!

Life is that of the *viator*. Those who in this lower world – as they say – are in a foreign land.

The only thing that they do not notice, is that simply by bringing out this function of foreigner, they give rise at the same time to the third term, the third dimension, the one thanks to which they will never get out of the relationships of this life, unless it is to be then still more duped than the others, by this locus of the other that with their Imaginary they nevertheless constitute as such.

The idea of *genesis*, of development, as they say, of what is supposed to be some norm or other, thanks to which a being which is only specified by being speaking, in everything that is involved about its effects, precisely, will be commanded by something or other that no one is capable of defining, which is called development. And that is why, by wanting to reduce analysis, one fails, one makes the complete error, the radical error as regards what is involved in what the unconscious uncovers.

(20) There is something that Freud says to us, and here it is unambiguous: *Und* (it is the final paragraph of the *Traumdeutung*) *der Wert des Traums für die Kenntnis der Zukunft?*. Re value of dreams for the knowledge of the future.

And this is why it is very nice. Because people believe that in writing this, Freud is making an allusion to the famous divinatory value of dreams. But can we not read it differently? Namely, to say to us, and the value of the dream for the knowledge (*connaissance*) of what is going to result from it in the world, from the discovery of the unconscious, to see, whether, by chance, a discourse ensured that in a more and more widespread way, it is known – it is known – what the end of Freud's paragraph says, namely that this future held by the

This is the last paragraph of the dream book. L. says this not that dreams predict the future.

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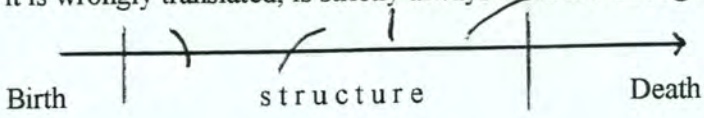
dreamer to be present, is *gestaltet*, structured by the indestructible demand in so far as it is always the same: *zum Ebenbild*. Namely, that if you wish, I am going to put something for you here:

Birth ——————————→ Death

which is supposed to be this journey, namely this development, like that, punctuated between birth and death.

What does Freud indicate to us from the emergence of the unconscious? It is that at whatever point one is at of this so-called journey, the structure, of something that I am sketching here, it does not matter: the structure, namely, the relationship to a certain knowledge, the structure, for its part never lets go. And the *desire*, as it is wrongly translated, is strictly always the same throughout life.



Simply the relationships of a particular being in his emergence, in his emergence into a world where already it is this discourse that reigns, his desire is completely determined from the beginning to the end.

This indeed is why it is only by... by no longer wishing to be a dupe of the structure, that one imagines in the maddest way, that life is woven from some contraries or other of life drives and death drives, is already all the same to float a little bit higher, anyway, than the notion – the age old notion of a journey.

(21) Those who are not dupes of the unconscious, namely, who do not spend their whole effort sticking to it, is that not so, who only see life from the point of view of the *viator* – this indeed is how moreover, that there arose... anyway...a whole stage of logic, the one from which subsequently, of course, and with I do not know what consequences, there appeared these things which one does not even see the degree to

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produces: there are some very funny things. I do not want to compromise God too much in this business, everyone knows that I consider that...he is rather of the order of the super cherished; so then (22) why would he always tell the truth, when it works out just as well if he is totally deceptive, huh? Admitting that he made the Real, he is all the more subject to it in that precisely, if it is he who made it, so then, why not? I believe that, when all is said and done, this is how there must be interpreted the famous business of Descartes, is that not so, the evil genius (*le malin génie*). Well then, he is the evil genius and things work out like that. The smarter (*malin*) he is, the better things will go. That is even why it is necessary to be a dupe.

It is necessary to be a dupe, namely to stick, to stick to the structure.

Good, well listen, I've had my bellyful of this!.

Definitions

Errer: 1. To roam, wander about. 2. To err; to be mistaken

Erre: the speed acquired by a ship when what is propelling it is no longer acting; something or someone that slides on after its initial impetus has been removed.

OR THE IMPETUS WHICH A DIVER HAS WHEN HE DIVES INTO A POOL.

Lancee: the initial impetus

Les non-dupes errent

The unduped wander / are mistaken

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which they are paradoxes, is that not so: all men are mortal. Namely, what I said, travellers, huh.

Socrates is a man – and he is a man, he is a man, if he wishes, huh, he is a man if he throws himself into it, is that not so, this indeed moreover is what he does, and this indeed is why moreover, the fact that he should have asked for death, there is all the same quite a little difference; but this difference did not prevent what followed being absolutely fascinating. Nor was it any worse because of that.....with his hysteria, he allowed a certain shadow of science, the one that precisely is founded on this categorical logic. It was a very bad example.

But this must [spread], huh. In any case this essentially imaginary function of the *viator*, ought to put us on our guard against any metaphor that comes from the way. I know well that the way, the way that is at stake, the Tao, imagines itself as being in the structure. But is it quite sure that there is only one Way? Or even that the notion of the way, of the method, is worth anything at all? Might it not be in forging for ourselves a quite different ethic, an ethic that would be founded on the refusal of being *unduped*, on the way of being always more strongly the dupe of this knowledge, of this unconscious which, when all is said and done, is our only lot in terms of knowledge.

I know well that there is this blessed question of the truth, huh. We are not going like that, after what I have said to you about it, returning to it and turning around it, set about sticking to it without knowing that it is a choice, since it can only be half-said. And after all, behind what we choose to say about it, behind there is always a desire, an intention, as they say.

It is on this that there was founded, in any case, all phenomenology, I am talking about that of Husserl. According, like that, as you vary the 'bits to say' of the truth, of course, to see the sort of things it

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Seminar 2: Wednesday 20 November 1973

There is a little book, there that..... I am going to begin like that in a confidential way, huh, because, obviously I ask myself, I ask myself in starting up again, is that not so: am I enough of a dupe – am I enough of a dupe, huh – not to make a mistake (*errer*)?

To make a mistake in the sense that I specified for you the last time, which means: am I sticking enough to... to the analytic discourse, which does not all the same fail to comprise a certain sort of cold horror. Am I sticking to it enough not to... to be distracted from it, namely, not to truly follow it along its thread, or even, to employ a term that I will use later, there where I am expected, onto vector spaces, I am saying this to you right away; anyway, I will not tackle that today, but spaces introduces a notion, like that, another space in space. That is called fibred space (*espace fibré*).

But anyway, this analytic discourse, this must not all the same be forgotten, to excuse myself if I do not completely stick to it, the fact is that I founded it. I founded it in a written elaboration, the one that writes the small **o** and the S_2 superimposed on the left, and then the $ and the S_1 on the right.

$$\frac{\mathbf{o}}{S_2} \longrightarrow \frac{\$}{S_1}$$

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When what is at stake is being dupe, is that not so, it is not a matter on this occasion of being the dupe of my ideas, because these four little letters are not ideas. They are not even ideas at all, the proof, is that it (24) is very, very difficult to give them a meaning. Which does not mean that... one cannot make something of them. This is what is inscribed from a certain elaboration of what I will call, it is the same thing to say that it is inscribed as to say what I am going to say now namely,: the mathematics of Freud, what is locatable in the logic of his discourse, in his own wandering. Namely, the way he tried to render this analytic discourse adequate to the scientific discourse. That was his *erre*. This is what – I cannot say prevented him in a word – to construct the mathematics of it; since the mathematics that he did like that, needed a second step in order to be able to be inscribed subsequently.

So then, while I was speaking to you the last time, there came back to me, like that, blasts of memories, of something which of course did not happen to me here, which had worried me that morning in preparing what I had to say to you.

There you are, it is called – let us say it right away – it is called *die Grenzen der Deutbarkeit*. It is something which has a close relationship, in fact, with the inscription of the analytic discourse; the fact is if this inscription is indeed what I am saying about it, namely, the beginning, the key kernel of its mathematics, there is every chance that it can be used for the same thing as mathematics. Namely, that it carries in itself its own limit. I knew that I had read that, because I had it in an old yoke that I had bought like that, second hand, in the debris of what survived from the story of Freud, after the Nazi business, so then I had this debris... and I said to myself that all the same that must have been collected somewhere, given the date. It's true. It had been collected in volume III of the *Gesammelte Schriften*. But! But nowhere else, namely, where it ought to have appeared, being already edited in 1925, in fact, and even already appeared, in

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fact, the first time, if I remember correctly, in... Well then, it had not appeared at all before... before that, before what I had then.

So then it was then – it came out in the *Gesammelte Schriften* but it did not appear where it should have appeared at the time it came out, namely, in the 8th edition of the *Traumdeutung*. And it did not appear because, in the additional notes in question, there is a third chapter – the first being constituted by these *Grenzen der Deutbarkeit*, the second I will skip over, I will talk to you about it again – and the third signifies *Die okkulte Bedeutung des Traumes*. Namely, *the occult significance*. That is why it did not appear.

(25) What remained in my mind, what worried me, was *die Grenzen*. But because of the fact that these *Grenzen* were associated to the occult significance, it did not come out. Jones says that somewhere: there is an objection in fact to the occult. There is an objection from the side of scientific discourse. And in effect, as it is presented now, the occult, is defined very precisely, anyway, as what scientific discourse cannot stand. This is even one might say its definition. So then, it is not astonishing that it should object to it. This objection came, like that, conveyed by Jones, and this may appear a quite simple explanation of the fact that it did not appear where it should have appeared, namely, in the 8th edition.

Freud, as you know, there was nothing new, in fact, in that he worried about the occult. He did so, like that, by... by an *erre*. By an *erre* concerning scientific discourse. Yes, because he imagined that scientific discourse ought to take all the facts into account. It was a pure *erre*. And a still more serious *erre*: an *erre* that was pushed to the point of being an error. Scientific discourse does not take into account the facts that do not stick to its structure, namely, where it began to advance, its relationship with its own mathematics. But for it not to stick to it, it is still necessary that it should come within reach of this mathematical structure.

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So that it takes into account all the facts which create a hole in its, let us say, I am going quickly, here, because it is not a valid word... but which create a hole because it is more tangible, right away, to say it like that, which make a hole in its system! But it wants to know nothing about what does not belong at all to its system. So then, in worrying himself like that, about occult phenomena – ones described as occult, that does not at all mean that they are occult, that they are hidden, because, what is hidden is what is hidden by the form of the discourse itself, but what has absolutely nothing to do with the form of the discourse is not hidden, it is elsewhere.

You there, such as you are, like that – I am appealing to your feeling, in fact – there is nothing in common between the unconscious and the occult. In any case at the level that you are at here to hear me, I think that all the same you have been sufficiently broken to the idea that the unconscious... belongs fundamentally to language, huh. And if you were able the other day to look at what I had begun to do like that, (26) vaguely on the board with the line described as a journey, and then that you have simply been able to admit what I have been drumming into you for 20 years – indeed even more – namely, what closes, what finishes the *Traumdeutung*: what I recalled the other day, namely, this famous indestructible desire which travels along, which, on the line of the journey, once the entry into the field of language has occurred, accompanies from one end to the other and, *Ebenbild* always the same, without variation, accompanies the subject structuring his desire.

As Freud says, *Ebenbild*, (it is translated as *in the image* [SE: perfect likeness], but it is not in the image, it is *Ebenbild*, it is a fixed image, always the same!) in the image *der Vergangenheit*, namely, what in the image of this *Ebenbild* cannot even be called the past: it is always the same thing, there is no past once what is at stake is spatial function, the crossing of the line with this network of the structure

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which is displaced, for its part, according to the line, but of which one can say at the same time is not displaced since the line does not vary. It is with respect to life as journey that one can say that there is a part that is past and another which remains, like that, to be consumed, which is called the future. These inscriptions of the indestructible desire go with the flow. But in going with the flow, at the same time they stop it, they fix it, is that no so, since all movement is relative, is that not so. And the flow within it is only a flow, it does not constitute a point of reference, huh. There you are.

So then the symbolic structure, is that not so, is at the end of this *Traumdeutung* perhaps still to be discovered, but it is on this that Freud concludes his notion in this title, in this conclusion that comes here like the very point of everything he had ever stated about the dream in the *Traumdeutung*: his notion is there. This indeed is why that what retroact in it, is that – this is what he explained about the dream, is that not so – is that there is something of the unconscious, and that the unconscious is that: that he was able to say on occasion that the unconscious is the irrational, but that simply means that its rationality is to be constructed, that even if the principle of contradiction, the yes or the no, do not play the role that is believed in classical logic, is that not so – since classical logic has been superseded for a long time, at that very moment, well, it is necessary to construct another one... Yeah...

And I, I suspect, that if the *die Grenzen der deutbarkeit, the limits of interpretation*, (that's what that means) did not come out in the (27) following edition of *The interpretation of dreams*, it is not simply because it was in the shadow of the occult, it is because all the same here, that... that relied on it (*en remettait*). This went a little beyond the business about the affirmation that *desire is indestructible*, it showed in this structuring of desire itself something which precisely would have allowed its nature to mathematicised differently. That is why it is worth the trouble, all the same, for me to give you like that –

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it is obvious that before such an audience it is not possible for me to give a commentary on the 25 pages of Freud, there are no more, there are even fewer – but I could all the same tackle the first paragraph, that will encourage you to go to find it because all the same it finished up by being published, as was pointed out to me by my dear friend Nicole Sels, whom after the last session I got into this business, I said to her: 'But where the devil in fact is this thing?', this thing which nevertheless in the *Gesammelte Schriften*, is indicated immediately after this point on which I terminated about the indestructible and invariable desire, because this is what was at stake.

So then as she commented to me – that is worth the trouble, is it not, commenting to me - as my dear Nicole who knows something about what is involved in searching for the edition of a text (who knows a bit about it and who can really do something about it, in fact, it is unimaginable how I make her run around, I mean, that she runs around, and that she brings it back to me within two hours; here she spent longer: she spent at least three days), yes, this supplementary chapter does not figure, because I had said to her: "All the same, it would be curious if I were not to find it in the *Gesammelte Werke*. And I can't find it!" She replied to me that it is not in any logical place in this work, nor in the volume that corresponds – about the *Traumdeutung*, I had of course noticed, this is even what had enraged me - nor in volume XIV which corresponds to the year 1925. It appeared *in extremis* and – she added – sneakily in volume I, for this volume was the last one to appear: in 1952. Here she is referring me back to the opinion of Strachey, who had translated it himself in the *Standard Edition*, is that not so, but in volume XIX – namely, in its normal year, yes, that's true – but he thinks that this fate is due to the grimace everyone made before the *okkulte Bedeutung* of dreams. This is what Strachey thinks. I do not know what Nicole Sels thinks about it, but it is, with respect - simply - to the facts that she brought me, secondary.

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(28) So then I am not going to read the thing for you right away in German.

This is how it is put: 'The question of whether one can give a complete and assured translation of dream life" – *vollstandige und gesicherte bersetzung* – already this use of *Übersetzung* is not bad, it is very Lacanian, good – *in die Ausdruckweise des Wachslebns*: 'into the mode of expression of waking life', and here he puts in brackets: *Deutung*, namely meaning; *Deutbarkeit* means interpretation but *deutung*, means meaning, *Traumdeutung*, means the meaning of dreams – 'cannot be treated in the abstract but in the *Beziehung* to *Verhaltnisse*' – this is another term to express relations – 'with the relations' – designated then by another word, namely, posited differently: *Beziehung* is something, like that approximate: *Verhaltnisse*, can be taken in the sense of relations that are written, I mean of what is constituted properly speaking in an articulation proper to the sense of the term, is that not so, as something that may happen to be posited there – 'the relations, *unter denen*', under whose influence one works at interpreting dreams: *man an der Traumdeutung arbeitet*. (*SE* XIV 127 – I have translated from Lacan's French & *GW* I 561.)

And this is where we go a little further in it.

'Our *geistige* activities' – those of the spirit, that is how it is put: *unsere geistigen Tatigkeiten*. For Freud, that means 'what one thinks.' The activities of the spirit are what are generally designated as thoughts.

Streben. *Streben*, is a word which has different resonances, is that not so, than what it is translated by in English, namely, – on this occasion, is that not so, it is precisely Strachey's translation – *pursue*. It does not pursue anything at all. It pursues nothing at all, *streben* when one follows carefully what it is, when one sees the stuff of the word.

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which is done obviously with its previous usages, is something which is, to be inscribed, something like this: you understand if you have a vaulted arch, like that, something in wood: it is the tie-beams (*tirants*). They appear to support it like that; if you have the slightest notion about architecture, you will know that the tie-beams, in a vaulted arch, well then, they pull. I mean that they pull towards the outside. The tie-beams are not supports. Anyway, it does not matter for the *streben* what they pull: what they may hold together, is 'either *ein nützliches Ziel*" and you rediscover the essentially Lacanian functions of the (29) useful and of enjoying (*jouir*), they are specified as such, it is on this that at the start I made entirely pivot what I said about the ethics of psychoanalysis – 'a useful goal', is, or what they *anstreben*, what they pull, 'or indeed, *oder unmittelbaren Lustgewinn*", namely, quite simply my surplus enjoying (*plus-de-jouir*).

> *Die Frage ob man von jedem Produkt des Traumlebens eine vollstandige un de gesichert Ubersetzung in die Ausdrucksweise des Wachlebens (Deutung) geben kann, soll nich abstrakt behandelt warden, sodern unter Beziehung auf die Verhaltnisse unter denen man an der Traumdeutung arbeitet.*
>
> *Unsere geistigen Tatigkeiten streben entweder ein nützliches Ziel an oder unmittelbaren Lustgewinn. (GW, idem.)*

For what is meant by a *Lustgewinn*? A gain of *Lust*. If the ambiguity of this term in German, is that not so, does not allow there to be introduced into the *Lustprinzip*, translated as the pleasure principle, precisely this formidable divergence that there is between the notion of pleasure as it is commented on by Freud himself according to the ancient tradition, the only outcome of Epicurean wisdom, which meant to enjoy the least possible, because what really fucks us up is enjoyment! This is precisely why they were described as swine, because in effect, swine, good God, do not enjoy as much as is

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imagined, is that not so, they stay in their little pig house, nice and quiet, anyway, they enjoy the minimum possible...

That is why they are described as swine, because all the others, in fact, were seriously worried by enjoyment. Anyway they had to work at it, in fact: they were slaves of enjoyment. That is even why, listen... I am going to let myself be carried along, huh, that is even why there were slaves, huh. The only civilisation that was really bitten by enjoyment, had to have slaves. Because the ones who enjoyed were them! Without slaves, no enjoyment, huh. You for your part you are all employees. Anyway you do what you can to be employees. You haven't quite arrived at it, but believe me you will get there.

Good, I let myself be carried away a little, there like that. Reflect all the same a little on that, in fact, is that not so, that only slaves enjoy. (30) It is their function. And that is why they are isolated, that people have not even the slightest scruple in transforming free men into slaves, because in making them slaves, one allows them to devote themselves only to enjoying. Free men only aspire to that. And since they are altruistic, they make slaves. It happened like that in history, in our own history. Obviously there were places where it was more civilised: there was no slavery in China. But the result was that, despite what was said, they never managed to do science, huh. Now, they have been touched a little by Marx, so they are waking up. As Napoleon said: Above all, do not wake them up! Now they are awake. They will not have needed to go by way of this affair of slaves. Which proves, all the same that there are grafts, is that not so, that it is not the worst thing to avoid. One may avoid the best. And get there all the same.

Good, anyway, *unmittelbaren Lustgewinn*, means 'a surplus enjoying, there, immediate'. 'In the first case, huh, that with the goal of usefulness, it is, (these *geistigen Tatigkiten*, the spiritual operations) they are intellectual decisions, preparations for the manipulation, huh,

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Hadlengun, or communications *an andere*, to others', namely, that one talks in order – as I have just said – to manipulate them, as you say.

'In the other case, we call that – *nemmen wir sie* (*sie*, namely, the *geistigen Tatigkeiten) Spielen und Phantasieren* we call that games and the fact of phantasising. Naturally as he says, *bekanntlich*, is that not so, the useful, if simply also all the same a detour, *ein Umweg*, for a satisfaction of enjoyment'. But it is not in itself that it is aimed at, is that not so.

'Dreaming' – he did not say the dream – 'the fact of dreaming is then an activity of the second kind', namely, what he had defined by *unmittelbaren Lustgewinn*. 'It is an error, *irreführend*, to say that dreaming strives towards these pressing needs of daily life that are always imminent and tries to bring to a proper end the day's work, *Tagesarbeit*. That is what concerns preconscious thinking: *das vorbewusste Denken*. For the dream, this utilisation, this useful intention, is that not so, is just as foreign as the bringing into play, into operation, the preparation, the niggling, is that not so, of a communication *einer Mitteilung* to another, *an einen anderen*'. This (31) is why our dear Freud has something Lacanian about him is that not so, since everything that he has just told us about the dream, is uniquely a construction, an enciphering (*un chiffrage*), this enciphering which is a dimension of language has nothing to do with communication.

The relationship of man to language, which can only be... simply be tackled on the basis of the following: that the signifier is a sign, that is only addressed to another sign: that the signifier, is what makes a sign to a sign, and that that is why it is the signifier. That has nothing to do with communication to someone other, it determines a subject, it has as an effect a subject. And the subject, it is quite enough that he should be determined by that, qua subject, namely, that he should

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emerge from something which can only have its justification elsewhere. Except for the fact that in the dream, as we see, namely, that the operation of calculation is done for enjoyment. Namely, that things are done in order that in the enciphering one wins this something which is the essential of the primary process, namely, a *Lustgewinn*. That is what is said there.

And then it continues. And it does not simply continue, it stresses. And this clearly shows how, why the dream function, namely, that it is only constructed and is in no way constructed, and that is why it functions, for that: it is made for nothing – 'except to protect sleep, *den Schlaf verhüten*'. It protects sleep. What Freud only said, like that, incidentally in different points, here he insists. I mean that the question that he introduces, this is why precisely what is involved in the dream depends on the unconscious, namely, on the structure, on the structure of desire – what in the dream might well discommode sleep.

As regards sleep, it is clear that we do not know very much. We do not know very much precisely because, because those who study it, like that, as facts, with two little encephalographs, encephalopodes, encephalo-whatever-you're-having-yourself, well, they link things together, but finally...it is all the same curious, is it not, that something so widespread in life, here, as they say, as sleep – in fact I am not putting anything forward here I am simply noting: the question has never been put about what it had to do with enjoyment. All that because enjoyment, anyway, is, it must be clearly said that it has not been made an altogether major mainspring of the conception of the world as it is put.

What is sleep? It is perhaps there that Freud's formula could (32) obviously take on its meaning and rejoin the idea of pleasure: if I spoke about swine earlier, it is because they often take a snooze, yes. They have the least possible enjoyment in the measure that the more

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they sleep the better it is. In any case that would agree with – if my hypothesis is right, namely, that it is in the enciphering that the enjoyment is; one can also see, one can see by that, in any case, something, which is that the enciphering of the dream, after all, is not pushed all that far, as far as people say anyway! It is… I already explained condensation, displacement, it is … it is metaphor, it is metonymy, and then it is all sorts of little manipulations, like that, which expand the thing in the Imaginary. It is in that direction, huh, that enjoyment must be seen. So then one could perhaps raise oneself up, is that not so, to a structure, like that in conformity, in conformity to the history of calculation, the fact is that if it is in the direction of that something which happens….to what? *Die Grenzen*, the limits. That's the error. The limits *der Deutbarkeit*, if you read these four pages carefully, because there are no more than that, you will notice that, that what signals this limit, is exactly the same moment when it reaches meaning. Namely, that meaning is, in sum rather bitty. You do not discover ninety-nine meanings at the *bi-du-bout* of the unconscious: it is the sexual meaning. It is very precisely non-sense meaning. The meaning where the *Verhaltnis* is in a mess. The *Beziehung*, for its part, takes place with the following: that there is no sexual *Verhaltnisse* except that: the *Verhaltnis* qua written, in so far as it can be inscribed or that it is a matheme, always ~~flunks~~ it.

And this indeed is why there is a moment when the dream collapses namely, that one stops dreaming and sleep remains protected from enjoyment. It is because when all is said and done one can see the end of it (*le bout*).

But the important thing, the important thing for us, if it is true that this sexual meaning can only be defined by not being able to be written, is to see precisely what in this enciphering – not in the deciphering – that which in the enciphering necessitates *die Grenzen*, the same word,

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here employed in the title, the same word serves for what in mathematics, is designated as *limit*. As limit of a function, as limit of a real number. The variable can increase much as it likes – the function will not go beyond certain limits. And language is made like that. It is something which, however far you push its enciphering, will (33) never manage to let go what is involved in meaning, because it is there in the place of meaning; because it is there at that place. And what ensures that the sexual relationship cannot be written, is precisely that hole there, that all language as such fills, the access, the access of the speaking being to something which indeed presents itself, as touching the Real at a certain point, there, at that point here: at that point there, is justified the fact that I define the real by the impossible, because here precisely, it does not manage ever – it is the nature of language – it never arrives, ever at the point where the sexual relationship can be inscribed. Yeah... Yeah...

So then there remains our business with Freud and his *occult*.

The business of the occult, is very curious, is it not? I spoke to you about the 8th edition, but not the 7th. It is impossible to get one's hands on the 7th, not because of the Nazis, this time, but because it probably appeared in very few copies, anyway, it came out in 1919, can you imagine! The fabulous thing, is that all the same, thanks to another friend (you see that I have nothing but friends) Nanie Bridgman, Nanie Bridgman who is in the B.N. got her hands on the 7th. Well then that relieved me, huh. Because the way in which Freud is translated – it is true that that began especially with Marie Bonaparte, good.....but before that there was Isaac Meverson; I had got to the point, I beg his pardon for this, of thinking that for him it was the same thing, namely, that he wrote in any old way; I had got to that point, and why? Because (I didn't bring it here, like that, it's unfortunate, I forgot it, that's the truth) there is a little sentence, there is a little sentence at the moment when Freud asks the question, this is what culminates in this final paragraph that I spoke to you about, at

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the moment when Freud asks the question of what is involved, what is the order of reality of this dream – he is forced to call it psychical, but at the same time it worries him to call it psychical, because he clearly feels that the soul, in fact, this business does not hold up, anyway that the soul is all the same no different to the body, good.

There then he evokes material reality, he had not very clearly seen at that time that he had the material there: it was his whole book, very simply namely, the way in which he had dealt with the dream, dealing with it by the manipulation of deciphering, namely, after all simply with what language involves in terms of a dimension, of enciphering.

(34) So there, he gets involved in what is involved, when all is said and done, in this reality, and he is struck – he is struck only there, it is the only edition in which there is a sentence like that, a sentence where all of a sudden, he repudiates this fact: a savant, a modest savant certainly, he describes him like that, there are all the same two things that in any case – anyway here he puts a barrier, he cannot take it on board – it is the subsistence of what is dead.

This, this is directed at the immortality of the soul. (Lacan does not buy this)

And secondly that all the elements of the future can be calculated. (L. does not buy this either)
Which obviously here, rejoins is that not so, rejoins the solid ground of Aristotle, huh. The soul in Aristotle is so defined that it in no way implies its immortality, and it is moreover thanks to that that there can be progress in science, it is starting from the moment when in effect people interest themselves in the body – and then secondly, secondly the following: the maintenance of the contingent as essential. And after all why the contingent, namely, that we cannot predict what is going to happen tomorrow? In many things we can predict it. What does Aristotle use in his definition of the contingent? Knowing who is going to be victorious tomorrow, knowing if from today, in the name of this, that tomorrow something will be called "the victory of

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Mantitheus can we from today write: the victory of Mantitheus. It is this alone that is involved in the arguments of Aristotle about the contingent. It is all the same a nice opportunity for us to question ourselves about why events which are moreover not just any old events, which are let us say human events – I do not see why I would refuse here to state it like that – why is it that this is the contingent? Because after all, there are all the same human events that are all the more predictable because they are constants. For example: I was sure that you would be just as numerous today as the last time – for reasons moreover that are just as obscure – but anyway it can be calculated. Why can a victory not be calculated?

Who is going to answer me? [*To Madame Gloria Gonzales, his secretary: Give me a cigar*].

Listen: a victory cannot be calculated.....

[*Someone in the audience*]: Because there must be two...!

(35) There is something in that idea...

There is something in the idea, it's obvious, anyway, it's true, as you say, there must be two, and sometimes even a little more... But by going in that direction, is this not so, you clearly see that, despite everything, you slide gently to the side, to the side where these two, where these two funk it: namely, to the side of the sexual relationship. It is a hole business, huh, to be two. Yes. When I think that I will not have the time today to tell you all the beautiful things that I had prepared for you about love, well then, this disappoints me a little but it was because I dragged things out, and then I dragged things out like that because...because I wanted all the same to make a careful calculation, namely, not to *erre* too much, huh, so that for the rest, anyway, you can perhaps wait a little bit.

But to refer to something that I already put forward – I said it in a thousand ways, very often, but one day I said it quite crudely, like that, clearly, I said that the effect of interpretation – to limit myself to what, is that not so, I must remain stuck to, I must remain the dupe of, and still more a dupe without forcing myself, because if I am a dupe

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by forcing myself, well then I will write the *Discourse on the passions of love* precisely what Pascal wrote, and you can really see that he is forcing himself, huh.

After that naturally it slackened, it died, he was never able to come back to it, but anyway, it is probable enough (I am not sure) that he forced himself, all the same when he wrote that. The results are absolutely stupefying, are they not. It is absolutely magnificent in fact: by forcing oneself one manages to say... one manages, one truly manages not to *erre*. Read that, anyway it works, that is how love happens. Absolutely disconcerting, but that is how it happens. Good.

What is meant by saying that interpretation is incalculable in its effects? That means that its only meaning is enjoyment; it is enjoyment, moreover, that creates a complete obstacle to the sexual relationship being able to be written in any way whatsoever, and that in short, this allows there to be extended to enjoyment this formula that the effect of interpretation is incalculable. If you carefully reflect, in effect, on what is happening at the encounter of these two herds that are called armies, is that not so, and which moreover are discourse, walking discourses, I mean that each of them only holds together because people believe that the captain is S_1. Good... it is all the same quite clear that if the victory of one army over another is strictly (36) unforeseeable, it is because one cannot calculate the enjoyment of a combatant. That that is what its all about in fact: if there are some who enjoy being killed, they have the advantage. There you are. This is a little glimpse concerning what is involved in the contingent, namely, of what is only defined by the incalculable... Yeah.

So then now, all the same, I am not all the same going to leave you without telling you, anyway some few little words about what is completely opposite to the line, like that, with which we are in fact exercised – or indeed I am exercising myself before you – but where

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all the same – anyway there is some chance, like that – followed a little, at least followed by your silence, is that not so…
The occult, cannot all the same simply be defined by the fact anyway that it is rejected by science. Because, as I have just told you, it is crazy how much it rejects, I mean science, huh! In principle, everything that we have just said, and which nevertheless exists all the same. Namely, war. There they all are, the savants scratching their heads: *Warum Krieg*? Ah! Ah! Why war? They cannot manage to understand that, the unfortunates…yeah…They tackle it in twos, huh, Freud and Einstein. It is not in their favour…

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But anyway, the occult, the occult is well and truly surely that: this absence of relationship. And I would even tell you a little bit more about it, in fact, if I did not have all the same to specify clearly how it presented itself in Freud's time. Because there it is quite clear. Everything that he wrote, is that not so, *Psychoanalyse und Telepathie*, *Traum und Telephathie*, and God knows we know the bad use that has been made of this by people who have isolated it under the name of psy-phenomena, they are fraudsters, are they not. It must all the same be clearly seen that Freud, then – read the texts, is that not so, those whose title I have just given, all the same, those, they can be found. Contrary to *Grenzen der Deutbarkeit*, it is quite clear: he says that the dream and telepathy, for example, have strictly nothing to do with one another. It even gets to the point that he goes so far as to say that telepathy, is something of the same order, anyway, I admit it, why not, it is of the order of communication. And in the dream, it is treated like any other, namely, the first part of what I stated for you earlier, namely, *etwas nützliches*, is that not so, something that is of use for the days scheming. And it is taken up in the same way in the (37) dream, not only does he prefer to admit, but very specifically he demonstrates that in every case where there was so-called *dreamt* telepathy, there are cases where one can admit the direct fact that there was a message, namely, announced along a special wire if I can express myself like that, because that is what telepathy is, is that not

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so, it is a special wire. One can, you only have to treat the case, you only have to envisage it, to operate with it, in thinking that, like any other day's residue, there was a telepathic warning. In other words he doesn't give a damn whether it is telepathic or not, the only thing that interests him is that it is taken up in the dream, this (I don't want to be reading it for you because it is too late, is it not) this is stated in Freud: one must consider, to conceive something about the relationships of telepathy to the dream, that the telepathy is produced as a remainder, a residue of the preceding day. He prefers to admit that, even though of course naturally... he prefers to admit the telepathic phenomenon – this is the meaning of his position – than to bring it into the dream. And he underlines, he underlines, namely, he says why: because the dream is made – and he gives the whole list – with a whole series of encipherings and that these encipherings can only be brought to bear on a material which is constituted by the day's residues. He prefers to put telepathy, to range it with current events: in no way to attach it to the mechanisms of the unconscious. It is easy to confirm, it is enough for you to consult it – of course naturally in French it was never translated but all the same, there are some of you who read English, even a lot I hope, and on the other hand a certain number who read German – consult the texts of Freud on the unconscious and telepathy: there is never any ambiguity, he prefers to know everything, in short, not simply what he doubts, but about that... about what he washes his hands of, about which he says: I have no competence in that matter. But he prefers to admit that telepathy exists to simply bringing it close to what is involved in the unconscious. In other words everything that he emits, everything that he advances as remarkable, considering certain dreams, everything that he advances as remarkable consists always in saying: nothing else happened except the relationship to the dream as an enciphering. Or again only the relationship of the unconscious of the occultist or the fortune teller with the unconscious of the subject. In other words he denies any telepathic phenomenon in connection with this – he denies (38) regard to the following: that there was nothing else except a

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mapping out of desire. This mapping out of desire, he considers as always possible, which means – which means as compared to my inscription of the other day about life as a journey and the structure which is displaced at the same time as the journey is outlined, outlined linearly.

The question can be raised, and how would it not be raised, whether the structure is truly punctuated by the desire of the Other, as such, if already the subject is born included in language, included in language and already determined in his unconscious by the desire of the Other, why would there not be between all of that a certain solidarity? The unconscious does not exclude – if the unconscious is this structure, this structure of language – the unconscious does not exclude, it is only too obvious, the unconscious does not exclude the recognition of the desire of the Other as such, in other words the network, the network of structure of which the subject is specially determined, and it is conceivable that it communicates with the other structures: the structures of parents certainly, and why not on occasion with these structures which are those of an unknown, provided, provided, Freud underlines, his attention is, like that, a little elsewhere.

And the best part, what he underlines, is that not so, is that this diverting of attention, is precisely obtained by the way in which the fortune teller worries himself with all sorts of mythical objects. That sufficiently diverts his attention for him to be able to apprehend something which allows him to make the following prediction to a certain young woman who had taken off her marriage band to make him believe that... anyway to remain anonymous; he tells her that she is going to get married and that she will have two children when she is 32. There is no explanation for this prediction – which moreover does absolutely not happen, but which despite the fact that it does not happen, leaves the subject for whom it was destined, absolutely enchanted. Each time that Freud underlines a telepathic fact, it is always a fact of this order, namely, where the prediction is in no way

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realised; is in no way realised, but which on the contrary leaves the subject in an absolutely expansive state of satisfaction. He could not have been told anything better. And in effect, this figure of 32 years on this occasion, was inscribed in her desire. If the unconscious is what Freud tells us, if these figures chosen by chance, is that not so, are in reality never chosen by chance, it is precisely by a certain (39) relationship with the desire of the subject: this is what is displayed right throughout *The psychopathology of everyday life*.

The interest. The interest is something that Freud knows very well how to underline eventually, is that not so, which is, the only remarkable point of these facts that are described as occultism, is that they always concern a person that is important for us, in whom one has an interest. That one loves. But there is nothing more conceivable than that one should have some unconscious relationships with a person that one loves. But it is not, it is not in so far as one loves him, because in so far as one loves him, it is well known, is that not so, one misses her (*on la rate*). One does not manage it. So then what is at stake all the same are two things, in this so-called telepathic news *(information)*. There is the content of the news. And then there is the fact of the news. The fact of the news, is very properly speaking what Freud rejects. He is quite willing to admit it as possible, but in a world with which he has strictly nothing to do. As regards the content of the news, it has nothing to do with the person that it is a matter of having news about. It is uniquely concerned with the desire of the subject, in so far as love includes only too much this part of desire. It would desire to be possible.

So then, what I would like simply to accentuate in leaving you, is that there is all the same something that is conveyed from the deepest past, and which is called initiation. Initiation is what we have the debris of under the heading of occultism. This proves simply that it is the only thing that, when all is said and done, still interests us in initiation. I do not see why I should not give to initiation, as it was known in

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Antiquity, in fact, a certain status. Everything that we can glimpse about the famous Mysteries – and everything that still remains of it in countries that can be situated ethnologically, as regards something of the order of initiation – is linked to what somewhere, someone like Mauss is that not so, called *techniques of the body* – I mean that, what we have and what concerns us in this discourse, the analytic as much as the scientific, indeed the university, indeed that of the Master and whatever else you wish ... is that, is that initiation presents itself, when one looks at the thing closely, always as this: an approach, an approach that does not happen without all sorts of detours, of deliberation, and approach of something where what is opened, revealed, is something which strictly, concerns enjoyment. I mean (40) that it is not unthinkable that the body, the body in so far as we believe it to be living, is something that is much more clever than what the anatomical physiologists know. There is perhaps a science of enjoyment, if one can express it thus. Initiation in any case cannot be defined otherwise. There is only one misfortune, which is that in our day, there is no longer a trace, absolutely anywhere of initiation.

Voilà.

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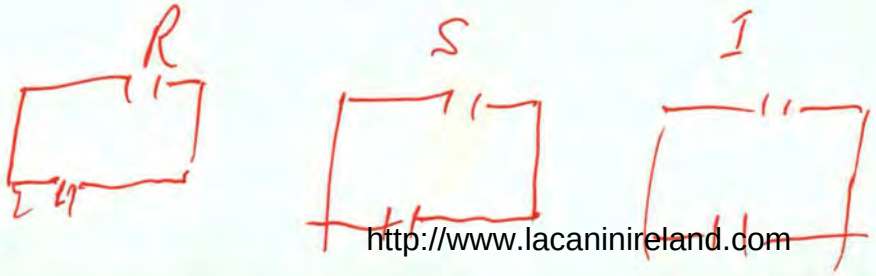
Seminar 3: Wednesday 11 December 1973

You can say that it is indeed because you are there that I am speaking. Don't tire me. huh. because otherwise I'm off. huh! Here is a little thing that I took the trouble to construct. to show it to you. It is a Borromean knot. Namely – take that one away for me. the blue – you see here the blue. it is taken away. huh. The result is that the two others are free. You have seen that I did not need to dismantle them for them to be free. There you are. There. Gloria can do it again for you. But anyway. I think that it is already sufficiently demonstrative. That is done with cubes. on occasion. it is done with cubes and one can see that there must be three in width and five in length for the minimal Borromean knot. Good.

The idea. is obviously to make something which... which corresponds to three planes. Namely. which are fabricated like the Cartesian coordinates. When you want to fabricate that. you will notice. well then. that you have all the same... some difficulties. You have some difficulties. that are not at all real: you have difficulties in taking into account right away what that is going to lead to. how much of it you have to put into one direction and then into the other. Try yourselves. won't you. Try above all – there was another thing that I did not bring for you. there was another thing which. which for its part corresponded not to the Borromean knot. which has the characteristic of... that each of the two rings (*ronds*) that this constitutes. they are not round (*rond*). it is just as if. the two rings that it constitutes are



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freed if you wish. if you cut one of them. You also have the well (42) known arrangement that I am not going to reproduce for you on the board because. anyway I have it here but I am tired. you only have to think again of the three circles that serve as an emblem for the Olympics. There you can note that it is done differently. namely. that not only are two of these rings knotted. but the third is fastened (*se boucle*). not to one of the two. that does not make three which would make a chain. but to the two. Well then try. Try to make a montage. a montage of cubes so that it is like that. namely. that the continuity of the montage that you will have made. like that. you will make the yellow. the red and the blue. that this is done. that it is possible that you set up on three planes – the assurance that what is at stake are planes is given by the cubic form precisely. you are forced to. to make them on three planes – try it.

You will certainly not see right away that in this case. it is necessary that. that the side. as I might say. the side that is going to show itself. should be at a minimum four cubes. But that these four cubes are also found in the other dimension. Namely. instead of having twice 5 + 2. as in this case. which gives 12. you have twice 4 + 2 x 2. which also gives 12 - which is curious. But look. the very difficulty that you will have in making this little construction. will be a good experience of something that I am going to begin with: it is that you will notice here the degree to which we do not sense(*nous ne sentons pas*) volume. Because you will be very hesitant. You will be very hesitant as I was myself. Because. starting for example from three simple series of 4. when you have fitted them together in such a way that this gives these famous three axes that are used in the Cartesian construction. when you only see four of them. you have moreover for an instant the feeling that it could be fastened. that it could be fastened. for example. like here. as if there were only four of them. and then. only three in width. You will have that feeling.

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This is a way to make you experience the fact that we do not have the sense of volume, whatever we may have succeeded in imagining as three dimensions of space. The sense of... of depth, of thickness, is something we lack, much more than we believe. This to put forward what I want to tell you at the start: that we are beings, you as well as me, of two dimensions, despite appearances. We inhabit the Flat land [in English] as the authors who have produced a little volume on this (43) subject express it, and they seem to have a lot of difficulty, in fact, in imagining two dimensional beings. There is no need to look far. It is all of us.

At least this is how, truly, things present themselves.

The best thing that we can manage to do is in fact what we limit ourselves to – it would all the same be astonishing that in an assembly, here where people are in the process of... of scribbling, that I, that I might not be able to make myself understood: that is what scribbling is, it is the best we can do. And this is what was very well articulated by the fact that, people were found, in fact, to proclaim in a different area than ours, that *the ink of the learned is very superior to the blood of martyrs*. There are people who have dared say that! They have dared to say this obvious thing. It must indeed be said, this last one, the blood of martyrs, huh, what do we have of it? The subjects of paintings. This with the obsessional structure that Freud was able to recognise in what is a single thing: religion and art. I apologise to the artists, there are perhaps some here, who have wandered into this audience, even though I find it hard to believe. I apologise to the artists if they hear about this: they are worth no more than religion. It is... it is not saying much.

The stupid thing (*connerie*), and it is not the first time that I evoke it here, so that, I hope, you are not going to think it is directed at you – the stupid thing is our essence, a part of which is the fact that your demand – I have racked my brains for a long time to know why you

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are so immoderately numerous – anyway through racking my brains finally, a flash emerged from it. Precisely, your demand, the one that herds you in here, is how to have a chance to get out of this stupidity. This is even what you are counting on me for. Except for the fact that this demand forms part of the stupidity.

So then, this demand, to which I am yielding for one more day, you should know that it is not because your number is so great that – precisely, I am not going to try to pretend. It is because, not that it is great, but that it is number. And this is why I dedicate myself to the abjection, I must say, with which, in this place I am merged. There is a thing that I called *la passe*, which is practised in my school, uniquely because I wanted to try to have the testimony of it. It is necessary that I should be or that I am part of it, namely, today, in order to see clearly for myself what it is: to devote oneself to (44) responding to anyone whatsoever, to anything whatsoever – but respond what? What analytic discourse responds is this. What you are doing: everything that you are doing. And of its nature, as one might say, by its structure, more exactly, contrary to everything that was thought up to the present, among the specialists, 'philosophers' they are called, not ignorance – natural ignorance, as Pascal puts it, and I thank someone who, while I was working last Sunday in fact, took the trouble to call me, moreover because I had explicitly charged him to do so... but, it was like that. I will tell you again a little later, in the form of a little suggestion that had come to me from him about Pascal – well then, I had charged him with looking in Pascal at all the stages which go from natural ignorance to true science, with between the what he designates, like that, in his scribbling, the semi-skilled (*semi-habiles*). It is the person who rendered me this service, in fact, who... who wiped Pascal clean, like that, to avoid me having to do it, because I was wrecked – he thought he could identify these semi-skilled with the non-dupes. I hope I will manage, anyway in this effort, to make you sense that... it is not at all, at all, at all, what I mean. Not that the semi-skilled are not perhaps in effect non-dupes. I

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believe for my part that they are just as much dupes as the others but, contrary to what you may imagine, it is not enough to be a dupe in order not to err!

I said: *the non-dupes errent*, again you must not simply be a dupe of just anything. And even one must be a dupe especially of something that I am going to try, to try, that I would like to try today to get you to reach.

So then, what analytic discourse responds is this: what you do, far from being a matter of ignorance, is always determined. Determined already by something which is knowledge, and that we call the unconscious. What you do, knows (*sait*), knows what you are, knows you. What... you... do not sufficiently sense – anyway I cannot believe it in such a numerous assembly – is to what point this statement, is new. Never did anyone among the Grand Guignols who busied themselves with the question of knowledge, and God knows it is not without some unease that I rank Pascal there also since he is the greatest of all these Grand Guignols! No one has ever dared to pronounce this verdict that I am pointing out to you here: the response of the unconscious, is that it implies, that it implies no pardon (*le sans-pardon*), and even in attenuating circumstances. What you do is (45) knowledge, completely determined. Which is why, which is why the fact that it is determined by an articulation supported by the preceding generation in no way excuses you, since this only makes the saying, the saying of this knowledge, more hardened knowledge, as I might say. At the limit, a knowledge that was always there. I separated out this meaning from Freud, because he says it. He says it by his whole work. But I beg you not to comprehend me, you see that there is a reason for it! But for my part I can do nothing but hear it in what Freud says, because there is nothing, nothing to do than to let the consequences flow. Once it is stated, it founds a new discourse. Namely, an articulation of structure which is confirmed to be all that exists in terms of a bond between speaking beings. There are no other

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bonds between them than the bond of discourse. That does not mean, naturally, that one does not imagine something else.

I told you earlier that... if we do not have volume, we are all the same two dimensional, huh. So then there is the profile, the projection, the silhouette, in fact everything that one adores in a beloved being. One never adores anything more. And since I started from that, huh, in connection with this famous story of the mirror, people imagined that I disparaged it. I did not disparage it at all, huh, because, like everyone else, I am very satisfied with it! As regards volume, thickness, the simple handling of what I advised you earlier, will inform you of the degree to which we are absent. But there is all the same something different huh, that we take for volume. And precisely it is the knot, huh? People have made of it metaphors – not unfounded – the knots of friendship the knots of love. Well then, that comes from the fact, anyway: it is our only way of approaching volume. When we squeeze, like that, someone against us – that happens to me too, yeah, but....are we in short so sure of these knots? For adoration we will remain, will we not, at what I called earlier two dimensions the two dimensions (pretty, pretty) – there is a recent author, like that (I apologise to him if he is there. I have not yet had the time to read him) he calls it the *Singe d'or*. Since he paid me the homage of his book, I think that it perhaps all the same because he had some echoes of what I talk about, and perhaps even, who knows, he read me – and that... and in order to talk in this way anyway about the *Golden monkey*, he must have had indeed some echo of what I have just been (46) pushing forward, about what attaches us to the image, to the image in two dimensions. I am far from having disparaged it. Not only am I far from having disparaged it, but it would be completely absurd to say so, because the signifiers themselves, we are forced to pass by the same image, the image of 'flat land', the image in two dimensions, huh, to demonstrate that they are articulated..

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I first showed you the Borromean knot flattened out. Naturally, thanks to artifices, there are places where you see the break appearing, what can only be represented as a break, even though it is a knot, a knot precisely that I tried to put into volume for you, so that you would clearly see that it is not only flattened out that one can tackle it, besides the fact that when you have yourself handled this volume, you will notice that... the volume, here, produced in volume, this does not at all allow there to be distinguished, as I might say, this knot from its specular image. It is no more laevogyratory than dextrogyratory, it is not simply perfectly symmetrical but it is so on three axes, which makes it strictly impossible for its specular image to be different from it.

Writing, for its part, is done in a space that is no less specular than the others. This is even the principle of this very pretty exercise that is called the palindrome. It nevertheless remains that this hotch potch that I have just made between the Imaginary and the Symbolic, does not swamp anything. It does not swamp in particular the difference there is between the Imaginary and the Symbolic, it is well and truly the same thing, once imagined, it is our common notion of space that... that we imagine does not have an end. You should read on this the juicy remarks of Leibniz discussing with Newton: the so-called supposition, in fact, of a limit of space, would become unthinkable Leibniz says, because if there was a limit, then outside of this limit, then, one could... one could make a little hole in the limit with a nail... It is absolutely extraordinary what one can read, what one can read about imagination. And notably about this fact that in order to imagine space – because it would be no less an imagination, but perhaps an imagination that would have opened up to something quite different: people did not start from the fact that in space there are knots. There surely would be an advantage in our seeing, as I might say, that the Imaginary and the Symbolic are only modes of approaching it.

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(47) I am taking them from the angle of space. Why are these two styles still not enough? But anyway I underline in passing that the word mode, is to be taken in the sense that this term has in the couple of words *modal logic*, namely, that there is meaning only in the symbolic, in other words in its grammatical articulation. When you approach certain tongues – I have the feeling that it is not wrong to say it about the Chinese tongue – you will notice that less imaginary than ours, the Indo-European tongues play on the knot. It is not a terrain onto which I am going to venture today, because I have enough to say like that, but perhaps... perhaps I would ask, I would suggest to a Chinese to take things from this angle, and to come to tell you what... what he thinks about it, if perchance what I tell him opens up his thinking about it, because it is not enough even to inhabit a tongue to have an idea of its structure, especially if as is necessarily the case, since I can only address the supposed Chinese in question, if I speak to him in my tongue, namely, that, if he understands me, it is because already with regard to his own, he is in a mess.

What is terrible is that when we distinguish an order, we make a *being* of it. The word *mode* on this occasion, ought to be illuminated if we gave its true import to the expression *mode of being*. Now, there is no other being than one of mode, precisely. And the imaginary mode has proved itself, with respect to what is involved in the being of the symbolic. It proved itself so well that one might well risk... trying to see if the symbolic mode might not illuminate...the being of the Imaginary. This indeed is what I tried to do, whether you are aware of it or not. I would like to say in this third session in the year of this seminar, the place it has at the seminar and in its programme. And that is why I stated it in speaking to your right away, at first, about the Borromean knot. The Borromean knot which, like that, I saw emerging, in fact, I mean that in a kind of a way it invaded me, the Borromean knot has no kind of being. It does not at all have the consistency of geometrical space of which we know that there is no limit to it being cut into slices, is that not so, to its projection, to

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whatever you wish... and even that this goes further. That... it invades. And this indeed is why it is instructive: it invades the other order. We are so captured by this imaginary mode, that, when we try to (48) manipulate the symbolic order, we arrive, in fact – remember the way in which sets are tackled, we are told about bijection, surjection, injection... all of that does not happen without images, in any case it is with images that you support these modes which nevertheless are designed to free you from the Imaginary. It is with little points that you will notice that between a domain and a co-domain there is an injection, or a bijection, or a surjection.

But by supporting it with points, you are carrying out nothing but an imaginary lucubration. Why has the flattening out of the Borromean knot not succeeded, did it not first come to evoke for us another start concerning the point... concerning the point, here incarnated, as I might say, because of the fact that at the heart of this little construction you have, whatever you do, an empty cell. Which is no less true than the other knot, not Borromean, huh, the knot that I called earlier Olympic. Except for the fact that there are... more complicated consequences. But let us leave that.

Why did the Borromean knot not evoke another start concerning the point? The point, the point that we are, huh, because even in the best case, this is what we are. Up to the present I am only talking to you about the Imaginary and the Symbolic, but precisely, my discourse tends to show you that these two dimensions must be completed by that of the Real. In other words, there must be three of them. Three for there to be this point, which could all the same perhaps, anyway, if... if one was not what is absurdly called a *geometre*, because, think about it, what does our geometry really have to do with the earth, anyway? Is the earth not something which is not at all flat? If we did not have a vocation for mapping, for the cadastral in what way would the earth suggest to us something flat? Why would we not have started from this point, on condition of starting from the knot, from the

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idea that a point sets out. It departs at the start, in its definition, from the tugging point, for example. That means nothing to you? Between your Symbolic, your Imaginary and your Real, given all the times that I have been sifting them for you, do you not sense that your time, your time is spent being pulled in different directions? What is more it has an advantage, huh, it suggests that... that space implies time, and that time is perhaps nothing other, precisely, than a succession of instants of being pulled about. This would in any case express rather well the (49) relationship between time and this swindle... that is designated by the name of eternity.

Time is, it is perhaps that, finally, the trinities of space... what emerges there from a squeezing without remedy. Yeah.

The Borromean knot is definitely not at all something negligible. If you flatten it out, here, you will see everything that can be drawn from it. For example, here I am going to give you one of them like that, like that as a way of manipulating it for you. It is like that, like that as a way of manipulating it for you. It is like that. You can see a little what can be thought about it from the fact that in short to transform it – when it is flat – from a dextrogyratory into a laevogyratory, it is enough in the first position that you have seen here, to do that to any one of them. If you do this subsequently to the other, huh, this is how it must be done, and if you do it subsequently to a third – that is how it must be done – each time you invert it. Namely, that from the laevogyratory first of all you make it dextrogyratory, and when you have tipped over the third, it is laevogyratory again. It is.....it is not without interest. This illuminates the question of this famous business, like that, that the universe is supposed to be ambidextrous, in any case it allows us to throw a little bit of light on it. It is worth the trouble dwelling on it. It gives a different idea of spatialisation. It is in any case a structure which....which completely changes the import of the word space in the sense that it is used in *The transcendental aesthetics*. Namely, that we can only perceive things from the angle of

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a space, which in Kant is simply imaginary. If there are three dimensions of space and if we begin to enumerate these three dimensions by the Symbolic and the Imaginary, the test must be carried about what that means for the third, namely, for the Real. There is only one thing to say about it for the moment. There. I cannot say that it is the date of the baptism of this Real: 'I baptise you Real, huh, *qua* third dimension...' I did that a long time ago. It is even by this that I began my teaching. Except for the fact that I added in my inner forum: 'I baptise you Real because if you did not exist, you would have to be invented.' That indeed is why I invented it. Not at all of course that it had not been denominated for a long time – because this is what is remarkable in the tongue, huh, it is that 'naming' (luckily we have English, huh, to distinguish naming from nomination. 'naming' means 'to name' which means to give a proper name, yes) – it is not for nothing, naturally, that I said: 'I baptise you'. I am not afraid of words which have a savour of religion. I do not sense any taboo for anything that smells of priestlings nor even for anything that they propagate.

'Naming' *qua* proper name precedes, in fact, the necessity by which it is no longer going to cease to be written. As long as you do not take – this is the meaning of what I put forward in a mode of apparent underestimation for the Imaginary – as long as you do not take the Symbolic in a hand to hand struggle, you will not get to the end of it. Nor at the same time of what, my God, what I call in my notes the Church, but... but which is Christianity. Because that is where Christianity fucks you up. It is the true religion. This is what should make you look twice at it. It is the true in religion. It is all the same worth the trouble being interested in it (perhaps) if for nothing other than to see what it offers. But nothing of what I say will ensure it (*n'y fera*). I say – I deafen you with it – *the truth can only be half said*. That means confirming that there is no truth unless it is mathematicised, namely, written, namely, it can only be suspended, as truth, from axioms. Namely, that there is no truth except about what

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has no meaning. Namely, of that from which there are no other consequences to be drawn than in its register, the register of mathematical deduction, in this case – and how after that can psychoanalysis imagine that it proceeds from the truth?

This is only an effect – a necessary effect, even though of course this necessity does not manifest itself anywhere outside my office, the office that I am in the process of serving, is that not so – this is only an effect, this kind… of odour of truth in analysis. Only an effect of the fact that it uses no means other than the word. Strictly none. Do not start telling me, huh, that it uses transference. Because transference, for its part, is not a means. It is a result, that stems from the fact that the words, by its means, the means of the word, reveals something that has nothing to do with it, and very precisely the knowledge that exists in language. There again, I never said that it is language that is knowledge. Language, if you do not mind remembering some of the things that I drew on the board when I had the energy for it, language is an effect of the fact that there is something of the signifier *one*.

(51) But knowledge is not the same thing. Knowledge is the consequence of the fact that there is another. And so in appearance that gives two. For this second holds its status precisely from the fact that it has no relationship with the first, that they do not form a chain even if I said, somewhere, in my scribblings, the very first ones, huh, *Function and field* was not all that stupid. In *Function and field*, I perhaps slipped in that they formed a chain. This is an error. Because to decipher, I had to make some attempts, hence this stupidity. It is what is proper to deciphering. When one deciphers, one confuses things. And this is even how I did indeed manage, all the same, when all is said and done, to know what I was doing. Namely, what it was to decipher. It is to substitute the signifier I for the other signifier. — capital I. The one that only makes two because you add the deciphering to it. Which allows right away to count three. This does not prevent it being written – as I did – S index 2, because that is how it should be

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read. the formula of the link between S_1 to S_2. It is pure forcing, but it is not the forcing of a notion. This is what puts us under the yoke of knowledge. Since I am in the process of speaking to you about psychoanalysis. I add: the yoke of knowledge, at the very place of truth. At the place moreover of religion, of which I have just told you that it, for its part, is true.

This is one of the pillars of psychoanalytic discourse.

Even this discourse, like all the others, I described as quadripedal. Perhaps I described it as I have just told you, huh. I described it, precisely – I consider that quadripedal is a qualification and not a quantification, huh, because the further I go the more I am convinced that we only count up to three. And even if it is only because we count *three* that we can manage to count *two* – again the true religion, huh, since it is indeed of Christianity that I am speaking looked twice at it. The Orthodox, in particular, which wants nothing to do with the *filioque*. This is not by chance, huh, it does not want it to be two because a third proceeds from it. Because on the contrary it is from the third that the two emerges. So that it is not for nothing that it calls itself *Orthodox*, huh, it is right. That does not mean at all that it is successful in it. To succeed, as I have endlessly pointed out to you: is the sign of nothing. But that precisely it fails... I can indeed say that for us analysts this is rather in its favour, huh, which does not prevent it having to be eliminated, huh. Ecumenism is not there for nothing. (52) Good! Anyway I am spreading myself, and I am chatting, I have enough of my old refrains, because, they only amuse you, but again, it is the old refrains (*des bateaux*) that float, huh. All that is directed, is directed at the fact that... that I am made sweat a little by being always answered by an eternal *two*. Even though I never produced it except as an index, namely, as a symptom. The word moreover even admits it. What falls together, that is what it means. It does not mean it explicitly, but it means it all the same. The two can be nothing other than what falls together from the three. And that is why this year, I

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am taking as subject. that is what this means – that means it in any case today when I am insisting on it: the Borromean knot.

It is obvious that it is a pedagogical effort. It is because all the same of something of the order of this debility that is called love. in which one can scarcely do better than to get on as best you can. it is because of this that. my God. that Kant's text on pedagogy... - which I opened because I had acquired an original edition. I have to have my little pleasures. huh – but you can find it. it was edited. anyway I believe re-edited by the *Presses Universitaires*. anyway someone here made me a present of it. and it is... thrilling in fact. It is thrilling. On the subject of... as regards what is involved in debility. nothing better has ever been written. not even what Maude Mannoni wrote. Yeah.

The child is designed to learn something. Here is what Freud states. here is what Kant states – it is all the same. all the same something – anyway. something extraordinary! It is something extraordinary that he had in short the presentiment of it: because how could he justify it? He is designed to learn something, namely, for the knot to be properly made. Because there is nothing easier than for it to fail. especially if you put it in this form namely. the same as this. Look! Here is the green circle and here is the red circle – anyway. the ring – suppose for the third. to construct it. I start from the inside of this one. the red. which is the outer one. In order to construct it. I have plait it and that it goes somewhere. either under or over the green. But if I have started from under the red – you see the red is there. bigger than the green – if I have started from underneath the red. whether I make it pass over or under the green. the result is the same: namely. that there (53) would be no knot. In other words. if I do not start from above the red. together with having to go underneath the green. there would be no Borromean knot. Kant cannot know – because that is not where he started from – in short why the child must learn something. He must learn something so that the knot is properly made. In order that he should not be. as I might say. non-dupe. namely. a dupe of the

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possible, huh. Dupe, dupe is a little bit too much. The non-dupes are two times dupes. They are precisely dupes because they are two. And it is in short the only objection that... from which I believed I should start like that, because I was dealing with ears, that had not precisely in fact been awakened – it is the objection, the only one, the only objection that I made to the moiety (*moi-ité*). This is an expression, like that that was attributed to me, rightly or wrongly, because I perhaps said it on one occasion, by one of my analysands, recently, and who has attended my seminar for a long while. The *moi-ité* as he expresses it, is obviously right away to fall into the two: since the *moi-ité* is necessarily made of two moieties. And if I said that religion is, is the truest thing that one can do, in religion – I will point out to you something about which I chattered on for a good while, huh: that thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, huh, does that mean that you will be three, yes or no? Yeah...

The Borromean knot can only be made from three. The Imaginary, the Symbolic, that is not enough, the third element is necessary, and I designate it by the Real.

There must be this determining solidarity of which there is a subject – spoken subject in any case; the loss of any one at all of these three dimensions, the condition for the knot to hold up, is that the loss of any one of these three dimensions must render the two others mad, namely, free from one another.

These three dimensions, how do I represent them for you? With rings of string, as someone decided and very rightly, in a relevant way to entitle my second last seminar of last year. What is a ring of string in terms of dimension huh? I point out to you that a ring of string is not even a knot, huh, because a knot, can be seen, huh, can be made, can be written on the board... on condition of making the necessary little interruptions and God knows that they must be put in, people have such little imagination, huh. There you are, there you see I must

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correct it again, a knot is that. In other words, a knot can be (54) unknotted. If you unknot it, you are finished, because you cannot do anything else than make another, and because you will never manage to distinguish one knot from another knot. Because they are not all alike, these knots. And that indeed is why a ring of string is necessary. Not that it is a knot, but it is necessary for the theory of knots.

For in effect, in order to be able to distinguish one knot from another, it must in no case be unknotted, or then when you make another knot you will have the feeling that it is the same one. That is why there are only two things: either to extend the cord that makes the knot to infinity – and so then you cannot unknot, huh – or indeed join the two ends, which is exactly the same thing. And this is what justifies the ring of string. The ring of string is something that allows you to have a theory of the knot. That is what requires it to be cut in order to break it. Cutpability (*coulpabilite*). This is what is distinguished – but totally, this has perhaps not yet come to your mind but I hope all the same for some – is that it is a topology. A ring of string is a torus. And it is this alone that allows a knot to be elaborated.

You do not knot two spheres together. But the interesting is that you do not knot two rings of string, in this affair, you knot three of them, but in such a way that only the third knots the two others. There is somewhere, in an article called *La causalite psychique*, a place, a place around which a certain number of people have sparred like that, where I knot – because this is what is at stake, liberty and madness.

The article de Le monde ~1945
& Psychosis

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where I say that the one cannot be conceived of without the other. which. of course disturbs people. because all the same. they think immediately. anyway that I am saying freedom is madness. huh... since in order to make myself comprehended why not. I (55) understand myself in it: only. what I would like to point out to you. is that the interest of joining in this way in the Borromean knot the Symbolic the Imaginary and the Real. is that what results from it. not only results from it. but it must result from it. namely. in the best case (*si le cas est bon*) – you will allow me this abbreviation given the time that we are getting to – in the best case it is enough. it is enough to cut any one of the rings of string for the two others to be free of one another. In other words. in the best case. allow me to imply that it is the result of good pedagogy. namely. that one has not failed in one's primal knotting; in the best case. when one of these rings of string is missing. you should go mad. And this is why. this is why the best case consists. namely. that if there is something normal. it is because. when one of the dimensions fails you for some reason or other. you should go. you should really go mad.

W.B.

And it is on this that I would like to finish. to show you its importance. Imagine the case of another knot. the knot that I called earlier Olympic. if one of your rings of string... fails you. fails you I might say. because of something that does not concern you. you do not for all that go mad. This because. whether you know it or not. the two other knots hold together. and that is what means that you are neurotic. This is why. always. I affirmed something that is not sufficiently known: neurotics are indefatigable. The only people that I saw behaving in an admirable way... during the last war. to recall it. God knows this does not give me any special pleasure. were my neurotics. those that I had not yet cured. They were absolutely sublime. Nothing disturbed them. Whether it was the Real. the Imaginary or the Symbolic that they lacked. they held up.

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I do not know whether some of you, anyway remember, I did something, at one time, about the phobia of Little Hans. It is very curious. I never saw anyone highlighting this, this thing that I not only wrote but repeated, resifted, is that not so. I never saw anything else in trying to find out, anyway, what was, in fact, this blessed story of a horse, because, of course, I asked myself the question, like everyone else: why the horse, is that not so? Why did that make him so afraid... The explanation that I found – because I gave it. I worked on it, I insisted did I not: it was that the horse was the representative – (56) I can all the same say it: of three circuits. I did not underline the truth that they were three, these circuits. But the horse represented a certain number of circuits, that I even went looking for in a map of Vienna, to mark them out clearly, because first of all it is in Freud's text, how would I have found it otherwise? It is in the measure that the phobia, the phobia of little Hans, is very precisely in this triple knot whose three rings hold together, it is because of this that he is neurotic: the fact is that if you cut one, the two others always hold together.

It is not the case certainly, that we attend to this, which is why precisely there are other couples in neurosis which are simple than that of phobia, we will come back to them. The importance, the importance is not even in this, which makes such a pretty image, huh, you were able to say in short that I defined the normal in this sense that it is constructed in such a way that it cannot but drive you mad, when one of these three rings fails. But the important thing is not that at all.

The important thing is that even though they are coloured with different colours with respect to one another, these three rings, these rings of string, are strictly equivalent. I mean that the important thing is that the Real just as much as the Imaginary or the Symbolic can play exactly the same function with respect to the two others. This is not self-evident. If I present you the knot like that: namely, the red

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above the green and squeezing it, and the black – I am calling this one the black provisionally because there are black points (*points noirs*), and the black in a good position – it is not self-evident that I can easily put the two others into a different position, namely, ensure that the green should be above the red, the Borromean knot being just as correct. Namely, not having to be cut at any moment. One may believe that there is an obstacle to me putting the green in the place of the red, starting from a fixed position of the black, it is nevertheless the case. It is nevertheless the case and it is also what must be said concerning the three dimensions of our Real.

The Real of which there is question at the end of *The interpretation of dreams* – and what must be said, what must be said is the following: it is that if I bored you the last time with this business of the occult, it is precisely because of something that for Freud is in a way the manifest avowal: the fact is that in three of these dimensions, two of which he (57) exposes so well for us, what is the Real for Freud? Well then, I am going to tell you today: it is precisely the occult. And it is precisely for this reason that he considers it impossible. Because this business of occultism and telepathy, he warns us, he insists, that he in no way believes in it.

How was it that someone like Freud was able to pursue in fact with such obstinacy, this shadow of the occult, that he considered properly speaking as cogitated by imbeciles? Read him carefully and you will see.

Well then, the importance of what I wanted to put forward for you the last time, and that I did not say, except by the sentence at the end, that there is no initiation, which those who have ears were well able to pick out as the only interesting sentence, is precisely that Freud – this is indeed something which deserves us looking at it twice – he was a dupe of the Real.

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He was a dupe of the Real even if he did not believe in it. And this indeed is what is at stake. The good dupe, the one who does not err, must have somewhere a Real of which she is the dupe.

dupe is feminine in French

Seminar 4: Wednesday 18 December 1973

There you are. It is certain that... it is certain that in making me raise my voice to no use there by wanting to shi... tease me, excite me before I begin my thing today, things will not have been improved. Anyway, it will not have been improved, at least I suppose. There you are, because all the same, the last time...I made an effort, and today I would only have wished, anyway, to spread out from these margins, as I might say anyway to say things *mezzo voce* as they say. Perhaps in order to try to illuminate for you, in fact, I mean for yourselves, its resonance. I presume this resonance after all, because what I said was designed to obtain it. I had echoes of it, but I do not see why moreover I would not say what I was trying to obtain.

What I said (*mon dit*) was about this knot that I did not introduce yesterday and whose import deserved my insisting on it. That means it could not appear immediately. It is not so much this knot that is important, it is its saying (*son dire*).

Its saying that in short, the last time, I tried to, to support sufficiently, like that. What is good about this knot, is that not so, is that it precisely makes quite clear that this saying, in so far as it is mine, is implicated in it. That means that, from this quarter where, you should note, I did not say *the word*, I said *the saying*. Not every word is a saying, otherwise, otherwise every word would be a happening (*un*

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événement), which is not the case, otherwise people would not speak *empty words*!

(60) A saying is of the order of a happening. It is not a happening that overflies, it is not a moment of knowing. In a word, it is not philosophy. It is something that is right up with what is going on. Right up with what determines us in so far as it is not quite what people believe. It is not every kind of local condition, like that, of this, or that, of what makes you yawn, of the Real, this is not what determines us speaking beings. And this stems precisely from this pedicle of knowledge, short certainly, but always perfectly knotted, which is called our unconscious, in so far as for each of us this knot has quite particular supports.

It is thus with bits and pieces, as I was able...that I constructed this topology by means of which I dare to split differently what Freud supported by these terms: *psychical reality*. For in fact my topology is not the same. Someone, someone, who like that, among the people who come chat with me, like that, put my knot, there, the Borromean one, like that, at the same stage, as I might say, is that not so as this famous egg [*SE XIX 24?*] made up of something which – you know that it is Freud in fact who made that – obviously, one could make a metaphor about nutritional reserves with what it... with what it is supposed to nourish, with enjoyment on the one hand and whatever you want on the other, the... the embryology of the soul. Good.

I would like to make a remark about what is called *love*. Because it is that, that is what I called earlier the resonance, the resonance among you, whether you know it or not, of what I supported the last time with my Borromean knot.

Love, in everything that, what people have allowed themselves to smear on top of it up to now, is all the same something which comes up against the objection that one cannot conceive how being – if of

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course you have already heard speak of that, anyway, it is dinned into your ears in metaphysics and... even elsewhere, in fact, in sermons, they speak of nothing but that – how being is supposed to be manipulated starting from any particular being (*étant*). This presents a great logical difficulty. Since being, when people speak to you about it, is not nothing, and it ends up in this aspiration which is supposed to be made starting from God, of love. I know well that you are not believers, is that not so? But you are even more stupid, as I already had occasion to tell you the last time, because even if you are not (61) believers, in this aspiration, I will show it to you right throughout what I am going to tell you today, in this aspiration you do believe. I will not say that you suppose it: it supposes you.

People try, in short, to empty out all that – or to fill it, what matter – by schematising it in the old metaphor of knowing. One knows whom one is dealing with – the one that one is dealing with, one knows in love... Only I object: what is being, if not the aseptic business of the imaginary perfections of which one dreams, of which you yourselves, I have just told you, whatever you may know about it, you dream, you dream of its ladder. The ladder whose final rung will or not be this God that I spoke about earlier... but if it is not that one, it is another. This is what is called daydreaming. Only what is demonstrated, precisely by the study of the dream, the true one, the one that you have when you are asleep and that strongly reproves you, has, whatever one says about it absolutely nothing to do with your dream, whether waking or not. This is even what distinguishes you as speaking beings: that there is a knowledge that you hear in the dream, that has nothing to do with what remains to you of it when you are supposedly awake. This indeed is why it is so important to decipher this dream – this dream that you only have at a certain time. Up to then, you are, you are, this has lasted for a time but you are not still so far from it. believe me, the time of the *signatura rerum*, from the reading of the daydream, from the readability of the world: you should not believe at

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all that because it is no longer the priests that dictate it to you, that you are not at the same point!

Love: if it is indeed here the metaphor of something, it is a matter of knowing what it refers to. We must start from what I said earlier about the happening. It refers, nothing more – in any case this is what I will limit myself to today, simply... to shift, anyway, is that not so, what I have just traced out about the tradition, about the metaphor of knowing – let us say that it refers first of all to the happening. To the things that happen, let us say when a man meets a woman. And why not? Because it is in general the fish that people try to play to death; when I say: 'when a man meets a woman', huh, it is because I am modest, I middle by that that I do not claim to go as far as speaking about what happens when a woman meets a man... because my experience is limited, huh.

(62) I would like to suggest the following to you, anyway, since we have started from two extreme points, I propose to you, in connection with the commandment of divine love, that I evoked for you the last time in challenging you to say yes or no, huh, does it make two or three? You remember perhaps, anyway those who were there. So then, I modify it slightly: what effect does it have on you if I state 'thou shalt love thy neighbour (*ta prochaine*) as thyself'? That makes you sense something all the same, huh, which is that this precept founds the abolition of the difference between the sexes. When I tell you that there is no sexual relationship, I did not say that the sexes are confused, far from it! Without that all the same, how could I even say that there is no sexual relationship, what would that mean? It is important to situate – you certainly have not done it yet – like that, to situate it in an exact fashion. I am making a little remark since today I am giving a commentary on myself, there is no sexual relationship, well it is of the same order, huh, as what I concluded my second lecture with, the one that was not all that understood: I spoke a lot about the *occult* – and believe me, I am putting myself in the same

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place, huh – I spoke a lot about the occult but the important point, there were one or two people who remarked it, is that I said that there is no initiation. It is the same thing as to say that there is no sexual relationship. Which does not mean that initiation is the sexual relationship, because it is not enough for two things not to exist for them to be the same! Yeah...

It is clear that, that love, in short, that here is the problem with which what I said the last time reverberates, it is all the same a fact, that is how there is described the complex relationship – it is the least that can be said – between a man and a woman.

So then here, perhaps I can hang the following, anyway, which is at the heart of my title, in fact, a first lineament of which I put forward in my first seminar, huh. Are we going to attribute what is rightly described as the complex relationship between a man and a woman simply to the fact of having made together what I called, I remark, not an error but a wandering, *viator*, as I articulated it, the journey on this earth, the category, the category comically which precisely excludes us from the world, is this what love is: to have done a bit of the path together?

(63) You see where that takes us, huh?

We would have helped one another. Yeah, there will always be, on the horizon, in fact, this promise. And then... and then it is true that there is something true in it, huh? Because we are man and woman (*bonhomme, bonne, femme*), as the existentialists used to say, I am talking about *la bonne femme*, the idea never came to them of talking about *bonhomme*, God knows why, even though it is better. A man and a woman who would have done a bit of the path together. On the horizon of love there would be the grandfather and the grandmother. There is that in the unconscious. There is also that.

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I would like all the same to suggest that this is perhaps not all. The question that I am asking: by what path does one love a woman... if I ask the question, that is an old Lacanian refrain, it is no doubt because I have the answer. But there are many of them. There is even no question that has more answers. Naturally, you don't know any of them, because you let yourselves be led by the thing – by the whirlwind. If one has first of all answers, the first thing to do is to count them, huh. And there is one that I find very good.

How does a man love a woman? By chance.

Yeah, that one I already gave you, huh, it is the luck (*l'heur*) of which I have been speaking like that for not all that long, when I say that the lucky chance (*bon-heur*), that it trickles down, that there is some of it everywhere, that you know nothing but that, even! It is simply a matter of having the feeling a little more that you are surrendered to this happiness (*bonheur*). Because anyway, it has to be said, to take my earlier reference the circumstances are not always of mutual help, when love happens between a man and a woman, and then, since I heard just now a little voice, down there singing its little song there, I would like all the same to point out in the margin that the fellow traveller, huh, ought to awaken more echoes than you believe in your dear little souls, huh, it forms part of a certain vocabulary, the vocabulary of the quarter where people speak about *the imagination in power*. I should tell you, the left, appears to me to be all that is most traditional. And the metaphor, is that not so, of fellow traveller, does not appear to me to be enough, if it is not precisely in the Christian register of the *viator*.

As regards the imagination in power, I am not the one who made them say it! No more than I make anyone at all say anything whatsoever. (64) My function is rather to listen. Naturally, anyway, here I re-launch things, but it is rather because what I listen to comes out my ears. Good.

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What am I doing now, huh? I am giving you a snapshot, like that, of another answer. Of another answer which is the one that justifies my question. It is obvious that... I mean, like that, anyway, to look twice at it. Because if saying is a happening, God knows the consequences that it can have! Bah, I am going all the same to give it to you.

Love is nothing more than a saying, *qua* happening. A happening without any smudges. And that love has nothing to do – with the truth, is to say a lot, since all the same what it shows, is that it cannot all be said. This saying, this saying of love is addressed to knowledge in so far as it is there, in what must indeed be called the unconscious. Let us say in this... this knot of being, if you wish, but in a quite different sense, than what first of all started from confusion, this knot, I said: it is the word knot that is important, it is not being, the being of this knot, that I drew the last time, and which is only justified by the unconscious. That implies then, everything it comprises, precisely this saying from the last time, in so far as it takes account of the place of this knowledge. What constitutes this saying is not knowledge, this knot is not in any way, it is not a knowledge of anything whatsoever. It implies my saying as a happening in what it is. With its three faces that it is imaginable since I made an effective image of it; that it is symbolic because I can define it as knot; and that it is altogether real by the very happening of this saying, which happening consists in that, in any case, every one of you can give it the meaning that it has.

And that is why, as always, I beg you not to comprehend too quickly. Because obviously, I must ward off, as they say, any kind of precipitation. This is what accounts on occasion for my slowness. I am here Master Jacques from the fact that one must ward off all precipitous interpretations, it is in nothing but this that there is constituted the exploit that there may be in this saying. That is why I have to decide, and that means that I am abbreviating.

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The import of this Borromean knot is that from each one of the three rings of string its rupture as a set follows. While in a simple chain, I am going to put it on the board for you – Gloria please draw a chain, a (65) chain simply with three rings, and make them correctly, huh? Good…like that. Huh, yes, but then you have to stop there, like that, after that, huh, and there also, you have to stop to do it that way. A simple chain of three huh it is only from the ring in the middle that you can break the extremes. Otherwise, if you take first of all one of the two extremities, the two others remain knotted. It is precisely in this that there consists the difference to the Borromean knot and of the Borromean knot on the other hand with the Olympic knot. The fact is that the Olympic knot, however paradoxical that may appear, this time it is by taking away anyone whatsoever of the three that the two others remain knotted. But it is simply symmetrical from what happens in this one here for the ring in the middle.

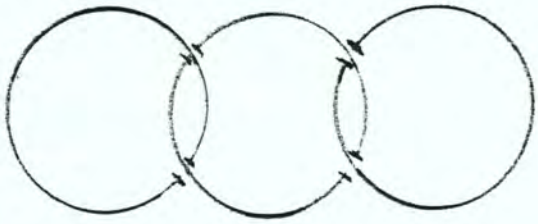

Fig IV. 1

This is the Olympic knot & only be cutting the middle one you break the other two. This is a regular chain. In the knot you only go over and under once – 4 crossings. But in the Borromean knot each knot is crossed. How ?? No no. 4 crossovers are important.

The consistency of all of that, of course, is only imaginary, huh, except that we reduplicate it with the Symbolic, simply by imagining it as a knot, and what is it, to imagine it on the one hand, but to formulate it as a knot, that pushes us towards mathematical formulae. Those of what is only barely sketched out, namely, the theory of knots, except for the fact that all the same this is indeed the representative (*representant*), of language and that *lalangue*, written in my way, reflects it in its very formation, that the more, in a word, we plough ahead in talking about it, the more we confirm what is self-evident, that we are moreover in the Symbolic, and after this why not admit the Real, real from the fact that in this business we pay with our hide? Namely, what may be most efficacious, and however far one

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goes, of our real presence. This real presence, let us say, nothing more, in fact, that after all, there is no need for hash to reveal it to you by its transformation into a light substance. We are deep enough in this business for us to be able to say that the important thing in what makes a knot here is that it is this ring of string, this is what is consistent in each one of these terms that I distinguish in three (66) categories what is consistent is strictly equivalent. Since – give me my little instruments, I am going to give you a present, while I'm at it, huh, ah! [*Dr Lacan throws rings of string into the audience*] – if I say that, as I showed you the last time – not without, as was pointed out to me by someone who was good enough to write a little note on these subjects which showed that the person had not understood very much, but who all the same pointed out to me incidentally that it was not without awkwardness that I had manipulated these instruments for you, good – if what I am saying is true, namely, that the Borromean knot has this curious property, huh, that... that one can in this construction put each one in strictly the same place as any one of the two others, even though that is not immediately self-evident, first of all, well, if each one can, in this function be qualified for its consistency of being strictly equivalent whether it is considered as Real or as Imaginary or as Symbolic, well then with this ring, which consists precisely in a Borromean knot, I can make a Borromean knot by simply, if I had the time, linking these three Borromean knots. I would like all the same for you to look at them a little bit closely, like that, and that you would do something with them. Yeah.

What is important, namely, that they are distinct, it is only important precisely that they are distinct, in so far as it is necessary that they make up three. They consist first and foremost in their difference. Like that, if something got into me, anyway, I would write like that something on the board to which I am not so inclined, given my mood today, to give a special status to, namely, to give you that in... with a significance that is any more than... outlined out. There you are.

2

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I am not going to put around it something, like that, something that isolates it, that asepticises it as a precaution, I am putting it quite crudely:

2

The figure (*chiffre*) of love, huh – *ils sont hors deux* [they are outside two, they are beside themselves] – as I told you, it is *lalangue*, anyway which mathematics is expressing, huh.

$$2 = 1 \text{ or } 3$$

$$2 = 1 \text{ v } 3$$

(67) Ah! That is simply idiotic, but it is not idiotic if one puts – here I must put down some signs used in logic, namely, brackets, and which will serve me here as a sign of equivalent implication, which is precisely as you know what grounds equivalence, huh. What is it equivalent to? It is equivalent to the fact that 2 or 1 is equal to 2 or 3.

$$(2 = 1 \text{ v } 3) \longleftrightarrow (2 \text{ v } 1) = (2 \text{ v } 3).$$

Which is a formula on which you... anyway that you will try to situate, like that, in what is given in the premises of propositional logic. You can make whatever you like of it, huh, I am letting you look after it.

I am letting you look after it because I must advance, I must advance into the... the properties, the properties of the triple, of the triple that we have to deal with. Yes. In these properties of the triple, there is the following: that since each one of the terms of these three of the Borromean knot frees the other two, I know well that there is a relationship, a real relationship – in any case that can be symbolised – with this middle, this middle which, for its part, leaves the two extremes well emptied of omnipotence. But in the case of the Borromean knot, the two extremes have the same. So then, we can consider them from the angle, from the angle of making each one of them the middle.

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[*Someone in the audience*]: What is meant by the v, Monsieur, is it a v or a multiplied?

What is he saying? It is a *vel*, it is an *or*, or, one or the other! It is used in logic, in written logic, like that, one puts a little v to say or. This reads: *2 = 1 or 3, this implies the equality of 2 or 1 with 2 or 3*...

To show you the importance of it, namely, the importance of this: by taking in the Borromean knot that I am going to draw for you all the same since there are people who seem to be interested in what I am saying, good, that I am going to draw for you like that, I do not know if you remember, that's it, and there you are. The interest of taking each one as a middle – since today I am talking about meaning – is to push them forward for you, like that, interpreted. There you are. I am (68) rather easy, rather easy about the fact that I am taking care that you will not give too much meaning too quickly to what I am saying, there is also a good way, anyway, to obtain the same result, it is... to give you so much of it that you will vomit it out, huh. Namely, that I am not going to do it with the back of the spoon. I am going to tell you things to make you vomit, and then after all, huh, you will have the time to swallow them again, like the dog in Scripture. There is even here something that shows why one should not retreat. If I want to give to this exactly its import, anyway, we must have a go at it.

Let us take this as the Symbolic, that one as the Real, that one as the Imaginary. If we take the Symbolic [*clean the board for me if you don't mind, the thing*] as playing the role of middle [*thanks, you are too kind*] as playing the role of middle between the Real and the Imaginary... here we are at the heart of what is this love that I spoke about earlier under the name of divine love. It is enough for this that this Symbolic taken *qua* love, divine love – that suits it – is there in the form of this commandment which puts at the pinnacle *being and love*. For it to conjoin something *qua* being and *qua* love, these two things cannot be said except by supporting the Real on one hand, the

Fig IV 2

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Imaginary on the other, respectively, beginning with the last, of the body and the other, the Real, of death. It is indeed here that there is situated the core of religion in so far as it preaches divine love. It is indeed here also that there is realised this crazy thing, from this emptying out of what is involved in sexual love on the journey. This perversion of the Other as such, establishes in the sadistic story of Original Sin, and in everything that follows from it, by having adopted, naturally, this pre-Christian myth, why not, it is perhaps just as good as any other, establishes in the Imaginary, in this body precisely, this sort of levitation, of insensibility about what concerns (69) it, which is after all, I do not need to insist any more on it, the whole history of what is called Arianism, indeed of Marcionism.

Here is where the dimension of 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' acquires its imperative.

Be a dupe of it, you will not err, I must say. Because one cannot say that such religion is nothing. Since as I told you the last time, it is the true one, it is the true one since it invented this thing – this sublime thing – of the Trinity. It saw that there had to be three of them. That there had to be three rings of string of strictly equal consistency for *nothing* to function. It is all the same quite curious that for every end, it should produce that with regard to love. But read *The life and reign of love* in Kierkegaard – it has just been published by Aubier. There are a lot of you, you are all going to rush into Aubier when you leave, huh, because usually, when I say a book should be read, it has effects! I have a copy, already, so then you can exhaust the edition, but read it! Read it because there is no more implacable logic, nothing better has ever been articulated on love, I mean divine love. There is not the slightest wandering, everything is traced out logically. Love is charity, woman – a curious slip – is charity, faith and hope and thanks to that charity is, as you see in art, anyway, rather lamentably symbolised by this woman with innumerable breasts, is that not so, on which are hung innumerable kids. But it is all the same something, to

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do that, precisely it is at the origin of my slip, to make that from the image of the woman. The finality, the finality in so far as there are two extremes and a middle, I am pointing it out to you, the whole specification of ends – and moreover ends that are always articulatable from rec... I do not dare to say the word reciprocity, it is not correct on this occasion. But I ~~middle~~ that moreover what is the start becomes the end, when the end plays the function of start. The relationship of the body and of death is articulated by divine love in such a way that it ensures that on the one hand the body becomes dead, that death becomes the body on the other hand, and that it is by means of love.

But it is quite general that the very idea of finality should be something that is attached to the intermediary of desire. The love of God is the supposition that he desires what is accomplished for all ends, as I might say. It is the definition of teleology in itself. It is a transformation of the term *desire* into the term *end*. But in this articulation, what creates the end is the middle; in the articulation of (70) the Borromean knot, there is a confusion between means and the ends. Every end can serve as a means. Let us here, precisely make this simply parenthesis: this simple parenthesis that, in taking this place, in taking this place divine love has chased away what I have just defined as desire. With this gain of a truth, the truth of the three who, as I might say, pays the thing and compensates: it can be properly speaking situated at this place, at the place of the Symbolic in so far as it only becomes a middle, is desire. I am pointing it out to you in passing, Christian love has not extinguished, far from it, desire. This relationship of the body to death, has as I might say, baptised love. But I am not insisting any more for the moment, I am taking another connection.

Very exactly what can result from taking, this time no longer the Symbolic, but the Imaginary as middle. If like earlier, and it is in this that there is pinpointed what I articulated for you as something to make you vomit, I always give this summary sense of death to the

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Real, as constituting its kernel, and to the Symbolic, because up to now I did not have to put it forward, to the Symbolic what it reveals to us by its use in the word, and especially in the word of love, to support what in effect all analysis makes us sense – to support enjoyment.

So then, what does the ring of string of the Imaginary taken as middles demonstrate to us? It is that what it supports is nothing less than what must indeed be called love. Love, as I might say, at its place, that that it has always had. And if once, in my *Ethics*, I gave an account of courtly love, of courtly love in what it imagines about enjoyment and about death, this is something that it is – I was going to say miraculous – very surprising and well designed to hold our attention, that it should have been feudalism that produced this order of courtly love. Not that I believe that what is testified to in it is something like a rectification, a counter-theory about divine love, a compensation, but much more rather of an ancient order through which there is testified precisely how much there remained, more than is believed of this ancient order in feudalism. For the ancient order has nothing to do with the one we know. It is – I do not see moreover why some economist would contradict me since beyond the feudal age, he no longer wants to know anything – it is what was conserved in the feudal era. And in a word, I would ask you to verify it, I do not see any distinction as regards the emphasis, as regards the meaning of (71) love, between what remains to us of it; the very elegant theories of courtly love and the whole romance that is deployed around it, I do not see any difference between that and what the literature of Catullus bears witness to us and the homage to Lesbia, however much of a prostitute she was. I think that here, namely, the Imaginary taken as middles, here is the foundation of the true place of love.

How did there occur this displacement, after all very fruitful, which in Christian love situates love at the place – you will see at the end why – at the place that seems to me to be that of desire? The thing was only possible – and that is why I am talking about something about

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which I have thought a bit, huh – from what Christ taught. I am not talking about his Passion, which is the passion of the signifier, I am speaking about his saying (*son dire*). I am speaking about his saying! 'Imitate the lilies of the fields', he utters. 'They do not weave or sew', he says. And this is the important point: this failure to recognise the presence in nature of what knowledge took some time to discover, namely, that, who has woven or sewn more than the lilies of the field? To utter, to articulate this as a model, is here, properly, to add denegation to misrecognition, and the denegation of what? Since it is only a metaphor? The denegation of the unconscious. Namely, of what it weaves and sews, this knowledge without which there is no proper situating of love if what love consists in, is very precisely this saying, this saying that starts, you should note, from the Imaginary taken as middles. What there is in courtly love, is that what still remained in Plato suspended on the Imaginary of the beautiful, it is this that is crystallised, which, in love as middle takes on a body, as opposed as I might say, for all of this can be done, be articulated by a series of triple oppositions to the Imaginary of love as it is articulated in the *Symposium*, is opposed to taking it as means of what is involved in courtly love.

This is something that deserves to be put forward. You must not believe that, if I said that divine love took the place of desire, that means that it is quite simple, that they should be put back in their place, namely, that each should take up its own again; this is not at all what happened. If courtly love was, as I might say, ousted from its place, in order to preside in place of desire at the ascension of a Christian love, that does not nean that desire is exchanged: it was pushed elsewhere. It was pushed elsewhere, namely, there where the Real itself is a middle between the Symbolic and the Imaginary. And (72) if this Real, this is what is audacious, in fact, in my interpretation today, anyway this evening – if this Real is indeed death, this is a crude figuration but if this Real is indeed death, there where desire was chased, if you will allow me to speak in terms of a happening –

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where desire was chased to, what we have is masochism. Certainly not, of course, in so far as it is supposed to be, in any way at all, the vehicle of death – it is only psychoanalysts who believe that, the poor little things, huh! Life instinct, death instinct, that is all they occupy themselves with in their interpretation; they are completely off the mark – but there is no doubt that it is masochism that stirred them up, the connection, the use as a middle, as a middle to unify, to unify enjoyment and the body, the use of this perversion as middle, is certainly what rivets them. What rivets them, as I might say, for a time, anyway irremediably, to what a part of their theory is constructed on. It nevertheless remains that love is the relationship of the Real to knowledge. And psychoanalysis must correct itself by this displacing, by this displacing which stems from the fact that after all, it only followed the out-of-place turnaround of desire, it must indeed come to know that if psychoanalysis is a middle, that it holds itself at the place of love. It is the imaginary of the beautiful that it has to affront, and it is to open up a path of a re-flowering of love in so far as *l'(a)mur*, as I said one day, writing the little *a* object in brackets plus the word *mur*, since *l'(a)mur* is what limits it.

Love is the specific imaginary of each one, which unites it to only a certain number of people not at all chosen by chance. There is the mainspring of the surplus enjoying. There is the relationship of the Real of a certain knowledge and love fills the hole. As you see, huh, it is a little difficult.

It's a little difficult, but all the same, what I must say to you to end – because after all, all these things do not end – what I must show you to end is something that is going to answer to what I told you the last time about the structure of this knot, of the Borromean knot that you now have in your hands, namely, that starting from a certain badly chosen point, there is no ~~middles~~ means of getting out. All of this ~~middles~~ milieu that everyone weaves his own knot. There is something that I want to show you, to show you how this failure happens. Because there is all

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(73) the same an inverse! I seem to be singing the *los* of love to you, yes there is an inverse: the fact is that you are going to see how, if love becomes really the middle by which death is united to enjoyment, the man and the woman, being to knowledge, if it really becomes the middle, love no longer defines itself as a failure. Because there is nothing more than truly the middle that can unknot the one from the other. And this happens in a way that I am going to show you which is the following.

Someone

The Borromean knot – there is a charming listening to me, who sent me a whole document on this – the Borromean knot, was tackled along mathematical paths, as you know, I told you, the theory of knots is still at the abc stage; the amusing thing is that it comes to light, not by taking things at the level of knots, but at that of the plait (*la tresse*).

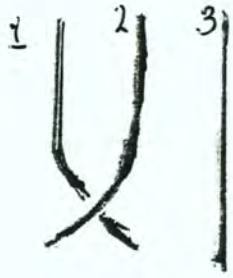

Fig IV. 3

Ah! What is a plait?

First of all, it has relationships with three, otherwise it would not be called a plait... one, two, three... How can I make a plait with that? Anyone at all who has taken care of a woman's hair will all the same know it, but you naturally do not know it because now women have short hair. So then a plait is made like that, no? Namely, huh, you change the place of the two into the place of the one and the three being in its own little corner. Good, one must truly mark the place of the result because otherwise you will understand nothing about it. If I knot it again too quickly you will not be able to see where the cuts are

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made. I had myself, of course, to run into this trouble and I am avoiding it for you, so then now, change the place of the three with the place of the two. You had there (since this is 1, 2, 3) you had there 2, 1, 3. After that then you will have 2, 3, 1 and if you continue the thing once more, you will have from one end to the other 3, 2, 1. Good. (74) Imagine they are in the order, the starting order: between 1, 2, 3 and 3, 2, 1 it is the inverse order, there is nothing easier than to join them up, it is enough in short to adopt the procedure, as was very well seen by the charming person who wrote to me about this thing, it is a matter of procedures as in the Moebius strip. The funny thing is that when you look, there, what circulates, at least I hope, namely, my Borromean knots from earlier, fiddle around with it: you will see that between the places where this appears to form a knot and the places where it can be flattened out, it is a question, of course, of choice, it can vary infinitely but it puts itself, naturally in... in three phases, as I might say. You can imagine for yourselves that the Borromean knot is made up of three of these exchanges, and only of three. Well then not at all, not at all, if you only make three of them, namely, if you proceed by re-sticking together the 1, 2, 3 to the 3, 2, 1, namely, without waiting to see whether if it does six phases, you have the 1, 2, 3 in the proper direction, and that it is like that, nicely, that one obtains the Borromean knot – try it out. Try this out, namely, by only making three phases of the plait, what you will obtain is not the Borromean knot, it is that. This to tell you how easy it is to fall into

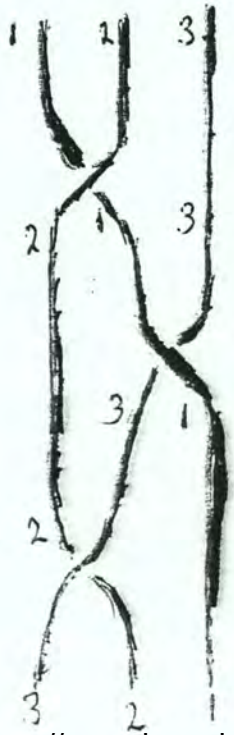

Fig IV. 4

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(75) the middle. And that the face, the equivalent face of what I situated of love as being the essential bond between the Real and the Symbolic, is that taken as a middle, it has every chance of being what it also is at the level of finality, namely, what is called a pure failure.

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Seminar 15: Tuesday 11 June 1974

Voilà! I had to make an effort to ensure that this room was not occupied today by people who are doing exams and I must say that people were good enough to leave it to me. It is obvious that it is more than kind on the part of the University of Paris I to have made this effort since, classes being over for this year – which of course I did not know, this room should have been at the disposition of another part of the administration whose business is to channel you. There you are.

So then all the same, since it cannot be done again, beyond a certain limit, today will be the last time this year that I will speak to you. This forces me naturally to cut things a little short, but that is not going to hold me back since in short one must always finish by cutting things short. For my part I do not know moreover very well why I am lodged in this place, since in short the University, if this is what I am explaining to you, it is perhaps *the woman*. But it is the prehistoric woman, it is the one whom you see is made of folds (*replis*). Obviously for my part it is in one of these folds that she shelters me. She does not realise – when one has a lot of folds one does not feel very much – otherwise, who knows, she would perhaps find me burdensome. Good.

So then, on the other hand, on the other hand – you'll never guess – you will never imagine what I wasted my time on – wasted, in short,

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yes, wasted – what I wasted my time on in part since I last saw you gathered together here. You'll never guess: I was in Milan at a (226) semiotic congress. That is extraordinary. It is extraordinary and of course, it left me, it left me a little nonplussed. It left me a little nonplussed in the sense that it is very difficult precisely from a University perspective to tackle semiotics. But anyway, this very lack that I, as I might say realised in it, threw me back, as I might say, on myself. I mean made me realise that it is very difficult to tackle semiotics – for my part of course, I did not make a face because I was invited, like here, very, very kindly, and I do not see why I would in short have disturbed this Congress by saying what – that the seme, in short, cannot be approached like that in the raw starting from a certain idea of knowledge, a certain idea of knowledge that is not very well situated, in sum, in the university. But I reflected on it and there are reasons for that which are, perhaps, due precisely to the fact that the knowledge of *the woman* – since it is like that that I situated the university – the knowledge of *the woman,* is perhaps not quite the same thing as the knowledge with which we are occupied here.

as in "semiotic" – the unit of meaning.

as opposed to phonème.

The knowledge with which we are occupied here – I think I have made you sense it – is the knowledge in which the unconscious consists. And it is, in sum, on this that I would like to close this year.

I never, in sum, I never attached myself to anything other than what is involved in this knowledge described as unconscious. If for example I marked the accent, in short, about knowledge in so far as the discourse of science may situate it in the Real, what is singular and that whose impasse I believe I have articulated in a way here, the impasse which is the one for which Newton was assailed inasmuch as, not making any hypothesis, any hypothesis inasmuch as he articulated the thing scientifically, well then, he was quite incapable, except of course for the fact that he was reproached for it, he was quite incapable of saying where there was situated this knowledge thanks to which in short the heavens move in the order that we know, on the foundation of gravity.

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If I emphasised, is that not so, this character of a certain knowledge in the Real, this may seem to be beside the question, beside the question in this sense that unconscious knowledge, for its part, is a knowledge that we have to deal with. And it is in this sense that one can say that it is in the Real.

This is what I am trying to support for you this year with the support of a writing, of a writing that is not easy, since it is the one that you have seen me handle more or less adroitly on the board in the form of the Borromean knot. And this is how I would like to conclude this year; it is by coming back to this knowledge and to say how it is (227) presented. How it is presented, I would not say altogether in the Real, but on the path that leads us to the Real.

I must all the same start again from that, from what was also presentified to me, presentified in this interval, namely, that there are some very funny people in short, people who continue in a certain Society described as International, who continue to operate as if all of that was self-evident. Namely, that this could be situated, be situated in a world; in a world like that that is supposed to be made up of bodies, of bodies that are called living – and of course there is no reason for them to be called that, is that not so – that are plunged into a milieu, a milieu that is called 'world' and all that, in short, why should it be rejected all of a sudden?

Nevertheless what comes out of a practice, of a practice which is based on the ek-sistence of the unconscious ought all the same allow us to detach ourselves from this elementary vision which is that of... I would not say of the ego, even though it is encumbered by it and that I read things directly extracted from a certain congress that was held at Madrid where for example, one sees that Freud himself, I must say, said things just as outrageous, just as outrageous as what I am going to put forward to you: that it is from the ego – the ego, is something other than the unconscious, obviously, it is not underlined that it is

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something different, there is a moment where Freud redid his whole topography as it is called, is that not so. There is the famous second topography which is a writing, simply, which is nothing other than something in the form of an egg, the form of an egg which it is all the more striking to see, this form of the egg, that what is situated in it as the ego comes at the place where in an egg, or more exactly on its yolk, on what is called the vitellus, is the place of the embryonic point. It is obviously curious, it is obviously very curious and it brings the function of the ego closer to where, in short, there is going to develop a body, a body which only the development of biology allows us to situate the way it is formed in its first morulations, gastrulations, etc. But since this body – and it is in this that there consists Freud's second topography – since this body is situated by a relation to the id, to the id which is an extraordinarily confused idea; as Freud articulates it, it is a locus, a locus of silence - that is the principle thing he says about (228) it. But in articulating it in this way, he only signifies that what is supposed to be id, is the unconscious when it says nothing. This silence is a saying nothing. And this is no small thing, it is certainly an effort, an effort in the direction, in the direction that is perhaps a little regressive as compared to his first discovery, in the direction let us say of marking the place of the unconscious. It does not say for all that what this unconscious is, in other words, of what use it is. There it says nothing: it is the place of silence. It remains beyond doubt that it complicates the body, the body in so far as in this schema, it is the ego, the ego which is found, in this writing in the form of an egg, the ego which is found to represent it.

Is the ego the body? What makes it difficult to reduce it to the functioning of the body, is precisely that in this schema, it is supposed to develop only on the foundation of this knowledge, of this knowledge in so far as it says nothing, and to draw from this what must indeed be called its nourishment. I repeat: it is difficult to be entirely satisfied with this second topography because what happens, what we have to deal with in analytic practice, is something which

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indeed seems to be presented in a quite different way. Namely, that this unconscious, as compared to what would couple so well the ego to the world, the body to what surrounds it, what would order it in this sort of relationship that people persist in wanting to consider as natural the fact is that, as compared to this, the unconscious is presented as essentially different from this harmony. Let us say the word: discordant (*dysharmonique*). I am blurting it out right away, and why not, it must be emphasised. The relationship to the world is certainly, if we give it its meaning, this effective meaning that we see in practice, is something about which one cannot but immediately feel that, as compared to this quite simple vision in a way of exchange with the environment, this unconscious is parisitic. It is a parasite to which it seems a certain species, among others, accommodates itself very well, but it is only in the measure that it does not experience its effects that must indeed be said, to be stated for what they are: namely, pathogenic. I mean that this happy relationship, this supposedly harmonic relationship between what is living and what surrounds it, is disturbed by the insistence of this knowledge, of this knowledge that no doubt is inherited – it is not by chance that it is there – and this speaking being, to call him that, as I call him – this speaking being inhabits it but he does not inhabit it without all sorts of (229) drawbacks. So then if it is difficult not to make life the characteristic of the body, because it is almost all we can say about it, *qua* body, it is there and it seems to be able to defend itself, to defend itself against what? Against this something to which it is difficult not to identify it, namely, what remains of that body when it no longer has life. It is because of this that in English the cadaver is called 'corpse'; in other words, when it is living, it is called 'body'. But that it is the same, has a satisfying air like that, materially. In short, one sees clearly what remains of it is the waste scrap, and if one must conclude that life, as Bichat said, is the totality of forces that resist death, it is a schema, it is a schema, in spite of everything, that is a little crude. It does not say at all how life is sustained. And in truth, in truth, we arrived very late, very late in the biology, before having the idea that

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life is something other – it is all that we can say about it – something other than the totality of forces that oppose the dissolution of the body into a corpse. I would even say more: everything that may allow us to hope a little for something else, namely, about what life is, takes us all the same towards a quite different conception: the one in which I tried this year to situate something by talking to you about a biologist, an eminent biologist, about Jacob and his collaboration with Wollman, and of that which moreover, well beyond - it is through this that I tried to give you an idea of it – of that which, well beyond, is found to be what we can articulate about the development of life, and specifically the fact at which biologists are coming to, thanks only to the fact that they can look at things more closely than has always been done, that life is supported by something as regards which I am not, for my part, going to take the step and say that it resembles a language, and talk about messages that are supposed to be inscribed in the first molecules and which could have obviously singular effects, effects which are manifested in the way in which there are organised all kinds of things that are turned into manure, or to all sorts of constructions that are chemically located and locatable. But in fact, there is certainly a profound eccentricity which happens and which happens in a way as regards which it is at least curious that this comes to be noticed everywhere only from some articulated thing, up to and including a punctuation.

(230) I do not want to enlarge on that; I do not want to enlarge on it, but after all, it is indeed because I in no way assimilate this kind of signalisation that biology makes use of, I in no way assimilate it to what is involved in language, contrary to a sort of jubilation that seems to have laid hold in this connection of the linguist who meets up with the biologist, shakes his hand and says: 'We're in this together'. I think that concepts, for example, like that of structural stability can, as I might say, give a different form of presence to the body. For after all, what is essential, is not only how life manages with itself for there to be produced things that are capable of being

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Let's not quit reduce what happens in a body to language.

living, the fact is that all the same, that the body has a form, an organisation, a morphogenesis, and that it is a different way also of seeing things, namely, that a body, reproduces itself.

So then it is not the same, all the same, it is not the same as the way in which things are communicated inside, as one might say. This notion of communication which is all that is at stake in this idea of first messages thanks to which a chemical substance is supposed to be organised, is something else. It is something else and then, this is where the leap must be taken and we must note that signs are given within a privileged experience, that there is an order, an order to be distinguished, not of the Real, but in the Real, and that it originates, is made original by being solidary with something which, despite us, as I might say, is excluded from this approach of life, but of which we do not take account – that is what this year I wanted to insist on – that life implies it, imaginarily implies it as one might say. What strikes us in this fact which is the one to which Aristotle really adhered, that it is only the individual who truly counts, the fact is that without knowing it, he supposes enjoyment to it. And that what constitutes the One of this individual, is all sorts of signs, but not signs in the sense that I understood earlier, signs which give this privileged experience that I situated in analysis, let us not forget – there are signs in its displacement, in its motion, in short, that it enjoys. And that indeed is why Aristotle had no trouble making an ethics, the fact is that he supposes, the fact is that he supposes *hedone*, that *hedone* had not received the meaning that it received later from the Epicureans; the *hedone* that is at stake, is what puts the body into a current which is one of enjoyment. He can only do so because he is himself in a (231) privileged position. But since he does not know which, since he does not know that he thinks about enjoyment in this way because he belongs to the class of masters, it happens that he tackles it all the same, namely, that only one who can do what he wants, that only he has an ethics.

linked to hedonism

It's what makes you act – it's the basis of your pleasure.

This is the other of the mortal. Aristotle does not reflect on it fact that he is a mortal. The only one who can afford to have an ethics is the one who can do what he wants

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This enjoyment is obviously linked much more than is believed to the logic of life. But what we discover, is that in a privileged being – as privileged as Aristotle was compared to the totality of human beings – in a privileged being, this life, as I might say, varies or even is damaged (*s'avarie*) is damaged to the point of being diversified into what? Well this precisely is what is at stake: what is at stake are semes namely, this something that is incarnated in *lalangue*. Because one must indeed accept to think that *lalangue* is solidary with the reality of the feelings that it signifies. If there is something that really makes us get in touch with that, it is precisely psychoanalysis. That 'impediment' – as I said at one time in my seminar on *Anxiety* which I regret, after all, is not yet at your disposal – that 'impediment', 'dismay' – dismay as I clearly specified it: dismay is the withdrawal of a power – that 'embarrassment' are words which have meaning, well, they only have the meaning conveyed on the traces opened up by *lalangue*. Of course, we can project these feelings onto animals. I would simply point out to you that if we can project impediment, dismay, embarrassment onto animals, it is uniquely onto domestic animals. That we may be able to say that a dog was dismayed, embarrassed or impeded in some way, is in the measure that he is in the field of these semes, and this by way of our mediation.

Domestic animals are subjected to the language of men & they are likely to react (unlike wild animals)

So then I would like all the same to make you sense what analytic experience implies: the fact is that when it is a question of this semiotics, of what creates meaning and of what involves feeling, well then, what this experience demonstrates, is that it is from *lalangue*, as I write it, that there proceeds what I will not hesitate to call animation – and why not, you know very well that I do not bore you with the soul: animation, is in the sense of a series fiddling about, a fiddling, a scratching, in a word of a fury – the animation of the enjoyment of the body. And this animation is not experience, does not come from just anywhere. If the body is animated in its motive power, in the sense (232) that I have just told you, namely, that it is the animation that a parasite gives, the animation that perhaps I give to the University for

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example, well then, that comes from a privileged enjoyment, distinct from that of the body. It is certain that to speak about it, in short, one is rather embarrassed because to put it forward like that is laughable, and it is not for nothing that it is laughable: it is laughable because it makes us laugh. But it is very precisely this that we situate in phallic enjoyment. Phallic enjoyment is what, in short, is contributed by the semes, since today alongside – since today, worried as I was by this Congress on semiotics, I allow myself to put forward the word 'seme'. It is not that I insist on it, you understand, because I do not try to complicate your lives. I do not try to complicate your lives, nor especially to make semioticians of you. God knows where that could lead you! That would lead you moreover into the place where you are, namely, that would not lead you out of the University. Only here is what is at stake: the seme is not complicated, it is what makes meaning. Everything that creates meaning in *lalangue* proves to be linked to the ek-sistence of this tongue, namely, that it is outside the business of the life of the body, and that if there is something that I have tried to develop this year before you – that I hope to have made present, but who knows – it is that it is in so far as this phallic enjoyment, that this semiotic enjoyment is added on to the body that there is a problem.

I proposed to you to resolve this problem if indeed it is a complete solution, but to resolve it simply in short, from the observation that this sliding semiosis tickles the body in the measure – and this measure, I propose to you as absolute – in the measure that there is no sexual relationship. In other words, in this confused totality that only the seme, the seme once one has awakened it to ek-sistence, namely, that one has said it as such, it is by this, it is in the measure that the speaking body inhabits these semes that it finds the means to supply for the fact that nothing, nothing apart from that, will lead it towards what we have indeed been forced to bring out in the term 'other', in the term 'other' which inhabits *lalangue* and which is designed to represent the fact precisely that there is no relationship with the

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partner, the sexual partner, except by the mediation of what creates meaning in *lalangue*. There is no natural relationship, not that if it (233) were natural, one could write it, but that precisely one cannot write it because there is nothing natural in the sexual relationship of this being which finds itself less a speaking being than a spoken being.

There is no "sexual relationship" - the first Three Essays if there is already saying this.

That imaginarily, because of that, this enjoyment as regards which you see that in presenting it to you as phallic, I qualified in an equivalent way as semiotic, of course, it is obviously it appears to me quite grotesque to imagine this phallus in the male organ. It is all the same in that way indeed that it is imagined in the facts that analytic experience reveals. And it is certainly also the sign that there is in this male organ something which constitutes an experience of enjoyment which is apart from the others, not only which is apart from the others, but which ... the other enjoyments, the enjoyment which is, faith, quite easy to imagine. Namely, that a body, good God, is designed so that one has the pleasure of lifting one arm and then another, and then of doing gymnastics, and of jumping and running and of pulling and doing whatever you want, good. It is all the same curious that it should be around this organ that a privileged enjoyment should come to birth. For this is what analytic experience shows us, namely, that it is around this grotesque shape that there begins to pivot this sort of supplying that I described as what in Freud's statement, is marked by the privilege, as one might say, of sexual meaning, without it being truly realised, even though all the same, that tickled him also and he glimpsed it, he almost said it in *Civilisation and its discontents* – namely, that meaning is only sexual because meaning is substituted precisely for the sexual which is lacking. That is what is supposed by everything implied by its use, its analytic use of human behaviour: not that meaning reflects the sexual, but that it supplies for it.

Meaning, it must be said, meaning like that when one does not work on it, well then it is opaque. The confusion of feelings, is everything that *lalangue* is designed to semiotise. And it is indeed because of

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that that all words are designed to be pliable in every direction. So then what I proposed, what I proposed from the start of this teaching, from the Rome discourse on, is to grant the importance that it has in practice, in analytic practice, to the material of *lalangue*. A linguist, a linguist of course, is altogether introduced right away to this consideration of the tongue as having a material. He knows this (234) material well: it is what is in the dictionaries, it is the lexical, it is morphology also, in short, it is the object of his linguistics. There is someone who, naturally, is a hundred cubits above a congress like the one that I told you about, who is Jakobson. He spoke a little about me in the margins, not in his opening discourse, but immediately afterwards, he was determined to specify clearly that the use that I had made of Saussure, and behind Saussure – I knew enough about it to know all the same – the Stoics and Saint Augustin? Why not? Me, I retreat before nothing. The fact is that what I borrowed from Saussure simply and from the Stoics under the term of *signatum*, this *signatum*, is meaning and that it is just as important as this accent that I put on the *signans*…

The *signans* has the interest of allowing us to operate in analysis, to resolve, even though like everyone else we are only capable of having one thought at a time, but to put us in this state that is modestly described as floating attention. This means precisely that when the partner, here the analysand, for his part expresses one, a thought, we can have a quite different one, that it is a lucky chance from which there springs forth a flash. And it is precisely here that an interpretation can occur, namely, that because of the fact that we have a floating attention, we hear what he has said sometimes simply because of a kind of equivocation, namely, a material equivalence. We perceive that what he said – we perceive it because we undergo it – that what he said could be understood in the wrong way. And it is precisely in understanding it in the wrong way that we allow him to perceive where his thoughts, his own semiotics, where it comes from:

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it comes from nothing other than the ek-sistence of *lalangue*. *Lalangue* ek-sists elsewhere than in what he believes to be his world.

Lalangue has the same parasitic quality as phallic enjoyment, with respect to all other enjoyments. And it is what determines as parasitic in the Real what is involved in unconscious knowledge. *Lalangue* must be conceived of. And why not, why not speak of what *lalangue* might be in relationship with phallic enjoyment like the branches of a tree. It is not for nothing – because all the same I have my own little idea… – it is not for nothing that I pointed out to you that this famous tree at the start, there, the one from which the apple was picked, one could ask the question of whether it enjoyed itself just like any other (235) living being. If I put this forward to you, it is not entirely without reason, of course. And then let us say that *lalangue*, any element whatsoever of *lalangue*, is, with respect to phallic enjoyment, a strand of enjoyment. And that is why it stretches its roots so far into the body.

Good, so then what one must start from – you see that this is being dragged out, it is late, good – is this strong affirmation that the unconscious is not a knowing (*connaissance*): it is a knowledge (*savoir*), and a knowledge in so far as I define it from the connection of signifiers. First point. Second point: it is a discordant knowledge which does not lend in any way to a happy marriage, to a marriage which would be happy. This is implied in the very notion of marriage, this is what is outrageous, what is fabulous: does anybody know a happy marriage? No, but in short… Let us go on. Nevertheless the name is designed to express happiness. Yes, the name is designed to express happiness and it is the one that came to me to tell you what one could imagine in terms of a good adaptation, as they say, of a fitting together, in short of something which would ensure that what I have said to you about life, the life of the body in the one who speaks, this could be judged in terms of a just, of a noble exchange between this body and its milieu, as they say, its old pal the *Welt*.

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All the same, these remarks have their historical importance, because you will see, you who will survive me, you will see: everything that has begun to be babbled about in biology clearly gives the impression that life has nothing natural about it. It is something mad. The proof is that they have shoved linguistics into it! In a word, it's outrageous. This life will keep some surprises, when people have stopped talking like bird brains, namely, imagining that life is opposed to death. It's absolutely crazy, this business! First of all what do we know about it? What is dead? The inanimate world we are told. But it is because there is a different conception of the soul than the one that I represented for you now, namely, that the soul is that which... is a crab (*crabe*).

So then, I am going to tell you, even: at the point that we are at in it, it is paradoxical. It is paradoxical, I say that because it read a little torchon paper that was produced there in the last congress of the *Societé de Psychanalyse* and which bore witness to something that at the very least is paradoxical: which is that as regards what I am in the process of rejecting, namely, that there is a knowing, that there is the slightest harmony between what is situated terms of enjoyment, of (236) corporal enjoyment and what surrounds it. But there is only one place where this famous knowing can happen, a place, according to me and you will never guess it: it is in analysis itself. In analysis, one can say that there can be something that resembles knowing. And I find the testimony for it in the fact that in connection with the paper, the torchon paper that I am talking to you about which deals with the dream, the innocence with which this is acknowledged is absolutely marvellous. There is someone and someone about whom I am not at all surprised should be that person, because all the same he received a little finishing touch that I gave him at one time, the fact is that everything is centred around the fact that he sees there being reproduced in one of his dreams a note, a properly speaking semantic note – namely, that it is only truly here as noted, articulated, written –

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he sees there being reproduced in one of his dreams a semantic note of the dream of one of his patients. He is quite right to stick knowing into his title. This kind of co-vibrating, semiotic co-vibrating, it is not surprising that it is called like that modestly transference. And people are quite right also to call it only that. I'm for that. It is not love, but it is love in the ordinary sense, it is love as it is imagined. Love is obviously something else. But as regards the idea, as one might say, that people have of love, there is nothing better than this sort of analytic knowing. I am not sure that it goes very far, this is indeed moreover also why all analytic experience remains bogged down. And that is not what should be at stake. It should be a matter of elaborating, of allowing the one that I call the analysand to elaborate, to elaborate this knowledge, this unconscious knowledge which is in him like a canker, not like a depth, like a canker.

This is something different, of course, it is something different to knowing. And it would need a discipline obviously a little different than the philosophical discipline. There is something in Cocteau – because from time to time I do not see why I should spit on writers, they are rather less stupid than the others – there is a thing in Cocteau that is called *Le Potomak* where he created something that I am not going to try to tell you what it is: *les Eugène*. But there is also within it the Mortimers. The Mortimers have only a single heart, and it is represented in a little drawing where they have a dream in common.

Si plein, si rond,
(un seul pour deux)
le rêve des Mortimer,
qu'en vain les Eugène
cherchent, pour y pénetrer,
une issue
[So full, so round, (a single one for two) the dream of the Mortimers that in vain the Eugenes seek a way out of in order to penetrate it]
Jean Cocteau, *Le Potomak* (1915)

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It is someone in the style of my psychoanalyst of just now, the one that I did not name: between the analysand and the analyst, it is like among the Mortimers. It is not frequent, it is not frequent even among people who love one another, for them to have the same dream. It is even very remarkable. It is indeed what proves the solitude of each one with what emerges from phallic enjoyment. Good.

So then all the same – there is less than a quarter of an hour left – I would like all the same to make some remarks, I would like to make all the same some remarks about the import – because this seemed to strike like that a pal who is there in the first row, I blurted that out to him like that during a dinner and I had the surprise to see that it filled him with pleasure, so then I realised how badly I explain myself: because I had written for you on the board:

$\exists x . \overline{\Phi x}$ (There should be a negation over the Φx)

Which means:

There must be one who says no to phallic enjoyment

Thanks to which and to which alone

There are alls (des tous) who say yes (There are lots of people who don't say 'no' to Phallic enjoyment)

lots of people

(238) I put you face to face with the fact that there are – I must have, I must have given rise to some confusion – that there are others among whom there are none who say no. Only, that has as a curious consequence that among these others, in short, there are none at all who say yes. That is the inscription, it is the attempt at inscription in a mathematical function, of something which uses quantifiers. There is nothing illegitimate – I am not going to argue that today because we don't have any more time – there is nothing illegitimate in this quantification of meaning. This quantification stems from an identification. The identification stems from a unification. What did I write for you formerly in the formulae of four discourses? An S_1 that has fixed itself, that has pointed towards an S_2. What is an S_1? It is a signifier, as the letter indicates. What is proper to a signifier – it is the

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feature of a tongue about which one can do nothing – is that any signifier can be reduced to the import of the signifier *One*. And it is as signifying *One* – I think that you remember formerly my little brackets: S_1 S_2 in brackets, and there were S_1's that stuck themselves in front again, etc., to express the business that I am defining to ensure that the signifier should be what dominates in the constitution of the subject: a signifier is what represents a subject for another signifier. Good so then, so then, any letter *x*, whatever it may be means this *One* as indeterminate. This is what is called in the function, in the function in the mathematical sense, the argument. This is where I started to talk to you about identification. But if there is an identification, as sexed identification and if, on the other hand, I am telling you that there is no sexual relationship, what does that mean? That means that there is a sexed identification only on one side, namely, that all these pinpointings of identification described as functional, are to be put – and it is in this that the pal in question manifested his lively satisfaction, it is because I had told him like that in a solid way, instead of to you, I left you in the soup – the fact is that all these identifications are on the same side: that means that it is only a woman who is capable of making them. Why not the man? Because you note that I say of course 'a woman' and then I say 'the man'. Because the man, the man as he is imagined by *the woman*, namely, she who does not exist, namely, an imagination of the void, the man for his part is twisted by his sex. Instead of a woman being able to make a sexed (239) identification. She has even nothing to do but that, because she must pass by way of phallic enjoyment which is precisely what is lacking to her. I am saying that to you because I could speckle it with a reference to my four little pinpointings, there: $\forall x$ – I am not going to the board because you won't hear if I write on the board – what does that mean for *the woman*, because you may have been able to believe that with that, that what I was designating were all the men? That means the requirement that *the woman* shows – it is obvious: that the man should be all hers. I begin with this, because it is the funniest bit. It is in the nature of the woman to be jealous, in the nature of her

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love. When I think that in 10 minutes I am going to have to explain to you what love is! It's annoying to be hassled to that extent. Good. The not-all (*pas-toutes*) by which I inscribed the other relationship to Φx, is that by which this same love, the love that is at stake and that I put like that, generously, entirely on the side of women, we must all the same put, as I might say, a break on it, I mean by that, that it is not all that she loves: there remains a bit for herself, for her corporal enjoyment. This is what is meant by the $\overline{\forall x}$ the 'not-allness'. Good. And then after the $\exists x$, existence, the existence of the *x*, that for its part, as near as may be – as near as may be and then because I said it clearly here – which is the one where God is situated... One must be more temperate, I mean by that that one must not be too haughty about this business of God, since with time it has become worn out, and it is all the same not because there is knowledge in the Real that we are forced to identify it to God. I for my part am going to propose to you, a different interpretation. The $\exists x \overline{\Phi x}$, is the locus of the enjoyment of *the woman* who is much more linked to the saying than is imagined. It has to be said that without psychoanalysis it is quite obvious that in this I would be a complete novice like everyone else. The link of the enjoyment of *the woman* to the impudence of the saying, this is what it appears to me to be important to underline. I did not say shamelessness (*impudeur*). Impudence is not the same, it is not at all the same. And the $\overline{\exists x}.\overline{\Phi x}$, both barred, is the way in which *the woman* does not exist, namely, the way in which her enjoyment cannot be grounded on her own impudence.

I am handing you that like that, it is, I must acknowledge that it is... I find you patient. These, these are hammer blows that I am landing on your mug. But anyway, since I am a little bit rushed, I would like all (240) the same to conclude on this fact that the unconscious as discordant knowledge is more foreign to a woman than to the man. It is funny that I should be saying such a thing to you! So then, so then what is going to result from it? What is going to result from it is that there is all the same the woman's side. It is not because it is more

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foreign that it is not foreign to the man also. It is more foreign to her because that comes to her from the man, from the man of whom I spoke earlier, from the man of whom she dreams because if I said that the man exists, I clearly specified that it is in the measure that he is, more cankered or even more notched by the unconscious. But a woman preserves, as I might say, a little bit more fresh air in her enjoyments. She is less notched contrary to appearances.

And it is on this that I would like to end. I would like to end on something which is an extract from Peirce: namely, that it was noticed all the same that logic, Aristotelian logic, is a purely predicatory and classificatory logic. So then he started to think around the idea of the relation, namely, what is perfectly, what is self-evident, what is like a billiard table, a billiard table concerning not the function of pinpointing to a single argument that I have just given you as being that of the identification by putting the thing back into the woman's pocket. He started to cogitate around the $x\,R$ (R, the sign of an ideal emptied-out relation, he does not say which) R and y: $x\,R\,y$: a function with two arguments. What, starting from what I have just put forward for you today, what is the knowledge relation? There is something very, very clever that is noted in Peirce – you see I pay tribute to my authors – when I make a discovery in one, I attribute it to him. I attribute it to him like that, I might moreover not have attributed it to him. Formerly, I spoke about metaphor and metonymy, and all the people started crying out, on the pretext that I had not said immediately that I owed that to Jakobson. As if everyone should not have known that! Anyway it was Laplanche and Lefebvre-Pontalis who were shouting about that. Anyway, what a memory! Make no mistake!

If what I am saying to you today, what I am putting forward is founded, knowledge does not have a subject. If knowledge is made up in the connection of two signifiers and if it is only that, it only has a subject if we supposed one that only serves as a representative of the

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(241) subject for the other. There is all the same something which is rather curious there: it is the relation, if you write *x R y* in this order, is the result that *x* is related to *y*? Can we support what is expressed in the active or passive voice of the verb by the relation? But that is not self-evident. It is not because I said that feelings are always reciprocal – because this is how I expressed myself at one time before people who as usual understood nothing about what I was saying – it is not because one loves that one is loved. I never dared say such a thing. The essence of the relation if in effect some effect is referred back to the starting point, means simply that when one loves one becomes enamoured as I said. And when the first term is knowledge? There we have a surprise, which is that knowledge is perfectly identical, at the level of unconscious knowledge, to the fact that the subject is known. At the level of meaning in any case, it is absolutely clear: knowledge is what is known.

So then let us try all the same to draw some consequences from something that analysis shows us, which is that what is called transference, namely, what I called earlier love, everyday love – the love on which one calmly rests and then, no more trouble – is not altogether the same as what happens when the enjoyment of *the woman* emerges. But there you are, I will reserve that for you for next year. For the moment, let us try to clearly grasp that what analysis has revealed as truth, is that love, the love of which I spoke earlier, love is directed towards the subject supposed to know and so that it would be the reverse side of what I questioned the relation of knowledge about, well then, it would be that the partner, on this occasion, is borne along by this sort of motion that is described as love.

But if the *x* of the relation that might be written as sexual, is the signifier in so far as it is connected to phallic enjoyment, we have all the same to draw out its consequence. The consequence is that if the unconscious is indeed the support of what I told you about today, namely, a knowledge, the fact is that everything I wanted to tell you

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this year about the non-dupes who err means that anyone who is not in love with his unconscious errs. That says nothing whatsoever against past centuries. They were just as much in love with their unconscious as the others and so they did not err. Simply, they did not know where they were going, but as regards being in love with their unconscious, (242) they certainly were! They imagined that it was knowing (*la connaissance*) because there is no need to know that one is in love with one's unconscious in order not to err. One only has to offer no resistance, to be its dupe. For the first time in history, it is possible for you for you to err, namely, to refuse to love your unconscious, since in short you know what it is: a knowledge, a knowledge that pisses you off. But perhaps in this impetus (*e-r-r-e*), you know, this thing that pulls, when the ship is riding at anchor – it is perhaps here that we can wager on rediscovering the Real a little more in what follows, to perceive that the unconscious is perhaps no doubt discordant, but that perhaps it leads us to a little more of this Real than this very little of reality which is ours, that of the phantasy, that it leads us beyond: to the pure Real.

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Seminar 9: Wednesday 12 March 1974

[Dr. Lacan arranges four sketches on the board].

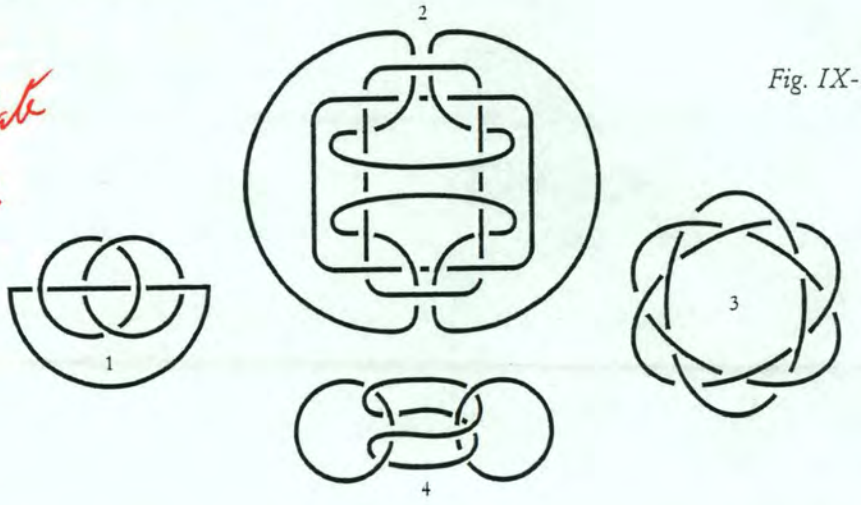

Fig. IX-1

Good, so then I am entering into the core of the subject, even though I would of course prefer to talk about something else. To say for example that... that I have no reason to complain, that... that I am giving, in a word, at the same time, I am giving you – I apologise - I am giving you hay to eat. All of that is hay. These are things that cross over one another, and, well, which do not get across. So that I have no reason to complain in this sense that, it is either one thing or the other: either I am given back my hay right away, this is what (134) happens, like that, my hay as such, in short, it is not at all something that cannot be tolerated, it is served up to me again just as, just as I have propounded it. This is what happens with some people. And then there are people, for example that this hay tickles so much as

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it goes down their throat, that they vomit Claudel, at me, for example. It is because they already had him there… I am annoyed, I am annoyed because the person that I made vomit Claudel telephoned – Gloria naturally – at the moment… to ask her where my seminar was held. Anyway, I am terribly sorry, I hope that she has ended up by finding out. She is perhaps here, in any case if she is not here let her be brought my apologies, because Gloria sent her packing, and it is not at all what… what I would have wanted: why would she not come to eat hay like everyone else… Good, good, well then the hay in question, anyway, is what you know is on the agenda, is that not so, because of me: the Borromean knot.

I can say that I am spoiled, because I have just been brought an African one. It is the Borromean knot in person is it not. It is… I certify its authenticity for you, because ever since I have been handling it, I have begun to know a bit about it… and I like it a lot, because if there is one thing about which I rack my brain – I even asked about it, anyway, it is… it is to know where it comes from. It is called Borromean, it is not at all because there was a chap who one day discovered it. It was of course discovered a long time ago, and what astonishes me is that, is that it has not been used more, indeed, because it was truly, it was truly a way of tackling what I call the three dimensions. They were taken up differently and there must be reasons for that. There must be reasons for that, because I cannot at all see why – anyway, I do not see this at a first approach – I does not see why people would not have tried to squeeze the point, to make the point, if you wish, with it, rather than with things that cut themselves. It is a fact that it did not happen like that. What fate it would have had if it had happened like that, it is probable that this would have trained us quite differently.

It is not at all that those who are called philosophers, namely,, good God, those who try to say something about our… our condition, in a word, to respond to it, it is not at all the case that there is no trace of

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the fact that this business of knots, precisely, did not interest them, because: for truly, for truly a very long period of time there have been (135) people who find themselves curiously having, as far as we know – by being classed for a long time as far as we know, among the women, anyway, what I call 'the women' – and it is in the plural since as you know, in fact, there have been some of them there for a long time – that women reached an understanding of that, by making tissues, fabrics. And this might have put people on the track. It is very curious that quite the contrary, this rather inspired intimidation. Aristotle indeed talks about it, and it is very curious that he did not take it as an object. Because that would have been a start that would not have been any worse than any other. What is it, what is it that ensures that knots, knots, are so poorly imagined? This one like that, because it is made in a certain way, holds up. [*Lacan is talking here about the African knot in his hand*]. But it is only when it is flattened out that it is not easy to handle, and it is probably not for nothing indeed, that with these knots it is always things which make a fabric, namely, that form a surface, that people tried to fabricate. It is probably because the flattened out thing, the surface, is very much linked, in fact, to all sorts of uses. Yes. I am going to give you right away a proof of the fact that knots are poorly imagined. Good.

You make a plait. A plait of two. You do not have to do very much with it, it is enough for you to cross over once, then a second time, after two you find your two in order. Knot them now end to end, namely, the same with the same. Well then it is knotted. One could even say it is knotted twice. That makes a double buckle. It holds together, the... what you have joined together, namely, as my faithful Achates put as a title of my last seminar of last year, he called that 'rings of string (*les ronds de ficelle*). I don't know whether in the text I had called it that or something else, it is probable that I had called it that, but he put it into the title. Good.

Women made fabrics & the men made pots. (Freud made a fantastic thing)

There are a lot of knots that were made – plaiting etc. But women have flattened knots.

He makes a point of "order". It's not a cardinal order 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc. but an order is made – a modality.

Achates?! Who is he? Why does he call him his Achates?

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Good. Now make a plait of three. Before you rediscover, in the plait of three, the three strands – let us call them strands (*des brins*), today, for example – the three strands in order, you have to perform 6 times the gesture of crossing over the strands, as a result of which, after you have performed this gesture 6 times, you rediscover the three strands in order. And then again you join them. Well then, it is all the same something that is not self-evident, that is not immediately imagined: the fact is if once this knot that I quite simply told you was a (136) Borromean knot, namely, such as it is in the most simple form, the one there on the left, it is not self-evident that having plaited as in the first case, you can see when all is said and done that this stems from a double knot, it is not self-evident that it is enough for you to break one of these strands for the two others to be free. Because at first sight, they seem to be very well twisted around one another, and one might presume that they hold together just as well as in the plait of two. Well then not at all: you see right away that they separate. It is enough to cut one of the three for the two others to prove not to be knotted. And this remains true no matter what the multiple of six with which you pursue the plait. It is quite certain in effect that, since you have found your three strands in order at the end of six gestures of plaiting, you are also going to find them in order when you make a further six. When you make a further six of them this will give you this Borromean knot here [sketch 3]. Namely, that what you see here passing once, inside the two other knots, which you can see are – and that is why I presented them like that – free from one another, you do that, in reality here you see it, twice. And it is still a knot described as Borromean, in that whatever may be the one that you break, the two others will be free. With a tiny little bit of imagination, you can see why. It is because, let us take these two here for example, they are such that, let us say to say things simply, that they do not cut one another, that they are one above the other. You can note that this is true for each couple of two. Good. Here are two ways of making a Borromean knot, but which in reality are only one, namely, that to

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plait them an indefinite number of times multiple of six, it will still be just as authentic a Borromean knot.

Any two of the Borromean knots are on top of each other & the 3rd one binds them.

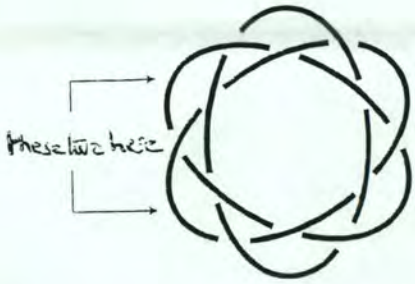

Fig. IX-2

(137) I apologise to those that this may weary, what I am telling you here all the same has an end. I would like simply to point out to you that the count is not complete for all that. You can plait for as long as you like, provided you stick to a multiple of six, as long as you like, the plait in question will always be a Borromean knot. Already just by itself, this seems to open the door to an infinity of Borromean knots.

Infinity is a very important thing in knots. Cantor on infinite Series. Algebraic terms do not have an infinity

Well then this infinity, already realised virtually since you can conceive of it, this infinity is not limited to this. Such and such an example of it that I give you on the board in the shape of this way (one cannot say that the instruments are suitable, good...) in the shape of this way of inscribing it, namely, that you see that here [sketch 2], the buckle, as I might say, is double, and that if the Borromean knot is realised in a way that I had first traced out in such a way that it can be clearly seen, by pulling from here that this makes two. You can for that matter draw it by making come back here the buckle which you see has passed under one of the levels of my rings of string, and for each of the two to come back, it will do the circuit, of one of these rings, and will come back here to inscribe itself by crossing underneath the two buckles that are found here to be parallel because of the arrangement, and to give the shape in short of a cross. If you arrange the Borromean knot in this way – I hope I was... I made you imagine what this drawing could be. if you want me to trace it out. I

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will trace it out for you – it becomes entirely symmetrical, and it has the interest of presentifying for us in a different form the materialisation that it can give in this shape of symmetry, precisely (the symmetry, in two words, is it not: the symmetry from another side). Namely, to show us that there is a way of presenting the Borromean knot which, in its very tracing out, imposes on us the emergence of symmetry, namely, of the two.

He wants to give the notion of 'symmetry' as giving rise to the "2".

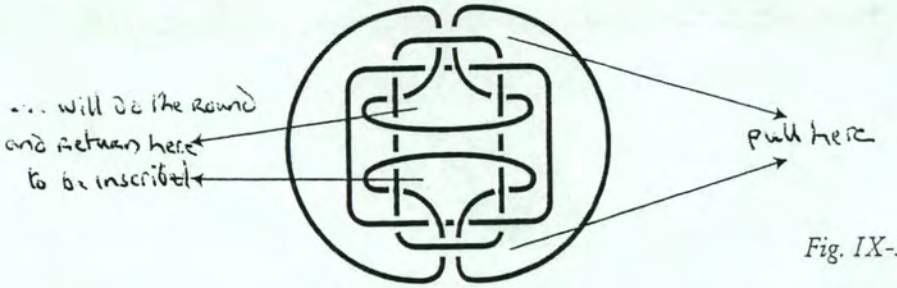

Fig. IX-3

(138) There was no need for us to go so far to notice it. Namely, that by simply, I would say 'pulling' on this part of the ring of string, you can easily imagine for yourself the result that it will give, namely, to fold in two this ring on the right [sketch 1]. Namely, to obtain this result which is presented as follows:

This loop over here brings you to infinity.

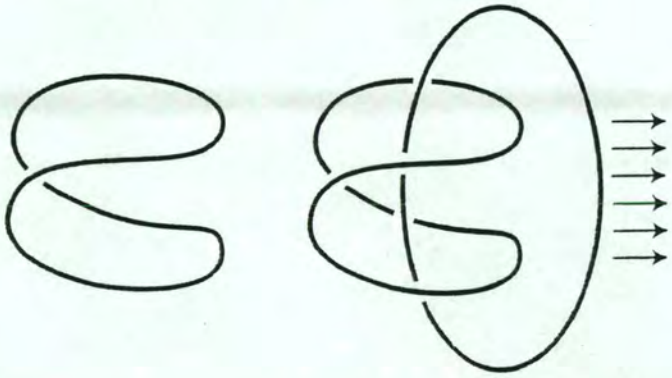

Fig. IX-4

As a result of which, you see that what results from it is the following: namely, that one of these rings pulls the knot folded in two, the buckle folded in two in this direction ⟶ while the other that you have there is presented in a manifest way, perhaps moreover less salient to

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your eyes, the particular thing which ensures that, you cannot unknot these knots of three but it is enough for one of them, any one at all of them to be missing for the two others to be free. It is even one of the clearest ways to image the fact that you can, if you pass your ring inside the knot that I am calling... of the buckle that I am calling 'the folded buckle', if you put through another buckle folded in the same way pass, you can knot an indefinite number of these rings of string, and it is enough for one to be broken, for one to be lacking, for one to be missing, for all the others to be free. As a result of which, as a result of which, what cannot but come to mind, is that, since you have added an indefinite number of times, they are folded knots taken up one into the other, you are not forced to end because you see here functioning, namely, a simple ring of string. You can buckle this complete circle in a way that makes... the thing to be closed by a folded circle. Namely, that if you had more than three of them, it would be quite easy for you to imagine that to close, it is with one of (139) these folded circles that you would bring about the closure. If you bring about the closure with three, what you obtain is in fact very precisely this result [sketch 2]. Namely, that starting from there you can produce this buckle, namely, that from the handling in three's of the Borromean knot – which as you see can function on a much greater number, from the handling in three's you give rise to this figure of which I told you that it presentified the symmetry in the Borromean knot itself. Namely, that it inscribes the two in it.

What must be underlined, before closing what we might call this 'depicted' demonstration, that we can describe as depicted, what should be underlined is the following. It is that to each of these rings of string – to call them such in the way that gives the best image – to each of these rings of string, you can give, by a sufficiently regular

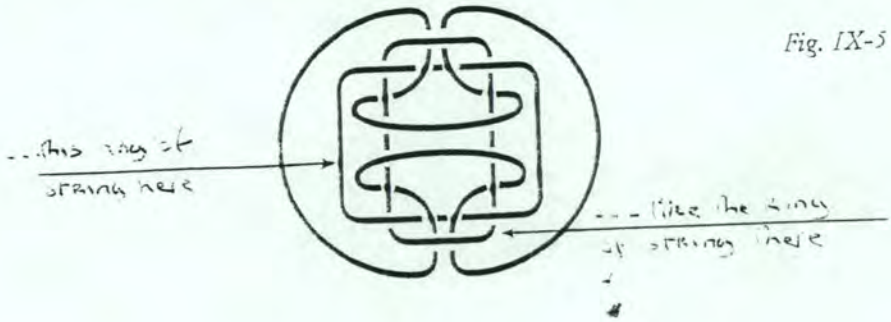

Fig. IX-5

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manipulation (you must not be surprised at the patience you will require) to each of these three, namely, as much to this ring of string here as to this ring of string there also, you can give exactly the same place which is the one that you see depicted here as the third.

What use do I make of this Borromean knot of three? It is of use to me, as I might say for inventing the rule of a game, in such a way that there can be figured by it the relationship of the Real very properly to what is involved in the Imaginary and the Symbolic. Namely, that the Real, like the Imaginary and the Symbolic, is what makes three of it. That makes three of it, and nothing more.

It is striking that up to now there is no example that there was ever a saying that posited the Real, not as that which is third, because that would be to say too much, but as that which, with the Imaginary and the Symbolic, makes three. That is not all... 'with the Imaginary and the Symbolic makes three'... that is not all! By this presentation what (140) I am trying to hook onto, is a structure such that the Real, by defining it in this way, in other words the Real of before the order, that nodality gives us this something which, by saying that it is before order in no way supposes a first, a second, a third. And as I have just underlined for you, not even a middle with two extremes. For even in the first form of the Borromean knot, the one that I... that I showed you allows there to be depicted as middle term knotting two extremes, this folded circle, that I am showing you here, even in this case any one at all of the three circles can play this role. Namely, that it is in

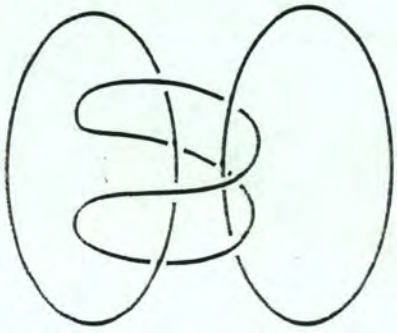

Fig. IX-6

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no way linked, except to make you imagine it, the figure on the left only being there in order to make accessible to you the fact, is that not so that there is a middle in the folded circle; but any one at all of the two others can fulfil the same function, the others then taking the position of extremes.

Where does this get us?

It is to be noted that if we interest ourselves in the 'two' – which is indeed the problem presentified by something which is truly, one can say, insistent in what the experience of the analytic discourse brings us, it is not for nothing that it introduces this two par excellence which is the love of one's own image, it is indeed the essence of symmetry itself; does this not introduce us, because of this knot, to this consideration that the Imaginary is not what is to be most recommended for finding the rule of the game of love. What experience tells us about it, if it is specifically marked by imaginary representation, since we have come, from the experience itself, to impose it on ourselves, we imagine that love is two. Is it all that (141) proved, other than by imaginary experience? Why would it not be this middle – as moreover is indicated by the fact that it is at the level of this middle that there is produced, this time, two times two, why should it not be this middle – which I have just underlined for you is moreover gyrowave (*gyrovague*) namely, vagabond, that it can just as well be fulfilled by any one of the three – why would it not be this middle which, by providing itself in a suspect way with this form, with this form of the image of itself – this middle which would deliver correctly thought out, namely, through the Real of these connections, the mainspring of these knots?

In other words, is the Borromean knot not the mode in which there is delivered to us the One of the ring of string as such, the fact on the other hand that there are three of these Ones, and that it is by being knotted, only by being knotted, that we get the two. There are many

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considerations into which I could stray, as I might say, because they would not yet circumscribe any more closely what I might call the first character of the three.

It is first, not in the sense that it would be the first to be first, because as everyone knows there is another which is described as such, but if the two is so described, it is in a quite singular way, since it is not in any way said, that one can accede to it starting from the One. If only because of the fact that – as has been noted for a long time – to say that one and one gives two, comes from the simple fact of the mark of addition, supposedly a reunion, namely, already the two.

In this sense the two is as one might say something of a vicious order, since it reposes only on its own supposition. To join ~~by one plus two~~ one is already to install the two.

But for the moment let us stick simply to the following, which is that what the Borromean knot illustrates for us, is that the two is only produced from the junction of the one to the three. Or more exactly, let us say that if one says that – as has been humorously done, that 'the number two rejoices at being odd', it is certainly not without reason that it rejoices – it would be wrong to rejoice at being odd, because if it were to rejoice for that reason, it would be a pity for it, it certainly is not so, but that it is engendered by the two odds one and three, is in short what the Borromean knot brings out for us, as I might say.

You should all the same clearly sense the relationship that this (142) lucubration has with our analytic experience. Freud is certainly a genius. He is a genius in that what analytic discourse brought out by his pen, is what I will call primitive terms (*des termes sauvages*). Read *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego* and very specifically the chapter on *Identification*, to grasp the quality of genius there is in the distinction that he formulates between three sorts of identification, namely, those that I denoted, when I highlighted them

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by the unary trait, by the *Einziger Zug*, and the way in which he distinguishes them from love in so far as carried to a term which, undoubtedly, is indeed the one that we must reach, namely, this function of the Other, in so far as it is given by the Father, and on the other hand, the other form, that of the identification described as hysterical, namely, from desire to desire, in so far as he distinguishes all three forms of this identification.

That presented in this way, it is only a knot of riddles, I will say: a further reason to work, namely, to try to give to this a shape that involves a more rigorous algorithm. This algorithm is precisely the one that I am trying to give in the three itself, in so far as this three, as such, makes a knot. This is obviously the reason, as I might say, the reason to work. But a reason which, as I might say does not fail to damage us, not because the rings of string is already a toric, or indeed a twisted figure, it is much more still from this very singular fact even mathematics has not yet managed to find the algorithm, the most simple algorithm, namely, the one that would allow us, in the presence, certainly of other forms of knots than that of the Borromean knot, to find this something that would deliver to us for the knots in so far as they involve more than one ring of string – because for a single ring of string, being knotted to itself, it has, this algorithm, I could easily, I already did it, put on the board for you the figure of something which would have more or less the same aspect as the central figure, and which would nevertheless only be a single ring of string (I say 'more or less' because obviously it would not be the same – for a single ring of string, it may know what is homomorphous; for several rings of string the algorithm has not been found. This is not nevertheless a reason to abandon a task which engages nothing other than this two which is what is most involved in this figure of love as I have just reminded you.

Annie has a seminar on Knots will veer on & on for a long time.

(143) Love – I hope that already you feel more at ease – love is thrilling (*passionant*). To say that, is to say simply the truth of

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experience, but to say it like that, seems to be nothing, but is all the same it is all the same to take a step. Because, for whoever has his ears a little open, it is not at all the same thing as to say that it is a "passion." First of all there are many cases where love is not a passion. I would even say more. I doubt whether it is ever a passion. I doubt it, my God, because of my experience. Because of my experience – it does not stem only from mine – I mean that my experience in the analytic discourse gives me enough material – for what? For me to be able to allow myself in short to do what I defined the last time as knowledge, namely, to invent it. Which in no way protects you, especially if you are in analysis with me, from supposing that I have this knowledge, as something that I am not supposed to invent. But if knowledge, even unconscious, is precisely what is invented to supply for something which is only perhaps the mystery of the two, one can see that there is all the same a step taken, in daring to say that if love is thrilling, it is not because it is passive. It is a saying which, as such, implies in itself a rule. Since to say that something is thrilling, well, is to speak about it, as a game, where one is only in short active starting from rules.

There are all the same some people who have noticed that for a long time. As regards everything that is said, there is someone called Wittgenstein, in particular, who distinguished himself at that.

So then, what I am putting forward, is that my formula there, 'love is thrilling', if I put it forward, it is as strictly true. Yes. Strictly true: it is all the same a long time since I since I emitted some reservations about this, namely, that strictly true is never more than half-true, that one can only ever half-say the truth. We will all the same have to manage, have to manage before the end of the year to formulate what that involves, and that I explain it for you later. It is the true – there is here all the same something that analytic experience can put us in contact with - yeah... the true has no other way of being able to be defined than that which in short brings it about that the body goes

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towards enjoyment, and that in this, what it is forced by, is nothing other than the principle, the principle by which sex is very specifically (144) linked to the death of the body. It is only among sexed beings that the body dies. And this forcing of reproduction, is indeed where the little bit of the true that we can state is of use.

I will even say more. Since it is death that is at stake – that is even why we never have more than the verisimilitude, since this death, the principle of the true, this death in the speaking being in so far as he speaks, is never anything more than a sham – death, truly, even though it confronts us, is not within reach of the true. Death pushes it. Even though it confronts us, even though we have to deal with death, it only happens with the Beautiful, and there it keeps its rendezvous.

I already demonstrated that at a time, at the time when I was doing the *Ethics of psychoanalysis*, and why does that keep its rendezvous? Because things being in a certain rotating order, it keeps its rendezvous in so far as it glorifies the body. There the principle of enjoyment, which is forced, is the fact of death, and everyone knows... that it is 'in the name of the body' that all of that happens, this indeed is what I formerly illustrated by the tragedy of *Antigone* and which curiously passed into Christian myth – because I do not know whether you have clearly perceived why there took place, this whole story this story of Christ who speaks of nothing but enjoyment: the lilies of the fields which neither weave nor sow – who traverses, for part, the myth affirms, traverses death. All of that when all is said and done has no goal, what we see, in a word, being spread out over kilometres of canvas, has no end than the production of glorious bodies about which one may ask what they are going to do throughout eternity, even if they are put in a ring in a circle of a theatre, what indeed they are going to be able to in contemplating something or other. It is all the same curious that it is along this path, this path not of the true, but of the Beautiful, that it is along this path that there was manifested for the first time the dogma of the divine Trinity. It must

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be said that it is a mystery! It is a mystery that... which has been approached, but, but not without a certain number of slippages. If in Aristotle's logic, the other day, I demonstrated for you the irruption of, of some theories or other of love – of some theories or other of love where there are very clearly distinguished love and enjoyment, this is already not bad, huh?

It is already not bad, but that only gives two, it does not at all give a trinity. But what is amusing to read in a treatise *On the Trinity* by a certain Richard de Saint Victor, the same unbelievable irruption, in fact, of the return of, of the return of love, of the Holy Spirit (145) considered as 'a little friend'. It is something that I would ask you to go to see in the text, in fact – I will get it out for you one day, I did not bring it along here this morning because, because I have enough to say today, but it is worthwhile, it is worthwhile touching that. How is it that it is by the Beautiful, that something which is there... the very truth, and what is more, what is true in the Real, namely, what I am trying to, to articulate this morning, like that, limping along: it is all the same quite curious. Yes.

In what way are the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real something which at least have the pretension, in short of going a little further than... than this going round in a circle of enjoyment, of the body and of death. Is there here something from which we might reach, reach better than what only... that what only appears to us as a signal, as a trace, I have just spoken of the True, of the Beautiful, in a way which in a word makes them function for us as middles (*moyens*) – I must deal with what is involved, what is involved in the Good.

In this business of the Borromean knot can the Good be situated somewhere? I tell you right away, there is very little chance, huh: if the True and the Beautiful did not hold up, I do not see how the Good would do any better. The only virtue that... that I see coming out of this questioning – and I am indicating it to you here while, while there

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is time, because it will no longer be seen – the only virtue, if... if there is no sexual relationship, as I state, is shame (*pudeur*). There you are, this indeed is why I ... I think it was a stroke of genius by the person who put a certain *atterrita* on the cover of my *Télévision*. It is a... it forms part of a theme in which the central personage, the one who gives its meaning to the whole picture, is, is a demon, in a word, who... was perfectly well recognised by the Ancients as being the demon of shame. He is not particularly funny, that is even why that the person, the *atterrita*, opens her arms in a kind of panic. Yes.

So then, the non-dupes err, is perhaps the unashamed (*non-pudes)* err. Which as a result is promising, huh, it is promising because since on the other hand I think that, in fact, we should expect nothing, absolutely no progress from anything... I said that like that, to someone who spat out this hay, very kindly, because it is a person who spat out, truly, strictly only the hay that I had put into his mouth. It is no worse than anything else. It is... it is my hay, is it not... So (146) then, this does not all the same mean that there are not things that change. I am in the process of questioning love. And I begin to read things, like that, which are a little approach, simply, I do not know how it can happen... I will perhaps say more about it... if the result of an extension of the psychoanalytic discourse, since after all I am doing no less than considering it, but as a canker! I mean that it can explode up a lot of things, if being well spoken is only governed by shame, well then, obligatorily, it shocks. It shocks but it does not violate shame...

So then let us try to question ourselves about what might happen if one made serious ground from the angle that... love is thrilling, but that this implies that one follows the rule of the game in it. Naturally, for that, it must be known. That is perhaps what is lacking: it is that people have always been here in the most profound ignorance, namely, that they play a game whose rules they do not know. So then

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To invent the knowledge of the form of love.

if this knowledge must be invented in order for there to be knowledge, it is perhaps for that that analytic discourse may be of use.

Only if it is true that what you win on the one hand you lose on the other, there is surely something that is going to suffer. It is not hard to find: what is going to suffer is enjoyment. Because, in short, enjoyment is not lacking to this thing that is pursued blindly under the name of love! It is there by the shovelful! What is marvellous is that nothing is known about it: but it is probably what is proper to enjoyment, precisely, that nothing can ever be known about it... What is all the same surprising, is that, that there has not been a discourse on enjoyment. People have spoken about whatever you want, about extended substance, about thinking substance, but the first idea which might come, namely, that if there is something by which the body can be defined, it is not life, since we only see life in bodies which are, after all, what? Things of the order of bacterias, of things which flourish like that, in fact, you quickly get three kilos when you start with a milligram... the fact is ... it is not easy to see what relationship there is between that and our body... But that the very definition of a body is that it is an enjoying substance, how is it that this has never yet been stated by anyone? It is the only thing outside a myth which is really accessible to experience. A body enjoys itself, it enjoys itself (147) well or badly, but it is clear that this enjoyment introduces it into a dialectic in which incontestably there must be other terms for it to hold up, namely, nothing less than this knot which I, which I am serving up to you in a sandwich.

That enjoyment may suffer when love becomes something a little civilised, namely, when people know that it is to be played as a game - in fact it is not sure that this will happen. It is not sure that it will happen, but it might all the same occur to you, as I might say. It might occur to you all the more in that there are little traces, like that. There is all the same a remark that I would really like to make to you, concerning the pertinence of this knot: it is that in love, what bodies

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tend towards – and there is something piquant that I am going to say to you afterwards – what bodies tend towards, is to knot themselves together. They do not manage to do so, naturally, because…you clearly see…what is extraordinary is that a body never manages to be knotted. There is not even a trace of a knot in the body! If there is something that struck me when I was doing anatomy it was indeed that: I was always expecting to see at least, like that, in a corner, an artery, or a nerve, which…which hoopla, would do that…Nothing! I never saw anything like it, and that is even why anatomy, I should tell you thrilled me (*m'a passioné*) for two years. That really pisses off people who do their medicine as forced labour, like that. Not me. Naturally, I did not notice right away, that that was why it thrilled me, I noticed it afterwards; you never know until afterwards. And it is absolutely certain that what I was looking for in dissecting, was to find a knot. Yeah.

Which is why this Borromean knot rejoins all the same the why of the fact that, that love, in fact, is not designed to be tackled by the Imaginary. Because the simple fact that when it is working out badly, is that not so, for want of knowing the rule of the game, it articulates the knots of love, huh…It is funny all the same that this remains as a metaphor, that it does not illuminate things, that it does not give the idea that, on the side of this thing whose strange consistency I have, I hope, like that, made you sense a little, and the fact that…that it is surprising in fact that the Real, when all is said and done, is only that, a matter of knots; in short all the rest can be dreamt about. God knows, the dream in fact has a place in the activity of the speaking being.

We would talk about "bonds of love"..

I am letting myself go a little bit, like that, like that by putting in parentheses – you will pardon me, because you usually pardon me – but it is all the same, it is all the same unbelievable that the power of the dream should have gone so far as to make a desire out of a corporal function, sleep. No one has yet, has ever highlighled that

the dream has made a desire out of sleep.

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something which is a rhythm – well, manifestly, because it exists among many other beings than speaking beings - the speaking being manages to make into a desire. He manages to pursue his dream as such, and because of that, to desire not to wake up. Naturally there is a moment where it lets go. But that Freud should have been able to go that far is something whose autonomy, originality, no one has really highlighted. Good.

So let us come back to our metaphorical knots. Do you not sense that what I am trying to do, by having recourse to them, is to do something which would not involve any supposition. Because people have spend their time positing, but never being able to posit except by supposing. Namely, that people posited the body – that was required – and people supposed the soul in it. It would be all the same necessary - this is a thing, there, like that, that I brewed up, because of the level I was at in this *Telévision*, huh, to speak about the soul and the unconscious... the unconscious, might be something quite different to a 'supposed', since knowledge (if what I advanced about it the last time is true), it is not at all required, it is not at all required to suppose it: it is a knowledge in the course of construction.

If it happened, if it happened that love were to become a game whose... whose rules one knew, this would perhaps, have many disadvantages with regard to enjoyment. But this would reject it, as I might say, towards its conjoined term. And if this conjoined term is indeed what I am putting forward about the Real, for which, as you see, I am satisfied with this slender little support of the number (I did not say the figure (*chiffre*)), of the number three. If love, becoming a game of which one knows the rules, were to be found one day, since that it its function, at the end of the fact that it is one of the One's of these threes – if it functioned to conjoin the enjoyment of the Real with the Real of enjoyment, would that not be something to make the game worthwhile?

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The enjoyment of the Real has a meaning, huh. If there is somewhere an enjoyment of the Real as such, and if the Real is what I am saying, namely, to begin with the number three – and you know that it is not to the three that I hold huh: adding 1416 to it would still give the same (149) number, huh, for what I use it for, and you could also write 2718, it is a particular Napierian logarithm, that plays the same role – the only people who enjoy this Real, are the mathematicians. So then it would be necessary for the mathematicians to pass under the yoke of the game of love, that they should state something about it to us, that they should do a little more work on the Borromean knot – because I should admit to you, in fact, I am really embarrassed, more than you can believe; I spend my days making Borromean knots, while it is... there, like that, I knit.

Only there you are, the enjoyment of the Real does not work without the Real of enjoyment. Because for one to be knotted to the other, the other must be knotted to the one. And the Real of enjoyment, is stated. But what meaning can be given to this term: the Real of enjoyment?

This is where I am leaving you for today, with a question mark.

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Lacan is trying to correct the belief that he has downgraded the Imaginary in favour of the Symbolic. He does not agree

Seminar 10: Tuesday 19 March 1974

Whatever I may say – I say 'I', in quotes, because I sup-pose myself in this saying (*ce dire*), of which nevertheless there is the fact that it is in my voice – whatever I may say is going to give rise to two aspects: a good and a bad. This is precisely because people attribute it to me wanting the Imaginary to be excrement, muck, a bad thing, and that what is supposed to be good is the Symbolic. Here I am again then formulating an ethics. It is the misunderstanding of this that I want to dissipate because this year I am taking you forward from this structure of the knot, in which I put the emphasis on the following: that it is from the three that the Real is introduced into it.

All of this does not ~~prevent~~ STOP this knot itself ~~is~~ BEING singular, if what I put forward the last time is true (inform yourselves among mathematicians), namely, that this so simple knot, ~~this knot of three~~, the algorithm, namely, what would allow there to be brought to it what the Symbolic culminates in, namely, the demonstration, the articulation in terms of truth, if we are reduced to affirming our failure with regard to this algorithm, our failure to establish it, to handle it. Hence the result that at least until further notice, these knots – these knots whose writing I was able to produce, I did it for you the last time, in more than one form – you are reduced, on the basis of this writing, to imagine it in space. It has even got to the point that if what I can make in the simplest form, these projected knots as I am going to show you, stem from the fact that here what I am drawing for you, is

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something that you can imagine. Namely, how this third buckle, by (152) establishing itself from a trajectory [that of?] these two independent knots, as you see, namely, imagine from these two independent knots, made by this triple knot, that I call the Borromean knot, this thing which thus represented can be imagined by you in space, you can see, just as well as any other way in which I might have written this knot – you can note that it also is a writing: namely, that by effacing one, I can calculate that the two others are free, I mean any one whatsoever. That what constitutes the Imaginary, in the way in which you can sense here that in the space they are held, that this itself is writing, because it is enough for you to efface one of them to be able to spot that the two others are free, on the simple condition that they cut one another in a particular way which for its part is nameable from the following: namely, that the above and the below form two couples, two matching couples from the fact that the two above follow one another, and that the two beneath are not on the same line. I mean that they succeed one another with respect to the two above, that there is a trick (*tour*) which means that, to demonstrate that two of these circles are free, it is enough that there should be two above which follow one another, then two below which come afterwards – I said: on the same line – I probably made an error earlier in saying that they are not on the same line. That was a slip.

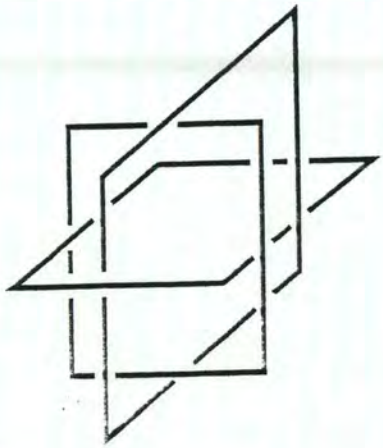

Fig. X-1

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The enigma of writing, of writing *qua* flattened out, is there: it is that moreover, by tracing out what is essentially of the order of the imaginable, namely, this projection into space, it is still a writing that I (153) am producing, namely, what can be stated, stated from the simplest algorithm here, namely, a succession.

This squeezing, namely, that by imagining it, you rediscover the idea of the norm, that the norm is imaginable once there is the support of an image, and that here we are always led to privilege one of them, an imagination of what makes a good shape; a curious relapse, why is the shape is described as 'good'? Because after all why should it not have been called simply what it is, namely, beautiful? We slip again, with the ancient *kalos kagathos* into this ambiguity, which for its part, proves at this date, at the date when that was how the Greeks expressed themselves, and that when all is said and done, we still find the title of nobility, the antiquity of the family, which, as you know, can always be found by the genealogist, for any imbecile whatsoever and also then for any imbecility whatsoever.

I do not see why I would prevent myself from imagining anything whatsoever, if this imagining is the right one, and that what I am putting forward, is that the right one can only be certified by being able to be demonstrated, ~~be demonstrated~~ in the Symbolic, which means entitling it Symbolic, by a certain dislocation of *lalangue*, in so far as it gives access to what? To the unconscious.

The Imaginary remains nonetheless what it is, namely, precious (*d'or*), and this is to be understood as, it sleeps (*il dort*). It sleeps, as I might say, *au naturel*. This in the measure that I do not especially awaken it, on the point of previous ethics. Too careful as I am of this. of this ethics, specifically, from which I would like to break, that precisely of the Good. But how can this be done if to wake up, is, on this occasion, to fall asleep again, if in the Imaginary, there is something that requires the subject to sleep?

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Dreaming (*rêver*) does not simply have, in *lalangue*, the *lalangue* that I make use of, this astonishing property of structuring the awakening (*réveil*). It also structures the revolution, and the revolution, if we understand it carefully, is stronger than the dream. Sometimes, it is falling asleep again, but in a cataleptic way. I have to manage to promote, to make there enter for you into your cogitations the fact that the Imaginary is the prevalence given to a need of the body, which is to sleep. It is not that the body, the body of the speaking being, needs more sleep than other animals - without our still being able to know moreover how to give a sign of it - than the other (154) animals, who, for their part, function with sleep. The function of sleep, of hypnosis, in the speaking being, only takes on this prevalence of which I spoke to identify it to the Imaginary itself, only takes on this prevalence from the effects of this nodality, of this nodality which only knots, only knots the Symbolic to the Imaginary – but in fact you could put here any other couple of the three – only knots them from the agency, the agency of the three in so far as I make it that of the Real.

If then I wake you up to what all the same our ancient *kalos kagathos* allows us to date the formula in Aristotle's Sovereign Good. When I did the *Ethics of psychoanalysis*, it was to the *Nicomachean Ethics* that I referred, referred to as a starting point. But I was careful on this point not to wake up, because if I wake people up to the manifest Imaginary of this Sovereign Good, what are they not going to imagine? Not that there is no Good, which would take them a little bit too far for their own well-being, but that there is no sovereign, as a result of which, the effective sovereign, the one who knows how to use the knot, finds his satisfaction because it is by this, because it is by this that sleep makes itself desired by those, enough by those, for it to encounter among them the complicity of the dream, namely, the desire that it will continue to sleep well. It is appropriate then that every

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statement should take care precisely in that it *rêve*-olutionises by maintaining the reign of what he wakes up to.

A little parenthesis, since moreover this is not easy to comprehend as a motive of this discourse in which I find myself caught up, due to the fact of being its subject by my experience, the experience described as analytic.

Naturally, there are those who, in order that this experience should not put them up against it, do not expose themselves to it as such, but have all the same a suspicion of something that makes them itch. Those simply afflicted by the itch have not much imagination. When they smell something about the consequences of my discourse, they dig up some biographical feature, for example, the fact that I frequented the Surrealists and that my discourse bears the trace of it. It is all the same curious that I never collaborated with these aforesaid Surrealists. If I had said what I was thinking, namely, that with language, I mean, by making use of it, what they demolished, was the Imaginary, what would have happened! I would perhaps have woken them up. Woken them up with a start to the fact that I would have been found to have well and truly said, the fact is that between the one and the other of the (155) Imaginary and the Symbolic whose existence precisely they did not suspect, they re-established order.

Can I get you to understand that the fate of the speaking being, is that he cannot say, that he cannot even say: 'I slept well', namely, a deep sleep, 'I slept well between this and that time', for the simple reason that he knows nothing about it, his dreams framing this deep sleep having consisted in the desire to sleep. It is only on the outside, namely, when he is submitted to the observation of an electroencephalogram, for example, that it can be said, that effectively between such a time and such a time, the sleep was deep, namely, not inhabited by dreams, these dreams that I say are the tissue of the Imaginary, that they are the tissue of the Imaginary in so far as it is by

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being caught up in the knot, this Real, that his need, his principal need becomes this elective function: the function of sleeping.

Is this passage of the Imaginary through the sieve of the Symbolic enough to give, to state the first, that of the Imaginary, the stamp of 'Good', fit to serve. To serve what? I do not believe I am forcing things in asking this question, because it must indeed be said, no one has ever approached this question without giving rise from some angle to an idea of sovereignty, namely, of subordination. It is true that the Good can only be called sovereign. Do you not sense that here is where there is exposed something like an infirmity – I am appealing to those who, have a wide awake Imaginary, on condition that this does not support among them any hope, because it is altogether understood that I am not saying, for my part, anything of the kind, but that I am not saying the contrary either: namely, that the Good is sovereign. So that in our day my saying operates in the aforesaid Imaginary, certainly, but it is not how it attacks it. It simply says that the Imaginary, is that by which the body ceases to say anything worthwhile by being written differently than: 'I slept from such a time to such a time.'

All this changes nothing in the fact that it makes us itch. The truth makes us itch, even those - without believing in it too much – that I call the rabblement, because, when all is said and done, it is enough for the truth to itch for it to touch the true from some angle. Say anything at all, it will always touch the true. If it does not touch yours, why would it not touch mine? Here is the principle of the analytic discourse, and that is why I said somewhere – and to someone (156) who, faith, produced a very nice little book on transference, someone called Michel Neyraut – I told him that by beginning as he did by what he called 'counter-transference', if by this he means the way in which the truth touches the analyst himself, he is surely on the right path, since after all, this is where the true takes on its primary importance, and that, as I have pointed out for a long time, there is

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only one transference, that of the analyst, since after all he is the subject supposed to knowledge. He should clearly know what to stick to in this regard, in his relationship to knowledge, the point to which he is ruled by the unconscious structure that separates him, from this knowledge, which separates him from it even though he knows something about it, and I underline, as much by the test that he made of it in his own analysis as by what my saying can convey to him about it.

Does this mean, does this mean that transference is the entry of the truth? It is the entry of something which is the truth, but the truth of which precisely transference is the discovery, the truth of love.

This is worth noting. The knowledge of the unconscious, the knowledge of the unconscious was revealed, was constructed, this indeed is the value of this little book, it is its only value moreover, but this makes it worth buying, the truth of the unconscious, namely, the revelation of the unconscious as knowledge, this revelation of the unconscious was made in such a way that the truth of love, namely, the transference, only irrupted into it. It came secondarily. And people have never clearly known to bring it back in, except in the form of misunderstanding, of the unexpected thing, the thing we do not know what to do with, except to say that it must be reduced, indeed even liquidated. This remark just by itself justifies a little book knowing how to highlight it, because moreover one must be penetrated by the fact that from experience, from analytic experience, the transference is what it expels, it is what it cannot tolerate without getting very bad stomach pains from it.

If love passes here along this narrow defile of what causes it, and by that fact reveals what is involved in its veritable nature, here there is, is there not here something which makes it worthwhile repeating the question about it? Because it is difficult not to admit that love holds a place, even if up to now we have been reduced, as they say, to paying our respects to it. We discharge our obligations with regard to love.

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we pay our contribution to it, anyway, we try by every means, to allow it to distance itself, to hold itself satisfied.

How then tackle it? I promised at Rome, to give a lecture some day or other on love and logic. It was indeed in preparing it that I became (157) aware of the enormity, in short, of what my discourse supports. For it appeared to me that there was almost nothing in the past to account for it in the slightest way. That is how I notice that when all is said and done, it is not for nothing that Freud, in what I quoted the last time, namely, what is entitled the *psychology* that is described precisely as being that *of the group* and the *analysis of the ego*, while signalling that there he contrasts (*confronte*) identification and love, and this without the slightest success, to try to make it acceptable that love participates in any way whatsoever in identification.

Simply, it is indicated there that love is concerned with what I isolate under the title of the Name of the Father. It is quite strange. The name of the father to which I made the ironic allusion that you know earlier, namely, that it is supposed to be related to the antiquity of the family, what does that mean? On this what does Oedipus, the aforesaid Oedipus teach us?

Well then, I do not think that this can be tackled head on. That is why, in what I proposed to say to you today, this no doubt in terms of an experience that had tired me out, I would like to show you how this name is minted, this name, this name that, that in few cases, we do not see in the least repressed. It is not enough to bear this name, for the one in whom the Other is incarnated, the Other as such, the Other with a capital O, the one I am saying, by whom the Other is incarnated, is only incarnated moreover, incarnates the voice, namely, the mother. The mother speaks, the mother through whom the word is transmitted, the mother, it must be clearly said, is reduced, to expressing this name by a no, precisely, the no the father says, which introduces us to the foundation of negation – is it the same negation which creates a circle in a world, which by defining some essence, an essence of a universal

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nature, in other words what is supported by the all – precisely rejects, rejects what? – outside the all, led by this fact to the fiction of a complement to the all, and makes all men respond: by this fact [...] what is non-man, do you not feel that there is a gap from this non-logic to the nay-saying (*dire-non*)? To the propositional nay-saying, I would say, in order to support it. Namely, what I make function, in my schemas of sexual identification, namely, that not all men can acknowledge themselves in their essence, namely in their phallic enjoyment, to call it by its name, that not all men manage to ground themselves on this exception of something, the father, in so far as propositionally, he says no to this essence. The defile, the defile of (158) the signifier through which there passes this exercise of this something which is love, is very specifically this name of the father, this name of the father which is only no at the level of saying, and which is cashed in on by the voice of the mother in the nay-saying of a certain number of interdictions. This in the case, the fortunate case, the one in which the mother is willing indeed to make some nods of her little head.

There is something whose incidence I would like to designate. Because it is an angle on the moment that we are living through in history. There is a history, even though it is not inevitably the one that we believed. What we are living through is very precisely the following: that curiously, the loss, the loss of what might be supported by the dimension of love, if it is indeed the one not that I am saying, I cannot say it, I cannot say it, for this name of the father, there is substituted a function which is none other than that of naming-to (*nommer-à*). To be named to something is what is highlighted in an order which is effectively being substituted for the name of the father. Except for the fact that here, the mother all by herself is generally enough to designate its project, to trace it out, to indicate its path.

If I defined the desire of man as being the desire of the Other, it is indeed here that this is designated in experience. And even in the

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cases where, like that, by chance, in fact, it happens that by an accident she is no longer there, it is all the same she, she, her desire, that designates to her kid this project that is expressed by the naming-to. To be named-to something, is what, for us, at this point of history we are at, is found to be preferred – I mean effectively preferred, to go before – what is involved in the name of the father.

Very devastating. This new order means that we have a return of the Name of the father in the Real (+ not symbolic in the sense here of society. It's mad.

It is quite strange that here, the social should take on the prevalence of a knot, and which literally makes up the fabric of so many existences, the fact is that it holds this power of naming-to to the point that after all, there is restored an order, an order which is an iron one. What is this trace, this trace designated, as return of the name of the father in the Real, in so far precisely as the name of the father is *verworfen*, foreclosed, rejected, and in this capacity it designates whether this foreclosure which I said is the principle of madness itself, is this naming-to not, is this naming-to not the sign of a catastrophic degeneration?

To explain it, I must give its full meaning to what I designated by the term that I write as 'ek-sistence'. If something ek-sists with respect to something, it is very precisely because of not being coupled to it, of (159) being thirded (*troisé*), if you will allow me this neologism. The form of the knot, since moreover the knot is nothing other than this form, namely, imaginable, is it not here that the imaginable is designated as not being able to be thought? Thought, namely, put in order, rooted not simply in the impossible, but in the impossible in so far as it is demonstrated as such; nothing is demonstrated by this knot, but simply shown. To show what is meant by ek-sistence, of a ring of string to make myself understood, a ring of string in so far as it is only on it that there reposes the knot of what otherwise remains mad. Explanation having no grip on the inexplicable.

Is it not here that we ought to search in what possesses us, possesses us as subjects, which is nothing other than a desire, and what is more the desire of the Other, a desire by which we are alienated from the

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start, is it not here that there ought to be brought to bear - namely, in this phenomenon, this apparition to our experience, that as subjects, it is not simply not having any essence, except to be squeezed, *squeezés* in a certain knot, but moreover as subject, supposed subject of what squeezes this knot – as subject it is not simply essence that we lack, namely, being, it is besides that there ek-sists for us everything that constitutes a knot. But to say that all of this ek-sists us does not mean for all that that we exist in it in any way. It is in the knot itself that there resides everything that for us is only when all is said and done pathetic, which Kant rejected as if anticipating our ethics, namely, by the fact that nothing of what we suffer can in any way direct us towards our good. This indeed is something that must be understood some way or other as a prodrome, as a prodrome I dare say, and that is why I once wrote *Kant with Sade*, as a prodrome of what effectively constitutes our passion, namely, that we no longer have any kind, any kind of idea of what might trace out for us the path of the Good.

At the moment that that path peters our, at the moment when Kant made the gesture of this slender recourse, of this tiny link with what Aristotle had established as the order of the world, what are the arguments that he puts forward? To make the dimension of duty sensed, what does he put forward? What he puts forward is supposedly that a lover close to obtaining success in his enjoyment would look twice at it if, in front of the hall door, a gibbet was already erected from which he was going to be hanged; and to oppose to this (160) that of course no one would ever risk such a thing - while it is on the contrary quite obvious that anyone at all is capable of doing it, simply if he wants to. So then what does he oppose to that? It is that – as if this were a sign of a superiority – it is that summoned by the tyrant to defame another subject, anyone would look twice at it before bearing false witness.

To which in my text, *Kant with Sade* – because I wrote very good things, things that no one understood anything about, of course, but

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that is simply because they are deaf – to which I opposed: but what if to put into the tyrant's hand the one the tyrant wants to get at, not a false but a true testimony sufficed! Which is enough of course to demolish all the systems because the truth, the truth is always for the tyrant. It is always true that one cannot tolerate the tyrant, and as a consequence, the tyrant always has reasons to get at the person he wants. What he needs is a semblance of truth. The angle, the angle from which Kant here makes the split, this angle is not the right one. Hence there results the formula which is separated out simply from these two terms between which Kant brings about the re-entry of practical reason, namely, moral duty, which is that the essence, the essence of what is at stake in the Good, is that the body forces its enjoyment, namely, curbs it and this simply in the name of death, of one's own death or the death of someone else, on this occasion, the one that he will imagine sparing. But once this formula is circumscribed, does not this reduce the Good to its correct import, is it not the case that outside these terms, these terms of which there are made the three, the three of the Real, in so far as the Real itself is three, namely, enjoyment, the body, death, in so far as they are knotted, as they are knotted only, of course, by this unverifiable impasse of sex, it is there indeed that there is conveyed the import (*la porte*) of this newly arrived discourse as regards which it is not for nothing that something should have necessitated it, the analytic discourse whose relay you will allow me to take up again on the 9th May, the 9th May the second Tuesday and not after that the third, but the fourth, which will not be then the one after Easter, the 16th April but that of the 23rd…….

The 9th April, not May, April!

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Seminar 11: Tuesday 9 April 1974

Good, today... - what's happening? – today for reasons, like that, of personal choice, I am going to start from a question, a question of course that I ask myself, believing at least that the answer is there – that's an old refrain, as you know – and this question is: what, what has Lacan here present, invented? You know that I put forward this word 'invented', I made it recognised by you, as I might say, apparently at least, by linking it to what necessitates it, namely, knowledge. Knowledge is invented, I said, which the history of science seems to me to testify to rather well. So then, what did I for my part, invent? This does not at all mean that, that I form part of the history of science, since my starting point is different, being that of analytic experience.

What? I will answer, because it is understood that I already have the answer – I will answer, like that, to get things going: the little **o**-object. It is obvious that I cannot add, the little **o**-object, for example. It, it can be touched immediately. It is not among Others that I invented the **o**-object, among Other things, as some people imagine. Because the **o**-object is solidary, is solidary at least at the (162) start, with the graph. You know perhaps what it is, I am not

Fig. XI-1

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even sure, but anyway it is something which has a shape like that, with two things that go across, there, and then in addition, that: I say that, because at the point that we are at it is necessary. From the graph, then, of which it is a determination and specifically at the point at which the question is asked: what is desire, if desire is the desire of the Other? Anyway, that is where it emerged. That does not mean of course, that it is not elsewhere. It is also elsewhere, it is also in the schema called the *schema L* and then it is also in the quadripodes of the discourses to which I believed I should give a place, in fact, some years ago. And then, who knows, perhaps there is a question of it being put at the place of the x in these already celebrated quantifying formulae that today I will call like that because when I woke up this morning I wrote some notes, that I will call of sexuation. And while I was at it, in taking these notes, the following came to me, something which, of which it is curious anyway that I never hear echoes, is that not so. I obviously, even, even in Rome where I made a little trip, I heard tell of these quantifying formulae, which proves already rather widely diffused. And I was asked questions, namely, whether these quantifying formulae, because there are four of them, might well be situated somewhere in a way that, that would correspond with the formulae of the four discourses. This is... this is not necessarily unfruitful, because what I am evoking, anyway, is that the small o comes at the place of the x in the formulae that I call 'quantifying formulae of sexuation'. Do I need to write them again, it would surely not be useless. I am recall that those marked by the are on the left, and are continued by four other formulae which are like that in a square, good.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \exists x \,.\, \overline{\Phi x} & \text{——} & \overline{\exists x} \,.\, \overline{\Phi x} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \forall x \,.\, \Phi x & \text{——} & \overline{\forall x} \,.\, \Phi x \end{array}$$

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Something might have come back to me about it if, of course, it did not require a little bit of trouble; but if there is something that I would like to point out to you, it is that these formulae described as quantifiers of sexuation could be expressed differently, and this would (163) perhaps allow progress to be made. I am going to tell you what is implied by it. It could be put like this: 'the sexed being is only authorised by him/herself'. It is in this sense that, that there is a choice, I mean that what one limits oneself to, in short, to classify them as male or female, to be officially registered, in short, this, this does not prevent there being a choice. This is something, of course, that everyone knows. He is only authorised by himself – and I would add: 'and by some others'.

What is the status of these others, on this occasion, if not that it is somewhere, I am not saying in the locus of the Other, it is somewhere that must be clearly situated, known, where my quantifying formulae of sexuation are written. Because I would even say that I am going rather far: if I had not written them, would it be just as true that the sexed being is only authorised by himself?

This appears difficult to dispute, given that people had not waited for me to write these formulae, these quantifying formulae of sexuation in order for there to be, in short, a serious handful of people who are labelled ... as is done, in short, who are labelled with homosexuality. Neither on one side nor on the other. It would then be undeniably true, except for the fact that, a curious thing, in fact, it seems, that even though this has been widespread from all time, that people have spent some time precisely in labelling with these terms that, as chance would have it are wrong, by this term of 'homosexual', for example. It is curious that, that I can say they are wrong. In fact, it is altogether wrong as a nomination. Well before, in short, people did not have these terms, in short, this was called, for example - anyway for one side - and the fact that they were distinguished in a serious fashion even to the extent of giving them a different place on the geographical

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map is already sufficiently indicative. These were called, for one side, sodomites: *Sumus enim sodomitae*, wrote a prince who, I believe, was himself from the Condé family: *Sumus enim sodomitae igne tantum perituri*. He said that to reassure his companions when they were crossing a river: nothing can happen to us, we are not going to be drowned since we are *igne tantum perituri*, we must perish only in fire, so we are safe. Good.

In the meantime, might it not have come into someone's head in my School that this balances my saying that the analyst is only authorised by himself? That does not mean for all that that he is all alone in (164) deciding it, as I have just pointed out to you, pointed out to you as regards what is involved in the sexed being. I will even say more, indeed, what I wrote in these formulae implies at least that, to make a man, there must at least be written somewhere the quantifying formula that I have just written there, and that there exists – it is a writing – that there exists, this x which says that it is not true, that it is not true, as a foundation for an exception (*comme fondement d'exception*), that it is not true that Φx namely, that what supports in writing the propositional function in which we can write what is involved in this choice of the sexed being, that it is not true that it holds up, that it always holds up, that even the condition for the choice to be made in a positive way, namely, that there should be something of the man, is that castration should be somewhere.

I am saying then that the analyst is authorised only by himself, which is something, in a word, so crushing, in a word, to think about, that if the analyst is something in the mode of... being named-to, to analysis, as I might say, to analysis in this form which means, well, an associate member, a titular member, some member or Other; everything that I tried like that with which I tried to make people laugh in a little article by marking the stages of what I called the Sufficiencies, the little Slippers, indeed the Blessed, to be named Blessed, is this not something that in itself might make you laugh a little? This made

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people laugh, but, but not very much, because at that time I wrote that, it only interested specialists, who for their part, scarcely laughed, of course, because they were in the system.

But this would imply all the same that this formula that I produced in an altogether pivotal *Proposal*, that this formula should receive the few complements, the few complements implied by the fact that if, assuredly one cannot be named to psychoanalysis, that does not mean that just anyone can enter into it like a rhinoceros into a china shop, namely, without taking account of the following. Which is that it must indeed be inscribed, that there must be inscribed what I expect from it being inscribed, because it is not like when I invent, like when I invent what presides over the choice of the sexed being. There, I cannot invent, I cannot invent for a reason that, that a group, that a group is Real. And even it is a Real that I cannot invent because of this fact that it is a Real that has newly emerged. Because as long as (165) there was not this analytic discourse, there was nothing of the psychoanalyst (*du psychanalyste*). This is why I announced that there is something of the psychoanalyst, of which for example, I, I was the testimony, but that does not mean for all that that there is a psychoanalyst. It is a properly hysterical perspective to say that there is at least one, for example; I am not at all on this slope, not being by nature in the position of the hysteric. I am not Socrates, for example. Where I situate myself in fact, we will eventually see, well, why not, but for today I do not need to say any more about it.

So there are things, there are things at the level of what emerges in terms of Real, in the form of a different functioning, of what? Of what is involved when all is said and done about letters, because letters, what is at stake is letters, this is what I wanted to put forward in my quadripodes. There can be a certain way in which a certain bond is established in a group, there can be something new and which only consists in a certain redistribution of letters. That I can invent.

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But the way of pursuing this new arrangement of letters in order to pinpoint in it a discourse, pre-supposes, pre-supposes a sequence, precisely, and why not, as I was asked, asked in Rome, when I was asked the question about what was the link between the four quantifying formulae of sexuation, what was their link with the formula – this is what was at stake – the formula of analytic discourse as I thought I should put it forward at first. To connect them up, this would be to give this development which would be made in a school, in mine, why not, with a little bit of luck, that in a school there would be articulated this function from which the choice of the analyst, the choice of being so, can only depend. Because while only being authorised by himself, he cannot but be authorised also by others. I am reducing myself to this minimum because, precisely, I am waiting for something to be invented, to be invented in the group without slipping into the old rut, the one from which it results that by reason of old habits, against which after all we are so little protected against that these are the very ones that form the basis of the discourse described as university, that one is named-to, to a title.

This pushes us, pushes us because I chose to be pushed there – but pushes you at the same time since you listen to me – to try to specify the link there is between the invention of knowledge and what is (166) written. It is quite clear that there is a link. It is a matter, of specifying this link. In Other words, to notice, to ask the question about what one can put one's finger on: where is there situated, where is writing situated? This indeed is what I have been trying to give you an indication of for a long time, by substituting, which I did very early, in sub-slipping as I might say, into the statement that I attempted to give about ... the *Function and field of speech and language*. I did not all the same entitle a certain article, like that, a pivotal writing, I did not entitle it *The agency of the signifier in the unconscious*, I entitled it *The agency of the letter* and it is around letters, as you remember perhaps a bit, in short, like that, in the mist, that S, S_1, S_2, etc. over s, over small s. Anyway, it is all that, all this

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implying a certain relation that I pinpointed as being that of metaphor, another one of metonymy, it is around that that I made turn a certain number of proposals that can be considered as a forcing, I mean as giving a certain agency not of the letter, but of linguistics. But I would point out to you that linguistics does not proceed any differently than the other sciences, namely, that it only proceeds from the agency of the letter, hence the agency of linguistics, passing by the letter, in short, to propose some remarks to those who practice analysis.

This does not prevent of course, because I believe that with time, well, is that not so, there are those Surrealists, is that not so, that I am pestered with. Anyway, when people want to write articles about me, these Surrealists, I knew one who still survived at that time, Tristan Tzara. I gave the *Agency of the letter* to him and of course, it meant nothing to him. Why? Because this indeed shows what I pointed out to you – you perhaps heard it – at my last seminar. What I pointed out to you, namely, that when all is said and done, with all this row, is that not so, they did not really know what they were at.

1896-1963. French writer. B. Romania, formulated the DADAIST MOVEMENT INITIALLY AS A PROTEST STATEMENT. HE MOVES TO PARIS IN 1921 & WORKS WITH ANDRÉ BRETON.

But that, that stemmed from the fact that, in short, they were poets, and as Plato pointed out a long time ago, it is not at all inevitable, it is even preferable that the poet does not know what he is doing. This is even, this is even what gives, this is what gives to what he does its primordial value. And before which one can truly, one can truly only bow one's head. I mean that if one can make a certain analogy, anyway a certain homology, let us say – but with for the word homo (167)the approximate meaning that I underlined for you earlier – a certain homology between, between what one has in terms of works, works of art, and what we pick up in analytic experience.

Interpreting art, is something that Freud always ruled out, always rejected. What is called, what is called the psychoanalysis of art, well, is still more to be ruled out than the famous psychology of art which is

PRIMORDIAL: ORIGINAL; OF, PERTAINING TO, EXISTING FROM THE BEGINNING.
HOMOLOGY: IS A SPECIFIC EXPLANATION OF SIMILARITY OF FORM SEEN IN THE BIOLOGICAL WORLD.

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a delusional notion. With art, we have to learn a lesson (*prendre de la graine*). Learn a lesson, learn a lesson for something else, namely,, for us, to make of it this third which is not yet classified, to make of it this something which, which leans on science on the one hand, which learns a lesson from of art on the other. And I will even go further, it can only be done in the expectation of having at the end to fail to find the answer.

What analytic experience testifies for us, is that we are dealing, I would say with untameable truths, with untameable truths that we... that we nevertheless have to bear witness to, as such. Are these the only ones that can allow us to define how, in science, what is involved in knowledge, in unconscious knowledge, how, in science, this may constitute what I will call an edge, namely, that by which science itself, as such, is, for want of a better word, I will say structured. If what I am putting forward to you corresponds to something, I mean that you waited long enough on me before I stated that there was no sexual relationship, that is what this means.

There again I underline that this does not go so far as to say that the little Real that we know, which is reduced to number, that the little Real that we know, if it is so little, this stems from the famous hole, to the fact that in the centre there is this *topos*, that one can only plug; that one can only plug with what? With the Imaginary. But that does not mean for all that that the little **o**-object, belongs to the Imaginary. It is a fact that it can be imagined, it can be imagined in whatever way one can, namely, with what is sucked, with what is shitted, with what constitutes the look, what tames the look, and then, and then the voice. It is I who have added to the list the two last in number, in any case certainly the last one in so far as it is imagined.

But the fact that it is imagined removes nothing from the import of the little **o**-object as *topos*, I mean, as what is *squeezed* to give an image of it. I have done nothing more to give an image of it which has only

TOPOS = A TYPE OF CATEGORY WHICH ALLOWS THE FORMATION OF ALL OF MATHEMATICS INSIDE OF IT.

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one advantage, which is that it is a written image, the one that I gave (168) in the Borromean knot. It is here that the little **o**-object is knotted. There are therefore two faces, here, to the little **o**-object, a face that is as Real as possible, simply by the fact that it is written. You see what I am trying to do, there, I am trying to situate writing for you, and it goes a long way to put it forward, as this edge of the Real, situated on this edge.

In order, because I must, in fact give you different fodder than this abstraction, as you would say, because precisely what is tangible here, is that this is not an abstraction. It is as hard as iron. It is not because a thing is not succulent that it is abstract. It is obviously amusing that I experience here the need, for you, the desire of man being the desire of the Other, that I experience here the need for you to have a little funny interlude, to point out to you that it is amusing, in fact, a thing, a little anecdotal sample that I am going to give you, is that not so. It is rather curious, for example, that knowledge, in so far as it is invented, happens like that, as I am going to tell you. When Galileo noticed, in short, some of his inventions, in fact, which completely upset knowledge about the celestial Real, he took care to note it, in the following form. He sent to some people a certain number of Latin couplets, no more, two lines, in which, through which he could in a way fix the date, and by taking a certain number of letters from three to three, for example, demonstrate that he had invented the thing that was impossible to swallow at his time, that he had already invented at such a date. I mean that it was indisputably inscribed by the very way in which he had made these couplets, whose content moreover does not matter, given that of course, one can in fact write anything whatsoever in this style, this does not matter to anyone, all that interests someone, when one receives a letter from a personage like Galileo, it is not what he wanted to say, it is that one has an autograph. And the way under what, in a way, we will call the apparent stupidity of these two lines, there was inscribed, in short, the date, the date of a particular thing, the thing that was at stake, namely, about the sky and

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the principle of the journeyings that it offers to our sight, is this not something that illustrates in a way that is certainly only amusing, but you have many other illustrations of it, since as I did it, I insisted with leaden feet, it is obvious that if logic is what I am saying, the science of the Real, and not something else, if precisely what is proper to logic, and *qua* science of the Real, is precisely to make of the truth (169) only an empty value, namely, exactly nothing at all, something about which you simply write that non-T is F, namely, that it is false, namely, that it is a way of treating the truth that has no kind of relationship with what we commonly call truth. This science of the Real, logic, cleared its way, could only clear its way from the moment when people had been able to sufficiently empty words of their meaning to substitute letters purely and simply for them. The letter is in a way inherent to this passage to the Real. Here it is amusing to be able to say that the writing was there to prove, to prove what, to prove the date of the invention. But in proving the date of the invention, it proves also the invention itself, the invention, is the written, and what we require in a mathematical logic, is very precisely the fact that nothing in the demonstration reposes on anything but a certain way of imposing on oneself a combinatorial perfectly determined by an interplay of letters.

Here I ask the question: is the anagram then, since this is what is at stake in the verses of Galileo, the anagram about which our dear Saussure racked his brains in private, is the anagram not simply here to prove that this is the nature of writing, even when people have not yet the idea of there being anything to prove. Is the anagram at the level that Saussure questioned himself about it, namely, at the level where in verses described as Saturnian, one can rediscover precisely the number of letters required to designate a god without there being anything in the heavens to help us to know whether it was the intention of the poet, to have riddled what he had to write, since the writing, already functioned, to have riddled it with a certain number of letters that ground the name of a god.

ANAGRAM = A WORD OR PHRASE FORMED BY TRANSPOSING THE LETTERS OF ANOTHER WORD OR PHRASE

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Can we not sense here that even when it is not supported by anything, by nothing to which we can bear witness, we must admit that it is the writing that supports it, that we have here, that we have here a sort of entity of the written. How will we express entity (*entité*), are we going to push it towards the side of being or towards the side of a particular being (*l'étant*), is it *ousia* or is it *on*? I think it would be better to abandon this direction.

And I am proposing something to you which is of interest because it goes in the same direction as what I have previously traced out; as was remarked, like that, by an old sage, at the time when people knew all the same already how to write what was required by language, is that not so, a road that ascends is the same as the one that descends, so (170) then, I could propose to you as a formula of writing, the knowledge supposed subject (*le savoir supposé sujet*). That there is something which attests that such a formula may have its function, it is in any case the best that I can find today to situate for you the function of writing, for this reason and that... to what our question about the entity of writing *ousia* or *on*, introduced us to, to situate the fact that it is defined above all by a certain function, by the place of the edge.

There you are. It is quite evident is it not, that as – I underlined it like that, incidentally because I spend my time having it out with philosophers – it is quite evident that it is my kind of materialism. Yeah. I scarcely say it, I scarcely say it because I don't give a damn about materialism. This certain materialism, like that, which is always there, which consists in kissing the ass of matter in the name of the fact that it is supposed to be something more Real than the form, in short, that, of course, has already been cursed. It has been cursed starting from historical materialism which is strictly nothing Other than a resurgence of Bossuet's Providence. Yeah. In any case, this material of the written, in short, of the supposed written, like that,

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OF THE DIVINE RIGHT WAS FINALLY OVERTHROWN
IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

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because it is the little new, in short, would deserve to have its dugs pulled a little, in order to come back to our fundamental little **o**-object. Let it be exploited a little, at least for a while, huh.

For this exploitation to become possible is that not so, it is… that means precisely, if you translate modality as I have taught you, that means that it ceases to be written, and not at all the contrary. This must cease to be written for it to prove something. Namely, that it does not cease starting up again. But precisely here is this scansion of which I am trying, of which I am trying to give you an idea. It is a scansion which is curious. Because the pulsation that it implies, namely, what everyone knows, only the possible can be necessary, namely, what I situate by the 'ceasing to be written', is precisely something which does not cease to be repeated, which is here something that we have been clearly able to touch, is that not so, in this function of repetition produced with such genius by Freud.

This is a fundamental thing and I am trying to approach it here for you, to approach it in this sense that this establishes a time two (*un temps deux*). Far from making time linear, this establishes a time two as altogether fundamental. And I would even go as far as to ask the (171) question of those who might be able to say a little bit about it to me, and I would be very amused if someone were to reply to me, on this point. The fact is that in taking a set of dimensions, set not supposing anything cardinal, but let us say a finite set – how determine on this set of dimensions, why not imagine the dimension as I define it, namely, there where the saying is situated, how arrive at formulating the fact that if we start from the idea that the function of two, two dimensions are situated there on one side of the surface, but from 'to cease' and 'to non-cease' as I have just said to you, is there not here something which gives very exactly the import of writing? In Other words, on a set of dimensions, that we will not determine in advance, how find what acts as surface-function and which at the same time according to my saying would make a time-function?

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Which is in any case very close, very close to the knot that I am suggesting to you.

I formerly risked producing something called *Logical time*. And it is curious that I put a second time in it, the time to comprehend, the time to comprehend what is there to be comprehended. It is the only thing in this form that I made as refined as possible, it was the only thing that had to be comprehended. The fact is that the time to comprehend does not work if there are not three. Namely, what I called the instant of seeing, then the thing to comprehend, and then the moment to conclude. To conclude, as I believe I sufficiently suggested in this article, to conclude wrongly. Otherwise, if there are not these three, there is nothing to justify what manifests with clarity the two, namely, this scansion that I described, which is that of an arrest, of a ceasing and of a re-departure. Thanks to which it is obvious that these are the only convincing movements, which are valid as proof, is that not so, when the three characters for whom as you know it is a matter of them getting out of prison, as it happens, it is only subsequent to these scansions that they can make them function as proof, namely, do what they are asked, not simply that they should have got out, which is a quite natural movement, but what they are identical to, namely, each one strictly to the two Others. They have the same, the same black or white ring on their backs. They cannot, which is what is asked of them, give an explanation for it unless from the fact that they have all performed the same ballet to get out. That is the only explanation.

It is a way which is altogether, well, altogether charming, is that not so, to explain something which is furthermore quite obvious. The fact is that this does not involve any kind of identity of nature among them, that the illustration, the commentary in the margin that I give of it, namely, that it is like that that people imagine some universality or other. There is no trace of it in this apologue – since we are dealing with an apologue – there is no trace in this apologue of the slightest relationship between the prisoners since precisely this is what is

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prohibited to them: namely, to communicate among themselves. They are simply, identifying themselves or distinguishing themselves by having or not having a white disk or a black disc on their backs. I apologise for being so long for people who have never opened the *Ecrits*, there must be many here in this situation, of course. To define then what in a set of dimensions, constitutes at the same time surface and time, this is what I am proposing to you as a follow up, good God, as a follow-up, to what I propose to you about *logical time* in my *Ecrits*. Good. Yeah.

Am I, am I a bad judge when I answer that the little **o**-object was perhaps what I had invented... Perhaps, it is surely, in any case... no one invented it apart from me. Good. But I may be all the same be a bad judge. And that is why it is not unrelated to *ousia* like that, which I used like a rag earlier. The fact is that if my schema of analytic discourse is true, I must become this little **o**-object, this is what I have to make come to pass. It is not the 'I', in my case, namely, when I am in front of you. It is the small **o**. Yes, this place of no one (*personne*) is of course, as the name of person indicates, a place of rank to be held as semblance, is that not so. It is a matter of holding the role of the analyst. And this indeed is why I put forward a certain something, that is what is asked by the question which is always the same: 'Can I be it?' To authorise myself, might just about pass, huh, but to be it is a different matter. It is here that obviously, there is forged what I stated with the verb *désêtre*. I 'un-am' the analyst; the little **o**-object has no being.

I insisted sufficiently, is that not so, I insisted sufficiently at one time on something that psychoanalysts exult in, is that not so, namely, this face, this support, this pathetic aspect of the little o-object when it takes on the form of a waste scrap. I insisted a lot on it, one day, I turned up like that at Bordeaux, and I explained to them that civilisation was a sewer, that there is strictly no other kind of trace of (173) it, and that it is all the same something quite strange, that we

SEMBLANCE:- 1. AN OUTWARD OR TOKEN APPEARANCE. "FOOLISH MEN MISTAKE TRANSITORY SEMBLANCE FOR ETERNAL FACT" (THOMAS CARLYLE).
2. A REPRESENTATION, A COPY.
3. THE BARREST TRACE, A HISTORY. NOT A SEMBLANCE OF TRUTH TO THE STORY.

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should turn our minds to it. Because as far as we know all the other animals that exist do not encumber the earth with their waste, while it is altogether singular that, that everything that man makes, always ends up as waste, is that not so. A single thing which preserves a little dignity, are the ruins, but get out of your shells, all the same, a little bit and you will notice the number of broken-down automobiles that are piled up in places, and you will notice that wherever you put your foot, you put your foot on something that – where people have tried in every possible way to recompress old rubbish in order not to be submerged by it, literally.

Yes... it is a whole business that! It is a whole business of organisation, is that not so. Of imaginary organisation, as one might say. To simulate, to simulate with the crowd, because it is the other face of what I earlier called the choice, the group, simulate with the crowd – and you always have to deal with that when you are assembling a group – to simulate with the crowd something that functions like a body. Yeah. Good. But anyway, this little **o**-object, all the same what is that... or what is the face of what interests you, not when I write it – because I write it as little as I can, I have too much of a sense of my responsibilities for me not to leave this writing its chance, its chance of ceasing, in order that, if it does not cease, it proves itself. But there, there when I am chatting, what interests you, about this little o of which I speak? There is something that may indeed come into my head, because it is like all the rest, huh, I invent as regards what is involved in knowledge, but as regards what is involved in the truth, I do not invent: the truth is brought to me, I have whole buckets of it.

And then, there is a chap who came to see me, I cannot say how long ago, and then I would not want him to recognise himself, he came to tell me that what he needed, was my voice! It was not for a vote (*voix*), huh, it was the voice. No, but it is a very serious question, for me, is it the voice – because it is quite obvious that there is something

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here. It is not a question of timbre, if the little o-object is what I am saying, we must not confuse the phonetic and the phoneme. The voice is defined by something Other than what is inscribed on a disc, and on a magnetic tape the way so many people entertain themselves, it is nothing to do with that. The voice can be strictly the scansion with which I tell you all of that. I am persuaded that there is here a source (174) of your gathering in this enclosure, a gathering that today is decent. There is something, like that, that is linked to… to the time that I spend in saying things, since the little **o**-object is linked to this dimension of time. It is completely distinct to what is involved in the saying.

The saying, is not the voice. And to be loved, since you love me, of course, to be loved for the one or for the other, is not at all the same, huh. The saying that the little **o**-object involves, in short, is all sorts of things that I even set down in writing, huh, *Subversion of the subject and dialectic of desire,* and so on and so forth. That is on a completely different path, is that not so, than the exhibition of the voice, namely, like that, of a pathetic testimony, make no mistake, is that not so, of it being squeezed in this whole affair.

On the other hand, the saying, the saying is not writing either. Yeah. Saying is not writing either, it is not enough to have something to say to be able, to be able to know a lot about it. It is a distinction, is that not so, that I would very much like for you to get into your little heads. Yes. Even about what is involved in the truth, is that not so, there is a place for knowledge. There is a place for knowledge in so far as there is question, at every instant, of inventing, is that not so, to reply to the tissue of contradictions of the truth, huh. And this indeed is why the first step to be taken, is to follow it in all its affectations. It is not simply a matter of the fact, is that not so, that the lie forms part of it. I insisted enough on that, is that not so. And it must be seen, in fact, what it is capable of making you do.

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The truth, my dear friends, leads to religion. You never understand anything about what I tell you about this thing because I seem to be sneering, is that not so, when I speak about it, about religion. But I am not sneering, I am grinding my teeth! It leads to religion, and to the true, as I already said. And since it is the true, that is precisely why there would be something to be got out of it for knowledge. Namely, to invent. Well then you are not equipped to do it, huh! And it is not tomorrow that you will get to the end of it. Because into all of that you put absolutely no seriousness. It is obvious, is it not, that those who invented the most beautiful things about knowledge – I name them, huh, it is an honours list, huh: Pascal, Leibniz, and Newton! Newton, in fact, do you Realise what Newton wrote about the Book of Daniel and about the Apocalypse of St. John! You have never looked at that, of course, because it is not in paperback, but I (175) regret it. I do not reproach you either for not having gone looking for it. There should be a paperback of that and one well translated. He had a cast-iron belief in religion. And the two Others... it seems to me that it is difficult to renounce what is obvious, huh. They talk of nothing but that. It is even the only thing that interests them.

When one... I must... when I think that I have to go looking in the middle of, a mountain of 'addresses to the curé of Paris', what Pascal wrote about the cycloid, for example, anyway which is the very type, is it not, of the step which meant that people invented, nothing less than integral calculus – do you imagine that integral calculus is nothing other than writing? The parabola from which it started - the parabola – I am talking about the parabola that is traced out, the parabola and then any Other lunule or thingamajig or yoke, whatsoever, in short, these are written things, it is only there that we touch what is involved in the Real. Good, these three were passionate about the true. The true about the true.

Cycloid: 1. RESEMBLING A CIRCLE

*LUNULE: A CRESCENT-SHAPED MARK OR ORGAN, -'HALF-MOON' OF FINGER-NAIL

MISSING Pages 18, 19, 20

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The path to take is to start up again. If you do not question in an appropriate way the true of the Trinity, well you are made, you are made like rats, like the rat man. It is obvious, it is obvious all the same that religion, anyway has its limits, all the same! Anyway, I have just come back from Italy, you understand, so I am, so I am swamped by bodies that stream down all the walls, in a word, there is nothing but that. There are enough pictures to stifle you, moreover it is altogether magnificent, but I do not see why I should say *proh pudor*! before this streaming of bodies. But anyway, this gives all the same its limit to the thing, it shows all the same that one is in the truth, and that one remains there, that one does not get out of it. What is required, what would be at stake, is to get out of the truth, there, indeed I do not see any other way except inventing, and to invent in the right way, in the analytic way, is that not so, it is to start up again, to go along entirely in this direction is that not so. Yes. Yes.

There is only one thing which is all the same quite annoying and on which I would like to end if you, if you don't mind. It is not by chance that it is among my pupils, a woman, she is made like that, she, good, well, produced like that a whole lot of chattering about the desire to know; it is certainly not from me that she got it...I never even, even suggested such a thing, huh. Yes. There is no shadow of a desire to know, apart from something about which I question myself (176) and about which I have nothing to tell you because I don't know anything about it, which is that there is mathematics, which cannot proceed, it seems to me, unless it is an effect of the unconscious, which do not produce the slightest desire, but it is all the same curious to see that mathematics continues. People imagine that there are among people of your kind, in short, namely, that the mathematicians, are – I think that there are perhaps not two of them in this room, I am talking about the true, the Really bitten: there is not the slightest desire to know. There is not the slightest desire to *invent* knowledge.

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Anyway, there is a desire to know attributed to the Other. One sees that. That is how there arises, anyway, the manifestations of complacency that the child gives in his 'whys'. Everything that he poses as a question, in fact, is designed to satisfy what he supposes the Other would want him to ask. Not all children, huh! Not all children, because I am going to do a little thing for you, I must from time to time give you a little something to get your teeth into, this thing attributed to the Other, is very often accompanied by a 'very little for me' (*très peu pour moi*). And 'very little for me', a 'very little for me' of which the child gives proof in this form to which I am sure you have not dreamt, but, as you know, I also learn something every day. I educate myself, I educate myself of course along the line of what I like, along the line of what I invent inevitably, but anyway I do not lack food. And if you knew as I know, is that not so, the degree to which what I already illustrated about anorexia nervosa by making this action state, for an action states: 'I eat nothing'.

But why do I eat nothing? That is something you have not asked yourselves, huh, but if you ask the anorexics, or rather if you let them come, I for my part have asked it, I have asked it because I was already in my little vein of invention on this subject, I asked it: so then what did they answer me? It is very clear: she was so preoccupied about knowing whether she was eating, that in order to discourage this knowledge, this knowledge like that, the desire to know, is that not so, just for that the kid would have let herself die of hunger! That is very important. This dimension of knowledge is very important, and also to notice that, that it is not desire that presides over knowledge, it is horror.

(177) Yes. You will tell me that, you will tell me that there are people who work, and who work like that to get the *agrégation*. But that, you understand, has nothing to do with the desire to know. That is a desire which is, which is as I might say, as always the desire of the Other, and I already explained that it is enough for the Other to desire for, of

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course, one to fall under its influence. The desire of man is the desire of the Other but the circuit is more or less complicated. There is the desire of the Other, which, which, which is communicated on an equal footing because it is already at sea in the Other, the subject.

There is the hysteric. The hysteric, is another affair, huh, I will have to take up my schema, is that not so, to show you the exact place held by knowledge, is that not so, for the hysteric. It is a knowledge, in short, that is particularly specified, is that not so, it is a knowledge from which, from which she picks up the thing. Yes. It is a knowledge that does not go very far. It is a knowledge which to stick to the origin - it is a knowledge which is very often, not produced by discourse, the desire of the Other, but palmed off, as one might say.

I mean that it can very well be that a person, in short, who, who had not the slightest desire to know anything about anything whatsoever, is that not so, noticed all the same that in society, the university discourse assures for those who know, a good place, and that it is palmed off on the young one, here, to the kid who is going to become hysterical, and precisely for that reason, that it is palmed off to her that it is a means to power. Naturally, she receives the thing, for her part, without knowing that that is why, she receives it when she is very young, and there, it is a rather frequent case of transmission, in fact, is that not so of the desire to, of the desire to know, but it is something that is acquired altogether secondarily. In other words, what I am trying to get into your head and in connection with this experience, with this experience of the child, who naturally speaks to you about these 'whys', and these 'whys' which concern: Why this, why are children born, how is that done, etc., and all they want is, it is to hear something which, which gives pleasure, which, to show that, who, that they do everything as if they were interested in it. But as soon as they know it, they repress it, as you know well, and they repress it immediately, in fact, they think no more about it, in fact. You should all the same have an idea that is a little clearer about what

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(178) is really happening. This desire to know, in so far as it takes on a substance, takes on the substance of the social group.

In truth, I will not go so far as to be satisfied with this answer as regards mathematical invention, is that not so. It is quite clear that there are people bitten by that, is that not so, I mean that solving the problem of the cycloid was not a way of promoting oneself at the Sorbonne. There was, like that, in fact a miraculous time, a time that that I would like to see being reproduced, is that not so in the form of psychoanalysts, I would like to see being reproduced in them this kind of Republic, is that not so, which meant that Pascal corresponded with Fermat, with Roberval, with Carcavi, with a whole pile of people, is that not so who were all interrelated with one another, in fact, in order that something or other should happen. This indeed is what I would want one day to draw out of the story, something or Other happened which ensured that there were people who wanted to know more about the most unlikely things, is that not so, who drew for themselves like that the cycloid. You know what it is, is that not so, whether it is a circle, a little wheel that turns around another one, you can see what that can give, that gives, I don't know, something like that which is called cardioid, which you can believe, at that moment, did not confer anything, with any Lord, is that not so, that made their reputation. In fact their thing was strictly among themselves, is that not so, they did not go outside that.

Naturally, from there, there has come your television, this television thanks to which you are definitively stupefied, good, good but anyway, they did not do it for that, they provided for the little **o**-object – of course, but precisely it was without knowing it, but they had all the same, in a word, all the better realised that the object was the little o-object, namely, what you are stifled by, is that not so. They realised it all the more in that without knowing where they were going, they passed by the structure, by the structure that I told you, namely, this edge of the Real.

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ALL STUDIED THE CYCLOID.
- MENTIONED IN MOBY DICK.

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12, 13, 14. + 15. Hoff

Seminar 12: Tuesday 23 April 1974

Good, I am going first of all, by beginning three minutes before the time, I am going first of all to fulfil a duty that I did not carry out the last time. I did not do so, because I believed it would happen all by itself, but since even in my School, I saw that no one had taken this step, I am encouraged to urge others to take it. A book has just appeared in the *Champ Freudien*, as they say, huh, it is a collection which, as it happens, I direct. If it has appeared in this collection, I am obviously not uninvolved, I even had to force it into it. This book is called – this is a title – this one is worth as much as any other – is called: *L'Amour du Censeur*. It is by someone called Pierre Legendre, who happens to be a professor in the Law Faculty. There you are. So then, I strongly encourage those who, I do not really know why, indeed, are gathered together here around what I am saying, I strongly encourage them to get to know it, namely, to read it, to read it with a little attention because they will learn something from it.

There you are. With that, I begin.

I begin, or rather I begin again. This is what most astonishes me. Namely, that I have the opportunity each time to notice that if I spoke of hope in certain terms, in connection with a Kantian question that I was asked: 'whether I might...', 'what might I hope for'? And I had said that hope, I had retorted that hope was something proper to each (182) one. There is no common hope. It is quite useless to hope for a

Stuff on law in Nanterre outside Paris, not part of the University of Paris. about 10 yrs afterwards he wrote 2 books which we might look in the French legal system. The French legal system speaks "Lacanese" – it has taken over from psychology but the use in it has been psychologised. French legal system is Roman law & is inquisitorial & not adversarial.

re "Television" – one of the questions Miller asked him – what can one hope for?

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common hope. So then I, I am going to admit mine to you. It is the one that possesses me all week until the morning when I wake up with you in mind – namely, for example this very morning – until that moment, I, always have the hope that it will be the last time, that I will be able to say to you *n, i, ni*: finished. The fact that I am here, because the day when I say it, it will be before, it will before beginning, the fact that I am there proves to you that, however special this hope may be for me, it is disappointed.

Good, as a result of which, in waking up, I naturally thought of something quite different than, than what I had fomented to say to you. There arose in me like that, in short, that if there is – I already said it, in short, but I must repeat it – that if there is something which analysis has discovered the truth of, it is the love of knowledge. Since, at least if what I point out to you has some emphasis, an emphasis that moves you, transference reveals the truth of love and precisely in that it is addressed to what I stated as being the subject supposed to know. That may appear to you, after what I stated the last time, with I believe some emphasis, at least I imagine so, anyway I hope you remember it, not only did I put forward that there was no desire to know, but I even spoke about something which... that I effectively articulated about the horror of knowing. There you are.

So then, how connect that up, as I might say? Well precisely it is not connected up. It is the *Marriage of heaven to hell*. There is someone called William Blake, as you know, who at his time, at his epoch, with his with his own little material – which was not slight – who stirred up that: he even gave it exactly this title. There you are. So then perhaps what I am in the process of saying to you, is that the marriage in question is not quite what is believed. What is believed, in reading William Blake, precisely. Yeah. This only re-emphasises something that I told you elsewhere, something that our experience implies in any case, the analytic experience that I am only here to situate for you.

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What is a truth if not a complaint? At least this is what corresponds to what we charge ourselves with, as analysts, if in short there is something of the psychoanalyst, that we charge ourselves with gathering. We do not gather it all the same without noting that division marks it. Marks the truth. That perhaps not-all of it can be (183) said. There you are. It is our way (*voie*), the way people have been speaking about for a long time, huh. And if it is put first in a statement that, that I hope is finally making your ears ring, if it is put first – it is indeed because this is what is at stake first, even though the solutions that are put forward greatly differ among themselves. It is a matter of having a little idea of our own. And then immediately after, when one states this term, the way, immediately afterwards people talk about the truth which, if it is what I have just said, is something like a rotten plank, and then as a third, people dare, anyway someone, in any case, has dared, like that: someone called Saint John, he spoke about life. These are imprudent emissions. Emissions of what? Of the voice. Of the voice which is to be written quite differently: *v, o, i, x*, for these. They are imprudent emissions of the voice that state these couplings. You can note that this...that the coupling, on this occasion, goes in threes. And what is life on this occasion? It is indeed something which, which in this three, then, makes, makes, makes, makes a hole, huh. I do not know if you know what life is, huh, but it is all the same curious that, that it creates a problem. Life (*lavie*) that on this occasion I would write indeed as I did, as I did with *lalangue* in a single word. This would only be to suggest that, that we do not know much about it except that it needs washing (*elle s'lave*). It is almost the only tangible mark of what enters into life.

Anyway, these couplings, what am I suggesting here, starting from the experience that is defined as analytic, what am I suggesting here? Is it to think out these couplings? Yeah. If that were it, it would be in short, this kind of tipping over, which would mean falling into University discourse. That is where people think. Namely, where they fuck. Good, I am pointing out to you that in this discourse, I am

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not – like that, it is a little test, simply, it is not at all that I pride myself on it, I am not accepted, I am rather put up with, yes, tolerated – all that brings us back to the status, to the status of, of what I stated the last time, anyway, linked to our relationship, of you, of me, and that I put in suspense between the voice and the act of saying. I dare hope that the act of saying has a greater weight in it, even though this is what I might doubt, since this doubt is what I expressed the last time as such. If it is the act of saying, this is what I get from a codified experience.

I also stated – you see, in insist on repeating myself – I also stated the (184) following: what is required, in the sense of what is lacking, so that this codified experience is not, should not be within everybody's reach? It is not a question of the division of labour, namely, that everybody cannot spend their time analysing the rest. It is not within everybody's reach, due to a fact of... of structure about which I tried to recall the last time, or at least to indicate what I intended to connect it up with. It cannot be within everybody's reach to fulfil this office that I defined just now as gathering up the truth as a complaint.

What is the status of this marriage that I evoked just afterwards, by putting it under the patronage of William Blake? When I say that it is not within everybody's reach, that goes a long way, that implies that there are those for whom it is in short prohibited. And when I state things thus, I intend to set myself apart from what is involved in something, in something that Hegel advances somewhere, about this rejection, inscribed, he says, in what he calls 'the law of the heart', this rejection of the disorder of the world. Hegel shows that if that is done, it is easy. And he is quite right. It is not a matter of producing here the disorder of the world, it is a matter of reading the not-all in it. Is this a substitute for the idea of order? This is very specifically what, into what I am proposing today to advance, to advance; with this question left just now, of what pushes me. What pushes me to bear witness to it.

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What does this not-all consist in? It is obvious that it cannot be referred to what would make an all, to… to a harmonious world. So must the not-all be grasped somewhere in an element? An element which sins precisely by not being harmonised with it? Is it enough that, that everything in it should be won over – allow me here, to put it forward – to bifurcation, to the tree. Yeah. I would point out to you that here, as if nothing was happening, by asking you a question like that, this bifurcation, is also indeed what I have just made, a sign, a y, of something which is tangible, in short, with what we are clearing the way for: there is the tree, there is the vegetable, it makes up a branch, it is its mode of presence. And I do not see why I would not wade in there, into something which all the same is recommended to our attention, because it stems from writing, huh: the old *Urszene*, the primal scene, as it is inscribed in the Bible, at the beginning of the aforesaid *Genesis*. The tempter, huh. And then the fathead, is that not so, the one called Eve. And then the ass hole of all ass holes, is that not so, the first Adam? And then what circulates, there, the thing that gets stuck in his throat, the apple as it is called. And worse that's not (184) all, huh: there is the Grandaddy who turns up and then let's fly at them.

For my part, when I read that, I am not against it. I am not against it since it is full of meaning. This indeed is precisely what it must be cleansed of. Perhaps if… one scratched away all the meaning huh, one would have a chance of reaching the Real. This is even what I am in the process of teaching you. That it is not the meaning of the complaint that is important for us, it is what one might find beyond, as definable in terms of Real, yeah. Only to clean away the meaning, it must not be forgotten, because otherwise it turns into a shoot, huh, and in all of that there is something that is forgotten. And it is precisely the tree. What is outrageous is that it is not noticed is that it was what was forbidden. It was not the snake, it was not the apple, it was not the assholes, him or her: it was the tree that was not to be approached!

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And nobody thinks any more about it, it is admirable! But for its part, what does the tree think about it? Here I am making a leap, huh, because what does that mean, what does it think about it? That means nothing other than something that is in suspense, and this is very precisely what makes me suspend everything that can be said under the heading of life, of the life that is washed. Because despite the fact that the tree is not washed – that can be seen! – despite that, does the tree enjoy? It is a question that I would call essential. Not that there might be an essence outside the question: the question is the essence, there is no other essence than the question. Since there is no question without an answer, I have been dinning that into you for a long time, this means that the essence also depends on it, on the answer. Only there, it is missing. It is impossible to know whether the tree enjoys, even though it is no less certain that the tree is life. Yeah.

I apologise to you for having, like that, imagined that, imagined presenting that to you, like that, with the help of the Bible. The Bible does not frighten me. And I would even say more, I have a reason for that. It is because there are people like that who are formed by it, huh, they are generally called Jews. One cannot say that they have not thought about this thing, the Bible. I would even say more: everything proves, everything proves in their history [*to Madame Gloria Gonzales: Give me a cigar*...], everything proves in their history that they are not preoccupied by the way that they have talmudized, as they say, this Bible. Well then I must recognise that it has worked out well for them. And where do I put my finger on that? I put my finger on it from the fact, yes, that they have truly well (186) contributed, when it came within their reach, to this domain that interests me, even though it is not mine – mine in the sense of the domain of analysis – that they have truly contributed, with particular astuteness, to the domain of science. What does that mean? It is not they who invented it.

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The history of science started from a questioning about (put that in inverted commas, I beg you) about 'nature', about *phusis* – in connection with which Mr. Heidegger wriggles in convolutions. What was nature for the Greeks, he asks himself. They had an idea of nature. It must be said that the idea that they had of it - as the same Heidegger suggests – is completely lost. It is lost, lost, lost, lost. I do not see why one would regret it! Since it is lost, huh? Well then, it is not to be mourned all that much because we know even more about what it is. Yeah. We know even more about what it is because it is quite obvious that if science has succeeded, has succeeded in emerging, it does not appear, moreover, that the Jews put much of themselves into it at the beginning. It is subsequently, when the prize had been won, that they came to add their grain of salt, huh, and that it was noticed, that, it is clear, in short, what Einstein, by adding something to the great construction of Newton, that he is the one who takes things from the right angle. And then he is not the only one, there are others – that I will name for you when the occasion arises, but I cannot speak about everything at the same time, because they are to be found in profusion and then they are not all in the same quarter. What is certain is that, it is all the same striking that, that this blessed thing, written, was enough, the Scriptures par excellence, as they say! – that this was enough for them to enter into the thing the Greeks had prepared and prepared by something which is not to be distinguished from writing, from writing in so far as what specifies it, in short, is that it is possible to read it, that when it is read, it gives a saying (*un dire)* – an extraordinary saying, naturally, as I told you earlier about this scene that would make you collapse (*à la mords–moi le doigt*), a saying that would make you think you are sleepwalking - but a saying! It is quite clear that if the Talmud has a meaning it consists precisely in emptying this saying of its meaning, namely, of only studying the letter. And from this letter to induce absolutely crazy combinations, in the style of the equivalence of the letter and the number, for example, but it is all the same curious that this is what formed them.

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and that they find themselves up to date when they have to deal with science... Yeah!

(187) So then, that is what authorises me, I would say to do like them, not to consider as a forbidden field what I will call religious froth (*mousse*) to which I had recourse earlier. What I call 'froth', here, is quite simply the meaning! The meaning in connection with which I was trying precisely to carry out, to carry out a cleansing, by asking the question, the question about the tree: what is the tree? And what is it on a very precise point that I designated, because I do not remain up in the air: does it enjoy? Religious froth can then, in short, be also laboratory material! And why not, and why not make use of it because it comes to us with what I call, with what I call by making it entirely tip over to one side, what I call the truth, because of course, it is not the emptied out truth, huh, it is the truth like that flourishing.

There you are. I can all the same clearly indicate to you that it is not for nothing, in short, that there are Jewish biologists, huh. For my part, I have just read something of which moreover I will give you the title... I will give you the title, anyway, it is the book, there, *On sexuality and bacteria*. There is something that, that struck me, anyway, in reading this book which I read with passion from start to finish, because it was along my line, like that, the ~~short~~ is that if, the ~~short~~ is that if the amoeba, ehm... this little piece of filth, there, that you look at in the microscope, there, huh, and then which obviously wriggles, it eats things on you... it... good. It is certain that it enjoys! Well then as regards bacteria, I am questioning myself! Does bacteria enjoy? Well it's funny, huh, the only thing which can, in short, suggest the idea of it to us, is – I can all the same say that it is in Jacob that I discovered it, we must not exaggerate, I had heard like that a rumour... but in this Jacob, who moreover is on this occasion associated with someone called Wollman, what really fascinated me, huh, is that what is characteristic of the aforesaid bacteria is that there is nothing in the world like a bacteria for being infected. It is in a

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word that bacteria would contribute absolutely nothing to us if there were not the bacteriophage. And the link that is made by – that is made by: he does not make it, that emerges – but anyway it is certain that, the short that, as his name indicates Jacob is a Jew, is certainly not indifferent that his relationship, his relationship of accumulated, minute, swarming experiences in short, that his report about what happens between bacteria and the bacteriophage, that it is here that we may have the 'feeling', let us say that from infection, from its (188) infection with the bacteriophage, the bacteria eventually enjoys.

And if one looks at it very closely – anyway, consult the text, I am indicating it to you, it will only take a second for you to look through the paperbacks, only its very difficult to find, this yoke is really exhausted, it appeared in America... It really would piss you off! It would be no bad thing all the same for you to make some photocopies. There is perhaps also one in French around, but I cannot say, for my part... I did not rush out looking for it, since I read it in English, anyway, there is also one in French, but I do not even know whether it can still be found. You see the extent of my benevolence, I am indicating it to you just when you are going to enter into the most appalling rivalry with me if I want to get it. Anyway too bad, there are always photocopies...

When all is said and done, it is from there that you can touch on a connection, a very particular connection. If Jacob makes manifest through this that there is sex at the level of bacteria, he only makes it manifest by the following fact - read this book carefully - that between two mutations of bacteria of the same line of descent, in other words of this famous *escherichia coli* which has served as laboratory material at that level, that between two mutations of bacterias from the same source, what constitutes sex, is that between them, between these mutations, no relationship is possible. This means that one line of descent of bacteria whose mutation consists in a possibility of a greater multiplication than in the other, while it is at the level of this

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possibility of multiplying that the other is distinguished: *foisonnement-plus*, fertility they call that in English, fertility-less. When the more fertile encounter the less fertile, they make them transfer to the side of fertility. While the less fertile, when they go towards the more fertile, for their part, do not make them transfer towards the side of the less fertile. It is then essentially from the non-relationship between the two branches – here we find our little tree again! – it is then from the non-relationship between the two branches of a same tree, that for the first time there is suggested, at the level of bacteria, the idea that there is a sexual specification.

So then you see the register in which this, this may affect me, because, in finding again this non-relationship at a completely different level of this so called evolution of life which is the one by which I specify the speaking being, is all the same something which, in short, which is well designed to hold my attention, and at the same time to try to give (189) you a little whiff of it... Because in short, what that means, is that in its first apparition – which moreover has strictly nothing to do with its second apparition which is a pure homology – sexuality is not at all the same thing, but that it may be so on occasion at the level of the tree, something linked to infection and to nothing else, is all the same, is all the same worth our dwelling on. Naturally, that does not mean either that we should rush into it, huh, you must not rush, especially, because it is, it is the best way to stick your finger in your eye! But anyway, it is tangible. And that, that the question of enjoyment is suggested from infection, sexuality with a limited import, is also worth remembering. Good. When I say: not to rush, huh, that also means: not to let yourself be led by the nose.

Is there – I am making a break here, I am taking things from the other end – is there knowledge in the Real? It is essential that here I should break, since otherwise I, at least you, you have let yourselves up to now be led by the nose, namely, that you stop there where I stop myself, in order not to let myself be led by the same end. To ask the

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second question, the one that I am putting forward now, after having allowed myself to be led into religious froth, of what interest is it that now I start over again? It is all the same – it is not difficult to, to sense, is that not so, enjoyment, it erupts (*sic*) into the Real. And that there will be a moment - which will be later, because things must be carefully put into a series, huh - when the question turns back on itself. What does the Real answer if enjoyment questions it? And that is why I begin – here you see the link – why I begin to ask the question: knowledge is not the same as enjoyment. I will even say more, if there is a point to which I have led you, anyway, in starting from this knowledge that is inscribed in the unconscious, it is indeed because it is not inevitable that knowledge should enjoy itself.

And that indeed is why, now - a break - I am taking up again a thread from a different end, no term of which is encountered in what I first put forward. I am taking up the thread from another end, and I am putting the question about knowledge in the Real. It is quite clear that this question, like all the others, is only asked from the answer. I would even say more: from the answer such as I have already emphasised it. The unconscious in Freud's sense, is that in whose name I asked the question about knowledge in the Real. But I do not ask it in giving to Freud's unconscious all its import. I am simply saying that the unconscious is at first only conceived of from the (190) following: that it is a knowledge. But I am limiting myself to that. It is in the name of this that the question about knowledge in the Real takes on its meaning.

There is some. And there is no need for Freud's unconscious for it to be so. There is some to all appearances, otherwise the Real would not work. Here is where I am starting from which as you see is a quite different aspect. This one, precisely, has a Greek aspect. The Real, is like the discourse of the master: it is the Greek discourse. The Real must work. And we cannot see how it would work without there being some knowledge in the Real. So then there also, huh, no

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rushing. Here it is not longer a matter of being led by the nose, there, it is to get limes in this step. One must cut through its casing. If I take this step in the Real, I must cut away... all the glue around, in order not to remain stuck in it, huh. And that in the Real, may I dare say, means nothing outside a meaning.

That means in the Real: which does not depend on the idea that I have of it. A further step with the same paste on one's feet: as regards which, what I think of it does not matter. The Real does not give a damn whether I think of it like that. And this indeed is why the first time that I tried to make this category vibrate, anyway, in the ears of my listeners, those of Sainte-Anne, I cannot say that I was not kind, huh, I said to them: the Real is, is what always returns to the same place. Which is precisely to put it in its place. The notion of place, arises from that.

So then, in saying that, I put the Real – I situate it precisely, I put it in its place, with a meaning, let us not forget, with a meaning *qua* known: the meaning knows itself. So much so that it is astonishing, huh, that people should have become entangled in it: the sensible, the tangible, anything you wish, but that it did not end up by being crystallised: the known meaning (*le sensu*). It must be believed that it had echoes we did not like.

What I am in the process of saying by that, in any case putting forward to you about the Real, is first of all that, it is that the knowledge at stake in the question, is there knowledge in the Real, is to be completely separated from the use of known in the known meaning. It is from meaning, starting from there that I detach the Real, but it is not from the same knowledge that I question to know whether there is a knowledge in the Real. The knowledge at stake in the question is not the order of knowledge which conveys meaning or more exactly, which is conveyed by meaning.

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(191) And I am going to illustrate it right away. To illustrate it from Aristotle. It is quite striking that in his *Physics*, Aristotle for a good long while, in short, made the leap, the leap by which, it is demonstrated that his *Physics* has strictly nothing to do with the *phusis* whose ghost Heidegger tries to make re-emerge for us. It is because what he is tackling, he is tackling to answer the question which is the one that I am asking now: is there knowledge in the Real? He tackles it by way of the knowledge of the artisan. The short is that the Greeks did not have the same relationship to writing. The flower of what they produced, is drawings, it is the making of plans. That is their idea of intelligence. It is not enough to have an idea of intelligence to be intelligent. This recommendation is especially addressed to you. And it is surprising that it should be Aristotle who proves it to us.

This artisan, God knows what he imputes to him, make no mistake. He imputes to him, first of all, knowing what he wants: which all the same is a bit thick! Where have we ever seen anyone struggling along as an artisan, knowing what he wants? It is Aristotle who lays that on his back. Thanks to Aristotle, the artisan is the 'final cause'. And then also, while he is at it, I really do not see what stops him, is that not so, he is also the 'formal cause', he has ideas, as they say. And then after that, he, he, he causes 'cause' (*il cause 'cause'*), he even causes 'means', he causes 'efficient' in a word, and it is a lucky thing that Aristotle leaves some bit of the role to matter. There it is it: it is the 'material cause'! It causes, it causes, it causes even without rhyme or reason [*causer* = to cause, or to chat, to bladder on].

Because, to take things, like that, at the level from which they come, namely, the pot – that is how it came out, not at all of course that they only knew how to make that, the Greeks, they knew how to make much more complicated things, but all of that, all of that comes from the pot. When I ask a question of whether there is knowledge in the Real, it is precisely to exclude from this Real what is involved in the

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knowledge of the artisan. Not only does the knowledge of the artisan not cause, but it is exactly this order of knowledge that the artisan makes use of because another artisan taught him to do it like that.

And far from the pot having an end, a form, an efficacy and even some matter or other, the pot, is a mode of enjoying. He was taught to enjoy making pots! And if someone did not buy his pot – and that depends on the good sense of the client – if his pot is not bought, well then he has the reward of his enjoyment, namely, that he left with it, (192) and that this does not go very far. It is a mode that is essential to detach from what is at stake when I ask the question: is there knowledge in the Real?

There must all the same simply be some people here who have been, who have been, I don't know, to the exposition of Chinese archaeological excavations, as it is called, Chinese excavations which were the best thing that they found to send us from the land of Mao. There you can see – at that level because there are reasons why, in this zone, in short, one can still see the pots at the moment that they emerge. It is quite clear that these pots are absolutely gripping, admirable, is that not so, these pots from the time of the apparition of words, when for the first time, people made pots – three feet are stuck onto them, as it happens, but they are feet which are not feet, feet that are screwed on, you understand, they are feet, feet which are there in continuity with the pot. These are pots which have spouts of which one can say in advance that any mouth is unworthy. They are pots which are in themselves, with their advent, in short things before which one prostrates oneself.

Do you believe that this emergence here, is something... is something that has anything whatsoever to do with Aristotelian decomposition? It is enough to look at these pots to see that in short they are of no use for anything. But there is one thing certain, which is that this grew, is that not so, this grew, in short, like a flower. That Aristotle, finally,

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decomposes them, in short, is that not so, con-causes them with at least four different causes, is something that just by itself, in short, demonstrates that the pots are from elsewhere.

But why am I talking to you about them since precisely I put them elsewhere? I am talking to you about them because if it is the client who finally has to judge the pot, in the absence of which the potter, in short will have to tighten his belt, this demonstrates something to us, which is that it is the client who not only buys the pot, but who, 'potters' the artisan, it if I can express myself thus. And it is enough to see what follows from this link between the fact that the pot, in short, is so well made that people imagine that God is a potter, exactly like the artisan. The God in question is, is... at one time, anyway, my old friend Andre Breton believed that he was pronouncing a blasphemy in saying that, in saying that God is a pig (*un porc*). It is not for nothing that the last time I told you that I never encouraged the Surrealists. Not at all that I for my part would abbreviate and I would say that God is a pot. God is clumsy (*un empoté*)! True, God is the potter, but the potter also is awkward. He is the subject, in short, of the knowledge supposed to his art.

But this is not what is at stake when I ask you the question: is there knowledge in the Real? Because this, this is what was encountered the day when from the Real someone succeeded in tearing out a strand, namely, at the time of Newton, when all the same, it happened, and that there in order that the Real should function, at least the Real of gravity, namely, not nothing, all the same, because we are all screwed to this gravity and by nothing less than our bodies, until we hear differently, not that it is a property of it, as what followed clearly demonstrated – but one is screwed onto this Real. And there, what is it, in short, that worried people in Newton's time? It was nothing less than this question which I would say, in short, concerned what was at stake, namely, masses – make no mistake. Masses. How these masses could know the distance at which they were at from other

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masses so that they would be able to observe Newton's law? It is absolutely clear that that God is required here. One cannot, all the same, claim that the masses, the masses as such, namely, defined by their simply inertia, where would the notion come to them of the distance that they are from other masses? And what is more, as regards what is involved in these masses themselves in order to behave correctly? At the time of freshness when this Newtonian lucubration came out, this escaped no one! It was the only notion in short, that – the only notion that could be opposed to him, were Descartes vortices; unfortunately Descartes vortices did not exist and everyone could see that quite clearly... So then, God was required to inform, is that not so, at every instant, in short it has even got to the point that not only was he required to be there to inform the masses at every instant about what was happening to the others, but... it was even supposed that he had perhaps no other means than to push the masses himself with his finger... Which, of course was exaggerated, in short, was exaggerated because it was clear that once acceleration is already inscribed in the formula, time was also there, so then there was no need for the finger of God! But as regards informing all the same, it was difficult to exclude him. And what I am talking to you about, for my part, here, is the knowledge in the Real.

(194) You must not imagine that because Einstein came afterwards and put something else into it, huh, you must not imagine that things are any better, huh, because there is all the same a funny story, is that not so, which is that this relativity of space, which is henceforth de-absolutised, because indeed it is some time, in short since people have been able to say that in short, that after all God was absolute space – indeed that is, that is only banter. But the relativisation of this space with respect to light, this has a funny feel for you of *fiat lux*, and that, that has every appearance of starting to put its ass once again into the religious froth. So then, let us exaggerate nothing. It is perhaps here, you understand, that – this is how, in any case for today, I will limit myself, indeed to what made the analyst emerge. You have clearly

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sensed, *sentu*, huh, that all of this comes from this ~~short~~ fact indeed that we have only spoken up to now about what comes from Heaven. Everything that we have of the Real however little sure it is, including our monsters, huh, has uniquely, uniquely come down from heaven. If it were not from there that we had started in order to always return to the same place, the definition that I give of the Real, we would not have today either watches nor televisions nor all these charming things thanks to which you are not only minuted but I would dare to say 'seconded'. You are so well seconded that you no longer even have living space.

Luckily there is something of the analyst, huh. The analyst – I am going to end on a metaphor: the analyst is the will-o-the-wisp. It is a metaphor which, for its part, does not amount to *fiat lux*. It is all that I have to say to excuse him. I mean that it opposes to the stars from which everything has descended in terms of what encumbers you and organises you so well here, indeed, to listen to my discourse, is that not so. Namely, that this has absolutely nothing to do with what you will come in to complain to me in a moment.

The only advantage that I find in this will-o-the-wisp, is that this does not amount to *fiat lux*. The will-o-the-wisp does not illuminate anything, it emerges even ordinarily from some pestilence. That is its strength. This is what can be said, starting from the will-o-the-wisp, whose thread I will try to take up, the wisp of thread, the next time.

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This is one of the most difficult seminars he has ever read.
The dupe is a person who is the dupe of their ucs. You have to love your ucs.

Seminar 13: Tuesday 14 May 1974

The non-dupes-err... That does not mean that the dupes do not err. If we start from what is proposed as an affirmation – can you hear? Can you hear like that, if I am in front of this thing? Would the person who said that he can hear nothing answer: can he hear? Let us say that there is introduced by this affirmation that the non-non-dupes, may well, no more, not err. But already, this introduces us to the question that is posed by double negation. To be...not to be a non dupe, does that come back to being a dupe? This supposes, and supposes nothing less, than that there is a universe; that one can put forward that the universe, is divided by every statement; that one can say 'the man', and that if one says it – I mean to say it – all the rest becomes non-man.

He is kicking around the question of sexual identification. You are 'not man'. Are you a woman. He takes a long time to get started.

A logician – because I am putting forward that logic is the science of the real – a logician took a step a long time after Aristotle. We had to wait for Boole to publish in 1853 *An investigation of the laws of thought*, which, has already this advantage over Aristotle of being a step, an attempt to stick to what he claims to observe, to found in short *a posteriori* as constituting the laws of thought. What does he do? He writes very precisely what I have just told you, namely that starting from anything whatsoever that is said and that is stated, and things are such for him that he cannot but put forward the idea of the universe, he symbolises it by a number (*un chiffre*), a number which is appropriate for it, it is the number 1. He will write then, about

this book "An Investigation of the Laws of Thought" see the abstract

Aristotle worked 'a priori' a lot.

Boole symbolises the idea of the universe by the number 1.

slight mean a

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anything that is proposed as notable, notable in this universe, he will (196) then write *x*, he leaves this *x* empty, because this is the principle of the use of this letter it is whatever may be notable in the universe [*to Gloria Gonzales: if you would carry that away from me, it would help me to go to the board*]. Yes, *x*, he writes, multiplied by *1–x*, this cannot but equal zero:

$$x(1 - x) = 0$$

This cannot but, provided one gives this meaning to multiplication, but note the intersection. That is where he starts from. It is in so far as x is notable in the universe that something is sustained simply by no, to men there being opposed non-men as such, everything that subsists as notable being here considered as subsisting as such. Now, it is clear that what is notable is not as such individual; that already in this way of positing logical ek-sistence, there is something which, from the start, appears to be awkward.

How does it happen that there should be posited without criticism, the theme, the theme of the universe that is posited? If I believe this year to be able to support by the Borromean knot something, something which, certainly, is not, is not a definition of the subject, of the subject as such of a universe, it is in that, I will remark once again, my attempt has nothing metaphysical about it. I mean, I mean in this connection that metaphysics is what is distinguished by supposing, by supposing as such the subject, the subject of a knowing (*connaissance*). It is in so far as it supposes a subject, that metaphysics is distinguished from what I am trying to articulate the elements of, namely, those of a practice, and this along the line of having defined it as distinguishing itself, distinguishing itself from something which is pure place, pure topology, and which means that there be generated from there the definition situated only from the place of this practice, from what is announced, from then on is advanced as being three other discourses. This is a fact, a fact of

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discourse, a fact by which I try to give to analytic discourse its place of ek-sistence.

What is it, that properly speaking, that ek-sists? There only ek-sists as the spelling by which I modified this term stresses, there only ek-sists in any practice something that acts as a foundation of the saying (*du dire*), I mean what the saying contributes as an agency in this practice. It is under this heading that I try to situate under these three terms, the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real, the triple category which makes a knot, and by this gives its meaning to this practice. For this (197) practice has not simply a meaning, but gives rise to a type of meaning that illuminates the other meanings to the point of putting them in question again, I mean by suspending them. With that, as an articulation, an articulation which at the end of a progress made to stimulate among those who sustain this practice, the idea of what for them this Real is, I say: the Real, is writing. The writing of nothing other than this knot as it is written to say it, as it is written when it is according to the law of flattened out writing. And I submit what I am stating to this test of putting in suspense the distinction, the precisely subjective distinction of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, in so far as they might in a way already carry with them a meaning, a meaning which would hierarchise them, would make a 1,2,3 of them. Naturally, this would not avoid us falling again into another meaning – as already it may have appeared to you by the fact of what I emphasise about the association of the Real with a three, of the Imaginary with a two, and of the Real precisely – [a slip by Lacan] – and of the Symbolic precisely with the *One*.

Something in, at the level, in the terms of the Symbolic, is posited as *One*. Is it a *One* sustainable from any individuation in the universe? That is the question that I ask, and from now on, I will put it forward under this form, namely, to ask the question in connection with Boole's writing. If the *One* that Boole advances as sufficient to divide up the truth, if there is an *x*, it is only true if, if the *x* subtracted from

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the *One* is something different to all the rest, than all the rest of the nameable. It is nothing less than gripping to note that Boole himself, by writing what results, what results from the writing of these terms in a mathematical formula, should be led to found on it that the proper of any *x*, of any *x qua* stated, is that *x* minus *x 2* equals 0, which is written:

$$x - x2 = 0$$

$$x = x\,2$$

I mean to be supported by a mathematical formula.

It is strange that here a note in his book, a book whose date I gave you earlier, the major date in this sense that it is starting from there that a new... a new start is taken by logical speculation, and that someone Charles Sanders Peirce of whom I already spoke to you, can for example ameliorate, according to him, Boole's formulation by showing in it that at certain points the result of it can be that it goes (198) astray, let us say. This to highlight what results from functions of two variables, namely, not simply *x* but *x* and *y*, and showing in it that which... that where I myself believed I ought to take up that the function described as relationship, can here serve to show us that, as regards what is involved in the sexual, this relationship cannot be written.

Why, Boole asks himself, rather than writing $x = x2$ and the inverse, cannot one write $x = x3$? It is striking that Boole – and this starting from the notion of truth as radically separating what is involved between the One and the zero, because it is by zero that he connotes error – it is striking that this universe, from then on solidary as such with the function of truth appears to him to limit the writing, the writing of what is involved in the logical function, to the second power of *x* while he refuses the third power. He refuses it because of the fact that mathematically, it would only be supposable in writing by adding to it a new term of the product, which he certainly does not

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refuse when what is at stake is to make the operation of multiplication work, he writes on this occasion:

$$x\,y\,z$$

and he can, according to the case, mark that $x\,y\,z$ such that the variables were situated by a certain function, that $x\,y\,z$ for example also equals 0. But since he limits himself to the values zero and one, it can just as well take on the function, the function taking its value from a certain… from a certain ciphering of zero and one for each of the three – he can, by making x, y and z each equal to one, notice that zero is not the fruit of it.

So then, what can prevent him from adding to his $(1 - x)$ a $(1 + x)$ and to add it not as addition, to add it as a term of multiplication? He sees then very clearly that $(1 - x)$ multiplied by $(1 + x)$ giving $1 - x2$, he will end up, I do not need to underline it for you, with this: the fact is that $x - x3$ will be equal to zero and from this fact x will be equal to $x3$:

$$x(1 - x)(1 + x) = 0$$
$$x - x3 = 0$$
$$x = x3$$

Why does he stop, stop at what? In the interpretation of what this x might be precisely as added to the universe. Is it not proper to what (199) ek-sists the universe, to be added to it? This is properly what we do every day, and precisely what I designate by a plus in supporting it by the small **o**-object. But then this suggests to us, this suggests the following: namely, to ask ourselves whether the *One* in question, is well and truly the universe, to be considered as a set or collection of everything that can be individualised in it.

I suggest – there is suggested to me, let us say in connection with this writing of Boole – founding what he establishes in terms of universe – because it is as such that he articulates it, that he gives it its meaning – to suppose that this *One*, far from arising from the universe, arises

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from enjoyment. From enjoyment and not just from any enjoyment, from the enjoyment called phallic, and this in so far as analytic experience demonstrates its importance. That from this sequence of what is posited as logical, as signifier, but literal, I mean inscribable, in so far as the inscription is where there arises in our experience the function of the Real, at least if you follow me, that something like an *x* can be added to this enjoyment, and constitute what I already defined as grounding surplus enjoying (*plus-de-jouir*).

It remains that Boole is far from not indicating that it is not simply the relationship of enjoyment to surplus enjoying, in so far as surplus enjoying is supposed to be precisely what ek-sists, ek-sists with respect to what? Precisely the knot whose use and function I am trying for the moment to illuminate for you. He sees very clearly that in order to end up with the function $x = x3$ and no longer simply *x2*, he sees very clearly that the third term, the term (1 + x) can be written differently and specifically *(-1 –x)*. I mean *(-1 -x)* taken in brackets, which is equivalent mathematically – I mean in so far as writing is what is mathematical – what can be inscribed here by minus before the brackets and by *(1 + x)*, put on the inside:

$$-(1 + x)$$

I write *–(1 + x)* and I say that it is the equivalent to the addition here of *(-1 –x)* and that Boole adds them in order to reject them, to reject them in so far as logic is supposed to be designed to assure the status of the truth.

But for the moment, what we are aiming at, is not to give its status to the truth, since the truth, we say, is never stated except from a half-saying, that it is properly speaking unthinkable, except at the locus of the saying, to mark that a proposition is not true, and to mark it with a bar, with an upper bar that excludes it, and marks it with the sign of false.

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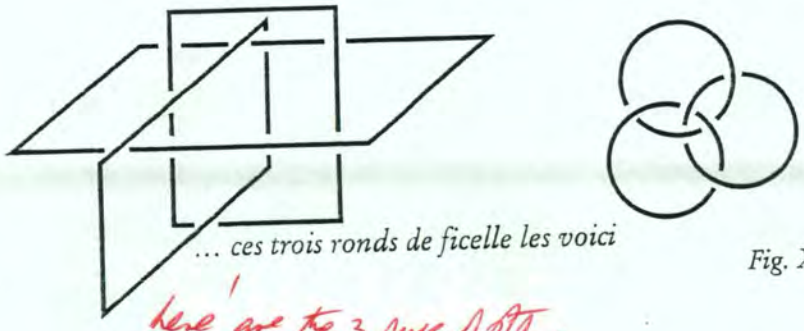
(200) In the order of things, in so far as the symbol is designed to ek-sist it in this order of things, it is properly, whatever may be said, whatever Boole may say studying or claiming to establish the status of thought, it is unthinkable, precisely, it is unthinkable to split anything whatsoever nameable, to split by a pure no to designate what is not named. Does this mean that we ought to put to the test, put to the test what results from $\overset{3}{x3} = x$, assuredly it is already something to see functioning in it this three by which I mark as such the Real, and this is where we are going to take up again our Borromean knot.

I would like once more to give the example of the fact that even if the statement of the Borromean knot ek-sists with respect to analytic practice, it is what permits it to be supported in this space of ours. And this without our knowing, at the present time, despite Aristotle's quotations, what the number of the dimensions of this space is, I mean even the one where we name things. Look, this is the same thing as what I first drew on the board, namely, that we have here a ring, a ring of string as I precisely called it the first time that I introduced this function.



... ces trois ronds de ficelle les voici

Fig. XIII-1

Here is the ring of string, the three rings of string. You see that they hold together. They hold together in so far as there is here one which I put on the horizontal, the two others being vertical and the verticals crossing over one another. It is obvious that this cannot be unknotted. The Borromean knot as such has made a lot of people here work, and

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they have even sent me the testimony of this. This is the simplest form.

(201) It is striking that in the works – it is veritable works that have been sent to me on this point – works which do their share in all sorts of other ways, they are innumerable, to knot these three in such a way that they allow, with the unknotting of a single one of the three rings, exactly to free all the others, and as I told you, whatever may be the number of them. But to limit ourselves to three, since this three goes with our three functions of the Imaginary the Symbolic and the Real, this very precisely not to distinguish them, to see up to what point the fact that they are three, and by this fact to construct from them the very logic of the Real. Namely, to see at what moment we are going to be able to see arising, simply from these three, strictly equivalent, as you can immediately see – from these three to give rise to the beginning of what would be differentiation in it. Differentiation is initiated, is initiated from the fact, and I am astonished that in the works that I have received, no one has pointed it out to me, here you are: through these three as they are arranged here, there are determined let us say eight quadrants, *1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8*. I take one of them, any one whatsoever, and from this quadrant I pull the flattened out one, the one that you are going to see – you are going to see from where you are, but by being where I am, it is certainly exactly the same, namely, that you see that something is already found there, because of this flattening out, is found to be already oriented. I mean that you certainly see the same inscription of the knot which is the one that I see, namely, on this occasion, for what I have shown you, by having taken my knot in the way it has been depicted, the fact is that by the flattening out something is outlined that is inscribed in following out its shape, which is inscribed as dextrogyratory.

Once it is flattened out as it is and turned over, I know in advance that it is the same dextrogyratory. It is enough to do this small job, indeed to imagine the turning over – and this also can be written – you will

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see that it is not the mirror image, that in turning over the Borromean knot you do not see something which is its mirror image.

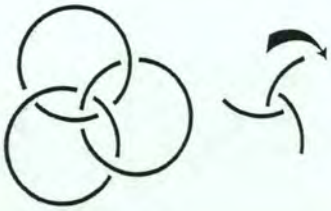

Fig. XIII-2

Fig. XIII-3

(202) Does this not render all the more striking this fact: it is that in taking up again my quadrants – let's say that I chose earlier – I do not know if it is effectively what I did – that one for you on the top right – if I take this one, that not only as I said on the top and at the right but I also say, in front, if I take the one no longer on the top right and in front, but below on the left behind, the one that is strictly opposite it and if it is from there that I start to flatten it out in the same way that I previously did, it is quite notable – and you can verify it – that what will result from this flattening out will be a way in which the knot is squeezed, in which the knot is tightened in the exactly inverse way, namely, laevogyratory.

There comes out then from the simple handling already of the Borromean knot, there arises a distinction which is of the order of orientation. If one is in the clockwise direction, the other is in the inverse direction. We must certainly not be astonished, be astonished that something of this order can happen, because it is in the nature of things that space should be oriented. It is even from there that there proceeds the function described as that of mirror image, and of all symmetry.

I apologise for the asperity of what my discourse today implies. Simply, I note for you that this fact of orientation for the opposite

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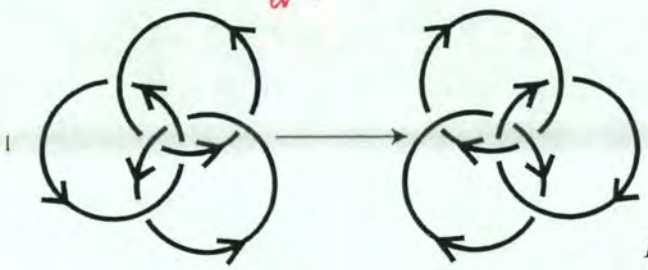

Fig. XIII-4

quadrants is something that already indicates to us that it is in (203) conformity with the structure, from the simple fact that the orientation arises from the single support from the single nodal support for which here I take up arms. It is conceivable from these rings themselves to mark a direction in them, namely, an orientation. In other words, to take the last, the one that is written here (1), to ask ourselves the question about what results from making use of an orientation in conformity with the one that we have abstained from of two species [?] and of two species alone which are different, namely, to Realise that there will result from it a figure, a figure such that its periphery will mark by that fact the same orientation. What is required for one of these figures to be transformed into the other, namely, this one equally completed (2)? You have seen from my hesitation the very mark of the difficulty that is encountered in the handling of the aforesaid rings of string. This is the mirror image of the other. But what is enough to transform the one into the other? Something which is definable in the following very simple way: namely, that, as you see the Borromean knot itself displayed, you see that any one of them is manifested by cutting each of the two others in such a way that the one being freed, the one being sectioned, the two others are free. Which means that one of these rings can turn around one of the two others, and that this all by itself will give us a new Borromean knot. The law of what is happening on this occasion is the following: here you only have to – I apologise for not having coloured chalk, it would be better, I am drawing it in chalk – what happens if we fold back one of these knots, one of these rings, around another?

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Fig. XIII-5

This is exactly what we get – from this we get a new figure which – I'm going to rub out the old one so that you can see it better – we get a new figure which has as a property to be of this kind. Namely, that, (204) you see – this one is rubbed out – namely, that you see it, the figure is presented in this way, we have this which has remained invariable, and two others... two other elements. There you are: the two other elements present the sort of orientation which is the one defined here... namely, that, as compared, is that not so, to this... this being marked by *a* for example you will subsequently have a presentation like this, namely, if this is *b*, you will have an inversion of direction from the *b* and of the *c* and an inversion of orientation of their curves, things being completed in the following way. There you are.

What matters is the following: it is to see that, by inverting the *a* what results from it, is a totally different orientation of the tightening of the knot. Namely, that from the simple fact that we have turned over one of the rings, the two other elements, those that we have not inverted, the two other elements change direction. I mean that, as is conceivable, the segment, the segment that I section in this mess, the segment that is found to be sectioned by the turning over of this ring which was first of all there, the segment has changed direction. Namely, that to one, to this one here, this other segment and this one has fitted here in a way that we will call if you wish, centripetal, while previously the three were centrifugal. This indeed is why, when we turn over a further ring of string, this ring of string will remain in its primal orientation for the segment itself that we are going to have to

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turn over. Namely, that if now, after having turned over *a* we turn over *b*, *b* will find itself keeping this centripetal direction, but then it is these two others, namely, one centrifugal and the other centripetal, that will be inverted so that the result of this will be that the centripetal becomes centrifugal and the centrifugal becomes centripetal, we will have here anew one centrifugal and two centripetal. But the one that will be centrifugal will be one of the turned over centripetals.

Do have to do all of that again, or has someone followed it?

I exposed myself to, to not even looking at notes, for this simple reason, which is that the very difficult of handling, the so small imaginable, as one might say, of this Borromean knot from which we are trying to draw some profit, is the very thing that that I am not unhappy, in short, to highlight, is that not, so to highlight a way... of ... there you are, after the second circuit, is that not so, a laevogyratory that has been reproduced like the preceding one, is that not so, and it is (205) in so far as we have turned over the *b* after having turned over the *a* that we obtain the following: that we have a centripetal in place of a centrifugal which is here, and a centrifugal at the place of the centripetal which is here, is that not so. As a consequence, we have here *c*, *a*, and *b*.

I was asked the question, I was asked the question in a place where people were working, I was asked the question as to what relationship this Borromean knot had with what I have stated about the four – I would say – options, described as sexed identification. In other words, what relationship this might have with the

$$\exists x \,.\, \overline{\Phi x} \qquad \overline{\exists x} \,.\, \overline{\Phi x}$$

$$\forall x \,.\, \Phi x \qquad \overline{\forall x} \,.\, \Phi x$$

Fig. XIII-6

I am now going to try to tell you. Suppose that we give to this this position in a quadrant that we designate according to the mark in

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Cartesian co-ordinates, the eight quadrants in question. You should be able to see, to notice that, let us take the top right quadrant in front, it is by folding over – ah, finally... good there you are! – it is by the folding back of the ring of string marked here, I mean in so far as this ring of string, this one then, is held – there you are – in so far as this ring of string is held by this one, namely, the one that I will call the 'in depth', we will call this one here 'the top', and this one here 'the flat'.

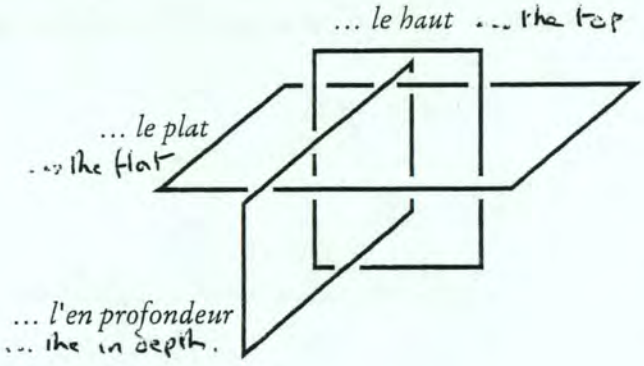
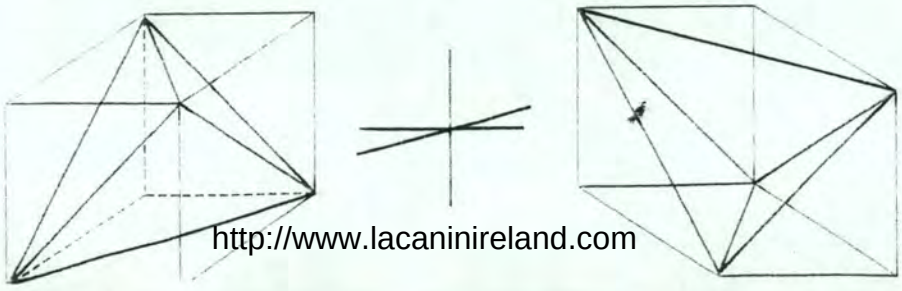


Fig. XIII-7

Good, so then the flat comes here... and it is the one that comes there [*Lacan demonstrates with a knot that he has in his hand*], so then, green, blue, red. This is how things will present themselves. Good. (206) It is a little bit... a little bit different. There you are. You will have to take a bit of trouble, yourselves, to make the things, because after all, I note that it doesn't work out all that easily. Good.

The important thing is the following: it is, it is to indicate that it is by folding back this one, namely, the vertical towards the in depth; by folding back this one, is that not so, namely, the one that was first of all well marked at its place here, it is by folding it back in this way that we are going to get the ring, the Borromean knot as it is situated in this quadrant on the left of whatever quadrant we started from. In this quadrant, then, with inversion, inversion of the laevogyratory, is that not so, namely, a passage to the dextrogyratory, because the one that I did at the bottom was a laevogyratory. I took it that way because in the way that the knots are arranged – the way that the rings of string are arranged, this is how it is knotted. So then here we have



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an inversion. Which means that, to take things by placing them like here for example, in this quadrant there, is that not so, we have to pass into this one, we have a first inversion. By passing into this one, we have a second inversion, as in some direction – on condition that it is a direction of symmetry with respect to one of the planes of intersection we have, at the three extremities, a change in the Borromean knot, we have an inversion. Good, if we pass along here, namely, that we go through it from the top to the bottom we have a new inversion, namely, a return of what was here, of the laevogyratory. These operations are commutative, namely, that by passing in this way, we arrive at the same return.

(207) In others words, it is at the four opposite points, namely, on the eight quadrants of four definable quadrants by as I might say the inscription in the cube of a tetrahedron, it is with that that we are going to see appearing four homogenous figures, all three, on this occasion, laevogyratory, since we have started from a laevogyratory. Good. What results from this? How consider this multiplication, as I might say, by four, from what results from simply the flattening out, or the writing of the Borromean knot. I propose simply something that, given the time, I will only be able to give a commentary on the next time, it is this. If, as you have just seen, what is at stake is a tetrahedral figure, a tetrahedral figure in so far as it is produced by the tipping over of two of the rings of string, and one can say two, whatever they are. Whatever they are, we come back to the laevogyratory figure, to specify it. We come back to it whatever the one of the two that has been folded over. There will remain one which has not been folded over. The one that remains is obviously the third, I mean the one that remains after the two others have been folded over. That for example, if we make of these rings of string, the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real, what will remain in short, and what will remain in a centrifugal position, this again I would have to verify for you, I mean that you should be able to see that it is by tipping over the S and the I that at the end the R remains centrifugal.

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There is a good reason for that. If you have clearly seen the last figure, it is the R, namely, let us say the Real, that must be tipped over to obtain the last figure, which itself will be dextrogyratory and will be entirely centrifugal. It is a convenient way for you to remember what is involved in the second phase of what happens after two tipping overs, since you ought as I showed you, you ought shortly find in the strictly opposite quadrant, the one about which I spoke to you when I made this remark to you, this remark that was not found, namely, that in passing from one quadrant to the strictly opposite quadrant, to the contradictory quadrant, to the diagonal quadrant, we obtain a knot, a knot no more if we start from the laevogyratory – we obtain a dextrogyratory knot. Good.

So then, verify all of this when you have a chance, in short, by making small manipulations like the ones that I made such a mess of before you and you will see in short the following: that by staying with the laevogyratory knot, we obtain what I qualified or specified as a tetrahedron, because you see how things happen. You can make, reconstitute: here for example you have to take one of the faces of the (208) square, you pull it, you reconstitute the cube, you reconstitute the cube starting from this, the fact is that it is always in a diagonal arrangement with respect to one of the faces of the cube that there are found the quadrants which are of the same kind of orientation and specifically on this occasion, of the laevogyratory kind.

I am simply going to suggest the following to you: this is what comes out of it starting from the function of enjoyment, what comes out is the following: it is that somewhere in one of these extremities of the tetrahedron somewhere there is situated the

$\overline{\exists x}.\overline{\Phi x}$ *there is no x to say no to* $\overline{\Phi}$ *of x*

somewhere, and we are going to put it,

$\exists x.\overline{\Phi x}$ *there is something which says no to* $\overline{\Phi}x$

somewhere, there is

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masculine

$\forall x . \Phi x$ *namely, that: all (tous) are a function of it*

And that somewhere, you have:

$\overline{\forall} x . \overline{\Phi} x$ *not all (pas-toutes)* — the feminine.

It is not for nothing that I put it in this form, namely, a basic form.

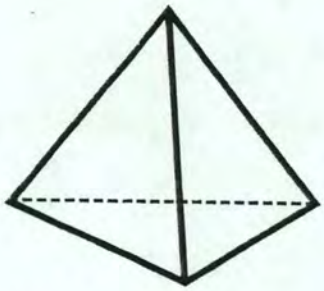

Fig. XIII-9

a step on a Rhod.

It is connected up with castration & the assumption of your own desire

We will have in a way to put the following in question: the not (*pas*), not the exclusive not like the earlier one, the step of what exists by saying no to the phallic function. We will on the other hand have what says yes to it, but which is reduplicated, namely, that there is the all, on the one hand, and on the other hand the not-all (*pas-tous*) in other words what I qualified as not-all (*pas-toutes*). Does it not appear to you that we have here a programme, namely, to take in what is a subject to be examined, to take the criticism of what is involved in the not, of what is implied by the saying no, namely, the interdiction, (209) and very specifically, when all is said and done, that which, specifying itself by the saying no to the $\overline{\Phi} x$ function, says no to the phallic function.

Saying no to the phallic function, is what we call, in the analytic discourse:

$\exists x . \overline{\Phi} x$ *the function of castration*

There is what says yes to the phallic function, and says it as all, namely, very specifically a certain type which is altogether necessitated by the definition of what we call man. You know that the not-all very essentially served to mark that there is no *the woman*, namely, that there are only as I might say the diverse and in a way one

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by one, and that all of this finds itself in a way dominated by the privileged function of the following, that there is nevertheless not-one to represent the saying that prohibits, namely, the absolutely-no.
Voilà. .

So then because there is an exam now, I simply began the thing today. I beg your pardon for having spent so long on it, we will take it up the next time.

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Seminar 14: Tuesday 21 May 1974

I apologise for being late and I want to thank you for having waited for me. You see that I am persevering, as regards the foundation that I am giving this year to my discourse in the Borromean knot. The Borromean knot is here justified by materialising, by presenting this reference to writing. The Borromean knot is only on this occasion a mode of writing. It finds itself in short presentifying the register of the Real.

When, at the start, I questioned myself about what the unconscious was, I only intended to take it at the level of what analytic experience effectively constitutes. At that time, I had in no way elaborated discourse as such; the notion, the function of discourse was only to come later. And it is in so far as this discourse is where there is situated a social bond and then, it must be said, a political one, it is inasmuch as this discourse situates it, that I spoke about discourse. But I started only from the experience, and in this experience, it is clear that language, that something which undisputedly is required by the practice of analysis, that the practice of analysis is founded on a pathos, on a pathos that must be situated, and it is a matter of situating how one intervenes in it.

To intervene gives rise to the notion of act. It is also essential to think out, this notion of act, and to demonstrate how it can come to consist in a saying. At one time, as they say, I thought I should point out that

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the analyst, not only operates by the word alone, but is specified by only operating with that. Refusing this intervention on the body, for example, which passes by the absorption, in any form whatsoever, of (212) substances that then enter into the chemical dynamics of the body, for example medications, as they are called, good. The point that I am at in it, is simply something, the circuit, is that not so, it is the circle that you see drawn here. The fact is that there is a link – but it is a matter of knowing what one, between sex and the word. It is clear that sex involves the duality of corporal structure. A duality which is reflected in a cascade, as one might say, about the duality for example of the soma and the germen, on the opposition between the living and the inanimate world, etc.

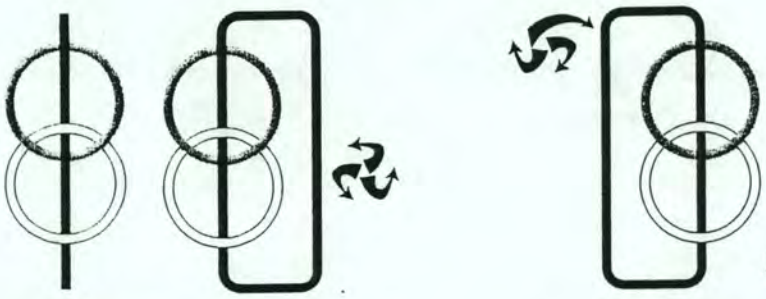

Fig. XIV-1

Is the notion of duality enough to homogenise everything that is two? You see right away that this is not true. The simple enumeration that I carried out, is that not so, of the duality of corporal structure, of the duality of the soma and the germen, of the opposition between the living and the inanimate world, ought to be enough for you to see that this polarity, to call it by its name, in no way homogenises the series of poles that are at stake, is that not so. It does not in any way suffice to ensure that the notion of world, or universe, is correlated to this unthinkable thing which is the subject, in so far as it is supposed to be what? The reflection, the consciousness of the aforesaid world. And this by reason of what I will call the pathos of meanings. There is no need to marvel at the fact that there is a being to know what? The rest, is that not so, and it is obviously from all time that the metaphor of the sexual relationship has been cherished for this patent duality. Patent, but specified, local, distinct from other dualities. Hence the

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accent given to the word 'to know', (*connaître*), hence also the idea of active and passive, without one being able to know moreover in this polarity described as the subject and the world, where is the active, where is the passive. There is no need for an active for the pathos to subsist and attest itself in our lived experience, as they say, is that not so. We suffer. That is what is at stake when we are dealing with (213) analysis. We act also in order to get out of it, of this suffering, and on occasion, we put a lot into it. It is a matter of knowing what our two persons, as they say, namely, two animals situated by a very specified political organisation that I called a discourse, it is a matter of knowing what is the saying of an exchange ritualised in words, and what is called, what is supposed to be at stake in this exercise, namely, the unconscious.

There I am trying to tell you: there is some knowledge in the Real, which functions without our being able to know how the articulation is made in what we are used to see being realised. Is this what is at stake and what we would indeed have to admit, is that not so, as stemming from an organising thought? This is the option that religion and metaphysics take, and in this respect they are on the same side; they join hands in the suppositions that they ordain for being.

So then what I want to say, is that unconscious knowledge, the one Freud supposes, is distinguished from this knowledge in the Real in such a way, that whatever of it there is, even science manages to make this knowledge providential, namely, something, a subject, guarantees it as harmonic. What Freud puts forward – but I note in passing that it is not all – is that it is not providential, that it is dramatic. Arising from something which starts from a default in being, a disharmony between thought and the world, and that this knowledge is at the heart of this something that we name ek-sistence, because it insists from outside and it is disturbing. It is in this sense that the sexual relationship shows itself in the individual – whom I am not the only one to characterise as a speaking being, is that not so – shows itself to

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be disturbed. This in contrast with everything that seems to happen among other beings. It is even from this that there has come the distinction between nature and culture. And very specifically this nature, as I might say, we must indeed characterise as not being as natural as all that. Because from where we are living, nature is not indispensable (*ne s'impose pas*). For us what is indispensable, is a different mode, a different mode of knowledge, a knowledge which is in no way attributable to a subject who is supposed to preside over its order, who is supposed to preside over its harmony, and it is in this that, first of all, in my first statements, to characterise Freud's unconscious, there was a formula that I find... – that I came back to on several occasions – that I find I put forward at Sainte-Anne, which is the following: that God does not believe in God.

(214) To say: "God does not believe in God", is exactly the same thing as to say "there is something of the unconscious". Of course, given the order of the audience, is that not so, that I had then, namely, psychoanalysts as they were able to present themselves at that epoch, that had no effect. It had no effect except for the fact that they asked me the question whether, whether I in short believed in him. There is someone since, in short, is that not so, who defined me by saying that I was someone who believed he was Lacan, is that not so, it was the way in which I had myself defined Napoleon, but... about the end of his life, in short, when in sum, my God, he was mad, is that not so, because to believe in one's own name, in short, is... is the very definition of it. Good. Contrary to what someone called Gabriel Marcel imagined, in short, I do not believe in Lacan. But I ask the question of whether there is not a strict consistency between what Freud puts forward as being the unconscious, and the fact that there is no one to believe in God, especially not himself, because it is in this that the knowledge of the unconscious consists.

The knowledge of the unconscious is completely contrary to instinct, namely, to what presides, in short, not simply over the idea of nature,

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but over every idea of harmony. It is inasmuch as, somewhere, there is this break which ensures that the most natural thing, as one might say, the one that appears from our point of view, when we look, indeed animals, are completely differently, objects in the world: we construct on this all the extrapolations that we can. What we note is something which seems to produce something between two bodies which indisputably is completely different, moreover, among most species, than the relationship of the body described as masculine to the one that is acknowledged as feminine. Namely, that there is in sum between these two bodies, I would say very little resemblance, while among animals, what is striking is the degree to which male and female – let us say the word to go quickly and to indicate my thought – are narcissistic.

So then, I would like to put forward today, because I must all the same put forward something, something which is important, is that not so. It is that if I put the accent on the fact that what creates an obstacle to the sexual relationship, is nothing other than this function that I found myself the last time rewriting on the board in the form of Φx and it is not for nothing that I wrote it thus, mathematically, it is inasmuch as what can be written, I trust to be in the right direction to (215) reach the Real. What does that mean? Is it because here it sometimes happens – in the whole measure that you allow me because of this microphone – to write things on the board, is it this that supports my relation with you as it is established in this discourse? I do not believe so, I ceaselessly question it: what I want to highlight here, is something which implies, which is that I say, I always say the truth, and that this is inscribed in the Symbolic, I always say the truth not simply because I repeat it, I open up the path that makes a saying exist, and that your relationship with me in this situation, is that this makes you enjoy. I have more than once asked the question, in short, I turn around it, but what is certain, is that here there is to be found the accent, in short, of this proper saying that I am trying to state inasmuch as elsewhere no doubt, I take support on writing, but that it

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is on the side of writing that there is concentrated what I try to question about the unconscious when I say that the unconscious, is something in the Real.

I said 'knowledge' (*savoir*), on the one hand, but I also underlined the following: that if this dimension of knowledge touches the edges of the Real, that it is by grasping, by playing with what I would call, in short, the folds, the edges of the Real, it is inasmuch as I have faith in the fact that writing alone supports this Real as such, that I can say something that is simply orientated, orientated simply. Because to say the truth, is as I might say, within reach for everyone, and in a certain way, for us in the analytic experience the truth is our material (*étoffe*). In what way is it our material? In the fact that it is the truth about this pathos, about this suffering that I designated as such, which leads to this circumscribing of an experience structured like a discourse. And I tried to give the articulation of these discourses, but a written articulation: it is only by this that something can bear witness to the Real in it.

So then what is at stake when the last time, I recalled to you the four terms, the four punctuations, the written punctuations of the identification that I would call on this occasion not 'sexual' but 'sexed', when I recalled that the Borromean knot allowed there to be situated each of these writings in which something that can be mapped out starting from the primal knot. This knot that I showed you as best I could with these rings, the rings of string that I held in my hand, in the four quadrants that they determine, that they determine starting (216) from a first flattening out, and from a first flattening out in that two of these rings must – and I said two and not the same ones, not the same since moreover, if it were the same it would come back to the same place. Namely, that there must be two of them, two different ones for us to be able to reach a quadrant that is homologous to the first that was flattened out. I thought I was able, able at that moment to show you on the board in a way that was obviously risky, since, as

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you were able to see – and to my great exasperation – I became entangled in it, is that not so. I became entangled in it because, a curious thing, there is in sum, this is what this experience signifies, there is something of the... of the still not mastered in – you know it, I pointed it out to you, I remind you – of the still not mastered in what is of the order of knots. It is strange, it is singular, even though already something was able to be put forward about it, that the Borromean knot had been identified to the plait of six movements, six, and not three, as it might seem to be able to appear there. It is already something, and today what I am showing you... to put... to refer to what I already marked for you, already wrote, already wrote as being the simplest form, the simplest form of the Borromean knot which is very exactly the following, namely, the one where there is nowhere a third ring, the third ring here being represented only by a straight line that you will allow me to suppose to be infinite. It is an altogether capital and even illuminating supposition in itself, I would say. Illuminating in that it is very well known, it is the first remark that any elaboration of knots, that of Artin, for example, whose volume you know perhaps – some of you in any case have surely got hold of it – that of someone like Artin who says the following: the fact is that there is only a single way on a simple line to affirm that the knot (217) cannot be unknotted, it is either one thing or the other: either the two ends in effect stretch to infinity, which makes it impossible not to recognise anything whatsoever that is formed in a knot, or the two ends are connected, in which case it can be checked out whether or not it is indeed a knot.

What kind of remark does this suggest to us? The fact is that if this

Fig. XIV-2

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straight line, this straight line of which the knot consists, the Borromean one on this occasion, and which is specified by the fact of crossing the knots, I would say, in a way that cuts the first inasmuch as the first cuts the second, which at the same time requires alternation, namely, that it will cut the first and will be cut by the second that it encounters in so far as it is itself within the first ring and that it will then cut the blue ring twice just as it will be cut twice by the green ring, the blue ring and the green ring being distinguished by the fact that it is the blue ring that cuts the green ring.

It is then from a triadic relationship that what makes the knot is situated on this occasion: and you can see that the infinite straight line requires, requires that it cannot be given any orientation. For where does it start? It must be known whether there is a start in order that with respect to this start an orientation can be taken.

On the other hand, it is enough for this infinite straight line to be joined end to end in a ring, to express ourselves in a way that does not imply any geometrical shape but simply a consistency, for us the very fact that we give it the consistency of a ring, there appears something which is of the order of orientation, not on what I called just now this straight line that all of a sudden I turned into a ring, but in the knot itself, for you see – marked it for you each time by a correspondence – (218) that it is by the fact that the individual specified here as being orange or yellow, it is by the fact that it is flattened out in the form of

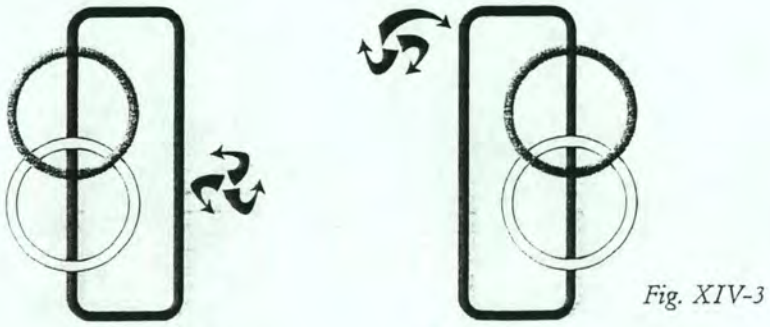

Fig. XIV-3

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a ring, it is by this fact and by none other, that there appears here this orientation that I can call laevogyratory. If I force myself to follow the direction that each of the three indicates to me, outside of a knot that they make, while from the other side, the rings appear quite differently namely, here dextrogyratory. It is in so far as here we have the things under this form that we can say that what, in the other, is presented under a certain mode is precisely, in the other form, inverted.

It is clear that it is inasmuch as we take things in this form that we have here a dextrogyratory form, just as it is inasmuch as we take the things here under the edge, under the opposite side to the point where we have folded back the orange line, that we have here a laevogyratory form. That means that what appears here, is something of that order. At the same time we note the following: that as compared to what is inverted, namely, the orange line, there is inversion of the side: here the blue line is on the right, here it is on the left, and it is in a relationship of extremity with respect to the orange line that the green line finds itself. Namely, that it is easy to understand, this is what I tried to show you the last time, namely, that in folding back one of these rings of string with respect to the two others, what we find of course is that it is elsewhere, elsewhere on one of these circles, namely, [*a slip*] the one here, the green, that it is the one that is here, the blue, that it is elsewhere we find that we cut it, in other words, that the yellow line [*previously called orange*] inasmuch as it is the one that we have folded back, is continued and cuts.

There is then every time something that changes, that changes in the orientation of the knot. Each time we pass from one quadrant, from one quadrant into another, there is something that changes in the orientation of the knot. And that is why the knot, the knots are specified four by four, that they have this relationship among one another that I qualified the other day as tetrahedral, and where I wanted to recognise what is involved in the mode of four places

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reserved for the modes of identification, the identification called sexed. It is obviously striking that you see that today again, is that not so, I found myself, even in this ultra simple form, in difficulty, is this not enough to make you sense, in difficulty in demonstrating it myself (219) in writing, what is involved in the effect, the effect of folding back, inasmuch as already what is at stake is one of the terms chosen as such and in a way previously distinguished from the two others.

It is certain that it is in this that this object of writing presents us with something particularly gripping: it is that here is a writing that in a way, I will say, we master with difficulty; it is striking enough that already in a second phase, namely, after having believed that I would get out of it easily by this artifice, that I found myself anew, perplexed, entangled with this writing. Is there not here the sign of this something that has presided over the aversion, the quite striking aversion in mathematics, an aversion that happened with respect to what the knots are. For after all, it would not have been inconceivable that this something which was drawn in a developed geometry which effectively functioned just like a writing, a writing by which science was initiated, I mean in Greek geometry, it is quite striking to see that this might also have been able, to be in an effort concerning the squeezing for example that is produced when we set aside here this knot with respect to the line which serves to constitute it properly speaking as knot, just as in folding it here, we see quite manifestly that we squeeze something, we squeeze, what can we say except what is at stake, namely, something squeezed, there is nothing more to be said about it. And it is this squeezed that is in question, that is in question in this function through which, in order to say the relationship of the Symbolic, of the Imaginary and of the Real, I say that it is here that there is taken up something, something which, on this occasion, is indeed in effect the subject. Again I must try to illuminate this something, try to illuminate it in a way by individualising what indeed each one of these rings indeed is, namely, how the Symbolic differs from the Imaginary and differs from the Real.

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To illuminate very quickly, as best I can, no more, this lantern, I would say that the Symbolic, I would put forward that the Symbolic is of the order of the One, this One that, the last time, I already put forward to you as constituting in the logical order that our friend Boole tries to construct as being the universe. I pointed out to you at the same time that there is something disputable in this; for to make (220) the universe something of One is already to posit a hypothesis over against this and along the very line that Boole proceeds in posing the formula:

$$x(1-x) = 0$$

Namely: *everything that is not x, is what is x subtracted from the Universe, and their product, their intersection, their encounter is strictly equal to zero.* It is on this foundation that Boole believes he is able to advance a formalisation of what is involved in logic.

As opposed to this, I propose, I propose to give to the One the value of that in which, through my discourse, there consists, there consists phallic enjoyment in so far as it is what creates an obstacle to the sexual relationship. It is inasmuch as phallic enjoyment – and there, let us say that I make an organ of it, I suppose it to be incarnated by what, in the man, corresponds to it as organ – it is inasmuch as this enjoyment takes on this privileged emphasis, privileged in such a way that it stamps itself on all our experience, our analytic experience. It is around this, because it is only there, around, around the sexed individual himself who supports it, it is inasmuch as this enjoyment is privileged that the whole of analytic experience is organised. And I propose, and I propose that it should be to it that there is referred the function of the One in the logical formalisation as Boole promotes it.

In other words, that if there is signifier – and signifier is not sign. The signifier is distinguished from the sign in the fact that we can make the sign circulate in an objective world. The sign is what goes from the emitter to the receiver and which to the receiver gives a sign of the

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emitter. But it is quite otherwise in the form of what I called the message received in an inverted form that the signifier is posited as what it is in so far as it has a relationship to another signifier that it gives rise to a subject, namely, in its configuration. What is suggested by this, is that in so far as something which is designated in Boole by an *x*, something is precipitated as signifier, this signifier is in a way stolen, subtracted, borrowed from phallic enjoyment itself. And it is in so far as the signifier is the substitute for it that the signifier itself is found to create an obstacle to there ever being written what I called the sexual relationship, I mean something which was the supposed to be able to be written *xR* and then *y*. Namely, that in no way can there be written in a mathematical way what is involved in what is presented as a function with regard to the phallic function itself. I mean that it is in so far as what is written is:

$$\exists x \,.\, \overline{\Phi x}$$

negation of the phallic function itself and completely opposite that there is no such thing, namely,

$$\overline{\exists x} \,.\, \overline{\Phi x}$$

that there does not exist an *x* to deny the function of *x*, to be opposed to it, and that inversely I introduce at the level of the Universal this something which, sticking to the phallic function, is characterised on the one hand by a universal quantifier, an inverted capital $\forall$ – you know that this is how it is written:

$$\forall x \,.\, \Phi x$$

but in the other, it puts a negative bar, namely, it says that there is somewhere a function that is distinguished from it by being 'not-all' (*pas-toute*).

$$\overline{\forall x} \,.\, \Phi x$$

Not all, what does that mean? The least that can be said is that there are two of them. It is in the measure where at the level where there is articulated this 'not all', there is not only one enjoyment. Here do not go too quickly, here do not go too quickly and do not start supposing

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that what I am distinguishing, is something or other like that which sexually would correspond to this so called division of enjoyment called clitoral from an enjoyment called vaginal. That is not what is at stake. What I am talking about is this distinction that must be made between phallic enjoyment in so far as in the speaking being it predominates and that it is from there that there has been stolen the whole function of significance. That there is a distinction to be made between this prevalent enjoyment in so far as it creates an obstacle to what is involved in the sexual relationship, that there is a distinction to be made between this enjoyment and that which, alongside – I introduced it to you the other day, I think sufficiently with what was involved in the tree, the tree described as that of science, of the science of Good and Evil – there is the fact that undoubtedly the animal, the animal is distinguished by subsisting not simply in a body, but that this body as such is only identified, only has identity, not as (222) has been said from all time traditionally, of thought, of this something or other which by the fact that it thinks would make it be, but from the fact that it enjoys itself. I mean that there is not only this apperception, apprehension, sensation, pressure, touch, sight, or any other mode of appropriation through the senses, it is only in so far as it consists and that it consists in a body, what is at stake is an enjoyment and an enjoyment which is found according to our experience to be of a different order than what is involved in phallic enjoyment.

This is how I began from the beginning of my teaching by authenticating, by making original from the imaginary relation, made reference to what I would call the homology, the resemblance, precisely this part which is so hesitant, when it is the speaking being that is at stake, the homology of bodies. That in the animal we must clearly note that phallic enjoyment whatever it may be does not have the same prevalence, does not have the same weight, the same weight in a way of opposition that it has with respect to enjoyment in so far as two bodies enjoy one another. This is the break through which there is damaged, as one might say, in analytic experience everything that is

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organised about love. That if one speaks as I said, I recalled it earlier, if one speaks about the knot, it is to make an allusion to the embrace, to the hug. But very different is the way in which there irrupts into the life of each one this enjoyment which, either belongs, as one might say to one of the bodies, but to the other only appears in the form, as I might say, of reference to another as such, even if something in the body can give it a slight support, I mean at the level of this organ which is called the clitoris.

It is in so far as we must conceive of the Symbolic as stolen, subtracted from the order One of phallic enjoyment and in so far as the relationship of bodies *qua* two, by this very fact, cannot but go by way of the reference, the reflection onto something which is different to the Symbolic, which is distinct from it, and it is to know what here and now appears of the three in the slightest writing. What language in a way sanctions, is the fact that in its formalisation it requires something other than the simple homophony of the saying. The fact is that it is in a letter, and that is why the signifier shows, shows this precipitation through which the speaking being can have access to the Real. It is inasmuch as from all time every time it was a matter of (223) configuring something which is supposed to be in a way the encounter of what is emitted, of what is emitted as a complaint, as a statement of the truth, every time it is a matter of everything that is involved in this half-saying, an alternating, contrasting, half-saying, an alternating chant of what leaves the speaking being separated in two halves every time this is what is at stake, it is always, it is always from a reference to writing that what can be situated in language finds its Real, and it is inasmuch as I will try to push further for you this reference to the Real, to the Real as third, that I will leave that for today, apologising for not having been able to advance further.

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Seminar 5: Wednesday 8 January 1974

I wish you a Happy New Year, huh, even though naturally several people, I imagine, have here, have hear begun it badly. I am one of them moreover. I am one of them. So that after all, my inclination was to excuse myself because of the fact that the Tuesday with which the year began was not because of that fact a true Tuesday and to put you off to the next one. It would have been a good way of getting rid of my duty today... I still remain, it must be said very tempted by it, there is only one thing that holds me back, I must tell you, it is that today, you are less numerous. I am so grateful to you that it is this perhaps that is going to push me, like that, as best I can, to state some of the things that, necessarily, I continue to cogitate, like that, by habit. The fact also that this morning, my secretary was disturbed a lot, with people asking if I was going to do it, effectively, and since I had not confided in her, she had answered yes. Among them, my God, were some of the best, if I am to believe certain names that were reported to me. So then since they also put themselves out, these, the better ones, I am going to try to have a go at it.

So then let us start from this, let us start from something that I do not hold to particularly: namely, that words have a meaning, and that it is a fact, whatever the problem may be, starting from this fact, of knowing where to lodge them. This indeed is what I have done, lodge these words of course, I must all the same chew things for you, this indeed is the effort that I made, that I made the last time, starting from

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(78) love. It is a fact that I started from the fact that the word exists. And this is why the thing, the thing is to be conceived as possible. Which is expressed in my saying (*mon dire*) by the fact that the thing, the love thing, is founded, that it is only founded – since it is simply a matter of its possibility – it is founded as I said by ceasing to be written. Namely, on what remains from the fact that it ceases to be written. What remains of it, I articulated since the time, since this almost infinite time for me, that I have been repeating myself, namely, the letter *d'(a)mur*. The letter *d'(a)mur* in so far as, in fact, it constitutes nothing other than a pile (*tas*). A little pile, a *petit a* of habits, not much more. At least this is how I read, translated into Italian, my famous object with which this *petit a* of the letters *d'(a)mur* has only of course the slightest of relationships.

All this does not prevent me saying things which take their air of seriousness from the fact that I am expressing something of the serial. It is a fact, also, that I change the order of the series that is repeated, in other words, that is called ordinary. Is that all that is involved in my saying, changing the ordinary order? It is to this that I would like today to contribute an argument. An argument to give meaning to functions that are more purely cardinal. This is what I am trying to do with my Borromean knot. As you know, this distinction between cardinal and ordinal, it… – the step was taken only thanks to set theory, namely, thanks to Cantor. How can this be of use to us as regards the exploration of a new discourse, as you know, this is how I designate the analytic discourse. This discourse announced itself from a decanting of meaning.

What does decanting (*décantage*) mean on this occasion? It is properly – and this is why the metaphor of decanting can be sustained here – it is properly about the condensation of what, in terms of meaning, is concentrated by this discourse from the fact that meaning – the meaning of words – are only a garb (*appareil*) for what we will call if you don't mind nothing more than sexual coitus. This is what is

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new in analytic discourse. And this indeed is what must be said, if indeed it is what, from this discourse is necessary, it is only necessary in this – and that is why I inflect in this way the meaning of *necessary* – that its characteristic, in this discourse, is that this discourse does not cease to write it.

Is it true for all that? It is true with the sort of truth that establishes this discourse, namely, a truth of the middle *(moyen)*, if in fact some of you remember the way in which the last time, and precisely (79) concerning love, I distinguished through what is involved in the Borromean knot, the function of the middle as such. The middle precisely, is what only makes a knot because there is an order. Namely, that, to take these 'ones' that the rings of string constitute, let us say quite simply, there is only one of the three which, when cut liberates the two others. This is what you see in a chain of three, with three ordinary links, there is only one of the three that frees the two others. The distinction between this chain, this chain which tangibly, it seems, is of the order of the Symbolic: a subject, a verb and whatever you wish, a complement; a 2, 3, can, having this order, this order that there is something which acts as middle, and this is the very thing that is called, with the ambiguity of this word, the verb – one could begin with the complement and finish with the subject – but it is the verb that acts as middle.

And in this way it can be glimpsed, at the limit, that language for its part is not made of words; for it is the link by which the middle establishes this unity between the first and the last which only has to be broken for the meaning to disappear; this indeed is what shows that language is not made of words, and how what is called – for it is this and nothing more that is called a proposition – a proposition is at least a relative effacing – I am saying that: 'at least relative', to facilitate your access to things – it is the effacing of the meaning of words. Which is not true of the tongue, *lalangue* as a jingle, you know that I write it in word, *lalangue* if it, is made up of meaning, namely, how,

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through the ambiguity of each word, it lends itself, it lends itself to this function that meaning trickles down in it. It does not trickle down in your sayings. Certainly not. Nor in mine either. This indeed is why, this indeed is why meaning is not reached so easily. And this trickling down of which I speak, how imagine it? Make no mistake. How imagine it if it is a trickling that little cups finally bring to a halt? For the tongue is that. And this is even the meaning to give to what ceases to be written. It would be the very meaning of words, which in this case is suspended. This is how the mode of the possible emerges from it. That when all is said and done, something which has been said ceases to be written, this indeed is what shows that at the limit everything is possible with words, precisely on this condition that they no longer have a meaning.

And the very thing that I am aiming at this year, is that you should not (80) confuse words with letters, since it is only letters that found the necessary, as impossible, in an articulation which is that of logic. If my way of situating the modes is correct, namely, that what does not cease to be written, the necessary – what does not cease to be written, the necessary – is the very thing that necessitates the encounter with the impossible, namely, what does not cease not to be written, which can only be tackled by letters. This indeed what only allows us to tackle by some saying the structure that I designated as the Borromean knot; that is why, the last time, love was a good test for the precariousness of these modes. This love is brought into existence which is indeed the result of its very meaning, by the impossible of the sexual bond with the object, the object whatever may be its origin, the object of this impossibility. It requires as I might say, this root of the impossible. And this is what I said by articulating this principle: that love is courtly love.

It is obvious that the *(a)musant* in it, if I may express myself thus, is the love of the neighbour in so far as it is sustained by emptying love of its sexual meaning. It is in ceasing to write the sexual meaning of

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the thing, that one makes it, as is tangible, that one makes it possible. Namely, in so far, it must indeed be said, as one ceases to write it. Once the thing, love, has happened it is obvious that it is starting from there that it imagines itself necessary. This indeed is the meaning of the love letter, which does not cease to be written but only in so far as it preserves its meaning, namely, not for long.

This is how there intervenes the function of the Real. Love thus proves to be contingent in its origin, and at the same time there is proved the contingency of the truth with regard to the Real. For these modes are veritable and even definable in fact by our pinpointing of writing. They quarter, as I might say, the verification of love, and in a way that by one of its faces, it is certain, founds what is called wisdom. Except for the fact that wisdom cannot in any way be what results from these considerations on love. Wisdom only exists from elsewhere. For in love it is of no use.

For my knot, described as Borromean, and the fact that I strive to make my saying equal to what it comprises, if what it knots together as I state, is properly the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, this only stems from the fact that it commands what I state only by the fact (81) that I tie them with the Borromean knot, that each one of the three is only produced from a consistency which is the same for the three. Namely, that from the angle that I take them this year in my saying, it is only writing that distinguishes them. Which here is tautology, if all three are not written, I have just said that they are the same, it is only writing that makes them three. What must be clearly articulated, is that in this writing of the very knot – because reflect carefully, this knot is only some strokes written on a board – it is in this writing itself that there resides the happening of my saying. My saying in so far as this year I could pinpoint it by carrying out what we could call *édupation*, if in fact it is by putting the stress on the fact that the non dupes err, which does not prevent this from not meaning that any old dupery does not err, but that it is by yielding to this dupery of

Not in Dictionary
the double of the ines.

making you into a dupe.

TAUTOLOGY = the contextual repetition, usually of the same word or phrase, but occasionally of the same idea in different words, esp. as a fault of style.

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a writing in so far as it is correct, that there can be correctly situated the different themes of what emerges, emerges as meaning, precisely from analytic discourse.

At this point I should right away get on with it right away, if something did not tell me that you are already so... groggy, I would say, groggy from this saying, that I must first of all make a filter. which is a mode of writing specified by mathematics at the very source of topology, a filter from which words rediscover their meaning, I mean the way in which they function in the sexual order, which order, it is patent, is only the source of an ordinary. In other words to justify, not them, the terms of this order, but this order of them (*d'eux*) except for the fact that you are going to see it – because this is what today I have to say not knowing who will follow me – this knot has a quite different function, quite different than founding this order, whatever order in which you could enchain the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. What we must find, is not the diversity of their consistency, it is this consistency itself, namely, what one cannot say, this consistency itself in so far as it no longer diversifies them but only that it knots them. To emancipate you then, since I presume not unreasonably that I have stunned (*sonné*) you, I must *raie-sonne* with you. Namely, I must try again.

The Imaginary is distinguished, is distinguished in meaning from the fact that it is imagined, as someone might say – if in fact that they say it among you – you must all the same look at it more closely, to say then that it is not self-evident, and for this reason which perhaps you (82) may be lacking: that it is not the privilege of the Imaginary. For the Symbolic, what else am I doing except trying to get you to imagine it? Allow me to believe that I am getting there. As regards the Real, well, that's ok, that is what is at stake this year, it is a matter of seeing what Real there is, precisely, in this Borromean knot. And this is why I began, began in my second articulation before you, in my second seminar as this is called, I began by saying that there is no

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initiation. There is no initiation. I mean that there is only the veil of meaning, there is only meaning in what is operculated, as I might say, by a cloud: *nuptiae* is only articulated when all is said and done from *nubes*. This is what veils the light which is all there is in the way *nuptiae*, the rites of marriage, sustain their metaphor.

There is nothing other behind except what one must hold onto, with the support of the semblance, certainly, in so far as this semblance is similar (*semblable*) to the articulation of what can only be said in the form of a stated truth.

Namely, as necessary, that is to say incessant, unveiling. The articulation is the knot in so far as the light does not illuminate it, that there is no enlightenment, much more: that it rejects all light into the Imaginary. And what I state, what I am aiming at this year, is precisely to tell you that the Imaginary, because it is itself of the order of the veil, is not for all that darkened by it. Consistency is of a different order to the obvious. It is constructed from something of which I think that by supporting it with rings of string, there will get across something of what I am telling you: that it is much more a hollowing out.

The circle, for its part, lends to intuition, it radiates. It is not a matter of obscuring it. It is what makes *the One*. It is a matter of receiving the effect of the knot. To receive the effect as from its Real, namely, that it is not *One*. The Real of the Borromean knot, is to hold together only by, I do not dare to say 'being', it is not three: it forms a plait. It forms a plait, and it is here that there must be seen how what I put forward earlier, namely, that the order is not essential in it, is here the important point.

You must clearly sense that it is by ranking them in threes, *qua* cardinal number – I beg your pardon for the aridity of what I have to say to you today – this, which is proper to the three, implies no

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ordination. No matter how it seems to you, namely, that 1, 2, 3, begins with 1 – no matter how it appears to you, it is not possible to (83) properly order 1, 2, 3 on this simple condition that it is repeated, and this is what happens in the Borromean knot. But it is not simply because of the Borromean knot, it is because of the cardinal numbers 1, 2, 3 whether they are knotted or not.

What does that mean, what I have just said?

It is that in threes, cardinal, one can only – on this single condition that there are not two of the same in succession – one can only manage to write them by finding all the orders such that they can, can be cogitated by a combinatorial.

Write on the board 1, 2, 3, - 1, 2, 3, nothing prevents you from reading them, on the single condition of taking it in the palindromic order, namely, back to front, from left to right, instead of from right to left, instead of from left to right: 1, 3, 2. This means, starting from the knot, from the Borromean knot, something that I am going to try to put on the board for you – give me a piece of chalk – here is how I simplify the Borromean knot. It will be enough for you, to see that this indeed is what is at stake, to complete it in this way, namely, what is summarised by three central strokes in so far as these are what mark how the knot holds together.

I turn this knot over. What is that going to give us? What is proper to a knot, when it is flattened out, an essential dimension. Because the Borromean knot, I think I pointed it out to you when I showed you a

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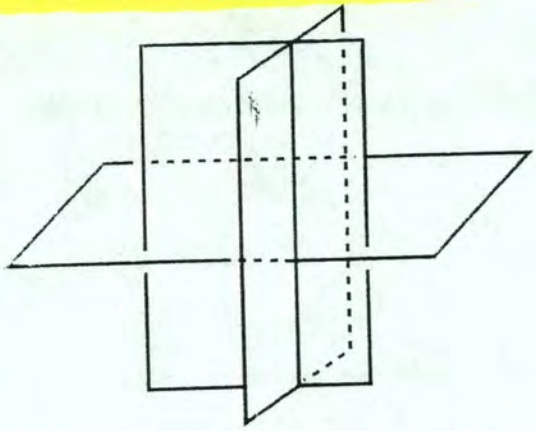
little construction in cubes that I brought I no longer know what time, the last time or perhaps the second last time – is made like that: and to avoid the headache of making these little interruptions it should be noted that it is completed by this, this is what constitutes it, it has in, let us say, the three planes on which my little construction was situated, it has on the three planes, complete symmetry, you see



V·2

(84) clearly that here this one is to be put, to make clearly sensed as being underneath the one that cuts it, it is from a flattening out that there comes from the other writing that I gave of the Borromean knot. What is to be said of it from the moment when, having flattened it out, I turn it over? There must be by the simple fact linked to the fact that the writing implies that the 'over-crossing' [English], the *croisement supérieur* should be written in this way, namely, that it cuts what is the 'under-crossing' the *croisement par en dessous*, what is that going to give if we turn it over? What was not underneath comes on top. Well then, I think that it will not be necessary for me to complete, to complete these three strokes, for you to clearly see that, by turning over the knot, the Borromean knot, what you are going to find when all is said and done, is something which is distinguished from the fact that it is not its mirror image, that you are going to find, of course, as it would be, for example, for the orientation of each of these circles, if you orientate them, I am not going to go into it yet, if you orientate... any circle whatsoever, if you turn it over, what you have is its mirror image. Far from it, when you turn over the Borromean knot,

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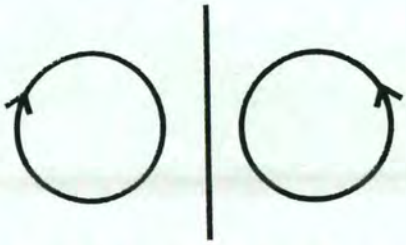
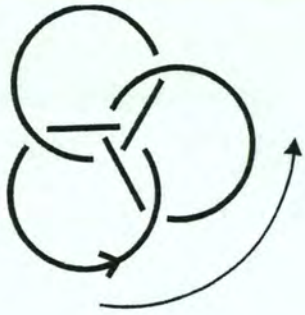


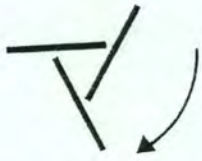
V - 3

(83) you have a... a completely different aspect which in no case represents the mirror image of the first aspect. Far from the direction, the orientation as it is defined, for example very simply, by a watch, make no mistake, the clockwise direction, if you turn over the watch, become the inverse direction, namely, the mirror image. On the contrary, Borromean knot remains what it is when it has been turned



V · 4

over, namely, that the second image, the turned-over image, is exactly in the same direction as the first, namely, laevogyratory. You clearly count on the fact that there can be another direction, namely, this one, which would be *dextro*, namely, the clockwise direction.



V - 5

Given what I pointed out to you earlier, namely, that the order in the three – and by the fact that precisely, it is enough to invert the direction of 1, 2, 3, to go in the palindromic direction to find in it any order whatsoever, you find here a distinction between the effect of order with what you will allow me to call the effect of the knot, or in other words the effect of nodality. This is why it is appropriate, that it

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TERNARITY = A FUNCTION HAVING A THREE ARGUMENTS

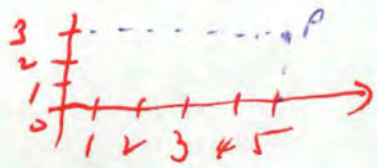
is appropriate for you to remember what I stated first, namely, that it is the pure and simple ternarity of the knot, namely, that the import of this ternarity is only sustained by the fact that we only made them first ...that we only took them from the angle of what does not distinguish (86) them among themselves by any quality that there is no diversification of the Imaginary with respect to the Symbolic and the Real, that their substance is not diverse, that we do not make qualities of them, that we will simply consider them under the species of this consistency which makes each of them one.

Since I use the word *quality* which is a feminine noun, should I say that their quality is *une*, it would be a good opportunity to set out here around this one what is involved in terms of *one* if we take it as *qualificative*. Does *lalangue*, *lalangue* in so far as it has a meaning, does *lalangue* allow *un* and *une* to be considered equal? Is *une* not a different mode of *un*? It must be said that this would be a rather comic angle to make duality re-enter at the level of the one. *Yad'lun*, I said, but also when I said it that it is that with which there is founded what? Uniquely – it was the meaning of what I put forward at the end of my seminar last year – uniquely the numerable, namely, $\aleph_0$, and nothing more, namely, what says it is a One, but in so far as saying 'it is a One,, is to cut it off from any ordination. It is to take it – and this is what only Cantor permits – under its purely cardinal aspect.

DENOTES A QUALITY = aleph 0

Certainly, you will tell me, it can only do it – if in fact you were to say something to me – it can only be done by alienating its unity in the set, as a result of which the elements preserve nothing more of this unity, except that of being open to the fact that one can count them, namely, subjective computation; which does not prevent the objectivity of the one, I will say, only giving rise to a question by the fact that it is surely not without an answer. And this answer is precisely why I state that it is in the three.

OBSERVATION: THE VERTICAL OR Y CO-ORDINATE OF A POINT IN A TWO-DIMENSIONAL SYSTEM OF CARTESIAN CO-ORDINATES, EQUAL TO THE DISTANCE OF THE POINT FROM THE X AXIS MEASURED PARALLEL TO THE Y-AXIS. FOR EXAMPLE IN THE FIGURE BELOW, THE ORDINATE OF P IS 3



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What does the 3 make of the 1, if there is no 2? Is it simply because there are 3 of them, $\aleph_0$ is already there? It is certain that if I state that there is no 2, because this would be to inscribe at the same time in the Real the possibility of the relationship as it is founded from the sexual relationship, is it not only through the three and as I wrote it the other time on the board by the difference between one and three that there proceeds this 2, is it – all of this brings us to asking the question – it was required, for us to take this step, that $\aleph_0$ ceased not to be written? In other words that it is contingency, the happening of Cantor's saying that alone allows us to have a glimpse of what is involved, not in (87) number, but of what constitutes in its ternarity the relationship of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. Must we then from the contingency of this saying of Cantor go to the necessary of the fact that this $\aleph_0$ no longer ceases to be written, that it no longer ceases henceforth to be written in order that there should subsist what? Nothing other than a notion of truth.

The truth in effect, up to the present in logic, could only ever consist in contradicting. It is in the dualism of the true and the false. The true only being supposed by knowledge, in so far as knowledge imagines itself – this is its meaning – as the connection between two elements. And it is precisely why it is imaginary if the One, if a One, a third One, does not come to connect it at the cost of making an addition to it. An addition not of the same categorical circle, not of the same order, as I was saying earlier, but coming from nodality.

Well then, since, today, I had to force myself to lead you to there, you will allow me to stay with it, and after all, if there are some people that it discouraged, I do not see for my part any disadvantage, since the only reason that I spoke to you today, was because you were less numerous.

NODALITY = NODE = 1. A POINT AT WHICH TWO OR MORE BRANCHES OF A GRAPH MEET.
2. ANOTHER WORD FOR A VERTEX OF A TREE, NETWORK OR DIGRAPH.

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Seminar 6: Wednesday 15 January 1974

Voilà. Ah! You saw me the last time a little bit overcome by your number. Since it is... that leaves me with some hope that it will reduce. So then I continue.

The trouble with this number is that – I ~~was~~ thought about it earlier – I am... I am led, anyway, every time to... to be inclined, anyway, towards the fact that if I am speaking to you, this can only be for the first time. Namely, that it is a notion of order. This notion of order obviously embarrasses me and it is what I try to get out of by showing you something else, namely, that there is nodality.

In order to say it, is that not so, the question is to know what unconscious knowledge – there, inevitably, I see clearly that... I see clearly that I am making a link, namely, that I posit unconscious knowledge. I posit it as what works. And what works can work – there is no kind of grip on work except in a discourse. It is a matter of founding what is working in the analytic discourse. If there were not this social bond and this social bond in so far as it is founded by a discourse, the work would be ungraspable. Let us say, with the irony that it involves, that in nature, work is not done. So then, it seems indeed, anyway – this moreover is what grounds nature – that the idea we have of it, is that it is the place, it is the place where work is not done. Knowledge, knowledge *qua* unconscious, in so far as it works in us, seems then to imply a supposition. It is a supposition, you will

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tell me, for which we have no need to force ourselves, since in short, (90) we ourselves are the subject, the *hupokeimenon*, all that means exactly the same thing, namely, that it is supposed that something exists, which is called – that I in fact designated as – the speaking being. Which is a pleonasm, because there is no being except from speaking; if there were not the verb to be, there would be no being at all. Nevertheless, nevertheless, we know well that the word *to exist* has taken on a certain weight. A weight in particular though the quantifier, the quantifier of existence. The quantifier of existence, in reality, has completely displaced the meaning of this word *ex-sist*, and if I even can write as I have written it: ex hyphen sist, it is precisely there how... how... how there is marked the originality of this quantifier.

Only there you are. The originality only displaces the order, namely, that what ex-sists, is what is supposed to be original. It is starting from existence that we find ourselves questioning again what is involved, what is involved in supposition. A simple displacement, in short. And what I am trying, what I am trying to, what I am trying to do, this year, huh, with my non-dupes, is to see what one must, in short, be a dupe of for all of that to hold together, and for it to hold together in a consistency. And that is why I am introducing this ternary, or more exactly that I notice that by starting, because of having started from this ternary, of the Symbolic the Imaginary and the Real, I ask a question, or more exactly, since for every question, for every question it is from the answer that it started... from the answer which, in maintaining, in maintaining as distinct, the Real, makes us ask the question: where is this knowledge situated, this unconscious knowledge that... which we are worked over by on in the analytic discourse. It is quite certain that it is the discourse that makes us stick, the psychoanalytic discourse, that makes us stick to this knowledge in a way that has no precedent, has no precedent in History.

$\frac{0}{S_2}$

Saying the same thing twice.

The old debate of Lacan that there is a substance underneath. Hupokeimenon is Aristotle's word for Subject. The word has been lost in favour of Cogito – a subject. The substance is not the res.

Substance became a dominant notion but Le Gaufey that is not the way Speaking Beings operate.

Quantifier Logic – Instead of saying "all men are mortal" – you get busy for it by saying "there is no man who is not mortal" – He includes them in the formula of seduction.

$\forall x \ldots$

$\exists x \ldots$

New Logic of Quantifiers – Frege – there is no man who is not mortal. 'Exist' does not mean it in the new Logic. We would not have a subject without language – He wants to be.

The non-dupes err. ∴ You must be a dupe of something – i.e. you have to become a dupe of the unconscious knowledge

The History of Thought before Freud →

Modal Logic (Aristotle yes not)

Necessary	Contingent
Possible	Impossible

Pro (or Dark)

there exists does not mean there is a substance. Ex-sist → it emerges from something as the Nothing.

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Sanity does not cease to be written
" cease not to be written

etc.

Lacan bases the nature of love on the contingent
" also " " sexual relation " "
(the gap is not in of Quantifying Logic but the
greatest break-through in the 19th century.

The modal Values in Book are
- divine
- human
-

etc. They link not Aristotelian
modal Logic

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Why after all could we not consider this discourse itself as contingent since it starts from a saying *(un dire)*, from a saying that constitutes a happening, the one that I am trying to… that I am trying to prolong before you, and the question of the contingency of this saying, is indeed what we are turning around. If this saying is only contingent, and moreover this is what we have to account for, where is the Real situated? Is the Real never anything but supposed?

(91) In this knot, this knot that I put forward, in this knot, this knot made up of the Symbolic and of the Imaginary in so far as it is simply something which with, with, makes three, that knots then, it is the Real that is at stake. The Real stems from the fact that they are three. Why is the Real three? It is a question that I ground, that I justify from the fact that there is no sexual relationship. In other words, that I specify, that I specify from something that can be written, as a result of which, as a result of which what is written, is that, for example, there does not exist an *f*, an *f* such that between *x* and *y* which here signify the foundation of such and such speaking beings, to be chosen from the male part or the female, this, function which would constitute the relationship, this function of the man with respect to the woman, this function of the woman with respect to the man, there does not exist one that can be written.

$$\overline{\exists f} \cdot f(x, y)$$

This is the thing, the thing that I am putting forward before you, this is what, somewhere – because I repeat myself like everyone else, you are not the only ones who notice it – this is what I already stated under the name of the Freudian thing; it is there in all its length and breadth and of course, it passed completely unnoticed for a simple reason, which is that we remain in this Imaginary. In this Imaginary which is precisely what is put in question by the slightest experience of the analytic discourse, it is that there is nothing more fuzzy than belonging *(l'appartenance)*, than belonging to one of two sides: the

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one that I designate by *x* and the other by *y*, precisely by the fact, that at the same time I must note that there is no function that links them. So then, it is a matter of knowing how, all the same, it functions, namely, that all the same people fuck within it.

In stating that, I must all the same take off from something which is a... a supposition, a supposition that, there is a subject male or female. This is a supposition that experience quite obviously renders untenable, and which implies that what I am putting forward, that what I am putting forward as a statement by my stating, by the stating of which I am only the subject inasmuch as I am working myself in the analytic discourse, that I must not put the subject under this *x* and under this *y*. It must be then that the statement – and already simply by writing it on the board – it must be then that my statement does not imply a subject. If there is something, if there is something that is found written there, it is that there is no question of a subject except in (92) the function, and precisely that what I am writing is that under this function, precisely because it is denied, there is no existence. The *there does not exist*, means that: there is no function. What is at stake, what is at stake, is to prove that if this function has no existence, this is not simply a contingent matter it is a matter of the impossible.

It is a matter of the impossible, and to prove it is no small matter. It is no small matter because the fact is by simply writing, by simply stating, even only in writing, the thing does not hold up until there is proof of the contrary, namely, until the moment, until the moment where something contingent denies this saying, and by good luck – as I might say - good luck (*bon heur*), the two words separate, are written *f(x,y)*, there is a function which knots the *x* and the *y*, and that it has ceased not to be written.

For it to have ceased not to be written, it must be possible, and up to a certain point it remains so, since what I am putting forward, is that it has ceased to be written. Why would that not begin again? Not only

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is it possible, it is possible that one might write *f(x,y)* but it is clear that people have not deprived themselves of it. To demonstrate the impossible then, one must take one's foundation elsewhere. Elsewhere than in these precarious writings since after all, they have ceased, and that from the moment they have ceased, one might believe that it can start up again. This indeed is the relationship between the possible and the contingent.

By basing myself on the knot so that something of the impossible can be demonstrated, what am I doing? I am basing myself – perhaps the question deserves to be raised – on a topology.

People want order in the relationship between the sexes, but it's not the same order [and] in the psychoanalytic discourse.

Since as regards what is involved in order, well then one can say that it is indeed what, up to the present, has not been lacking, namely, that it is in order to establish order that people support everything that has been able to be put forward about the relationship described as sexual. It is true that as regards this order, people have got their paws in a bit of a tangle in it, and that it is certain that it is not the same, it is not the same order, in any case, that is established, that is established by what analytic discourse puts forward, or appears to put forward, about what concerns the sexual relationship. The order 1, 2, 3, well, there is a 1 that comes first, and it is not by chance – we do not know moreover which comes first – it is not by chance that it is the 1, since the second (93) seconds it and that the third simply results from their addition. This gives a sequence that has been qualified as natural. Which leaves us something to ponder on. Which leaves us something to ponder on all the more because the last time I remarked to you that in writing them in a sequence, the privilege of these first three, in fact it is enough to take them in reverse for every order to be possible. It is enough in effect that there should be 1, 2, 3, or 1, 3, 2, this is what I mean by taking them in reverse, for the six other ways of arranging the 1, 2, 3, to be possible.

This comes back to the point which Solaris did last week

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The idea of a successor, is that not so, and that, in terms of successor there is only one, only one in the natural sequence of numbers, this is an idea that was only separated out rather late, which is rather curious, because it really seemed it was the most tangible, the most real thing there is about the natural sequence. Why should there not be a multitude of successors? It is not self evident. We have a crowd of examples, that of the tree in particular, of the tree that we encounter everywhere, towards our descendants as towards our predecessors, why should the idea of a successor be inherent to a privileged sequence of successors being founded on the fact that there is only one of them?

If you look at a fractal tree you have a whole range of successors. The notion of a natural sequence was only hinted in (19).

That there are three of them in a particular case, a particular privileged case, is certainly related to the fact that there is something of the *One*. *Yad'lun*, that is how I expressed myself. But it is quite imaginable that the three should not be taken in order. That is not new, huh, the famous triangle that the Greeks profited from – the profit that you know – rests on that, and with, and with that, all the geometry that they extracted from it, and through which for a long time the clear idea took priority over the distinct. The clear and distinct ides, as they say! As a result it was *more geometrico*, that things were proved for centuries and that this was an ideal and still remains one. The link between measure and the phenomenon of the shadow (I underline phenomenon), namely, with the Imaginary, in so far as it presupposes light, established this order that is called harmonic, established, founded, everything that is involved in proportion, a proportion which was the only foundation of measure, and established an order, an order which served to construct a Physics.

In the end. All Greek geometry is based on notion of pole to orbit the sun. You get a triangle between Top of pole & the shadow. This is imaginary.

The shadow is a phenomenon & not a noumenon. What happens when the light goes out?

It is from there that there started this idea of supposition. Because, by founding things on this Imaginary, there had to be something else behind: a sub-stance, it is the same thing, it is the same word as supposition, subject and everything that follows from it. This whole (94) business was far, as I might say, far too phenomenal. When I

This is Plato. If you have something in the world there must be something behind it.

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testify, when I say that the knot, is what cogitates me, and that my discourse - in so far as it is the analytic discourse – that my discourse testifies to it, it happens that, because I have taken a few more steps than you, that this knot is Borromean, on this occasion, this knot, but it could be a different one. Even if it were a different one, my question, my question of knowing, of knowing how this is related to what distinguishes topology, to what distinguishes the topology of space founded by the Greeks, space in so far as it gave a prime matter to be disengaged from supposition.

What does topology presuppose? Topology only presupposes, only presupposes, as regards what is involved in space a consistency – you know that or you do not know it, in any case, I cannot give you a course in topology, but it is not ruled out that you might consult a mathematical text in which this notion is elaborated, starting from the abandonment of measure as such, namely, whatever may be the relativity of this measure, since moreover it is only produced from homothety, in order to know the time and the height of the sun, we have nothing except the relationship of the shadow with the stick that projects it, and that it is on a triangle that there rests everything about measure. Topology for its part, elaborates a space which only starts from the following, from the definition of neighbourhood, of proximity, it has the same meaning, it is a definition of the neighbour (*proche*), which starts……from an axiom, namely, that everything that forms part of a topological space, if it is to be put in a neighbourhood, implies that there is something else that is in the same neighbourhood. The pure notion of neighbourhood already implies then triplicity, and is not founded, is not founded on anything that unites each of these triple elements, if not that they belong to the same neighbourhood. It is a space that is only supported from the continuity that is deduced from it, because in topology there are no other relationships described as continuous except those founded on the neighbourhood and at the same time imply what I will call – which is not said, stated, formulated as such in topology – what I will call

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It can be put into any shape

malleability. This is what the mathematicians for their part call continuous distortion. You see that the reference to the continuous is in the word, and joined, stuck, to the word distortion, which, to be more correct is stated as: continuous transformation.

These are also images. But it must be said, they are less well grasped. The fact that I talk about grasping, *Begriff, begrifflich* implies a (95) reference to what is well grasped, namely, solid. The supple is less well grasped, if you take it in your hand. The idea, the idea that grounds topology, mathematically defined, is to tackle what is involved from the fact that it supports, it is topology which, here, supports, it is not a subject that is supposed to it; what topology supports, the idea, is to tackle it without an image, not to suppose to them, not to suppose to these letters, as they ground topology, not to suppose to them anything but the Real. The Real in so far as it does not add… - do you notice that this term is still excessive, since it evokes addition – as it does not add, to what we are able to distinguish as the Imaginary, this suppleness linked to the body, or as Symbolic, the fact of denominating the neighbourhood, the continuity, that it only adds something, the Real, and not from the fact that it is third, but from the fact that all of them make up three. And that this is all the Real they have, nothing more. I mean each and every one. It is the only Real they have. This does not seem much, but it is not nothing.

Very mysterious. Its not clear why the Real should be this.

It is not nothing since, as has been clearly felt from all time, it is precisely on this that the Real was supposed. It is a matter of ousting it from this position of supposition which when all is said and done subordinates it, subordinates it to what one imagines or to what one symbolises. The only Real they have, is that they make up three. Here, three is not a supposition thanks to the fact that we have, thanks to the theory of sets, elaborated the cardinal number as such. What must be seen, what you must support, is the following: it is to put in question, to put in question that it is not a model, which would be of

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the order of the Imaginary. It is not a model because, because with respect to this three, you are not its subject imagining or symbolising it you are, you are squeezed (*coincés*): you are only – *qua* subjects – you are only the patients of this triplicity.

You are the patients, first of all, because, it is already in the tongue. There is no tongue in which the three is not stated. It is in the tongue, and it is also in the functioning that is called language, namely, the logical structure such that, quite naively, in fact, the first one who began in that, for example – the first as far as we know, of course – the first as far as we know, namely, Aristotle, in fact, the one whose writings we have precisely, he had to manipulate the thing with little letters, and it cannot be manipulated without there being three of them. Apart from the following, of course, apart from the fact of course that there remained something of the supposition of the Real, and that he did not believe he could support this Real by any other thing than the particular, the particular which he imagines is the individual, while precisely, in situating it in logic as particular, he clearly shows that of the individual, he only had… a quite imaginary notion. The particular is a logical function and that he gave it as a support to the individual body is very precisely, in fact, the sign that he needed a supposition. A saying that supposes nothing, except that the triple is the Real, I said triple, namely, three, not third, it is in this that there consists the saying that I am constrained to put forward through the question of non-relationship, of non-relationship in so far as it specifically touches what is involved in the subjectifying of the sexual. My saying consists in this Real, in this Real which is what the three insists on, insists to the point of being marked in the tongue.

It is not a matter here of a thought, since *qua* thought it is, as I might say, still virginal; and moreover thought, with respect to what is supported by this advancing of the three, of the three as knot, and as nothing else, thought is only what I earlier called what is cogitated, namely, a black dream, the one in which, commonly, you dwell. For

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if there is something that analytic experience initiates you into, it is that what is closest to lived experience, to lived experience as such, is the nightmare. There is nothing that is more of an obstacle to thought, even to thought that claims to be clear and distinct: learn to read Descartes as a nightmare, that will make you progress a little. How can you even not notice that this guy who says to himself: *I think therefore I am*, is a bad dream?

The happening for its part, the happening is only produced in the order of the Symbolic. There is no happening except the saying. I think that, in the century in which you live, you should all the same be able to see that every day. This flood of information, as I might say, in the midst of which you may be astonished that you still subsist, that you preserve your common sense, namely, that in the last analysis you do not make too much, huh, of what the paper announces every morning. Well, thank God, it runs off you, as they say, like the water off a duck's back... Otherwise, where would you end up? There must indeed all the same be something fallacious, in which alas, the (97) misunderstanding of my saying – I mean the very one that I am giving you here, in so far as I am myself its victim – to which it must then be that a certain saying, the saying about the said, has contributed, for you to be able to believe that in what holds your body together, it is a circulation of information starting from some places or other, first of all from the DNA, as we are told, or from the DN something or other, that it is on this that you are supported, that everything is only, in short ... only a piece of information about which luckily we are warned in fact, that this information only holds up by violating one of the very foundations of that which moreover is built up as energetics, is not all of this also of the order of cogitation? Are we in other words obliged to take account of it when what we have to deal with in politics what we have to deal with, is a type of information whose meaning has no other import than to be imperative, namely, the signifier *One*. It is in order to command us, in other

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words, so that our noses will follow, that all information, in our epoch, is poured out as such.

In what I state to you then about a certain saying, the important thing is nothing other than the consequences that it may have. Again, in order that it may have its consequences, I must take trouble over it. This saying is only veritable – here I am putting it forward in the more than probable case that you have not noticed it - it is only veritable in so far as it constitutes a limit to the import, to the import of what interests us in the very first place, in analytic discourse, in that it puts a limit to the import of the truth.

There was formerly like that an... an office boy who cried out after each one of my seminars, cries which were resumed in: "Why does he not tell us the true about the true?"

This character is well known, there was even confided in him the care of a *Vocabulaire*... I did not say the true about the true, for the reason that I can only say this about it: it is that the true is what contradicts the false. But on the contrary I can say, I can say but again I had to spend some time on it, for there is a time for everything, I can tell the truth about the truth.

The truth is that it cannot be said, since it can only be half-said. The truth is only founded, as I have just said, on the supposition of the false: it is contradiction. It is only grounded on the no. Its statement is only the denouncing of non-truth. It says nothing except by the half-. Let us say the word it is *mi-métique* (mimetic); it is from the (98) Imaginary. And this indeed is why we are forced in my opinion to take this path. It is from the Imaginary in so far as the Imaginary, is the false second, with respect to the Real, in so far as the male, in the speaking being, is not the female, and that he has no other angle from which to posit himself. Only, these are not angles with which we can be satisfied. It has got to the point that one can say that the

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unconscious is defined by this and by nothing but this: that it knows more than this truth, and that the man is not the woman.

Even Aristotle did not object to that! First of all how could he, huh? To say *no man is a woman* would have been really cheeky, especially in his time! So then he didn't do it... if he had said *every man is not a woman*... Huh? Well then you see, huh, you see the meaning that takes on: that of an exception; there are some of them who are not. It is as all that he is not a woman. Here, the $\forall$ of the quantifier, huh, the quantifier of *x*, full stop, and *y* barred:

$$\forall x . \overline{y}$$

Only the annoying thing is that it is not at all true and that it is obvious that it is not true. The only thing that one could write, is that there does not exist an *x* of which one can say that it is not true that to be a man is not to be a woman:

$$\overline{\exists x . \overline{xy}}$$

All of this, of course, it must be noted in passing, presupposes that the *One* is triple. Namely, that, there is the *One* of which one makes the all, namely, what is unified as such, there is the *One* which means any one whatsoever, namely, what I will tell you later, and then there is the unique *One*, which alone grounds the all.

To deny the unique *One*, is the meaning of the bar over the quantifier of existence. As regards any one whatsoever, it must be considered as a pure void. That unconscious knowledge is topological, namely, that it only holds up from the proximity of neighbourhood, not of order, is why I am trying to say, to ground on it that it is nodal. Which is to be expressed by the fact that it is written or is not written. It is written when I write it, when I make the Borromean knot, and when you try at that instant to see how it holds together, namely, that you make of it... that you break one, two others wander off. It is no longer written.

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And it is here that it is seen that the convergence of the nodal and the modal is initiated.

(99) So then this unconscious knowledge is not supported by the fact that it insists, but by the traces that this insistence leaves. Not of the truth, but of its repetition in so far as it is *qua* truth that it is modulated. Here I must introduce what grounds neighbourhood as such. Neighbourhood as such is founded on the notion of open. Topology immediately plays this card. It is on sets as open that it is founded. And this indeed is why it tackles, it tackles from the correct angle the fact that the class does not close. Namely, that it accepts the paradox, the paradox which is only a paradox because of predicative logic, namely, that if logic simply renounced being, namely, if propositional logic were purely and simply crossed out, there would be no problem, the problem, if there is one, the problem designated as paradox, being simply this: that the class Man is not a man. All the paradoxes come down to that.

What does that mean, except that at the limit what we can designate as Man is an open set, which is obvious?

So then let us clearly see that the truth has a limit on one side, and that is why it is half saying. But on the other side it is limitless, it is open. And that indeed is why unconscious knowledge can inhabit it, because unconscious knowledge is an open set.

You see, you see, I am flaunting it, huh, that love plagues me. You too, of course. But not like me! Yeah…that is even why, a parenthesis, your number makes me uncomfortable: for some time, I can no longer identify you to a woman. That pisses me off.

Good love, I will say then since – you will excuse me, that this plagues me – love is the truth, but only in so far as it is starting from it, starting from a cut, that there begins a different knowledge than

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propositional knowledge, namely, unconscious knowledge. It is the truth in so far as it cannot be said about the subject, in so far as what is supposed, as what is supposed to be able to be known about the sexual partner. Love is two half-sayings that do not overlap. And this is what gives it its fatal character. It is the irremediable division. I mean why it cannot be remedied (*remédier*), which implies, which implies that the '*médier*' might already be possible. And precisely, it is not only irremediable, but without any mediation. It is the connectiveness between two knowledges in so far as they are irremediably distinct. (100) When that happens, it creates something … quite privileged. When the two unconscious knowledges overlap that makes an awful hotchpotch.

And here, I am going to put forward, at the end of this speech (*laïus*) this indeed is the proper word – I am going to put forward something which… is like that, anyway, that settles things: masculine knowledge, in the speaking being, is irremediably a track (*une erre*); it is a cut, initiating a closing, precisely, that of the start, this is not its privilege; but it starts in order to close; and it is because it does not get there that it ends up by closing without noticing it. This masculine knowledge, in the speaking, is the ring of string. It goes around in circles. In it there is something of the *One* at the start, as a stroke that is repeated moreover without being counted, and by turning round in circles it closes, without even knowing there are three of these rings. How can it, how can we suppose that it gets there, to know some little thing about this elementary distinction. Well then, luckily, for that, there is a woman. I already told you that the woman – naturally this is what results from what I already wrote on the board, that the woman does not exist – but a woman … can happen, when there is a knot, or rather a plait.

It is a curious thing, the plait, is only produced from the fact that it imitates the male speaking being, because it can imagine him, it sees him strangled by these three categories that suffocate him. He is the

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only one who does not know it up to then. She sees him imaginarily, but it is an imagination of his unity, namely, of what the man identifies himself with. Not of his unity as unconscious knowledge, because unconscious knowledge remains rather open. So then, with this unity, she completes a plait. To make a Borromean knot, as I told you, six gestures are necessary and six gestures thanks to which, thanks to which they are in the same order, except for the fact that precisely, nothing allows them to be recognised. That indeed is why one must make six of them, namely, exhaust the order of permutations two by two, and know in advance that one must not make more, otherwise one makes mistakes. This indeed is why, in fact, a woman is not at all necessarily trained (*dressée*), so that it is not at all necessarily with the same element that she completes the round when all is said and done. That is even why she remains a woman, among others, because she is defined by the plait that she is capable of, well then, this plait, it is not at all inevitable that she knows that it is at the end of six that it holds together to make a Borromean knot. It is not at all sure that…she knows either that the three has a relationship to the (101) Real, she may lack the distinction, so that it makes a knot, as I might say that is still more knotted, from a unit still more one. In the best case, huh, in the best case, it may be that…it only makes one, of cord, of ring of string when all is said and done. It is enough for you to imagine, is that not so, that the 1, 2, 3 joins up with 2, 3, 1. This will make a still more beautiful (*beau*) knot, if I can express myself thus, is that not so. I mean that everything is continued in everything, and after all, it nonetheless remains a knot, because if you have made a plait, that inevitably gives something, something which knots inevitably at least two, and if two of the strands join up, well then, that will make something that will be knotted or not knotted to the third. That is not where the question lies. The failure, as I might say, of this affair, namely, that by which *the* woman does not exist, is indeed how, the very thing by which she manages to succeed the sexual union. Only this union is the union of one with two, or of each one with each one, each one of these three strands. Sexual union, as I might say, is

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internal to its threading (*filage*). And this is where she plays her role, by clearly showing what a knot is, it is that by which man for his part succeeds in being three. Namely, because the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real are only distinguished by being three, quite crudely. Namely, that... without her subject discovering itself, it is starting from this triplicity by which a woman, sometimes, reaches her success by failing it, namely, by which she is satisfied as realising in herself sexual union, it is starting from there that the man begins to grasp, by a little common sense, the idea that a knot is of some use.

+ also plays the man.

I told you that the hysteric makes the man. But it is as formed by the hysteric that man starts from the idea, the first idea, the right one, the one that leaves him a little chance, starts from the idea that he knows nothing. Which is moreover her own case, because she makes the man. She does not know that sexual union only exists in her and by chance. She knows nothing, but the man finds himself due to the backlash noticing this knot. And that gives in him a second result which is quite different in short: it is that by refusing his open knowledge, at the same time, he closes it. He constitutes the correct Borromean knot. He accedes to the fact that the only Real is the 3, he knows, he knows that, he knows that when he speaks to say nothing, but to obtain effects, that he imagines with all his force that these effects are effective, even though they go round in circles, and that he supposes the Real, as is appropriate, since supposing it involves (102) nothing, nothing except preserving his mental health. Namely, to be in conformity with the norm of man, with the norm of man which consists in the fact that he knows that there is something impossible and that, as was said by this charming woman, in fact, that I quoted for you already: 'Nothing is impossible for man, what he cannot do he leaves'. This is what is called mental health. In particular never to write the sexual relationship in itself, except in the lack of his desire, which is nothing but its squeezing in the Borromean knot. This is why I expressed for the first time, some time ago, but there are people that have only noticed it now, I was able to affirm – it

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is true that it is someone who, who only had notes, anyway to inform himself: 'I ask you to refuse what I offer you because it is not that'. Not what I desire that you to accept, nor to arrive at anything whatsoever of this kind, because I am only dealing with this knot itself.

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Seminar 7: Wednesday 12 February 1974

Good, well then I was hoping... I learned late that there were what are called the *Mardi gras* holidays, precisely because it is not *Mardi gras*. So then I have kept to my... my something or other, my seminar, did I not, I kept to it today because I was hoping that thanks to that I... could perhaps walk among you because you would be less numerous, and in short talk a little with the people who are supposed to be listening to me. True you are a little less numerous which allows me moreover to do so, but anyway, I regret not having had this opportunity to express myself in a more familiar and direct way. There you are. (VOILA)

On this point... on this point I announce to you, a sort of a little booklet like that has just come out (Dr Lacan tosses the booklet into the audience) that I am sending you, there is an inset in it, the inset is as interesting as the booklet, so that it works just as well if it is not the same people who received it. There you are. In principle – in principle, this is supposed to be shown on television – give the inset to someone else... there you are. It is the questions that Jacques-Alain Miller was good enough to ask me in the hope of making... *Télévision*. Naturally, naturally it is a completely unwarranted hope: he asked me the questions he is capable of asking me, starting from the idea that he is doing television. He asked me Kantian questions in particular, as if (104) everyone was a Kantian, but up to a certain point it is true, everyone is Kantian, so that the questions that he asked me simply

there in a translation in "OCTOBER"

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gave me an opportunity to... an opportunity to answer at what is presumed to be a television level by Jacques-Alain Miller. The result seemed to me all the same worth being remembered since I had it published. There you are.

So ~~then~~ now, I am going to talk to you a little, today, trying to remain on the note of what I was hoping. What I was hoping to tell you, was in short, it was something, let us say, in general, like that, whose aim, anyway, you can give it the title that you wish – whose aim was to tell you, to tell you the difference (this is what appeared to me, this is what appeared to me important in what I am trying to bring you this year) to tell you the difference between the true and the Real.

As you have perhaps noticed, is that not so, I advanced this year with you, I advanced this year with you, as in Courteline's *La paix chez soi*, is that not so, 'the whatsit on one side and the thingamajig on the other', this is all she succeeded in obtaining, the little woman, buying some chandelier or other, anyway which precisely is in two pieces... anyway, contrary to her, my three pieces, namely, the three, the three consistent rings with which the Borromean knot is set up, this is what I am holding in my hand in order to speak to you about the *non-dupes err*. This does not seem to have a direct relationship, an immediate one at least, it is not self-evident. But you know perhaps that one of these... one of these three rings, I denominate, I denominate as Real, the two others being the Imaginary and the Symbolic, and that it is around that that I am trying to get you to sense something.

To get you to sense this, first of all what I already put forward, but this does not inevitably leaped to your eye, is that not so, is that, is that precisely I take them simply from this angle that they are three, that they are three and equally consistent. This is a first way of tackling, of tackling what is involved in the Real. It is quite certain that the Real, is what makes them three, without for all that the third being

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what makes them three. If they are added to one another, it is only to make three. And precisely they are not added together. Because each one of the three is added on just as much, without for all that, without for all that being the third. It is only there because the two others do not constitute a knot without three, if I can express myself thus.

And this is what I would like to say to you: that logic can only be defined by being the science of the Real. The annoying thing, is that it (105) only talks and it only starts from the true. It did not immediately begin like that. There was perhaps, as all the same on the whole, anyway you know, there was someone called Aristotle who opened up the question. Obviously the word true, *to alethes*, is found a lot in this thing that he calls the *Organon* from which logic has since been constructed. He opened up the path, he worked things out as best he could, and the trouble, currently in our business with the *Organon*, is that it cannot appear without half the page being taken up by, let us say, commentaries on the *Organon*, which are not at all properly speaking what one can call commentaries, but a certain way of organifying about the *Organon*, namely, making it edible.

This begins with a certain Alexander, another who was called Simplicius, and then later someone called Pacius, and then after that anything you like, a Peter of Spain, a St Thomas Aquinas, anyway, thanks to that, the thing was, anyway, completely diverted. It has got to the point that it is not at all easy, because despite everything we have a kind of scumble, we have a smattering of these different authors, and we hear them, we hear Aristotle, despite everything, through them.

It would be good if someone, if someone managed to make the effort, in short to read, to read for example, just this, which is the second volume of this *Organon*, to read what is called – what is called, it is because it has been entitled that, it is also a title that came later, it is called *Prior analytics* – managed to read, not of course in a first

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impression, because someone who might read it in a first impression, simply, will not understand it any more than on the whole, anyway you understand what I am talking about, namely, not a lot... The thing that someone must absolutely manage to do some day, is precisely to get to know well enough the difference between what Aristotle said and what has been transmitted. In fact, those who have sifted out the thing to see well enough in it the difference by seeing the degree to which Aristotle opened things up and how he opened things up and why not, even the places where he slipped up, where he twisted his ankle, where... it's a whole world! Yeah...

It is quite clear that I am not adding anything on here. Or rather what I am adding on, is designed to propose, anyway at least a task, namely, up to what point, and in Aristotle, it seems to me, one can (106) grasp, the degree to which it is a clearing of the ground (*un frayage*) and a clearing of the ground that is only illuminated starting from the fact that I stated just now: that logic is properly the science of the Real.

Steady point.

In Aristotle we are not all that encumbered by the true. He does not talk about the true in connection with the predicate. He is stumbling, of course, and because of that people believed that they were obliged to do the same, they speak about man, about animal, about living being (*vivant*), on occasion, and again, here I am saying things that immediately have a vague sense. Man, animal, living being, all dovetail; every animal is living, every man is an animal, as a result of which man is living... yeah... It is quite clear from this start, as what followed moreover clearly showed, that all of that means nothing. In other words, that the true, in the affair, is altogether out of season, displaced.

And what renders it tangible, what renders it tangible, is that it is... these compartments, is that not so, these... that he fills as he can with these, for example these three words that I have just said: man,

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animal, and living being, is that not so, he can moreover put anything whatsoever, is that not so, the swan, blackness... in fact anything else, the white... the white is found everywhere, we do not know what to do with it; it is mademanifest in what I called his clearing of the ground, that these terms, his whole effort, is precisely to be able to do without them. Namely, that he empties them of meaning, and he empties them of meaning in this way that he replaces them by letters, namely, α, β, γ, for example, instead of my first three terms, there that I extracted for you, which are in Aristotle... he says is that not so, it only begins to take shape starting from the moment when he will announce that all β... all α is β, all γ is β... no, all β is γ, as a result of which everything will be γ. In other words, he proceeds by way of being able to qualify two of these terms, those that make the connection, of middle, as a result of which he will be able to establish a relation between these two extremes. That is why at the start, from the start, it can be felt that it is not the true that is at stake. Because it matters little that such an animal should be white or not, everyone knows that there are black swans – *des cygnes c-y-g-n-e-s* - the important thing is that something should be articulated thanks to which there is introduced the Real as such.

It is not for nothing that in the syllogism, there are three terms: the two extremes and the middle. The fact is when all is said and done – I say 'when all is said and done' because it is only a first attempt – everything happens as if there was something like a presentiment of (107) the Borromean knot. Namely, that right away he puts his finger from the moment that he tackles the Real, on the fact that there must be three. Obviously these three, he handles completely wrongly, namely, he imagines that they hold together two by two. This is an error. He imagines that they hold together two by two, and even, up to a certain point, one can express the thing by saying that he makes them concentric. Namely, that there is the sphere of the living, for example, then inside the sphere of animals – the sphere or the ring –

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and then more inside again the sphere of men. This is what is called 'translating in extension'. Naturally, people have worked on it, because they are just as perplexed by it as by a term that I use a lot, but it is not without a *raison d'être*: people are perplexed by it like a fish with an apple.

To allow you to relax, I am making here a clear parenthesis. It has nothing to do with Aristotle, because Aristotle, had not the slightest idea of it... Me, for example, I am perplexed by your number, exactly like a fish with an apple. And nevertheless there are other moments when I say to you that the relationships of my saying with, anyway, this audience precisely that I do not know what to do with, are of the order of the relationships of a man with a woman. I will point out this to you like that, something I found this morning, that leaped to my eyes, that... well then, that it is already in *Genesis*. What *Genesis* indicates to us by Eve's offer, is nothing other than this: that man – here there is a vacillation at that moment, it is the woman, but as I told you, the woman does not exist, is that not so, but just like Aristotle, hesitates a little, I do not see why *Genesis*, even though inspired, should have done any less, and that this offer of the apple is very exactly what I am saying, namely, that there is no relationship between the man and the woman, which is incarnated very manifestly by the fact that, as I underlined, the woman does not exist, the woman is not not-all, and from that the result is that man with a woman is as perplexed about her as a fish with an apple, which normalises our relationships, and which allows me to assimilate them to something of which it would be a lot to say to say that it is love, because in truth, I do not experience the slightest feeling of love for you. And no doubt it is reciprocal, as I stated: in what is involved in love, feelings are always reciprocal. That's a parenthesis, let us come back to Aristotle.

(108) Aristotle what? Shows clearly that the true, is not at all what is in operation. Thanks to the fact that he clears the ground, that he opens up the business of his science that I am calling the Real, of the

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Real, namely, of the three, at the same time he demonstrates that he only gets to the three by opening things up by means of writing, namely, that from the first steps in the syllogism, it is because he empties these terms of all meaning by transforming them, by transforming them into letters, namely, into things which of themselves mean nothing, this is how he takes the first steps in what I called the science of the Real.

What is logic thus conceived, caught hold of by that end, what is logic doing in analytic discourse?

The reason why you are in short, as I complain, so numerous hearing me, it is in the measure that what I am conveying is what is emitted by analytic discourse. In analytic discourse things proceed in a different way and that is why – and that is why you are there – in so far as here I am drawing it out; what constitutes the body of what I am saying, is something quite different to what, up to the present, logic has been founded on, namely, the said (*des dits*). The said that is manipulated. Aristotle does it, but as I have just told you, the characteristic of his step forward is to empty this said of its meaning. And it is in this way that he gives us an idea of the dimension of the Real. There is no way to trace the paths of logic, except by passing through writing. This is what Aristotle demonstrates from his first steps, and this is the way the written shows itself to be of a different dimension to the saying.

On the contrary what holds you, what excites you, and what will no doubt excite you more and more, is that the true saying is something quite different. The true saying, is as I might say the groove, this is what defines it, the groove along which there passes what... what it must indeed supply for the absence, for the impossibility of writing, of writing as such the sexual relationship. If the Real is indeed what I am saying, namely, what is only opened up by writing it, it is indeed what justifies my putting forward that the hole, the hole that will ensure, that ensure forever the impossibility of writing the sexual

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relationship as such, this is what we are reduced to, as regards what it is, this sexual relationship, to realise it all the same.

There are little channels, there are things that weave in and out, there are things that one gets lost in, but where one gets lost in such a way that this is properly what constitutes what is described as the metaphor of the labyrinth. One never gets to the end of it, but the important (109) thing is not that, it is to show why one never gets to the end of it, namely, to tightly circumscribe what is happening when what is at stake, everything by which we touch the Real, of that which no doubt ensures that the Real. We have, like that, a proper and distinct idea of the Real, the Real is what is determined by the fact that there cannot in any way be written in it the sexual relationship. And it is from this that there results what is involved in the true saying, at least what the practice of the analytic discourse demonstrates, it is that by saying true – namely, stupidities, those that come to us, those that drip out of us like that – that one manages to open the path towards something as regards which it is not altogether contingent that sometimes and by error, it ceases not to be written, as I define the contingent, namely, that this leads to establishing between two subject something which has the air of being written like that: hence the importance of what I give to what I said about the letter *d'amur*.

This distinction that specifies analytic discourse, which allowed me to discern it among four others that were there because... they really seem, like that, to live, and not only do they seem, but they are infinitely more robust than the analytic discourse which has still everything to do as regards clearing its path. Analytic discourse not only reserves the place of the truth, but it is properly speaking what allows to be said what, as regards the sexual relationship, flows in it, fills the groove. It is very important. It is very important because this completely changes the meaning of this saying true that I have just posited at first as distinct from any science of the Real. It completely

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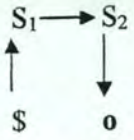
changes the meaning because, as I have just said, for once, this groove is not empty: something passes along it.

If some of you remember what I put forward, structured, as the discourse of the master, they can read in it, if they are capable of reading something, they can read in it that the truth of the master, is nothing other than the subject. For the deaf I recall that the discourse of the master is this: with here two arrows and here two arrows like that, and here nothing at all:



(110) What the discourse of the master is based on, is what I have called S_1, *S index 1*. In other words: the commandment, the imperative. The discourse of the master is there. And for quite a while. Simply because, because the signifier exists. Because S_1 namely, the signifier 1, is nothing other than the fact that the signifier, there are piles of them, but they are all some one or other. And this is all the existence of the One is based on: it is that there is something of the signifier, and that each is not unique, but all alone, which is not quite the same thing.

It is precisely because there are not two... two what? Two speaking beings that can be conjoined, make two, it is precisely for that reason that there are signifiers, namely, that they speak. And what analytic discourse demonstrates, is that what happened as regards the place of those who could be subjects, subjects of something, of the sexual relationship, when at their place there are two signifiers, well then it is that, and it is nothing else, that flows in what I called the groove of the true saying.

For that, it must be that the S_2 has nothing to do with the true saying. In other words: that S_2 is Real. And if you are following me in what I tried to open up, in my first stammerings in this seminar, you will

S_2 is knowledge – + it's a puzzle that he should call knowledge the real
S_2 is the embodied jouissance as opposed to symbolic knowledge

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conceive that S_2, this is what I wrote in my schema of the analytic discourse, that S_2, namely, knowledge *qua* unconscious, is what flows in the groove of the true saying. What I am in the process of telling you does not mean nothing! It means that it is a Real, there is some knowledge that even if there is no subject who knows it, remains being of the Real. It is a depot. It is a sediment that occurs in everyone when he begins to tackle this sexual relationship to which of course he will never get, whatever education he is given, because if there is indeed something which will in no way improve the situation, the situation of the relationship, it is indeed everything that you can bullshit them with on the subject of what this relationship might supposedly be.

I have 3 brothers -- etc. Amen. The speaking being does not have the slightest idea that he is a subject

It will nonetheless remain that it is from quite incidental angles that there will enter for him what makes the three, namely, the Real. Because, of course, thank God, when the speaking being begins, he has not the slightest idea that he is a subject. He counts one and two, whatever you want, but not himself, and as three, he will put into it anything you wish, even what fakes (*maquille*) the two others, namely, himself, the child, as you might say. It is a good pretext for making the Real enter while completely veiling it: the Real is only a (111) child; if it is not the child itself it will be any third whatsoever, it will be Aunt Yvonne, in fact, is that not so, or anybody else... Grandfather whatshisname: once it makes up three, anything is acceptable in order not to notice that what is at stake is only the three as Real. As a result of which there are things which, through Aunt Yvonne or Grandfather whatshisname or by the child himself, namely, his pathos, namely, that he is relegated, nobody understands anything about it, and for good reason. There is nothing to understand.

There will all the same be something that will be imprinted, namely, not three, because the three is always veiled from some side, the three steals away, the three is the support, there will be S_2, *S index 2*, 2 S's, two signifiers S which will be imprinted, and which will give along

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the path of pure chance, namely, of that which, above all, was missing in the relationships with those who were there to preside over what is called his education, his formation, he will form this knowledge, this indelible and at the same time absolutely not subjectivised knowledge, he will form for himself this Real knowledge, imprinted there somewhere, imprinted just like in Aristotle, the α, the β and the γ, and this is what will be the unconscious and there will be nothing else, huh, as was said by the character going through customs: "That's food for my goat". To which the customs man says: "Listen, that's amazing, because they are braces (bretelles), no?" The other answers: him: "Anyway, that's how it is, and if she didn't have that, she would have nothing else..." It is the same for unconscious knowledge: as truth, there will be nothing other than these braces.

Unconscious knowledge, this is what must be connected up for the true saying to succeed in some way, namely, to succeed in being understood somewhere to supply for the absence of any relationship between the man and a woman (some, not all). Here is the distance, the difference between the true saying and the science of the Real. That is why that as regards dealing with the unconscious, we are much closer to it by manipulating logic than anything else, because it is of the same order. It is of the order of the written, as I pointed out to you; moreover the great opener up of analytic discourse, Freud himself, was not able to eliminate it, or when he gives his little schemas, is that not so, in his projects, those by which he tried to understand what the knowledge of the hysteric might well be, well (112) what does he do? He does exactly nothing other than that, namely, these little points and these little arrows, these modes of writing thanks to which he accounts – he believes he accounts – for something which was as old as the world, namely, anamnesis. It is obvious that for a long time anamnesis was considered as a mark, as an impression, it must moreover also be said that this is quite vacillating and insufficient. Here our dear Freud confirms in a way

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that this indeed is what is at stake, when it is the Real that is at stake, that what is at stake is something that is written, something that is written and that it is a matter of reading, of reading by deciphering it, and what does that mean? That means nothing except this something which, in – as I might say – in reanimating it in the sense of this something, of this something which creates a barrier to every attempt to debouch onto the relationship properly so-called, by reanimating thanks to this something which is this kind of parasite, of movable part of the body, that analytic discourse designates by the phallus, ensures that what acted as a stopper, which is properly speaking enjoyment, and phallic enjoyment as such, what acted as a stopper thanks to something that discourse manages to obtain, is that not so, namely, to separate it in the Imaginary, to accomplish Symbolic castration, allows something to succeed or to fail, most often to fail, which establishes at least between two subjects something which resembles a relationship, something that ceases not to be written for some rare and privileged cases.

I am speaking of course here about what is obtained along the proper path, through analytic discourse, because, it must indeed be said that this concern for the truth is only necessitated in extremely rare cases, those for whom the aid of the analytic discourse which I said is required in the other discourses, is much easier to obtain. In the discourse of the master, indeed why not in the university discourse, huh... In the discourse of the hysteric, huh, a knot becomes a dream... But in the two other good old discourses, the king and the queen, listen, it happens automatically! It is enough to be a king and to be a queen to understand one another. It is even unthinkable that they should not understand one another. Of course, this has nothing to do with the truth of the sexual relationship, but the important thing is not that, huh, it is that it supplies for it.

So then, because in some cases unconscious knowledge is lame – not only is it lame, but it clearly creates an obstacle for the sexual

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(113) relationship being established. So then, in those cases, one is dealing with the necessity of going by way of the analytic discourse, namely, one has the need to speak true, and especially to suspect a little what bad company speaking true keeps. Namely, that everything that comes to muddy, disturb, good God, the calm and tranquil discourse that we usually have to deal with, which grounds the normal, namely, that what comes to muddy these perfectly well established discourses, never brings out anything except cases, cases where there is a need, in short of a psychoanalysis, namely, the cases of truth.

In this you are not trying to reduce somebody to the normal discourse in or the university discourse.

This does not make me reduce them to being unworthy, which is what I am telling you: the fact that they are not normal – is because they have with the truth a kind of... a kind, like that, of kinship, which stems from the fact that they are in the connection where it does not work for a single Real, namely, what is involved in the relationship described as sexual.

Let it be well understood then – I am making here, like that, some remarks which seem useful to make to you so that you do not make errors – let it be well understood then that the analytic discourse does not at all consist in making what is not working out, what is not working out re-enter normal discourse, huh, two of which I have designated for you. This is not at all what is involved. It is not at all a matter of making them enter into it. It is simply to note that the discourse which only proceeds by the true saying, is precisely what, what does not work, as has always been demonstrated, it is enough for someone to make an effort, to say true, for it to upset everyone. I am simply restoring things here to their context.

In the analytic discourse you are listening for the hysteric discourse. If you later she touch it's for it to upset everyone

What I simply want to point out to you is that in constituting this break, this break between the true saying and the science of the Real, in reconstituting it for what its worth, in reconstituting it at the very place where it is situated, I am not closing here, very far from it, any

She is not trying to create a scandal

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system of the world. On the contrary. For a system of the world to exist, there is only one means, is that not so, it is to make suppositions in it. The fact is that … a discourse like that of Aristotle (who was surely not an idiot, nor even a sod) is full of hard edges, I mean stimulation. What is stupefying is that there is no text where what is called supposition is clearer.

This distinction that I have articulated for you today, between the true saying and the science of the Real, I called it that, I called it as best I could: the true saying, is there, this is what I am trying to do, the (114) science of the Real, is this something which is logic, and which, also holds up, is that not so, which holds up for those who know, of course, how to locate themselves in it. The distinction is somewhere, I could show you where, somewhere in the *Prior analytics*, huh: 1–37, there, yeah…37…no it's at…if you take your reference from the manuscripts, is that not so, it is towards the 7th line of the page of the manuscripts of what is numbered as 49a. Good, the 37 is the division of translation. It is a matter of different kinds of attribution, of expressions…No that's not it, it's further on…Ah!

> *There must also be brought into operation the exchange of…*it's further on, is it not, it's at 49b, *there must also be brought into operation the exchange of terms of an identical value, words for words, expressions for expressions, word and expression one for the other, and always prefer a word to an expression in order to facilitate in this way the presentation of terms*

He seems to be only talking about his own little affair. But it is when he gives an example…

> *For example, there is no difference between saying…*

And then in connection with this he says something true: but, if I may say so it is indeed a risk, you are going to see what he says about the true,

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> *... the object of supposition is not the genus of the object of opinion and to say the object of opinion is not identical with a certain object of supposition (for the meaning is the same in the two judgements), instead of the expression that has been stated, it would be better to posit as terms...*

By blocking them... and this is what he calls *hupolepton*, the object of the supposition and the object of opinion *doxaston*, *dozaston*.
(I beg your pardon, I'm tired...)

What is the object of opinion?

Well then the object of opinion is what works. Opinion is just as true as something else. True opinion, it is precisely about this that Plato racks his brain in *Menon*. The object of opinion is what ensures that one does not notice that... (until it falls on your head, naturally), that there is no sexual relationship. The object of supposition is not identical, he says on this occasion. Namely, that everything that he talks about in the *Prior analytics*, is something which makes us understand how much, when one is in the order of the Real, one must make suppositions.

In the order of the Real we are all the time forced to suppose. We are forced to suppose, in fact those crazy things: spirit, matter too, sometimes, and even some other things of the same kind, is that not so, which are luckily a little bit closer to us, but which are nonetheless suppositional. Here I am trying to proceed along a path where I am not making suppositions, where I do not suspect anything of being suspect. Since supposition, has that aspect. Yes.....in Aristotle, he called that *hupokeimenon* sometimes, but there, in that case it is something that can only be translated into Latin by *suspicabile*, it is *to hupolepton*, it is the suspect (*la soupçonnable*).

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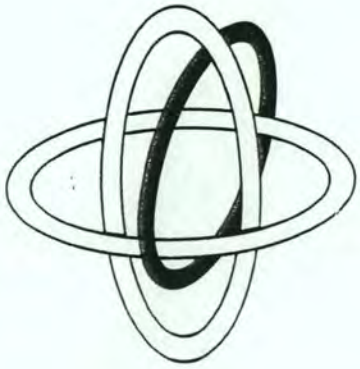
Of course, the suspect is very respectable, like the rest, is that not so, this is what we must suspect as being Real, and that takes us very far, that leads to all sorts of constructions. The important thing would perhaps be to remain with simply what the science of the Real allows there to be affirmed, namely, that the kernel of all of that is above all logic, namely, what has never succeeded in advancing by a step, by a quarter of a step, by the tip of its nose, huh, except by writing. Which is already something.

Good, I told you that, and then I made you my Borromean knot, you must Really try to imagine that this Borromean knot here, is as I might say the only one which... which is presented decently, as I might say.

It is presented decently because it has the place to be deployed but that does not prevent it easily being the object of all sorts of deviations. You will note in it for example, that it is very easy to find in it, for example the three planes of reference of Cartesian co-ordinates. And this indeed is what is fallacious about it. Because the Cartesian co-ordinates, are all the same something quite different, they are something which by the very fact that they imply the surface as existent, is that not so, are at the source of all sorts, of all sorts of fallacious images: the *more geometrico* which sufficed throughout the centuries to guarantee many things a supposedly demonstrative character, comes entirely from that.



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(116) The fact that, the fact that the fallacious character of the surface, is that not so, is demonstrated by the fact that when you try to join it up with this apparatus here, you obtain, what constitutes the – for some time, anyway, I think for you – the siglum of what is involved in the Borromean knot, namely, the joining at which the three rings are knotted together. And where they are knotted, in fact, in a way which is properly speaking concise, namely, the one, the way, which allows it for example to be seen that that is how it is squeezed, in fact, huh. And there you are: that is how you must conceive that the... that the knots are connected up to define this something which is a completely definition of the point: namely, the point where the three rings are squeezed together.

Yes, this is not quite what I had foreseen, in fact, telling you today, but since after all I felt like improvising, I allowed myself to be led, like that, to tell you other things. This has a sequel, of course, it will have a sequel the next time, I would like all the same to point out to you that there are points in the *Prior analytics*, for example, among others – there are others, there are points of logic, there are points of the *Organon* – where we see all of a sudden that Aristotle himself, (117) who knew bloody well what he was doing, does not fail to stumble. I mean without letting out what, when all is said and done worries him [me?] like everyone else.

There is a thing somewhere, I must find that for you, I am going to find it for you right away, at... at page 68 still the page number of the manuscript... There is something unbelievable. I note – I spoke to you earlier about... about 'all A is B', 'all B is γ' and about what is

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deduced from it that 'all A is γ'. He questions himself apparently about what results from that, by inverting the conclusion, namely, for example to say that 'all γ is α'. He shows its overwhelming consequences, namely, that the conclusion must be put at a different place, namely, at the place of a major or of a minor in order for it to culminate properly speaking at a conclusion that is the one that inverts one of the premises. Good. All that seems to be unimportant and nevertheless it certainly is not unimportant, because it is on this occasion that there begins to emerge something else, namely, the qualifications that are applied to every kind of being.

I must tell you that I spared you something which is the degree to which, the degree to which the use of the term *huparchein*, 'to belong to', creates a problem. Because in his definition of the universal, it is completely beyond question to give a univocal sense to this 'to belong to'. It is impossible to know in a univocal fashion if the subject belongs to the predicate or if the predicate belongs to the subject. It depends on the passages. It cannot be, of course, that someone as vigilant as Aristotle must have been did not notice that.

In any case in this chapter, this small little chapter which is extremely instructive, one sees by progression – and by this progression which consists in that, from well defined universal beings, it passes on to all beings – it is very singular that it is in connection with that, that there emerges, that there emerges like an irruption, the following passage:

> *If then* (textually) *every lover, in virtue of his love, prefers A* (it is not prefers to, huh, it is the written A), *to know that the beloved is disposed to grant him his favours* (that is described as *suneinai*, to go together) *without for all that granting them to him* (which we image by the γ, it is then non-*suneinai*, to call it by its name: he does not sleep with him) *rather than see the beloved accord him his favours* (which is imaged by Δ)...

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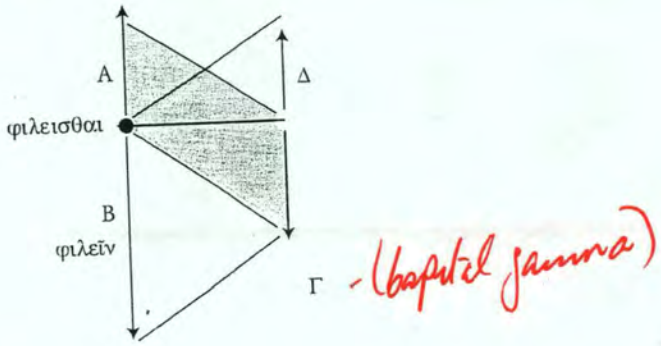
(118) It's marvellous.

So then, Δ what have we said, that, that the... what?... ah! yes!

It is then γnot to grant them to him, rather than to see... etc. Good. Good, so then it is obvious that α namely, to be disposed, which stands in Aristotle for loving him, is that not so – it is obvious that the object of love A, is to be loved, is to be disposed to grant his favours to him, this is what, in Aristotle, is perfectly well designated in this text (I would ask you to consult it), is described as *phileisthai*.

Good, to love, is then *philein*.



What is at stake for him is to demonstrate the following: after this passage concerning the whole conversion, and quite especially the conversion of predicates which concerns every being – what is at stake is that if one starts from that, is that not so, that the conjunction of this A with this B, namely, to be loved by the partner – a partner who does not grant you his favours – if one posits that this is preferable to the contrary combination, is that not so, namely, that he grants his favours without for all that loving you, he demonstrates that, if one posits this – it is the object of his demonstration – there results from that at the end love, A, is something, if one posits it here, is that not so, the result is, what seems in effect inevitable to be admitted, that the *suneinai* is worth less than the *kharixesthai* namely,

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this good disposition which testifies to being loved. The emergence, in this place, and in a way that is all the more problematic in that it is absolutely characteristic of love as homosexual, is a quite striking thing, concerning, as I might say the eruption in the middle of what I defined as being articulated as the science of the Real, as the eruption (119) at a certain point, a point which, I repeat is at 68b to which I would ask you to refer in the *Prior analytics*, a thing which is truly the irruption of the true, and of the true which is precisely a true to which there is only, when all is said and done, the approach, since the problem we are dealing with is precisely that of a love which, when all is said and done, is of concern only by the mediation of enjoyment, of the *suneinai* that is at stake, namely, a perfectly localised homologous, homogeneous, enjoyment, in fact, the one that ensures that when all is said and done, if there is, in effect, something that allows the non-existence of the sexual relationship as such, it is very precisely that the *homoios* is assuredly something like a step in it no doubt, but a step, in a way, that confirms, that supports the non-existence of the relationship [**or:** that the non-existence of the relationship confirms, supports].

And what I would like to conclude on is the following, is this not so, that in so far as it is around this x which is called the phallus that there continues to turn – to turn only because it is at the same time its cause and its mask – the non-existence of the sexual relationship, I am announcing, if I can say the theme of my next seminar; as regards man – and first of all when I say man, I write it with a capital L (*L'homme*) namely, that there is an all-man – for man, love, I mean, what is hooked onto, what is situated in the category of the Imaginary, for man, love goes without saying. Love goes without saying because his enjoyment is enough for him, and that is moreover very exactly why he understands nothing about it.

But for *a* woman, things must be taken from a different angle, is that not so. If for a man it goes without saying because enjoyment covers

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everything, including precisely that there is no problem concerning what is involved in love, the enjoyment of the woman – and it is on this that I will end today – the enjoyment of the woman for her part, does not go without saying, namely, without the saying of the truth.

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Seminar 8: Wednesday 19 February 1974

So, my dear Rondepierre, I pinched it from you, huh? I pinched it from you, it was you who had ordered it, but I took it. There you are. So, what I pinched from Rondepierre, is a book by Hintikka called *Models for modalities*. It is a very good read. It is a very good read that is well designed to demonstrate what should not be done. In this respect, it is useful. Good. There you are. Yeah... what time is it?

This Hintikka is a Finn, a logician, it is not because he did what should not be done, that as I have just told you it is not very, very, very, very useful. It is precisely particularly demonstrative. If you read what I have just written on the board:

Necessary that p does not cease to be written p	Possible to cease to be written $(p \vee \sim p)$	Necessary that $\sim p$ does not cease to be written $\sim p$
Contingent that p ceases not to be written p	Impossible not to cease to write $(p \wedge \sim p)$ *No*	Contingent that $\sim p$ ceases not to be written $\sim p$

Does not cease not to be written

The Real: p $\sim p$

Both are logically unverifiable

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(122) You see perhaps where that can be placed, you see perhaps what must not be done. Anyway, you will see it better when I will have said a little more about it. Yeah...

On the other hand – since I still have a minute – on the other hand there is a good example, a good example of what one can do. It is another book. It is another book by the same Jaakko, Jacques, that is how it is pronounced, it appears – Jaakko Hintikka, so then he is called Jacques. Jaakko Hintikka produced another book called *Time and necessity*, subtitled: *A study of the theory of Aristotle's modalities*. It is not bad. It is not bad and... it implies – I have only had it two days – it implies that someone, the Hintikka in question, had anticipated me, had anticipated me long ago, since his book has not simply been written but has been published... – anticipated me long ago in what I was pointing out to you the last time, that Aristotle's *Organon*, is worthwhile reading because the least that one can say, is that, is that it, is that it will make you rack your brains, and that what is difficult is indeed to know, with somebody who opens things up (*un frayeur*), as I called it, like Aristotle, is indeed to know why, why... why he chose these terms and not others. There you are. He chose these and not others because... it is not possible when all is said and done; it is not possible, it is not possible to say why if, if I do not begin by articulating what I have to say to you today.

What I did the last time, naturally, is no small thing. Make no mistake about it! Naturally it went unnoticed, I imagine, by more than one of you, but anyway there were some who realised how important it was. Good. So then, if I am not going astray, and I do not seem to, how does the game that guides me, play out (*joue le jeu*)?

That makes a verb, huh: *jouljeu*, you *jouljeux*, that continues, that holds up to *il jouljeut* and then afterwards it becomes uncertain. We *jouljouons*, or the verb *jouljouer* does not hold up. That proves that

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one only *jouljeut*'s in the singular. In the plural, it is doubtful, the *jouljeu* cannot be '*conjeugated*' in the plural. And the fact that there is no plural does not prevent there being several people all the same in the singular. There are precisely three of them. This is how there is recognised the three of the Real, as I have already... tried to get you to sense: it is three (*trois*), huh, and even *étroit* like *La porte*... So then, what I did the last time shifted something. What? What I am claiming, precisely, is that it does not shift the not-all (*pas-tout*). (123) Something, this not-all. This is even why I am lucky to be serious... lucky to be serious, because the serious does not squeeze (*serre*) all. It squeezes the series closely. What I put forward, is the fact that there is already a logic. And this is even something that may surprise you. If Aristotle had not begun it, it would not be there already.

So then, I get that far and I say: it is the knowledge of the Real. I demonstrated on every occasion, make no mistake. I recognise the three in it. But the three as knot. My beloved structure, huh, my nutty structure proves to be a Borromean knot. Naturally, it is not enough to name it, to call it that; because it is not enough for you to know that it is called a Borromean knot for you to be able to make something of it. Make no mistake, is that not so: it must be made (*faut l'faire*). Here there emerges a little light about what I am doing, because that is what I started from, I am going to tell the truth. That already proves that it is not enough to say it to be in it, in the true. And I put forward right away, is that not so, one of the pivotal points of what I intend to advance into today, in what I am doing here, as an analyst, since that is where I am speaking from: I do not discover the truth, I invent it. To which I add that it is that, knowledge.

Because the funny thing, huh, it is really amusing: no one has ever asked what knowledge was! Ah! Me neither. Except the first day when like that, held by the arm, in fact, in this thesis, in this thesis that between ourselves, huh – where is Francois Wahl? I don't know but

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anyway what matter, he is there perhaps, he is perhaps not there, but anyway, if he is there I point out that I promised one day publicly, like that, yielding to a, a tender pressure, that I would re-publish this thesis. I said it, this was enough for them, for *Seuil*. In order to publish it... naturally they never stopped snapping at my heels at the start, when I brought out the *Ecrits*, so that I would re-publish, this thesis, I said at that time that I did not want to, I have changed my mind, but now they are not in a hurry. In short, after all, what matter, I promised, but if it does not happen, huh, it is obviously not my fault. Anyway, that is all the same how I was nibbled by something, by something which made me slide like that gently... towards Freud. It was something which had here and now, the closest relationship with the question, indeed, that I am formulating today.

It is curious – it may appear striking, is that not so, that it was like that, in connection with psychosis, is that not so that I had, that I had slid towards the question of... that it required Freud in fact, for me to truly ask it, it is: what is... what is knowledge?

Knowledge seems to discover, to reveal as they say, *aletheia*, my beloved. I show you to the world. Completely naked. I unveil you. The world is not able (*n'en peut*), but of course! Because it is what is at stake: when I show her, this truth, my beloved, it is what I am showing. If I said that logic is the science of the Real, this has obviously a relationship, a very close relationship with the fact that science can be conscience-less. Because precisely, this is hardly ever said, huh, that logic is the science of the Real. That this is hardly ever said, is already a sign, huh, it is a sign that it is not taken to be true... What is curious is that, for want of saying it, people are not in a position to say anything worthwhile whatsoever about what logic is. It is demonstrated in class, but when it is announced, there, at the start, open any book whatsoever of logic, you will see the hesitations. It is even quite curious. It is certainly moreover why... why Aristotle did

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not at all call his *Organon*, 'Logic', and he got into the thing... The astonishing thing is that he called it *Organon*.

In any case, conscience-less science then, there is someone who said one day – he was called Rabelais, like that he was someone particularly astute, and it is enough to read what he wrote to perceive it. To write what Rabelais wrote, that is why I say: it must be made/done (*il faut le faire*). 'Science without conscience', he said, 'is but the ruin of the soul'. Well then, it is true. Only it is to be taken not as the priests take it, namely, that it works havoc in this soul which as everyone knows does not exist, but that it brings the soul down to earth (*ça fout l'âme par terre*)! No doubt you do not see that, that I am saying that this brings the soul down to earth, namely, that it renders it completely useless, is exactly the same thing as I have just said to you in saying to you that to reveal the truth to the world, is to reveal the world to itself. That means that there is no more a world than there is a soul. And that consequently, in fact, every time one starts from... from the state of the world, as they say, to highlight the truth in it, you stick your finger in your eye! Because the world, well then, if it is already enough to affirm it, it is a hypothesis that sweeps away all the rest. Including the soul. And that is clearly seen in reading Aristotle; *On the soul*. Just like Hintikka, I strongly advise you to read it.

If there is knowledge, if the question can be asked of what knowledge is, well it is quite natural, of course, that I was held, because the patient in my thesis, *le cas Aimée*, well she knew, simply she confirms, she confirms what you will comprehend I started from. She was inventing, of course that is not enough to assure, to confirm that knowledge is invented, because as they say, she was talking nonsense... Only, that is how the suspicion about it came to me. Of course, I did not know it! This indeed is why a further step is required in logic, and one must note that knowledge, contrary to what puts forward epistemic logic, which starts from the following: about the

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hypothesis, it is even on this that there rests the clean sweep that it constitutes, it is to see what this will give if you write it, that is how they write it, there, the knowledge of *a*, small *a* – it is not so badly chosen, this little *a*, anyway, it is by chance if it is the same as mine – the knowledge of small *a*, this must obviously be commented on, here it designates the subject; naturally they do not know that the subject is what the small *a* is the cause of, but anyway it is a fact that they write it like that:

This is a different type of writing. It's like the letter, but it's not the same.

$$S(a, \alpha)$$

Epistemic logic starts from the fact that knowledge is inevitably to know the true. You cannot imagine where that leads. To madness....even if it were only this, in fact, which unconscious knowledge disputes, that it is impossible to know anything whatsoever that is supposed to be true as such, without knowing it. I mean knowing that one knows.

This leads to madness. Knowledge is separate from the truth. 'Baby, I am just doing science.'

like Donald Rumsfeld – there are things that we know – things that we don't know – things that we don't know that we know.

From which it results that it is altogether impossible, it is not very difficult to obtain, but anyway there is a very nice mathematician, who breaks with Hintikka, and who in effect gives a very pretty proof – the notes have been communicated to me – that the knowledge which is supposed to be supported by the fact that one does not know that one knows is strictly inconsistent, in fact impossible to state in epistemic logic. Yeah.

You can put your finger here on the fact that knowledge is invented, since this logic is a knowledge. A knowledge like another – and here I would like to get your feet back on the ground a little again, like that – this is simply to remind you, what unconscious knowledge is. It fully deserves the title of knowledge, huh! It must indeed be said, that Freud is uneasy about its relationship to the truth, it, even to the point that this gives him quite a turn when one of his... – they were called patients at that time, the term analysands had not yet been

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found – when one of his patients brings him a dream that deliberately lies.

The fact is that this is where the break (*faille*) lies.

There is something in Freud that lends itself to this confusion that was created, when all is said and done, by translating *Trieb* as 'instinct'. Everyone knows that instinct is...is a knowledge, like that, that is supposedly natural. But there is something all the same which takes a trick, in Freud's case, which is the death instinct. Naturally, I took a little step further than him. But it is in the wrong direction. He turns around it. He, he for his part is well aware of it. For that you have to read the famous *Beyond*, yes, *Beyond the pleasure principle*, as it happens. In this *Beyond*, in short...he worries himself about, how something whose module is to remain at a certain threshold; the least possible tension, that is what suits life, as he says. Only he notices in practice that this does not work. So then he thinks that it goes lower than the threshold. Namely, that this life that maintains tension at a certain threshold, starts to slacken all of a sudden, and that beneath the threshold, we see it succumbing, succumbing to the point of rejoining death. That is how when all is said and done, he makes this thing acceptable. Life is, it is something that arose one day God knows why, make no mistake, and then which only asks to go back like all the rest. He confuses the inanimate world with death. It is inanimate, that means that it is supposed to know nothing. That means nothing more for whoever gives to the soul its sensible equivalent. But this fact that it knows nothing, does not prove that it is dead. Why should the inanimate world be, why should it be a dead world? That certainly

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does not mean very much, but to ask the question has in any case a meaning...

In any case, correlatively to this question of the *Beyond of the pleasure principle*, Freud is at sea in something which is much closer to the question of death, namely, of what it is; he starts, he starts and then he lets the thing drop, and it is very annoying. He starts from the question of the germen and the soma. He attributes it to Weismann. I cannot develop this. This is not quite what Weismann said. The person who started from the separation between the germen and the (127) soma, is a chap who lived a little earlier, and who was called Nussbaum. Moreover, for what you make of it, let us stay with that, it does not have any great importance.

What is important, and what Freud touched on, on this occasion, is that there is only death where there is reproduction of the sexual type. That's all.

If we employ Aristotle's term, the *huparkhein* in question, the 'belonging to', and if we employ it in the right way, in the way Aristotle uses it, namely, without knowing from what end to tackle it, we see that sex *huparkhei*, 'belongs to' death, unless it is death that belongs to sex, and we remain there, precisely, with the sleeve by which we caught the thing in our hands, yeah.

Where the break is shown by its consequences, is that it is in this connection that Freud, under the pretext that there is something in the world which shows that life sometimes goes towards death, he marries, he marries to it something that is all the same difficult to, to eliminate from sex, which is enjoyment; and that, making the slip that he would not have made if he had firmly held in his hands the Borromean knot, he designates as masochism the supposed conjunction of this enjoyment, sexual enjoyment, and death. It is a collapse. Yeah.

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If there is a place where the clinic, practice, clearly shows us something – and that is why I congratulated, like that in passing, someone who has since taken the wrong road – if there is something that is quite obvious it is that masochism is a sham (*du chiqué*). It is a knowledge, certainly, a know-how even! But if there is then a knowledge in which we can put our finger on the fact that that is invented, that it is not within everyone's reach, it is indeed there! It must be said that the person in question there that I congratulated in passing, was not a clinician, but he had simply read Sacher-Masoch. If it is here that it can be seen, in short, that masochism is invented, and that it is not within everyone's reach, that it is a way of establishing a relationship there where there is not the least involved, between enjoyment and death, it is quite clearly manifested by the fact that, all the same, huh, one only puts the tip of one's little finger into it, huh, one does not let oneself be seized like that into the machine. Good.

So then this is what all the same, allows there to be envisaged the import of what I am stating. The fact is that knowledge, knowledge where we grasp it for the first time, like that, in a way that can be handled; can be handled because, because it is not we who know – it (128) is not we who know, as one of my pupils says, and calling it non-knowledge, poor chap! He fancies that he does not know! What a funny business... But we all know, because all of us invent something to fill up the hole in the Real. Where there is no sexual relationship this gives a '*troumatisme*'. One invents. Naturally one invents what one can. When one is not very smart, one invents masochism. Sacher-Masoch was a sod. You should see the fire tongs, anyway is that not so, the person who wanted to play the game, like that, to answer him, the fire tongs with which he dealt with him, this Sacher-Masoch! She did not know what to make of him. Only *Le Figaro* expressed itself, huh, which says it all! Anyway let us leave Sacher-Masoch! There are knowledges that are more intelligently

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invented. And this indeed is why I say that the Real, not simply where there is a hole, is invented, but that it is not unthinkable that it is through this hole that we might advance into everything that we invent about the Real, which is not nothing because it is clear that there is a place where the Real works. It is when we bring it in as three, this bastard thing, because it is sure that this connotation '3' for the Real is difficult to manipulate logically..

All that we know is that 'one' connotes enjoyment very well, and that 'zero' means there is none, what is missing, and that if zero and one make two, this does not render any less hypothetical the conjunction between the enjoyment of one side with the enjoyment of the other. Yeah.

Not only does it not make it more sure, but it spoils it. In a world that is neither made nor to be made, a totally enigmatic world, once one tries to bring in this something which is supposed to be modelled on logic, and on which there is supposed to be grounded that in the species described as human *one is either man or woman*. This is very especially what experience rises up against – and I do not need to go far, someone reported to me, no later than a few hours ago, his encounter with a taxi driver – they're all over the place, huh, make no mistake – as regards whom not only was it impossible for the person who was speaking to say whether it was a man or a woman, but that she had even asked and he was not able to answer her. When I say that you find that everywhere, huh, all the same, it is no small thing! And it is even from there that Freud starts.

(129) He starts, like that, as a commentary. Experience is not enough for him because he has to hook on more or less everywhere, to science, huh, from the moment that there is nothing, that there is nothing that more resembles a masculine body than a feminine body, if one is able to look at a certain level, at the level of tissue, huh. That does not prevent an egg from not being a spermatozoon, that it is here

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that the sex thing is to be found. It is quite superfluous, huh, to point out that as regards the body, in short, it can be ambiguous as in the case of the taxi driver earlier. It is quite superfluous. Because you see clearly that what determines is not a knowledge, it is a saying (*un dire*). It is only a knowledge because it is a logically inscribable saying. It is the one that I wrote for you, in clear letters, make no mistake with my: $\exists x . \overline{\Phi} x$

Namely, the exception around which there pivots the fact that it is in the measure that this exception carries a consequence for all of those who believe that they have, that they have what? That we do not even dare to call the prick, we call that the phallus, and this is what remains to be determined.

While on the other side it is about the saying, the formal saying, even though the saying of a non-existent person x. Namely, that it is only for every other that the function $\overline{\Phi} x$ is denied, that negation, let us say, to illustrate, is left, I am not all the same going to say to God, because that pisses us off, this business, this sticking of the Other onto God, but all the same, for anyone who Realises this sort of universality that there is no negation of the function $\overline{\Phi} x$, and it is the only form of universality of the saying of a woman, whoever she may be. It nevertheless remains – I think that you remember all the same what I wrote on the board, and that I am not going to be required to rewrite here – it nevertheless remains that in this set, it is not every saying that formulates the function $\overline{\Phi} x$. In other words, that what must be substituted for my little bar that I put over the inverted A, the sign of the universal quantifier, the little bar by which I inscribe the not-all, what must be substituted, is the sign of the denumerable, namely, $\aleph_0$, aleph zero.

What opposes the one of the all of man – and there is only one of them, as everyone knows, the proof is that it is designated by the definite article – what opposes the 'all' of man, here, is, is, it must be

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said, 'the' women, in so far as there is no way to get to the end of them, except by enumerating them. I cannot say all (*toutes*) because what is proper to the denumerable, is precisely that one never gets to the end of it. And if I give you this reference point, it is because this – this must be of use to you for something, it must illustrate what I said the last time about the true saying. The true saying is what comes to grief, is what comes to grief on this: that for, in an untenable *either-or* which would be that everything that is not man is woman and inversely, what decides, what clears the way, is nothing other than this saying, this saying which is engulfed in what is involved in the hole by which there is lacking to the Real what could be inscribed about the sexual relationship.

So then, so then. What is involved in knowledge?

Naturally, I have not managed at this time, namely, 1.20, or something like that...24, I have not managed at this hour, to tell you even a quarter of what I should get into your guts, because that is the function of the saying. If I do not say it to you it is not enough for me to write it, but I am all the same going to give you a little sample of what can be written. Because without this reflection on writing, without what ensures that the saying comes to be written, there is no way for me to make you sense the dimension in which unconscious knowledge subsists. And what you must do as a supplementary step, is to notice that if I make you sensitive by telling you that the unconscious does not discover anything, because there is nothing to discover, there is nothing to discover in the Real, since here there is a hole. If the unconscious, here, invents, it is all the more precious for you to notice that in logic it is the same thing, namely, that if Aristotle had not invented it, the first clearing of the way, namely, to make the saying go into this grinder of being thanks to which he makes syllogisms – naturally syllogisms were made before him, simply people did not know that they were syllogisms. In order to notice it, it must be invented: to see where the hole is, the edge of the Real must be seen.

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And since we are already far gone, and I have not managed to say a quarter of it for you – it will have to be 'too bad', it will ornament, (131) anyway, what will come subsequently – I must all the same make you sense the import of a certain way in which I open up modal logic.

The best part about it, huh, is that naturally, that as regards constructing, as regards inventing – and you can see there all the intuitionist echoes you wish, if indeed you know what that is. One day I translated the necessary for you, huh, by *what does not cease to be written*. Good. You should know, there is a trace in Aristotle, that propositional logic, namely, that something is true or false, what is marked as zero or one, according to the case, there is a little trace, there is a spot where Aristotle skids off – I will show you that whenever you like – into the *peri hermenetas*, as it happens, *On interpretation*, for those who do not hinder it: there is a spot where it is fused, that propositional logic is just as modal as the others. It is true that if it is true that this is only situated where I am telling you, namely, where contradiction is only when all is said and done an artifice, a deputising artifice, but which for all that remains no less true, the true playing here the role of something from which one starts in order to invent the other modes. Namely, that 'necessary that: *p*' whatever truth it may be, can only be expressed by this 'does not cease to be written'. Everyone sees between this fact, this fact that something does not cease to be written – you should understand by this that it is repeated, that it is always the same symptom, what always falls into the same fold. You see clearly that between the 'does not cease to be written: *p*' and the 'does not cease to be written: *non-p*' we are here in the artefact that is testified to precisely, and which bears witness at the same time to this gap concerning the truth and that the order of the possible is as Aristotle indicates, connected to the necessary. What ceases to be written is *p* or *non-p*. In this sense the possible bears witness to the break of the truth. Except for the fact

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that there is nothing to be drawn from it. There is nothing to be drawn from it and Aristotle himself bears witness to it. He bears witness there to his confusion at every instant between the possible and the contingent. What is written here my T towards the bottom: Λ because after all, what ceases to be written can in short cease not to be written, namely, come to light as the truth of the business... It can happen that I love a woman like any one of you – these are the sort of adventures into which you may slip – this however does not give any assurance about the sexual identity of the person that I love any more than of mine. Only there is something that, among all these contingencies, may well testify to the presence of the Real. And this (132) is indeed what only advances from the saying inasmuch as it is supported by the principle of contradiction. Which of course, naturally, is not the current saying of every day. Not only do you ceaselessly contradict yourselves in the current everyday saying, namely, that you do not pay any attention to this principle of contradiction, but it is truly only logic that raises it to the dignity of a principle, and allows you, not at all of course to assure any Real, but to find your bearings in what it might be when you have invented it.

And this indeed is why what I marked about the impossible, namely, what separates, but otherwise than is done by the possible, it is not an *either-or*, it is a *both-and*. In other words, that it should be at the same time *p* and *non-p* is impossible, it is very precisely what you reject in the principle of contradiction. It is nevertheless the Real since it is from there that I am starting, namely, that for every knowledge there must be invention, that this is what happens in every encounter, in every first encounter with the sexual relationship.

The condition for logic to pass into the Real, and this is why it is invented, and that logic is the most beautiful recourse of what is involved in unconscious knowledge. Namely, of what we steer ourselves by into the doldrums. What logic has managed to lucubrate,

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is not to remain with this: that one must choose between *p* and *non-p*, and that by travelling along the vein of the principle of contradiction, we will manage to get out of it as regards knowledge. What is important, what constitutes the Real, is that through logic, something happens, which demonstrates not that *p* and *non-p* are both false, but that neither one nor the other can be in any way be logically verified. This is the point, the point of re-departure, the point on which I will take things up again the next time: this impossible on one side and the other, is the Real as logic allows us to define it, and logic allows us to define it only if we are capable of inventing the refutation of both the one and the other.

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Introduction

Preliminary to the Seminar of R.S.I.

19 November 1974

There is no mike. So you're going to have to tell me whether you can hear me.

There you are, there are people, I know because I was told so, who are living the strike like a celebration. I know it, of course, through analysis. One gets to know things by analysis! One gets to know even that there are people twisted enough for that. But anyway, why not? It's subjective, as they say. That means that there are people who can tackle a lot of things from the right angle. Nevertheless, I am not one of them; as analyst, I can only take the strike to be a symptom, in the sense that this year perhaps, I will manage to convince you of it, that the symptom, to refer to one of my three categories, belongs to the Real. The annoying thing – and this is why I have some reservations – is that it is an organised symptom; that is what is bad, at least from the point of view of the analyst.

So then, if all the same I am going to go on strike, it is not because for me it is a celebration, but it happens that this strike comes to me like a ring on my finger; I mean that it happens that today, namely, at the start of this year 74-75, I have not the slightest inclination to do a seminar for you, as is attested by the fact that you have not seen any notice of it, announcing the title like every other year. I must say that

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nevertheless your number today does not fail to shake me. You know that every year I question myself about what it could be that motivates this crowd. It is not any more resolved now, it is not any more resolved for me, but all the same I consider it as an appeal, an appeal (10) linked to the fact that what I wrote, did nothing more than write, I mean what is written on the board with little signs, the **o**, the S_1, the S_2, the $ of the subject, the fact is that the analytic discourse is something that stirs you, I mean which stirs *you*. It is not a *you*, a *stirs you* in the neutral sense. It is true that to have written it, is an attempt, a tentative approximation. One could perhaps do better. I hope that one will do better.

But in short this year, I have to tell you that I have other concerns. That would, I hope, only give me greater merit in your eyes, if I pursue this seminar here. I have other concerns and I question myself as to whether I ought not let them take precedence. I mean that among you – I see numerous faces of them here – there are people who belong to my School. And perhaps after all my lassitude comes from something that is eating me, namely, that this seminar prevents me from paying more attention to this School.

This year to stimulate this School, I took a tack of which some among you have perhaps heard an echo. I am not going to put the concerns that this gives me into the public forum. Not, of course, that this is something private, quite the contrary, since what is at stake is that there is elsewhere, somewhere other than here, something that gives a place to other teachings than mine. It is strange, strange in the properly Freudian sense, *unheimlich*, it is strange that it is by some people who do not find themselves properly speaking yet authorised by analysis, but who are on the path, that there comes this resistance to the reason why I am stimulating them. I am stimulating them in short to make effective, to make effective what? In a testimony that they would contribute about the point where they are at, to make effective this *passe* which perhaps some of you know is what I am

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trying to introduce into my School, this *passe* by which in short what is at stake is that each one contributes his stone to the analytic discourse by bearing witness to how one enters into it.

It is strange that among them there are some who are fully formed analysts and who when literally – this is what I did in this place where I wanted certain teachings to take place – when literally I beg their help – this is what I did – refuse it in the most categorical way, and go as far as to answer me with the insult, the insult which can be found in the newspapers for example – these are not things that have an effect on me but which, all the same about this insult, which is already not (11) bad to find in the newspaper, in the newspaper *Le Monde* in particular, as it happens, inflate this insult, and add to it. Yeah.

If I speak this year, I will take things from the angle of the identity of self to self. The question is whether this applies to the analyst. Can the analyst be considered as an element? Does he make, in other words, a *set*? Making a set/doing it together (*faire ensemble*), this is something that I will try to explain to you, is not to form a trade union. They are two different terms. *Faire ensemble* might mean, that means being able to make a series. And what I am questioning myself about is where this series stops? Among other terms, can an analyst, like the example of what I have just alluded to about the insult, behave like an imbecile (*imbécile)*? This is a very important question. How judge what I am describing as imbecility? It surely has a meaning, even in the analytic discourse; elsewhere, of course, in every discourse no one has any doubt, one is an imbecile or not, I am saying with respect to this discourse specifically to the discourse of the master, the discourse of the university, the scientific discourse, there is no doubt about it. How define imbecility in the analytic discourse? Here is a question, a question that I introduced, faith, I would say, from the first year of my seminar in stating that analysis is certainly a remedy against ignorance, that it is without effect against being an asshole (*connerie*).

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Hang on, pay attention! I already said that *connerie* is not imbecility. How can you situate imbecility, specify it as being an asshole?

The annoying thing and what is difficult in the question that I evoke, is something is perhaps something that you got wind of from me, I did not heavily insist on it, but all the same it must be said there are subjects for whom analysis, I mean the analytic experience, when they present themselves to it, does not succeed. And I specify that this makes them imbeciles. It must indeed be that there is something flawed at the start. That means perhaps that they would be more useful, I mean useable elsewhere. I mean that for something else they have obvious gifts. This brings us back to the ethics of each discourse and it is not for nothing that I put forward the term ethics of psychoanalysis. Ethics is not the same in it and it is perhaps with those whose ethics would have made them shine elsewhere that analysis does not succeed. Simple hypothesis, but that perhaps – this cannot be without twists and turns – perhaps if I decide, we will put here, finally we will put, it is a manner of speaking, I will put to the test here, (12) starting from the fact that I am indicating that there is no other ethics than to play the game according to the structure of a discourse and that we rediscover there my title of last year; it is the non-dupes, those who do not play the game of a discourse, who find themselves liable to err. It is not inevitably any worse for that. Only it is at their own risk. Those who err, in each discourse, are not inevitably useless in it. Far from it! Only it would be preferable in order to found a new one of these discourses, that people should be a little bit more dupe.

There you are. So then since all the same it would be quite useless to tell you that I am suspending myself, that I am questioning myself about what I will do this year, it would be quite vain to do so, but to do it for two hours which is what you were expecting, well then, I am not going to do it. I am going to stop there while asking you simply to trust, in order to know if you are to come back here on the 10th December, the second Tuesday, to trust the little notices on which I

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will inscribe the title that I will have chosen, if do this seminar this year. It is quite superfluous, and I would even say contra-indicated for you to bombard Gloria with telephone calls. The poor woman can't take any more! It will be one thing or another, either this notice will be put up there, let us say to leave the time to do it and then I must also think things out, the notice will be in the corridor two days before, or else it will not be. If it is not there, well then! You can tell yourselves that I am taking a year's sabbatical. If it is there, I am counting on seeing you as numerous as you are today.

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Seminar 1: Tuesday 10 December 1974

Voilà. So then you saw my notice, which is written like that, Rsi. It can be read like that. It can also be read, since it is in capital letters, it can be read R.S.I. Which perhaps suggested to those who are in the know the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary.

I would like this year to talk to you about the Real, and to begin by pointing out to you that these three words, Real, Symbolic and Imaginary have a meaning. They are three different meanings, but you can also note that I said three meanings, like that, because it seems to be self-evident. But if they are different, is that enough for them to make three, if they are as different as I say? Hence the notion of a common measure, which is difficult to grasp, except by defining the unit in it as a function of measure. There are so many, one, two, three. Again it must be, for it to be able to be said that there are so many, again this unit must be grounded on the sign, whether it is a sign or whether it is written equals, or indeed that you make two little strokes to signify equals, the equivalence of these units. But if by chance they were different, as I might say from one another, we would be very embarrassed and, after all, what would bear witness to it, would be the meaning itself of the word other. Again there must be distinguished, in this meaning of other, the other made up of a distinction defined by an external/internal relationship, for example, as Freud did, whether he wants to or not, in his second topography which is supported by a geometry of the sack where you see a thing, somewhere in the *New introductory lectures*, a thing which is supposed to contain, contain what? It's a funny thing to say, the (14) drives. This is what he calls the Id. Naturally this forces him to add to it a certain number of tools, a sort of lunula which all of a sudden is transformed into a sort of vitellus on which there is supposed to be differentiated an embryo. This is obviously not what he means, but it is regrettable that it suggests it. Such are the

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disadvantages of imaged illustrations. I am not telling you everything else that he is forced to add, without counting the number of hatchings (*hachures*) that he entitles Superego. This geometry of the sack is indeed this thing that we have to deal with at the level of topology, except for the fact that, as perhaps the idea has come to you, this is drawn on a surface and that we are forced to put the sack onto it. On a surface this gives a ring (*rond*) and, with this ring, there is an inside and an outside.

It is with that that one is led to write inclusion, namely, that something, I for example is included in an E, a set. Inclusion you know perhaps how that is written, like that, , whence people have deduced a little quickly that one could slip from inclusion which is there above to the lesser sign , namely, that I is smaller that E, which is a manifest imbecility.

Here then is the first other, the other defined from the outside to the inside. Only there is another Other, the one that I marked with a capital O, which for its part is defined as not having the slightest relationship, however small you may imagine it…when you begin to convey yourself in words, you are immediately caught in a wolf trap. Because this however small you imagine it, brings the Imaginary into play, and when you bring the Imaginary into play, you have every chance of becoming entangled. This is even how people started out for the infinitesimal: people had all sorts of trouble getting out of the Imaginary.

That they should be three, this Real, this Symbolic and this Imaginary, what does that mean? There are two slopes. One slope, a very steep one, leads us to homogenise them; because what relationship have they among themselves? Well then! This is precisely where I want to open up the path for you this year. One could say that the Real is what is strictly unthinkable. That at least would be a start. That would make a hole in the affair and that would allow us to question

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what is involved in, do not forget, what I started from, namely, from three terms in so far as they convey a meaning. What is this business of meaning, especially if you introduce into it what I am striving to make you sense? The fact is that as regards what is involved in
(15) analytic practice, this is where you operate from, but on the other hand, you only work to reduce this meaning; it is in the measure that the unconscious is supported by this something, it must be said, the most difficult thing that I had to introduce, this something defined by me, structured like the Symbolic. It is from the fundamental equivocation of this something that is at stake in the term Symbolic that you always operate - I am talking to those here who are worthy of the name analyst. Equivocation is not meaning. Meaning is that through which there responds something which is different to the Symbolic, and there is no means of supporting this something otherwise than by the Imaginary. But what is the Imaginary? Does it even ek-sist? Since you hint, simply by pronouncing the term Imaginary, that there is something which ensures that the speaking being shows that he is destined for mental defectiveness. And this results from the simple notion of the Imaginary, in so far as the starting point for it is the reference to the body and to the fact that its representation, I mean everything that for it is represented, is only the reflection of its organism. It is the least of the suppositions that the body implies.

Only here there is something that immediately makes us stumble, which is that in this notion of body, there must be immediately implied the following, which is its very definition: it is something about which one presumes that there are specified functions in the organs, so that an automobile, even a computer according to the latest news, is also a body. It is not self-evident, we should say, that a body is living. So that what best attests to the fact that it is living, is precisely this *mens* in connection with which, more exactly that I introduced along the path, the journeying of mental defectiveness. It is not given to all bodies, in so far as they function, to suggest the

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dimension of imbecility. This dimension is introduced by this something that the tongue, and not just any one, Latin… – this to put in their place those who impute precisely this imbecility to Latin – is precisely the only one that instead of sticking on the soul an opaque term like *nous*, or another metaphor of something or other, of a knowledge, which we for sure do not know whether it exists, since it is the knowledge supposed by the Real. This knowledge of God, it is certain that it ek-sists. We have given ourselves enough trouble in spelling it out, it ek-sists, but only in the sense that I am writing this term ek-sistence, by (16) writing it differently than is usually done. It *sists* perhaps, but we do not know where. All one can say, is that what consists gives no testimony of it, so then, there is something a little bit striking in seeing that the tongue that is suspected of being the most stupid one is precisely the one that has forged this term *intelligere*, to read between the lines, namely, elsewhere than the way in which the Symbolic is written. It is from this effect of writing of the Symbolic that there stems this meaning-effect, in other words imbecility, to which there bear witness up to today all the systems described as natural. Without language, not the slightest suspicion could come to us of this imbecility, which is also that by which the support which is the body bears witness to us, I remind you that I said it earlier but this did not do anything for you, bears witness to us of being alive. In truth this *mens*, attested to by mental defectiveness, is something from which I do not hope to get out in any way.

I do not see why what I am contributing to you would be less defective than the rest. This might indeed be the meaning of this banana skin that was slipped under my foot, by catching me like that on the telephone, to give a lecture in Nice. You'll never guess, they slipped this title under my foot, the Lacanian phenomenon! Ah yes! What I am in the process of telling you, is that precisely I do not expect it to be a phenomenon, namely, that what I am saying is any less stupid than all the rest. The only thing that makes me persevere, and you know that I do not persevere without looking twice at it, I told

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you the last time why I was hesitating to set about it again this year, it is because I believe that there is something I have grasped (*sais*), I cannot even say with my hands, with my feet, it is the coming into play of this trace that is outlined, which quite obviously is not easily tolerated, especially by analysts, by the analytic experience. So that if there is a phenomenon, it can only be the *Lacanalyste* phenomenon or indeed *lac-à-pas-d'analyste* [*être dans le lac*: to be in the soup?].

There is something which happened nevertheless, I am sharing it with you like that, because I am letting myself be drawn along; naturally, I could not explain anything about all of that to them, because for them, I was a phenomenon. What the organisers wanted in fact was to collect a mob. There is always a mob to look at a phenomenon. So, I was not going to tell them, listen I am not a phenomenon! That would (17) have been a *Verneinung*. Anyway, I let myself go for a good hour and a quarter. I cannot say that I am at all satisfied with what I told them, because what can you say in an hour and a quarter! For my part I imagine that with you of course I have a number of hours, since it is a little bit more than three, it is limitless. I am quite wrong, because in reality, there are no more than 50, including all that I will have between now and the end of the year. But that helps me to take to the road.

In short, at the end of an hour and a quarter of chat, I asked them questions, I mean, I asked them to ask me some. It was a demand. Well then! You can believe me if you wish, contrary to you, they asked me them for three quarters of an hour! And I will say more, these questions were striking in that they were relevant questions, relevant of course like that, in a second zone. In short it was the testimony of the fact that in a certain context, the one in which I do not insist, questions could come to me, and questions that were not stupid, questions that in any case required me to respond. So that I found myself confronted with the situation, without having had to reject the Lacanian phenomenon, of having demonstrated it. That

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naturally, it was not even sure that they noticed themselves, that that was the Lacanian phenomenon. Namely, that I was an effect for a audience, which had only heard like that, on the rebound, from very far, what I may articulate in this place here, where I give my teaching, my teaching to open up for the analyst the very discourse that supports him. If indeed it is from a discourse, and always from a discourse, that this Thing that we are trying to manipulate in analysis suffers, from a discourse.

I am saying then that this is the phenomenon. It is, in short, part of the wave (*vague*), if you will allow me to employ a term that might have tempted me to write the letters in a different order. Instead of R.S.I., R.I.S., that would have given a laugh, this famous *ris de l'eau*, on which precisely, somewhere in my *Ecrits*, I equivocate. I was looking for the page earlier, there was someone here, a pal of the first order, who had the *Ecrits*; I found it, it is on page 166, that I play on the *ris d'eau* (*rideau*), indeed implicating there 'my dear friend Leiris dominating' something or other.

I must obviously cheer myself up by telling myself that this
(18) phenomenon is not unique, it is only particular. I mean that it is distinguished from the universal. The annoying thing is that it is up to now unique at the level of the analyst. It is nevertheless indispensable that the analyst should be at least two, the analyst to produce effects, and the analyst who theorises these effects. That was why it was precious for me that I was accompanied by a person, who perhaps, I did not ask him, at this precise level of the phenomenon, of the phenomenon described as Lacanian, was able to notice precisely there, at the level of what I had to say, about what I have just now stated, namely, that on that occasion I simply demonstrated this phenomenon by the fact that from that, from this mob, I received questions and that alone is where the phenomenon lies. If this person, and I have no doubt about it, is an analyst, she was able to notice that I had in the

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little I said - which was, I am repeating to you, execrable - demonstrated this phenomenon.

That closes the brackets. I would like now to come back to what I have to advance in today, namely, that I only found, in a word, a single way of giving these three terms, Real, Symbolic, Imaginary their common measure by knotting the, with this bo-bo…bo-bo…Borromean knot. In other words, that you must pay attention to what I drew there on the board, and you have been able to see, not without difficulty, because I made a mistake in the colour on several occasions. Because it is indeed here that we will find the whole time the question, what distinguishes the way in which each one consists, of those things which at one time, I designated as rings of string, what distinguishes each one from the others? Absolutely nothing but the meaning. And that is why we have the hope, a hope, good God, on which you can thoroughly depend, because hope, in short for me is only in this affair. And if I did not have the answer, as you know, I would not ask the question.

We have the hope, I am leaving you the hope in the short term, there is none other, that we will take this year a step together, a step which only consists in the fact that, if we have won something somewhere, it is inevitably, it is surely, at the expense of something else. That in other terms, if analytic discourse functions, it is sure that we lose something in it elsewhere. Moreover, what could we well lose, if truly what I have just said, namely, that all the systems of nature that have emerged up to now are marked by mental deficiency, why should we hold on to them so much! There remain to us all the same these (19) pivotal systems whose manipulation may allow us, I mean us analysts, to account for our own operation.

I would like to keep you for an instant on the Borromean knot. The Borromean knot consists strictly in the fact that 3 is the minimum for it. If you make a chain, with what this word has for you, in terms of

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ordinary meaning…If you unknot two rings of a chain, the others will remain knotted (I-1).

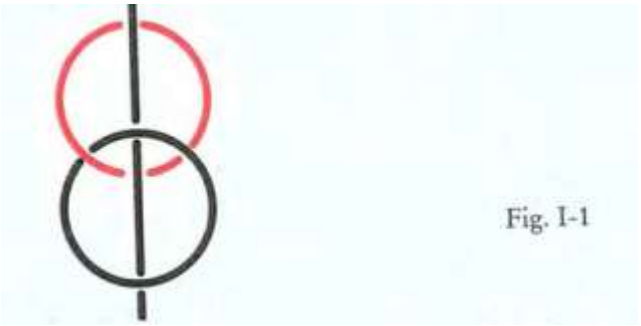

Fig. I-1

The definition of the Borromean knot starts from 3. Namely, that if [I-2] you break one of the rings of the 3, all 3 are freed, namely, the two other rings are freed.

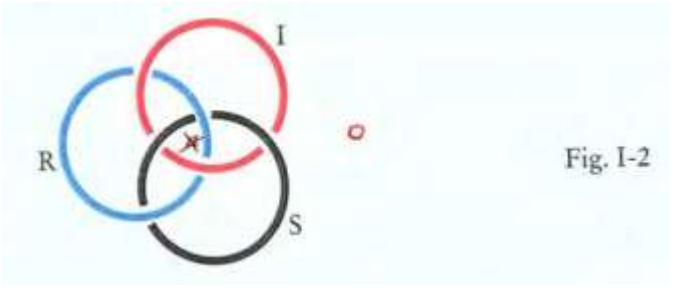

Fig. I-2

The remarkable thing in this, which is a matter of consistency, is that starting from there you can put an indefinite number of rings. It will always be true that if you break one of these rings, all the others, however numerous they are, will be freed. I already, I think, sufficiently made you sense, at a time that has already gone, that to take the example of a ring thus fabricated [I-3], it is quite conceivable that another comes to pass into the buckle which consists, which is realised by the bending of this little circle, and that you grasp, in short, immediately, that simply here by breaking the circle which, here, (20) prevents the third from being liberated, the bent buckle is going to slip from this, and that, in putting an indefinite number of these bent circles, you will see through what really tangible, immediately imaginable mechanism, all the rings are freed, whatever may be their number.

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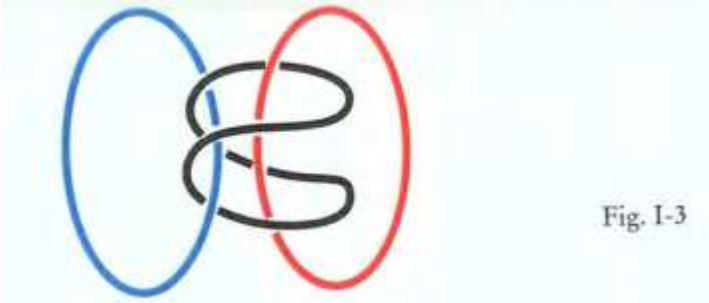

Fig. I-3

This property is all by itself what homogenises everything in terms of number starting from 3; which means that, in the sequence of numbers, of whole numbers, 1 and 2 are detached; something begins at 3, which includes all the numbers, however far they are denumerated, and it is indeed on this that I intended to put the emphasis, in my seminar, particularly last year. That is not all. There is much more than a single way of Borromeanising a certain number of consistent toruses, there is much more than a single way. I already indicated it at the appropriate time, there are very probably a quantity that there is no reason not to qualify as infinite, infinite in the sense of numerable, because you have only to suppose for an instant the following way of making a buckle [I-4] for you to perceive that you can multiply it indefinitely. Have you got that? Namely, to make of

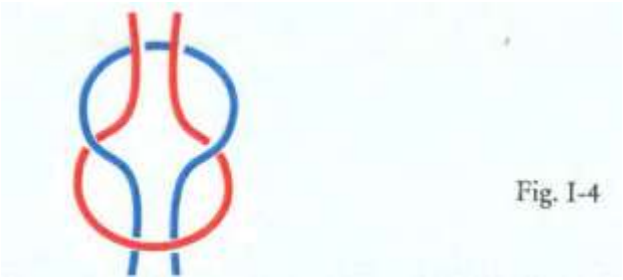

Fig. I-4

(21) these buckles, as many turns as you wish to knot the two toruses together. There is no plausible limit to this arrangement, and consequently, already simply in this dimension, there is a way of tying together, one to the other, as many ways as it is possible to dream of on this occasion. You can even find others, it will be no less true that the Borromean knot whatever it may be has as a lower limit the number 3, that Borromean knot will always bear the mark of three, and that under that heading, you have right away to ask yourself the

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question of the register to which the Borromean knot belongs? Is it to the Symbolic, to the Imaginary or to the Real?

From today I am putting forward what subsequently I will allow myself to demonstrate, I am putting forward that the Borromean knot, in so far as it is supported by the number three, belongs to the register of the Imaginary. It is in so far as the Imaginary is rooted in the three dimensions of space. I am putting forward something which is nowhere going to be conjugated with a transcendental aesthetic. It is on the contrary because the Borromean knot belongs to the Imaginary, namely, supports the triad of the Imaginary, of the Symbolic and of the Real, it is in so far as this triad exists, from the fact that there is joined to it the addition of the Imaginary, that space *qua* sensible finds itself reduced to this minimum of three dimensions, in other words from its attachment to the Symbolic and to the Real.

Other dimensions are imaginable, and they have been imagined. It is by sticking to the Symbolic and to the Real that the Imaginary is reduced what is not a maximum imposed by the sack of the body, but on the contrary, is defined by a minimum, the one which ensures there is only a Borromean knot from the fact that there are at least three of them.

I am going here, before leaving you, to give you a little indication, some points, some punctuations of what we are going to have to demonstrate this year. If here [I-2] I depicted the Real with a blue ring, the Symbolic with a white ring, and with a red ring the one that is found to be supported by the three, to be depicted here, dominating them, I would like to point out to you that it is in no way implied in the notion of the knot as such, of the Borromean knot, whether we are dealing with rings of string or with toruses, that it is just as conceivable that, in conformity with the intuition of Desargues in ordinary geometry, these rings open up, or, to say it simply, become

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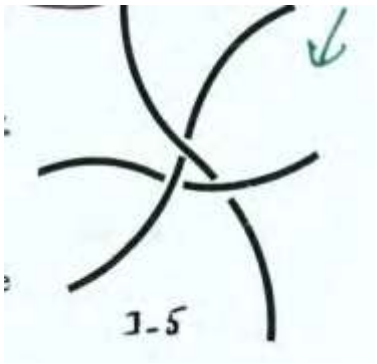
(22) cords supposed, why not, nothing prevents us from positing it as a postulate, to join up at infinity.

There is nevertheless a means of defining what is called a point, namely, this something strange that Euclidean geometry does not define, and of which it nevertheless makes use as a support because on occasion, it punctuates the individual there. Namely, that the point, in Euclidean geometry, has no dimension at all, that it has zero dimensions, contrary to the line, to the surface, indeed to volume which respectively have one, two, three of them. Is there not, in the definition that Euclidean geometry gives of the point – as the intersection of two straight lines – something, I will allow myself to say, something that falls short? Namely, what would prevent two straight lines from sliding onto one another?



The only thing that would allow a point to be defined as such is presented like this [I-5], three straight lines which are not here simple lines, marks of a saw, shadows, but effectively three consistent straight lines which, at the central point here, produce what constitutes the essence of the Borromean knot, namely, which determine a point as such, something for which then, we must invent something other than simply the indication of a dimension which is supposed to be zero, which for its part has no dimension (*ne dimense pas*).

I am suggesting to you to try this out, that there is not simply here a banal stroke, namely, that this is also supported by three surfaces, I mean that with three surfaces you will obtain the effect described as a point in just as valid a way as the one depicted here, let us say, with

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three cords. That on the other hand, you can render tangible that you will obtain here these straight lines here, these cords from free (23) interplay, namely, on three surfaces that are not being squeezed, if you start not from the chain such as it is constituted in the Borromean knot, but in this chain two by two whose ghost I evoked earlier in passing, that in untying buckles knotted two by two, what you get are three straight lines, free one on the other, namely, not being squeezed, not defining the point as such.

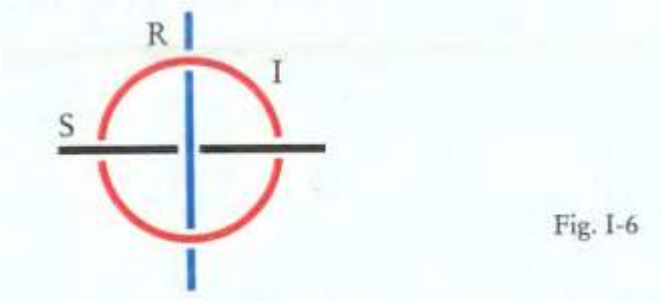

Fig. I-6

What I want to announce to you before leaving you, is then the following. It is clear [I-6], here, from the fact that we can see that with two infinite straight lines, we can, by knotting a single ring of string, maintain the property of the Borromean knot, on this single condition that the two straight lines are not able to cut themselves somewhere between this knot and infinity except in a single way. To take the straight line, R, it must be pulled forward, as I might say, while the line S of the figure on the right can only be pulled backwards. They must not, in a way, be brought to buckle with one another two by two, which, in any case excludes the central figure, which, having already made one of the buckles, that one of the rings, let's say the white ring on the red ring, defines by that simple fact, whatever may be its future fate, the strict position of the blue infinite straight line which must pass under what is below and over what is above, to express myself in a simple way. On this condition the Borromean knot functions.

I would like to indicate to you the fact that if we situate this blue ring of the Real, if we situate this ring of the Symbolic, and that of the Imaginary, I am allowing myself to indicate to you that here there is

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situated a flattening out, in other words a reduction of the Imaginary. For it is clear that the Imaginary always tends to be reduced to a (24) flattening out. It is on this that there is founded all depiction, it being well understood that it is not because we may have crumpled these three rings of string that they are any the less knotted in a Borromean way in the real, namely, with regard to the fact that each one of them, unknotted, frees the two others. This thing will always be true. How does it happen that we must have this flattening out in order to be able to depict any topology whatsoever? It is very certainly a question which reaches out towards that of the defectiveness that I qualified as mental, in so far as it is rooted in the body itself.

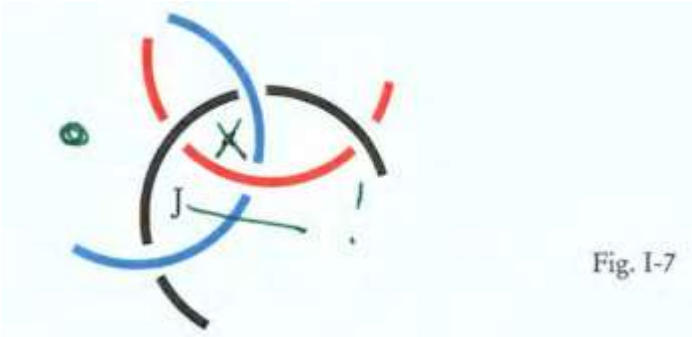

Fig. I-7

- Small **o,** I have written here; in the Imaginary but just as well in the Symbolic, I am write the function described as meaning.
- The two other functions, those that stem from what is to be defined with respect to the central point allowing there to be added three other points, this is something to be defined. We have enjoyment…

It is a matter of knowing that there are two enjoyments:

- for example, one we could define, but which one? As enjoying life, if the Real is life, we are led to refer to it, but is it sure? Enjoyment, in so far as it participates in the Imaginary of meaning, the enjoying of life in a word, is something that we can situate in the fact that, let us note it, is no less a point than the central point, the point described as that of the **o**-object, because it links together, on this occasion, three surfaces which also are squeezed.

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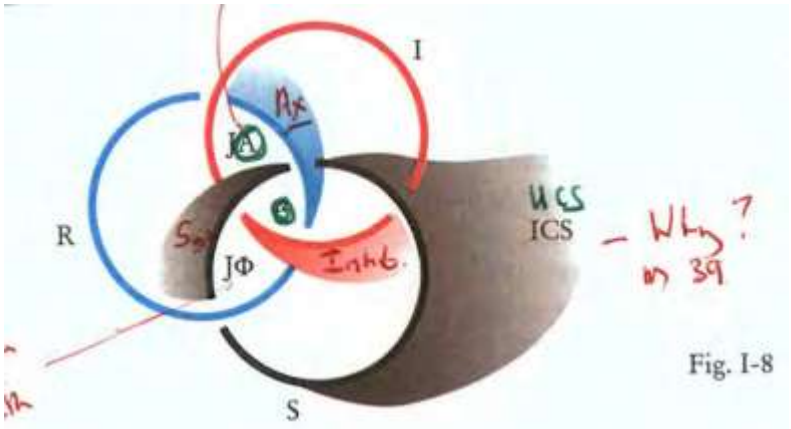
- And on the other hand what about this other mode of enjoyment, the one depicted by an overlapping, a squeezing where the Real comes here to squeeze it at the periphery of the two other rings of string? What about that enjoyment?

These are, close up, the points that we will have to elaborate, since moreover they are the ones that question us.

One point that I am suggesting here and now is this, to return to Freud, namely, to something triadic, he stated it as *Inhibition, Symptom, Anxiety*.



I would say that inhibition, as Freud himself articulates it, is always a matter of the body, or of functioning. And to indicate it already on this schema [I-8] I would say that inhibition is what somewhere stops interfering, as I might say, in a figure which is the figure of a hole, the hole of the Symbolic. We will have to discuss this inhibition in order to know if what is encountered in the animal, where there is in the nervous system these inhibiting centres, is something of the same order as this arrest of functioning *qua* Imaginary, *qua* specified in the speaking being, whether it is conceivable that something should be of the same order, namely, the bringing into function in the *nevrax*, in the central nervous system, of an activity that is positive *qua* inhibiting. How is it conceivable that the being presumed not to have language finds itself joining in the term inhibition something of the same order as what we grasp there, at the level of the experiority of meaning, that what we grasp there as stemming from what is found in short outside

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the body, namely, as a surface to topologise it in the way in which I told you that it is assuredly only on two dimensions that this is depicted, how inhibition can have to deal with what is a type of arrest which results from its intrusion into the field of the Symbolic.
(26) It is starting from there, a not simply starting from, it is quite gripping to see that *anxiety*, in so far as it is something that starts from the Real, it is altogether tangible to see that it is this anxiety that is going to give its meaning to the nature of the enjoyment that is produced here, under **o,** of the cross-checking brought to the surface, the Eulerian cross-checking of the Real and Symbolic.

Finally, to define the third term, it is in the *symptom* that we identify what is produced in the field of the Real. If the Real manifests itself in analysis and not only in analysis, if the notion of the symptom was introduced, well before Freud by Marx, so as to make it the sign of something which is what is not working out in the Real, if in other words, we are capable of operating on the symptom, it is in as far as the symptom is the effect of the Symbolic in the Real. It is inasmuch as this Symbolic, as I it drew here, must be completed here, and why is it outside? This is what I will have to manipulate for you in what follows, it is in so far as the unconscious is, in a word, what responds to the symptom. It is inasmuch as this knot, this knot quite real for its part even though only reflected in the Imaginary, it is in so far as this knot accounts for a certain number of inscriptions by which the surfaces respond to one another, and that we will see that the unconscious can be responsible for the reduction of the symptom.

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Seminar 2: Tuesday 17 December 1974

Voilà. Hm! Like that, since I don't like much writing on the board, I am writing the minimum for you. This minimum is enough for you to recognise in it on the left the Borromean knot [II-1]. I think so anyway, inasmuch as you remember what I say. In short, you take notes, or at least some of you do. I think I have justified how the Borromean knot can be written; since it is a writing, a writing that supports a real. This already, just by itself, designates that not only can the Real be supported by a writing but that there is no other tangible idea of the real.

This Real, this Real that is the knot, the knot which is a construction, this Real is enough to leave open this trait, this trait of writing, this trait which is written which supports the idea of the Real. This because of the fact that the knot being made only from the fact that each of its elements is only knotted by a third, you can leave open one of these three. Since this is a fact that I highlighted, that I believe I highlighted the last time, that each of its elements can have two forms, the form of the infinite straight line, and the form that I designate, because it seems to me the best for your imagination, that I designate by a ring of string, which proves when one studies it to be a torus.

Having made this little bit of knot with what I said the last time, as a way of bringing it back to you, I find myself like that, this morning, preferring rather to read what I elaborated with you in mind. It seems to me that there are remarks, preliminary remarks in short, that may (30) well be of use to you in responding, in justifying, as questions, questions that I suppose you must have asked.

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So then I am not going to make these preliminary remarks numerous, I am going to make three of them. [On the board].

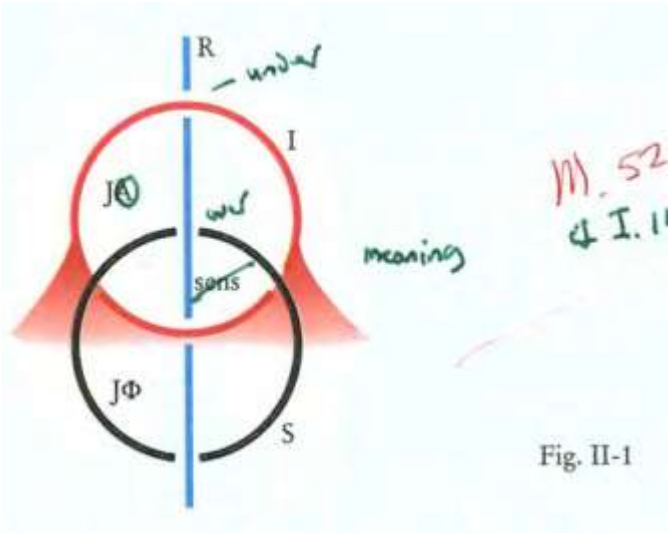

Fig. II-1

This may come to mind, in short, for some people who open books, they do not even need to open them. It's there on the covers! They may ask themselves…

[On the board] This knot that I put forward by way of uniting in it the R.S.I. in the most certain way, namely, when the S, this is the white ring that you see there, and the Imaginary, that's the red ring, this knot is held to be sufficiently defined, by not presenting an ambiguity, when the two rings are crossed by the Real, in a way, as I stated the last time, that the Real crosses them by being underneath the one of the two rings that is underneath and being above the one that is above. That is enough for the squeezing, whether you make it on the left or on the right. I point out to you in passing that it is impossible from this single knot to give the characterisation of this left or of this right; otherwise we would have the expected miracle that would allow us to make a message of the difference between the left and the right for the eventual subjects capable of receiving the aforesaid message. The Borromean knot can in no way serve as a basis for such a message which would permit the transmission of a difference between left and right. It is then a matter of indifference to place on the left or on the right what results because of the fact of this knot, something that we (31) will designate as external, as being the meaning, in so far as it is

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starting from it that there are defined the terms Real, Symbolic and Imaginary.

The very fact that I am advancing with these terms is something that ought to make you ask the question, it seems to me, by simply having read some titles of books, is the knot a model? A model in the sense that this is understood for example with respect to mathematical models, those that frequently serve us to extrapolate as regards the Real? Namely, as in this case, to establish from a writing what can be imagined from the very fact of this writing, which finds itself then allowing there to be accounted for the questionings which will be brought by experience to this real itself, which in any case is only a supposition there, a supposition which consists in this meaning of the word Real. I claim to repudiate for this knot the qualification of model, this in the name of what we must sup-pose to a model; the model as I have just said and this, because of its writing, is situated from the Imaginary. There is no Imaginary which does not suppose a substance. This is a strange fact, but it is always in the Imaginary, from the spirit that gives a substance to this model, that the questions formulated from it are secondarily asked of the Real.

And this is why I claim that this apparent model that consists in this knot, this Borromean knot, is an exception even though it also is situated in the Imaginary, is an exception to this supposition, by the fact that what it proposes, is that the three function here as pure consistency, namely, that it is only by holding together among themselves that they are consistent. The three hold together among themselves really, which implies metaphor all the same, and asks the question of which one is the impetus (*erre*), in the sense that I meant it last year, which is the impetus of the metaphor. For if I state, which can only be done from the Symbolic, from the word, that the consistency of these three rings is only supported by the Real, it is indeed because I use the setting aside of meaning which is permitted between R.S.I. as individualising these three rings, specifying them as

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such. The setting aside of meaning is supposed there to be taken from a certain maximum. What is the accepted maximum of the setting aside of meaning? This is a question that I can only, in the present state of things, put to linguists. How the linguist – and there is one who honours me today by his presence in the front row – how can a linguist define the limits of metaphor? What can define a maximum of the divergence of metaphor, in the sense that I have stated it, a (32) reference to the *Agency of the letter*, in my *Ecrits*; what is the permitted maximum of the substitution of one signifier for another? I apologise, perhaps I have been a little quick here but it is certain that we cannot afford to delay. We cannot afford to delay and, because of that, I must pass on to my second remark.

To operate with this knot in an appropriate manner, you have to ground yourselves on a little stupidity. The best thing is still to use stupidly what is meant by being its dupe. One must not get into this subject with obessional doubt, or haggle too much. One thing struck me in reading a work which it happens my daughter had got wind of, though her work on Buffon. She borrowed it from someone who moreover promptly gave her indications on the appearance of this text. This text is by Maupertuis, who at the Berlin Academy, had given under the title of *The physical Venus* a report of what was in short at the high point, in his time, of what is known about the phenomenon of the reproduction of living bodies. For him to have introduced it with the term of *The physical Venus*, shows that he only wants to deal with sexed reproduction.

It is quite striking, to my eyes at least, to see that this reading of Maupertuis – on this occasion, for someone who can be located in history, certainly the first thing that stands out, is the date of this statement, 1756 – bears witness to the time taken by these speaking beasts which men are, let us take them as defined by that, to realise what was specific in sexed reproduction. It is quite clear to my eyes that it is because of not being simply dupe, of not sticking to what his

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time furnished him as material, namely, already a lot, the mapping out in the microscope by Leeuwenhoek and Swammerdam, of what were called at the time animalculs, namely, the spermatozoon and the eggs on the other hand; namely, what is ordinarily supported by two bodies which, by this fact, are defined as being of opposite sexes, with some exceptions of course, namely, that the same body, may support the two, which happens with snails as you are not unaware of. It is assuredly because of not sticking to this massive fact of the distinction between the animalcul and the egg, nevertheless here and now present in the simple diversity of theories, that Maupertuis, by not being a dupe, by not sticking to this massive fact, and in a word by not being stupid enough, does not realise the point properly speaking of discovery that this constitutes for what is involved in terms of a real (33) apprehension of the distinction between the sexes, does not stick to what was he was brought. If he had been a dupe, he would have erred less. Not that of course his impetus was stupid because he gets to something that is in a way the prefiguration, as one might say, of what was revealed by the later examination of more powerful microscopes to constitute the existence of genes. Between ovism and animalculism, namely, what puts the whole stress on one of these elements or the whole stress on the other, he goes as far as to imagine that the facts of attraction and repulsion can lead things to this composition as regards which moreover the experiment, the experiment conducted by Harvey on the examination of what is stated as existing in terms of a first manifestation of what he calls the living point at the back of the uterus of does that Charles I had placed at his disposition. He manages certainly to have an idea, or at least to suggest it, about what may happen, and as regards which one can say that it effectively happens at the level of what might be a morula, for example, indeed at a further stage which is that of the gastrula, but precisely by guessing…by guessing he does not advance.

What escapes him is that each cell of what someone like Harvey discovered, and for him to blind himself to it as being the substance of

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the embryo, is the puzzle, the mixture apparently that one might imagine about it, namely, something that Maupertuis does not fail to imagine. The fact is that in this puzzle, in these cellular elements, there are some that are supposed to be male and others female. Which is certainly not true. It must be pushed much further, and to tell the truth in such a way that the living point can in no way be recognised. We are at the level of these distinguishable genes in the caryosome in the innermost part of the cell. It is because one must go that far that the idea of the mixture, towards which Maupertuis leans, is simply a premature idea, not a forging ahead, precisely! It is, as I might say, by being a non-dupe that he imagines very badly. He is not dupe in the measure that he does not stick strictly to what is provided to him, that in short he makes hypotheses. *Hypotheses non fingere*. The repudiation of hypotheses seems to me to be what is appropriate and what I designate properly by this advice to be stupid enough not to ask oneself questions concerning the use of my knot, for example. It is certainly not with the help of this knot that one can go further than from where it emerges, namely, from analytic experience. It is analytic experience that it accounts for, and that is what gives it its value.

(34) Third remark, also preliminary. In what does there consist in the knot, as it is presented, this something which, from the first remark, made someone ask me the question of whether it was a model? The fact is of course, that apparently the Imaginary dominates in it; the Imaginary dominating in it is something in effect that reposes on the fact that this grounds its consistency. What I am introducing by this remark is the following. It is that enjoyment, with regard to this Imaginary consistency, can do nothing but ek-sist, or parody it, it is with regard to the Real, it is something other than meaning that is at stake in enjoyment. With that the signifier is what remains. For if the signifier, by this fact, is deprived of meaning, it is because the signifier, all that remains, proposes itself as intervening in this enjoyment. Not of course that the 'I think' is enough to assure ek-

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sistence – it is not for nothing that Descartes stumbled there – but up to a certain point, it is all the same true that it is only by effacing all meaning that ek-sistence is defined. And indeed, moreover, he himself floated between the *sum*, *ergo* and the *exsisto*. Assuredly the notion of ek-sistence, was not then assured. For something to ek-sist, there must be a hole somewhere. It is around this hole simulated by Descartes' *I think*, since this *I think*, is empty, it is around this hole that the ek-sistence is suggested. Assuredly we have these holes here at the heart of each of these rings, since without this hole it would not even be thinkable that something can be knotted.

It is a matter of situating, not what Descartes thought, but what Freud touched, and for that, I propose that what ek-sists to the Real, to the Real of the hole, should be symbolised in writing by an intermediary field, intermediary like flattened out, because this is all that writing permits us. It is quite striking in effect that writing requires, as such, this flattening out. And if here I suggest that something supposes, incarnates I would say, that the Symbolic, for example, shows in two-dimensional space [II-2] defined by the fact that something ek-sists by

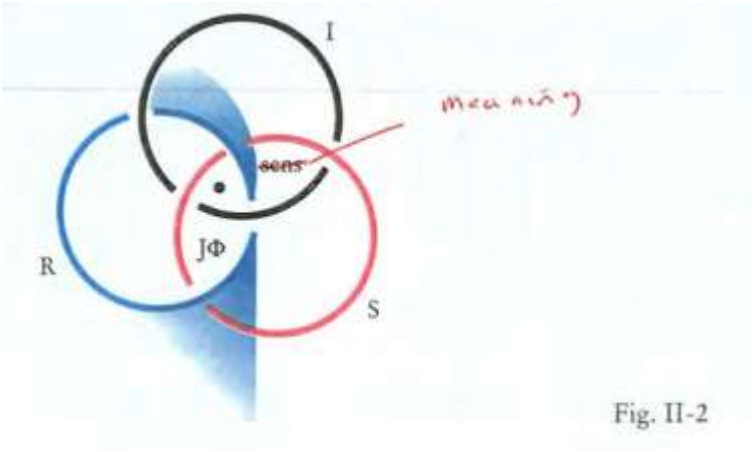

Fig. II-2

only being supposable in writing from the opening, the opening of the ring into this indefinite straight line, that is here what moreover with respect to one of the elements of the knot as to all the others, what allows to situate what stems from existence.

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Why then, on the right, have I marked that what is concerned in ek-sistence is something that is metaphorised from phallic enjoyment? This is a proposition which presupposes that I should say more about this enjoyment. To situate it in a way which will not give rise to ambiguity, it is with a blue stroke that I draw what is involved in the Real, and with a red stroke, the Symbolic. I propose, even if only with the aim of completing it subsequently, to situate here, as such, phallic enjoyment, in so far as it is in relation to what ek-sists to the Real, namely, what is posited from the field produced by the fact that the Real ring, that's how I am calling the ring connoted as the Real, from the fact that it opens out to posit itself as this infinite straight line, isolated, as one might say, in its consistency. It is to the Real as making a hole that enjoyment ek-sists.

This is due to what analytic experience has contributed to us as such. There is in Freud…- I am not going, quite simply for want of having collected them – there is in Freud a kow-towing, as I might say, before phallic enjoyment as such. This is what analytic experience discovers, the nodal function of this enjoyment *qua* phallic. And it is around it that there is founded what is involved in this sort of Real with which analysis has to deal.

What is important to see, is that if there is something by which the knot is supported it is precisely that there is with regard to this phallic enjoyment, as Real, this something that only situates it from the squeezing that results from nodality, as I might say…the nodality proper to the Borromean knot and from the fact that something which here is drawn as a ring, as a ring of string, as a ring *qua* consistency that constitutes the Symbolic. It is in the measure that a third point, which is defined as what defines meaning, is external to the more (36) central of the points of this nodality. It is in this sense that there is produced what is called phallic enjoyment. Phallic enjoyment always involves the knot that is made with the ring of the Symbolic, to name it only in the way as it ought to be. That this enjoyment as such

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is linked to the production of ek-sistence is something that I am proposing this year to put to the test.

For you see what results from it is that this knot, as I stated, this knot is reduplicated by another triplicity, the one linked to meaning in so far as it is from meaning that there starts the distinction of meanings which from these terms makes three terms. It is from this that we ought, can, start for the knot to consist as such. There are three elements, and it is as three that these elements are supported; we reduce them to being three. That simply is what gives them their meaning. On the other hand, under the heading of ek-sistence they are each distinct, and moreover it is with regard to enjoyment as real that they are differentiated, and that at this level what analytic experience contributes, is that it is in the measure that enjoyment is what ek-sists, that it makes the Real, that it justifies it precisely by that, by ek-sisting. Assuredly, there is here a passage which is important, because to what does ek-sistence ek-sist? Certainly not to what consists. Ek-sistence as such is defined, is supported by what in each of these terms, R.S.I., creates a hole. There is in each something which means that it is from the circle, from a fundamental circularity, that it is defined, and this something is what has to be named.

It is striking that in Freud's time, all that is named about it is Imaginary. I mean that the function for example described as the ego, is this something that Freud, in conformity with this necessity, with this penchant which means that it is to the Imaginary that the substance as such goes, Freud designates it by what? Nothing other than what in representation creates a hole. He does not go so far as to say it but he represents it in this phantastical topography which the second is, while the first marked his amazed distance with regard to what he had discovered about the unconscious. It is in the sack, the sack of the body, it is with this sack that the ego is depicted, and this moreover induces him to having to specify something about this ego which is precisely to make a hole in it to allow the world to enter it, to

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necessitate that this sack should be, in a way stoppered by perception. It is in as far that Freud does not designate as such, but betrays, that the ego is only a hole.

(37) What are the holes constituted on the one hand by the Real and on the other by the Symbolic? This is something that we assuredly will have to examine very closely. For something, of course, is opened up to us, which seems in a way to be self-evident. Namely, to designate this hole in the Real by life, and moreover this is a slope which Freud himself did not resist, in opposing life instincts to death instincts. I note that in questioning by our knot what is involved in the structure necessitated by Freud, that it is on the side of death that the function of the Symbolic is found. It is in so far as something is *urverdrängt* in the Symbolic that there is something that we can never give a meaning to, even though we are, it is almost a refrain to state it, we are capable logically of saying that *all men are mortal.* It is in so far as *all men are mortal* does not, from the very fact that this *all*, properly speaking has no meaning, that at least the plague must be propagated at Thebes, in order that this *all* may become something imaginable and not purely Symbolic; that each one must feel himself concerned in particular by the threat of the plague, that there is revealed at the same time what supposed that. Namely, that if Oedipus forced something, it is altogether without knowing it, that, as I might say, he only killed his father for want of having, if you will allow me to say it, for want of having taken the time to *laïusser*. If he had taken the time that was required, but it would have required certainly a time that would have been almost the time of an analysis, since for himself, it was precisely for that reason that he was on the road, namely, that he believed through a dream precisely, that he was going to kill the one who under the name of Polybus was well and truly his veritable father.

What Freud brings us concerning what is involved in the Other, is precisely this, that there is only an Other by saying it. But that this

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Total-Other (*Tout-autre*) is quite impossible to say completely, that there is an *urverdrängt*, an irreducible unconscious, and that to say it, is properly speaking what is not only defined as impossible, but introduces as such the category of the impossible.

That religion is true, is something that I said on occasion. It is surely more true than neurosis in that it represses this fact that it is not true that God simply *is* (*soit seulement*), as I might say, in which Voltaire had a cast iron belief. It says that he *ek-sists*, that he is ek-sistence par excellence, namely, that in short he is repression in person, he is even the person presupposed for repression. And it is in that that it is true. (38) God is nothing other than what ensures that starting from language, there cannot be established a relationship between the sexed. Where is God in all of that? I never said that he was in language. Language, well then! Precisely, it is what we will have to question ourselves about this year. Where can it come from? I certainly did not say that this came to fill a hole, the one constituted by the non-relationship, the constitutive non-relationship of the sexual, because this non-relationship is only suspended on it. Language is not then simply a stopper, it is that in which there is inscribed this non-relationship. That is all we can say about it. God, for his part comprises the totality of the effects of language, including the psychoanalytic effects, which is no small thing to say!

To fix things, what are called ideas, is that not so, and which are not at all ideas, to fix things there where they deserve to be fixed, in logic, Freud does not believe in God, because he operates along his own line as is testified by the powder that he throws into our eyes in order to *en-moiser* us [play on Moses and *moi*?]. The *en-moisement* may also be the *en-moisement* of which I spoke earlier. Not alone does he perpetuate religion but he consecrates it as the ideal neurosis. This indeed is what he says moreover in attaching it to obsessional neurosis which is the ideal neurosis, which deserves to be called properly speaking ideal. And he cannot do otherwise because it is impossible

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namely, that he is dupe, for his part, in the right way, the one that does not err. Not like me! I cannot testify that I err; I err in these intervals that I try to situate for you, of Meaning, of Phallic Enjoyment, indeed of the Third Term, which I have not illuminated, because it is what gives us the key to the hole, the hole as I am designating it. It is Enjoyment in so far as it would involve, not the other of the signifier, but the other of the body, the other of the other sex.

When I say, state, announce that there is no sexual relationship does this not mean this fact that is there in experience, that everyone knows, but about which we must learn why Freud did not take it into account. Why Freud qualified Eros by the One, handing himself over to the myth of the body, of the united body, of the body with two backs, of the completely round body, by daring to refer himself to this Platonic blunder? Is it not that the fact that we may well embrace any other body whatsoever is nothing more than the sign of the most extreme perplexity? It happens that thanks to a fact that Freud (39) catalogues quite obviously as is required as regression, and what's more we suck it, what matter? Apart from breaking it into fragments, it is hard to see what one can really do to another body, I mean another body described as human! There is thus justified that if we seek what this enjoyment of the other body can be bordered by, in so far as it surely makes a hole, what we find is anxiety.

This indeed is why at a time, a time where it was certainly not for nothing that I had chosen this theme of anxiety, I had chosen it, because I knew that it would not last. I knew that it would not last because I had faithful followers who were busying themselves with giving rise to points of order which would subsequently have me declared unsuitable for transmitting analytic theory. Not at all that this provoked anguish in me, or even embarrassment. Anyway that can return any time. This provoked neither anxiety nor embarrassment in me. But I wanted all the same precisely in connection with this anxiety, *Inhibition, symptom, anxiety*, to say

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certain things which should now in short bear witness to the fact that it is quite compatible with the idea that the unconscious is conditioned by language, to situate affects in it. This simply means that it is to language and that it is from language we are manifestly and in an altogether overwhelming way affected. And what's more, at the time of my seminar on *anxiety*, if I introduced something, it is precisely the qualities of affect. That for a long time the affectionate, there, the affected had not simply not found them, but it was completely ruled out that they should be even able to glimpse them. That indeed is why you can find in the mapping out that I made at the time, about what is involved in *Anxiety, inhibition, symptom* that I staggered on three planes

Inhibition

Symptom

Anxiety

in order precisely to be able to demonstrate what from that time is tangible, namely, that these three terms inhibition, symptom, anxiety are just as heterogeneous among themselves as my terms of Real, Symbolic and Imaginary. And that specifically, anxiety is that, it is (40) what is obvious, it is what within the body ek-sists, ek-sists when there is something that awakens it, which torments it. Look at little Hans, when it happens that there is made tangible the association to a body, specifically a male one on this occasion, defined as male, the association of a body and a phallic enjoyment. If *Little Hans* rushes into phobia, it is obviously to give body, I demonstrated it for a whole year, to give body to the embarrassment that he is in about this phallus, and for which he invents a whole series of differently prancing equivalents in the form of the phobia described as that of horses. *Little Hans*, in his anxiety, source of the phobia, source of the phobia and it is in this sense that in giving him what one might call this pure anxiety, they manage to get him to accommodate himself to this phallus about which, when all is said and done, like all of those who find themselves being charged with it, what I one day qualified as being a smuggler (*bandoulière*), well then, he simply has to

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accommodate himself to it, namely, that he is married to this phallus. This is something that the man can do nothing about. The woman, who does not ek-sist, can dream about having one, but the man is afflicted with it. He has no other wife than that.

This is what Freud said, is that not so on every register. What did he say, in saying in short that the phallic drive is not the genital drive, if not that the genital drive, in the man, make no mistake, is not at all natural. Not only is it not natural, but if he did not have this devil of the symbolic pushing him from behind, so that when all is said and done he ejaculates and that this is of some use, but long ago there would have been no more of these speaking beings, of these beings who do not speak simply to be, but which are so by being [*parlêtres*]. Which is really the high point of the high point of futility.

Good! Well then, it is a quarter to two. For my part I find that today since I more or less improvised everything that I wanted to tell you, I am rather tired like that. This will all appear in a different shape, since after all I am not all that satisfied with this one.

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Seminar 3: Tuesday 14 January 1975

Voilà! What I am saying concerns, you are the proof of it, concerns everybody. It does not concern me, for my part, like everybody else. And that indeed is why it concerns everybody, because that is sensed in what I say. Why is that sensed? Because what I am saying is an opening up that concerns my practice, an opening up that starts from this question that of course I would not ask if I did not have the answer in my practice. It is: what is implied by the fact that psychoanalysis works?

You come to see me, but this has nothing to do with what I do in terms of psychoanalysis, you come to see me operating on the board. This was, as you have been able to see, no small matter…I corrected myself time after time, even though I had a piece of paper in my pocket to guide me, otherwise I would have become even more entangled in it, I would have got into even more of a mess than I did! In effect…

What you see on the right [III-1] is the good old granddaddy Borromean knot, the Borromean knot of four, in which it is easy, immediate to see, that if you cut any one of these rings of string, the three others are free. There is then not the slightest complication in making a Borromean knot as long as you wish, namely, to knot to one another any number at all of rings of string. I already pointed out that as I draw it there, the number, the number of rings of string is not, as I might say, homogeneous. As you can see, simply by looking at this schema, there is what you might call a first and a last. The way it is done like that, there cannot be more than four and if I proceed in the same way for there to be five of them, I would have in a way to give to the one that – if you wish, the one on the extreme right – [here on the bottom figure] we will call the last, a different way of being knotted.

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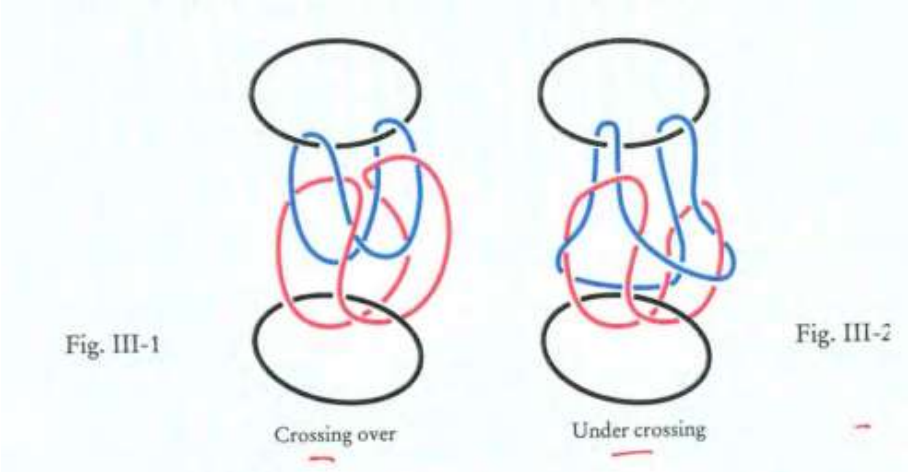

Because when all is said and done, it is the last that holds the whole chain, which ensures that there are four of them there, and if I go a little further, there will be five, on condition that I do not give to the last the same role, because it will be holding five instead of four.

You know this by, I must have made an allusion in passing to it, the way of articulating the essence of number that Peano produced by means of a certain number of axioms, it seems that here the n+1, the successor that Peano highlights as structuring the whole number, this on a single condition, which is that there should be one at the start which is not the 'successor' of anyone, namely, what this ring of string imitates very well, what he designates by zero. It is in an axiomatic fashion that Peano expresses himself, that Peano makes his statement, namely, that he posits a certain number of axioms and that it is from there, in conformity with mathematical requirements, arithmetical on this occasion, that he constructs something that gives us the definition of a series which will be in numbers, in homological whole numbers let us say, since we are here homological, namely, that everything that will be done by means of such axioms will be homological to the series of whole numbers.

But what am I showing you here? Something different, since here there is specified the function of this +1 as such. It is this +1 which (43) ensures that, eliminate that one for example, there is no longer a chain here, there is no longer a series since from the simple fact of

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cutting out this one-among-others, all the others, let us say, are freed as ones. It is a way, would I call it material, to make it sensed that 1 is not a number, even though this sequence of numbers is made up of a sequence of ones.

By using rings of string, let us say that I am illustrating something that is not unrelated to this sequence of numbers which, as you know, we have the greatest difficulty not to take as a constituent of the Real. Every approach to the Real makes it very difficult not to take account of number. Number seems (*semble*)…why not welcome this word which comes to me here prematurely? First of all the Real is woven by number. There is in number a *consistency* which is indeed of a nature that we can say is not natural at all. Since, for me to make you sense that I am tackling this category of the Real in so far as there is something which knots what I am led to give consistency to also – the Imaginary and the Symbolic – how does it happen that this, as I might say, pushes me first of all to use the knot?

It is by virtue of being the same consistency in these three something that I originated in terms of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real, it is in virtue of being the same consistency that I produce – and why so, to give myself an explanation of my practice – that I produce this Borromean knot. That was never done, never done what consists…consists in what? Disregarding consistency as such. I isolate consistency as this something that I will call like that, to give you an image because I do not stint myself in giving images.

What is there here [on the board] if not images, images about which the most astonishing thing is that you can locate yourself in them. Because you must not believe that these images function just by themselves! No doubt you are used to the blackboard, but what do you see on it? The very trouble you have seen that I had to go to for these images, which have this property that flattened out, nevertheless a line must pass over, *crossing over* [III-1] or go underneath, *under-*

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crossing [III-2] that this should make an image is already in itself miraculous. I am moreover not quite sure that you will grasp these images as easily as that.

You clearly see that there is nevertheless a difference. I am putting (44) the problem to you: is this knot, as it is there, as it is made, in the granddaddy way that I have signalled to you for a long time, is it the same? In other words, by simply fiddling around with the thing, are you able I am not saying to transform it into this one here since it is supposed to be the same? Set yourself that as a little exercise…In other words, this is the meaning of what I am asking you, does it work in fours? Is it the same knot, or is one more required? For I am telling you already that in a chain made up like that one, the transformation can be obtained. But I am not telling you, to leave the delight for yourselves, I am not telling you from how many on, because there is one thing certain, which is that with three, you will not produce this very particular little complication that apparently distinguishes the figure on the left from the figure on the right.

If there is something that illustrates that consistency, this something which is in a way underlies everything that we say, that this consistency is something other than what is qualified, in language, as non-contradiction, it is this sort of figure, in so far as it has this something that I am indeed forced to call a *real* consistency, because this is what is supposed.

The fact is that a cord holds together. We never think about it, we never think about the fact that there is a metaphor in the term consistency. There is even something more, which is that I am communicating to you this real consistency by way of an intuition of which, all the same, I can say, that since I transmit it to you by image, it is by way of an imaginary intuition that I am communicating it to you. And the fact that I am sure that you are not more familiar than I am with these sorts of figures – the few openings out that I am

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creating of it for you by drawing it on the board – I am sure that, let us say, for the great majority of you, the question I am posing, that of the transformation which is not a transformation, which would be a transformation if the knot had to be remade so that the one on the left is transformed into the one on the right, or inversely, I asked you this question, is it the same knot? There are not many who could tell me out of the blue like that. And still fewer tell me why.

Here we are then, as I might say, with this cord in hand as supposed foundation of consistency, in such a way that it cannot be said what is at stake there is something to which we are already habituated, (45) namely, the geometrical line. It is all the same something quite different. Not only is the geometrical line not that, but everyone knows that what it generates, are all sorts of problems about its continuity, which are not nothing and which are not nothing, why? Precisely because we cannot support the line with something that has precisely this consistency, that makes a cord. This is even the principle, the principle of the fact that the first bluff perpetrated about the functions described as continuous. It seemed that one could not construct a line which does not somewhere have a tangent, that this tangent was straight or curved, moreover, was of little importance. It is from this idea that the line was not after all without width that there were produced these mirages with which mathematicians had to fight for a long time and that moreover it took time for them to wake up to the fact that one could make a perfectly continuous line which did not have a tangent.

This is to say all the same the importance of this image, but is it indeed an image? After all, it is not for nothing that you are told 'Hold fast to the cord, huh' (*T'nez bien la corde hein!*). 'Hold fast to the cord' means that when the other end of the cord is knotted, you can hold onto it. This has something to do with the Real, and it is that here indeed, good God, it does not seem to me to be missing the point to remind you that in his rule among the proper *Rules for the direction*

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of the mind (esprit), someone called Descartes did not think it was superfluous, in this *Rule X*, to make the remark that '…since not all minds are equally inclined to spontaneously discover things by their own strength, this rule – the one that he is stating – teaches that one must not busy oneself immediately with the more difficult and arduous things – less important – but that one must first of all study thoroughly the less important and the simplest arts, those in particular where greater order reigns, like those of artisans who make cloth and carpets, or those of women who embroider or do lace work, as well as all the combinations of numbers and all the operations that refer to arithmetic, and other similar things…".

There is not the slightest suspicion that in saying these things, Descartes had the feeling that there is a relationship between arithmetic and the fact that women do lace work, indeed that upholsterers make knots. On the other hand it is certain that Descartes never in the slightest interested himself in knots. Quite the (46) contrary we had to be well advanced into the 20th Century for something to be outlined that could be called a theory of knots. You know on the other hand, what I have told you, that this theory of knots is in its infancy, is extremely clumsy. And as it is fabricated, there are many cases where at the sight of simple figures such as the ones that I have made for you on the board, you could not in any way give an explanation for the fact, whether yes or no, the tangle that you have drawn is or is not a knot, whatever may be the conventions that you have given yourself in advance to account for the knot as such. The fact is moreover that there is something that is worth dwelling on. Is it because of an intuition? But what I am demonstrating to you, is that it goes much further than that, it is not simply that vision always more or less makes a surface, it is for more profound reasons that in a way these knots make tangible for you, it is for more profound reasons for what is in the nature, in the nature of things as they say. The being who speaks, since after all we cannot say a whole lot about the others, at least until we have gone a little bit more keenly into the slant of

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their meaning, the being who speaks is always somewhere badly situated between two and three dimensions.

This indeed is why, you have heard me putting forward here something that is the same thing, the same thing as my knot, this equivocation on *dit-mansion*, that I write, as you know because I have dinned it into you, that I write as *d-i-t* hyphen *mansion*, a stage set [?] of the said. We do not know very well whether in the saying we have the three dimensions written as they customarily are. I mean whether we are able to move around in it so easily, *Ta zoa trexei* [animals run] And we are undoubtedly there, *zoon*. We walk, but it must not be imagined that because we walk, we are doing something that has the slightest relationship with three-dimensional space. That our body has three dimensions is something about which there is no doubt as long as we can pierce the skin of this body. But this does not at all mean that what we call space is not always more or less flat. There are even mathematicians who wrote that explicitly, all space is flat.

Any manipulation of something real is situated in this case in a space that in fact we are able to handle very badly outside techniques that are required by this three-dimensional space. It is obviously quite (47) striking that it is a technique, a technique that can be reduced to what it apparently is, namely, this chatting which for me forces my hand about the weighing up, as I might say, of space as such.

If we start again from something that must indeed be said to be science, does science not allow us to suspect, that in treating space in the same way as the one a technique in fact requires, requires of me at least, what it encounters is a paradox. Because in short, one cannot say that matter, you have heard tell of it a little bit, that matter does not create a problem for it at every instant. A problem, namely, that's what problem means, an advance defence, something to crush before getting to see what it is defending. Science has perhaps not yet completely realised that if it treats matter, it is as if the aforesaid

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matter had an unconscious, as if it knew somewhere what it was doing. Naturally it is a truth that was very rapidly extinguished. People noticed it, there is a little moment of awakening, at the time of Newton, he was told, listen, this business of this blessed gravity that you are telling us about, be serious! How moreover how could it have been represented before, apart from Aristotle's *topos*! Anyway! Be serious! That is unthinkable for us! Unthinkable because…why? Because we have Newton's little formulae and we understand nothing about them, which is what gives them their value. Because when these formulae made their entry, it was to this that right away an objection was raised, namely, but how can each one of these little particles know the distance it is from all the others? Namely, what was evoked was the unconscious, in short, of the particle, of course!

All that, all that has died down. Because why? Because people have simply given up trying to understand anything about it and that, moreover, it is in the measure that people have come back to it that we have been able to arrive at more complicated formulae by knotting a few more dimensions into the affair. This indeed is the problem. What is this analysis, in the proper sense of my technique, one that I have in common with a certain number of people who are here, and what place does this technique occupy with regard to what constitutes science? Science counts, it counts matter, but what does it count in this matter? Namely, if there were not the language that number (48) already conveys, what meaning would have to count? Does the unconscious for example have an accountant (*comptable)* in it? I am not saying something that can be counted, I am asking whether there is an accountant in the sense of the character that you know who scribbles numbers. Is there an accountant in the unconscious? Quite obviously, yes. Each unconscious is not something of the accountant, it is an accountant, and an accountant who knows how to do addition. Naturally it has not yet, of course, got to multiplication, this is even what perplexes it. But as regards counting things, counting the blows,

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I will not say that it knows how to deal with it, it is extremely awkward, but it must count in the style, in the style of these knots.

It is from this that there comes the famous guilt feeling about which you have probably sometimes heard talk…the guilt feeling is something that does accounts, that does accounts and of course cannot work them out, can never work them out. It gets lost in its accounts. But it is indeed there that it can be felt that there is at least a knot, this knot of which, if you will allow me to say it, nature abhors. I mean a different song than nature abhors a vacuum, nature abhors the knot. Nature abhors the knot, and very especially the Borromean and, a strange thing, that is why I am going over the thing with you. The thing, is nothing less than the *urverdrängt*, the original repressed, the primal repressed, and that is why I advise you to practice my two little things [III-1 & III-2]. It is not because it will tell you anything whatsoever about the repressed, since this repressed is the hole. You will never get to it. But en route, by manipulating this little knot, you will familiarise yourselves, at least with your hands, with this something about which in any case you will never understand anything, because it is altogether ruled out that you should know this knot. That is indeed why, as history bears witness, that indeed is why geometry has gone through everything, through cubes, through pyramids, the different forms of hedgehog about which in short people have cogitated. In short, rigour is what means nothing other than solids! While it had within hand's reach, something which was well worth, good God, the stones with which it made the carriage, or the fields, precisely what could not be measured without stretching out cords. Never has anyone seemed to have reserved for these cords the slightest attention up to very recent times.

(49) In a certain sense, I would say that there is something new, in the fact that people have been interested in words, in terms like that for example of mesology; what is there between, between what and what? It is a matter of defining what does between mean. Yeah! I between

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you (*je t'entre*), it is my own *tentrisme*. Between, is a category that made its appearance, in short, quite recently in mathematics and, that indeed is why, in short, hat from time to time I consult a mathematician so that he can tell me where they have got to in this respect.

Yes! There is something that to take…[*on the board*].

You see, I am making progress. I have almost managed to draw a Borromean knot without being forced to rub bits out. I would like today, since already time is passing, to announce what I have to say, and what will occupy our year.

Here [III-3] at the joint of the Imaginary and of the Symbolic, and not just in any joint, in this joint here, where you may confuse these two points – even though they still do not come from the same movement, from the same relative movement of the Imaginary and the Symbolic – here, in these two points which moreover are confused, when the squeezing between the Imaginary and the Symbolic occurs, in these

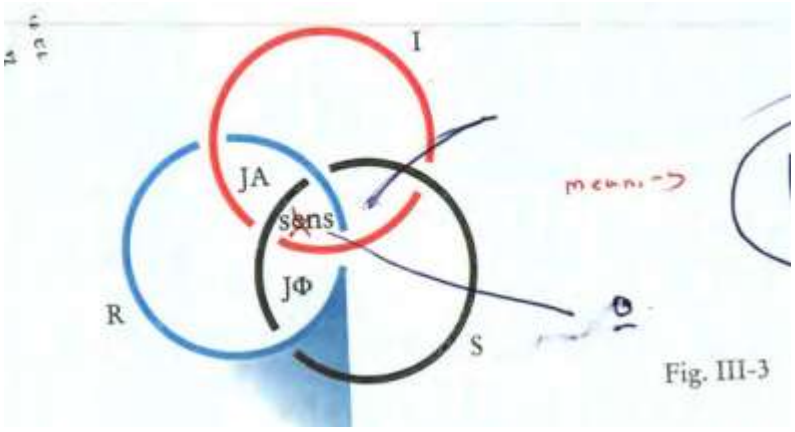

Fig. III-3

two points, there is meaning. I must split things a little, because I apologise, I must have delayed to give you a little of a *dit-mansion*, a *dit-mansion* that concerns me, that of the knot.

(50) Here, and there, you can see how difficult it is, I must all the same fiddle around a bit, we have something that is called phallic enjoyment. There you are! Why do we call it phallic enjoyment?

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Because there is something called ek-sistence. Ek-sistence, I ought to say, has a history. It is not a word that was used so easily, nor voluntarily, at least in the philosophical tradition, and since we do not know how people in the first centuries spoke, I mean that we certainly have glimpses, about a certain Latin tongue, the popular tongue. Perhaps it was spoken over a considerable area, this core tongue from which there came by differentiation the romance tongues. In this popular Latin tongue, we have no testimony that *existo* nor *existere* was used. Nevertheless, it is curious that this term emerged, and emerged in a field that we will call philosophico-religious. It is altogether in the measure that religion sucked in, the religious *humante*, that religion sucked in philosophy that we have seen emerging this word existence, which seems nevertheless to have had, make no mistake, many raisons d'être.

What is this existence, and where indeed can we situate it? This existence is very important in itself, because if we have the idea, the idea that something that comes in place of this kind of naïve production and which only starts from words, namely, what Aristotle advanced into, namely, that the *dictum de omni et nullo*, he says somewhere, this is what the Universal is, *what is said about all can also be applied to a particular*. It is from this that the first linguistic disentangling took place. The serious thing is that what followed consisted in demonstrating to Aristotle, who could not accept it for a long time, that universality did not imply existence. But this is not what is serious in a certain apprehension of things. That universality does not imply existence, we sweep aside every day. It is that existence implies universality that is serious. It is that in what is existence, we chatter on about something which participates in the general, while the very reason that my little Borromean knot is made, is to show you that existence is of its nature what *eks*. What turns the consistent but what creates an interval, and which in this interval has may ways of being knotted, precisely in the measure that we do not

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(51) have the slightest manual or mental familiarity with these knots. Moreover, it is the same thing!

Many people have suspected, in short is that not so, that man is only a hand. If only he were a hand! There is his whole body. He thinks also with his feet, I even advised you to do so, because it is after all the best thing that can be wished for you. Here, what resists the test of existence, to be taken as what is squeezed in the knot?

There is all the same an opening up, the opening up made by Freud. Freud certainly did not have the notion of the Imaginary, of the Symbolic and of the Real that I have, because it is the least that one can have, call that what you wish, provided there are three consistencies, you have the knot. What Freud did is not unrelated to existence and, by this fact, comes close to the knot. I am going, like that, because I am nice and because I have pissed you off enough today, I am all the same going to show you something that I find for my part rather funny and it is naturally something I invented! And in my opinion, this illustrates well something that gives its value to what I asked you to question yourselves about, namely, whether the two in the middle [on the board] are the same knot? [III-1 & III-2] Freud had no idea about the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real, but he had all the same a suspicion of them. The fact that I have been able to extract, with time no doubt and with patience, that I began with the Imaginary and, that after that, I had to chew on this business of the Symbolic, with this whole reference, this linguistic reference in which I effectively did not find in short everything that would have suited me, and then, this famous Real that I end up by presenting to you in the very form of the knot.

There is in Freud a reference to something that he considers to be Real. It is not what people believe. It is not the *Realitätsprinzip*, because it is too obvious that this *Realitätsprinzip* is a matter of saying, namely, social. But let us suppose that he had the suspicion

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simply, that he did not say to himself that this could make a knot. In short, Freud, contrary to a prodigious number of people, from Plato to Tolstoi, Freud was not a Lacanian. I have to say it, but to slip this banana skin under his foot, in short, is that not so, of the R.S.I., of the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary, let us try to see how he effectively disentangled himself from it.

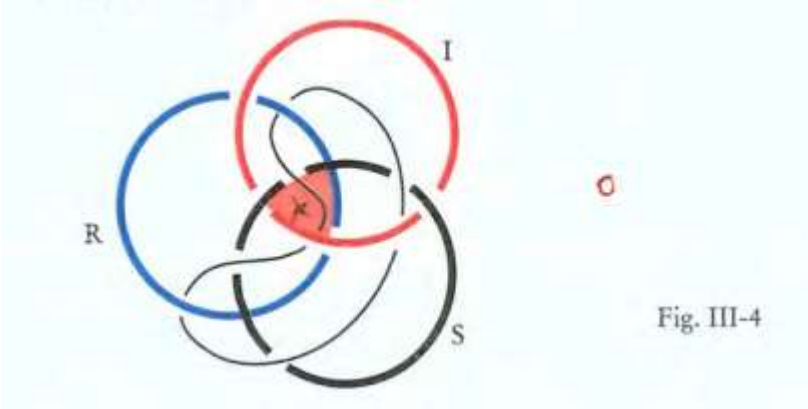

Fig. III-4

(52) These here [on the board] do not hold up, huh! [III-4] I am pointing out to you, they are placed on top of one another, the Real is there, the Imaginary there and the Symbolic is there, just like in the earlier schema. Ah! What did Freud do? Ah! I am going to tell you. He made the knot of four with these three, these three which I suppose to be a banana skin under his feet. But then, here is how he proceeded; he invented something that he calls psychical reality. I should have put the third knot here, the third field of ek-sistence, namely, the enjoyment of the Other. Since these two figures, since they are figures, are the same, you see that it is from a line that is found to cross, to cross these fields which are designated as ek-sistence of something around consistency, to cross these fields, namely, here to be in the enjoyment of the Other, then in the Imaginary, then in meaning, then from the hole of the Symbolic and by breaking through it, to be somewhere in an existence which is outside the Symbolic and the Real, that it returns towards this point which is none other than the one that I designate as the **o**-object. This is what can knot with a fourth term, the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real, in so far as Symbolic, Imaginary and Real are left

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independent, go with the drift in Freud. It is as such that he requires a psychical reality that knots these three consistencies.

I said, I said here or if it was not here it was elsewhere, it is in my Rome discourse, the last one that I gave, the one called *La troisième*, I said that if I had not done the Names-of-the-father written this time correctly, I would have stated a consistency such that it would have (53) explained for us a certain number of slippages in Freud. Freud needed not three, the minimum, but four consistencies for it to hold together, to suppose it being initiated into the consistency of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. What he calls psychical reality has perfectly well a name, it is what he calls the Oedipus complex. Without the Oedipus complex, nothing holds together, nothing of the idea that he has holds together, about the way in which the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real hold onto the cord. That by which, with time, I was determined to proceed, comes from the fact that I believe that, what Freud stated not, not I am saying about the Oedipus complex, is to be rejected, it is implicit.

And this is demonstrated and each one of the points can in itself be specified, it is implicit in that while having the same effect, but this time at a minimum, it is enough to make what was below pass above

Fig. III-5

into these two points [III-5]. In other words, the Real must surmount, as I might say, the Symbolic in order for the Borromean knot to be produced.

This is what by having four terms, Freud himself was not able to do, but it is very precisely what is involved in analysis. It is to ensure that the Real, not reality in the Freudian sense, that the Real at two points,

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that I will name as such, that the Real at two points surmounts the Symbolic.

It is clear that the thing that I am stating here in this form has nothing to do with the surmounting in the Imaginary sense that the Real ought, as I might say, dominate. Because it is enough for you to go back to this little thing for you to note that in the opposite sense, of course, this does not work and one cannot see why the Borromean knot would be less real, if you turn the thing over. I am pointing out to you, I pointed it out to you already once in passing, that if you turn it over, it has exactly the same aspect, namely, that if you turn it over, it is not (54) with its mirror image that you have to deal, it is exactly the same laevogyratory thing that you have in the Borromean knot that you find at the back.

This to specify that it is not a matter, of course, of a change of order, of a change of plane between the Real and the Symbolic. It is simply that they are knotted differently. Being knotted differently is what constitutes the essential of the Oedipus complex, and it is very precisely what analysis itself operates on, namely, it is by going into the finesse of these fields of ek-sistence, that we will proceed this year.

It is rather late already, I am renouncing, as I might say, given the difficulty, the slowness of what I presented to you today, I abandon going any further, putting off to our next meeting which will take place in a week's time the rest of what I wanted to say to you today.

I can all the same mark something, which is that if ek-sistence is defined with respect to a certain consistency, if ek-sistence is when all is said and done only this outside which is not a not-inside, if this ek-sistence is in a way that around which there is elaborated a substance, if ek-sistence, as someone like Kierkegaard puts it forward to us, is essentially pathetic, it nevertheless remains that the notion of a break,

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that the notion of a hole, even in something as worn out as ek-sistence, preserves its meaning. That if I told you first that there is in the Symbolic a repressed, there is also in the Real something that makes a hole, and there is also something of it in the Imaginary, as Freud clearly saw, he niggled out everything that is involved in drives in the body as being centred around the passage from one orifice to an other.

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Seminar 4: Tuesday 21 January 1975

Precisely because – can you hear or not? – of what I am talking to you about, the knot, I cannot have, I cannot be sure of having a plan, because the knot, if you see the way I draw it there, on the extreme right [IV-1], I will explain to you afterwards why it takes that form, let us say, of three pages. Let us imagine then stitched, [on the board] tied together here. Here then is the first, which is a piece of page, this to make myself understood, it seems to be self-evident, the second, is S which is just below and you see here the third that it is easy for you to imagine starting from this stitching on the left, it is necessary for the third to be palmed off (*refile*) on the first.

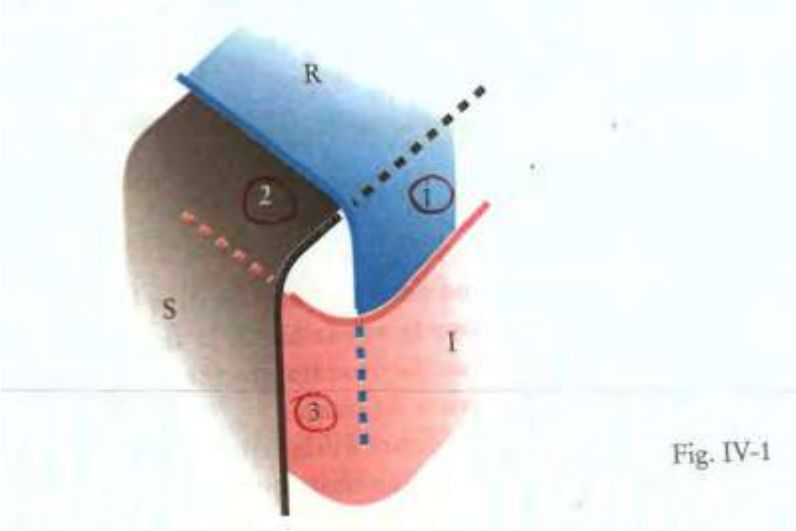

Fig. IV-1

(56) Nevertheless, there are places [on the board] where by perforating these pages, you will only find one of them. [Here] there are three of them. Here, you only find page 2, here only page 1, and here, only page 3. But everywhere else you will find the three, which prevents me from having a plan, since there are three of them.

There are several modes of stating the meaning, that all refer back to the Real that they correspond to. So that you will not get entangled all the same, I am marking the Real for you here [IV-2]. It is marked by the edge of a hole, the Imaginary, here and there the Symbolic, that is so that you can follow. All these meanings refer back to the Real, to

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the Real that each corresponds to. It is here that there is confirmed the suppleness of the knot, which also creates its necessity. The principle of the knot is that it does not come undone, unless it is broken. What is this unknotting of the knot, which is impossible? It is the return to a form described as trivial, and which is precisely that of the ring of string! So that it is a knot, it is a second degree knot, it is a knot that holds together, as you have already several times heard from my voice, it is a knot that holds together because it has three rings.

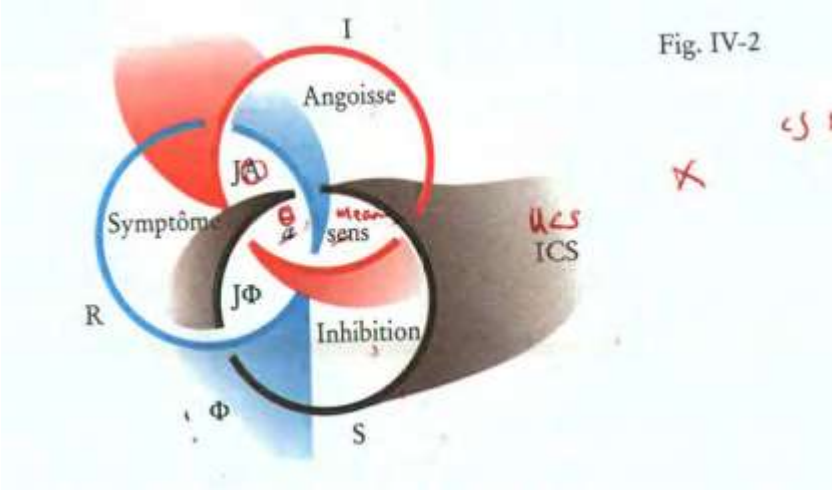

Fig. IV-2

The true knot, the knot with which we busy ourselves in the theory of knots, is that which, as you see here on figure IV-3, I have just added, is precisely what is not transformed by a continuous distortion into the trivial figure of the ring.

If one starts from a knot [IV-3] made with three trivial figures, namely, three rings, it is something that is designated or rather is (57) drawn from the following, it is that by cutting in this way something which is, as one might say, the Borromean knot itself, you will obtain by joining together what you have cut every time, you will obtain the proper figure of a knot in the proper sense of the word [IV-4].

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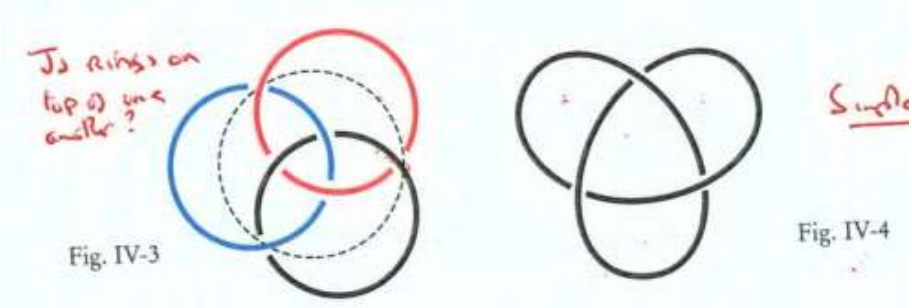

Fig. IV-3

Fig. IV-4

What is the most convenient way of showing that a knot is a knot? For this knot there, the one on the right, is the simplest knot that exists. You get it by simply making a ring of a cord and passing it for example over the right of the piece that you are holding. It is by making the cord re-enter by the left on the inside of the ring that you have thus formed, that you see there being made what is called a knot in a cord, a knot that you can unknot; but which can no longer be unknotted from when on? From the moment that you suppose that the two ends of the cord are rejoined by a splice or indeed that you suppose that this cord has no end, stretches to the thinkable limits or more exactly goes beyond even these limits. In which case, you will properly speaking be dealing with the most simple knot, this knot which, when you close it, has the form that you see there on the right, namely, what is called *un noeud-trèfle*, clover-leaf in English.

It is clover in that it is three. It outlines, flattened out it allows there to be drawn, not three fields, but four fields. These are fields that you rediscover in the form, the form of the Borromean knot, the one that is only made up of this: one of each figure that I called trivial, the ring of string, one of each of these figure makes from two others a knot, namely, that it is by being three that there is a link, knot-link that is constituted for the two others.

If you hear talk sometimes about a four dimensional world you will know that in this world, calculable but not imaginable, there could not be such knots. Impossible to knot a cord in it, if in fact this world exists, impossible to knot a cord in it because of the fact that every figure, whatever it may be, is supported not by a line but by a cord

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consistency, that every figure of this kind can be distorted into any other whatsoever.

Nevertheless, if the thing was imaginable for you, it would be possible to understand, namely, by hearsay, because moreover the demonstration of it is not simple, but is doable, the fact is that in a space that is supposed to be of four dimensions, it is not the consistencies of lines but of surfaces that can make a knot. Namely, that there subsist in the indefinite order, dimensions supposable as being more than three with which there is constituted, this indeed is where I must stop, with which there is constituted assuredly our world, namely, our representation. When I said world, should I not have said our real, on this single condition that it is seen that the world, here as representation, depends on the conjunction of these three consistencies that I name Symbolic, Imaginary and Real, the consistencies moreover being supposed to them. But that it is a matter of three consistencies and that every representation depends on them, is something that is well designed to suggest to us that there is more in the experience that necessitates, I would say, this trivision, this division into three, of diverse consistencies, that it is from that, without our being able to settle it, that it can be supposed that the consequence should be our representation of space as it is, namely, in three dimensions.

The question evoked, at this time of my statement, is something that responds to the notion of consistency: what can be supposed, since the term consistency presupposes that of demonstration, what can be supposed to be a demonstration in the Real? Nothing other supposes it than the consistency of which the cord is here the support. The cord here is, as I might say, the foundation of agreement (*l'accord*). To make a leap into that which, from what I am stating, will only be produced a small later, I would say that the cord thus becomes the symptom of the way in which the Symbolic consists. Which does not go badly after all with the fact that language bears witness to us that

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the formula to be threadbare (*montrer la corde*), by which there is (59) designated the wearing-out of a cloth, has its bearing, since when all is said and done to be threadbare, namely, that the weaving is no longer camouflaged in something where metaphorical use is so permanent, is no longer camouflaged in what is called – with the idea that in saying that, one is saying something – in what is called the material (*l'étoffe*). The material of something is what, as near as may be, will give the image of substance, and which moreover is usual in the use made of it. It is a matter in this formula of which I spoke, to be threadbare, of seeing that there is no material that is not woven.

I had prepared for you a paper, because it is too complicated to draw on the board, made a whole tissue, uniquely made up of Borromean knots. One could cover the surface of the blackboard with it. It is easy to see that one arrives at what I might call a hexagonal fabric. You must not believe nevertheless, that the section of any one of the rings of tissue, let us call them that here, will free anything whatsoever from what it is knotted to, since by only cutting a single one of them, the six other rings freed by one cut, held together moreover, held together by the six times three, eighteen other rings with which it is knotted in a Borromean way.

If I earlier produced prematurely, but it has to be done – it is even the law of language that something should come out before being able to be commented on – if I produced the term symptom, it is indeed because the Symbolic is what from consistency makes the simplest metaphor. Not that the circular figure is firstly a figure, namely imaginable. It is even there that the notion of the good form was founded. And this notion of the good form is indeed something that is designed, as I might say, to make re-enter into the Real what is involved in the Imaginary. And I would say more, there is a kinship of the good form with meaning, which should be noted. The order of meaning is configured, as one might say naturally from what this form of the circle designates. The consistency supposed to the Symbolic is

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in agreement with this image that is in a way primary and we had to wait for psychoanalysis to see that it is linked to the order of this body on which the Imaginary depends. For who doubts, it is even on this slender thread that there survived everything that is called philosophy down to today, who doubts that there is a different order than the one in which the body believes it moves around in? But this order of the body is not any more explained for all that.

Why does the eye see spherically while it is indisputably perceived as (60) a sphere, while the ear, you should note hears sphere just as much, even though it is presented in a different form that everyone knows is that of a snail? So then can we not at least question whether, if the two organs so manifestly *diffeomorphic*, if I can express myself in this way, perceive in the same way spherically, is it by taking things starting from my object described as small **o** that by a necessary conjunction which links the small **o** itself to make a ball of in fact of the small **o** under different forms. Except for the fact that it does not have a form, but it is thinkable in a dominant way, orally or moreover, as I might say shittily (*chialement*), the common factor of the small **o**, is to be linked to the orifices of the body. And what is the impact of the fact that the eye and the ear are also orifices on the fact that perception for both is spherical?

Without the small **o**, something is lacking in any possible theory of any reference, of any appearance of harmony, and this from the fact that the condition of the subject, the supposed subject, is to be only supposable, only knowing something by being himself, *qua* subject, caused by an object which is not what he knows, what he imagines he knows (*connaitre*), namely, which is not the Other of knowing as such, but that on the contrary, this object, the small **o**-object, removes this Other. The Other is thus, the Other that I write with a capital O, the Other is thus a matrix with a double entrance, of which the small **o** constitutes one of these entrances, and of which the other…what are we going to say about it? Is it the One of the signifier?

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Let us begin to question whether it is not thinkable there? I would say that it is even thanks to that, that I was able one day, if in fact that some of those who are here were there, to couple for you the One and my small **o**, that on that occasion, I had put it in relationship to the one by supposing it to be of the golden number. This was rather useful to me in introducing that which, that where I had already been led to by the experience, namely, that it can be read rather well there that between this One and this small **o**, there is strictly no rationally determinable relationship. The golden number, as you remember, is 1/**o** = 1 + **o**; from this there results that no proportion is ever graspable between the 1 and the **o**, that the difference between the 1 and the **o** will always be an o^2 and so on indefinitely, a power of **o**, namely, that there is never any reason for the overlapping of the one by the other to end, that the difference will be as small as it can be represented, that there is even a limit but that within this limit, there will never be a (61) conjunction, a copulation of any kind between 1 and **o**.

Does that mean that the One of meaning, for this is what the Symbolic has as a signifying effect, is something related to what I called the matrix, the matrix that removes the Other from its double entry. The One of meaning is not to be confused with what makes the One of the signifier. The One of meaning is being, being specified by the unconscious, in so far as it ek-sists, that it ek-sists at least to the body. For if there is one thing that is striking, it is that it ek-sists in the dis-body (*dis-corps*). There is nothing in the unconscious - if it is made as I have stated to you - that makes an agreement with the body. The unconscious is discordant. The unconscious is that which, by speaking, determines the subject as being, but being to be removed from this metonymy, by which *I* support desire, as forever impossible to say as such.

If I say that the small **o** is what causes desire, this means that it is not the object of it. It is not its direct or indirect complement, but simply

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this cause which, to play on the word as I did in my first discourse at Rome, this cause which always talks (*cause*). The subject is caused by an object that can only be noted by a writing, and that indeed is why a step is made in the theory. What is irreducible in this is not a language-effect, because the effect of language is *pathein*, it is the passion of the body. But from language there is inscribable, there can be noted in so far as language does not have an effect, this radical abstraction which is the object, the object that I designate, that I write with the figure of writing **o** and about which nothing is thinkable, except for the fact that everything that is subject, subject of thought that one believes to be Being, is determined by it. The One of meaning is so little involved here that what it is as an effect, effect [is made up of] from the One of the signifier. We know it and I am insisting on it, the One of the signifier only operates in fact by being able to be employed to designate any signified whatsoever.

The Imaginary and the Real are here knotted to this One of the signifier. What would we say about it if not that as regards their quality, what Charles Sanders-Peirce calls the *firstness* of what divides them up as different qualities, where put for example, how divide among them on this occasion something like life or indeed death? Who knows where to situate them, since moreover the signifier, the one of the signifier as such, causes just as muchl on one or the other of the aspects? One would be wrong to believe that from two, from the (62) Real and from the Imaginary, it is the Imaginary that is mortal and that it is the Real that is living. Only the ordinary of the use of a signifier can be said to be arbitrary. But where does this arbitrary come from, if not from a structured discourse!

Will I evoke here the title of a journal, *Ornicar*, that you see appearing at Vincennes, under my auspices. Is it not an example of what the signifier determines? Here it does so by being agrammatical, this by presenting only one category of grammar. But it is by this that it demonstrates the configuration as such, the one, as I might say, which

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with regard to Icarus only ornaments it. Language is only an *ornure*. There is only rhetoric, as Descartes underlines in rule X. Dialectic can only be supposed from the use of what goes astray towards a mathematically ordered ordinary, namely, towards a discourse, the one that associates, not the phoneme, even understood in the broadest sense, but the subject determined by Being, namely, by desire.

What is the affect of ek-sisting, starting from my terms? It is to see, with regard to this field where I situate here the unconscious, namely, this interval between, as I might say, two consistencies, the one that is noted here by an edge that I made the edge of a page [IV-1] and the one that is buckled here [IV-2], is buckled, being buckled implying the hole without which there is no knot. What is the affect of existing? It concerns this field in which not just anything whatsoever is said, but where already the texture, the trellis of what I designated for you earlier by a double entry, of the crossing of the small **o** with what is defined as being from the signifier. What is it that makes ek-sistence from this unconscious? This is what I depicted here [IV-2] and what I underline just now as a support of the symptom.

What is it to say the symptom? It is the function of the symptom, a function to be understood as the mathematical formulation f(*x*) would do. What is this *x*? This is what can be expressed of the unconscious by a letter, in so far, that only in the letter is the identity of self to self isolated from every quality. From the unconscious every One, in so far as it sustains the signifier in which the unconscious consists, every One is capable of being written by a letter. No doubt, there needs to be a convention. But the strange thing is that this is what the symptom operates in an untamed way. What does not cease to be written in the symptom stems from that.

Not long ago someone, someone that I listen to in my practice – and nothing of what I tell you comes from anywhere other than from this (63) practice, this indeed is what constitutes the difficulty, the

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difficulty I have in transmitting it to you – someone with regard to the symptom articulated to me this something that would compare it to points of suspension.

The important thing is the reference to writing. The repetition of the symptom is this something that I have just said is writing in an untamed way, this for what is involved in the symptom as it is presented in my practice. That the term should have come from elsewhere, namely, from the symptom as Marx defined it in the social, takes nothing away from the well-foundedness of its employment, as I might say, in the private. That fact that the symptom in the social is defined by unreasonableness does not prevent it being signalled by all sorts of rationalisations as regards each one. All rationalisation comes from a particular rationale, namely, not of exception but of anyone whatsoever. Anyone whatsoever must be able to make an exception in order that the function of the exception may become a model. But the reciprocal is not true. The exception must not be found in just anyone to constitute, by this fact, a model. This is the ordinary state of affairs. Anyone at all who reaches the function of exception that the father has, we know with what result, that of his *Verwerfung*, or of his rejection, in most cases, through the filiation that the father generates with the psychotic results that I have exposed.

A father has only a right to respect, indeed to love, if the aforesaid, the aforesaid love, the aforesaid respect, is, you are not going to believe your ears, per-versely (*père-versement*) orientated, namely, made by a woman (*fait d'une femme*), the small **o**-object which causes her desire. But what this woman picks up in the small **o**, if I may express myself in this way, has nothing to do with the question! What she is occupied with, are the other **o**-objects who are the children with whom the father nevertheless intervenes, exceptionally in the right case, to maintain in repression, in the correct half-God (*mi-Dieu*) if you will allow me, the version of his perversion that is proper to him, the only guarantee of his function of father, which is the function, the function

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of the symptom that I wrote it there, as such. For that, it is enough that he should be a model of the function. That is what the father ought to be, in so far as he can only be an exception, he cannot be the model of the function except by realising its type. What matter if he has symptoms, if he adds to that something of the paternal perversion, namely, that the cause of it is a woman that he has acquired to give her children and, that whether he wants to or not he takes paternal care of (64) them. Normality is not the paternal virtue par excellence, but simply the proper *mi-Dieu* described just now. In other words the correct non-saying, naturally on condition that this non-saying should not be stitched up in white thread, namely, that one does not see right away in short what is at stake in what he does not say.

It is rare! It is rare and it will renew the subject to say that it is rare that he succeeds in this correct *mi-Dieu*! It will renew the subject when I will have the time to take it up again for you. I said it simply in passing to you in an article on *Schreber*. Here there is nothing worse, there is nothing worse than the father who proclaims the law on everything, above all no father educator! But rather standing back from any magisterium.

I am going to end like that by talking to you about a woman. Well then, this indeed is all I did to avoid speaking about a woman, since I tell you that *The woman* does not ek-sist. Naturally all the journalists said that I had said that women did not exist! There are things like that that one cannot…*le donne*…that are expressed in short…things like that that one… They are not even, not even capable of noticing that to say *The woman*, is not the same thing as to say *women*, while they mouth on about the woman all the time, is that not so! The woman, is obviously something who can be perfectly, perfectly well outlined. *All women*, as they say, but I, I also say that women are not-all so then that creates a little objection, does it not! But *The* woman is, let us say that it is *all the women*, but then it is an empty set,

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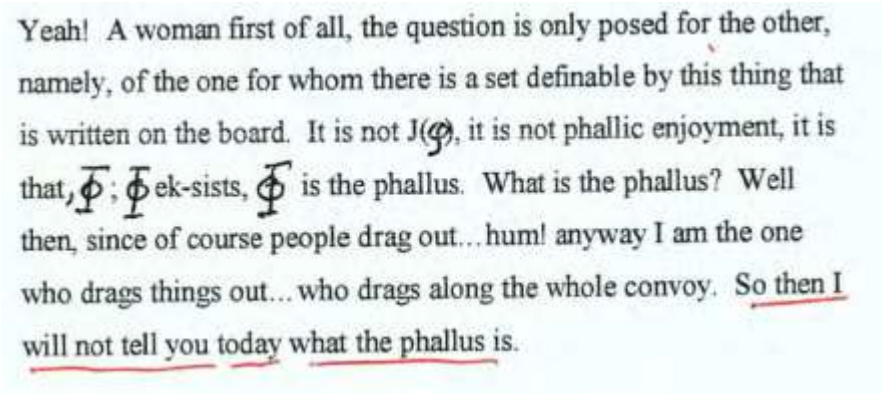
because this set theory, is all the same something that allows a little bit of seriousness to be put into the use of this term *all.*


Yeah! A woman first of all, the question is only posed for the other, namely, of the one for whom there is a set definable by this thing that is written on the board. It is not J(φ), it is not phallic enjoyment, it is that, $\overline{\Phi}$; $\overline{\Phi}$ ek-sists, $\overline{\Phi}$ is the phallus. What is the phallus? Well then, since of course people drag out... hum! anyway I am the one who drags things out... who drags along the whole convoy. So then I will not tell you today what the phallus is.

In short, all the same, you can have all the same a little suspicion about it. If phallic enjoyment is there, it must be that the phallus must be something else, huh? So then, the phallus, what is it? In short, I am asking you the question because I cannot go into it today for very (65) long. It is enjoyment without the organ, or the organ without enjoyment? In short, it is in this form that I am asking you to give meaning, alas, to this figure.

Anyway! I am going to skip this step. For the one encumbered with a phallus, what is a woman? It is a symptom. It is a symptom and that can be seen, that can be seen from the structure there that I am in the process of explaining to you. It is clear that if there is no enjoyment of the Other as such, namely, if there is no guarantee that can be met in the enjoyment of the body of the Other which ensures that to enjoy the Other as such exists, here is the most manifest example of the hole, of what is only supported from the small **o**-object itself, but by misunderstanding, by confusion. A woman, no more than a man, is not an **o**-object. She has her own, that I mentioned earlier, that she occupies herself with, that has nothing to do with the one by whom she is supported in some desire or other. To make this *a* woman a symptom is all the same to situate her in this articulation to the point where phallic enjoyment as such is moreover her affair. Contrary to what is said, the woman has to undergo castration neither more nor less than the man. She is, with regard to what is involved in her

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function of symptom all together at the same point as her man. It must simply be said how, for her, this ek-sistence, this ek-sistence of the real that is the phallus I mentioned earlier, the one on which I left you with your tongue hanging out, it's a matter of knowing what corresponds to it for her. You must not imagine that it is the little yoke that Freud talks about! It has nothing to do with that.

These points of suspension of the symptom are in fact questioning points, as I might say, in the non-relationship. I would like all the same to open up what I am introducing here to show you from what angle this definition of the symptom is justified. What is striking in the symptom, in this something which gives a little peck to the unconscious, is that it is believed. There are so few sexual relationships that I recommend for that the reading of something which is a very beautiful novel *Ondine*. *Ondine* manifests what is at stake. A woman in the life of a man is something he believes in, he believes that there is one, sometimes two or three, and what moreover is interesting here is that he can only believe in one. He thinks that there is a species, in the style of sylphs or water sprites (*ondins*). (66) What is it to believe in sylphs or water sprites? I point out to you that one says believe in (*croire à*) in this case. And even that the French tongue adds to it this reinforcement of what is not believe in, but believe in it (*croire y*), believe there. What does believing in it mean? Believing in it only strictly means as follows: it can only mean, semantically, believing in beings in so far as they can say something. I would ask you to find me an exception for this definition. If they are beings who can say nothing, say properly speaking, namely state what is distinguished as truth or as lie, it means nothing. Only that, the fragility of this *believing in it* to which manifestly there is reduced the fact of non-relationship so tangibly cross-checked everywhere, I mean that it crosschecks. There is no doubt that whoever comes to present us with a symptom believes in it. What does that mean? If he asks our help, our aid, it is because he believes the symptom is capable of saying something, that it must only

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be deciphered. It is the same for what is involved in a woman, except for this, which happens, but which is not obvious, the fact is that one believes that she effectively says something, it is there that you come a cropper. To believe in it, one believes her. One believes what she says. This is what is called love. And that is why it is a feeling that I described on occasion as comic. It is the well known comic, the comic of psychosis. That is why we are usually told that love is a madness. The difference is nevertheless manifest between believing 'in', a symptom, or believing 'it'. This is what makes the difference between neurosis and psychosis. In psychosis, the voices, it's all there, they believe in them. Not only do they believe in them, but they believe them. Now it is all there, in this limit.

Believing her is, thank God, a widespread condition because, all the same, it provides company, you are no longer all alone. And that is why love is precious, eh!, rarely realised, as everyone knows only lasting for a time and all the same made up of the fact that it is essentially this breaking down of the wall where one can only give yourself a bump on the forehead, in short, that is at stake. If there is no sexual relationship, it is certain that love, love is classified according to a certain number of cases whose petals Stendhal has very well plucked, in short. There is the love of esteem, there is that in short. It is not at all incompatible with the love of passion, is that not so, nor with the love of taste; (*l'amour-estime, -passion, -gout*). But all the same it is the major love, it is the one which is founded on the (67) fact that one believes *her*, that one believes *her* because one has never had the proof that she is not absolutely authentic. But this believing *her* is all the same this something about which one is totally blinded, which acts as a stopper, as I might say, this is what I already said, to believing *it*, which is something that can be very seriously put in question. For to believe that there is one of them, God knows where that takes you, that takes you precisely towards believing that there is *The, The* which is altogether a fallacious belief. Nobody says the sylph or the water sprite. There is a water sprite or a sylph, there is

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a spirit. There are spirits, for some people. But all of this never gives anything except a plural. It is a matter of knowing what is its meaning. What meaning is there in *believing it* and whether there is not something altogether necessitated in the fact that, in order to believe *in it,* there is no better way than to *believe her*.

Voilà, it is ten to two. I introduced today something, I introduced something that I believe to be able, to be able to be of use to you. Because the business of points of suspension earlier, it was someone who said this to me about a connection, is that not so about what is involved in women, and my God, that fits so well that in the practice, is that not so to say that a woman is a symptom, as no one has ever done up to the present, I believed I should do so.

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Seminar 5: Tuesday 11 February 1975

I was told that the last time people heard nothing. It was explained to me since that it is because tape recorders are being hung on the loudspeakers. So then I would be grateful to the people who are in the process precisely of hanging them to take them away, so that all the same the loudspeakers may be of some use. At the same time, I would like the people who might find themselves in the position of not hearing anything to make a sign to me, so that I do not trust the loudspeakers and try to raise my voice. Because it is obviously painful to hear the remark, since there are some people who come to see me, to hear the remark that perhaps indeed I said interesting things, the preceding day or the day before that, that they were there, but that they did not hear.

I am delighted that today all the same, because I chose to come on Mardi gras, that the doors are not too congested. This could be an opportunity for me, to confide something in you. I reported to you, reported because it was instructive for me, I reported to you the fact that I had been at Nice, that I had accepted any title whatsoever. In short, I would say that it was in virtue of any one whatsoever that I had accepted, this title, obviously a little shocking for me, of *The Lacanian phenomenon*. And then I had pointed out to you that, in sum, I had provoked it, but that this informed me about something, which is perhaps a presumption, that what I say, has meaning effects. It seems in measuring things that these effects are not immediate, but (70) with the time that I have put into it and also, it must be said, the perseverance, since when all is said and done, for me, at least, it took 20 years for me to notice them, I mean for me to record them, that it should appear to me that this has had effects and I told you how surprised I was. One never knows whether a surprise is good or bad, a surprise is a surprise, it is outside the field of the agreeable or the disagreeable, since after all what is called good or bad is agreeable or

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disagreeable. So then [when] a surprise is lucky, let us say, this signifies what is called an encounter, namely, when all is said and done something that comes to you from yourself. I hope that this happens to you from time to time. So then I was able to renew this surprise that I am calling lucky, rather than good or bad, by going since, since I left you until the first Tuesday of February, first, in short, the second, the one that I speak on, I made a little trip to Strasbourg where I was able to note without even being too surprised at it because it is the Strasbourg group that takes charge of it, that I had effects, meaning effects in Germany. I mean that, from the Germans that I met in the Strasbourg group, I obtained when all is said and done questions which gave me the lucky surprise that I spoke about just now.

I was less surprised than at Nice, given that it was the Strasbourg group that were taking care of it – not that no one was taking care of what I was saying at Nice! – but in short it happened, like that, that I was expecting less. It must be said that, in the interval, I cheered up a little, and that that was perhaps the reason that however lucky it was, the surprise was less at Strasbourg. I had a greater one, because, I have just spent a week, you'll never guess where? I have just spent a week in London. It is quite certain that neither the English, nor I will not say English psychoanalysts, I only know one who is English, and even then he is probably a Scot!…*Lalangue*, I think it is the English *lalangue* that creates an obstacle. That is not very promising, because the English *lalangue* is in the process of becoming universal, I mean, that it is making its way. Anyway, I cannot say that there are not people who strive to translate me into it. Those who read me, like that, from time to time, can get, can have an idea in short of how difficult it is to translate me into the English *lalangue*.

(71) One must all the same recognise things as they are. I am not the first to have noted this resistance of the English *lalangue* to the unconscious. I made remarks, like that, I allowed myself to write

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something that was well or less received which I am used to, something on returning from a journey to Japan where I believe I said for the Japanese something that is opposed to the play, and even to the handling to the unconscious as such in what I called at the time, in a little article that I wrote, that I brought out I no longer know where, I completely forget, that I called *Lituraterre*. I thought I saw, in a certain, let us say, duplicity, duplicity in the case of the Japanese *lalangue*, of pronunciation, I thought I saw there something that reduplicated by the system of writing which is also double, I believed I saw there a certain special difficulty, a special difficulty in operating on the plane of the unconscious, and precisely in something which ought to appear a help to it, if what is involved in the unconscious is localised at the locus of the Other and if I made the remark that there is no Other of the Other, namely, that what in my little schema depicting the Borromean knot (IV-2) is characterised by a special accentuation of the hole in what faces up, as I might say, in what faces up to the Symbolic and that I highlighted, I think the last time, by putting there, by putting there a J followed by a capital O, that I translated in short, that I tried to state as designating the enjoyment of the Other, not a subjective but an objective genitive. And I underlined that it is here that there is very especially situated something which, I believe, legitimately, healthily, corrects the notion that Freud has of Eros as a fusion, as a union.

I put the accent, in this connection, like that incidentally, more or less before having brought out this Borromean knot, I put the accent on the fact that it is very difficult to for two bodies to melt into one another. Not only is it very difficult but it is an obstacle of everyday experience and that if one finds its place well indicated in a schema, it is all the same of a nature to encourage us, concerning the value of what I am calling, here, a scheme (*schème*).

Today I must open up, open up the path to a certain number, I will not say of equivalences, but of correspondences. It is quite obvious that I

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have several times in my scribbling work, since it is with rough drawings that I prepare what I have to say to you here, encountered (72) these equivalences, and that I look twice at them before sharing them with you. I am rather prudent. I do not try to speak without rhyme or reason.

Good! Is there here, for example, anyone who knows, because I do not know whether François Wahl is there, is there someone here who knows whether *Queen Victoria* by Lytton Strachey – who is a well known, indeed celebrated author, I read at one time a little book translated, if I remember correctly, by *Stock,* about Elizabeth and the Count of Essex – is anyone here in a position to tell me, since there are people who are at *Seuil*, are there any of them here? I think that they would be able to tell me whether Lytton Strachey on *Queen Victoria* has been published in translation by *Seuil*. [In the audience]: 'In *Seuil*, no' – What's that? I can't hear properly. It has not been published? That really pisses me off. It really pisses me off, because I would have recommended you to read it. Yes that really pisses me off! Who was it that said that to me? Good, anyway, I'm very annoyed, because that could be found everywhere in the form of a Penguin book, but it is *out of print* so then I cannot recommend you to read it, but in short, all those who can get their hands on it, because there are all the same libraries and there are also second hand bookshops, all those who can lay their hands on this *Queen Victoria* by Lytton Strachey, I warmly invite them to read it, because on my return from England, that is to say last Saturday and Sunday, I could not put this book down. I could not put it down and that does not mean that I am going to talk to you about it today, because I must, to make something of it, in short, make it enter into my discourse I would have to titrate it, I would have to melt it down, I would have to wring it dry, I would have to squeeze the juice out of it, it is – I may well have taken pleasure in it – it is too tiring, and then I don't have the time.

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Nevertheless, it could, it seems to me, show that there is perhaps more than one origin of this stupefying phenomenon of the discovery of the unconscious. If the 19th Century, it seems to me, had not been so astonishingly dominated by what I must really call the action of a woman, namely, Queen Victoria, well then, it would perhaps not have been realised the degree to which this kind of havoc was required in order that with it there should occur what I am calling in short an awakening. The awakening is one of my old refrains. It is a flash of (73) lightening. It is situated for me, in short when it happens to me, not often, it is situated for me, for me, that does not mean that that is how it is for everybody, it is situated for me at the moment when effectively I am emerging from sleep. I have at that moment a brief flash of lucidity, that does not last, of course, I enter like everyone else into this dream that is called reality, namely, into the discourses of which I form part, and among which I try to open up for you the path of analytic discourse. It is a very painful effort.

I believe that this book seems to me to make something tangible for you, in short tangible with a particular relief, the fact that love has nothing to do with the sexual relationship. And to confirm that this starts, not, I am going to say, from the woman, since precisely as regards this, I saw, I saw once again, in short it is a point on which even people who are most friendly to me, I mean those who believe they should pay homage to me vacillate and even come off the tracks, it must be said! If, if I say that *The woman* does not exist, there is obviously no way back, as I might say, but *a* woman, a woman among others, a woman well isolated in the English context by this kind of prodigious selection that has nothing to do with the discourse of the master, it is because there is an aristocracy that there is a discourse of the master. This aristocracy moreover does not have a lot to do with a local selection, as I might say. The true masters, are not those who are the, those who could be called worldly, in short nice people, people who are good company, people who know one another, in short, or who believe they know one another…The fate which ensured that a

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certain Albert of Saxe-Coborg fell into the hands of the *Queen*, he had no penchant, that is what is marvellous in short, this is what Lytton Strachey underlines, not the slightest penchant for women. But when one encounters a *vagina dentata*, if I can express myself thus, of the exceptional proportions of Queen Victoria, in short, a woman who is Queen, namely, what is really the best thing done in terms of *vagina dentata*! It is even an essential condition. In short, Semiramis must have had a *vagina dentata*, it is inevitable, it can be seen moreover when Degas makes a drawing of her. Elizabeth of England must also, in short, that can be seen for Essex. It had consequences… Why did it not have the same for him who is called, when they designed the museum that subsists to their memory the *Victoria and Albert*, because you do not say *Victoria – and –* you say *Victor (ia) and Albert*, why did the Albert in question not suffer the fate of Essex? It (74) is because he did not…it is not even sure that he did not undergo it, because he died very young. He died very young of what is called a natural death, but you will look very closely at that, I hope. You will look very closely at that, this seems to me the most marvellous thing there can be had as an announcement of this truth that I had found without it, in short, this truth of the sexual non-relationship.

It seems to me an altogether sensational illustration, and since all the same all of this happened very quickly, and in sum had gone through its principal episodes before the birth of Freud, it is not, it seems to me all the same not a reason for saying that if Freud had not emerged there, by some mysterious encounter of History, immediately after this exercise of what women have, I do not know if it is a power – people are very, very fascinated by notions, categories like that, power, knowledge, all that. They are silly notions in fact, silly notions which leave the whole place to women, and I did not say *The woman*, to the women who are not concerned with it, but whose power goes immeasurably beyond all the categories. Good, in short, God rest the soul of *r–and Albert*! It is certain that what I am saying does not quite go in the direction, despite everything, of what women can, nor take

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their chance, if one can call that a chance in a kind of integration into the categories of the man. I mean, neither power, nor knowledge, in fact they know about them, they know so much more about them, in short, is that not so, from the very fact of being a woman that it is to this indeed that I take off my hat. And the only thing that astonishes me, is not so much as I said like that on occasion, that they know better how to treat the unconscious, I am not too sure. Their category with respect to the unconscious is very obviously of a greater force, they are less bogged down in it. They treat it with a savagery, indeed a liberty of approach which is quite gripping for example in the case of Melanie Klein. It is something that, like that, I leave to the meditation of each one and women analysts are certainly more at ease with respect to the unconscious. They busy themselves with it, they do not busy themselves with it, it must be said, without it being, without it being at the expense…it is perhaps here that the idea of merit is upset, that they lose something of their chance in it which, simply by being one among women is in a way without measure. If I (75) had, which obviously would never come into my head, if I had to localise somewhere the idea of liberty, it would obviously be in a woman that I would incarnate it. A woman, not obligatorily anyone whatsoever, because they are *not-all* and the anyone whatsoever slides towards the *all*.

Good, let us leave that to one side. Let us leave that to one side because it is a subject which, fundamentally, like Freud himself, I could say that I can make neither head nor tail of (*J'y perds mon latin*). Which is not a bad way of saying things. But in short, if you get your hands on it, I had the good luck that a person who is one of those who had invited me there, I mean to London, that a person gave me this out of print thing, in short, his own copy in a word, and I think it is a read that no one here should miss if he has a little something, a little touch, a little vibration with respect to what I am saying. Good…

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It is obviously quite extraordinary, I am passing onto another subject, quite extraordinary to see that the art, the very art that has treated subjects that are called geometrical in the name of the fact that a prohibition is brought to bear by a certain religion on human representation, that even Arab art then, to call it by its name, makes the friezes but that among the friezes and these plaits that it involves, there is no Borromean knot. Even though the Borromean knot lends itself, lends itself to a quite flourishing richness of figures of which there is precisely no trace of in any art. It is something that in itself is very surprising. It is not easy, it is not easy to give an explanation for that, if not perhaps that if no one has sensed its importance this is all the same designed to give us this dimension that something was required that does not at all go without the requirement of the emergence of what I will call certain consistencies. It is precisely those I give to the Symbolic, to the Imaginary and to the Real. But it is by homogenising them that I give them this consistency, and to homogenise them is to restore them to the value of what commonly in short is considered as the lowest. One might well ask in the name of what? It is to give them a consistency in a word from the Imaginary. It is indeed in that that there is something to be corrected. The consistency of the Imaginary is strictly equivalent to that of the Symbolic, as to that of the Real. It is even by reason of the fact that they are knotted in this way, namely, in a way that puts them strictly in a relationship to one another, the one with respect to the two others, (76) in the same relationship; it is even here that an effort must be made which is of the order of a meaning effect, that is of the order of a meaning effect, I mean that analytic interpretation altogether implies a tipping over in the bearing of this meaning effect. It is certain that it is brought to bear, analytic interpretation is brought to bear in a way that goes much further than the word. The word is an object of elaboration for the analysand, but what the analyst says – for he says – what the analyst says has effects about which it is not nothing to say that transference plays a role in it, but, it is not nothing but it does not illuminate anything. It would be a matter of saying how the

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interpretation is brought to bear, and that it does not inevitably imply a stating. It is quite obvious that too many analysts have the habit of keeping their mouths shut, I dare to believe, I mean to shut up, not to open it, as they say, I am talking about the mouth. But I dare to believe that their silence is not simply the result of a bad habit but of a sufficient apprehension of the import of a silent saying. I dare to believe it, but I am not sure of it. From the moment we enter into this field, there is no proof. There is no proof, if not in the fact that an appropriate silence does not always succeed.

What I am trying to do here – where, alas, I chatter, I chatter a lot – is all the same designed to change the perspective about what is involved in a meaning effect. I would say that this meaning effect consists in squeezing it, squeezing it but of course on condition that it is done in the right way, namely, squeezing it by a knot, and not just any one. I am very astonished at succeeding in substituting, I believe, this meaning effect as it makes a knot, and a knot in the right way, for what I would call what happens at a perfectly designatable point, designatable on the knot itself, something in which I do not believe I participate at all, if not at this precise point, and which is called the fascination effect. For, to tell the truth, it is what, it is on this cord that there slides, that there are brought to bear most of the effects of art, and it is the only criterion that can be found which separates it from what science, for its part, manages to co-ordinate. That indeed why that a man of letters, like I don't know, Valery, for example, is content with remaining on the fact that it is a matter of explaining, on fascination effects, whose analysis is all the same required.

The meaning effect required of analytic discourse is not Imaginary, it is not Symbolic either, it must be Real. And what I am occupied with (77) this year, is in trying to closely squeeze what the Real of a meaning effect may be. Because on the one hand, it is clear that we are used to this meaning effect being conveyed by words and not being without reflection, without Imaginary undulation. One could

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even say that even on my little schema [on the board] as I reproduced it for you the last time, as I am going to redo it no – get into the habit, is that not so, of drawing it like that, namely, not to do what is done, what is regularly done, in short the junction once one has started with this élan – the meaning effect is that, it is at the connection of the Symbolic and the Imaginary that I situated it. It does not in appearance have a relationship with this, namely, the circle consisting of the Real, in principle it only has a relationship of exteriority. I say in principle, because that is why it is there, flattened out. It is flattened out from this fact that we cannot think otherwise. We only think on the flat.

It is enough to depict this Borromean knot [on the board] differently. You are going to see the trouble of course that this is going to give us, is that not so. You see already…Ah! That is what is marvellous, it's that…[he draws on the board],[V-1]. Let us take it like that. I could of course have taken it in any way whatsoever.

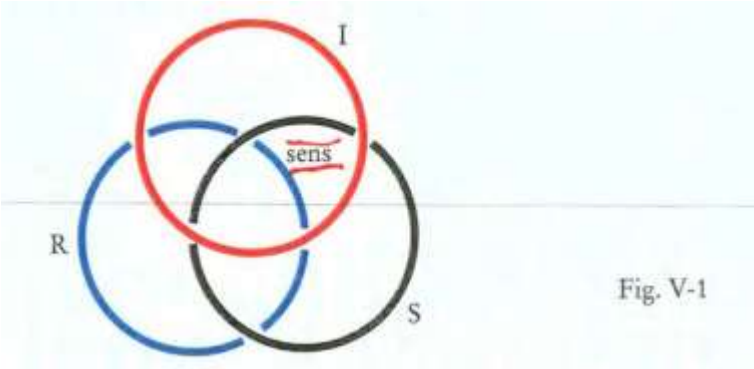

Fig. V-1

You clearly see that what is at stake is to make this knot Borromean, namely, that you clearly see the two that are depicted here separate easily from one another. There is not only one way and only one single way, because there is more than one to make this knot Borromean. This is what I am depicting to you with all the awkwardness which, I hope, will also be yours on this occasion. Because I want to show you that the difficulty is this. You see that by (78) the fact that the third buckle that I added passes, as I might say, across the two ears that allow to be distinguished the passage of this

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element of the knot to the inside of what I would call the hole of the third knot, it is in this measure that the knot holds together.

Do we have to stop there? Namely, to think that three consistent elements are enough, one of which makes a knot of the two others. There is already something that we posit with this knot, something which goes against the image described as concatenation. It is in so far as the discourse at stake does not constitute a chain, namely, that there is no reciprocity of the passage of one of these consistencies into the hole that the other offers it, namely, that one of the consistencies, in the common sense of the term, is not knotted to the other, I mean, does not make a chain, it is in this that there is specified the relationship of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. This is how the question is put first of knowing whether the meaning effect in its Real stems from the use of words, I am saying use in the usual sense of the term, or simply by there being uttered (*leur jaculation*), as I might say, it is the term that is used for what concerns words. From all time many things have made people think, but the distinction was not

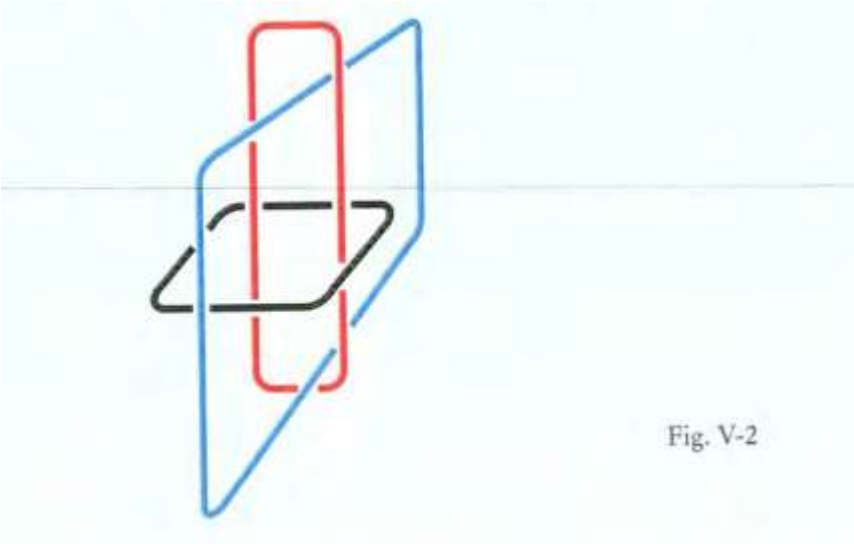

Fig. V-2

made in this use of the uttering. People believed that it was the words that were important. While if we give ourselves the trouble of isolating the character of the signifier we clearly see that uttering preserves a meaning, a meaning that can be isolated.

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Does that mean that it is here, in this that we should trust, for it to come about that the saying makes a knot? As distinct from the word which very often slips, allows there to slip, and that our intervention with regard to what the analysand is asked to provide, namely, as they say, everything that passes through his head, which does not for all that in any way imply that this only bla-blah, for behind precisely there is the unconscious. And it is because of the fact that there is the unconscious that already in what he says, there are things that make a knot, that there is already saying (*du dire*), if we specify the saying as being what makes a knot.

It is not enough to call this knot the Real - the Imaginary in this schema is not an imaginary ring. If the knot holds together, it is precisely because the Imaginary ought to be taken in it proper consistency and that, no doubt, since this schema is what presses us, at least through my mediation, the fact is that the use of the Symbolic is obviously not to be taken there, as everything indicates in the technique of analysis, in the common sense of the word. The Symbolic is not simply blah-blah. What they have in common is that. It is not the Real, that is the Real! The Real, is that there should be something that is common to them in their consistency. Now, this consistency resides simply in the fact of being able to make a knot. Is a mental knot real? That is the question. I agree that I am not making things easy for you today, but it is all the same to give you the answer immediately: there is the Real, the mental knot, there is the Real of ek-sistence. There is the Real of ek-sistence, as I write it from these equivalences which I told you earlier it was my goal to introduce today. I am speaking, I am speaking prudently about correspondence, I am speaking now about functions. And that is why I am putting forward the word *equivalence*.

It is rather curious, if we wish to give some support to what we are putting forward, that this precisely forces us not to put the Real in consistency. And consistency, to designate it by its name, I mean by

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its correspondence, consistency, I would say, is of the Imaginary order, which is demonstrated, which is demonstrated lengthily in all human history. And what ought to inspire in us a singular prudence, is that much of the consistency, all the consistency that already has been proved is pure imagination. I am bringing back the Imaginary here to its stress on meaning. Consistency for the *parlêtre*, for the (80) speaking-being, is what is fabricated and what is invented. On this occasion, it is the knot in so far as it is plaited. But precisely this is the last word on the business, as I might say. It is not in so far as it has been plaited that it ek-sists, even if I do not make a figure of my Borromean knot on the board, it ek-sists. For, once it is traced out, anyone can clearly see that it is impossible for it not to remain what it is in the Real, namely, a knot. And this indeed is why I believe I am putting forward something which may perhaps be useful to the analysts who are listening to me in their practice. It is that they should know that what they are plaiting, that what they are plaiting in terms of the Imaginary does not any the less ek-sist. That this ek-sistence is what corresponds to the Real. There is something, thank God, that has introduced us to this notion of ek-sistence, it is the use of the writing in connection with this something which, on this occasion, is called a variable, linked, designated by the letter *x*. There exists an *x* that can be brought into f(x), namely, into a function of *x*, whether this function is a function in the general sense of the term or simply an equation. In the case of an equation, it can happen that no root exists, as it is expressed, if an equation is always something equal to zero. It can happen that there is no root, that no root exists, and when it does not exist, that does not upset us, we make it exist, namely, that we invent the category of the imaginary root and what is more, that gives results.

Here lies the vacillating point by which one sees that the term imaginary does not mean pure imagination, since moreover, if we can bring it about that the Imaginary ek-sists, it is because another Real is at stake. I am saying that the meaning effect ek-sists, and that in this,

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it is Real. This is not apologetics, it is consistency, Imaginary consistency, no doubt, but it seems that there is a whole common domain of the Imaginary function that for its part lasts and holds together. I can only dialogue with someone that I have fabricated to understand me at the level at which I speak, and this indeed is why I am not only astonished that you are so numerous, but I cannot even believe that I fabricated each one of you to comprehend me. You should know simply that this is not what is at stake in analysis. It is simply a matter of accounting for what ek-sists as interpretation. The astonishing thing is that to work, as I might say, on these three functions, of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real, I fabricated enough people at a distance who had only to open – when all is said (81) and done I cannot even believe that there was ever an Englishman who did more than that, to look a little bit or to open my books, when they know French, because it is not yet translated – and that all the same there is something that allowed them to respond to in it. What is meant by the fact that there ek-sists a construction whose consistency must not be imaginary? There is only a single condition which is quite readable, readable here on the blackboard, for that there must be a hole. And this is what brings us to what is called the topology of the torus which is the one by which for a long time I was, I cannot say altogether willingly, it was not one of these things that were so familiar to me, even though everyone knows well what a bangle is, simply what I note, is that mathematical topology, the one being entitled such and constituting the introduction of these relationships to the soft (*mou*), to the woolly (*flou*), as my dear friend Guilbaud expresses it, and with that to the knot, should be something, which, in mathematical theory, gives me so much trouble and will give you just as much, I must say, because I do not see how a theory of knots needs to pass through the function described as filters, for example, or to require the consideration of sets, the ones open, the others closed, when these terms of open and of closed take on an imaginary consistency no doubt, but a consistency quite different from the practice of knots.

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The hole of which I speak, which seems to me ought to be put in the centre of this, which seems to me the point from which we can take off from this circular thinking, from this thinking that obligatorily flattens out, and which by that fact, simply by that fact, says that what is within it [V-3], is something other than what is outside, while it is

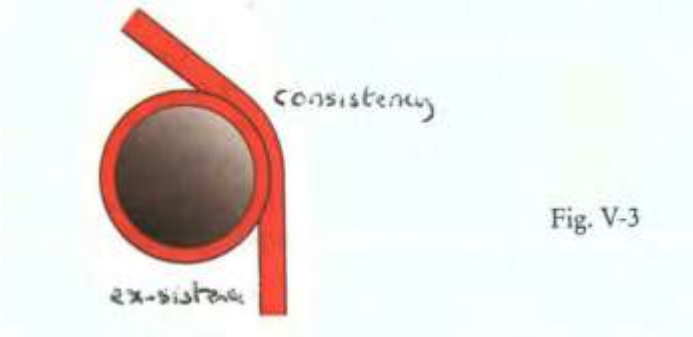

Fig. V-3

(82) enough to imagine it, to imagine it as consistent cord to clearly see that the inside that is at stake here and the outside, are exactly the same thing. There is only one inside, the one that we imagine as being the interior of the torus. But precisely, the introduction of the figure of the torus consists, in not taking account of this inside of the torus. This indeed is the relief and the importance of what is provided to us.

The last time, in connection with my knot, I made the remark and I even drew the figure of the fact that if we start from the requirement

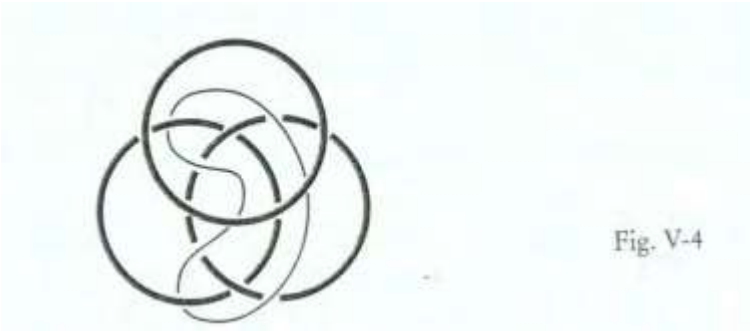
Fig. V-4

of making a Borromean knot not of three, but of four, we must suppose these three independent toruses [on the board] namely, to draw them like this [V-4, an error of Lacan's, taken up in the following session]: here is the one above, the one that is intermediary and the one that is beneath.

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I depicted for you the last time how, by a figure which is that of a fourth torus, these three depicted as independent can be knotted, can and must be knotted, and I even made an allusion to the fact, which is that in Freud, there is an elision of my reduction to the Imaginary, to the Symbolic and to the Real, and as being all three knotted with one another, and that what Freud establishes with his Name-of-the-Father, which is identical to psychical reality, to what he calls psychical reality, specifically to religious reality, for it is exactly the same thing, that it is thus by this function, by this function of the dream that Freud establishes the link of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real.

Those who, I hope, were here the last time, preserved, I think, the notes, the outline, of the simply way in which here there can be traced out this torus [on the board] like, of course, here. I believe if I remember correctly…I could draw it, it is possible that I might make a (83) mistake, because it is not at all easy. Let us try like that, all the same this amuses me, it amuses me because each time one gets lost in it! Let's see, starting from this…Ah! What do we get from that? Yeah, this seems to have succeeded by good luck, namely, to hold together, namely, to reproduce what I gave you the last time.

But this is not what is important. What is important to me, is the following; this figure, this figure here, let us suppose it is my knot, namely,, as you see, here what I traced out the last time as third circle, as third cord, knots nothing. How can we make the drawing on this of what would knot these three?

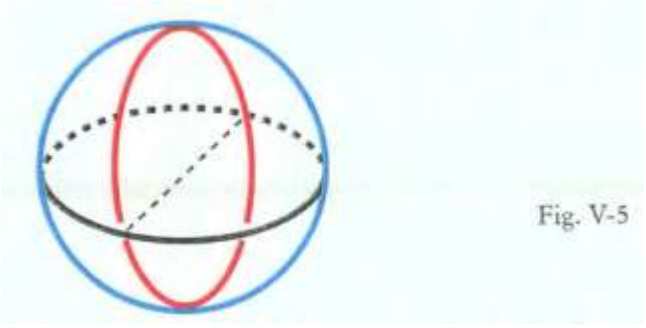

Fig. V-5

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I am going to present it to you in another way which is this one [V-5]. It is very easy to conceive of it, in the form that was materialised in a thousand and one ways throughout the ages, namely, astrolabes. It is very easy to conceive of three metallic circles here where we find our bearings much more easily, of course, since we are only able to make a geometry of solids. [On the board] Here is how I am going to represent them; suppose something which was very frequently produced throughout the ages, in naval instruments. I am going to draw it for you simply. Here is a circle seen head on. The equatorial circle that I am drawing for you now is seen flattened out, and that is why I pretended to draw it for you in perspective. Let us now make a third vertical circle and let us trace out this little dotted line to give you the notion of the way in which you ought to see it in perspective. It is a distinct way because it appeals, it appeals, without any hope moreover, to your sense of space, you who do not have one anymore than anybody else! You think you are seeing things in relief, but you do not even imagine in relief.

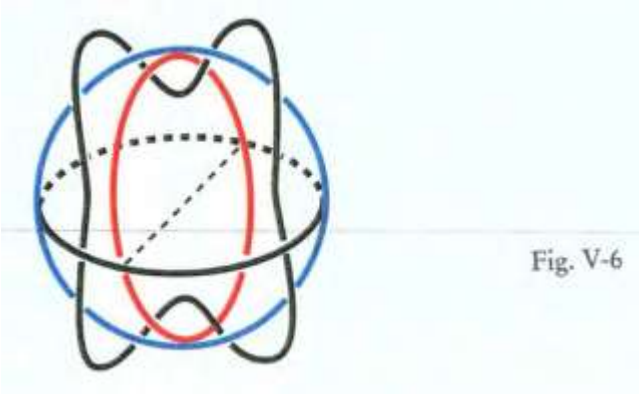

Fig. V-6

I would like here [V-6] to depict how there is conceived in space the outline of what I gave you earlier, what I posed as a problem to you earlier about what can unite these three, the disunited Imaginary, Symbolic and Real. If you proceed in this way, you will see that you have to trace out this line, this consistency; that it is necessary and sufficient that this should be, let us say, depicted for there to be a knot here, a knot of four, a knot starting from a disjunction conceived as originating the Symbolic the Imaginary and the Real. I would advise you to keep a note of it because it is of a rather fruitful nature to make

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you reflect on what is involved in this function of knot, namely, why, for example, this line that I isolated as pink [in black on the drawing] must pass twice for us in front and above of this circle the only flattened out one, and pass, be content to pass in short within the one which here occupies the second rank with regard to an idea that we could have of the outside, of the middle and of the inside, of depth. This is largely sufficient in effect and it is illustrative of the function of the knot.

I will posit, as I might say, this year the question of knowing whether, as regards what is involved, namely, the knotting of the Imaginary, of the Symbolic and of the Real, there is required in short this supplementary function of an extra torus, the one whose consistency is to be referred to the function described as that of the Father. It is indeed because these things have interested me for a long time, even though I had not yet at that time found this way of depicting them, that I began *The Names-of-the-father*. There are in effect many ways of illustrating the way in which Freud, as is obvious in his text, only makes the conjunction of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real (85) hold up through the *Names-of-the father*. Is this indispensable? It is not because that would be indispensable and I am saying the contrary that it could always be shown to be false that it is in fact so, always!

It is certain that when I began to do the seminar on *The Names-of-the-Father*, and that I, as some people know, at least those who were there, that I put an end to, I had surely – it is not for nothing that I had called it *The (Les) Names-of-the-Father* and not *The* (*Le*) *Name-of-the-Father*! I had a certain number of ideas about the way in which the analytic domain, discourse, takes temporary support (*suppléance)* from Freud's putting forward of the Names-of-the-Father. It is not because this support is not indispensable that it does not take place. Our Imaginary, our Symbolic and our Real are perhaps for each one of us still in a state of sufficient dissociation for the Name-of-the-Father

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alone to be able to make the Borromean knot, and to hold all that together, to make a knot of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and of the Real. But you must not imagine that - it would indeed not be my usual tone – that I am in the process of prophesying that we can in any way do without the Name- of-the-Father in analysis and for that matter the Name-of-the- Father elsewhere, that we can in any way do without for our Symbolic, our Imaginary and our Real since it is the fate of all of you not to take off quite well each one in his own direction. It is certain, without our being able to say that this constitutes a progress, because it is hard to see how a further knot on one's back, on one's neck and elsewhere, it is hard to see how a knot, a knot reduced to its strictest would constitute a progress, from the simple fact that it is a minimum. It surely constitutes a progress in the Imaginary, namely, a progress in consistency. It is quite certain that in the present state of things, you are each and every one of you as inconsistent as your fathers, but it is precisely from the fact of being entirely dependent on them that you are in your present condition.

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Seminar 6: Tuesday 18 February 1975

The last time, I bore witness to you about my experiences of wandering, and since I was disappointed that the Mardi-gras had not thinned out the fullness of this room, since I was disappointed about that, I allowed myself to slide into telling you what I think.

Nevertheless today for reasons that, I must say, are personal to me, because my work was a bit disturbed this week, I would like to take up the relay of what seemed to me to be required and which, after all, I can imagine, demanded some time. Today this time seems to me, I repeat, for simple personal reasons, the time might well have come – at least, I hope so – for some, some among you, to ask me, to ask me questions to which, I repeat, I would be happy at least to be able to answer to what I might seem in the present state of things to have an answer for.

I would really be very, very grateful to these people who certainly in the sense that I understand it, ek-sist, to these people if they would throw me the ball, as I might say; and to the person that will devote himself to it first, because after all, it is enough for one to decide, for others to be found who will open up the path. There you are! I am appealing to whoever would be willing to speak first, man or woman (*le premier ou la première*). I would really like to be asked a question. First of all that would give me the note of what might take hold. It seems to me that the last time already, in putting forward what I said about an effort made, to distinguish, not simply to distinguish, and I will show you when the occasion arises where that starts from…it starts from a flattening out of the knot. In the knot there must be distinguished the fact that it is very difficult to bring it (88) into mathematical theory, this to the point that, let us say, I have found nothing whatsoever that corresponds to this knot, to this knot which – I was led to it in short step by step – to the knot qua

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Borromean that I ended up with. How did I end up with it? It is certain that currently, in short, if I, of course, know what is coming subsequently, the only thing that will allow the thread to be found, namely,, what gives it its consistency, the only thing that will allow the thread of the sequence, the sequence of seminars of which you have the first and the last, thanks to the care of someone, and also the one that is not the median, the one that is the eleventh. This is assuredly what will give to it what I designate as consistency.

How does it happen that something which, I recalled it, might have been the start of a different mode of thinking, with rigour, *more geometrico*, is what, is what Spinoza, for example, prided himself on spinning out, on deducing something according to the mode and the model given by the Ancients. It is clear that this *more geometrico* defines a mode of intuition which is properly mathematical and that this mode of intuition, after all, is not self-evident.

The way in which the point, the line, is in a way fomented from a fiction, and for that matter the surface which is only sustained by the split, by the break, by a break that is no doubt specified, specified as being in two dimensions – but since the line is only a dimension by being without consistency properly speaking, it is not saying a lot to say that one is going to add on one – and on the other hand the third, the one that in sum is erected by a line perpendicular to the surface, is something very strange. How, without something giving a support to what must be said to be an abstraction founded on the cut of a saw, how, without rediscovering the cord, make such a construction hold up? But on the other hand, it is not by chance either that things happen like that. No doubt there is here a necessity which is, let us say, my God, because I do not find any better, which is the weakness of a manual being, *homo faber* as he was described. But why should this manual being, the *homo faber* who for that matter, if only, as I remarked, for carrying around what he attacks, what he manipulates, starts from something that has consistency, starts from the cord?

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What necessity requires that this cord, this cord – which in the tenth rule, that of Descartes, that I recalled – Descartes evokes that moreover, after all, the art of the weaver, the art of the plait, the art of the sewer could give the model, how does it happen that these things (89) become so exhausted, become exhausted to this point that their thread becomes inconsistent?

Perhaps there is here this something which is related to a repression? Before going as far as to say that this repression, is the primordial one, is the *Urverdrängt*, is what Freud designated as inaccessible in the unconscious… [*Uproar at the back of the hall*]. It would perhaps be no bad thing if someone at the back should take the floor and ask me a question, that would show me how loudly I must raise my voice for people to hear me, since these things seem to work badly. Could someone at the back open up this path that I wished for earlier?

We must start from the fact, is that not so, of how easy it is to make a mistake in the depiction of this knot, of this special knot that I designate as being Borromean and which has this singular property that it is enough to break something which nevertheless is simply depicted in it, namely, a torus, namely, a torus which precisely it is enough to cut to have in one's hand this thickness, this consistency, namely, what makes a cord.

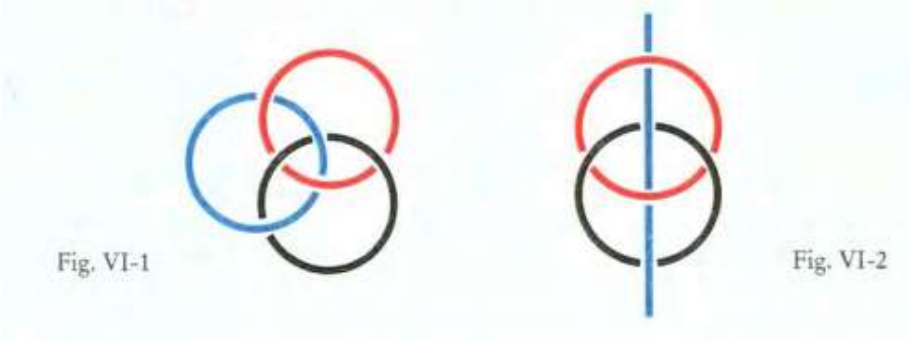

Fig. VI-1 Fig. VI-2

This indeed is why, questioning, questioning my knot that can be drawn in this way [on the board, VI-1] and in fact is drawn, I noted the fact that it was no less drawable and that it remained a knot on this single condition that one of its buckles is opened out [VI-2] and that it

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is transformed into a straight line. We rediscover here the question that I asked at the start, that of the straight line and the slightness of its mathematical, geometrical consistency. Here this restored consistency supposes that we extend it to infinity for it to continue to fulfil its function. We must then see this cord infinitely prolonged, on the top and on the bottom, for the knot to remain such, to remain a knot. This (90) indeed is how the straight line, the straight line on which in short this cord takes its support in its present state, the straight line is scarcely consistent and it is indeed on this moreover that geometry has, as one might say, slipped. In other words starting from the moment when, in a geometry described as spherical, one has restored infinity to this straight line, by making of it a new ring. Without noticing that from the position of the knot, of the Borromean knot, this ring is implicated and that there was no need then perhaps to have made this whole circuit.

In any case, the last time you saw me extending this geometry of the Borromean knot of three, to the depiction of what is required for it to be valid for four. This was to give you the experience of the difficulty of what I called the mental knot. But I know well that it is with the attempt to flatten it, to flatten out this mental knot, namely, to submit oneself to the fact that this supposed thought, namely, something that sticks to extension, has a condition. Far from being separated from it, as Descartes supposes, thought is only extended, and again, it needs an extension, not just any one whatsoever, an extension in two dimensions, an extension that can be drawn. For this indeed is the way that it will not be displaced, in which it will not be inopportune to define this surface whose geometry I showed earlier, the one that is imagined, that is essentially sustained by an Imaginary. It is indeed like that that one could moreover define this surface, this cut of a saw on a solid, the fact is that it presents something, something to draw.

It is singular that the only way people have managed in short to reproduce this ideal surface, is precisely something that people back

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away from, namely, the plait of a canvas. And that it should be on a canvas that the painter has in short to draw, because it is all that he finds himself able to do to tame the look, as I expressed it at one time, what is involved in this function of the painter. And that here also it is on something specified, the blackboard, that I find myself inevitably flattening out, flattening out what I have to communicate to you about the knot. It is indeed here that in effect there is sensed in a particular way, there is sensed the fact that, the knot that I have on the other hand depicted thanks to your perspective imagination, namely, how the Borromean knot of three holds up, how it is made. It is made of two knots which are independent of one another, and it is a matter of knowing where the third passes for this to make a knot.

I asked you the same question concerning what was required for it to (91) be a knot, even if at the start we leave the three rings of string of the first problem, we leave them independent, and I depicted for you by also flattening it out, even though in a way which bore its perspective, by depicting for you what is involved in what happens for these three rings that I drew independent, contenting myself, to simplify things for you, to show how they must be traced out in order that the fourth, the fourth that I represented a bit differently from the way in which I am now doing, highlighting for you the quadruple function of the fourth ring of string [VI-3].

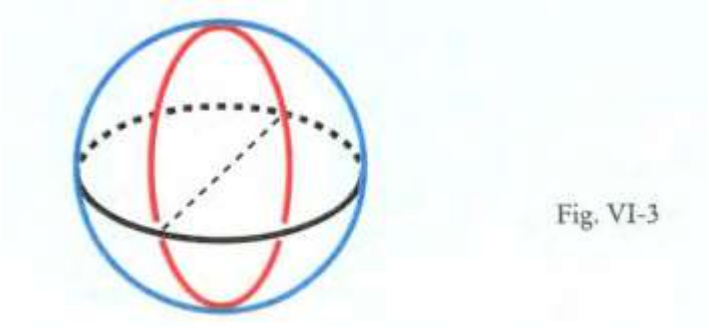

Fig. VI-3

But when I wanted to flatten it out in a way that reproduces in modifying it, namely, in making the three knots, the three rings of string independent from the start, I found that I had made an error. And I can say that this error was a matter rather of a mistake linked to

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the fact that being weary of it, weary of remembering these things that I had seen myself as correctly depicting what results from the flattening out, from a flattening out modelled on that of the knot of three, I omitted, I missed as I might say, I explicitly missed, through weariness, and moreover to give you, good God, an example of how little naturalness there is in the way these things work, namely, the representation of the knot. [On the board]. Here then, to take up the mental thing, the way in which first of all this operates. If from the upper to the lower, you note by 1, 2, 3 [VI-4] that which, of course, has nothing to do with an upper and a lower, since moreover it would be enough to turn them upside down for the problem to be renewed, here is how one should proceed. That I knew, but precisely it was by neglecting the fact that I found myself operating in the way that you have seen, and which left circle 1 outside the knot, but at the same time moreover all the others. It would be well to start from the fact (92) that the three circles flattened out in this way, and the 3 outside the 1, and to finish by the 3 in the 2. When one operates in this way, things work.

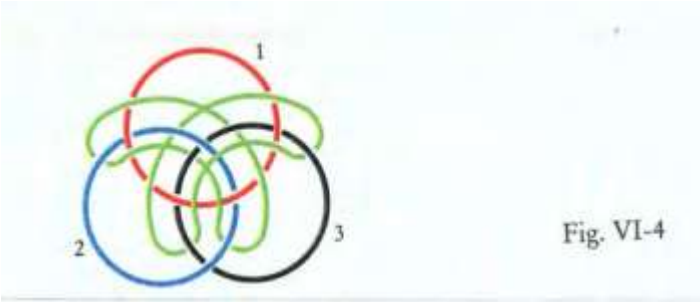

Fig. VI-4

It is no less true that it is easy to see that they can also function in a different way, but that there is a third one, precisely the one that I took the last time and which leaves one of these knots free and specifically the 1, by which at the same time, it leaves the others free.

Why in short did the blundered action work here, if not in order to testify that no analysis, after all, can avoid something, something not resisting in this theory of the knot. And it is indeed what after all, I do not think it is a bad thing to have made you sense, and to have made you aware of in an extremely experimental way. It is quite clear that

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the other way, that the other way, the other way that is distinguished by this, which is that by inverting these two propositions, namely, starting from what of the 2 is outside the 1, but what I am doing there has not…[on the board] what I am doing there and what I did not do at first confuses, since moreover it is by depicting things for you in a way which makes the two green rings of string seem to re-cross one another. Simply cancel out these four points and you will see that in every case the two ways of proceeding are quite appropriate.

How are they so appropriate? They are so appropriate in that the function of the 2 and then of the 3, like the other figure, the one that is in perspective shows, as the other figure makes it appear, the function of the 2 and of the 3 are strictly equivalent and that with regard to the circle that might here be designated as 1, these two others are strictly equivalent, namely, as regards the way in which the pink ring goes around them, the mode is the same if we adopt this depiction.

What is there to say? What is there to say except that what this central figure highlights, is that the infinite straight line that figures there, the straight line described as infinite, but about which I remarked on one (93) occasion what it presupposes, namely, properly speaking the impossible, that this infinite straight line is opposed, is opposed by virtue of its rupture, and how can this rupture not be considered as a refinement (*affine*) of something which is quite essential to the knot, this straight line is opposed to what constitutes a ring as to what I called consistency, on the other hand to something on which I did not insist the last time and which is indeed what is essential to what we call a ring, and specifically a ring of string, namely, the hole that it has in the middle. Hence the question that I put the last time as to whether there was not a correspondence, a correspondence between consistency, ek-sistence and the hole and each one of the terms that I am putting forward as Imaginary, Symbolic and Real. If consistency is indeed as I stated the last time of the order of the Imaginary, since moreover the cord goes towards this vanishing point of the

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mathematical line, we have to question ourselves about what is involved in making the ring of string as such, and that if we say it is the hole, it is a fact that we are not satisfied with it: what is a hole, if nothing circumscribes it?

Now, the last time, I had clearly marked that ek-sistence [on the board] namely, this something which, with regard to the opening and of what makes a hole, that the ek-sistence, namely, to flatten out things, this something that we ought, in the flattening

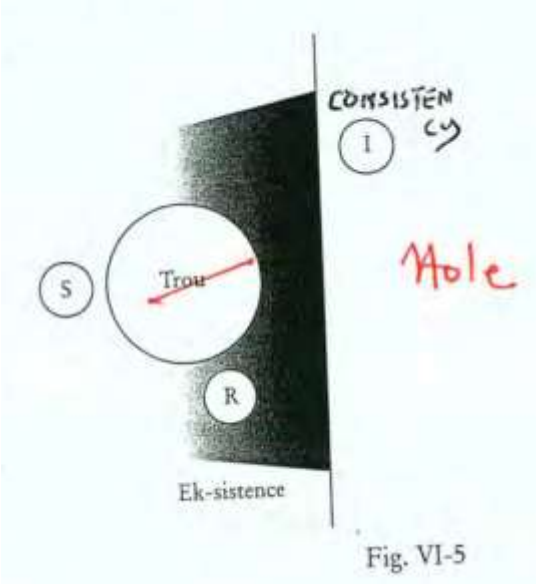

Fig. VI-5

out, to depict [VI-5] that ek-sistence belongs to this field, which is, as I might say, supposed by the rupture itself and that it is through it, through this in, in the a – write that l apostrophe a – that there is played out as one might say the fate of the knot, that if the knot has an ek-sistence, it is by belonging to this field and this indeed is why I stated that ek-sistence is with regard to this correspondence of the order of the Real, that the ek-sistence of the knot is Real to such a degree that I was able to say, I was able to put forward that the mental knot ek-sists, that the *mens* depicts it or not to itself, since what we see is that this ek-sistence of the knot is still to be explored, to be explored not without trouble, since there is not, to the best of my knowledge, anything at all, except to learn to constitute it and to learn it by the plait, which assuredly is not properly speaking a mental way of resolving the question, while it seems, it seems that

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there is properly speaking a resistance of the *mens* to 'mentaling' this knot. I gave you an example of it earlier.

No doubt it is by a procedure called that of the remainder and which supposes as fundamental the order explored, explored starting from my experience, explored from the properly analytic experience which I said had led me to this infernal trinity, let us call it by its name, this infernal trinity of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. I do not think that I am playing a tune (*cord*) here which is not Freudian. *Flectere si nequeo Superos* our dear Freud wrote at the head of the *Traumdeutung, Acheronta movebo*. And it is no doubt here that there is illustrated, in short, what I called the truth, the truth of a certain religion, for which I highlighted that it is not at all by chance that it arrived at a divine notion which is of a trinity this one, contrary to the tradition to which it is itself connected. I am not telling you how I let myself go in confiding to an audience that was none other, if I remember correctly, than the one I believe in England, unless it was the one in Strasbourg. What matter, I did not go so far as to tell this secret that the desire of man, which is nevertheless tangible, is hell, hell very precisely in that it is hell that he is missing! And with this consequence that it is what he aspires to, and we have the testimony of it, the testimony in neurosis which is very exactly the fact is that neurosis is something that only happens in so far as it is for him a mirage in which he might be satisfied, namely, a perversion, that a neurosis is a failed perversion.

A simple illustration of the knot, of the knot and why it is to the knot that I come to try to sustain, as I might say, what is produced and which your number here bears witness to, namely, some interest. It is indeed because you are much more interested in short than you suppose each one of you, in this nodalising of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, that you are there, it seems to me. For moreover why would you take this strange satisfaction in listening to my stammering on this occasion, for moreover this is what I have to

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accept today, namely, that I can only clear the way to what this involves in terms of consequences.

If it is indeed in effect in this mode that the ek-sistence of the knot is supported, namely, from this field that, flattened out, is intermediary to what gives rise to a question in this knot, intermediary to what makes a body out of the hole, while what the body supports, is something quite different, it is the line of consistency. A body, a body such as the one that you are supported by, is very precisely this something which for you has only the aspect of being what resists, what consists before being dissolved. And if the Real is to be localised somewhere, namely, in this field intermediary to the flattening out that I depicted, denoted as ek-sistence, it remains that it can only be by elimination that we may do it, and this is what gives rise to a question for us, that it is only, it is only by asking the question of whether the hole is indeed what is of the order of the Symbolic that I founded on the signifier, this indeed is the point that we will find ourselves having to settle in the course of this year.

[On the board] We find ourselves then at present, under an interrogative form, to put here the hole with a question mark and nothing else……
[*break in the recording*]
…in question what is involved in the Symbolic while here it is the Real, it is ek-sistence, and that consistency here corresponds to the Imaginary.

It is certain that these categories are not easily handled. They have in their favour nevertheless the fact of having left some traces in history, namely, that if it is at the end of the account, of the account of a traditional philosophical extenuation whose summit is given by Hegel that something sprung forth again under the name of someone called Kierkegaard, and you know the degree that I exposed him as converging with the experience that appeared much later in Freud, his promotion as such of ek-sistence. There is there something, it seems,

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of which one cannot say and of which one cannot find in Kierkegaard himself the testimony for, that it is not simply by the promotion of repetition as something more fundamental in experience than the resolution described as thesis, antithesis, synthesis on which Hegel wove History. The highlighting of this repetition as being a
(96) fundamental function whose stamp is found in enjoyment and whose relations, the relations lived by the Kierkegaard in question, are those of a knot never avowed no doubt, but which is that of his father to sin. Namely, the introduction not of his own experience, but of the experience of the one who is found, with respect to him, to occupy the place of the father, that this place of the father at the same time becomes problematic. Namely that, a singular thing for a tradition that manipulated the *Abba* without rhyme or reason, that it should be at this date, and only at this date that there was promoted at the same time existence as such, which no doubt does not have the same accent as the one that I put in it by fragmenting it with a hyphen that it should be at this epoch that ek-sistence emerges, as I might say, emerges for me, emerges so that I can make something of it that is written differently, and that this is what is touchable, tangible in something that is defined by the knot. I do not believe that this is something of a nature to put me, as I might say, in continuity with a philosophical questioning, but much more rather into a mode of rupture which is moreover what is imposed if the emergence of the unconscious as a knowledge, as a knowledge proper to each one, to each particular person, is of a nature to completely change the conditions in which the very notion of knowledge has dominated, let us say, from ancient times, let us say even Antiquity. There has entered this character of knowledge along paths that we must question, that we must question in a way which, in any case puts its substance in question. If knowledge is something so dependent, so dependent on the relationships of generations to the Symbolic, to the hole of which I spoke of earlier, to call it by its name, if it is so dependent on the fact that the succession of generations fomented as knowledge, how can we not re-question its status. Is there, one, some knowledge in the

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Real? It is quite clear that the supposition from all time, but a supposition that was not properly speaking made, not avowed, is that to all appearances there was, since the Real worked, it operated properly. And this indeed is what manifests that for all of us, there is a change, because this *in the Real* we touch a knowledge in it in a quite different form.

It is specifically to take up again here my construction [goes to the board], it is specifically this that if we insist that a knowledge, should have as a support, not, I am not saying a hole, the consistency of the (97) Symbolic, what appears in the Real… What appears in the Real, is properly speaking this, because perhaps you remember that the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary are situated in this way. It is the something which, flattened out, flattened out because we think, that flattened out appears in the Real, namely, within the domain that the consistency of the ring of string alone allows to be defined, that is presented not like the knowledge immanent to the Real that there is no way of resolving except of putting it into it in the form of, of *nous*, in the form of something that the Real would know what it has to do, and when it is not this *nous* well then, it is the whole power and wisdom of God! I do not have to come back on the fact that you know, that you know because I dinned it into you, namely, that the world is not thinkable without God. I am talking about the Newtonian world, because how would each one of the masses know the distance it is at from all the others? There is no way out! Voltaire believed in the Supreme Being. I was not let into his confidence, I do not know what idea he had of it, but it could scarcely be far from the idea of all-knowing, namely, that he was the one who made the machine work. The old business of knowledge in the Real, we know that it has, good God, sustained in short all these old metaphors. These old metaphors when all is said and done, it must be said! Aristotle was a populist in short, was he not! It is the artisan who gives him the model for all his causes, his final cause if I may express myself thus, his formal cause, it (*sa*) causes, it even causes at full tilt, it causes even material and that

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is only the most hopeless of them [*causer*: cause, chat] It is certain that at the level of the cause, of the physical cause, of that which is inscribed by him in his *Physics*, all the haughtiness, is that not so of the *nous*, of the *nous* present to the world is reduced, is reduced to what I described in short as the artisinal, the artisinal which means that this was received with open arms everywhere the metaphor of the potter dominates and where it is a divine hand that makes the pot. How does it continue to turn nevertheless all by itself? This indeed is the question and the question on which the refinements of knowledge, if it continue to occupy itself with it, namely, to make it turn, or whether it leaves it turn all by itself after having ejected it, is truly secondary.

But the whole question of knowledge is to be taken up again simply starting from the fact that a knowledge is only supposed from a relation to the Symbolic, namely, to this something that is incarnated by a material as signifying, which is not all by itself to ask an easy question. Because what is a signifying material? We have only the (98) tip of its muzzle in Aristotle, at the place where he talks about *stoicheion* but it is certain that the very idea of material is only strictly thinkable as coming from signifying material in which it finds its first examples.

So then! To try simply to note something, which will be what my notation will unfold around, it is certain that it is from an experience, from an experience of the depiction of the symptom as reflecting in the Real the fact that there is something that is not working and where, not in the Real of course, in the field of the Real, this something that does not work holds up. Holds up how? Holds up only by what I support in my language as a *parlètre*, from what is only a speaking being, because if he did not speak, he would not have the word being, and that to this speaking being, there is a field, a field connected to the hole that I depicted here – I apologise, I do not insist especially that my figures should be elegant, or symmetrical – it is in the measure

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that there is no possible opening, rupture, consistency coming from this hole, the locus of ek-sistence, Real, that the unconscious is here [VI-6] and that what here is tenuous (*y fait tenue*) passing behind the hole of the Real, behind on this figure, because if you turn it over, it is in front, that there is coherence, that there is consistency between the symptom and the unconscious. Except for the fact that the symptom cannot be defined otherwise than by the way in which each one enjoys the unconscious in so far as the unconscious determines it.

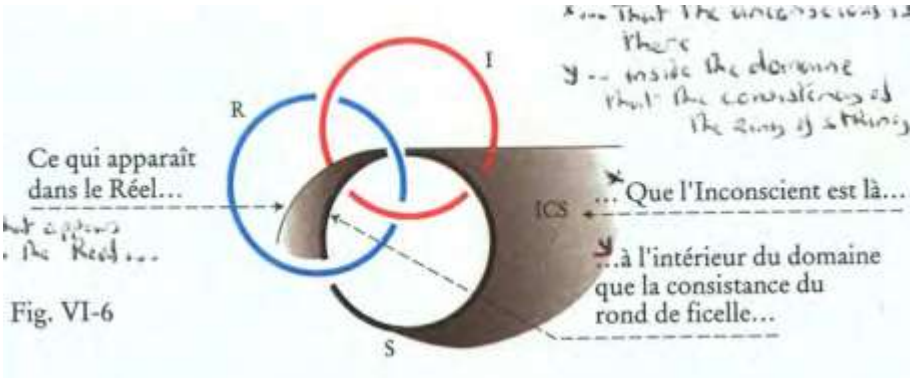

Fig. VI-6

To look for the origin of the notion of symptom, which is not at all to be looked for in Hippocrates, which is to be looked for in Marx, who was the first in the link that he made between capitalism, and what? The good old times, what people call them when they want, in short, (99) to try to call them something else, feudal times. Read all the literature on this. Capitalism is considered as having certain effects, and why in effect would it not have some! These effects are on the whole beneficial, since it has the advantage of reducing to nothing the proletarian man, thanks to which the proletarian man realises the essence of man, and by being stripped of everything is charged with being the Messiah of the future. Such is the way in which Marx analyses the notion of symptom. He gives of course crowds of other symptoms, but the relation of this with a faith in man is quite indisputable.

If we make of man, no longer anything whatsoever who conveys a future ideal, but if we determine him from the particularity, in every case, of his unconscious and the way in which he enjoys it, the

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symptom remains at the same place that Marx put it, but it takes on a different meaning. It is not a social symptom, it is a particular symptom. No doubt, these particular symptoms have types, and the symptom of the obsessional is not the symptom of the hysteric. This is very precisely what I will try to get across to you in what follows.

For the obsessional nevertheless, I note it right away, there is a very particular symptom. No one, of course, has the slightest apprehension of death, otherwise you would not be so calm there. For the obsessional, death is a parapraxis (*un acte manqué*). It is not so stupid, because death is only approachable by an act. Again, for it to be successful, someone would have to commit suicide knowing that it is an act, which happens very rarely. Even though it was very widespread at a certain epoch, at the epoch when philosophy had a certain import, an import other than that of sustaining the social edifice, there are some people who managed to group themselves in a school in a way that had consequences. But it is quite singular and indeed of a nature also to make us suspect the authenticity of commitment in these so-called schools, that there was no need to have reached any wisdom whatsoever, that it was enough to be a good obsessional to know from a sure source that death is a parapraxis. Not of course that this presumes that I will not give some development to it, but I will stay with that today, since moreover I have not been able, as one might have expected, to tackle the difficulty (*l'os*) of what I wanted to tell you, namely, whether by saying that the woman does not ek-sist, as someone has objected to me, I did not make her ek-sist! Don't believe a word of it. This will be the thing that I will tackle the next time. I think I can sustain that it is in the state of one or of innumerable ones…but ones that are numerable, I will not say innumerable, but from perfectly numerable one, that women ek-sist, and not in the state of *The*.

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Seminar 7: Tuesday 11 March 1975

I have two reasons for being encouraged, in short, to take things from an angle different to the one which you saw me at the last time.

The fact is, since I had the frailty to authorise the publication of these seminars in a certain bulletin I was, at the same time, constrained to look at the first two which were due to come out in the second number of this bulletin. And all things considered, I said to myself…in short, despite the difficulty, not, of course, in orientating myself but in sustaining your interest, in sustaining your interest because I am talking this year about the R.S.I., well then, good God, even these first explorations, these two first seminars did not seem to be so intolerable.

The second reason for encouragement was brought to me by the response, in short the response, I am not sure that it is simply a response… I mean that the people who sent me two papers on knots, and very especially on Borromean knots, namely, Michel Thomé and Pierre Soury, their paper had something that was altogether worthy of interest. It is to these papers that the little drawings on the lower row respond to. For the first, those of the first row, they continue, follow on from what I had to tell you, from what I proposed to myself to tell you this year.

So then, R.S.I., I write this year as a title. They are only letters, and as such presuppose an equivalence. What results from the fact that I speak these letters, by using them as initials, and that I speak them as Real, Symbolic and Imaginary? That takes on a meaning, and this (102) question of meaning is indeed what, nothing less, I am trying to situate this year. It takes on a meaning, but what is proper to meaning, is that one names something in it. And this gives rise to the *dit-mansion*, the *dit-mansion* precisely of this vague thing that are called

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things, and that only take on their foundation from the Real, namely, from one of the three terms from which I made something that could be called the emergence of meaning.

Names them, I said. What I did in, I am not saying yet in demonstrating (*démontrant*), because this amounts to something that is no more demonstrable than the Borromean knot, this amounts to a showing (*monstration*). If I have been led to the showing of this knot, while what I was looking for was a demonstration of a doing, the doing of analytic discourse, that is already enough, I would say, whether it is a showing or a demonstrating. In any case what I would like to advance today, is something about which I – it is not without guile, because I always slip in things like that, quite gently, there is something of a ruse in it and it is not nothing either to recognise it – the fact is that I indicated to you one day that Freud's work revolves around the Name-of-the-Father. It makes no use at all of the Symbolic, the Imaginary nor of the Real, but it nevertheless implies them. And what I want to tell you, is that it is not for nothing that I did not speak about *the Name*-of-the-Father, when I began, as I imagine some know because I go over it enough, I spoke about *the Names*-of- the-Father. Well then, the Names-of-the-father is this:

Fig. VII-1

[On the board] the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real according to my meaning, with the weight that I gave earlier to the word meaning.

That is what the Names-of-the-father are, the first names, in so far as they name something as is indicated – yes, as the Bible indicates in (103) connection with this extraordinary yoke that is called the Father there, the first phase of this human imagination that is God is

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consecrated on giving a name, good God, to something that is not indifferent, namely, a name to each of the animals. Of course, before the Bible, namely writing, there was a tradition. This did not come from nothing. It is tangible, tangible to the point that it ought to strike the lovers of tradition, the fact is that a tradition is always, what I would call fucked-up. That is even why people have a devotion to it, there is no other way of being attached to it than devotion, it is always so appallingly…what I have just said. All that one can hope from a tradition is that it should be less fucked up than another one. How can that be judged? There we enter into the more and the less. That is judged by the surplus-enjoying (*plus-de-jouir*) as production.

The surplus-enjoying, is obviously all we have to get our teeth into. It is because it is a matter of enjoying that one believes in it. Enjoying, as one might say, is at the horizon of this more and of this less, it is an ideal point. An ideal point that one calls as one can, the phallus, and I already underlined at one time that in the speaking being, this always has the closest relationship, it is the essence of the comic. Once you talk about something that has a relationship to the phallus, it is the comic. The comic has nothing to do with the witticism as I underlined at one time when I spoke about the witticism. The phallus is something else, it is comical like everything comical. It is a sad comic. When you read *Lysistrata,* you can take it from two sides, laugh or find it bitter. It must be said that the phallus is what gives body to the Imaginary. I recall here something that greatly struck me at one time. I saw a little film that Jenny Aubry brought to propose to me, by way of illustration, what I called at that time the mirror stage. There was a child before the mirror, and I no longer know whether it was a little girl or a little boy – it is even quite striking that I no longer remember…someone here perhaps remembers – but what is certain, is that the little girl or the little boy, grasps there, in a gesture, something that to my eyes had this value: that in supposing as I do on foundations that are not too sure, that this mirror stage consists in the unity that is grasped, in the collecting together, in the assumed

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mastery by reason of this image of the fact that this premature body, uncoordinated up to then, seems to be collected together. By making (104) a body of it, a knowledge that he masters it – this does not happen, without one being able to affirm it, of course, to the same degree in animals that are born mature, there is not this joy of the mirror stage – what I called jubilation. Well then, there is truly a link, a link between that and something which was made tangible in this film, by something which, whether it was a little boy or a little girl, I underline for you had the same value, the elision, in the form of a gesture, the hand that goes in front, the elision of what was perhaps a phallus, or perhaps its absence. A gesture, clearly, removed it from the image. And this was tangible to me as a correlate, as I might say of this prematurity. There is here something whose link is in a way primordial with respect to something that will later be called shame, but which it would be exaggerated to take into account at the stage described as that of the mirror.

The phallus then is the Real. Especially in so far as it is elided. If you come back to what I opened up this year by trying to harmonise for you consistence, ek-sistence and hole, with, on the other hand, Imaginary, Real, for ek-sistence, and Symbolic, I would say then that the phallus, is not the ek-sistence of the Real. There is a Real that ek-sists with respect to this phallus, which is called enjoyment, but it is rather its consistency. It is the concept, as I might say, of the phallus. With the concept, I am echoing the word *Begriff*, which does not work out so badly since in sum it is, it is this phallus that is taken in the hand! There is something in the concept that is not unrelated with this announcement, this announcement this prefiguring of an organ that is not yet taken as consistency, but as an appendix and which is fairly well manifest in what prepares man, as we are told…in short, or what resembles him, what is not far, namely, the monkey (*singe*). The monkey masturbates, it well known! And that is how he resembles man, it is quite certain! In the concept, there is always something of the order of the grimace (*singerie*). The only difference between the

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monkey and the man, is that the phallus does not consist any less in him in his female aspects than in what are described as male in what he has, a phallus, as I illustrated it by this brief vision earlier, being equivalent to its absence.

Hence the special accent that the speaking being puts on the phallus, in this sense that enjoyment ek-sists in it, that this is the emphasis proper to the Real. The Real, in so far as it ek-sists, namely, the Real (105) as Real, the Real to the power of two. It is all that this speaking being knows about the two, it is the power, or a semblance through which he remains the one, alone. This is what is called being. This from the start, one to the power of two equals one, $1^2 = 1$.

There must be a link, since I told you like that, indicated it at one time, there must be a link between that and meaning, in other words that by which one is so well applied to zero. It is Frege who discovered it and I chattered at one time about the difference between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*, namely, something which…where there can be seen the difference between zero and one, while suggesting that it is not a difference. There is nothing as good as an empty set to suggest the one.

There you are. So then, how the Symbolic – the Symbolic like that, about which I simply remarked that it has its weight in analytic practice, how the Symbolic, namely, what is ordinarily called blah-blah, or again the Verb, all that is the same, how does it cause meaning? Here is the question that I am only asking you because I have the answer. Is it in the idea of the unconscious? Is that what I have been saying since the first Rome discourse? – Question marks, huh! – It is not in the idea of the unconscious, it is in the idea that the unconscious ek-sists, written as I write it, namely, that it conditions the Real, the Real of this being that I designate as a speaking being. He names things, as I recalled earlier, here, in connection with this first fooling around of the Bible in the Terrestrial Paradise. He names

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things for this speaking being, namely, that this being who himself is a kind of animal, but who singularly differs from one. He is only animal in this, because animal means nothing, huh, it means nothing except to characterise the animal by his way of reproducing, sexed or not sexed, an animal is that, it is what reproduces itself.

Only, how is this animal is parasited by the Symbolic, by the blah-blah? Yes, there, it seems to me, it seems to me but it is not very probable, that I distinguish myself from people of the same animal species, who as far as human memory goes, make no mistake, know that they speak but do not pay explicit attention to it. And what shows that they do not pay explicit attention to it, is not, of course, that they have not said it, everything is said in the blah-blah, they do not pay explicit attention to it for this reason: they dream of not being the only ones (*les seuls*). That, that catches them in the gut! Write *laisseuls*, if you wish, to evoke the left alone (*laissés seuls*) in this talk.

(106) In our day, it is manifested like that, by this frantic need to discover language in dolphins, in bees. Anyway! Why not.! It is always a dream! Formerly, it had different forms, which shows clearly that it is always a dream. They dreamt that there is *at least one* God who speaks, and who does not speak especially without that having an effect. Who causes/talks! The unheard of thing is this tangling of paws which means that they absolutely must shore up this God with sub-speakers, angles they are called, I mean by the commentators!

In short there is all the same something more serious, is that not so, which has come from this fact that there is all the same a tiny little advance, not a progress, of course, because there is no reason for people not continuing to get their paws entangled. The fact is that in linguistics, namely, as regards talking there is all the same distinguished the *giving a name*, *naming*, and *consecrating a thing*, in the name of speech (*parlotte*). You see all the same here that it is

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distinct from communication. That it is there that speech, properly speaking, is knotted to something of the Real. *Naming* yes! *Naming*. [English] What is the relationship of this *naming*, as the title of a book puts it, with necessity?

The unheard of thing is that for a long time, is that not so, there was someone named Plato who realised that the third was required in it, the third term, of the idea, of the *eidos*, which is all the same a very good Greek word to translate what I call the Imaginary, huh! Because that means image! He very clearly saw that without the *eidos*, there was no chance that names would stick to things. This did not get to the point of him stating the Borromean knot of three, of the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary. But it is because chance had not provided him with it. The idea gave, for him, the consistency of the Real. Nevertheless the idea being nothing in his time except the nameable, the result was what was deduced; of course! What was deduced like that, with the university discourse, the realism of the name. It must be said, the realism of the name if worth more than the nominalism of the Real, namely, that the name, well, good God, one can put any one at all on it to designate the Real. Philosophical nominalism, like that, it is not so that I am marking a preference, I note simply that nominalism is an enigma that is tangible in this sense, that it pays homage to the effect of the name on the Real, namely, to what is added to it by the fact of naming it. All nominalism, to distinguish itself from the realism of the name, has founded itself on (107) the Imaginary. The fact is that there is a saying less. One is forbidden to admit this homage, this is found in the prestige of the University, but this does not appear to us, to us analysts, to constitute an advantage. We remain in thought. You will tell me that I am having a good time with it and even to the point that it tires you, but I do not see why the fact that I have a good time with it, on occasion, should be expressed by anything other than an effort to extricate myself from it. To extricate myself from what is fundamental for thought, namely, what I would call the imbecility typical, typical of

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the *mens*, of the human mood, with respect to the Real that it nevertheless has to deal with. Hence the urgency that the meaning of this word Real should be discerned.

Up to the present what I said there, in connection with tradition, preserves all its value. There is nothing more negotiable than religion, the 'green pasture' [English], to go here straight to the goal, the at-least-one God, huh, the true about the true, is Him – capital H! Who taught the speaking being to give a name to each thing? The non-dupe of the name of the name of the Name-of-the-Father, the non-dupers without that, for the *siste* or the zest eternity. Hence it results all the same, by standing back a little, that the Real, is what ek-sists with regard to meaning, in so far as I define it by the effect of *lalangue* on the idea, in other words on the imaginary supposed by Plato, in the speaking animal, among others animal-bodies or the devil-in-the-body, as you wish. Because why not like that, since we are dealing with mental deficiency, one mental defective is as good as another, why not Plato? Aristotle who, for his part, argues about the idea of the donkey, in order to say that the donkey is a donkey, and that it is indeed him, and that there is no capital donkey, huh, and well! He also *anistotes*!

The Real must be conceived as what is expelled from meaning. It is the impossible as such. It is the aversion from meaning…it is also, if you wish, the aversion of meaning into anti-meaning and ante-meaning. It is the return shock of the Verb, in so far as the Verb is only there for that. A that (*un ça*) which is not for nothing, if it takes into account what is at stake, namely, the filth from which the world cleanses itself, in principle, if in fact there is a world. That does not mean that it manages to do it! Man is still there. The ek-sistence of the filthy (*immonde*), namely, of what is not world (*monde*), this is the Real full stop! But it is worthwhile pushing this as far as the elaboration of the quantifier , there ek-sists an *x* such, which rather than an *x*, it would be better to say, yes one (*une*) *x* in order that

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she henceforth ek-sists, this one, the ek-sistence as one. This is what (108) we must ask ourselves, it is to what does she ek-sist? She ek-sists with respect to the ideic consistency of the body, that which, reproduces this body, just as Plato situates it very well, according to the formula, now that we are contaminating the idea with the supposed message of genes. It ek-sists with regard to the Symbolic in so far as the Symbolic turn in circles around an inviolable hole, otherwise the knot of three would not be Borromean. Because that is what it means, the Borromean knot, it is that the hole, the hole of the Symbolic is inviolable.

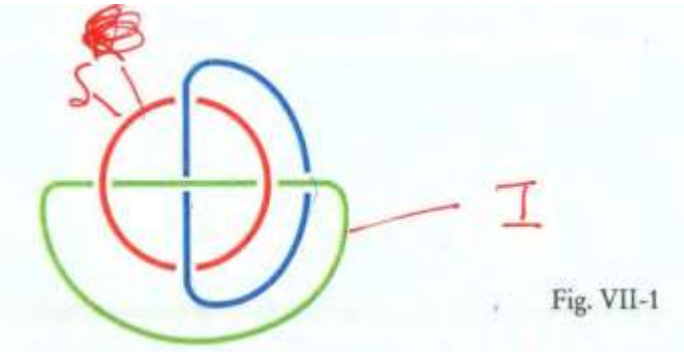

Fig. VII-1

There you are. So then why not write it like this, in the order where it is simplest to write it, the Symbolic, here [VII-1] this is what I make into a ring, there, this Symbolic imposing itself on the Imaginary that I put in green, the colour of hope, huh!

We see how the Real ek-sists there, by no longer being compromised by being knotted with the said Symbolic in particular, any more than the Imaginary does. So there, I showed you while I was at it that whatever may be the meaning, is that not so, into which one turns this Imaginary and this Real, they will cross one another, as it is here flattened out, in a way in any case that will not make a chain. For the indication here, in this form of crossing, is moreover that these two consistencies may be straight lines at infinity; but that what must be specified, is that however one conceives of this point at infinity, which was dreamt up by Desargues as being specific to the straight line, a straight line that returns from one of its ends to the other, this must be carefully pointed out, that there is in no way a question that it is

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imagined as folding back on itself, without that which, first passed over, still passing over the other.

So then what we come to is that to demonstrate that the Name-of-the-Father is nothing other than this knot, there is no other way of managing than to suppose them unknotted [on the board]. let us no longer pass the Symbolic in front of the Imaginary. Let us do it like that. Here is what you have then. And then, how knot them? By a ring which knots these three independent consistencies. There is a way which is the one that I call the Name-of-the-Father which is what Freud did. And at the same time I reduce the Name-of-the-Father to

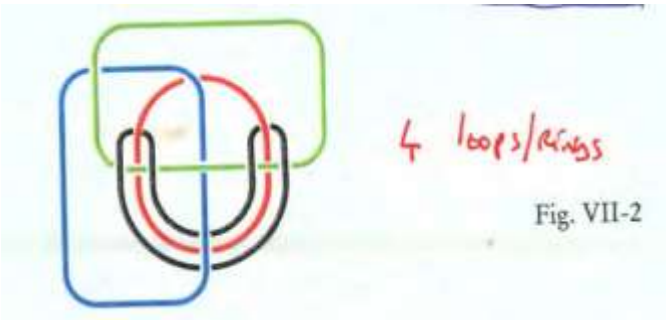

Fig. VII-2

its radical function which is to give a name to things, with all the consequences that this involves, because it does not fail to have consequences! And, up to the day in particular, which I indicated to you earlier.

I already made a drawing for you, a drawing of these four knotted, as such. I even made one that failed. But the big one, the right one, is that one here that I am reproducing for you today but in profile namely, that instead of seeing it vertically, I see it transversely. It is this one, the big circle about which I showed you that by distinguishing these three circles as they are in an armillary sphere, namely, containing one another, one must hook the innermost circle, pass over the outermost circle, by putting oneself before returning (110) onto the outermost circle within the middle circle. This is what was expressed by the first schema that I gave you.

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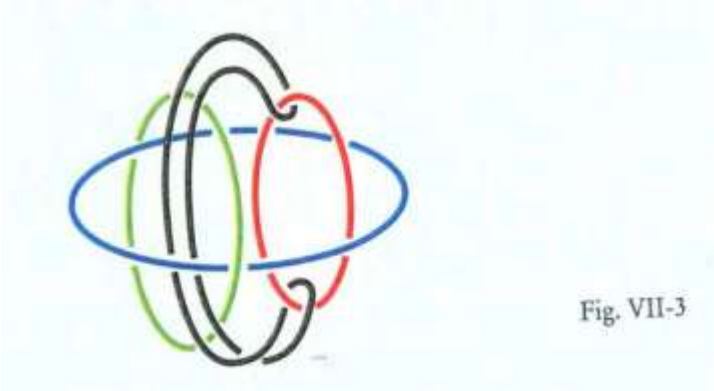

Fig. VII-3

Who can fail to see that this business leaves us in the three, namely, as one might expect, what is involved in the distinction in the Symbolic of *name-giving* forms part of this Symbolic, as is demonstrated by the fact that the addition of this four is in a way superfluous. Namely, that what you see here in a particularly clear way, I repeated it because here perhaps this does not stand out clearly, is that the Borromean knot is that.

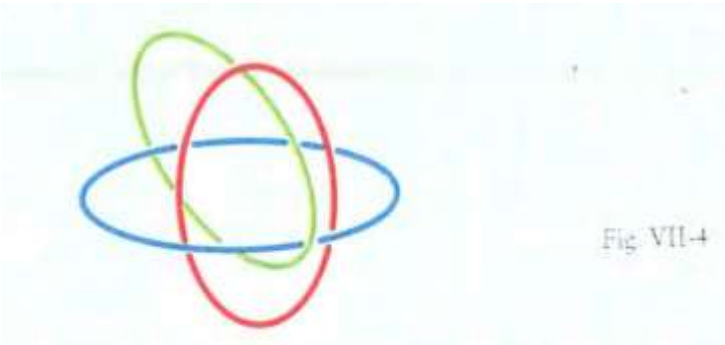

Fig. VII-4

It is that before being flattened out in any way whatsoever. The Borromean knot is what, for two circles that circumscribe one another, introduces this third to penetrate into one of these circles in such a way that the other, as I might say, should with respect to the third be brought into the same relationship as it is with the first circle.

Is there a discernible order here? Is the Borromean knot a whole, a conceivable whole, make no mistake, or indeed does it imply an order? At first approach, one could say that it implies an order in the case where each of these circles remains coloured, as was very correctly expressed precisely by someone who sent me a text where he uses the word coloured, which means on this occasion that each one remains identified to itself. One could say that if they are coloured,

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there is an order, that 1, 2, 3, is not 1, 3, 2. The question nevertheless is to be left in suspense. It is perhaps with regard to all the effects of the knot that this order is indifferent: 1, 2, 3, 1, 3, 2, which would put us on the path indeed that they are not to be identified. It was in so far as three making a knot, making a Borromean knot, namely, of which (111) no ring forms a chain at any moment with another of these rings, it is as such that we must support the idea of the Symbolic, of the Imaginary and of the Real. What suggests it to me is what I received from one of those who are interested in the knot, as I said earlier: someone named Michel Thomé sent me a little letter to show me that in a certain figure, a figure that I did not check out and that I never drew here in any case, that in a certain figure, someone who had introduced into the publication of my seminar XX, had made what he calls an error, and an error of perspective. He had highlighted the fact that from one circle to the other of the three the first by being knotted to it, the simplest form of the Borromean knot, was, since I have used this term, the circle folded in two ears. The person who had the goodness to edit me (*m'éditer*, m-apostrophe), the person who had the goodness to edit me, made this error of perspective while keeping the folded form in the same order, [on the board] here corresponding to this, and here corresponding to this, and so on, to consider that the two wings of these two ears simply made two and not to cross them. Hence there results immediately this succession of consequences that Michel Thomé has very clearly seen, namely, that these knots are intertwined and that, as a consequence, [on the board] by cutting the one that here is supposed to hold together the totality of these two buckles, these two ears that I spoke about earlier, would end up with what it is easy to see, this figure here first, indeed those at the extreme end, where one clearly sees that these knots are intertwined.

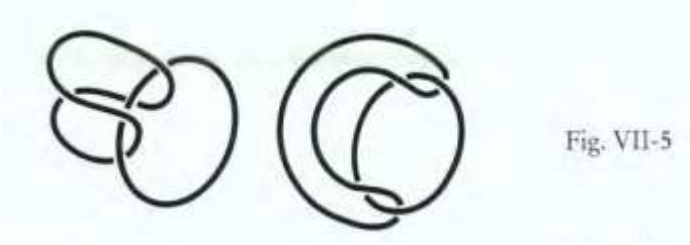

Fig. VII-5

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But that is not all. This is not all for, as Michel Thomé had very well deduced right away, is that there will result a Borromean knot of a special type, which will be such that to limit ourselves here, for example, to four, but you can see that it works just as well with three, since I have pointed it out to you, these two here remain knotted, either this one, or that one, remain knotted; if one sections the third, no need then to put four of them.

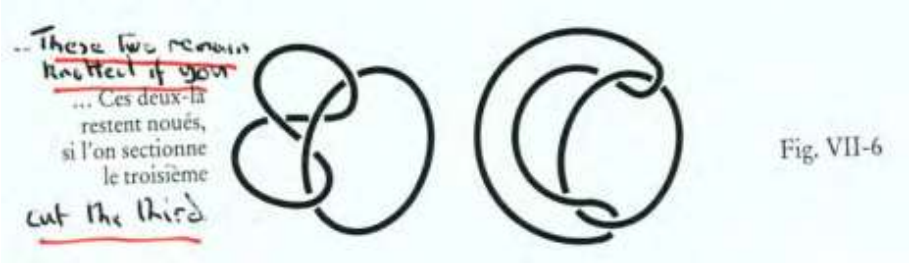

Fig. VII-6

(112) To see this, that only the four highlight, the fact is that there is no means of manifesting the Borromean quality of this knot of four for example, except by cutting a single one of them, namely, the one that we can call here the last, as a result of which each of the others will be freed from its follower up to the first. But as one might say, a distinction must be made here, they will not be freed together, they will be freed one after the other. While on the contrary, if you begin to cut the one that I have called the first, all the others up to the last will remain knotted. There is something here that is very interesting to demonstrate something particular about certain knots, that one can call Borromean in one sense but not in the other. Which evokes already the idea of the cycle and of orientation.

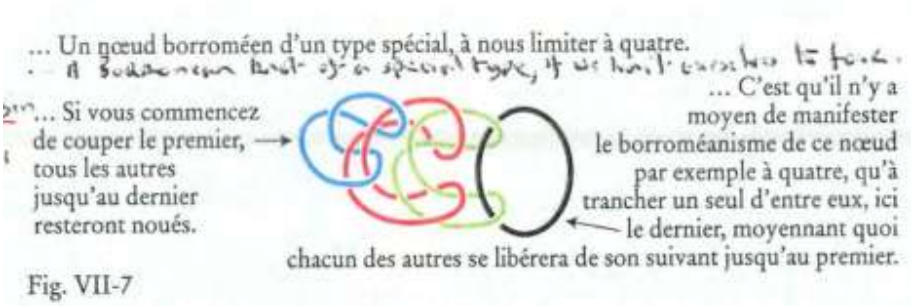

Fig. VII-7

I am not insisting because I think that it is really only those who devote themselves to a searching study of this knot, that are likely to take a veritable interest in it.

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[On the board] Here I had myself drawn a knot whose only interest is that it cannot be produced from this error of perspective to which Michel Thomé has given its fruitfulness. It is only strictly producible (113) by having been explicitly made, as I might say, by confusing the two buckles which hold on each side the forms of the ears which are the ones that I proposed as the simplest form to generate the Borromean knot. You see it here. Here there could be an external knot, an external ring that would hold these two buckles, these two buckles of ears, why not say it, and so on if you reunite these two knots, these two rings, I already alluded to it at one time, you obtain the following form which is a buckle that is quite distinct from the forms that I will call on this occasion, as I might say *thoméenes*, namely, those that are produced from an error of perspective such as

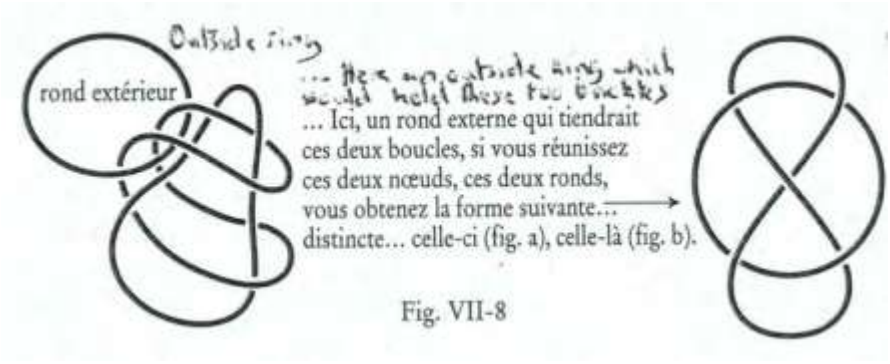

Fig. VII-8

this one, indeed an error of perspective such as this one which is not the same.

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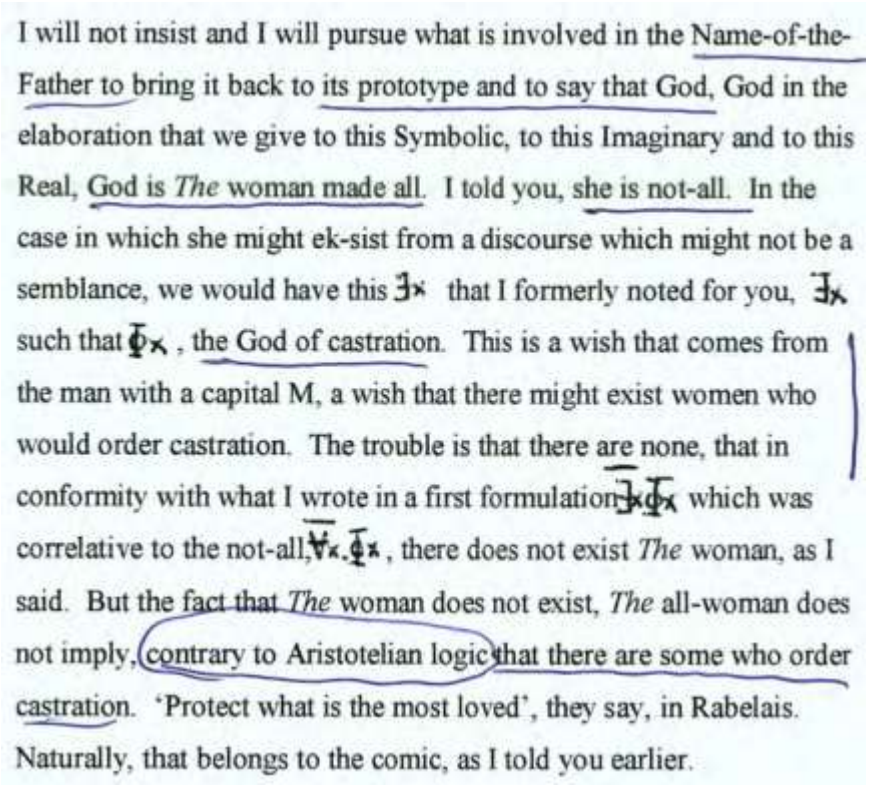

I will not insist and I will pursue what is involved in the Name-of-the-Father to bring it back to its prototype and to say that God, God in the elaboration that we give to this Symbolic, to this Imaginary and to this Real, God is *The* woman made all. I told you, she is not-all. In the case in which she might ek-sist from a discourse which might not be a semblance, we would have this $\exists x$ that I formerly noted for you, $\overline{\exists}x$ such that Φx, the God of castration. This is a wish that comes from the man with a capital M, a wish that there might exist women who would order castration. The trouble is that there are none, that in conformity with what I wrote in a first formulation $\overline{\exists}x \overline{\Phi}x$ which was correlative to the not-all, $\overline{\forall}x.\overline{\Phi}x$, there does not exist *The* woman, as I said. But the fact that *The* woman does not exist, *The* all-woman does not imply, contrary to Aristotelian logic, that there are some who order castration. 'Protect what is the most loved', they say, in Rabelais. Naturally, that belongs to the comic, as I told you earlier.

(114) This nevertheless not-all, does not mean that any one of them say the contrary, that there exists an *x* of the woman who formulates the 'do not protect it'; very little for them, the nay-saying. They simply say nothing. They say nothing, except as *The-all* (*La-toute*) which I said earlier was God, *The-all*, if she existed. There are none to carry castration for the Other and this has got to the point that it does not prevent her, as they say, wanting the phallus for herself as I indicated earlier. There is nothing more phallogocentric, as was written somewhere about me, there is nothing more phallogocentric than a woman, except for the fact none *ne-toute* wants the aforesaid phallus. Each of them of course want it, except for the fact that this does not weigh too heavily on them. It is just like what I highlighted in the dream described as that of the butcher's beautiful wife. She indeed does want some of the smoked salmon as you know on condition of not making use of it. She only gives it in the measure that she does not have it. This is what is called love. It is even the definition that I gave of it, to give what one does not have, is love. It is the love of women, in so far, namely, that it is true that one by one,

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they ek-sist. They are real and even terribly so, they are even nothing but that. They only consist in so far as the symbolic ek-sists, namely, what I was saying earlier, the unconscious. This indeed is how they ek-sist as symptom, the consistency of which is provoked by this unconscious, this apparently in the flattened out field of the Real. This is what must be called really, which means, not enough attention is paid to this distinction between the adverb and the adjective, to the way of the Real, but in reality to the way in which there is imagined in the Real. I do not need to redo this schema, I think, in which there is imagined in the Real the effect of the Symbolic. [On the board] This is something all the same that I must draw, yeah! *Voilà.* Here is the symptom, the effect of the Symbolic in so far as it appears in the Real, and even it is in this direction here.

I apologise to Soury who sent me a very beautiful little schema concerning the Borromean knot about which I will not have the time to speak today. I am going all the same to indicate something to him, which is that the two schemas that he sent me precisely involve an orientation, a direction. In other words, that these three essential elements of the Borromean knot are orientated in what I might call a centrifugal way. To which he opposes to me the contrary form, that in which the three are – did I say centrifugal just now? It was a slip – centripetal, to which he opposes me with the centrifugal form. I am (115) pointing out this to him like that in passing, which is that by not identifying, namely, colouring the three rings, by not specifying which is the Symbolic and which is the Real, these knots, very far from being untransformable into one another, are only the same, seen from another side. I ought to add to it the fact that if you make of this the Real, by taking things from the other side, the Real and the Symbolic are inverted, which is not foreseen in his schema. And that leaves nevertheless intact for us the question as to whether, the one that I asked earlier, whether it is indifferent that in this form [VII-4] this form that is not flattened out, that in this form the order ek-sists or does not ek-sist. I am allowing myself to signal to him that there is a

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distinction between the order of the three terms, the orientation given to each one and the equivalence of the knots.

This having been said, I could and I point out that the idea of supplying for the unreal woman, is not for nothing. That the imbeciles of *L'amour fou* call themselves Surrealists. They were themselves, I should say, symptoms, symptoms of the post-war of 14-18, except for being social symptoms. But it is not said either that what is social is not linked to a knot of resemblance. Their idea then of supplying for the woman who does not ek-sist as *The*, to the woman about whom I said in short that she was the very type of wandering (*l'errance*), put them back into the angle, into the rut of the Name-of-the-Father, of the Father as naming, about whom I said that it was a thing that came out of the Bible, but about which I add that it is for man a way of getting out of the phallic venture without loss.

That a God, good God, as tribal as the others but perhaps used with a greater purity of means, does not prevent the fact that we must touch the weight of it, in the same way as operating with this knot. The fact is that this tribal God, whether it is this one or indeed another, is only the quite useless complement, that is what this expresses, of the conjugation of this knot four to the Symbolic [VII-3]. It is the quite useless complement of the fact that it is the signifier one and without a hole, without a hole that it is permitted to use in the Borromean knot, which, to the body of the man a-sexed in itself, Freud underlines, gives the partner what she is lacking. Which she is lacking how? By the fact that he is, as I might say *aphligé, aphligé* to be written like that, really *aphligé* by a phallus which is what prohibits for him the enjoyment of the body of the other. He would need an Other of the Other for the body of the Other should not be for his a semblance, for (116) him not to be so different from animals, of not being able like all sexed animals to make of the female, the God of his life. For the mental of man, namely, the Imaginary, there is the affliction of the phallic Real because of which he does not know how to be anything

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but the semblance of power. The Real, is meaning in a blank, in other words the blank meaning by which the body pretends (*fait semblant*). A semblance on which there is grounded all discourse, in the first rank, the discourse of the Master which makes of the phallus the signifier index 1. Which does not prevent that if in the unconscious there were not a crowd of signifier to copulate among one another, to be indexed by flourishing two by two, there would be no chance that the idea of a subject, of a *pathème* of the phallus of which the signifier is the One who essentially divides him, would come to light. Thanks to which he sees that there is unconscious knowledge, namely, unconscious copulation. Hence the crazy idea of making this knowledge a semblance in its turn with respect to what partner? If not the product of what is produced, by a blind copulation, make no mistake, for only signifiers copulate among one another in the unconscious, but the *pathèmatiques* subjects that result from it in the form of body are led, good God, to do the same, they call that fucking. It is not a bad formula. Because something warned them that they could do no better than to suck the body signified other, other simply because of some writing in a civil register. To enjoy it, what would be called to enjoy it like that, it would have to be torn to pieces, huh! Not that there are not in the other body dispositions for it, like that, being born prematurely, it is not inconceivable. The concept here is not lacking. It is called sadomasochism, I do not know why. But it can only be dreamt from the unconscious naturally since it is the path about which it must be said, about which it must be said that it is a slap in the face to call it royal.

King, another name, another name in the business and about which everyone knows that it always springs from the business of the Name-of-the-Father. But it is a name to lose like the others, to let drop in its perpetuity. The Names-of-the-Father huh! The *Anons* of the Father, what a herd had I not prepared to do it, or to shove their braying back down their throats if I had not done my seminar. I would have *h-uni*, a word that comes from the *hune* woman, some new stupidity. But

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why these *hanes-à-liste*, a waiting list of course, were queuing at the doors of the *Interfamilial Analytic Association* and Anna was humming/Freuding in the corridor the return to the cradle by making (117) up for me upper crust motions? I am certainly not insensible to the weariness of ek-sisting (*d'ek-sisterre*) Land (*terre*)! Land! that one always believes one will reach! At last! I have only persevered in my impetus ever since. 'Laurent, bring my hairshirt and my discipline' [Molière], because this one benefits from it.

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Seminar 8: Tuesday 18 March 1975

- *Soury, where are you? Good! So then have you distributed them? I saw, huh! Good, you have distributed how many of them?*
- *There are three texts each of 150 copies.*
- *What?*
- *There are three texts with 150 copies each.*
- *Yeah! So nobody has them! That's very annoying! You had told me that you would make…distribute 500?*
- *We can bring more the next time, but there we only brought 150.*
- *Yes, no but it's already very kind of you, I am not reproaching you, it is already very kind of you only, only it is…some people are not going to have it. They are not going to have it moreover uniquely because others have it!*

Good! So then I am forced to say, for those who do not have it, what there is in these papers that Pierre Soury and Michel Thomé have distributed. There is this something that you saw the last time, I cannot say the explanation of, because precisely I did not really explain it, this drawing which, it seems to me, in so far as I know something about it, which is a discovery, a discovery that Michel Thomé made on a certain figure 6 which is somewhere in my last (120) nseminar, that which is called, which is entitled *Encore*. He made there the discovery of an error, an error in this drawing.

I presume, I cannot say any more about it, I presume that it is a lucky error, *felix culpa*, as they say. It is a fortunate error if it is on the occasion of this error that Michel Thomé – but perhaps he invented it all by himself – invented all by himself what I have indicated – in short, the last time, in one of these pages that I have had stuck to the board – and which demonstrates that there is in short, that it is possible to depict, I am not saying to write, to depict the Borromean

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knots, in such a way, let us things rapidly, that they only come undone from one end, starting from one end. If – ah! it's not easy! – if we attack any one of them, any one at all of the rings of string that are knotted in a certain way, precisely in a non-Borromean way since if it were Borromean, it would be enough to break any one of them at all for all the others to be immediately independent of one another, while the definition of these knots, of these knots such that they only come undone from one end signifies that in attacking any one whatsoever, it is only in one direction, and not in the other, that all are unknotted, but in the direction where all are unknotted, it is one by one and not immediately that they are unknotted.

I do not know whether it was on the occasion of this error or off his own bat that Michel Thomé made what I called earlier this discovery. He is perhaps there, so let him say it! Is he there?

- You made this discovery on the occasion of the error? It was on the occasion of the error? Yes? It is indeed what I am saying, it is a lucky error! But this proves at least the following, the fact is – I must admit my surprise because I do not get proof of it every day – that I do not speak absolutely without effect. You will tell me that I cannot measure these effects since I am not given any trace of them. But in short, precisely, it something about which I know thanks to this couple of friends, Soury and Thomé, to have given me a trace of it, it is encouraging all the same! I would like from time to time to have other traces of it! It must be said that people look twice at it before giving it to me, not unreasonably moreover because it might well be that the traces that I collect, are not as solid, are not such well-made knots.

That obviously gives an idea that these knots are something rather (121) original, I would say, with the ambiguity perhaps, I am not sure, of original. What they would confirm, is that it is not so easy to go back, and then, the original does not mean that it is from there that one

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starts. It is even quite sure that historically well let us say…the Borromean knot was not found under a horses hoof! It was very late when people got interested in it. Let us say that, if in fact I have the shadow of a merit, I do not know what that means moreover, merit, it is that when I got wind of this thing, the Borromean knot – I found that in the notes of a person that I meet from time to time and who had picked it up at Guilbaud's seminar – there is one things certain, it is that I immediately had, in short, the certainty that it was something precious. Precious for me, for what I had to explain.

I immediately related this knot to what from then on, appeared to me like rings of string. Something provided with a particular consistency, that remains to be supported and which was for me recognisable in what I had stated from the start of my teaching. Which, no doubt, I would not have expressed, being little inclined to it by nature, without an appeal, an appeal linked in a more or less contingent way, to let us say a crisis in analytic discourse. It is possible that with time, I would have glimpsed that this crisis all the same would have to be unknotted, but circumstances were required for me to pass into action.

So then, these Borromean knots came to me like a ring on the finger and I immediately knew that this had a relationship that put the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real into a certain position with respect to one another, about which the knot encouraged me to state something which, as I already said here, homogenised them. What is meant by homogenised? It is obviously, as Pierre Soury previously remarked in a little note that he communicated to me, because I am very keen to give everyone his due, that they have something similar. As the same Pierre Soury remarked to me 'between the similar and the same' – that's from him – between the similar and the same, there is room for a difference. But it is very precisely in putting the accent on the similar in that that homogenisation consists, the pushing forward of the *homoios* which is not the same, which is similar.

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What is similar about them? Well then, this is what I believe I have to (122) designate by the term of consistency, which is already to put forward something unbelievable! What can the consistency of the Imaginary, that of the Symbolic and that of the Real have in common? By this mode, this statement, do I make tangible for you - it seems to me that it is difficult to make it more tangible for you - that the term consistency henceforth belongs to the Imaginary?

Yeah! Here I stop to make a parenthesis designed to show you that the knot is not easy to depict. I am not saying to depict it to *oneself*, because in this business I eliminate completely the subject who is depicting it, since I start from the thesis that the subject is what is determined by the figure in question, determined, not that in any way he is the double of it, but that it is by the squeezing of the knot, of what in the knot determines the triple points from the fact of the tightening of the knot that the subject is conditioned. I am going perhaps later to remind you of this in the form of a drawing on the board. In any case, to depict this knot is not easy. I already gave you the proof in messing about more or less myself with one or other little drawings that I made. In any case the last episode of my relationships with the aforenamed Pierre Soury consists, make no mistake, in something which is certainly very strange, it is that after having acceded on one occasion to what he had put forward, put forward very correctly, namely, that there was in the Real of the Borromean knot, a Real to which you add the fact that you orientate each of these rings.

To orientate it is a business which only seems to concern each one of the rings. There is supposed to be another way, let us not say of recognising these rings, for recognise would already be to enter into all sorts of implications, let us say differentiating them, which would be to colour them. You clearly sense the whole distance there is between colouring, and this is something that ought to come in at the level where Goethe took up things: but there is not the slightest trace of it in *The theory of colours*, and a level where that by which colour

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is something which is heavy with differentiation. Obviously, there is a limit, namely, that there are not an infinite number of colours. There are nuances no doubt. But thanks to the colour, there is difference.

I had asked the question at one of my preceding seminars, whether these knots, I had taken one, a bit more complicated than the (123) Borromean knot of three, not that they were not three, but I had asked the question of whether this knot was only one, namely, whether the introduction of differentiation into the knot left the knot not similar, but always the same. It is effectively always the same, but there is only a single way of demonstrating it, which is to demonstrate that in every case – what is meant by 'case'? – it is reducible to the similar.

This indeed in effect is what happened. In fact I was in effect quite convinced that there is only one coloured knot, but I had a vacillation, which is what I call my last adventure concerning the orientated knot. Because oriented concerns a *yes* or a *no* for each one of these knots and I allowed myself, there, to stray by way of something that stems from the relationship of each one of these *yeses* or *no* with the two others. And for a moment, I said to myself – I did not go as far as to say to myself that there were eight knots, I'm not that stupid! Namely, 2 x 2 x 2, *yes* or *no* x *yes* or *no* x yes or no. I did not even go so far as to think that there were four of them, but I do not know why I was racking my brain over the fact that there were two of them and it is not all the same something that does not have a bearing. That after having asked in an explicit way, I obtained from Pierre Soury, who, I hope, will distribute it to you the next time, I obtained, am I going to say the demonstration, what I asked for, namely, the showing (*monstration*) that there is only one orientated Borromean knot. The showing in question, that Pierre Soury communicated to me within a time span, as I might say – he is not without merit – he had to [wrestle with it], it is a shaky thing to demonstrate, he provided me in time for me to read it and for me to be quite convinced of it, the showing, not

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the demonstration, the showing that in terms of orientated knot there is only one, well and truly the same.

The only thing that this leads us to, and here I am challenging him, is the following. It is that this similar he reduces to the same, he can only do it starting from the fact that this something about which I am questioning him on this occasion. It is why it is required for this showing to be depicted, why must it pass by way of what I am calling, and what I already called, my flattening-out of the knot? It is something that deserved to be individualised, this flattening-out. Because, as I think you have already seen by this pencil sketch that I had to make on the board, namely, flattened-out, a perspective pencil sketch, you have indeed been able to see that if this knot is not of its nature a flat knot, far from it, the fact that it has to pass by way of the (124) flattening-out to highlight the sameness of the knot, whatever may be the orientation that you give to each one, which, I already made you sense it, indicated, will evoke that there will be eight of them, I told you that I did not let myself be taken in. But anyway all the same I still got bogged down in thinking that there were two of them. This simply proves the extraordinary debility of thought, at least of mine and in a general fashion that thought, the one that proceeds by way of what I said earlier in terms of a *yes* or a *no*, thought, must be looked at twice before accepting what must indeed be entitled its verdict.

Is there not, as I might say, a sort of *fatum* of thought which, in attaching it too closely to the true, allows there to slip between its fingers, as I might say, the Real? This indeed is what I brought out the last time by a remark on the concept in so far as the concept is not the same thing as the truth; in so far as the concept is limited to a grasp as the word *capere* implies, and that a grasp is not enough to be sure that it is the Real that one has in one's hand.

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There you are! These remarks that I am making to you that you have, I do not know why, the patience to accept, mean that it is impossible for me to warn you at every instant about what I am doing in speaking to you. That I am doing something that concerns you, your presence proves, but that is not enough to say the mode under which this is happening. To say that you comprehend something about it is not even certain, not certain at the level that what I am saying is sustained. But there is something worthwhile and it is indeed because of situating this thing, I am saying it in this way, that we comprehend one another. It is difficult not to sense, in the very text of what is said, in the sense that we comprehend one another has no other substratum than we embrace one another. And I see all the same that this is not quite what we are doing, and that there is here an equivocation, an equivocation which, it must be said, like all equivocations has an aspect of smut, to call things by their name. And what I strive to do, let us say, is to put a bit of humour into the recognition of this smut as a presence. This indeed is what gives its weight to the way I cut the knot in stating this point whose bearing should be clearly specified, that there is no sexual relationship.

What does that mean when I say it? It does not mean that we do not find the sexual relationship at every street corner! And that in (125) highlighting that everything must be re-centred on this scumble, this stew, to appeal to what! To the Real, to the Real of the knot. Freud obviously did not take a step, a step which moreover consisted, is that not so quite simply in noticing that from all time people spoke about nothing but that, that everything that was done in terms of philosophy oozed the sexual relationship from every pore.

So then, what does it mean when I state that there is no sexual relationship? It is to designate a very local point, to manifest the logic of the relation, to mark that R to designate the relation, or to be put between x and y, is to enter here and now into the operation of writing, and that, as regards what is involved in the sexual

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relationship, it is strictly impossible to write x R y, in any way, that no elaboration of the sexual relationship can be made that is logical and at the same time mathematical. This is exactly the accent that I put on this statement *there is no sexual relationship*, and this then is to say that without having recourse to different consistencies – for the moment I am only taking them as consistencies – to these different consistencies which nevertheless are distinguished by being named Imaginary, Symbolic and Real, without the recourse to these consistencies in so far as they are different, there is no possibility of this scumble. That there is no reduction possible of the difference of these consistencies to something that will be simply written in a way that is supported, I mean that resists the test of mathematics and which allows the sexual relationship to be assured.

These modes which are those under which I took the floor, Symbolic Imaginary and Real. I would not say at all that they are obvious (*évidents*). I strive simply to empty them (*les é-vider*), which does not mean the same thing because to empty out is based on a void and that the obvious is based on seeing. Does this mean that I believe in it? I believe in it in the sense that it affects me as a symptom. I already said what the symptom owed to believing in it (*l'y croire*) and what I strive to do, what I try, is to give to this *I believe in it* a different form of credibility. It is certain that I will fail at it. It is not a reason for not undertaking it, if only to demonstrate something which is the beginning of the impossible, already my impotence.

The knot is supposed by me to be the Real in the fact that it determines as ek-sistence, I mean, in that by which it forces a certain mode of *turning-around*, the mode under which there ek-sists a ring of string with respect to another, it is in this that I have managed to shift the question, insoluble of itself, of objectivity.

(126) This seems to me less silly, objectivity thus shifted seems to me to be less silly than the noumenon; because, try to think a little about

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what people persisted at for more than two millennia of history the noumenon, conceived in opposition to the phenomenon. It is strictly impossible not to bring out in its connection – but as you are going to see it is in retrospect – not to bring out in its connection the metaphor of the hole. Nothing to say about the noumenon, except that perception has the value of deception. But why here not remark that it is we who say that this perception is deceptive? For perception properly speaking says nothing precisely. It does not say, it is we who make it say, we talk all by ourselves. This indeed is what I am saying, in connection with any saying whatsoever, we lend our voice. The saying is a consequence, it is not the voice, the saying is an act.

So then, if the noumenon is nothing other than what I have stated as a hole, perhaps this hole, by finding it named as such in our Symbolic starting from the topology of the torus, of the torus *qua* distinguished from the sphere by a mode of writing by which there are defined as a matter of fact *homo-* as well as *homeo* - , as well as *auto-morphism*, whose foundation is always the possibility of being founded on what is called a continuous distortion and a distortion which is defined by encountering what creates an obstacle – that is what topology is - to another cord that is supposed to consist, this is what makes the torus, t-o-r-u-s, that I would be happy to call here the tube-torus (*tore-boyau*).

In order to depict for you the torus in a way that may be tangible do I…[on the board] Here is a torus [VIII-1], make a hole in it, put in your hand and catch what is at the centre, the centre of the torus. That leaves like that a feeling of which the least that can be said is that there is a discordance between this hand and what it squeezes.

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Fig. VIII-1

(127) There is a way other than that to show it, which would be to suppose another torus inside the torus [VIII-2]. How far can one go like that? You must not believe that it is enough here to place another inside the second torus, because this would not at all be something homogenous despite the appearance given by the cup (*coupe*), that would not be something homogenous to what is depicted here.

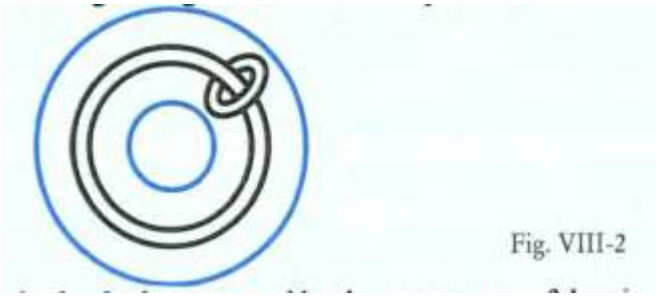

Fig. VIII-2

[On the board] As is clearly demonstrated by the correct way of drawing a torus, when one does it in a mathematical way [VIII-3] it would have to be another ring placed here [VIII-2] in order for this one to be, equivalent to the one that I first cut to give here the figure of the torus.

Fig. VIII-3

In short, if these cords supposed to consist give some support to the metaphor of the hole, it is only starting from the topology of the torus in so far as it elaborates mathematically the difference between an implicit…topology and a topology which, by being distinguished from it, becomes explicit, namely, the sphere, in so far as every supposition of the Imaginary participates first of all implicitly in this sphere in so far as it radiates. *Let there be light*! That is not a *tube-torus*!

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The annoying thing, this is what analysis reveals concerning what is involved in the consistency of the body, it is to the tube that one must come instead of the polyhedrons which occupied the 'Timaean', 'Timaeic' imagination throughout the centuries. It is what I earlier called the tube-torus that prevails, and when I say tube-torus, that is (128) not enough, as you see sufficiently from these drawings, it is not enough to orientate things towards the tube, it is as a matter of fact a sphincter.

Here we are then, in what renders more tangible than anything, the relationship of the body to the Imaginary, and what I want to point out to you is the following: can one think the Imaginary, the Imaginary itself in so far as we are caught up in it by our bodies, can one think the Imaginary as imaginary to reduce, as I might say imaginariness or imaginarity, as you wish? One *is* in the Imaginary, that is what must be recalled. However elaborated you makes it, this is what analysis brings you back to; however elaborated you make it, in the Imaginary, you are. There is no way of reducing it in its imaginarity. It is in this that topology takes a step. It allows you to think, but it is a retrospective thought, that aesthetics, that what you sense, in other words, is not in itself, as they say, transcendental, that it is linked to what we can very well conceive of as contingency, namely, that it is this topology that is valid for a body. Again it is not a body all by itself! If there were not the Symbolic and the ek-sistence of the Real, this body would simply have no aesthetics at all, because it would have no tube-torus. The tube-torus, torus with the hyphen as I write it, is a mathematical construction, namely, made of this inek-sistent relationship, *qua* ek-sistent, that there is between the Symbolic and the Real. The notion of knot that I am putting forward can no doubt be imagined, as I said, be depicted between the Imaginary the Symbolic and the Real, without loosing for all that its weight of Real, but precisely why? Because there is an effective knot, namely, that the cords are squeezed, that there are these cases where the ek-sistence, the turning around, no longer happens because of these triple points

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whose ek-sistence is suppressed. This is what I indicated in telling you that the Real is demonstrated as having no meaning, having no meaning because it begins. Because it begins with what?

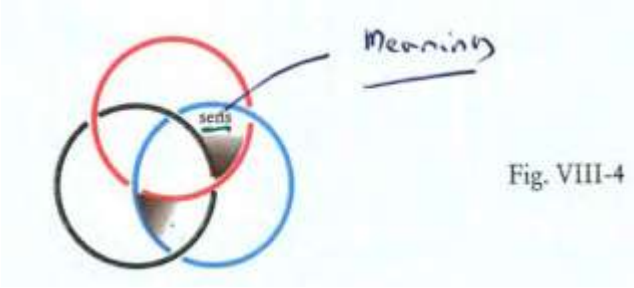

Fig. VIII-4

[On the board] With the fact that here, if this Real, to indicate it, if this Symbolic to indicate it by a different colour, I make in this way, reducing the place, the one that I indicated as being that of small **o**, I reduce meaning to this triple point that is here. Only this meaning, *qua* vanishing gives meaning to the term of Real. In the same way, here, at this other triple point which is defined by this corner, it is enjoyment *qua* phallic that implies its liaison to the Imaginary as ek-sistence, the Imaginary is the *pas-de-jouissance* (the step/not of enjoyment). Just as for the Symbolic, it is very specifically that there is no Other of the Other which gives it its consistency.

Does that mean that all of these are only models? I already said and put forward, which is no reason for me not to repeat it, that models have recourse as such to the pure Imaginary, the knots have recourse to the Real and take their value from the fact that they have no less bearing in the mental than the Real, even if the mental is Imaginary for the good reason that they have their bearing on the two. Any couple, anything involved in the couple is reduced to the Imaginary. Negation is also a way of acknowledging, *Verneinung*, Freud insists on it from the start, a way of acknowledging where alone, the acknowledgement is possible because the Imaginary is the place where all truth is stated and a truth denied has just as much Imaginary weight as an acknowledged truth, *Verneinung* as *Bejahung*.

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How does it happen, this is the question that I ask in bringing you the answer, that the Real only begins with number 3 (*chiffre 3*)? All Imaginary has something of the 2 involved, as I might say, as a remainder of this 2 effaced from the Real. This indeed is why the 2 ek-sists with respect to the Real, and that it is not out of place to confirm that ek-sistence, namely, what plays on every cord as ek-sistence, has the consistency of the others. That this ek-sistence, namely, this operation, this limited field, where the trajectory or the path as someone said to me recently someone who was speaking to me about this subject, which again is nobody but Soury, that the ek-sistence, the operation of the cord up to the point that something squeezes is indeed the zone where one can say that consistency, the consistency of the Real, namely, what Freud put the accent on, renewed the accent, no doubt using an ancient term, the phallus. But how know what the Mysteries put under this term of phallus? By accentuating it, Freud exhausted himself, but it is in no other way than (130) by its flattening-out. Now, what is at stake is to give its whole weight to this consistency, not simply the ek-sistence of the Real. To name, to name (*nommer*) that moreover you could n-apostrophe-h-o-two ms-e-r, write *n'hommer*. To say is an act; what makes saying an act, is the adding of a dimension, a dimension of flattening-out.

No doubt, in what I encouraged Pierre Soury to share with us just now, namely, his demonstration of the fact that there is only one knot, by taking it as orientated, he distinguishes all sorts of elements that only stem from the flattening-out: the turning over of planes, the turning over of rings, the turning over of bands, indeed internal or external exchanges. These are only, you will read them, at least I hope so, these are only the effects of the flattening-out as regards which it would be well to highlight that there is here only a recourse, an exemplary recourse to the distance there is between the Real of the knot and this conjunction of domains, the one that is inscribed, that I inscribed here earlier on the board to give weight to meaning. That all of this may illuminate, illuminate in fact the practice of a discourse, of

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the discourse properly called analytic, is what I will leave you to decide, without making any more concessions today. I acknowledge, I did not make many of them. But consult simply these terms such as the ones that Freud puts forward concerning what he calls identification. I am proposing to you in closing this session today the fact that identification, the triple identification as he puts it forward, I am formulating the way in which I define it: if there is a real Other, it is nowhere else than in the knot itself and that is why there is no Other of the Other. This real Other, make yourselves identify yourself to its Imaginary, you have then the identification of the hysteric to the desire of the Other, the one that is happening here at this central point. Identify yourselves to the Symbolic of the real Other, you have then this identification that I specified as being the *einziger Zug*, the unary trait. Identify yourselves to the Real of the real Other, you obtain what I indicate as the Name-of-the-Father, and that is where Freud designated what this identification has to do with love.

I will speak the next time about three forms of the Names-of-the-father, those that name as such the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, for it is in these names themselves that the knot holds up.

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Seminar 9: Tuesday 8 April 1975

Voilà! I am struck by one thing, which is that – nevertheless I searched, I searched for traces, for traces somewhere of what I call cogitation, whose cogitation, I will say later – cogitation remains limed in an Imaginary which is, as I have, let us say, suggested for a long time, the Imaginary of the body. What is cogitated – you must not believe that I put the emphasis on the Symbolic – what is cogitated is in a way, retained by the Imaginary as rooted in the body. Well then, it strikes me not to have, not to be able, in the literature which is not simply philosophical - philosophy is moreover in no way to be distinguished from the artistic, from the literary…I am going to emphasise that progressively, is that not so? And to put my cards immediately on the table, I am going to announce something that I will take up later.

It is hard to imagine, make no mistake, because one must stand back a little it is hard to imagine the degree to which the Imaginary is sticky and has a stickiness that I am right away going to designate, that of the sphere and of the cross. It is fearsome! I have been, in short why not say it, I have been strolling through Joyce because I was requested, like that, to speak at a Joyce congress which should take place in June. I cannot say that it is not imaginable, it is only too imaginable! It is not Joyce who is responsible for it. To be limed like that in this sphere and the cross, one can say that it is because he read a lot of St

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Thomas. Because that was what

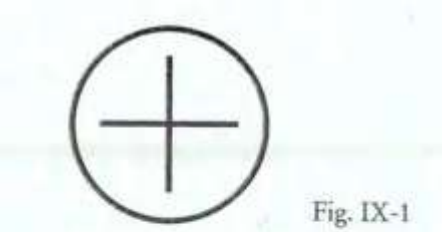

Fig. IX-1

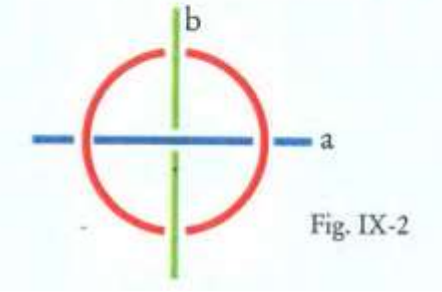

Fig. IX-2

was taught in the Jesuits where he received his formation. But it is not only due to that, you are just as limed in the (132) sphere and in the cross. It is there on the little page [IX-1] a circle, a section of a sphere, and then inside the cross. What's more that makes the + sign. You cannot imagine how much you are retained in this circle and in this + sign.

It can happen, is that not so, that by chance an artist, who sticks something in plaster on a wall, makes something that by chance is like that [IX-2]. But nobody notices that this is already the Borromean knot.

Try, like that to tackle it for yourselves. When you see it like that, what do you make of it imaginarily? You make of it two things that hook onto one another and which come back to fold over, this A and this B [IX-3], to fold them over in this way. As a result of which, the circle, the ring, the cycle, I will come back later to what that means, has only to slip over what is thus knotted.

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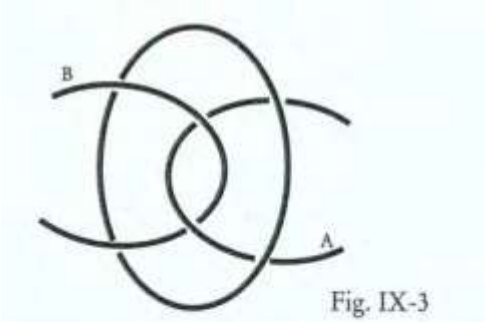

Fig. IX-3

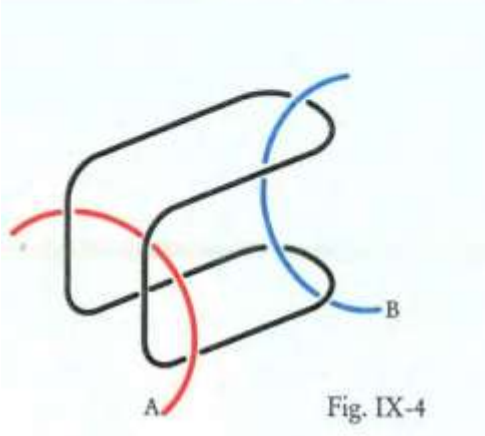

Fig. IX-4

It is not, as I might say, natural, what does natural mean? Once one approaches it, in short, it disappears, but in short, natural to your imagination, it is not natural to do exactly the opposite, namely, to distort the circle, the cycle like that [IX-4], which seems to be dictated for all that, in short, if one (133) makes a simply different use of A and B.. That is a fact, it is a fact of which the least that can be said is that it is curious that I should be interested in the Borromean knot because you can be sure that the Borromean knot is not obligatorily what I have drawn for you a hundred times. Is that not so in fact! That is also a Borromean knot [IX-5], just as valid as that in the form in which I usually flatten it out. It is a true Borromean knot, I mean this one.

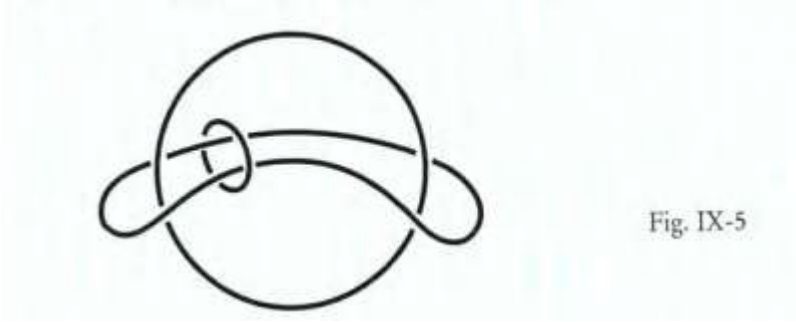
Fig. IX-5

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Look at it closely, I already said that if I was, like that, gripped one day by the Borromean knot, it is altogether linked to this order of event or advent, as you wish, that is called the analytic discourse, and in so far as I defined it as a social bond emerging in our day. This discourse has a historic value that has to be mapped out. It is true that mine is a weak voice to sustain it, but it is perhaps so much the better because if it were stronger, well then I would perhaps in short have less chance of subsisting. I mean that it seems difficult to me, throughout all history, like that, for the social bonds prevalent up to now not to silence any voice that is designed to sustain a different emerging discourse. This is what has always been seen up to now and it is not because there is no longer the Inquisition that it should be believed that the social links that I defined, the discourse of the master the discourse of the university, indeed the hysterico-diabolic discourse should not stifle, as I might say, whatever voice I may have. This having been said in short, I within this, I am a subject. I am caught up in this business, like that, because I set about existing as an analyst. That does not mean that I believe that I have a mission of truth. There were people like that, in short, in the past, who were crackers. No mission of the truth because the truth, I insist, cannot be said, it can only be half-said. So then let us rejoice that my voice is low….

(134) In every philosophy…Up to the present like that, there is philosophy, the right one, huh, the current one, and then from time to time there are crazy people who precisely believe they have a mission of truth; the whole thing is simply buffoonery! But that I should say so has no importance, luckily for me, I am not believed! Because when all is said and done, believe this for the time being, the right dominates, the right philosophy, it is indeed still there. I made, like that, a little visit during these holidays, as a way of making him a little sign before both of us disintegrate, to someone called Heidegger. In fact I am very fond of him. He is still very stout hearted…There is already something that he is trying to get out of. There is something in him like a, like a presentiment of *sicanalise*, as Aragon said. But it

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is only a presentiment because Freud, in short he does not what way to turn when he…it does not interest him.

Nevertheless something emerged through him, through Freud, is that not so? Yes, whose consequences I am drawing out, by weighing it in its effects which are no small thing. But this supposes, this would suppose that the psychoanalyst ek-sists, ek-sists a little bit more. Anyway! He has already begun…there is already that, huh, begun to ek-sist, there, as I write it. But what to do so that the knot to which I have come, there, not of course without getting entangled in it just as much as you, what to do to make him tighten this knot, to the point that the speaking being as I call him, no longer believes, no longer believes what? That outside the being of speaking, he believes in being, huh! Is it too crude to say that it is uniquely because there is the verb to be? No, that is why I said the being of speaking. He believes that because he speaks, well then that is where his salvation lies. It is a track (*erre*) and I would even say a unary track (*trait-une-erre*). Yes! It is thanks to this that what I will call an orientated decoding has prevailed in what is called thought, the thought that is described as human. I am letting myself go like that, something gets into me from time to time, and I would say that this track deserves rather to be pinpointed by the words on the move (*transhumant*), its so called humanity depending only on a naturalness of transit, like that – and what is more, which postulates transcendence…

My success as I might say, which has of course no connotation of a result to my eyes and with good reason…I only believe, like Freud, in the bungled action, but in the bungled action in so far as it is revelatory of the site, of the situation of the *transit* in question, with *transfe*r in one's grasp of course, all of that, gives something of the *trans* [trance?]. This *trans* must simply be brought back to its proper (135) measure. My success then, my succession, that's what that means, will it remain in this transitory? Well then this is the best thing that could happen to it because in any case there is no chance

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that the *humant-trans* should ever tackle anything whatsoever. So then just as well have an endless peregrination! Simply Freud made the remark that there is perhaps a saying which takes on the validity that I am going to tell you, as only being up to now forbidden (*interdit*). That means to say between, nothing more, between the lines. This is what he called, like that, the repressed. Naturally, I am not going to get up on my high horse. But why, if really as I have just said, there is not, even in people who would be made in a way to meet it, no trace of this Borromean knot, despite what I am telling you, since the sphere and the cross, can be found everywhere, someone might have noticed that this could make a Borromean knot, as I have just explained to you.

Good, as it happens I made this discovery of the Borromean knot, without looking for it of course! It seems to me like that, it must also appear like that to you, of course, that seems to me to be a notable discovery in order to salvage not the air of Freud, a-i-r, but precisely his track (*erre*), what exists of it, which is rigorously a matter of the knot. Good! Now let us pass on to something like that, to get our teeth into – and this [IX-2] is what is important; why the devil did no one draw this plus which consists in writing this sign like that, in the proper way? [IX-4]

There is all the same someone, like that, who one day, you do not remember, of course, because you have not read all of Aragon – who reads the whole of Aragon! – there is a passage in the young Aragon, where he begins to fume, I mean to get heated up, by claiming that at one time…who went so far as to suppress the crossroads, *quadrivii*, he was thinking of autoroutes, because autoroute is a rather funny word huh! What is meant by an auto-route? A road in itself or a road for itself? Anyway, who found this time, there are still a lot of crossroads, a lot of street corners, of course! In short, I do not know what got into him, like that, to think that there would no longer be any crossroads, that there would always be subterranean passages, that this

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time deserves a better fate than to remain in general theology? What is curious is that he in no way drew a conclusion. That is the surrealist mode, is that not so? It never culminates in anything. He did not spatialise the Borromean knot in the right way. Thanks to which, is (136) that not so, we are still at being, as Heidegger said to me there, that I was able earlier to extract from his brain, being *in-der-Welt*, at *in-der-Welt-sein*. It is a cosmeticology, which is also cosmeticological. It is a tradition like that, thanks to what? Thanks to this *Welt* there is a *Umwelt* and then there is a *Innenwelt*. This should make you suspicious, this repetition of the bubble (*bulle*) yes I learned that in cartoons it is by bubbles, I had never noticed it, because I should tell the truth, I never look at cartoons. In short I am ashamed, I am ashamed because it is marvellous is it not? They are not even cartoons, they are photo-montages, in short they are sublime! They are photo-montages, and I read in *Nous deux* photo-montages with words! And then thoughts, is when there are bubbles!

I don't know why you are laughing, because for you this is familiar! At least I suppose so because…yes! Does the question I am asking here in the form of this bubble prove that the Real makes up a universe? It is here, the question that I ask, it is one that I asked starting from Freud, in something which is only a beginning, which is that Freud suggested that this universe had a hole. And what is more, a hole that there is no way of knowing. So then I follow the track of this hole, as I might say, and I encounter, it is not I who invented it, I encounter the Borromean knot which, as they always say, fits me like a ring on my finger…here we again have the hole! Only there is all the same something, when one goes ahead like that in following the track of things, which is that one notices that there is not only one thing to make a cycle. It is not obligatorily and only the hole. Yes, if you take two of them, from that, from these cycles, from these things that turn, from this circle in question [IX-2], and if you knot both of them, in the right way…you must not make a mistake of course – and I must say that I make mistakes all the time, it is not only Jacques-

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Alain Miller! The proof that…look at that! When I wanted earlier to make the Borromean knot for you, that one there is shocking, I put my foot in it! Because made like that, it is not a Borromean knot. Namely, that you can always cut one of them, the two others will remain knotted. It's not the right yoke! But in short, provided you fold them in the right way, you notice that if you add this straight line to it [IX-6] nothing more than this straight line, well then! It is a Borromean knot. The straight line, infinite of course as I said, stated

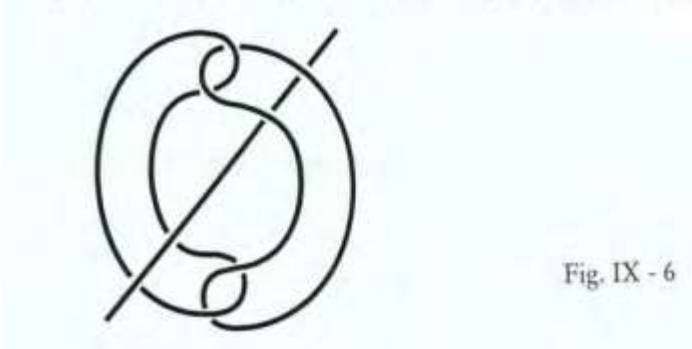

Fig. IX - 6

at the beginning of this seminar. That makes a Borromean knot that is just as valid as the one that I usually draw and that I am not going to start on again. If the straight line is an infinite straight line, and how not refer to it as the string in itself, the consistency reduced to the last it has, well then, it makes a knot! Naturally, it is much more convenient for us to close this consistency. I mean to notice that it is enough here to make a buckle to rediscover the familiar knot, the knot in the way in which I usually draw it [IX-6]. What is interesting, is that not so, in representing it in this way, is to notice that starting from there [IX-7], the way, the first, of writing the Borromean knot rebounds on this cycle [IX-6] and that it is one of the ways of showing how the knot can be, as I might say, doubly Borromean, namely, that we pass to the bo-bo knot of four.

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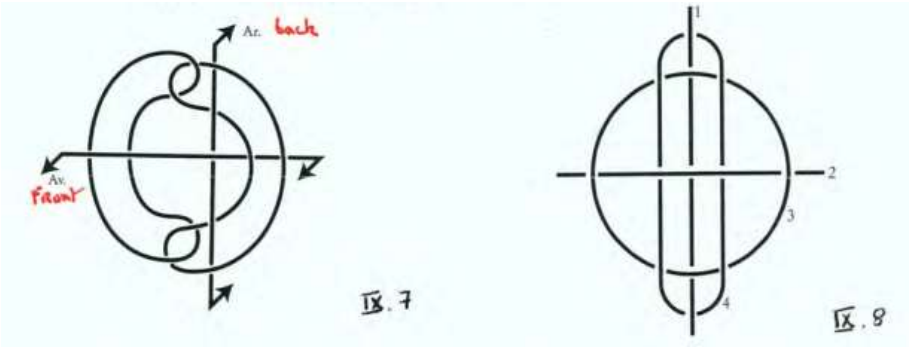

(138) There you are! I showed you here [IX-8] another illustration of this knot of four. But the question that this poses is what is the order of equivalence of the straight line [IX-6], of the infinite straight line, as it is there, of the straight line to the cycle? There is someone, a man of genius called Desargues, to whom I made an allusion at one time – in short 'at one time', at the time when I made an allusion to him… – to whom the idea came that every straight line, every infinite straight line achieved closure, created a buckle at a point at infinity. How could this idea have come to him? It is an absolutely sublime idea around which I constructed my whole commentary on *las Meninas*, the one about which people say, in short, if we are to believe the hacks, was completely incomprehensible. I do not know. It did not seem to be so to me, at least! What is the equivalence of the straight line to the circle? It is obviously to make a knot. It is a consequence, is it not, of the Borromean knot. It is a recourse to efficiency, to effectiveness, to *Wirklichkeit*.

That is not, that is not the important thing! For if we find them equivalent in efficiency, in the efficiency of the knot, what is the difference? I am not telling you at all that I am satisfied huh! I approach, I approach so painfully, good God, that this will make you suffer, everything that concerns thinking-out-the-Borromean-knot. Because I told you, it is not easy to imagine it, which gives a proper measure of what all thinking (pensation) is, as I might say. It is all the same curious in short that even Descartes, is that not so. His *Regula decima*, namely, the one that I highlighted, even read for you
(139) concerning what is not said literally, concerning the use of

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thread, the use of weaving, the use of what might have led him to the knot, and to the Borromean knot in particular, he never made anything of it. That he never made anything of it is a sign.

Good! So then the difference? I am not saying that it is my last word, is that not so, the difference is in the passage from the one to the other, and in something that for the moment I content myself with illustrating, with illustrating without doing it in a definitive way. The fact is that between the two, there is an interplay. And since this whole interplay only culminates in their equivalence, it is perhaps in this journey of something which, by being a cycle, buckles a hole. It is perhaps in the interplay of ek-sistence, of the track in short, of the fact that there is an interplay, in short, that this moves, that this opens as they say, that the difference consists, a difference of ek-sistence. One ek-sists, heads off into the track until it only encounters simply consistency, and the other, the other, the cycle, is centred on the hole.

Naturally, no one knows what this hole is. That the hole, should be what the emphasis is put on in the corporal by all analytic thought, well, this rather puts a stopper in the hole! It is not clear. By the fact that it is the orifice on which there is suspended everything that is involved in the pre-Oedipal as they say, that all perversity is orientated, which is that of all our behaviour, integrally, is quite strange! This is not going to illuminate the nature of the hole for us. There is something else like that that might come to mind, which is quite unrepresentable. It is what is called, in short, like that by a name that only dazzles because of language, it is what is called death. Good, that puts no less a stopper in it! Because we do not know what death is.

There is all the same an approach, an approach that is expressed in what mathematics has described as topology which envisages space differently. Note this differently, it is worthwhile remembering it. Well then, one cannot say that this leads us to notions that are all that

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easy. One sees clearly there the weight of imaginary inertia. Why did geometry find itself so much at ease in what it combines? Is it by adhering to the Imaginary, or is it by a sort of injection of the Symbolic? This is what would deserve to be posed as a question to a mathematician. In any case, the twisted character of this topology, the (140) establishment of notions like that of neighbourhood, indeed of accumulating point, this emphasis put on something – we see very well what the aspect is - on discontinuity as such, while manifestly there is here a resistance. Continuity is indeed a natural aspect of the imagination.

Good, I am not going to develop this any more. What I note, is that the difficulty of the introduction, like that, of the mental to topology, the fact that it is not more easily thinkable gives a good idea of what there is to be learned from this topology as regards what is involved in our repressed.

The effective difficulty, is that not so, of cogitating about the Borro-knot, here, reduplicated by the fact that the accessibility constituted by this sphere and the cross presents it as an example of a missed *mathesis*, missed inexplicably by a hairs breath, never familiar in any case, why not see in the manifest aversion that this entails, the very trace of this first repression? And why not become engaged along this furrow, just like a dog who picks up a scent? Except for this of course, that the sense of smell is not what characterises us, and that we must take into account this smell effect in the dog. How? This can imitate, imitate a perception effect which would be the supplement for a lack that we must indeed admit if we have, and this is a question, had our eyes opened. If we open our eyes to the ek-sistence of the *Urverdrängt*, of something affirmed by analysis which is that there is a repression that is not simply first but irreducible. This is what we should be following the trace of, and this is in short what I am doing before you in so far as I am able. Naturally, all the same, I take care to tell you that I am not getting up on my high horse, I mean that I do

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not believe that I have found here the last word, not at all! To think that one has found the last word, would be properly speaking paranoia. Paranoia, is not that, paranoia is being stuck in the Imaginary. It is the voice that sounds, the look that becomes all-prevailing it is a matter of the congealing of a desire. But in short, all the same that would be paranoia, Freud told us not to worry. I mean to say why not? This could be a vein to follow, huh! There is no need to be so afraid if that leads us somewhere! It is quite clear that this has only ever led to…well to the truth. Which indeed makes it the measure of the truth itself, namely, what the paranoia of President Schreber shows, which is that there is no sexual relationship except (141) with God. It's the truth! And it is indeed what puts in question the ek-sistence of God, we are here in something failed in creation, if I can thus express myself. The saying is to trust something which, probably dupes us. But to not be its dupe is to be nothing other than the first occupant of the non-dupe, in other words what I called the impetus (*erre*). But this impetus is our only chance of really fixing the knot in its existence, because it is only ek-sistence *qua* knot. It is what only ek-sists by being knotted in such a way that it can only be squeezed. Even in confusion! [On the board] What I have not been able to draw for you here is the Borromean knot; it is enough to have one of three. You know, you can very well draw it in a totally confused way, so that you won't hear a peep out of it!

To say that *there is no sexual relationship* starts from the idea of a *phusis*, namely, from something that would make of sex a principle of harmony. Relationship, up to today means for us proportion. The idea that one could reproduce this with words, that words were designed to mean something, that if being is, the result is for example that non-being is not. Yes! There are still people for whom that means something. The Parmenides meaning there, like that, at the origin, has become chit-chat, and that it does not come into anyone's mind that this is not properly speaking a sign that it is only wind, *flatus vocis*! I am not saying at all that they are wrong, quite the

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contrary, they are precious to me, they prove that meaning goes as far in equivocation as one may desire for my theses, namely, for the analytic discourse. Namely, that starting from meaning there is enjoyed, *s'oui-je, j'ouisse* myself, *souis-je m'assoter* with words. Naturally, naturally, there is something better. Except for the fact that the better, as popular wisdom has it, is the enemy of the good. Just as surplus enjoying comes from the *père-version*, from the *a-per-(e)-itive* version of enjoying. We can do nothing about it. The speaking being aspires only to the good, as a result of which he plunges always into the worst. That does not mean that he cannot refuse it, huh! Not even me. Here, I am a grain like all of you, ground down in this salad. The trouble is, is that everyone knows that this has good effects…I am talking about analysis! That the good effects only last for a while does not stop it being a respite, and that it is better, make no mistake, than doing nothing. It is a little annoying all the same! It is an annoyance that one can try to go against, despite the current, is that (142) not so. Because it is, despite everything, of a nature to prove the ek-sistence of God himself. Everyone believes in him! I defy each one of you [to show] that I will not prove to him that he believes in the ek-sistence of God! This is even the scandal. The scandal that psychoanalysis alone highlights. It highlights it because at present it is only psychoanalysis that proves it. I am talking about proving it. It is not at all the same as proving to you that you believe in him. Formally, this is only due to Freud's Jewish tradition, which is a literal tradition that links it to science, and at the same time to the Real. This is the cape that must be rounded.

God is Father, hyphen, towards, *père-vers*. This is a fact made obvious by the Jew himself. But we will indeed finish up by, in short I cannot say that I hope for it, I am saying it – by going against this current, we will finish up by inventing something less stereotyped than perversion. This is even the only reason why I am interested in psychoanalysis, I am saying that I am interested and why should I try to do what is currently called galvanising it. But I am not stupid

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enough to have the least hope of a result that nothing promises and which no doubt has been taken from the wrong end. This thanks to this unbelievable story of Sodom and Gomorrah, huh! There are even days, when it can come to me that Christian charity is on the path of a perversion that illuminates a little the non-relationship. You can see how far I am going, huh. It is nevertheless not to my inclination, but anyway, make no mistake, we must not exaggerate (*charrier*)…nor be charitable (*chariter*)! There is no chance that we have the key to the road accident which means that sex has ended up by being an illness in the speaking being, and the worst illness, huh! The one by which he is reproduced. It is obvious that it is to the advantage of biology to strive, to become with a slightly different emphasis, 'viology', the 'logy' of violence and to force itself to the side of mouldiness with which the aforesaid speaking being has many analogies. You never know, a lucky encounter! Someone like Francois Jacob is Jew enough to allow the non-relationship to be rectified, which in the present state of knowing can only mean replacing this fundamental disproportion of the aforesaid relationship by a different formula, by something that can only be conceived of as a detour that is destined to err (*erre*), but an error limited by a knot.

Yeah! I would not like all the same to leave you without pointing out something to you, pointing out something which I think is opportune. I think that you have had a pile of little pages distributed, because I (143) have been told so by Michel Thomé and Pierre Soury? Yes! They are little pages that are very important because they demonstrate something, that there is only a single orientated Borromean knot.

There you are! So then, for them I want, like that, because probably they will be the only ones to appreciate it, to point out the following for them, which is that what I contributed today like that – I don't know what I contributed today moreover – what I contributed today, namely, the remark that there is a way of making a cycle with two circles, this remark has consequences as regards their proposal, that

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there is only one orientated knot. On the fact that there is only one orientated knot when there are three rings of string, but not when there are more, I agree. Nevertheless, there is something amusing, which is that if you transform one of these rings into an infinite straight line… – that was the import of the remark that I had made to them, but, against which they were right to hold out – I had made the remark to them that it was on the side of this third that there was something that seemed to me to require the ek-sistence, not of one knot, but of two orientated knots. It is to them that I am addressing myself for the moment is that not so, and because of that I am charging them to respond to me. I am addressing myself to them. I am not asking a question, I am not saying does it not appear to you? I affirm, I affirm that if there is one that is transformed into an infinite straight line, there is no longer simply one orientated knot, but two. I did not make the little drawing of it, but I am going to do so. I am going to do so on this last piece of paper that I explicitly left blank, and I am pointing out to them that the infinite straight line is not orientatable. From where could it be orientated? It is only orientatable, it is obvious, it is well known, starting from any chosen point whatsoever on this straight line from which orientations diverge. But diverging doesn't give it one. So then, with respect…you are going to see that I am going to do exactly what should not be done, namely,… Ah! all the same, I have managed it. Good. Namely, the following which is that by sticking to a simple formulation, let us point out that in the double circle [IX-9] there is an orientation, namely, what we will designate by the word gyre (*gyrie*).

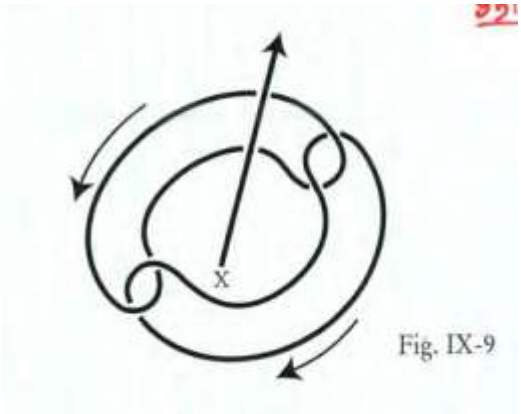

Fig. IX-9

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Not of course that we can say that it is dextro-gyratory or laevo-gyratory, everyone knows that now. For with all the time that people have been racking their brains to do so,
it seems all the same, not that it is demonstrated, but that one could consider that, in short, there were enough clever people racking their brains, to do something about which it would be conceivable that we should send it as a message to someone who is supposed to be on another planet, and who would know the distinction between right and left. As regards that, we can admit it, as we have ended up by admitting it for the squaring of the circle, even though there it has been demonstrated, we can admit that nothing can be done. But to distinguish the gyres as being two, that we can do. We could do it with words in a message for the inhabitants of another planet.

[on the board] It is enough for them to have the notion of a horizon, which gives at the same time that of a plain. If we put just these two circles [IX-10] flattened out, this is what is supposed by the notion of horizon. We can say for example that we define one of them as being further from the point from which we will start on the straight line as a point of view, and that there is something external, which, as you see, because of the straight line highlighted by Soury and Thomé,

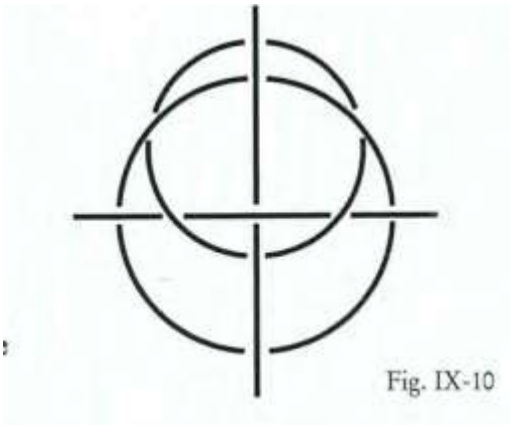

Fig. IX-10

concerning the knot of these two circles is, from a dextro-gyratory side, if we define dextro-gyratory by the fact that the most external one goes underneath, goes above the band of the circle, of the ring of string, and that there is another which, by this fact, also goes over, because this is how we define the gyre, but it is found to be in a

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different direction with regard to the circle. This circle [IX-9] has then two orientations, this one and that one, this one dextro-gyratory, that one laevo-gyratory; we are incapable of saying which is dextro, which is (145) laevo, we are incapable of transmitting it in a message. No manipulation of the knot of three – I tried it because I had hoped that the Borromean knot would perhaps give it to us – gives unambiguously the definition of laevo or of dextro. We always find ourselves confronted with the situation of having two gyres, but that to define them by the fact that the most external strip passes over the other strip, and that this is what ought to give the orientation, always fails. Since, as you see there, if we define the fact that the most external strip passes over the other, we find ourselves before an ambiguity, is it this one or that one? On the contrary, the ek-sistence of two gyres is made manifest by that. There are two gyres, two orientated Borromean knots, not just one, starting from the moment when we made an infinite straight line from one of the three, in so far as the infinite straight line is defined as non-orientatable. Namely, if you want it again, that we have the difference with what quite properly Soury and Thomé reasoned, namely, that there are three centrifugal, we are going to put a little e to say centrifugal, going towards the outside, there are there centripetal, three i's, there can be one i and two e's, one e and two i's.

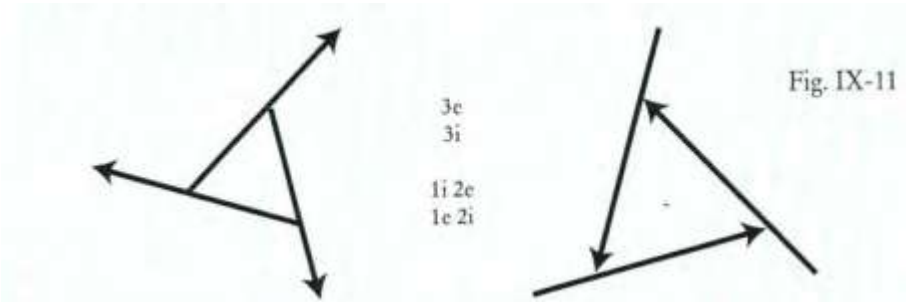

Fig. IX-11

These diverse specifications are those on which Soury and Thomé depend to demonstrate that there is only a single orientated knot.

If we have one straight line, one bar without orientation, we have then one-zero, one-i, one-e, and it is starting from that that there does not come a similar order, namely, that there is one-without-orientation,

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one-with-a centrifugal-direction, towards the outside, one-with-a-centripetal-direction, towards the inside.

1o 1i 1e

1o 1e 1i

(146) This is of interest, since for their demonstration, they started from the notion of the same, namely, that in all, reducing all the projections, all the flattening-outs that they made, they demonstrated that from these different flattening-outs there resulted the fact that it was the same, it was the same, as I might say, from all the flattened-out points of view. But it is sufficient that one, taken moreover from the knot point of view, should ek-sist, for it to demonstrate the orientations, namely, the Borromean knot *qua* orientated as being two. The knot is certainly not orientated, this from the fact that the three are so. If one of the three is not so, and it is sufficient for that that it should be coloured which means identical to itself, this makes it comprehensible that there are two of them. Once it is, either coloured or disorientated, what distinguishes it, there were already two provided one is specified. This remark consists in saying that a single coloured knot is sufficient, is sufficient by being equivalent to the fact that one of the knots is not orientated. The word orientatable which is in the dictionary of what was distributed to you is striking. The word orientatable already means that there are two orientations. The knot, certainly, can reabsorb these orientations among themselves, but it does not reabsorb them, once there is carried out on one of the elements of the knot this thing of distinguishing it by the fact that it is not orientatable, namely, that it is transformed into a straight line.

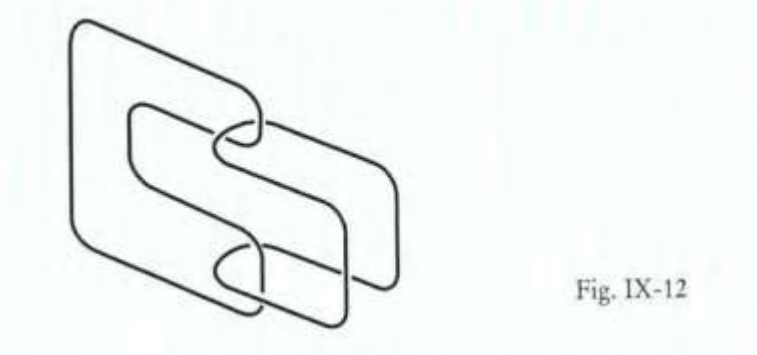

Fig. IX-12

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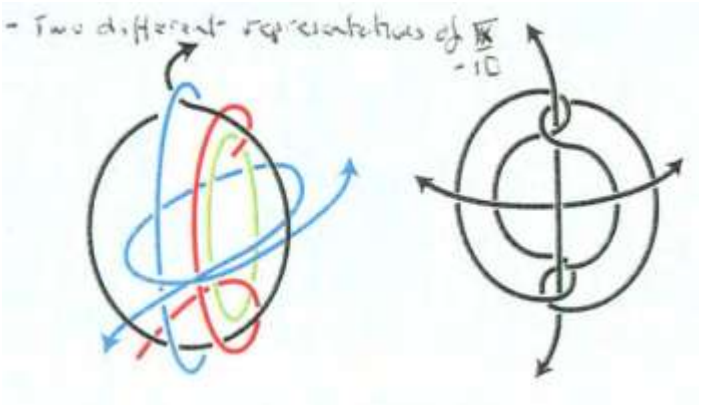
I, do not propose, but I think I have sufficiently indicated what is involved in this knot as doubly orientated, and that it alone is what explains by the rapprochement that I made with the coloured one, that one of these knots should be by the fact of not being orientatable, by this very fact coloured, requires that there are two knots, and that is why the coloured one and the orientated one at the same time, makes (147) two. No doubt Thomé and Soury will think, no doubt it will come to them that the flattening-out here introduces a suspect element. Nevertheless, I point out the following to them, that the same articulations concerning orientation are valid, if we draw these two knots these two circles in the following way, that I believe, that perspective sufficiently indicates and that makes no reference to exteriority of one of the curves, of the one with respect to the curve of the other. There is neither external nor internal with the simple reference to these spatial way of saying, put into three dimensions, by representing the two circles, the circles that become cycles, already with this way, there is a way to demonstrate that there are two knots, and not a single one orientated, two Borromean knots of three orientated.

There you are, I will stick with that for today.



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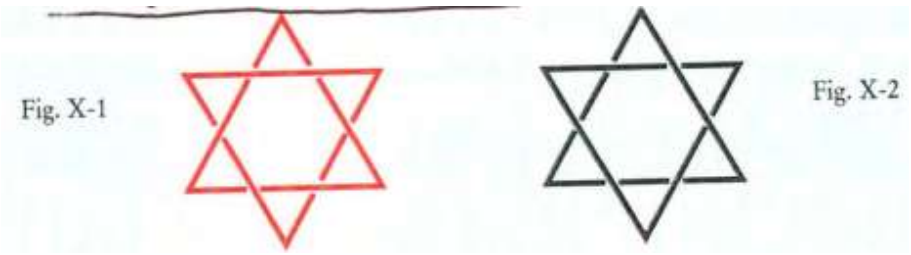
Seminar 10: Tuesday 15 April 1975

Just like that, I imagined this morning, as I awoke, two little drawings, the two on top [on the board], on the extreme right. I imagined then two little nondescript drawings – you were able to see the difficulty I had in simply reproducing them. It is a matter in these two drawings: [X-1 and 2] those on top, of two triangles, and in addition, two triangles of the most ordinary type, in short, they do not even have curved sides; two triangles that cross over one another.



There is all the same, I think that it will be tangible for you who look at that, as I fabricated it, that there are in twos, those of the left, the red, that is why I put the others in black, which are knotted in a chain, which make just by those two, a chain, which are by this fact, comparable in every way to what I will talk about later, two toruses, one of which would pass through the hole of the other. The two others are not knotted. They can be pulled apart from one another. It (150) is like a torus that would be flattened out to operate, not at all to be knotted, but to operate in the hole of the other.

The case is the same, that is also why I put them in black, for these two triangles that are drawn underneath, except for the fact that one of these triangles is in sum bent around what is presented as – but of course that means nothing at this level – one of the sides of the other, I am saying side because people imagine that a triangle has three sides.

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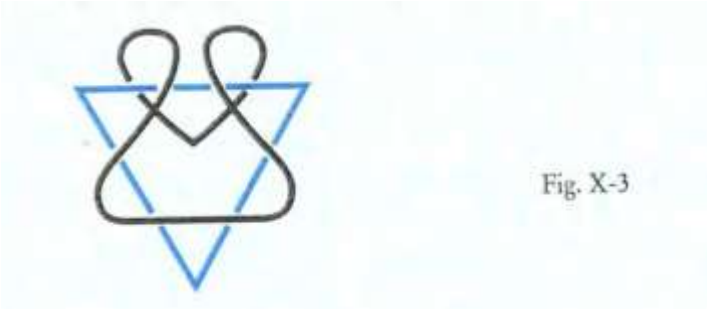

Fig. X-3

It is simply to get you into the swing of a geometry, to put you into the dimensions of a geometry that is repugnant for the word geometry; not without reason, because it is not a geometry, it is radically distinct from it. A topology is what, at the start, indicates how what is not knotted two by two can nevertheless make a knot.

We call a Borromean knot what is constituted in such a way that by subtracting one of these elements that I depicted, I say depicted, because it is only a figure, it is not its consistency, for each one of these couples of two that I made, it is enough to break – what is meant by break we will try to say later – that it is enough to break one of these elements in order that all the others should be also unknotted from each of them; and this can be done for as great a number of them as one wishes to state. You know that there is no limit to this stating. It is in that that it seems to me that there can be supported in a sayable (*dicible)* way, a term that I will comment on later, it is in it that there can be supported the term of sexual non-relationship, sexual in so far, I can only repeat, as it is supported essentially by a non-relationship of the couple. Does the knot as a chain suffice to represent the couple relationship?

(151) At a time when most of you were not at my seminar, since it was a time when I brought out what was involved in demand and desire, I illustrated with two toruses the link to be made between demand and desire, two toruses, namely, two orientatable cycles. I am going all the same to make the two toruses for you or at least to indicate them to you. It is something that begins to be drawn like that.

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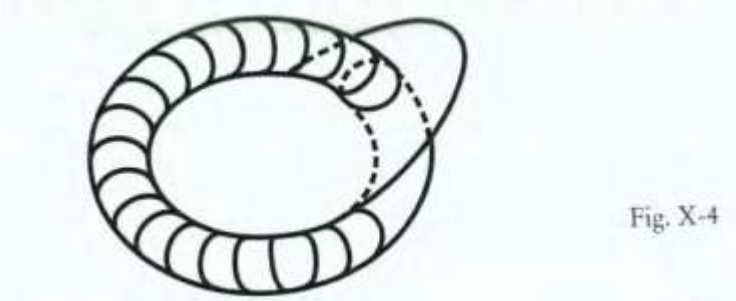

Fig. X-4

[On the board] You see, what is more, one gets entangled in it. Obviously, I am not very gifted, but you are no more so than I. Here's how this is drawn, if you want to make something complete. Since I put a wrong line there, I am going to indicate that there is on this torus, this particular torus, something which on its circuit comes to enter into the hole of the other torus. It is by depicting in each one of these toruses something that turns around that I showed what winds around this one, is shifted onto the other by a series of windings around the central hole of the torus. What does that mean if not that demand and desire, for their part, are knotted. They are knotted in the measure that a torus represents a cycle and is therefore orientatable.

You know, because all the same you have heard talk of that, of what constitutes the difference between the sexes, that this is situated at the level of the cell and especially at the level of the cellular nucleus or in the chromosomes which, since they are microscopic, seem to guarantee for us a defined level of the Real. But why the devil should people want what is microscopic to be more real that what is macroscopic! Something usually differentiates the sex which in each species is situated as male from that which is female, the fact is that in one case, there is a homozygotism, namely, a certain gene which is paired with another gene, without one ever knowing in advance how (152) in each species it is divided up, I mean, whether it is the male or the female that is homozygotic. The difference to the other sex, is that in the other sex, there is a heterozygotism somewhere, namely, that there are two genes which are not paired, pair meaning that they are h-o-m-o, homozygotic, that they are similar.

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It is an opportunity to give its whole weight to what André Gide makes great play of in *Paludes*, namely, the famous proverb *Numero deus [sic] impare gaudet*, which he translates by, the number two rejoices at being odd, as I said a long time ago; he is quite right, because nothing would produce this two, if there was not an odd. This odd in so far as it begins at the number three - which, of course, is not immediately seen - and which makes it necessary to display openly more developed knots, specifically what I call the Borromean knot.

With the Borromean knot, what we have within our reach is something that for us is essential, crucial, for our practice and we have no need of a microscope for there to appear the reason, the reason for what I stated as a first truth, namely, that love is *h-a-i-n-a-m-o-r-a-t-i-o-n*, hainamoration. Why love is not the *velle bonum alicui*, as St Augustine states, if the word *bonum* has the slightest support, namely, if it means wellbeing? Not that certainly on occasion love is not preoccupied a little bit, the minimum, with the wellbeing of the other, but it is clear that it only does so up to a certain limit, and I have found nothing better, up to now, than the Borromean knot to represent this limit. To represent it, you should clearly understand that it is not a matter of a figure, of a representation, it is a matter of positing that it is the Real that is at stake, that this limit is only conceivable in the terms of ek-sistence, which for me, in my vocabulary, my own nomination, means the interplay, the interplay permitted to one of the cycles, to one of the consistencies, permitted by the Borromean knot. Starting from this limit, love persists (*s'obstine*) because there is something of the Real in the affair, love persists, quite contrary to the wellbeing of the other. This indeed is why I called it *hainamoration*, with the substantified vocabulary of the writing with which I support it.

This notion of limit implies then an oscillation, a yes or a no, it is to wish the good of someone or to wish strictly the contrary, it is all the same something which suggests to us the idea of a sinusoid. So then,

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(153) what is this sinusoid like? If there is a limit, it is a circle. The sinusoid is like this [X-5].

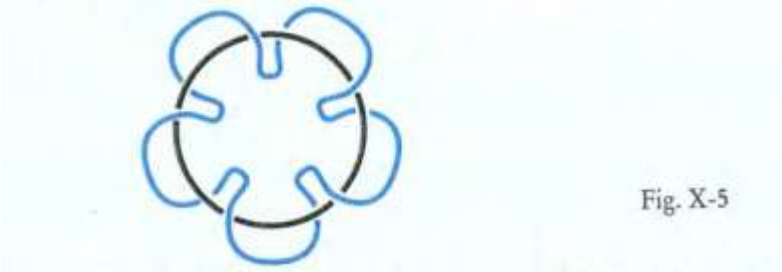

Fig. X-5

Does this sinusoid wind around? Does it make a knot or not by being wound around or not? This is the question that is posed by the notion of consistency, more nodal, as I might say than that of line, since the knot underlies it. There is no consistency that is not supported by the knot. That is why from the knot the very idea of the Real is dictated. The Real is characterised by being knotted. But still this knot must be made.

The notion of the unconscious is supported by the fact that not only is this knot found to be already made, but it is found made in a different emphasis of the term 'One is made (*on est fait!*)'. One is made by this act X by which the knot is already made. To my mind there is no other possible definition of the unconscious. The unconscious is the Real, I am measuring my terms. If I say it is the Real in so far as it is holed, I advance. I advance a little more than I have the right to, because I am not the only one who says it, who still says it, soon everyone will repeat it and, by being rained on, it will finish up by becoming a very pretty fossil. But meanwhile it's new! But up to the present, I am the only one who has said that there was no sexual relationship, and that this made a hole at a point of being, of the speaking being. The speaking being is not very widespread, huh! But all the same, it is like mould, it has a tendency to expand. So then, will we content ourselves with saying that the unconscious is the Real in so far as it is afflicted…- You're leaving, you're quite right. How can people put up with what I am telling them! – that the unconscious is the Real, in so far as in the speaking being, it is afflicted by the only

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thing that makes a hole, which assures us of the hole. This is what I called the Symbolic, by incarnating it in the signifier, of which when all is said and done there is no other definition than that, the hole. The signifier makes a hole.

(154) That is why I am putting forward, I already said it, the knot is not a model. Not alone is what makes the knot not Imaginary, not a representation, but its characteristic is precisely the following, that is why it escapes from being represented, and that I assure you that it is not to make grimaces, that every time I represent one, I put in a wrong line; since I believe I am no less imaginative than anybody else, this demonstrates already the point to which the knot is repugnant to us as a model. There is no affinity between the body and the knot, even if in the body, it plays a damned important function for analysts. The knot is not the model, it is the support. It is not reality, it is the Real. That means that if there is a distinction between the Real and reality, it is the knot, not which gives a model of it, until of course finally, fossilisation arrives, you pass your time making knots between your fingers. It is desirable. That will suggest to you a little more ingenuity.

In bringing back the unconscious to the Symbolic, namely, to what makes a hole from the signifier, I am doing something, my God, that will be judged by its effect, its fruitfulness. This seems to me to be dictated by our very practice, which is far from being able to be content with an obscure reference to instinct, as people persist in translating the word *Trieb* into English. Instinct at its emergence and which, of course, is immemorial, and how even know what it meant, before Fabre, who only supports it from one thing, how the devil can a little insect know, because we affirm this knowledge from the precision of its gestures, how it must at a particular point of the body of another insect, at a particular joint, and what is more since it is a matter of an insect slipping underneath what is called the carapace and which, of course, is only a figurative mythology because there must be

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somewhere something to pierce, to reach what, a particular precise point of what we know now comes from the ectoderm, namely, the invaginated part that is called the nervous system and there, breaks something which means that the other insect can be preserved.

What is this knowledge? What interest has it? How is it explicatory to transport it into a behaviour which is like the one that we see in the human being, every day, and who obviously has no instinctual knowledge, who does not see any further than the tip of his nose, but who, for his part also, from a different source, finds himself able to do a lot of things. And specifically, in short, knowing how to make, it is a way of putting it, to say that he knows how to make love is probably (155) very exaggerated. This pushes all the same this idea that I stated, of course, because I for my part take risks like that, that pushes this idea that, the one that I came to, like that in little steps, that the Real is not all (*tout*) and when I say that it is not all, that puts a lot of things in question. At the same time it implies that science, well, only extracts little bits of this Real. That it extracts manifestly up to the present with the idea of the universe, which it seems is indispensable for it but why? So that it can manage to assure, to make sure. Obviously it manages to make some things sure, when there is number, and that is truly what it is all about. How does it happen that language conveys a certain number of numbers so that one finally arrives at qualifying as real number properly ungraspable numbers, that are not otherwise defined, namely, that they are not in the series, that they even cannot be in it, that they are fundamentally excluded from it. How these numbers one, two, three, four came to peoples' minds says a lot about the subject of knowledge. For my part, I took like that a certain side, pushed by what? I will not say by my experience because an experience only means one thing, namely, that one engages in it, and I do not see why my engagement would be preferable. If I were the only one for example anything I might say would have no import. It is indeed because there is something that I am trying to situate, in the form, in the species of psychoanalytic

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discourse, namely, that I am not alone in carrying out this experiment, that thanks to the fact that I am like everybody else, I am a speaking being. That thanks to this fact I am led to formulate what can account for this analytic discourse, in a certain way. Good!

There is someone who – this was reported to me – like that, he is a complete bastard; he said that, I do not know, that my theory was dead! It is not as dead as all that, it will indeed end up by becoming so, is that not so, with the crusting over that I spoke about earlier. Meanwhile, this guy who obviously is not of my persuasion, he is one of these guys who talk…who talk like that…they talk…they don't know what they are saying, who talk about psychical reality! Yes! I would not call anything whatsoever by such a name, because the psyche, precisely is what everyone has tried to avoid, it gives rise to incredible difficulties, it involves a world of suppositions, it supposes (156) everything, it supposes God in any case. Where would the soul be if there were no God, and if, what's more, God had not explicitly created us to have one! This cannot be eliminated from any psychology.

What I am doing, at least what I am trying to do, is to talk about an operational reality. Naturally it is much more limited, but that requires, it seems to me, from the fact that the simple word, the blah-blah…the blah-blah of the bastard I mentioned just now, who says that my theory is dead, in short, he literally does not know what he is saying, it means that he is only talking, he is blathering, and I am sure, that in his analysis that works. That works with a certain limitation, of course, but I am sure that it works, otherwise, he would not continue to be an analyst. Even the word of those who believe in psychical reality works. Yes! Despite you, for you, and this is what, I don't know, I would like a little bit to make you grasp, that for you, for you if simply you experience things a little, the structure of the world (*monde*), if I can express myself thus, to talk about what is filthy (*immonde*), the structure of the world, I would ask you to try to grasp

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the points, the points where you can grasp that for you the structure of the world consists in putting you off with fine words. And that this is even why the world is more futile, I mean that flees, it is more futile than the Real, this Real that I am trying to suggest to you, in its *dit-mansion*, the dwelling of the said, that I try to get you to grasp by this said of mine, namely, through my saying.

The fuss that is being made about this psychoanalytic business is crazy, and it is badly read. There are very serious people, there are very serious people, who busy themselves with the dreams of animals. They cannot of course, there is no way of knowing whether the animal dreams, I beg your pardon, they cannot of course know whether the animal dreams, but really they know that it has all the appearances of it, is that not so, of the dream. The animal sleeps and then, it is obvious that if he stirs, it is because something is going through him, and since of course, naturally, no one doubts that ideas are images, nothing more, that is even what it means; what is marvellous, is that language is always there as a witness. So then there are images, so he has ideas, which does not mean that he names them. So then, there are guys like that who get excited around the idea that the dream is not there, as Freud said, to protect sleep. The trouble is that Freud did not (157) say that. Sleep in itself can only designate *qua* sleep what is called a need, the need to sleep. What Freud says, is that the dream in the speaking being…because he did not experiment on rats, nor on anything else like that of which we have the proof that it dreams, no one knows whether a fly dreams, nor a rat, one can imagine it because we are all a bit of a rat from some angle, and in particular we are failures (*raté*)! And the experiments in question are such more than the others, they are ratified, they are Ratmen. In short when one is a man one is inhabited by a lot of Ratmen. In any case we have men who are at the level (*au ras*) of science. Freud said that the dream protects, not the need, but the desire to sleep. It is quite certain that this *dit-mansion* alone adds to this Real like that, this insignificant Real in short, that is supposed to be scientific, where people imagine

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needs. But on the contrary, if there is one thing that Freud really made us sense, and there we should follow the text, and notice that for his part, he knows what he is saying, which is that the dream protects something that is called a desire. Now a desire is not conceivable without my Borromean knot.

This is simply in short a remark by which I am trying to show that my saying is all the same, for its part, orientated, and to say that what I am saying is only conditioned by the fact that – I would not say that the word acts in the analytic discourse – that only the word acts. *Im anfang war die Tat* as someone or other has said, and he believes that he invented something there! Yes in short, it's not too bad, he thinks that it contradicts *das Wort*, but if there is not *dat Wort* before the *die Tat*, well then, there is no *Tat* at all. While analysis grasps a point, very limited of course, a very limited point where the word has a *Wirklichkeit*. Of course, it does what it can, it perhaps cannot do a lot, but in short it is all the same a fact, a fact that is all the more exemplary, that this gives us the hope of having a little light on something which is manifest, that there is no action that is not rooted – I will not even say in the word, in the *wawah* in *das Wort*, *das Wort* is that, it is to go *ouah-ouah*. Only the unconscious allows it to be seen how there is a knowledge, not in the Real, [but as a support of the Symbolic]. It is already a lot that it should be supported by this Symbolic that I tried to get you to sense as conceivable, not at the limit, but by the limit, as being made up of the consistency required for the hole, and by this fact requiring it. The Symbolic, certainly, (158) goes round in circles, and it only consists in the hole that it makes. So then everything that has been said about instinct, only means that we had to go towards the Real, towards the supposed Real, that one goes to the Real in order to have a presentiment of the unconscious. And in the sense that the body means consistency, the unconscious gives body to this instinct in a practice. If we want body to mean consistency there is only the unconscious to give body to instinct.

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Yes! Of course, why would all this not be a vain debate between specialists, huh! But in short, this supports a saying, a saying which could have consequences, if analysts said something other than tittle-tattle, it's a fact that they say nothing. Have you ever seen something come out of the *Institut psychanalytique de Paris*, for example? Something readable? It's funny all the same, yeah, you will tell me that there is my School. Of course my School, I have just had an experience, like that, in the *Journées* which have even, that's what's marvellous, what is tiredness! Nevertheless I was very happy, I was completely in my element. Everybody said things that proved that I had been read and I could not get over it. Not only which proved that I had been read, but even , faith, that people were able to bring out of it, like that, pseudopodiums which proved that my saying was being extended. Even I mean to the extent of drawing a certain number of consequences and which were no small thing. You must not imagine that because I question them here that they do not react. They react for reasons which stem from the function of saying, which stem from ek-sistence, namely, from the knot, when all is said and done. But it existed bloody well in these *Journées*. I, naturally have a tendency to think that what I am saying, namely, this discourse founded on a hole, the only hole that is certain, the hole constituted by the Symbolic, because there is one thing whose demonstration, everything on the board is designed to demonstrate it, a hole provided it is consistent, that is circumscribed, a hole is sufficient to knot together a strictly indefinite number of consistencies. And this begins with two as is manifest by this Borromean knot here [IX-2]; that it begins with two guarantees it. That is why the two is only supported by the fundamental hole of the knot. A striking thing, the four [X-6], namely, how it happens that a hole, this one for example, is sufficient (159) to knot together three consistencies that you can make recto-linear – for it is clear that here I can reduce this buckle to be parallel to the one that is here, which on this occasion I designated by a small b.

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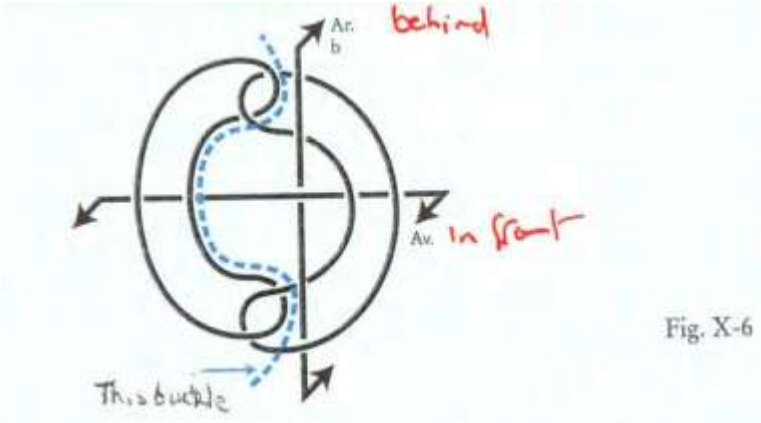

Fig. X-6

Why would I give a hole, a hole circumscribed by a consistency this privilege, this privilege of highlighting the first time that the fact that the hole makes a knot is not limited to two. The fact is that the couple, all by itself, is always unknottable, unless it is knotted by the Symbolic.

I had put that forward as I could at one time, I was recently reminded, in what is called my Rome Discourse, the one for which finally I am delaying a repetition of, I spoke about the full word. Obviously, it was not bad, even though what the words were worth does not amount to much namely, as I told the person who was talking to me about it, the full word, if indeed it supports what creates a knot in the *you are my wife*, I all the same showed a little bit, because I said it since, of course, I did not say it right away like that because I had Lagache and Favez-Boutonnier on my back. In short, anyway, you can imagine if I had said *tuer ma femme* huh, like that, yeah! To kill her, yes, good. That would have made a bad impression (*mauvais effet*), and I am all the same…I look twice at it, I do not lack all common sense, I look twice at it before creating a bad impression. Someone asked me recently in the name of what did the *Jury d'Accueil* (Reception Committee) proceeded in order to stretch its benevolent hand over a certain number of people in the School. It is simply that, they will not (160) make a bad impression, they will not make a bad impression right away - they will do so later when they have got older, and have won a little authority.

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Good, well, the couple, of course, was knotable, whatever may have been the full words that founded it. What analysis demonstrates, is that not so, what it demonstrates in a quite tangible way, is that it is knotted despite that. It is knotted by what, huh? By the hole. By the prohibition of incest. Yes, there are not many people who have highlighted that. It must all the same be said, in the Jewish religion, there was a thing all the same that I wanted to tell you like that, in passing – why do the Jews not get a good press huh? Well, I am going to put that in your pocket, it corrects a certain number of things. It is because they are not nice/gentiles (*gentils*). If they were gentiles, well, they would not be Jews would they? That would settle everything! It is the prohibition of incest. There are all the same people who managed to make that emerge in myths, and even, the Hindus are after all really the only ones who said that if one has slept with one's mother you had to go away, I don't know whether it is towards the East or towards the West, I think it is towards the West, towards the West with one's own prick between one's teeth, after having cut it off of course!

Yeah! We will not consider the fact of the prohibition of incest as historical. It is of course historical, but one has to look so much in history that, as you see, I ended up by finding it among the Hindus, and one can say that here one gets hold of one end of it, huh! It is not historical, it is structural. Why is it structural? Because there is the Symbolic. What one must manage to clearly conceive of is that this prohibition consists in the hole of the Symbolic. There must be something of the Symbolic for there to appear individualised in the knot this something that I, I do not so much call the Oedipus complex, it is not so complex as all that. I call that the Name of the Father. Which means nothing but the Father as Name, which means nothing at the start, not simply the father as name, but the father as naming. There, one cannot say that in this regard the Jews are not nice huh! They really did explain to us what the Father was, the Father that they call, the Father that they stick into a point of the hole that one cannot

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even imagine, *I am what I am*, that is a hole, no! Well! It is from (161) there, that by an inverse movement, for a hole, if you can believe my little schemas, the hole whirls around, or rather it gulps down, huh, then there are moments when it spits out again. It spits out what? The Name. It is the Father as Name.

Obviously one must have all the same a little idea of what that involves, namely, that the prohibition of incest, is propagated. It is propagated on the side of castration, like the other gentiles, in short here the Greeks showed us all the same in a certain number of myths, namely, where they made a genealogy uniquely founded on the Father. Uranus, Chronus, and so on and so forth, until the moment when Zeus after having made a lot of love, faints, faints before what, before a breath. There is all the same a further step to be taken otherwise we comprehend nothing about the link of this castration with the prohibition of incest. It is to see that the link is what I call the sexual non-relationship.

When I say the Name-of-the-Father, that means that there can be like in the Borromean knot an indefinite number of them. That is the core point. It is that this indefinite number in so far as they are knotted everything rests on one. On one, *qua* hole it communicates its consistency to all the others, hence the fact that, you understand, the year when I wanted to speak about the Names-of-the-Father, I would all the same have spoken about a few more than two or three, huh! And what upset that would have caused among analysts, if they had had in short, a whole series of Names-of-the-Father! You can well imagine that I could not have stated an indefinite number of them. A little bit more than the two or three that I had prepared, I am quite satisfied all the same to let them high and dry, namely, to have never

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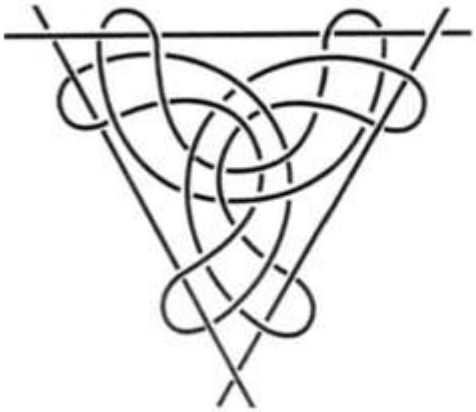

Fig. X-7

taken up these Names-of-the-Father, except, like last year, in the form of the *Non-dupes*, the *Nons-dupes-qui-z'errent*. Obviously, they cannot but err because the more of them there are, the more they will become entangled, and I am certainly very happy to have not brought out a single one.

But, this indeed is why I found myself at the end of these *Journées* having to answer for something that naturally no one had paid attention to in the School, namely, as to what constituted what is called a *cartel*. Why a *cartel*? This is the question that I asked, and – to which miraculously I obtained indicative responses, pseudopodiums as I said earlier, things that made a little bit of a knot, is that not so! (162) Why did I posit very precisely that a cartel starts from three plus-one person, which in principle makes four and gave as a maximum this five, thanks to which that gives six. Does that mean that I think that like the Borromean knot, there are three that must incarnate the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. After all the question could be put, I might be crazy! Have you heard tell, I asked the question yesterday, at the *Journées* because I wanted above all to receive, to instruct myself, have you heard tell of identification? Identification in Freud is quite simply inspired. What I want is what? The identification to the group. Because it is certain that human beings identify to a group. When they do not identify to a group, they're finished and should be locked up. But I am not saying by this to what point of the group they must be identified. The start of any

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social knot is constituted, I am saying, by the sexual non-relationship as a hole, not of two, at least three, and what I mean, is that even if you are only three, that will give four. The plus-one person will be there, even if you are only three, as is very precisely shown by this schema here [IX-7], this giving the example of the fact that this will make a Borromean knot [X-7] if one started from the idea of the cycle, as it is made from two knotted [X-6] even if you were only three, that will make four, hence my expression plus-one. And it is by withdrawing a real one that the group will be unknotted. For this you must be able to withdraw a real one to give the proof that the knot is Borromean and that it is indeed the three minimal consistencies that constitute it. In the three, one never knows which of the three is real, (163) and that indeed is why there must be four, because the four is what in this double buckle [IX-7] supports the Symbolic by what in effect it is made up of, namely, the Name-of-the-Father. Nomination is the only thing about which we can be sure that it makes a hole. And that is why in the cartel I gave this number four as giving the minimum, not without considering that one can all the same have a little bit of slack about what ek-sists and perhaps one day, why not next year, at the rate I am persisting, I will try all the same to show you what all the same the Names-of-the-father…if I couple this Name-of-the-Father to the Symbolic, to make of it the plus-one, by which there is manifestly assured…while here [On the board, IX-2], with three there is something that is not seen right away in the fact that neither *a* nor *b* cross over the hole and make a chain. When there are two of them [IX-6] one sees that even with one it does not cross any of the two holes, that the hole is between the two. That indeed is why the couple does not exist. But perhaps we can specify that there is only after all the Symbolic which has the privilege of the Names-of-the-father, that it is not obligatory that it should be to the hole in the Symbolic that nomination should be joined. I will indicate it next year.

But to come back from this, because I want to end on something which has substance, did not Freud state properly that in

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identification, he said, nobody sees its support, namely, its import. There is no love except from the identification brought to bear on this fourth term, namely, the Name-of-the-Father. Is it not strange that he only states three identifications for us, and that in this three there is everything you need to read my Borromean knot. Namely, that he goes as far as to designate properly consistency as such, in so far as in this knot, it is everywhere. Whether it makes a hole or not, consistency is the basis namely, you see, the *triskel*, namely, this [X-7] for example because I only have the example of it there, the *triskel* which is not a knot. It is only inscribed from consistency, he called that the unary trait, one could not say better! Which is a component of the knot, not without having got the idea that there is only love, I would say, because of the fact that the Name-of-the-Father makes a buckle between the three, makes a buckle of the three of the *triskel*. This term *triskel*, I think that it perhaps means something to a certain number of you. It is strictly that, in so far as extended you see what in (164) it? Three batons (*fusils*) which make a bundle, that support one another in 3's, this is what as you know perhaps, and this is where the name comes from, the Bretons took up to make up their coat of arms, the coat of arms of modern Brittany.

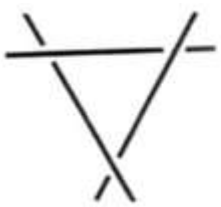

Fig. X-8

That gets us away from the cross, there is already that in short. Yeah! Apart from the fact that one can say that the cross of Lorraine, in its way if it is drawn in the correct way also makes a *triskel*. And what did Freud add to it? He added minimal identification to it in order that this term of identification is supported with respect to the Borromean knot.

I repeat for you, precisely, [On the board] that it is in so far as the Name-of-the-Father is what makes a knot here, and it is a matter of the

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triskel, the Name- of-the-Father, here, makes a knot of the *triskel*, it is in so far then as the *triskel* ek-sists that there can be identification, identification to what? To that which in the Borromean knot, I remind you, in every Borromean knot, I remind you…There, you see, here is my *triskel* here in every Borromean knot it constitutes the heart, the centre of the knot. And where did I mark for you that already desire was situated, the desire which is also a possibility of identification? It is here, namely, there, where I situated for you the place of the **o**-object as being the one that dominates what Freud makes the third possibility of identification, the desire of the hysteric.

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Seminar 11: Tuesday 13 May 1975

There are no, there are no moods (*états d'âme*). This has to be said, to be demonstrated. And to promote the title under which this saying will be pursued next year, if I survive, I would announce it as: 4, 5, 6.

This year I said R.S.I. Why not 1, 2, 3? – "*Un, deux, trois, nous irons aux bois* (1, 2, 3 we will go to the wood) – you know the rest perhaps? - "Q*uatre, cinq, six, cueillir des cerises*, (4, 5, 6 to pick cherries)" – Yes – "*Sept, huit, neuf, dans mon panier neuf*, (7, 8, 9 in my new basket). – Well, I will stop at 4, 5, 6. Why?

Why are R.S.I given as letters? That they are three can be said to be secondary. It is not because they are three that there is one which is the Real. Which, which of these three letters would deserve this title of Real? I say that at the level of logic, what matter! And that meaning yields it to number to the point that it is number that, am I going to say, dominates this meaning? Not at all! Determines it. The number three is to be demonstrated as what it is if it is the Real, namely, the Impossible. It is the most difficult sort of demonstration. What one wants to demonstrate does without saying, it must be impossible, a condition required for the Real. It ek-sists as impossible.

Again it must be demonstrated, not simply shown! Demonstrating refers to the Symbolic. If the Symbolic is thus a step ahead of the Imaginary, that is not enough, it only gives the tone. And when all is said and done, it is not tone that one must trust but number. This is what I am trying to put to the test. But is a knotted number still a number? Or indeed is it something else?

(166) That is where we have got to. I have kept you throughout this year around a certain number of news flashes. For my part, I am not

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all that important in it, being determined as subject by the unconscious, or indeed by the practice, a practice that implies the unconscious as presupposed. Does that mean, that like every sub-posed, it is imaginary? It is the very meaning of the word *subject*, sup-posed as imaginary.

What is there in the Symbolic that is not imagined? What I want to tell you is that there is the hole. Someone who saw me preyed on, make no mistake, by this knot, that here [XI-1] I am drawing for you in its simplest form, someone who saw me preyed on by it, in more complicated forms, told me that I was contradicting myself in a way by having put forward at one time, in terms that are not even my own, which are from Picasso as everyone knows, 'I do not seek, I find', someone said to me: 'Well then there, I see you really searching.'

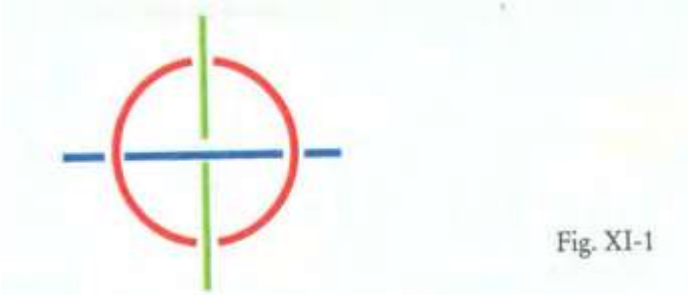

Fig. XI-1

To search (*chercher*), is a term that comes from *circare*, as you can find in any etymological dictionary. I find all the same, because that not in the etymological dictionary, I found the hole, Soury's hole, if I dare to express myself in this way, through which I am reduced to pass. Does it have to do with what people imagine determines it, namely, the circle? A circle may be a hole, but it is not always so… While I am at it, at this subject, I would say – I recall what can already be found in the last lines of my *Remarks on psychical causality* – an Arabic proverb which states that there are a certain number of things, he also names three of them, on which nothing leaves a trace, the man in the woman, he says first, indeed the step of the gazelle on a rock. I anticipated it, recalling the third term of this ending with a comma, 'more inaccessible to our eyes, this trace, made for the signs of the

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(167) moneychanger.' That is the third term. There is no trace on the coin that has been touched, only wear.

Yes! It is indeed here that there comes to be settled, make no mistake, this knotted thing that is at stake, I find, enough to have to foment the circle which is only the consequence of the hole, I find, enough to be able to move around (*circuler*). I do not know if you have noticed that the police whom Hegel posits very well are at the root of everything political and that there is nothing in politics that is not, when everything has been boiled down, purely and simply police, that policemen have only one word to say: keep moving (*Circulez!*). The gyre that I spoke to you about the last time does not matter to them, whether it is gyring to the right or to the left, they don't give a damn, make no mistake, what is at stake is to keep moving! That becomes, that only becomes serious if one starts from the hole through which one must pass. What is remarkable in the knot called 'bo', I am not saying beautiful (*beau*), in the beau knot, as I will call it on this occasion, is exactly the fact that it forms a knot, while not moving around in a way that uses the hole as such. There is a difference between this knot and that one [XI-2] that the hole uses. This is what makes a chain.

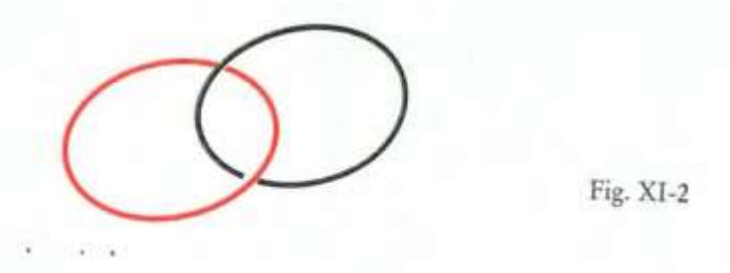

Fig. XI-2

It is striking ever since chains have been made that the thing that has not been noted, is that in the 'bo' knot, there is no need to use the hole because it makes a knot without making a chain. How does it make a knot? In such a way that, to redo it in the way the rings do [XI-3] which is exactly the same thing as that [XI-4], despite the appearance

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Fig. XI-3

as you see it in this form, this form of pure appearance, it is in the measure that these two rings are not knotted [XI-4] that the third, in this very measure, bends one of the two, that are free among themselves, bends it in such a way that necessarily when it gets to the other end of one of these circles, it will bend the other in its turn, and thus, it will turn around, if this ring, the small one there, we suppose it to be the Symbolic, it will indefinitely make a circuit of the – in inverted commas since it is not a true chain – of the 'false chain' of the Imaginary and the Symbolic. This indeed is what is at stake.

How recognise oneself in this coupled double circle and precisely, by not being knotted? In order for a knot to be Borromean, for a knot to be 'bo', it is not enough that it should be a knot, it is necessary that each of the elements, this term it is necessary and it is sufficient, is not

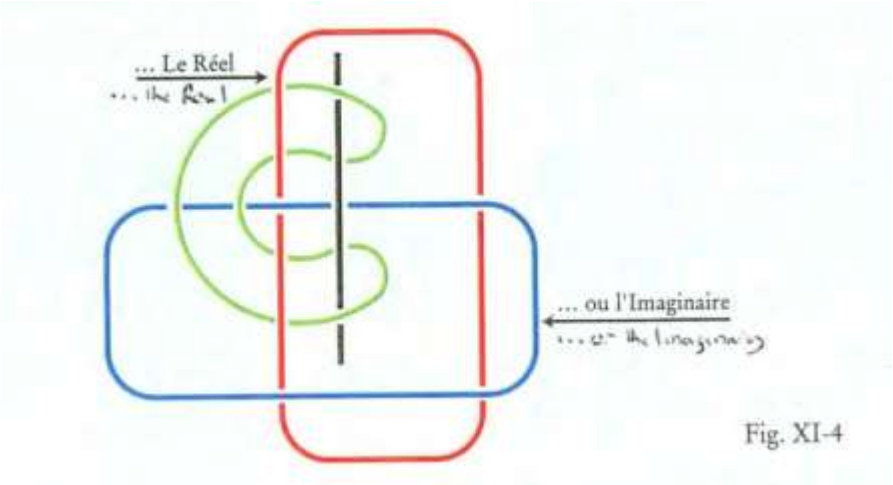

Fig. XI-4

given its full meaning unless it is referred to the knot; to say it is necessary, is something, but to say it is sufficient implies, which is always forgotten because people do not make the hole (*trou)*, the only hole that is worthwhile, the discovery (*trouvaille*)! Because one does not make the hole, one does not see that if the condition is lacking, nothing is going to work out! Which is the opposite of the 'it is

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necessary', the always eluded opposite. I am going to show it to you right away.

You knot two circles [XI-5] you knot them in a way which implies, since here it is not demonstrated but simply shown, you knot them in

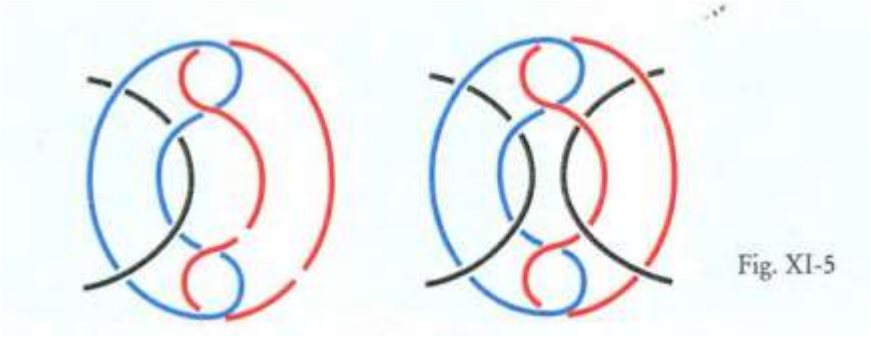

Fig. XI-5

(169) such a way that they are not knotted; that they make here something which is just as much the consistency of a circle as an infinite straight line. This is sufficient because it is identifiable to this figure [XI-1], the 'bo' knot. This is enough to make a Borromean knot. Nothing is going to be easier for you to imagine than the fact that if you make another one pass here like that, you have a figure which will have the air – how can you not believe it? – of being a

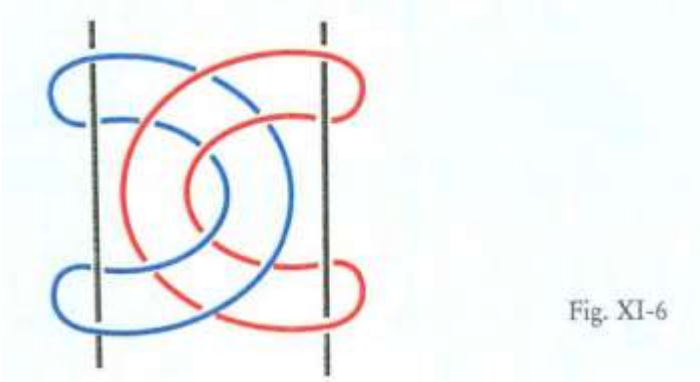

Fig. XI-6

Borromean knot. Nevertheless it is not sufficient to cut this consistency for each of the three elements to be free from the two others. For it to be thus, it would be necessary that things should be differently arranged, which nevertheless indeed seems to be the same thing, namely, [XI-6] that the arrangement in four elements should be in this form, *qua* showable. What demonstrates it? For in this form, it is clear that any one of the elements being broken, the three others are free, which was not the case in the first figure that I gave you.

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(170) And first of all what is there in common in the way in which I depicted these four elements for you, what is there in common between the straight line as infinite and the circle. What is in common is that their breaking liberates the other elements of the knot. The breaking of the circle is equivalent to the breaking of the infinite straight line. How? From the point of view of the knot – not in so far as the breaking in its effects on the knot, not in its effects as a remainder on the element. What does there remain of the circle after its breaking? A finite straight line as such, you may as well say ready to be thrown out, a little rag, a piece of cord that is good for nothing. The zero of the cut circle! Allow me to depict this cut up by what separates it, namely, the two, zero over two equals, at the very most, this little one worth nothing at all. The infinite straight line, the big One, once it is sectioned, gives all the same two half-straight-lines that start as they say, from a point, from a zero point, in order to go to infinity. One over two equals two. This in order to make you sense that when I state that there is no sexual relationship, I give to the meaning of the word relationship the idea of proportion. But everyone knows that the *mos geometricum* of Euclid, which sufficed for so long to appear the paragon of logic, is quite insufficient and to get into the figure of the knot. There is a completely different way of supporting the figure of the non-relationship of the sexes, it is to support them by two circles *qua* not knotted. That is what is at stake in what I state about non-relationship, each of these circles which are constituted we do not yet know of what, in the relationship of the sexes, each one in its way of turning around as sex, is that not so, is not knotted to the other. This is what my non-relationship means.

It is quite striking that language has for a long time anticipated the figure of the knot, about which mathematicians have begun to spar only in our own day, to call a knot what unites the man and a woman, without naturally knowing what is at stake, in speaking metaphorically about the knots that unite them. It is these knots that it would no

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doubt be worth referring to in showing that they imply as necessary this elementary 3 by which as it happens I support them by this three indications of meaning, of materialised meaning, that are depicted in the nominations of the Symbolic the Imaginary and the Real.

I have just introduced the term nomination. I had to answer for it recently in connection with what was collected in a little work by logicians on the subject of what the logicians have managed to state (171) up to now, concerning what is called the referent. I fell there from the heights of my knot, and this did not facilitate things for me at all because that is the whole question: does nominations stem, as it apparently seems, from the Symbolic? You know, in short, perhaps you remember it! I made for you one day the figure that is required when one wishes to foment a knot of four. The least that can be said is that if we introduce nomination at this level, it is a fourth element. This figure, I made it for you in this way [XI-7]: one must start from the unknotted circles, and I even have no repugnance in evoking the case where I was found lacking with regard to this figure. Here is what is appropriate for a fourth circle to knot the three that first of all were posited as unknotted. This figure, contrary to the one in which one day I was just as entangled as you may be on occasion, for want

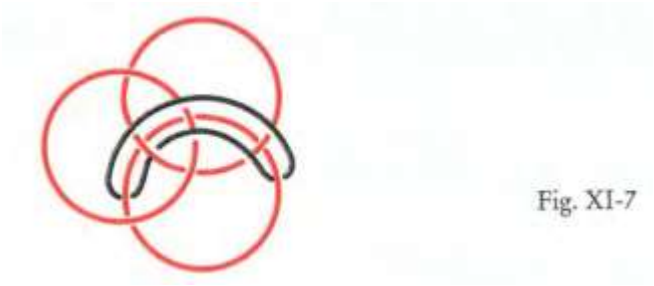

Fig. XI-7

of having disciplined yourself to this exercise, one of these circles remained outside the operation.

It is in this that however full in its simplicity the Borromean knot of three may be, it is starting from four, and I underline, by being engaged in this four, that one finds a path, a particular path that only goes up to six. In other words, which makes of the coupled circle,

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taken for each one of the elements qualifiable from the fact that the three is dictated, not from distinction, but quite the contrary from the identity between the three terms of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real to the point that it seems to us to be required to find in each one, this triplicity, this trinity of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. Namely, to recall that the Real holds up in these terms that I already fomented with the name of ek-sistence, of consistency and of hole, to make of ek-sistence written as I write it, namely, what operates up to a certain limit in the knot, this supports the Real. What gives consistency is of the Imaginary order which is supposed by the (172) fact that it is truly tangible for us that if there is something from which the rupture springs, it is indeed consistency, to give it its most restricted meaning. There remains then – but does there remain – for the Symbolic the affectation of the term hole, this in so far as mathematics, the one properly qualified as topology, gives us a figure in the form of the torus of something that can depict the hole. Now topology does nothing of the kind, if only because the torus has two holes, the internal hole with its gyre and the hole that one can call external, thanks to which the torus is demonstrated as participating in the figure of the cylinder which is one of the ways which best materialises for us the figure of the straight line at infinity. Everyone knows the relationship of the straight line at infinity to what I simply call the ring of consistency. Everyone knows this relationship, and not simply for having seen me depict it in the Borromean knot, the one that carries the indication o.k. (*n.bo.*).

Someone named Desargues, the *Arguésien*, as they say, noticed a long time ago that the infinite straight line is in every way homologous to the circle. In this he anticipated Riemann, he anticipated him. Nevertheless a question remains open to which I already give an answer by the attention that I am bringing to bear on the Borromean knot. Which will not prevent you, at least I hope, from maintaining present to your minds a form of question.

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[*At the board*] As you see in this figure on the left [XI-1] of the Borromean knot constituted by the equivalent of this circle in the form of a straight line knotted to a circle, of the couple [XI-4] supposed by what here, to give your mind a support, could be the Symbolic. The two others, without us knowing what straight line should in particular depict the Real, for example this one, or the Imaginary for that one, what is required for that to make a knot? The point at infinity must be such that the two straight lines do not make a chain. Here is the condition that the two straight lines, whatever they may be, from wherever one sees them – I am pointing out to you in passing that this from wherever one sees them supports this reality that I state about the look, this look is only definable from wherever one sees them from – where one sees them from is in truth, if we think of a straight line as going round a point, a unique point at infinity, how not see that the fact that they are not knotted has a meaning. Not alone does it have a meaning that they are not knotted, but that it is by not being knotted that they will effectively be knotted at infinity, a point that to the best of my knowledge Desargues, Desargues whom I used at the time that (173) somewhere other than here, at *Normale Supérieure*, to evoke it by its name, I was giving my seminar on *Las Meninas*, the *Las Meninas* of Velasquez that I took advantage of to pride myself on situating where was this famous look which quite clearly is the subject of the painting. I situated it somewhere, in the same interval – perhaps one day you will see this seminar appearing – in the same interval that I am establishing here on the board, in a different form, namely, in the one that I define from the fact that the infinite straight lines at their supposed point at infinity, are not knotted in a chain.

Here indeed is where the question begins for us. It does not seem that Desargues ever asked himself about the form in which he supposed these infinite straight lines, in posing the question of whether they knotted or not. It is quite striking that Riemann, for his part, should have settled the question in a way that gives little satisfaction by making of all the points at infinity, whatever straight line they belong

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to, a single and unique point which is at the principle of Riemann's geometry.

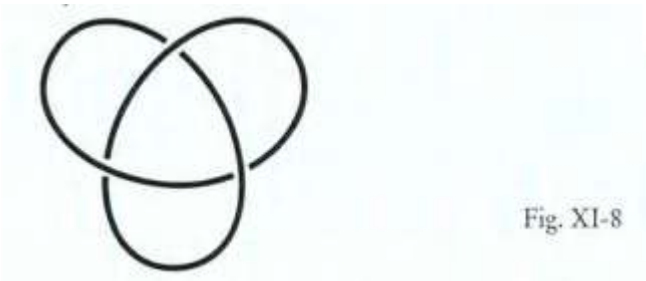

Fig. XI-8

By raising the question of the knot, we are going to see, I am going to depict something for you here [XI-8], ah!, that I hope to get to the end of, in the form of a knot, a true one, which, a curious thing, presents a sort of analogy with this form [XI-3]. If we study this knot as the mathematicians do, what we, all that we can do, is to initiate the notion described as that of the fundamental group, namely, define the structure of this knot by a series of journeys (*trajets*) that will be made from any point whatsoever, this one, for example. We define the knot by something called the fundamental group which involves a number that differs according to the knots, a number of journeys that are necessary to indicate its structure. These journeys, even if they make several buckles in each one, but here I am asking the question, I am putting the hole in quotation marks, in each one of the holes which, apparently, make this knot, will be a certain number of them, and (174) contrary to what you may imagine, this number, in this case, in this case where the flattened-out figure seems to involve four, four distinct fields, that will not make for all that four individualised circles of the journey, but contrary to what one may imagine, this is not the number which will be characteristic of this fundamental group, it will be the relation between a certain number of journeys.

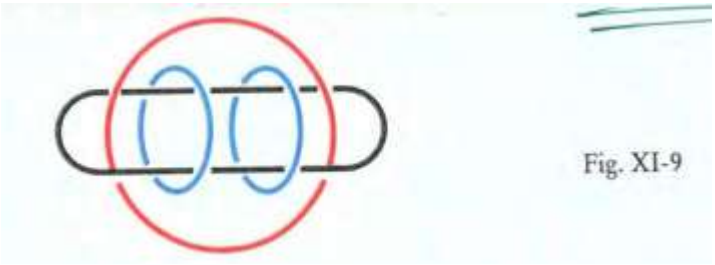

Fig. XI-9

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We are supporting here, in a pure state, the notion of relationship, in so far as, precisely, it brings us back to the knot, to the Borromean knot, since this very relationship makes a knot, except for the fact that the knot lacks numbers. In taking this stage of the Borromean knot, we support by the very number the circles or the journeys that are at stake for any knot whatsoever, even if this knot, the one that I have just drawn, as you see, only has a unique consistency. We take the number as a go-between, as an intermediary, as itself an element to introduce us into the dialectic of the knot. What I will come to this time is the following, it is that namely, nothing is less, as I might say, natural than to think this knot. That there is something of the one, which I put forward at one time to support it by the circle is something to which, precisely, the movement of thought is limited, to make a circle, and that is why there is nothing more natural, make no mistake, than to reproach its circle as vicious. That if, to depict the relationship of the sexes without otherwise specifying any more, I find the figure of two one (*sic*), in the form of two circles, that a third knots precisely by the fact that they are not knotted with one another, for what is at stake is not simply that they are not so, that they are free when this third is broken, it is that this third, as I showed you in the figure [XI-9], this one, what is at stake is that it is because this third explicitly knots them by the fact that they are not knotted and if all I had done was to get this function into your heads, I would consider that today I (175) had not spoken in vain. This is the very thing that is at stake, it is from the fact that they are not knotted that they knot. And the necessity of a fourth term should come here to dictate its first truths is precisely what I want end on. Namely, that without the fourth, nothing is properly speaking highlighted – I was not able to do it today – highlighted about what the Borromean knot truly is.

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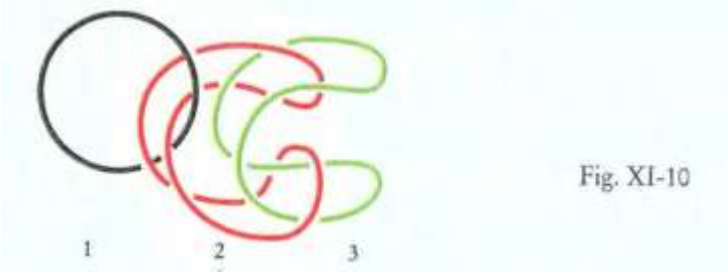

Fig. XI-10

In any chain, to imagine the simplest one for you, in every Borromean chain, there is a one then a two [XI-10] according to the form that I drew for you earlier, you will find here the one and the two, which is the beginning of the chain after which, here, there will be a third circle that act as a buckle. What is implied by the fact that in any chain whatsoever, since it makes a chain, it always makes a chain, we place any one whatsoever of the first two in the third rank? Whatever may be the chain, the operation that is at stake will imply for us limiting the chain 1-2-3-4, [XI-11] will imply that if we wish to put any one whatsoever of these two in the third rank, the one will be then knotted to the two, both by the three and the four. Try it out, for moreover there is nothing like it to try to think out this knot than to manipulate

(176) rings of string. I repeat, although already having no more space on the board, 1-2-3-4, [XI-12] to limit ourselves to that, in any chain whatsoever, from whatever end we take it, will imply that by putting either the 1, or the 2 in the place described as the third, by making the effort, we will obtain the following. The fact is that by choosing one of the two, since here it is the 2 that we choose, to put the 2 here in the third row, the 3 and the 4 will necessarily knot this 1 to the 2 that is shifted in this way. It is quite clear that the 1 and the 2 are interchangeable, namely, that at the start of a chain, the first and the second are indefinitely interchangeable [XI-13]. It is by placing the

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one of these two there in the third rank, by striving to aim at placing it in row three that we will see not simply the three involved and passing to the place of the 2, but with the 3, the fourth. And this is why the interest that I have in the knot of four is justified on this occasion and that I will develop it next year.

Fig. XI-13

From then on, since we do not know what to couple nomination with, the nomination which here constitutes the fourth term, are we going to couple it to the Imaginary, namely, that coming from the Symbolic, nomination is there to have a certain effect in the Imaginary? This indeed in effect is what seems to be at stake among logicians when they talk about the referent. The descriptions of Russell, those that question themselves about the author, those that ask why it is legitimate and logically fragile to question the fact of whether or not (177) Walter Scott is the author of *Waverley*, it seems that this reference explicitly concerns what is individualised by the thought-out support of bodies. It is certainly in fact nothing of the kind. The notion of referent aims at the Real. It is as Real, that what the logicians imagine as Real, gives its support to the referent. For this imaginary nomination, the one that is written by this for example, that from the relation between R and S, we have a nomination index *i*, and then the I to stick with the knot of four, as constituting the link between the Real and the Symbolic.

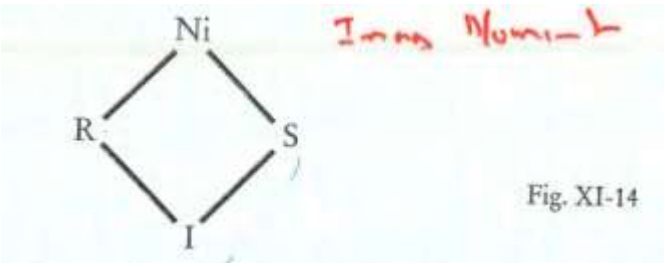

Fig. XI-14

I would propose the following, which is that Imaginary nomination is very precisely what I have supported today by the infinite straight line,

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and that this straight line, in this circle that we compose of a circle and a straight line, that this straight line is very precisely not what names anything whatsoever of the Imaginary but what, precisely, creates a bar, inhibits the handling of everything that is demonstrative, of everything that, articulated as Symbolic, creates a bar at the level of the Imagination itself and renders what is at stake in the body as regards which everyone knows that what interests the body, at least in the analytic perspective, is the body in so far as it creates an orifice, that that by which it is knotted to some Symbolic or Real that is involved, is precisely from this knot, the highlighting of a circle, of an orifice that the Imaginary is constituted.

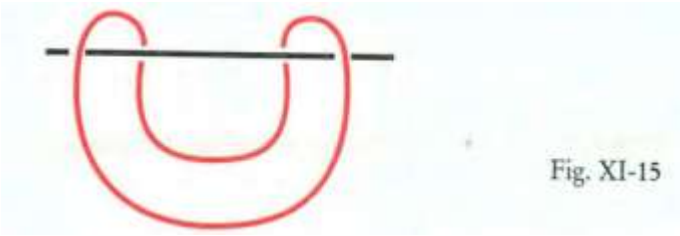

Fig. XI-15

(178) This infinite straight line which here completes the false hole [XI-15] that is at stake, since an orifice is not enough to make a hole, each one of them being independent of the other, is very precisely the inhibition that thought has with respect to the knot. We can question in the same way, whether between the Real and the Imaginary, it is the nomination index of the Symbolic, namely, in so far as in the Symbolic there arises something that names, we see that at the beginning of the Bible, except for the fact that what is not noticed is that the creationist idea, the inaugural *Fiat lux*, is not a nomination. That it is from the Symbolic that the Real arises – that is the idea of creation – has nothing to do with the fact that in a second phase, the same God gives their name to each of the animals that inhabit Paradise.

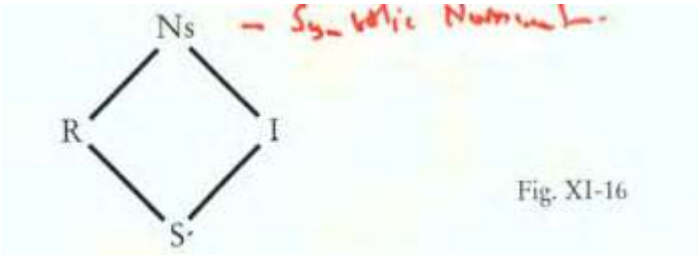

Fig. XI-16

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What nomination is at stake, in what I am calling here to indicate it by a Ns, what nomination is involved, in this, in one of the two of those we are mythically told about? This indeed in effect is a question that is worth dwelling on a little, because this stems from the meaning which, in each case, is a different meaning. The nomination of each one, which moreover is a common name, not a proper name in Russell's sense, what does the nomination of each one of the species represent? Assuredly a narrowly Symbolic nomination, a nomination limited to the Symbolic. Is this sufficient for us to support what happens at a point that is certainly not indifferent in this elementing of four of the knot that is supported by the name of the Father. Is the Father the one who has given their name to things? Or indeed should this Father be questioned *qua* Father, at the level of the Real? In a word is the eternal Father, in whom of course nothing would prevent us from believing if it was even thinkable that he himself believes in himself, while it is quite clearly unthinkable, should we put the term (179) nomination as knotted at the level of this circle by which we support the function of the Real? It is between these three terms, nomination from the Imaginary as inhibition, nomination from the Real as what is found to happen in fact, namely, anxiety, or nomination from the Symbolic, I mean implicated, flower of the Symbolic itself, namely, as it happens in fact in the form of the symptom, it is between these three terms that I will try next year, it is not a reason because I have the answer that I do not leave it to you as a question, that I will question myself next year about what substance should be given to the name of father.

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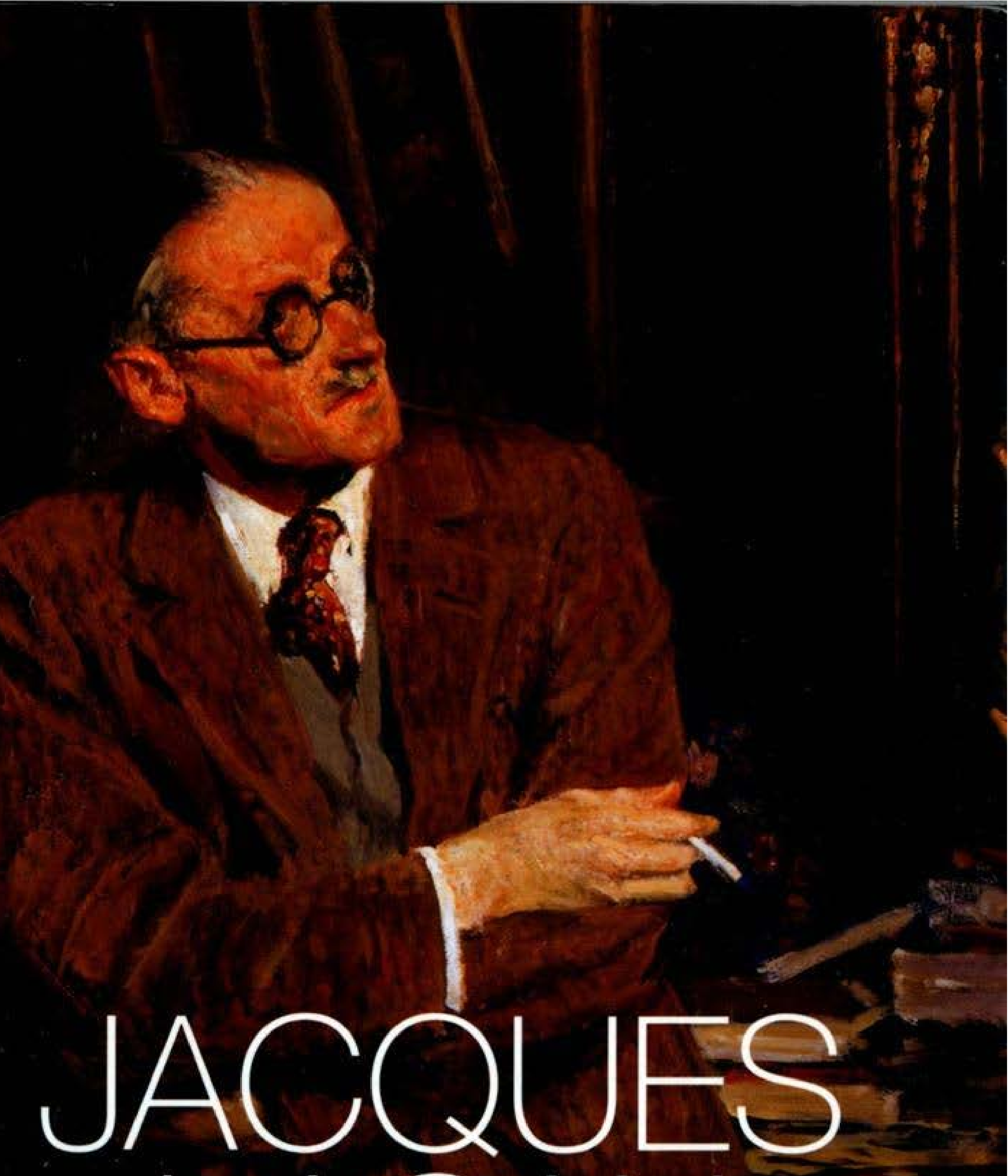

JACQUES LACAN

The Sinthome

The Seminar of Jacques Lacan | Book XXIII

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller

'Ten times, an elderly grey-haired man gets up on the stage. Ten times puffing and sighing. Ten times slowly tracing out strange multi-coloured arabesques that interweave, curling with the meanders of his speech, by turns fluid and uneasy. A whole crowd looks on, transfixed by this enigma-made-man, absorbing the *ipse dixit* and anticipating some illumination that is taking its time to appear.

Non lucet. It's shady in here, and the Théodores go hunting for their matches. Still, they say, *cuicumque in sua arte perito credendum est*, whosoever is expert in his art is to be lent credence. At what point is a person mad? The master himself poses the question.

That was back in the day. Those were the mysteries of Paris forty years hence. A Dante clasping Virgil's hand to be led through the circles of the Inferno, Lacan took the hand of James Joyce, the unreadable Irishman, and, in the wake of this slender Commander of the Faithless, made with heavy and faltering step onto the incandescent zone where symptomatic women and ravaging men burn and writhe.

An equivocal troupe was in the struggling audience: his son-in-law; a dishevelled writer, young and just as unreadable back then; two dialoguing mathematicians; and a professor from Lyon vouching for the seriousness of the whole affair. A discreet Pasiphaë was being put to work backstage.

Smirk then, my good fellows! Be my guest. Make fun of it all! That's what our comic illusion is for. That way, you shall know nothing of what is happening right before your very eyes: the most carefully considered, the most lucid, and the most intrepid calling into question of the art that Freud invented, better known under its pseudonym: psychoanalysis.'

Jacques-Alain Miller

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The Sinthome

Jacques Lacan

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The Seminar of Jacques Lacan
Book XXIII

Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller

Translated by A. R. Price

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Book XXIII

The Sinthome

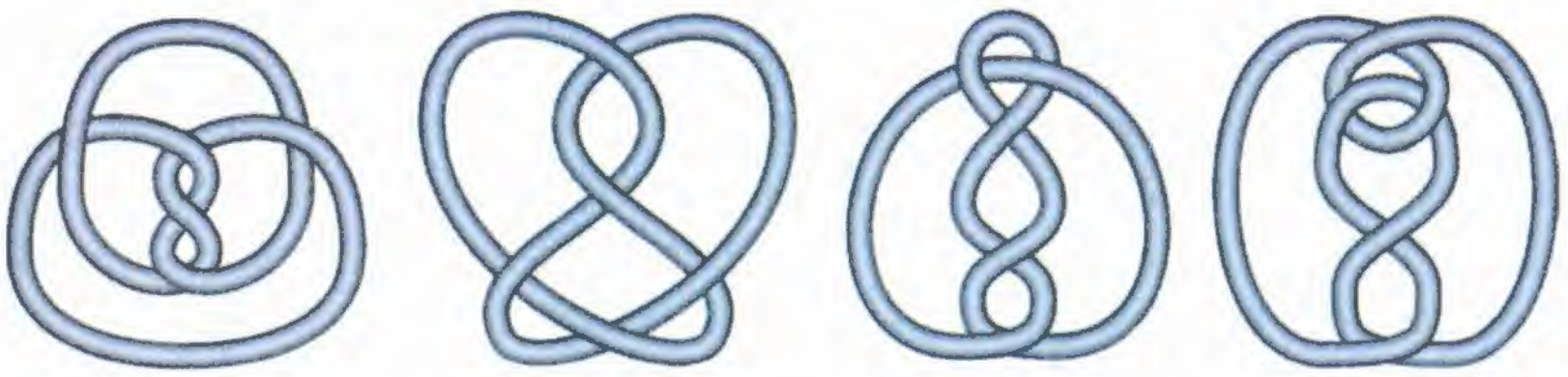
1975–1976

THE SPIRIT OF THE KNOTS

I

ON THE LOGICAL USE OF THE SINTHOME
OR FREUD WITH JOYCE

Joyce, that father-tasked wretch
The body: form and the fact of saying
The father is a sinthome
On the four-component Borromean link
On an art that foils the truth of the sinthome



Figures drawn on the blackboard[1]

Sinthome is an old way of spelling what was subsequently spelt *symptôme*.

This way of spelling it marks a date, that of the injection of Greek into what I call my *lalingua*, specifically French.[2] Indeed, I've allowed myself to alter its spelling in this way because Joyce, in the first chapter of *Ulysses*, expressed his wish to Hellenize, to inject in like fashion the Hellenic tongue, but into what? We don't know, since it wasn't Gaelic, even though Ireland was involved.

Joyce had to write in English, there's no doubt about that. However, as someone whom I do hope is here in the audience, Philippe Sollers, has remarked in *Tel Quel*, Joyce wrote in English in such a way that the English language no longer exists.

Admittedly, this tongue was already one that bore little consistency, which doesn't mean that it's easy to write in English, but, through the sequence of works that he penned in English, Joyce

added something to it that makes the same author say that it ought to be written *l'élangues*.[3] I suppose he thereby means to designate something like the elation that we are told lies at the root of a sort of sinthome that in psychiatry we call mania.

Mania is indeed what Joyce's last work looks like, the one that he strung out for such a long while to attract the attention of all and sundry, namely *Finnegans Wake*.

It was in relation to this work that I let myself get roped into opening a Joyce symposium, given what I must say was a pressing request from Jacques Aubert, who is present here today and every bit as pressing. This was also how, all told, I let myself be turned away from the project I announced at the end of the last academic year, which was to call this year's Seminar *4, 5, 6*. I've made do with four, and I'm glad because I would surely have been defeated by *4, 5, 6*.

This doesn't mean that the four at issue shall sit any more lightly on my shoulders.

1

I have inherited from Freud, quite in spite of myself, for having stated in my time what could be gleaned with sound logic from the gibberish of those he called his *band*, and whom I've no need to name. This was the clique that attended the Vienna meetings, and it can't be said that a single one of them followed the path of what I'm calling sound logic.

To cut to the chase, I shall say that what specifies Nature *per se* is that it is not *a* nature, hence logical process as a means of broaching it. Through the process of calling *Nature* that which you exclude by the very fact of taking an interest in something, this something becoming differentiated on account of being named, Nature ventures nothing save to affirm itself as a potpourri of what is not in the nature of anything.

This statement has one advantage, which is the following. Should you find, fairly reckoning, that *naming* stands apart from what seems to be the law of Nature, that man doesn't enjoy any relation that is naturally sexual – this *naturally* comes with every reservation – well, this statement allows you logically to posit that this is not exclusive to man, which does actually turn out to be the case.

Take care, however, not to start saying that there is nothing natural about sex. Try instead to find out how it is in each case, from bacteria to birds, because they do have names. I've already alluded to both one and the other.

Let's note in passing that in the Creation that is said to be Divine only in that it makes reference to naming, the bacterium is not named. Nor is it named when, fooling around with the putative original man, God suggests he begin by the act of saying the name of each little beastie.

The only trace we have of this first bout of mucking around lies in concluding from it that Adam, as his name indicates well enough – an allusion to Peirce's function of the index – was a Madam, precisely in keeping with the joke that Joyce makes.

Indeed, one does have to assume that Adam only ever named the beasts in the tongue of she that I shall call *l'Ève*. I've every right to call her this because in Hebrew, if Hebrew is indeed a tongue, her name means *mother of the living*.[4] Well, *l'Ève* found her tongue straightaway, and kept it well-oiled, because after the putative naming by Adam she was the first person to put it to use, in order to speak to the serpent.

This so-called Divine Creation is thus redoubled by the parley of the *parlêtre*, as I've called him, by which *l'Ève* turns the serpent into what you'll allow me to call the *serre-fesses*, the buttock-clencher, later designated as a *faille*, a fault-line, or better still, a phallus – because you need one to make the *faut-pas*.[5]

This is the fault, the *sin*, which my *sinthome* advantageously starts with. In English, *sin* refers to the trespass of original sin, hence the *necessity* of the fact that the fault-line that is always growing *doesn't stop*, unless it should undergo the *stop* of castration as *possible*.

I said in the past that this *possible* is *what stops being written*. Seeing you here in such large numbers I reckon there must all the same be some who have already heard my yarns, but you haven't remotely noticed, since I myself didn't, that a comma has to be included here. The *possible* is *what stops*, comma, *being written*. Or rather, *what would stop, taking the path of being written* in the event that the discourse I have mentioned would at last come to be, a discourse such that it is not semblance.

Is it impossible for truth ever to be produced by *savoir-faire*? No, it isn't, but then it shall only be half-said, incarnated in a signifier S subscript 1, right where it takes at least two of them for *The Woman*, the one and only, She who is mythical in the sense that the myth makes her singular – it's Eve, whom I spoke about just now – ever to have been incontestably possessed, for having tasted the fruit of the forbidden tree, the tree of Knowledge.

L'Ève, then, is not mortal. She is no more mortal than Socrates. *The Woman* in question is another name of God, and it is in this respect that she doesn't exist, as I've said many times.

You will notice Aristotle's cunning here, not wanting the singular to play a role in his logic. Now, contrary to what he allowed in the aforesaid logic, it has to be said that Socrates *is not* a man, because he agrees to die so that the city will live on. He accepts this, and this is a fact. Moreover, it really has to be said that on this occasion he doesn't want to hear his wife speak. Hence my formula about woman, which I'm pegging out, as it were, for your use, by using the *μὴ πάντες*, which is the opposition, dismissed by Aristotle, to the universal of the *πάν*, and which I picked out from the *Organon*.

I haven't managed to find it again, but I did read it there, sure enough that my daughter, who is here today, put her finger on it and swore to me earlier that she would find the place again for me. Woman is not *all* but in the equivocal form that takes on its piquancy from this lalingua of ours, in the form of *but not that*, as when one says, *anything, but not that*. This was precisely Socrates' position. The *but not that* is what, under this year's title, I'm introducing as the sinthome.

At this instant, at the instance of the letter such as it has so far been outlined – and don't expect any better, because whatever might be more effective would do no better than to displace the sinthome, even to multiply it – for the present instance, there is the *sinthome masaquinas*, which I spell however you like.

You know that Joyce had slaved quite enough over this *saint homme*. As far as philosophy is concerned, no one's ever done any better. One has to put things as best one can – it's the only true thing there is. This doesn't prevent Joyce from not really making head or tail of it with respect to the thing by which he sets such great store, namely what he calls Beauty. On this point, have a look at Jacques Aubert's book and you'll see that in the *sinthomasaquinas* there is goodness knows what exactly which he calls *claritas*, which Joyce replaces with something along the lines of the *radiance* of Being, which is really the weak point at issue.

Is this a personal weakness? I don't find the radiance of Being to be all that striking. And it is in precisely this respect that Joyce strips the sinthome of its *masaquinism*.

Contrary to how things might appear at first glance, namely somewhat detached from politics, this produced what I shall call the *sint'home rule*. The *Freeman's Journal* represented this Home Rule as a sun rising behind the Bank of Ireland. As if by chance, Joyce has it come up in the northwest, which is not usual for a sunrise. Despite the squeaking that we meet on this subject in Joyce, it's none the less the *sinthome roule*, the rolling sinthome, on rollers, that Joyce conjoins.

It's quite certain that these two terms could be given different names. I'm naming them this way on account of the two aspects available to Joyce's art, which will be keeping us busy this year in view of what I said earlier, which I introduced, and which I did no better than call by the name he deserves, that suits him, by changing its spelling.

Both spellings concern him, but it's a fact that Joyce makes a choice, and in this regard he is, like me, a heretic. For *haeresis* is precisely what specifies the heretic. One has to choose the path by which to capture the truth – especially since, once the choice has been made, no one is prevented from subjecting it to *confirmation*, that is, from being a heretic in the right way.

The right way is the one that, when the *nature* of the sinthome has been recognized, doesn't shrink from using it logically, that is, from using it to the point of reaching its real, at the end of which it is sated.

2

Joyce did that, but in an approximate fashion, of course, because one couldn't get off to a worse start than he did.

Being born in Dublin with a boozing father who was more or less a Fenian, that is, a fanatic, from two families, because that's how it turns out for everyone when one is a son of two families and when it so happens that one believes oneself to be male because one has a little scrap of a dick. Pardon me for this word, but naturally it takes more than that. However, since his dick was a bit lax, as it were, his art supplemented his phallic allure. And this is always the way. The phallus is the conjunction between what I've called *this parasite*, which is the little scrap of a dick in question, and the function of speech. And it is in this respect that his art is the true guarantor of his phallus.

Aside from that, let's say that he was a *pauvre hère*, a poor wretch, and even a *pauvre hérétique*. The Joyceans who have enjoyment of his heresy are only to be found in academia. But Joyce quite deliberately wanted this breed to busy themselves with him. The best of it is that he managed, and beyond all measure. It has lasted, and will last further still. He expressly wanted three hundred years of it. He said he wanted to *keep the critics busy for three hundred years*, and this he shall achieve, provided God doesn't a-Thomize us.

Ce hère – one cannot say *cet hère*, the aspirated *h* forbids it and this even bothers everyone so much that they say *le pauvre hère* – this wretch conceived of himself as a *hère-o*. *Stephen Hero* is the title

expressly given to the book from which he prepared *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*

I would have liked at least to show you the edition to get but I didn't bring the book along, which is really daft of me. It's hard to find, which is why I'm telling you how much you will have to insist. Nicole Sels, who is here today, sent me a very precise note – more what you'd call a letter – where over two pages she explains that currently it's impossible to get hold of this text, along with its *criticism* by different people, all of whom are academics. Besides, to write on Joyce is one way of getting into the university. The university draws in Joyceans. It gives them degrees. They're already in a good position. In short, you won't find the . . . – I don't know how to pronounce this name. Jacques Aubert will tell me. Is it *Beeb* or *Beeb-ie*?

– *Usually, one says* Beeb-ie.

He's at the top of the list, with an article on Joyce that's in a class of its own. Further down you have Hugh Kenner who in my opinion speaks fairly well about Joyce, perhaps because of the Saint Thomas Aquinas in question. And then there are others right up to the end. I regret that you won't be able to have this book at your disposal.

Truth be told, it was a schoolboy blunder on my part, if ever there was one, to have shrunk the characters of this short note. You'll have to make arrangements with Nicole Sels to get a series of photocopies made. As I reckon there are not that many of you who are up to scratch in English, especially Joyce's English, this should only be a small number, but clearly there will be some competition, my goodness, legitimate competition.

A Portrait of the Artist . . . You have to write *Artist* with all the stress on *the*. This *the* is not entirely the same as our French definite article of course. But one can trust Joyce. If he says *the*, it's because he really reckons that, when it comes to the artist, he's the only one. In this, he is singular.

. . . *as a Young Man* is very suspect. In French, that would translate as *comme*. In other words, what is at issue is the *comme-ment*, the *how*.

The French is telling on this point. When one employs an adverb when one speaks, when one says *real-ly*, *mental-ly*, *heroic-ly*, adding on this *–ly* already in itself tells you that one is *ly*-ing. There is something of a lie in any adverb. This is no accident. When we interpret, we must pay attention to this.

Someone who is fairly close to me made the remark with regard to the tongue, in so far as this designates the instrument of speech,

that it is also the tongue that carries what are called taste buds. Well, I retorted that *ce qu'on dit ment* is not for nothing.[6]

It's good of you to chuckle, but it's not funny because when all is said and done the equivoque is all we have as a weapon against the symptom.

It so happens that I afford myself the luxury of *supervising*, as they call it, a certain number of people who have authorized themselves, each on their own, to be analysts, in keeping with my formula. There are two stages. There is a stage when they go like a rhino. They go barging in any old how, and I always go along with them. Indeed, they are always right. The second stage consists in playing on the equivoque that might free up something of the sinthome.

Indeed, interpretation operates solely through equivoques. There has to be something in the signifier that resonates.

It comes as a surprise that this wasn't even remotely apparent to the British philosophers. I'm calling them philosophers because they're not psychoanalysts. They staunchly believe that speech doesn't have any effects. They're wrong. They do entertain the existence of drives, but even then, only when they are good enough not to translate *Trieb* as *instinct*. They don't entertain the idea that the drives are the echo in the body of a fact of saying.

For this fact of saying to resonate, for it to be consonant, to use another word of *sinthome masaquinas*, the body has to be sensitive to it. And it's a fact that it is. The body is sensitive to it because it has a few orifices, the most important of which is the ear because it can't be sealed, shut, or closed off. It is because of this that there is a response in the body to what I have called the voice.

The trouble is surely that there is not only the ear. The gaze also puts up some stiff competition.

More geometrico. Because of form, the form that was so dear to Plato, the individual presents himself just as he has been put together, as a body. And this body possesses such a power of captivation that up to a certain point one should be envious of the blind. How might a blind man, assuming he knows how to use braille, read Euclid?

The astonishing thing is that form offers up nothing more than the bag, or, if you like, the bubble, because it's something that inflates.

The obsessional is more stricken by this than anyone else because, as I said somewhere and was reminded recently, he belongs to the same register as the frog who wanted to be as big as an ox. A certain fable allows us to see the effects of that. It's particularly difficult, as we know, to wrench the obsessional away from the stranglehold of the gaze.

The bag, such as it is envisaged in the set theory that Cantor founded, is made manifest, or even demonstrated – if every demonstration is to be held to demonstrate the imaginary that it implies – as fit to be connoted with an ambiguity between 1 and 0. This is the only fitting support for the confines of the empty set, which imposes itself in this theory. Hence our scription S_1 which, I specify, is read S subscript 1. It does not form the unity of *one*, but it indicates that it is an empty bag, since it is able to contain nothing.

It none the less remains that an empty bag is still a bag, namely the *one* that can be imagined only on the basis of the ex-sistence and the consistence that the body possesses on account of being a pot. This ex-sistence and this consistence have to be held to be real, since the real is the fact of holding them together, hence the word *Begriff*, which means precisely that.

The imaginary here shows its homogeneity with the real, and it shows that this homogeneity is due solely to the fact of number, in so far as number is binary, 1 or 0. This means that it only supports 2 by dint of 1 not being 0, by dint of 1 *ex-sisting* relative to 0, but it doesn't *consist* in any of it.

So it is that Cantor's theory has to start afresh from the pair, but then the set stands in third place. The conjunction between the first set and what amounts to the Other doesn't come about. This is precisely why the symbol offloads onto the imaginary.

The symbol carries the subscript 2, indicating that it is a pair, that is to say, that it introduces division in the subject, whoever this subject might be, through whatever is uttered here *de facto*. Since this fact remains suspended from the enigma of enunciation, which is simply a fact closed in upon itself – the fact of the fact, as it is written, *le faîte du fait*, the pinnacle of the fact, or *le fait du faîte*, the fact of the pinnacle, as it is said. The facts are equal in fact. Equivocal and equivalent, the fact is thereby the limit of what is said.

What is incredible is that men saw quite clearly that the symbol could only be a fractured part, and that this has been so, as it were, since time immemorial. But what is also incredible is that they didn't see at the time, the time of this *immemorial time*, that this entailed the unity and the reciprocity of the signifier and the signified – and that consequently the originary signified doesn't mean anything, that it is only a sign of arbitration between two signifiers – a sign of arbitration and, due to this fact, there is no arbitrariness in choosing between them.

Arbitration or, to say it in English, *umpire*. That's how Joyce writes it. There is only any umpire on the basis of empire, on the basis of the *imperium* over the body, just as everything bears its mark following the trial by ordeal.

Here the 1 confirms its detachment from the 2. It only makes 3 through imaginary forcing, the same that imposes a kind of will that suggests to one to manhandle the other, without being bound to either of them.

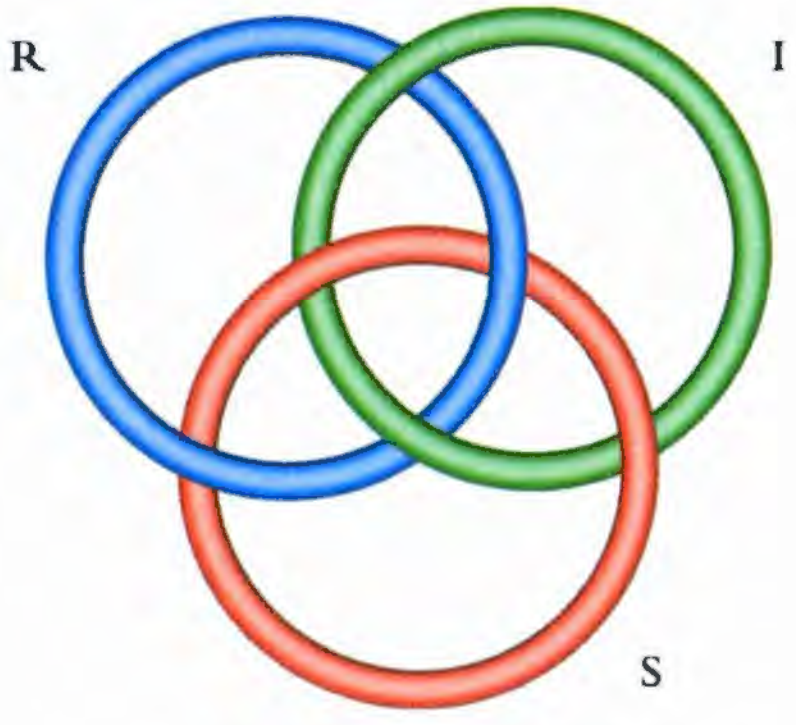
3

For the condition to have been expressly posited that, starting with three rings, a link is made such that a break in one of the rings, the middle one, if I may put it in a somewhat abridged form, sets the other two, whichever they may be, free from one another, it had to be noticed that this had been inscribed on the coat of arms of the Borromeo family.

The so-called *nœud borroméen* was thus already there without anyone being shrewd enough to learn a lesson from it.[7]

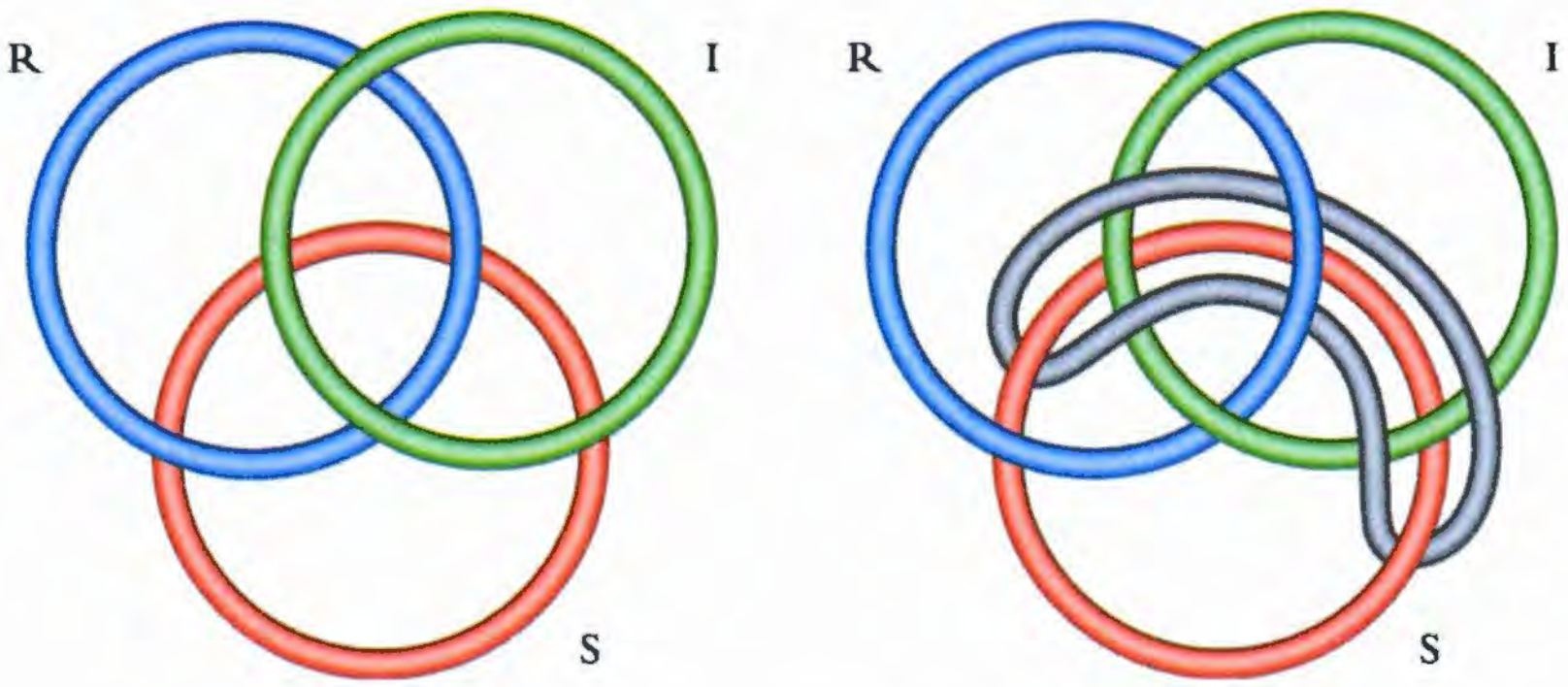
It is precisely here that we find what lies behind the error of thinking that this knot is a norm for the relationship between the three functions that only exist one relative to the other in their implementation within the being who, forming a knot, believes himself to be a man. It is not a break between the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real that defines perversion, it is that they already stand apart in such a way that a fourth term has to be supposed, which on this occasion is the sinthome.

I'm saying that what forms the Borromean link has to be supposed to be tetradic – that perversion merely means *version vers le père*, a version towards the father – and that all in all, the father is a symptom, or a sinthome, as you wish. The ex-sistence of the symptom is what is *im-ply-cated* by the very position that presupposes this enigmatic bond between the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real.



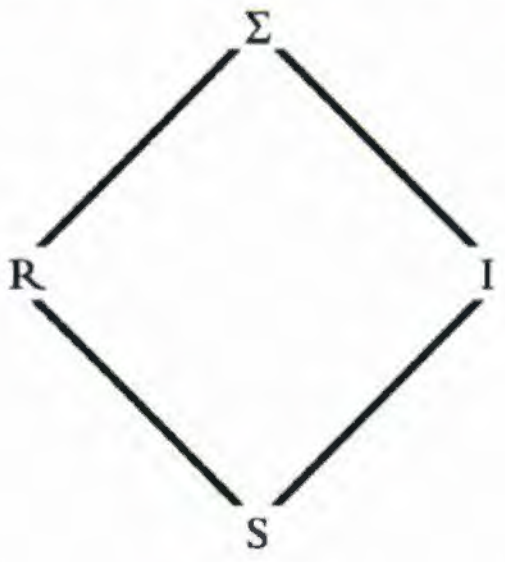
The Borromean link[8]

The following figuration, here on the left, is a diagram of the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real, each separate from the other. Already, in my previous planar diagrams, you have the possibility of binding them together. With what? With the sinthome, the fourth ring.



The three separate rings (left);
the rings linked by the fourth ring, the sinthome (right) [9]

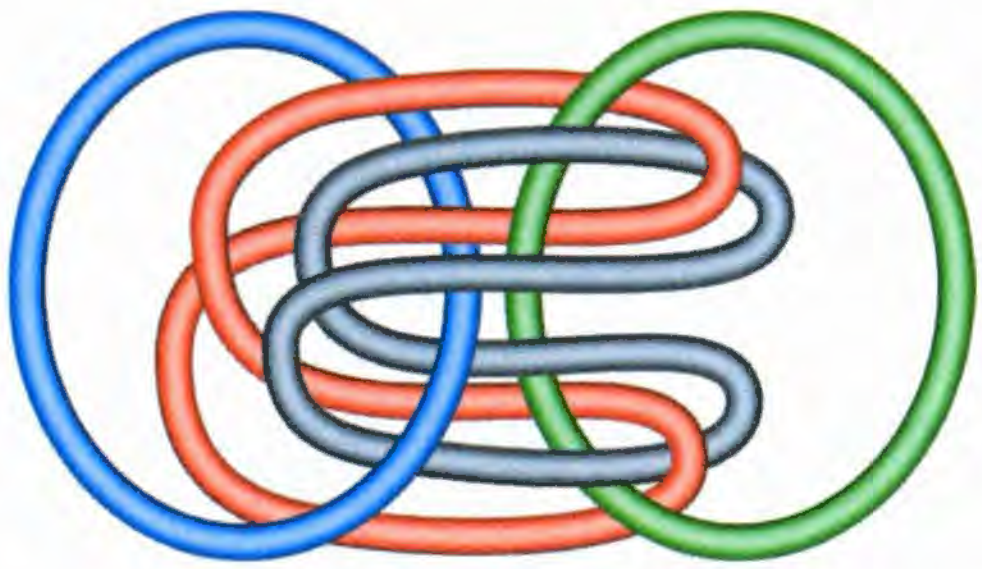
That gives you this relationship, namely, the imaginary, the real, the symptom – which I'm writing here with a sigma – and the symbolic. Each one is interchangeable in a way that will, I hope, strike you as quite straightforward. To spell it out, 1 onto 2 can permute to 2 onto 1, while 3 onto 4 can permute to 4 onto 3.



I R Σ S
1 2 3 4
2 1 4 3

The combinatory I R Σ S

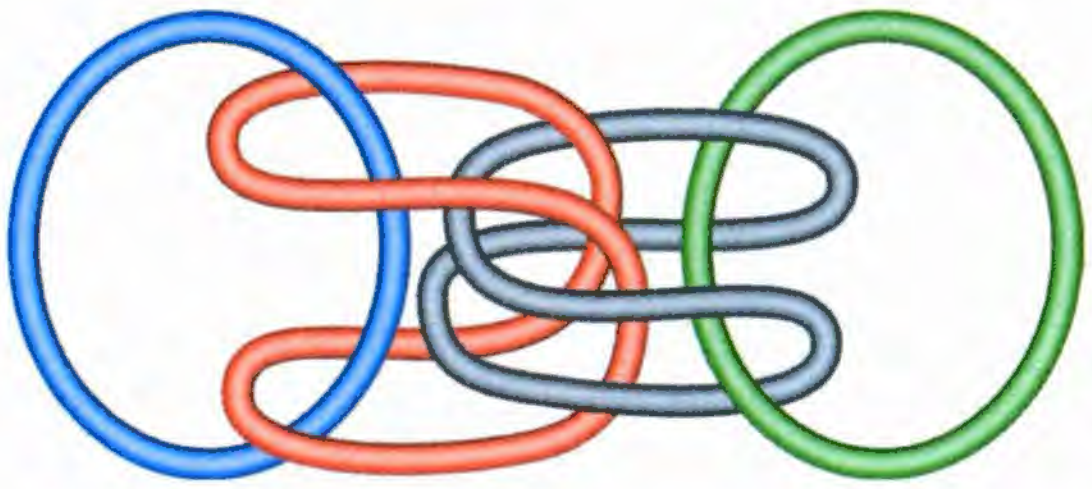
We find ourselves in the situation where the link of 1 onto 2, indeed of 2 onto 1, has in the midst of it, as it were, the 3 and the 4, that is, the Σ and the S. In what way do the symptom and the symbol find themselves caught between the real and the imaginary? I'll show you with this simple configuration.



The four-component Borromean link, showing the symptom and the symbol between the real and the imaginary

On the left, you can see four bights being pulled by the capital R ring, while on the right the I ring commingles with them in a certain way by passing over the symbol and under the symptom. In other words, the two in the middle – the symptom and the symbol – present themselves in such a way that one of the far-end terms takes them up in their entirety, while the other far-end term passes over the one that is on top and under the one that is underneath. It is in this form that the bond I expressed through the opposition between R and I presents itself.

I shall also add a different figure, a symmetrical one, which you regularly get when trying to make a four-component Borromean knot.



Symmetrical figuration of the four-component Borromean link

The Oedipus complex is, as such, a symptom. Everything is sustained in so far as the Name-of-the-Father is also the Father of the Name, which doesn't make the symptom any the less necessary.

The Other at issue manifests itself in Joyce by the fact that, all in all, he is tasked with a father. To the extent that he must support this father for him to subsist, as is borne out by *Ulysses*, Joyce, through his art – this art which is always that which, down through the ages, comes to us as emanating from the artisan – not only makes his

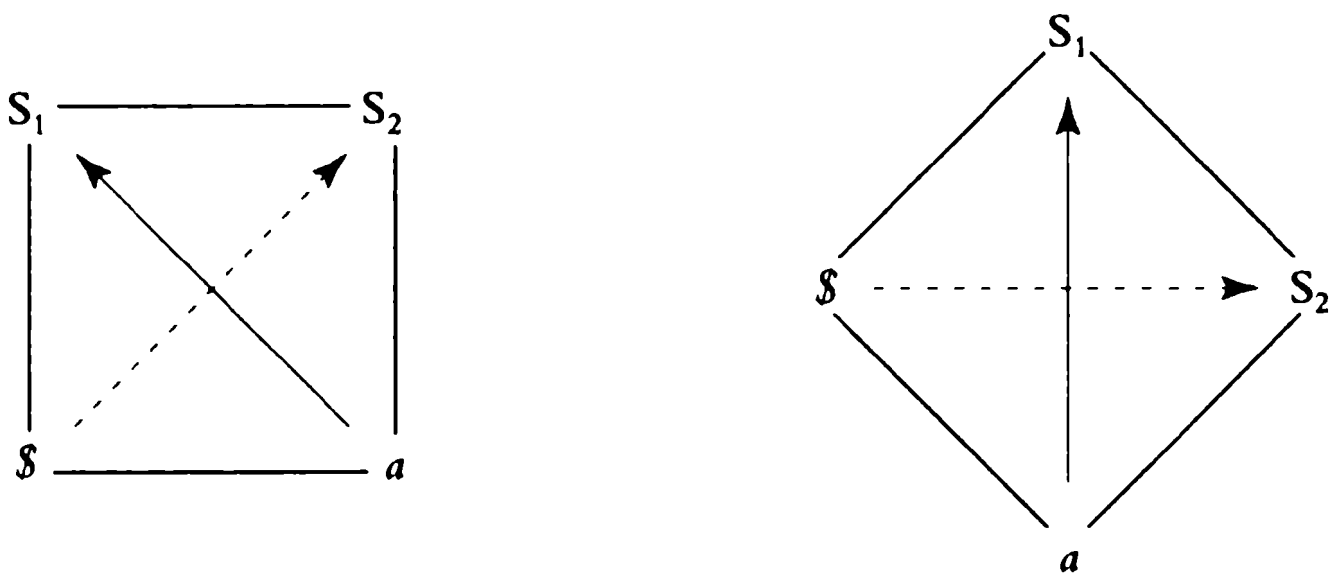
family subsist, but *illustriates* it, as it were. By the same token he *illustriates* what somewhere he calls *my country*, or better still, *the uncreated conscience of my race*, on which he ends *A Portrait of the Artist.* This is the mission Joyce sets himself.

In this sense, I am hereby announcing what this year shall be my examination of art.

In what way is artifice expressly able to target what presents itself in the first instance as a symptom? In what way can art – the artisanal – foil, as it were, what imposes as a symptom? Namely, truth.

4

I included truth in my two tetrahedrons.



Tetrahedral schemas of the discourse of the master

Where is the truth in this setting? I said that in the discourse of the master it stood as something that is supposed in the subject, barred S. In so far as he is divided, the subject is still subject to the fantasy. It is there, at barred S, at the level of truth, that we must consider the half-saying.

At this stage, the subject can only represent himself with the signifier subscript 1, S_1. As for the signifier subscript 2, S_2, there stands the artisan, in so far as through the conjunction of two signifiers he is capable of producing what I have called the object *a*.

Earlier I illustrated this by the relationship with the ear and with the eye, even evoking the closed mouth. I have offered a figuration of division with the duplicity of the symbol and the symptom.

In so far as the discourse of the master reigns, the S_2 is divided.

The division at issue is that between the symbol and the symptom. This division is reflected, so to speak, in the subject's division. It

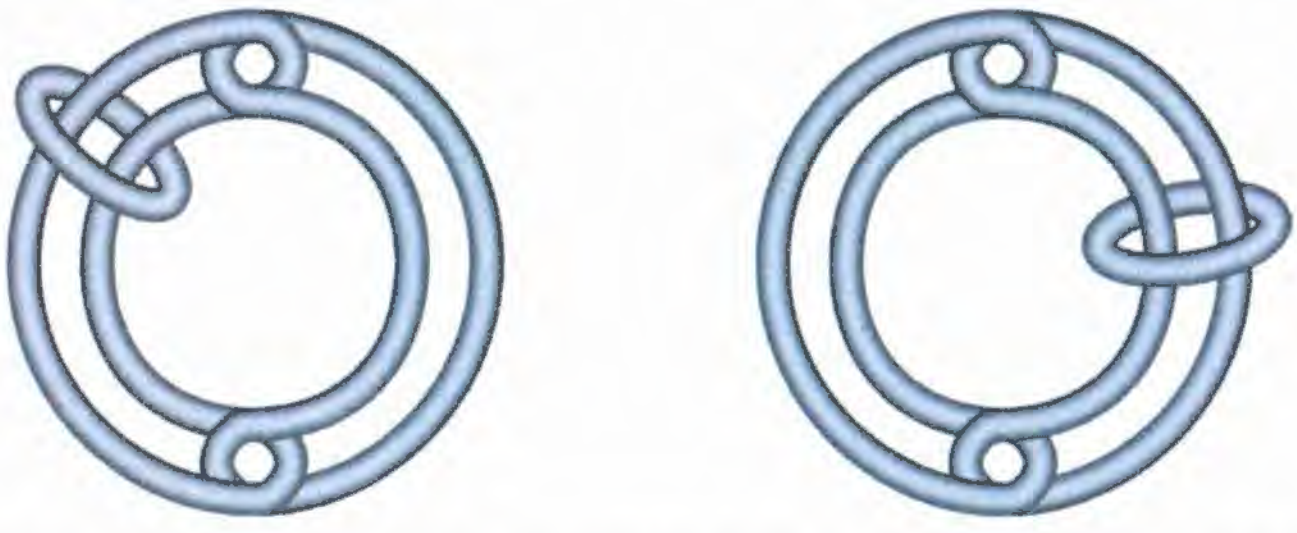
is because the subject is what one signifier represents relative to another signifier that we are required by its insistence to show that it is in the symptom that one of these two signifiers from the symbolic derives its support.

In this sense, in the symptom's articulation with the symbol, there is, I shall say, merely a false hole.

Supposing the consistency of any one of these functions – symbolic, imaginary or real – to form a circle presupposes a hole. But something else is at stake in the case of the symbol and the symptom.

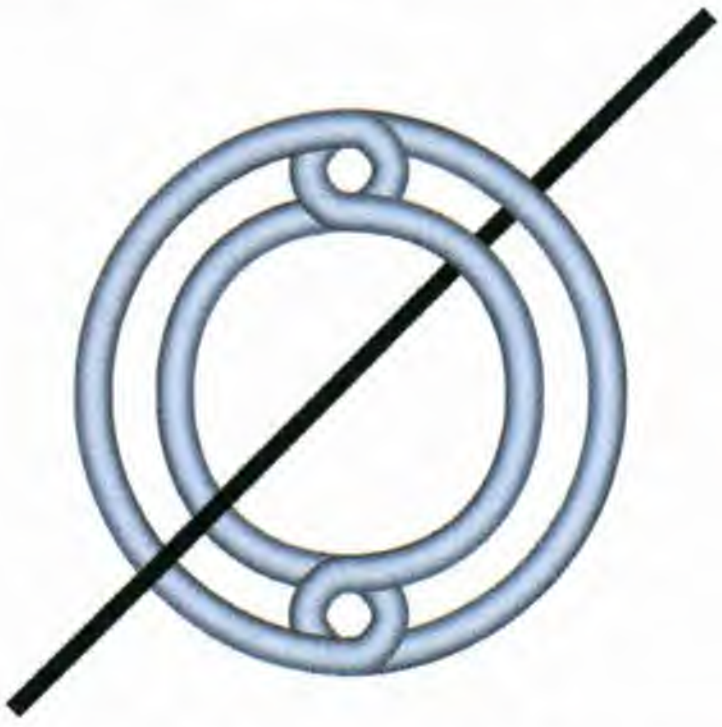
The false hole of the symbol and the symptom[10]

What makes a hole here is the full length of one circle folded over the full folded length of the other. But this is a false hole. For us to have something that might be qualified as a true hole, we have to surround, to enclose, one of the circles with a consistence that makes them hold together, which looks like an air cavity, what in topology we call a torus. Pierre Soury – to cite him by name, I don't know if he's here today – has set this out rather well.



A true hole obtained from a false hole by enclosing one of the folded circles[11]

This also means that, for the hole to subsist, to be maintained, one has simply to imagine a straight line here. So long as this straight line stretches to infinity it will fulfil the same role.



A true hole obtained by adding a straight line stretching to infinity

Over the course of the year we are going to have to look again at what this infinity is. We are going to have to look again at just what a straight line is, what makes it subsist, and in what way it is akin, as it were, to a circle.

I will most certainly have to look again at the circle, too. It has a function with which the police are very well acquainted. The circle is used for circulation. It is in precisely this respect that the police possess a support that's been around for some time. Hegel saw its function very clearly. For the police, it is simply a matter of keeping things turning round. This form is certainly not what is in question here.

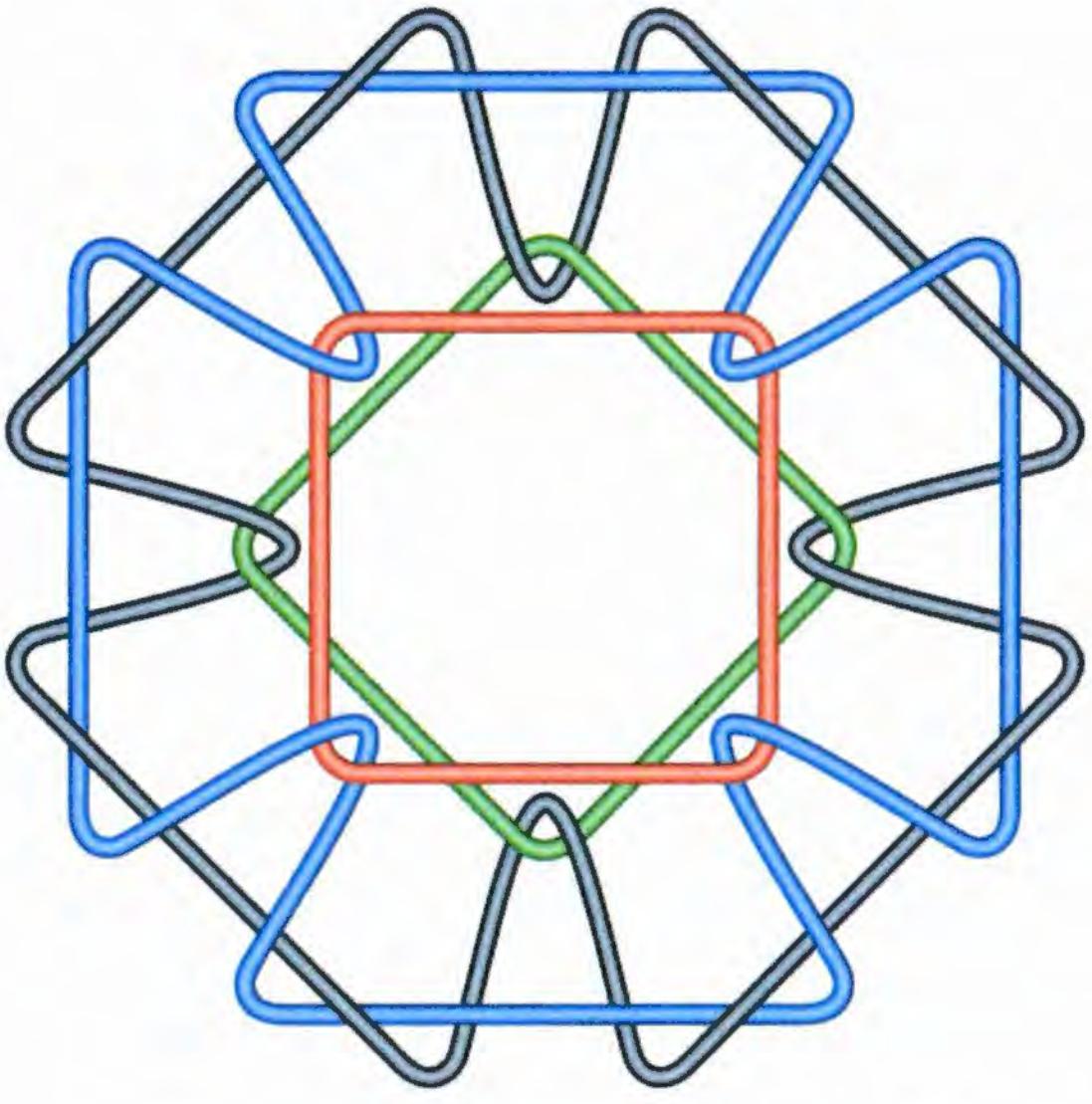
That simply adding an infinite straight line to the false hole should turn it into a hole that subsists in a Borromean fashion, this is the fact on which I shall stop for today.

18 November 1975

II

ON WHAT MAKES A HOLE IN THE REAL

The fourth ring
A geometry forbidden to the imaginary
Meeting Chomsky
No hope of escaping from feeble-mindedness
On an art that substantializes the symptom



Figuration of the four-component link

It can't go on like this. There are too many of you.

Well, I still hope to get from you what I got from the audience over in the United States, where I have just spent a busy fortnight.

I was able to take in a certain number of things over there, and in particular, if I understood correctly, a certain weariness that is being felt principally by the analysts.

I can only say, good gracious, that I was treated exceedingly well, which is not to say very much, is it? To use a term which is the same one I use for the situation of mankind, I felt I was being more or less drawn in, or, if you would care to hear this, I was sucked in – sucked into a kind of whirlwind that only finds some ready response in what I have been bringing to the fore with my knot.

1

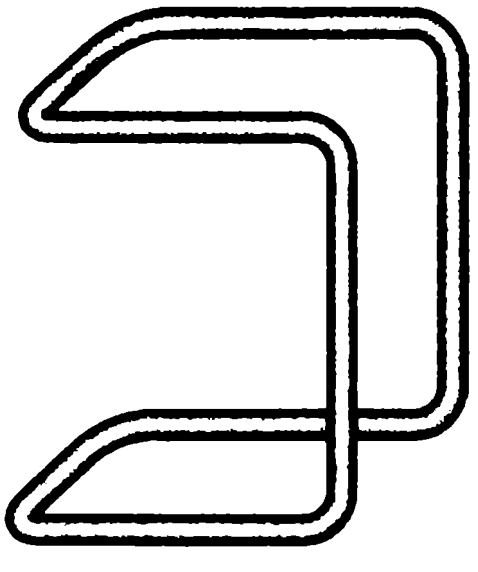
As those of you who've been here for a while now have been able to see, well, to hear, it is not by chance, but rather little by little, step by step, that I have come round to expressing by means of the function of the knot what I initially put forward as the triple alliance of the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real.

The knot is formed in the spirit of a new *mos geometricus*. *Mos* means *mode* or *manner*. Initially, we are always captivated by a kind of geometry that last time I qualified as being comparable with the bag, that is, the surface.

Pondering commonly happens with eyes shut. When one ponders the knot – you can have a go at it, it's very hard – one can make neither head nor tail of it. So I'm not really sure that I've got this one right for you, though it does seem so to my eye.

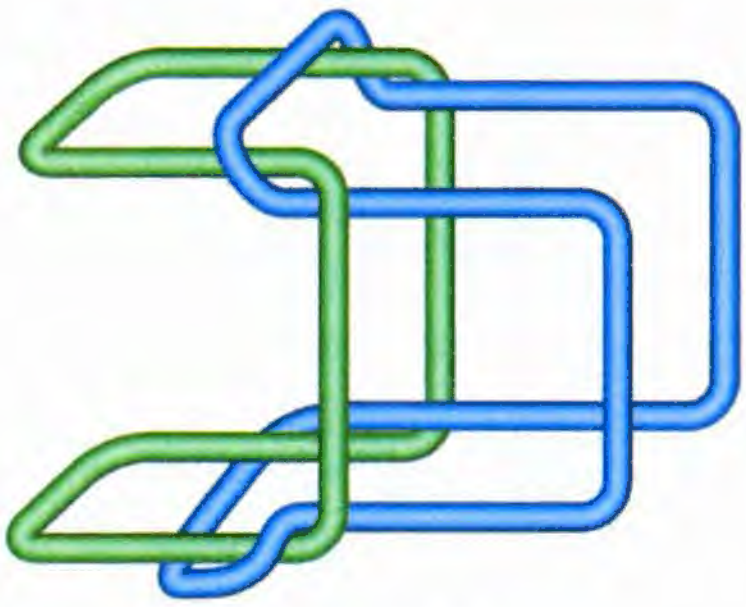
No, it looks like there's a mistake. In fact, yes, there's a mistake here. There you go, because this part here needs to be removed.

This four-component knot is constructed using this, which you're quite familiar with. You have this shape in a Borromean knot.



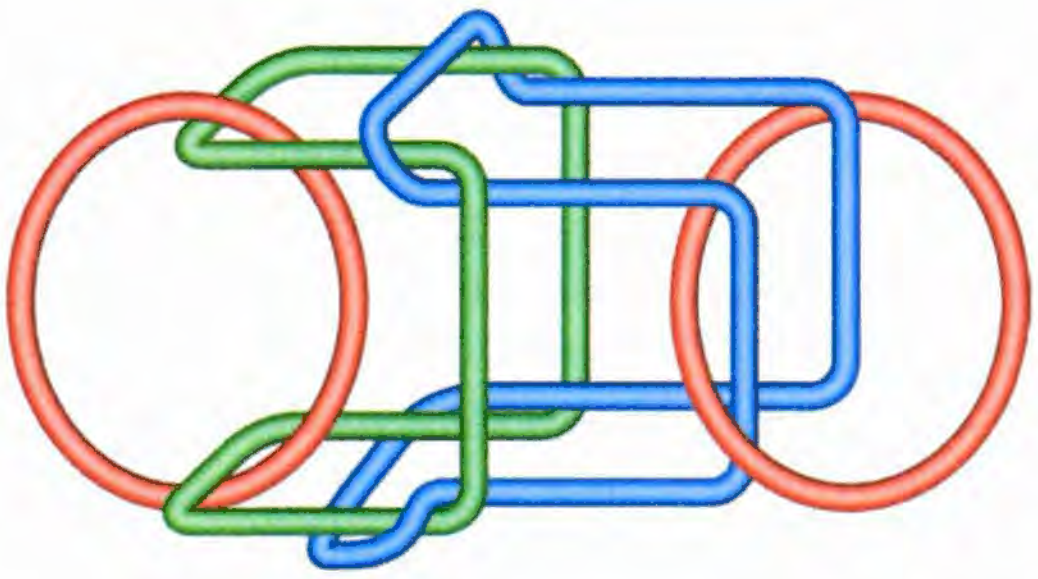
Folded shape from the four-component link

As it happens, this is duplicated.



Double folded shape

Then you have to finish it off with two further rings.



Second figuration of the four-component link

There is another way of drawing and duplicating the folded shape, making the two folds hook onto one another.

Another figuration of the double folded shape

And there is a third way, which consists in employing this, which I happen to have already shown you once, and which in and of itself constitutes a closed circle.

Third figuration of the double folded shape

However, in the two shapes that I presented before, the two circuits in the middle can be handled in such a way that they can be set free from one another. This is why the two circles traced out here in red can turn this into a Borromean knot, that is to say, a knot in which sectioning any one of the circles will free the others.[1]

2

Analysis is, in sum, the reduction of initiation to its reality, that is to say, to the fact that strictly speaking there is no initiation. Every single subject in analysis reveals how he is always and only ever a supposition.

None the less, experience demonstrates that this supposition is always given over to what I shall call an ambiguity. I mean that the subject as such is always, not only double, but divided. It's a matter of accounting for what it is in this division that makes for something real.

On this point we have to come back to Freud, since he is the one who was the great trailblazer in apprehending this.

On the back cover of Erich Fromm's latest book, which you can easily get, if memory serves, from Gallimard,[2] one can read what is set out as *la psychanalyse appréhendée à travers son 'père'*, psychoanalysis apprehended through its 'father'. In what way did Freud, a bourgeois if I've read correctly, a bourgeois brimming with prejudices, reach something that holds the specific value of what he said, which is certainly no small matter, since its aim was to say the truth about mankind?

To which I've added the following rectification, which entailed its share of blood, sweat and tears for me, that the only truth is one that is said by half, just like the subject that it entails. To express it as I stated it, truth can only be half-said.

My starting point is my condition, which is that of bringing to Man what the Scripture states, not as *an help meet for him*, but as a helpmeet *against* him. I try to take my bearings from this condition,

and this is truly what led me, in a way that is worth remarking upon, to considering the knot.

This consideration is constituted by a geometry that may be said to be forbidden to the imaginary, because it can only be imagined through all kinds of resistances and, indeed, difficulties. This is what the knot substantifies in so far as it is Borromean.

One of the things that struck me most when I was in the US was my meeting with Chomsky, which was altogether intentional on my part. I was quite taken aback, and I told him so. What made me sense the great distance that lies between us was that he simply affirmed to me, in person, one idea that I realized was his own. I can't say that this idea is refutable, because it's the most commonplace idea, but it does strike me as a precarious one.

This idea starts off from the consideration of something that presents itself as a body, conceived of as being equipped with organs. This conception implies that the organ is a tool, a tool for grasping or apprehending, and there is no objection in principle to the tool apprehending itself as such. So it is that Chomsky considers language, among other things, to be determined by a genetic fact. In a word, language is itself an organ. He said as much, right there in front of me, in those very words.

It strikes me as altogether startling – this is what I was expressing in saying that I was taken aback – that one should be able to turn this language into a return upon itself as an organ. Indeed, to my mind, if one doesn't admit the principial truth that language is tied to something that makes a hole in the real, it is not simply difficult but impossible to consider how it is handled. Observational method cannot start off from language without accepting the fact that, in what can be situated as real, language only emerges in making a hole. It is on the basis of this function of the hole that language effects its purchase on the real.

It's not easy for me to impress upon you the full weight of this conviction. This is a conviction that to my eye is unavoidable, given that truth as such is only possible when this real is hollowed out. Moreover, language eats into the real.

To speak as Chomsky does, see if you will what this genetic real is all about. Language only enables it to be approached in terms of signs, in other words, messages. The molecular gene is reduced to what secured the reputation of Crick and Watson, namely the double helix from which the various tiers that organize the body at a number of different levels are deemed to set off. First there is division, development, and cellular specialization. Next there is specialization based on hormones, which act as vehicles for all sorts of messages that direct the organic information. With all these

so-called messages, we arrive at a great spiriting away of what the real actually involves.

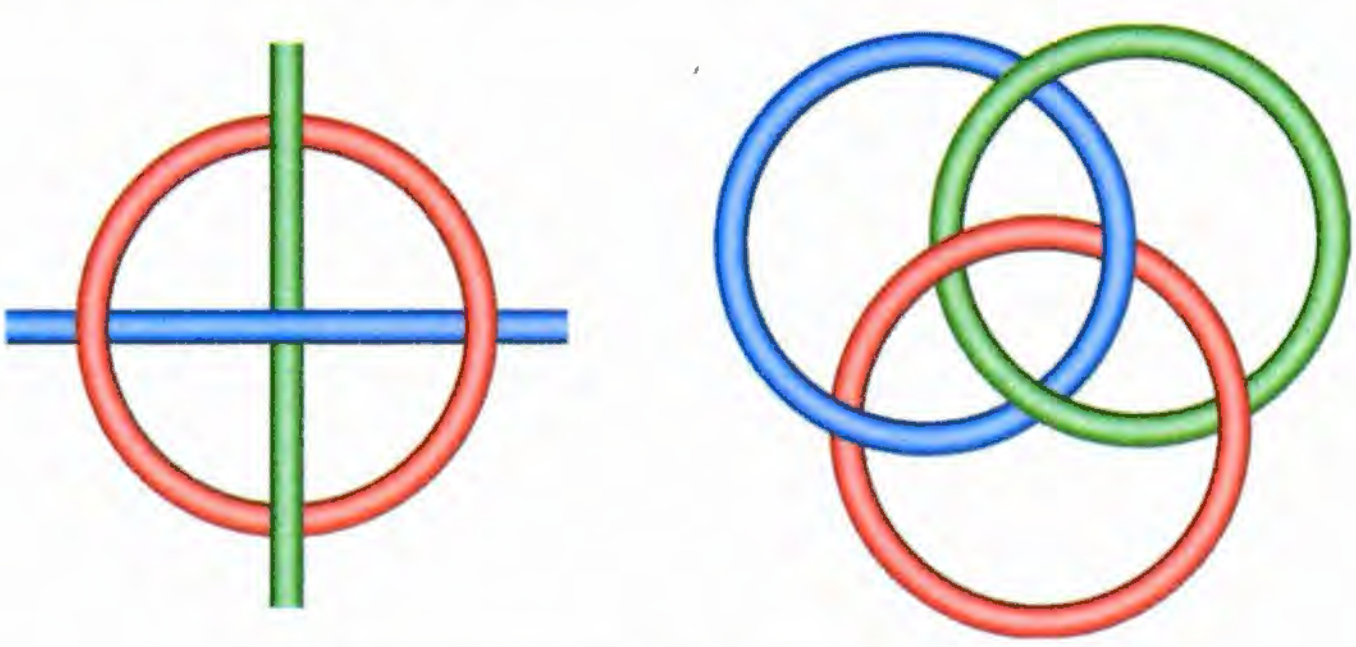
This is still, however, nothing more than a veil that has been drawn over what lies behind the efficacy of language, that is, over the fact that language is not in itself a message, but rather is only sustained by the function of what I've called the hole in the real.

For this, there exists the path of our new *mos geometricus*, that is, the substance that results from the specific efficacy of language, and which is supported by the function of the hole.

To express this in the terms of the much-vaunted Borromean knot that I've been relying on, let's say that it hinges entirely on the equivalence between a circle and a straight line stretching to infinity.

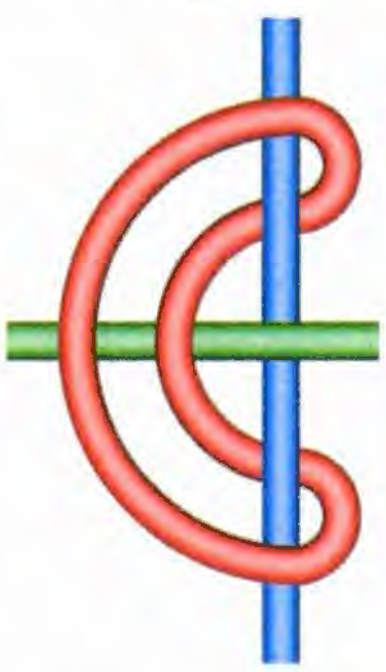
3

The diagram of the Borromean knot is this one, here on the left. It is just as Borromean as my usual drawing, here on the right.



Two figurations of the Borromean link[3]

This is also true of the following drawing.

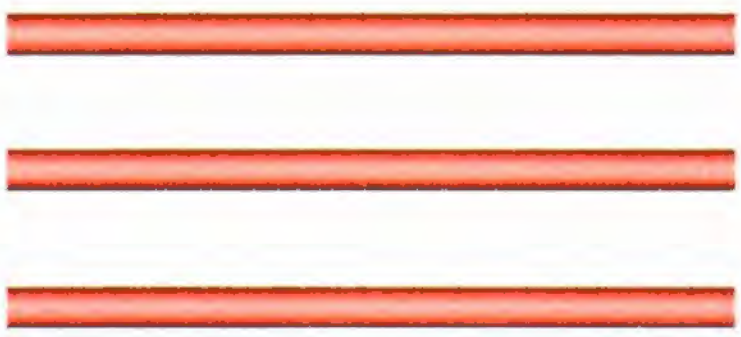


A further figuration of the Borromean link

Thus it emerges that you get the same Borromean knot when you replace the three circles with this one circle together with this pair of straight lines that we suppose stretch to infinity.

To account correctly for the Borromean knot it should be emphasized that it is on the basis of three that a requirement originates. The cipher 3 is the threshold, if I may say so, of the specific requirement of the knot.[4]

It is possible, through a perfectly straightforward manipulation, to make these three infinite straight lines run parallel. To achieve this you would just have to make the folded circle, the red one, more pliable.



Parallel straight lines stretching to infinity

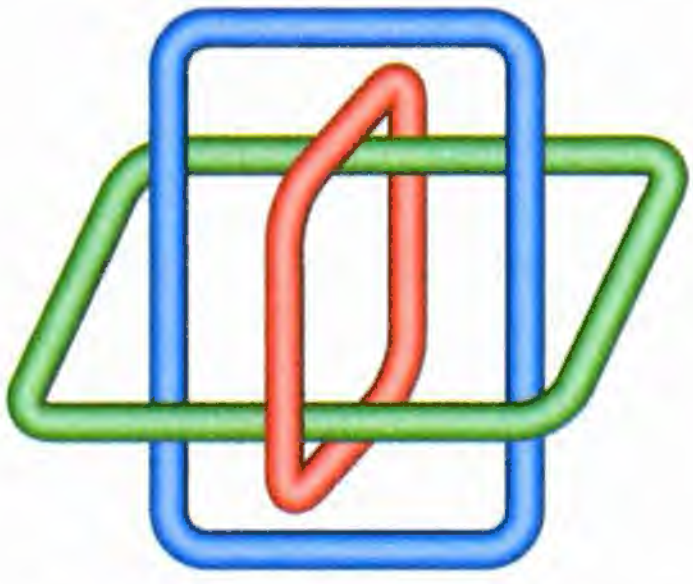
It is starting from the 3 that we have to define what is at stake in the straight line's *point at infinity*. This is what allows us on no account to make any mistake about what we may call their concentricity. Let's place the three *points at infinity*, which complete the straight lines, here.

Infinite straight lines completed by their *points at infinity*

We can also permute these positions and make it so that this first infinite line envelops the others instead of being enveloped by them. The characteristic of this *point at infinity* is that it cannot be situated, as one might express oneself, on any side.

However, in starting off from 3, to figure it in this imaged fashion, you have the following requirement. You can sense that there are reasons why I had to trace these circles out in different colours,

whereas just before I was drawing the three straight lines, completed by their *points at infinity*, in red.



A further figuration of the Borromean link

Not one of these circles, despite being enveloped by one of the two others, fails to envelop the third. This is what constitutes the property of the Borromean knot, a property with which I've acquainted you on several occasions now. In this third dimension, as it were, the Borromean knot consists in this relationship which means that what is *enveloped* with respect to one of the circles finds itself *enveloping* with respect to the other one.

It is in this respect that the following figure is exemplary, which you usually see in the form of the armillary sphere, which is used for sextants. To draw it out clearly, the blue circle will always swing in the following way around the circle I've drawn in green, while the red circle, in keeping with the inter-axial swing, has to be like this.

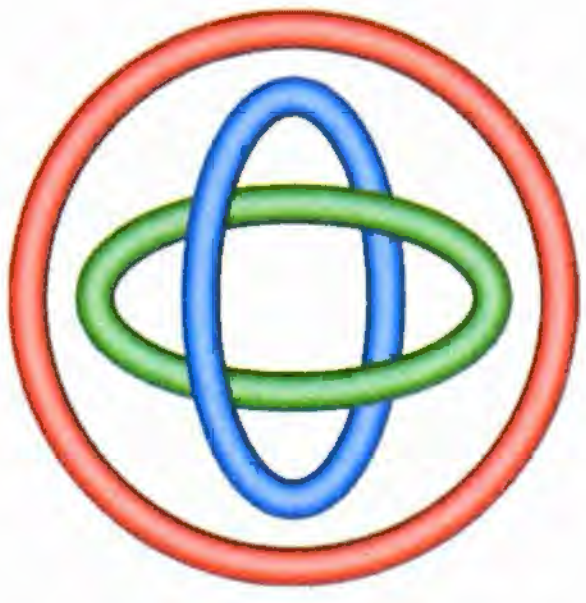
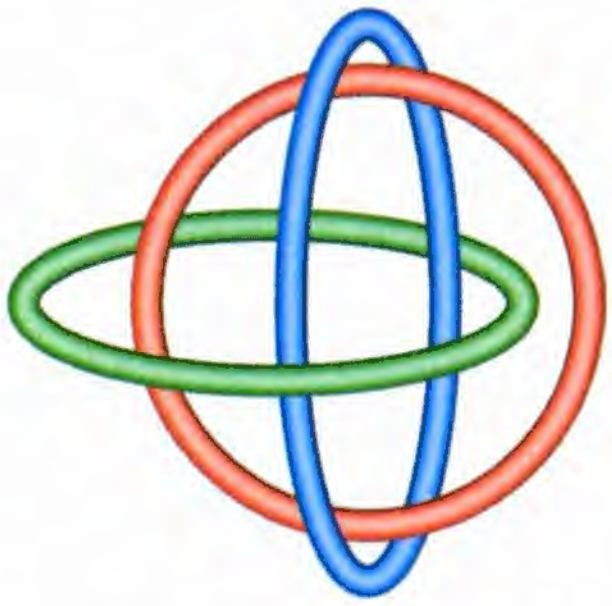


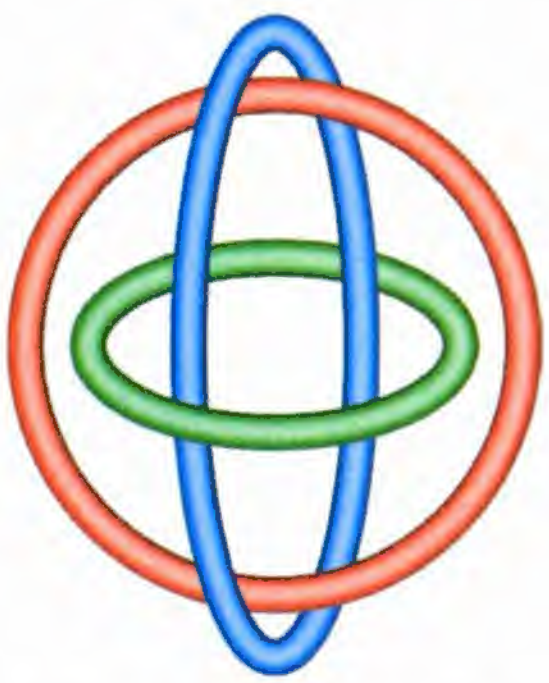
Diagram of the armillary sphere

There is a difference between this arrangement, which is ordinary in any manipulation of the armillary sphere, and the following arrangement.



Faulty Borromean link

I'm redrawing it because this drawing is wrong. You can see how the green circle is situated in relation to the blue circle and the red circle. The blue circle, which here looks like it's the middle one, cannot swing around, because it envelops the red circle but is in turn enveloped by the green circle.



Correct Borromean link

Even my hesitations are significant here. They bring out the clumsiness with which the Borromean knot, which is the exemplar of the knot, is necessarily handled.

The fundamental character of this use of the knot is to illustrate the triplicity that results from a consistence that is assigned only on the basis of the imaginary, from a fundamental hole that emerges from the symbolic, and from an ex-sistence which belongs to the real, which is even its fundamental character.

This method, because it does indeed involve method, presents itself as something hopeless. There is no hope of breaking, in any way whatsoever, the constitutive knot of the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real. In this respect, let's put it in the most coherent way we can, it passes up what constitutes a virtue, a virtue that is

even said to be theological. This is why our analytic appreciation of what is involved in the knot is the negative of religion.

We no longer believe in the object as such. It is in this respect that I reject that the object can be grasped by any organ.

When an organ is itself perceived as a tool, a tool that stands apart, it is thereby being conceived of as an object. In Chomsky's conception the object is not in itself broached except through an object. On the other hand, it is through the restitution of the subject as such, inasmuch as the subject can only be divided by the operation of language, that analysis finds the scope of its diffusion.

Analysis finds the scope of its diffusion in the fact that it calls into question science *per se* – science in so far as it makes an object into a subject, whereas it is the subject that is divided on his own account.

We don't believe in the object, but we observe desire, and from this observation of desire we induce the cause as something objectivized.

The desire to take cognizance meets obstacles. I invented the knot to embody such an obstacle. We need to become more accustomed to this knot. I mean that the knot alone is the conceivable support of a relationship between any one thing and any other thing. Although on one hand the knot is abstract, it must none the less be thought of and conceived of as something concrete.

In which respect, although today you can see that I'm really rather weary after my test in the US, I was nevertheless rewarded, as I told you, because I was able to stir up what I will call some *agitation*, some *emotion*, with these figures. You can see these figures here, more or less substantialized on account of being set down in written form, on account of being drawn. This doesn't prevent the *sentiment* of the *mental*, the sentimental, from being feeble-minded, because it can always be reduced from some angle or other to the imaginary.

The imagining of consistency makes straight for the impossible dimension of the fracture, but it is in this respect that a fracture can always be the real, the real as impossible. It is no less compatible with the said imagining, and even constitutes it.

I'm not hoping on any account to escape from feeble-mindedness, which I indicate as being present from the start. Just like anyone else, I only escape from it as far as my means allow. That is to say, like *sur-place*, like running on the spot, what is *sûr* about this *place* doesn't ensure any verifiable progress except in the long term.

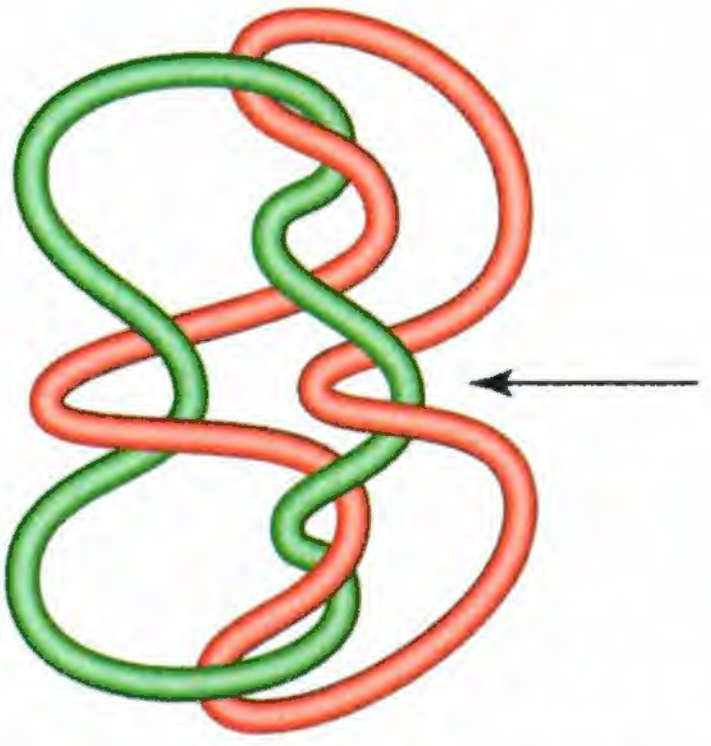
It is in a confabulatory way that I assert, in my way of pondering it in my lightweight ponder,[5] that *real-ly*, because indeed the real does lie, the real entails the hole that subsists within it, given that its consistence is no more than the consistence of the entirety of the knot that it forms with the symbolic and the imaginary.

This knot can be qualified as Borromean, which means that it cannot be sliced through without dissolving the myth that it renders of the subject as non-supposed, that is, as real. The latter displays no variation from any other body that may be indicated as a *parlêtre*, a body that has a status that is respectable, in the common sense of the word, only by virtue of this knot.

4

Joyce turns out to have targeted, in a privileged way, through his art, the fourth term known as the sinthome. I shall resume my disquisition next time by tackling this point.

You can see this fourth term figured in different ways up here on the board, be it in the red ring on the far right of the second diagram of the Borromean knot, or in the black ring, or even in the following.



New figuration of the folded circle

This is still the same folded circle. It's in a special position here, namely, with two inflexions, that is to say, caught up in itself at four points, so to speak.[6]

In the second figuration of the four-component knot, one or the other of the circles at the far ends wedges in, at two different points, the loop that is figured in one or the other of the folded circles. In the very first figuration, however, the black ring wedges in the green, or the blue ring wedges in the red, at four different points, because it is likewise essentially a matter of wedging.

It is still the case that it is through Joyce that I'm going to be broaching this fourth term in so far as it completes the knot of the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real.

The whole problem lies here. How can an art target in an expressly divinatory way the substantialization of the sinthome in its consistence, but also in its ex-sistence and in its hole?

How is it that someone has been able to target through his art the rendering of this fourth term – which I simply wanted to show you today as being essential to the Borromean knot – to the point of getting as close to it as it is possible to get?

5

After this exhausting task, because today I'm really feeling very weary, I'm expecting from you what I got with greater ease in the States than elsewhere, namely for someone to pose me a question, whatever it might be, about what I've said today.

I'm waiting for someone to speak up. Anyone.

So, what might have struck you as debatable in what I've put forward today?

Stuart Schneiderman – *What led you to believe you'd get anything out of Chomsky? That's something that would never have occurred to me.*

That is precisely why I was taken aback, sure. But we always possess something of this kind of weakness, don't we, some remnant of hope. Dealing as he does with linguistics, I might have hoped to see in Chomsky some slither of appreciation of what I have been showing with respect to the symbolic, namely that it preserves something of the hole, even when this hole is a false hole.

It's impossible, for instance, not to qualify the set formed by the symptom and the symbolic as a false hole. However, from another angle, the symptom subsists in so far as it is hooked onto language, at least if we believe that we can modify something in the symptom by means of a manipulation that is said to be interpretative, that is, by playing on meaning.

That Chomsky should assimilate to the real something that in my eyes belongs to the realm of the symptom, that is, that he should mix up the symptom and the real, is very precisely what took me aback.

Stuart Schneiderman – *My next question might be a little* oisive . . .

Oiseuse?

Stuart Schneiderman – *Thank you. Being American* . . .

Yes, you're American. And I thank you. I simply note that once again I'm only being questioned by an American. Well, I can only say how delighted I was, as it were, by the fact that in the US I had people who showed me in one way or another that my disquisition has not been in vain.

Stuart Schneiderman – *It strikes me as impossible that someone could consider that Chomsky, who was educated in the new tradition derived from mathematical logic, which he picked up from Quine and Goodman at Harvard . . .*

But Quine is no fool, huh!

Roland Chemama – *Concerning the alternation between the body and speech, as you've been speaking for an hour and a half, and as you're seeking to have a more direct contact with someone, I wondered whether in a more general way there might not be an alternation between discourse and the body in the life of a subject. Without language, would this hole not exist due to the fact of a direct physical engagement with this real? I'm speaking about love and jouissance.*

That's precisely what's at issue. All the same, it's very hard on this occasion not to consider the real as a thirdness. Let's say that what I'm soliciting by way of response is along the lines of a call to the real, not as something linked to the body, but as something different. Far from the body, there is the possibility of what last time I called resonance, or consonance. This consonance can be found at the level of the real. Between the two poles constituted by the body and language, the real is what establishes an accord.

Mr X. – *You were saying earlier that Chomsky makes language an organ, and that you were taken aback by this. I was wondering whether this might not be due to the fact that you make libido an organ. I'm thinking of the myth of the lamella. I wonder whether this might not be the angle from which the question of the soul might be posed. Because casting aside the idea of putting distance between language and the organ can only be retrieved in the sense of an art if one cuts out the organ at the level at which you put it, at the level of libido.*

Libido, as its name indicates, can only be a participant in the hole, just as much as the other modes by which the body and the real present themselves. Clearly this is where I'm trying to join up with the function of art. This is implied in a way by what has been

left blank as a fourth term. When I say that art can even affect the symptom, this is what I'm going to be trying to substantialize. You're quite right to mention the myth known as the lamella myth. This hits the right note, and I thank you for it. It's along this line that I hope to continue.

Henri Cesbron-Lavau – *When you speak about libido in the text on the lamella, you say that what is remarkable about it is its to-and-fro trajectory of invagination. Now, this image strikes me today as being able to function like the image of the cord, which is caught in a phenomenon of resonance, which undulates, which forms an antinode that rises and falls, and which forms nodes.*

No, but it's not for nothing that in a cord the metaphor comes from what forms a knot. What I'm trying to do is to find what this metaphor refers to. If there are nodes and antinodes in a vibrating cord, then it's in so far as the knot is being referenced. I mean that language is being used in a way that goes much further than what is effectively being said. People are always limiting the scope of metaphor as such. That is to say, people limit it to a metonymy.

Henri Cesbron-Lavau – *When you go from the three-component Borromean knot to the four-component knot, into which the symptom is introduced, the three-component Borromean knot vanishes as such.*

That's quite right. It's no longer a knot. It's only held together by the symptom.

Henri Cesbron-Lavau – *From this perspective, the hope for any cure in analysis seems to pose a problem.*

There can be no radical reduction of the fourth term, not even in analysis, because Freud stated – we don't know by which path – that there is an *Urverdrängung*, a repression that can never be undone. It is in the very nature of the symbolic to include this hole. This hole is what I'm aiming at, and in it I recognize the *Urverdrängung* itself.

Henri Cesbron-Lavau – *You've said that the Borromean knot can't constitute a model. Could you be more explicit?*

The Borromean knot does not constitute a model in so far as it possesses something that imagination fails to grasp when it gets close to it. I mean that, as such, it resists the imagining of the knot. The mathematical approach to the knot in topology is insufficient.

I can nevertheless tell you about my experiences over the holidays.

Knot of three crossings, known as the trefoil knot

This here constitutes a knot, but not a knot between two elements, for there is only one.[7] This is the most straightforward form of knot there is, which you can make with any old piece of string. It is the same knot as the overhand knot, though it doesn't look the same.

I persevered in pondering this, this discovery I made, let's say, namely, that with this knot such as it is shown here, it is easy to demonstrate that a Borromean knot ex-sists.

You just have to think that you could place the same knot on an underlying surface, which is the duplicate surface without which we wouldn't be able to set down anything at all in written form with respect to the knots. It's very easy to bring about the following, by setting it down in writing, I mean – when you slip a homologous knot under, and then, at each new step, over the knot that I'm calling the underlying knot, you get with the greatest of ease a Borromean knot. It's easy to imagine this, although you don't come to imagine it straightaway. I had to discover it first.

With this trefoil knot, is there now any possibility of bringing about a four-component Borromean knot? I spent nearly two months racking my brains over this object. It really does have to be called an object.

I didn't manage to demonstrate that there ex-sists a way of knotting together four trefoil knots in a Borromean fashion. Well, that doesn't prove anything. That doesn't prove that it doesn't ex-sist.

Even yesterday evening, I was thinking only of managing to demonstrate for you that it ex-sists. The worst thing was that I didn't find the demonstrative reason for its non ex-sistence. I simply failed.

The fact that I'm unable to show that the knot of four trefoil knots ex-sists, as a Borromean knot, doesn't prove anything. I would have to demonstrate that it *cannot* ex-sist, whereby, in that very impossibility, a real would have been secured. It would be a real constituted by the fact that there is no Borromean knot that is

constituted of four trefoil knots. To demonstrate this would be to reach a real.

To tell you what I think about it, still in my way of saying that this is my ponder, I believe that this knot ex-sists. I mean that this is not the path by which we would stumble upon a real.

So, I do not despair of finding it, but it's a fact that I'm unable to show you anything of the like. Here the relationship between showing and demonstrating is sharply divided. If and when it were to be demonstrated, it would be easy to show it to you.

Mme Y. – *You said earlier that in Chomsky's perspective language can be an organ, and you spoke about the hand. Why did you use this word* hand*? Is there, in this word, a reference to an object that is not yet technological in the Cartesian sense of the term? That is to say, a technology that is unaware of language? Is the hand there to show the necessity of another theory of technology besides Chomsky's theory.*

Yes, in spite of the existence of handshakes, the hand in the act of handshaking knows nothing of the other hand. That's what I claim.

9 December 1975

III

ON THE KNOT AS THE SUBJECT'S SUPPORT

Soury and Thomé
Knot and knot
Personality and paranoia
The sinthome and the unconscious
Meaning and jouissance

If one were to put as much seriousness into analyses as I put into preparing my Seminar, well, that would be so much the better, and would surely bring about better results.

For that, one would have to possess a sentiment of absolute risk in analysis. I have this sentiment, but it's sentimental, as I was saying the other day.

1

The trefoil knot (circular form)

I was speaking to you the other day about the trefoil knot, which I draw like this, and which you can see is obtained from the Borromean knot by joining up the cords at the three points I have

just noted. I told you that I had made the discovery that three trefoil knots can be knotted together in a Borromean fashion.

I also told you, by way of explanation, in what way this was absolutely justifiable. I then told you that I had striven for two months to make ex-sist, for this most straightforward of knots, a four-component Borromean knot. Lastly, I told you that the fact that I didn't manage to make it ex-sist doesn't prove anything, except my clumsiness. I recall having said by way of conclusion that I believed this knot ought indeed to exist.

That very same evening – it was late, because I'd got out a bit later than usual in view of my obligations – I had the pleasant surprise of finding on my doorstep a certain Thomé, to cite him by name, who had come to bring me – for which I thanked him extensively – the proof, the fruit of his collaboration with Soury, that the Borromean knot of four trefoil knots does indeed exist.

Soury and Thomé. Make a mental note of these names.

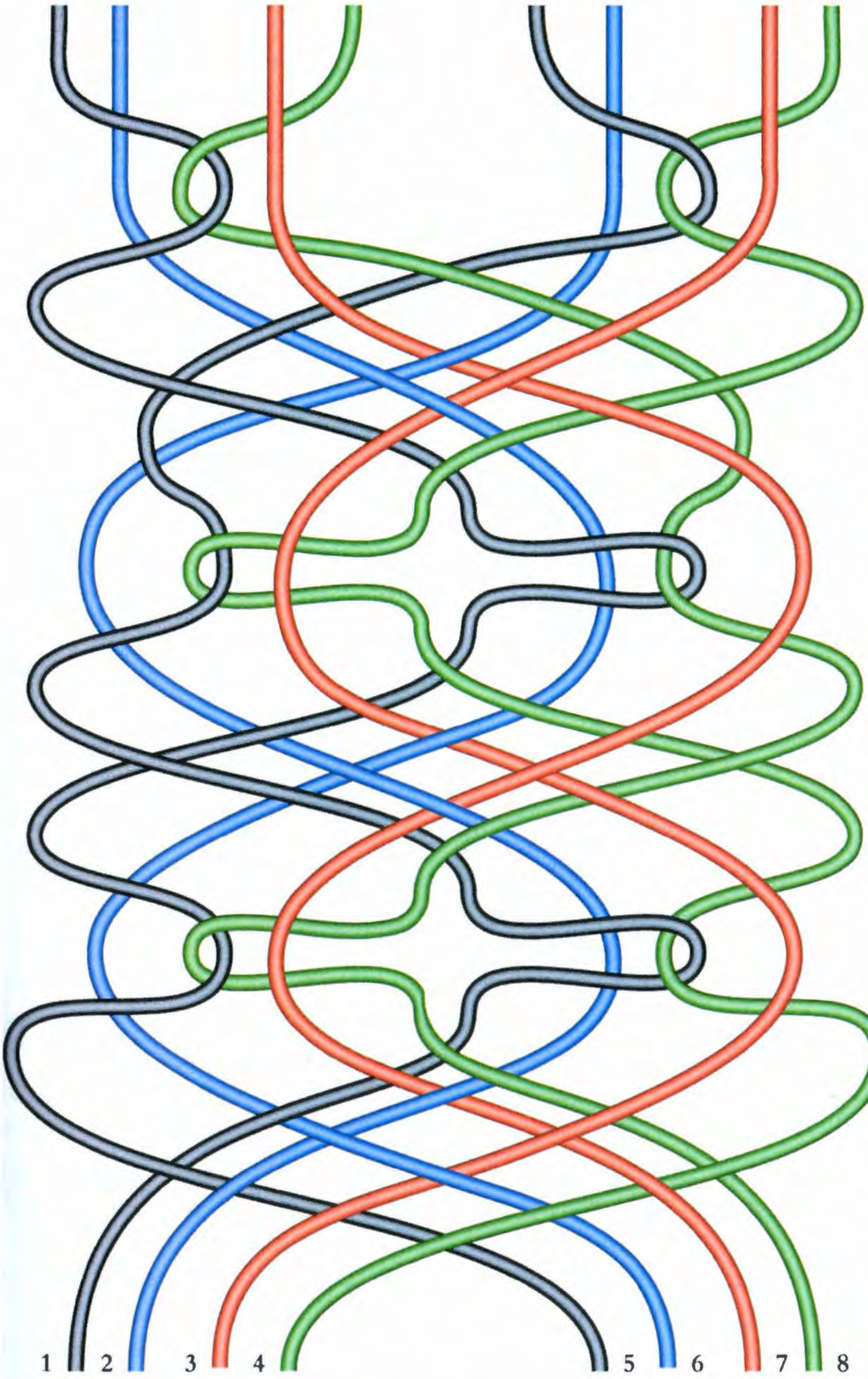
This most certainly justifies my obstinacy, but does not make my incapacity any the less deplorable. Still, I did not welcome the news that this problem had been solved with mixed feelings – a mixture of regret at my powerlessness and satisfaction that success had been achieved. My feelings were of sheer enthusiasm, and I think I displayed some of this when I saw them a few evenings later.

They weren't able to give me an account of how they'd found it. They found it *de facto*, and I hope I haven't made any mistakes in transcribing the fruit of their discovery on this sheet of paper up here in the middle of the blackboard. I've reproduced what they developed – with only some slight changes – *textuellement*, which is the fitting expression here. The planar diagram of the pathways is just slightly different. I'm presenting it to you in this form so that you can sense how it's put together perhaps a little better than you can in the figure they produced.

From the angle of this figuration[1], you can all see that, were the black trefoil knot to be elided, the three other trefoil knots would clearly be roaming free. In effect, since the green trefoil knot lies under the red trefoil knot, you would just have to bring the green one away from the red for the blue trefoil knot to show itself to be free as well.

I spent a long time with Soury and Thomé. They didn't confide how they came to obtain this knot. Besides, I don't think that there is only one way, that there is only this way. Perhaps next time I'll show you how you can obtain it in another way.

Before I tell you why I went in search of this knot, I would like to commemorate a little further this minor event, which moreover I do not consider to be minor.

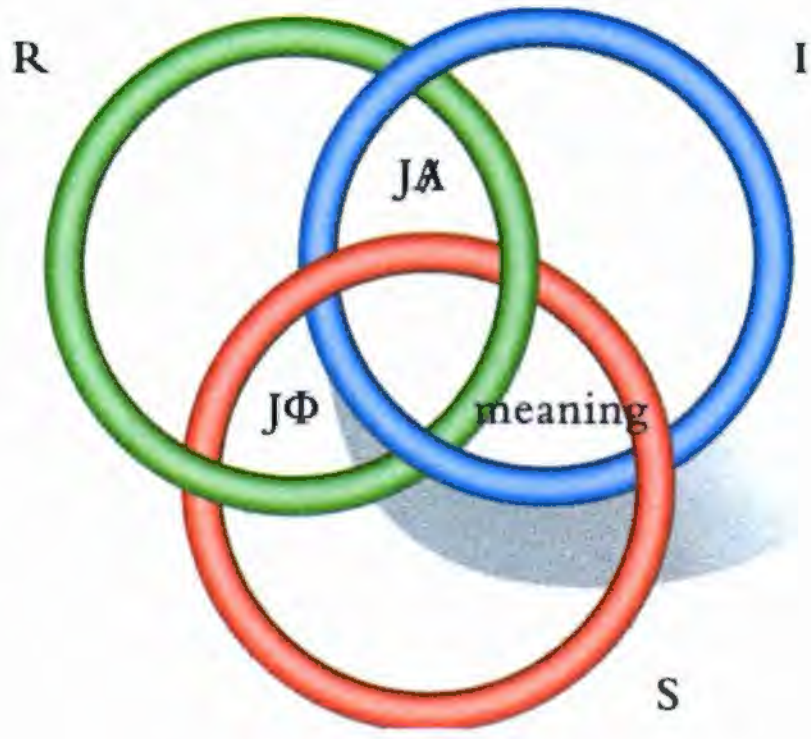


The Borromean link of four trefoil knots

I don't believe the support of this research to be the uncanny that Sarah Kofman looks at in a remarkable article that she has titled *Vautour rouge*. This support is none other than a reference to *The Devil's Elixirs* that Freud lauded, which is a reference she's citing anew, having already mentioned it once in her *Quatre romans analytiques*, an entire book she authored. The article, meanwhile, features alongside those of five other contributors in a collection called *Mimesis*, which really is worth reading. Truth be told, I've only read the first, third, and fifth articles, because I've had other fish to fry in preparing this Seminar. The first article, which is about Wittgenstein and all the fuss to which his teaching has given rise, is altogether remarkable. I read that one from beginning to end.

The uncanny incontestably pertains to the imaginary. The altogether specific and original geometry of knots has the effect of exorcizing this uncanny, but that there should be something that enables it to be exorcized is surely uncanny in itself.

Where should I place what is at issue here? To specify it for you on the diagram that I gave you last year, it is round about here.



RSI Diagram

Here, the imaginary opens out across two circles, which can also be noted as a drawing. I would say that a drawing doesn't note anything, in so far as the planar diagram remains enigmatic. Nevertheless, I'm indicating here, at the join with the imaginary of the body, something along the lines of a specific inhibition that would be typified by the uncanny in particular. This is where I will allow myself to note, at least provisionally, the place of the said uncanny.

The resistance that imagination feels when cogitating what is involved in this new geometry is something that has struck me on

account of having experienced it myself. I daresay, even though they haven't told me about it, that Soury and Thomé have been particularly captivated by what in my teaching has led me to explore the knot, and which was even pressed upon me under the influence of the conjunction between the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real. It is certainly not by chance that they have been caught by this flight of fancy of mine. Let's say that they are gifted for this sort of thing.

What is odd – and this time I will allow myself to betray what they confided in me – is that they make their way through this by speaking to each other. I found that quite striking, given what you know I say about dialogue. I didn't mention this to them straightaway because, truth be told, what they confided struck me as something exceedingly precious. It's quite certain that we don't usually ponder in twos.

The fact is, however, that it is by speaking to each other that they've been getting results that are remarkable not only in view of this latest success, because for a long time now what they have been composing on Borromean knots has struck me as holding considerable interest. This latest discovery will surely not be the crowning achievement of their labour, for they will make further discoveries. I won't add what Soury in particular told me about how he thinks about my teaching. This is an affair in which, following my example, the example I qualified earlier, he will doubtless acquit himself just as well as I can, that is to say, in the same suggestive way.

The fact that a discovery such as this can be achieved through dialogue – though I don't know if this was especially the case on this occasion – the fact that dialogue has proven to be especially fruitful in this domain, confirms that I missed out on it. I mean that, for those two months during which I was toiling away at finding the fourth trefoil knot and the way that it could be knotted to the three others in Borromean fashion, I was most certainly labouring away on my own, pinning my hopes on my cogitation.

Never mind. I'm not going to insist. It's time to say in what way this research was important to me.

2

This research was of the utmost importance for me for the following reason.

The three circles of the Borromean knot are, as circles, equivalent to one another. They are constituted by something that is

reproduced in all three of them. Whatever happens, don't lose sight of this fact.

It is not by chance, indeed it is the result of a certain concentration, that I place in the imaginary the support of what makes for consistency. I likewise make the hole the essential part of what is involved in the symbolic, and I give a special support to the real in what I have been calling ex-sistence.

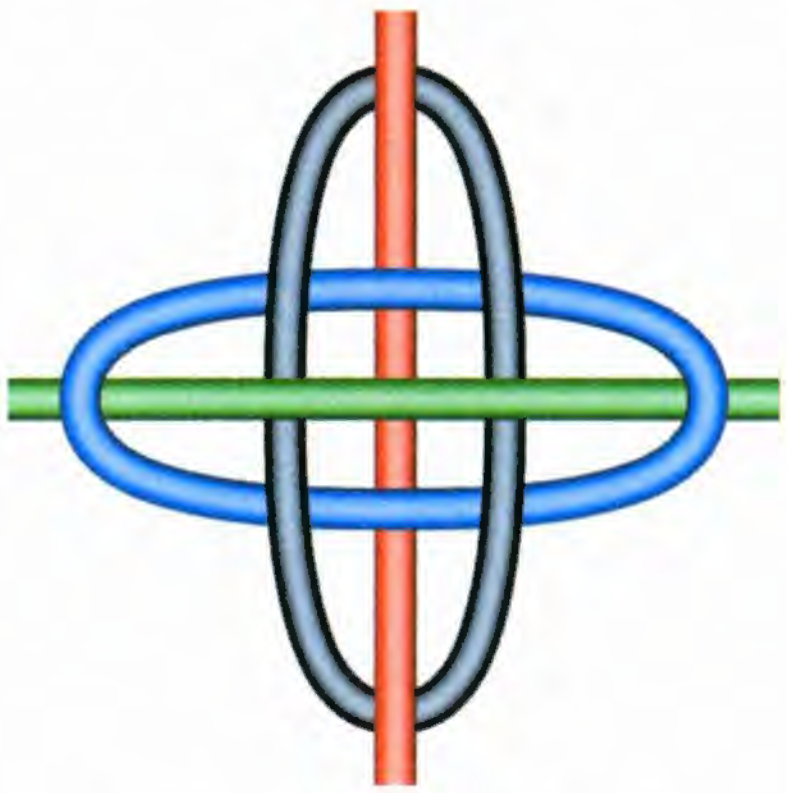
The fact that the first two are loose from one other – this is the very definition of the Borromean knot – enables me to sustain the ex-sistence of the third, that of the real, in relation to the free-roaming imaginary and symbolic. In *sisting* outside the imaginary and the symbolic, the real butts into, plays into, something that is of the order of limitation. Once it has been tied to the other two in Borromean fashion, from that moment forth the two others resist it. This is a way of saying that the real only enjoys ex-sistence to the extent that it encounters, with the symbolic and the imaginary, a point of arrest.

Of course, my formulating it in this way is not mere chance, but it's still rather astonishing, because you have to say the same of the other two. It is also inasmuch as it ex-sists relative to the real that the imaginary encounters friction, though in this case it is more easily perceived. Why then do I put this ex-sistence precisely right where it might seem to be most paradoxical? It is because I have to share out these three modes, and it is precisely on account of ex-sisting that pondering the real is sustained.

But what results from this, if not that we have to conceive of these three terms as being joined onto one another? If they are so – to employ this term – *analogous*, then can we not suppose that this is because of some continuity? There you have it for what leads us directly to fashioning the trefoil knot. Indeed, given the way that these three balance each other out, the way that they superpose one over the other, it doesn't take a great deal of effort to join up the points in the planar diagram, thus turning them into a continuity.

What is it that results from this, such that from this knot something that really has to be said to belong to the order of the subject – in so far as the subject is only ever supposed – finds itself supported in the trefoil knot? That is to say, if the trefoil knot is itself tied together in a Borromean fashion – with at least three – does that suffice? My question concerned precisely this point.

Does it not emerge that the minimum requirement in a Borromean link is invariably constituted by a four-component knot?

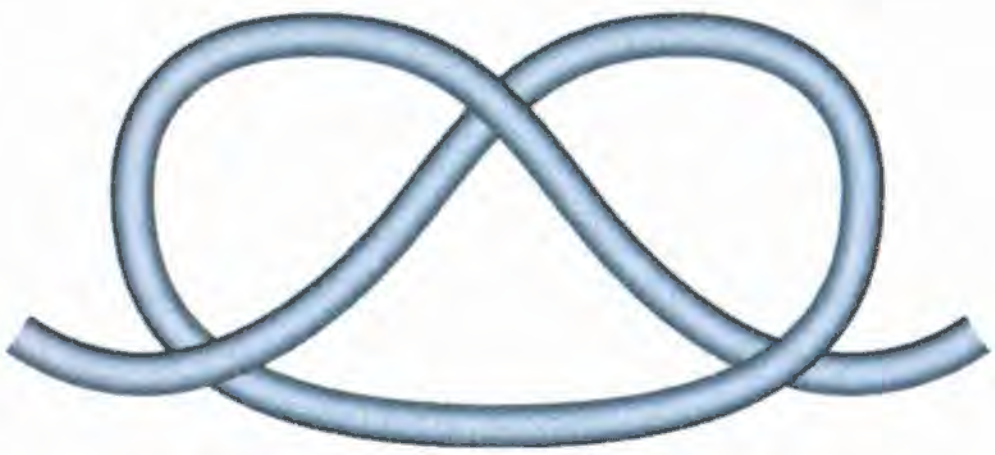


Borromean relation of 1 to 3

I mean that you just have to tug on this green cord to notice that the black circle, which is here knotted round the red cord, will take on the palpable shape of a Borromean link in being pulled by the blue circle.

Indeed, it seems that the least one may expect from the Borromean link is this relation of 1 to 3 others.

Now, we already have the proof that four trefoil knots, like this one – because this one, even though it is presented in an open form, is no less of a trefoil knot – can be composed together in a Borromean fashion, one in relation to the others.



Open form of the trefoil knot

We then get the following. It is invariably on the basis of three supports, which for our purposes we shall call subjective supports, that is, personal supports, that a fourth term will be propped up. If you care to think back to the way I introduced this fourth element with respect to the three elements that are each supposed to constitute something personal, the fourth will be what I am announcing this year as the sinthome.

It is not for nothing that I have written up these items in a particular order, namely, RSI, SIR, and IRS. It was precisely to this that my title from last year corresponded, *RSI*.

R S I
S I R
I R S

sinthome

The 3 + 1 scheme

3

The same Soury and Thomé have shown that once the Borromean knot has been given colour and orientation there are two knots of a different nature.

This duality of the Borromean knot, to which I have already expressly alluded in this Seminar, can already be shown in the planar diagram.

I'm summarizing here. I'm just indicating in which direction it can be put to the test.

I've told you about the equivalence between the three rings of string. It is remarkable that what is effective when it comes to orienting them is that their difference should be marked out by colours, as opposed to marking out their identity. To mark out their identity would involve labelling them with an initial letter. Thus, to say R, I, and S, is already to give each of them as such the titles of the real, the symbolic and the imaginary.

What is marked out by colour is not the difference of each one from the next, but rather their absolute difference, as it were, in so far as it is a difference common to all three of them. It is only when something is introduced to mark out the difference between the three of them, as opposed to difference at the level of the twain, that there appears as a consequence the distinction between two structures of the Borromean knot.

Which of these two knots is the true one with regard to what is at stake in the way that the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real tie together in what supports the subject? This is a question that deserves to be examined. To appreciate this, you should refer to my previous allusions to the duality of the Borromean knot, since today I have only been able to mention it very briefly.

There is something that is quite remarkable, namely, that when

one considers instead the trefoil knot, it bears no trace of this difference. In the trefoil knot, that is to say, in the fact that we put the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real in continuity, it is not surprising that we should see that there is only a single trefoil knot there.

I do hope that there are enough of you taking notes because this is important. Important enough to suggest that you should go and check what is at issue, namely, that when it comes to the trefoil knot, which homogenizes the Borromean knot, there is only one type.

Does this mean that this one type is true? Everyone knows that there are two trefoil knots. It depends on whether the knot is dextrorotary or levorotatory. So, this is a problem I'm going to put to you – what is the bond between these two types of Borromean knot and the two types of trefoil knot?

Either way, if the trefoil knot is indeed the support for any sort of subject, how is it to be examined? How is it to be examined in such a way that it is indeed a subject that is at issue here?

There was a time, before I came to the path of analysis, when I was moving down another path, that of my thesis, *De la psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports*, that's how I put it, *avec la personnalité*. On paranoid psychosis in its relationships with personality. If I resisted the republication of my thesis for so long, it was quite simply because paranoid psychosis and personality as such do not have any relationship, for the simple reason that they are one and the same thing.

In so far as a subject knots together as three, the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real, he is supported only by their continuity. The imaginary, the symbolic, and the real are one and the same consistence, and it is in this that paranoid psychosis consists.

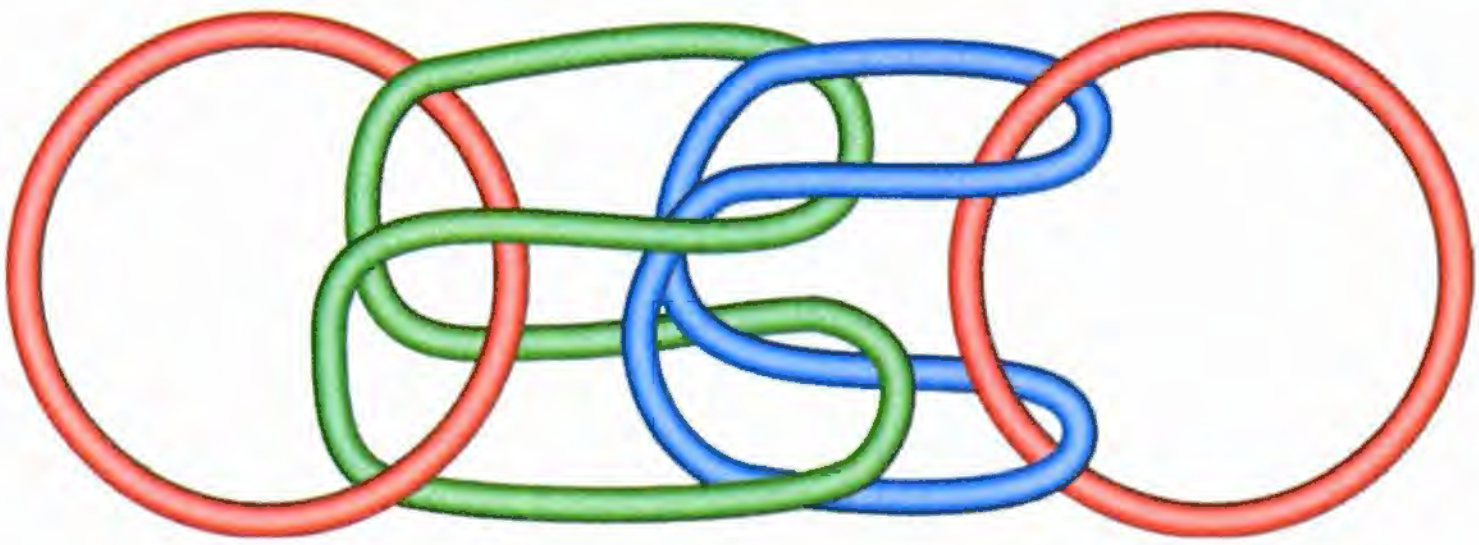
If you hear correctly what I am setting out today, you may deduce from it that to the paranoiac three there can be knotted, in the capacity of a symptom, a fourth term that would be situated as the personality, to the extent that it would be distinct from the three preceding personalities and would be their symptom.

Does this mean that this personality would be paranoiac as well? Nothing indicates this in the case – which is more than probable, which is quite certain – where a Borromean link can be constituted from an indefinite number of trefoil knots. With regard to this link, which from this moment forth no longer constitutes a paranoia unless it be run-of-the-mill paranoia, the possible flocculation, which would be final, of fourth terms in this braid, which is the subjective braid, leaves us with the possibility of supposing that there are certain choice points across the totality of the texture which are found to be the term of the four-component knot. It is precisely in this that the sinthome, strictly speaking, consists.

The sinthome is at issue not as a personality but as that which stands out, with respect to the three others, as a sinthome and as neurotic.

It is in this respect that we are afforded a glimpse of what is involved in the unconscious – in so far as the sinthome specifies it, in so far as there is a term that is attached to it in a more specific way. This term enjoys a privileged relationship with what is involved in the sinthome.

In the diagram I showed you earlier of four trefoil knots tied in Borromean fashion, you can see that the red responds to the blue in a particular way, just as the green responds to the black in a particular way. The same holds for the following diagram of the Borromean knot of four rings.



Two pairs in the four-component Borromean link

Colour, to use the term I used earlier, allows one to distinguish, in this set of four, two pairs that are each composed of red plus another colour. We have a red–green pair on the left and a blue–red pair on the right.

There is a pair inasmuch as there is a link between the sinthome and something particular.

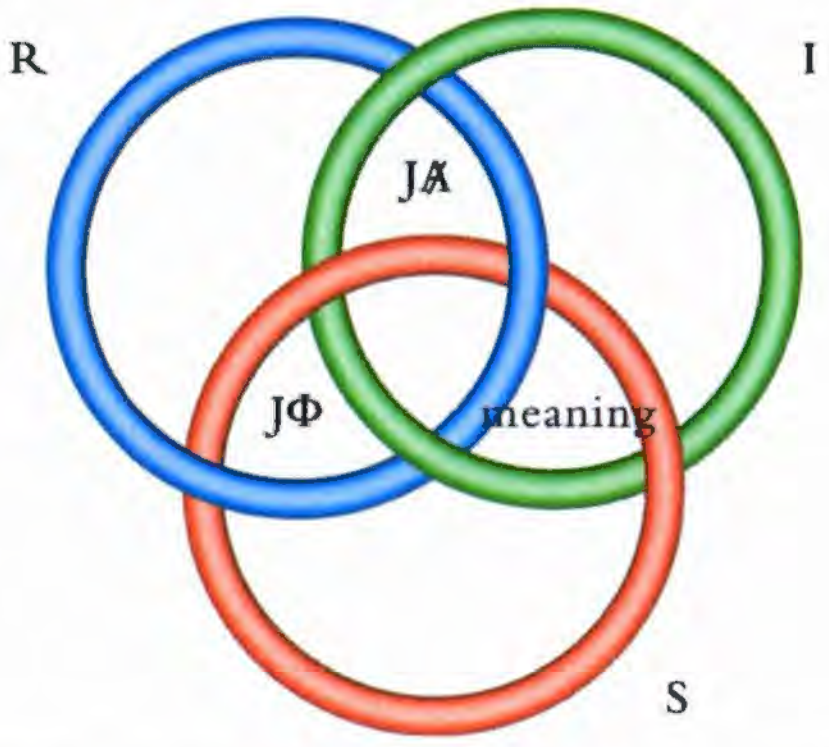
Inasmuch as the sinthome is tied onto the unconscious and the imaginary is tied onto the real, we are dealing with something from which the sinthome emerges.

4

These are the difficult things that I wanted to set out for you today.

They most certainly call for a complement, the complement that will tell you why earlier I was led to give the trefoil knot an open form, which was not the form – a circular shape – in which I initially drew it.

First of all, let's come back to the diagram from last year, in which there are three fields. I have already labelled one of these fields JA, to be read, *jouissance of the barred Other*. What does that mean?



The three central fields of the RSI diagram

This barred A means that there is no Other of the Other, that is to say, nothing stands in opposition to the symbolic, the locus of the Other as such. Thus, there is no jouissance of the Other because there is no Other of the Other. The result of this is that the jouissance of the Other of the Other is not possible for the simple reason that there is none.

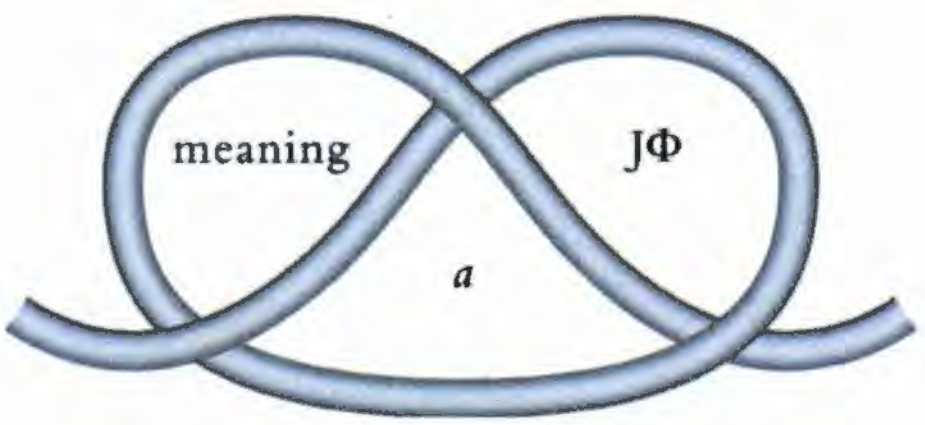
From this it transpires that only the two other terms remain. On the one hand, there is meaning, which is produced at the junction, in the planar diagram, between the circle of the symbolic and the circle of the imaginary. On the other hand, there is the jouissance known as the jouissance of the phallus, in so far as it stems from the relationship between the symbolic and the real.

In and of itself, this so-called phallic jouissance is certainly not penile jouissance.

If we consider what arises in relation to the imaginary, that is, the jouissance of the double, of the specular image, the jouissance of the imaginary body, this imaginary body sustains a certain number of gaps and these gaps constitute the different objects that occupy it. So-called phallic jouissance is, however, located here at the conjunction between the symbolic and the real. This is so to the extent that, in the subject who is supported by the parlêtre, which is what I denote as the unconscious, we find *might*, which is called upon and sustained to conjoin a certain jouissance that, due to the fact of this very speech, conjoins with so-called phallic jouissance.

Phallic jouissance is experienced, given the fact of the parlêtre, as parasitic.

I am writing this phallic jouissance here, thus balancing out what is involved in meaning. This is the locus of that which in consciousness is denoted by the parlêtre as *might*.



Meaning–jouissance diagram

I'm coming to a close with something that earlier I suggested you read.

There is *mimesis* in the fact that the three rings partake of the imaginary as consistence, of the symbolic as a hole, and of the real as ex-sisting relative to them. Thus, the three rings *mimic* one another.

Only, it is all the more difficult to do so because they do not mimic one another simply, but, given the fact of what gets said, they come to be composed in a triple knot. Hence my concern that, having made the discovery that this triple knot is indeed tied, threefold, in Borromean fashion, should the three have remained loose from one another, then a triple knot, playing out across a full application of its texture, ex-sists, which is well and truly a fourth.

It is called the sinthome.

16 December 1975

THE JOYCE TRAIL

IV

JOYCE AND THE FOX RIDDLE

Home truths ticking over
The real bears no meaning
Mentality and the adoration of the body
Joyce deep-rooted in the father he disowns
Making a splice between sinthome and jouissance

One is only responsible within the limits of one's *savoir-faire*.

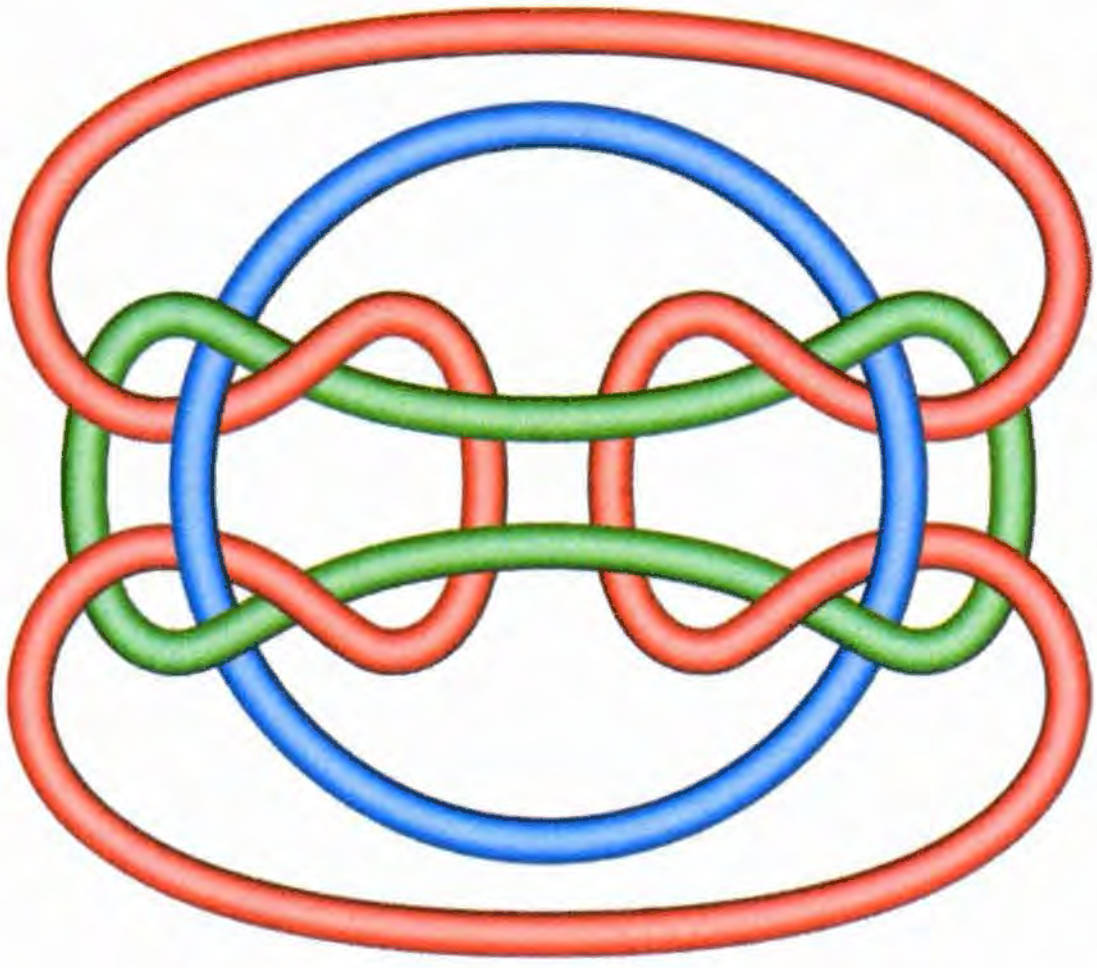
What is *savoir-faire*? It is art, artifice, that which endues a remarkable quality to the art of which one is capable, because there is no Other of the Other to perform the Last Judgement. At least, so say I.

This means that there is something from which we cannot derive jouissance. Let's call it God's jouissance, with the meaning of sexual jouissance that this embraces.

Does the image that we form of God imply, or not, that He derives jouissance from what He has made? Assuming He ex-sists. Replying that He doesn't ex-sist settles the question by putting the onus on us with respect to a pondering whose essence is to be inserted into the reality, the limited reality, that is attested through the ex-sistence of sex. This reality is a first approximation of the word *real*, which carries a different meaning in my vocabulary.

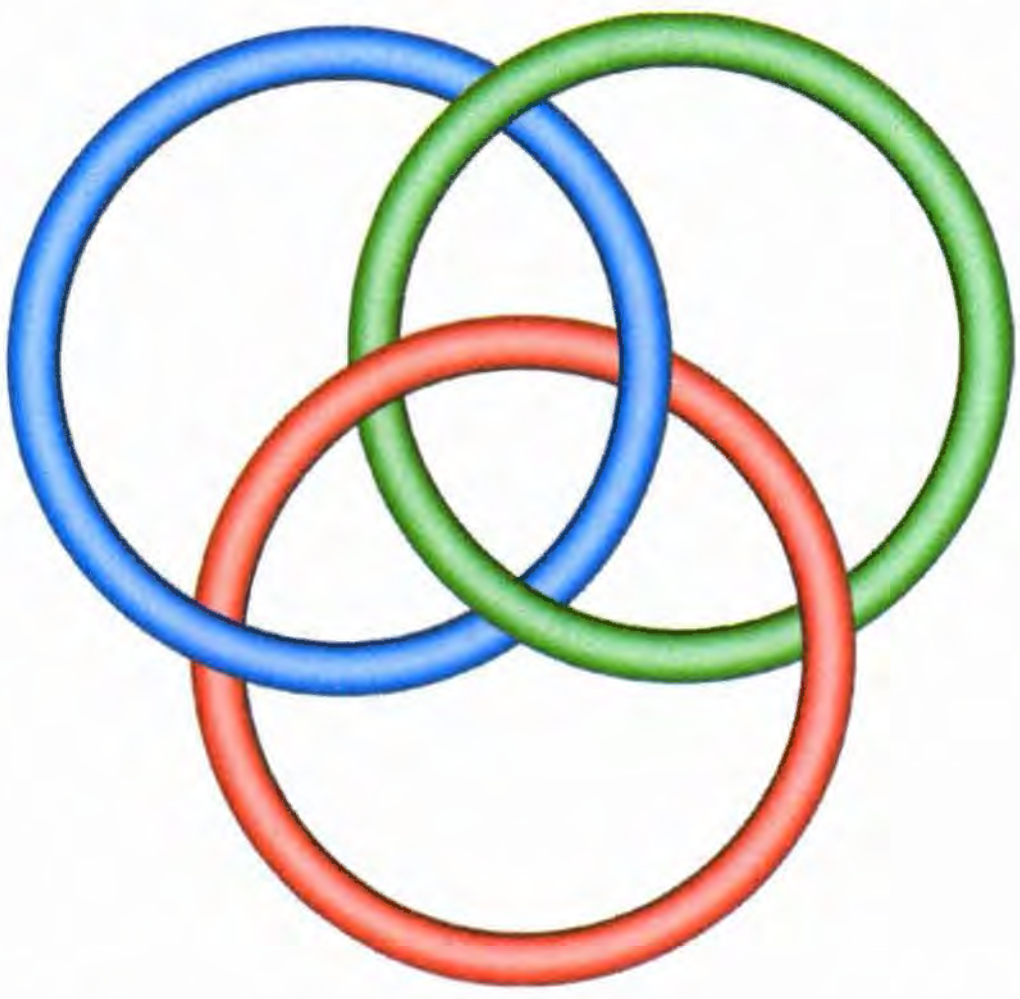
There you go. This is one of the items that I'm bringing you at the start of this new year. These items are what I would call home truths.

That's not such a bad thing for a new year. Not that I haven't been labouring away over the break since we last met some three weeks ago now. I've been working on a few things, a sample of which you can see up here on the blackboard.



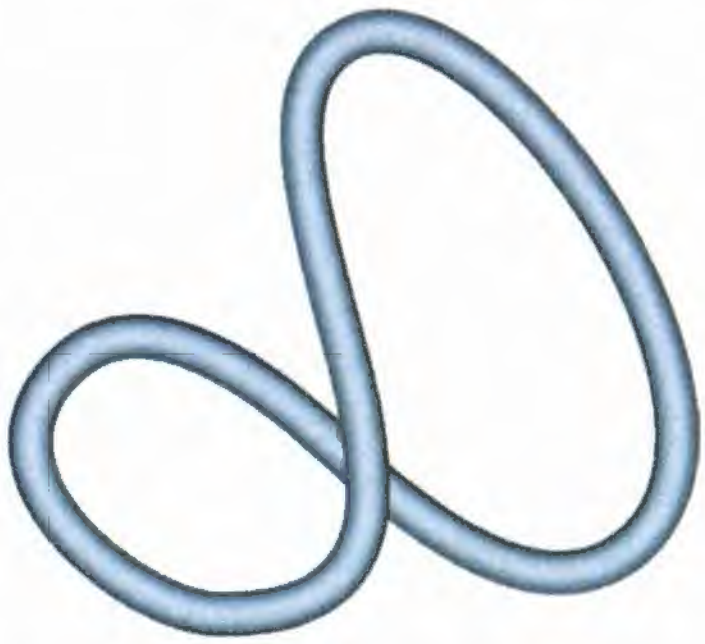
New figuration of a Borromean link

This, as you can see, is a Borromean knot.[1] It is no less of one than the one I usually draw, and which is put together as follows.



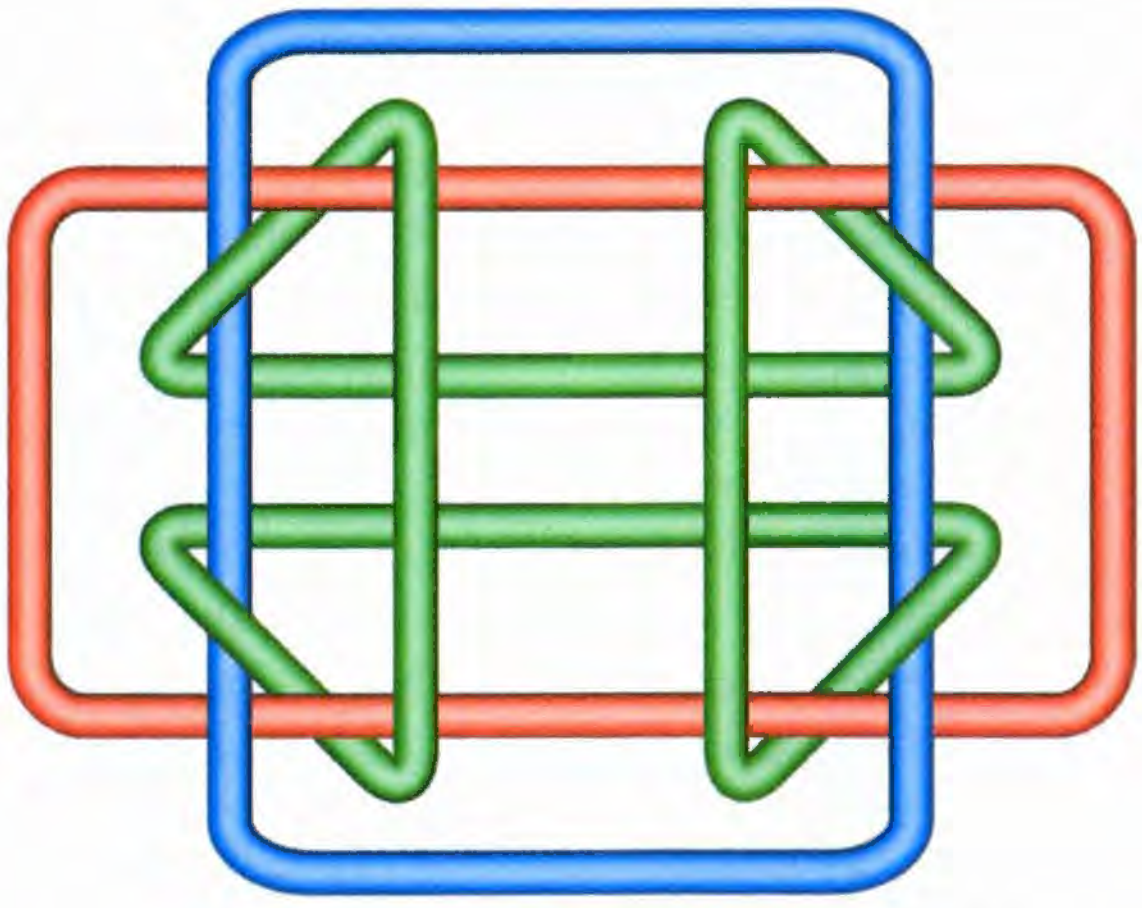
Usual figuration of the Borromean link

The first only differs from the second on account of one thing, which is by no means negligible, namely that this second one can be stretched out in such a way that there is a ring at each of the two extremities, with the one in the middle forming the join.



Figuration of the middle ring

The difference is this. Suppose if you will that three elements like this middle ring come together in a circular way. You can see, I hope, how this can be made without me having to trace it out for you on the board. This can be simplified like the one that I traced out first, or else as follows. This is the same knot.[2]



Another figuration of a Borromean link

Naturally, I wouldn't make do with this alone. I spent my holidays dreaming up a good many more of these in the hope of finding one good one that would serve as an easy support for what I've started to tell you today by way of home truths.

Well, and here's the surprising thing, this doesn't happen all on its own. Not that I think I'm wrong to have found in the knot the support of our consistence. Only, this is already a sign that I can

deduce this knot only from a link, namely, something that is not at all of the same nature. A link is not the same thing as a knot.

Let's get back, though, to the ticking over of these truths that I've called home truths.

It is clear that the very first stirrings of what is called pondering, of what makes sense, from the moment it first rears its head, entails a reference, a gravitation towards the sexual act, however little in evidence this act may be. The very word *act* implies an active / passive polarity, which already puts us on the path to the wrong meaning. This is what is called *cognizance*, with the ambiguity that what is active is that of which we take cognizance, though we imagine ourselves to be active in making the effort to take cognizance.

Therefore, from the very start, cognizance shows itself for what it is – deceptive. This is precisely why everything needs to be begun again from scratch, starting off from sexual opacity. I'm saying *opacity* because, first of all, we fail to realize that no relation of any sort ever comes to be founded on the basis of the sexual.

This implies, as pondering dictates, that, in the sense that responsibility means non-response, or a response that falls wide of the mark, the only responsibility that exists is sexual responsibility. At the end of the day everyone has an inkling of this.

On the other hand, what I have called *savoir-faire* goes much further, and to this is added the artifice that we impute to God. This imputation is quite needless, as Joyce insists, because this is something that titillated him in some locality, which is what we call pondering.

God is not the one who made this thing that we call the universe. People impute to God what is the artist's business, the first model of which is the potter, as everybody knows. It is said that he moulded – but with what, though? – this thing that is called, not by chance, the universe. *Universe* means but one thing, that there is Oneness, *Yad'lun*,[3] but we don't know where. It is more than unlikely that this One constitutes the universe.

The real Other of the Other, that is, the impossible, is the idea that we form of artifice, inasmuch as it is a form of making which eludes our grasp, that is, which far exceeds the jouissance we can derive from it. This altogether slender jouissance is what we call *esprit*.[4]

All of this implies a notion of the real. Of course, we have to make it distinct from the symbolic and the imaginary. The only onerous factor – this really is the fitting expression, and you'll be seeing why later – is that, in this affair, the real makes sense, when in actual fact, if you look more deeply into what I mean by this notion of the real, it appears that the real is grounded in that it bears no meaning, in

that it excludes meaning, or, more accurately, in that it settles in a deposit on account of being excluded from meaning.

I'm telling you this as I think it. So that you should know this, I'm telling you.

What is imagined, in its form that is most devoid of meaning, is consistency. Nothing forces us to imagine consistency, would you believe it.

I have here a book by a certain Robert Martin Adams called *Surface and Symbol*. It is a study – without the subtitle, how would we know? – on *The Consistency of James Joyce's Ulysses*. Here we have something like an intuiting of the distinction between the imaginary and the symbolic. As proof of this there is a whole chapter that places a question mark at the end of the title, *Surface or Symbol?*

What is meant by consistency here? It means *what holds together*, and this is precisely why on this occasion it is symbolized by the surface. Indeed, poor things that we are, we only get any idea of consistency from that which forms a bag, or from sackcloth. This is the first idea we have. Even the body is something we feel to be a skin that holds a heap of organs in its bag. In other words, this consistency is threadbare to the point of showing the cord. Our capacity for imaginative abstraction is so weak, however, that the knot is excluded from the cord, the cord that shows through as a residue of consistence.

Now, it is on this point that I can perhaps bring in the only tuppence ha'penny worth for which, when all is said and done, I acknowledge my responsibility – in a cord, the knot is all that ex-sists, in the proper sense of the term.

It is not for nothing, I mean, it is not without a hidden cause, that I've had to prepare an inroad to this knot by beginning with the link, in which there are elements that are distinct. These elements consist in some form of the cord, either as a straight line that we have to suppose to be infinite so that the knot doesn't come undone, or else in what I've been calling a ring of string, in other words a cord that is joined to itself with a splice.

The knot does not constitute the cord's consistence. Consistence still needs to be distinguished from the knot. The knot ex-sists relative to the cord element, relative to the consistent cord.

Therefore, a knot can be fashioned. This is precisely why I've been progressing through these elementary forms of join. I've proceeded in this way because it seemed to me that it was the most didactic way, given that mentality – there's no need to say any more – the *senti-mentality* specific to the parlêtre – because he senses it, he feels its burden – *ment*-ality to the extent that he is mendacious, is a fact.

What is a fact? It's precisely his *doing*. There is only any fact due to the fact that the parlêtre says it. There are no other facts besides those that the parlêtre recognizes as such by saying them. There is no fact but by dint of artifice. And it is a fact that he lies, that is, that he establishes false facts and acknowledges them, because he possesses mentality, that is, self-love.

Self-love is the principle of imagination. The parlêtre adores his body because he believes that he has it. In reality, he doesn't, but his body is his only consistency – his only mental consistency, you understand – because his body will clear off at any moment. It is even fairly miraculous that it subsists for the time it is being used, which is an inescapable fact, due to the fact of saying it. It is inescapable inasmuch as, however you use it, it won't get used up.

This is a fact that can be observed even in animals. The body doesn't evaporate. It is consistent. Indeed, this is what is disagreeable to mentality, solely because this mentality believes in having a body to adore. There lies the root of the imaginary. *Je le panse*, I put a dressing on it, that is, *je le fais panse*, I turn it into a paunch, therefore, *je l'essuie*, I suffer it.[5] It comes down to that. The sexual is what is mendacious in all this, sounding off a bit much as it does.

This is for want of the imaginary abstraction I mentioned earlier, the abstraction that is reduced to consistency, because the only concrete dimension we know is always sexual adoration, that is to say, *la méprise*, getting it wrong, in other words, *le mépris*, contempt, because what one adores is not supposed to have any mentality, cf. the case of God.

This is true only for the body considered as such – I mean, adored, because adoration is the only relationship that the parlêtre has with his body – to the point that whenever he adores another one, another body, it's invariably suspicious because it entails the same contempt – the same *veritable* contempt, since this has to do with verity.

What is truth? as someone once asked. What does it mean to speak the truth about the truth, which is what I was reproached for not saying throughout the period when I was first spouting my twaddle?

It means to do what I have effectively done, and nothing more – to track the real, which consists, which ex-sists, only in the knot.

2

A function of haste. I must make haste.

Naturally, I shan't get to the end of it, even though I haven't been idling, but to bring the knot to a close imprudently simply means to go a bit quickly.

The knot that I made for you at the start in two different forms is perhaps a tad insufficient. This was even why I looked for a few others in which there might be a higher crossing number than there is here. But let's stick to the principle, the principle that, all things considered, we need to make sure we have found.

I was led to this principle by sexual relation, that is, by hysteria, in so far as it is the last perceptible reality, the last, *ὕστερον*, with respect to what is at issue in sexual relation. Freud saw this very clearly. That's where he learnt the ABC behind it, which didn't stop him from asking the question *Was will das Weib?* –

W w d W.

He made just one mistake. He thought that there was *das Weib*. There is only *ein Weib* –

W w e W.

All the same, I'm about to give you a little something to get your teeth into. I should like to illustrate this with something that forms a support, and which is very much what is at issue in this question.

Some time ago, I spoke about the *énigme*. I wrote it with a capital E followed by a lowercase *e* in subscript – E_e. This has to do with Enunciation and the *énoncé*, the statement. A riddle, as the name indicates, is an enunciation such that its statement cannot be found.

You'll find one of these riddles pointed out in the book I mentioned earlier, *Surface and Symbol*. Since it is published by Oxford University Press, it's easier to find than the famous *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which you can nevertheless get hold of provided you don't insist on having the edition that includes all the criticism that Chester Anderson took care to tack on at the end. So, here, in this R. M. Adams volume, you will find something that holds great worth.

In the first chapters of *Ulysses*, Stephen goes off to teach one of those little groups of people that constitutes a class, in Trinity College, if I remember rightly. Stephen is the Joyce that Joyce dreams up. And since Joyce is no fool, he doesn't adore him, far from it. He just has to mention Stephen and he breaks out in a snigger. This is not far removed from my stance when I speak to you about myself, or in any case about my prate to you.

Of what, then, do riddles consist? Riddling is an art that I shall call an art *between the lines*, thereby alluding to the cord. I don't see why the lines of what is written should not be tied in by a second cord.

With everything that I've managed to consume by way of histories of writing, even theories of writing – there is a certain Février who produced an *Histoire de l'écriture*, and another, by the name of Gelb, who has done a theory of writing – my mind started wondering.

Writing is of interest to me because I think that it was through little bits of writing that, historically speaking, we entered the real, that is, that we stopped imagining. The real is upheld by writing little mathematical letters. *But good heavens, how did that come about?* I wondered. It was then that I turned a corner with something that strikes me as, let's say, *vraisemblable*, plausible, when I told myself that writing must always have something to do with the way that we set down the knot in a written form.

A knot is commonly written like this. Already, this gives us an S.

Beauty according to Hogarth

All the same, this is something that bears a strong relationship with the instance of the letter, such as I uphold it. Then, this produces a body that is *vraisemblable* with respect to beauty. Hogarth, who examined beauty in great detail, thought that it always had something to do with this double curve. That's poppycock, of course, but in the end it moves in the direction of connecting beauty to something other than obscenity, that is, to the real. Ultimately, the only beauty there is would thus be writing. Why not?

Let's get back to Stephen, whose name also begins with an S.

Stephen is Joyce in so far as he deciphers his own riddle. He doesn't get far because he believes in all his symptoms. This is very striking.

He begins by believing in his race. When it comes to his beginnings, in fact he started long before, sputtering out a few bits and

pieces, even poems, and it's not the best stuff he came up with. But my word, he believed in such things as *the uncreated conscience of my race*. You find that at the end of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. It's plain to see that this doesn't reach very far.

It ends well, though. I'll read you the last sentence of *A Portrait of an Artist* – you see, I made a slip, because he reckoned himself to be *the Artist*.

> *27 April: Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead.*

He addresses this prayer to his father, a father who distinguishes himself precisely as – I dunno – as what we might call an unworthy father, a failing father, the one whom throughout *Ulysses* he will seek in the guise of he who is not to be found at any level whatsoever.

Clearly there is a father somewhere, and that is Bloom, a father who is trying to find himself a son, but Stephen protests that it's really not for him. *After the father I had, I've had my fill. No more father*. Especially given that the Bloom in question is not so very tempting.

In the end, however, it's quite peculiar how Bloom's ponderings and Stephen's orbit each other and are pursued throughout the novel, to the point that Adams, whose name oozes more Jewry than Bloom, is very struck by some particular little clues that he discovers.

Singularly, he discovers that it's far too implausible to attribute to Bloom a knowledge of Shakespeare that he plainly doesn't possess. Moreover, this knowledge is not at all necessarily correct, even if it is the knowledge that Stephen possesses. It really is pure supposition because it presumes that Shakespeare had relations with a certain herbalist who lived in the same part of London. Adams stresses that the fact that this occurs to Bloom exceeds the bounds of what may rightly be attributed to him.

In truth, there is a whole chapter of *Surface and Symbol* that deals strictly with just this, to the point that it culminates in a Blephen – since earlier I made a slip – a Blephen and Stoom that we meet in the text of *Ulysses*. This clearly shows that they are made not only of the same signifier but truly of the same matter.

Ulysses is the testimony of how Joyce remains deeply rooted in his father while still disowning him. That's precisely what his symptom is.

3

I said that Joyce is the symptom. His entire life's work vouches for this at length.

Exiles is really an approach to something that for him is the core symptom, which is formed from the specific shortcoming of sexual relation. This shortcoming must, however, assume some shape, and it does so not just any old how.

It takes the shape of what tethers him to his wife, to she known as Nora, under whose reign he dreams up *Exiles*.

It has been translated into French as *Les Exilés*, the exiled, though it means *Les Exils* as well. There can be no better term to express non-relation than *exile*, and all that transpires in *Exiles* revolves precisely around this non-relation.

Non-relation is the fact that there is really no reason to hold one-woman-among-others to be *one's* woman. One-woman-among-others is also she who has a relationship with just any old other man. And it is indeed this *any old other man* that is at issue in the character Joyce conjures up, and for whom, at this point in his life, he knows how to open up the choice of the one-woman in question, who is none other than Nora.

The *Portrait*, which he was bringing to a close at that time, ends with *the uncreated conscience of my race*, with respect to which he calls upon the artificer par excellence, who would be his father, when in fact this artificer is he. He is the one who knows, who knows what he has to do. To believe, however, that there is an uncreated conscience of any race is a great illusion.

He also believes that there is a *book of himself*. What an idea! To make oneself be a book! Really, such a thing can only occur to a stunted poet, a confounded poet. Why doesn't he say that he's a knot instead?

Let's come to *Ulysses*, so that we may analyse it, for this is what a certain Shechner has surely achieved. As I was dreaming, I thought his name was Checher, which is easier to spell, but no, he's called Shechner. It's a shame, because he's not in the least bit *séché*, he's not a dry fellow. He imagines himself to be an analyst because he's read a lot of analytic books. This is a fairly widespread illusion, among analysts, precisely. And then, he has analysed *Ulysses*.

Unlike *Surface and Symbol*, this analysis of *Ulysses*, which naturally is an exhaustive one – because when you analyse a book you can't really stop, can you? – makes an altogether terrifying impression. On this score, Freud only wrote articles, and limited articles at that. Besides, apart from Dostoyevsky, he never analysed a novel in the strict sense. He made a brief allusion to Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*, but ultimately he contained himself.

It really does suggest that the novelist's imagination, I mean the one that rules in *Ulysses*, ought to be tossed into the bin. This really isn't my sense, though. Still, one must press oneself to gather up from *Ulysses* a few home truths. That's what I was broaching by means of the riddle.

This is what dear Joyce, in the guise of Stephen, offers to his pupils as a riddle. It's an enunciation.

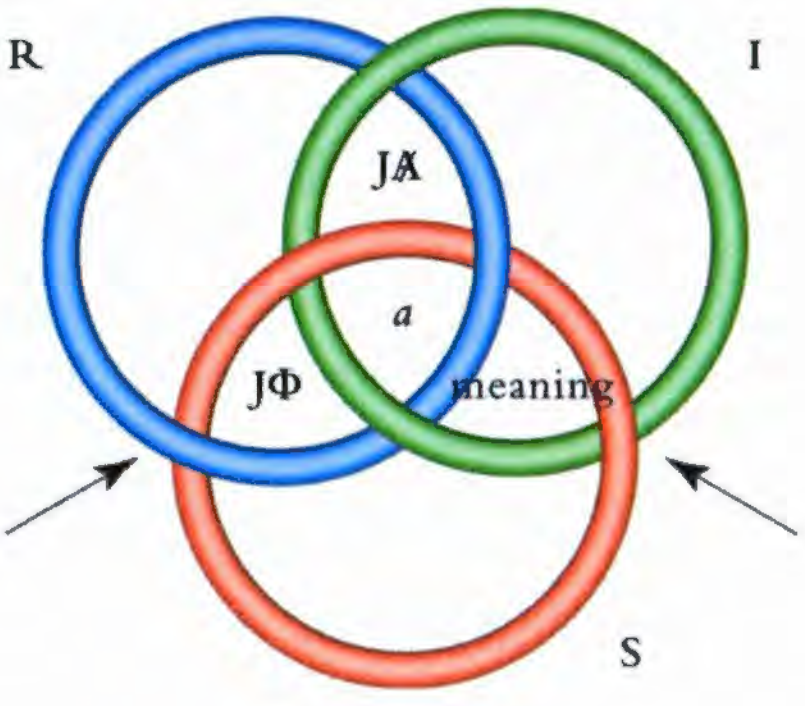
The cock crew,
The sky was blue:
The bells in heaven
Were striking eleven.
'Tis time for this poor soul
To go to heaven

I'll give you three guesses to find what unlocks it. Joyce provides the key once the whole class has fallen silent – *The fox burying his grandmother under a hollybush.*

That doesn't sound like much at all. Alongside the coherence of the enunciation – which, I point out to you, is in verse, it's a poem in consecutive sequence, and it's a creation – it is incontestable that this little fox burying his grandmother under a bush is truly a wretched thing. But what kind of echo might this have, I shan't say for everyone in this room, but for those of you here who are analysts?

That's what analysis is. It's the response to a riddle. Moreover, it's a response – it has to be said, from this example – that is quite especially daft. This is precisely why one must keep a firm hold on the rope. I mean that, if one has no idea where the rope ends, namely, in the knot of sexual non-relation, one runs the risk of floundering.

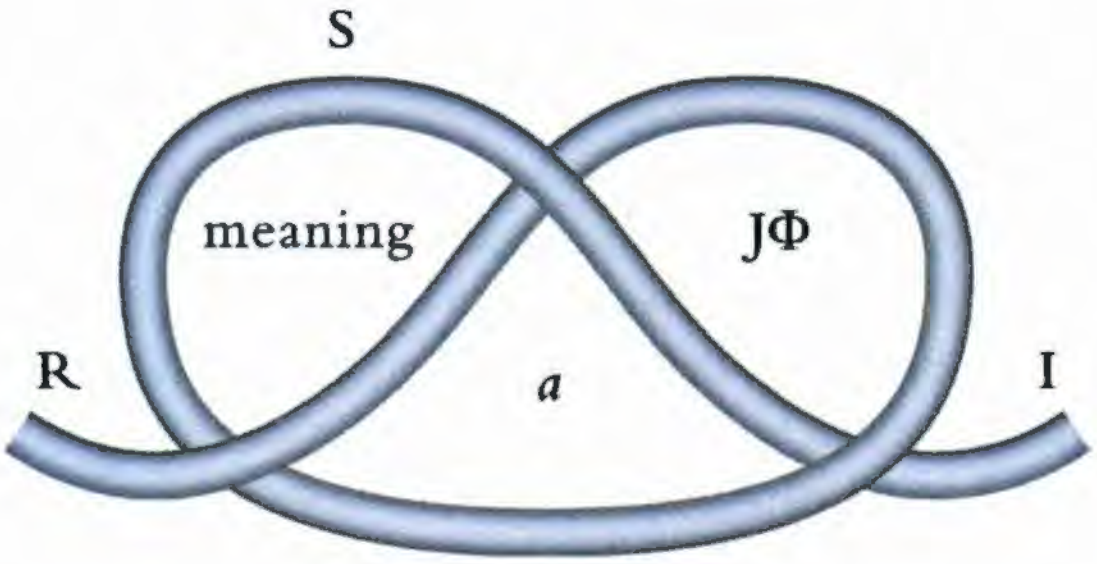
Meaning emanates from a field that lies between the imaginary and the symbolic. That goes without saying. I'll have to show you this. Of course, here in the middle is the *a*, the cause of desire.



RSI diagram

If we think that there is no Other of the Other, or at the very least, no jouissance of this Other of the Other, then we really need to perform a suture somewhere between this symbolic, which stretches out here on its own, and this imaginary, which is here. It is a splice between the imaginary and unconscious knowledge. All of this is done to obtain a meaning, which is the object of the analyst's response to what the analysand exposes at length through his symptom.

When we perform this splice, by the same stroke we make another one, precisely between that which is symbolic and the real. That is to say, in one way or another we teach the analysand to splice, to perform a splice between his sinthome and the parasitic real of jouissance. This is what typifies our operation. To make this jouissance possible is the same thing as what I shall write *j'ouïs-sens*. It is the same thing as *ouïr*, hearing, a *sens*, a meaning.



Splicing the link into a knot
(open form of the trefoil knot)

Analysis is about sutures and splices, but it needs to be said that we should consider the instances as really standing apart. The imaginary, the symbolic, and the real do not get muddled up.

Finding a meaning entails knowing which knot it is, and joining it together fast by means of an artifice. Isn't there something improper about tying a knot by means of what I might call a Borromean *linknot*?

It is with this question, which I shall leave hanging, that I'm going to leave you. The time has come for us to part.

I haven't left time now for dear Jacques Aubert to speak. My intention was to give him the floor for the rest of the session, but next time, given what I've heard from him, since he was kind enough to call me by phone on Friday, I believe he will be able to tell you about the Bloom in question.

The aforementioned Bloom is no worse placed than any other when it comes to twigging something about analysis, because he's a Jew. The way that he senses the suspension between the sexes means that he cannot help but wonder as to whether he's a father or a mother. Something that certainly radiates out in thousands of different directions in Joyce's text is that, with respect to his wife, Bloom has the sentiments of a mother. He believes that he carries her in his belly. All things considered, one cannot go more terribly astray in what one may feel for someone one loves.

And why not? Love needs to be carefully explained, and to explain it as a kind of madness is the first thing in arm's reach.

I'll leave you on that note. I hope that you haven't been overly disappointed by this first session after the break.

13 January 1976

ADDITIONAL SESSION

The following week: Adjournment to eftsoons

You must see – I assume so, if you're not too backward for it – that I'm in a bind with Joyce, like a fish with a bicycle.

This is clearly linked – I'm able to say so because these days I experience it day in day out – to my lack of practice, let's say, to my inexperience in the language he writes in. Not that I'm completely ignorant in English, but, precisely, Joyce writes English with these peculiar refinements that mean that he disarticulates the tongue, the English tongue on this occasion. Don't imagine that this only begins with *Finnegans Wake*. Long before, notably in *Ulysses*, he had a way of chopping up sentences that already inclined that way. It is truly a process that is exerted in the direction of finding another use for the language in which he writes, in any case, a use that is far from ordinary. This is part and parcel of his *savoir-faire*. I've already cited the article by Sollers in this regard. It would be as well for you to take stock of its pertinence.

The upshot of this is that this morning I'm going to give the floor to someone whose practice goes much further than mine, not only in the English language, but in Joyce in particular. That someone is Jacques Aubert.

So as not to drag on, I'm going to let him speak right away, because he's been good enough to take over from me. I'll be listening to him with all the consideration that I have drawn from his experience of

Joyce. The reflections that I shall have to add – quite brief reflections, indeed, because I'm not asking him to shorten his talk, far from it – will, I trust, be added with all the respect that I owe him for having introduced me to what I have called *Joyce the Symptom*.

So, come up here, dear Jacques. Stand over there. Let's go then.

[*Jacques Aubert's presentation is in the appendix, pp. 149–65*]

I thank Jacques Aubert for having got his feet wet.

The author of *Surface and Symbol*, whose name I gave you last time, labels Joyce's art one of *inconceivably private jokes*. In the same text there appears a word I had to look up in the dictionary, *eftsoon*. I don't know if this word is a common one. You don't know it? It doesn't ring a bell? It refers to things that are put off till later, *after soon*. There's nothing but that in Joyce. Not only are the effects put off till later, but more often than not they throw you off track.

Well, that's the art of Jacques Aubert too. He got you to follow one of his threads with bated breath. All of that obviously gives some grounding to what I'm trying to give consistency to in the knot.

I realized that I was already referencing Joyce's slipping and sliding in my Seminar *Encore*, which rather stunned me. I asked Jacques Aubert whether this wasn't what led him to invite me to speak about Joyce, but he replied that the Seminar hadn't yet been published at the time. So, it can't have been this that incited him to present me with this hole into which I shan't be venturing, no doubt out of some prudence, prudence such as he has just defined it.

The hole of the knot poses me no less of a question.

One is able to ascertain the duplicity of the Borromean knot – which actually is not a knot but a link – I mean, to ascertain that there are two of them, only when the circles, the rings of string, are coloured. I am indebted to Soury and Thomé for mentioning that, which I surely did notice myself, of course.

When the coloured quality distinguishes any one of these rings from the two others, we can, with the aid of this daubing, make it so that there are two knots. If the knots are not coloured, if nothing sets the rings apart, then nor will there be anything to set one knot apart from the other. Both statements will be equivalent.

You will tell me that in the planar diagram there is one that is levorotary and another that is dextrorotary. Here, however, lies the whole crux of this calling into question of the planar diagram. The planar diagram implies a specified viewpoint, and doubtless it is no accident that the notion of left and right cannot be translated into the symbolic in any way whatsoever.

For the knot, this only starts to ex-sist upwards of the three-component relation. How can it be that the three-component

relation enjoys this privilege? Precisely here lies that with which I should like to endeavour to solve the question. There must be something here, which cannot be unrelated to the way that Jacques Aubert singled out for us just now the function of phonation, precisely in what is at issue in supporting the signifier.

The keen point, on which I shall remain, is that of knowing where significance qua written starts to be distinct from mere effects of phonation. Phonation is what transmits the proper function of the name, and it is from the proper noun that we shall be setting off again, so I hope, next time we meet.

20 January 1976

V

WAS JOYCE MAD?

The jouissance of the real
Redemption or castration
The real within the entanglements of the true
Compensating for a de facto *Verwerfung*
The value of the proper noun

Things aren't going so well, and I'll tell you why. It's because I've been busy soaking up the vast literature around Joyce's work, to which it has given rise.

Even though the term *literature* repulsed him, that's still what he gave rise to, and he did so eagerly. He has given rise to a vast amount of waffle. How does such a thing come about?

Jacques Aubert, who is here in the front row, every now and then, and to his credit, sends me up from Lyon hints on a few further authors. He is not innocent in this because he too has produced some stuff on Joyce. But then, who is innocent?

At the leading edge of what is, on this occasion, my labour, this labour of soaking it all up, I have to ask myself why I'm doing it. Plainly it's because I started it, but I'm trying, as one tries with any reflection, to ask myself why I started.

At what point is a person mad? The question is worth asking, but for now the question that I'm posing myself, and which I pose to Jacques Aubert, is the following – was Joyce mad?

1

I won't be answering this question today, which doesn't stop me from starting to try to take my bearings from the formula that I offered you, the distinction between the true and the real.

This is quite obvious in Freud. This is even how he oriented himself – truth is pleasure-giving, which sets it apart from the real. The real does not give pleasure, of course.

It's clear that this is where I've been distorting something in Freud. I've been trying to point out how jouissance partakes of the real.

This leads me into tremendous difficulty, first and foremost because it's clear that the jouissance of the real includes masochism, which Freud noticed. Masochism is the main share of the jouissance endued by the real. Freud discovered that. He didn't foresee it right away, and obviously that's not the first step he took.

It's quite certain that going down that path sucks you in. This is borne out by the fact that I started by writing *Écrits inspirés*.

That is indeed how I started, and that's why I can't really be all that surprised to find myself grappling with Joyce. This is precisely why I've dared to ask whether Joyce was mad, that is to say, whence his writings came to him through inspiration.

Joyce left behind a large quantity of notes and doodles. *Scribbledehobble* as a certain Connolly called one Joyce manuscript that he published. I met Connolly in his day, I don't know if he's still around. All in all, the question is this – how are we to find out, based on his notes, what Joyce believed?

It's no accident that he left so much behind. His notes were drafts, and it took the fact that he was eager for this, and even encouraged those we call researchers to hunt them out.

He wrote a large quantity of letters too. Three thick volumes of these have appeared in print. Among them are some that are almost unpublishable. I say *almost*, because as you can fairly imagine, in the end that's not what would stop someone or other from printing them. The priceless Richard Ellmann has just brought out a last volume, *Selected Letters*, in which he has published a number of those that were considered unfit for print in the first tome.

There's such a welter that you can make neither head nor tail of it all. At least, I admit that I can't.

I find my way by means of a certain number of little threads, of course. I've managed to form some idea of his doings with Nora, based on my practice, I mean, based on what people confide in me, since I deal with people whom I've trained in such a way that they take pleasure in speaking the truth.

Everyone says, or rather Freud says, that if I manage this, it's because they love me, due to what I've tried to pinpoint in the way of transference, that is, they suppose me to know. Well, it's quite clear that I don't know everything. In particular, on reading Joyce, how are we to know what he believed about himself?

Indeed, the dreadful thing is that I'm reduced to reading him, because surely enough I didn't analyse him, which I regret. Well, clearly he was hardly disposed to it. It came quite naturally to his pen to qualify Freud and Jung as Tweedledum and Tweedledee, which does not show that he was that way inclined.

You must read, if you manage to find the thing, the French translation of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* that was published some time ago by La Sirène. Well, I said that you can get the text in English, though you might not get it with what I thought you would get, namely all the criticism and even the notes that have been added. If, however, you can read more easily in the French version what he tells of his prate with a certain Cranly, who is a friend of his, you'll come across a number of things.

It's very striking. Joyce comes to a standstill. He doesn't dare to say what he's getting into. Cranly pushes him and hassles him, pesters him even, to find out whether he is going to follow through on the consequences of his saying that he's lost his faith. This is faith as in the teachings of the Church – *the* teachings, I say – in which he has been trained. It's clear that he daren't disentangle himself from these teachings because they form, quite simply, the armature of his ponderings. He obviously doesn't manage to take the step of affirming that he no longer believes in them. What is it that makes him recoil from this? Well, the string of consequences that rejecting this vast apparatus would entail, an apparatus that, even so, still forms his support. Read it. It's well worth it. Cranly questions him and implores him to take this step, and Joyce won't.

He writes this down. What he writes is the consequence of what he is, but how far does this go? How far did his means of navigating reach, some of the devices of which he provides – exile, silence, and cunning?

I ask you, Jacques Aubert. Isn't there in Joyce's writings what I shall call the *hint* that he is, or is turning himself into, what in his language he terms a *redeemer*? There was one redeemer, a true redeemer, in the fairy tales – to put it the way I see it – that the priests told him, and which he clearly has faith in. Will he go so far as to come in the stead of this redeemer?

I don't see why I shouldn't ask Jacques Aubert for his sense of this, which is worth just as much as mine. We're reduced to *sentiment* here because Joyce didn't say it, he wrote it, and the whole difference lies there. When one writes, one may indeed touch on the real, but not the true.

So, what do you reckon, Jacques Aubert? Did he believe himself, yes or no?

– *There are traces, yes.*

That's why I'm asking you, because there are traces.

– *In* Stephen Hero, *there are traces.*

Why, yes.

– *In the first version, there are very sharp traces.*

Listen [*to everyone*], if you don't understand anything, you can clear the hell out of here. The only thing I ask is for this room to empty. That will mean less bother for me. [*To Jacques Aubert*] In *Stephen Hero*, which I have perused a bit, and then in *A Portrait of the Artist*, what's irritating is that it's never very clear. The artist is not the redeemer, it's God himself, as an artificer.

– *Yes, the passages in which he mentions the allure of the illegitimate Christ are also those in which he speaks about the* enigma of a manner. *And then, on the other hand, this also seems to correspond to the famous period when he was fascinated by Franciscanism, with two aspects that are perhaps of interest, one bearing on the imitation of Christ, which is part of Franciscan ideology, where we are all on the side of the Son, where one imitates the Son, and then the poetry, the* Fioretti. *One of the texts that he hunts out in* Stephen Hero *is precisely a text, not by a Franciscan theologian, but a poetic text by Jacopone da Todi.*

Exactly. If I ask this question it's because it seemed to me that it was worth asking. How are we to gauge the extent of his belief? With what kind of physics can we operate? Well, with my knots, that's where I'm hoping we have something with which to operate.

2

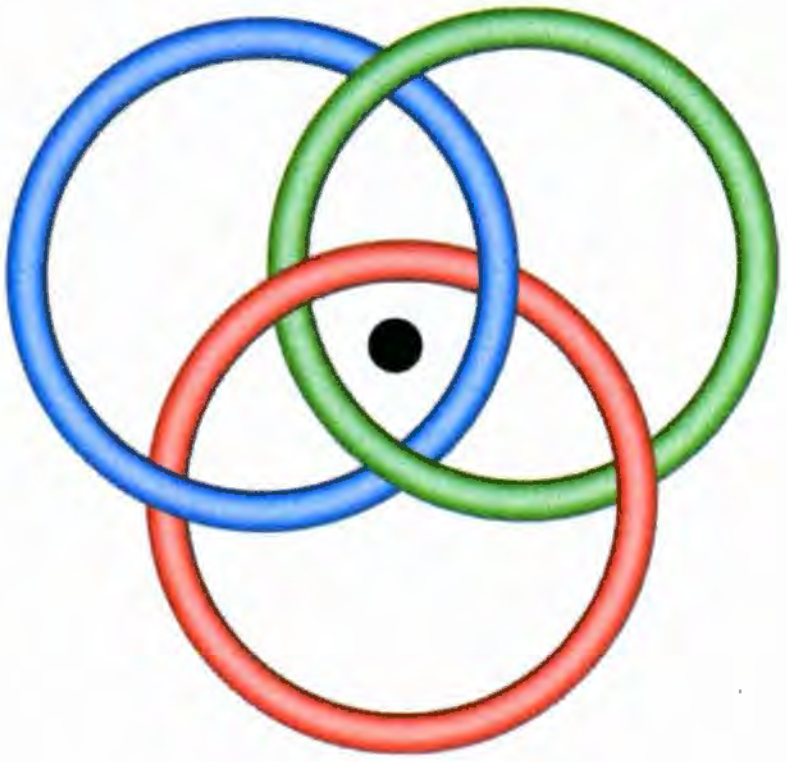
I've been operating with the knots for want of anywhere else to turn.

I didn't get there straightaway, but they've been affording me things, things that put me in a bind, I must say.

How can I put it? There is a dynamic of the knots. *Ça sert à rien*, it's pointless, but *ça serre*, it grips tightly. Well, it can form a tight grip, even if it doesn't have any point. What is it able to grip? Well, something that we suppose to be wedged in by these knots.

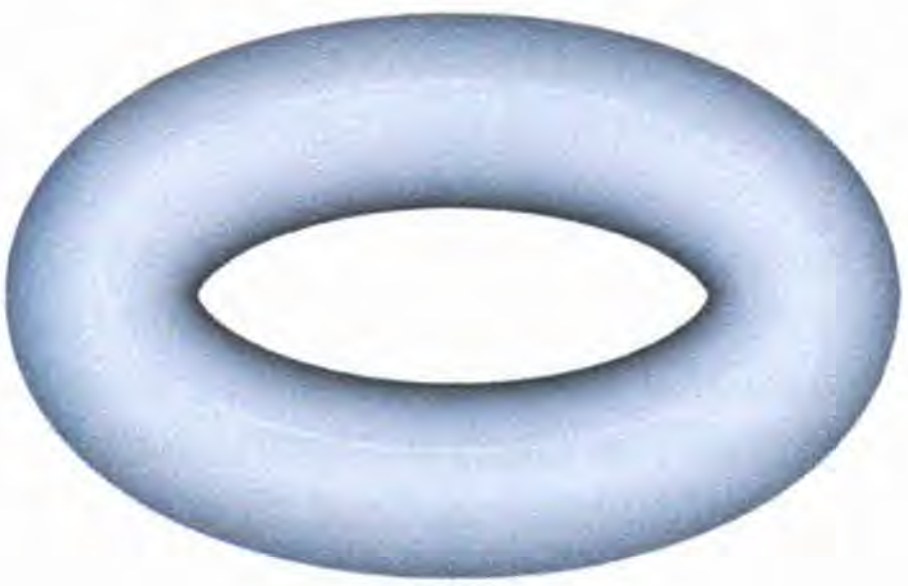
If we think that these knots are the most real thing there is, how can there even remain any room for something to be

gripped? This is precisely what is supposed by the fact that I'm putting a dot here. It is not unthinkable to see this dot as the reduced notation of a cord that would pass though here and out the other side.



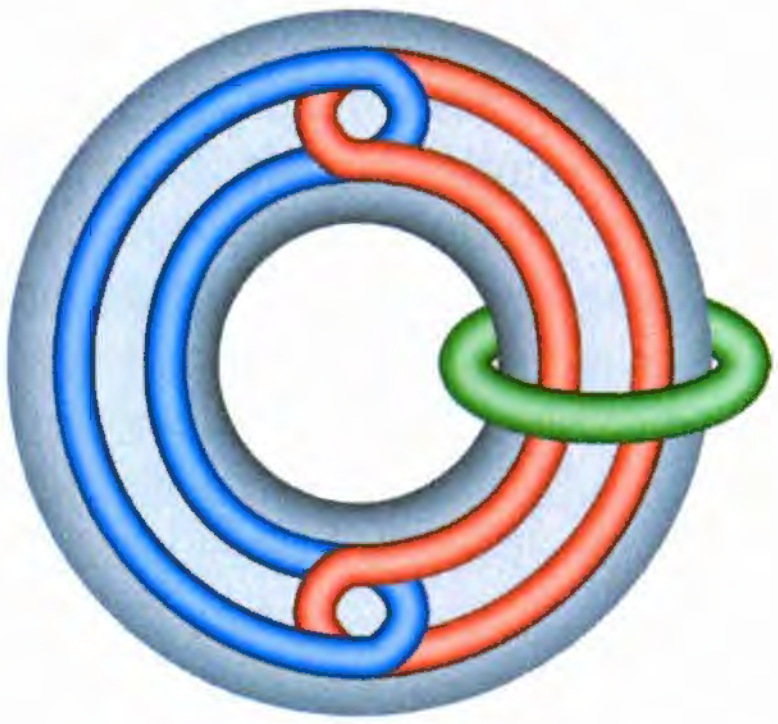
Link with a dot

This business of a cord has the advantage of being just as daft as the representation as a whole, behind which there still lies nothing less than topology. In other words, topology leans on the fact that there is at least this thing – without counting the others that exist – this thing that is known as the torus.



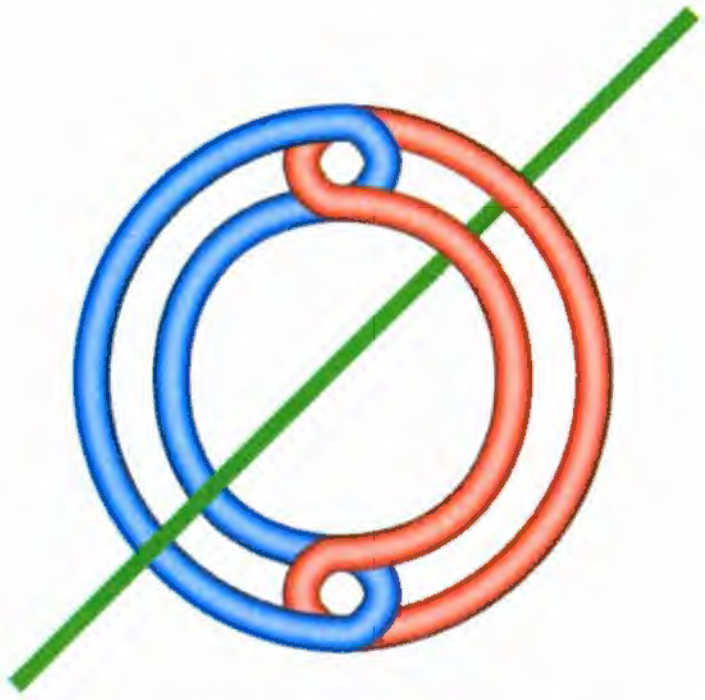
The torus

My good friends Soury and Thomé have succeeded in breaking down the relationships between the Borromean knot and the torus. They realized that the pair of circles that are folded around each other can be set into a torus that is formed thus.



The link set into a torus

For the same reason, if one introduces an infinite straight line – which is not excluded from the problem of the knots, far from it – into what we may term the *false hole*, it turns it into a true hole. This hole is represented in the planar diagram.



The false hole transformed into a true hole by the addition of an infinite straight line

The question of the planar diagram still remains. In what way is it suitable? The most that we can say is that the knots steer us to this planar diagram as an artifice. In actual fact, this artifice of representation is merely an artifice of perspective, because really we have to supplement this supposed continuity that we can see when the infinite straight line is reckoned to exit – to exit what? Well, the hole.

What function does this hole carry? The hole is something that the most basic experience dictates, the experience of the ring. A ring

is not a purely abstract thing like the line of a circle. For a circle to be thinkable, we have to flesh it out, that is, we have to give it consistency. We have to imagine that it is supported by something physical.

Moreover, this is where we meet the following – only the body can be pondered.[1]

3

Let's get back to what we are engaged in today, namely, the Joyce trail.

What do his love letters to Nora imply? There are a certain number of coordinates in them that we need to mark out.

So, what is Joyce's relationship to Nora? Oddly enough, I would say that it's a sexual relation, even though I say that such a thing doesn't exist, but it's a funny old sexual relation.

One thing we ponder, it's agreed, though we seldom ponder it, because it's not customary for us, is to slip our right hand into the left-hand glove by turning it inside out. It's in Kant somewhere, but then, who reads Kant? It's tremendously apposite in Kant. There's just one thing that he didn't think of, perhaps because in his day gloves didn't have a button, and that's the fact that in the inside-out glove, the button is on the inside. All the same, this is an obstacle to the comparison being entirely satisfactory.

If you have carefully followed what I've just said, however, the gloves in question are not entirely arbitrary. The inside-out glove is Nora. It's his way of considering that she fits him like a glove.

It's no accident that I'm advancing by way of this progression. For Joyce, there is but one woman. She follows the same model, always, and he only slips on this glove with the keenest repugnance. It is quite tangible that he made Nora his chosen woman only by virtue of the strongest depreciation. Not only must she fit him like a glove, she must grip him tightly as a glove. She is absolutely pointless.

This is quite plain in their relations, to the point that when they are in Trieste, whenever she drops a sprog – I really am obliged to speak in these terms – it causes a scene. It wasn't part of the programme. Unease sets in between Nora and the one called Jim, who are thick as thieves. People write about him using this name because his wife used it when she wrote to him. With each new rug rat, things go awry between them. Always, in each case, it causes a ~~scene~~.

Just now I spoke about the button. This button must surely be somewhat linked to the way we speak about something, well, an

organ. The clitoris, to call it by its name, is something like a black spot in this affair.

I'm calling it a black spot, whether it's metaphorical or not. Moreover, this finds a few echoes in the conduct, which is not noted nearly enough, of what is known as *a* woman. It's quite curious that *a* woman should take such a lively interest in black spots. The first thing she does with her boy is to squeeze out his blackheads. It's a metaphor for the fact that she would rather her own black spot not take up quite so much space. This is still the button from earlier, the button on the inside-out glove.

Even so, we mustn't get muddled up. There are women who have to undergo delousing once in a while, like monkeys, but still, squishing vermin and squeezing out a blackhead really aren't the same thing.

We need to press on with our review.

The imagination of being the redeemer, at least in our tradition, is the prototype of *père*-version. This madcap idea of the redeemer emerged to the extent that there is a father-son relation, and this arose a long while back. Sadism is for the father, masochism for the son. All the same, Freud tried to rid himself of this sado-masochism. This is the only point at which there is a putative relationship between sadism and masochism.

These two terms bear strictly no relation to one another. To make it thinkable one really has to believe that it transpires as it does in the diagram of an infinite straight line passing through a torus. I think it forms enough of an image like this. One really has to believe in active and passive to imagine that sado-masochism is something that can be explained by means of a polarity.

Freud was very alert to something that is a great deal older than this Christian mythology, namely castration. Castration means that the phallus is transmitted from father to son, and this even entails something that cancels out the father's phallus before the son has any right to bear it. Freud refers to the idea of castration essentially in this manner, where castration is a transmission that is plainly symbolic.

Indeed, this is what leads me to pose the question of the relationships between the symbolic and the real. They are highly ambiguous, at least in Freud.

Here arises the question of the critique of the true. What is the true, if not the true real? And how does one distinguish between the true real and the false, unless one employs a metaphysical term – Heidegger's *echt*. This *echt* is on the side of the real, though. It's right here that Heidegger's entire metaphysics runs aground. In his brief passage on the *echt*, he admits, if I may so say, his *échec*, his defeat.

The real is to be found within the entanglements of the true. This is precisely what led me to the idea of the knot, which stems from the fact that the true pierces a hole in itself by virtue of how using it makes meaning out of whole cloth, given how it slides, given how it is drawn into the image of the bodily hole from which it is emitted, namely the mouth that sucks.

There is a centrifugal dynamic of the gaze, that is to say, one that starts off from the seeing eye but also from the blind spot. It starts off from the *instant of seeing*, and maintains it as its prop. Indeed, the eye beholds *instantaneously*. This is what one calls intuition, whereby it duplicates what is known as *space* in the image.

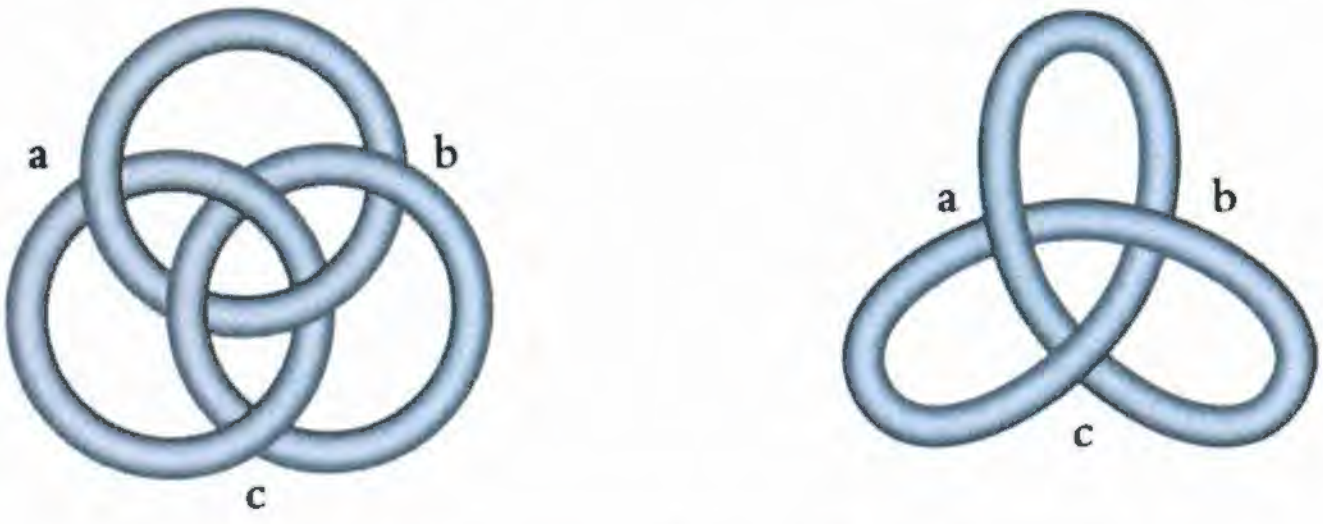
There is no such thing as real space. It is a purely verbal construction, which has been spelt out in three dimensions in accordance with the laws – as they are called – of geometry, which are those of the balloon or the bubble, imagined kinaesthetically, that is to say, oral-anally.

The object that I called object *a* is actually just one self-same object. I restored the name *object* to it because the object is *ob*, it constitutes an *obstacle* to the expansion of the concentric imaginary, that is, the englobing imaginary. The object is conceivable, that is, graspable in one's hand – this is the notion of *Begriff* – in the manner of a weapon. To evoke a few Germans who were not in the least bit daft, this weapon, far from being an extension of the arm, was a ranged weapon from the start. There was no need to wait for round shot to lob a boomerang.

What emerges from this review is that, on the whole, all that subsists of sexual relation is the geometry to which we alluded with regard to the glove. This is all that remains for the human race by way of a support for relation. Moreover, it is precisely in this respect that geometry has been engaged all along in matters of *soufflure*, in air chambers. Geometry more or less introduced the solid into it. It is still no less the case that we have to distinguish between the section of this solid and the solid itself.

What is most consistent in the chamber, that is to say, in the sphere, in the concentricity, is the cord in so far as it forms a circle, in so far as it turns round in a circle, in so far as it loops round into one sole loop, having initially been laid out in a planar diagram. After all, what is it that proves that a spiral is not more real than a ring? Well, in this latter case, nothing indicates that to join up with itself it would have to tie a knot, unless it were the one that is wrongly termed a Borromean knot, namely a *linknot* that quite naturally generates a trefoil knot.

The trefoil knot, to call it by its name, stems from this *linknot* when it is joined up at *a*, at *b*, and at *c*. It becomes continuous.



From the Borromean link to the trefoil knot

It is no less striking that when turned around like this it no longer forms a trefoil knot.

A false trefoil knot

This might not be abundantly plain for you, and it's not self-evident, but straightaway it was quite rightly noticed that if you change something here by passing this bight underneath, the immediate result is that the knot is entirely done away with.

What I'm raising as a question in this prate – namely, whether or not Joyce was mad – may find some bearings here.

After all, why shouldn't Joyce have been mad? All the more so given that this is not a privilege, if it's true that in most people the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real have become intertwined to the point that each forms the continuation of the other, for want of any operation that would set them apart as in the link of the Borromean knot – of what is claimed to be a Borromean knot, because the Borromean knot is not a knot, it's a link. Why not grasp that each of these loops continues in the next in a way that is strictly indistinct? By the same token, being mad is no privilege.

What I am proposing here is that we consider that Joyce's case corresponds to a way of making up for the knot's coming undone.

The unknot as a ring, then folded into a figure of eight and a false trefoil

This undoing forms a ring, pure and simple. When you fold the ring, you get this figure of eight. When you fold the upper loop over the lower loop, you get this, which looks like a trefoil knot, a cloverleaf, but isn't, because it will simply spring back to its initial ring shape.

One can rectify this by adding a buckle, thanks to which the supposed trefoil knot won't vanish into its constituent strand.

Buckle repairing the false trefoil knot[2]

Why not conceive of the case of Joyce in the following terms – isn't his desire to be an artist who would keep the whole world busy, or in any case as many people as possible, what compensates exactly for the fact that, let's say, his father was never a father for him? Not only did he teach him nothing, he neglected pretty much everything, save for relying on the good Jesuit fathers, the *Church diplomatic*.

The term *diplomatic* is in Joyce's text, specifically in *Stephen Hero* where *Church diplomatic* features word for word. In *A Portrait of the Artist*, however, his father speaks of the Church as a very fine institution, and the word *diplomatic* is again pushed to the fore. The plot in which all this develops no longer has anything to do with Redemption, which is nothing but babble here.

Is there not something along the lines of a compensation for this paternal abdication, this de facto *Verwerfung*, in the fact that

Joyce felt himself to have imperiously received his *calling*? This is a word that results from a whole stack of things to be found in what he wrote. It is the specific mainspring by which the proper noun is something strange in Joyce.

I said I would be speaking about the proper noun today. Late in the day, I'm keeping my promise.

The name that is proper to him is what Joyce valorizes at the expense of the father. It is to this name that he wanted homage to be paid, a homage that he refused to anyone else.

It is in this respect that one is able to say that the proper noun does all it can to make itself more than the S_1, the master's signifier, which heads towards the S that I've labelled with the index of a subscript 2, which is that around which the gist of knowledge accumulates.

$$S_1 \rightarrow S_2$$

It's quite clear that the fact that there are two names that are proper to the subject was an invention that spread as the story unfolded. That Joyce was also called James links up in a succession only with the use of the alias – James Joyce *also known as* Dedalus.

The fact that we can pile up a whole stack of them ultimately leads to one thing – it introduces the proper noun back into the common nouns.

Well, listen now, since I've reached this point at this hour, you must have had your *claque*, your fill, and even your *Jaclaque*, because I'll add, too, the *han* that shall stand as the expression of the relief I feel for having completed this path today. So it is that I reduce my proper name to the most common noun.

10 February 1976

VI

JOYCE AND IMPOSED WORDS

Lacan's knot
Knots and links
Slips of the knot mended by the sinthome
Sexual equivalence = non-relation
Symptomatic woman, ravaging man

I had invested some hope – and don't get the idea that this is some vanity or teasing – in the fact that it's half term. A lot of people go away. It's quite pronounced among my clientele. But not here. I can see that the doors are just as congested. All this is quite exasperating for me because it really doesn't set the right tone.

To be quite frank, I was hoping that the room wouldn't be so full, in view of which I was hoping to speak more confidentially, to stand in the middle of the room, I don't know. If there were just half of the people who are here it would be better. I would be able to speak in a fashion that is a shade more intimate.

Even so, it would be nice if I could manage to get some response, some collaboration, some active interest. It seems to me that it's hard to take an interest in what is becoming a research project. I mean that I'm starting to do what the word *research* implies, namely to go round in circles.

There was a time when I used to sound my bugle a bit more. Like Picasso, I used to say – *I don't seek, I find.* These days, however, it's tougher for me to clear my path.

1

All the same, I'm going to go back to what I suppose you heard last time. It's pure supposition. I'm reduced to supposing.

To get to the crux of it, I'm going to be illustrating.

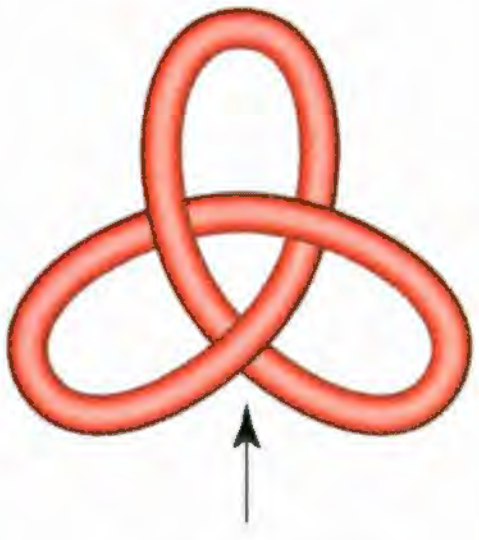
Here is a knot. This is the trefoil knot, a knot with three crossings, which is deduced from the Borromean knot. The latter is not a knot – contrary to its name, which, like all names, reflects a meaning – but a link. It carries the meaning that enables meaning to be located somewhere in the Borromean link.

When we call one element of the link *the imaginary*, another *the real*, and the third *the symbolic*, meaning, as I've already shown you, lies in the field between the imaginary and the symbolic. We cannot hope to place it anywhere else because we are reduced to imagining all that we ponder. Only, we do not ponder without words, contrary to what some psychologists have asserted, those of the Würzburg school.

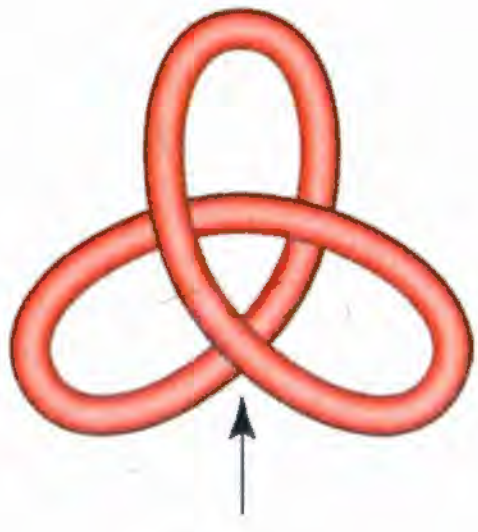
As you can see, I'm a little disappointed, and I'm finding it hard to get going. I'll come to the crux of the matter now, and say what can occur to what forms a knot.

What forms a knot is, at bare minimum, the trefoil knot. I make do with this because it's the knot that is deduced from the fact that the three rings of string of the imaginary, the real, and the symbolic form a knot. They form a knot in that they don't make do with merely determining a certain number of fields that are wedged in, a certain number of places where, were you to stick your finger in, you would feel a pinch. A knot is somewhere that you can also get pinched. Only, the knot is of a different nature.

So, last time, if you remember well – naturally I wouldn't expect that much – I put forward this remark, which is not self-evident, that all it takes is for there to be one mistake somewhere in the trefoil knot and it will be reduced to a ring. Suppose, for example, that here, instead of passing over, it passes under. That's all it takes.



Trefoil knot

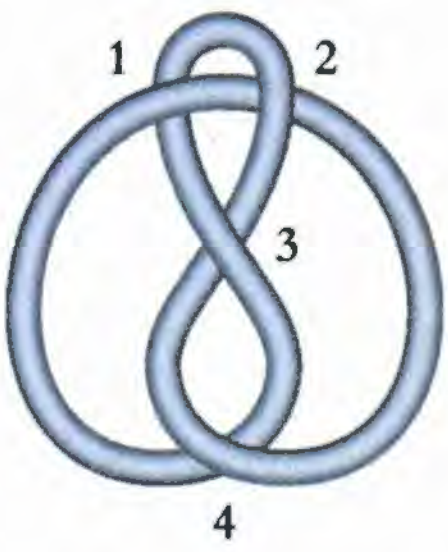


Unknot

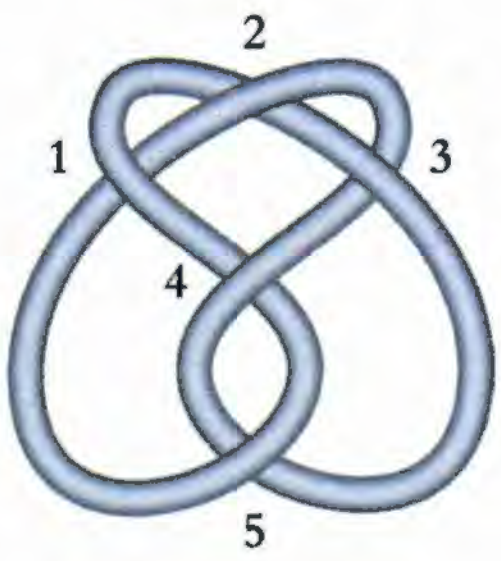
Everyone knows that there's no such thing as a knot with two crossings. So, all it takes is for there to be one mistake somewhere in the knot.

I think that this is blindingly obvious for you. Yet it's not self-evident.

Take, for example, the knot with five crossings. Since there is a well-known knot with four crossings called *Listing's knot*, I had the madcap idea of calling this knot with five crossings *Lacan's knot*.[1] Indeed, this is the knot that is most suitable, but I'll tell you about that another time.



Listing's knot



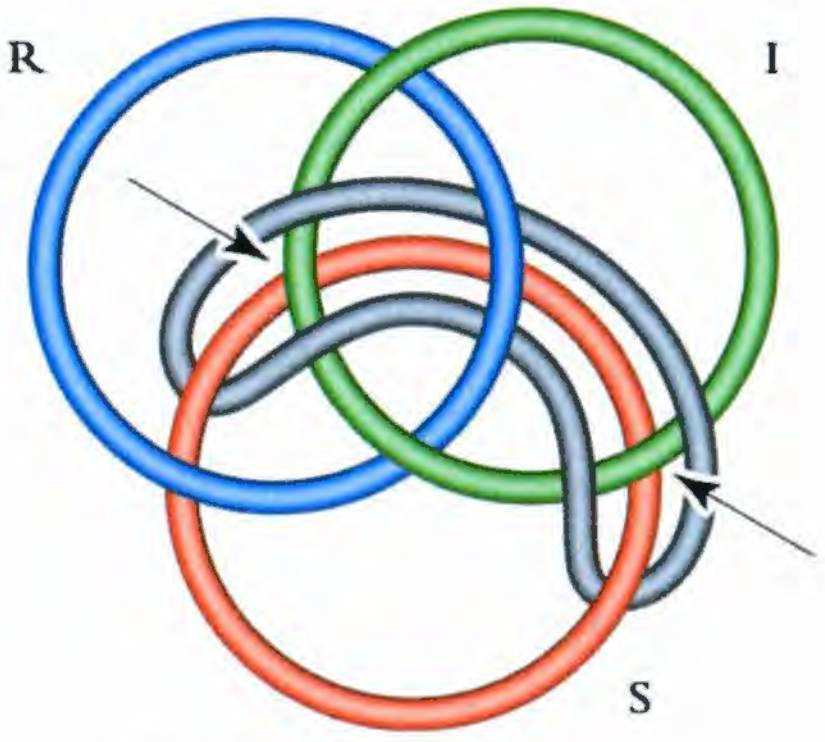
Lacan's knot

It's quite magnificent. As with every time one draws a knot, one runs the risk of making a mistake. Earlier, when I was drawing these things in order to present them to you, I came up against something of this kind, which meant that Gloria had to add a piece on, here. When one draws like this, one makes mistakes.

So, with the knot of five crossing points, if you make a mistake at either one of these two points labelled 4 and 5, the same thing occurs as in the trefoil knot, namely, the whole thing comes undone, and clearly that forms nothing more than a ring. If on the other hand you make a mistake at any one of these points here, 1, 2 or 3, you can observe that it still holds together as a knot, that is to say, it becomes a trefoil knot.

This is to tell you that it's not self-evident that, by making a mistake at one point of the knot, the whole knot evaporates, if I can put it like that.

What I said last time is the following – I alluded to the fact that the symptom, which this year I've been calling the sinthome, is what enables the Borromean link to be mended, should we no longer be making it a link, namely, should we have made what I have been calling a *mistake* at two different points.



The Borromean sinthome

Should the symbolic thereby come free, as I once noted it would, we have a way of mending it, which is to fashion what I defined for the first time as a sinthome. This is the item that enables the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real to go on holding together, even though here none of them are actually holding on to any of the others anymore due to the two mistakes.

Last time, I allowed myself to define as a sinthome that which enables the trefoil knot, not to go on forming a trefoil knot, but rather to maintain itself in a position that *looks like* it is forming a trefoil knot. That's what I was very gently putting forward.

Incidentally, I shall mention again what I thought – make what you will of my thought! – I thought that this was the key to what happened to Joyce.

Joyce has a symptom that starts off from the fact that his father was a failing father, a radically failing father. He speaks of nothing but that. I centred everything around the proper noun, and I thought – make what you like of this thought – that it was in wanting a name for himself that Joyce came up with a compensation for the paternal failing.

At the very least, that's what I said, because I couldn't say it any better. I'm going to try to articulate it in a more precise manner.

It is clear, however, that Joyce's art is something so particular that the term sinthome is really what suits it.

2

It so happens that last Friday, during my presentation of something that is generally considered to be a case, I dealt with a case,

certainly a case of madness, which began with the sinthome of *imposed words*.

That, at least, was how the patient himself articulated something that appears to be all that is most sensible in the realms of an articulation that I may say to be a Lacanian articulation. How is it that any of us can help feeling that the words on which we depend are in some sense imposed upon us?

It is precisely in this respect that he who is called ill sometimes goes further than he who is called a man of sound mind. Rather, the question is why a normal man, a man said to be normal, doesn't notice that speech is a parasite, that speech is a veneer, that speech is a form of cancer that afflicts the human being? How is it that there are some who go so far as to sense this? It's quite certain that Joyce affords us a little inkling of this.

I didn't speak about his daughter last time because I didn't want to get caught up in what we might call side notes. His daughter, Lucia – for he gave his children Italian names – is still with us. She's in a home in England. She is what is commonly known as schizophrenic.

I was reminded of this during my last case presentation, in that the case I was presenting had taken a turn for the worse. After having felt – a feeling which, for my part, I consider to be quite sensible – that words were being imposed upon him, the patient had the feeling that he was affected by what he himself called telepathy. It wasn't what this word usually refers to, namely the fact of being aware of things that occur to others, it was that everyone else was aware of what he himself was formulating, everyone apart from him, namely, his inmost reflections, and most especially reflections that occurred to him on the fringes of these notorious *imposed words*.

For example, he heard something like *low-down political assassination*, which he made equivalent to *low-down political assastination*.[2] You can hear how the signifier is reduced to what it is, to the equivoque, to a torsion of the voice. In response to *low-down assastination*, or a *low-down assassination* said to be *political*, he told himself something that began with a *but* and which was his reflection on this subject. What left him utterly distraught was the thought that the reflections he came up with, over and above what he considered to be words that were imposed on him, were also known to everyone else.

He was therefore, as he put it himself, a *sending telepath*. In other words, he had no more secrets, nothing left in reserve. That was precisely what had led him to commit an attempt to end it all, which is known as a suicide attempt, which was also the reason

he was there and the reason I had, all told, to turn my attention to him.

What is pushing me today to speak about Lucia is exactly the following – that Joyce, who put up a fierce defence on her behalf against the grip of the doctors, affirmed one thing, namely, that she was telepathic. In the letters he wrote about her he says that she is far more intelligent than everyone else, that she informs him – *miraculously* is the word that is implied – about everything that happens to a certain number of people, that for her these people hold no secret.

Isn't this something quite striking? Not that I think on any account that Lucia actually was telepathic, that she knew what happened to people about whom she had no more information than anyone else. But that Joyce attributed this virtue to her, through a number of signs and declarations that he understood in a particular way, is precisely where I can see how, in order to defend, as it were, his daughter, he attributes to her something that is an extension of what I shall for the time being call his own symptom.

In relation to the case of Joyce it is hard not to mention the case I saw last week, given the way that this came about for him. With regard to speech, one cannot say that something wasn't imposed upon Joyce.

In his efforts dating back to his first critical essays, then in *A Portrait of the Artist*, and ultimately in *Ulysses* and ending in *Finnegans Wake*, in what is in some sense the continuous progress that his art constituted, it is hard not to see how a certain relationship with speech is increasingly imposed upon him – namely, this speech that comes to be written while being broken apart, pulled to pieces – to the point that he ends up dissolving language itself, as has been very well noted by Philippe Sollers and which I mentioned at the start of the year. He ends up imposing on language itself a sort of fracturing, a sort of decomposition, which makes it so that there is no longer any phonatory identity.

There is undoubtedly a reflection here at the level of writing. It is through the intermediary of writing that speech is decomposed by imposing itself as such. This occurs through a warping, and it is ambiguous as to whether this warping lets him free himself from the parasite of speech I was speaking about earlier, or whether it leaves him on the contrary open to invasion from the essentially phonemic properties of speech, from the polyphony of speech.

Either way, in light of the patient whose case I was considering on the last occasion that I gave what is known as my presentation

at Sainte-Anne, the fact that Joyce affirmed, in Lucia's defence, that she was telepathic, strikes me as a certain indication of what Joyce testifies to at this very same point, which I designated as being the point of the failing of the father.

What I sustain by means of the sinthome is here shown with a ring of string, which I suppose to be brought to bear at the very site where, shall we say, there is a mistake in the tracing out of the knot.

The mistake rectified at the site where it occurs[3]

3

We cannot help but observe that the slip is the very thing on which the notion of the unconscious is, in part, founded.

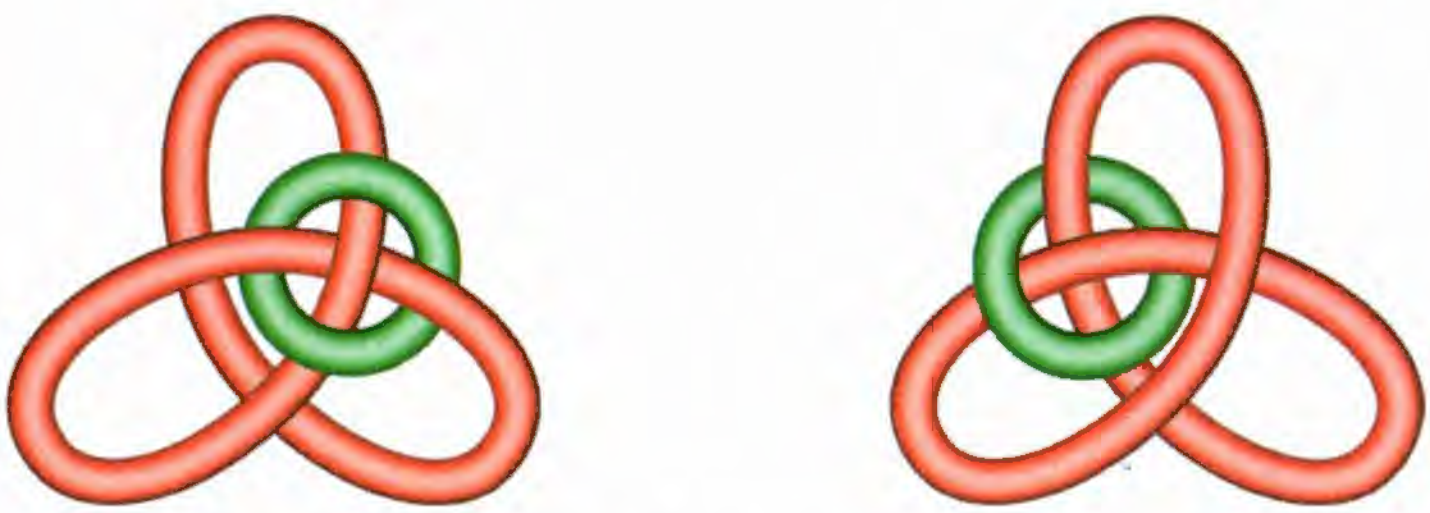
The witticism is too, but this has to be credited to the same account, as it were, because after all it is not unthinkable that it results from a slip. At the very least this is what Freud himself asserts by saying that it's a *short-circuit*, an *economy* with respect to a pleasure, a satisfaction.

The fact that this should lie at the site where the knot fails, where there is a kind of slip of the knot itself, is just what it takes to hold our attention. It occasionally happens that I mess up, as I have shown here, and this indeed is what confirms the fact that a knot is something that can be botched. Likewise, the unconscious is there to show us that it is on the basis of its specific consistency that there are piles of botched cases.

Here the notion of fault is making a return. Does fault, which conscience turns into a sin, belong to the realm of the slip? The equivocation of the word is also what allows it to be pondered, to pass from one meaning to another. Is there something that belongs to the realm of the slip in the initial fault that Joyce puts forward so strongly?

This brings to mind a whole imbroglio, but we're already in this imbroglio because we're in the knot, and by the same stroke we're in a tangle.

I spoke of rectifying the slip at the very site at which it occurs. This is not self-evident. Indeed, what does it mean, that it occurs at such a site? There is an equivocation because we meet the consequence of this at two other sites. What is striking about it is that it doesn't produce the same consequences at each of the two sites. If you pay close attention, you can see, in the way the knot responds, that when you put the sinthome at the very site where the fault occurs you don't get the same knot as you do when you rectify it at one of these other sites.



With the mistake rectified at one of the other two sites,
the link is different[4]

Rectifying the slip at the two other sites is just as conceivable as doing so at the site where the mistake occurred, because it's a matter of making something of the primary structure of the trefoil knot subsist. Now, as you can see, what subsists due to the intervention of the sinthome will be different depending on whether the sinthome is placed at the very site of the slip or at one of the other two sites.

The striking thing is that there is a common feature that is shared in the way that the things are knotted, something which is marked in a certain direction, let's say the dextrorotary orientation, of the knotted compensation, of compensation by means of the sinthome. It remains no less clear that what results from this compensation will be different depending on the site at which it is placed.

The nature of this difference is as follows.

In what results from the rectification made to the trefoil knot at the two other sites, the sinthome and the figure-eight loop, that is to say, the red figure-of-eight and the green ring – which here take

shape, as it were, spontaneously – can be permuted and are strictly equivalent.

Equivalence by permuting red and green

However, when the rectification is made at the site at which the mistake occurs, there is no such permutation.

You have only to take a figure-of-eight knot[5] and you will obtain with the greatest of ease the passage from one shape to another. Nothing could be more straightforward.

You just have to form an idea of how you would tug on the different parts in such a way that the red loop would form a ring, here. Nothing could be easier than to perceive that there is every chance that what was initially a green ring will become a green figure-of-eight. You will see when you try it out that it's a figure-of-eight that is likewise dextrorotary. So, it seems to me that there is a strict equivalence here.

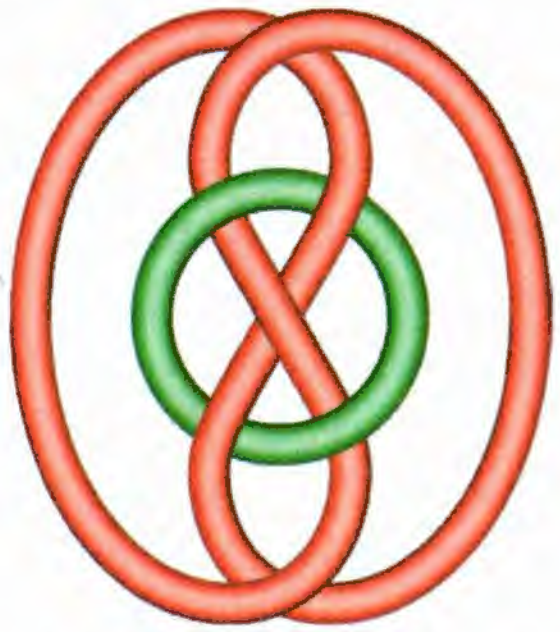
What about this thing I'm calling *equivalence*? After the path I've just cleared around sexual relation, it is not difficult to suggest that, when there is equivalence, there is no relation.

Let's look again at the trefoil knot. Suppose if you will that the two sexes are symbolized here by the two colours, and assume for the time being, as we already have, that from this point forth there is a failure of the knot.

We have observed that the failure of the trefoil knot is strictly equivalent in both sexes. If what we thus behold to be equivalent is supported by the fact that there has been a failure of the knot in either sex, the result is that both sexes are equivalent.

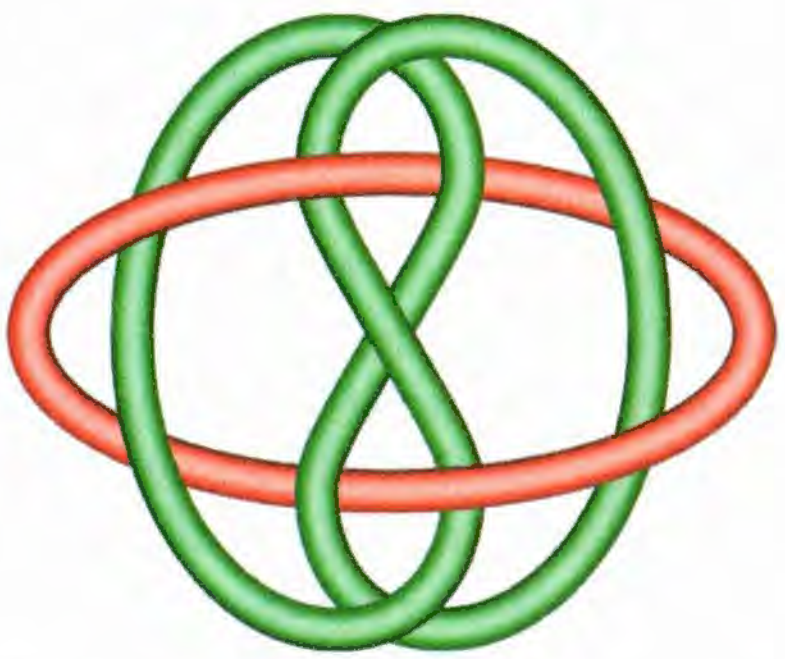
This is true, however, only with the proviso that should the fault have been rectified at the very site at which it occurs, the two sexes are no longer equivalent.

What about in this double figure-of-eight?



Double figure-of-eight[6]

What, then, corresponds to what just now I was calling equivalence is, in actual fact, far from being equivalent.



Non-equivalence in the permutation of red and green

One colour may very well be replaced by another, but whereas in the first diagram the green ring is, as it were, internal to the set of what is supported by the double figure-of-eight in red, in the second diagram the red ring is external to the double figure-of-eight in green.

It was on this point that I put to work our dear Jàcques-Alain Miller, who was at my country house at the same time as I was cogitating this. I put forward to him this shape – quite rightly, contrary to what I said to him – praying that he would uncover the equivalence that might have been produced. It is clear, however, that no such equivalence can be produced. This comes to light with the fact that the green ring will never be able to get through the outer band of the double figure-of-eight in red.

At the level of the sinthome, there is not, therefore, any equivalence to the relation between green and red, if we make do with this straightforward designation. To the extent that there is a sinthome, there is no sexual equivalence, that is to say, there is relation.

Indeed, if non-relation stems from equivalence, then relation is structured to the extent that there is no equivalence. Therefore, there is both sexual relation and no relation. Where there is relation, it is to the extent that there is sinthome, that is to say, to the extent that the other sex is supported by the sinthome.

I allowed myself to say that the sinthome is very precisely the sex to which I don't belong, that is, a woman. If a woman is a sinthome for any man, it's quite clear that another name needs to be found for what's involved in man for a woman, since the sinthome is characterized precisely by non-equivalence.

One can say that for a woman, man is anything you please, specifically an affliction that is worse than a sinthome. A ravage, even. If there is no equivalence, you're forced to specify what's involved in the sinthome.

There is no equivalence. This is the only thing, the only nook, in which what is known as sexual relation in the parlêtre, in the human being, finds a support.

Isn't this what is demonstrated for us in what is known as the clinic, which is another use of the bed. All the same, it is when we see beings in bed, and not only in hospital beds, that we are able to form an idea of what is involved in this notorious relation. This relation *se lie*, it is tied, *lit* being the operative word[7], in a tight bond with the sinthome. This is precisely what results, good heavens, from everything that I hear on another bed, the famous couch on which people go on about it at such length.

It's a matter of situating what the sinthome has to do with the real, the real of the unconscious, should the unconscious indeed prove to be real. How are we to know whether the unconscious is real or imaginary? That is the question. It partakes of an equivocation between the two.

This is what we are now committed to, thanks to Freud, and in the guise of the sinthome. I mean that henceforth we are dealing with the sinthome in sexual relation, which Freud held to be natural, which doesn't mean anything.

It is on this point that I shall leave you today, since I also have to mark in some way my disappointment at not having found you thinner on the ground this time.

17 February 1976

THE INVENTION OF THE REAL

VII

ON A *FALLACE* THAT VOUCHES FOR THE REAL

testimony

The all and the set
Borromean duality
Orientation and colour
Syntax and equivoque
The phallus and the real

Here I am, reduced to having to improvise. Not that I haven't been working since last time, and profusely so, but as I wasn't necessarily expecting to speak because in principle this is a day of strike, here I am, then, reduced to setting out what I did prepare a little after all, and even a great deal.

As usual, I was hoping there might be fewer of you.

I'm going to begin by showing you something that is not necessarily what you were anticipating, but which is not unrelated, something that I went to fetch before leaving and which I wanted very much to think about because I had promised as much to the person who is more than a little concerned in this.

I would like to let you know, or to remind you, for those who already know, that there is someone of whom I'm very fond, whose name is Hélène Cixous. It turns out that she had already produced a brief note on Dora in the sold out issue of *Littérature* in which I produced *Lituraterre*. Since then, she has turned it into a play, *Portrait de Dora*, which is being performed right now at the Petit Orsay. It's not bad, in my opinion. I told Hélène what I thought about it – I've been on first-name terms with her since I first met her – and I told her I would speak about it.

It's about Freud's Dora. This is precisely why I suspect that it might interest a few of you to go and see how it's been put together. It's been put together in a real fashion. I mean that reality, the reality of the rehearsals, for example, is ultimately what has dominated the

actors. I don't know to what extent you will appreciate it, but it's quite certain that there's something quite striking in it.

It's about hysteria, Dora's hysteria more precisely, and it so happens that she's not the best hysteric in the cast. The woman who is the best hysteric plays another role, but on no account does she make a show of her hysteric's virtues. The woman who plays the role of Dora doesn't make a bad show of it. At the very least this is my sense of it.

There is also someone in it who plays the role of Freud. Naturally, he's in a right pickle. He looks rather bothered and you can hear it in his delivery. Well, he goes at it with great caution. It's all the less fortunate, for him at least, that he is not an actor. He stepped forward for the role. So, he's constantly afraid of overdoing Freud. In the end, the best thing I can tell you to do is to go and see it. What you will see bears the mark of the caution of the actor who plays Freud.

At the end of the day, the overall result of this is something that is altogether curious. We are faced with a hysteria – I think this will strike you, but then, perhaps you will appreciate it in a different way – that I could call *incomplete*. I mean that hysteria has always been in twos, since Freud anyway. Here we can see it reduced in some way to what I might call a material state, and this is why this is going to sit rather well with what I'm about to explain to you. The play lacks the element that was added some time ago – before Freud, when all is said and done – namely, the way that hysteria has to be *understood*. This produces something very striking and very instructive. It's a kind of rigid hysteria. You'll be seeing this presently because I'm going to show you what the word *rigidity* means here.

I won't speak any further about *Portrait de Dora*. I hope to have some echoes about it from the people who come to see me, for instance. Such things happen.

1

I'm going to speak to you about a link that I happen to have offered to your attention, the Borromean link.

It's no accident that it gets called a knot, because it does slide towards the knot. I'm going to show you this right away, but what you will see first of all, in my first drawing, is a kind of embedding of rigidity. It's not out of the question that the word *link* might representify this for you, so to speak, because a link is, after all, rigid.

The snag is, the link at issue here can be conceived of only as something that is highly supple. It is even important to consider it to

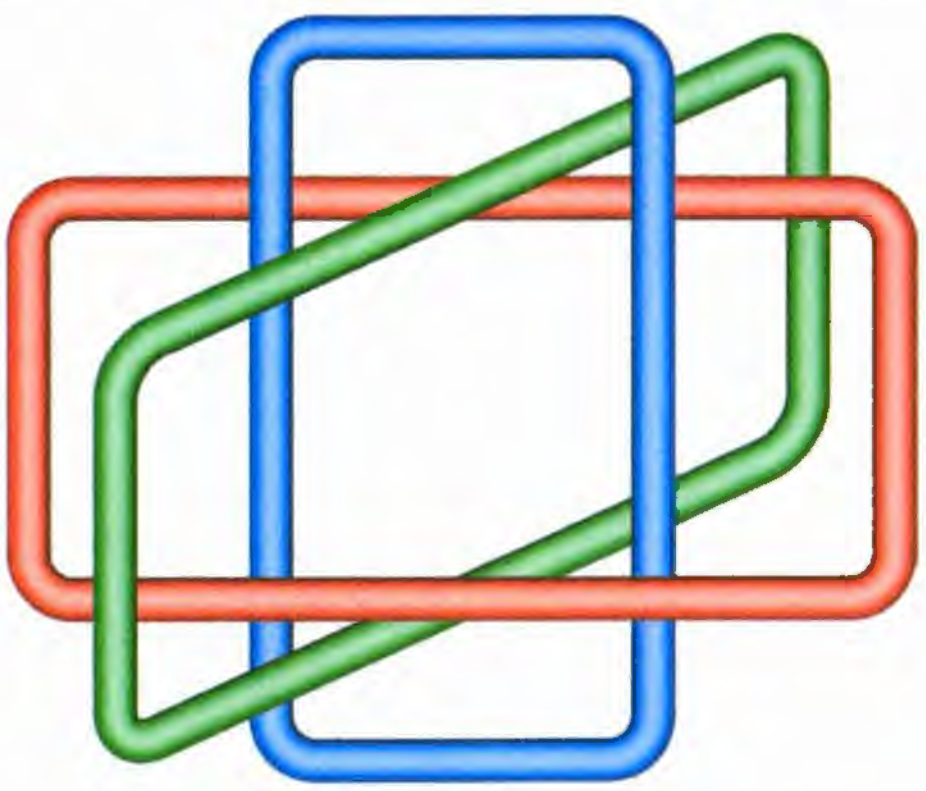
be something that is altogether supple. I'm going to show you this as well.

I was led to articulate this link, indeed to limn it, by conjoining to it the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real. What is important here is the real. After having spoken at great length about the symbolic and the imaginary, I was led to ask myself what the real might be in this conjunction.

Of course, the real cannot be just one of those rings of string. It's the way of presenting them in their linked-up knot that, in and of itself, forms the real of the knot.

You must nevertheless have cottoned on a bit to what it is that I have been trying to sustain the Borromean link with.

Here's what this yields. I wasn't minded to complete the drawing, but clearly it has to be completed to give a sense of what's at issue. Here, then, is the typical link.

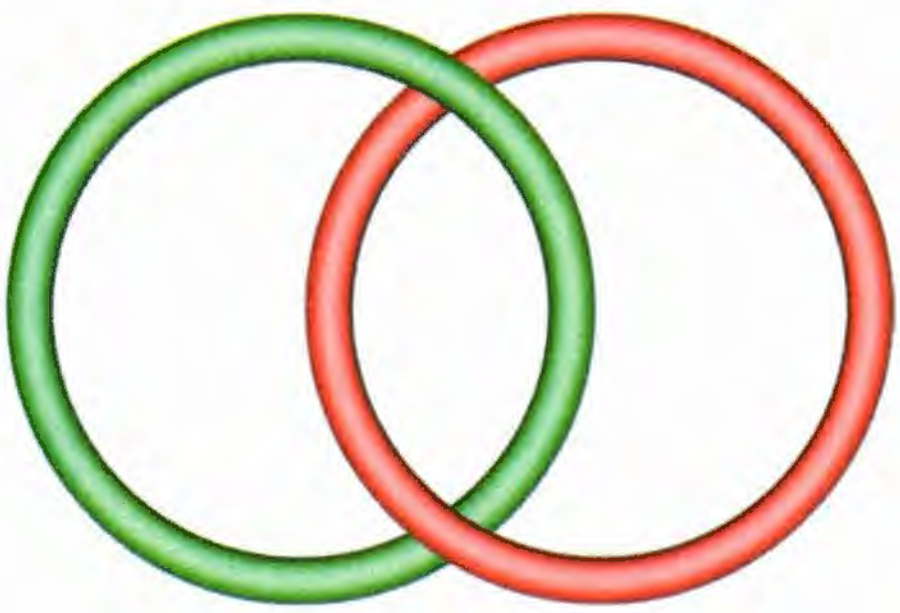


Typical Borromean link

The fact that here I'm tricolouring the trefoil knot is a reminder that this is derived from the Borromean link.

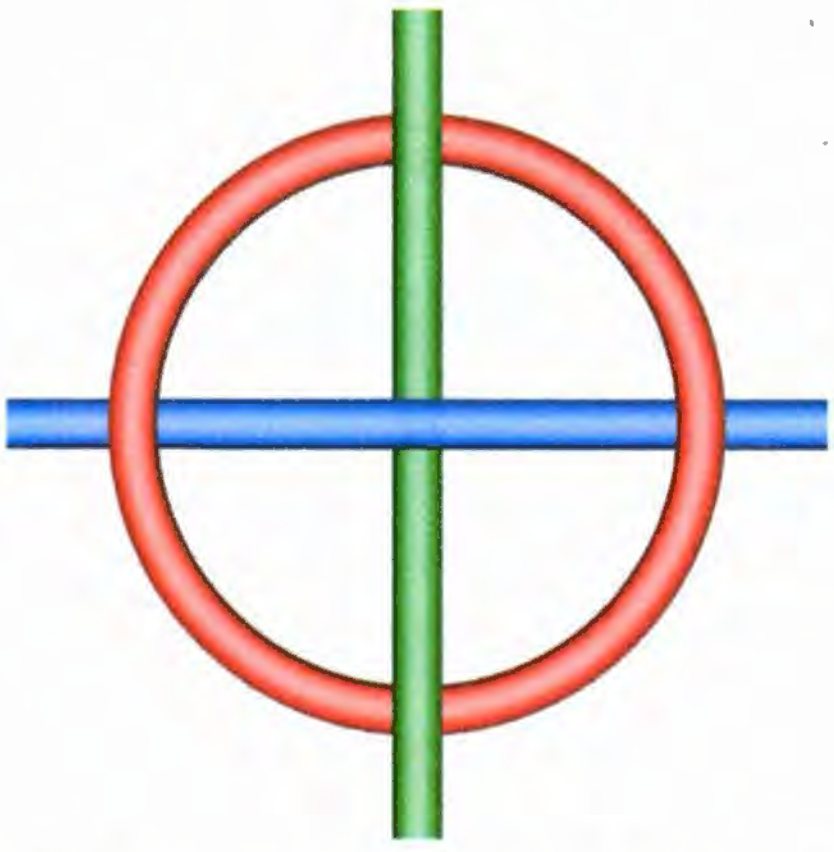
Tricoloured trefoil knot

You have seen how this can transform at the drop of a hat into something that looks like it would better deserve to be called a link, because this is, all the same, what most resembles what one usually considers a link to be.



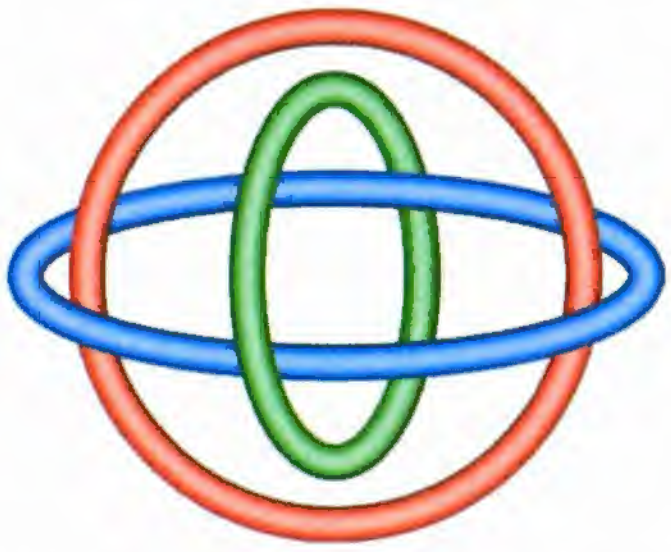
Two-ring 'Olympic' link[1]

Lastly, it is advantageous to figure the Borromean link as follows, by representing the three rings in a way that ought to be called *projective*.



Projective representation of the Borromean link

It is no less the case that there is an advantage to what I'm now about to present, taking care to position the three rings in a way that respects the layout of what I drew up before.



Borromean link simulating an armillary sphere

The advantage to the way I've presented the Borromean link is that it simulates a sphere, as I once mentioned to Dalí in conversation, I no longer recall when.

There is of course a difference between the Borromean link and what is always drawn in an armillary sphere when one tries to circularize the sphere at three levels, which one may call respectively transverse, sagittal, and horizontal.[2] You've never seen an armillary sphere represented in this fashion.

Since the false sphere that I've drawn here is supported by circles, there is a way of handling it that consists in flipping it over.

One cannot help but conceive of a sphere as being linked to the idea of the *all*. The fact that one quite readily represents a sphere by means of a circle links the idea of the *all* – which is actually supported only by the sphere – to the circle. But this is a mistake, because the idea of the *all* implies closure, whereas if one is able to flip this *all*, the inside becomes the outside.

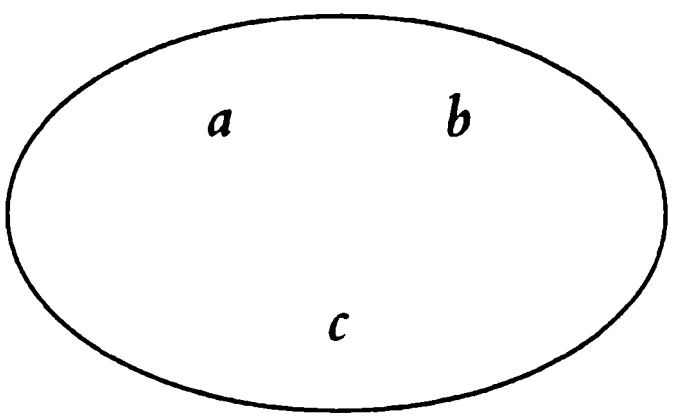
Once we are using circles to support the Borromean link it becomes invertible, by virtue of the fact that the circle is in no respect what people believe it to be – something that symbolizes the idea of the *all*. Indeed, in a circle there is a hole.

It is only to the extent that beings are inert, that is to say, supported by a body, that one is able to say to someone, as was done at the initiative of Popillius – *I have drawn a ring around thee, and thou shalt not step beyond it until thou pledgest me this.*

In sum, here we meet again, with respect to what I have been calling by the name of *the* woman, the reason I asserted that she is *not all*. This means that women merely form a set.

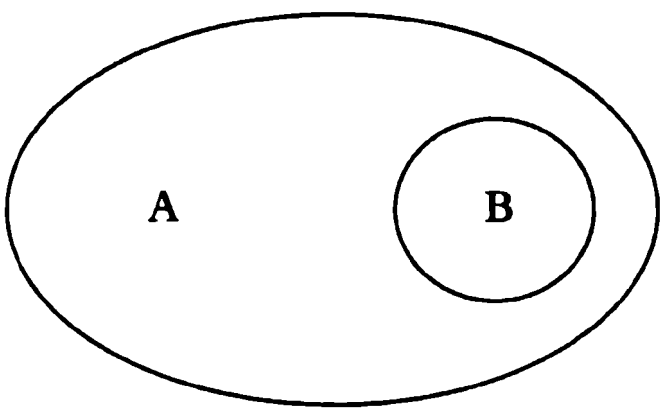
Indeed, over time, we have reached the point that the idea of the *all* has been dissociated from the idea of a set. We have come to think that a certain number of objects can be supported by small letters, such that the idea of the *all* has been dissociated therefrom. In other words, the circle that is supposed to group together the

objects *a*, *b*, *c*, and so forth, in a representation that is altogether fragile, is exterior to them.



The set {*a*, *b*, *c*}

Specifying that the woman is *not-all* implies a dissymmetry between an object that one could call capital A – and we need to find out what it is – and a set with one element. If there is a pair, the two of them are united by being contained within a circle that, by virtue of this fact, turns out to be distinct from them. This is usually expressed by using braces, and is written thus – {A, {B}}. This says that within a set there is, on the one hand, an element, and on the other, a set with one single element.



The set {A, {B}}

2

I must, now, confess something.

Soury and Thomé had spelt out to me how a three-component Borromean link shows that it supports two different objects on the condition that the three rings that constitute it be coloured and oriented. These two conditions are required, and I assented to this.

In a second phase, I found myself in the disagreeable position of having imagined that simply colouring them would be enough to single out these two objects. This was because I had consented in a somewhat superficial way to the affirmation they had brought me.

Indeed, should we assign the colour red to one of the three rings, it is not the same object, when we give the colour green to this one and blue to this one, as it is when we do the opposite. This looks to be quite palpable. However, if we flip the sphere over, it is the same object. Thus, we will obtain with the greatest of ease a reverse layout.

Good heavens, I'll quickly draw this up for you. *[Diagrams overleaf.]*

Let's start off from what we have here *[i]*. If we consider that this is not rigid, then it is quite feasible to make the following representation of the red ring *[ii]*. If we are here, then it is likewise more than feasible to make the ring slide to where it's quite evident that it is able to be, and you obtain the following transformation *[iii]*. From here, it's quite feasible to make the red ring slide back down in such a way that the green ring, instead of the blue, now lies inside the red ring. The blue, on the contrary, lies outside the red *[iv]*.

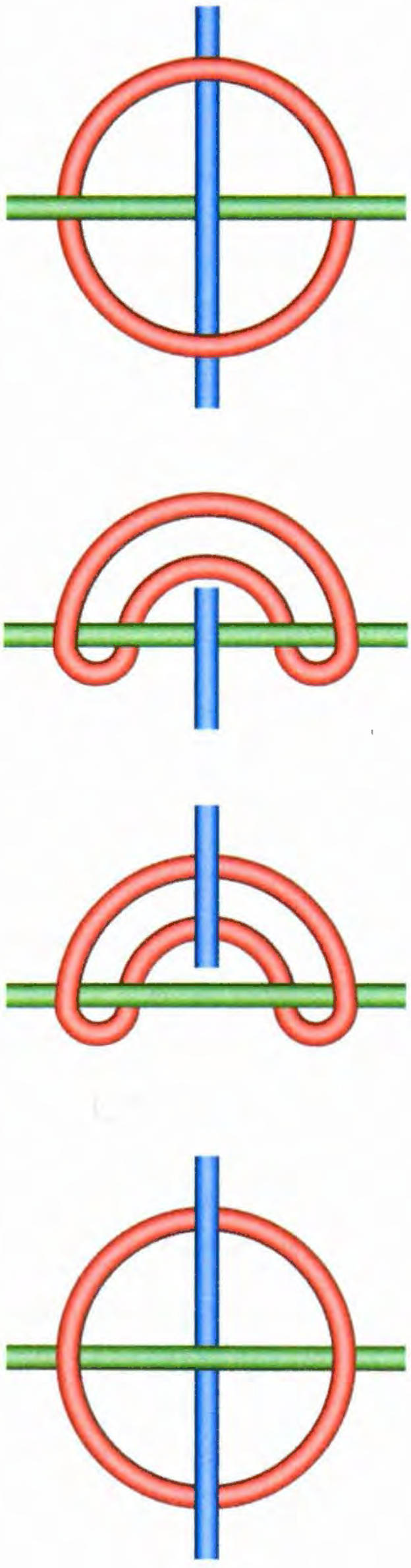
These things are not all that easy to demonstrate. What is immediate, and this is obtained by handling them – the simple thought that the three rings can be flipped, one over the other – is not obtained quite so easily as that. The proof is that the aforementioned Soury and Thomé, who quite rightly represented for me this way of handling things, only did so by getting a bit tangled up. I've tried to represent for you here how this transformation may effectively be said to operate.

What is it, all told, that brings us to a standstill in this immediacy, which is another sort of self-evidence, if I may say so, a self-evidence which, concerning the real, I designate with a joke, which I sustain by means of an *évidem(m)ent*? What resists *self-evidence/emptying-out* is the knotty appearance produced by what I have been calling the *linknot*, equivocating on *link* and *knot*. This knotty appearance, this knotty form, if I may say so, is what makes for the assurance of the real. I shall say therefore, on this occasion, that what vouches for the real is a *fallace*, since I have spoken of appearance.[3]

This differs from pseudo-evidence, because in my stupidity I initially took it to be self-evident that there could be two objects simply by colouring the circles. All in all, what is meant by this series of artifices that I have demonstrated to you? It is here that the difference between *monstration* and *demonstration* shows itself.

There is in some sense an idea of degeneration in *demonstrating* as opposed to *monstrating*. In demonstration, there is a decline in the monstration. All the waffle that emanates from self-evidence merely brings about the emptying out, on the condition that this is done in a signifying fashion.

More geometrico, which has long stood as the ideal support



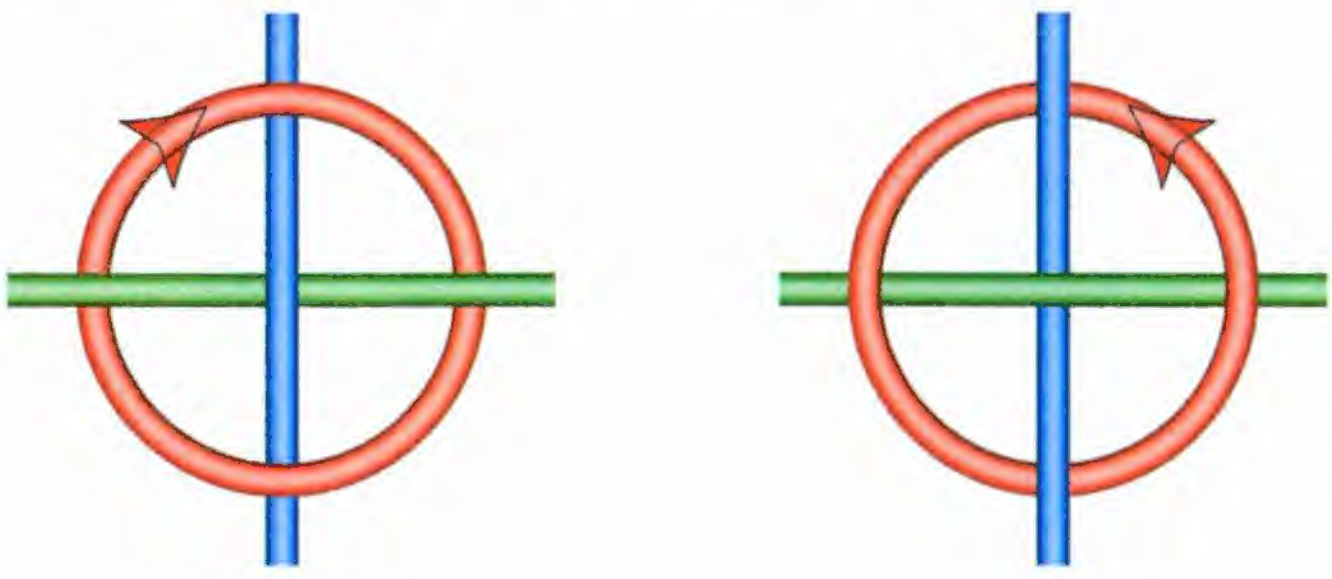
Inversion

of demonstration, hinges on the *fallace* of formal self-evidence. This is altogether apt to remind us that, geometrically speaking, a line is nothing but the meeting edge of two surfaces, which are themselves cut from a solid. But it is another support that is furnished by the ring, by the circle – or whatever else, provided it is supple – it is a different geometry, which has to be grounded in the link.

It's quite certain that I'm still exceedingly struck by my mistake, which I quite rightly qualified as stupidity. It affected me to a degree you can scarcely imagine. It's precisely because I want to perk myself up a bit that I'm now going to argue against what I believe to be an opinion held by Soury and Thomé, such as they expressed it to me.

To demonstrate that there are two different Borromean links, they thought it necessary to proceed by way of an exhaustive combination of three colourings and three orientations that were collocated upon each of the circles. On that occasion they remarked that all three need to be both oriented and coloured, and that it was not simply a matter of colouring some, orienting others, or orienting just one. I think I can take an opposing view. I even believe I am able to demonstrate what's at issue, in the sense that a demonstration is still close to a monstration.

I'm keeping the same colours as I used before. You know how I usually represent the Borromean link. I represent it differently from the classical representation in that I introduce two infinite straight lines. Using these two infinite straight lines, as opposed to circles that join them up, is enough to allow us to demonstrate that there are two different objects in the link, on the condition that a pair be coloured and the third be oriented, as is the case here.



dextrorotary *levorotary*

Inverting the orientation

I have spoken in terms of infinite straight lines because the infinite straight line, which Soury and Thomé are careful not to employ, is equivalent, at least as far as the link is concerned, to a circle when the line is completed by a *point at infinity*.

The two infinite straight lines are required to be concentric. I mean that they do not link up with one another as a link.

Desargues showed this a long time ago, but without specifying that the two straight lines in question, which are said to be infinite, must not link up. Indeed, in what he formulated, and which in its time I mentioned at my Seminar, nothing is specified regarding the nature of the point that is said to be *at infinity*.

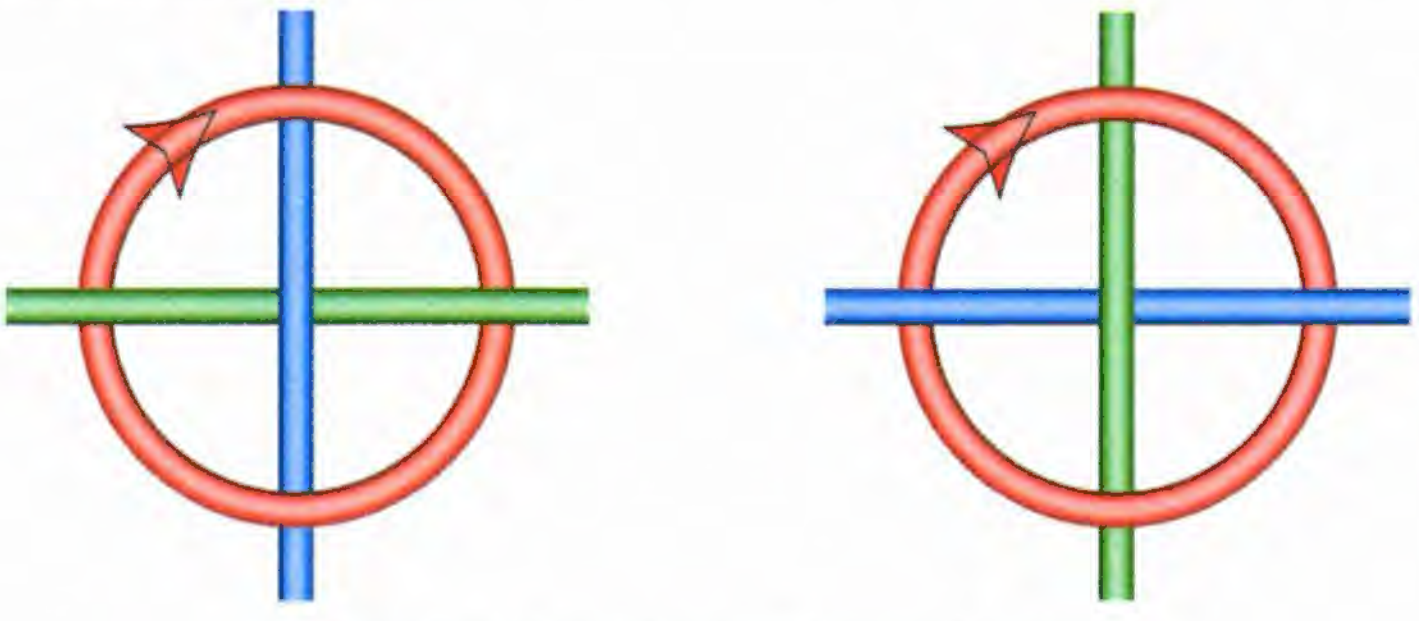
Then, we come to the following fact. Orienting the ring, which we are saying doesn't need to be in one particular colour, evidently already amounts to isolating it. Not to say that it is of any particular colour is already to turn it into something different. Nevertheless, it is not inconsequential to say that the three of them need to be oriented.

In the first of these two Borromean diagrams with an oriented ring, the orientation of the ring that is here in red is, from where we see it, dextrorotary. One should not assume that an orientation is something that is maintained across all cases. This is easy to prove. Specifically, by inverting the red ring – and inverting it implies that the two infinite straight lines are invertible as well – there will be an orientation that is exactly the opposite.

I said that it is enough for just one to be oriented. This is all the more conceivable when you make these two lines infinite. On the basis of what would we assign an orientation to them?

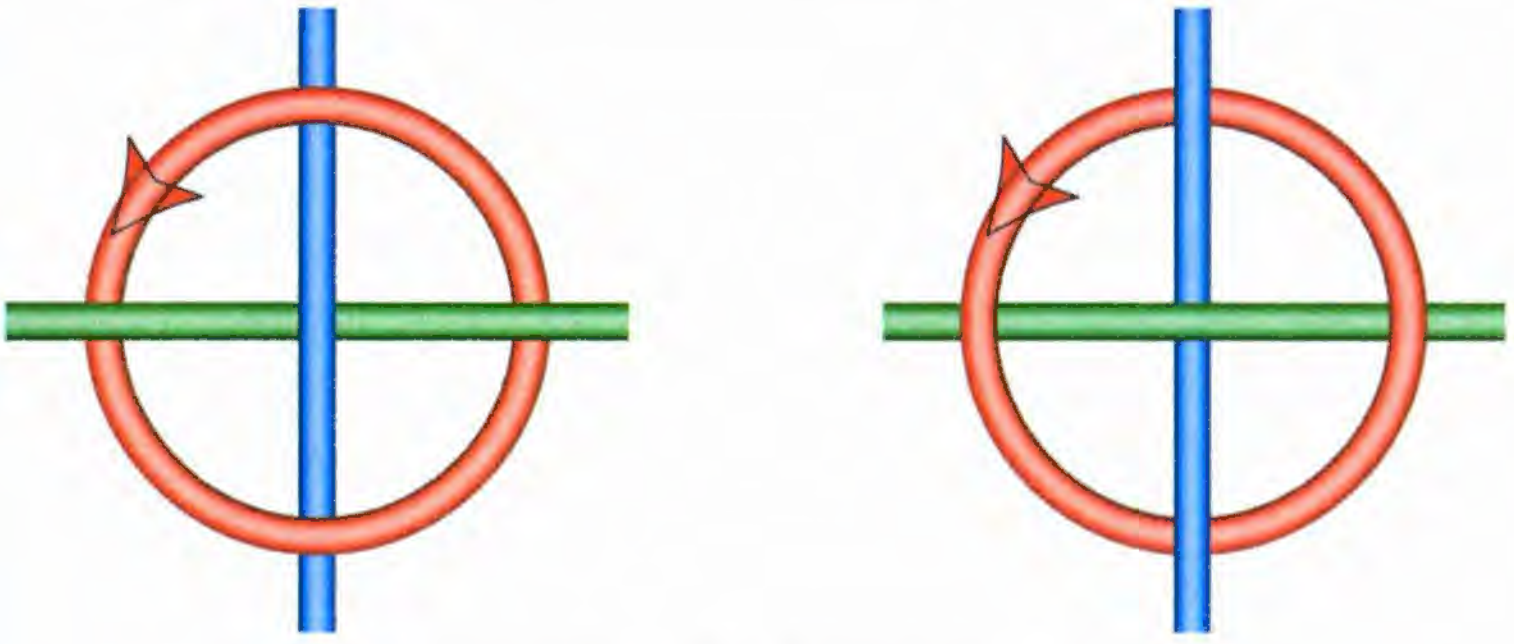
Likewise, it is entirely possible to evidence the second object on the basis of what lay behind the principle of my deception with respect to the colouring. By inverting the colours, I mean, and not the orientation.

By inverting the colours from the first diagram, the green and the blue, we obtain an object that is unquestionably different, provided we leave the oriented element with the same orientation. Indeed, why would I change the ring's orientation? It has no reason to be changed if I have changed the pair of colours. How would I ever recognize the non-identity of the complete object if I were to change the orientation?



Inverting the colours (blue and green)

Even if you invert this second object, you will see that it's well and truly different from the second one from earlier, for now it's a matter of comparing the levorotary ones with each other.



Comparison of the levorotary rings

In sum, it is the orientation that has been maintained that differentiates this triplicate from one where the triplicate could be said to have the same presentation.

3

The difference between the oriented ring and the coloured pair enables us to underscore the difference between what earlier I called the real as marked by a *fallace* and what is involved in truth.

Only that which has a thrust to it is true.

What is the real's relationship with the true? The truth about the real, if I may put it like that, is that the real, the real of this coloured pair here, has no *sens*, no thrust to it.

This statement plays on the equivoque of the word *sens*. What is the relationship between *sens* and what has been set down here in written form as an orientation? One can ask the question, and one can suggest an answer, namely – time.

The important thing is that on this occasion we are bringing in a pair that is said to be coloured, and that this pair has no thrust to it. Is the appearance of colour the appearance of vision, in the sense that I have singled it out, or the appearance of the gaze? Is it the gaze or vision that distinguishes colour? This is a question that I shall leave in suspense for today.

This notion of the coloured pair is designed to suggest that in sex there is nothing more than what I shall call the Being of colour, which in itself suggests that there can be woman with man's colour or man with woman's colour.

If we sustain what is involved in the symbolic by means of the red ring, then the sexes on this occasion lie in opposition as the imaginary and the real, as *the idea* and *the impossible*, to use my terms.

Is it altogether sure, however, that the real is always what is in question? I asserted that in the case of Joyce it is rather *the idea* and *the sinthome*, as I've been calling it. Hence the clarification that results from this regarding what a woman is. Here, she is *not-all*, on account of not being grasped, on account of remaining foreign to Joyce, on account of having no thrust to her, no meaning for him. Besides, does a woman ever carry a meaning for man?

Man is the bearer of the idea of the signifier. This idea is essentially sustained in lalingua by syntax. It is no less the case that if there is something that may be supposed in history, then it is that what I have called lalingua is begotten by the set of women, faced with a tongue that can be broken down, Latin on this occasion, because this is what is at issue at the origin of our tongues.

What is at issue is this fact of saying, examined with respect to what is involved of lalingua, with respect to what may have guided one out of the two sexes towards what I shall call the prosthesis of the equivoque, because what typifies lalingua among all the others is the equivoques that are possible in it, as I have illustrated with the equivoque between *deux* and *d'eux*.

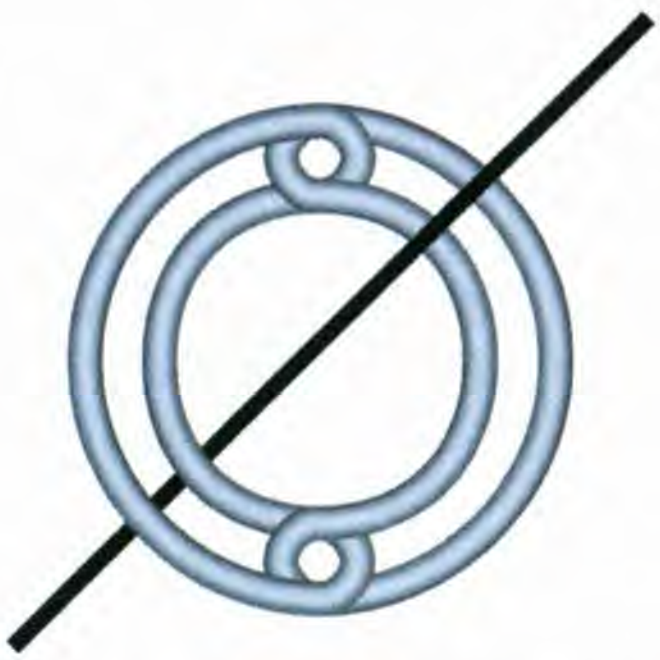
In each case, lalingua was begotten by a set of women.

I want to indicate something in relation to this point. We've spoken about a good many things today, except for what it is that constitutes the specificity of the Borromean link. The Borromean link would have no cause to be were it not for what I'm drawing here. And which, as usual, I'm drawing badly. The specificity of the Borromean link is indeed this, which I have already presented.

The false hole

As I underlined earlier, in a circle there is a hole. The fact that one is able, by taking one circle and joining to it another, to form this hole that consists in what passes through the midst of it, and which is neither the hole of one nor the hole of the other, this is what I am calling the false hole.

Should something – a straight line or a circle – traverse this false hole, then the latter thereby comes to be, as it were, *verified.* The essence of the Borromean link hinges on this *verifying* of the false hole, on the fact that this verifying transforms it, making it real.



Transformation of the false hole, making it real

Now, having had an opportunity to reread my *Signification of the phallus*, I had the pleasant surprise of finding in the very first line a mention of the knot. That was at a time when I was still a long way from turning my attention to the Borromean knot. On that occasion, the knot was the mainspring of castration.

It is indeed the phallus that has the role of verifying the false hole, making it real.

It is in so far as the sinthome forms a false hole with the symbolic that there can be any praxis whatsoever, that is to say, something that emanates from the *dire*, from the fact of saying, from what on this occasion I shall call *art-dire*, to slide towards *ardour*.

Joyce didn't know that he was fashioning the sinthome, I mean, that he was simulating it. He was oblivious to it and it is by dint of this fact that he is a pure artificer, a man of *savoir-faire*, which is what is likewise known as an artist.

The only real that verifies anything whatsoever is the phallus, in so far as it is the support of the function of the signifier. In that article, I underline that this function creates all that is signified.

It is still the case – I shall add in order to take this up next time – that there oughtn't to be any but this to verify this real.

9 March 1976

VIII

ON *SENS*, SEX, AND THE REAL

Orientation of the real, foreclosure of *sens*
The real is tied to nothing
Joyce's sinthome is unanalysable
The phallic function, between fantasy and phonation
Folisophy

Borromean link by Soury and Thomé

This is the most recent thing that Soury and Thomé have given me. It's a Borromean knot of my sort, made of two infinite straight lines and something circular. You can see, doubtless with a bit of effort, that it's Borromean.

The only excuse I have for saying something to you today – because, in truth, I need some excuse, at least in my eyes – is that this is going to be *sensé*, sensible. In view of which I shall not be doing what I would like to, which would be to give you *un bout de réel*, some odd or end of the real. It cannot go by any other name. You will see that I'm going to be clarifying this.

I am thereby reduced to telling myself that there is something sensible that can serve a purpose, provisionally. This *provisional* is, however, fragile. I'm not sure how long it will be able to serve its purpose.

1

I've been much preoccupied with Joyce of late, and I'm going to tell you why Joyce is so stimulating.

Joyce is stimulating because he suggests, though it's merely a suggestion, an easy way of presenting him. In view of which, and here indeed lies his worth and his weight, everybody has been hitting the wall with this, even my friend Jacques Aubert who is here in the front row and before whom I feel unworthy.

Jacques Aubert doesn't manage any more than anyone else, no more than the said Adams who has pulled off some *tours de force* in this area, to reach this easy way of presenting him. Perhaps in a while I will tell you, rather than suggesting to you, why this is so.

Of course, I too have been dreaming of this easy way of presenting Joyce. This is to be taken in the literal sense, because I dreamt about it just last night. Evidently – *évidement*, as one says, emptying out – you were my audience, but I was not an actor, and even, I was not an actor in the least. I was sharing with you the way that I – not an actor in the least, but instead what I would call a mediocre penman – judge characters who were not mine. Evidently, in this respect, I was overstepping my role, or rather, I had no part. It was something of the psychodrama kind. This is an interpretation.

That Joyce should make me dream of functioning in this way must have a value, a value that is, moreover, not easy to extract, because as I said he suggests to anyone and everyone that there must be a Joyce that is easy to handle.

He suggests this due to the fact that there is such á thing as psychoanalysis, and a whole load of people go scurrying off down this trail. It is not, however, because I am a psychoanalyst and, by the same stroke, overly concerned, that I should forbid myself from picturing him in this light, for there is all the same something objective here.

I would say that Joyce is an *a-Freud*, playing on the word *affreux*. Thus, he is an *a-Joyce*.

Every object, except the object that I call *a*, which is an absolute, abides by a relation. The annoying thing is that there is language, and that relations are expressed within it by means of *épithètes*, relatives. Relatives push towards *yea or nay*.

Upon this, a certain Charles Sanders Peirce built his own brand of logic, which due to the emphasis that he lays upon relation leads him to construct a ternary logic. This is precisely the same path that I have been following, with the slight difference that I call the things at issue by their name – symbolic, imaginary, and real, in the correct order.

To push towards *yea or nay* is to push towards the couple. This is so because there is a *rapport*, a relation, between language and sex. This relation has certainly not yet been altogether clarified, but I have, as it were, made a dent in it.

Did you catch that? In saying I've *made a dent*, I realize that I'm forming a metaphor. And what does this metaphor mean? I can speak about metaphor in the general sense, but I'll leave it up to you to find out what this one means.

Metaphor indicates this and nothing else – sexual relation. With the proviso that metaphor proves de facto, due to the fact that it exists, that sexual relation amounts to taking a bladder for a lantern[1], that is to say, the best one can utter to express a mix-up. A bladder can become a lantern on the condition you put a flame inside, but so long as there is no flame, it's not a lantern.

Where does this flame come from? The flame is the real. The real sets fire to everything. But it's a cold fire. The fire that burns is a mask, if I may say so, of the real. The real is to be sought on the other side, on the side of absolute zero. They've got to it, even that. There is no limit to the high temperatures one may imagine. For the time being there is no imaginable limit. The only thing that partakes of the real is the lower limit. This is what I call something orientable. This is why the real is orientable.

There is an orientation, but this orientation is not the thrust of it. What does that mean? I'm going back on what I said last time when I suggested that the *sens*, the thrust of something, might be its orientation. But orientation is not *sens* because it excludes the bare fact of the copulation of the symbolic and the imaginary, which is where the thrust of it lies. The orientation of the real, on my territory, forecloses *sens*.

I'm saying this because yesterday evening I was asked whether there are other types of foreclosure besides the one that results from the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father. It's quite certain that foreclosure has something more radical about it. In the end, the Name-of-the-Father is something slight. Yet it's certain that this is where it can serve a purpose, in the stead of the foreclosure of *sens* by the orientation of the real. Well, we haven't got there yet.

One has to break oneself up, if I may say so, with a new imaginary that establishes *sens*. This is what I'm trying to establish with my

language, which has the advantage of wagering on psychoanalysis inasmuch as I try to institute it as discourse, that is to say, as semblance at its most *vraisemblable*, its most plausible. All in all, psychoanalysis is nothing more than a short-circuit via meaning, via *sens* as such. Just now I defined this as the copulation of language – since it is by means of this that I support the unconscious – with our body.

I have to tell you that in the meantime I went to listen to Jacques Aubert, somewhere else, where you weren't invited, and there I offered some reflections on the *Ego*, what the English call *Ego*, and what the Germans call the *Ich*.[2] I cogitated around this *Ego* on the basis of a knot that had itself been cogitated by a mathematician who goes by the name of Milnor. He came up with an idea of the link which I'm going to have to draw.

I'm redoing it because, of course, I'm getting in a muddle, as I do every time I draw a knot. This is not the first time this has happened to me in front of you. Here it is, drawn properly. It's a link with two components. You should be able to see that it holds fast.

Link described by Milnor[3]

Suppose, says Milnor, that you allow that in any such two component link one of the components is able to cross itself in such a way that what formerly crossed *over* now crosses *under*. Then, there is no more link. Of course, there are an abundance of further examples.

What I now offer to your astuteness is the remark that if you double each of the components in the link, this will no longer be true,[4] as *invraisemblable*, as implausible, as this may seem. You will check this, I hope. I didn't bring my drawings so I shan't venture to show you its writhe. If a figure-of-eight loop crosses itself, it easily comes free. Why ever should this not be true when there are two of them, two figures-of-eight and two ovals?

I'll come back to this next time. Not only is there an obstacle, it is also radically impossible to separate the four components.

2

On this point, I need to tell you that I cannot trace out all the algorithms of the S(Ⱥ) type, S of barred A.

What does it mean that I protest, in my Seminar *Encore* – so it would seem, because of course I've never read it, indeed I'd completely forgotten it, but a few others have apparently been wondering what it means – against confusingly equating the S(Ⱥ) with the *phi* function. Not the lowercase φ, but the capital Φ, which is a function, as is implied by what I indicated, namely – there exists an x for whom this function is negative, $\exists x.\ \overline{\Phi x}$.

Of course, the ideal of the matheme is that everything should correspond. It is precisely in this respect that the matheme wades in on the real. Indeed, this correspondence is not the final term of the real, contrary to what people imagine, without knowing why. As I said earlier, we can only reach odds and ends of the real.

This real, the real at issue in what is called my thought, is always an odd or an end, a core. It is certainly a core around which thought embellishes, but the mark as such of this real is that it doesn't tie on to anything. This at least is how I conceive of the real.

There have been little points of emergence throughout history. One day, a certain Newton found one of these odds or ends of the real. That bloody well put the wind up all the thinkers, foremost among them the likes of Kant who may be said to have turned Newton into a sickness. Furthermore, all of them, all the pondering creatures of the time, each in their own way turned him into one. That came raining down not only on the men but on the women too. Madame du Châtelet wrote a whole book on the Newtonian System where she takes abundant leave of her senses. It is all the same extraordinary that reaching an odd or end of the real should produce such an effect. It is, however, from here that one should start off. It is the very sign that one has reached the core.

I'm trying to offer you an odd or end of the real with respect to where we are. We are at the place of this incredible story that is the human race.

I tell you in this respect that there is no sexual relation, but this is embellishment because it partakes of the *yea or nay*. As soon as I say *there is no* . . ., it's already very suspicious as to whether this truly is some odd or end of the real because the mark of the real is that it is tied to nothing, as I said a moment ago.

One recognizes oneself only in what one *has*. One never recognizes oneself in what one *is*. This is implicit in what I have been putting forward. It is implicit in the fact, which Freud acknowledged, that there is an unconscious.

That one never recognizes oneself in what one *is* is the first step of psychoanalysis, because what one *is*, when one is a man, belongs to the realm of copulation, that is to say, to what reroutes this said copulation into the no less uttered, and significantly so, copula constituted by the verb *to be*.

In its change of direction towards the copula, language meets the proof that it is a rerouting that is altogether *vessie*, bladder-like, that is to say, obscure. *Obscure* is but a metaphor here, because were we to have an odd or end of the real, we would know that light is no darker than shade, and vice versa.

The metaphor *copula* is not proof in and of itself. This is the way of proceeding that the unconscious has – it only gives traces, which not only efface themselves of their own accord, but which any use of discourse strives to efface, the analytic discourse like the rest.

You yourselves will reckon only on erasing the traces of mine from discourse, since I'm the one who started out by furnishing the analytic discourse with its status, on the basis of *affecting a semblance of the object a*, that is, my naming of man putting himself in the place of the refuse that he is – at the very least in the eyes of a psychoanalyst, who has good reason to know this, for he himself puts himself in this place. One has to go via this determined refuse so as, perhaps, to *retrouver*, to find again something that might belong to the order of the real.

But you see, I'm using the word *retrouver*. This is already a slide, as though everything of this order had already been found. Such is the snare of history. History is the greatest of fantasies, if it may be expressed like this. Behind the history of the facts in which historians take an interest, there lies myth.

Myth is always captivating, the proof being that, having carefully borne witness to the sinthome of Dublin that only has any soul to it by dint of his own, Joyce doesn't fail – fabulously – to fall into the Vico myth that sustains *Finnegans Wake*. The only thing that nevertheless saves him from this is that *Finnegans Wake* presents itself as a dream.

Not only is it a dream, but it denotes how Vico is a dream just as much as Madame Blavatsky's diffuse bleed, the *manvantara* and everything that ensues, the idea of a rhythm that I fell back into myself with my *retrouver* just now. One never *finds again* – or else, this denotes how one only ever turns round in circles – one *finds*. The

only advantage of this *finding again* is to highlight what I'm indicating, that there cannot be any progress, that one only ever goes round in circles.

Even so, there is perhaps another way of explaining that there is no progress. It is that there is no progress but bearing the stamp of death, which Freud underscores by *triebing* this death, if I can put it like that, by making it a *Trieb*. This was translated into French by *pulsion* or *pulsion de mort*. I don't know why they didn't find a better translation when there was the word *dérive*.

The death drive is the real inasmuch as it can only be pondered qua impossible. This means that each time it rears its head it is imponderable. To approach this impossible could never constitute a hope, because this imponderable is death, whose real grounding is that it cannot be pondered.

What is incredible is that Joyce – who harboured the greatest contempt for history, however futile, which he qualifies as a *nightmare* whose character is to bring down upon us those *big words* that he says *make us so unhappy* – was only able to find the solution of writing *Finnegans Wake*, namely a dream, which like any dream is a nightmare, even if it's a toned-down nightmare. With one slight difference, says he, and this is how *Finnegans Wake* is fashioned, it's that the dreamer is not any one character, he is the dream itself.

It is in this respect that Joyce slides . . . slides . . . slides to Jung, slides to the collective unconscious. There is no better proof than Joyce that the collective unconscious is a sinthome, for it cannot be said that *Finnegans Wake*, in his imagination, does not partake of this sinthome.

So, the sign of my entanglement is indeed Joyce, precisely inasmuch as what he puts forth, and in a way that is quite especially that of an artist because he has the know-how to pull it off, is the sinthome, and a sinthome such that there is nothing to be done to analyse it.

A rock-solid catholic, as was Joyce, who never did anything to compromise his proper upbringing by the Jesuits, a catholic, a genuine article – but of course, there are no genuine ones here, you weren't raised by Jesuits, not a single one of you – well, a catholic is unanalysable.

I said as much recently, during an evening event with Jacques Aubert. On that score, someone made the remark that I said the same thing about the Japanese. It was Jacques-Alain Miller, of course, who didn't let the opportunity slip by.

Well, I stick by this, though it's not for the same reason.

3

Since the Jacques Aubert evening, to which you were not invited, I've seen a film. It too was Japanese.

It was on a small screen so it wasn't possible to invite you there any more than it was to Jacques Aubert's event. And then, I wouldn't have wanted to give the wrong idea. I did, however, pick out a few people from my School to watch the film, and I suppose they were as taken aback as I was. This is the term I used to speak of the effect it had on me.

I was taken aback because it's female eroticism. I wasn't expecting that in going to see a Japanese film. Watching it, I started to understand the power of Japanese women.

It was a private screening, but I do hope that it will be certified for general release. If you scamper around a bit you will manage to see it on one of the restricted viewing screens. They'll ask you to produce some ID. You could tell them that you come to my Seminar.

I'm not going to set down a dividing line just on the basis of a film, but female eroticism seems to be carried to its extreme point here, and this extreme is the fantasy, no more nor less, of killing the man. But even that does not suffice. Having killed him, she goes further still. Afterwards – why after? there lies the doubt – the Japanese woman in question, who is a *maîtresse femme*, a boss lady, if ever there was, slices off her partner's dick. That's what it's called. One wonders why she didn't do it beforehand.

We know that it's a fantasy, all the more so given that there's a great deal of blood in the film. I'm fine with the idea that the corpus cavernosum might be blocked, but in the end, what do I know? I don't know how this plays out after death.

There is a shade of what just now I called doubt. This is where one can clearly see that castration is not the fantasy. It is not so easy to situate it in its function in analysis because it can be fantasmatized.

This is why I come back to my capital Φ, which might just as well be the first letter of the word *fantasy*.

This letter situates the relations of what I shall call a *phunction* of phonation. This is the essence of the Φ, contrary to what people believe. It is a phunction of phonation that finds itself being a placeholder for the male, said to be man, as such.

In the Seminar *Encore*, I took a stand against this Φ being a placeholder for the signifier that I have only been able to sustain by means of a complicated letter of mathematical notation, namely S(Ⱥ). S of barred A is something altogether different from Φ. It is not that with which man makes love. In the end, he makes love with his unconscious, and nothing more. As for what the woman

fantasizes, if this is really what the film presents us with, it is something that, either way, impedes the encounter.

What is meant by S(Ⱥ)?

If the intermediary, that is to say, the instrument, that one uses for copulation is really to be cast away, as is quite obvious, this is not of the same order as what is at issue in my capital S of barred capital A in brackets.

The capital A is barred because there is no Other – not where something makes up for this, namely the Other as the locus of the unconscious, which I've just said is what man makes love with, in another sense of the word *with*, and that's what one's partner is – the big Other is barred because there is no Other of the Other.

I beg your pardon for not having anything besides the bar at my service. There is a bar that any woman knows how to get her leg over, and that is the bar between signifier and signified, as I hope the film I alluded to earlier will have proven for you. It is like the bar that lies over $\overline{\Phi x}$. There is another bar that consists in barring. Moreover, I regret not having made it like the first one, because it would have been most exemplary like that. Positioned in diagonal through the capital A, this bar says that there is no Other that could respond as a partner.

The full necessity of the human race is that there should be an Other of the Other. This is what is generally called God, but which analysis unveils as being quite simply *La femme*, The Woman.

The only thing that allows The Woman to be supposed is that, like God, she should be a spawner.

Only, the progress that analysis leads us to make has been to have us realize that, even though the myth makes her all issued from just one mother, namely from Eve, there are only particular spawners. And this is the sole thing that allows her to be denoted by means of the definite article *The*, because I've told you that *The* Woman does not exist, and I've voiced more and more reasons to believe it, especially after seeing this film.

It is in this respect that I called to mind, in the Seminar *Encore* – so it would seem – what this complicated letter means, namely the signifier of the fact that there is no Other of the Other.

There you go. Everything I'm telling you here is nothing but *sensé*, sensible. In this capacity, it is heavy with risk, the risk of going awry, as all history proves. We've never done anything but that.

If I'm taking these same risks, it is much rather to prepare you for what else I might tell you, by trying to do some folisophy, so to speak, that is less sinister than the book in the Bible known as *The Book of Wisdom*, though in spite of everything this is the best one

can do to ground wisdom on lack, which is the sole grounding it is able to have. It's really not bad at all. It's top notch. I recommend that you read it. It is sober and hits the right tone.

Catholics seldom read it. One could even say that over the centuries Catholicism has consisted in preventing its followers from reading the Bible.

Will I manage to tell you – it oughtn't to be merely a dream – what would qualify as an odd or end of the real, in the proper sense of the [French] word *bout*, which I specified earlier?

For the time being, we may say that Freud himself produced nothing but sensibleness, and this takes away all my hope. This is not, however, a reason, not for me to hope to, but for me really to do so someday.

That's enough for today. One has to laugh a bit once in a while.

16 March 1976

IX

FROM THE UNCONSCIOUS TO THE REAL

A new type of idea
Energetics and the real
Meaning is the Other of the real
The Name-of-the-Father: bypassing it, making use of it
The real is lawless

I usually have something to tell you but today, because it's a special occasion – it's my birthday – I should like to be able to verify whether I know what I'm saying.

In spite of everything, the fact of saying aims to be heard. I would like to verify whether, all in all, I don't content myself with speaking for my own sake – as does everybody, of course, if the unconscious carries a meaning.

Today, therefore, I would prefer it if someone would ask me a question. I said *a* question. I'm not asking for several. On no account am I asking for miracles, for sparks to start flying.

What I would undoubtedly like most is for someone to write something down that might justify the trouble I've been going to for a little over twenty-two years now. The only way to justify it would be for someone to invent something that might serve me in some way. I'm of the mind that this is possible.

1

I invented what has been written as the real.

Naturally, writing it down, *real*, does not suffice. A fair few did that before I did. I have written this real in the form of the Borromean knot, which isn't a knot but a *link* on account of possessing certain properties. In the minimal form in which I have traced out this link, there have to be at least three elements.

That's what the real is. The real consists in calling one of those three *real.*

This means that there are three elements, and these three, in the way they are knotted together – well, actually, *linked* together – form a metaphor. It's nothing more, of course, than a metaphor of the link.

How can it be that there is such a thing as a metaphor of something that is nothing but number? This metaphor, on account of this, is called *cipher.*

There are a certain number of ways of tracing out ciphers. The simplest way is the one that I have called the unary trait. Moreover, marking down a certain number of traits or points is enough to indicate a number.

What is known as *energetics* is none other than the handling of a certain amount of numbers from which a constant number is extracted. In referring to science such as it was conceived of in his time, Freud took this as a reference point. He just turned it into a metaphor. He never really gave any grounding to the idea of psychical energetics. He wasn't even able to draw metaphor from it with any *vraisemblance*, with any plausibility. For example, the idea of a constant which would bind stimulus to response can in no way be upheld.

I have been saying that I invented something in the metaphor of the Borromean link. What does it mean, to invent? And what have I invented? Is it an idea?

Don't let this prevent you from trying in a short while to pose me a question that will reward me – not for the effort that I'm making right now, because, precisely, I think that for the moment what I'm saying to you doesn't stand much of a chance of drawing any response.

Is it an idea, this idea of the real such as it is written in the Borromean knot, which, I insist, is actually a link? It's not an idea, not one that can be upheld. This is where we touch upon the fact that the idea, the idea that occurs to us just like that when we are lying down, is merely that, at least when reduced to its analytic value – an idea that occurs to you when lying down.

Whether we're lying down or on our feet, the link effect that we obtain through writing is not something that can be pondered easily. In my experience, at the very least, a link composed of a certain number of elements, even when they are reduced to three, is something that can be neither easily imagined nor easily written. One really has to make sure that one is fairly well-versed in it if one is to be confident of succeeding in providing its written form. It's precisely this that you have witnessed umpteen times in my mistakes, well, in the slips of my hand, when I stand before you trying to write something that symbolizes this link.

I consider the fact of having stated the real in question in the form of this writing to possess the value of what is generally called a trauma. Not that my aim was to traumatize anyone, especially not my audience, whom I have no reason whatsoever to be mad at to the point of causing them a trauma. Let's say that this is the forcing of a new kind of writing, which possesses, through metaphor, a scope that really has to be called symbolic. It is also the forcing of a new type of idea, if I may say so, an idea that does not burgeon spontaneously from the simple doing of that which forms meaning, that is to say, from the imaginary.

Nor is it the case that this should be something entirely foreign. I would go further still by saying that this is what renders palpable, that this is what lets us put our finger on, what might be called *reminiscence*, albeit in an utterly illusory fashion. Reminiscence consists in imagining, with respect to something that holds the function of an idea but which is not one, that one is *reminiscing* it, if I may express myself in this way.

Reminiscence is distinct from remembering. These two functions are set apart in Freud, who had a nose for distinctions.

Remembering is evidently something that Freud completely forced by virtue of the term *impression*. He presumed that there were things in the nervous system that became imprinted, and he furnished them with letters, which was already to say too much because there is no reason for an impression to be figured as this thing that we call a *letter*, which is already considerably far removed from impression. A letter and a phonological symbol are worlds apart.

The idea that Freud attests to in the *Project* is to figure this by means of networks, and this is perhaps what prompted me to give them a new form, a more rigorous form, by turning them into something that links up in a chain instead of simply weaving together.

Remembering amounts to introducing these links – and this is certainly not an easy thing to do, the many slips I have made in trying to trace out on this piece of paper the knots that were placed under the patronage of the Borromeo family stand as proof of this – into something that is already there and which bears the name *knowledge*. Indeed, I tried to be rigorous by saying that what Freud sustains as the unconscious always presupposes a knowledge, and a spoken knowledge as such. The unconscious is wholly reducible to a knowledge. This is the minimum that is presupposed by the fact that the unconscious may be interpreted.

It's quite clear that this knowledge has the minimum requirement of two supports, which are called *terms* and which are symbolized with letters, hence my way of writing knowledge as supported by S subscript 2, S_2. This is not S to the power of two, it is not

S squared, it is S *supposed to be twain*. The definition I give of the signifier, which I support with S subscript 1, S_1, is to represent a subject as such, and to do so truthfully. *Truthfully* on this occasion means *in conformity with reality*.

The truthful is a fact of saying in conformity with reality. On this occasion, reality is what functions, what functions truthfully. However, what functions truthfully has nothing to do with what I denote as real. That my real – for I really do have to put it under my name – should condition reality, the reality of your hearing, for example, is an altogether precarious supposition. Here lies a gulf, and we are a long way from being able to ensure that it is bridged.

In other words, the instance of knowledge that Freud reiterates, I mean, renovates, in the shape of the unconscious, does not on any account necessarily presuppose the real that I make use of.

I have been a vehicle for much of what is known as the Freudian thing. I even gave the title *The Freudian Thing* to something I wrote. When it comes to what I call the real, however, I invented, because it imposed itself upon me. Perhaps some of you here remember how and at what point this notorious knot arose, this knot being all that is most *figurative*. To say that to the imaginary and the symbolic, that is to say, to things that are utterly foreign to one another, the real brings the element that can make them hold together, is the maximum that may be *figured* thereof.

This is something which I can say I consider to be nothing more than my symptom. I mean that it's my own particular way of carrying Freud's lucubration to its degree of symbolism, to the second degree – if indeed there is such a thing as may be termed Freudian lucubration. Let's say that it's to the very extent that Freud articulated the unconscious that I react to it.

Here we can already see that this is one way of carrying the sinthome itself to the second degree. It is to the very extent that Freud truly made a discovery – supposing this discovery to be true – that it may be said that the real is my symptomatic response.

To reduce this response to being symptomatic is also to reduce any and every invention to the sinthome.

2

Let's change places.

Does one possess a memory? Might it be said that we do more in *saying* that we have one than in *imagining* that we have one, that we have one at our disposal? I should say that we have it at our *dire*-sposal, that *on a à dire*.

The tongue that I have called *lalinglish* has all sorts of resources for saying *on a à dire*. *I have to tell*. It's been translated as *J'ai à dire*, which is an Anglicism. But the fact that one may say not only *have* but also *ought*, *I ought to tell*, produces a slide.[1] *J'ai à dire* becomes *Je dois dire*. Likewise, in the fact that one can accentuate the verb in such a way as to be able to say *I do make*, I'm insisting, all told, on the fact that through this *making* there is nothing but fashioning. There is also the fact that one can equally separate out the negation in the form *I don't*, which means *I abstain* from doing this or that. *I don't talk*, which means *I choose not to speak*. To speak what? In Joyce's case it was Gaelic.

This presupposes or implies that one chooses to speak the tongue that one does effectively speak. In actual fact, one does no more than imagine to oneself that one is choosing it. Moreover, what resolves the issue is that, at the end of the day, one creates this tongue. This is not restricted to the phases during which a tongue is created. One creates a tongue inasmuch as, from one instant to the next, one endues it with meaning, one gives it a little nudge, without which it would not be a living tongue. It is a living tongue to the extent that one creates it from one instant to the next. It is in this respect that there is no collective unconscious. There are only particular unconsciouses, to the extent that every single one of us, from one instant to the next, gives a little nudge to the tongue we speak.

So, what is at issue for me is to find out whether I don't know what I say to be true. It falls to each of you who are here to tell me how you hear it. After all, it is by no means sure that what I might say of the real amounts to anything more than speaking out of place.

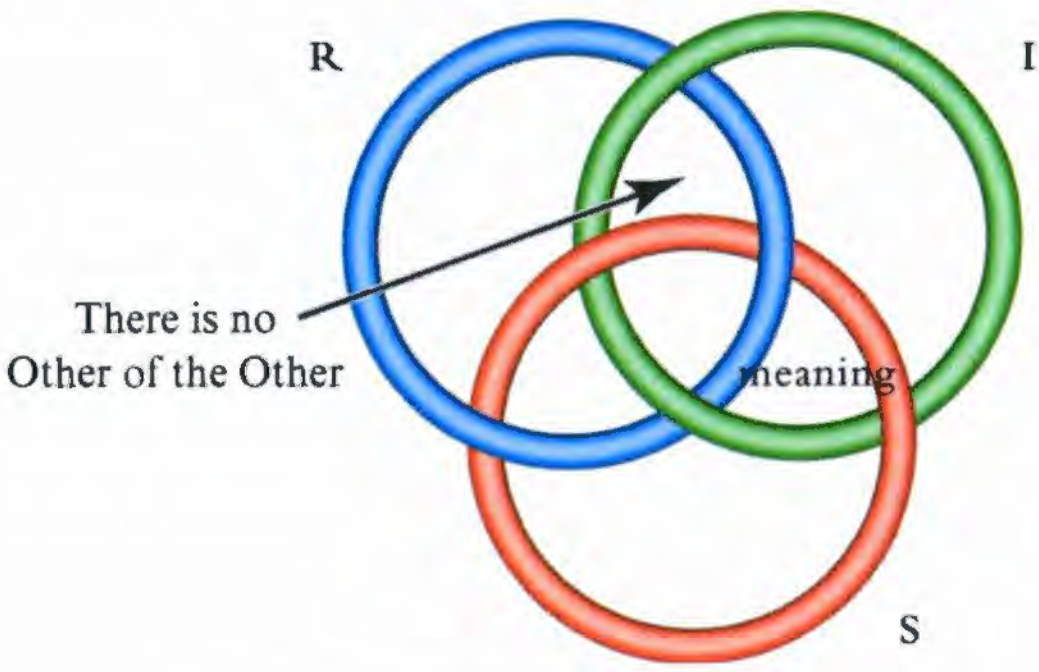
Saying that the real is a sinthome, my sinthome, does not prevent energetics, which I spoke about earlier, from being any less of one. What would the privilege of energetics boil down to? Well, on the condition that things are handled in the right way, in conformity with certain mathematical teachings, one always finds a constant number. One does sense, however, that from one moment to the next this is a requirement that is, as it were, pre-set.

The thing that in and of itself constitutes energetics is that some trick has to found in order to obtain the constant. The suitable trick, the one that succeeds, is supposed to be congruent with what is known as reality. But I draw a firm distinction between, on the one hand, the supposed real, which is that organ, so to speak, that has nothing whatsoever to do with an organ in the flesh, by which imaginary and symbolic are tied together in a knot, and, on the other hand, that which plays its part in grounding the science of reality.

The real at issue is illustrated by the fact that, in this planar diagram of the knot, I show one field, the field of meaning, to be

essentially distinct from the real. One can say that the real both carries and does not carry a meaning, in view of the fact that the field of meaning is distinct from it.

That the real carries no meaning is what is figured by *meaning* being over there and *the real* being over here.



The true hole lies here

The symbolic is distinct in being specified, as it were, as a hole. What is striking, however, is that the true hole is here, at the site where it is revealed that there is no Other of the Other.

This would be its place, just as meaning is the Other of the real, but there is nothing of the like. In the place of the Other of the Other, there is no order of existence. It is precisely in this respect that I am given to think that the real has no existence either.

I am given to think that the real lies in abeyance, as it were. It might be what I've reduced it to, in the form of a question, namely, nothing but a response to Freud's lucubration, which, anyway, one may say is quite repellent to energetics. It is utterly up in the air as far as this energetics is concerned.

The sole conception that is able to make up for the said energetics is the one that I have set out using the term *real.*

3

[The written questions are read out by Lacan]

I'm being asked the following – *If psychoanalysis is a sinthome* – I didn't say that psychoanalysis was a sinthome – *is it not the case that what you've been doing with your knot and your mathemes is to decipher psychoanalysis, with the consequence of dissipating its signification?*

I don't think psychoanalysis is a sinthome. I think it's a practice whose effectiveness, which despite everything is palpable, implies for me that I should make what I have called *my knot*, namely the triple knot up there on the blackboard. It is in this respect that I have been holding in abeyance the approach to the third element that is distinct from reality and which I call *the real*. It is in this respect too that I cannot say *I think*, because this is a thinking that is still utterly sealed off, that is to say, ultimately enigmatic.

The real's distinction from reality is something that I am not sure merges with what I shall call the *proper value* that I ascribe to the term *real*. Since the real is devoid of meaning, I'm not sure whether the meaning of this real might not be clarified when it is held to be nothing less than a sinthome.

This is how I'm replying to the question that has been put to me.

I believe that I am able to support what is at issue by means of a rough-and-ready topology, and what is at issue is the very function of the real, which I set apart from what I believe I am able to hold with certainty to be the unconscious. *With certainty*, because I am practised – am I not? – in the latter. It is to the extent that the unconscious is not without reference to the body that I think that the function of the real can be set apart from it.

I do think that the psychoanalyst cannot be conceived of otherwise than as a sinthome. Psychoanalysis is not the sinthome, the psychoanalyst is. This is how I reply to what's been put to me by way of a question.

– *According to Genesis, as translated by André Chouraqui* – I'm reading you the things that people have been good enough to write down for me, which is no worse than anything else, given what I said about the real abiding by writing – *God created for man* une aide contre lui, *a helpmeet against him. What about the psychoanalyst as a helpmeet against?*

The psychoanalyst is a helpmeet that may be said to be a reversal in the terms of Genesis, since the Other of the Other too is what I defined just a moment ago as a little hole. That this little hole should be able all by itself to form a helpmeet is precisely where the hypothesis of the unconscious finds its support.

The hypothesis of the unconscious, and Freud underscores this, is something that can only hold up by presupposing the Name-of-the-Father. Presupposing the Name-of-the-Father, which is certainly God, is how psychoanalysis, when it succeeds, proves that the Name-of-the-Father can just as well be bypassed. One can just as well bypass it, on the condition that one make use of it.

– Isn't each speech act, the exploit of one particular unconscious, a collectivization of the unconscious?

If each speech act is the exploit of one particular unconscious then it is absolutely clear, as the theory has shown, that each speech act may stand a hope of being a fact of saying. Moreover, this fact of saying ends up in what there is a theory for, the theory that supports every kind of revolution, namely the theory of contradiction.

One can say things of very great diversity, each thing being on any given occasion a contradiction. But that a reality that is presumed to be revolutionary should emerge from this is very precisely what has never been proven. I mean that just because there might be some contradictory hullabaloo, it doesn't mean that anything like a constituent of reality should ever have arisen from it. One hopes that a reality shall arise from it, but this is just what has never materialized as such.

– What limits do you set to the fields of metaphor?

That's a very good question. Just because the straight line is infinite, it doesn't mean that it's limitless. Indeed, the question continues – *Are the fields of metaphor infinite, like the straight line for instance?*

It's quite certain that the status of the straight line deserves to be reflected on. The fact that a straight line is assuredly finite when it is cut, on account of having limits, does not mean that an infinite straight line is limitless. Just because a finite line has limits, it doesn't mean that an infinite straight line suffices when it comes to metaphorizing the infinite, since an infinite straight line may be supposed to have what is known as a *point at infinity*, that is, it may be supposed to form a circle.

The question that the straight line poses is precisely the following – that the straight line is not straight. The ray of light might seem to afford us an image of the straight line, but everyone knows, as seems to be the case going by the latest news from Einstein, it has to be reckoned to be flexible. The light ray bends, even though it does give every appearance of realizing the straight line of this limited scope of ours.

How are we to form some conception of a straight line that, on certain occasions, bends? This is evidently a problem that is raised by my question of the real. This question *im-plies* in some way that one can ask questions, my goodness, like the one Lenin asked. It is expressly said that a straight line may be curved. He *im-ply-cated* this in his metaphor that supposes that a stick – a stick being, roughly speaking, the image of a straight line – simply by virtue of

being a stick, can be bent and, by the same token, is capable of being straightened.

What is the meaning of this *straightening* in relation to the use that we can make of it in the Borromean knot with two straight lines? What might the definition of the straight line be beyond the support of what is called – with limited scope – the light ray? There is no other support for it besides what is known as the shortest path from one point to another. But how is one to know what the shortest path from one point to another is?

– *I keep expecting you to play on the equivoques. You have said* Y a d'l'Un, *you've spoken to us about the real as impossible, but you haven't drafted in* Un-possible. *In relation to Joyce you have spoken about imposed words, but you haven't drafted in the Name-of-the-Father as* Un-posé.

This one is signed. Who is it that keeps expecting me to play on blessed equivoques? I'm not especially keen on doing so. It seems to me that I demystify them. It's quite certain that I'm in a considerable bind with this *Un*, this One. I don't know what to do with it, because the One is not a number, as everybody knows, and as I have stressed on occasion.

I speak of the real as impossible to the extent that I believe, precisely, that the real – well, *I believe*, if this is my symptom, then pray tell me so – it really has to be said, the real is lawless. The true real implies the absence of any law. The real has no order. This is what I mean when I say that the only thing that I might one day manage to spell out here in front of you is something that has to do with what I called an odd or end of the real.

– *What do you make of the contradictory hullabaloo that's been going on for a few years now in China?*

I've been waiting, but I don't hope for anything.

– *A point is defined as the intersection of three planes. Can one say that it is real? In setting down traits in writing, as an alignment of points, are these points real, in the sense that you understand it?*

It is written here *au sens que vous l'entendez*. No, there's nothing to laugh at. This is a question that absolutely deserves to be asked. A point is defined as the intersection of three planes. Can one say that it's real?

The *im-ply-cation* of what I have been calling the Borromean

link is that amid everything that is consistent in this link there is no common point. This im-ply-cation certainly excludes the point as such from the real. That a figuration of the real should be able to be supported only by the hypothesis that there is no common point, no branching, no *Y* in writing, certainly implies that the real does not entail the point as such. I am very grateful for this question.

– Does the constant number that you've been speaking about bear any relation to the phallus or the phallic function?

I think that – well, *I think*, I do think nevertheless that my thought is more than a symptom – that the phallus absolutely cannot be a sufficient support for what Freud conceived of as energetics. Furthermore, what is altogether striking is that Freud himself never identified it.

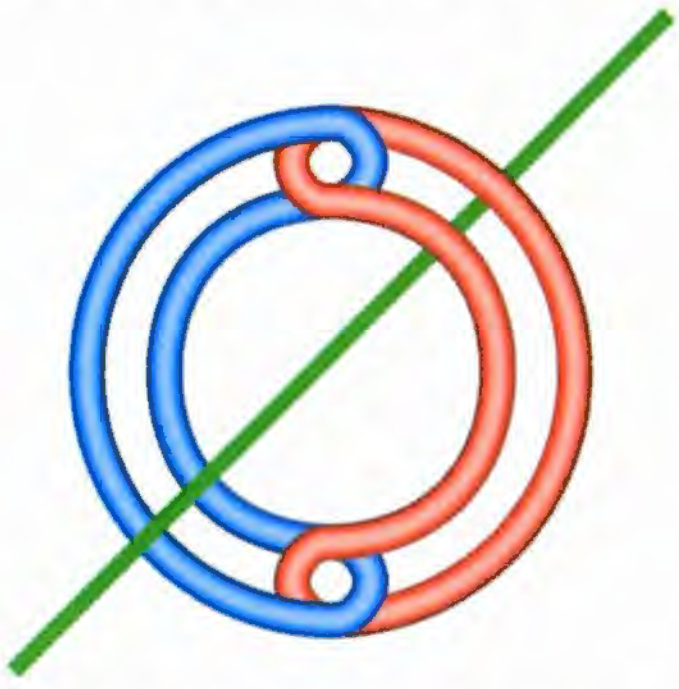
Someone's written to me in Chinese, which is really very nice. No, in Japanese, I mean that I recognize the small characters. I should very much like the person who sent me this text to translate it for me.

– Are you an anarchist?

Certainly not.

– What might the status be of a response given to a lucubration on the basis of which it would be defined as a sinthome?

Earlier I mentioned a lucubration which is the lucubration of the unconscious. You surely noticed that I had to bring the sinthome down a peg in order to consider it to be homogenous with the lucubration of the unconscious. I mean that the sinthome was figured as



The link between the sinthome and the unconscious, maintained by the body

being tied to the unconscious in a knot. What I supposed earlier was that I was reducing the sinthome, which is here, to something that corresponds not to the lucubration of the unconscious but to the *reality* of the unconscious. It's quite certain that, even in this form, this implies a third term, one that keeps these two rings of string apart.

This third term can be whatever you like, but if the sinthome is considered to be equivalent to the real, on this occasion the third term can only be the imaginary. After all, one can repeat Freud's theory by making this imaginary, to wit, the body, everything that holds the two apart – the two of the set that I have formed here by means of a knot between the symptom and the symbolic.

I thank you for having sent me your questions, apart from this one – *Is your twisted cigar a symptom of your real?*

It certainly is. My twisted cigar bears the strictest possible relation to the question that I posed about the equally twisted straight line of the same name.

13 April 1976

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

X

THE WRITING OF THE *EGO*

What philosophy lacks, and what makes up for it
On a logic of bags and cords
Disentangling oneself from the idea of eternity
On a body dropped like a fruit peel
What Joyce's knot lacks, and what rectifies it

Last time, I confided in you that the strike suited me just fine. I hadn't the faintest inclination to tell you anything whatsoever, because I was in a pickle.

Can you hear me? I'm not going to speak very loudly. Is this microphone on? It would be quite easy for me to find some other pretext, like this microphone not working, for instance – not that this time I don't have something to tell you.

Last time, I was too tangled up in my knots and Joyce to have the slightest inclination to speak to you about it. I was in a pickle, but now I am a little less so, because I think I've found a few transmissible items.

Evidently I've been rather active. Difficulty spurs me on, such that I've been toiling away throughout all my weekends racking my brains over something that doesn't go without saying – since my having found the so-called Borromean knot does not go without saying.

1

All told, I'm trying to force things. Indeed, Joyce didn't have the faintest idea about the Borromean knot.

Not that he didn't make use of the circle and the cross. Indeed, some even speak about nothing but that in his regard. A certain

Clive Hart, an eminent mind who has devoted himself to commentaries on Joyce, makes a great deal of this and makes extensive use of it in the book he titled *Structure and Motif*. . . in James Joyce, but most especially . . . in *Finnegans Wake*.

The first thing I can tell you is that the expression *That takes some doing!* is very now. I mean that it has never been uttered to such an extent. And this becomes lodged quite naturally in the fashioning of the knot – it takes some *doing*.

What does it mean, *it takes some doing*? It amounts to setting it down in written form. The curious thing is that this knot is an *appui*, a prop, for *la pensée*, for pondering. I'm going to let myself illustrate this with a term that allows pondering to be written differently. I'll have to write it down on this little sheet of paper – *appui à l'appensée*, a prop for appondering.

This knot is a support for pondering but, curiously enough, in order to get something out of it you've got to set it down on a page. Meanwhile, when you merely ponder it, it's not easy to form a representation of this Borromean link – because in reality it's a *link* and not a *knot* – even the most straightforward representation. It's not easy to visualize it functioning. This knot, the *Node Bo*, carries with it the fact that it has to be set down in written form to see how it functions.

Calling it *Node Bo* makes one think of something that is evoked somewhere in Joyce's writing – *atop Mount Nebo the Law was given to us*.

So, a writing is a fashioning that gives support to pondering.

Truth be told, the Node Bo in question completely changes the sense of writing. It affords this writing an autonomy, one that is all the more remarkable given that there is another form of writing, one that results from what one might call a precipitation of the signifier. Derrida has insisted on this form of writing, but it's quite clear that I showed him the way, as is already indicated amply by the fact that I didn't find anything else to support the signifier besides writing a capital S.

What remains, however, is that the signifier, that is to say, that which is modulated in the voice, has nothing to do with writing. This in any case is what is demonstrated perfectly by my Node Bo, and this changes the sense of writing. It shows that there is something to which one can fasten signifiers. How, then, does one fasten these signifiers to it? Well, through the intermediary of what I call *dit-mension*.

Once again, because I'm not altogether sure that this hasn't escaped your notice, I'm going to write it down – *mension du dit*, the mention of what is said.

This way of writing has one advantage, which is that it enables *mension* to be extended into *mensionge*, into *mendation*, which indicates that what is said is on no account necessarily true.

In other words, what is said in what is known as philosophy is not without a certain lack, which I try to make up for by turning to what cannot help – in the Node Bo – but be set down in written form, so that one may draw some benefit from it.

It's still the case that the *φιλία* that is there in the *φιλέω* that the word philosophy starts with can become fairly weighty. *Φιλία* is time in so far as it is *thought*. Not *thought* as in *thinking*, but *thought* as in *pondered – pondered time*. That's what *φιλία* is.

I'm allowing myself to posit that writing changes the sense, the mode, of what is at stake, namely the *φιλία* of wisdom. It's not terribly easy to support wisdom otherwise than through writing, the writing of the Node Bo, such that all in all, please excuse my infatuation, what I've been trying to do with my Node Bo is nothing less than the first ever philosophy that, to my eye, stands up.

Simply introducing these Bo Nodes gives an idea of how they support an osseous matter, which in turn is sufficiently suggestive of something that on this occasion I shall call the *osbject*.

This is indeed what characterizes the letter that I match to this *osbject*, namely the letter *a*. I reduce the *osbject* to this lowercase *a* precisely in order to indicate that the letter does no more than testify, occasionally, to the intrusion of a form of writing as *autre* with a lowercase *a*, as other.

The writing in question comes from somewhere other than the signifier. It really has been some time now that I've been taking an interest in this business of writing, which I promoted the first time I spoke of the unary trait, Freud's *einziger Zug*.

By virtue of the Borromean knot, I have given this unary trait another support. I haven't yet brought this other support out into the open. In my notes, I've written it *DI*. These are the initials of *droite infinie*, the straight line stretching to infinity.

This is not the first time you've heard me speak about the infinite straight line, which I characterize through its equivalence to the circle. This is the principle of the Borromean knot. By combining two straight lines with the circle, you obtain the crux of the Borromean knot. Why does the infinite straight line possess this virtue, or this quality? Well, because it's the best illustration of the hole there is, better than the circle.

Topology indicates to us that there is a hole in the middle of a circle. One sets about dreaming up whatever it is that might constitute the centre, which extends into all kinds of effects of vocabulary, a *nerve centre*, for example. No one knows exactly what *nerve centre*

means. The infinite straight line possesses the virtue of having the hole all around it. It's the simplest support for the hole.

If we refer to practice, what does this provide us with?

Man, and not God, is a trinitarian composite.

Composed of what? Well, of what we call *elements*.

What is an element? An element is, on the one hand, that which makes *one* – in other words, the unary trait – and that which, by virtue of making *one*, initiates substitution. The characteristic of an element is that you proceed to a combinatory of elements.

Real, imaginary, and symbolic strikes me as just as valid as the other triad from which, going by Aristotle, the juice was extracted to compose man, namely, *νοῦς*, *ψυχή*, and *σῶμα*, or otherwise, *will*, *intelligence*, and *affectivity*.

What I've been trying to introduce through the writing of the knot is nothing less than what I shall call a logic of bags and cords.

Evidently there is the bag, the myth of which, if I may say so, consists in the sphere, but it would seem that no one has reflected sufficiently on the consequences of introducing the cord. The cord proves that a bag is only closed once it has been tied. In any sphere we really need to imagine something that, of course, is at every point of the sphere, that tethers it – this thing into which one blows – by means of a cord.

I'm going to speak to you about Joyce's childhood memories, because I need to show you how this logic of bags and cords can help us to understand how Joyce functioned as a writer.

2

People write down their childhood memories. This has consequences. It's a passage from one kind of writing to another.

Psychoanalysis is something else. It passes by way of a certain number of utterances. No one says that psychoanalysis puts one on the path to writing. What I'm trying to inculcate through my language is that when someone asks you, in the name of I know not what inhibition, to be put in the position of writing, it deserves to be looked at a second time. I for one take a second look when it happens to me, as it does to everybody, that someone should come to ask me this, because it's by no means a clear-cut thing that one would manage to remove such an inhibition with psychoanalysis. This presupposes an investigation, strictly speaking, into what it means to write.

What I'm going to suggest for you today concerns very specifically what this means for Joyce.

I got it into my bonce – a bonce that is far from being spherical on this occasion because it is attached to all that is known – that something happened to Joyce by way of a path that I believe I am able to account for.

Something happened to him that made what is commonly called the *Ego* play a role that for him was altogether different from the simple role – a role that one imagines to oneself is simple – that it plays in the common run of those who are quite rightly termed mortals. The *Ego* fulfilled a function for him that I can only account for through my mode of writing.

It is well worth taking the trouble of pointing out what it was that put me on this path. It is that writing is utterly essential to his *Ego*.

He illustrated this when he met some Tom Fool who went to interview him. I haven't found his name in the Ellmann biography, which is surely the most careful of the biographies on Joyce. It might be in the Gorman one. I'm not saying it's not in the Ellmann, but I didn't have time to look it up this morning. The episode is a well-known one, and one or other of the Joyce biographies mentions it.

So, someone went to see him one day and while there asked him about a picture that depicted a view of the town of Cork. Joyce, who knew how to head his man off at the pass, replied that it was Cork. Whereupon the fellow said – *Yes, I see it's Cork. But what's that framing the image?* To which Joyce replied – *cork*.

This is given as an illustration of the fact that in what he writes Joyce always goes via this relationship with framing. You just have to read the little table of points of correspondence that he provided for *Ulysses*. He gave it to Stuart Gilbert, he gave it to Linati too, albeit a slightly different one, and to a few others, including Valery Larbaud. In each thing he gathers up, each thing he recounts in order to turn it into the work of art that *Ulysses* is, the framing always bears at least a homonymic relationship with what he is presumed to be recounting as an image. For example, each of the chapters in *Ulysses* claims to be supported by a certain mode of framing, which is called, for example, *dialectic*, or *rhetoric*, or *theology*. For Joyce, this framing is linked to the very stuff of what he recounts. This is not without producing an evocation of my little rings, which are also the support of a framing.

The question is as follows – what happens when something occurs to someone following on from a fault?

Such a fault is not conditioned by mere chance. Indeed, psychoanalysis teaches us that a fault never occurs by chance. Behind any lapsus, to call it by its name, there lies a signifying finality. If there is an unconscious, a fault tends to want to express something, which is not only that the subject knows, because the subject resides in the

very division that I represented for you in its time by one signifier's relationship with another one.

The fault expresses the life of language, life being utterly different for language from what is simply called *life*. What signifies *death* for the somatic support has just as much place as *life* in the drives that fall within the remit of what I've just called *vie de langage*[1]. The drives in question fall within the remit of the relationship with the body, and in no man is the relationship with the body a straightforward relationship – aside from the fact that the body has a few holes. According to Freud, this is even what must surely have put man on the path of those abstract holes that have to do with the enunciating of anything whatsoever.

This reference suggests that one needs to try to disentangle oneself from the idea of eternity. It's an essentially confused idea, which attaches only to *pondered time* – the φιλία I was speaking about earlier. People ponder an eternal love, and it even happens that people speak about it indiscriminately, without knowing in the slightest what they are saying, because by that they mean *the other life*, if I may so express it. You can see how all this gets under way, and where this idea of eternity leads us. No one knows what it is.

As far as Joyce is concerned, I could have read you what he confides to us in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

With regard to Tennyson, to Byron, to things that refer to poets, it so happened that some classmates pinioned him up against a barbed-wire fence and give him a hiding. The classmate who leads the whole escapade was a certain Heron, which is not an entirely inconsequential term. It's the ἐρῶν. So, this Heron beat him for a time with the help of a few other classmates.

After the escapade, Joyce wonders how it is that, once the thing was over, *he bore no malice* to him. He expresses himself in an exceedingly pertinent manner, as one may expect from him, I mean that he metaphorizes his relationship with his body. He observes that the whole business was divested of, like a fruit peel.

What does this indicate to us? Well, something that in Joyce has to do with his relationship with his body, a relationship that is already such an imperfect relationship in all human beings.

Who knows what happens in one's body? This is something extraordinarily suggestive. For some, this is even the meaning that they give to the unconscious. If, however, there is one thing that I've been carefully articulating from the start, it's that the unconscious has nothing to do with the fact that one is unaware of a whole load of things related to one's body. As for what one does know, that is of an entirely different nature. We know things that fall within the remit of the signifier.

The old notion of the unconscious, the *Unerkannt*, drew precisely on our ignorance of what happens in our bodies. Freud's unconscious is the relationship that exists between a body that is foreign to us and something that forms a circle, even a straight line stretching to infinity, and which is the unconscious, these two things being, either way, equivalent to one another.

So, what meaning is to be given to what Joyce gives us an account of?

It's not simply a matter of his relationship with his body, but, if I may say so, the psychology of this relationship. After all, psychology is nothing else but the confused image that we have of our body, but this confused image is not without entailing *affects*, to call a spade a spade. It is precisely in imagining this psychical relationship that something of the psyche is affected, that it reacts, and that it is not detached, in contrast to what Joyce testifies to after having received the strikes of the cane from his four or five classmates. In Joyce, there is only something that asks simply to take its leave, to be divested of like a fruit peel.

That there are some people who don't feel any affect when violence is done to their body is something curious. Moreover, this is a thing that is ambiguous – perhaps it brought him pleasure, masochism not being excluded in the slightest from Joyce's possibilities of sexual stimulation. He insisted enough on this point with Bloom. I would say, however, that what is striking are the metaphors he employs, namely the detachment of something just as peel is detached. This time he didn't derive any jouissance from it. He had a reaction of disgust. This is something that is valid, psychologically speaking. In sum, this disgust has to do with his own body. It's like someone placing something between parentheses, chasing away a bad memory.

To have a relationship with one's own body as though it were foreign is certainly a possibility, one that is expressed by the use of the verb *to have*. One has one's body. To no extent is it something that one *is*. This is what makes one believe in the soul, and there is no reason to stop there. So, one thinks that one has a soul, which really tops it all. The form that this *dropping* of the relationship with the body takes for Joyce is, however, altogether suspicious for an analyst. This idea of the self, the self as a body, carries weight. This is what is called *the Ego*.

The *Ego* is said to be narcissistic because, at a certain level, there is something that supports the body as an image. In the case of Joyce, however, isn't the fact that the image is not involved on this occasion the sign that the *Ego* has an extremely particular function for him? And how is this to be set down in my Node Bo?

Here, I'm moving into something that you're not obliged to follow.

How far does *père*-version extend? You know how I spell it.

The Node Bo is the inevitable consequence of the fact that Freud makes everything hold together through the function of the father.

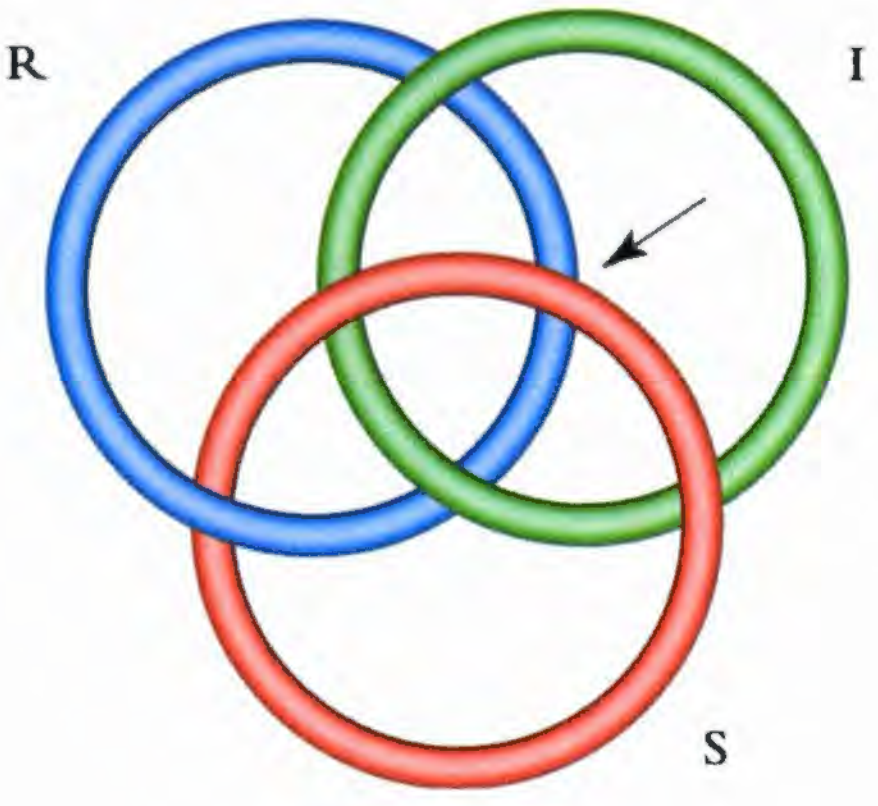
The Node Bo is merely the translation of the following, which I was reminded of yesterday evening – love, and into the bargain the love that one may qualify as eternal, is addressed to the function of the father, in the name of the fact that he is the bearer of castration. This at least is what Freud puts forward in *Totem and Taboo* through his reference to the primal horde. The sons love the father to the very extent that they are deprived of women.

This is something utterly singular and mind-boggling, which only Freud's intuition sanctions.

I've been trying to flesh out this intuition in a different way with my Node Bo, which is so very apt to evoke Mount Nebo or, as they say, the Law – Law which has absolutely nothing to do with the laws of the real world, these laws being moreover a matter that remains completely open. The Law at issue on this occasion is simply the law of love, that is to say, *père*-version.

It's very curious that learning to write, at the very least learning to set down my Node Bo in written form, comes in handy. I shall illustrate this for you right away.

Suppose that somewhere, namely at this spot here, there is a mistake, namely that these little breaks mean that there is a fault. Suppose that at the spot I'm indicating here, the third ring passes over the capital R ring instead of underneath. What result does this have?



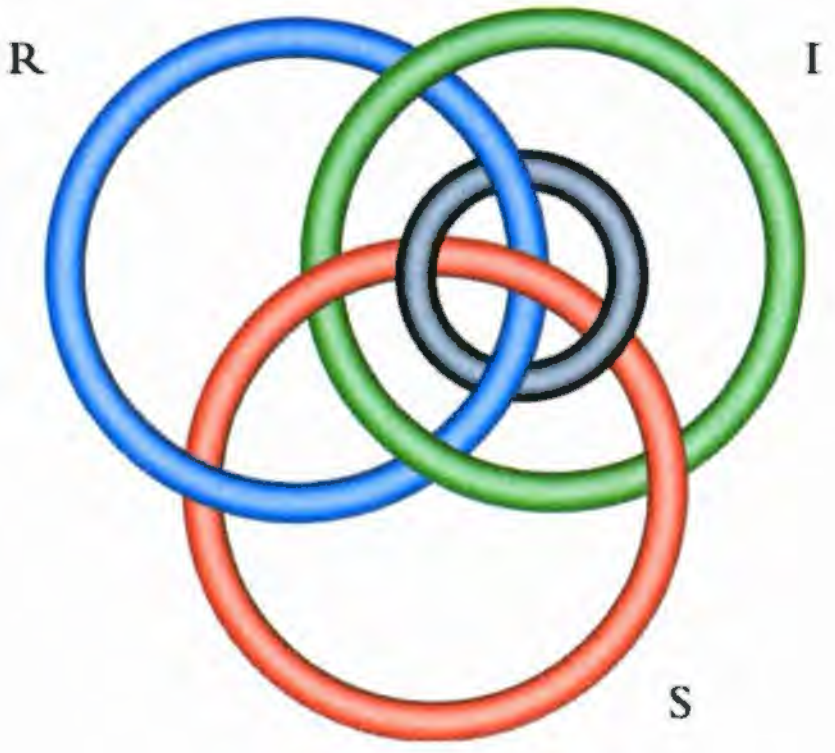
The botched link

All that remains to this capital I is for it simply to clear off. It slides away, in just the same way as what Joyce feels after his hiding. It slides, and the imaginary relationship has no locus. Moreover, this gives one to think that if Joyce was so very interested in perversion, it might have been for another reason. Perhaps, after all, the hiding did disgust him. Perhaps he wasn't a true pervert.

Why is Joyce so unreadable? We must indeed endeavour to imagine why this is so. It might be because he doesn't stir any sympathy in us. But mightn't something be suggested in this affair of ours by the fact, the patent fact, that he has an *Ego* of a quite different nature?

At the time of his revolt – because it's a fact that he does manage to break away – precisely, this *Ego* is not functioning, not immediately, just after the said revolt. But after this, I would say that he no longer displays to anyone whatsoever any acknowledgement of having received this hiding.

Look at the link. Nothing could be more commonly imagined than this mistake, this fault, this lapsus. Why shouldn't it happen that a knot should fail to be Borromean, that it should be botched? I've made umpteen thousand mistakes drawing it up here on the board. Well, what I am now going to suppose is the rectification of this mistake.



The rectifying Ego^2

You can see exactly what happens here, where I'm incarnating the *Ego* as rectifying the wanting relationship, namely what, in the case of Joyce, does not tie the imaginary in a Borromean fashion to the link between the real and the unconscious. Through this artifice of writing, I would say that the Borromean knot is restored.

You see, it's not a *face*, but a *string*. Common geometry, from which the word *face* comes, is about things that play out across

faces. Polyhedra are replete with faces, edges and corners. The knot, however, which on this occasion is a link, introduces us to an utterly different dimension which, unlike the *evidence* of the geometric face, is *évidé*, emptied out. And precisely because it's *évidé*, it's not evident.

There is someone who once asked in my regard – *Why doesn't he say the truth about truth?* He doesn't say the truth about truth because to say the truth about truth is to say that it's a lie.

The *intensional* truth – here I'll allow myself to spell it *intension*, which I have already distinguished from the word *extension* – can once in a while touch upon something real. But that, as it happens, is by chance.

One scarcely imagines the extent of botches that are made in writing. The *lapsus calami* is not primary in relation to the *lapsus linguae*, but it may be conceived as a touching upon the real.

I am well aware that my knot is that by which, and uniquely that by which, the real is introduced as such. Don't get worked up, it doesn't go very far. I'm the only one who's picked up on how to handle it, but I'll just as well make use of it, for this will help me to explain something to you. One can very well tolerate, since this is the situation you're in, my fooling around with my feeble means, but it's a way of spelling out the following – all human sexuality is perverse if we carefully follow what Freud says. He never managed to conceive of sexuality except as something perverse, and this is precisely why I question the fruitfulness of psychoanalysis.

You've often heard me state that psychoanalysis hasn't even been bloody capable of inventing a new perversion. It's sad. If perversion is the essence of man, what a fruitless practice this is. Well, I think that, thanks to Joyce, we touch upon something I hadn't thought of.

I didn't think of it straightaway, but it occurred to me in time. Joyce's text is fashioned just like a Borromean knot. And what strikes me is that he's the only one whose notice this escaped. There's not the faintest trace in his whole life's work of anything that looks like one. This seems to me, however, to be more of a sign of authenticity.

When one reads Joyce's text, and above all his commentators, what's striking is the number of riddles it contains. Not only do they abound, but one may say that Joyce played on this, knowing full well that there would be Joyceans for two or three hundred years to come. These are fellows who are kept busy exclusively by solving these riddles. At a minimal level, this consists in wondering why Joyce put such and such a thing here or there. Naturally, they always find a reason why. *He put it there because, just after, there's another word.* In short, it's exactly like my business of *osbject*, *mendation*, *dit-mention*, and all the rest. I have my reasons. I want to

express something, I equivocate, whereas with Joyce, it's all Greek to us, and all the more so given that he knew a bit of Greek.

Fortunately, there was a time when I took an interest in the enigma of the riddle. I write it E_e, capital E subscript *e*. At issue here is the Enunciation and the *énoncé*, the statement. The enigma consists in the relationship between the capital E and the lowercase *e*. It's a matter of finding out why the devil any such statement has been uttered. It's a matter of enunciation, and the enunciation is the enigma.

The enigma raised to the power of writing is something that deserves to give us pause. Might not this join that is so poorly made give rise to the consequence that it is an *Ego* of enigmatic functions, of reparatory functions?

That Joyce is the writer of the enigma par excellence is something that, were it not so late, I could have quoted countless examples of. I urge you to go and check for yourselves. *Ulysses* exists in French translation. It can be found in a Gallimard edition, if you don't have the old volume from the time of Sylvia Beach.

4

Even so, before I leave you I shall point out a few small items that seem to me to be noteworthy.

The first point is that you really must realize that what I've told you about man's relations with his body hinges entirely on the fact that man says that the body, his body, is something he *has*. Just saying *his* means that he owns it, like a piece of furniture, of course. This has nothing to do with anything that allows the subject to be defined in any strict sense. The subject can be defined in a correct way only through that which forms a relation, through that which means that a subject is a signifier inasmuch as he is represented alongside another signifier.

Here I would like to make a remark that might just keep in check a little something that forms a gulf in what the use of this Borromean knot, this *père*-version, allows us to clasp. There is something that one may be quite surprised not to see serving the body as such even more, and that is dance. This would allow us to write the term *con-dansation* a little differently.

Another question. Is the real straight? I should like to point out to you that in Freud's theory the real has nothing to do with the world. What he explains to us with something that has to do precisely with the *Ego*, namely the *Lust-Ich*, is that there is a phase of primary narcissism. Primary narcissism is characterized, not by there not being

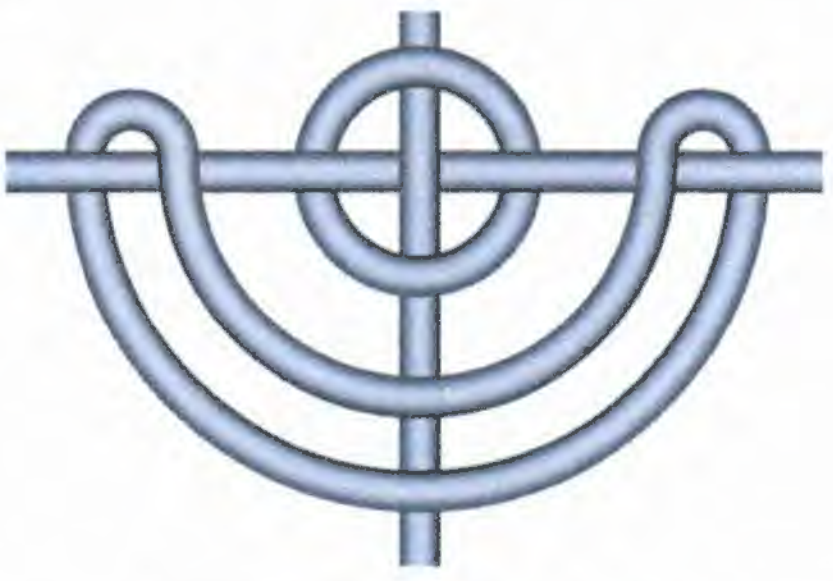
any subject, but by the fact that there is no relationship of inside to outside.

I shall surely have to go back over this. I'm not saying that I will do so here in front of you, because it's by no means certain as things currently stand that I shall still have this lecture theatre at my disposal next year. But let's suppose that I find, somewhere, a place of two hundred square feet, well, that will be somewhere for eight people, me included, and that's the best I can wish for.

I must still say a few more words that I prepared on Joyce's famous epiphanies. You find them at every turn.

I ask you to confirm the following. When he sets out a list of them, every single epiphany is invariably characterized by the same thing, which is very precisely the consequence that results from the mistake in the knot, namely, that the unconscious is tied to the real. The fantastic thing is that Joyce himself speaks about this in a way that is no different. It's there for the reading in Joyce that epiphany is what makes it so that, by virtue of the fault, the unconscious and the real are tied together.

There is one last diagram I can draw for you. If this here is the *Ego*, as I drew it earlier, we find ourselves in a position to see the Borromean knot being restored. The rupture of the *Ego* sets the imaginary relation free, because it's easy to imagine that the imaginary will just clear off, given that the unconscious incontestably allows it to do so.



Reconstitution of the link

These are a few observations that I wanted to tell you for this last session. One ponders *contra* a signifier. This is the meaning that I have given to the word *l'appensée*, appondering. One props oneself *contra* a signifier in order to think.

There you go. I'm setting you free. There won't be a final session this year. I was counting on the 18th, but since exams start on the 17th, I'll spare you having to move.

11 May 1976

NOTE

In the first appendix the reader will find the lecture to which Lacan refers at the very start of the Seminar, the same that was delivered in June 1975 at the behest of Jacques Aubert to open the Joyce Symposium at the Sorbonne. Lacan later composed a written text under the same title 'Joyce le Symptôme' for the collected proceedings of the Symposium, which I included in the collection of Lacan's *Autres écrits* (Seuil, 2001, pp. 565–70). A first version of the lecture text, which I established based on notes taken by Éric Laurent, was published in the Freudian magazine *L'Âne* under the editorship of Judith Miller.

The second appendix is Jacques Aubert's presentation at the Seminar, the text of which has been revised by its author for the present edition.

Lastly, Jacques Aubert, who was at the origin of *The Sinthome* and who harbours a fond memory of Lacan, has been kind enough to read the entire manuscript and to draft at my request some reading notes that constitute an admirable piece of textual criticism. As both a Joycean and a Lacanian, only he could have provided them. I shall indicate the following books which have been published under his guidance: *Joyce avec Lacan*, Navarin, 1987; the edition of Joyce's *Œuvres* in Gallimard's 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade' collection (where *The Sinthome* is mentioned in the *apparatus criticus*); and, in 2004, the new translation of *Ulysses* (Gallimard).

I hereby acknowledge my gratitude to him.

J.-A. M., 7 January 2005

RETROACTIVE NOTE

Going through the galley-proofs of the reading notes that I requested of Jacques Aubert to supplement my Joycean knowledge, I realized that they highlighted the absence of similar indications bearing on other fields of knowledge that are mentioned or evoked in *The Sinthome*.

Given the sometimes cryptic character of this Seminar, it occurred to me that it might not be out of the question for the 2005 reader quite legitimately to wish to have some form of reading-aid within arm's reach, and that in this event it would not be unhelpful to provide one. Nevertheless, my aversion to furnishing any critical apparatus that, with the instant gratification it provides, would thereby deprive the reader of the most precious form of knowledge which is only acquired by overcoming perplexity, has led me to try my hand at the 'eftsoon' style behind Jacques Aubert's art (see what Lacan says about this on p. 60, and Aubert's commentary on p. 172.

To avoid delaying publication, I have made do with drawing on my recollections, on the research I have carried out down the years to make this Seminar pass over into written form, and more generally on my practice of teaching Lacan's work, which I labour to elucidate, notably with this published edition in mind, in my courses at the Department of Psychoanalysis at Paris-VIII University.

The audience this has earned me, in yet larger numbers this year, vouches for the renewed interest in Lacanian studies that has effectively been sparked by the latter-day promotion of various methods, as harmful as they are brisk and simple-minded, of induced mental auto-coercion (CBT). The lengths to which this 'orthodoxy' has gone with a view to imposing itself, in conformity with its fundamental nature, in a brazen and authoritarian manner, make this opportunity for clinicians to verse themselves in the writhen and heretical discipline of the sinthome all the more timely. This is why my course of the present year has been devoted to this Seminar. Transcripts of the sessions will be published in *La Cause freudienne*, the journal of the École de la Cause freudienne (Navarin/Seuil).

In the same spirit, I have had an index of names made, for the first time in the published edition of the Books of the Seminar [in French].[1]

J.-A. M., 17 January 2005

APPENDICES

JOYCE THE SYMPTOM

Jacques Lacan

Lecture delivered on 16 June 1975
in the main lecture theatre of the Sorbonne as the
opening address to the 5th International Joyce Symposium

I'm not on top form today, for all sorts of reasons.

With the approval of Jacques Aubert, to whose urging you owe my presence here – Jacques Aubert is an eminent Joycean, and his PhD thesis on Joyce's aesthetics is an eminently commendable work – I have taken *Joyce the Symptom* as my title.

You will excuse me if I purstiche a short while[1] – it won't go on for long – the Joyce of *Finnegans Wake*, which is the dream he has bequeathed, set down as an end-point to – what? This is what I should like to try to spell out. This dream sets down the *fin* to the oeuvre – *Fin again* – of being unable to do any better.

I'll resume. Why should one seek that the rot by which man protspers – which has the air of *to rot in expectation* – why should one seek that the drearly broadshit that stuffs us with news items relay my title correctly?[2] Jacques Lacan, they don't have a clue, *Jules Lacue* would do just as well. Besides, that's the English pronunciation of what in our language we call *la queue*. Why should they print *Joyce the Symptom*? Jacques Aubert relayed it to them, so they went and put *Jacques the Symbol*. Of course, it's all much of a muchness in their eyes.

From the *sym* that does *ptom* to the *sym* that does *bol*, what can that fairly do to the Bosom of Abraham, where for the nature of the pot-pourrotten it's a dogsbody's life for all eturnity?[3]

I shall emend this, though. *Ptom*, *p'tithomme*, the lil' feller still lives, in the language that reckoned it fell to it, alongside other tongues, to *ptom* the coextensive entity.[4] Because that's what this means.

Take a look at the Bloch and von Wartburg, an etymological dictionary of sturdy stock, and you will read that *symptôme* was initially spelt *sinthome*.

Joyce the sinthome forms a homophony with saintliness, which a few people here may recall I televisionized.

If we read the entry in question in the Bloch and von Wartburg a little further, we notice that Rabelais was the one who turned *sinthome* into *symptomate*. It's not surprising. He was a doctor and *symptom* must have already held its place in medical language, though it's not for sure. If I continue in this same vein I shall say that he symptraumatizes something.

The important thing for me is not to do a pastiche of *Finnegans Wake* – one would always be beneath the task – but to say in what respect, by formulating the title *Joyce the Symptom*, I endue Joyce with nothing less than his proper name, the one in which I believe he would have recognized himself within the dimension of naming.

This is a supposition. He would have recognized himself if only I were still able to speak to him today. He would be in his hundreds, which is not the done thing.[5] It's not the done thing to pursue life to such lengths. It would be a strange adherence.

Meeting

Coming from a fairly sordid background, Stanislas to mention it by name – I had a clerical upbringing, as did Joyce, but the priests were less serious than his, Jesuits, and God knows what he was able to make of that – in short, emerging from this sordid background, it so happens that at seventeen, thanks to the fact that I used to drop by Adrienne Monnier's shop, I met Joyce. So too did I attend, when I was twenty, the first reading of the French translation of *Ulysses* that came out.

Such are the happenstances that drive us from pillar to post, and from which we shape our destiny, for we are the ones who weave it thus. We shape our own destiny from them because we speak. We believe we say what we want, but it's what the others wanted, more particularly our family, *qui nous parle*. You should hear this *nous* as a direct object. We are spoken, and, because of this, from the happenstances that drive us, we form something textured.

Indeed, there is a texture – we call it our destiny. Such that it is surely not happenstance, though it would be hard to pick up the thread, that I met James Joyce in Paris while he was still here, for a brief spell more.

Pardon me for telling my tale, but I think I'm doing it only in homage to James Joyce.

Academia and analysis

Throughout my existence, as errant an existence as anyone's, I have always carted around a vast quantity of books – there's a stack about so high – in which those *by* Joyce only go up to here – the rest are books *on* Joyce.

Once in a while I would peruse one of them, but of late I've been dabbling in this a great deal more, as Jacques Aubert will testify. I have been able to make out more than mere differences. There is a peculiar wavering in how Joyce is received, which depends of course on the angle from which he is taken.

In conformity with what Joyce himself knew would befall him posthumously, not only do academics dominate, they are pretty much the only ones to busy themselves with Joyce. This is altogether striking.

Joyce said as much – *What I write will go on and on producing work for academics*. He hoped for nothing less than to keep them busy till the university is no more. It has certainly been carving out a path. And it's quite clear that this has only been able to come about because Joyce's text is teeming with utterly captivating problems, fascinating problems that academics can get their teeth into.

I'm no academic, contrary to what is thrust upon me by way of *professor*, *mentor*, and other dalliance. I'm an analyst. This produces immediate homophony, does it not, with the four Master Annalists whom Joyce makes so much of in *Finnegans Wake*, who laid the foundations of Ireland's annals. I belong to another species of analyst.

It cannot be said that Joyce was particularly enthralled by the analysis that emerged thereafter. Authors in whom we may put our faith, who knew Joyce well – I merely caught a glimpse of him – who were friends of his, readily suggest that while he freudened this *fredonnement*, it was with repugnance. I believe this to be true.

I think this is borne out by the fact that in the constellation of the dream from which one never awakens, in spite of the last word, *Wake*, in the texture of characters in *Finnegans Wake*, there are the two twins, Shem – whom you'll allow me to call Shemptom – and Shaun.

That is how they are pronounced, at least I hope so because this time I didn't consult Jacques Aubert, who has supported me so terribly well throughout this brewing process.

So, we have Shemptom and Shaun. They are knotted together. Nothing could be more tightly knotted than twins. It is to the other one – not to Shem, whom he calls, tacking on a label, *the penman* – it is to Shaun that Joyce tacks Dr Jones, the analyst to whom Freud entrusted the task of drafting his biography. Freud knew what he was doing. He knew Jones well, which is to say that he was quite

sure that Jones wouldn't be in the least bit fanciful, that he wouldn't, among other things, go fishing for the agenbite of inwit. Stephen Dedalus speaks about the agenbite of inwit somewhere in *Ulysses*, the bite of the *ensoi* – as it's been translated in French, I don't know why – when really it means *wit*, inward wit, the bite of the flash of wit, the bite of the unconscious. With Jones, Freud could rest easy. He knew his biography would be a hagiography.

Clearly, that Joyce should Shaunize, if I may say so, the Jones in question is what gives us some idea of the importance, as the other fellow put it, of being Ernest. Jones, much more than did Joyce – I'm telling you this because I met him – sniffed at being called Ernest, but this was undoubtedly because of the play of this name, such an astonishing play, by Wilde, and which Joyce made so big a deal of. This reference to the importance of being called Ernest arises more than once in *Finnegans Wake*.

A cancelled subscription to the unconscious

The sole import of all this is that it brings us closer to the fact that saying *Joyce the sinthome* and saying *Joyce the symbol* are not the same thing.

I'm saying *Joyce the Symptom* because the symptom, with respect to the symbol, a-*bol*-ishes it, if I may continue in this same vein. It is not simply *Joyce the Symptom*, it is Joyce in so far as he has, as it were, cancelled his subscription to the unconscious.

Read *Finnegans Wake*. You will notice that this is something that is played out not at the level of each line but at the level of every single word. It plays on the pun, a highly particular punning. Read it. Every single word is put together like the first words by which I tried to set the tone, with *protsper*, made up of three or four words that, through the way they are used, flake apart in sparks. This is undoubtedly fascinating, though truth be told its meaning, in the sense we usually give it, gets lost.

In *Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake*, Mr Clive Hart speaks about goodness knows what sense of disappointment in Joyce's use of this type of pun. Mr Atherton, in his book *The Books at the Wake*, relates this to the unforeseen. Rather, these puns are portmanteau-words in the Lewis Carroll sense, which makes Carroll a precursor. Having come across Carroll rather late in the day, Joyce must surely have found himself – so reports Atherton – somewhat importuned.

Read a few pages of *Finnegans Wake* without striving to understand it. It's quite readable. It's quite readable, as someone from my circle remarked to me, because one can sense the presence of the jouissance of he that wrote it. One wonders, however – at least the person in question did – why Joyce published it? Why did he

eventually bring out, in cold print, this *Work* that was *in Progress* for seventeen years?

By good fortune there is just one edition, which means that when one cites it one can quote the right line on the right page, that is, the page that will forever bear the same number. If ever it had to be reprinted with a different pagination, as some other books are, where would one go to get one's bearings?

The fact that he did publish it is what I should hope, were he still here, would let me convince him that he wanted to be Joyce the Symptom, inasmuch as he offers the apparatus, the essence, and the abstraction, of the symptom. If there is one thing that accounts for the fact noted by Clive Hart – that in following him step by step, by the end one finds oneself tired out by it – then it is precisely that this proves how your own symptom, for you like everyone else, is the only thing that holds any interest for you. The symptom in Joyce is a symptom that concerns you in no respect whatsoever. It is the symptom inasmuch as it stands no chance whatsoever of hooking anything of your unconscious. I think this is the meaning behind what was said by the person who asked me about why he published it.

This questioning on his major and final work needs to be continued. It is the work for which Joyce set aside the function of being his *escabeau*[6], because from the very start he wanted to be someone whose name – very precisely the name – would endure forever. *Forever* means that it marks a date. No one had ever made literature like that. And to underscore the weightiness of the word *literature*, I shall utter the equivoque that Joyce often plays on – *letter*, *litter*. The letter is litter. Now, were it not for this very special kind of spelling that is specific to the English language, a good three quarters of the effects of *Finnegans Wake* would be lost.

The most extreme case, I can tell you, and I owe this to Jacques Aubert, is – *Who ails tongue coddeau, aspace of dumbillsilly?* Had I come across this piece of writing on my own, would I have perceived or not – *Où est ton cadeau, espèce d'imbecile?* Where's your present, you imbecile?

What is unprecedented in this is that the homophony, translinguistic homophony on this occasion, is sustained only by letters that conform to English-language spelling. You wouldn't know that *who* can transform into *où* if you didn't know that *who* is pronounced that way in the interrogative. There is some kind of ambiguity in this phonetic usage, which I would also spell *f.a.u.n.* The faunesque aspect of the thing leans squarely upon the letter, namely upon something that is not essential to a tongue, a tongue being something woven by the accidents of history. That someone

should make such prodigious use of this enquires, in and of itself, into the very nature of language.

I've said that the unconscious is structured like a language. It's odd that I'm also able to speak in terms of a *cancellation of subscription to the unconscious* for someone who plays strictly on language, though he did use one particular tongue among others, one that is not his own – for his own is precisely a tongue that had been wiped off the map, to wit, Gaelic, of which he had a smattering, enough to get by, but hardly much more – not his own, then, but the tongue of the invaders, the oppressors.

Joyce said that in Ireland they had one master and one mistress, the former being the imperial British state and the latter the holy Roman catholic and apostolic church, each as baneful as the other. This is precisely what can be seen in what makes of Joyce the Symptom, the pure symptom of what is involved in the relationship to language, in so far as this is reduced to the symptom – namely, to what it produces by way of effect, when one does not analyse this effect – I shall say, furthermore, in so far as one refrains from playing on any of those equivoques that would stir anybody else's unconscious.

Jouissance, not the unconscious

If the reader is fascinated, then it is on account of the fact that, in keeping with this name that echoes the name of Freud – after all, Joyce bears some relation to *joy*, jouissance when written in lalingua that is English – that this *jouasse*, this jouissance, is the sole thing in his text on which we can get a purchase. There lies the symptom.

The symptom – in so far as nothing ties it to what makes for lalingua itself, by which this weft is sustained, these stria, these *strings in the earth and air* with which he opens *Chamber Music*, his first published book, a chapbook of poems – is purely what is conditioned by lalingua, but in a certain fashion Joyce lifts the symptom to the power of language, without for all that any of it being analysable.

This is what strikes you, and literally renders you *interdit*, in the sense that means *I was rendered speechless*.

That one uses the word *interdire* to say *stupefy* is something that holds great import. This is what makes for the substance of what Joyce brings us, whereby, in a certain way, literature after him can no longer be what it was before.

It is no accident that *Ulysses* aspires, that it draws in, a Homeric something or other, even though there isn't the faintest relationship between what happens in *Ulysses* and what is involved in *The Odyssey*. Joyce did send some commentators down that path,

though, assimilating Telemachus into Stephen Dedalus. People fret over carrying the torch of the commentary on *The Odyssey*. Moreover, how can it be said that Bloom is in any respect a father for Stephen, who has nothing to do with him save bumping into him now and then in Dublin? Unless Joyce is already indicating, and finds himself denoting, how psychical reality as a whole, which means the symptom, depends in the final analysis on a structure in which the Name-of-the-Father is a non-conditioned element.

The father as a name and as he who names, that's not that same. The father is this fourth element – here I'm evoking something whose deliberation only a part of my audience may have access to – without which nothing is possible in the knot of the symbolic, the imaginary and the real.

There is, however, another term for this. This is where today I'm going to crown what is involved in the Name-of-the-Father, at the very degree to which Joyce bears it out, with what it would be most suitable to call *the sinthome*.

It is in so far as the unconscious is knotted to the sinthome, which is what is singular to each individual, that we may say that Joyce, as has been written somewhere, identifies with the individual. He is one who has earned the privilege of having reached the extreme point of embodying the symptom in himself, by which he eludes any possible death, on account of being reduced to a structure that is the very structure of LOM, if you will let me spell it quite simply L.O.M.[7] This is how he conveys himself, as something that puts a full stop to a certain number of exercises. He sets down an end point, but how are we to understand the meaning of this end point?

It is striking that Clive Hart should lay the emphasis on the cyclic form and on the cross as being what Joyce substantially attaches himself to. Some of you know that with this circle and this cross I have been tracing out the Borromean knot. Examining Joyce at the level of the product of this knot, namely the ambiguity between 3 and 4, namely that to which he remains stuck, attached, to examining Vico, and things that are worse still, to conversing with spirits – moreover, Atherton files all that under the general heading of spiritualism, which rather surprised me, because thus far I've been calling that Spiritism – it is most certainly surprising to see that this is occasionally a contributing factor in *Finnegans Wake* in the guise of the symptom.

This is not all, for it's hard not to take into account the fiction that may be placed under the heading of initiation. What is the make-up of all that is conveyed in this register and under this term? How many associations arm themselves with banners whose meaning they do not comprehend? That Joyce delighted in Madame

Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* is something I learnt from Atherton and which I found quite staggering. The form of feeble-mindedness that all initiation entails is what hits me at first, and perhaps leads me to underestimate it.

It has to be said that shortly after the time when, thank heavens, I met Joyce, I was to come across a certain René Guénon, who was worth no more than the worst of initiation. *Hi han a pas*, to be written like the hee-haw of the jackass to which Joyce alludes as the central point of the four terms North, South, East and West, as the intersection of the cross – borne by a jackass, goodness knows Joyce makes enough of this in *Finnegans Wake*.[8]

Even so, how can *Finnegans*, this dream, be said to be finished, since already its last word cannot help but join back up with the first, the *the* by which it ends soliciting the *riverrun* by which it starts, which indicates circularity? To spell it right out, how did Joyce manage to miss, right here, what I am at present introducing by way of the knot?

In so doing, I am introducing something new which accounts not only for the limitation of the symptom but also for what means that it is by tying itself to the body, i.e. the imaginary, and by thus tying itself to the real, and to the unconscious as a third term, that the symptom takes on its limits. It is because it meets its limits that one can speak in terms of the knot.

The knot is certainly something that can be scrunched up, that can be rolled up into a ball of twine, but which, once unravelled, maintains its knot shape and, by the same token, its ex-sistence.

This is what I am going to allow myself to introduce into my development for the coming year by leaning, among others, on Joyce.

PRESENTATION AT LACAN'S SEMINAR

Jacques Aubert

Delivered on 20 January 1976

Back in June, Dr Lacan announced that Joyce was going to be on his path. The fact that I am here today on no account means that I find myself on this royal road. Let's say straightaway that I'm more on the hard shoulder, and you know in general why the hard shoulders are signposted. So, you are going to be hearing comments that are not so much *à la cantonade* as *à la cantonnier*, a road-mender's remarks!

I must thank Jacques Lacan for inviting me to produce a piece of work that would be *bâclé*, hurried, and not *bouclé*, complete, that wouldn't be well fashioned, and wouldn't be all that well articulated as far as the knots are concerned. On the other hand, I would like to point out that what I'm about to say starts off from my sense of what is snaking through Joyce's text, through some of Joyce's texts at certain points, something that Joyce wove into them. This awareness of something that snakes in and out has led me not to insist upon what might otherwise produce a definitive piece of work.

To locate the point from which I began, quite by chance, I must specify that it was a short piece from 'Circe' – I'm saying this in an altogether didactic way – a short piece of exchange from this episode of *Ulysses* that was subsequently called 'Circe', and which is known as the episode of hallucination, whose purported *art* is 'magic', and whose purported *technic* is 'hallucination' (according to the table that Joyce drew up for some of his friends).

Elements from earlier chapters crop up again, the status of which it is still too early to assign. They may be characters, true or fictive, objects or signifiers. But what is also interesting is the way they crop up, the way that this clearly has to do with speech, with a word. One realizes this from the very start because I daresay that the first two characters are THE CALLS and THE ANSWERS

that mark out a dimension that is developed in the chapter's form through an ostensibly dramatic style of writing. In short, this is a dimension of speech, and a kind of setting up of sites from which *it speaks*.

The important thing is that *it speaks*, and this runs all over the place. Moreover, anything and everything can be impersonated, to use a term that we shall be meeting in a little while; everything can personate in this text; everything can be the occasion of effects of the voice through a mask.

It is one of these functions, the detail of one of these functions, a functioning of one of these functions, that I think I have distinguished at the start of the chapter in an exchange between Bloom and the one who is supposed to be his father, Rudolph, who has been dead for eighteen years. I'll read you the brief exchange in question. It can be found on p. 416.[1]

Rudolph has appeared, initially, as an elder of Zion. According to the stage direction he has the face of an elder in Zion. After making a few reproaches to his son, he says this:

> What you making down this place? Have you no soul? [Of Hungarian extraction, he is not supposed to be fully fluent in English.] (*With feeble vulture talons he feels the silent face of Bloom.*) Are you not my son Leopold, the grandson of Leopold? Are you not my dear son Leopold who left the house of his father and left the god of his fathers Abraham and Jacob?

At first sight, what transpires here for the reader of *Ulysses* is a phenomenon described on several occasions by Bloom himself with the expression 'retrospective arrangement', an expression that crops up fairly often throughout the text. The reader cannot fail to be sensitive to this retrospective arrangement, nor to the fact that this is an arrangement formed from a favourite quotation of his father's, a literary text that, to all appearances, had certain effects on him. This text is on p. 73:

> Nathan's voice! His son's voice! I hear the voice of Nathan who left his father to die of grief and misery in my arms, who left the house of his father and left the God of his father.

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[1] In this presentation the reference texts are the 1922 Shakespeare & Co. edition of *Ulysses* [reprinted with the same pagination by Oxford World's Classics]; and the 1968 Viking edition of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* with criticism and notes by C. G. Anderson.

One can see that what repeats is slightly different. But before I isolate the differences, I would like to point out the effects that this different return has on Bloom.

What does he reply in the 'Circe' episode? The following:

> Bloom (*With precaution.*) I suppose so, father. Mosenthal. All that's left of him.

Here, there appears one of the functions of Bloom, who is described at some length in *Ulysses* as the cautious one. Caution is one of the aspects of Ulysses himself (though Ulysses is not only that). Bloom is often described in a language that is somewhat Masonic in inspiration: 'the prudent member'. This prudent member says, 'I suppose so' (and not *je crois que oui* as the first French translation rendered it), rather it is *I sub-pose so*, or *I suppose something in reply to the question, 'Are you not my son?'*. It's *I sub-pose something of the sort*, which in principle refers back to what his father has said, but which all of a sudden takes another turn when we follow the text because we have this stop, marked by what in the US they call a 'period', something that forms a period, a dot that is not a suspension point but a point of suspense. From this point there emerges 'Mosenthal', which is also punctuated with a full stop.

Around this proper name something is articulated and disarticulated at the same time based on the announced sub-position. What, then, is this *suppôt*, this 'henchman', this *sous-pot* function, a 'pot saucer' function (or a *sous-peau* function, an 'under the skin' function) that Mosenthal holds?

Here, in this context, this signifier has the function of referring his father's speech to the author of a text, the text that has just been mentioned by his father. But in its brutality this signifier obscures more than it clarifies, and the reader is led to uncover, to find again, the thoughts to which it refers and the displacements in which it is implicated.

One of these displacements is evident: in the first text, the text of the 'Lotus Eaters' episode (p. 73), the name in question, the name of the author, features before the quote; it is in the signature position here, and also the reply position. This is very seductive, and since it has to do with Moses, it's especially pleasing. But if we bear in mind – as always, because we spend our time re-reading – the place that Mosenthal occupied in the first text, we realize that this was a displaced reply to the question as to the existence of the true name; a question that itself didn't manage to be formulated except in a suggestively vacillating way.

At this point I should write up another sentence, which is precisely the question to which 'Mosenthal' was supposed to reply:

> What is this the right name is? By Mosenthal it is. Rachel, is it? No.

For good measure, I've included the next part, which might hold some interest.

Even though a German speaker who knows the slang might hear something else, especially if it carried a diaeresis, Mosenthal is the name of the author of a theatre play whose original German title Bloom is trying to retrieve and retranslate. In fact the title is a woman's name, a female Jewish name, which wasn't kept in English. It's a curious idea. It's a melodrama that had the title *Deborah* in German, which was translated into English under the name *Leah*, and this is what Bloom is trying to find. So, he's trying to translate the original title (which is a woman's name) and this takes the form of this search. Clearly, we can see the game of hide-and-seek between the author's name and the creature's name at the level of art, which brings into play both Being, with insistence – the 'is' insists – and the sexual problematic of a patronymic that comes in the stead of a daughter's name.

At this point the reader, whose notice nothing in *Ulysses* escapes, of course, says that this rings a bell, which bears some relation with Bloom himself.

I'll give you the first passage again (and I apologize for doing this in bits and pieces but I'm simply following the path I took), along with its context:

> Mr Bloom stood at the corner, his eyes wandering over the multicoloured hoardings. Cantrell and Cochrane's Ginger Ale (Aromatic). Clery's summer sale. No, he's going on straight [This refers to someone he's just been speaking to; Bloom wonders whether he might be watching him]. Hello. *Leah* tonight [The play in question]: Mrs Bandman Palmer. Like to see her in that again. *Hamlet* she played last night. Male impersonator.

Here begins a short passage on the problematic of the sexes. The English expression 'male impersonator' refers to an actress who has taken on the male persona, his mask, but on the other hand this can apply as much to the one play, *Hamlet*, as to the other, *Leah*. Everything will revolve around this.

> Male impersonator. Perhaps he was a woman. Why Ophelia committed suicide?

So, at a certain level there is the fact that the role of Hamlet was very often played by women. It turns out that one Anglophone critic had the fanciful idea of analysing Hamlet precisely in terms of transvestism, taking the impersonator seriously in some sense and saying: Ophelia committed suicide because she realized that Hamlet was in fact a woman. I'm not mentioning this critic for the sake of it, in the name of my Shakespearian and Joycean knowledge, but simply because this implication appears elsewhere in *Ulysses*.

The statement 'Why Ophelia committed suicide?' is equivocal. It's both *Why did Ophelia commit suicide?* and *Was this the reason she committed suicide?* Clearly this doesn't make it through in the French translation, and it's worthwhile pointing that out.

What do we read next?

> Poor papa! How he used to talk about Kate Bateman in that! Outside the Adelphi in London waited all the afternoon to get in. Year before I was born that was: sixtyfive. And Ristori in Vienna. [And this is where the question about the title comes in.] What is this the right name is? By Mosenthal it is. Rachel, is it? No. The scene he was always talking about where the old blind Abraham recognizes the voice and puts his fingers on his face.
>
> – Nathan's voice! His son's voice! I hear the voice of Nathan who left his father to die of grief and misery in my arms, who left the house of his father and left the God of his father.
>
> Every word is so deep Leopold.
>
> Poor Papa! Poor man! I'm glad. I didn't go into the room to look at his face. That day! O dear! Ffoo! Well, perhaps it was the best for him.

So, in this passage a whole series of questions are at stake: questions about existence; about Being and the name; about existence and suicide; the question of the name – and I shall be coming back to this point – that is in fact both the name of the father, his father, and the name of the main character in the play; and lastly the question about the sex that personates, which is that which *père*-sonates.

Behind the question of the name stands the suicide of the father, who possesses this further characteristic of having changed name: this is what is indicated in another passage that is likewise presented in a curious way.

In a pub, a few of the barflies are talking about Bloom. 'He's a perverted jew', says one of them. (Here, 'perverted' means 'renegade', in the same way that Joyce uses it towards the end of

A Portrait: '[. . .] are you trying to make a convert of me or a pervert of yourself?')

> He's a perverted jew [. . .] from a place in Hungary and it was he drew up all the plans according to the Hungarian system [the political plans of Sinn Fein]. [. . .] He changed it [his name] by deedpoll, the father did. (p. 323)

So, it seems that the father changed his name. Moreover, he changed it in a way that is rather interesting, using a legal form called a deed poll. A 'deed' is an act (in every sense of the term), but 'poll' evokes or describes in some way the act from the point of view of the document: it's a document that has been 'cropped'. This 'poll', which describes the cropping, actually refers to what has been lopped off or affected by pollarding (a tree that has had its upper part removed is referred to as a 'pollard'). In fact, 'poll' refers to the top of the head. The deed poll has the characteristic of only comprising one part, the lower part. This is why in the French translation it says *par décret*. This is distinct from indenture where the act is torn in two, precisely by indentation, in order to be entrusted to the two parties. Therefore, so Joyce tells us, the father changed name by deed poll, by a procedure that is different from a symbolic one. But what name did he change?

> – Isn't he a cousin of Bloom the dentist? says Jack Power.
> – Not at all, says Martin. Only namesakes. His name was Virag. The father's name that poisoned himself.

In this we can hear a play on the genitive and on the position of the name of the father, which allows one to understand that it was the name that poisoned itself.

'Virag' appears again. It is mentioned in several places in *Ulysses*. It reappears in 'Circe', where first it is a virago, designated as such: VIRAGO. Here we may remind ourselves just what 'virago' is, namely the name that in the Vulgate, in Saint Jerome's translation of the Bible, serves to designate woman from Adam's point of view. In Genesis, man is led to name woman: *thou shalt be called woman [Virago]*. She is a little bit male (*vir*), while still being a woman.

Having come to this point in my lucubration and my groping between the lines of *Ulysses*, I should like to single out what gives the impression of being a hole in this interlacing. Indeed, it's tempting to use, with a view to interpretation, a schema that brings into play the suicide, the change of name, and Bloom's refusal to see the face of his dead father. It would be very apt if all that were to

reappear in 'Circe', in what is deemed to be a hallucination. But this is nowhere near enough, even if there is some truth to it, to make the text function, to account, for example, for the passage, 'Poor Papa! Poor man!' in the first extract (after 'Every word is so deep Leopold'). These words report the father's commentary on the play, and then: 'Poor Papa! Poor man!', which perhaps was not so kind about the father's comments. 'I'm glad. I didn't go into the room to look at his face. That day! O dear! [. . .] Well, perhaps it was the best for him.' In short, there is a whole set of items that need to be accounted for, and above all the effects produced in the dramatic redistribution that 'Circe' comprises. For this holds together, it functions, and things happen precisely alongside something that gives the impression of being a hole. Precisely, Joyce has a knack, among other things, of displacing, if I may say so, the area of the hole in a manner that allows for certain effects.

For example, in the given quotation the son's voice is not mentioned, no more than the father's death. On the other hand, an effect is produced by the son's voice, which is displaced in a reply, but a son's voice that bears a certain *savoir-faire* about the signifier. This precaution, this ability that is to be supposed, to be sub-posed, can be seen growing in accordance with an altogether suggestive logic. I spoke of the rhetorical suggestiveness of Mosenthal, within periods, articulated in the style of *j'en ai marre, marabout . . .*[1]: *Mosenthal . . . All that . . . all that's left of him.* 'All that's left of him' is *all that remains of him.* But it's also *all that's to the left of him, on his left.* If one thinks of what the Creed stipulates on the respective places of the Father and the Son on high, this says a great deal about their relations. All that's left of him, a name, an author's name; all that's to the left of him, something therefore that either way is not a true son. Let's stop there.

What's quite sure is that this gives pleasure to Bloom and that this had been understood. And how do we see this? It's because the father is not at all happy. The following retort begins:

> Rudolph (*Severely.*) – One night they bring you home drunk [. . .].

If you please, no out-of-place humour, let's speak instead about *your* transgressions. Bloom's jubilation, Bloom who has prudently said what he had to say, and which pleases everyone.

However, within this series of effects, some of which I've just isolated, there is another sort of cascade: another effect develops, which is in some respect structural in relation to the previous effects, a sort of result of the previous effects. This game in relation to the father

seems to slide to the side of the mother. The father, who is contested in various ways, leads to a mother on the side of the imaginary.

So, Rudolph has mentioned his son's transgression, when he came home drunk, having spent all his money, and also when he came home covered in mud. 'Nice spectacles for your poor mother!' He wasn't the one who was displeased, it was her!

But the way this comes about, the way it is passed on to the mother by means of the mud, is rather funny: those of you who've read *A Portrait of the Artist* in English may have noticed that 'mud' is also a familiar term for 'mother'. This gets associated with a pantomime (p. 67 in the Viking edition). It's a little sketch, of the epiphany type (I'm using the term with a little provocation): in one of the first chapters of *A Portrait* Joyce placed a series of sketches where the child Stephen, young Stephen, is finding his way around in Dublin, based on a certain number of points, scenes, sites, and houses. He is seated in a house (generally the scenes start like that), on a chair, in the kitchen of his aunt who is reading the evening paper and admiring 'the beautiful Mabel Hunter', a beautiful actress. A young girl with ringletted hair approaches

> on tiptoe to peer at the picture and said softly:
> – What is she in, mud?
> – In a pantomime, love.

Now, it so happens that the passage from 'Circe' that I was speaking about just now slides into the mud because this signifier, 'mud', comes back three or four times in the passage, sliding from mud to the emergence of the mother: 'Nice spectacles for your poor mother!', says Rudolph, and Bloom says, 'Mamma!', because she is appearing at that very instant. (In 'Circe', as soon as certain words, certain signifiers, are introduced, the object, as it were, comes to the surface.) And in what way? '*In pantomime dame's stringed mobcap, widow Twankey's crinoline and bustle, blouse with muttonleg sleeves*', following the logic of English pantomime, that is to say, a man disguised as a woman (these pantomime shows are played in particular around Christmas, and involve generalized cross-dressing: panto-mime).

So, women's dress. But something else resonates here, because at the very start of *Ulysses* the mother has been mentioned in relation to pantomime (pp. 9–10). Indeed, after having mentioned his dying mother, Stephen says:

> Where now?
> Her secrets: old featherfans, tasselled dancecards, powdered with musk, a gaud of amber beads in her locked drawer. A

> birdcage hung in the sunny window of her house when she was a girl. She heard old Royce sing in the pantomime of Turko the Terrible and laughed with others when he sang:
>
> *I am the boy*
> *That can enjoy*
> *Invisibility.*
>
> Phantasmal mirth, folded away: muskperfumed.

There appears here a fantasmatic whole that is linked to the mother, through Stephen's stumbling, with a radical ambiguity: what was she laughing at? At old Royce singing? At what he was saying? At the sound of his voice? Goodness knows what else.

It turns out that this mother, this problematic mother, is dressed precisely as the mother in the *Aladdin* pantomime, Widow Twankey, is dressed. The Widow Twankey blouse is the blouse worn by Aladdin's mother in the pantomimes, a mother who clearly understood nothing of what he was up to, apart from the fact that in rubbing the lamp the genie within was being made to talk.

I shall leave this point here in order to move onto another aspect of the functioning of the text.

Ellen Bloom, who has just emerged, is not at all like the father on the side of the elders of Zion. Rather she sounds like she is on the side of Catholic religion, apostolic and Roman, for what does she say when she sees him all covered in mud?

> O blessed Redeemer, what have they done to him!
> [. . .] Sacred Heart of Mary, where were you at all at all?

This is rather curious because one would have expected the Sacred Heart of Jesus instead. In a certain way, this betrays her narcissistic relation to religion: she is very clearly Catholic, in a way that it was possible to be in the nineteenth century, and this is a dimension that deserves to be noted when one speaks about Joyce, even if one has to go looking in the more benign texts, *Stephen Hero* and *Dubliners*: an imaginary relation to religion is ascertained in the mother.

I would like to indicate this first of all in relation to epiphany. What is known as 'epiphany' signifies many things that are fairly diverse. Joyce defined epiphany once only, in *Stephen Hero*, and of course what he said has been slightly twisted. Here is the definition:

> By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself.

This is a definition that is polished, didactic, and redolent of Aquinas. But it is slotted into a text that over two pages takes us from a dialogue with his mother in which she reproaches Stephen for his unbelief – she is constantly mentioning the 'priests' – to Stephen breaking away from her on this issue and, at another level, circumventing the problem. In his discourse he slips from the woman/priest relationship to the beloved. Then, suddenly, he says that he started wandering round the streets, and a Dublin incident that was 'keen enough to afflict his sensitiveness' effectively 'set him composing some ardent verses'. There is no further mention of the poem, but he reports the dialogue he heard, a colloquy between a young lady and a young gentleman. One of the few words that appears is the word 'chapel', a word that in Ireland designates a Catholic church (the churches strictly speaking were occupied by the Anglican church): apart from this word there is precious little but suspension points in the dialogue.

So, this dialogue which, from one angle, doesn't present anything, leads him to write a poem and, from the other angle, he baptizes it and defines it over the following lines, in learnèd fashion, as an 'epiphany'. He adds that what he wanted to do was to record these scenes, these realist and exceedingly suggestive sketches. Therefore, we have a sort of duplication of experience (let's say, in order to simplify things, a realist side and an in some sense poetic side), and a kind of elimination or suppression of the poetic in the text of *Stephen Hero*. Now, the elided poem was called 'Vilanelle of the Temptress', and it emerged precisely within a certain discourse that involved his mother, his mother in relation to the priests.

This relationship, which I have roughly defined as an imaginary relation to religion, is to be found again in different ways in *A Portrait of the Artist*, for example with the sermons on hell, which are interminable (both Kantian and very Sadean) and which aim to present in detail the horrible tortures of hell, to give *in praesentia* an idea of what hell is. Or in another way with the figure of the confessor, who listens but also replies. What does he reply? What does he say? It is precisely around all of this that Stephen's Easter duty revolves, the confession of his turpitude, and also the function of the artist.

Here I shall indicate two passages, from two texts, one that is to be found at the start of *Stephen Hero*, where Stephen says that in writing verse he was able to 'combine the offices of penitent and confessor'; the other towards the end of *A Portrait of the Artist* when,

mortified at seeing his beloved lending an ear and smiling to a young well-scrubbed priest, he says that he has renounced the priesthood, that the matter is settled, and that he doesn't stand on that side. He adds in so many words that it's fellows like the young priest, whom women confide in, who in turn tell them everything in the half-light, and he says that he would like to be there before she engenders someone of their race, and that the effect of this word should even improve this blasted race a little.

This is perhaps related to the famous 'uncreated conscience' that he speaks about on the last page. It goes by way of the ear, the famous conception through the ear, which moreover we meet in 'Circe'.

Jacques Lacan – And which Jones insisted on a great deal. Jones, Freud's pupil.

Another essential point concerning this imaginary dimension of religion is thrown into relief in the famous passage in *Ulysses* where there is an opposition between the Trinitarian and problematic conception of theology and an 'Italian' Madonnaizing conception that plugs all the holes with an image of Mary. He says that, indeed, the Catholic Church did rather well in founding everything 'upon the void', 'upon incertitude'. It seems to me that in these texts the names of the father are playing out at various different levels.

In 'Circe', however, and in *Ulysses* as a whole, what sets things in motion, what produces the artifice, is the game of hide-and-seek with the names of the father, that is to say, alongside everything that gives the impression of being a hole there are displacements of the hole and there are displacements of the name of the father.

In passing, we have seen, rather haphazardly, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Virag, and Dedalus too, and another who is rather funny. In one of the central episodes, where there's one eye, 'Cyclops', we meet a certain J. J. whom, you will recall, if you have some memory of it, we met in a previous episode under the name J. J. O'Molloy. The 'O' means 'descended from'. J. J., son of Molloy. His position is rather curious. He's a man of law, but a man of law – I won't say altogether diminished, but on the wane. We are told (and here the English words are interesting) that his clientele is declining, 'practice dwindling', and this is because of his 'gambling'. His gambling has in some way superseded his practice.

Clearly something would have to be developed from this. What I would simply like to indicate is the function of this perfectly false father who bears the initials of both James Joyce and John Joyce, Joyce's father. What's more, it's remarkable that the words of this

J. J. O'Molloy bear on other fathers. In a passage that links up with the riddle that Dr Lacan quoted last week (the 'Aeolus' episode, which is set in a newspaper office), it is he who turns to Stephen to give him a fine piece of rhetoric, which also holds some interest. We have learnt that O'Molloy, after having taken up gambling, started doing 'some literary work' for the press. We should note in passing that this also refers back to 'The Dead', the last of the short stories in *Dubliners*, where Gabriel Conroy, the main character, writes 'a literary column', but we don't know much about it (this appears in yet another manner in *Exiles*). What kind of literature? Is it the kind of literature that deserves to live? Gabriel asks himself the question, and we shall see that he isn't the only one.

So, we're told that J. J. O'Molloy turns to Stephen and presents him with a fine specimen of legal eloquence (pp. 134–5):

> J. J. O'Molloy turned to Stephen and said quietly and slowly:
> – One of the most polished periods I think I ever listened to in my life fell from the lips of Seymour Bushe [a surname that's one letter away from 'bush', which also refers to pubic hair]. It was in that case of fratricide, the Childs murder case. Bushe defended him.
> [Then comes a little Shakespearian aside:] *And in the porches of mine ear did pour*. [*Hamlet.*]
> By the way how did he find that out? He died in his sleep. Or the other story, beast with two backs? [This is Stephen's cogitation.]
> – What was that? the professor asked.

ITALIA, MAGISTRA, ARTIUM

[One of the titles that punctuate the episode in the newspaper office.]
– He spoke on the law of evidence, J. J. O'Molloy said, of Roman justice as contrasted with the earlier Mosaic code, the *lex talionis*. And he cited the Moses of Michelangelo in the vatican.
– Ha.
– A few wellchosen words, Lenehan prefaced. Silence!
[. . .]
J. J. O'Molloy resumed, moulding his words:
– He said of it: *that stony effigy in frozen music, horned and terrible, of the human form divine, that eternal symbol of wisdom and of prophecy which, if aught that the imagination or the hand*

of sculptor has wrought in marble of soultransfigured and of soul-transfiguring deserves to live, deserves to live.

Thus, having begun to turn himself into a sounding board of legal knowledge, having specified the law of evidence in relation to other sorts of law, O'Molloy makes Bushe speak, makes the Bush speak, giving voice to a rhetorical testimony on art as founding the right to existence ('deserves to live') and the right to existence of the work of art. One can grasp the resonance that this carries in relation to newspaper literature: art founds, in law, the bearer of the Law, Moses, since he shall remain as the Vatican Moses (this is how he is designated, 'the Moses [. . .] in the vatican'): which is not uninteresting when one bears in mind what the Vatican represents in *Ulysses*, and furthermore, when one bears in mind that the statue in question is actually in San Pietro in Vincoli, the church of Saint Peter in Chains.

This 'deserves to live', which insists (through the rhetorical 'deserves to live, deserves to live'), bears the stamp, is countersigned, by its effects on the one for whom the 'period' was destined, namely Stephen. J. J. O'Molloy turns towards him and it transpires that, 'his blood wooed by grace of language and gesture, [he] blushed.' Curiously enough, Stephen's blushing forms a series with other texts by Joyce. I'm thinking in particular of the passage from *A Portrait* that you might have noticed: during a trip to Cork, Stephen goes with his father to the anatomy theatre in the medical school where his father had spent some time; very little time, it would seem. The father is in search of his carved initials. No mention is made of the fact that clearly these initials are also his (Simon Dedalus carries the initials S. D., like Stephen Dedalus). But Stephen comes across the word 'FOETUS' (also carved into the bench), which causes a great effect on him. He blushes, then pales. Thus we meet again, in relation to the initials, but in another relation, the 'deserves to live'. I'll add that this series can be extended with another passage from *Dubliners*, again in 'The Dead', to which I alluded earlier. The aforenamed Gabriel Conroy is about to give a speech, the customary speech for a family gathering. He's always there when you need him to write in the newspaper or make a little speech of this kind. And they've just been speaking, precisely, about artists whose names have been forgotten, those who've left nothing behind save a name that is altogether problematic.

– His name, said Aunt Kate, was Parkinson. [. . .] the purest tenor voice that was ever put into a man's throat.

This gives him pause for thought, and he takes off from there, concluding one of the first 'periods' of his speech with two things: an

echo of a song called 'Love's Old Sweet Song', which evokes the lost paradise in its opening line; and a quotation from Milton (though not *Paradise Lost*) which says the following, 'I hope that I may leave something so written to aftertimes, that they shall not willingly let it die.'

So it is that the question of the right to existence, the question of the right to creation, the question of validity, and the question of certitude, too, find themselves knotted into Joyce's discourse.

Another thing concerning the bush: the eloquent Bushe, in speaking of Moses, is also speaking about a Holy Bush, the Holy Bush in the Bible. The Lord says to Moses that 'the place whereon thou standest is holy ground', the ground before the burning bush. The holy bush turns out to have a certain relationship with the 'fox'. For when J. J. O'Molloy reappears in Circe, he has a 'foxy moustache' and something of barrister Bushe about him. This is a fox that we have seen more than once in *A Portrait*, where of course it appears because Fox is one of the nicknames for Parnell, associated with his fault. But it is also very precisely a kind of signifier of dissimulation: 'He was not foxing', says the young Stephen when he is in the infirmary and afraid that he will be accused of skiving. And then, a little later, when he has just renounced joining the orders, right after picturing to himself his imaginary calling card, 'The Reverend Stephen Dedalus, S. J.', he wonders what kind of face he would have, and one of the things that comes to his mind is 'one of the Jesuits whom some [. . .] called Lantern Jaws and others Foxy Cambell'.

So, we have this bush / fox series. But there is also some wordplay, which functions for 'Molloy' / 'Molly' too, articulated on 'holy'. We had 'holly' / 'holy', 'Molly / 'Molloy', and another word that doesn't appear in *Ulysses* but of which Joyce says – I'm tugging this by the sleeve, or rather by the letters, but after all, he wrote those letters – he reveals to us the name of something that is supposed to enter the functioning of 'Circe', namely the plant, the golden garlic, which Hermes gave to Ulysses so that he would be able to resist Circe, and which is called 'moly'. The curious thing is that between the two, between 'moly' and 'Molly', there is a difference which belongs to the realm of phonation. What is 'phonized' in *Ulysses* is 'Molly', with a single vowel, and the 'moly' he speaks about is a diphthong, a *ditongue* as it used to be written. The ditongue (*di-tongue*?) transforms into a consonant at the same time as the diphthong transforms into a single vowel. There is consonantal duplication, a duplication of consonance, and this consonance is what appears in *Ulysses* in the shape of 'Molly'.

He says two or three curious things about 'moly'. Dr Lacan is going

to analyse one of them, I believe; I'll make do with pointing out one other. It is a gift from Hermes, god of public thoroughfares, and 'the invisible influence (prayer, chance, agility, presence of mind, power of recuperation) which saves in case of accident.' Thus, this is something that confirms Bloom in his role as the prudent one. In the end, he is one who corresponds fairly well to the definition that can be found in the entry in the Lalande philosophical dictionary on this question of prudence (which is rather disappointing, probably because it is above all Saint Thomas who speaks about it). There is a short authorless note that says the following: '*Prudence*. The ability, in choosing one's means, to obtain for oneself the greatest well-being.' Bloom seems to be saying that this is precisely how one gets by.

The second thing that I would like to stress is that there is an ongoing question about certainty and how to ground it.

This certainty reappears precisely with respect to the famous Virag. I didn't tell you everything. I came to a halt in the famous quotation where O'Molloy is telling the others about Virag:

> His name was Virag. The father's name that poisoned himself. He changed it by deedpoll, the father did.
>
> – That's the new Messiah for Ireland! says the citizen. Island of saints and sages!
>
> – Well, they're still waiting for their redeemer, says Martin. For that matter so are we.
>
> – Yes, says J. J., and every male that's born they think it may be their Messiah. And every jew is in a tall state of excitement, I believe, till he knows if he's a father or a mother.

I'll simply stress what is perhaps appearing over and above the humour that constitutes part of the functioning of the text of 'Cyclops'. It's barroom humour, but it's very much present. Moreover, it's a brand of humour that would have to be linked to other problems that bear on anti-Semitism, but I won't have time to tackle that now. There is an imaginary identification that situates another question: the problematic of the Messiah and, through this, the problematic of succession. The problem of the king's word that grounds legitimation, a word that enables one, even if the mother's belly has been mendacious, to land back on one's feet through legitimation. Legitimation, that is to say, the possibility of bearing the stamp of the king, the crown, *στέφανος*, or else to bear this other stamp that appears in 'Circe' with Virag, the grandfather, who 'chutes rapidly down through the chimneyflue', bearing the label *basilicogrammate*, 'the king's *grammate*'. This problematic of legitimacy that turns out to be problematic legitimation is

perhaps assuming here the figure of the imaginary dimension and its recuperation.

It seems to me that Joyce uses certainty and brings it onto the stage in its relationships with the effects of the voice. Even if a word, a paternal word, is challenged at the level of what it says, it seems to suggest that something of it passes into the *personation*, into what lies behind the *personation*, into what lies on the side of phonation, perhaps, on the side of something that is also something that 'deserves to live' in melody; perhaps precisely because of this something that in spite of everything has effects on the mother through melody. The mother's 'phantasmal mirth', which is mentioned at the beginning of *Ulysses* bears very precisely on pantomime and old Royce (*Roi*-Joyce), who used to sing. Something passes through the melody, and perhaps not merely sentimentality. Of course, Irish culture at the turn of the century was altogether pervaded by melody, especially the melodies of Thomas Moore, which in *Finnegans Wake* Joyce calls 'Moore's maladies'. Moreover, it was in this that Joyce's father, John Joyce, exulted. But in this art of the voice, of phonation, perhaps just enough of it was passed on to the son.

In short, while this certainty with respect to what he makes always has something to do with the mirror, with these mirror effects that would have to be enumerated, this also has to do with the voice-effects of the signifier. I would like to remind you that 'The Dead', with which Joyce concluded *Dubliners*, at a crucial moment in his poetic production, at a time when things became unblocked in some respect, the guiding idea of 'The Dead' occurred to him when his brother told him about a particular interpretation of one of Moore's melodies that staged a dialogue between revenants and the living. Stanislaus said to him that the fellow who sang it did so in an interesting way, in a way that said something. Then, as if by chance, Joyce set to writing 'The Dead'. And one of the centrepieces of this short story is the moment when the protagonist's wife is mesmerized, frozen into stone like the Moses statue, listening to a hoarse-voiced singer singing this famous melody. What effect does this have on the protagonist? It turns his wife into a symbol.

> A woman was standing near the top of the first flight, in the shadow [. . .]. He asked himself what a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow [. . .] is a symbol of.

He describes her in vaguely realist terms, but at the same time he asks what she symbolizes. This symbolizes a certain way of listening, among other things.

Joyce wanted to set out the rules for this certainty, for the

problems of certainty and its grounding in relation to the voice's effects on the signifier, in an aesthetic science, but fairly quickly he saw that this was not so firmly linked to science, and that it was precisely a *savoir-faire* tethered by a practice of the signifier. What is foremost in my mind, which imposes itself upon me through and beyond what Aristotle said about *praxis* in his *Poetics* (which gave Joyce pause for thought), is Lacan's definition: 'a concerted action on the part of man [. . .] that puts him *en mésure*, in a position, to deal with the real through the symbolic.' It is precisely in 'Circe' that we perceive this question of *mésure*, when Bloom, entering the brothel, is seen by Stephen as he turns. And this evocation of *mésure* is, as if by chance, also a quotation from Revelation. I should doubtless stop here before my talk becomes overly apocalyptic.

READING NOTES

Jacques Aubert

References to *Stephen Hero* are from the 1963 New Directions edition, edited by J. J. Slocum and H. Cahoon, which includes five additional manuscript pages that were missing from earlier editions; references to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* are from the 1977 Viking Press edition, which follows the same pagination as the 1964 Critical Library corrected text, edited (with criticism and notes) by Chester G. Anderson; the edition of *Ulysses* referenced below is the Oxford World's Classics edition (which reproduces the original 1922 Shakespeare & Co. text).

I

Joyce, in the first chapter of Ulysses, *expressed his wish to Hellenize*: see *Ulysses*, p. 7: 'God, Kinch [nickname given to Stephen Dedalus by Buck Mulligan], if you and I could only work together we might do something for the island. Hellenise it.' Mulligan has been elaborating on this same theme from the very start. It was only in Trieste, from 1905 on, that Joyce started studying Greek and mixing with some delight with the Greek rabble, in whom he must have found something of the Dublin rabble (see Mando Aravantinou, 'Joyce et ses amis grecs', in *James Joyce*, L'Herne, 1985, pp. 58–64).

. . .*as someone [. . .], Philippe Sollers, has remarked in* Tel Quel . . .: Philippe Sollers, 'Joyce et C^ie', in *Tel Quel*, Issue 64, Winter 1975, pp. 15–24.

. . . *opening a Joyce symposium* . . .: this was the fifth International Joyce Symposium, held in Paris over 16–20 June, 1975. The proceedings were collected and presented by Jacques Aubert and Maria Jolas in collaboration with the CNRS Press and the University of

Lille-III, in a two-volume set, under the title *Joyce & Paris (1902 . . . 1920–1940 . . . 1975)*, 1979. Volume I included the first ever publication of the Lacan lecture that features in the appendix to the present book.[1]

. . . *Adam [. . .] was a Madam* . . .: see *Ulysses*, p. 132: 'Madam, I'm Adam. And Able was I ere I saw Elba.' The palindrome is uttered by Lenehan, the group joker, whom we met back in *Dubliners*. The 'Abel'/'able' pun will be taken up again in *Finnegans Wake* (287.11): 'I cain but are you able?', where signifier and voice are interwoven in a yet more subtle manner.

. . . *Joyce had slaved quite enough over this saint homme*: the young Joyce claimed to have composed a treatise of aesthetic theory based on texts by Saint Thomas Aquinas. See *A Portrait of the Artist*, p. 209.

. . . *Jacques Aubert's book* . . .: the book in question is *Introduction à l'esthétique de James Joyce*, Paris: Didier, 1973. It was substantially revised and expanded for the English-language edition: *The Aesthetics of James Joyce*, John Hopkins University Press, 1992.

The Freeman's Journal *represented this Home Rule* . . .: see *Ulysses*, p. 55: 'What Arthur Griffith said about the headpiece over the *Freeman* leader: a homerule sun rising up in the northwest from the laneway behind the bank of Ireland.' The 'Home Rule' slogan of the Irish autonomists of the 1880s and '90s is also evocative of the Bloom couple.

. . . *the heretic*: from the time of his earliest writings Joyce showed a certain fascination for the position of the heretic, embodied in his eyes by Giordano Bruno. See for example 'The Bruno Philosophy' (in *Critical Writings of James Joyce*, ed. E. Mason and R. Ellmann, New York: Viking Press, 1966, pp. 132–34); the penultimate chapter of *A Portrait of the Artist*; and also *Ulysses*, pp. 20–21, p. 199. In each case, alongside the question of the Church, the question of the position of the Father in the Trinity is posed.

. . . *a boozing father who was more or less a Fenian* . . .: Joyce's father was less Fenian (as in the mid-nineteenth-century violent nationalist movement) than *feignant*, lazy.

. . . *the critics* . . .: Richard Ellman (*James Joyce*, Oxford University Press, revised edition, 1982, p. 703) reports the following reply from

Joyce to Jacob Schwartz, who asked him, 'Why have you written the book this way?' – 'To keep the critics busy for three hundred years.' He also reproduces the reply Joyce gave to Max Eastman: 'The demand that I make of my reader is that he should devote his whole life to reading my works.'

. . . *the edition to get* . . .: Jacques Lacan is alluding to the edition that he recommended in the flyer announcing the Seminar: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Text, Criticism and Notes*, ed. C. G. Anderson, New York: Viking Critical Library, 1968. The text has the same pagination as the later edition from the same publisher, which we are referencing here.

. . . *Beeb or Beeb-ie?*: Jacques Lacan is enquiring as to the pronunciation of the name of the author Maurice Beebe, whose article features in the edition in question under the title 'The Artist as Hero' (pp. 340–57).

. . . *Hugh Kenner* . . .: his article bears the title, 'The *Portrait* in perspective' (pp. 416–39), taken from his book, *Dublin's Joyce*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1955.

. . . *umpire*: an allusion to the debate in the second episode of *Ulysses* (pp. 29–30) between Stephen Dedalus and Mr Deasy, the director of the school where Stephen teaches, an Anglo-Irishman loyal to the British empire and a willing umpire between his pupils. Lacan's remark draws its significance from the previous page where we hear Stephen pondering over the body of one of his pupils and the body of the child he once was. Joyce's stance in relation to his country is clearly linked to the regulation of Irish bodies by the joint forces of the Catholic church and Anglo-Saxon Puritanism, which united in spectacular fashion against the hero of his youth, Parnell, an advocate of Irish independence; hence the importance of his departure in October 1904, with a woman, Nora Barnacle, and his later refusal to return. This return was dramatized in *Exiles*, where there is an insistent questioning of woman's desire, sexual relationship, and jealousy. See too the story told by Davin in *A Portrait of the Artist*, pp. 182–3.

. . . *the uncreated conscience of my race.*: *A Portrait of the Artist*, pp. 252–3: 'I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.'

II

. . . *sentimental* . . .: Cf. *Ulysses*, p. 191, Stephen's telegram announcing the end of his friendship with Buck Mulligan: 'The sentimentalist is he who would enjoy without incurring the immense debtorship for a thing done.'[2]

How can an art target in an expressly divinatory way . . .: this is undoubtedly an allusion to the passages in *A Portrait of the Artist* (pp. 224–6) where Stephen Dedalus presents himself, not without a certain distance, as an augur; he will remember this in *Ulysses*, p. 209; see also p. 534. In *Ulysses* the matter is clearly linked to a subject's peculiarly poetic questioning of his shadow (p. 48):

> Why not endless till the farthest star? Darkly they are there behind this light, darkness shining in the brightness, delta of Cassiopeia, worlds. Me sits there with his augur's rod of ash, in borrowed sandals, by day beside a livid sea, unbeheld, in violet night walking beneath a reign of uncouth stars. I throw this ended shadow from me, manshape ineluctable, call it back. Endless, would it be mine, form of my form?

IV

. . . *a book here, by a certain Robert Martin Adams* . . .: *Surface and Symbol: The Consistency of James Joyce's Ulysses*, London/New York: Oxford University Press, 1962. On several occasions Adams insists (for example p. 33) on the importance of enigma in *Ulysses*. He also readily uses the term 'symptomatic', in a way that is rather vague (p. 25, p. 59n).

. . . *Trinity College, if I remember rightly.*: Stephen actually teaches in a public school in Dalkey, a Dublin suburb. He has taught neither at Trinity College, nor at University College where, like Joyce, he is supposed to have done his higher education, nor even at Belvedere College, the Jesuit secondary school he attended as an adolescent. Lacan's slip can of course be read in light of his interest in the Trinitarian, notably in relation to the psychosis of Newton, who was a professor at Trinity[3] ('Television', in *Television/A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment*, New York: Norton, 1990, p. 36). Thus, the two cases are brought together, the question of the Trinity appearing at the right place in *Ulysses* in its close relationship with heresy. On this subject, see Jean-Louis Houdebine and

Philippe Sollers, 'La Trinité de Joyce, I et II', *Tel Quel*, 83, Spring 1980, pp. 36–88.

. . . *a certain Février* . . .: James G. Février, *Histoire de l'écriture*, revised edition, Paris: Payot, 1959.[4]

. . . *Stephen, whose name also begins with an S.*: it has also been observed that *Ulysses* begins and ends with an 'S': 'Stately [. . .] Yes.'

Beauty according to Hogarth: an allusion to Hogarth's line of beauty, to which Joyce returns on many occasions in his early texts, in particular in *A Portrait of the Artist* (p. 181) when he mentions his schoolfellow Davin, the typical young nationalist peasant:

> His nurse had taught him Irish and shaped his rude imagination by the broken lights of Irish myth. He stood towards the myth upon which no individual mind had ever drawn out a line of beauty and to its unwieldy tales that divided against themselves as they moved down the cycles in the same attitude as towards the Roman catholic religion.

Joyce is pointing out the distance that lies between the artist and productions of the unconscious that have colonizing effects.

. . . *really not for him* . . .: see *Ulysses*, pp. 648–9.

. . . *far too implausible to attribute to Bloom a knowledge of Shakespeare* . . .: this has to do with an enigma in *Ulysses* pointed out by Adams, op. cit., pp. 95–9, that carries remarkable significance in the ordering of the structure. In Bloom's 'interior monologue' on p. 269, two lines reappear that had first emerged in Stephen's discourse on p. 193 (and to which he returns on p. 615):

> Do and do. Thing done. In a rosery of Fetter Lane of Gerard, herbalist, he walks, greyedauburn. An azured harebell like her veins. Lids of Juno's eyes, violets. He walks. One life is all. One body. Do. But do. Afar, in a reek of lust and squalor, hands are laid on whiteness.

These fragments and their apparent discordance, which raises the question of the relationship of identification between Bloom and Stephen, are all the more remarkable in that they knot the signifiers of identity to the body, and above all to the act. Furthermore, the

intertextuality points up the question of debt: 'Thing done' is an echo of the telegram Stephen sent to Buck Mulligan: 'The sentimentalist is he who would enjoy without incurring the immense debtorship for a thing done.' (p. 191).

. . . *Blephen and Stoom* . . .: see *Ulysses*, p. 635, and Adams, p. 95.

. . . a *book of himself*.: does the knot lie exactly where Lacan suggests it does? See *Ulysses*, p. 179, where the librarian at the National Library quotes Mallarmé commenting on *Hamlet*: 'He says: *il se promene, lisant au livre de lui-même*, don't you know, reading the book of himself.'

. . . *a certain Shechner* . . .: Mark Shechner, *Joyce in Nighttown, A Psychoanalytic Inquiry into Ulysses*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

The cock crew . . .: This riddle is in the second episode of *Ulysses*, 'Nestor', p. 27. A few lines above (p. 26), Stephen gives the start of another conundrum, which follows the evocation of the shadow of Jesus and his riddles 'woven and woven on the church's looms':

Riddle me, riddle me, randy ro.
My father gave me seeds to sow.

The solution, which Joyce omits, is noteworthy:

The seed was black and the ground was white.
Riddle me that and I'll give you a pipe.

Answer: writing a letter.[5]

The fox burying . . .: *Ulysses*, p. 27.

. . . *whether he's a father or a mother.*: see *Ulysses*, p. 323: '. . . every male that's born they think it may be their Messiah. And every jew is in a tall state of excitement, I believe, till he knows if he's a father or a mother.'

He believes that he carries her in his belly.: I have not been able to locate any part of the text that goes in this direction. Joyce uses this idea instead in relation to his work. On the other hand, he does see Nora pregnant with him: cf., for example, his letters to Nora on

5 September 1909 ('O that I could nestle in your womb like a child') and on 24 September ('take me into the dark sanctuary of your womb'), in *Letters of James Joyce, Vol. II*, ed. R. Ellmann, New York: Viking, p. 248, p. 281.

. . . *inconceivably private jokes.*: from Adams, op. cit., p. 200.

. . . *eftsoon*: 'eftsoon' can be found in *Finnegans Wake* at 473.18. Here Lacan is pointing out the style of *reading* to which Joyce pushes us, rather than his *writing* style: a style of reading that follows a metonymic line, even though his writing cannot be defined in this way (unlike that of Wolfson, for example).

V

Scribbledehobble: the full title is *Scribbledehobble: The Ur-Workbook for Finnegans Wake*, ed. Thomas E. Connolly, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1961. Dr Lacan is clearly confusing this academic with Cyril Connolly (1903–1974), editor-in-chief of the literary magazine *Horizon* (1940–1949) which published British authors from the 1930s and '40s, alongside some French and American writers. Cyril Connolly is surely better known as the author of *The Unquiet Grave; A Word Cycle by Palinurus* (1944, reprinted in 1961), a voyage into the mind of a writer haunted by the wandering ghost of Palinurus, the helmsman of Aeneas' ship. One may wonder whether it is not in relation to this background figure of 'A-Father', who also comes from Troy, albeit in a different way, that Lacan, turning his interest to the story of Ulysses, finds this Connolly again. See also footnote 3 on p. 7 of the second volume of Joyce's complete works in French, *Œuvres* (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade), about Conolly Norman, who seems to have been the first Irish psychiatrist to come across Freud's work.[6]

. . . *letters . . . unpublishable.*: in fact, most of these letters (with the exception of those of 8 and 9 December 1909, to which Jacques Lacan nevertheless had access even prior to the 1975 publication of *Selected Letters*), which were absent from *Volume I*, had been published in *Volumes II* and *III* (1966).

. . . *Tweedledum and Tweedledee.*: Joyce uses these two names in his 24 June 1921 letter to Harriet S. Weaver, in *Letters, Vol. I*, ed. S. Gilbert, New York: Viking, 1966, p. 167:

> A batch of people in Zurich persuaded themselves that I was gradually going mad and actually endeavoured to induce me to enter a sanatorium where a certain Doctor Jung (the Swiss Tweedledum who is not to be confused with the Viennese Tweedledee, Dr. Freud) amuses himself at the expense (in every sense of the word) of ladies and gentlemen who are troubled by bees in their bonnets.

Cranly questions him . . .: *A Portrait of the Artist*, p. 243.

In Stephen Hero, *there are traces.*: notably where Joyce plays with the 'enigma of a manner' (p. 27), the fantasies of heroism, of 'egoism', of redemption,[7] and then the slide towards the poetic route offered by Franciscan literature. See, too, the note on 'a *book of himself*', above.

. . . *the Church diplomatic.*: see *Stephen Hero*, p. 172. See also the passages mentioning the Jesuits and their duplicity in *A Portrait of the Artist*, such as p. 184 and p.189.

. . . *his calling.*: see *A Portrait of the Artist*, pp. 172–3 and p. 252, entry of 16 April.

VI

. . . *Lucia . . . sending telepath.*: see Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, op. cit., p. 677 (letter to Harriet S. Weaver of 21 October 1934), p. 682, and p. 684.

. . . *the initial fault . . .*: fault, and its return in the theme of the Fall/ falling, is staged throughout *Finnegans Wake*.

VIII

. . . *Madame Blavatsky . . .*: Clive Hart (in *Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1962, p. 49, pp. 56–7 and *passim*) makes a great deal of Madame Blavatsky's theses, as well as those of Jung.

. . . Finnegans Wake,. . . *a nightmare . . .*: see *Ulysses*, p. 34: 'History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.' One will recall that *La femme* in the plural in *Finnegans Wake*, Anna

Livia Plurabelle, is generally designated by her acronym, ALP, which in German means 'nightmare', when she does not expressly turn into the 'cunnyngnest couchmare' (576.28).[8]

X

. . . *atop Mount Nebo the Law was given to us.*: I am unable to find where Joyce ever could have written this sentence, even to attribute a blunder to someone or other (in Deuteronomy 32:49, it is actually the site of the death of Moses, overlooking Canaan).[9] The rhythm is vaguely reminiscent of a (parodic?) student song.

Cork: this anecdote is reported by Richard Ellmann in his biography, *James Joyce*, op. cit., p. 551.

. . . *the little table of points of correspondence* . . .: the two most commonly accessible tables, one of which Joyce entrusted to his friend Carlo Linati, and the other, later, to Herbert Gorman, his first biographer, are detailed episode by episode at the end of each *notice* in the French edition of *Œuvres*, op. cit., tome II.[10]

. . . *a hiding.*: this incident features in the second chapter of *A Portrait of the Artist*, pp. 80–82.

. . . *masochism* . . . *He insisted enough on this point with Bloom.*: see, for example, some of the passages from the 'Circe' episode in *Ulysses* and, of course, Joyce's letters to Nora, like the letter of 13 December 1909 (*Letters of James Joyce, Vol. II*).

. . . *epiphanies*. Joyce's epiphanies were first published as *Epiphanies*, ed. O. Silverman, Buffalo: University of Buffalo/Easy Hill Press, 1956; then in Robert Scholes and Richard M. Kain, *The Workshop of Daedalus: James Joyce and the raw materials for A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Evanston: Northwestern Press, 1965; and finally in *Poems and Shorter Writings*, ed. R. Ellmann and A. W. Litz, London: Faber & Faber, 1991.

Joyce the Symptom

. . . *at seventeen* . . .: there is a mistake here regarding Lacan's age, since Joyce only arrived in Paris in 1920 when Lacan was nineteen. The following sentence suggests that Lacan was present on

7 December 1921 ('when [he] was twenty') in Adrienne Monnier's bookshop, for the first public reading of fragments from *Ulysses* in English and French. [Indeed, Lacan told me that he had been present at this reading – J.-A. M.]

. . . *freudened* . . .: *Finnegans Wake*, 115.22-23: 'when they were young and easily freudened.'

This reference to the importance of being called Ernest arises more than once in Finnegans Wake.: a surprising remark given that *The Importance of Being Earnest* only appears in *Finnegans Wake* at 233.20. *De Profundis* is the most-cited work of Wilde's. It is possible that Lacan was familiar with Hester Travers-Smith's book *Psychic Messages from Oscar Wilde*, published in 1924, which launches a ferocious attack on *Ulysses* and is considered to be the source of pp. 534 to 538 of *Finnegans Wake*.

Mr Atherton . . .: James S. Atherton, *The Books at the Wake: A Study of Literary Allusions in James Joyce's Finnegans Wake*, New York: Viking Press, 1960, revised and expanded edition, 1974.

Work that was in Progress for seventeen years: Joyce began his book in the spring of 1923; the first copy was given to him on 30 January 1939, ahead of his birthday on 2 February, but the book was not actually released until 4 May, in London and New York.

. . . *letter, litter*: see Jacques Lacan, 'Lituraterre', translated by B. Khiara-Foxton and A. R. Price, in *Hurly-Burly*, 9, May 2013, p. 29. And, of course, *Finnegans Wake*.[11]

Who ails tongue coddeau . . .: *Finnegans Wake* (15.18).[12]

. . . *each as baneful as the other.*: see *Ulysses*, p. 20.

Chamber Music: see the first poem in the collection.

A NOTE THREADED STITCH BY STITCH

Jacques-Alain Miller

§ 1. An apologue

Philippe Sollers! Lacan enquires about him at the start of *The Sinthome*, p. 3: is he in the audience? Why yes, he is, and so he shall be, a regular attender the whole year through.

He will be there too at the 'evening event with Jacques Aubert' mentioned on pp. 106–7 (which was held at the Hôtel-Dieu, organized by the Department of Psychoanalysis at the University of Paris-VIII; after being published by Navarin in the fourth issue of the bulletin *Analytica*, Aubert's lecture was reprinted in *Joyce avec Lacan*, again by Navarin, pp. 69–84, under the title, 'Galeries pour un portrait'). He will also see the film cited on the same page, *In the Realm of the Senses* (*Ai no corrida*, by Nagisa Oshima, 1976), though at a different screening from the one Lacan attended.

In an interview that is about to appear to accompany the release of *The Sinthome* (agreement struck with Sollers by telephone on 17 January 2005) the writer mentions an evening gathering in the 1970s. The story runs as follows:

Lacan, seated on the floor, making an effort to get up on his feet, and stumbling, is joined by Sollers who 'moves into place to help him stand upright.' 'Leave him will you,' appealed Sylvia, Lacan's wife, 'he's grown up now!'

'Need I comment on this?', asks Sollers in his interview. 'No . . . "He's grown up now": it's not worth helping him to walk . . . One oughtn't to say such things! One oughtn't to say such things, seeking some rapport . . . well, seeking some erotic innuendo with a younger man. It's shocking. For me, [. . .] Lacan isn't a child.'

It's a sensational scene. However, dear Philippe, please excuse me, but it can be understood rather differently.

What does Sylvia say? She's says that you are the one, Philippe, who is taking Lacan for a child. Yes, *you*, by rushing to his aid. Is

she really mocking him? Isn't she rebuffing you instead, the over-attentive one?

She is the one who is pointing out to you that Lacan is not a child anymore, or that he is no more of one than *touthomme*, 'everyman', in one word, as Lacan wrote it.

Who is speaking? Why, let's take a look. She is a 'true woman', one who is defined by not being a mother, who would sooner trip a man up than 'stand him up straight'. In short, Philippe, you are playing the role of a mother to Lacan. As for her, she is a Medea (see below, § 15).

Certainly Eros is in on it, but which Eros? His wife has her idea about it. Under her nose an officious young man is forcing his attentions upon her husband. '*Noli tangere*', says she.

I'm not saying that you are wrong to detect in Sylvia's remark an invitation to you, but how can one fail to see that this sentence only takes on its erotic meaning from the gesture of solicitude that precedes it, when you make to steady the doddering old man? All in all, Sylvia is telling you: 'Leave be, young fellow, turn your interest to a woman, *rather than him*.'

Doubtless her injunction is addressed to Lacan as much as to you.

Ah! You weren't the only one, Philippe, hovering around Lacan, wanting to lend him a hand in his old age, 'moving into place to help him stand upright'. There was Jacques Aubert, there was I, Jacques-Alain, there was the whole clique caught in the 'transference'. Do you think that we who, like you, had a weakness for great men, were looked upon with favourable eye by the woman who accompanied him through life?

You who have made a vocation out of your admiration for Bataille, you take exception to Sylvia saying to you disappointedly: 'Ah, you're getting interested in Georges?', and you virtuously demur: 'For me, Bataille was not "Georges".' Indeed not, but don't you see, for her he was? The whole problem lies there.

Sylvia was a heretic, in her way. In her eyes you were nothing but an idolatrous youth, as was I. She would chip away at our idols with feet of clay, or smash them. She would never get up on her *escabeau* (see below, § 5).

Do you know that one morning she told me: 'Ah, Jacques-Alain, I'm very tired. I spent the night burning all Georges's letters'?

We wouldn't have done that, would we now, Philippe? (Again, see below, § 15). But then, Bataille had never been our 'ravaging man' (see above, p. 84).

Sollers helps Lacan. Sylvia rebuffs Sollers. She is entirely the 'helpmeet against' that God created for Adam in the person of woman (Genesis 2:18), the same that is twice mentioned in *The*

Sinthome (the more optimistic King James Version translates, on the contrary: 'an help meet for him'). With the 'extreme sense of uniqueness' that Lacan saw in her (see *The Seminar Book VII, The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, p. 296), she perceived the romantic dream of the capable man who, thirty years later, would say laughingly of Lacan: 'I think that the transference was reciprocal, and to my advantage.'

This transference is there, Philippe, in the *supporting* gesture that makes a couple of Sollers and Lacan. And that is when Sylvia interposes from a third position. There is now a trio and, deciphering it through *The Sinthome*, it is Borromean.

Sollers, wholly unto his reciprocal transference, is the imaginary. His *touthommie*, his 'everymanliness' makes him believe that Lacan, righting himself under his helping hand, is imaginary like him. 'No, he doesn't need you for that, he can stand upright by himself', says Sylvia, 'and, he is symbolic' (see § 13, *in fine*). As for her, she is the real (see *Anxiety*, chapter XIV, pp. 182–96), unless she is the sinthome (above, p. 84) that prevents the real from stealing away.

To end, I will gladly surrender my arms to you, Philippe. I'm not out to get the better of you.

Without you, we wouldn't have this sublime vaudeville. To disclose this scene you had to pass through gates that are guarded by the Demon of Shame. Perhaps that cost you less than it cost me – for I too had to do so, to follow you into the incandescent zone where Bataille's letters smoulder beside those of Gide, and where you advance, intrepid, braving the *mille e tre* plus one, to take the hand of *Il Commendatore* so that fall, he shall not.

There is no better apologue for *The Sinthome*. Lacan called upon Joyce in order to take a step beyond the point at which Freud had come to a standstill. Isn't this what you were miming that evening? Literature flying to the aid of psychoanalysis just as it is about to *fall flat on its face*.

Sylvia couldn't help but intervene, due to an effect of constraint.

§ 2. Effects of constraint

Lacan announced that his initial intention was to call his Seminar *4, 5, 6* (p. 4).

Indeed, in the last session of his Seminar *RSI*, on 13 May, he had taken up once more the Borromean knot with four rings (the real, the symbolic, the imaginary, plus the symptom) that had been introduced on 14 January of the same year, and had asserted that, 'in committing oneself to this four, one comes across a particular

path that only goes up to six.' The lecture that he would later give as the opening to the Joyce Symposium in June 1975 turned him away from this project.

What could this 'particular path' be? My hypothesis is that it had to do with exploiting the combinatorial possibilities that are in evidence in the tables to be found on p. 12 and p. 40 of *The Sinthome*.

The first table, which had already been mentioned on 13 May, establishes a double correlation, 1–2/3–4, evidenced by the knot on the same page; a correlation such that, using the four named rings, it would enable one to obtain effects of constraint that we may observe to be the same as those of the *alpha, beta, gamma, delta* syntax from the 'Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"', (cf. *Écrits*, pp. 49–50 of the 1966 Seuil edition): by ascribing a term from one of the pairs to one of the four possible places, constraints appear when it comes to setting down the terms of the second pair in the remaining places.

The second table lists the three configurations obtained from the three terms R, S, I, when subjected to 'a non-permutative revolution in their position', as is the case for the four terms $\mathcal{S}$, S_1, S_2, and *a* in 'Radiophonie' (*Autres écrits*, p. 444 of the 2001 Seuil edition), while the 'sinthome' term remains fixed in one place.

It is not hard to come up with a third table on which the permutation of the terms R, S, I is this time permitted, with Σ remaining fixed. In this case, six configurations are obtained:

R	S	I
S	I	R
I	R	S
R	I	S
S	R	I
I	S	R

Σ

My hypothesis, therefore, is that Lacan had been planning to privilege the study of the three further knots that can be added to the first three that already featured in the second table, and which had been isolated in the Seminar *RSI*. Knots 4, 5, and 6 would thus be RIS, SRI, and ISR, with, in each case, the fourth ring Σ. I imagine that in a second phase the exploration of this path alone would not have yielded the results that Lacan might have been anticipating from it. Following the Joyce trail struck him as a more fruitful enterprise.

§ 3. Some diffuse bleed on the knot

Before Lacan could turn his interest to the Borromean knot it first had to come to him by way of his friend the mathematician G. T. Guilbaud.

On 8 February 1972, Lacan was preparing his Seminar of the following day around a sentence he had come up with, *I ask you to refuse what I am offering you because this is not it*, when good fortune delivered into his hands, in the person of a woman by the name of V* P*, the Borromean knot. On 9 February, Lacan said the following:

> Now here's a strange thing. While I was wondering yesterday evening how I might present this to you today with my geometry of the tetrad, it so happened that, dining with a charming person who attends the courses of Monsieur Guilbaud, I was given, like a ring slid on my finger, something that I should like to show you now. It would seem to be nothing less – this I learnt yesterday evening – than the family crest of the House of Borromeo (*The Seminar Book XIX, . . . or Worse*, chapter VI).

Georges Théodule Guilbaud introduced von Neumann and Morgenstern's game theory into post-war France (see his still renowned article from the journal *Économie appliquée*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, April-June 1949, pp. 275–319[1]), which also caught Lacan's interest. His article 'Les problèmes de partage' (*Économie appliquée*, Vol. 5, Issue 1, April–June 1951, pp. 93–137) was used by Lacan in *Seminar XVI* with regard to Pascal's wager (chapter VII). Guilbaud later found himself 'at the centre of the development of operational research in France' (see his interview in *Les Annales des Mines*, Issue 67, March 2002).

The knot had long featured in popular books of mathematical curiosities, for instance *Mathematics and the Imagination* by Edward Kasner and James Newman (first published by Simon & Schuster in 1940, with several subsequent reprints). Lacan owned a copy of this book. On p. 287, the knot is presented as 'the trademark used by a well-known brewer', and the commentary makes do with pointing out the 'strange relation' between the three rings. When Lacan showed Quine the resources of the knot, the eminent philosopher saw nothing more in it than 'a little topological curiosity that was engaging in its way' (see below, § 9).

This is the occasion to remind the reader that, as indicated by Alexei Sossinsky in the preface to his semi-popular presentation

(*Knots: Mathematics with a Twist*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002, p. vii), 'for reasons I do not entirely understand', knots were long ignored by mathematicians, who only got to grips with them once and for all in the twentieth century. Up until the mid-1980s, this theory did not engage many beyond a small circle of specialists.

It should be added that the physicists preceded the mathematicians here. William Thomson, Lord Kelvin, inventor of absolute zero (– 273.15° C) and the temperature scale that bears his name, came up with nodal models of molecular structure and was particularly attentive to the trefoil knot. A prankish theosophy has sprung up around this, and I wouldn't be able to forgive myself for neglecting to share with the reader of *The Sinthome* the laughter to be had at the website *Kelvin is Lord* (zapatopi.net/kelvin/).

Once my own interest had been kindled by Lacan, in 1973 or thereabouts I got hold of *Introduction to Knot Theory* (R. H. Crowell and R. H. Fox, Boston: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1963), which I passed on to him. It is quite possible that Pierre Soury transmitted to him the articles, or at least the knots, by Listing and Milnor which are reproduced in the Seminar. Soury was a young mathematician, who died all too young; an endearing character who, along with his friend Michel Thomé (see, notably, p. 34, *passim*), developed a passion for Lacan's knots. Lacan found in Soury and Thomé a competence and an availability that he had been seeking in vain among most of his listeners and the psychoanalysts of his School.

During his stay in New York, on the transatlantic trip that he undertook between the first and second sessions of the present Seminar, Lacan had a conversation with Dalí and tried to spark some interest in the Borromean knot, but to no avail. Such had already been the case with Heidegger, to whom he had paid a visit in Freiburg im Breisgau with this in mind during the year of *RSI*. Lacan confides that the German didn't say a word, and showed him instead a heap of his course manuscripts still waiting to be published.

Having appeared in *Seminar XIX*, the knot surfaces again in *Encore*, in chapter X. It is the centrepiece of the lecture Lacan gave in Rome in 1974 (due to appear in the 'Paradoxes de Lacan' series); with its title, 'La troisième', it fits into the series of Lacan's talks in Rome, after the 1953 'Function and field of speech and language' (*Écrits*, op. cit., pp. 237–322) and the 1968 'La psychanalyse. Raison d'un échec' (*Autres écrits*, op. cit., pp. 341–9). Lastly, the 1974–1975 Seminar *RSI*, just prior to *The Sinthome*, deals with the knot itself and with the triad of the real, the symbolic, and the imaginary that was inspired by Lévi-Strauss and which marked the beginning of

Lacan's teaching *sensu stricto* (see the 1953 lecture on the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real).

The series begun by *RSI*, which reaches its heights with *The Sinthome*, constitutes Lacan's return to the fundaments of his project and his calling into question of psychoanalysis. The depth of this questioning has seen no equal, but this has remained largely unperceived given the care Lacan took in shielding his listeners from the full impact of his discourse and its highly charged potentialities, hence his desire, which never came to be, to limit his disquisition to a much smaller circle. One can't help thinking that Lacan's late teaching belonged to the same register as the esoteric teaching that found a place in the Schools of antiquity.

An aristocratic notion of 'creative subjectivity' has a long history in Lacan, but never, and especially in *The Sinthome*, would he yield to the temptation to wager exclusively on an elite. See the following passage from the 1953 'Function and field of speech and language': 'To emphasize how few subjects there are who support this [symbolic] creation would be to give in to a Romantic viewpoint' (*Écrits*, op. cit., p. 283); or this passage from 1973:

> The more saints there are among us, the more laughter there is. That's my principle. Indeed, that's the way out of the capitalist discourse – which will not constitute any progress, if only for some. (*Autres écrits*, op. cit., p. 520)

Lacan's repeated lamenting in *The Sinthome* as to the inordinate number of people in his audience clearly hints that the doctrine he was exposing to the four winds was meant to be kept secret. Giving a public form to an esoteric teaching forces one to conceal at the same time as disclosing. One has in some sense to button up while still speaking, as Baltasar Gracián advocated, and to make use of all the procedures outlined by Leo Strauss in *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, hence Lacan's cryptic *mi-dire*, the 'half saying' that is particularly in evidence in *The Sinthome* (see below § 15).

So it was that, unlike Freud, though instructed by the misadventures of his apostolic succession, Lacan refrained from selecting a circle of supposedly loyal followers and from binding himself to this chosen people – like Venice wedding the sea in her *Sposalizio del Mare* – by handing out rings. (Concerning the Secret Committee, the inner circle of the Seven Rings, see 'The situation of psychoanalysis and the training of psychoanalysts in 1956', in *Écrits*, op. cit., pp. 473–4.) The only ring on Lacan's finger is the knot (see above). The annoyance felt by his pretenders is evinced well enough by the faithful animosity they have vowed to his son-in-law.

It is beyond doubt that Lacan harboured the same sentiments for psychoanalysts that he attributed to Freud:

> It is not hard to identify the contempt for men that Freud felt each time he set his mind to bringing them face to face with the task [of psychoanalytic technique] he deemed to be beyond their means. By that time, however, this contempt had been consolidated by recurrent acts of abandonment in which he had taken measure of how mentally and morally unfit his first followers had been; minds and characters who only too clearly surpassed the best of men by far, as they did the host of those who since then have spread the world over with his doctrine ('Psychoanalysis and its teaching', *Écrits*, op. cit., pp. 458–9).

On the theme of contempt, which Lacan attributes to Marx and Lenin, as well as to Freud himself, see *Encore*, chapter VIII.

One can hardly deny that this severe appraisal finds nothing but confirmation in the way that a not insignificant portion of the French psychoanalytic community greeted, late in 2003, an enterprise that sought quite openly to do away with psychoanalysis. At the same time the swashbuckling intelligentsia were to be seen stepping into the breach, as though Sollers's generous, mild, and intimate gesture with regard to Lacan that evening in the 1970s were fated to repeat throughout history (see P. Sollers, 'L'avenir de la psychanalyse', in *L'infini*, Issue 67, summer 2004, pp. 55–9; Bernard-Henri Lévy, 'Pour une charte de la psychanalyse' and 'La cause de Freud', in *Récidives*, Paris: Grasset, 2004, pp. 114–131; along with the numerous contributions in *Le Nouvel Âne*, issues 1 to 4, 2003–2004). 'What am I getting mixed-up in?', we could hear from the side of the mob that went to ground, 'those guys aren't analysts'.

The knot opens out onto an infinite series, which can be qualified as ascendant since one may always add further 'rings of string' in the Borromean relation. This relation only begins, however, with the third ring.

We may point out that the Borromean series is in this respect analogous to what is known as the Fibonacci sequence, on which Lacan spent a great deal of time in his sixteenth Seminar: it is evident that the general law that dictates the series (each new number is composed by adding together the two previous numbers) can only start to be applied with its third term:

1 1 2 3 5 8 13 21 34 . . .

§ 4. *Aristotle and the not-all*

Lacan's attention had been drawn to Aristotelian quantification (p. 6) by the article that the *Cahiers pour l'analyse* (the journal of the Epistemology Circle of the École normale supérieure) had requested from the philosopher Jacques Brunschwig, and which was published as the leader article of issue 10 (1969). The issue was dedicated to formalization. The title of Brunschwig's article is 'La proposition particulière et les preuves de non-concluance chez Aristote'[2] (pp. 3–26). Lacan had already made use of the article in his text 'L'étourdit' with regard to female sexuation (*Autres écrits*, pp. 465–9, in reference to Aristotle, p. 469; see too 'Television' in *Television/A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment*, Norton, 1990, pp. 39–41).

Interpreting the delicate key passage at the start of the *Prior Analytics*, I, i, 24a, 18–20, Brunschwig draws a distinction between the particular negative that he calls *minimal* (at least some A is not B, it not being excluded that no A is B), and the particular negative that he calls *maximal* (at least, and, at most, some A is not B). He stresses that Aristotle always interprets the particular in the former, minimal, sense and rejects the latter.

In what way is the first minimal and the second maximal? The first does not exclude the possibility of a universal relationship between A and B (which would be: no A is B), while the second does exclude this possibility. In the second case one can say neither 'all A' nor 'no A'. There is no universal truth of A.

Contrary to Aristotle, Lacan holds onto the maximal sense of the particular negative, and with it equips his *not-all*.[3] He assigns this to woman's side of sexuation: there is no 'all the women', there is no universal womanliness, there is no Woman prefixed by a definite article (*La femme*).

The *not-all* is, however, more wily still. Lacan does not retain the maximal/minimal opposition without adding some of his own handiwork, as he does for the metaphor/metonymy pair that he got from Jakobson.

Aristotelian quantification is inscribed into a universe of discourse that is finite. Therefore, whether maximal or minimal, Aristotle's *not-all* plays only on lack and incompleteness: *are they all there? Are some of them elsewhere?* Lacan's *not-all* is deployed on the contrary in an infinite universe, and it is constructed on the intuitionistic model of a *choice sequence*: the emphasis shifts to the impossibility of stating the universality of the predicate. If the law of the formation of the series (all As are B) has not been posited at the outset, however far the series is pursued, and even if from one

moment to the next it has been confirmed that there is no A that is not B, it will be impossible ever to conclude that this is the case for them all. As such, the sequence is lawless.

This singular attribute is recognized by Lacan as the real that he invents (see p. 118). This is not his only heresy.

§ 5. *Sublimation = escabeau*

Haeresis, p. 7: Lacan uses the Latin word due to the consonance between *hérésie* and the pronunciation of the letters *RSI*. The word has a Greek root, *αἵρεσις*, 'choice', hence 'particular opinion'.

What choice is at issue here? I have done my best to make it as clear as possible in the established text. The choice lies between what Lacan cheerily designates in terms of *sinthome masaquinas* and *sinthome roule*. These are, respectively, the orthodox 'sinthome' and the heretical 'sinthome'.

Indeed, heresy is not alone in constituting a sinthome. The choice that Lacan lauds in *The Sinthome*, that of the standpoint that here we are calling heretical, actually implies that orthodoxy (the normal) is just a particular regime of the sinthome, just as a 'lawful'[4] sequence that is normative and regular is nothing but a 'lawless' sequence that was given a formation law at the outset (the Name-of-the-Father) so as to avoid any suspense or surprise (what a bore!).

The *sinthome roule* is the sinthome that has been stripped right back in its structure and in its real; the *masaquinas*, or *madaquin* in French, is the sinthome elevated to semblance, the sinthome that has become a mannequin, and which is veiled by the sublimations that are available in the storehouse of accessories: Being and its radiance, the true, the good, the beautiful, and so on.

The elevatory means of sublimation as an upward operation was often named by Lacan using the well-known Hegelian term *Aufhebung*. In his written text 'Joyce the Symptom' he gives it the more expressive name *escabeau* (*Autres écrits*, pp. 565–70).

The *escabeau* shifts the emphasis to the body. Likewise, Lacan designates the sinthome as an 'event of the body' (ibid., p. 569), whereas he defined the Freudian symptom as 'truth' (*Écrits*, pp. 234–5). Joyce, a 'heretic', a partisan of the *sinthome-rolling-along-any-old-how*, 'strips the sinthome of its *masaquinism*' (p. 6). But this does not prevent him from wanting to haul himself, with his sinthome, onto the 'S.K.beau' of the work of art.

This same orientation leads Lacan to make us understand, on pp. 117–18, that what is real about straightness is that it is bent, that the bent aspect takes precedence over the straightness, that the

straight is merely one kind of bend. Need I remind the reader that orthodoxy is, etymologically speaking, the opinion that is said to be 'right', 'proper' or 'straight'? 'Straight' is the antonym of 'gay', and thus means 'in conformity' or 'on the level'.

The passage from straightness to bendiness, from *mos geometricus* to nodal topology, is reminiscent of the Keplerian passage 'from the imaginary of the so-called "perfect" form, that of the circle, to the articulation of the conical, of the ellipse' ('Radiophonie' in *Autres écrits*, p. 431).

Einstein and Lenin are associated under the cover of this theme. The physicist made *evident*, if I may say so, the real curve of the ray of light, which nevertheless looks like it is straight. As for the revolutionary, defending the theses of *What is to be Done?*, published in March 1902, against the economist Martynov, he stated in the conclusion to his 'Speech on the Party Programme' on 22 July (4 August 1903) at the second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party:

> We all know now that the 'economists' bent the stick in one direction. In order to make the stick straight it was necessary to bend the stick in the other direction, and that is what I did. I am sure that Russian Social Democracy will always straighten the stick that is bent by any kind of opportunism of any kind, and that our stick will therefore always be straight as possible and as ready as possible for action. (Lenin, V. I., *Polnoe sobranie sochineniia*, Vol. VII, fifth edition, Moscow, 1958–1965, p. 272[5])

Lenin later came back to this point, in 1907 in his 'Preface to the collection *Twelve Years*' (ibid., Vol. XVI):

> [T]he expression I used – and it has since been frequently quoted – was that the Economists had bent the stick in one direction. *What is to be Done?* I said, straightens out the stick that had been bent by the Economists. I emphasized that precisely because we were so vigorously straightening out the stick, our line of action would always be the straightest.

I think that Lacan often practised the Leninist method to which he refers in this passage of *The Sinthome*, and that a number of theses he put forward in psychoanalysis are to be read in this light: he bends back the stick that had been bent by the 'orthodox', so that it will be straight again.

When on p. 137 of the French edition of *The Seminar Book XXIII* Lacan speaks of a *bâton* instead of a *barre*, it may be supposed that

this is due to contamination from the Cartesian example in the 'Dioptrique' of the illusion of a stick in water. I have chosen not to correct this mistake in the established text.

The unprecedented couple of Einstein and Lenin becomes a trio when, in the last of the questions posed to Lacan (p. 120), an object emerges that held a great deal of fascination at the time: Lacan's twisted cigar. This cigar was a mild Havana known as a *culebra*. The Davidoff tobacco shop in Geneva (where the 1903 RSDLP Congress was held. How odd! What a coincidence!) used to sell them fastened together in threes.

One knew that one could please Lacan by bringing back a box of them for him. This pleasure helped him to 'stand upright', as Sollers would say, while some lay in wait for him to choke himself with his knot (in particular the person mentioned at the end of § 16).

§ 6. From Schreber to Joyce

One contributor whom Lacan often drafted in for a helping hand in the 1970s was Nicole Sels, mentioned on p. 8. She was the secretary of the École freudienne de Paris, which Lacan founded and directed, and she always displayed great bibliographic skill. She co-translated the French edition of Präsident Schreber's *Memoirs of my Nervous Illness* (*Mémoires d'un névropathe*, published by Seuil).

The text of the *Memoirs* and Lacan's reading thereof in *Seminar III* and 'On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis' (*Écrits*, pp. 531–83) lie in the background of *The Sinthome*. The '*dropping* of the relationship with the body' (p. 129) refers to the state of dereliction that is designated in Schreber's delusion by the term *liegen lassen*, which Lacan isolates as a fundamental feature of psychosis, and which he translates as *laisser en plan* (see 'On a question preliminary . . .', *Écrits*, p. 560 and p. 563).[6]

Another of the modalities of this *letting drop* is to be met in the structure of the *passage à l'acte*: Lacan speaks of the *(se) laisser tomber* of the subject, which translates the *niederkommen lassen* from the Freudian case of the young homosexual woman (*Anxiety*, pp. 109–16). Defenestration in melancholia is the most striking clinical illustration of this.

Who, or what, falls in the *letting drop*? It is not the pure subject of the signifier, for this subject is weightless; gravity does not act upon this subject. It is the subject insofar as his Being is lodged in the object *a*. The body is necessarily involved.

§ 7. On a Cantoresque body

Page 10 offers a cursory summary of Lacan's reading of Cantor's definition of the set, the first axioms of his theory, and their initial consequences. I will have to begin by setting out its basic elements.

Let the primary relation R*, which is not defined here, be that of *membership* of a set. If x is a member of the set A (i.e. is an element of the set, is contained within it), we write: $x \in A$. The set A that contains precisely two elements, a and b, is written: $\{a, b\}$.

The axiom of extensionality (here noted M*) posits that a set is defined by its elements: two sets are equal iff they have the same elements. On the basis of this axiom, one can define a second relation, R**, which this time is a relation between sets, and this is the relation of *inclusion*. For two sets A and B, if all the elements of the first are also in the second, A is said to be a subset of B, or is included in B. This is written: $A \subset B$ or, reflexively, $B \supset A$.

These two relations, of *membership* and *inclusion*, are utterly distinct.

It is now a matter of assuring the existence of a set containing precisely the elements that correspond to the definition.

It is not enough to say that to any definition D of an element there corresponds a set S whose elements are exactly the elements x that correspond to D. This axiom would give rise to Russell's paradox if D should only be: $x \in x$. Therefore, one has to ensure beforehand that the elements x defined by D are all, as it were, *settable* elements, those which the axiom will guarantee already to lie in some set.

In other words, one shall allow each x to become a member of E only once one has made sure in advance that x is already a member of some set A that has no other virtue, no other definition, besides that of being supposed (but not posited) to pre-exist. In this way, one is making sure of the regularity of each element x that is a candidate for being in E and, by way of consequence, the regularity of E itself. Any set E so formed will be a subset of a set A.

This signifying expenditure is the price that has to be paid in order to circumvent the Russellian curse and to show any irregular elements and paradoxical sets to the door of the universe. The goal is that everything should keep turning smoothly round, if I may express it thus (see below, § 8).

We shall call a definition of x: 'condition S (x)' (in other, more technical, terms: a sentence S in which the letter x appears at least once in a free state, i.e. extrinsic to the particular quantifier, 'there exists an x', and the universal quantifier, 'for all x').

We now introduce the axiom known as the axiom of specification (M**), which posits that to every set A and to every condition S (x)

there corresponds a set B whose elements are exactly those elements x of A for which S (x) holds.

The first consequence of this axiom is that it ensures the innocuousness of the Russellian phenomenon. Should it take your fancy, you can very well form a set R whose members are not included in themselves, i.e. that corresponds to the condition $x \notin x$ (the catalogues that are not part of themselves, of august memory), since R will not be included in A: $R \notin A$ (the demonstration is left to the reader).

Since A is just any set, R is thus what is 'absent in any set', if we may be allowed to use a somewhat Mallarmean turn of phrase, hence the saying, worthy of Parmenides, if not of Heraclitus, that we owe to Halmos: 'nothing contains everything'. Lacan took up this sentence in the form: 'Nothing is everything' (Halmos likewise says, 'there is no universe'; see Paul Halmos, *Naive Set Theory*, Van Nostrand, 1960, pp. 6–7).

Correlatively, there appears what is 'present in every set', if I may say so, which is the empty set, denoted $\varnothing$.

For the empty set to exist, all it takes is for at least one set to exist, though this requires that it be posited and, in order to do so, that we change dimension (the *mension* of the *dit*), because our definitions and axioms do not say anything about what *is*. They only tell us what it is called and what it resembles, to the extent that a set may very well have no more existence than a unicorn.

So, let's *creationize*: there exits a set.

Everything has now been consummated. Given M**, there exists a set without any elements, which is known as the empty set. Given M*, there exists just one empty set. Given the definition of R**, this empty set is a subset of any set: $\varnothing \subset A$. By virtue of this same definition, any set is a subset of itself: $A \subset A$.

Now we come to the Lacanian reading of all this little machinery.

Phase one. Take an object, the simplest object, 1 all alone. Is it even a number? It is a single mark on a piece of paper, any old *one*, but it can be a member of a set, it is capable of being an element in a set, though it has not yet been put in a set. There is nothing more than that, 1.

Phase two. Put it in a set: $\{1\}$.

Phase three. Form the set of its subsets. What is that? By virtue of the machine constructed above, it is a set of two elements: $\{\{1\}, \varnothing\}$. Since in the case of a set with one element the set and this element can easily be confused, we rewrite this: $\{1, \varnothing\}$.

This is the set that is at issue on p. 10 of *The Sinthome*.

Here you can see how, with something of 1, you have created something of 2. You had just a single *one*, the first *one* all by itself,

then in a second phase you had the *one* included in a set, and then, as if by some miracle, a *one-to-boot* (Lacan *dixit*) which is the empty set, ∅.

This is why Lacan says that the set, the Cantorian bag, is fit 'to be connoted with an ambiguity between 1 and 0', which expresses how the empty set contains zero elements, but thereby remains no less of a *one*, as one set. An empty bag is still *one* bag.

This is no miracle. There is no creation *ex nihilo*. The rabbit had already been placed in the top hat. What we find in the shape of the empty set is what we ourselves added to the *one-all-alone* in the form of the set into which we inscribed it in the second phase.

Lacan had already concluded elsewhere (see 'Radiophonie', op. cit., p. 409) that the empty set is the Other as the locus of any signifying inscription, and that its first form, if one may say so, is the body, the body that has been emptied of jouissance. He clarifies this here, on p. 10, by suggesting that the very concept (*Begriff*) of the set might have been envisaged on the basis of the body and its highly particular unity, which is the unity of the *one-to-boot*. This is what distinguishes the Lacanian body from the Aristotelian body.

For Aristotle, as Lacan stresses in *Encore*, the body is the model of the one. This one, however, is the individual, that is to say, the *one-all-alone*. Moreover, Lacan will enquire into the true origin of the signifier One (pp. 111–12). His answer lies here, on this page of *The Sinthome*, in the suggestion that the body might be the model, the imaginary origin, not of the *one-all-alone*, which is a signifier, a mark, a trait, or a cut, but of the *one-to-boot*, which is the empty set. This is quite simply a way of saying that the body exists as a bag of skin, apart and aside from its organs.

The word I have just written is the one that lets us grasp what is at issue, grounding the exact site at which the lucubration of a mysterious 'body without organs', which is central to *Anti-Oedipus* (G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, Minuit, 1972; English trans. Viking, 1977), ought to be inscribed. The body without organs is the bag-body. Its ex-sistence relative to the elements that it contains, its consistence as a container, is that of the empty set in the formula: {1, ∅}.

This is what Lacan allows us to understand by following up with the Cantorian pair (these being the two elements 1 and ∅). However, the set that includes them stands in third place, hence the text: '[. . .] Cantor's theory has to start afresh from the pair, but then the set stands in third place.'

In the initial *one-all-alone*, Lacan invites us to acknowledge the S_1, the master signifier, and in that of the second phase, which is inscribed into the set, the S_2. The first is the unary trait, the second is

the symbol. While the first indicates the empty set, the second indicates that 'it is a pair', the very pair 1, ∅, of which it is an element.

A good deal more may be said about this rather dense page, but it seems to me that this will suffice to make the kind of attention that Lacan's intelligence requires tangible for the reader, above all in Lacan's late teaching which is teeming with so many things said and so many things to be said, the enunciation of which plays out across several pitches, and the statement of which plays several hands at once.

The most pertinent references are not always the most explicit ones, and no index of names will ever detect them. One would need an index of all that is not said: back-of-the-mind thoughts, cryptic allusions, resonances, and other *invisibilia*. Actually, I might just have a go at it one day by way of example.

Thus, one might wonder, for instance, why there is a development focussed on Adam and Eve at the start of *The Sinthome*. The answer is that the first words of *Finnegans Wake* are: 'riverrun, past Eve and Adam's . . .'

The day when there are Lacanians in the university just as now there are Joyceans, when 'to be Lacanian' will mean the same thing as 'to be Joycean', namely, to be possessed by a love of the text, there can be no doubting that they will have much on their plate. This day will surely come, but should it be eagerly anticipated and hastened on? They will soon find themselves turning round in circles.

§ 8. Hegel and the police

Hegel, mentioned on page 16, devotes paragraphs 231 to 249 of *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* to the police. The final paragraph of the section opens with the sentence:

> The universal, which is contained in the particularity of the civic community, is realized and preserved by the external system of police supervision, whose purpose is simply to protect and secure the multitude of private ends and interests subsisting within it.

This is what Lacan, going straight to the crux of the matter, translates as: 'For the police, it is simply a matter of keeping things turning round', which gives a familiar and eloquent form to the notion that has been pompously rendered in French as *existence stable dans l'universel* (translation by Robert Derathé, Vrin, 1975, p. 254).

If Hegel speaks of stable existence in the universal, what might mobile existence in the particular be? It might be travel, for example.

§ 9. Lacan and his Americans

During his trip to the United States, mentioned at the start of the second chapter (p. 17), Lacan was to give several lectures, the transcripts of which were published in the journal *Scilicet* (Seuil, Issue 6/7, 1976). Quine dedicates a paragraph of his autobiography to his meeting with Lacan at MIT, where his talk was also attended by Jakobson and Octavio Paz (*The Time of my Life*, MIT Press, 1985, pp. 416–17).

'Quine is no fool', says Lacan on page 29; indeed, because he made such a good impression on Lacan. Quine was exceedingly courteous: I remember seeing him unruffled by the joint insults issued by Jean Dieudonné and Georg Kreisel during a colloquium at the École normale supérieure. He knew how to conceal from Lacan the fact that he had understood nothing of his talk and his conversation, to the point that he was relieved not to be seated next to him during a dinner in honour of the master, the 'new rage of the Paris cafés'.

At MIT, Lacan met Chomsky (p. 21). Following a pointer from Jakobson, Lacan was one of the first in France, if not *the* first, to speak about *Syntactic Structures* (Mouton, 1964), almost as soon as it came out, and about the now famous example of 'colourless green ideas . . .' (at the start of *Seminar XII*, 1964–1965). When he met Chomsky during his US trip, the renowned linguist's theses on language, such as the 'mental organ', were not yet as widely known as they would be later on following the publication of *Rules and Representations* (Columbia, 1980). We may also note that the translator of *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (MIT, 1965) is also a former attendee of Lacan's Seminar (Jean-Claude Milner).

Likewise, the first collection of texts by the American logician Charles Sanders Peirce (p. 5 and p. 102) to appear in French was translated by someone close to the Seminar. Lacan regularly drew on Peirce's *Collected Papers*, which he had also come to via Jakobson. Lacan borrowed his logical quadrant from Peirce, which he used for the first time in *Seminar XI*. To Peirce he also owes the definition of the sign (a sign represents something for someone), which he transposed into his paradoxical definition of the signifier (a signifier represents the subject for another signifier).

Conveyance from one signifier to another introduces widespread falsification into the 'world' (and this explains why, for example, we meet a certain Fals in the extraordinary picaresque novel *Femmes*, Gallimard, 1983, which is so very Lacanian, especially in its title; see § 4).

§ 10. Critique of authenticity

What is the 'brief passage' on *echt* (which translates as 'authentic' or 'genuine') that Lacan is thinking of on page 69?

We can easily see what might have caught his attention in section 60 of *Being and Time*, 'The Existential Structure of the Authentic Potentiality-of-Being Attested to in Conscience'[7], in particular the sentence on the modification of the disclosing of the 'world' by '*echt* disclosedness' (Stambaugh, p. 282; MacQuarrie and Robinson, pp. 297–8).[8]

Heidegger is, of course, one of the 'few Germans' mentioned on page 70.[9] I no longer recall whether I had passed on to Lacan the anti-Heideggerian pamphlet by Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity* (1964), which I read in the English-language translation that came out in 1973. The Joycean scorn of Aquinian *claritas* on p. 6 (and here in § 5), the critique of 'evidence' on pp. 93–5, the critique of '*intensional* truth', and the distinction between the true and the real on p. 132, all motion in the same direction as an objection raised against Heideggerian authenticity.

In Lacan, the modification, not of the disclosing of the 'world', but of the cutting-out of the object *a*, is due to the invention of new signifiers, as we shall see.

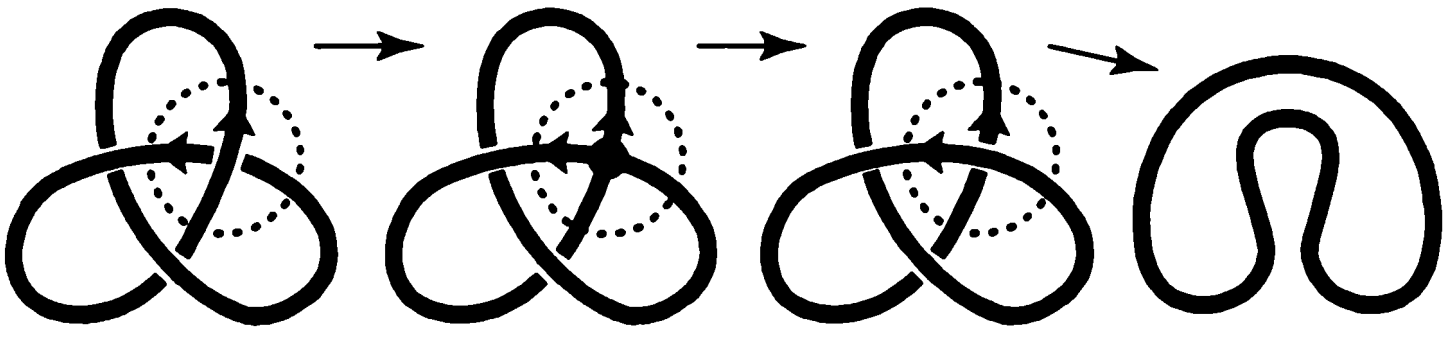
§ 11. The lapsus of the knot

The theme of the nodal error, or the 'lapsus of the knot', on p. 75, along with its 'mending', is central to *The Sinthome*; it is to be found again in the final chapter.

What Lacan calls 'mistake' carries the function, in chapter VI, pp. 75–6, of a transformation that possesses the property of unknotting the trefoil knot and turning it into a mere ring of string. We may add in this regard that it was precisely the study of this kind of transformation that in 1990 enabled a Russian mathematician from Saint Petersburg, Victor Vassiliev, from the school of Vladimir Arnold, to make a breakthrough in the mathematical theory of knots.

The principal mathematical treatment of the question runs as follows: the said 'mistake' is defined as a singularity (a catastrophe in Thom's sense) which occurs when one part of the knot cuts another transversally at a 'double point'; at that instant, the knot becomes singular, then immediately reverts to an ordinary knot, but one that may be different from the initial knot.

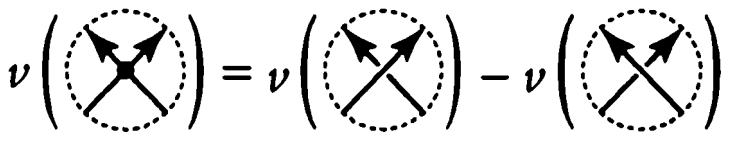
The most straightforward example is furnished precisely by the transformation that Lacan shows: undergoing a catastrophe, the trefoil knot becomes a singular knot at a 'double point', only to become immediately a 'trivial' knot, labelled ○ (the ring of string). Passing through a double point is the mathematical translation of the act of cutting and splicing the string.



Vassiliev's originality was to consider the knots as points of a larger and more structured set. In his theory, the ordinary knots form a subset denoted by Σ_0, whereas the others form the infinite family Σ, which is broken up into strata Σ_1, Σ_2, Σ_3, . . . constituted of singular knots with 1, 2, 3, . . . double points, respectively.

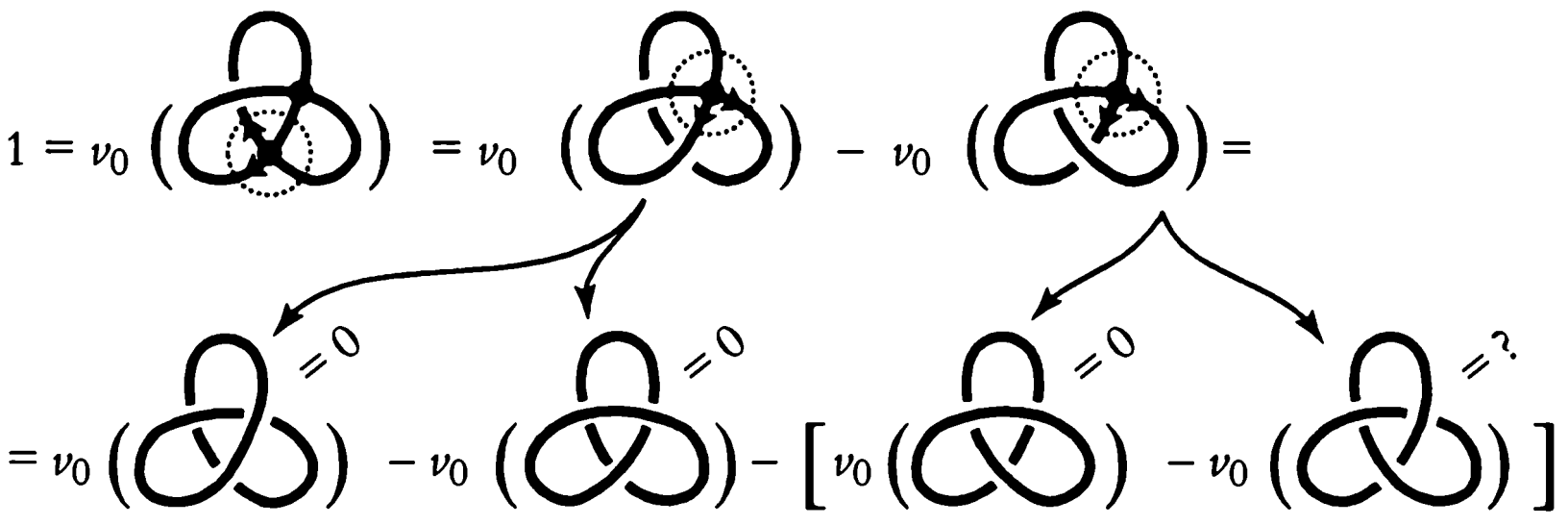
Vassiliev quite naturally chose the sigma symbol to designate the strata. This coincidence (and it is no more than that, I implore you not to read any meaning into it) is strange for the reader of the Seminar because this is also the letter that Lacan uses to denote the sinthome.

The Vassiliev invariants allow a knot to be distinguished on the basis of the path that leads through the strata to ○, in accordance with the number of double points that separate it from the trivial state. Each invariant is a function that, for each double point in a singular knot, satisfies the following relation:



The theory only becomes nontrivial from the second-order invariants onward. To distinguish between the trefoil knot and the trivial knot, one such invariant is sufficient, labelled v_0. For the trivial

knot, it is equal to zero: v_0 (○) = 0. This same invariant assigns the value 1 to the trefoil knot, in accordance with the calculation that is illustrated by the following diagram, in which one can recognize the properties explored by Lacan in chapter VI:



In this note I have been following the exposition set out on pp. 90–99 of the book by Sossinsky cited above in § 3. The three illustrations are taken from the same. The reader of *The Sinthome* will surely find this book most informative; I also recommend consulting *The KnotPlot Site*, the most attractive website dedicated to the knots (www.knotplot.com).

It would be preposterous to imagine that mathematicians should owe anything whatsoever to psychoanalysts, but it appears that it was indeed a psychoanalyst who became attached to knots that have an effect of singularity (already isolated by Lord Kelvin, see § 3) some fifteen years before they turned out to be the inroad to an important breakthrough in mathematical theory. Nothing more than that, but nothing less either.

The history of knots will certainly find a place for Lacan on account of his many years of tenacious experimentation. The fact that this experimentation was not highly formalized is no obstacle to this. It was in just such a way that a New York lawyer who had been manipulating pieces of cord on his living-room floor, just as Lacan used to do in his office at rue de Lille or on the ground at Guitrancourt, discovered that two of the knots listed in the 1899 Tait-Little table were actually the same. This was the last duplication of its kind to be discovered. The article in which he reports his finding was published in *Proceedings of the American Mathematical Society*, Vol. 45, Issue 2, August 1974, pp. 262–6.

Seeing Lacan play, on p. 76, with the idea of a 'Lacan's knot', there can be no doubting that he would have been delighted to make a discovery comparable with Kenneth A. Perko Jr's find.

§ 12. The circle of Popillius

The episode of the circle of Popillius, mentioned on p. 91, is a topos of Roman history that was popularized in the classical age by Charles Rollin's *Histoire ancienne* (1730–1738). In the 1740 edition it was illustrated with a print by J.-P. Le Bas, 'Antiochus enfermé dans un cercle par Popilius'.

The source is Livy Book XLV (12.5); it can also be found in the *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus* by Justin (XXXIV, 3, 1–4). Here is the translation in English:[10]

> Accordingly Popillius was despatched, in the character of ambassador, to Antiochus, to desire him 'to refrain from invading Egypt, or, if he had already entered it, to quit without delay.' Having found him in Egypt, and the king having offered to kiss him (for Antiochus, when he was a hostage at Rome, had been friendly with Popillius among others), Popillius said that 'private friendship must be set aside, when the commands of his country stood in the way,' and having produced and delivered to him the decree of the senate, but observing that he hesitated, and referred the consideration of it to his friends, he drew a circle round him with a staff which he carried in his hand, so large that it also enclosed his friends, and desired him 'to decide on the spot, and not to go out of that ring, till he had given an answer to the senate whether he would have peace or war with Rome.' This firmness so daunted the king's spirit, that he replied that 'he would obey the senate.'

The episode belongs to the most turbulent part of the history of the Seleucids under Roman influence, prior to the Syrian kingdom being reduced to the status of a province. This is the period from which Corneille borrowed the plot of *Rodogune* (one can read with interest Corneille's preface and the note by Georges Couton, as well as the genealogical note on p. 1293, in Tome III of the *Œuvres complètes*, Gallimard, 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade').

First of all, we should not confuse the Popillius Laenas of the circle with Cicero's assassin of the same name, who was stigmatized by Voltaire in the *Dictionnaire philosophique* and has a small role in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (played in the 1953 Mankiewicz film by an actor of whom a great deal could be said). I do not know the degree of kinship between the two homonyms, but it cannot be impossible to determine.

As for the 'encircled' one, he is none other than Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Why yes, the very same who, prevented by the said

'circle of Popillius' from launching an invasion of Egypt, began the persecution of the Jews. As Bossuet writes quite superbly in his *Universal History*:

> Antiochus Illustris reigned like a mad-man: he bent all his fury against the Jews, and attempted to destroy the temple, the law of Moses, and the whole nation. The authority of the Romans kept him from making himself master of Egypt.[11]

As we know, the Maccabean revolt forced him to put off his anti-Jewish plan, and the Temple was cleansed in 164, an episode that is still joyfully commemorated in Jewish tradition by the feast of Ḥanukkah.

The Fine Arts Museum in Rennes holds a very fine drawing by Rembrandt, 'Popillius and Antiochus' (c. 1660): the consul, a modest Popillius clothed in a tunic, stooped and alone, draws in the sand the circle that surrounds a superb and richly brocaded Antiochus, under the watchful eye of his immobile cavalrymen and the attentive crowd, who are also forming a circle.

I am inclined to think that Lacan's familiar references to the circle of Popillius (this is not the only one) are a memory of some school textbook or illustrated volume from his childhood, perhaps the children's edition of the aforementioned Rollin or a book that was inspired by it. Rollin's *Histoire ancienne*, with its Épinal prints, as it were, maintained a strong influence throughout the nineteenth century and was still being recommended in 1900 by the eminent Rawlinson (see the article by Pierre Briant on 'La tradition gréco-romaine sur Alexandre le Grand dans l'Europe moderne et contemporaine', in Haagsma, M., et al, *The Impact of Classical Greece on European and National Identities*, Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2003, pp. 161–80).

I would certainly have caught Lacan's interest with the recently advanced hypothesis from Peter O'Neill ('Going Round in Circles: Popular Speech in Ancient Rome', in *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 2003, pp. 135–66, especially footnote 7) which holds that Livy's use of the word *circulus* in the episode of the said 'circle of Popillius' was most likely the 'retrojecting' of a term that was in vogue during the late Republic, not in the geometrical sense but in the metaphorical sense of a human 'meeting' or 'congregation'. The multiplication of unofficial, unauthorized, or even dissenting and conspiratorial *circuli* marked the lifestyle of the time, and did not fail to cause anxiety for the senatorial authorities and the 'establishment' as a whole. In the Livian fable of Popillius, the circle becomes, on the contrary, the pure signifying materialization of a

senatorial power that is all the more insistent given that it is physically absent.

Rembrandt lets us see quite marvellously the sudden *Aufhebung* that transforms the sign of Popillius' weakness, the staff of his old age, the incarnation of his castration – in short, his long, bare cane – into the instrument of his triumph, into an astounding master-signifier capable of imposing its empire over the most presumptuous realities in the person of a fiercely reigning king, holding him back from upsetting what Hegel called 'stable existence in the universal' (§ 8). Rome devoted itself, ultimately exhausting itself, to spreading this 'stable existence' across the world as though it were to be the world's police, which is exactly what has become, and shall become again, we may suppose, of other empires throughout history.

The circle of Popillius is thus the illustration of the 'turning round in circles' that forms the sum and substance of the police vision of the world. Looking back, this is the occasion to confirm Lacan's perennial thesis that while power is the attribute of the master, his intimate truth is impotence (see Chapter VI in *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, titled 'The castrated master'; see too page 174 in Chapter XX, except that here, with regard to the sign of the master, it is not that 'everybody jumps', but that one individual becomes immobilized).

To my mind this is precisely what makes the 'megalomaniacal dream', the 'all-pervasive will to power', the idea of submitting to the university, and even the aspiration to be 'sacred', which Philippe Sollers oddly attributes to Lacan in the interview mentioned in § 1, altogether doubtful. As I knew him, and as I understand him, Lacan offered a lesson of sobriety and lucidity with regard to power, to the point that he left it to others to negotiate the balance of power with the IPA. We know the price he paid for this (his 'excommunication').

Imputing to Lacan the desire to be sacred seems hard to reconcile with the Lacanian heresy of the *escabeau* (§ 5), though this desire is liable to come quite naturally, through a retroactive effect, to great French writers, be they infamous or idolized. We have only to cite the *Dieu Voltaire*, *Jean-Jacques*, the *Divin Marquis*, *l'Enchanteur*, and more generally the romantic cult of the *vates* writer such as it has been traced out by Paul Bénichou in the admirable works that have followed on from *The Consecration of the Writer, 1750–1830* (the original French text, published by José Corti in 1973, bears the subtitle: 'Essai sur l'avènement d'un pouvoir spirituel laïque dans la France moderne' [Essay on the advent of a secular spiritual power in modern-day France]). One can also think of Joyce as the Redeemer or as grist to the mill for academics, as 'canonical fodder', dare I say (see here, p. 8 and pp. 64–5). The desire for sacredness has its place,

too, in Bataille's erotic theosophy, that of *Madame Edwarda* and the 'unavowable community' (see Lacan's reference to Bataille in the *Écrits*, p. 583, and I am fully aware of the irritation this reference has caused Sollers).

Nevertheless, and to pay tribute to Sollersian intuition which in my eyes is never without interest, I will gladly admit that Lacan's policy might indeed appear to be akin to that of the God of the Jews such as he is evoked in the first lesson of *On the Names-of-the-Father* (see the small volume that was recently published with this title, p. 85): Lacan's doctrine is not the only one in psychoanalysis, it claims nothing more than to be the only one to reign in its own little corner, his little School. There, it is 'jealous'. Lacan himself readily and laughingly accepted this risky analogy in one of our private conversations. On the other hand, the lovely yet more dangerous idea of a universal domination of minds is to be rendered to the Roman and Papist ideology where it first took root.

To conclude this *excursus*, I shall add that I see nothing exorbitant in a major Catholic writer in present-day France, a current legatee of the glorious 'spiritual power' of literature that took over from a Christian vocation whose values, today restored, had back then fallen into obsolescence (Bénichou, op. cit., p. 342), being led to a particularly exalted conception of his function and his gifts once he has assumed the difficult happiness of 'being oneself' rather than someone else. Contrary to what the writer's apparent ease and proclaimed felicity would have us believe, both of which actually stem more from iron discipline than any hypothetical Gascony good nature, the assumption of his calling did not go without saying for Philippe Sollers, as his remark in the afore-cited interview can vouch: 'I truly believe that it's better to be a great writer than to be Lacan'. Just turn to page 115 (*passim*) of the 'Folio' edition of *Femmes* cited above: one can read the transposed testimony of Sollers's decision, circa 1970, 'cut to the quick, to show them that I too was a thinker'.

Let us now look at the Popillian circle in terms of the empty set from earlier.

Popillius only forms a pair with the overweening eastern monarch by separating him from his organs, his advisory and military organs,[12] and by deflating his air chamber until it is reduced to an empty bladder. This is how, as Epiphanes fades away, or at least as all the life drains from him, for it is as though he has been entombed – think of Saddam Hussein, unearthed from the ground – the multitude comes to form a circle. The circle of Popillius thus fulfils Daniel's prophecy.

The apologue certainly allows for more than one reading.

One might be tempted to develop themes in a classical vein, such as *Joyce enclosed in a knot by Lacan*, or, inversely, *Lacan enclosed in a knot by Joyce*, or even, *Lacan enclosed in Joyce by Jacques Aubert*, if one were to forget that this kind of enclosing only carries meaning in a Euclidian metrical space, the only space that the police in 'The Purloined Letter' move about in. The police fail to spot the paradoxical relationships, even the singularities, that are authorized by topology, and which are required, for instance, by the Freudian *Lust-Ich*, the pleasure-ego, which as Lacan points out on pp. 133–4 has no exterior (see in this regard, for example, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 239–41, and *Encore*, pp. 55–6).

The triviality of the Popillian circle is met in the triviality of the separate rings that each give rise to a 'turning round in circles', to a particular enclosing, but it disappears when the fourfold Borromean nodality is established between them by means of the sinthome and, further still, the false nodality (of the final chapter).

This can be transposed onto the clinical plane. One can say, then, in the style of Vassiliev, that the said normality results from the trivializing transformation of a higher-stratum knot. Herein lies the demonstration of *The Sinthome*. It is topological. It requires the use of non-Euclidian spaces.

§ 13. Other spaces

Lacan often makes reference, as he does on pp. 68–9, to the paradox of symmetrical objects, which featured in Kant's *Inaugural Dissertation of 1770* (*De Mundi Sensibilis atque Intelligibilis Forma et Principiis*, Section 3, § 15; p. 396 in *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770*, translated by D. Walford, Cambridge University Press, 1992). Lacan never tires of stressing the limited character of the transcendental aesthetic, which is fundamentally inadequate for subjective experience.

Likewise, as on p. 96, Lacan often comes back to Desargues, his projective geometry and his *point at infinity*, which is axiomatically forbidden in Euclidism. When *Les Mots et les Choses* came out in 1966, Lacan used Desargues in his *Seminar XIII* to analyse in his own way *Las Meninas* by Velásquez, following in the footsteps of Foucault who was present at the session. Foucault's now famous commentary opens his book.

Lacan was acquainted with two landmark texts by René Taton, *L'Œuvre mathématique de Desargues* and *La Géométrie projective en France de Desargues à Poncelet* (PUF, 1951). One may also consult the excellent books by Judith V. Field, professor of art history at

Birkbeck College, University of London, *The Geometrical Work of Girard Desargues* (New York/Berlin, Springer, 1987), co-edited with J. J. Gray, and *The Invention of Infinity: Mathematics and Art in the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1997). It may be noted that in his treatise on projective geometry, the 1639 *Rough Draft*, Desargues calls 'trunk' (*tronc*) a straight line cut by several other straight lines (*rameaux*, 'branches'), and 'node' (*nœud*) the point at which a branch intersects a trunk.

This fact would surely have interested Lacan, since he was not averse to underlining, on p. 99, that his text 'The signification of the phallus' (*Écrits*, p. 685) begins with the sentence: 'We know that the unconscious castration complex has the function of a knot . . .'

§ 14. From Madame du Châtelet to Madame Blavatsky

We know that Newton fired the loins of the glitterati of his time.

Lacan revisits Newton on several occasions in his teaching (p. 104). In *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, p. 76, he attributes the invention of the categorical imperative, and the invention of a practical reason whose motives are detached from any sensible interest, to 'the disorienting effect of Newtonian physics [. . .], a physics that has reached a point of independence relative to *das Ding*, to the human *Ding*.'

In the fourth part of 'Radiophonie' (*Autres écrits*, pp. 415–31), following the footsteps of Koyré he dedicates several pages to the 'astronomic revolution', in which he sees a three-phase thought process: Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton. He reads the terminal point of the process (Newton) as the 'instant of seeing' of a new process whose two successive steps have yet to come (p. 422). He thereby implies that Freud, by making do with his reference to Copernicus, betrays how he has limited the scope of his discovery of the unconscious. This Newtonian theme is taken up again in 'Television' (op. cit., p. 36).

As for the marquise du Châtelet, 'the divine Émilie' of the Voltaire who spent fifteen years at her side in the château de Cirey, to whom he dedicated the lines, *Si vous voulez que j'aime encore, / Rendez-moi l'âge des amours* . . . ['If you would have me love once more, / Restore to me the age of amours'], it is traditional to portray her, unfairly, as a *femme savante*, when in fact she claims the fame of having translated the *Principia* into French. The two *Causeries du lundi* by Sainte-Beuve on 'Voltaire at Cirey' (17 June and 18 July 1850) still make for very fine reading, even though they have been surpassed by historians' research on this tumultuous liaison (René Vaillot, *Madame du Châtelet*, Albin Michel, 1978). The letters

inspired by her passion for Saint-Lambert, the playboy who was friend to Rousseau and lover to Sophie d'Houdetot, were published by Louise Colet (yes indeed, Flaubert's mistress).

Though Lacan may scoff at the infatuation for the 'God Newton', he none the less points out that a rumpus of this order is only to be expected following the discovery of some 'odd or end of the real', precisely because it foretells a change in the way of the world, an interruption of the notorious 'turning round in circles'. Such was the case with the Freudian discovery.

In his repeated grumblings over the large crowd at his weekly Seminar at the law faculty on rue Saint-Jacques, grumblings which are far from being an expression of vanity, Lacan is actually lamenting how he had not succeeded in his stated ambition of discovering in turn a new 'odd or end of the real'. The presence of the droves around him strikes him as unwarranted, the sign of some imaginary obscenity. Perhaps, too, with their anticipation they pressed him to remain there, to stay rooted on the stage until he had made his find. This would make him the Antiochus of his audience, who in turn would serve as a Popillius.

He did not for all that wish for solitude. The right size for him would have been a small circle, if I may say so, of dedicated workers. So it is that we see him marvelling in *The Sinthome* at the dialogue between the two friends Soury and Thomé, or setting his son-in-law to work.

Voltaire's couple with the marquise clearly caused him greater difficulty. The recent feminist historiography has sought to revalorize her work, and quite rightly so. One recent article that is exceedingly clear-cut and compelling has stressed the extreme care of her translation and her continual effort to make the technical terms and abstract notions accessible to the public. (Might I say that here I consider myself to be a latter-day Émilie?) Another interesting read is Judith P. Zinsser's 'Translating Newton's *Principia*: The Marquise du Châtelet's Revision and Additions for a French Audience', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, London, 55(2), 2001, pp. 227–45.

Furthermore, attention has recently been drawn to a short work that was initially clandestine and condemned by the Church, then later softened down to be become a European bestseller, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame, ovvero Dialoghi sopra la luce e i colori*, Naples, 1737, by Francesco Algarotti, who presents Newtonian optics in a dialogue between the two sexes on Lake Garda, in the style of Le Bovier de Fontenelle. The Italian text can be consulted on the website of the University of Bologna[13]; on this topic one can also read a recent article by Massimo Mazzotti in the *British Journal for the History of Science* (2004) on the University of Cambridge website.

In short, the decried category of *femme savante* should not be an excuse to think that Mme du Châtelet and Madame Blavatsky are of the same stock.

Lacan cites the name of the latter and mocks her 'diffuse bleed' on the *manvantara* (p. 105). Since the life and work of the Russian theosophist are hardly familiar to the sectarians of Freud and Lacan, I think it will not be unhelpful to offer a brief sketch thereof, which owes everything to *Textes théosophiques*, Paris, without having been able to confirm the accuracy of any of the information since I am not aware of any critical biography.

Helena Petrovna was born in the Ukraine in 1831 while her father, Captain Von Hahn, was in the service of the Tsar. From an early age she displayed 'strange parapsychological aptitudes'. At eighteen she married Nikifor Blavatsky, whose name she would immortalize, though she left him three months later, still a virgin, fleeing on horseback to travel around the world (three times).

Helena visited the 'Redskins' and the Incas, before gaining access to 'the closed world of the high mystics in India and Tibet, and then the secret fellowships of the Druzes', where she was 'subjected many times to the most severe initiatory trials, from which she emerged gasping, but immoveable in her determination, all in the service of her Master's cause.' The said Master was an Indian Rajput, but this did not prevent her from maintaining close relations with Garibaldi, at whose side, at the battle of Mentana (1867), she would be wounded five times and left for dead. Once recovered, she set off for Florence, passing through Slovenia, staying in Tibet, finding herself in Greece, then in Cairo, Syria, Lebanon, Odessa, Budapest, then a brief spell at 11 rue de l'Université in Paris, before embarking for the United States.

In the US she met W. Q. Judge, a young lawyer of Irish origin (the Irish connection, Joyce!), who would become her loyal disciple. With him she founded the Theosophical Society in Manhattan (1875), and wrote her first book, *Isis Unveiled*, all 1,200 pages of it. It sold out in ten days. In it she condemns the sectarianism of scholars along with the spiritual monopoly that religion has arrogated to itself, and asserts the real existence of initiatory mysteries.

Having become an American citizen she set off for India where she created a journal. She became 'HPB' to her close ones, and headquartered in Madras (1883), before returning to Paris, 45 rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs, then roaming all over Europe, dining with Nubar Pasha in Cairo, astounding Gaston Maspero with the breadth of her knowledge, and finally going back to India.

Even though her last years were blighted by the cabal formed by a French couple and an investigator from the Society for Psychical

Research, who accused her of having made various fraudulent claims, she found the strength to found the Blavatsky Lodge, whose *Transactions* shed new light on dreams; to create the magazine *Lucifer*, aiming to 'bring to light the hidden things of darkness'; and above all to issue to the public her 1,500-page *Secret Doctrine* (1888), followed by a popular compendium, *The Key to Theosophy* (1889). In it she recognizes mankind's profound soul, a transpersonal core of consciousness underlying the ephemeral structure of the personal ego. This is said to constitute the nucleus of a veritable brotherhood of humanity, allowing for a global awareness.

Mme Blavatsky then succumbed to a nasty bout of flu (London, 1891).

Among the members of her Society were: Edison, the astronomer Camille Flammarion, the Russian chancellor Aksakof, Rudolf Steiner the founder of anthroposophy, W. B. Yeats (Ireland again) and Mondrian. Among the personalities who were close to theosophy or inspired by it, besides Joyce himself, were: Kandinsky, Malevich, Klee, Scriabin, D. H. Lawrence, T. S. Eliot and Henry Miller.

The latter testified to the effect of 'subjective rectification' (cf. *Écrits*, p. 601) that he obtained reading Blavatsky's work:

> I was hypnotized by her eyes and I had a complete vision of her as if she were in the room. Now I don't know if that had anything to do with what happened next, but I had a flash, I came to the realization that I was responsible for my whole life, whatever had happened. I used to blame my family, society, my wife . . . and that day I saw so clearly that I had nobody to blame but myself. I put everything on my shoulders and I felt so relieved: Now I'm free, no one else is responsible.

In sum, where the others were, where 'hell is other people', *I* comes to be.

Two other weighty endorsements are foregrounded in the theosophical literature. Gandhi had met Madame Blavatsky in London, where some theosophists had shown him the *Bhagavad Gita* (which he had never read), and he maintained that the teaching of this Russian-American, née von Hahn, was 'Hinduism at its best'. Meanwhile, in the 1960s, a certain someone purportedly presented herself at the international headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, wanting absolutely to pay a visit to the site, given that a copy of *The Secret Doctrine* used to hold pride of place on the desk of her late uncle, Albert Einstein.

Two questions are of special interest to the reader of *The Sinthome*. First, what is this *manvantara*? Second, how is it that the

name Blavatsky and the word *manvantara* come to be on Lacan's lips on page 105?

It is certainly no easy matter for the uninitiated to answer the first question. Nevertheless, by condensing and simplifying a great deal the sometimes incoherent data that I gathered from several sources, I have developed the following exposé, without being able to guarantee whether it is perfectly orthodox, and without myself having penetrated its meaning which in all likelihood is esoteric.

We should start off from the fundamental postulate of theosophy: the universe, an uncreated reality that constitutes a unique Whole, contains within it the potentiality of every manifested form, and this is why one can call it *the unmanifested*. Periodically it does manifest itself as an objective universe. The periods of manifestation (*manvantara*) and unmanifestation, or dissolution (*Pralaya*), alternate over both a long and a short duration. A Life of Brahma (also known as *maha-manvantara*, or universal *manvantara*, which is not to be confused with the *manvantara* to which Lacan is very likely referring) is followed by a Dissolution of Brahma (or *maha-pralaya*) of equal duration. The Day (or *Kalpa*) of Brahma, when there is a manifestation, is followed by a Night of Brahma, a dissolution of equal length, before a new awakening of Brahma comes to pass. If one is curious to know the durations in question, one just has to refer to the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*: one Life of Brahma lasts 100 Divine Years, that is, 311, 040, 000, 000, 000 human years; each of the Divine Years contains 360 Days and 360 Nights, that is, 4, 320, 000, 000 human years per Divine Day. Each Divine Day comprises fourteen periods. At the start of each period, there is an apparition of a *Manu* (yes indeed, the Manu of the Law Code of Manu), the generic name of the One and Only Sovereign whose mission is to govern the whole of the terrestrial world during this period, which bears his name.

This is where we are. This period, which lies between (*antara*) two *Manus*, is called *manvantara*, or Age of the World. At present, on this Day of four million-odd years in which we find ourselves, six *manvantaras* have already passed. We are living, therefore, in the seventh *manvantara*, whose *Manu*, we will be pleased to learn, is *Vaivasvata*, son of the Sun-God.

Blavatskian theosophy ensures that each spirit passes through the *manvantara*, that is to say, through manifestation for one's own enrichment and for that of the Whole. Through a 'process of gradual evolution', the Sages, the *mahatmas* and *rishis*, who have appeared in the course of a *manvantara*, naturally become, after its expiration, planetary spirits who guide the evolution of future planets. One and all are invited to profit from this knowledge in everyday life, preferably under the guidance of a confirmed Master.

This is certainly not impossible: Miller's testimony, if it is acknowledged, shows that this path, which might seem extraordinary or even extravagant, is nevertheless able to minimize one's minor ills, right there on the spot, for who would put anything off until Tomorrow when the Day and the Night last four million years? Or rather, it is precisely because this path is so out-of-the-ordinary that it is not implausible that it might enable a subject to obtain, at least fleetingly, a point of access to the effect of banalization that Freud (but not Lacan) readily understood as the result to be expected from an analysis (this is a personal commentary).

Second question: what is this astonishing Blavatskian blather doing in *The Sinthome*?

It was certainly summoned up by Joyce's taste for theosophical speculation, but not only that. Indeed, in his youth, Lacan was in contact with the major French initiate René Guénon, so much so that the scattered references to initiation in his teaching, as caustic as they most often are, nevertheless bear out the traces left by his former curiosity, and are absolutely first-hand (if I may say so, since in this context nothing is ever really first-hand). These references in Lacan bring out all the better the recent and, as it were, miraculous character of the advent of scientific discourse. On Guénon, see for example: Bruno Hapel, *René Guénon et le Roi du monde*, Guy Trédaniel, 2001. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Guénon held Mme Blavatsky's doctrine to be hare-brained, and brushed aside psychoanalysis for being downright diabolical.

The eroticism that has always been attached to the unveiling of the world's mystery shows that it is expedient to distinguish, as does Lacan, between the symbol of the symbolic phallus, labelled uppercase Φ, to be read *capital Phi* (which is not to be confused with φ, *small phi*, the imaginary phallus), and the signifier of the barred Other, S(Ⱥ), which designates, among other things, the nonsensical place of the last truth (see pp. 107–8 of *The Sinthome*; the passage to which he is alluding can be found on pp. 28–9 of *Encore*).

§ 14. Derrida and the knot

In tribute to the memory of the philosopher who was one of the mentors of my youth, I shall develop further the detail conjured up by the mention of Derrida's name on p. 124. [14]

Lacan judged that Derrida had neglected to acknowledge what the invention of 'grammatology' and *archi-écriture* owed to the circulation of terms that came from his teaching ('La psychanalyse. Raison d'un échec', December 1967, in *Autres écrits*, p. 346), and

that this invention was itself an academic counterfeit of this teaching, a 'confusional discourse' ('Lituraterre', in *Hurly-Burly*, 9, p. 32, where the name of Derrida, who is clearly being fingered, does not appear), while sometimes recognizing, at least allusively, that the topicality of the question of writing in the intellectual and literary context of the time was largely due to Derrida's early articles, collected in *Writing and Difference* (London: Routledge, 1978).

On Derrida's side, in a now famous article from 1975 ('Le facteur de la vérité', translated as 'The Purveyor of Truth' in *Yale French Studies*, 52, pp. 31–113, and retranslated with its original French title in *The Post Card*, University of Chicago Press, 1987, pp. 411–96), he indulges in a painstaking re-reading of the 1956 'Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"' (*Écrits*, pp. 11–61) and Poe's tale, under the cover of which he levels fundamental objections at Lacan's doctrine of the letter and 'logic of the signifier'.

The historical importance of this critique cannot be overestimated. For the followers of deconstruction, it had the effect of making Lacan seem 'old-hat'. For the Lacanians, they turned away from reading Derrida, even though many of them had followed his elaborations with great sympathy at the start. By my reckoning, however, the debt that I had acquired with respect to the man who throughout my years at the École normale had been my professor, my mentor, my friend, and even my confidant (as the so-called *caïmans* of the ENS often are), forbade me from entering into this controversy by supporting Lacan's colours against his, just as I deemed that I did not share Lacan's declared contempt for Derrida (see for example the passage cited above from 'La psychanalyse. Raison d'un échec'). While I felt free to evoke this theme occasionally in my courses at the Department of Psychoanalysis, I abstained from giving any commentary beyond those confines.

It was with this in mind that, in January 1987, during a round-table discussion at the Collège international de philosophie to which Derrida and Jean-Pierre Vernant had been invited to comment on the release of the second volume of Élisabeth Roudinesco's *Histoire de la psychanalyse en France* (she was present in the audience), I declined the sudden urging from the chairman of the panel, René Major, to respond to the objections raised in 'Le facteur de la vérité'. It was in this same spirit that, when I was publishing extracts from *Seminar XXIII*[15] in the journal *Ornicar ?*, I withheld the passage where Lacan treats Derrida harshly for his Preface to *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonomy* by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. It nevertheless transpired that Derrida took me to task for this omission ('For the Love of Lacan', lecture delivered at the colloquium 'Lacan avec des philosophes' in May

1992, published in the *Journal of European Psychoanalysis*, 2, 1995/1996, pp. 63–90; reprinted in Jacques Derrida, *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, Stanford University Press, 1998, pp. 39–69). The misunderstanding seemed to me to be irreversible, and over-determined to such a degree that explaining myself to him could only amplify it.

What was Derrida's central objection? For him, Lacan's letter is 'intangible and indestructible', an 'indivisible locality' (p. 425 of *The Post Card*). Lacan purportedly assigns to the letter 'a *proper*, and properly *circular*, itinerary', and this would be attested by the final sentence of his text: 'So it is that what is meant by "the purloined letter", or even *en souffrance*, is that a letter arrives always at its destination.' Now, Derrida maintains that if the letter is indestructible then in fact it is being elevated to the 'ideality of a meaning' (p. 466), and if it comes back after each detour from its proper trajectory (or 'itinerary'), it is because this is actually 'transcendental reappropriation and readequation'. All in all, in Lacan, 'the signifier must never risk being lost, destroyed, divided, or fragmented without return' (p. 438). Against this 'law of the signifier', Derrida victoriously proffers 'dissemination' and 'disseminating power': 'a letter can always not arrive at its destination', its 'partition' is 'always possible', 'it can always be fragmented without return', and so on (p. 438 and p. 465).

The most straightforward reply to Derrida's objection forced itself upon me as soon as I read his 1975 article. It is not accurate that the letter as such in Lacan is intangible, indestructible, indivisible, or ideal. The memorable episodes of the letter's destruction, from the fire in the Library of Alexandria to Kafka's instructions to Max Brod, and simple good sense as well, make it highly improbable that Lacan had maintained such a conception. But more than that, there is a text.

Just a year and a half after writing the 'Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"', which was completed in August 1956 (*Écrits*, p. 41), Lacan wrote an article that was supposed to be published in the April 1958 issue of the journal *Critique* under the title 'The youth of Gide or the letter and desire' (later included in the *Écrits*, pp. 759–64). The last six pages are devoted to an admirable analysis of 'Madeleine's act' of burning the near-totality of letters she had received from André no sooner had she learnt of his departure for England with his young lover, Marc Allégret.

Lacan recognizes in the act of burning these letters the same act that Medea commits. Indeed, at the same time as she sacrifices 'what is most precious to her', as she puts it, she also wrests it from Gide, who wept over the letters, 'his child', 'the best of me'. He would wait for Madeleine's death before penning his testimony of this event,

under the Virgilian title *Et nunc manet in te* (published in 1947, included in the *Journal 1939–1949*). It was only then that he yielded the pages of his *Journal* dedicated to the episode, which he had cut out of the previous volume.

Lacan stresses the fact that these letters had no copies, which according to him attests to 'their nature as a fetish'. He sees them as comparable to what Molière's character Harpagon hides in his cash box, the object that is brought into function in desire, which Lacan would later designate as 'the cause of desire' (the expression features already in 'The signification of the phallus', *Écrits*, p. 691, dated May 1958, but it would only be properly grounded in the 1962–1963 Seminar *Anxiety*; thereafter it can be found in several of Lacan's seminars and writings). Even though the word is never uttered, Lacan undoubtedly recognizes in Gide's letters the status of the object *a*.

But there is no need to venture into such arcana to affirm, on the basis of this text, that it is inaccurate to allege that Lacan failed to recognize the letter's tangible, destructible, and divisible character, which is not ideal but very material. On the other hand, it is hard to explain how such a pernickety reader as Derrida, who was so anxious about the sources of his information, so lavish in his quotations, who didn't hesitate to scour the volume of the *Écrits* to show how it was entirely steeped in the erroneous doctrine he detected in the 'Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"' (he refers to no less than fourteen texts in the collection, if our count is correct; nor does he neglect the 'later publications', two of which are cited) should have skipped over what is spread out across six pages of 'The youth of Gide'. This omission is all the more surprising given that this text features among the fourteen I counted, two pages of which, p. 742 and p. 753, are quoted on pp. 467–8 of *The Post Card* in regard to the function of fiction in literature, but without the faintest mention of the title of the article from which the quotations are lifted.

These six pages of the *Écrits* thus stand as 'the purloined letter', or the blunder of the 'Purveyor of truth'. A first blunder since, when 'Le facteur de la vérité' came out, 'Lituraterre' had already been published four years hence, and this text contained everything it should have taken to hold the philosopher's attention.

Indeed, it was first published as the leading article of issue 3 of the journal *Littérature* (Larousse, 1971, pp. 3–10), which also included (on pp. 79–85, with an introduction by Catherine Clément) the note on Dora that Lacan mentions on p. 87 of *The Sinthome*, and whose author was a friend they had in common, herself a Joycean, Hélène Cixous (detail: her play, *Le Portrait de Dora*, was published in 1978 by Éditions des Femmes).

Furthermore, back in his earliest published essay (I can still see him in the bookshop of Presses universitaires, flicking through the first copies of his book), Derrida had ascribed to Joyce and his attempt to 'repeat [. . .] all equivocation', the place of an 'other pole' with respect to the Husserlian attempt to obtain a univocal and transparent language. This was a veritable 'choice' (the word is out) on the side of heresy. These days we can scarcely imagine just how incongruous this orientation was in the philosophical context of the time, and this played no small part in the fact that among all the teachers back then at the Sorbonne, I chose the young Derrida to become his student (See *Edmund Husserl's 'Origin of Geometry': An Introduction*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978, this fine page falls on p. 102 of the John P. Leavey translation).

I would feel bad were these lines to revive the Picrocholin wars between Lacanians and Derridians when the present situation, which is characterized by the resurgence of orthodoxies, could on the contrary lead their students to renew their alliances of old. Lacan and Derrida are each major figures in their respective genres, it is simply a matter of knowing what those genres are. After all, Lacan began, as he reminds us in *The Sinthome* (p. 63), with 'Écrits "inspirés": schizographie'. Perhaps everything is to be found there (this article was presented, having been drafted along with two co-authors, in the *Annales médico-psychologiques*, 1931, tome II, pp. 508–22; it is set to be included in a volume currently being prepared in the 'Champ freudien' collection).

There is certainly much to be said to clarify Derrida in contrast to Lacan, and vice-versa. One could of course defend much further the pertinence of the perspective chosen in 'Le facteur de la vérité', but I would prefer to count on the many practitioners of deconstruction for that, this text having pushed me away from an oeuvre whose progress I had followed up to that point.

What I do know is that the knots in *The Sinthome* are a form of writing, and the knot is a letter. Moreover, Lacan reckoned he had inaugurated 'this business of writing' (p. 125) through the role he had been giving, from his *Seminar IX* onwards, to the 'unary trait' (which is how he translates Freud's *einziger Zug* from the last line of the fifth paragraph in chapter VII of *Massenpsychologie*; see for example *Seminar XI*, p. 256).

§ 14. The enigma of enunciation

Intension, with an 's', p. 132: Lacan had already employed the distinction between intension and extension (see for example the

'Proposition of 9 October on the Psychoanalyst of the School' in *Analysis*, 6, 1995, p. 6).

The distinction is recognized in logic: the *extension* of a class is the objects that it contains, its denotation; the *intension* is the definition of these objects, the property (or properties) or attribute(s) that allow(s) them to be selected in a universe (of discourse).

Intension can be purely subjective, varying according to different individuals. It can also be objective and designate all the attributes, whether known or unknown, that the denoted objects have in common; *intension* is then equivalent to *comprehension*. Lastly, if it concerns only those attributes selected by convention, then *intension* is equivalent to *connotation*. This latter aspect is the one that concerns logic. One can find this useful three-phase division in the old primer by Cohen and Nagel, *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method*, Routledge, 1934, reprinted in 1963, pp. 30–3. This is where the difficulties begin.

Quine found intension deeply repellent because of the so-called 'referential opacity' phenomena to which it gives rise, notably in quotation, and because of the appearance of 'truth-value gaps' that complicate deduction. Thus, the penultimate chapter of *Word and Object* (MIT Press, 1960) carries the title 'Flight from Intension'. Quine endorses and methodically organizes this flight from Egypt by banning all 'intensional objects' in accordance with the principle, worthy of Antiochus Epiphanes, that 'explication is elimination' (p. 260). It is true that language amounts to much ado about nothing, but forcing oneself to speak only and always about what exists results in a perfectly transparent and regimented discourse that is shorn of proper names (in order to avoid the occurrence of unicorns and other creatures such as might be found in a Blavatsky- or Meinong-style discourse), that is shorn of meanings and surprises, a discourse in which we always know in advance who is who and who does what.

The Quinean universe, with its detached and ironic Olympian calm, a little dull but exceedingly worthy, and really rather nice once the extermination of intruders has been taken care of, in which there reigns a principle of caution and least effort that has been pushed to its extreme, and whose *Stimmung* is not far removed from the one that makes itself felt in the logician's autobiography (see above § 9), did not survive Rorty's betrayal, infected though it was with the most muddled intensional abstractions of 'French Theory', deconstruction, and even Heidegger (who had nevertheless been pilloried by Carnap). Nor above all did it survive the assault from Kripke, which was hailed by Lacan no sooner than his lectures were collected in the

1972 volume that bears the title *Naming and Necessity*. We shall mention once again that the translator of this book (published in French by Éditions de Minuit) was a contributor to Lacan's Seminar (François Recanati).

A little further down, on p. 133, Lacan indicates that he once turned his interest to the enigma of the riddle. A passage from *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis* (p. 36–7)[16] effectively defines enigma in reference to enunciation, in contradistinction to quotation which is defined in reference to the statement. The enigma is an enunciation that defers to the listener in order to become a statement; the quotation is a statement that settles the enigma of enunciation by means of the author's proper name.

This pairing is highly instructive. For example, it affords an immediate understanding of why it was quite normal that it should be the co-author of the *Vocabulary of Psychoanalysis*, a very orderly compilation of quotes from Freud, who questioned Lacan on the truth of truth (see here, p. 132)[17].

Saying the truth about truth presupposes eliminating the enunciation in favour of the statement (of an operating predicate '*x* is true'). Yet, this 'true', which is the '*intensional* truth' from page 132, remains relative to the universe of discourse that is under consideration, to its axioms and procedures of validation. It just requires a harmonious accord of signifiers among themselves. The signifier, like the jackass, rubs itself against the signifier, it deploys its networks, meanders and labyrinths, but all this is tantamount to turning round in circles in the ring of the symbolic, around an invisible hole, that of the want-of-saying. This is the Quinean path, which is not bereft of wisdom.

On the other hand there is the paradoxical necessity, as in *The Sinthome*, of inventing and naming the 'bare' real, which is set apart from the true, which ex-sists relative to the 'symbolic order', and which is lawless, disconnected, and haphazard.

This is a new and extreme variation of Lacan's perennial formula: truth possesses the structure of fiction; it is fantasmatic through and through, it is mendacious, or rather *mensonge*, the *songe qui ment*, the dream that tells lies; it is semblance; it stands betwixt us and the real (see *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, p. 174).

Footnotes are one of the ordinary incarnations of the 'truth about truth'. Whether from the author or his commentator, whether at the foot of the page or carried over to the end of the book, the footnote stands in the position of meta-language, from which it effects a semblance of validation (or invalidation) with respect to the object-language. One has only to savour Anthony Grafton's lesson in his spicy little book *The Footnote: A Curious History*, Faber, 1997, to

grasp the deep-lying reasons that led Lacan to decide to rule out this way of going about things for the published edition of his Seminar, where what is at stake is to make an enunciation pass through into writing without dulling its enigmatic radiance.

It will be remarked that in this 'Note' I have replaced tragedy[18] with facetiae, and you shall be the judge of whether I have displayed the enigma of enunciation, in its loquacity as much as its arbitrariness and mystery.

§ 17. The Unerkannt

The adjective *unerkannt* on p. 129, which translates as 'unrecognized', 'unacknowledged', or 'unidentified', features as a noun in a famous sentence from chapter seven of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, dedicated to 'The psychology of the dream processes' (*Gesammelte Schriften*, Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1925, Tome II, p. 466; *The Interpretation of Dreams* in the *Standard Edition 5*, Hogarth, 1953, p. 525). Freud notes the persistence of 'eine Stelle im Dunkel' (an obscure point) in the most thoroughly interpreted dreams, and he adds: 'Dies ist dann der Nabel des Traumes [the dream's navel], die Stelle, an der er dem Unerkannten aufsitzt [the spot where it reaches down into the unknown].'

There has been a great deal of lucubration around this so-called 'unknown'. When asked about it in January 1975, Lacan translates *unerkannt* as 'unacknowledged'. He identifies it with what Freud calls the *Urverdrängt*, the primary or primordially repressed (cf. especially the 1915 articles on repression and the unconscious, as well as *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, chapter X, *Standard Edition 20*, Hogarth, 1959, p. 94) which he reads as *a knot in the utterable* comparable to the hole in the drive (see *Seminar XI*). On this topic, he developed some highly original considerations (his remarks, which in their time were published in the *Lettres* of the École freudienne de Paris, are due to appear, in a version established by my hand, in a volume in the 'Paradoxes' series[19]). Freud notes in the same passage that the dream-thoughts branch out in every direction, like the networks of the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* that are involved on page 112 (translated into English in *Origins of Psychoanalysis*, Basic Books, 1954, pp. 347–445, reprinted in the *Standard Edition 1*, Hogarth, 1966, pp. 283–397; the networks Lacan is speaking about are represented on page 354; see also pp. 313, 314, 324 and 341). One keeps on finding, and yet one keeps on searching. Finding is not the opposite of searching. The find does not put an end to the search, but endlessly starts it over again.

The same goes for the remarks that make up this 'Note threaded stitch by stitch'.

§ 18. Folisophy

Lacan once adopted for himself Picasso's superb statement, 'I do not seek, I find' (p. 74; see *Seminar XI*, p. 7). I am the author of the rather uncharitable (private) remark alluded to on p. 74: 'These days, you might as well say: *I don't find, I seek*.' In the same spirit, see p. 106.

What was he seeking? Well, a knot from which he could fashion the privileged support of his lucubrations, and which would start them over again by questioning him, as we saw him doing with the non-permutative rotation of the four well-chosen symbols from which he would draw his 'four discourses'.

He sought an aid of the same sort in Joyce. Unlike Joyce, however, he did not dream of calling upon the father (the last sentence of *A Portrait*, quoted on p. 55).

If the knot as the subject's support holds together, then there is no need of the Name-of-the-Father: it is superfluous. If the knot does not hold together, the Name holds the function of the *sinthome*. In psychoanalysis, it is an instrument for transforming jouissance by way of meaning. It works in the same way as the Name that transforms the *x* of the mother's desire (DM) in the 'paternal metaphor' by giving it the signification of the phallus (*Écrits*, p. 557).

One can, therefore, make use of the Name-of-the-Father while still dispensing with any belief in it (see above, p. 116). This sentence has provided the theme of the next Congress of the World Association of Psychoanalysis, which will be held in Rome in 2006. The reference to *Totem and Taboo* on p. 130 is a cursory reminder of the thesis that was set out and developed at length in the second part of *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 85–140, under the title 'Beyond the Oedipus Complex'. Lacan calls upon this beyond (which is *ipso facto* a beyond of the Name-of-the-Father and a beyond of *La femme*, the latter being a version of the Father according to *Autres écrits*, p. 563)[20] in order to restore to female sexuality its own specific structure, which Freud had unduly restricted to male coordinates (see 'L'étourdit' in *Autres écrits*, especially p. 462, *passim*).

Yet all the help in the world could never silence the tolling bell of the 'hopelessness' that resounds throughout *The Sinthome* like a 'Nevermore'. It is the hopelessness of the 'method' of the knots (p. 25); the hopelessness of any relation between the sexes.

Lacan had commented on Plato's *Symposium* in his Seminar

on *Transference*, the sixth chapter of which was dedicated to Aristophanes' myth; he later offered a less optimistic and somewhat fantastic version, worthy of Edgar Allan Poe, in what is known as the 'lamella myth', mentioned on pp. 29–30 (see *Écrits*, pp. 845–7). In this lamella one can recognize the entity that Freud conjured up in his 1915 article 'Trieb und Triebschicksal' (commented on in *Seminar XI*, chapters XIII and XIV; see also *Écrits*, pp. 851–4): 'eines fast völlig hilflosen, in der Welt noch unorientierten Lebewesens, welches Reize in seiner Nervensubstanz auffängt', an almost entirely helpless organism, as yet unoriented in the world, whose nerve substance receives stimuli (*Gesammelte Werke*, Tome 10, p. 212: see also James Strachey's footnote on p. 119 of the *Standard Edition 14*). Lacan turns this into the representation of *libido*. It would be a third, supplementary, entity that arises from the break of the initial egg. This is an image of the object *a*, an object that itself translates the constant character of the Freudian drive, its 'konstante Kraft'.

The approach to energetics by way of a numerical constant to be obtained in a closed universe is pointed out on pp. 113–14 of *The Sinthome*. This theme made its appearance in Lacan's teaching during *Seminar XII*, in reference to *The Feynman Lectures on Physics* (see also Richard P. Feynman, *The Character of Physical Law*, BBC, 1965). It is also mentioned in 'Television', pp. 24–5.

In *The Sinthome*, Lacan underlines the 'helpmeet against', the *ezer k'negdo* (see § 1), the one that God created for man by giving him a woman. The word *k'negdo* has not failed to mobilize the ingenuity of exegetes. Its roots are *K*, 'as', and *NGD*, 'which is contrary to', 'in front of', 'opposite', 'in the presence of', and 'spouse'. In verses 18 and 20, the *D* is written with a dot, which gives it the sense of 'opposed', 'contrary'. The literal translation would be: 'as a presence of that which is against.'

In the English translation of the *Aggadah* from the *Babylonian Talmud* (compiled in Salonica c. 1515) we read:

> R. Eleazar also said: 'What is the meaning of the scriptural text: *I will make an ezer kenegdo*? If he is worth it, she is his helper, and if he is not worth it, she is against him.
>
> [. . .] It is written [as though it could be read] *kenagdo* (opposing him) but we read *kenegdo* (corresponding to him): when he is worth it, she is a counterpart for him, but when he is not, she chastises him (*menagado*).[21]

The Midrash Rabba, which was compiled in the fifth century, states that the *kenegdo* shall be a helper if he merits it, 'otherwise – against

him' (17.3[22]). The *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, midrashic commentaries that were composed c. 830 and which gave a decisive push to the shaping of Kabbalah, in particular the composition of the *Zohar*, sets down the following: 'Rabbi Jehudah said: – If he be worthy she shall be an help meet [*kenegdo*] for him; if not, she shall be against him [*lenagdo*] to fight him.'[23] The word *lenagdo* is constructed of *L*, meaning 'towards', with a movement, and *NGD*, meaning 'against'. Finally, we have the *Zohar*:

> This helpmeet against him is the *Mishnah*, [. . .] the maidservant of the *Shekhinah*. If Israel [i.e. the man] so merits, the *Mishnah* will be a helpmeet in his exile, functioning on the side of the permissible, the pure, and the kosher. If not, the *Mishnah* will be against him, functioning on the side of the impure, the improper, and the forbidden. (*Tikunei haZohar*, 27b)

The *Mishnah* is literally 'the Repetition', or 'the Second'; written between the first and second centuries it constitutes the base of the legislative teaching of Judaism.

Antoine Fabre d'Olivet translated the verse literally: 'Je ferai à lui une force auxiliaire (un soutien, une aide, une corroboration, une doublure) en reflet lumineux de lui.'[24] As much as Blavatsky, or even Anne-Catherine Emmerich ('the pious nun', a stigmatist who delighted Clemens Brentano), as much as the marquis de Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, who 'possessed the faculty of being able to duplicate himself and project into the astral realm' and who became guru to René Guénon, as much as Ferdynand Antoni Ossendowski, the author of *Beasts, Men and Gods* (1922), and just as much as the whole Swedenborgian procession of the last centuries, this great Kabbalist initiate deserves wider renown; see issue 138 of the *Revue d'études d'Oc*, June 2004, devoted to 'Fabre d'Olivet, Occitanist, Hebraist, and theosophist', under the aegis of the Centre d'enseignement et de recherche d'oc, Paris-Sorbonne University. *Les Secrets kabbalistiques de la Bible*, Licorne ailée, from the hand of François Brousse, the eminent and prolific neo-surrealist poet-theosophist (b. Perpignan 1913; d. Clamart 1995) also makes for profitable reading.

Are there such secrets to be found in *The Sinthome*? One could plausibly maintain that there are. For example, who would believe that it is *really* by chance that Sollers in the late 1970s, that is, *precisely* during Lacan's last years, wrote his *Paradis* (published in 1981, the *very year* of the master's death)? When one knows that the word comes from *Paradêsha*, 'the supreme region' in Sanskrit, one cannot help but wonder to what extent the Seminar, under the

reassuring appearance of a rational exploration of the properties of knots for psychoanalytic purposes, might actually have been the spiritual centre (though only for certain initiates since it is invisible to common folk) that is described in tradition under the name of *Agartha*, the Paradise of the present esoteric cycle? To go straight to the heart of the matter, doesn't Sollers let us hear, in his *exceedingly singular* 'novel', that he recognized in the person of the 'doctor' Lacan none other than Melchizedek, or rather, *Malki Tzedek*?

The question is there for the posing. That it should be greeted with a chuckle to which the interested parties are well accustomed, and that Lacan like Freud should have flatly rejected any compromise with occultism, ought not to be confused by anyone with a *serious* refutation. 'Since it's slower [to read], paradoxically, it gets ahead of itself', explains Sollers of *Paradis*. This paradox, with its *indisputably* Kabbalistic scent, is also the paradox of *The Sinthome* in which the 'power of unreading' that Lacan prided himself on is pushed to its limits.

Let's come back to the aforementioned hopelessness. It also makes itself heard in Lacan's gloomy reply to the question about China on p. 118: 'I've been waiting, but I don't hope for anything.' In his 1968–1969 Seminar, Lacan hypothesized that Chairman Mao was aiming to reconfigure the relationships between the subject and knowledge (which would have allowed the field of 'creative subjectivity' to open up to the working class, along with the poor and the medium-poor peasants; see above, § 3). But Lacan added that we would have 'to wait in order to see more clearly'. In 1976, it was still a matter of waiting, but this time without hope. Already in 1972, in a private admonition to his then militantly Maoist son-in-law, Lacan was maintaining that money reigned supreme in Peking (see François Regnault, 'I was struck by what you said . . .', *Hurly-Burly* 6, 2011, pp. 23–8).

This absence of hope (see also 'Television', pp. 42–4) is not despair. It opens the path to wisdom. But which wisdom?

On no account is it that of the *Book of Wisdom* (cited on pp. 108–9). Among the Sapiential Books in the third part of the Bible, Lacan singles out this one for how it grounds wisdom on lack. This point is especially tangible in the first part of the Book, which lists the ills with which the righteous may be afflicted without losing their quality of righteousness.

No, the wisdom of the sinthome is not resignation to lack, nor is it the return to zero or the homeostasis of the stable existence of the universal under the ferule of the pleasure-principle. The wisdom of the sinthome is neither the *Wisdom of Solomon*, nor Hegel, nor

Husserl, nor Quine, but much rather Joyce, as the young Derrida had spotted so well.

Joycean wisdom is much rather a 'folisophy' (p. 108). It consists in making use of one's sinthome, the singularity of one's supposed 'psychical handicap', for better or worse, without crushing its relief under common sense.

Even when it falls under the remit of mereotopology (Nicholas Asher and Laure Vieu, 'Toward a Geometry of Common Sense: A Semantics and a Complete Axiomatization of Mereotopology' in C. Mellish (ed.), *Proceedings of the 14th IJCAI. San Mateo*, Morgan Kaufmann, 1995, pp. 846–52), common sense remains fundamentally Scottish. As for sinthomal wisdom, it is of Irish stock. Nothing could be further from the French ideological school, for which Lacan harboured a deep and constant aversion (hence our allusion to Victor Cousin in § 5). This aversion has, moreover, often been mutual.

Ideology (see the fine study by François Picavet, *Les Idéologues. Essai sur l'histoire des idées et des théories scientifiques, philosophiques, religieuses, etc., en France depuis 1789*, Paris, 1891) still permeates in this day and age what the French like to think of as their *esprit cartésien*, which is actually far removed from the spirit of the adventurous cavalier that Descartes was. In the progeny of Ideology, which is altogether forgotten nowadays in keeping with its omnipresence in the intellectual life of the nation, we also meet as much the École polytechnique students, at least those of the nineteenth century, who 'prided themselves on having more precise and more satisfactory solutions than anyone else for all political, religious and social questions' (Émile Keller), and who 'ventured to create a religion as one learns at the École to build a bridge or a road' (Albert Thibaudet; these two quotes come from chapter 11 of F. A. Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science: Studies on the Abuse of Reason*, Liberty Fund, 1952, reprinted in 1979; the author stresses disapprovingly their 'propensity to become socialists', p. 113), as the ironic liberal partisans of Ernest Renan, whose brightest prospects in humanism and literature are Messrs Marc Fumaroli and François Sureau.

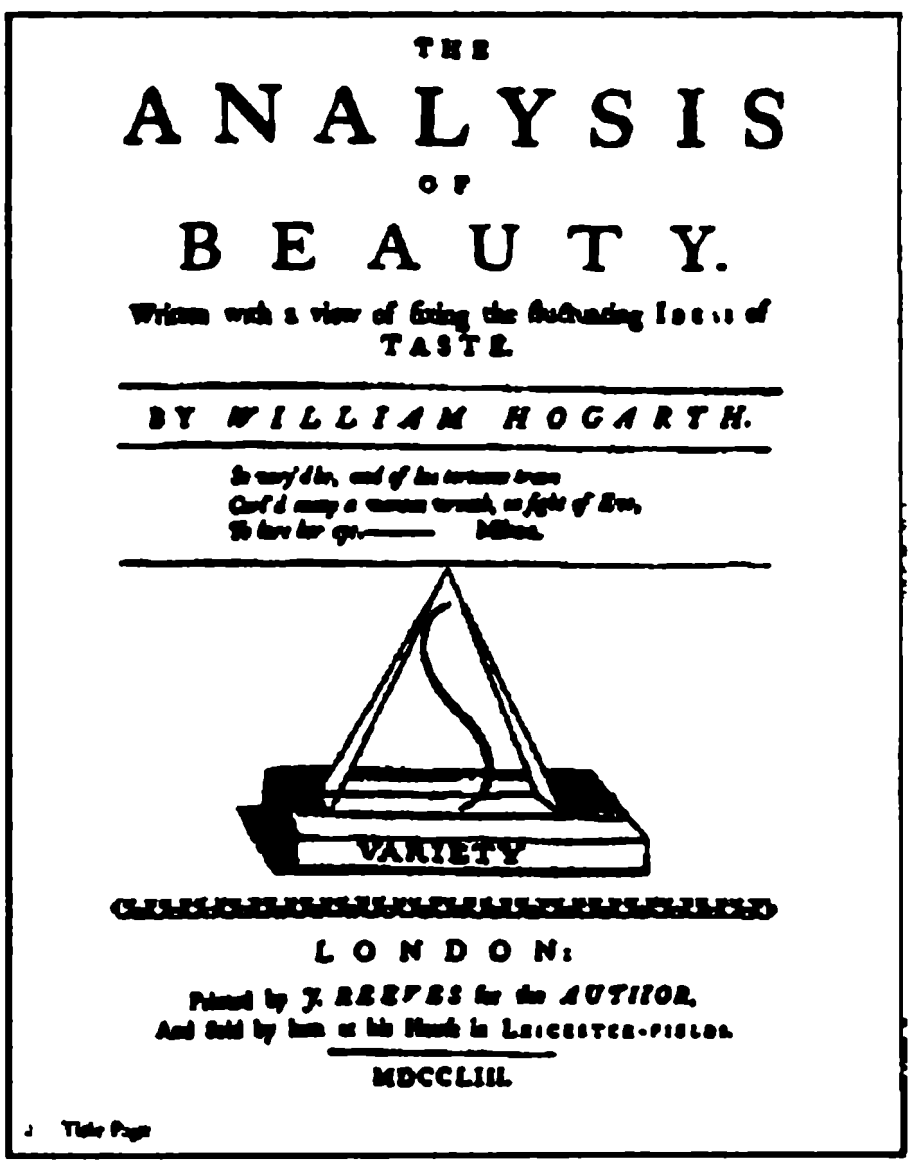
§ 19. Hogarth

The ethic sketched out in *The Sinthome* is complemented by an aesthetic.

The aged Lacan's inspired speculations and sometimes exceedingly laboured 'diffuse bleed' (he was the first to say so), his

breaches through the dark obscurity and his serpentine knots which for him were both torture and delight, emit a strange effect of beauty.

This is not peaceful Fibonaccian beauty in the pattern of the golden section, designed to accord with stable existence in the universal; it is the winding, varied, and haphazard beauty that Hogarth's genius depicted in a single undulating ethereal line (see p. 54). Himself something of a Popillius here, Hogarth encloses it not in a circle this time, but in a translucent pyramid.



§ 20. Envoi

O Lacan, now that thou art no more than the name of thy Luciferian desire – in the proper sense: he who shines light in the darkness – this faithful Achates, who carries upon his back the weight of this light, calls on thy glorious shadow to bear witness:

'I can say that yes, I am content, content at having endued thy voice with the written form most worthy of bearing it, content at having brightened thy sombre dissonant symphony with a hundredfold blithesome arias, content to have done so while delivering to the common folk nothing of the unsullied arcana of thy *lettre voilée*.'

§ 21. 'A commodius vicus of recirculation'

Leaning on Jacques-Alain, his staff beyond the grave, the Doctor stands upright, in keeping with the erstwhile wish of their dear

Back to the start

Nota bene

The *Écrits* have been referenced in the 1966 French edition, and the *Autres écrits* in the 2001 edition; both were published by Seuil, who have also published all the Seminars edited to date; the Seminars yet to appear have been referenced in the text as currently in preparation.

Philippe Sollers has kindly agreed for Navarin to reprint his interview quoted in § 1 in a short book that will bear the title *Lacan même*, which is slated to come out at the same time as *The Sinthome* (distribution by Seuil); the historian Dominique Colas, author of the classic *Le Léninisme. Philosophie et sociologie politique du léninisme* (PUF, 1982 and 1998), contacted by my brother Gérard, located the Lenin quotes in § 5 for me; the mathematician M* S* proofed § 11, and informed me of Perko's remarkable

discovery; the historian Élisabeth Roudinesco, whose works form part of the essential references of the period, provided me with the dates and titles I needed for the fifth paragraph of § 15; the psychiatrist Yves-Claude Stavy shared with me his knowledge on the 'helpmeet *k'negdo*' (§ 18); an additional reference was furnished by the Israeli psychoanalyst Marco Mauas; I have been surrounded by the abiding friendship of my colleagues from the École de la Cause freudienne and the World Association of Psychoanalysis, who have helped me more than I can say.

I would like to express my gratitude for the aid they have been kind enough to offer me, and I thank 'in advance any reader who would like to collaborate in the revision of a text that is the object of continuing work. Comments should be forwarded c/o my publisher' (quoted from the 'Acknowledgements' to *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, 1992, p. 326).

Please pardon the author's faults. As Joyce said for a long while of *Finnegans Wake*: 'work in progress'.

Post-scriptum

Hardly had I finished correcting the text of the present 'Note' than someone pointed out to me, in this week's edition of the magazine *Voici* (No. 898, 24–30 January 2005, pp. 44–5), an interview with Philippe Sollers under the title 'Oui, je suis Dieu!'

Actually, those words come from the lips of the journalists: 'They say that you're God in the world of literature!' to which Sollers gives an ok-you're-on reply, 'well, my children, yes, I'm God!' The mere existence of this humorous exchange confirms, if need be, my argument in § 12.

I shall add, following the same register of ideas, that to offer to the public some notion that approximated the figure of the psychoanalyst, Lacan drew on saintliness, and not on the unique God ('Television', pp. 15–16), since The Analyst has no more existence than *La femme* (see § 4, and *Autres écrits*, p. 308: 'the analyst falls under the remit of the not-all').

If the analyst is a saint, the question could then be posed as to whether the unconscious might not be God (see the highly informed book by François Regnault, *Dieu est inconscient*, Navarin, 1986). In any case, one can be quite sure that if He were, he would be unable, contrary to Sollers, to affirm: 'Yes, I am.'

He would not even know that He exists.

27 January 2005

Notes

All notes below have been provided by the translator.

Chapter I. On the Logical Use of the Sinthome, or Freud with Joyce

1 The four planar diagrams depict four different projections of the same knot: the 'three-twist knot' (Rolfsen notation 5_2).
2 Here and hereafter, we use *lalingua* for *lalangue*. *Lalangue* is a contraction of *la langue* ('the tongue' or 'the language') and is reminiscent of 'lallation' (as Lacan himself remarks; cf. (1989) 'Geneva lecture on the symptom', *Analysis* 1:14).
3 *L'élangues* is homophonic with *les langues*. Sollers's neologism is evocative of the verb *élanguer*, 'to remove the tongue', and also *élan* ('momentum', 'impetus', 'surge' or 'urge').
4 *L'Èvie* is homophonic with *les vies*, 'lives'.
5 This sentence contains some extended wordplay: Lacan's term *parlêtre* condenses *être parlé*, 'spoken being', and *par lettre*, 'by letter'; *le serre-fesses* is derived from *serrer les fesses,* literally 'to clench the buttocks', which carries the idiomatic sense of 'to brace oneself'; and lastly *faut-pas*, 'ought not', is homophonic with 'faux pas'.
6 *Ce qu'on dit ment*, 'what one says lies', is homophonic with *ce condiment*.
7 Throughout the first three lessons of this Seminar, Lacan often uses the terms *nœud* and *nœud borroméen* imprecisely, referring to links of three or four components. From the fourth lesson onwards, he rectifies his vocabulary, switching to *chaîne* and *chaîne borroméenne*, while reserving the term *nœud* (with some exceptions) for single-component knots. See also Chapter II note 1 below.
8 L6a4 (Rolfsen notation 6^3_2).
9 The figure on the left is equivalent to Rolfsen notation 0^3_1; the figure on the right is a four-component Brunnian link with a crossing number of 14.
10 This doubling of the components is conventionally known as Bing doubling (after R. H. Bing).
11 Further figurations of L6a4, though not in minimal projection.

Chapter II. On What Makes a Hole in the Real

1 It should be noted that what Lacan calls 'the Borromean property' corresponds more conventionally to 'the Brunnian property'. Here and hereafter, when Lacan speaks of a link tied 'in Borromean fashion', it equates with the criterion of a Brunnian link, which holds that both the minimum cutting number, μ, (i.e. the smallest number of cuts that suffice to unlink all the remaining rings) and the maximum cutting number, M, (i.e. the largest number of cuts that can be applied to unlink all the remaining rings) of a given link are equal to 1. This observation becomes more critical when considering links that possess four or more components. It has been shown, for example, using the more conventional definition of the Borromean property ($\mu = 1$, $M > 1$), that a four-component Borromean link exists where $M = 2$. Lacan's definition coincides with the conventional definition only in that $\mu = 1$.

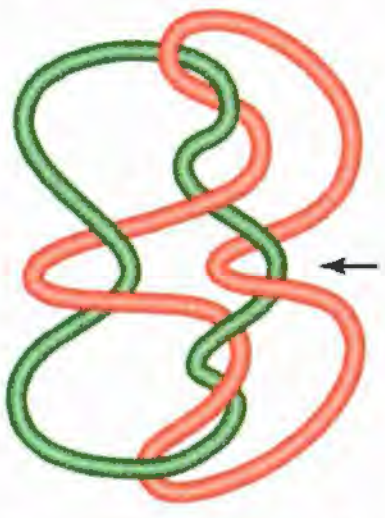
2 The French translation of Fromm's *Sigmund Freud's Mission; an analysis of his personality and influence* was published under the title *La Mission de Sigmund Freud: une analyse de sa personnalité et de son influence* by Éditions Complexe, not Gallimard.

3 Strictly speaking, the diagram on the left comprising straight lines is not a (Borromean) link, for in supposing the (blue and green) lines to be infinite, it omits the sixth crossing point that would specify the nature of their linkage. The same applies to all Lacan's subsequent diagrams using straight lines.

4 Here and on p. 111, when Lacan uses *chiffre*, which would more conventionally be rendered as 'number', or '(numerical) figure', we have opted for its English cognate 'cipher', to accommodate the notion of an enciphered metaphorization of number.

5 Lacan pronounces *pen-se* in a way that might suggest *pense-ce*, 'ponder this'; but perhaps also *panse*, which he will mention in lesson IV, punning on the homophony between verb and noun.

6 As reproduced here, the link is not in minimal projection: the ten overlaps are reducible to nine crossings, producing L9a34 (Rolfsen notation 9^2_6). However, one unofficial typescript of this lesson reproduces the link in a slightly different form: as L10a115.



7 What Lacan calls *nœud à trois* (in reference to the knot's crossing number: 3) is translated here and hereafter as 'trefoil knot' (Rolfsen notation 3_1).

Chapter III. On the Knot as the Subject's Support

1 This figuration effectively switches from a link presentation to a braid presentation, and in so doing is perfectly coherent with Alexander's theorem. Each trefoil knot is cut into the strands of a braid, which is allowed by the isomorphism between the knot group of the trefoil and the braid group of degree three (B_3). As Lacan indicates in the following paragraph, different braids could give rise to the same link.

Chapter IV. Joyce and the Fox Riddle

1 This link is not L6a4, since it has a crossing number of 20. It might be more accurate to say that this link is a further version of a three-component Brunnian link.
2 Again, this link is distinct from either of the two shown in the two previous planar diagrams in that it possesses a crossing number of 24. It is, however, yet another version of a three-component Brunnian link.
3 The written form *Yad'lun* is an attempt to capture Lacan's concentrated pronunciation of *Y a de l'Un*, itself an informal contraction of *Il y a de l'Un*: 'There is Oneness' or 'There is something of the One'. Thus, not only does the content of the expression indicate the prominence of the One, but its very form presents as a unitary element.
4 The French *esprit* embraces 'spirit', 'mind' and, perhaps most pertinently here, 'wit'.
5 *Je le panse . . . donc je l'essuie* is a deliberate play on the French translation for *cogito, ergo sum*: *je pense donc je suis*. *Panse* signifies both 'bandage' and 'stomach' or 'belly', as in the belly of a vase. *Essuyer* signifies both 'to suffer' and 'to clean' (with the possible implication here of tending a wound).

Chapter V. Was Joyce Mad?

1 *Ne se pense que le corps*, perhaps contains a further pun on *panse*: *ne se panse que le corps*.
2 L7a1 (Rolfsen notation 7^2_6).

Chapter VI. Joyce and Imposed Words

1 Lacan's knot is more commonly known today as a 'three-twist knot' (Rolfsen notation 5_2). See chapter I, endnote 1.
2 As noted by the translator of Lacan's interview with the patient (who was given the pseudonym Gérard Primeau), the French word *assastinat*, translated here by a neologism in order to preserve the homophony, is the recognized term for an 'assistantship' in a medical context. Cf. 'A Lacanian Psychosis: Interview by Jacques Lacan' in *Returning to Freud: Clinical Psychoanalysis in the School of Lacan*, edited and translated by S. Schneiderman, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980, p. 21.

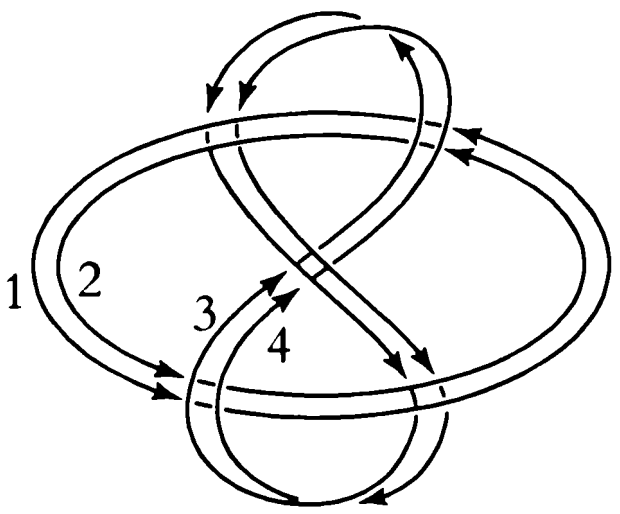
3 L7a1.
4 Left: L5a1 (Rolfsen notation 5^2_1); right: L4a1 (Rolfsen notation 4^2_1). Neither of these links is in minimal projection.
5 Lacan's term 'figure-of-eight knot' is misleadingly redolent of 'figure-eight knot', the alternative label for Listing's knot. It would be less diverting to refer to these projections of L5a1 as a 'figure-of-eight link'.
6 A different projection of L7a1.
7 *Se lie* is homophonic with *se lit*, 'gets read'. A *lit* is also a bed.

Chapter VII. On a *Fallace* that Vouches for the Real

1 More precisely the Hopf link or L2a1 (Rolfsen notation 2^2_1).
2 The transverse plane and the horizontal plane are generally taken to be synonymous. The more widely accepted term for the third plane is the 'coronal plane' (occasionally, 'frontal plane').
3 The antiquated French noun *fallace* means 'deception'. Its loose homophony with 'phallus' has led us to leave it un-Englished here.

Chapter VIII. On *Sens*, Sex and the Real

1 *Prendre des vessies pour des lanterns* is a French idiom, dating back at least to the fourteenth century, used to denote someone's credulity. A common English-language equivalent is, 'to think the moon is made of green cheese'.
2 We have respected the practice introduced by Sylvana Tomaselli and John Forester of italicizing *ego* when the word *ego* appears in the French text (in contrast to the roman face 'ego' used for the French *moi*). See the 1986 note included in their respective translations of the first two books of Lacan's Seminar.
3 This link, described in Milnor's 1954 paper (in *Annals of Mathematics* 59 (2): 177–195), is more widely known as the Whitehead link (after J. H. C. Whitehead) or L5a1 (Rolfsen notation 5^2_1).
4 The link that results from these four components comprises a Bing double and two satellite rings with zero Whitehead torsion. This one is equivalent to L10n107. Some of the unofficial typescripts of this lesson reproduce an illustration of the link, indicating that Lacan drew it on the blackboard. The following diagram shows the link as it features in Milnor's 1954 paper (not in minimal projection):



Chapter IX. From the Unconscious to the Real

1 Lacan says 'I awe to tell', and spells out the word 'awe' letter by letter. The Seuil edition modifies to 'ought', which we have respected here, but the reader may like to consider 'awe' in light of Joyce's phrase in *Finnegans Wake*: 'where Used awe to be he' (16.22).

Chapter X. The Writing of the *Ego*

1 In this second mention of the term, Lacan drops the feminine article from *vie*, which amplifies the possible homophony with *vide de langage* (*vide* carries a masculine article), 'void of language'.
2 L10a169. Note that the rings R and S are interlinked as a Hopf link (which Lacan usually avoids) and thus, strictly speaking, this is neither a Borromean nor a Brunnian link.

Note

1 Unlike the French edition, the English-language editions of Lacan's Seminar have carried a full index from the very first, as does the present.

Joyce the Symptom

1 We have used 'purstiche' to render *poursticher*, a combination of *poursuivre* ('pursue') and *pastiche*.
2 Our 'protspers' is for *pourspère*, a combination of *pourriture* ('rot') and *prospère* ('prosper'). In the Seuil edition, line-end hyphenation has been introduced, accentuating (perhaps deliberately) the final syllable *père* ('father'). 'Drearly broadshit' is our rendering of *la journiture*, a combination of *journal* ('daily newspaper') and *pourriture* ('rot'). *Journiture* also rhymes with *nourriture*.
3 'Ptom' is for *ptôme*, the Romanized suffix of *symptôme*, from the Greek πίπτω ('fall'). Meanwhile, 'bol' is for *bole*, the Romanized suffix of *symbole*, from the Greek βάλλω ('throw'). 'The pot-pourrotten' is our rendering of *le tout-pourri*, which rhymes loosely with both *potpourri* and *Tout-Paris*, a seventeenth-century coinage referring to the capital's fashionable 'high society'. 'A dogsbody's life' is an attempt to render *bonneriche*, which is a contraction of *bonne et riche* ('hearty and wealthy') and rhymes loosely with *boniche* ('skivvy'). 'Eturnity' is for *étournité*, which introduces *tour* ('turn', or 'round') into *éternité*.
4 *P'titom* is a combination of *ptôm* and *petit homme* ('little man').

5 Joyce was born on 2 February 1882 so, in fact, had he lived until 1975 he would have been ninety-three.
6 An *escabeau* is a low stepladder or footstool used as an individual platform or to facilitate individual access to a higher place. In the written version of 'Joyce le Symptôme', Lacan plays on *escabeau* and 'S.K.beau', thus foregrounding the letter and the notion of 'the beautiful'. See 'A note threaded stitch by stitch', § 5.
7 *LOM* is homophonic with *l'homme* ('the man' or 'mankind').
8 *Hi han a pas* is homophonic with *Y'en a pas*, the contracted form of *Il n'y en a pas* ('there isn't any' or 'there are none'). Here, in our translation, 'hee-haw' designates both the donkey's bray and, in keeping with Central Scottish vernacular, 'nothing' or 'next to nothing'.

Presentation at Lacan's Seminar

1 . . . *j'en ai marre, marabout* . . . is a fragment from a children's schoolyard game called *Marabout de ficelle*, adapted from a well-known nursery rhyme, *Trois petits chats*. It employs a dense form of anadiplosis that bears on phonemes (rather than full words) to form a concatenated scheme. It is often chanted in twos, accompanied by hand-clapping games.

Reading Notes

1 In fact, the text to be found on pp. 13–17 of *Joyce & Paris* is the version that was later printed in *Autres écrits*, and not the transcript of the Sorbonne lecture (see Jacques-Alain Miller's note introducing the appendices). For an English-language rendering of the *Joyce & Paris* text, see 'Joyce the Symptom' in *The Lacanian Review*, Issue 2, 2016.
2 Lifted from George Meredith's *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, and also used in a slightly altered form by Oscar Wilde in *De Profundis*.
3 Trinity College, Cambridge, of course, and not Trinity College, Dublin, was Isaac Newton's university, first as a student, then as a fellow.
4 . . . *and another, by the name of Gelb*: Ignace J. Gelb, *A Study of Writing*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.
5 Variants include: 'Riddle me that and I'll give you a pint' or 'Riddle me that and you'll escape my bite'.
6 The note corresponds to *Ulysses*, p. 6, where Dr Norman is mentioned.
7 The strongest trace is to be found in *Stephen Hero* (p. 34): 'It was part of that ineradicable egoism which he was afterwards to call redeemer that he conceived converging to him the deeds and thoughts of his microcosm.'
8 'Couchmare' resembles *cauchemar*, the French term for 'nightmare'. The *alp* is more specifically a demon in German folklore that causes nightmares.
9 Perhaps Lacan is alluding to Joyce's mention of 'nebohood' in *Finnegans Wake* (235.16), though there is no reference to Moses.

10 Joyce refused to let the schemas be printed in the successive editions of *Ulysses*. The Linati schema, originally in Italian, first appeared in English translation in Richard Ellmann's *Ulysses on the Liffey*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1972, pp. 186–90. The Gorman-Gilbert schema first appeared in print in Stuart Gilbert's book: *James Joyce's Ulysses: A Study*, London: Faber, 1930, p. 30.

11 Especially: 'litterish fragments lurk dormant in [. . .] a pillarbox' (66.25-7); 'a cloudletlitter' (73.29); 'The letter! The litter! And the soother the bitther!' (93.24); 'writing thithaways end to end [. . .] with lines of litters slittering up' (114.17); 'neins to a litter' (202.2); 'an equoangular trillitter' (286.22); 'skittered his litters' (370.6); 'laying out his litterery bed' (422.35); 'an absquelitteris puttagonniante' (512.17-18); 'a litteringture of kidlings' (570.18); and 'type by tope, letter from litter, word at ward' (615.1).

12 This 'confusion of tongues' was first decrypted by William York Tindall in *A Reader's Guide to Finnegan's Wake,* New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1969, p. 42.

A Note Threaded Stitch by Stitch

1 Guilbaud's 'La théorie des jeux, contribution critique à la théorie de la valeur' was translated into English by A. L. Minkes as 'The Theory of Games', in *International Economic Papers*, London: Macmillan, 1951, pp. 37–65.

2 Brunschwig's article has never been translated into English. The English-language reader might wish to consult the chapter 'Logic' in Jacques Brunschwig and Geoffrey E. R. Lloyd (eds.), *Greek Thought: A Guide to Classical Knowledge*, translated under the direction of C. Porter, Harvard University Press, 2000, especially pp. 365–7 (also printed in abridged form as *The Greek Pursuit of Knowledge*).

3 Here, and throughout the Seminar, we have chosen to render the quantifying *tout* as 'all'. While this usage conforms to a long-standing tradition of Aristotelian term logic in English, it may be remarked that Robin Smith asserted (drawing on P. T. Geach in *Logic Matters*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1972, p. 69) that translating *ὑπάρχειν παντί* as 'belongs to all' is an 'unnecessary barbarism', with the plural form, 'belongs to every', being more advisable ('Preface' to *Prior Analytics*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989, p. ix). This opinion is counter to that of W. and M. Kneale in their 1962 book *The Development of Logic* (Oxford University Press) who assert: 'in some modern versions of Aristotle's doctrine the difficulties of his account of opposition are unnecessarily aggravated by use of examples and formulae in the plural' (p. 61). Recent translators and commentators have tended to maintain the use of 'all', foremost among them Gisela Striker in her *Aristotle's Prior Analytics, Book I*, Oxford University Press, 2009; see also M. Malink's note on '*Every* and *all*' from his chapter on 'The Orthodox *dictum* Semantics' in *Aristotle's Modal Syllogistic*, Harvard University Press, 2013. As for *μὴ πάντες*, which Lacan mentions on p. 6 (having already employed it in the 1972 'L'étourdit', *Autres écrits*, p. 465), this formula does indeed include a

plural form, though exactly which passage in the *Organon* Lacan might be referring to is not clear. There, the phrase occurs just once, in *On Sophistical Refutations*, X, 170b, 33. A more likely source is the passage from *De Interpretatione* to which Lacan alludes when he first mentions the *pas-tout* in his Seminar, on 17 January 1962 (that is, over seven years before Brunschwig's article was written). The precise reference is obfuscated, however, by Lacan's choice of example: the Latinized *omnis homo mendax*, presumably a nod to Luther's commentary on Psalm 116. In any case, the argument in support of the rendering 'not-whole' to be found in *Encore: The Limits of Love and Knowledge* (Norton, 1998), p. 7, footnote 28, is as flimsy as it is unprecedented.

4 Jacques-Alain Miller writes 'lawfull' (sic), but the mathematical term 'lawlike' might be more suitable.

5 Here we have used the translation provided by L. T. Lih in *Lenin Rediscovered: 'What is to Be Done?' in Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2006, p. 27).

6 Alan Sheridan (in *Écrits: A selection*, London: Tavistock, 1977, p. 202) translated *liegen lassen* as '[left] in the lurch' (and, on p. 205, as 'let-lie'). Russell Grigg followed suit on p. 127 of *The Seminar Book III, The Psychoses*, Norton/Routledge, 1993.

7 We are quoting from Joan Stambaugh's *Being and Time; A Translation of Sein und Zeit*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953; revised by Dennis J. Schmidt, New York: SUNY, 1996. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson give the very similar formula: 'The Existential Structure of the Authentic Potentiality-for-Being which is Attested in the Conscience' in their *Being and Time*, Blackwell, 1962. Jacques-Alain Miller cites from the Emmanuel Martineau translation, published by 'the appropriately named' Authentica Press, 1985; noting that he prefers this version over the François Vezin translation, Gallimard, 1986. It should also be noted that some scholars have highlighted a distinction between the *echt* (genuine) and the *eigentlich* (authentic) in *Sein und Zeit*. The former denotes the way concepts are drawn from entities and phenomena, the latter the entities and phenomena themselves (when they are deemed to be apt to yield insight into the ontology of existence). Heidegger also occasionally employs a third term, *genuin*, though not in a technical sense and with no apparent bearing on the above distinction.

8 Jacques-Alain Miller cites p. 213 of the Martineau translation, and p. 356 of the Vezin. Martineau gives *ouverture authentique* and Vezin *ouvertude authentique* to render *eigentliche Erschlossenheit*. (Both Stambaugh and MacQuarrie & Robinson give 'authentic disclosed-ness'.) The bilingual term '*echt* ouverture' thus contains an erroneous back-translation, since the adjective Heidegger uses is *eigentliche* (see previous note).

9 The term *Begriff* is attested (with the signification 'concept') long before Heidegger. It was used in Germanic mystical theology (cf. Christian Thomasius and Christian Wolff) and took on a specifically philosophical aspect with Kant and, later, Hegel. The Seuil text gives *quelque Allemand* (p. 86), but the liaison 's' audible on the recording leaves no doubt as to the plural.

10 Jacques-Alain Miller reproduces the French translation by Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet: *Abrégé des Histoires Philippiques de Trogue Pompée* (available online at *Corpus latinorum scriptorum*). We have quoted the 1853 translation by John Selby Watson, London: Henry G. Bohn.

11 For this rendering, see: Bossuet, J. B., *An Universal History: from the Beginning of the World to the Empire of Charlemagne*, translated by D. Ephilstone, London: Evans/Sewell/Fox, 1778, p. 78; reprinted with revised spelling, New York: J & J Harper, 1821, pp. 64-5.

12 Thus taking the Le Bas engraving or the Rembrandt sketch as reference, since the above-cited passage from Justinus specifies that the king's advisors were included within the circle. Neither Livy nor Polybius (*Histories*, XXIX, 27) are explicit on this point.

13 We owe the first English-language translation of Algarotti's book to another woman of the eighteenth century who came to be taxed with the doubtful accolade of *femme savante*: Mrs Elizabeth Carter (*Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy Explain'd for the Use of the Ladies. In Six Dialogues on Light and Colours*, London: E. Cave, 1739).

14 Jacques Derrida passed away on 9 October 2004, just two months prior to the completion of the appendices to the French edition of *Seminar XXIII* (see the date to the 'Note' on p. 137 above).

15 Lacan's disparaging remarks on the book and its Preface are actually from the following year's Seminar (cf. the lesson of 14 December 1976).

16 Russell Grigg translates *énonciation* as 'utterance', and *énigme* as 'enigma'. We have preferred 'enunciation' due to the fairly widespread tradition of using 'utterance' in English for the converse of *énonciation*: *énoncé*. Here and for the corresponding passage in the Seminar above we have used the paraphrase 'enigma of the riddle' to convey the two meanings carried by the French *énigme*.

17 At the end of his bio-bibliographical references to the single session of the *Names-of-the-Father* seminar cited here, Jacques-Alain Miller discloses the name of the author concerned: J.-B. Pontalis.

18 An allusion to the French title of Grafton's book: *Les Origines tragiques de l'érudition. Une histoire de la note en bas de page* (Seuil, 1998).

19 The promised text has yet to appear in its revised form. The remarks in question came in reply to a query from Marcel Ritter at the 26 January 1975 Cartels Study Day held in Strasbourg. A transcript of Lacan's improvised answer was published in issue 18 of *Lettres de l'EFP*, 1976, pp. 7–12.

20 This page corresponds to p. 34 of 'Spring Awakening' in *Analysis*, 6, 1995.

21 Babylonian Talmud, Yebamoth 63a. The text in square brackets was added by Jacob Neusner, in *The Talmud of Babylonia* (13b: Tractate Jebamot chapters 4–6), Atlanta, 1992, p. 142.

22 This reference conforms to the J. Theodor and Chanoch Albeck edition, *Bereshit Rabba*, p. 152.

23 *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer (The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer the Great): According to the text of the manuscript belonging to Abraham Epstein of Vienna*, translated by Gerard Friedlander, London, Paul Kegan, 1916, p. 86.

24 'I shall make for him an auxiliary force (a support, a helper, a corroboration, an understudy) as a luminous reflection of him.'

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Seminar 1: Wednesday 16 November 1976

There is a kind of notice which sets out...were you able to read it? What did you make of it? *L'insu que sait*, all the same that's a bit of blah-de-blah, it equivocates; *L'insu que sait*, and then I gave a translation of the *Unbewusst*, I said that there was, in the sense of the use in French of the partitive, that there was *de l'une-bévue*[1]. It is just as good a way of translating the *Unbewusst* as any other, as the unconscious, in particular which, in French – and in German also moreover - equivocates with unconsciousness.

The unconscious has nothing to do with unconsciousness. So then why not quite calmly translate it by *l'une-bévue*. All the more so because this has immediately the advantage of highlighting certain things; why do we feel obliged in the analysis of dreams, which constitutes a *bévue* like anything else, like a parapraxis, except for the fact that there is something in which one recognises oneself. You recognise yourself in the witticism, because the witticism depends on what I called *lalangue*, you recognise yourself in the witticism, you slip into it and on this Freud made some remarks that are not unimportant. I mean that the advantage of the witticism for the unconscious is all the same linked to something specific which involves the acquisition of *lalangue*. Moreover, should we be saying that to analyse a dream we should stick to what happened the previous day? This is not self-evident. Freud made a rule of it, but it would be as well all the same to see that there are many things which, not alone can go further back, but which depend on what could be called the very fabric of the unconscious. Also, is the parapraxis something which ought to be analysed strictly according to

[1] [1] Lacan's play on *Unbewusst* and *une-bévue* cannot be reproduced in English. 'something of a-bungle' or similar expressions miss the point. A practical solution would be for readers to add *une-bévue* or simply *bévue* to their Lacanian vocabulary.

what happened, not the previous day, but this time during the day, this is something that really should be questioned.

This year, let us say that with this *L'insu que sait de l'une-bévue*, I am trying to introduce something which goes further than the unconscious. What relationship is there between this something which must be admitted, that we have an inside that is called as best one can, psyche for example, we even see Freud writing *endo*, endo-psychical; it is not self-evident that the psyche should be *endo*; it is not self-evident that this endo should be endorsed. What relationship is there between this *endo*, this inside and what we usually call identification? It is this in short that, under this title which is as it were made for this particular occasion, this is what I would like to put under this title. Because it is clear that identification is what is crystallised in an identity. Moreover this *fication* in French is in German enunciated differently, *Identifizierung*, says Freud, in a place where I went to rediscover it, because I did not remember that I had done a seminar on *Identifizierung*. I did not remember, I remembered all the same what was in this chapter, I did not know that I had consecrated a year to it. But I remembered that for Freud there are at least three modes of identification, namely, the identification to which he reserves – I don't really know why – the qualification of love. Love is the qualification that he gives to the identification to the father. What is it on the other hand that he advances in terms of an identification brought about by participation? He calls that, he pinpoints that as hysterical identification. And then there is a third identification which is the one that he constructs from a trait, a trait that formerly – I had all the same held onto the memory of it without knowing that I had done a whole seminar on identification – from a trait that I called 'unary', this unary trait interests us because, as Freud underlines, it is not something particularly connected to a beloved person. A person can be indifferent and a unary trait chosen as constituting the basis of an identification. It is not indifferent, since this is how Freud believes that he is able to account for the identification to the Führer's little moustache which everyone knows played an important role.

It is a very interesting question because it would result in certain remarks that have been advanced that the end of analysis should be to identify oneself to the analyst. For my part, I do not think so. But anyway this is what Balint maintains, and it is very surprising. To what then does one identify oneself at the end of analysis? Is one supposed to identify oneself to one's unconscious? This is what I do not believe. I do not believe it, because the unconscious remains – I say 'remains', I am not saying 'remains eternally', because there is no eternity – remains the Other. It is the Other with a capital O that is at stake in the unconscious. I do not see how one could give a sense to the unconscious, except by situating it in this Other, the bearer of signifiers, which pulls the strings of what is imprudently called, imprudently because it is here that there arises the question of what the subject is from the moment that it so entirely depends on the Other.

So then in what does this mapping out called analysis consist? Might it be or might it not be, to identify oneself, to identify oneself while taking some insurance, a kind of distance, to identify oneself to one's symptom? I put forward that the symptom could be – this can be cashed in, it is pretty common – it can be the sexual partner. This is along the line of what I put forward,- put forward without it making you scream like an osprey – it is a fact, I put forward that the symptom taken in this sense is, to employ the term knowing (*connaître*), is what you know, it is even what you know best, without that going very far. Knowing has strictly only this sense. It is the only form of knowing taken in the sense in which it has been put forward that it is enough for a man to sleep with a woman for us to be able to say that he knows her, and indeed inversely. Since despite the fact that I strive for it, it is a fact that I am not a woman, I do not know what is involved in terms of what a woman knows about a man. It is very possible that it may go, that it may go very far. But it can all the same not go so far as the woman creating man, even when it is a matter of her children, it is a matter of something that presents itself as a parasitism. In the uterus of the woman, the child is a parasite, and everything indicates that, up to and including the fact that things can go very badly between this parasite and this belly.

So then what does knowing mean? Knowing means being able to deal with the symptom, knowing how to sort it out, knowing how to manipulate it, to know (*savoir*), this is something that corresponds to what man does with his image, it is to imagine the way in which you can manage this symptom. What is in question here, of course, is secondary narcissism, radical narcissism the narcissism that is called primary being ruled out on this particular occasion. Knowing how to deal with your symptom, that is the end of analysis. We have to recognise that this is pretty limited. It does not really go very far. How it is practised, this is of course what I am striving to convey in this crowd, with what result I do not know. I embarked on this navigation like that, because at bottom I was provoked into doing so. It is what resulted from what was published in some special series or other of *Ornicar* on the split of 1953. I would surely have been much more discreet if the split of '53 had not happened.

The metaphor in use for what is called access to the real is what is called the model. There is someone called Kelvin who was very interested in that, he was even called Lord, Lord Kelvin. He considered that science was something in which a model was functioning and which allowed, with the help of this model, to foresee what would be the results, the results of the functioning of the Real. One has recourse therefore to the Imaginary to give oneself an idea of the Real. You should write then *se faire*, 'to give oneself an idea', I said, write it as 'sphere' (*sphère*) to clearly understand what the imaginary means. What I put forward in my Borromean knot of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, led me to distinguish these three spheres and then, afterwards, re-knot them. I had therefore to go from these three balls – there are dates, I enunciated the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real in '54, I entitled an inaugural lecture with these three names which have become in short through me what Frege calls proper nouns (*noms propres*). To found a proper noun, is something that elevates your own name (*nom propre*) a little bit. The only proper name in all of that, is mine.

Lacan's extension to the Symbolic, to the Imaginary and to the Real is what allows these three terms to consist. I am not particularly proud of it. But I

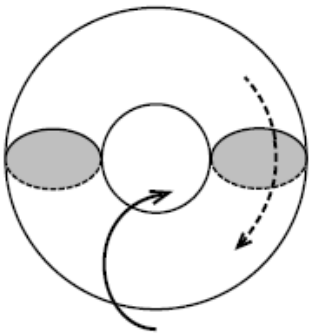
after all noticed that to consist meant something, namely, that one had to speak about body; there is a body of the Imaginary, a body of the Symbolic – this is *lalangue* – and a body of the Real about which we do not know how it comes out. It is not simple, not that the complication comes from me, it is in what we are dealing with. It is because I was, as someone or other has said, confronted with the idea that Freud's unconscious supports, that I tried, not to answer for it, but to respond to it in a sensible way, namely, by not imagining that this *avision* – what Freud glimpsed, that's what that means – that this *avision* concerns something which is supposed to be inside each one, of each of those who make up a crowd and who believe that they are by this fact a unity.

This notion of crowd, which *Massen-psychologie* clearly means, has been translated as *Psychologie collective et analyse du moi*. There is nothing to be done with that. Freud may well have explicitly started from what Gustave Lebon specifically call *psychologie des foules*, it is translated by *psychologie collective*, a collection, a collection of pearls no doubt, each person being one of them, even though what is at stake, is to account for the existence, for the existence in this crowd of something which qualifies itself as *ego*.

What can this ego be? It is in trying to explain this for you, that I tried to imagine this year the usage of what is called a topology. A topology, such as you can grasp simply by opening anything at all called *General Topology*, a topology is always founded on a torus, even if this torus is at times a Klein bottle, for a Klein bottle is a torus, a torus that crosses itself – I spoke about that a long time ago.

There you are. Here, you see that in this torus, there is something which represents an absolute inside when one is in the void, in the hollow that a torus may constitute. This torus can be a cord, no doubt, but a cord itself can twist, and there is something which can be drawn as being the inside of the cord. In this respect you have only to unpack what is enunciated as a knot in a special literature.

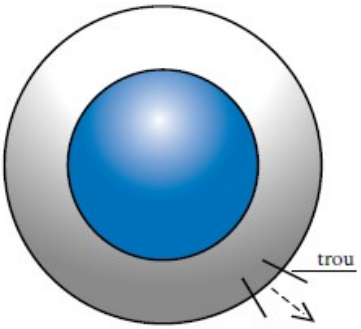
Fig. I-1



So then there are obviously two things, there are two kinds of holes; the hole which opens out onto what is called the outside, puts in question what is involved in space. Space seems to be extension when we are dealing with Descartes. But the body founds for us the idea of another kind of space. This torus in question does not immediately seem to be what is called a body, but you are going to see that it is enough to turn it inside out, not in the way that one turns a sphere inside out, because a torus is turned inside out in a quite different way. If here, for example, I set about imagining that it is a sphere which is inside another sphere, I do not get anything which resembles what I am going to try to get you sense now. If I make a hole in the other sphere, that sphere is going to come out like a small globular bell.

But it is a torus, it is a torus, namely, that is going to behave differently. **[hole]**

Fig. I-2



It would be enough for you to take a simple tube, the tube of a small tyre, and apply yourself to testing it, you will see then that the tyre lends itself to this way of swelling, as I might say, into the egress offered by the cut, the cut that we have made here, and which, if I were to continue, supposing that the cut comes here, comes to fold back here, to be inverted, as one might say, what you are going to get here is something which is different, different in appearance to the torus; for it is well and truly a torus all the same, even though, seen this time in section, it is well and truly a torus exactly as if we were to cut here the torus that is in question. I think that it will not escape you that by folding this back until we have completed the hole that we have made in the torus, it is well and truly the figure which follows that we will get. **[cut]**

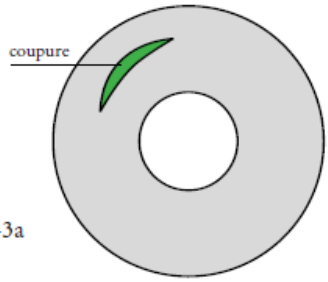


Fig. I-3a

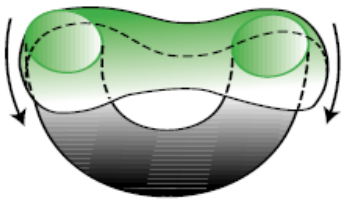


Fig. I-3b

This does not seem to command, as I might say, your consent. It is nevertheless quite tangible. It is enough to make an attempt at it.

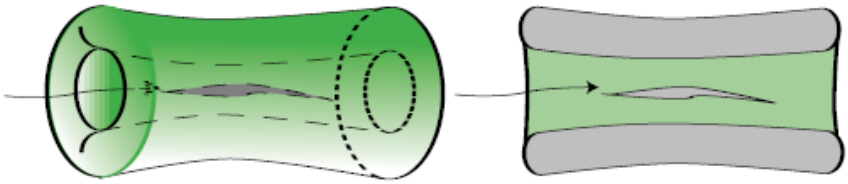


Fig. I-4

You have here 2 tori one of which represents what has happened, while the other is the original. If you, on one of these tori coupled in the same way –

this is going to lead us to something else – on one of these coupled tori, you engage in the manipulation that I have explained for you here, namely, that you make a cut, you will obtain this something which is expressed as follows, namely, that these tori being coupled, you have inside one of these tori, another torus, a torus of the same kind as the one that I have drawn here. What this designates, is that here, you can clearly see that what regards the first torus has something that I called its inside, something in the torus has been turned inside out, which is exactly in continuity with what remains of the inside in this first torus. This torus is turned inside out in the sense that henceforth its inside is what goes to the outside, while in order to designate the latter as being the one around which there is turned inside out

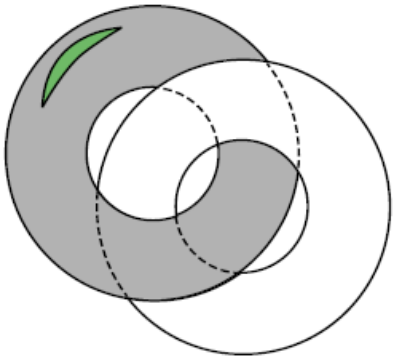


Fig. I-5a

the one here, we see that the one that I designated here, has for its part remained unchanged, namely, that it has its first outside, its outside as it is posed in the loop, it has its outside always in the same place.

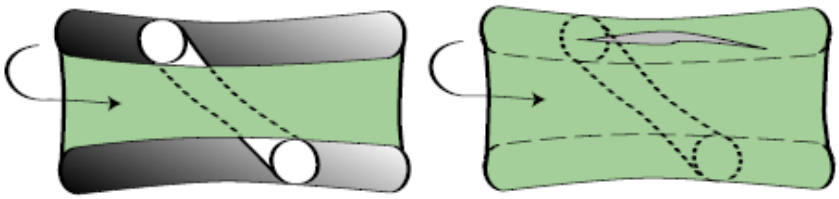


Fig. I-5b

There had therefore been a turning inside out of one of them. I think that, even though these things are very inconvenient, even very inhibiting to imagine, I think all the same that I have conveyed to you, conveyed what is at stake on this particular occasion. I mean that I have made myself understood, I hope, as regards what is at stake.

It is altogether remarkable that, what is here [Fig. I-4] does not – even though it is literally a torus – does not have the same shape, namely, that it presents itself as a rod [trique]. It is a rod which nonetheless remains for all that a torus. I mean that as you have already seen here, what has been formed, is something that has nothing to do with the first presentation, the one that knots the two tori [Fig. I-5a]. It is not the same sort of chain by reason of the turning inside out of what I call on this occasion the first torus. [**cut**]

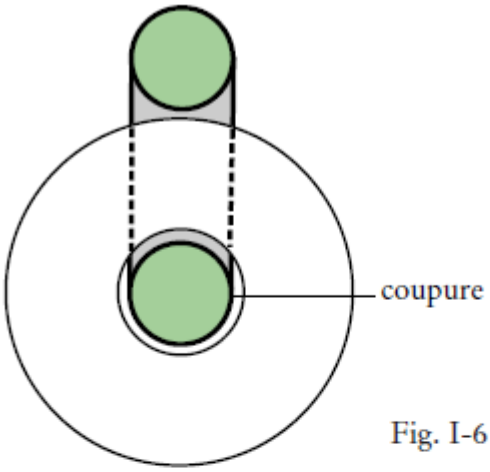
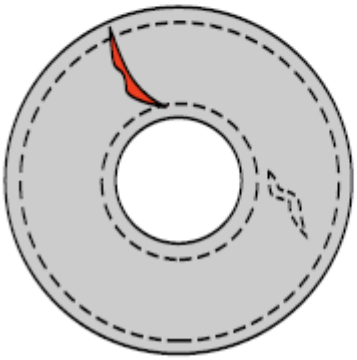
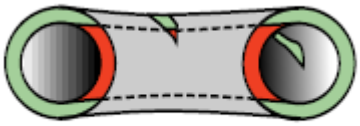


Fig. I-6





But as compared to this first torus, as compared to the same, what you have is something that I draw like that, with respect to the same, the torus-rod – if we remember this thing, the torus-rod comes here, namely, that in order to support things, the hole which is to be made in the torus, the one that I designated here, can be made in any locus whatsoever of the torus, up to and including cutting the torus here, because then it is quite manifest that this cut torus can be turned inside out in the same way and that it will be by joining two cuts that we will obtain this aspect. In other words by cutting the torus here, you get what I called the presentation as a rod in the same way, namely, that something that will manifest itself in the torus by two cuts will allow a folding over exactly in the way as by joining the two cuts – and not by forming the single cut, the one that I made here – it is in joining two cuts that we obtain this rod which I am calling by this term, even though it is a torus.

Here you have what today, and I agree it is not easy to digest, but what I would like the next time, namely, on the 2nd Tuesday of December what I would like to hear the next time from one of you, is the way in which these two modes of folding of the torus being joined to a third which for its part is the following:

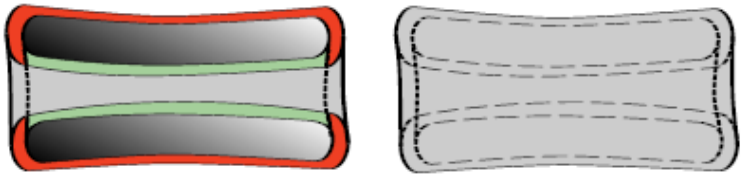


Fig. I-7b

Supposing that we have a torus in another torus, the same operation is conceivable for the 2 tori, namely, that from a cut made in this one and from a different distinct cut, since it is not the same torus, made in that one. It is in this case quite clear – I will leave you to conceive it – at the folding back of these two tori will give us the same rod, except for the fact that in the rod there will be an analogous content, except for the fact that for the two cases, this time, the inside will be outside and the same for this one; I mean for the torus which is inside.

How, I will ask you the question, how identify – because it is distinct – how identify hysterical identification, the so-called loving identification to the father and the identification that I would call neutral, the one which is neither one nor the other, which is the identification to a particular trait, to a trait that I called – that is how I translated the *einziger Zug* – that I called any trait whatsoever?

How divide up these three inversions of homogenous tori therefore in their practice, and what is more which maintain the symmetry, as I might say, between one torus and another, how divide them up, how designate in a homologous fashion paternal identification, hysterical identification, identification to a trait which is simply the same? There is the question on which I would like, that you would be good enough to engage with the next time.

Seminar 2: Wednesday 14 December 1976

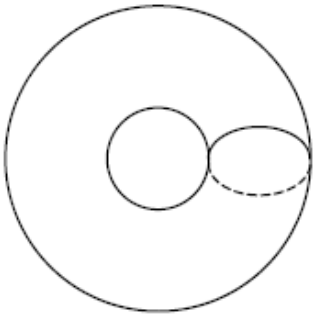
No need for commentaries. Since the last time I spoke to you about something, like that, which is not one sphere in another one, which is what is called a torus, the result is – this is what I wanted to indicate to you by that, but it was allusive – that no result of science is a progress. Contrary to what is imagined, science goes round in circles, and we have no reason to think that the people who used flint-stone had any less science than us. Psychoanalysis notably is not a progress, since what I want to indicate to you, since after all I remain close to this subject, psychoanalysis notably is not a progress, it is a practical approach to feeling better. *This feeling better*, it must be said, does not rule out being brutalised...

Everything indicates, with the index of suspicion that I bring to bear on the all (*tout*), that in fact there is no whole (*tout*) that is not riddled and in bits and pieces. The only thing that counts, is whether a *pièce* (piece, coin) has or not an exchange value. It is the only definition of the whole. A *pièce* is valid in every circumstance, that means, that only means the qualified circumstance like every valuing, homogeneity of value. The whole is only a notion of value, the whole, is what is valid in its genus, what another of the same type of unit in its genus is worth.

We are advancing here very gently towards the contradiction of what I call the *une bévue*. The *une bévue* is what is exchanged despite the fact that it is not worth the unit in question. The *une bévue* is a false whole. Its type, as I might say, is the signifier, the typical signifier, namely, for example, there is nothing more typical than the same and the other. I mean that there is no more typical signifier than these two enunciations. Another unit is similar to the other. All that sustains the difference between the same and the other is that the same is the same materially. The notion of matter is fundamental

by the fact that it founds the same. Anything that is not founded on matter is *matériel-ne-ment* [2] a fraud.

Fig. II-1



Material presents itself to us as *corps-sistance*[3], I mean under the subsistence of the body, namely, of what is *con*sistent, what holds together in the manner of what one can call a cunt (*con*), otherwise called a unit. There is nothing more unique than a signifier, but in this limited sense that it is only similar to another emission of signifier. It returns to value, to exchange. It signifies the whole, which means, it is the sign of the whole. The sign of the whole is the signified, which opens up the possibility of exchange. I underline on this occasion what I said about the possible, there will always be a time – that is what this means – when it will cease to write itself, where the signified will no longer hold up as founding the same value, material exchange. For the same value is the introduction of the lie, there is exchange, but not materiality itself.

What is the other as such? It is this materiality that I spoke about just now, namely, that I pinpointed as the sign mimicking the other. There is only a series of others, all the same qua unit, between which a *bévue* is always possible, namely, that it will not be perpetuated, that it will cease as a *bévue*. There you are. All of these are first truths, but I think I had to remind you of them.

[2] Condensing 'material' and 'does not lie'.
[3] Condensing 'body' and 'consistency'.

Man thinks. That does not mean that he is made only for that. But what is manifest, is that this is the only valid thing he does, because valid means – and nothing else, it is not a scale of values, a scale of values, as I remind you, turns round in circles – valid means nothing other than the fact that it involves the submission of use value to exchange value. What is patent, is that the notion of value is inherent to this system of the torus and the notion of something of an *une-bévue* in my title of this year only means that – one could just as well say the contrary – man knows more than he believes he knows. But the substance of this knowledge, the materiality which is beneath, is nothing other than the signifier in so far as it has meaning-effects. Man *parle-être*[4] as I said which means nothing other than that he speaks signifier, with which the notion of being is confused.

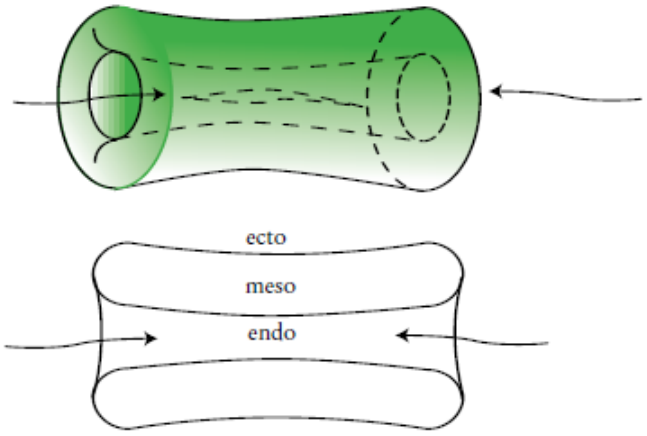
This is real. Real or true? Everything is posed, at this tentative level, as if the two words were synonyms. The appalling thing is that they are not everywhere so. The true is what one believes to be such; faith and even religious faith, is the true that has nothing to do with the real. Psychoanalysis, it must be clearly said turns round in the same circle. It is the modern form of faith, of religious faith. Adrift, that is where the true is when the real is what is at stake. All that because manifestly – since the time, we would have known it, if it were not manifest – manifestly there is no knowing (*connaissance*). There is only some kind of knowledge (*savoir*) in the sense that I said at the outset, namely, that we make mistakes...a *bévue*, that is what is at stake, philosophy going round in circles. It is a matter of substituting a different sense for the term *world system* that we must indeed preserve, even though as regards this world we can say nothing about man, except that he has fallen from it. We are going to see how, and that has a great deal of relationship with the central hole of the torus.

There is no progress, because there cannot be any. Man goes round in circles if what I say about his structure is true, because the structure, the structure of man is toric. Not at all that I affirm that it is so. I am saying that one can try to see the state of affairs, this all the more since general

[4] Condensing 'speaks' and 'being'.

topology encourages us to do so. The world system up to now has always been spheroidal. Perhaps we might change! The world has always been painted, up to the present, like that, as regards what men have enunciated, has been painted inside a bubble. The living being considers himself as a ball, but with time he all the same realised that he was not a ball, a bubble. Why not recognise that he is organised, I mean what one sees of the living body, that he is organised at what I called the other day a rod.

Fig. II-2



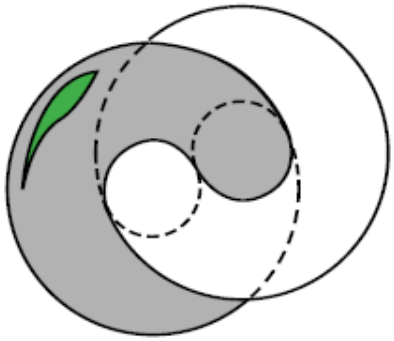
There you are, I am trying to draw it like that. It is obvious that this is how there ends up what we know about the body as consistent. This is called ecto, that endo and then around, there is meso. That is how it is made; here there is the mouth and here the contrary, the posterior mouth. Only this rod is nothing other than a torus. The fact that we are toric goes rather well in short with what I called the other day, rod (*trique*). It is an elision of the o: *t()rique*.

So then this leads us to consider that the hysteric whom everyone knows is just as well male as female, the *hystorique*[5] if I may allow myself this slippage, we must consider in short that she is – I am feminising it on this occasion, but as you are going to see I am going to put my weight on the other side, that will largely suffice to demonstrate to you that I do not think that there are only feminine hysterics – the *hystorique* in short has only an

[5] Condensing '*hysterique*' and 'torique'

unconscious to make her consist, it is the *radically other*. She even is not except *qua* other. Well then, that's the case for me. I also, I only have an unconscious. That is even why I think about it all the time. It has got to the point that – I can bear witness to you of it – it has got to the point that I think the universe toric and that it means nothing else, the fact is that I only consist in an unconscious of which, of course, I think night and day, which means that the *une-bévue* becomes inexact. I make so few blunders that it is the same thing – naturally I make some from time to time, that is of little importance; I may happen to say in a restaurant 'Mademoiselle is reduced to eating only shrimps *à la nage*' [*Mademoiselle en est réduit*[6] *a ne manger que des écrevisses à la nage*'], as long as that is where we are at, making an error of this kind, does not matter. When all is said and done, I am a perfect hysteric, namely, symptomless except from time to time this error of gender of the kind in question.

Fig. II-3



There is all the same, I would say, something that distinguishes the hysteric from me on this particular occasion. But I am going to try to present it to you. You can see how clumsy I am. There you are. That is two – I am colouring this one here to give the direction – that means a torus that links up with another one. Everyone knows, because I already indicated it the last time, that if you make a cut here and if you fold the torus you will obtain the following: something which is presented like that, namely, which reproduces what I called earlier the rod, except for the fact that what I drew earlier like that is there inside the rod. The difference between the hysteric

[6] Instead of the feminine '*réduite*'

and me, and I who, in short, by dint of having an unconscious unity with my unconscious, the difference is this, it is that, in short, a hysteric is sustained in her form as rod, is sustained by a framework. This framework is in short distinct from her consciousness. This framework is her love for her father. All that we know about the cases enunciated by Freud concerning the hysteric, whether it is Anna O., Emmy von N., or any other of them, the other von R., for example, the setting, is something that I designated earlier as a chain, a chain of generations.

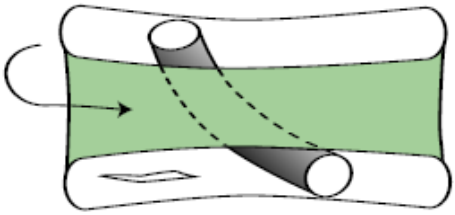


Fig. II-4a

It is quite clear that from the moment that one is engaged along this path, there is no reason why it should stop, namely, that here there can be something else that constitutes a chain and that it is a question of seeing – this cannot go very far – of seeing how this on occasion will constitute a rod with respect to love, the love of the father in question.

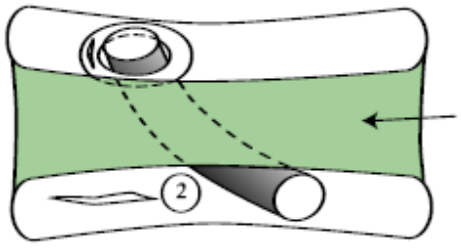


Fig. II-4b

That does not mean that it is settled and that one can here schematise the turning inside out of this torus around torus 2, let us call it that, that one can schematise it by a rod. There is perhaps something which creates an obstacle, and very specifically that's what it's all about; the fact that the

unconscious chain stops at kinship relationships is yes or no founded, relationship of the child to his kin.

If I pose the question: 'What is a hole?', you have to trust me, this has a certain relationship to the question. A hole like that, of feeling, that is what this means when I crack the surface. By this I mean that by intuition, our hole is a hole in the surface. But a surface has a front and a back, as is well known, and that signifies therefore that a hole, is the hole in the front, plus the hole in the back. But since there exists a Moebius strip, which has the property of conjoining the front which is here with the back which is there, is the Moebius strip a hole?

It is obvious that it really seems to be so. Here there is a hole, but is it a true hole?

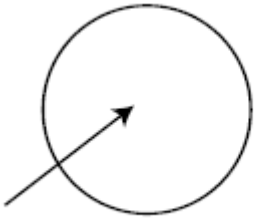
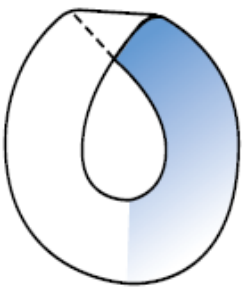


Fig. II-5

It is not at all clear, for a single reason, as I already pointed out, that a Moebius strip is nothing other than a cut, and that it is easy to see that, if this is defined as a front, it is a cut between a front and a back. Because it is

Fig. II-6a



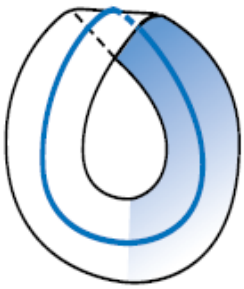


Fig. II-6b

enough for you to consider this figure, it is quite easy to see that if here is the front, a back is there, since it is the back of this front and that, here, the cut is between a front and a back, thanks to which, in the Moebius strip, if

we cut it in two, the front and the back as I might say become normal again namely, that when a Moebius strip cut in two, we are going to go over it, it is easy to imagine what is found, namely, that from the moment that there are two turns, there will be a front distinct from the back.

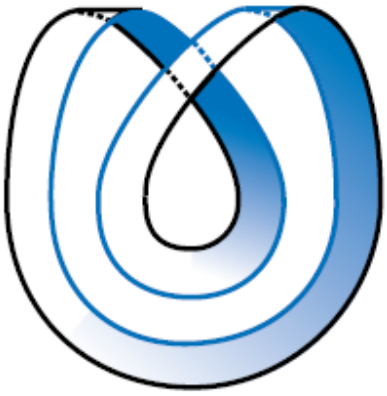


Fig. II-7

This indeed is why a Moebius strip is essentially capable of redoubling itself; and what must be remarked, is the fact that it redoubles itself in the following way which allows the passage. It is a real pity that I did not take precautions. Here is the Moebius strip as it redoubles itself, as it redoubles itself and shows itself to be compatible with a torus. This indeed is why I am attached to considering the torus as being capable of being cut out in terms of a Moebius strip. And it is enough, it is enough for this – here is the torus – it is enough for there to be cut out in it not a Moebius strip, but a double Moebius strip. It is very precisely what is going to give us an image of what is involved in the link between the conscious and the unconscious. The conscious and the unconscious communicate and are both supported by a toric world this is the reason, this is the discovery, a discovery which was

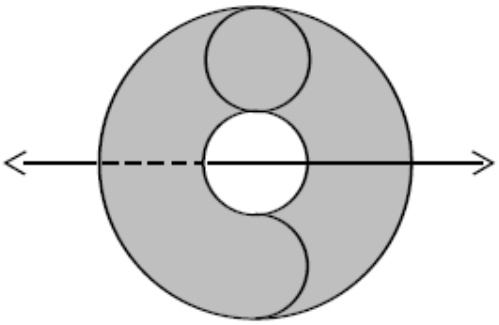


Fig. II-8

made by chance, not that Freud did not work desperately hard at it, but he did not say the last word on it. He specifically never enunciated the following, which is that the world is toric. He believed, as every notion of the psyche implies, that there was something that I earlier dismissed by saying a loop, and another loop around the first, this one being in the middle, he believed that there was a vigilance, a vigilance that he called the psyche, a vigilance which reflected the cosmos point by point. In this he was aware of what is considered as a common truth, which is that the psyche is the reflection of a certain world.

That I am enunciating this in terms, I repeat, of something tentative, because I do not see why I would be any more sure about what I am putting forward, even though there are many elements which give the feeling of it, and specifically from the outset what I put forward about the structure of the body, of the body considered as what I called a rod.

That the living being, every living being, is denominated as rod, is something that a certain number of studies, moreover crudely anatomical, have always seen themselves confirm. That the torus should be something which is presented as having two holes around which something consists, is something that is simply obvious. I repeat, it was not necessary to construct a lot of specifically microscopic apparatuses, it is something that has always been known, since simply people began to dissect, began to do the most macroscopic anatomy.

That one can cut the torus in such a way that it becomes a double turn Moebius strip is certainly to be noted. In a certain way, the torus in question

is itself a hole and in a certain way represents the body. But that this should be confirmed by the fact that this Moebius strip which I already chose to express the fact that the conjunction of a front and a back is something which symbolises rather well the union of the unconscious and the conscious, is something which is worthwhile remembering.

Can we consider a sphere as a hole in space? This is obviously very suspect. It is very suspect because this pre-supposes, it pre-supposes something that is not self-evident, the plunging into space. It is equally true for the torus, and that is why it is by dividing the torus into two sheets, if I can express myself in that way, into two sheets capable of making a double turn, that we rediscover the surface, namely, something that to our eyes is more assured, is more assured in any case to found what is involved in a hole.

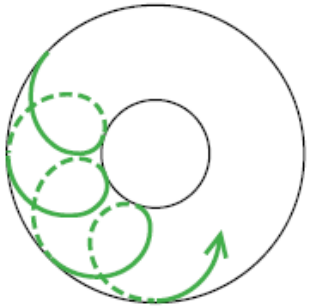


Fig. II-9

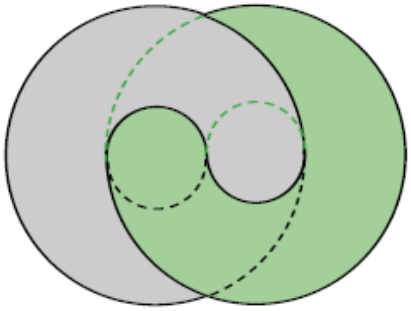


Fig. II-10

It is clear that it is not today or yesterday that I made use of these concatenations. Already to symbolise the circuit, the cutting of desire and demand, I made use of this, namely, of the torus. I had distinguished two modes of it, namely, what went around the torus, and on the other hand what went around the central hole. In this respect the identification of the demand to what is presented like this, and of desire to what is presented like that, was altogether significant.

There is something that I pointed out the last time, namely, this, which consists in a torus, within a torus. If you mark these two tori, the two of

them, by a cut, by folding them back, by folding back the two cuts, if I can express myself in that way, concentrically, you will make what is inside come to the outside, and inversely, what is outside will come inside. It is very precisely why I am struck by the fact that the highlighting, as envelopment, of what is inside is something that is not without relevance to psychoanalysis.

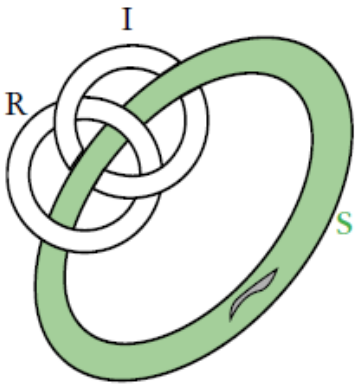


Fig. II-11

That psychoanalysis is attached to putting outside what is inside, namely, the unconscious, is something which obviously has its price, has its price, but is not without posing some questions. Because if we suppose that there are three tori, to call things by their name, that there are three tori that are specifically the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic, what are we going to see by turning inside out, as I might say, the Symbolic?

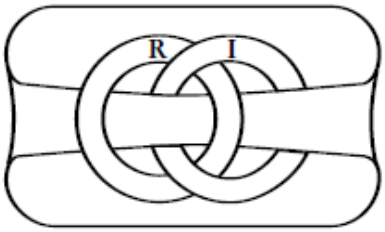
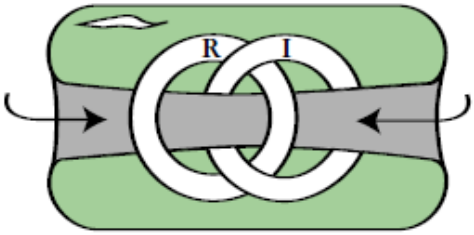


Fig. II-12

Everyone knows that this is how things will present themselves and that the Symbolic seen from the outside as torus, will find itself, with respect to the Imaginary and the Real, will find itself having to pass above this one which is above and below this one which is below. But what do we see by proceeding as we usually do by a cut, by a split to turn the Symbolic inside out? This Symbolic turned inside out in this way,...here is what the Symbolic turned inside out in this way will give: it will give a completely different arrangement of what I called the Borromean knot, namely, that the Symbolic will totally envelop, by turning the symbolic torus inside out, will totally envelop the Imaginary and the Real. This indeed is why the use of the cut with respect to what is involved in the Symbolic presents something which risks in short, at the end of a psychoanalysis, of provoking something which might be specified as a preference given above all to the unconscious. I mean that, if things are such that things are going a bit better like that as regards the life of each one, namely, to put the accent on this function, this function of the knowledge of the *une-bévue* by which I translated the unconscious, things can effectively be better organised. But it is all the same a structure of an essentially different nature to the one that I qualified as Borromean knot. The fact that the Imaginary and the Real should be entirely included, in short, in something which has come from the practice of psychoanalysis itself, is something which gives rise to a question. There is here, all the same, a problem. I repeat, this is linked to the fact that it is not when all is said and done the same thing, the structure of the Borromean knot and what you will see there. Someone who has experienced a psychoanalysis is something which marks a passage, which marks a passage, – of course this presupposes that my analysis of the unconscious *qua* founding the function of the Symbolic is completely acceptable. It is nevertheless a fact, the fact is apparently, and I can confirm it, apparently the fact of having gone through an analysis is something which cannot be in any case restored to the previous state, except of course by carrying out

Fig. II-13



another cut, one that would be equivalent to a counter-psychoanalysis. This indeed is why Freud insisted that psychoanalysts at least should undertake what is usually called two tranches, namely, to carry out a second time the cut that I designate here as being what restores the Borromean knot in its original form.

Seminar 3: Wednesday 21 December 1976

I am delighted that because of the holidays you are less numerous, at least I was delighted, I was delighted ahead of time. But I should tell you that today....

If in a systematic cutting up of a torus, a cutting up which has the result of producing a double Moebius strip, this cutting up is present here. The torus is there and to signify it, to distinguish it from the double loop, I am going with the same colour as the torus in question, draw for you a little ring (1) which has the effect of designating what is inside the torus and what is outside. **[interchange 1&2]**

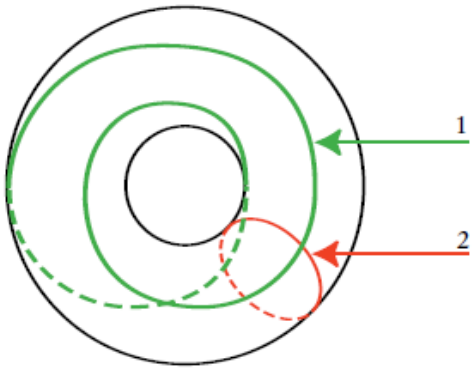
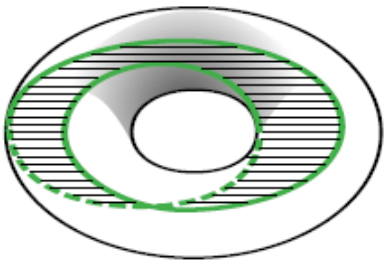


Fig. III-1a

If we cut out something of such a kind that here, if we were to cut the torus according to something (2) which, as I told you, has the result of furnishing a double Moebius strip, we can only do so by thinking of what is inside the torus – what is inside the torus by reason of the cut that we make on it - as conjoining the two cuts in such a way that the ideal plane which joins these two cuts should be a Moebius strip.

Fig. III-1b



You see that here I cut doubly through the green line, I cut the torus. If we join these two cuts with the help of a stretched plane, we get a Moebius strip. That indeed is why that is here (1) and on the other hand what is here (2) constitutes a double Moebius strip. I say double, what does that mean? That means a Moebius strip which is redoubled; and a Moebius strip which is redoubled has as property – as I already showed you the last time – has as property, not of being two Moebius strips, but being a single Moebius strip which looks like this, - let us try to do better – which looks in this way like the result of the double cut of the torus. [**double Moebius strip and Moebius strip**]

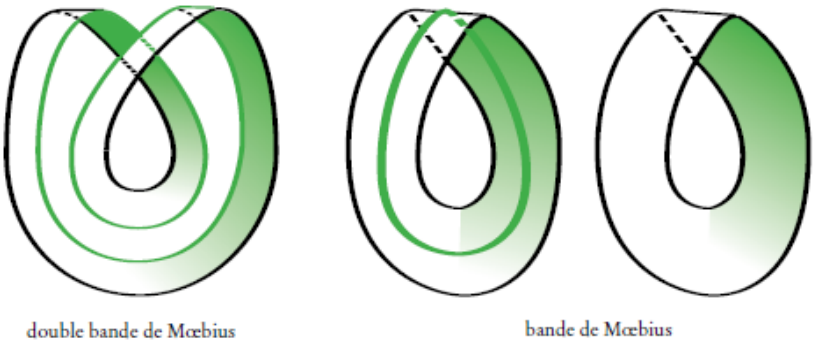


Fig. III-2

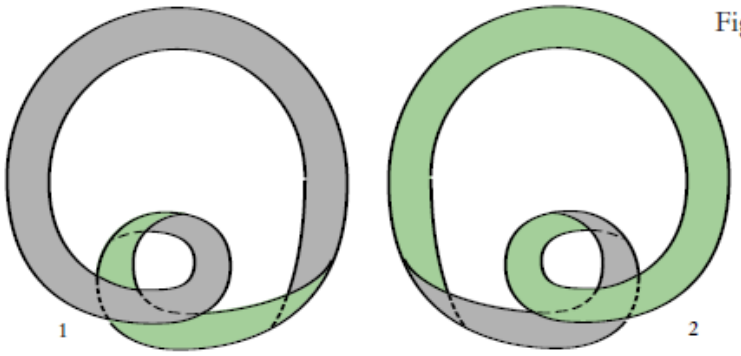


Fig. III-3

The question is the following: is this double Moebius strip in this shape or that one. In other words, does it go – I am speaking about one of the loops – does it pass in front of the following loop, or does it pass behind? It is something which is obviously not unimportant from the moment that we

proceed to this double cut, a double cut which has the result of determining this double Moebius strip.

I drew this figure very badly for you. Thanks to Gloria, I am going to try to draw it better: here is how it ought to be drawn. I do not know if you see it altogether clearly, but it is certain that the Moebius strip is redoubled in the way you see here. This is the point at which I am not really very satisfied about what I am in the process of showing you. I mean, since I spent the night cogitating on this business of the torus, I cannot say that what I am giving you here is very satisfying.

What appears as a result of what I called this double Moebius strip which I am asking you to put to the test, a test which you can experiment with in a simple way, with the simple condition of taking two sheets of paper and drawing on them a capital S, something like the following.

Fig. III-4

Be careful because this capital S demands to be drawn first with a small curve and then with a big curve. Just here the small curve and afterwards the big curve. If you cut out two of them on a sheet of double paper, you will see that by folding the two things that you will have cut onto a single sheet of paper, you will naturally obtain a junction of the number 1 sheet of paper with the number 2 sheet of paper, and of the number 2 sheet of paper with the number 1 sheet of paper, namely, that you will have what I designated just now as a double Moebius strip. You can easily note that this double Moebius strip is cut – if I can express myself in this way – indifferently. I mean that what here is above, then passes beneath, then subsequently having passed beneath repasses above. It is a matter of indifference to make pass what first of all passed above, one can make it pass below. You will note easily that this double Moebius strip functions in either case.

Does that mean that here it is the same thing, I mean that from the same point of view one can put what is below above and inversely? This indeed is in effect what the double Moebius strip realises. I apologise for adventuring into something which was not without some trouble for me, but it is certain that that is the way it is. If you work at producing in the same way as I presented this double Moebius strip to you, namely, by folding two pages, two pages thus cut out in such a way that the one is going to be conjoined to the second page and that inversely the second page is going to be conjoined to page 1, you will have exactly this result, this result about which you can note that one can make pass indifferently the one as I might say in front of the other, page 1 in front of page 2, and inversely page 2 in front of page 1.

What is the suspension which results from this highlighting, this highlighting of the fact that in the double Moebius strip what is in front from the same point of view can pass behind from the point of view which remains the same. This leads us to something which, I am encouraging you to it, is of the order of know-how, a know-how which is demonstrative in this sense that it does not happen without the possibility of an *une-bévue*. For this possibility to be extinguished, it has to cease to be written, namely, that we should find a way, and in this case a dominant way, a way of distinguishing the two cases.

What is the way of distinguishing these two cases?

This interests us because the *une-bévue* is something which substitutes for what is founded as knowledge that one knows, the principle of knowledge that one knows without knowing it (*sans le savoir*). The '*le*' here is brought to bear on something, the '*le*' is a pronoun on this particular occasion which refers to knowledge itself *qua*, not as knowledge, but what to do about knowing. This indeed is why the unconscious lends itself to what I thought I should suspend under the title of the *une-bévue*.

The inside and the outside in this particular case, namely, as regards the torus, are they notions of structure or of form? Everything depends on the conception that one has of space and I would say up to a certain point of what we highlight as the truth of space. There is certainly a truth of space which is that of the body. In this case, the body is something which can only be founded on the truth of space, which indeed is where the sort of asymmetry that I highlight has its foundations. This asymmetry depends on the fact that I designated as the same point of view. And this indeed is why what I wanted to introduce this year is something which is important for me. There is the same asymmetry not simply concerning the body, but concerning what I designated in terms of the Symbolic. There is an asymmetry of the signifier and of the signified which remains enigmatic. The question that I would like to advance this year is exactly the following: is the asymmetry of the signifier and of the signified of the same nature as that of the container and the contained which is all the same something which has its function for the body?

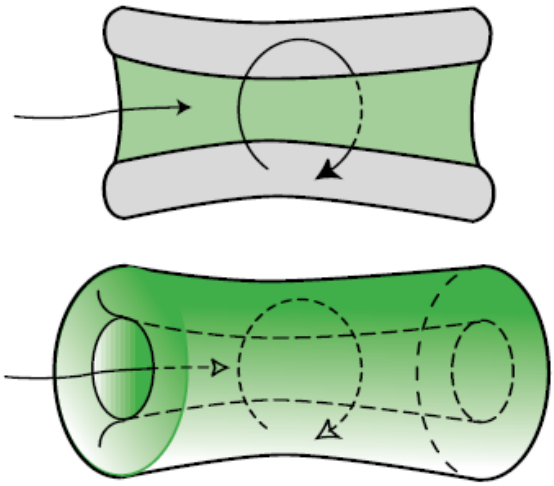


Fig. III-5

Fig. III-6a

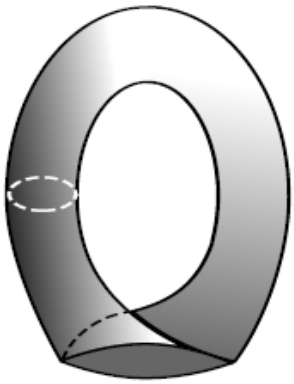


Fig. III-6b

The distinction between the shape and the structure is important here. It is not for nothing that I marked here something which is a torus, is a torus even though its shape does not allow this to appear. Is the shape something which lends itself to suggestion? Here is the question that I am posing, and that I pose while advancing the primacy of the structure.

Here it is difficult for me not to put forward the fact that the Klein bottle, this old Klein bottle that I made so much of, if I remember correctly, in the *Four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis*, this old Klein bottle has in reality that shape there. It is strictly nothing other than this, except for the fact that for it to become a bottle we correct it in this way (in red), namely that we have made it come back in the following shape, that we have made it come back in such a way that we no longer comprehend anything about its essential nature. Is there not effectively, in the fact of calling it a bottle, is there not here a falsification, a falsification with respect to the fact that only its presentation here in green is the something that precisely allows it to be immediately grasped the way in which the junction of the front is made with the back, namely everything that is cut out in this surface, on condition of making it complete, and that is again a question: what is meant by making a cut which involves the whole of the surface?

These are the questions that I ask myself and that I hope to be able to resolve this year, I mean that this brings us to something fundamental as

regards the structure of the body, or more exactly of the body considered as structure. That the body is able to present all sorts of aspects which are of pure shape, that just now I made dependent on suggestion, this is what is important for me. The difference of the shape, of the shape insofar as it is always more or less suggested with the structure, that is what I would like this year to highlight for you.

You must excuse me. This, I must say, is assuredly not the best thing that I could have brought to you this morning. I had, as you see, I had the great worry, I am floundering, - there is a case for saying, it is not the first time - I am floundering in what I have to put forward to you and that is why I am leaving to give you the opportunity to have someone who will be this morning a better orator than I, I mean Alain Didier who is here present, and whom I invite to come to tell you what he has drawn from certain data of mine, which are the drawings of writing and which he would really like to share with you.

- **Alain Didier**: Good. I must say first of all that Dr Lacan is taking me completely by surprise, that I was not warned that he proposed to give me the floor to try to take up again a point about which I spoke to him these days, of which I should tell you right away that personally I am not making any articulation whatsoever with what we are being told at present. I sense it confusedly perhaps, but it is not....do not expect therefore me to articulate what I am going to say with the problems in topology about which Dr Lacan is talking at the moment. The problem that I was trying to articulate, is to try to articulate in a rather consequential way with what Dr Lacan contributed about the montage of the drive, to try starting from the problem of the circuit of the drive, different torsions which appear to me can be located between the subject and the Other, different moments in which two or three torsions are articulated.

For me this remains a little hypothetical, but anyway I am going to try to retrace for you how things can like that be put in place. So then the drive, the instinctual circuit from which I will start, in order to try to advance, will

be something rather enigmatic, will be something of the order of the invocatory drive and its reversal into a listening drive. I mean that the word listening drive, does not, I believe, exist does not exist anywhere as such, it remains altogether problematic. And more precisely when I spoke about these ideas to Dr Lacan, I should say that it is more specifically on the subject of the problem of music and of trying to locate, to locate for a listener who listens to some music that touches him, let us say that has an effect on him, to locate the different moments because I am going to try therefore to convey to you now rather succinctly because I did not prepare a text, nor notes? So then excuse me if it's a little improvised.

I imagine, if you wish, that, if you listen to some music, I am talking about a music that speaks to you or that 'musics' you, I start from the idea that, if you listen, the way in which you take this music, I will start from the idea that from the outset it is as an auditor that you function; that appears obvious, but in fact it is not so simple. Namely, that I would say that if the music, at the very first moment – the moments that I am going to try to decorticate for the convenience of the presentation are not of course to be taken as chronological moments, but as moment which might be logical, and that I necessarily disarticulate them for the convenience of the presentation – if therefore music has an effect on you as a listener, I think one can say that it is because somewhere, as a listener, it is just as if it gave you an answer. Now the problem begins with the fact that this answer therefore gives rise in you the antecedents of a questions which dwelt in you as Other, qua Other, qua listener who dwells in you without you knowing it; you discover therefore that there is here a subject somewhere which appears to have heard a question that is in you and which, would not only have heard it, but has been inspired by it, since music, the production of the 'musicing' subject, if you wish, would be the answer to this question that is supposed to dwell in you. Therefore you already see that if one wished to articulate that to the desire of the Other: if there is in me, qua other, a desire, an unconscious lack, I have the testimony that the subject which receives this lack is not paralysed by it, it is not fading because of it, underneath, like the subject which is under the injunction of the *che vuoi*, but on the contrary is

inspired by it and its inspiration, the music bears witness to it. Good, this is the starting point of what is to be noted.

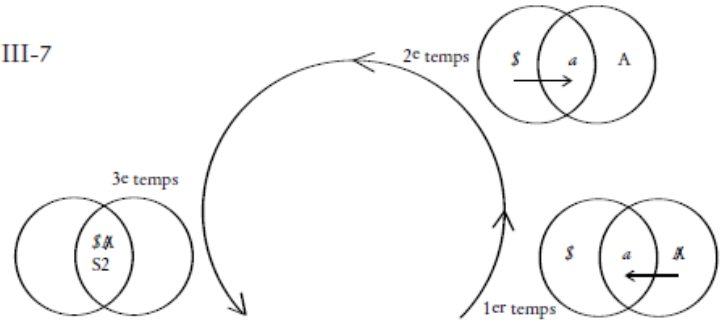
The other point is to consider that qua Other, I do not know what this lack which dwells in me is, but that the subject itself tells me nothing about this lack since this lack does not mean anything directly. The subject itself of this lack knows nothing and says nothing about it because he is said by this lack, but qua Other I would say that I am in a topological perspective where there appears to me the point where the subject is divided since he is said by this lack, namely, that this lack which dwells in me, I discover that it is its very own, it itself knows nothing about what it is saying, but I know that it knows without knowing it. I am going therefore...You see that what I have said to you there could be written a little bit like what Lacan articulates about the process of separation. I am therefore going to articulate the different moments of the drive with the different articulations of separation. Good.

On the bottom left, I put the process of separation with an arrow which goes from the Ø (O with this lack put together between the capital O and the subject, the little **o**-object, and this arrow is meant to signify that, I know nothing about this lack qua Other, but something of it comes back to me from the subject who for its part says something about it. That is why I articulate it with a drive, because it is just as if I wanted to manage to articulate this lack, this nothing, hang something on it, know something about it, let us say I trust the subject: I allow myself to be pushed by it – it is moreover the drive. I allow myself to be pushed by it and I expect that it will give me this little **o**-object. But according as I advance, as I wait for this subject, as I might say, what I discover is that in following the subject, the little **o**, all the two of us are doing is going around it. It is effectively inside the loop and I assure myself that effectively this little **o** is unattainable.

I could say here that this is a first circuit and that, I have assured myself qua Other that he has effectively this character of lost objects, the idea that I

propose, is that one can comprehend at that moment the instinctual reversal of which Freud speaks and Lacan takes up again, the instinctual reversal that

Fig. III-7



I am going to put on the top of the graph, as the passage to a second mode of separation and this instinctual reversal, as one might say, as a second attempt at approaching the lost object but this time from a different perspective: from the perspective of the subject. Let me explain: if you wish, in the first moment that I postulate, I would say that while I recognise myself as listener, the switching point that comes, which means that now I am going to pass to the other side, can be articulated as follows, namely, to advance that when I recognise myself as listener, one could say that this time it is me, I am recognised as listener by the music which comes to me, namely, that the music, what was an answer and which gave rise to a question in me, things are inverted, namely, that the music becomes a question which assigns me, as subject, to respond myself to this question, namely, that you see that the music is constituted as listening to me, as subject finally – let us call it by its name – as subject supposed to hear and the music, the production, that which was the inaugural answer becomes the question, the production therefore of the musician subject being constituted as subject supposed to hear, assigns me in this position of subject and I am going to answer it by a transference love. In this way one cannot fail to articulate the fact that music produces all the time effectively love-effects, as one might say.

I come back again to this notion of lost object from the following angle: the fact is that you have not failed to remark that what is proper to the effect of

music on you, is that it has this power, as one might say, of metamorphosis, of transmutation, that one could summarise rapidly as follows, by saying for example that it transmutes the sadness that is in you into nostalgia, I mean by that that if you are sad, the fact is that you can designate, whether you are sad or depressed, you can designate the object that you lack, whose lack you are missing, makes you suffer, and it is sad to be sad, I mean, it is not the source of any enjoyment. The paradox of nostalgia – as Victor Hugo said, nostalgia is the happiness of being sad – the paradox of nostalgia is that precisely in nostalgia what happens, is that what you are lacking is of a nature that you cannot designate and that you love this lack. You see that in this transmutation, everything happens as if the object which was lacking really evaporated, has evaporated, and that what I propose to you, is to comprehend effectively the enjoyment, one of the articulations of musical enjoyment, as having the power to evaporate the object. I see that the word 'evaporate', we can almost take it in the physical sense of the term, in which physics has located sublimation: sublimation, is effectively a matter of making a solid pass into the state of vapour, of gas; and sublimation, is this paradoxical path by which Freud teaches us – and Lacan has articulated in a much more sustained way – it is precisely the path along which we can have access, precisely along the path of desexualisation, to enjoyment.

Therefore, you see, in this second moment – what I am marking, at the top of the circuit: the reversal of the drive – a first torsion – it is perhaps starting from this notion of torsion that Dr Lacan thought of inserting this little topo at the point that he is in his progress – a second moment therefore, a first torsion appears where there is the apparition of a new subject and of a new object. The new subject precisely, is me who from auditor becomes, I would say, I cannot say speaker, speaking, musicing, one would have to say that it is the point in music where, the notes that go through you, everything happens as if paradoxically, it is not so much that you hear them, it is as if everything happens as if – I insist on the 'if' – everything happens as if you were producing them yourself: you are the author of this music. I put here an arrow which goes there from the subject to the separating little **o**, wanting to indicate by that that in this second perspective of separation, this

time, it is from the point of view of the subject that I have a perspective of a lack in the Other.

So then what is this lack?

How map it out with respect to transference love? Well then, when we listen to music that moves us, the first impression is hearing all the time that this music has always something to do with love; one might say that music sings with love. But if one takes this little schema seriously and if even one tries to comprehend how love functions, from this movement of torsion in music, you will sense it is not so much the subject, the subject who speaks of his love for the Other, but much more rather that he answers the Other, that his message is this answer where he is assigned by this subject supposed to hear and that his music of impossible love is in fact an answer that he makes to the Other and that it is to the Other that he supposes the fact of loving him and of loving him with an impossible love. The problem, if you wish, one could in a summary way draw a parallel with certain mystical positions, where the mystic is the one who does not tell you that he loves the Other, but that he only answers the Other who loves him, that he is put into this position, that he has no choice, that he only answers it.

In this second moment of the music, one can draw this parallel in the measure that the subject effectively solicits the love of the Other for him, but the love of the Other qua radically impossible. That is why I put this arrow, the fact is that the subject has, through this second point of view, has a perspective on the lack that inhabits the Other, namely, that as you see, after these two moments, one could say that there is confirmed by this second moment that the evaporated object, in the second position, remains just as evaporated as in the first position. We are getting closer, as you see, we are getting closer to the end of the loop. Transference, one may remark, corresponds very precisely to the way in which Lacan introduced transference love in the seminar on *Transference*, namely, that there is there: the subject postulates that it is the Other who loves him; he poses therefore a beloved and a lover. There is therefore a passage, in this transference love,

from the beloved to the lover. What I have told you there, in any case is not correct, because the second moment cannot be articulated as such, it is synchronically articulated with a third moment which exists, I would say, synchronically with it in the following way: the subject, this time, if you wish, being himself a musician, being therefore a producer of the music, addresses himself to a new other, which I called the subject supposed to hear who is no longer altogether the Other at the starting point, it is a new other. This new other, precisely, is no longer the '*vel*' it is no longer 'either one or the other'. To this new other, he is also going to identify himself, namely, that there is starting from the top of the loop, a double arrangement where the subject is both the one who is speaking and the one who is hearing.

Something may perhaps illustrate this division for you: this is what is highlighted, in my opinion, by the myth of Ulysses and the Sirens. You know that Ulysses, in order to hear the song of the Sirens, had stuffed with wax the ears of his sailors. How ought we understand that? Ulysses exposes himself to hearing, to hearing the invocatory drive, in fact to hearing the song of the Sirens; but what he is exposed to, since, when he hears the song of the Sirens, you know that history tells us that he shouts to the sailors, that he says to them: 'Stop, let us stay here'. But he has taken his precautions: he knows that he will not be heard. Namely, that this myth in my opinion illustrates, this is my second moment, namely, that Ulysses is put in the position of being able to hear in the measure that he had assured himself that he could not speak, namely when he had assured himself that there would not be this reversal of the drive, namely, the second and the third moments, namely, when he had assured himself that there would not be a subject supposed to hear, because of these wax stoppers. You see that the first moment, 'to hear' is one thing, but that even poses for us the problem of the ethics of the analyst. Is the analyst precisely not someone from whom one can hear that he hears certain things, is he not, at a given moment, necessarily, by the very structure of the instinctual circuit, in a position of having to make himself a speaker? Not to behave like Ulysses, let us say, who had already taken a first risk of hearing certain things.

I imagine that after this second and third moment where the subject and the Other continue their paths side by side always separated by the separating small **o**, what is the position with respect to our starting point, where have we got to? Well then, the point, one could say, on to which the subject emerges, is that after this second and third moment, he has found the assurance that this little separating **o**, he has found the assurance that it was effectively impossible to encounter it, since he only managed to go around it, but he had needed to make several dialectical movements in order to have, I would say, like – I don't know if this is the right word – to have as it were a kind of certainty that is going perhaps to allow him to make a new leap, which will be my fourth moment, a new leap that is going to allow him at that moment to pass to a new kind of enjoyment, to risk himself in it. I said '*s'y risquer*' because it is not obvious that one will arrive at what I am calling this fourth moment that I will all the same mark. I am telling you that one can imagine a last moment which would be the terminal point, the point not of return, since the drive does not come back to the starting point, but the ultimate, possible point of the drive, I marked the enjoyment of the Other, and the little schema, the new schema of separation, the third that I am inscribing, represents the schema of separation, no longer with the little **o-**object in the lunula, but with the signifier S(Ø), and the signifier S_2, a signifier that Lacan teaches us to situate as being that of the *Urverdrängung*.

Why am I marking that? I would say that, the whole journey having been made, that it is from the point of view of the subject, of the Other and of second other, it is confirmed that the object is really volatilised; one may imagine that at this moment the subject is going to make a leap, is no longer going to be content to be separated from the Other by the little **o-**object but is going to veritably proceed to an attempt to go through the phantasy; there is a passage in *seminar II*, well before Lacan speaks about the problem of the enjoyment of the Other, where Lacan on the subject of the drive and of sublimation, asks the question, he asks himself how the drive is experienced after the phantasy has been gone through. And Lacan adds: 'It is no longer of the domain of analysis, but is the beyond of analysis'. Now if we recall

that the little **o**-object is not uniquely, as one so often hears it said, essentially characterised by the fact that it is the missing object, it is certainly the missing object, but its function of being the missing object is specified very particularly, let us say, in the phenomenon of anxiety but besides this function, one could say that its fundamental function is much more rather to fill in this radical gap which renders so imperious the necessity of demand. If there is really something lacking in this speaking being, it is not the little **o**-object, it is this gap in the Other which is articulated with the S of Ø. That is why at the end of this instinctual circuit, to account for the experience of the listener, I am putting forward the idea the nature of the enjoyment to which one can accede at the end of the journey is not at all on the side of a 'surplus enjoying', but precisely on the side of this experience of this enjoyment, that perhaps one might call 'ecstatic', enjoyment of existence itself – moreover as regards the term 'ecstatic enjoyment' I was struck at finding Levi-Strauss writing on the one hand, in a number of *Musique en jeu* where Levi-Strauss puts very precisely in perspective the nature, not of the enjoyment, in fact the experience of music and that which appears to him to be that of mystical experience. Freud himself, in a letter to Romain Rolland, finds himself answering, spontaneously articulating that he refused himself musical enjoyment and that this musical enjoyment appeared to him as strange as what Romain Rolland was saying to him about enjoyments of a mystical order; anyway it is he himself who articulated the two, who had the idea of introducing music into it.

Final moment then, where the subject will make the leap, I don't know whether one can say 'beyond' or 'behind' the little **o**-object, but will manage to break through and arrive at this locus, one might say of the commemoration of the unconscious being as such, namely, the joining up of the most radical lacks which are those which constitute the gap of the subject of the unconscious and that of the unconscious, namely, to put the experience of this..., one might say that in the final moment, if you wish, one might say that the real as impossible is a white heat, is raised to incandescence; at that very moment, I mean, I would indicate, for my part,

that the drive stops in the sense that musicians, listeners to music know that in certain moments of being overwhelmed by music, as one says, time stops. Effectively there is a suspension of time at that level. And in this suspension of time, one can make the hypothesis that what is happening, is a sort of commemoration of the founding act of the unconscious in the most primordial separation, the most primordial gap that has been torn from the real and which has been introduced into the subject, which is that of the S of Ø of the signifier. I believe that the last point that one can put forward, is to remark that this point of enjoyment which appears to me to be what Lacan articulates as being the enjoyment of the Other, is precisely the point of maximum desexualisation, I would say total, superior, sublime, sublime in the sense of sublimation; and it is indeed at this point that sublimation is connected with desexualisation and enjoyment.

So then, two torsions or three torsions therefore, of which I spoke to you at the start, it is therefore these which can be mapped out between the passage from the first to the second moment, from the second to the third, and I do not know whether one can really speak about torsion for the topology of what I would call the fourth moment. This remains to be thought through.

- **J Lacan**: Thank you very much.

Seminar 4: Wednesday 11 January 1977

What determines the contagious nature of certain formulae? I do not think that it is the conviction with which they are pronounced, because one cannot say that that is the basis on which I propagated my teaching. Anyway in that regard, it is rather J.A. Miller who can contribute a testimony on this: does he consider that what I have been chatting about throughout my 25 years of seminar carries that brand?

Good. This all the more so in that what I strove for was to say what is true, but I did not say it with all that much conviction, it seems to me. I was all the same sufficiently sidelined to be well-behaved. To say what is true about what? About knowledge. It was from this that I believed I could found psychoanalysis, because when all is said and done everything that I said holds together. To say what is true about knowledge, is not necessarily to ascribe knowledge to the psychoanalyst. As you know, I defined the transference in these terms, but that does not mean that it is not an illusion. It remains that, as I said somewhere in this yoke that I re-read myself with some astonishment – what I recounted in the good old days always strikes me, I never imagine that it is I who could have said it - that Knowledge and Truth do not have with one another, as I say in this *Radiophonie* in No 2-3 of *Scilicet*, that Knowledge and Truth have no relation with one another. I now must produce a preface for the Italian translation of these four first numbers of *Scilicet*.

That naturally is not all that easy for me, given the age of these texts. I am certainly weakish in my way of taking on the responsibility of what I myself wrote. That is not because it always appears to me to be the most uninspired stuff, but it is always a little backhanded and that is what astonishes me.

The Knowledge in question therefore, is the unconscious. Some time ago, invited to something that was nothing less than what we are trying to do at Vincennes under the name of *Psychoanalytic clinic*, I remarked that the Knowledge in

question was neither more nor less than the unconscious and that in short it was very difficult to know clearly the idea Freud had of it. Everything he says, it seems to me, it seemed to me, prescribed that it should be a Knowledge.

Let us try to define what this can mean to us, a Knowledge. What is at stake, in Knowledge, is what we can call signifier-effects (*effets de signifiant*).

I have here a yoke that I must say terrorised me. It is a collection which has come out under the title of *La philosophie en effet*. Philosophy in effect, in signifier-effects, it is precisely what I am trying to get out of unscathed, I mean that I do not believe that I am doing philosophy, but one always does more of it than one believes, there is nothing more slippery than this domain; you also do it, you too have your moments, and it is certainly not what you have most to rejoice about.

Freud therefore had only a few ideas about what the unconscious was. But it seems to me, in reading him, that one can deduce that he thought it was signifier-effects. Man – we have to call a certain generality by that name, a generality in which one cannot say that some stand out; Freud had nothing transcendent about him: he was a little doctor who did, good God, what he could in terms of what we call curing, which does not take us very far – man therefore, since I spoke about man, man can scarcely escape this business of Knowledge. This is dictated to him by what I called the signifier-effects, and he is not at ease: he does not know how to 'deal with' ('*faire avec'*) Knowledge. This is what is called his mental debility from which, I must say, I do not except myself. I do not except myself simply because I have to deal with the same material, with the same material as everyone else and that this material, is what dwells in us. With this material, he does not know how 'to deal' ('*y faire*'). It is the same thing as this 'dealing with' that I spoke about just now, but these nuances of the tongue are very important. This *y faire* cannot be said in every language. Knowing how to deal with is something different to know-how. It means to get on with it. But this '*y faire*'indicates that one does not really capture the thing, in short, in a concept.

This leads us to pushing the door of certain philosophies. You must not push this door too quickly, because you must remain at the level where I placed what in

short I called the discourses; the saids, it is the 'saying which succours' ('*dire qui secourt*'). We must all the same take advantage of what the tongue in which we speak offers us in terms of equivocation. What succours, is it the saying or is it the said? In the analytic hypothesis, it is the saying; it is the saying, namely the enunciating, the enunciating of what I called earlier the Truth. And in these '*dire-secours*', I had, the year when I spoke about *L'envers de la psychoanalyse* – you certainly do not remember it – I had, like that, distinguished in general 4 of them, because I was amusing myself precisely at making a sequence of 4 revolve, and in this sequence of 4, the Truth, the Truth of the saying, the Truth was only in short implied, since as perhaps you remember...yes, as you perhaps remember, it was presented like that, I mean that it was the discourse of the master that was the least true discourse. [**impossibility**]

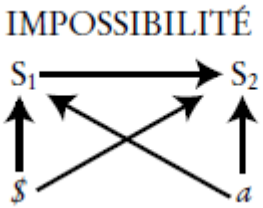


Fig. IV-1

The least true, that means the most impossible. I noted in effect the impossibility of this discourse, at least this was the way in which I reproduced it in what was published of *Radiophonie*.

This discourse is lying and it is precisely by that that it reaches the Real. *Verdrängung*, was what Freud called that; and nevertheless, it is indeed a said which succours him. Everything that is said is a swindle. It is not simply about what is said starting from the unconscious. What is said starting from the unconscious, participates in equivocation, in equivocation which is the principle of the witticism: the equivalence of sound and sense, it was in the name of that that I believed I could advance that the unconscious was structured like a language.

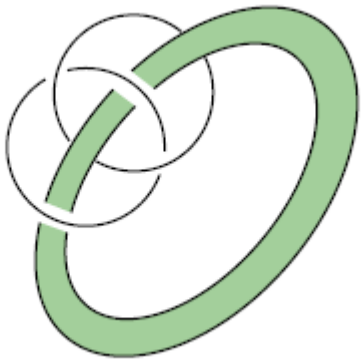
I noticed, like that a little bit too late and in connection with something which appeared in *Lexique et Grammaire* or else *Langue Française*, a trimestrial journal; it is a little article that I would advise you to look at very closely because it is by

someone for whom I have great esteem, he is J.–C. Milner. It is No 30, which appeared in May 1976. It is called *Réflexions sur la réference*. Something that, after reading this article, is an object of interrogation for me is the following; it is the role that he gives to the anaphore. He notices that grammar plays a certain role and that specifically the sentence that is not so simple: 'I saw 10 lions and you, he says, you saw 15 of them (*tu en a vu 15*)', the anaphore involves the use of this '*en*'. It very precisely highlights things by saying that the '*en*' does not concern the lions, it concerns the 10. I would prefer that he should not say '*tu en a vu 15';* I would prefer him to say *'tu en a vu plus'.* Because, in truth, the *tu* in question has not counted these 15. But it is certain that in the distinct sentence: 'I captured 10 lions and you, *tu en a capturé 15'*, the reference is no longer to the 10 but to the lions. It is, I believe, quite gripping that in what I call the structure of the unconscious, grammar must be eliminated. Logic must not be eliminated, but grammar must be eliminated. In French there is too much grammar. In German there is still more. In English, there is a different one that is in a way implicit. Grammar must be implicit to have its proper weight.

I would like to indicate to you something which is from a time when French did not have such a burden of grammar. I would like to point you towards something called *Les bigarrures du seigneur des Accords* ('The variegations of the lord of concords'). He lived right at the end of the 16th century. It is gripping because he seems to be all the time playing on the unconscious, which is all the same curious, given that he had no kind of idea of it, even less than Freud, but it is all the same on it that he plays. How manage to grasp, to say, this sort of flux that usage is?
And how state precisely the way in which, in this flux, the unconscious, which is always individual, can be specified?

There is something striking, which is that there are not three dimensions in language. Language is always flattened out. And that indeed is why my twisted business of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, with the fact that the Symbolic is what goes above what is above and which passes beneath what is beneath, this indeed is what gives it its value. The value is that it is flattened out.

Fig. IV-2



It is flattened out, and in a way that you know, because I repeated, resifted it, you know the value of the function, namely, that the effect this has is that if one of the 3 dissolves, the 2 others are freed. This is what I described, at one time, by the term knot for something that is not a knot, but effectively a chain. This chain all the same, it is striking that it can be flattened out.

And I would say that – it is a reflection, like that, which was inspired in me by the fact that as regards the Real, people want to identify it to matter (*la matière*) – I would rather propose to write it like this '*l'âme à tiers*'[7] (third party soul?). It would be, like that, a more serious way of referring oneself to this something that we have to deal with, and it is not for nothing that it is homogenous to the two others; that someone named Charles - Sanders as he was called, as you know, I already wrote this name often, many, many times, - that this Peirce was really struck by the fact that language does not properly speaking express relation, that indeed is something which is striking; that language does not permit a notation like x having a certain type of relation with y, and no other; this indeed is what authorises me, since Peirce himself articulates that for this there would need to be a ternary logic, and not the one we use, a binary logic, this indeed is what authorises me to speak about *l'âme à tiers*' as something which necessitates a certain type of logical relationships.

Yes. Well then, all the same, I am going in effect to come to this *Philosophie en effet*, a collection published by Aubier-Flammarion, to say what scared me a little

[7] Pun on *la matière.*

in what makes its way in short from something that I inaugurated by my discourse. There is a book which has appeared by someone called Nicolas Abraham and someone called Maria Torok. It is called *Cryptonymie*, which sufficiently indicates the equivocation, namely that the name is hidden there, and it is called *Le verbier de l'homme aux loups*. I don't know, there are perhaps some people here who attended my elucubrations on the Wolfman. It was in this connection that I spoke about the foreclosure of the name of the father. *Le verbier de l'homme aux loups* is something where, if words have a sense, I believe I recognise the thrust of what I have always articulated, namely, that the signifier is what is involved in the unconscious, and that, the fact that the unconscious, is that in short one speaks – if indeed there is something of the *parlêtre* – that one speaks all alone, that one speaks all alone, because one never says anything but one and the same thing which in short is upsetting, hence its defence and everything that is elucubrated about so-called resistances. It is altogether striking that resistance – I have said it – is something which takes its starting point in the analyst himself and that the goodwill of the analyser never encounters anything worse than the resistance of the analyst.

Psychoanalysis, - I have said it, I repeated it quite recently, - is not a science. It does not have its status as science and it can only wait for it, hope for it. But it is a delusion from which one is awaiting a science to be brought forth. It is a delusion that one is waiting to bring forth a science. One can wait for a long time. One can wait for a long time, I said why, simply because there is no progress and that what one is expecting is not necessarily what one is going to get. It is a scientific delusion therefore, and one is expecting that it will bring forth a science but that does not mean that analytic practice will ever bring forth this science.

It is a science that has all the less chance of maturing in that it is antinomical; and all the same, by the use that we make of it, we know that it has its relationships between science and logic. There is a thing which, I should say, astonishes me astonishes me still more than the broadcasting, the broadcasting which I know well is happening, the broadcasting of what is called my teaching, my ideas – because that means that I have ideas – the broadcasting of my teaching to this which makes its way under the name of *Institut de Psychanalyse*, the thing that

astonishes me still more, is not that *Le verbier de l'homme aux loups*, not simply that it sails ahead, but that it produces offspring, the fact is that someone whom I did not know – to tell the truth, I think he is in analysis – whom I did not know was in analysis – but this is a simple hypothesis – someone called Jacques Derrida who writes a preface for this v*erbier*. He writes an absolutely fervent enthusiastic preface in which I believe I can see a trembling which is linked – I do not know which of these two analysts he has dealings with – what is certain, is that he couples them; I do not find, I must say, despite the fact that I launched things along this path, I do not find this book, nor this preface to have the right tone. As a kind of delusion, I am speaking to you like that, I cannot say that it is in the hope that you will go and look at it; I would even prefer you to forgo it, but anyway I know well that when all is said and done you are going to rush to Aubier-Flammarion, even if only to see what I call an extreme limit. It is certain that this is combined with the more and more mediocre desire I have of talking to you. What is combined, is that I am scared of that which in short I feel myself more or less responsible for, namely, to have opened the floodgates of something about which I could just as well have shut up. I could just as well have reserved for myself alone the satisfaction of playing on the unconscious without explaining the farce of it, without saying that it is by this yoke of the signifier-effects that it operates. I could just as well have kept it to myself, since in short if I had not really been forced, I would never have done any teaching. It cannot be said that what Jacques Alain Miller published about the split of '53, that it was with any enthusiasm that I took up the baton on the subject of this unconscious.

I would even say more, I do not like the second topography all that much, I mean the one into which Freud let himself be drawn by Groddeck. Of course one cannot do otherwise, these flattening-outs, the Id with the big eye which is the Ego. The Id is..., everything is flattened out. But anyway, this Ego – which moreover in German is not called Ego, is called *Ich - Wo Es war* – where it was, where it was: we have no idea about what was in Groddeck's head to support this Id, this *Es*. He thought that the Id in question was what lived you. This is what he says when he writes his *Buch*, his '*Book of the Id*', his book on the *Es*, he says that it is what lives you.

This idea of a global unit which lives you, even though it is quite obvious that the Id dialogues, and this is even what I designated by the name of capital O, the fact is that there is something else, what I called earlier *l'âme à tiers*, *l'âme à tiers* which is not simply the Real, which is something with which explicitly, I am saying, we do not have relations. With language we clamour after this thing, and what is meant by S(Ø), that is what that means, which is that it does not answer. It is for that reason that we talk all alone, that we talk all alone until there emerges what is called an Ego, namely, something as regards which nothing guarantees that it might not properly speaking be speaking deliriously. This indeed is the reason I highlight, like Freud moreover, that you do not have to look too closely at what is called psychoanalysis and that, between madness and mental debility, we can only choose. That's enough of that for today.

Seminar 5: Wednesday 18 January 1977

Fig. V-1

This is rather laboured, so there you are, in truth, here, it is more or less the testimony, the testimony of a failure, namely, that I have exhausted myself for 48 hours, in making what I would call, contrary to what is involved in a plait (*tresse*), I exhausted myself for 48 hours, in making what I would call a 'four-stranded plait' ('*quatresse*'). There you are [Fig. V-2]

Fig. V-2

The plait is at the principle of the Borromean knot. That is to say that after six times, one finds, provided one crosses these three threads in an appropriate fashion – good, so then, this means that at the end of six manoeuvres of the plait, you find in order, at the sixth manoeuvre, the 1, the 2 and the 3. This is what constitutes

the Borromean knot [fig. V-3]. If you have, if you try it twelve times, you have likewise another Borromean knot, which Borromean knot is curiously not visualised immediately [Fig. V-4]. It has nevertheless this character that contrary to the first Borromean knot which, as you have seen just now, passes above the one that is underneath, since as you see, the red is above the green, underneath the one that is underneath: that is the principle from which the Borromean knot derives. It is in function of this operation that the Borromean knot holds up. Likewise, in a fourfold operation, you will put one above, the other underneath, and in the same way you will operate with underneath the one that is underneath, you will therefore have a new Borromean knot which represents the one with 12 crossovers.

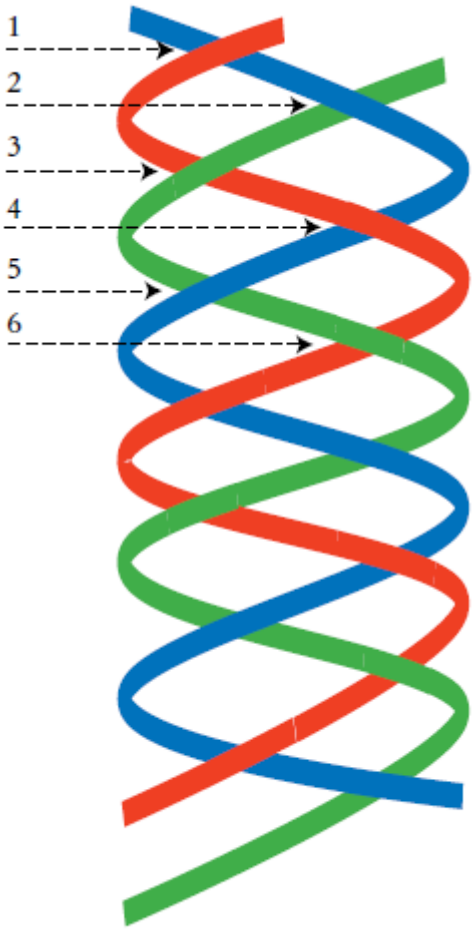


Fig. V-3

What is to be thought of this plait?

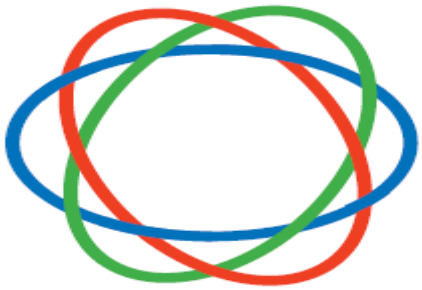


Fig. V-4

This plait can be in space. There is no reason, in any case at the level of the 'fourfold' ('*quatre-se*') that we cannot suppose it to be entirely suspended. The plait nevertheless can be visualised insofar as it is flattened out. I spent another period, one that was supposedly reserved for holidays, exhausting myself in the same way, in trying to make function another type of Borromean knot, namely, one that would be obligatorily made in space, since what I started from was not the circle as you

see it here, namely, something that one usually flattens out, but from what is called a tetrahedron.

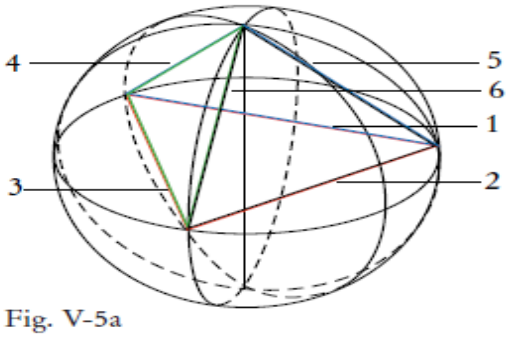


Fig. V-5a

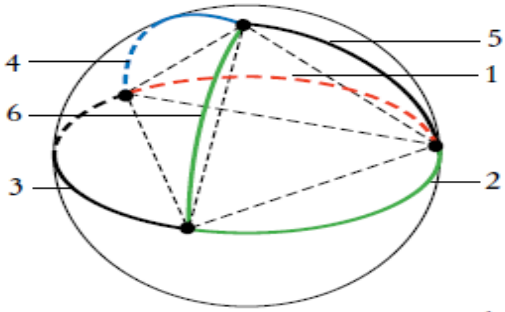


Fig. V-5b

A tetrahedron is drawn like that. Thanks to that, there are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 edges (*arêtes*). I should say that the prejudices that I had – because it is a matter of nothing less – pushed me to operate with the four faces, and not with the six edges, and with the four faces it is quite difficult, it is impossible to make a plait. There must be six edges there to make a correct plaiting and I would like to see these balls carrying the outline of the schema, coming back [**balls thrown into the audience**]. The fact is that you will note there that the plaiting, not six-fold but twelve-fold, is altogether fundamental. I mean that, what happens is that one cannot bring into play this knotting of tetrahedrons without starting, since there are only three tetrahedrons, without starting from the plait. It was a fact that was unveiled to me rather late, and which you will see here provided I pass you these balls which, I repeat, I would like to see coming back, because I have not, far from it, fully elucidated them,. I am going therefore, as I usually do, to throw them to you so that you can examine them.

I would like all four of them to be sent back. In effect, they are not similar. There are four of them, and there is a reason for that. It is a reason that I still have not mastered. It is preferable, even though of course that would take too much time, it would be preferable, that these balls should be compared one to the other, for they are effectively different. I would like that, from this threefold plait which is basic in the operation of these tetrahedric Borromean knots to which, I repeat, I applied myself without really completely managing them, I would like you to draw a conclusion. The fact is that, even for the tetrahedrons in question, one

proceeds also to what I would call a flattening out for this to be clear. The flattening out which on this occasion is spherical is necessary for one to put one's finger on the fact, as I might say, that the crossovers in question, the tetrahedric crossovers, are indeed of the same order, namely, that the tetrahedron which is underneath, the third tetrahedron, passes underneath, and that the tetrahedron which is above, the third tetrahedron passes above. It is indeed because of that that we are still here dealing with the Borromean knot.

What is annoying nevertheless, is that even in space, even starting from a presupposed spatial, we should also be constrained in this case here to support – since when all is said and done, it is we who support it – to support the flattening out. Even starting from a spatial presupposition, we are forced to support this flattening out, very precisely in the form of something which presents itself as a sphere (Fig. V-5b). But what does that mean, if not, that even when we manipulate space, we have never seen anything but surfaces, surfaces no doubt which are not banal surfaces because we articulate them as flattened out. From that moment on, it is manifest on the balls that the fundamental plait, the one that crisscrosses itself 12 times, it is manifest that this fundamental plait forms part of a torus. Exactly this torus that we can materialise by the following, namely, the twelve-fold plait, and that we can also moreover materialise in terms of the following namely, the six-fold plait [Fig. V-3 and Fig. V-4].

In truth this function of torus is clearly manifest in the balls that I have just given you, because it is no less true that between the two little triangles, if we make – I would ask you to consider these balls – if we make a polar thread pass through, we will have exactly in the same way a torus; for it is enough to make one hole at the level of these two little triangles to constitute at the same time a torus. This indeed is why the situation is homogenous, in the case of the Borromean knot, as I have drawn it here, is homogenous between the Borromean knot and the tetrahedron.

There is therefore something which ensures that it is no less true for a tetrahedron that the function of the torus governs here whatever is nodal in the Borromean knot. It is a fact, and it is a fact that has strictly never been glimpsed,

namely, that everything that concerns the Borromean knot is only articulated by being toric.

A torus is characterised quite specifically as being one hole. What is annoying, is that this hole is difficult to define. The fact is that the knot of the hole with its flattening out is essential, it is the only principle of their counting – and that there is only one way, up to the present, in mathematics, of counting the holes: it is by going through, namely, by taking a path such that the holes are counted. This is what is called the fundamental group. This indeed is why mathematics does not fully master what is at stake.

How many holes are there in a Borromean knot? This indeed is what is problematic since, as you see, flattened out, there are four of them [Fig. V-6]. There are four of them, namely, that there are not fewer than in the tetrahedron which has four faces in each of the faces of which one can make a hole. Except for the fact that one can make two holes, even three, even four, by making a hole in each of these faces and that, in this case, each face being combined with all the others and even repassing through itself, it is hard to see how to count these paths which would be constitutive of what is called the fundamental group. We are therefore reduced to the constancy of each of these holes which, by this very fact, vanishes in a quite tangible way, since a hole is no great thing.

Fig. V-6

How then distinguish what makes a hole and what does not make a hole? Perhaps the *quatresse* can help us to grasp it.

What is involved in this *quatresse* is something which solidarises what is found, that by which it happens that I qualified three circles, namely, that, as you see

here in this first drawing [Fig. V-1], these three circles form a Borromean knot. They form a Borromean knot, not that the first three form a Borromean knot since, as is implicated in the fact that the freed fourth, as I might say, the fourth element freed should leave each of the three free. The *quatresse* binds nevertheless, starting from the one which is the highest (black), on condition of passing above the one that is highest, it will find itself by passing over the one which in the flattening out is intermediary (green), by passing beneath, it will find itself binding the three. This indeed in effect is what we see happening [Fig. V-7], namely, that, on condition that you see that as equivalent to the following, I think that you see here that it is a matter of a representation of the Real insofar as it is here that we have the apprehension of the Imaginary, of the Symptom and of the Symbolic, the Symbolic on this particular occasion being very precisely what we must think about as being the signifier. What does that mean? The fact is that the signifier on this particular occasion is a symptom, a body, namely, the Imaginary being distinct from the signified. This way of making the chain questions us about the following: the fact is that the Real, namely, what on this particular occasion is marked here, the fact is that the Real would be very specially suspended on the body.

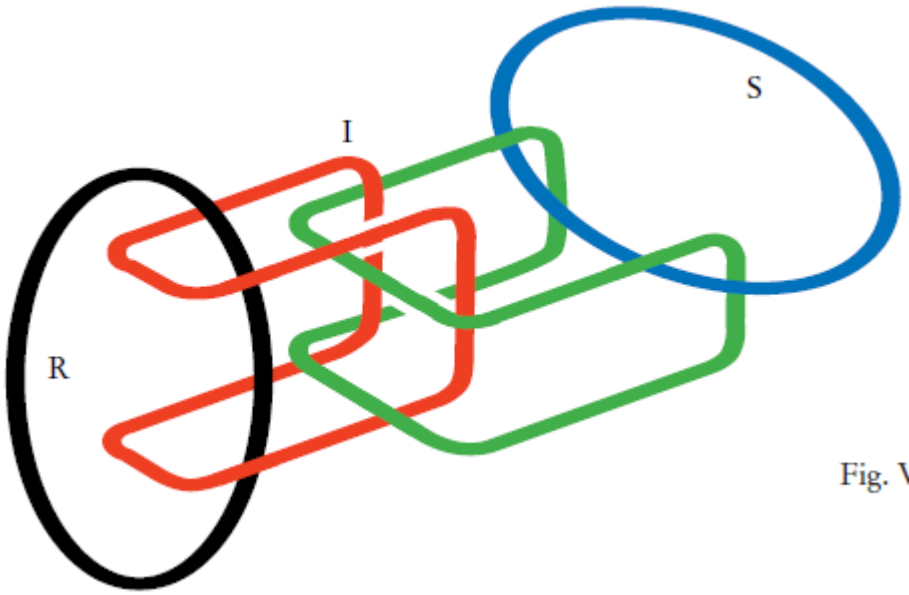
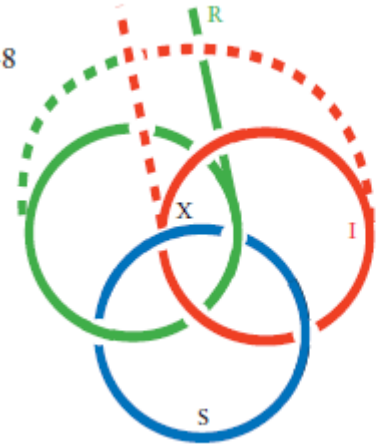


Fig. V-7

Let's see. Let us try to see here what would result from that, namely, that this X which is at this place, would open out and that the Imaginary would continue into the Real. This indeed in effect is what happens, because bodies are only produced, in the most futile fashion, as appendices of life, in other words of that about which Freud was speculating when he speaks about a germen.

We find there around the speaking function, something which, as one might say, isolates man, of whom at this time it must be marked that it is only in function of the fact that there is no sexual relationship, that what we can call on this particular occasion language, as I might say, may supply for it. It is a fact that blah-de-blah furnishes, furnishes what is distinguished by the fact that there is no relationship.

Fig. V-8



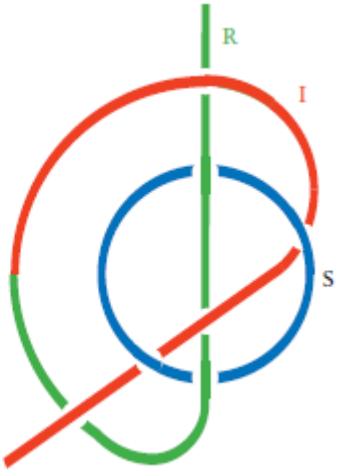


Fig. V-9

Yes, it would be necessary in this case that the Real, without us being able to know where it stops, that we should place the Real in continuity with the Imaginary. In other words, it begins there somewhere right in the middle of the Symbolic. That would explain why the Imaginary, traced out here in red, effectively falls back into the Symbolic, but that it is on the other hand foreign to it, as is testified by the fact that it is only man who speaks. You see here that the Real is drawn in green.

Yes, I would like someone to challenge me about what today, for you, I laboriously tried to formulate in this very unsymbolic fashion; it is something that is not easy to express. I think that as regards what is involved in this four-fold plait [Fig. V-2], it seems to me to reproduce, to reproduce very exactly what is here [Fig. V-1],

namely, that it is a way of representing it as plait that is in question. If I did not succeed effectively from the start, it is because it must not be believed that it is easy to make a four-fold plait; one must start from a point which sections the intercrossings, as I might say, in an appropriate fashion and it may be that things are such that starting from one of these points, one does not find a means of making the plait.

It is at this that I delayed so long, delayed so long that there has resulted more than a little damage to what I had to say to you today. If therefore someone wants to answer me, namely, question me about what i wanted to say today I would be very grateful.

- **X**: I would like to ask you a question...I wanted to ask you, because you said 'the presupposed space', and I never too clearly understood - and I humbly admit it before this noble assembly – whether you were saying '*ek-siste*' or '*existe*'. I have a right to my little weaknesses. But why could you not say: the '*père espace'*?
- **Lacan**: Yes
- **X**: I am asking myself, and then you said the 'presupposed tetrahedron which is threefold in space forms a plait'. I am not at a circus, but I remember since we are talking about a sphere, with these balls that you threw out which are so different, one could plait it.
- **Lacan**: One could?
- **X**: One could plait on the Borromean isle. One could make the plait in space like a jungler.
- **Lacan**: Yeah...
- **X:** It is because you said that it is difficult when it's flattened out, you admitted it yourself. Nobody told you that?
- **Lacan**: Yes, yes that's true. Well then has anyone else a question to ask?
- **Y:** Does the opening of the Real and of the Imaginary with the Symbolic folded back on itself presuppose that you are passing from the domain of man to the domain of life and of living beings?
- **Lacan**: He is certainly not the only one alive.

- **X**: You can't hear me because precisely I don't have a microphone. Things are designed technically so that there should be microphones. Why don't you use one? Is it to give a greater value to what you're saying?
- **Lacan**: Certainly not. I apologise for having had to go to the board more than once.
- **X**: So then, if the speaking function isolates man, what about a preverbal manifestation, namely, of the possible opening up of the Real – I am re-reading: the Real in continuity with the Imaginary – how do you see for example preverbal manifestations like all those of art for example:
- **Lacan**: Those of...
- **X**: Art, music, indeed all the arts which are, which do not go by way of the talking cure that do not pass through speaking? So then if you put the Real in continuity with the Imaginary by an opening here, I believe, from the experience which I have of painting that the continuity here drawn by you on the board by an opening is in act – I am saying indeed in act – this time by the body, which is as you have defined it and as Freud defined it by the germen, like the body being here an appendix, I think that at the level of painting something happens which is a preverbal appendix operation, namely, and there, I would ask you to link up precisely not that I do not know what follows but I am waiting for your riposte.
- **Lacan**: Yes
- **X:** I see in this graph, which is the representation of a cut, but where there is a possibility of an opening, in the act which is the act of painting, which is precisely there the fact of an opening, but by a continuity which would be, excuse me, like when you take a piece of toffee, it makes threads; so then this time there is no cut between the subject and the locus of the Other, there is not this alienation that was described for us in music, the last time, where the small **o** vanishes, let us say between the subject and the locus of the Other that makes threads. It is like when one is making toffee. Starting from the compulsionality of the Subject to the locus of the Other, me, for my part i see a curious possibility from the language of painting, which is mine, and which is a language where at the level of what is denoted, namely, at the level of what is in the dictionary and of what is plunged into an abyss and which is in function of time in your study on language starting from the treatment. Here in the pictorial fact there is a sort of insistence and since Lacan says that sense does not consist in what it signifies at that very

moment, effectively there is always this slippage and this interplay of signifiers as in the *Seminar on the Purloined Letter*, here there would seem to be a process of continuity, of curious insistence, a first level which would be a level of denotation, which might exist in poetry, which exists in what concerns me, in a pictorial experience where at that moment there is a first putting into a scenario or a production; signs are scenoengraphed and are going to insist at a level where the primary passes into the secondary and if you wish, constitutes a first formation of signs which themselves will be afterwards put into the condition of an abyss by the operation of a sort of scenic engagement.

- **Lacan**: For my part I believe that your preverbal on this particular occasion is completely modelled by the verbal. I would even say that it is hyper-verbal. What you call on this particular occasion filaments, is something which is profoundly motivated by the symbol and by the signifier.

- **X**: Yes, moreover I believe that too. But let us say that the path is different and does not happen by the whole process of the Symbolic and this is not at all to put in doubt or to fault your teaching even though I am not for it here.

- **Lacan**: There is no reason why one cannot find fault with my teaching.

- **X:** No but let us say at the level of what no longer is.

- **Lacan**: I am trying to say that art on this particular occasion goes beyond symbolism. Art is a know-how and the Symbolic is a principle of doing. I think that there is, that there is more truth in the saying of art than in any amount of blah-de-blah. That does not mean that it can pass along any path whatsoever.

- **X:** Yes I just wanted to say that things...

- **Lacan**: It is not a preverbal. It is verbal to the power of two. There you are.

Seminar 6: Wednesday 8 February 1977

Ah! I am banging my head against what I would call, on this occasion, a wall, a wall of course of my own invention. That is precisely what annoys me. One does not invent just anything at all. And what I invented is designed in short to explain – I say to explain, but I am not very clear about what that means – to explain Freud. What is striking, is that, in Freud, there is no trace of that worry or more exactly of these worries, of these worries that I have and that I communicate to you in any case in the form of: 'I am banging my head against the walls'. That does not mean that Freud did not worry a lot, but what he gave to the public was apparently of the order, I say of the order of a philosophy namely, that there was not..., I was going to say that there were no snags (*d'os*); but precisely, there were bones and what is necessary for walking on one's own, namely, a skeleton. There you are. I think that here you recognise the figure, in any case if I drew it properly, the figure, the figure in which by a single stroke depicted the generation

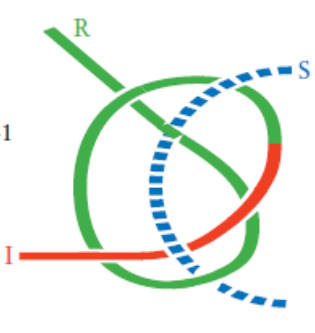


Fig. VI-1

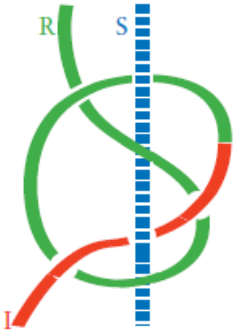


Fig. VI-2

of the Real, and that this Real is extended in short by the imaginary since that indeed is what is at stake, without us knowing very clearly where the Real and the Imaginary stop. There you are, it is this figure [Fig. VI-1] which is transformed into this figure there [Fig. VI-2]. I am only offering it to you because in short it is the first drawing where I haven't got into a muddle, which is remarkable, because I always of course get into a muddle.

Good, I would like all the same to give the floor to someone whom I asked to come here to express a certain number of things which seem to me to be worthy, altogether worthy of being enunciated. In other words I think that Alain Didier Weil is someone who is not badly engaged in his business. What I can tell you, is that, for me, I was very attached to flattening out something. Flattening out always participates in a system, it simply participates in it, which is not saying a lot. A flattening out, for example that I made for you with the Borromean knot, is a system. I am trying of course to crush this Borromean knot, and this indeed is what you see in these two images.

The ideal, the Ego Ideal, in short would mean finishing with the Symbolic, in other words saying nothing. What is this demoniacal force which pushes forward to say something, in other words to teach, is what I have come to tell is that, the Superego. That is what Freud designated by the Superego which, of course, has nothing to do with any condition that could be designated as natural. On the subject of this natural, I ought all the same signal something to you, it is that I found myself strongly drawn to read something which appeared in the Royal Society of London and which is an 'Essay on dew'. This had the greatest esteem of someone called Herschel who wrote something entitled '*Discours préliminaire sur l'étude de la philosophie naturelle*'. What most strikes me in this 'Essay on dew', is that it is of no interest. I obtained it, of course, at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* where I have like that from time to time a particular person who makes an effort for me, a person who is a musicologist there and who is in short not too badly placed to obtain for me on occasion, since I had no other means of getting this original text which at a pinch I might have managed to read. What I asked her for was a translation. It had been translated in effect, this'Essay on dew', this 'Essay on dew' had been translated from its author William Charles Wells, it was translated by someone called Tordeux, a master in pharmacy and you really have to force yourself enormously to find it of the slightest interest. That proves that not all natural phenomena interest us as much, and dew quite particularly, we slip over the surface of that. It is all the same curious that dew, for example, has not the same interest that Descartes succeeded in giving to the rainbow. Dew is as natural a phenomenon as the rainbow. Why does it not have any particular importance for us? It is very strange and it is quite certain that it is by reason of

its relationship to the body that we do not have the same lively interest in dew as in the rainbow, because the rainbow, we have the feeling that this opens out to the theory of light, at least we have this feeling since Descartes demonstrated it. Yes. Anyway, I am perplexed about the little interest that we have in dew. It is certain that there is something centred on the functions of the body, which ensures that we give a sense to certain things. Dew lacks a little sense. That at least is what I can bear witness to after reading as attentively as I could this 'Essay on dew'. And now I am going to give the floor to Alain Didier Weill, while apologising for having delayed him a little; he will have no more than an hour-and-a quarter to speak to you, instead I think of what I guaranteed for him, which was an hour-and-half.

Alain Didier Weill is going to speak to you about something which has a relationship to Knowledge, namely, 'I know' or 'he knows'. It is on this relationship between 'I know' and 'he knows' that he is going to play.

- **Alain Didier Weill**: Can we say that I am going to talk about the *Passe*?

- **Lacan**: You can also talk about the *Passe*.
[*ADW's lengthy intervention has been included for completeness but has not been as carefully translated and revised as Lacan's own words. CG*]

- **Alain Didier Weill**: The point from which I came to propose to Dr Lacan these elucubrations that I am going to submit to you, comes from what is represented for me by what is called in the Ecole Freudienne, the Passe. Effectively a rumour circulates for some time in the School, which is that the results of the Passe which is supposed to have functioned for a certain number of years, did not respond to the hopes that had been put in it. Given that this idea, like that, that there is the idea of a failure of the past, this is something that personally I find hard to put up with, in the Passe where for me it seems to guarantee what can preserve the essential and what is most living for the future of psychoanalysis; I cogitated on the question a little, and I think I have eventually found what could account for a topological montage which does not exist and which would account for the fact that the *jury d'agrement* perhaps does not manage to use, and to use what is

transmitted to it to advance the crucial problems of psychoanalysis. The circuit that I am going to put in place before you claims to metaphorise by a long circuit in which there would be representable the fundamental movements – you see that I am designating precisely three of them – at the issue of which a subject and his Other can arrive at a precise point, very locatable, that I will call B4-R4 – you will see why – and starting from which I will articulate what seems to me to be, both the problem of the passe, and that of, perhaps, the nature of the short circuit, of what could topologically short circuit what is supposed to happen at the level of the *jury d'agrement*. Good, I commence therefore.

The subjects that I chose to presentify for you our two analytic partners, can be made familiar to you in that they are supposed to correspond in a certain way to two protagonists most absent in the story of *The purloined letter* which you know, the very ones, about whom from the beginning to the end there is question, namely, the emissary, the one who is the emissary with the letter who is so far excluded that Poe even, I believe, does not even name him and namely, the receiver of the letter, who – as we know – Lacan showed it to us – is the King. If you allow me, I baptise for the convenience of my presentation, the subject by the name of Bozef and I will keep the name of the one it is destined for, that of the King. My whole montage is going to consist in substituting for the short circuit by which Poe's story keeps his two subjects outside the journeying of the letter, a long zigzag circuit by which the letter starting from position B1 will end by arriving at position B4. The numbering of 1 and 4 that I indicate to you indicate already that I will be led to distinguish 4 places which will differentiate 4 successive positions of the subject and of the Other. I begin therefore with B1.

You see that B, the series of Bs, responds to the subject Bozef, this series of R1, R2, R3 correspond to the progression of the knowledge of the king, R1, R2, R3. By B1, if you wish, I am qualifying the state, of innocence of the subject indeed the infantilism of the subject, when he is uniquely supported by this subjective position which is the following: the Other does not know, the king does not know, does not know what? Well then, quite simply, the content of the letter does not matter, quite simply does not know that the subject knows something about him. R1 represents therefore the radical ignorance of the king; therefore one could say

that in the position B1, would be the foolish position of the cogito which could be written: 'He does not know, therefore I am'. The story, if you wish, this position is familiar to you in the measure that we know that it is a position that we know from the analyser; the analyser quite often as we know chooses his analyst while saying unconsciously to himself, while saying to himself, 'I am choosing him, this particular one, because I know I am going to be able to best him' and we know that what he fears the most at the same time is that he will succeed. So then starting from this elementary montage, I continue.

Before putting up Lacan's graph here is how things are going to happen. But now, the story begins; I am going to now make intervene someone that I call, you see that I called him M, M I will call that the messenger, namely, that B1 one day, Bozef who is at B1 is going to give to the messenger in the position of M the message that I called m1 and in m1 he says: The Other does not know, the king does not know. The messenger is designed for that, he is of course a traitor, he transmits to the king the message m1 which is transformed on m of 1, namely, that the king passes from the position of the ignorance R1, to the position of R2 an elementary knowledge: the Other knows, namely, that the subject knows something about me. Starting from there, the message is going to go back to Bozef, our subject, in an inverted form. It is going to come back in two ways as I say, it is going to come back because there will be a return movement, the messenger is going to say to him, is going to find him if you like and going to say to him: I said to the king what you told me. I call this message m1 it is a return on

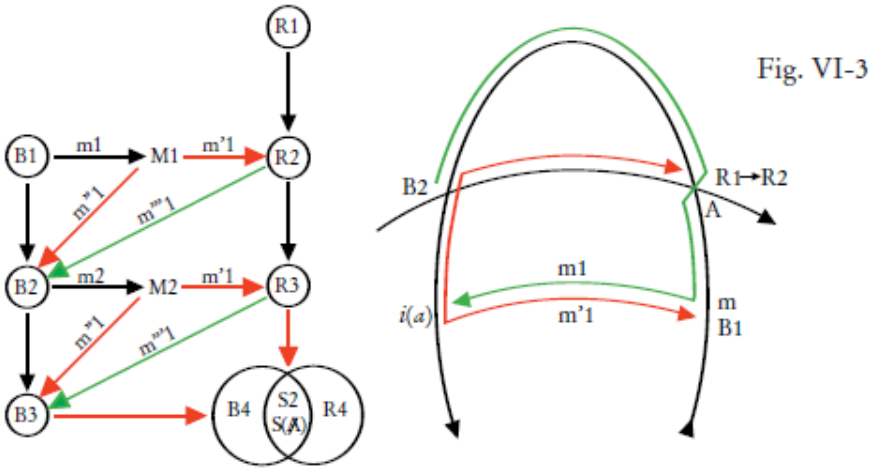


Fig. VI-3

the plane on the axis on the graph, on the axis of i of o; if you wish, it is a specular relation. Another message arrives to Bozef that will be placed for its part on the trajectory of subjectification, that I put in green, that will arrive directly therefore on the plane through the symbolic plane. You see therefore that the important thing here is the fact that Bozef who was in a position of foolishness, of the foolishness of B1, because of the inversion of the message that comes back to him, namely, this time the Other knows, is displaced. He can no longer remain at B1, he finds himself at B2. And at B2, I would say that he is here in the position of semblance, he can still support himself in the position that I would describe as that of duplicity since at B2 he can still say to himself: 'Yes, he knows, but he does not know that I know he knows'. So then I am now going to write, before going any further, the first episode on Lacan's graph.

There, the position of the Other, the message leaves from the Other; there is the ego position of Bozef that I am writing as B1. The message starts from Bozef who gives it to the messenger who would be i of o the message that I called m1, namely, that this circuit says: he does not know. The messenger does his business, transmits this message along this path which makes the king go from R1 to R2. The effect starting from there, starting from the new position of the Other is going to carry Bozef who was at B1, here an elementary subject effect what Lacan would call the signified of the Other, at the level of B2, namely, that one can also draw this arrow.

Bozef also receives a message, one might say, at the level in the axis of o – o' of the messenger. You see therefore that our subject Bozef is at B2, I am now going to make, to introduce another graph of Lacan's.

I continue therefore, I left, as you see, Bozef at B2, being sustained by the position of duplicity that I have described for you, since he

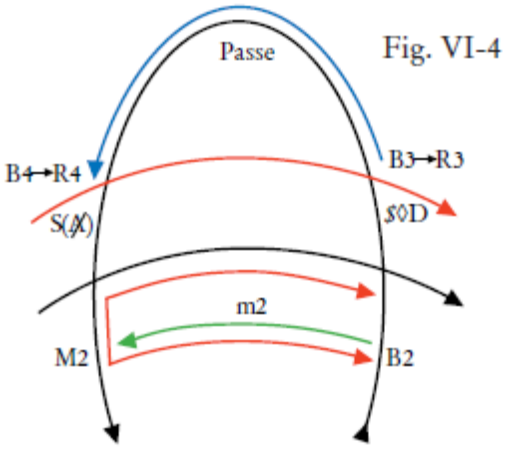


Fig. VI-4

is in the position of maintaining the idea of the ignorance of the Other. Now things, it is here that things begin to become really interesting for us and much more complicated. Starting from this position B2 of Bozef, here's what is going to happen: Bozef continues the operation of the transmission of his knowledge, namely, that to the messenger that I draw in the position of M2, he is going to transmit a second message that I call m2 and in this message he says to him: 'Yes, he knows, but he does not know that I know'. The messenger at M2 does the same work, retransmits this message to the king, the king passes therefore to a new knowledge, goes from R2 to R3; the knowledge of the king at that point is: 'He knows that I know that he knows that I know'; but that is something that Bozef does not yet know, he will only know it when the messenger makes his last trip, comes back to Bozef and confides to him: 'I told the king that you know that he knows that you know that he knows', namely, that, at this point Bozef whom we have left at B2 is propelled into a new position that I am calling B3, starting from which we are going to question the second graph of Lacan, in a very particular way and starting from which we are going to begin to be able to introduce what is involved in the passe.

I am therefore going to continue, to end the schema before continuing.

Here is M2, m1, m1.

Bozef whom I left at B2 here (2), I replace here at B2 (1), namely, that he transmits to M2, he transmits m2, he says to him: 'He knows, but he does not know that I know that he knows'. Just like earlier this message arrives at the Other also like the following (2) and the return of this message to Bozef puts him in this very particular position of being confronted to an Other from whom he can no longer hide anything. The king...

Good, I hope that you can follow me, even though it's a bit of a zigzag. What happens therefore when the king is at R3, namely, when he is in the position of knowing what I have indicated to you and that this knowledge is known by the return of the messenger to Bozef, namely, that Bozef may think: 'The king knows that I know that he knows that I know'. What is going to happen at that very

moment and what is going to introduce us to what follows, is that, even though, at B2, Bozef in the semblance, could still lay claim to a little bit of being by saying: 'He knows, but he does not know and I can all the same still be', at B3, because of what one could call 'the absolute knowledge of the Other', Bozef, the position of the cogito of Bozef will be completely dispossessed of his thought. At that level, if the other knows everything, it is not because the Other knows everything, it is because he can no longer hide anything from the Other, but the problem is to hide what? Because what is revealed to the Other at that moment, is not so much the lie in which Bozef held him, it is that there emerges for Bozef at that moment the fact that his lie reveals to him that in fact, behind this lie, there was hidden a lie of a completely different nature and another dimension. If the king is in this position, in this position of R3 in which he would know everything, this all, namely, the most radical incognito of Bozef, which disappears, Bozef is in the position, in the position in which he find himself and what I am going to show you, corresponds to what Lacan names the position of the eclipsing of the subject, of fading before the signifier of demand, which is written on the graph – this also designates the drive, I am not going to talk about that now - $◊D.

I must continue now, I would like you to sense that since at R3 nothing more can be hidden, while there is opening up for the subject B3 the last hiding place, namely, the one that he did not know was hidden. And what he uncovers, is that by involuntarily hiding, by having a lie that he can designate, he avoided in fact a lie of which he knew nothing, which dwelt in him and which constituted him as subject. Therefore, this knowledge of which he knew nothing is going to emerge at R3 with respect to the Other who henceforth knows everything. When I say 'emerge with regard to the Other', it is really in the proper sense that this expression must be understood, for he does not emerge with respect to this Other, it is precisely what was withdrawn during the originating creation of the Subject, what was withdrawn from the Subject, the signifier S_2, and which constituted him as such, as subject supporting speech, as subject acceding to speech in the demand of the fact of the withdrawal of this signifier S_2. Now, what happens? Here we have the signifier S_2 reappearing in the Real, for that is what must be said.

Effectively the problem of primary repression, one cannot say that the return of the primary repression is produced in the Symbolic as secondary repression would, since it is itself the author of it. If it comes back, it can only be because in the Real and it is insofar that it is as such it manifests, I would say by a look, a look of the Real, before which the Subject is absolutely without recourse.

I am not going to go on about that, but if you reflect on it, you will see that the position of knowledge implied by R3, by the Other at R3, could correspond to what happens, if you wish, in that which is supposed to be the Last Judgement, at this point where the subject will not be accused finally of lying in the present, since precisely at the point B3 – R3 he is no longer lying, since he is revealed in his non being, but what is subsequently revealed to him, is that he did not cease to lie in the imperfect, even though he said a word. This position can also indicate to you, Knowledge at R3 can also open up perspectives, if you want to reflect, on what might be involved in racist or segregationist knowledge, but this would be a position of knowledge in which I would see the subject incarnate this S_2 in the Real.

As you see these are paths that I am launching here, since it is not our subject and I'm not going to come back to it. It would also be necessary to articulate the return of this S_2 into the Real with what is involved in terms of delusion, to seriously articulate the aphanisis and the delusional position in the measure that in the two cases the signifier returns to the Real, but nevertheless one could say that in the case of the non-psychotic who loses speech like the psychotic, nevertheless one could compare his position to that of these peoples invaded by foreigners who carry out a politics of scorched earth, who burn everything, who burn everything in order to keep something, namely, that the invasion is not total. And what is effectively maintained, what remains once the subject disappears, since, if you reflect on it, what is happening at R3, is that the signifier of the *Urverdrängung* returning into the Real, it is nothing less than primal repression, the subject of the unconscious which disappears: if you like, the bar of the unconscious, this bar which separates the **o** and S_2 being barred, makes them appear in S_2 in the Real and in the **o** in the Real, and that is what remains, and that this is a position of total desubjectification.

I am coming now to the most enigmatic point of the business, which is that this position in which the subject finds itself thunderstruck under the look of the S_2 in the real, a thunderstruck position, without speech before this monstrous look, the word monstrous is not here by chance, because it is a matter of the reality which shows itself (*se montre*), that this 'monster', which is precisely the most radical incognito and that, if this S_2 shows itself, what supports speech itself, namely, its effacing, can no longer arrive, and if a monster is monstrous, it is nothing other than the cutting of speech.

The high point of the riddle that we are getting to, is to try to interpret how Bozef being in B3, if we posit that he is not going to remain there all his life, in eternity like a petrified subject, fixed in stone, under the look of Medusa, what is going to enable the subject at B3 get out of it? And how is he going to get out of it?

So then the first step that I am posing, is that you see that at that moment there there is no longer the support of the messenger; the messenger was at the end of his course and at the end of his recourse to Bozef and for the first time Bozef is confronted to the Other and with this Other, namely, with the one to whom the letter was really addressed and meeting whom he avoided as much as possible, at that moment he is face to face with this Other and he cannot do anything other than say a word recognising this Other, one word and one alone. The important thing is to see the link that there is between the fact that he can only say a single word, with the fact, at the moment when he gives up on the messenger, namely, the moment at when there are no longer two of them to transmit the message to the Other. It is also then the moment when the Other is going to receive a message that will not come from the two, it will no longer be duplicity, one could say that the position of duplicity at that moment, interiorised by Bozef, metamorphises him by dividing him, that is the division and the price of 'one word'.

You see there moreover that duplicity is without doubt the best defence against division. The fact that there is a link between a single possible word, Bozef is going to be confronted with the king at R3, there is only one possible word to

which I will return later, what is the only thing that he can say to him? He will say to him: 'It is you'. An 'it is you' that is extended moreover – I will come back on this later, into 'it is us'. And the single word that he can say to him, he says to him at the same time: there is only one person to whom I can say it and it is already from topology that we can see that one word can only be given at one locus and that the tongue itself shows you that it knows this topology since it tells you that someone that has speech has only one and cannot have another; someone who has no speech, precisely has only one and at the same time there is the notion in the tongue of the destination, since, to give his word, is only conceivable if one can keep it namely, in fact a word that can be kept, the point therefore at which I arrive, is that the message delivered is this 'it is you' and I am going to write it for you in a way at a certain level, I am going to write a letter which is going to go from B3 to R3, B3 and R3 are going to meet at the level of this message which I will further explicitate now as being this S of Ø. I am going to give you a first way of writing it.

What I have drawn on the schema on the left is that when Bozef with his back to the wall this time can only say one word to the king by the very fact that he addresses this word to the king, the king one last time is displaced, migrates, migrates from the place where he was, namely, of the Real, migrates anew into the locus, into the symbolic locus where there is found in the position of R4, Bozef saying 'It is you' who is in the position of B4, the S(O), I am writing of the meeting, of the communion between B4 and R4, both putting in common at that moment their bar and that is why I wrote in the lunlua S_2 and S(O); I hope to be able to explicitate more rigorously in what is going to follow.

The point of the enigma on which I would like to keep you, is that, in the message delivered at S(Ø), in the 'it is you', is that the subject who keeps his word – as we have seen – is here in a position much more of keeping it, but of supporting it, which is something quite different. What does it mean to sustain a word? It is much easier first of all to say what it is not, for example someone who says to you: 'I think that, when Lacan says the unconscious is structured like a language, I think that he is right, I agree with him', even if the subject may assure himself of his thinking in all good faith by thinking that he thinks that the unconscious is

structured like a language, I ask you: what does that prove? Nothing at all. In other words: is it because a subject thinks that he is thinking something that he really thinks it, namely, is it because he thinks he is thinking it that the enunciating, the subject of the unconscious which is in him, corresponds to what he says, in other words is he responsible for what he says? That is what is meant by sustaining one's word among others. It's a first approach. This having been said, that our enunciating corresponds, sustains our enunciation, I was going to say, praise be to God, there is no proof for it. There is no proof for it, but what there is eventually is a proof and that is how I believe one can understand the passe, the passe as a topological montage that would allow us to take into account if effectively when a subject enunciates something, he is capable of bearing witness, namely, of transmitting the articulation of his enunciating to his enunciated. In other words, it is not a matter of saying, but to show how it is possible not to go back on one's word.

The question therefore at which I will go further on, is that if this S(O) which Bozef reaches at R4, if he reaches there according to what I am showing you, the fact is that it is from a certain place – the word he uses doesn't matter, it is banal, it is you, it's chit chat, it's nothing at all – the weight of truth of this message, is that it is a locus. The question that I am now going to pose and develop is: is this locus from which the subject speaks transmissible? Can it reach, for example in the case of the passe, can it reach the *jury d'agrement*? Good. The enigma from the moment when the subject is capable, more than keeping his word, of sustaining it, namely, to be at a point where he reaches something that must be recognised as being of the order of a certainty and of a certain desire let us try to give an account of it, it is not easy. It is not easy because precisely in S(O) the object of desire or the object of certainty is something of which one can say nothing. But notice already, in order to circumscribe more closely what I am trying to say, it is in a general fashion that the people who, in life, inspire confidence in you, as it is put, are people that precisely you feel are desiring, but with a desire that remains I would say enigmatic to themselves, and quite the contrary, those who inspire in you what I would call an ethical judgement that is eventually of distrust, who will make you say: he's a hypocrite, he's a bad penny or he's ambitious, anyway terms of this kind, this doesn't matter, these are precisely people of whom you feel that

the object of desire is not unknown to themselves, that they can very precisely designate it, I would even say that what makes you uneasy perhaps in them, is that the voice of phantasy is so strong in them that there will be no hope for the voice of the S(Ø); since I am talking about trust you can clearly see that that poses the problems of the conditions by which an analyst can be worthy of trust? How is he so? Briefly I would say for the moment precisely that his desire should not be placed like the one that I have tried to describe, but this his desire should not have as a voice of clogging up the bar by making the object emerge but that his desire is to maintain this bar, and to bring it to incandescence just as what happens at the point B4 – R4 where the bar is carried to this point of extreme incandescence, I would say briefly. All of this does not yet give us an account of why at S(O), while the subject has no guarantees, what ensures that he reaches the point of being able to sustain what he says? And how he must account for the fact that if he gets there it is along the path of B3-R3, - as you remember – when the Other is in the position of absolute Knowledge, the subject can arrive at S(Ø) after having undergone the experience of the dispossession of his thinking, a total dispossession of his thinking.

Let us suppose, if you wish, to go a little further, an analyst who has not Passed through this dispossession of his thinking and who maintains with psychoanalytic theory a relationship of a possessor, of relationships of possession comparable to those, if you wish of the miser and his moneybox. Such an analyst, in his relationship to the theory, naturally can only see the gain of the operations; the gain of the operation is obvious; the thing is within hands reach and by definition what he does not see, is what he loses in the operation. What does he lose? Precisely what he loses, is the dimension of topology that there is in him, namely, the dimension of the locus of enunciating, namely, the dimension of presence which in him can answer 'Present', answer to what he enunciates. What I would then say, is that, in this position, is not the subject, the analyst in question, in a position that corresponds psychoanalytically to flat denial, namely,, is it possible on the one hand to say yes to knowledge and on the other hand to say no to the locus from which this knowledge is emitted. If this split takes place, one may think that the truth which is in the subject having brought about this split, by having remained outside the circuit of speech, is going to short circuit the circuit

of speech as, if you wish, reminding him of an absolutely painful nostalgia that must never be reawakened. That is why I would say, if a *parl'être* pulls himself together at that moment and makes a completely different sound be heard, Lacan for example in his heroic days, the analyst in question – let us think of the IPA or even, without going that far, to what happened among ourselves – can literally not support the echo that this sends back to him. This split of which I am speaking, which it is tempting to bring about, because it avoids division, implies in effect for the analyst, if he is split, that implies that his Other also is split and his Other is split, I would say, between an Other that would never lie and an Other which always lies, if you wish the Devil, the one who deceives, and to defy whom it is enough, in order not to make a mistake, it is enough not to be a dupe. You know well that the non-dupes err, and you see that it is the renunciation of this duplicity of the Other that the subject is necessarily in a position of passing on, namely, of being a heretic. And I would point out to you that Lacan, more than once, designated himself specifically as a heretic, and especially as passing it on. My transitory hypothesis, is to say that in the red arrow which goes from B4 to R4 (1), which make S_2 and S(Ø) communicate, an arrow that I drew above in violet (3), which makes one go from the fading of $ ◊ D to S(Ø), is the Passe, the movement by which something about the Passe can be said.

Now let us explore still more, if you wish, the scandalous character, that's how it should be described, of the message transmitted in S(Ø), the message of the heretic. I told you at the outset there are no longer these two divinities, there is therefore no longer a guarantee for the moneybox. The subject speaks having in himself a responder to what he says. What is interesting, when we read, - I am making a rapid parenthesis – *The Manual of Inquisitors*, and they are interesting because they correspond literally to what happened in a recent Passe for us – the fact is that the inquisitor picks out perfectly what is in question in this S(Ø); he picks it out in his way of defining a heretic: a heretic is not somebody who errs, who is in error, '*errare humanum est'*, it is the one who perseveres, it is the one who says 'I say and I repeat', namely, the one who poses an 'I' to which another diabolical 'I' – '*errare diabolicum*' – a diabolical one responds, and effectively this I of enunciating, is diabolical because like the devil, it is diabolically ungraspable: the devil does not always lie. If he always lied that would come down to saying

that he tells the truth. You see that the inquisitor, clearly spots what is at stake, namely, that it is in terms of an articulation between the two 'I's', at the level of this S(Ø). And that is why, whatever he says, he does not demand an avowal of the heretic, but a disavowal. You sense the nuance between the two, since I spoke to you earlier about the disavowal at the very heart of the inquisitor in this split of the two Others. This disavowal moreover, notice that I am not throwing stones at anyone, this disavowal lies in wait for us at every moment. It is not all that rare to see for example an analyst in supervision who, at a given moment in his journey, prefers to lie on the couch rather than to continue the supervision, and what one often sees is that, if he wants to lie on the couch, it is as if lying on the couch the rule being to be able to say anything at all, as if, at that very moment, he had disengaged himself from the fact that he had to answer for what he says, that he can talk without responsibility. This analyser can believe that for a certain time until the day he discovers, on the couch, that these signifiers that he thought he did not have to answer in the sense of responsibility, he has to answer for, and that day perhaps the analyser, for him, the Passe is profiled because at that moment, one could say that he is no longer simply the disciple of Lacan or of Freud, but he becomes the disciple of his symptom, namely, that he allows himself to be taught by it and that if for example the analyser in question was Bozef, however complicated may be Bozef's path, he can only discover that in writing this outline, that this outline in a certain way has already been sketched out, perhaps even before he learned how to read, on the graphs of a certain Dr Lacan. One could say at that moment that the analyser no longer is the delegate of the master, because he no longer has to be, he no longer has to be I would say carried by the knowledge of the master, because he makes himself the carrier, and this is what he delivers to S(Ø). I am going round in circles to approach little by little, closer and closer, the core of this S(Ø) namely, at the point that we are at, I could say that Bozef, it would be at the end of this journey that he is responsible for the graphs that he writes and only at that very moment.

Now the problem is to effectively account for the nature of this certitude and of this enjoyment of the Other that Lacan talks to us about. I am obliged to go quickly because time is effectively passing.

At S(O) a contradictory phenomenon takes place, which is that of a communion – the word is Lacan's in *The formations of the unconscious*, you will find it – is that of a communion coinciding with a separation between the subject and the Other. The paradox is to comprehend why it is at the moment of the dissolution of the transference, that a certainty may be borne in the subject, and perhaps uniquely at that very moment. For that I am obliged to make a rapid return back to what is the point that we were at at B3-R3, the point of *désêtre*.

At that point I would say – I am obliged because to comprehend what is the nature of the emergence of the subject in a pure state – at B3-R3, rapidly, the subject was in a position where the primary repression had disappeared, fixed by the look of the Real. What is going to allow the subject to unfix himself – remember moreover, that on the subject of fixation, Freud articulates it to primary repression – what is going to allow the subject to unfix himself, what is going to allow the Other which is in the Real to reintegrate his symbolic site? It is there moreover that the art of the analyst must make itself heard. An example: an analyser in this position, where for him the knowledge of the Other wanders around like that in the Real, puts pressure on his analyst to see the way in which the analyst is going to manifest himself, from where he speaks, one day telephones him to press for a rendezvous to see the reaction, the analyst responds: 'If it were necessary, we would see one another'. The message, the signified, has nothing very original about it, nevertheless this message has the effect of a radical interpretation for the analyser, the effect being of managing to reconvey to the Other in his symbolic locus, quite simply because of the syntactic articulation, which ensured that his analyst by finding the formula 'If it were necessary', by the introduction of the 'it', subjecting himself as analyser to the dominance, to the predominance of the signifier.

In the point B3-R3 where the subject has no recourse, he has no recourse 'to comprehend this notion of being without recourse', evokes the night terrors of the child. Why effectively in the dark is the child in this position? I would say precisely that in the dark what happens for the child is that he does not have a corner to go to where he is not under the look of the Other; because in the dark there is no little corner. And it is precisely in answer to the fact that under the

look of the Real, there is not, for the subject, at B3-R3 any recourse to any corner whatsoever, that the recourse summoned by the signifier of the Name of the Father is going to be to create a little nook, namely, a nook that is going to withdraw him from the Other, but which is also going to withdraw him from himself by constituting him as not knowing, since it is precisely this corner itself, the corner in which he has the most of himself, the most symbolic of himself that is going to be evaporated. I would say that at that moment – scripture says to us 'let there be light' – what is at stake at that moment is 'let there be a hole', this is an expression of Lacan's. And this is perhaps what happened in the syntactical formula that I evoked earlier. Having said this, how is it that the subject – I am turning all the time around that as you can see – who has lost speech, is going to rediscover it and is going to be able to say 'It's you'? Well then I would say due to the intervention of the signifier of the Name of the Father, which recreated the primal repression, which made S_2 disappear and restored the **o-**object in its place, because of the operation of this signifier of the Name of the Father, the subject reaches a different point of view, a point of view where he does not know the equivalence between the knowledge of the Other and the key which is lacking in him. He discovers that it is not because the Other recognises that he is lacking, that there is not in him the key, that he lacks the essential key of his being, it is not because the Other recognises that that he knows it. I would even say that when he discovers that the Other can recognise the existence of this key while not knowing it, namely, not being able to restore it to him, if, in a first moment he may fall into despair, in truth this is going to reintroduce him to hope, because if the Other is in the position of recognising what he does not know, that introduces the dimension of the fact that the Other himself has lost this same key, that he knows well what lack is involved, and the hope that is opened up then, is to make present the absence of this lost uninscribable thing, and the hope, is precisely that the uninscribable can cease not to be written. And that is what is delivered at S(Ø).

The unlikely paradox on which one ends up, as one might say, is how a signifier, this signifier of S(Ø), can assume this unthinkable contradiction of being at once what maintains open the gap of what does not cease to be written – when you read, when you hear music that overwhelms you or a poem that overwhelms you,

the word that scores a bulls eye with you, one can say that opens to the maximum this dimension of primal repression – how then can this signifier maintain this contradiction of maintaining this gap and at the same time be what ceases not to be written, for example a very banal note in the diachronic scale a completely stupid lah?

You see that this wager nevertheless, is what is realised in our third moment of the S(Ø), of which one could say that the production, of this S(Ø), is the result of an ultimate dialectic between the subject and the Other through which the one and the other, by becoming two as I might say, resurrect literally in a movement of encounter – through which, I repeat, Lacan has not hesitated to employ the word of communion, in the production of the witticism – this very bar, this very bar whose paradox is to associate and to disassociate at the same time. From this, if you wish, from this encounter of the subject and the Other, some specifications, three specifications: first of all it is a matter of a communion, it is not a matter of collaboration. We know what the subject is capable of when he becomes a collaborator. Another point: this mode of communion which is produced in S(Ø) is a mode in which, at that moment, the subject does not receive his message in an inverted form since it would be the only unlikely moment, outside time, really outside time, in which the Other would communicate in the same knowledge at the same time. When I say knowledge, it is precisely the knowledge of this bar of this non-being. You see that the experience of this lack of being at S(Ø) – and precisely you have to distinguish between aphanisis which for its part is one could say an excommunication of the subject – here it is not a matter of being, here one could say that effectively it is a matter of a communion in non-being and that it is in this putting in common of the signifier of S_2 and of the signifier lacking to the Other that there is delivered this signifier that I articulated and that I am now going to articulate more closely to the Passe.

One might say if you wish, that the bar of the subject and of the Other, by communicating together, carried the subject into the incandescence of this shared lack to the very sources of existence, well beyond the object way beyond the phantasy. The very fact that along this path the subject renounces the phantasy, short-circuits it, demonstrates, at that moment, that what is

accentuated by him is the search for this experience of lack in a pure state. Finally you see that what is proper to this response, the 'It's you', as I define it at that moment, that the proper of this response is that it is a metaphor in a pure state. If you wish, if the subject had responded: 'It's you' to the Other who would have asked him: 'So then yes or no is it me?' and that then he would have answered, his word, his enunciation would have been the same but would not have had this effect of a message of S(Ø) by situating itself, I would say, clearly metonymically, like this aphasic described by Jakobson who by metaphorical aphasia, could not enunciate the adverb 'no' except if one said to him: 'Say no' then he can respond: 'No, since you say that I can't say it.....' demonstrating, if you wish, by that, that the word itself, if it has fallen from its locus of enunciating, falls itself as a simple metonymical remainder and loses its value of metaphorical message, as long as you see that – I am coming back to it, this S(Ø) only has sense when articulated at its locus of emission.

Good, since it's late, I am going to end with the problem of the Passe skipping over a certain number of things.

Let us take up again our story of Bozef. Can we say that Bozef, as things have happened here, has Passed the Passe, namely, we see that Bozef has arrived by delivering his message 'It's you', corresponds to what I have located, namely, has managed to do without an intermediary, one is no longer 2, one is only 1, to address a locus. Bozef, therefore has got to the point, the topological enunciating point articulated to his enunciated message. But Bozef being this point, is he for all that, if he is, as one might say '*passant*', is he for all that capable of testifying, of realising that he is in the Passe from which he speaks? Is he capable of it? The king himself who is supposed to be R4, in the position of the analyst, is for his part capable of recognising the locus from where Bozef speaks. He hears him. But the king – it is not by chance that the king who is the analyst – the king is not the jury d'agrément. I come back to my question: if the whole value of the message of S(Ø) is that it should be emitted at a certain locus, how can this locus be transmitted get to the jury? Because, in S(Ø), Bozef can sustain what he's saying, but in the name of a truth that he finds himself experiencing but of which he knows nothing: he knows nothing about this locus. In other words: if Bozef is in

a certain way, in the Passe, I would not say that for all that he occupies the position of a passant, insofar as being placed at the locus of truth at that moment, he is not in the right place to say something about it. Can we at the same time speak about this locus, B4-R4, and say this locus?

We have already said, if what is proper to this S(Ø) is not to be able to be hidden in any moneybox, to return to our metaphor of the possessive analyst, we take another step and now we are saying, that as a locus, this locus does not say itself as such and cannot arrive as such to the jury.

Good, I'm going to illustrate that in the following way: when you hear a Lacanian analyst, a Lacanian disciple speaking about Lacan passant, since Lacan has defined himself as not ceasing to pass the Passe, when you hear this passant, can you say that in hearing this passant you understand where Lacan is speaking from? You cannot say so. From where does Lacan speak, the S(Ø) of Lacan, you can pick out eventually when you hear him or when you read him; when you hear him, I point out to you here that I am taking another step, that he always supports himself with something written. Another example: do you think that what happened to psychoanalysis, before Lacan got involved, is to be imputed uniquely to the fact that analysts of that time were bad Passers or indeed that the jury d'agrément that they represented, aggregated in a way that was not that.

The two hypotheses are perhaps true, but not sufficient. If Lacan at a given time, reminded analysts that it would be better to read Freud than to read Fenichel, what was he doing by reminding them of that, if not that if they really wanted to agree with Freud, they needed a Passer, is, I was going to say, worthy of this definition, namely, the topological arrangement, the writing of Freud which testifies that Freud does not separate what he says from the locus from which he says it, and if one wants to bring about, that in certain psychoanalytic societies, a dumbing down of Freud's work – you can hear that in this dumbing the word vel is barred, namely, that one no longer hears any more the dimension of 'Freud *parl'être*': what one ends up with is effectively a taking possession of the theory that one can put in a moneybox.

What is happening, is it not, the danger, if the analyst therefore does not make himself a Passer, namely, if, I may say that the very reading of Freud, of the Passer Freud, qua manifesting his decision, does no longer bring about in them an effect of division, namely, this exigency of the S(Ø) which makes one sense that Freud, in himself, bears witness to this indivisible locus of what he says and which in fact makes him the responding heretic of his word. Because what is proper to a writing is it not – I am giving you this last example before concluding – the proper of a writing whatever it may be is that in a writing the subject of the enunciated and the subject of enunciating may well be present, but it is not for all that that the writing will be a Passer: the writing will only be a Passer if the two 'I's' are articulated in a transmissible way. Take the rather characteristic example of the actor, of the interpreter; a heart-rent interpreter, when he interprets a text, a writing, it will be heart-rending for this jury who is the spectator, his tears are going to draw tears from you and though he says he's acting, one could say that if he cries, if he is overwhelmed somewhere, it is because his enunciating has been shaken by the signifiers of the author; in such a way that what I am saying to you is that it is not the interpreter who is the Passer of the text, it is the text which is the Passer of the enunciating of the actor. I even heard it said in the Ecole Freudienne, these are the sorts of things that are said, that some Passers that have been accepted by the jury, if the Passer is accepted, it is because he will have been able to give rise in his Passer to an enunciating of the Passer which, for its part, Passes with the jury and that, since it gets Passed, it makes the rest pass, namely, the Passer.

I come back to my starting point to tell you that it is even more complicated than that. If the author himself, of whom I am speaking, plays his proper role in the fiction that I told you about, that doesn't prove, if he played his own personage, that he would play the role to perfection, crying out the truth as one might say – this has happened to great authors like Moliere – that does not prove that, if chance accepted this fiction, if the chance of life made him encounter the same situation as the one that he described to his personage, that does not prove that at that moment he would not be gauche, borrowed; and nevertheless the signifiers in question, it is not a question, as for an actor, of borrowed signifiers, in principle they are his own. I come therefore to the idea that the author is not at

all be superimposed on the one who produces on the stage and I return to Bozef. And on that I end.

Bozef therefore, at S(Ø) is in the position of being a Passer, but he is not in the position of bearing witness from where he is passing. What can account for his position, I ask you, from where he speaks, if not this concatenation of graphs that I have drawn for you – I unfortunately was not able to finish them – that I drew for you on the board. If this hypothesis is true, namely, if the Passer, this writing, these graphs function as Passers in that they testified from the locus of enunciating strictly articulated to enunciation which is the Passer, since it is not Bozef? I would simply answer and I would say that fundamentally the Passer is the writer of the one who has put in place, who has written this writing, these graphs. I would even say that the example, if Lacan says he never ceases passing the pass it is perhaps for this reason; he does not cease and we can imagine that he will never cease; he does not cease because seminar after seminar he creates, he resurrects the Passer, which is his writing, namely, that he creates the conditions of his division. He creates like Bozef at a given moment on his journey with his back to the wall, puts himself in the place of the transmitter in order to make himself at the same time an emitter and a transmitter in the violet arrow when he renounces the intermediary, Lacan, seminar after seminar, creating and recreating his Passer, can effectively not cease to pass the pass, all the more so that the Other to whom he addresses himself is certainly not a jury from which he expects some sort of Amen. Yes. I imagine the negative reactions that will be thrown back at me, of saying that a writing could play the function of a Passer for a jury; I incidentally learned from Jean Clavreul, that this is a proposition that he had made, some years ago, to think of this notion of a writing as a Passer; the objection that will be made immediately to me is to say; to make a Passer out of a writing, effectively, is a matter then of making a report, a report why not an academic masters? Naturally, the response that I would give immediately to this contradictor, would be to say that if the one who writes, if the Other to whom he addresses himself is identifiable to a jury, effectively what he will produce will eventually effectively be perhaps an excellent report but effectively academic. If in this writing he bears witness, as I think I have tried to do, of the locus of the way in which an enunciation and an enunciating are articulated topologically in a

grounded and articulatable way, and that besides what is articulated between these the lines, Passes the presence that corresponds to the writing, the heretical responding presence, which for its part is the guarantee that it is not an academic writing, but effectively a writing that creates the topological arrangements where at the same time a *parl'être* assumes, indeed lives at the same time his division of Passer-passing.

Good in conclusion what I would tell you, is that it is for nothing other than the very consequences of this hypothesis of work that did not authorise me to make the Passe as it functions topologically in this moment in the Freudian school, that made me produce what appears to me to be something like this Passer which is this writing, which, by its topological arrangement puts in place, has allowed me to account for a possible transmissible articulation between the two 'I's'. To whom this writing was destined before I did it, I knew strictly nothing before Dr Lacan asked me to speak to you about it.

Seminar 7: Wednesday 15 February 1977

To give you an idea of why, the last time, I had Alain Didier Weill speak – I had asked him to speak, it is obviously because I worry myself about this business of the Borromean chain. This is a Borromean chain. As you see, this element here, could be folded back, in such a way that these two circles are buckled like the ones that you see here, which is what a Borromean knot realises. It is absolutely not completely simple and the fact that on several occasions I disturbed Pierre Soury who is someone of whom I dare to believe...but of whom I dare to believe that I contributed something to the fact that he has given an awful lot to the Borromean knot. I most recently posed him the question of how four tetrahedrons could be knotted in a Borromean way among themselves. He right away gave me the solution, a solution that I verified as being valid. It is something which implies what you see here,

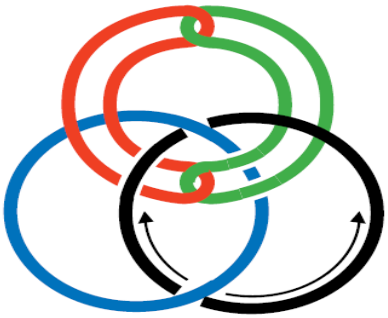


Fig. VII-1

namely, not a relation between these terms which is spherical, but a relation that I could call toric. Suppose that...

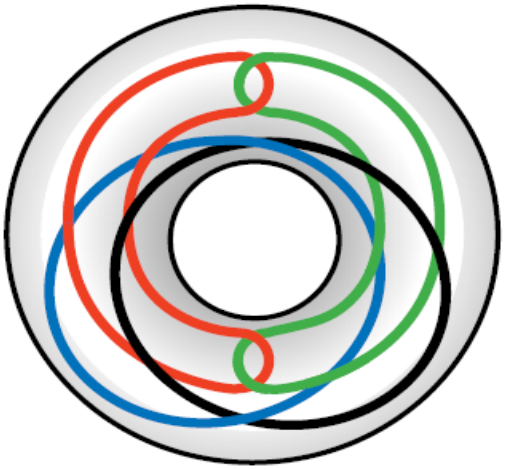


Fig. VII-2

It seemed to me that the mode in which – but I only got it last night – the mode in which Pierre Soury sent me the knot, the Borromean knot of the four tetrahedrons is just as toric. This simply to explain to you that it worried me to know whether, the application of the Borromean knot to a space spherically representable also generated a toric space and this in order to explain to you that in short, since I was completely entangled in the midst of all of that, it was to Alain Didier Weill that I made a call, a call to substitute himself for me in this enunciation, because I had expected great promise on why he had put forward the name of Bozef. This name of Bozef that he brings in like an intruder into *The purloined letter*, this name of Bozef, I challenged him about this name Bozef and this famous 'I know that he knows' – that he, the King knows – 'because I had informed him of it'. Informed of what, this is what is not said.

In principle Alain Didier Weill, by introducing the Bozef into the story of *The purloined letter*, does not formally know what he is putting forward. Witness the question that I posed him and which he answered. He answered: if Bozef could be substituted for a character in Poe's story, it could only be the Queen, eventually the minister when he is – as I underlined – in a feminised position. It is a fact that the fact of introducing himself in the way that you know, by filching the letter which for that

reason is said to be purloined, while what I enunciate, in re-establishing Poe's text, *The purloined letter*, namely, the letter that does not arrive, the letter whose circuit is extended. On this I made a certain number of remarks that you will find in my text, a text which is at the start of what is called my *Ecrits*. I show how striking it is to see that the fact of being in short in a state of dependency on this letter feminizes a personage who – one could put this otherwise – is not precisely lacking in pluck, were it only from the fact of filching the letter which the Queen knows that he possesses and he is feminised for all that, and not because of the trials he endures in hiding it from the Other, who is the King, this scandalous letter. He says to himself: the Other does not know. But this is simply equivalent to the fact that he holds the letter. He for his part knows, hence the extrapolation that Alain Didier Weill makes, an extrapolation which depends on the fact of holding the letter. That he hides it from the Other, does not ensure that the King knows anything at all about it.

Alain Didier Weill pursues: the way in which the story of the Queen of the story is different to Bozef depends on the fact that, if the Queen does indeed carry out the trials opened with the Minister of these 4 moments of knowledge that he himself has described and that he finds the trace of in Poe by the ascendency that the Minister has gained at the expense of the knowledge that the abductor has, of the knowledge that the victim has of its abductor and of which the four moments are according to him: the Minister *knows* that the Queen *knows* that the Minister *knows* that she *knows*. It is true that this can be picked out, and that following on this, Alain Didier Weill, in his letter, points out to me that the Queen does not for all that experience this objective dispossession by the Minister as the subjective dispossession at which Bozef arrives at the level that he enunciated for you, the last time, as B3-R3. It is true that here there is a deficiency in the enunciation that gave us at the last session. But, in this regard. I disagree. Bozef, even though he has had a name bestowed on him – and this indeed is the flaw in which I surprise– Bozef even though he has been given a name, is not something which deserves to be named, I mean that it is not something which is like something which, let us say, is seen. It is not

nameable. Bozef is, I would say, the incarnation of Absolute Knowledge, and what Alain Didier Weill extrapolates, completely in the margins of Poe's tale, is, the journeying that starts from this hypothesis, namely, that Bozef is the incarnation of what I will specify soon, of what is meant by Absolute Knowledge, shows the journeying starting from this hypothesis that he is himself, Bozef, this incarnation, shows the journeying of a truth which in fact is nowhere made obvious. At no moment, does the Minister who has kept this letter in short as a pledge of the good will of the Queen, at no moment has the Minister even the idea of communicating this letter, to the King for example, who is moreover the only one who would find himself in the position of understanding its consequences.

The truth, one might say, 'demands' to be said. It has no voice, to 'demand', to be said, since in short it can happen, as is said – and this indeed is what is extraordinary about language – it can happen – how has French which must be considered as an individual, has it put this form into use? – it can happen, I would say according to it, the concrete French that is at stake, it can happen, according to it, that no one says it, not even Bozef; and this indeed is what in fact happens, I say, namely, that this mythical Bozef, since he is not in Poe's tale, says absolutely nothing. Absolute Knowledge, I would say, does not speak at any price. It is silent if it wishes to be silent. What I called Absolute Knowledge on this particular occasion, is the following: it is simply that there is knowledge somewhere, not just anywhere at all, in the Real, and this thanks to the apparent existence of a species for which – as I said – there is no sexual relationship. It is a purely accidental existence, but on which one reasons starting from the fact, as I might say, starting from the fact that it is capable of enunciating something, about appearance of course since I underline apparent existence. The orthography that I give to the name *paraître* that I write *parêtre*, it is only about the *parêtre* that we have to know, being on this occasion only being one part of *parl'être*, namely, of what is made up uniquely of what speaks.

What is meant by Knowledge as such? It is Knowledge in so far as it is in the Real. This Real is a notion that I elaborated by having put it into the

Borromean knot with that of the Imaginary and of the Symbolic. The Real, as it appears, the Real tells the Truth, but it does not speak and one must speak in order to say anything. The Symbolic, for its part, supported by the signifier, only tells lies when it speaks; and it speaks a lot. It ordinarily expresses itself by the *Verneinung,* but the contrary of the *Verneinung*, as someone who was good enough to take the floor during my first seminar, the contrary of the *Verneinung*, in other words of what is accompanied by negation, the contrary of the *Verneinung* does not give the Truth. It exists when one speaks of a contrary, one is always speaking about something that exists, and which is true about one particular among others; but there is no universal that corresponds to it in that case. And that by which the *Verneinung* is typically recognised, is that one must say something false, to succeed in getting across a truth. Something false is not a lie, it is only a lie if it is willed to be such, which often happens, if it is aiming in a way at a lie passing for the truth; but it must be clearly said that, apart from psychoanalysis, it is rare. It is in psychoanalysis that this promotion of the *Verneinung*, namely, of the lie willed as such to get a truth across, is exemplary. All this, of course, is only knotted by means of the Imaginary which is always wrong. It is always wrong, but it is on it that there depends what is called consciousness.

Consciousness is very far from being knowledge, since, what it lends itself to is very precisely falsity. 'I know' never means anything, and one can easily wager, that what one knows is false; is false but is sustained by consciousness, whose characteristic is precisely to support this false by its consistency. To the point that one could say that, one should look twice before admitting something obvious, that it must be sifted as such, that nothing is sure in matters of obviousness, and that that is why I enunciated that the obvious (*l'évidence*) must be emptied out (*évider*) that what is obvious depends on this emptying out.

It is very striking that – I can well, for my part also, go on to the order of confidences with which I am crushed in my daily analyses – an 'I know' that is conscious, namely, not simply knowledge, but the will not to change,

is something which is, I can confide in you, experienced very early on, experienced by the fact of someone, like everyone, who was close to me, namely, the one that I called at that time, I was two years older than her, two and a half years, my little sister, she is called Madeleine and she said to me one day, not 'I know', because the 'I' would have been too much, but 'Manène knows'.

The unconscious is an entity that I try to define by the Symbolic, which is only in short an extra entity. An entity with which one must know how to deal. Knowing how to deal with it, is not the same thing as a knowledge, as the Absolute Knowledge of which I spoke earlier. The unconscious is what precisely makes something change, what reduces what I called the *sinthome*, the *sinthome* which I write with the orthography that you know.

I always had to deal with consciousness, but in the form which formed part of the unconscious, since it is a person a 'she' on this particular occasion, a 'she' since the person in question put herself in the third person by naming herself Manène, in a form which formed part of the unconscious, I am saying, since it is a 'she' who, as in my title for this year, a 'she' *qui s'ailait à mourre* who pretended to be a bearer of knowledge.

He or she, is the third person, is the Other, as I define it, it is the unconscious. It knows, in the absolute, and only in the absolute, it knows that I know what was in the letter, but that I alone know. In reality, it therefore knows nothing, except that I know it, but this is not a reason that I should tell him.

In fact, this Absolute Knowledge, I did more than allude to it somewhere, I really insisted on it with my big boots, namely, that the whole appendix that I added to my writing on *The purloined letter*, namely, what goes from page 54 to page 60, and that I entitled in part 'Parenthesis of parentheses', is very precisely this something which, here, is substituted by Bozef.

Alain Didier Weill, for his part, it is not that he substitutes himself, he identifies himself to Bozef. He feels himself, he feels himself in the *Passe*, it is rather curious that he could, in a way in this writing, find, as I might say, the call that answered for me, made me answer by the *Passe*.

The Real that is at stake, is the knot in its entirety. Since we are speaking about the Symbolic, it must be situated in the Real. There is, for this knot, a cord. The cord is also *corps-de* (body-of). This *corps-de*, is parasited on by the signifier; for the signifier though it forms part of the Real, it is indeed there that I am right to situate the Symbolic, one must think of the following, which is that we might well have dealings with this *corps-de* only in the dark. How could we recognise, in the dark, that it is a Borromean knot? That is what is at stake in the Passe. 'I know that he knows', what can that mean except to objectify the unconscious, except for the fact that the objectification of the unconscious necessitates a redoubling, namely, that 'I know that he knows that I know that he knows'. It is on this condition alone that analysis holds onto its status. This is what creates an obstacle to this something which, by limiting itself to 'I know that he knows', opens the door to occultism and telepathy. It is because of not having sufficiently grasped, sufficiently well grasped the status of anti-knowledge, namely, of the anti-unconscious, in other words of this pole, of this pole which consciousness is, that Freud allowed himself from time to time to be tickled by what have since been called 'psy' phenomena, namely, that he allowed himself to slip quite gently into delusion, in connection with the fact that Jones gave him his visiting card immediately after a patient had casually mentioned Jones' name.

The *Passe* that is at stake, I only envisaged in a tentative way, as something which means nothing but a 'recognising one another', if I can express myself in that way, on condition that we insert into it an '*a-v*' after the first letter 'recognising one another between knowledge (*se reconnaître entre s(av)oir)*'. Are there tongues that are an obstacle to the recognition of the unconscious? This is something that was suggested to me as a question by the fact that this '*c'est to*i', in which would have Bozef communicating with

the King in this moment, that he imputed to me quite wrongly, thanks to the fact that he picked up the term communion somewhere in my *Ecrits*. '*C'est to*i', are there tongues in which this could be a '*toi sait*' of the verb *savoir*, namely, something which would put the *toi,* which would have it slip into the third person.

All of this to advance, to say that it is really divinatory that Alain Didier Weill was able to link what I call the *Passe* to *The purloined letter*. There is surely something worthwhile here, something that consists in the introduction of Bozef. Bozef walks around in it, as I really indicated in the very text of *The purloined letter*; as I really indicated – I talk all the time, on every page, of something which is on the point of happening, it even goes as far as being the point at which I end – that a letter always arrives at its destination, namely, that it is in short addressed to the King, and that is why it has to get to him. That, in all of this text, I speak of nothing but that, namely, of the imminence of the fact that the King gets to know about the letter, is this not to say, namely, to put forward, that he knows it already? Not alone does he know it already, but I would say that he 'recognises' it. Is not 'this recognition' very precisely what can ensure the behaviour of the Queen and King?

That is what I wanted to say to you today.

Seminar 8: Wednesday 8 March 1977

What one writes..., I say 'one', because – anyone at all can write – I say 'one' because it embarrasses me to say 'I'. It is not without reason that it embarrasses me. Why should the 'I' be produced on this particular occasion? Therefore it happens that I said and by that fact it can be found in writing, I said that there is no metalanguage, namely, that one cannot talk about language.

As it happens I reread something which is in *Scilicet IV* that I called, anyway that I entitled, that is how, it is something like that that carries your brand, anyway that I entitled *L'étourdit*, and in *L'étourdit*, I noticed, I recognised something, in *L'étourdit*, this metalanguage, I would say that I almost brought it to birth. Naturally that would mark an epoch. It would mark an epoch, but there is no epoch because there is no change. This *almost* that I added to my sentence, this almost underlines that it never happened. It is a semblance of metalanguage and since I make use in the text, I make use of this way of writing, *s'emble*r, *s'emblant* to metalanguage. Making a reflective verb of this *s'embler*, detaches it from this coming to fruition which being is, and as I write, *il parest*, *parest* means a *s'emblant* of being. There you are.

And then, in this connection, I notice that it was for a preface that I opened this writing, for a preface that I had to write for an Italian edition that I had promised, it is not sure that I will do it, it is not sure that I will do it because it annoys me, but I noticed in this connection, I consulted someone who is Italian for whom this tongue, that I understand nothing about, is his maternal tongue, I consulted someone who pointed out to me that there is something that resembles this *s'embler*, which resembles this *s'embler*, but which is not, which is not easy to introduce with the deformation in the way of writing that I give it. In short, it is not easy to transcribe, that is why I proposed that my preface should not be translated, after all, this all the more

that there is no kind of inconvenience in translating anything whatsoever, in particular, not the preface.

Like every preface, I would be inclined, since this is usually what happens in prefaces, I would be inclined to approve myself, even to applaud myself; this is what is usually done. It is a comedy. It is of the order of comedy and that made me, that induced me..., that pushed me towards Dante. This comedy is divine, of course, but that only means one thing, which is that it is farcical. I speak about the farcical in *L'étourdit*, I don't know at what page I speak about it but I do speak about it. That means that one can be farcical about this supposedly divine work. There is not the slightest divine work, unless one wants to identify it to what I call the Real. But I want to specify this notion that I have of the Real.

I would like it to become more widespread. There is an aspect (*face*) – it is unheard of that one should dare to advance terms like that – there is an aspect by which this Real is distinguished from what is, to say the word, knotted to it. Here it is necessary to specify certain things. If one can talk about aspect, it must take on its weight, I mean that it should have a sense. It is quite clear that it is inasmuch as this notion of the Real that I am advancing, is something consistent that I can put it forward.

And there I would like to make a remark, which is that the rings of string, as I called them, in which I made consist this triad of the Real, of the Imaginary and of the Symbolic, to which I was pushed, not by just anyone, by the hysterics, so that that I started from the same material as Freud, since it is in order to say something coherent about hysterics that Freud built up the whole of his technique, which is a technique, namely, something that on this particular occasion is very fragile.

I would like all the same to point out the following, which is that the rings of string on this particular occasion do not hold up. Something more is needed – this is what was, I should say, suggested to me the other day by Soury's lecture; Soury gives lectures on Thursday evening, I don't see why I

shouldn't tell you, at 7.15 at Jussieu and you can ask him where, I hope that many of the people who are here will go there – he pointed out to me very specifically that these rings of string only held up on condition of being something that must be called by its name, a torus. In other words, there are three tori; there are three tori which are necessary, because if they are not presupposed, one cannot demonstrate the fact that these tori are necessitated by the reversal of the aforesaid tori; in other words a torus, we are used to drawing it like that, naturally it is a completely inadequate drawing, since one does not see, unless one indicates it explicitly in this form, that it is a surface and not at all a bubble in a ball.

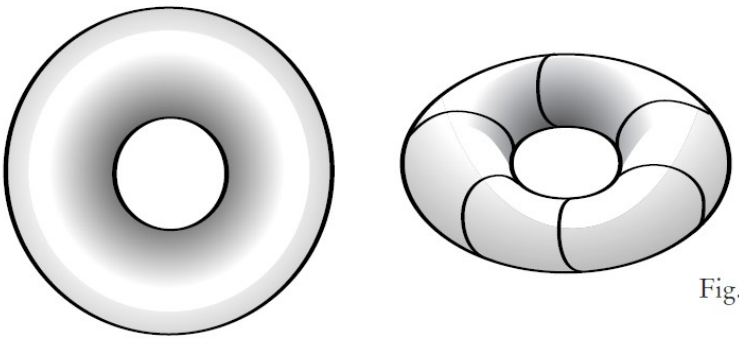


Fig. VIII-1

That this surface can be turned inside out, has properties from which it results – I once recalled that the torus can be turned inside out – from which it results that it is thanks to that that it appears, that turned inside out, the torus which for example is supposed to be one of three, this one for example, that when turned inside out the torus contains the two other rings of string which themselves ought to be represented by a torus, namely, that what you see here, which I drew in this way, ought, not to be drawn as I have just begun to draw it, but to be drawn like that namely, two other tori, and two other tori, are not two other rings of string. Does that mean that these three tori are Borromean knots? Absolutely not. For, if this is the way that you cut the torus which is for example the one that I have designated here (1), if that is the way you cut it, it does not free the two other tori. You

have to cut it, as I might say to express myself in a metaphorical fashion, you have to cut it lengthways (2) for it to be freed. [cut 1, 2]

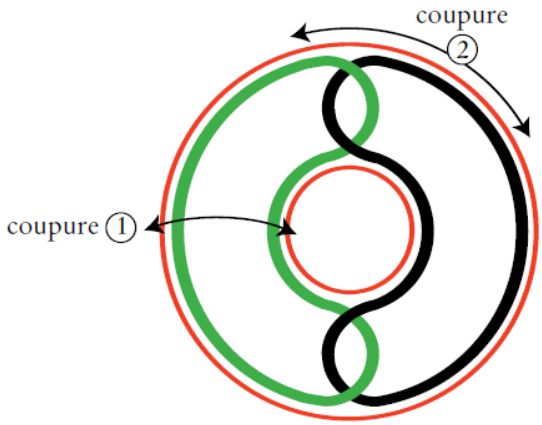


Fig. VIII-2

The condition therefore that the torus should only be cut in one single way, even though it could be done in two ways, is something that deserves to be remembered in what I would call on this occasion, not a metaphor but a structure; for the difference there is between the metaphor and the structure, is that the metaphor is justified by the structure.

Now in following what is at stake in the Dante in question, I was led to reread an old book that my bookseller brought me, since he comes from time to time to bring me things, it is by someone called Delescluze, which was published in 1864, he was a pal of Baudelaire, it is called *Dante et la poésie amoureuse* (Dante and love poetry) and it is not very reassuring; it is all the less reassuring in that as I said earlier, Dante had begun on this particular occasion, on the occasion of the aforesaid love poetry, began to act the buffoon.

He created, not what I have not created, namely, a metalanguage, he created what one can call a new tongue, what could be called a metatongue, since after all, every new tongue is a metatongue, but like all new tongues, it is formed on the model of ancient ones, which is to say that it fails.

What kind of fate is it which ensures that, whatever may be the genius of someone, he always recommences along the same rail, along this rail which

means that the tongue fails, that, in short, it is a farcical tongue? The French tongue is no less farcical than the others, it is uniquely because we have a taste for it, have practiced it, that we consider it as superior. It has nothing superior about it in any way whatsoever. It is exactly like Algonquin or Coyote (*sic*), it is no better. If it were worth more, one might say of it what Dante enunciates somewhere, he enunciates this in something he wrote in Latin and he calls it *Nomina sunt consequentia rerum*.

The consequence, consequence meaning on this particular occasion what? It can only mean the real consequence, but there is no real consequence, since the Real, as I symbolised it by the Borromean knot, the Real vanishes into a dust cloud of tori because, of course, these two tori here inside the other are unknotted. They are unknotted and this means that the Real, at least in the way that we believe we can represent it, the Real is only linked by a structure, if we pose that structure, means nothing but the Borromean knot. The Real is in short defined as being incoherent insofar as it is precisely structure.

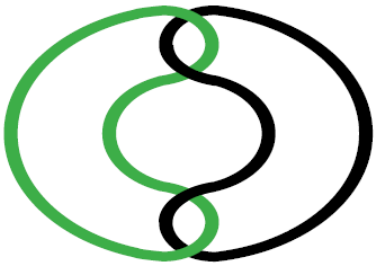


Fig. VIII-3

All of this does nothing more than specify the conception that someone, who happens on this particular occasion to be me, has of the Real. The Real does not constitute a universe, except by being knotted to two other functions. That is not reassuring, it is not reassuring because one of these functions is the living body.

We do not know what a living body is. It is an affair which for our part we have to leave to God. I mean that – insofar as what I am saying has a sense - what I mean is that I read a thesis which, bizarrely, was produced in 1943. Don't go looking for it, because you will never get your hands on it, you will never get your hands on it, because you are here much more numerous than the number of the copies of the thesis that came out, it is the thesis of someone called Madeleine Cavet who was born in 1908, the thesis specifies it, namely, about 7 years after me, and what she says is not foolish. She sees perfectly well that Freud, is something absolutely confused in which, as we say, a cat would not find its kittens. And she takes a measure, she evokes on this particular occasion the work of Pasteur.

Pasteur is a funny business. I mean that up to him – for after all it is from him that this comes – up to him people believed in what can be called spontaneous generation, namely, that people believed that, to abandon – here lay the apparent foundation – to abandon a living body, naturally things started to swarm all over it, I mean that it swarms with what are called micro-organisms, as a result of which people imagined that these micro-organisms could grow on anything whatsoever. It is quite certain that, if you leave a glass in the open air, there are things that fall into it and that even, on occasion, make what is called a culture. But what Freud demonstrated, what Pasteur demonstrated – this slip has all its value, given the sense of the thesis of the aforesaid Madeleine Cavet – what Pasteur demonstrated, is that, on condition simply of putting a little cotton wool at the mouth of a vase, things do not start to swarm inside and this is manifestly one of the simplest demonstrations of non-spontaneous generation.

But then that presupposes strange things. Where do these micro-organisms come from? We are reduced in our own day to thinking that they come from nowhere. It is as good as saying that it is God who fabricated them. It is very, very annoying that people should have abandoned this openness to spontaneous generation which was in short a rampart against the existence of God. For us, our friend Pasteur was moreover considered by the doctors

of his time as a formidable cleric and this is quite true. He had religious convictions. People completely forget this adventure, this adventure of the aforesaid Pasteur, people forget it. People forget it and the fact of being reduced to thinking that there is life, more or less pulsating life on meteorites does not resolve the question. The fact that we do not find the slightest trace of life on the moon, or on Mars, does not help matters. For why, in the name of what, if not in the name of a being that must all the same be situated somewhere, of a being who might have done that explicitly like a man, as if man who, for his part, manipulates and fiddles with things, as if man all of a sudden had seen that there was an ape, an ape-God – I mean that God is supposed to ape him – as if everything in short started from that, which in fact loops the loop. Everyone knows that the ape-God, is more or less the idea that we can construct for ourselves of the idea and of the way in which man is born and that this is not something which is completely satisfying. For why does man have what I call *parl'être*, namely, this way of talking in such a fashion that *nomina non sunt consequentia rerum*, in other words that there is somewhere something which is not working in the structure as I conceive it, namely, the so called Borromean knot.

This is indeed the case, and it is worthwhile evoking by this name Borromean a historic date, namely, the way in which there was elucubrated the very idea in short of structure. It is altogether striking to see that this meant at the time that, if one family withdrew from a group of 3, the 2 others by that very fact found themselves free, free to no longer agree with one another. Of course, this sordid aspect of this history of the Borromeans is worthwhile recording.

Not alone are names not the consequence of things, but we can explicitly affirm the contrary. I have a grandson, I have a grandson called Luc – it is a funny idea, but it was his parents who baptised him – he is called Luc and he says quite appropriate things. He says, in short, that he strives to say words that he does not understand, and he deduces that this is what makes his head swell, because he has like me, - it is not surprising since he is my

grandson – he has like me a big head. It is what is called, I am not properly speaking hydrocephalic, I have all the same a head, I have a head, and a head is characterised by the average, I have a rather big head, and my little grandson also and he makes the mistake obviously of thinking that, this way that he has of defining so well the unconscious – because that is what is at stake – this way that he has of defining so well the unconscious, this approach, namely, that the words entered into his head, he has deduced from that very fact that that is why he has a big head. It is a theory in short, that is not very intelligent, but pertinent in the sense that it is justified. There is something which all the same gives him the feeling that speaking is parasitic. So then he pushes that a little bit further to the extent of thinking that that is why he has a big head.

It is very difficult not to slip, on this particular occasion into the imaginary of the body, namely, the big head. The terrible thing is that it is logical and that logic on this particular occasion, is no small thing, namely, that it is the parasite of man. I said earlier that the universe did not exist, but is that true? Is it true that the One which is at the principle of the notion of the universe, that the One is capable of dissolving into powder, that the One of the universe is not one or is only one among others. Does the fact that there exists a One, imply just by itself the universal? This involves that one should say that, however excluded the universal may be, the foreclosure of this universal implies the maintenance of particularity. *There exists a one* is never put forward in logic except in a way that is coherent with what follows: *there exists a one that satisfies the function*. The logic of the function is in short what depends on the logic of the one. But this means at the same time, and this is what I try to draw somewhere on my graph, this graph that I risked a long time ago, on which like that so that no one would speculate about it, I wrote this something which is the signifier, the signifier of the fact that the Other does not exist, which I wrote like that: (Ø). But the Other, the Other in question, must indeed be called by its name Other, it is the sense, it is Other than the real.

It is very difficult not to waver on occasions. There is a choice to be made between actual infinity which can be circular, on condition that there is no origin that can be designated, and the enumerable knot, namely, finite.

There are many possibles in this which means that one interrupts the way of writing – that is my definition of the possible – one only continues it if one wishes; in fact one gives up, because it is always possible to give up, because it is even impossible not to really give up. What I call the *impossible, is the Real*, limits itself to non-contradiction. The Real is the impossible to simply write, or in other words, does not cease not to be written. The Real, is the possible waiting to be written.

And I should say that I had a confirmation of this, because I don't know why, something got into me, I went to Saclay, more exactly I asked someone to drive me there. It is someone called Goldzahl, it is amusing that he should have this name which means golden number; he brought me into a little room where there were traces – because Saclay is immense, it is absolutely enormous, you cannot imagine the number of people who are scribbling on paper inside it, there are 7,000 of them, all they do moreover is to scratch on paper, except for the few people who are there in this little room and thanks to which, there is seen, what bears witness to the functioning of most of these apparatuses – as a result of which one can see the undulating trace of what represents – of course it was necessary to set up the apparatuses in such a way that this functions, that it should be represented – of what represents the magnetism of the principle magnets. One sees on other apparatuses there being displaced, because one can qualify as displacement what goes from the left to the right and what is supported by a point; a point at the end of a line, that makes a trace and in this little room, one sees nothing but these traces whose structure it is in short conceivable to symbolise by something which goes around in the form of a circle each of these points, each of these points which represents a particle, a particle which therefore is articulated with all of the apparatuses of which it is quite certain that the totality of these apparatuses, is what is called *psi*, in other words what Freud could not prevent himself from

marking as the initial of the psyche. If there were not these savants who looked after these particles, there would not be *psarticules* either and this forces our hand to think that, not alone is there the *parl'être*, but that there is also the *psarl'être,* in other words that all of this would not exist if there were not the functioning of this thing which is nevertheless so grotesque and is called thought.

Everything that I am saying to you there, has no more value I think than what my grandson recounts. It is rather annoying that the Real can only be conceived of as being improper. It is not quite the same as language. Language is only improper for saying anything whatsoever. The Real is only improper by being realised; according to the usage of the word *to realise* [in English] that means nothing other than *to imagine as sense*. There is one thing which is in any case certain, if indeed a thing can be so, it is that the very idea of the Real involves the exclusion of all sense. It is only insofar as the Real is emptied of sense, that we can grasp it a little which obviously brings me to not even give it the sense of the One, but one must hang on to something, and this logic of the One is indeed what remains, what remains as existence. There you are.

I am very annoyed at having conversed with you today in this kind of extreme. It is necessary all the same that this should take a different turn, I mean that to end up on the idea that the only thing that is Real is what excludes any kind of sense, is exactly the contrary of our practice. Where our practice is bathed in this kind of precise indication that, not simply names, but simply words have an import.

I do not know how to explain that. If the *nomina* do not depend in some way on things, how is psychoanalysis possible? Psychoanalysis would be in a certain way what one could call a sham, I mean a semblance. That is all the same how I supplied in the enunciation of my different discourses the only thinkable way of articulating what is called the psychoanalytic discourse.

I remind you that the place of semblance where I put the object...that the place of semblance is not where I articulated that of the Truth.

How can a subject, since that is how I designated the S with the bar, $, how can a subject, a subject with all its weakness, its debility, hold the place of the Truth and even ensure that this has results? He places himself in it in this way, namely, a Knowledge. [**To be corrected, insert arrows and bars**]

$$\mathbf{o} > S_2 \quad \text{(hesitation)} \quad \mathbf{o} > S_1$$
$$\$ \quad S_i \qquad\qquad \$ \quad S_2$$

Is it not like that that I wrote it at the time?

- **J-A Miller**: $ at the place of S_1, S_1 at the place of S_2 and S_2 at the place of $

$$\mathbf{o} > \$$$
$$S_2 \quad S_1$$

- **Lacan**: - You see that it is easy to get confused with this!

Yes. Undoubtedly it is better like that. It is undoubtedly better like that, but it is still more troubling like that, I mean that the gap between S_1 and S_2 is more striking because there is something interrupted and that in short S_1, is only the beginning of knowledge; but a knowledge which is content to always commence, as they say, ends up at nothing. This indeed is why, when I went to Brussels, I did not speak about psychoanalysis in the best of terms. There are some that I recognise who were there.

Good. To commence to know in order not to arrive, is something which goes when all is said and done, rather well with what I call my lack of hope, but finally that implies a name, a term it remains for me to allow you to guess – the Belgian people who heard me speak in Brussels being free to share it with you or not.

Seminar 9: Wednesday 15 March 1977

There are people well intentioned towards me – and already that raises a mountain of problems: how account for the fact that people are well intentioned towards me? It is because they do not know me; for, as regards myself, I am not full of good intentions – in any case these well intentioned people have sometimes written letters tending... – in any case, it was written..., it was written that my stammerings the last time about the discourse that I call analytic, was a slip. They wrote that textually. What distinguishes a slip from gross error? I have all the more tendency, for my part, to classify as error, what is qualified as a slip, in that all the same I have spoken a little bit about this analytic discourse; when I speak, I imagine I am saying something. The annoying thing is that where I make a slip, or I am supposed to have made a slip, it was in material, as I might say, in written material that I made the slip. That takes on a particular importance when it is a matter of something written by someone - , me on this particular occasion - by someone who has been found out. Formerly I did happen to say, in imitation moreover of someone who was a celebrated painter: 'I do not seek, I find.' At the point that I am at, I do not so much find as search, in other words I go around in circles. This indeed is what happened in connection with this slip, the fact is that the letters written were not in the right direction (*sens*), in the direction that they turn, but were mixed up. It should all the same be clearly said that I did not make this slip altogether without reason, I mean that I certainly imagined the order in which the letters turned, but I think I know at least what I wanted to say.

I am going to try today to explain what. I am encouraged to do so by the hearing that I received last evening at the Ecole Freudienne from a Madame Kress-Rosen. I am not going to ask her to stand up, even though I can clearly see her. I even became quite concerned to know if she were among what are called the listeners (*auditrices*) and I do not see why I should put

this term in the feminine, since that has no sense, that has no sense (*sens*), that has no valid sense.

Madame Kress-Rosen had the goodness to say last evening almost what I wanted to say to someone, whom there is no longer any question of my encountering, since it is a person that I asked to telephone me and who did not do so – it is someone who belongs to German radio, I don't know too well, in truth I do not even know her name, but she asked me, apparently on the advice of Roman Jakobson, to answer something about what concerns him.

My first feeling was to say that what I call *linguisterie* – Madame Kress-Rosen has given its destiny to this appellation – that what I called *linguisterie* requires psychoanalysis to be supported. I would add that there is no other linguistics than the one that I call *linguisterie*, which does not mean that psychoanalysis is the whole of linguistics, events prove this, namely, that people have been doing linguistics for a very long time since the *Cratylus*, since Donatus, since Priscianus, that people have always done it, and this moreover does not settle anything since I tended to say the last time – I noticed it in connection with this S_1 and this S_2 which are separated in the correct notation of what I called the psychoanalysis discourse. I think that after all you got some information from the Belgians, and that the fact that I spoke about psychoanalysis as being able to be a fraud, has reached your ears, I would even say that I insist on it in speaking about this S_1 which appears to promise an S_2.

It must all the same be remembered at that moment what I said concerning the subject, namely, the relationship of this S_1 with this S_2. I said, at one time, that a signifier was what represented the subject for another signifier. So then what can be deduced from that? I will all the same give you an indication, even if only to throw some light on my route because it is not self-evident. Psychoanalysis is perhaps a fraud, but it is not just any one whatsoever. It is a fraud that is quite correct with respect to what a signifier is. And the signifier, it should all the same be clearly noted is something

very special; it has what people call sense- effects, and it would be enough for me to connote S_2, as not being the second in time, but as having a double direction (*sens*) for the S_1 to take its place, and its place correctly. It should all the same be said that the weight of this duplicity of sense is common to every signifier.

I think that Madame Kress-Rosen will not contradict me, if she wants to oppose it in any way whatsoever, she is quite free to make a sign to me, since, I repeat, I am delighted that she is there. Psychoanalysis, I would say, is no more of a fraud than poetry itself, and poetry is founded precisely on this ambiguity of which I speak and which I qualify as double sense. Poetry appears to me all the same to depend on the relation of the signifier to the signified. One could say in a certain way that poetry is *imaginarily symbolic*, I mean that, since Madame Kress-Rosen yesterday evoked Saussure and his distinction between the tongue and speech, not moreover without noting that as regards this distinction, Saussure had wavered; it remains all the same that his starting point, namely, that the tongue is the fruit of a maturation, of the ripening of something that is crystallised in usage, it remains that poetry depends on a violence done to this usage and that, - we have proofs of this – , if I evoked, the last time, Dante and love poetry, it is indeed to mark this violence, that philosophy does everything to efface, this indeed is why philosophy is the testing ground for swindling and why one cannot say that poetry does not play, in its own way, innocently, at what I called just now, what I connoted as *imaginarily symbolic*, that is called the Truth.

This is called the Truth notably concerning the sexual relationship, namely, that, as I put it, - perhaps the first, and I do not see why I would give myself a title for it – there is no sexual relationship, I mean properly speaking, in the sense that there might be something to ensure that a man necessarily recognises a woman.

It is certain that I, that I have this weakness of recognising her as *the* (*la*), but I am all the same sufficiently aware to have noted that there is no *the*,

which coincides with my experience, namely, that I do not recognise all women. There is no such thing, but is all the same necessary to say that this is not self-evident; There is no such thing, unless it is incestuous – this is very exactly what Freud put forward – there is none such except incestuous, I mean that, - what Freud said -, the fact is that the Oedipus myth designates the following, that the only person that one wants to sleep with, is one's mother, and as regards the father, one kills him. It is even all the more probable that one knows neither who is your father and your mother, it is exactly why the myth of Oedipus has a sense; he killed someone that he did not know and he slept with someone that he had not the slightest idea was his mother, it is nevertheless like that that things happened according to the myth, and what that means, is that the only true thing is castration. In any case with castration, one is quite sure of escaping it, as all this so-called Greek mythology designates clearly for us, namely, that the father, it is not so much his murder which is at stake as his castration, that castration passes by way of murder and that, as regards the mother, the best thing that one can do with her, is to cut it off to be quite sure of not committing incest.

What I would like, is to give you the refraction of these truths in sense. One would have to manage to give an idea of a structure, which is such that it would incarnate sense in a correct way. Contrary to what is said, there is no truth about the Real, since the Real is sketched out as excluding sense. It would be still too much to say, that there is something of the Real, because, to say that, is already to suppose a sense. The word *Real* has itself a sense, I even at one time, played a little bit on it, I mean to invoke the things, I evoked as an echo the word *reus* which, as you know, in Latin means guilty; one is more or less guilty of the Real. This indeed is why moreover psychoanalysis is a serious thing, I mean that it is not absurd to say that it can slide into fraudulence.

There is something that must be noted in passing, which is that, as I pointed out the last time to Pierre Soury – the last time, I mean in his own place, at Jussieu, the one of which I spoke to you the last time – I pointed out to him that the reversible torus from which he approaches the Borromean knot is

something which, for the knot in question, presupposes that one single torus is reversed. Not at all, of course, that one cannot reverse others, but then it is no longer a Borromean knot. I gave you an idea of that by a little drawing the last time.

It is therefore not surprising to enunciate in connection with this torus, with this torus which starts from a triple Borromean knot, with this torus if you reverse it, to qualify what is in the torus, in the torus of the Symbolic, as *symbolically real*. The *symbolically real* is not the *really symbolic*, for the *really symbolic* is the Symbolic included in the Real. The Symbolic included in the Real has well and truly a name, it is called the lie, whereas the *symbolically real* – I mean that which of the Real is connoted inside the Symbolic – this is what is called anxiety. The symptom is real; it is even the only real thing, namely, which has a sense, which preserves a sense in the Real. It is indeed for that reason that the psychoanalyst can, if he is lucky, intervene symbolically to dissolve it in the Real.

So then I am going to all the same note for you in passing what is *symbolically imaginary*. Well then, it is geometry; the famous *mos geometricus,* that so much has been made of, is the geometry of angels, namely, something which despite writing does not exist. I formerly teased the Reverend Father Teilhard de Chardin, a good deal by pointing out to him that if he was so keen on writing, he should recognise that angels existed. Paradoxically Reverend Father Teilhard de Chardin did not believe in them, he believed in man, hence his business about the hominisation of the planet. I do not see why one would believe more in the hominisation of anything whatsoever than in geometry. Geometry explicitly concerns the angels and for the rest, namely, as regards structure, there reigns only one thing, which is what I call inhibition. It is an inhibition that I attack, I mean that I worry about, I concern myself about everything that I bring you here as structure, a concern which is simply linked to the fact that a genuine geometry is not what one thinks, one that depends on pure spirits, as much as one that has a body, that is what we mean when we speak about structure,

and to put that for you in black and white, I am going to show you what is at stake when one speaks about structure.

It is a matter of something like that, namely, a holed torus – this I owe to Pierre Soury – I mean that it is easy to complete this torus; you clearly see that here there is, as one might say, the edge, if one can express oneself in this way, so imprecisely, the edge of the hole which is in the torus and that all of that is the body of the torus. [Fig IX-1, IX-2].

Fig. IX-1

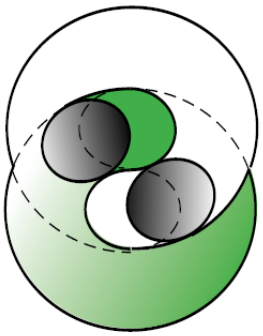


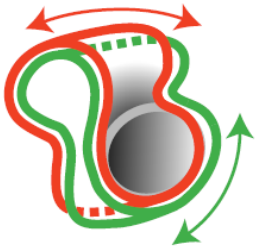
Fig. IX-2

It is not enough to draw this torus like that. For one sees that by holing this torus at the same time one makes a hole in another torus. This is what is proper to the torus, for it is just as legitimate to draw the hole here and to make the torus which is, as I might say, linked with that one. This indeed is why one can say that by holing a torus, one holes at the same time another torus which is the one which has with it a chain-like relationship.

So then I am going to depict for you what one can draw here in terms of a structure which you see that by drawing it in two colours, I think it is sufficiently evident that here, namely, the green in question, is inside the red torus; but that on the contrary here you can see that the second torus is outside. But that is not a second torus, since what is at stake is always the same figure, but a figure which shows itself able to slide inside what I will call the red torus, which slides while turning and which realises this torus linked to the first one.

If we make this green one turn, this green one which is found to be at the outside surface of the red torus if we make it turn, it is going to find itself here represented by its own sliding and what we can say of the one and of the other, is that the green torus is very precisely what we can call the complement of the other torus, namely, the linked torus. [Fig. IX-3].

Fig. IX-3



But suppose that it is the red torus that we make slide in that way. What we obtain, is the following, it is something which is going to find itself realised inversely, that something which is empty is knotted to something which is empty, namely, that what is there is going to appear there; in other words what I pre-suppose by this manipulation is that, far from us having two concentric things, we will have on the contrary two things which operate on one another.

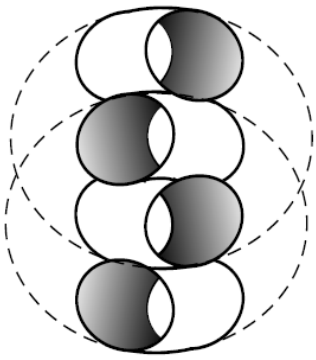


Fig. IX-4

And what I want to designate by that, is something that I was questioned about when I spoke about *full speech* and *empty speech*. I clarify it now. Full speech, is the speech full of sense. Empty speech is one that has only meaning. I hope that Madame Kress-Rosen whose bright smile I can still

see, does not see too great an inconvenience in that, I mean by that that speech can be at the same time full of sense, it is full of sense - because it starts from this duplicity drawn here – it is because the word with a double sense, which is S_2, that the word sense is itself full. When I spoke about Truth, it is to sense that I refer; but what is proper to poetry when it fails, is precisely to have only a meaning, to be a pure knot of one word to another word. It nevertheless remains that the willingness for sense consists in eliminating the double sense, which can only be conceived by realising, as I might say, this cut, namely, to ensure that there is only sense, the green overlapping the red on this particular occasion.

How can a poet realise this *tour de force* of ensuring that one sense is absent? It is, of course, by replacing this absent sense, by what I called meaning. Meaning is not at all what foolish people believe, as I might say. Meaning is an empty word, in other words it is that which, in connection with Dante, is expressed in the qualification given to his poetry, namely, that it is love poetry. Love is nothing but a meaning, namely, that it is empty and one can see clearly the way in which Dante incarnates this meaning. Desire has a sense, but love as I already pointed out in my seminar on *Ethics*, as courtly love supports it, is only a meaning.

There you are. I will be content to tell you what I told you today, since moreover I do not see why I should insist.

Seminar 10: Wednesday 19 April 1977

I have a little bit of trouble today, I have a sore back, so that standing up does not help me. But when I am sitting down I am still sore. Because one does not know what is intentional is certainly not a reason for speculating about what is supposed to be so.

The Ego, because that is what it is called – it is called that in Freud's second topography – the Ego is supposed to have intentions, this from the fact that there is attributed to it what it chatters about, what is called its saying. In effect, it says; it says and it says imperatively. It is at least like that that it begins to express itself.

The imperative, is what I supported, let us say, with a signifier with the index 2, S_2; this signifier index 2 by which I defined the subject, I said that a signifier is what represents the subject for another signifier. In the case of the imperative, it is the one who listens who, by this fact, becomes subject. That does not mean that the one who utters it does not become, for his part also a subject incidentally. Yes. I would like (*je voudrais*) to draw your attention to something, there is nothing in psychoanalysis except these *I would like*'s. I am obviously a psychoanalyst who has a little too much experience, but it is true that the psychoanalyst, at the point that I have got to, depends on the reading that he makes of his analyser, of what his analyser says to him in so many words. Can you hear me, because after all I am not sure that this megaphone is functioning? Is it functioning...in the...Huh? Yes? Good. What his analyser believes he is saying to him, means that everything that the analyst listens to cannot be taken, as people say, literally (*au pied de la letter*). Here I must make a parenthesis, I said the tendency that this letter, whose foot (*pied*) indicates the attachment to the earth, which is a metaphor, a lame metaphor, which goes well with the foot, the tendency that this letter has of rejoining the Real, is his business; the Real in my notation being what it is impossible to rejoin. What his analyser, believes he is saying to the analyst in question, has nothing to do – and that, Freud noticed – has nothing to do with the truth. Nevertheless we must indeed think that to believe, is already something

that exists, he says what he believes to be true. What the analyst knows, is that he is only speaking approximately about what is true, because he knows nothing about the True. Freud here, is delusional, and just enough so, for he imagines that True, is what he calls, for his part, the *traumatic kernel*. This is how he formally expresses himself, namely, that in the measure that the subject enunciates something closer to his traumatic kernel, this so called kernel, and which has no existence, it is only its prostitute (*roulure*) that the analyser is just like his analyst, namely, as I pointed out in invoking my grandson, the learning that he has undergone of one tongue among others, which for him is *lalangue* that I write, as you know, in a single word, in the hope of fitting (*ferrer*), the tongue itself, which equivocates with *faire-réel* (making real).

Lalangue whatever it is, is an obscenity. It is what Freud designates as – pardon me here for the equivocation - *l'obrescène,* it is also what he calls *the other stage*, the one that language occupies because of what is called its structure, elementary structure which is summarised in that of kinship.

I point out to you that there are sociologists who have enunciated under the patronage of someone called Robert Needham, who is not the Needham who has busied himself with so much care with Chinese science, but another Needham – the Needham of Chinese science is not called Robert – this one, the Needham in question, imagines that he is doing better than the others by making the remark, which is moreover correct, that kinship is to be questioned, namely, that it involves in fact something else, a much greater variety, a much greater diversity than that which, – it has to be clearly said, this is what he refers to – than what the analysers say about it. But what is quite striking, is that the analysers, for their part, speak only of that, so that the incontestable remark that kinship has different values in different cultures, does not prevent the resifting by the analysers of their relationship with their relations, moreover, it must be said, their next of kin, is a fact that the analyst has to support. There is no example that an analyser notes the specificity, the particularity which differentiates from other analysers, his relationship with his more or less immediate kin.

The fact that he talks only of that, is in a way something that chokes up all the nuances of its specific relation, so that *La parenté en question* (Kinship in question) – this is a book published by Seuil – that the kinship in question highlights this primordial fact that it is *lalangue* which is at stake. It has not at all the same consequences if the analyser talks only of that because his close relations have taught him *lalangue*, he does not differentiate what specifies his own particular relation with his close relations. It would be necessary to perceive that what I will call on this occasion the function of truth, is in a way deadened by something prevalent, and it must be said that culture is here stifled, deadened, and that on this particular occasion, one would do perhaps better to evoke the metaphor, since culture is also a metaphor, the metaphor of the *agri* of the same name. It would be necessary to substitute for the *agri* in question the term of cultural soup, it would be better to call culture a soup of language.

What does it mean to free associate? I am striving here to push things a little bit further. What does it mean to free associate? Is it a guarantee – it seems all the same to be a guarantee – that the subject who enunciates is going to say something which has a little bit more value? But in fact everyone knows that rationalisation, what is called that in psychoanalysis, that rationalisation has a greater weight than reasoning. What have what are called enunciations to do with a true proposition? One would have to try, as Freud enunciates, to see on what is founded this something, as Freud enunciates, to see on what is founded this something, which only functions by attrition, from which the Truth is supposed. One would have to see, to open oneself up to the dimension of truth as variable *varité*, namely, of what, in condensing like that these two words, I would call the *varité*, with the little silent *é*, the *varité.*

For example, I am going to pose something which has indeed its price. If an analysing subject slips into his discourse a neologism, like the one I have just made for example in connection with *varité*, what can one say about this neologism? There is all the same something that one can say, which is that the neologism appears when it is written. And it is precisely why that does not mean, like that, automatically, that it is the Real; it is not because it is written, that this gives the weight to what I evoked earlier in connection with *au pied de la lettre*.

In short, one must all the same raise the question of whether psychoanalysis,- I beg your pardon, at least I beg the pardon of psychoanalysts – is not what one could call an *autism à deux*? There is already a thing which allows this *autism* to be forced, this precisely that *lalangue* is a common affair and it is precisely there that I am, namely, capable of making myself understood by everybody here, this is where the guarantee is – this is why indeed I put on the agenda the transmission of psychoanalysis – this indeed is the guarantee that psychoanalysis does not limp irreducibly from what I called just now *autism à deux*.

People speak about the ruse of reason; it is a philosophical idea. It was Hegel who invented that. There is not the slightest ruse of reason. There is nothing constant, contrary to what Freud enunciates somewhere, that the voice of reason was low, but that it always repeated the same thing. It only repeats things by going around in circles. In order to say things, reason repeats the symptom. And the fact that today I have to present myself before you with what is called a physical *sinthome*, does not prevent you from asking quite rightly whether it is not intentional, whether for example I have not got into such stupid behaviour that my symptom, however physical it may be, may be something all the same wished for by me. There is no reason to stop in this extension of the symptom because it is something suspect, whether one likes it or not. Why should this symptom not be intentional?

It is a fact that *l'élangue*, I am writing that *élangue*, is elongated by translating one into the other, but the only knowledge remains the knowledge of tongues, that kinship is not translated in fact, but the only thing it has in common is the fact that analysers talk only about that. It has even got to the point that what I call on occasion an old analyst is tired of it.

Why did Freud not introduce something that he would call the *lui* (him)? When I wrote my little yoke there, in order to talk to you, I made a slip – another one! – instead of writing *comme moi* – this *comme moi* was not especially benevolent, it was a matter of what I would call mental debility, - I made a slip, at the place of *comme moi* I wrote *comme ça*. To write – since all of that is written, that is even

what constitutes saying – to write that the analyser gets on as best he can with me also means me with him. That analysis talks only about the Ego and the Id, never of *Lui*, is all the same very striking. *Lui* nevertheless, is a term which should be required, and if Freud disdains taking note of it, it is indeed, it must be said, because he is egocentric, and even super-egocentric! That is what he is sick of. He has all the vices of the master, he understands nothing about anything. For the only master, it has to be said, is consciousness, and what he says about the unconscious is only confusion and entanglement, namely, a return to this mixture of crude drawings and of metaphysics which are never there without one another.

Every painter is above all a metaphysician, a metaphysician that he is due to the fact that he makes crude drawings. He is a dauber, hence the titles that he gives to his paintings. Even abstract art is titled (*se titrise*) like the others – I did not want to say entitled (*titularisé*) because that would mean nothing – even abstract art has titles, titles that it strives to make as empty as it can, but all the same it gives itself titles.

Without that, Freud would have drawn the consequences of what he says himself that the analyser does not know his truth, since he cannot say it. Which I defined as not ceasing to be written, namely, the symptom, is an obstacle to it. I am coming back to it. What the analyser says while waiting to be verified, is not the truth, it is the *varité of the symptom*. One must accept the conditions of the mental in the first rank of which is debility, which means the impossibility of holding a discourse against which there is no objection, no mental one precisely.

The mental is discourse. One does one's best to arrange for discourse to leave traces. This is the business of the *Entwurf*, of Freud's *Project*, but memory is uncertain. What we know, is that there are lesions of the body that we cause, of the body described as living, which suspend memory or at least do not allow us there to count on the traces one attributes to it when the memory of discourse is at stake.

Objections must be raised to the practice of psychoanalysis. Freud was a mental defective, like everyone, and like me myself on this particular occasion, in

particular besides, neurotic, a sexual obsessional as has been said. It is hard to see why an obsession with sexuality would not be as valid as any other, since for the human species sexuality is quite rightly obsessive. It is in effect abnormal in the sense that I defined; there is no sexual relationship. Freud, namely, a case, had the merit of seeing that neurosis was not structurally obsessional, that it was fundamentally hysterical, namely, linked to the fact that there was no sexual relationship, that there are people disgusted by it, which is all the same a sign, a positive sign, is that it makes them vomit.

Sexual relationship must be reconstituted by a discourse, namely, something which has a quite different finality. What discourse is useful for from the outset, it serves to order, I mean to convey the commandment that I allow myself to call the intention of the discourse, because there remains something of the imperative in every intention. Every discourse has an effect of suggestion. It is hypnotic. The contamination of discourse by sleep is worth highlighting, before being highlighted by what one can call intentional experience, in other words taken as a commandment imposed on facts. A discourse is always soporific, except when one does not understand it. Then it wakes you up.

Laboratory animals are wounded not because one harms them more or less, they are woken up, completely, because they do not understand what is wanted of them, even if people stimulate their supposed instinct. When you make rats move in a little box, you stimulate their alimentary instinct, as it is put; it is quite simply hunger that is at stake. In short, awakening is the Real in its aspect of the impossible, which is only written by force or through force what is called counter-nature.

Nature, like every notion that comes to our minds, is an excessively vague notion. To tell the truth, counter-nature is clearer than the natural. The pre-Socratics, as they are called, had a penchant for counter-nature. This is the whole reason why attributing culture to them is deserved. They had to be gifted to force a little the discourse, the imperative saying which we have seen puts people to sleep.

Does truth waken up people or put them to sleep? That depends on the tone in which it is said. Spoken poetry is soporific. I take advantage of this to show the thing that François Cheng thought up. In reality he is called Cheng Tai-tchen. He put in François like that, as a way of being reabsorbed into our culture, which has not prevented him from maintaining very firmly what he says. And what he says, is *L'écriture poétique chinoise* (Chinese poetic writing), which is published by Seuil and I would really like you to follow the grain of it, follow the grain of it, if you are a psychoanalyst, which is not the case for everyone here.

If you are a psychoanalyst, you will see that these forcings by which a psychoanalyst can make something else ring out, something other than sense, for sense, is what resonates with the help of the signifier; but what resonates, does not go very far, it is rather flabby. Sense deadens things, but with the help of what one can call poetic writing, you can get the dimension of what one could call analytic interpretation.

It is quite certain that writing is not that by which poetry, the resonance of the body is expressed. It is all the same quite striking that the Chinese poets express themselves by writing and that for us, what is necessary, is that we should hold onto the notion, in Chinese writing, of what poetry is, not at all that all poetry – I am talking especially about ours – that all poetry is such that we can imagine it by writing, by poetic Chinese writing; but perhaps, you will sense something in it, something which is different than what ensures that Chinese poets cannot do otherwise than write. There is something that gives the feeling that they are not reduced there, the fact is that they sing, that they modulate, the fact is that there is what François Cheng enunciated before me, namely, a tonic counterpoint, a modulation which ensures that that it is sung, for from tonality to modulation there is a slippage. That you are inspired eventually by something of the order of poetry to intervene, is indeed why I would say, it is indeed something towards which you must turn, because linguistics is all the same a science that I would say is very badly orientated. If linguistics raises itself up, it is in the measure that a Roman Jakobson frankly tackles the questions of poetics. Metaphor, and metonymy, have an import for interpretation only insofar as they are capable of

functioning as something else. And this other thing that they function as, is indeed that by which sound and sense are closely united.

It is in as much as a correct interpretation extinguishes a symptom, that the truth is specified as being poetic. It is not from the angle of articulated logic – even though on occasion I slip into it – it is not from the angle of articulated logic that we must sense the import of our saying, not at all of course that there is something which deserves to have two aspects. What we enunciate always, because it is the law of discourse, what we always enunciate as a system of opposition, is the very thing that we have to surmount, and the first thing would be to extinguish the notion of the Beautiful.

We have nothing beautiful to say. A different resonance is at stake, one founded on the witticism. A witticism is not beautiful, it depends only on an equivocation, or, as Freud said, on an economy. Nothing is more ambiguous than this notion of economy. But all the same, economy founds value. A practice without value is what we must establish.

Seminar 11: Wednesday 10 May 1977

I am racking my brains, which is already annoying, because I am seriously racking them; but the most annoying thing, is that I don't know what I am racking my brains about. There is someone named Gödel, who lives in America and who has enunciated the name *undecidable*. What is solid in this enunciation, is that he demonstrates that there are things that are undecidable. And he demonstrates it on what terrain? On what I would qualify like that, as the most mental of all the mentals, I mean in what is the most mental, the mental par excellence, the high point of the mental, namely, what can be counted: what can be counted is arithmetic. I mean that it is arithmetic that develops the countable. It is a question of knowing whether there are One's which are un-enumerable; this is at least what Cantor put forward. But this remains all the same doubtful; given that we know nothing except the finite, and that the finite is always enumerable.

Does this mean that the mental is weak? It is simply the weakness of what I call the Imaginary. The Unconscious was identified by Freud – we do not know why – the Unconscious was identified by Freud to the mental. This at least is what results from the fact that the mental is woven of words, between which, - it is explicitly, it seems to me, the definition that Freud gives of it – between which *bévues* are always possible. Hence my enunciation, that in terms of the Real there is only the impossible. This indeed is where I come to grief: is the Real impossible to think about? If it does not cease, - but here there is a nuance –, I do not enunciate that, it does not cease not to say itself, if only because the Real, I name it as such, but I say, that it does not cease not to be written.

Everything that is mental, when all is said and done, is what I write by the name of 'sinthome', s.i.n.t.h.o.m.e., namely, sign.

What does sign mean? This is what I am racking my brains about. Can one say that negation is a sign? I formerly tried to pose what is involved in the agency of the letter. Is one saying everything by saying that the sign of negation, which is written like that, [**Frege's sign for negation**] should not be written? What does it

mean to deny? What can one deny? This plunges us into the *Verneinung* of which Freud has put forward the essentials. What he enunciates, is that negation presupposes a *Bejahung*. It is starting from something that is enunciated as positive, that one writes negation. In other words, the sign is to be sought – and this indeed is what, in this agency of the letter, that I posed – is to be sought as congruence of the sign to the Real.

What is a sign that one cannot write? For one really writes this sign. I highlighted like that, at one time, the pertinence of what the French *lalangue* touches on as adverb. Can one say that the Real lies (*ment*)? In analysis, one can surely say that the True lies. Analysis is a long journey (*cheminement*) – one finds it everywhere – that the *chemine-ne-mente* (the journey does not lie) it is something which can only on occasion signal to us that, as in the wire of the telephone, that we find our footing.

And then, that such things can be put forward poses the question of what is sense. Is sense supposed to be only lying, since one can say that the notion of the Real excludes – which should be written in the subjunctive – that it excludes (*qu'elle exclue*) sense? Does that indicate that it also excludes the lie? This indeed is what we have to deal with, when we wager in short on the fact that the Real excludes – in the subjunctive, but the subjunctive is the indication of the modal – what is modulated in this modal that would exclude (*excluerait*) the lie? In truth, - we sense it clearly -, there is nothing in all of that but paradoxes.

Are paradoxes representable? *Doxa*, is opinion, the first thing on which I introduced a lecture, at the time of what one can call or that one could call my beginnings, it is in the *Meno* in which it is enunciated that *doxa*, is true opinion. There is not the slightest true opinion, since there are paradoxes. This is the question that I am raising, whether paradoxes are or are not representable, I mean depictable (*dessinables*). The principle of true saying, is negation, and my practice, since there is a practice, a practice about which I question myself, is that, that I slide, I have to slide, because that is the way it is constructed, between the transference, that is called, I do not know why, negative, but it is a fact that it is called that. It is called negative because people clearly sense that there is

something, we still do not know what positive transference is, positive transference, is what I tried to define under the name of *subject supposed to know*. Who is supposed to know? It is the analyst. It is an attribution, as is already indicated by the word *supposed*; an attribution is only a word; there is a subject, something which is underneath which is supposed to know. To know is therefore its attribute. There is only one problem, which is that it is impossible to give the attribute of knowing to anyone.

The one who knows, is, in analysis, the analyser, what he unfolds, what he develops, is what he knows, except for the fact that it is an Other, - but is there an Other? -, that it is an Other who follows what he has to say, namely, what he knows. The notion of the Other, I marked in a certain graph with a bar which breaks it, Ø. Does that mean that when broken it is denied? Analysis, properly speaking, enunciates, that the Other is nothing but this duplicity.

There is something of the One (Y a de l'Un), but there is nothing other. The One, as I have said, the One dialogues all alone, since it receives its own message in an inverted form. It is he who knows, and not the one supposed to know.

I put forward also this something which is enunciated about the universal, and this to deny it; I said that there is no all (*tous*). This indeed is why women, are more man than men. They are not-all (*pas-toutes*), as I said. These *all* therefore, have no common trait; they have nevertheless this one, this single common trait, the trait that I described as *unary*. They are comforted by the One. *There is something of the One*, I repeated it just now to say that there is something of the One, and nothing else. *There is something of the One*, but that means that there is all the same some kind of feeling. This feeling that I called, according to the unaries (*unarités*) that I called the support, the support of what indeed I must recognise, hatred, insofar as this hatred is akin to love; *la mourre* that I wrote in – I must all the same finish on this – that I wrote in my title for this year: *l'insu que sait*, what? *de l'une-bévue*. There is nothing more difficult to grasp than this trait of the *une bévue*. This *bévue* – is that by which I translate *Unbewusst*, namely, the Unconscious. In German, that means unconscious, but translated by *une bévue*, it means something completely different, that means a stumbling, a tripping up, a

slipping from word to word, and this indeed is what is at stake when we use the wrong key to open a door which precisely this key does not open. Freud hastens to tell us that we thought that it opened this door but that we were mistaken. *Bévue* is indeed the only sense that remains for this consciousness. Consciousness has no other support than to permit a *bévue*. It is very disturbing because this consciousness strongly resembles the Unconscious, since it is what we say is responsible, responsible for all the *bévue*'s that make us dream. Dream in the name of what? Of what I called the **o-**object, namely, that by which by the subject, who, essentially, is divided, barred, namely, still more barred than the Other.

This is what I am racking my brains about. I am racking my brains and I think that when all is said and done psychoanalysis, is, is what seems true (*fait vrai*), but how must one understand this seems true? It is an effort at sense, but it is a sens-blance (*sens blant*). There is the whole distance that I designated between S_2 to what it produces. It is of course the analyser who produces the analyst, there is no doubt about that. And that is why I question myself about what is involved in this status of the analyst to whom I leave this place of seeming true, of semblance, and of whom I consider, that it is moreover, there where you have seen it formerly, there is nothing easier than to slip into the *bévue*, I mean into an effect of the Unconscious, since it was indeed an effect of my unconscious, which means that you were good enough to consider a slip, and not as what I wanted to qualify myself, namely, the next time as a crude error. [**Bars and arrow**]

$$\begin{matrix} \mathbf{o} & > & \$ \\ S_2 & & S_1 \end{matrix}$$

What effect does this subject, divided subject have if the S_1, the signifier indexed 1, S index 1, is found in our tetrahedron, since what I stressed, is that, in this tetrahedron, one of its links is always broken, namely, that the S index 1 does not represent the subject for S index 2, namely, of the Other. The S index 1 and the S index 2, is very precisely what I designated by the divided O of which I made a signifier S(Ø).

This indeed is the way in which the famous Unconscious presents itself. This Unconscious, is, when all is said and done, impossible to grasp. It does not represent, - I spoke earlier about paradoxes as being representable, namely, depictable – there is no possible depiction of the Unconscious. The Unconscious is limited to an attribution, to a substance, to something that is supposed to be beneath and what psychoanalysis enunciates, is very precisely the following, that it is only, I say, a deduction, a supposed deduction, nothing more. That with which I tried to give it body with the creation of the Symbolic has very precisely this destiny which is that this does not arrive at its destination.

How does it happen nevertheless that it is enunciated? That is the central introduction of psychoanalysis. I will stick with that for today. I hope to be able in a week's time, since there will be a 17 May, - God knows why! – anyway it has been announced to me that there will be a 17 May, and that here I have not too many examinees, unless it is you that I will examine and perhaps I will question in the hope that something of what I say have got across. Au revoir!

Seminar 12: 17 May 1977

People in the middle were not able to hear me; I would like to be told this time whether I can be heard. It is not because what I have to say is of extreme importance. Can you hear me? Would someone mind telling me if, perchance, I cannot be heard?

Good. So then to say things in order of growing importance, I had the pleasure of noticing that my teaching has reached *l'Echo des Savanes*! (laughter). I will only quote two lines for you: 'Psychoanalysis is no more complicated than that; anyway, that's Lacan's theory'. There you are. *L'Echo des Savanes*, number 30, in which you can read this text is all the same a little bit porno (laughter). That I have succeeded – indeed I have succeeded..., I did not do it deliberately – that I should have succeeded to going as far as porno, is all the same what can be called a success! Good. There you are. I am always careful to get *l' Echo des Savanes* as if I was only waiting for that, but it is obviously not the case. So then in order of growing importance, I am going all the same to signal for you the publication by Seuil of a text called *Polylogue*, which is by Julia Kristeva. I really like this text, it is a collection of a certain number of articles. It is no less precious for that. I would all the same like to be informed, by Julia Kristeva, since she has made the effort, this morning, to be good enough to put herself out, how she conceives of this *Polylogue*. I would really like her to tell me whether this *Polylogue*, as perhaps anyway it appears to me insofar as I was able to read it – because I did not get it too long ago – if this *Polylogue* is a *polylinguisterie*, I mean whether linguistics is there in some sort of way – what I believe is that it is, as far as I can see - , more than scarce, is that what she meant by *Polylogue*? She is moving her head up and down in a way that appears to approve me, but if she had still has enough voice to give a little yelp, I would all the same not be displeased. It is?..

J. Kristeva: It is something other than linguistics. It passes by way of linguistics, but it is not that.

J. Lacan: Yes. Only the annoying thing is that one only ever passes by way of linguistics. I mean that one passes by way of it, and if I enunciated something valid, I regret that people cannot base themselves on it. To tell the truth, I don't know, I heard it said by someone who came like that to pull my sleeve, that Jakobson wanted me to participate in an interview. I am very embarrassed and I feel myself completely incapable of doing so. It is not that...and nevertheless I have, as Julia Kristeva has just said, I have been through it. There you are.

I have been through it, but I have not remained there. I am still at the stage of interrogating psychoanalysis about the way in which it functions. What ensures that it holds up, that it constitutes a practice that is sometimes effective? Naturally there, one must all the same go through a series of interrogations. Does psychoanalysis work, since from time to time it does work, does it work by what people call *an effect of suggestion*? For the effect of suggestion to hold up, pre-supposes that language, - here I am repeating myself -, that language depends on what is called man. It is not for nothing that at one time, I manifested a certain, like that, preference for a certain book by Bentham which talks about the usefulness of fictions. Fictions are orientated toward service, which is...that he justifies in short. But on the other hand, there is a gap; that this depends on man, presupposes that we should clearly know, that we should know sufficiently what man is. All that we know about man is that he has a structure; but it is not easy to say what this structure is. Psychoanalysis has given a few squeaks about this subject, namely, that man leans towards his pleasure, which has a quite clear sense. What psychoanalysis calls pleasure, is to suffer, is to suffer the least possible. Here all the same one should remember the fashion in which I defined the possible, this has a curious reversal-effect, since I said that the possible is what ceases to be written. That is how at least I clearly articulated it, at the time when I was speaking about the possible, about the contingent, about the necessary and the impossible. So then if one transports the word the least, like that, quite clumsily, quite brutally, well then that means what ceases to be the least written. And in effect, that does not cease in an instant. Here indeed is where I would like to pose again a question to my dear Julia Kristeva. What does she call – that is going to force her to get out a little bit more from this quiet voice like earlier – what does she call the *metatongue* (*metalangue*)?

What does the *metatongue* mean if not translation? One can only speak of a tongue in another tongue, it seems to me, if what I said formerly is a fact, namely, that there is no metalanguage. There is an embryo of metalanguage; but one always skids away from it, for a simple reason, which is that I know nothing about language except a series of incarnated tongues. People strive to reach language

by writing. And writing only produces something in mathematics, namely, there where people operate by formal logic, namely, by the extraction of a certain number of things that one defines, that one defines principally as axiom, and that one only operates quite brutally by extracting these letters, for they are letters.

Yeah, this is not at all a reason for people to believe that psychoanalysis leads one to write one's memoirs. It is precisely because there is no memoir of a psychoanalysis that I am so embarrassed. There is no memoir, that does not mean that memory is not involved in this affair. But to write one's memoirs is a different matter. Everything depends on a metaphor, namely, that people imagine that memory, is something which is imprinted; but there is nothing to say that this metaphor is valid. In his project, *Entwurf*, Freud articulates very precisely, the impression of what remains in memory. Because we know that animals remember is not a reason that it should be the same for man.

What I enunciate in any case, is that the invention of a signifier is something different to memory. It is not that the child invents; he receives this signifier, and this is even what would make it worthwhile to make more of them. Why would we not invent a new signifier? Our signifiers are always received. A signifier for example which would not have, like the Real, any kind of sense. We do not know, it would perhaps be fruitful. It would perhaps be fruitful, it would perhaps be a means, a means of shocking, in any case. It is not that people do not try. That is even what the witticism consists of, it consists in using one word for another usage than the one for which it is made. In the case of *famillionnaire*, one crumples this word; but it is not in this crumpling that its operational effect consists.

In any case there is a thing that I risked operating in the sense of a metatongue, the metatongue about which just now I was interrogating Julia Kristeva. The metatongue in question consists in translating *Unbewusst*, by *une-bévue*, this has absolutely not the same sense; but it is a fact, the fact is that once a man is asleep, he *une-bévue'* s at full tilt, and without there being any inconvenience, apart from the case of somnambulism. Somnambulism is inconvenient, when one wakens when one wakens the somnambulist, if he is walking on the rooftops, he

may have an attack of vertigo, but in truth the mental illness which is the Unconscious does not wake up. What Freud enunciated and what I want to say, is the following: that in no case is there an awakening. Science, for its part, can only be indirectly evoked on this occasion, it is an awakening, but a difficult and suspect awakening. It is not sure that one is awake, unless what is presented and represented has, as I have said, no kind of sense. Now everything that is enunciated, up to the present, as science, is suspended on the idea of God. Science and religion go very well together. It's a *Dieu-lire*! But this does not presuppose any awakening. Luckily, there is a hole. Between the social delusion and the idea of God, there is no common measure. The subject takes himself to be God, but he is impotent to justify that a signifier can be produced, a signifier S index 1, and still more impotent to justify that this S_1, index 1, represents him for another signifier, and that it is through this that there pass all the effects of sense, which are right away blocked up, are in an impasse. There you are.

Man's trick, is to stuff all of that, as I told you, with poetry which is a sense effect, but also a hole-effect. It is only poetry, as I told you, which permits interpretation, and that is why I no longer manage, in my technique, to get it to hold up; I am not enough of a *pouâte*, I am not *pouâteassez*!

There you are. That is to introduce the following, in connection with which we pose questions. The definition of neurosis, we must all the same be sensible and notice that neurosis depends on social relations. We shake up the neurosis a little, and it is not at all sure that in that way we cure it. Obsessional neurosis for example, is the principle of conscience. And then there are also bizarre things. There is someone called Clérambault who noticed one day, -- God knows how he found that! – that there was somewhere mental automatism. There is nothing more natural than mental automatism. That there should be voices, - voices, where do they come from? They come necessarily from the subject himself – that there are voices which say: 'She is wiping her bottom', one is stupefied that this derision – since to all appearances there is derision –, does not happen more often. For my part, I saw, at my presentation of ill people, as they say, if in fact there are ill people, I saw a Japanese, a Japanese who had something which he himself called a thought-echo. What would a thought-echo be if Clérambault had

not pinpointed it? He calls this a *serpigineu* (billhook-like?) process. It is not even sure that it is a *serpigineux* process there where it is judged to be the centre of language. I for my part, I said all the same that this Japanese who had a very lively taste for the metatongue, namely, that he took great enjoyment in having learned English, and then French afterwards. Is this not where the slippage was? He slipped into mental trauma from this fact that, in all these metatongues that he managed to handle rather easily, well then, he could not find himself in them. I for my part advised that he should be given some room and that one should not stop at the fact that Clérambault had invented, one fine day, a thing called mental automatism. Mental automatism is normal. If as it happens I do not have it, for my part, that is by chance. There are all the same, all the same somethings that can be called bad habits. If one starts saying things to oneself, as the aforesaid Japanese expressed himself textually, if one starts to say things to oneself, why would that not slide towards mental automatism because it is all the same quite certain that, according to what Edgar Morin says in a book which was recently published and in which he questioned himself about the nature of nature, it is quite clear that nature is not as natural as all that, it is even in this that there consists this rottenness which is what is generally called culture. Culture seethes, as I pointed out to you in passing. Yes.

The types modelled by social relations consist in word play. Aristotle imputes, we do not know why, being hysterical to the woman; it is a play on the word *hysteron*. I pointed out something to you about kinship. *La parenté en question*, is a book tackled by Needham, Rodney Needham who is not the good one. Why does everyone get engulfed in the most banal type of kinship? Why do people, who come to speak to us in psychoanalysis, talk to us only about that? Why would we not say that we are entirely akin to a pouâte for example, in the sense that I articulated just now, the *pas pouâteassez*? A *pouâ**ate***, one has just as much kinship with him, why does psychoanalysis orient, orient people who open themselves to it, orient people, in the name of what, towards their childhood memories? Why does it not orientate them towards a kinship with a *pouâte*, a *pouâte* among others, any one at all? Even a *pouâte*, is very commonly what is called a mental defective. It's hard to see why a *pouâte* would be an exception.

A new signifier, one that would have no kind of sense, that would perhaps be what would open us up to what, in my lumpish way, I call the Real. Why would one not attempt to formulate a signifier which would, contrary to the use that is habitually made of it, which would have an effect? Yes. It is certain that all this has an extreme character. If I am introduced to it by psychoanalysis, this is all the same not without an import (*portée*). *Portée* means sense, it has exactly no other incidence. *Portée* means sense and we always remain stuck to sense. Why is it that we have not yet forced things sufficiently, in order, in order to test what that would produce, to forge a signifier which would be other.

Good, I will stick with that for today.

If ever I summon you in connection with this signifier, you will see it advertised and this will all the same be a good sign, since I am only relatively mentally defective, I mean that I am like everyone else, since I am only relatively mentally defective, who knows, a little light may come to me.

Seminar I: Wednesday 15 November 1977

How kind of you to go out of your way like that for what I have to say to you! There you are, I entitled my seminar – can you hear? – I entitled my seminar this year: 'Time to conclude' (*Le moment de conclure*).

What I have to say to you, I am going to say it, is that psychoanalysis is to be taken seriously, even though it is not a science. It is even not a science in any way. Because the problem is, as someone called Karl Popper has superabundantly shown, is that it is not a science because it is irrefutable. It is a practice that will last as long as it will last, it is a practice of chit-chat (*bavardage*). There is no chit-chat without risk. Already the word chit-chat implies something. What it implies is sufficiently said by the word *bavardage*, which means that there are not only sentences, namely, what are called propositions which imply consequences, words also. Chit-chat puts speech at the level of dribbling (*baver*) or of spluttering, it reduces it to the sort of spattering that results from it. There you are.

This does not prevent analysis from having consequences: it says something. What is meant by 'saying' ('*dire*')? 'To say' has something to do with time. The absence of time – it is something people dream about – is what is called eternity and this dream consists in imagining that one wakes up. One spends one's time dreaming, one does not dream simply when one sleeps. The unconscious, is very precisely the hypothesis that one does not dream only when one is asleep. I would like to point out to you that what is called 'the reasonable' is a phantasy; it is quite manifest at the beginning of science. Euclidian geometry has all the characteristics of phantasy. A phantasy is not a dream, it is an aspiration.

The idea of the line, of the straight line for example is manifestly a phantasy; by luck, we have got out of it. I mean that topology has restored what we should call weaving (*tissage*). The idea of neighbourhood is

simply the idea of consistency, if we only allow ourselves to give body to the word 'idea'. It is not easy. It was all the same Greek philosophers who tried to give body to the idea. An idea has a body: it is the word that represents it. And the word has a quite curious property, which is that it makes the thing (*qu'il fait la chose*). I would like to equivocate and to write that as: '*qu'il fêle achose'* (that it splits the thing?), it is not a bad way of equivocating. Using writing to equivocate can be of use, because we need equivocation precisely for analysis. We need equivocation, it is the definition of analysis, because as the word implies, equivocation (*l'équivoque*) is immediately turning towards sex. Sex – I told you, is a saying: that is worth whatever it is worth – sex does not define a relationship. This is what I stated in formulating that there is no sexual relationship; that only means that, in man and no doubt because of the existence of the signifier, the set of what could be sexual relationship is a set – we have managed to cogitate that, we do not know very well moreover how it happened – is an empty set. So then this is something that allows a lot of things. This notion of empty set is what is appropriate for the sexual relationship. The psychoanalyst is a rhetor (*rhêteur*): to continue equivocating I would say that he 'rhetifies' (*rhêtifie*), which implies that he rectifies. The analyst is a rhetor, namely, that '*rectus*', a Latin word, equivocates with '*rhêtification'*. One tries to say the truth. One tries to say the truth, but that is not easy because there are great obstacles to saying the truth, even if only because one makes mistakes in the choice of words. The Truth has to do with the Real and the Real is doubled, as one might say, by the Symbolic. I happened to receive, from someone called Michel Coornaert – I received it through someone who wishes me well and to whom the Coornaert in question had sent it – I received from this Coornaert a yoke which is called *Knots and links* – it's in English – which means, because it is not altogether simple, that one must metalanguage, namely, translate, one never speaks of a tongue except in another tongue. If I said that there is no metalanguage, it was in order to say that language does not exist; there are only multiple supports of language that are called '*lalangue*' and what is very necessary, is that analysis manages by a supposition, manages to undo by speech what has been made by speech. In the order of

the dream that the field of using language gives itself, there is an misuse (*bavure*) which is that Freud calls what is at stake '*Wunsch*'. As we know it is a German word, and the *Wunsch* in question has as property that we do not know whether it is a wish (*souhait*), which in any case is very vague, a wish addressed to whom? Once one wants to say it, one is forced to suppose that there is an interlocutor and, from then on, one is into magic. One is forced to know what one is demanding; but precisely what defines the demand is that one never demands except through what one desires – I mean that by passing through what one desires – and one does not know what one desires. That indeed is why I put the emphasis on the desire of the analyst. The subject supposed to know from which I supported, defined transference, supposed to know what? How to operate? But it would be altogether excessive to say that the analyst knows how to operate. What is required, is that he knows how to operate appropriately, namely, that he takes into account the import of words for his analyser, which incontestably he is unaware of.

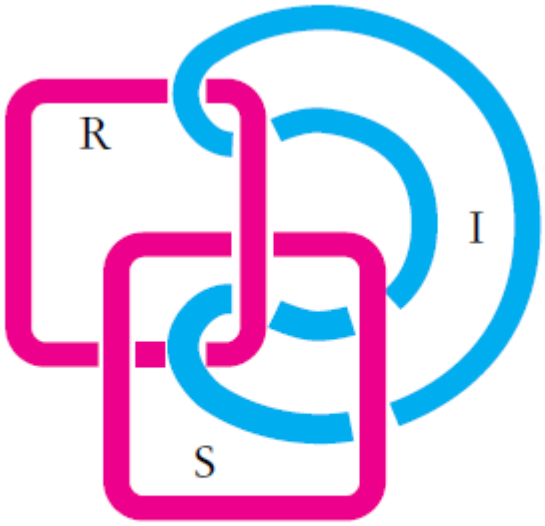


Fig. I-1

So that I must trace out for you what is involved in what I called, I put forward in the form of the Borromean knot. Someone who is none other – I have to name him – than J.B., Jean-Baptiste, Lefebvre-Pontalis granted an interview to *Le Monde*, he would have done better to refrain. He would have done better to refrain, because what he said is not worth much: from the fact that it appears, that my Borromean knot is supposed to be a way of strangling everyone, of suffocating people. Yeah!

Good, here all the same is what I can add to the dossier of this Borromean knot. It is quite obvious that, that is how it is drawn, I mean that one interrupts, because one projects things, one interrupts what is at stake, namely, a cord. A cord makes a knot, and I remember that there was a time when Soury made the reproach, to someone who is here present, made the reproach of having made this knot wrongly. I no longer know very well how he had effectively made it. But let us say that here, (I), we have indeed the right, since the Borromean knot has the property of not naming each of the circles in a way that would be univocal.

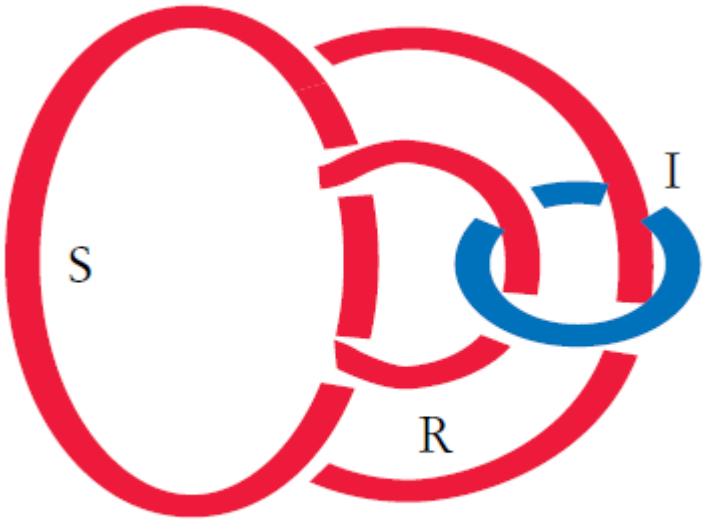


Fig. I-2

In the Borromean knot you have this, which means that you can designate each of these circles by whatever term you wish, I mean that it is not important whether this is called I.R.S. here, on condition of not misusing, I mean to put these 3 letters, you still have a Borromean knot.

Suppose that here we were to designate as distinct the R and the S, namely, the Real and the Symbolic, there remains the third which is the Imaginary. If we knot, as it is here represented [I-3], the Symbolic with the Real, which of course would be the ideal, namely, that since words make the thing, 'the Freudian Thing' ('*la Chose Freudienne'*), the Freudian '*Crachose',* I mean that it is precisely with the inadequation of words to things that we have to deal: what I called 'the Freudian Thing', was that words mould themselves onto things: but it is a fact, the fact is that it does not happen (*ne passe passe pas*) there is neither splutter (*crachat*) nor *crachose* and that the adequation of the Symbolic only makes things phantastically.

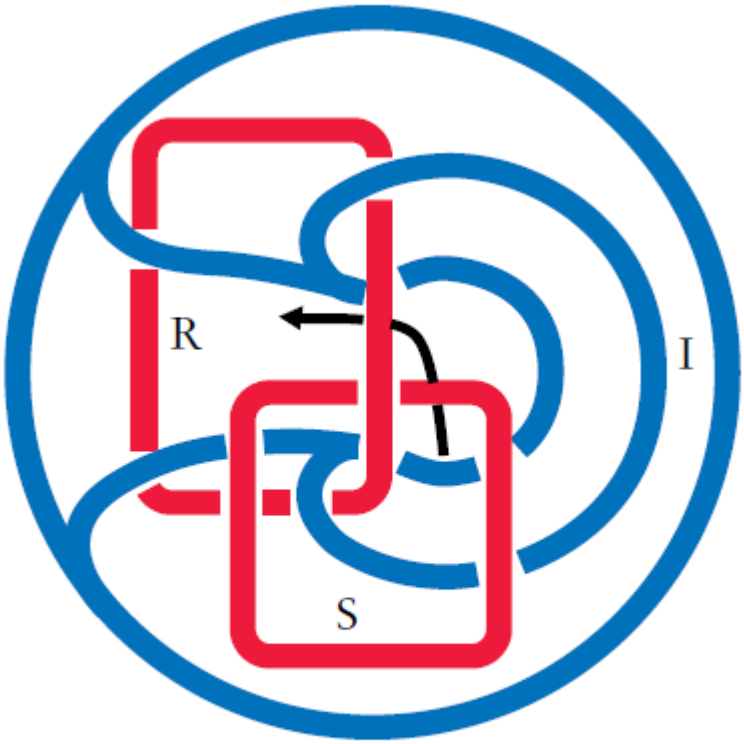


Fig. I-3

So that the bond, the ring which is supposed to be this Symbolic with respect to the Real or this Real with respect to the Symbolic do not hold up, I mean that it is quite simple to see that on condition of making the cord of the Imaginary more supple, what follows is very exactly that by which the Imaginary does not hold up – as you can see in a manifest way – does not hold up, since it is clear that here, passing under the Symbolic, this Imaginary comes here, and it comes here even though, even though it is under the Symbolic. I would ask you to note that here it is free, namely, that the Imaginary suggested by the Symbolic is freed.

This indeed is why the history of writing suggests that there is no sexual relationship. Analysis, on this occasion, consumes itself. I mean that, if we make an abstraction about analysis, we cancel it out. If we notice that we are only talking about alliances or of kinship, the idea comes to us to speak about something else and this is why indeed analysis, on occasion, may fail. But it is a fact that each particular person speaks of nothing but that.

Is neurosis natural? It is only natural inasmuch as in man there is a Symbolic; and the fact that there is a Symbolic implies that a new signifier emerges, a new signifier to which the Ego, namely, consciousness would identify itself; but what is proper to the signifier, which I called by the name of S_1, is that there is only one relationship that defines it, the relationship with S_2: S_1 S_2. It is inasmuch as the subject is divided between this S_1 and this S_2 that it is supported, so that one cannot say that it is a single one of the two signifiers that represents it.

Is neurosis natural? It would be a matter of defining the nature of nature. What can be said about the nature of nature? Nothing but the fact that there is something that we imagine can be accounted for by the organic, I mean by the fact that there are living beings; but that there are living beings, not alone is not self-evident, but it was necessary to speculate about a whole genesis, I mean that what are called genes undoubtedly mean something, but it is only a wish to say something. We have nowhere present this springing forth of a line of descendents, whether evolutionary, or even on occasion

creationist – they are equally valid. The creationist speculation is no more valid than the evolutionary speculation, since in any case it is only a hypothesis.

Logic is only supported by very little. If we do not believe in what is in short a gratuitous way that words make things, logic has no *raison d'être*. What I called the rhetor that there is in analysis – what is at stake here is the analyst – the rhetor only operates by suggestion. He suggests, that is what is proper to the rhetor, he does not impose in any way something which would have consistency and that is even why I designated by ex what is supported, what is only supported by ex-sisting. How must the analyst operate to be a proper rhetor? Here indeed is where we reach an ambiguity. The unconscious, it is said, does not know contradiction, this indeed is why the analyst must operate with something which is not founded on contradiction. It is not said that what is at stake is either true or false. What constitutes the true and what constitutes the false, this is what is called the weight of the analyst and that is why I am saying that he is a rhetor.

The hypothesis that the unconscious is an extrapolation is not absurd and this indeed is why Freud had recourse to what is called the drive. The drive is something which is supported only by being named and by being named in a way that is as I might say farfetched (*qui la tire ... par les cheveux*) namely, which presupposes that every drive, in the name of something which is found to exist in the child, that every drive is sexual, but there is nothing to say that something deserves to be called drive with this inflection which reduces it to being sexual. What is important in the sexual, is the comic, it is that, when a man is woman, it is at that moment that he loves, namely, that he aspires to something which is his object. On the contrary, it is *qua* man that he desires, namely, that he is supported by something which is properly called a hard-on (*bander*).

Life is not tragic, it is comic and it is nevertheless rather curious that Freud should have found nothing better than to designate by the Oedipus complex, namely, by a tragedy, what is at stake in the affair. It is hard to see why

Freud designated, when he could have taken a shorter path, designated by something other than by a comedy what he was dealing with, what he was dealing with in this relationship which links the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. For the Imaginary to be exfoliated, it only has to be reduced to phantasy, the important thing is that science itself is only a phantasy and that the idea of an awakening is properly speaking unthinkable.

That's what I had to say to you today.

Seminar 2: Wednesday 13 December 1977

That is to indicate to you that it is a torus. That is why I wrote hole. In principle, it is a fourfold torus. It is a fourfold torus, such that anyone of the four may be reversed.

Here is the fourfold torus that is at stake [II-1].

It is Soury who noticed that by reversing any one of the four that one obtains what I am showing you, what I am showing you in the figure on the left [II-2].

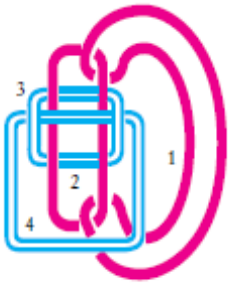


Fig. II-1

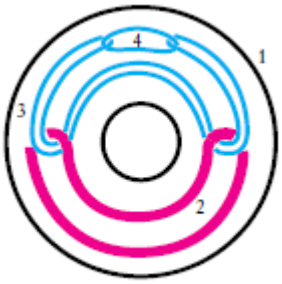


Fig. II-2

By reversing any one of the four, one obtains this figure which consists in a torus except for the fact that inside the torus, we only do what is presented there on the board, namely, rings of string, but each one, each one of what you see there, each one of these rings of string is itself a torus. And this ring of string reversed as torus gives the same result, the same result, namely, that inside the torus which envelopes everything, each of the rings of string which is nevertheless a torus, each of the rings of string, which I repeat is also a torus, each of these rings of string functions in the way that Soury has formulated in the form of this drawing. This implies an asymmetry, I mean that he has chosen a particular torus to make of it the torus such as I have drawn it: it is the torus that he has reversed – I would ask you to be careful – and, in this respect, he has given it a privilege over the other tori which only figure here as rings of string.

Nevertheless [II-1], it is quite obvious that the torus that he has chosen, the torus that he has chosen and which could be designated by 1,2,3,4, starting from the back towards what is in front.

This is the one which is in front (1).

This is the one which is most in front and this one which is a little more in front – that is why I give it no.3 – this one is completely in front.

Moreover, as you see, provided that you have a bit of imagination, as you see, there are four of them and it is by choosing one and reversing it that one obtains the figure that you see on the left [II-2] and this figure is equivalent for any one of the rings, I mean of the tori.

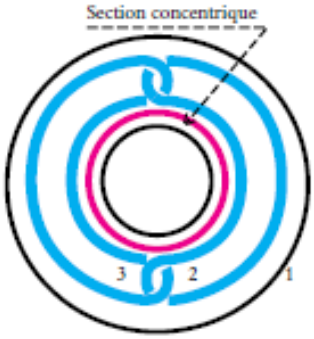


Fig. II-3

Nevertheless I pose the objection to Soury something which is not any less true, which is that by reversing any one whatsoever of what is called the Borromean knot, one obtains the following figure, [II-3]. The 2 and 3 being unimportant, it is by reversing what I designated here as 1, namely, 1 of the elements of the Borromean knot, and you know how it is drawn [II-4].

Fig. II-4

In the figure on the left, this one [II-2], it is quite clear that the rings of string which are inside, inside the torus, and which in a way equivalent to what I said just now can be depicted as tori, each one of these reversed tori envelopes the two other tori, just as what is designated in 1 [II-3] here is a torus which has the property of enveloping the two others, on condition that it is reversed. Therefore what is in the figure on the right [II-4} becomes what is in the figure on the left [II-3], on condition that each of these tori is reversed.

It is obvious that the two figures on the left [II-2 and [II-3] are more complex than the two figures on the right [II-1] and [II-4]. Besides, what makes the third figure appear is the following: that once reversed, the torus that I designated by 1 on the figure, by going from left to right on the third figure...

Left	**Right**
II-2	II-1
II-3	II-4
	II-5

Something comes to me, comes to my mind in connection with these tori: suppose that what I called 'privileging a torus' happens at the level of torus 2 for example, can you imagine what torus 2 becomes by privileging it as compared to torus 3, namely, by reversing it inside, inside of the torus that I designated by the name of 1, namely, by privileging the 2 with respect to torus 3?

In one case, the reversal will change nothing to the relationship of torus 2 with respect to torus 3. In the other, it will amount to a rupture of the Borromean knot. This comes from the fact that the Borromean knot behaves differently according as the rupture happens in a different way on the reversed torus. I am going to indicate on the left hand figure [II.3] something which is obvious:
Concentric section 1
Perpendicular section 2
The fact is that by sectioning (2) the reversed torus in the way that I have just done, the Borromean knot is undone. On the contrary by sectioning in this other way (1) which is, I suppose, evident to all of you as being equivalent to what I am drawing here [II-5], that it is equivalent, the Borromean knot is not dissolved, while in the present case the cut (2) that I have just made dissolves the Borromean knot. Therefore the privilege that is at stake is not something univocal.

The reversal of any one at all of what ends up at the first figure, the reversal does not give the same result according as the cut is presented on the torus in such a way that it is, as I might say, concentric to the hole or according to whether it is perpendicular to the hole.

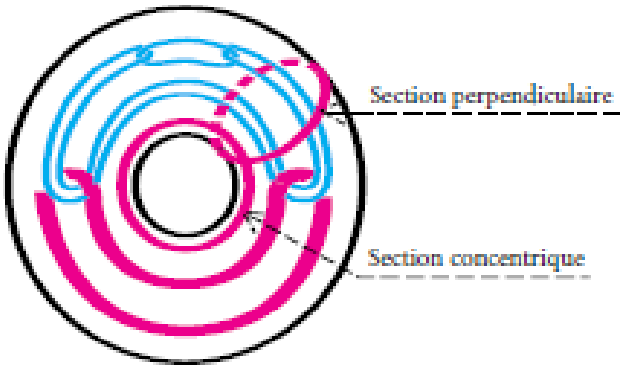


Fig. II-5

It is quite clear – this can be seen on the second figure [II-3] – it is quite clear that it is the same thing, I mean that by breaking according a tracing out which is this one (concentric), the threefold Borromean knot is dissolved; for it is quite clear that even in the state of torus, the two figures that you see there dissolve, I mean are separated if the reversed torus, cut in the sense that I have called longitudinal (2), while I can call the other sense transversal (1). The transversal does not free the threefold torus but on the other hand the longitudinal frees it. There is therefore the same choice to be made on the reversed torus, the same choice to the made according to the case that one wants or does not want to dissolve the Borromean knot.

The figure on the right [II-5], the one that materialises the way in which the surrounding torus must be cut in order – I think that you see this to free the three, the three that remain – it is quite clear that, by drawing things like that, you see that what I designate on occasion as (2), that this is freed from (3) and that secondarily the (3) is freed from the (4), [II-1 and II-2].

I propose the following, the following which is initiated by the fact that in the way of dividing up the figuration of (4), Soury had a preference, I mean that he prefers to mark that the (4) is to be drawn like that.

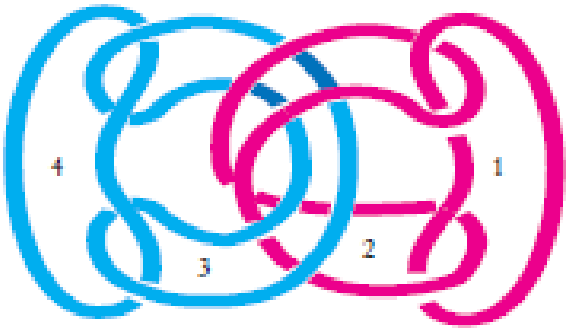
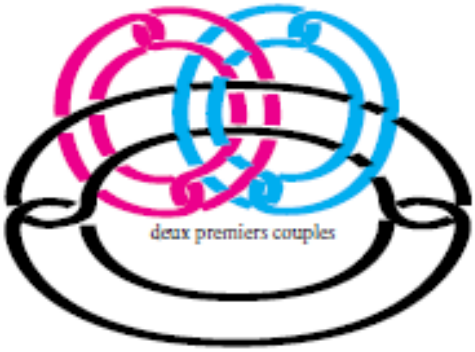


Fig. II-6

This is equally a Borromean knot but I suggest that there is a six-fold Borromean knot, six-fold which is not the same as the Borromean knot which, as I might say, would follow in single file, it is a more complex Borromean knot and I am showing you the way in which it is organised, namely, that, as compared to the 2 that I drew first, these two are equivalent to what happens from the fact that one is on the other; and in this case, the Borromean knot must be inscribed by being over this one which is above and under this one which is below. This is what you see here: it is under the one that is below and over the one that is above.

Fig. II-7



It is not easy to draw. Here is the one that is below... You have in connection with these two couples, of these 2 couples which are depicted here, you have only to notice that this one is above, the third couple therefore comes above and underneath the one that is below.

I pose the question: does reversing one of those which are here, give the same result as what I called the single file figure, namely, thus, the one which is

Fig. II-8

presented thus 1,2,3,4,5,6, all ending in the ring here, would reversing the 6 fabricated in this way give the same result as the reversal of any one at all of these three sixes. We already have an indication of response: which is that the result will be different.

It will different because the fact of reversing any one at all of these six that I call single file will give something analogous to what is depicted here [II-2]. On the contrary, the way in which the figure [[II-7] is reversed will give something different.

I apologise for having directly implicated Soury. He is certainly very valuable for having introduced what I am stating today. The distinction between what I called the longitudinal cut and the transversal cut is essential. I think I have given you a sufficient indication of this by this cut here. The way in which the cut is made is quite decisive. What happens by the reversal of one of the six, as I designated it here, this is what is important to know and it is by putting it in your hands that I desire to have the final word on it.

There you are, I will stay with that for today.

Seminar 3: Wednesday 20 December 1977

I am working in the impossible to say.

To say (*dire*) is something different than to speak (*parler*). The analyser speaks. He produces poetry. He produces poetry when he manages to do so – it is not frequent – but it is art (*il est art*). I cut because I do not want to say 'it is late' (*'il est tard'*).

The analyst, for his part, slices (*tranche*). What he says is a cut, namely,, has some of the characteristics of writing, except for the fact that in his case he equivocates in the orthography. He writes differently so that thanks to the orthography, to a different way of writing, he makes ring out something other than what is said, than what is said with the intention of saying, namely,, consciously, inasmuch as consciousness goes very far.

That is why I say that, there is neither in what the analyser says, nor in what the analyst says, anything other than writing. This consciousness does not go very far, one does not know what one is saying when one speaks. This indeed is why the analyser says more than he means to say and the analyst slices by reading what is involved in what he means to say, if in fact the analyst knows what he himself wants. There is a lot of play (*jeu*), in the sense of freedom, in all of that. There is play in the sense that the word ordinarily has.

All of that does not say to me how I slipped into the Borromean knot to find myself, on occasion, with a lump in my throat because of it. It must be said that the Borromean knot is that which, in thought, constitutes matter.

Matter is what one breaks, there also in the sense that this word ordinarily has. What one breaks (*casse*), is what holds together and is supple, on some occasions, like what is called a knot.

How did I slip from the Borromean knot to imagining it composed of tori and, from there, to the thought of reversing each one of these tori? This is what led me to things that constitute metaphor, natural metaphor, namely,, that that it is close to linguistics, insofar as there is one. But metaphor has to be thought of metaphorically.

The stuff of metaphor is that which in thought constitutes matter or, as Descartes says 'extension', in other words body.

The gap is filled here as it has always been. The body represented here is a phantasy of the body. The phantasy of the body is the extension imagined by Descartes. There is a distance between extension, Descartes' extension, and the phantasy. Here there intervenes the analyst who colours the phantasy of sexuality.

There is no sexual relationship, certainly, except between phantasies and the phantasy is to be noted with the accent that I gave it when I remarked that geometry, '*l'âge et haut-maître hie*' [a play on *la géométrie*], that geometry is woven by phantasies and in the same way the whole of science.

I read recently a yoke called – it's in four volumes – *The world of mathematics*. As you see it's in English. There is not the slightest world of mathematics. It is enough to hang together the articles in question. That is not enough to make what is called a world, I mean a world that holds up. The mystery of this world remains absolutely intact.

And at the same time what is meant by knowledge? Knowledge is what guides us. It is what means that people were able to translate the knowledge in question by the word 'instinct', of which what I articulate as *l'appensée* [thought] forms part, and that I write like that, because it constitutes an equivocation with *appui* [support].

When I said like that, the other day, that science is nothing other than a phantasy, than a phantastical kernel, I follow (*je suis*), certainly, but in the

sense of 'to follow' (*suivre*) and, contrary to what someone in an article hoped, I think that I will be 'followed' onto this terrain. It seems obvious to me.

Science is something futile which has no weight in anyone's life, even though it has effects: television for example, but its effects depend on nothing but phantasy, which, I will write like that, who *hycroit* [believes in it].

Science is linked to what is especially called the' death-drive'. It is a fact that life continues thanks to the fact of reproduction linked to phantasy. There you are

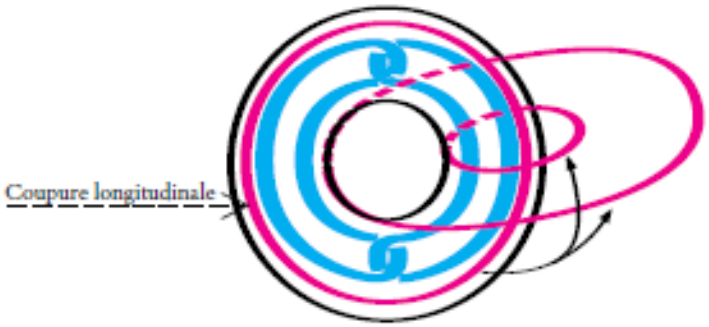


Fig. III-1

The other day I made you a torus while pointing out to you that it is a Borromean knot, namely,, that there are here three elements: the reversed torus and then the two rings of string that you see there, which are also tori; and I pointed out to you, that if one cuts this torus, that if one cuts it like that, namely,, as I expressed myself, longitudinally with respect to the torus, it is not surprising that one obtains the cutting effect which is that of the Borromean knot; it is the contrary that would be surprising.

It is the same thing as to cut ... here I am completing it since I left this Borromean knot unfinished ... it is the same thing to cut it like that: except for the fact that in this case the cut is - contrary to that one - perpendicular to what is called the hole.

Fig. III-2

But it is quite clear that if things are completed, namely, that this holds together, namely, that something happens here like a junction the circular cut leaves the Borromean knot intact and it is indeed the same cut which is rediscovered there, the same cut as results from what I called the longitudinal cut.

The cut is nothing other than what eliminates the Borromean knot entirely. It is by this very fact something that is repairable provided one sees that the torus that is involved is stuck together again if one deals with it properly in a reversed way.

Namely, that what is seen ... provided one cuts perpendicular to the hole ... what is seen is that the torus at the very moment preserves the Borromean knot.

It is enough for the cut to have some of the characteristics of the cut that I have called perpendicular to the hole in order for it to preserve the knot.

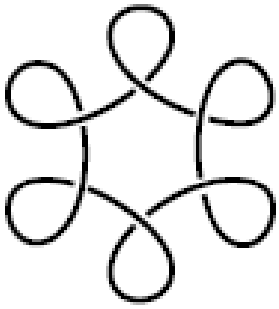


Fig. III-3

Suppose that the longitudinal cut that we have made here shares in the characteristics of the longitudinal cut. Namely, that something is established of this nature here. In other words that it turns around the torus. I mean the cut.

Here is what we obtain: the reversal of the torus wards off the effects of its cut.

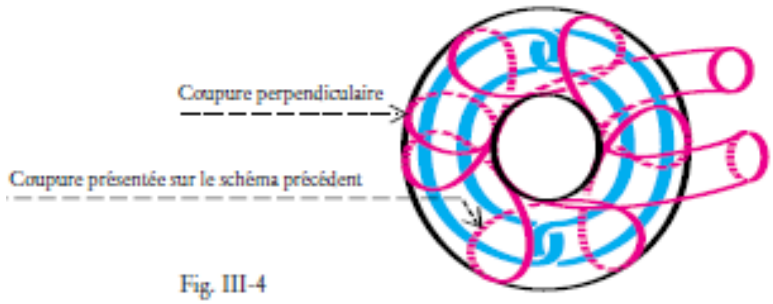


Fig. III-4

The phantasy of the cut is enough to preserve the Borromean knot. For there to be a phantasy there must be a torus.

The identification of the phantasy to the torus is what justifies, as I might say, my imagining of the reversal of the torus.

So that here I am going to draw what is involved in what I called earlier a ‘six-fold torus'.

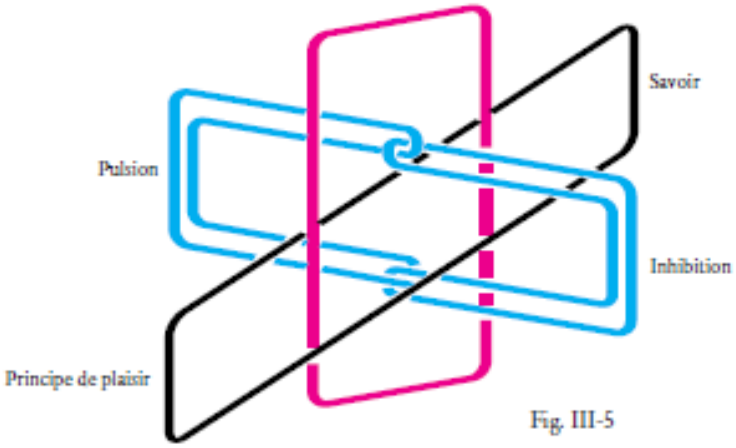


Fig. III-5

And imagine what can be deduced from the depiction I have just made. There is a couple: drive – inhibition.

Let us take for example this one, drive – inhibition.

In the same way for the others let us call the following couple: pleasure principle – unconscious.

We can sufficiently see from this fact that the unconscious is this knowledge which guides us and that I earlier called pleasure principle.

The interesting thing to notice is that the third, I mean that which, because of this is organised in this way – I beg your pardon these knots are always difficult to make – here you have a better way, one that I had to correct there, of representing what I called pleasure principle – unconscious, drive – inhibition, and it is here that the third is presented as the coupling of the Real and phantasy.

This puts a stress on the fact that there is no reality. Reality is constituted only by phantasy, and phantasy is moreover what gives material for poetry.

This means that our whole development of science is something which, we do not know along what path, which emerges, irrupts due to what is called the sexual relationship.

Why is there something that functions as science? It is poetry. The apperception of this world of mathematics convinced me of this. There is something that manages to get through by what is reduced in the human species to the sexual relationship. What is reduced to the sexual relationship in the human species is something that makes it very difficult for us to grasp what is involved for animals. Do animals know how to count? We don't have any proof of it, I mean tangible proofs.

As regards to what is involved in science, everything starts from numeration.

In any case what is involved in this practice is moreover poetry. I am speaking of the practice that is called analysis. Why did someone called Freud succeed in his poetry, I mean, in establishing a psychoanalytic art? This is what remains altogether doubtful.

Why do we remember certain men who have succeeded? It does not mean that what they have succeeded in doing is valid.

What I am doing here as was remarked by someone of common sense, Althusser, is philosophy. But philosophy is the only thing we know how to do.

My Borromean knots, are also philosophy. They are philosophy that I handled as best I could by following the current, as I might say, the current of what results from Freud's philosophy. The fact of having stated the word unconscious is nothing more than poetry with which one makes history. But history - as I sometimes say - history is hysteria.

Freud, if he sensed clearly what is involved in the hysteric, if he fabulated around the hysteric, this is obviously only a fact of history.

Marx also was a poet, a poet who has the advantage in having succeeded in making a political movement. Moreover if he qualified his materialism as historical, it was certainly not unintentionally. Historical materialism is what is incarnated in history. Everything that I have just stated concerning the stuff which constitutes thought is nothing other than to say things exactly in the same way.

What one could say about Freud, is that he situated things in such a way that it was successful. But it is not sure. What is at stake is a composition, the composition such that I was led to render all of that coherent, to give the note of a certain relationship between the drive and inhibition, and then the pleasure principle and knowledge – unconscious knowledge, of course.

Pay careful attention that it is here, and that here is the third element, I mean that this is where phantasy is and where there is found what I designated as the Real.

I really did not find anything better than this way of imaging metaphorically what is involved in Freud's doctrine.

What seems to me to be materially unwarranted, is to have imputed so much material to sex. I know well that there are hormones, that hormones form part of science; but it is quite clear that this is the densest point and that here there is no transparency.

Good, I will stop there.

Seminar 4: Wednesday 10 January 1978

I was a little jaded because Saturday and Sunday there was a congress of my School. Since people preferred that, anyway Simatos preferred that there should only be members of this School, we went a bit far and I only got back with difficulty.

Someone – someone who was speaking to me - was expecting from it, given that the subject was nothing other than what I call the *Passe*, someone was expecting from it some light about the end of analysis.

One can define the end of analysis. The end of analysis is when one has gone round in circles twice, namely, rediscovered that of which one is prisoner. Rebeginning twice the turning round in circles, it is not certain that it is necessary. It is enough for one to see what one is captive of.

And the unconscious, it that: it is the face of the Real – perhaps you have an idea, after having heard me numerous times, perhaps you have an idea of what I call the Real – it is the face of the Real of that in which one is entangled.

There is someone called Soury who is kind enough to pay attention to what I stated about the rings of string and he questioned me, he questioned me about what that means, what was meant by the fact that I was able to write like that the rings of string.

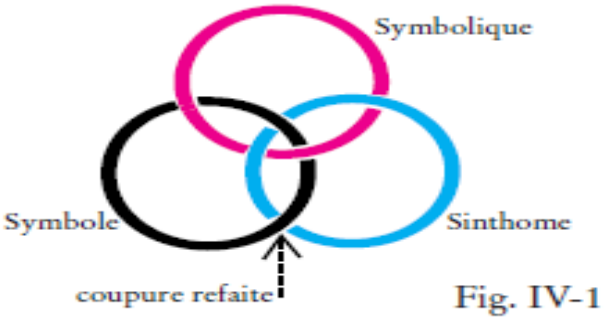


Fig. IV-1

For this is how he writes them.

Analysis does not consist in being freed from one's *sinthomes*, since that is how I write symptom. Analysis consists in knowing why one is entangled by them.

This happens because there is the Symbolic.

The Symbolic is language; one learns to speak and that leaves traces. That leaves traces which are nothing other than the symptom and analysis consists – there is all the same progress in analysis – analysis consists in realising why one has these symptoms, so that analysis is linked to knowledge.

It is very suspect. It is very suspect and it lends itself to every kind of suggestion. That's the word that must be avoided

That's what the unconscious is, the fact that one has learned to speak and by that very fact one has allowed all kinds of things be suggested to one by language.

What I am trying to do is to elucidate something about what analysis really is. About what analysis truly is, one cannot know unless you ask me for an analysis. That is how I conceive of analysis.

This indeed is why I traced out once and for all these rings of string that, of course, I ceaselessly make mistakes in their depiction.

I mean that here (IV-1), I had to make a cut here and that this cut, I had nevertheless prepared, it nevertheless remains that I have to remake it.

Counting is difficult and I am going to tell you why: the fact is that it is impossible to count without two kinds of figures. Everything starts from zero. Everything starts from zero and everyone knows that zero is altogether capital.

Two lines of numbers

The result, is that here it is (O) is 1. This is how this begins at 11, how the 1 here (*), and the 1 there (O) are distinguished. And of course, it is not the same type of figures which function to mark here the 1 which permits 16.

Mathematics makes reference to the written, to the written as such; and mathematical thought is the fact that one can represent for oneself a writing.

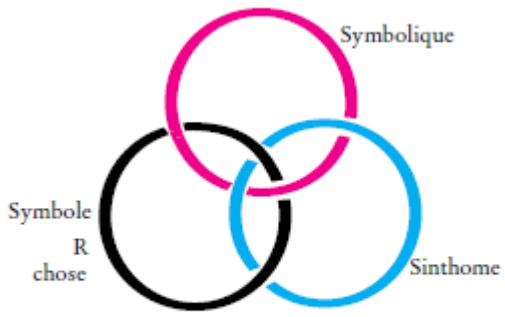


Fig. IV-2

What is the link, if not the locus, of the representation of writing? We have the suggestion that the Real does not cease to be written. It is indeed by writing that forcing is produced. The Real is all the same written; for, it must be said, how would the Real appear if it were not written?

That indeed is how the Real is there. It is there through my way of writing.

Writing is an artifice. Therefore writing only appearsby an artifice, an artifice linked to the fact that there is speech and even saying. And saying concerns what is called the truth. This indeed is why I say that one cannot say the truth.

In this business of the passe¸I am lead, since, as they say, it is I who produced the passé, produced it in my School in the spirit of knowing what might well arise in what is called the mind (*l'esprit*) of an analysand to be constituted, I mean receive people who come to him to ask for an analysis.

That might perhaps be done in writing, I suggested it to someone who moreover was in complete agreement. To proceed by way of writing has a chance of getting a little bit closer to the Real than what is currently done, since I tried to suggest to my School that the passeurs could be named by a few people.

The trouble is that these writings will not be read. Why so? Because people have read too much about writing. So what chance is there that they would be read. They lie there on paper; but paper is also toilet paper.

The Chinese realised that there was toilet paper, the paper with which you wipe your bottom. It is impossible therefore to know who reads. There is surely writing in the unconscious, if only because the dream, the principle of the unconscious – that's what Freud said – the lapses and even the witticism are defined by the readable. One has a dream, one does not know why, and then subsequently it is read; the same with a slip, and everything that Freud says about the witticism is quite notorious as being linked to this economy which is writing, economy as compared to speech. The readable - that is what knowledge consists of. And in short, it is limited. What I say about the transference is that I timidly advanced it as being the subject – a subject always supposed, there is not subject, of

course, there is only the supposed – the supposed-to-know. What could that mean? The supposed-to-know-how-to-read-otherwise (*autrement*). The otherwise in question, is indeed what I write, for my part also in the following way: S(Ø). Otherwise, what does that mean? Here it is a matter of the O, namely, the big Other. Does otherwise mean: otherwise than this spluttering called psychology? No, otherwise designates a lack. It is a matter of lacking differently (*autrement*). Differently on this particular occasion, does that mean, differently to anyone else? It is indeed in this way that Freud's speculations are truly problematic. To trace the paths, leave the traces of what one formulates, this is what teaching is, and teaching is also nothing other than going around in circles. It has been stated, like that, we do not know why, there was someone called Cantor who constructed set theory. He distinguished two types of set: the set which is innumerable and – he points out – within writing, namely, that it is within writing that he makes the series of whole numbers, for example, equivalent to the series of even numbers. A set is only numerable starting from the moment when it is demonstrated that it is bi-univocal. But precisely in analysis, it is equivocation that dominates. I mean that it is from the moment that there is a confusion between this Real that we are indeed led to call 'thing', there is an equivocation between this Real and language, since language, of course, is imperfect – this indeed is what is demonstrated about everything which is said to be most certain – language is imperfect. There is someone called Paul Henri who published that in Klincksieck. He calls that, language, 'a bad tool'. One could not say it better. Language is a bad tool and this indeed is why we have no idea of the Real. It is on this that I would like to conclude.

The unconscious, is what I have said, that does not prevent us counting, counting in two ways which are only for their part ways of writing. What is most real, is writing and writing is confused.

There you are, I will stay with that for today, since, as you see, I have reason to be tired.

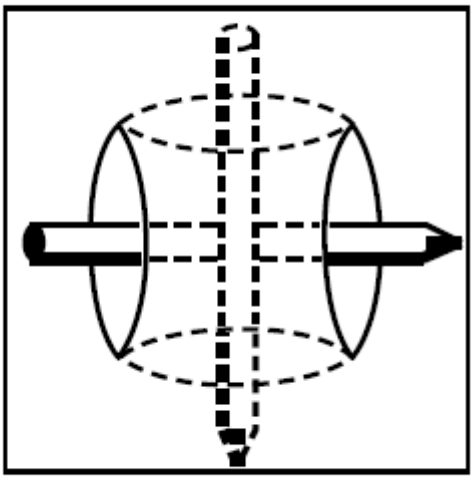
Seminar 5: Wednesday 17 January 1978

There is nothing more asymmetrical than a torus. That leaps to the eyes.

I have just seen Soury – where is he? – I have just seen Soury and I shared this idea with him. He right away illustrated to me what was at stake by marking for me, through a little construction of his own, the cogency of what I cannot say: I was stating. Because in truth...

There you are. So then I am going to show you this. I am going to have it passed around. It is a construction that Soury was good enough to make for me. You are going to see that here there is a passage, that there is, in what is constructed there, a double thickness and that, to mark the whole of the paper, here there is a double thickness, but here there is only one, I mean: at this level here which is continued into the whole of the sheet. Therefore behind what here constitutes a double thickness, there is only a third. There you are. I am going to pass around this piece of paper.

Fig. V-1



There is a passage at the back. We introduce a pencil which goes underneath the pencil introduced in the front. [See the details of this diagram at the end of the session]

I recommend you to take advantage of the double thickness so that you can see that it is a torus. In other words that this, (V-1), is constructed more or less like that, (V-2), namely, that one passes a finger through this, but that here is what one can call the outside of the torus which continues with the rest of the outside - I am giving it to you - this is what I call asymmetry. There you are.

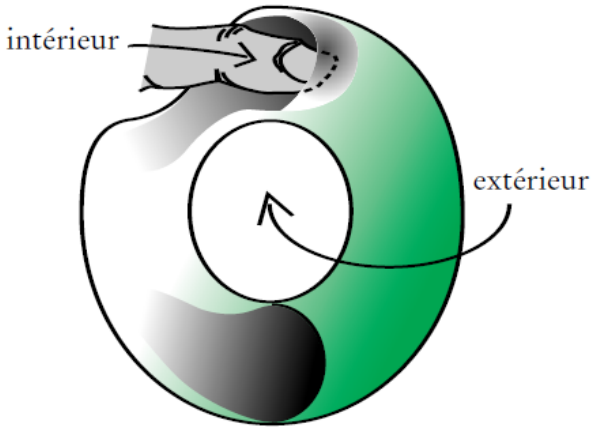


Fig. V-2

This is also what I call 'what makes a hole', for a torus makes a hole.

I succeeded – not right away, after a certain number of approximations – I succeeded in giving you the idea of the hole. A torus is considered, quite rightly, to be holed. There is more than one hole in what is called man; he is even a veritable sieve. Where do I enter?

This question mark has its response for every '*tétrume un'* [perhaps a pun on *être humain*, human being]. I do not see why I would not write it like that on this particular occasion. This question mark, as I have just said has its response for every *tétrume u*'. I would write that: *l'amort* [death\love] what is bizarre in the – because why not also write like that: *les*

trumains [a play on *trumeau*: a dodderer]; there, I am putting them in the plural – what is bizarre in *les trumains*, why not write it like that also, since moreover using this orthography in French is justified by the fact that *les*, the sign of the plural, is well worthy of being substituted for being which, as they say, is only a copula, namely, is not worth much. Is not worth much by the usage that one *amphest amphigourique*! Yeah!

What is curious, is that man is very keen on being mortal. He hoards death! While all living beings are destined to die, he only wants it to be so for him. Hence the activity deployed around burials. There were even people formerly who took care to perpetuate what I write as *laïque hors la vie*. They took care to perpetuate that by making mummies of them. It must be said that *les néz-y-après* (the later-born?)) afterwards put a proper order on it. Mummies were seriously shaken. I got the information from my daughter, - because, in my French-Greek dictionary, there were no mummies – I got the information from my daughter who was good enough to go out of her way, to wear herself out to find a French-Greek dictionary. I was informed by my daughter and I learned that this mummy, is called like this in Greek: *to skeleton soma*, the skeleton body. Mummies are precisely designed to preserve the appearance of the body *to teretichomenon soma*. This is also what she brought me. I mean that the *to teretichomenon soma* means 'to prevent rotting'. No doubt the Egyptians liked fresh fish and it is obvious that before carrying out a mummification on the dead person – this at least is the remark that was made to me on this occasion – mummies are not especially attractive. Hence the lack of ceremony with which people manipulated all these eminently breakable mummies. This is what those born afterwards devoted themselves to.

That is called in Quetchua, namely, around Cuzco – Cuzco is written like: CUZCO – sometimes people speak Quetchua there. People speak Quetchua there thanks to the fact that the Spaniards, since everyone speaks Spanish, the Spanish are careful to preserve this tongue. Those that I am calling the *les néz-y-après*, are called in Quetchua, 'those who are formed in the belly of the mother', and that is written, since there is a Quetchua writing. This is called: *Runayay*. This is what I learned with, good God what I would call a velar which teaches me to produce Quetchua, namely, to

act as if it were my natural tongue, to give birth to it. It should be said that this velar had the opportunity to explain to me that in Quetchua this is produced by the palate. There is a ferocious amount of aspiration in it.

A frightful person by the name of Freud knocked into shape some stammerings that he qualified as analysis, we don't know why, to state the only truth that counts: there is no sexual relationship among human beings (*les trumains*). It is I who concluded that, after had an experience of analysis, I succeeded in formulating that. I succeeded in formulating that, not without difficulty, and this is what led me to notice that I had to make some Borromean knots.

Suppose that we follow the rule, namely, that, as I say, above the one which is above and below the one which is below.

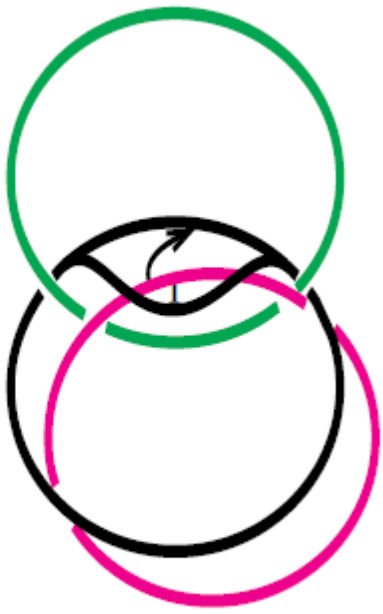


Fig. V-3

Well then, it is manifest that as you see it does not work. Namely, that it is enough for you to lift that (1) [V-3] to notice that there is a one above, one in the middle and one below and that as a consequence the three

are freed from one another. This indeed is why this must be asymmetrical. It must be like this to reproduce the way in which I drew it the first time; here it must be below, here above, here below and here above [V-4].

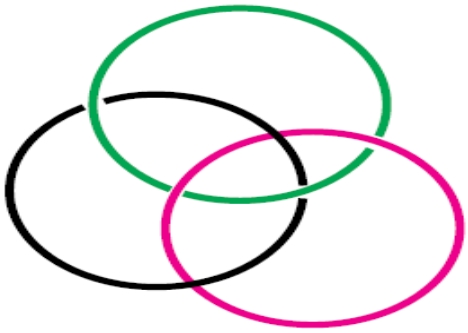
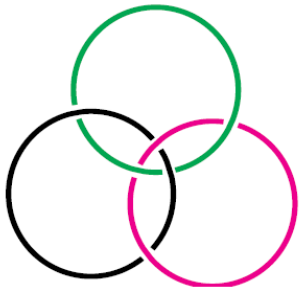


Fig. V-4

It is thanks to this that there is a Borromean knot. In other words, it must alternate [V-5]. It can just as well alternate in the opposite direction [V-6], in which there consists very precisely the asymmetry.

Fig. V-5



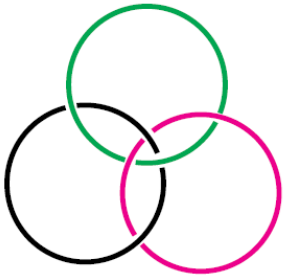


Fig. V-6

I tried to see what was involved in the fact that...it is just as well not to make the black line cross the red line more than twice. One could moreover make them cross one another more than twice. One could make them cross four times, that would change nothing in the veritable nature of the Borromean knot.

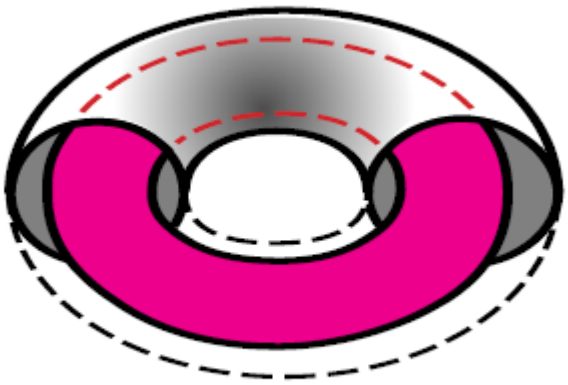


Fig. V-7

There is a sequence to all of that. Soury, who is responsible for some of it, has developed some considerations about the torus. A torus is something like that. Suppose that we make a torus be held inside another one [V-7]. That's where the business of inside and outside begin. Because let us turn over the one which is inside in that way. I mean: let us not only turn over this one, but at the same time let us turn over that one [V-8 & 9]. There results something which is going to make what was first of all inside come to the outside and, since the torus in question has a hole, what is outside of it is going to remain outside of it and is going to end up with this form that I called the rod-like shape, where the other torus is going to come inside.

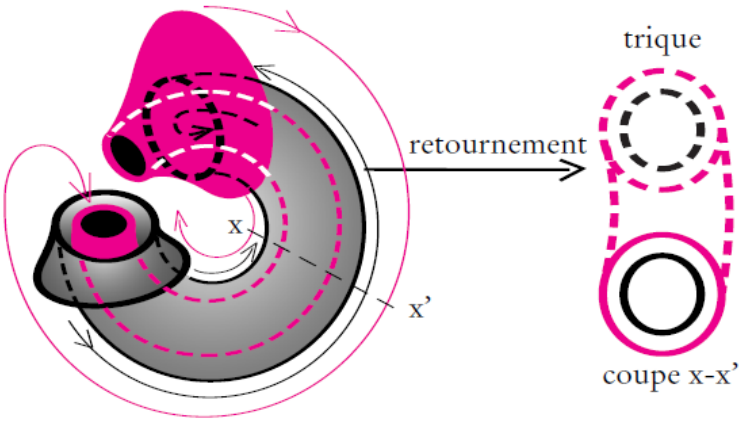


Fig. V-8

Fig. V-9

How should we consider these things? It is very difficult to speak here about inside when there is a hole inside a torus. It is completely different to what is involved in the sphere.

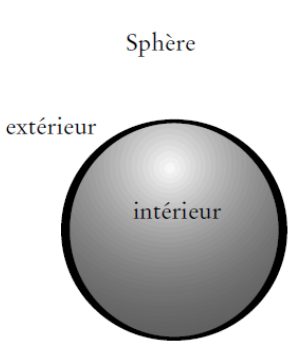


Fig. V-10

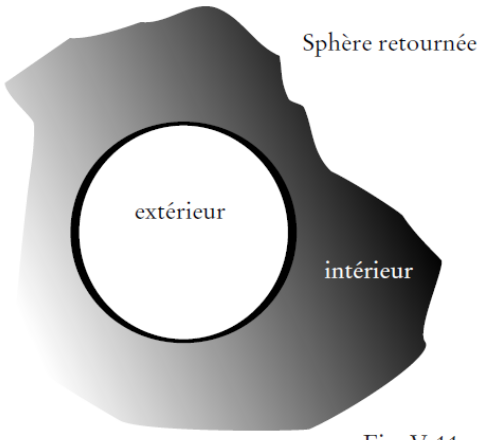
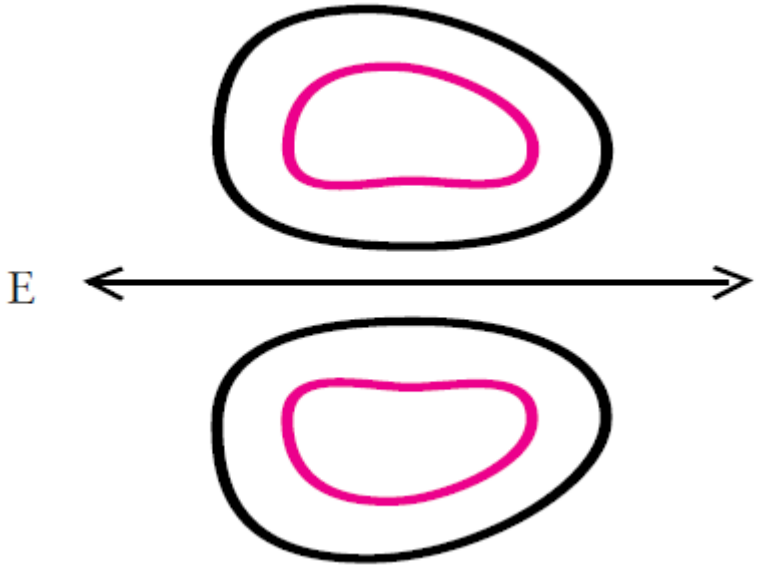


Fig. V-11

A sphere, if you will allow me to draw it now, is something like that. The sphere also can be turned over. One can define the surface as aiming at the inside. There will be another surface which aims at the outside. If we turn it over, the inside will be outside, by definition, the sphere. The outside will be inside; but in the case of the torus, because of the existence of the hole [V-12], of the inside hole, we will have what is called a great disturbance. The hole on the inside, is what is going to disturb everything that is involved in the torus, namely, that there will be in this rod, there will be a necessity that what is inside becomes what? Precisely the hole. And we will have an equivocation concerning this hole which from then on becomes an outside.

Fig V-12



In this rod there will be a necessity that what is inside becomes the hole.

The fact that the living being is defined almost like a rod, namely, that it has a mouth, indeed an anus, and also something which furnishes the inside of his body, is something which has consequences that are not unimportant. It seems to me that this is not unrelated to the existence of the zero and the one. That the zero is essentially this hole, is something that is worth exploring.

I would really like here if Soury took the floor. I mean by that, if he were willing to speak about the one and the zero it would be very agreeable to me. That has the closest relationship with what we are articulating concerning the body. The zero is a hole and perhaps he could tell us more about it, I am speaking about the zero and of the one as consistency.

Are you coming? I am going to give you that. Off we go. In this rod there is a necessity that what is inside becomes the hole.

Soury: There you are. On the zero and the one of arithmetic, there is something which is analogous to the zero and to the one of arithmetic in the chains. Therefore, what makes the zero and the one exist, are preoccupations about systematisation.

In the case of numbers, good, it is operations on numbers that make the zero and the one hold up. For example, with respect to the operation of summation, with respect to addition, the operation of summation, the zero appears as a neutral element – these are terms which are in place – the zero appears as a neutral element and the one appears as a generating element, namely, that by summation, one can obtain all the numbers starting from the one, one cannot obtain any number starting from zero. Therefore what locates the zero and the one, is the role that they play with respect to addition.

Good then, in the chains, there are things analogous to that. But then it is indeed a matter of a systematic point of view about the chains, anyway a point of view on all the chains, all the Borromean chains; and the chains as forming a system.

X: What does systematising mean? [*Laughter]*

Soury: Good already I do not believe in the possibility of presenting these things, namely, that these things depend on writing and I think it's scarcely possible to talk about these sorts of things. So then the possibility of answering..., in short, for those things, I do not think that speech can take these sorts of things in charge. Anyway systematisation depends on ways of writing (*écritures*) and precisely speech cannot practically take charge of anything that is systematic. Anyway what would be systematic and what would not be, I don't know, but it is rather what ways of writing can carry and speech, is not the same thing. And any speech which wants to give an account of writing appears to me to be acrobatic, risky.

So then systematisation, what is typical of systematisation, is the number: it is numbers and arithmetic. Namely, numbers, all we know are operations on numbers, namely, that we only know systems of numbers, we do not know numbers, we only know the system of numbers. Good, there is a bit of systematisation in the chains, anyway there is something in the chains which behaves like summation, like addition. It is a certain operation of interlacing, which means that one chain and one chain gives another chain, just as one and one number gives another number. Anyway, I will

not try to define this operation of enlacing I am not going to try to present it, to introduce it.

But then with respect to this operation of enlacing, the Borromean chain, the threefold chain appears as the generating case, the exemplary case, the case which engenders all the rest, namely, that the exemplarity of the threefold chain can be demonstrated. Relying on an article by Milnor which is called *Links groups* in English, the exemplarity of the Borromean chain can be demonstrated, namely, that any Borromean chain can be obtained starting from the threefold chain. In particular the chains of any number of elements whatsoever can be obtained starting from the threefold chain. Anyway, what ensures that the threefold chain is something which engenders everything. It is something which is generative and which is comparable to the one of arithmetic. In the same sense that the one is generative in the numbers system, the threefold Borromean chain is generative. All the Borromean chains can be obtained starting from the threefold chain by certain operations. Therefore the threefold chain plays the same role as the one.

So then there is something which plays the same role as the zero, it is the twofold chain which is a degenerated case, anyway which is a degenerated case of the Borromean chain. So then I'm going to draw the twofold chain. I am going to draw it because it has been less often drawn than the twofold chain.

Twofold chain, the chain of two interlaced circles: **Fig V-13**
The chain two interlaced tori: **Fig V-14**

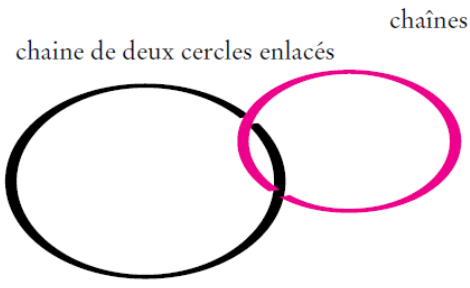


Fig. V-13

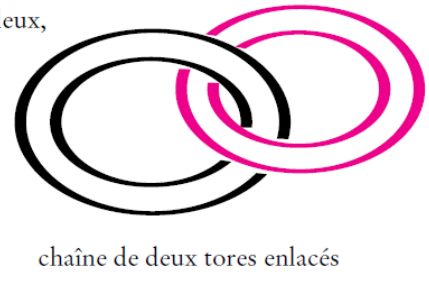


Fig V-14

This is a plane presentation of the twofold chain. It is two circles caught up in one another, you can do it with your fingers.

The twofold chain is a degenerate case. In the preoccupations of systematisation, degenerate cases take on an importance. They are quite analogous to the zero. The zero is a degenerate number, but it is from the moment on that there are preoccupations of systematisation on numbers that the zero takes on its importance, namely, that...anyway that does not allow us to respond to this business of systematisation, it is only a criterion, anyway quite simply a sign of what is systematic or non-systematic. It is according to whether the degenerate cases are excluded or not excluded. So then I could respond that systematisation is when one includes degenerate cases and non-systematisations when one excludes degenerate cases.

Anyway the zero is a degenerate case which takes on importance. While for the chains, the operations of interlacing on the chains or the operation of interlacing on Borromean chains, what plays the role of zero, is the twofold chain, namely, the twofold chain does not generate anything, it only generates itself; the twofold chain function like a zero, namely, zero + zero = zero; interlacing the twofold chain with itself still gives a twofold chain. From the point of view of interlacing, the fourfold chain is obtained starting from two threefold chains, namely, 3 and 3 make 4. The fourfold chain is obtained by interlacing of two threefold chains. Anyway it's analogous to arithmetic; but by locating oneself with respect to the number of circles, that gives 3 and 3 make 4, like that, that could be described as 2 and 2 make 2. Anyway the fact that 2 is neutral, is a degenerate neutral – the terms which exist on this subject, namely, generative element, neutral element anyway terms in mathematical culture.

The one is a generative element, the zero is a neutral element. I reinforce these terms a little by saying, instead of saying generative and neutral, exemplary and degenerate, namely, that the one would be an exemplary number and the zero a degenerative number. The threefold chain

is the exemplary Borromean chain and the twofold chain the degenerate Borromean chain.

One can see degenerate in different ways. It is also that, the fact that this chain is degenerate one can see in different ways; in different ways, it is too much. I have several reasons for qualifying the twofold chain as degenerate and several reasons is too much. One reason, is that the neutral element for interlacing, is that interlaced with itself, it only gives itself. It does not generate anything other than itself; it is degenerate in the sense in the sense that to be a neutral element with respect to the operation of interlacing. That's one meaning. A second meaning of being degenerate, is when the Borromean property degenerates to two; the Borromean property, the fact that each element is indispensible, that, when one removes an element, the others no longer hold together, that one element makes all the others hold together; each one is indispensible, they all hold together, but not without each one. The Borromean property, means something starting from 3, but with 2 everything is Borromean. At 2 everything is Borromean because holding together, anyway holding together in 2's, anyway 'each one is indispensible' at 2 is automatically realised, while starting from 3, the 'each one is indispensible' is not automatically realised, namely, that it is a property which can be either true or false, it is yes or no: yes or no the chain is Borromean. In 2's, all the chains are Borromean, therefore the Borromean property degenerates in 2's. So then a third reason why this chain is degenerate, is that in this chain a circle is the reversal of another circle. Another way of saying it is that these two circles have the same neighbourhood, anyway this is the business of surface. The fact is, that if these two circles are replaced by their two neighbourhood surfaces, it is the same surface, these two circles are only the redoubling of one another, but it is a pure redoubling, it is a pure complementing, but that can be seen on the surfaces. That can be seen on the surface chains, and not on the circular chains. That can be seen on the surface chains which are associated with

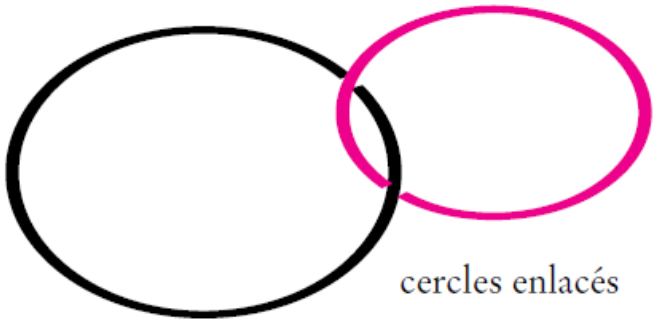


Fig. V-15

this chain of circles, namely, if this chain of two circles [V-15] corresponds to a chain of two tori, this chain of two tori corresponds to the redoubling of the torus.

Now that is not obvious; it is not obvious that two interlaced tori is the same thing as two tori which are the redoubling of one another just as the tyre and the tube. The tyre and the tube, is the redoubling of one torus into two tori, two tori which are only two versions of the same torus it is a

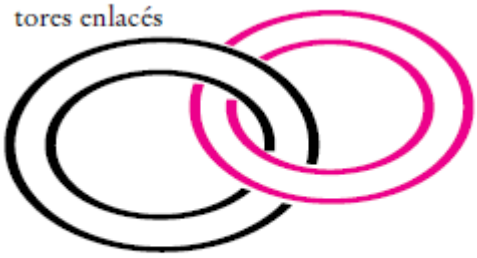


Fig. V-16

redoubled torus. That two tori being the redoubling of the torus, is the same thing as two interlaced tori is not obvious. It is the reversal which will say that and the reversal in not obvious. Which means that the two circles [V-15], is the same thing as these two interlaced tori [V-16]; these two

interlaced tori is the same thing as a redoubled torus [V-17] and that, that is a reason for saying that it is a degenerate chain.

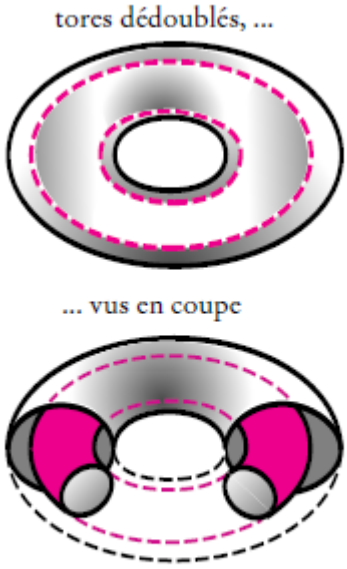


Fig. V-17

A degenerate chain because that only means, these two, the two of these two circles, is not the division of space in two halves. There you are, that is a criterion for saying that a chain is degenerate: it is that the elements of the chain only represent one division of space. These two circles here are valid for the division of space into two halves. It is in this sense that it is degenerate: it is that these two here, are only two halves of space. So then why two circles which only represent two halves of space, why is this degenerate? Well then because in the general case of chains, the several circles of chains only represent a division of space in several parts, but it happens that here these two circles only represent a division, a partition, a separation of space into two parts.

Lacan: I would like all the same to intervene to point out to you that if you reverse this circle there for example, the right-hand circle [V-15], you free at the same time the left hand circle. I mean that what you get, is what I call the rod [V-18], namely, that this rod is free from...and it is all the same very different from the torus inside the torus.

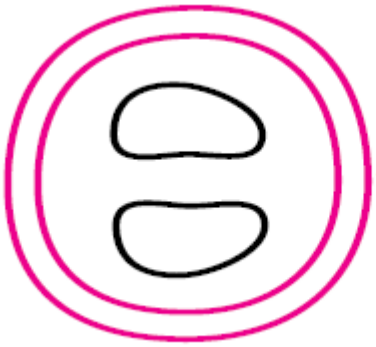


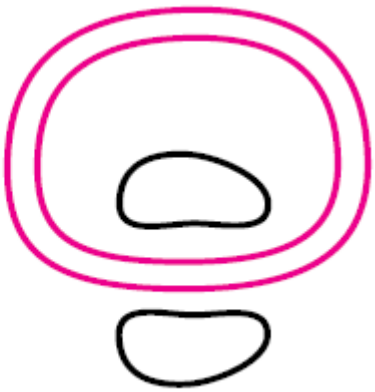
Fig. V-18

Soury: It is different, but it is...Look that one, in order to disimplicate one from the other of these two tori, this can only be done by a cut; it is not simply by reversal; by reversal one cannot one cannot disimplicate the two tori, which will be seen for example, if one makes the reversal with a little hole, anyway by holing. If one makes the reversal of a torus by holing, one cannot, one cannot disimplicate the two tori, they can't be disimplicated, unchained, unlaced. It is only when one makes a cut; but to make a cut is to do far more than a reversal. To make the cut, is to do more than holing, and holing is doing much more than reversal. Namely, that to make a cut is to do much more than a reversal. One can make a reversal by cut, but what is done by cutting is not representative of what is done by reversal. And that, would be precisely, it would be exactly an example of it: the fact is that by a cut one can disimplicate one can unchain the inside and the outside while by reversal, it is not a question of disimplicating the complementarity of the inside and of the outside. The fact is that what is done by a cut is much more than what is done by reversal, even though the cut may appear to be as a way to carry out the reversal. In that the cut, is more than holing and the holing is more than reversal. The reversal can be carried out by holing; the holing, no, I hesitate to say that holing could be done by a cut all the same. But in the cut there is a holing there is a holing implicit in the cut.

Lacan: In other words what you obtain by holing is in effect like that [V-19].

Soury: Yes, yes.

Fig. V-19



Lacan: There is something which is all the same not mastered concerning that which...it is all the same a result different to that [V-17]!.

Soury: No! No! It's the same thing.

Lacan: It is precisely on this 'it's the same thing' that I would like to obtain a response from you. This 'it's the same thing'...when we reverse the two tori [V-17], we obtain the following [V-20]. It is all the same something completely different to that [V-19] which is much more like this [V-16]. There is something there which does not appear to me to be mastered, because this [V-17] is exactly the same as that [V-7].

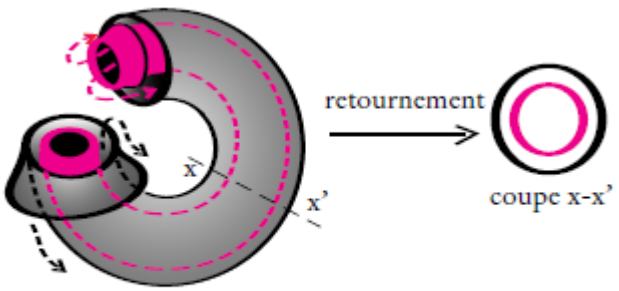


Fig. V-20

Soury: Good! So then we have two interlaced tori [V-19]. Here [V-20] it is two interlocking tori. That is two interlaced tori [V-14]. That [V-18] is two tori freed from one another, independent. So then what is the same thing, is that: two tori, two interlaced tori. And that is two interlaced tori.

Lacan: These [V-19] are not interlaced: one is inside the other.

Soury: Ah good! Good, I thought that it was that. Ah good! It is a matter of two tori, of the black and the red. While there, it is a matter of two interlocked tori, a black and a red interlocked here, here of two interlocked tori [V-20] and here of two interlaced tori [V-14].

Lacan: This is what is not mastered in the categories, in the categories of interlacing and of interlocking. I will try to find the solution which is properly speaking like interlacing. Interlacing is different ... (the end is inaudible).

Schema proposed by Pierre Soury

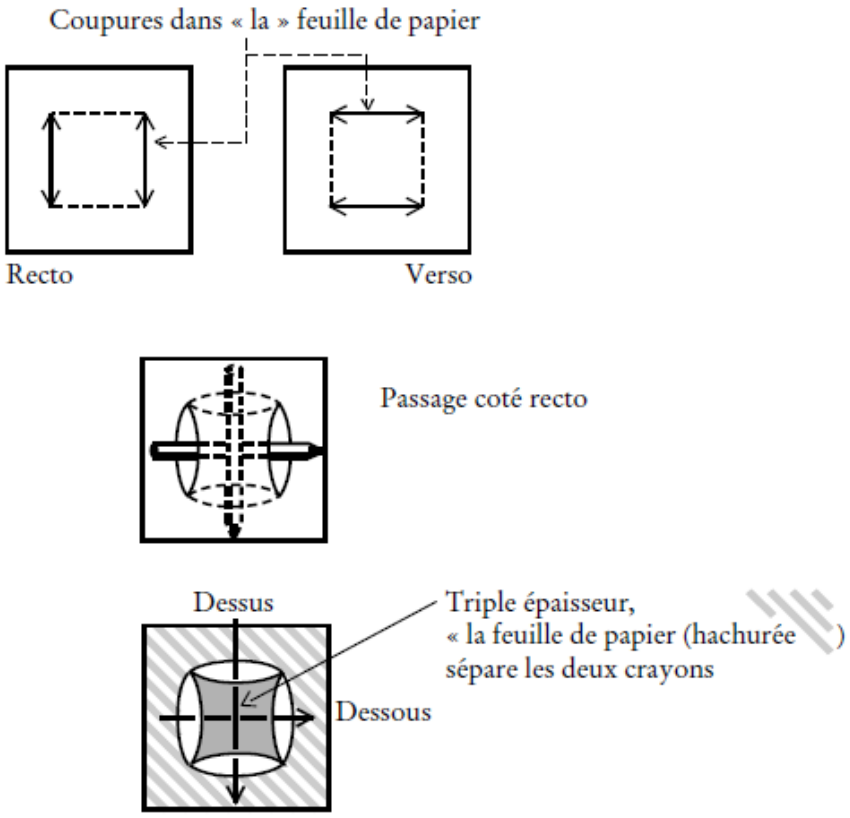


Figure V-1a, détail de la figure V-1, page 39.

Seminar 6: Wednesday 14 February 1978

I'm a little bit bothered because as it happens I do not have the intention of sparing you today.

There you are. There is something that I asked myself and that I made an effort to resolve. It is something which consists in the following: let us suppose something which is presented as follows, in other words which involves a double loop.

Fig. VI-1

Fig. VI-2

We are capable with this, namely, with this start to make a threefold Borromean knot. You can clearly see that here the two circles that are found to be something like that – they are circles seen in perspective – the two circles are knotted.

This is an idea that came to me; I wasn't sure that this would constitute a Borromean knot. But anyway I wagered and it proved to be right. Here you have to put in a bit of goodwill. Here is how this is pinned down. I put this to the test with Soury whom I am meeting for the moment. I am meeting him because he tells me sensible things on the subject of Borromean knot. Nevertheless I cannot say that he does not worry me. I mean that for this Borromean knot, he wanted at all costs to make a fourfold one. There was already a two, why make a four? This all the more so because the two does not hold up, while the four it appears will not hold up any the more, namely, that it would certainly become unknotted unless by making it circular. I already spoke to you about this circular Borromean chain. It presupposes something which, as they say, joins the beginning, at the start, and this something which can only be the ring which ends it at the same time as it inaugurates it [VI-3].

Fig. VI-3

Fig. VI-4

Fig. VI-5

This Borromean knot, the one that is outlined as I have just said [VI-2] is not circular. More exactly it is only circular when it is threefold. When it is threefold on condition of making go underneath the lower one, above the upper

one, we obtain a typical Borromean knot namely, this one here [VI-4]. This one [VI-1] and that one VI-6]. They are completed like that [VI-6].

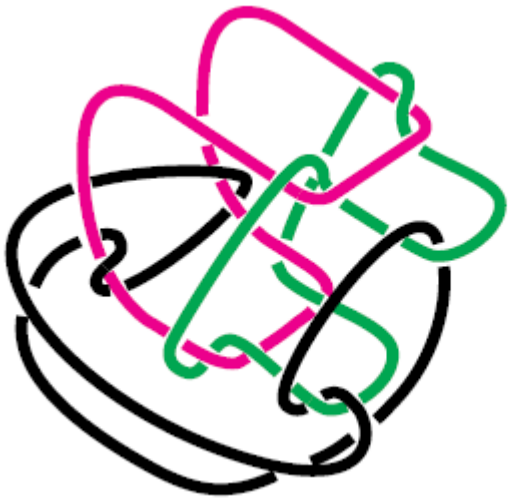


Fig. VI-6

It is quite clear that we still have not got used to this Borromean knot. Why the devil did I introduce it? I introduced it because it seemed to me that it had something to do with the clinic. I mean that the trio of Imaginary, Symbolic and Real seem to me to have a sense. In fact what is certain is something which is pinned down like this, namely, which is the third. Well then, that is knotted. This is not obvious on the figure which is there [VI-6]; but if one puts the thing that I added in black, put in front, I mean here, one would see that these two blacks can be identified. I am going to try to show it to you with the help of a supplementary drawing. It is really very complicated.

It is more or less that. It is more or less that on condition of completing it as follows. It is obvious that I am extremely awkward in these drawings [*Laughter*]. There is another way of doing it which is the one that I owe to Soury and which presents itself more or less like this. The way of doing it is the following [VI-7], which is completed in the following drawing [VI-8] which is obviously not very clear.

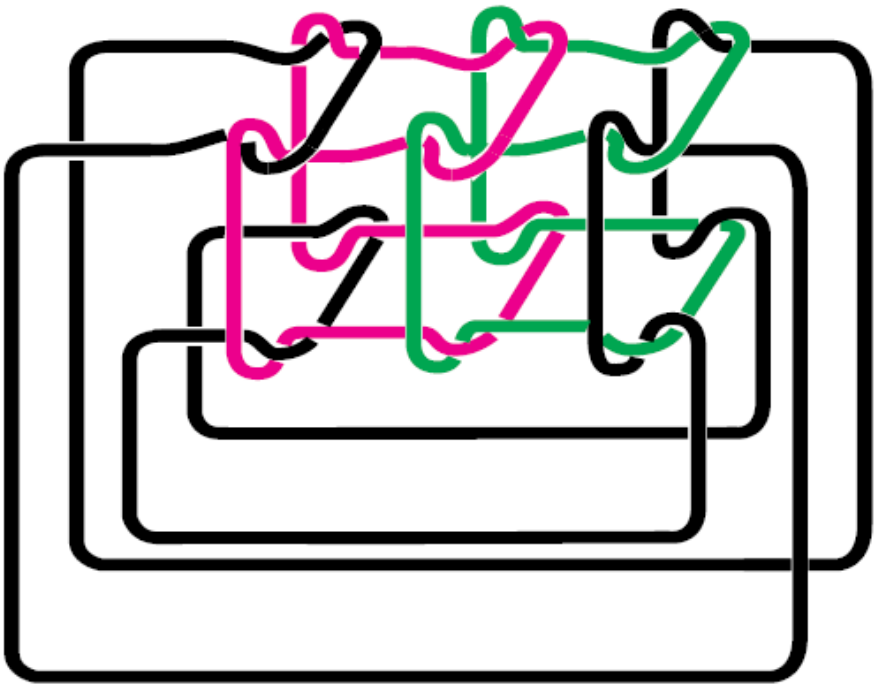


Fig. VI-7

You should realise that it is conceivable to put the third drawing here, I mean the black drawing. Perhaps, what incontestably is unknotted as it is presented here [VI-5], perhaps you will manage to reconstitute the following which is knotted. I mean that here there is a threefold Borromean knot which is constituted by putting end to end, I mean by the fact that it is closed. That it is closed exactly like what I wrongly showed you here, it is closed as in the case of a simple Borromean knot. There you are.

I apologise for not having better prepared this class. I will try the next time to distribute to you some drawings that are a little clearer.

There you are, I am leaving you with that for today.

Fig VI-8 [Presented on the board by Lacan with Fig VI-7]

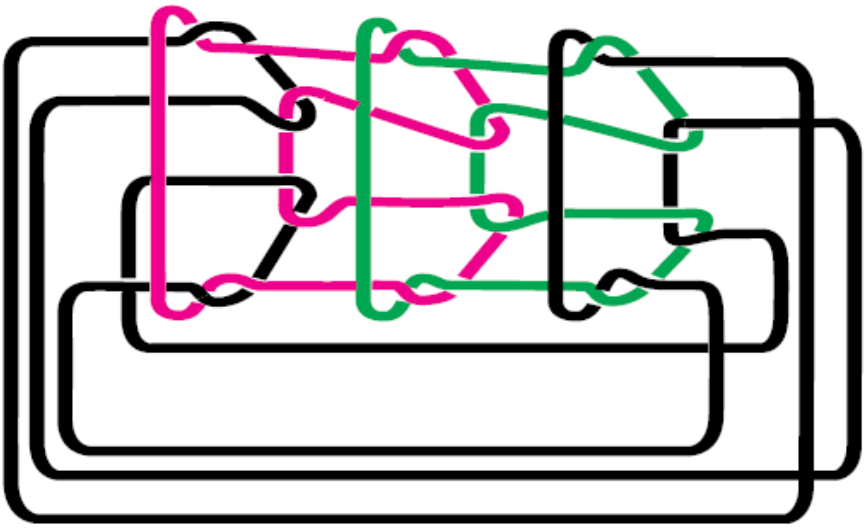


Fig. VI-8 (présentée au tableau, avec la figure VI-7, par Lacan)

Seminar 7: Wednesday 21 February 1978

There is someone called Montcenis, this at least is what I believe I read in the text that he sent me. He's not here? It's you? I thank you very much for having received this text which proves at the very least that there are people who were able to find their bearings, find their bearings in an appropriate way in the rings of string the last time [VI-7].

I repeat that what is at stake is something like this:

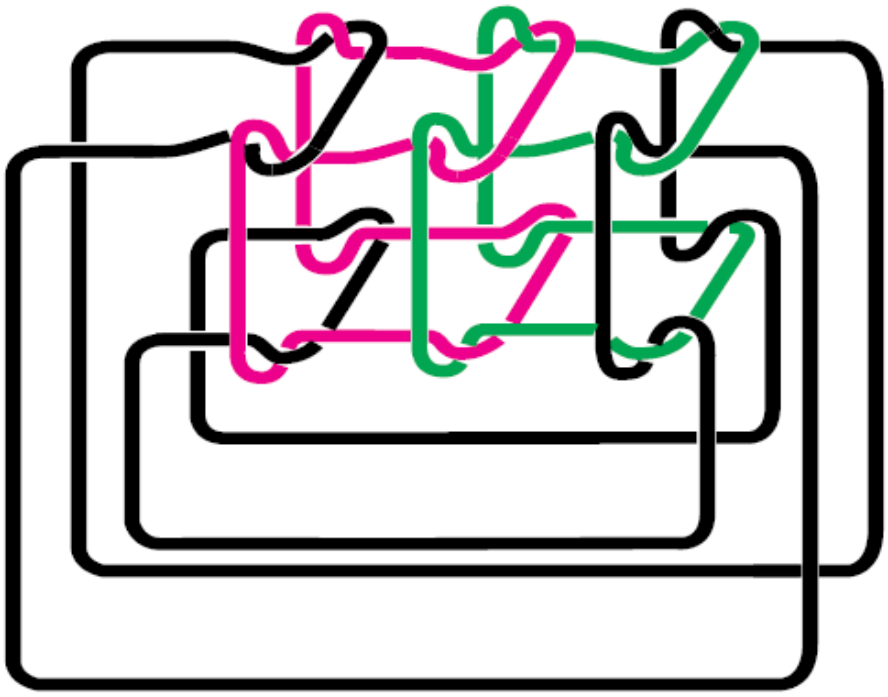


Fig. VII-1 [= Fig. VI-7]

Thanks to Soury, here present, I was able to obtain the transformation of this triple thing that I tried to reproduce there, this thing with three elements, thanks to Soury therefore, by a progressive transformation we have, we have something which has the same three elements. And if you consider what is on top, you can note – what is found at the top of the sheet that I only distributed to you so that you could reproduce it – what is found on top on condition of putting it, of considering it, what is found on top, you can see that this reproduces, reproduces the figure which is present here. It is simply sufficient for you to see that this passes under the three elements that compose the figure. And that this, from the moment that what you see on the right passes under what I called the three elements, this allows to descend what is involved in the black element and that one obtains this figure. What I am now asking Soury, is how the figure at the

bottom can be fiddled with in order that it may re-produce, that it may r-produce the figure on top. He tried to depict for me what is at stake, namely, to fold back what is depicted at the bottom under the form of what comes in front and which could therefore be folded according to a movement which could displace forward what seems to be free. I do not see that he has convinced me on this point. I believe that very exactly these two objects are different.

N. Sels: It's the same. It is turned over like a pancake.

Lacan: I cannot see that it is turned over like a pancake. I don't think that's the case. That which is – it has been communicated to me that the figure on top is the image of what one sees in a mirror placed behind the figure at the bottom. It is very precisely this question of the mirror which differentiates the two figures, for a figure placed in a mirror is inverted. And this indeed is why I object to Soury that it is what he calls or what he defines as couple. A figure placed in a mirror is not identical to the figure, to the original figure [VII-2].

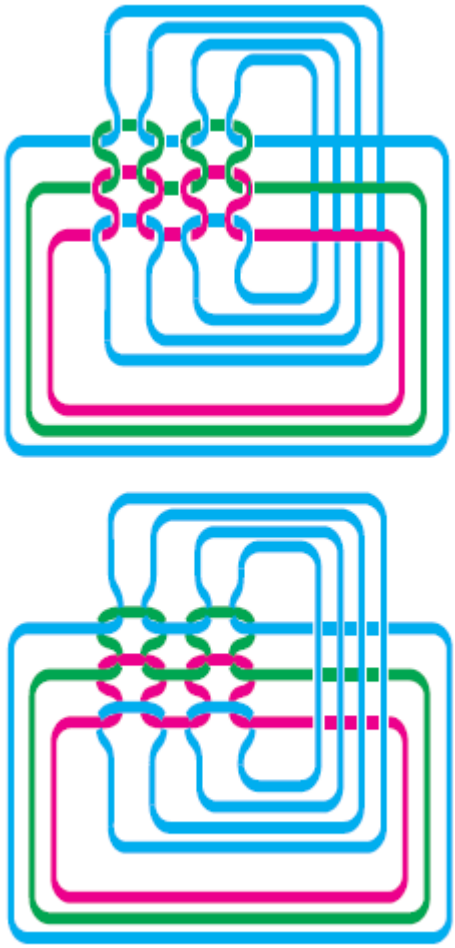


Fig. VII-2

Can Soury intervene here?

Soury: Yes. So then in this there are a lot of inversions, there are different sorts of inversions, there is the 'mirror-image' inversion, there is the inversion of 'reversing the paper as if it were something in wicker-work', there is the inversion 'exchanging the above and below', there is the inversion by which 'the front stitches become the stitches at the back' since it is a kind of stitching, there is the inversion according to which they are ranked – in this there are lines of rows and lines of stitches – wee have to know if the lines of rows pass under or over the lines of stitching, namely, that in the drawing on top the lines of stitches go underneath the lines of rows and, in the bottom drawing it is the contrary. So there is not just one inversion there is a whole quantity of them. So then there is a difficulty in this, which is that there is not just one inversion, there are multiple inversions. Good.

Lacan: And how many of these multiple inversions are there?

Soury: They have a tendency to proliferate (*Laughter*). So then here there is a principal inversion which is an object inversion; the principal inversion which means that there are two objects, they are the two toric stitchings.

Lacan: The two?

Soury: The two toric knittings. There are two toric knittings, they are two different chains. This is the principle inversion because they are two objects.

Good, there are inversions, another inversion is the inversion of plane and purl stitches, namely, the two faces of a jersey fabric. The two faces of a regular knitting – the regular knitting is the jersey knitting that has two faces – that is a very important inversion in the chain. Namely, that in it it is a question of a toric knitting, namely, a torus dressed in knitting, dressed in a regular knitting, in a jersey knitting and one of the faces of the torus is in plane stitches and the other face of the torus is in purl stitches. That's a second inversion.

In this there are still more inversions which are the inversions of the torus, namely, that one can change meridian and longitude or exchange inside and outside. I have already got to four inversions. There's the inversion of the reversal of the torus. That gives five inversions.

Now, on the plane presentation which is there, the principle inversion, is the inversion, it is not...anyway there is rather an apparent inversion: it is the inversion of above-below, namely, that these two drawings are deduced from one another by changing all the above-belows. I don't know how many inversions I have got to.

In this plane presentation, I would like to see there two inversions, namely, that there is the inversion of the knitting, namely, that in the central part of the plane stitches there come purl stitches; on this plane presentation, it is an inversion and another inversion, is that it is this business that the stitches go beneath or above the lines of rows. So then there are several inversions which are combined, already when there is simply one inversion, of the left-right type, one has every reason to take the left for the right and reciprocally.

Already simply a couple, a binary, an inversion, one is very likely to make mistakes, to choose one if one wants to choose the other. When there are several inversions, this is what I call binaries and liaisons of binaries. Finally in short where have I got to? To assure oneself, to have certainty about these things, in my opinion, it is not enough to succeed in imagining a distortion in

space, because by imagining a distortion in space one remains too dependent on these inversions of couples and inversions of binaries. That appears to me to be necessary with respect to the proliferation of binaries, the couples of inversions, to make an exhaustive checklist. So then the defect of this sheet, from this point of view, is that it is not an exhaustive checklist, namely, that in order to make an exhaustive checklist which would correspond to this sheet here, four figures would be necessary, namely, that there should be four possible combinations, on the one hand plane stitch, purl stitch and on the other hand to know whether these lines of stitches and of rows pass beneath or above one another. Four drawings would be necessary to have something exhaustive, namely, that, I repeat, with respect to these inversions, one cannot avoid getting lost; there is a need for something exhaustive. Therefore we need a second sheet which means that there would be four drawings. There would be four plane presentations and on these four plane presentations, that would set things up properly to discuss: Are these four presentations the presentation of how many objects?' For it is found that these four presentations are the presentation of two objects, namely, that there are changes of presentation which do not change the object. Now it happens that on this sheet there are two presentations of the same object. So then...

Lacan: It is, it seems to me, clear that if one divides this sheet what one sees on the bottom figure is exactly what is reproduced in a mirror by what is depicted on the image on top.

N. Sels: No, no.

Lacan: What?

N. Sels: If it was in a mirror, what is on the left in one would be on the right in the other. It is the bottom.

Lacan: There are two different objects, because one is the mirror-image of the other. What you hold, is that what happens, since there are four inversions according to what you're saying, is that this would be four inversions and there would be two objects, two distinct objects in these four inversions. Here I only see one inversion, I agree with the person who communicated with me, the two schema represent the same object. If we concretise it by three concrete strings, the schema on top is the schema on the bottom always as seen in a mirror put behind and vice versa. The object considered has only these two schemas and in

terms of this the scheme, the relationship of these two schemas is that of a mirror-image. Therefore it does not coincide. A mirror-image does not coincide with the original object, with the first figure. There are not two inversions, there is only one of them. There is only one but it introduces an essential difference namely, that the figure in the mirror is not identical to what is seen in the original figure. There is only a single inversion.

There you are! I am going to dismiss you now, because I believe, in material that is not especially difficult, that I have told you what is involved in these two images once inverted and which are only inverted once.

There you are, I am going to stay with that for today.

Seminar 8: Wednesday 14 March 1978

Someone put forward, in my regard, the imputation that I made my listeners do research or, or more exactly, that I managed to do so.

On this particular occasion it was Francois Wahl. This indeed is what I should manage to do. I stated formerly that 'I do not seek, I find', these were my words borrowed from someone who had in his own way a certain notoriety, namely, the painter Picasso.

Currently I do not find, I search. I search, and some people even want to accompany me in this research. In other words, I emptied, as one might say, these rings of string with which I formerly made Borromean chains. I transformed these Borromean chains not into tori, but into toric fabrics. In other words, it is tori that now carry my rings of string. It is not convenient because the torus, is a surface and there are two ways of treating a surface. A surface has features and these features which are bound to be on one of the faces of the surfaces, in other words one of the faces of the surface, these features, are actually what incarnate, support my rings of string, my rings of string which are always Borromean.

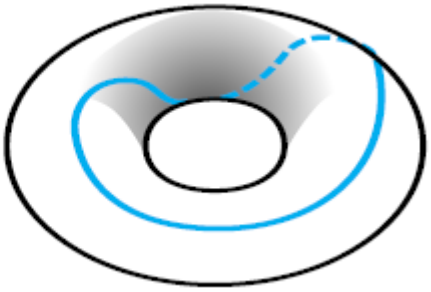


Fig. VIII-1

In fact the torus is at the centre of these features, it is fabricated more or less like that [VIII-1] and the features are on the surface. This implies that the torus itself is not Borromean.

That is the picture by Soury (see diagram VII-d atthe end of the session]. In it he distinguishes two elements, namely, the fact that a torus can be reversed, can be reversed in two ways. Either the torus is holed, holed from the outside. In that case as can be seen here, it is typical of being reversed, namely, that to draw things like that, it is reversed upside-down (*à l'envers*) and that the results are what one goes into, namely, what I would call the core (*l'âme*) of the torus becomes the axis. Namely, that the result of this reversal is something which is presented like this in cross section [VIII-3]. Namely, that the core of the torus

becomes its axis. In other words, this is closed here and what is involved in the torus becomes the axis, namely, that the core is formed from the redeployment of the hole.

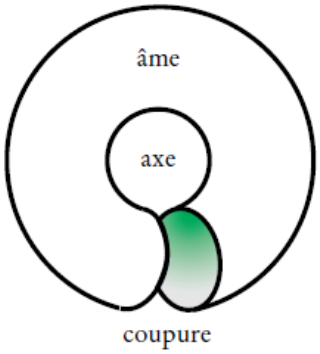


Fig. VIII-2

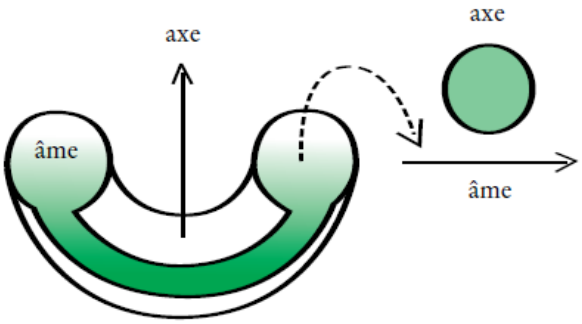


Fig. VIII-3

On the contrary, the reversal by cutting which has also the effect of transforming the torus by allowing – here is the cut – on allowing it to be reversed like this, also substitutes the core and the axis. Here the torus having what is called its core and here, because of the cut, what was first of all the core of the torus – here is the cut [VIII-2] – becoming its axis [VIII-3].

It seems to me, as far as I'm concerned, that the two cases are homogenous. Nevertheless the fact that Soury distinguishes this reversal by cutting from the reversal by hole impresses me. Namely, that I have great confidence in Soury.

(**Note**: The text up between the two '{' seems to be out of place)

{The two trefoils. There are knots. They are exchanged by two automorphisms. The plane presentations are exchanged by four automorphisms.

The two interlacings. These are orientated chains. They are exchanged by four automorphisms. The regular plane presentations are exchanged by eight automorphisms.

The two Borromean chains of two coloured straight lines and an orientated circle.

They are chains of two coloured straight lines by a and b and an orientated circle. They are exchanged by eight automorphisms. The plane presentations are exchanged by 16 automorphisms.

The two Borromean chains of three coloured orientated circles. They are chains of three circles coloured by a and b and c and orientated. They are exchanged by 96 automorphisms. The regular plane presentations are exchanged by 48 of automorphisms.

In other words what is called here crossroads of the strips – one says a crossroad of strips – is referred to a holed torus. Here also the reversal in question is a toric reversal, namely, half a hole.}

I am now going to let Soury take the floor and allow him to defend his position.

Naturally, there is something which impresses me, which is that the torus, if it is drawn like that [VIII-4],in perspective, the torus has the property of admitting the type of cut which is very exactly the following. If, starting from this cut, one reverses the torus, namely, that one makes the cut go behind the torus, the axis remains the axis and the core remains the core. There is a reversal of the torus, but without modifying what is found distributively the axis and the core – this is the axis. Is this sufficient to allow that the reversal by cutting works differently on the torus? It is indeed about this that I am posing the question. And on that I will give the floor to Soury who is willing, in my confusion, to take up the baton about what is at stake. Take your place here.

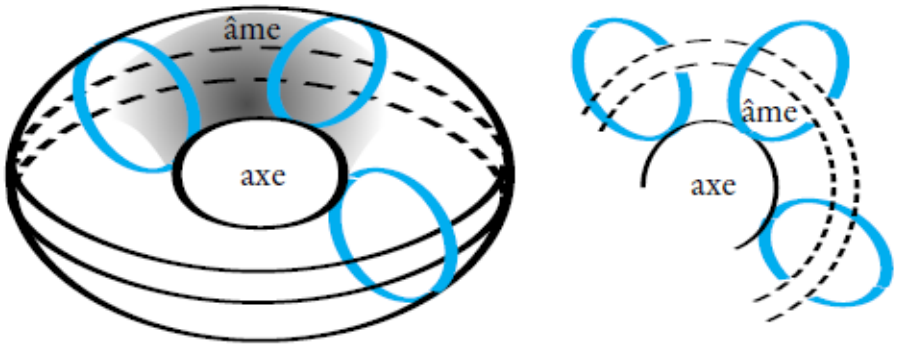


Fig. VIII-4

Soury: I will also need a board. It is a matter of the difference between the holing and the cutting of the torus and it is even a question of the difference between the reversal, the holing and the cutting.

So then I am going to try to present the difference between cutting and holing the torus, anyway first of all not worrying whether that can be used to make a reversal, simply cutting the torus and holing the torus how are they different. I draw a torus. I need different colour chalks. There you are.

So here we have the torus. On the torus, circles can be on the torus, they are reducible circles; reducible circles, are circles which by distortion can be reduced and there are non reducible circles. So that as a non reducible circle,

there is the meridian circle, there are the longitudinal circles and there are other circles.

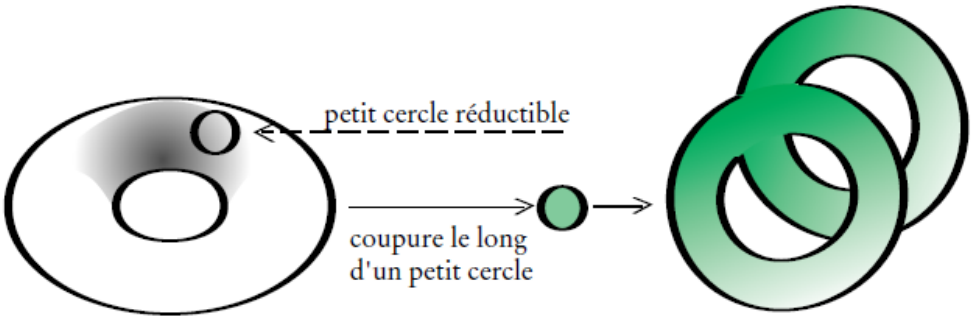


Fig. VIII-5

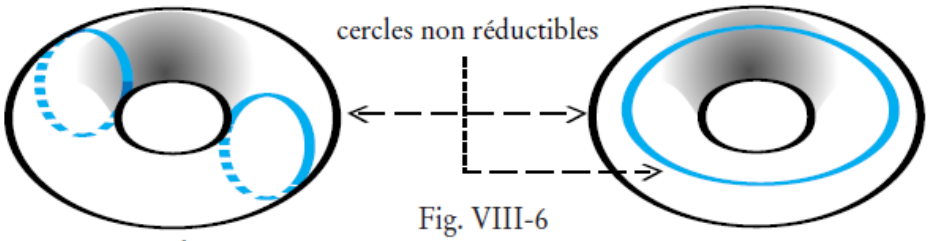


Fig. VIII-6

There you are. I drew a circle on the torus which is neither the meridian circle nor the longitudinal circle [VIII-7]. So then when there is a circle on the torus, it is possible to cut along the length of this circle and the result...

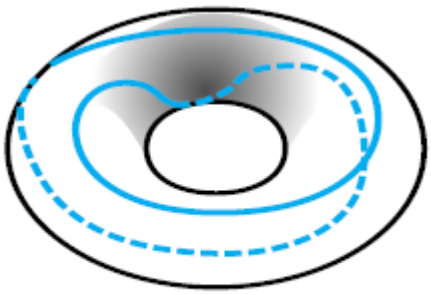


Fig. VIII-7

Good, so then the holing is this case, it is cutting along the reducible circle and the cut, is to cut along a non-reducible circle. If one cuts along a little circle, a reducible circle, a little circle, what remains? There remains on the one hand a piece, a little disc, this little disc, and on the other hand there remains a surface with an edge, a surface with an edge that I am drawing [VIII-8]. There you are. So then this drawing here represents a surface with an edge. Here is the result of the holing. To say holing, is not interesting oneself in the little disc which remains and to say that the holed torus is that. The holed torus is a surface with an edge which is drawn here.

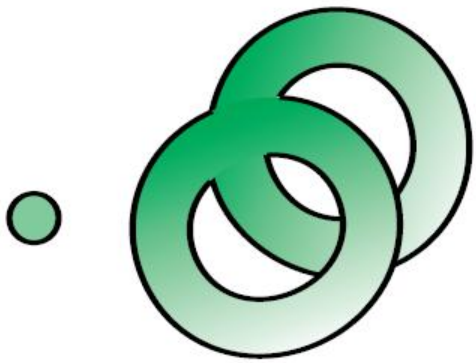


Fig. VIII-8

If the torus is cut along a non reducible circle, then that's the cut, so then what remains? First of all there remains just a single piece and I am going to say what remains there remains a strip more or less knotted and more or less twisted. So then I am going to draw the rest by a meridian cut.

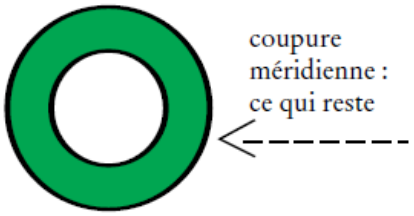


Fig. VIII-9

By a meridian cut, there remains a strip which is neither knotted nor twisted [VIII—9]. By a longitudinal cut also there remains the same thing: the strip which is neither knotted nor twisted [VIII-10]. And these also are surfaces with an edge. But there is all the same a difference: which is that there is a surface with a single edge and here there are surfaces with two edges.

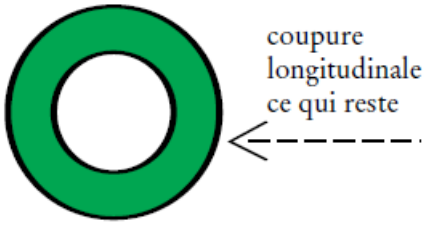


Fig. VIII-10

If the cut is made along a circle that is not so simple - not so simple as the meridian circle or the longitudinal circle - then what remains is a strip, there still remains a strip, but one that is more or less knotted more or less twisted. So that for example, anyway for a certain circle, one obtains a strip [VIII-11], which is knotted in a trefoil [[VIIII-12] and which is twisted. So then the torsion, I don't remember the corresponding torsion.

Therefore I am drawing it, I have every chance of making a mistake here, namely, that it is not just any torsion whatsoever, but I don't remember what torsion there is.

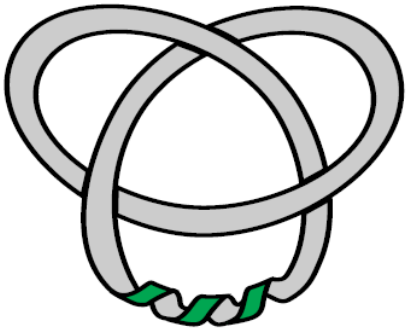


Fig. VIII-11

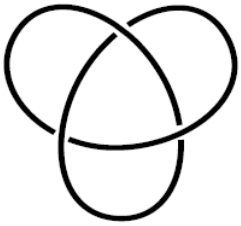
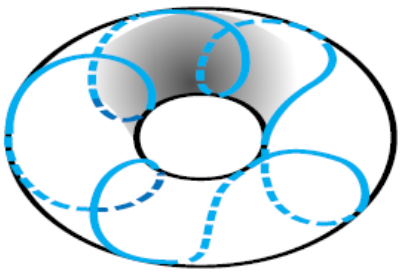


Fig. VIII-12

Anyway this is a strip which is knotted and twisted and one could separate its knotted part and its twisted part namely, the knotting of this strip can be represented by a knot, good here is the knot of the trefoil; and the torsion can be counted, it's a certain number of turns. In the case of the trefoil, there is a torsion of, I believe three turns, there are three turns of torsion; anyway if it's not three it's six I may be mistaken. Therefore here, I did not indicate these things in order to clearly show that what is in question are strips. Therefore the cut torus, is a strip that is more or less knotted, more or less twisted, therefore that gives certain knots, not all the knots, and it gives a certain torsion. There are certain circles on the torus that Mr Lacan has mentioned. These are the circles that he put in correspondence with Desire and Demand. Anyway here we are. These circles can be located by the number of times that they turn around the core and the number of times they turn around the axis. There are a lot of these circles but they can be located and this locating can be justified. So then the circles that Monsieur Lacan presented, are circles which turned only once, namely, around the axis or around the core and then several times...Here I am drawing one which turns a single time around the axis and several times around the core [VIII-13].

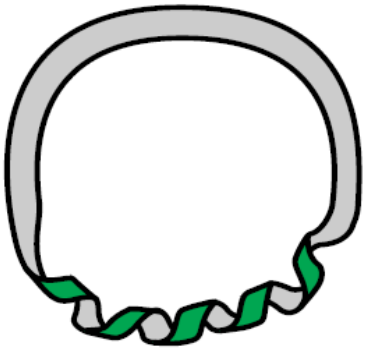
Fig. VIII-19



There I draw one which turns once around the axis and five times around the core. So then if

the torus is cut according to a circles like that, the result is a strip which is twisted but which is not knotted namely, that the result, the torus cut along a circle like that, for this a 5: there are going to be five turns and no knotting, five turns of torsion and no knotting. Now I am making a mistake namely, that I am confusing turns and half turns I didn't draw enough of them [VIII-14].

Fig. VIII-20



There you are. Good! No what I drew there, is a strip which is twisted and which is not knotted. Therefore the circles that Lacan mentioned among the circles on the torus, this was the meridian circle and the longitudinal circle which gives a strip that is neither knotted nor twisted and then these circles here correspond to desire/demand which gives a strip which is twisted and not knotted.

For the moment already that gives a difference between holing and cutting. So then here is the result of holing, there is only one way of holing while there are as many ways of cutting as there are of circles on the torus. So then here is the result of holing, here is the result of cutting. Here the result of holing, is a surface with an edge which is only a single edge. The result of cutting, are surfaces with two edges but it is a specially simple surface, since it is strip. That is already a way of showing the difference between holing and cutting: the fact is that the hole torus and the cut torus are not the same thing.

Now with respect to reversal, I am going to set about saying the differences between holing and cutting with respect to reversal.

First of all something, which is that cutting along a circle – I'm going to rub out a little here – let us say in the cut the holing is implicit namely, that in the cut the holing is implicit, namely, that in the cut there is much more than simply removing a little hole. The cut can be presented as something in addition with respect to holing namely, that one can make a holing first of all and starting from this holing, cut. The cut therefore can be decomposed in two phases: first holing and afterwards cutting starting from the holing. And therefore that can be done

here, namely, that this is a holed torus, good, well then, the cut can be obtained...anyway, if it is considered to be in two stages: the first stage is to hole, the second stage to cut starting from the holed torus, the cut can be shown on this, namely, on the holed torus. So then I am going to show, I'm going to indicate, without drawing it, the simplest cuts. Let us make a meridian cut. In the holed torus, the distinction meridian/longitudinal distinction is lost. Anyway, let us make a meridian cut; that can be for example to cut here (1). Good, I am going to draw it all the same.

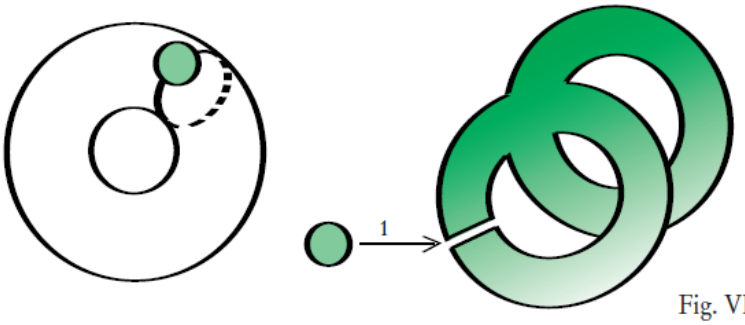


Fig. VIII-15

There you are let us make that, it's a meridian cut. While on this, one can see that there is only a strip remaining, namely, that once cut here, the cut here (1) leaves that. So then one can eventually imagine distortions on this in such a way that this can be reabsorbed and that can be reabsorbed and what remains is indeed a strip [VIII-9]. Therefore one can rediscover starting from the holed torus the meridian cut leaves a strip. Just as if this had been a longitudinal cut, the longitudinal cut would also have left a strip.

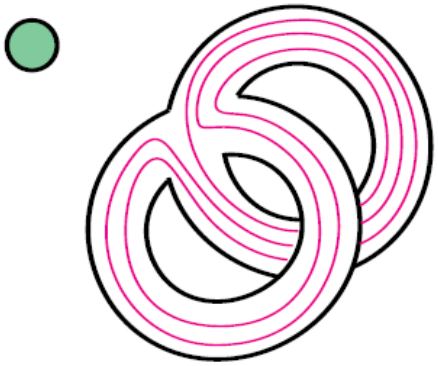


Fig. VIII-16

I am going to rub out this cut that I made there to draw a simpler cut, a cut along a circle which is not the simplest. So I'm going to make the cut, I'm going to draw a certain cut. I'm afraid of making a mistake all the same, so then I made a cut that starts again from the edge of the hole, anyway I made a cut which starts from the edge of the hole of the holing; so then I put this into gear. There you are, a circle [VIII-16]. Anyway, it's a circle which makes two turns around the axis, anyway two turns

and three turns since, once the torus has been holed the distinction between the inside and the outside is lost and the distinction between the core and the axis is lost; lost, not completely lost, I will get there, but one cannot distinguish any longer meridian and longitudinal. So then I drew one cut of the holed torus and, starting from this drawing with some patience, it is possible to restore the knotted and twisted strip which will be obtained. By drawing the cut - it is drawn in red - on the holed torus by procedures of drawing one can manage to know the result of the cut. Namely, that here, I chose a circle which turns on the one hand twice and on the other hand three times because the result of this cut will be a trefoil knotting. That is a cut which is not the most simple and the result is a strip which is knotted and which is twisted. In the cut the holing is implicit; the holing is implicit.

One can say this differently; the fact is to cut the torus, is to do much more than hole it. Namely, that the space of the holing which is created is largely created on this occasion by a cut. Therefore everything that can be done by holing can be done by a cut. In particular the reversal that can be made by holing can be done by a cut.

But by cutting, there are other reversals which are possible. There are certain reversals which are not possible by holing and which are possible by cutting.

So then I am going to tell you the difference between the reversals permitted by the cut and permitted by holing. I am going to rub out the right hand part.

In order to distinguish that, some differentiation is needed, namely, that I need to differentiate the core and the axis by colours. So then I am going to use blue and red for this core and the axis; and I still need some differentiation, which is to differentiate the two faces of the torus. The torus is a surface without edges, it is a surface which has two faces and I need that differentiation. Good, so then here is the torus. One only sees a single one of its faces, I am going to use green and yellow for the two faces and here one sees only one face. For the torus, one sees only a single face, we do not see the inner yellow face.

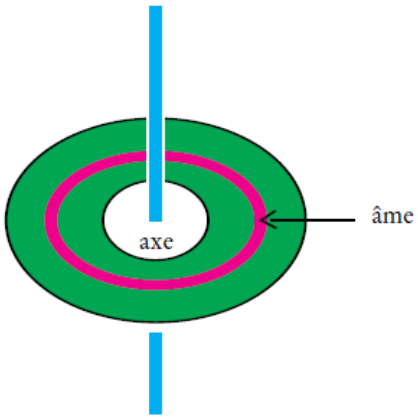


Fig. VIII-17

Therefore it's green and yellow the two faces of the torus and there is a correspondence between the core/axis couple and the couple of the two faces; there is a correspondence, namely, that the green face which is here the outside face is in correspondence with the axis and the yellow face the inner face is in correspondence with the core.

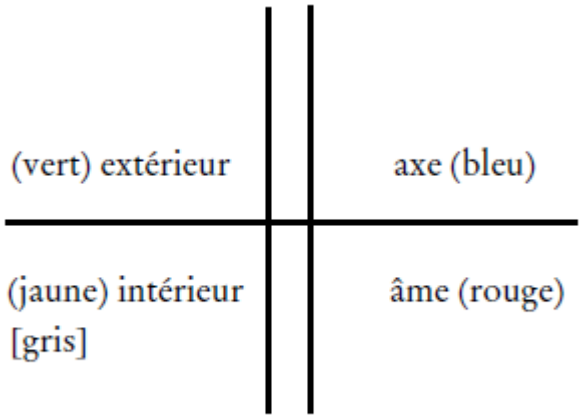


Fig. VIII-18

I am introducing two couples but these two couples are presently – because this is what is going to be lost – presently it is the couple with two faces and the inside/outside couple which are linked. So then the difference between cutting and holing, reversal by cutting /reversal by holing, can make a difference, anyway the difference, one difference, is that the reversal by holing does not touch, anyway does not change this link between the two faces with the inside/outside while the reversal by cutting dissociates this link.

So then the reversal by holing: what remains of it? In this presentation here of the torus that is holed one only sees a single one face, I am still taking the green face, this surface is now coloured these two faces are coloured there is a yellow face and a green face and in this plane presentation there is only a green

face visible, the yellow face would appear by reversal, by the reversal of the plane. Pay attention here! I am talking about several reversals at once in this moment which is dangerous: I have just mixed up reversal of the plane and reversal of the torus. So then here is the holed torus. In the state of the holed torus I can represent the core and the axis as two axes. So then I am going to situate the core and the axis with respect to the holed torus. I have one chance in two of making a mistake (*Laughter*). The green face corresponds to the blue axis. I am placing here the axis, it's a straight line, this is the blue axis and now the red axis.

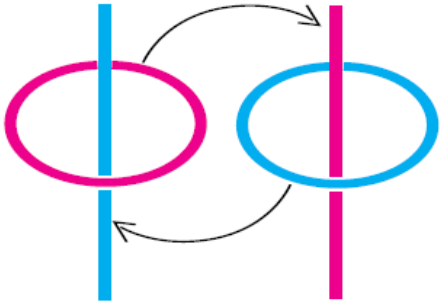


Fig. VIII-19

So why am I drawing two axes? There are reasons for that. I am going to tell you the reason for drawing the two axes for the holed torus. I'm going to rub out the left so that...so then in the original torus I am only preserving its core and its axis which are represented here. Once the torus is reversed it will have as core and as axis this; therefore the reversal of the torus, is the exchange of the core and the axis. It is the passage from that to that [VIII-19].

Well then the holed torus is a state of two axes, I am only affirming it; I am going to redraw it, finally I am only going to redraw what is here below, but I am going to redraw it here in the position of a hinge of an intermediary.

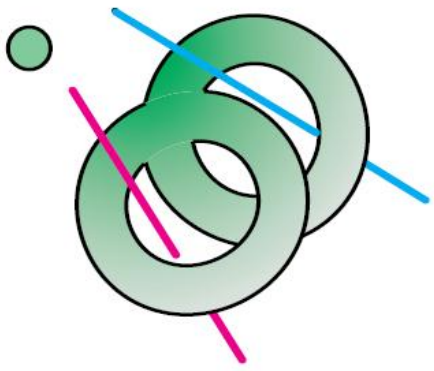


Fig. VIII-20

Here is the holed torus the surface with two axes [VIII-20]. And I will mention another version of it, which is that if

one only keeps the circle edge of that namely, that one only keeps the edge, the fact is – I am going to draw it still in the middle – there you are: this is to preserve the two axes of the torus which are here in blue and red and the circle at the edge of the hole [VIII-21].

Here it is to preserve the surface with the edge [VIII-20] and here [VIII-21] it is to preserve only one minus the edge. So then what's in the middle here acts as hinge in the operation of reversal of exchange between the core and the axis.

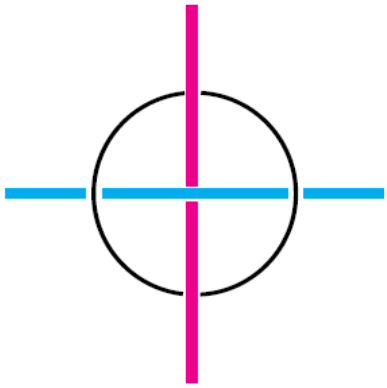


Fig. VIII-21

So then I'm mentioning this figure here because there is a Borromean configuration, namely, that the inside and the outside and the edge of the hole form a Borromean configuration. Finally I only affirmed that in this intermediary state the core and the axis were both able...At the moment of this intermediary state which is the state of indetermination, the hinge between the inside and the outside. Namely, that here the inside and the outside are differentiated and that here the inside and the outside are not differentiated. Here the inside/outside couple is in a state of vacillation or, in the case of the holed torus, the inside/outside distinction is lost.

So then this was dealing with the holed torus. Now I am going to rub out this schema, the schema of correspondence, even though I may have need of the starting schema of correspondence between the couple of two faces and the inside/outside couple. So then there is a green which corresponds to the blue and then yellow which corresponds to the red. So then when the torus is cut, it is going...but there, from memory I don't know how they are arranged...therefore I am going to draw it...Eventually I am wrong. But this won't trouble me at all for what I need. I'm going to draw a cut torus, I'm going to draw it like a knotted and twisted strip. Here I am in the process of redrawing a knotted and twisted strip that is obtained by cutting the torus. There you are. While to indicate that it is a

strip, I am putting these little lines but I am not going to put these little lines everywhere.

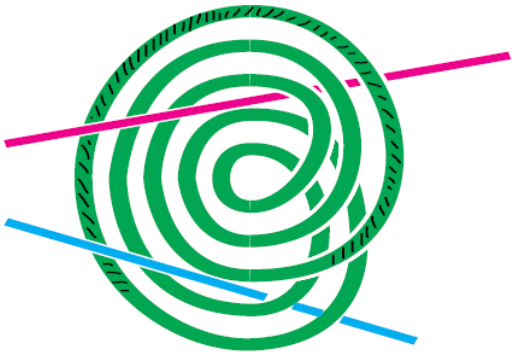


Fig. VIII-22

There you are that's the drawing of a knotted and twisted strip obtained by cutting the torus. There you are. So I am going stop drawing these little lines. The core and the axis are now here; what was previously the core and the axis – now there are two axes – are found...It's a pity I don't have enough space...so then there you are the two inside and outside axes and now a couple of two faces. So then this strip, as it is drawn, once again has only one face, and this is not by chance, namely, that I am systematically privileging drawings where one sees only one face. Therefore there we have the knotted and twisted strip with a yellow face and a green face here one only sees its green face. There you are. So then I am going all the same to draw the two faces, in the case here, to show the two cases in a different case

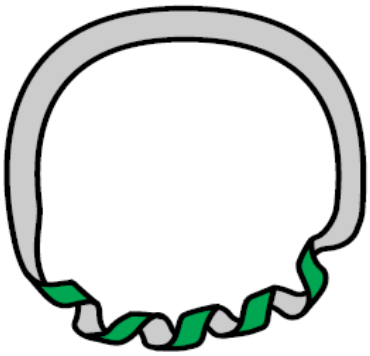


Fig. VIII-14

The fact is that here I had previously drawn a strip that was not knotted and which was twisted, so here one sees the two faces, namely, that in the case of a torsion one sees another face, namely, that in this part here one sees yellow, there is yellow and green. Anyway that's to show that in a drawing of a surface with an edge, the two faces may appear. It is by chance that in certain drawings one only sees the same face. So here therefore here are the two axes that were previously the inside and the outside and the cut torus: this strip. Well then, I don't know whether it is imaginable that inside this the couple of yellow and of green have become

independent from the couple of blue and red, namely, that this strip, all of this is only one strip and one can also give it a half twist along its length and it will always be the same object and the yellow face plays the same role as the green face. So then in that situation of the torus cut with its two axes, the couple of two faces green and yellow and the couple inside/outside, blue and red have become independent. This indicates something about the difference of the two reversals, which is that, in the reversal by holing one exchanges the inside and the outside one exchanges the two faces and they interchange together namely, that at the moment when the inside/outside couples exchange, this exchanges the two faces. Namely, if this torus coloured yellow and green when one reverses it, if it were the green outside afterwards it would be the yellow outside.

In the reversal by holing one simultaneously inverts the two faces and the inside/outside. On the contrary the reversal by cutting allows there to be disassociated this liaison, namely, that once the torus is cut, it can be closed, not by...I am going to say this differently: the fact is that instead of seeing the holed torus or the torus cut as an intermediary I'm going to describe it differently, the fact is that the holed torus can be closed in two different ways. The cut torus for its part closed in four different ways. Anyway I hesitate between two fashions of formulating it: one way in which the holed torus or the cut torus appear as an intermediary between the two states of the torus and another way of talking of the two states of the torus being described as two ways of closing this surface with the edge. So then once the torus is cut it is possible to close it in many ways, namely, that it is possible to close it as it was at the beginning, as it was at the beginning, namely, with a blue outside axis and a green outside face, but it is possible to close it in any way whatsoever namely, it is possible to close it with the red outside axis and with the green or yellow outside face. Namely, that there are four ways of closing this torus that has been cut but combining in every possible way the blue red couple to fix the blue red couple as inside/outside, as a core and an axis and to fix the green yellow couple as inside and outside face.

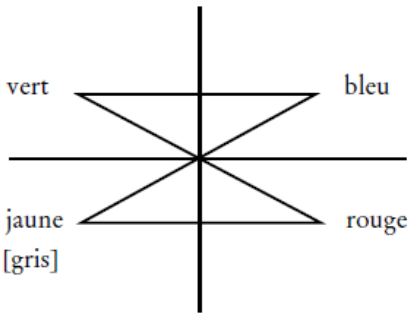


Fig. VIII-23

So then it's a matter of couples, of binaries (*Laughter*). I find it rather difficult to present these considerations with exactness. There I embarked in...anyway it was the holing and the cutting. Anyway this business of couples or of binaries are always linked to the business of inexactitude.

Lacan: The green can be associated to the blue and to the red...

Soury: Yes yes.

Lacan: And on the other hand the yellow can be associated also with the blue and the red.

Soury: Yes, yes.

X: But is what you're saying true also for a simple cut, like a meridian cut and a longitudinal cut?

Soury: Yes, yes.

Y: Namely, the separation between the green and the yellow and the axis and the core is also true for a simple cut.

Soury: Quite.

X: Because there you showed it for a complex cut but you could also have shown it for a simple cut.

Soury: Yes, that's true for it is the same thing for a meridian cut and for a longitudinal cut, that it produces the same thing as the cut in general, namely, the dissociation of the couple of two faces and of the inside/outside couple.

X: Could you not show it on a simple meridian cut?

Soury: Yes yes, it's indeed....

Lacan: Who sent me this paper? It is someone who attended what Soury was doing in practical work.

Second X: It's me.

Lacan: Who is it? It is you two? Listen I am very interested by this object A and the other that you designate by a star, I mean the A object and the object which is

drawn like that. I am very interested and I would really like to know what you have understood by what Soury has explained today. If you were to come to tell me I'd be very happy.

X: There what Soury showed is effectively an error that was in the paper.

Lacan: What? In the paper in the paper that you sent me?

X: Namely, that it was not effectively a reversal by a hole but a reversal by a cut.

Lacan: That's it. Good I am very happy to know that because I was racking my brains about that error. Now then I think Soury has fulfilled all our wishes and I will continue the next time.

Lacan to Soury: Come and see me.

Annexe to Session VIII

Pages distributed by Soury probably 21 February or 14 March

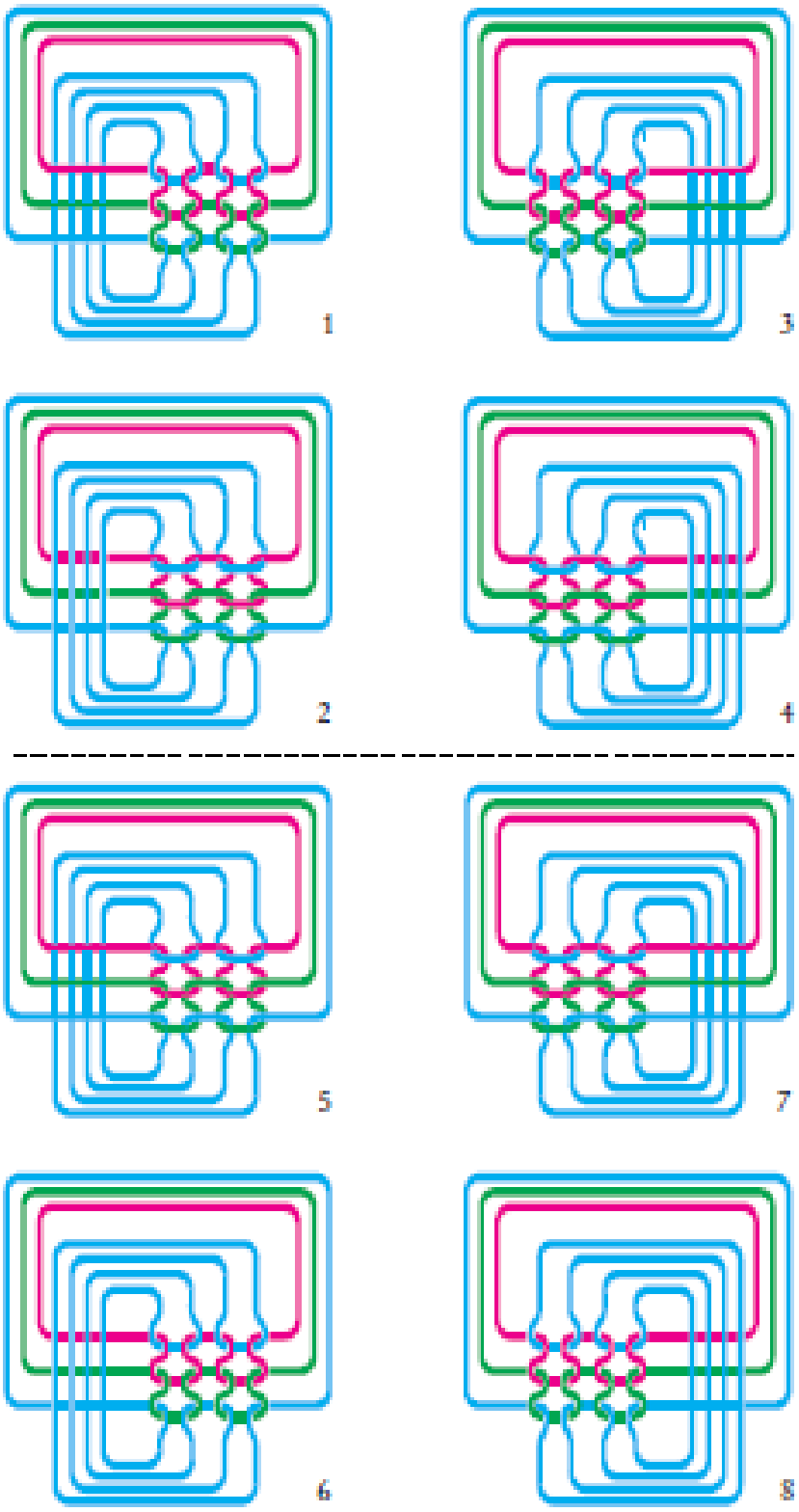


Fig. VIII-a — schémas « carrés » ou « peignes ».

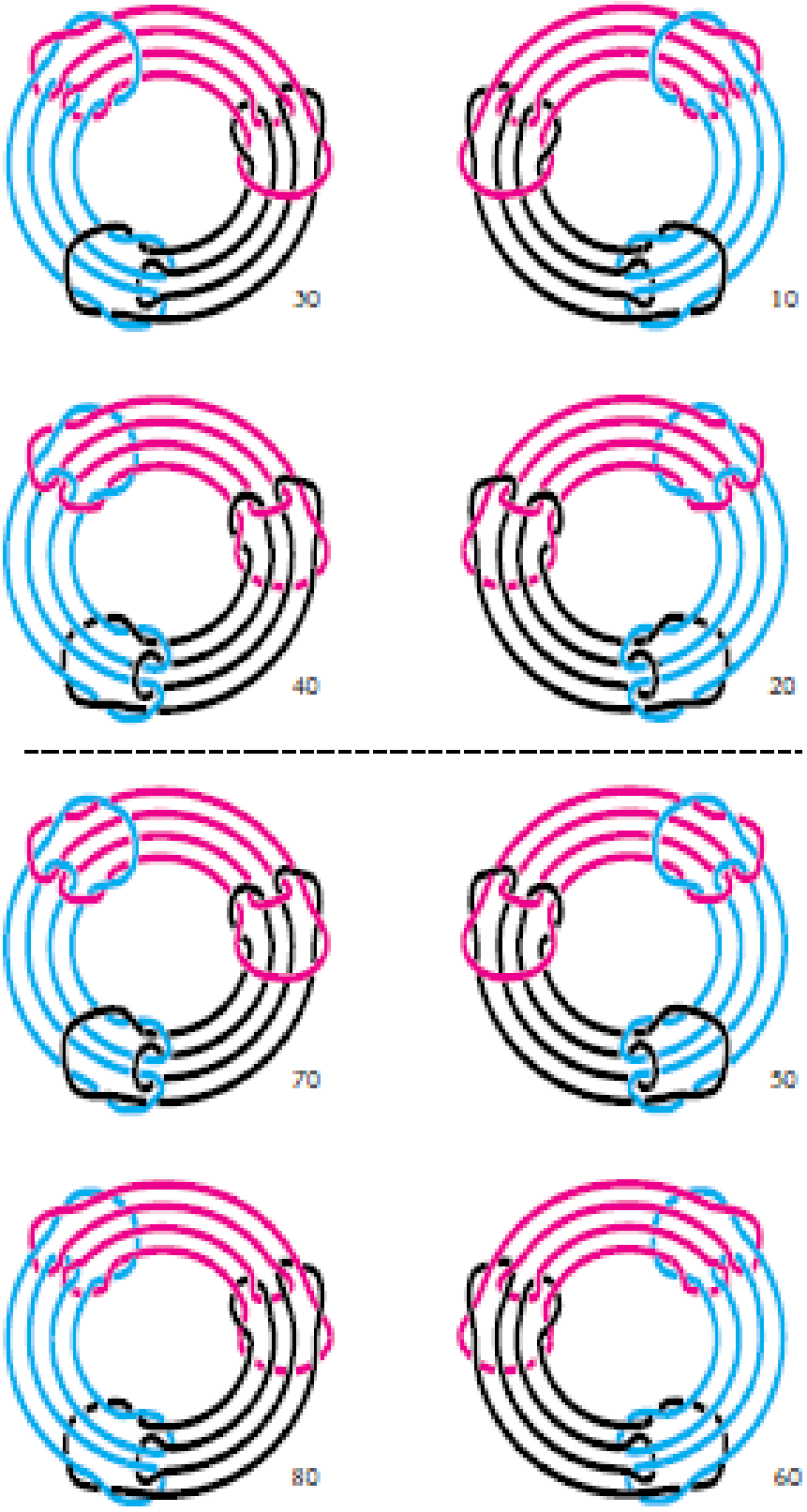
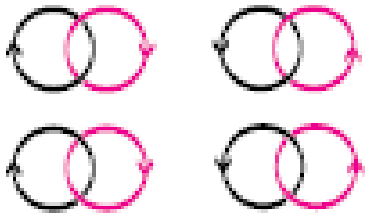


Fig. VIII-b — Schémas « ronds » ou « cercles ».

Le moment de conclure

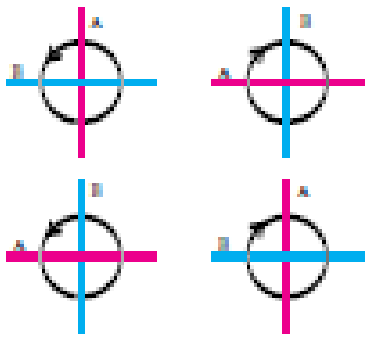
Les deux trèfles.

Ce sont des nœuds. Ils sont échangés par 2 automorphismes. Les présentations planes sont échangées par 4 automorphismes.



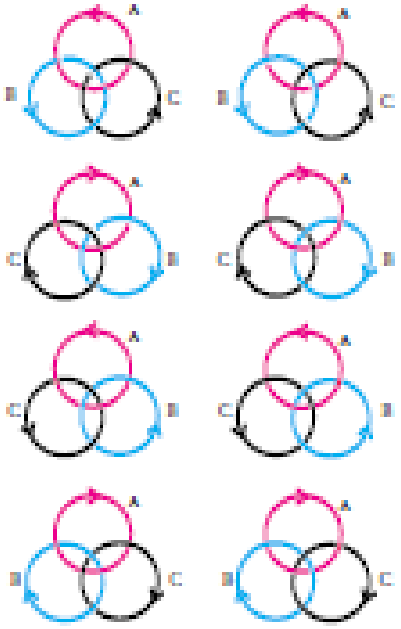
Les deux enlacements.

Ce sont des chaînes orientées. Ils sont échangés par 4 automorphismes. Les présentations planes régulières sont échangées par 8 automorphismes.



Les deux chaînes boroméennes de deux droites colorées et un cercle orienté.

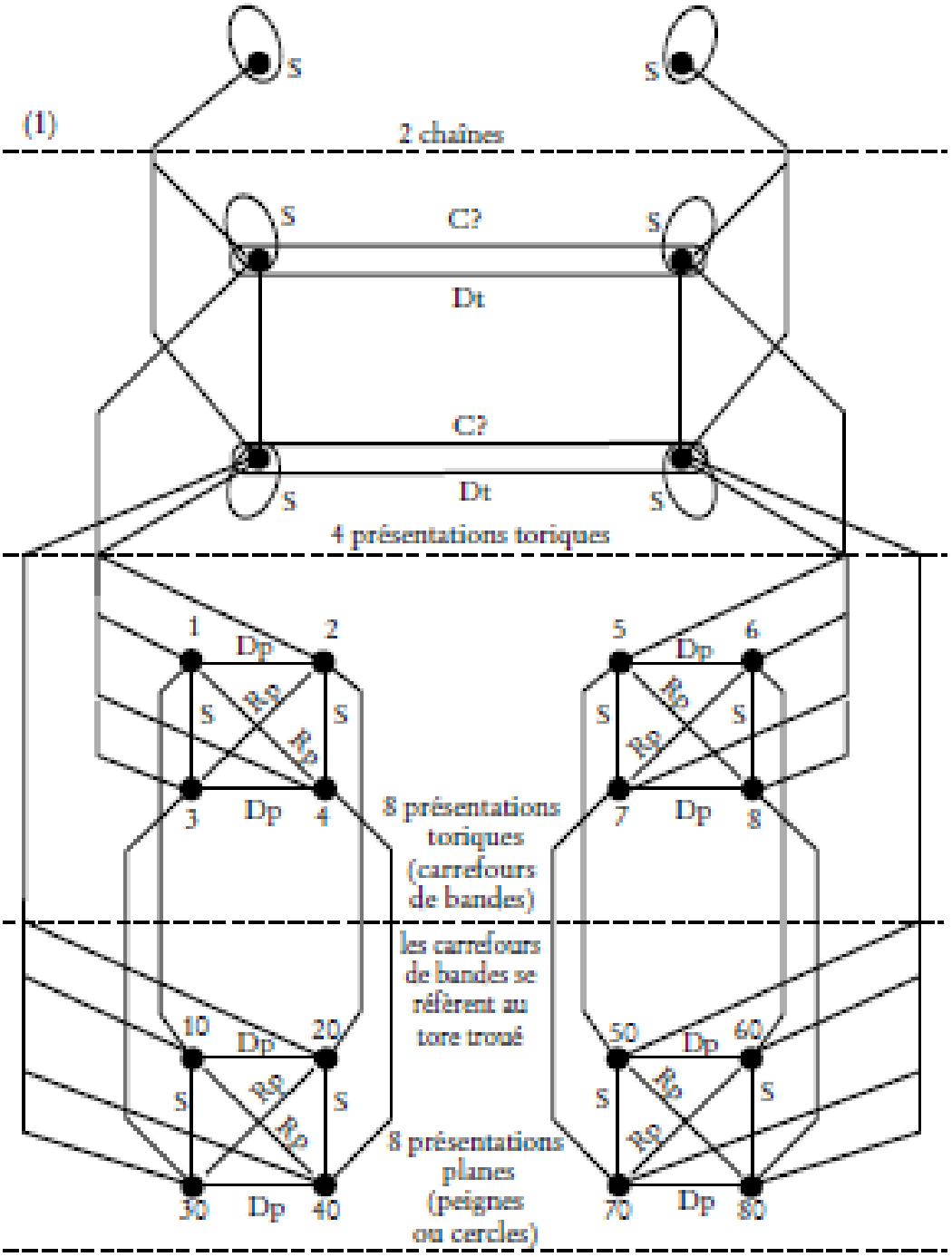
Ce sont des chaînes de deux droites colorées par A et B et de un cercle orienté. Ils sont échangés par 8 automorphismes. Les présentations planes sont échangées par 16 automorphismes.



Les deux chaînes boroméennes de trois cercles colorés orientés.

Ce sont des chaînes de trois cercles colorés par A et B et orientés. Les présentations planes régulières sont échangées par 48 automorphismes.

Fig. VIII-c



S = symétrie
Rt = retournement de tores
Dt = échanger les dessus/dessous sur le tore
C = retournement du tore par coupure. Quelle est la généralité de cette opération?

Rp = retournement de plan
Dp = échanger les dessus/dessous sur le plan (artifice)
(1) retournement se référant au tore troué

Fig. VIII-d — Diagramme affiché au tableau par Soury

21.3.78 (CG Draft 2)

Seminar 9: Tuesday 21 March 1978

I am warning you that Madam Ahrweiler, President of the University of Paris 1, Madam Ahrweiler has taken steps to ensure that I will give my seminar the 11th and 18th of April. This is a vacation period and therefore you will probably just have to enter by the door not on rue St Jacques, but on the place du Pantheon. In fact I was reduced to two seminars since, as regards May, it would be the 2nd Tuesday, but not the 3rd, given that I have been warned that in this very room there will be exams on the 3rd Tuesday.

It nevertheless remains that I am very concerned about what is involved specifically in the torus. Soury is going to pass you tori, tori on which there is something knitted. There is something that particularly worries me, which is the relationship between what can be called toricity and holing. It seems, according to what Soury says, that there is no relationship between holing and toricity. For my part, I cannot say that I do not see relationships, but probably I have a rather confused idea about what can be called a torus.

Last time you had a certain presentation of what one can do with a torus. There is something that Soury is going to pass around later and which involves a holing. It is a holing which is artificial, I mean that it is a torus covered by a knitting which is richer than the simple one, namely the one which is – and that indeed is where the difficulty is – the which is traced out as knitting on the torus. I have not dissimulated from you what this involves: the fact that it is traced out on the torus is of such a nature that one cannot, what I designate as 'a tracing out', cannot be passed as a knitting. It nevertheless remains that by convention, people think, and articulate that it is a knitting. But there should be added to this, this complement that what can be traced out on the other side of the surface has by being inverted and by being inverted by highlighting the inversion of above/ below, which of course frankly complicates what we can say about what is happening inside the torus. This indeed is what manifests itself in the relative complexity of what is drawn at this level. (On Soury's picture, 3rd and 4th levels in the annexe of the previous session). We will agree to say that the inversion of the above/below complicates the affair, because what I called earlier the complexity of this picture has nothing to do with this inversion that one can agree to call, because it is inside the torus instead of being outside, that one can call, by

definition its mirror-image. This would mean that there are toric mirrors. It is a simple question of definition. It is a fact that it is what is on the outside that passes for important, outside of the torus, traced outside the torus. There is no trace in these figures (Soury's picture: levels 3 and 4), there is no trace of this inversion, that I called the image in a toric mirror.

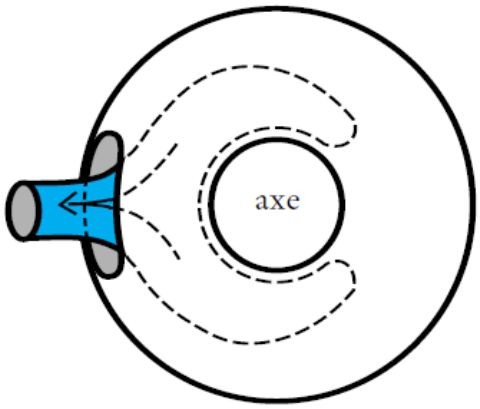


Fig. IX-1

Holing is a means of reversal. By holing it is possible for a hand to be introduced and go on to grasp the axis of the torus and, in that way, reversing it; but there is something else that is possible, which is that through this hole by pushing through the hole the whole of the torus, one obtains a reversal effect. This is what Soury will show you later with the help of a toric knitting that is a little more complicated.

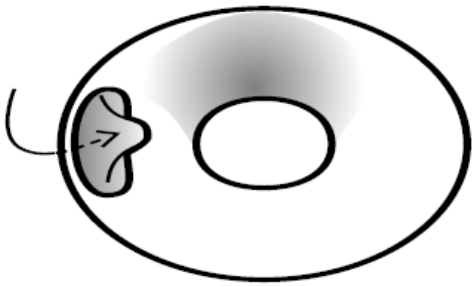
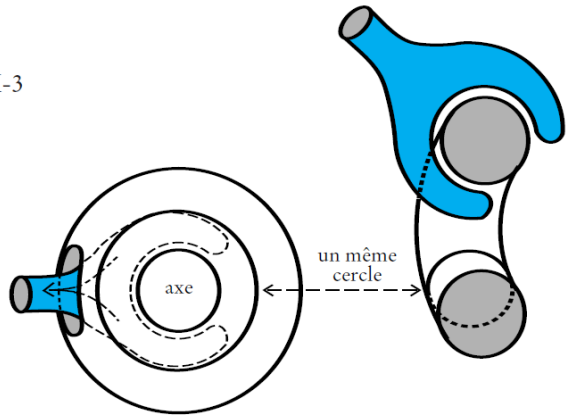


Fig. IX-2

It is striking that one obtains by pushing the outside of the torus, that one obtains exactly the same result, which I justify by saying that this hole by definition does not properly speaking have a dimension, namely that it is thus that it can be presented, namely that what is a hole here can moreover be projected in the following way.

Fig. IX-3



What will present itself therefore as a grasping of the axis here will find itself inverted; the grasping of the axis will ensure that this will be outside the hole but that, since there is an inversion of the torus, the grasping of the axis will ensure that the torus – this is also a simple circle and will be found here after the axis has been grasped - but inversely one can see that here we will obtain the same figure namely that what is here caught by the hole and this pushed back inside, after the inversion of what is here, will also find itself functioning as a torus, what is here becoming the axis.

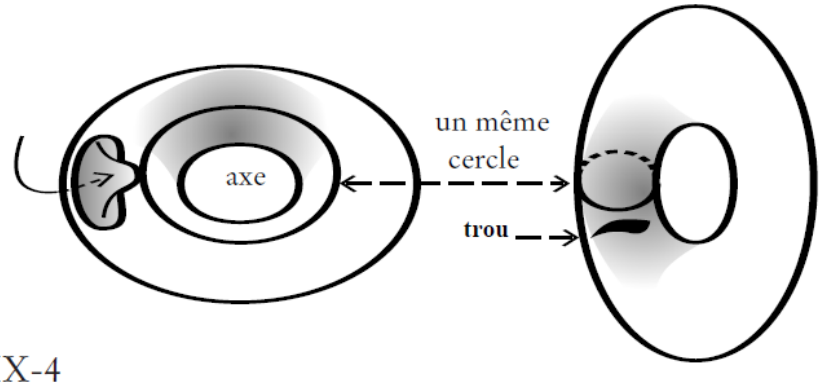


Fig. IX-4

I am now going to ask Soury, since he is good enough to be here, to come and show the difference – a null difference – that there is between these two ways of depicting the toric knitting.

You have the object?

Soury: I passed it around.

Lacan: You have passed it around. One can see on this object the difference there is between grasping the axis and pushing back the whole torus. Off you go.

Soury: Will I go ahead? So then it is a matter of reversing the torus by holing. I am going to present it in the following way namely that it is a torus which is grafted onto an infinite plane. This drawing here indicates that there is a torus which is grafted by a pipe onto an infinite plane. Inside this, what corresponds to

holing is this pipe part which carries out at once a holing of the torus and a holing of the infinite plane and for that reason, it is similar.

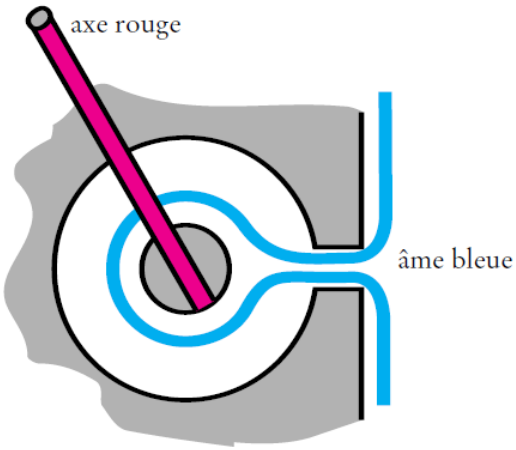


Fig. IX-5

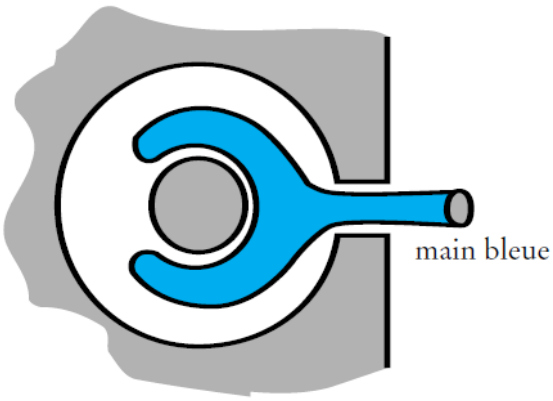


Fig. IX-6

So then inside, space is divided in two halves and this surface has two faces...one face that I draw here by hairs [in grey on the drawing], hairs on the surface, is here; here there is one face and there there is another face. Good! The space is divided into two halves, one half of the space, the half which is here on the left of this infinite plane and which is outside the torus and which acts as an axis for this torus; and in the other half, anyway the other half of this infinite plane is in communication with the inside of the torus and here I am drawing something which constitutes the core. So then this configuration here allows there to be indicated the before and after of the reversal. Here I am in the process of redrawing the same thing and it is what is in front. And after the reversal...then I show the two faces by the same indication.

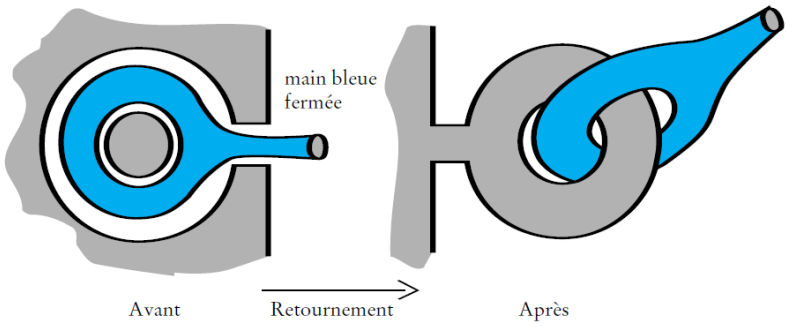


Fig. IX-7

Therefore here is what constituted the outside face, the left face of the plane in front, and now, which after still constitutes the left face of the plane, but which constitutes the inner face of the torus, namely that in the reversal what was an outside face of the torus has become an inside face.

So then that's a kind of glove. Anyway this reversal, is something comparable to the reversal of a glove. It is all the same not quite a glove, it is a toric glove, it's a glove which grasps, it is a glove which closes and which grasps. Now this glove which closes and which grasps can be reversed and that becomes again a glove which closes and a which grasps. So then a description that was given earlier, I am going to draw a hand in blue like that which comes to grasp here... Good, this blue hand – this couple there of ochre and of blue [in red on IX-5] is an inside outside couple – this blue hand which has just grasped, which uses this glove, namely that this toric glove gloves this blue hand and in that way this blue hand grasps, can grasp the axis which is ochre here (in red), this hand which has just used this glove as a glove and in this way grasped the ochre axis. The reversal can, at that moment, be described in the following way, which is that this blue hand pulls, pulls...and how is it going to find itself? Finally this hand is going to be found like that [IX-7].

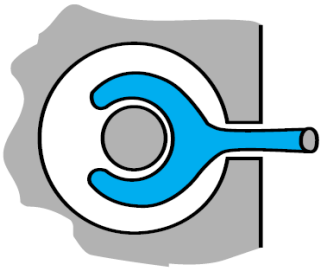


Fig. IX-8

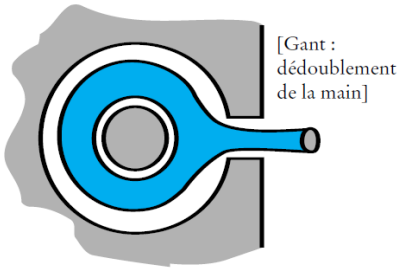


Fig. IX-9

This hand I am going to draw out in full, here's the hand which grasps and the arm of this hand is found here. And already now I have slightly changed the drawing of

the hand, namely that I have drawn this hand in the style of a hand which grasps, namely I no longer like there left an indication that the fingers were not closed [IX-6]. I drew the hand in two different ways, I am now going to modify the drawing of the hand here to indicate that it is a hand which grasps, therefore I indicate it as a closed hand [IX-9]. There you are.

I therefore modified the drawing of the hand as a closed hand, a hand which grasps. There you are. Therefore here its relationship with the torus, is that it is gloved by this torus, and here its relation to the torus, is that it is in the situation of a handshake with the torus, namely that from the hand to the torus here it is like handshake, namely that from the hand to the torus is to go here from a situation of reduplication, that the glove is a reduplication of the hand, and here in a situation of complementarity, namely that these two hands which are in a handshake complement one another, anyway they are two complementary tori two interlaced tori, the hand which grasps being itself a torus.

Therefore here is the before and the after of the reversal. While in the reversal, anyway the reversal therefore can be specified by the situation of this hand, whether it is gloved, or whether it gives a handshake. This can specify the reversal, but it is not indispensible for indicating the reversal, namely that the reversal can be indicated...if this hand did not figure, if this hand were absent, the reversal can be depicted all the same, it is to push all of that into the hole.

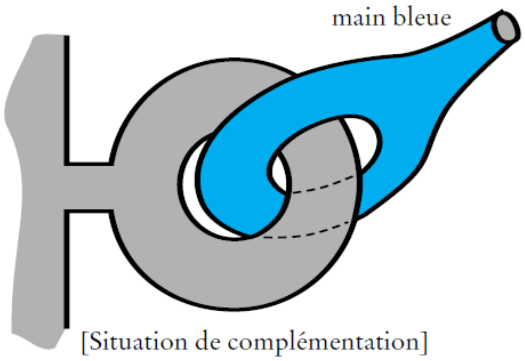


Fig. IX-10

The reversal of this toric glove can be carried out by pushing it into the hole, namely the passage from the before to the after which is here does not need to be defined by a hand which grasps, which pull and which is found like that there. This hand inside first which becomes a complementary hand, is not indispensible, the reversal can be defined as simply pushing this whole part there, the toric part, pushing it into the hole and it is enough to push it into the hole for it to be found on the other side. In other

words, the grasping here does indeed contribute to describing the reversal. The passage from the gloving to the handshake, in other words the passage from the reduplication of the torus to the complementarity of the torus, therefore the grasping inside, which serves to indicate, which indicates, the fact is that on the particular location of the reversal, there is a passage from reduplication to interlacing; but that is not indispensible for...The hand, inside, only shows the complementary torus; the hand inside stands for the complementary torus. But the reversal can be carried out even if the complementary torus is not present and by pushing all of that. Indeed by pushing all of that through the hole, gives this, namely that it is not...one can moreover push thewhole, one can push the torus and the hand and that will give this, namely that inside the hand which grasps is only a reduplication of the torus... which then is not indispensible for the reversal, namely that the difference between the description without the hand or with the hand, is the difference between carrying out the reversal of a torus which is white here or of a torus reduplicated by a blue torus.

So then I am drawing the two descriptions of the reversal [IX-11]– except that I have just made an error, here it is in blue – I am redrawing what was previously drawn, namely previously this torus with its outside here. Here is the outside face of the torus which is reversed like that, the outside face becomes the inside. And here it is the same thing, but the torus is reduplicated by the hand. And here then, there you are. Therefore there are two presentations, two neighbouring descriptions of reversal, in one case the isolated torus, in the other case the torus with its double, the double which is, either the double by reduplication, or the double by interlacing, the double by reduplication being able to be imaged as the situation of gloving and the double by interlacing being able to be imaged by the situation of a handshake. Good. There you are.

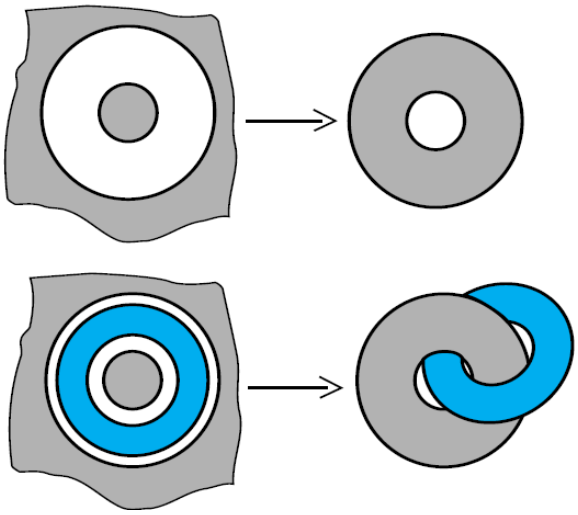


Fig. IX-11

Ribettes: could you situate the position of the axis?

Soury: So then the axis here, I can add it on. Therefore the gloved hand grasps the axis. On the occasion of the reversal, the axis is going to become the core. So then the axis is here. And after the reversal it has become the soul, the axis here is there and after the reversal it has become core, the axis here is there and after reversal it has become core.

X: Why the image of the handshake, it has such a....

Soury: Why the image of the handshake...

X: It seems so...?

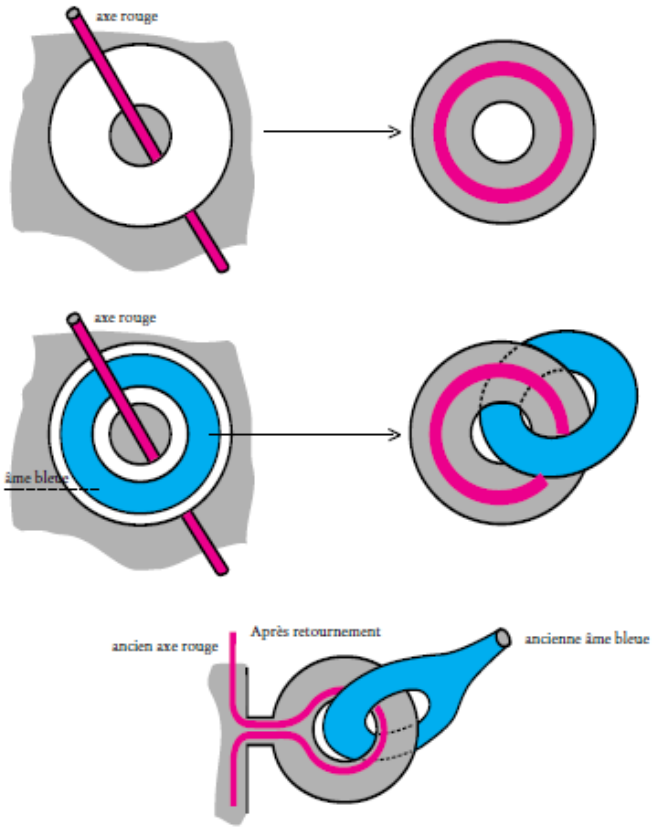


Fig. IX-12

Soury: Why does the image of the handshake seem so....hard? Well, the handshake is completely closed. They are rings which are closed. And the only choice is between the handshake or gloving; anyway in that suppleness only allows going from the handshake to gloving. It does not allow...Anyway, what are hands which open and which close, I know nothing about. There, they are only toric hands, closed hands.

Lacan: You consider that it is a matter of pushing? In this way of doing things, it cannot be simply pushing the whole of the torus. That is why you spoke earlier about the whole of the torus.

Soury: Yes, yes.

Lacan: Good, I'm going to remain there for today. Rendezvous on the 11th April.

Seminar 10: Tuesday 11 April 1978

I stated, putting it in the present, that there is no sexual relationship. It is the foundation of psychoanalysis. At least that is what I have allowed myself to say. There is no sexual relationship, except for neighbouring generations, namely, the parents on the one hand, the children on the other. This is what is warded off – I am talking about sexual relationship – this is what is warded off by the prohibition of incest. Knowledge, is always in relationship with what I write *'l'asexe'*, on condition of following it up with a word which is to be put in parenthesis '*ualité*': *l'asexe (ualité*). One has to know how to deal with this sexuality. To know *comme enfer* [a play on *comment faire*, how to deal with] this at least is how I write it. I began at one time, to symbolise this sexuality, to make a Möbius strip. I would like now to correct this strip, I mean by that to triple it.

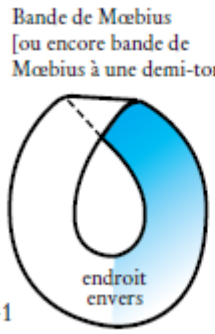


Fig. X-1

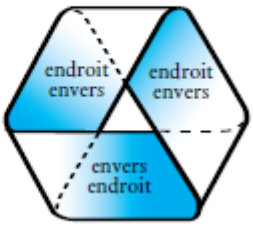


Fig. X-2

This is a strip, just like the other one, namely, that its front coincides with its back, but this time that happens twice. It is easy for you to see, if this is the front, this which turns is the back, following which one comes back to the front; and after that, the back is here, just as here where the back was, is the front; and in the same way here the front is the back. It is therefore a double Möbius strip, I mean that it is on the same face that the front and the back appear.

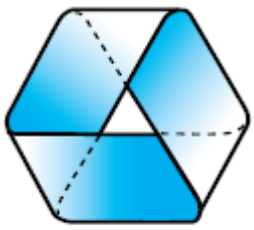


Fig. X-3

Here we can say that it is simpler: if this is the front, it is also the back, as appears from the fact that what was the back here returns there; namely, that the Möbius strip has only one front and one back. But the distinction between this [X-2] and this [X-1] comes from the fact that it is

possible to have a Möbius strip which, on its two faces, is at the same time the front and the back. There is a single face on each side: it's a Mobius strip which has the property of being bilateral.

What does one lose in the abstraction? One loses the fabric, one loses the stuff, namely, that one loses what is presented as a metaphor. Moreover, I point out to you, the art, the art by which one weaves, the art is also a metaphor. That is why I strive to make a geometry of fabric, of thread, of stitching. This at least is where the fact of analysis has led me; for analysis is a fact, a social fact at least, which is founded on what is called thought that one expresses as one can with *lalangue* that people have – I recall that I wrote this *lalangue* in a single word in the drawing in order to make something felt in it. In analysis, one does not think just anything whatsoever and nevertheless this indeed is what one tends to in the association described as free: one would like to think anything whatsoever. Is that what we do? Is that what dreaming consists in? In other words: do we dream about the dream? Because that is where the objection lies. The objection is that Freud in *The interpretation of dreams* does no better: about the dream, by free association about the dream, he dreams. How know where to stop in the interpretation of dreams? It is quite impossible to understand what Freud meant in *The interpretation of dreams*. This is what made me rave, it has to be said, when I introduced linguistics into what is called a quite effective paste, at least we suppose it to be so, and which is called analysis. 'From syntax to interpretation', this is what Jean-Claude Milner proposes to us. It is certain that he has all kinds of difficulties in going from syntax to interpretation. What was the state of things in Freud's time? There is obviously a question of atmosphere as one says, of what are called cultural co-ordinates. I mean that one remains with thoughts and acting by means of thought, it is something which is close to mental defectiveness. There must exist an act which is not mentally defective. I try to produce this act in my teaching. But it is all the same only stammering. We are close here to magic. Analysis is a magic which only has as support the fact that, certainly, there is no sexual relationship, but that thoughts are oriented, are crystallised on what Freud imprudently called the Oedipus complex. All that he was able to do, is to find in what was called tragedy, in the sense that this word had a sense, what was called tragedy furnished him, in the form of a myth, something which articulates that one cannot prevent a son from killing his father.

I mean by that that Laïus did everything he could to distance this son about whom a prediction had been made, that did not prevent him for all that, and I would say all the more so, from being killed by his own son.

I believe that by working on psychoanalysis, I made it progress. But in reality, I am breaking it apart. How direct a thought so that analysis works? The thing which is closest to it, is to convince oneself, if this word has a meaning, is to convince oneself that it works. I tried to flatten it out. It is not easy.

In the passage from the signifier, as it is understood, to the signified there is something that is lost, in other words, it is not sufficient to state a thought for it to work. To raise psychoanalysis to the dignity of surgery, for example, would be highly desirable. But it is a fact that the thread of thought in it does not suffice. What does that mean moreover the thread of thought? It is also a metaphor. This indeed is why I was also led to something that is also a metaphor, namely, to materialise this thread of thoughts. I was encouraged by something which basically is what I was saying at the beginning, namely, this triplicity which founds the fact of the succession of generations. There are three of them, three generations between which there is something of a sexual relationship. This brings with it of course a whole series of catastrophes and this is what Freud, when all is said and done, noticed. He noticed it, but this was not seen in his familial life; because he had taken the precaution of being madly in love with what is called a woman, it must be said, it is bizarre, it is strange. Why does desire go on to love? Facts do not allow it to be explained. There are no doubt effects of prestige. What is called social superiority must play a role in it; in any case for Freud it's very likely. The trouble is he knew it. He noticed that this effect of prestige was operating, at least it's very likely that he noticed it. Was Freud – the question must be asked all the same, was Freud religious? It is certain that it is worthwhile posing the question. Do all men fall under the weight (*faix*) of being religious? It is all the same curious that there is something which is called mysticism: mysticism which is a plague as is clearly proved by all of those who fall into mysticism.

I imagine that analysis, I mean inasmuch as I practice it, is something that made me limited. Analysis it must be said is an excellent method for cretinisation. But perhaps I tell myself that I am limited because I dream, I dream of being a little less so.

Fig. X-4

Flattening out something, whatever it may be, is always useful. There is something which is striking, which is that flattening out this, one notices that this is nothing other than a threefold thread, I mean that this is exactly identical to this threefold thread.

Flattened out it is the same thing as this threefold thread. It does not seem to be so, but nevertheless this indeed is what is at stake. The threefold thread, I mean what is properly speaking a knot, a knot that is said to have three points of intersection, this is what flattens out our Mobius strip. I would ask you to consider this and allow me to remain with that.

Seminar 11: Tuesday 18 April 1978

Come a little closer, because you have sent me things.

I would like you to comment, like that, one by one, on the things you have sent me, because there is something wrong. I am pointing out to you that what I drew for you the last time, in the form of this strip which I made as best I could, if one cuts it in two, the result – if one cuts it in two like that – the result is what is called a three-fold knot, namely, something which is presented like that.

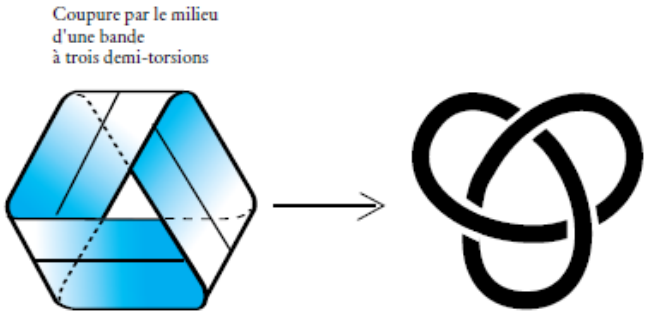


Fig. XI-1 Fig. XI-2

It is of course, quite striking. Here [XI-3], is what is called a Moebius strip. I am drawing it again because it is worthwhile noticing because, thanks to what is called elasticity...the Moebius strip is drawn like that. In other words, one reverses what appears in this form.

Fig. XI-3

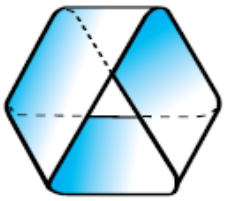
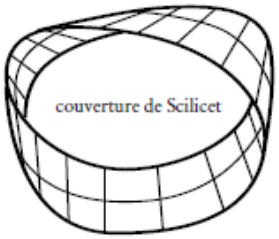
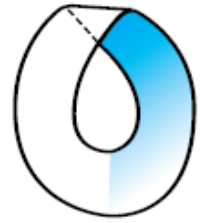


Fig. XI-4



The present form is the one that appears on the cover of *Scilicet*. But the real Moebius strip is that one.

Fig. XI-5

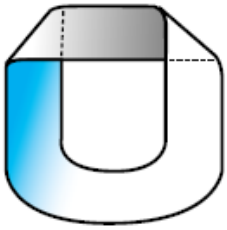


bande de Mœbius
à une demi-torsion

And there is what Jean-Claude Terrasson who is here and who is helping me, it is what Jean-Claude Terrasson very legitimately calls a half-twist and there, in the form that I made function the last time – since this is what I drew for you the last time – there are three half-twists. On the contrary it is possible to make just one twist. This is what is manifested in figure 2 [XI-5], where there is effectively a single twist. Figure 2 can also be depicted thus [XI-3].

bande de Mœbius
à trois demi-torsions

Fig. XI - 6



bande à deux demi-torsions
ou une torsion complète

Fig. XI - 7

This is a figure with a single twist, it is equivalent to the following figure ... it is not easy... namely, that this, if we depict the inside here, this is commonly realised by what is called a torus. If we make a loop here, what comes here comes in the form of something which comes beyond what I called the axis of the torus, this is what comes in the axis of the torus and this is what encircles the torus. I would ask you on this occasion to verify it, and you will see that the twist, the complete twist that is at stake is exactly equivalent to what Jean-Claude Terrasson calls a complete twist.

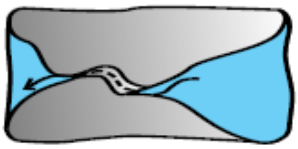


Fig. XI - 8

This is what is realised in the torus of which we obviously only have....The complete twist is everything that one can do on the torus..., which is of course not surprising, because there is no way of operating otherwise on a torus. If on a torus ... you draw something which cuts of course, which cuts by passing what is called ...behind the torus, which reappears in front and which passes behind the torus, what you obtain, is something which is like that and which is completed in the following way..., namely, that it reduplicates the knot which encircles the torus. In other words what comes here is very precisely..., what passes around what I am calling the axis. Therefore this is equivalent to two twists. Here one twist and there two twists.

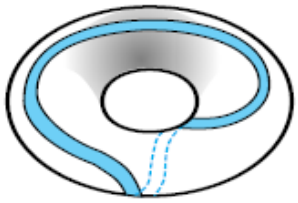


Fig. XI-9

I am now going to ask Jean-Claude Terrasson to take the floor to give a commentary on these figures, these figures which he has made there.

This is a Moebius strip:

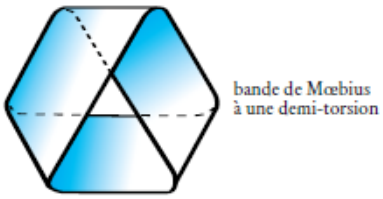


Fig. XI-10

J C Terrasson: So then one can pose the problem of how one can pave space, or pave the plane regularly with flattened Moebius strips, namely, ones that are flattened out. So then the problem is how can I regularly pave the plane by flattening out the Moebius strips,...anyway these strips, namely, one can begin with the zero twist strip

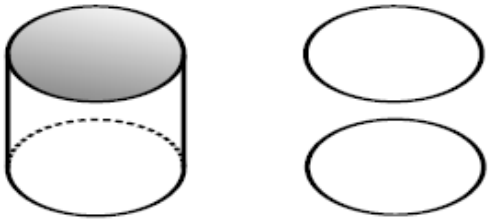


Fig. XI-11

which is...if one draws just the edges, one draws them like that, they are only linked by the fact that the strip has a certain materiality to link these two edges. Good then, in order to flatten this figure, in order to flatten it and obtain something which regularly paves the plane, namely, a regular polygon – there are not a whole lot of them, there is only the hexagon, the square and the equilateral triangle – for this I have a very simple solution which is to stick the two edges together in fact to stick one edge, to stick one edge to itself and to flatten it, namely, if I hatch where the surface comes twice one on the other, good that's it. Therefore I obtain a square, good that is not a square, but it could be, on condition that my strip has twice the length as its width and I obtain a square.

Starting from a half-twist, here the problem is going to be more complicated; but what one can already notice, is that each time, one will obtain, in fact as many as five, one will obtain a regular polygon without a hole namely, what is the hole of the strip finds a means of being reabsorbed to obtain a regular polygon and this will even be the only one that I can get. Good, so then, this figure if I draw its edge, it's that, namely, one sees that this only stays knotted...like the first figure, the edge only holds in its position of twisting with respect to the fact that the strip is also a materiality.

Fig. XI-12

This would no longer be true starting from these strips here where the edges only hold up by themselves outside any materiality of the strip. So then that, is the flattening out of the torus [*sic*] with a half-twist. Here then I am drawing the edge of the strip and in dots obviously, where it passes underneath and in the front hatching where the surface is covered. Good then this strip like these which are hexagons, to obtain a regular hexagon, the proportions of this must be: width, I take 1 as

width, the length will be the root of three: 1 = 1;**xxxx** L = √3. Good that's not good to get into it.

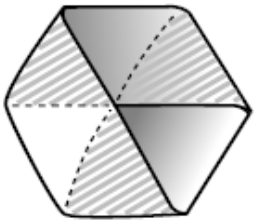


Fig. XI-13

So then what happens to the strip with two half-twists, namely, with one twist, namely, one strip with two edges, here's the way in which the edges of the hole, the edges of the strip are knotted to one another, namely, that here they no longer need the materiality of the strip to maintain their knotting, this indeed is why one goes on to the torus, as Lacan said earlier. So then this figure here is flattened out in the square. But to render these figures more readable...here again the edge is stuck to itself, namely, here it is twice, so I would have to draw it with a little separation to make things visible. By drawing, by hatching there where it covers itself, here with a little separation to see how the hole, the edges of the hole are knotted to one another. There is this figure which is therefore covered, where the surface is covered in its totality, this figure is a square and from that moment on, it is no longer this square here, but it is a square which is obtained with a strip whose length is at the same time its width, L=4l.

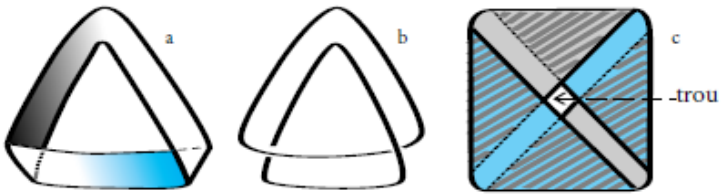


Fig. XI-14

So then when one goes to three half-twists, namely, that here the drawing on the board of the strip is that. I can again flatten out this figure, this strip, here anyway it's similar, I am drawing the visible strip of the hole, and I obtain this figure; namely, that I make it with the strip which has the same, still has the same proportions as that one.

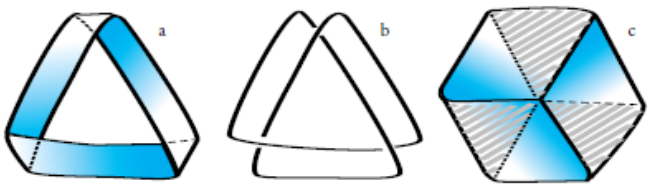


Fig. XI-15

The fourfold strip, it is the strip with four half-twists namely, with two twists, good its edges are knotted in the following fashion, namely, like that, this is the second knot...and one can also say that it is a torus with two holes and this one here, again I can flatten it out. It is similar, I would have to draw the edge of the hole. Here is how it is going to be knotted, and you see that it is the same figure as that one. And this figure here is identical to itself if one reverses it. Here I did not draw the torus with five half-twists, but it is evident that the torus with five half-twists is not going to constitute a regular polygon paving space; there would no longer be a means for that. But if one were to go back to the six-fold one, one could again remake a regular figure paving space.

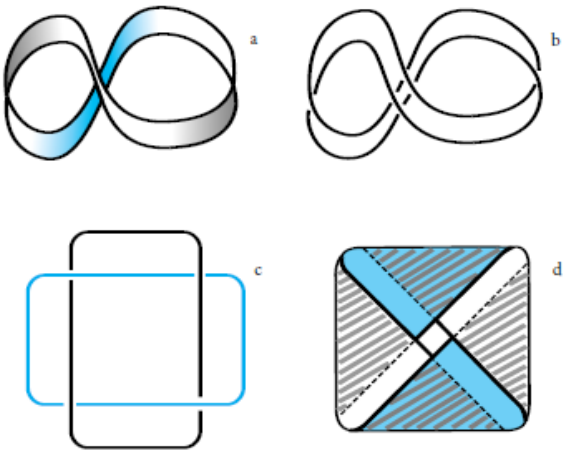


Fig. XI-16

J. Lagarrigue: With a half-twist and with three half-twists, you still have a virtual point, a virtual hole which is a point here and which is just like a little triangle, but it is not obligatory for a single twist and you can reduce it through the dimension of a triangle...

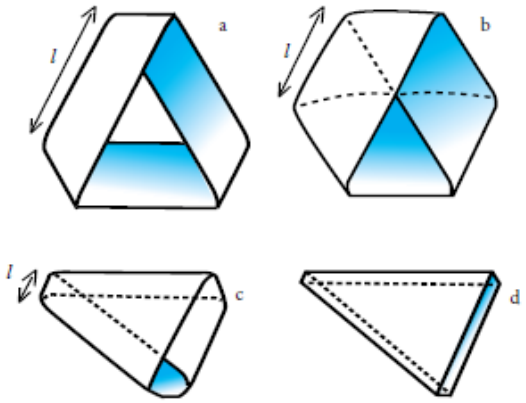


Fig. XI-17

you have this representation here now and you have the edge which describes this schema here, like that, with an edge which is here, which goes behind and you have the edge which goes in front, and which constitutes this schema. But anyway one can reduce these edges to being nothing. So then if you reduce these three edges to being nothing, you obtain a shape which is triangular and which I do not make at all triangular in order for it to be more easily representable and where you have this edge in fact which is going...it is not easy to represent and where you have in fact this edge here, it will come here like that, then it's going to go behind, here like that and then it's going to come in front again, this edge here, there, it is going to go there this little side which is going to be reduced to nothing, it is here, this goes behind and rejoins this edge here, this one therefore is going to be found above and then this one is going to return here to go behind again and it is going to rejoin...here...the third. And then here there is a Moebius strip reduced to its simplest expression and which is no longer reducible and which has the form of a triangle with three successive sections with the first which is represented by this strip which goes like that, then the second – here it's going to go behind and then the second which comes again and which is folded back a third time in order to pass again behind. And in fact this paving which you are making here with the hexagon you can make with the triangle, but it is another much simpler way of doing the paving. And you have here the disappearance that you thought was almost obligatory of this virtual hole which disappears with this representation here. There you are that's what I wanted to say. It's another interpretation.

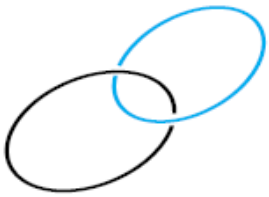
Terrasson: Why did I make this representation here and not that one? It is because here I have at most a second thickness and a simple thickness and that

that, I can obviously represent it, come here moreover by these pavings with which I can pave the plane. And so that allows me...

J. Lagarrigue: Here you do not have a virtual hole which cuts the plane, given that the only hole is a hole which is vertical like that, like a sleeve and here at this representation like this you still have a hole which is virtual, which is here a point through which you can pass a needle, a pin, and which disappears in this representation that you have of the three which absolutely overlap and which is in fact the most reduced form possible of a Moebius strip with the single half-twist and which is a representation which is much more reduced than that one because you have eliminated this hexagon effect, which is in effect artificial as one might say, which is no reason to be particular. It's only raison d'être in the form of the Moebius strip has a single half-twist; it is in fact the triangular form and it is here. And this form there, you cannot obtain with the second Moebius strip which is the Moebius strip with three twists where there the existence of this virtual central hole is absolutely obligatory. This can be made very well moreover with a strip of paper.

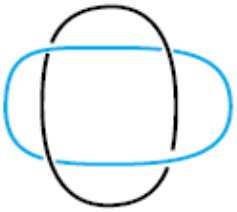
Lacan: What is interesting in this reflection is that, just as for the Moebius strip that I drew the last time, the thinning out of what is at stake, allows a form to be maintained which ends up with a threefold knot and this, I mean the Moebius strip, as is well known the Moebius strip divided on two makes an eight; if I remember properly this eight cut in two gives a shape like the following, namely, something interlaces, if I remember correctly. I believe that I do not remember correctly.

Fig. XI-18



J. Lagarrigue: I believe that that gives a formation which has characteristics like that. When one divides a Moebius strip twice one obtains a strip which is like that, which is of this kind, with a strip like that and which is knotted by a sort of weaving and which is not a simple...there is something which appears to me not to be clear it is your double twist, how do you obtain that figure there?

Fig. XI-19



Terrasson: By flattening out the Moebius strip, a Moebius strip with one twist by flattening it out namely, by making a half-twist each time it takes this form there (inaudible discussion)

Lacan: How is it two edges here interlace? Because in fact it is a fact that they are interlaced, they make an interlacing.

Terrasson: It is the first strip whose edges are obtained by themselves outside the fate of the strip....

Lacan: The two edges are interlaced?

Terrasson: It is the first interlacing of the edges. One can continue. There is a whole series of interlacings.

Lacan: Huh?

Terrasson: There is a whole series of interlacings of the edges.

Lacan: I apologise to you. There is a way of making a Borromean knot with a threefold knot. Nevertheless the question is whether there is another way of making a Borromean knot with the threefold knot. If one groups the three, it is quite obvious that what one obtains will be the same thing, as what one obtains with a Moebius strip. Is there a way, by separating out this threefold knot – this is what I was thinking about this morning – by separating out this threefold knot is there a way by displacing this threefold knot of ensuring that one can go under the second threefold knot which is slightly displaced, that one can pass underneath it, since it is by definition the Borromean knot, that one can go underneath this one which is here below and over this one which is above. This is

what I am proposing that you should put to the test, because I wasn't able to put to the test myself this morning. It must on the other hand be clearly said that this threefold knot itself is divided in two, I mean that it is liable to be cut, cut in the middle and that this gives a certain effect that I would also propose you to put to the test.

This promises us for the session of 9 May some results to which I myself will try to give a solution.

Seminar 12: Tuesday 9 May 1978

Things can legitimately be said to know how to behave. It is we who discover how they work. The turning point is that we have to imagine them. It is not always easy because some oratorical, that is to say spoken, precautions are needed.

Thus it is the cut which realises the threefold knot on a torus. To complete this cut, it is necessary, as I might say, to spread it out, namely, redouble it in such a way as to make a strip. This is what you see here on the right – the cut is there on the left – this is what you see here on the right of this drawing which it has to be said is not without a certain awkwardness.

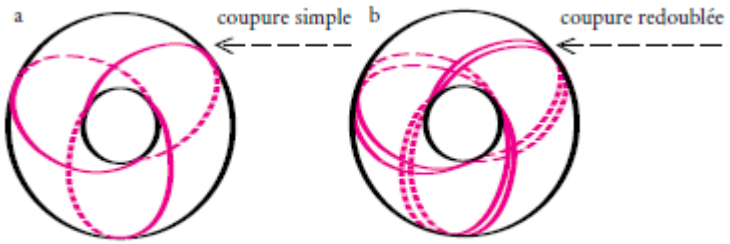


Fig. XII - 1

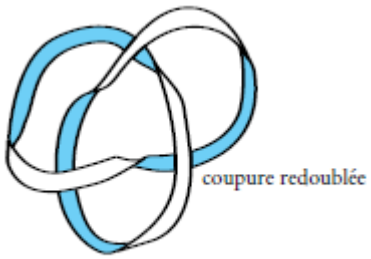


Fig. XII- 2

It has to be redoubled, thanks to which the figure of this strip appears, which for its part gives support, namely, the stuff of the threefold knot.

That is certainly why I stated this absurdity that it was impossible to establish a knot on a torus, which Lagarrigue legitimately took up, for the cut is not enough to make the knot: the strip must be there and you know how it is produced: by redoubling the cut a little to the right, a little to the left, in short by redoubling it. For a cut is not enough to make a knot, there must also be stuff, the stuff of a tube on this occasion which is sufficient. But it must not be believed that the cut suffices to make from the tube a Möbius strip even for example with a triple half-twist. It is the figure that I indicated there, this one which redoubles the cut, this is the figure that I indicated here which provides the stuff for this

threefold knot. I am pointing out to you that this threefold knot, is something that is only produced by a cut down the middle of what I called the triple Möbius strip: it is by cutting down the middle this triple Möbius strip that the threefold knot appears, so that after all this is what excuses me for having stated this fact, this absurd fact.

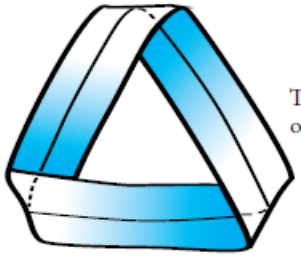
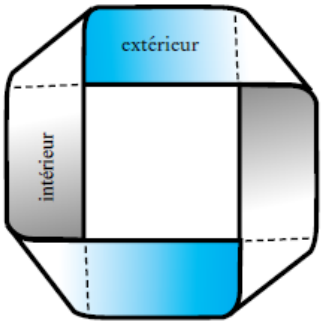


Fig. XII- 3

The triple Möbius strip is not capable of lying on a torus; hence it results that, if one cuts out this as it was originally, namely, the cut, the simple cut, this does not make a threefold knot and if one cuts the tube in the way that is represented here (redoubled cut), well then, what one obtains is something which is quite different from what one was expecting, namely, that it is a thing folded over four times: on this occasion, for example, this is the inside of the tube, this is the inside also and this is the outside.

Fig. XII-4



This indeed is why it is not possible to obtain this directly, namely, it is not possible to obtain directly what results for the strip inside the cut, , because this is something that only results by the section along the middle of the triple Möbius strip. This is perhaps what excuses me for having formulated this absurdity that I admitted earlier.

Nevertheless it is a fact that the cut in question realises on the torus something equivalent to the knot and which Lagarrigue was right to reproach me about.

What I said about the things that can be legitimately described as to know how one should behave, is something which supposes the use of what I called the Imaginary. What I said earlier, that one must imagine this stuff, suggests to us that there is something primary in the fact that there are fabrics (*tissus*). Fabric is

particularly linked to imagination, to the point that I would put forward that the support of a fabric, is properly speaking what I called just now the Imaginary. And what is striking, is precisely that, namely, that fabric is only imagined. Therefore we find here something which means that what passes for being the least imagined depends all the same on the Imaginary. It must be said that fabric is not easy to imagine, because it is encountered only in the cut.

If I spoke about the Symbolic the Imaginary and the Real, it is indeed because the Real is the fabric. So then how imagine this fabric? Well then, here precisely is the gap between the Imaginary and the Real, and what is between them, is the inhibition...precisely to imagine. But what is this inhibition, since moreover, we have here an example of it, there is nothing more difficult than to imagine the Real and here it seems that we are going around in circles and that in this affair of fabric, the Real, it is indeed what escapes us and it is indeed the reason why we have the inhibition. It is the gap between the Imaginary and the Real, if indeed it is the case that we can still support it, it is the gap between the Imaginary and the Real which constitutes our inhibition.

The Imaginary the Real and the Symbolic, is what I advanced as three functions which are situated in what is called a plait. It is clear that if one starts from here, this is a plait and what is curious, is that this plait is very particular.

Fig. XII-5

There is something that I would like to produce before you today. This is what it is: it is something that is presented like a strip. 2 covers 1; here it is 1 covers 3; here it is 2 which passes under 3, here it is 1, here it is 3, here it is 2, here it is 3.

And, in a word, at the end, we will find ourselves after 6 exchanges 1-2-3. Well then, this, namely, the equivalent of what is called the Slade strip, with what I depicted here as 1, 2, 3; this equivalence is shown in the fact that it is possible to reduce to this Slade band, by an appropriate manipulation of that in which consists the level where I wrote 1-2-3 [XII-7], it is possible to reduce this to this by inappropriate manipulation.

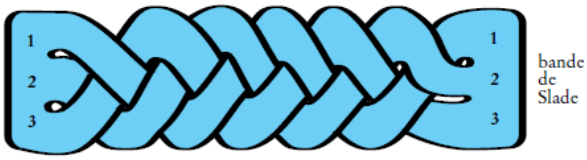


Fig. XII-6

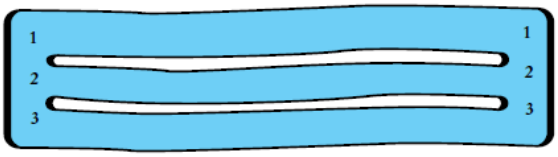


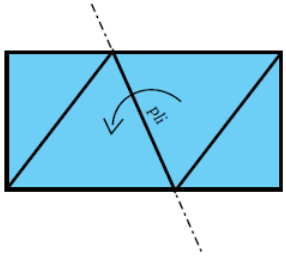
Fig. XII-7

In other words: a plaited belt which terminates by something which is the equivalent of this 1-2-3, namely, on this occasion a waist belt and I mean what is detached in this way (*Laughter: Lacan takes off his belt*), it is, not simply possible, but easy to demonstrate that this belt if it goes inside this plait, that this belt...It is more than possible in a plaited belt to obtain, with the help of the end of the strap and of the waist belt, to obtain the unknotting of the plait, I am talking about the Borromean plait. Therefore the equivalent of the Borromean plait, is exactly what is posed as unplaitted and this in order to signal for you this equivalence that I assure you you can effectively confirm in the most precise way.

It is no doubt difficult to imagine this fact, but it is a fact.

I would like to suggest to you something that has all its importance, which is the following: it is how can one make the shortest Möbius strip? By folding this triangle here onto that one. There results the following, namely, that something folds back which is this piece here. Well then, it is a matter of seeing that a Möbius strip will be produced by the fact of the folding of this here and of that there. It's an ordinary Möbius strip. Find the equivalent for what is involved in the triple Möbius strip. This Möbius strip is more or less like this:

Fig. XII- 8



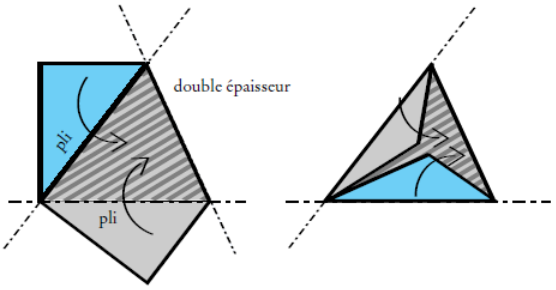


Fig. XII- 9

A curious thing, attack this business of the shortest Möbius strip and you will see that there is another solution, I mean that there is a way to make it still shorter, by still starting from the same equilateral triangle.

What is the relationship between that and psychoanalysis? I would highlight several things, namely, that the things that are at stake have the closest relationship with psychoanalysis. The relationship of the Imaginary of the Symbolic and of the Real, is something which belongs by essence to psychoanalysis. I did not adventure into them for nothing, if only because of the fact that the primacy of the fabric, namely, of what I call on this occasion things, the primacy of fabric is essentially what is necessitated by the highlighting of what is involved in the stuff of a psychoanalysis. If we do not go straight to this distance between the Imaginary and the Real, we are without recourse for what is involved in distinguishing in a psychoanalysis the gap between the Imaginary and the Real. It is not for nothing that I took this path. The thing is what we must stick to and the thing *qua* imagined, namely, the fabric *qua* represented. The difference between the representation and the object is something capital. It is at the point that the object at stake is something which can have several representations.

I am going to leave you there for today and perhaps do my seminar again next year at an appropriate date.